

Catering Policy August 2026

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Policy Superseded by this Policy:	Catering and Civic Support Policy
Responsible Department:	Governance, Integrity, Legal and Risk and Creative and Engaged City
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Document Compliance

Council acknowledges the legal responsibility to comply with the (Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006) and the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*. The *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* is designed to protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens. The Charter gives legal protection to 20 fundamental human rights under four key values that include freedom, respect, equality and dignity.

Greater Dandenong City Council Policies comply with the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, the *Climate Change Act 2017*, the Child Safe Standards contained in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*, (Amended) the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* and the Overarching Governance Principles specified in 9(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Acknowledgment of Country

Greater Dandenong City Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this land, the Bunurong People, and pays respect to their Elders past and present. We recognise and respect their continuing connections to climate, culture, Country and waters.

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1. POLICY OBJECTIVE (OR PURPOSE)

This Policy seeks to provide a clear, consistent and accountable framework for the procurement and provision of catering services at the City of Greater Dandenong (Council).

This includes the provision of meals, light refreshments and beverages for Council meetings, staff meetings, community gatherings and events held during or outside normal business hours at staffed Cultural and Community Hub venues.

The Policy aims to ensure that catering services:

- adopt a whole-of-Council and consistent approach
- represent value for money and responsible stewardship of public funds
- minimise waste, including food, packaging and resources
- promote healthy, safe and sustainable food choices
- support social enterprises and local traders wherever practicable
- contribute to a healthy, inclusive and respectful workplace
- comply with all relevant food safety and liquor licensing legislation.

2. BACKGROUND

Council provides catering services across a range of Cultural and Community venues. Community expectations and operational requirements require a consistent standard for how catering is provided, including appropriate provision of meals across standard mealtimes.

This Policy:

- establishes a transparent and consistent approach to food and beverage provision across Council operations, ensuring sound governance, compliance, safety and equity.
- restricts the consumption of alcohol at Council events, functions and meetings in line with Council Plan 2025-2029 and to meet Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) obligations under the [Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 \(Vic\)](#) and providing Council staff and guests with a safe environment.
- replaces the former Catering and Civic Support Policy 2017.

This policy is jointly owned by the Governance, Integrity, Legal and Risk and Creative and Engaged City directorates, noting that responsibilities for broader governance, the catering panel, and food safety require oversight from the relevant directorate with portfolio responsibility.

3. SCOPE

This Policy applies to:

- all catering procured, supplied or funded by Council;
- Councillors; and
- Council Staff involved in the procurement or service delivery of catering on behalf of Council

Exclusions

This policy does not apply to:

- Food or drink Council officers bring from home for personal use or in relation to meal allowances
- Food brought in to be shared at personal celebrations
- Food delivered by meal services
- Food or drink supplied by community groups or individuals when hiring Cultural or Community venues / hubs, who follow venue hire terms and conditions.

4. DEFINITIONS (OPTIONAL)

Unless otherwise specified within this policy, the following words and phrases are defined to mean the following:

Council	means Greater Dandenong City Council, being a body corporate constituted as a municipal Council under the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> .
Councillors	means an individuals holding the office as elected members of the Greater Dandenong City Council.
Council Staff	means the Chief Executive Officer, staff appointed by the Chief Executive Officer, including agency staff, Consultants, Contractors and Volunteers.
Guest	means a person external to Council invited to attend a Council function, event or meeting
Catering	means the provision of food and/or beverage services
Function / Event	means a Council-organised and or funded activity attended by Council Staff and external participants.
Internal Event	means a Council event attended only by Council Staff.
Preferred Supplier	means a group of approved catering suppliers appointed by Council under contract in accordance with Council's procurement policy
Catering panel	means a group of approved catering suppliers appointed by Council under contract in accordance with Council's procurement policy
Non-alcoholic Beverages	means Tea, coffee, water, and assortment of sugar and sugar free soft drinks

Policy

Council recognises that catering can enhance meetings and events; however, its provision must be justified, proportionate and carefully considered on a case-by-case basis.

All Council Staff are responsible for ensuring catering decisions comply with this Policy, Council's financial management and procurement policies, and principles of value for money, probity and waste minimisation.

Detailed operational processes are set out in the Catering Procedure Guide

Council meetings

Purpose	Time (when)	Catering Conditions
Council Meeting or Councillor Briefing Session	Evenings	• Dinner is provided at a suitable time during the meeting • Tea, coffee and non-alcoholic beverages provided for the duration of the meeting • Alcohol not permitted
All other Councillor Meetings / Training	Less than 2 hours	• No catering to be provided • Tea and coffee and non-alcoholic beverages only • Alcohol not permitted
	Half Day	• Morning or Afternoon Tea provided • Tea, coffee and non-alcoholic beverages provided for the duration of the meeting • Alcohol not permitted
	Full Day	• Morning and Afternoon Tea, lunch or dinner provided • Tea, coffee and non-alcoholic beverages provided for the duration of the meeting • Alcohol not permitted

Internal Council officer meetings and training events

Purpose	Time (when)	Catering Conditions
Internal meeting	During business hours and less than 3 hours	• No catering to be provided • Tea, coffee and water provided • Alcohol not permitted
	More than 3 hours and less than 5 hours	• Morning or afternoon tea • Tea, coffee and water provided • Alcohol not permitted
	Greater than 5 hours	• Lunch / Dinner • Morning or afternoon tea

		• Tea, coffee and non-alcoholic beverages provided • Alcohol not permitted
	Full day	• Lunch / Dinner • Morning and afternoon tea • Tea, coffee and non-alcoholic beverages provided • Alcohol not permitted
Staff Recognition Event, Retirement or Farewell	As per Staff Recognition guidelines	• Morning or afternoon tea • Tea, coffee and non-alcohol beverages provided • Alcohol not permitted
Staff Christmas party	3 to 5 hours	• Catering supplied • Tea, coffee and non-alcoholic beverages provided • Alcohol not permitted
Volunteer Christmas Function	3 to 5 hours	• Catering supplied • Tea, coffee and non-alcoholic beverages provided • Alcohol not permitted

External Council Events / Functions / Meetings

Purpose	Time (when)	Catering Conditions
External meeting / workshop / function	During business hours and less than 3 hours	• No catering to be provided • Tea, coffee and non-alcoholic beverages provided • Alcohol not permitted
	More than 3 hours and less than 5 hours	• Morning or afternoon tea • Tea, coffee and non-alcoholic beverages provided • Alcohol not permitted
	Greater than 5 hours	• Lunch / Dinner • Morning or afternoon tea • Tea, coffee and non-alcoholic beverages provided • Alcohol not permitted
	Full day	• Lunch / Dinner • Morning and afternoon tea • Tea, coffee and non-alcoholic beverages provided • Alcohol not permitted
Mayoral Dinner / Mayoral Functions	Day / Evenings	• Two or three course meal is provided • Tea, coffee and assortment of non-alcoholic and alcoholic beverages provided*

Gallery openings, Launch or Special Events	After hours	• Catering provided • Tea, coffee and assortment of non-alcoholic and alcoholic beverages provided*
Business Network Meetings	Day / Evenings	• Catering provided • Tea, coffee and assortment of non-alcoholic beverages provided

*All alcohol must be approved by a member of the Executive Team

*Where Alcohol is permitted, drinks should be limited to two standard drinks per person.

Alcohol is permitted at the Drum Theatre or other Council-operated venues where alcohol is made available for purchase by patrons as part of the venue's normal commercial operations. The sale and service of alcohol at these venues will continue to be managed in accordance with the venue's liquor licence conditions and all applicable Responsible Service of Alcohol requirements.

Catering Panel

Council has a duty of care to ensure all catering provided at Council events meets food safety and public health standards.

Council will establish a Catering Panel through an open tender process every three years.

The Catering Panel must:

- comply with Council's Procurement Policy
- hold current Food Act registration, Food Safety Plan, Business Registration and Public Liability Insurance
- provide competitively priced menus
- comply with Council's Single-Use Plastics Policy
- offer sustainable, seasonal and locally sourced options where possible
- provide culturally appropriate, inclusive, vegan, vegetarian, gluten-free and healthy food options
- will be required to provide appropriate financial controls (including valid tax invoice, match to order, approvals and dispute process).

Council will apply weighting during the tender process to local suppliers and social enterprises in support of local economic development.

Annual audits by Council's Procurement Team will be undertaken to ensure continued compliance.

Probity and Transparency

Council will ensure that all catering expenditure is conducted with integrity, transparency and accountability, in accordance with council's financial management and procurement requirements.

Catering providers must be selected through fair, open and defensible processes that demonstrate value for money and appropriately manage any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest.

All catering decisions and approvals should be documented, consistent with approved delegations, and capable of withstanding internal review, audit and public scrutiny.

Financial Controls and Probity

Catering expenditure must:

- apply CPI-based limits where relevant;
- be approved in accordance with financial delegations; and
- represent value for money
- be recorded, transparent and auditable.

All procurement must be free from actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest

Healthy food choices

In line with the Council Plan 2025-29, which incorporates the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, attention should be paid to selecting healthy choices for your menu when reviewing options available.

Menu selections should align with recognised healthy catering guidelines.

Council recommends alignment with [The Heart Foundation – Heart Healthy Catering – Quick Reference Guide](#).

Food Safety

Legislative Compliance

The provision of catering at Council venues, whether undertaken by Council officers, contractors, or external caterers, must comply with all relevant food safety and occupational health and safety legislation.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- the *Food Act 1984 (Vic)*; and
- the *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code* (Food Standards Code), as enforced by local government registration authorities.

Approved Caterers and Documentation

All caterers engaged through Council's approved Catering Panel are required to have provided all relevant documentation prior to engagement, including current food business registration, certificates of currency, and staff qualifications.

Notwithstanding this, Council officers responsible for events must ensure that all food brought into Council venues continues to comply with food safety, hygiene, and allergen management requirements at all times.

Food Handling and Training Requirements

All persons involved in the preparation, handling, transport, storage, or service of food must demonstrate an appropriate understanding of safe food handling practices to minimise the risk of foodborne illness, regardless of the size or nature of the event.

At a minimum:

- All food handlers must hold a valid Food Handler Certificate in accordance with Food Standard 3.2.2A; and
- Each catering business must nominate a Food Safety Supervisor who has completed accredited Food Safety Supervisor training relevant to their sector.

Food Safety Programs

Where catering activities fall within a class of food premises required under the *Food Act 1984* (including most Class 1 and Class 2 catering businesses), caterers must maintain a current, compliant Food Safety Program.

The Food Safety Program must:

- identify potential food safety hazards associated with the catering activities;
- document control measures, monitoring practices, corrective actions, and record-keeping procedures; and
- be available to Council upon request.

Allergen Management and Consumer Safety

Given the serious and potentially life-threatening consequences of food allergy exposure, all catering provided at Council venues must implement robust allergen management practices consistent with the Food Standards Code.

Caterers must:

- correctly declare the presence of any allergens as required under Standard 1.2.3 and Schedule 9 of the Food Standards Code;
- ensure allergen information is accurate, consistent, and readily available for all foods supplied, including unpackaged or buffet-style food;
- prevent allergen cross-contamination through appropriate food handling, segregation, cleaning, and storage practices; and
- ensure staff are trained to respond appropriately to allergen enquiries and manage allergen-related risks, including anaphylaxis awareness.

Council strongly encourages caterers and event staff to undertake recognised allergen awareness training to support best practice food safety outcomes.

Post-Event Food Handling and Storage

Any excess catering retained or removed from Council venues following the conclusion of an event must be stored, transported, and handled in accordance with food safety requirements to maintain temperature control and prevent contamination.

Responsibility for ongoing food safety compliance remains with the team or contractor who retains the food, and food safety must be maintained at all times.

Alcohol and other beverages

Alcohol Provision

Alcohol may only be provided in circumstances expressly permitted under this Policy.

All alcohol service must comply with the *Liquor Control Reform Act 1998* and be served by staff holding a current Victorian Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA) certification.

For events where alcohol is permitted, all alcohol orders must be approved by the relevant member of the Executive team coordinating the event.

Council maintains zero tolerance for alcohol consumption during normal business hours.

Water and other Beverages

Water and glasses will be provided with any catering request, along with being available in all internal meeting rooms. Beverages such as tea and coffee must be requested with venue booking.

Council provides staple items such as tea bags, coffee, full cream, low fat and soy milk, sugar, sweetener to all staff kitchens.

A tea and coffee station may be set up for a range of functions and may be charged to relevant functions.

Climate and Sustainability

Council is committed to reducing environmental impacts associated with catering, including plastic waste.

All catering must comply with Council's sustainability commitments, including the Single-Use Plastics Policy 2025.

Staff are responsible for appropriate waste separation and disposal at events.

Cultural Appropriateness

Catering must be inclusive and culturally appropriate, recognising religious, ethical and dietary needs of attendees.

Where practicable, dietary requirements should be identified in advance and clearly labelled.

Food Waste and Donations

Council will take reasonable steps to minimise food waste through appropriate planning and portion control.

Where safe and lawful, surplus food may be considered for donation in line with food safety requirements.

Catering process

Operational requirements are detailed in the Catering Procedure Guide, including ordering, communication, payment, cancellations, cleaning and equipment returns

Fringe Benefit Tax (FBT)

Food and beverage purchases must be managed in accordance with Australian Taxation Office (ATO) requirements and may be subject to Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT).

Purchases of food and beverages from restaurants, supermarkets, catering providers, or meal service providers may attract FBT.

Council staff who order catering or meals must provide a clear and valid business purpose at the time of purchase. This purpose must be documented on:

Purchase orders; and

Corporate credit card statements, including all supporting documentation

Where insufficient or unclear information is provided, Finance may request additional clarification before completing the FBT assessment.

All catering and meal expenses must be recorded accurately and will be reviewed by Finance for assessment of FBT liability.

The Finance team is responsible for determining the appropriate FBT treatment of catering and meal purchases and providing standard guidance and approved wording to support correct reporting and compliance.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Responsibility
CEO / Directors	Approval of service of alcohol requests where eligible; oversight of compliance and staff safety at work related events.
Managers	Ensure department orders relating to food services are compliant with this policy
Venue Experience officers	Maintain valid Responsible Service Alcohol certification where applicable
All Staff	Ensure catering expenditure is reasonable, ethical and compliant

6. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All Council Staff, and other persons involved in the administration or application of this policy must act impartially and in the public interest.

Any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest must be identified, declared and managed in accordance with the organisation's Conflict of Interest Policy and relevant legislation.

Where a conflict of interest arises:

- Council staff must disclose the conflict as soon as practicable to their direct report and the Manager Governance Integrity Legal and Risk.
- The CEO must disclose the conflict as soon as practicable to the Mayor the Manager Governance Integrity Legal and Risk.
- Appropriate steps must be taken to manage or mitigate the conflict, including recusal from decision-making where required.

Failure to declare or appropriately manage a conflict of interest may result in disciplinary or other action.

7. REPORTING, MONITORING REVIEW, AND IMPLEMENTATION

Reporting	The Creative and Engaged City Department will report any breaches of non compliance and operational issues to the Executive Team
Monitoring	Governance, Integrity, Legal and Risk will review the policy every six months to understand how it's impacting on the organisation and community and monitor compliance, breaches and operational issues
Review	This Policy will be reviewed every two years, with consideration of compliance, community impact, costs and benchmarking against other municipalities.
Stakeholder Engagement	The review process will involve stakeholders across all of Council, including: • Procurement • Environmental Health • Governance, Legal and Risk • Creative and Engaged Cities • Sustainability Planning
Implementation	The Catering Policy will be published on Source for all staff. Internal communications will be developed to support awareness, understanding and implementation of the policy.

8. REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

Legislation

- [Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006](#)
- [Gender Equality Act 2020](#)
- [Climate Change Act 2017](#)
- [Local Government Act 2020](#).
- [Liquor Control Reform Act 1998](#)
- [Food Act 1984](#)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#)

Related Council and Other Policies, Procedures, Strategies, Protocols, Guidelines

- Council Plan 2025-2029

- Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan
- Procurement Policy
- Staff Code of conduct
- Purchase card policy
- Gifts Benefits and Hospitality Policy
- Single Use Plastics Policy 2025
- Catering Procedures Guide
- Alcohol and Other Drugs Harmonisation Framework (not yet developed)
- Council Expenses Support and Accountability Policy

Administrative Updates

It is recognised that from time to time, circumstance may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter this document, such a change may be made administratively. Examples include a change to the name of a Council department, the change to an existing policy or document referred to in this policy and minor updates to legislation and the like which does not have a material impact. All changes or updates which materially alter this policy must be by resolution of Council.

Date	Update