



SUPPLEMENTARY BUSINESS PAPER

**(Late Item Memo – Response to QWN6/26)
General Meeting**

**Wednesday 9 September 2026
at 6:30 PM**



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SUPPLEMENTARY ITEMS

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ITEM 9 QWN6/26 - The Wallarobba Arts and Cultural Centre Proposal**ASKED BY COUNCILLOR TILBURY TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER:**

1. What community consultation was undertaken for the Wallarobba Arts and Cultural Centre project, after the draft plans for the project were prepared and prior to the resolution for Council to prepare a DA for the project?
2. What formal heritage assessment has been undertaken, and why has Council's Heritage Committee not been formally involved in the consideration of the current proposal for the Wallarobba Arts and Cultural Centre project?
3. Has any economic modelling been done on the Wallarobba Arts and Cultural Centre project, that is estimated to cost \$11,000,000?

Response

1. **What community consultation was undertaken for the Wallarobba Arts and Cultural Centre project, after the draft plans for the project were prepared and prior to the resolution for Council to prepare a DA for the project?**

The draft plans for the Wallarobba Arts Precinct have been developed through an iterative engagement process that commenced in March 2024 with internal stakeholder consultations involving staff and elected Councillors to gather feedback that would help inform the project's vision, design principles and proposed future uses of the site. This early engagement provided strategic direction for the development of the design brief, which would subsequently guide broader community and stakeholder consultation.

Following the completion of internal stakeholder engagement, Council undertook targeted external stakeholder consultation in May 2024. This included engagement with representatives from arts and cultural groups currently utilising Wallarobba and nearby facilities, as well as members of Council's Arts and Cultural Advisory Group to further refine project requirements and inform the development of the design brief.

To support community aspirations for the site, landscape architect Fiona Robbé also conducted on-site engagement with local youth and site users, together with community surveying at Mark Taylor Oval. This work sought to better understand community interests and preferences relating to the proposed interactive art playground component of the Wallarobba precinct.

Project updates were provided to Councillors in June 2024 and subsequently in February, August and November 2025 providing opportunities to review project progression and provide feedback at key

stages of development, including the design brief, master planning, reference designs and architectural design phases.

In December 2025, the architectural designs were presented to external stakeholders, including the Arts and Cultural Advisory Group and representatives from the visual arts sector. The consultation included presentations by DunnHillam Architecture + Urban Design and Fiona Robbé Landscape Architecture, outlining proposed floorplan layouts, site planning, heritage conservation requirements, and associated design constraints. Stakeholders were invited to provide feedback on the proposed facilities, operational opportunities, future programming, and activation of the precinct.

Since this consultation and leading up to Council's consideration of the Wallarobba Arts and Cultural Centre project in August 2026, further work has focused on minor refinements and on the preparation of supporting technical studies, operational considerations, and project documentation noting that the core architectural design, floorplan layouts and overall site planning have remained consistent with the feedback obtained from both internal and external stakeholders throughout the project's development.

2. What formal heritage assessment has been undertaken, and why has Council's Heritage Committee not been formally involved in the consideration of the current proposal for the Wallarobba Arts and Cultural Centre project?

Wallarobba House is a heritage listed item and heritage considerations have been incorporated throughout the planning and design development of the Wallarobba Arts Precinct project.

As part of the project, DunnHillam Architecture + Urban Design engaged John Oultram Heritage & Design to undertake heritage assessment and provide specialist heritage advice regarding Wallarobba House and Willow Park. This advice has informed the development of the reference design and consideration of the opportunities and constraints associated with the site.

In addition to the heritage consultant's input, Council's Heritage Planner was engaged through the project's internal stakeholder discussion in March 2024 and April 2025 and provided heritage policy advice to be implemented during planning and design development. Feedback provided through this process was referred to the project consultants for consideration and incorporated into the designs.

The project has also been the subject of a Pre-DA Assessment meeting, during which Council's Heritage Planners provided formal written heritage advice.

Further heritage assessment will be undertaken as part of the Development Application process, including preparation of a Statement of Heritage Impact and any other required heritage documentation.

The proposal will then be assessed in accordance with relevant planning legislation, heritage controls and Council requirements.

Council's Heritage Advisory Committee was not in place during the design stages of the proposal, with the previous Committee term ending with their last meeting in June 2024, and the new, current Committee formed and first meeting in November 2025. The Heritage Advisory Committee do not have a role in the Pre DA or Development Assessment stages of a proposal as this is outside its responsibilities as established in the Hornsby Heritage Advisory Committee Charter.

3. Has any economic modelling been done on the Wallarobba Arts and Cultural Centre

project, that is estimated to cost \$11,000,000?

Council's Community and Cultural Facilities Strategic Plan identifies the need to regenerate and expand the Wallarobba precinct with a focus on it as an art making space. This strategic direction is supported in Council's s7.11 Development Contributions Plan that has collected development contributions funds to enable the progression of both the Wallarobba Arts and Cultural Centre & the Willow Park Playground Embellishment (which forms part of the project). Additional funding for the project includes internally restricted Council funds such as those held for the Wallarobba Project since 2011 arising from the sale of a former Council property at 208 Pacific Highway, Hornsby

The project has been included in Council's Long Term Financial Plan since 2019 and is fully funded within the current 2026/27 Plan.

Council officers will shortly commence a capital expenditure review to meet the requirements of the Office of Local Government's Capital Expenditure Guidelines. This review will include the preparation of an economic appraisal and consideration of the project's projected costs to support future updates to Council's Long Term Financial Plan and would be completed prior to any further Council decision to progress the project to the construction stage.

GLEN MAGUS

Chief Executive Officer

Office of the General Manager

Attachments:

There are no attachments for this report.

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