2 Wingrove St - Building condition

A comprehensive assessment of building conditions has been undertaken to identify assets that have reached the end of their operational life, as well as those with potential for repurposing or upgrade to meet contemporary usage standards

Site Overview and Building Condition Assessment

The site comprises 16 buildings. Of these, nine have been assessed as being at the end of their operational life. Due to the extent of deterioration, demolition is considered a more viable and cost-effective option than attempting to restore them to a usable standard.

Three buildings are considered to be in good condition.

The remaining four buildings may have potential for repurposing; however, substantial works would be required to bring them up to standard. A key consideration in determining the value of such investment will be the intended future use of the site, as some buildings may not be suitable for all purposes

Cost Considerations and Strategic Implications

The report includes preliminary estimates of the overall costs associated with either upgrading buildings to a usable condition or proceeding with demolition.

A key challenge identified through this assessment is the significant financial investment required to address the condition of the buildings. This issue will require careful consideration as future options for the site are explored through the master planning process. Given the scale of the costs involved, any major works undertaken by Council would likely require support from partner governments or external organisations.

The cost estimates provided in this report are high-level and indicative only. They are intended to offer contextual insight and should not be interpreted as definitive figures. Prior to any works being undertaken, these estimates would require further detailed analysis, refinement, and validation through appropriate technical and financial due diligence.

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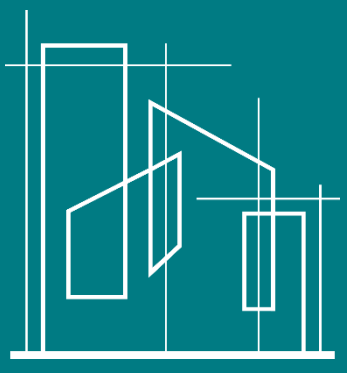
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MRA
BUILDING SURVEYORS

2 Wingrove Street, Alphington

Building consultancy report

June 2025



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18 June 2025

MRA24679 – 2 Wingrove Street, Alphington – compliance assessment report

We refer to our recent engagement to assist Council in assessing the compliance of specific buildings at the above site and are pleased to present this report.

1.0 Background

We understand that Council continues to monitor the environmental risks associated with the above site, which was previously part of the old Alphington landfill and for many years was known as the Melbourne Innovation Centre (**MIC**).

We further understand that there were legal issues between Council and some lessees in 2022 and 2023 relating to a prohibition of use of some buildings due to the unacceptably high asbestos risks.

We have been informed that, for the purposes of a future master planning exercise for the land at 2 Wingrove Street, Council wishes to be advised as to the following issues:

1. The structural integrity / adequacy of some existing buildings on site i.e. buildings used by licenced operators and those buildings not occupied or fit-for-purpose.

2. Compliance with relevant building legislation and any associated risks.

3. High-level cost estimates for each building i.e. demolition vs. rectification.

4. Recommendation for each building i.e. demolish or rectify.

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2.0 Building legislation

In Victorian building legislation, there is generally no obligation on building owners to continually upgrade existing buildings to meet current requirements. This reflects that law (including building legislation and the Building Code of Australia) is generally not retrospective i.e. amendments to existing laws are only applicable from the time the amendments are enacted.

Unless there is an express requirement to bring an existing building into compliance with new regulations, existing buildings will only need to be upgraded to current standards if there are substantial alterations to the building, …or the use of the building is changed (Victorian Building Authority, 2021).

An exception to this rule would be where the municipal building surveyor (**MBS**) of Council becomes aware of building work having occurred without a building permit being in place. Under these circumstances, the MBS could elect to issue enforcement under Part 8 of the Building Act 1993 (**Act**), which could require the building work conducted without building permits to be brought into conformance with current regulatory requirements.

Some other triggers for upgrades to existing buildings are summarised below.

2.1 Change of use

Regulation 229 of the Building Regulations 2018 states that ***"A person must not change the use of a building or place of public entertainment unless the building or place of public entertainment complies with the requirements of these Regulations applicable to the new use"***.

Therefore, as a baseline position, full compliance must be achieved when changing the use of a building. However, Regulation 229 does grant the relevant building surveyor (**RBS**) i.e. the person issuing the building permit for the change of use, significant power in providing exemptions or consents to partial compliance, having regard to the structural adequacy of the building, the health, safety and amenity of people using the building and the avoidance of the spread of fire to or from the building.

2.2 Substantial alterations

Regulation 233 of the Building Regulations 2018 states that **"…if the proposed alterations to an existing building, together with any other alterations completed or permitted within the previous 3 years, relate to more than half the original volume of the building, the entire building must be brought into conformity with these Regulations".**

Therefore, as a baseline position, full compliance must be achieved when carrying out major upgrades. However, Regulation 233 does grant the RBS significant power in providing exemptions or consents to partial compliance, having regard to the structural adequacy of the building, the health, safety and amenity of people using the building and the avoidance of the spread of fire to or from the building.

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This would be applicable to those buildings that require major work i.e. Buildings 3A-3D, 2A, 3E etc.

2.3 Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)

The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (**DDA**) differs from State building legislation in that it is complaints-based legislation i.e. a complaint under the DDA gives rise to the requirement for modifications that facilitate dignified access to and within building for persons with disabilities.

The DDA applies to all buildings, whether altered, existing or new. Also, given the hierarchy of Australian legislation, the DDA as a piece of Federal legislation would override any contrary requirements in Victorian law.

Whilst general comments have been made in this report with respect to the requirements of the accessibility provisions of the Building Code of Australia (**BCA**), this report is not intended to constitute an accessibility audit.

It is recommended that Council investigate their obligations under the DDA to ensure that measures are in place in the event that a claim under the DDA is received. This is particularly relevant since we understand that public access to the site is beginning to increase because of events being held on the land.

2.4 Enforcement under Part 8 of the Building Act 1993

If Council's MBS becomes aware of work having been carried out without a building permit, or any issues at the site that represent a danger to life, safety or health, he or she could choose to issue enforcement under Part 8 of the Act.

Should enforcement be received, this would be a trigger to carry out the upgrades or modifications that the MBS deems to be necessary.

There are several instruments available to the MBS to achieve this. A building notice permits a show cause response to be provided i.e. the case to be made as to why upgrades should not be carried out, whereas other instruments (building orders, emergency orders) do not permit a show cause response and require the nominated work to be carried out within a specified timeframe.

3.0 Site particulars

The site under consideration is located at 2 Wingrove Street in Alphington, a suburb in Melbourne's inner north. The site is bordered by the Darebin Parklands to the north and east, Yarana Road to the west and Wingrove Street / the Hurstbridge rail line to the south.

The site contains numerous buildings, some of which are in use but the majority which did not appear to be in use at the time of our inspection.

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We understand the buildings that are in use are all under individual and differing lease agreements.



Figure 1 – highlighted map of 2 Wingrove Street, Alphington - source: NearMap 2025

The following is a list of the buildings inspected:

- 1A, 1B & 1C (inclusive) – Main Administration Building, highlighted in yellow above. Currently utilised as a BCA Class 5 office. Note that these combined structures have been considered as a single building for the purposes of this assessment.
- 1D – mixed use building i.e. storage (Class 7b) and processing (BCA Class 8) – highlighted in red above.
- 2A – mixed use building i.e. office (Class 5) and storage (Class 7b) – highlighted in green above.
- 3A, 3B, 3C, 3D – mixed use building i.e. office (Class 5), storage (Class 7b) and processing (Class 8) – highlighted in cyan above.

- 3E – mixed use building i.e. storage (BCA Class 7b) and processing (BCA Class 8) – highlighted in mauve above.

- 4A – Fulton's Garden Supplies (BCA Class 6) – highlighted in orange above.

- 4B – office (Class 5), storage units (Class 7b) – highlighted in brown above.

- 4C – multiple buildings, including:
  - Farmer's Market administration / café / kitchen (BCA Class 5 & 6) – highlighted in blue above.
  - Farmer's Market storage building (BCA Class 7b) – highlighted in purple above.

- SES Buildings (Class 5 & 9b) – highlighted in light blue above.

4.0 Observations

To better understand the issues on site, and to give context to the compliance report, a thorough inspection of the relevant buildings and areas were undertaken by Martin Ryan (BS-U 60104) on 22 May 2025 and 28 May 2025.

Buildings 2A, 3A-3D and 3E were made safe with the use of protective bubbles around the entrances to reduce the risk from airborne asbestos. Suitable PPE was provided and worn whilst in the buildings.

The full findings of the inspection are contained in the tables within Appendix 1 of this report and a summary of the findings is presented below.

5.0 General commentary and site-wide issues

The following list represents a summary of issues that are considered site-wide, were not considered appropriate to include in the individual assessments for individual buildings, or were encountered in multiple buildings.

- None of the buildings on site are fully accessible for persons with disabilities, either to current or previous requirements. Access to the buildings themselves is variable i.e. some are unsealed paths, and multiple doors contain steps in thresholds. This results in an increased risk of claims under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth).

- No accessible carparking spaces are provided on the allotment i.e. dedicated car spaces for persons with disabilities, including statutory signage, adjacent shared space, linemarking and bollards. It is recommended that 1 accessible carparking space be provided in each side of the facility i.e. 1 in the Farmer's Market side and one in the Melbourne Innovation Centre (**MIC**) side.

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- Multiple buildings were observed to have undergone alterations and additions without building permits. Lack of building permit oversight of building work tends to lead to sub-standard outcomes and reduced safety levels, as was observed on site, and as elaborated on in this report. It is our recommendation that all building work conducted without building permits be removed, as rectification to achieve compliance would not be cost-effective.

- There are multiple external fire hydrants located on the allotment, but no fire hydrant booster assembly is provided at the street alignment. As part of future upgrades, consider the installation of a fire hydrant booster assembly.

- Access to some fire hydrant enclosures was made difficult by overgrown vegetation, particularly in the north-western corner of Building 3C. All vegetation inhibiting access to fire equipment should be trimmed as required.

- Stairs across the complex were observed to have multiple issues, including non-conforming and inconsistent dimensions of risers and goings, reduced width, lack of handrails and balustrades. This increases the risk of slips, trips and falls associated with access and egress.

- Doors in multiple buildings were observed to be fitted with multiple locks and / or non-conforming hardware. Refer to Appendix 1 for recommendations.

- Buildings exceeding 500m² in floor area are not provided with fire hose reels, reducing first response occupant firefighting capability. Refer to Appendix 1 for recommendations.

- There is a general lack of emergency lights and illuminated exit signs provided to buildings on site, resulting in reduced compliance and safety levels. Refer to Appendix 1 for recommendations.

- Without internal fire compartmentation or partial demolition, Buildings 3A, 3B, 3C and 3D require the provision of a sprinkler system complying with AS 2118.1-2017, a fire hydrant ring main and the provision of complying hardstand vehicular access, among other things.

- Issues with the compliance and maintenance of roof stormwater drainage systems were observed to all buildings, including broken, corroded and missing gutters and downpipes causing water to discharge directly onto the ground, resulting in reduced building longevity and issues with foundations. Refer to Appendix 1 for recommendations.

- Numerous buildings on site are confirmed to contain friable and non-friable asbestos, making them dangerous to enter and unsuitable to occupy. Permanent and complete remediation of asbestos-related issues should be considered by Council.

- Consultation with Council's Planning Department should be undertaken in order to determine if any of the new or altered structures required planning permits. If planning permits are required, and the structures are proposed to be retained, the planning permits should be obtained retrospectively, and any relevant conditions complied with.

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6.0 Structural adequacy assessment of each building

Council have requested to be advised of the structural adequacy of each of the buildings. As previously advised, MRA Building Surveyors are not structural engineers and the structural observations made in this report are not to be taken as final, not should any business decisions be based solely on these observations. For the avoidance of doubt, MRA Building Surveyors accepts no liability for decisions made based solely on the structural observations in this report. We recommend that specific structural advice be obtained from an endorsed structural engineer prior to making any business decisions.

For the purposes of this section of the report, structural adequacy assessment has been summarised as per the table below.

Rating	Description	Implications
Good	Structure appears sound with no significant defects.	Safe and serviceable; only routine maintenance needed.
Fair	Minor defects or deterioration present.	Monitor or undertake minor repairs to maintain adequacy.
Poor	Major defects or damage affecting structural integrity.	Immediate action required; may need repair, strengthening, or replacement.

Building no.	Building name	Structural adequacy
1A & 1B	Main administration building	Good
1C	Portable office	Fair
1D	Storage building	Fair
1E	Portable office	Fair
2A	Storage building / office	Poor
3A, 3B, 3C, 3D	Warehouse / factory / office	Poor
3E		Poor
4A	Fulton's Garden Supplies	Poor
4B	Garages / storage units	Poor
4C	Farmer's Market administration	Good
	St. John Ambulance building	Fair
	SES Buildings	Poor

Generally speaking, most of the warehouse / shed buildings had been the subject of unauthorised building work that was of substandard quality, including stairs, mezzanines, verandahs and intertenancy walls.

Multiple buildings were observed to be suffering from foundation settlement or slab heave, likely due to a combination of the site previously being a landfill and the poor condition and lack of maintenance to stormwater drainage systems across the site.

Several buildings also exhibited degradation and corrosion of structural members, again likely exacerbated by the poor condition and lack of maintenance to stormwater drainage systems across the site.

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For specific commentary on the structural issues observed in each building, please refer to the tables in Appendix 1.

7.0 Cost estimates for each building – demolition vs. rectification

As previously advised, MRA Building Surveyors are not quantity surveyors and the costs presented in this report are not to be taken as being final, nor should any business decisions be based solely on these costs.

For the avoidance of doubt, MRA Building Surveyors accepts no liability for decisions made based solely on the costings in this report. These numbers are indicative, high level and given for context only. We recommend that firm costing advice be obtained from a licensed quantity surveyor.

The following represent high level costs for demolition work vs. rectification for each building. All costs used Rawlinsons 2025 indicative demolition and refurbishment per square metre costs as a benchmark, with some addition for contingencies and educated interpolation / extrapolation of the indicative costs where the Rawlinson data does not specifically cover the scenario noted.

Please note that where demolition costs are noted, no allowance is made for site remediation / make good / paving etc. after demolition. This would be an additional cost.

No allowance is made in the cost of either demolition or rectification for consultant fees. These would be addition to the noted costs.

Costs are also provided for each building in isolation. There may be efficiencies and cost savings to be realised from grouping similar works e.g. demolishing multiple buildings in the same engagement.

Buildings 1A & 1B			
	Activity	**Budget cost**	**TOTAL**
Demolition	Physical demolition work and debris removal	$64,590	$89,590
	Contingency	$25,000	
Rectification	Refurbishment	$340,000	$365,000
	Contingency	$25,000	

Building 1D			
	Activity	**Budget cost**	**TOTAL**
Demolition	Physical demolition work and debris removal	$65,790	$89,590
	Contingency	$25,000	
Rectification	Refurbishment (strip out, make good)	$125,000	$150,000
	Contingency	$25,000	

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Building 1C & 1E			
	Activity	**Budget cost**	**TOTAL**
Demolition	Physical demolition work and debris removal	$64,590	$89,590
	Contingency	$25,000	
Rectification	Refurbishment	$140,000	$165,000
	Contingency	$25,000	

Building 2A			
	Activity	**Budget cost**	**TOTAL**
Demolition	Physical demolition work and debris removal	$34,500	$113,120
	Asbestos remediation and removal	$48,620	
	Contingency	$30,000	
Rectification	Refurbishment	$350,000	$428,620
	Asbestos remediation and removal	$48,620	
	Contingency	$30,000	

Buildings 3A, 3B, 3C, 3D			
	Activity	**Budget cost**	**TOTAL**
Demolition	Physical demolition work and debris removal	$306,592	$573,092
	Asbestos remediation and removal	$166,500	
	Contingency	$100,000	
Rectification	Refurbishment, including sprinkler installation	$1,950,000	$2,216,500
	Asbestos remediation and removal	$166,500	
	Contingency	$100,000	

Building 3E			
	Activity	**Budget cost**	**TOTAL**
Demolition	Physical demolition work and debris removal	$75,500	$179,500
	Asbestos remediation and removal	$54,000	
	Contingency	$50,000	
Rectification	Refurbishment	$362,250	$466,250
	Asbestos remediation and removal	$54,000	
	Contingency	$50,000	

For Building 4A, it is our opinion that rectification would be difficult to achieve without complete reconstruction of a new building in its place, given the extent of non-compliance and the fact that construction occurred without appropriate approvals in place. We have therefore not offered costs for this building.

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Building 4B			
	Activity	**Budget cost**	**TOTAL**
Demolition	Physical demolition work and debris removal	$65,790	$90,790
	Contingency	$25,000	
Rectification	Refurbishment including foundation and earthworks	$340,000	$365,000
	Contingency	$25,000	

Building 4C – Farmer's Market Main Building & Shed			
	Activity	**Budget cost**	**TOTAL**
Demolition	Physical demolition work and debris removal	$58,616	$83,616
	Contingency	$25,000	
Rectification	Refurbishment	$95,000	$130,000
	Contingency	$35,000	

SES Building			
	Activity	**Budget cost**	**TOTAL**
Demolition	Physical demolition work and debris removal	$39,726	$63,616
	Contingency	$15,000	
Rectification	Refurbishment	$93,600	$108,600
	Contingency	$15,000	

8.0 Recommendations for each building

Having considered the results of inspection findings and high level cost assessments, the following represents our recommendation for each of the buildings on site i.e. demolish or refurbish.

Building 1A

Building 1A displays a level of wear and tear generally consistent with its age, including several compliance defects, most notably with respect to accessibility for people with disabilities and narrow internal circulation spaces.

However, there is the potential to justify numerous existing conditions by Performance Solution assessments as part of an upgrade scope, which could limit the amount of physical building work involved, other than cosmetic enhancements and energy efficiency upgrades.

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Although it would be cheaper to demolish than to carry out a light refurbishment, the savings acquired through demolition of other buildings could potentially offset this. Plus, there would still be an income-generating asset at the completion of the refurbishment, which would not be the case with demolition.

Recommendation for Buildings 1A & 1B is to retain and refurbish.

Buildings 1C & 1E

Buildings 1C and 1E are portable buildings. It would not be cost-effective to upgrade them to meet current requirements, given their age, lack of structural footing and tie-down systems and access / egress issues.

It is therefore recommended that the portable buildings are removed from site.

Building 1D

Generally speaking, the main building structure is in reasonable condition.

The principal driver for the issues in Building 1D are the internal works that have been conducted without a building permit. If these works were removed, the building would be suitable for use as a storage shed.

It is therefore considered that the most cost-effective approach would be to remove all internal fitout works but retain the building structure.

Building 2A

The fabric of this building contains substantial asbestos. Remediation of the asbestos would essentially require stripping the building back to a frame state and then re-installing wall and roof cladding. This would require an assessment of the frame against current requirements and any required remediation work to be carried out. Given the age of the building, this could prove difficult.

The building also contains substantial building work that, in our professional opinion, appears to have been conducted without building permits, due to the substantial levels of non-compliance and associated safety risks.

It would therefore be more cost-effective to demolish the building than to carry out the extensive works that would be required to make it suitable for occupation.

Buildings 3A, 3B, 3C and 3D

The fabric of these buildings contains substantial asbestos, which has been disturbed over time and is now across the building in dust and debris. Remediation of the asbestos would essentially

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require stripping the building back to a frame state and then re-installing wall and roof cladding. This would require an assessment of the frame against current requirements and any required remediation work to be carried out. Given the age of the building, this could prove difficult.

The building also contains substantial building work that, in our professional opinion, appears to have been conducted without building permits, due to the substantial levels of non-compliance and associated safety risks.

The nature and extent of work required to make this building habitable would also trigger Regulation 233 (refer explanation above in this report), which would require a re-assessment of the building against current requirements.

It would therefore be more cost-effective to demolish the building than to carry out the extensive works that would be required to make it suitable for occupation.

Building 4A

It is our opinion that these structures were installed without building permits. This is evidenced by the extent of non-compliances that are evident.

There are signs of structural distress due to structural elements being undersized and timber posts being in direct contact with the ground, with no evidence of suitable treatment to permit this. A lack of footings and structural tie-downs is also evident.

Since these buildings have no legal status, **it would be more cost-effective to demolish these structures.**

Building 4B

This building exhibits numerous signs of structural distress, including foundation settlement / slab heave, causing internal levels to become unsafe.

This is likely exacerbated by the lack of maintenance to the stormwater systems, causing water to discharge directly onto the ground and to swell the foundation soil, coupled with the site's location over an old landfill

The building fabric is also in poor condition, with cladding impact-damaged and rusted. Roof framing is corroded, and timber posts are in direct contact with the ground, causing them to become degraded.

Internal work without building permits has also been conducted, resulting in non-complaint and unsafe outcomes.

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It would therefore be more cost-effective to demolish the building than to carry out the extensive works that would be required to address the structural issues and make it suitable for occupation.

Building 4C

Building 4C, the Farmer's Market Administration Building, has been the subject of building work in recent years. It is a building that is used frequently and therefore does not display the same level of degradation as other, unused buildings on site.

Whilst there are some issues, they are considered relatively minor and able to be addressed.

Recommendation for Building 4C is to retain and refurbish.

SES Buildings

The SES Buildings in the north-east corner of the site display multiple issues as detailed in Appendix 1, mostly relating to structure and access for persons with disabilities.

It would therefore be more cost-effective to demolish the buildings than to carry out the extensive works that would be required to address the structural issues and make it suitable for occupation.

Summary of recommendations for each building

Building number	Building name	Recommendation
1A & 1B	Main administration building	Refurbish / retain
1C	Portable office	Demolish / remove
1D	Portable office	Retain / strip-out
1E	Portable office	Demolish / remove
2A	Storage building / office	Demolish
3A, 3B, 3C	Warehouse / factory / office	Demolish
3E	Warehouse / office	Demolish
4A	Fulton's Garden Supplies	Demolish
4B	Garages / storage units	Demolish
4C	Farmer's Market administration	Refurbish
N/A	St. John Ambulance building	Retain
N/A	SES Buildings	Demolish / remove

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9.0 Conclusions and risks

Generally speaking, the buildings were found to be in a condition and level of compliance that is consistent with their age and evident lack of use / occupation and poor maintenance.

It is very difficult, and not expected, for existing buildings to meet current requirements. However, as outlined above, there are several triggers in building legislation for upgrades. Whilst it does appear that some of those triggers have been activated by the works that have occurred at the site over the years, the lack of building permits for a lot of the additions and alterations has resulted in the obligations for upgrades not being met.

There are obvious risks to the health and safety of people using the land that posed by the presence of asbestos in multiple buildings on site.

The structural and other safety issues associated with the extensive building work that has been carried out across the without building permits represent a risk to Council, should a person ever become injured when using these spaces; or should the Municipal Building Surveyor become aware of work having been conducted without building permits.

There is also a risk of claims under the DDA for the lack of access for persons with disabilities across the site. Although the DDA is a complaints-based piece of legislation, and therefore applies to any building, the risk at the subject site is comparatively higher due to the very low levels of accessibility compliance, the increasingly public nature of the site and the fact that obligations to carry out accessibility upgrades have not been met when works have been carried out in various areas of the site.

Another factor for consideration is the value of the land. Despite our recommendations to retain some buildings, if all buildings on site were to be demolished, the site remediated and the land rezoned for residential or commercial use, sale of the land would attract a considerable sum, which could be reinvested in building and / or upgrading other Council assets.

8.0 Exclusions and limitations

This report is subject to the following limitations:

- Our inspection of the buildings was limited to visual observations only, and therefore may not capture underlying issues not able to be seen.
- The assessment of access and features for persons with disabilities was limited to general observations and only related to the provisions of the Building Code of Australia (**BCA**) and referenced Australian Standards. This report does not constitute a full accessibility audit of the buildings and does not cover issues such as ergonomics or universal design.
- This report references legislative requirements in force at the time of the preparation and issue of the report. Future legislative changes may impact or void the advice contained in this report.

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- Where specific BCA clauses and sections are not covered in the tables appurtenant to this report, it can be taken that such a requirement is not applicable, that there is no non-compliance or that achieving compliance would be relatively simple.

- As outlined in our fee proposal and in the body of this report, MRA Building Surveyors are not quantity surveyors or structural engineers. We therefore recommend that findings in relation to costings are verified by quantity surveyors and findings in relation to structural adequacy are verified by structural engineers. MRA Building Surveyors accepts no liability for business decisions made on the costing and structural adequacy opinions provided in this report.

If there are any queries with respect to the information contained within this report, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Yours sincerely,



Martin Ryan
Director | Building Surveyor
MRA Building Surveyors Pty. Ltd.

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