

Media Response

8 October 2025

Please attribute the following response to Greater Dandenong City Council Executive Director Strategy and Corporate Services, Dr. Marjan Hajjari:

Our community is the most multicultural municipality in Australia. We have more people seeking asylum than anywhere else in Victoria. We work incredibly hard to support their needs in an organised, thoughtful and responsible way.

We truly appreciate Bakhtar Community Organisation's contribution and that they serve a legitimate community need in Greater Dandenong.

That's why, three years ago, we agreed that the organisation could temporarily store supplies at the Noble Park Scout Hall while seeking a permanent storage solution.

We expected the supplies would be stored for a few months and communicated clearly to Bakhtar Community Organisation that this was a temporary arrangement.

We had explained to our community that we had purchased this site with a view to demolishing the hall and sheds, to provide much-needed open space. Over the past three years, we have provided various extensions to the Bakhtar Community Organisation, along with advice, letters of support and help in seeking grant funding to make alternate arrangements.

However, it is now imperative that we take the site back to proceed with our commitment to provide open space to the wider community. The site is not particularly appropriate for the distribution of household goods. The buildings have been broken into numerous times and there is an ongoing problem with dumped rubbish. The ongoing costs to Council of removing dumped rubbish are high. It has also become very costly to continue repairing buildings that are scheduled for demolition. We have received numerous complaints that the situation is having a negative impact on community amenity.

Despite Council's support and advice to the Bakhtar Community Organisation, they have not secured alternative premises over the past three years.

In August, we issued a notice to vacate by Monday 6 October, advising the organisation they needed to remove their items and vacate the property. We had meetings with the group before and after this notice where we offered to assist with the responsible distribution of any remaining material aid items. This offer was not accepted.

The Bakhtar Community Organisation cannot access the buildings and sheds as they are now being prepared for demolition. Some items are being removed and stored at a Council facility. We have advised that the organisation must remove them

from this location by 17 November, or we will distribute any remaining quality items to local charitable organisations.

ENDS

Media Enquiry

8 October 2025

From the Dandenong Journal

This is a long-running issue, involving three sheds used by the Bakhtar charity for storing goods on council-owned land at 61 Heyington Crescent, Noble Park North.

Bassir Qadiri from Bakhtar CO tells us that the locks have been changed on the buildings, meaning they no longer have access to the stored goods.

He believes that demolition of the buildings is looming.

1. Can you confirm that the council changed locks and has barred Bakhtar from accessing the buildings?
2. When is demolition expected to commence?
3. What is to happen to the furniture, clothes, whitegoods and other donated goods inside the buildings?
4. What notice was given to Bakhtar of this move? Why didn't the council wait until Bakhtar vacated the premises?
5. Have any alternative storage sites been found for Bakhtar to continue their charitable deeds?
6. Please feel free to add any other context for the council's actions - including repeated break-ins at the site.