



# Planning Panels Victoria

Department of Transport and Planning

1 Spring Street  
Melbourne Victoria 3000  
GPO Box 2392  
Melbourne, Victoria 3001  
Telephone (03) 5381 9457

16 January 2026

Dear Submitter

## **Victorian Planning Authority Projects Standing Advisory Committee Referral 15: Ballarat North Precinct Structure Plan**

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We are writing to you because you made a submission to the above matter and the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) has referred your submission to the Victorian Planning Authority Projects Standing Advisory Committee (the Committee). Sarah Raso (Chair), Shannon Davies and Mark Varmalis have been nominated to consider this matter.

This letter:

- explains what the Committee can consider
- tells you about the Public Hearing process
- tells you what you need to do if you want to participate in the Public Hearing
- explains how we will use information we collect
- sets out draft directions for the Hearing.

### **The Amendment**

Draft Ballarat Planning Scheme Amendment C256ball (the Amendment) proposes to facilitate development of the Ballarat North PSP area in accordance with the Ballarat North Precinct Structure Plan (PSP), Native Vegetation Precinct Plan (NVPP) and Development Contributions Plan (DCP). More information about the Amendment is available at <https://vpa.vic.gov.au/project/ballarat-north/>.

The VPA is the Planning Authority for the Amendment.

### **What the Committee can consider**

The VPA referred this matter to the Committee on 16 January 2026, including all submissions. The attached referral letter identifies the key issues from submissions that the VPA is seeking the Committee's advice on.

While all submissions have been referred, the Committee will only consider submissions and evidence on these key issues. Accordingly, the Committee will direct submitters to focus preparation of submissions and appointment of experts only on the specific matters the VPA has requested its advice on.

If you intend to participate in the hearing, please carefully read the table of referred issues (Table 1) in the referral letter and make sure the matters you wish to raise align with the issues the Committee can consider.

#### **Privacy Statement**

*Any personal information about you or a third party in your correspondence will be protected under the provisions of the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014. It will only be used or disclosed to appropriate Ministerial, Statutory Authority, or departmental staff in regard to the purpose for which it was provided, unless required or authorised by law. Enquiries about access to information about you held by the Department should be directed to the Privacy Coordinator, Department of Transport and Planning, GPO Box 2392, East Melbourne, Victoria 3001.*



## The Hearing process

The public Committee process includes a Directions Hearing and a main Hearing.

The Committee will:

- consider submitters in an independent forum
- be informal and not like a court
- give fair, unbiased advice to the VPA and the Minister for Planning about the Amendment.

Submissions and other information presented throughout the process, including the Hearing, will be treated as public documents. Please carefully read the attached *Privacy Collection Notice*.

### Directions Hearing

At the Directions Hearing, the Committee will:

- give directions about exchanging information before the Hearing and the conduct of the Hearing
- consider Hearing times and venue and site inspections
- answer questions people have about the Committee process including the Hearing.

The Directions Hearing will be held in person and by video at **10am on Friday, 13 February 2026**. You can attend in person at Hearing Room 1, Planning Panels Victoria (Ground Floor, 1 Spring Street, Melbourne) or join online via Microsoft Teams video conference:

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 455 752 460 397 48

Passcode: ce67Fh3T

Or dial in: call (03) 9070 4463 and enter phone conference ID 757 357 562#

You should attend the Directions Hearing if you:

- are new to the Committee process and/or wish to participate in the Hearing
- have questions about the Committee process or wish to raise procedural issues.

The Committee proposes to issue directions after considering all requests to be heard and any additional matters raised at the Directions Hearing or in writing before the Directions Hearing.

### Hearing

The purpose of the main Hearing is for people to speak to their written submission and to hear from the VPA. The Hearing is expected to start on Monday 23 March 2026 and is likely to run for several weeks. The length of the Hearing will be confirmed at the Directions Hearing once the Committee has received all requests to be heard. The Hearing is open for anyone to observe.

The Committee will only consider referred submissions as relevant to the advice sought by the VPA when preparing its report. This includes the referred submissions of submitters who do not attend the Hearing. The Committee advises that submissions and expert evidence that is to be considered by it must be directed at the referred issues only and submissions and evidence without such focus will not be heard or considered. The Committee intends to issue Directions regarding time limits for the presentation of evidence and cross examination of expert witnesses.

### Key dates

The Key Information attached to this letter includes a list of key dates for filing information in the leadup to the Hearing. If you wish to comment on the key dates or any other matters but are unable to attend the Directions Hearing, you can provide comments in writing to [office@planningpanels.vic.gov.au](mailto:office@planningpanels.vic.gov.au) by Wednesday, 11 February 2026.

## If you wish to be involved in the Hearing

Please complete the [online request to be heard form](#) by **12 noon on Wednesday 11 February 2026** if you wish to be involved in the Hearing.

Notes on completing the online request to be heard form are attached.

## Further Information

The attached *Privacy Collection Notice* explains how your submission will be used by the Committee.

Further information including the *What is a Committee?* guide, *Guide to the Public Hearing* and *Frequently Asked Questions* are available at:

[www.planningpanels.vic.gov.au/guides-and-resources](http://www.planningpanels.vic.gov.au/guides-and-resources)

If you have questions, please contact Georgia Thomas, Project Officer, Planning Panels Victoria on [REDACTED] or [office@planningpanels.vic.gov.au](mailto:office@planningpanels.vic.gov.au).

Yours sincerely



**Sarah Raso**  
Committee Chair

# Completing the Request to be Heard Form

Ballarat North Precinct Structure Plan

When completing the online [request to be heard](#) form, please note the following details.

## When will the Hearing be held?

The expected hearing dates are between 23/03/2026 and 17/04/2026.

## What if I have availability issues during the expected hearing dates?

You can tell us when you are not available.

The Committee will accommodate your availability where possible.

## Time required to present your submission

You will be allocated 10 minutes for your submission if this field is left blank.

## Experts

An expert gives evidence in a field of expertise and must prepare an expert statement.

If you propose to call experts, you must:

- provide details of all experts on the request to be heard form – this includes their name, organisation, and field of expertise
- circulate expert reports at the time directed by the Committee before the Hearing.

Please note that it is critical the Committee receives this information about experts on time as it assists in planning the draft timetable for the Hearing before the Directions Hearing.

Experts may be directed to participate in a conference of experts and contribute to preparing a joint experts report.

Participants in the Hearing can generally cross-examine experts.

## What happens after I complete the form?

If you complete this form, a letter with directions and a timetable for the Hearing will be emailed to you after the Directions Hearing. Your name and email address will be added to the Distribution List for circulating information, including reports and submissions for the Hearing unless you tell us otherwise.

## What if I do not have an email address?

Please contact Planning Panels Victoria on (03) 5381 9457 as soon as possible if you need a form mailed to you. A paper copy of documents such as the timetable will be mailed to submitters who provide a postal address.

## How will my contact information be used?

We will use your contact address to contact you. We will provide your email or postal address to participants in the Hearing so that they can share reports and submissions unless you tell us otherwise.

## Access requirements

Please contact PPV with any access requirements. Some Hearings are at PPV, some are at other locations (for example, local Council offices) and some are held online. PPV Hearing Rooms are equipped with a hearing loop, and a laptop and projector if required. If the Hearing is held at another location, we may need to ensure access requirements can be met.

## Preliminary list of issues

Please refer to Table 1 in the attached referral letter from the VPA dated 16 January 2026 which specifies the advice it is seeking under the following key issues:

- Development Contributions Plan
- Transport network
- Drainage infrastructure.

## Summary of dates

The following dates are proposed:

Time	Date	Actions for filing and other matters
12 noon	Wednesday, 11 February 2026	Expert witness details
12 noon	Monday, 9 March 2026	VPA must provide a submitter location map to the Committee only and a site inspection itinerary showing key precinct features and major DCP/ICP elements
12 noon	Monday, 2 March 2026	VPA Part A (background and context) submission
12 noon	Friday, 6 March 2026	Expert witness reports
12 noon	Friday, 13 March 2026	VPA 'Day 1' version of the Amendment documents and PSP
12 noon	Friday, 20 March 2026	Documents or material to be presented on Day 1 of the Hearing
12 noon	Monday, 23 March 2026	<b>Hearing commences</b>
12 noon	Monday, 23 March 2026	Any supplementary submission from a party not appearing at the Hearing
12 noon	3 working days after the circulation of the VPA's final version of the Amendment documents	Comments on final drafting (if relevant)

## **Foley's List Legal Assistance Service**

The Legal Assistance Service, offered by Foley's List barristers, offers low-cost or no-cost legal support to eligible submitters in Planning Committee Victoria hearings. Available to individuals and community groups, the service offers legal advice and representation to help participants navigate PPV processes (subject to barrister availability). Assistance ranges from preliminary advice to full representation, with fees reduced or waived. To participate, submitters must meet eligibility criteria. More information about the service is available on the PPV [website](#), including information on who to contact at Foley's List to apply for the service.

# Planning Panels Victoria Privacy Notice

Your personal information will be collected during this Committee process for the purpose of documenting your views about the Amendment, advising the planning authority and the Minister for Planning about the Amendment, and communicating with you throughout the Committee process.

## While the Committee process is underway

Natural justice for all participants and transparency are important parts of the Committee process. The *Planning and Environment Act 1987* requires the Committee to conduct any Hearing it holds in public, and to keep a public record of the material provided to the Committee. Planning Panels Victoria (PPV) may:

- provide a copy of your material with all contact details to the VPA, government agencies and other parties to the Hearing
- provide a copy of your material to any other person who requests it (your personal information will be removed first)
- provide a copy of your material to the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) if needed for preparing Ministerial briefings
- publicly display a copy of your material in the PPV Office or Hearing room
- direct that a copy of your material be publicly displayed in the relevant local council office or DTP regional office.

## Hearings

The Committee may conduct a Hearing, either in person or using video conferencing. Hearings by video conference have special privacy requirements. If you choose to participate in the Hearing, you should be aware:

- a link to the Hearing will be published on the internet, and third parties will be able to join the Hearing and observe
- the Committee may broadcast the Hearing live on the internet.

The Committee may make a recording of the Hearing and may provide a copy of any recording to any person who requests it. Where Hearings are recorded, generally audio only is recorded (not video).

The Committee can hear submissions or accept material on a confidential basis, provided this would be fair to the other parties to the Hearing. If you want to make your submissions or provide material to the Committee confidentially, you will need to ask permission from the Committee Chair and provide reasons why the Committee should treat your submissions or material confidentially.

## The Committee report

Under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, a Committee report is a public document. The Committee's report will include a list of the names of submitters and a list of the names of the parties to the Hearing. It may include direct quotes from submitters. It may be published on the internet.

## After the Committee has reported

When the Committee has reported to the Planning Authority, your material will be removed from public display.

## Requesting copies

If you would like a copy of any submissions or material collected by the Committee, or a copy of any recording the Committee makes of the Hearing, make a request to PPV by email at [office@planningpanels.vic.gov.au](mailto:office@planningpanels.vic.gov.au) before the Committee submits its report. If the Committee has reported, you should submit your request to the DTP Freedom of Information and Privacy Unit at [foi.unit@transport.vic.gov.au](mailto:foi.unit@transport.vic.gov.au)

If you have any concerns about how your submission will be used, please contact Planning Panels Victoria on (03) 8572 7999.