

# Public Questions

Council Meeting 5 November 2025



Mornington  
Peninsula Shire

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

The following questions were received without notice. Responses will be provided to submitters and published on the Shire website.

### Rising Rates

Stephen Tweedly, a resident of Rosebud, asked the following question:

*You're saying the 10-year budget's fixed, but it sounds like it only works if rates and fees keep going up each year. How much are they expected to rise by? Because some councillors did promise no rate rises, and I think people deserve to know what that actually means. And are there any cuts to local services in this plan to make it balance?*

Council advises that for the purposes of the long-term financial plan, the assumptions include a rate increase each year in line with rate cap, which is aligned to CPI as set in the State budget. At the time, this was based on an increase in year 1 of 2.75% and 2.5% each year after. Applying the Minister's rate cap remains a decision of Council each as part of the annual budget process.

The increase in user fees is also aligned to CPI + 1%, however this can also be achieved through volume increases, new fees and price increases.

There are no specific levers to cut services. Should Council make a decision to increase or decrease services, this would be reflected in the annual budget along with annual updates to the long-term financial plan.

### Social Media

Mr Tweedly, also asked the following:

*Are councillors allowed to block residents on their public or official social media pages? I've noticed some people have been blocked after posting fair questions, and I'd like to know if that's considered appropriate under council's communication or conduct policies.*

Council advises, late last year, the Victorian Local Government Association released its Councillor Social Media Policy.

Section 9 of the policy talks to moderation of community content. The below is an extract from this policy for your information.

*Councillor social media pages are not official communication channels of the Council and are privately hosted by individual Councillors. This part sets out the rights and obligations of Councillor to moderate content and limit participation on their social media platform.*

- 9.1 Councillors have an absolute right to moderate community content on their social media platforms, including comments, reactions and other contributions.
- 9.2 Councillors must remove community content that, if published by the Councillor, would be contrary to the Model Councillor Code of Conduct.
- 9.3 Councillors have an absolute right to block or ban persons from their social media platform at their sole discretion.

### **Unlocking Strategic Sites**

Dale Stohr, a resident Crib Point, asked the following question:

*With the Victorian Government seeking Expressions of Interest from local councils by 19 November 2025 on surplus land sites for future development, will Mornington Peninsula Shire be making a submission to the Development Facilitation Program seeking re-zoning requests for new residential housing on the Mornington Peninsula?*

Council advises that it did not make any submissions to the Development Facilitation Program seeking re-zoning requests for new residential housing on the Peninsula.

Council is already progressing planning scheme amendment requests to deliver new housing on several strategic sites identified Council's adopted Housing and Settlement Strategy: Refresh 2020-2036 (HSS).

As you may be aware, Council's adopted HSS outlines how future housing and population growth will be accommodated on the Peninsula over the next 15 years, while ensuring the special values and character of the Peninsula are protected. It identifies areas for 'substantial, 'incremental, and 'minimal' housing change across the Shire, as well as several strategic sites that may be suitable for more housing than current planning controls permit, subject to detailed investigation and proper planning. Referred to as 'investigation areas', these are identified on the Housing Change Framework Maps. Importantly, as these sites are all privately owned, Council is assessing privately led rezoning requests.

For example, the 'investigation area' in Mornington (shown below) is currently the subject of Planning Scheme Amendment C247morn to rezone the land from Low Density Residential to the Neighbourhood Residential Zone to create a housing precinct with about 200 new dwellings. This amendment is nearing the end of the process and is due to be considered by

Council early in 2026 (Council Meeting TBD) for adoption and submission to the Minister for final approval.

Another example is Planning Scheme Amendment C249morn which seeks to rezone a large parcel of land in Dromana (see below) for about 250 new dwellings. This rezoning request has been with the Minister for some time now, waiting for a decision on whether to authorise Council to prepare and publicly exhibit the amendment.

Regardless of whether these, or other investigation area rezonings proceed, Council's HSS and Planning Scheme Amendment C219morn (which implements the HSS and Council's adopted Neighbourhood Character Study) provides for enough housing capacity on the Peninsula for at least the next 15 years, including comfortably meeting the State Government's recently release housing target for the Shire. That is, under existing and proposed planning controls under Amendment C219morn, the Shire has capacity for about 25,000 net new dwellings over 15 years, while the State Government's housing target is for 24,00 by 2051.

### **Housing for Women and families**

Helen Smallwood, a resident of Sorrento, asked the following question:

*Why can some of the apartments at the Quarantine Station not be used to house women and families who are homeless/ fleeing domestic violence. The infrastructure is there and if a committee thought carefully and innovatively, suitable accommodation and resources could be made available for those in need. We are sitting on a valuable and unused resource that could help change lives. Habitat for Humanity has proven the value of stable accommodation in the education and outcome for children.*

Council advises that the Quarantine Station is managed by Parks Victoria, and the provision of crisis accommodation falls under the responsibility of the State Government. However, please be assured that Council is actively advocating for increased crisis accommodation options and for a more equitable distribution of social housing investment across the Mornington Peninsula.

In addition to our advocacy efforts, Council is currently involved in several projects and partnerships aimed at addressing housing needs in our community:

- We are leasing Council-owned land for community housing initiatives, with a focus on priority cohorts such as women and children impacted by family violence, and women over 55 at risk of homelessness. Several of these projects are already underway.
- We are working closely with local support services, the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH), and Homes Victoria to better understand and respond to community needs.

- Council also supports local emergency relief efforts through the three funded community support centres operating across the region and located in Rosebud, Hastings and Mornington.
- Furthermore, through our Triple A Housing Advisory Committee, we are exploring innovative housing solutions. This includes engagement with organisations such as Habitat for Humanity, and expanding local crisis accommodation initiatives like The Ranch.

We appreciate your interest and advocacy in this space, and we welcome ongoing community input as we work together to improve housing outcomes for all.

### **Vegetation Clearance**

Tanya Burdett, a resident of Mount Martha, asked the following question:

*What approvals were granted for extensive vegetation clearance at Lot 3, 131 Hearn Road Mount Martha on 22/23 October 2025? Did works comply with VPO provisions of the MP Planning Scheme? If not, can Council confirm that they will instigate compliance, warning, infringement notices or enforcement orders through VCAT?*

Council advises that following a thorough search of Council records there is no indication of any permission granted for the vegetation removal described by you. There is an active investigation into the matter led by the Planning Compliance team and supported by multiple other internal teams. That is because the planning scheme can contain potential exemptions for some or all vegetation removal, depending on the extent, purpose for its removal and the specific provision/s in question.

As the investigation is ongoing, it is not possible to offer a detailed response to each of your questions at this stage. Depending on whether there are any exemptions identified, what the extent of removal is and whether there are any mitigating circumstances will determine what action Council can or would take. At this point of the investigation, it is not possible to advise what (if any) warnings, infringement or enforcement would be appropriate.