

# Whitehorse Community Safety Committee Minutes

Tuesday 11 August 2026 from 12pm to 1.30 pm

Location: Box Hill Room, Civic Centre, 379-399 Whitehorse Road, Nunawading

**Attendees:** Names withheld

**Apologies:** Names withheld

## 1. Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country

- The Chair provided an Acknowledgment of Country and welcomed everyone to the Whitehorse Community Safety Committee (WCSC) meeting.

## 2. Attendance/Apologies

- As noted above.

## 3. Conflicts of interest

- There were no conflicts of interest declared.

## 4. Confirmation of Previous Minutes

- The Minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday 12 May 2026, were confirmed as a true and correct record.

## 5. Items arising from previous meeting

- As outlined in the Actions summary.

## 6. Presentation on the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU)

- The Manager of Initiatives – South and East Area of the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) provided an overview of this new initiative.
- The VRU originated in Scotland following a World Health Organisation report that identified Glasgow as the most violent city in Europe. In response to these findings, Strathclyde Police established the VRU, adopting a public health approach to prevent and reduce violent crime.

- The Victorian VRU sits within the Department of Premier and Cabinet and operates as a systems connector rather than a funding body. Taking a public health approach to violence prevention, the VRU views violence as preventable and focuses on addressing the underlying causes.
- The VRU operates a Rapid Response Model (RRM) for significant violent incidents, including serious harm and fatalities. Previous responses to significant incidents have traditionally focused on providing support to schools, whereas it is anticipated the new RRM will enable coordination across the broader community and public settings. The RRM framework and response plan are currently being developed, with input from Victoria Police.
- VRU is committed to ensuring supports are accessible to all communities and is working to develop tailored responses where CALD communities are disproportionately represented within the justice system.
- Participants emphasised the value of storytelling and lived experience in informing community responses. The conversation also highlighted the critical role sporting clubs play in engaging and supporting vulnerable young people, particularly those experiencing barriers related to cost, transport or family support. Councils are well positioned to facilitate partnerships that enhance access, inclusion and community connection.
- The VRU works with Public Transport Victoria, Victoria Police and Protective Services Officers to deliver initiatives at transport hubs, including community connector programs that engage and support vulnerable people. This service is based on priority locations predominantly in the South East, and is not available in the East.
- Discussion highlighted the importance of equipping trusted community members, including hairdressers and sports coaches to recognize, with the skills and confidence to recognise signs of vulnerability and connect people with appropriate support services.

The Whitehorse Youth Connexions Outreach program was recognized as an effective initiative, providing outreach support twice a week at transport hubs, and other key locations across Whitehorse.

## 7. Councillor Updates

- Cr Martin noted the value of hearing community safety perspectives through attending several Community Safety pop-ups held as part of Round 2 engagement for the Draft Whitehorse Community Safety Plan. Additional feedback was also gathered through the Mahoneys Reserve Master Plan engagement, including concerns relating to scooter use in local streets and public spaces.



## 8. General Business

### Proposed Community Safety Champions Award

- Following discussions at the last meeting, an internal Community Safety Working Group has been established, bringing together representatives from across Council and Whitehorse Manningham Libraries to share insights, strengthen collaboration and identify opportunities to enhance community safety outcomes.
- The Group considered the proposed Community Safety Champions Award and agreed that recognition of positive contributions to community safety would be more appropriately incorporated as a category within Council's annual Citizen of the Year Awards.

### Update from Victoria Police

- The Whitehorse Neighbourhood Policing Forum took place at the Box Hill Town Hall on Wednesday 29 July 2026 and was well attended.
- Victoria Police have recently launched Operation Connect, in which members ask residents to rate (out of 10) how safe they feel at home, on the roads, and in public, with follow-up questions where scores are low. They were pleased to receive 255 during their first month.
- An overall reduction in recorded crime of 2.4% over the past 12 months, with more significant reductions in high-harm offence categories including:
  - Aggravated burglaries: down 32%
  - Armed robberies: down 20%
  - Carjackings: down 75%
  - Home invasions: down 58%
  - Theft of motor vehicle: down 22.5%

### Road Safety

- Council's School Crossing Supervisors regularly report road safety concerns relating to excess speeds near schools. In response, safety cameras have been activated at key school crossing locations across the municipality. Additionally, Council successfully advocated for the speed limit outside Antonio Park Primary School to be reduced from 80km to 60km, enabling the implementation of a 40km school speed zone during school times.



### **Coffee with a Cop**

- Coffee with a Cop events continue to be well received, with a record 40 participants attending the June 2026 session at Leeroy Café in Vermont, which was the highest attendance for this year.

### **Community Safety Plan**

- Engagement for the Round 2 draft Whitehorse Community Safety Plan 2027-2031 closed on Sunday 9 August 2026.
- A request was made to include a breakdown of the recorded demographic data, noting that the employment statistics on page 12 may not be representative of the Whitehorse population.

### **Vehicle Theft Prevention Card Project**

- A vehicle theft prevention card, based on the Mental Health card is being developed through a collaboration between Deakin University, Victoria Police, Crime Stoppers and Rotary Club of Burwood Box Hill. The card is expected to be available for motorists across Victoria to store in their vehicle glove box and access important vehicle theft prevention information.

### **State election caretaker period**

- A query was raised about the forthcoming state election on 28 November 2026 and any implications for local government during caretaker period. While the caretaker period does not impose direct restrictions on local government, some Council projects, funding agreements, grants and approvals may be affected where they are subject to State Government decisions.

Cr Cutts will be standing for this year's election and will continue to fulfil her responsibilities as Councillor until commencing a leave of absence during the 2026 caretaker period. The caretaker period is scheduled to commence on 3 November 2026 and will continue until the election result is declared or a new government is commissioned.

