



City of
Whittlesea

MINUTES

OF SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

HELD ON

THURSDAY 7 NOVEMBER 2019

AT 7:00PM

**IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, 25 FERRES
BOULEVARD, SOUTH MORANG**

COUNCILLORS

TOM JOSEPH	NORTH WARD
RICKY KIRKHAM	NORTH WARD
EMILIA LISA STERJOVA	NORTH WARD
SAM ALESSI	SOUTH EAST WARD
ALAHNA DESIATO	SOUTH EAST WARD
NORM KELLY	SOUTH EAST WARD
MARY LALIOS	SOUTH EAST WARD
LAWRIE COX	SOUTH WEST WARD
STEVAN KOZMEVSKI	SOUTH WEST WARD
CAZ MONTELEONE	SOUTH WEST WARD
KRIS PAVLIDIS	SOUTH WEST WARD

SENIOR OFFICERS

SIMON OVERLAND

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

RUSSELL HOPKINS

DIRECTOR COMMUNITY SERVICES

HELEN SUI

DIRECTOR CITY TRANSPORT & PRESENTATION

AMY MONTALTI

ACTING DIRECTOR CORPORATE SERVICES

LIANA THOMPSON

DIRECTOR PARTNERSHIPS, PLANNING &
ENGAGEMENT

MICHAEL TONTA

MANAGER GOVERNANCE

ORDER OF BUSINESS

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Note:

In these Minutes, Resolutions adopted by Council are indicated in bold text.

1. OPENING**1.1 TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON**

In accordance with Council's Procedural Matters Local Law, until the Mayor was elected, the Chief Executive Officer was the temporary Chairperson of the meeting and the Returning Officer for the election of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

1.2 MEETING OPENING AND PRAYER

The Chief Executive Officer opened the meeting with a prayer at 7.00pm.

1.3 ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS STATEMENT

On behalf of the City of Whittlesea the Chief Executive Officer recognised the rich Aboriginal heritage of this country and acknowledged the Wurundjeri Willam Clan as the Traditional Owners of this place.

1.4 PRESENT**Members:**

Cr Tom Joseph	Councillor (North Ward)
Cr Ricky Kirkham	Councillor (North Ward)
Cr Emilia Lisa Sterjova	Councillor (North Ward)
Cr Sam Alessi	Councillor (South East Ward)
Cr Alahna Desiato	Councillor (South East Ward)
Cr Norm Kelly	Councillor (South East Ward)
Cr Mary Laliou	Councillor (South East Ward)
Cr Lawrie Cox	Councillor (South West Ward)
Cr Stevan Kozmevski	Councillor (South West Ward)
Cr Caz Monteleone	Councillor (South West Ward)
Cr Kris Pavlidis	Councillor (South West Ward)

Officers:

Mr Simon Overland	Chief Executive Officer
Mr Russell Hopkins	Director Community Services
Ms Helen Sui	Director City Transport & Presentation
Ms Amy Montalti	Acting Director Corporate Services
Ms Liana Thompson	Director Partnerships, Planning & Engagement
Mr Michael Tonta	Manager Governance

2. APOLOGIES

NIL

3. GENERAL BUSINESS**3.1 ELECTION OF THE MAYOR FOR 2019/2020**

The Chief Executive Officer invited nominations for the Office of Mayor for 2019/2020.

NOMINATIONS FOR MAYOR

NOMINATOR: *Cr Pavlidis*

THAT Cr Tom Joseph be nominated for the Office of Mayor for the year 2019/2020.

NOMINATOR: *Cr Kelly*

THAT Cr Emilia Lisa Sterjova be nominated for the Office of Mayor for the year 2019/2020.

Cr Kris Pavlidis spoke in support of Cr Tom Joseph's nomination for Mayor.

Cr Norm Kelly spoke in support of Cr Emilia Lisa Sterjova's nomination for Mayor.

The Chief Executive Officer then called for a show of hands for each nominee.

DECLARATION OF THE POLL

Following a vote by show of hands for each nominee, the Chief Executive Officer declared Cr Emilia Lisa Sterjova elected as Mayor for 2019/2020.

3.2 ELECTION OF THE DEPUTY MAYOR FOR 2019/2020

The Chief Executive Officer invited nominations for the Office of Deputy Mayor for 2019/2020.

NOMINATION FOR DEPUTY MAYOR

NOMINATOR: *Cr Laliotis*

THAT Cr Alahna Desiato be nominated for the Office of Deputy Mayor for the year 2019/2020.

DECLARATION OF THE POLL

As there was only one nomination, the Chief Executive Officer declared Cr Alahna Desiato elected as Deputy Mayor for 2019/2020.

4. SPEECH FROM INCOMING MAYOR, CR EMILIA LISA STERJOVA

Tonight I am truly honoured to have been elected as the youngest mayor in Australia and the youngest female mayor in Australian history at the age of 22.

Thank you to my fellow Councillors for electing me to lead the City of Whittlesea in 2020.

Firstly, I recognise the rich Aboriginal heritage of this country and acknowledge the Wurundjeri Willum Clan as the traditional owners of this place.

I would like to acknowledge all of our special guests, Councillors, Council Officers, friends and most importantly our community of the City of Whittlesea.

Congratulations to Cr Alahna Desiato for being elected as our Deputy Mayor. I am absolutely elated to do things differently with Alahna by my side. This is the first time in Whittlesea's history that our council has been led by two females in their 20s. Talk about girl power! Cr Desiato has done some tremendous work for our community so it will be terrific to work more closely with her in our final year.

I want to share with you all my story.

I am an only child and have grown up with my incredible single mum.

Throughout my life, she would work three jobs just to make ends meet.

I grew up with a small family – my mum, uncle, grand parents and granduncle.

Mum didn't want me to feel as though I was missing out on anything in life so she encouraged me to get involved in our community.

She wanted me to feel that I had a much bigger family and I truly felt that I did.

From a young age I felt inspired by my mum's strength and golden heart.

I'll never forget one night in particular when I was still in primary school where my mum broke down.

She held me in her arms and told me to work hard in my life so that other people don't need to struggle like we have.

I never forgot those words.

That gave me the impetus to love and serve our community.

In 2015 I started studying a Bachelor of Laws / International Relations and a Diploma of Indonesian at La Trobe University.

On my very first day, I signed up to the Labor club on campus because I wanted to learn about getting my voice heard and giving back to our community.

The following year I met my State Labor Member of Parliament, Danielle Green.

She saw my undeniable passion to help our community and asked me whether I would consider running for council.

I told her that I wouldn't know where to begin in running my own campaign.

No one in my family has ever been politically involved and I didn't have anyone to mentor me.

Fortunately, Danielle offered to mentor me and so I began to run a campaign for local government as a Labor endorsed candidate.

I was only a year out of high school and was frustrated with the lack of transport, road infrastructure, lack of sporting facilities, youth services and more.

I have always loved living in Mernda but saw that there was a lot that needed to be improved.

So, I decided to do something about it.

I decided to run for council and I was humbled to have been elected in 2016 at the age of 19.

I cannot quite describe the feeling, knowing that our community had such faith in me.

Being elected to council has impacted my life in a wonderful way.

I remember pinching myself in my first council meeting and I have made sure to hold on to the gratitude I felt in that moment.

My role has brought me closer to our community and made me feel like I belong more than ever before.

Even in my darkest moments when my incredible granduncle was passing away two years ago, it was our community who embraced me and helped me heal.

I even noticed that it was the Whittlesea Salvation Army who knit my granduncle a blanket while he was in palliative care.

I have met some of the most selfless community members and continue to be inspired by their devotion to help others in our community.

In return, I have brought much positive change to our council in my term.

Some highlights in my past three years have been;

Firstly, I moved to develop an affordable housing strategy because of the challenges people face in purchasing their first home. Housing affordability continues to be a major contributor to homelessness and a significant barrier for young people in accessing housing.

Secondly, I moved to establish environmental programs to reduce single use plastics in our municipality, divert food waste from landfill and ban single use plastics at all council operations.

Thirdly, I moved to create the first ever Youth Advisory Committee so that young people could finally have an ongoing, meaningful contribution to our decision making process.

Now something for the future...

Our council spans over urban, semi-rural, and rural land that is growing by more than 119 residents per week, half of which speak a language other than English.

As a rapidly growing and diverse council, we have growing demands and challenges to consider in our forward planning.

I plan to lead our council to better manage our population growth by reviewing our planning policies to ensure that our luscious open spaces are not crowded by overdevelopment.

There is so much that will be happening over the next twelve months but there are three key priorities I will focus on during the year.

Firstly, one of my commitments during my council election was to create a Youth Advisory Committee.

Having now established such a platform for young people, I plan to host a youth forum this year where I can directly engage, educate and mentor our youth.

It's time to bring the views of our youth to the forefront.

Secondly, I know from our community engagement that our football, netball and basketball clubs in the north are particularly eager to gain much needed facilities to keep up with the growth of their clubs.

I plan to make the Mernda Recreation Reserve plan a live document where we gain community feedback and gain some momentum.

Lastly, I want Whittlesea to lead the way in being a smart city.

By that I mean, a technologically advanced council that expands its capabilities in using the 'internet of things', which is technology used to monitor our core services such as waste collection and road maintenance.

This will mean that we are more intelligent in the way that we deliver our services to the community.

It will also enable long term cost efficiencies so that we can better manage our rate payer dollars to provide more community services.

This type of technology remains almost untapped at our council and I absolutely see a significant opportunity in exploring this further over the year.

To my fellow councillors, I see that you all work tirelessly to serve our community and I see your passion.

As a first term councillor, I believe I have the ability to unify our council to enable us to work cohesively together for the betterment of our community.

We are now commencing our final year before the next council election.

Let's make it a great one.

Basically, I aim to do things differently, to look at our policies and procedures with fresh eyes and an unbiased opinion needed to create real positive change.

Tonight I am incredibly humbled and grateful.

Tonight we are making history and we are making a statement that the role of a councillor and the role of a mayor does not need to fit a stereotype.

As a young Macedonian woman, I am here to bring better representation to a whole cohort in our community that has never been truly represented before and I hope to inspire others to join me in being more politically active.

I hope I inspire other young people to realise that age is not a barrier.

I hope women realise that their gender is an asset, not a disadvantage.

I hope that ethnically diverse people consider their diversity as a superpower, not an impediment.

I want to inspire, to challenge and to create positive change.

I'm different and 'different' is exactly what Whittlesea needs.

5. CLOSURE

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS THE MAYOR DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 7.23PM.

CONFIRMED THIS 12TH DAY OF NOVEMBER 2019.

**CR EMILIA LISA STERJOVA
MAYOR**