

Quarterly Update

March 2023

Updating members and stakeholders on the work of the Eastern Region Group of Councils

From the ERG

Welcome to the ERG Quarterly Update

This newsletter provides a snapshot of current activities, issues and opportunities across the region, including the progress of the ERG's 2021-2025 Strategic Plan. Please share this update with interested colleagues and stakeholders.

Meeting updates

In February, the ERG met with the Minister for Local Government, the Hon. Melissa Horne MP seeking to strengthen our relationship with the State in the context of COVID recovery, cost of living pressures, rate capping and fiscal repair. The Minister was invited to discuss how she could assist us to progress our priorities across government, and how she would move the sector towards financial sustainability. The Minister suggested a 'roadmap' to guide how the State partners with local government and agreed to follow up on discussions about digital service delivery, shared services, flammable cladding, soft plastics, windfall gains, workforce issues, level crossing removal impacts and the Warburton Highway landslip. The ERG also considered machinery of government changes and the State priorities of skills and workforce, cost of living, budget repair and housing affordability. Members shared their experience with the My Place movement and learned about Monash's new reducing gambling harm policy.

ERG members 2023

Knox: Cr Marcia Timmer-Leitch, Mayor; Cr Jude Dwight, Deputy Mayor and Bruce Dobson, CEO
Manningham: Cr Deirdre Diamante, Mayor; Cr Tomas Lightbody, Deputy Mayor and Andrew Day, CEO
Maroondah: Cr Rob Steane, Mayor (ERG Chair), Cr Tasa Damante, Deputy Mayor and Steve Kozlowski, CEO
Monash: Cr Tina Samardzija, Mayor; Cr Nicky Luo and Dr Andi Diamond, CEO
Whitehorse: Cr Mark Lane, Mayor (ERG Deputy Chair); Cr Prue Cutts, Deputy Mayor and Simon McMillan, CEO
Yarra Ranges: Cr Jim Child, Mayor; Cr Sophie Todorov, Deputy Mayor and Tammi Rose, CEO
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Follow us on

Stay up to date and support our vision to work together to make lives better, create better places and deliver better performance across councils in the eastern region by following us on LinkedIn at: [linkedin.com/company/eastern-region-group-of-councils](https://www.linkedin.com/company/eastern-region-group-of-councils)

Upcoming meeting dates

The ERG meets every two months. CEOs meet two weeks prior. Upcoming 2023 ERG meeting dates are:
19 April 18 August 20 October 7 December
Local State and Federal MPs meetings: **5 and 19 April**
Health Innovation and Care Economy Charettes:
25 May and 14 July

Strategic Plan 2021/25 update

The ERG Strategic Plan provides a shared vision for the region and sets out short and longer-term priorities under four pillars - Our Economy, Our Communities, Our Environment and Our Infrastructure.

We are currently undertaking a mid-term review to strengthen our focus on Planning and Building; Procurement; Greening / Future East; Soft Plastics, and the Financial Sustainability of sector.

Here is an update on key actions:

Regional economic development and investment attraction

Our growing Health Innovation and Care Economy (HICE) is essential for the region's liveability, COVID recovery and economic growth.

The \$198K Metropolitan Partnerships funded project to explore opportunities for the region's HICE is well underway.

Five background working papers, stakeholder interviews and three roundtables will inform the Stage 1 report, due at the end of April.

Research has shown that:

- Health care services (including hospitals and health services) is the fourth (of 114) largest export sub-industry in the region
- Human pharmaceutical and medicinal product manufacturing is fifth - exporting 81% of production valued at \$1B.
- 27% of all production is exported (value \$1.2B)
- Private investment is flowing in to expand private hospitals at Knox and Box Hill and fund new research at Monash.

In May, the first of two 'charettes' will explore and agree on the priority project to be progressed in July as part of Stage 2.

Accelerating joint procurement

A Roadmap, governance framework and Heads of Agreement to establish an authorising environment to accelerate joint procurement and shared service delivery is firming up and will be discussed by CEOs in April. Please talk to your Council's Procurement Manager to find out more.

Advocacy

Meetings with local State and Federal members are planned for April. We have updated our 'Projects' 'News' and 'Advocacy' sections on the website and you can view the ERG's Priorities for Government action at: www.easternregiongroup.org.au/advocacy

Housing needs and site identification

With affordability reducing and homelessness increasing across the region, the ERG supports the work of the [Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance \(EAHA\)](#) and the broader 13-council Charter group.

Congratulations to EAHA who hosted 180 people for the screening of [UnderCover](#) and panel discussion regarding homelessness in women over 55 - a risk faced by more than 5000 women in Melbourne's east.

The Victorian Infrastructure Strategy 2021–2051 recommends state-wide targets to grow social housing to reach the national average (4.5 social dwellings per 100 households) by 2031.

Research by [Infrastructure Victoria](#), [Our home choices](#) calls for greater diversity of housing, particularly in established areas and reduced minimum parking requirements in areas well supported by public transport. While the critical issue of social housing for low/very low income households was out of scope, the long overdue 10-year strategy for social and affordable housing was referenced as being released.

Nationally, the [Housing Legislative package](#) to establish the Housing Australia Future Fund and the National Housing Supply and Affordability Council is progressing. Consultation held over Christmas was easy to miss (19 Dec - 11 Jan) however there are many submissions which can be viewed online.

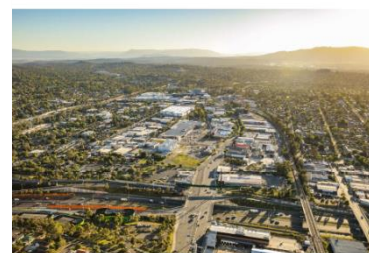
Regional Sport & Recreation Strategy 2032

This strategy has been finalised for endorsement by Councils. It is being implemented through monthly Sport and Recreation Officers meetings, with a priority being the development of a regional **Fair Access Policy and Guide** - a pre-condition for State grant funding. Access to enhanced participation dashboards and the supporting data provided by State Sporting Associations is being worked through so that no identifiable personal data is included. See: [ERG Regional Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2032](#)

ERG EASTERN REGION GROUP OF COUNCILS

Strategic Plan

2021 - 2025



See the ERG's Strategic Plan 2021-2025 at: www.easternregiongroup.org.au/resources