



**Item 7.1 Petition – Reintroduction of the hard copy newsletter
'Divercity' into community circulation**

A Petition containing 111 signatures, was received from local residents.

The Petition states the following:-

The following Petitioners hereby request that the newsletter Divercity be printed in hard copy and delivered by post to citizens of Port Phillip.

We are fully aware that this practice could be an environmental and financial concern to Council but the fact that many of the senior citizens of Port Phillip are not comfortable with online procedures and also many are elderly, disabled or housebound due to mobility issues which factors far outweigh the former mentioned concerns.

As a suggestion, a compromise could be attained by Council and those citizens with special needs for this service to be reinstated and at the same time encompassing inclusive and diverse practices.

OFFICER COMMENT

In March 2020 Council resolved to transition from a printed magazine published five times per year to a monthly email newsletter. This decision was informed by customer research indicating a preference for online delivery as well as the financial and environmental impact of producing a printed magazine. The five-week lead time between finalising content and distribution to letterboxes was also an important consideration in the decision, as this often resulted in missed opportunities to promote events or provide up-to-date news.

Since November 2020 Council's online Divercity has been distributed to a growing email database, now with over 3,000 addresses. In making the decision to cease publication of the magazine, Council acknowledged that the lack of a printed option would make accessing Council news a challenge for our residents without access to or confidence with computers. Officers have created 'print-friendly' versions of the email newsletter and distributed these to libraries and ASSIST to print on-demand. The print-friendly version is also available to download from Council's website.

In that time, Council's Communications team have responded to 10 resident complaints related to the loss of the printed version of the magazine.

We acknowledge that there are additional options available to help bring Divercity to our residents who can't go online. Further measures being introduced include:

- Installation of a rack to hold copies of the printed version into our free community buses
- Home library service delivery to include offering a copy of the most recent issue of Divercity to customers
- Printed copies of Divercity available from Council Officers working in our delivered meals, home care and home maintenance services.

MEETING OF THE PORT PHILLIP CITY COUNCIL 5 MAY 2021



OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1.1 Receives and notes the Petition.
- 1.2 Thanks the petitioners, noting their passion and connection for their community.
- 1.3 Acknowledges that Council Officers have taken measures to provide a printed option of the online version of Divercity.
- 1.4 Notes that the online delivery of Divercity does not suit all in the municipality, particularly those without access to or who have difficulty with computers.
- 1.5 Supports the additional measures proposed by officers to widen the distribution of the printed version of Divercity.

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ATTACHMENTS Nil