

Minutes

Maribyrnong Community Recovery Committee

Meeting details	
Date/Time:	Wednesday 22 January 2025 6.30pm to 8.00pm
Location:	Maribyrnong Community Centre
Guests	
Mayor Pradeep Tiwari	Guest
Attendees	
Andrew Monteiro	Community Representative
Debora North	cohealth Representative
Georgia Esplin	Flood Recovery Manager, MCC
Martina Holland	Independent Chair
Mike Caridi	Community Representative
Mike McIntosh	Director Planning and Environment, MCC
Susan Saunders	Community Representative
Cr Susan Yengi	Councillor Representative
Wennie Van Riet	GenWest Proxy
Apologies	
Andy Chan	A/ Coordinator Emergency Management, Maribyrnong City Council (MCC)
Mary Cameron	Community Representative
Melissa Eastwood	Manager Inclusive Communities, MCC
Nazim Bayrak	Community Representative
Paul Larsen	Community Representative
Shweta Kawatra Dakin	GenWest Representative

Item	Subject
1	<p>Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country Martina acknowledged the Traditional Custodians of the land and emphasised the aim to bring First Nations voices to the table.</p>
2	<p>Conflict of interest declaration Martina Holland declared during item 9 that her role as CRC Chair is a paid position and therefore she will remove herself from decisions on the extension of the Community Recovery Committee.</p>
3	<p>Endorsement of previous meeting minutes Members endorsed the previous meeting minutes. Members discussed the inclusion of names in minutes, particularly with them being published online. Members advised they think names should remain in minutes where appropriate. Sensitive or personal information is redacted prior to publishing minutes.</p>
4	<p>Action item review See action table on page seven.</p>
5	<p>Rural partner CRC Georgia Esplin advised that she had sought advice from Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV) about connecting with a rural CRC as an opportunity to learn from one-another. ERV asked if the CRC would prefer the partner CRC to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At a similar stage of the recovery process, or a group further along • Impacted by flood, or another disaster • Available to meet face-to-face or via Zoom
	<p>Members advised they would like to meet with a CRC that is further in their recovery journey, very active and can provide advice on bringing projects together. They are open to meeting face-to-face if they are and are open to other disasters, although it was noted that the experience is vastly different between bushfire and flood.</p>
6	<p>Recovery projects Community recovery project stream leads provided the following updates.</p> <p>Social recovery and young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floods and Me program workshops have begun in partnership with Victoria University (VU), with 12 young participants aged 11-17. Positive feedback has been received by parents and the VU project lead. • The children’s book storytelling project is in the planning stages, with a draft memorandum of understanding (MoU) provided to the partners for signature. Council are seeking to involve Cohealth counselling services in the project to seek their advice in the design of the program to ensure the program is effective at supporting the wellbeing and recovery of the young participants. The clinician involved will have expertise in child counselling and integrate play therapy to the story building workshops. • River cruises have been very well-received. There have been four cruises to date with 69 participants in total. Bookings open for the February cruise tomorrow. • Tai chi is also well-received, with an average of 30 participants. • Council’s Arts and Culture team undertook a site visit of the proposed location for the public artwork project. The team will develop an artist brief based on the feedback received by the Social Recovery Project Meeting on 9 December 2024. Additional opportunities to provide input will be announced.

-
- Activity program has been developed with a range of social connection opportunities scheduled over the next six months. Members are encouraged to share this.
 - At the November 2024 CRC meeting, equine-assisted therapy was categorised as a lower priority but worth exploring if funding permits. The recovery team has identified several group therapy options involving horses and other animals, with one farm located 30 minutes from Maribyrnong. Funding is available in the grant for this project if the committee decides to proceed.

Discussion:

- Members raised that there are a number of overgrown gardens and nature strips. This could exacerbate the risk of snakes in the area. Members questioned whether Council can provide a program of mowing to support maintenance, particularly over Summer.
- Members also discussed the wellbeing of property owners in this position. It was noted that a wellbeing check would be beneficial.
- **Action:** Susan and Mike to provide addresses of properties with overgrown nature strips.

Preparedness, health and safety:

- The Emergency Management team at Council are progressing planning for the Maribyrnong Neighbourhood Flood Network training day and resource kits with VICSES. The training day and community planning day are tentatively scheduled for 3 and 10 May 2025. The Red Cross will also be involved.
- VICSES have opened feedback on the Local Flood Guide and are holding a face-to-face drop-in session to discuss feedback on 25 February 2025.
- The content for the River Watch page on the Council website is with Council's Communications team for review. Susan was acknowledged for her support drafting the content.

Insurance and built environment:

- The content for the Maribyrnong Insurance Guide is currently being drafted by the contributing organisations Cohealth, Consumer Action Law Centre, Disaster Legal Help Victoria, Financial Counselling Victoria, the Red Cross and West Justice.
- Project partner, GenWest have scheduled sessions to take portraits of the community members who have contributed to the guide.
- Members discussed the name of the guide and agreed on *Flood Insurance Guide: a Maribyrnong Community Initiative*.
- The resource launch and panel discussion is scheduled for 28 March 2025.

Discussion:

- Members sought an update on the request to revitalise the vacant land on Chifley Drive raised through the Community Recovery Committee and Maribyrnong Community Strengths and Opportunities workshop. Council will provide an update at the next meeting.
 - Members emphasised the need to revitalise this land, whether it be an off-leash, fenced dog park proposed through the CRC, or another type of community space.
 - Members raised that there has been misunderstanding amongst community about the proposed location for this project and clarified the proposed site is 13 and 15 Chifley Drive. It was noted that a clear update will dispel any misunderstanding about the location amongst the community.
 - Members discussed the GIVIT funding available and suggested a tool shed could be a positive use of funds and meet the criteria.
 - **Action:** Council to investigate the whether a tool shed is eligible expenditure through GIVIT funding.
-

Social Recovery Sub-Committee update

The Flood Recovery Manager provided an overview of the Social Recovery Sub-Committee (SRC):

- The SRC is comprised of agencies and service providers involved in recovery.
- Enables members to stay informed about recovery needs and changes to recovery services.
- Enables opportunities for collaboration.
- The committee has developed an action plan which guides the recovery programs provided.
- The action plan, which has been shared with members, has strong similarities to the CRC project streams.

7

The Flood Recovery Manager advised that there will not be a January SRC meeting. The group will reconvene in February for a face-to-face planning session.

Discussion:

- Deb North (Cohealth) advised that their funding to support recovery from the October 2022 flood event will conclude at the end of June 2025. They use the SRC meetings as an opportunity to raise emerging issues and convey recovery needs to state agencies such as Emergency Recovery Victoria.
- Wennie van Riet (GenWest) advised that the SRC helped initiate the Maribyrnong Insurance Guide.

Recovery needs discussion

The Chair reminded members that funding has been provided for the CRC members to access 1:1 counselling support through David Younger. The Chair also suggested a group session could be held with the CRC or for the broader community.

Discussion:

8

- Members noted that shortly after the flood may have been too soon for community to access supports such as David Younger. Now residents may be ready to utilise this.
- Often social connection events provide an opportunity for residents to improve their mental health and wellbeing, and is more likely to be attended than something labelled as a 'mental health event'.
- The Flood Recovery Manager reminded members that donated household items and vouchers for flood-impacted community are available through GIVIT. Council also has access to a Western Emergency Relief Network (WERN) membership which gives community access to a warehouse of second hand furniture for free – they will just be required to arrange transport. This may be helpful as residents move home.
- **Action:** Council to add group counselling sessions to the agenda for the next meeting

Cr Yengi questioned what has worked to engage with hard-to-reach groups in the past. Members identified the following:

- Utilising a Vietnamese bi-cultural worker from the area for the Maribyrnong Insurance Project has been helpful to gain trust and bridge accessibility barriers.
 - The recovery doorknock enabled Council staff to discuss the program, support services available and identify recovery needs. Of the properties visited, 123 took time to discuss the program with the team, and 61 discussed recovery support services available.
 - It was noted that there is significant engagement at community connection events and programs. This poses a great opportunity to integrate mental health and wellbeing support into scheduled connection opportunities.
-

- **Action:** Council to seek an update on the proposal to revitalise the parcels of land on Chifley Drive.

Members identified the following groups as at-risk of being missed through the program:

- Displaced residents who are not visiting their property for maintenance (owners of overgrown properties)
- Single parent households
- Residents who are new to the area, less connected and may be unaware of their flood risk
- Residents who were uninsured

Members discussed the opportunity for information-sharing with Maribyrnong Community Recovery Association (MCRA).

Terms of reference

The Chair noted that the Terms of Reference (ToR) is due to be reviewed. Some suggested changes she had identified include:

- Role of project groups and community leads for project streams to capture methods for informed decision-making
- Process for identifying needs
- Sharing minutes online

Discussion:

- 9
- The CRC discussed the current CRC finish date (end of June 2025) and whether they are interested in extending this if Council has capacity to resource this.
 - Members suggested the group be extended, however a finish date still be attached to the committee such as December 2025 or a future flood anniversary. The meeting frequency should also be revisited.
 - It was noted that the Recovery Hubs Grant concludes at the end of June 2025, however there could be other grants or avenues to fund community projects if the committee was extended.
 - It was noted that the key needs emerging will be relating to wellbeing, which could be a long-term process. The committee could shift to a mental health and wellbeing focus.
 - **Action:** Members to provide feedback on the ToR via email

Disaster Ready Fund

- 10
- Mike Caridi requested that Council consider submitting an application for the National Emergency Management Agency's Disaster Ready Fund Round (DRF) Three for mitigation scoping.

More information on the funding available can be found here: <https://www.nema.gov.au/our-work/key-programs/disaster-ready-fund>.

Action: Council to investigate a DRF application

Key messages

Members identified the following key messages for members to share with community:

- 11
- Save the date for the launch of the insurance project launch and panel discussion (28 March from 5.30pm)
 - Good news stories to share – 30 regular tai chi participants and 69 river cruise participants
 - Register for a free Maribyrnong Aquatic Centre membership as part of the recovery program

Close meeting

12

Action Table				
Date	Action item	Responsible	Status	Notes
29/05/24	Chair to invite Dr Rob Gordon to a future CRC meeting due to his specialty with working with children and young people	Chair	Open	Update January 2025: Ongoing – Dr Rob Gordon is on leave and will be contacted once he returns
24/07/24	Council to draft an article in the Maribyrnong Messenger for the second anniversary about the ongoing impacts of the flood on community	Council	Open	Update January 2025: Ongoing – the pitch was not selected for the Autumn edition however this will be re-submitted for the Winter edition
16/09/24	Council to arrange a presentation on the network mapping tool at a future CRC meeting	Chair	Open	Update January 2025: Martina is meeting with Kate to discuss potential to undertake network mapping in Maribyrnong
30/10/24	Susan to share a list of documents required to access the Planning and Building Assistance Rebate Scheme	Susan Saunders	Closed	Item closed January 2025: complete
20/11/24	Council to confirm if CRC resilience projects meet the criteria for the GIVIT funding	Council	Closed	Item closed January 2025: Georgia met with GIVIT representatives to discuss their available funding. They advised that they are looking to fund materials for an existing community initiative, e.g. art supplies for a wellbeing circle as opposed to the clinicians. They would not fund research or infrastructure unless it was for a community group
18/12/24	Council to seek advice from Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV) contacts to establish connection/mentor opportunities with regional communities	Council	Closed	Item closed January 2025: advice sought from ERV.
22/01/25	Susan and Mike to provide addresses of properties with overgrown nature strips	Susan and Mike	Open	
22/01/25	Council to investigate the whether a tool shed is eligible expenditure through GIVIT funding	Council	Open	
22/01/25	Council to add group counselling sessions to the agenda for the next meeting	Council	Open	
22/01/25	Members to provide feedback on the ToR via email	All	Open	
22/01/25	Council to investigate a DRF application	Council	Open	