

HOBSONS
BAY CITY
COUNCIL



Social Impact Assessment guidelines

Residential

Acknowledgment of Country

Council acknowledges the Bunurong People of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners of these municipal lands and waterways, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

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1. Purpose

Developments impact on communities in a variety of ways, affecting the way people live, work and interact with each other, their community and their local environment. Social Impact Assessments (SIAs) ensure that positive and negative social impacts of developments are considered as part of the planning process. Identifying and managing these impacts supports the Hobsons Bay 2030 vision of an inclusive, empowered, sustainable and visionary community. Ultimately, SIAs aim to help facilitate quality developments that are responsive to the needs of current and future communities.

These guidelines have been prepared to assist applicants and consultants in the preparation of a Social Impact Assessment for residential applications. They apply for all relevant residential planning permit and re-zoning applications in the City of Hobsons Bay (see Section 3, below).

The social impact of any residential development will vary depending on the size and scale, location and surrounding environment and infrastructure of the site. A SIA therefore aims to identify the extent to which each application:

- aligns with relevant planning and policy frameworks
- affects housing diversity and access to affordable housing
- changes demand for existing community infrastructure
- impacts access to employment, education, shopping, recreation and leisure opportunities
- impacts health and wellbeing, and liveable outcomes for incoming residents and the broader community
- meets the overall needs of current and future residents

2. Legislative context

Social impact assessments support Council to not only fulfil its policy commitments but also meet its legislative requirements.

The *Planning and Environment Act 1987* establishes that one of the objectives of Victoria's planning framework is to "ensure that the effects on the environment are considered" and that the planning framework "provide[s] for the explicit consideration of social and economic effects when decisions are made about the use and development of land" (Section 4(2).d). It also states that the objective of planning in Victoria is to "enable the orderly provision and coordination of public utilities and other facilities for the benefit of the community" (Section 4(1)e) and "facilitate the provision of affordable housing in Victoria" (Section(1)fa).

In this context, the Act states that responsible planning authorities must consider "any significant social effects and economic effects" (Section 60(1).f) before deciding on a planning application.

3. What types of applications require a Social Impact Assessment?

Residential applications required to complete a Social Impact Assessment include (but are not limited to):

- residential development with a yield of 200 or more dwellings, or if the application forms part of a site that could accommodate 200 or more dwellings.
- rezoning land to residential use with a potential yield of 200 or more dwellings
- development where the form, height or density is not anticipated by the planning scheme or supporting strategic plans and policies
- development where Council deems a moderate to high potential for negative social impacts

4. Requirements for a Social Impact Assessment

All Social Impact Assessments MUST be prepared by a consultant with experience and expertise in preparing social impact assessments, at the applicant's expense. The report must address four key areas:

- **details** - information about the applicant, site, proposal and future residents
- **context** –description and analysis of relevant demographic data within a defined catchment area
- **impacts** – description and analysis of ALL relevant social and economic impacts (both positive and negative), suggested measures to mitigate or enhance impacts, and any cumulative impacts with other proposals in the catchment area. Responses should also have regard to relevant Council policies and strategies, including the Community Infrastructure and Services Plan 2020-2030 and Council's Affordable Housing Policy Statement 2016
- **conclusion** – a summary of the key social impacts and enhancement/mitigation measures and a statement regarding the application's overall net benefit/cost to the community

The SIA does not seek to duplicate work for applicants, and it is acknowledged that some of the required information may already be contained within an applicant's planning report.

An applicant may therefore seek to prepare a SIA and only address specific matters not already covered in the planning report, referring to where the required information for the SIA is otherwise located. Alternatively, the required information for the SIA can be addressed within a specific section of the applicant's planning report.

The specific requirements for a Social Impact Assessment for residential applications is provided at Section 6. The guiding questions that Council uses to review social impacts is also provided at Appendix 1.

5. Application and Assessment Process

The application and assessment process for an SIA occurs in four stages. The following description should be read in conjunction with the diagram at Figure 1 and Council's 'How the Planning Process Works' and 'Planning Scheme Amendment Process' diagrams (see Appendix 2 and 3).

Stage 1: Pre-application advice

The applicant is initially encouraged to meet with Council's Statutory Planning or Strategic Planning team to ensure their application includes all the information needed to resolve any potential issues. If the application triggers the need for a Social Impact Assessment, the applicant is then encouraged to meet with the Economic Development and Social Planning team (either in person or by telephone) to discuss a range of topics, including:

- the scope of the report, for example, types of impacts for consideration, catchment area for impacts
- availability of information on community infrastructure, both privately and publicly operated (the applicant may be required to obtain data directly from providers where information is not available within Council)
- the recommended sources of data

The applicant will also be provided with any other information Council deems worthy of consideration, which may include demographic data, key Council plans and strategies, and information about infrastructure and services within the catchment area.

Stage 2: Preparation and lodgement

A suitably qualified consultant will prepare the Social Impact Assessment for lodgement with the application. If a Social Impact Assessment is required but not provided at this stage, the applicant will be informed and advised to meet with the Economic Development and Social Planning team (if Stage One did not occur) and complete the report prior to the application being considered.

Stage 3: Review

Council's Economic Development and Social Planning team will review the Social Impact Assessment, including any recommendations provided. Written feedback will be provided to either the Statutory Planning or Strategic Planning team for consideration in the detailed assessment of the application.

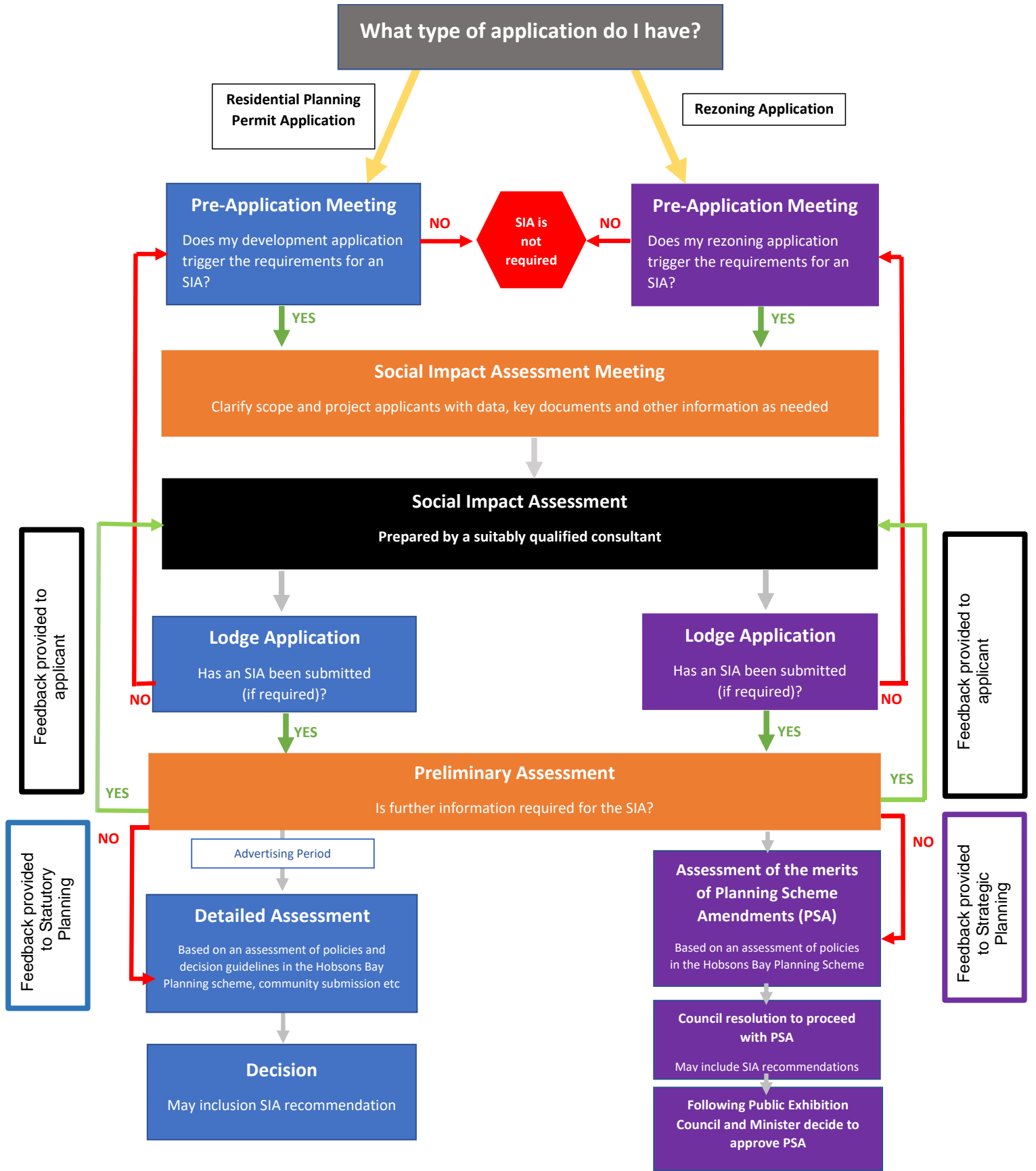
If a Social Impact Assessment does not include all information, impacts are missing, or Council considers that the impacts will be more significant than indicated in the report, Council may request further information. It should be noted that documents lodged at any stage of the application process may be made public as part of the advertising process.

Stage 4: Decision and further action

For Planning Permits: Following the advertising period and detailed assessment, Council's Statutory Planning team will decide on the application under delegation or make recommendations to the Delegated Planning Committee. Applicants will be informed by Council regarding the outcome of the application and any requirements associated with approval (or otherwise).

For Rezoning Applications: Council's Strategic Planning team will first determine the merits of the rezoning of land for residential development and will consider the SIA as part of the amendment application process. The Strategic Planning team will seek a Council resolution to proceed with the amendment if it is deemed to have merit and the SIA will form part of this process.

At this stage, agreement may be reached regarding the actioning of any SIA recommendations. These may require a range of responses from various stakeholders, including the applicant, Council, local business, and/or state and federal government agencies. Recommendations may also be formalised through one or more of the following options: planning scheme controls, planning permit conditions, developer contributions, Section 173 Agreement or another relevant mechanism.



6. Social Impact Assessment – Required Information

This section provides a detailed description of the information that is required to be included in a Social Impact Assessment Report or embedded within the planning report.

<p>Part One: Details</p> <p>This section seeks information about the applicant, site, proposal and future residents.</p>	<p>Applicant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • name, position, address and contact information of the person(s) making the application • name of company/organisation (if relevant)
	<p>Site Details</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • street address • current uses of the site • land area • current zoning • map indicating site and any other streets providing access/egress to the site
	<p>Proposal details</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • total number of proposed dwellings, classified according to number of bedrooms and by size/area • estimated sale price range for each proposed lot and/or dwelling type • estimated market rental price for each dwelling type • number/type of dwellings marked as affordable, including social housing • anticipated total resident numbers • expected average number of persons per household • target demographics (e.g. students, older people) and indicative number of people by service age groups • public transport access (e.g. distance to nearest bus stop/station and timetable/frequency information)

<p>Part Two: Context</p> <p>This section seeks an assessment of the application’s alignment with relevant planning and policy frameworks, definition of an appropriate catchment area, and a description and analysis of local demographic data.</p> <p>Council’s research and data page, including Community Profile and Forecast, is a useful resource when developing an appropriate catchment and demographic profile.</p> <p>The Economic Development and Social Planning team can assist with more specific data sources.</p>	<p>Catchment area</p> <p>Council’s Housing Framework seeks to encourage new developments in areas close to activity centres in order to make better use of existing community infrastructure and services. This aligns with Victorian state planning policy that seeks to create ‘20-Minute Neighbourhoods’ where most everyday needs can be accessed within a 20 minute walk, cycle or local public transport trip.</p> <p>In line with this, to assess social impacts a catchment of 1,500 metres should be used for proposals in a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhood Residential Zone • General Residential Zone • Residential Growth Zone • Mixed Use Zone • Comprehensive Development Zones • Strategic Redevelopment Zone <p>More information on Hobsons Bay City Council’s Housing Framework and Residential Zones can be found here.</p>
	<p>Demographic profile</p> <p>Using the defined catchment area as a basis, present an overview of current and forecasted demographic data and indicators (with comparisons to the wider Western Metropolitan region, where appropriate), including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • size and composition of the population and resident workforce within the catchment area (current and projected ten years into the future) • relative levels of socio-economic disadvantage (as measured by the SEIFA Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage) within the catchment area and municipality • other relevant characteristics of the population within the catchment area (current and/or forecast), including employment status, journey to work, household income, household size and types

Part Three: Impacts

This section seeks a description and analysis of all relevant social impacts, both positive and negative. Adequate evidence should be presented regarding the likelihood and consequences of expected social impacts, including any impacts on specific locations and/or population groups experiencing disadvantage. Assessment of impacts should be based upon considered data analysis and credible findings in published literature, as well as community and stakeholder engagement. The guiding questions that Council uses to review social impacts is presented at Appendix 1.

This section should also describe any measures to mitigate negative impacts or enhance positive impacts. This may be presented as a mitigation/enhancement action plan describing the timing and responsibility for actions by the applicant and/or other stakeholders. Where relevant, the report should also include an analysis of cumulative impacts of the application in conjunction with any proposed, pending or recently completed developments in the neighbouring area and surrounds.

Finally, it should be noted that consideration of some social impacts may require input from other suitably qualified practitioners or draw on the findings from other expert reports (e.g. traffic, sustainable design, access). Rather than repeat other experts' reports, the report should include a summary of the relevant social impacts associated with each specialist area, as well as any relevant enhancement or mitigation strategies.

The following information should be included in a Social Impact Assessment for residential applications to support a thorough analysis of all relevant social impacts:

Housing

- impacts on the diversity of currently available housing in the catchment area
- an assessment of how the application aligns with Council's Affordable Housing Policy Statement 2016, including a statement of how the development may contribute affordable housing stock to the area and alignment with the Hobsons Bay Affordable Housing Trust. Affordable housing contributions are required for applications seeking permits for 20 or more dwellings, as per Council's Affordable Housing Policy Statement 2016
- additional measures to reduce utility costs for housing within the development, beyond those described in the Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) Report (if one is prepared as part of the application)

Connectivity and access

- an assessment of physical access, connectivity and walkability, both within the development and to adjoining neighbourhoods
- an assessment of how universal design principles have been incorporated to increase access for all (including accessible car parking)
- impacts on residents' capacity to safely and equitably access public transport services and active transport infrastructure

NOTE: It is recommended that an accredited access auditor be engaged to provide access advice for all developments of 10 or more dwellings.

Community infrastructure

- a list of existing community infrastructure within the catchment area, including distance from the proposed development (please refer to Council's Community Services and Infrastructure Hierarchy at Appendix 4 for types of community infrastructure to be considered). It should also be noted where any infrastructure defined at the neighbourhood level sits outside of the defined catchment
- assessment of future demand for community infrastructure resulting from the development, including early years' facilities, government schools, and public open space
- assessment of the capacity of existing community infrastructure to meet the needs of new residents, considering current capacity, future demand, and access to the site

NOTE: Applicants should refer to the Hobsons Bay [Community Service and Infrastructure Plan](#) and assess how proposals may impact on current and forecasted capacity.

Health and wellbeing

- impacts on opportunities for physical activity, including walkable access to fresh and healthy food
- gender Impacts, including the different ways women, men and gender non-binary people may be impacted
- impacts on access to opportunities for community connections, social inclusion, and sport and recreation activities (including within the development)
- impacts on community identity, historical connections, and 'sense of place' for existing and future residents
- impacts on the physical environment with potential to affect individual and community health, including air quality, traffic, noise, shade, shelter, open public and private space

Employment, training and economy

- impacts on future residents' access to employment, education and training activities
- impacts on existing businesses, including amenity impacts, access disruptions and labour draw

Community safety

- impact on community safety, including perceived and actual safety in public places

Part Four: Conclusion

This section seeks an overall conclusion on the social impacts of the proposal.

The concluding statement should include:

- a summary of the key social impacts and enhancement/mitigation measures
- a statement regarding the proposal's overall net benefit/cost to the community
- how the proposal aligns with and supports the vision and relevant priorities of the Hobsons Bay 2030 Community Vision, making reference to the issues identified in the previous sections

7. More information

Please contact Council's Economic Development and Social Planning team on 1300 179 944 or at socialplanning@hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au for more information on Social Impact Assessments for residential applications.

Appendix 1: Guiding questions for reviewing Social Impact Assessments

When reviewing a Social Impact Assessment for residential applications, Council officers will use the following questions to assess the report and determine whether further information is required.

Report and methods used

- Does the report identify all relevant social impacts, including for disadvantaged groups and future generations?
- Does it identify and respond to social impacts at all stages, including direct, indirect, temporary, permanent and cumulative impacts?
- Does it use robust and accurate social baseline data (both qualitative and quantitative), including information provided by Council?
- Does it use data analysis, published literature, and community and stakeholder engagement to inform assessments and determine appropriate mitigation measures?
- Does it reflect the views and insights of potentially affected groups, as identified through community and stakeholder engagement?
- Where relevant, does it include information, data and analysis from other specialist studies undertaken for the application (e.g. traffic report, environmentally sustainable design report, access audit report)?

Impact mitigation measures

- Does the report identify all potential enhancements and incorporate these into the application to maximise community outcomes?
- Does it identify all potential mitigation measures?
- Are mitigation measures practical, respectful, action-oriented, evidence-based and assigned to specific persons/groups/organisations to lead implementation?
- Could any mitigation measures cause unintended impacts in another location or in relation to another issue?
- Do mitigation measures need to be monitored and reviewed, and potentially adapted in the future to ensure they remain effective?

Appendix 2: How the Planning Process Works

How the Planning Process Works

The *Planning and Environment Act 1987* sets out the legal process and procedures that must be followed in the planning process. The principal steps in the process are outlined here.



Pre-Application Advice

Applicants are encouraged to have a pre-application meeting with Council planning officers before lodging to ensure their application has all the information officers need and to resolve any potential issues with their application. This will lead to a better quality application and a quicker assessment.



Lodge Application

It is important that all the required information discussed in the pre-application meeting is submitted in the application and is of a high standard to avoid delays in the assessment.



Preliminary Assessment

If insufficient detail is provided in the application, the Council planner will ask for additional information within 28 days of lodging the application. The assessment will be put on hold until that additional information has been received.



Advertising Period

If the application has the potential to detrimentally impact another person, it will need to be advertised for a period of 14 days. If your application is advertised, any person may view the plans and supporting documents at Council and lodge an objection.



Detailed Assessment

A detailed assessment is undertaken by the planner based on an assessment of the policies and decision guidelines in the Hobsons Bay Planning Scheme, the planning merits of any objections received and responses from any referral authorities such as VicRoads and Melbourne Water.



Special Planning Committee (SPC)

If eight or more objections are received and are not resolved, the application is referred to the Special Planning Committee (SPC) which is chaired by councillors. Applicants and objectors are invited to attend and present at SPC.



Amendment or change to the Permit

A request to amend the application during the assessment stage, or amend the permit after the decision can be made to Council. An amendment follows the same process as a new planning application, and an application will be advertised again if the amendment has the potential to detrimentally affect another person.



Lodge Final Plans with Council

If a permit has conditions which require changes to the plans or additional information, updated plans and information must be submitted for final assessment and endorsement by Council.



Appeal

Applicants or objectors can appeal Council's decision to VCAT. The Council, objectors and the applicant present their cases to VCAT at a formal hearing. Following the decision Council will be directed to issue a planning permit, or a refusal.



Planning Permit

The planning permit authorises the use and development of land with conditions. The applicant has the ability to lodge an appeal against conditions to VCAT.



Notice of Decision

If Council proposes to approve the application and objections have been received, a Notice of Decision to grant a permit is issued. This allows objectors 21 days to apply to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) for an application for review. If no appeal is lodged, a planning permit is issued.



Notice of Refusal

A notice of refusal includes the reasons why the proposal was refused. The applicant has the ability to lodge an appeal against the Notice of Refusal with VCAT.

One of the following three decisions are made:

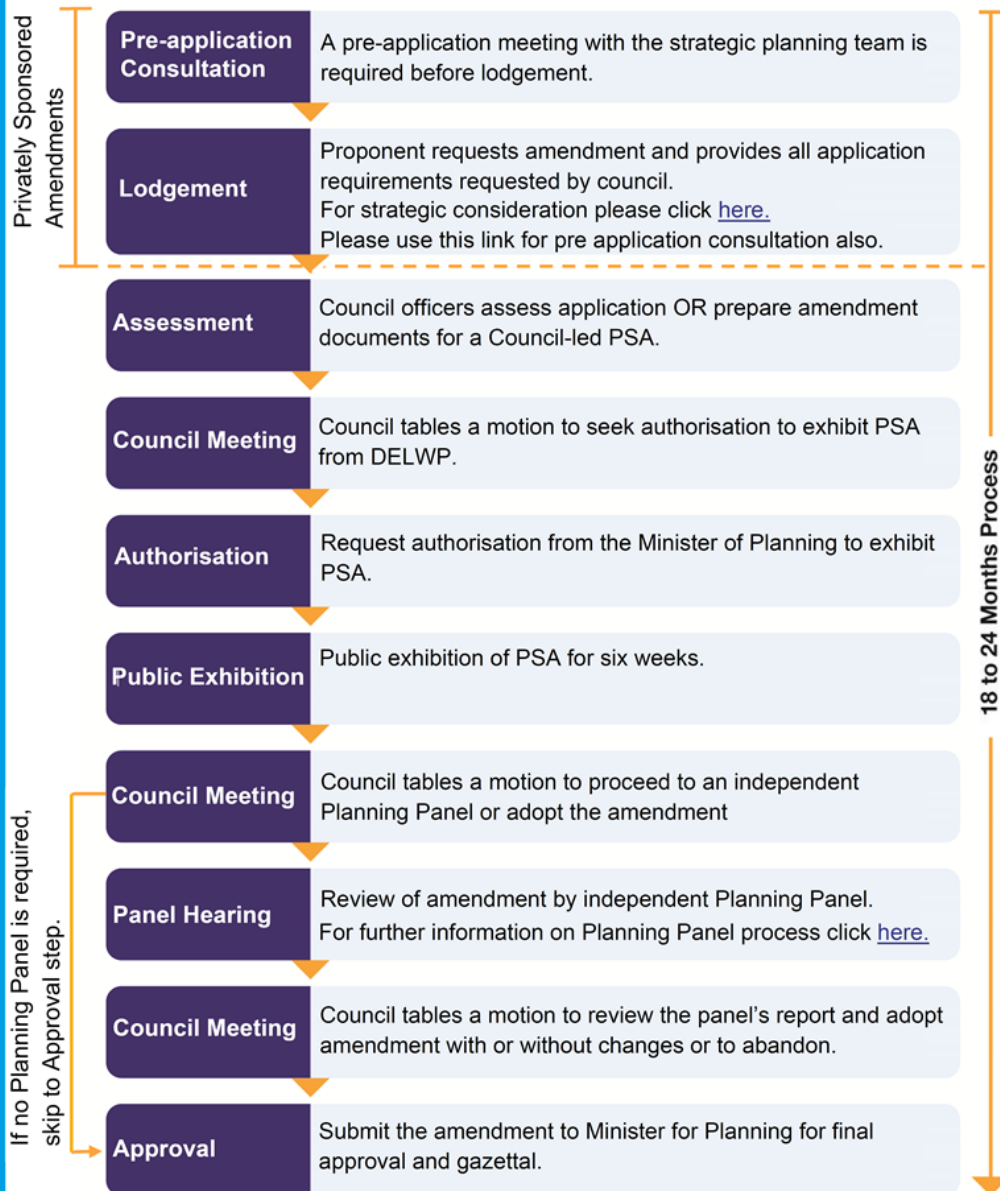
Other Requirements: Once you have planning approval, you may need other permits or licenses, such as a building permit, registration with Council's Public Health Unit or a liquor license. Please contact Council's customer service on **9932 1000** or email customerservice@hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au for further information

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Appendix 3: Planning Scheme Amendment Process

PLANNING SCHEME AMENDMENT PROCESS FACTSHEET



Please note: Privately sponsored amendments start at the 'pre-application consultation' stage. Council-led amendments start at the 'assessment'



Appendix 4: Hobsons Bay Community Services and Infrastructure Hierarchy

Neighbourhood	Maternal and child health
	3 and 4 year kindergarten
	Long day care
	Community Halls/meeting spaces (small)
	Community centres/Neighbourhood Houses
	Art and Culture venues (small)
	Primary schools
Precinct	Library
	Residential aged care
	Community Halls/meeting spaces (medium)
	Senior Citizens Centres
	Secondary schools
Municipal	Community Halls/meeting spaces (large)
	Art and Culture venues (strategic importance)
	Youth services