



October 2025

Community Event Space

Executive Summary

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Introduction

Located in the western suburbs of Melbourne, Wyndham is one of Australia’s fastest-growing municipalities. The city is renowned for its dynamic blend of urban development, natural landscapes, and vibrant community spirit. The region is home to thriving suburbs, a beautiful coastline, and agricultural land. As a meeting place for people of the Kulin Nation, Wyndham has a rich and diverse Aboriginal cultural heritage. The Wadawurrung and Bunurong were the first people to occupy the area now known as Wyndham. Today, the City of Wyndham is rich in cultural diversity, and is home to the most multicultural population in the country according to the most recent Census.

Wyndham covers 542 square kilometres features 27.4 km of coastline and is home to some amazing natural open space areas like the Point Cook Coastal Park, K Road Cliffs on the Werribee River and the Point Cook Marine Sanctuary. Each year, more people choose to make Wyndham their home. Our current population of 337,000 people is set to soar to more than 500,000 by 2050. As the tier of government closest to the community, Wyndham City Council plays a significant role in providing the services and infrastructure required for a liveable community. Council takes seriously our role in representing and understanding community needs and focusing on what matters most.

While such a high rate of growth presents great opportunity, it also presents significant challenges. These challenges extend to sustainably delivering the infrastructure and services required to meet the needs of new and emerging communities while balancing this with the needs of established communities. Although Wyndham provides a range of community facilities for services and activities, it has become evident that there is a shortage in access to large affordable and flexible multipurpose spaces that can be used for large scale events and gatherings. At the 25 March 2025 Council Meeting, a report was presented to explore the options

associated with delivering a large multi-purpose facility community event space in Wyndham.

Cultural inclusion and diversity are important factors in what makes a city great, and it is crucial that all people in Wyndham can fully participate in community life. Council understands that the range of issues impacting on access to equal participation continue to evolve and change as our demographic profile does. We are committed to seeking improved and enhanced approaches towards ensuring that our work is informed by and responsive to the changing needs of our multicultural community. The Wyndham 2050 Vision sets out our community’s hopes and priorities for the future and helps guide planning for the future.

The vision

- We are the vibrant and diverse community of Wyndham, embracing a sense of belonging and inclusivity at all stages of life.
- We value and celebrate the First Nations people and take pride in our arts, culture and heritage.
- We are a thriving city that is safe, accessible and connected.
- We champion health, well-being, education, enterprise, and innovation.
- We nurture our land and environment for future generations."



The Council Plan 2025-29 (The Plan) incorporating the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan also outlines the importance of community wellbeing – recognising that physical, mental, emotional, and social health are shaped by the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age. Council plays a vital role in shaping a healthy, inclusive, and a thriving city. The Plan is structured around four strategic areas that reflect Council's commitment to improving quality of life for all residents:

1

A Welcoming, Healthy and Resilient City:
An inclusive and equitable place which provides what residents need to maintain good health and wellbeing

3

A Clean and Green City: A presentable and sustainable place where open spaces are valued protected and enjoyed

2

A Liveable City: A great place to live, work, visit and invest in

4

Delivering for community: Council is a well governed, accountable and financially responsible organisation that delivers on what the community values most

The proposed Community Event Space aligns with the strategic directions of the Community Vision 2050 and Council Plan 2025-29 and is supported by a range of strategic documents, policies and plans, including State and Federal Government.



Purpose of the Report

This report has been developed to assess the need for a community event space in Wyndham and to provide informed recommendations for its planning and delivery. The purpose is to support inclusive, accessible, and vibrant community engagement by identifying a suitable solution that meets current and future needs. To inform the recommendations, a multi-stage process was undertaken:

- **Community Consultation:** Engagement activities were conducted with community groups to understand usage patterns, aspirations, and barriers related to existing spaces.
- **Site and Infrastructure Review:** An audit of current facilities and potential locations was completed to evaluate suitability, accessibility, and alignment with strategic planning frameworks.

- **Benchmarking and Best Practice Analysis:** Comparable community spaces in other municipalities were reviewed to identify successful models and innovative approaches.
- **Needs Assessment:** Demographic trends, projected growth, and cultural priorities were analysed to ensure the proposed solution is future-focused and responsive to community dynamics.

The findings highlight a clear and growing demand for a flexible, multi-purpose event space that can accommodate a range of activities – from cultural events and workshops to civic gatherings. The recommendations presented aim to deliver a space that is welcoming, adaptable, and reflective of the community's identity and aspirations.

What is a Community Event Space

For the purposes of this project, the proposed community event space is intended to be a flexible low-cost multipurpose space for large gatherings that can accommodate

- hall space that can cater for between 500-1,500 guests for events, conventions, gatherings and exhibitions
- commercial kitchen
- amenities
- car parking

The types of activities that the space might be able to accommodate include cultural and religious events and festivals, performances and concerts, community celebrations and gatherings, presentations and awards nights, fundraising, markets, exhibitions and outdoor events.



Project Background

The need for an affordable and flexible community events space in Wyndham continues to grow and has been identified through various avenues, including direct feedback via residents to councillors, insights from other community engagements including Creative Wyndham and Encore Review, and general booking requests from user groups at community facilities across Wyndham. Although a range of community venues are available for community uses, these are limited in size and feedback received about Encore Events Centre is that size, accessibility and affordability are limiting factors to meeting the community needs. Leaving many community groups unable to fulfill their full potential, limiting their ability to fully participate in community life.

Access and demand across Wyndham for a multi-purpose community event space continues to grow rapidly, especially from various multi-cultural groups. Exploring options enables the collection of additional evidence and information that can support investigations on where such a space could be built, the size and scale of the space, as well as how Council

can continue to advocate for supplementary funding and/or consider what partnership opportunities may be available to create a regional significant affordable and flexible community event space.

Although there are no critical dates, Council is aware of the current community demand for access to large spaces for community gatherings and it would be anticipated that such a space could be constructed over the coming years.

This report provides a summary of the planning and investigations that were undertaken in response to the decision made at the 25 March 2025 Council meeting.

Scope & Budget

The initial project scope has included desktop analysis, planning and high-level feasibility including targeted community engagement. This initial work is to be funded within current resourcing budgets. Any future works will be subject to budget processes.





Project Methodology

The need for community spaces can be expressed in different ways. To generate an accurate understanding of required needs in a community, it is important to consider 'need' from multiple perspectives. The approach taken for the Community Event Space has been based on needs from four perspectives. These are:

- **Community Consultation:** An online engagement was conducted with community groups to understand usage patterns, aspirations, and barriers related to existing spaces.
- **Review:** An audit of current facilities and potential locations was completed to evaluate suitability, accessibility, and alignment with strategic planning frameworks.

- **Benchmarking and Best Practice Analysis:**

Comparable community spaces in other municipalities were reviewed to identify successful models and innovative approaches.

- **Needs Assessment:** Demographic trends, projected growth, and cultural priorities were analysed to ensure the proposed solution is future-focused and responsive to community dynamics.

While a considerable number of needs might be identified for a community, these needs might be able to be provided in one or a select number of facilities and through innovative models of delivery, therefore impacting the overall recommendation on infrastructure provision.



The method used to guide the assessment of need for a community event space can be summarised into the following high-level steps

1. Situation Analysis

Establishing a baseline, including review of existing information including relevant strategies and documents, previous engagement findings, and demographic data.

Internal engagement and review of existing facilities, utilisation, barriers and demand insights.

2. Benchmark Analysis

Using contextual information around community event / meeting spaces, provision in similar urban environments and comparable standards in other areas, appropriate levels of Desired Standards (DS) for WCC were determined for the purposes of this project. The DS considering council's Sustainable Infrastructure Framework (WSIF), Service and Asset Planning Policy, draft Creative Wyndham Plan and other guidelines. Projected population, current facilities and planned future infrastructure was also considered.

3. Guiding Principles

Research on other leading practice in community space planning including consideration of innovative models and case study examples were used to help support the development of guiding principles. The defined budget parameters were also a key factor when considering the various building and delivery models.

4. Targeted Consultation with community groups and internal stakeholders

The project included targeted consultation and included the following

- Consultation with internal council staff to identify known needs, gaps and considerations, including identifying potential site options
- Consultation with community groups through an online survey to obtain information on current demand, capacity and functionality requirements.





5. Building Models (Scope), Site Identification & Site Assessment

Using community engagement insights and benchmarking from previous stages, building models were determined to guide land size requirements, site needs and building scope.

Preliminary building models were considered as follows

- Small – can accommodate up to 500 people
- Medium – can accommodate up to 750 people
- Large – can accommodate up to 1,000 people

Using the information from the internal engagement, ten potential site options were identified and an assessment criterion for determining site suitability was established. The criteria considering site size, residential impact, accessibility, profile, planning considerations and additional known factors such as cost.

6. Capital, Operational Costs & Future Management

High level cost estimates were developed informed by current markets rates and known existing costs from other similar projects. Two cost rates were considered and applied based on a top-quality finish and medium quality finish. These options were considered to enable the proposed building models

to be assessed against the budget parameters, while still being able to meet the needs of the community.

Using an operational forecasting model used by Wyndham and applied to other community infrastructure planning, cost estimates were established for each of the building models, including staff costs, cyclic maintenance, utility services and asset management costs.

Council currently has different operating and management models in place for various community facilities including - fully operated by Wyndham Model, Community Centre Model, Hall for Hall, Lease and Hybrid Models. Each of these models were costed and considered against factors including customer experience, risk, and community affordability.

In addition to the operating costs a potential Fees & Charges Schedule was considered and benchmarked against other facilities. This was undertaken to help understand the net annual operating cost to council.

7. Prepare Council Report

Using all the information from the previous stages, preliminary recommendations have been made on the preferred site, building scope, cost and operating model.

Project Outcomes

The following outlines the key project outcomes which have been considered in determining the project recommendations

Community Engagement

A community engagement process was undertaken from 2 June to 30 June 2025 to help us better understand the community need and feasibility for access to a large multipurpose community event space. A survey was undertaken via The Loop and a communication plan activated which included social media posts, direct emails to 2,300 community groups and digital advertising in community centres and libraries. We received 116 survey responses representing approximately 49,000 to 60,000 people, with 85% of groups indicating that they had trouble finding a suitable venue in Wyndham with size, space and cost being the biggest barriers. We heard that a large-scale venue is required to accommodate various activities including cultural and religious festivals, performances and shows, community celebrations and gatherings, presentations and award nights, markets, exhibitions, education and learning. To accommodate these activities design requirements included provision of - a stage, change rooms, commercial kitchen, car parking and outdoor areas. We also heard that 21% of groups are currently meeting outside of Wyndham due to the lack of access to a suitable space. The full engagement report is available via <https://theloop.wyndham.vic.gov.au/have-your-say-community-event-space>

The information collected from the engagement validating need and informing the project scope and parameters.

Site Identification and Assessment

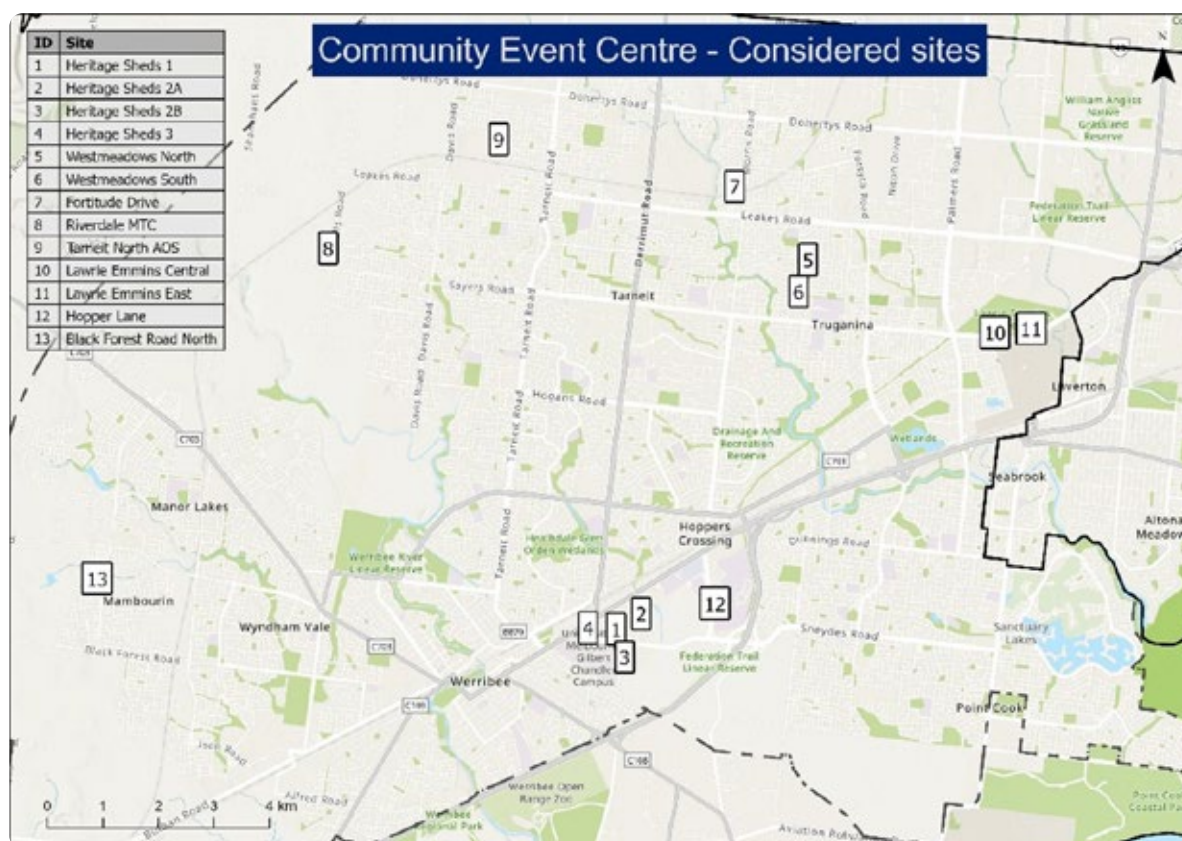
To assist determine the site requirements, high level benchmarking was undertaken to firstly establish how much land would be required to accommodate the proposed community event space and carpark.

The community engagement insights were used to inform the broad parameters of the project scope and scale. From this information benchmarking was undertaken on other similar sites such as Encore Events Centre, Eagle Stadium, Geelong Arena and Norlane Auditorium. The benchmarking assisted to determine that a land parcel of approximately two hectares would be required to accommodate the proposed community event space. More information on Geelong Arena and Norlane Auditorium is available via www.geelongaustralia.com.au

Through an internal engagement process ten potential sites were identified as possible options for a future community event space. The sites included ;

- Fortitude Drive Truganina – Council owned land, part of Fortitude Drive Reserve
- Westmeadows South, Truganina – Council owned land purchased for open space
- Hoppers Lane, Werribee – State Government owned land (part of Werribee PSP and existing lease with Victoria University)
- Lawrie Emmins, Laverton – State Government owned land (Council Committee of Management)
- Westmeadows North, Truganina – Council owned land purchased for open space
- Tarneit North, Tarneit – Council owned land for active open space
- Black Forest Road North, Wyndham Vale – Council owned land set aside intended for future indoor recreation facility
- Black Forest Road North Wyndham Vale- Council owned land set aside for intended community infrastructure and services
- Riverdale Major Town Centre, Tarneit – Council owned land adjacent to major town centre intended for a future recreation facility
- Sneydes Road, East Werribee – State Government owned land previously the State Research Farm (part of East Werribee PSP)





To better understand site suitability an initial assessment criterion was developed, based on the following

- **Size and Shape** – is the land sufficient size and shape to accommodate the facility?
- **Resident Impact** – how much of an impact will the site have on residents? (e.g. noise, traffic)
- **Accessibility** – to what extent is the location accessible? (e.g. main road access/ public transport)
- **Profile / exposure** – is the land in a prominent position?
- **Planning Considerations** – what are the planning overlays of the site including heritage considerations, who owns the land, is the land identified for other future uses
- **Additional known factors** – are there any other known factors e.g. costs associated with the site?

Each of the sites were assessed against the criteria, identifying Fortitude Drive as the most suitable site for the future delivery of a community event space. Fortitude Drive Reserve is a new active open space

being developed by Wyndham City Council, which will include a state-of-the-art athletics facility, play spaces, and picnic areas. The reserve is located at the corner of Morris Road and Fortitude Drive, adjacent to Bemn Secondary College, with Stage One of the Active Open Space scheduled for completion in late 2025. A community event space on this site will compliment the surrounding activities while providing a well located and accessible site.



Indicative location of community event space

Guiding Principles, Project Scope, Scale and Cost

Through the background review, benchmarking and community engagement, the following guiding principles emerged and should be applied as a basis to underpin the design and delivery of the proposed community event space.

Guiding Principles

General Principles	
P1	Culturally appropriate and flexible to accommodate various uses and needs
P2	Build inclusion participation and activation
P3	Community accessible and affordable
P4	Actively engage in partnership opportunities to deliver affordable and accessible community space
P5	Adequately resourced and managed, ensuring customer experience and risks are well managed
Design Principles	
P6	Developing flexible, adaptable multipurpose spaces that can incorporate a range of uses and change over time as needed
P7	Create adaptable community spaces appropriate for the level of service demand
P8	Support innovation, access, inclusion and universal design
P9	Environmentally sustainable
Location Principles	
P10	Land capability and site characteristics
P11	Accessible to major roads, and transport networks
P12	Integrated with other facilities and services



Project Scope, Scale & Cost

Based on the community engagement insights, benchmarking and the budget parameters, the following three building models were developed to guide the planning

- Small – can accommodate up to 500 people
- Medium – can accommodate up to 750 people
- Large – can accommodate up to 1,000 people

Each of the above models should include a stage, change rooms, commercial kitchen, required amenities, carparking and outdoor space.

High level cost estimates were developed and informed by current markets rates and known

existing costs from other similar projects. Two cost rates were considered based on top quality finishes and medium quality finishes. These options were considered to help better understand what size facility could be delivered within the budget parameters while still being able to meet the needs of the community. The cost estimates varying from between \$20m for the small size venue through to \$36m for the large scale venue.

From this process, it was determined that the medium scale facility size would be the most appropriate model to continue exploring from a design and cost perspective. The delivery of a large-scale community event space that can accommodate multi-cultural gatherings, events and festivals aligns with the aspirations of the State Government and advocacy for funding will continue to State and Federal Government.

Site comparison with Encore



Indicative only – proposed building on Fortitude Drive Reserve. Building footprint approximately 3,650m², carpark 6,550m²



Encore Events Centre – indicative only building area approximately 2,300m² (top), carpark approximately 5,740m² (bottom).

Example AI-generated Concept Imagery



Operating Models, Fees & Charges

The operating model of the proposed community event space was also considered to ensure that both capital construction costs and ongoing operating costs were considered to help inform future budget requirements. Council currently has different operating models in place for various community facilities including - fully operated by Wyndham, Community Centre Model, Hall for Hall, Lease, Commercial and Hybrid Models. Each of these models were considered and costed. Consideration factors included- the likely operating cost to council, customer experience, risk, and community affordability. Using a forecasting approach cost estimates were established for each model and each of the building options. The forecasting model taking into account staff costs, cyclic maintenance, utility

services and asset management. The cost varying from an operational cost between \$1m per annum for the small scale venue to \$2.6m per annum per the large scale venue.

To help offset the ongoing operational costs to council while still ensuring an affordable venue for community, a schedule of fees and charges was considered and benchmarked against other venues including Norlane Auditorium, Williamstown Ballroom, Encore and the general community rate for hire in Wyndham. Noting that each venue is different in size and with different fee structures, we were able to estimate a per square metre rate and apply that to each building model. This resulted in an estimated income of around \$500,000 per annum, noting this would also be subject to utilisation rates.



Project Recommendations

Based on the needs assessment, benchmarking, site assessments, budget parameters and community insights, the following recommendations have been made;

Deliver a Community Event Space that can accommodate up to 750 people banquet style (1,500 theatre style), that includes a stage, change rooms, commercial kitchen, carparking and outdoor space at Fortitude Drive, Truganina within the budget parameters of up to \$24.4m, to be operated under a community management model.

Next Steps

To ensure the desired outcomes and actions are met for this project, it is proposed that the following next steps are undertaken with regular updates provided to Council

- Prepare Design Brief including Value Management options
- Pursue funding / grant opportunities
- Advertise Design Tender, including independent Quantity Surveyor
- Complete Design
- Award Construction Tender

It is expected that design for the community event space would commence in 2026, construction in 2027 and be ready to open to the community mid-2028.

