

[REDACTED]
Executive Director – New Communities
Housing, Building and Land Delivery
Department of Transport and Planning

Dear [REDACTED],

Re: Merrimu Precinct Structure Plan – Draft for Public Consultation (March 2026)

Submission on behalf [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

1. Introduction

[REDACTED] welcomes the opportunity to provide comments on the Merrimu Precinct Structure Plan – Draft for Public Consultation (March 2026) (the PSP).

This submission is made on behalf of [REDACTED] and should be read in conjunction with our earlier submission dated 12 December 2025, our cover letter to the Department dated 19 December 2025, and the accompanying Agency Comment Table.

[REDACTED] supports the identification of a 5.5-hectare non-government school site within the PSP and acknowledges the ongoing engagement with the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP).

The purpose of this submission is to provide a targeted review of the March 2026 draft PSP, noting a number of outstanding inconsistencies, drafting matters and areas where further clarification would assist in ensuring the intended delivery of the non-government school site.

In particular, [REDACTED] seeks to ensure that the PSP clearly articulates the role and function of non-government school sites within the planning framework, and that key provisions operate as intended to support their timely and efficient delivery.

2. Summary of Key Issues

The following critical issues remain unresolved or have emerged since [REDACTED] December 2025 submission:

-

This was the primary concern in [REDACTED]' December 2025 cover letter and has not been addressed.

- The school site remains fragmented across three separate titles (MM-14, MM-15 and MM-16), requiring consolidation into a single lot suitable for school development.
- The non-government school is omitted from Plan 11 – Community Infrastructure, despite being shown on Plan 2 – Place Based Plan.
- The NDA definition in the Glossary excludes government schools but not non-government schools, creating an unjustifiable disparity in the treatment of the 5.5-hectare school site.
- The alternative use provision (G79) is a guideline rather than a requirement, limiting its protective effect.
- The Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment remains outstanding and may directly impact the school site. While the traffic assessment and Native Vegetation Precinct Plan have been published, neither has been reviewed for specific implications for the non-government school site.
- Road access requirements (R87) apply only to government schools. Non-government schools are not addressed.

3. The Primary Issue: Amenity Area Designation and Land Values

[REDACTED] December 2025 cover letter identified that the inclusion of the non-government school site within a residential designation on the PSP maps may create ambiguity regarding the intended use of the land, with the potential to influence market expectations toward residential outcomes.

The March 2026 draft has not addressed this matter. The relevant extract of Plan 3 is reproduced below.

Specifically:

- (a) The non-government school site falls within the 'amenity area' on Plan 3 – Housing. The Glossary (Appendix 6, p.101) defines 'amenity area' as land within a 400-metre walkable catchment of activity centres and train stations, and within 50 metres of open space and the Principal Public Transport Network. These areas attract the highest residential density targets in the PSP (25 dw/NDHa), second only to town centre land (30 dw/NDHa).
- (b) Table 3 and Guideline G1 provide that amenity areas should deliver at least three different housing typologies, including small lot front/rear-loaded townhouses and low-rise apartments. While expressed as a guideline, this signals to the market that the land has significant development uplift potential.
- (c) This designation directly undermines the capacity of [REDACTED] to acquire the land at a price reflective of its designated use as a school site. [REDACTED] is not in a financial position to compete with for-profit developers or independent school providers who can pay residential values.
- (d) By contrast, government school sites are excluded from the NDA entirely. The PSP therefore results in differential treatment between government and non-government school land.

█████ requested amendments to resolve this issue are set out in the Detailed Issue Table below (Ref 1 and Ref 4).

4. Net Developable Area: Unjustifiable Disparity

The Glossary definition of 'net developable area' (p.103) provides that NDA excludes 'government schools and community facilities and public open space'. Notably, non-government schools are not included in this exclusion. By contrast, the DCP correctly defines NDA by deducting 'public and private education facilities'. This inconsistency between the PSP Glossary and the DCP must be resolved.

This creates a direct inequity. Government school land is protected from being counted as developable residential land; non-government school land is not. The practical consequence is that the 5.5 hectares allocated to the non-government school continues to be counted toward the residential yield calculations in Table 4, further entrenching its perceived value as residential land.

█████ requests that the NDA definition be amended to read: 'government schools, non-government schools, and community facilities and public open space'.

5. Childcare Co-location: Drafting Deficiency in the UGZ Schedule

█████ review of the draft UGZ schedule (Clause 37.07s1) and the parent UGZ clause (Clause 37.07) has identified a significant drafting deficiency that prevents the co-location of a childcare centre with the non-government school.

Since the Merrimu PSP applies to this land, Part B of Clause 37.07 governs and the schedule (37.07s1) controls the use provisions. The schedule lists Primary school and Secondary school in Section 1 (permit not required) for land shown as a potential non-government school on Plan 1 of the schedule. However, Childcare centre is listed in Section 1 under a different condition — it is permit-exempt only on land shown as 'local community facilities' on Plan 1. Because the non-government school site is not shown as a community facility on Plan 1, childcare on the school site does not satisfy the Section 1 condition. It therefore falls to Section 2 of the schedule as a permit-required use. The practical effect is that █████ can establish a school on the site without a permit, but a co-located childcare centre would require a separate planning permit application — with notice, potential objection, referral, and the discretion of the responsible authority. This asymmetry defeats the purpose of integrated delivery and adds cost, delay and uncertainty to what the VPA's own Guidance Note contemplates as a single, co-located operation.

Co-location of childcare and early learning with a primary school delivers clear operational and planning benefits. It supports integrated service delivery, reduces traffic impacts through consolidated access arrangements, and enables efficient use of shared infrastructure including buildings, car parking and outdoor spaces. In growth area contexts, it also facilitates the timely provision of early years services alongside school delivery.

The VPA's own Non-Government School Planning Guidance Note recognises this, providing that the DCP exemption for non-government schools extends to ancillary uses 'totally integrated within the school development', including 'childcare centres, kindergartens and community facilities'. The current schedule drafting is inconsistent with this policy position and should be corrected.

█████ submits that childcare should be permit-exempt when co-located with a school on the designated school site. Requiring a separate permit for an ancillary childcare use on a site that is

already designated and approved for education serves no planning purpose — it merely introduces procedural cost and delay without any corresponding public benefit. The schedule should treat integrated childcare in the same way it treats the school itself: as-of-right on the designated site. This can be achieved through the inclusion of the non-government school site as a community facility on Plan 11.

6. Detailed Issue Table

The following table provides an issue-by-issue assessment of each matter raised in [REDACTED] December 2025 submission against the March 2026 draft, together with further comments where new concerns have arisen.

Ref	PSP Provision	[REDACTED] Dec 2025 Comment	Status March 2026	Outstanding Issue / Further Comment
1	Plan 3 – Housing Amenity area overlay	[REDACTED] requested the school site not be identified for 'proposed medium density residential' to prevent speculative pricing.	NOT ADDRESSED. The site falls within the 'amenity area' on Plan 3, targeting 25 dw/NDHa with min. 3 housing typologies. Glossary defines amenity area as land within 400m of activity centres.	See Ref 4.
2	Table 34 – Land Use Budget NDA treatment	[REDACTED] raised the treatment of the school site within the land budget and its relationship to the NDA.	PARTIALLY ADDRESSED. Table 34 allocates 5.5 ha. The DCP correctly defines NDA by deducting 'public and private education facilities'. However, the PSP Glossary (p.103) only excludes 'government schools', creating an inconsistency between the two documents.	[REDACTED] supports the 5.5 ha allocation and notes the DCP correctly excludes private education facilities from NDA. However, the PSP Glossary definition must be amended to align with the DCP and read: 'government schools, non-government schools, and community facilities and public open space'.
3	Table 35 – Lot fragmentation	[REDACTED] raised the difficulty of acquiring a site fragmented across three titles.	NOT ADDRESSED. Table 35 distributes the allocation across MM-14 (1.68 ha), MM-15 (2.45 ha)	Following further consultation with relevant stakeholders, [REDACTED] understands that the land parcels comprising the non-government school designation are held in single ownership. This mitigates concerns

			and MM-16 (1.03 ha), totalling 5.16 ha. This does not reconcile with the 5.5 ha stated in Table 34. The 0.34 ha discrepancy between the summary and property-specific land budgets is unexplained.	in this instance regarding delivery of a consolidated school site. Notwithstanding, ██████ requests that the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) note its preference for non-fragmented land ownership arrangements for non-government school designations within Precinct Structure Plans, to ensure clarity, reduce delivery risk, and support the efficient provision of appropriately configured school sites.
4	G79 – Alternative use provision	█████ requested a clear hierarchy: education first, residential secondary.	PARTIALLY ADDRESSED. G79 requires 80% PSP completion + letter from provider. But G79 is a guideline, not a requirement.	Elevate Guideline G79 to a Requirement to clearly establish the primacy of education use over any alternative land use outcome. The Requirement should mandate that alternative use provisions (including residential development) can only be considered where the preconditions currently outlined in G79 are demonstrably satisfied, including evidence that the land is no longer required for a non-government school. Further, the application of any higher-density residential outcomes (including those facilitated by the Amenity Area Overlay or equivalent controls) should be expressly contingent on the satisfaction of these preconditions. In effect, the uplift in dwelling yield should not be assumed at the PSP stage and must only be enabled where a non-government education provider has not been secured. This approach would more formally establish a clear hierarchy of land uses, with education as the primary and intended outcome, and residential as a contingent secondary use. It would also mitigate the risk of land value inflation driven by speculative assumptions regarding higher-density residential yields, thereby supporting the timely and viable delivery of school infrastructure.
5	Plan 11 – Community Infrastructure	Not raised in Dec 2025.	NEW CONCERN. Plan 11 shows government	The school must be shown on Plan 11 with a distinct legend entry, consistent with Plan 2.

			schools (P-6, 7-12) but omits the non-government school. It appears on Plan 2 but not Plan 11.	
6	Plan 8 – Bushfire	██████ noted proximity to BMO to the east.	NOTED. Plan 8 shows setbacks (19m–132m) along eastern edge. School site appears outside but requires confirmation.	██████ requests written confirmation the school site is not impacted by the BMO or associated setbacks.
7	Plan 7 – Environmental Constraints Quarry	██████ noted the site is outside quarry offsets A and B.	CONFIRMED. Plan 7 confirms the site is outside all quarry buffers with no contamination indicated.	██████ requests a requirement addressing dust, noise and vibration management from quarry operations as they affect the school.
8	Plan 9 – Cultural Heritage	██████ requested clarification re Aboriginal and European heritage.	NOT RESOLVED. Plan 9 shows the site within/adjacent to ‘area of cultural heritage sensitivity’. ACHIA remains in preparation.	██████ requests the completed ACHIA prior to PSP finalisation, with specific advice on school site impacts.
9	EAO	██████ requested confirmation re EAO.	REQUIRES CONFIRMATION. The EAO map (Amendment C109moor, Map 004) shows an EAO area north of Buckleys Road between Gisborne Road and Bences Road, adjacent to the school site. The school site appears to be south of the EAO boundary, but proximity is close. Clause 37.07-6 requires a PRSA or environmental audit for any primary school on	██████ requests the Department confirm whether the EAO directly affects the non-government school site (properties MM-14, MM-15 and MM-16). ██████ further notes that Clause 37.07-6 and the UGZ schedule application requirements impose a PRSA obligation for any school use regardless of the EAO, and requests advice on the anticipated assessment pathway and timeline.

			potentially contaminated land, regardless of the EAO.	
10	DDO-1	██████ noted DDO-1 map with no ordinance provisions.	RESOLVED. The DDO map (Amendment C109moor, Map 002) confirms DDO1 is being deleted by the amendment. No DDO will apply to the school site.	██████ notes the DDO is being deleted. No further action required on this issue.
11	NVPP (CI 52.16)	██████ noted the site appears devoid of native vegetation.	AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW. The draft NVPP has been published for exhibition (March 2026). The NVPP confirms that native vegetation in areas designated for community facilities including schools is to be removed. However, site-specific confirmation for the school site has not been provided.	Confirm no native vegetation constraints. If constraints exist, usable area of 5.5 ha must not be reduced below ██████ siting requirements.
12	Traffic	██████ requested clarification of traffic implications.	PARTIALLY ADDRESSED. The Traffix Group ITA (March 2025) and Addendum (February 2026) account for the non-government school in traffic modelling. However, R87 addresses road frontage and access requirements for government schools only. No equivalent requirement	Amend R87 to also apply to non-government school sites, or include a separate requirement for road access, drop-off and bus access.

			applies to non-government school sites.	
13	Covenants, easements, s 173	██████ requested clarification.	NOT ADDRESSED. No express statement in PSP.	Confirm whether any encumbrances affect the school site.
14	UGZ Schedule (CI 37.07) Permit not required	██████ requested that primary school, secondary school, and associated childcare and early learning be permit not required on the school site.	PARTIALLY ADDRESSED — CHILDCARE DEFICIENCY. Since the PSP applies, Part B of Clause 37.07 governs and the schedule (37.07s1) controls. Primary school and Secondary school are Section 1 (permit not required) on the school site. However, Childcare centre is Section 1 only on land shown as 'local community facilities'. On the school site, childcare falls to Section 2 — permit required. The school is as-of-right; the childcare is not. This asymmetry adds cost, delay, and uncertainty to co-located delivery.	The UGZ schedule must be amended to include Childcare centre alongside Primary school and Secondary school in Section 1, with the same condition (land shown as potential non-government school on Plan 1). Co-location of childcare and early learning with a school is standard practice in ████████ delivery model and delivers significant community and operational benefits: it enables a single drop-off for families with children across multiple age groups, reducing car trips and traffic congestion; it supports the transition from early learning into primary school within a familiar environment; it allows shared use of facilities including administration, car parking, outdoor play areas, and hall spaces; and it provides essential early years services in new communities where childcare is often the last facility to be delivered by the private market. The VPA's own Guidance Note expressly supports ancillary uses being 'totally integrated within the school development' and provides that the DCP exemption extends to such uses. The current schedule drafting contradicts this policy. ████████ requests the Department confirm whether this exclusion was intentional or an omission.
15	DCPO (CI 45.06)	██████ noted school excluded from contributions. Requested childcare also excluded.	PARTIALLY ADDRESSED. The DCP correctly defines NDA by deducting 'public and private education facilities', and the 5.5 ha school site appears excluded	DCP must exclude the 5.5 ha school land from NDA, together with associated childcare. ████████ requests draft DCP for review.

			from NDA in the land budget. However, the DCP does not expressly address childcare ancillary to a school.	
16	CI 72.04 Incorporated Documents	[REDACTED] requested school site be excluded from NDA in PSP and DCP documents.	NOT ADDRESSED. No amendment evidenced.	Incorporated PSP and DCP documents must reflect the 5.5 ha school allocation as excluded from NDA.
17	Plan 6 – Topography	[REDACTED] noted gentle slopes are supported for school sites.	CONFIRMED. Plan 6 confirms gentle topography. No steep slopes on designated site.	[REDACTED] supports current topographical suitability. Any relocation must maintain equivalent conditions.

7. Summary of Requested Amendments

In summary, [REDACTED] requests the following amendments to the PSP:

- Amend Plan 3 – Housing to remove the non-government school site from the ‘amenity area’ overlay or alternatively apply a ‘residential investigation area’ designation that establishes education as the primary use.
- Amend the NDA definition in the Glossary to exclude non-government school land from the net developable area, consistent with the treatment of government school land.
- Note [REDACTED] preference for non-fragmented land ownership across non-government school designations within the PSP, to support efficient site delivery and reduce subdivision and delivery complexity.
- Elevate G79 from a guideline to a requirement, and further amend its scope (or introduce an additional requirement) to clarify that any uplift in dwelling density, including through the Amenity Area Overlay, is not assumed at the PSP stage and will only be enabled where the G79 preconditions are satisfied, thereby reinforcing the primacy of the education use and limiting speculative land value uplift.
- Show the non-government school on Plan 11 – Community Infrastructure or Amend the UGZ schedule (37.07s1) to include Childcare centre alongside Primary school and Secondary school in Section 1, to enable co-location of childcare on the school site as-of-right. The current drafting prevents this and contradicts the VPA Guidance Note.
- Amend R87 to extend road access requirements to non-government school sites.
- Ensure the DCP excludes the 5.5-hectare non-government school land take from the NDA.

9. Conclusion

[REDACTED] reiterates its support for the inclusion of a non-government school site within the Merrimu PSP and the proposed 5.5-hectare land allocation.

The matters raised in this submission are intended to resolve a number of inconsistencies between PSP provisions, clarify the operation of key controls, and reinforce the intended hierarchy of land uses as it relates to non-government school sites. Addressing these items will assist in providing greater certainty to all parties and support the effective implementation of the PSP over time.

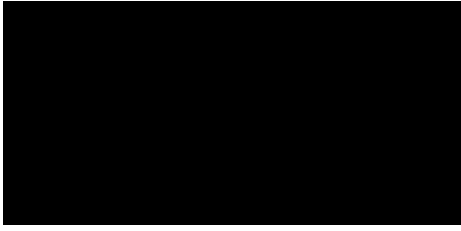
[REDACTED] considers that the requested refinements are largely drafting and clarification matters that can be addressed without materially altering the structure or intent of the PSP.

[REDACTED] welcomes continued engagement with DTP as the PSP progresses and would be pleased to provide any further information required.

Should you have any questions regarding this submission, please do not hesitate to contact me directly via email at [REDACTED]

This submission is accompanied by Attachments A through E, as listed in the schedule of attachments at Attachment E.

[REDACTED]



9 April 2026

Melbourne Merrimu PSP Agency Comment Table

Agency: [REDACTED]

Contact 1 Name: [REDACTED]

Contact 2 Name: [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Page number PSP/Ordinance Footer number	Reference Section Objective/Requirement/ Guideline/Table/Plan/ Appendix/Other	Agency comment Explain why the change has been requested	Change needed Y/N	Change requested Exact wording for the change requested, italicize word changes where appropriate
ORDINANCE				
Page 2 of 14	Schedule 1 Clause 37.07 Urban Growth Zone Clause 2.3 Section 1 – Permit not required	Primary School and Secondary school permit not required if located on land identified as 'potential non-government school' on Plan 1 of this schedule Consider including Child Care and Early Learning Centre to this category if associated with a designated site on a PSP as the non-government school site is to accommodate a K-9 education complex	N Y	
Page 1 of 1	Schedule 1 to Clause 45.06 Development Contributions Plan Overlay Clause 3 Land or development excluded from development contributions plan	It is noted that development for a non- government school is excluded from development contributions. Consider including Child Care and Early Learning Centre associated with a non-government school to this category if associated with a designated site on a PSP	N Y	
	Schedule to Clause	Aerial photography would indicate that	Y	

	52.16 Native Vegetation Precinct Plan (pending)	the non-government school site is devoid of vegetation and Native vegetation. Any vegetation required to be retained for its significance reduces available developable land and space to enable the delivery of an efficient and suitable school/s on the designated non-government school site. Plan 12 as exhibited indicates that the designated non-government school site falls outside the VGED Habitat & Quarantine areas. It is noted that a Native Vegetation Precinct Plan is yet to be prepared by WSP. It is not anticipated that the findings of this report would have implications for the school site in its current location. Confirmation of the above understanding is required.		
MAPS				
MAP EAO	Environmental Audit Overlay EAO Map	It is noted that the 'potential non-government school' site is not impacted by the EAO and that the site itself is not likely to be contaminated. Confirmation of the above understanding is required.	Y	
MAP DDO-1	A DDO-1 Map has been included with no corresponding Ordinance provisions	No Ordinance provisions appear to have been included	Y	
PRECINCT				

STRUCTURE PLAN				
	Merrimu PSP Land Budget Lot # Plan Fragmentation of land for designated non-government school. Site selection criteria to be met Cost of land and high amenity areas	The Land Budget table identifies the non-government school site, strategically justified for a K-9 Catholic school site located across three titles-lots 12, 13 and 14. This causes difficulty in having to secure fragmented parcels of land from three separate landowners. The K-9 school site is required to be located on one title. The Merrimu PSP Land Budget plan identifies a split by an east-west running road (R3). Is this road to be discontinued to allow for a continuous lot? Similarly, the site location criteria as outlined in the [REDACTED] selection Criteria needs to be adhered to. Preference is for an east-west site maximising northern solar access with a configuration with a 60: 40 ratio. Abuttal of the lot to a minimum of two local roads. No abuttal to arterial roads. The site appears removed from the activity centre. It is important that the non-government school site is removed from any high amenity and high-density areas. While locating schools within activity centres and within the vicinity of other community facilities is acknowledge as best planning practice, escalating land values make this increasingly unviable for Catholic education. [REDACTED] requests that Council identify	Y	

	Need to cater for all three education sectors.	school sites outside high-density and high-amenity areas where land costs are more manageable. It is necessary that provision is made within the Merrimu PSP to cater to all three education sectors – Government, Catholic and Independent. As a [REDACTED] [REDACTED] is not in a financial position to compete with Independent schools when purchasing land. Where [REDACTED] has been unable to secure intended sites, lost to the Independent sector, evidence indicates that Catholic students are more likely to attend government schools rather than the Independent sector. This, in turn, places additional pressure on the government school system.		
PLAN 7 PSP	Topography of school stie	The Plan indicates that the land is gently sloping. Such slopes are supported for school sites. Any relocation of the site to have regard for [REDACTED] siting guidelines would need to ensure that this same slope is achieved	Y	
PLAN 8 PSP	Quarry operations	Whilst the school site is located outside offset lines A and B Managing operations to minimise dust, noise and any other detrimental impact on the school and residents should be seriously considered.	Y	
PLAN 9 PSP	Bushfire	The school site falls within proximity to the edge of the Bushfire Management Overlay to the east of the PSP. The addendum report to the Bushfire	Y	

		Assessment and development report, 14 March 2024 indicates that the preferred route for the Bacchus Marsh Eastern Link Road will be a net community benefit with regards to bushfire protection in the Merrimu PSP Precinct. However, it is considered that this road is removed from the non-government school site, which sits in proximity to the Long Forest Nature Conservation Reserve area. Refer to Plan 1 PSP and Bacchus Marsh Eastern Link Road - Preferred Option, attached. ██████ needs to ensure that the non-government School site is adequately removed from and separated from the Bush fire prone areas. Bushfire management measures for the broader area need to be considered.		
TABLE 32	Property Specific Land Use Budget	Ensure that under the table heading Community/Education- Potential non-government school an area of 10 hectares is stipulated, within one title configured to address ██████ siting guidelines.	Y	
TECHNICAL REPORTS				
	ASR Research Page 44	Reference is made in support of a K-9 School	N	
	Draft TECHNICAL report – Existing Ecological Conditions: Merrimu Precinct Structure Plan,	A review of the Draft report – Existing Ecological Conditions: Merrimu Precinct Structure Plan, Merrimu, Victoria prepared by Ecology and Heritage partners would indicate that the non-government school site is removed		

	Merrimu, Victoria prepared by Ecology and Heritage partners-	from areas deemed significant for the following values: • Native vegetation • Scattered trees • Wetlands • Fauna including areas suitable for the Grassland Earless dragon • Environmental Significance • Significant Landscape • Conservation • Biolink The non-government school site also appears to fall outside the areas Ecology and Partners have recommended for further review. Refer to Figures 2, 3c, 5, 6, 10, 11 and 12		
OUTSTANDING - TECHNICAL REPORTS UNDER PREPARATION				
	Areas of Aboriginal Heritage significance	Clarify if the 'potential non-government school' site is impacted by areas of Aboriginal Heritage significance	Y	
	European Heritage significance	Clarify if the 'potential non-government school' site is impacted by areas of European Heritage significance	Y	
	Native Vegetation removal	Clarify if the 'potential non-government school' site is impacted by areas of vegetation significance	Y	
	Traffic	Clarify potential traffic implications for the school.	Y	

	Restrictive Covenants, easements, Section 173 Agreements, or the like	Clarify if the 'potential non-government school' site is impacted by any Restrictive Covenants, easements, Section 173 Agreements, or the like	Y	
Page 1 of 2	Schedule to Clause 72.04 Incorporated Documents PSP and DCP Documents	Ensure that a site area of 10 hectares is excluded from the net developable area for the K-9 Catholic School within both the Precinct Structure Plan(PSP) and Development Contributions Plan (DCP) documents. Should the DCP now be referred to as an Infrastructure Contributions Plan (ICP)? Minimum two local road abuttal to the school site The 'potential non-government school' site is contained within one Title	Y Y Y Y	
DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS PLAN	Development Staging Plan will be prepared in line with the preparation of the DCP and refinement of the DSS	Ensure 10-hectare land take for the non-government school is exempt from the Net developable area		
BACKGROUND REPORT	Background Report	Any Background Report associated with the Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) to insert a comment stating that the site designated as 'potential non-government school' has been strategically justified for delivery of a Catholic K-9 school	Y	

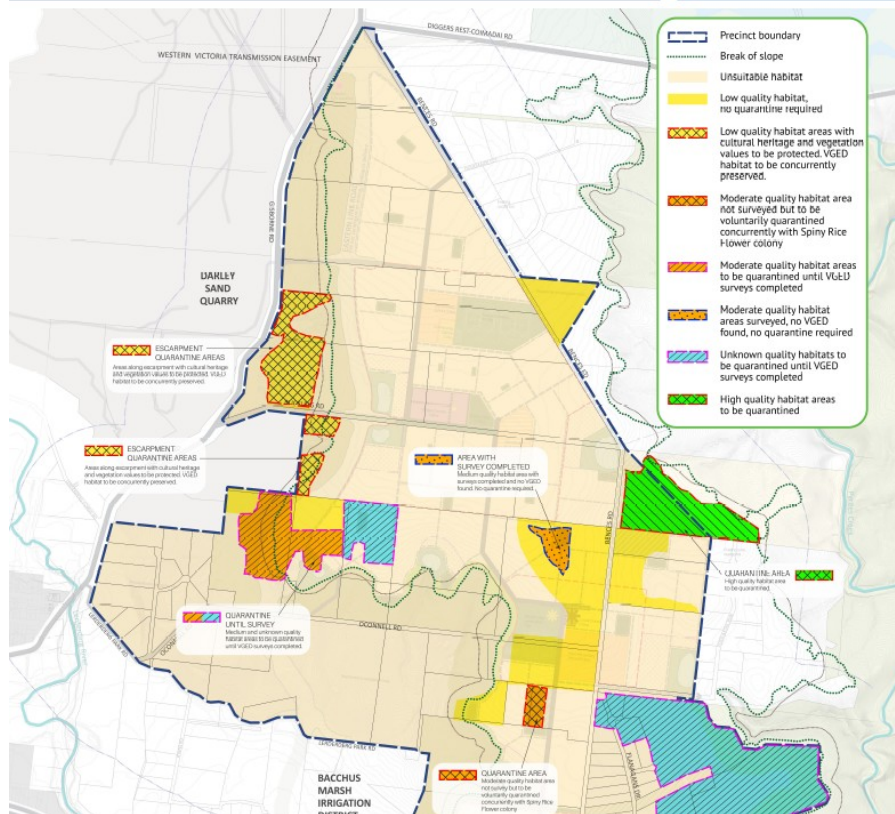
Extracts of the relevant plans referred to are reproduced below for ease of access.



Extract MERRIMU PSP_ Land Budget Lot # Plan

PLAN 12. VGED HABITAT & QUARANTINE

Scale 1:25,000 @ A4



Extract Plan 12 PSP

Bacchus Marsh Eastern Link Road

Preferred alignment: Option B Alternative – 2023



DTP0317/23



Department of Transport and Planning

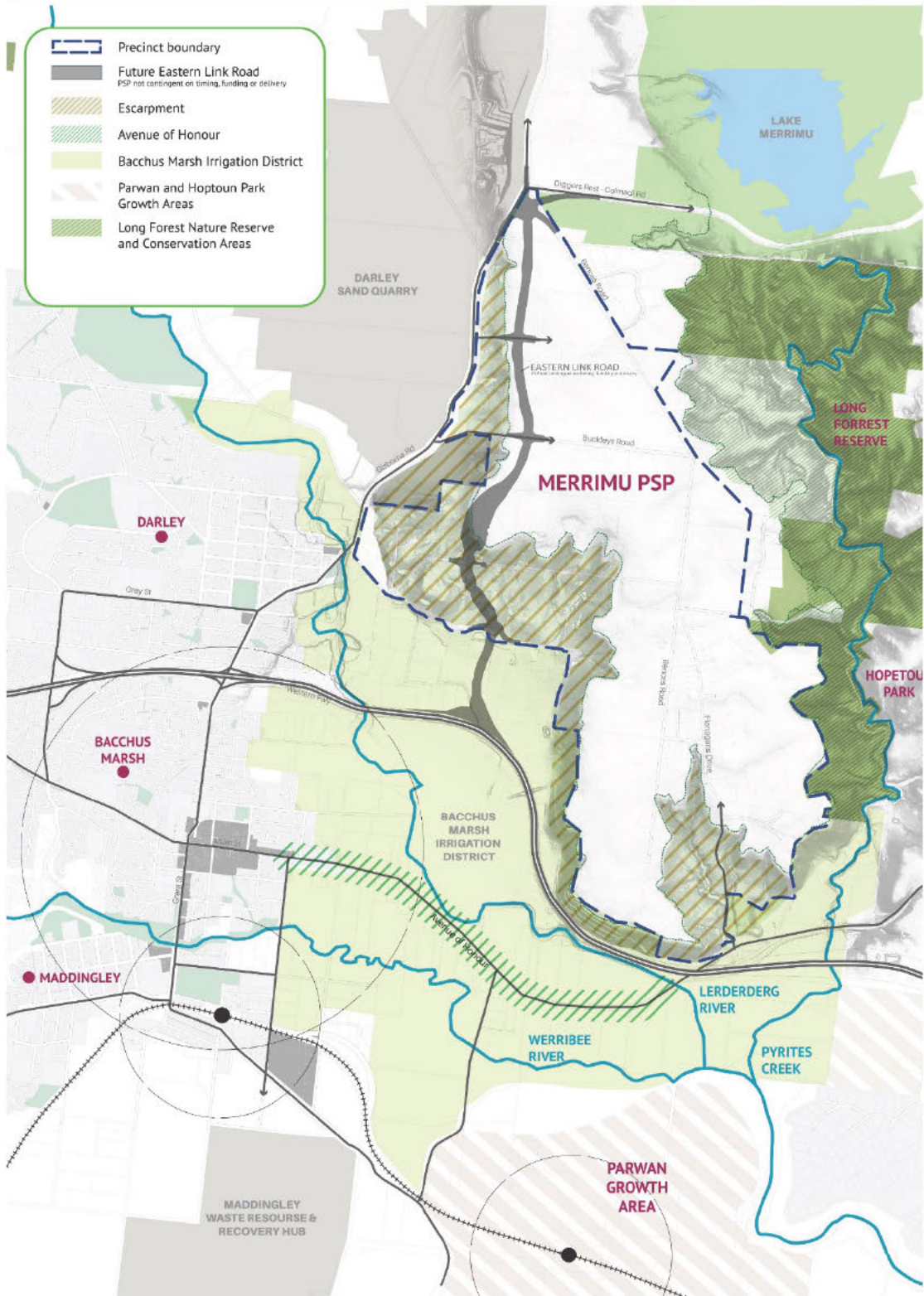
regionalroads.vic.gov.au



Authorised by the Department of Transport and Planning, 1 Spring Street, Melbourne

PLAN 1. REGIONAL CONTEXT

Scale 1:40,000 @ A4
0m 250 500 750 1,000 1,250



[REDACTED]

Our Reference: D25/116111

[REDACTED]
Executive Director – New Communities
Housing, Building and Land Delivery
Department of Transport and Planning

Dear

Re: Merrimu Precinct Structure Plan Review – Non-government Primary School

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Merrimu Precinct Structure Plan ('the PSP').

We appreciate the consultative approach and provide our support for the 5.5ha non-government school site identified in the PSP.

While we support the proposed designation, we wish to raise one matter for your attention. Our key concerns are outlined below for your consideration:

Merrimu PSP - Plan 4

Residential identification on PSP maps and planning zones create speculation from developers. This in turns increase the acquisition cost of land designated as 'non-government school', as developers seek residential prices for the land, based on their most valuable use.

As a [REDACTED] is not in a financial position to compete with for-profit independent schools when purchasing land. Where [REDACTED] has been unable to acquire identified land due to the independent sector's ability to pay more than market value, evidence indicates that Catholic students are more likely to attend government schools rather than the Independent sector. This, in turn, places additional pressure on the government school system.

We strongly recommend that Plan 4 of the PSP be amended as that it is identified as a 'non-government school', and not for 'proposed medium density residential'. This would mirror how government school's are identified in the PSP.

Alternatively, the school site should be identified as '*residential investigation area, only as an alternative to a non-government school, where no education provider has expressed interest in acquiring the site*'.

Such wording would:

- a) protects the monetary value of the land from speculative residential prices, and ensures that the underlying housing designation and residential zone do not prejudice the acquisition of the site for a school, as sought and identified in the PSP; and
- b) will ensure that the hierarchy of uses, is clear, meaning that a school is the priority, and that housing is secondary and is not to be considered unless a non-government school provider fails to express any interest in acquiring the site. A direct potential result of failure to remove the site from 'high amenity' area is that the cost of land will inhibit its acquisition for education, which would have a direct and seriously detrimental impact on the community, by losing access to important education options.

The above options would support the fact that the site is first and foremost set aside for the purposes of providing a non-government school. Thus, the PSP should be sympathetic to the hierarchy of education first, and alternative uses as secondary options.

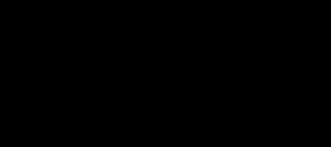
[REDACTED]



In addition to the above mentioned comments, further comments are provided in Appendix A to this letter.

Should you have any questions regarding our feedback, please do not hesitate to contact me directly via email at .

Yours sincerely



Manager – Planning and Property

19 December 2025

ATTACHMENT C

School Siting Requirements – Summary

This document summarises the key siting requirements for a school site in a precinct structure plan context. These requirements inform assessment of the potential non-government school site identified in the Merrimu PSP.

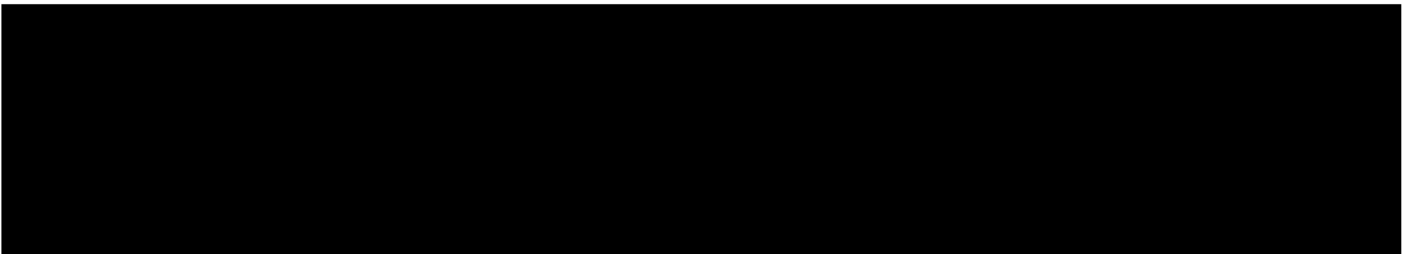
The requirements below are consistent with the VPA's Non-Government School Planning Guidance Note, the Victorian Government School Site Selection Criteria (adapted for non-government context), and operational experience across Melbourne's growth areas.

Siting Criterion	Requirement
Site area	Minimum 3.5 hectares for a primary school (K–6). For a K–9 campus, 5.5 hectares is appropriate where co-located with outdoor learning areas and passive recreation. Site must accommodate projected long-term enrolment of up to 900 students.
Site configuration	Regular shape preferred (rectangular or near-rectangular). Minimum depth of 150 metres and minimum frontage of 200 metres. Irregular or fragmented configurations increase construction costs and reduce functional usability.
Topography	Gently sloping or flat land preferred. Maximum cross-fall of 1:20 across the building platform. Steep slopes (>10%) are not suitable without significant earthworks, which add substantially to project costs for a not-for-profit provider.
Road frontage	Minimum two road frontages required, three preferred. At least one frontage must be to a connector street capable of accommodating bus services. All frontages must provide adequate width for student drop-off zones, indented parking, and safe pedestrian crossing.
Single title	The school site should ideally be contained within a single title to support efficient delivery. Where the school designation spans multiple property identifiers within the land budget, preference is for non-fragmented land ownership arrangements to reduce subdivision and delivery complexity. Where single ownership exists, this concern is mitigated, but the land budget should facilitate the creation of a single, appropriately configured school lot at the subdivision stage.
Separation from hazards	The site must be separated from quarries, high-voltage transmission lines, sources of noise or dust pollution, high-volume traffic routes, and bushfire hazard areas. Proximity to the Bushfire Management Overlay or quarry buffer zones is not acceptable without detailed risk assessment and mitigation.
Co-location	Preference for sites adjacent to public open space, community facilities, and/or activity centres. Co-location supports shared infrastructure, walkability, and integration with the broader community.
Services and utilities	The site must be serviced or serviceable with reticulated water, sewer, gas, electricity, and telecommunications. The cost of extending services to the site must not be disproportionate.
Environmental constraints	The site must be free of native vegetation constraints that would reduce the usable area below the minimum required. The site must not be subject to the



	Environmental Audit Overlay, cultural heritage constraints, or restrictive covenants that would impede school development.
Acquisition cost	As a not-for-profit provider, [REDACTED] cannot compete with for-profit developers or independent school providers at residential land values. PSP designations that signal residential development potential (such as amenity area overlays or inclusion in the NDA) directly inflate acquisition costs and threaten the viability of Catholic school provision.

These requirements are provided to assist the VPA and the Department in understanding [REDACTED] siting needs when assessing the configuration, designation, and treatment of the non-government school site in the Merrimu PSP.



ATTACHMENT D

VPA Non-Government School Planning Guidance Note – Compliance Analysis

The VPA's *Non-Government School Planning Guidance Note* (the Guidance Note) sets out the framework for how non-government school sites are identified and treated in precinct structure plans. The Guidance Note is publicly available at:

https://vpa.vic.gov.au/wp-content/Assets/Files/PSP%20Note_Non-Government%20Schools.pdf

The Guidance Note is expressly referenced in G79 of the Merrimu PSP. The following table assesses the Merrimu PSP (March 2026 draft) against the key requirements of the Guidance Note.

VPA Guidance Note Requirement	Merrimu PSP (March 2026)	Status	MACS Comment
Non-government school sites should be excluded from the net developable area within a DCP.	The DCP correctly defines NDA by deducting 'public and private education facilities', excluding the 5.5 ha from NDA. However, the PSP Glossary (p.103) only excludes 'government schools', creating an inconsistency between the two documents.	INCONSISTENT	The DCP correctly deducts 'public and private education facilities'. However, the PSP Glossary only excludes 'government schools'. This inconsistency must be resolved by amending the Glossary.
Land shown as a non-government school site should not be developed for urban residential purposes unless at the time of subdivision there is no purchaser or provider.	G79 provides a similar mechanism but is a guideline only, not a requirement. The amenity area overlay on Plan 3 continues to signal residential development potential.	PARTIAL	G79 should be elevated to a Requirement. Any uplift in dwelling density, including through the amenity area overlay, should be expressly contingent on the G79 preconditions being satisfied, reinforcing the primacy of education use.
Non-government school sites should not exceed the size of equivalent government schools (3.5 ha primary, 8.4 ha secondary, 11.9 ha P-12).	5.5 ha is allocated for a K–9 school. This is within the benchmarks.	COMPLIANT	supports the 5.5 ha allocation.
Three road frontages should be provided for each non-government school site.	R87 requires minimum two road frontages for government schools (three preferred) but is silent on non-government schools.	NOT ADDRESSED	R87 must be extended to non-government schools.
Schools should be co-located with other community facilities and located close to a neighbourhood activity centre.	The school site is proximate to the local town centre on Plan 2. Co-location with other community facilities is not addressed.	PARTIAL	Plan 11 should show the school to enable co-location planning.
Non-government primary schools	PARTIALLY VERIFIED. The	PARTIAL	R87 must be extended

should be located on connector streets carrying a local bus service, with a bus stop at the school boundary.	Integrated Transport Assessment (Traffix Group, March 2025) and Addendum (February 2026) are available. Plan 4 shows connector streets through the precinct. R87 requires government school frontages to be bus-capable but does not address non-government schools.		to non-government schools to ensure bus-capable road frontage.
Non-government school sites should be separated from potential hazards such as quarries, sources of noise or smoke pollution.	Plan 7 confirms the site is outside quarry buffer zones. No contamination potential indicated.	COMPLIANT	Ongoing dust/noise management requested.
The VPA can use statutory planning provisions to remove the need for 'use' permits for non-government school sites shown in a PSP.	The UGZ schedule (37.07s1) Section 1 lists Primary school and Secondary school as permit not required on the school site. Use permit exemption is confirmed for the school use.	COMPLIANT	School use is permit exempt. However, buildings and works still require a permit (s 2.5 of the schedule).
The Guidance Note provides that the DCP exemption for non-government schools extends to ancillary uses 'totally integrated within the school development', including childcare. This establishes a policy expectation that childcare and schools are delivered as an integrated operation, which should be reflected in both the DCP and the use provisions of the UGZ schedule.	Since the PSP applies, Part B of Clause 37.07 governs and the schedule controls. Child care centre is Section 1 only on community facility land. On the school site, childcare falls to Section 2 (permit required). The school use is as-of-right; the childcare is not. This asymmetry adds cost, delay and uncertainty to integrated delivery.	INCONSISTENT	The schedule must be amended to include Child care centre alongside Primary school and Secondary school in Section 1. This can be achieved either by amending the Section 1 condition or by including the non-government school site on Plan 11 as a community facility. The current drafting directly contradicts the Guidance Note.
A Preliminary Risk Screen Assessment or environmental audit is required before a school commences on potentially contaminated land (Clause 37.07-6).	The EAO map (C109moor Map 004) shows an EAO area adjacent to the school site, north of Buckleys Road. The UGZ schedule application requirements also impose a standalone PRSA obligation for any sensitive use including a school.	PROCEDURAL RISK	█ requests the Department confirm whether the EAO directly affects the school site and advise on the anticipated PRSA assessment pathway and timeline.
Development contributions plans are structured to apply the relevant residential charge rate if school sites are developed for an alternative purpose.	The DCP (March 2026) defines NDA by deducting 'public and private education facilities', and the land budget tables exclude the 5.5 ha non-government school allocation from the NDA calculation.	COMPLIANT	█ supports the DCP exemption. The Glossary definition of NDA should be amended to match the DCP treatment.

Key Findings

The compliance analysis reveals three categories of concern:

- Non-compliant — Childcare co-location: The UGZ schedule does not enable as-of-right co-location of a childcare centre on the school site. Childcare requires a separate planning

permit, while the school itself is permit-exempt. This asymmetry is inconsistent with the Guidance Note's support for ancillary uses being 'totally integrated within the school development' and should be corrected.

- Inconsistent — NDA definition: The DCP correctly deducts 'public and private education facilities' from NDA, but the PSP Glossary only excludes 'government schools'. The Glossary must be amended to align with the DCP.
- Partially addressed — Alternative use: G79 reflects the Guidance Note's intent but is weakened by being a guideline rather than a requirement, and by the concurrent amenity area overlay which signals residential development potential irrespective of G79.
- Procedural risk — Environmental audit: The EAO is adjacent to the school site and a Preliminary Risk Screen Assessment is required under both Clause 37.07-6 and the UGZ schedule application requirements. The assessment pathway and timeline should be confirmed.
- Compliant — School use permit exemption: The UGZ schedule correctly lists Primary school and Secondary school as permit not required on the school site.

Recommendation

█ submits that the Merrimu PSP should be amended to achieve full compliance with the VPA's own Guidance Note. The Guidance Note represents established VPA policy and its requirements should be treated as baseline standards, not aspirational targets.

In particular, the childcare co-location deficiency is a significant drafting issue. The Guidance Note expressly contemplates ancillary uses including childcare being integrated within the school development. The UGZ schedule's treatment of childcare as tied to community facility land rather than school land is inconsistent with this position. This can be resolved either by amending the Section 1 condition in the schedule, or by showing the non-government school on Plan 11 – Community Infrastructure, which would bring the school site within the 'local community facilities' condition and enable childcare as-of-right.

Similarly, the inconsistency between the DCP's NDA definition (which correctly excludes private education facilities) and the PSP Glossary (which does not) should be resolved as a matter of internal document consistency.



ATTACHMENT E

Schedule of Attachments

The following documents are attached to and form part of [REDACTED] submission on the Merrimu Precinct Structure Plan (March 2026):

Attachment A – [REDACTED] Agency Comment Table (12 December 2025)

Attachment B – [REDACTED] Cover Letter to DTP (19 December 2025)

Attachment C – [REDACTED] School Siting Requirements – Summary

Attachment D – VPA Non-Government School Planning Guidance Note – Compliance Analysis

Note: The VPA Non-Government School Planning Guidance Note itself is a publicly available document and is accessible at the URL referenced in Attachment D. A copy can be provided on request.

