1. Meeting Time and Venue

7:00 pm Epping RSL, Harvest Home Road, Epping.

2. Attendance

2.1 Members

Glenn Eckardt (President), Siradore El-Asmar (Vice President), Lee Robinson (Secretary and Treasurer), Kevin Balaam (subcommittee), Graeme Williams (committee), Mara Ferraro (committee), Colin Williams (committee member), David Stephens, David Ford, Ted Henning, Niko, Alison and Alan Kenworthy, Helen Henry, Keerat Singh.

2.2 Visitors

Alison McCormack (CEO of BN presenter),
Catherine Thwaites (CoW presenter), Russell Tricker (CoW presenter), Sadaf Saeed (CoW presenter).

Christine Williams.

2.3 Apologies

Shannon Johnson (Sponsor Bicycle Centre South Morang).

Peter Duncombe (committee member), Salman Sharmi (committee member), Neil Fitzgerald (member), Alice and Teri Yanni (members).

Councillor Jarrod Lappin.

3. Welcome and Presentation by the Chairman

This is the Annual General Meeting (AGM) for the 2024-2025 financial year that we are required to hold as an Incorporated Association. The role of Chairman was undertaken by the current President, Glenn Eckardt.

Glenn welcomed the members and guests present and thanked them for their attendance.

Whittlesea Bicycle Users Group acknowledges the Wurundjeri Willum Clan, Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet, and we pay our respects to their Elders past and present. We extend that respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Glenn gave a brief overview of the Whittlesea BUG (WBUG) since its inception in 2010.

4. Determination of Voting Members

The attendance of 15 members filled the requirement of at least 10% of the membership (7 members) entitled to vote, who were personally present to form a quorum to conduct the business of a General Meeting.

5. Confirmation of Previous Minutes

Motion: That the minutes of the 2024 Whittlesea Bicycle Users Group Inc. Annual General Meeting held on the 12-11-2024 be accepted as a true record of that meeting.

Moved: Graeme Williams Seconded: David Stephens.

The motion was declared carried by a simple majority on a show of hands.

6. Business Arising

No business arose from the previous AGM.

7. Presentations

7.1 Bicycle Network (BN)

Alison McCormack, CEO of BN.

Bicycle Network Update.

Alison informed the meeting that BN were celebrating their 50 year milestone. She supplied copies of the 50 Year Celebration edition of the Ride On magazine and BN “Arse Savers” to mark the occasion. She pointed out that the magazine contained an article covering their history.

Alison spoke about some of the priorities for Bicycle Network, including advocating for an increase in the Victorian State Government budget to fund the delivery of the Victorian Strategic Cycling Corridors. This will be particularly important in an election year in 2026.

Alison also discussed the need for stronger regulation and enforcement of laws for e-bikes to help reduce the number of illegal e-bikes and improve lithium-ion battery safety. There is still work to be done to influence the State Government to ban only illegal e-bikes and batteries on trains.

Glenn thanked Alison for her time at the meeting and for her continued support of WBUG and all the BUGs in general.

7.2 City of Whittlesea (CoW) Bicycle Initiatives

Russell Tricker, Sadaf Saeed and Catherine Thwaites from the Urban Design and Planning team at Whittlesea Council.

Russell, Sadaf and Catherine provided valuable insights on the infrastructure projects and behaviour change programs that have been implemented by the City of Whittlesea in 2024-25 and will continue to be implemented in 2026 and beyond as part of the Integrated Transport Plan 2024-34, Walking and Cycling Plan 2022-27 and Northern Trails Strategy 2022. The presentation highlighted the strength of the collaboration between Council and Whittlesea BUG.

The presentation from Council is attached.

8. Committee Reports

8.1 Rides in 2025

Types of rides conducted:

Sundays

- Short (<25 km), Medium (25 km–50 km) and Long (50 km plus) path rides.

Saturdays

- Faster road rides.
- Short, Medium and Long path rides.

Wednesdays

- Twilight path rides during Daylight Savings Time (now moved to Tuesdays).
- Lunchtime path rides.

Plus

- Gravel rides.
- Rail Trail rides - Lilydale to Warburton, Bellarine Peninsula and Great Southern Rail Trail.
- Special Events - Melbourn Roobaix, ATB and GVBR.

Statistics:

• Total number of rides: 128.
• Total distance ridden: 51,149 km.
• Male participation: 809 (79.2%).
• Female participation: 212 (20.8%).

An entertaining presentation was given, with photos highlighting our various rides held over the previous 12 months.

8.2 Advocacy and Community Engagement

Advocacy

Glenn's presentation covered how WBUG interacts with and provides input into Whittlesea's Council's Community Plan 2025-29 and their Community Action Plan 2025-26. We were involved in consultations on Donnybrook Road and the Edgars Creek Corridor Improvement Plan.

The strategies being utilized are the Northern Councils Alliance for transport advocacy with State and Federal governments and Whittlesea Youth Council to engage with younger riders and promote e-bike safety.

Collaborations

There was also our collaboration with Bicycle Network, other BUGs and active transport groups on:

- Avoiding City of Melbourne budget cuts.
- Preventing full e-bike bans on trains.
- Creating new BUGs.

- State Government Budget Campaign advocating for 20% of the transport budget to be allocated to Strategic Cycling Corridors.

Infrastructure Successes

Some of the infrastructure successes include:
- The off-road cycling paths along Bridge Inn Road.
- The Mill Park Reserve Shared Trail linking the South Morang Rail Path to Mill Park Leisure Centre, the All Abilities Play Space and the softball fields.
- Improved road maintenance along Plenty Rd.

Community engagement and promotion

These were achieved through a stand at the Whittlesea Community Festival, helping Whittlesea Council create a “Discover the Darebin Creek” promotional video.

Participation in the Biketober bike riding promotion where again the WBUG team did very well—the most kms ridden and the third-biggest number of riders. We again held our Mill Park Leisure Centre BBQ and ride and ran lunchtime rides from the Council Offices during Biketober.

Bike Maintenance Workshops and “Bike Riding Confidence and Skills” sessions were also held.

8.3 Website and Social Media

Kevin reported that we continue to host our website www.wbug.org.au as well as the Whittlesea BUG Facebook page which has 683 followers and the Whittlesea BUG Facebook group (private) which allows the 415 members to post or comment on cycling related matters.

We have 215 members in our Stack Team App group, which is our main medium for communicating our rides, events, and news to our members and registered users.

8.4 Membership

We currently have 67 members: 17 female and 50 male. 47 members (70%) have ridden with us this year.

Membership Locations

Our top 3 membership locations are still South Morang with 15 members, Mill Park with 7 members, and Doreen, Epping, Mernda and Wollert sharing equal third with 5 members each. The centre of gravity of our membership is slowly drifting north.

We have 8 members who have not supplied a home address of at least a suburb. This is well down on the 18 reported last year, so thank you to those who have responded to our request to help refine our membership data.

Length of Membership

Members for 2 years 42 (62%)
Members for over 5 years 26 (38%)
Members for over 10 years 18 (25.5%)

8.5 Treasurer's Report

A Financial Statement for the 2024-2025 Financial Year has been circulated.

In Summary

Our income was $1885 and our expenditure was $4516, creating a deficit of $2,631 to bring our total funds to $8,882.

Our Income

Our major source of income was our membership fees of $870 followed by $605 in donations, almost entirely through Kevin Balaam's participation as the BUG's representative on the focus group for the Wollert Waste Disposal proposal.

Unfortunately, we were unable to attract any funding from sponsorships or grants in this financial year, as we were so lucky with last year.

Our Expenditure

Our most significant expenditure by far was Grant Expenditure of $2055 which was for the Bicycle Maintenance courses. This is really just an accounting quirk, as we received this money in the previous financial year and spent it this financial year. This accounts for a significant portion of the deficit.

Membership Fees

The committee decided that we will maintain the current membership fee levels of $20 for adults, $15 concession and $50 for family memberships for the 2025-2026 membership year.

Conclusion

There is no cause for concern about our finances with the reported deficit, we get excesses and deficits caused by the timing of our financial year. If we were to average out our recent couple of years we can see that we have made a small profit.

The Treasurer's Statement declares that we are in a position to pay all our reasonably expected expenses for the 2025–26 financial year.

Motion: That the Treasurer's Report be accepted at the AGM.
Moved by: David Ford Seconded by: Colin Williams.
The motion was declared carried by a simple majority on a show of hands.

9. Committee Elections

All current positions were declared vacant. Nominations were requested for the following required committee positions:

President

The renomination for President by Glenn Eckardt was accepted unopposed.

Vice President

The nomination for Vice President by David Stephens was accepted unopposed.

Treasurer

The nomination for Treasurer by Keerat Singh was accepted unopposed.

Secretary

The renomination for Secretary by Lee Robinson was accepted unopposed.

Ordinary Members

The following people were elected as Ordinary Committee Members; Peter Duncombe, Salmon Sharmi, Mara Ferraro, Kevin Balaam and Helen Henry.

Motion: That the nominations received for committee positions be accepted at the AGM.
Moved by: Graeme Williams Seconded by: Colin Williams.
The motion was declared carried by a simple majority on a show of hands.

Glenn, on behalf of WBUG, thanked our outgoing committee for 2025 for their tireless efforts and great work, with a special thanks to Siradore El-Asmar, Graeme Williams and Colin Williams, who have decided not to renominate for the committee in 2026.

We are pleased and excited to see new people nominate to serve on the committee for 2026, including: David Stephens, Helen Henry, and Keerat Singh. A warm welcome is extended to each of them.

10. General Business

No items of General Business were raised.

11. Meeting Closed

The President thanked everybody for their support and interest in the BUG by attending its AGM and enabling all committee positions to be filled.

The meeting was declared closed at 9:00 PM.