June 2026

Improving how community spaces are leased and licensed

Engagement report



City of GLEN EIRA

GLEN EIRA CITY COUNCIL

BENTLEIGH, BENTLEIGH EAST, BRIGHTON EAST, CARNEGIE, CAULFIELD, ELSTERNWICK, GARDENVALE, GLEN HUNTLY, MCKINNON, MURRUMBEENA, ORMOND, ST KILDA EAST

Contents

Contents 2
Executive summary 3
Background 6
Communication and reach 8
How we engaged 9
What we heard 10

Executive summary

Glen Eira City Council undertook targeted engagement with current Council tenants to inform the review of the draft *Leasing and Licensing Policy*. Engagement focused on organisations leasing or licensing Council-owned land and facilities, including community organisations, sporting clubs, statutory authorities and commercial tenants. It also addresses those situations where Council may also be the tenant itself.

This report summarises what we heard through meetings, emails, phone calls and written submissions, and will inform further refinement of the draft policy prior to the policy being presented to Council for adoption.

How we engaged

Engagement ran from 29 April to 20 May 2026 at the consult level of the Engagement Institute Public Participation Spectrum.

Opportunities for stakeholder feedback included:

- 💻 an online survey on Council's Have Your Say Glen Eira webpage
- 📩 email, letter or phone submissions
- 👥 in-person meetings.

Who we heard from

We received feedback from 16 organisations:

- Bayside Community Emergency Relief
- East Bentleigh Village Garden Group
- Glen Eira Adult Learning Centre
- Glen Eira Cheltenham Art Group
- Glen Eira Historical Society Inc.
- Glen Orme Tennis Club
- MiCare
- Moongala Community Women's House
- Moorabbin Area Toy Library
- Moorleigh Ceramics
- Murrumbeena Park Bowls Club
- Ormond Community Kindergarten
- Scout Heritage Victoria
- State Emergency Service – Glen Eira Unit
- Southern FM Radio / Southern Community Broadcasters
- U3A Bentleigh.

We also received feedback from one anonymous participant through Have Your Say.

A representative of Thalassaemia and Sickle Cell Australia (TASCA) attended a group meeting with Moorleigh Community Village tenants but did not provide feedback.

What we heard

Overall, feedback showed broad support for the intent of the policy, particularly its focus on fairness, transparency, accountability and long-term sustainability of Council assets. Many stakeholders welcomed clearer principles and a more consistent approach to leasing and licensing decisions.

However, many stakeholders raised a range of practical and operational concerns about how the policy would work, particularly for small and volunteer-run organisations.

Key themes across stakeholder feedback included:

Administrative and compliance impacts

Some organisations raised concerns about the administrative burden of reapplying for leases or licences at the end of an agreement, particularly the requirement to address Key Selection Criteria, such as business planning. Many organisations noted that their committees are volunteer-run and will need appropriate support.

Financial impacts, particularly service and utility fees

While the proposed increase in the peppercorn rent ($488.05 plus GST) was generally accepted, some stakeholders noted that the cumulative impact over time may become significant. Moorleigh tenants, however, consistently raised concerns regarding the service fee and utility fee charging methodology, which is an exclusive outgoing charge only applicable to this facility's tenants. In addition, some tenants expressed concern that restrictions on commercial income may affect the financial sustainability of their service models.

Lease security

Concerns about the impacts on ongoing tenancy were common. A number of organisations requested more security of tenure, including first right of renewal and protection where the tenant has made significant investments into the facility. Some tenants were concerned that the competitive expression of interest process could result in a loss of lease.

Policy clarity and guidance

There were a range of requests for clearer wording, definitions and guidance across key clauses, including the need to better recognise different tenant types, such as statutory authorities and specialised community organisations.

There were also practical concerns about implementation, including relocation impacts, shared use arrangements, facility management, and the need for clear communication and transition support.

Shared-use spaces

There was feedback from nine tenant organisations who share Moorleigh Community Village in Bentleigh East. They highlighted a range of issues around sharing the facility, including managing the access to rooms and spaces, challenges with securing and storing their property, issues with maintenance, and parking access.

Background

Council is reviewing its *Leasing and Licensing Policy*, which sets out how Council-owned or managed land and buildings are leased or licensed to community organisations, sporting clubs, commercial tenants and statutory authorities. The policy applies to longer-term or exclusive use arrangements and provides a framework to guide decisions so they are fair, transparent, consistent and aligned with community benefit.

In turn, the policy also provides guiding principles in situations were Council may also be the tenant.

Why we engaged now

The policy was last updated in 2019. Since then, a number of factors have changed that make a review timely and necessary. Council's property portfolio has grown and aged, placing increasing pressure on maintenance budgets, risk management and long-term planning. Legislative and governance requirements have also evolved, alongside updated Council strategies and plans that place stronger emphasis on transparency, sustainability, fairness and stewardship of public assets.

In practice, Council has also observed increasing complexity in leasing and licensing arrangements. This includes a broader range of tenant types, greater diversity in how facilities are used, and growing expectations around shared use, equity of access and accountability. At the same time, many tenants are volunteer-run organisations facing rising costs and capacity pressures, while still delivering significant community benefit.

Engaging with tenants at this stage of the policy review allows Council to test the draft policy before it is finalised. It provides an opportunity to understand how proposed changes may affect different organisations, identify unintended consequences, and ensure the policy is workable in practice as well as sound in principle.

Alignment with Council's broader strategic directions

The *Leasing and Licensing Policy* review supports Council's broader strategic direction around responsible stewardship of public land and buildings, sustainable asset management, and ensuring Council facilities continue to meet current and future community needs.

Council is the custodian of public assets on behalf of the community. Decisions about who occupies Council facilities, on what terms and for how long have long-term implications for equity, access, financial sustainability and service delivery. The policy aligns with Council's adopted strategies that seek to:

- maximise community benefit from limited public assets
- support inclusive, accessible and well-used community facilities
- strengthen governance, transparency and consistency in decision-making
- manage financial, legal and safety risks associated with ageing infrastructure
- ensure Council facilities remain adaptable to changing community needs over time.

The engagement approach also aligns with Council's commitment to genuine, proportionate engagement. By targeting current tenants who are most directly affected, Council sought informed, practical feedback to support better policy outcomes, while being clear about what aspects of the policy were open to influence and what was constrained by statutory or contractual requirements.

How the policy will be guided by feedback

Feedback from this engagement will directly inform refinement of the draft policy prior to Council consideration. While the final decision-making authority rests with Council, tenant feedback provides critical insight into how the policy operates on the ground.

The engagement has helped Council to:

- identify areas where greater clarity is needed, particularly around fees, outgoings, lease renewal and selection criteria processes
- understand the administrative and capacity impacts on volunteer-run organisations
- test assumptions about shared use, lease length and security of tenure
- better recognise the differing needs of community tenants, commercial operators and statutory authorities
- highlight where additional guidance, communication or support may be required during implementation.

By considering this feedback alongside Council's strategic objectives, legislative obligations and asset management responsibilities, the final *Leasing and Licensing Policy* will be better positioned to balance fairness, sustainability and community benefit. The intent is to adopt a policy that provides clearer expectations for tenants, supports consistent and transparent decision-making, and ensures Council-owned land and buildings continue to serve the Glen Eira community now and into the future.

Communication and reach

This was a targeted engagement focused on tenants directly affected by the policy. Communication was designed to be clear, proportionate and respectful of existing tenant relationships.

Communication activities	Reach
Direct email to current tenants	Sent to 68 tenant organisations (several existing tenants hold lease or licence agreements for multiple sites)
Have Your Say page with survey	Provided background information and an avenue for written feedback
Meetings and briefings	Moorleigh Community Village tenants meeting and individual discussions
Direct contact	Feedback received via email, phone and online submissions

How we engaged

Engagement was undertaken at the 'consult' level on the Engagement Institute Public Participation Spectrum. Tenants were invited to review the draft policy and provide feedback on proposed changes, potential impacts on their organisation, and suggestions for improvement.

Opportunities for feedback included written submissions via Have Your Say, emails to Council officers, meetings and briefings, and phone or online discussions. All feedback received has been consolidated and summarised in this report and provided to relevant business areas for consideration.

Engagement activities	Number who participated
Have Your Say survey	Survey submissions: 9
Email submissions	Emails: 1
Meetings	Organisations: 13

What we heard

We received feedback from 17 participants, including 16 organisations and one anonymous participant.

The online survey covered four topics:

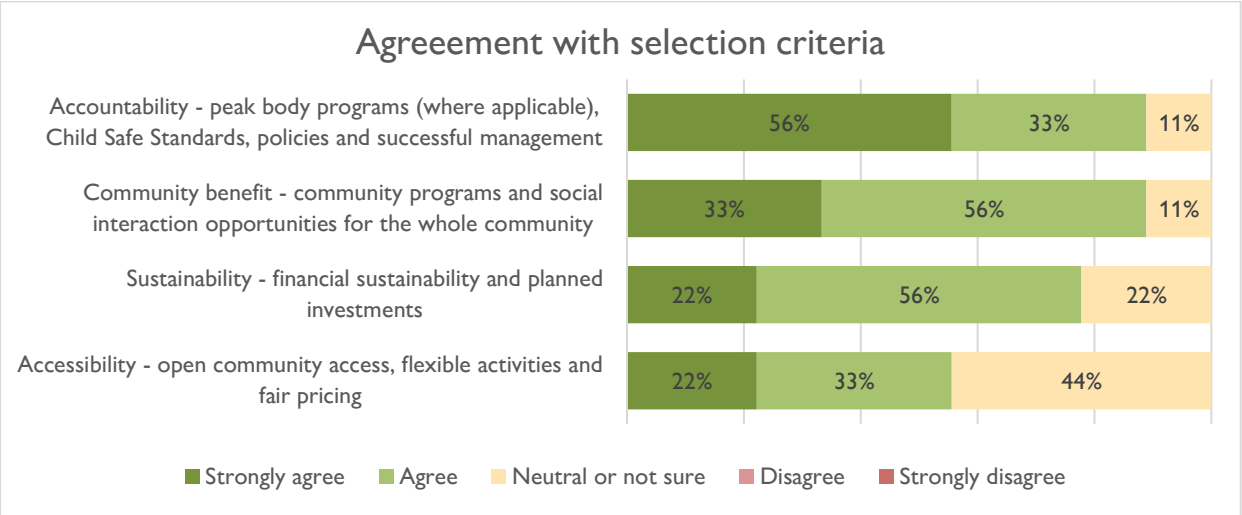
- The respondent's details and their organisation (identification).
- Feedback on the policy, including any gaps or missing elements.
- Feedback about the selection criteria and expression of interest process.
- How we can best support the respondents and their organisation.

One **quantitative question** was asked in the survey. The responses to this are shown below.

Question. Do you think the selection criteria are a fair approach to leases and licenses?

This was a required question. It was answered by nine participants (**100 per cent**). The responses to this question show that:

- All four selection criteria were generally well received, with no responses of 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree'.
- The criteria of 'Accountability' (**89 per cent**), 'Community benefit' (**89 per cent**), and 'Sustainability' (**78 per cent**) had a high portion of participants who either agree or strongly agree.
- The criteria of 'Accessibility' was supported by a majority (**55 per cent**), but had the most participants who responded 'neutral or not sure' (**44 per cent**).



All the **written feedback** shared by each stakeholder is summarised below. These summaries cover all feedback channels, including feedback heard through the survey's free text questions, emails and meetings.

The free text questions asked in the survey were:

- Do you have any feedback about the proposed changes to the policy?
- Is there anything else that is missing or could be improved in the policy?
- Do you have any other feedback about the selection criteria or expression of interest process?
- How can we best support you and your organisation?

The organisations are listed in alphabetical order.

Bayside Community Emergency Relief

Feedback: Notes taken during Teams meeting
Facility: Moorleigh Community Village, Bentleigh East
Support for policy: Broadly supportive, a couple of concerns

Bayside Community Emergency Relief indicated broad support for the draft policy and did not raise concerns with its overall intent. They queried the requirement for longer-term business planning when lease or licence terms at Moorleigh are capped at five years, suggesting that business plan requirements should be proportionate to the maximum tenure available.

The organisation also sought clarity around relocation provisions in the lease, asking whether Council has any current plans to close or redevelop Moorleigh Community Village. In addition, they requested clearer information about future service fees and utility charges to support budgeting and longer-term planning.

East Bentleigh Village Garden Group

Feedback: Notes taken during conversation
Facility: Moorleigh Community Village, Bentleigh East
Support for policy: No issues with the policy

The East Bentleigh Village Garden Group did not raise specific concerns with the draft policy. However, they indicated that a review of service fees and utility charges would be welcome, particularly given their small committee size and current challenges maintaining membership levels. They also noted their membership is struggling, and that a camera and lights for security of their shed would be appreciated.

Glen Eira Adult Learning Centre

Feedback: Have Your Say submission
Facility: McKinnon Station precinct, McKinnon
Support for policy: No explicit support stated

Glen Eira Adult Learning Centre raised concerns about Clause 5.43 relating to commercial leasing arrangements. They emphasised that their current sub-lease arrangement, including Council acting as head lessee, is critical to their financial viability and service delivery. They requested greater flexibility in the policy to avoid unintended impacts on long-standing, low-risk community service providers.

They indicated a strong preference to continue operating out of their current McKinnon Station property under their current conditions. They highlighted the substantial investment made in fitting out the premises, the importance of public transport access for students, and the significant disruption and cost that relocation would involve.

They asked for Clause 5.21 to be amended to clarify that it does not prohibit ordinary not-for-profit service fees, membership fees, government-funded program income, sponsorships consistent with a not-for-profit purpose, or fundraising, but is directed to commercial uses inconsistent with the approved tenancy purpose.

They asked that the selection criteria and expression of interest process not be too onerous, particularly the 5-9 year business plan. They also suggested a phone call would have been more appropriate as a notice of the engagement, rather than an email.

Glen Eira Cheltenham Art Group

Feedback: Notes taken during conversation and Have Your Say submission
Facility: Moorleigh Community Village, Bentleigh East
Support for policy: Generally supportive

Cheltenham Art Group provided detailed feedback about the policy clauses in their Have Your Say submission. Their notes have been summarised below:

- Clause 2.3 – request to show where Council's strategic plans can be accessed.
- Clause 2.4 – requests to define multi-use, define the circumstances that enable multi-use, quantify what maximum use would be, provide community tenants a right to negotiate, protect property in shared facilities, and restrict the sharing of facilities when a tenant has equipment that can't be locked away.
- Clause 2.6 – request to remove or rewrite this clause, as it would disqualify community tenants from offering a service for a fee.

- Clause 4 – concerns about sprinklers and emergency lighting not being installed at Moorleigh and the compliance with the policy's Essential Safety Measures.
- Clause 5.2 – request to provide advance notice of three to six months to tenants about an upcoming lease renewal. Also a request for information on the actions that Council would take in the case that a lease renewal application is not submitted in time, and a request for Council to consider circumstances.
- Clause 5.5 – request for clarification about how licence agreements are preferred over leases.
- Clause 5.6 – request for clarification on the costs of Essential Safety Measures.
- Clause 5.15 – request for clarification on Table 2 headings, and wording suggestions.
- Clause 5.17 – request for definition of outgoings that are passed onto tenants, and suggestion for wording change in Table 3.
- Clause 5.27 – request for clarification on the expectations for facility maintenance and investments at Moorleigh Community Village.
- Clause 5.37 – requests for wording changes.
- Clause 5.38 – request for clarification or inclusion of the rent calculation method and frequency, particularly in respect to Moorleigh Community Village.

In feedback about the selection criteria or expression of interest process, they noted that not all organisations will be able to meet all criteria, and that Council should consider the nature of the organisation. They also note that providing accountability may be too difficult for some organisations, and that Council may be breaching tenant privacy or overstepping their authority.

In conversation with officers, they also raised concerns about the affordability and structure of service fees and utility charges. They requested better communication about maintenance activities, noting that noise and disruption can affect classes and programs.

Glen Eira Historical Society Inc.

Feedback: Have Your Say submission
Facility: 965 Glenhuntly Road, Caulfield
Support for policy: No explicit support stated

Glen Eira Historical Society (GEHS) provided detailed feedback about the policy. They provided the context that they operate in a commercial property, which is leased by Council and sub-leased to GEHS under a sub lease agreement. They raised concerns about how the draft policy could apply to them as a specialist, long-standing organisation in this arrangement.

They asked whether they would be treated as a 'new tenant' in an expression of interest process when seeking lease renewal or relocation and asked for a clear definition of 'new tenancy opportunities'.

They also highlighted the administrative burden of business planning and reporting for volunteer-run organisations, raised concerns about duplication of reporting requirements to different parts of Council. They requested that the policy provide guidance and a template for business plans.

They note that Clause 5.43 includes the principle of not approving commercial leases unless the group is directly linked to a Council-run service – a principle that appears to impact them. They asked for confirmation in writing whether GEHS is eligible for approval, if required, for future leases in their current premise.

They requested that the policy include an exemption from sharing facilities when community groups, such as GEHS, provide a service with specific physical space and storage requirements. They requested that the policy specify a minimum notice period in the case that a lease is being terminated.

The GEHS also wanted to draw attention to the fact that they are the only existing historical society in Glen Eira, operating from a large number of facilities in their 54 years of operation, and have supported Council's History and Heritage services for many years.

They also asked Council to ensure that the Leasing and Licensing Policy aligns with the proposed Community Infrastructure Plan.

Glen Orme Tennis Club

Feedback: Have Your Say submission
Facility: Glen Orme Avenue tennis courts, Ormond
Support for policy: Generally supportive, with some key conditions

Glen Orme Tennis Club indicated that it is broadly comfortable with the proposed policy, but raised several caveats focused on lease security, peppercorn costs and administrative burden.

The Club requested that existing tenants should be given the first opportunity to renew their lease on a sole basis, provided they meet the criteria. They asked that facilities should not be advertised/offered to other parties unless the incumbent tenant doesn't renew. The Club also requested longer lease terms, a minimum five-year lease with 3+3 renewal option. This would better enable long-term planning, investment and community programs.

The Club raised concerns about the increase in rental costs. They requested that peppercorn rents should remain token amounts designed to support volunteer-run community organisations, not to recover property costs or generate revenue for Council. They noted that increases to rent would be inconsistent with Council's role in supporting community sport and volunteering.

The Club also noted that stronger alliance with Council strategies shouldn't add governance or compliance burdens to organisations with limited resources. They noted that self-checklists or similar would be best to maintain adequate standards.

The Club also raised ongoing concerns about tree maintenance at tennis facilities, noting that poor upkeep can interfere with access and facility function.

MiCare

Feedback: Notes taken during Teams meeting
Facility: Moorleigh Community Village, Bentleigh East
Support for policy: No issues with the policy

MiCare indicated no concerns with the draft policy overall. Their feedback focused on the need for clearer information about future service fees and utility charges, and on parking access issues that affect service delivery.

Moongala

Feedback: Email submission
Facility: Moorleigh Community Village, Bentleigh East
Support for policy: Supports the policy

Moongala advised that the draft policy appeared fair and reasonable. Their primary request was for assurance that the policy would not impact their existing Service Level Agreement.

Moorabbin Area Toy Library

Feedback: Notes taken during Teams meeting
Facility: Moorleigh Community Village, Bentleigh East
Support for policy: No explicit support stated, concerns about fees and utilities

The Moorabbin Area Toy Library raised concerns about affordability and the methodology used to calculate service fees and utility charges. They requested a review of the current methodology used to calculate these service fees and utility fees. They also sought confirmation that they could still apply for fee reductions under the updated policy.

Moorleigh Ceramics

Feedback: Notes taken during Teams meeting
Facility: Moorleigh Community Village, Bentleigh East
Support for policy: No issues with the policy

Moorleigh Ceramics did not raise concerns with the policy's intent but requested clearer information about future service fees and utility charges. They also raised minor facility-related requests, including repainting the room white, air purifiers, and maintenance matters.

Murrumbeena Park Bowls Club

Feedback: Have Your Say submission
Facility: Murrumbeena Park, Murrumbeena
Support for policy: No explicit support stated, concerns about rental costs

The Club noted that the suggested rental amount looks reasonable in the initial stage, but expressed concern that it will grow to be an unreasonable impost on not-for-profit or donation-based clubs and community organisations.

They did not identify anything missing from the policy itself. However, the Club encouraged Council to look favourably on clubs and communities where fees have a detrimental impact on their financial position. The Club notes that the money paid to Council could otherwise be directed to facility improvements for the club or community group.

Ormond Community Kindergarten

Feedback: Have Your Say submission
Facility: 1A Oakleigh Road, Ormond
Support for policy: No explicit support stated, concerns noted

Ormond Community Kindergarten raised concerns about the administrative burden associated with lease renewal and compliance processes, and the potential impact on lease

security. They noted that repeatedly demonstrating how they meet selection criteria places pressure on a small community-run service and diverts time from working with children and families.

They acknowledged the importance of accountability but stated that their long history of service, compliance, and community engagement already demonstrates their capability. They also expressed concern about the possibility of other providers seeking to take over existing leases, creating uncertainty that may affect long-term planning, staff stability, and the continuity that supports positive outcomes for children and families.

Scout Heritage Victoria

Feedback: Email
Facility: Scout Victoria Heritage Centre, Mackie Road, Bentleigh East
Support for policy: Supports the policy in principle

Scout Heritage Victoria supported the draft policy in principle and welcomed the clearer and more transparent leasing arrangements. They acknowledged that increased rental fees would affect a volunteer-run organisation but recognised Council's asset management responsibilities.

They made clear that they would like to continue their involvement in the community, delivering youth programs through their activity centre while offering volunteer opportunities to older people.

State Emergency Services – Glen Eira Unit

Feedback: Have Your Say submission, and notes taken during phone conversation
Facility: Moorleigh Community Village, Bentleigh East
Support for policy: No explicit support, requests for improvement/clarification

The Glen Eira SES Unit (the Unit) welcomed the addition of a fourth tenant category for statutory authorities and emphasised that VICSES should not be treated the same as community tenants. They highlighted their statutory emergency response role and the need for separate consideration. They also raised concerns about service and utility fees, requested clearer policy guidance for statutory authority tenants, and identified gaps in definitions and guiding principles.

The Unit raised concerns about how the fourth category is defined and applied. They noted inconsistencies between the Category 4 definition in Table 2 and section 5.1, and suggested

the definition should be clearly aligned and referenced. They also highlighted the absence of dedicated guiding principles for statutory authority tenants, unlike other categories, with only a general statement that rent is determined on a case-by-case basis.

The Unit further noted that statutory authorities are not referenced in the Definitions section. They raised that under the current wording, VICSES could be captured as a community tenant as it is a not-for-profit registered charity. They also suggested that the plans and strategies listed in sections 7 and 8 should be provided as hyperlinks, noting difficulty locating the *Glen Eira Municipal Emergency Management Plan*.

In response to how Council can best support them, the Unit requested that Council recognise the value it provides to the Glen Eira community, including Council itself. They reinforced that the Unit should not be treated as a community group or as a standard tenant at Moorleigh, given its role as a statutory authority with trained volunteers responding to emergencies locally, statewide and nationally.

They also requested that service and utility fees not be applied. They stated that the Unit and VICSES generally should not be viewed as a source of revenue for cost recovery, but as a valued community asset that warrants ongoing financial support.

Southern FM Radio / Southern Community Broadcasters

Feedback: Notes taken during Teams meeting
Facility: Moorleigh Community Village, Bentleigh East
Support for policy: Supportive, with conditions

Southern FM supported the not-for-profit principle proposed for Moorleigh Community Village but emphasised the importance of securing their tenure due to significant investment in their studio fit-outs. They are happy with the proposed rent increases.

They raised questions about Clause 5.21 and how commercial income relates to their sponsorships, memberships and fundraising.

They noted that Clause 5.35 appears to limit their ability to renew their lease, however they requested a longer-term lease in the future. They also sought Council notifications when lease renewal is due.

They noted that their power usage is low, so the Service Fee and Utility Fee may need consideration with respect to this and asked whether individual electrical meters could work for ‘user-pays’.

They also noted that they broadcast late at night or overnight and requested that Council consider back-up power such as a battery in case of outages.

U3A Bentleigh

Feedback: Notes taken during conversation
Facility: Moorleigh Community Village, Bentleigh East
Support for policy: Generally supportive

U3A Bentleigh indicated no major concerns with the policy's intent but noted that the reapplication and key selection criteria process could be daunting for volunteer committees. They emphasised the importance of Council providing guidance and support and requested clearer information about future outgoings. They also noted some concerns about the performance of Council's contract cleaners.

Anonymous submission

Feedback: Have Your Say submission
Facility: Unknown
Support for policy: No explicit support, concerns noted

An anonymous participant raised concerns about the impact of the principle of openness and transparency in Clause 5.1 on tenant security. They requested that long-term tenants with decades of service may have limited options to relocate without Council support and should not be unduly displaced.

They also raised concerns about increasing costs for community tenants, noting that the proposed rent has risen significantly from a long-standing low-cost rate. They highlighted broader cost pressures and suggested that maintaining a $100 p.a. peppercorn rent would help offset the policy's compliance and operational requirements.

In response to how Council can best support them, they requested continued access to low-cost leasing arrangements and ongoing support to enable delivery of community and volunteer programs for Glen Eira residents.