



2026-2027 Advocacy Priorities



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Message from the Mayor



The City of Greater Dandenong is proud to be home to one of Australia's most vibrant and diverse communities. It is with great pride that I present Greater Dandenong City Council's Advocacy Priorities for 2026–27.

This document outlines Council's commitment to representing the needs and aspirations of our community. It reflects our active approach to working with the Australian and Victorian Governments, industry, and community partners to strengthen our collective voice and secure the investment needed to drive meaningful change.

Our advocacy priorities focus on the issues that matter most to our community. These include addressing cost of living pressures, improving housing affordability, enhancing transport and connectivity, investing in community infrastructure, supporting local business and jobs, and taking action on sustainability and climate resilience.

These priorities have been shaped by ongoing engagement with our community and stakeholders, ensuring our advocacy is grounded in local insight and reflects the real challenges and opportunities facing Greater Dandenong.

As our city continues to grow, we are committed to ensuring that growth is supported by the right infrastructure, services and opportunities. Through this advocacy agenda, Council is calling for coordinated action across all levels of government to deliver the outcomes our community needs now and into the future.

I invite our community, local Members of Parliament and partners to work with us to progress these priorities and help create a more connected, inclusive and thriving Greater Dandenong.

Councillor Sophie Tan
Mayor of the City of Greater Dandenong



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Introduction

The Greater Dandenong City Council is committed to representing the needs and aspirations of our vibrant community. We actively pursue partnerships with the Australian and Victorian Governments, other councils, and advocacy groups to strengthen our collective voice and secure the resources needed to drive meaningful change.

Our engagement with peak bodies further amplifies the voice of local government, helping to shape policy reform that reflects the values of our residents. The key focus areas of our strategic objectives remain unchanged from 2021, underscoring the enduring aspirations we all share for Greater Dandenong:

- A socially connected, safe and healthy city
- A city that respects and celebrates diversity, our history and the arts
- A city of accessible, vibrant centres and places
- A green city committed to a sustainable future
- A city that supports business, entrepreneurship, quality education and employment outcomes
- A Council that demonstrates leadership, responsible use of public resources and a commitment to investing in the community

What's inside

This document outlines Council's advocacy priorities for 2026–27, supporting engagement with Members of Parliament and key stakeholders. It presents eleven focus areas, detailing:

- The opportunity
- Why it matters
- What Council is asking for

We invite our local MPs and partners to collaborate with us in delivering meaningful outcomes for Greater Dandenong.

Advocacy Priorities 2026-27



1 Back Your Neighbour



2 Poverty Is Everyone's Business



3 Housing



4 Transport



5 Sport and Recreation



6 Art and Cultural Spaces



7 Business Development and Economic Growth



8 Sustainability



9 Major Projects

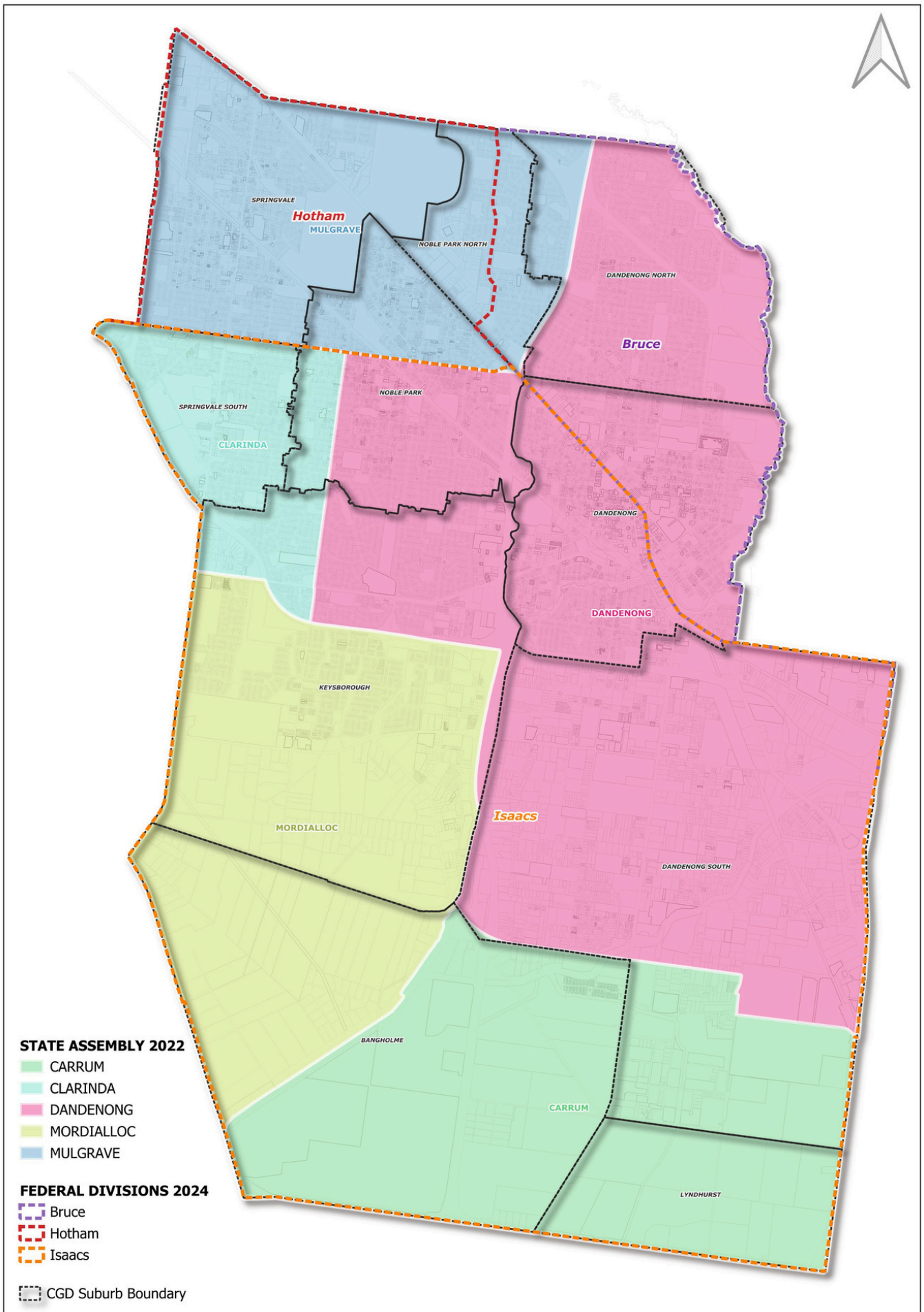


10 Community Safety



11 Community Public Health

Boundaries of State and Federal Electorates



Community Snapshot

Population



167,000
residents in 2024.
Predicted to grow
over the next decade
to **185,000**

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2023



615
residents are of
Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander Heritage

Source: Census 2021



over **154**
birthplaces

Source: Census 2021



2/3
of people are
born overseas



24,000
migrants have
arrived since 2016



5,500
immigrants settled
in 2022–23

Source: Census 2021



700
people seeking asylum, the second
highest number in Victoria

Source: Settlement Reports, 2022/23.

Employment



Unemployment rate
6.4%

114,506
people work in
Greater Dandenong

Source: REMPLAN June 2024

Housing



62%
owned or being
purchased



1/5
of renting households are at risk of housing
related financial stress or homelessness



2,366
people are homeless or living in
severely overcrowded dwellings

1. Back Your Neighbour



The opportunity

Council welcomes the Federal Government's reforms of the Protection Visa system, which has offered permanency to thousands of refugees in Greater Dandenong.

There are still at least 700 people in the City who face the prospect of persecution and conflict in their homelands. Granting them permanent residency would provide safety and protection for children and families.

**BACK YOUR
NEIGHBOUR**

#Back Your Neighbour

The 'Back Your Neighbour' campaign led by Council, is supported by **over 40 Local Governments** and more than **70 community organisations nationally**.

Why it matters

Greater Dandenong is home to the second highest number of people living on Bridging Visas in Victoria.

Many families and children in Dandenong do not have work rights and/or access to basic services. As a result, they live in poverty and seek desperate financial and material aid from local services and Council.

From **2024**, Council's **Community Connector program** has supported **over 1,000 families** many of whom are people seeking asylum - with food, clothing, and emergency relief.

What Council is asking for

- Provide a **fair and clear path for refugees** with unresolved immigration status to get permanent protection.
- Give people a **valid visa with work rights** so they can support themselves.
- Make **health care, financial help and important services easier to access** so people can participate fully in society.

2. Poverty is Everyone's Business Campaign



1 in 5 people in Greater Dandenong live below the poverty line.



Since 2020 Council has invested over **\$1.7 million** in poverty alleviation with a further **\$8.8 million** invested in community grants.

#Poverty is everyone's business

The opportunity

Greater Dandenong continues to experience some of the highest rates of poverty in Victoria. Council is seeking support from all levels of government to deliver a coordinated, place-based response through an investment of **\$1.8 million annually over five years** to lead place-based initiatives tackling **food insecurity, homelessness, financial hardship, and social exclusion.**

Why it matters

Rising living costs and limited affordable housing continue to deepen disadvantage. The Anti-Poverty Consortium, a partnership between Council and local organisations, delivers practical support and advocates for long-term change by elevating the voice of lived experience and working together to create community-driven solutions.

What Council is asking for

Early intervention and education

- **\$254,000** supporting new arrivals to connect to community via expanding Council's Community Connector program.
- **\$159,000** for the Multicultural Community Engagement Network to educate through a multicultural lens about people seeking support early and not delaying engagement.

Monitoring and Evaluation **\$30,000**

Place-based community support

- **\$287,000** to fund financial counsellors and 'bring your bill' events by grass-roots community organisations
- **\$150,000** to test innovative solutions for addressing local disadvantage

Homelessness/Vulnerable persons outreach

- **\$790,000** social work outreach for hotspots as modelled by the South East Community Links and Metro Trains pilot

A place for respite

- **\$130,000** for Cornerstone Contact Centre to provide a safe place for rough sleepers to seek respite

3. Housing



The opportunity

Greater Dandenong aims to be a vibrant, inclusive community with diverse housing options for all. Council is committed to net zero goals and integrating sustainability into housing affordability to support growth and resilience.

Why it matters

Housing costs in Greater Dandenong have risen faster than incomes for decades, leaving many residents behind. In 2023, only 6% of rentals were affordable for low-income earners. By creating affordable, diverse housing on public land, Council can ease housing pressure, support local jobs, and make Dandenong a more inclusive, sustainable place to live.

What Council is asking for

- **Funding for a pilot program** in Greater Dandenong working with manufacturing sector to **enable Modern Construction Methods** for faster and more affordable Housing delivery
- **Exempting council-owned land** from the Windfall Gains Tax when Rezoned for Social and Affordable Housing
- **Social Housing Priority** for Very Low and Low-Income Households
- Strengthen **homelessness** prevention and early intervention
- Deliver better **homelessness** crisis responses across South East Metropolitan Melbourne
- Deliver a significant increase in **social housing** supply
- Increase **specialist homelessness** funding to match rising demand
- A statewide **homelessness** governance, data, reporting and system alignment

Among renters in Greater Dandenong, 21% of families live in acute financial hardship, compared to 16% across Victoria.

- **Rooming house** residents to remain on the Victorian Housing Register waiting list even after accepting a placement in a rooming house, recognising the transitional nature of this accommodation

Stronger and more consistent regulations and operational guidelines for **rooming houses** across Victoria including:

- Minimum standards for safety, hygiene and management
- Mandatory compliance checks and licensing requirements
- How to reduce impacts on surrounding communities
- Accountability for operators and landlords

4. Transport



The opportunity

Greater Dandenong is advocating for key transport upgrades to improve safety, access, and connectivity. Priorities include **\$19 million** for the Jacksons/ Elonera/ Chandler Road corridor, completing the Djerring Trail and safer intersections.

Why it matters

Safe, accessible transport is vital for community wellbeing and economic growth. Upgrades to the Jacksons Road corridor will reduce accidents and improve traffic flow. **Completing the Djerring Trail** will boost active transport and ease congestion.

What Council is asking for

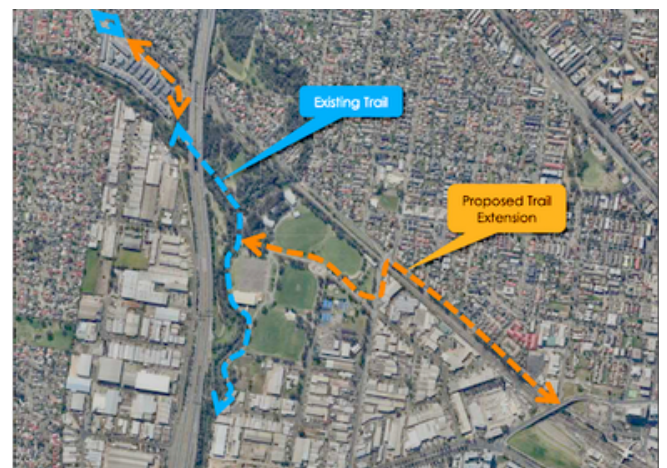
Road safety projects

- **\$4 million** in infrastructure upgrades and improvements to the Jacksons Road, Elonera Road and Chandler Road corridor including pedestrian signals on Chandler Road near Yarraman Road.
- **\$4 million** for the removal of the Heatherton Road, Douglas Street roundabout in Noble Park, to be replaced with traffic lights.
- **\$3 million** for the full signalisation of the intersection between Kirkham Road and Frankston Dandenong Road.

Djerring Trail Extension:

- The Djerring Trail was proposed as part of the Caulfield to Dandenong level crossing removals but was only delivered up to Yarraman Station and needs to be extended into Dandenong CBD.

Project cost: \$8 million



4. Transport continued



The opportunity

Greater Dandenong is seeking to improve transport access and equity through better bus connectivity, targeted route upgrades, and a trial demand-responsive service in Dandenong South. These initiatives will support access to jobs, education, and services—especially for older adults and people with disabilities.

Why it matters

Accessible options for older people and those with disabilities will ensure Greater Dandenong is inclusive for all.

Better public transport links will connect residents to jobs and services, while safer intersections and lower speed limits will protect pedestrians.

What Council is asking for

- More consistent, reliable and accessible public transport options for people with a disability and older people when using taxis and other ride sharing providers.

A **bus transformation program** for the South East focussing on rationalisation and modernisation of the bus network. Priority projects to improve buses within Greater Dandenong include:

- Funding of a 12-month trial of a Dandenong South Demand Responsive Bus Service for the Dandenong South National Employment and Innovation Cluster
- Increase frequency and coverage on the 828 bus service through Greater Dandenong between Berwick and Hampton
- Upgrading the Route 800 bus to a Smartbus standard service

5. Sport and Recreation



The opportunity

Council is seeking investment to upgrade key sport and recreational spaces and projects include revitalising and improving reserves across the municipality. Note: no co-contribution possible.

Why it matters

In Greater Dandenong, physical activity levels are low, and health outcomes lag behind other areas in Victoria. These projects will provide safer, more accessible places for sport and recreation for all our community.

What Council is asking for

who meets Australian physical activity guidelines ?

City of Greater Dandenong

49%



Victoria

73%



- **\$3.6 million** complete redevelopment of the JC Mills Hockey pitch, lighting, fencing, and playing facilities to align with Hockey Victoria and Australia playing standards*.
- **\$1.55 million** neighbourhood playground, picnic facilities and lighting at **Greaves Reserve***.
- **\$2.6 million** refurbishment and extension to **Rowley Allan Reserve** pavilion, to include female change facilities.
- **\$1.2 million** Public Active Recreation Infrastructure at **Frederick Wachter Reserve**, including multi-court, bouldering, picnic facilities, landscaping, furniture*.
- **\$840,000** Pump track at **Frederick Wachter Reserve***.
- **\$800,000** neighbourhood playground at **Rowley Allan Reserve***.
- **\$380,000** to renew the batting cage at **Robert Booth Reserve**. Design underway.
- **\$150,000** for a Greater Dandenong Stadium growth feasibility study, including a growth and development of Dandenong Stadium, and other stadium facilities in the municipality.

- **\$750,000** **Burden Park** lawn bowls amenities upgrade and fenced dog off-leash area.*
- **\$600,000** **Alan Corrigan Reserve** playground upgrade.

- **\$5.2 million** **Tatterson Park** Public Active Recreation Infrastructure, including multi-court (basketball and futsal), skate park, picnic facilities, landscaping, public lighting, furniture*.
- **\$1.8 million** **Tatterson Park** playground extension and bike education*.

- **\$630,000** neighbourhood playground at **Bakers Road Reserve**.*
- **\$400,000** multipurpose courts and fencing at **Barry Powell Reserve**.*

*Projects fully designed and shovel ready.

6. Art and Cultural Spaces



The opportunity

Council is seeking investment to support the renewal of cultural spaces like Dandenong New Art (DNA).

Why it matters

The expansion of public art across the city enriches spaces and reflect the city's cultural diversity. improved accessibility in exhibition design and audience engagement, and a purpose-built education/activity space to enhance participation opportunities for young visitors.

What Council is asking for

For the **renewal of cultural spaces**, including Dandenong New Art (DNA Lab):

DNA Fit-Out

- This investment would be used to deliver museum-quality display systems, professional acoustic treatments, integrated and upgrade-ready AV and interactive technologies, improved accessibility in exhibition design and audience engagement, and a purpose-built education/activity space to enhance participation opportunities for young visitors.
- Indicative cost: **\$1.12–\$1.57 million.**

Creative Industry Space/DNA Lab

The DNA Lab would address a critical infrastructure and support a gap in Melbourne's southeast by providing:

- Public presentation opportunities for emerging artists
- Increased visibility of culturally diverse storytelling
- Reduced barriers to entry for young and migrant creatives
- Indicative cost: **\$600,000–\$1 million.**

7. Business Development and Economic Growth



The opportunity

Council is seeking investment to deliver the Southern State Significant Industrial Precinct (SSIP) Future Readiness – State of Play, Audit and Investment Roadmap, a decision-ready initiative to safeguard and strengthen Victoria’s most important industrial and manufacturing precinct.

Why it matters

The SSIP in Dandenong South is Victoria’s largest and most productive manufacturing and industrial precinct, underpinning critical state and national supply chains across advanced manufacturing, food, pharmaceuticals, logistics and exports.

Without a coordinated, evidence-driven approach, future investment risks becoming fragmented, reactive and less effective.



The City’s economic output was \$58.23 billion and regional exports valued at \$29.72 billion in 2023.

Source: REMPLAN

What Council is asking for

Southern SSIP Future Readiness - State of Play, Audit and Investment Roadmap

This initiative aims to create a robust and up-to-date evidence base that will facilitate coordinated infrastructure planning, land optimization, sustainability efforts, and transition readiness.

It seeks to enhance future industry attraction at a precinct level, ensuring that the Southern SSIP remains globally competitive, investment-ready, and in alignment with State and Federal priorities for advanced manufacturing, clean industry, and productivity.

The project will provide a thorough, action-oriented assessment to foster confident investment from both public and private sectors. The project will deliver:

1. State of Play and Audit
2. Industry 4.0, Innovation and Transition Readiness
3. Future Industry and Investment Analysis
4. Clear Investment Roadmap
5. Private Investment Opportunity Identification

Funding Request: \$250,000

8. Sustainability



The opportunity

Council is seeking funding to invest in climate resilient infrastructure, promote energy upgrades for the business sector and the community, and support programs, education and activities that promote sustainability and a circular economy.

Why it matters

Greater Dandenong City Council has declared a climate and ecological emergency and has committed to urgent action on climate change. Our Bright Green Future Strategy and Action Plan 2025-35 commits Council to achieving net zero by 2035 and adopts a community net zero target of 2040. Council's sustainability vision is to be a city committed to a green future.

To achieve this, Council is seeking opportunities to invest in climate resilient infrastructure, promote energy upgrades for the business sector and the community, and support programs, education and activities that promote sustainability and a circular economy.

What Council is asking for

Investment in climate resilient infrastructure that reduces the vulnerability of our community in response to climate related risks.

- **\$9 million** to fully electrify the Noble Park Aquatic Centre as it is one of Council's largest emitters
- **\$250,000** to investigate key community infrastructure and the feasibility of electrifying these assets to support community adaptation and resilience, while progressing Council's net zero target
- **\$4 million** to electrify Dandenong Civic Centre and contribute to an innovative modernisation of a Council asset
- Support and gazettal of strengthened Environmental Sustainable Development (ESD) requirements in the Planning Scheme and Building Regulations aligning with Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment (CASBE) recommendations

8. Sustainability continued



What Council is asking for

Investment in programs, education and activities to promote a circular economy by reducing waste and improving opportunities for reuse.

Programs to support and advocate to the local business sector and wider community regarding the importance of reducing emissions through electrification, energy efficiency upgrades and other methods.

Total program cost \$500,000 to:

- Develop a dashboard and **digitalise data tracking for illegal dumping** to improve data-driven decision making, improve operational efficiency and develop targeted education strategies to reduce illegal dumping in the municipality to meet council and state government investments to tackle illegal dumping
- **Upgrade bin infrastructure** in selected areas within the municipality to introduce innovative ways of managing waste collections, improve recycling and reduce litter in busy locations within the municipality. This project will help council align with council, state and national Waste and Circular Economy (CE) policies and targets, aiming to reduce litter, increase resource recovery rates, and lower carbon emissions
- Engage with **local industrial businesses on electrification**, including the ability to conduct audits and connect industry with renewable energy suppliers



9. Major Projects



The Opportunity

Greater Dandenong is seeking investment in key projects to support a growing, diverse community, upgrading Dandenong Station, exploring a new rail link and delivering a central Community Hub.

Why it matters

These projects will improve transport, education, and community amenity making Greater Dandenong safer, more connected, and inclusive, while boosting local opportunities and long-term resilience.

What Council is asking for

Upgrade Dandenong Station

Deliver a Strategic Assessment, Network Integration Plan and Business Case for upgrading Dandenong Station. Costing around **\$800,000** these reports pave the way for:

- Unlocking development potential and driving land use change around Dandenong Station

Planning for a **\$400 million** rebuild of the station to:

- provide an additional platform, and increase capacity of the bus interchange to boost rail and bus service provision and align with the Metro Tunnel and Suburban Rail Loop projects
- provide a customer centric design including wider and longer platforms and direct DDA access between platforms and the surrounding land uses and services to amenity and compliance with current accessibility standards

Create a Noble Park Library Lounge

Council is advocating for the construction /renovation of Paddy O'Donoghue Centre to create a Noble Park Library Lounge. It is costed at around \$800,000 for construction works and to develop the site into a mini community hub model. Approximately **\$630,000** per year would enable Council to undertake a two-year pilot approach to ensure continued operations for the site.

Multicultural Place Upgrade

With around 10,000 people a day, this popular public gathering space is where people meet up and proceed to the many exciting shopping and eating experiences within Springvale. The concept design to revitalise Multicultural Place and the adjacent laneway includes new street furniture, pavement upgrades, lighting and art interventions, green spaces, improved waste management infrastructure, seating/tables for outdoor dining, recreation and play spaces.

Estimated Budget: \$5 million

9. Major Projects continued

Dandenong Community Hub



The Opportunity

The Council is seeking funding for a new Dandenong Community Hub, a modern facility consolidating key community services in Central Dandenong.

After a decade of planning and consultation, there's clear community demand for an inclusive space. The Council is developing a design that respects the site, budget, and sustainability, while upholding the community's vision.

Why it matters

As the civic and economic heart of Melbourne's south-east, Central Dandenong is undergoing major transformation, with increasing density and demand for accessible, integrated community infrastructure.

A new community hub will:

- Provide accessible, co-located services for families, young people and older residents
- Support social inclusion and cultural connection in one of Australia's most diverse communities
- Enable more efficient service delivery through shared spaces and partnerships
- Act as a civic anchor within the Market Precinct, driving activation and community life

What Council is asking for

Community Infrastructure

- Delivery of a new multi-purpose community hub (approx. 2,000–2,200m²)
- Flexible spaces including community rooms, meeting spaces, maker spaces, and co-working areas
- Integrated café and community lounge to support activation and social connection

Early Years and Family Services

- Four-room early years facility (childcare and maternal child health services)
- Integrated indoor-outdoor play spaces supporting families and young children

Public Realm and Open Space

- High-quality landscaped courtyards and outdoor community spaces
- Integration with the broader Market Precinct and pedestrian network
- Provision for a significant, family-friendly play space, a key community priority

Design is aligned to a **\$42 million Community Hub**.

9. Major Projects continued

Dandenong Market Precinct Plan



The Opportunity

The Dandenong Market Precinct Plan is a 20-year strategy that aims to honor the market's heritage while ensuring its future success. It integrates elements from the Revitalising Central Dandenong program and outlines actions to address key issues, including land use, urban design, economic investments, transportation, public spaces, and community infrastructure.

Why it matters

Dandenong Market stands as Melbourne's second oldest and largest market. Since 1866, it has been instrumental in the growth of the 'Gateway to Gippsland,' providing vital support to local farmers and small businesses in the Dandenong area.

A Vision for the Future

The Precinct Plan marks a significant advancement in ensuring a vibrant, prosperous, and sustainable future for this iconic area. It serves as a crucial step forward in securing the market's ongoing success.



What Council is asking for

Immediate priorities of the Precinct Plan include:

- **Renewed Palm Plaza.** A contemporary, activated, and accessible pedestrian street that is vibrant and safe. It would feature a tree-lined boulevard with integrated water management.
Project cost: \$20 million
- **Investigation of Clow St/Cleeland St Intersection Realignment.** Improve connectivity, enhance safety, and support a more balanced and accessible transport network that encourages active and public transport use, while maintaining functionality for private vehicles. This investigation will inform future infrastructure upgrades and urban design improvements that align with broader revitalisation goals for the precinct.
Project cost: \$8 million

10. Community Safety



The opportunity

Community safety in Greater Dandenong involves reducing crime, anti-social behaviour, supporting vulnerable community members and promoting social cohesion.

It's more than just policing and security - it's about building a cohesive, resilient community where everyone feels safe and connected.

Why it matters

Investing in community safety helps address the root causes of crime, creating safer, more resilient neighbourhoods. With the right support, communities can flourish and prosper, fostering a sense of belonging, wellbeing, and opportunity for all residents.

What Council is asking for

Crime prevention initiatives

\$600,000 investment to further develop place-based, community-led crime prevention initiatives across Greater Dandenong.

This funding would support the 3-year delivery of innovative local safety and community cohesion building programs, taking the successful Empowering Communities program model, and expanding it across Greater Dandenong. This project will strengthen social cohesion, reduce crime, and build community capacity in priority neighbourhoods.

\$800,000 to enhance perceptions of safety and community confidence in the Springvale Activity Centre.

This funding would support targeted security upgrades, arts-based activation, and community engagement to strengthen safety outcomes across the activity centre.

Top crimes reported 2025



3,110
Theft from a motor vehicle



1,661
Criminal damage



1,983
Theft



1,377
Steal from a retail store



1,947
Breach of family violence order



1,235
Drug possession

Family Violence

2,584
Family violence incidents

75%
Victim survivors are women

8th
Highest breach of intervention order rate across all Victoria



11. Community Public Health

Gambling



The opportunity

For many residents, gambling is a cause of financial hardship, poverty, personal stress, family conflict and violence, unemployment and even homelessness.

Governments have the means to take steps to reduce the enduring burden of gambling losses, thereby improving the financial wellbeing of residents, easing family conflict and improving welfare of the community.


Why it matters

In 2024-25, \$141 million was lost to electronic gaming machines (EGMs or 'pokies') in Greater Dandenong – the second highest rate of losses in Victoria. Meantime, the relentless and aggressive promotion of sports gambling prompts a growing number of young people to gamble regularly.

In communities of financial disadvantage, facing the burden of rising household costs, measures to reduce gambling losses would improve the prosperity and wellbeing of many local families.

What Council is asking for

- **National ban** on gambling advertising, including online gambling
- A prompt and full implementation of the State Government's pledge to introduce a **mandatory pre-commitment scheme**
- **Reductions in State Government 'caps' or limits** upon the number of EGMs permitted in communities of elevated gambling losses and socio-economic disadvantage
- **Prohibition** of Australian parliamentarians, candidates and political parties by the gambling industry



We acknowledge the Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters, now known as the City of Greater Dandenong. We honour their enduring connection to Country, their Cultural knowledge, and their sustainable stewardship of these lands and waterways over thousands of generations.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present, recognising their vital role in preserving and protecting the sacred lands and waterways of their Ancestors, their places, Traditional Cultural practices, and stories. We also acknowledge the Bunurong Land Council as the Registered Aboriginal Party, responsible for caring for the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage of this area.

In the spirit of reconciliation, we value the opportunity to learn from and work alongside Bunurong peoples, as Traditional Custodians.