



01/05/2025
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City of Whittlesea Councillors,

We would like to congratulate all City of Whittlesea Councillors on their successful campaigns and election. Upon reviewing Council's Draft 2025/26 budget, Northern BMX Club would like to further commend the Councillors and the Administration for developing a financially responsible budget. As a club, we understand that current cost of living pressures are felt by many in our community, including our club members and Council.

The Draft 2025/26 Budget claims to set out a pathway '*to deliver critical investment in services and key infrastructure to support our rapidly growing community*'. However, one key asset and piece of community infrastructure is missing from Section 4.5 - 2025/26 Capital Works Expenditure program: immediate and predominantly safety-related capital works to Sycamore BMX track.

The following proposal, if supported, will not make a material impact on the draft 2025/26 Capital Works Expenditure program, currently forecast just under \$117M. Furthermore, many of the requests articulated within this submission may be accommodated within the current budget under line items lacking public-facing project specifics such as:

- 2025-26 Infrastructure Planning and Feasibility Studies for Future Projects
- 2025-26 Lighting of Shared User Paths Program
- 2025-26 Bicycle Facilities
- Planned Renewal (Minor Works)

Given the many expenditure pressures facing Council, the Club has prioritized our requests into four categories:

1. Immediate safety concerns
2. Planning and partnership resourcing
3. Operational requirements
4. Asset enhancement building community pride

A little about our club: Northern BMX, formerly known as Lalor BMX, was the first BMX club established in the state of Victoria. We have recently focused on a push for female participation, and have seen an increase, bringing our female membership from 15% to approximately 24%. We are coming into our fifth year of being a female-led club. Because of our unique position and strong volunteer force, we currently host more club races than any other club in the state (20 on the calendar this year) and boast the only mini-wheeler dedicated start gate in the state, allowing beginner riders five and under to practice and race as they would on a full track. This has helped us to draw the largest mini-wheeler and sprocket participation levels (2-7 years old) at our club races of any Victorian club in recent months.

We currently boast 26 "state plates" (top 8 riders at state championships) across categories from 9 years old to 60+. The club is home to the only active 60+ rider in the state, and one of only three 60+ women in the country to still compete at gold (national) level. That same rider, our treasurer Kim Lane, was just awarded Masters Female Rider of the Year 2024 by AusCycling.

We continue a dedicated focus on inclusivity and access at NBMX, which has helped to build us from only two members in 2018 to now 160 strong, making us one of, if not the largest club in Victoria.

In 2018, the Club worked in close partnership with Council to redevelop the site and race track following years of Council neglect and asset deterioration. We are concerned as a club that history is about to repeat itself as the last twelve months have seen a significant deterioration in the track through a lack of regular track and site maintenance. The broader site maintenance has also been of very low quality and, in some instances, Council's maintenance crews have actually caused damage to the track which we are now trying to manage.

Photographs accompanying this submission provide clear visual evidence of the current safety hazards and deterioration of the track surface and surrounds. These images underscore the urgent need for investment to protect rider safety and prevent further damage to infrastructure.

Public Use and Broader Community Benefit

Sycamore BMX is not just a sports facility used by club members. It is a highly trafficked community recreation asset, with frequent public use by children, families, and local residents outside of club events. Continued investment ensures the site remains a safe and welcoming environment for the broader community—not only during formal races or training, but also for casual riders and families using the space daily. Improvements to lighting, waste management, and surrounds benefit all public users of the reserve area and facility, reduce safety risks, and foster pride in community infrastructure.

Capital Works Budget Requests

1. Immediate safety concerns

1.1 Track maintenance works. Specifically, the club highlights the following critical track concerns. There is significant track surface deterioration and wear. The surface has worn down significantly, exposing the sub-grade in multiple locations. There are persistent drainage issues. The base of the start hill suffers from persistent drainage issues, which have already caused structural damage to the track base. Large cracks are present in various locations along the track surface and bitumen corners, further exposing the base to water damage. These issues have led to sub-grade penetration where areas of surface damage have penetrated through the polymer layer to the sub-grade. Estimated cost – \$69,272.50, please see attached quote.

1.2 Start Hill Lighting. The downlights on the start hill roof are outdated and were not replaced when the site was redeveloped. These lights are insufficient for lighting the area and ensuring rider and official safety on dark race nights. At present, a club member is using a ladder on the hill to hang a portable light each night, which poses its own risks. This could be eliminated by installing improved permanent lighting fixtures.

1.3 Safety lighting to car park and walkway. With lockup occurring after 9pm three nights per week, the lack of lighting to the car park area and walkway between the club pavilion and car park presents potential risk to users including slips and trips due to low visibility and makes the location attractive for potential crime.

1.4 Improved safety signage. Several tracks in Victoria have now had prominent signage placed which provides information on the safe use of the track, and emergency advice (000 instruction and location information). We have recently had trouble guiding an ambulance to the track because of the lack of a street address which leads to the facility, so would like to investigate this option to potentially address this and ensure members of the public can access the same should it be required.

2. Operational requirements

2.1 Waste Management. At present, the club is chaining a rubbish bin to the start hill, which provides the only waste disposal in the vicinity. This causes a constant issue with the bin becoming overfilled if club members aren't present to monitor it for a period, public users not wanting to scale the hill and littering the area instead, and the rubbish bin being vandalised on a regular basis. Placement of public waste bins in the area would reduce this burden on the club and improve the facility and area for the public and local users.

2.2 Improvements to track surrounds. As well as being a condition of hosting major AusCycling events, it is best practice for all tracks hosting events to have clear, flat, and safe access to all areas of the track without the need to cross the track surface where possible. Uneven ground and ineffective drainage in winter make accessing the track to provide first aid or officiate racing difficult.

2.3 Completion of the finish line and club room surrounding bitumen. Bitumen was placed at the finish line and start hill pathway via club contribution round, however the club were advised that between the application being accepted and works being completed the costs had increased such that only part of the bitumen works could be covered. Gravel from the front and rear of the pavilion regularly impacts the track which causes a safety risk to both club riders and members of the public. The gravel surface is unsuitable for providing safe access for wheelchair users to the track side and pavilion service windows.

3. Planning and partnership resourcing.

3.1 The club would like to work in close partnership with Council to develop a 10-year maintenance program for the site, inclusive of exploring design options for enhancing the track and site interface, and all items listed under section four of this submission.

4. Asset enhancement building community pride

4.1 Trackside seating, Pavilion shade/awnings for near windows, spectator shade options, and a secondary pedestrian access gate install (near finish line).

Table 1 below provides an overview of estimated costing for this submission. Please note only the track works have been formally quoted as they are viewed as the most urgent. All other costings are club estimates and would require further due diligence.

Table 1 – Sycamore BMX Works

Item	Project Description	Estimated Cost
1.1	Track maintenance works	\$69,272.50 (formal quote)
1.2	Start hill lighting	\$2,250
1.3	Safety lighting to car park and walkway	\$35,000
1.4	Improved safety signage	\$500
2.1	Waste management	\$150
2.2	Track surrounds	\$3,800
2.3	Finish line and club room surrounds	\$65,000
4.1	Asset enhancement	\$250,000 (26/27 forecast)
Total Budget Submission 2025/26		\$175,972.50
Total Budget Submission 2026/27		\$250,000

Many thanks for taking the time to read our submission.

We welcome your response, and look forward to working together to ensure Sycamore Reserve remains a safe and vibrant hub for our growing community.

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