Greater Dandenong



Agenda

Council Meeting

Monday 21 September 2026, 7:00 pm

Dandenong Civic Centre, 225 Lonsdale Street,
Dandenong, Victoria 3175

greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au

Council Meeting Details

At the time of printing this Agenda, the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 21 September 2026, will be open to the public to attend in person but will be subject to venue seating capacity. This will be a hybrid meeting consisting of Councillors attending in person and remotely.

If we are unable to accommodate you indoors, you will still be able to watch the webcast live on the Urban Screen in Harmony Square. To view the webcast and stay informed about the status of Council Meetings please visit Council's website.

The Civic Centre basement carpark will be opened to all members of the public during library opening hours. Any parking in this area will be subject to availability and time limits as notified by any signage posted.

Your Councillors

Mayor Sophaneth (Sophie) Tan

Deputy Mayor Phillip Danh

Cr Isabella Do

Cr Lana Formoso

Cr Rhonda Garad

Cr Alice Phuong Le

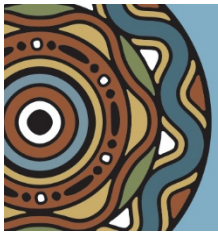
Cr Jim Memeti

Cr Bob Milkovic

Cr Sean O'Reilly

Cr Loi Truong

Cr Melinda Yim



We acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land, the Bunurong People, and pay respect to their Elders past and present.

We recognise and respect their continuing connections to climate, Culture, Country and waters.

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Online: relayservice.gov.au
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Acknowledging Bunurong Country

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COUNCIL OBLIGATIONS AND AGENDA REPORTS

Council has several obligations in relation to its Community Vision, Council Plan, Instruments of Legislation and Council policy. These are summarily considered in each Agenda report and further details are added as required. The obligations are as follows:

Community Vision 2040 (Community Vision | Greater Dandenong Council)

After consultation with the Greater Dandenong community on what kind of future they wanted for themselves and our city, the Greater Dandenong People's Panel developed a new Community Vision for 2040:

> *The City of Greater Dandenong is a home to all.*
> *It's a city where you can enjoy and embrace life through celebration and equal opportunity.*
> *We harmonise the community by valuing multiculturalism and the individual.*
> *Our community is healthy, vibrant, innovative and creative.*
> *Our growing city is committed to environmental sustainability.*
> *Welcome to our exciting and peaceful community.*

Reports in this Agenda will identify when any of the above principles are relevant.

The Council Plan 2025-29 (Council Plan 2025-29 | Greater Dandenong Council)

The Council Plan describes the kind of future the Council is working for, and how Council will do this over four years. The Council Plan has the following key strategic objectives:

- *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.*

Reports in this Agenda will identify when any of the above principles are relevant.

The Overarching Governance Principles of the Local Government Act 2020

Section 9 of the *Local Government Act* 2020 states that a Council must in the performance of its role give effect to the overarching governance principles. These are:

a) Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law;
b) priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations;
c) the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted;
d) the municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making;
e) innovation and continuous improvement are to be pursued;
f) collaboration with other Councils and Governments and statutory bodies is to be sought;
g) the ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured;
h) regional, state and national plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision making;
i) the transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

Also, in giving effect to the overarching governance principles above, a Council must take into account the following supporting principles:

a) the community engagement principles (section 56);
b) the public transparency principles (section 58);
c) the strategic planning principles (section 89);
d) the financial management principles (section 101);
e) the service performance principles (section 106).

Reports in this Agenda will identify when any of the above principles are relevant.

The Gender Equality Act 2020

The *Gender Equality Act 2020* came into operation on 31 March 2021 and requires councils to take positive action towards achieving workplace gender equality and to promote gender equality in their policies, programs and services. The objects of the Act are as follows:

a) to promote, encourage and facilitate the achievement of gender equality and improvement in the status of women; and

b) to support the identification and elimination of systemic causes of gender inequality in policy, programs and delivery of services in workplaces and communities; and

c) to recognise that gender inequality may be compounded by other forms of disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience on the basis of Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation and other attributes; and

d) to redress disadvantage, address stigma, stereotyping, prejudice and violence, and accommodate persons of different genders by way of structural change; and

e) to enhance economic and social participation by persons of different genders; and

f) to further promote the right to equality set out in the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Council is obligated to think about how its programs and services affect different people and different communities and how we can avoid reinforcing unintentional inequalities. Reports authors must consider the requirements of the *Gender Equality Act* 2020 and Council's Diversity, Access and Equity Policy when asking Council to consider or review any issues which have a direct or significant impact on members of the Greater Dandenong community.

Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities

Council, Councillors and members of Council staff are a public authority under the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act* 2006 and, as such, are all responsible to act in accordance with the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities* 2006 (the Charter). The Charter is founded on the following principles:

- human rights are essential in a democratic and inclusive society that respects the rule of law, human dignity, equality and freedom;
- human rights belong to all people without discrimination, and the diversity of the people of Victoria enhances our community;
- human rights come with responsibilities and must be exercised in a way that respects the human rights of others;
- human rights have a special importance for the Aboriginal people of Victoria, as descendants of Australia's first people, with their diverse spiritual, social, cultural and economic relationship with their traditional lands and waters.

Given this municipality's diversity and inclusiveness, when developing or preparing a report for Council consideration, report authors are required to ensure their report is consistent with the standards set by the Charter.

Consideration of Climate Change and Sustainability

One of the overarching governance principles of the *Local Government Act* 2020 is that the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted.

In January 2020, this Council joined a growing number of cities around Australia and declared a “Climate and Ecological Emergency” and committed this Council to emergency action on climate change. Council has developed a Climate Change Emergency Strategy and Action Plan 2020-30 to help the City of Greater Dandenong become a resilient, net zero carbon emission city with an active community prepared for the challenges of changing climate.

When developing or preparing a report for Council consideration, report authors are required to consider what impacts their issue has on Council’s Declaration on a Climate and Ecological Emergency, Council’s Climate Change Emergency Strategy and the requirements of the *Local Government Act* 2020 in relation to the overarching principle on climate change and sustainability.

Related Council Policies, Strategies or Frameworks

Report authors will consider how their report aligns with existing Council policies, strategies, frameworks or other documents, how they may affect the decision of this report or are relevant to this process.

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1 MEETING OPENING

1.1 OPENING OF MEETING BY CHAIR

1.2 ATTENDANCE

1.3 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS OF LAND

Those who wish to stand for the acknowledgement to country are welcome to do so.

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of this land, the Bunurong People, and pay respect to their Elders past and present.

We recognise and respect their continuing connections to climate, Culture, Country and waters and we also pay our respect and acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their Elders present here today, in acknowledging their journey.

1.4 OFFERING OF PRAYER, REFLECTION OR AFFIRMATION

In recognition of the diversity of beliefs, cultures and perspectives within our community, this evening's Affirmation will be read by a Councillor of the City of Greater Dandenong.

1.5 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Meeting of Council held 17 August 2026.

Recommendation

That the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held 17 August 2026 be confirmed.

1.6 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Any interest that a Councillor or staff member has deemed to be significant and has disclosed as either a material or general interest is now considered to be a conflict of interest. Conflict of Interest legislation is detailed in Division 2 – Conflicts of Interest: sections 126, 127, 128, 129 & 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020*. This legislation can be obtained by contacting the Greater Dandenong Governance Unit on 8571 5216 or by accessing the Victorian Legislation and Parliamentary Documents website at www.legislation.vic.gov.au.

If a Councillor discloses any interest in an item discussed at any Council Meeting (whether they attend or not) they must:

1. complete a disclosure of interest form prior to the meeting;
2. advise the chairperson of the interest immediately before the particular item is considered (if attending the meeting); and
3. leave the chamber while the item is being discussed and during any vote taken (if attending the meeting).

The Councillor will be advised to return to the chamber or meeting room immediately after the item has been considered and the vote is complete.

2 OFFICERS REPORTS - PART 1

2.1 DOCUMENTS FOR SEALING

2.1.1 Documents for Sealing

Responsible Officer: Manager Governance, Integrity, Legal & Risk
Attachments: **Nil**

Officer Recommendation

That the listed documents be signed and sealed.

Executive Summary

1. Under the *Local Government Act* 2020, each Council is a body corporate and a legal entity in its own right. Each Council must therefore have a common seal (like any corporate entity) that is an official sanction of that Council. Sealing a document makes it an official document of Council as a corporate body. Documents that require sealing include agreements, contracts, leases or any other contractual or legally binding document that binds Council to another party.

Item Summary

2. There is one (1) item being presented to Council's meeting of 21 September 2026 for signing and sealing as follows:

   a) A letter of appreciation to Mr Tim Cockayne for their service and contribution as Director on the South East Leisure Board.

2.2 STATUTORY PLANNING APPLICATIONS

2.2.1 Planning Delegated Decisions Issued – August 2026

Responsible Officer: Executive Director City Futures

Attachments:
1. Planning Delegated Decisions Issued – August 2026 [**2.2.1.1** - 10 pages]

Officer Recommendation

That the listed items in Attachment 1 to this report be received and noted.

Executive Summary

1. This report provides Council with an update on the exercise of delegation by Council officers.
2. It provides a listing of Town Planning applications that were either decided or closed under delegation or withdrawn by applicants in August 2026.
3. It should be noted that where permits and notices of decision to grant permits have been issued, these applications have been assessed as being generally consistent with the Greater Dandenong Planning Scheme and Council's policies.
4. Application numbers with a PLA#, PLN#.01 or similar, are applications making amendments to previously approved planning permits.
5. The annotation 'SPEAR' (Streamlined Planning through Electronic Applications and Referrals) identifies where an application has been submitted electronically. SPEAR allows users to process planning permits and subdivision applications online.

Planning Delegated Decisions Issued from 1/08/2026 to 31/08/2026

City of Greater Dandenong

Application ID	Category	VicSmart	Property Address	Applicant Name	Description	Notes	Authority	Decision	Decision Date	Ward
PLA25/0046	PlnAppAmd	No	2/12 Zenith Road DANDENONG SOUTH VIC 3175	TMC Building Design	AMENDMENT TO: Use of the land for Industry (Animal Processing), construct and carry out buildings and works, and a reduction in car parking requirements (PLA22/0037)	Amend endorsed plans	Delegate	AmendPerm	31/08/2026	Dandenong
PLA25/0260	PlnAppAmd	No	185-195 Frankston Dandenong Road DANDENONG SOUTH VIC 3175	Stephen D'Andrea Pty Ltd	AMENDMENT RECEIVED To construct building and works, alteration to a Road in a Road Zone Category 1 and a reduction in car parking (PLN18/0598)	Amend endorsed plans	Delegate	AmendPerm	24/08/2026	Dandenong
PLA26/0004	PlnAppAmd	No	12 Backous Way NOBLE PARK VIC 3174	J Bowyer	AMENDMENT TO: Development of the land for four (4) dwellings (three (3) double storey dwellings and one (1) single storey dwelling to the rear) and subdivision of the land into four (4) lots (PLN22/0541)	Amend endorsed plans	Delegate	AmendPerm	24/08/2026	Noble Park
PLA26/0021	PlnAppAmd	No	9 Leonard Avenue NOBLE PARK VIC 3174	Abacus Design & Planning	AMENDMENT TO: Development of the land for eight (8) dwellings (PLN25/0128)	Amend endorsed plans	Delegate	AmendPerm	24/08/2026	Noble Park
PLA26/0027	PlnAppAmd	No	53 Albert Avenue SPRINGVALE VIC 3171	Abacus Design & Planning	AMENDMENT TO: Development of the land for four (4) triple storey and one (1) double storey dwelling (PLN25/0030)	Amend endorsed plans	Delegate	AmendPerm	27/08/2026	Springvale North

Application ID	Category	VicSmart	Property Address	Applicant Name	Description	Notes	Authority	Decision	Decision Date	Ward
PLA26/0049	PlnAppAmd	No	290 Thomas Street DANDENONG VIC 3175	Maiwand Supermarket	AMENDMENT TO: Development of the land for a Supermarket and Restaurant, display internally illuminated business identification signage and reduce the car parking requirements DECLARED AREA (PLN25/0367)	Amend permit and endorsed plans	Delegate	AmendPerm	17/08/2026	Dandenong
PLA26/0060	PlnAppAmd	No	4/72 Buckley Street NOBLE PARK VIC 3174	Discounted Patios Pty Ltd	Application to Amend Planning Permit 11/73	Amend endorsed plans	Delegate	AmendPerm	20/08/2026	Noble Park
PLA26/0063	PlnAppAmd	No	2/73 Assembly Drive DANDENONG SOUTH VIC 3175	Shekinah Christian Church	AMENDMENT TO: Use of the land for a place of worship and to reduce the car parking requirements (PLN18/0049)	Amend permit conditions	Delegate	AmendPerm	18/08/2026	Dandenong
PLA26/0066	PlnAppAmd	No	2-106 Bayliss Road DANDENONG SOUTH VIC 3175	Salta Properties (Lyndhurst) Pty Ltd	AMENDMENT TO: Use and development of the land for a Food and Drink Premise (Excluding Bar and Hotel) and Office and the sale and consumption of liquor (PLN24/0003)	Amend planning permit condition 36 and endorsed plans	Delegate	AmendPerm	13/08/2026	Dandenong
PLA26/0067	PlnAppAmd	No	Parkmore Centre Management 317-321 Cheltenham Road KEYSBOROUGH VIC 3173	GPT Funds Management Limited	AMENDMENT TO: Internally illuminated and non- illuminated business identification signs (PLN25/0394)	Amend endorsed plans	Delegate	AmendPerm	27/08/2026	Keysborough
PLA26/0068	PlnAppAmd	No	9 Marlene Court SPRINGVALE VIC 3171	P Dang	AMENDMENT TO: The construction of alterations and extensions to the existing dwelling and the construction of one (1) single storey dwelling to the rear (PLN13/0339)	Amend endorsed plans	Delegate	AmendPerm	17/08/2026	Springvale North

Application ID	Category	VicSmart	Property Address	Applicant Name	Description	Notes	Authority	Decision	Decision Date	Ward
PLA26/0072	PlnAppAmd	No	1 Hawdon Street DANDENONG NORTH VIC 3175	Innova Developments Pty Ltd	AMENDMENT TO: Development of the land for one (1) double storey dwelling to the rear of an existing single dwelling and alterations and additions to the existing dwelling (PLN23/0476)	Amend endorsed plans	Applicant	Withdrawn	18/08/2026	Cleeland
PLA26/0078	PlnAppVicA	Yes	927-937 Springvale Road KEYSBOROUGH VIC 3173	Lighthouse Christian College	AMENDMENT TO: To develop a modular building containing two classrooms and associated works VICSMART (PLN26/0037)	Amend endorsed plans	Delegate	AmendPerm	20/08/2026	Keysborough South
PLN25/0186	PlnApp	No	114 Kirkham Road DANDENONG VIC 3175	F Muedini	Development of the land for four (4) double storey dwellings	General Residential 1 Zone, 771sqm	Delegate	NOD	10/08/2026	Dandenong
PLN25/0275	PlnApp	No	12 Treesbank Avenue SPRINGVALE VIC 3171	Abacus Design & Planning	Development of the land for eight (8) double storey dwellings	General Residential 1 Zone, 1444.38sqm	Delegate	NOD	31/08/2026	Springvale Central
PLN25/0307	PlnApp	No	96-126 Ordish Road DANDENONG SOUTH VIC 3175	City Circle Recycling Pty Ltd	Use and development of the land for materials recycling and reduction in car parking requirements of Clause 52.06-5	Industrial 2 Zone	Delegate	NOD	28/08/2026	Dandenong
PLN25/0478	PlnApp	No	43 Bloomfield Road NOBLE PARK VIC 3174	Kostic & Associates Pty Ltd	Alterations and additions to the existing/retained single-storey dwelling, together with the construction of one (1) new double-storey dwelling to the rear of the land	Neighbourhood Residential 1 Zone, 529sqm	Delegate	PlanPermit	27/08/2026	Noble Park

Application ID	Category	VicSmart	Property Address	Applicant Name	Description	Notes	Authority	Decision	Decision Date	Ward
PLN25/0499	PlnApp	No	120 Princes Highway DANDENONG VIC 3175	Project 120 Pty Ltd	Development of the land for thirty-seven (37) dwellings (36 triple storey and 1 double storey), the alteration of access to a Transport Zone 2 and the removal of two (2) canopy trees	Residential Growth 2 Zone, 4743sqm	Delegate	PlanPermit	28/08/2026	Cleeland
PLN26/0005	PlnApp	No	179 Outlook Drive DANDENONG NORTH VIC 3175	W WD Subdivision and Planning Solutions	Development of one (1) double storey dwelling to the rear of an existing single storey dwelling, alterations to the existing dwelling, and removal of one (1) boundary canopy tree in the Neighbourhood Residential Zone	Neighbourhood Residential 1 Zone, 747sqm	Delegate	NOD	28/08/2026	Dandenong North
PLN26/0030	PlnApp	No	2 Nullawil Street SPRINGVALE VIC 3171	C Mai	Development of the land for three (3) double storey dwellings	General Residential 1 Zone, 592sqm	Delegate	PlanPermit	04/08/2026	Springvale North
PLN26/0107	PlnApp	No	8 Elm Grove SPRINGVALE VIC 3171	ABS Design & Construction	Development of the land for three (3) double storey dwellings	General Residential 3 Zone	Delegate	PlanPermit	12/08/2026	Springvale North
PLN26/0116	PlnApp	No	269-271 Frankston Dandenong Road DANDENONG SOUTH VIC 3175	Tyree Property 269 FDR VIC Pty Ltd	Development of the land for an extension to an industrial building	Industrial 1 Zone, 2286sqm	Delegate	PlanPermit	07/08/2026	Dandenong
PLN26/0129	PlnApp	No	14 Lexton Avenue DANDENONG VIC 3175	Hargreaves Design Group	Development of the land for two (2) double-storey dwellings and to remove a canopy tree in the General Residential Zone	General Residential 1 Zone, 603sqm	Delegate	PlanPermit	27/08/2026	Yarraman

Application ID	Category	VicSmart	Property Address	Applicant Name	Description	Notes	Authority	Decision	Decision Date	Ward
PLN26/0135	PlnApp	No	5 Mason Street DANDENONG VIC 3175	City of Greater Dandenong	Realignment of the common boundary between two lots SPEAR	Residential	Delegate	PlanPermit	13/08/2026	Noble Park
PLN26/0147	PlnApp	No	7 Cook Court DANDENONG NORTH VIC 3175	360 Land Solutions	Subdivision of the land into two (2) lots SPEAR	Residential	Delegate	Lapsed	28/08/2026	Cleeland
PLN26/0155	PlnApp	No	8 Hosken Street SPRINGVALE SOUTH VIC 3172	DJT Design P/L	Buildings and Works (Building Alterations)	Commercial 1 Zone	Delegate	PlanPermit	21/08/2026	Springvale Central
PLN26/0182	PlnApp	No	Level 1 229 Thomas Street DANDENONG VIC 3175	Nobelius Land Surveyors Pty Ltd	Subdivision of the land into fifty (50) lots	Residential	Applicant	Withdrawn	11/08/2026	Dandenong
PLN26/0184	PlnApp	No	6 Clow Street DANDENONG VIC 3175	OC Designs	To display business identification signage DECLARED AREA	No response to further information request	Delegate	Lapsed	28/08/2026	Dandenong
PLN26/0186	PlnApp	No	98A Kirkham Road DANDENONG VIC 3175	Wakefield Planning	Business identification signage	General Residential 1 Zone	Delegate	PlanPermit	27/08/2026	Dandenong

Application ID	Category	VicSmart	Property Address	Applicant Name	Description	Notes	Authority	Decision	Decision Date	Ward
PLN26/0191	PlnApp	No	10 Bungaleen Court DANDENONG SOUTH VIC 3175	Lemnos Foods Pty Ltd	Buildings and Works (Trade Waste Tank)	Industrial 1 Zone	Applicant	Withdrawn	12/08/2026	Dandenong
PLN26/0193	PlnAppVic	Yes	1/8 Ericksen Street SPRINGVALE VIC 3171	Impact Design Consultants	Extension of one dwelling on a lot less than 300 square metres VICSMART	General Residential 1 Zone, 40sqm	Delegate	PlanPermit	18/08/2026	Springvale North
PLN26/0215	PlnApp	No	Floor 2 276-288 Thomas Street DANDENONG VIC 3175	Upsndowns Property Custodians Pty Ltd	Reduction in the car parking requirement associated with an existing education centre DECLARED AREA	Comprehensive Development 2 Zone	Delegate	PlanPermit	04/08/2026	Dandenong
PLN26/0225	PlnApp	No	Retarding Basin (East Of Kitchen Road) 22A Kitchen Road DANDENONG SOUTH VIC 3175	Supagas Pty Ltd	Use and development of the land for a car park	No response to further information request	Delegate	Lapsed	18/08/2026	Dandenong
PLN26/0229	PlnAppVic	Yes	48 Baldwin Avenue NOBLE PARK VIC 3174	Squareback Planning Pty Ltd	Development of the land for a double-storey dwelling to the rear of an existing single-storey dwelling and alterations to the existing dwelling VICSMART	General Residential 1 Zone, 609sqm	Delegate	PlanPermit	10/08/2026	Noble Park
PLN26/0233	PlnApp	No	Springvale Botanical Cemetery 600-698 Princes Highway SPRINGVALE VIC 3171	Spaces Pty Ltd	Buildings and Works (Roof Alterations)	Public Use 5 Zone	Delegate	NotRequire	27/08/2026	Noble Park North

Application ID	Category	VicSmart	Property Address	Applicant Name	Description	Notes	Authority	Decision	Decision Date	Ward
PLN26/0243	PlnApp	No	6 Westall Road SPRINGVALE VIC 3171	C Graham	Buildings and Works (Shipping Container)	No response to further information request	Delegate	Lapsed	28/08/2026	Springvale North
PLN26/0249	PlnApp	No	2-10 Springvale Road SPRINGVALE VIC 3171	P Truong	Buildings and works and display of internally illuminated signage associated with a food and drink premise	Commercial 1 Zone	Applicant	Withdrawn	19/08/2026	Springvale North
PLN26/0252	PlnApp	No	4 Tillbrook Court NOBLE PARK NORTH VIC 3174	RS Usher	Removal of one boundary canopy tree	No response to further information request	Delegate	Lapsed	25/08/2026	Noble Park North
PLN26/0263	PlnApp	No	44 Queens Avenue SPRINGVALE VIC 3171	LTN Ngo	Subdivision of the land into five (5) lots SPEAR	Residential	Applicant	Withdrawn	13/08/2026	Springvale North
PLN26/0266	PlnAppVic	Yes	20 Adele Street KEYSBOROUGH VIC 3173	E Varava	Development of the land for a mezzanine and to reduce the car parking requirements VICSMART	Industrial 1 Zone	Delegate	PlanPermit	12/08/2026	Noble Park
PLN26/0270	PlnApp	No	70 McMahens Road BANGHOLME VIC 3175	F Memedi	Native Vegetation Removal	Green Wedge 1 Zone & Urban Floodway Zone	Applicant	Withdrawn	12/08/2026	Keysborough South

Application ID	Category	VicSmart	Property Address	Applicant Name	Description	Notes	Authority	Decision	Decision Date	Ward
PLN26/0272	PlnApp	No	291-297 Springvale Road SPRINGVALE VIC 3171	Number 1 Shopfitting Pty Ltd	Buildings and Works (Building Alterations)	Commercial 1 Zone	Delegate	PlanPermit	26/08/2026	Springvale North
PLN26/0276	PlnApp	No	8 Osborne Avenue SPRINGVALE VIC 3171	WM Tu	Subdivision of the land into eight (8) lots SPEAR	Residential	Applicant	Withdrawn	13/08/2026	Springvale North
PLN26/0279	PlnApp	No	11 Joffre Street NOBLE PARK VIC 3174	Joffre Street Property Pty Ltd	Subdivision of the land into four (4) lots SPEAR	Residential	Delegate	PlanPermit	18/08/2026	Yarraman
PLN26/0285	PlnApp	No	20 Rich Street NOBLE PARK VIC 3174	Nilsson Noel & Holmes (Surveyors) Pty Ltd	Subdivision of the land into four (4) lots SPEAR	Residential	Delegate	PlanPermit	19/08/2026	Noble Park
PLN26/0287	PlnAppVic	Yes	35 Yarraman Road NOBLE PARK VIC 3174	Eight Homes	Removal of one (1) boundary canopy tree VICSMART	General Residential 1 Zone, 528sqm	Delegate	PlanPermit	13/08/2026	Noble Park
PLN26/0291	PlnAppVic	Yes	29 Kimberly Road DANDENONG SOUTH VIC 3175	Stephen D'Andrea Pty Ltd	Development of the land for a warehouse and to reduce the car parking requirements VICSMART	Industrial 1 Zone	Delegate	PlanPermit	12/08/2026	Dandenong

Application ID	Category	VicSmart	Property Address	Applicant Name	Description	Notes	Authority	Decision	Decision Date	Ward
PLN26/0298	PlnApp	No	2-106 Bayliss Road DANDENONG SOUTH VIC 3175	Salta Properties (Lyndhurst) Pty Ltd	Development of the land for two (2) warehouses and a reduction in car parking requirements	Industrial 1 Zone, 13507sqm	Delegate	PlanPermit	25/08/2026	Dandenong
PLN26/0302	PlnApp	No	1612-1624 Centre Road SPRINGVALE VIC 3171	Vicurban Town Planning Pty Ltd	Development of the land for an industrial building and a reduction in the car parking requirements	Industrial 1 Zone, 1680sqm	Delegate	PlanPermit	11/08/2026	Springvale North
PLN26/0311	PlnAppVic	Yes	12/10 Assembly Drive DANDENONG SOUTH VIC 3175	Lamark Australia Pty Ltd T/A Onaro Foods	Reduction in the car parking requirements of Clause 52.06-5 in association with a Supermarket VICSMART	Comprehensive Development 2 Zone	Delegate	PlanPermit	10/08/2026	Dandenong
PLN26/0320	PlnAppVic	Yes	34 Clive Street SPRINGVALE VIC 3171	Carlisle Home Pty Ltd	Development of the land for one (1) dwelling on a lot within the Special Building Overlay VICSMART	General Residential 1 Zone, 650sqm	Delegate	PlanPermit	18/08/2026	Springvale South
PLN26/0327	PlnAppVic	Yes	4/355-365 South Gippsland Highway DANDENONG SOUTH VIC 3175	Mounties Care P/L C/_ G2 Urban Planning	Building and works and reduction of car parking VICSMART	Commercial 2 Zone	Delegate	PlanPermit	13/08/2026	Dandenong
PLN26/0329	PlnAppVic	Yes	1/36 Marna Court NOBLE PARK VIC 3174	Draeh Planning	Subdivision of the land into two (2) lots VICSMART	General Residential 1 Zone, 533sqm	Delegate	PlanPermit	04/08/2026	Yarraman

Application ID	Category	VicSmart	Property Address	Applicant Name	Description	Notes	Authority	Decision	Decision Date	Ward
PLN26/0334	PlnAppVic	Yes	2/22-24 Rhur Street DANDENONG SOUTH VIC 3175	Paynters Pty Ltd	Development of the land for a warehouse and a reduction in the car parking requirements VICSMART	Industrial 1 Zone	Delegate	PlanPermit	17/08/2026	Dandenong
PLN26/0341	PlnApp	No	449-451 Hammond Road DANDENONG SOUTH VIC 3175	Chobani Pty Ltd	Buildings and Works (Mezzanine) and Reduction in Car Parking Requirements	Industrial 1 Zone	Delegate	PlanPermit	11/08/2026	Dandenong
PLN26/0354	PlnAppVic	Yes	21 Philip Street DANDENONG NORTH VIC 3175	Nilsson Noel & Holmes (Surveyors) Pty Ltd	Subdivision of the land into two (2) lots SPEAR (VICSMART)	Residential	Delegate	PlanPermit	19/08/2026	Cleeland
PLN26/0359	PlnAppVic	Yes	4 Tillbrook Court NOBLE PARK NORTH VIC 3174	RS Usher	To remove one (1) boundary canopy tree in the Neighbourhood Residential Zone VICSMART	Residential	Delegate	PlanPermit	27/08/2026	Noble Park North
PLN26/0364	PlnAppVic	Yes	50 Coolavin Road NOBLE PARK NORTH VIC 3174	M Darwish, F Darwish	Subdivision of the land into two (2) lots SPEAR (VICSMART)	Residential	Delegate	PlanPermit	27/08/2026	Noble Park North

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3 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Question Time at Council meetings provides an opportunity for members of the public in the gallery to address questions to the Councillors, Delegates and/or officers of the Greater Dandenong City Council. Questions must comply with s. 4.5.8 of Council's Governance Rules.

QUESTIONS FROM THE GALLERY

Questions are limited to a maximum of three (3) questions per individual. Where time constraints deem it likely that not all questions can be answered within the time allowed for Question Time, the Mayor at his/her discretion may determine only the first question may be presented verbally with others deferred to be managed in the same manner as public questions not verbally presented.

Priority will be given to questions that relate to items on the Council Agenda for that meeting. Questions including any preamble should not exceed 300 words.

a) All such questions must be received in writing on the prescribed form or as provided for on Council's website and at Ordinary meetings of Council. Where there are more than three (3) questions received from any one individual person, the Chief Executive Officer will determine the three (3) questions to be considered at the meeting.

b) All such questions must clearly note a request to verbally present the question and must be received by the Chief Executive Officer or other person authorised for this purpose by the Chief Executive Officer no later than:
   i) the commencement time (7.00pm) of the Ordinary meeting if questions are submitted in person; or
   ii) noon on the day of the Ordinary meeting if questions are submitted by electronic medium.

c) A question can only be presented to the meeting if the Chairperson and/or Chief Executive Officer has determined that the question:
   i) does not relate to a matter of the type described in section 3(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* (confidential information);
   ii) does not relate to a matter in respect of which Council or a Delegated Committee has no power to act;
   iii) is not defamatory, indecent, abusive or objectionable in language or substance, and is not asked to embarrass a Councillor, Delegated Member or Council officer; and
   iv) is not repetitive of a question already asked or answered (whether at the same or an earlier meeting).

d) If the Chairperson and/or Chief Executive Officer has determined that the question may not be presented to the Council Meeting or Delegated Committee, then the Chairperson and/or Chief Executive Officer:
   i) must advise the Meeting accordingly; and
   ii) will make the question available to Councillors or Members upon request.
   iii) The Chairperson shall call on members of the gallery who have submitted an accepted question to ask their question verbally if they wish.

e) The Chairperson, Chief Executive Officer or delegate may then direct that question to be answered by a nominated Councillor or member of Council staff.

f) No debate on, or discussion of, a question or an answer will be permitted other than for the purposes of clarification.

g) A Councillor, Delegated Committee Member or member of Council staff nominated to answer a question may:
   i) seek clarification of the question from the person who submitted it;
   ii) seek the assistance of another person in answering the question; and
   iii) defer answering the question, so that the answer may be researched and a written response be provided within ten (10) working days following the Meeting (the question thereby being taken on notice).

h) Question time for verbal presentations is limited in duration to not more than twenty (20) minutes. If it appears likely that this time is to be exceeded then a resolution from Council will be required to extend that time if it is deemed appropriate to complete this item.

i) The text of each question asked and the response will be recorded in the minutes of the Meeting.

4 OFFICERS REPORTS - PART 2

4.1 FINANCE AND BUDGET

4.1.1 Council 2025-26 Financial Report - Management Results

Responsible Officer: Chief Financial Officer

Attachments:

1. # Council 2025-26 Summary Financial Report - Management Results - Council 26-09-2026 - after VAGO [**4.1.1.1** - 57 pages]

Officer Recommendation

That Council APPROVES the Financial Report for the year ended 30 June 2026, including the key operating and capital variances, cash and investment position, financial sustainability indicators and timing differences to be managed through the 2026-27 quarterly forecasting process. The results are presented following Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) audit clearance.

Executive Summary

1. This report presents Council's financial result for the year ended 30 June 2026 following Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) audit clearance.
2. It includes the principal variances to the 2025-26 Mid-Year Budget, capital delivery, cash and investments, liquidity and financial sustainability.

Background

3. The attached June 2026 Financial Report compares Council's performance and financial position for the period 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026 with the Mid-Year Budget adopted by Council on 8 December 2025.
4. It provides detailed information on operating performance, capital delivery, cash and investments, liquidity and financial sustainability.

Key Issues and Discussion

5. **Audit status.** The attached report presents Council's 2025-26 financial result following VAGO audit clearance. Any material matter arising through the annual reporting process will be reported to Council in accordance with established governance requirements.
6. **Year-end result.** Council recorded an operating surplus of $19.29 million, which was $3.22 million favourable to the Mid-Year Budget. Capital expenditure totalled $85.84 million, $60.11 million below budget. The operating result includes the early receipt of the 2026-27 Financial Assistance Grant and significant non-cash asset accounting entries; these factors should be considered when assessing the underlying result.

7. **Operating variances.** The main favourable variances were employee costs $12.67 million below budget, materials and services $6.99 million below budget, early receipt of $12.38 million of the 2026-27 Financial Assistance Grant, investment income $2.46 million above budget and borrowing costs $1.15 million below budget. The main unfavourable variances were capital grant income $10.15 million below budget, net loss on non-financial asset $8.87 million is largely attributable to asset write-offs of $9.86 million, prior-year project-in-progress expenditure unable to be capitalised of $4.90 million, depreciation $4.05 million above budget, statutory fees and fines $1.37 million below budget and an unbudgeted $1.53 million fair-value adjustment to investment property.
8. **Capital program.** The $60.11 million capital expenditure variance primarily reflects project deferrals, revised delivery timing and procurement and delivery delays. Major timing differences included Oasis Aquatics and Wellbeing Centre, Dandenong New Art, Perry Road Stage 3 and the Blackspot Dandenong program. Deferred expenditure, associated grant income, reserve funding and forecast completion dates will continue to be monitored through the 2026-27 capital program and quarterly forecasting process.
9. **Cash, liquidity and restricted funds.** Cash and cash equivalents were $37.04 million at 30 June 2026, $1.88 million above budget. Total cash and investments were $224.80 million, $44.64 million above budget and $12.27 million higher than at 30 June 2025. Of the closing balance, $193.79 million was restricted for reserves, employee provisions, trust funds and deposits and other restricted purposes. The working capital ratio remained sound at 2.03.
10. **Financial sustainability.** Council's results were within the low to medium risk range across most of the VAGO financial sustainability indicators, with four of the seven indicators performing favourably. The adjusted underlying result was negative 3.28%, compared with negative 8.82% in the Mid-Year Budget. The internal financing ratio was 94.97% and continued to be affected by the scale and funding profile of the Oasis Aquatics and Wellbeing Centre.
11. **Timing differences and forward monitoring.** The attached report identifies operating and capital timing differences to be managed in 2026-27 and later years. This includes $12.37 million of the 2026-27 Financial Assistance Grant received in advance. These matters will be monitored through the quarterly forecast process in 2026-27.

Governance Compliance

Human Resource Implications (consider Workforce Planning and Service Statements)

12. There are no additional human resource implications arising directly from this report. The employee cost variance reflects recruitment and onboarding delays, the timing of grant-funded programs, provision movements and operational savings. Workforce impacts and vacancies will continue to be managed through existing workforce planning, recruitment and service planning processes.

Financial/Asset Resource Implications (consider Service Statements, Budget, Long Term Financial Strategy and Asset Plan)

Operating Budget Implications

13. There are no additional financial commitments arising directly from consideration of this report. The report communicates the 2025-26 financial result following Victorian Auditor-General's Office audit clearance. Operating and capital timing differences, grant obligations, restricted cash, capital delivery and financial sustainability will be monitored through the 2026-27 quarterly forecasting and established governance processes.

Asset Implications

14. Capital expenditure was below budget primarily because of project deferrals and revised delivery timing. Asset write-offs and project-in-progress costs that no longer met the criteria for capitalisation were recognised in the 2025-26 result. Deferred capital works and related funding will continue to be monitored through the 2026-27 capital program, quarterly forecasting and established asset management and financial governance processes.

Legal/Risk Implications

15. The financial reporting risk associated with VAGO audit clearance has been addressed through completion of the clearance process. Ongoing financial reporting risks include the accurate recognition and monitoring of grant obligations, capital delivery timing and restricted cash. These risks will continue to be managed through annual reporting, quarterly forecasting and established financial governance controls.

Environmental Implications

16. There are no environmental implications arising directly from this report. Any environmental impacts associated with individual capital projects or service activities are considered through the relevant project planning, approval and delivery processes.

Gender Impact Assessment

17. A gender impact assessment is not required because this report presents Council's financial results and does not develop or vary a policy, program or service that directly and significantly affects the public.

Community Consultation

18. There was no requirement for community consultation.

Links to Community Vision, Council Plan, Strategy, Notice of Motion

19. This report supports the Community Vision 2040 principle:
    - Responsible and transparent governance through clear reporting on Council's financial position and stewardship of public resources.
20. This report is consistent with the Council Plan 2025-29 strategic objective:
    - A Council that demonstrates leadership, responsible use of public resources, and a commitment to investing in the community."
21. This report does not relate to a Notice of Motion.

Legislative and Policy Obligations

22. This report has considered Council's legislative and policy obligations (where applicable) as outlined in the Report Considerations section detailed in the front of this Agenda. The applicable obligations considered and applied are:
    - The applicable obligations include the overarching governance principles and financial management and annual reporting requirements of the *Local Government Act* 2020.
    - The *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations* 2020.
    - Applicable Australian Accounting Standards.
    - Council's adopted financial policies and governance framework.



30 June 2026
Financial Report

Greater Dandenong

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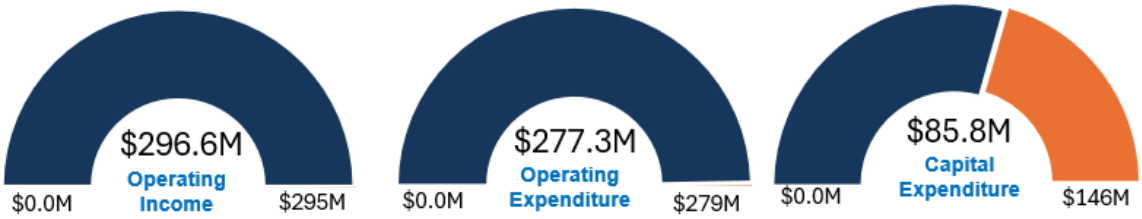
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KEY FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Full year ending 30 June 2026



	Full Year					Full Year				
	Actual $'000	Mid Year Budget $'000	Variance $'000	Var. %	Status Var.	Forecast $'000	Forecast to Actual $'000	Var. %	Status Var.	Original Budget $'000
Operating Income	296,597	295,026	1,571	1%	✓	290,552	6,045	2%	✓	288,267
Operating Expenses	277,311	278,956	1,645	1%	✓	278,047	736	0%	—	262,465
Operating Surplus	**19,286**	**16,070**	**3,216**	**20%**	✓	**12,505**	6,781	54%	✓	**25,802**
Capital Expenditure	85,837	145,947	60,110	41%	✓	115,485	29,648	26%	✓	119,871
Net cash movements in cash and cash equivalents	4,220	2,336	1,884	81%	✓	(778)	4,998	642%	✓	(1,164)
Cash / Investment Holdings [1]	224,804	*180,160*	44,644	25%	✓	179,952	44,852	25%	✓	152,429

Status legend:

✓	Above budgeted revenue or under budgeted expenditure
—	Below budgeted revenue or over budgeted expenditure by less than 10%
×	Below budgeted revenue or over budgeted expenditure by 10% or greater

Notes

1. Total cash/investments at 30 June 2026 includes cash on hand and financial assets and have been allocated for specific future purposes by Council.

Budget information

The Original Budget information contained in the report is the budget approved by Council on 23 June 2025. The full year budget in this report reflects the Mid-Year Budget as adopted by Council on 8 December 2025. The full year 2025-26 current forecast is the subject of an extensive review undertaken with departments during March quarter.

Executive Summary

Operating Result

For the full year 2025-26, Council recorded a surplus operating result of $19.29 million which is $3.2 million better than mid-year budget.

The main factors contributing to this result comprise favourable variances in:

Operating income ($1.57 million favourable)

Operating income for the year full year is above budget mainly due to:

- Early receipt of 80% of Council's 2026-27 Financial Assistance Grant allocation from the Victorian Local Government Grants Commission ($12.38 million).
- Additional operating grants across Community Strengthening programs, including Home and Community Care, Maternal and Child Health, Children's Services, Food Services and the Dandenong Employment Hub ($1.55 million).
- Higher-than-anticipated interest returns on investments due to increased interest rates and higher cash balances resulting from delayed capital expenditure ($2.46 million).
- Higher rental, venue hire and recovery income ($366,000).
- Higher user fee income from parking, planning, food trader and animal registrations ($336,000).

These favourable movements were partially offset by:

- Lower capital grant income as recognition is linked to capital expenditure progress ($10.15 million unfavourable). Funding received is retained in an unearned income account in Council's Balance Sheet which will be recognised in future years as capital project expenditure is incurred. Key projects impacted include Oasis Aquatics and Wellbeing, Blackspot, Safe Local Roads and LXRP projects.

- Lower statutory fees and fines ($1.37 million unfavourable) due to recruitment delays in enforcement roles, and impacts of parking infrastructure installation which reduced enforcement activity.

Operating expenditure ($1.65 million favourable)

Operating expenditure for the full year came in below budget mainly due to the following:

- Lower employee costs ($12.67 million favourable), largely driven by recruitment delays across the organisation. Of this, $5.51 million (43%) relates to grant-funded programs with future obligations that require acquittal, while a further $5.62 million reflects timing delays in filling vacant positions and onboarding staff.
- Lower materials and services expenditure ($6.99 million favourable) resulting from delays in landfill commissioning works, roads and drains maintenance programs, digital transformation initiatives, lower waste processing costs, reduced Family Day Care expenditure, and savings across infrastructure, maintenance and community programs.
- Lower borrowing costs ($1.15 million favourable) due to lower borrowing requirement for Oasis Aquatics and Wellbeing in 2025-26 based on actual project cash flows.

Partly offset by unfavourable non-cash fixed asset accounting entries. These accounting entries are not entirely included in the budget as they are difficult to predict:

- Net loss on financial assets ($8.87 million).
- Prior year capital expenditure unable to be capitalised ($4.9 million).

More detailed variance explanations are included in the body of this report.

Measures of financial sustainability

The Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) uses a set of financial sustainability indicators to assess the long-term financial health of councils. These indicators provide insights into liquidity, indebtedness, and asset renewal, among other factors. While these measures are unaudited and typically assessed on an annual basis, they remain a useful reference point for monitoring financial performance.

2025-26	Net result	Adjusted underlying result	Internal financing	Liquidity	Indebtedness	Capital replacement	Renewal gap
Full Year Actuals	6.48%	(3.28%)	94.97%	2.03	20.22%	1.47	1.34
Mid Year Budget	5.45%	(8.82%)	56.93%	1.66	35.61%	2.82	2.26
Forecast Full Year	4.30%	(8.50%)	58.51%	1.66	35.51%	2.74	1.97
Original Budget	8.95%	4.50%	73.46%	1.48	36.06%	2.68	2.19
2024-25 Full Year Actuals	10.67%	3.76%	132.24%	2.29	22.64%	1.21	0.67

Financial Performance Overview (as of 30 June)

Council's year-to-date financial results indicate performance within the low to medium risk range across all key financial indicators. Council achieved favourably in four (4) of the seven (7) VAGO indicators, with the Adjusted underlying result indicating a challenge.

As of 30 June, the ***Adjusted Underlying Result*** ratio is less than the above 0% target range. This ratio measures Council's operating surplus as a proportion of ongoing income, after excluding one-off or non-recurrent capital grants and contributions. It provides an indication of whether Council is generating sufficient surplus from its core operations to support long-term financial sustainability. While results above 5% are generally considered strong, Council's performance in this ratio has been lower in recent budgets and actuals, primarily due to increasing depreciation expense. Depreciation reduces the reported accounting surplus and is not excluded from the Adjusted Underlying Result, which places downward pressure on the ratio despite having no direct cash flow impact.

The ***Internal Financing ratio*** in all 2025-26 forecasts and results, falls within the medium to low range, largely reflecting Council's significant investment in the Oasis Aquatics and Wellbeing (OAW) capital project. This ratio assesses the extent to which capital expenditure is funded from cash generated by normal operating activities. Results below 100% indicate that Council is not fully funding its capital program from operations alone. It should be noted, however, that this ratio does not account for other appropriate funding sources, such as the use of reserves or borrowings. Both funding sources are being applied to the OAW project, and as a result, the ratio on its own does not fully capture Council's overall capacity or financial strategy for delivering this investment.

Capital Result

Capital expenditure for the year ended 30 June 2026 totalled $85.8 million, which is $60.1 million below the Annual Mid-Year Budget. This lower-than-budgeted outcome was driven by several factors, including project deferrals, timing adjustments in major infrastructure works and delays identified during procurement and delivery phases.

Operating expenditure in the current year Capital Improvement Program that was not able to be capitalised to the asset register because it was not capital in nature, nor did it meet the relevant capitalisation threshold was $846,000. Examples include:

- Roads to Recovery and Resurfacing Programs ($267,000)
- Art Gallery PEP Building ($260,000)
- Dandenong New Art ($113,000)

Variance explanations to the 2025-26 Original Budget are included in Note 2.1.2 in Council's Annual Financial Statements. The difference between the Original Budget and the Mid-Year Budget relates to timing differences from the previous financial year and grant funded projects.

Variance explanations for projects exceeding $300,000 are included in the body of this report.

Cash Position

Cash and investments totalled $224.80 million at 30 June 2026, comprising $37.04 million in cash and cash equivalents and $187.76 million in term deposits and other investments. This represents Council's available liquidity and capacity to meet operational, capital and strategic funding commitments.

While accounting standards require term deposits with maturities greater than 90 days to be excluded from cash and cash equivalents in the Cash Flow Statement, Council considers cash and investments together to provide a more complete view of its liquidity position. Council's working capital ratio remained sound at 2.03 at 30 June 2026.

A significant proportion of Council's cash and investments is restricted for specific future purposes. Total restricted cash at 30 June 2026 was $193.79 million, comprising $108.08 million in reserve funds, $21.99 million for employee provisions, $9.10 million in trust funds and deposits, and $54.62 million in other restricted funds. Major reserve balances included $48.44 million for major projects, $16.29 million for Council-funded Development Contribution Plans, and $15.19 million for statutory open space purposes.

The closing balance was also positively impacted by the early receipt of $12.4 million of Victorian Local Government Grants Commission funding. This funding has already been budgeted within Council's 2026-27 financial year and will be recognised accordingly.

INCOME STATEMENT

For the period 1 July 2025 – 30 June 2026

		FULL YEAR					
		ACTUAL	MID YEAR BUDGET	VARIANCE	FORECAST	FORECAST vs ACTUALS VARIANCE	ANNUAL ORIGINAL BUDGET
	Note	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
Income	**B1**						
Rates and charges		184,749	184,700	49	184,700	49	184,000
Statutory fees and fines		11,461	12,832	(1,371)	11,987	(526)	12,805
User fees		9,756	9,420	336	9,848	(92)	9,420
Grants - operating		45,494	32,988	12,506	32,503	12,991	36,800
Grants - capital		15,265	25,411	(10,146)	20,880	(5,615)	20,870
Contributions - monetary		7,509	7,509	-	6,519	990	3,162
Contributions - non-monetary		7,221	7,500	(279)	7,500	(279)	7,500
Net gain (loss) on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment		-	787	(787)	1,722	(1,722)	787
Other income		15,142	13,879	1,263	14,893	249	12,923
Total income		**296,597**	**295,026**	**1,571**	**290,552**	**6,045**	**288,267**
Expenses	**B2**						
Employee costs		101,689	114,362	12,673	113,167	11,478	105,929
Materials and services		92,636	99,629	6,993	100,691	8,055	96,820
Prior year capital expenditure unable to be capitalised (non-cash)		4,902	-	(4,902)	-	(4,902)	-
Bad and doubtful debts		1,725	1,614	(111)	1,615	(110)	1,614
Depreciation		57,277	53,229	(4,048)	53,229	(4,048)	48,481
Amortisation - right of use assets		562	715	153	715	153	715
Borrowing costs		2,640	3,793	1,153	2,740	100	3,936
Finance costs - leases		16	57	41	57	41	57
Fair value adjustments expense		1,525	-	(1,525)	-	(1,525)	-
Net loss on non-financial assets		8,875	-	(8,875)	-	(8,875)	-
Other expenses		5,464	5,557	93	5,833	369	4,913
Total expenses		**277,311**	**278,956**	**1,645**	**278,047**	**736**	**262,465**
Net surplus (deficit)		**19,286**	**16,070**	**3,216**	**12,505**	**6,781**	**25,802**

Notes

For comments regarding movements in Operating Income and Expenditure items, please refer to explanatory notes located at B1 to B2.

- *'Net loss on non-financial assets' include assets write offs ($9.86 million) mostly represent asset renewal and replacement as part of capital work projects and renewal programs. Refer to Note 43 of this report for further details.*
- *'Prior year capital expenditure unable to be capitalised (non-cash)' of $4.90 million represents works in progress (prior year capital expenditure) that cannot be capitalised to the asset register because it is not capital in nature or does not meet the capitalisation threshold. Refer to Note 38 of this report for further details.*

BALANCE SHEET

As at 30 June 2026

	Note	2025-26 ACTUAL 30 Jun 2026 $'000	2024-25 ACTUAL 30 Jun 2025 $'000	2025-26 MID YEAR BUDGET $'000	2025-26 ORIGINAL BUDGET $'000
ASSETS					
Current assets	**C1**				
Cash and cash equivalents		37,042	32,822	35,160	24,942
Financial assets		187,762	179,708	145,000	128,000
Trade and other receivables		41,260	32,253	32,519	32,100
Other assets		6,206	5,895	5,503	6,021
Total current assets		**272,270**	**250,678**	**218,182**	**191,063**
Non-current assets	**C2**				
Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment		3,451,850	3,026,836	3,126,996	2,781,993
Investment property		5,340	6,865	6,865	6,690
Right-of-use assets		360	680	664	1,257
Trade and other receivables		169	183	183	266
Total non-current assets		**3,457,719**	**3,034,564**	**3,134,708**	**2,790,206**
Total assets		**3,729,989**	**3,285,242**	**3,352,890**	**2,981,269**
LIABILITIES					
Current liabilities	**C3**				
Trade and other payables		25,782	25,669	44,452	39,221
Trust funds and deposits		6,043	3,201	3,300	4,354
Unearned income		54,623	54,054	54,354	56,668
Provisions		21,417	21,504	22,112	21,804
Interest-bearing liabilities		25,900	4,379	6,619	6,068
Lease liabilities		393	494	507	599
Total current liabilities		**134,158**	**109,301**	**131,344**	**128,714**
Non-current liabilities	**C4**				
Provisions		2,002	1,957	1,718	1,305
Trust funds and deposits		3,055	2,910	3,052	3,052
Interest-bearing liabilities		39,645	43,992	73,617	74,027
Lease liabilities		3	244	251	647
Total non-current liabilities		**44,705**	**49,103**	**78,638**	**79,031**
Total liabilities		**178,863**	**158,404**	**209,982**	**207,745**
NET ASSETS	**C5**	**3,551,126**	**3,126,838**	**3,142,908**	**2,773,524**
EQUITY					
Accumulated surplus		1,010,082	993,868	1,024,289	1,054,410
Asset revaluation reserve		2,432,967	2,027,966	2,027,966	1,655,211
Reserves		108,077	105,004	90,653	63,903
TOTAL EQUITY		**3,551,126**	**3,126,838**	**3,142,908**	**2,773,524**

Explanatory notes regarding movements in other Balance Sheet items are located at C1 to C5.

CASH FLOW STATEMENT

For the period 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026

	Notes	2025-26 ACTUAL as at 30 Jun 2026 Inflows/ (Outflows) $'000	2025-26 ANNUAL MID YEAR BUDGET Inflows/ (Outflows) $'000	2025-26 ANNUAL ORIGINAL BUDGET Inflows/ (Outflows) $'000
Cash flows from operating activities				
Rates and charges		182,820	184,933	183,417
Statutory fees and fines		9,205	10,676	10,809
User fees		8,541	10,503	10,292
Grants - operating		46,201	34,395	38,574
Grants - capital		13,344	25,391	20,870
Contributions - monetary		4,382	8,309	3,962
Interest received		8,637	6,829	6,000
Trust funds and deposits taken		61,203	32,195	32,100
Other receipts		6,496	7,533	7,700
Net GST refund		15,557	21,536	18,235
Employee costs		(103,354)	(113,892)	(105,201)
Materials and services		(108,891)	(104,845)	(112,460)
Short-term, low value and variable lease payments		(902)	(722)	(720)
Trust funds and deposits repaid		(58,176)	(31,954)	(31,954)
Other payments		(5,084)	(5,493)	(4,823)
Net cash provided by operating activities	**D1**	**79,979**	**85,394**	**76,801**
Cash flows from investing activities				
Payments for property, infrastructure, plant and equipment		(84,215)	(145,949)	(119,871)
Proceeds/(payments) of investments		(7,476)	34,708	14,000
Proceeds from sale of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment		1,994	847	847
Net cash used in investing activities	**D2**	**(89,697)**	**(110,394)**	**(105,024)**
Cash flows from financing activities				
Finance costs		(2,636)	(3,793)	(3,936)
Proceeds from borrowings		30,172	45,227	36,502
Repayment of borrowings		(12,998)	(13,361)	(4,770)
Interest paid - lease liability		(16)	(57)	(57)
Repayment of lease liabilities		(584)	(680)	(680)
Net cash provided by financing activities	**D3**	**13,938**	**27,336**	**27,059**
Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		4,220	2,336	(1,164)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		32,822	32,822	26,106
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period		**37,042**	**35,158**	**24,942**

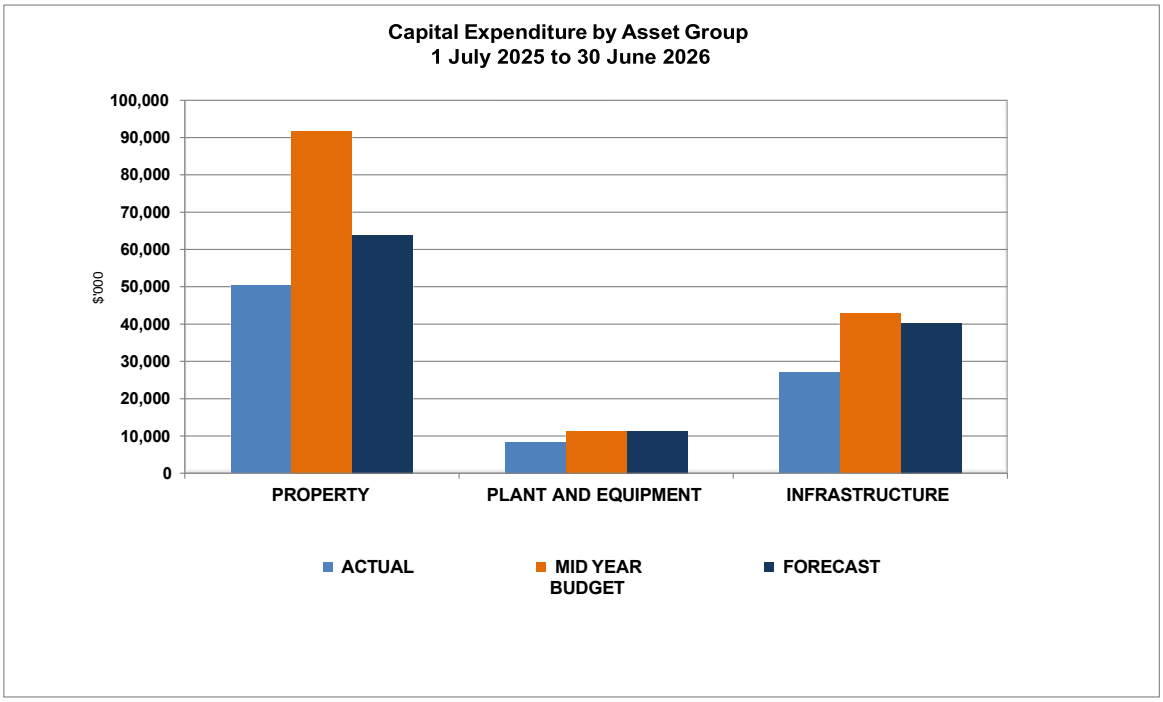
Details regarding Council's cash movements are contained in Note D - Cash Flow Statement.

The dissemination of Council's restricted and operating cash is provided in the table in section D4 and the graph "Restricted and Unrestricted Cash" in Appendix 2 Investment Analysis of this report. Note - cash inflows and outflows are inclusive of GST where applicable.

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

The detailed program under each of the capital groups is contained in **Appendix 1 – Capital Expenditure.**

	FULL YEAR					
	ACTUAL	MID BUDGET	VARIANCE	FORECAST	FORECAST vs ACTUALS VARIANCE	ANNUAL ORIGINAL BUDGET
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
PROPERTY	50,426	91,698	41,271	63,849	13,422	77,123
PLANT AND EQUIPMENT	8,439	11,350	2,911	11,350	2,911	7,983
INFRASTRUCTURE	26,972	42,900	15,929	40,285	13,313	34,765
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	**85,837**	**145,948**	**60,111**	**115,484**	**29,646**	**119,871**



Gross capital expenditure timing differences to 2026-27 are listed on the following pages. Appendix 4 details operating and capital timing differences from 2025-26 to 2026-27.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

A. Accounting Policy Notes

The financial report is prepared on the principles of accrual accounting. Accrual accounting recognises income when earned and expenditure when incurred, regardless of whether cash settlement has taken place. The basis of recognition of major income and expenditure in these statements are defined below.

1. **Rate revenue:** Rate revenue (excluding supplementary rates) is accrued evenly over the year, although cash is received in quarterly instalments or a lump sum, depending on how the ratepayer chooses to pay. Rate revenue in the Income Statement is a monthly accrual of the rates determined for the year in July.

2. **Grant revenue:** Council receives two types of grants, namely a General Purpose Grant (Financial Assistance Grant funding from the Victorian Local Government Grants Commission) which is not tied to any programs and Special Purpose Grants for various programs.

   In accordance with Accounting Standards, AASB 15 'Revenue from Contracts with Customers' and AASB 1058 'Income of Not-For-Profit Entities', grant income is generally recognised in the Income Statement to the extent of satisfied performance obligations.

   Alternatively, grant funding which does not have sufficiently specific performance obligations is recognised as income when the cash is received. Any grant income relating to unsatisfied performance obligations are recognised as unearned income in the Balance Sheet at balance date. Grants comprise of operating and capital (recurrent and non-recurrent in nature).

3. **Fees and charges**: Most fees and charges are recognised when cash is received. Generally, where Council raises a debtor's invoice, income is recognised at the point of the invoice and not when cash is received. Car parking permit income relating to a future period at balance date are recognised as unearned income in the Balance Sheet.

4. **Contributions - cash:** Cash contributions are essentially from developers towards open space works. These monies are treated as income when received. Council is obligated to spend these monies for the purpose for which they are given by the developers. Council also receives external contributions for other capital projects. Cash contributions received are held in reserves and treated as "restricted cash" until they are spent (see note 9 below).

5. **Employee costs:** Salaries expenditure is based on fortnightly salaries paid and accruals for salary on-costs such as leave entitlements, superannuation and Workcover.

6. **Capital expenditure:** The two broad areas of capital are the capital improvement program (CIP) (which includes infrastructure and major projects) and 'other' which includes fleet, computers, plant and furniture. Expenditure is recognised as capital if it is significant in value and results in assets which have a useful life in excess of at least one year.

7. **Budget information:** The Original Budget information contained in the report is the budget approved by Council on 23 June 2025. The full year annual budget in this report reflects the Mid-Year Budget as adopted by Council on 8 December 2025. The Mid-Year Budget represents the adopted budget incorporating net carry forward capital and operating amounts from 2024-25 and any adjustments identified since the 2025-26 Original Budget was approved in June 2025.

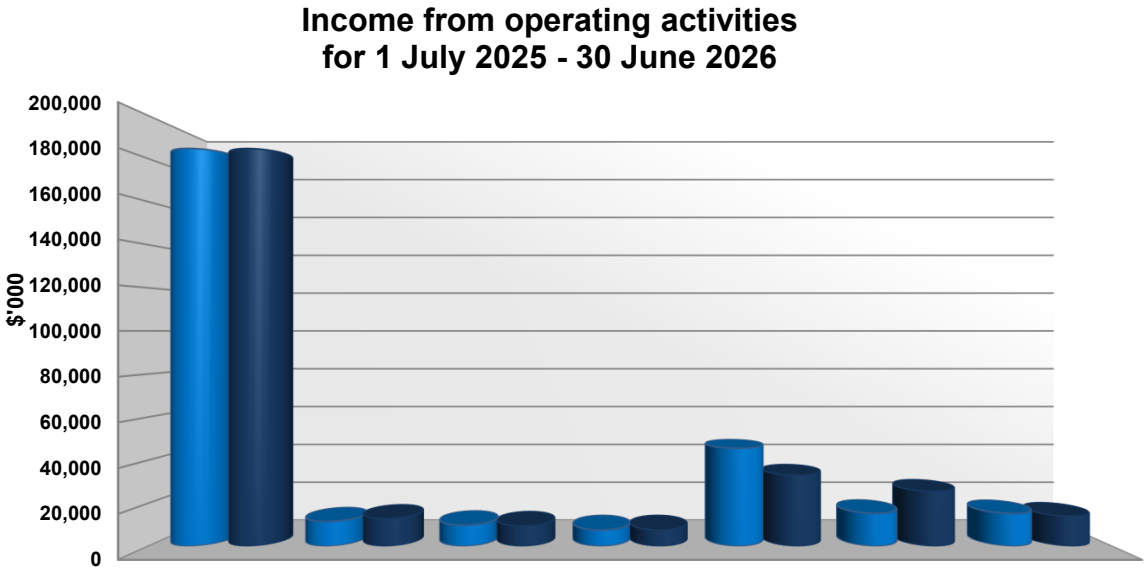
8. **Cash Flow Statement:** Reflects the actual cash movements during the year.

9. **Restricted cash:** These are monies set aside for specific purposes and are not readily available for day-to-day operations or general capital works. They include funds set aside towards meeting long service leave commitments (required by government regulations), statutory reserves (e.g. open space contributions) and other funds that are committed towards specific purposes.

B. Income Statement

B1. Operating Income

The chart below shows the categories of operating income against their respective budgets (excludes non-cash accounting entries such as non-monetary contributions or gifted assets).



	Rates and charges	Statutory fees and fines	User fees	Contributions - monetary	Grants - operating	Grants - capital (recurrent & non-recurrent)	Other Income
YTD actual	184,749	11,461	9,756	7,509	45,494	15,265	15,142
YTD budget	184,700	12,832	9,420	7,509	32,988	25,411	13,879

Operating income for the year ended 30 June 2026 is $1.57 million favourable against the Mid-Year Budget. This is due to the following:

- **Statutory fees and fines ($1.37 million unfavourable)** – Mainly due to reduced infringement revenue from enforcement resourcing, delayed recruitment and parking infrastructure installation project which impacted enforcement activity (Parking Management $955,000, General Law Enforcement $918,000 and Animal Management $120,000). The unfavourable variances are partially offset by higher plan checking, subdivision fee income and Magistrates Court fine income (Building $265,000, Health $209,000 and Civic Development and Design $151,000).

- **User fees ($336,000 favourable)** – Better than anticipated car park ticket machine income due to reduced availability in some non-council car parks due to ongoing works, combined with higher planning fee and food trader permits (City Futures $463,000) The favourable variance is partially offset by lower than anticipated income for home personal care, individual social support and home maintenance materials supplied (Community Strengthening).

- **Other income ($1.26 million favourable)** – Better than anticipated interest returns on investments, supported by higher average cash and investment balances due to later than expected capital expenditure (Non-Directorate $2.46 million), along with higher rental, venue hire and recovery income (Community Strengthening $366,000). These favourable variances were partially offset by delayed groundwater and drainage commissioning works at Spring Valley Landfill, reducing partner council recoveries (City Futures $1.22 million), with a corresponding reduction in expenditure.

- **Grants – operating ($12.51 million favourable)** - Mainly due to:

  - Early receipt of 80% of Council's 2026-27 Financial Assistance Grant allocation via the Victorian Local Government Grants Commission (Corporate Accounting $12.38 million).
  - Higher and additional funding for Home and Community Care ($773,000), Maternal and Child Health ($378,000), Children and Support Services ($148,000) and Food Services ($102,000)
  - Unbudgeted grant for Dandenong Employment Hub (Dandenong Employment Hub $150,000).

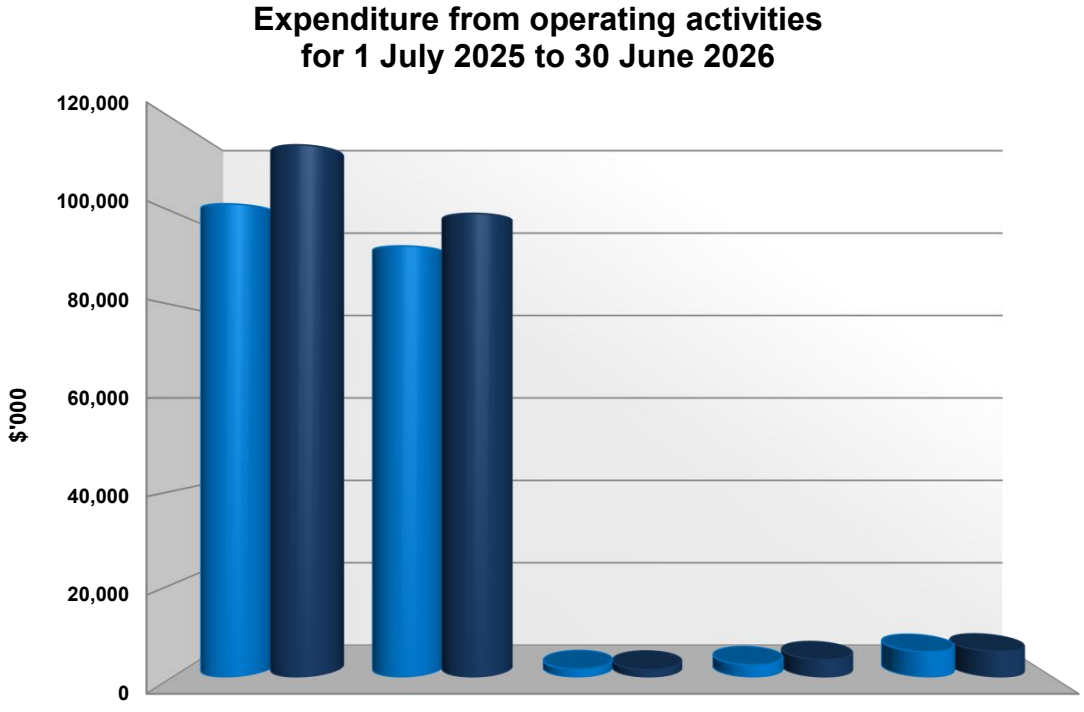
  These favourable variances are partially offset by Sleep and Settling ($852,000), Family Day Care (FDC) program ($463,000), HACC – Home Maintenance ($180,000) and Pre-school Field Officer ($110,000). Each grant will be offset by associated by expenditure. A number of these grants were not fully spent at 30 June 2026 and will be deferred to the 2026-27 financial year (refer to Appendix 4a of this report)

- **Grants – capital ($10.15 million unfavourable)** – Lower capital grants recognised at 30 June due to delay in capital expenditure. Funding received for these projects has been recorded as unearned income in the Balance Sheet and will be recognised as income in future years as project milestones are achieved and expenditure is incurred. There are several factors contributing to the delay in completion of capital projects including supply of materials, change in project scope, internal resourcing issues and third-party authority involvement. The grant income expectation and capital expenditure budget will be deferred to the 2026-27 financial year for several capital projects (see Appendix 4b of this report), including:

  - Oasis Aquatics and Wellbeing $4.10 million
  - Blackspot $3.92 million
  - Safe Local Roads Program $1.69 million
  - Level Crossing Removal Program (LXRP) $827,000

B2. Operating Expenditure

The chart below shows the categories of operating expenditure against their respective budget (excludes non-cash accounting entries including depreciation, amortisation, net loss on financial assets and prior year capital expenditure unable to be capitalised).



	Employee costs	Materials and services	Bad and doubtful debts	Borrowing costs	Other expenses
YTD actual	101,689	92,636	1,725	2,640	5,465
YTD budget	114,362	99,629	1,614	3,793	5,557

Operating expenditure for the year ended 30 June 2026 is favourable by $1.65 million. This is mainly due to favourable variances in materials and services and employee costs, partly offset by non-cash fixed asset accounting entries, including prior year capital expenditure unable to be capitalised, net loss on financial assets which include asset write-offs and fair value adjustments. These entries do not impact Council's cash position and are discussed in more detail in Notes 38, 42 and 43 of this report.

- **Materials and services ($6.99 million favourable)** – due to the following variances:
  - *City Futures ($5.28 million):*
    - Delayed groundwater and drainage commissioning works at Spring Valley Landfill.
    - Lower waste collection, disposal and processing costs due to reduced tonnages.
    - Delayed commencement of Roads and Drains maintenance programs.
    - Lower street lighting costs following LED conversion works.
    - Lower expenditure across several infrastructure, maintenance and place-making initiatives.

- *Customer and Information Office ($948,000):*
  - Lower application support, hardware, software maintenance and digital transformation costs.
- *Community Strengthening ($795,000):*
  - Reduced Family Day Care educator payments, aligned with lower grant income.
  - Lower expenditure on events, community programs, consultants and grant-funded initiatives.

These favourable variances were partially offset by increased expenditure relating to Core System Replacement activities, legal and planning services, fleet operations, software maintenance and other strategic organisational initiatives.

- **Employee costs ($12.67 million favourable)**

As depicted in the table below, the $12.67 million favourable variance is made up of:

Directorate	2025-26 Variance Fav/(unfav) $	Grant Funded Programs $	Offset by Lower Income $	2025-26 Underspend/ (overspend) $
CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM	(79,226)	-	-	(79,226)
CEO SERVICES	(44,886)	-	-	(44,886)
CITY FUTURES	2,695,508	74,215	846,202	1,775,090
COMMUNITY STRENGTHENING	7,435,927	5,437,262	690,102	1,308,564
NON DIRECTORATE	2,434,056	-	-	2,434,056
STRATEGY & CORPORATE SERVICES	73,285	-	-	73,285
CUSTOMER & INFORMATION OFFICE	(202,026)	-	-	(202,026)
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICE	358,962	-	-	358,962
Grand Total	**12,671,599**	**5,511,477**	**1,536,304**	**5,623,817**

- $5.51 million (43%) in grant funded programs which represent a future obligation and require an acquittal, caused mainly by a delay in recruitment (mostly in Community Strengthening).
- $1.54 million represents favourable employee costs are wholly offset by lower income.
- The remaining $5.62 million represents an underspend in employee costs due to the delay in recruitment of vacant positions as well as the timing gap between recruitment of vacant positions commencing and onboarding across the organisation:
  - *Non-Directorate ($2.43 million)* – Favourable variance due mainly to the impact of higher interest rates on the discounting methodology of long service leave provision at 30 June 2026 ($1.18 million).
  - *City Futures ($1.78 million)* – Parks and Open Spaces ($1.65 million), City Works ($353,000) and Strategic and Environmental Planning ($134,000). This favourable variance was partially offset by higher employee costs in Infrastructure Strategy ($214,000), City Development ($133,000) and the Chief Infrastructure Office ($56,000).

- *Community Strengthening ($1.31 million)* – Community Wellbeing ($1.16 million), Community Care ($304,000) and Safe, Active and Connected Communities ($46,000). This favourable variance is partially offset by an unfavourable variance in Creative and Engaged City ($226,000).

- *Chief Financial Office ($359,000)* – Mainly due to delays in recruitment for Procurement team and new Chief Financial Officer.

- **Borrowing costs ($1.15 million favourable) -** Lower interest costs due to reduced borrowings being required during 2025-26, reflecting the progression of the Oasis Aquatic & Wellbeing Centre project cash flows.

C. Balance Sheet

At 30 June 2026, Council's net assets are valued at $3.55 billion.

C1. Current assets

Cash and other assets that can be readily converted to cash.

Cash and cash equivalents ($37.04 million) – Represent the net amount held by Council in cash or term deposits with a term of less than 90 days.

When combined with 'Financial assets' of $187.76 million (below), Council holds a total of $224.80 million in cash and investment funds. Of this amount, $193.79 million (86%) is restricted for specific purposes, including employee entitlements, trust funds and deposits, and internal reserves.

Funds are invested in accordance with Council's Investment Policy. The policy requires Council to invest with prudence, consideration of acceptable risks and relevant legislation.

The details of Council's investments are contained in **Appendix 2**. In selecting investment products, Council has paid due consideration to risk by ensuring the investment portfolio does exceed the limits set in the Policy based on the Standard and Poor's Long-Term rating of Authorised Deposit Taking Institutions (ADI) combined with the term of the investment.

Financial assets ($187.76 million) – The increase in financial assets from 30 June 2025 is primarily due to the delayed timing of planned capital expenditure, which has resulted in Council retaining cash for longer and placing a higher proportion of funds in term deposits with maturities over 90 days at 30 June 2026.

Trade and other receivables ($41.26 million) – This balance includes:
- Rate debtors $19.67 million
- Infringement debtors of $10.49 million (net of provision for doubtful debts).
- General debtors $7.86 million (net of provision for doubtful debts).
- GST receivable $3.05 million.

Rate revenue (excluding supplementary rates) is accrued evenly over the year, although cash is received in quarterly instalments, via direct debit (including more flexible payment frequencies for ratepayers who sign up to Payable) or as a lump sum, depending on how the ratepayer chooses to pay. Rate revenue in the Income Statement is a monthly accrual of the rates determined for the year in July.

Other assets ($6.21 million) – This balance includes:
- Accrued income $4.27 million – income earned but cash not yet received as at 30 June 2026.
- Prepayments $1.61 million - expenses prepaid at 30 June 2026.
- Other deposits of $333,700 comprising:
  - $250,000 for Metropolitan Resource Recovery Landfill Services Gate Fee,
  - $75,000 for Metropolitan Resource Recovery organic waste processing contract, and
  - $8,700 works warranty bond for Soccer Pitch and Community Centre, 9 Memorial Drive, Noble Park.

C2. Non-current assets

Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment ($3.45 billion) – Includes Council land, buildings, roads, drainage, footpaths, parks, community facilities, plant and equipment, and other fixed assets. These values are reported after recognising accumulated depreciation against the relevant assets.

The $424.9 million increase in property, infrastructure, plant and equipment from the prior year is due to:

+ Asset revaluation net increment of $405 million
+ Asset acquisitions of $86 million
+ Contributed assets of $7 million
- Less depreciation expense of $57 million
- Less asset write-offs and disposals, net of accumulated depreciation, of approximately $16 million

2025–26 asset revaluations

Council recognised net revaluation increments of $405 million during 2025–26, comprising:

- Infrastructure assets: $271 million
- Property assets: $134 million

Infrastructure asset revaluations by asset class:

- Roads: $139 million
- Drainage: $78 million
- Footpaths and cycleways: $21 million
- Bridges: $16 million
- Parks, open space and streetscapes: $7 million
- Recreational, leisure and community facilities: $6 million
- Off-street car parks: $4 million

The largest movements related to roads and drainage, which together accounted for approximately $217 million of the net infrastructure revaluation increment.

Property asset revaluations resulted in a net increment of $134 million, comprising:

- Buildings – specialised: $77 million
- Land – specialised: $32 million
- Land – non-specialised: $7 million
- Land under roads: $18 million

Asset acquisitions and contributed assets

Council recognised asset acquisitions of $86 million during 2025–26 and recognised $7 million of contributed or gifted assets. Contributed assets included infrastructure transferred to Council without a corresponding cash purchase, such as assets arising from development and subdivision activity.

Depreciation

Depreciation expense for 2025–26 was $57 million, reflecting the consumption of Council's assets over their assessed useful lives.

The most significant depreciation charges related to:

- Roads: $15 million
- Buildings and other property assets: $16 million
- Drainage: $8 million
- Parks, open space and streetscapes: $4 million
- Recreational, leisure and community facilities: $4 million
- Footpaths and cycleways: $4 million
- Bridges: $1 million
- Off-street car parks: $0.5 million

Asset write-offs and disposals

Council recognised asset write-offs and disposals with a combined net carrying value impact of approximately $16 million. These non-cash movements mainly reflect the removal of existing assets renewed or replaced through Council's capital works and asset renewal programs, a $3.2 million land asset transferred from Council's asset register following confirmation that ownership rests with another entity, and prior-year expenditure of $4.5 million on the Dandenong New Art project that could not be capitalised because it no longer met the asset recognition requirements.

C3. Current liabilities

Debts due to be repaid within 12 months.

Trade and other payables ($25.78 million) – This balance includes trade creditors arising from operations, employee-related costs and capital works.

Trust funds and deposits ($6.04 million) – Trust funds and deposits include other refundable monies in respect of:

- Emergency Services Volunteer Fund (ESVF) payments collected by Council on behalf of the State Government but not yet paid on to the State Revenue Office ($2.75 million). These monies are remitted to the State Revenue Office in accordance with legislative timeframes (28 days after each quarterly rate instalment date).
- Other deposits ($1.92 million).
- Landscape deposits ($932,000).
- Road deposits ($318,000).
- Open space contributions ($122,000).

Unearned income ($54.62 million) – Represents income not yet earned, based on specific performance obligations, that were not complete as at 30 June 2026 in respect of:

- Developer Contribution Plan liabilities (DCP) – ($38.29 million).
- Operating grants ($7.79 million).
- Capital grants ($5.55 million).
- Other ($2.30 million).

Provisions ($21.42 million) – This balance represents the provision for employee entitlements and landfill restoration works.

- Employee entitlements:
  - Long service leave entitlements - $11.39 million.
  - Annual leave entitlements - $9.08 million.
  - Rostered days off (RDO) - $829,000.

- Landfill provision - $115,000 - provision for the restoration and aftercare management of the former Spring Valley landfill site (closed). The former closed landfill is owned by the Council and is used as recreational open space. Council's share is 19.88% of the total future estimated costs.

Interest-bearing liabilities ($25.90 million) – Represents the repayment of long-term borrowings expected during 2025-26.

Lease liabilities ($393,000) - Represents the lease repayments in respect of the right-of-use assets that are payable during 2025-26.

C4. Non-current liabilities

Debts due to be repaid in future years.

Provisions ($2.00 million) – Represents the provisions estimated to be paid beyond the 2025-26 financial year and comprises long service leave entitlements for employees ($688,000) and landfill provision for restoration of Spring Valley landfill site ($1.31 million) (Council's share is 19.88% of the total future estimated costs).

Trust funds and deposits ($3.06 million) – Represents deposits that are payable beyond the 2025-26 financial year and comprises asset protection bonds of $2.92 million, landscape deposits of $85,000 and contractor deposits of $54,000.

Interest-bearing liabilities ($39.65 million) – Comprises the amount of outstanding borrowings to be repaid beyond the next 12 months.

Lease liabilities ($3,000) – Represents the amount of lease payments in respect of the right-of-use assets to be repaid beyond the next 12 months.

C5. Net assets and equity

Net assets - Represents the difference between total assets and total liabilities. It is the Council's net worth to the City's ratepayers.

Reserves – Includes both statutory reserves (S) and discretionary reserves (D). The statutory reserves apply where funds are gained from the application of legislative requirements to contribute – and where expenditure of the funds is not entirely discretionary (i.e. the funds need to be used for certain expenditure only). The reserves listed below are explained in Section D - Notes to the Cash Flow Statement that follows.

The **discretionary** reserves are:

- Major projects reserve
- Insurance fund reserve
- Council funded – Development Contribution Plans reserve
- Spring Valley landfill rehabilitation reserve
- Springvale Activity Precinct – Parking and Development reserve
- Dandenong Activity Precinct – Parking and Development reserve
- Native re-vegetation reserves
- Keysborough South Maintenance Levy reserve
- General reserve (Aged Care)
- Grants in advance reserve
- Future maintenance reserve
- Digital Technology

The **statutory** reserves are:

- Open space – planning, development and improvements
- Open space – land acquisitions

D. Cash Flow Statement

Cash and cash equivalents totalled $37.04 million as at 30 June 2026, an increase of $4.22 million since 30 June 2025.

When considered together with 'Financial assets' of $188 million, Council's total cash and investment holdings comprise $225 million. 'Financial assets' are term deposits with a maturity greater than 90 days.

86%, or $193.79 million, of Council's total cash and investment holdings was restricted for specific purposes. Please refer to the following page for a detailed listing of restricted cash items.

Cash flows from operating activities – net inflow of $80 million.

The major inflows are rates and charges ($182.82 million), trust funds and deposits taken ($61.20 million), operating grants ($46.20 million), net GST refunds ($15.56 million), capital grants ($13.34 million), statutory fees and fines ($9.20 million), user fees ($8.54 million), interest received ($8.64 million), other receipts ($6.50 million), and monetary contributions ($4.38 million).

The major outflows are materials and services ($109 million), employee costs ($103 million), and trust funds and deposits repaid ($58 million).

Trust funds and deposits taken and repaid mainly relate to the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF). The remittance of ESVF amounts and associated levy interest is made to the State Revenue Office (SRO) in four instalments in accordance with section 41(1) of the *Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund Act 2012 (Vic)*. An instalment is due and payable to the Commissioner of State Revenue 28 days after the due date of rates instalments. Council collects ESVF on behalf of the State Government.

Cash flows from investing activities – net outflow of $90 million, including:

- $84 million cash payments for capital works expenditure. The detailed capital works schedule is included in this report as Appendix 1. Please note the difference between the two capital expenditure amounts is due to the movement in capital trade creditors at the start and end of the reporting period. Appendix 1 is on an accrual basis.
- A net $7 million relates to cash flows for term deposits invested with a maturity of greater than three months.
- $2 million proceeds on asset sales relating to a property sale and the annual fleet replacement program.

Cash flows from financing activities – inflow of $14 million.

Council incurred $2.64 million in finance costs during the year, received $30.17 million in borrowing proceeds and repaid $13.00 million of borrowings. Of these cash flows, $8.73 million of both the borrowing proceeds and repayments related to the refinancing of two existing loans during 2025–26. Council also paid $16,000 in lease interest and repaid $0.58 million of lease liabilities during 2025–26.

Restricted cash - Restricted cash represents funds that are set aside for specific purposes, as detailed in the following tables.

Type	30-Jun-26	Notes
Reserve funds	**$'000**	
Council funded Development Contribution Plans (DCP) reserve	16,294	Reserved for specific expenditure in accordance with the published DCP.
Open space – planning, development and improvements	9,190	Reserved for enhancing the City's open space by planning, development and improvements.
Open space – acquisitions	6,000	To fund acquisitions of new open space land.
Major projects reserve	48,443	Funds realised from the sale of Council's property assets or surplus Council funds that will be utilised for investing in other properties or funding future major projects.
Keysborough South Maintenance Levy	4,268	Reserved for specific maintenance expenditure relating to this area.
Spring Valley landfill rehabilitation	6,363	Rehabilitation of the Spring Valley landfill site.
Re-vegetation reserves	140	To meet native re-vegetation requirements on Council's reserves.
Insurance fund reserve	1,179	To meet large and unexpected policy excesses on multiple insurance claims.
Springvale Activity Precinct Parking and Development reserve	236	To fund development in the Springvale Activity Centre.
Dandenong Activity Precinct Parking and Development reserve	4,168	To fund development in the Dandenong Activity Centre.
General reserve (Aged Care)	7,628	Funds set aside for the aged care reforms.
Future maintenance reserve	3,582	Contribution funds for future works to address level crossing removal authority defects.
Digital Technology	586	To fund digital technology uplift.
Total reserve funds	**108,077**	

Employee provisions	**$'000**	
Long service leave	12,082	Funds to meet long service leave commitments.
Annual leave and other	9,908	Funds set aside to meet annual leave and rostered days off (RDO) commitments.
Total employee provisions	**21,990**	

Type	30-Jun-26	Notes
Trust funds and deposits	**$'000**	
Emergency Services Volunteer Fund (ESVF) collected and due	2,754	Payable to State Revenue Office – legislative requirement.
Open space contributions	122	Pending completion of works.
Landscape deposits	1,018	Pending completion of works.
Road deposits	318	Pending completion of works.
Other trust funds and deposits	4,885	Refundable upon finalisation of programs.
Total trust funds and deposits	**9,098**	

Other restricted funds	**$'000**	
DCP unearned income	38,288	Pending completion of works by developers.
Other unearned income	16,335	Pending completion of performance obligations.
Total other restricted funds	**54,623**	

Total restricted cash	**193,788**

E. Statement of Capital Works

Total capital expenditure as at 30 June 2026 was $86 million. The following CIP Expenditure Report contains the expenditure status of each of the approved capital projects.

The timing of cash outflows and project completion can differ for capital projects. Commentary on the status of each project with major variances are reported if the variance is greater than $300,000. Please note that the variances detailed below are the total of all asset classes by project whereas the Capital Expenditure report details the variances separately by asset class and project.

Property

1631 Art Gallery PEP Building ($0.56 million favourable) – Project completed under budget. Savings will be returned to Council.

1869 Dandenong Community Hub ($1.19 million favourable) – Delivery will be completed in 2026-27. Works will be undertaken over the next six months in response to the Council resolution in January. Deferred to 2026-27 financial year.

3041 Dandenong Civic Centre Rectification ($0.72 million favourable) – Works were delayed due to internal resourcing constraints. As a multi-year staged project, works will continue in 2026-27.

3717 Springvale Reserve ($0.32 million favourable) – Remaining works will continue in 2026-27 to address defects and undertake additional works within the Springvale Reserve kitchen and social room.

3906 Dandenong New Art ($8.78 million favourable) – This is a multi-year funded project. The project will progress into 2026-27 financial year in line with the programmed delivery timeline.

3974 Oasis Aquatics and Wellbeing ($22.77 million favourable) – The variance is due to a slight delay in the delivery of this multi-year project, resulting in expenditure deferred to future periods. To ensure continued alignment between project delivery and financial forecasts, quarterly reviews are scheduled with the CGD Finance team to closely monitor cash flow performance against projections as required. Continues in 2026-27 financial year.

4069 PEP Redevelopment ($1.08 million favourable) – The variance is primarily due to the timing of project expenditure. As a multi-year, fully grant-funded project, a portion of the planned expenditure has been deferred to the next financial year, with no impact on the overall project budget or funding outcome.

4071 Noble Park Community Centre – DDA Bathroom ($0.45 million favourable) – Project delivery will be completed in 2026-27. The construction tender closed on 12 May 2026 with construction expected to commence in July and be completed within approximately four months.

4185 Dandenong Market Fire and Compliance ($0.55 million favourable) – This is a multi-year project. The surplus will support the continuation of the fire service upgrade works in 2026-27.

4186 Dandenong Market Structure Rectification ($0.46 million favourable) – Surplus funds will be returned, as new budget allocation has been provided for the works in 2026-27.
4264 Dandenong Stadium Court Resurfacing ($0.47 million favourable) – Project works will be completed in 2026-27. The construction contract has been awarded, works programmed between September and December 2026.

4265 Water Main Renewal Program ($1.04 million favourable) – Project delivery has been delayed due to multiple factors, including overlaps with the City of Casey and cultural heritage overlay. Delivery in 2026-27 remains uncertain. Subject to project progression, funds may either be deferred to enable construction or returned to Council.

4293 Dandenong Library Inclusive Spaces ($0.43 million favourable) – Remaining in, scope, including the diversity room works, will be completed in 2026-27.

4296 Springers Floor and Futsal Goal ($0.94 million favourable) – Stage one external drainage works is scheduled for completion in December 2026. Delivery has been staged to address underlying issues prior to the floor replacement. Deferred to 2026-27 financial year.

Plant and Equipment

4162 CCTV Renewal Program ($2.43 million favourable) – Delivery to be completed in 2026-27. The project is currently in procurement, with a preferred supplier expected to be appointed in July and construction scheduled to comment in the new financial year.

Infrastructure

3231 Road Reconstruction Program ($1.17 million favourable) – Completed under budget, saving will be returned to Council.

3752 Road to Recovery Program ($0.35 million unfavourable) – Overspend due to price increases in fuel and bitumen charges, which were impacted by the conflict in the Middle East, compared to the original estimated prices.

3753 Road Resurfacing Program ($0.96 million favourable) – Project under budget, savings will be returned to Council.

3992 DCP Perry Road Stage 3 (KR01c) ($4.60 million favourable) – This is a multi-year DCP-funded project. The project will progress into 2026-27 financial year in line with the programmed delivery timeline.

4075 Parking Meter Expansion ($0.30 million favourable) – Project works, including expansion of paid parking into additional areas, will continue in 2026-27. Delivery has been extended due to a prolonged consultation process.

4076 Safe Local Roads Program | Chapel Road Keysborough ($0.62 million favourable) – This is a multi-year grant funded project. The project will progress in 2026-27 financial year in line with the programmed delivery timeline.

4226 Drainage Renewal Works Program ($0.41 million favourable) – Project completed under budget, resulting in savings that will be returned to Council.

4250 LXRP Fowler Road Footpath ($0.38 million favourable) – In lieu of returning left over funds, Council has been permitted to utilise this money for its sister project along the South Gippsland Highway (undertaken by Council as part of the Progress Street Level Crossing Removal Project) and, subsequentially, other level crossing removal project works undertaken by Council (such as the Webster Street Level Crossing Removal ancillary projects)

4257 Safe Local – McCrae Street Dandenong ($1.08 million favourable) – This is a multi-year grant funded project. A minor delay was experienced due to scope expansion during the design phase; however, the project remains on track and will progress into 2026-27 financial year in line with the programmed delivery timeline.

4258 Blackspot Dandenong ($3.88 million favourable) – This is a multi-year grant funded project. A minor delay was experienced due to scope expansion during the design phase; however, the project remains on track and will progress into 2026-27 financial year in line with the programmed delivery timeline.

4284 Greaves Reserve Cricket Nets Oval 1 and 2 ($0.32 million unfavourable) – Grant funded project commenced in 2025-26, not included in the budget; however, the program is fully grant-funded, resulting in no net impact on Council funding requirements.

4302 Road Renewal (Complex) Program ($0.51 million favourable) – Surplus funds will be returned, as new budget allocation has been approved to deliver the works in 2026-27.

4309 LXRP Fowler Road ($0.35 million favourable) – This project has until 2030 to be completed; works won't start until 2028-29 and will form part of the renewal projects.

APPENDIX 1 – CIP EXPENDITURE REPORT

	FULL YEAR					
	ACTUAL	MID YEAR BUDGET	VARIANCE	FULL YEAR FORECAST	FORECAST vs ACTUAL VARIANCE	ANNUAL ORIGINAL BUDGET
	$	$	$	$		$
PROPERTY						
Buildings						
0000. Not Applicable	669,895	-	(669,895)	18,777	(651,118)	-
1631. Art Gallery PEP Bldg	-	562,061	562,061	562,061	562,061	-
1869. Dandenong Community Hub	229,207	1,415,544	1,186,337	1,415,544	1,186,337	-
3004. Bldg Renewal Aq/Leis D'nong Oasis	129,803	132,791	2,988	132,791	2,988	19,470
3024. Heritage Kindergarten	26,855	32,062	5,207	25,552	(1,303)	32,062
3041. Dandenong Civic Ctr Rectification	212,420	930,126	717,706	930,126	717,706	500,000
3083. Bldg Renewal Walker St Gallery	260,924	79,845	(181,079)	79,845	(181,079)	79,845
3093. Dandenong Nth Senior Citizen	10,058	61,242	51,184	61,242	51,184	-
3207. Bldg Renewal Aq/Leis D'nong Stadium	144,633	298,290	153,657	298,290	153,657	-
3224. Ross Res Athletics Pav. Amenities	5,739	64,800	59,062	64,800	59,062	64,800
3267. Lois Twohig Gerry Sweet Pavilion	87,738	137,600	49,862	90,132	2,394	137,600
3303. NP Comm Ctr Building 2	33,221	27,597	(5,624)	27,597	(5,624)	-
3324. Bldg Renewal Aq/Leis Springers	50,126	135,536	85,410	135,536	85,410	-
3455. Burden Park Masterplan Implem.	6,830	47,059	40,229	47,059	40,229	-
3479. Darren Reserve Kindergarten	3,300	78,605	75,305	78,605	75,305	-
3548. Keysborough Community Hub (KCH)	1,215,107	1,428,516	213,409	1,428,516	213,409	-
3717. Springvale Reserve	-	324,920	324,920	324,920	324,920	-
3820. Bldg Renewal Aq/Leis NPAC	93,393	137,671	44,278	193,474	100,081	53,471
3873. Bldg Renewal DDA	3,900	223,112	219,212	223,112	219,212	223,112
3876. Bldg Renewal Fixt/Fitt Bathroom	23,375	15,127	(8,248)	15,127	(8,248)	-
3878. Bldg Renewal Lift	125,179	26,500	(98,679)	26,500	(98,679)	-
3879. Building Renewal Minor Works	-	-	-	-	-	-
3883. Bldg Renewal Fixt/Fitt Kitch & Mech	-	-	-	-	-	-
3904. Bldg Renewal Theatre	101,311	188,690	87,379	188,690	87,379	188,690
3906. Dandenong New Art	408,839	9,191,603	8,782,764	894,096	485,257	4,255,599
3946. Bldg Renewal Aquat/Leis	103,344	5,371	(97,973)	5,371	(97,973)	-
3955. Chandler MCH/Kinder Windows	31,777	85,455	53,678	85,455	53,678	-
3974. Oasis Aquatics & Wellbeing	44,322,089	67,086,733	22,764,644	47,500,000	3,177,911	66,156,000
4001. Dandenong Market Bazaar Bird Net	121,184	185,000	63,816	185,000	63,816	-
4003. Springvale Res Masterplan Implem.	-	88,500	88,500	88,500	88,500	-
4067. Lyndale Sec. College Kitchen	8,374	163,589	155,215	163,589	155,215	-
4069. PEP Redevelopment	14,255	1,094,032	1,079,777	1,094,032	1,079,777	-
4071. Noble Park Comm Ctr-DDA bathroom	-	450,000	450,000	450,000	450,000	-
4072. Noble Park Comm Ctr-Kitchen	-	70,000	70,000	70,000	70,000	-
4073. Drum Theatre Facade & Lighting	48,544	250,000	201,457	250,000	201,457	-
4074. Burden Park Bowls Club Flooring	2,020	61,500	59,480	61,500	59,480	-
4081. Dandenong Employment Hub Fitout	205,579	-	(205,579)	-	(205,579)	-
4104. Security Program	142,378	220,000	77,622	220,000	77,622	-
4105. Police Paddocks Water Main	375	122,727	122,352	122,727	122,352	-
4106. 2330-22/23 D'nong Civic Hot Water	-	93,280	93,280	93,280	93,280	-
4126. Dandenong Day Nursery Cafe Blinds	-	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000	-
4132. Heritage Hill (Laurel)	3,078	55,028	51,950	14,128	11,050	-
4146. 39 Clow Ground Floor HVAC	394,814	664,480	269,666	464,480	69,666	664,480
4147. Dandenong West Prim Sch	25,380	25,080	(300)	25,380	0	25,080
4148. Noble Park Mobile Library Service	17,356	17,356	0	17,356	0	-
4184. Dandenong Market - Lift	137,236	174,565	37,329	174,565	37,329	-
4185. D'nong Market Fire & Compliance	257,313	803,976	546,663	803,976	546,663	100,000
4186. D'nong Market Struct Rectification	46,748	510,318	463,570	510,318	463,570	500,000
4202. Gas Transition Program	42,184	120,237	78,053	120,237	78,053	-
4220. Bldg Renewal Fixt/Fitt General	24,061	88,570	64,509	88,570	64,509	-
4222. NPAC Pump & Pipework	-	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	-
4238. Bldg Renewal Fixt/Fitt Fifth Ave	-	110,000	110,000	110,000	110,000	-
4264. Dandenong Stadium Court Resurfacing	900	474,467	473,567	474,467	473,567	1,024,467
4265. Water Main Renewal Program	76,358	1,119,680	1,043,323	1,174,680	1,098,323	1,119,680
4293. Dandenong Library Inclusive Spaces	38,875	471,839	432,964	721,839	682,964	471,839
4296. Springers Floor & Futsal Goal	7,625	950,525	942,900	950,525	942,900	950,525
4298. Bldg Renewal D'nong Civic Centre	55,759	93,280	37,521	93,280	37,521	93,280
4299. Springvale Res Sport Pav Amenities	328,884	452,868	123,984	402,868	73,984	452,868

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	FULL YEAR					
	ACTUAL	MID YEAR BUDGET	VARIANCE	FULL YEAR FORECAST	FORECAST vs ACTUAL VARIANCE	ANNUAL ORIGINAL BUDGET
	$	$	$	$		$
PROPERTY						
Leasehold Improvements						
0000. Not Applicable	105,955	-	(105,955)	-	(105,955)	-
3553. Parkmore Customer Service Refurb	-	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
4288. Police Paddocks DDA Access	21,465	-	(21,465)	-	(21,465)	-
Land						
4201. 9A Blissington Street, Springvale	590	-	(590)	-	(590)	-
					-	
Total property	**50,426,349**	**91,697,753**	**41,271,404**	**63,848,515**	**13,422,166**	**77,122,868**
PLANT AND EQUIPMENT						
Plant, machinery and equipment						
0000. Not Applicable	56,479	-	(56,479)	-	(56,479)	-
1445. Fleet Renewal Program	5,682,854	5,759,395	76,541	5,759,395	76,541	3,949,201
Library books						
3104. Library Strategy Books & Resources	754,787	865,592	110,805	865,592	110,805	865,592
Computers and telecommunications						
0000. Not Applicable	83,288	-	(83,288)	-	(83,288)	-
4104. Security Program	-	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	-
4154. Various Locations People Counters	26,375	31,088	4,713	31,088	4,713	-
4162. CCTV Renewal Program	223,239	2,651,627	2,428,388	2,651,627	2,428,388	1,832,290
4223. Dandenong Library Book Sorter	231,173	250,000	18,827	250,000	18,827	-
4224. Dandenong Civic Ctr UPS Server	137,739	137,832	93	137,832	93	-
4262. AI-powered Chat Bot	189,558	250,000	60,442	250,000	60,442	-
Fixtures, fittings and furniture						
3314. Furn Renewal Community Hubs	147,141	162,970	15,829	162,970	15,829	162,970
3959. Emergency Relief Centre Equipment	3,688	29,010	25,322	29,010	25,322	-
4269. Library RFID Infrastucture Renewal	84,279	268,487	184,208	268,487	184,208	268,487
4270. Creative Studio Hub	35,956	26,352	(9,604)	26,352	(9,604)	26,352
4271. Community Hub Waste Wash Stations	-	12,497	12,497	12,497	12,497	12,497
4297. D'nong Civic Ctr Chamber Screen	42,944	43,065	121	43,065	121	43,065
4300. Furn Renewal Kitchen & Mechanical	548,232	625,000	76,768	625,000	76,768	625,000
4301. MCH Office Furniture	191,385	197,316	5,931	197,316	5,931	197,316
Total plant and equipment	**8,439,117**	**11,350,231**	**2,911,114**	**11,350,231**	**2,911,114**	**7,982,770**
INFRASTRUCTURE						
Parks, open space and streetscapes						
0000. Not Applicable	303,879	-	(303,879)	-	(303,879)	-
3027. Fencing Program (Active & Passive)	133,646	249,075	115,429	249,075	115,429	249,075
3147. Parking Machines	773,534	682,448	(91,086)	682,448	(91,086)	224,290
3173. Springvale Activity Ctr Wayfinding	115,163	117,000	1,837	117,000	1,837	117,000
3293. Heritage Archive Fencing & Gate	58,956	62,150	3,194	62,150	3,194	62,150
3442. NPR Noble Park Revitalisation	182,845	247,793	64,948	247,793	64,948	-
3835. Passive OS Signage	3,480	186,560	183,080	186,560	183,080	186,560
3847. Public Lighting Renewal Program	321,915	305,250	(16,665)	305,250	(16,665)	305,250
3849. Frederick Wachter Playground	-	34,471	34,471	34,471	34,471	-
4012. Alex Wilkie Wetlands	267,541	331,425	63,884	331,425	63,884	-
4062. NPR Muderra Artwork	138,026	137,459	(567)	137,459	(567)	-
4066. George Andrews Field 2 Lighting	144,886	171,186	26,300	171,186	26,300	-
4075. Parking Meter Expansion	-	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	-
4079. Police Paddocks Pitch 3 Lighting	27,803	90,000	62,197	90,000	62,197	-
4091. Heritage Hill Fencing SCSG	19,977	-	(19,977)	-	(19,977)	-
4119. Frederick Wachter Tennis Lighting	9,871	26,378	16,508	26,378	16,508	26,378
4151. Public Art Renewal Program	21,105	58,300	37,195	58,300	37,195	58,300
4164. Dandy CBD LED Upgrade	123,565	122,456	(1,109)	122,456	(1,109)	-
4175. Springvale Revit ActPLAN	72,637	250,000	177,363	250,000	177,363	-
4191. Railway Parade Shopping Centre	9,159	7,595	(1,564)	7,595	(1,564)	-
4207. Noble Park Reserve Carpark & Picnic	10,350	39,250	28,900	39,250	28,900	-
4208. Warner Reserve Masterplan Implem.	57,128	60,212	3,084	60,212	3,084	-
4213. View Road Furn & Landscape	82,665	110,110	27,445	110,110	27,445	110,110
4234. Rosswood Tennis Lighting	203,105	368,338	165,233	368,338	165,233	-
4235. Greaves Res Oval 4 Lighting	103,824	141,107	37,283	141,107	37,283	-

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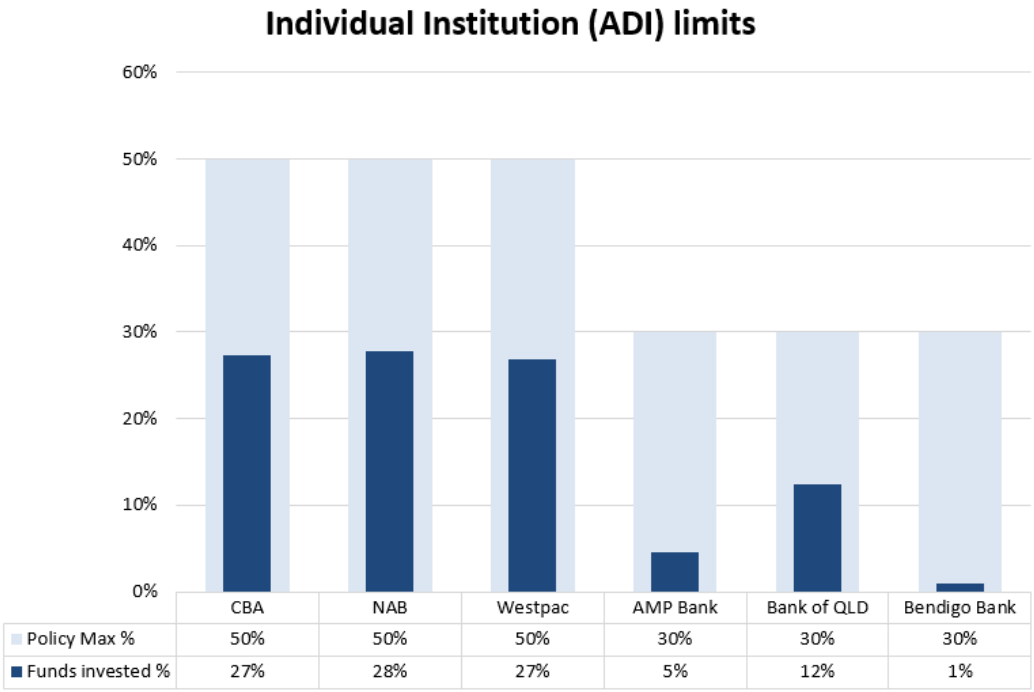
	FULL YEAR					
	ACTUAL	MID YEAR BUDGET	VARIANCE	FULL YEAR FORECAST	FORECAST vs ACTUAL VARIANCE	ANNUAL ORIGINAL BUDGET
	$	$	$	$		$
INFRASTRUCTURE						
Parks, open space and streetscapes (continued)						
4274. Doris Res - Local Pk Furn & LndScp	32,733	86,130	53,397	86,130	53,397	86,130
4277. JC Mills Reserve Hockey Lighting	6,890	24,420	17,530	24,420	17,530	24,420
4278. Fotheringham Reserve Lighting	1,800	23,320	21,520	23,320	21,520	23,320
4281. WJ Turner Reserve Floodlighting	300,149	327,904	27,755	327,904	27,755	327,904
4290. Fotheringham Reserve LED Lighting	290,235	-	(290,235)	-	(290,235)	-
4304. Passive OS Furniture & BBQs	175,644	215,710	40,066	215,710	40,066	215,710
4305. Ian Tatterson Wayfinding	66,250	183,150	116,900	183,150	116,900	183,150
Recreational, leisure and community facilities						
0000. Not Applicable	499,895	-	(499,895)	-	(499,895)	-
1679. Parkfield Reserve Master Plan	194,636	314,921	120,285	314,921	120,285	-
1859. Rowley Allan Res Masterplan Implem.	13,571	30,000	16,429	30,000	16,429	-
3209. Active Reserve Prog Facilities	115,560	126,308	10,748	126,308	10,748	126,308
3211. Passive OS Softfall & Rubber	513,336	513,040	(296)	513,040	(296)	513,040
3406. Fotheringham Cricket Wicket	77,254	146,080	68,826	146,080	68,826	146,080
3506. Greaves Reserve Cricket Wicket	59,054	71,940	12,886	71,940	12,886	71,940
3586. Booth Reserve(Clow St)	30,400	36,080	5,680	36,080	5,680	36,080
3631. Dandenong Park Masterplan Implem	43,969	44,180	211	44,180	211	-
3684. Warner Reserve Cricket Wicket	70,079	146,080	76,001	146,080	76,001	146,080
4125. Greaves Reserve Masterplan	-	14,593	14,593	14,593	14,593	-
4158. Springvale Reserve Netball	80,340	80,000	(340)	80,000	(340)	-
4275. JC Mills Res Hockey Field & Fence	59,820	95,436	35,616	95,436	35,616	95,436
4276. Rowley Allan Coaches Box	24,494	46,600	22,106	46,600	22,106	46,600
4280. Greaves Reserve Recreation Infra.	889,587	964,917	75,330	964,917	75,330	964,917
4282. Warner Reserve Sth Soccer Field	77,050	212,227	135,177	212,227	135,177	212,227
4284. Greaves Reserve Cricket Nets O1&2	322,415	-	(322,415)	-	(322,415)	-
4285. Greaves Reserve Coaches Boxes x 6	64,900	-	(64,900)	-	(64,900)	-
4292. Ross Res. Athletics Shade Struct's	12,657	-	(12,657)	-	(12,657)	-
4303. Passive OS Playground Risk	125,097	123,200	(1,897)	123,200	(1,897)	123,200
Roads						
0000. Not Applicable	83,066	-	(83,066)	-	(83,066)	-
3099. Road Signs, Linemark & Improvemts	49,346	154,050	104,704	154,050	104,704	154,050
3231. Road Reconstruction Program	4,140,369	5,309,761	1,169,392	5,309,761	1,169,392	2,757,300
3373. Kerb & Channel Renewal	225,069	239,300	14,231	239,300	14,231	239,300
3404. Black Spot - Brady Rd, Dandenong	283,543	365,797	82,254	365,797	82,254	-
3752. Roads to Recovery Prg	2,243,641	1,891,400	(352,241)	1,891,400	(352,241)	1,831,496
3753. Road Resurfacing Program	5,190,208	6,147,840	957,632	6,147,840	957,632	6,147,840
3754. Road Rehabilitation Program	-	-	-	-	-	-
3931. Guardrail Renewal Program	-	211,250	211,250	211,250	211,250	211,250
3992. DCP Perry Rd Stage 3 (KR01c)	2,119,976	6,715,596	4,595,620	5,000,000	2,880,024	6,715,596
4076. Safe Local Chapel Rd Keysboroug	20,450	640,836	620,386	640,836	620,386	-
4077. Safe Local - Bryants Rd Dandenong	246,171	485,414	239,243	485,414	239,243	-
4138. LATM Renewal Program	101,014	200,000	98,986	200,000	98,986	200,000
4187. Black Spot Prog.- Hammond Rd Lodgis	25,550	82,454	56,904	82,454	56,904	-
4189. Black Spot Prog.-View Rd, S/Vale	48,989	52,414	3,425	52,414	3,425	-
4225. Dandenong Market Road Safety	86,528	86,386	(142)	86,386	(142)	-
4257. Safe Local - McCrae St Dandenong	44,600	1,126,250	1,081,650	1,126,250	1,081,650	2,252,500
4258. Blackspot Dandenong	-	3,876,000	3,876,000	3,876,000	3,876,000	3,876,000
4260. Blackspot Clow St, Dandenong	14,230	-	(14,230)	-	(14,230)	-
4261. IP43 Road Safety Infrastructure	1,154,341	1,388,585	234,244	1,388,585	234,244	1,388,585
4273. Minor Civil Engineering Design Prog	-	87,450	87,450	87,450	87,450	87,450
4302. Road Renewal (Complex) Program	94,990	606,320	511,330	356,320	261,330	606,320
4309. LXRP Fowler Road	-	350,000	350,000	350,000	350,000	-
Bridges						
3185. Bridge & Boardwalk Program	34,866	261,850	226,984	261,850	226,984	261,850
Footpath and cycleways						
0000. Not Applicable	90,327	-	(90,327)	-	(90,327)	-
3134. Palm Plaza	188,770	239,800	51,030	239,800	51,030	239,800
3355. Footpath Renewal Program	423,674	537,325	113,651	537,325	113,651	537,325
4250. LXRP Fowler Rd Footpath	368,544	750,000	381,456	750,000	381,456	-
4286. Lois Twohig Path Network	104,585	-	(104,585)	-	(104,585)	-
4308. LXRP Sth Gipps Path	4,360	99,900	95,540	99,900	95,540	-
4313. LXRP Webster St Shared User Path	3,250	-	(3,250)	-	(3,250)	-

	FULL YEAR					
	ACTUAL	MID YEAR BUDGET	VARIANCE	FULL YEAR FORECAST	FORECAST vs ACTUAL VARIANCE	ANNUAL ORIGINAL BUDGET
	$	$	$	$		$
INFRASTRUCTURE						
Off street car parks						
4003. Springvale Res Masterplan Implem.	-	12,230	12,230	12,230	12,230	-
4186. D'nong Market Struct Rectification	88,328	203,855	115,527	203,855	115,527	-
4272. Off Street Car Park Renewal	95,650	119,405	23,755	119,405	23,755	119,405
4306. Burden Park Southern Carpark	179,190	179,190	0	179,190	0	179,190
4307. Noble Park Reserve Carpark Aenone	179,190	179,190	(0)	179,190	(0)	179,190
Drainage						
0000. Not Applicable	121,876	-	(121,876)	-	(121,876)	-
3269. Rowley Allen Pav. Oval Interface	289,923	301,968	12,045	201,968	(87,955)	301,968
4010. LRCI2 Callander Road	11,090	276,444	265,355	76,444	65,355	-
4226. Drainage Renewal Works Program	683,138	1,097,800	414,662	747,800	64,662	1,097,800
4227. Drainage Reactive Works Program	600,133	699,600	99,467	699,600	99,467	699,600
Total infrastructure	**26,971,846**	**42,900,459**	**15,928,613**	**40,284,863**	**13,313,017**	**34,765,470**
GRAND TOTAL	**85,837,311**	**145,948,443**	**60,111,132**	**115,483,609**	**29,646,298**	**119,871,108**

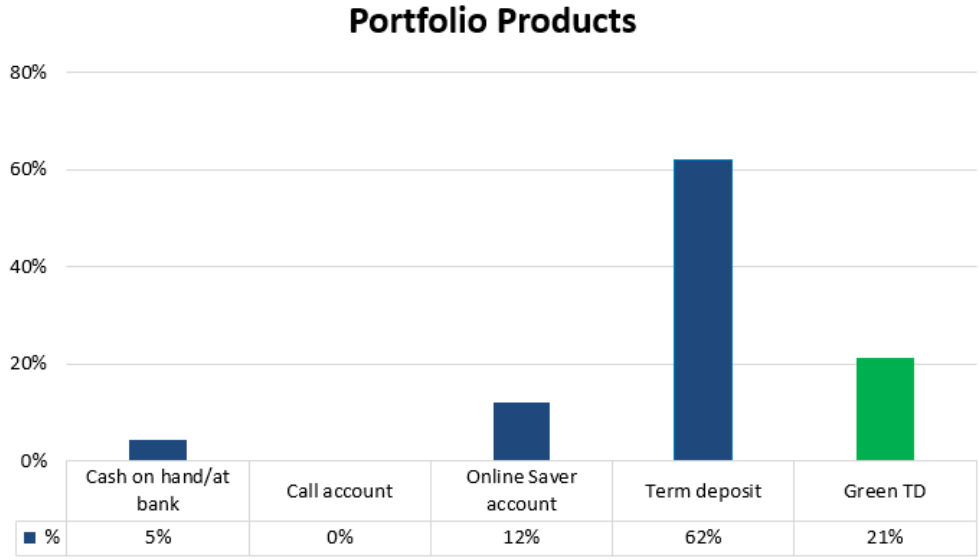
CIP Glossary

Abbrev.	Description
AI	Artificial Intelligence
CBD	Central Business District
CCTV	Closed-Circuit Television
CIP	Capital Improvement Program
DCP	Development Contributions Plan
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
HVAC	Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning
LED	Light-Emitting Diode
LRCI	Local Roads Community Infrastructure
MCH	Maternal and Child Health
NP	Noble Park
NPAC	Noble Park Aquatic Centre
NPR	Noble Park Revitalisation
OS	Open Space
PEP	Precinct Energy Plant
UPS	Uninterruptible Power Supply

APPENDIX 2 – INVESTMENT ANALYSIS

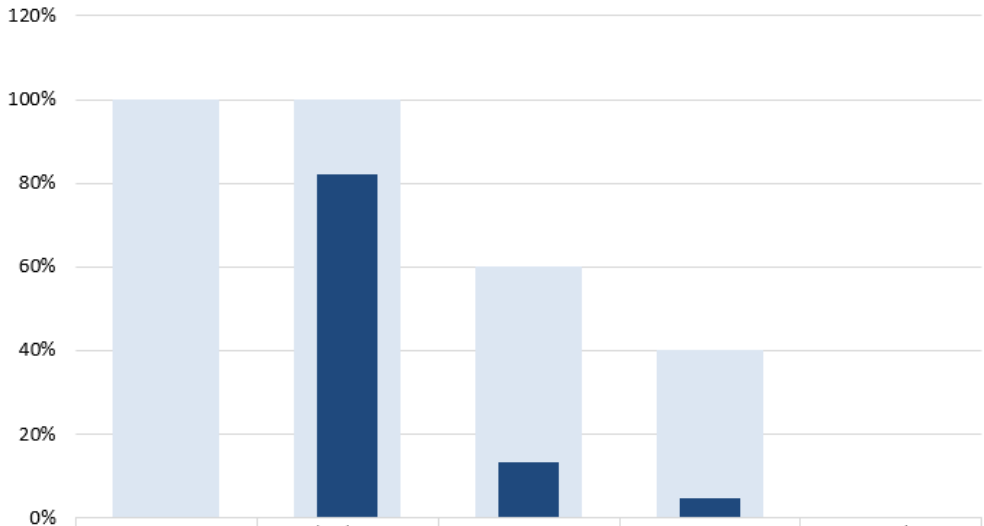


Policy limit – AAA category bank max. 60%, AA category or major bank 50%, A category bank max. 40%, BBB category bank max. 30%, Unrated ADI category bank 0%.



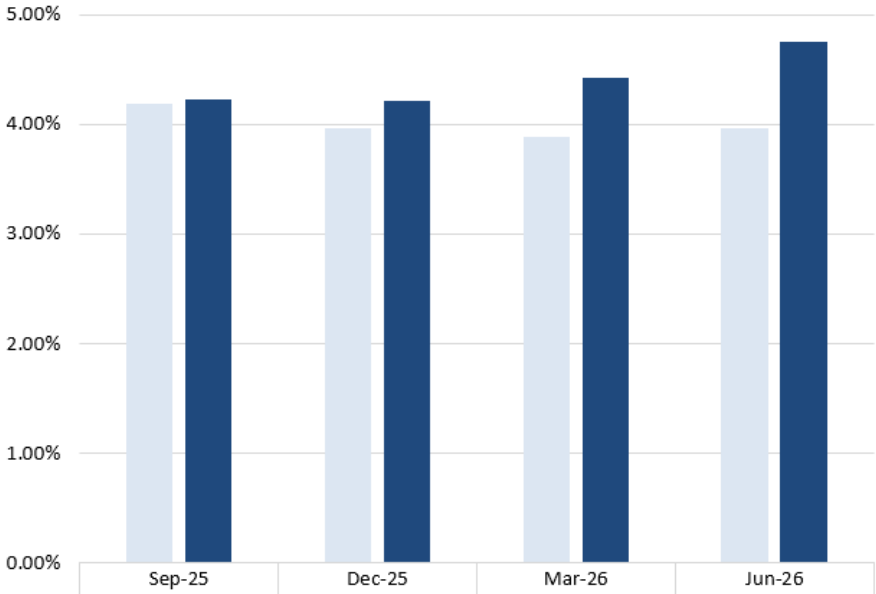
Green term deposits (TD): At 30 June 2026, 21% of Council's investment portfolio (or $47.2 million) was held in 'green deposits' certified to the Climate Bonds Initiative - Climate Bonds Standard (the same certification used for green bonds). Investments held with Bendigo Bank are included in this category, noting the institution's policy of not investing in fossil fuels.

Investment portfolio by credit rating

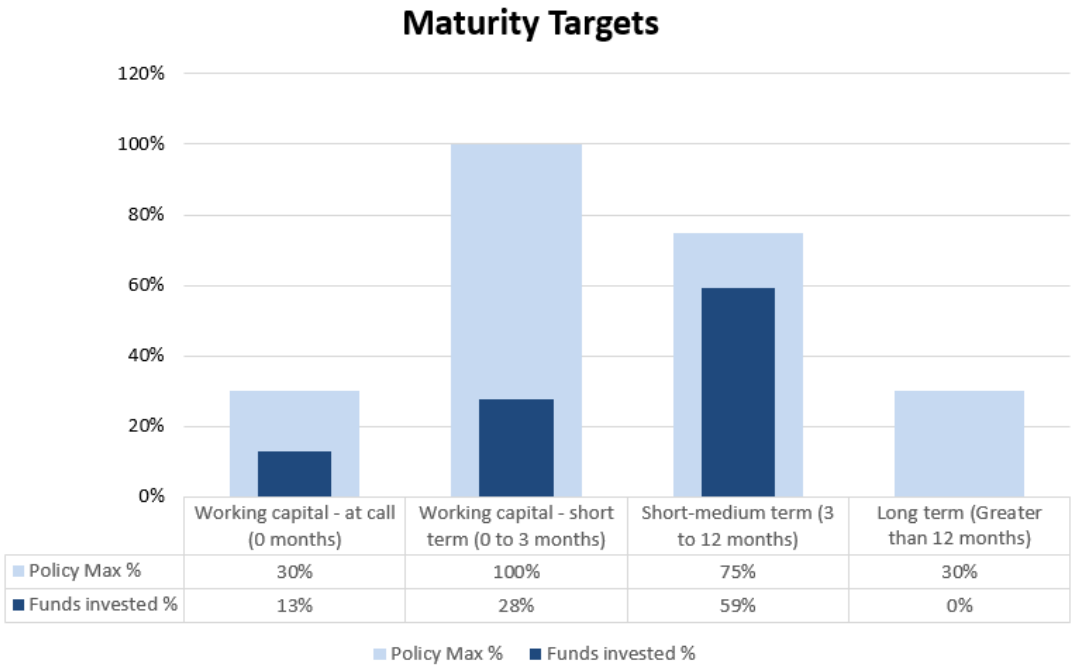


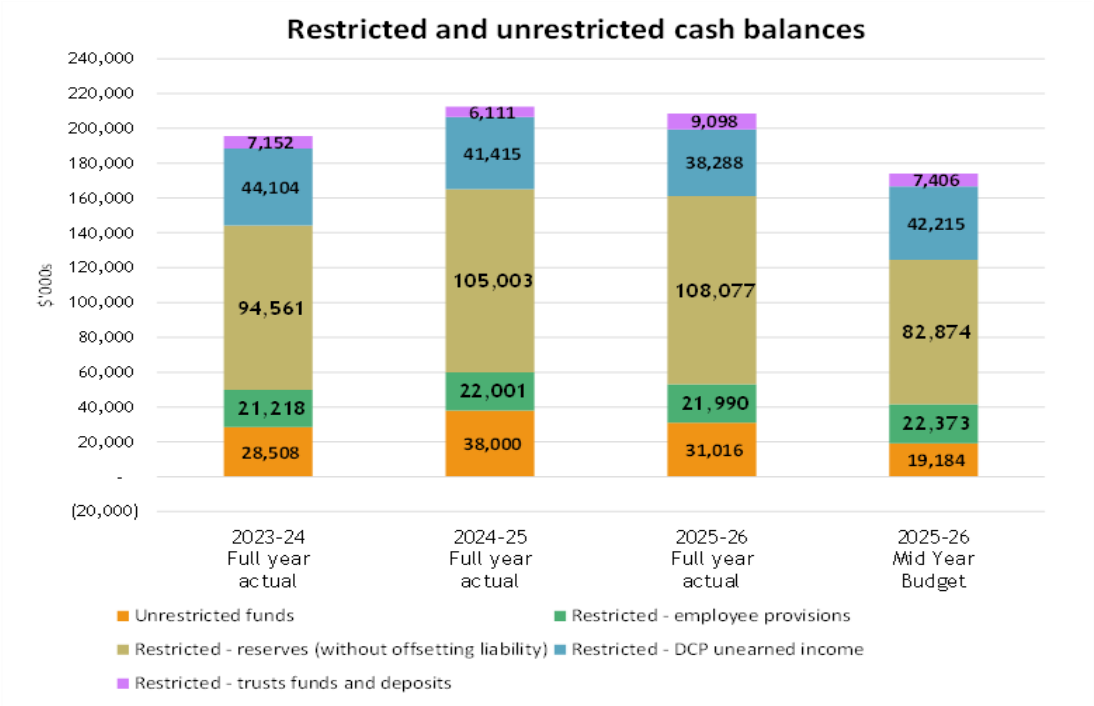
	AAA	AA (incl. major banks)	A	BBB	Unrated ADI category
Policy Max %	100%	100%	60%	40%	0%
Funds invested %	0%	82%	13%	5%	0%

Benchmark Indicator - Term/Green Deposits



	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26
UBSA Warburg	4.19%	3.97%	3.89%	3.97%
Actual Return - Term Deposits	4.23%	4.21%	4.43%	4.75%





Notes – (1) The 'Restricted and Unrestricted Cash' graph presents Council's cash and investment holdings (including term deposits with a maturity over 90 days that are classified as 'financial assets'). The Statement of Cash Flows reports cash and cash equivalents only, so the graph will not reconcile directly to the Statement of Cash Flows.

APPENDIX 3 – DIRECTORATE ANALYSIS

Total Operating Results by Directorate

	FULL YEAR					
	ACTUAL	MID YEAR BUDGET	VARIANCE	FORECAST	FORECAST vs ACTUALS VARIANCE	ANNUAL ORIGINAL BUDGET
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
Income						
Chief Financial Office	302	576	(274)	495	(193)	576
Customer & Information Office	235	131	104	251	(16)	-
Strategy & Corporate Services	2,687	1,701	986	2,714	(27)	1,639
City Futures	49,513	51,920	(2,407)	51,801	(2,288)	51,411
Community Strengthening	30,060	29,936	124	29,041	1,019	27,248
Non-Directorate [(a)]	195,882	179,964	15,918	181,199	14,683	185,421
Capital Works Program	19,911	30,857	(10,946)	25,177	(5,266)	22,032
Total income	**298,590**	**295,085**	**3,505**	**290,678**	**7,912**	**288,327**
Expenses						
Chief Executive Office	794	768	(26)	798	4	768
Chief Financial Office	4,688	5,345	657	5,075	387	5,290
Customer & Information Office	11,727	12,395	668	13,674	1,947	11,517
Strategy & Corporate Services	17,757	16,950	(807)	17,701	(56)	16,200
City Futures	106,037	114,150	8,113	113,283	7,246	111,344
Community Strengthening	60,464	69,031	8,567	68,261	7,797	61,050
Non-Directorate [(a)]	76,991	60,376	(16,615)	59,381	(17,610)	56,356
Capital Works Program	846	-	(846)	-	(846)	-
Total expenses	**279,304**	**279,015**	**(289)**	**278,173**	**(1,131)**	**262,525**
Net surplus (deficit)	**19,286**	**16,070**	**3,216**	**12,505**	**6,781**	**25,802**

Notes

General note: Total income and total expenditure may differ to the operating result presented earlier in this report due to the treatment of proceeds from asset sales and associated written down value.

(a) Non-Directorate includes non-attributable items such as rates income, Emergency Services Volunteer Fund (ESVF), developer's contributions, interest income, non-monetary assets, finance costs and depreciation. The $16.6 million year-to-date unfavourable variance in Non-Directorate is due to two fixed asset accounting entries (non-cash adjustments that don't affect the cash position):

- 'Net loss on financial assets' includes asset write-offs ($9.9 million) which represent asset renewal and replacement as part of capital work projects and renewal programs. Refer to Note 43 of this report for further details.

- 'Prior year capital expenditure unable to be capitalised (non-cash)' of $4.9 million which represents works in progress (prior year capital expenditure) that is not able to be capitalised to the asset register because it is not capital in nature or does not meet the capitalisation threshold. Refer to Note 38 of this report for further details.

CEO Directorate

		FULL YEAR					
		ACTUAL	MID YEAR BUDGET	VARIANCE	FORECAST	FORECAST vs ACTUALS VARIANCE	ANNUAL ORIGINAL BUDGET
	Notes	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
Expenses							
Employee costs		709	664	(45)	692	(17)	664
Materials and services		79	102	23	102	23	102
Other expenses		6	2	(4)	4	(2)	2
Total expenses		**794**	**768**	**(26)**	**798**	**4**	**768**
Net surplus (deficit)		**(794)**	**(768)**	**(26)**	**(798)**	**4**	**(768)**

No commentary is required, as no variances exceed $50,000.

Chief Financial Office Portfolio

		FULL YEAR					
		ACTUAL	MID YEAR BUDGET	VARIANCE	FORECAST	FORECAST vs ACTUALS VARIANCE	ANNUAL ORIGINAL BUDGET
	Notes	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
Income							
Statutory fees and fines		159	112	47	130	29	112
User fees		4	3	1	3	1	3
Other income	1	139	461	(322)	362	(223)	461
Total income		**302**	**576**	**(274)**	**495**	**(193)**	**576**
Expenses							
Employee costs	2	3,865	4,223	358	3,994	129	4,223
Materials and services	3	819	1,118	299	1,077	258	1,063
Other expenses		4	4	-	4	-	4
Total expenses		**4,688**	**5,345**	**657**	**5,075**	**387**	**5,290**
Net surplus (deficit)		**(4,386)**	**(4,769)**	**383**	**(4,580)**	**194**	**(4,714)**

Income

Note 1 Other income ($322,000 unfavourable) – The unfavourable variance is mainly due to lower than anticipated recoveries of rates debtors (Property Revenue $317,000), which is matched by lower associated debt recovery legal costs.

Expenditure

Note 2 Employee costs ($358,000 favourable) – Due to delay in recruitment of new Procurement team, vacant positions and commencement date of new Chief Financial Officer (Procurement $290,000, Financial Services $43,000 and Property Revenue $26,000).

Note 3 Material and services ($299,000 favourable) – Primarily due to lower debt recovery legal costs (as per Note 1 above) partly offset by higher than anticipated postage charges (Property Revenue $293,000).

Customer and Information Office Portfolio

	Notes	FULL YEAR ACTUAL $'000	MID YEAR BUDGET $'000	VARIANCE $'000	FORECAST $'000	FORECAST vs ACTUALS VARIANCE $'000	ANNUAL ORIGINAL BUDGET $'000
Income							
Grants - operating		131	131	-	131	-	-
Other income	**4**	104	-	104	120	(16)	-
Total income		**235**	**131**	**104**	**251**	**(16)**	**-**
Expenses							
Employee costs	**5**	6,182	5,980	(202)	6,620	438	5,726
Materials and services	**6**	4,838	5,786	948	6,261	1,423	5,162
Other expenses	**7**	707	629	(78)	793	86	629
Total expenses		**11,727**	**12,395**	**668**	**13,674**	**1,947**	**11,517**
Net surplus (deficit)		**(11,492)**	**(12,264)**	**772**	**(13,423)**	**1,931**	**(11,517)**

Income

Note 4 Other income ($104,000 favourable) – Favourable variance due to unbudgeted salary cost recoveries for the Network Services Officer position, which is included in employee costs within Digital Technology and supports both South East Leisure (SEL) and Dandenong Market (DMPL). Salary costs are recharged to SEL, resulting in additional recovery income of $104,000.

Expenditure

Note 5 Employee costs ($202,000 unfavourable) – The unfavourable variance is primarily due to new positions, including the Information Analyst EA role and a six-month Project Officer engaged to support the Core Systems Replacement (CSR) project. Employee costs also include the Network Services Officer position, which supports both SEL and DMPL. While this position contributes to the employee cost overspend, it is partially offset by $104,000 of recovery income received from SEL. Digital Technology-related costs contributed $184,000 to the variance, with a further $69,000 relating to the Core Systems Replacement project.

These unfavourable variances are partially offset by a favourable variance in Call and Service Centres due to delay in recruitment of vacant positions ($51,000).

Note 6 Materials and services ($948,000 favourable) – Mainly due to lower than anticipated application support, hardware and software maintenance (Business Systems $1.03 million, Technical Services $210,000).

This adjusted favourable variance includes:

- $500,000 favourable variance related to the finance (Computron) and customer relationship management system (Oracle CRM) implementations which have been deferred to 2026-27;
- Approximately $100,000 in Business Systems contingency funding held to mitigate the risk of unplanned critical system failures requiring specialist external support; and

- Approximately $100,000 in Digital Transformation funding that remained unspent due to organisational resources being redirected to support the CSR Program.
- $50,000 AI Chatbot grant co-contribution provision that was ultimately acquitted through recognised in-kind staff contributions;
- Funding allocated to a number of digital and business system initiatives where expenditure was subsequently treated as prepaid expenses, resulting in the budget provision not being utilised within the 2025/26 financial year.

Note 7 Other expenses ($78,000 unfavourable) – Largely due to higher number of leased IT equipment (Technical Services $78,000).

Strategy and Corporate Services Directorate

		FULL YEAR					
		ACTUAL	MID YEAR BUDGET	VARIANCE	FORECAST	FORECAST vs ACTUALS VARIANCE	ANNUAL ORIGINAL BUDGET
	Notes	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
Income							
User fees		18	9	9	15	3	9
Grants - operating	8	227	170	57	200	27	150
Contributions - monetary		67	63	4	62	5	-
Asset sales	9	1,045	-	1,045	1,000	45	-
Other income	10	1,330	1,459	(129)	1,437	(107)	1,480
Total income		**2,687**	**1,701**	**986**	**2,714**	**(27)**	**1,639**
Expenses							
Employee costs	11	9,986	10,061	75	10,201	215	9,784
Materials and services	12	5,929	6,017	88	6,592	663	5,586
Carrying amount of assets sold	13	873	-	(873)	-	(873)	-
Other expenses	14	969	872	(97)	908	(61)	830
Total expenses		**17,757**	**16,950**	**(807)**	**17,701**	**(56)**	**16,200**
Net surplus (deficit)		**(15,070)**	**(15,249)**	**179**	**(14,987)**	**(83)**	**(14,561)**

Income

Note 8 Grants – operating ($57,000 favourable) – Funding for Food Relief Program (Community Development $57,000) that will be offset by associated expenditure.

Note 9 Asset sales ($1.04 million favourable) – Property sale proceeds from Vanity Lane, 275 Lonsdale Street (Property Assets $1 million) which has been transferred to reserves.

Note 10 Other income ($129,000 unfavourable) – Lower than budget commercial property rental income due to tenant vacancies and the use of a Council-owned property to deliver the grant-funded Dandenong Employment Hub program, reducing rental revenue by $129,000 (Property Management Administration).

Expenses

Note 11 Employee costs ($75,000 favourable) – Primarily due to a delay in recruitment of vacant positions (Organisational Planning and Strategy $172,000, People, Safety and Culture Executive $131,000 and Strategic Communications and Engagement $33,000).

These favourable variances are partially offset by unbudgeted temporary agency costs and higher salary costs in other functions (Strategy and Corporate Services Executive $148,000 and Governance, Integrity, Legal and Risk $115,000).

Note 12 Materials and services ($88,000 favourable) – The favourable variance is due to lower professional services, consultants, asset purchases and insurance claims (Organisational Planning and Strategy $363,000, Risk Management $93,000 and Members of Council $64,000).

The favourable variance was partially offset by higher than anticipated legal expenses, software maintenance, subscription charges and Australia Post charges (Governance $274,000, People Safety and Culture $96,000 and Strategic Communications and Engagement $60,000).

Note 13 Carry amount of assets sold ($873,000 unfavourable) – Due to asset disposals, notably sale of land at 275 Lonsdale Street, Dandenong (Property Asset $873,000).

Note 14 Other expenses ($97,000 unfavourable) – Due to grant funded expenditure relating to the Food Relief program and Empowering Communities program (Community Development $97,000).

City Futures Directorate

		FULL YEAR					
		ACTUAL	MID YEAR BUDGET	VARIANCE	FORECAST	FORECAST vs ACTUALS VARIANCE	ANNUAL ORIGINAL BUDGET
	Notes	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
Income							
Rates and charges	**15**	27,999	28,424	(425)	28,424	(425)	28,425
Statutory fees and fines	**16**	11,108	12,623	(1,515)	11,733	(625)	12,623
User fees	**17**	6,602	6,139	463	6,689	(87)	6,139
Grants - operating	**18**	1,085	899	186	1,228	(143)	575
Asset sales	**19**	950	847	103	847	103	847
Other income	**20**	1,769	2,988	(1,219)	2,880	(1,111)	2,802
Total income		**49,513**	**51,920**	**(2,407)**	**51,801**	**(2,288)**	**51,411**
Expenses							
Employee costs	**21**	40,033	42,730	2,697	41,629	1,596	40,777
Materials and services	**22**	63,777	69,054	5,277	69,203	5,426	68,501
Bad and doubtful debts		1,618	1,606	(12)	1,606	(12)	1,606
Carrying amount of assets sold	**23**	134	60	(74)	125	(9)	60
Other expenses	**24**	475	700	225	720	245	400
Total expenses		**106,037**	**114,150**	**8,113**	**113,283**	**7,246**	**111,344**
Net surplus (deficit)		**(56,524)**	**(62,230)**	**5,706**	**(61,482)**	**4,958**	**(59,933)**

Income

Note 15 Rates and charges ($425,000 unfavourable) – Waste income was below budget due to a minor variation between the waste service data assumptions used during budget development and the actual data applied when levying waste charges. This resulted in an unfavourable revenue variance; however, it was more than offset by favourable expenditure variances across the waste service area.

Note 16 Statutory fees and fines ($1.52 million unfavourable) – Lower statutory fines are due to reduced infringement revenue from administration staff shortages, delayed recruitment of enforcement officers, and impacts of the parking machine installation program (Parking Management $955,000, General Law Enforcement $918,000 and Animal Management $120,000).

The unfavourable variances are partially offset by higher plan checking, subdivision fee income and Magistrates Court fine income (Building $265,000, Health $209,000 and Civic Development and Design $151,000).

Note 17 User fees ($463,000 favourable) – Better than anticipated car park ticket machine income due to reduced availability in some non-council car because of ongoing works, combined with higher planning fee, food trader and animal registration income (Parking Infrastructure Management $392,000, Health $166,000, and Statutory Planning $76,000).

The favourable variance is partly offset by lower animal registration income (Animal Management $75,000).

Note 18 Grants - operating ($186,000 favourable) – Mainly due to unbudgeted grant funding for Dandenong Employment Hub and Level Crossing Removal Program Support Payments, that will be offset by associated expenditure for the projects (Dandenong Employment Hub $150,000 and Strategic Asset Planning $44,000).

Note 19 Asset sales ($103,000 favourable) – Due to higher than anticipated income from fleet sales (Fleet Management $103,000).

Note 20 Other income ($1.22 million unfavourable) – Due to delay in installation of groundwater/drainage commissioning and associated works at Spring Valley Landfill, resulting in lower partner council financial contributions.

Expenses

Note 21 Employee costs ($2.70 million favourable) – Due mainly to the delay in recruitment of vacant positions as well as the timing gap between recruitment of vacant positions commencing and onboarding occurring in the following departments listed below:

City Futures Directorate	2025-26 Variance Fav/(unfav) $	Grant Funded Programs $	Offset by Lower Income $	2025-26 Underspend/ (overspend) $
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT	118,775	39,062	-	79,713
CHIEF INFRASTRUCTURE OFFICE	(56,277)	-	-	(56,277)
CITY DEVELOPMENT	(25,018)	35,153	73,143	(133,315)
CITY FUTURES EXECUTIVE	(39,674)	-	-	(39,674)
CITY WORKS	352,775	-	-	352,775
COMMUNITY COMPLIANCE & AMENITY	773,060	-	773,060	0
INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY	(213,716)	-	-	(213,716)
PARKS & OPEN SPACES	1,651,769	-	-	1,651,769
STRATEGIC & ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING	133,815	-	-	133,815
Grand Total	**2,695,508**	**74,215**	**846,202**	**1,775,090**

In particular, the following areas are exhibiting higher favourable employee costs:

- Parks and Open Spaces ($1.65 million) – The favourable variance is mainly due to delays in recruiting some positions following the recent restructure, together with reduced use of temporary agency staff.

- Community Compliance and Amenity ($773,000) – The favourable variance reflects delays in recruiting new and vacant positions, including re-recruitment following early exits, extended secondments, and time to update and approve new position descriptions. These factors have resulted in lower employee expenditure for the year, which is wholly offset by lower income.

- City Works ($353,000) – The favourable variance is mainly due to delayed recruitment for vacant Waste Management positions ($302,000) and earlier vacancies in Roads and Drains ($132,000). This is partially offset by higher agency staff costs in Cleansing ($125,000).
- Strategic and Environmental Planning ($134,000) – The favourable variance is due to delays in recruitment, which have now been finalised

These favourable variances are partially offset by higher salaries, agency staff and staff departures from a department restructure (Infrastructure Strategy $214,000 and Chief Infrastructure Office $56,000).

Note 22 Materials and services ($5.28 million favourable) – Lower expenditure across several areas including:

- Spring Valley Landfill ($1.28 million) – Favourable variance due to deferred ground water/drainage commissioning works pending resolution of a legal dispute. These works now are not anticipated to occur until 2028-29. This favourable variance is mostly offset by lower recovery income from partner councils.

- Waste Management ($995,000) – Favourable variance due to lower tonnages for kerbside collection of hard waste, food and garden organics (FOGO), garbage and recycling. Lower collection tonnages have resulted in reduced disposal (tipping) fees and collection costs.

- Roads and Drains ($878,000) - The favourable variance primarily reflects a delayed commencement of planned maintenance programs following the July/August implementation of the new Works Management System (WMS). Activity was focused on reactive works. Delay in the receipt of footpath condition audit data also impacted program delivery.

- Strategic Asset Planning ($592,000) – Lower street lighting costs from the LED lighting conversion program. The variance also reflects flood mitigation initiative costs ($201,000) that will be deferred to 2026-27. In addition, professional services expenditure is below budget as temporary staff were engaged during the team restructure to undertake work that would otherwise have been performed by contractors, with the associated employee costs reported elsewhere.

- Building and Disposal Program ($422,000) – Mainly due to lower than anticipated costs for the PEP building demolition.

- Building Maintenance ($339,000) – The favourable variance is primarily due to the transition of Building Maintenance activities from capital to operational teams, along with lower electricity costs over the summer period. Building maintenance activity is largely reactive in nature and can fluctuate depending on demand.

- Parks and Open Spaces ($332,000) - The underspend largely reflects works program realignment following the department restructure and delays in progressing some planned activities.

- Keysborough Community Hub ($309,000) – The building is under the defect's liability period. The expenses relate to cleaning, security services and utilities only.

- Cleansing ($277,000) – The favourable variance reflects lower costs incurred for graffiti removal, and the management of dumped rubbish and sweeping activities. This favourable variance is offset by higher temporary agency staff costs to perform these activities.

- Place Making and Revitalisation ($195,000) – Mainly due to the Mid-Year Budget allocation for the 'Dandy Vibes' program not being required, as it was able to be delivered within existing budget allocations.

- Strategic and Environmental Planning ($168,000) – Lower than anticipated consultant expenditure due to a focus on strategy development.

- Business and Employment ($145,000) – Due to a reduction in events and programs not continued.

These favourable variances are partly offset by unfavourable variances in:

- Fleet Management ($187,000) – Due to higher fuel, maintenance and registration costs.

- Statutory Planning ($182,000) – Higher legal and planning service costs.

- Chief Infrastructure Office ($156,000) – Due to a number of factors including application support for CAMMS Management software, office furniture and fit out, and recruitment services.

- Parking Infrastructure Management ($115,000) – Due to higher parking equipment maintenance due to vandalism of parking meters and higher cash collection costs associated with higher income.

Note 23 Carrying amount of assets sold ($74,000 unfavourable) – Higher than anticipated written down value write off fleet sold (Fleet Management $75,000) offset by higher asset sale proceeds. This is a fixed asset accounting entry that does not impact on the cash result.

Note 24 Other expenses ($225,000 favourable) - Primarily due to the reclassification of the Dandenong Market (DMPL) Bazaar contribution. Following an end of year audit recommendation, DMPL reclassified $188,000 of the Bazaar contribution from Other Expenses to Other Payables. To ensure consistency for consolidation purposes, Council has recorded the same adjustment in its accounts, resulting in a favourable variance within Other Expenses.

Community Strengthening Directorate

		FULL YEAR					
		ACTUAL	MID YEAR BUDGET	VARIANCE	FORECAST	FORECAST vs ACTUALS VARIANCE	ANNUAL ORIGINAL BUDGET
	Notes	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
Income							
User fees	**25**	3,132	3,270	(138)	3,142	(10)	3,270
Grants - operating	**26**	24,565	24,669	(104)	23,825	740	22,019
Other income	**27**	2,363	1,997	366	2,074	289	1,959
Total income		**30,060**	**29,936**	**124**	**29,041**	**1,019**	**27,248**
Expenses							
Employee costs	**28**	41,798	49,234	7,436	48,565	6,767	42,598
Materials and services	**29**	16,136	16,931	795	16,828	692	15,887
Bad and doubtful debts		19	9	(10)	9	(10)	9
Other expenses	**30**	2,511	2,857	346	2,859	348	2,556
Total expenses		**60,464**	**69,031**	**8,567**	**68,261**	**7,797**	**61,050**
Net surplus (deficit)		**(30,404)**	**(39,095)**	**8,691**	**(39,220)**	**8,816**	**(33,802)**

Income

Note 25 User fees ($138,000 unfavourable) – Mainly due to lower than anticipated income for home personal care, individual social support and home maintenance materials supplied (Home and Community Care $111,000 and HACC – Home Maintenance $54,000).

The unfavourable variance is partially offset by lower than anticipated costs for Food Services ($53,000).

Note 26 Grants - operating ($104,000 unfavourable) – comprising:

Lower than anticipated:

- Family Day Care $463,000 (more than offset by lower educator payments).
- Pre-School Field Officer $110,000.

Lower than anticipated grant funding recognised based on satisfied performance obligations for:

- Sleep and Settling $852,000.
- HACC - Home Maintenance $180,000.
- HACC – Co-ordination $49,000
- Best Start $48,000

These unfavourable income impacts in Community Care income are more than offset by favourable expenditure variances.

The above unfavourable variances are partly offset by the following favourable variations.

Additional, unbudgeted or earlier than anticipated:

- Home and Community Care $773,000
- Maternal and Child Health $378,000.
- Children Support Services $148,000.
- Food Services $102,000.
- Planned Activity Group $70,000
- Enhanced Maternal Child Health Program $51,000.
- Library and Information Services $48,000.

Note 27 Other income ($366,000 favourable) - Due to higher rental, venue hire and recovery income (Civic Facilities $156,000, The Drum Theatre $116,000, Senior Citizen Facilities $66,000, Paddy O'Donoghue Centre $42,000 and Jan Wilson Community Centre $45,000).

These favourable variances are partially offset by lower than anticipated sporting club rental income (Sports Planning $100,000).

Expenses

Note 28 Employee costs ($7.44 million favourable)

Community Strengthening Directorate	2025-26 Variance Fav/(unfav) $	Grant Funded Programs $	Offset by Lower Income $	2025-26 Underspend/ (overspend) $
COMMUNITY CARE	994,372	-	690,102	304,271
COMMUNITY STRENGTHENING EXECUTIVE	27,620	-	-	27,620
COMMUNITY WELLBEING	6,593,645	5,437,262	-	1,156,384
SAFE, ACTIVE & CONNECTED COMMUNITIES	46,154	-	-	46,154
CREATIVE AND ENGAGED CITY	(226,381)	-	-	(226,381)
CHANGE & SPECIAL PROJECTS	516	0	0	516
Grand Total	**7,435,411**	**5,437,262**	**690,102**	**1,308,047**

The $7.44 million favourable variance at the end of the June consists of:

- $5.44 million (73%) for grant funded programs which represent a future obligation and require an acquittal, caused mainly by a delay in recruitment (MCH Enhanced Program $1.72 million, Pre-School Field Officer $316,000, Child First $1.56 million, Children's Services Grants $238,000, Playgroups Initiative $187,000, MCH Additional Support $215,000, Harm Prevention Strategy $192,000 and Best Start $80,000).

- $690,000 in Community Care is offset by lower income due to actual target achievement and service levels. This is due to ongoing resourcing challenges combined with an ageing workforce on limited duties or Workcover, as well as service demand.

- The remaining $1.31 million favourable variance is due to delays in recruitment of vacant positions as well as the timing gap between recruitment of vacant positions commencing and onboarding occurring, in the following areas:

    - Children's Support Services ($397,000)
    - Library and Information Services ($307,000)
    - HACC – Home Maintenance ($255,000)
    - Maternal and Child Health ($168,000)
    - Family Day Care ($121,000)
    - Youth Development ($111,000)
    - Strong and Resilient Communities ($107,000)
    - Youth and Family Support ($101,000)
    - Food Services ($87,000)
    - HACC – Coordination ($83,000)
    - Sports Planning ($65,000)
    - Planned Group Activity ($54,000)
    - Community Wellbeing Executive ($51,000)
    - Youth Leadership ($49,000)

These favourable variances are partially offset by higher casual salaries, overtime, temporary staff, staff recoveries and salaries in other areas (Cultural and Community Hubs $362,000, Home and Community Care $151,000 Experiences and Partnerships $87,000, and Access and Quality Systems $69,000).

Note 29 Materials and services ($795,000 favourable) - Due to lower Family Day Care educator payments which is matched by lower income ($446,000), performance fees, special project costs, events, community education, consultants and maintenance (Harm Prevention Strategy $286,000, Experiences and Partnerships $181,000, and South East Leisure $132,000).

These favourable variances are partially offset by higher professional services for supervision, recruitment, service delivery and Springvale Snow Fest (Festival and Events $142,000, Home and Community Care $120,000 and Maternal and Child Health $104,000).

Note 30 Other expenses ($346,000 favourable) – Lower community grant program funding distributions and grant funded expenditure (PYP Linkages $289,000 and Community Funding $104,000).

Non-Directorate

	Notes	FULL YEAR ACTUAL $'000	MID YEAR BUDGET $'000	VARIANCE $'000	FORECAST $'000	FORECAST vs ACTUALS VARIANCE $'000	ANNUAL ORIGINAL BUDGET $'000
Income							
Rates and charges	**31**	156,750	156,275	475	156,275	475	155,575
Statutory fees and fines	**32**	193	97	96	123	70	70
Grants - operating	**33**	19,487	7,119	12,368	7,119	12,368	14,056
Contributions - monetary	**34**	2,795	2,000	795	2,161	634	2,000
Contributions - non-monetary	**35**	7,221	7,500	(279)	7,500	(279)	7,500
Other income	**36**	9,436	6,973	2,463	8,020	1,416	6,220
Total income		**195,882**	**179,964**	**15,918**	**181,198**	**14,684**	**185,421**
Expenses							
Employee costs	**37**	(963)	1,471	2,434	1,466	2,429	2,156
Materials and services		580	619	39	629	49	519
Prior year capital expenditure unable to be capitalised (non-cash)	**38**	4,902	-	(4,902)	-	(4,902)	-
Bad and doubtful debts	**39**	88	-	(88)	-	(88)	-
Depreciation	**40**	57,274	53,228	(4,046)	53,229	(4,045)	48,480
Amortisation - right of use assets		562	715	153	715	153	715
Borrowing costs	**41**	2,640	3,793	1,153	2,740	100	3,936
Finance costs - leases		16	57	41	57	41	57
Fair value adjustments expense	**42**	1,525	-	(1,525)	-	(1,525)	-
Investments		13	-	(13)	-	(13)	-
Asset write offs	**43**	9,861	-	(9,861)	-	(9,861)	-
Other expenses		493	493	-	545	52	493
Total expenses		**76,991**	**60,376**	**(16,615)**	**59,381**	**(17,610)**	**56,356**
Net surplus (deficit)		**118,891**	**119,588**	**(697)**	**121,817**	**(2,926)**	**129,065**

Note - *Non-Directorate includes non-attributable items such as rates income, ESVF on Council properties, developer's contributions, interest income, gifted assets, carrying amount of assets disposed/written off and finance costs.*

Income

Note 31 Rates and charges ($475,000 favourable) – Due mainly to better than anticipated interest on rates.

Note 32 Statutory fees and fines ($96,000 favourable) – Higher than anticipated fine income from prior Council election penalties.

Note 33 Grants - operating ($12.38 million favourable) – Due to early receipt of 80% of the Victorian Local Government Grants Commission grant income for 2026-27 in June 2026.

Note 34 Contributions – monetary ($795,000 favourable) – Higher public open space contributions received. These contributions are restricted and transferred to reserves to fund future open space planning, development, improvements and land acquisitions

Note 35 Contributions – non – monetary ($279,000 unfavourable) – Lower income from gifted assts. The non-monetary contributions primarily relate to land, land under roads, drains, roads, parks open space, streetscapes, recreational leisure and community facilities. The number of subdivisions that are complete vary from year to year and the timing of these asset transfers is outside of Council's control and difficult to predict.

Note 36 Other income ($2.46 million favourable) – Mainly due to better interest returns on investments (Corporate Accounting), driven by higher interest rates and cash and investment balances, resulting from lower than forecast capital outflows due to project deferrals and timing adjustments.

Expenses

Note 37 Employee costs ($2.43 million favourable) – The favourable variance was primarily attributable to year-end adjustments to Council's long service leave provision ($1.18 million), reflecting changes in discount rates used to measure future liabilities. A further $1.0 million relates to employee-related budget provisions that were not required in 2025-26.

Note 38 Prior year capital expenditure unable to be capitalised (non-cash) ($4.90 million unfavourable) – Due to prior year capital expenditure included in works-in-progress being non-capital in nature or not meeting capitalisation thresholds (Corporate Accounting $4.9 million). Comprises:

- $4.37 million has been written off from the Dandenong New Art (DNA) Gallery Project, as these costs relate to the original design, construction works, contract disputes, legal matters, and rectification activities that no longer provide future economic benefit under the revised project scope. The DNA Building Project is now being delivered as a new development with an updated design, and only costs assessed as recoverable and directly attributable to the future construction works have been retained in DNA building project.

- $302,000 of capital works that were below the capitalisation threshold that predominantly relates to the Drainage ($114,000), Fixtures, Fittings and Furniture ($90,000) and Roads Surface ($66,000) asset classes.

- $78,000 relates to repairs and maintenance, predominantly for Recreational, Leisure and Community Facilities and Road patching works.

- $65,000 belongs to works undertaken during the Road Resurfacing project at Railway Parade, Noble Park.

- $64,000 relates to operational services that was included in the capital works and mainly relates to the Road Surface and Drainage asset classes.

- $21,000 relates to Studies/Surveys/Concepts for concept designs (not capital in nature).

Note 39 Bad and doubtful debts ($88,000 unfavourable) – Due to an increase in the provision of doubtful debts for debts outstanding over 90 days.

Note 40 Depreciation ($4.05 million unfavourable) – Depreciation expense was higher than budget due to the timing of changes to the estimated useful life of building ancillary services component, resulting in additional depreciation being recognised during 2025-26. This is a non-cash accounting adjustment and does not impact Council's cash position.

Note 41 Borrowing costs ($1.15 million favourable) – The favourable variance was mainly attributable to lower borrowing costs for the Oasis Aquatic and Wellbeing Centre project. Revised project cash flows resulted in a lower borrowings requirement during 2025-26 than originally budgeted, reducing interest costs by $1.15 million.

Note 42 Fair value adjustments expense ($1.53 million unfavourable) – Driven by the 2025-26 external valuation of investment property assets (Corporate Accounting $1.53 million).

Note 43 Asset write-offs ($9.86 million unfavourable) – Arising mainly from disposals and asset renewal and replacement works undertaken through capital projects. This item is not budgeted because it is difficult to predict and is a non-cash accounting entry (Corporate Accounting $9.86 million). The full-year result mainly relates to:

- Replacement of assets as part of Council's infrastructure and building renewal programs ($4 million), mainly Roads ($3.3 million), Drainage ($428,000), Parks, Open Space and Streetscapes ($324,000) and Footpaths and Cycleways ($206,000).
- The Hallam Valley Road (33–35) Drainage Reserve ($3,225,000) was initially recorded as Council-owned land. However, it has recently been identified that ownership of the reserve rests with Melbourne Water. Accordingly, the asset has been transferred from Council ownership.
- Ownership clarification of $451,000 in assets from the Recreational, Leisure and Community Facilities, Footpaths and Cycleways and Drainage asset classes, previously recorded as Council-owned.
- $346,000 due to incorrect mapping and duplicate infrastructure assets that were previously recognised in the Asset Register.
- The building sheds and stores at Heyington Crescent (61–63), Noble Park North, have been demolished ($236,000).
- Parks, Open Space and Streetscapes assets ($64,000) not found on site.

Capital Works Program

		FULL YEAR					
	Notes	ACTUAL $'000	MID YEAR BUDGET $'000	VARIANCE $'000	FORECAST $'000	FORECAST vs ACTUALS VARIANCE $'000	ANNUAL ORIGINAL BUDGET $'000
Income							
Grants - capital	**44**	15,265	25,411	(10,146)	20,880	(5,615)	20,870
Contributions - monetary	**45**	4,646	5,446	(800)	4,297	349	1,162
Total income		**19,911**	**30,857**	**(10,946)**	**25,177**	**(5,266)**	**22,032**
Expenses							
Employee costs	**46**	79	-	(79)	-	(79)	-
Materials and services	**47**	479	-	(479)	-	(479)	-
Other expenses	**48**	288	-	(288)	-	(288)	-
Total expenses		**846**	**-**	**(846)**	**-**	**(846)**	**-**
Net surplus (deficit)		**19,065**	**30,857**	**(11,792)**	**25,177**	**(6,112)**	**22,032**

Income

Note 44 Grants - capital ($10.15 million unfavourable) – Mainly due to grant income not yet recognised where performance obligations were not satisfied at 30 June 2026. The grant income received has been transferred to 'Unearned Income' in the Balance Sheet and will be recognised in future years as the performance obligations are satisfied. The grant income expectations will be deferred to 2026-27 to align with the associated capital expenditure budget.

- Oasis Aquatics and Wellbeing $4.10 million
- Blackspot $3.92 million
- Safe Local $1.69 million
- LXRP $827,000

Note 45 Contributions – monetary ($800,000 unfavourable) – Development Contributions Plan contribution income was not yet recognised because performance obligations for Perry Road Stage 3 had not been satisfied at 30 June 2026. This was partially offset by higher than anticipated DCP contributions for Keysborough Community Hub.

Expenses

Note 46 Employee costs ($79,000 unfavourable) – Due to current year expenditure that that could not be capitalised to the asset register because it was not capital in nature.

Note 47 Materials and services ($479,000 unfavourable) – Comprises current-year expenditure in the Capital Improvement Program that could not be capitalised because it was not capital in nature or did not meet the relevant capitalisation threshold ($425,000).

Note 48 Other expenses ($288,000 unfavourable) – Comprises current year expenditure in the CIP program that could not be capitalised to the asset register because it was not capital in nature, or it did not meet the relevant capitalisation threshold largely relating to Art Gallery PEP building ($287,000).

APPENDIX 4 – CAPITAL AND OPERATING TIMING DIFFERENCES FROM 2025-26 TO 2026-27

These items have a net zero impact on the operating result in 2025-26. Council held higher cash at 30 June 2026 that is expected to be spent in 2026-27 on the following items:

APPENDIX 4A – OPERATING TIMING DIFFERENCES

NO.	DESCRIPTION [Sub Account]	CARRY OVER TYPE	FUNDING SOURCE INCOME $	FUNDING SOURCE RESERVES $	EXPENSE $	NET $	PRIOR YR C/OVER
GRANT FUNDED PROJECTS & PROGRAMS							
CITY FUTURES							
	Business Development and Investment						
A1	Dandenong Employment Hub	Unspent grant	0	0	96,244	96,244	0
			0	**0**	**96,244**	**96,244**	**0**
	City Development						
A2	Local Government Capacity Building Grant (High Risk Waste Sites)	Unspent grant	0	0	35,153	35,153	35,153
A3	Cladding Rectification Program [4200]	Unspent grant	0	0	55,980	55,980	0
			0	**0**	**91,133**	**91,133**	**35,153**
	Infrastructure Strategy						
A4	Liveable Communities, Liveable Waterways Program - 4292 Flood Hotspot Stage 2 [2607]	Unspent grant	0	0	45,000	45,000	0
A5	Level Crossing Removal Program (LXRP) Support Payments [2131]	Unspent grant	0	0	158,344	158,344	0
			0	**0**	**203,344**	**203,344**	**0**
		CITY FUTURES	**0**	**0**	**390,721**	**390,721**	**35,153**

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NO.	DESCRIPTION [Sub Account]	DEFERRED TIMING TYPE	FUNDING SOURCE INCOME $	FUNDING SOURCE RESERVES $	EXPENSE $	NET $	PRIOR YR C/OVER
GRANT FUNDED PROJECTS & PROGRAMS							
COMMUNITY STRENGTHENING							
	Community Care						
A6	Fair Work Commission Boost [2261]	Unspent grant	0	0	61,892	61,892	0
A7	PYP Linkages	Unspent grant	0	0	325,847	325,847	136,387
			0	**0**	**387,739**	**387,739**	**136,387**
	Creative and Engaged City						
A8	Libraries After Dark [1769]	Unspent grant	0	0	9,778	9,778	0
A9	PEP Creative Activation Project [1913]	Unspent grant	0	0	95,412	95,412	95,412
A10	National Science Week [2627]	Unspent grant	0	0	20,000	20,000	0
			0	**0**	**125,190**	**125,190**	**95,412**
	Community Wellbeing						
A11	Childrens Services	Unspent grant	0	0	438,622	438,622	125,750
A12	Playgroups Initiative	Unspent grant	0	0	250,538	250,538	0
A13	Child First	Unspent grant	0	0	1,584,430	1,584,430	0
A14	Preschool Field Officer	Unspent grant	0	0	208,478	208,478	0
A15	Enhanced Maternal and Child Health Program	Unspent grant	0	0	1,755,598	1,755,598	770,353
A16	Best Start	Unspent grant	0	0	32,909	32,909	0
A17	Drug Strategy	Unspent grant	0	0	483,244	483,244	116,364
A18	Strong and Resilient Communities	Unspent grant	0	0	122,879	122,879	0
A19	Maternal and Child Health Additional Support [1910]	Unspent grant	0	0	215,023	215,023	215,023
A20	Maternal and Child Health Training and System Champion [2226]	Unspent grant	0	0	73,860	73,860	0
A21	Sleep and Settling Program	Unspent grant	(110,000)	0	110,000	0	110,000
A22	Healthy Children and Young People	Unspent grant	0	0	50,311	50,311	0
			(110,000)	**0**	**5,325,892**	**5,215,892**	**1,337,490**
	COMMUNITY STRENGTHENING		**(110,000)**	**0**	**5,838,821**	**5,728,821**	**1,569,289**
	TOTAL GRANT FUNDED PROJECTS & PROGRAMS		**(110,000)**	**0**	**6,229,542**	**6,119,542**	**1,604,442**
GRANTS IN 2026-27 BUDGET (RECEIVED EARLY)							
NON DIRECTORATE							
	Corporate Accounting						
A23	Victoria Local Government Grants Commission 2026-27 Financial Assistance Grant Allocation (75%)	Early grant	12,367,635	0	0	12,367,635	0
	TOTAL GRANTS RECEIVED IN ADVANCE		**12,367,635**	**0**	**0**	**12,367,635**	**0**

APPENDIX 4B – CAPITAL TIMING DIFFERENCES

NO.	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	FUNDING SOURCE RESERVE $	FUNDING SOURCE INCOME $	2026-27 EXPEND-ITURE $	2027-28 EXPEND-ITURE $	2028-29 EXPEND-ITURE $	NET TIMING ADJUSTMENT $
	Grant related projects						
B1	4069. PEP Redevelopment	0	(279,778)	1,079,777	0	0	799,999
B2	4076. Safe Local - Chapel Rd Keysborough	0	(548,550)	620,386	0	0	71,836
B3	4077. Safe Local - Bryants Rd Dandenong	0	(184,829)	239,243	0	0	54,414
B4	4175. Springvale Revit ActPLAN	0	0	177,363	0	0	177,363
B5	4250. Fowler Road Level X Removal Proj	0	(381,456)	381,456	0	0	0
B6	4257. Safe Local - McCrae St Dandenong	0	(955,400)	1,081,650	0	0	126,250
B7	4258. Blackspot Dandenong	0	(1,375,000)	1,375,000	0	0	0
B8	4259. Blackspot Gladstone Rd, Dand Nth	0	(1,776,000)	1,776,000	0	0	0
B9	4260. Blackspot Clow St, Dandenong	0	(710,770)	710,770	0	0	0
B10	4262. AI-powered Chat Bot	0	(10,442)	$60,442	0	0	50,000
B11	4281. WJ Turner Reserve Floodlighting	0	(12,725)	$27,755	0	0	15,030
B12	4282. Warner Reserve Sth Soccer Field	0	(1,475)	125,177	0	0	123,702
B13	4293. Dandenong Library Inclusive Spaces	0	(279,675)	682,964	0	0	403,289
B14	4308. LXRP Sth Gipps Path	0	(95,540)	95,540	0	0	0
B15	4309. LXRP Fowler Road	0	(350,000)	0	0	350,000	0
		0	**(6,961,640)**	**$8,433,523**	**0**	**350,000**	**1,821,883**
	Multi-year major projects and/or Council decision						
B16	3548. Keysborough Community Hub (KCH)	0	0	155,647	0	0	155,647
B17	3906. Dandenong New Art	(372,319)	0	$372,319	0	0	0
B18	3974. Oasis Aquatics & Wellbeing	0	520,555	$3,177,911	0	0	3,698,466
B19	3992. DCP Perry Rd Stage 3 (KR01c)	(2,880,024)	0	$2,880,024	0	0	0
B20	4071. Noble Park Comm Ctr-DDA bathroom	0	0	450,000	0	0	450,000
B21	4072. Noble Park Comm Ctr-Kitchen	0	0	70,000	0	0	70,000
B22	4073. Drum Theatre Facade & Lighting	0	0	201,457	0	0	201,457
		(3,252,343)	**520,555**	**$7,307,358**	**0**	**0**	**4,575,570**
	Projects underway - Procurement complete and/or Construction commenced						
B23	1869. Dandenong Community Hub	(471,527)	0	1,186,337	0	0	714,810
B24	3041. Dandenong Civic Ctr Rectification	0	0	717,706	0	0	717,706
B25	3099. Road Signs, Linemark & Improvemts	0	0	50,000	0	0	50,000
B26	3479. Darren Reserve Kindergarten	0	0	75,305	0	0	75,305
B27	3955. Chandler MCH/Kinder Windows	0	0	53,678	0	0	53,678
B28	4003. Springvale Res Masterplan Implem.	0	0	100,730	0	0	100,730
B29	4074. Burden Park Bowls Club Flooring			10,000	0	0	10,000
B30	4075. Parking Meter Expansion	0	0	300,000	0	0	300,000
B31	4126. Dandenong Day Nursery Cafe Blinds	0	0	35,000	0	0	35,000
B32	4132. Heritage Hill (Laurel)	0	0	10,528	0	0	10,528
B33	4162. CCTV Renewal Program	0	0	$2,428,388	0	0	2,428,388
B34	4184. Dandenong Market - Lift	0	0	37,298	0	0	37,298
B35	4185. D'nong Market Fire & Compliance	0	0	546,445	0	0	546,445
B36	4264. Dandenong Stadium Court Resurfacing	0	0	473,567	0	0	473,567
B37	4269. Library RFID Infrastructure Renewal	0	0	184,208	0	0	184,208
B38	4271. Community Hub Waste Wash Stations	0	0	12,497	0	0	12,497
B39	4299. Springvale Res Sport Pav Amenities	0	0	$73,984	0	0	73,984
B40	4305. Ian Tatterson Wayfinding	0	0	116,900	0	0	116,900
		(471,527)	**0**	**$6,412,571**	**0**	**0**	**5,941,044**

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NO.	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	FUNDING SOURCE RESERVE $	INCOME $	2026-27 EXPEN D-ITURE $	2027-28 EXPEND-ITURE $	2028-29 EXPEND-ITURE $	NET TIMING ADJUSTMENT $
	Projects requiring more analysis before proceeding further						
B41	1679. Parkfield Reserve Master Plan	0	0	118,693	0	0	118,693
B42	4105. Police Paddocks Water Main - Design	0	0	122,352	0	0	122,352
B43	4265. Water Main Renewal Program - Construct	0	0		1,043,323	0	1,043,323
B44	4296. Springers Floor & Futsal Goal	0	0	200,000	742,900	0	942,900
		0	**0**	**441,045**	**1,786,223**	**0**	**2,227,268**
	Project savings in 2025-26 recommended to supplement future construction works						
B45	3224. Ross Res Athletics Pav. Amenities	0	0	59,062	0	0	59,062
B46	3717. Springvale Reserve	0	0	324,920	0	0	324,920
B47	4079. Police Paddocks Pitch 3 Lighting	0	0	62,197	0	0	62,197
B48	4146. 39 Clow Ground Floor HVAC	0	0	69,666	0	0	69,666
B49	4275. JC Mills Res Hockey Field & Fence	0	0	35,616	0	0	35,616
B50	4277. JC Mills Reserve Hockey Lighting	0	0	17,530	0	0	17,530
		0	**0**	**$568,991**	**0**	**0**	**568,991**
		(3,723,870)	**(6,441,085)**	**23,163,488**	**1,786,223**	**350,000**	**15,134,756**

4.1.2 Transition from Multi-Budget Review Process to an Annual Budget and Quarterly Forecasting Framework

Responsible Officer: Chief Financial Officer

Attachments:
1. Transition to Quarterly Forecasting Framework 2026-27 [**4.1.2.1** - 2 pages]

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. **ENDORSES the Annual Budget and Quarterly Forecasting Framework set out in Attachment 1, to take effect from the 2026–27 financial year;**
2. **APPROVES the replacement of the current Amended Budget, Mid-Year Budget and Current Year Forecast processes with three formal quarterly forecasts;**
3. **NOTES that the adopted Annual Budget will remain Council's approved financial baseline and that a forecast will not amend the Budget or authorise expenditure, borrowings, reserve use, changes to rates or fees, or material service or capital program changes;**
4. **NOTES that any matter outside officer delegations or otherwise requiring statutory or Council approval will be presented separately to Council before implementation;**
5. **NOTES that a detailed implementation and communications plan, including governance, system configuration, reporting, training, change management and assurance arrangements, is being developed and will be considered by the Executive Team; and**
6. **NOTES that the Chief Financial Officer will review the framework after its first full year of operation and report any material findings or recommended changes to Council.**

Executive Summary

1. This report seeks Council endorsement of a revised financial management framework from 2026–27: one Council-adopted Annual Budget supported by three formal quarterly forecasts.
2. The change is intended to reduce repeated budget reconstruction and shift organisational effort toward timely analysis of the expected year-end position, emerging financial risks and opportunities, service and workforce changes, grant movements and capital delivery.
3. The adopted Annual Budget will remain Council's approved financial baseline. Forecasts will provide updated management estimates only and will not, by themselves, authorise additional expenditure, new borrowings, reserve use, changes to rates or fees, or material changes to services or the capital program.
4. Council will continue to receive quarterly financial reporting and will decide separately on any matter requiring Council approval. A detailed implementation and communications plan is being developed, including governance, MAGIQ configuration, reporting, training, change management and assurance arrangements, and will be discussed with the Executive Team.

Background

5. The organisation currently undertakes several budget review processes during the financial year:
   - Annual Budget
   - Amended Budget
   - Mid-Year Budget
   - Current Year Forecast
6. While these processes were established to ensure financial oversight, they often require managers and Finance teams to rebuild budgets multiple times throughout the year. This creates duplication of effort, additional review meetings and significant administrative workload.
7. Contemporary financial management practice increasingly favours a single approved budget supported by regular forecasting cycles that focus on expected outcomes rather than resetting approved financial targets. The proposed framework reflects this direction and supports stronger financial performance management across the organisation.

Proposal

8. The proposed future state framework can be summarised as:

   "Budget once, forecast often."
   Under the proposed approach:

Current Process	Proposed Process
Annual Budget	Annual Budget
Amended Budget	Forecast Q1
Mid-Year Budget	Forecast Q2
Forecast	Forecast Q3

9. Forecasts would provide updates to the organisation's expected year-end financial position using:
   - Actual financial performance.
   - Emerging risks and opportunities.
   - New operational requirements.
   - Changes in grant funding.
   - Savings initiatives.
   - Capital program delivery updates.
   - Workforce movements.
10. The existing Long-Term Financial Plan process would remain unchanged.
11. The indicative annual cycle, quarterly forecast production sprints, organisational benefits, key risks and proposed mitigation measures are detailed in Attachment 1.

Key Issues and Discussion

12. **Decision sought.** Council is being asked to endorse the forecasting framework and the replacement of the three existing in-year budget review processes with three quarterly forecasts. Council is not being asked to approve forecast movements as revised budgets or to delegate any additional spending authority.

13. **Council oversight and transparency.** Each quarterly report will compare year-to-date actuals and the latest full-year forecast with the adopted Annual Budget, explain material movements, identify risks and opportunities, outline management actions, and clearly identify any matter requiring a separate Council decision. This preserves accountability to the adopted Budget while giving Council earlier visibility of the expected year-end result.
14. **Authority and safeguards.** Forecasting is separate from approval authority. A forecast will not authorise expenditure above approved limits, new borrowings, reserve use, changes to rates or fees, or a material change to services or the capital program. Any action outside an officer's delegation, affecting a matter specifically approved by Council, or otherwise requiring statutory or Council approval will be presented through a separate approval process before implementation.
15. **Accountability and assurance.** Budget owners will prepare and certify complete, supportable forecasts. Finance Business Partners will review and challenge assumptions; Executive Team members will approve their respective directorate or portfolio forecasts; and the consolidated forecast will be endorsed by the Chief Financial Officer and approved by the Chief Executive Officer before reporting to Council. Material judgments, assumptions and movements will be documented to maintain an appropriate audit trail.
16. **Implementation.** Attachment 1 establishes the framework and indicative reporting cycle. A more detailed implementation and communications plan is being developed and will be discussed with the Executive Team. It will address process design, roles and delegations, materiality and escalation thresholds, MAGIQ configuration and testing, reporting templates, timetable and cut-off requirements, training, stakeholder communications, quality assurance, resourcing and post-implementation review. Council will be advised if implementation identifies any material cost, delay, control issue or change requiring approval.

Governance Compliance

Human Resource Implications (consider Workforce Planning and Service Statements)

17. No change to the staffing establishment is proposed. Implementation will require targeted training, revised responsibilities for budget owners and Finance Business Partners, and short-term change management effort.
18. The detailed implementation and communications plan is being developed and will be discussed with the Executive Team. Communications and training will explain the purpose of forecasts, responsibilities, approval and escalation requirements, timetable, materiality expectations and the distinction between a forecast and authority to spend. Finance Business Partners will support budget owners through the transition.

Financial/Asset Resource Implications (consider Service Statements, Budget, Long Term Financial Strategy and Asset Plan)

Operating Budget Implications

19. Implementation is expected to be managed within existing operational budgets and staff resources, subject to completion of detailed planning. The plan will confirm the effort and cost of MAGIQ configuration and testing, reporting enhancements, training, change management and quality assurance. Any material unbudgeted cost or additional resourcing requirement will be progressed through the usual approval process before commitment.

Asset Implications

20. There are no direct asset implications arising from the proposed framework.

Legal/Risk Implications

21. The *Local Government Act 2020* requires Council to prepare and adopt an Annual Budget each financial year. The proposed quarterly forecasts are not intended to replace or amend the adopted Budget and will operate as management reporting tools that update Council's expected year-end financial position.

22. Quarterly forecasts may identify expected changes in Council's financial outlook but will not amend the adopted Budget or authorise additional expenditure, new borrowings, reserve use, changes to rates or fees, or material changes to services or the capital program. Fully externally funded expenditure may be recognised where it creates no unfunded operating, maintenance or future-year financial commitment for Council and is approved under legislation, Council resolutions and applicable delegations. All other matters requiring additional Council funding or approval will continue through the usual governance processes before implementation.

23. Key transition risks are inconsistent forecast quality, optimism bias, unclear ownership, late submissions, system or reporting defects, misunderstanding of forecasts as spending approval, and insufficient capacity during peak reporting periods. These risks will be managed through documented roles and approvals, standard assumptions and materiality thresholds, Finance challenge, Executive oversight, system testing, training, clear communications, exception escalation and review of forecast accuracy. The Chief Financial Officer will review the framework after its first full year and report material findings or recommended changes to Council.

Environmental Implications

24. There are no environmental implications relevant to this report

Gender Impact Assessment

25. A gender impact assessment is not required.

Community Consultation

26. There was no requirement for community consultation.

Links to Community Vision, Council Plan, Strategy, Notice of Motion

27. This report supports the Council Plan 2025–29 objective of:

    - A Council that demonstrates leadership, responsible use of public resources and a commitment to investing in the community.

Legislative and Policy Obligations

28. This report has considered Council's legislative and policy obligations (where applicable) as outlined in the Report Considerations section detailed in the front of this Agenda. The applicable obligations considered and applied are:

    - The applicable obligations include the overarching governance principles and financial management requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020*.
    - the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020.*
    - Council's Governance Rules, delegations and relevant financial policies.

    The attached framework preserves the Annual Budget as Council's approved financial baseline and requires separate approval for matters outside delegated or statutory authority.

Annual Budget and Quarterly Forecasting Framework 2026-27

Council Meeting 21-09-2026

1. Purpose

This framework establishes a single Council-adopted Annual Budget supported by three formal quarterly forecasts. It is designed to provide timely visibility of Council's expected year-end financial position, strengthen accountability and support early management of financial risks and opportunities.

2. Framework

From 2026–27, Council's financial planning and forecasting cycle will comprise:

Process	Timing	Purpose	Council role
Annual Budget	Adopted by 30 June each year	Sets Council's approved financial baseline for the following financial year.	Adopts the Annual Budget in accordance with legislative requirements.
Forecast Q1	September quarter; reported in November	Updates the expected full-year position using first-quarter results and known changes.	Notes the forecast and considers any separate approval matters.
Forecast Q2	December quarter; reported in March	Provides a mid-year update of the expected full-year position.	Notes the forecast and considers any separate approval matters.
Forecast Q3	March quarter; reported in May	Provides the latest expected year-end position before completion of the financial year.	Notes the forecast and considers any separate approval matters.

3. Forecast Requirements

Each forecast will update the expected full-year operating and capital position using:

- year-to-date actual results and current financial commitments;
- service delivery and workforce changes;
- grant and other funding changes;
- capital program delivery and timing;
- savings, risks and opportunities; and
- other information materially affecting the expected year-end position.

Forecasts are management estimates and do not replace or amend the adopted Annual Budget.

4. Roles and Approval Process

(a) Budget owners prepare and certify complete and supportable forecasts.
(b) Finance Business Partners review submissions, challenge assumptions and consolidate results.
(c) Executive Team members approve forecasts for their respective directorates or portfolios.
(d) The Chief Financial Officer endorses the consolidated forecast.
(e) The Chief Executive Officer approves the consolidated forecast for reporting to Council.
(f) Council receives each quarterly forecast for noting and considers any matter requiring a separate Council decision.

5. Quarterly Reporting to Council

Each quarterly report will present, at a minimum:

- year-to-date actual results;
- the adopted Annual Budget;
- the latest full-year forecast;
- material movements from the previous forecast;
- key financial risks and opportunities;
- capital program and cash position updates; and
- management actions and any matters requiring separate approval.

6. Legislative and Financial Controls

- The Annual Budget will be prepared and adopted in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020, the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020 and Council's applicable policies and governance requirements.
- The adopted Annual Budget remains Council's approved financial baseline. A forecast does not amend approved revenue targets or authorise expenditure above the approved operating or capital budget.
- A forecast cannot authorise new borrowings, reserve use, changes to rates or fees, or a material change to services or the capital program.
- Any action outside an officer's delegation, affecting a matter specifically approved by Council, or otherwise requiring statutory or Council approval must be referred through a separate approval process before implementation.
- Additional expenditure may be managed under applicable delegations where it is fully funded from external sources, creates no unfunded operating, maintenance or future-year commitment, and does not require additional Council funding, reserve use or borrowings. Otherwise, separate Council approval is required.
- The Long-Term Financial Plan process remains unchanged.

7. Review

The Chief Financial Officer will review the framework after its first full year of operation and recommend any refinements to the Chief Executive Officer and Council, where required.

4.1.3 Consolidated 2025-26 Financial Statements and Performance Statement

Responsible Officer: Chief Financial Officer

Attachments:

1. Consolidated Annual Financial Report 2025-26 [**4.1.3.1** - 80 pages]
2. Performance Statement 2025-26 [**4.1.3.2** - 17 pages]
3. Management Representation Letter 2025-26 [**4.1.3.3** - 6 pages]

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. **NOTES that VAGO audit clearance has been received for the Consolidated Annual Financial Report and Performance Statement for the year ended 30 June 2026;**
2. **APPROVES the Consolidated Annual Financial Report and Performance Statement for the year ended 30 June 2026 per Attachment 1;**
3. **AUTHORISES the Principal Accounting Officer to make any final formatting amendments to the Consolidated Annual Financial Report and Performance Statement as required or agreed with VAGO;**
4. **NOMINATES Mayor Sophie Tan and Councillor Melinda Yim to certify the Consolidated Annual Financial Report and Performance Statement for the year ended 30 June 2026 in their final form, noting that the Chief Executive Officer and Principal Accounting Officer will also provide the certifications required by the prescribed statements;**
5. **NOTES that the Consolidated Annual Financial Report and Performance Statement, Councillor and Principal Accounting Officer certifications, and VAGO independent auditor's reports will be incorporated into Council's 2025-26 Annual Report; and**
6. **NOTES that VAGO's independent auditor's reports are not available at the time of preparing this report and will be incorporated into Council's 2025-26 Annual Report once issued.**

Executive Summary

1. Council's Consolidated Annual Financial Report for 2025-26 comprises the consolidated financial statements of Council, Dandenong Market Pty Ltd and South East Leisure Pty Ltd. All inter-entity balances and transactions are eliminated on consolidation.
2. VAGO's appointed audit service provider, RSD Audit, has completed the audit of the Consolidated Annual Financial Report and Performance Statement for the year ended 30 June 2026 and VAGO audit clearance has been received.
3. Council is required to approve the statements in principle and authorise two Councillors to certify them once finalised, in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* and *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*.
4. Authority for the Principal Accounting Officer's is sought to make any final formatting amendments to the Consolidated Annual Financial Report and Performance Statement as required or agreed with VAGO.

5. VAGO audit clearance has been received for the Consolidated Annual Financial Report and Performance Statement. Once the required certifications and VAGO's independent auditor's reports have been signed, the draft attachments will be replaced with the final documents and incorporated into Council's 2025-26 Annual Report.
6. VAGO has advised that no material audit differences have been identified. One unadjusted audit difference of $3.2 million remains in relation to depreciation for the Ancillary Services building component. The difference is below audit materiality and is disclosed in VAGO's Closing Report.

Background

7. The consolidated financial statements include the value of all assets, liabilities, equity, revenue and expenditure of Greater Dandenong City Council and its controlled entities:
   - Dandenong Market Pty Ltd.
   - South East Leisure Pty Ltd.

Key Issues and Discussion

8. **Audit status and finalisation:** VAGO audit clearance has been received for the Consolidated Annual Financial Report and Performance Statement.
9. **Certification and audit opinions:** The final statements must be certified by the Principal Accounting Officer, the Chief Executive Officer and the two Councillors nominated by Council. The Management Representation Letter must be signed by the Principal Accounting Officer and the Chief Executive Officer. VAGO's independent auditor's reports on the financial report and performance statement will be attached when available.
10. **Approval:** Council's approval enables the statements to proceed to final certification.
11. **Annual Report:** Once finalised, the Consolidated Annual Financial Report, Performance Statement, certifications and VAGO audit opinions will be incorporated into Council's Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 2026 and presented in accordance with the statutory timetable.

Governance Compliance

Human Resource Implications (consider Workforce Planning and Service Statements)

12. This report does not have an impact on existing human resources beyond normal year-end financial reporting, audit and Annual Report finalisation activities.

Financial/Asset Resource Implications (consider Service Statements, Budget, Long Term Financial Strategy and Asset Plan)

Operating Budget Implications

13. There are no additional budget implications arising from the recommendations in this report. The Consolidated Annual Financial Report records the financial performance and financial position of Council and its controlled entities for the year ended 30 June 2026.

Asset Implications

14. The financial statements report Council's financial performance for the year ended 30 June 2026 and financial position at that date, including the carrying values and movements in Council's assets. This report does not itself affect the use, scope or maintenance requirements of Council assets.

Legal/Risk Implications

15. Council must prepare, approve and certify its financial report and performance statement in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* and *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*. The principal risk in preparing reports is that if there were outstanding audit matters or delayed certification, it could affect completion and publication of Council's Annual Report within the statutory timeframe. This is mitigated through upfront planning, the proposed amendment authority, Audit and Risk Committee oversight and Council notification of any material amendments throughout the year end reporting process.

Environmental Implications

16. There are no environmental implications arising directly from this report.

Gender Impact Assessment

17. A gender impact assessment is not required because this report concerns statutory financial and performance reporting and does not develop or review a policy, program or service that directly and significantly affects the public.

Community Consultation

18. There was no requirement for community consultation. The financial report and performance statement are statutory accountability documents. Following finalisation, they will be incorporated into Council's 2025-26 Annual Report and published in accordance with legislative requirements.

Links to Community Vision, Council Plan, Strategy, Notice of Motion

19. This report is consistent with the following principles in the Community Vision 2040:

    Not Applicable

20. This report is consistent with the following strategic objectives from the Council Plan 2025-29:

    - A Council that demonstrates leadership, responsible use of public resources, and a commitment to investing in the community.

21. This report does not relate to a Notice of Motion.

Legislative and Policy Obligations

22. This report has considered Council's legislative and policy obligations, where applicable, as outlined in the Report Considerations section at the front of this Agenda. The applicable obligations are:

    - The overarching governance principles and financial and performance reporting requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020*
    - The *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*.

Greater Dandenong City Council
ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED
30 JUNE 2026

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Certification of the Consolidated Financial Statements

In my opinion the accompanying consolidated financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020,* the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*, the Australian Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements.

Mark Burke CPA
Principal Accounting Officer

Date: 21 September 2026
Dandenong

In our opinion the accompanying consolidated financial statements present fairly the consolidated financial transactions of the Greater Dandenong City Council for the year ended 30 June 2026 and the consolidated financial position of the Council as at that date.

As at the date of signing, we are not aware of any circumstances that would render any particulars in the financial statements to be misleading or inaccurate.

We have been authorised by the Council and by the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* to certify the consolidated financial statements in their final form.

Mayor Sophie Tan

Date: 21 September 2026
Dandenong

Councillor Melinda Yim

Date: 21 September 2026
Dandenong

Jacqui Weatherill
Chief Executive Officer

Date: 21 September 2026
Dandenong

Independent Auditor's Report

Comprehensive Income Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2026

	Note	Consolidated 2026 $'000	Consolidated 2025 $'000
Income / Revenue			
Rates and charges	3.1	184,617	178,130
Statutory fees and fines	3.2	11,461	11,693
User fees	3.3	15,443	14,973
Grants - operating	3.4	45,504	48,785
Grants - capital	3.4	15,265	9,676
Contributions - monetary	3.5	7,509	7,149
Contributions - non-monetary	3.5	7,221	6,000
Fair value adjustments for investment property	6.4	-	175
Other income	3.6	27,452	27,563
Total income / revenue		314,472	304,144
Expenses			
Employee costs	4.1	112,289	106,375
Materials and services	4.2	103,648	101,528
Depreciation	4.3	57,484	47,645
Amortisation - intangible assets	4.4	19	20
Depreciation - right-of-use assets	4.5	562	661
Allowance for impairment losses	4.6	1,719	2,743
Borrowing costs	4.7	2,662	2,669
Finance costs - leases	4.8	16	28
Net loss on non-financial assets	4.9	8,875	4,768
Fair value adjustments for investment property	6.4	1,525	-
Other expenses	4.10	6,189	6,794
Total expenses		294,988	273,231
Surplus for the year		**19,484**	**30,913**
Other comprehensive income			
Items that will not be reclassified to surplus or deficit in future periods			
Net asset revaluation gain	9.1(a)	405,001	372,755
Total other comprehensive income		**405,001**	**372,755**
Total comprehensive result		**424,485**	**403,668**

The above Comprehensive Income Statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Balance Sheet
As at 30 June 2026

	Note	Consolidated 2026 $'000	Consolidated 2025 $'000
Assets			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	5.1(a)	41,222	36,758
Trade and other receivables	5.1(c)	41,496	32,584
Other financial assets	5.1(b)	187,762	179,708
Inventories	5.2(a)	66	67
Prepayments	5.2(b)	1,655	2,373
Other assets	5.2(c)	4,573	3,531
Total current assets		276,774	255,021
Non-current assets			
Trade and other receivables	5.1(c)	169	183
Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	6.2	3,452,278	3,027,341
Investment property	6.4	5,340	6,865
Right-of-use assets	5.8	360	680
Intangible assets	5.2(c)	-	19
Total non-current assets		3,458,147	3,035,088
Total assets		3,734,921	3,290,109
Liabilities			
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	5.3(a)	27,448	27,545
Trust funds and deposits	5.3(b)	6,703	3,808
Contract and other liabilities	5.3(c)	54,683	54,103
Provisions	5.5	21,829	21,872
Other interest-bearing liabilities	5.4(b)	115	107
Interest-bearing liabilities	5.4(a)	25,900	4,379
Lease liabilities	5.8	393	494
Total current liabilities		137,071	112,308
Non-current liabilities			
Trust funds and deposits	5.3(b)	3,055	2,910
Provisions	5.5	2,177	2,062
Other interest-bearing liabilities	5.4(b)	84	193
Interest-bearing liabilities	5.4(a)	39,645	43,992
Lease liabilities	5.8	3	244
Total non-current liabilities		44,964	49,401
Total liabilities		182,035	161,709
Net assets		**3,552,886**	**3,128,400**
Equity			
Accumulated surplus		1,011,842	995,430
Reserves	9.1(c)	2,541,044	2,132,970
Total equity		**3,552,886**	**3,128,400**

The above Balance Sheet should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Statement of Changes in Equity
For the year ended 30 June 2026

		Consolidated			
2026	**Note**	**Total $'000**	**Accumulated Surplus $'000**	**Revaluation Reserve $'000**	**Other Reserves $'000**
Balance at beginning of the financial year		3,128,400	995,430	2,027,966	105,004
Rounding adjustment (note 6.2 (a))		1	1	-	-
Surplus for the year		19,484	19,484	-	-
Net asset revaluation gain	9.1(a)	405,001	-	405,001	-
Transfers to other reserves	9.1(b)	-	(25,519)	-	25,519
Transfers from other reserves	9.1(b)	-	22,446	-	(22,446)
Balance at end of the financial year		**3,552,886**	**1,011,842**	**2,432,967**	**108,077**

		Consolidated			
2025		**Total $'000**	**Accumulated Surplus $'000**	**Revaluation Reserve $'000**	**Other Reserves $'000**
Balance at beginning of the financial year		2,724,732	974,960	1,655,211	94,561
Surplus for the year		30,913	30,913	-	-
Net asset revaluation gain	9.1(a)	372,755	-	372,755	-
Transfers to other reserves	9.1(b)	-	(22,487)	-	22,487
Transfers from other reserves	9.1(b)	-	12,044	-	(12,044)
Balance at end of the financial year		**3,128,400**	**995,430**	**2,027,966**	**105,004**

The above Statement of Changes in Equity should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Statement of Cash Flows
For the year ended 30 June 2026

	Note	Consolidated 2026 Inflows/ (Outflows) $'000	Consolidated 2025 Inflows/ (Outflows) $'000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Rates and charges		182,688	176,944
Statutory fees and fines		9,205	8,494
User fees		14,228	15,668
Grants - operating		46,211	48,360
Grants - capital		13,344	12,244
Contributions - monetary		4,382	4,460
Interest received		8,785	9,785
Trust funds and deposits taken		61,203	37,862
Other receipts		21,020	21,043
Net GST refund		14,402	12,545
Employee costs		(113,840)	(105,188)
Materials and services		(116,265)	(120,050)
Short-term, low value and variable lease payment		(903)	(696)
Trust funds and deposits repaid		(58,176)	(38,853)
Other payments		(5,797)	(6,005)
Net cash provided by operating activities	9.2	80,487	76,613
Cash flows from investing activities			
Payments for property, infrastructure, plant and equipment		(84,345)	(57,595)
Proceeds from sale of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment		1,994	1,505
Payments for investments		(337,946)	(371,810)
Proceeds from sale of investments		330,470	365,143
Net cash used in investing activities		(89,827)	(62,757)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Finance costs		(2,658)	(2,655)
Proceeds from borrowings		30,172	5,120
Repayment of borrowings		(12,998)	(3,931)
Repayment of other interest-bearing liabilities		(112)	(102)
Interest paid - lease liability		(16)	(30)
Repayment of lease liabilities		(584)	(670)
Net cash used in financing activities		13,804	(2,268)
Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		4,464	11,588
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year		36,758	25,170
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	5.1(a)	**41,222**	**36,758**
Financing arrangements	5.6		

The above Statement of Cash Flows should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Statement of Capital Works
For the year ended 30 June 2026

	Note	Consolidated 2026 $'000	Consolidated 2025 $'000
Property			
Land		1	1,013
Total land		1	1,013
Buildings		50,298	27,576
Leasehold improvements		127	-
Total buildings		50,425	27,576
Total property	2.1.2	50,426	28,589
Plant and equipment			
Plant, machinery and equipment		5,848	2,324
Fixtures, fittings and furniture		1,076	98
Computers and telecommunications		891	1,002
Library books		755	889
Total plant and equipment	2.1.2	8,570	4,313
Infrastructure			
Roads		16,172	17,820
Bridges		35	-
Footpaths and cycleways		1,184	1,109
Drainage		1,706	1,682
Recreational, leisure and community facilities		3,274	3,672
Parks, open space and streetscapes		4,059	3,447
Off street car parks		542	59
Total infrastructure	2.1.2	26,972	27,789
Total capital works expenditure	2.1.2	**85,968**	**60,691**
Represented by:			
New asset expenditure		7,966	28,899
Asset renewal expenditure		36,521	24,710
Asset upgrade expenditure		40,035	7,082
Asset expansion expenditure		1,446	-
Total capital works expenditure		**85,968**	**60,691**

The above Statement of Capital Works should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

1 OVERVIEW

The Greater Dandenong City Council was established in December 1994 with the amalgamation of the former City of Springvale and former City of Dandenong, and is a body corporate. The Council's main office is located at 225 Lonsdale Street, Dandenong, 3175.

Statement of compliance

These consolidated financial statements are a general purpose financial report that consists of a Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Changes in Equity, Statement of Cash Flows, Statement of Capital Works and notes accompanying these financial statements. The general purpose financial report complies with Australian Accounting Standards (AAS), other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board, the *Local Government Act* 2020, and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020.*

The Council is a not-for-profit entity and therefore applies the additional AUS paragraphs applicable to a not-for-profit entity under the Australian Accounting Standards.

Accounting policy information

1.1 Basis of accounting

These consolidated financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2026 comprise the results of operations for both Council and its wholly owned subsidiaries, namely the Dandenong Market Pty Ltd and South East Leisure Pty Ltd. Refer to Note 6.3 for further details of Council's subsidiaries.

Accounting policies are selected and applied in a manner which ensures that the resulting financial information satisfies the concepts of relevance and reliability, thereby ensuring that the substance of the underlying transactions or other events is reported. Specific accounting policies applied are disclosed in sections where the related balance or financial statement matter is disclosed.

The accrual basis of accounting has been used in the preparation of these financial statements, whereby assets, liabilities, equity, income and expenses are recognised in the reporting period to which they relate, regardless of when cash is received or paid.

The financial statements are based on the historical cost convention unless a different measurement basis is specifically disclosed in the notes to the financial statements.

Judgements, estimates and assumptions are required to be made about the carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated judgements are based on professional judgement derived from historical experience and various other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis. The financial statements are in Australian dollars. The amounts presented in the financial statements have been rounded to the nearest thousand dollars unless otherwise specified. Minor discrepancies in tables between totals and the sum of components are due to rounding.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

1 Overview (continued)

Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised and also in future periods that are affected by the revision. Judgements and assumptions made by management in the application of AAS's that have significant effects on the financial statements and estimates relate to:

- the fair value of land, buildings and infrastructure (refer to note 6.2 and 8.4).
- the determination of depreciation for buildings, infrastructure, plant and equipment (refer to note 6.2).
- the determination of employee provisions (refer to note 5.5(a)).
- the determination of landfill provisions (refer to note 5.5(b)).
- the determination of whether performance obligations are sufficiently specific so as to determine whether an arrangement is within the scope of *AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers* or *AASB 1058 Income of Not-for-Profit Entities* (refer to note 3).
- the determination, in accordance with *AASB 16 Leases*, of the lease term, the estimation of the discount rate when not implicit in the lease and whether an arrangement is in substance short-term or low value (refer to note 5.8).
- other areas requiring judgements.

Unless otherwise stated, all accounting policies are consistent with those applied in the prior year. Where appropriate, comparative figures have been amended to accord with current presentation. Disclosure has been made of any material changes to comparatives (refer to note 10). It is noted that there have been no material changes to comparatives.

Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Income and expenses are recognised net of the amount of associated GST. Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the taxation authority is included with other receivables or payables in the balance sheet.

1.2 Impact of emergencies and natural disasters

During 2025-26 there were no notable emergencies or natural disasters that impacted Council's operations.

1.3 Impacts of other external events

Council has considered ongoing external events that have contributed to volatility in international markets, disrupted global supply chains and increased inflationary pressure, including the risk that they may cause significant changes in the carrying values of assets and liabilities in the next financial year, and has concluded that there is no material impact on the 2025-26 financial report that requires additional disclosure.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

2 ANALYSIS OF OUR RESULTS

2.1 Performance against budget

The budget comparison notes compare Council's financial plan, expressed through its annual budget, with actual performance. *The Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* requires explanation of any material variances. Council has adopted a materiality threshold of greater than 10 per cent and greater than $1 million or where further explanation is warranted. Explanations have not been provided for variations below the materiality threshold unless the variance is considered to be material because of its nature.

The budget figures detailed below are those adopted by Council on 23 June 2025 (known as the Adopted Budget). The Budget was based on assumptions that were relevant at the time of adoption of the Budget. Council sets guidelines and parameters for income and expense targets in this budget in order to meet Council's planning and financial performance targets for both the short and long-term. The budget did not reflect any changes to equity resulting from asset revaluations, as their impacts were not considered predictable.

These notes are prepared to meet the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* .

2.1.1 Income / Revenue and expenditure

	Consolidated Actual 2026 $'000	Council Actual 2026 $'000 (note 6.3)	Council Budget 2026 $'000	Council Variance $'000 Fav (Unfav)	Council Variance % Fav (Unfav)	Note 2.1.1 Ref
Income / Revenue						
Rates and charges	184,617	184,749	184,000	749	0.4%	
Statutory fees and fines	11,461	11,461	12,805	(1,344)	(10.5%)	(a)
User fees	15,443	9,756	9,420	336	3.6%	
Grants - operating	45,504	45,494	36,800	8,694	23.6%	(b)
Grants - capital	15,265	15,265	20,870	(5,605)	(26.9%)	(c)
Contributions - monetary	7,509	7,509	3,162	4,347	137.5%	(d)
Contributions - non-monetary	7,221	7,221	7,500	(279)	(3.7%)	(e)
Net gain on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	-	-	787	(787)	(100.0%)	(i)
Other income	27,452	15,142	12,923	2,219	17.2%	(f)
Total income / revenue	**314,472**	**296,597**	**288,267**	**8,330**	**2.9%**	
Expenses						
Employee costs	112,289	101,689	105,929	4,240	4.0%	
Materials and services	103,648	97,538	96,820	(718)	(0.7%)	
Depreciation	57,484	57,277	48,481	(8,796)	(18.1%)	(g)
Amortisation - intangible assets	19	-	-	-	0.0%	
Depreciation - right-of-use assets	562	562	715	153	21.4%	
Allowance for impairment losses	1,719	1,725	1,614	(111)	(6.9%)	
Borrowing costs	2,662	2,640	3,936	1,296	32.9%	(h)
Finance costs - leases	16	16	57	41	71.9%	
Net loss on non-financial assets	8,875	8,875	-	(8,875)	100.0%	(i)
Fair value adjustments for investment property	1,525	1,525	-	(1,525)	100.0%	
Other expenses	6,189	5,464	4,913	(551)	(11.2%)	
Total expenses	**294,988**	**277,311**	**262,465**	**(14,846)**	**5.7%**	
Surplus for the year	**19,484**	**19,286**	**25,802**	**6,516**	**25.3%**	

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

2.1.1 Income / revenue and expenditure (continued)

Explanation of material variations

Ref	Item	Explanation
(a)	Statutory fees and fines	Statutory fees and fines income was $1.34 million lower than budget, mainly due to lower parking and compliance enforcement activity arising from project delays and workforce shortages.
(b)	Grants - operating	Operating grant income was $8.69 million higher than budget, primarily due to the early receipt of 80% of Council's 2026-27 Financial Assistance Grant allocation ($12.38 million) through the Victorian Local Government Grants Commission (VLGGC). This was partially offset by the prior year benefit from the early receipt of 50% of the 2025-26 Financial Assistance Grant allocation. The favourable result also includes $1.20 million of Community Care grant funding recognised from prior year unearned income following final grant acquittal outcomes, and $1.21 million in additional funding received for the Child First program.
(c)	Grants - capital	Capital grant income was $5.61 million lower than budget, primarily due to delays in several multi-year projects, resulting in deferred recognition of grant funding, including the Black Spot Works Program ($3.36 million), Oasis Aquatic & Wellbeing Centre ($2.20 million), Safe Local Roads Program ($1.82 million) and Dandenong Library Inclusive Spaces ($0.28 million). The variance was partially offset by $1.57 million of additional grant funding secured after the adoption of Council's budget, including funding for the Level Crossing Removal Program (LXRP), Greaves Reserve Cricket Nets, Fotheringham Reserve LED Lighting, Dandenong Employment Hub, Alex Wilkie Wetlands and the AI Powered Chat Bot project.
(d)	Contributions - monetary	The $4.35 million favourable variance was primarily due to Development Contributions Plan (DCP) income of $4.59 million recognised for the Keysborough Community Hub, which was not included in Council's adopted budget. This favourable variance was partially offset by $1.15 million relating to Perry Road Stage 3, where the associated project milestones had not been achieved by year end and the income could not yet be recognised.
(e)	Contributions - non-monetary	These contributions represent assets transferred to Council by developers following the completion of subdivision developments. Refer to Note 6.2(a) for further details on contributed assets. In 2025-26, the contributions primarily comprised land reserves, land under roads, roads, drainage and footpath assets. The number and timing of subdivision completions vary from year to year, meaning the value and timing of asset transfers are largely outside Council's control and difficult to predict.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

2.1.1 Income / revenue and expenditure (continued)

Explanation of material variations (continued)

Ref	Item	Explanation
(f)	Other income	Other income was $2.22 million higher than budget, primarily due to $3.20 million of additional investment interest income generated from favourable economic conditions and higher interest rates. The favourable variance also includes higher-than-budgeted income from casual park hire ($0.19 million) and Venue Hire staff cost recoveries ($0.12 million). These favourable variances were partially offset by lower-than-budget recovery income from the SpringValley Landfill ($1.00 million) and rates debtor recovery income ($0.32 million), both reflecting lower underlying expenditure levels.
(g)	Depreciation	The $8.8 million unfavourable variance to budget is primarily attributable to higher depreciation expense resulting from significant asset revaluations undertaken at 30 June 2025, which increased the carrying value of Council's assets by $372.76 million. As the original 2025-26 budget was prepared and adopted before the final 2024-25 valuation outcomes were known, the associated increase in depreciation expense was not reflected in the budget assumptions.
(h)	Borrowing costs	The $1.3 million favourable variance was primarily due to lower borrowings than budgeted for the Oasis Aquatic & Wellbeing Centre project. Revised project cash flows and expenditure timing reduced Council's borrowing requirement during 2025-26, resulting in lower interest and financing costs than originally forecast.
(i)	Net loss on non-financial assets	The $8.8 million unfavourable variance was primarily due to asset write-offs of $9.8 million, which were not included in the budget as they are difficult to forecast and do not impact Council's operating cash position. These write-offs mainly relate to assets replaced, renewed or disposed of as part of Council's capital works program, requiring the derecognition of the existing assets.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

2.1.2 Capital works

	Consolidated Actual 2026 $'000	Council Actual 2026 $'000	Council Budget 2026 $'000	Council Variance $'000 Fav (Unfav)	Council Variance % Fav (Unfav)	Note 2.1.2 Ref
Property						
Land	1	1	-	(1)	(100.00%)	
Total land	**1**	**1**	**-**	**(1)**	**(100.00%)**	
Buildings	50,298	50,298	77,113	26,815	34.77%	(a)
Leasehold improvements	127	127	10	(117)	0.00%	
Total buildings	**50,425**	**50,425**	**77,123**	**26,698**	**34.62%**	
Total property	**50,426**	**50,426**	**77,123**	**26,697**	**34.62%**	
Plant and equipment						
Plant, machinery and equipment	5,848	5,739	3,949	(1,790)	(45.33%)	(b)
Fixtures, fittings and furniture	1,076	1,054	1,336	282	21.11%	
Computers and telecommunications	891	891	1,832	941	51.36%	(C)
Library books	755	755	866	111	12.82%	
Total plant and equipment	**8,570**	**8,439**	**7,983**	**(456)**	**(5.71%)**	
Infrastructure						
Roads	16,172	16,172	26,467	10,295	38.90%	(d)
Bridges	35	35	262	227	86.64%	
Footpaths and cycleways	1,184	1,184	777	(407)	(52.38%)	
Drainage	1,706	1,706	2,099	393	18.72%	
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	3,274	3,274	2,482	(792)	(31.91%)	
Parks, open space and streetscapes	4,059	4,059	2,200	(1,859)	(84.50%)	(e)
Off street car parks	542	542	478	(64)	(13.39%)	
Total infrastructure	**26,972**	**26,972**	**34,765**	**7,793**	**22.42%**	
Total capital works expenditure	**85,968**	**85,837**	**119,871**	**34,034**	**28.39%**	
Represented by:						
New asset expenditure	7,966	7,835	8,493	658	7.75%	
Asset renewal expenditure	36,521	36,521	40,470	3,949	9.76%	(f)
Asset upgrade expenditure	40,035	40,035	65,873	25,838	39.22%	(g)
Asset expansion expenditure	1,446	1,446	5,035	3,589	71.28%	(h)
Total capital works expenditure	**85,968**	**85,837**	**119,871**	**34,034**	**28.39%**	

2.1.2 Capital works (continued)

Explanation of material variations

Ref	Item	Explanation
(a)	Buildings	The favourable variance of $26.8 million to budget is primarily attributable to the timing of expenditure and cash flows associated with major capital projects, including the Oasis Aquatics and Wellbeing ($21.9 million) and Dandenong New Art ($3.8 million). While project delivery timelines and expenditure have progressed at a different pace than originally budgeted, both projects continue to advance and remain key strategic investments for the community.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

2.1.2 Capital works (continued)

Explanation of material variations

Ref	Item	Explanation
(b)	Plant, Machinery & Equipment	Plant, Machinery & Equipment expenditure was $1.8 million higher than budget, primarily due to the delivery of the Fleet Renewal Program. The variance reflects the expenditure of $1.8 million carried forward from the prior year, where vehicle deliveries were deferred due to extended supplier lead times. The fleet replacement program has since progressed, with the associated expenditure recognised in 2025-26 as assets were received and commissioned.
(c)	Computers and telecommunications	Computers & Telecommunications expenditure was $0.9 million below budget, primarily due to the timing of the CCTV Program, which contributed a favourable variance of $1.6 million. The project has progressed through planning and procurement activities, with supplier selection underway and delivery expenditure occurring later than originally forecast. This favourable variance was partially offset by expenditure on three projects carried forward from the prior year, where the associated budgets were not included in the original 2025-26 budget.
(d)	Roads	Roads expenditure was $10.3 million below budget, primarily due to the timing of expenditure on three significant road infrastructure projects: Black Spot Program 2025-26 ($3.9 million), Perry Road Stage 3 DCP ($3.6 million), and the Safe Local Roads Program – McCrae Street, Dandenong ($2.2 million). While expenditure occurred later than originally forecast, all projects continue to progress and are scheduled to continue into 2026-27. The associated grant funding and developer contribution commitments remain dedicated to these projects, with all funding obligations expected to be met through the ongoing delivery of the works.
(e)	Parks, open space & streetsc	Parks, Open Space & Streetscapes expenditure was $1.9 million higher than budget, primarily due to the delivery of eight projects carried forward from the prior year, where the associated budgets were not included in the original 2025-26 budget. The variance also reflects expenditure on a grant-funded project introduced through the mid-year budget process.
(f)	Asset renewal expenditure	Renewal capital expenditure was $3.9 million below budget, reflecting a range of offsetting variances across the renewal program. The favourable result was primarily driven by the timing of expenditure on the Oasis Aquatics & Wellbeing Centre ($2.2 million), CCTV Renewal Program ($1.6 million), Perry Road Stage 3 ($1.0 million), Dandenong Stadium Court Resurfacing ($1.0 million), Police Paddocks Water Main Renewal ($1.0 million) and Springers Leisure Centre Floor & Futsal Goals Renewal ($0.9 million), where project delivery and associated cash flows occurred later than originally forecast. These variances were partially offset by $2.0 million of capital purchases transferred from operating expenditure and $1.7 million relating to the Fleet Renewal Program carried forward from the prior year.
(g)	Asset upgrade expenditure	Asset upgrade expenditure was $25.8 million below budget, primarily due to the timing of expenditure on the Oasis Aquatics and Wellbeing project ($21.9 million) and Dandenong New Art ($3.8 million). While expenditure occurred later than originally forecast, both projects continue to progress and remain significant strategic investments for the municipality.
(h)	Asset expansion expenditure	Asset expansion expenditure was $3.6 million below budget, primarily due to the timing of expenditure on the Perry Road Stage 3 project ($3.6 million). The project remains in progress, with associated developer contribution funding retained for delivery in future financial years.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

2.2 Analysis of Council results by program

2.2.1 Council delivers its functions and activities through the following programs.

Chief Executive Office (CEO)

The Chief Executive Office has overall responsibility for the operations of the organisation. Each member of the executive team reports to the CEO. Resources necessary in the provision of executive and overall organisational leadership in accordance with the core provisions of the Local Government Act.

City Futures

City Futures is responsible for a large range of Council activities including parks and waste, roads and transport, major projects, sustainability, statutory planning, growth and investment, place making and revitalisation. It has a key focus on the development of our built and natural environments and ensuring that Council's activities match the community's future needs for facilities, housing, and

The departments which make up City Futures are Business Development and Investment, Chief Engineer and Major Projects, Infrastructure Services, Statutory Planning, Strategic and Environmental Planning, and Transport and Civil Development.

Community Strengthening

Community Strengthening provides direct services to the community across a wide range of programs such as sport and recreation, libraries, youth and families, children's services, festivals and events, support for older people and community safety. This directorate manages Community Amenity, Creative and Engaged City; Community Care; Community Wellbeing; and Safe, Active and Connected Communities.

Chief Financial Office

The Financial Services function provides core financial governance and support by ensuring statutory compliance, delivering strategic financial advice, managing rates, valuations and property revenue, and overseeing procurement, contracts and resource monitoring to enable the effective delivery of Council services.

Customer and Information Office

Customer and Information Office supports Council's operations and service delivery by managing records and information systems, maintaining core business and ICT infrastructure, providing technical and systems support, and leading the transition to modern, secure digital solutions that ensure reliable, compliant and future ready technology services across the organisation. The unit is also responsible for the management, storage and disposal of corporate records to support business transactions and for evidentiary purposes.

Strategy and Corporate Services

Strategic Growth and Advocacy is responsible for Council's organisational strategy and performance; asset management; and advocacy functions. The business units within this department include Asset Management, Community Advocacy, and Corporate Planning and Performance.

Non-attributable

The items that cannot be reliably attributable to a directorate. For example furniture, fixtures and fittings that cannot be identified by a location or work in progress that cannot be easily allocated to a directorate.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

2.2 Analysis of Council results by program

2.2.2 Summary of income / revenue, expenses, assets and capital expenses by program

	Income / Revenue	Expenses	Surplus/ (Deficit)	Grants included in income / revenue	Total assets
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
2026					
Chief Executive Office	-	794	(794)	-	50
City Futures	78,434	156,112	(77,678)	16,350	2,544,153
Community Strengthening	30,060	76,591	(46,531)	24,564	921,257
Customer and Information Office	235	12,845	(12,610)	131	3,008
Strategy and Corporate Services	2,687	16,913	(14,226)	227	12,965
Chief Financial Office	185,181	9,154	176,027	19,487	248,377
Non-attributable*	-	4,902	(4,902)	-	179
Council Total	**296,597**	**277,311**	**19,286**	**60,759**	**3,729,989**
Dandenong Market Pty Ltd	7,831	7,653	178	-	3,167
South East Leisure Pty Ltd	14,569	14,549	20	10	2,159
Consolidated elimination	(4,525)	(4,525)	-	-	(394)
Consolidated Total	**314,472**	**294,988**	**19,484**	**60,769**	**3,734,921**

The Directorate structure was revised during the 2025-26 financial year. Comparative disclosures have not been restated to reflect the current-year structure

	Income / Revenue	Expenses	Surplus/ (Deficit)	Grants included in income / revenue	Total assets
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
2025					
Chief Executive Office	456	12,075	(11,619)	386	1,398
City Futures	60,921	120,414	(59,493)	10,289	2,192,479
Community Strengthening	41,465	95,919	(54,454)	26,594	741,294
Corporate Development	184,212	24,870	159,342	21,166	350,045
Non-attributable*	-	2,988	(2,988)	-	26
Total for Council	**287,054**	**256,266**	**30,788**	**58,435**	**3,285,242**
Dandenong Market Pty Ltd	7,447	7,377	70	-	2,792
South East Leisure Pty Ltd	13,913	13,858	55	26	2,250
Consolidation elimination	(4,270)	(4,270)	-	-	(175)
Consolidated Total	**304,144**	**273,231**	**30,913**	**58,461**	**3,290,109**

* Non-attributable represents income and expense items that are not specifically attributable to one of the directorates.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note		Consolidated 2026 $'000	Consolidated 2025 $'000
3	**FUNDING FOR THE DELIVERY OF OUR SERVICES**		
3.1	**Rates and charges**		

Council uses the Capital Improved Value (CIV) as the basis of valuation of all properties within the municipal district. The CIV of a property is the value of the land and all improvements on it, and is determined by independent valuers and certified by the Valuer General Victoria. The valuation base used to calculate general rates for 2025-26 was $69.86 billion ($67.11 billion in 2024-25).

Residential	61,684	61,081
Commercial	13,284	13,066
Industrial	76,410	70,812
Farm	542	522
Cultural and recreational	506	506
Waste management charge - residential	27,901	27,115
Supplementary rates and rates adjustment	957	1,878
Maintenance levy	1,797	1,796
Interest on rates and charges	1,536	1,354
Total rates and charges	184,617	178,130

The date of the general revaluation of land for rating purposes within the municipal district was 1 January 2025 and the valuation was first applied in the rating year commencing 1 July 2025.

Annual rates and charges are recognised as income when Council issues annual rates notices. Supplementary rates are recognised when a valuation and reassessment is completed and a supplementary rates notice issued.

3.2 Statutory fees and fines

Infringements and costs	5,986	6,628
Court recoveries	2,168	2,418
Building and town planning fees	2,277	1,817
Subdivision	209	154
Land information certificates	160	144
Election fines	193	182
Permits	468	350
Total statutory fees and fines	11,461	11,693

Statutory fees and fines (including parking fees and fines) are recognised as income when the service has been provided, the payment is received, or when the penalty has been applied, whichever first occurs.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note		Consolidated 2026 $'000	Consolidated 2025 $'000
3.3	**User fees**		
	Aged and health services	1,250	1,237
	Leisure centre and recreation	5,687	5,524
	Child care/children's programs	1,588	1,697
	Parking	3,710	3,542
	Registration and other permits	2,002	1,881
	Asset protection fees	461	445
	Other fees and charges	745	647
	Total user fees	15,443	14,973
	User fees by timing of revenue recognition		
	User fees recognised over time	398	390
	User fees recognised at point in time	15,045	14,583
	Total user fees	15,443	14,973

User fees are recognised as revenue at a point in time, or over time, when (or as) the performance obligation is satisfied. Recognition is based on the underlying contractual terms.

3.4 Funding from other levels of government

Grants were received in respect of the following:

Summary of grants		
Commonwealth funded grants	46,733	41,996
State funded grants	14,036	16,456
Other grant sources	-	9
Total grants received	60,769	58,461
a) Operating grants		
Recurrent - Commonwealth Government		
Financial Assistance Grants (via Victoria Local Government Grants Commission)*	19,487	21,166
Family Day Care	6,437	7,091
General Home Care	8,019	7,495
Libraries	245	246
Volunteer Services	150	-
Immunisation	9	13
	34,347	36,011

* Financial Assistance Grants received via the Victorian Local Government Grants Commission can vary year to year due to timing differences in distributions. In 2024-25, approximately 130% of the annual allocation is reflected - comprising 50% of the 2025-26 funding and an early distribution of 80% of the 2026-27 allocation received in June 2026. By contrast, 100% of the 2024-25 funding and an early distribution of 50% of the 2025-26 allocation received in 2024-25.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note		Consolidated 2026 $'000	Consolidated 2025 $'000
3.4	**Funding from other levels of government (continued)**		
	a) Operating grants (continued)		
	Recurrent - State Government		
	Aged care	480	2,794
	Maternal and Child Health	2,946	2,774
	Family, Youth and Children Services	3,530	3,161
	Libraries	1,137	1,137
	General Home Care	629	426
	Community Health	189	184
	Education and Employment	-	160
	School crossing supervisors	569	556
	Emergency management	40	40
	Volunteer Services	4	8
	Immunisation	70	78
		9,594	11,318
	Total recurrent operating grants	**43,941**	**47,329**
	Non-recurrent - Commonwealth Government		
	Libraries	1	1
	Family, Youth and Children Services	10	10
	Arts and Culture	-	61
	General Home Care	62	10
	Social Inclusion	170	-
		243	82
	Non-recurrent - State Government		
	Community Development	482	594
	Community Health	57	-
	Open Space and Environment	37	211
	Waste management	-	29
	Family, Youth and Children Services	313	286
	Maternal and child health	74	-
	South East Leisure	10	26
	Community Safety	320	219
	Libraries	27	-
		1,320	1,365
	Non-recurrent - Other		
	Arts and Culture	-	9
		-	9
	Total non-recurrent operating grants	1,563	1,456
	Total operating grants	**45,504**	**48,785**

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note		Consolidated 2026 $'000	Consolidated 2025 $'000
3.4	**Funding from other levels of government (continued)**		
	b) Capital grants		
	Recurrent - Commonwealth Government		
	Roads to Recovery	1,793	1,881
	Non-recurrent - Commonwealth Government		
	Buildings	9,009	924
	Parks, Open Space and Streetscapes	310	40
	Local Roads Community Infrastructure Program	-	1,109
	Black Spot Program	515	1,949
	Leasehold improvements	21	-
	Recreational, Leisure and Community Facilities	395	-
	Footpaths and Cycleways	100	-
		10,350	4,022
	Non-recurrent - State Government		
	Buildings	259	2,597
	Footpaths and Cycleways	373	118
	Intangible	190	-
	Plant, Machinery and Equipment	-	50
	Recreational, Leisure and Community Facilities	289	275
	Noble Park Revitalisation Program	104	26
	Parks, Open Space and Streetscapes	352	657
	Roads	1,555	
		3,122	3,723
	Non-recurrent - Other		
	Recreational, Leisure and Community Facilities	-	50
		-	50
	Total non-recurrent capital grants	13,472	7,795
	Total capital grants	**15,265**	**9,676**

(c) Recognition of grant income

Before recognising funding from government grants as revenue the Council assesses whether there is a contract that is enforceable and has sufficiently specific performance obligations in accordance with *AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers*. When both these conditions are satisfied, the Council:
- identifies each performance obligation relating to revenue under the contract/agreement
- determines the transaction price
- recognises a contract liability for its obligations under the agreement
- recognises revenue as it satisfies its performance obligations, at the point in time or over time when services are rendered.

Where the contract is not enforceable and/or does not have sufficiently specific performance obligations, the Council applies *AASB 1058 Income of Not-for-Profit Entities*.

Grant revenue with sufficiently specific performance obligations is recognised over time as the performance obligations specified in the underlying agreement are met. Where performance obligations are not sufficiently specific, grants are recognised on the earlier of receipt or when an unconditional right to receipt has been established. Grants relating to capital projects are generally recognised progressively as the capital project is completed. The following table provides a summary of unspent grants.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note		Consolidated 2026 $'000	Consolidated 2025 $'000
3.4	**Funding from other levels of government (continued)**		
	d) Unspent grants received on condition that they be spent in a specific manner		
	Operating		
	Balance at start of the year	12,683	5,912
	Received during the financial year and remained unspent at balance date	16,709	11,543
	Received in prior years and spent during the financial year	(10,905)	(4,772)
	Balance at year end*	18,487	12,683

** The large balance of unspent operating grants in the last two years relates to the early distribution by the Victorian Local Government Grants Commission of the Financial Assistance Grants allocation for the following financial year (2026: $12.37 million (75%) and 2025: $7.24 million (50%)).*

3.5	**Contributions**		
	Monetary		
	Community contributions *(for capital works)*	-	9
	Other contributions	126	248
	Total non-developer contributions	126	257
	Open space contributions (*for future capital works)* **	2,795	3,996
	Development infrastructure levies *(for capital works completed)*	4,588	2,896
	Total developer contributions	7,383	6,892
	Total monetary contributions	7,509	7,149
	Non-monetary	7,221	6,000
	Total contributions	14,730	13,149

*** Public open space contributions received during the financial year are transferred to the Open Space Planning, Development and Improvements Reserve. Refer note 9.1(b).*

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note		Consolidated 2026 $'000	Consolidated 2025 $'000
3.5	**Contributions (continued)**		
	Contributions of non-monetary assets were received in relation to the following asset classes:		
	Land	3,294	3,796
	Infrastructure	3,927	2,204
	Total non-monetary contributions	7,221	6,000

Monetary and non monetary contributions are recognised as income at their fair value when Council obtains control over the contributed asset.

3.6 Other income

Interest on investments	9,216	9,975
Interest - other	68	62
Dandenong Market Pty Ltd - revenue from operations	7,498	6,807
Investment property rental	1,576	1,566
Other rent	4,426	4,164
Recoveries	1,544	1,773
South East Leisure Pty Ltd	1,892	1,750
Dandenong Market Pty Ltd - other income	179	434
Other	1,053	1,032
Total other income	27,452	27,563

Interest is recognised as it is earned.

Other income is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable and is recognised when Council gains control over the right to receive the income.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note		Consolidated 2026 $'000	Consolidated 2025 $'000
4	**THE COST OF DELIVERING SERVICES**		
4.1	**a) Employee costs**		
	Wages and salaries	88,460	82,602
	WorkCover	2,182	2,685
	Casual staff	1,570	1,423
	Superannuation	10,687	9,723
	Long service leave oncost	1,278	2,333
	Fringe benefits tax	345	342
	Other	7,767	7,267
	Total employee costs	112,289	106,375
	b) Superannuation		
	Council made contributions to the following funds:		
	Defined benefit fund		
	Employer contribution to Local Authorities Superannuation Fund (Vision Super)	252	312
		252	312
	Employer contributions payable at reporting date.	52	41
	Accumulation funds		
	Employer contribution to Local Authorities Superannuation Fund (Vision Super)	3,947	3,798
	Employer contribution - other funds	6,210	5,438
		10,157	9,236
	Employer contributions payable at reporting date.	373	335

Contributions made exclude amounts accrued at balance date. Refer note 9.3 for further information relating to Council's superannuation obligation.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note		Consolidated 2026 $'000	Consolidated 2025 $'000
4.2	**Materials and services**		
	Waste management	22,083	20,734
	Parks maintenance	11,253	11,314
	Other contract payments	11,328	10,102
	Consultants and professional services	6,519	7,404
	Cleaning services	7,526	7,311
	Educator services	6,503	7,093
	General maintenance	4,484	6,698
	Office administration	6,621	6,282
	Utilities	6,485	6,076
	Information technology	6,507	5,934
	Building maintenance	3,190	3,435
	Works in progress (unable to be capitalised)	4,901	2,987
	Insurance	2,194	2,360
	Security services	2,545	2,254
	Library resources	595	578
	Meals for delivery	441	425
	Cash collection services	204	269
	Property valuation services	142	147
	Springvalley landfill rehabilitation and monitoring costs	127	125
	Total materials and services	103,648	101,528

Expenses are recognised as they are incurred and reported in the financial year to which they relate.

4.3	**Depreciation**		
	Property	15,617	15,799
	Plant and equipment	4,189	4,176
	Infrastructure	37,678	27,670
	Total depreciation	57,484	47,645

Refer to 6.2 for a more detailed breakdown of depreciation charges.

4.4	**Amortisation - intangible assets**		
	Software	19	20
	Total amortisation - intangible assets	19	20
4.5	**Depreciation - right-of-use assets**		
	Property	364	428
	Vehicles	3	20
	IT and office equipment	195	213
	Total depreciation - right-of-use assets	562	661
4.6	**Allowance for impairment losses**		
	Parking fine debtors	1,318	1,925
	Other debtors	407	771
	Dandenong Market Pty Ltd	(6)	44
	South East Leisure Pty Ltd	-	3
	Total allowance for impairment losses	1,719	2,743
	Movement in allowance for impairment losses in respect of debtors		
	Balance at the beginning of the year	4,044	3,208
	New allowances recognised during the year	1,719	2,743
	Amounts already allowed for and written off as uncollectible	(1,515)	(1,907)
	Balance at end of year	4,248	4,044

An allowance for impairment losses in respect of debtors is recognised based on an expected credit loss model. This model considers both historic and forward looking information in determining the level of impairment.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note		Consolidated 2026 $'000	Consolidated 2025 $'000
4.7	**Borrowing costs**		
	Interest - borrowings	2,640	2,637
	Interest - other interest-bearing liabilities	22	32
	Total borrowing costs	2,662	2,669

Borrowing costs are recognised as an expense in the period in which they are incurred, except where they are capitalised as part of a qualifying asset constructed by Council.

4.8	**Finance costs - leases**		
	Interest - lease liabilities	16	28
	Total finance costs - leases	16	28
4.9	**Net loss on non-financial assets**		
	Net (gain) on sale of of non-financial assets		
	Proceeds of sale	(1,994)	(1,505)
	Carrying amount of assets sold	1,007	110
		(987)	(1,395)

The profit or loss on sale of an asset is determined when control of the asset has passed to the buyer.

	Net loss on non-financial assets		
	Write off of Land	3,288	-
	Write off of Building	387	1,268
	Write off of Infrastructure	6,181	4,840
	Write off of Plant and Equipment	6	55
		9,862	6,163
	Total net loss on non-financial assets	8,875	4,768
4.10	**Other expenses**		
	Auditors' remuneration - VAGO - audit of the financial statements, performance statement and grant acquittals	141	110
	Auditors' remuneration - Internal Audit	192	130
	Auditors' remuneration - Other	3	3
	Councillors' allowances	584	538
	Council elections	54	859
	Operating lease / rentals	823	725
	Landfill provision	(31)	356
	South East Leisure Pty Ltd	214	198
	Dandenong Market Pty Ltd	555	512
	Other expenses	1,112	831
	Community grants and contributions	2,542	2,532
	Total other expenses	6,189	6,794

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note		Consolidated 2026 $'000	Consolidated 2025 $'000
5	**INVESTING IN AND FINANCING OUR OPERATIONS**		
5.1	**Financial assets**		
	(a) Cash and cash equivalents		
	Cash on hand	15	16
	Cash at bank	41,207	29,243
	Term deposits	-	7,499
	Total cash and cash equivalents	41,222	36,758
	(b) Other financial assets		
	Current		
	Term deposits	187,762	179,708
	Total current other financial assets	187,762	179,708
	Total other financial assets	187,762	179,708
	Total cash and cash equivalents and other financial assets	228,984	216,466

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

	Consolidated 2026 $'000	Consolidated 2025 $'000

5.1 Financial assets (continued)

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits at call, and other highly liquid investments with original maturities of 90 days or less, net of outstanding bank overdrafts.

Other financial assets are valued at fair value, being market value, at balance date. Term deposits are measured at amortised cost. Any unrealised gains and losses on holdings at balance date are recognised as either a revenue or expense.

Other financial assets including term deposits and those with original maturity dates of three to 12 months are classified as current, whilst term deposits with maturity dates greater than 12 months are classified as non-current.

(c) Trade and other receivables

Current		
Statutory receivables		
Rates debtors	19,675	17,346
Infringement debtors	12,487	11,906
Allowance for expected credit loss - infringements	(2,001)	(1,906)
Other statutory debtors	193	245
Allowance for expected credit loss - other debtors	(174)	(116)
Net GST receivable	3,046	2,635
Non statutory receivables		
Other debtors	10,343	4,496
Allowance for expected credit loss - other debtors	(2,073)	(2,022)
Total current trade and other receivables	41,496	32,584
Non-current		
Non statutory receivables		
Narre Warren landfill - financial contribution	166	180
South East Metropolitan Advanced Waste Processing Pty Ltd	3	3
Total non-current trade and other receivables	169	183
Total trade and other receivables	41,665	32,767

Short term receivables are carried at invoice amount. An allowance for expected credit losses is recognised based on past experience and other objective evidence of expected losses. Long term receivables are carried at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method.

i) Ageing of receivables

The ageing of the Council's trade and other receivables (excluding statutory receivables) that are not impaired was:

Current (not yet due)	1,574	604
Past due by up to 30 days	4,939	525
Past due between 31 and 180 days	556	404
Past due between 181 and 365 days	255	224
Past due by more than 1 year	1,115	900
Total trade and other receivables	8,439	2,657

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note		Consolidated 2026 $'000	Consolidated 2025 $'000
5.1	**Financial assets (continued)**		
c)	**Trade and other receivables (continued)**		
	ii) Ageing of individually impaired receivables		
	At balance date, other debtors representing financial assets with a nominal value of $2.07 million (2025: $2.02 million) were impaired. The amount of the allowance raised against these debtors was $2.07 million (2025: $2.02 million). They individually have been impaired as a result of their doubtful collection. Many of the long outstanding past due amounts have been lodged with Council's debt collectors or are on payment arrangements.		
	Ageing of all impaired trade and other receivables (excluding statutory receivables)		
	Current (not yet due)	11	30
	Past due by up to 30 days	28	2
	Past due between 31 and 180 days	63	5
	Past due between 181 and 365 days	55	50
	Past due by more than 1 year	1,916	1,935
	Total trade and other receivables	2,073	2,022
5.2	**Non-financial assets**		
a)	**Inventories**		
	Inventories held for distribution	66	67
	Total inventories	66	67
	Inventories held for distribution are measured at cost, adjusted when applicable for any loss of service potential. All other inventories, including land held for sale, are measured at the lower of cost and net realisable value. Where inventories are acquired for no cost or nominal consideration, they are measured at current replacement cost at the date of acquisition.		
b)	**Prepayments**		
	Prepayments	1,655	2,373
	Total prepayments	1,655	2,373
c)	**Other assets**		
	Accrued income	4,239	3,189
	Other	334	342
	Total other assets	4,573	3,531

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

		Consolidated 2026 $'000	Consolidated 2025 $'000
5.2	**Non-financial assets (continued)**		
(c)	**Intangible assets**		
	Software	-	19
	Total intangible assets	-	19
	Software		
	Gross carrying amount		
	Balance at 1 July 2025	3,050	3,050
	Balance at 30 June 2026	3,050	3,050
	Accumulated amortisation and impairment		
	Balance at 1 July 2025	(3,031)	(3,010)
	Amortisation expense	(19)	(21)
	Balance at 30 June 2026	(3,050)	(3,031)
	Net book value at 30 June 2025	19	40
	Net book value at 30 June 2026	-	19

Intangible assets with finite lives are amortised as an expense on a systematic basis over the asset's useful life (3 years for Computer Software). Amortisation is generally calculated on a straight line basis, at a rate that allocates the asset value, less any estimated residual value over its estimated useful life. Estimates of the remaining useful lives and amortisation method are reviewed at least annually, and adjustments made where appropriate.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note		Consolidated 2026 $'000	Consolidated 2025 $'000
5.3	**Payables, trust funds and deposits and contract and other liabilities**		
	(a) Trade and other payables		
	Current		
	Non-statutory payables		
	Trade payables	15,241	17,470
	Accrued expenses	12,059	9,939
	Statutory payables		
	Net GST payable	148	136
	Total current trade and other payables	27,448	27,545
	(b) Trust funds and deposits		
	Current		
	Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund	2,755	30
	Road deposits	318	290
	Landscape deposits	932	996
	Open space contributions	122	162
	Other refundable deposits	2,576	2,330
	Total current trust funds and deposits	6,703	3,808
	Non-current		
	Other refundable deposits	3,055	2,910
	Total non-current trust funds and deposits	3,055	2,910
	Total trust funds and deposits	9,758	6,718

Amounts received as deposits and retention amounts controlled by Council are recognised as trust funds until they are returned, transferred in accordance with the purpose of the receipt, or forfeited. Trust funds that are forfeited, resulting in Council gaining control of the funds, are to be recognised as revenue at the time of forfeit.

Purpose and nature of items

Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund *- Council is the collection agent for the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund on behalf of the State Government. Council remits amounts received on a quarterly basis. Amounts disclosed here will be remitted to the State Government in line with that process.*

Road and landscape deposits - are taken by Council as a form of surety during the maintenance period of a development or held due to outstanding works identified after the maintenance period which have not been addressed by the contracted builder or developer.

Refundable deposits - Deposits are taken by Council as a form of surety in a number of circumstances, including in relation to building works, tender deposits, contract deposits and the use of civic facilities.

	(c) Contract and other liabilities		
	Contract liabilities		
	Current		
	Grants received in advance - operating grants *	7,782	7,171
	Grants received in advance - capital grants *	5,555	3,012
	Unearned income / revenue - Development Contribution Plans (DCP) *	38,288	41,415
	Other	3,058	2,505
	Total contract liabilities	54,683	54,103

** Movement reconciliations for 2026 provided on the following pages.*

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

5.3 (c) Contract and other liabilities (continued)

Contract liabilities

Contract liabilities reflect consideration received in advance from customers in respect of operating grants with sufficiently specific performance obligations. For example, Home and Community Care grant funding to perform a set number of service hours or meals for clients. Contract liabilities are derecognised and recorded as revenue when promised goods and services are transferred to the customer. Refer to Note 3.

	Consolidated 2026				
Revenue from contracts *(AASB 15)*	**Opening balance**	**Income received during current year**	**Income refunded**	**Income recognised due to satisfied obligations**	**Closing balance of unsatisfied obligations**
	$'000	**$'000**	**$'000**	**$'000**	**$'000**
Operating grants					
Home and Community Care *	6,325	9,839	(314)	(8,824)	7,026
Family, Youth and Children	846	3,483	-	(3,573)	756
	7,171	**13,322**	**(314)**	**(12,397)**	**7,782**

Performance obligations under the above operating grants are based on the contract agreement and generally relate to the number of service hours or meals provided.

* The most significant item above relates to grants received by Council's Community Care department from the Commonwealth Government for the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) and the Victorian Government for the Home and Community Care (HACC) Program for Younger People (PYP). The $7.03 million relates to unsatisfied performance obligations from 2023-24, 2024-25 and 2025-26. These funds were received under an agreement that was initially to end in 2019 but due to delays in implementing the new Aged Care Reform Agenda Council has been receiving one- or two-year contract extensions in recent years. The current CHSP contract extension now finishes 30 June 2027. The combining of Home Care Packages (HCP) and CHSP into the new Support at Home Program is currently due to commence 1 July 2027.

Other liabilities

Council receives grant consideration from a variety of funding bodies to support the construction of nominated property and infrastructure assets. Grant consideration is recognised as income following specific guidance under AASB 1058 as the asset is constructed. Income is recognised to the extent of costs incurred-to-date because the costs of construction most closely reflect the stage of completion of the asset. As such, Council has deferred recognition of a portion of the grant consideration received as a liability for outstanding obligations.

The table on the following page outlines the various capital grants Council has recognised as income under AASB 1058 based on the stage of completion of the asset.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

5.3 (c) Contract and other liabilities (continued)

The closing balance of transfers received to construct a recognisable non-financial asset to be controlled by Council represents a liability (unearned income) arising from the transfer at balance date.

	Consolidated 2026				
Transfers to construct a recognisable non-financial asset to be controlled by Council *(AASB 1058)*	**Opening balance**	**Income received and/or accrued**	**Income refunded**	**Income recognised due to satisfied obligations**	**Closing balance of unsatisfied obligations**
	$'000	**$'000**	**$'000**	**$'000**	**$'000**
Capital grants					
AI-powered Chat Bot	100	150	-	(190)	60
Alex Wilkie Reserve	138	55	-	(193)	-
Apex Park Playspace	-	144	-	-	144
Black Spot Program	418	97	-	(515)	-
Buckingham Lighting	-	125	-	-	125
Dandenong Employment Hub	-	450	-	(206)	244
Dandenong Library Parents, Multi Faith and Quiet Study Spaces Project	319	-	-	(39)	280
Dandenong Parks and Sport Grounds Program	-	509	-	(509)	-
Fotheringham Reserve LED lighting	-	290	-	(290)	-
Glass Bin Implementation	-	426	-	-	426
Greaves Reserve Public Recreation Infrastructure	225	25	-	(250)	-
IP43 Safe System Pedestrian Infrastructure	86	1,158	-	(1,245)	(1)
Level Crossing Removal Program (LXRP)	-	1,171	-	(373)	798
Noble Park Revitalisation	104	-	-	(104)	-
Oasis Aquatics & Wellbeing	1,076	10,000	-	(9,009)	2,067
Railway Parade Shopping Strip Streetscape	8	-	-	(8)	-
Redevelopment of former Precinct Energy Plant (PEP)	294	-	-	(14)	280
Roads to Recovery	60	1,733	-	(1,793)	-
Ross Reserve Athletics Shade	-	7	-	(7)	-
Safer Local Roads and Streets Program	-	717	-	(311)	406
Strengthening Community Safety Program	-	586	-	(20)	566
Warner Reserve Dog Off-Leash	-	150	-	-	150
Warner Reserve Southern Soccer	36	3	-	(39)	-
WJ Turner Reserve lighting	148	13	-	(151)	10
	3,012	**17,809**	**-**	**(15,266)**	**5,555**

Council's obligations under the above transfers are to construct a Property, Infrastructure, Plant and Equipment asset and this obligation is considered to be satisfied as the capital project expenditure to construct the asset is progressively incurred.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

5.3 (c) Unearned income / revenue (continued)

	Consolidated 2026				
Transfers to construct a recognisable non-financial asset to be controlled by Council *(AASB 1058)*	**Opening balance**	**Income deferred during current year**	**Income recognised due to satisfied obligations**	**Developer reimburse-ments**	**Closing balance of unsatisfied obligations**
	$'000	**$'000**	**$'000**	**$'000**	**$'000**
Development Contribution Plans (DCP)					
Keysborough Residential DCP	28,846	301	(4,587)	-	24,560
Dandenong Industrial DCP (Keysborough & Lyndhurst)	12,569	1,159	-	-	13,728
	41,415	**1,460**	**(4,587)**	**-**	**38,288**

The satisfaction of DCP obligations depends on development activity and the construction of assets by developers. Income / revenue is recognised on practical completion of the asset.

5.4 Interest-bearing liabilities	**Consolidated 2026 $'000**	**Consolidated 2025 $'000**
(a) Interest-bearing loans and borrowings		
Current		
Other borrowings - secured	25,900	4,379
	25,900	4,379
Non-current		
Other borrowings - secured	39,645	43,992
	39,645	43,992
Total interest-bearing liabilities	**65,545**	**48,371**

Borrowings are secured over the general rates of Council.

(b) Other Interest-bearing loans and borrowings		
Current		
Other borrowings - secured	115	107
	115	107
Non-current		
Borrowings - secured	84	193
	84	193
Total other interest-bearing loans and borrowings	**199**	**300**

Other interest-bearing loans and borrowings relates to a finance lease entered into by South East Leisure Pty Ltd to lease and subsequently purchase gym equipment. Council is a guarantor to this finance lease.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

	Consolidated 2026 $'000	Consolidated 2025 $'000
5.4 Interest-bearing liabilities (continued)		
(c) Maturity profile		
The maturity profile for Council's borrowings is:		
Not later than one year	26,015	4,486
Later than one year and not later than five years	16,822	18,159
Later than five years	22,907	26,026
	65,744	48,671

Borrowings are initially measured at fair value, being the cost of the interest bearing liabilities, net of transaction costs. The measurement basis subsequent to initial recognition depends on whether the Council has categorised its interest-bearing liabilities as either financial liabilities designated at fair value through the profit and loss, or financial liabilities at amortised cost. Any difference between the initial recognised amount and the redemption value is recognised in net result over the period of the borrowing using the effective interest method.

The classification depends on the nature and purpose of the interest bearing liabilities. The Council determines the classification of its interest bearing liabilities based on contractual repayment terms at every balance date.

In classifying borrowings as current or non-current Council considers whether at balance date it has the right to defer settlement of the liability for at least twelve months after the reporting period. Council's loan arrangements include covenants based on Council's financial performance and position at the end of the reporting period. These covenants are assessed for compliance after the reporting period based on specified financial ratios.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

5.5 Provisions

	Consolidated		
	Employee	Landfill restoration	Total
	$'000	$'000	$'000
2026			
Balance at beginning of the financial year	22,474	1,460	23,934
Additional provisions	9,588	57	9,645
Amounts used	(9,124)	(25)	(9,149)
Change in the discounted amount arising because of time and the effect of any change in the discount rate	(361)	(63)	(424)
Balance at the end of the financial year	22,577	1,429	24,006
Provisions - current	*21,714*	*115*	*21,829*
Provisions - non-current	*863*	*1,314*	*2,177*
	22,577	*1,429*	*24,006*
2025			
Balance at beginning of the financial year	21,591	1,104	22,695
Additional provisions	9,540	470	10,010
Amounts used	(8,933)	(130)	(9,063)
Change in the discounted amount arising because of time and the effect of any change in the discount rate	276	16	292
Balance at the end of the financial year	22,474	1,460	23,934
Provisions - current	*21,771*	*101*	*21,872*
Provisions - non-current	*703*	*1,359*	*2,062*
	22,474	*1,460*	*23,934*

(a) Employee provisions	Consolidated 2026 $'000	Consolidated 2025 $'000
Current provisions expected to be wholly settled within 12 months		
Annual leave	8,847	8,459
Long service leave	1,228	1,041
Other	829	735
	10,904	10,235
Current provisions expected to be wholly settled after 12 months		
Annual leave	568	454
Long service leave	10,242	11,082
	10,810	11,536
Total current employee provisions	21,714	21,771
Non-current		
Long service leave	863	703
Total non-current employee provisions	863	703
Aggregate carrying amount of employee provisions:		
Current	21,714	21,771
Non-current	863	703
Total aggregate carrying amount of employee provisions	22,577	22,474

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

5.5 Provisions (continued)

The calculation of employee costs and benefits includes all relevant on-costs and are calculated as follows at reporting date.

Annual leave

A liability for annual leave is recognised in the provision for employee benefits as a current liability because the Council does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement of the liability. Liabilities for annual leave are measured at:
- nominal value if the Council expects to wholly settle the liability within 12 months
- present value if the Council does not expect to wholly settle within 12 months.

Liabilities that are not expected to be wholly settled within 12 months of the reporting date are recognised in the provision for employee benefits as current liabilities, measured at the present value of the amounts expected to be paid when the liabilities are settled using the remuneration rate expected to apply at the time of settlement.

Long service leave

Liability for long service leave (LSL) is recognised in the provision for employee benefits. Unconditional LSL is disclosed as a current liability as the Council does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement. Unconditional LSL is measured at nominal value if expected to be settled within 12 months or at present value if not expected to be settled within 12 months. Conditional LSL that has been accrued, where an employee is yet to reach a qualifying term of employment, is disclosed as a non-current liability and measured at present value.

	Consolidated 2026	Consolidated 2025
Key assumptions:		
- discount rate	4.53%	3.67%
- index rate	3.25%	3.50%
(b) Landfill restoration	**$'000**	**$'000**
Current	115	101
Non-current	1,314	1,359
Total provision for landfill restoration	1,429	1,460

The former Springvalley Landfill has been closed to the receipt of refuse since December 1998. The former landfill is located between Clarke Road and Springvale Road and the premises was used as a landfill for disposal of waste from 1993 to 1999 under a licence issued by the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA). The landfill is owned by the Greater Dandenong City Council and is used as recreational open space. Under the terms of a licence agreement with the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) and Pollution Abatement notices, Council is required to monitor, progressively rehabilitate and conduct rectification works.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

5.5 Provisions (continued)

Council is obligated to restore the former Springvalley Landfill site to a particular standard. The forecast life of the site is based on current estimates of remaining capacity and the forecast rate of infill. The provision for landfill rehabilitation has been calculated based on the present value of the expected cost of works to be undertaken including site aftercare and monitoring costs. The expected cost of works has been estimated based on current understanding of work required to progressively rehabilitate the sites to a suitable standard. Accordingly, the estimation of the provision required is dependent on the accuracy of the forecast timing of the work, work required and related costs.

Council reviews the landfill restoration provision on an annual basis, including the key assumptions listed below.

The Greater Dandenong City Council shares the commitment for rehabilitation and aftercare management of the landfill with other stakeholder Council's. Council's interest or share of the costs is 19.88%. In the financial report for 30 June 2026, Council has an amount of $1.43 million (30 June 2025 $1.46 million) as a provision for the restoration of the Springvalley Landfill site which includes aftercare costs to meet EPA obligations.

	Consolidated 2026	Consolidated 2025
Key assumptions:		
- discount rate	4.64%	3.89%
- index rate	3.00%	3.00%
- settlement period	15 years	15 years

5.6 Financing arrangements

Bank overdraft	2,500	2,500
Credit card facilities	200	200
Interest-bearing liabilities - secured	65,545	48,371
Other interest-bearing liabilities - secured	199	300
Total facilities	68,444	51,371
Used facilities	65,807	48,675
Unused facilities	2,637	2,696

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

5.7 Commitments

The Council has entered into the following commitments. Commitments are not recognised in the Balance Sheet. Commitments are disclosed at their nominal value by way of note and presented inclusive of the GST payable.

(a) Commitments for expenditure

	Consolidated				
	Not later than 1 year $'000	Later than 1 year and not later than 2 years $'000	Later than 2 years and not later than 5 years $'000	Later than 5 years $'000	Total $'000
2026					
Operating					
Animal pound services	1,393	-	-	-	1,393
Building maintenance services	4,136	178	8	-	4,322
Cleaning services	1,678	-	-	-	1,678
Dandenong Market Pty Ltd commitments	2,849	419	-	-	3,268
Garbage collection (incl. garden waste)	6,949	2,818	3,531	-	13,298
Hard waste and dumped rubbish	1,104	276	-	-	1,380
Other contracts	1,659	943	368	-	2,970
Recycling	415	415	415	-	1,245
South East Leisure Pty Ltd commitments	1,307	75	41	-	1,423
Works (roads and drains) services	901	-	-	-	901
Total operating	22,391	5,124	4,363	-	31,878
Capital					
Buildings *	55,018	-	-	-	55,018
Drainage	376	125	-	-	501
Parks, open space and streetscapes	3,946	1,898	3,305	-	9,149
Roads	695	-	-	-	695
Total capital commitments	60,035	2,023	3,305	-	65,363
Total commitments 2026	**82,426**	**7,147**	**7,669**	**-**	**97,241**

* Capital contract commitments for building projects primarily relate to ongoing construction works for the Oasis Aquatics and Wellbeing Centre (formerly known as the Dandenong Wellbeing Centre), following Council's appointment of ADCO Constructions Pty Ltd as the principal contractor.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

5.7 Commitments

(a) Commitments for expenditure (continued)

	Consolidated				
	Not later than 1 year $'000	Later than 1 year and not later than 2 years $'000	Later than 2 years and not later than 5 years $'000	Later than 5 years $'000	Total $'000
2025					
Operating					
Animal pound services	438	-	-	-	438
Building maintenance services	2,180	55	51	-	2,286
Building Demoliton	1,852	-	-	-	1,852
Cleaning services	3,019	584	-	-	3,603
Dandenong Market Pty Ltd commitments	2,765	2,849	419	-	6,033
Festivals and events	259	-	-	-	259
Garbage collection (incl. garden waste)	9,291	9,041	4,076	-	22,408
Hard waste and dumped rubbish	2,311	-	-	-	2,311
Meals for delivery	306	-	-	-	306
Open space management	33	204	-	-	237
Other contracts	1,120	456	1,368	-	2,944
Parking management	90	-	-	-	90
Recycling	1,069	-	-	-	1,069
Renewable electricity	489	489	977	-	1,955
South East Leisure Pty Ltd commitments	1,324	223	9	-	1,556
Works (Roads and drains) services	627	14	-	-	641
Total operating commitments	27,173	13,915	6,900	-	47,988
Capital					
Buildings *	68,640	35,209	-	-	103,849
Drainage	626	626	156	-	1,408
Parks, open space and streetscapes	5,671	1,580	4	-	7,255
Roads	102	-	-	-	102
Total capital commitments	75,039	37,415	160	-	112,614
Total commitments 2025	**102,212**	**51,330**	**7,060**	**-**	**160,602**

* Capital contract commitments for building projects have increased significantly in 2024-25 following Council's appointment of ADCO Constructions Pty Ltd to deliver the landmark Dandenong Wellbeing Centre project.

(b) Operating lease receivables

The Council has entered into commercial property leases on selected properties. These properties are held under operating leases and have remaining non-cancellable lease terms of between 1 and 50 years. All leases include a CPI based revision of the rental charge annually.

Future undiscounted minimum rentals receivable under non-cancellable operating leases are as follows:

	Consolidated	
	2026 $'000	2025 $'000
Not later than one year	1,126	1,181
Later than one year and not later than five years	1,188	2,089
Later than five years	11	102
	2,325	**3,372**

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note 5.8 Leases

At inception of a contract, Council assesses whether a contract is, or contains, a lease. A contract is, or contains, a lease if the contract conveys the right to control the use of an identified asset for a period of time in exchange for consideration. To identify whether a contract conveys the right to control the use of an identified asset, it is necessary to assess whether:

- The contract involves the use of an identified asset;
- Council has the right to obtain substantially all of the economic benefits from use of the asset throughout the period of use; and
- Council has the right to direct the use of the asset.

This policy is applied to contracts entered into, or changed, on or after 1 July 2019.

As a lessee, Council recognises a right-of-use asset and a lease liability at the lease commencement date. The right-of-use asset is initially measured at cost which comprises the initial amount of the lease liability adjusted for:

- any lease payments made at or before the commencement date less any lease incentives received; plus
- any initial direct costs incurred; and
- an estimate of costs to dismantle and remove the underlying asset or to restore the underlying asset or the site on which it is located.

The right-of-use asset is subsequently depreciated using the straight-line method from the commencement date to the earlier of the end of the useful life of the right-of-use asset or the end of the lease term. The estimated useful lives of right-of-use assets are determined on the same basis as those of property, plant and equipment. In addition, the right-of-use asset is periodically reduced by impairment losses, if any, and adjusted for certain measurements of the lease liability.

The lease liability is initially measured at the present value of the lease payments that are not paid at the commencement date, discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease or, if that rate cannot be readily determined, an appropriate incremental borrowing rate. Generally, Council uses an appropriate incremental borrowing rate as the discount rate.

Lease payments included in the measurement of the lease liability comprise the following:
- Fixed payments
- Variable lease payments that depend on an index or a rate, initially measured using the index or rate as at the commencement date;
- Amounts expected to be payable under a residual value guarantee; and
- The exercise price under a purchase option that Council is reasonably certain to exercise, lease payments in an optional renewal period if Council is reasonably certain to exercise an extension option, and penalties for early termination of a lease unless Council is reasonably certain not to terminate early.

When the lease liability is remeasured in this way, a corresponding adjustment is made to the carrying amount of the right-of-use asset, or is recorded in profit or loss if the carrying amount of the right-of-use asset has been reduced to zero.

Under *AASB 16 Leases*, Council as a not-for-profit entity has elected not to measure right-of-use assets at initial recognition at fair value in respect of leases that have significantly below-market terms.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

5.8 Leases (continued)

Right-of-use assets	Consolidated			
	Property	**Vehicles**	**IT and Office Equip.**	**Total**
	$'000	**$'000**	**$'000**	**$'000**
Balance at 1 July 2025	485	3	192	680
Additions	166	-	76	242
Depreciation charge	(364)	(3)	(195)	(562)
Balance at 30 June 2026	287	-	73	360

Lease liabilities	**Consolidated 2026 $'000**	**Consolidated 2025 $'000**
Maturity analysis - contractual undiscounted cash flows:		
Less than one year	398	508
One to five years	4	247
Total undiscounted lease liabilities as at 30 June	402	755
Lease liabilities included in the Balance Sheet at 30 June:		
Current	393	494
Non-current	3	244
Total lease liabilities	396	738

Short-term and low value leases

Council has elected not to recognise right-of-use assets and lease liabilities for short-term leases of machinery that have a lease term of 12 months or less and leases of low-value assets (individual assets worth less than existing capitalisation thresholds for a like asset up to a maximum of AUD$10,000), including IT equipment. Council recognises the lease payments associated with these leases as an expense on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

	Consolidated 2026 $'000	**Consolidated 2025 $'000**
Expenses relating to:		
Leases of low value assets	823	725
Total	823	725

Non-cancellable lease commitments - short-term and low-value leases

Commitments for minimum lease payments for short-term and low-value leases are payable as follows:

Within one year	672	697
Later than one year but not later than five years	834	755
Total lease commitments	1,506	1,452

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

6 ASSETS WE MANAGE

Note content:

6.2 Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment
- (a) Summary of Property, Infrastructure, Plant and Equipment
- (b) Summary of Work in Progress (WIP)
- (c) Property
- (d) Plant and Equipment
- (e) Infrastructure
- (f) Recognition
- (g) Depreciation
- (h) Valuation
- (i) Reconciliation of Specialised Land

8.4* Fair value measurement

** This note includes additional details about the fair value hierarchy and impairment of assets.*

6.1 Non-current assets classified as held for sale

Non-current assets classified as held for sale are measured at the lower of its carrying amount and fair value less costs of disposal, and are not subject to depreciation. Non-current assets and related liabilities are treated as current and classified as held for sale if their carrying amount will be recovered through a sale transaction rather than through continuing use. This condition is regarded as met only when the sale is highly probable and the asset's sale is expected to be completed within 12 months from the date of classification.

There are no non-current assets classified as held for sale at 30 June 2026.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note 6.2 Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment

Consolidated

(a) SUMMARY OF PROPERTY, INFRASTRUCTURE, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT (net carrying amount)

	Carrying amount ** 30 June 2025	Acquisitions	Contributions	Revaluation	Depreciation	Impairment (loss) / reversal	Disposals	Write Offs	Transfers	Carrying amount 30 June 2026
(Related FS note)		*Stmt Cap Works*	*(Note 3.5)*	*(Note 9.1(a))*	*(Note 4.3)*	*(Note 4.9 and 9.1(a))*	*(Note 3.6)*	*(Note 4.2 and 4.9)*		
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
Land	1,408,962	-	3,294	57,132	-	-	(873)	(3,288)	-	1,465,227
Buildings	319,507	993	-	76,571	(15,617)	-	-	(387)	18,661	399,728
Plant and equipment	12,561	6,476	-	-	(4,189)	-	(134)	(6)	1,137	15,845
Infrastructure	1,212,153	7,874	3,927	271,298	(37,678)	-	-	(6,181)	30,552	1,481,945
Work in progress (WIP)	74,159	70,625	-	-	-	-	-	(4,901)	(50,350)	89,533
Total carrying amount	**3,027,342**	**85,968**	**7,221**	**405,001**	**(57,484)**	**-**	**(1,007)**	**(14,763)**	**-**	**3,452,278**

(b) SUMMARY OF WORK IN PROGRESS

	* Opening WIP	Additions	Transfers	Write Offs	Closing WIP
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
Property	45,584	48,879	(27,565)	(4,451)	62,447
Plant and equipment	802	2,006	(673)	(109)	2,026
Infrastructure	27,773	19,740	(22,112)	(341)	25,060
Total	**74,159**	**70,625**	**(50,350)**	**(4,901)**	**89,533**

* The opening WIP balance at 1 July 2025 has been reclassified across property, infrastructure, and plant and equipment to reflect the correct categorisation. While the overall WIP opening balance remains unchanged, the allocation between asset classes has been updated from the 2024-25 Financial Statements.

** The opening carrying amount at 30 June 2025 has been adjusted by $1,000 due to a rounding difference.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note 6.2 Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment **Consolidated**

(c) PROPERTY

	* Land - specialised	* Land under roads - specialised	Land - non-specialised	Total land	Buildings - specialised	Leasehold improvements	Total buildings	Work in progress	TOTAL PROPERTY
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
At cost 1 July 2025	-	-	-	-	-	4,027	4,027	45,584	49,611
At fair value 1 July 2025	1,122,239	93,385	193,338	1,408,962	572,465	-	572,465	-	1,981,427
Accumulated depreciation at 1 July 2025	-	-	-	-	(254,822)	(2,163)	(256,985)	-	(256,985)
	1,122,239	**93,385**	**193,338**	**1,408,962**	**317,643**	**1,864**	**319,507**	**45,584**	**1,774,053**
Movements in fair value/cost									
Additions	-	-	-	-	905	88	993	48,879	49,872
Contributed assets	3,165	129	-	3,294	-	-	-	-	3,294
Revaluation increments	31,929	17,766	7,437	57,132	124,701	-	124,701	-	181,833
Fair value/cost of assets disposed	(33)	-	(840)	(873)	-	-	-	-	(873)
Fair value/cost of assets written off	(3,288)	-	-	(3,288)	(1,195)	-	(1,195)	(4,451)	(8,934)
Transfers in (out)	-	-	-	-	17,229	29	17,258	(27,565)	(10,307)
	31,773	**17,895**	**6,597**	**56,265**	**141,640**	**117**	**141,757**	**16,863**	**214,885**
Movements in accumulated depreciation									
Depreciation	-	-	-	-	(15,479)	(138)	(15,617)	-	(15,617)
Accumulated depreciation of write offs	-	-	-	-	808	-	808	-	808
Revaluation (increments) decrements	-	-	-	-	(48,130)	-	(48,130)	-	(48,130)
Transfers (in) out	-	-	-	-	1,403	-	1,403	-	1,403
	-	**-**	**-**	**-**	**(61,398)**	**(138)**	**(61,536)**	**-**	**(61,536)**
At cost 30 June 2026	-	-	-	-	-	4,144	4,144	62,447	66,591
At fair value 30 June 2026	1,154,012	111,280	199,935	1,465,227	714,105	-	714,105	-	2,179,332
Accumulated depreciation at 30 June 2026	-	-	-	-	(316,220)	(2,301)	(318,521)	-	(318,521)
Carrying amount	**1,154,012**	**111,280**	**199,935**	**1,465,227**	**397,885**	**1,843**	**399,728**	**62,447**	**1,927,402**

* Refer to note 6.2(i) for a reconciliation of specialised land at fair value.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note 6.2 Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment **Consolidated**

(d) PLANT AND EQUIPMENT *

	Plant, machinery and equipment	Fixtures, fittings and furniture	Computers and telecomm's	Library books	Work in progress	TOTAL PLANT AND EQUIPMENT
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
At fair value 1 July 2025	18,374	9,392	9,961	12,642	802	51,171
Accumulated depreciation at 1 July 2025	(11,358)	(8,432)	(7,849)	(10,169)	-	(37,808)
	7,016	**960**	**2,112**	**2,473**	**802**	**13,363**
Movements in cost						
Additions	5,422	265	34	755	2,006	8,482
Cost of assets disposed	(2,734)	-	-	-	-	(2,734)
Cost of assets written off	(292)	(17)	(36)	-	(109)	(454)
Transfers in (out)	12	550	581	8	(673)	478
	2,408	**798**	**579**	**763**	**1,224**	**5,772**
Movements in accumulated depreciation						
Depreciation	(2,311)	(406)	(678)	(794)	-	(4,189)
Accumulated depreciation of disposals	2,600	-	-	-	-	2,600
Accumulated depreciation of write offs	293	11	35	-	-	339
Transfers (in) out	-	(14)	-	-	-	(14)
	582	**(409)**	**(643)**	**(794)**	**-**	**(1,264)**
At fair value 30 June 2026	20,782	10,190	10,540	13,405	2,026	56,943
Accumulated depreciation at 30 June 2026	(10,776)	(8,841)	(8,492)	(10,963)	-	(39,072)
Carrying amount	**10,006**	**1,349**	**2,048**	**2,442**	**2,026**	**17,871**

* Plant and equipment are carried at historical cost.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note 6.2 Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment **Consolidated**

(e) INFRASTRUCTURE

	Roads	Bridges	Footpaths and cycleways	Drainage	Recreational, leisure and community facilities	Parks, open space and streetscapes	Off street car parks	Work in progress	TOTAL INFRA-STRUCTURE	GRAND TOTAL PROPERTY, PLANT & EQUIP, INFRAST.
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
At cost 1 July 2025	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	27,773	27,773	**128,555**
At fair value 1 July 2025	910,811	82,828	193,378	821,280	70,348	60,243	26,160	-	2,165,048	**4,146,475**
Accumulated depreciation at 1 July 2025	(464,746)	(29,459)	(82,761)	(316,790)	(27,746)	(21,497)	(9,896)	-	(952,895)	**(1,247,688)**
	446,065	**53,369**	**110,617**	**504,490**	**42,602**	**38,746**	**16,264**	**27,773**	**1,239,926**	**3,027,342**
Movements in fair value/cost										
Additions	3,779	-	522	1,066	1,106	1,202	199	19,740	27,614	**85,968**
Contributed assets	1,000	-	140	2,043	379	434	-	-	3,996	**7,290**
Revaluation increments	273,296	26,070	38,861	118,940	10,483	11,470	6,078	-	485,198	**667,031**
Fair value/cost of assets disposed	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**(3,607)**
Fair value/cost of assets written off	(9,681)	-	(536)	(2,028)	(3,175)	(4,874)	(191)	(341)	(20,826)	**(30,214)**
Transfers in (out)	13,892	(142)	944	3,918	2,837	8,979	1,513	(22,112)	9,829	**-**
	282,286	**25,928**	**39,931**	**123,939**	**11,630**	**17,211**	**7,599**	**(2,713)**	**505,811**	**726,468**
Movements in accumulated depreciation										
Depreciation	(15,340)	(1,051)	(4,067)	(8,259)	(4,222)	(4,206)	(533)	-	(37,678)	**(57,484)**
Accumulated depreciation of contributed assets	(21)	-	(4)	(43)	-	(1)	-	-	(69)	**(69)**
Accumulated depreciation of disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**2,600**
Accumulated depreciation of write offs	6,161	-	178	720	2,975	4,239	31	-	14,304	**15,451**
Revaluation (increments) decrements	(134,098)	(9,958)	(17,674)	(41,250)	(4,229)	(4,143)	(2,548)	-	(213,900)	**(262,030)**
Transfers in (out)	-	9	(9)	(4)	440	(1,825)	-	-	(1,389)	**-**
	(143,298)	**(11,000)**	**(21,576)**	**(48,836)**	**(5,036)**	**(5,936)**	**(3,050)**	**-**	**(238,732)**	**(301,532)**
At cost 30 June 2026	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	25,060	25,060	**148,594**
At fair value 30 June 2026	1,193,097	108,756	233,309	945,219	81,978	77,454	33,759	-	2,673,572	**4,852,904**
Accumulated depreciation at 30 June 2026	(608,044)	(40,459)	(104,337)	(365,626)	(32,782)	(27,433)	(12,946)	-	(1,191,627)	**(1,549,220)**
Carrying amount	**585,053**	**68,297**	**128,972**	**579,593**	**49,196**	**50,021**	**20,813**	**25,060**	**1,507,005**	**3,452,278**

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

6.2 Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment (continued)

(f) Recognition

Acquisition

Initial measurement
Council initially measures its property, infrastructure, plant and equipment assets at cost. The cost of an acquired asset is the fair value of the consideration that Council has provided at the date of acquisition plus any incidental costs attributable to the acquisition.

Fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset (or paid to transfer a liability) in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. Refer to Note 8.4 for more information on how Council measures fair value.

Where assets are constructed by Council, cost includes all materials used in construction, direct labour, borrowing costs incurred during construction and an appropriate share of directly attributable variable and fixed overheads.

In accordance with Council's policy, the threshold limits detailed in note 6.2(g) have been applied when recognising assets within an applicable asset class and unless otherwise stated are consistent with the prior year.

Land under roads

Council recognises all land under roads acquired after 30 June 2008 at fair value. Council does not recognise land under roads that it controlled prior to that period in its financial report.

Repairs and maintenance

Where the repair relates to the replacement of a component of an asset and the cost exceeds the capitalisation threshold, the cost is capitalised and depreciated. The carrying value of the replaced asset is expensed.

Leasehold improvements

Leasehold improvements are recognised at cost and are amortised over the unexpired period of the lease or the estimated useful life of the improvement, whichever is the shorter. At balance date, leasehold improvements are amortised over a 5 to 30 year period.

(g) Depreciation

All asset classes except land, land under roads and art works, having limited useful lives are systematically depreciated over their useful lives to the Council in a manner which reflects consumption of the service potential embodied in those assets. Estimates of remaining useful lives are made on a regular basis with major asset classes reassessed annually. Depreciation rates and methods are reviewed annually.

Where assets have separate identifiable components that are subject to regular replacement, these components are assigned distinct useful lives and residual values and a separate depreciation rate is determined for each component.

Straight line depreciation is charged based on the residual useful life as determined each year.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

6.2 Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment (continued)

(g) Depreciation (continued)

Asset recognition thresholds and depreciation periods

Depreciation periods used are listed below and are consistent with the prior year unless marked with an *.

Council has also set a threshold limit for all classes of assets, which means that all assets with a value equal or greater than this threshold are recognised in these financial statements.

	Depreciation period	Threshold limit
	(years)	$'000
Property		
Land		
Land	N/A	-
Land under roads	N/A	-
Buildings		
Building components:		
Superstructure	100	10
Ancillary services	* 30	5
Fitout and fittings	20	5
Leasehold improvements	Lease term	5
Plant and equipment		
Plant and equipment		
Heavy plant and equipment	7	3
Buses, quads and trailers	10	3
Light plant and equipment, passenger and light commercial vehicles	5	3
Fixtures, fittings and furniture		
Fixtures, fittings, furniture and equipment	6	3
Musical instruments	20	3
Art works	N/A	3
Computers and telecommunications		
Hand held devices / mobile phones	5	3
Hardware and equipment	5	3
Library resources	5	-
Infrastructure		
Roads		
Seal	12-20	20
Substructure	100	20
Kerb and channel	15-80	5
Local Area Traffic Management (LATM) devices	5-30	2
On-street car parks	20-100	5
Bridges	20-100	5
Footpaths and cycleways	10-50	5

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

6.2 Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment (continued)

(g) Depreciation (continued)

Asset recognition thresholds and depreciation periods

	Depreciation period (years)	Threshold limit $'000
Infrastructure (continued)		
Drainage		
Pipes	100	5
Pits	100	2
Gross pollutant traps	50	5
Recreational, leisure and community facilities		
Recreational equipment and facilities, minor outdoor electronic screens, signs and scoreboards. Sportsgrounds, grass (turf), courts, hardstand, other ground surfaces. Minor structures (sporting, shade structures and retaining walls), irrigation, sportsfield drainage, controllers, sensors, water tanks/pumps.	10-20	3
Major outdoor LED screens	5	3
Playgrounds	15	3
Outdoor pools	50	3
Parks, open space and streetscapes		
Open space furniture, fencing, bollards and gates.	10-50	3
Open space furniture (tree pits).	* 100	* 3
Flood prevention - retarding/detention basins	20	3
Surface drainage - unformed open drains, water quality devices - wetlands, rain gardens and biodetention swales.	10	3
Surface drainage - formed open drains. Public art.	50	3
Signs, parking meters, ticket machines and equipment.	10-20	3
Lighting, landscaping, passive grass/surface and gardens.	10-20	3
Off street car parks	20-100	5

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

6.2 Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment (continued)

(h) Valuation

Valuation of land and buildings

Valuations of land, land under roads and investment property were undertaken by Mark Angerame, Certified Practising Valuer (CPV No. 63402), Herron Todd White, and valuations of buildings were undertaken by Ashay Prabhu, MIE(Aust), CPEng, NPER (Membership 1102199), Modelve. The valuations are at fair value, being market value based on the highest and best use permitted by relevant planning provisions. Where land use is restricted by existing planning provisions, the valuation is adjusted to reflect those restrictions. This adjustment represents an unobservable input in the valuation and does not impact the Comprehensive Income Statement. Where land use is not restricted, highest and best use is assumed to be the current use, except where the asset is held for sale or is highly likely to be used for an alternative purpose within 12 months of the reporting date.

The next valuation of land and buildings is scheduled for 1 January 2028.

Specialised land is valued at fair value using site values adjusted for englobo (undeveloped and/or unserviced) characteristics, access rights and private interests of other parties and entitlements of infrastructure assets and services. This adjustment is an unobservable input in the valuation. The adjustment has no impact on the Comprehensive Income Statement.

Any significant movements in the unobservable inputs for land will have a significant impact on the fair value of these assets.

The date and type of the current valuation is detailed in the following table.

Details of the Council's land and buildings and information about the fair value hierarchy as at 30 June 2026 are as follows:

		Non-specialised	*Specialised*		
	Level 1 $'000s	**Level 2 $'000s**	**Level 3 $'000s**	**Date of last valuation**	**Type of valuation**
Land	-	199,935	1,154,012	30-Apr-26	Full
Land under roads	-	-	111,280	30-Apr-26	Full
Buildings *	-	-	397,885	30-Jun-26	Full
Total written down value	-	199,935	1,663,177		

** Buildings at fair value excludes leasehold improvements which are valued at cost.*
Additional details about the fair value hierarchy (Levels 1-3) can be found in Note 8.4.

Valuation of Infrastructure

Valuation of infrastructure assets at fair value has been determined in accordance with a Council valuation or using an appropriate index.

The valuation is at fair value based on current replacement cost less accumulated depreciation at the date of valuation.

The date and type of the current valuation is detailed in the following table. The indexed revaluations that were conducted in the prior year used CPI index as the basis of the valuation.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

6.2 Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment (continued)

(h) Valuation

Valuation of Infrastructure (continued)

Details of Council's infrastructure and information about the fair value hierarchy as at 30 June 2026 are as follows:

		Non-specialised	*Specialised*	Date of	Type of
	Level 1 $'000s	Level 2 $'000s	Level 3 $'000s	valuation	valuation
Roads	-	-	585,053	30-Jun-26	Full
Bridges	-	-	68,297	30-Jun-26	Full
Footpaths and cycleways	-	-	128,972	30-Jun-26	Full
Drainage	-	-	579,593	30-Jun-26	Full
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	-	-	49,196	30-Jun-26	Index
Parks, open space and streetscapes	-	-	50,021	30-Jun-26	Index
Off street car parks	-	-	20,813	30-Jun-26	Full
Total written down value	-	-	1,481,945		

During 2024-25, Council adopted ARC360, an online asset valuation platform developed by Insight Valuations, to enhance the accuracy, consistency and transparency of infrastructure asset replacement rates. The transition from spreadsheet-based valuation models to ARC360 enabled more detailed assessments incorporating asset-specific characteristics, location factors and current construction cost inputs.

During 2025-26, the Bridges asset class was configured within ARC360. The transition of the Parks, Open Space and Streetscapes and Recreational, Leisure and Community Facilities asset classes also commenced during the year but was not completed by 30 June 2026. Accordingly, indexation-based valuations were applied to these asset classes at 30 June 2026. The transition of these asset classes to ARC360 will continue in 2026-27.

Valuations were undertaken by Ashay Prabhu, MIEAust, CPEng, NER (Membership No. 1102199), a qualified valuer with more than 25 years' experience in infrastructure asset valuation.

The Drainage asset class recorded a net revaluation increment of $77.7 million in 2025-26, following the $156.8 million increment recognised in 2024-25. The 2025-26 increase primarily reflects updated market-based replacement rates for drainage pipes, particularly larger-diameter reinforced concrete pipes, together with a refinement to the methodology used to estimate replacement costs for non-standard pipe sizes. The AASB 13 adjustment applied to drainage remained unchanged at 7%, with the current-year movement therefore principally attributable to updated construction costs and the refined valuation methodology.

As part of the revaluation process in 2025-26, Council also incorporated AASB 13 amendments, which require the inclusion of overheads related to site preparation and disruption. These overheads are estimated to account for approximately 7-12% of the total infrastructure asset revaluation increase of $271 million in 2025-26.

Description of significant unobservable inputs into level 3 valuations

Specialised land and land under roads are valued using a market based direct comparison technique. Significant unobservable inputs include the extent and impact of restrictions of use and the market cost of land per square metre. The extent and impact of restrictions on use varies. The market value of land varies significantly depending on the location of the land and the current market conditions. Currently, land values range between $2 and $3,750 per square metre.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

6.2 Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment (continued)

(h) Valuation

Specialised buildings are valued using a current replacement cost technique. Significant unobservable inputs include the current replacement cost and remaining useful lives of buildings. Current replacement costs are calculated on a square metre basis and range from $425 to $180,000 per square metre. The remaining useful lives of specialised buildings are determined on the basis of the current condition of buildings and vary from 1 year to 100 years. Replacement cost is sensitive to changes in market conditions, with any increase or decrease in cost flowing through to the valuation. Useful lives of buildings are sensitive to changes in expectations or requirements that could either shorten or extend the useful lives of buildings.

Valuation of Infrastructure (continued)

Infrastructure assets are valued based on the current replacement cost. Significant unobservable inputs include the current replacement cost and remaining useful lives of infrastructure. The remaining useful lives of infrastructure assets are determined on the basis of the current condition of the asset and vary from 1 year to 100 years. Replacement cost is sensitive to changes in market conditions, with any increase or decrease in cost flowing through to the valuation. Useful lives of infrastructure are sensitive to changes in use, expectations or requirements that could either shorten or extend the useful lives of infrastructure assets.

Note - 'Work in progress' is valued at cost.

(i) Reconciliation of specialised land at fair value *

	Consolidated 2026 $'000	Consolidated 2025 $'000
Parks and reserves	662,530	648,055
Floodway	8,260	7,615
Public use	22,895	23,160
Industrial	148,039	121,769
Other	423,568	415,025
Total specialised land	1,265,292	1,215,624

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

6.3 Investments in associates, joint arrangements and subsidiaries

a) Principles of consolidation

The consolidated financial statements of Council incorporate all entities controlled by Council as at 30 June 2026, and their income and expenses for that part of the reporting period in which control existed. Subsidiaries are all entities over which Council has control. Council controls an entity when it is exposed to, or has rights to, variable returns from its involvement with the entity and has the ability to affect those returns through its power to direct the activities of the entity. Subsidiaries are fully consolidated from the date on which control is transferred to the Council. They are deconsolidated from the date that control ceases.

Where dissimilar accounting policies are adopted by entities and their effect is considered material, adjustments are made to ensure consistent policies are adopted in these financial statements.

Entities consolidated into Council are Dandenong Market Pty Ltd and South East Leisure Pty Ltd.

Reconciliation of Council, it's subsidiaries and consolidated accounts

Dandenong Market Pty Ltd

Dandenong Market Pty Ltd (DMPL) is a wholly owned subsidiary company of the Greater Dandenong City Council, established in 2012. DMPL is managed in accordance with the terms set out in a Management Service Agreement which was updated and approved by Council on the 25 August 2021. This Agreement took effect from 1 July 2021 and continues until 30 June 2027. The Management Service Agreement runs concurrently with the Lease Agreement (50 years) and provides for annual agreement extensions at Council's discretion.

South East Leisure Pty Ltd

South East Leisure Pty Ltd (SEL) is another wholly owned subsidiary company of the Greater Dandenong City Council, established in 2021 and commenced operations from 1 July 2022. SEL manages and operates four leisure centres on the terms set out in a Management Services Agreement dated September 2021 from 1 July 2022 through to 30 June 2032:

- Dandenong Oasis
- Noble Park Aquatic Centre (NPAC)
- Springers Leisure Centre
- Dandenong Stadium.

Council also granted a lease to SEL in respect of each of the four major leisure facilities which runs concurrently with the Management Services Agreement for the next 10 years.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

6.3 a) Principles of consolidation (continued)

The following Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet and Statement of Cash Flows has been provided to show the individual financial positions of the Council, The Dandenong Market Pty Ltd, South East Leisure Pty Ltd and consolidated accounts for the 2024-25 financial year. These financial statements should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes in the financial report.

Comprehensive Income Statement
For the year ended 30 June 2026
Consolidated

	Council 2026 $'000	DMPL 2026 $'000	SEL 2026 $'000	Consolidation Adjustment 2026 $'000	Consolidated Accounts 2026 $'000
Income / revenue					
Rates and charges	184,749	-	-	(132)	184,617
Statutory fees and fines	11,461	-	-	-	11,461
User fees	9,756	-	5,687	-	15,443
Grants - operating	45,494	-	10	-	45,504
Grants - capital	15,265	-	-	-	15,265
Contributions - monetary	7,509	-	-	-	7,509
Contributions - non-monetary	7,221	-	-	-	7,221
Other income	15,142	7,831	8,872	(4,393)	27,452
Total income / revenue	296,597	7,831	14,569	(4,525)	314,472
Expenses					
Employee costs	101,689	2,057	8,559	(16)	112,289
Materials and services	97,538	4,577	5,501	(3,968)	103,648
Depreciation	57,277	25	182	-	57,484
Amortisation - intangible assets	-	-	19	-	19
Depreciation - right-of-use assets	562	-	-	-	562
Allowance for impairment losses	1,725	(6)	-	-	1,719
Borrowing costs	2,640	-	22	-	2,662
Finance costs - leases	16	-	-	-	16
Net loss on non-financial assets	8,875	-	-	-	8,875
Fair value adjustments for investment property	1,525	-	-	-	1,525
Other expenses	5,464	1,000	266	(541)	6,189
Total expenses	277,311	7,653	14,549	(4,525)	294,988
Surplus for the year	**19,286**	**178**	**20**	**-**	**19,484**
Other comprehensive income					
Items that will not be reclassified to surplus or deficit in future periods					
Net asset revaluation gain	405,001	-	-	-	405,001
Total comprehensive result	**424,287**	**178**	**20**	**-**	**424,485**

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

6.3 a) Principles of consolidation (continued)

Balance Sheet
As at 30 June 2026
Consolidated

	Council 2026 $'000	DMPL 2026 $'000	SEL 2026 $'000	Consolidation Adjustment 2026 $'000	Consolidated Accounts 2026 $'000
Assets					
Current assets					
Cash and cash equivalents	37,042	2,965	1,215	-	41,222
Trade and other receivables	41,260	108	460	(332)	41,496
Other financial assets	187,762	-	-	-	187,762
Inventories	-	-	66	-	66
Prepayments	1,577	13	65	-	1,655
Other assets	4,629	6	-	(62)	4,573
Total current assets	272,270	3,092	1,806	(394)	276,774
Non-current assets					
Trade and other receivables	169	-	-	-	169
Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	3,451,850	75	353	-	3,452,278
Investment property	5,340	-	-	-	5,340
Right-of-use assets	360	-	-	-	360
Total non-current assets	3,457,719	75	353	-	3,458,147
Total assets	3,729,989	3,167	2,159	(394)	3,734,921
Liabilities					
Current liabilities					
Trade and other payables	25,782	1,095	925	(354)	27,448
Trust funds and deposits	6,043	660			6,703
Contract and other liabilities	54,623	14	86	(40)	54,683
Provisions	21,417	127	285		21,829
Other interest-bearing liabilities	-	-	115		115
Interest-bearing liabilities	25,900	-	-		25,900
Lease liabilities	393	-	-		393
Total current liabilities	134,158	1,896	1,411	(394)	137,071
Non-current liabilities					
Trust funds and deposits	3,055	-	-	-	3,055
Provisions	2,002	16	159	-	2,177
Other interest-bearing liabilities	-	-	84	-	84
Interest-bearing liabilities	39,645	-	-	-	39,645
Lease liabilities	3	-	-	-	3
Total non-current liabilities	44,705	16	243	-	44,964
Total liabilities	178,863	1,912	1,654	(394)	182,035
Net assets	**3,551,126**	**1,255**	**505**	**-**	**3,552,886**
Equity					
Accumulated surplus	1,010,082	1,255	505	-	1,011,842
Reserves	2,541,044	-	-	-	2,541,044
Total equity	**3,551,126**	**1,255**	**505**	**-**	**3,552,886**

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

6.3 a) Principles of consolidation (continued)

Statement of Cash Flows
For the year ended 30 June 2026
Consolidated

	Council 2026 $'000	DMPL 2026 $'000	SEL 2026 $'000	Consolidation Adjustment 2026 $'000	Consolidated Accounts 2026 $'000
Cash flows from operating activities					
Rates and charges	182,820	-	-	(132)	182,688
Statutory fees and fines	9,205	-	-	-	9,205
User fees	8,541	-	5,687	-	14,228
Grants - operating	46,201	-	10	-	46,211
Grants - capital	13,344	-	-	-	13,344
Contributions - monetary	4,382	-	-	-	4,382
Interest received	8,637	80	68	-	8,785
Trust funds and deposits taken	61,203	-	-	-	61,203
Other receipts	6,496	8,812	9,938	(4,226)	21,020
Net GST refund / (payment)	15,557	(283)	(872)		14,402
Employee costs	(103,354)	(2,012)	(8,490)	16	(113,840)
Materials and services	(108,891)	(5,130)	(6,024)	3,780	(116,265)
Short-term, low value and variable lease payments	(902)	(1)	-	-	(903)
Trust funds and deposits repaid	(58,176)	-	-	-	(58,176)
Other payments	(5,084)	(999)	(255)	541	(5,797)
Net cash provided by operating activities	**79,979**	**467**	**62**	**(21)**	**80,487**
Cash flows from investing activities					
Payments for property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	(84,215)	(58)	(93)	21	(84,345)
Proceeds from sale of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	1,994	-	-	-	1,994
Payments for investments	(337,946)	-	-	-	(337,946)
Proceeds from sale of investments	330,470	-	-	-	330,470
Net cash used in investing activities	**(89,697)**	**(58)**	**(93)**	**21**	**(89,827)**
Cash flows from financing activities					
Finance costs	(2,636)	-	(22)	-	(2,658)
Proceeds from borrowings	30,172	-	-	-	30,172
Repayment of borrowings	(12,998)	-	-	-	(12,998)
Repayment of other interest-bearing liabilities	-	-	(112)	-	(112)
Interest paid - lease liability	(16)	-	-	-	(16)
Repayment of lease liabilities	(584)	-	-	-	(584)
Net cash used in financing activities	**13,938**	**-**	**(134)**	**-**	**13,804**
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents	4,220	409	(165)	-	4,464
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year	32,822	2,556	1,380	-	36,758
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	**37,042**	**2,965**	**1,215**	**-**	**41,222**

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note		Consolidated 2026 $'000	Consolidated 2025 $'000

6.3 Investments in associates, joint arrangements and subsidiaries

(b) Committees

All entities controlled by Council that have material revenues, expenses, assets or liabilities, such as committees of management, have been included in this financial report. Any transactions between these entities and Council have been eliminated in full.

At balance date there were no committees of management controlled by the Council.

6.4 Investment property

Balance at beginning of financial year	6,865	6,690
Fair value adjustments	(1,525)	175
Balance at end of financial year	5,340	6,865

Valuation of investment property

Investment property, comprising retail complexes, are held to generate long-term rental yields. Investment property is measured initially at cost, including transaction costs. Costs incurred subsequent to initial acquisition are capitalised when it is probable that future economic benefit in excess of the originally assessed performance of the asset will flow to the Council. Subsequent to initial recognition at cost, investment property is carried at fair value, determined annually by independent valuers. Changes to fair value are recorded in the Comprehensive Income Statement in the period that they arise. Investment property are not subject to depreciation. Rental income from the leasing of investment properties is recognised in the Comprehensive Income Statement on a straight line basis over the lease term.

Valuation of investment property has been determined in accordance with an independent valuation by Patel Dore Valuers who have recent experience in the location and category of the property being valued. The valuation is at fair value, based on the current market value for the property.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note 7 People and relationships

7.1 Council and key management remuneration

(a) Related parties

Parent entity
Greater Dandenong City Council

Subsidiaries
Dandenong Market Pty Ltd - detailed in note 6.3
South East Leisure Pty Ltd - detailed in note 6.3

(b) Key Management Personnel

Key management personnel (KMP) are those people with the authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of City of Greater Dandenong. The Councillors, Chief Executive Officer, Executive Directors and Executive Managers are deemed KMP.

Details of KMP at any time during the year are:

Councillors		**Consolidated 2026 No.**	**Consolidated 2025 No.**
From 1 July 2025 to Current			
Councillor Jim Memeti	Mayor 1 July 2025 - 11 November 2025		
Councillor Sophie Tan	Deputy Mayor 1 July 2025 - 11 November 2025 and Mayor 12 November 2025 - current		
Councillor Lana Formoso			
Councillor Sean O'Reilly			
Councillor Loi Truong			
Councillor Bob Milkovic			
Councillor Rhonda Garad			
Councillor Phillip Danh	Deputy Mayor 12 November 2025 - current		
Councillor Isabella Do			
Councillor Melinda Yim			
Councillor Alice Phuong Le			
Total number of Councillors		11	14

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

7.1 Council and key management remuneration (continued)

(b) Key Management Personnel (continued)	Consolidated 2026 No.	Consolidated 2025 No.
Other key management personnel		
Peta Gillies - Executive Director Community Strengthening		
Sanjay Manivasagasivam - Executive Director City Futures		
Marjan Hajjari - Executive Director Strategy And Corporate Services		
Yuri Guzman - Chief Customer and Information Officer		
Mark Burke - Chief Financial Officer (16 March 2026 - current)		
Michelle Hansan - Chief Financial Officer (1 July 2025 - 9 November 2025)		
Kirsten Geri - Interim Chief Financial Officer (10 November 2025 - 15 March 2026)		
Total number of other key management personnel	7	6
Chief Executive Officer		
Jacqui Weatherill	1	1
Total key management personnel	**19**	**21**
Dandenong Market Board Members		
Board Members	6	5
Executives	5	5
Total number of Dandenong Market Board Members	**11**	**10**
South East Leisure Board Members		
Board Members	5	6
General Managers	4	4
Chief Executive Officer	3	1
Total number of South East Leisure Board Members	**12**	**11**

(c) Remuneration of Key Management Personnel

Remuneration comprises employee benefits including all forms of consideration paid, payable or provided by Council, or on behalf of the Council, in exchange for services rendered. Remuneration of Key Management Personnel and Other senior staff is disclosed in the following categories.

Short-term employee benefits include amounts such as wages, salaries, annual leave or sick leave that are usually paid or payable on a regular basis, as well as non-monetary benefits such as allowances and free or subsidised goods or services.

Other long-term employee benefits include long service leave, other long service benefits or deferred compensation.

Post-employment benefits include pensions, and other retirement benefits paid or payable on a discrete basis when employment has ceased.

Termination benefits include termination of employment payments, such as severance packages.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

7.1 Council and key management remuneration (continued)

(c) Remuneration of Key Management Personnel (continued)

	Consolidated 2026 $'000	Consolidated 2025 $'000
Total remuneration of key management personnel was as follows:		
Short-term benefits	4,696	4,404
Long-term benefits	92	40
Post employment benefit	449	410
Termination benefits	-	141
	5,237	**4,995**

The numbers of key management personnel, whose total remuneration from Council and any related entities fall within the following bands:	No.	No.
$1 - $9,999	1	-
$10,000 - $19,999	-	5
$20,000 - $29,999	4	8
$30,000 - $39,999	5	5
$40,000 - $49,999	8	4
$50,000 - $59,999	1	1
$60,000 - $69,999	2	1
$80,000 - $89,999	2	1
$90,000 - $99,999	2	-
$100,000 - $109,999	3	2
$110,000 - $119,999	1	2
$120,000 - $129,999	1	-
$150,000 - $159,999	1	-
$180,000 - $189,999	1	-
$200,000 - $209,999	1	3
$210,000 - $219,999	1	1
$220,000 - $229,999	2	1
$250,000 - $259,999	-	1
$260,000 - $269,999	-	1
$270,000 - $279,999	-	1
$280,000 - $289,999	1	1
$300,000 - $309,999	1	-
$340,000 - $349,999	-	2
$360,000 - $369,999	1	-
$390,000 - $399,999	1	-
$400,000 - $409,999	1	-
$420,000 - $429,999	-	1
$430,000 - $439,999	-	-
$440,000 - $449,999	-	1
$470,000 - $479,999	1	-
Total*	**42**	**42**

* The number of Key Management Personnel represents the number of individuals who held KMP positions during the financial year.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

7.1 Council and key management remuneration (continued)

(d) Remuneration of other senior staff

Other senior staff are officers of Council, other than Key Management Personnel, whose total remuneration exceeds $170,000 and who report directly to a member of the KMP.

The number of Senior Officers are shown below in their relevant income bands:

Income range:	Consolidated 2026 No.	Consolidated 2025 No.
$170,000 - $179,999	1	2
$180,000 - $189,999	2	1
$190,000 - $199,999	-	5
$200,000 - $209,999	2	3
$210,000 - $219,999	2	1
$220,000 - $229,999	1	2
$230,000 - $239,999	3	1
$240,000 - $249,999	2	2
$250,000 - $259,999	1	1
$260,000 - $269,999	1	-
$290,000 - $299,999	-	1
	15	19

Total remuneration for the reporting year for Senior Officers included above, amounted to:	**$'000**	**$'000**
	3,345	4,051

7.2 Related party disclosure

(a) Transactions with related parties

(i) During 2025-26 Council entered into the following transactions with related parties Dandenong Market Pty Ltd (DMPL) and South East Leisure Pty Ltd (SEL).

	Consolidated 2026 Excl GST $'000	Consolidated 2025 Excl GST $'000
Dandenong Market Pty Ltd		
Received from DMPL		
Rent received	489	406
Other charges	132	108
Total received	**621**	**514**
Paid to DMPL		
Contributions for festival/events	305	80
Payment for gift vouchers	1	7
Payment for other items	4	120
Total paid	**310**	**207**

Councillor Memeti has a financial interest in a stall at Dandenong Market. The financial arrangements are at arms length based on commercial terms. A number of related parties have minority shareholdings in public companies, which have dealings with the Council from time to time.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

7.2 Related party disclosure (continued)

(a) Transactions with related parties (continued)

South East Leisure Pty Ltd	Consolidated 2026 Excl GST $'000	Consolidated 2025 Excl GST $'000
Received from SEL		
Other reimbursements	62	4
Total received	**62**	**4**
Paid to SEL		
Management fee	3,757	3,505
Payment for other items	45	40
Total paid	**3,802**	**3,545**

(b) Outstanding balances with related parties

The following transaction was outstanding at 30 June		
Contribution receivable	188	-
Rent receivable	165	-
Other reimbursements	38	2
	391	**2**

(c) Loans to/from related parties

On the 26 September 2022, Council resolved to serve as a guarantor for the finance lease facility in favour of South East Leisure Pty Ltd. The amount outstanding at 30 June 2026 is $362,000.

(d) Commitments to/from related parties

Dandenong Market Pty Ltd

Under the Management Services Agreement with Dandenong Market Pty Ltd (DMPL) an extension has been exercised up to 30 June 2027.

A commitment for rent of the Market premises is as follows	229	372
	229	**372**

South East Leisure Pty Ltd

Under the Management Services Agreement Council appoints South East Leisure Pty Ltd to provide management services to Council, Council is required to pay a Management Fee under the terms and conditions of the Management Services Agreement which ends 30 June 2032.

A commitment to pay a Management Fee to South East Leisure Pty Ltd	4,518	3,637
	4,518	**3,637**

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

8 MANAGING UNCERTAINTIES

8.1 Contingent assets and liabilities

Contingent assets and contingent liabilities are not recognised in the Balance Sheet, but are disclosed by way of a note and, if quantifiable, are measured at nominal value. Contingent assets and liabilities are presented inclusive of GST receivable or payable respectively.

(a) Contingent assets

Contingent assets are possible assets that arise from past events, whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence or non-occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the Council.

The following are potential contingent assets to be considered by Council.

Developer contributions

Greater Dandenong acquires infrastructure assets, such as local roads, footpaths, kerb and channel and drains etc, from developers, as subdivisional contributions. The amount and value of assets acquired depends on the size of the development and the level of growth within the municipality. Developers construct infrastructure assets which are vested with Council when Council issues a Statement of Compliance. These assets are brought to account as revenue (Contributions – Non-Monetary) and capitalised. At reporting date, developers had commenced construction of assets that will eventually be transferred to the Council subject to Council issuing a Statement of Compliance. Council cannot reliably measure the value of the assets involved prior to completion and the timing of recognition.

(b) Contingent liabilities

Contingent liabilities are:
- possible obligations that arise from past events, whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence or non-occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the Council; or
- present obligations that arise from past events but are not recognised because:
- it is not probable that an outflow of resources embodying economic benefits will be required to settle the obligation; or
- the amount of the obligation cannot be measured with sufficient reliability.

The following are potential contingent liabilities to be considered by Council.

Superannuation

Council has obligations under a defined benefit superannuation scheme that may result in the need to make additional contributions to the scheme, matters relating to this potential obligation are outlined in Note 9.3. As a result of the volatility in financial markets the likelihood of making such contributions in future periods exists.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note 8.1 (b) Contingent liabilities (continued)

Development Contribution Plans (DCP)

Council has three sites that are subject to formal development contribution plans, two are in Keysborough and one in Lyndhurst. All three sites are covered by a DCP.

A DCP provides the framework for the provision and funding of infrastructure to facilitate the set development area and the purpose of a DCP is to provide a “fair distribution of costs for works and services, including roads, traffic management and community facilities to all the proper servicing in the area”.

New development in each of the areas is required to meet its share of the total cost of delivering the required infrastructure works – as measured by its projected share of usage – through development contributions collected under the DCP's. The balance of works not covered by development contributions has been agreed to be funded by Council. The total value of these works is estimated to be around $10 million.

Landfills

The Greater Dandenong City Council may be liable for the consequences of disposing refuse at a number of legacy landfill sites. A legacy site refers to a landfill that has been decommissioned and is no longer receiving waste. At balance date Council is unable to assess whether there are any financial implications.

Legal actions

Council is presently involved in a number of confidential legal matters, which are being conducted through Council's solicitors. The estimated potential financial effect of these matters may be up to $3.6 million ($2.15 million as at 30 June 2025).

MAV Workcare

Council was a participant of the MAV WorkCare Scheme. The MAV WorkCare Scheme provided workers compensation insurance. MAV WorkCare commenced business on 1 November 2017 and the last day the Scheme operated as a self-insurer was 30 June 2021. In accordance with the Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013, there is a six year liability period following the cessation of the Scheme (to 30 June 2027). During the liability period, adjustment payments may be required. Since 30 June 2021, Council has paid $1.42 million in adjustment payments (2025-26: $32,260 and 2024-25: $29,327). The determination of any adjustment payments is dependent upon revised actuarial assessments of the Scheme's tail claims liabilities as undertaken by Work Safe Victoria. If required, adjustments will occur at the 3-year and 6-year points during the liability period, and will affect participating members.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

8.1 (c) Guarantees for loans to other entities

The amount disclosed for financial guarantee in this note is the nominal amount of the underlying loan that is guaranteed by the Council, not the fair value of the financial guarantee.

Financial guarantee contracts are not recognised as a liability in the Balance Sheet unless the lender has exercised their right to call on the guarantee or Council has other reasons to believe that it is probable that right will be exercised. Details of guarantees that Council has provided, that are not recognised in the Balance Sheet are disclosed below.

As at 30 June 2026, Council's maximum potential exposure is as follows:

Entities	Amount outstanding 30 June 2026 $'000	Amount outstanding 30 June 2025 $'000	Date commenced
Keysborough Bowls Club Inc.*	-	23	18 May 2015
Total Guarantees for loans to other entities	**-**	**23**	

* The loan has been fully paid as at 30 June 2026.

8.2 Australian Accounting Standards issued but not yet effective

Certain new Australian Accounting Standards and interpretations have been published that are not mandatory for the 30 June 2026 reporting period. Council assesses the impact of these new standards. The Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB) has issued AASB 18 *Presentation and Disclosure in Financial Statements*. When applicable AASB 18 supersedes AASB 101 *Presentation of Financial Statements*. AASB 18 aims to improve how entities communicate in their financial statements, with a focus on information about financial performance in the statement of profit or loss. It is expected to result in presentation and disclosure changes, primarily to Council's Comprehensive Income Statement. AASB 18 is expected to first apply to Council for the 2028-29 financial year.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

8.3 Financial instruments

(a) Objectives and policies

The Council's principal financial instruments comprise cash assets, term deposits, receivables (excluding statutory receivables), payables (excluding statutory payables) and bank borrowings. Details of the significant accounting policies and methods adopted, including the criteria for recognition, the basis of measurement and the basis on which income and expenses are recognised, in respect of each class of financial asset, financial liability and equity instrument is disclosed in notes of the financial statements. Risk management is carried out by senior management under policies approved by the Council. These policies include identification and analysis of the risk exposure to Council and appropriate procedures, controls and risk minimisation.

(b) Market risk

Market risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of our financial instruments will fluctuate because of changes in market prices. The Council's exposures to market risk is primarily through interest rate risk with only insignificant exposure to other price risks and no exposure to foreign currency risk.

Interest rate risk

Interest rate risk refers to the risk that the value of a financial instrument or cash flows associated with the instrument will fluctuate due to changes in market interest rates. Interest rate risk arises primarily from long term loans and borrowings at fixed rates which exposes us to fair value interest rate risk. We do not hold any interest bearing financial instruments that are measured at fair value, and therefore has no exposure to fair value interest rate risk. Cash flow interest rate risk is the risk that the future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market interest rates. Council has minimal exposure to cash flow interest rate risk through its cash and deposits that are at floating rates.

Investment of surplus funds is made with approved financial institutions under the *Local Government Act 2020*. We manage interest rate risk by adopting an investment policy that ensures:
- diversification of investment product
- monitoring of return on investment and
- benchmarking of returns and comparison with budget.

There has been no significant change in the Council's exposure, or its objectives, policies and processes for managing interest rate risk or the methods used to measure this risk from the previous reporting period.

Interest rate movements have not been sufficiently significant during the year to have an impact on the Council's year end result.

(c) Credit risk

Credit risk is the risk that a contracting entity will not complete its obligations under a financial instrument and cause us to make a financial loss. We have exposure to credit risk on some financial assets included in the Balance Sheet. Particularly significant area of credit risk exists in relation to outstanding fees and fines as well as loans and receivables from sporting clubs and associations. To help manage this risk:

- we have a policy for establishing credit limits for the entities we deal with
- we may require collateral where appropriate and
- we only invest surplus funds with financial institutions which have a recognised credit rating specified in our investment policy.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

8.3 (c) Credit risk (continued)

Receivables consist of a large number of customers, spread across the ratepayer, business and government sectors. Credit risk associated with the Council's financial assets is minimal. Rates debtors are secured by a charge over the rateable property. Council has assessed that 16% of parking infringement debts owing to Council are unlikely to be collected and has raised a provision for doubtful debts over those debts based on an assessment of collectability. The collection of long overdue parking infringement debts is managed by Fines Victoria.

Refer note 5.1 for financial assets which are determined to be impaired.

Council may also be subject to credit risk for transactions which are not included in the Balance Sheet, such as when Council provides a guarantee for another party. Details of Council's contingent liabilities are disclosed in note 8.1(b).

The maximum exposure to credit risk at the reporting date to recognised financial assets is the carrying amount, net of any allowance for impairment of those assets, as disclosed in the balance sheet and notes to the financial statements. Council does not hold any collateral.

(d) Liquidity risk

Liquidity risk includes the risk that, as a result of our operational liquidity requirements we will not have sufficient funds to settle a transaction when required or will be forced to sell a financial asset at below value or may be unable to settle or recover a financial asset.

To help reduce these risks Council:

- has a liquidity policy which targets a minimum and average level of cash and cash equivalents to be maintained.
- has readily accessible standby facilities and other funding arrangements in place.
- has a liquidity portfolio structure that requires surplus funds to be invested within various bands of liquid instruments.
- monitors budget to actual performance on a regular basis, and
- sets limits on borrowings relating to the percentage of loans to rate revenue and percentage of loan principal repayments to rate revenue.

The Council's maximum exposure to liquidity risk is the carrying amounts of financial liabilities as disclosed in the face of the Balance Sheet and the amounts related to financial guarantees disclosed in note 8.1(c), and is deemed insignificant based on prior periods' data and current assessment of risk.

There has been no significant change in Council's exposure, or its objectives, policies and processes for managing liquidity risk or the methods used to measure this risk from the previous reporting period.

With the exception of borrowings, all financial liabilities are expected to be settled within normal terms of trade. Details of the maturity profile for borrowings are disclosed at note 5.4.

Unless otherwise stated, the carrying amount of financial instruments reflect their fair value.

(e) Sensitivity disclosure analysis

Taking into account past performance, future expectations, economic forecasts, and management's knowledge and experience of the financial markets, Council believes the following movements are 'reasonably possible' over the next 12 months:

- A parallel shift of +1% and - 1% in market interest rates (AUD) from year-end rates of 4.35%.

These movements will not have a material impact on the valuation of Council's financial assets and liabilities, nor will they have a material impact on the results of Council's operations.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

8.4 Fair value measurement

Fair value hierarchy

Council's financial assets and liabilities are not valued in accordance with the fair value hierarchy, Council's financial assets and liabilities are measured at amortised cost.

Council measures certain assets and liabilities at fair value where required or permitted by Australian Accounting Standards. *AASB 13 'Fair value measurement'*, aims to improve consistency and reduce complexity by providing a definition of fair value and a single source of fair value measurement and disclosure requirements for use across Australian Accounting Standards.

For assets, where the Council adopts a current replacement cost approach to determine fair value, the Council now considers the inclusion of site preparation costs, disruption costs and costs to restore another entity's assets in the underlying valuation.

All assets and liabilities for which fair value is measured or disclosed in the financial statements are categorised within a fair value hierarchy, described as follows, based on the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement as a whole:

Level 1 — Quoted (unadjusted) market prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities.

Level 2 — Valuation techniques for which the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement is directly or indirectly observable.

Level 3 — Valuation techniques for which the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement is unobservable.

For the purpose of fair value disclosures, Council has determined classes of assets and liabilities on the basis of the nature, characteristics and risks of the asset or liability and the level of the fair value hierarchy as explained above.

In addition, Council determines whether transfers have occurred between levels in the hierarchy by re-assessing categorisation (based on the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement as a whole) at the end of each reporting period.

Revaluation

Subsequent to the initial recognition of assets, non-current physical assets, other than plant and equipment, works in progress and leasehold improvements are measured at their fair value, being the price that would be received to sell an asset (or paid to transfer a liability) in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. For assets valued at cost, the carrying amount is considered to approximate fair value given short useful lives. At balance date, the Council reviewed the carrying value of the individual classes of assets measured at fair value to ensure that each asset materially approximated its fair value. Where the carrying value materially differed from the fair value at balance date, the class of asset was revalued.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

8.4 Fair value measurement (continued)

Fair value valuations are determined in accordance with a valuation hierarchy. Changes to the valuation hierarchy will only occur if an external change in the restrictions or limitations of use of an asset result in changes to the permissible or practical highest and best use of the asset. In addition, Council undertakes a formal revaluation of land, buildings, and infrastructure assets on a regular basis ranging from 1 to 5 years. The valuation is performed either by experienced council officers or independent experts. The following table sets out the frequency of revaluations by asset class.

Asset class	Revaluation frequency
Land	1 to 2 years
Buildings	1 to 2 years
Roads	2 to 5 years
Bridges	2 to 5 years
Footpaths and cycleways	2 to 5 years
Drainage	2 to 5 years
Off street car parks	2 to 5 years

Where the assets are revalued, the revaluation increases are credited directly to the asset revaluation reserve except to the extent that an increase reverses a prior year decrease for that class of asset that had been recognised as an expense in which case the increase is recognised as revenue up to the amount of the expense. Revaluation decreases are recognised as an expense except where prior increases are included in the asset revaluation reserve for that class of asset in which case the decrease is taken to the reserve to the extent of the remaining increases. Within the same class of assets, revaluation increases and decreases within the year are offset.

Impairment of assets

At each reporting date, the Council reviews the carrying value of its assets to determine whether there is any indication that these assets have been impaired. If such an indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs of disposal and value in use, is compared to the assets carrying value. Any excess of the assets carrying value over its recoverable amount is expensed to the comprehensive income statement, unless the asset is carried at the revalued amount in which case, the impairment loss is recognised directly against the revaluation surplus in respect of the same class of asset to the extent that the impairment loss does not exceed the amount in the revaluation surplus for that same class of asset. The impairment policy above does not apply to Council's property, infrastructure, specialised buildings and other non-current physical assets subsequently measured at fair value. These are primarily non-cash generating assets of not-for-profit entities, which are typically specialised in nature and held for continuing use of their service capacity. Their recoverable amount is expected to be materially the same as fair value determined under AASB 13 *Fair Value Measurement*, with the consequence that AASB 136 *Impairment of Assets* does not apply to such assets that are regularly revalued.

There were no impairment adjustments at 30 June 2026.

8.5 Events occurring after balance date

No matters have occurred after balance date that require disclosure in the financial report.

8.6 Adjustments directly to equity

There were no adjustments to opening equity balances in the 2025-26 financial year.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

9 OTHER MATTERS

9.1 Reserves

	Balance at beginning of reporting period $'000	Increase (decrease) $'000	Reversal of previous revaluations for assets disposed $'000	Impairment loss (credited against previous increments)/ reversal $'000	Balance at end of reporting period $'000
(a) Asset revaluation reserves					
2026					
Property					
Land	1,025,776	57,132	-	-	1,082,908
Buildings	75,851	76,571	-	-	152,422
	1,101,627	133,703	-	-	1,235,330
Infrastructure					
Roads	379,801	139,198	-	-	518,999
Bridges	31,829	16,112	-	-	47,941
Footpaths and cycleways	70,452	21,187	-	-	91,639
Drainage	427,195	77,690	-	-	504,885
Off street car parks	8,063	3,530	-	-	11,593
Parks, open space and streetscapes	4,516	7,327	-	-	11,843
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	4,483	6,254	-	-	10,737
	926,339	271,298	-	-	1,197,637
Total asset revaluation reserves	**2,027,966**	**405,001**	**-**	**-**	**2,432,967**
2025					
Property					
Land	1,025,776	-	-	-	1,025,776
Buildings	75,851	-	-	-	75,851
	1,101,627	-	-	-	1,101,627
Infrastructure					
Roads	216,246	163,555	-	-	379,801
Bridges	31,829	-	-	-	31,829
Footpaths and cycleways	22,752	47,700	-	-	70,452
Drainage	270,429	156,766	-	-	427,195
Off street car parks	3,329	4,734	-	-	8,063
Parks, open space and streetscapes	4,516	-	-	-	4,516
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	4,483	-	-	-	4,483
	553,584	372,755	-	-	926,339
Total asset revaluation reserves	**1,655,211**	**372,755**	**-**	**-**	**2,027,966**

The asset revaluation reserve is used to record increments and decrements on the revaluation of non-current assets, as described in accounting policy note 6.2(h).

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

	Balance at beginning of reporting period	Transfer to accumulated surplus	Transfer from accumulated surplus	Balance at end of reporting period
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
9.1 Reserves (continued)				
(b) Other reserves				
2026				
Insurance reserve	715	(221)	683	1,177
Re-vegetation reserves	170	(30)	-	140
Open space - planning, development and improvements	6,727	(331)	2,795	9,191
Open space - acquisitions	6,000	(74)	74	6,000
Keysborough South maintenance levy	3,682	(1,210)	1,797	4,269
Major projects reserve	49,264	(16,804)	15,983	48,443
General reserve	6,436	(7)	1,199	7,628
Council funded development contributions reserve	17,428	(2,157)	1,023	16,294
Springvalley Landfill rehabilitation	5,455	(57)	965	6,363
Springvale Activity Precinct - parking and development	235	-	-	235
Dandenong Activity Precinct - parking and development	4,012	(844)	1,000	4,168
Future maintenance reserve	3,792	(210)	-	3,582
Digital technology reserve	1,088	(501)	-	587
Total other reserves	**105,004**	**(22,446)**	**25,519**	**108,077**
2025				
Insurance reserve	469	-	246	715
Re-vegetation reserves	200	(30)	-	170
Open space - planning, development and improvements	3,756	(1,026)	3,997	6,727
Open space - acquisitions	6,000	(1,026)	1,026	6,000
Keysborough South maintenance levy	3,008	(1,122)	1,796	3,682
Major projects reserve	49,308	(8,501)	8,457	49,264
General reserve	4,155	(34)	2,315	6,436
Council funded development contributions reserve	16,314	(31)	1,145	17,428
Springvalley Landfill rehabilitation	4,063	(25)	1,417	5,455
Springvale Activity Precinct - parking and development	235	-	-	235
Dandenong Activity Precinct - parking and development	3,013	(1)	1,000	4,012
Future maintenance reserve	4,040	(248)	-	3,792
Grants in Advance	-	-	-	-
Digital technology reserve	-	-	1,088	1,088
Total other reserves	**94,561**	**(12,044)**	**22,487**	**105,004**

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

9.1 Reserves (continued)

(b) Other reserves (continued)

Nature and purpose of other reserves:

Insurance reserve
The insurance reserve has been created to meet large and unexpected policy excesses on multiple insurance claims.

Re-vegetation reserves
The purpose of this reserve fund is to meet native re-vegetation requirements on Council's reserves.

Open space - planning, development and improvements
Funds set aside in this reserve will be utilised exclusively for allocation towards enhancing the City's open space via planning, development and improvements.

Open space - acquisitions
Funds set aside in this reserve will be utilised exclusively for open space land acquisitions.

Keysborough South maintenance levy
This reserve has been established to ensure full accountability of the levies received for the Keysborough and Somerfield Estates reflecting costs of maintaining an additional 15% open space beyond that of traditional estates.

Major projects reserve
The major projects reserve holds proceeds from the sale of Council's property assets or surplus Council funds and will be utilised for investing in other properties or funding future major projects.

General reserve
This reserve relates to financial impacts of future aged care sector reforms and fixed term contracts in community service programs.

Council funded development contributions reserve
The reserve for Council funded development contribution plans holds funds in respect of Council's contribution to the two major developments in Dandenong South (C87) and Keysborough (C36).

Springvalley Landfill rehabilitation reserve
The purpose of this reserve is to rehabilitate the Spring Valley landfill site at Clarke Road, Springvale South.

Springvale Activity Precinct - parking and development reserve
The purpose of the reserve is to fund development in the Springvale Activity Centre.

Dandenong Activity Precinct - parking and development reserve
The purpose of the reserve is to fund development in the Dandenong Activity Centre.

Future maintenance reserve
This reserve holds contribution funds for future works to address level crossing removal authority defects.

Digital Technology reserve
This reserve is dedicated to advancing Council's digital capabilities. This reserve supports initiatives that drive innovation, improve operational efficiency, enhance customer and employee experiences, and ensure long-term technological resilience.

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

9.1 Reserves (continued)

(c) Total reserves summary	Note	Consolidated 2026 $'000	Consolidated 2025 $'000
Asset revaluation reserve	9.1(a)	2,432,967	2,027,966
Other reserves	9.1(b)	108,077	105,004
Total reserves		2,541,044	2,132,970

9.2 Reconciliation of cash flows from operating activities to surplus

Surplus for the year	**19,484**	**30,913**
Non-cash adjustments:		
Depreciation	57,484	47,645
Amortisation intangible assets	19	20
Depreciation right of use assets	562	661
Impairment loss	-	-
Investments in other entities	13	10
Net loss on non-financial assets	8,875	4,768
Fair value adjustments for investment property	1,525	(175)
Contributions of non-monetary assets	(7,221)	(6,000)
Works in progress (unable to be capitalised)	4,901	2,987
Borrowing costs	2,662	2,669
Finance cost - leases	16	28
Other interest bearing liabilities net present value adjustment	11	18
Change in assets and liabilities		
(Increase)/decrease in trade and other receivables	(8,911)	(2,529)
(Increase)/decrease in prepayments	(902)	1,313
Increase/(decrease) in trust funds and deposits taken/repaid	3,040	(1,005)
Increase/(decrease) in trade and other payables	(1,724)	(3,377)
Increase/(decrease) in contract and other liabilities	580	(2,574)
Increase in provisions	72	1,239
(Increase)/decrease in inventories	1	2
Net cash provided by operating activities	80,487	76,613

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

9.3 Superannuation

Council makes the majority of its employer superannuation contributions in respect of its employees to the Local Authorities Superannuation Fund (the Fund). This Fund has two categories of membership, accumulation and defined benefit, each of which is funded differently.

Obligations for contributions to the Fund are recognised as an expense in Comprehensive Income Statement when they are made or due.

Accumulation

The Fund's accumulation category, Vision MySuper/Vision Super Saver, receives both employer and employee contributions on a progressive basis. Employer contributions are normally based on a fixed percentage of employee earnings (for the year ended 30 June 2026, this was 12% as required under Superannuation Guarantee (SG) legislation (2025: 11.5%)).

Defined Benefit

Council does not use defined benefit accounting for its defined benefit obligations under the Fund's Defined Benefit category. This is because the Fund's Defined Benefit category is a pooled multi-employer sponsored plan.

There is no proportional split of the defined benefit liabilities, assets or costs between the participating employers as the defined benefit obligation is a floating obligation between the participating employers and the only time that the aggregate obligation is allocated to specific employers is when a call is made. As a result, the level of participation of Council in the Fund cannot be measured as a percentage compared with other participating employers. Therefore, the Fund Actuary is unable to allocate benefit liabilities, assets and costs between employers for the purposes of AASB 119 Employee Benefits.

Funding arrangements

Council makes employer contributions to the Defined Benefit category of the Fund at rates determined by the Trustee on the advice of the Fund Actuary. As at 30 June 2025, an interim actuarial investigation was held as the Fund provides lifetime pensions in the Defined Benefit category. The vested benefit index (VBI) of the Defined Benefit category as at 30 June 2025 (of which Council is a contributing employer) was 110.5%. The financial assumptions used to calculate the VBI were:

	30 June 2025 (interim review)	30 June 2025 (interim review)
- Net investment returns	5.7% pa	5.6% pa
- Salary information	3.5% pa	3.5% pa
- Price inflation (CPI)	2.6% pa	2.7% pa

As at 30 June 2026, a triennial actuarial investigation is underway as the Fund provides lifetime pensions in the Defined Benefit category. It is expected to be completed by 31 October 2026.

Vision Super has advised that the VBI at 30 June 2026 was 116.9%. The financial assumptions used to calculate this VBI were:

	2026	**2025**
- Net investment returns	6.2% pa	5.6% pa
- Salary information	3.5% pa	3.5% pa
- Price inflation (CPI)	3.0% pa to 30 June 2029 and 2.6% pa	2.6% pa

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

9.3 Superannuation (continued)

Employer contributions

(a) Regular contributions
On the basis of the results of the 2025 interim actuarial investigation conducted by the Fund Actuary, Council makes employer contributions to the Fund's Defined Benefit category at rates determined by the Fund's Trustee. For the year ended 30 June 2026, this rate was 12% of members' salaries (11.5% in 2024/25). This rate is expected to increase in line with any increases in the SG contribution rate and was reviewed as part of the 30 June 2023 triennial valuation.

In addition, Council reimburses the Fund to cover the excess of the benefits paid as a consequence of retrenchment above the funded resignation or retirement benefit.

(b) Funding calls
If the Defined Benefit category is in an unsatisfactory financial position at an actuarial investigation or the Defined Benefit category's VBI is below its shortfall limit at any time other than the date of the actuarial investigation, the Defined Benefit category has a shortfall for the purposes of SPS 160 and the Fund is required to put a plan in place so that the shortfall is fully funded within three years of the shortfall occurring. The Fund monitors its VBI on a quarterly basis and the Fund has set its shortfall limit at 98% from 26 July 2024 (previously 97%).

In the event that the Fund Actuary determines that there is a shortfall based on the above requirement, the Fund's participating employers (including Council) are required to make an employer contribution to cover the shortfall.

Using the agreed methodology, the shortfall amount is apportioned between the participating employers based on the pre-1 July 1993 and post-30 June 1993 service liabilities of the Fund's Defined Benefit category, together with the employer's payroll at 30 June 1993 and at the date the shortfall has been calculated.

Due to the nature of the contractual obligations between the participating employers and the Fund, and that the Fund includes lifetime pensioners and their reversionary beneficiaries, it is unlikely that the Fund will be wound up.

If there is a surplus in the Fund, the surplus cannot be returned to the participating employers.

In the event that a participating employer is wound-up, the defined benefit obligations of that employer will be transferred to that employer's successor.

The 2025 interim actuarial investigation surplus amounts

An actuarial investigation is conducted annually for the Defined Benefit category of which Council is a contributing employer. Generally, a full actuarial investigation is conducted every three years and interim actuarial investigations are conducted for each intervening year. An interim investigation was conducted as at 30 June 2025 and 30 June 2024 while a full investigation was conducted as at 30 June 2023.

The Fund's actuarial investigation identified the following for the Defined Benefit category of which Council is a contributing employer:

	2025 (Interim) $m	2024 (Triennial) $ million	2023 (Interim) $ million
- A VBI surplus	200.1	108.4	85.7
- A total service liability surplus	229.4	141.4	123.6
- A discounted accrued benefits surplus	242.8	156.7	141.9

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

9.3 Superannuation (continued)

The VBI surplus means that the market value of the fund's assets supporting the defined benefit obligations exceed the vested benefits that the defined benefit members would have been entitled to if they had all exited on 30 June 2025.

The total service liability surplus means that the current value of the assets in the Fund's Defined Benefit category plus expected future contributions exceeds the value of expected future benefits and expenses as at 30 June 2025.

The discounted accrued benefit surplus means that the current value of the assets in the Fund's Defined Benefit category exceeds the value of benefits payable in the future but accrued in respect of service to 30 June 2025.

The 2026 triennial actuarial investigation

A triennial actuarial investigation is being conducted for the Fund's position as at 30 June 2026 as the Fund provides lifetime pensions in the Defined Benefit category. It is anticipated that this actuarial investigation will be completed by 31 October 2026.

The VBI of the Defined Benefit category at that date was 116.9% as at 30 June 2026. The financial assumptions for the purposes of this investigation were:

	2026 Triennial investigation	2025 Interim Investigation
- Net investment returns	6.2% pa	5.7% pa
- Salary information	3.5% pa	3.5% pa
- Price inflation (CPI)	3.0% pa to 30 June 2029 and 2.6% pa	2.6% pa

Council was notified of the 30 June 2026 VBI during August 2026.

Accrued Benefit

The Fund's liability for accrued benefits has been determined in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards. The applicable accounting standard is AASB 1056 *Superannuation Entities*

	30 June 2025 Interim $m	30 June 2024 Interim $m
Net Market value of Assets	2,132.8	2,155.4
Accrued Benefit	1,889.9	1,998.9
Difference between Assets and Accrued Benefit	242.9	156.5
Vested benefit (Minimum sum which must be paid to members when they leave the fund)	1,932.6	2,047.1

The financial assumptions used to calculate the Accrued Benefits for the Defined Benefit category of the fund were:

	30 June 2025	30 June 2024
- Net investment returns	5.7% pa	5.6% pa
- Salary information	3.5% pa	3.5% pa
- Price inflation	2.6% pa	2.7% pa

Notes to the Consolidated Financial Report

Note

9.3 Superannuation (continued)

Superannuation contributions

Contributions by Council (excluding any unfunded liability payments) to the above superannuation plans for the financial year ended 30 June 2025 are detailed below:

Scheme	Type of scheme	Rate	Consolidated 2026 $'000	Consolidated 2025 $'000
Vision Super	Defined benefits	12.0% (2025: 11.5%)	252	312
Vision Super	Accumulation	12.0% (2025: 11.5%)	3,947	3,798
Other funds	Accumulation	12.0% (2025: 11.5%)	6,210	5,438

In addition to the above contributions, Council has paid $0 unfunded liability payments to Vision Super in 2025-26 (2024-25: $0).

There were $373,000 contributions outstanding and no loans issued from or to the above schemes as at 30 June 2026.

The expected contributions to be paid to the Defined Benefit category of Vision Super for the year ending 30 June 2026 is $312,000.

10 Change in Accounting Policy

There have been no changes to accounting policies in the 2025-26 year.
There are no pending accounting standards that are likely to have a material impact on Council.

Greater Dandenong City Council

Performance Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2026

Performance Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2026

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Performance Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2026

Certification of the Performance Statement

In my opinion, the accompanying performance statement has been prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020.*

_____

Mark Burke CPA
Principal Accounting Officer

Date: 21 September 2026
Dandenong

In our opinion, the accompanying performance statement of the Greater Dandenong City Council for the year ended 30 June 2026 presents fairly the results of Council's performance in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020.*

The performance statement contains the relevant performance indicators, measures and results in relation to service performance, financial performance and sustainable capacity.

At the date of signing, we are not aware of any circumstances that would render any particulars in the performance statement to be misleading or inaccurate.

We have been authorised by the Council and by the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* to certify this performance statement in its final form.

_____

Sophie Tan
Mayor

Date: 21 September 2026
Dandenong

_____

Melinda Yim
Councillor

Date: 21 September 2026
Dandenong

_____

Jacqui Weatherill
Chief Executive Officer

Date: 21 September 2026
Dandenong

Performance Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2026

Victorian Auditor-General's Office Audit Report

Performance Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2026

Section 1. Description of municipality

The City of Greater Dandenong encompasses an area of 129 kilometres in Melbourne's south-east, approximately 35 kilometres from the central business district. Greater Dandenong has a population of over 167,000 people and is the most multicultural municipality in Australia, with residents from over 150 different birthplaces. This adds a wealth of diversity to the city through a range of cultural experiences. The city has a vibrant economy in both the retail and manufacturing sectors and is renowned as the manufacturing hub of Victoria. The wholesale trade, health care, and retail trade sectors also provide a significant proportion of employment opportunities.

Performance Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2026

Section 2. Service performance indicators

Service / *indicator* / measure [formula]	Results 2023	Results 2024	Results 2025	Target 2026	Results 2026	Material Variations and Comments
Aquatic Facilities ***Utilisation*** *Utilisation of aquatic facilities* [Number of visits to aquatic facilities / Municipal population]	3.82	4.60	4.89	N/A	4.95	
Animal Management ***Health and safety*** *Animal management prosecutions* [Number of successful animal management prosecutions / Number of animal management prosecutions] x 100	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	N/A	100.0%	All prosecutions brought by Council in the reporting period have been successful.
Food Safety ***Health and safety*** *Critical and major non-compliance outcome notifications* [Number of critical non-compliance outcome notifications and major non-compliance notifications about a food premises followed up / Number of critical non-compliance outcome notifications and major non-compliance notifications about a food premises] x 100	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	N/A	100.0%	All critical and major non-compliance outcomes were followed up, inspected and deemed compliant.
Governance ***Satisfaction*** *Satisfaction with community consultation and engagement* [Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with the consultation and engagement efforts of Council]	59.00	58.00	77.00	60.50	78.00	Council changed providers for the Community Satisfaction Survey in 2025 and took a face-to-face, door-knocking approach. The results following this change showed a considerable increase in satisfaction.

Performance Statement
For the year ended 30 June 2026

Section 2. Service performance indicators (continued)

Service Performance Indicators (continued) For the year ended 30 June 2026						
Service / *indicator* / measure [formula]	**Results 2023**	**Results 2024**	**Results 2025**	**Target 2026**	**Results 2026**	**Material Variations and Comments**
Libraries ***Participation*** *Library membership* [percentage of the population that are registered library members] x 100	New	33.47%	35.64%	N/A	34.61%	
Maternal and Child Health (MCH) ***Participation*** *Participation in the MCH service* [Number of children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of children enrolled in the MCH service] x 100	70.31%	72.81%	72.22%	N/A	74.12%	
Participation *Participation in the MCH service by Aboriginal children* [Number of Aboriginal children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of Aboriginal children enrolled in the MCH service] x 100	81.30%	74.17%	82.40%	N/A	72.82%	The participation rate for Aboriginal children in the MCH service decreased in 2025-26. This was primarily due to a lower number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families engaging with the service during the year, together with natural fluctuations in the age profile of enrolled children and the timing of scheduled Key Age and Stage consultations. As participation in the MCH service is voluntary, annual results can vary depending on family uptake and demographic trends. Council continues to support Aboriginal families through partnerships with First Peoples Health and Wellbeing and the provision of dedicated Aboriginal Maternal and Child Health support within the service.

Performance Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2026

Section 2. Service performance indicators (continued)

Service / *indicator* / measure [formula]	Results 2023	Results 2024	Results 2025	Target 2026	Results 2026	Material Variations and Comments
Roads ***Condition*** *Sealed local roads below the intervention level* [Percentage of sealed local roads that are below the renewal intervention level set by Council and not requiring renewal]	98.37%	97.82%	99.94%	95.50%	100.00%	All roads were maintained to condition standards.
Statutory Planning ***Service standard*** *Planning applications decided within the relevant required time frames* [Percentage of planning application decisions made within the relevant required time]	78.97%	81.64%	84.28%	83.00%	87.04%	
Waste Management ***Waste diversion*** *Kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill* [Weight of recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins / Weight of garbage, recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins] x100	45.25%	47.71%	46.46%	48.00%	45.93%	

Performance Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2026

Section 3. Financial performance indicators

For the year ended 30 June 2026

Financial Performance Indicators For the year ended 30 June 2026										
Dimension / *indicator* / *measure* [formula]	**Results 2023**	**Results 2024**	**Results 2025**	**Target 2026**	**Results 2026**	**Forecast 2027**	**Forecast 2028**	**Forecast 2029**	**Forecast 2030**	**Material Variations and Comments**
Efficiency ***Expenditure level*** *Expenses per property assessment* [Total expenses / Number of property assessments]	$3,354.91	$3,561.83	$3,712.00	$3,781.21	$3,976.87	$4,094.64	$4,011.49	$4,079.92	$4,126.64	
Revenue level *Average rate per property assessment* [Sum of all general rates and municipal charges / Number of property assessments]	$1,972.70	$2,053.24	$2,122.97	N/A	$2,192.87	$2,269.36	$2,330.90	$2,392.81	$2,455.91	
Liquidity ***Working capital*** *Current assets compared to current liabilities* [Current assets / Current liabilities] x 100	205.57%	206.67%	229.35%	148.44%	202.95%	165.41%	163.60%	164.84%	164.88%	The 2026 actual result was greater than the target due mainly to delayed capital expenditure. The forecast working capital ratio for forthcoming years is projected to decrease as closing cash holdings return to normal levels. Council's cash reserves will also be drawn down to fund the Oasis Aquatics and Wellbeing major capital project.

Performance Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2026

Section 3. Financial performance indicators (continued)

For the year ended 30 June 2026

Dimension / *indicator* / *measure* [formula]	Results 2023	Results 2024	Results 2025	Target 2026	Results 2026	Forecast 2027	Forecast 2028	Forecast 2029	Forecast 2030	Material Variations and Comments
Unrestricted cash *Unrestricted cash compared to current liabilities* [Unrestricted cash / Current liabilities] x 100	15.01%	(21.56%)	(29.06%)	N/A	(18.33%)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	The negative indicator result for 2025 is primarily due to $187.8 million in investments that are required to be classified as 'other financial assets' as the term deposit period exceeds 90 days. If these investments were included in the ratio calculation, the ratio result would be a positive 121.6% for 2026. Forecast information for future years is not available because this indicator is not included in Council's 2026-27 Budget and is not scheduled to be reported as a performance measure in future reporting periods. As a result, targets and forecast values have not been established for subsequent years.
Obligations ***Loans and borrowings*** *Loans and borrowings compared to rates* [Interest bearing loans and borrowings / Rate revenue] x 100	30.74%	27.84%	27.41%	N/A	35.83%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	The higher 2026 result reflects the drawdown of $21.5 million for the Oasis Aquatics and Wellbeing major capital project and the refinancing of $8.7 million in loans during the year. Forecast information for future years is not available because this indicator is not included in Council's 2026-27 Budget and is not scheduled to be reported as a performance measure in future reporting periods. As a result, targets and forecast values have not been established for subsequent years.

Performance Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2026

Section 3. Financial performance indicators (continued)

For the year ended 30 June 2026

Financial Performance Indicators (continued) For the year ended 30 June 2026										
Dimension / *indicator* / *measure* [formula]	**Results 2023**	**Results 2024**	**Results 2025**	**Target 2026**	**Results 2026**	**Forecast 2027**	**Forecast 2028**	**Forecast 2029**	**Forecast 2030**	**Material Variations and Comments**
Obligations (continued) *Loans and borrowings repayments compared to rates* [Interest and principal repayments on interest bearing loans and borrowings / Rate revenue] x 100	3.81%	3.63%	3.71%	N/A	8.55%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	The higher 2026 result reflects the refinancing of $8.7 million in existing loans during the year. Forecast information for future years is not available because this indicator is not included in Council's 2026-27 Budget and is not scheduled to be reported as a performance measure in future reporting periods. As a result, targets and forecast values have not been established for subsequent years.
Indebtedness *Non-current liabilities compared to own source revenue* [Non-current liabilities / Own source revenue] x 100	26.05%	23.29%	22.64%	N/A	20.22%	42.43%	41.49%	37.56%	33.90%	The upwards trend in future years relates to planned borrowings to fund the Oasis Aquatics and Wellbeing major capital project.
Asset renewal and upgrade *Asset renewal and upgrade compared to depreciation* [Asset renewal and asset upgrade expense / Asset depreciation] x 100	121.50%	102.50%	66.99%	219.35%	133.66%	173.69%	107.51%	76.68%	72.66%	The 2026 ratio result and 2027 forecast are influenced by increased renewal works, primarily driven by the Oasis Aquatics and Wellbeing project. The 2025 result was impacted by a 33% increase in depreciation expense following the componentisation of building assets, together with delays in key renewal programs, including fleet replacement and road reconstruction. The lower ratios forecast for 2029 and 2030 reflect the ongoing challenge of maintaining asset renewal expenditure at levels above annual depreciation.

Performance Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2026

Section 3. Financial performance indicators (continued)

For the year ended 30 June 2026

Financial Performance Indicators (continued) For the year ended 30 June 2026										
Dimension / *indicator* / *measure* [formula]	**Results 2023**	**Results 2024**	**Results 2025**	**Target 2026**	**Results 2026**	**Forecast 2027**	**Forecast 2028**	**Forecast 2029**	**Forecast 2030**	**Material Variations and Comments**
Operating position ***Adjusted underlying result*** *Adjusted underlying surplus (or deficit)* [Adjusted underlying surplus (deficit)/ Adjusted underlying revenue] x 100	3.04%	(4.50%)	3.76%	N/A	(3.30%)	(5.59%)	(1.59%)	(2.25%)	(1.93%)	The 2026 negative result declined from the prior year, as expenditure increased faster than income. While rates revenue increased during the year, this was partly offset by lower grant income and user fees. Higher operating costs, including depreciation, employee costs and materials and services, contributed to the result. Looking ahead, adjusted underlying deficits are projected in future years due to rate capping, rising costs, and the progression of the significant Oasis Aquatics and Wellbeing project. Council remains committed to addressing these future challenges with transparency and accountability.
Stability ***Rates concentration*** *Rates compared to adjusted underlying revenue* [Rate revenue / Adjusted underlying revenue] x 100	68.32%	72.20%	65.90%	70.52%	68.15%	69.89%	70.40%	71.43%	72.17%	
Rates effort *Rates compared to property values* [Rate revenue / Capital improved value of rateable properties in the municipality] x 100	0.27%	0.26%	0.26%	N/A	0.26%	0.26%	0.26%	0.27%	0.27%	

Performance Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2026

Section 4. Sustainable capacity indicators

For the year ended 30 June 2026

Sustainable Capacity Indicators For the year ended 30 June 2026					
Indicator */ measure* [formula]	**Results 2023**	**Results 2024**	**Results 2025**	**Results 2026**	**Material Variations and Comments**
Population *Expenses per head of municipal population* [Total expenses / Municipal population]	$1,445.16	$1,497.72	$1,540.13	$1,643.97	
Infrastructure per head of municipal population [Value of infrastructure / Municipal population]	$7,343.30	$7,570.52	$9,670.62	$11,777.19	The increase in the 2026 ratio result is due to fair value asset revaluations of property and infrastructure asset classes during 2025-26.
Population density per length of road [Municipal population / Kilometres of local roads]	228.47	234.73	240.20	240.34	
Own-source revenue *Own-source revenue per head of municipal population* [Own-source revenue / Municipal population]	$1,221.10	$1,268.07	$1,296.28	$1,310.78	

Performance Statement
For the year ended 30 June 2026

Section 4. Sustainable capacity indicators
For the year ended 30 June 2026

Sustainable Capacity Indicators (continued) For the year ended 30 June 2026					
Indicator */ measure* [formula]	**Results 2023**	**Results 2024**	**Results 2025**	**Results 2026**	**Material Variations and Comments**
Recurrent grants *Recurrent grants per head of municipal population* [Recurrent grants / Municipal population]	$252.02	$151.96	$294.15	$271.13	This ratio result is affected by the timing of Financial Assistance Grant payments, which are sometimes received in advance of the financial year they relate to. In 2025, the result reflects 150% of the grant allocation due to an early receipt of 50% of the 2025-26 grant allocation plus 100% of the 2024–25 allocation. The 2026 result includes 130% of the grant allocation (50% from 2025-26 and 80% early for 2026-27).
Disadvantage *Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage* [Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage by decile]	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	
Workforce turnover *Percentage of staff turnover* [Number of permanent staff resignations and terminations / Average number of permanent staff for the financial year] x 100	12.92%	12.52%	11.20%	12.14%	Prior year comparator updated: The 2024-25 result has been restated from 12.3% to 11.2% following a review of employee movement data and year-end workforce information. The revised result provides a more accurate basis for comparison with the current year.

Performance Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2026

Section 5. Notes to the accounts

5.1 Basis of preparation

Council is required to prepare and include a performance statement within its annual report. The performance statement includes the results of the prescribed service performance, financial performance and sustainable capacity indicators and measures together with a description of the municipal district and an explanation of material variations in the results and notes to the accounts. This statement has been prepared to meet the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* and *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*.

Where applicable the results in the performance statement have been prepared on accounting bases consistent with those reported in the Financial Statements. The other results are based on information drawn from council information systems or from third parties (e.g. Australian Bureau of Statistics or the Council's satisfaction survey provider).

The performance statement presents the actual results for the current year and the previous three years, along with the current year's target, if mandated by the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020.* Additionally, for the prescribed financial performance indicators and measures, the performance statement includes the target budget for the current year and the results forecast for the period 2026-27 to 2029-30 as published in Council's Budget and Long Term Financial Plan.

The *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* requires explanation of any material variations in the results contained in the performance statement. Council has adopted materiality thresholds relevant to each indicator and measure and explanations have not been provided for variations below the materiality thresholds unless the variance is considered to be material because of its nature.

Important note:

The financial indicator information included in the Performance Statement relates to the 2025-26 results of Council. It does not represent Consolidated results.

Performance Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2026

5.2 Definitions

Key term	Definition
Aboriginal children	means a child who is an Aboriginal person
Aboriginal person	has the same meaning as in the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006
adjusted underlying revenue	means total income other than: • non-recurrent grants used to fund capital expenditure; and • non-monetary asset contributions; and • contributions to fund capital expenditure from sources other than those referred to above
adjusted underlying surplus (or deficit)	means adjusted underlying revenue less total expenditure
annual report	means an annual report prepared by a council under section 98 of the Act
asset renewal expenditure	means expenditure on an existing asset or on replacing an existing asset that returns the service capability of the asset to its original capability
asset upgrade expenditure	means expenditure that— (a) enhances an existing asset to provide a higher level of service; or (b) extends the life of the asset beyond its original life
critical non-compliance outcome notification	means a notification received by council under section 19N(3) or (4) of the Food Act 1984 , or advice given to council by an authorized officer under that Act, of a deficiency that poses an immediate serious threat to public health
current assets	has the same meaning as in the Australian Accounting Standards
current liabilities	has the same meaning as in the Australian Accounting Standards
food premises	has the same meaning as in the Food Act 1984
intervention level	means the level set for the condition of a road beyond which a council will not allow the road to deteriorate and will need to intervene
local road	means a sealed or unsealed road for which the council is the responsible road authority under the Road Management Act 2004
major non-compliance outcome notification	means a notification received by a council under section 19N(3) or (4) of the Food Act 1984, or advice given to council by an authorized officer under that Act, of a deficiency that does not pose an immediate serious threat to public health but may do so if no remedial action is taken
MCH	means the Maternal and Child Health Service provided by a council to support the health and development of children within the municipality from birth until school age
non-current assets	means all assets other than current assets
non-current liabilities	means all liabilities other than current liabilities

Performance Statement
For the year ended 30 June 2026

Key term	Definition
non-recurrent grant	means a grant obtained on the condition that it be expended in a specified manner and is not expected to be received again during the period covered by a council's Financial Plan
own-source revenue	means adjusted underlying revenue other than revenue that is not under the control of council (including government grants)
population	means the resident population estimated by council
rate revenue	means revenue from general rates, municipal charges, service rates and service charges
recurrent grant	means a grant other than a non-recurrent grant
relative socio-economic disadvantage	in relation to a municipal district, means the relative socio-economic disadvantage, expressed as a decile for the relevant financial year, of the area in which the municipal district is located according to the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage of SEIFA
residential rates	means revenue from general rates, municipal charges, service rates and service charges levied on residential properties
restricted cash	means cash, cash equivalents and financial assets, within the meaning of the Australian Accounting Standards, not available for use other than for a purpose for which it is restricted, and includes cash to be used to fund capital works expenditure from the previous financial year
SEIFA	means the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas published from time to time by the Australian Bureau of Statistics on its Internet site
unrestricted cash	means all cash and cash equivalents other than restricted cash

5.3 Other matters

Overview of 2026

During the 2025-26 financial year, Council continued to operate within a rate-capped environment, with rates increasing by 3.0% in line with the Victorian Government's Fair Go Rates System. Despite ongoing cost pressures across the local government sector, Council maintained a sound financial position while continuing to invest in community infrastructure and services.

Council progressed a number of significant capital projects during the year, including the opening of the Keysborough Community Hub and continued construction of Oasis Aquatics and Wellbeing. Council invested $85.8 million in capital works and maintained strong cash and investment balances to support future project delivery.

The operating result benefited from the early receipt of 80% of Council's 2026-27 Financial Assistance Grant allocation and stronger-than-expected returns on investments, supported by higher cash balances and favourable interest rates. These positive impacts were partially offset by the deferral of capital grant income associated with multi-year projects where performance obligations had not yet been met at 30 June 2026.

Council's asset base continued to grow through the completion of major infrastructure projects and ongoing investment in community facilities.

21 September 2026

Kathie Teasdale
Partner
RSD Audit

Via email: kteasdale@rsdaudit.com.au

Dear Ms Teasdale

Representations by the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Financial Officer in relation to the financial report of Greater Dandenong City Council for the year ended 30 June 2026

This representation letter is provided in connection with your audit of the financial report and performance statement of Greater Dandenong City Council for the year ended 30 June 2026. The audit is undertaken for the purpose of you being able to obtain sufficient and appropriate audit evidence on which to express an opinion as to whether the:

- financial report presents fairly, in all material respects in accordance with applicable Australian Accounting Standards, and the financial reporting requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*
- whether the performance statement presents fairly in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* and *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*.

We confirm that, to the best of our knowledge and belief, the representations we make below are based on information available to us, having made such enquiries as we considered necessary to appropriately inform ourselves on these matters.

Preparation of the financial report

We have fulfilled our responsibilities, as set out in the terms of the audit engagement dated 15 August 2024, for the preparation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and the requirements of *Local Government Act 2020* and *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* in particular the financial report presents fairly, in all material respects.

1. We have prepared the financial report as a not-for-profit entity for the purpose of reporting under Australian Accounting Standards.
2. All transactions have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the financial report.[1]
3. Proper accounts and records of the transactions and affairs of the council and such other records as sufficiently explain the financial operations and financial position of the council have been kept in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*, where applicable.

[1] ASA 580 Written Representations

4. The effects of uncorrected misstatements are immaterial, both individual and in the aggregate, to the financial report as a whole.

Access to information

5. We have provided you with:
   a. access to all information of which we are aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial report such as records, documentation and other matters
   b. any additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of the audit
   c. unrestricted access to persons within the council from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence[2]

Controlled entities

6. We have undertaken a control assessment using the criteria outlined in AASB 10 *Consolidated Financial Statements*.
7. The consolidated financial report includes the value of all assets, liabilities, equity, revenue and expenses of Greater Dandenong City Council and its controlled entities:
   - Dandenong Market Pty Ltd
   - South East Leisure Pty Ltd

   The consolidated financial report has been prepared using uniform accounting policies as required by AASB 10 *Consolidated Financial Statements*.

Joint arrangements

8. We have undertaken an assessment of our contractual arrangements to determine whether they are joint arrangements as per the requirements of AASB 11 *Joint Arrangements*. Our assessment has not identified any joint arrangements that require disclosure

Investments in associates

9. We have undertaken an assessment of our contractual arrangements to determine whether they are investments classified as associates as per the requirements of AASB 128 *Investments in Associates and Joint Ventures*. Our assessment has not identified any joint arrangements that require accounting as per AASB 128 *Investments in Associates and Joint Ventures*.

Fraud disclosure

10. We have disclosed to you the results of our assessment of the risk that the financial report may be materially misstated as a result of fraud.[3]
11. We are not aware of any actual or suspected fraud affecting Greater Dandenong City Council that involves:
    a. management
    b. employees who have significant roles in internal control or
    c. others where the fraud could have a material effect on the financial report.[3]

[2] ASA 580 Written Representations/ASA 210 Agreeing the Terms of Audit Engagements
[3] ASA 240 The Auditor's Responsibilities Relating to Fraud in an Audit of a Financial Report

12. We are not aware of any allegations (to the extent we are legally able to disclose these to you in accordance with the requirements of the *Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2011*) of fraud, or suspected fraud, affecting Greater Dandenong City Council's financial report communicated by employees, former employees, analysts, regulators or others[3].

Internal control

13. We acknowledge our responsibility for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control to prevent and detect fraud and/or error[3]. We have established and maintained an adequate internal control structure to facilitate the preparation of a reliable financial report, and adequate financial records have been maintained. We have disclosed to you details of all deficiencies in internal control of which we are aware.

Legal

14. There are no known or suspected instances of non-compliance with laws or regulations whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial report.
15. There is no known actual or possible litigation and claims whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial report.
16. The Council has satisfactory title to all assets (excluding those assets held in the name of the Crown), and there are no liens or encumbrances on such assets nor has any asset, with the exception of right of use assets under finance lease, been pledged as collateral.
17. The Council has complied with all aspects of contractual agreements that would have a material effect on the financial report in the event of noncompliance.
18. The Council has been properly managed in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020*.
19. We have complied with, in all material respects, the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* for the establishment and keeping of relevant accounts, registers and other appropriate records.

Accounting estimates

20. We believe that the significant assumptions, judgements, methods and data we have used in making accounting estimates for inclusion in the financial report are reasonable, appropriately supported and, where required, disclosed to achieve recognition, measurement or disclosure that is reasonable in the context of the applicable financial reporting framework[4].

Financial statement disclosures

21. The financial report discloses all significant accounting policies used in the preparation of the financial report. We considered the substance of the underlying transactions as well as their legal form in selecting the appropriate accounting policies and related disclosures for the financial report.
22. The following have been properly recorded and/or disclosed in the financial report:
    a. arrangements involving restrictions on cash balances and line-of-credit or similar arrangements

[4] ASA 540 Auditing Accounting Estimates and related disclosures

Income and revenue

23. We have determined whether contracts and arrangements are within the scope of AASB 1004 *Contributions*, AASB 15 *Revenue from Contracts with Customers* and AASB 1058 *Income of Not-for-Profit Entities*; applying the relevant measurement and recognition requirements for each transaction.

Asset and liability fair values (including property, plant and equipment)

24. We consider the measurement methods, including related assumptions, used to determine fair values relating to assets and liabilities to be appropriate based on the nature and purpose of the asset/liability. These have been consistently applied and appropriately disclosed in the financial report.

25. We have considered the requirements of AASB 13 *Fair Value Measurement* relating to the fair value of property, plant and equipment. These assets have been valued on the basis that the highest and best use of the asset is obtained from its current use, taking into consideration what is physically possible, legally permissible and financially feasible. Our fair value assessment did not identify any internal or external events that would trigger a reassessment of the assets' highest and best use.
Further, we confirm that the assumptions used by us in the categorisation of observable and un-observable inputs within the fair value valuation hierarchy are reasonable and have been fully disclosed in accordance with the accounting standards and other applicable financial reporting requirements.

26. We have applied AASB 16 *Leases*. We have assessed whether our contracts are or contain a lease. For our leases we have recognised on the balance sheet a separate right of use asset (ROU) with an associated lease liability. We have applied the initial and subsequent measurement ROU asset and lease liability.

27. We have considered the requirements of AASB 136 *Impairment of Assets* when assessing the impairment of assets and in ensuring that no assets are stated in excess of their recoverable amount.

28. Asset useful lives have been reviewed and we are satisfied that they reflect the assets' expected period of use.

29. Allowances for depreciation have been adjusted for all important items of property, plant and equipment that have been abandoned or are otherwise unusable.

Related parties and key management personnel

30. We have determined who are the key management personnel of Greater Dandenong City Council in accordance with AASB 124 *Related Party Disclosures* and we are satisfied that our assessment is complete and appropriate.

31. We are satisfied that the compensation paid to key management personnel has been properly reported in Note 7.1(c) to the financial statements in accordance with AASB 124 *Related Party Disclosures* and includes all required components of compensation.

32. We have not identified any significant transactions with government-related entities that would require disclosure in accordance with AASB 124 *Related Party Disclosures.*[5]

[5] ASA 550 Related Parties

33. We are not aware of any non-government related parties (including any controlled entities), related party relationships or transactions which would require disclosure under AASB 124 *Related Party Disclosures.*[5]

Remuneration of other senior staff

34. We have disclosed the remuneration of all other senior staff in Note 7.1(d) as per the requirements of *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*. This includes all short-term, post-employment, other long-term benefits and any termination benefits.

Future plans

35. There were no material commitments for construction or acquisition of property, plant and equipment or to acquire other non-current assets, such as investments or intangibles, other than those disclosed in the financial report.

36. We have no plans or intentions that may materially affect the carrying values or classification of any assets and liabilities.

Going concern

37. We have assessed the Council's ability to continue as a going concern and believe there are reasonable grounds to believe that the entity will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

Subsequent events

38. No events have occurred subsequent to the balance sheet date that would require adjustment to, or disclosure in, the financial report [6].

Preparation of the performance statement

39. We have prepared and presented the performance statement in conformity with the requirements of *Local Government Act 2020* and *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*. We consider the indicators to present fairly the performance of the council.

40. All relevant matters have been recorded in the council's records and are reflected in the performance statement[7].

41. We believe the effects of uncorrected misstatements are not material, both individually and in aggregate, to the performance statement taken as a whole. A list of all uncorrected misstatements is attached to this representation letter (refer Appendix A)[7].

42. We acknowledge our responsibility for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control to prevent and detect fraud and/or error. We have established and maintained an adequate internal control structure to facilitate the preparation of a reliable performance statement. We have disclosed to you details of all deficiencies in internal control of which we are aware[7].

Publication of the financial report and performance statement

43. With respect to publication of the financial report and performance statement in hard copy, we will ensure that:

[6] ASA 560 Subsequent Events
[7] ASAE 3000 Assurance Engagements Other than Audits or Reviews of Historical Financial Information

a. the financial report and performance statement accurately reflects the audited financial report and performance statement and
b. the independent auditor's reports are reproduced accurately and in full.

44. The electronic presentation of the financial report and performance statement is our responsibility. Our responsibility includes ensuring that the electronic version of the financial report, the performance statement and the independent auditor's reports presented on the website are the same as the final signed version of the financial report, the performance statement and independent auditor's reports.

45. The Annual Report may include additional financial and/or non-financial information other than the financial report, the performance statement and the independent auditor's reports (referred to as 'other information'). With respect to other information that is included in the council's Annual Report, we have informed you of all the sections/separate documents that we expect to issue that may comprise other information. With regard to any other information that we have not provided to you prior to the date of the auditor's report, that we intend to prepare and issue such other information and will provide it to you to enable you to complete your required procedures.[8]

46. We have provided you with a copy of the printers' proof of the annual report or will provide a copy to you on 07 October 2026. We plan to publish our annual report on our website on 14 October 2026.

Other matters[9]

47. We have provided you with all requested information, explanations and assistance for the purposes of the audit.

48. We have provided you with all information required by the *Local Government Act 2020.*

Conclusion

We understand that your examination was made in accordance with the *Audit Act 1994* and Australian Auditing Standards and was, therefore, designed primarily for the purpose of expressing an audit opinion on the financial report and performance statement of the council taken as a whole, and that your tests of the financial records and other auditing procedures were limited to those which you considered necessary for that purpose.

This letter is provided for and on behalf of Greater Dandenong City Council.

Yours sincerely

Jacqui Weatherill
Chief Executive Officer
21 September 2026

Mark Burke
Chief Financial Officer
21 September 2026

[8] ASA 720 The Auditor's Responsibilities Relating to Other Information
[9] ASA 580 Written Representations

4.1.4 Investment Policy 2026 Update

Responsible Officer: Chief Financial Officer

Attachments:

1. Table of Changes [**4.1.4.1** - 2 pages]
2. Investment Policy September 2026 (clean) [**4.1.4.2** - 13 pages]
3. Investment Policy September 2026 (marked-up) [**4.1.4.3** - 14 pages]
4. Current Investment Policy [**4.1.4.4** - 13 pages]

Officer Recommendation

That Council ADOPTS the revised Investment Policy (September 2026), provided as Attachment 2.

Executive Summary

1. The Investment Policy has undergone its scheduled review to ensure it remains current and aligned with legislative, governance and organisational requirements. The revised policy is presented to Council for formal adoption following consideration by the Audit and Risk Committee and Councillors at the Councillor Briefing Session on 14 September 2026.

Background

2. The Investment Policy provides the framework for authorised officers to invest Council's surplus funds prudently, with preservation of capital, liquidity and return as the key objectives. The policy applies to all funds invested on behalf of Council and is due for its scheduled review in September 2026.

Key Issues and Discussion

3. There are four attachments to this report:
   a) A summary table of changes;
   b) A clean version of the revised Investment Policy proposed for adoption;
   c) A marked-up version showing the proposed changes; and
   d) The current Investment Policy.
4. The amendments are primarily governance and administrative changes. They include:
   - expansion of the prohibited investments list to include investments related to weapons, alcohol, tobacco and pornography, to better align investment decisions with Council's values.
   - clearer requirements for oversight and independence of an investment adviser (where engaged by Council), including disclosure of any material use of artificial intelligence.
   - clearer arrangements for identifying, escalating and reporting policy breaches.
   - clarification of investment risks, including relevant non-financial risks.
   - strengthened monitoring, reporting and implementation requirements.

- retention of Council's preference for environmentally and socially responsible investments where these meet the policy's risk, return and liquidity requirements.
- and updated legislative, accounting and organisational references.

5. No changes are proposed to the core investment objectives, approved investment framework, investment thresholds, credit and institutional exposure limits, maturity settings or quotation requirements. The prohibited investments list has been expanded to clarify investments that Council will not undertake.
6. The proposed revisions were presented to the Councillor Briefing Session on 14 September 2026. Feedback and questions raised through that process have been considered in finalising the policy for Council adoption.
7. The next scheduled review is September 2029.

Governance Compliance

Human Resource Implications (consider Workforce Planning and Service Statements)

8. The revised policy does not affect existing staffing levels. Implementation, monitoring and reporting will be undertaken within current Financial Services responsibilities and resources.

Financial/Asset Resource Implications (consider Service Statements, Budget, Long Term Financial Strategy and Asset Plan)

Operating Budget Implications

9. There are no direct operating budget implications associated with this report. The policy continues to support prudent management of surplus funds and the optimisation of investment returns within approved risk and liquidity parameters.

Asset Implications

10. This item does not affect any existing Council assets.

Legal/Risk Implications

11. The revised policy supports compliance with section 103 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and strengthens controls over investment risk, diversification, investment adviser independence, breach escalation and reporting. If the policy is not adopted, Council would retain outdated references and weaker governance arrangements, increasing the risk of inconsistent application, insufficient oversight or non-compliance.

Environmental Implications

12. The revised policy retains Council's preference for environmentally and socially responsible investment options, including fossil-fuel-free authorised deposit-taking institutions and green term deposits, where they meet the policy's return, risk and liquidity requirements. No direct environmental impacts arise from adoption of the policy.

Gender Impact Assessment

13. A gender impact assessment is not required because the policy governs the internal investment of Council funds and does not directly and significantly affect the public.

Community Consultation

14. There was no requirement for community consultation. The proposed updates were reviewed within Financial Services, considered through the internal review process and by the Audit and Risk Committee, and presented to Councillors at the Councillor Briefing Session. Feedback and questions raised through these processes were considered in finalising the policy for Council adoption.

Links to Community Vision, Council Plan, Strategy, Notice of Motion

15. This report is consistent with the following principles in the Community Vision 2040:

    Not Applicable

16. This report is consistent with the following strategic objectives from the Council Plan 2025-29:

    - A Council that demonstrates leadership, responsible use of public resources, and a commitment to investing in the community.

17. This report does not relate to a Notice of Motion.

Legislative and Policy Obligations

18. This report has considered Council's legislative and policy obligations (where applicable) as outlined in the Report Considerations section detailed in the front of this Agenda. The applicable obligations considered and applied are:

    - The Overarching Governance Principles and sections 101, 102 and 103 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.
    - The *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.
    - The *Gender Equality Act 2020*.
    - Climate change and sustainability considerations.
    - Applicable Australian Accounting Standards.
    - Related Council policies, strategies and frameworks.

Policy Review - Table of Changes

POLICY NAME: Investment Policy

REVIEW DATE: September 2026

Policy section	Change proposed	Reason for proposed change
Document Control	Updated version, responsible business areas, mandated-policy status and next review date of September 2029.	To align the policy with the current governance template, organisational structure and three-year review cycle.
Throughout	Updated terminology, officer titles, legislative references, formatting and section numbering.	To improve consistency, currency and clarity.
Definitions	Revised definitions for Principal Accounting Officer and S&P ratings.	To support consistent interpretation and application of the policy.
Federal Government Bank Guarantee	Removed original section and replaced with a more concise paragraph under 'Approved Investments' section.	More relevant and appropriate.
Prohibited Investments	Expanded prohibited investments to include weapons, alcohol, tobacco or pornography.	To align investment decisions with Council values.
Policy Breaches and Reporting	Introduced requirements for prompt escalation, documentation, corrective action and quarterly Council reporting of material breaches.	To improve governance, accountability and transparency.
Investment Advisor	Disclosure requirements regarding the use of artificial intelligence by the investment advisor.	To enhance transparency and accountability regarding the use of artificial intelligence in the provision of investment services.
Reporting, Monitoring, Review and Implementation	Refined quarterly reporting requirements for investments. Added Stakeholder Engagement and Implementation as per new policy template.	To improve relevance of reporting and to align the policy with the current governance template

Policy section	Change proposed	Reason for proposed change
References and Administrative Updates	Updated legislation, accounting standards, related documents and the process for minor administrative amendments.	To maintain currency while reserving material policy changes for Council approval.

Investment Policy
September 2026

Greater Dandenong

Document Control

Date Created: 14 April 2009

Objective ID: A9821113

Date of Adoption: 14 September 2020

Version No: 005

Policy Superseded by this Policy: Not applicable

Responsible Department: Financial Services

Responsible Directorate: Chief Financial Office

Gender Impact Assessment: Not Required

Adoption Required by: Council

Policy Type: Mandated

Next Review: September 2029

Document Compliance

Council acknowledges the legal responsibility to comply with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 and the Equal Opportunity Act 2010. The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 is designed to protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens. The Charter gives legal protection to 20 fundamental human rights under four key values that include freedom, respect, equality and dignity.

Greater Dandenong City Council Policies comply with the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, the *Climate Change Act 2017*, the Child Safe Standards contained in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*, (Amended) the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* and the Overarching Governance Principles specified in 9(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Acknowledgement of Country

Greater Dandenong City Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this land, the Bunurong People and pays respect to their Elders past and present. We recognise and respect their continuing connections to climate, Culture, Country and waters.

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1. POLICY OBJECTIVE (OR PURPOSE)

The Investment Policy (the policy) provides a framework within which the investment of Council funds is to be undertaken by authorised Council officers. It provides a set of guidelines to ensure that investment management of surplus cash funds is made with prudence, consideration of acceptable risk and relevant applicable legislation. It also aims to safeguard Council's cash assets and meet Council's objectives in generating maximum value to ratepayers.

2. BACKGROUND

The policy was developed to provide guidance to staff undertaking investment of Council funds.

3. SCOPE

This policy will apply to all funds invested on behalf of Greater Dandenong City Council.

4. DEFINITIONS

Term	Meaning
ADI	Authorised Deposit-taking Institutions
Credit rating	Assessment of the creditworthiness or risk associated with an investment or a borrower.
Principal Accounting Officer	Chief Financial Officer
Responsible investment	Is a process that takes into account environmental, social and governance (ESG) and ethical issues into the investment process of research, analysis, selection and monitoring of investments.
S&P	S&P Global Ratings is a global credit rating agency that provides independent, forward-looking opinions on the relative creditworthiness of issuers and debt obligations. Its long-term rating scale ranges from AAA to D. Ratings of BBB− and above are classified as investment grade. • AAA – extremely strong capacity to meet financial commitments; the highest rating. • AA – very strong capacity to meet financial commitments. • A – strong capacity to meet financial commitments but somewhat more susceptible to adverse economic conditions than higher-rated categories.

Term	Meaning
	• BBB - adequate capacity to meet financial commitments, although adverse economic conditions are more likely to weaken that capacity. Ratings are opinions, may change over time and should not be relied upon as the sole basis for an investment decision.

5. POLICY

5.1 Investment Objectives

In investing Council funds, Council must meet the following objectives:

1. Preservation of Capital – the preservation of capital and protection of principal is the foremost objective. Investments made by Council shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved investments and with regard to ensuring the protection of Council funds;
2. Return on investment – within the boundaries of meeting the safety objective, Council will seek to maximise the return-on-investment funds; and
3. Maintenance of liquidity – investment decisions will at all times have regard for the future liquidity requirements of Council and maintain flexibility for Council to meet its short-term funding requirements.

Where the above three criteria can be met, Council may seek to invest a portion of its investment portfolio in a responsible investment approach, and which meets the goals and objectives of Council.

5.2 Approved Investments

Council will invest its surplus funds within the guidelines and restrictions contained in section 103 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Section 103 of the *Local Government Act 2020* states that "Council may invest money in:

a) in Government securities of the Commonwealth
b) in securities guaranteed by the Government of Victoria
c) with any financial institution guaranteed by the Government of Victoria
d) with an ADI
e) on deposit with an eligible money market dealer within the meaning of the *Corporations Act*
f) in any other manner approved by the Minister, either generally or specifically, to be an authorised manner of investment for the purposes of this section." For example,

the Victorian Funds Management Corporation was deemed an approved investment product[1].

Council will invest in any of the investments listed above subject to the limits mentioned in this policy, and subject to the specific requirements of the Act. Different investment products will have differing levels of use, practicality and desirability at different times of the economic cycle. The decision regarding investment types will be made with regard to the prevailing economic and market conditions, the liquidity requirements of Council and the rates of return applicable at the time.

Eligible Australian-dollar deposits with Australian-incorporated ADIs may be protected under the Australian Government Financial Claims Scheme up to $250,000 per account holder per ADI. Council will not rely on this protection as a substitute for appropriate credit assessment, diversification and investment limits.

5.3 Responsible investment

Council seeks to preference its investments with ADI's identified as environmentally and socially responsible in line with Council's vision and values.

Council will preference fossil fuel free ADIs, provided they can demonstrate:

- The rate of return on investment is equivalent to the average rates of other ADI's while complying with Council's investment policy and availability;
- The avoidance of funding fossil fuel use in the investment product; and
- That the ADI and product are compliant with this Investment Policy.

Green term deposits are generally certified by the Climate Bonds Standard and are associated with a defined pool of eligible assets and/or projects such as renewable energy, low carbon transport, low carbon buildings and water infrastructure.

Council may invest in such complying products provided they comply with the objectives and risk covenants in this Policy.

5.4 Prohibited investments

The following investments are prohibited as they place an unacceptable risk to Council (refer Risk Management criteria in the following section).

- Derivative based instruments
- Stand-alone securities issued that have underlying futures, options, forwards contracts and swaps of any kind
- Mortgage of land
- Investments related to weapons, alcohol, tobacco or pornography.
- Leveraged investing – using borrowed money to invest.

[1] Local Government Victoria Bulletin 38/2022 – Approval of Investments with Victorian Funds Management Corporation 21 June 2022.

5.5 Risk Management

Council will actively manage the different types of risks relating to investments as follows:

Table 5.3.1

Type of risk	Details and mitigation procedures
Credit risk	The risk that a party or guarantor to a transaction will fail to fulfil its obligations. In the context of this policy, it relates to the risk of loss due to the failure of an institution/entity with which an investment is held to pay the interest and/or repay the principal of an investment. Manage this by matching rate of return expectations with levels of risk by seeking investments with the highest S&P rating with regard to investment return.
Diversity risk	Place Council funds in a broad range of products and entities (subject to acceptable credit ratings) to avoid overexposure to a single sector of the investment market.
Management risk	Maintain the segregation of investment functions – no Council officer will both approve and invest funds.
Market risk	The risk that fair value or future cash flows will fluctuate due to changes in market prices, or benchmark returns (see Table 5.4.2) will unexpectedly overtake the investment's return.
Maturity risk	Managing the length of term to maturity of the investment portfolio. Longer-term investments have greater exposure to market volatility and changes to interest rate return. Set maturity limits for different investments and counterparties to a maximum of 5 years, unless approved by Council.
Performance risk	Monitor investment performances against the benchmark for that category of investments. Investments that consistently perform below benchmark (see Table 5.4.2) will be invested in alternative instruments. Monitor credit ratings of counterparties regularly.
Preservation of investment principal (capital)	Avoiding investments that may place Council invested cash at risk of loss, such as speculative instruments.
Rollover risk	The need to balance Council's cash flow needs with the objective of maximising investment returns. Shorter term investments are more likely to ensure investment funds are readily available to meet Council's financial obligations as they fall due. However longer-term investments are more likely to optimise interest income return.

5.6 Diversification of Investments by Credit Rating and Financial Institution

Council will control the credit quality of the investment portfolio by applying the following credit framework. Exposure to individual financial institutions will be restricted by their rating so that single entity exposure is limited as detailed in Table 5.4.1 below (excludes Government guaranteed investments).

Percentage holdings shown in the table below should be restricted to average investment holdings excluding at-call amounts.

Table 5.4.1

S&P Long Term Rating	Investment portfolio maximum by credit rating	Individual Institution (ADI) limits
AAA Category	100%	60%
AA Category or Major Banks* (AA+, AA and AA-)	100%	50%
A Category (A+, A and A-)	60%	40%
BBB Category (BBB+ to BBB-)	40%	30%
Unrated ADI category	0%	0%

* Major Banks are defined as the ADI deposits or senior guaranteed principal and interest ADI securities issued by the major Australian banking groups (including ADI subsidiaries whether or not explicitly guaranteed and brands:

- Commonwealth Bank of Australia (CBA)
- National Australia Bank Limited (NAB)
- Westpac Banking Corporation (WBC)
- Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Limited (ANZ)

Investments are subject to the prudential standards of the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA). A listing of the approved ADI's is available online (click here).

Where the exposure limit of an investment category is exceeded due to a credit-rating downgrade, merger, withdrawal of funds, portfolio movement or another event outside Council's control, no additional investment may be placed with the affected institution or rating category until the exposure is compliant. The position must be corrected as soon as practicable, having regard to capital preservation, liquidity requirements and any costs of early redemption.

Any actual or suspected breach of this Policy must be reported promptly to the Chief Financial Officer and Manager Financial Services, documented in the investment register and supported by an approved corrective action. Material breaches must be reported in the next quarterly investment report to Council.

Table 5.4.2 – Benchmarks

Council will use the following benchmarks to analyse the risk and return of the investment portfolio to understand how it is performing.

Investment category	Benchmark
At call	Official Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) cash rate (< 1 month)
Term deposits and other authorised investments	Applicable RBA Bond Index plus 0.25% (> 1 month)

5.7 Investment Maturity

Investments are to be structured with regard to maturity dates in order to satisfy income and liquidity requirements.

Once the primary aim of liquidity is met, Council will diversify its maturity profile as this will ordinarily be a low-risk source of additional return as well as reducing the volatility of Council's income. However, Council always retains the flexibility to invest as short as required by internal requirements or the economic outlook.

The factors and/or information used by Council to determine minimum allocations to the shorter durations include:

- Council's liquidity requirements to cover both regular payments as well as sufficient buffer to cover reasonably foreseeable contingencies.
- Medium term financial plans and major capital projects forecasts.
- Known grants, asset sales or similar one-off inflows.
- Seasonal patterns to Council's investment balances.

Maturity will also be laddered to provide for interest rate fluctuations and to minimise investment interest risk.

Investments are to be guided by the following terms to maturity targets:

Table 5.5.1

Maturity category	Time to maturity	Minimum allocation *	Maximum allocation *
Working capital - at call	0 months	$5 million	30%
Working capital - short term	0 to 3 months	0%	100%
Short-medium term	3 to 12 months	0%	75%
Long term	Greater than 12 months	0%	30%

* Allocation of total investment funds.

5.8 Quotations for Investments

- Not less than three (3) quotations shall be obtained from authorised institutions whenever a direct investment is proposed and ideally quotes should be received from a larger range of ADI.
- When evaluating potential investments Council will consider financial institutions (ADIs) that are committed to sustainable and responsible practices including:
  - the offering of suitable 'fossil fuel free' investment options; and/or
  - the offering of suitable ethical investment options; and/or
  - a commitment to adding value to the Greater Dandenong community.
- The selection, however, must also consider and not be in conflict with the other objectives of the Investment Policy.
- The best quote on the day will be successful after allowing for administrative and banking costs, as well as having regard to the limits set in this policy.
- Investment recommendations are required to be approved by either the Manager Financial Services or the CFO.
- The physical transfer of funds will require two authorised officers registered with Council's financial institution.

5.9 Cash Management

The following principles apply to ensure efficient management of Council's cash resources:

- Cash flows and cash balances will be reviewed daily. The investment register shall be updated daily and monitored for compliance with the diversification requirements of this policy.
- An interest earning, at call account shall also be used to maximise earnings on funds whilst investment decisions are pending. Consideration of investment placements is predicated on the operating account maintaining a minimum credit balance of $500,000 at all times, and the At Call account maintaining a $5 million balance to cover any urgent additional cashflow requirements.
- The balance of funds considered to be surplus to the Council's immediate cash requirements will be invested in accordance with the guidelines in this policy.
- All investments including rolling movements will be recorded in Council's investment register.

5.10 Investments Advisor

An investment advisor, if appointed, must be approved by Council and licensed by the Australian Securities and Investment Commission. The advisor must be an independent person who has no actual or potential conflict of interest in relation to investment products being recommended.

The advisor must disclose to Council any use of artificial intelligence (AI) in providing investment advice or related services, including where AI has materially contributed to the analysis, recommendations or information provided to Council. The advisor remains responsible for the accuracy, integrity and appropriateness of all advice provided.

5.11 Responsibilities

The Chief Executive Officer has delegated the day-to-day management and authority to invest Council's surplus funds to the CFO and the Manager Financial Services who must ensure adequate skill, support and oversight [2].

This Financial Accounting function is responsible for investment recommendations and administration of investment funds under the direction and approval of the Manager Financial Services. This includes responsibility for having cash available to meet day-to-day demands and to invest all excess cash into appropriate investments as per this policy.

6. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All Council Staff, and other persons involved in the administration or application of this policy must act impartially and in the public interest.

Any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest must be identified, declared and managed in accordance with Council's Conflict of Interest Policy and relevant legislation.

Where a conflict of interest arises:

- Council staff must disclose the conflict as soon as practicable to their direct report and the Manager Governance, Integrity, Legal and Risk.
- The CEO must disclose the conflict as soon as practicable to the Mayor and the Manager Governance, Integrity, Legal and Risk.
- Appropriate steps must be taken to manage or mitigate the conflict, including recusal from decision-making where required.

Failure to declare or appropriately manage a conflict of interest may result in disciplinary or other action.

[2] Instrument of Sub-Delegation by Chief Executive Officer to Members of Council Staff

7. REPORTING, MONITORING, REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION

Reporting	A quarterly report will be provided to the Council outlining investments held by financial institution, maturity profile, interest income against YTD budget, and compliance with legislative and policy requirements. Council or the Chief Executive Officer may request additional reporting as required.
Monitoring	Council will comply with relevant Accounting Standards in valuing its investments, quantifying its investment returns and financial statement disclosures. Documentary evidence must be held for each investment, and the details thereof maintained in an investment register. The documentary evidence must provide Council legal title to the investment. For audit purposes, certificates must be obtained from the banks/fund managers/custodian confirming the amounts of investment held on Council's behalf at 30 June each year.
Review	Investment balances, transactions and internal controls will be subject to external and/or internal audit review. This Policy will be reviewed every three years or as required in the event of legislative change or as a result of significantly changed economic/market conditions. The Policy may also be changed as a result of other amendments that are to the advantage of Council. Any amendment to this Policy must be by Council resolution.
Stakeholder Engagement	The review process will include consultation with relevant internal stakeholders, including Financial Services, Governance, Integrity, Legal and Risk and the Executive Management Team. The Audit and Risk Committee, external auditors, investment advisers and other subject matter experts will be consulted where appropriate.
Implementation	This Policy will be published on Council's intranet and communicated to officers involved in investment management, approval, reporting and oversight. Supporting procedures, delegations, controls and systems will be maintained to enable consistent implementation.

8. REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

Legislation

Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
Gender Equality Act 2020
Local Government Act 2020

Accounting Standards

- AASB 7 Financial Instruments: Disclosures
- AASB 9 Financial Instruments
- AASB 13 Fair Value Measurement
- AASB 132 Financial Instruments: Presentation
- AASB 136 Impairment of Assets
- AASB 139 Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement

Related Council and Other Policies, Procedures, Strategies, Protocols, Guidelines

- Annual Report
- Budget
- Long Term Financial Plan
- Climate Change Emergency Strategy and Action Plan 2020-30
- Ministerial Guidelines and Circulars

9. ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

It is recognised that from time to time, circumstance may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter this document, such a change may be made administratively. Examples include a change to the name of a Council department, the change to an existing policy or document referred to in this policy and minor updates to legislation and the like which does not have a material impact. All changes or updates which materially alter this policy must be by resolution of Council.

Date	Update

Investment Policy September 2026

Greater Dandenong

Document Control

Date Created: 14 April 2009

Objective ID: A9821113

Date of Adoption: 14 September 2020

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Policy Superseded by this Policy: Not applicable

Responsible Department: Financial Services

Responsible Directorate: Chief Financial Office

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Adoption Required by: Council

Policy Type: Mandated

Next Review: September 2029

Document Compliance

Council acknowledges the legal responsibility to comply with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 and the Equal Opportunity Act 2010. The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 is designed to protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens. The Charter gives legal protection to 20 fundamental human rights under four key values that include freedom, respect, equality and dignity.

Greater Dandenong City Council Policies comply with the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, the *Climate Change Act 2017*, the Child Safe Standards contained in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*, (Amended) the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* and the Overarching Governance Principles specified in 9(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Acknowledgement of Country

Greater Dandenong City Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this land, the Bunurong People and pays respect to their Elders past and present. We recognise and respect their continuing connections to climate, Culture, Country and waters.

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1. POLICY OBJECTIVE (OR PURPOSE)

The Investment Policy (the policy) provides a framework within which the investment of Council funds is to be undertaken by authorised Council officers. It provides a set of guidelines to ensure that investment management of surplus cash funds is made with prudence, consideration of acceptable risk and relevant applicable legislation. It also aims to safeguard Council's cash assets and meet Council's objectives in generating maximum value to ratepayers.

2. BACKGROUND

The policy was developed to provide guidance to staff undertaking investment of Council funds.

3. SCOPE

This policy will apply to all funds invested on behalf of Greater Dandenong City Council.

4. DEFINITIONS

ADI	Authorised Deposit-taking Institutions
Credit rating	Assessment of the creditworthiness or risk associated with an investment or a borrower.
Principal Accounting Officer	~~Manager Financial Services of Council.~~Chief Financial Officer
Responsible investment	Is a process that takes into account environmental, social and governance (ESG) and ethical issues into the investment process of research, analysis, selection and monitoring of investments.
S&P	S&P Global Ratings is a~~n~~ global~~American~~ credit rating agency that provides independent, forward-looking opinions on the relative creditworthiness of issuers and debt obligations. ~~who issue credit ratings for the debt of public and private companies as well as for governments and government entities.~~ ~~S&P Global Ratings is the largest of the credit rating agencies and is a nationally and internationally recognised statistical rating organisation.~~ Its long-term rating scale ranges from AAA to D. Ratings of BBB− and above are classified as investment grade. ~~S&P long-term investment grade ratings comprise:~~

- AAA – extremely strong capacity to meet financial ~~obligations~~commitments; the highest rating. ~~This is the highest issued rating by S&P.~~
- AA – very strong capacity to meet financial ~~obligations~~ commitments. ~~Very low credit risk and not significantly vulnerable to foreseeable events.~~
- A – strong capacity to meet financial commitments but somewhat more susceptible to adverse economic conditions than higher-rated categories. ~~high credit rating with expectation of low credit risk. However somewhat more susceptible to the adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions compared to AAA and AA rated organisations.~~
- BBB - adequate capacity to meet financial commitments, although adverse economic conditions are more likely to weaken that capacity. ~~good credit quality with an expectation of low credit risk. However adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to lead to a weakened capacity to meet financial commitments.~~

Ratings are opinions, may change over time and should not be relied upon as the sole basis for an investment decision.

5. POLICY

5.1 Investment Objectives

In investing Council funds, Council must meet the following objectives:

1. Preservation of Capital ~~Safety of principal~~ – the preservation of capital and protection of principal is the foremost objective ~~of the investment program~~. Investments made by Council shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved investments and with regard to ensuring the protection of Council funds; ~~and~~
2. Return on investment – within the boundaries of meeting the safety objective, Council will seek to maximi~~s~~ze the return-on-investment funds; and
3. Maintenance of liquidity – investment decisions will at all times have regard for the future liquidity requirements of Council and maintain flexibility for Council to meet its short-term funding requirements.

Where the above three criteria can be met, Council may seek to invest a portion of its investment portfolio in a responsible investment approach, and which meets the goals and objectives of Council.

5.2 Approved Investments

Council will invest its surplus funds within the guidelines and restrictions contained in section 103 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Section 103 of the *Local Government Act 2020* states that "Council may invest money in:

a) in Government securities of the Commonwealth~~; and~~
b) in securities guaranteed by the Government of Victoria~~; and~~
c) with any financial institution guaranteed by the Government of Victoria~~;~~
d) with an ADI~~;~~
~~e) with any financial institution guaranteed by the Government of Victoria;~~
f) on deposit with an eligible money market dealer within the meaning of the *Corporations Act*~~; and~~
g) in any other manner approved by the Minister, either generally or specifically, to be an authorised manner of investment for the purposes of this section." For example, the Victorian Funds Management Corporation was deemed an approved investment product[1].

Council will invest in any of the investments listed above subject to the limits mentioned in this policy, and subject to the specific requirements of the Act. Different investment products will have differing levels of use, practicality and desirability at different times of the economic cycle. The decision regarding investment types will be made with regard to the prevailing economic and market conditions, the liquidity requirements of Council and the rates of return applicable at the time.

Eligible Australian-dollar deposits with Australian-incorporated ADIs may be protected under the Australian Government Financial Claims Scheme up to $250,000 per account holder per ADI. Council will not rely on this protection as a substitute for appropriate credit assessment, diversification and investment limits.

~~5.3 Federal Government Bank Guarantee~~

~~The Australian Government has issued a Permanent Guarantee on all deposits in ADI's up to $250,000.~~

~~The Financial Claims Scheme (FCS) is an Australian Government scheme that was established during the 2008 global financial crisis to provide financial protection for consumers in the unlikely event of a failure of a bank, credit union, building society or general insurer. The FCS provides protection for depositors of banks, credit unions and building societies that are incorporated in Australia (also known as ADIs), for deposits up to $250,000 per account holder per ADI. The scheme aims to return deposits to account holders within seven days of activation of the FCS. The FCS can be activated by the Australian Government in the unlikely event that an ADI or general insurer fails. Once activated, the FCS will be administered by the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA).~~

~~The objectives of the FCS are to:~~

[1] Local Government Victoria Bulletin 38/2022 – Approval of Investments with Victorian Funds Management Corporation 21 June 2022.

- ~~Protect depositors of ADIs, and claimants of general insurers, from potential loss in the unlikely event of the failure of these institutions.~~
- ~~Provide depositors with prompt access to their deposits that are protected under the FCS.~~
- ~~Support the stability of the Australian financial system.~~

~~5.4~~5.3 Responsible investment

Council seeks to preference its investments with ADI's identified as environmentally and socially responsible in line with Council's vision and values.

Council will preference fossil fuel free ADIs, provided they can demonstrate:

- The rate of return on investment is equivalent to the average rates of other ADI's while complying with Council's investment policy and availability;
- The avoidance of funding fossil fuel use in the investment product; and
- That the ADI and product are compliant with this Investment Policy.

Green term deposits are generally certified by the Climate Bonds Standard and are associated with a defined pool of eligible assets and/or projects such as renewable energy, low carbon transport, low carbon buildings and water infrastructure.

Council may invest in such complying products provided they comply with the objectives and risk covenants in this Policy.

~~5.5~~5.4 Prohibited investments

The following investments are prohibited as they place an unacceptable risk to Council (refer Risk Management criteria in the following section).

- Derivative based instruments
- Stand-alone securities issued that have underlying futures, options, forwards contracts and swaps of any kind
- Mortgage of land
- Investments related to weapons, alcohol, tobacco or pornography.
- Leveraged investing – using borrowed money to invest.

~~5.6~~5.5 Risk Management

Council will actively manage the different types of risks relating to investments as follows:

Table 5.3.1

Type of risk	Details and mitigation procedures
Credit risk	The risk that a party or guarantor to a transaction will fail to fulfil its obligations. In the context of this policy, it relates to the risk of loss due to the failure of an institution/entity with which an investment is held to pay the interest and/or repay the principal of an investment. Manage this by matching rate of return expectations with levels of risk by seeking investments with the highest S&P rating with regard to investment return.
Diversity risk	Place Council funds in a broad range of products and entities (subject to acceptable credit ratings) to avoid overexposure to a single sector of the investment market.
Management risk	Maintain the segregation of investment functions – no Council officer will both approve and invest funds.
Market risk	The risk that fair value or future cash flows will fluctuate due to changes in market prices, or benchmark returns (see Table 5.4.2) will unexpectedly overtake the investment's return.
Maturity risk	Managing the length of term to maturity of the investment portfolio. Longer-term investments have greater exposure to market volatility and changes to interest rate return. Set maturity limits for different investments and counterparties to a maximum of 5 years, unless approved by Council.
Performance risk	Monitor investment performances against the benchmark for that category of investments. Investments that consistently perform below benchmark (see Table 5.4.2) will be invested in alternative instruments. Monitor credit ratings of counterparties regularly.
Preservation of investment principal (capital)	Avoiding investments that may place Council invested cash at risk of loss, such as speculative instruments.
Rollover risk	The need to balance Council's cash flow needs with the objective of maximising investment returns. Shorter term investments are more likely to ensure investment funds are readily available to meet Council's financial obligations as they fall due. However longer-term investments are more likely to optimise interest income return.

~~5.7~~5.6 Diversification of Investments by Credit Rating and Financial Institution

Council will control the credit quality of the investment portfolio by applying the following credit framework. Exposure to individual financial institutions will be restricted by their rating so that single entity exposure is limited as detailed in Table 5.4.1 below (excludes Government guaranteed investments).

Percentage holdings shown in the table below should be restricted to average investment holdings excluding at-call amounts.

Table 5.4.1

S&P Long Term Rating	Investment portfolio maximum by credit rating	Individual Institution (ADI) limits
AAA Category	100%	60%
AA Category or Major Banks* (AA+, AA and AA-)	100%	50%
A Category (A+, A and A-)	60%	40%
BBB Category (BBB+ to BBB-)	40%	30%
Unrated ADI category	0%	0%

* Major Banks are defined as the ADI deposits or senior guaranteed principal and interest ADI securities issued by the major Australian banking groups (including ADI subsidiaries whether or not explicitly guaranteed and brands:

- Commonwealth Bank of Australia (CBA)
- National Australia Bank Limited (NAB)
- Westpac Banking Corporation (WBC)
- Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Limited (ANZ)

Investments are subject to the prudential standards of the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA). A listing of the approved ADI's is available online (click here).

Where the exposure limit of an investment category is exceeded due to a credit-rating downgrade, merger, withdrawal of funds, portfolio movement or another event outside Council's control, no additional investment may be placed with the affected institution or rating category until the exposure is compliant. The position must be corrected as soon as practicable, having regard to capital preservation, liquidity requirements and any costs of early redemption.

Any actual or suspected breach of this Policy must be reported promptly to the Chief Financial Officer and Manager Financial Services, documented in the investment register and supported by an approved corrective action. Material breaches must be reported in the next quarterly investment report to Council.
~~as a result of an investment being redeemed, the exposure limits will be re-balanced at the next available opportunity.~~

~~If any of the investments are downgraded such that they no longer fall within this investment policy, they will be divested as soon as practicable.~~

Table 5.4.2 – Benchmarks

Council will use the following benchmarks to analyse the risk and return of the investment portfolio to understand how it is performing.

Investment category	Benchmark
At call	Official Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) cash rate (< 1 month)
Term deposits and other authorised investments	Applicable RBA Bond Index plus 0.25% (> 1 month)

~~5.8~~5.7 Investment Maturity

Investments are to be structured with regard to maturity dates in order to satisfy income and liquidity requirements.

Once the primary aim of liquidity is met, Council will diversify its maturity profile as this will ordinarily be a low-risk source of additional return as well as reducing the volatility of Council's income. However, Council always retains the flexibility to invest as short as required by internal requirements or the economic outlook.

The factors and/or information used by Council to determine minimum allocations to the shorter durations include:

- Council's liquidity requirements to cover both regular payments as well as sufficient buffer to cover reasonably foreseeable contingencies.
- Medium term financial plans and major capital projects forecasts.
- Known grants, asset sales or similar one-off inflows.
- Seasonal patterns to Council's investment balances.

Maturity will also be laddered to provide for interest rate fluctuations and to minimise investment interest risk.

Investments are to be guided by the following terms to maturity targets:

Table 5.5.1

Maturity category	Time to maturity	Minimum allocation *	Maximum allocation *
Working capital - at call	0 months	$5 million	30%
Working capital - short term	0 to 3 months	0%	100%
Short-medium term	3 to 12 months	0%	75%
Long term	Greater than 12 months	0%	30%

* Allocation of total investment funds.

~~5.9~~5.8 Quotations for Investments

- Not less than three (3) quotations shall be obtained from authorised institutions whenever a direct investment is proposed and ideally quotes should be received from a larger range of ADI.
- When evaluating potential investments Council will consider financial institutions (ADIs) that are committed to sustainable and responsible practices including:
  - the offering of suitable 'fossil fuel free' investment options; and/or
  - the offering of suitable ethical investment options; and/or
  - a commitment to adding value to the Greater Dandenong community.
- The selection, however, must also consider and not be in conflict with the other objectives of the Investment Policy.
- The best quote on the day will be successful after allowing for administrative and banking costs, as well as having regard to the limits set in this policy.
- Investment recommendations are required to be approved by either the Manager Financial Services or the ~~Executive Manager Finance and IT~~CFO.
- The physical transfer of funds will require two authorised officers registered with Council's financial institution.

~~5.10~~5.9 Cash Management

The following principles apply to ensure efficient management of Council's cash resources:

- Cash flows and cash balances will be reviewed daily. The investment register shall be updated daily and monitored for compliance with the diversification requirements of this policy.
- An interest earning, at call account shall also be used to maximise earnings on funds whilst investment decisions are pending. Consideration of investment placements is predicated on the operating account maintaining a minimum credit balance of $500,000 at all times, and the At Call account maintaining a $5 million balance to cover any urgent additional cashflow requirements.
- The balance of funds considered to be surplus to the Council's immediate cash requirements will be invested in accordance with the guidelines in this policy.
- All investments including rolling movements will be recorded in Council's investment register.

~~5.11~~5.10 Investments Advisor

An investment advisor, if appointed, must be approved by Council and licensed by the Australian Securities and Investment Commission. The advisor must be an independent person who has no actual or potential conflict of interest in relation to investment products being recommended.

The advisor must disclose to Council any use of artificial intelligence (AI) in providing investment advice or related services, including where AI has materially contributed to the analysis, recommendations or information provided to Council. The advisor remains responsible for the accuracy, integrity and appropriateness of all advice provided.

~~5.12~~5.11 Responsibilities

The Chief Executive Officer has delegated the day-to-day management and authority to invest Council's surplus funds to the ~~Executive Manager Finance and IT~~ CFO and the Manager Financial Services who must ensure adequate skill, support and oversight[2].

This Financial Accounting function is responsible for investment recommendations and administration of investment funds under the direction and approval of the Manager Financial Services. This includes responsibility for having cash available to meet day-to-day demands and to invest all excess cash into appropriate investments as per this policy.

6. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All Council Staff, and other persons involved in the administration or application of this policy must act impartially and in the public interest.

Any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest must be identified, declared and managed in accordance with Council's Conflict of Interest Policy and relevant legislation.

Where a conflict of interest arises:

- Council staff must disclose the conflict as soon as practicable to their direct report and the Manager Governance, Integrity, Legal and Risk.
- The CEO must disclose the conflict as soon as practicable to the Mayor and the Manager Governance, Integrity, Legal and Risk.
- Appropriate steps must be taken to manage or mitigate the conflict, including recusal from decision-making where required.

Failure to declare or appropriately manage a conflict of interest may result in disciplinary or other action.

7. REPORTING, MONITORING, REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION

Reporting	A quarterly report will be provided to the Council outlining investments held by financial institution, maturity profile, interest income against YTD budget, and compliance with legislative and policy requirements. ~~The report will detail the investment portfolio in terms of holdings and impact of changes in market value since the previous report. The report will also detail the investment performance against the applicable benchmark, investment income earned versus budget year to date and confirm compliance of Council's investments within legislative and policy limits.~~ Council or the Chief Executive Officer may request ~~nominate~~ additional ~~content for~~ reporting as required.

[2] Instrument of Sub-Delegation by Chief Executive Officer to Members of Council Staff

Monitoring	Council will comply with relevant Accounting Standards in valuing its investments, quantifying its investment returns and financial statement disclosures. Documentary evidence must be held for each investment, and the details thereof maintained in an investment register. The documentary evidence must provide Council legal title to the investment. For audit purposes, certificates must be obtained from the banks/fund managers/custodian confirming the amounts of investment held on Council's behalf at 30 June each year.
Review	Investment balances, transactions and internal controls will be subject to external and/or internal audit review. This Policy will be reviewed every three years or as required in the event of legislative change or as a result of significantly changed economic/market conditions. The Policy may also be changed as a result of other amendments that are to the advantage of Council. Any amendment to this Policy must be by Council resolution.
Stakeholder Engagement	The review process will include consultation with relevant internal stakeholders, including Financial Services, Governance, Integrity, Legal and Risk and the Executive Management Team. The Audit and Risk Committee, external auditors, investment advisers and other subject matter experts will be consulted where appropriate.
Implementation	This Policy will be published on Council's intranet and communicated to officers involved in investment management, approval, reporting and oversight. Supporting procedures, delegations, controls and systems will be maintained to enable consistent implementation.

8. REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

Legislation

Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
Gender Equality Act 2020
Local Government Act 2020
~~*Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*~~

Accounting Standards

- AASB 7 Financial Instruments: Disclosures
- AASB 9 Financial Instruments
- AASB 13 Fair Value Measurement

- AASB 132 Financial Instruments: Presentation
- AASB 136 Impairment of Assets
- AASB 139 Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement

Related Council and Other Policies, Procedures, Strategies, Protocols, Guidelines

- Annual Report
- Budget
- Long Term Financial Plan
- Climate Change Emergency Strategy and Action Plan 2020-30
- Ministerial Guidelines and Circulars

9. ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

It is recognised that from time to time, circumstance may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter this document, such a change may be made administratively. Examples include a change to the name of a Council department, the change to an existing policy or document referred to in this policy and minor updates to legislation and the like which does not have a material impact. All changes or updates which materially alter this policy must be by resolution of Council.

Date	Update

GREATER DANDENONG
City of Opportunity

Investment Policy

Policy Endorsement:	Endorsement required by Council		
Policy Superseded by this Policy:	Not applicable		
Directorate:	Corporate Services		
Responsible Officer:	Manager Financial Services		
Policy Type:	Discretionary		
File Number:	A9821113	Version No:	004
1st Adopted by Council	Minute No. 118 14 April 2009	Last Adopted by Council:	Minute No. TBA 10 July 2023
Review Period:	Every 3 years	Next Review:	September 2026

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1. POLICY OBJECTIVE

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This policy will apply to all funds invested on behalf of Greater Dandenong City Council.

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5. POLICY

5.1 Investment Objectives

In investing Council funds, Council must meet the following objectives:

1. Safety of principal – the preservation of capital and protection of principal is the foremost objective of the investment program. Investments made by Council shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved investments and with regard to ensuring the protection of Council funds; and
2. Return on investment – within the boundaries of meeting the safety objective, Council will seek to maximize the return-on-investment funds; and
3. Maintenance of liquidity – investment decisions will at all times have regard for the future liquidity requirements of Council and maintain flexibility for Council to meet its short-term funding requirements.

Where the above three criteria can be met, Council may seek to invest a portion of its investment portfolio in a responsible investment approach, and which meets the goals and objectives of Council.

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Council will invest its surplus funds within the guidelines and restrictions contained in section 103 of the Local Government Act 2020.

Section 103 of the Local Government Act 2020 states that "Council may invest money in:

a) in Government securities of the Commonwealth; and
b) in securities guaranteed by the Government of Victoria; and
c) with an ADI; and
d) with any financial institution guaranteed by the Government of Victoria; and
e) on deposit with an eligible money market dealer within the meaning of the Corporations Act; and
f) in any other manner approved by the Minister, either generally or specifically, to be an authorised manner of investment for the purposes of this section." For example, the Victorian Funds Management Corporation was deemed an approved investment product[1].

Council will invest in any of the investments listed above subject to the limits mentioned in this policy, and subject to the specific requirements of the Act. Different investment products will have differing levels of use, practicality and desirability at different times of the economic cycle. The decision regarding investment types will be made with regard to the prevailing economic and market conditions, the liquidity requirements of Council and the rates of return applicable at the time.

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The objectives of the FCS are to:

- Protect depositors of ADIs, and claimants of general insurers, from potential loss in the unlikely event of the failure of these institutions.
- Provide depositors with prompt access to their deposits that are protected under the FCS.
- Support the stability of the Australian financial system.

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Council seeks to preference its investments with ADI's identified as environmentally and socially responsible in line with Council's vision and values.

Council will preference fossil fuel free ADIs, provided they can demonstrate:

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- The avoidance of funding fossil fuel use in the investment product; and
- That the ADI and product are compliant with this Investment Policy.

Green term deposits are generally certified by the Climate Bonds Standard and are associated with a defined pool of eligible assets and/or projects such as renewable energy, low carbon transport, low carbon buildings and water infrastructure.

Council may invest in such complying products provided they comply with the objectives and risk covenants in this Policy.

Prohibited investments

The following investments are prohibited as they place an unacceptable risk to Council (refer Risk Management criteria in the following section).

- Derivative based instruments
- Stand-alone securities issued that have underlying futures, options, forwards contracts and swaps of any kind
- Mortgage of land
- Leveraged investing – using borrowed money to invest.

5.3 Risk Management

Council will actively manage the different types of risks relating to investments as follows:

Table 5.3.1

Type of risk	Details and mitigation procedures
Credit risk	The risk that a party or guarantor to a transaction will fail to fulfil its obligations. In the context of this policy, it relates to the risk of loss due to the failure of an institution/entity with which an investment is held to pay the interest and/or repay the principal of an investment. Manage this by matching rate of return expectations with levels of risk by seeking investments with the highest S&P rating with regard to investment return.
Diversity risk	Place Council funds in a broad range of products and entities (subject to acceptable credit ratings) to avoid overexposure to a single sector of the investment market.
Management risk	Maintain the segregation of investment functions – no Council officer will both approve and invest funds.
Market risk	The risk that fair value or future cash flows will fluctuate due to changes in market prices, or benchmark returns (see Table 5.4.2) will unexpectedly overtake the investment's return.
Maturity risk	Managing the length of term to maturity of the investment portfolio. Longer-term investments have greater exposure to market volatility and changes to interest rate return. Set maturity limits for different investments and counterparties to a maximum of 5 years, unless approved by Council.
Performance risk	Monitor investment performances against the benchmark for that category of investments. Investments that consistently perform below benchmark (see Table 5.4.2) will be invested in alternative instruments. Monitor credit ratings of counterparties regularly.
Preservation of investment principal (capital)	Avoiding investments that may place Council invested cash at risk of loss, such as speculative instruments.
Rollover risk	The need to balance Council's cash flow needs with the objective of maximising investment returns. Shorter term investments are more likely to ensure investment funds are readily available to meet Council's financial obligations as they fall due. However longer-term investments are more likely to optimise interest income return.

5.4 Diversification of Investments by Credit Rating and Financial Institution

Council will control the credit quality of the investment portfolio by applying the following credit framework. Exposure to individual financial institutions will be restricted by their rating so that single entity exposure is limited as detailed in Table 5.4.1 below (excludes Government guaranteed investments).

Percentage holdings shown in the table below should be restricted to average investment holdings excluding at-call amounts.

Table 5.4.1

S&P Long Term Rating	Investment portfolio maximum by credit rating	Individual Institution (ADI) limits
AAA Category	100%	60%
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Unrated ADI category	0%	0%

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Investments are subject to the prudential standards of the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA). A listing of the approved ADI's is available online (click here).

Where the exposure limit of an investment category is exceeded as a result of an investment being redeemed, the exposure limits will be re-balanced at the next available opportunity.

If any of the investments are downgraded such that they no longer fall within this investment policy, they will be divested as soon as practicable.

Table 5.4.2 – Benchmarks

Council will use the following benchmarks to analyse the risk and return of the investment portfolio to understand how it is performing.

Investment category	Benchmark
At call	Official Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) cash rate (< 1 month)
Term deposits and other authorised investments	Applicable RBA Bond Index plus 0.25% (> 1 month)

5.5 Investment Maturity

Investments are to be structured with regard to maturity dates in order to satisfy income and liquidity requirements.

Once the primary aim of liquidity is met, Council will diversify its maturity profile as this will ordinarily be a low-risk source of additional return as well as reducing the volatility of Council's income. However, Council always retains the flexibility to invest as short as required by internal requirements or the economic outlook.

The factors and/or information used by Council to determine minimum allocations to the shorter durations include:

- Council's liquidity requirements to cover both regular payments as well as sufficient buffer to cover reasonably foreseeable contingencies.
- Medium term financial plans and major capital projects forecasts.
- Known grants, asset sales or similar one-off inflows.
- Seasonal patterns to Council's investment balances.

Maturity will also be laddered to provide for interest rate fluctuations and to minimise investment interest risk.

Investments are to be guided by the following terms to maturity targets:

Table 5.5.1

Maturity category	Time to maturity	Minimum allocation *	Maximum allocation *
Working capital - at call	0 months	$5 million	30%
Working capital - short term	0 to 3 months	0%	100%
Short-medium term	3 to 12 months	0%	75%
Long term	Greater than 12 months	0%	30%

* Allocation of total investment funds.

5.6 Quotations for Investments

- Not less than three (3) quotations shall be obtained from authorised institutions whenever a direct investment is proposed and ideally quotes should be received from a larger range of ADI.
- When evaluating potential investments Council will consider financial institutions (ADIs) that are committed to sustainable and responsible practices including:
    - the offering of suitable 'fossil fuel free' investment options; and/or
    - the offering of suitable ethical investment options; and/or
    - a commitment to adding value to the Greater Dandenong community.
- The selection, however, must also consider and not be in conflict with the other objectives of the Investment Policy.
- The best quote on the day will be successful after allowing for administrative and banking costs, as well as having regard to the limits set in this policy.
- Investment recommendations are required to be approved by either the Manager Financial Services or the Executive Manager Finance and IT.
- The physical transfer of funds will require two authorised officers registered with Council's financial institution.

5.7 Cash Management

The following principles apply to ensure efficient management of Council's cash resources:

- Cash flows and cash balances will be reviewed daily. The investment register shall be updated daily and monitored for compliance with the diversification requirements of this policy.
- An interest earning, at call account shall also be used to maximise earnings on funds whilst investment decisions are pending. Consideration of investment placements is predicated on the operating account maintaining a minimum credit balance of $500,000 at all times, and the At Call account maintaining a $5 million balance to cover any urgent additional cashflow requirements.
- The balance of funds considered to be surplus to the Council's immediate cash requirements will be invested in accordance with the guidelines in this policy.
- All investments including rolling movements will be recorded in Council's investment register.

5.8 Investments Advisor

An investment advisor, if appointed, must be approved by Council and licensed by the Australian Securities and Investment Commission. The advisor must be an independent person who has no actual or potential conflict of interest in relation to investment products being recommended.

6. RESPONSE TO THE OVERARCHING GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2020

This policy considers the overarching governance principles outlined in section 9 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and has taken the financial management principles in section 101 into account. This policy is predominantly administrative in nature and outlines the considerations when placing Council funds into investment products. It impacts on future budgets in relation to interest revenue. The policy is required to comply with the Local Government Act 2020 and Australian Accounting Standards. This policy is reviewed every three years ensuring the transparency of Council decisions, actions and information in relation to investments.

This policy also satisfies the requirement in section 102 of the Local Government Act 2020 for Council to prepare and adopt financial policies that give effect to the financial management principles.

7. CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ACT 2006 – COMPATIBILITY STATEMENT

The Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 has been considered in relation to whether any human right under the Charter is restricted or interfered with in any way by enacting any part of this policy. It is considered that this policy is consistent with the rights outlined in the Charter.

8. RESPONSE TO THE GENDER EQUALITY ACT 2020

The Gender Equality Act 2020 has been considered in the preparation of this policy but is not relevant to its contents. The policy relates to financial investments and does not have the potential to influence broader social norms and gender roles.

9. CONSIDERATION OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY

Council's Declaration on a Climate and Ecological Emergency, Council's Climate Change Emergency Strategy 2020-2030 and the requirements of the Local Government Act 2020 in relation to the overarching governance principle on climate change and sustainability have been considered in the preparation of this policy.

This policy promotes 'Responsible investments' which is a process that takes into account environmental, social and governance (ESG) and ethical issues into the investment process of research, analysis, selection and monitoring of investments.

The policy provides for investment in 'green term deposits' which are generally certified by the Climate Bonds Standard and are associated with a defined pool of eligible assets and/or projects such as renewable energy, low carbon transport, low carbon buildings and water infrastructure. Council may invest in such complying products provided they offer equivalent investment returns and comply with the objectives and risk covenants in this policy.

10. RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Chief Executive Officer has delegated the day-to-day management and authority to invest Council's suplus funds to the Executive Manager Finance and IT and the Manager Financial Services who must ensure adequate skill, support and oversight[2].

- This Financial Accounting function is responsible for investment recommendations and administration of investment funds under the direction and approval of the Manager Financial Services. This includes responsibility for having cash available to meet day-to-day demands and to invest all excess cash into appropriate investments as per this policy.

11. REPORTING, MONITORING AND REVIEW

A quarterly report will be provided to the Council. The report will detail the investment portfolio in terms of holdings and impact of changes in market value since the previous report. The report will also detail the investment performance against the applicable benchmark, investment income earned versus budget year to date and confirm compliance of Council's investments within legislative and policy limits. Council or the Chief Executive Officer may nominate additional content for reporting.

Council will comply with relevant Accounting Standards in valuing its investments, quantifying its investment returns and financial statement disclosures.

Documentary evidence must be held for each investment, and the details thereof maintained in an investment register. The documentary evidence must provide Council legal title to the investment.

For audit purposes, certificates must be obtained from the banks/fund managers/custodian confirming the amounts of investment held on Council's behalf at 30 June each year.

Investment balances, transactions and internal controls will be subject to external and/or internal audit review.

This Policy will be reviewed every three years or as required in the event of legislative change or as a result of significantly changed economic/market conditions. The Policy may also be changed as a result of other amendments that are to the advantage of Council. Any amendment to this Policy must be by Council resolution.

[2] Instrument of Sub-Delegation by Chief Executive Officer to Members of Council Staff

12. REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

Legislation

- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
- Gender Equality Act 2020
- Local Government Act 2020
- Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020

Accounting Standards

- AASB 7 Financial Instruments: Disclosures
- AASB 13 Fair Value Measurement
- AASB 132 Financial Instruments: Presentation
- AASB 136 Impairment of Assets
- AASB 139 Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement

Related Council and Other Policies, Procedures, Strategies, Protocols, Guidelines

- Greater Dandenong City Council Annual Report
- Greater Dandenong City Council Annual Budget
- Greater Dandenong City Council Climate Change Emergency Strategy and Action Plan 2020-30
- Greater Dandenong City Council Long Term Financial Plan
- Ministerial Guidelines and Circulars

4.2 POLICY AND STRATEGY

4.2.1 Adoption of Disability Action Plan

Responsible Officer: Executive Director Community Strengthening

Attachments:

1. Draft Disability Action Plan 2026-2030 (Final Version) [**4.2.1.1** - 24 pages]
2. Draft Disability Action Plan Consultation (17 June - 15 July 2026) [**4.2.1.2** - 10 pages]

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. **NOTES the community feedback received on the Draft Disability Action Plan 2026-30 and the minor amendments made in response; and**
2. **APPROVES the Disability Action Plan 2026-30, provided at Attachment 1, for implementation.**

Executive Summary

1. At its 15 June 2026 meeting, Council endorsed release of the Draft Disability Action Plan 2026-30 for a four-week public consultation period commencing Wednesday 17 June 2026.
2. Community engagement demonstrated strong support for the Plan. Feedback has been analysed and only minor amendments have been made to improve clarity, inclusivity and alignment with community input.
3. The revised Disability Action Plan 2026-30, provided at Attachment 1, is now presented to Council for approval.
4. The report now summarises the consultation process, the key themes raised by the community and the minor changes made to the draft Plan before seeking Council endorsement of the revised document.

Background

5. A Disability Action Plan sets out how Council will improve access, inclusion and participation for people with disability. Under the Victorian Disability Act 2006, councils must have a plan that reduces barriers to access and employment, supports inclusion and participation, and helps address discriminatory attitudes and practices.
6. The development of the draft Plan was informed by input from the Disability Advisory Committee, disability service providers, community networks and people with disability. It also incorporated feedback from previous engagement activities, including the Council Plan deliberative engagement process and the 2023 Aged and Disability Services Review.
7. At the 15 June Council Meeting councillors approved the Draft Disability Action Plan to commence a four-week public consultation from Wednesday 17 June 2026.
8. Council undertook targeted community engagement to refine the Disability Action Plan, consulting with people with disability, carers, service providers, community organisations and the broader community. The consultation reached more than 700 people, attracted 420 webpage visitors and generated over 148 pieces of feedback, helping ensure the final Plan reflects a wide range of community perspectives and lived experiences (see Attachment 2).

9. Following targeted community engagement on the draft Disability Action Plan, Council made minor updates to strengthen inclusivity, reflect community feedback and improve clarity. These changes included:
    - clarifying that the Plan applies to people of all ages and diverse identities.
    - updating the consultation findings and key themes.
    - revising actions and measurable outcomes based on community input.
    - making minor grammar and consistency improvements throughout the document.

10. This plan replaces the 2017–2023 Disability Action Plan and continues Council's commitment to removing barriers, increasing participation, and ensuring people with disability have equitable access to opportunities across our community.

11. The Disability Action Plan 2026-30 (Attachment 1) is presented to Council for approval.

Key Issues and Discussion

12. The Plan is built around four key themes:
    a. Employment and Economic Participation;
    b. Accessible and Inclusive Community Infrastructure;
    c. Support to Carers, Families and Access to Services; and
    d. Community Inclusion, Awareness and Leadership.

13. The Disability Action Plan is a Tier Three mandated plan within Council's Integrated Planning Framework. It is required under the Victorian Disability Act 2006 and sits alongside Council's other mandated plans.

14. The Plan supports Greater Dandenong City Council's Community Vision 2040 by setting out how Council will improve access, equity and participation for people with disability. In doing so, it supports a community that is welcoming, healthy and inclusive for everyone.

15. Earlier plans focused on improving access to buildings and facilities. Since then, Council has delivered significant improvements in areas such as public transport access, inclusive parks and public spaces, and support for a strong network of disability service providers in the municipality. More recent plans have also focused on inclusive communication, participation in community life and challenging attitudes that create barriers. These learnings have informed the priorities and actions in this Plan.

16. This sixth Disability Action Plan is the next step in Council's ongoing commitment to inclusion.

17. Government disability policy and programs may change over the four-year life of the Plan. As a result, some actions may need to be reviewed and adjusted to keep the Plan aligned with any policy changes that affect delivery.

18. In areas where Council has limited influence or direct control, the draft Plan highlights Council's advocacy role in helping to drive better outcomes.

19. The actions in the draft Plan will be delivered through existing equivalent full-time resources across Council and within current business and strategic plans. No additional resources are required beyond Council's annually adopted budget.

Governance Compliance

Human Resource Implications (consider Workforce Planning and Service Statements)

20. Once the final Plan is endorsed, existing workforce priorities will be reviewed to ensure they align with the Plan deliverables.

Financial/Asset Resource Implications (consider Service Statements, Budget, Long Term Financial Strategy and Asset Plan)

Operating Budget Implications

21. Once the final Plan is endorsed, existing operational budgets will be refocused to align with the Plan deliverables. Any new initiatives will be considered through Council's annual budget process.

Asset Implications

22. This report does not have any direct implications for existing assets. However, future asset planning and development should continue to be informed by the principles outlined in the Plan and relevant legislation.

Legal/Risk Implications

23. Under the Victorian Disability Act 2006, councils must have a plan in place that reduces barriers to access and employment, supports inclusion and participation, and helps address attitudes and practices that discriminate against people with disability.

Environmental Implications

24. There are no environmental implications relevant to this report.

Gender Impact Assessment

25. The Gender Impact Assessment for the Disability Action Plan outlines actions to improve accessibility, inclusion, and participation for people with disability through accessible services, strengthened staff capability, and ongoing collaboration with the community and partner organisations. It identifies gender-related inequalities, including the significantly higher risk of violence experienced by women with disability, particularly where factors such as cultural background, language barriers, caring responsibilities, and social disadvantage intersect. The assessment recommends continuing inclusive and accessible engagement practices, maintaining partnerships with disability and family violence services, providing flexible participation and communication options, and ensuring women with disability remain involved in shaping, implementing, and evaluating actions under the plan.

Community Consultation Summary

Purpose	To seek community feedback on whether the Draft Disability Action Plan reflects the views and lived experience of people with disability, builds on earlier engagement, and identifies practical actions supported by the community for the next four years.
Engagement period	Wednesday 17 June until Wednesday 14 July
Level of Influence:	Based on IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum: Consult
Engagement Activities:	Engagement was delivered through Council's online Have Your Say survey, community drop-in sessions at local hub locations, targeted outreach to community organisations, and consultation with advisory committees and Council staff.
Communication reach and engagement numbers:	• The Disability Action Plan consultation attracted 420 unique visitors to the Have Your Say page, generated 637 page views, and resulted in 73 Plan downloads. • Community engagement reached 708 people through direct emails and stakeholder networks, with 47 online

	submissions and more than 148 individual feedback comments received. • Engagement activities included 11 face-to-face consultation sessions, comprising four community drop-in sessions and seven targeted discussions with disability and community groups. • Feedback was gathered through online submissions, face-to-face conversations with more than 50 participants, and targeted engagement with disability service providers, carers, support groups and community organisations. • Consultation materials were also accessed in several languages other than English, including Chinese (Simplified and Traditional), Arabic, Greek, Punjabi, Vietnamese and Shinala.
Summary of feedback:	Consultation feedback demonstrated strong community support for the draft Disability Action Plan, with more than 86% of survey respondents supporting its overall direction. Participants reinforced the importance of improving inclusion, accessibility and participation, while also highlighting the need to continue reducing barriers and improving opportunities for people with disability. Feedback emphasised the value of involving people with lived experience in planning and decision-making. Overall, the consultation confirmed that the draft Plan aligned closely with community expectations and required only minor refinements before finalisation. Further information is available in Draft Disability Action Plan Consultation (Attachment 2).

Links to Community Vision, Council Plan, Strategy, Notice of Motion

26. This report aligns with the following principles in Community Vision 2040:
    - Safe and peaceful community.
    - Education, training, entrepreneurship and employment opportunities.
    - Embrace diversity and multiculturalism.
    - Mind, body and spirit.
27. This report aligns with the following strategic objectives in the Council Plan 2021-25:
    - 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.

Legislative and Policy Obligations

28. This report has considered Council's legislative and policy obligations, where applicable, as outlined in the Report Considerations section at the front of this Agenda. The relevant obligations considered and applied are:

    - The Overarching Governance Principles of the *Local Government Act* 2020.
    - *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities* 2006.
    - Related Council Policies, Strategies or Frameworks.



Draft Disability Action Plan

2026-2030

Greater Dandenong

DRAFT

Version control:

Version	Date	Author
1.0	1/4/2026	Coordinator Community Access
2.0	6/8/2026	Coordinator Community Access

Acknowledgement of Country

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.



Attribution:
Auntie Heather Kennedy
Trawalway Plermiernier and Bunurong Artist
Coming Together as One
Acrylic on canvas

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Mayor's Message

It is my pleasure to present our Disability Action Plan 2026-2030 to the Greater Dandenong community.

Thank you to the hundreds of people with disabilities, carers, service providers, advocates and community members who consulted with us to develop this plan. Your valuable insights helped ensure it reflects community priorities and lived experience.

The new Disability Action Plan will guide our work together over the next four years so we can increase access and inclusion, as well as support for carers and families across Greater Dandenong.

To do so, we will focus on the following priority areas which were supported by our community:

- Inclusive employment and economic participation
- Accessible and inclusive community infrastructure
- Support for carers, families and access to services
- Community inclusion, awareness and leadership.

We are looking forward to building on our accomplishments in this space, to further improve the lives of people with disabilities and those who care for them.

Greater Dandenong Mayor
Councillor Sophie Tan



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Executive Summary

Greater Dandenong City Council is committed to ensuring people with disability, their families and carers feel welcome, respected and included in community life.

This Disability Action Plan shows how we will make our community easier to access and more inclusive. It helps Council understand local needs, improve our services, and work with other organisations when issues are outside Council's control.

Through this plan, Council will:

- Support inclusion so people with disability can take part in all parts of community life.
- Make it easier to access Council services by identifying barriers and planning improvements.
- Support Council staff with training and resources to deliver inclusive services.

This plan replaces the 2017–2023 Disability Action Plan. It continues our commitment to removing barriers, increasing participation, and making sure everyone has equal opportunities.

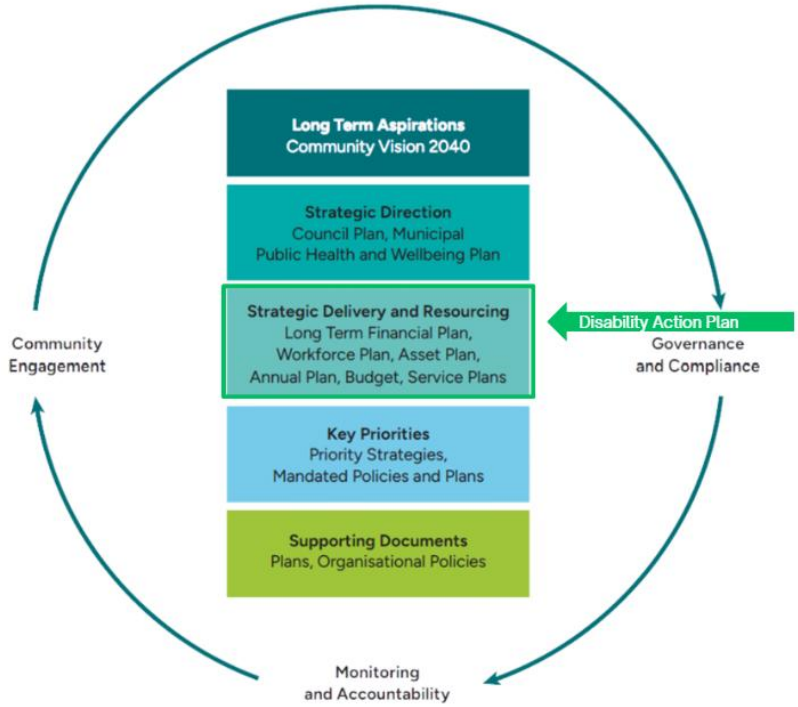
Key themes included in this plan:

1	**Employment and Economic Participation**	Supporting fair access to jobs, training and opportunities to help earn an income.
2	**Accessible and Inclusive Community Infrastructure**	Making community spaces, buildings and public areas safe, welcoming and easy to use for everyone.
3	**Support for Carers, Families and Access to Services**	Improving support and making it easier for people with disability and their carers to find and use services.
4	**Community Inclusion, Awareness and Leadership**	Building a community that understands, includes and values people of all abilities.

Integrated Planning Framework

Council's Integrated Planning Framework (IPF) outlines Council's planning in the long, medium, and short term. This planning approach is required by law and helps Council plan well, measure progress, and deliver better outcomes for the community.

The IPF guides the creation of strategies and plans, ensuring their alignment with both strategic and operational priorities.



The Disability Action Plan (DAP) is one of Council's key plans. It is required under the Victorian Disability Act 2006, along with other important Council plans.

The DAP supports the Greater Dandenong City Council's Community Vision 2040 by explaining how Council will improve access, fairness and participation for people with disability. This helps create a community that is welcoming, healthy and supports everyone to thrive.

By improving access, participation and wellbeing for people with disability, the DAP directly supports the goals of the Council Plan 2025-2029. This includes a strong focus on inclusion, community wellbeing and fair access to services.

The DAP also guides Council's internal policies and procedures and links with other plans. These help staff turn the actions in the DAP into everyday practice and support ongoing improvements to accessibility across Council.

Background

This Disability Action Plan uses the same meaning of disability as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability. Disability is described as a long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory condition. Disability happens when these conditions interact with barriers that stop people from taking part in society on an equal basis.

This way of understanding disability is called the social model of disability. It focuses on removing barriers rather than changing the person. This definition is also used in *Inclusive Victoria: State Disability Plan 2022–2026*.

Inclusive Victoria's State Disability Plan is the Victorian Government's plan for improving access, inclusion and rights for people with disability across Victoria. It sets clear priorities and guides how councils, including Greater Dandenong City Council, develop, deliver and review their Disability Action Plans.

Inclusive Victoria focuses on improving outcomes for people with disability, including:

- better access to healthcare
- more inclusive sport and recreation opportunities
- improved inclusion in schools
- better support for children with complex disability support needs.

 International	• United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
National	• Australia's Disability Strategy (2021–2031) • Disability Discrimination Act 1992 • NDIS • Information Linkages and Capacity Building program • Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability
 Victorian	• Disability Act 2006 (Vic) • The Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023 • Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic) • Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic) • Inclusive Victoria: State Disability Plan (2022-2026)
 Local Government	• Disability Action Plans

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Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031 is a national plan to improve inclusion, participation and wellbeing for people with disability.

The Strategy focuses on important areas such as jobs, health, education, community life, safety, community attitudes, and access to support. It aims to make everyday life fairer and more inclusive for people with disability.

The Strategy highlights the need for governments, services and the community to work together to remove barriers, protect rights and support people with disability to take part fully in society.

It also recognises that some people with disability face extra challenges. The Strategy aims to improve outcomes for these groups through more inclusive policies and better services.

This Disability Action Plan supports the same aims of equity and inclusion as the Victorian Government and Australian Government plans. It turns these plans into clear, practical actions at a local level. All three plans work together to improve inclusion for people with disability.

Disability can affect people of all ages and backgrounds, and the Disability Action Plan recognises the diverse experiences and intersectional identities of people with disability, including children, older people, and individuals from varied cultural, social, gender, and community groups.

Council will continue to keep track of Victorian Government and Australian Government policies and programs that may affect our community. If there are any changes, Council will update future actions in the Disability Action Plan to reflect these changes.

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Achievements of the Disability Action Plan

This Disability Action Plan is the sixth plan delivered by Greater Dandenong City Council.

The first four Disability Action Plans helped improve access and inclusion by making buildings and public spaces easier to use, supporting inclusive community programs, and building disability awareness and inclusion across Council services.

During the fifth Disability Action Plan, Council showed strong leadership in disability inclusion. This included better planning, strong partnerships with the community, improved access to facilities and services, new inclusive employment initiatives, and targeted support for people with disability and their carers.

Together, this work shows steady progress toward creating a more fair and accessible community for all residents.

Some key highlights from our previous DAPs include:

- Developed several inclusive employment programs at Council. These included a disability internship program, self-employment program for people with intellectual disability, school-based apprenticeships in parks and gardens, and involvement in a Municipal Association of Victoria project sharing the stories of employees and interns with disability.
- Delivered and promoted accessible community events that celebrate inclusion, such as inclusive sports days and Council festivals, and created an accessible events guide.
- Delivered International Day of People with Disability celebrations designed with people who have lived experience of disability. Events included activities at Noble Park Community Centre and Disability at Dusk, delivered with the City of Casey and Cardinia Shire.
- Supported people in the community to better understand and access the NDIS.
- Improved access to information, including making Council's website more accessible.



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- Strengthened support for carers through programs such as the Carers Walking Group and by increasing carer-focused information on the Council website.
- Made accessibility upgrades to Council buildings and facilities, including Springvale Hub, Keysborough Hub and Dandenong Wellbeing Centre.
- Supported community connection through inclusive events, regional partnerships and community-led activities.
- Involved the community in the design and development of the All Abilities Playground in Noble Park.
- Strongly advocated for better accessibility across public transport, including for the redevelopment of Noble Park Station.
- Produced and supported the development of a range of videos to raise awareness about disability inclusion.
- Partnered with Sport4All to support local schools and sports clubs to become more inclusive.
- Introduced the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program to better support people with hidden disability.





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Community Snapshot

Many more people live with disability than the Census shows. This is because the Census only counts people who need help with everyday activities and relies on people self-reporting. It does not include many people who have a disability but do not need this type of assistance.

Another survey, called the Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC), gives a clearer picture. It shows that 21% of Australians have a mild, moderate, severe or profound disability. Such a proportion would be equivalent to 36,000 people in Greater Dandenong.

The same survey concluded that 12% of Australians were carers, equivalent to 20,000 Greater Dandenong residents. Among them, 4.8% were primary carers, representing 8,000 residents.

The survey also shows the following:

Disability and Age

Disability is more common as people get older.



Young Children

~6%

Have disability



Older Adults

~33%

About 1 in 3 have disability



Aged 90+

80%+

Live with disability

Work and Disability

People with mild disability are much more likely to work full-time than those with severe disability.



Many workers with disability face limits on the type or amount of work they can do



Just over half receive support at work, such as flexible hours or special equipment

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Greater Dandenong Snapshot

Women are more likely to be carers than men.



11.2%

Residents care for someone with disability

13.5% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents live with disability - almost double the rate for non-Indigenous residents

NDIS Participation



Greater Dandenong has **4241** NDIS participants

This is only **12.7%** of all residents with disability, meaning most people with disability do not receive NDIS supports

What this means for Council

- Our community includes many people with disability who aren't in the NDIS but still face barriers.
- Council planning needs to support everyone, with:
  - accessible buildings and spaces
  - inclusive services and programs
  - community supports for people who don’t qualify for or need the NDIS.

For further information about our community visit www.greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/disability-and-carers-social-statistics.

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Challenges and Opportunities

Greater Dandenong City Council faces some challenges in delivering the actions outlined in the Disability Action Plan.

Research shows that people with disability still experience poorer health, lower levels of education, fewer job opportunities, and difficulties accessing buildings, services and transport. This happens even though accessibility standards are in place. Research also shows that negative attitudes and a lack of understanding in the community continue to limit full inclusion and participation. Many of these issues are outside Council's direct control. Because of this, advocating to other organisations and levels of government is an important role for Council.

There are also many opportunities to improve outcomes. Council has already completed considerable work to improve access to public transport, create inclusive parks and public spaces, and support a strong network of disability service providers have arrived in the municipality.

These strengths provide opportunities to improve access, strengthen services, promote universal design, and increase community understanding and positive attitudes. Through this work, the Disability Action Plan will create a more inclusive, fair and supportive community for everyone.







Consultation – How was this Developed?

Initial community engagement, undertaken to inform Council's future role in aged care and disability services, together with consultation for the Council Plan and input from the Disability Advisory Committee, involved approximately 1,438 people. Participants included people with disability, older people, families, carers, service providers, employers and business owners. This engagement identified key community priorities and provided a strong foundation for developing the draft Disability Action Plan.

To further refine the draft Plan, Council undertook targeted consultation with the Disability Advisory Committee, people with disability, carers, families, service providers, advocates, community organisations and the broader community. Engagement activities included an online Have Your Say survey, community drop-in sessions, targeted discussions with disability and carer groups, and promotion through stakeholder networks and partner organisations. The consultation reached more than 700 people through direct networks, attracted 420 unique visitors to the Have Your Say webpage, and generated more than 148 individual pieces of feedback, ensuring a wide range of perspectives and lived experiences were heard.

Across both stages of engagement, participants consistently highlighted the need for a more accessible and inclusive community. Key priorities included accessible infrastructure, transport and parking; improved access to information and services; stronger support for carers and families; increased employment opportunities; greater community awareness and understanding of disability; and ongoing involvement of people with disability in decision-making through co-design and lived experience leadership. Feedback demonstrated strong community support for the Disability Action Plan 2026-2030 and confirmed that the Plan reflects local priorities, needs and aspirations.

This sixth Disability Action Plan represents the next step in Council's ongoing commitment to accessibility and inclusion. Each plan builds on the achievements, learnings and community feedback from previous plans, ensuring continuous improvement over time. Earlier plans focused primarily on improving access to buildings, facilities and public spaces. More recent plans expanded this focus to include inclusive communication, participation in community life, and addressing attitudes and barriers that can limit inclusion. These learnings have informed the priorities and actions outlined in this Plan.

While recognising the progress made, the Plan acknowledges that barriers to inclusion still exist. It focuses on embedding accessibility and inclusion across all areas of Council's work, while strengthening advocacy on issues beyond Council's direct responsibility, such as transport, employment and community attitudes. Through these actions, Council will continue to work towards a community where people with disability can participate fully, contribute meaningfully and feel valued, respected and included.

Key Themes Identified



1. Employment and Economic Participation

The community shared several challenges about work, including:

- **Limited employment opportunities:** People with disability often find it harder to get jobs or move forward in their careers. Many employers and the wider community do not always recognise the skills, strengths and contributions of people with disability, and there is a need for more employment pathways, training opportunities and workplace supports.
- **Balancing work and caring:** Caring responsibilities can make it harder for people with disability and their families to take part in work or study.



2. Accessible and Inclusive Community Infrastructure

The community identified a number of access issues, including:

- **Accessible buildings and spaces:** Public spaces, buildings and facilities are not always designed or maintained to be accessible for everyone.
- **Transport barriers:** Limited access to reliable and accessible transport reduces independence and makes it harder to take part in community life.
- **Parking access:** Disability parking rules are not always well understood, creating barriers for people who rely on these spaces.
- **Inclusive Design:** People with disability have valuable lived experience and expertise to contribute to the planning and design of public infrastructure. Greater involvement in decision-making helps create facilities, services and public spaces that are more accessible, inclusive and beneficial for everyone.

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3. Support for Carers, Families and Access to Services

The community identified opportunities to improve services and support, including:

- **Access to services:** People with disability report facing barriers accessing specialist health and allied health services and navigating complex service systems.
- **Support for families and carers:** Families and carers need better coordinated support to manage caring responsibilities, including access to services and information.
- **Accessible information:** Information about services, including the NDIS and accessibility, is not always easy to find, understand or use.



4. Community Inclusion, Awareness and Leadership

The community raised issues about inclusion and participation, including:

- **Stigma and lack of understanding:** Negative attitudes, misunderstandings and limited awareness of disability, including hidden disabilities, can create barriers to social connection and community participation.
- **Representation and leadership:** People with disability are not always represented in leadership and decision-making roles, limiting opportunities to influence decisions, shape community outcomes and share their lived experience.
- **Inclusive design:** Involving people with disability from the earliest stages of planning and design leads to better outcomes by drawing on their expertise, perspectives and practical knowledge.

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Action Plan

Theme 1: Employment and Economic Participation

No	Action	Measurable Outcome
1.1	Promote employment programs and skill building opportunities through partnerships.	Increase number of disability employment and training programs promoted to the community.
1.2	Support employers to access inclusive hiring resources to support employees with disabilities.	Increase contribution to Greater Dandenong Business Network and other relevant networks to promote employment inclusion.
1.3	Identify opportunities to support carers to balance work and caring responsibilities.	Identify and implement new initiatives that strengthen support for carers balancing work and care.
1.4	Strengthen Council's role in inclusive employment by promoting accessible workplace practices and supporting opportunities for people with disability.	The number of activities identified and implemented that lead to increased opportunities for employment and support of Council staff with disability.

Theme 2: Accessible and Inclusive Community Infrastructure

No	Action	Measurable Outcome
2.1	Improve the accessibility of public spaces including car parking.	Community reported accessibility barriers in public spaces are addressed.
2.2	Advocate to improve access to public transport.	Public transport accessibility issues are identified and raised with responsible government organisations.
2.3	Provide opportunities for people with disabilities to contribute to the planning and design of Council facilities.	The number of Council facility and infrastructure projects that incorporate inclusive design principles and formal consultation with people with disability.
2.4	Increase accessibility awareness among businesses and service providers.	Increase the number of businesses and service providers who participate in information sessions and access resources.

Theme 3: Support for Carers, Families and Access to Services

No	Action	Measurable Outcome
3.1	Expand peer support programs to include new members.	Increase the number of families and carers participating in peer support programs and social connection initiatives.
3.2	Promote resources to local healthcare and service providers to increase access and inclusion by people with disability.	The number of local healthcare and service providers reached through promotion and engagement activities.
3.3	Improve access to disability-related, Council and community service information.	Increase the availability of accessible disability related information across Council platforms (e.g., website, printed materials, translated resources).

Theme 4: Community Inclusion, Awareness and Leadership

No	Action	Measurable Outcome
4.1	Increase disability awareness within the community to promote inclusion, and improve understanding of accessibility, rights, and participation for people with disability.	Number of disability awareness and inclusion activities delivered to promote understanding of accessibility, rights, participation and hidden disabilities.
4.2	Strengthen leadership development for people with disabilities through meaningful involvement in committees, advisory groups and consultation activities.	Increase the number of people with disability participating in Council committees, advisory groups and consultation processes.
4.3	Provide opportunities for people with lived experience of disability, including carers, to be actively involved in planning and designing community facilities, programs and spaces.	Increase the number of Council planning and design projects that engage people with lived experience of disability and carers through co-design processes where possible.
4.4	Encourage greater participation by people with disability in Council programs, services, and activities by proactively addressing access barriers and promoting inclusive practices.	The number of Council programs, services and activities that review and address accessibility barriers and implement inclusive practices.

Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting

Greater Dandenong City Council will implement the DAP using a whole-of-Council approach. This means all Council departments are responsible for making sure their work is accessible and inclusive. Council will work closely with people with disability, carers, service providers and local businesses to support this work.

The Disability Advisory Committee plays an important role by providing advice and guidance on the plan. The Committee helps identify new and emerging needs, gaps in services, and links to Victorian Government and Australian Government priorities.

Each year, Council will review progress in consultation with the Disability Advisory Committee. The review will align with Council's planning and reporting processes and assess progress against the Plan's long-term goals and actions, including what has been achieved.

These steps help ensure transparency, accountability and continuous improvement, and support Council's commitment to creating an inclusive community.



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Supporting Documents

The Disability Action Plan supports the goals of the Council Plan 2025-29 by helping build inclusion, encouraging people to take part in community life, celebrating diversity, and strengthening social connections.

The Council Plan emphasises priorities including:

- Our city is accessible to all and supports health and wellbeing
- Our city supports people in need
- Our city is vibrant and well planned for the future
- We have well-connected spaces and places
- We provide opportunities for our community to succeed
- We value the voices of our community in decision making
- We provide easy access to services for our community.

The Disability Action Plan helps put these priorities into action by making sure Council services, buildings and planning remove barriers and support inclusion.



Appendices

Disability Discrimination Act 1992
www.legislation.gov.au

Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-31
www.health.gov.au/our-work/australias-disability-strategy

Inclusive Victoria: State Disability Plan
www.vic.gov.au/state-disability-plan

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW)
www.aihw.gov.au/reports/disability/people-with-disability-in-australia/contents/social-support/community-attitudes

Centre of Research Excellence in Disability and Health
www.credh.org.au

Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability 2023
www.disability.royalcommission.gov.au/publications/final-report

Engaging with our community and stakeholders to understand Council's future role in aged and disability services
www.greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/aged-care-reforms

Council Plan 2025-2029
www.greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/council-plan-2025-29

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Draft Disability Action Plan Consultation Report

17 June 2026 – 15 July 2026

Greater Dandenong

Executive Summary

The consultation for the draft Disability Action Plan 2026-2030, included engagement across a wide range of community members, including people with disability, carers, service providers, advocates and the broader community. Through online submissions, face-to-face engagement activities and direct stakeholder outreach, the consultation generated substantial participation and valuable feedback, ensuring that diverse voices and lived experience informed the development of the final Plan.

Feedback showed overwhelming support of the proposed direction of the Disability Action Plan. More than 86% of survey respondents indicated they were very supportive or generally supportive of the four priority areas, with no respondents expressing opposition to the priority areas. This strong level of support reflects community confidence in Council's approach to improving inclusion, accessibility and participation for people with disability.

Accessible and Inclusive Community Infrastructure was identified as the highest priority, highlighting the importance of improving accessibility in public spaces, facilities and transport. Strong support was also evident for initiatives that promote employment opportunities, support carers and families, improve access to services, increase community awareness, and strengthen opportunities for people with disability to contribute to decision-making and leadership.

A consistent finding across all engagement activities was the community's desire for greater inclusion of people with disability in planning, service design and community life. Participants strongly supported co-design approaches, lived experience leadership, accessible information and continued efforts to reduce barriers to participation. These priorities were already reflected in the draft Plan, demonstrating a high level of alignment between community expectations and Council's proposed actions.

Overall, the consultation confirmed that the draft Disability Action Plan 2026-2030 accurately reflects the priorities and aspirations of the community. Feedback reinforced the Plan's strategic direction and resulted in only minor refinements to strengthen several actions, while confirming strong community support for the proposed priorities and outcomes.

Consultation Snapshot

- **420** unique visitors to the Have Your Say page
- **637** consultation page views on the Have Your Say page
- **73** Disability Action Plan downloads
- **47** online submissions via the Have Your Say page
- **708** people reached through direct email and networks
- **11** face-to-face consultation activities (four drop-in sessions and seven targeted group consultations)
- **148+** individual feedback comments received overall
- Content accessed in other languages other than English, including Shinala, Chinese (Simplified), Arabic, Chinese (Traditional), Greek, Punjabi, Vietnamese

Contributions by Channel

- Online Feedback (47 submissions received)
- Face-to-Face Feedback (50+ participants connected with Council)
- Individual Feedback (148+ comments received)

Community Drop-In Sessions

- Dandenong Market – Tuesday 23 June (approximately 50 people attended)
- Dandenong Library – Tuesday 7 July
- Springvale Library – Wednesday 8 July
- Keysborough Library – Thursday 9 July

Targeted Face-to-Face Engagement, with the following groups:

- Chronic Pain Support Group
- Carers Walking Group
- ERMHA Community BBQ
- Wellsprings for Women
- Noble Park Community Centre
- Yooralla Disability Service
- Springvale Park Special Development School

This level of engagement provided valuable insight from people with disability, carers, service providers, advocates and community members, helping to inform the final Disability Action Plan and ensure it reflects community priorities and lived experience.

Have Your Say – Survey Results

The survey results show strong support for the draft Disability Action Plan 2026-30 and the four proposed priority areas. Of the 46 respondents who answered the question of the support for the four themes, 60.9% indicated they were *very supportive* of the priorities and a further 26.1% were *generally supportive,* as shown in the table below.

An additional 13.0% were supportive of some elements, while no respondents indicated that they were not supportive. Overall, more than 86% of respondents expressed broad support for the proposed priorities, demonstrating strong community endorsement of the direction of the Disability Action Plan and confidence in the focus areas identified by Council.

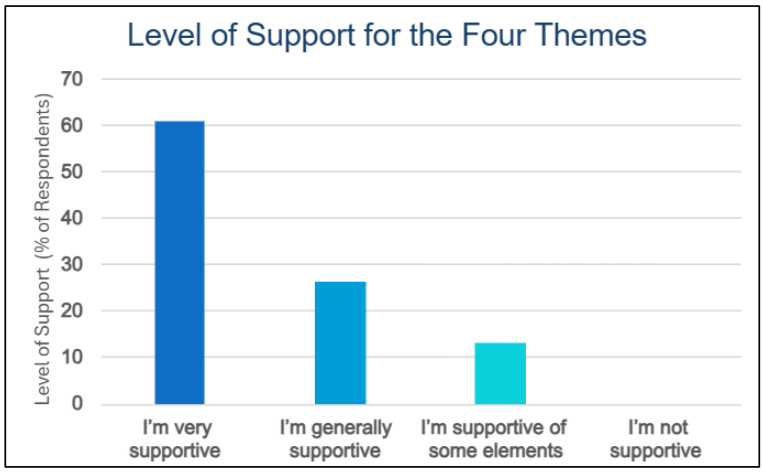


Table 1: Key Themes

Table 2 below, shows all four priority areas received strong support from respondents. *Accessible and Inclusive Community Infrastructure* was the priority most frequently ranked number one by respondents, highlighting a clear focus on improving accessibility within the built environment and community spaces. *Support for Carers, Families and Access to Services* ranked second, followed by *Inclusive Employment and Economic Participation*. While *Community Inclusion, Awareness and Leadership* ranked fourth overall, it still attracted significant support, with nearly one in four respondents identifying it as their top priority. Overall, the results indicate broad support across all priorities, with the strongest emphasis on creating more accessible and inclusive communities.

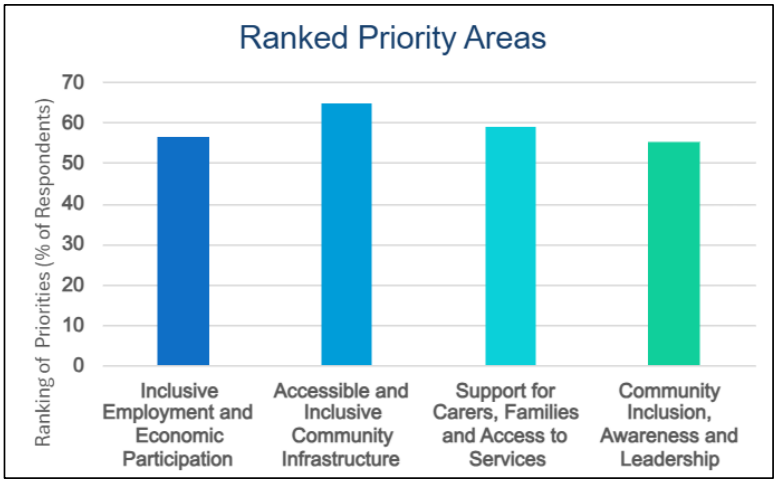


Table 2: Priority Areas

Respondents were then asked to choose their top 7 actions from a list of 15. Each action received a score based on:

- How many people selected it, and
- How highly they ranked it (for example, whether it was chosen 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and so on).

Actions chosen by more people and ranked higher received a higher overall score, which helps identify the actions that were considered the most important by the group.

Table 3 below, shows that the actions most frequently selected by respondents as a top priority were focused on employment, accessibility, participation, and inclusion. The action most prioritised, was *promoting employment programs and skill-building opportunities through partnerships*, followed by *supporting carers to balance work and caring responsibilities*. Other frequently selected priorities included *providing opportunities for people with disability to contribute to the planning and design of Council facilities.*

These results indicate a strong community focus on improving employment outcomes, supporting carers, increasing participation in decision-making, and building a more inclusive and accessible community.



Table 3: Actions

When the online *Have Your Say* survey findings are considered alongside feedback gathered through face-to-face engagement, a clear and consistent picture of strong community support for the draft Disability Action Plan emerges. Community feedback was reviewed against the draft Plan's proposed actions to assess alignment with community priorities and identify any areas requiring greater focus. The analysis found a high level of consistency between community feedback and the draft Plan, confirming strong support for the four strategic priority areas and the actions proposed to achieve them.

Consultation Findings by Key Theme

Theme 1 – Employment and Economic Participation

Draft Action	Consultation Findings	Assessment
1.1 Promote employment programs and skill building opportunities through partnerships.	Strong support for increased employment pathways, training opportunities and skill development for people with disability.	Strong alignment, minor wording change to measurable outcome to include training.
1.2 Support employers to access inclusive hiring resources to support employees with disabilities.	Focus on need for greater employer education, workplace accommodations and support for mainstream employment.	Strong alignment, no changes to action required.
1.3 Identify opportunities to support carers to balance work and caring responsibilities.	Carers highlighted challenges balancing employment and caring responsibilities and the need for greater support and flexibility.	Strong alignment, no changes to action required.
1.4 Increase inclusive employment opportunities within Council.	Stakeholders encouraged Council to demonstrate leadership as an inclusive employer and expand employment pathways.	Strong alignment, minor wording change to action to clarify Council's role in inclusive employment.

Key Messages from the Consultation:

- Increase employment opportunities for people with disability.
- Encourage local employers to adopt inclusive recruitment practices.
- Strengthen workplace supports and accommodations.
- Support carers to participate in employment and community life.
- Position Council as a leader in disability employment.

Current actions address consultation feedback however some wording has been changed to reflect the feedback about training and to clarify Council's role in employment.

Theme 2 – Accessible and Inclusive Community Infrastructure

Draft Action	Consultation Findings	Assessment
2.1 Improve accessibility of public spaces including car parking.	The highest volume of comments related to footpaths, kerb ramps, parking, toilets, public buildings and accessible facilities.	Strong alignment, no changes to action required.
2.2 Advocate to improve access to public transport.	Accessible transport was one of the strongest recurring themes, including buses, taxis, train access and transport funding issues.	Strong alignment, no changes to action required.
2.3 Provide opportunities for people with disabilities to contribute to the planning and design of Council facilities.	Strong support for co-design and involving people with lived experience in infrastructure projects.	Strong alignment, minor wording change to measurable outcome to reflect the importance of inclusive design.
2.4 Increase accessibility awareness among businesses and service providers.	Focus on need for improved accessibility in local businesses and community facilities.	Strong alignment, no changes to action required.

Key Messages from the Consultation:

- Improve the accessibility and safety of public spaces, including footpaths, kerb ramps, community facilities and public toilets.
- Improve access to public transport, bus stops, accessible parking and transport options.
- Increase opportunities for people with disability to contribute to planning and design decisions.
- Strengthen the use of universal design principles across Council projects and infrastructure.

This theme generated the greatest volume of feedback and represents the strongest community priority. The feedback aligns strongly with the draft actions so only minor wording changes updated. The feedback also highlights the importance of Council's advocacy role in progressing priorities that sit beyond Council's direct control to improve outcomes for people with disability.

Theme 3 – Support for Carers, Families and Access to Services

Draft Action	Consultation Findings	Assessment
3.1 Expand peer support programs to include new members.	Strong positive feedback regarding carer support groups, peer support and social connection initiatives.	Strong alignment, minor wording change to measurable outcome to reflect the importance of participation, inclusion and connection.
3.2 Promote resources to healthcare and service providers to increase access and inclusion by people with disability.	Focus on need for stronger service coordination and improved engagement with health services and GPs.	Strong alignment, minor wording change to measurable outcome to reflect the opportunity for connection with providers.
3.3 Improve access to disability related and Council service information including supports focused on carers.	Significant feedback regarding difficulty navigating NDIS, My Aged Care and local support systems.	Strong alignment, minor wording change to action to ensure the action is reflective of all people with disability.

Key Messages from the Consultation:

- Continue to support carers and families, future planning, and recognition of the financial and emotional impacts of caring.
- Improve access to disability supports and services, including better coordination and easier navigation
- Increase the availability of accessible, easy-read and translated information.
- Improve promotion of services, supports, Council programs and community resources.
- Strengthen community awareness and access to information through a range of communication channels and information hubs.

The actions align strongly with consultation outcomes. Changes made to ensure key feedback about social connection and access to information and services are incorporated.

Theme 4 – Community Inclusion, Awareness and Leadership

Draft Action	Consultation Findings	Assessment
4.1 Increase disability awareness within the community.	Strong support for awareness campaigns, education initiatives and reducing stigma.	Strong alignment, minor wording change to measurable outcome to highlight the importance of hidden disabilities.
4.2 Strengthen leadership development for people with disability.	Focus on greater representation and decision-making opportunities.	Strong alignment, no changes to action required.
4.3 Involve people with lived experience in planning and design.	One of the strongest consultation themes. Respondents strongly supported co-design and lived experience leadership.	Strong alignment, minor wording change to measurable outcome to reinforce the focus on co-design principles where possible.
4.4 Increase participation in Council programs, services and activities.	Focus on greater social participation, recreation opportunities and removal of participation barriers.	Strong alignment, minor wording change to measurable outcome to reflect the focus on reducing barriers.

Key Messages from the Consultation:

- Increase community awareness and understanding of disability, including hidden disabilities.
- Promote inclusion and reduce stigma, misconceptions, discrimination and bullying.
- Increase awareness of programs and initiatives that support people with disability.
- Create more opportunities for social connection, recreation, sport and community participation.
- Ensure people with disability are involved in decision-making, leadership, consultation and co-design.
- Strengthen disability representation and lived experience in Council planning and engagement processes.

Community support for co-design and lived experience leadership was particularly strong, with actions and measures strengthened to reflect this feedback.

Consultation feedback resulted in minor updates to improve clarity and better reflect community views. Overall, the feedback supported the Plan's direction, with no major changes required to priorities or actions.

The importance of clear reporting, measurable targets and regular progress updates was also highlighted, reinforcing the proposed monitoring and reporting framework and the community's expectation for accountability and visible outcomes.

Conclusion

The analysis of the priorities and comments demonstrates that the Draft Disability Action Plan 2026 - 2030 accurately reflects the priorities identified by the community. Feedback strongly supports the four themes and associated actions, particularly those relating to accessible infrastructure, transport, carer support, community awareness, employment, and lived experience participation.

Community feedback has informed the final Disability Action Plan 2026 - 2030, resulting in refinements to actions and priorities where appropriate. The consultation findings also reinforced the overall strategic direction of the plan, strengthening existing actions and helping to confirm the areas of greatest importance to the community.

4.2.2 Complaints Policy and Implementation Plan

Responsible Officer: Chief Customer & Information Officer

Attachments:
1. Complaints Policy - DRAFT V5 (Final) (A14132940) [**4.2.2.1** - 16 pages]
2. Complaints Policy Review - Table of Changes - Council (A13888649) [**4.2.2.2** - 6 pages]

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. **NOTES the outcomes of the review and community consultation on the draft Complaints Policy;**
2. **APPROVES the Complaints Policy be adopted per Attachment 1; and**
3. **NOTES the proposed implementation approach, including development of a supporting procedure, staff training and awareness, central recording through Council systems, performance reporting and assessment of future complaint-handling resource requirements.**

Executive Summary

1. Council has completed a comprehensive review of its Complaints Policy in response to legislative obligations, the May 2025 internal audit, guidance from the Victorian Ombudsman and feedback from internal and community consultation.
2. The revised policy establishes a clearer, fairer and more consistent complaint-handling framework.
3. Key changes include a four-tier model for resolution and review, acknowledgement within two business days, tier-based response standards, regular progress updates for complex matters, clearer arrangements for sensitive complaints, stronger accessibility and privacy commitments, and defined responsibilities across the organisation.
4. The policy also strengthens organisational learning by requiring consistent recording of complaints, monitoring of performance and analysis of complaint data to identify recurring issues and service improvements.
5. Implementation will be delivered through Council's Complaints Handling Uplift Program. This will include a supporting procedure, staff training and awareness, centralised complaint recording and management through Merit CRM, improved reporting and consideration of dedicated oversight resources through a future business case.
6. Community feedback supported clearer, more concise and accessible information and raised concerns about accountability for complaints involving contractors. In response, complaints involving contractors will remain under Council's oversight, and customer-facing guidance, including Easy English information, will accompany implementation.
7. A detailed record of all amendments is provided in the Policy Review – Table of Changes (**Attachment 2**).

Background

8. A comprehensive update has now been completed, informed by:
    - Legislative compliance requirements.
    - Internal Audit Report – Review of Complaints Management, May 2025.
    - The Victorian Ombudsman's Councils and Complaints – Good Practice Guide (2nd edition).
    - The Victorian Ombudsman's 'Good complaint handling' workshop.
    - Internal consultation sessions with senior leaders across the organisation.
    - Community consultation.
    - Feedback from the Executive Team, Audit and Risk Committee and Staff Consultative Committee.

Key Issues and Discussion

9. The key areas of change in the revised policy include:
    - Improved clarity of scope and definitions.
    - Improved complaint handling framework (tiered approach).
    - Updated complaint handling service standards.
    - Enhanced guidance on sensitive and serious matters.
    - Established clear roles and responsibilities.
    - Inclusion of two new appendices outlining external complaint handling bodies and providing a comparison of service requests and complaints.
10. The revised Complaints Policy represents the first stage of Council's Complaints Handling Uplift Program, a multi-phase initiative.

    Key initiatives to be delivered through the program include:
    - Development and implementation of a Complaints Handling Procedure.
    - Introduction of a structured complaints training and awareness program.
    - Centralisation of complaint recording and management within the Merit CRM system.
    - Establishment of dedicated complaint handling resources to support oversight, reporting and continuous improvement, subject to business case approval.
11. To support successful implementation of the Complaints Handling Uplift Program, a Change Plan and Communication Plan have been developed.

Governance Compliance

Human Resource Implications (consider Workforce Planning and Service Statements)

12. The revised policy will require staff training, implementation of supporting procedures, system enhancements and ongoing organisational oversight. While initial implementation will be managed within existing resources, the need for dedicated complaint-handling resources will be assessed through the Complaints Handling Uplift Program and considered through future workforce planning and budget processes.

Financial/Asset Resource Implications (consider Service Statements, Budget, Long Term Financial Strategy and Asset Plan)

Operating Budget Implications

13. The policy itself does not require additional funding. However, implementation of the Complaints Handling Uplift Program is expected to require investment in training, change management, complaint management capability, data reporting and system optimisation. Any future resource requirements will be subject to business case development and Council's normal budget and workforce planning processes.
14. The expected benefits include improved customer experience, stronger governance, reduced organisational risk and greater efficiency through consistent complaint handling practices.

Asset Implications

15. This item does not affect any existing assets.

Legal/Risk Implications

16. The Complaints Handling Uplift Program has been established in response to recommendations arising from the Internal Audit Report - Review of Complaints Management (May 2025).
17. Failure to implement the audit recommendations may result in continued inconsistency in complaint handling practices, reduced organisational oversight and reporting, non-alignment with recognised best-practice standards, increased scrutiny from future audits or external reviews, and reputational impacts to Council.

Environmental Implications

18. There are no environmental implications relevant to this report.

Gender Impact Assessment

19. A gender impact assessment is not required.

Community Consultation

Purpose	We sought community feedback on the draft policy, particularly in relation to clarity, usability from a customer perspective and whether the process is fair and easy to follow.
Engagement period	The proposed policy was published on Councils ‘Your Say’ page from 3 June to 16 June 2026.
Level of Influence:	A ‘consult’ level of influence was available.

Engagement Activities:	The consultation was promoted on Council's website, at Council's customer service centres and via an email to 195 people who have subscribed to be kept up to date on consultations.
Communication reach and engagement numbers:	There were 112 visits to the consultation page, with 70 unique visitors. The draft policy was downloaded by 33 visitors.
Summary of feedback:	Submissions raised matters relating to accountability and responsiveness where the complaint is about a Council contractor, the usability and structure of the policy document and a preference for more concise and user-friendly information. In response, the policy has been updated to clarify that complaints will not be referred to contractors for handling. To improve usability and accessibility, website content will be published providing a summary of the Complaints Policy and outlining how complaints are managed, supported by fact sheets in Easy English.

Links to Community Vision, Council Plan, Strategy, Notice of Motion

20. This report is consistent with the following principles in the Community Vision 2040:
    - This policy supports the Community Vision 2040 aspiration of a Council that is responsive, accountable and focused on the needs of its community. Through fair, transparent and consistent complaint handling practices, the policy strengthens community trust and confidence in Council, encourages community participation and supports continuous improvement in service delivery.
21. This report is consistent with the following strategic objectives from the Council Plan 2025-29:
    - A Council that demonstrates leadership, responsible use of public resources, and a commitment to investing in the community.

Legislative and Policy Obligations

22. This report has considered Council's legislative and policy obligations (where applicable) as outlined in the Report Considerations section detailed in the front of this Agenda. The applicable obligations considered and applied are:
    - The Overarching Governance Principles of the *Local Government Act* 2020.

Complaints Policy
September 2026

Greater Dandenong

Document Control

Date Created: September 2026

Objective ID:

Date of Endorsement:

Version No: 2

Policy Superseded by this Policy: Complaints Policy (April 2022)

Responsible Department: Customer Experience

Responsible Directorate: Customer and Information

Policy Type: Mandated

Next Review: September 2030

Document Compliance

Council acknowledges the legal responsibility to comply with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*. The *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* is designed to protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens. The Charter gives legal protection to 20 fundamental human rights under four key values that include freedom, respect, equality and dignity.

Greater Dandenong City Council Policies comply with the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, the *Climate Change Act 2017*, the Child Safe Standards contained in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*, (Amended) the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* and the Overarching Governance Principles specified in 9(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Acknowledgment of Country

Greater Dandenong City Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this land, the Bunurong People and pays respect to their Elders past and present. We recognise and respect their continuing connections to climate, Culture, Country and waters.

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DRAFT

1. POLICY OBJECTIVE (OR PURPOSE)

The objective of this policy is to ensure a fair, consistent and transparent approach to managing complaints, with clear communication and analysis of complaint data to support ongoing service improvement.

2. BACKGROUND

Under Section 107 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council has an obligation to develop and maintain a complaints policy. This policy has been developed with guidance from the Victorian Ombudsman – Council and complaints – A good practice guide 2nd edition, July 2021.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to complaints about an action, decision or service provided by Council staff, contractors and volunteers. It also applies to the Council as a decision-making body.

This policy does not apply to requests for service, staff grievances, infringement reviews, matters that have already been reviewed by an external body, or where a statutory review process is conducted by an external body. See Appendix One (1) for a list of external bodies and the matters they handle.

Concerns or allegations about the abuse, harm or neglect of a child or young person are managed in accordance with Council's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

4. DEFINITIONS

Unless otherwise specified within the policy, the following words and phrases below are defined to mean the following in terms of this policy.

Complaint	A communication by a person to Council either verbally or in writing, expressing dissatisfaction about: • The quality of an action, decision or service provided by Council staff, a Council contractor or Council volunteer • A delay by Council staff, Council contractor or Council volunteer in taking an action, making a decision or delivering a service • A policy or decision made by the Council, Council staff, Council contractor or Council volunteer
Complainant	The person making the complaint
Customer	Any party that interacts with Greater Dandenong City Council

Council	The body of elected councillors
Councillor	A person democratically elected by residents and ratepayers of a municipality who is responsible for reviewing matters and debating issues before their Council
Council staff	All Council employees (including agency staff), contractors, consultants and volunteers
Council contractor	A third-party engaged by the Council to carry out functions on the Council's behalf
Council volunteer	A person who willingly gives their time, without financial gain, to assist in carrying out activities in designated volunteer positions
Request for service	A request made by a member of the public for a service to be provided or for an action to be taken
Senior Officer	A council staff member who holds a position at the level of Manager or above

5. WHAT IS A COMPLAINT

A complaint includes any communication (verbal or written) to the council which expresses dissatisfaction about:

- the quality of an action, decision or service provided by Council staff, a Council contractor or Council volunteer; or
- a delay by Council staff, a Council contractor or Council volunteer in taking an action, making a decision or delivering a service; or
- a policy or decision made by the council, Council staff, a Council contractor or Council volunteer.

'Complaint' versus 'service request'
It's important to identify the difference between a complaint and a request for service.

One way to distinguish a service request from a complaint is to look at whether a person is:

- requesting something additional or new (a service request)
- reporting what they believe to be a failing or a shortfall (a complaint)
- complaining about a council's response to a service request (a complaint).

Refer to Appendix Two (2) for examples of complaints and requests for service.

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6. HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

Any person, including a child or young person, can make a complaint. Complaints can be made by:

Phone	(03) 8571 1000
Online	greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/contactus
Email	council@cgd.vic.gov.au
Post	Greater Dandenong City Council PO Box 200 Dandenong VIC 3175
In Person	Dandenong Civic Centre Level 2, 225 Lonsdale Street, Dandenong Springvale Community Hub 5 Hillcrest Grove, Springvale Parkmore Customer Service Centre Shop A7, Parkmore Shopping Centre 317 Cheltenham Road, Keysborough

Accessibility
We are committed to ensuring that our complaints process is accessible to everyone. Tell us if you have specific communication needs or barriers and we can assist you by:

- using an assistance service, such as an interpreter or TTY (for free)
- talking with you if you have trouble reading or writing
- communicating with another person authorised to act on your behalf if you cannot make the complaint yourself.

Information to include when making a complaint
When making a complaint, it's important to provide as much relevant information as you can to help us understand the issue. This includes:

- your name, address and contact details
- a brief description of the issue and why you are dissatisfied
- relevant details such as dates, times, locations and any reference numbers
- previous correspondence relating to this complaint
- the outcome you are seeking
- any communication needs you have.

Sometimes we may ask you to put your complaint in writing to ensure that all the facts are clear, especially if the matter is complex or may need escalation. We can assist you with this if required.

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Anonymous complaints
To properly investigate a complaint, we may need to contact the complainant to seek further information or clarification. Complaints can be made anonymously; however, this may limit how thoroughly we can investigate the matter. We also cannot provide the outcome of anonymous complaints.

7. HOW WE MANAGE COMPLAINTS

All complaints will be managed fairly, promptly and transparently, in accordance with legislative and regulatory requirements. No person will be disadvantaged for making a complaint.

Council uses the following four-tiered approach to investigating and resolving complaints.

Tier 1 – First-contact resolution
Most issues can be resolved quickly and where possible, we will resolve a complaint at the first point of contact. When a complaint is received, we will assess it to decide the best way to manage it. This may happen during your initial conversation with us. After this assessment, we may:

- resolve the matter directly
- refer the matter to the appropriate team
- decline to deal with the matter if it should be managed under another Council policy or a separate statutory or legislative process
- guide you to another agency if the matter is outside Council's responsibilities.

Tier 2 – Investigation
When we are unable to resolve a complaint at Tier 1 or it needs further consideration, it will progress to Tier 2. Tier 2 investigations focus on whether Council policies, procedures, service standards etc. have been applied appropriately.

A Team Leader or Coordinator of the relevant department to which the complaint pertains will review the complaint, gather any additional information (such as records, correspondence, or advice from involved parties) and make an evidence-based decision. We will keep the complainant informed during the investigation and provide a written outcome explaining our decision and the reasons for it.

Complaints about Council staff, contractors and volunteers are initiated at Tier 2 and managed in line with the relevant procedures. While we will explain the complaints process to the complainant, we may not be able to share specific outcomes or actions taken in relation to individual personnel. All matters will be assessed impartially, based on available evidence, and addressed in a manner that is proportionate, confidential and consistent with the organisation's duty of care to Council staff.

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Tier 3 – Internal review
If a complainant is dissatisfied with the Tier 2 outcome, they may request an internal review. A senior officer, independent of earlier stages, will conduct the review to determine whether the complaint should have been handled differently and whether the outcome should change. The reviewer may confirm, vary or overturn the original decision. We will provide the complainant with a written outcome explaining the decision and reasons for it.

Tier 4 – External review
If a complainant still believes we have made the wrong decision, they may seek an external review. This generally involves escalation to an oversight body, tribunal or court. External review bodies assess matters at their discretion and may decide whether to accept or review a complaint. We will participate with any external review process. External review options include:

Organisation to contact for external review	Complaint
Victorian Ombudsman ombudsman.vic.gov.au	Actions or decisions of Council staff, including human rights concerns
Local Government Inspectorate lgi.vic.gov.au	Breaches of the *Local Government Act 2020*
Office of the Victorian Information Commission ovic.vic.gov.au	Privacy breaches, Freedom of Information complaints and issues relating to the collection, use or disclosure of information
Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC) ibac.vic.gov.au	Corruption, serious misconduct or public interest disclosure complaints
Victorian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission humanrights.vic.gov.au	Human rights concerns, discrimination, sexual harassment or vilification
Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission agedcarequality.gov.au	Breaches of provider obligations

Complaints about the Mayor or individual Councillors will be referred to the Manager Governance, Integrity, Legal and Risk and considered against the standards of behaviour outlined in the Model Councillor Code of Conduct.

Complaints about the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will be referred to the Mayor for assessment and if necessary, referred to the Local Government Inspectorate.

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Complaints made to councillors will be handled in accordance with this policy.

Timeframes
We will acknowledge complaints within 2 business days and aim to provide a response within the following timeframes:

- Tier 1: 10 business days
- Tier 2: 10 business days
- Tier 3: 20 business days

If more time is required because the matter is complex or requires additional investigation, we will inform the complainant before the original timeframe expires. Where additional time is needed, we will provide progress updates at least every 5 business days until the matter is finalised.

In limited circumstances where the matter is awaiting a fixed event or external dependency (such as consideration at a scheduled Council meeting), we may instead provide updates at key milestones. In these cases, we will advise the complainant of the reason updates will be less frequent and the date of the next expected update.

Sensitive or serious allegations
Some complaints involve sensitive or serious allegations such as misconduct, corruption, discrimination, harassment, family violence, occupational health and safety concerns, improper use of information, or matters raised by whistleblowers or through protected disclosures.

These matters may require confidential handling, mandatory reporting, or referral under other Council policies or legislation, including Public Interest Disclosures, Child Safety, Equal Opportunity, Whistleblower Protection, or Independent Broad-Based Anti-Corruption (IBAC) processes.

Your privacy
We understand that making a complaint may involve sharing personal or sensitive information and we take this responsibility seriously. We only collect information that is necessary to assess and respond to your complaint.

Your information is treated confidentially, accessed only by authorised staff, and stored securely in line with Council's Privacy and Personal Information Policy. We manage personal and health information in accordance with the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* and the *Health Records Act 2001*.

8. DISCRETION TO REFUSE A COMPLAINT

At times, matters raised with Council may be assessed as feedback rather than a complaint and, as a result, may not be progressed through the complaints process.

If a decision is made not to action your complaint, we will explain why and where possible, guide you to the appropriate organisation or process.

9. UNREASONABLE COMPLAINANT CONDUCT

Council acknowledges that some complainants may understandably feel upset, angry or disappointed, particularly if they believe they have been negatively affected, treated unfairly or have received information that was unclear or incorrect. Many complainants manage these feelings and communicate respectfully with us. However, in some circumstances a complainant's behaviour can become unreasonable.

We do not expect Council staff to tolerate behaviour that is abusive, aggressive, threatening, harassing, discriminatory or which places excessive demands on time and resources.

Where a complainant's conduct raises concerns about the health, safety or wellbeing of staff or creates inequity or unreasonable pressure on resources, we may need to modify how we communicate or interact with them.

We will follow our Complaint Handling Guidelines when responding to unreasonable conduct. This includes informing the complainant of any restrictions that are introduced, clearly explaining the reasons for these decisions and how long they will be in place for, and advising them of the available options for review and appeal.

Below are some ways we may modify how we communicate or interact with unreasonable complainants:

Who you can contact
In some cases, Council may direct all communication through a single officer (a case manager), who will manage the complaint(s) and communication with the complainant. This helps ensure consistency and reduces the risk of misunderstandings or conflicting information.

What you can raise
If a person continues to pursue issues that have already been fully considered or reviewed under this policy, Council may limit the matters we continue to engage with.

When and how you can contact us
Where a person's behaviour involves persistently rude, abusive, aggressive or disruptive communication or places unreasonable demand on staff, Council may place limits on the timing, frequency or method of contact, such as restricting communication to writing.

Access to services or facilities
If a person's conduct presents a safety risk to Council staff or members of the public, Council may restrict their access to certain services or facilities.

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10. RESPONSIBILITIES

Customer	• Provide honest, factual information • Treat Council staff with courtesy and respect • Respond to requests for additional information in a timely manner • Use the complaints process responsibly and in good faith.
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	• Promote positive behaviours and practices relating to enabling, responding to and learning from complaints • Support service improvements that arise from complaints • Review and publish complaint data.
Executive Directors, Managers and Leaders	• Recruit, train and empower staff to resolve complaints promptly and in accordance with Council's policies and procedures • Manage conflicts of interest in the complaints process • Report on and identify improvements from complaint data • Support staff who handle complaints.
Manager Governance, Integrity, Legal and Risk	• Participate and cooperate with external review processes. • Investigate complaints made about the Mayor and Councillors.
Senior Officer	• Conduct independent reviews of Tier 2 decisions • Make evidence-based decisions and provide written outcomes • Maintain clear and accurate internal review records.
Coordinators and Team Leaders	• Investigate tier 2 complaints • Maintain clear and accurate investigation records • Communicate with complainant and provide progress updates • Make evidence-based decisions and provide written outcomes.
All Council staff	• Familiarise themselves with this policy and Council's complaints process • Assist customers to make a complaint • Treat people with respect and professionalism • Resolve complaints in accordance with this policy • Where required, seek the assistance of their supervisor, to enable the complaint to be resolved at this point of contact • Undertake training in relation to complaint handling • Ensure all complaints are recorded as complaints.
Councillors	• Familiarise themselves with this policy and Council's complaints process • Refer complaints for resolution in accordance with this policy.
Contractors	• Familiarise themselves with this policy and Council's complaints process • Cooperate with Council's complaint handling processes • Undertake training in relation to complaint handling.

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Volunteers	• Familiarise themselves with this policy and Council's complaints process • Cooperate with Council's complaint handling processes • Undertake training in relation to complaint handling.

11. REPORTING, MONITORING, REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION

Reporting and Monitoring	The Manager Customer Experience alongside the Chief Customer & Information Officer is responsible for the oversight, implementation, periodic review, monitoring and evaluation of this policy. These responsibilities ensure alignment with complaint-handling best practices recommended by the Victorian Ombudsman.
Review	This policy will be reviewed every 4 years.
Stakeholder Engagement	The following stakeholders will be consulted as part of the review process: Manager Customer Experience, Executive Management Team, CEO, Audit and Risk Committee, Staff Consultative Committee, Manager Governance, Coordinator Risk Management, Council, Legal and Risk.
Implementation	This Policy will be published on Council's website and intranet and implemented through staff induction and training, supporting procedures and clear allocation of responsibilities.

Performance reporting
We will report on complaints and complaint handling performance using the following measures:

- Total number of complaints received
- Number of complaints resolved within set timeframes
- Average resolution time
- Number of complaints escalated to external review

These measures will be published in Council's Annual Report.

Additional detailed measures will be reported internally to our Executive Team.

How we learn from complaints
We recognise that complaints provide valuable feedback and insight into our performance. Analysing data from complaints allows us to identify trends and help uncover potential issues that may require further attention. We will use this information to create solutions and ongoing improvements to our services.

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12. REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

Legislation

- *Aged Care Act 2024*
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*
- *Freedom of Information Act 1982*
- *Gender Equality Act 2020*
- *Health Records Act 2001*
- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Ombudsman Act 1973*
- *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*
- *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012*

Related Council and Other Policies, Procedures, Strategies, Protocols, Guidelines

- Rights and Responsibilities | Greater Dandenong Council
- Greater Dandenong City Council Access, Diversity and Equity Policy
- Greater Dandenong City Council Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Greater Dandenong City Council Fraud and Corruption Prevention and Control Policy
- Greater Dandenong City Council Public Transparency Policy
- Greater Dandenong City Council Privacy and Personal Information Policy
- Greater Dandenong City Council Public Interest Disclosures Policy
- Greater Dandenong City Council Staff Code of Conduct
- Victorian Ombudsman – Council and complaints – A good practice guide 2nd edition, July 2021
- Model Councillor Code of Conduct

Administrative Updates

It is recognised that from time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter this document, such a change may be made administratively. Examples include a change to the name of a Council department, the change to an existing policy or document referred to in this policy and minor updates to legislation and the like which does not have a material impact. All changes or updates which materially alter this policy must be by resolution of Council.

Date	Update

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13. APPENDIX ONE – EXTERNAL BODIES

Regulatory Body	Type of complaint
Victorian Ombudsman ombudsman.vic.gov.au	Actions or decisions of Council staff, including human rights concerns
Local Government Inspectorate lgi.vic.gov.au	Breaches of the *Local Government Act 2020*
Office of the Victorian Information Commission ovic.vic.gov.au	Privacy breaches, Freedom of Information complaints and issues relating to the collection, use or disclosure of information
Independent Broad-Based Anti-Corruption Commission (IBAC) ibac.vic.gov.au	Corruption, serious misconduct or public interest disclosure complaints
Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) vcat.vic.gov.au	Planning disputes and appeals, including planning permit decisions
Victorian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission humanrights.vic.gov.au	Human rights concerns, discrimination, sexual harassment or vilification
Disability Services Commissioner odsc.vic.gov.au	Complaints about disability services
Office of the Public Advocate publicadvocate.vic.gov.au	Concerns about the rights and wellbeing of people with disability
Victorian Electoral Commission vec.vic.gov.au	Complaints and feedback about Council elections
Social Services Regulator ssr.vic.gov.au	Reportable Conduct matters and complaints involving abuse, harm or neglect of children or young people by Council staff
Victorian Building Authority (VBA) vba.vic.gov.au	Building related complaints where statutory review applies
Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission agedcarequality.gov.au	Complaints about poor or unsafe care in aged care services

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14. APPENDIX TWO – COMPLAINT VS REQUEST FOR SERVICE

The following section provides examples of the differences between request for service and a complaint across multiple scenarios.

Summary definition of a complaint
Communication by a person to Council, expressing dissatisfaction about the quality of an action, decision or service provided by Council staff, a Council contractor or Council volunteer.

Summary definition of a request for service
A request made by a member of the public for a service to be provided or for an action to be taken.

Please refer to Section 5 for further information.

Request for service	Complaint
How can I object to the development on Walker Street?	Council shouldn't have approved the development on Walker Street.
Can you tell me if a planning permit is required for a backyard pool?	Council's website doesn't have enough information about when a planning permit is needed for a pool.
I want to make a complaint that my neighbours business is very noisy.	Council's investigation into noise from a business wasn't thorough and didn't look at peak times.
Can Council fill in a pothole in my street?	I reported a pothole to Council two months ago and it hasn't been fixed.
There should be a speed hump on Clow Street.	I asked Council to put a speed hump on Clow Street and it hasn't happened and I haven't heard from Council.
I want my parking fine withdrawn.	The officer who issued me a parking fine was very rude and unprofessional.
The same car parks illegally in a no stopping area in my street every day. Can you send someone to investigate?	I reported a car parked illegally three weeks ago and the car is still parking there every day. You haven't actioned my request.
The nature strip on the corner of McCrae Street is overgrown. Can Council please mow it?	I'm unhappy that Council stopped maintaining the nature strip without notifying residents.
There's loose gravel on the shared bike path behind the library. Could it be swept?	I'm unhappy that Council hasn't been maintaining the shared Path. It's dangerous.

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I want to make a complaint that the air-conditioning wasn't working during my hall booking.	I'm unhappy that my previous concerns about hall conditions weren't addressed and no alternative room was offered.
There seems to be an error on my rates notice. Can someone review it?	I'm unhappy with the way staff handled my enquiry about the rates error. They didn't explain the situation clearly.
I'd like to report a trailer parked on the nature strip for several days. Can an officer take a look?	I'm dissatisfied with how parking officers respond. Previous issues have been closed without explanation.
I would like to change the time of my personal care service.	No one has arrived for my personal care service.

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Policy Review - Table of Changes

POLICY NAME: Complaints Policy

REVIEW DATE: September 2026

Policy section	Change proposed	Reason for proposed change
Section 1 – Policy Objective	Remove reference to what a complaint is and improve wording to focus on clear communication and the use of complaint data to support service improvement	To ensure the objective remains focused on the purpose of the policy and the use of complaints to support continuous service improvement
Section 3 – Scope	Clarify that “complaints already reviewed by an external body” are out of scope	To provide clarity on matters that fall outside the scope of the policy and avoid duplication of external review processes
Section 3 – Scope	Clarify that complaints regarding abuse, harm or neglect of a child or young person will be managed in accordance with Councils Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy	To clarify that complaints relating to child abuse, harm or neglect are outside the scope of this policy and will be managed under Council’s Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
Section 3 – Scope	Relocate examples of requests for service to a dedicated appendix	To streamline the main policy and maintain focus on defining the scope of complaints and matters managed through other processes
Section 4 – Definitions	Change definition of Customer to “any party that interacts with Greater Dandenong City Council”	To broaden the definition of customer to reflect the range of parties that interact with Council
Section 4 – Definitions	Change definition of Council to “the body of elected councillors”	To clarify the meaning of Council using more accessible language
Section 4 – Definitions	Change definition of Council Staff to “All council employees (including agency staff), contractors, consultants and volunteers”	To provide consistency with Council's standard organisational definition
Section 4 – Definitions	Change definition of Council Volunteer to “a person who willingly gives their time, without financial gain, to assist in carrying out activities in designated volunteer positions”	To provide a clearer and more concise definition
Section 4 – Definitions	Define “Senior Officer” as “A council staff member who	To define the role responsible for managing Tier 3 complaints

Policy section	Change proposed	Reason for proposed change
	holds a position at the level of Manager or above"	
Section 5 – What is a Complaint	Introduce section defining a complaint and how it differs to a request for service	To improve policy navigation by relocating this information to a standalone section
Section 6 – How to make a Complaint	Update website address, postal name and name of Parkmore Customer Service Centre	To ensure organisational and contact information is current and accurate
Section 6 - How to make a complaint	Add an "Accessibility" heading	To improve visibility of accessibility information within the policy
Section 6 – How to make a Complaint	Include that we cannot provide the outcome of anonymous complaints	To clarify expectations regarding the management of anonymous complaints
Section 7 – How we manage Complaints	Move reference to complaints about the mayor, councillors and CEO from the "other complaints"' section	To ensure information about complaints concerning the Mayor, Councillors and CEO is located in the section describing how complaints are managed and updated how complaints regarding the Mayor and Councillors are actioned
Section 7 – How we manage complaints	Improve wording of Tier 1 approach and allow for complaints to be triaged to the appropriate team rather than relevant team or contractor	Simplify the wording of the Tier 1 complaints process and require complaints to be triaged to the appropriate Council team rather than directly to a contractor
Section 7 – How we manage complaints	Detail the scope of Tier 2 investigations and assign responsibility for investigations to Team Leaders and Coordinators	To provide greater clarity on the matters considered during a Tier 2 investigation and accountability for conducting investigations
Section 7 – How we manage complaints	Clarify how complaints about Council staff are managed, apply the same approach to Council volunteers and contractors, and set expectations regarding confidentiality and communication of outcomes	To support fair, consistent and transparent management of complaints about Council staff, volunteers and contractors.
Section 7 – How we manage complaints	Change responsibility for managing Tier 3 complaints from the CEO to a Senior Officer and clarify that the Senior Officer will determine whether to confirm, vary or overturn the original decision	To align responsibility for Tier 3 complaint reviews with the appropriate organisational level and clarify the potential outcomes of the review process
Section 7 – How we manage complaints	State that external review bodies assess matters at their discretion and may decide not to accept a complaint	To provide clarity about the role of external review bodies and manage expectations regarding external review options

Policy section	Change proposed	Reason for proposed change
Section 7 – How we manage complaints	Include the following organisations as external review options for complainants: • Local Government Inspectorate • Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner • Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC) • Victorian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission • Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission	To provide additional relevant external review bodies
Section 7 – How we manage complaints	Reduce the timeframe for acknowledging complaints from five days to two business days	To ensure a more timely response to complaints
Section 7 – How we manage complaints	Replace the current response timeframe with tier-based response timeframes of 10 business days for Tier 1 and Tier 2 complaints, and 20 business days for Tier 3 complaints	To align response timeframes with the complexity of complaints at each tier
Section 7 – How we manage complaints	Change the commitment from providing regular updates for complex matters to providing progress updates at least every five business days, unless the matter is awaiting a fixed event or external dependency, in which case updates will be provided at key milestones.	To ensure complainants receive regular and timely updates on the progress of complex complaints
Section 7 – How we manage complaints	Add a “Sensitive or serious allegations” heading, including examples of such complaints and how they may be handled	To improve visibility of information relating to sensitive or serious allegations and provide examples
Section 8 - Discretion to refuse a complaint	Introduce a dedicated section outlining when Council may decline to action a complaint.	To improve the visibility of information about complaints that may not be actioned

Policy section	Change proposed	Reason for proposed change
Section 9 - Unreasonable complainant conduct	Outline behaviours that Council staff are not expected to tolerate	To set clear expectations regarding behaviours that Council staff are not expected to tolerate
Section 9 - Unreasonable complainant conduct	Commit to informing complainants of any restrictions applied, including the reasons, duration and available review options	To ensure a fair and transparent approach to the application of restrictions
Section 9 - Unreasonable complainant conduct	Expand the information outlining how communication may be modified when managing unreasonable complainant behaviour	To provide greater detail on how communication may be managed in response to unreasonable complainant behaviour
Section 10 - Responsibilities	Change “Directors, senior leaders and managers” to “Executive Directors, Managers and Leaders”	To reflect current organisational position titles
Section 10 - Responsibilities	Add responsibility for “All Staff” to identify and record complaints	To ensure all complaints are consistently identified and recorded in accordance with the policy
Section 10 - Responsibilities	Add roles and responsibilities for: • Senior Officer • Coordinators and Team Leaders • Manager Governance, Integrity, Legal and Risk	To ensure responsibilities for newly introduced roles are clearly documented
Section 10 - Responsibilities	Remove the responsibility for roles to "act in accordance with Council's Staff Code of Conduct"	To avoid duplication of requirements already addressed through the Staff Code of Conduct
Section 10 - Responsibilities	Redefine responsibilities of Complainant	To update and clarify the responsibilities of complainants throughout the complaints process
Section 11 - Reporting, Monitoring, Review and Implementation	Change reporting indicators to: • Total number of complaints received • Number of complaints resolved within set timeframes • Average resolution time of complaints • Number of complaints escalated to external review	To provide more meaningful indicators of complaint handling performance

Policy section	Change proposed	Reason for proposed change
Section 12 - References and Related Documents	Change name of Protected Disclosure Act 2012 to Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012	To ensure legislative references are current and accurate
Section 12 - References and Related Documents	Add following references: • Equal Opportunity Act 2010 • Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 • Australian Government Charter of Aged Care Rights • Aged Care Act 2024 • Fraud and Corruption Prevention and Control Policy • Public Transparency Policy • Council's Child Safety and Wellbeing policy	To ensure the policy references relevant legislation and Council policies
Section 12 - References and Related Documents	Change "Greater Dandenong City Councillor Code of Conduct" to "Model Councillor Code of Conduct"	To ensure the policy references the current Councillor Code of Conduct
Appendix One – External Bodies	Convert the list of external review bodies and contact details into Appendix One in table format.	To improve the presentation and accessibility of information about external review options available to complainants Removed the Magistrates Court of Victoria to prevent a misunderstanding that complainants should contact the Magistrates Court of Victoria
Appendix One – External Bodies	Add the following bodies: • Victorian Ombudsman • Disability Services Commissioner • Office of the Public Advocate • Social Services Regulator • Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Remove the Magistrates Court of Victoria	To provide a more comprehensive list of relevant external review bodies and reduce the risk of confusion about the appropriate avenues for seeking external review

Policy section	Change proposed	Reason for proposed change
Appendix Two – Complaint vs request for service	Introduce Appendix Two and add definitions of complaints and requests for service and provide examples pairing each with a corresponding complaint example	To support a clearer understanding of the difference between complaints and requests for service

4.2.3 Draft Integrated Children, Youth and Family Strategy - Endorse for Consultation

Responsible Officer: Executive Director Community Strengthening

Attachments:

1. Integrated Children Youth and Family Services Strategy 2027-2031 DRAFT (Attachment 1) [**4.2.3.1** - 30 pages]
2. Background Report Integrated Children Youth and Family Strategy, May 2026 (Attachment 2) [**4.2.3.2** - 82 pages]
3. Community Engagement Summary Report (Attachment 3) [**4.2.3.3** - 5 pages]

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. **NOTES the Draft Integrated Children, Youth and Family Strategy 2027-31 (Attachment 1) which builds on Council's previous two strategies: the Youth and Family Strategy 2021-26 and the Children's Plan 2021-26, and has been informed by consultation with the community and sector stakeholders; and**
2. **ENDORSES the Draft Integrated Children, Youth and Family Strategy 2027-31 for the purposes of public consultation (for a period of over 30 days) from 22 September to 31 October 2026.**

Executive Summary

1. The Draft Integrated Children, Youth and Family Strategy (2027-31) outlines a five-year plan for Council to best direct services and supports to meet the needs of children, young people, and families. It adopts a 0–25 years life course approach, recognising that people experience needs and services across various stages of life, not in isolation.
2. The Strategy aligns with Council's shift to streamline plans through its Integrated Planning Framework, bringing together the former, discrete Children's Plan (2021–26) and Youth and Family Strategy (2021–26) into a single, clear, and integrated approach to guide future planning and delivery.

Background

3. Greater Dandenong is a growing and diverse community, with more than 30% of residents aged 0–25. While the community is rich in cultural strengths and resilience, many children, young people, and families face challenges including financial pressure, mental health concerns, housing stress, and barriers to accessing support.
4. This Strategy aims to improve outcomes for children, young people, and families through a more coordinated and integrated approach across Council services. It focuses on promoting health, wellbeing and development, strengthening early intervention and prevention, supporting pathways to education, employment and participation, and ensuring services are inclusive and accessible.
5. At its heart, the strategy seeks to ensure all children, young people and families feel supported, included and empowered to thrive, contributing to a healthier, more connected, and resilient community.

Key Issues and Discussion

6. The Integrated Children, Youth and Family Strategy (2027-31) sets out Council's vision and priorities for children, young people, and families in Greater Dandenong.
7. Council's vision is that young people and families are valued, celebrated, and supported to reach their full potential.
8. This vision will be fulfilled by working across five key priority themes:

Leading and Partnering	Working together to improve access and outcomes.
Healthy and Thriving	Promoting health, wellbeing, and resilience.
Engaged and Valued	Ensuring every voice is heard and valued.
Belonging, Safety and Connection	Creating safe, inclusive, and connected communities.
Learning and Growing	Building skills, confidence, and future opportunities.

9. The Strategy is informed by both evidence and community voice. Development included a review of research, policy, demographic and service data, alongside extensive community and stakeholder engagement between January and June 2026. Through conversations, surveys, workshops, consultations and community events, valuable insights were gathered to ensure the Strategy reflects the needs, experiences and aspirations of children, young people, and families. A copy of the 'Integrated Children, Youth and Family Strategy, Background Report, May 2026 (Attachment 2); and Community Engagement Summary Report (Attachment 3), accompany this report.
10. Responsibility for implementing, monitoring and reporting on the Strategy will be shared by Children's Services and Youth and Family Services. Mobilised around five key themes, the Strategy brings together Maternal and Child Health, Children's Services, Youth Services and Family Services to support children, young people, and families from birth to 25 years. Delivery will be supported through annual action plans, with progress reported through Council's annual reporting processes.

Governance Compliance

Human Resource Implications (consider Workforce Planning and Service Statements)

11. This item does not have an impact on existing human resources.

Financial/Asset Resource Implications (consider Service Statements, Budget, Long Term Financial Strategy and Asset Plan)

Operating Budget Implications

12. There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Asset Implications

13. This item does not affect any existing assets.

Legal/Risk Implications

14. There are no legal / risk implications relevant to this report.

Environmental Implications

15. There are no environmental implications relevant to this report.

Community Consultation

16. Integrated Children, Youth and Family Strategy (2027-31) Public Exhibition Engagement Summary

Purpose	To seek community feedback on the draft Strategy and validate that the draft Strategy reflects the needs, priorities, challenges, and aspirations identified through the extensive community engagement process. Feedback during the public exhibition will inform any final refinements.
Engagement period	Proposed: 22 September – 31 October 2026, minimum four-week public exhibition period.
Level of Influence:	Consult (IAP2 Spectrum)
Engagement Activities:	• Draft Strategy published on Council Have Your Say website. • Online feedback survey/submission process. • Face-to-face community information and feedback. • Community stakeholder outreach and promotion. • Media release. • Social media promotion (Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn). • Source News article. • Communication to stakeholders who participated in Phase 1 engagement.
Communication reach and engagement numbers:	Consultation will include both broad reach across general community engagement pathways and targeted engagement and consultation with all stakeholders who participated in Phase 1 of engagement. Analysis of all engagement results will be completed once the consultation is finalised and included in a detailed engagement report.
Summary of feedback:	Phase 1 of community engagement feedback reinforced the priorities identified during the initial engagement phase and demonstrated broad support for the draft Strategy's vision, outcomes, and five priority areas. Our community told us that the following areas are especially important to them: • Access to services • Health and wellbeing • Learning and development opportunities • Community connection • Safety • Inclusion and ensuring the voices of children, young people and families continue to inform Council decision-making. A detailed summary of Phase 1 engagement feedback is provided in the accompanying Community Engagement Summary Report, (Attachment 3).

Links to Community Vision, Council Plan, Strategy, Notice of Motion

17. This report is consistent with the following principles in the Community Vision 2040:

- Safe and peaceful community
- Education, training, entrepreneurship, and employment opportunities
  Sustainable environment
- Embrace diversity and multiculturalism
- Mind, Body and Spirit
- Art and Culture

18. This report is consistent with the following strategic objectives from the Council Plan 2025-29:

- A socially connected, safe and healthy city.
- A city of accessible vibrant centres and places.
- 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.

Legislative and Policy Obligations

19. This report has considered Council's legislative and policy obligations (where applicable) as outlined in the Report Considerations section detailed in the front of this Agenda. The applicable obligations considered and applied are:

    Not Applicable



Draft Integrated Children, Youth and Family Strategy 2027-2031

Greater Dandenong

Acknowledgement of Country

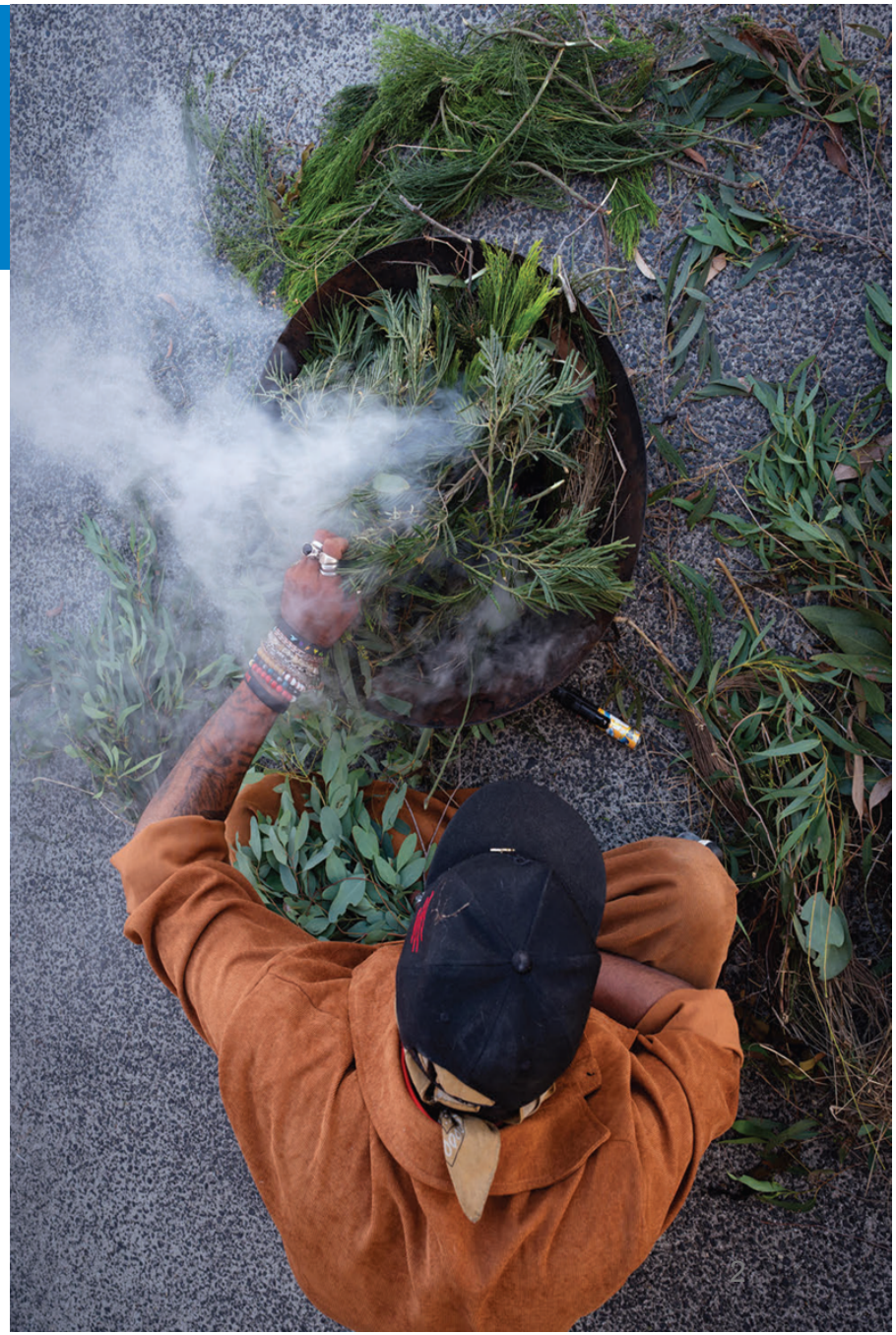
We acknowledge the Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters, now known as the City of Greater Dandenong.

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.

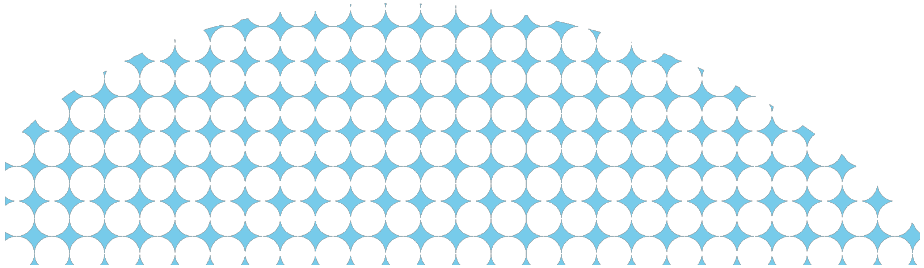
In the spirit of reconciliation, we value the opportunity to learn from and work alongside Bunurong peoples, as Traditional Custodians.



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Message From the Mayor





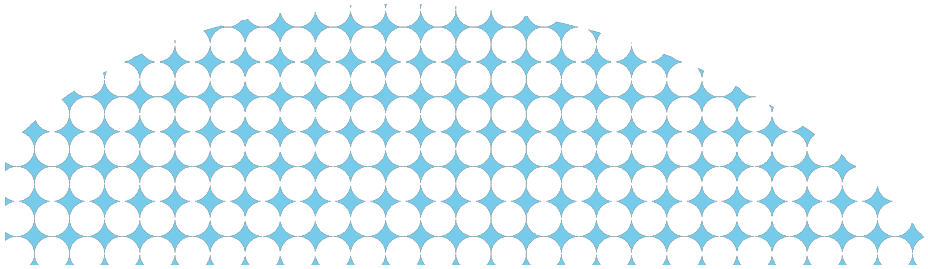
Introduction

Council's vision is that children, young people and families are valued, celebrated and supported to reach their full potential.

Children and young people aged 0–25 years make up over 30 per cent of the City of Greater Dandenong's population of more than 167,000 people, highlighting the critical importance of investing in their wellbeing and future.

The municipality is one of Australia's most diverse and dynamic communities, with over half of residents born overseas and more than 150 nationalities and 120 languages represented. This diversity, combined with a relatively young and growing population, strong community networks and active multicultural organisations, creates a socially rich and resilient community.

Greater Dandenong City Council's Integrated Children, Youth and Family Strategy 2027–2031 is the first integrated strategy of its kind for the municipality. It provides a clear and coordinated long-term framework to guide the planning, delivery and continuous improvement of services for children, young people and families. By bringing together existing plans into a single, cohesive approach, the strategy adopts a life-course perspective, recognising that the needs and experiences of children, young people and families are interconnected and evolve over time.



The Strategy

The strategy responds to the unique strengths and challenges of the Greater Dandenong community. It builds on the area's cultural richness, strong family connections and community resilience, while also addressing gaps, emerging needs and barriers to participation and wellbeing.

This strategy will:

- Provide an integrated and coordinated approach to planning for children, young people (0-25 years) and families.
- Respond to emerging needs and priorities across the 0-25-year life course.
- Guide Council's investment and partnerships over the next five years.
- Ensure services are inclusive, responsive and aligned, enabling children, young people and families to feel valued, supported and able to reach their full potential.



Community Vision | Vision for 2040

The City of Greater Dandenong is home to all. It's a city where you can enjoy and embrace life through celebration and equal opportunity! We harmonise the community by valuing multiculturalism and the individual. Our community is healthy, vibrant, innovative and creative. Our growing city is committed to environmental sustainability.

Welcome to our exciting and peaceful community.

Greater Dandenong People's Panel (2021; reviewed 2024), Community Vision to 2040, setting long-term aspirations and guiding principles.



Guiding Principles

The following principles underpin the development and implementation of this Strategy.
Council's approach is grounded in an intersectional lens, meaning that we recognise that children, young people and families experience systems and services differently based on overlapping aspects of identity and circumstance.

1. **Leadership, Advocacy, Planning and Partnerships**
   Lead, advocate, plan and work in partnership to strengthen the local service system to be responsive to the needs of children, youth people and families.

2. **Family Centred Practice**
   Work from a strength-based approach with a focus on prevention and early intervention to uphold the best interests of children and young people.

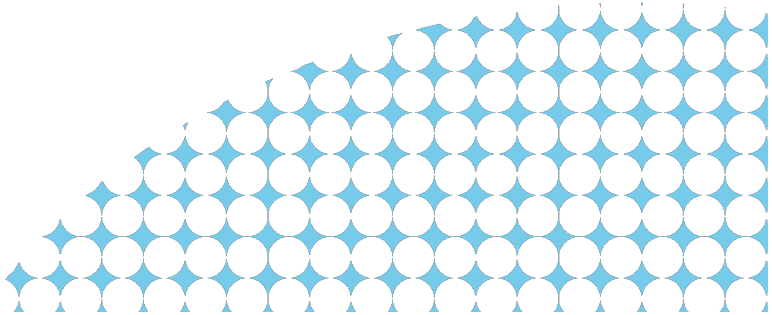
3. **Participation and Engagement**
   Engage children and young people's voice in discussion and decision making to promote active engagement in community life.

4. **Continuous Improvement**
   Use evidence informed practice and adopt innovative approaches in developing programs and services for children, young people and families.

5. **Capacity Building**
   Build the capacity of children, young people and families to support their active participation in community.

6. **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion**
   Ensure Council's services are fair, inclusive and responsive to the different experiences, backgrounds and needs of our community.

7. **Climate Change and Sustainability**
   Follow environmentally responsible practices and inspire children, young people, and families to care for their surroundings and community.

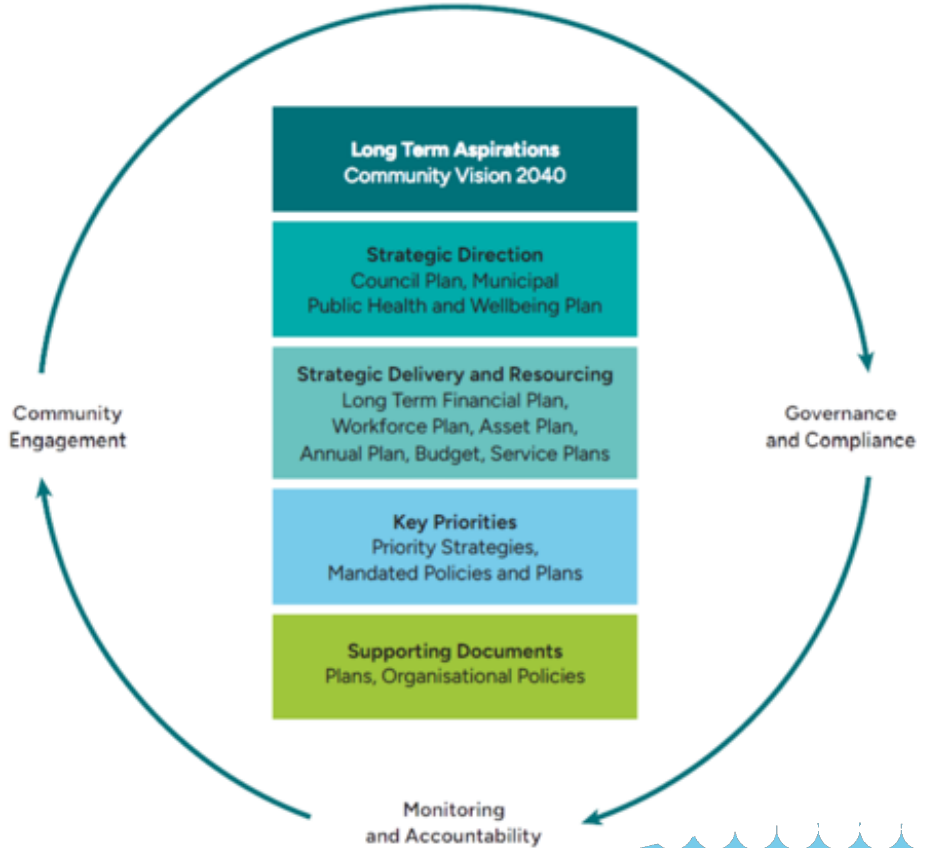


Council's Commitment and Strategic Approach

Council's Integrated Planning Framework

This strategy is embedded within Council's Integrated Planning Framework, which brings together long-term community aspirations, strategic priorities and service delivery. The Council Plan and the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan have shaped its focus, ensuring alignment with broader community goals. These priorities are delivered through services, programs and partnerships. Clear planning, resourcing and regular reporting ensure progress is tracked and accountability is maintained.

Together, this approach ensures our work with children, young people and families contributes to a stronger, healthier and more connected community.



Supporting Documents

Council's strategic objectives in the Council Plan 2025–29 reflect the hopes and aspirations of the community as expressed in the Community Vision and guiding principles. This strategy supports these objectives by strengthening and aligning Council's work with children, young people and families across the 0–25 life course, contributing to their achievement.

- 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

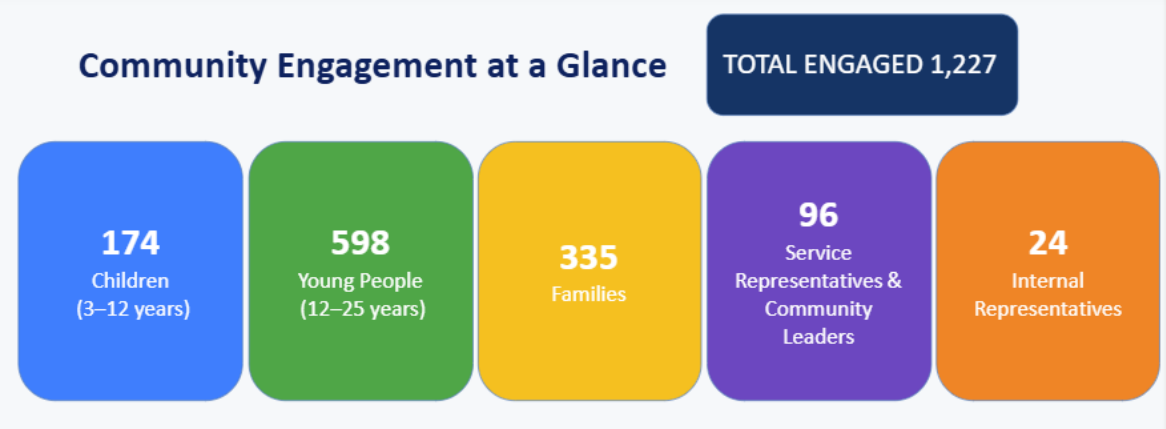


Background

The Development of the Strategy

The priorities in this strategy are based on a comprehensive, evidence-informed approach. This includes a background report drawing on local data, community insights, relevant legislation, policy frameworks, and Council commitments. The strategy is further informed by consultation with children, young people and families, as well as input from service providers and Council departments. It also builds on previous engagement, benchmarking, and the outcomes of the former Children's Plan 2019–2026; and Youth and Family Strategy 2019–2026.

Consultation was undertaken in two phases during 2026: targeted stakeholder engagement from January to May 2026, followed by public exhibition from September to October 2026 to test and refine the draft strategy. Together, these processes helped ensure the strategy reflects current community needs and long-term priorities. The evidence base is detailed in the supplementary document, '*Integrated Children, Youth and Family Strategy Background Report*': Planning for Communities (May 2026).

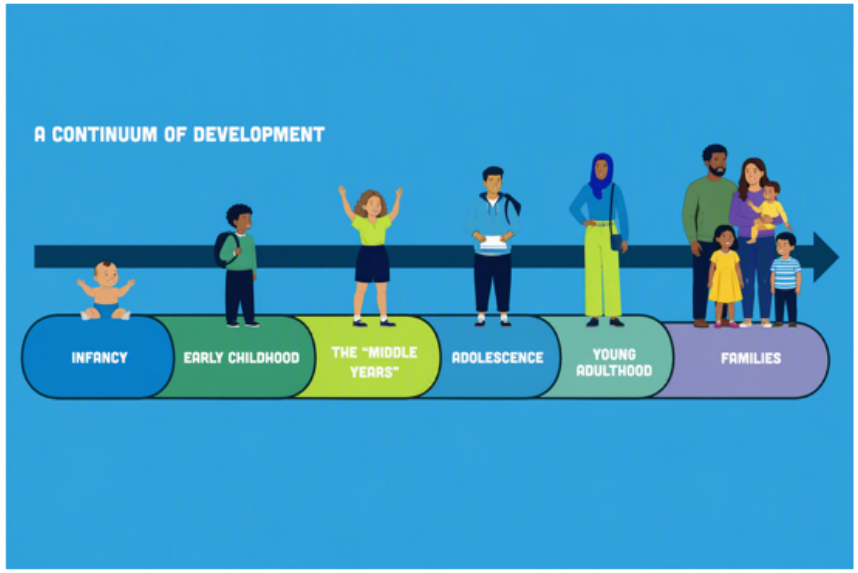


A Life-Course Approach: Supporting People from Birth to 25 years

Council has adopted a life course approach in developing this strategy because it reflects the way people move through various stages of life. People don't grow, learn or face challenges in fixed stages that start and stop at certain ages, our lives evolve over time. Our health, wellbeing and opportunities are shaped by what happens early in life, including during the first 1,000 days when the foundations for development are established, as well as during important changes and milestone transitions, and through the support of our families and communities.

By adopting this approach, Council recognises that supporting children early, assisting people through key life transitions, and strengthening families can prevent more complex issues later and lead to fairer outcomes for everyone, now and into the future.

Council is committed to being a child safe organisation, placing the safety, wellbeing and rights of children and young people at the centre of everything we do. This commitment is critical to our work and underpins the delivery of the strategy, ensuring our services, programs and decision-making actively create environments where children feel safe, supported and empowered.

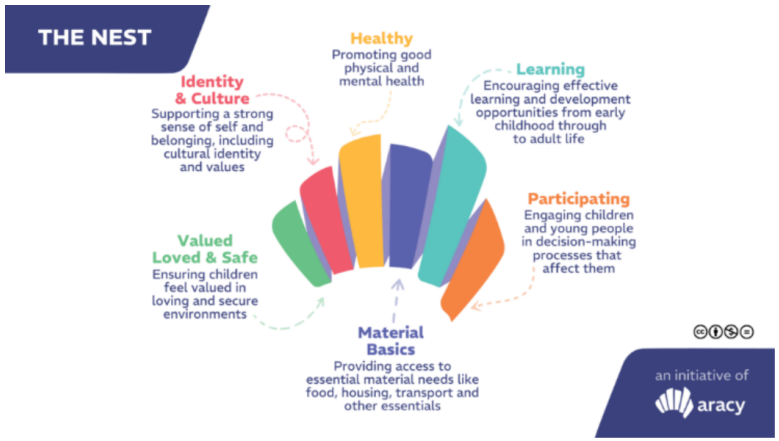


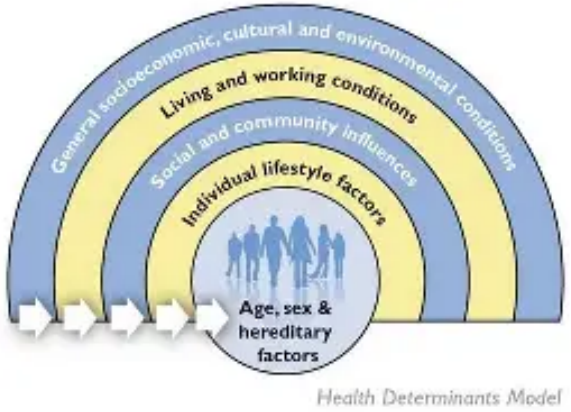
The ARACY Nest Framework and A Social Model of Health

Council takes a people-centred and place-based approach to improving health and wellbeing and meeting the needs of our community. This is reflected in the way this strategy is structured and will be delivered.

At the heart of this strategy are two complementary approaches that guide how Council supports children, young people and families.

The first is the ARACY Nest framework, which defines what children and young people need to thrive, including being safe and supported, having enough to live on, being healthy, learning and growing, feeling connected, and developing a positive sense of identity.





Health Determinants Model

The second is a social model of health, which recognises that these outcomes are shaped by broader factors such as housing, income, education, community connection and access to support. By applying these approaches, Council focuses not only on the outcomes children and young people need, but also on the conditions that influence their wellbeing and how support is delivered across the system.

Council has structured this strategy in a clear and practical way:

1. The ARACY Nest defines the outcomes we want for children and young people.

2. The social model helps us understand the broader conditions shaping those outcomes.

Role of Council in Responding to the Needs of Children, Young People and Families

Council plays a leadership role in shaping coordinated, responsive and inclusive approaches that support children, young people and families to thrive. Council demonstrates leadership and commitment to the community through the following strategic roles:

Lead	Collaborates with all levels of government and service providers to identify priority needs and mobilise coordinated, innovative responses.
Advocate	Advocates for local priorities and emerging issues, ensuring the needs and experiences of children, young people and families are represented in decision-making.
Deliver	Delivers programs, services and opportunities that support children, young people and families to participate in community and civic life, build skills, and improve health and wellbeing.
Facilitate	Facilitates connections, access and coordination across community, services and spaces to support collaboration, participation and shared outcomes for children, young people and families.
Partner	Works in partnership with community, service providers and other stakeholders to strengthen local service systems and deliver integrated, place-based responses.



Council's Service Model – Coordinating Support from Early Childhood to Young Adulthood

Council supports children, young people and families across a 0–25 service continuum, connecting Maternal and Child Health, Children's Services and Youth and Family Services to ensure coordinated support and smooth transitions between these milestones, life stages.

Life Stage	Key Focus	Key Supports (What We Do)	Service Area
Antenatal & Infancy 0–3 years	A strong start	Free, universal support for families Health and development checks Parenting, feeding, sleep and wellbeing advice Early identification of needs Connections to local services	Maternal & Child Health
Early Childhood 3–5 years	Learning and early development	Kindergarten access and enrolment supported playgroups Outreach to diverse communities Inclusive early learning opportunities Building family connection to services	Children's Services
Childhood 6–12 years	Connection and participation	Safe and inclusive places to learn and play Support through community and school partnerships Opportunities for social connection Encouraging children's voice and participation	Children's Services
Adolescence 12–18 years	Voice, identity and belonging	Youth programs and safe spaces Leadership and participation opportunities Support for wellbeing and connection Information, referrals and access to services	Youth Services
Young Adulthood 18–25 years	Pathways and independence	Education, employment and volunteering pathways Skills and leadership development Ongoing support and connections Responsive, evidence-informed programs	Youth Services
All Life Stages 0–25 years	Extra support when needed	Support for families experiencing vulnerability Where relevant, case management and practical help Connections to specialist services Focus on safety, wellbeing and keeping families together	Family Services

Local Profile of Children, Young People, and Families in Greater Dandenong



Total Population in Greater Dandenong

167,000

*Vic Dept Planning and Transport 2026



Birth Notifications in Greater Dandenong

(for the period 1 July 2024-30 June 2025)

1920



Percentage of Total Population in Greater Dandenong 0-24 years

31% (51,000)

*Vic Dept Planning and Transport 2026



Percentage of persons who speak a language other than English at home

69%

(ABS Census 2021)



Single parents with children 19% (ABS Census 2021)



Couples with children 48%

Cultural Diversity

Greater Dandenong is the most Multicultural Community in Australia

(ABS Census 2021)



Challenges and Opportunities for Council

Council plays a critical role in supporting children, young people and families across the 0–25 life stages. This work is occurring in a context of increasing demand and complexity, driven by cost-of-living pressures, social inequality, and changing community needs.

1. Rising Demand & Complexity

Families are experiencing rising and layered challenges including mental health concerns, family violence, housing instability and financial stress. Services are increasingly responding to crisis rather than providing earlier, preventative support.

Opportunity:
Prioritise early intervention through universal and targeted support to identify vulnerability sooner, reduce escalation, and improve long-term outcomes.

2. Workforce Constraints

Recruitment and retention challenges, an ageing workforce and strong sector competition are impacting service capacity, continuity and quality.

Opportunity:
Strengthen workforce sustainability by investing in attraction, retention and development, while building multidisciplinary practice, cultural capability and staff wellbeing.

3. Funding & Cost Pressures

Funding has not kept pace with demand or rising costs and is often short-term and program specific. This limits service adaptability, innovation and the ability to respond to emerging needs.

Opportunity
Data-informed decision making and targeted investment. Use local data and evidence to guide investment toward high-impact services and priority cohorts.

4. Equity, Inclusion and Access

Families from CALD, Aboriginal and disadvantaged backgrounds face structural barriers including language, cultural safety, system navigation and trust, resulting in inequitable access and outcomes.

Opportunity:
Co-design with community and lived experience. Embed genuine co-design approaches with communities to ensure services are culturally safe, accessible and responsive. Strengthen community-led and place-based responses.

5. Fragmented Service System

Services are often disconnected, resulting in duplication, gaps and poor navigation. Families must repeat their story and coordinate their own care across multiple providers.

Opportunity:
Place-based, integrated service delivery. Strengthen local service integration through partnerships, shared pathways and coordinated responses. Progress models that provide 'no wrong door' access and wraparound support.

6. Government Reforms

Ongoing government reforms are reshaping roles, responsibilities and service delivery structures, creating both opportunities and uncertainty for local government.

Opportunity:
Strengthen partnerships to position Council as a system leader, influencing reform to meet local needs and support cohesive service delivery.

Challenges and Opportunities for Community

What our children, young people, families and community told us…

They want timely, affordable and stigma-free mental health support, safe and inclusive communities, and stronger social and cultural connections that foster a sense of belonging. They also want services that are easier to find and access, meaningful opportunities to have a voice in decisions that affect them, and clear pathways to education, training and employment.

1. Mental health, wellbeing and support
2. Feeling safe, included and respected
3. Stronger connections to community, culture, and others
4. Genuine voice, participation and co-design
5. Access, affordability and navigating services
6. Learning, development and future pathways



Priority Themes

1 | Leading and Partnering

2 | Healthy and Thriving

3 | Engaged and Valued

4 | Belonging, Safety and Connection

5 | Learning and Growing

1 | Leading and Partnering

Strategic Objective | Work in partnership to lead and advocate for coordinated responses that improve access to support, and improve outcomes for children, young people and families.

What Community Told Us

Children, young people and families told us that cost of living pressures, housing stress, and knowing where to go for support are key challenges in their day-to-day lives. These pressures can limit access to essential services, opportunities and community participation, particularly for those experiencing disadvantage. These interrelated and complex issues highlight the importance of a well-connected, responsive and easy-to-navigate service system.

Council plays an important role as a leader, advocate, deliverer, facilitator and partner, working across government, community and service providers to strengthen the local service system. Through this role, Council advocates for community needs, supports coordinated responses, improves access to services, and contributes to addressing structural disadvantage and enhancing quality of life.

Council Plan		Priority	Council's Role	Measure
A Council that demonstrates leadership, responsible use of public resources, and a commitment to investing in community.	1.1	Work with partners to identify, respond to, and advocate for emerging needs and trends affecting children, young people, and families.	Partner | Advocate	Number of new coordinated responses led or initiated by Council to address emerging needs and trends impacting children, young people and families.
	1.2	Facilitate local service networks to strengthen collaboration, share information and improve coordination across the service system.	Facilitate	Increased number of local services engaged in networks, coordinated approaches or initiatives facilitated by Council that improve collaboration and service coordination for children, young people and families.
	1.3	Support sector development by building capacity, sharing knowledge and promoting effective, coordinated practice across services.	Deliver	Increase in the number of capacity-building initiatives led or facilitated by Council that strengthen sector capability and coordinated practice.
	1.4	Proactively pursue funding and partnership opportunities to address identified gaps and improve access to support for the community.	Lead	Increase in the number of funding and partnership initiatives pursued by Council to address identified service gaps and improve access for children, young people and families.

2 | Healthy and Thriving

Strategic Objective | Increase positive health and wellbeing outcomes for children, young people and families (0–25) over the life of the strategy by strengthening mental health, supporting active living, enhancing social connection, and improving access to quality care and healthy environments.

What Community Told Us
Children, young people and families told us that health and wellbeing are a key priority. They place strong emphasis on mental health, social connection and opportunities for active living. Access to services, trusted support, safe parks and playgrounds, and inclusive spaces that support physical activity and community connection are essential.

Council Plan		Priority	Council's Role	Measure
A socially connected, safe and healthy city	2.1	Support the mental health and wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable families by facilitating early identification, referral and connection to trusted services and programs.	Facilitate	Reported improvement in number of children, young people and families accessing mental health support.
	2.2	Support families facing vulnerabilities affecting parenting through a family-centred Enhanced Maternal and Child Health (MCH) program.	Deliver	Increase in the number of families accessing the Enhanced MCH program.
	2.3	Deliver quality health services through immunisation with targeted outreach to students facing access barriers.	Deliver	Increase immunisation consent and vaccinations delivered within the Secondary School Program.
	2.4	Enable children, young people and families to adopt active and healthy lifestyles through participation in physical activity, access to healthy food, and support for overall wellbeing.	Deliver | Facilitate	Children, young people and families participating in and reporting improved physical activity, and a healthy lifestyle through council-supported initiatives.
	2.5	Support the delivery of health education and initiatives that promote community wellbeing, including those that prevent and reduce the impacts of alcohol and other drug use.	Deliver	Participants in council supported education and prevention initiatives reporting increased awareness and confidence to make safer decisions.
	2.6	Collaborate with key health and wellbeing agencies to support and engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families.	Partner	Increase in involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agencies in active partnerships. Increase in the number of families accessing the Aboriginal MCH Nurse.

3 | Engaged and Valued

Strategic Objective | Increase participation and engagement of children, young people and families in decisions that affect them, by ensuring their voices are heard, their contributions are valued and acted on, and that participation is inclusive, safe and respectful of culture and identity.

What Community Told Us

Children, young people and families told us they feel engaged and valued when they are listened to, included in decisions that affect them, and able to participate in ways that are accessible, inclusive and responsive to their needs, with clear evidence that their input leads to action.

Council Plan		Priority	Council's Role	Measure
A socially connected, safe and healthy city	3.1	Facilitate children, young people, and families to have their voices heard and to co-design and deliver initiatives, ensuring their perspectives directly influence Council decision-making.	Facilitate	Increased participation and influence of children, young people and families in Council decision-making and initiatives.
	3.2	Support children and young people to develop leadership skills, contribute to their community and be recognised and celebrated as active citizens.	Deliver	Increase the percentage of young people who report positive outcomes across participation, leadership, voice and recognition.
	3.3	Enable children and young people to participate in environmental sustainability and climate action learning and initiatives.	Partner	Creating opportunities for children and young people to participate in sustainability initiatives; including a reported increase in knowledge and confidence to take climate action.

4 | Belonging, Safety and Connection

Strategic Objective | Increase positive experiences of belonging, safety and connection for children, young people and families, so they feel included, supported and able to participate in community life.

What Community Told Us

Children, young people and families told us that strong relationships, safe environments free from bullying and discrimination, and a sense of belonging are central to their wellbeing and growth. They value opportunities to connect, feel included and safely participate in community life. When these strengths are present, children and young people are more confident, supported and able to thrive.

Council Plan		Priority	Council's Role	Measure
A city of accessible, vibrant centres and places	4.1	Strengthen social cohesion and a sense of belonging by supporting inclusive, culturally safe and connected communities.	Lead	Increase the number of community members who report a sense of belonging, inclusion and cultural safety.
	4.2	Prevent and respond to family violence by addressing its underlying causes and strengthening support for children, young people and families.	Deliver | Partner | Facilitate	Reduce risk and impact of family violence by strengthening early intervention, safety, and support for children, young people and families.
	4.3	Promote inclusion, equity and respect across the community, particularly for children, young people and families, including LGBTIQA+ people and those facing barriers to participation.	Lead | Partner | Facilitate	Priority groups represented (including LGBTIQA+ people and those facing barriers) in programs relative to the community.
	4.4	Strengthen community safety through prevention, early intervention and partnership approaches that respond to community safety concerns.	Lead | Partner | Facilitate	Increase in the number of children, young people and families who report feeling safer and more supported in their community.
	4.5	Support children, young people and their families to safely navigate digital environments and emerging technologies, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), by building awareness, resilience and safe online behaviours.	Lead | Partner | Facilitate	Number of children, young people and families who report increased confidence and capability to safely navigate digital environments and technologies.

5 | Learning and Growing

Strategic Objective | Increase positive outcomes across key life stages, including early childhood development, school engagement, and successful transitions into further education, training, employment and community participation.

What Community Told Us

Children, young people and families told us they want stronger skills, clearer pathways and better support to navigate school and their future. They highlighted the importance of building confidence, communication and social skills, as well as access to practical learning opportunities and support through key transitions.

Learning and growing recognises that development begins in the first 1,000 days and continues through early learning, school transitions and into adolescence and young adulthood. It includes strong early foundations, support through key transitions, and opportunities for young people to build skills, confidence and pathways into further education, training and employment, including informal learning and community participation.

Council Plan		Priority	Council's Role	Measure
A city that supports business, entrepreneurship, quality education and employment outcomes	5.1	Support vulnerable parents to foster their child's development as their first educator through accessible MCH services, Children's Services and community supports.	Facilitate | Deliver	Number of first-time and vulnerable parents who report increased confidence in supporting their child's health, development and learning.
	5.2	Promote and support enrolment and participation in 3-and 4-year-old kindergarten, with a focus on vulnerable children.	Facilitate	Increase in the number of children enrolled in and attending 3- and 4-year-old kindergarten, including those from priority cohorts.
	5.3	Strengthen a whole-of-council approach to supporting children and young people navigating key education transitions, notably pre-school to primary school, and primary school to secondary school.	Partner | Facilitate	Increased participation of children, young people and families engaged in initiatives that support key education transitions.
	5.4	Facilitate opportunities for young people to build skills, confidence and experience through informal learning, volunteering and pathways to education, training and employment.	Facilitate	Number of young people who report increased skills, confidence and readiness for education, training or employment.
	5.5	Strengthen referral pathways for young people experiencing, or at risk of, disengagement from education and employment.	Facilitate	Number of young people who report being successfully connected to education, training or employment opportunities.
	5.6	Support participation in library, arts and cultural programs as spaces for learning, exploration and community participation for children, young people and families.	Facilitate	Number of children, young people and families who report increased participation in and connection to learning, arts and cultural experiences.



Monitoring Outcomes

Action Plan Implementation

Council's Children, Youth and Family Services teams will lead the implementation and monitoring of this strategy. Annual action plans for each unit will accompany this strategy, to support its implementation and to provide a framework for annually reviewing the progress against each strategic objective.

Monitoring and Review

Key outcomes will be reported in line with Council annual reporting processes.

Appendix

Legislative and Policy Context This strategy has been informed by a range of Local, State and Federal policies and legislation.

Local (City of Greater Dandenong)

- Community Vision 2040
- Council Plan 2025–2029 (including Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan)
- Youth and Family Strategy 2021–2026
- Children's Plan 2021–2026
- Community Safety Plan 2026-30 (in development)
- Open Space Strategy 2020–2030
- Anti-Poverty Strategy 2022–2025
- Reconciliation Action Plan 2025–2027
- Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy 2022–2026 (under review)
- Library Strategy 2022–2026 (under review)
- Make Your Move Physical Activity Strategy 2020–2030
- Our Bright Green Future Strategy 2026-2036
- Economy and Place Strategy 2026-2036
- Disability Action Plan (in development)

State

- Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005
- Victorian Child Safe Standards 2022
- Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2023–2027
- Wellbeing in Victoria: Mental Wellbeing Strategy 2025–2035
- Victorian Alcohol and Other Drugs Strategy 2025–2035
- Best Interests Framework for Vulnerable Children and Youth
- Best Start, Best Life Reforms 2024–2036
- Our Promise, Your Future: Victoria's Youth Strategy 2022–2027
- Supporting Children and Families in the Early Years (2017–2027)
- Victoria's Vulnerable Children: Our Shared Responsibility (2013–2022)
- Pathways to Support for Children and Families: Priority Setting Plan 2021–2024

Appendix

Legislative and Policy Context This strategy has been informed by a range of Local, State and Federal policies and legislation.

Federal

- Education and Care Services National Regulations
- Early Years Learning Framework 2022
- Early Years Strategy 2024–2034
- National Action Plan for the Health of Children and Young People 2020–2030
- Engage: Strategy to Include Young People in Decisions 2024
- Safe and Supported: National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children (2021–2031)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (ratified by Australia)



planning for communities

Integrated Children, Youth and Family Strategy

Background Report

1 May 2026

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1.0 Introduction

This Report presents the findings from background research undertaken to inform the development of an Integrated Children, Youth and Family Strategy for the City of Greater Dandenong.

Council is preparing an evidence-based strategy to guide its future role in supporting children, young people and their families, with a focus on:

- high quality services which are responsive to the current and emerging needs of children, young people and families;
- the voices and opinions of children and young people being considered and influencing governance and decision making;
- ensuring Council's role responds to the key needs, gaps and opportunities for children, young people and families;
- supporting initiatives that increase health and wellbeing in children, young people and families; and
- services and programs being inclusive of all children, young people and their families, regardless of ability, income, gender, or cultural background.

1.1 Scope of background research

Key elements examined through background research include:

- strategic and policy documents which provide important strategic guidance about Council's response to the needs of children, young people and families;
- current and forecast demographic and social data;
- previous engagement undertaken by Council; and
- the current provision of services and supports for children, young people and families.

Collectively, the background research provides important insight about the potential areas the Integrated Strategy needs to focus on, highlights elements to explore further through targeted engagement, and provides information to guide Council in supporting children, young people and their families.

2.0 Key learnings to inform the Children, Youth and Family Strategy

This section highlights key reflections and considerations for developing the Integrated Child, Youth and Family Strategy for Greater Dandenong. The information in this section draws on all components of the background research identifying key issues and impacts, the importance of investing in children, young people and their families, Council's role in supporting children, young people and their families including obligations and opportunities created by the Federal and State Government policy framework, and identifying potential areas for the Integrated Child, Youth and Family Strategy to focus upon. Detailed references and citations related to commentary in the section can be found in the body of the report.

Complex issues

The Greater Dandenong community faces a complex array of issues.

- It is one of the most culturally diverse communities in Victoria and wider Australia and is home to a large portion of new migrants in Victoria, many of whom are on humanitarian visas or are asylum seekers.
- It will experience significant growth over the next 25 years with the implementation of the State Government Housing Targets and Activity Centre initiatives, driving a substantial increase in demand for services and supports across the community.
- It is ranked as the most disadvantaged community in Victoria with high levels of financial hardship, low levels of educational attainment and employment, and poor health and wellbeing outcomes.
- It has a small but growing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population with a high proportion of children and young people. The financial hardship experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members is notably higher than the broader community.
- Community safety issues including high levels of family violence and community members feeling unsafe in their community. Young people feel unsafe in locations such as train stations, public transport hubs, and public places, due to crime, violence, and discrimination.
- A high level of concern amongst young people about mental health and wellbeing, education and employment, cost of living and financial hardship, discrimination and racism.
- Difficulty accessing services because of high demand from both Greater Dandenong residents and residents from wider southeast Melbourne, language, cost and transport barriers, a lack of awareness about the services available and how to access them, and limited services being available outside the Dandenong Activity Centre.

Impact of these issues

The impact of these issues includes:

- **The community being disproportionately impacted by the rising cost of living**. A large number of households are low-income households, housing affordability has been consistently declining, over half of all households are experiencing housing stress because they spend more than 30% of their household income on housing costs, and one fifth of

residents are experiencing or have been worried about food insecurity in the past 12 months (2023 data). Engagement undertaken with children and young people over the past 3 – 4 years highlights the impact on families of financial hardship including difficulty purchasing essential items or paying rent / a mortgage, children or young people being unable to participate in activities, hobbies or groups, and young people stepping away from education to help support their families financially. Primary school aged children raised concerns about children missing out and needing more support to participate in extracurricular activities.

- **Many children and young people not achieving developmental and educational milestones**. Key examples include the high and increasing proportion of children in their first year of school identified as being developmentally vulnerable, kindergarten participation rates below the Victorian average and the high proportion of children not meeting national literacy and numeracy benchmarks. The proportion of children not meeting these benchmarks is higher than the Victorian average across all year levels (Year 3, 5,7 and 9).

  On the positive side, kindergarten participation rates have been increasing consistently and the rate of participation in Tafe by 20 – 24-year-olds is higher than the metropolitan average. In addition, young people identify education and learning as one of their key hopes and priorities for the future, particularly raising the importance of having an inclusive and accessible education system, especially for newly arrived youth, and having the skills and experience needed to support employment.

- **High levels disengagement from employment and education and high levels of youth unemployment**. Key challenges young people experience with employment are feeling underprepared for the workforce and being concerned about feeling safe at work, experiencing discrimination and not understanding their worker rights. Despite these concerns, having local employment opportunities and pathways and landing a dream career or job form part of the key hopes and priorities young people have for the future. Linked to this is the desire for a stable income and financial security.

- **The cultural diversity of the community offering both positive and negative impacts.** For young people, the cultural diversity of the community is something they value and feel positive about, but it is also a trigger for discrimination with many experiencing or witnessing discrimination based upon race or cultural background.

- **New arrivals to the Greater Dandenong community experiencing significant difficulties** including language barriers, significant financial hardship and difficulty navigating the settlement service system, accessing education and employment opportunities, accessing health services, and adjusting to different cultural norms. A needs analysis about Afghan communities undertaken for Council and the Victorian State Government in 2023 found that the settlement service system does not support new arrivals effectively, and community members experience significant difficulty accessing education and employment opportunities, with key barriers including limited education and literacy in their own language, difficulty navigating VCE pathways for young people, and qualifications, employment history and skills obtained in Afghanistan often not being recognised in Australia and / or undervalued.[1]

[1] Greater Dandenong City Council and the Victorian State Government, Afghan Community Centre Feasibility Study Needs Analysis Report 2023

- **Increasing demand for demand for services and supports as the population grows**. In a community like Greater Dandenong the service system is already under pressure and may struggle to respond effectively to growing demand. Increased partnering and innovative service models are likely to become more critical as the population grows and the demand for services increases.
- **Children and young people being exposed to family violence**. One third of reported family violence incidents in Greater Dandenong involve a child (under 18 years of age) being present as a victim or witness. This means in 2024/2025 there were 1,000 times a child was a victim or witness of a reported family violence incident. Growing up in an environment where family violence is perpetrated can have a profound impact on a child's life. In addition to risks of physical harm, family violence can impact a child's wellbeing including behavioural, emotional, social, developmental and educational.[2] The high levels of family violence in Greater Dandenong is likely to be contributing to children and young people not achieving key developmental and educational milestones.
- **Children and young people expressing a desire to feel safe, included and connected to their local community**. Children identify libraries as a place where they feel safe and can be themselves, and playgrounds, walking trails and sporting fields as places that support them to connect with friends, and feel part of the community. School is a key place young people feel safe because they feel supported by teachers and wellbeing staff and they feel safe travelling to and from school. Young people desire safe spaces where they can congregate without fear of violence or discrimination.
- **Mental health and wellbeing is a key area of concern** with adults, young people and children all experiencing mental health challenges. In 2023, one fifth of adults experienced high or very high levels of psychological distress in the previous 12 months, metal health has been the top issue of concern across the Greater Dandenong Youth Summits in 2018, 2022 and 2025, it is one of the top issues young people identified as causing stress through the 2025 Mission Australia Youth Survey (CGD), and was identified as a top priority in the Greater Dandenong Youth Leadership Forum in 2024. Primary school aged children Council has engaged with in recent years demonstrate great insight about being resilient. They identified that things sometimes go wrong, but it's important not to give up, because things will get better. They also identified the importance of asking for help if you need it. Key priorities young people have about mental health are reducing stigma and improving access to support. Also of critical importance is the connection between mental health and wellbeing, having great support from family, have strong social connections with friends and being involved in community, being physically active, getting lots of sleep and eating well.[3]
- **Families and young people not accessing services when they need them most**. As outlined above, there are multiple reasons why community members experience difficulty accessing services. The limited availability of services and cost are key barriers, particularly given the high demand for services, the number of households with low incomes and the rising cost of

[2] Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia, the Impact of family violence on children, The impact of family violence on children | Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia

[3] Raising Children Network, Mental Health and Wellbeing – School age, Pre-teens, Teens

living. But cultural and language barriers are also significant in Greater Dandenong, particularly for new migrants. In some cultures, acknowledging that help is needed can be difficult, and poor or no English language skills means people do not know about services, how to access them, and are reliant on translation support from family or friends to access services.

Investing in children, young people and their families

Collectively, the issues and their impacts outlined above underline the importance of investing in children, young people and their families and of understanding and supporting their priorities and aspirations. There is clear evidence that when we invest in children, young people and their families their long-term health, social, education and economic outcomes are vastly improved. It is this evidence which has driven changes to the policy framework and investment by Federal and State Government in the early years space and the life course of children, young people and their families.

Council's role in supporting children, young people and their families

As outlined in the project brief, Council has a diverse role in in supporting children. Young people and their families. It includes:

- **Leader**: collaborate with tiers of government and service providers, to identify priority needs and mobilise innovative responses.
- **Planner**: together with service providers, stakeholders, and community, identify gaps and opportunities for responses.
- **Advocate**: provide advocacy on local needs and priority areas of concern for children, young people and their families.
- **Provider**: facilitate opportunities for children, young people and their families to actively participate in community and civic life.

Specific obligations Council has in relation to state and federal policy frameworks include:

- The Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and the Public Health and Wellbeing Act (2008) which creates a statutory obligation for Council to protect, improve, and promote public health and wellbeing and take a critical leadership and partnering role in protecting and improving community health and wellbeing.
- Adherence to Victorian Child Safe Standards. For Council this means programs, services or activities Council conducts, any facilities they own and manage and any interactions they have with children must be adhere to the Child Safe Standards.
- Best Interests Framework for vulnerable children and youth. Council must adhere to the Best Interests Framework in the delivery of relevant to services such as parenting support and case management services, and Maternal and Child Health services.
- The Best Start Best Life Reforms which are based upon a partnering approach between State and Local Governments with a focus on ensuring all children have access to 2 years of kindergarten.
- The Supporting Children and Families in the early years compact agreement between the State and Local government. The Compact states that Local Government has a statutory and social

responsibility for planning for its local community and supports the learning, health and wellbeing of Victorian children and families through determining policy at a local level.

- The Federal Government Early Years Learning Framework and associated legislation because of Council's role as a family daycare provider. The service must meet the national curriculum requirements as outlined the Framework and the Education and Care Services National Regulations.

The opportunities the Federal and State policy framework offer to Council centre upon:

- The commitment to improving long term health and wellbeing outcomes for children, young people and families. As a community experiencing significant disadvantage and poor health and wellbeing outcomes, Council has an opportunity to build on and seek new partnering and funding opportunities with State and Federal government to improve these outcomes.
- The commitment to including children, young people and families in decisions which affect them. Council has a strong demonstrated history of engaging with children and young people to understand their experiences, needs and aspirations, ensuring their voice is embedded in planning for services, supports and infrastructure. The opportunity is to partner with Federal and State Governments to embed this in the wider service system.

Potential areas to focus on in the Integrated Children, Youth and Families Strategy

1. **Strengthening the service system supporting children, young people and their families**. Key areas include improving access to services and supports, removing or reducing barriers created by disadvantage and hardship, and strengthening existing partnerships or building new ones particularly in the delivery of innovative service models to respond to high and growing demand.
2. **Improving health and wellbeing outcomes for children, young people and their families** with a focus on children and young people achieving developmental and educational milestone, children and young people being able to access programs and activities which support their physical and mental wellbeing, more young people and their parents being engaged in meaningful education and employment.
3. **Making Greater Dandenong a safe place for children, young people and their families**. This includes having child friendly and child safe environments and services, having places where young people feel able to gather without experiencing violence and discrimination, and having access to timely services and supports which enable children, young people and families to be safe at home, at school and in the broader community.
4. **Encouraging and enabling children, young people and their families to have strong social connections** through kindergarten, school, their local community, within their family, through community events and activities.
5. **Enabling and championing the voice of children and young people**, ensuring their experiences, what they value, what they worry about, their aspirations and the contributions they make to Greater Dandenong are considered and embedded in all of Council's work.

3.0 Strategic and policy context

The strategic and policy context considers the following:

- International, Federal and State policy frameworks
- The City of Greater Dandenong policy framework
- Why investing in children, young people and their families is so important
- Other key influences for developing the Integrated Plan.

3.1 Summary of key findings, obligations and opportunities

The review of the strategic and policy context has identified a number of key findings, obligations and opportunities to consider as part of developing the Integrated Children, Youth and Family Strategy. These are outlined below, with more information about each of the plans, policies and research considered in the strategic and policy context provided in sections 3.2 – 3.5.

There is a fundamental commitment at an international, Federal, State and local level to support children, young people and their families to thrive, to be heard and respected, to be safe, to be engaged and involved in decisions which affect them.

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child lays this foundation by outlining the civil political, economic, social, health and cultural rights of children, and the Australian Federal Government upholds this as a signatory to the Convention, and through the policy framework it has developed for children, young people and their families.
- The Victorian State Government also upholds this through their extensive policy framework which aims to support children, young people and families to thrive. Over the last decade, the State Government focused on highlighting and responding to the needs of vulnerable children, young people and families, with significantly increased investment in the early years space.
- Council's policy framework is underpinned by the Community Vision 2040, and the Council Plan 2025 – 2029. These provide overarching guidance for Council's planning and decision making about how it supports the community and delivers services and infrastructure. This is complemented by a range of plans and strategies which collectively have a focus on developing a safe, inclusive and sustainable community, provision of places and spaces to support active living, and encouraging participation in creative and educational activities. Council's targeted policy framework for children, young people and families has been centred on the Youth and Family Strategy 2021 – 2026 and the Children's Plan 2021 – 2026.

  There is a strong consistency between broader community and Council priorities in Greater Dandenong and the priorities for children, young people and their families e.g. safety, education and employment, participation and engagement, health and wellbeing, social connection, inclusion, and being valued.

The established evidence of how a person's brain is built over time has been a key driver of the changes to the policy framework and investment by government in the early years space and the life course of children, young people and their families.

The key factors which support children and young people to thrive include having people in their lives who are loving and supportive, particularly family; having access to universal and specialised services and supports; having positive and effective learning experiences; being involved in decisions which affect them; having good mental and physical wellbeing including building resilience to respond to challenges and difficulties they may experience; and feeling connected and like they belong to their community and culture.

- Key policy initiatives which reflect this at a Federal level include the Early Years Learning Framework 2022, the Early Years Strategy 2024 – 2034, the National Action Plan for the Health of Children and Young People 2020 to 2030, Engage: a strategy to include young people in the decisions we make about them, 2024; and Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children (2021– 2031).
- Targeted policies which reflect this at a State level include the Best Interests Framework for vulnerable children and youth, Best Start Best Life Reforms (2024 – 2036), Our promise, Your future, Victoria's Youth Strategy (2022-2027), Supporting Children and Families in the Early Years (2017-2027); Victoria's Vulnerable Children: Our Shared Responsibility (2013-2022), Pathways to Support for Children and Families: Priority Setting Plan (2021–2024). In addition, the introduction of Child Safe Standards in 2016 has been a key legislative change which requires all organisations involved with children to have policies, procedures and practices in place to keep them safe.

The policy framework established at the Federal and State level provides important context for understanding Council's obligations and opportunities to support children, young people and their families in Greater Dandenong.

Council's obligations are predominantly related to the State Government policy framework, particularly the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, Victorian Child Safe Standards, Best Interests Framework for vulnerable children and youth, Best Start Best Life Reforms, and Supporting Children and Families in the early years (the compact agreement between State and Local Government (represented by the MAV).

- The Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan is enacted under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act (2008) which requires both the State and Local governments to prepare public health and wellbeing plans every 4 years. The Act also creates a statutory obligation for Council to protect, improve, and promote public health and wellbeing, but more broadly highlights the importance of Council taking a leadership and partnering role in protecting and improving community health and wellbeing.[4]
- As noted above, the Victorian Child Safe Standards requires all organisations involved with children to have policies, procedures and practices in place to keep them safe. For Council this means any programs, services or activities they conduct, any facilities they own and manage and any interactions they have with children must be adhere to the Child Safe Standards.

[4] Municipal Association of Victoria, Leading Healthy Communities, Leading Healthy Communities | MAV website, and Victorian State Government, Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2023 – 2027, Victorian public health and wellbeing plan 2023–27

- The Best Interest Framework for vulnerable children and youth is underpinned by the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 and the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005. The framework requires that family services, child protection and placement services work in ways that reflect the Best Interest principles and associated provisions of the framework. For Council this is relevant to services such as parenting support and case management services, and Maternal and Child Health services.[5]
- While Council does not deliver kindergarten services it is a key provider of infrastructure and operates a kindergarten central registration system. The Best Start Best Life Reforms are based upon a partnering approach between State and Local Governments with a focus on ensuring all children have access to 2 years of kindergarten.
- As noted above, Supporting Children and Families in the early years is a compact agreement between the State and Local government (represented by the MAV) outlining the responsibilities of State and Local Government in the planning, funding and delivery of early years services for children from birth to school age. The Compact states that Local Government has a statutory and social responsibility for planning for its local community and supports the learning, health and wellbeing of Victorian children and families through determining policy at a local level.[6]

Federally, the primary obligation for Council relates to the Early Years Learning Framework and associated legislation because of Council's role as a family daycare provider. The service must meet the national curriculum requirements as outlined the Framework and the Education and Care Services National Regulations.

The opportunities the Federal and State policy framework offer to Council centre upon

- The commitment to improving long term health and wellbeing outcomes for children, young people and families. As a community experiencing significant disadvantage and as a consequence experiencing poor health and wellbeing outcomes, Council has an opportunity to build on and seek new partnering and funding opportunities with State and Federal government to improve these outcomes. This is opportunity but also critical to improving the health and wellbeing outcomes for the community.
- The commitment to including children, young people and families in decisions which affect them. Council has a strong demonstrated history of engaging with children and young people to understand their experiences, needs and aspirations, ensuring their voice is embedded in planning for services, supports and infrastructure. The opportunity is to partner with Federal and State Governments to embed this in the wider service system e.g. the settlement service system and the provision of targeted support services.

[5] Victorian State Government, The Best Interest Framework for vulnerable children and youth, the-best-interests-framework-for-vulnerable-children-and-youth.pdf

[6] Supporting Children and Families in the early years, Partnership agreements | MAV website

3.2 International, Federal and State policy framework

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) is an international treaty outlining the civil political, economic, social, health and cultural rights of children. The convention is built around 4 core principles:

1. **Nondiscrimination**: All rights apply to all children without exception, regardless of race, gen der, nationality, or any other status.
2. **Best interests of the child**: The best interests of the child must be a primary consideration i n all actions concerning children.
3. **Right to life, survival, and development**: Children have the inherent right to life, and states must ensure their survival and development.
4. **Respect for the views of the child**: Children have the right to express their opinions and hav e those opinions taken into account in matters affecting them.[7]

The Australian Federal Government is a signatory to the Convention and is committed to upholding children's rights and this underpins the Federal and State Government policy framework and determining priorities to recognise the importance of supporting families, young people and the early years. Council's preparation of an Integrated Children, Youth and Family Strategy is in strong alignment with Federal and State policy directions.

The Federal Government has developed a thorough policy framework for children, young people and their families. Key documents and policies are:

- **The Early Years Learning Framework 2022**, a national curriculum framework which seeks to ensure quality and consistency in the delivery of early childhood education programs across all early childhood settings.
- **The Early Years Strategy 2024 – 2034** recognises the importance of the early years for a child's development and success over their lifetime and outlines how the Australian Government will help children aged 0-5 and their families to learn, grow and thrive. Priority focus areas include valuing the early years raising awareness of why early childhood matters and embedding the voices of children and their families, empowering parents, caregivers and families, supporting and working with communities and strengthening accountability and co-ordination.
- **The National Action Plan for the Health of Children and Young People 2020 – 2030** which seeks to improve health outcomes for children and young people, emphasising the importance of early intervention, prevention and equitable access to health services. The plan recognises that a child's health begins at birth, influenced by parental health pre-conception and during pregnancy, and that families are the most powerful influence on a child's development. Priority areas include improving health equity across populations, empowering parents and caregivers, tackling mental health and risky behaviours, addressing chronic conditions and preventative health and strengthening the workforce to ensure health professionals are equipped to meet the needs of children and young people.

[7] United Nations; Convention of the Rights of the Child, November 1989

- **Engage: a strategy to include young people in the decisions we make about them, 2024.** The strategy seeks to ensure young people have a genuine voice in shaping decisions which affect their lives. Key goals of the strategy are Empowerment – equipping young people with the tools, knowledge and opportunities to influence government decisions; Inclusion – ensure voices from all backgrounds including regional, rural and marginalised communities are heard; Partnership – foster collaboration between young people, government and community organisations; accountability – track progress through nine measurable indicators, reported annually.
- **Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children (2021–2031)** which sets out a 10-year framework for how Australian, state and territory governments, Aboriginal leaders, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and the non-government sector will work together to support children and young people to reach their full potential and grow up safe and connected in their family, community and culture.

The Victorian State Government has also developed an extensive framework for supporting children, young people and their families to thrive. Like the Federal Government, the State Government identifies the social and economic imperative of supporting families and children. Initiatives include significant funding to build new early years infrastructure, adopting a set of standards to protect children and young people from harm (Child Safe Standards) and protections for vulnerable children. Key elements of the State Government's policy framework are:

- **The Best Interests Framework for vulnerable children and youth** is designed to ensure that the best interest of children is paramount in all decisions taken by family services, child protection and placement services. The framework emphasises the importance of a culturally and age-appropriate approach to child development and wellbeing. It also recognises the need for a consistent understanding of the Best Interest principles and their practice ramifications, which are essential for professionals working in these sectors.
- **Best Start Best Life Reforms (2024 – 2036)** which include making free kindergarten available for all children participating in 3 and 4 year old kindergarten, 3 year old children having access to 15 hours of 3 year old kindergarten per week by 2029, and 4 year old children having access to 30 hours a week of 4 year old kindergarten (or pre-prep) by 2036, and the establishment of 50 State government owned and operated early learning and childcare centres in areas of greatest need.
- **Our promise, Your future, Victoria's Youth Strategy (2022-2027)** developed to inform how government works with young people, the youth and community sectors to improve young people's outcomes. Priorities include giving young people a seat at the decision-making table, taking a strengths-based approach, building governments capacity to involve young people in decision making, recognising the ages before and after 12 – 25 are just as important, focusing on prevention, young people finding solutions to local issues, and centring diversity, inclusion and accessibility.
- **Supporting Children and Families in the Early Years (2017-2027).** This is a compact agreement between the State Government and Local Government (represented by the Municipal Association of Victoria) with the aim of giving all children the best start in life. It is designed to strengthen collaboration between State and Local Government in the planning,

development and provision of early years services. The compact outlines the roles and responsibilities of State and Local government in the planning, funding and delivery of early years services.

- **Victoria's Vulnerable Children: Our Shared Responsibility (2013-2022).** This strategy aims to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and young people in Victoria, emphasising a shared responsibility across government, service providers and community to address the needs of vulnerable children. The strategic goals are to prevent abuse and neglect, act earlier when children are vulnerable, improve outcomes for children in statutory care.
- **Pathways to Support for Children and Families: Priority Setting Plan (2021–2024).** This forms part of the long-term Road Map for Reform in supporting children and families. Priorities for 2021 – 2024 include shifting the children and family system to intervene earlier to improve family functioning, keep children with their families today and safely reunify children, with a priority focus on Aboriginal families; build evidence across the system to enable effective services targeted to the needs of priority groups of children and families; strengthen partnerships between child protection, family violence, sexual assault and child and family services to enable improved experiences and outcomes for children and families; advance Aboriginal self-determination and self-management, including through care and case management of Aboriginal children by ACCOs and Aboriginal-led service offerings..
- **Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (2023-2027)** outlining the 10 priorities for improving public health and wellbeing. The plan provides a framework for coordinated action to ensure all Victorians have the opportunity for optimal health and wellbeing, so they can participate fully in their community, in education and employment. The priorities are:
  1. Improving sexual and reproductive health
  2. Reducing harm from tobacco and e-cigarette use
  3. Improving wellbeing
  4. Increasing healthy eating
  5. Increasing active living
  6. Reducing harm from alcohol and drug use
  7. Tackling climate change and its impacts on health
  8. Preventing all forms of violence
  9. Decreasing antimicrobial resistance across human and animal health
  10. Reducing injury.

- **Wellbeing in Victoria: A strategy to promote good mental wellbeing 2025 – 2035**. The strategy outlines a commitment to promoting mental health for all Victorians wherever they live, work and play. It focuses on creating the social, physical, economic and environmental conditions that support people to feel and function well at every stage of life.
- **The Victorian Alcohol and Other Drugs Strategy 2025** – 2035 aims to reduce alcohol and drug related harm through a health led, culturally responsive and co-ordinated approach. The Strategy sets out a holistic framework which aims to reduce harm and improve the health, mental health and wellbeing of Victorians. Key priorities in the strategy are better information and easier access to services, stronger and flexible harm reduction and treatment options, culturally safe and self-

determined responses for Aboriginal Victorians, system innovation and continuous improvement, and greater co-ordination across mental health, housing, justice and other services.

- **Victorian Child Safe Standards 2022** require organisations involving children to have policies, procedures and practices to keep them safe. There are 11 child safe standards including:
    1. Establishing a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.
    2. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
    3. Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
    4. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
    5. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
    6. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
    7. Processes for complaints and concerns are child-focused.
    8. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
    9. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
    10. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.
    11. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

A number of legislative changes also came into effect in Victoria between December 2025 and February 2026 in relation to Child Safe Standards. These include:

- Increased transparency and information sharing in relation to enforcement, disciplinary action (suspension, supervision or mandatory training) or people convicted of offences.
- Prohibiting persons involved in providing unlicensed services
- New regulatory and ministerial powers to give direction and guidelines to the sector including closure because of an emergency event, suspending individuals from working in a service, disciplinary action against approved providers, cancelling provider approval, and suspending a services quality rating.
- Higher penalties for offences.
- New requirements to report sexual offences or misconduct by staff, students or volunteers.

Note: it is important to acknowledge there is a range of Federal and State government legislation which influences the provision of services, supports and engagement with children, young people and their families. While these are not all outlined in this section, the Victorian Child Safe Standards are the most vital to Council's work as they require a whole of organisation response through policies and procedures which ensure a safe environment for children and young people in everything that Council does.

3.3 Greater Dandenong policy framework

Council has a significant strategic and policy platform guiding decisions and planning about how it supports the community and delivers services and infrastructure. The primary strategic documents are the Community Vision 2040 and the Council Plan 2025 – 2029 incorporating the Health and Wellbeing Plan.

- **The Community Vision 2040** sets out the community's long-term aspiration for the City. The Vision is structured around 6 principles which include:
  1. ***Safe and peaceful community***: A socially connected, safe and healthy city. A city of accessible, vibrant centres and places. A Council that demonstrates leadership, responsible use of public resources, and a commitment to investing in the community
  2. ***Education, training, entrepreneurship and employment opportunities***: A city that supports business, entrepreneurship, quality education and employment outcomes.
  3. ***Sustainable environment***: A green city committed to a sustainable future. A Council that demonstrates leadership, responsible use of public resources, and a commitment to investing in the community
  4. ***Embrace diversity and multiculturalism***: A city that respects and celebrates diversity, our history and the arts.
  5. ***Mind, body and spirit***: A socially connected, safe and healthy city.
  6. ***Arts and culture***: A city that respects and celebrates diversity, our history and the arts.

- **The Council Plan 2025-2029 incorporating the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan,** builds on the principles in the Community Vision. The Plan sets out objectives regarding community safety and wellbeing, celebration of diversity and the arts, a commitment to accessibility and supports to enhance community life. The Plan incorporates Council's health and wellbeing priorities (physical health, active living, social connection and wellbeing, community safety, and climate change and health) and acknowledges that individual needs and health outcomes change as people move through different life stages. The Council Plan strategic objectives are:
  1. A socially connected, safe and healthy city.
  2. A city that respects and celebrates diversity, our history and the arts.
  3. A city of accessible, vibrant centres and places.
  4. A green city committed to a sustainable future.
  5. A city that supports business, entrepreneurship, quality education and employment outcomes.
  6. A Council that demonstrates leadership, responsible use of public resources, and a commitment to investing in the community.

Policy framework focusing children, young people and families

Council currently has two policy documents that specifically guide support for children, young people and families in Greater Dandenong - the **Youth and Family Strategy** and **Children's Plan.** The Integrated Children, Young People and Families Plan will replace these documents.

The existing Youth and Family Strategy 2021-2026 and associated **Action Plan** focus on five priorities.

1. ***Lead and advocate*:** Working in partnership, lead and advocate in response to the needs of young people and families.
2. ***Engaged and valued*:** Facilitate and value active participation and engagement of young people and families in the community.
3. ***Learn and work*:** Support engagement in learning, skill development and employment pathways
4. ***Health and wellbeing*:** Strengthen health and wellbeing outcomes for young people and families
5. ***Safe and inclusive*:** Creating a community where young people and families feel respected and safe

The Strategy aims to "create a community where young people and families feel safe, respected and supported". The Strategy adopts an integrated approach and acknowledges that Council needs to work in partnership to develop a supportive environment for families and young people.

The existing Children's Plan (2021-2026) and Annual Action Plan focuses on 5 strategic objectives:

1. ***Provide leadership and advocacy*** in planning for children and families.
2. ***Strengthen health and wellbeing outcomes*** for children and families
3. ***Support engagement in learning, skill development and vocational pathways***
4. ***Improve safety and accessibility*** for children and families to participate in the community
5. ***Value active participation and engagement*** of children, and families in the community

The Plan incorporates Council's commitment to the Child Friendly Cities Framework and confirms that Council is a signatory to the Victorian Child Friendly Cities and Communities Charter.

The vision Council has for children and their families is to be valued, celebrated, respected and supported to reach their full potential.

Other relevant Council plans and strategies

As noted previously, Council has a significant strategic and policy platform. The plans and strategies outlined below guide Council decision making and service delivery with the objective of developing a safe, inclusive and sustainable community, provision of places and spaces to support active living, and encouraging participation in creative and educational activities.

- ***Community Safety Plan 2015-2022:*** The plan guides the actions undertaken by Council, community agencies and the community to improve perceptions of safety and reduce the risk of crime and anti-social behaviour. The City of Greater Dandenong's vision for community safety is a diverse, safe and welcoming community, where all people feel included and respected. This plan is currently being updated.
- ***Open Space Strategy 2020-2030:*** Provides a framework for Council to manage and improve the quality, design and provision of open space to ensure the needs of existing residents and future generations are met. Council is committed to providing a high-quality, accessible and sustainable open space network and aims to do this by increasing the quantity of publicly accessible open space and improving the amenity and quality of existing spaces and links to spaces.

- ***Anti-poverty Strategy 2022 -2025:*** This strategy guides Council's efforts to alleviate poverty within the community with a focus on lifting the voices of those with lived experience; building a shared understanding of poverty; strengthening the way we collaborate and work together to understand and challenge poverty; engaging government and other decision makers; strengthening local place placed community connections. No information is available regarding whether this Strategy will be updated.
- ***Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2025 - 2027:*** This Plan is an important part of Council's ongoing commitment to the advancement of reconciliation. The RAP focuses on embedding truth telling within council business and the three domains as guided by Reconciliation Australia Innovate RAP Framework. These are Respect, relationships and opportunities. This plan is currently being updated.
- ***Arts Culture and Heritage Strategy 2022-2026***: Supports the Greater Dandenong Community Vision 2040 and guides Council's efforts to promote, support and grow arts and cultural heritage in the City of Greater Dandenong. This Strategy is currently being updated and will be integrated with the Library Strategy.
- ***Library Strategy 2022-2026:*** Provides guidance to enhance Council's library service so that is safe, trusted and accessible and outlines actions for Council to empower people with the literacy skills, resources, and opportunities to pursue their aspirations, foster joy, curiosity, and connection. This Strategy is currently being updated and will be integrated with the Arts Culture and Heritage Strategy.
- ***Make your Move Physical Activity Strategy 2020-2030***: This strategy is for the whole community but has a focus on getting the less active more active through active living, active transport, active recreation and social sport. It identifies target populations including adults aged 18 – 30 years, children aged 3 – 12 years and their families, girls aged 12 – 16 years, people with a disability aged 18 years and older including their families and carers.
- ***Sustainability Strategy 2016-2030:*** Provides the strategic framework to achieve Council's vision for the City of Greater Dandenong to be one of the most sustainable cities in Australia by 2030. The Strategy has 10 themes and associated goals including biodiversity and open space: a greener City; water and stormwater: a water sensitive City; waste and resource: a waste wide City; transport and movement: a well-connected City; climate and energy: a low carbon City; buildings and places: a City planned for the future; environmental pollution: a clean and healthy City; local and sustainable food: a City connected by food; local community and culture: a liveable City; local business and economy: a City of opportunity.

3.4 Why investing in children, young people and their families is so important

There is established evidence that brains are built over time, through an ongoing process beginning at conception. Simple neural connections form first, followed by more complex circuits. The connections which form early provide either a strong or weak foundation for the connections which form later. While we are all shaped through a complex interaction between our genes and the

environment in which we are raised, the early life experiences of a child shape the architecture of their brain, providing the foundation for all future learning, behaviour and health.[8]
The brain continues to develop throughout childhood into adolescence and adulthood. By the age of 14, the brain has reached its full size, but the circuitry continues to rewire until early adulthood. By age 25, the brain is hardwired with its neural connections, but can still adapt because of its plasticity i.e. the ability of neurons to strengthen or weaken their connections in response to information.[9]

Critical to brain development is the relationships a child and young person has with parents, caregivers and extended family. Responsive, attentive relationships with a caring adult helps build a strong foundation for a child's brain architecture and for all future health and wellbeing. When an adult's responses to a child are inconsistent, harmful, or absent, developing brain architecture may be disrupted, potentially leading to long-term impacts on health and well-being. The more adverse experiences in childhood, the greater the likelihood of developmental delays and later health problems, including heart disease, diabetes, substance abuse, and depression. [10]

Early intervention is key to preventing or minimising the impact of adversity in a child's life. In addition, economic modelling shows that the cost of investing in the early and middle years of a child's life, provides significant long term savings and benefits such as higher levels of educational attainment, increased employment options, reduced crime, and improved health outcomes.[11] This research underpins the investment Federal, State and Local Governments make in the early and middle years through programs and initiatives such as the National Quality Framework and Standards for Early Childhood Education, Maternal Child Health Services, kindergarten and preschool and school aged childcare facilities and programs.

Research shows that getting the right support at the right time can help young people lead healthy lives and stay connected, engaged and participating in their communities. Parents, carers, friends and relatives are the main source of advice and support for young people during adolescence. However, support from elsewhere can be just as effective including teachers, employers, coaches, community networks, and specialised support services such as youth services and mental health services.[12]

A key factor in helping adolescents and young adults to achieve positive social, health, education and employment outcomes is building resilience. Resilience helps young people manage and learn from

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[8] Center on the Developing Child (2026), Key Concepts, Key Concepts in Early Childhood Development | Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University; Australian Government, Why Children and their early years matter: an evidence summary in support of the Early Years Strategy 2024 – 2034, Evidence Summary - Why Children and their Early Years Matter | Department of Social Services

[9] The University of Queensland Australia, Timeline of brain development, The brain magazine, Timeline of brain development

[10] Center on the Developing Child (2026), Serve and return, Serve and Return: Back-and-forth exchanges and Toxic Strees Toxic Stress : What is toxic stress?

[11] Yoshikawa, H., Weiland, C., Brooks-Gunn, J., Burchinal, M., Espinosa, L., Gormley, W., Ludwig, J.O., Magnuson, K.A., Phillips, D.A., & Zaslow, M.J. (2013, August, September). Investing in our future: The evidence base for early childhood education. Society for Research in Child Development and Foundation for Child Development. Available: http://fcd-us.org/sites/default/files/Evidence%20Base%20on%20Preschool%20Education%20FINAL.pdf.

[12] Raising Children Network (2013), 'Teenage brain development'. Available at: http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/brain_development_teenagers.html.

challenges and can be built by working on attitudes like self-respect and self-compassion, social skills, helpful thinking habits, and skills for getting things done.[13]

Families play a critical role through all ages and stages for children and young people and are central to achieving positive health, social, educational and employment outcomes. This underlines that the services and supports available to the Greater Dandenong community must be designed for families, as much as for children and young people. The provision of a support system which offers universal access to a range of experiences, programs and supports, and encourages community connections, for all families and children, teamed with more targeted supports for those with lower levels of resilience or experiencing vulnerability, is essential.

3.5 Other key influences for developing the Integrated Plan

The social model of health is based on a broader understanding of health beyond the absence of disease, emphasising the impact of social, cultural, economic and environmental factors on health. Health outcomes are influenced by factors such as housing, employment, education, income and access to resources, and social support and connections.

A key part of the social model of health is the concept of health inequity which often arises from systemic social and environmental conditions beyond the control of an individual.
People who have limited access to quality housing, education, social protection and job opportunities have a higher risk of illness and death. Addressing health inequity is fundamental for improving the health and wellbeing of communities and individuals. [14]

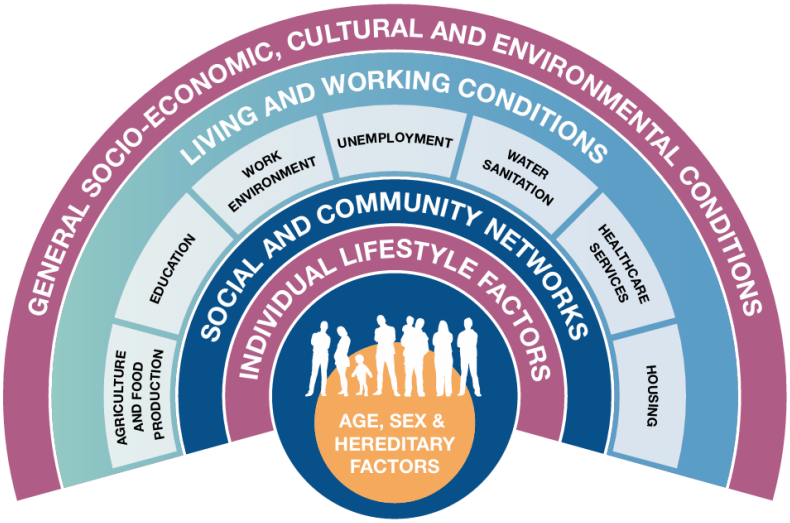
The social model of health underpins Council's health and wellbeing planning and priorities and has formed a key component of the Council Plan 2025 – 2029. The Plan recognises the factors which contribute to good health and overall community wellbeing including:

- Individual and lifestyle factors
- Social and community supports
- Living conditions
- The environment.

It also recognises that individual needs and health outcomes change as people move through different life of stage e.g. early years, children, youth, adult and older years.

[13] Raising Children Network, Resilience pre-teens and teenagers. Available online: Resilience in pre-teens & teenagers | Raising Children Network

[14] World Health Organisation, Social Determinants of Health, Social determinants of health; and Australian Government, Social Determinants of Health July 2024, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare



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A life course approach: The development of an Integrated Children, Youth and Family Strategy demonstrates Council's commitment to taking a life course approach to planning for, supporting and engaging children, young people and their families.

The World Health Organisation implements a life course approach to ensure health policies and strategies address needs across all life stages. This approach recognises that health trajectories are shaped over time and incorporate transitions such as commencing preschool, starting primary school, starting secondary school, commencing work. The life course approach recognises that experiences in critical and sensitive periods such as early childhood and adolescence influence long term outcomes and intergenerational health.

The goals of a life course approach as outlined by the World Health Organisation are to:

- Optimize health trajectories across the life course – across generations and for the next generation.
- Build resilience and reserve capacities in each life stage.
- Enable people's well-being at all ages.[16]

ARACY (Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth) established in 2002 has a clear focus on pursuing wellbeing for all Australian children and young people through driving systemic change, collaboration with communities and amplifying young voices. Their work focuses on prevention, early intervention and equity and as part of this, they have developed The Nest, a child-centred framework

[15] City of Greater Dandenong, 2021, Children's Plan 2021 - 2026
[16] World Health Organisation, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health and Ageing, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health and Ageing Department

that defines what children and young people need to thrive across six interconnected wellbeing domains, aligning closely with the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child.

The Nest answers the questions 'what does it take for a child or young person to have a good life?' It looks at six broad domains that work together to create overall wellbeing. To thrive a child must be doing well in all six domains. The six domains are:

1. Loved, valued and safe: Ensuring children feel valued in loving and secure environments.
2. Identity and culture: Supporting a strong sense of self and belonging, including cultural identity and values.
3. Healthy: Promoting good physical and mental health.
4. Material basics: Providing access to essential material needs like food, housing, transport and other essentials.
5. Learning: Encouraging effective learning and development opportunities from early childhood through to adult life.
6. Participation: Engaging children and young people in decision-making processes that affect them.[17]

There are a number of engagement and participation frameworks which provide key guidance for Council in planning for, supporting and engaging children, young people and their families.

- Hart's Ladder of Youth Participation
- CHOICES Flower of participation
- IAP2 Community Engagement Framework.

Hart's Ladder of Youth Participation categorises the levels of engagement with young people from non-participation to full youth initiated and shared decisions with adults. Its purpose is to encourage organisations to think critically about the way they engage with young people, identify barriers to engaging with young people, enable more meaningful engagement and foster skills in leadership, collaboration and civic responsibility.[18]

CHOICES Flower of participation uses the metaphor/image of a blooming flower to illustrate meaningful youth participation and the factors that enable it to bloom and flourish. The metaphor can be used to distinguish between different forms of participation, and to determine whether they are meaningful or not. The flower is based on Hart's Ladder of Youth Participation but seeks to better reflect that there are multiple ways for young people to participate meaningfully, and that the type of participation will depend on various factors. Meaningful participation means that young people can participate on equal terms with adults, or work independently, in organizations as well as in all stages of programming and policy-making - design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. [19]

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[17] ARACY, 2013, The Nest Wellbeing Framework. Available online: The Nest Wellbeing Framework - ARACY

[18] Youth Research and Evaluation Exchange, 2016, Factsheet Hart's Ladder of Youth Participation, Hart's Ladder of Youth Participation - Youth Research and Evaluation eXchange : Youth Research and Evaluation eXchange, and Cornell College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Cornell Garden-Based Learning, Hart's Ladder of Participation | Cornell Garden-Based Learning

[19] Choice for Youth and Sexuality, Meaningful and Inclusive Youth Participation, Meaningful and Inclusive

IAP2 community engagement framework provides a structured approach to community engagement, guiding practitioners on levels of participation, core values and methods to ensure meaningful community involvement. The framework outlines a spectrum of participation helping organisations to determine the appropriate level of public involvement based on project goals, resources and the decision-making context. The spectrum has 5 levels:

- **Inform**: Providing the public with balanced and objective information to assist understandin g
- **Consult**: Obtaining public feedback on analysis, alternatives, or decisions
- **Involve**: Working directly with the public to ensure concerns are understood and considered
- **Collaborate**: Partnering with the public in each aspect of decision-making, including developing alternatives and identifying preferred solutions.
- **Empower:** Placing final decision-making in the hands of the public.

Each level includes a promise to the community, clarifying the role they will play and the influence th ey can expect. [20]

Youth Participation » CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality

[20] The Engagement Institute, Engagement Institute — the Home of Engagement Professionals

4.0 Demographic and social profile

The Greater Dandenong community is a growing, diverse and complex community. Children, young people and families form an important part of the community, and their needs and strengths are influenced by a wide range of factors. While taking a strengths-based approach to planning for the community is critical to building resilience and improving wellbeing, it is essential to understand the factors which impact on the ability of children, young people and families to respond to economic shocks, and to build lives which allow them to be healthy and well, to feel connected to their community and able to participate in community life and to have economic and housing security.

Population growth and its impact

Located in southeast Melbourne, the City of Greater Dandenong encompasses the communities of Dandenong, Dandenong North and South, Keysborough, Noble Park and Noble Park North, Springvale and Springvale South and Bangholme. It is a large and growing community with an estimated population of just over 167,000 in 2024 which is forecast to grow to nearly 190,000 by 2036, representing growth of nearly 14 percent. However, the Victorian State Government Housing Targets and Activity Centre initiatives are likely to drive much larger growth.

Currently Greater Dandenong has an estimated 55,000 dwellings and the State Government Housing Targets propose an additional 52,500 dwellings by 2051. Using the current average household size of 3.06 for Greater Dandenong, this will mean the population could grow by as much as 160,000 people by 2051, driving a significant increase in demand for services and supports across the community. In a community which experiences high levels of vulnerability and disadvantage, the impact on the service system and community infrastructure will be profound.

A growing population of children, young people and families

With a growing population, the number of children and families with children in Geater Dandenong is also expected to increase. While between 2016 and 2021 the population of children and young people remained stable, it is projected to grow notably between 2021 and 2036. In 2021 there were 47,400 children and young people aged 0 – 24 years and by 2036 this is projected to increase to 56,500 equating to 19.1% growth and representing 29.7% of the total population. All age groups are projected to experience growth, with the most significant growth expected to amongst young people aged 20 – 24 years, followed 15 – 19-year-olds and 0 – 4-year-olds.

Where children and young people live	The largest number of children and young people live in Dandenong, Keysborough, and Noble Park, followed by Dandenong North and Springvale. This is consistent with the profile of the wider community.
Family households	Couple families with children account for 19,135 households, and a further 7,605 households were single parent households. By 2036 this is projected to grow to 24,583 and 8,996 respectively. The majority of single parent households are female (83.1%)
Housing	Nearly half of all people who live in overcrowded dwellings in Greater Dandenong are a child or young person (47.3%) and one quarter of all

	homeless people in Greater Dandenong is a child or young person (24.9%).
Employment	A high proportion (25.4%) of couple families with children where both parents do not work, compared with wider Victoria (19.8%), and a high proportion where only one parent is employed either full or part time.
Cultural diversity	A high proportion of families with dependent children (76.1%) where both parents were born overseas and 39% of young people aged 12 – 24 years are born overseas.

Cultural diversity and its impact

The Greater Dandenong community is one of the most culturally diverse communities in Victoria and wider Australia. This is something to both celebrate and support by ensuring services and opportunities to participate in community life are universally accessible and responsive to the needs of people from all cultures and backgrounds.

Residents come from 150 different birth places, 61.4% were born overseas, nearly 70% of residents speak a language other than English at home, and 14.2% of the population have limited fluency in English. This presents challenges such as needing information to be available in multiple languages or for translation support when accessing services.

With the fourth largest number of new migrants in Victoria in 2024-2025, the second highest number of new migrants on humanitarian visas, and consistently receiving one of the highest number of new Asylum Seekers each year in Victoria (18% in 2025), there is significant complexity and need amongst new arrivals in Greater Dandenong. New arrivals to the community may not only experience language barriers, but also have difficulty navigating the settlement service system, accessing education and employment opportunities, accessing health services, adjusting to different cultural norms, and experience significant financial hardship.

Disadvantage and its impact

Greater Dandenong is ranked as being the most disadvantaged local government area across Victoria. The indicators which measure this disadvantage include income levels, educational attainment levels, employment and occupation, and housing and family structures. The disadvantage experienced by the community is evidenced by:

- ***High levels of financial hardship experienced by many households***. Data supporting this includes the large number (25%) of low-income households (i.e. households with a combined income of less than $800 per week); the high number of households receiving centre link benefits (20% receiving Family Tax Benefit Part A); the high percentage of households (54.6%) experiencing housing stress because they spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs; the reducing rental affordability including the very low and rapidly decreasing proportion of rental properties (2.6%) considered to be a affordable to a family of 2 adults and 2 children who receive Centrelink benefits; the high levels of financial hardship amongst family rental households; and that overcrowding in households is higher in Greater Dandenong than in any other local government area in Victoria.

A report prepared for the Minderoo Foundation in 2024 by Impact Economics and Policy highlights that high inflation since the middle of 2021 has led to rising cost-of-living pressures as incomes have failed to keep up with prices. In particular the report highlights that families with children are facing the biggest cost of living increases.[21] Because of the financial hardship many families and individuals face, the rising cost of living disproportionately impacts the Greater Dandenong community. Engagement undertaken with young people in Greater Dandenong over the past 3 – 4 years highlights the impact of this on families including difficulty purchasing essential items or paying rent / a mortgage, children or young people being unable to participate in activities, hobbies or groups, and young people stepping away from education to help support their families financially.

The 2024 Productivity Commission Inquiry into Early Childhood Education and Care found that affordability is a key factor influencing whether children access early education and care services highlighting that households spend between 2 and 21% of their disposable income on childcare. Most notably, children and families experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage are less likely to access these services because they cannot afford to do so.[22] There is evidence to suggest this impact is being felt in Greater Dandenong with declining participation in both long daycare and family daycare, although it is important to acknowledge the introduction of free kindergarten may also be having an impact. [23]

- ***Low levels of educational attainment and employment***. Data supporting this includes the lower proportion of residents participating in workforce compared with wider Victoria (55.9% compared with 62.4%); the high proportion of residents working as labourers and the much lower proportion working as professionals; the consistently high levels of unemployment (7.6% in 2025 compared with 4.3% nationally); the high levels of youth unemployment, particularly amongst those aged 15 – 19 years (24.5%); the high proportion of young people disengaged from education or employment; the high proportion of children not meeting national literacy and numeracy levels; the low rates of participation in 3 and 4 year old kindergarten compared with wider Victoria; and the lower levels of digital inclusion compared with National and Victorian averages, particularly amongst people on low incomes, people who receive income support and people not in the labour force or who are unemployed.

  There is, however, evidence of improvement in relation to educational participation and attainment with participation in kindergarten growing consistently between 2021 and 2023. The introduction of 15 hours of 3-year-old kindergarten and free kindergarten have been key drivers of this improvement. Other evidence of improvement includes the growing percentage of people with a bachelor's degree (16.5% to 21.2% between 2016 and 2021); and the rate of participation in Tafe by 20 – 24-year-olds being higher than the metropolitan average (12% compared with 9.3%).

[21] Impact Economics and Politics, All they want for Christmas – families hit the hardest by cost of living pressures, November 2024, prepared for the Minderoo Foundation

[22] Australian Government Productivity Commission, September 2024, Early Childhood Education and Care Final Report

[23] City of Greater Dandenong, reducing long daycare and family daycare participation data, provided by Council Officers 25 March 2026.

- ***Poorer health and wellbeing outcomes***. The link between disadvantage and poorer health and wellbeing outcomes is well documented and in Greater Dandenong it is evidenced by a wide range of data. Key data includes the high (28.8%) and increasing proportion of children in their first year of school identified as being developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain; the growing proportion of children and young people with a disability (28.5% growth between 2016 and 2021) and the number of children and young people who actively receive support through the NDIS; low vaccination rates amongst children aged 0 – 5 years; a growing proportion of residents who are overweight or obese, a high proportion who do no moderate or vigorous physical activity in an average week, and the very low rates of participation in organised sport (5.1% - the lowest in Victoria); the high levels of people experiencing food insecurity or worrying about food insecurity (one fifth of CGD residents in 2023); nearly one quarter of residents aged 18 years and older who have self-reported fair or poor dental health; the proportion of residents experiencing high or very high levels of psychological distress (20.7%); and the proportion of young people who are experiencing a mental illness (5.5% at the 2021 Census) or are concerned about their mental health and wellbeing; the number of alcohol and drug related ambulance attendances and ED presentations by children and young people; and the number of sexual health notifications per 100,000 population - while the rates are lower than wider Victoria, in most instances they have grown between 2019 and 2024).

Community safety

Greater Dandenong has high and increasing reported incidents of family violence. In 2021/2022 there were 2,500 reported incidents and this grew to just over 3,000 by 2024/2025. The reported incidents are 20% higher than the Victorian average, the second highest in metropolitan Melbourne, and one third of incidents involve a child being present as a victim or witness. In addition to family violence, a 2023 survey about perceptions of personal safety conducted by the Department of Government Services found that among residents in Greater Dandenong, 25% of men and 49% of women felt unsafe or extremely unsafe walking alone at night in their neighbourhood. Consistent with this, 37% of young people in Greater Dandenong who participated in the 2025 Mission Australia Survey indicated they do not feel safe in their neighbourhood. While this was a small sample size, it is consistent with information gathered from young people in Greater Dandenong through engagement undertaken by Council in the last 3 – 4 years.

A growing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population

While small, the population is growing and has a very high proportion of children and young people (45%). The financial hardship experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members is higher than the broader community with median individual, family and household incomes all notably lower than wider Greater Dandenong. Consistent with this, the unemployment rate is higher amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in Greater Dandenong (20% compared with 10.3% in 2021).

4.1 Detailed data and sources

Population size and distribution

The communities with the largest population are Noble Park, Dandenong and Keysborough, followed by Dandenong North and Springvale.

Location	2021	2024	2031	2036
Bangholme	749	792	844	899
Dandenong	30,127	31,858	33,938	36,160
Dandenong North	22,526	23,820	25,375	27,037
Dandenong South	125	132	141	150
Keysborough	30,018	31,743	33,815	36,029
Noble Park	32,257	34,110	36,337	38,717
Noble Park North	7,436	7,863	8,377	8,925
Springvale	22,174	23,448	24,979	26,615
Springvale South	12,766	13,499	14,381	15,323
Total	**158,178**	**167,266**	**178,187**	**189,855**

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Greater Dandenong 2021 and 2016 Census All persons Quickstats and Victoria in Future Local Government Areas, 2026 – 2036

Children, young people and families

Age Range	2021	2036	Change No.	Change %
0 – 4	9,626	11,404	1,778	18.5%
5 – 9	9,348	10,345	997	10.7%
10 – 14	8,456	9,724	1,268	15.0%
15 - 19	8,588	10,344	1,756	20.4%
20 - 24	11,393	14,667	3,274	28.7%
Total	**47,411**	**56,484**	**9,073**	**19.1%**

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Greater Dandenong 2021 and 2016 Census All persons Quickstats and Victoria in Future Local Government Areas, 2026 – 2036

0 – 24-year-old population	2016	2021	Change No.	Change %
Bangholme	82	61	-21	-25.6%
Dandenong	10,056	9,435	-621	-6.2%
Dandenong North	8,038	7,511	-527	-6.6%
Dandenong South	18	5	-13	-72.2%
Keysborough	8,644	9,755	1,111	12.9%
Noble Park	9,496	9,323	-173	-1.8%
Noble Park North	2,202	2,138	-64	-2.9%
Springvale	6,888	6,168	-720	-10.5%
Springvale South	4,217	3,851	-366	-8.7%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Greater Dandenong 2021 and 2016 Census All persons Quickstats

Family profile	2016		2021		Change		2036	
	no.	%	no.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Couple family without children	11,414	29.7%	12,130	30.4%	**716**	**6.3%**	13,855	28.4%
Couple family with children	18,850	49.0%	19,135	48.0%	**285**	**1.5%**	24,583	50.4%
One parent family	7,194	18.7%	7,605	19.1%	**411**	**5.7%**	8,996	18.4%
Other family	1,012	2.6%	1,034	2.6%	**22**	**2.2%**	1,340	2.7%
Lone parent female	n/a	84.2%	n/a	83.1%				
Family households	36,124	74.4%	37,633	72.8%	**1,509**	**4.2%**	48,774	74.6%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Greater Dandenong 2021 and 2016 Census All persons Quickstats and Victoria in Future Household Dwelling Projections

Employment profile in couple families	Greater Dandenong				Victoria
	2016		2021		2021
Both employed, worked full time	5,355	17.7%	5946	19.0%	22.7%
Both employed, worked part time	1,213	4.0%	1614	5.2%	5.0%
One employed full time, one part time	4,315	14.3%	4877	15.6%	22.6%
One employed full time, other not working	6,057	20.0%	5455	17.4%	13.3%
One employed part time, other not working	2,369	7.9%	2458	7.9%	6.3%
Both not working	8,077	26.7%	7,928	25.4%	19.8%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Greater Dandenong 2021 and 2016 Census All persons Quickstats

	2016	2021
Families with dependent children (up to 24 years of age) where both parents were born overseas	76.9%	76.1%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Greater Dandenong 2021 ad 2016 Census All persons Quickstats

Overcrowding	2021
Estimated no of people living in overcrowded dwellings	3,286
Estimated % of children and young people (0 - 24 yrs)	47.3%
Estimated % not employed	48.6%
Estimated percentage with at least one health condition	13.3%
Estimated % with less than yr 11 education	38.1%
Speak English not well	29.7%

Source: City of Greater Dandenong, Housing Social Statistics, Homelessness and overcrowding

Homelessness	2021
Estimated no. of homeless people in CGD	1,260
Estimated % of children and young people (0 - 24 yrs)	24.9%
Estimated % not employed	56.6%
Estimated percentage with at least one health condition	40.0%
Estimated % with less than yr 11 education	34.5%
Speak English not well	29.7%

Source: City of Greater Dandenong, Housing Social Statistics, Homelessness and overcrowding

Cultural diversity

Cultural diversity	2016	2021	Vic in 2021
Residents born overseas	64.2%	61.4%	31.6%
Households where a language other than English is spoken	70.0%	69.1%	30.2%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Greater Dandenong 2021 ad 2016 Census All persons Quickstats

Top places of birth	2016	2021
Vietnam	8.7%	9.3%
India	8.2%	7.5%
Cambodia	4.5%	5.5%
Sri Lanka	4.2%	4.0%
China	3.0%	3.1%
Afghanistan	3.2%	3.1%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Greater Dandenong 2021 ad 2016 Census All persons Quickstats

Birthplace of recently arrived residents in CGD (last 5 years), 2021 data	No.	%
India	469	23.0%
Cambodia	259	12.7%
Afghanistan	258	12.7%
Vietnam	245	12.0%
Pakistan	179	8.8%
Sri Lanka	127	6.2%

Source: City of Greater Dandenong, Statistics and Data, Immigration and settlement social statistics

Settlement in 2024 - 2025	CGD	Casey	Melb.	Wyndham	Vic. Total	CGD as % of Vic
Humanitarian	1,470	1,613	234	815	9,638	15.3%
Family	1,387	2,312	790	1700	19,559	7.1%
Skilled	2,078	3,460	7,306	6468	66,373	3.1%
Total	**4,935**	**7,385**	**8,330**	**8983**	**95,570**	**5.2%**

Source: City of Greater Dandenong, Statistics and Data, Immigration and settlement social statistics

Asylum Seekers - Bridging Visa E	CGD	Brimbank	Whittlesea	Casey	Total in Vic.	CGD at % of Vic. Total
Irregular maritime arrivals 2021	975	944	643	400	4,546	21.2%
Irregular maritime arrivals Sept 2025	633	732			3,515	18.0%

Source: City of Greater Dandenong, Statistics and Data, Immigration and settlement social statistics and Australian Government Department of Home Affairs, Unauthorised maritime arrivals on bridging visa E, September 2025

Disadvantage

Greater Dandenong is ranked as the most disadvantaged local government area in Victoria based on the Commonwealth Government Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage. The indicators used to measure disadvantage include:

- Income: the financial resources available to residents.
- Education: Educational attainment levels within an area.
- Employment and occupation: Employment rates and job types.
- Housing and family structure: the living conditions and family dynamics.

Greater Dandenong has a SEIFA (socio-economic indexes for areas) of 887 compared with the Victoria average of 1010, and the neighbouring City of Casey 995. Note the lower the number, the higher the level of disadvantage.

SEIFA	Score
City of Greater Dandenong	**887**
Dandenong	824
Springvale South	830
Springvale	845
Noble Park	873
Dandenong South	878
Dandenong North	926
Noble Park North	936
Keysborough	977
Doveton – Eummering	832.1
City of Casey	995
Mornington Peninsula	1038
City of Monash	1042
City of Kingston	1044
Victoria	1010

Sources: Mission Australia, Communities for Children, Greater Dandenong + 3177 Community Profile, and id. profile, City of Casey Community Profile

Households and hardship

Households in CGD	2011	2016	2021
Occupied households in CGD	45,490	48,566	51,670
Total population in CGD	135,605	152,050	158,208
Avg no. of people per occupied household CGD	**2.98**	**3.13**	**3.06**
Greater Melbourne	**2.62**	**2.61**	**2.58**

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Quickstats, Greater Dandenong 2011, 2016 and 2021

Location	2021			2016		
	Median weekly income			Median weekly income		
	Individual	Family	Household	Individual	Family	Household
Bangholme	505	990	644			
Dandenong	596	1,413	1,267			
Dandenong North	605	1,640	1,436			
Dandenong South	792	1,125	821			
Keysborough	728	2,015	1,991			
Noble Park	628	1,545	1,382			
Noble Park North	596	1,724	1,452			
Springvale	558	1,470	1,402			
Springvale South	559	1,498	1,498			
Greater Dandenong	**618**	**1,605**	**1,453**	**475**	**1,260**	**1,168**
Victoria	**803**	**2,136**	**1,759**	**644**	**1,715**	**1,419**
Melbourne - Sth East	**745**	**2,004**	**1,811**	**586**	**1,593**	**1,444**

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Greater Dandenong and Melbourne - southeast 2021 and 2016 Census

	Total households	Low-income households	% of total households
Bangholme	433	252	58.2%
Dandenong	9,960	2,832	28.4%
Dandenong North	7,572	1,917	25.3%
Dandenong South	96	41	42.7%
Keysborough	9,146	1,580	17.3%
Noble Park	11,140	2,887	25.9%
Noble Park North	2,624	682	26.0%
Springvale	7,211	1,934	26.8%
Springvale South	3,879	915	23.6%
Greater Dandenong	**52,061**	**13,041**	**25.0%**
Family households	**37,633**	**5,790**	**15.4%**
City of Casey	**113,710**	**17,451**	**15.3%**
Greater Melbourne	**1,794,883**	**341,353**	**19.0%**

Source: Remplan Greater Dandenong Community Profile, Families / Family income, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Greater Dandenong Community Profile, .id community, Social Atlas, City of Casey

Centrelink payments in CGD	March 21 - March 23	June 23 - Sept 24	Dec 24 - Dec 25
Family Tax benefit Part A	11,517	10,530	10,165
Family Tax benefit Part B	9,194	8,085	7,905
Youth allowance (students and apprentices)	2,349	1,700	1,375
Youth allowance (other)	781	405	630

Source: Australian Government, DSS Payments by Local Government Area, Data.gov.au

Notes: Part A is applied per child (children aged 0 - 19 years) and Part B per family (children aged 0 - 16 years) and is for single parent families or families with only one main income earner. Eligible families can receive both Part A and B. Youth allowance is for young people who are students or undertaking an apprenticeship, seeking work, unable to work due to illness or injury are long term unemployed or migrant English students.

Housing Tenure in CGD	2011	2016	2021		
	CGD	CGD	CGD	Victoria	South East Melb
Owned outright	32.6%	30.3%	30.0%	32.2%	27.9%
Owned with a mortgage	29.6%	30.2%	31.2%	36.1%	41.8%
Rented	32.6%	34.9%	35.0%	28.5%	26.9%
Other tenure	0.9%	0.8%	1.7%	1.7%	1.8%
Social housing		3.6%	3.7%		

Source: ABS, Quickstats, Greater Dandenong 2011, 2016 and 202 .id community, City of Casey, Social Atlas
Note: Social housing statistic - 3.6 and 3.7% of rented dwellings

Housing stress in CGD in 2021	CGD	City of Casey	Sth East Metro Melb
% of households spending more than 30% of their income on rent	32.5%	29.9%	28.2%
% of households spending more than 30% of their income on mortgage costs	22.1%	18.3%	14.3%

Source .id community, City of Casey, Social Atlas

Affordable rental: % of households that would be affordable to a family of 2 adults and children, on Centrelink benefits	Jun-21	Jun-22	Jun-24	Jun-25
Greater Dandenong	11.0%	8.6%	4.4%	2.6%
Metro Melbourne	9.2%	8.6%	6.7%	10.1%

Source: City of Greater Dandenong, Housing Social Statistics, Affordable Rental Housing

Change in rental affordability in CGD	2010	2015	2020	2025
Avg price of renting a 3 bedrom home in CGD	457	448	465	550
Avg price of renting a 3 bedrom home in metropolitan Melbourne	479	475	477	550

Source: City of Greater Dandenong, Housing Social Statistics, Rental Costs

Financial hardship among rental households in CGD, based upon 2021 Census data	CGD	Victoria
Couple with children	28.7%	17.1%
Single parent	41.7%	40.3%
Other families	13.2%	18.1%
All families	28.2%	21.3%

Source: City of Greater Dandenong, Housing Social Statistics, Financial hardship among renting households

Overcrowding in CGD	2021
Estimated no of people living in overcrowded dwellings	3,286
Estimated % of children and young people (0 - 24 yrs)	47.3%
Estimated % not employed	48.6%
Estimated percentage with at least one health condition	13.3%
Estimated % with less than yr 11 education	38.1%
Speak English not well	29.7%

City of Greater Dandenong, Housing Social Statistics, Homelessness and overcrowding

Education attainment and employment

Workforce in CGD	CGD		Victoria	
	No.	%	No.	%
Total no. of people who work in CGD	114,506			
No. of CGD residents who are in the workforce	65,681			
No. of CGD residents who work in CGD	23,292			
No. of residents aged 15 years plus participating in the workforce	73,065	55.9%	3,330,560	62.4%
No. of residents aged 15 years and over working full time	40,162	55.0%	1,871,278	56.2%
No. of residents aged 15 years and over working part time	23,351	32.0%	1,076,741	32.3%

Source: Remplan Economy, Greater Dandenong Economy, Jobs and Business Insights and Australian Bureau of Statistics Greater Dandenong 2021 Census All persons QuickStats

Occupations - people aged 15 years and over in CGD	2016	2021	
	CGD	CGD	Victoria
Labourers	17.2	17.3	8.8
Professionals	13.5	15.9	25.0
Technicians and Trades Workers	15.5	14.5	12.6
Machinery Operators and Drivers	12.1	12.2	5.9
Community and Personal Service Workers	10.7	11.0	11.0
Clerical and Administrative Workers	11.4	10.6	12.4
Managers	7.7	8.0	14.0
Sales Workers	9.5	7.8	8.3

Source: Remplan Economy, Greater Dandenong Economy, Jobs and Business Insights and Australian Bureau of Statistics Greater Dandenong 2021 Census All persons QuickStats

Unemployment and underemployment in CGD	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
CGD unemployment rate	9.1%	8.2%	6.6%	6.7%	7.6%
National unemployment rate	5.1%	3.7%	3.7%	4.1%	4.3%
National youth unemployment	11.3%	8.5%	9.5%		9.6%
Unemployment young people aged 20 - 24 years in CGD	11.1%				
Unemployment rate young people aged 15 - 19 years	24.5%				
Young people aged 20 - 24 years not in paid employment or formal education	13.2%				
National underemployment rate	9.1%	6.0%	6.5%	6.3%	5.9%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistsics Greater Dandenong 2021 Census All Persons Quickstats; Australian Bureau of Statistics Labour Force, Australia; City of Greater Dandenong Indicators of Community Health and Wellbeing, Employment and Unemployment Social Statistics, and Labour force status by age and sex, 2021

Disengagement from education or employment in CGD based on 2021 data	CGD	Metro Melbourne
Young people aged 15 - 19 years	6.1	4.4
Young people aged 20 - 24 years	13.2	9.8
Total no. of young people disengaged (15 - 24 years)	**1,900**	

Source: City of Greater Dandenong Statistics and Data, Education Social Statistics, Youth Disengagement and Health and Wellbeing Profile

Highest level of educational attainment in CGD	2016	2021	Victoria
			2021
Bachelor Degree and above	16.5	21.1	29.2
Advanced Diploma and Diploma level	8.6	8.7	9.8
Certificate IV	2.2	2.4	3.4
Certificate III	9	8.1	10.9
Year 12	20.7	20.6	14.9
Year 11	5.4	4.8	5.7
Year 10	8	7.2	7.3
Certificate II	0.1	0.1	0.1
Certificate 1	0	0	0
Year 9 or below	12.5	11.3	7

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Greater Dandenong 2016 and 2021 Census All Persons Quickstats

Participation in Tertiary Education in 2021 by 20 - 24 year olds in CGD	CGD	Metro Melbourne
Tafe	12	9.3
University and other Tertiary Education	32.4	37.8

Source: City of Greater Dandenong Education Social Statistics, Participation rates of 20 - 24-year-olds in Tertiary Education 2021

National education benchmarks 2023	CGD	Victoria
Students not meeting national literacy benchmarks		
Year 3	34.3	28.8
Year 5	27.2	21.2
Year 7	31.2	27.7
Year 9	41.7	33.8
Students not meeting national numeracy benchmarks		
Year 3	39.3	30.7
Year 5	36.2	29.7
Year 7	35.3	30.6
Year 9	40.5	33.4

Source: City of Greater Dandenong Education Social Statistics, Literacy and numeracy amongst school pupils

Kindergarten participation rate	Greater Dandenong			Victoria
	2021	2022	2023	2023
3-year-old kindergarten participation rate	N/A	68%	85%	89%
4-year-old kindergarten participation rate	83%	90%	93%	96%

Source: Victorian State Government, 2023 Greater Dandenong ECE Profile

Digital inclusion Index 2024	CGD	Victorian Avg.	National Avg	Low income - $41,600	Receives income support	Not in the labour force	Unemploy
Overall digital inclusion score	71.6	74.1	73.6	53.5	62.1	63.1	68.6
Affordability score	66.3		70.3	34.5	53.7	56	56.6
Accessibility	75.8		76.8	69%	76%	78%	81%
Digital ability	72.9		73.6	67.5	62.3	62.4	75.8

Source: Australian Digital Inclusion Index, 2024

Health and wellbeing

Need for Assistance in CGD	2016	2021	Change	
			No.	%
0 – 4 years	84	112	28	33.3%
5 – 14 years	390	530	140	35.9%
15 – 19 years	151	216	65	43.0%
20 – 24 years	189	188	-1	-0.5%
Total children and young people with a disability	**814**	**1046**	**232**	28.5%
Total CGD children and young people	48,565	47,411	-1,154	-2.4%
% of the population	**1.7%**	**2.2%**		
% of CGD population with a need for assistance	**6.3%**	**7.2%**		

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Greater Dandenong 2021 and 2016 Census

Active NDIS participants in CGD Age Group	Q3 FY24/25	Q4 FY24/25	Q1 FY25/26	Q2 FY25/26
0 -8 years	1108	1128	1086	1047
9 - 14 years	592	608	634	656
15 - 18	267	275	273	289
19 - 24	296	303	314	319

Source: ndis, Explore Data, Greater Dandenong

Immunisation	2024-2025		2019-2020
	CGD	Victoria	Victoria
% of children vaccinated 12 - 15 months	90.3%	92.5%	95.1%
% of children vaccinated 24 - 27 months	86.3%	90.5%	92.8%
% of children vaccinated 60 - 63 months	90.3%	94.4%	96.1%

Source: City of Greater Dandenong Annual Report 2024 - 2025 and Victorian State Government, Vaccination coverage rates for Victoria, Department of Health

Physical activity and overweight and obesity	CGD	Vic. Avg
No moderate to vigorous physical activity in an average week 2023	20.0%	16.8%
Participation in organised sport - 2021	5.1%	17.2%
Overweight or obese 2020	44.4%	51.0%
Overweight or obese 2023	46.9%	54.4%

Source: Victorian State Government Department of Health, Victorian Population Health Survey, 2020 and 2023, and VicHealth Sport Participation in Victoria 2015 - 2021

Food insecurity in CGD in 2023	CGD	Vic Avg
Proportion of people who experienced food insecurity in the last 12 months - CGD	11.8%	8.0%
Proportion of people who have been worried about food insecurity in the last 12 months	8.4%	9.7%

Source: Australia Government, Victorian Population Health Survey, 2023

Dental health in CGD in 2023	CGD	Vic Avg
Residents who self-reported fair or poor dental health	22.4%	22.5%
Residents with loose teeth, bleeding or painful gums	20.8%	20.3%
Residents who have delayed visiting a dentist due to cost	29.0%	32.3%

Source: Victorian State Government Department of Health, Victorian Population Health Survey, 2023

Mental health	CGD	Vic Avg
Young people aged 15 - 24 years who indicated they are experiencing a mental illness, 2021 Census	5.5%	
Residents experiencing high or very high levels of psychological distress	20.7%	19.1%
Residents who sought help for a mental health related problem	15.1%	20.1%

Source: Victorian State Government Department of Health, Victorian Population Health Survey, 2023, and City of Greater Dandenong Statistics and Data, Health and Wellbeing Profile

Ambulance attendance in CGD	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
Alcohol and drug related ambulance attendances 0 - 19 years	174	147	124	97
Alcohol and drug related ambulance attendances 20 - 24 years	122	109	128	123
ED presentations in CGD				
Alcohol and drug related ED presentations 0 - 19 years	117	99	N/A	N/A
Alcohol and drug related ED presentations 20 - 24 years	70	76	N/A	N/A

Source: Turning Point, AOD Stats

Deaths related to Alcohol and Illicit drugs in CGD	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Number of deaths 0 - 19 years	<5	0	0	0	0
Number of deaths 20 - 24 years	0	0	<5	<5	<5

Source: Turning Point, AOD Stats

Sexual health	CGD	Victoria
Notification rate of chlamydia 2024 (per 100,000)	278.65	412.39
Notification rate of chlamydia 2019 (per 100,000)	287.39	419.31
Notification rate of gonorrhoea 2024 (per 100,000)	156.59	281.17
Notification rate of gonorrhoea 2019 (per 100,000)	132.55	225.18
Notification rate of infectious syphilis 2024 (per 100,000)	28.36	45.98
Notification rate of infectious syphilis 2019 (per 100,000)	19.94	36.69
New HIV diagnoses 2024	6	253
New HIV diagnoses 2019	16	286
Notification rate of new hepatitis C diagnosis 2024 (per 100,000)	36.44	17.81
Notification rate of new hepatitis C diagnosis 2019 (per 100,000)	37.28	25.03

Source: Victorian State Government Department of Health, Victorian sexual and reproductive health and viral hepatitis strategy monitoring indicators dashboard

Community safety

Family violence in CGD	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024 - 2025
Reported incidents of family violence	2,517	2,657	2,652	3,014
Incident rate per 100,000 people - CGD	1,580.10	1,621.90	1,585.20	1,785.10
Incident rate per 100,000 people - Victoria	1,365.48	1,366.05	1,415.89	1,499.68
Born overseas	25.7%	24.3%	23.5%	21.5%
Total no. of victims on FVIO	2,045	2,098	2,220	2,182
% of incidents where a child was present as a victim or witness				32.8%

Source: Victorian Crime Statistics Agency, Family Violence Dashboard, Data by Local Government Area 2020-21 - 2024-25

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Pop. In CGD	2016	2021	Change		Percentage of	
			No.	%		
Total population	441	615	174	39.5%	0.4%	Of CGD pop.
0 – 4 years	61	52	-9	-14.8%	8.5%	Of total ATSI pop.
5 – 14 years	100	95	-5	-5.0%	15.4%	Of total ATSI pop.
15 – 24 years	93	129	36	38.7%	21.0%	Of total ATSI pop.
Total children and young people pop.	**254**	**276**	**22**	**8.7%**	**44.9%**	**Of total ATSI pop.**

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Greater Dandenong 2021 and 2016 Census Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander people Quickstats

Education participation 2021	Greater Dandenong		Victoria
Preschool	22	10.3%	9.7%
Primary School	64	30.0%	35.6%
Secondary School	52	24.2%	24.5%
Tertiary - vocational education	15	7.0%	7.8%
Tertiary - University or higher education	19	8.9%	9.6%
Other	9	4.2%	3.2%
Not stated	28	13.1%	9.7%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Greater Dandenong 2021 Census Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander people Quickstats

Median Weekly Income 2021	Individual	Family	Household
Greater Dandenong - Whole community	618	1,605	1,453
Greater Dandenong - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	489	1,364	1,257
Victoria - whole community	803	2,136	1,759
Victoria - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	619	1,638	1,527

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Greater Dandenong 2021 Census Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander people Quickstats

5.0 Previous engagement

This section outlines the key findings from engagement undertaken with children, young people, parents and carers, and Council staff in Greater Dandenong between 2022 and 2025. Outlined below are:

- the engagement tools and activities undertaken;
- an assessment of the scope, depth and value of the previous engagement including identifying any gaps which may need to be addressed through additional engagement;
- a summary of the findings from the previous engagement which are grouped as follows:
  - Young people
  - Children
  - Parents and carers
  - Council staff.

More detailed information from examining the previous engagement can be found in **Appendix A**.

5.1 Previous engagement tools and activities



5.2 Assessment of previous engagement

Overall, there is a vast amount of information and insights about the needs and aspirations of children, young people and families from previous engagement undertaken by Council. In particular, there is an impressive commitment to engaging directly and meaningfully with children and young people. The information gathered through engagement with children and young people is of high quality and depth and means there can be a high level of confidence the information is valuable in helping to understand the experiences, needs and aspirations of children and young people.

Key issues and potential gaps:

- More young people of secondary school age have been engaged with compared with older young adults and primary or preschool aged children. This may reflect a combination of the strong partnering approach Council has with local secondary schools, secondary school aged young people being more likely to access Council's youth services, and older young adults being more challenging to engage.
- The survey of families about accessing Council led child and family services lacks depth and the information is of limited value in understanding the needs of families. The insights shared by the Children's Services Support Team help to fill some of this gap, particularly in relation to barriers and emerging needs.
- Another key gap is information from stakeholder organisations and partners. It is anticipated this is a aspect Council will address as part of developing the Integrated Strategy**.**
- The insights from the Children's Services Support Team are both valuable and valid. There would be value in gathering and considering similar insights from the wider Wellbeing Team as part of developing the Integrated Strategy.
- Consider whether there is any information from the engagement supporting the development of the Council and Wellbeing Plan 2025 – 2029 which may be of value.

5.3 Summary of key findings from previous engagement

5.3.1 Young people

What young people value and feel most positive about

Many young people in Greater Dandenong feel very positive and happy with their life and the neighbourhood they live in. The things they value and feel most positive about are:

- **The cultural diversity**, range of opportunities, the sense of connection and food in Greater Dandenong and their community.
- **School** including feeling safe at school, feeling supported by their teachers and wellbeing staff, and feeling safe travelling to and from school.
- **Feeling supported by and connected to their family, friends and community**. This includes knowing they have people in their lives they can rely upon to ask for help and seek information from, and being given opportunities to share their views and be involved in decisions.

Key issues of concern or priority for young people

- **The primary issue of concern or priority for young people in Greater Dandenong is mental health and wellbeing.** This was identified as the top issue of concern consistently across the Greater Dandenong Youth Summits in 2018, 2022 and 2025, it is one of the top issues young people identified as causing stress through the 2025 Mission Australia Youth Survey (CGD), and was identified as a top priority in the Greater Dandenong Youth Leadership Forum in 2024.

- **Closely linked to mental health and wellbeing is young people feeling or experiencing stress**. Young people identify a range of factors which cause them stress including managing their time, school or study concerns, friendship or family concerns, managing expectations, body image, cost of living and worrying about the future.
- **Education and employment** are also key priorities for young people. They form part of their biggest hopes for the future, but also present challenges. For education these challenges include having the motivation to be engaged and reach goals, disrupted learning, and pressure to leave to support their family financially. For employment challenges include feeling underprepared for the workforce and concerns about feeling safe at work including experiencing discrimination and not understanding their worker rights.

Other priorities or areas of concern are:

- **Cost of living concerns or financial hardship:** Financial hardship means that some young people are not able to participate in activities, hobbies or groups, and they or their family may have difficulty purchasing essential items or paying rent / a mortgage. Young people identify having a stable income, financial security and wealth as one of the key hopes they have for the future.
- **Discrimination or racism**. Nearly one third of young people indicated they experienced unfair treatment or discrimination in the past year (Mission Australia Youth Survey 2025 CGD) and this is predominantly based upon race or cultural background. A survey of young people aged 12 – 25 in Greater Dandenong in 2023 sought to understand their experience of racism and discrimination finding that 90% of young people surveyed had seen or experienced an incident of racism involving young people. Of particular concern is the wide range of locations or setting which it occurs (schools, social media, public transport, workplaces, shopping centres and organised sport) and the reluctance to report it because they felt nothing would change or they did not know where or how to report it.
- **Perceptions of safety:** Fewer young people in Greater Dandenong feel safe in their neighbourhood compared with the Victorian average. Young people feel unsafe in locations such as train stations, public transport hubs, and public places, due to crime, violence, and discrimination. They would like to see Council have a greater focus on community safety.
- **Climate change and the environment:** Young people in Greater Dandenong are concerned about climate change and the environment, but other things are of greater concern and priority.

Hopes and priorities for the future

The hopes and priorities for the future young people have centre upon:

- **Employment and career** including having local employment opportunities and pathways and landing a dream career or job.
- **Stable income, financial security and wealth** including being financially independent, being able to support community members, and being able to own a home.
- **Family, relationships and social connections**, particularly the importance of social connections in supporting mental health and wellbeing.

- **Mental health,** particularly reducing the stigma around mental health and improving access to support.
- **Education and learning**, particularly the importance of having an inclusive and accessible education system, especially for newly arrived youth, and having the skills and experience needed to support employment.
- **Community safety** including having safe spaces where young people can congregate without fear of violence or discrimination and feeling safe when working. Reducing racism and discrimination and supporting young people to feel safe and supported to report racism and discrimination.

5.3.2 Children

Priorities and aspirations

- **Having friends and family you can trust and talk to** is a big part of helping children to feel supported and happy.
- **Quality and accessible spaces and places support children to feel safe and included**. Places like schools and libraries are identified by children as being safe spaces where they can be themselves. When asked about their dream library, children identified having play areas and spaces where they can participate in activities. They also identified having access to different types of technology, shops and a café / restaurant, a rooftop garden, lots of different activities to participate in like sport, cooking, arts and crafts, outer space and technology.

  Playgrounds, walking trails and sporting fields help children connect with friends and feel part of the community and they have an aspiration for them to be greener and more playful.
- **Being more physically active** by spending less time on devices and having the opportunity to participate in free sporting programs and facilities.
- **Looking after the environment** with concerns about rubbish, pollution and littering. Children would like to see Council do more and have ideas about what could be done like Clean Up days, more bins and better education about the impact of harming the environment.
- **Equity and inclusion** with concerns some children miss out and need more support to access education and to participate in extracurricular activities.
- **Mental health and wellbeing** with a focus on building resilience. Children are very insightful about the idea that things sometimes go wrong, but it's important not to give up, because things will get better. They also identified the importance of asking for help if you need it.

5.3.3 Parents and carers

Information from parents and carers is more limited than the information from children and young people as it is drawn from very brief surveys i.e. the quarterly satisfaction survey of participants in Supported Playgroups and in Home Support, and a Children's Services survey administered as part of the Noble Park Family Fun Day and Keysborough Hub opening in 2025.

Priority ideas for improving services delivered by Council

- **Providing services or activities at different times or on different days** e.g. better availability on weekends, longer time suitable for working parents, and flexible times.
- **Providing transport** to access services or activities.
- **Using a variety of different venues or locations** for activities.
- **Providing more and different types of activities**.
- **Making services more culturally inclusive**.
- **Making information more easily available** about services and activities.

5.3.4 Staff insights

Key insights about challenges and emerging issues for families

- **Increased demand for targeted support** including in-home support and supported playgroups and a desire for expanded learning opportunities, including parenting education, behavioural support, English classes and first aid.
- **Transport barriers** including limited access to transport and low confidence using public transport. This limits their ability to access services and programs.
- **Limited awareness of supports available including** how to access them, or what type of help they can ask for. Exacerbating this are challenges around service integration and a lack of information sharing between services. There is a need for more consistent, accessible, and user-friendly information about services, referrals and community resources.
- **Gaps in support when transitioning to school** and navigating related supports (e.g. uniforms, welfare services).
- **Difficulty accessing early years health and development services** including MCH and enhanced MCH (due to workforce shortages), lactation services, and first-time parenting groups, due to a combination of transport challenges, lack of knowledge of the service system, and language barriers.
- **Difficulty accessing kindergarten due to immunisation status**. Immunisation can present a significant barrier to kindergarten access if children are not up to date on the Australian Immunisation Register.

6.0 Services supporting children, young people and their families

There are a wide range of services in Greater Dandenong and the surrounding region which focus on supporting children, young people and their families. Services are delivered through a mix of providers including not for profit and community-based organisations, private operators, Council and other levels of government. The service system is organised into three broad categories:

- **Universal services:** These are typically available to support all families, children and young people, providing opportunity for early identification and referral. Examples include maternal child health services, kindergarten and schools.
- **Secondary services** typically focus on early intervention and identifying risk factors. This might include developmental disability services, parenting / family relationship programs and early intervention programs
- **Tertiary services** are typically focused on families, children and young people who require intensive and often ongoing interventions such as child protection, family violence, specialised allied health or mental health services.

The analysis of services primarily concentrated on secondary and tertiary services and does not include services delivered by private providers.

6.1 Key findings about the service system

- The suburb of Dandenong is a regional activity and service centre supporting residents of Greater Dandenong and southeastern Melbourne. This means many service providers are located in Dandenong, and service the wider municipality as well as the wider southeastern region.
- The are a limited number of services who operate in other parts of Greater Dandenong e.g. Springvale, Noble Park, or Keysborough. This means children, young people and their families will primarily need to travel to Dandenong to access services, and transport is identified as a key barrier to accessing services for many families.
- It is understood the demand for both secondary and tertiary services is significant and outstrips demand. For Council this means services such as enhanced maternal and child health and family support services are in high demand.
- Council is a critical provider of services for the community with few or no other providers delivering services such as maternal and child health, supported playgroups, immunisation, family support, and generalist youth services. Council's role also includes referring children, young people and their families to other services, partnering with other services and providing spaces to support the delivery of services by other organisations. Council plays an important role in the service system as a:
  - **Leader**: collaborating with tiers of government and service providers, to identify priority needs and mobilise innovative responses.
  - **Planner**: together with service providers, stakeholders, and community, identify gaps and opportunities for responses.
  - **Advocate**: providing advocacy on local needs and priority areas of concern for children, young people and their families.
  - **Provider**: facilitating opportunities for children, young people and their families to actively participate in community and civic life.

6.2 Summary of services available

A more detailed list of services is provided in **Appendix B,** but Council officers will add to this list.

Grouping	Service type	In the wider region	In CGD	Council as a provider
Families	Family violence	√	√	
	Mental health	√		
	Family Support	√	√	√
	Aboriginal health services	√		
	Crisis & transitional housing		√	
	Settlement services	√	√	
	Parent education	√	√	√
Early years 0 – 4 years	Maternal and Child Health	√	√	√
	Playgroups	√	√	√
	Toy Library	√	√	
	Immunisation	√	√	√
	Early childhood intervention		√	
	Child protection	√		
	Child First	√	√	
	Parent education	√	√	√
	Settlement services	√	√	
Middle years 5 – 12 years	Education - engagement	√		
	Education - disability	√	√	
	Disability	√		
	Mental health	√		
Young people and young adults 12 – 24 years	Education – disability	√	√	
	Education – engagement	√		
	Generalist youth services	√	√	√
	Settlement services	√	√	
	Crisis & transitional housing		√	
	Disability	√	√	
	Parent education	√	√	√
	Mental health	√	√	
	Immunisation	√	√	

Appendix A
More detailed information from assessment of previous engagement

1. Mission Australia Youth Survey, 2025
City of Greater Dandenong

The Mission Australia Survey is a national survey undertaken annually with young people aged 14 – 19 years. It aims to identify the values, aspirations and issues of concern to young people to support Mission Australia and its partners to support and advocate for young people in need.
In total 146 young people from CGD, 4,448 from across Victoria, and 17,155 from across Australia completed the survey.

The data collection period was 10 April to 20 August 2025. Survey participation by young people was voluntary and no survey incentives were offered to survey respondents. The survey could be completed online or by paper and young people were engaged via schools, local councils, community and service organisations and through Mission Australia services.

Profile of survey respondents

- 98% identified as male or female, 1% as gender diverse, and 1% preferred not to say
- 1% identified as Aboriginal and/or Tores Strait Islander (at the 2021 Census an 0.4% of the CGC population identified as being Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander)
- 7% identify as a person with a mental health condition
- 6% identify as a person with a disability (at the 2021 Census, 7.2% of the CGD population needed assistance with core activities)
- 56% speak a language other than English (at the 2021 Census in 69.1% households a language other than English was spoken)
- Cultural heritage
  - 32% Southeast Asian (e.g. Cambodia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia)
  - 24% South Asian (e.g. India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh)
  - 12% East Asian (e.g. China, Japan, Korea, Philippines)
  - 10% West / Central Asian and Middle East (Lebanon, UAE, Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey)
  - 4% African (e.g. Egypt, Kenya, Zimbabwe, South Africa)

National issues and personal stress

1. The top responses to the issues which have made young people feel stressed in the last year

- Managing my time. Notably higher for young people in CGD (63%) than young people in wider Victoria (52%)
- School or study problem (58%)
- Mental health and wellbeing (42%)

- Problems with friends (34%)
- Problems with family (32%)
- Body image (29%)
- Cost of living. Notably higher for young people in CGD (27%) than young people in wider Victoria (17%).

2. The top responses to the 10 most important issues in Australia today

- Cost of living. Very similar for young people in CGD (63%) and young people in wider Victoria (64%)
- Violence, safety and crime. Notably higher for young people in CGD (63%) than young people in wider Victoria (52%)
- Mental health. Very similar for young people in CGD (26%) and young people in wider Victoria (28%)
- Climate change and the environment. Notably lower for young people in CGD (23%) than young people in wider Victoria (33%).

Education and employment for young people in CGD

- Most young people who completed the survey are participating in education (98% of 133 responses)
- A high percentage feel safe at school (83%)
- 75% feel safe travelling to and from school
- Nearly two thirds (62%) feel there is a teacher or another adult at their school they can reach out to for support when needed
- Nearly two thirds (61%) like their school
- More than half (58%) feel teachers and students treat each other with respect.
- Most young people who completed the survey plan to complete year 12 (98% of 118 responses)
- The primary reasons young people miss days at school are being sick (71%), and having an appointment (56%). Followed by family holidays or fun activity (28%), I don't like school (16%), anxiety, depression or mental health issues (12%).
- 38% of young people are employed part time and 42% are looking for work.
- The primary reasons young people are working (49 survey respondents) are so I can save up money (92%), so I can pay for my own things (80%, so I can build my skills / experience (65%, so I can do fun activities (53%). A small proportion work to help out with bills / expenses (8%) or to pay rent / mortgage (6%). These percentages are similar with young people in wider Victoria.
- 30% of CGD young people (39 survey respondents) indicated there are barriers to achieving their goals with key barriers including not feeling motivated (56%), and not having time or space to focus on my goals (51%), followed by not having enough money (31%), mental health concerns (28%), not being good at school (26%).

Financial hardship

- A higher proportion of young people in CGD than wider Victoria experience financial hardship meaning they
  - Couldn't participate in activities, hobbies or groups (12% CGD compared with 6% wider Victoria)
  - Couldn't pay rent / mortgage (11% CGD compared with 4% wider Victoria)
  - Couldn't buy clothes / other essential items (6% CGD compared with 4% wider Victoria)
- A higher proportion of young people in CGD received financial support through a government allowance (15%) than young people across wider Victoria (8%)

Housing and homelessness

- A higher proportion of young people in CGD experienced homelessness in the past year (3%) compared with 1% for young people in wider Victoria.
- Consistent with this, a higher proportion of struggled to find or keep a place to live in the past years 9% in CGD compared with 4% of young people across wider Victoria.

Wellbeing

- Nearly two thirds (64%) of young people in CGD described their level of happiness with their life as being very happy or happy, 30% indicated they were not happy or sad and a further 6% sad or very sad. This is broadly consistent with young people across wider Victoria.
- 59% percent of young people in CGD indicated they feel completely in control or mostly in control of their life. This is notably lower than young people across wider Victoria (68%). A further 33% indicated they feel some control and 8% almost no control.
- More than half of young people in CGD (54%) indicated they feel very positive or positive about the future. This is somewhat lower than young people across wider Victoria (61%). Conversely, 14% of respondents report negative or very negative feelings about the future, a proportion that exceeds the 11% observed among young people across Victoria.
- The biggest hopes for the future young people in CGD have are employment and career (62%), money, wealth and owning a home (44%), purpose, values and big dreams (39%), family, relationships and connections ((38%) and education and learning (36%)
- More than half of young people (55%) in CGD are experiencing moderate or high psychological distress, compared with 44% of young people in wider Victoria.
- A high proportion of young people in CGD feel positive about themselves including I think I get along with others (76%), I can deal with things that happen in my life (72%), I am able to do things as ell as most other people (63%), I can achieve my goals even if they are hard (62%), I feel good about myself (57%).

Support and connectedness

- Parents / guardians (75%) and friends (74%) are the biggest source of support for young people in CGD, followed by the internet (67%) and other family members (54%).

- Two thirds of young people in CGD (66%) feel they have someone they can turn to when they are unsure about important decisions in their life, while 50% prefer to tackle issues on their own.
- While around two thirds of young people in CGD are happy living in their neighbourhood (68%) and feel safe in their neighbourhood (63%), this is notably lower than the national average 74 and 73% respectively. 57% feel their neighbourhood has the things they need to have a positive and thriving future. This is slightly higher than the national average (54%)

Activities and unfair treatment

- The things young people find most easy to do are things in public places with friends e.g. shopping centres, sporting or music events (90%), travelling around the community e.g. using footpaths or public transport (88%), making choices and feeling independent (86%), turning to friends and family of you need help (79%), fit in and socialise with everyone (79%), do everyday activities as young people my age usually do (78%). These results are very consistent with the national averages.

  Of note is the low response to turn to services / organisations if you need help (55%). ***While this is slightly higher than the national average, it points to the importance of the broader environment and opportunities, and family and friend support networks in supporting young people to be healthy and well and feel valued in their community.***
- Nearly one third of young people in CGD (31%) indicated they experienced unfair treatment or discrimination in the past year. This is slightly higher than wider Victoria (27%). The key reasons for being treated unfairly are race / cultural background (53%), this is much higher than young people across wider Victoria (33%), and physical appearance (42%).

2. Youth summit, Greater Dandenong
21 September 2025

In 2025, Youth and Family Services hosted the Youth Summit: Your Voice, Your Future, welcoming 115 students from eight local secondary schools and 25 youth leaders (140 in total). The summit was co-designed and delivered in partnership with participants from Council's 2025 Young Leaders program, embedding youth participation throughout the planning, preparation, and delivery of the event. Council's Young Leaders program is designed for young people aged 16–25 and provides opportunities to develop leadership skills and contribute to community impact through designing two major projects. The Youth Summit was the first project for the 2025 cohort, who played a leading role in event planning, emceeing, workshop delivery, and co-facilitating consultation activities.

Group discussions explored the challenges faced by young people in Greater Dandenong, providing space for students to share insights and propose solutions.

Challenges facing young people

The top challenges young people identified they were facing are ***mental health 23%, stress 22%, and education 15%.*** To gain deeper insight, students were further prompted to identify specific sub-issues within the broader categories of mental health, stress, and education.

- For mental health the most identified sub issues were anxiety (47%), body image (21%), and resilience and coping skills (20%).
- For stress, the key challenges were school / study stress (31%), managing expectations (23%), and worrying about the future (20%).
- For education, the challenges identified were motivation (70%), disrupted learning (13%) and pressure to leave education and provide for the family financially (11%)

Mental health has consistently been the top issue of concern for young people in the last 3 Youth summits, while stress has been a top issue in the last two Summits. See table 1 below for information about the top issue of concern for young people in the last three Summits

2025	2022	2018
1. Mental Health	1. Mental Health	1. Mental Health
2. Stress (22%)	2. Stress (18%)	2. Bullying & discrimination (12%)
3. Education (15%)	3. Physical health (12%)	3. Crime and safety (12%)

Table 1: Top issues of concern for young people, CGD Youth Summit 2018, 2022 and 2025

Ideas for responding to areas of concern

- Mental Health – anxiety: The top responses were self-care and stress-relieving techniques (38%), community and service-based support (21%), and exercise (20%).
- Stress – school / study stress: The top responses were improved organisational skills and time management (17%), taking breaks and self-care (14%) and school and teacher support (14%). This

includes “advance planning,” “sleeping” and requesting “extensions/support if needed to manage workloads” respectively.

- Education – motivation: The top responses were goal setting and mindset (32%) e.g. finding a way to make learning fun, discipline and setting “career goals and dreams, school support (24%) e.g. less stress and pressure from school and hands on/engaging activities, and time management and scheduling (16%).

Support and Service Access in CGD

Council sought to better understand the supports young people rely on, the services they access, and any gaps or barriers they encounter.

- The main supports / people young people turn to for help are friends (25%), family (14%), teachers (9%), parents (9%), themselves (4%).
- The local services young people know about and can access include school wellbeing teams or counsellors (19%), Kids Helpline (16%), doctor or GP (11%), teachers (10%), Headspace (7%), Beyond Blue (5%), and Youth and Family Services (4%). While this list reflects strong awareness of widely available services, it also reveals a gap in knowledge of organisations that specifically serve the Greater Dandenong community.
- Services gaps or barriers identified included limited knowledge of free therapists and check-ups (10%), a desire for confidential wellbeing support that does not involve parental disclosure (8%), and a lack of awareness of online support tools and wellbeing apps (6%). This suggests a need for improved promotion of local and digital mental health resources, with particular attention to privacy and accessibility.

Strategic vision

- ***What young people love the most about CGD and their community:*** cultural diversity (31%), the wide range of opportunities (18%), a sense of connection (12%) and food (11%).
- ***What young people would like Council to focus on for the next 4 years:*** Community safety (25%), providing opportunities such as sport (19%), events (15%), creating spaces for youth voice (15%), education (14%), and mental health (12%).
- ***Hopes young people have for the future:*** Landing a specific dream profession (53%), community safety (21%) and a stable income, financial security, and wealth (20%). This data highlights the need for services to provide pathways and support for young people to fulfill their employment goals.

Connection, belonging, inclusion

- ***What makes young people feel connected to CGD and their community:*** school (48%) and friends (46%), followed by sports (27%) and family (22%). This illustrates the integral role schools, friends, sports, and family play in sustaining young people’s sense of connection and belonging.
- ***How young people could feel more included in the CGD community:*** holding festivals and events (62%), providing outlets to participate in hobbies such as sport and art (48%) and the opportunity

for youth voice to be shared and heard (16%). This insight suggests young people value opportunities for to engage through a variety of events and activities.

Youth voice, engagement and participation

- ***How Council can better involve young people in decision making:*** providing opportunities for young people to participate in programs where they can share their opinions (22%), actively including young people in discussions and decisions (20%) and facilitating more events and involving young people in event planning (19%).
- ***What makes young people feel valued, safe, supported and heard:*** being surrounded by good and caring people (38%), being given opportunities to share their views (31%), being appreciated (13%) and being in a safe space (13%).

3. Youth Leadership Forum, Greater Dandenong
November 2024

In 2024, Council's Young Leaders group planned and delivered a Greater Dandenong Youth Leadership Forum bringing together agencies and youth leaders from across the community to discuss how to develop and invest in youth leadership, particularly strengthening efforts in securing 'diverse' youth representation. Organisations and their youth leaders involved included Centre for Multicultural Youth, South Sudanese Community Support Group, Foundation House, Uniting VicTas - KOMAK Afghan Support Service Program, South East Community Links (SECL), , Southern Migrant Refugee Centre (SMRC), Headspace, Youth Support and Advocacy Services (YSAS). In total 79 people attended including 60 attendees and 19 young leaders.

Priority issues:

- **Mental health** particularly the stigma around mental health making it difficult to openly talk to friends and family. The need to normalise conversations about mental health with health professionals and the wider community was emphasised along with the link between mental health and social connection, with friendships and community connections seen as crucial for enhancing positive mental health. Also highlighted was the important connection between mental and physical health.
- **Education and employment** particularly the importance of an inclusive and accessible education system, especially for newly arrived youth. The need for local employment opportunities and pathways, with a desire to find work close to home was emphasised, along with the importance of work for financial independence and supporting family members. Young people talked about wanting to feel more prepared for the workforce by accessing programs providing the skills and experience needed for employment. Additionally, young people stressed the significance of feeling safe at work, with some noting struggles with discrimination and not understanding their work rights.
- **Perceptions of safety** particularly feeling unsafe in certain community areas including train stations, public transport hubs, and public places, due to crime, violence, and discrimination. The importance of having safe spaces in the community where young people can congregate without fear of violence or discrimination was emphasised, along with the need for increased police presence in areas such as public transport, including at night. Participants also discussed the importance of having helplines to call for 24hour-help in an emergency and that perceptions of safety can be enhanced through design environmental factors such as brighter streetlights.
- **Physical activity** including highlighting that having good physical health is important to young people. Despite this, there is concern about a lack of parks and recreation facilities where they can play sports and be active, and about difficulty accessing sports and recreation programs, including free after school programs, as many were expensive or difficult to get to. Young people emphasised schools as key places to get information about the importance of being healthy and active, and learning about where these opportunities could be found. Vaping and drug use were also highlighted as a growing concern for many young people.

Proposed solutions

- *Mental heath*:
  - Increase visibility of mental health literacy information in places frequented by young people, such as shopping centres, markets, public transport, public amenities and waiting areas.
  - Increase opportunities for social and community connections based on the needs and interests of young people.
  - Promote and provide free or low-cost opportunities for physical activity, emphasising its benefits to mental health
- *Education and employment*:
  - Promote and provide opportunities for work experience, skill-based programs, and volunteering opportunities as a method to build work related skills.
  - Provide accessible education about work rights for young people entering the workforce.
  - Continue to advocate for an education system that is inclusive of all needs of students.
- *Perceptions of safety*:
  - Advocate for increased police patrols within the community.
  - Increase promotion and education of accessible helplines for young people to contact authorities.
  - Advocate for better illumination in community areas with streetlights to provide a sense of safety.
- *Physical activity*:
  - Activate local parks and recreation facilities with events to attract young people.
  - Promote and provide free or low-cost opportunities for physical activity, including competitions, clinics, training, and workshops.
  - Increase health literacy on vaping and drug use by providing education through social media campaigns and print media throughout Greater Dandenong.

4. Understanding young people's experiences of Racism and Discrimination in Greater Dandenong, 2023, Summary Report

The survey sought to engage with young people aged 12-25 with a connection (live, play, work, study) to CGD. The CGD Young Leaders led the development of the survey with support from Council's Youth Services staff. The Young Leaders proactively distributed the survey through their peer networks and communities. ***The survey was administered online between August and October 2023 and a total of 326 young people completed the survey***. Youth and Family Services supported the Young Leaders with the analysis of key findings, with staff preparing the following report based on the survey responses.

The survey sought to understand how often young people see or experience racism or discrimination, where this occurs, whether they would report it, where they would report it, and / or why they would not report it, and what would encourage them to feel safe and supported to report racism and discrimination.

Key findings

- Over 90% of survey respondents indicated they had seen or experienced an incident of racism involving young people.
- The incidents of racism and discrimination occur for young people mostly at school, on social media, on public transport and the workplace. But also occur in public places such as shopping centres, during organised sport or within family settings. Some respondents to the survey discussed that racism was normalised in Australian culture and that people did not realise that their comments could be hurtful.
- While 55% of survey respondents indicated they would report an incident of racism or discrimination, many indicated they would not report it because they felt nothing would change (47%), didn't know where to report racism and discrimination (29%) or how to report it (25%).
- If respondents were to report racism and/or discrimination, it would be to a trusted person or institution such as a school, or a place that they perceived held power such as Police.
- The factors which would support young people to feel safe and supported to report racism or discrimination are being able to report anonymously, followed by reports being dealt with cultural sensitivity, having access to information to know where to report, and being able to request a formal response where a report is made.

Recommendations

- Work with schools to share the findings of the Report and for Council to work with schools to increase support for students and teachers.
- Continue to promote reporting pathways and supports to young people, related addressing and responding to incidents of racism and discrimination.
- Advocacy for improved reporting mechanisms.

5. Climate Changers Youth Forum, Greater Dandenong, June 2023, Summary Report

Conducted in June 2023, the Climate Changers Youth Forum engaged local 60 secondary school students from 5 secondary schools to share their thoughts and ideas about climate change.

Key findings

- 79% of students indicated they know about climate change, 93% indicated they are concerned or very concerned about climate change.
- 83% of students believe climate change will impact their health, with one third strongly agreeing. Specifically, students reported being very concerned by the associated health implications resulting from climate change.
- 94% of students indicated the environment and sustainability were important to them.
- The biggest concerns students have about the environment and climate change are natural disasters (20%) e.g. rising sea levels, floods, earthquakes and Tsunamis, global warming (15%) e.g. rising temperatures and extreme weather events, and animals (13%) e.g. habitat loss, deforestation, extinction of animal species.
- Changes students identified they could make at school to promote sustainability centred around education and awareness raising. Students said that “environmental issues” were partially covered in the curriculum – through science, geography, humanities, and some English texts – however, they would like to receive more “practical advice about how to take action”. Students expressed that they needed regular messages embedded throughout their formal learning, but also outside of the classroom, including signage and opportunities to “connect with nature”.
- Waste management was another key focus. Students wanted to improve access to bins by increasing placement around the school, but also by upgrading the school waste system to include recycling and composting, along with education initiatives. They would also like to see schools focus on reducing the amount of waste they create in the first place.
- Greater investment in sustainable infrastructure and resources. Energy efficiency was a commonly cited priority, including renewable energy / solar panels, automatic sensor lights, and double glazing.

6. Nurture self, nurture others, metal health activity and engagement, Greater Dandenong, October 2022

This activity brought together year 7 and 8 students from eight local secondary schools in CGD to participate in a day of interactive workshops and activities, to build their mental health literacy and equip young people with positive coping and selfcare strategies. A survey was conducted as part of the activity to understand young people's greatest concerns about mental health and identify priority areas for action to support youth mental health. A total of 120 young people completed the survey.

Key findings

- Students identified the biggest mental health issue impacting young people in our community as anxiety (19%), closely followed by depression and body image (18%). School-related stress (12%), bullying and discrimination (11%), and self-harm (7%) were also key concerns. To a lesser extent, students also prioritised peer pressure (5%), family pressures, COVID-19 (4%) and friendships (2%).
- When prompted to elaborate on their biggest issues of concern regarding mental health, the most commonly cited concerns were those relating to social pressures, such as bullying and peer influence (18%). Also mentioned were both actual and perceived pressures, including fears of judgement and exclusion, as well as body image concerns. This was followed by:
  - family pressures (referenced by 11%) with students indicating they have a lack of voice and autonomy, and are concerned parents and carers do not understand mental health and "do not take issues seriously".
  - concerns about help-seeking and access to support (cited by 16%). There was a general consensus that "young people aren't getting enough help" – which participants believe to be exacerbated by stigma and poor understanding of support pathways. Students shared worries that young people are delaying help-seeking, which allows time for mental health concerns to intensify.
  - young people also reported concerns relating to stress, anxiety, and depression. In particular, students described how these issues impact social connections, by contributing to isolation and withdrawal. Alarmingly, a significant number of young people cited issues relating to self-harm and suicidal ideation (reported by 16%). Students raised concerns about not having a trusted person who they can disclose these behaviours to, and commented that "not enough is being done to prevent suicide".
- The top solutions for greater investment to support youth mental health were:
  - greater investment in school-based supports (20%)
  - access to counselling (17%)
  - mental health education (15%)
  - peer support groups (12%)
  - youth events and activities (10%)
  - sports and recreation opportunities (8%).

7. Children's Voices Report 2025, Greater Dandenong Children's Advisory Group, Junior Civic Leaders Club and Junior Mayor Program

The Junior Civic Leaders Club provides a way for children to share their voices and contribute ideas about their community. The Club brings together 18 Grade 5 and 6 students from local primary schools across CGD. Members are school leaders or SRC representatives who meet regularly to share their perspectives and provide input on issues affecting children.

In 2025, the group took part in a series of child-led consultation activities (6 meetings) to explore what matters most to children growing up in CGD. As part of this, children were also supported to act as Peer Researchers, taking consultation questions back to their schools to gather a wider range of ideas from their classmates.

Key messages from the engagement

Safer, Greener, More Playful Spaces

- More parks, bike paths, playgrounds and sports facilities close to where they live.
- Spaces that support physical and mental health, including gyms, walking trails, yoga centres and nature walks.
- More trees, seating, bins and shade in parks.
- Safer road crossings and more signals near busy roads.
- Fun, engaging ideas like scavenger hunts, community events and book clubs for all ages.

Feeling Safe, Loved and Included

Children value places where they feel supported and welcome. They told us:

- Schools and libraries are safe spaces where they can be themselves.
- Playgrounds, walking trails and sporting fields help them connect with friends and feel part of the community.
- Multilingual signage and inclusive programs help families feel they belong.

Let Us Be Active!

A strong theme in the Junior Mayor speeches was supporting children to be more active:

- Calls for free sporting programs and better access to facilities.
- Concern that many children are stuck on devices and need more encouragement to get outdoors.
- Some linked sport with health, happiness, and connection to family.

Protecting the Planet

Children of all ages showed deep care for the environment:

- They want a cleaner city and raised concerns about rubbish, pollution, and littering.
- They proposed events like Clean Up Days, more bins, and better education about the consequences of harming nature.
- Some also questioned why Council isn't doing more and what actions are being taken.

Equity, Education and Support

Several children (especially Junior Mayor candidates) highlighted:

- The need for extra academic support and inclusive education.
- A desire for free or affordable extracurricular programs like piano, swimming or karate.
- Concerns about children who miss out due to cost or lack of access.

8. Children's Forum, Greater Dandenong
October 2025

The Children's Forum is an annual event delivered by the Children's Services team during Children's Week. It brings together local Grade 5 and 6 students to contribute to shaping the future of their city. Through interactive workshops, guest speakers and creative activities, the Forum provides a meaningful platform for children to engage directly with Council staff, explore real-life community projects and share their ideas and aspirations.

In 2025, the Children's Forum was attended by approximately 80 students from 13 primary schools, accompanied by teachers. The Forum was based around a series of workshops and activities including:

- Children's Services – A message to your younger self
- Youth Services – Transition to high school
- Library Services – Library Lab: imagine the Future
- Sport and Recreation – Make Your Move activity.

Children's Services workshop

In this workshop children were encouraged to reflect on the first couple of years of school and transitioning to school and the messages that they would tell their younger selves to prepare for starting school. Guiding questions included what do you wish you knew back then? What do you wish someone had told you? What message of empathy, care or hope would you give?

Key messages

Friendships:

- The importance of finding friends you can trust, that make you feel happy and safe and that you can talk to. Take your time finding friends and enjoy yourself.
- Have confidence in being able to make new friends – don't be scared, be social, try not to be shy.
- Don't be scared of the older children, they won't be mean.
- You don't need everyone to like you, not everyone will be nice to you, and it's okay if you lose some friends because you keep making friends along the way that you can count on.
- It's okay to spend time by yourself and sometimes you may not feel great or afraid, but that's okay.

Family and connection

- Remember there is no nap time in primary school so maybe sleep when your Mum tells you to.
- There are nice teachers and friends.
- It's important to find people you can trust and talk to.
- There are so many great things to do. Don't cry, have fun and take advantage of every opportunity.
- Treat family and friends well. Be kind to yourself and to others.

Education

- Work hard, try your best, listen to your teachers and learn from your mistakes, it will pay off.
- School is tricky to start with, but it gets better.

- You don't have to know everything when you start school. You will learn so many different things.
- Believe in yourself and what you can achieve.
- Try different things, try new opportunities, try everything you can.
- It's okay to ask for help and support.
- Writing and maths are fun. Be creative and use your imagination.

Mental and emotional health

- Don't be scared, be yourself, be brave and curious, stand up for yourself and others, believe in yourself and be kind to yourself.
- Try your best and never give up.
- Try new things.
- Ask for help if you need it, help others and be kind.
- Find ways to stay calm e.g. breathing exercises,
- It's okay to look and be different. It's okay to be yourself.

Healthy active lifestyle

- Playing with friends and playing sport is a fun part of school.

Covid Carryover

- Some children enjoyed being at home during Covid.
- Enjoy school because something like Covid might come along.

Youth Services workshop

In this workshop children were invited to share what they're most excited about, looking forward to, or feeling anxious about as they transition to secondary school. Through the workshop, children were also invited to identify personal strengths that will support them through the transition to secondary school.

Key messages

What grade 6 students are most excited about for year 7

- Everything is new e.g. being in a new environment, starting anew (clean slate), having new experiences, making new friends, learning new and more advanced things, meeting new teachers, new uniforms, books and technology (laptops).
- More opportunity to pursue specific interests e.g. sport, art, science, cooking, technology, humanities, health, PE.
- New / more activities and opportunities e.g. excursions, special projects, experiments, more social activities.
- Focusing on the future e.g. studying for a job, learning to be more independent

Worries or concerns grade 6 students have about moving to secondary school

- Everything is new and different and changing e.g. new people, new classrooms, different teachers for each subject, new subjects, getting lost, not finding classes, everything is unfamiliar, being the smallest / youngest in the school

- Friendships including making friends / a friendship group, not having friends, not being able to make friends, missing friends from primary school and losing this connection, being bullied, not having anyone to talk with, being judged, not fitting in,
- More and harder work including homework, not meeting standards or not doing well, getting behind with schoolwork, being stressed about schoolwork, writing essays.
- Whether the teachers will be nice, supportive and helpful.
- Getting in trouble e.g. being late to class, more warnings, strict teachers.

The most important things for grade 6's to know before going to high school

- Everything is new – new rules and teachers, it will be different to primary school, and it will be scary, but it will get better.
- Friendships including make lots of friends, know who you can trust, learn to be social, friendships change throughout high school, be kind to others, don't be scared.
- Work hard and never give up – do your homework, focus on your studies, listen during classes, be organised, ask for help, try your best, you don't have to know everything at the start.
- Be yourself, be confident and believe in yourself, don't be scared.
- Have fun and take up opportunities.

Libraries workshop

In this workshop children were invited to imagine they had been given a credit card with unlimited money to design a brand-new magical library building for kids and teens. They were invited to image what their dream library would look like, dream programs and dream book collection.

Key messages

Dream library

- Play areas e.g. lego area and slides.
- Technology e.g. AI book finder, VR room for gaming / simulation, travelator and teleportation, computer room.
- Big activities / spaces e.g. cinema, go karts, slides to move around, indoor zoo, aquariums, indoor basketball court, swimming pool, dance floor, carnival ride, rage room, escape room, hotel, ice skating, roller blades, escooters.
- Café / restaurant.
- Shops e.g. to buy books, Gucci store.
- Rooftop garden with waterfall and kitchen.
- General features e.g. drive through library, meditation room, multilevel, sensory room, artifacts, arts and crafts room, giant books.
- Activities e.g. music and concerts.

Dream programs

- Outer space e.g. rocket workshops, zero gravity, becoming an astronaut.

- Sporting activities e.g. badminton, volleyball, cricket, table tennis, netball, tag rugby, making go-karts and racing.
- Cooking / food e.g. cooking club, icecream making, Free food for underprivileged/ everyone and other supplies
- General e.g. scavenger hunts, hide and seek, lego club, tutoring, arcade games.
- Arts and crafts e.g. origami, drawing, crochet, sewing, photo booth, photography.
- Books e.g. book club, find your book in an escape room, trading books.
- Languages e.g. French, Japanese, English, Spanish.
- Technology e.g. gaming, VR event, Roblox skills workshop

Dream library collection

- Languages e.g. Japanese, Korean.
- Sports e.g. Badminton, how to win sport.
- Art, craft and music e.g. painting, origami, Jazz music.
- Space e.g. big bang, building a rocket.
- Technology e.g. hacking, gaming. Coding.
- Economy and money e.g. how to earn heaps of money, business.
- Animals e.g. bring back dinosaurs.
- Geology.

Sport and recreation activity

In this activity to children participated in sport and recreation activities and only informal information was captured about their preferences. The key findings were most children preferred unstructured, team based, social, free play because they like to be active with their friends (being able to choose who they play with) and they like to choose what to play and what equipment to use.

9. Noble Park Family Fun Day Children's Services Planning Survey 21 September 2025

In total 96 people completed the survey which sought to understand the Council led child and family services being used by families, how satisfied families are with the services they use, how families believe the services could be improved, and any other ideas or comments.

Profile of survey respondents

- The largest number of survey respondents live in Noble Park 38.3%. This is expected given the activity occurred in Noble Park. This was followed by Springvale (16%), Dandenong (13.8%), Keysborough (7.5%) and other (24.5%).
- The aged range of families responding was 57.3% 0 – 5 years, 50% 5 – 12 years, 21.9% Adult 26 years and older, 5.2% 12 – 25 years.

Services used and satisfaction levels

- The Council led services used the most by survey respondents are kindergarten 3-year-old (40.6%), kindergarten 4-year-old (34.4%), Maternal and Child Health (28.1%), immunisation (22.9%), long daycare (17.7%), supported playgroup (15.3%), family daycare (12.5%).
- There were high levels of satisfaction amongst survey respondents about the Council led services they access with 51% of survey respondents indicating they were very satisfied and 40.6% indicating they were satisfied.

Ideas to make services better

- The top things identified to make services better were providing different times for activities or services (39.6%), providing a variety of venues or locations for activities (31.9%) and providing different types of activities (31.9%).
- A high proportion also indicated there was nothing to change as they are happy with the services provided (31.9%).
- A much smaller number of survey respondents (11%) indicated improving culturally inclusive services would help make services better.
- A small number of survey respondents also provided other comments or ideas for consideration including:
  - More school holiday activities
  - In our area, there is no cultural diversity related to Asian culture
  - Child protection
  - More family activities
  - If all councils have different activities for youth for all teenagers
  - More rides, more gifts to kids, more food
  - Looking @ more cultural children's activities

10. Keysborough Hub Launch Children's Services Planning Survey 6 September 2025

In total 82 people completed the survey which sought to understand the Council led child and family services being used by families, and how families believe the services could be improved.

Profile of survey respondents

- The largest number of survey respondents live in Keysborough (69.5%) This is expected given the activity occurred in Keysborough. This was followed by Noble Park (8.5%), Springvale (4.9%), Dandenong (3.7%), and other (13.4%).
- The aged range of families responding was 72.3% 0 – 5 years, 34.9% 5 – 12 years, 20.5% Adult 26 years and older, 2.4% 12 – 25 years.

Services used

- The Council led services used the most by survey respondents are kindergarten 3-year-old (40.7%), kindergarten 4-year-old (37%), long daycare (32.1%), Maternal and Child Health (21%), supported playgroup (18.5%), immunisation (16.1%), family daycare (12.4%).

Ideas to make services better

- Times / days (identified 12 times) e.g. better availability on weekends, longer time suitable for working parents, Flexible time
- Transport (identified 9 times)
- Cultural perspective (identified 5 times)
- Venue (identified 3 times)
- Extend library activities to the new hub e.g. Think Tank
- Language classes - would love an Italian class or Italian reading
- More books for library
- More activities and hours
- Cost. More family involved.
- More digital services to make it easier to book and manage access to these services.
- Quality of education, funding, variety of activities
- Pedestrian crossing at Villiers.

How services could be changed to make them better

- Information availability (identified 4 times) e.g. make information more accessible, communication, more advertisement to let us know more about the services.
- More activities (identified 4 times) e.g. much more activity, more social activity, variety of activities, more nature and music activities.
- Times and hours (identified 2 times) e.g. later times, longer hours.
- More services (identified 2 times) e.g. in local area/

- Springvale and Dandenong libraries have after-school activities - it would be good if Keysborough could have these too but during school hours for home schoolers please.
- More place for kids/
- Redesign the services to focus on how they can be made more efficient for families and parents. Focus on user experience.
- Less cost.
- More funding and quality teachers.
- More transport.
- Being diverse.
- Bigger library.

11. Quarterly Satisfaction Survey

Supported Playgroups and In Home Support City of Greater Dandenong, 2024/2025

As part of the funding Council receives for Supported Playgroups and In Home Support programs, Council is required to undertake a quarterly survey with families to understand both their satisfaction with the Playgroup or program and gather insights about changes in the knowledge and confidence of parents and their social connections with other families and parents.

Supported Playgroups

Supported Playgroups are facilitated by an early year's worker who provides guidance, parenting information and play-based learning strategies. The number of surveys completed in 2024/2025:

Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
182 families	179 families	188 families	204 families

- **Increased and high satisfaction levels:** Satisfaction levels across the 12 months for supported playgroups increased from 77.8% at the start to 93.2% at the end of the 12 months.
- **Skilled workforce:** A total of 93% of participants rated staff skills as excellent, with qualitative feedback consistently highlighting facilitators' knowledge, professionalism and supportive approach.
- **Improved parenting knowledge and confidence:** 100% of participants reporting increased understanding of their child's development and up to 97% learnt new ways to teach and play with their child using everyday routines and play-based learning.
- **Social connection and community building**: Over 70% of families reported connecting with other playgroup families outside of sessions, supporting social inclusion and peer support.

In Home Support (Small Talk program)

The Small Talk program provides assistance to parents helping them to enhance their parenting skills in a supportive environment. In 2024 / 2025 the total number of surveys completed were:

Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
26 families	20 families	24 families	28 families

- **Effective in-home support**: The Small Talk in-home program achieved extremely positive outcomes, with 100% of parents reporting improvements in child development understanding, parenting strategies and awareness of community services.
- **Improved service navigation**: Families gained increased awareness of other services, including libraries, playgroups, family activities and community programs.
- **Trusted and accessible support**: In-home visits were particularly valued for providing personalised, flexible and culturally safe support in a familiar environment.

12. Insights from CGD Children's Services Support Team
City of Greater Dandenong, 2025

The Children's Services Support Team have provided insights about the challenges and emerging issues they see and hear about from families through:

- Kindergarten enrolments
- Preschool Field Officer
- Supported Playgroup
- In Home Support

Key insights about challenges and emerging issues

- **Increased demand for targeted support** including in-home support and supported playgroups and a desire for expanded learning opportunities, including parenting education, behavioural support, English classes and first aid.
- **Transport barriers** including limited access to transport and low confidence using public transport. This limits their ability to access services and programs.
- **Limited awareness of supports available including** how to access them, or what type of help they can ask for. Exacerbating this are challenges around service integration and a lack of information sharing between services. There is a need for more consistent, accessible, and user-friendly information about services, referrals and community resources.
- **Gaps in support when transitioning to school** and navigating related supports (e.g. uniforms, welfare services).
- **Difficulty accessing early years health and development services** including MCH and enhanced MCH (due to workforce shortages), lactation services, and first-time parenting groups, due to a combination of transport challenges, lack of knowledge of the service system, and language barriers.
- **Difficulty accessing kindergarten due to immunisation status**. Immunisation can present a significant barrier to kindergarten access if children are not up to date on the Australian Immunisation Register.

Appendix B
More detailed information about service provision for children, young people and families

Families							
Service Type	**In the Region**	**In Greater Dandenong**	**Organisation**	**Locations**	**Type of Services Available**	**Council's Primary Role**	**Comments**
Family violence	√		South Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault	Bentleigh East	Crisis response Counselling and therapy Assessment and intervention	Referral role.	
	√	√	Uniting Vic Tas	Dandenong	Orange Door – supporting families experiencing family violence.	Referral role.	
	√	√	Windermere	CGD City of Casey Cardia Shire	Individual or family Counselling for survivors of family violence or sexual assault.	Referral role.	
Mental health	√		Suicide Line	N/A	24/7 telephone counselling service for people at risk of suicide, people concerned about someone else's risk of suicide, and people bereaved by suicide.	Referral role.	
	√		Monash Health	Clayton	Psychiatric Triage Service.	Referral role.	
	√	√	Standby	CGD City of Casey Cardia Shire	Supporting people impacted by suicide.	Referral role.	
Family support		√	Council (CGD)	Dandenong	Case management and building parenting skills.	Service delivery.	Families are referred through Child First.
	√	√	Uniting Vic Tas	Dandenong City of Casey Cardinia Shire	Community-based family support program for families with children under 18 years.	Referral role.	Families are referred through Child First.
Aboriginal health services	√		Monash Health	Unknown	Children's health services	Referral role.	

Service Type	In the Region	In Greater Dandenong	Organisation	Locations	Type of Services Available	Council's Primary Role	Comments
Crisis and transitional housing	√	√	WAYSS Dandenong	Office location Princes Highway Dandenong	Housing aid to families in rooming houses or facing homelessness due to housing issues, with a focus on securing lasting housing solutions.	Referral role.	The closest crisis accommodation service is in East St Kilda or South Melbourne
	√	√	Launch Housing	Office locations Cheltenham Collingwood St Kilda	Emergency shelter, crisis accommodation, housing advice and support for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness.	Referral role.	Crisis supported accommodation is available in Dandenong (Bobs Place). The entry point to interact with Launch Housing in CGD is through WAYSS Dandenong.
Settlement services	√	√	CatholicCare Refugee and Settlement program	CGD and Cardinia Shire	Social and life skill support for newly arrived families includes case management, employment and training support, English literacy participation, in social activities, events and festivals.	Referral and partnering role	
			MiCare	Location unclear	Settlement Engagement Transition Support - casework, information, advice, advocacy and referral to specialist service providers.	Referral and partnering role	
Parent education	√	√	Anglicare	Dandenong Springvale Keysborough	Parentzone programs e.g. Beyond the Violence,	Referral role.	
	√	√	Uniting VicTas	Office located in Dandenong City of Casey Cardinia Shire	New Parents and Infant Network, and intensive parent education program to support families under stress to break the cycle of destructive family behaviour and enhance parent child relationships.	Referral role.	

Early Years 0 – 4 years							
Service Type	**In the Region**	**In Greater Dandenong**	**Organisation**	**Locations**	**Type of Services Available**	**Council's Primary Role**	**Comments**
Maternal and Child Health	√	√	Council (CGD)	15 locations Keysborough (3 sites), Dandenong (3 sites), Dand. North (2 sites), Dand. South (2 sites), Noble Park (3 sites), Springvale (2 sites), Springvale South	Universal Maternal and Child Health services	Service provider.	The delivery of some universal MCH services is constrained by difficulty securing and retaining staff.
					Enhanced Maternal and Child Health Services	Service provider.	
					Sleep and settling program	Service provider.	
					First time parent groups	Service provider.	
					Breastfeeding support	Service provider.	
					INFANT program	Service provider.	
		√	Bunurung Health Service	Dandenong	Koori Maternity Services	Referral and partnering role	
		√			Aboriginal Best Start	Referral and partnering role	
Playgroups	√	√	Community led	Estimated to be 16 playgroups in CGD	Community led playgroups providing opportunities for a group of parents and children to meet regularly to play and socialise.	Enabler through providing access to infrastructure.	Playgroups may be connected to a particular location or venue or have a specific cultural focus.
	√	√	Council (CGD)	Locations change depending on the needs of families	Supported Playgroup	Service provider	
	√	√	Council (CGD)	Held in the home of individual families	In home parenting support	Service provider	Assisting parents to implement strategies learnt in supported playgroup when at home.
		√	Council (CGD)	Springvale South	Nature play program	Service provider	

Service Type	In the Region	In Greater Dandenong	Organisation	Locations	Type of Services Available	Council's Primary Role	Comments
Toy Library	√	√	Springvale Service for Children Toy Library	Springvale	Toys available for loan.	Unclear whether Council have a role with this provider	
Early Childhood Intervention	√	√	Dandenong Toy Well	Dandenong	Toys available for loan.	Enabler through providing access to infrastructure.	The service operates from Dandenong Hub.
Child protection	√		State Govt. Department of Families, Fairness and Housing	Unknown	Formal reporting pathway for agencies and individuals concerned about a child suffering significant harm.	Reporting and partnering role.	This is a mandated service delivered by the State Government. It includes case management of children and young people at high risk, and co-ordinates intervention services such as foster care and accommodation support.
Child First	√		Uniting VicTas	CGD City of Casey Cardia Shire	Centralised intake and assessment service.	Referral and partnering role	
Parent education	√	√	Anglicare	Keysborough Springvale Casey	Parentzone programs e.g. Baby Makes 3, parenting in the early years.		
Settlement services	√	√	CatholicCare Refugee and Settlement program	CGD and Cardinia Shire	Social and life skill support for newly arrived families includes case management, employment and training support, English literacy participation, in social activities, events and festivals.	Referral and partnering role	

Middle years 5 – 12 years							
Service Type	**In the Region**	**In Greater Dandenong**	**Organisation**	**Locations**	**Type of Services Available**	**Council's Primary Role**	**Comments**
Education – engagement	√		Smith Family	Unknown	Learning for Life program supporting education outcomes for disadvantaged young people. Includes financial support, guidance and advice, and access to targeted programs	Referral role	Open to both primary and secondary school aged children.
Education - disability		√	Emerson School	Dandenong	Education for primary and secondary aged children with mild intellectual processing difficulties.	Referral role	
		√	Springvale Park Special Development School	Springvale	Education for primary and secondary aged children with a disability.	Referral role	
	√		Endeavour Hills Specialist Schools	Endeavour Hills	Education for primary and secondary aged children with autism and / or an intellectual disability.	Referral role	
Disability	√		Scope	Glen Waverley	Therapy services for children with disability or developmental delay e.g. occupational therapy, speech pathology, physiotherapy, psychology.	Referral role	
Parent education	√		Anglicare	Cranbourne	Parentzone programs e.g. Tuning into Kids.	Referral role.	
Mental health	√	√	FMC Mediation and Counselling Victoria	CGD City of Casey Cardia Shire	Child and adolescent counselling.	Referral role.	
	Phone service	Phone service	Kids Helpline	Statewide	24-hour counselling service for young people aged 5 – 25 years.	Referral role.	

Young people and young adults (12 – 24 years)							
Service Type	**In the Region**	**In Greater Dandenong**	**Organisation**	**Locations**	**Type of Services Available**	**Council's Primary Role**	**Comments**
Education - Disability		√	Emerson School	Dandenong	Education for primary and secondary aged children with mild intellectual processing difficulties.	Referral role	
		√	Springvale Park Special Development School	Springvale	Education for primary and secondary aged children with a disability.	Referral role	
	√		Endeavour Hills Specialist Schools	Endeavour Hills	Education for primary and secondary aged children with autism and / or an intellectual disability.	Referral role	
Education – engagement	√	√	Chisholm Reconnect	Unclear	Wrap around support to help vulnerable people ease back into education, training and employment.	Referral role	
		√	Centre for Multicultural Youth	CGD specific location unclear	CALD Navigator program - intensive case management to support disengaged learners and their families.	Referral role	Currently focused on high school students - Pasifika and South Sudanese young people who have 70% of less non-attendance at school.
				CGD specific location unclear	Community support groups		Targets specific cohorts e.g. Pasifika and South Sudanese young people
	√		Smith Family	Unknown	Learning for Life program supporting education outcomes for disadvantaged young people. Includes financial support, guidance and advice, and access to targeted programs	Referral role	Open to both primary and secondary school aged children.

Service Type	In the Region	In Greater Dandenong	Organisation	Locations	Type of Services Available	Council's Primary Role	Comments
Education engagement continued….	√	√	SELLEN	Office is in Dandenong, support provided across CGD	School to Work Program – helps local LLENs and schools to arrange work-based learning for secondary school students.	Enabler by providing office space for SELLEN	Statewide program, delivered locally by SELLEN.
Generalist youth services		√	Council (CGD)	Dandenong	Young Leaders Program	Service provider	
					Counselling		
				Various locations	Holiday activities		
					Amplify Youth Committee		
					Call Out for Performers		
					IMPACT Program		
	√		Casey Youth Services	Cranbourne, Hampton Park, Narre Warren and mobile	Youth Information Centres	Referral and partnering role	
				Various locations	School holiday programs		
					Events		
					Youth Initiatives		
				N/A	Counselling and support		Service currently unavailable.
Settlement services		√	Southern Migrant Resource Centre	Office is in Dandenong	Case work - Assists migrants and refugees (12 – 25 years) to access social support, employment coaching, and educational guidance.	Enabler through providing access to infrastructure. Also, referral and partnering role.	
		√	SECL Youth services	Dandenong	Youth drop-in service	Referral and partnering role	Information, referrals, initial assessments, personal support, crisis intervention, advocacy, emergency relief
					General Counselling		

Service Type	In the Region	In Greater Dandenong	Organisation	Locations	Type of Services Available	Council's Primary Role	Comments
Settlement services continued…..	√	√	CatholicCare Refugee and Settlement program	CGD and Cardinia Shire	Social and life skill support for newly arrived young people (18 – 25 years) and their families includes case management, employment and training support, English literacy participation, in social activities, events and festivals.	Referral and partnering role	
Crisis and transitional housing		√	WAYSS Dandenong	Office located in Dandenong	Support services for young people at risk of homelessness including transitional housing and access to crisis accommodation	Referral role.	The closest crisis accommodation service is in East St Kilda or South Melbourne.
		√	Launch Housing	Offices located in Dandenong Cheltenham Collingwood St Kilda	Emergency shelter, crisis accommodation, housing advice and support for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness.	Referral role.	Crisis supported accommodation is available in Dandenong (Bobs Place). The entry point to interact with Launch Housing in CGD is through WAYS Dandenong.
		√	Uniting VicTas	Unclear	Support and safe accommodation for young people facing mental illness, homelessness, alcohol or drug misuse and disconnection from their family.	Referral role.	Unclear if there is accommodation in CGD.
		√	Springvale Community Aid Advice Bureau	Springvale	Assists young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to reduce to obtain and maintain suitable and affordable housing.	Referral role.	

Service Type	In the Region	In Greater Dandenong	Organisation	Locations	Type of Services Available	Council's Primary Role	Comments
Crisis and transitional housing continued….	√	√	Whitelion Southern	CGD City of Casey City of Frankston	Outreach-based case management and brief intervention support for young people (12-25) who are homeless or at risk of homelessness,	Referral role.	
	√	√	Centre for Multicultural Youth	Office based in Dandenong Works across CGD and the City of Casey	Supports with newly-arrived (less than 5 years in Australia) young people from refugee backgrounds who are at risk of homelessness.	Referral role.	
Disability	√		Scope	Pakenham Glen Waverley	Social connection programs	Referral role	
	√		Access Youth Specialist Disability Employment Service	Unclear	Support for young people with a disability to find a job e.g. resume development and training in interview skills.	Referral role	
	√	√	At Work Australia Disability Employment Servies	Offices in Dandenong, Keysborough, Noble Park and the wider region	Supporting people with a disability, injury or health condition to find meaningful work and vocational pathways.	Referral role	
Parent education	√	√	Anglicare	Dandenong Rosebud Frankston Online	Parentzone programs e.g. You and Your Kids Matter, Beyond Violence, Getting Teens on Track, Parenting in Australia and Parenting a Child on the Autism Spectrum		

Service Type	In the Region	In Greater Dandenong	Organisation	Locations	Type of Services Available	Council's Primary Role	Comments
Mental health		√	Headspace	Dandenong Narre Warren	For young people and their families providing access to counsellors, psychologists, GPs and other professionals.	Referral role.	
			FMC Mediation and Counselling Victoria	Specific location unclear CGD City of Casey Cardia Shire	Child and adolescent counselling.	Referral role.	
Immunisation	√	√	Council (CGD)	Sessions conducted in various locations.	Secondary school vaccination for students in years 7 and 10.	Service provider	

Integrated Children, Youth and Family Strategy 2027 - 2031

Community Engagement Report

Greater Dandenong

Executive Summary

The development of the draft Integrated Children, Youth and Family Strategy 2027–2031 (the *Strategy*) has been informed by a comprehensive, evidence-based planning process. This included the preparation of a background report that brought together local demographic and community data, community insights, relevant legislation, policy frameworks and Council commitments. This is detailed in the *Integrated Children, Youth and Family Strategy Background Report: Planning for Communities* (May 2026).

Council undertook a comprehensive community engagement program between January and May 2026 to validate and refine priorities, identify emerging issues and ensure the Strategy reflects the lived experiences, needs and aspirations of the Greater Dandenong community.

A total of 1,227 participants contributed to the consultation, including 174 children, 598 young people, 335 parents, carers and community members, 96 service representatives (including six members of the RAP Aboriginal Advisory Committee) and 24 Council staff.

Engagement methods included surveys, focus groups, interviews, community events, information sessions, telephone consultations and yarning conversations. Targeted approaches were used to increase participation from culturally diverse communities, First Nations people, vulnerable families and other priority groups.

Across all stakeholder groups, consistent themes emerged, including the importance of

- Supporting mental health and wellbeing
- Strengthening community safety
- Addressing cost-of-living pressures
- Improving access to services
- Creating opportunities for social connection and belonging

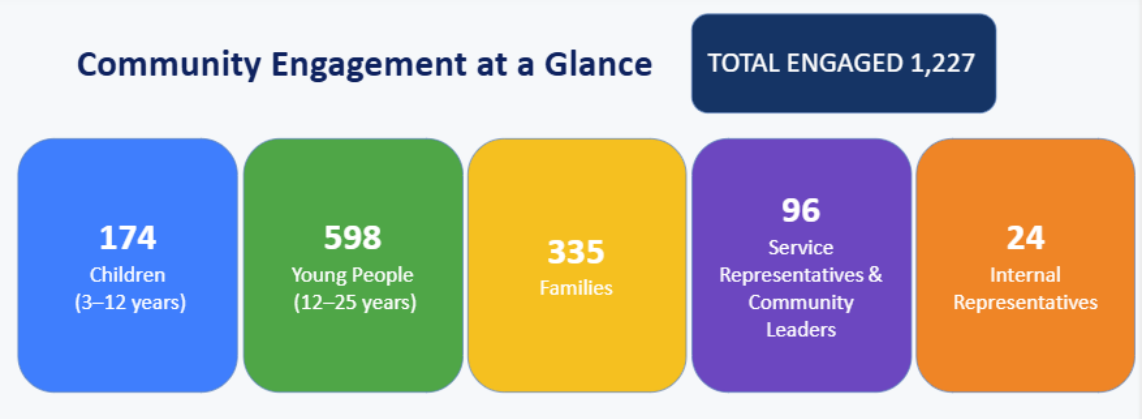
Children highlighted the importance of play, recreation, safety, learning opportunities and caring for the environment. Young people emphasised the need to be genuinely heard and involved in decision-making. Families identified a need for greater support to navigate services and access affordable programs and activities. Service providers highlighted growing complexity of need, the importance of collaboration and the value of early intervention, while First Nations participants emphasised culturally safe services, community-led solutions, cultural identity and strong partnerships.

The consultation findings provide a robust evidence base for the Strategy and reinforce the importance of a coordinated approach to supporting children, young people and families. The insights gained will guide Council's planning, service delivery, advocacy and partnership activities over the next five years, ensuring community priorities remain at the centre of decision-making.

Summary of Community Engagement

This report provides an overview of the consultation process and outlines the methods used to engage a broad range of stakeholders and key target groups.

*A spreadsheet containing all raw data and individual responses is available on request.



Consultation approach

Children (aged 3 – 12 years)

Total children: 174

Children's Services engaged directly with 174 children aged 3–12 years to understand what matters most to them and ensure their voices inform future planning and decision-making. To support meaningful participation, a range of age-appropriate consultation methods were used, including, surveys (online and paper-based), and conversations at community events.

These approaches enabled children to share their views, ideas and experiences in ways that felt comfortable and accessible. Creative activities, particularly drawing, supported younger children to express their thoughts, while older children participated through surveys and discussions.

Feedback was primarily collected between February and May 2026 through community events and engagement activities, including the Keysborough Big Picnic, Discover Dandenong Creek, and the Sustainability Festival.

Young people (aged 12 – 25 years)

Total young people: 598

530 young people participated in a short survey, through assertive engagement young people shared their perspectives on health and wellbeing, belonging, education and employment, and youth voice. Surveys were completed across a range of settings, including school holiday programs, sporting tournaments, library pop-ups, Council events and festivals, Youth Services programs, and through local schools and community partners.

Engagement was led by youth workers who held one-to-one conversations with young people to explain the process and encourage participation. Respondent age and postcode data were regularly reviewed, with targeted engagement undertaken to address gaps and ensure a broad cross-section of young people was represented.

A further 68 young people participated in focus groups across Youth Services programs. These discussions provided the opportunity to take a deeper dive into key issues and enabled participants to reflect and expand on themes emerging from the survey findings.

Families

Total individuals: 335

A total of 335 adults, including parents, carers, community members, Elders and service providers, participated in the consultation. A range of engagement methods, including interpreter services and consultation in community-based settings, helped ensure diverse perspectives were captured and contributed to a robust evidence base for planning and decision-making for children and families across the municipality.

Of these participants, 21 vulnerable families were engaged through individual interviews conducted by Council's Family Support case workers. Families were selected from existing caseloads and participated in semi-structured interviews exploring their key concerns, needs and experiences.

Service Representatives

Total individuals: 96 (including First Nations)

Youth sector professionals were consulted through an in-person Greater Dandenong Youth Network meeting. Participants were asked to identify emerging trends and challenges affecting young people, explore future partnership and innovation opportunities, and nominate the highest priority issues facing local youth.

Children's Services consulted service providers from the Greater Dandenong Best Start Child & Family Partnership Group to gather professional perspectives on the needs and priorities of children and families.

These consultations drew on the expertise of organisations working directly with children, families and communities, providing valuable insights into community strengths, emerging needs and service delivery challenges, as well as inform future planning, partnerships and service improvement initiatives.

First Nations Community Consultation

Total individuals: 6 - RAP Advisory Committee members

Culturally appropriate engagement was undertaken to gather the perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families. This included a yarning session with Council's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Advisory Committee and drew on insights from previous consultations with the Dandenong & District Aboriginal Co-operative (DDACL) Koori Maternity Services Mums and Bubup Group and the Eyes on Boorais Committee. An additional yarning session with community leaders further explored emerging themes through a cultural lens.

The consultation provided both lived experience insights and strategic guidance, ensuring Aboriginal voices informed Council's planning and future priorities. Key themes highlighted the importance of community-led approaches, culturally safe services and strong partnerships to support positive outcomes for Aboriginal children, young people and families.

Internal Stakeholders

Total individuals: 24

24 Council staff from across the organisation were engaged in a focus group session, where attendees explored existing and potential future collaborations with Children's Services, Youth Services and Family Support that could be captured in the Strategy.

4.3 OTHER

4.3.1 Dandenong Market Precinct Plan - Final Draft for endorsement

Responsible Officer: Executive Director City Futures

Attachments:

1. **Final Draft Dandenong Market Precinct Plan**
2. **'Have Your Say' Engagement Report**

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. **ADOPTS the Dandenong Market Precinct Plan (per Attachment 1) to guide future development and investment in the precinct;**
2. **NOTES that the Implementation Strategy detailed in section 7.0 of the Plan is tentative and will be subject to the availability of future Funding and Resources; and**
3. **NOTES that a comprehensive Governance Framework will be presented to Council for endorsement prior to progressing major projects and the development of any land parcels which could be subject to land sale or long-term lease arrangements.**

Executive Summary

1. Dandenong Market Precinct Plan (the Plan) provides strategic direction to guide issues such as land use, urban design, economic investment opportunities, transportation, public realm, and community infrastructure for the precinct.
2. The Plan has been prepared through comprehensive stakeholder consultation and a series of Council Briefing Sessions.
3. The Draft Dandenong Market Precinct Plan package was exhibited for community consultation from 3 March to 10 April 2026. A series of meaningful engagement sessions were held both online and face to face to capture diverse voices across our community.
4. There was a record level of participation from the broader community, traders, business owners, and customers/visitors, demonstrating significant interest in and support for the Precinct Plan.
5. Following this strong community support, the draft Precinct Plan (Attachment 1) is now ready for Council adoption.

Background

6. The Dandenong Market Precinct is a large area, within the central Dandenong Metropolitan Activity Centre, with an extensive range of transport options, shops, facilities and services within easy reach. In this context, much of the land in the Precinct is underutilised, being occupied by at-grade car parking or undeveloped land secured for strategic purposes. There is opportunity to utilise this well-located, Council-owned land to accommodate a range of uses which benefit the community.

7. The Plan outlines a desired future and strategies to manage, influence, and facilitate growth and attract investment in the Dandenong Market Precinct (Market Precinct) over time. Key themes identified are built form and urban design principles, parking, movement and access, and property market opportunities for investment. The Plan ties together the strategic work that has occurred in the Revitalising Central Dandenong (RCD) program, into a broader strategic vision for the whole Study Area.
8. Council's design team and Dandenong Market Pty Ltd (DMPL) consultant team have held collaborative design workshops to inform the proposed plan.
9. Council officers working with consultants developed a draft vision, objectives and themes based on existing site conditions audit, economic analysis, benchmarking of state significant renewal projects and community engagement.
10. Potential strategies identified via the Plan are:
    - New and enhanced public open spaces
    - Business and retail spaces for local access
    - Housing development options
    - Council and community facilities
11. The Precinct Plan further outlines:
    - Precinct vision and objectives
    - Precinct wide principles to guide design and development
    - Future precinct urban structure, movement and access, and development uses
    - Potential opportunity/catalyst sites
    - Concept design for catalyst sites
    - Staging and implementation mechanism
    - Suggested project delivery models
12. The Precinct Plan ensures new development contributes to a distinctive precinct character and reinforces the Market's role as a destination of regional significance through a requirement for Social Impact Assessment (SIA) for all future projects. The SIA will ensure that community values associated with the Dandenong Market inform decision-making.

Key Issues and Discussion

13. The fully developed draft Precinct Plan was exhibited for community feedback from 3 March to 10 April 2026.
14. A series of face to face and online engagement was undertaken during the public exhibition period (phase 3 consultation).
    - 'Have your say' page – online
    - 20 engagement sessions – face to face
    - Multilingual Pop-ups at the Market & Dandenong Plaza
    - Walking Map tours with CALD community groups
    - Community leaders and Neighbourhood Centres
    - 'Have Your Say' page in top 9 languages
    - Printed Materials in 5 languages
        - Translated flyers
        - Easy-English versions
        - Infographics
        - Images and artist impressions
    - Bilingual officers (4 different languages)

- Conversation corners (1:1) at the Civic Centre

15. Council officers are confident that the level of engagement, both internal and external, has delivered a meaningful consultation with stakeholders and the community.
16. The strong participation and support received reflects broad community backing and indicates clear community support for the Precinct Plan.
17. Phase 3 engagement findings are:
    a. Vision for the Precinct;
        - **90% agree** with the vision for the precinct to become a vibrant, connected and welcoming destination.
        - **10% do not agree**. Concerns include carparking provisions and traffic congestion.
    b. Most strongly supported Precinct Plan themes were;
        - Create a clear, walkable and connected street network that integrates with surrounding streets and lanes
        - Use Council-owned land strategically to improve activation, safety, business vibrancy and community enjoyment
        - Protect and showcase significant existing trees in the precinct
        - Create food and dining areas that celebrate cultural diversity and attract locals and visitors.
    c. The highest-rated aspirations for community were;
        - Better car parking, public transport and connectivity
        - High-quality streets, plazas, landscaping and gathering spaces
        - More trees and green spaces
        - Public-realm improvements
    d. Priority Projects Top-ranked early actions;
        - Refreshing Palm Plaza – highest priority
        - Improving the Clow Street & Lonsdale Street intersection for pedestrian safety
        - Running events and activities to attract visitors and encourage night-time use
        - Advocating to Government & Agencies to invest in the Market Precinct renewal projects.
    e. Additional feedback:
        - Streetscape improvements
        - Well-considered parking provision and traffic impacts
        - Improved safety
        - Sensible built-form transition
        - Protect the market’s core identity and affordability
        - Improve parking and cleanliness around the Market
        - Modernise thoughtfully while staying relevant
        - Strengthen long-term sustainability and activation
        - We received 124 submissions (proforma) linked to the Dandenong Community Hub proposal. The Precinct Plan aligns with the Council resolution of 8 Dec 2025, where

Council confirmed that the design for the DCH should fit within the boundary set out in the Plan.

18. In response to community feedback, the following changes have been made to the Precinct Plan:

    - Additional built-form guidance for Sites 10 and 12: Provide a sensitive and well considered transition of building heights, particularly along the northern and eastern edges of the precinct, to respect and respond positively to adjacent residential interfaces.
    - Carparking and traffic: Ensure an appropriate number of well-designed on-site parking spaces with clear, safe, and efficient operation. Impacts on pedestrian crossings and the wider local movement network will continue to be assessed as part of the next phase of Precinct Plan work.
    - Public spaces and streetscape improvements: Palm Plaza revitalisation and an audit of the Clow Street/Lonsdale Street intersection will be prioritised as immediate actions, subject to available funding.
    - Social Impact Assessment (SIA) requirement: Introduce a requirement for all future developments within the precinct to prepare a Social Impact Assessment. The SIA will ensure that community values associated with the Dandenong Market inform decision-making.
    - Housing opportunities for local people will be a key focus of the Plan. Housing availability and affordability are significant challenges at the local, national and international levels, highlighting the need for increased supply in well-located areas with convenient access to transport, jobs, shops and services. Consistent with the Victorian Government's housing targets and Council's Local Housing Strategy, the Plan will support a diverse range of housing types and tenure models, including affordable and key worker housing, to help meet future housing demand and respond to the needs of the local community.
    - The Precinct Plan will celebrate Dandenong Market as the cultural, social and economic heart of the precinct by creating welcoming, inclusive and accessible places that showcase Dandenong’s multicultural identity, heritage and stories, while supporting community gathering, cultural events, festivals and vibrant public life.

19. Council officers are confident that the draft Precinct Plan (Attachment 1) reflects the stakeholders and the community feedback and aspirations for the Market precinct and is now ready for Council adoption.
20. Timeframes in the Section 7 Implementation Strategy are tentative and will be subject to further resolution dependent on available funding and resources. The future implementation process will include further community engagement for specific projects as they are progressed.
21. Council recently adopted its 2026/27 budget which includes the following two catalyst infrastructure projects: -

    - Clow Street Cleeland Street Intersection $120,000
      Investigate intersection redesign options to inform delivery of a safer, more efficient intersection layout.
    - New Palm Plaza Design $250,000
      Prepare a robust concept design based on the Dandenong Market Precinct Plan design and place guidelines.

22. Council is currently preparing its draft Housing Strategy which is exploring the potential identification of key Council owned sites that could be considered for catalyst housing projects with the parcel 15 (corner of Clow/Lonsdale) a likely candidate that could be progressed to market sounding.

Governance Compliance

Human Resource Implications (consider Workforce Planning and Service Statements)

23. This item does not have an impact on existing human resources.

Financial/Asset Resource Implications (consider Service Statements, Budget, Long Term Financial Strategy and Asset Plan)

Operating Budget Implications

24. There are no financial implications associated with this report at this time. The costs associated with development of the Dandenong Market Precinct Plan are in line with the annual budget provision for this project provided in the approved 2025/26 Council Budget. Any further funding will be considered as part of the annual budget process and subject to external funding.

Asset Implications

25. This item relates to a future CIP project that this not currently incorporated in the Asset Plan. Priorities related to the need for this item still need to be determined.

26. Strategic advocacy to State and Federal Government to fund major infrastructure initiatives proposed within this precinct is actively underway.

Legal/Risk Implications

27. There are no legal / risk implications relevant to this report.

Environmental Implications

28. There are no specific environmental implications relevant to this report at this time.

29. Sustainability is a key focus in the Plan objectives and recommendations.

Gender Impact Assessment

30. The draft Dandenong Market Precinct Plan has been developed in alignment with the City of Greater Dandenong's gender-equity obligations, including the requirement under the Gender Equality Act 2020.

31. This ensures that considerations of safety, accessibility and equitable use of public spaces for women and gender-diverse community members are embedded throughout the planning and design process.

32. Community engagement for the draft Plan has been delivered with a strong focus on inclusive and accessible consultation, supporting participation from diverse user groups especially women and girls from multicultural backgrounds and helping shape a precinct that meets the needs of all genders.

Community Consultation

Purpose	Consult with residents, local business owners, market traders, visitors and stakeholders to seek feedback on the draft Precinct Plan
Engagement period	A series of face-to-face and online engagements occurred during the public exhibition period from 3 March to 10 April 2026

Level of Influence:	Based on IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum: inform, consult
Engagement Activities:	Face to face (pop-ups, walking tour, information session, pop-up, multilingual conversations) and online (have your say website)
Communication reach and engagement numbers:	• The engagement program generated 363 written survey responses, providing detailed and considered feedback to inform refinement of the draft Plan. • In addition, officers facilitated approximately 720 face to face engagements through trader meetings, pop ups, walking tours, events and targeted sessions, enabling direct conversation with traders, shoppers, residents and community representatives. • Online participation was also substantial, with around 3,000 visits to the CGD people engaging digitally through CGD “Have Your Say” page. • Reflecting this high level of interest and transparency, the draft Precinct Plan was downloaded more than 1,000 times. • Highest level of social pinpoint engagement statistics with local and national media coverage. • Major media cut-through with 46 media items in 35 days, led by Herald Sun and ABC News multi-platform coverage, Architecture Australia • Strong positive narrative for the Precinct Plan with over 96% positive or neutral sentiment, with minimal negative coverage (3.1%) • Large audience reach accounting to nearly 3.9 million people reached across print, online, TV and radio • Broad media mix with consistent coverage across local, state and national outlets, amplifying consultation awareness during the public exhibition period.
Summary of feedback:	Council undertook a comprehensive three-phase community engagement program to inform the development of the draft Dandenong Market Precinct Plan. Phase 1 was an Inquiry by Design workshop coordinated by the consultant team in collaboration with Council staff, focusing on identifying key issues and a vision for the precinct. A short online survey was sent out to the Market traders by DMPL in March 2025. 17 submissions were received. Most of the feedback was about the immediate maintenance and safety upgrades to the market. Traders generally showed excitement and support for the need for a broader precinct plan approach. Phase 2 targeted stakeholder engagement occurred from June to July 2025. Phase 2 consisted of a series of targeted focus group discussions planned by Council’s engagement team and delivered jointly by Council and the consultants, engaging specific stakeholder groups including local youth, children, community facility leaders, and market traders/business owners. The draft vision and directions were

	supported by the stakeholders. Feedback received during phase 2 consultation has informed the draft Plan. Comprehensive consultation was undertaken during the Phase 3 public exhibition period from 3 March to 10 April 2026. This phase 3 community engagement undertaken includes consultation with: o Dandenong Market traders o Dandenong Market visitors o Dandenong Square Shopping Centre o Traders & business owners within the precinct area o Returned & Services League of Australia (RSL) o Southeast Migrant Resource Centre and other lessees of Clow Street Community Facility o Neighbourhood House o Young Leaders Advisory Committee o Children (Young Mayor) Committee o Multicultural Community Engagement Network o Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee o LGBTQI++ Committee o Wellsprings for Women o Dandenong Residents o Development Victoria o Capital Alliance o Department of Transport & Planning (activity centres) A series of meaningful engagement sessions were held both online and face to face to capture diverse voices across our community. There was a record level of participation from the broader community, traders, business owners, and customers/visitors, demonstrating significant interest in and endorsement of the Precinct Plan. Refer to Attachment 2: “Have Your Say” Engagement Report.

Links to Community Vision, Council Plan, Strategy, Notice of Motion

33. This report is consistent with the following principles in the Community Vision 2040:

- Safe and peaceful community.
- Education, training, entrepreneurship and employment opportunities.
- Sustainable environment.
- Mind, body and spirit.

34. This report is consistent with the following strategic objectives from the Council Plan 2025-29:

- 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.

Legislative and Policy Obligations

32. This report has considered Council's legislative and policy obligations (where applicable) as outlined in the Report Considerations section detailed in the front of this Agenda. The applicable obligations considered and applied are:

    - The Overarching Governance Principles of the *Local Government Act* 2020.
    - The *Gender Equality Act* 2020.
    - Climate Change and Sustainability.



Dandenong Market Precinct Plan

Version 3 - Final Draft for Adoption - SEPTEMBER 2026

Greater Dandenong



Image: Koorie Youth Will Shake Spears

Acknowledgement of Country

Greater Dandenong City Council acknowledges and pays respects to the Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation, as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters in and around Greater Dandenong.

We value and recognise local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultures, heritage, and connection to land as a proud part of a shared identity for Greater Dandenong.

Greater Dandenong City Council pays respect to Elders past and present and recognises their importance in maintaining knowledge, traditions, and Culture in our Community.

Greater Dandenong City Council also respectfully acknowledges the Bunurong Land Council as the Registered Aboriginal Party responsible for managing the Aboriginal Cultural heritage of the land and waters where Greater Dandenong is situated.

Project Consultants

McP BKK ARCHITECTS in collaboration with

HillPDA CONSULTING · Movement & Place Consulting · GLAS urban design and landscape architecture · DesignFlow · AMPLIFIER COLLECTIVE

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Foreword from Mayor and CEO



Sophie Tan

Mayor City of Greater Dandenong

Dandenong has long been a place where cultures meet, enterprise thrives, and community life flourishes. For more than 150 years, Dandenong Market has been central to that identity, reflecting the spirit, resilience, and diversity of our people.

The Dandenong Market Precinct Plan marks an important step in shaping our city's next chapter. It outlines a clear, integrated vision for a vibrant and sustainable precinct that supports traders, enhances public spaces, and strengthens Dandenong's position as a key regional centre. The Precinct Plan aims to deliver significant benefits: increased housing supply, expanded open space, and improved walkability, safety, and public transport access for the thousands who visit each day.

Our community will gain new public spaces, upgraded facilities, enhanced safety, and a richer mix of activities and experiences. With stronger place activation and cultural programming, the precinct has the potential to become an international exemplar of market-centred urban renewal.

Sustainability is fundamental to this vision. Retaining significant trees, expanding planting, and delivering high-performance buildings will ensure the precinct is cooler, greener, and more resilient. Economically, the Precinct Plan will support market operations, attract visitors, strengthen business conditions, and stimulate major investment. It will generate jobs across construction, hospitality, retail, and community services, contributing to the long-term prosperity of Greater Dandenong.

As Mayor, I believe this project reflects the very best of what our city can achieve:

"The Dandenong Market Precinct Plan is more than a blueprint for development — it is a promise to our community. A promise to honour our heritage, strengthen our present, and build a future that is vibrant, inclusive, and full of opportunity for every resident."

— Mayor Sophie Tan

Together, we are creating a precinct worthy of its history — and a city ready for the generations to come.



Jacqui Weatherill

CEO Greater Dandenong Council

For more than a century, the Dandenong Market has been a cornerstone of our community — a place of commerce, culture and connection.

As our city continues to transform, so too must the places that shape daily life for residents, visitors and businesses. The Dandenong Market Precinct Plan represents an important step forward in securing a vibrant, prosperous and sustainable future for this iconic precinct.

This is a 20 year plan that provides a long-term strategic direction and vision for the Precinct that honours the Market's heritage while positioning it to thrive for decades to come. It brings together key elements from the Revitalising Central Dandenong program and integrates them into a cohesive, forward-looking strategy. Through considered design principles, improved accessibility, enhanced parking and movement networks, and targeted opportunities for investment, the Precinct Plan will help us unlock the precinct's full potential and ensure it remains a dynamic destination for all.

Our goal is to create a market precinct that is welcoming, resilient and adaptable; a place that supports local businesses, attracts new investment and fosters community pride. This Precinct Plan lays the groundwork for that future — a future in which the Dandenong Market continues to be not only a marketplace, but a meeting place; not only a local asset, but a regional destination.

I would like to acknowledge the many stakeholders, community, traders and partners whose insights will shape future works. Your ongoing contributions help ensure that the Market Precinct's next chapter is as meaningful and successful as its long history.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Project Description

The Dandenong Market Precinct Plan (Precinct Plan) provides strategic direction and implementation actions to resolve and guide issues such as land use, urban design, economic investment opportunities, transportation, public realm and community infrastructure.

The Precinct Plan will map out a desired future and help to manage, influence, and facilitate growth and attract investment in the Study Area over time. Key themes include built form and urban design principles, parking, movement and access and market opportunities for investment. The Precinct Plan outlines a bold vision for tying together the strategic work that has occurred in the Revitalising Central Dandenong (RCD) program, into a broader strategic vision for the whole Study Area.

Dandenong Market is Melbourne's second oldest and second largest Market. The market has played a central role in the development of the 'Gateway to Gippsland', supporting local farmers and small business in Dandenong area since 1866. The market officially opened for business on 10 October 1866, on the intersection of Lonsdale and McCrae Streets. Early market traders sold livestock, fruit, dairy products and other farm produce. It was not long before the stock sales were surrounded by local farmers selling surplus produce.

As the community around the market grew, bigger premises were required and in 1926 the Market was relocated to its current site on the corner of Clow Street and Cleeland Street. The livestock trading section of the market moved to the area on Cheltenham Road, behind the Dandenong railway yards in 1958.

Between 2005 and 2010, Dandenong Market underwent a $26 million redevelopment. The existing facility and site was fully refurbished and expanded as an 'Urban Market'.

Today the market has become the centre of the Greater Dandenong community, bringing together 150 nationalities under one roof. The market has five main areas: Fruit and Vegetables, Meat, Fish and Deli Hall, The Pantry, The Bazaar and Market Square.

Precinct Plan Study Area

The project study area includes the Dandenong Market area bounded by Clow, Cleeland and King St Streets and Sleeth Avenue; the triangular car park site south of Clow Street; Palm Plaza; and properties between Lonsdale Street and Palm Plaza, as shown below.

Precinct Plan Boundary



Image 01: Precinct Plan Boundary

Dandenong Market Precinct Plan

Dandenong Market Masterplan

1.2 Project Process

The Precinct Plan has been developed through a carefully planned, collaborative process, involving Council officers and external stakeholders working alongside the consultant team, to support outputs which are informed, place-specific and supported.

The Dandenong Market Precinct Plan has been prepared by McP Studio, a Melbourne based Urban Design practice, in collaboration with BKK Architects, and supported by GLAS Landscape Architecture, Movement and Place Consulting (Transport and Access), HillPDA (Property Economics) and Amplifier Collective (Stakeholder Engagement and Social Impact).









Images 02-08: Inquiry by design workshops 1 & 2

1. Collaborative approach

The project has been developed through a carefully planned, collaborative process, involving Council officers and external stakeholders working alongside the consultant team, to support outputs which are informed, place-specific and supported.

This process focused on a series of four (4) 'Inquiry by Design' (IBD) collaborative workshops held at Council offices. Inquiry by Design describes a method of rapid, intensive, focused design work by invited groups, typically from multiple organisations and sectors, working in real time 'under the same roof' to develop options and proposals.

The IBD methodology supports efficient and effective design processes and facilitates stakeholder involvement and therefore buy-in to the work that is developed.

The IBD workshops for the Dandenong Market Precinct Plan comprised:

2. Design review

The Precinct Plan has also been tested through a Design Review process by the Office for the Victorian Government Architect (OVGA), comprising two (2) formal Design Reviews by an expert panel and chaired by the Associate Government Architect and an interim update review.

This process provided comprehensive commentary, critique and recommendations to inform the design and planning process.

Inquiry by Design Timeline

IBD1 Site Visit and Inception

February 2025

- Consultant team
- Council officers
- Walking tour of precinct
- Outline of project process / Initial discussion

IBD2 SWOT Analysis and Visioning

March 2025

- Consultant team
- Council officers
- Stakeholder engagement
- SWOT analysis
- Vision development





Images 09-10: Inquiry by design workshops 1 & 2

IBD3 **Precinct Framework Plan**

March 2025

- Consultant team
- Council officers
- Council executives
- External stakeholders
- Design at precinct scale
- Reviews and commentary
- Design refinement

IBD4 **Catalyst Sites and Spaces**

March 2025

- Consultant team
- Council officers
- Council executives
- External stakeholders
- Design at site scale
- Reviews and commentary
- Design refinement

1.3 What Problems Are We Trying To Solve?

1. Safety

The project process has heard from various participants that the Precinct often is, or feels, unsafe during non market days and after hours. This is due to its isolation, lack of visible activity, anti-social behaviour and high maintenance demand from aging infrastructure in some locations.

Potential strategies:

- Bringing more people into the Precinct, through housing and other uses.
- Encouraging buildings to 'turn/face outwards' (rather than the current inward-facing Market and Shopping Centre).
- Active building edges, supporting passive surveillance or 'eyes on the street'.
- Activated public spaces, with increased usage (more people around).

2. Access

Access into and around the Precinct can be difficult, for all transport modes, particularly for those with mobility challenges. This relates to ground levels and gradients, entrances/thresholds, conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles, and clarify of access ways.

Potential strategies:

- Universal access provision.
- Ground plan (public realm) enhancement.
- Accessible gradients.
- Kerb-free streets where appropriate.

3. Market patronage and business performance

Market traders and other local businesses need increased patronage for greater prosperity and financial sustainability, and to support the Market's planned growth.

Potential strategies:

- Increasing the local population (more customers).
- Improving access.
- Create more attractive, amenable, enjoyable places that people want to spend time in.

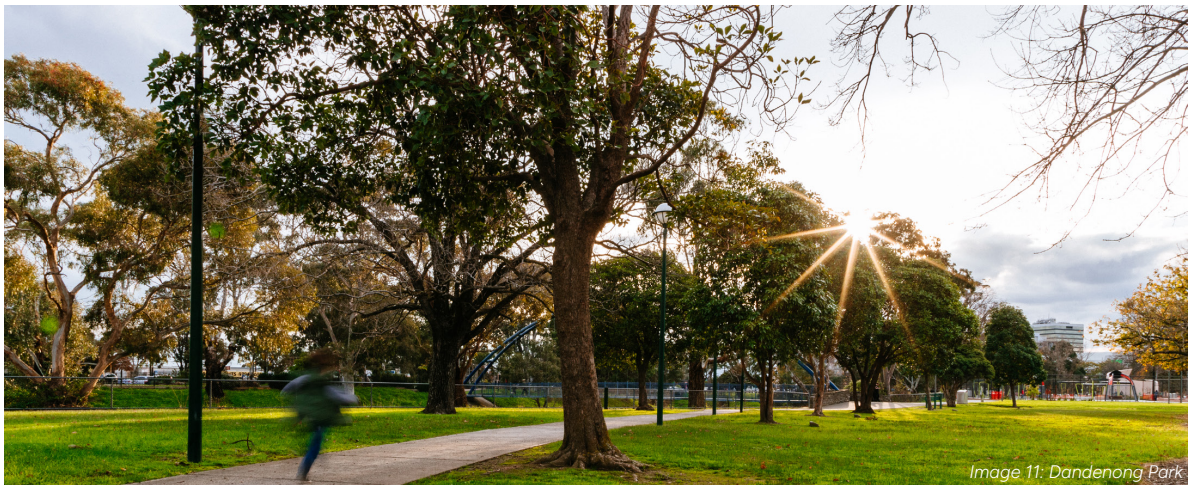


Image 11: Dandenong Park

4. Housing opportunities for local people

Housing availability and affordability are significant local and national challenges. There is a substantial need to increase the supply of well-located housing that provides residents with convenient access to employment, transport, shops and essential services. Aligned with Council's Housing Strategy and the State Housing Target, the precinct will offer diverse housing choices that are critical to supporting sustainable and connected communities.

Potential strategies:

- Medium and higher-density housing development in the precinct.
- Mixed-tenure housing, including potential affordable, and social housing types, along with market housing
- Key worker accommodation and employer-supported initiatives to attract and retain essential workers.
- 'Whole-of-life' housing provision, for families, singles, young people, older people etc.

5. Transport choice

Private car usage is the dominant transport mode in and around the Precinct. While it is recognised that market customers often carry significant weight in purchases, many people access markets via public transport, bicycle or on foot, particularly as more people live locally. These options are limited or constrained in Dandenong currently. Alternative transport modes help to address cost of living impacts, because they are less costly than private car usage.

Potential strategies:

- Improved cycling access routes.
- Improved intersection and crossing design.
- Enhanced walking routes, to make walking more interesting, enjoyable and safe.
- Improved bus infrastructure, such as sheltered waiting spaces, seating, smart signage and green streets.

6. Changing climate, community impacts

Climate change is increasingly creating community impacts, as well as for buildings, infrastructure and ecology. Severe heat, major weather events and flooding are likely to increasingly impact this locality, recognising that stormwater and drainage are existing issues for the Market Precinct. Future development must avoid contributing further to climate change, enhance resilience to these impacts and support mitigation of climate effects.

Potential strategies:

- Site water management, including natural filtration and drainage.
- Increased tree canopy cover, for shade and ecology benefits.
- Increased biodiversity support through landscapes design and tree retention.
- Sustainable/high performance building design.
- Facilitation of sustainable transport options.



Image 12: Fresh produce, Dandenong Market

7. Food security

Related to climate impacts and the cost-of-living crisis, food security is an increasing challenge at both local and national/global scales. Food production and distribution can be impacted by system shocks and climatic changes or weather events. The increasing cost of food affects more and more households, often restricting access to sufficient food. Fresh food markets often provide communities with good quality, local, lower-cost food options.

Potential strategies:

- Support for the Market's ongoing operation, prosperity and expansion.
- Improved Market access and operations, such as for deliveries.
- Increased resident access to the Market.
- Accommodating important community support services within the Precinct.

8. Underutilised land in a central city location

The Dandenong Market Precinct is a large area, within a Metropolitan Activity Centre, with an extensive range of transport options, shops, facilities and services within easy reach. In this context, much of the land in the Precinct is underutilised, being occupied by at-grade car parking or open space with low usage levels. There is opportunity to utilise this well-located, Council-owned property to accommodate a range of uses which benefit the community.

Potential strategies:

- Housing development, including community-oriented housing options.
- Community facilities.
- New and enhanced public open spaces.
- Business and retail spaces for local access.

9. Underutilised car parking

The existing Market car park occupies a lot of land and is underutilised, especially on non-Market days when it remains empty. The car park on the triangular Clow Street/Palm Plaza site is also underutilised. These areas present opportunities for more efficient, effective land use, to retain and expand car parking capacity, along with other activity-generating uses, such as housing, shops and workspaces.

Potential strategies:

- Consolidation of car parking within buildings and/or basements.
- Residential car parking concealed from streets and spaces.
- Expansion of Market parking, in basement and upper levels (subject to masterplanning).
- Unlocking of redevelopment opportunities in the Precinct to support activation, safety and business prosperity.



Image 13: Activation of Palm Plaza

10. The place is less welcoming for some people, than others

Some parts of the community feel less welcome in the Market and Precinct, than others.

Potential strategies:

- Gender-sensitive design.
- Neurodivergent-sensitive design.
- Design with Country.
- Culturally-sensitive design.

11. Interconnectivity between destinations

Pedestrian connectivity between the Market, Pioneer Park, Dandenong Square, Palm Plaza, Lonsdale Street and further to Harmony Square and Dandenong Station, are difficult and obstructed by traffic conditions and infrastructure, edged by inhospitable building edges and indirect.

Potential strategies:

- Transformed streetscapes including footpath widening and new bike infrastructure.
- New and enhanced laneways and pedestrian streets.
- New links and connections to thew wider Central Dandenong area.
- Opening up and activation of building edges.
- Programming of public spaces to increase activity and vibrancy.

12. Community knowledge of the Precinct Plan and why it is needed

The Precinct Plan is a complex and multifaceted project initiative by the Greater Dandenong City Council to work towards a more vibrant, connected, sustainable, liveable precinct, while addressing the problems listed in this section. It is important that the community is informed and can contribute to the conversation around this plan.

Proposed strategies:

- Targeted stakeholder engagement (focus groups) including community members, July 2025.
- Public Exhibition of the Draft Precinct Plan, March 2026.
- A comprehensive public engagement will be undertaken during this phase.

1.4 Other Major Projects in Central Dandenong

1. Dandenong Market Masterplan

A Masterplan is being developed for the potential expansion and operational upgrade of Dandenong Market, potentially to incorporate other land uses such as shops, office space and housing in upper levels, while protecting the essential Market function and character.

The Market itself is within the Dandenong Market Precinct (the planning area for this Precinct Plan report), but subject to a separate, parallel master planning process, essentially at the same time.

That project was instigated and led by the Dandenong Market Pty Ltd (DMPL), a subsidiary of the City of Greater Dandenong, consisting of an independent Board and Executive Team who manage the Market as a commercial enterprise.

The Dandenong Market Precinct Plan team, with Council officers, has liaised extensively with the Market Masterplan team, during preparation of the Precinct Plan.

Council recognises that the Precinct Plan will establish the overarching parameters for the Precinct, including the future Market expansion and renewal.

2. Dandenong Community Hub

At the Council Meeting on 8 December 2025, Council agreed to redesign the Dandenong Community Hub so that it is similar in size and cost to the Keysborough Hub, while still retaining all the essential elements previously approved in 2021. Council also supported accelerating the project timeline to improve its chances of securing state and federal funding. In addition, Council directed officers to investigate opportunities for private-sector partnerships, including potential development above the site (air rights). Council officers will contact the community when a concept design is ready for consultation.



Image 14: Dandenong Market

2.0 Precinct Analysis

2.1 Strategic Context - Policy Context

1. Plan for Victoria (2025)

The people's panel vision for Victoria by 2050
This new long-term plan incorporates five pillars for action:

- Pillar 1: Housing for all Victorians
- Pillar 2: Accessible jobs and services
- Pillar 3: Great places, suburbs and towns
- Pillar 4: Sustainable environments
- Pillar 5: Self-determination and caring for Country

Housing targets
Greater Dandenong LGA has a revised housing target of 52,500 net new dwellings to 2051, equivalent to 2,019 new dwellings completed per year, for 26 years from 2026.

A key direction of the Housing Statement is cheaper housing, closer to where you work, through:

- Unlocking new spaces to build – including across established suburbs and government land – to boost supply and stop urban sprawl;
- Building more homes closer to where people have the transport, roads, hospitals and schools they need;
- Delivering vital community infrastructure – like footpaths and parks – faster.

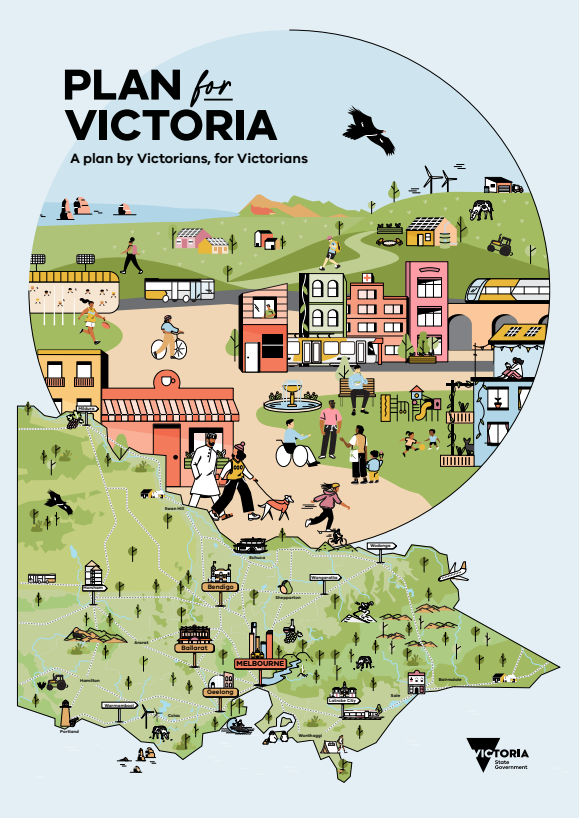


Image 15: Plan for Victoria

It further states that:

We need to create more housing, with the best design standards, where people want to live. And that means going up and out – not just out. By unlocking new spaces to build homes across established suburbs, we'll stop urban sprawl and boost housing supply in the places Victorians want to be – close to where they work, or send their kids to school.

2. Activity centres program

The Victorian Government is planning for more homes in activity centres across Melbourne so more Victorians can access homes in the places they want to live. Activity centres will bring new homes that will be built in and around Melbourne's train and tram lines, jobs and services by 2051.

Plans for the Dandenong Station (activity centre) is currently in community consultation phase. The plans identify the activity centre 'core' and 'catchment' areas as follows:

- Activity centre core: Various heights between three and 12 storeys in most activity centres and up to 20 storeys in some places in the largest activity centres.
- Inner catchment: Up to six storeys on blocks larger than 1000m2 and up to four storeys in all other places.
- Outer catchment: Up to four storeys on blocks larger than 1000m2 and up to three storeys in all other places.

3. Greater Dandenong planning scheme

Key components of the Greater Dandenong Planning Scheme affecting the study area are summarised as follows.

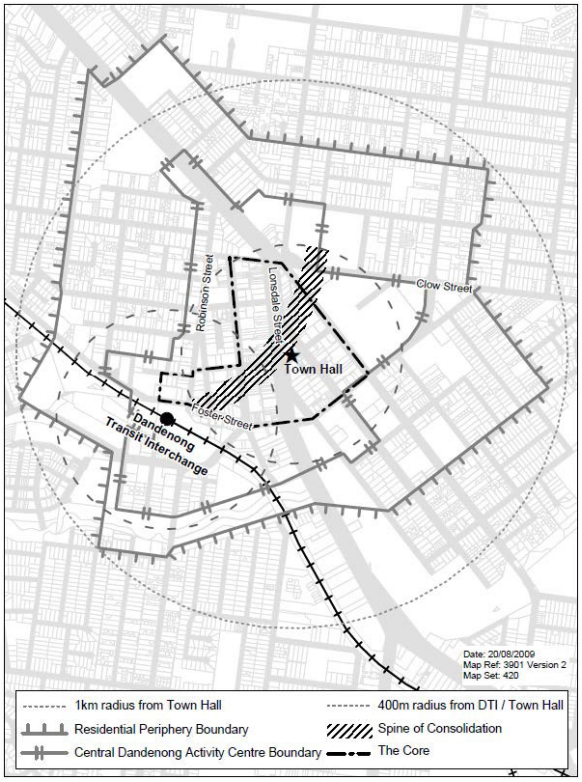
Clause 22.07 Central Dandenong local planning policy

This policy dates from 2017 and applies to all land within the Central Dandenong Metropolitan Activity Centre boundary, which is shown (see map below) to include the Dandenong Market, Clow Street 'triangle' site and Dandenong Square Shopping Centre, but excludes the eastern part of the precinct (Market car parking and Pioneer Park). However the policy remains relevant to this Precinct Plan.

The Future Direction and Vision statement includes:

Central Dandenong will be a residential city of national significance, supported by a strong economic foundation. It will integrate an extensive range of recreation and leisure activities and display a high quality urban landscape. It will be a pedestrian dominated environment, designed for high levels of access and mobility for all forms of transport.

Central Dandenong is transforming from purely a space of commercial functions to one with a strong, wide ranging residential base. It has a multiplicity of spaces accommodating all facets of human endeavour in which its new fundamental residential function is served by its integration into a mutually contributive multi-functional environment.



The policy then states that:

public open space will be enhanced and added to by extending green spaces such as Dandenong Creek, Dandenong Park and John Hemmings Memorial Park into the city and by developing socially engaging urban open spaces within the public realm. Enhancement and development of urban squares, piazzas, pedestrian malls and green spaces, as environments dedicated to social recreation and exchange will form a strong foundation for creating a high quality living and working city.

This Policy identifies the *'Spine of Consolidation', as the focus of compaction and consolidation of Central Dandenong, running between the station, the Town Hall and the market. At either end of these centre points, within the 400 metre radius, are strong anchors in the new market development, Dandenong Plaza and the Metro Village* 3175 residential development.

Image 16: Map from Clause 22.07, indicating the 'spine of consolidation' linking Dandenong Station, Civic Centre, Drum Theatre, Lonsdale Street, Palm Plaza and Dandenong Market.

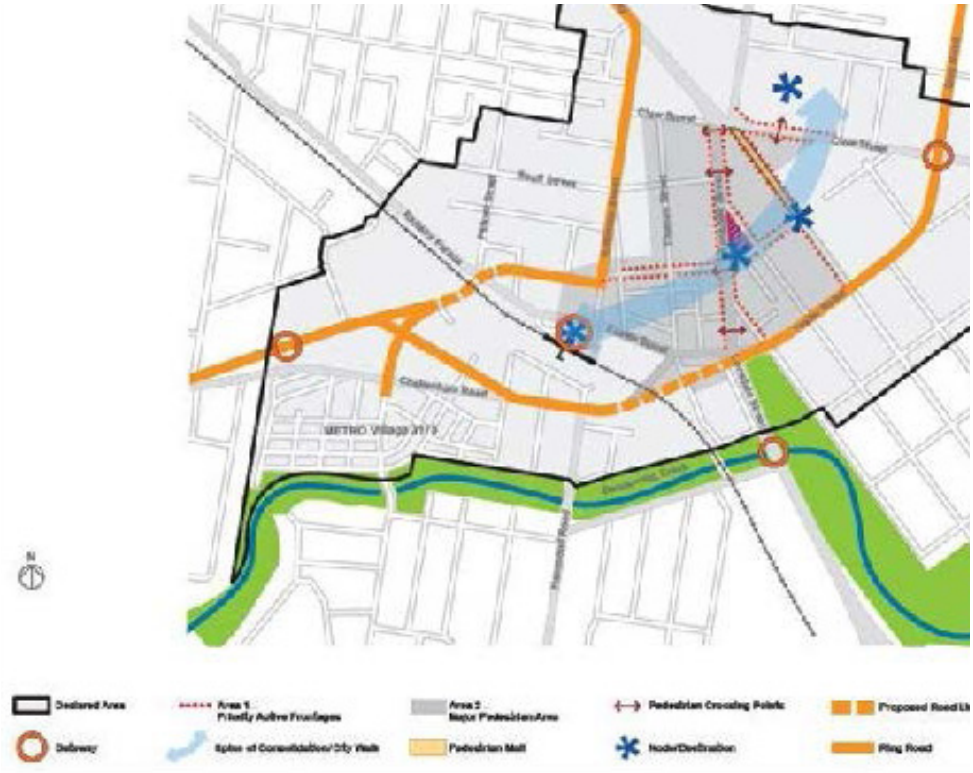


Image 17: Strategic Framework Plan from Clause 22.07, showing the Spine of Consolidation, between Dandenong Station and Dandenong Market and linking other nodes/destinations.

Schedule 16 to Clause 43.04 Development Plan Overlay – Revitalising Central Dandenong (Sites 11-15, Foster Street) Development Plan

The Objectives of DPO16 are as follows:

- To provide for the integrated planning and development of the precinct, encouraging a range of uses with a priority focus on maximising housing supply (including the provision of affordable housing), retail, commercial, recreational, hospital and community spaces that will attract and retain people and activity across the day and evening.
- To encourage high-quality urban design and architecture that establishes a distinctive mid-rise character north of Foster Street with taller sculptural forms south of Foster Street, contributing to the revitalisation of Dandenong as a Metropolitan Activity Centre and National Employment and Innovation Cluster.
- To encourage best practice environmentally sustainable design, stormwater management and water quality treatment.
- To provide a high-quality, accessible and inviting public realm that is supported by a vibrant and strengthened 'Little India' precinct, new public open space, well designed connections throughout the precinct, and extensive activation to support a sense of safety and vibrancy.
- To provide for safe and efficient vehicle and pedestrian movements within and around the precinct, including integration with Dandenong Station, to promote connected and walkable neighbourhoods.

The preferred building heights are mid-rise north of Foster Street (approx. 3-12 levels) and with high-rise forms between Foster Street and the rail corridor, of up to approximately 35 levels.

Schedule 15 to Clause 43.04 Development Plan Overlay – Dandenong Plaza Shopping Centre (Dandenong Square)

The Objectives of DPO15 are as follows:

- To provide a framework for the facilitation of the redevelopment of the Dandenong Plaza with high density commercial, retail and residential uses, that compliments other relevant planning polices and controls for the site.
- To create a high-quality built environment that positively responds to new and existing public spaces and connections through the site, provides a diversity of building typologies and facilitates a diversity of land uses.
- To create new high quality and amenity connections through the site that integrate it with the surrounding street network, prioritise pedestrian movement and are designed to be universally accessible.
- To develop a series of high-quality and high amenity new and upgraded public open spaces that provide for a diversity of uses and optimise solar access.

The indicative building heights in the DPO are as follows:

- Area A (north, interfacing Council car park site): 65-78m (approx. 20-25 storeys).
- Area B (near corner Clow and Foster Streets): 34-50m.
- Area C (central): 50m.
- Area D (south, corner McCrae and Foster Streets): 50m.
- Area E (Clow Street central): 40m.

2.2 Urban Context Analysis

This section provides a series of analytical plans of the study area and its surrounds. These were developed to allow the design team to gain a comprehensive understanding of the location, as a basis for developing planning proposals. The analysis was informed by in-person visits and observations of the study area and by Council officer inputs. It identifies a range of distinct strengths and challenges, associated with the existing conditions. This analysis is focused on spatial and physical conditions, rather than, for example, the social and economic context.

Key findings

Gateway location

Dandenong Market is positioned at the northern end of the Central Dandenong retail/commercial area, at a major intersection where the Princes Highway meets Clow Street and Cleeland Street (and becomes Lonsdale Street in the central area).

The Market Precinct is visible and frames the arrival experience into Central Dandenong from the north.

Street grids

The local network of streets and lanes is strongly grid-based. However, the orientation of the grid 'shifts' or 'rotates' between the Market Precinct, the area between Clow Street and Lonsdale Street to the south, and the area west of Lonsdale Street.

Lonsdale Street forms the main 'spine' of the Activity Centre, linking between Dandenong Station (via Halpin Way or Foster Street) and the Market Precinct.

Topography

The study area is substantially graded, generally from north to south, with the broader topography generally 'falling' towards Dandenong Creek. Water / pre-settlement creek line.

Water / pre-settlement creek line

Overland water flows follow the general topography across the Precinct. Early topographic and ecological mapping show a former creekline or tributary to Dandenong Creek originating within the Market Precinct and extending south to Dandenong Creek.

Closed frontages

The Market building itself, and nearby buildings including Dandenong Square, present extensive 'closed' or 'inactive' frontages to the public realm (streets, lanes and spaces). These conditions restrict passive surveillance ('eyes on the street') potential and therefore reduce safety, whole also limiting visual interest and amenity for pedestrians.

These building edges give the impression that the activities are 'turning their backs' on each other and on the spaces between buildings. While large buildings generally require some 'back of house' areas, such as for deliveries, servicing and parking access, this should be balanced with a majority of active, visually permeable frontages, especially at ground floor level.

Currently, both the Market and Dandenong Square are predominantly 'inward looking', which limits their integration with surrounding streets and spaces. The significant activity within these retail spaces is largely concealed from surround streets.

By contrast, the traditional 'fine grain' fabric of Lonsdale Street presents a comparatively much higher extent of active frontages, to support safety and visual interest.



Image 18: Figure ground diagram

Underutilised land

The Market Precinct is strongly characterised by extensive, underutilised space. While extensive car parking is essential for the Market operations and customer access, surface car parking is an inefficient use of centrally-position, accessible land, and restricts pedestrian access and walkability.

While green open space such as Pioneer Park are highly valuable in urban centres, currently these spaces are poorly used and are isolated from other activity hubs in the centre.

Trees

The Precinct contains a significant number of mature trees, as identified in the Arborist's Report. That report indicates the trees of high and medium retention value. Several existing trees are sizeable and visually prominent.

The value of retaining established trees in urban areas is widely recognised, for reasons of cultural significant, heritage, shade/cooling, visual amenity and ecological habitat.

Fragmentation

Dandenong Market is, and 'feels', somewhat disconnected and isolated from other parts of Central Dandenong. Adjacent elements including large open car parks, busy streets and large intersections make access difficult, especially for pedestrians and cyclists.

The Precinct is somewhat of an 'island', removed from the more regular fabric of the surrounding urban area.

While the Market must necessarily accommodate vehicle access for both traders and customers, this is currently provided at the expense of the Market's connectivity with other nearby activities, and ease of access between these activities.

2.3 Economic Context

Investment proposals

Capital Alliance

Capital Alliance are working in partnership with Development Victoria on the Revitalising Central Dandenong (RCD) project.

Capital Alliance are undertaking projects around Dandenong Train Station / South-Western CBD precinct, including:

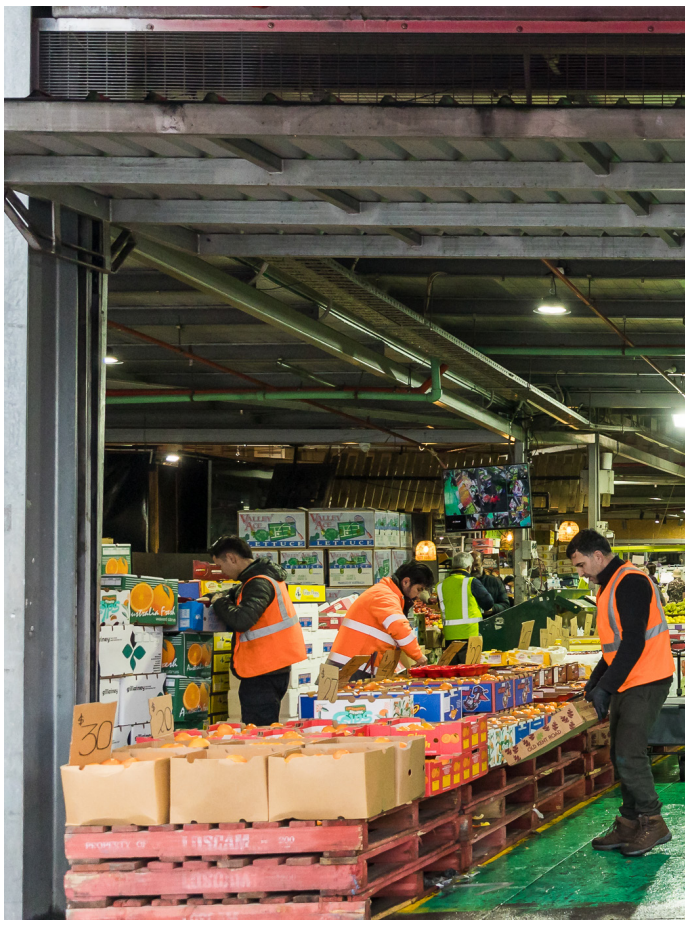
- Apartments
- Offices
- Retail
- New Little India offer

Dandenong Square shopping centre

Dandenong Square is a 53,000 sqm regional centre anchored by two discount department stores, three supermarkets, cinema, mini majors and speciality stores.

Centre trading performance has been relatively flat in recent years and lower than what was reported five years ago. Turnover was reported at approximately $200m in 2020, down to $176 in 2024. Annual pedestrians estimate was 10 million in 2020.

The centre owner, Pelligra, has plans for a refresh to selected spaces and amenities in the centre.



Other investment proposals

Other proposals in and around central Dandenong include:

- $30m apartment development in Abbott Street.
- $4.5m apartment development in Princes Highway.
- $4.5m townhouse development in King Street.
- Other residential and medical centre developments.
- Completion of residential apartment building on 27 Scott Street.

Residential apartment prices

- Prices for new or modern apartments in Dandenong are in the vicinity of:$5,500 /sqm for 1-bedroom apartments of approximately 50 sqm.
- $5,300 /sqm for 2-bedroom apartments of approximately 72 sqm.
- $4,900 /sqm for 3-bedroom apartments of approximately 94 sqm.
- However, prices around the $6,000/sqm can be achieved for new stock.



2.4 Community Context

Central Dandenong

The precinct

Located within the heart of the Dandenong Metropolitan Activity Centre (MAC), the Dandenong Market Precinct is a major social, cultural and economic destination for Melbourne's south-east. Anchored by the iconic Dandenong Market, the precinct attracts residents, workers and visitors from across Greater Melbourne and reflects the diversity and vibrancy of Greater Dandenong.

The community

Greater Dandenong is one of Victoria's most culturally diverse municipalities, home to over 150 nationalities and significant migrant and refugee communities. The municipality includes large Vietnamese, Indian, Sri Lankan, Cambodian, Afghan and Chinese communities, contributing to a rich multicultural identity and strong sense of place.

Dandenong has a relatively young and diverse population. The community comprises families, young adults, students, workers, newly arrived migrants and older residents, creating demand for a broad range of housing, services, community facilities and public spaces.

The precinct is situated within a significant employment centre, supporting jobs across retail, health, education, manufacturing, logistics and professional services. Dandenong Market is a key economic asset, supporting local employment, entrepreneurship and culturally diverse small businesses.

Excellent access to public transport, walkable connections and regional road networks positions the precinct as a highly accessible destination for residents, workers and visitors from across the south-east region.

Ongoing population growth and housing affordability pressures are increasing the need for a greater diversity of housing options, including affordable housing, key worker accommodation, social housing and medium to high-density residential development within and around the precinct.

The opportunity

The precinct presents a significant opportunity to evolve into a vibrant mixed-use destination that integrates housing, employment, community infrastructure, open space and cultural experiences while strengthening the role of Dandenong Market as one of Melbourne's premier multicultural destinations.



Image 19: Harmony Square celebration

3.0 Precinct Plan Directions

3.1 Stakeholder Engagement Summary

1. Social

- Safety (is a concern) and impacts visitation and investment.
- Reflecting the unique characteristics of Dandenong – remaining authentic and unpretentious.
- Celebrate multicultural vibrancy through placemaking.
- There's a need for spaces that cater to youth, families and diverse communities.
- Palm Plaza and surrounding spaces are seen as underutilised with ongoing maintenance issues. Participants called for beautification and activation.
- Some parks were described as intimidating and unsafe, dominated by groups perceived as threatening.
- Encourage outdoor dining, food trucks and cultural events.
- Design must prioritise inclusive, multi-use/ multi-generational spaces that feel safe and welcoming.
- Dandenong is perceived as a vibrant, multicultural hub with a strong sense of place. However, its identity is often 'externally defined', leading to misperceptions and a sense of an unsafe place in decline.
- There are many cultural spaces and activities, there is limited intercultural programming.
- Protect the market's core identity and affordability: Preserve the traditional market vibe, cultural diversity, and commitment to affordable goods.
- Improve access, safety, and amenity: Enhance parking (particularly disability access, larger bays, and safer layouts), traffic flow, cleanliness, rubbish collection, and overall visitor safety.
- Modernise thoughtfully while staying relevant: Refresh obsolete and low-value stalls by encouraging more diverse, high-quality, locally made goods, along with improved food court and gathering spaces.
- Strengthen long-term sustainability and activation: Extend operating days and hours, increase fruit and vegetable trading frequency, support waste-reduction and environmental initiatives, and reinforce the market's role as the heart, heritage, and social hub of Dandenong.

In response to community feedback

Council will introduce a requirement for all future developments within the precinct to prepare a Social Impact Assessment (SIA).

- The SIA will ensure that community values associated with the Dandenong Market inform decision-making. This approach embeds community priorities into future planning and development, supporting outcomes that respect the market's social, cultural, and economic significance.

2. Economic

- Congestion and accessibility, during busy times.
- The market is seen as the beating heart of Dandenong, with strong emotional and cultural significance.
- Enhance market visibility, edge activation and connectivity to surrounding public realm.
- Support development feasibility through targeted incentives, streamlined approvals and partnerships with developers.
- Develop branding and marketing strategies. Celebrate Dandenong's multicultural identity and unique offerings.
- Concern about gentrification and displacement. Strong suggestion that the Precinct Plan can't be successful without a strong focus on 'the economics of the area'.
- Promote inclusive economic development, with a strong focus on supporting and celebrating the cultural diversity of the area.
- Declining business performance, rising operating costs and poor retail curation.
- The area lacks the diversity and vibrancy needed to sustain local enterprise.

3. Environmental

- Support economic resilience through curated retail strategies, flexible leasing models and activation programs that boost weekday foot traffic.
- Consider how locals could more safely and easily access the precinct by foot, bike, etc.
- Tree removal associated with development projects is a major concern in central Dandenong, which already has low canopy cover and high vulnerability to heat.
- The removal of trees especially remnant species threatens already limited biodiversity in Central Dandenong.
- Greater Dandenong's drainage network includes pits, pipes, channels and outflow systems that in some areas are up to 100 years old, and many of them were not designed for modern rainfall intensities. This contributes to flash flooding across Dandenong during heavy rain.



Image 20: Consultation booth











Image 21-23: Phase 1 & 2 consultation







Image 24-31: Phase 3 consultation



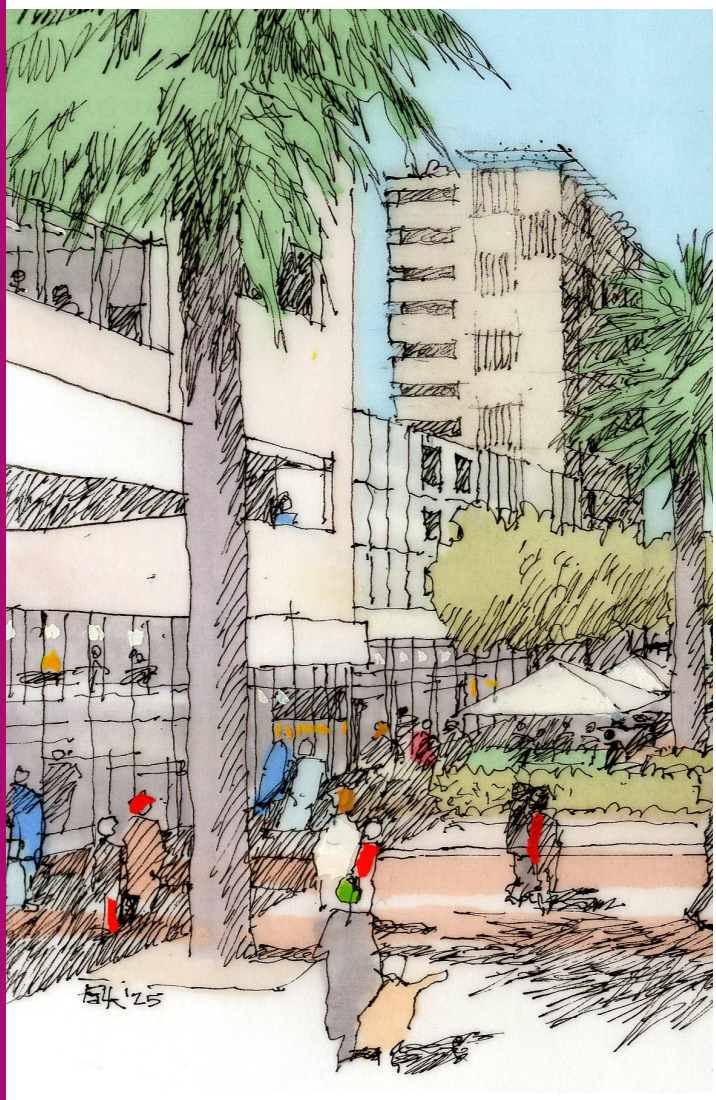




3.2 Precinct Vision

Vision Statement

The Dandenong Market Precinct will be a vibrant, connected and welcoming destination at the heart of Central Dandenong, with the iconic Dandenong Market as its centrepiece and defining identity. It will offer high-quality, sustainable public spaces and contemporary development that create an attractive destination for visitors and a liveable, safe and inclusive neighbourhood for residents.



The Dandenong Market Precinct will be a vibrant and engaging, integral, connected component of the Central Dandenong experience. It's easy to get to, comfortable and enjoyable to spend time in, and safe and welcoming for all.

The Precinct is characterised by varied contemporary urban spaces – streets, lanes, parks and plaza spaces – whose design is founded in sustainability, providing green shaded, clean settings which utilise and conserve water, and connect to the history of this place. These spaces are framed by contemporary, dynamic, engaging buildings, creating a distinctive and widely recognised urban setting, centred around its famed Market.

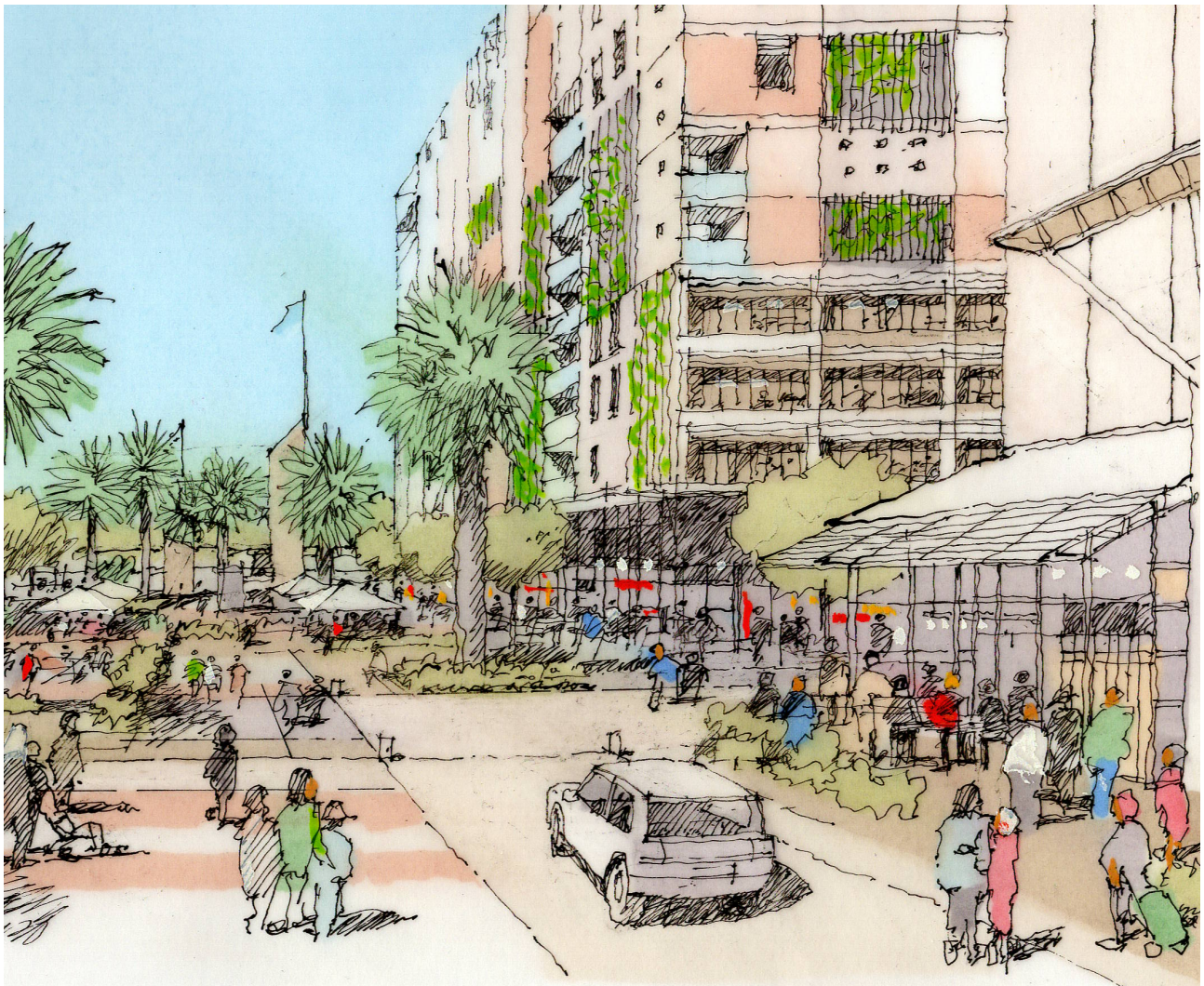


Image 32: Artist impression - Palm Plaza

The Precinct is both an exciting destination for visitors and a highly liveable, comfortable and safe urban neighbourhood for all.

The people of Dandenong are proud of their Market, which has evolved as a prominent, exciting visitor destination with a valued local role, emphasising food, community and cultural diversity, while retaining and celebrating its historic character and community value.

More people living, working and playing in and around the Market makes the Precinct a place of opportunity.

Food businesses are supported and thrive, social connections abound, culture and connection – to Country and to history - are celebrated, high quality produce is provided and accessible to all, and regional producers are rewarded.

Neighbouring buildings and streetscapes have also been renewed to form a contiguous, prosperous setting, and forming strategic synergies and community connections between the Market, Dandenong Square shopping centre, Palm Plaza and beyond.

Dandenong Market Precinct is a revitalised, inviting and compelling place for the community and visitors, which has transformed by building on its unique values, and is prepared for a sustainable future.

3.3 Precinct Plan Principles

These principles have been informed by analysis of the precinct and its urban context, and discussions with stakeholders, including during the Inquiry by Design workshops and focus groups. The Principles are categorised by Theme and intended to be locally specific and place-based. Therefore they are not 'high level' goals which apply to urban renewal projects generally, but are targeted to the distinct local issues, constraints and opportunities of the Dandenong Market Precinct.

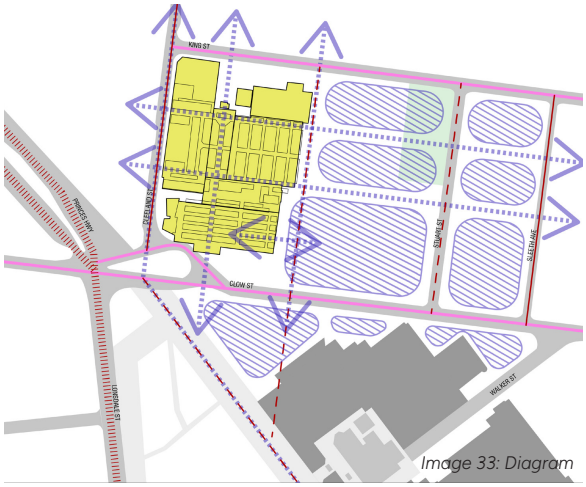


Image 33: Diagram

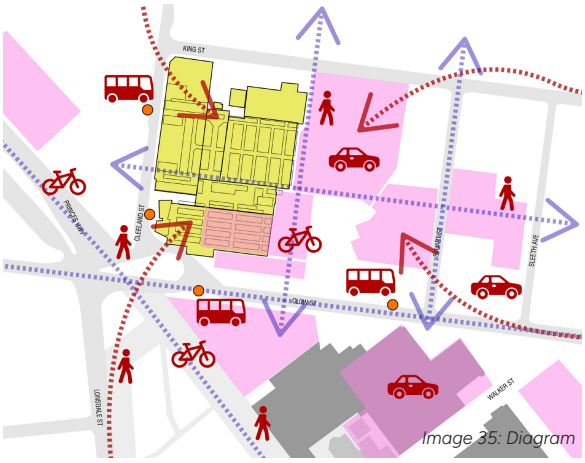


Image 35: Diagram

Theme 1: Urban design and revitalisation

Optimise future use of Council-owned land to support activation and safety, business prosperity, resident liveability and community enjoyment.

Establish a legible, permeable urban structure within the precinct, integrated with surrounding streets and lanes.

Extend the urban structure of the Market through new streets and lanes in the precinct. Build on and enhance existing streets as part of a cohesive public realm network.

Work with land owners and development partners to develop an integrated vision and Precinct Plan.

The Precinct Plan should leverage off the vision for Dandenong Square shopping centre, Dandenong Market and other strategic sites.

Theme 2: Access and mobility

Reduce the presence and spatial impact of car parking in the Precinct.

Integrate market car parking in new development, to optimise use of land assets.

Consider and investigate parking locations outside the immediate Market precinct, to take pressure off the Market area itself and to free up land for increased activation.

Support and encourage walking and cycling to and through the Precinct

Ensure walking and cycling routes to the Market and through the precinct and safe and attractive.

Provide engaging streets and spaces, well-located bicycle parking/storage, seating and resting places.

Elevate the experience of public transport access to the Precinct.

Integrate bus stops in new development and public realm spaces. Provide comfortable waiting spaces for buses.

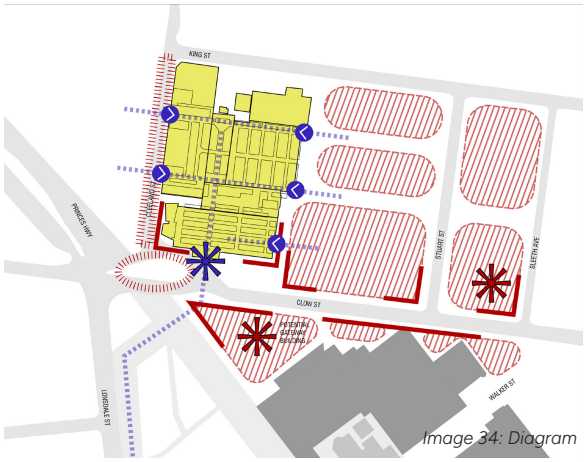


Image 34: Diagram



Image 35: Diagram

Theme 3: Built form and catalyst action

Integrate the proposed Dandenong Community Hub.

The Precinct Plan should incorporate the proposed siting and layout of the DCH, as a future potential development, while also considering alternative approaches and configurations.

The DCH would be supported by a new residential community within the precinct.

Facilitate redevelopment of the 'triangle' car park site for a significant gateway building.

Envision a landmark building or cluster/precinct on this large, prominent, Council-owned land parcel, to mark the entrance into Central Dandenong, and signify a forward-looking, revitalised city centre.

Facilitate new development across the precinct.

New buildings should be planned to accommodate a range of uses and to support activity across the daytime and evening, throughout the week.

Support new, mid-rise scale built form

Mid-rise (approximately 5-10 storeys, with some variation) provides an optimal combination of 'good' density, for activation, safety and community interaction, human scale streets and public spaces which are comfortable to spend time in and the basis for sustainable buildings.

Providing a diverse housing offer will support community cohesion, new housing opportunities for younger people, ageing in place, and a vibrant neighbourhood around the Market.

Theme 4: Economics and implementation

Incorporate mixed-tenure, high-quality housing in the precinct.

Housing density and diversity should be optimised, including varied tenure types (market, mid-market, key worker, affordable, Build to Rent and potentially community and social housing).

Establish a food/dining precinct, potentially integrated with Dandenong Square shopping centre.

Expand the focus of food, cooking, cultural diversity and community through a new dining precinct or 'eat street', as a focal place for local residents, visitors and tourists.

Activations, events, entertainment and community gatherings will help to attract people to this new place.

Leverage Council land to facilitate residential-focused development activity.

Council's extensive land ownership in the precinct presents significant opportunities to catalyse and facilitate redevelopment, which in turn brings a raft of social, economic and environmental benefits.

A residential focus will help address current housing shortages, increased affordability and local activation including when the Market is closed.



Image 36: Diagram

Theme 5: Public realm and water/hydrology

Celebrate water in the public realm, by integrating Water Sensitive Urban Design throughout the public realm, including exiting streets.

Work with existing overland water flows, filter and reduce runoff and support landscaping.

Reflect the original creek tributary which ran through the precinct, connecting to Dandenong Creek.

Roof stormwater harvesting for building and irrigation use.

Celebrate origin, place and identity through an enhanced public realm that reflect heritage and history, including the retention of existing mature trees.

Restore and enhance the cultural landscape and ecology, reversing the damage. Design for non-human kin.

Protect and celebrate the existing mature River Red Gums (Pioneer Park area), Palm and Plane trees (Palm Plaza), street trees (Clow Street at Market entrance) and other significant trees in the precinct.

Revitalise Palm Plaza.

Increase activity and activation, potentially through limited vehicular access.

Protect and retain existing palm trees.

Consider the future role of Palm Plaza as a potential "eat street' dining precinct.

Theme 6: People, place and precinct character

The Dandenong Market Precinct will celebrate the people, cultures and stories that make Dandenong unique, reinforcing the Market as its social and cultural heart. Reflecting the area's rich multicultural identity, the precinct will provide a welcoming, inclusive and vibrant destination that supports community connection, cultural expression and everyday activity.

Celebrate Dandenong Market as the cultural, social and economic heart of the precinct.

Recognise and showcase the multicultural identity, heritage and stories of the local community.

Support community gathering, cultural events, markets, festivals and public life.

A strong sense of place will be fostered through high-quality public spaces, community facilities, public art, events and programming that celebrate local heritage and diverse communities. New development should enhance precinct character by creating active, safe and attractive streets and public spaces that are engaging throughout the day and evening.

Create welcoming, inclusive and accessible spaces that support people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities.

Encourage active and vibrant streets, laneways and public spaces that promote safety and social connection.

Integrate public art, interpretation and placemaking initiatives that strengthen local identity.

Provide a diverse mix of housing, community facilities and services that support a growing and inclusive community.

Ensure new development contributes to a distinctive precinct character and reinforces the Market's role as a destination of regional significance.

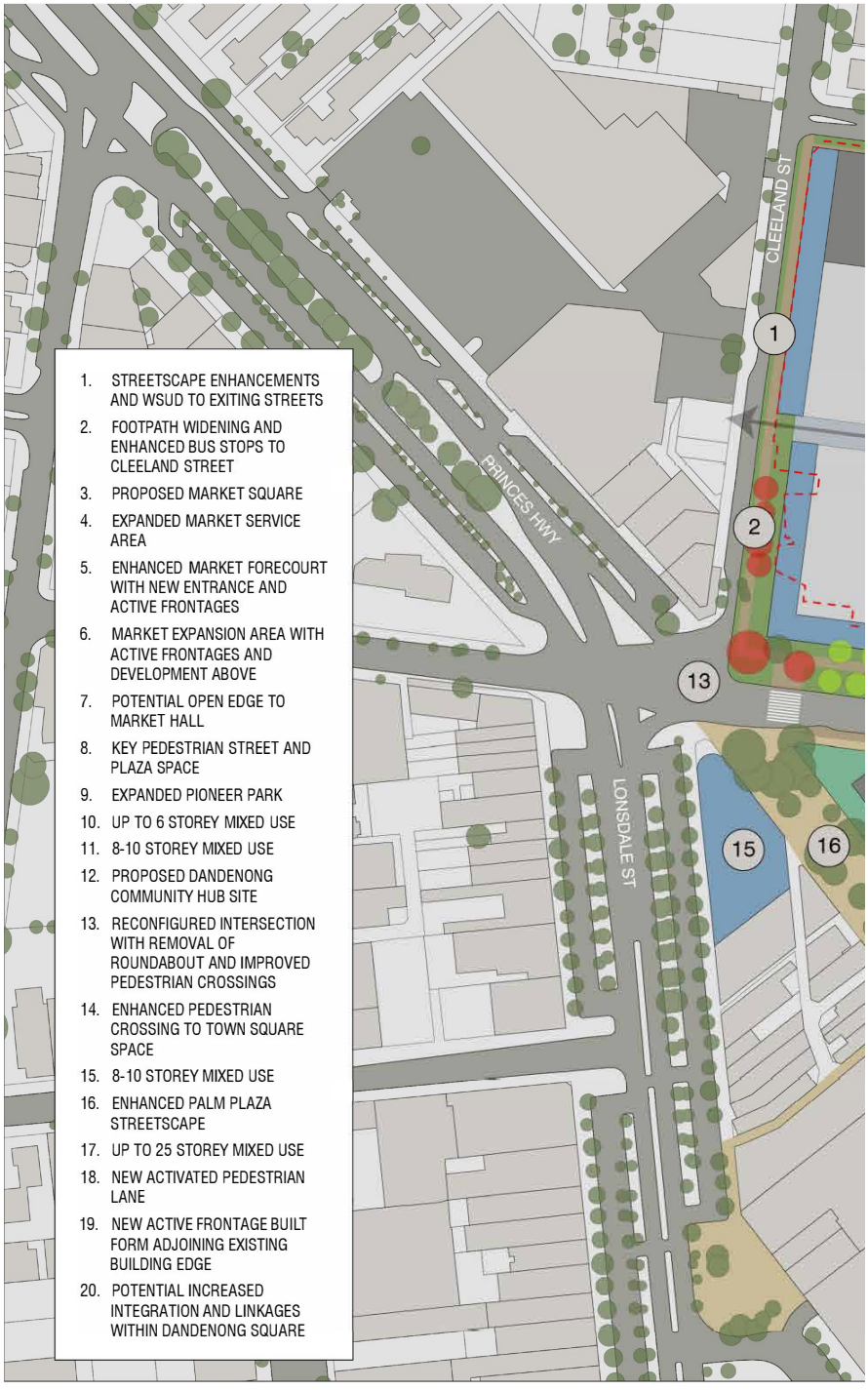


Image 37: Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD)

4.0 Precinct Plan framework

4.1 Precinct Plan

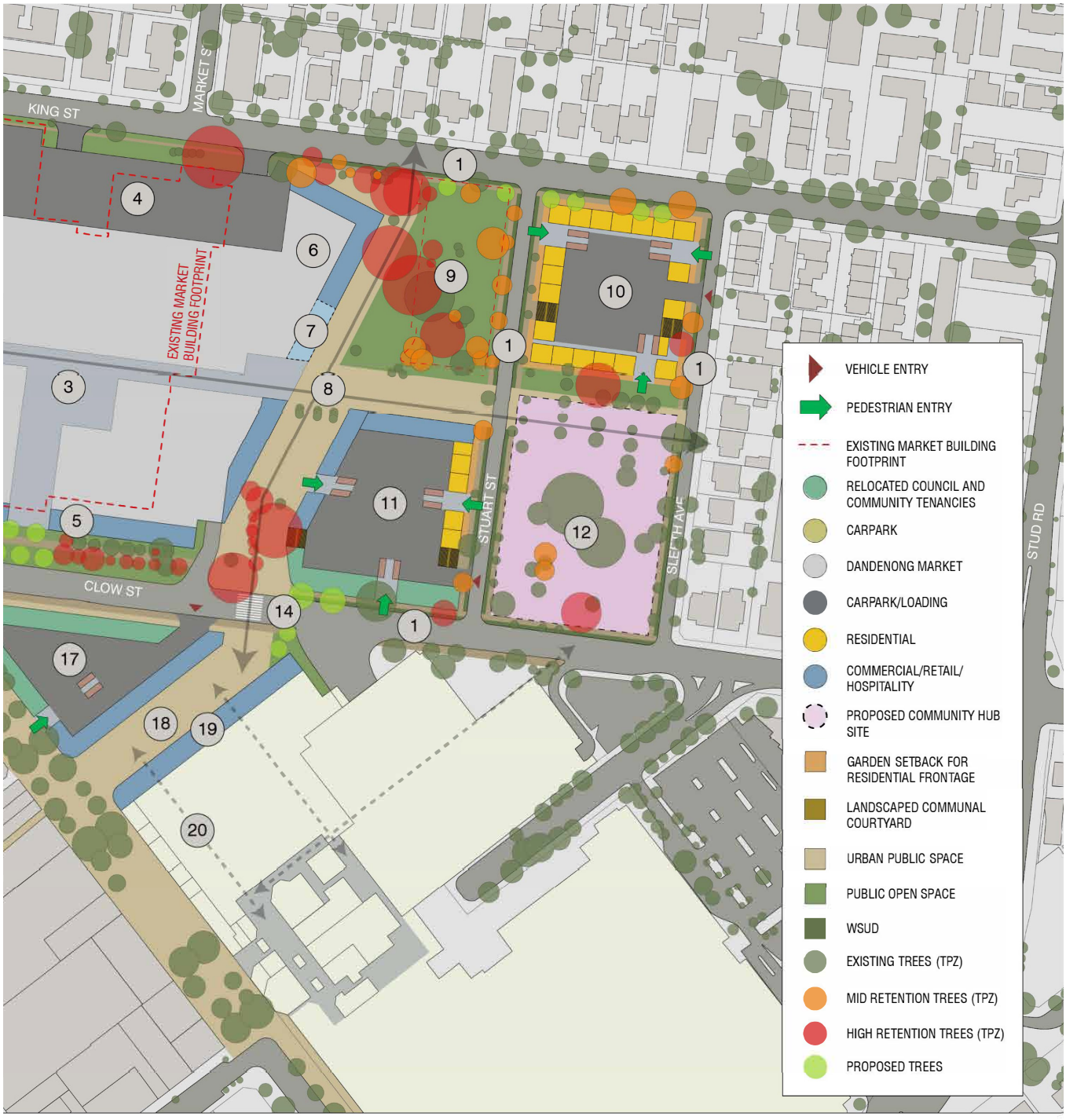
1. Ground floor plan



McP in collaboration with BKK ARCHITECTS

HillPDA CONSULTING · Movement & Place Consulting · GLAS landscape architecture and urban design · DesignFlow · AMPLIFIER COLLECTIVE

Image 38: Ground floor plan



PROJECT
DANDENONG MARKET PRECINCT PLAN

PROJECT NO
BKK502

0 25m

REV
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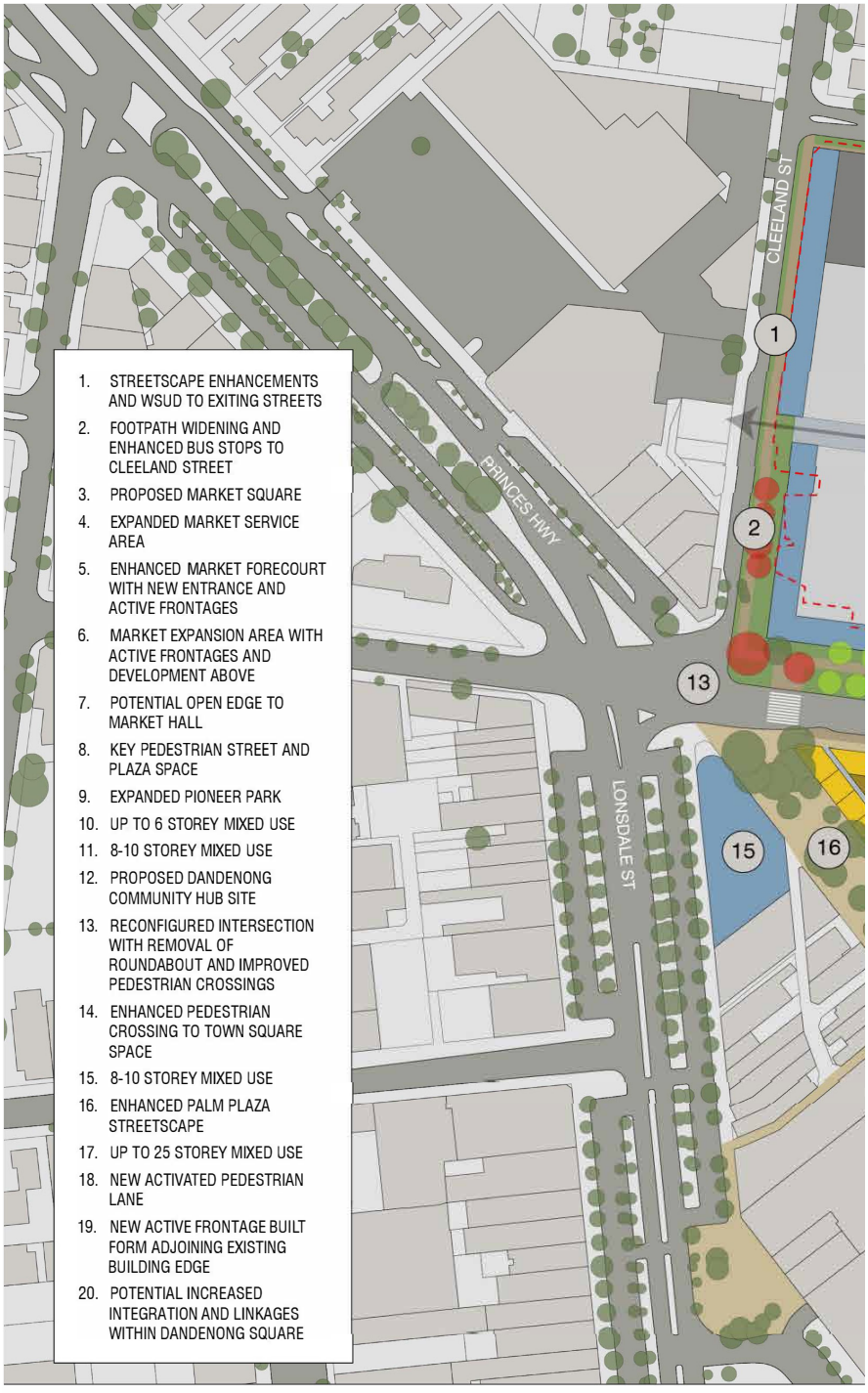
DRAWING TITLE
GROUND FLOOR PLAN

SCALE
1:2000 @ A3

DATE
18-11-2025

DRAWING No.
BKK502-BKK-ZZ-DR-A-10001

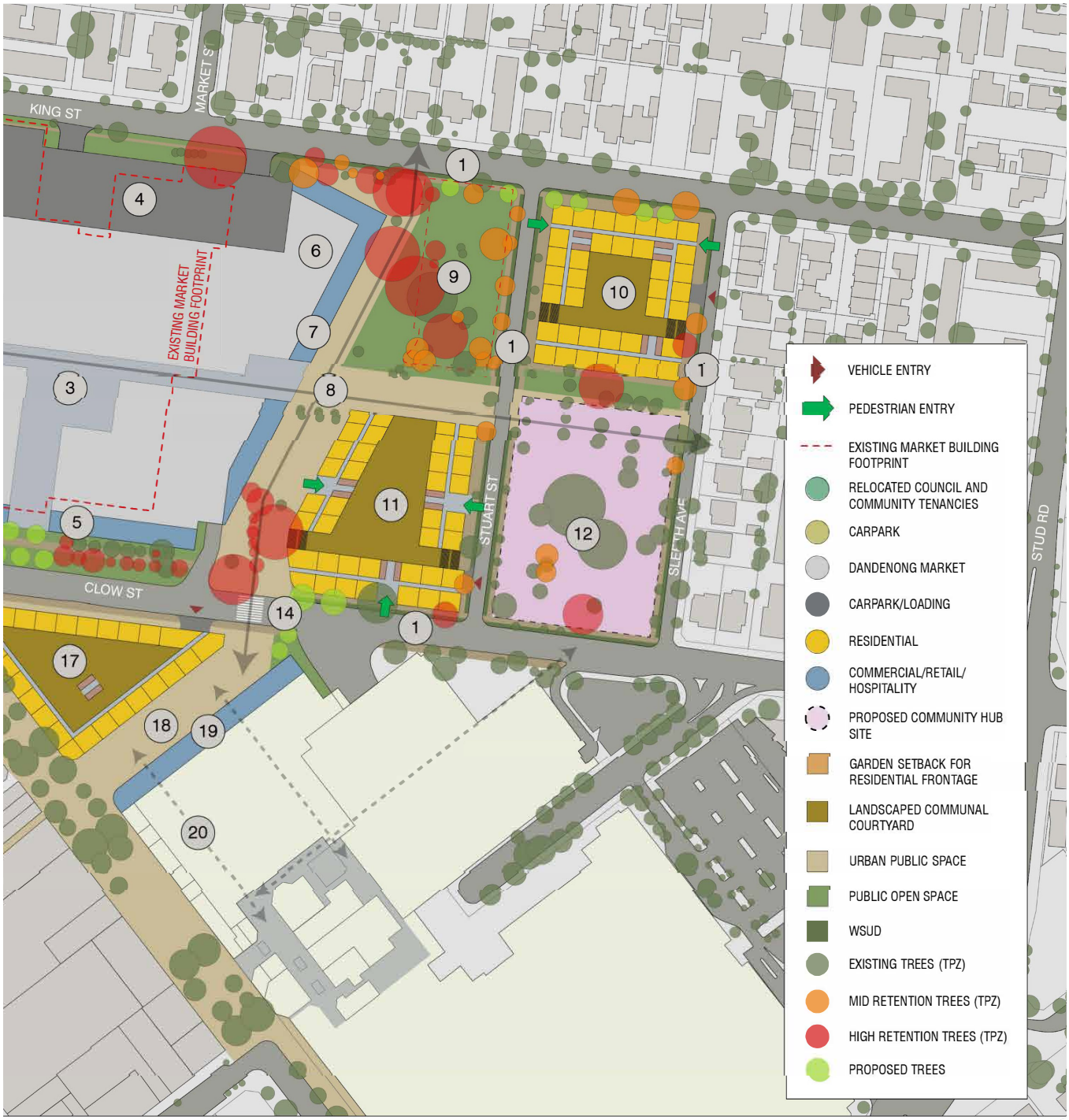
2. Typical floor plan



McP in collaboration with BKK ARCHITECTS

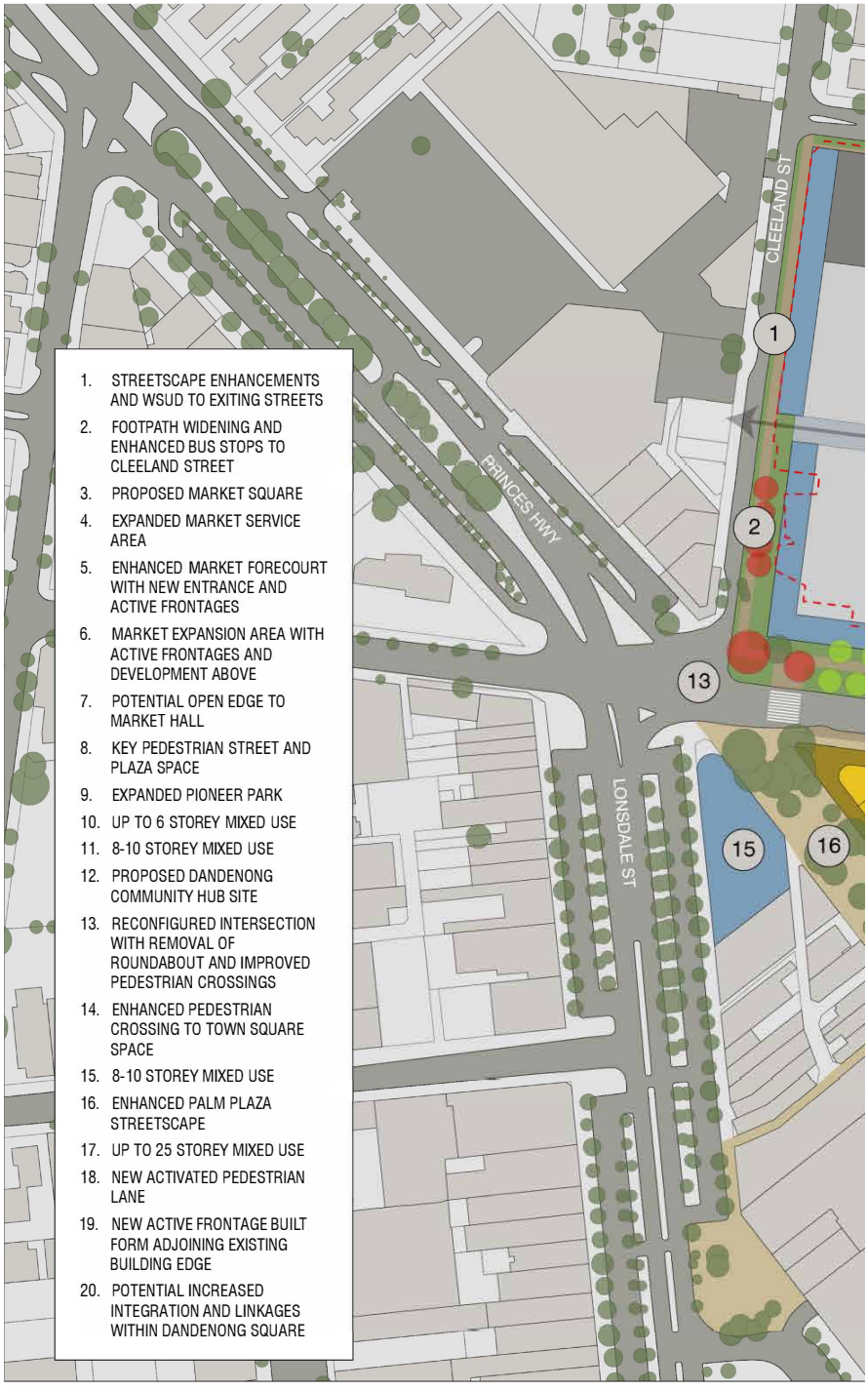
HillPDA CONSULTING · Movement & Place Consulting · GLAS landscape architecture and urban design · DesignFlow · AMPLIFIER COLLECTIVE

Image 39: Typical floor plan



PROJECT DANDENONG MARKET PRECINCT PLAN	PROJECT NO BKK502	0 25m	REV A
DRAWING TITLE TYP FLOOR PLAN	SCALE 1:2000 @ A3	DATE 18-11-2025	DRAWING No. BKK502-BKK-ZZ-DR-A-10002

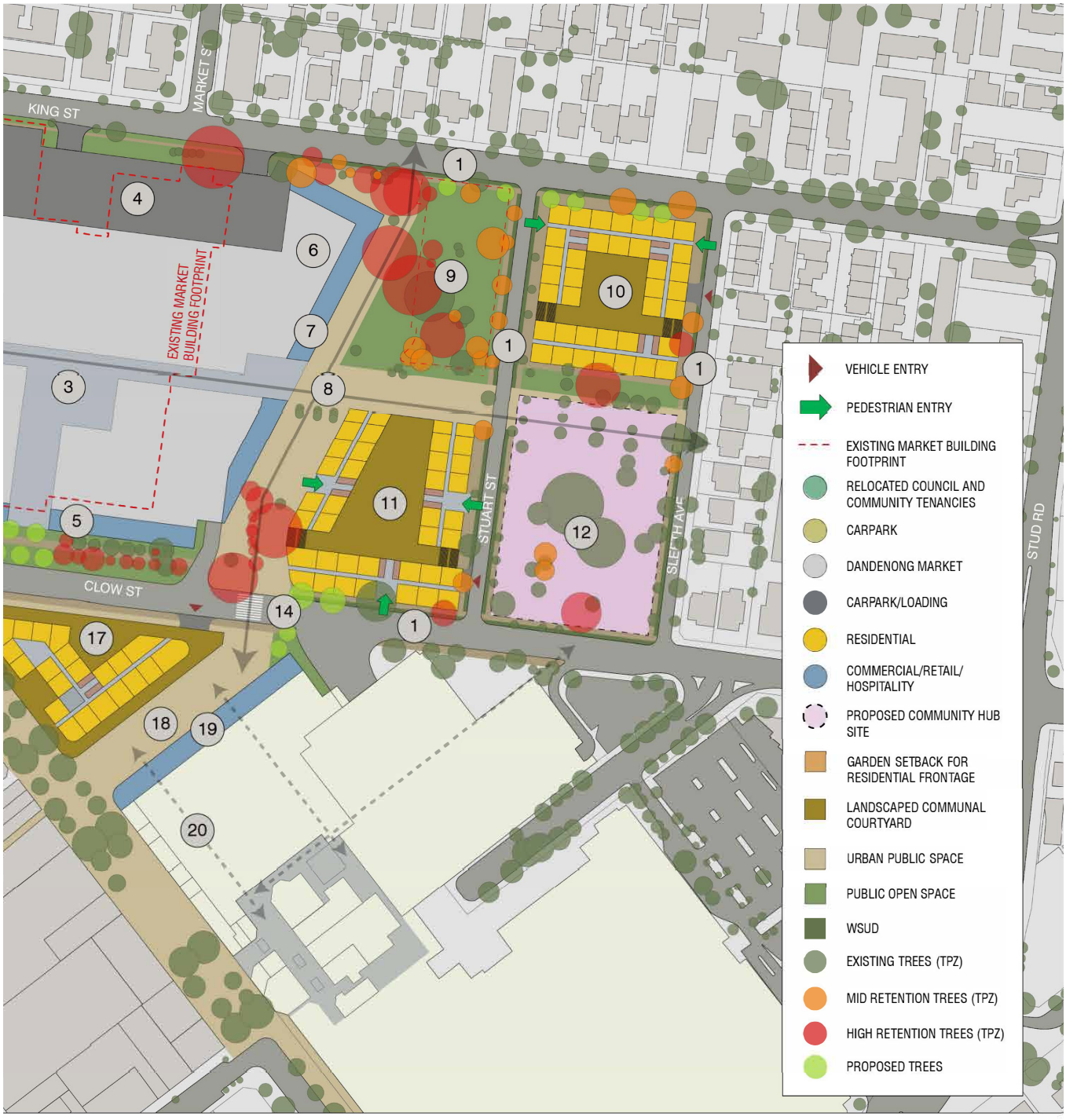
3. Upper Level Plan



McP in collaboration with BKK ARCHITECTS

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Image 40: Upper level plan



PROJECT
DANDENONG MARKET PRECINCT PLAN

PROJECT NO
BKK502

0 25m

REV
A

DRAWING TITLE
Upper Level Plan

SCALE
1:2000 @ A3

DATE
18-11-2025

DRAWING No.
BKK502-BKK-ZZ-DR-A-10003

4.2 Key Design Moves

1. Market / food 'heart' of the Precinct

Creating an integrated place which spans the Market Square (internal) and the adjoining plaza space (north-south link), as a food-focused, vibrant 'heart' of the Precinct, with direct connectivity to Palm Plaza and Pioneer Park.

2. North-south 'spine' / 'Eat Street'

An active, vibrant connection into the heart of the Market precinct, as a terraced public setting – an engaging arrival space for diverse food experiences, comprising seating, social and play spaces, extensive landscaping and Water Sensitive Urban Design initiatives.

3. Water/vegetation corridor

A public connection celebrating and interpreting water, topography and native planting, re-creating the original, pre-settlement drainage line and EVC corridor in this location, which connected to Dandenong Creek.

4. Potential supermarket location (active edges)

A boutique or specialist supermarket in this location could integrate with the Market, have a prominent entrance and adjacent servicing and car parking, while presenting active edge 'sleeving' to Pioneer Park.

5. Residential ground floor frontages

Streetscapes in the eastern part of the Precinct will have active residential frontages – potentially including small front gardens, porches/stoops, front doors and windows, to activate the public realm and reinforce the 'urban neighbourhood' setting.

6. Prominent infill development

Four Council owned properties at the intersection of Lonsdale Street and Palm Plaza, opposite the larger triangle site present an opportunity for consolidation and redevelopment for mid-rise residential built form, while retaining the prominent curved brickwork 'prow' building. This site will also be prominent on arrival into Central Dandenong and will afford extensive views for future residents.

7. Potential community focused uses at ground floor

Some buildings could accommodate new community facilities and spaces at ground floor (and other lower levels) to support visual prominence and ease of access to these facilities, and a high level of integration with surrounding streets and spaces.

8. Prominent corner frontages/ facade forms at gateway/arrival space

The proposed buildings on sites facing the intersection of Princes Highway and Clow Street can present prominent 'prow' of 'flatiron' profiles to this arrival space, as a result of site shapes and the 'radial' street grid layout around this intersection Removal of the teardrop roundabout will allow the Market building(s) to also present a more prominent gesture to this arrival space.



Image 41: Key moves diagram

A. MARKET/ FOOD 'HEART' OF THE PRECINCT

B. NORTH-SOUTH 'SPINE' / 'EAT STREET'

C. WATER/ VEGETATION CORRIDOR

D. KEY TENANCY - ARRIVAL

E. POTENTIAL SUPERMARKET LOCATION (ACTIVE EDGES)

F. RESIDENTIAL GROUND FLOOR FRONTAGES

G. PROMINENT INFILL DEVELOPMENT

H. POTENTIAL COMMUNITY FACILITIES FOCUS COMMUNITY FACILITIES FOCUS AT GROUND FLOOR

I. PROMINENT CORNER/ 'PROW' FORMS AT GATEWAY/ ARRIVAL SPACE

J. ACTIVE/ FINE-GRAIN FRONTAGES

K. WATER SENSITIVE URBAN DESGIN IN STREETSCAPES

L. NORTH-SOUTH 'SPINE' TO PARK DESTINATION

M. MARKET SERVICING/ PARKING

N. TREE RETENTION

O. LANDSCAPE TERMINATION TO EAST-WEST AXIS

P. PARK EXPANSION AND RENEWAL

Q. MARKET EXPANSION

R. CENTRAL LINK THROUGH MARKET WITH NATURAL LIGHT

S. MARKET MAIN ENTRANCE FROM CLOW STREET

T. MARKET MAIN ENTRANCE FROM CLEELAND STREET



9. Park expansion and renewal

Pioneer Park is currently underutilised and isolated – removed from the Market itself by an expansive car park. The Precinct Plan allows its re-integration and centralisation in the configuration of the precinct, along with a significant expansion.

10. Active / fine grain retail streets

Building frontages close to the Market will be characterised by a fine-grain configuration of multiple, narrow frontages to tenancies, many entrances and open shopfronts to provide for visual interaction and passive surveillance opportunities. It is envisaged that these ground floor spaces will be occupied by retail shops, food outlets and other small commercial premises, which work 'in concert' with the Market interfaces.

11. Water sensitive urban design in existing streetscapes

Existing streets including Stuart Street, Cleeland Street and Clow Street are proposed to be upgraded with Water Sensitive Urban Design infrastructure to support drainage, water management and amenity outcomes.

12. North-south 'spine' to Park destination

The proposed north-south link makes Pioneer Park a 'destination' and arrival point for the precinct, and a central focus for neighbouring retail and residential activities. This central public realm system will form the 'heart' of the precinct and will be integral with the movement spines through the Market itself.

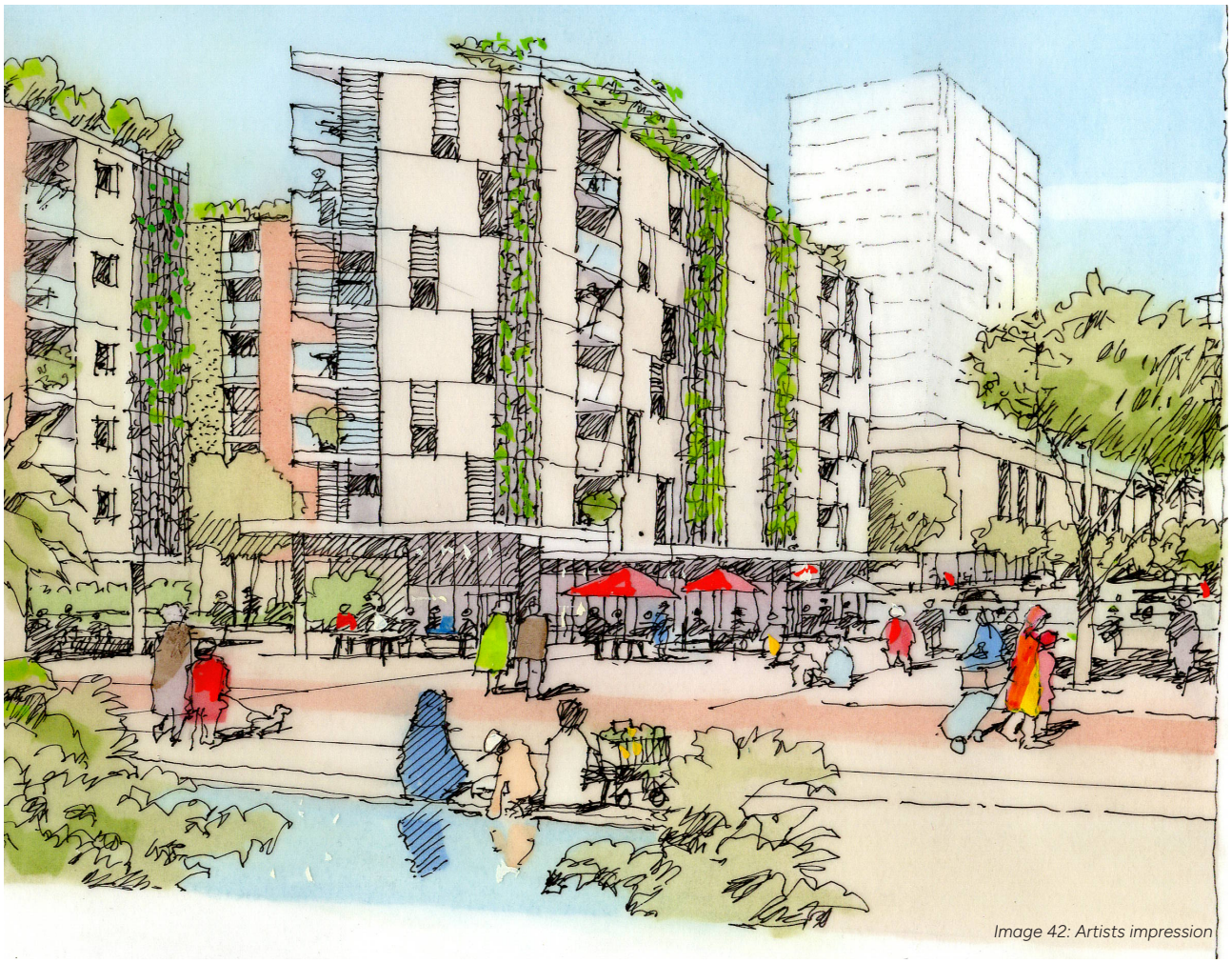


Image 42: Artists impression

13. Tree retention

The Precinct Plan is configured to retain many existing trees, particularly those assessed as high and medium retention value by an Arborist. While a large-scale redevelopment cannot reasonably retain all trees in the precinct, the building footprints and public spaces are arranged to 'take in' significant trees to support their retention.

14. Market servicing/parking

The Market's existing servicing/loading/storage and waste management area on King Street will be retained and rationalised. Traffic flow on King Street will be improved by banning right turns entering the Market's King Street loading dock and continue to allow left and right turns exiting the loading dock.

15. Landscape termination to east-west axis

The central east-west public realm link through the precinct extends as a central corridor through the Market to Cleeland Street to the west. To the east, this link will arrive at and be terminated by a specific landscape feature, potentially comprising youth-oriented passive space (not a skate park), and/or a sensory garden for example, to terminate this vista.

4.3 Community Benefits



1. Social

- Increased housing supply: approx. 1,000 dwellings, plus further housing above the redeveloped Market.
- Expanded public open space (163% more than existing).
- Increased safety: through active frontages and increased local population.
- Proposed response to Designing with Country/ pre-settlement conditions in the landscape design and placemaking, through meaningful and ongoing engagement with Traditional Owners.
- New community facilities.
- Diversity of activity, choice of places and experiences.
- Place activation and programming (curation).
- Unique Market-centred neighbourhood: a potential international demonstration project.
- SIA requirement: Introduce a requirement for all future developments within the precinct to prepare a Social Impact Assessment. The SIA will ensure that community values associated with the Dandenong Market inform decision-making



Image 43: Artist impression - Clow Street

2. Environmental

- Retention of significant trees.
- Extensive new landscaping/planting.
- Water Sensitive Urban Design, to protect waterways and mange flooding.
- Benchmark/high-performance sustainable buildings.
- Improved walkability and public transport connectivity.
- Urban cooling, through canopy trees, water, materials, planting.
- Solar access and natal ventilation to housing.

3. Economic

- Substantial investment: in the order of $1billion total.
- Business support, through increased local population.
- Enhanced business conditions.
- Increased visitor attraction.
- Enhanced regional competitiveness.
- Improved image of Central Dandenong.
- Jobs growth: construction, operation, Market expansion, local facilities.

5.0 Catalyst Development Opportunities

5.1 Design and Development Guidelines

1. Land uses

Housing

- Focus development opportunities on housing provision, with limited commercial/retail and community uses at lower levels, in appropriate locations.
- Facilitate development of a range of housing types and tenures, within higher-density building forms.
- Ensure provision of affordable housing types, including for key workers.

Retail

- Locate retail and food and beverage tenancies close to and facing the Market building, to establish two-sided active food-focused spaces or "Eat Streets", and to encourage engagement with Pioneer Park and other public realm spaces.

Community

- Locate community uses in prominent, accessible location(s), close to key movement routes and public spaces, and with strong visual relationships to the public realm.

Car parking

- Encourage lower-than typical car parking rates, given the proximity of buses, shops, facilities and the train station.
- Make car parking within buildings flexible and not attached to individual titles.
- Allow/require each parcel to be self-sufficient for car parking, including the Market itself.
- Conceal car parking within basements, or lower levels and sleeved by active frontages.

Communal open space

- Integrate landscape and public realm design with building design.
- Integrated developments with adjacent public realm spaces, including Pioneer Park, while maintaining clear public/private delineation.
- Incorporate communal open spaces within residential developments, to enhance amenity (sunlight access, outlook, play space) and opportunities for social interaction.
- Design courtyards, podiums and rooftops to accommodate communal outdoor space with landscaping, where appropriate.
- Provide space for deep soil planting on development sites.

2. Frontages

Retail/commercial/community

- Address level changes across parcels through stepped frontages/levels, particularly along the western frontage of Parcel 5 facing the Market.
- Provide narrow shop frontages and individual entries to retail tenancies, to increase activation.
- Utilise clear glazing to support visual interaction and passive surveillance.
- Provide weather protection along the western frontage or Parcel 5, for retail uses.
- Provide retail/commercial tenancies suited to small independent businesses.

Residential

- Provide ground floor residential frontages to streets and public spaces in the eastern part of the Precinct, which is more removed from the Market.

- For residential ground floor frontages, balance activation with privacy and sense of safety, such as through raised ground floors, small front gardens or stoops within setback spaces, and low-height, visually permeable fences.
- Support strong visual connections between the public realm and upper-level residential windows and balconies.

3. Architectural design

- Design parcels as individual, green urban neighbourhoods, within an integrated Precinct and wider city centre. This approach should inform entry locations and arrival experiences, positioning of dwellings and communal spaces, outlook, apartment sizes and configurations, integration with the public realm and building envelope design.
- Require a high level of design quality, by experienced and reputable design teams, in recognition of the emerging precinct and pioneering mature of these development parcels. This may involve involvement of Design Competitions and/or Design Review Panels, for example.
- Utilise high quality, robust and enduring materials, which will retain a positive visual impression over time. Facades to be low-maintenance. Avoid materials that degrade due to weather and other factors.
- Use natural, textured, tactile materials at the lower levels, such as brickwork, masonry, textured concrete and timber.
- Avoid superfluous façade decoration or applied elements on facades.
- Require sustainable buildings, which support amenable higher-density living and reduce living costs through energy and water savings.
- Require low-carbon approaches to building designs, spanning construction, both in operational and embodied carbon.
- Integrate passive solar design in facades, appropriate to orientation, outlook and exposure, to optimise natural light and shading.
- Avoid where possible, services presenting to streets and public realm.
- Locate services in basements, carparks or well-designed enclosures.

4. Internal layouts

- Provide a mix of apartment/dwelling types and sizes.
- Provide generous, welcoming and safe residential entrances.
- Provide windows to communal corridors, for natural light, ventilation and outlook.
- Provide small ‘incidental’ communal spaces, such as along corridors, with seating and outlook, to support social interaction.
- Provide inset balconies to apartments, to provide a sense of enclosure and privacy, with enhanced weather protection.
- Provide for effective servicing/loading to retail spaces and general waste management.
- Provide well-located, generous bicycle storage, which is visually connected to the building’s communal, circulation and/or lobby spaces and the public realm, and incorporate higher than statutory bike parking numbers.

5.2 Design Excellence Approach

"Good design is not just about the aesthetic improvement of our environment, it is as much about improved quality of life, equality of opportunity and economic growth."

The Value of Good Design, Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), United Kingdom.

The Precinct Plan Design Excellence approach must be used rigorously to inform, guide and make decisions on the planning, design and delivery of major projects, plans for strategic sites, and projects of public significance (infrastructure), with the aim to improve the quality of buildings, public places and spaces for the benefit of the community. The design principles, guidelines and design review processes outlined in this Precinct Plan should be an integral part of all infrastructure projects and programs across the Dandenong Market Precinct.

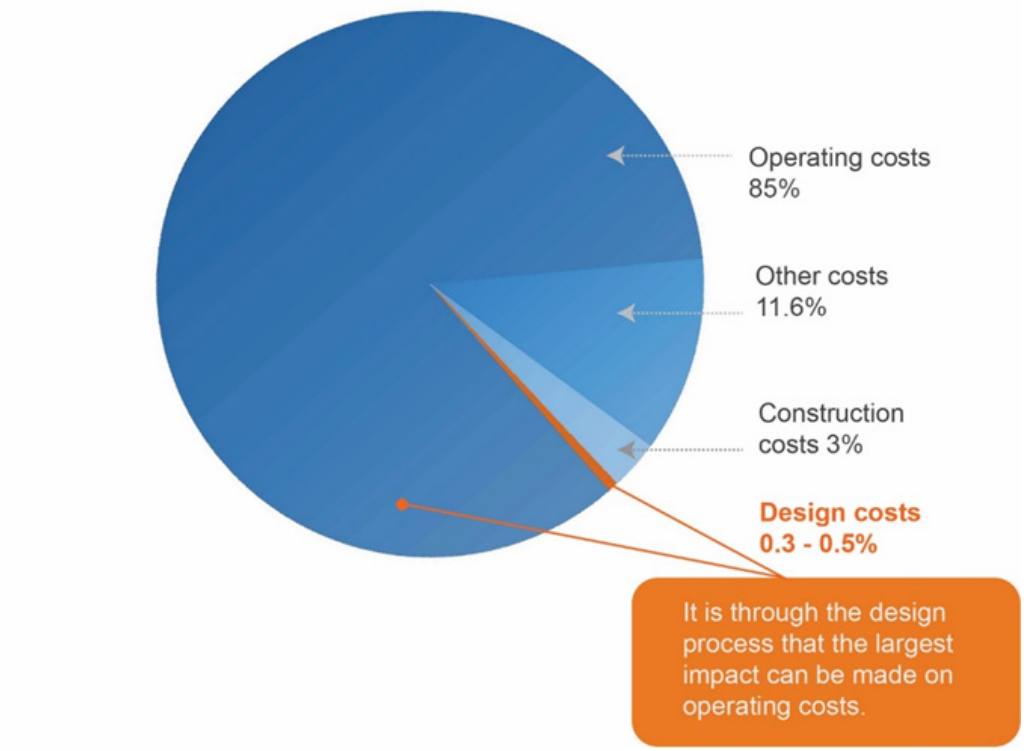


Image 44: Lifecycle cost of an asset, Good Design - Guide to Design Review draft, Office of the Victorian Government Architect (OVGA).

1. What is Good Design?

Design is both a process and an outcome, it comes in many forms and is defined by much more than how something looks. High-quality design has the potential to shift negative perceptions of growth through the creation of both fit for purpose and inspiring environments. Good design is essential in developing communities with a sense of civic pride, improved quality of life and equal opportunity. While for state and local governments, good design can help reduce public expenditure in areas such as healthcare and crime prevention while boosting economic productivity. To create great places for Greater Dandenong, we need to elevate the role, importance and value of design, towards finding solutions to today's pressing challenges that will benefit all our communities.

Design represents less than 1% in the lifetime cost of a building, but it is through the design process that the largest impact can be made on both construction and operating costs. Construction costs are typically 2–3 per cent of the whole-life costs, while operating costs are estimated to be 85 per cent. In comparison, design costs are small, between 0.3–0.5 per cent, yet they can significantly affect the function of a project across its lifespan and the operating costs associated with this.

Design proportionally represents the smallest investment in the total lifetime cost of an asset, yet it can provide the greatest cost saving benefit over time.

2. Good design processes for projects

Encourage all new interventions within the Market Precinct to employ good design, through application of the design objectives outlined in this Precinct Plan, and effective design and procurement methodologies by:

- Early engagement with multidisciplinary design disciplines within Council and integrate design in the early formation stages.
- Providing guidance for delivery including methodologies (e.g. design review and advisory processes).
- Fostering design thinking, identifying opportunities, and testing scenarios and options early in project right at the start of the planning processes.
- Aligning with and informing the frameworks for Council's Assets Lifecycle, Project Management and the Infrastructure and Environment Strategies.

3. Design Review

All major projects within the Market Precinct should follow the Design Review Process and Procedures as outlined in the Good Design - Guide to Design Review draft, Office of the Victorian Government Architect (OVGA).

- Design Review will add to the rigorous adherence to the initial design intent ensuring it's not lost through the design refinement, documentation and delivery phase. Design Review is an independent and impartial evaluation process in which a panel of multidisciplinary experts from across all aspects of the built environment assess the design of a proposal.
- The projects recommended for design review are design schemes, masterplans and projects of public significance, and the process is designed to improve the quality of buildings, public places and spaces for the benefit of the community.

The Design Review Panel will:

- Conduct design review of major projects and offers feedback and observations that will lead to the improvement of schemes but does not redesign them.

- Give decision makers the confidence and information to support innovative, high-quality designs that meet the needs of our communities and customers, and to resist poorly designed schemes.
- Provide expert guidance in the appointment of architectural and design consultancies, help us run design competitions, and provide post implementation reviews of strategic projects.

4. Design Competition

A design competition is a competitive process in which an organisation or government body invites designers to submit a proposal for a precinct, site or building. An independent panel of design professionals selects the winner based on an agreed selection criteria. This involves multiple teams who offer ideas, solutions and/or services to a brief to encourage multiple innovative outcomes. A competitive design process may involve a design competition. Major project design procurement and delivery within the Market Precinct should consider appropriate design competition process to improve value and achieve community benefits.

Innovation in delivery models:

- Working with the project management and procurement teams to improve awareness and innovation in delivery models for Council owned and or partnership projects.
- Explore contemporary design and delivery options, i.e.: Public Private Partnerships, Novation, Project Alliancing and design competitions for city shaping projects.

5. A stronger design culture active engagement

Encouraging Council and community interest, participation and investment in better design, planning and development, raising awareness and expectations relating to design, facilitating better design, and supporting advocacy for better outcomes by:

- Capacity building through fostering a change in design culture – design is not an 'optional extra', but essential from vision to conception to project completion.
- Ongoing advocacy for good design outcomes in the Market Precinct.
- Encouraging the building industry to communicate and collaborate with Council and local communities.
- Providing an informative website where information about design and processes of the Market Precinct which is accessible to all.
- Providing case studies where successful design processes and outcomes have been achieved, so the Greater Dandenong community can be proud of their great places.



Image 45: Dandenong Civic Centre

5.3 Development Sites

Parcel 10
King Street and Stuart Street

A mid-scale residential cluster, at the interface between the Market/retail setting to the south-west and the residential area to the north-west. Adjoining Pioneer Park and the new plaza space, this parcel presents a compelling residential opportunity for families and diverse households.

Development parameters

Site area

- 72m x 72m.
- 5,184 sq.m approx.

Land use/ Development use

- Ground floor (all frontages): Residential, including opportunities for townhouse-type units, small front gardens, stoops etc.
- Upper levels: Residential (mixed tenure).

Building configuration

- Perimeter block layout, with central courtyard.
- Potential for up to four individual buildings (north, east, south, west).
- Pedestrian access from Stuart Street, Sleeth Avenue, King Street and east-west plaza (south).
- Vehicle access from Stuart Street and Sleeth Avenue.
- Car parking at ground floor, sleeved active uses to external spaces. Potential additional parking in basement level.

Building heights

- Up to 6 levels.
- Provide a sensitive and well-considered transition of building heights, particularly along the northern and eastern edges of the precinct, to respect and respond positively to adjacent residential interfaces.

Setbacks

- 5m to 8m to King Street, Stuart Street and Sleeth Avenue, for street tree planting.
- 10m approx. to south, to protect existing high-value tree.

Street wall heights

- Up to 3 levels with setback at upper levels.

Interfaces

- Active residential frontages at ground floor to all frontages.

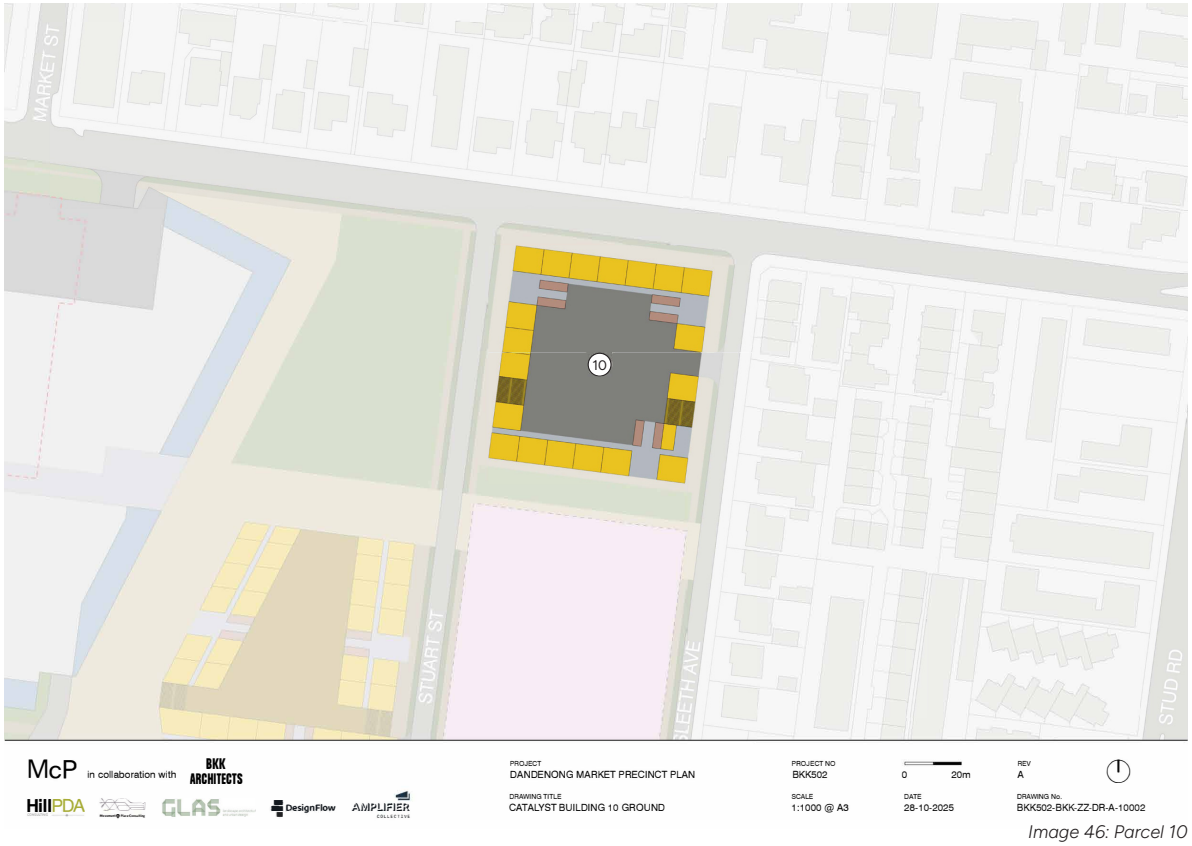


Image 46: Parcel 10

Carparking

- Vehicle access and servicing from King Street (subject to further analysis).
- Secondary vehicle access from the northern end of Sleeth Avenue.
- Modelling indicates 140 vehicles can exit during the morning peak indicating the maximum parking allowance should not exceed 467 spaces in the whole city block.
- Ensure an appropriate number of well-designed on-site parking spaces with clear, safe, and efficient operation. Impacts on pedestrian crossings and the wider local movement network will continue to be assessed as part of the next phase of Precinct Plan work.
- Geometric allowance for 108 spaces per level in this building.

Indicative residential yield

- 220 dwellings.

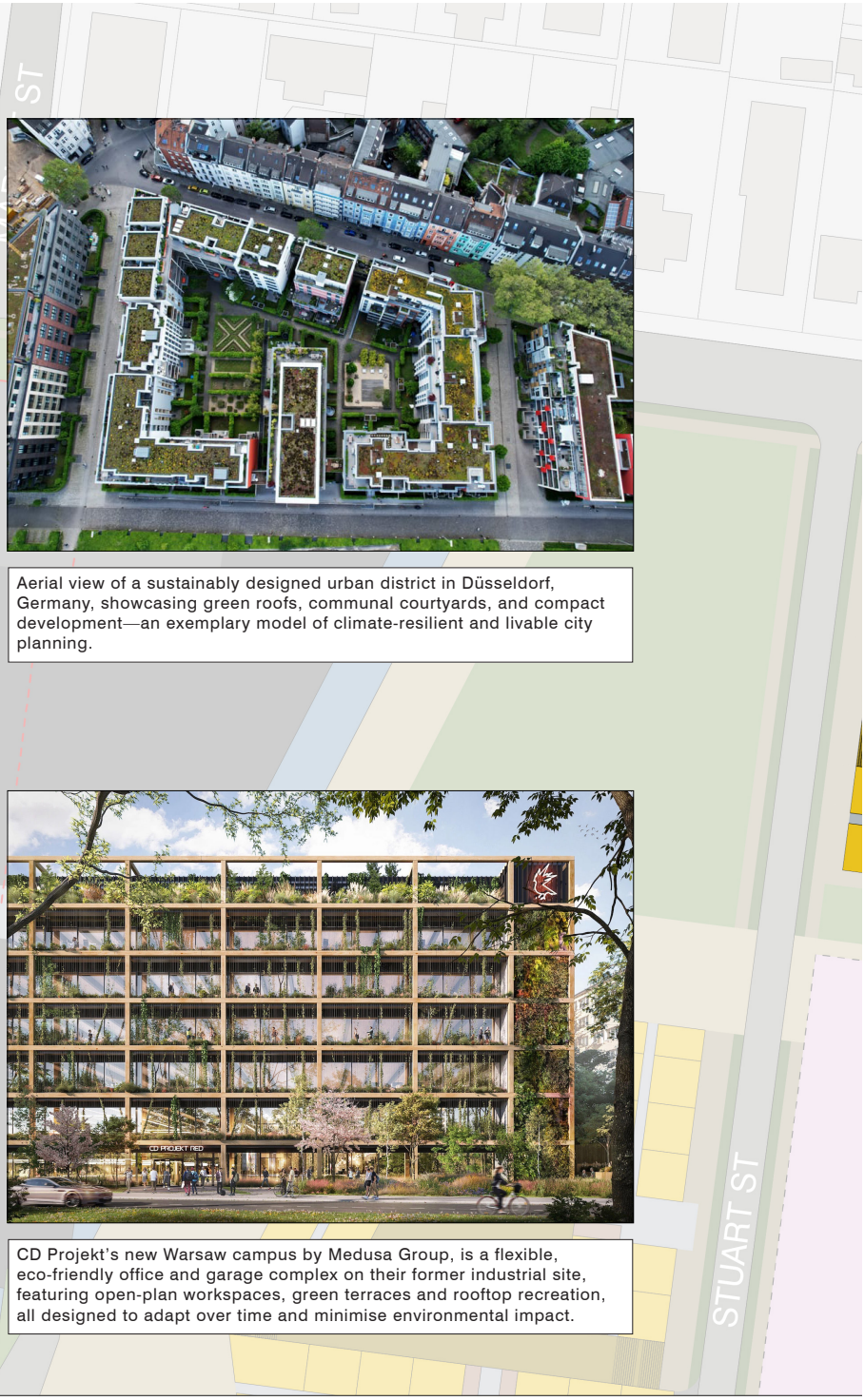
Access

- Potential pedestrian entrances at all four frontages.
- Potential vehicle entrance from three street frontages.

Internal arrangement

- Double-loaded corridors.
- Corner lift cores, or central to each wing.
- Central communal courtyard.
- Potential rooftop communal spaces.

Parcel 10



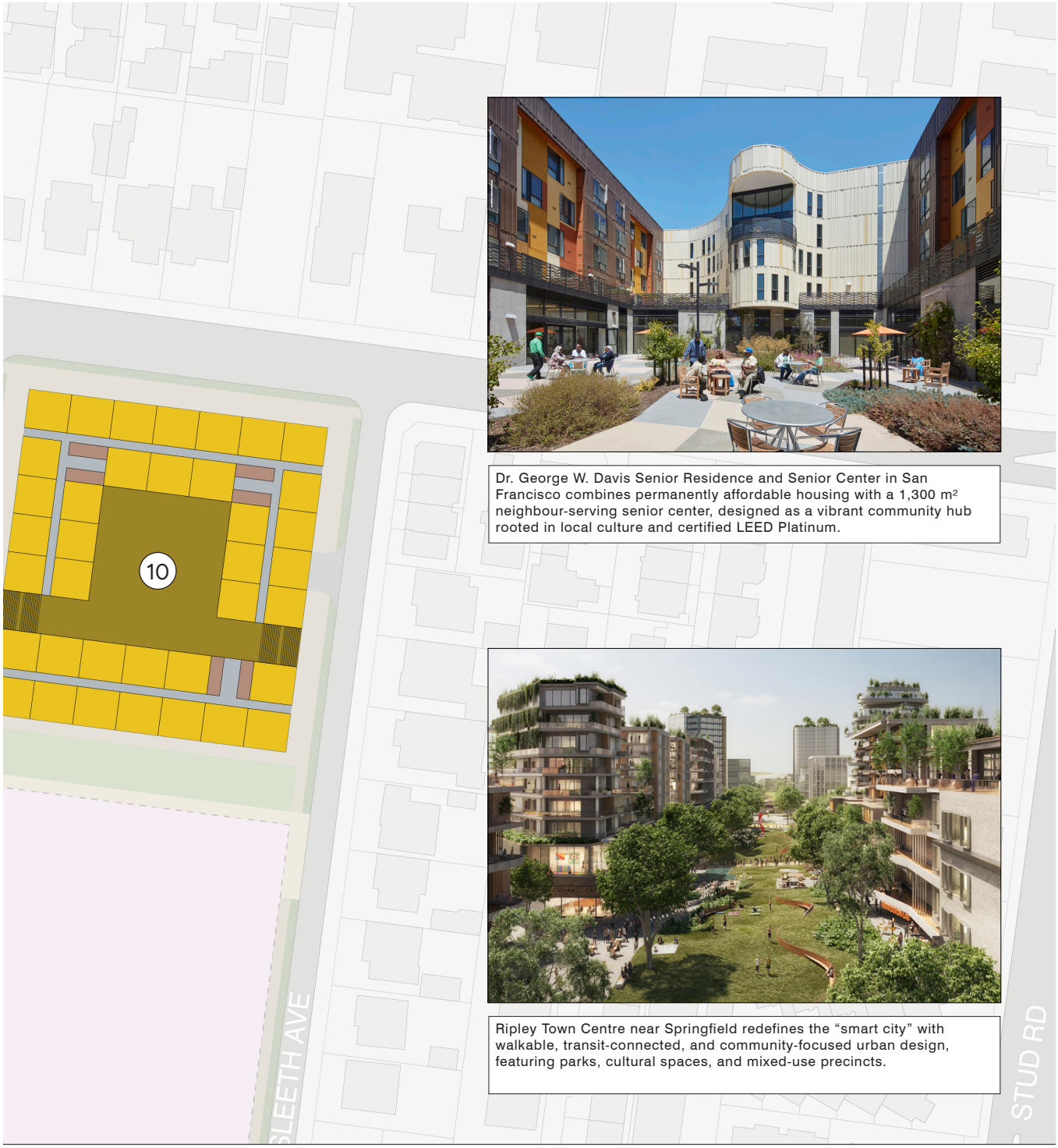
Aerial view of a sustainably designed urban district in Düsseldorf, Germany, showcasing green roofs, communal courtyards, and compact development—an exemplary model of climate-resilient and livable city planning.

CD Projekt's new Warsaw campus by Medusa Group, is a flexible, eco-friendly office and garage complex on their former industrial site, featuring open-plan workspaces, green terraces and rooftop recreation, all designed to adapt over time and minimise environmental impact.

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Image 47: Parcel 10



Dr. George W. Davis Senior Residence and Senior Center in San Francisco combines permanently affordable housing with a 1,300 m² neighbour-serving senior center, designed as a vibrant community hub rooted in local culture and certified LEED Platinum.

Ripley Town Centre near Springfield redefines the “smart city” with walkable, transit-connected, and community-focused urban design, featuring parks, cultural spaces, and mixed-use precincts.

PROJECT DANDENONG MARKET PRECINCT PLAN	PROJECT NO BKK502	0 20m	REV A
DRAWING TITLE CATALYST BUILDING10 PODIUM	SCALE 1:1000 @ A3	DATE 28-10-2025	DRAWING No. BKK502-BKK-ZZ-DR-A-10002

Parcel 11
Clow Street and Stuart Street

A substantial opportunity for a mixed-use, mid-rise development in a perimeter block configuration, with strong building edges to the public realm and enclosing a central communal courtyard above concealed car parking.

Development parameters

Site area

- 75m x 85m.
- 6500sqm approx.

Land use/ Development use

- Ground Floor (Clow Street and plaza frontages): Community (SMRC, NH + tenants).
- Ground floor (Market interface): Retail/food and beverage.
- Upper levels: Residential (mixed tenure).
- Existing and future community uses to be considered based on community infrastructure demand and supply analysis.

Building configuration

- Perimeter block layout, with central courtyard.
- Potential for three individual buildings (east, west, south).
- Pedestrian access from Clow Street, plaza and Stuart Street.
- Vehicle access from Stuart Street.
- Car parking in semi-basement (1-2 levels), with active uses to external spaces and accommodating the topographic fall from north to south.

Building heights

- 10 levels.

Setbacks

- Ground floor (south): 8m, for street tree planting along Clow Street.

Street wall heights

- Up to 8 levels (based on 25m visual recognition distance).

Interfaces

- Active frontages to north, west, south.
- Vehicle access and servicing to east (Stuart Street.

Carparking

- Ground floor (part-basement), sleeved by active ground floor uses.
- Appox. 200 spaces.

Indicative residential yield

- 380 dwellings.

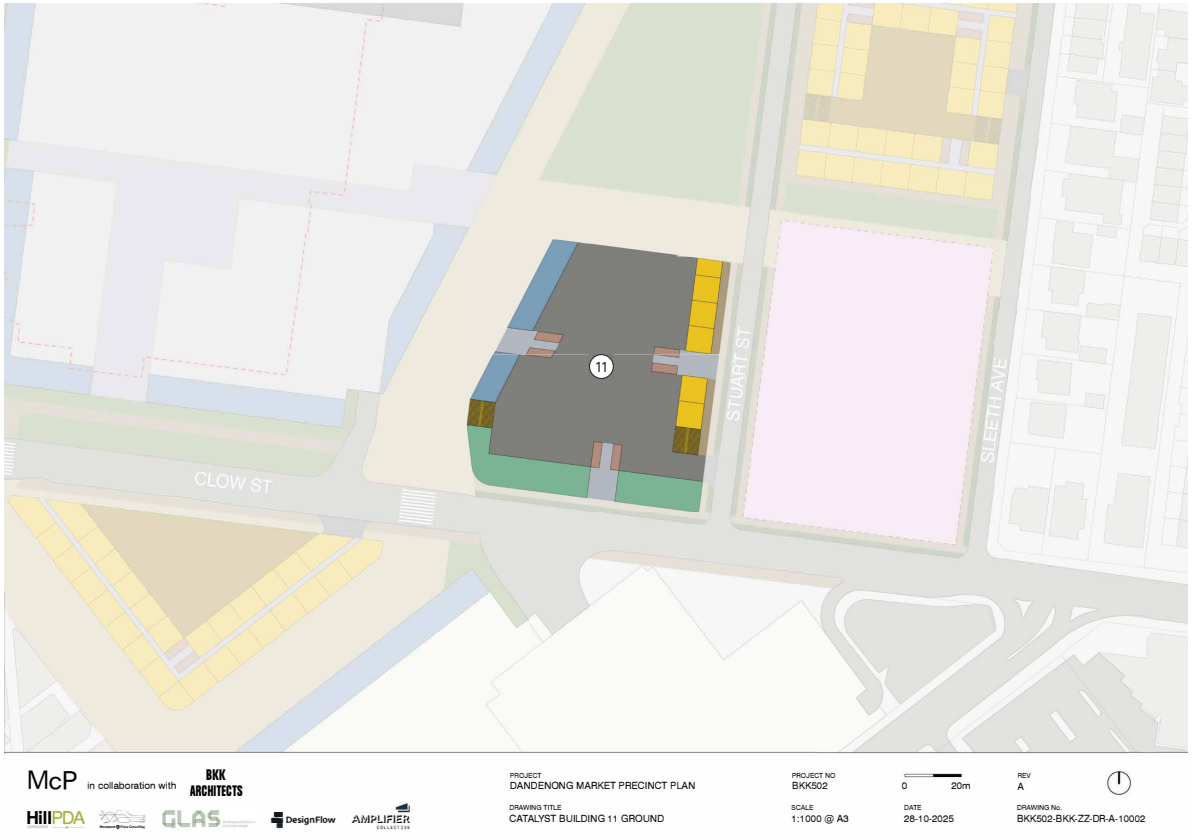


Image 48: Parcel 11

Access

- Main access/ entrances – ped entrance from Civic Plaza and Clow Street.
- Vehicular entrance/s- Stuart Street.

Internal arrangement

- Double-loaded corridors.
- Corner lift cores, or central to each wing.
- Central communal courtyard.
- Potential rooftop communal spaces.

Parcel 11



Sekisui House for Ripley Town Centre (QLD) focused on a 20-minute neighbourhood, with 10 interconnected precincts. The vision emphasises medium-/high-density living, seniors' housing, retail expansion, sustainability, transit connections and green public spaces.



Henning Larsen's Humlestaden is a 15.5-hectare masterplan south of Gothenburg, Sweden, reimagining the Garden City model for about 3,000 residents, combining green public spaces, mixed-use areas, and nature corridors to prioritise sustainable, community-centred urban living.

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Image 49: Parcel 11



Oculus designed Melbourne's first new urban park since 1980, Market Street Park, transforming a 1,900 m² former car park into lawns, water play, a café plaza, bike lanes, and landscaped native plantings.

Arkadia in Alexandria is a mid-rise multi-residential development by DKO & Breathe for Defence Housing Australia, comprising 152 dwellings, designed with recycled brick, communal sunlit spaces and a public pocket park to enhance neighbourhood integration.

PROJECT	PROJECT NO		REV	
DANDENONG MARKET PRECINCT PLAN	BKK502	0 20m	A	
DRAWING TITLE	SCALE	DATE	DRAWING No.	
CATALYST BUILDING 11 PODIUM	1:1000 @ A3	28-10-2025	BKK502-BKK-ZZ-DR-A-10002	

Parcel 12
Proposed Dandenong Community Hub Site

The site is for a mixed-use development featuring the Dandenong Community Hub (DCH) at ground level/s, integrated with adjoining community open spaces that connect to Pioneer Park. The Community Hub will would feature multi-purpose community facilities providing a range of complementary services in a single accessible location.

Development parameters

Land use/ Development use

- Co-locating community facilities with housing may improve the hub's financial sustainability, maximise the value of Council land assets, and enhance safety, accessibility and local activity.
- The development will provide secure, accessible entry for all users and sufficient car parking for both community and residential uses.

Building heights

- 6-8 levels.
- Provide a sensitive and well-considered transition of building heights, particularly along the northern and eastern edges of the precinct, to respect and respond positively to adjacent residential interfaces.

Carparking

- Ensure an appropriate number of well-designed on-site parking spaces with clear, safe, and efficient operation. Impacts on pedestrian crossings and the wider local movement network will continue to be assessed as part of the next phase of Precinct Plan work.

Access

- A youth-focused landscaped public space is proposed between Sites 10 and 12, supporting the DCH while maintaining pedestrian access from Sleeth Avenue and acting as a visual focal point linking the Market Precinct to Cleeland Street.



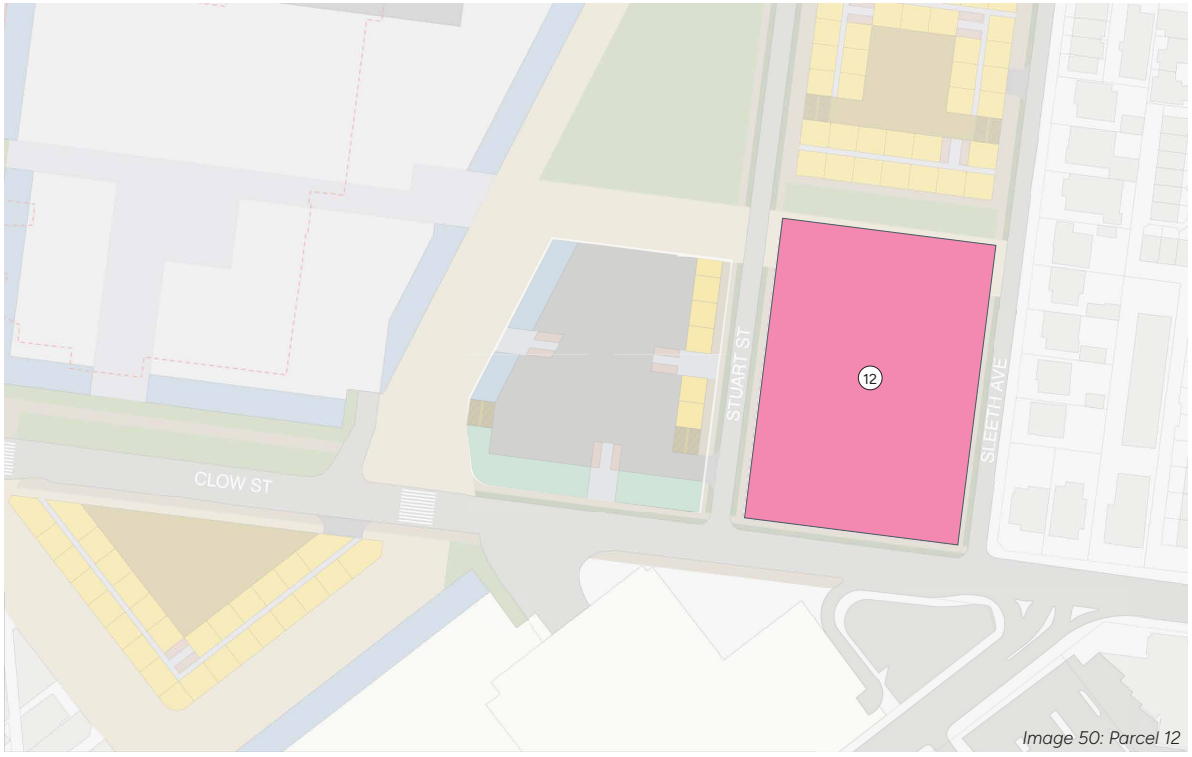


Image 50: Parcel 12





Image 51-53: Integrated community facility, adjacent Queen Victoria Market

Parcel 15
Lonsdale Street and Palm Plaza

An infill residential opportunity on a prominent yet compact site between two pedestrian-oriented streetscapes. Concept design for this site has been developed through a parallel study commissioned by the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) in partnership with City of Greater Dandenong.

Development parameters

Site area

- 1,658 sq.m approx.

Land use/ Development use

- Ground floor (Palm Plaza interface): Retail / Commercial.
- Ground floor (Lonsdale Street interface): Retail / Commercial.
- Upper levels: Residential (proposed social and community housing).

Building configuration

- Full site occupation at ground floor.
- Consistent upper-level form, Levels 1-6.
- Through-link lobby connecting between streets, for pedestrian access.
- Frontage activation development along pedestrian laneway, against Dandenong Square wall.
- Potential basement car parking (or no car parking, or off-site parking availability).

Building heights

- 7 levels.

Setbacks

- 0m ground floor setbacks.
- Approx. 2.5m setbacks above podium for rear part of tower.

Interfaces

- Active frontages to both streets.
- Vehicle access (if required) and servicing from Lonsdale Street.

Carparking

- Potential for approx. 75 spaces over three (3) basement levels.

Indicative residential yield

- 78 dwellings.

Internal arrangement

- Central core against Palm Plaza frontage.
- Double-loaded central corridor.
- Prominent 'prow' or sculptural form to north.
- Option for basement car parking (constrained, complex, given small, irregular site).
- Potential communal open space at Level 1.
- Potential multi-generational units (adaptable, combinable).

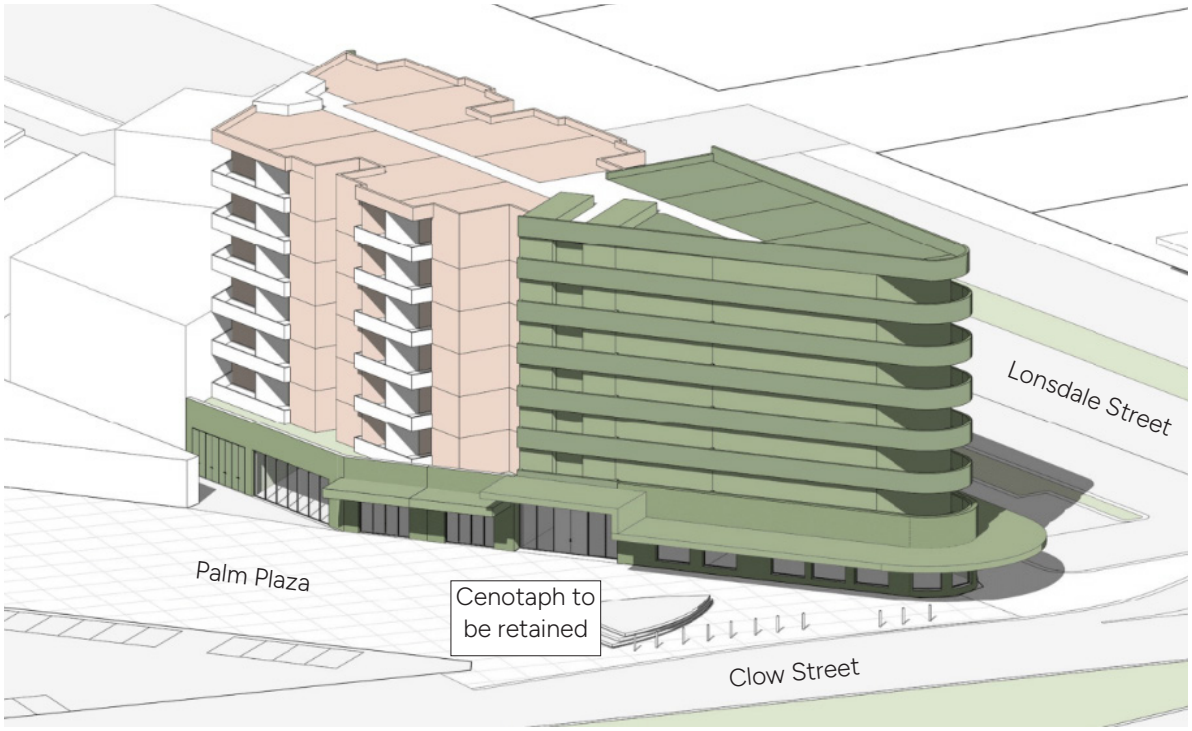






Image 54-56: Parcel 15 residential concept

Parcel 17
Clow Street and Palm Plaza

A landmark, gateway site for large-scale redevelopment, at a key entry point into Central Dandenong from the north, via Princes Highway. The site position supports long-range visibility and outlook, and a prominent, premium development can 'announce' the city centre and Market setting.

The potential height is commensurate with the approved Development Plan Overlay for the adjoining Dandenong Square, and the site forms part of a cluster of prominent corner forms in this location.

Development parameters

Site area

- 3700 sq.m approx.

Land use/ Development use

- Ground floor (Clow Street interface): Retail and Commercial; and/or Community facilities.
- Ground floor (Palm Plaza and new laneway interface): Retail/food and beverage.
- Upper levels: Residential (market and affordable).

Building configuration

- Podium and tower.
- Potential for one or two towers.
- Pedestrian laneway link across site, parallel and proximate to Dandenong Square interface.
- Frontage activation development along pedestrian laneway, against Dandenong Square wall.
- Pedestrian access from Clow Street and Palm Plaza.
- Vehicle access from Clow Street.
- Car parking in basement and/or podium levels (sleeved by active uses).

Building heights

- 3-6 level podium approx.
- Total height up to 25 levels approx.

Setbacks

- 0m street wall setbacks.
- 6m tower setbacks above podium.

Street wall heights

- Up to 6 levels (podium).

Interfaces

- Active frontages to all three sides, with integration of vehicle access and servicing in Clow Street frontage.
- Vehicle access and servicing from Clow Street.

Carparking

- 288 spaces approx. (ground floor plus 2 podium levels).
- Additional basement and/or podium parking likely to be required.



Image 57: Parcel 17/18/19

Indicative residential yield

- 570 dwellings.

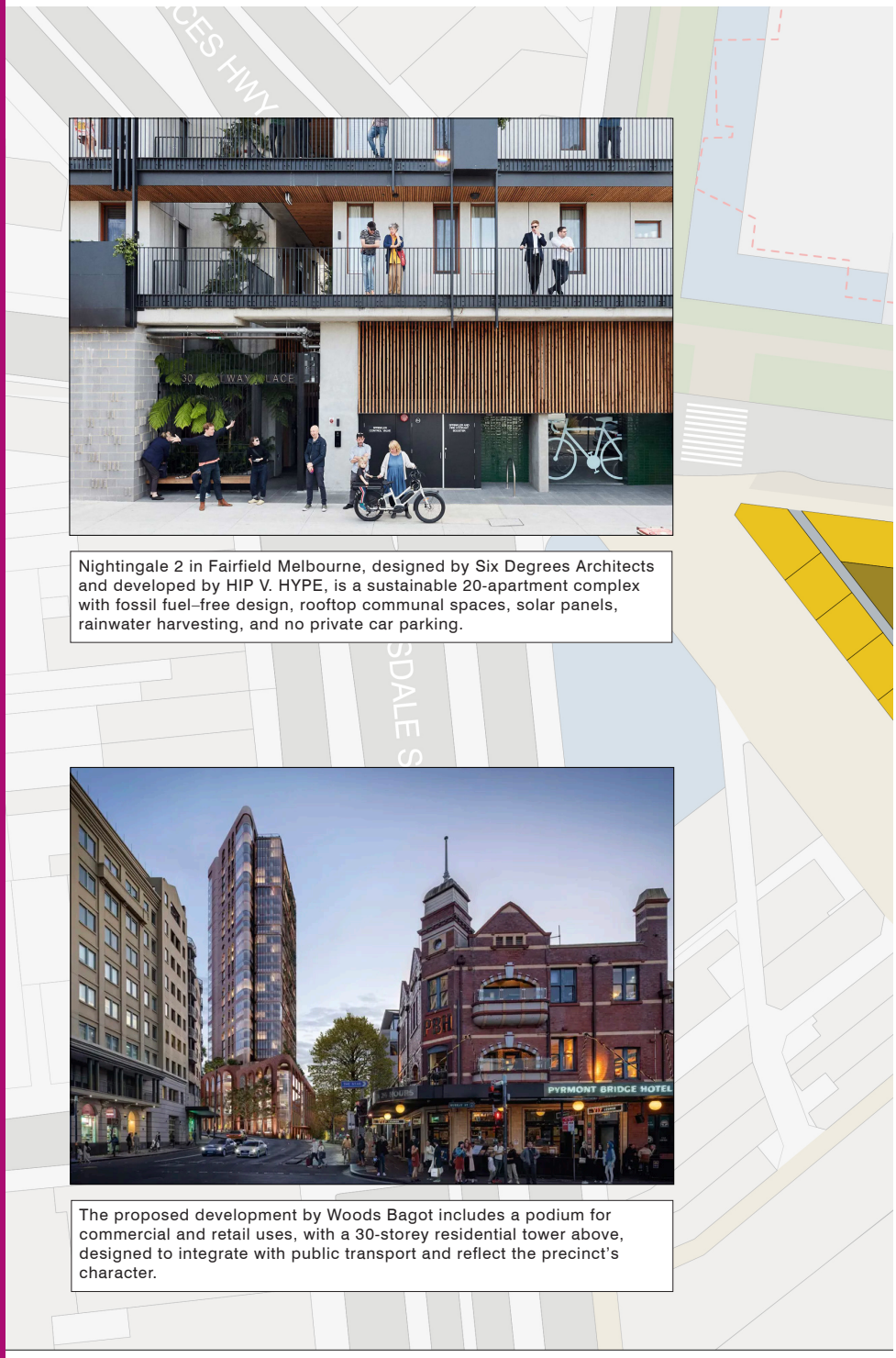
Internal arrangement

- Central core(s).
- Prominent 'prow' or sculptural form to north.
- Podium car parking (sleeved).
- Potential communal spaces at podium level.

Site constraints

Drainage pipe across site to be realigned.

Parcel 17 Podium



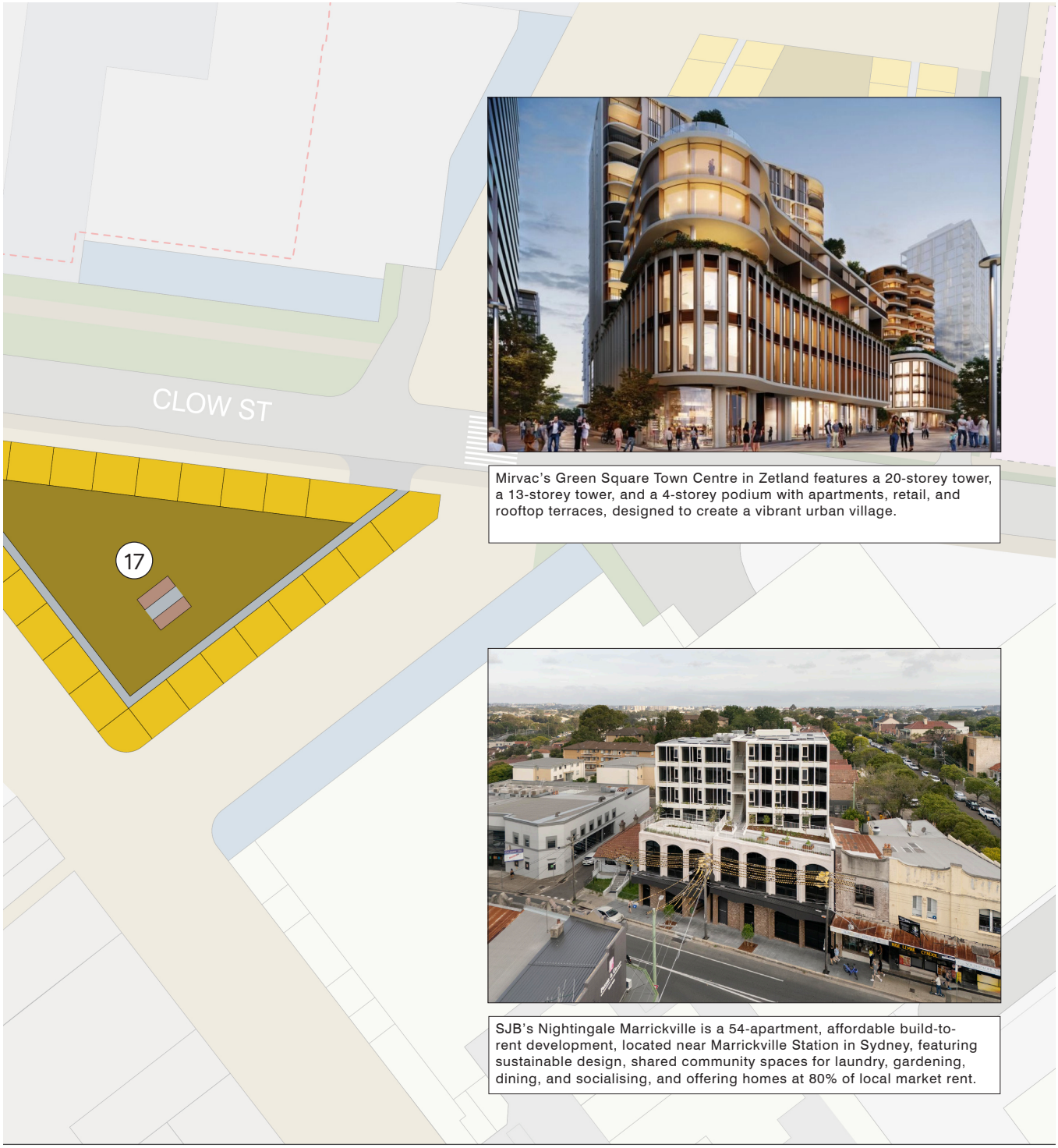
Nightingale 2 in Fairfield Melbourne, designed by Six Degrees Architects and developed by HIP V. HYPE, is a sustainable 20-apartment complex with fossil fuel–free design, rooftop communal spaces, solar panels, rainwater harvesting, and no private car parking.

The proposed development by Woods Bagot includes a podium for commercial and retail uses, with a 30-storey residential tower above, designed to integrate with public transport and reflect the precinct's character.

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Image 58: Parcel 17/18/19



Mirvac's Green Square Town Centre in Zetland features a 20-storey tower, a 13-storey tower, and a 4-storey podium with apartments, retail, and rooftop terraces, designed to create a vibrant urban village.

SJB's Nightingale Marrickville is a 54-apartment, affordable build-to-rent development, located near Marrickville Station in Sydney, featuring sustainable design, shared community spaces for laundry, gardening, dining, and socialising, and offering homes at 80% of local market rent.

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Image 59: View from Pioneer Park toward Clow Street



Image 60: View from Clow Street carpark

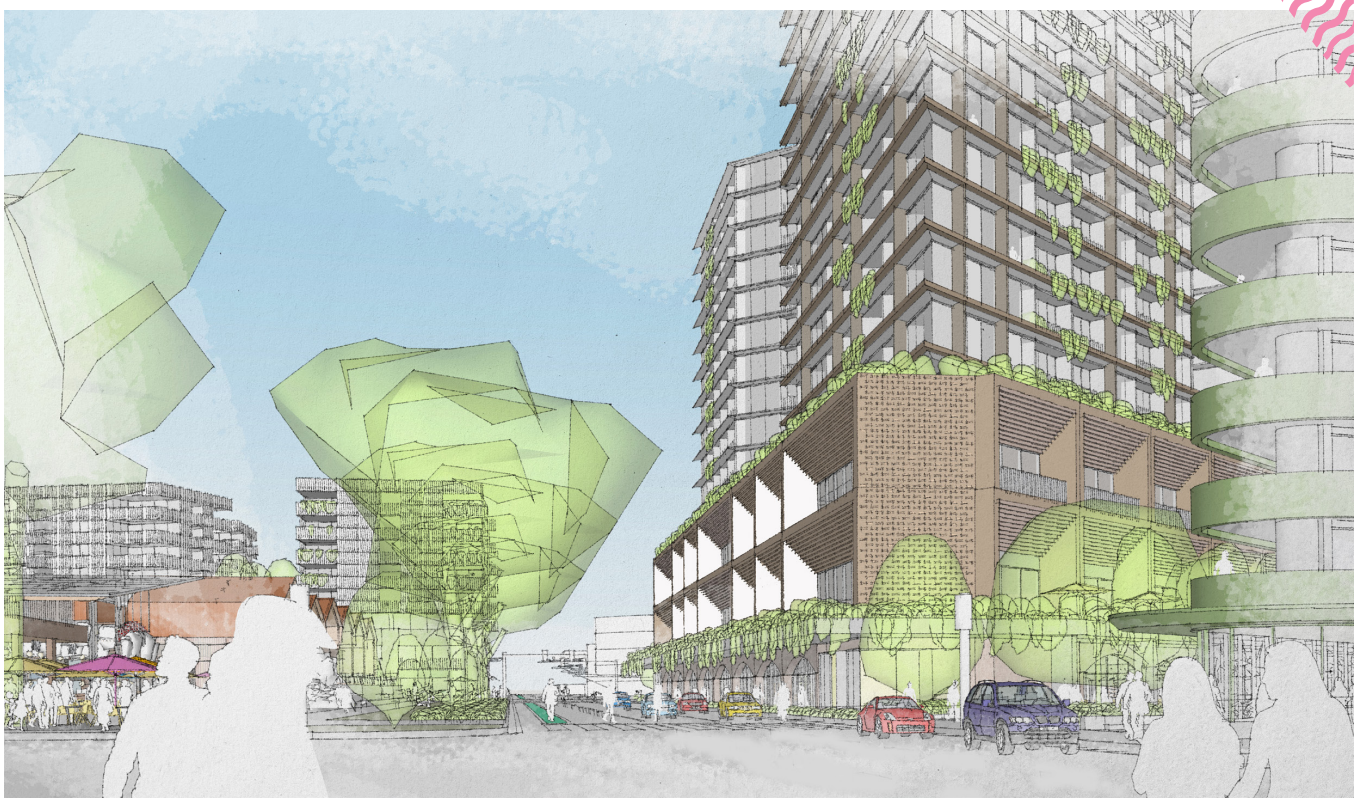


Image 61: View from Lonsdale Street - Northern Gateway

6.0 Public Realm and Key Spaces

6.1 Overarching Strategies

- Establish a high quality, cohesive public realm network of spaces and connections, to facilitate urban integration, accessibility, safety and sense of place.
- Create and enhance streets and public spaces which integrate with Dandenong Market, accommodating eating, meeting, events, play and passive recreation.
- Respect Country: tell the narrative of land, ecology, landscape and water, shaped by existing site conditions and informed by the EVC and flood overlay.
- Respond to the local precolonial and urbanisation story.
- Reinforce and develop the public realm and spatial connectivity between the Market Precinct, the Market itself, the Lonsdale Street corridor and the established 'Spine of consolidation' through Central Dandenong, extending south to Dandenong Station.
- Create spaces for all, including children, youth and older people, to support integration, safety, social wellbeing, comfort and a welcoming environment.
- Develop a public environment which respects the unique cultural diversity of Dandenong, but which is welcoming to all.
- Use water flows through the site to guide the public realm layout and narrative, landscape design and built form massing.
- Capture stormwater from the roof and ground level to form water assets, water treatment opportunities, activation and play opportunities.
- Harvest and treat stormwater (on-site) from all surfaces to form water assets and natural treatment opportunities, to provide water for landscape irrigation and re-use purposes, and activation and play opportunities.

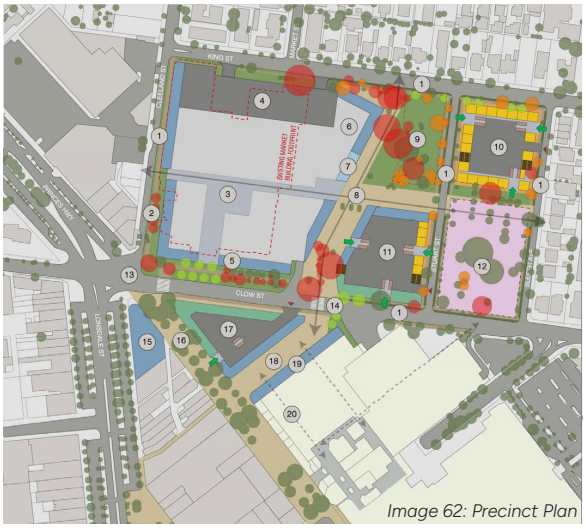


Image 62: Precinct Plan

- Deliver a holistic 'learning landscape' with a strong interpretation strategy/ interpretation trail to connect the Country/ landscape/ water story.
- Cultivate a strong sense of belonging by refining the arrival experience, articulating a clear and cohesive hierarchy and progression of public spaces.
- Enhance wayfinding, accessibility and opportunities for public engagement—thereby fostering an environment that is welcoming, vibrant and seamlessly connected.

6.2 Public Realm Actions

- Establish a high-quality north-south link from Clow Street to Pioneer Park, as a key public interface an expanded Market (item 2 in plans).
- Establish a continuous east-west public link connecting Cleeland Street to Sleeth Avenue, linking through the Market as a central aisle (23).
- Establish a pedestrian 'laneway' connection through the redeveloped Clow Street/Palm Plaza car park site, including activation of the northern wall to Dandenong Square (12, 13).
- Enhance or redevelop the Palm Plaza public realm as a high-quality pedestrian street and gathering place (10).
- Facilitate enhanced connections between Palm Plaza and Lonsdale Street.
- Enhance existing streetscapes, including tree planting, pavement, lighting, furniture and Water sensitive urban design initiatives, to Clow, Cleeland, King and Stuart Streets and Sleeth Avenue.
- Remove the existing teardrop roundabout on Clow Street near Princes Highway and implement required traffic modifications, to improve the public realm experience and accessibility of the Market for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles.
- Where appropriate, deliver new and enhanced public realm elements early, to help facilitate and catalyse mixed-use development and investment.



Image 63: Footpath trading and landscaping

6.3 General Principles and Design Guidelines

Principle 1
A permeable and connected place

Guidelines:

- Promote and enhance the experience of active transport – walking, cycling and public transport - through the public realm design.
- Reduce car dependence and encourage other modes of access, to limit the need for carparking and reduce traffic issues/congestion.
- Increase footfall to generate greater activation and patronage of the commercial uses.
- Facilitate walking to increase public realm safety, through activation and passive surveillance, presence of people and 'eyes on the street'.
- Facilitate and encourage walking access, through new and improved streetscapes and connections, including strengthening east-west connectivity between Lonsdale Street, Palm Plaza and the Market Precinct.
- Develop high quality north-south connections which benefit from good solar access, including along the eastern interface to the Market and the existing Stuart Street.

Principle 2
A safe and welcoming place

Guidelines:

- Maximise active frontages to new and existing buildings in the Precinct, at ground floor and upper levels, to enhance public realm safety.
- Increase public realm activation from existing or modified buildings, along Palm Plaza and the east, west and south sides of the Dandenong Market (with servicing concentrated at the northern edge).
- Design the public realm to increase footfall around the precinct to promote activation revenue generation for local business.
- Increase activation of buildings along Lonsdale Street and Palm Plaza.
- Encourage and facilitate frontage activation to Dandenong Square buildings, including frontages to Palm Plaza and Clow Street.
- Facilitate a pedestrian-focused public realm along Cleeland Street including reducing the carriageway and associated traffic.

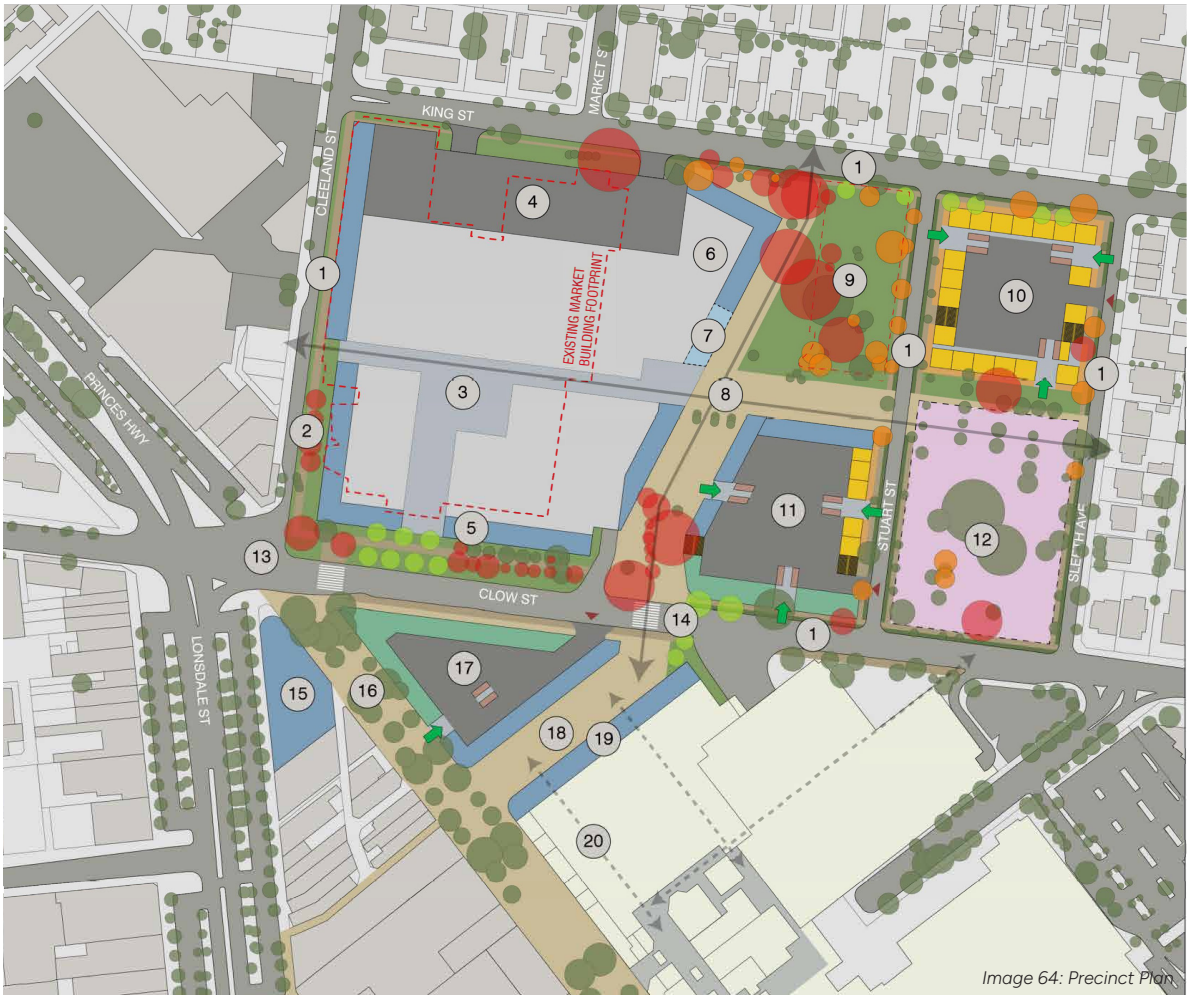


Image 64: Precinct Plan

Principle 3
A place for everyone

Guidelines:

- Develop a suite of open spaces to suit a diverse range of uses and users – large public open spaces, civic plaza space(s), smaller and 'pocket' spaces, communal open spaces for apartment residents, activated streetscapes and laneways.
- Design and deliver the public realm as a cohesive network, including destinations and transitional spaces, movement spaces and passive recreation/lingering spaces, which reflect how people will use and experience the precinct.
- Design all spaces to be multi-functional, accommodating a range of potential uses.

Principle 4
A 'Fit for Future' landscape

Guidelines:

- Design for a diverse community, changing user profiles and demographics over time.
- Establish a public realm that is adapted and resilient to a changing climate, including species readiness and protection, and tolerance for extreme weather conditions and flooding.
- The landscape and public realm design should incorporate climate positive design, taking into account the embodied carbon of new materials and operational factors through life cycle assessment.
- Facilitate urban cooling and urban forest outcomes, aim for at least 40% tree canopy coverage of the precinct public realm.

6.4 Key Spaces

Palm Plaza

Palm Plaza is to be redesigned and constructed to deliver high quality paving and planting, furniture and lighting, and improved water management, while retaining the existing high retention value trees.

1. Renewed Palm Plaza:

Design intent

- A contemporary, activated, and accessible pedestrian street that is vibrant and safe, featuring a robust retained tree-lined boulevard and an integrated water management strategy, to honour Country and the water narrative.

Design guidelines - Pavement and furniture

- Provide new paving to the full streetscape, utilising high quality, durable materials which prioritise retained tree root health.
- Design the streetscape for potential to host festivals and larger events.
- The existing cenotaph memorial will be retained in the Palm Plaza upgrade.
- Restrict vehicle access to avoid compaction of the existing trees' root protection zone, but design to allow essential vehicle movements.
- Ensure consistency of design, materials and fixtures throughout the precinct public realm.
- Incorporate new lighting which provides amenable, safe and welcoming settings, using energy-efficient fixtures.
- Ensure furniture meets the needs of the community, incorporating Universal Design principles.
- Design with council maintenance capacity in mind, allowing for short lead times and easily replaceable units.
- Create spaces that are integrated with surrounding commercial and community uses that encourage and enhance activation and from these adjacent entities.



Image 65: Palm Plaza

Planting strategy

- Retain and protect existing high and moderate retention value trees.
- Establish an urban forest in suitable location(s), using native plant species, for shade and cooling and ecological support.

Water sensitive urban design (WSUD)

- Integrate WSUD to support ecological health and increased access to nutrients for the high retention value trees (oxygen and water), such as through permeable/ porous paving.
- Improve stormwater management through infrastructure and landscsape design, including for flood protection to the public realm and shopfronts.







Image 66-68: Precedent images

New Pedestrian 'Street' (Palm to Clow)

A generous and visible pedestrian street connecting between Clow Street and the north-south link or Market 'Eat Street' and Palm Plaza, and continuing the water 'narrative' from north to south.

2. New pedestrian 'street'

Area

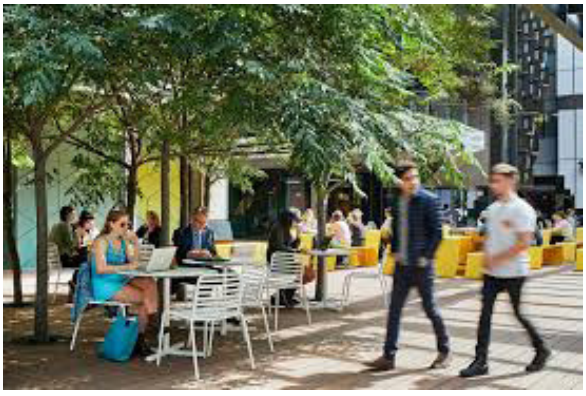
- 2,720 sq.m approx.

Design guidelines - Pavement and furniture

- Provide new paving to the public realm, utilising high quality, durable materials, ensuring consistency with the enhanced Palm Plaza to the south and new spaces and linkages to the north.
- Enhance and promote activation by providing areas for congregation and seating.
- Promote safety through activation (including night-time activity), with clear visibility through the space and avoidance of potential concealment spaces.
- Collaborate with Traditional Owners to incorporate interpretative signage, addressing the landscape and respecting Country themes.
- Design with council maintenance capacity in mind, allowing for short lead times and easily replaceable units.
- Design for universal access and inclusivity.



Image 69: Pedestrian Street



Planting strategy

- Establish an Urban Forest for shade and reducing Urban Heat Island Effect, targeting 40% coverage.
- Select plant species focusing on indigenous and native species.
- Use water sensitive urban design planting that supports phytoremediation to cleanse stormwater of pollutants.
- Design for a climate-resilient landscape which can withstand increasingly frequent extreme weather.
- Design planting to address crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) principles, ensuring clear sightlines and effective light penetration.

Water sensitive urban design (WSUD)

- Integrated WSUD infrastructure, reflecting the original creek tributary in this approximate location/alignment.
- Utilise native, locally specific plant species within WSUD infrastructure.
- Introduce strata cells for tree planting to ensure access to nutrients in hardscape areas by providing sufficient soil volumes to support healthy tree growth and canopy cover.
- Explore passive irrigation opportunities for new trees.
- Continue the water narrative using WSUD treatments connecting Pioneer Park with Dandenong Creek.

Building edges

- Promote the 'opening out' and activation of the Dandenong Square frontage to this link (13), or a new built edge with active uses, which 'backs onto' the Dandenong Square interface.
- Ensure that new development on the car park site (11) provides a highly active frontage to this link, with retail and hospitality uses.
- Provide for spill out trading zones within the laneway space, to support activity.





Image 70-72: Precedent images

North-South Pedestrian Spine and East-West Plaza Space

This link from Clow Street to Pioneer Park and King Street is the civic 'heart' of the Precinct, integrating spaces which pulse with activity and energy, and quiet, serene settings.

It is the main pedestrian spine and interface between the Market and the rest of the Precinct, and the primary connector into the Precinct from Palm Plaza, Lonsdale Street and beyond.

It will integrate with the expanded Market's activated eastern frontage, and 'terminate' at a rejuvenated and expanded Pioneer Park as an open space destination.

3. Outline

Area

- 8,450 sq.m approx.

Design guidelines - Pavement and furniture

- Design for the ability to hold events and market activities.
- Enhance and promote activation by providing areas for congregation, seating and outdoor dining.
- Design for universal access and inclusivity.
- Incorporate interpretative signage, addressing the landscape and respecting Country themes.
- High quality pavement extending the materiality across adjacent public realm to create a seamless and contiguous narrative.
- Spatial framework designed to allow movable furniture to be stored when not in use, freeing space for large events.
- Declutter the public realm through multi-use furniture, such as multimodal posts that integrate bins, signage, CCTV, lighting and Wi-Fi.
- Design with council maintenance capacity in mind, allowing for short lead times and easily replaceable units.



Image 73: Pedestrian spine

Planting strategy

- Protect retained existing trees during construction and ongoing, through public realm design and effective management.
- Increase access to nutrients for the high retention value trees (oxygen and water).
- Provide sufficient soil volumes to support healthy tree growth and canopy cover (e.g. strata cells)Introduce strata cells for tree planting to ensure access to nutrients in hardscape areas.
- Planting focused on indigenous and native species.
- Water sensitive urban design planting that supports phytoremediation to cleanse stormwater of pollutants.
- Climate-resilient landscape designed to withstand increasingly frequent extreme weather.
- Design planting to address CPTED principles, ensuring clear sightlines and effective light penetration.

Water sensitive urban design (WSUD)

- Integrate stormwater treatment with landscape elements.
- Treat all stormwater on the surface, prior to underground pipe network.
- Retain water in the landscape to support green infrastructure.
- Explore stormwater harvesting opportunities (e.g. roof water for building use, irrigation and/ or to support water features).
- Maximise passive irrigation opportunities with surface grading (e.g. direct surface flows to garden beds).
- Stormwater treatment elements to support public realm activation, such as integrated seating and opportunities for informal play.



Image 74: South Melbourne Market

Building edges

- Ensure activation of building edges to the public realm and facilitate spill out of activity into trading zones in the public realm.
- Ensure building edges have integrated seating profiles, planting opportunities and are integrated with public realm.
- Configure land uses/tenants and building frontages to support safety through night time activation.
- Provide tree canopy coverage canopy and shade/weather protection to building edges above ground floor level.



Image 75: Queen Victoria Market

Pioneer Park Expansion

A retained, improved and expanded Pioneer Park, to be designed with Country-led', and begins the water story/narrative, providing a place for more expansive open space activities. The expansion of Pioneer Park toward the west allows for the retention of significant trees in the existing car park area. The alignment of the proposed north-south 'spine' from Clow Street reinforces the central prominence and accessibility of Pioneer Park.

4. Outline

Area

- Existing: 3,400 sq.m approx.
- Proposed: 5,085 sq.m approx.

Design guidelines - Pavement and furniture

- Provide for small-scale active and passive recreational uses.
- Provide a majority of soft landscape and lawn areas, with paved paths.
- Design for the opportunity for the space to be used for events.
- Develop an open space design that caters for future demographics and diverse users of the area.
- Integrated Nature Play around retained significant trees.
- High quality pavement extending the materiality of adjacent public realm to create a seamless and contiguous narrative.
- Include public amenity such as picnic settings, bins, drinking fountain, BBQ and bike parking.
- Consider incorporation of fitness equipment and play furniture, guided by Greater Dandenong City Council's Open Space Strategy and gap analysis of the area.
- Furniture which is accessible and suitable for intergenerational use.

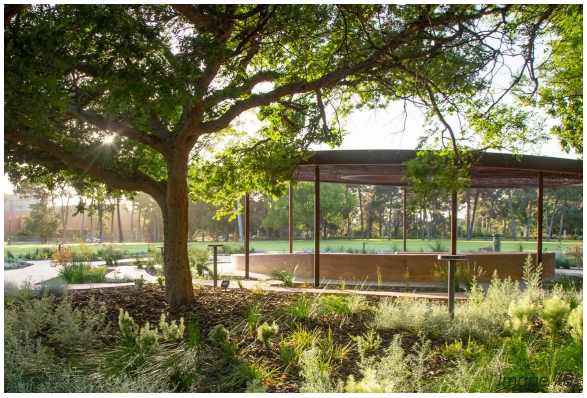


Image 76: Pioneer Park

- Furniture designed for universal design, including frequent rest stops, seating with backs and armrests, and dedicated wheelchair and pram space.
- Declutter the public realm through multi-use furniture, such as multimodal posts that integrate bins, signage, CCTV, lighting and Wi-Fi.

Planting strategy

- Design the park expansion and renewal, informed by the existing extent of tree protection zones.
- Protect high-value and large existing trees including appropriate exclusion zones from hardscape or built form.
- Establish an urban forest and expanded tree canopy to provide shade, targeting 40% canopy coverage across the entire Dandenong Market Precinct site. Pioneer Park expansion presents an opportunity to accommodate the majority of this canopy target.
- Consider the role of Pioneer Park as a key link in connecting biodiversity corridors between Dandenong Creek to the east and Yarraman Creek to the west.
- Lawn area to be designed to accommodate events, festivities, and spill-out activities from the Market, with appropriate drainage, irrigation and soil profiling to support high use.
- Planting to focus on indigenous and native species.
- Water sensitive urban design planting to support phytoremediation to cleanse stormwater of pollutants.



Water sensitive urban design (WSUD)

- Introduce a WSUD treatment space in the south-west corner of the park (topographic low point).
- Direct stormwater to a feature treatment system that enhances site amenity and contributes to passive cooling.
- Explore stormwater harvesting opportunities from market building roof to support building operations, irrigation for planting, or integration into water features.



Image 77: Playground



Image 79: WSUD

- Climate-resilient landscape designed to withstand increasingly frequent extreme weather.
- Planting design to assist with wind mitigation and enhance microclimate, encouraging longer stays.
- Planting design to address CPTED principles, ensuring clear sightlines and effective light penetration from pole-top lighting.

Building edges

- Avoid excessive or impactful overshadowing to Pioneer Park from adjoining built form, on sites 1 and 4.
- Provide for active retail/food and beverage frontages in Site 1 facing Pioneer Park, and active residential frontages in Site 4 facing the park.

Courtyard Spaces
Communal (Semi-private)

Quiet, shared garden courtyards within individual developments promoting passive recreation and providing protected, green oases, for use by residents and workers in these buildings.

5. Outline

Area

- Parcel 4 courtyard: 1,440 sq.m approx.
- Parcel 4 southern setback: 795 sq.m approx.
- Parcel 5 courtyard: 2,630 sq.m approx.
- Parcel 11 podium: 1,810 sq.m approx.

Design guidelines

- Ensure space achieves appropriate solar access in line with Apartment Design Guidelines for Victoria.
- Activate the western edge of Building 5 to enhance public realm engagement and create an interstitial interface that connects seamlessly with the north–south pedestrian link.
- Passive surveillance to the central open space.
- Semi private open space for residents / workers controlled access for residents.
- Produce gardening, gathering, seating and relaxation, nature play, biodiversity planting.



Image 80: Courtyard spaces

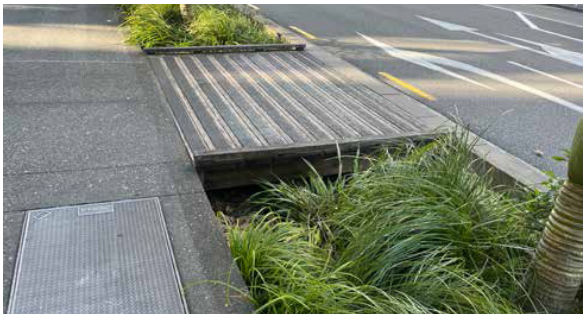






Image 81-83: Courtyard precedents

Design guidelines - Pavement and furniture

- Design for passive activity such as relaxation, social gathering gardening, gathering and nature play.
- Integrate stormwater harvesting and passive irrigation systems for courtyard planting.
- Incorporate generous, diverse seating to encourage residents to use the space.
- Provide path connections across the spaces, to link lobby entries and external accessways.
- Consider integration of bicycle storage.
- Ensure quality paving that considers universal access and intuitive wayfinding.
- Design with body corporate maintenance capacity in mind.
- Consider BBQ and social gathering spaces.
- Allocate deep soil planting zones.

Planting strategy

- Establish substantial deep soil planting zones where possible, noting the courtyards may be located on structure above car parking.
- Provide canopy cover from trees where possible.
- Utilise indigenous and native species in planting designfully indigenous planting.
- Provide for produce gardening and biodiversity planting.

Water sensitive urban design (WSUD)

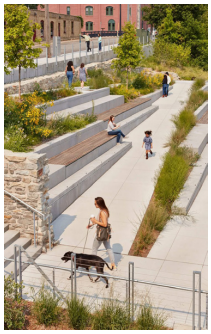
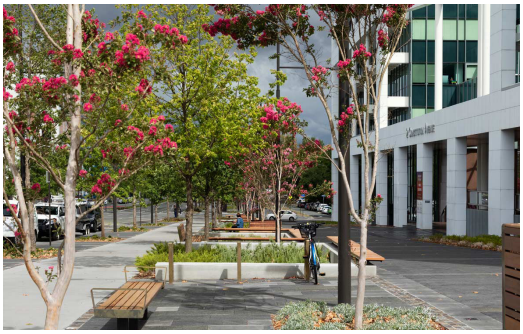
- Direct stormwater to a treatment system that enhances site amenity and contributes to passive cooling.
- Explore stormwater harvesting opportunities from building roof to support building operations, irrigation for planting, or integration into water features.

Building edges

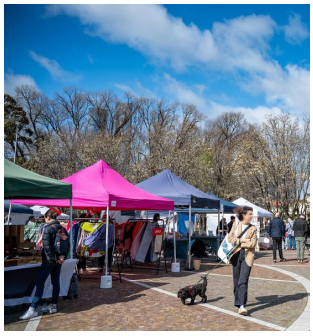
- Design the building edges to ensure passive surveillance to the central open space.
- Design for active retail or active residential frontages, including those looking onto the courtyard spaces.

Exemplar Images

Arrival Zones

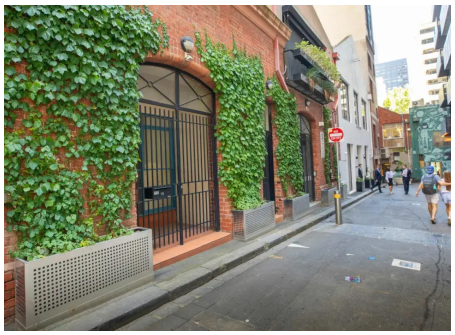
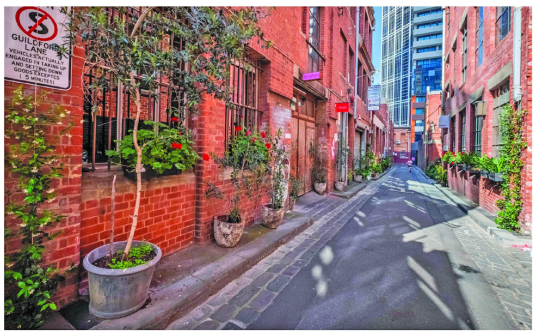





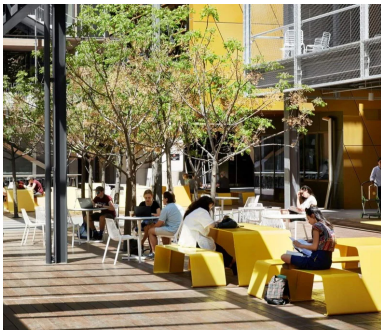


Boyd Lane

Dandenong Arcade





Clow Street





Cleeland Street

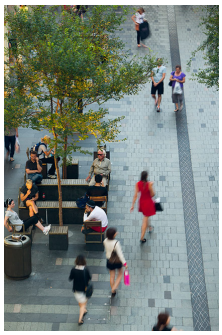
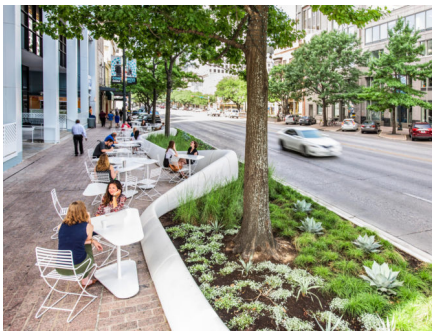




Image 84-103: Exemplar images

7.0 Implementation Strategy

7.1 Staging Strategy

This section outlines the staging strategy for redevelopment of the Dandenong Market Precinct, as a sequence of development activities over time. The strategy was developed during the project workshops.

Implementation

The Dandenong Market Precinct Plan will create lasting public value by strengthening Dandenong Market as the social, cultural and economic heart of the precinct, ensuring future development delivers measurable community, social, environmental and economic benefits.

Before any land sale or long-term lease proceeds, proponents must demonstrate:

- Enhancement of Dandenong Market's role as the social, cultural and economic heart of the precinct.
- Delivery of publicly accessible spaces and amenities.
- Positive social, environmental and economic outcomes.
- Long-term value creation for current and future generations.

A comprehensive Governance Framework would be endorsed by Council prior to progressing and parcel development process which would give consideration to:

- Public benefit test.
- Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) assessment.
- Development agreement safeguards.
- Market anchor protection mechanisms.
- Community benefit return.
- Independent reporting.

Stage 1 (1-3 years)

Public realm

- Design and deliver Palm Plaza via a design competition process.
- Investigate tear drop intersection realignment options.
- Invetigate below ground infrastructure rationalisation (Stormwater drainage and associated works).
- Conduct place activation program to improve public space.

Development

- Site preparation.
- Planning and approvals.
- Development market sounding, EOI process etc.
- Partnership formation.

Stage 2 (4-5 years)

Public realm

- Pioneer Park expansion design.
- North-south pedestrian 'street' and east-west spine designs.
- Streetscape enhancement and water sensitive urban design initiatives to Stuart and Sleeth Streets (Parcel 1).

Development

- Parcel 15 infill redevelopment, between Palm Plaza and Londsdale Street, for ground floor retail and upper-level residential.
- Parcel 10 development (north-east site) for residential apartments with central courtyard above car parking.

Market (provisional, subject to seperate project process)

- Permits and approvals.
- Detailed design.
- Operation strategy for during construction works.
- Marketing for other planned uses (residential, commercial, retail).
- Upgrade and expansion of service/loading area.

Stage 3 (5-10 years)

Public realm

- Removal of 'teardrop' roundabout and reconfiguration of Princes Highway / Clow Street / Cleeland Street intersection.
- Landscape treatment to space between Parcels 10 and 12, as landscape termination to east-west axis, potentially for youth-oriented public space (not a skate park).
- Clow Street northern side upgrade, including separated bike lane, tree planting.
- Pioneer Park delivery.

Development

- Parcel 11 – development including ground floor retail activation to N-S link.

Stage 4 (10 years and beyond)

Public realm

- Clow Street Market frontage space renewal.
- New pedestrian laneway across triangular Parcel 17 linking between Palm Plaza and Clow Street (Parcel 18).

Development

- Parcel 17 development, including:
  - Podium: community uses, entrance spaces, car parking above, edge activation.
  - Tower: residential apartments.
  - Activated edge to Dandenong Plaza interface: retail/commercial, 1-4 levels.

7.2 Development Actions

This section outlines several implementation actions, for Council and other stakeholders to consider, in progressing this Precinct Plan towards implementation.

Key actions

- Prepare sites for development, in the early stages, to provide smoother processes for investing partners, and remove risks and uncertainties for the developer. This could include:
  - Subdivision of land.
  - Soil testing.
  - Traffic modelling associated with streetscape works including intersection simplification, widening of Sleeth Avenue and removing on street parking from the eastern side of Cleeland Street and southern side of King Street.
  - Infrastructure works such as streetscape works, services relocations and 'teardrop' intersection simplification.
  - Amendments to the Planning Scheme, potentially in coordination with the Activity Centres Program (Department of Transport and Planning).
- Implement early public realm improvement works, to enhance place quality before or in the early stages of development.
- Ensure public realm works can be protected from damage by subsequent construction activity.
- Seek development partnerships, utilising the value of Council land to support development viability and quality.
- Coordinate development with the proposed Market redevelopment. Plan staging/sequence carefully, considering impacts of construction on early-stage residents.
- Establish an ongoing, managed implementation strategy.
- Establish a Place Management / Delivery Committee or similar (within Council or with partners), to oversee the process over time.
- Determine the expected timing and requirements for the Market redevelopment, including any requirements for temporary relocation of Market activities within the Precinct.
- Facilitate staging of development, including within parcels, in response to housing market conditions, construction costs and other factors.
- Consider staging and sequence in response to residential market conditions. For example, a higher-scale, more premium development may become viable at a later date, while the smaller-scale proposal at Parcel 10 may be more suited to an early stage.
- Implement the Precinct Plan in partnership with a developer, selected through a competitive Expression of Interest (EOI) / Request for Proposal (RFP) process. Council's role should be minimised and de-risked as much as possible, whilst managing the desired outcomes via approvals and oversight.

7.3 Development Strategy and Benefits

1. Divestment options

The main options to deliver the developments proposed in the precinct plan are:

- Divestment of individual parcels to private sector developers (freehold sale).
- Divestment or all parcels to a master developer to deliver the precinct in stages (freehold sale).
- Divestment of parcels to community housing providers (freehold sale).
- Long term ground lease of parcels to community housing providers.

There are a range of variations with the divestment options, regarding timing of land transfer to the developer. This can be up-front (under a traditional sale process) or during the development process (under a joint venture arrangement).

A joint venture arrangement may be suitable for the master developer concept, in order to share risks and for Council to retain control of land as the development progresses.

A simpler model is sale of freehold parcels to developers.

The selection of an option depends on the objective and risk appetite of Council. The objective can include:

- Maximise financial value from land divestment.
- Use land to deliver a social and/or economic outcome, such as delivering affordable housing or stimulating investment and jobs in the area.

A fundamental issue is whether Council seeks to retain land ownership or whether Council is happy to divest land.

If Council seeks to retain ownership, the range of development options are limited to Council use and development of land for community uses or lease of land to another party.

2. Ground lease

A long term ground lease (of say up to 50 years) can be offered to another party, such as community housing provider. However, this option is unlikely to deliver a significant financial return to Council for use of the land. The objective would be to stimulate investment and achieve an objective, like adding to the supply of affordable housing. The Council contribution would be the land, provided at a nominal long term ground lease value (this could be one dollar). If the ground lease is to a community housing provider for example, the provider would build and operate the housing for the life of the lease. The housing provide may seek financial support from the state government (Homes Victoria).

A ground lease option is generally not suitable for private sector residential strata-titled development. Profit seeking developers are generally unwilling to invest in land they do not own. Also, there are legal and financing issues regarding ownership of land and improvements being separate.

A ground lease model can work with some other development types, such as some retail, commercail and industrial uses. However, these uses are not the focus of development in the subject precinct.

3. Sale of freehold land

Sale of freehold land is the optimal way to attract private sector investment interest and maximise financial return from surplus to needs land. The downside is loss of land in Council ownership and control.

The return to Council is determined by developers based on their assessment of residual land value. This is calculated by developers in feasibility studies based on what is permitted to be developed on land.

The land value will be calculated as follows (in general terms):

- The expected revenue from the sale of finished properties (in this case apartment units and ground level commercail and / or retail properties).
- Less costs of development including construction, financing, professional fees, taxes and charges.
- Less profit margin for the developer.
- Leaving an amount that can be paid for land (residual land value).

Bellfield Community Housing Project, Banyule



Image 104: Bellfield Community House

The Bellfield community housing project is a partnership between Launch Housing, Homes Victoria and Banyule City Council. The project delivered 58 apartments in Bellfield in 2023 for low-to-moderate income earners. The development includes studios, one-bed and two-bed apartments, communal outdoor spaces integrated with the adjacent Bellfield Community Hub. The project was selected via an expression of interest process with community housing providers. It is understood a nominal $1 ground lease was provided for 50 years.

Gurrowa Place in City of Melbourne



Image 105: Gurrowa Place

The City of Melbourne has partnered with Lendlease to develop the Southern Precinct, known as Gurrowa Place. The $1.7 billion development will complement investments being delivered by Council in the precinct – including heritage shed restoration, the new Munro library and community hub, hospitality and retail offerings in the Munro development and a build-to-rent project. Gurrowa Place will deliver over 2,200 new homes, student housing, 1.8 ha of public space, and heritage restoration of the Franklin Street Stores at Queen Victoria Market.

4. Implementation Considerations

Precinct Development Timing

It is likley that higher values will be achieved later this decade as costs and inflation continue to stabilise further and interest rates decline. These conditions will support higher prices of finished properties and land values.

Nevertheless, preparatory work can commence immediately to prepare sites for development. These initial processes can take several years to implement.

A nominal 2028 target year may be appropriate for the expression of interest process (see below).

Development Strategy

A first step to divest land and maximise value is to prepare the site for development and remove - to the extent possible – risks and uncertainties for the developer.

This should at least include:

- Subdividing the land to provide a clear title with no or minimal encumbrances on the land.
- Amending the planning scheme to enable the planned development to occur.

Other potential actions can include:

- Addressing any potentially complicated engineering issues in and around the site (if any exist); this could include the drainage easement matter on the parcel south of Clow Street.
- Delivering public domain amenity improvements in the area to add value to surrounding properties.
- This could even extend to preparing and approving plans and the planning permit for development (with potential to amend).

Any item that can reduce (add) time, cost or uncertainty will be assessed in the feasibility study by the developer and will result in a higher (lower) residual land value.

Impacts of Major Construction

Potential future construction in the area that may impact on residential amenity may impact buyer interest and potential value. The main risk regarding this point is the potential large scale redevelopment of the market hall.

Parcel Availability

A significant unknown is the nature and timing of the market hall redevelopment (Site 1). It is possible the construction plan will require use of the land to the east of the site (i.e. the existing car park which is nominated for development under the precinct plan). This project may require temporary relocation of market stalls to the area.

These details are not known and will need to be confirmed at an appropriate time.

Whilst these details are being developed, its is prudent to not commence development on sites 3, 4 and 5 and item 2 north of Clow Street until further information is know.

Phase 1 Development

On that basis, the initial phase of precinct development can focus on sites and items south of Clow Street. This area is generally unencumbered.

However, site preparation, in terms of legal and planning work can commence for all parcels.

The best way to divest land and maximise value is to prepare the site for development and remove - to the extent possible - risks, processes and uncertainties for the developer.

Legal and planning

This should at least include:

- Subdividing the land to provide a clear title with no or minimal encumbrances on the land.
- Amending the planning scheme to enable the planned development to occur.

Engineering site preparation

This could include:

- Addressing any potentially complicated engineering issues in and around the parcels (if any exist); this could include the drainage matter on the parcel south of Clow Street.
- Delivering public domain amenity improvements in the area.

Management of activity centre matters before and during construction

The precinct plan and how it will be delivered will require landowners, businesses and the community to be well informed.

- Consult with stakeholders and the community prior to the expression of interest process regarding precinct construction.
- Develop an appropriate parking strategy to be implemented during the construction process.

Ongoing asset management

- Develop an asset management plan for the precinct, including timing of public domain works.

Development / Legal agreement with developer

- Council should commission an appropriate law firm to prepare a legal agreement for the execution by parties and this should be structured to ensure Council's risks are managed.
- A risk is the development partner not delivering on the development.

Selection of developer(s)

It is recommended that Council utilise the services of a proven developer of similar sites serving similar market areas to release value from the site.

The developer (or developers) must be selected in a competitive process to ensure market value is realised.

Council's role should be minimised and de-risked as much as possible whilst managing the desired outcome via approvals and oversight.

The expression of interest process can seek a range of development options including freehold sale to ground lease. The benefits of options can be assessed based on proposals submitted.

Where a freehold sale is considered, the development partner(s) should provide Council with value for money via:

- A suitable cash payment.
- Any other benefits that may be offered by a development partner.

The selection of a development partner (or partners) can be based on:

- Prepare a project brief and marketing material.
- Undertake an expression of interest process - this could invite master developers and individual site developers and community housing groups to provide proposals.
- Sign one or more MoU with selected development partner(s).

Contract to develop

- Finalise contracts supported by an appropriate legal firm.
- Execute contract with development partner(s).

Developer builds south of Clow Street first

- The sale can be undertaken via a legal agreement under which the developer is required to construct the project to the appropriate standard and conditions.

Developer builds north of Clow Street

- At an appropriate time, the developer undertakes the projects north of Clow Street.
- This phase of development should follow conformation of the development plan and needs of the market hall redevelopment.

Summary of possible timing

- 2026: Finalise precinct plan.
- Ongoing: stakeholder engagement.
- 3-5 years: Site preparation including legal, planning and civil works.
- 3-5 years: Expression of interest process and execute contracts.
- Beyond 5 years: Construction and precinct delivery.

Summary of development benefits

- A preliminary estimate of development yield and benefits is shown below.

Table 1: Project yield and benefits

Metric	Estimate
Development	
Gross building area	126,000 sqm to 144,300 sqm
Apartments	986 to 1,088 apartment units
Employment space	11,400 sqm
Car parking	568 car spaces
Construction*	
Potential investment value	$1 billion
Jobs during construction	2,000 jobs
Ongoing*	
Residents	1,700 residents
Ongoing jobs in new buildings	500 jobs

Source: development data supplied by McP Studio; HillPDA

**In the precinct, not including multipliers across the economy.*

8.0 Dandenong Market Masterplan

The Dandenong Market itself is within the Dandenong Market Precinct (the planning area for this Precinct Plan), but subject to a separate, parallel masterplanning process. Council recognises that the Precinct Plan will establish the overarching parameters for the Precinct, including the Market expansion and renewal. This section outlines the high level place strategy that has been prepared by Dandenong Market Pty Ltd.

8.1 Place Strategy

The masterplan place strategy articulates how the masterplan addresses the opportunities and challenges for Dandenong Market identified to date. It is a vision for the future of Dandenong Market, and a framework which sets out the aims, goals and aspirations of the masterplan.

The place strategy is made up of four Place Pillars, each having multiple actions or strategies within them. Each Place Pillar is a statement of the goals achieved in the masterplan. The actions and strategies contained within each Place Pillar serve as guidelines or actions for ways to achieve the goals of the place plan.



1. International fresh food markets case studies

Internationally, markets are often renowned as tourist attractions, but many still function as a day-to-day market for locals to purchase everyday goods, too. Studying European markets can offer some key learnings that could help inform Dandenong Market masterplan.

- Each market usually has a distinctive, visually-striking feature or drawcard. This is particularly evident in the markets of Barcelona, where numerous markets across the city identify themselves with a unique character (see Mercat de Santa Catarina), or the Markthal in Rotterdam which has an enormous coloured display on the underside of a residential building enveloping the market.
- Most markets are simply a large, freestanding roof structure with insertions underneath. They are rarely typical 'buildings,' and stalls are sometimes permanently built as islands under the roof structure.
- Most markets have a clean, functional and almost minimal aesthetic internally, which focusses attention on the colour and vibrancy of the produce.
- The markets retain their original character, traders and types of produce even after redevelopment.
- Some markets use the top of stalls for dining, balconies and/or for storage.







Image 106-110: Fresh food markets

2. The character of Dandenong Market

Dandenong Market remains an extremely successful and vibrant produce market in eastern Melbourne, well-known for it's value for money, diversity of products and cultures, and community atmosphere.

Dandenong Market attracts local residents for daily shopping as well as regional tourists seeking an authentic market atmosphere.

The existing character of Dandenong Market as a simple, local, no-frills and value-for-money market has contributed to its success, and the masterplan aims to retain this character into the future. At the same time, the expansion of the market offers an opportunity to grow, develop and refine the market to reflect its status as a regional destination, local source of quality food, and a variety of other experiences. Additionally, the wide variety of cultures, languages and diversity of traders is recognised as a key continuing element to the success of Dandenong Market into the future.

To balance the existing and future character, the Masterplan considers:

- Blending indoor/outdoorspaces.
- Market-stall shopfront-style tenancies.
- A landmark roof form.
- Natural light filled spaces.
- Opportunities for branding.
- Simple, local materials.
- Straightforward construction.
- Avoiding a 'mall' or shopping centre character.

















Image 111-117:
Examples of market character

8.2 Key Design Moves

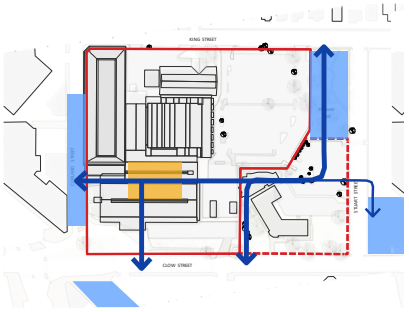
The key design moves set up a spatial framework that is based upon strong urban design principles. These set the fundamental design strategy for the masterplan.

The market forms a clear pedestrian link between Cleeland street, the pedestrian mall (palm plaza), Pioneer park and future community facilities through an active, internal market space or square.

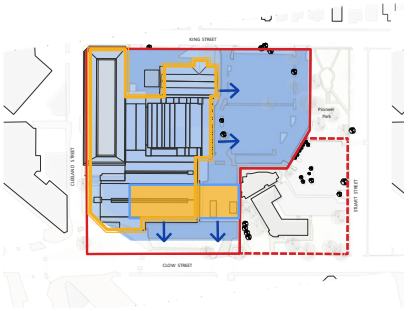
The corner of Clow and Cleeland street presents a clear opportunity for a landmark form and gateway entrance, while the interfaces along Clow and Cleeland streets should be designed so that the vibrant activity of Dandenong market is visible and recognisable along both of these edges.

The market area would increase in size and footprint, whilst also diversifying in activity and food and beverage offerings. The back- of-house and loading functions would be maintained along King Street away from the most active frontages, increased in size and improve their functionality to the market.

The underdeveloped parts of the site would be unlocked for potential future development opportunities, and upper levels would introduce new uses and activity in and around the market.



CONNECT MARKET AND CIVIC SPACES



RETAIN & EXPAND KEY MARKET FUNCTIONS



Image 118: Key design moves diagrams

8.3 Artist Impressions

View of market entrance from Clow Street

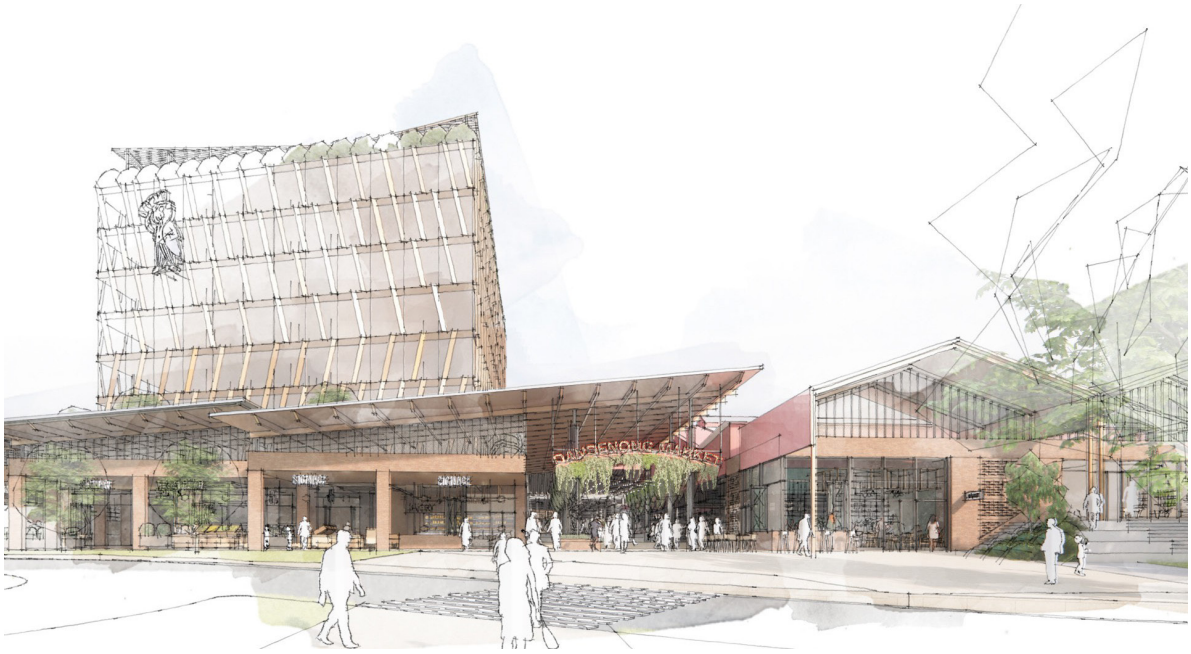


Image 119: Artist impression

View of plaza/park from Clow Street to market entrance



Image 120: Artist impression





Project Consultants

McP BKK ARCHITECTS in collaboration with

HillPDA CONSULTING Movement & Place Consulting GLAS urban design and landscape architecture DesignFlow AMPLIFIER COLLECTIVE

Customer Service Centre locations

Dandenong Civic Centre

Level 2, 225 Lonsdale Street, Dandenong

8.30am–5pm Monday to Friday

Springvale Community Hub

5 Hillcrest Grove, Springvale

8.30am–5pm Monday to Friday

Parkmore

Shop A7, Parkmore Shopping Centre Cheltenham Road, Keysborough

9am–5pm Monday to Friday, 9am–1pm Saturday

(03) 8571 1000

council@cgd.vic.gov.au

greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au

TTY: 133 677

Speak and listen: 1300 555 727

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4.3.2 Community Grants Impact Report 2024-25 (For Noting）

Responsible Officer: Executive Director Community Strengthening

Attachments:
1. Community Grants Impact Report 2024-2025 (A13806989) [**4.3.2.1** - 22 pages]

Officer Recommendation

That Council NOTES the Community Grants Impact Report 2024-25, per Attachment 1, which provides the the first consolidated assessment of the social, cultural, environmental and economic outcomes achieved through Council's Community Grants Program.

Executive Summary

1. The Community Grants Impact Report 2024-25 (GIR) is Council's first consolidated assessment of the outcomes achieved through the Community Grants Program. The report demonstrates how Council's investment in community grants contributes to community outcomes and Council Plan priorities.
2. The report reflects Council's transition to an outcomes-based approach to grants management and reporting. Over several years, Council has progressively developed and refined an Outcomes Framework to measure and report on the outcomes achieved through grant-funded activities.
3. Drawing on data collected through Council's Outcomes Framework and grant acquittal processes, the report provides an assessment of outcomes achieved through approximately $1.66 million in funding distributed through the Small, Medium and Large Grants Programs during the 2024-25 financial year. During this period, 192 grant-funded projects were delivered across the municipality.
4. The report identifies outcomes across six domains aligned with Council Plan priorities. It establishes a baseline for future impact reporting and supports ongoing monitoring, strategic planning, continuous improvement, evidence-based decision-making and accountability for Council's investment in community grants.
5. The report is intended to be shared on Council’s website, and the data and stories within the report will be used to showcase the depth and breadth of impact, Councils Community Grants Program has on our community.

Background

6. Since 2018, Council has strengthened how it measures and reports the outcomes of community grant funding. This work responds to a broader shift within the grants sector towards better understanding the outcomes and longer-term impacts of funded activities.
7. Traditional grant reporting has focused on outputs, such as funding allocated, projects delivered and participation numbers. While these measures provide useful information about activity delivery, they do not fully demonstrate the broader outcomes achieved through grant funding. To address this, Council developed an Outcomes Framework to support consistent measurement and reporting across the Community Grants Program.

8. In 2022, Council introduced an outcomes-based approach to grants reporting, which was refined in 2024 to strengthen alignment with the Council Plan. During this period, Council also introduced a range of improvements across its grants programs through the Community Grants Program Policy Review, including streamlining grant categories, enhancing acquittal processes, aligning administrative processes, and progressively improving SmartyGrants data collection and analytics capability. These changes were designed to create a more consistent and proportionate approach to capturing outcomes information across grant programs.

9. The latest iteration of the framework was applied through the Large Grants Program for projects funded between 2024 and 2026. Under this approach, funded organisations report against defined community outcomes through their acquittal processes, providing Council with a more structured method for collecting, assessing and aggregating outcomes data. This enabled Council to move beyond reporting on funding distribution and project delivery and towards understanding the collective outcomes achieved through grant-funded activities.

10. The GIR represents the next stage of this work. Drawing on data collected through Council's Outcomes Framework and grant reporting processes, the report provides the first consolidated assessment of outcomes achieved through the Community Grants Program.

11. The GIR demonstrates how grant funding contributes to Council Plan priorities and community outcomes, while establishing a baseline for future impact reporting, continuous improvement, transparency and evidence-based decision-making. Council understands this report to be one of the first local government community grants impact reports of its kind in Australia.

Key Issues and Discussion

Measuring Community Impact

12. Historically, grant reporting focused on outputs such as the number of grants awarded, activities delivered and participants engaged. While these measures provide information about activity delivery, they do not capture the outcomes achieved through grant funding. Council's Outcomes Framework has enabled a shift towards measuring community outcomes and understanding how funded projects contribute to Council Plan priorities.

13. The report aggregates and analyses outcomes data across funded activities, establishing a baseline for future reporting, evaluation and continuous improvement.

Program Outcomes and Community Benefit

14. During 2024-25, Council distributed approximately $1.66 million through the Community Grants Program, supporting 192 successful applications across the municipality. The report assesses outcomes achieved through grant-funded activities against six domains within Council's Outcomes Framework, which are aligned with Council Plan priorities:

    - Safe and Peaceful Community.
    - Education, Training, Entrepreneurship and Employment Opportunities.
    - Sustainable Environment.
    - Embrace Diversity and Multiculturalism.
    - Mind, Body and Spirit.
    - Arts and Culture.

15. The report indicates that Council's Community Grants Program contributes to a range of social, cultural, environmental and economic outcomes across Greater Dandenong. Reported outcomes include:
    - 10,875 participants reporting increased food security.
    - 2,050 participants reporting increased social connection.
    - 1,176 participants reporting improved mental health.
    - 1,040 participants reporting increased skills development.
    - 369 participants reporting employment outcomes.
    - 490 participants reporting increased feelings of safety.
    - 26.5 tonnes of waste diverted from landfill through funded projects
16. The report also highlights the contribution of volunteers, community organisations and partner agencies in delivering outcomes that align with Council Plan priorities and support the wellbeing of Greater Dandenong residents.

Data Integrity and Reporting Challenges

17. Impact reporting relies on the collection of accurate and reliable data. To support data quality, information submitted through grant acquittals is reviewed and validated before being included in the report.
18. As this is the first year of consolidated impact reporting, funded organisations are at different stages in their ability to collect and report outcome data. Council will continue to refine reporting requirements and work with funded organisations to strengthen the quality, consistency and reliability of outcome data over time.

Continuous Improvement

19. The development of the GIR identified opportunities to further refine outcome measures, reporting requirements and data collection processes. Learnings from this work have informed ongoing improvements to grant management and reporting practices and will support the continued development of Council's outcomes measurement approach.
20. As Council's first consolidated impact report, it establishes a baseline for future reporting and supports a more systematic and evidence-based approach to evaluating the outcomes achieved through community grant funding.

Future Opportunities

21. Future impact reports will support trend analysis and provide greater insight into outcomes achieved through Council's Community Grants Program. As outcome data matures, it will support program development, strategic planning, evaluation and decision-making related to Council's investment in community grants.

Governance Compliance

Human Resource Implications (consider Workforce Planning and Service Statements)

22. This item does not have an impact on existing human resources.

Financial/Asset Resource Implications (consider Service Statements, Budget, Long Term Financial Strategy and Asset Plan)

Operating Budget Implications

23. There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Asset Implications

24. This item does not affect any existing assets.

Legal/Risk Implications

25. There are no legal / risk implications relevant to this report. Key considerations relate to ensuring that public reporting is accurate, evidence-based and does not disclose personal, sensitive or identifying information without appropriate authority or consent.

Environmental Implications

26. There are no environmental implications relevant to this report.

Gender Impact Assessment

27. A gender impact assessment is not required as this report is for noting only and does not introduce or amend a policy, program or service. The Community Grants Program Policy was informed by a Gender Impact Assessment and continues to promote equity, inclusion and participation through community funding.
28. There was no requirement for community consultation however anything that affects this report and future iterations will be included in Community Grants Program Policy Reviews.

Links to Community Vision, Council Plan, Strategy, Notice of Motion

29. This report is consistent with the following principles in the Community Vision 2040:
    - Safe and peaceful community.
    - Education, training, entrepreneurship and employment opportunities.
    - Embrace diversity and multiculturalism.
    - Sustainable environment.
    - Mind, body and spirit.
    - Art and culture.
30. This report is consistent with the following strategic objectives from the Council Plan 2025-29:
    - 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.

Legislative and Policy Obligations

31. This report has considered Council's legislative and policy obligations (where applicable) as outlined in the Report Considerations section detailed in the front of this Agenda. The applicable obligations considered and applied are:
    - The Overarching Governance Principles of the Local Government Act 2020.
    - Related Council Policies, Strategies or Frameworks.

Community Grants Impact Report
2024-2025

Greater Dandenong



Acknowledgement

Greater Dandenong City Council acknowledges and pays respects to the Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation, as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters now named the City of Greater Dandenong.

We value and recognise local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, heritage, and connection to land as a proud part of a shared identity for Greater Dandenong. Council pays respect to Elders past and present and recognises their importance in maintaining knowledge, traditions, and culture in our community.

Greater Dandenong City Council also respectfully acknowledges the Bunurong Land Council as the Registered Aboriginal Party responsible for managing the Aboriginal cultural heritage of the land and waters where Greater Dandenong is situated.

Greater Dandenong is committed to:

- Respectfully engaging and being led by the Traditional Owners, the Bunurong people, via consultation and partnership
- Respecting Aboriginal sites, objects, places, and traditions
- Walking together in reconciliation and assisting with the education of the broader community about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and culture of the municipality and region



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Overview

Community Grants Programs are designed to support partnerships between the Council and the community by enabling locally led projects that address community needs, align with Council priorities, and build strong, resilient communities through collaboration, innovation, and long-term community benefit.

The Greater Dandenong City Council Community Grants Program provides funding to community groups, not-for-profit organisations, and individuals to deliver initiatives that benefit the local community and is tailored to address community outcomes in our Council Plan. Below is an overview of our programs in 2024-2025:

PROGRAM	STREAM	AMOUNTS Per annum
SMALL GRANTS Open all year round or until allocation is expended.	**Individual Achievement Grant**	Up to $500
	Community Group Activities Grants	Up to $1,500
	Entry Level Grants	Up to $1000
	Responsive Project Grants	Up to $1,500
MEDIUM GRANTS Open twice a year.	**Community Development**	Up to $10,000
	Climate Change	Up to $5,000
	Arts, Festivals and Events	Up to $10,000
	Individual Artists	Up to $5,000
LARGE GRANTS Open once every two years. (Next open 2027)	**Partnership Grants**	Up to $50,000
	Strategic Grants	Up to $80,000
	Sponsorships	Up to $40,000

Snapshot

Community Grants Program Snapshot - 2024-2025 Financial Year

$1.66 Million
Amount invested by Council through Large, Medium and Small Grants.

$2.19 Million
Amount invested across the Community Grants Portfolio including contracts.

Application Data

354 Total Number of Applications

54.2% Grants Program Successful Application Rate

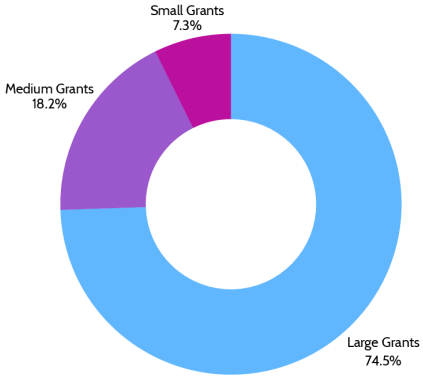
192 Number of Successful Applications

34% New Applicants



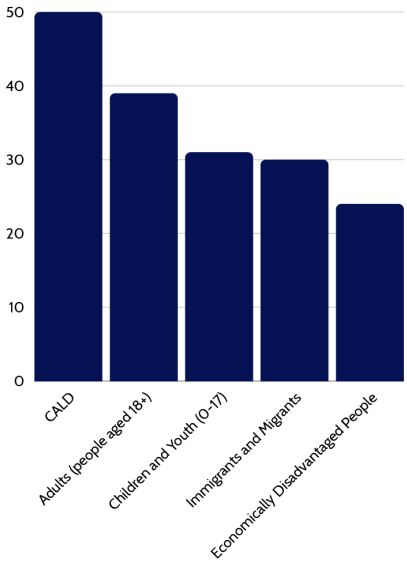
11 Community panellists newly recruited (15 Community panellists' seats across 5 Panels)

Graph shows percentage breakdown of allocated funds:



Top 5 Beneficiaries

Based on 88 responses
Note: CALD stands for Culturally and Liguistically Diverse People.



Community Development Projects

Note: Metrics reported for Medium and Large Grants Programs (Small Grants breakdown is not available).



42,231 Reported number of participants

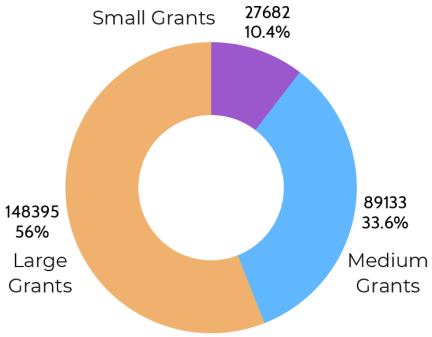
31,083 Total Number of participants from Greater Dandenong.

73,635 Estimated Number of Volunteer Hours

185 Number of Paid Staff Involved

802 Project Volunteers

Participants Per Program



Snapshot

Arts, Festivals and Events Projects

Most participants captured in the snapshot were engaged through arts, festivals, and events initiatives. These programs are designed to deliver economic benefits by attracting visitors and business activity from outside the Greater Dandenong City Council, while also contributing to social and environmental outcomes. They enhance the City's profile, provide clear economic value, and take place within the municipality while remaining open and accessible to the entire community.



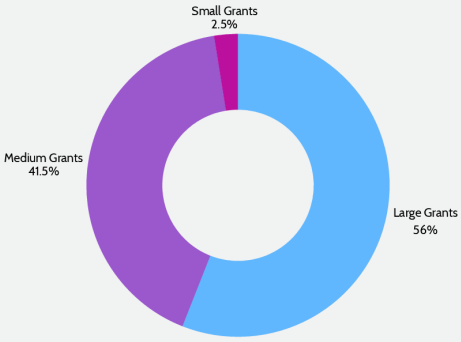
$383,416

Amount invested by Council into Arts, Festivals and Events Projects



195,297

Reported number of participants / project beneficiaries



The graph shows the percentage of the reported number of participants/project beneficiaries for arts, festivals and events projects funded through each program.

Measures for Arts, Festivals and Events Projects

Note: Metrics reported for all Arts, Festivals and Events Grants under Medium and Large Grants programs (includes individual artist grants data).

Total Number of Participants from CGD
116,868

Estimated Number of Volunteer Hours
18,743

Number of Paid Staff Involved
126

Project Volunteers
2257



The below metrics were pulled from individual artist grants only.

Total Number of Participants from CGD
37,605

Estimated Number of Volunteer Hours
50

Number of Paid Staff Involved
7

Project Volunteers
6



74,605
Reported number of participants/ project beneficiaries

Note: Reported numbers for individual artist grants has been separated as it includes number of people who have engaged with their works (project examples include street murals, etc.).

Outcomes Framework

In measuring the impact of funded community projects, Council has an Outcomes Framework to measure progress towards our Council Plan initiatives.

Council Vision for 2040

Greater Dandenong City Council is a home to all. It's a city where you can enjoy and embrace life through celebration and equal opportunity! We harmonise the community by valuing multiculturalism and the individual. Our community is healthy, vibrant, innovative, and creative. Our growing city is committed to environmental sustainability. Welcome to our exciting and peaceful community.

Outcome Domains / Council Principles

In 2024-2025, the Outcome Domains for our Large Grants Program have changed to directly align with the new Council Plan Principles to ease alignment with Council Plan initiatives and priorities.

- Safe and peaceful community
- Education, training, entrepreneurship and employment opportunities
- Sustainable environment
- Embrace diversity and multiculturalism
- Mind, Body and Spirit
- Art and Culture

Across these domains, there are 47 Outcomes. These were simplified from Council Strategic Objectives that applied to the Community Grants Program.

Measures

The measures against each outcome have been developed considering metrics across Government Agencies, SmartyGrants, and in discussion with fundees to reflect measures that indicate change against each outcome that are also feasible with funded program delivery.

- Output Measures (Activity Impact)
- Outcomes Measures (Participant Impact)

Impact

Council reviews acquittal reports that evaluate individual project impact in alignment with Grants Principles outlined in our Community Grants Program Policy.

- Project Impact
- Impact against Council Outcomes
- Grants Program Improvement
- Advocacy and Trends

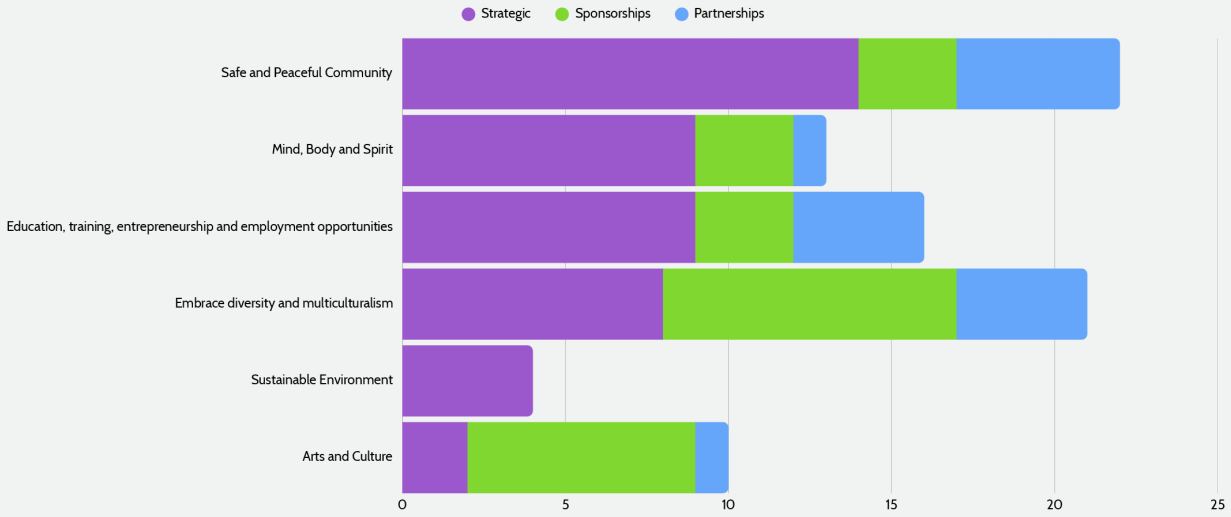
Domains

In 2023, an Outcomes Framework was developed to assess the impact of the Strategic Grants program against Council Plan outcomes. The framework has since continued to evolve, reflecting updated community priorities identified through the Council Plan and being progressively applied across other programs within the Community Funding Portfolio.

Image 1 shows the number of applications that address Outcomes under each Domain, which are based on Council Plan Principles. This image also includes a breakdown of the number of projects in each Large Grants Category that were delivering outcomes under each domain.

Note: Numbers have been pulled from the submitted reports of the Large Grants program only, which was the pilot for the outcomes framework and funded 35 projects. Each project addresses between one to five different Council outcomes under each Domain.

Image 1: Number of Large Grants Projects Addressing Council Domain Areas





Outcomes

Under each Council Plan Domain, key outcomes measured across all funded community projects are highlighted. An example project is included in each Domain to demonstrate how these outcomes were achieved.

Sustainable Environment



Case Study: Our Village (formerly St Kilda Mums Inc) - Providing Essentials for Vulnerable Babies and Children

This project supports families in Greater Dandenong by redistributing essential items such as prams, car seats, cots, and clothing through social workers and Maternal and Child Health nurses. In its first year, the program supported around 2,200 babies and children (a 15% increase on the previous year), diverted over 12 tonnes of goods from landfill, and mobilised 110 volunteers contributing nearly 2,000 hours, delivering strong social, wellbeing, and environmental benefits for vulnerable families.



400

Participants reported an increase in awareness of the impact of climate change.



26.5 Tonnes

Total waste diverted from landfill and repurposed through funded projects.

Arts and Culture



198

Participants reported an increase in creative and cultural learning and expression.



Art Access Victoria - Makers Space, Dandenong

The Maker Space, Dandenong project by Arts Access Victoria delivers inclusive creative workshops for young people aged 18–25 who are living with a disability, supporting creative expression and social connection in an accessible environment. In its first year, 64 participants from Greater Dandenong took part in artist-led workshops at Walker Street Gallery, with early evidence showing increased confidence, creative exploration, and comfort using public cultural spaces, setting strong foundations for deeper engagement and a public exhibition in year two.

Education, training, entrepreneurship and employment opportunities



369
Participants reported employment outcomes.

922
Participants reported increased resilience and capability in the workforce.



1040
Participants reported an increase in skill development.



Case Study: Dandenong North Neighbourhood House - Building Community Resilience in North Dandenong

This project was funded through the Strategic Projects Grant (2024–2026) to reduce barriers to financial security, education, employment, and social inclusion. In its first year, the project delivered a wide range of activities including food relief and community lunches, financial counselling and “Bring Your Bills” days, English language and employment skills training, and social connection programs, reaching over 1,600 participants and showing strong positive outcomes in wellbeing, belonging, learning engagement, and employment pathways.

Mind, Body and Spirit



10,875
Participants reported increased food security.



1176
Participants reported improved mental health.

2050
Participants reported increased social connection.





Case Study: Afri-Aus Care Inc - The UBUNTU Women’s Project

This project supports African and CALD women from refugee and asylum-seeker backgrounds by providing a culturally safe, women-only space that combines peer support with access to counselling, health services, and community programs. The project has had a strong positive impact on mental wellbeing, with participants reporting improved mental health, reduced social isolation, and increased confidence through regular connection and culturally responsive support. Qualitative evidence highlights reduced social isolation (91% of surveyed participants), increased confidence and self-esteem (82%), and the value of culturally safe, women-only spaces and culturally responsive counselling in supporting emotional healing and resilience.

Embrace diversity and multiculturalism



1798

Participants reported increased pride in cultural diversity.



716

Participants reported increased feelings of respect and inclusiveness.



9128

Reported increased feelings of social cohesion.



Case Study: Springvale Neighbourhood House - Springvale Harmony Festival

This event is a large-scale multicultural celebration that transforms the Springvale Community Hub precinct into an inclusive cultural space through performances, workshops, food stalls, and the parade of many cultures. The 2025 festival attracted around 3,400 attendees and demonstrated strong social impact, with participant feedback showing that approximately 97% of surveyed respondents felt they made new community connections, 97% felt more respected and included, and nearly 89% felt more connected to their community. These outcomes highlight the festival's effectiveness in strengthening social connection, cultural pride, and inclusion across Greater Dandenong's diverse communities.

Safe and Peaceful Community



1285

Participants reported improved participation in the community.

380

Participants reported a reduction in family violence.



490

Participants reported an increase in feelings of safety.

Springvale Monash Legal Service - Mothers Legal Help (MLH)

The Mothers Legal Help (MLH) project, delivered by South-East Monash Legal Service, provides trauma-informed, integrated legal assistance to mothers experiencing family violence by embedding specialist lawyers within Maternal and Child Health (MCH) services across Greater Dandenong. The program supports women with family violence, family law, and migration issues while also offering legal education and referrals through a holistic service model.

The project has had a strong positive impact, supporting 115 mothers, the majority of whom are Greater Dandenong residents. Among those surveyed, over 80% reported a better understanding of their legal rights and how to seek legal help, around three-quarters felt more empowered to participate in their community, and many reported increased safety and confidence in navigating complex legal systems. The integration of migration advice has been described as life-saving for women on temporary visas, helping reduce fear, improve stability, and support safer long-term outcomes for families.

Small Grants Program

The Small Grants Program provides accessible funding to support individuals and community groups to deliver initiatives that benefit the local community. The program aims to encourage participation, build local capacity, recognise achievement, and respond to emerging community needs through flexible, short-term funding opportunities.

The Small Grants Program includes four funding categories designed to support a range of community needs and capacities. Individual Achievement Grants assist individuals in pursuing representation opportunities, while Community Group Activity Grants support not-for-profit organisations and community groups in delivering local activities or events that bring people together. Entry Level Grants provide small amounts of funding for new or emerging groups, or first-time applicants, helping them build experience and test ideas. Responsive Project Grants offer flexible funding for projects that address emerging priorities, unexpected opportunities, or identified community needs, enabling timely community benefit.

Program Statistics

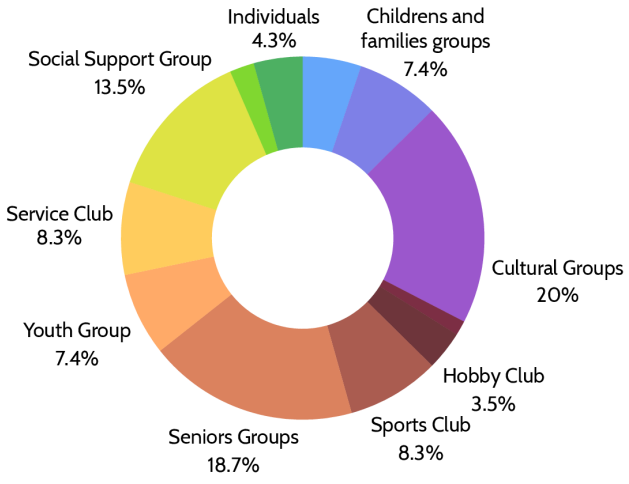
Total Funding Provided by Council
$121,366

Number of Successful Applications
105

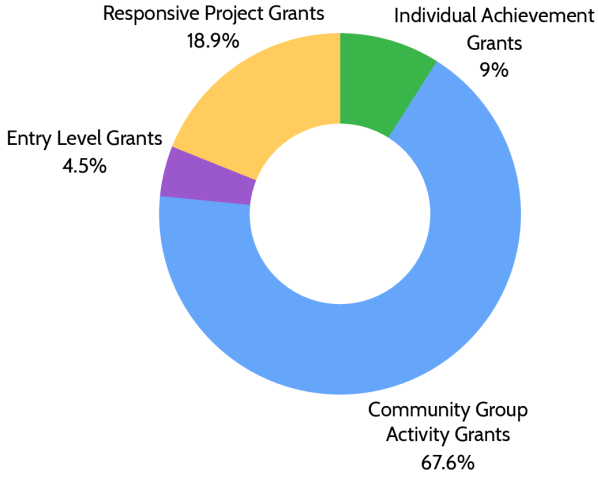
Total Number of Participants or Direct Beneficiaries
27,682

Applicant Success Rate
67%

Types of Applicants



Percentage of Category Approved Applications



Program Case Studies

Fijian Community Association Victoria Inc

The Fijian Community Association of Victoria Inc received a Small Grant to support the delivery of the Fiji Independence Day celebration that was held on 19 October 2024 at Dandenong Park, attracting around 800 attendees. The event featured speeches and vibrant cultural performances from Fiji, Cook Islands, China, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, and Afghanistan. Food and craft stalls, plus roving performers, created a lively atmosphere that delighted families and vendors.









Dodgeball Athlete representing Australia in World's Dodgeball Championships in Austria

A Small Grant helped a local resident to compete in the World Dodgeball Championship held in Graz, Austria, in August 2024, where the athlete represented Australia and competed against some of the world's best teams. The team achieved an impressive 3rd place in the Foam Mixed category, strengthening Australia's presence internationally and building global connections.

Dandenong and District Orchid Club Inc.

The Annual Orchid Show, held at the Paddy O'Donoghue Centre from 26–28 September, was a remarkable success with 350 community members attending. The new committee and members created stunning displays that impressed judges and visitors, earning praise as the best show yet. Members provided expert orchid care and cultural advice throughout the event, answering questions and sharing tips. Grants played a vital role in covering expenses such as venue hire for shows and meetings, enabling the club to continue offering demonstrations and guidance. Visitors expressed excitement to return next year, and the club looks forward to what 2026 will bring.



Medium Grants Program

The Medium Grants Program offers not-for-profit community groups, organisations, and individual artists the opportunity to apply for one-off grants to support the delivery of projects, programs, and events that benefit the Greater Dandenong community.

The Medium Grants Program includes four streams that support community benefit in different ways: Community Development funds projects that build inclusion, well-being, and community capacity; Climate Change Action supports local initiatives that address climate impacts and promote sustainability; Arts, Festivals, and Events fund creative activities that strengthen connection and celebrate diversity; and Individual Artist grants support artists in delivering community-based projects with strong artistic and engagement outcomes.

Program Statistics

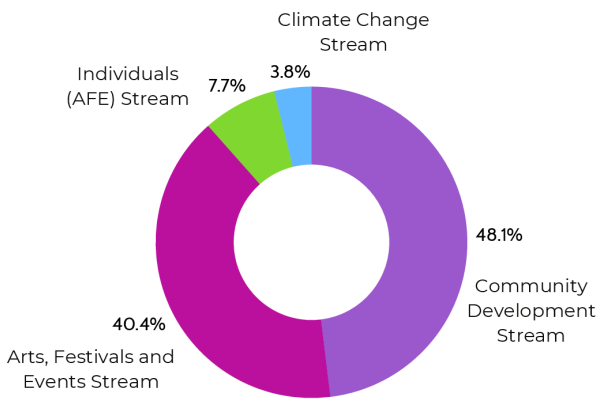
Total Funding Provided by Council
$302,928

Total Number of Successful Applications
52

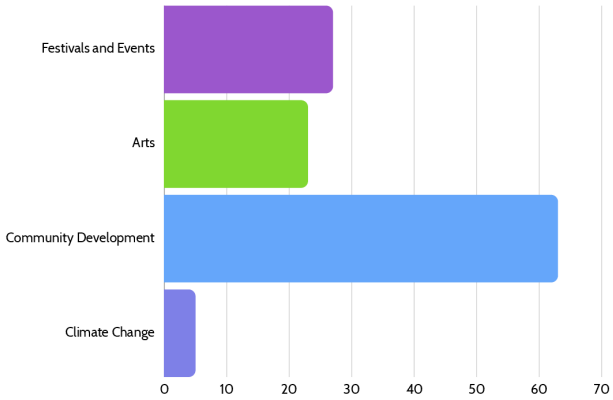
New Applicants to the Program
43%

Applicant Success Rate
43%

Percentage of Category Approved Applications



Number of Projects Addressing Program Outcomes



Funded Project Metrics

Projects funded under Medium Grants are required to report on the following:

Total Number of Participants or Direct Beneficiaries
89,133

Number of Volunteers from CGD
1193

Total Number of Participants from CGD
57,265

Estimated Number of Volunteer Hours
12K

Number of Volunteers involved in the Project
1532

Number of Paid Staff Involved in Funded Projects
173

Program Case Studies

Rite Mentoring Inc - Group Mentoring Program for Young Men

This project was funded under the Medium Grants Program to support youth wellbeing, learning engagement, and community cohesion through a partnership between public secondary schools in Greater Dandenong and Rite, delivering weekly in-school group mentoring programs across three locations. Using workshops, sports, reflection, and group activities, the program builds trust, leadership, and social skills while reducing stigma around help-seeking for vulnerable young people. In 2025, three culturally diverse boys' programs achieved strong outcomes, with participants reporting increased confidence, stronger peer relationships, and a sense of belonging, while delivery insights are shaping more flexible and impactful future programs.



Greater Dandenong Environment Group Inc - Verges for Nature Project

The Verges for Nature project united the Greater Dandenong community to create native verge gardens that improve neighbourhood appearance, build social connections, and support biodiversity. Volunteers found the work rewarding and cost-effective, enabling plans to expand from five to seven verges next year with a $5,000 grant. Inclusive participation, flexible work times, and strong community outreach helped spread interest in native verge gardening across Greater Dandenong.



Australian Society of Graduate Tamils Inc - Tamil Youth Cultural Night

The Tamil Youth Cultural Night brought together 700 young people aged 4 to 25, along with their families, from diverse backgrounds including Sri Lanka, India, Malaysia, and Singapore. The event celebrated Tamil heritage through cultural performances, authentic cuisine, and activities for all age groups, while fostering social cohesion and inclusivity. It provided a platform for youth to showcase talents, build confidence, and strengthen interpersonal bonds, promoting values of multiculturalism and community harmony. The night was a powerful display of unity, inspiring pride in Tamil identity and encouraging cross-cultural understanding.



Greater Dandenong Football Club - Soccer for All

The Soccer for All project increased participation of newly arrived Afghan young people, particularly girls and women, in soccer through pathways into State League teams and weekly social sessions. The program successfully engaged families, led to the formation of a girls-only under-9 team in 2025, and supported many first-time players to join Miniroos. The project strengthened community connection, inclusion, and gender equity through culturally sensitive delivery and local home games.



Large Grants Program

The Large Grants Program provides up to two years of funding to not-for-profit organisations delivering initiatives that create lasting community benefit in Greater Dandenong. It supports projects that build community capacity, reduce disadvantage, encourage participation, and align with Council priorities.

Funding is available through three categories: Partnership Grants, which support the ongoing operations of established organisations delivering essential services; Strategic Project Grants, which fund time-limited projects aligned with Council objectives and wellbeing outcomes; and Festivals and Events Sponsorship Grants, which support large-scale, inclusive events that deliver social, environmental, and local economic benefits.

Program Statistics

Total Funding Provided by Council
$1.24 Million

Total Number of Successful Applications
35

New Applicants to the Program
26%

Applicant Success Rate
54%

Funded Project Metrics

Projects funded under Large Grants are required to report on the following:

Total Number of Participants or Direct Beneficiaries
148,395

Number of Volunteers from CGD
757

Total Number of Participants from CGD
90,686

Estimated Number of Volunteer Hours
77,285

Number of Volunteers involved in the Project
1527

Number of Paid Staff Involved in Funded Projects
138

Sisterworks - Journey to Employment: Dandenong's Migrant and Refugee Women Initiative

Project Summary

The Journey to Employment initiative delivered SisterWorks' Employment Pathways Program to support migrant, refugee, and asylum-seeker women in Greater Dandenong to overcome barriers to work through culturally safe training, job-ready skills, and employment support. During the reporting period, 189 women graduated, and 88 secured employment, with most reporting increased confidence, skills, and work readiness. The program exceeded expectations, with strong participant satisfaction, improved English and workplace readiness, and a positive influence on more inclusive recruitment practices among employer partners.

Project Outcomes

- Increase skill development
- Increase employment pathways
- Increase Employment

Image: Two Sisters (who were program participants) were placed at the Holiday Inn Dandenong



Project Case Study

Shakila arrived in Australia from Afghanistan in 2017 and faced barriers to employment due to limited English, lack of experience, and low confidence, which were worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic. After joining SisterWorks' Warehousing Program in 2024, she built skills and confidence and is now employed at API, with a permanent role offered. Her story highlights the positive impact of targeted employment support for migrant women.

Cambodian Association of Victoria Inc - Promoting integration and resilience of the Cambodian Community in Victoria

Project Outcomes

- Increase access to affordable, healthy and culturally appropriate services.
- Increase resilience of the Greater Dandenong Community
- Increase engagement in learning
- Increase knowledge and appreciation of our First Nations culture and history



The Promoting Integration and Resilience of the Cambodian Community in Victoria project, delivered by the Cambodian Association of Victoria, provides culturally appropriate support to Cambodian migrants and seniors in Greater Dandenong. Services include assistance with documents, referrals, translation, access to health and government systems, and community education in Khmer. During the reporting period, over 1,600 people were supported, exceeding targets and demonstrating strong demand. The project has reduced language barriers and social isolation, responded effectively to crisis needs, and aligns strongly with Council priorities for multicultural inclusion and equitable access to services.

Sponsorships Metrics 2022-2024 (Major Festivals and Events)

31
Number of Paid Staff Involved in Funded Projects

Total Number of Participants from CGD
65,243

112,160
Total Number of participants/beneficiaries

Estimated Number of Volunteer Hours
11,316

990
Number of reported stallholders that participated in funded events

Number of Council-owned venues or parks utilised as part of event
20

3,937
Number of CGD residents that took part in the events as artists

Springvale Asian Business Association - 2025 Springvale Lunar New Year Festival

The funded project supported the successful delivery of the 2025 Springvale Lunar New Year Festival, held on 26 January in Greater Dandenong, celebrating the Year of the Snake and bringing the community together. The event attracted around 70,000 attendees and delivered strong social, cultural, and economic benefits for local residents and businesses.



Event Case Study

A local food stallholder participated in the 2025 Springvale Lunar New Year Festival, joining more than 60 traders at the one-day event in Springvale. With an estimated 70,000 attendees throughout the day, the stallholder experienced strong customer demand and reported a profitable trading outcome. The stallholder noted that the festival not only generated immediate income but also helped raise the business's profile within the community. This experience reflects the broader economic and community impact of the festival.



Community Feedback

Council provides opportunities for our Community to provide feedback on our program through a number of ways, including our online forms, training programs, and our annual Community Grants program Improvement Survey.



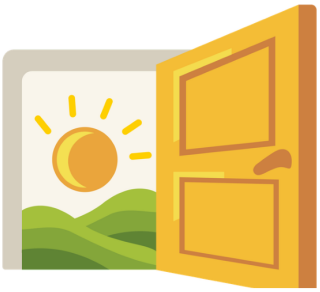
Strengths

- Grants perceived as accessible (4.33/5) and aligned with Council objectives (4.18/5).
- Strong sense of partnership (4.24/5) and contribution to community outcomes (4.19/5).
- Clear guidelines and acknowledgment processes rated highly.



Areas for Improvement

- Transparency of funding decisions and reporting (3.67/5).
- Timeliness of decisions and communications (3.69/5).
- Feedback on unsuccessful applications (3.22/5).
- Simplification of the application process and enhanced support during the application.



Opportunities

- Expand training in grant writing, fundraising, marketing, and volunteer management.
- Improve communication and feedback loops for unsuccessful applicants.
- Enhance transparency through public reporting of funded outcomes.

The Community Funding Team plays a key role in the administration of grants and community development. This includes identifying opportunities for improvement and training, which the team plans to expand. The Council also supports learning and improvement by offering unsuccessful applicants clear feedback against the assessment criteria, along with guidance on funding approaches and areas to strengthen future applications.

While funding outcomes are reported in the Council's Annual Report, the team plans to provide annual updates on the overall impact of the Community Funding Program and highlight new opportunities for community engagement.

To stay up to date with Community Funding and development opportunities, subscribe to the Community Funding Newsletter and visit greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/grants. For inquiries, contact the Community Funding Team at commgrants@cgd.vic.gov.au or phone 8571 1432. Together, we can continue working towards the Council's vision for Greater Dandenong as a home to all.



Street Mural on the corner Thomas Street and Halpin Way, Dandenong by artist Marta Oktaba was funded under the Medium Grants Program 2024-2025.

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4.3.3 Council News - Revised Model for 2027

Responsible Officer: Executive Director Strategy & Corporate Services
Attachments: **Nil**

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. **APPROVES a revised approach to the publication of the Greater Dandenong Council News from 2027, comprised of:**
    a. **Letterbox delivery of six (6) print editions per year, including 5-6 Councillor ward columns per edition, and**
    b. **Emailed distribution of fortnightly digital editions of Council News.**
2. **NOTES that community market research was conducted in August 2026 to establish a baseline measure of awareness and perceptions of Council News. The effectiveness of the new approach will be assessed through an evidence-based review approximately 12 months after implementation.**

Executive Summary

1. It is proposed that Council amend its approach to the annual production and publication of the Greater Dandenong News, reducing the number of print editions from 11 to 6 publications per annum.
2. Consumer information and communication preferences and expectations are changing due to technology, with an increasing preference for online publications and materials.
3. Effective communication requires an integrated, multi-channel approach. Council must balance investment across traditional and digital channels to maximise reach, relevance and value for our diverse community.
4. The proposed approach maintains a commitment to the valued Council News publication in print and delivered by letterbox. However, it shifts to fewer print editions to redirect resources towards a more contemporary communication mix, with more digital products to enhance community engagement and reach, while also being faster and adaptive to emerging news.
5. The revised approach to the publication of the Greater Dandenong Council News will allow the reinvestment of around $150,000per year towards support and production of new digital communication materials and channels.

Background

6. Contemporary communication practice is increasingly digital-first, enabling information to be published and updated quickly and supporting more interactive, accessible and multilingual content.
7. Across the media industry, content is increasingly published digitally in the first instance and subsequently adapted for print where appropriate.

8. Council's current communications model remains heavily weighted towards the printed Greater Dandenong Council News. This limits Council's capacity to invest in and respond through a broader range of contemporary communication channelsCouncil currently produces 11 editions of Council News each year. Each edition is 16 pages, with a 20-page summer edition
9. The production cycle for each edition is almost two months, limiting Council's ability to provide timely information and respond to emerging issues and community needs.

Evolving Communication Practices Across Local Government

10. Benchmarking of 10 councils across eastern and southern metropolitan Melbourne shows that Greater Dandenong and one other council continue to letterbox 11 editions each year. Several councils have reduced the frequency of printed publications and/or changed their distribution models in response to changing communication preferences and increasing distribution costs.

    Most benchmarked councils also provide more frequent digital news offerings alongside their printed publications.

Council	Print Editions per year	Delivery method	Digital newsletters
Greater Dandenong	11	Letterbox	Monthly news
Monash	11	Letterbox	Monash Bulletin
Whitehorse	6	Supermarkets, civic outlets	Fortnightly 'What's Happening'
Casey	3	Civic outlets	Monthly Casey Catch up
Cardinia	3	Civic outlets & letterbox	Monthly Connect+
Knox	5	Letterbox	Weekly enews
Kingston	4	Letterbox	Monthly
Boroondara	6	Letterbox	Fortnightly Feed
Manningham	6	Letterbox	Monthly
Frankston	6	Letterbox	Monthly

Key Issues and Discussion

Current resource allocation limits communication flexibility

11. The cost of producing and distributing Council News has increased over time. Council currently spends significantly more on the printed publication than on its websites and social media channels combined.
12. The current allocation of resources limits Council's ability to invest in a broader mix of accessible and contemporary communication channels. Redirecting resources would provide greater capacity for multilingual content, targeted audience engagement, face-to-face community outreach and enhanced digital communication.

Print remains important, but digital continues to grow

13. The 2026 Community Satisfaction Survey found that the two most preferred methods for receiving Council information remain a newsletter delivered to the letterbox (55%, down from 63% in 2025) and email (52%, up from 50%).
14. Preferences for other communication channels increased substantially. Preference for Council's website increased from 26% to 43%, text messages from 23% to 36%, and social media from 19% to 23%.
15. These results demonstrate the continuing importance of Council News, while also supporting a more diverse, multi-channel approach to Council communications.

Proposed approach to the future of Council News

16. It is proposed that the revised approach commence in early 2027, allowing time to communicate the changes to the community.

Element	Current	Proposed approach
Distribution	Letterbox	Letterbox
Editions per year	11	6: Feb, April, July, Sept, Nov, Dec
Councillor ward columns	2-3 per edition; 2 per year, per Councillor	5-6 per edition; 3 per year, per Councillor
Pages per edition	16 (20 in the summer edition)	20
Digital enews	Monthly, following print	Fortnightly, digital first
Cost	$624,000	$300,000 (est, subject to procurement)
Re-investment capacity	N/A	$150,000 to re-invest in digital and multi-lingual approaches.

Evaluation of new approach

17. Market research undertaken in August 2026 provides a baseline measure of awareness and perceptions of the print and digital editions of Council News.
18. The effectiveness of the revised approach will be reviewed approximately 12 months after implementation, with further market research undertaken in late 2027 using a similar methodology. The review will consider changes in awareness, readership, engagement preferences and community sentiment, as well as the effectiveness of new communication activities trialled during the year.

Governance Compliance

Human Resource Implications (consider Workforce Planning and Service Statements)

19. This item does not affect existing human resources.

Financial/Asset Resource Implications (consider Service Statements, Budget, Long Term Financial Strategy and Asset Plan)

Operating Budget Implications

20. The proposal is cost-neutral overall. Approximately $150,000 per annum currently allocated to the production and distribution of print editions would be redirected to digital and other communication channels. The estimated cost of the revised print model remains subjecy to procurement.

Asset Implications

21. This item does not affect Council assets.

Legal/Risk Implications

22. There are no identified legal or risk implications arising from this proposal.

Environmental Implications

23. Reducing the number of printed editions is expected to reduce paper use associated with Council News.

Gender Impact Assessment

24. A gender impact assessment is not required for this proposal.

Community Consultation

25. The proposed approach has been informed by communication preferences identified through the 2026 Community Satisfaction Survey and market research undertaken in August 2026.
26. The August 2026 research established a baseline measure of community awareness and perceptions of Council News.
27. Further research will be undertaken in late 2027 to assess the effectiveness of the revised approach and changes in community awareness, readership and communication preferences.

Links to Community Vision, Council Plan, Strategy, Notice of Motion

28. This report is consistent with the following principles in the Community Vision 2040:
    - Embrace diversity and multiculturalism.
29. This report is consistent with the following strategic objectives from the Council Plan 2025-29:
    - A socially connected, safe and healthy city.
    - A Council that demonstrates leadership, responsible use of public resources, and a commitment to investing in the community.

Legislative and Policy Obligations

30. This report has considered Council's legislative and policy obligations (where applicable) as outlined in the Report Considerations section detailed in the front of this Agenda. The applicable obligations considered and applied are:
    - Not Applicable

4.3.4 S5 Instrument of Delegation to the Chief Executive Officer

Responsible Officer: Executive Director Strategy & Corporate Services

Attachments:
1. S 5 Instrument of Delegation to the Chief Executive Officer 260921 [**4.3.4.1** - 4 pages]

Officer Recommendation

In the exercise of the power conferred by section 11(1)(b) of the *Local Government Act* 2020 (the Act), Greater Dandenong City Council (Council) resolves that:

1. **there be delegated to the person holding the position, or acting in or performing the duties, of Chief Executive Officer, the powers, duties and functions set out in the Instrument of Delegation to the Chief Executive Officer provided in Attachment 1 to this report, subject to the conditions and limitations specified in that Instrument;**
2. **the Instrument comes into force immediately upon this resolution being made and is to be signed by the Council's Chief Executive Officer and the Mayor with the common seal of Council being affixed to the Instrument;**
3. **on the coming into force of the Instrument, all previous delegations to the Chief Executive Officer are revoked; and**
4. **the duties and functions set out in the Instrument must be performed, and the powers set out in the instruments must be executed, in accordance with any guidelines or policies of Council that it may from time to time adopt.**

Executive Summary

1. Under the Local Government Act 2020, Council may delegate powers, duties and functions to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to ensure the efficient and effective operation of the organisation.
2. Council's Instrument of Delegation to the Chief Executive Officer has been reviewed and a minor amendment is proposed to one of the conditions and limitations relating to the approval of contracts valued between $200,000 and $1,000,000 (excluding GST).
3. The amendment removes the reference to the Tender Board and replaces it with governance wording that reflects Council's current procurement governance arrangements, executive delegations, approval thresholds and workflow requirements. The proposed change aligns the Instrument with Council's procurement practices and governance framework.
4. Council is asked to endorse the updated Instrument of Delegation to the Chief Executive Officer provided in Attachment 1.

Background

5. Council, as a statutory body, is responsible for carrying out various powers, duties and functions under a wide range of legislation and municipal local laws. To provide for the efficient and effective operation of the organisation, the Local Government Act 2020 enables Council to delegate many powers, duties and functions, particularly those of an administrative and operational nature, to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO may then, in turn, sub-delegate a range of powers, duties and functions to Council staff.

6. Greater Dandenong City Council's Instrument of Delegation to the CEO is informed by the Maddocks Lawyers Delegations and Authorisations Service. The Instrument is reviewed periodically to ensure it remains consistent with legislative requirements and Council's governance arrangements.
7. Council endorsed the current Instrument of Delegation to the Chief Executive Officer on 23 June 2025. An amendment to one condition and limitation is now proposed to ensure the Instrument accurately reflects Council's current procurement governance framework.

Key Issues and Discussion

8. The proposed amendment relates to the Condition and Limitation item 1.1 concerning contracts valued between $200,000 and $1,000,000.
9. The current Instrument includes a reference to the Tender Board. Since the Tender Board is not operating as an active approval body, the existing reference no longer accurately reflects Council's procurement governance arrangements.
10. It is proposed that wording be amended as follows:

Current wording	Proposed wording
The delegate must not determine the issue, take the action or do the act or thing: 1. if the issue, action, act or thing is an issue, action, act or thing which involves: 1.1 entering into a contract exceeding the value of $1,000,000 **(noting that contracts between $200,000 and $1,000,000 are considered and approved by the Tender Board which consists of the Executive Management Team and is chaired by the Chief Executive Officer);**	The delegate must not determine the issue, take the action or do the act or thing: 1. if the issue, action, act or thing is an issue, action, act or thing which involves: 1.1 entering into a contract exceeding the value of $1,000,000. **(noting that contracts between $200,000 and $1,000,000 are considered and approved by the Executive Management Team Meeting Forum chaired by the Chief Executive Officer);**

11. The amendment does not alter Council's procurement approval thresholds or decision-making authority. Rather, it clarifies and formalises the governance and approval arrangements that are already in operation across the organisation.
12. Approval and decision-making responsibilities for procurement activities continue to be exercised through existing delegated officers, financial delegations, procurement governance requirements and approved workflow processes. The amendment therefore represents a governance update that aligns the Instrument with current practice and reduces the need for future amendments should procurement advisory structures change.
13. The proposed change is administrative in nature and is not considered to have a material impact on Council's procurement approval processes.
14. Once the Instrument of Delegation to the CEO has been endorsed by Council, all the remaining Instruments of Delegation and Authorisations under the *Local Government Act 2020* and all other legislation will be reviewed and updated accordingly.

Governance Compliance

Human Resource Implications (consider Workforce Planning and Service Statements)

15. This item does not have an impact on existing human resources.

Financial/Asset Resource Implications (consider Service Statements, Budget, Long Term Financial Strategy and Asset Plan)

Operating Budget Implications

16. There are no financial implications associated with this report. Note that the Instrument of Delegation to the Chief Executive Officer does not affect any salary to the CEO. It is purely a legislative tool that allows for the effective handover of administrative and operational duties from Council to the CEO.

Asset Implications

17. This item does not affect any existing assets.

Legal/Risk Implications

18. The proposed amendment ensures that Council's Instrument of Delegation to the Chief Executive Officer accurately reflects current procurement governance arrangements and approval processes. This supports good governance practice and reduces the risk of ambiguity arising from references to governance structures that are no longer operating.

Environmental Implications

19. There are no environmental implications relevant to this report.

Community Consultation

20. There is no requirement for Council to consult with the community in relation to delegations, however, under Council's Public Transparency Policy and section 11(8) of the Local Government Act 2020, the Instrument of Delegation to the Chief Executive Officer must be made available to the public and will be placed on Council's website.

Links to Community Vision, Council Plan, Strategy, Notice of Motion

21. This report is consistent with the following principles in the Community Vision 2040:
    - Not Applicable
22. This report is consistent with the following strategic objectives from the Council Plan 2025-29:
    - A Council that demonstrates leadership, responsible use of public resources, and a commitment to investing in the community.

Legislative and Policy Obligations

23. This report has considered Council's legislative and policy obligations (where applicable) as outlined in the Report Considerations section detailed in the front of this Agenda. The applicable obligations considered and applied are:
    - The Overarching Governance Principles of the *Local Government Act* 2020.
    - Related Council Policies, Strategies or Frameworks.

GREATER DANDENONG CITY COUNCIL

INSTRUMENT OF DELEGATION

TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

21 SEPTEMBER 2026

Instrument of Delegation to the Chief Executive Officer

In exercise of the power conferred by s 11(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* **(the Act)** and all other powers enabling it, the Greater Dandenong City Council **(Council)** delegates to the member of Council staff holding, acting in or performing the position of Chief Executive Officer, the powers, duties and functions set out in the Schedule to this Instrument of Delegation,

AND declares that

1. this Instrument of Delegation is authorised by a resolution of Council passed on 21 September 2026;

2. the delegation;

   2.1 comes into force immediately the Common Seal of Council is affixed to this Instrument of Delegation;

   2.2 is subject to any conditions and limitations set out in the Schedule;

   2.3 must be exercised in accordance with any guidelines or policies which Council from time to time adopts; and

   2.4 remains in force until Council resolves to vary or revoke it.

The **Common Seal of the Greater Dandenong City Council** was hereunto affixed in the presence of:)

……
Signed by:
Jacqueline Weatherill
Chief Executive Officer
in the presence of:

……
Witness: Sophie D'Rozario
21 September 2026

……
Signed by:
Mayor, Cr Sophaneth (Sophie) Tan
In the presence of:

……..
Witness: Sophie D'Rozario
21 September 2026

SCHEDULE

The delegate (Chief Executive Officer) has the power to:

1. determine any issue;
2. take any action; or
3. do any act or thing

arising out of, or connected with, any duty imposed, or function or power conferred on Council by or under any Act, subject to the following conditions and limitations:

Conditions and Limitations:

The delegate must not determine the issue, take the action or do the act or thing:

1. if the issue, action, act or thing is an issue, action, act or thing which involves:
   - 1.1 entering into a contract exceeding the value of $1,000,000 (noting that contracts between $200,000 and $1,000,000 are considered and approved by the Executive Management Team Meeting Forum chaired by the Chief Executive Officer);
   - 1.2 making any expenditure that exceeds $1,000,000, unless it is expenditure;
     - (a) made under a contract already entered into; or
     - (b) that is part payment of a contract that Council has resolved to enter into; or
     - (c) which Council is, by or under legislation, required to make (such as, but not limited to, payment of insurance premiums or fire services levies, payment of utilities, payment of an urgent nature for operational security or emergency purposes); or
     - (d) required for the purchase of property on behalf of Greater Dandenong City Council,

     in which case, there is no financial limit *[Note: Purchases of property must comply with s 112(3) of the Local Government Act 2020 and due discussion will be held with Councillors prior to such financial transactions.];*
   - 1.3 appointing an Acting Chief Executive Officer for a period exceeding 28 days;
   - 1.4 electing a Mayor or Deputy Mayor;
   - 1.5 granting a reasonable request for leave under section 35 of the Act;
   - 1.6 making any decision in relation to the employment, dismissal or removal of the Chief Executive Officer;
   - 1.7 approving or amending the Council Plan;
   - 1.8 adopting or amending any policy that Council is required to adopt under the Act;
   - 1.9 adopting or amending the Governance Rules;
   - 1.10 appointing the Chair or the Members to a Delegated Committee;
   - 1.11 making, amending or revoking a Local Law;
   - 1.12 approving the Budget or Revised Budget;

Conditions and Limitations continued:

1.13 approving the borrowing of money;

1.14 subject to section 181H(1)(b) of the *Local Government Act 1989*, declaring general rates, municipal charges, service rates and charges and specified rates and charges;

2. if the issue, action, act or thing is an issue, action, act or thing which is required by law to be done by Council resolution;

3. if the issue, action, act or thing is an issue, action or thing which Council has previously designated as an issue, action, act or thing which must be the subject of a resolution of Council;

4. if the determining of the issue, taking of the action or doing of the act or thing would or would be likely to involve a decision which is inconsistent with a

   4.1 policy adopted by Council; or a

   4.2 strategy adopted by Council;

5. if the determining of the issue, the taking of the action or the doing of the act or thing cannot be the subject of a lawful delegation, whether on account of section 11(2)(a)-(n) (inclusive) of the Act or otherwise; or

6. the determining of the issue, the taking of the action or the doing of the act or thing is already the subject of an exclusive delegation to another member of Council staff.

4.3.5 Appointment of South East Leisure Board Director

Responsible Officer: Executive Director Community Strengthening

Attachments:

1. CONFIDENTIAL - CONFIDENTIAL - Mark Anderson CV - NED [**4.3.5.1** - 5 pages]
2. CONFIDENTIAL - CONFIDENTIAL - Lisa Hasker CV - NED [**4.3.5.2** - 4 pages]
3. CONFIDENTIAL - CONFIDENTIAL - Karen Luu CV - NED [**4.3.5.3** - 3 pages]

This report contains an attachment which is deemed confidential under s 3(1)(i) of the *Local Government Act* 2020. It contains internal arbitration information, being information specified in section 145 of the *Local Government Act* 2020.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. **APPOINTS Mark Anderson and Lisa Hasker as Non-Executive Directors of South East Leisure Pty Ltd, a wholly Council-owned subsidiary, for a three-year term commencing 1 October 2026 and concluding 30 September 2029, inclusive;**
2. **APPOINTS Karen Luu as a Non-Executive Director of South East Leisure Pty Ltd, a wholly Council-owned subsidiary, for a two-year term commencing 1 October 2026 and concluding 30 September 2028, inclusive;**
3. **REAPPOINTS Caroline Patrick as a Non-Executive Director of South East Leisure Pty Ltd, a wholly Council-owned subsidiary, for a further three-year term commencing 1 January 2027 and concluding 31 December 2029, inclusive;**
4. **REAPPOINTS John Nguyen as a Non-Executive Director of South East Leisure Pty Ltd, a wholly Council-owned subsidiary, for a further two-year term commencing 1 January 2027 and concluding 31 December 2028, inclusive; and**
5. **RECOGNISES the contribution of Mr Tim Cockayne, outgoing South East Leisure Pty Ltd Director, through a signed letter under seal.**

Executive Summary

1. South East Leisure Pty Ltd (SEL) is Council's wholly owned subsidiary responsible for managing four major aquatic and leisure facilities on Council's behalf.
2. Council established SEL following its 8 February 2021 resolution, and SEL commenced trading on 1 July 2022 under a Board appointed by Council as shareholder.
3. Under SEL's Constitution, Council may appoint Directors for terms of up to three years. Directors are eligible for reappointment, provided their total continuous term does not exceed nine years.
4. Several Director terms are approaching expiry, and one Director has ceased office. To maintain effective governance and Board continuity, SEL undertook a competitive market recruitment process using internal resources approved by the SEL Board.
5. The recruitment campaign attracted more than 210 applications through LinkedIn, Seek, Sportspeople, the Australian Institute of Company Directors and the SEL website. A strong field was shortlisted and interviewed in July 2026.

6. Candidates were assessed against the key selection criteria, with formal interviews, second-round interviews, reference checks and probity checks completed before the recommended appointments were finalised.
7. The report recommends appointing Mark Anderson and Lisa Hasker for three-year terms and Karen Luu for a two-year term as new Non-Executive Directors of SEL.
8. The report also recommends reappointing Caroline Patrick for a further three-year term and John Nguyen for a further two-year term.
9. Staggering the appointment and reappointment terms will support succession planning, preserve organisational knowledge and maintain governance stability while the Board continues to oversee services that contribute to community health and wellbeing.
10. Council also wishes to formally recognise Mr Tim Cockayne's contribution as an outgoing SEL Director, including his role during SEL's establishment and his contribution to advancing health and wellbeing outcomes for the Greater Dandenong community.

Background

11. After considering alternative management models, Council resolved to establish a proprietary company limited to manage four major aquatic and leisure facilities, namely; Dandenong Oasis Aquatic Centre, Noble Park Aquatic Centre, Springers Leisure Centre and Dandenong Stadium.
12. Following Council's February 2021 resolution, South East Leisure Pty Ltd (SEL) was established and commenced management of these facilities from 1 July 2022, with a Constitution and Board of Directors in place to provide governance oversight.
13. Clause 9.1.2(a) of SEL's Constitution allows Council, as shareholder, to appoint a person as a Director for a term of up to three years. A Director may be reappointed at the end of their term, provided their total continuous appointment does not exceed nine years.
14. The Constitution provides the following requirements for Board composition and appointments:
    - The Board will comprise a minimum of one (1) and a maximum of seven (7) Directors.
    - Directors will be appointed by the Shareholder (Council) for a term of up to three (3) years.
    - Directors will be limited to a maximum continuous term of nine (9) years.
    - The Shareholder will appoint the Board Chair.
15. The Shareholder may by resolution appoint any person as a Director under Clause 9.3.1 to replace a Director who has ceased to hold office.
16. In early 2024, Council engaged external auditors to complete a desktop review of SEL's governance systems and processes. The review considered governance arrangements and improvement opportunities, drawing on input from SEL Directors, the Company Secretary, the Chief Executive Officer and Council representatives.
17. The review found that SEL had established a sound governance framework and had supported confidence in the company's stewardship of Council's aquatic and leisure facilities.
18. The review also identified the value of staggering future Board appointments so that Director terms do not all expire at the same time. This approach supports continuity of Board leadership, preserves corporate knowledge and reduces governance risk.

Key Issues and Discussion

Appointment of three new Non-Executive Directors

19. With several Director terms approaching expiry and one Director ceasing office, SEL undertook a competitive market recruitment process. The SEL Board approved the allocation of internal resources to manage the process.
20. A strong field of candidates was shortlisted and interviewed in July 2026. The interview panel included SEL Board members Kirstan Corben, John Nguyen and Caroline Patrick, and Melissa Rist, SEL Risk and Compliance Manager and Company Secretary.
21. Second-round interviews were held in early August 2026 with Jacqui Weatherill, CEO, City of Greater Dandenong, and Peta Gillies, Executive Director Community Strengthening.
22. Following reference and probity checks, the panel unanimously recommended the appointment of Mark Anderson, Lisa Hasker and Karen Luu as Non-Executive Directors of the SEL Board.
23. Mark Anderson brings senior executive and board experience across sport, tourism, governance and organisational transformation. His experience includes leading organisational change, strengthening strategy and culture, supporting commercial growth and building stakeholder partnerships.
24. Lisa Hasker brings governance and leadership experience across club, state and national sport, supported by qualifications in education, sports science, sport management, marketing and player wellbeing. Her experience includes strategic planning, financial oversight, risk management, stakeholder engagement and inclusion.
25. Karen Luu brings executive leadership experience in governance, risk, compliance, organisational performance and capital infrastructure. A resident of CGD, Karen's experience includes not-for-profit governance, local community connection and experience supporting positive community outcomes.
26. Collectively, the recommended candidates strengthen the Board's capability in executive leadership, governance, strategic planning, cultural renewal, commercial development, risk and community-focused service outcomes.

Reappointment of two Non-Executive Directors

27. In addition to the three new appointments, this report recommends reappointing John Nguyen and Caroline Patrick for further terms of two years and three years respectively. These reappointments provide continuity of knowledge and leadership, support succession planning and help maintain governance stability during the Board transition.
28. John Nguyen is a purpose-driven executive with more than 25 years' professional services experience, including senior leadership in people, corporate services, governance and risk.
29. John's governance experience includes Non-Executive Director and Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, and Independent Chair, Audit and Risk Committee, City of Casey.
30. Caroline Patrick has 25 years' experience across senior and executive roles in government, private, publicly listed and member-based organisations. She is currently Group Manager, Marketing, Communications and Engagement at South East Water, with responsibility for brand, marketing, campaigns, government relations, community and stakeholder engagement.
31. Caroline's governance experience includes Non-Executive Director and member of the Risk and Governance Committee, Chair of the Customer Engagement Committee at Cara, and Non-Executive Director and Chair of the Fundraising and Marketing Committee at the Women's and Children's Hospital Foundation.
32. The proposed appointments and reappointments complement the existing Board skills profile, as outlined in the combined skills matrix below:

Name	Kirstan Corban	John Nguyen	Caroline Patrick	Mark Anderson	Karen Luu	Lisa Hasker
Qualifications	BPhysio, MHealthProm, MOrgLead, GAICD	MBA, Bcommerce	BA (Hons), MBA, GAICD	BAppSc (PE), MBM	MBA, MLaw, BTourism, BBus (mgt), BA (Pol & Int Studies), DipWHS , GAICD	M Mktg, GradDipBus (Sports Mgt), GradDip SportSci, Bed, GAICD
Board Role	Chair & Non-Executive Director	Non-Executive Director	Non-Executive Director	Non-Executive Director	Non-Executive Director	Non-Executive Director
Term Expiry	Current term expiry: 31 Dec 2027	Current term expiry: 31 Dec 2026	Current term expiry: 31 Dec 2026			
Recommended term	For review in 2027	Reappointment term: 2 years 1 Jan 2027- 31 Dec 2028	Reappointment term: 3 years 1 Jan 2027- 31 Dec 2029	Recommended NED: 3 years 1 Oct 2026 - 30 Sept 2029	Recommended NED: 2 years 1 Oct 2026 - 30 Sept 2028	Recommended NED: 3 years 1 Oct 2026 - 30 Sept 2029
Area of Speciality*						
Governance/ Director experience	*Y*	*Y*	*Y*	*Y*	*Y*	*Y*
Strategy	*Y*	*Y*	*Y*	*Y*	*Y*	*Y*
Financial		*Y*		*Y*		
Legal and Risk	*Y*	*Y*			*Y*	
People & Culture	*Y*		*Y*	*Y*	*Y*	
Sport and Leisure Experience	*Y*			*Y*		*Y*
Health & Wellbeing	*Y*			*Y*		*Y*
Marketing, Digital & Public Affairs			*Y*			*Y*
Connection to City of Greater Dandenong community	*Y*				*Y*	*Y*

**** Y denotes area of specialty, noting all candidates have broad / generalist knowledge across all key competencies***

Recognition of outgoing SEL Director (and former DMPL Director)

33. Council also seeks to formally acknowledge the conclusion of Mr Tim Cockayne's term as a Director of the South East Leisure Board.

34. Mr Cockayne has served on the SEL Board since its inception and contributed to the company's establishment and early governance from July 2021.

35. The City of Greater Dandenong acknowledges Mr Cockayne's contribution to SEL, as well as his service as a Director of Dandenong Market Pty Ltd from 2015 to 2021, and expresses its appreciation for his governance leadership and service to the Greater Dandenong community.

Governance Compliance

Human Resource Implications (consider Workforce Planning and Service Statements)

36. The appointments do not affect existing Council staffing levels or employment arrangements. The recommended Board composition is intended to support SEL's governance capacity and continuity.

Operating Budget Implications

37. There are no direct Council operating budget implications arising from this report. Costs associated with the recruitment process and Director fees are incorporated within SELs operating budget.

Legal/Risk Implications

38. The appointments and reappointments are consistent with SEL's Constitution, including provisions for shareholder appointment, Director term limits and reappointment eligibility. Staggered terms reduce governance continuity risk by avoiding multiple Director terms ending at the same time.

Environmental Implications

39. There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report. The appointments support continuing governance oversight of facilities that contribute to community health, recreation and wellbeing.

Links to Community Vision, Council Plan, Strategy, Notice of Motion

40. The recommended appointments support Council's Community Vision 2040 by strengthening governance of aquatic and leisure services that contribute to a safe, healthy, inclusive and connected community.

    - Safe and peaceful community.
    - Embrace diversity and multiculturalism.
    - Mind, body and spirit.

41. The report is also consistent with Council Plan objectives relating to a socially connected, safe and healthy city, accessible and vibrant centres and neighbourhoods, and Council leadership in community investment.

    - A socially connected, safe and healthy city.
    - A city of accessible, vibrant centres and neighbourhoods.
    - A Council that demonstrates leadership and a commitment to investing in the community.

Legislative and Policy Obligations

42. This report has considered Council's legislative and policy obligations (where applicable) as outlined in the Report Considerations section detailed in the front of this Agenda. The applicable obligations considered and applied are:

    - The Overarching Governance Principles of the Local Government Act 2020.
    - Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006.

4.3.6 Recommended Appointments for Membership of Positive Ageing Advisory Committee

Responsible Officer: Executive Director Community Strengthening

Attachments:
1. Recommended Appointments for Membership of Positive Ageing Advisory Committee [**4.3.6.1** - 1 page]

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. **APPOINTS the 11 applicants (per Attachment 1) as independent members of the Positive Ageing Advisory Committee for a two (2) year term from 22 September 2026 to 21 September 2028; and**
2. **NOTES the Mayor will write to the proposed 11 applicants to confirm their appointment to the Positive Ageing Advisory Committee for the term specified in Recommendation 1.**

Executive Summary

1. To outline the Expression of Interest process undertaken to appoint new independent members to the Positive Ageing Advisory Committee (PAAC) for the 2026–2028 term and seek Council endorsement of the 11 recommended applicants listed in Attachment 1.
2. The recommended appointments will support the continuation of PAAC as an advisory forum that brings older residents' experiences, community knowledge and diverse perspectives into Council's planning, policy development and implementation of the Positive Ageing Strategy 2026–2030.

Background

3. The Positive Ageing Advisory Committee (PAAC) was established to provide advice to Council on policies, services and initiatives that support older people and promote positive ageing across Greater Dandenong.
4. The committee provides an important forum for older residents and community representatives to identify current and emerging issues, share lived experience, and inform Council's policy development and long-term strategic priorities.
5. PAAC complements Council's broader community engagement activities, including newsletters, focus groups, community consultations and other opportunities for community input.
6. The current PAAC has made a significant contribution to the development of the draft Positive Ageing Strategy 2026–2030.
7. Following endorsement of the Strategy, the incoming committee will support implementation by providing advice on priorities, monitoring emerging issues for older residents, and maintaining a strong connection between Council and older members of the community.

Key Issues and Discussion

8. An Expression of Interest (EOI) process to recruit members for the Positive Ageing Advisory Committee was conducted from 21 May to 31 July 2026. The EOI was promoted through multiple channels including Council's website, social media platforms, e-News, local community groups, and targeted engagement via senior networks.
9. The selection process was undertaken in accordance with the Committee's Terms of Reference. A total of 12 applications were received. One applicant withdrew during the process, and the remaining 11 applicants were assessed against the selection criteria.
10. A selection panel was convened to assess the applications against the agreed criteria and make a recommendation to Council for consideration and endorsement.
11. The 11 applicants listed in Attachment 1 bring diverse knowledge, skills and community connections to the Positive Ageing Advisory Committee.
12. Recruitment for the remaining vacant position will occur at a later date.

Governance Compliance

Human Resource Implications (consider Workforce Planning and Service Statements)

13. This item does not have an impact on existing human resources.

Financial/Asset Resource Implications (consider Service Statements, Budget, Long Term Financial Strategy and Asset Plan)

Operating Budget Implications

14. There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Asset Implications

15. This item does not affect any existing assets.

Legal/Risk Implications

16. There are no legal or risk implications arising from this report. The recruitment and selection process was undertaken in accordance with the Committee's Terms of Reference.

Environmental Implications

17. There are no environmental implications relevant to this report.

Gender Impact Assessment

18. The Positive Ageing Advisory Committee is open to people of all genders, backgrounds, and lived experiences. The Expression of Interest (EOI) process provided equal opportunity for participation by promoting the opportunity through a broad range of networks across Greater Dandenong. Promotional materials were developed using clear, inclusive, and gender-neutral language to encourage participation from all community members. The recruitment and selection process considered diversity and representation to support a committee that reflects the demographics, experiences, and perspectives of the Greater Dandenong community. As a result, the committee is expected to provide inclusive advice that considers the needs and experiences of older people of all genders.

Community Consultation

19. No separate community consultation was required for this report. The Expression of Interest process provided an opportunity for community members to nominate for membership of the Positive Ageing Advisory Committee.

Links to Community Vision, Council Plan, Strategy, Notice of Motion

20. This report is consistent with the following principles in the Community Vision 2040:
    - Education, training, entrepreneurship and employment opportunities.
    - Embrace diversity and multiculturalism.
    - Mind, body and spirit.
21. This report is consistent with the following strategic objectives from the Council Plan 2025–29:
    - 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 city that supports business, entrepreneurship, quality education and employment outcomes.

Legislative and Policy Obligations

22. This report has considered Council's legislative and policy obligations, where applicable, as outlined in the Report Considerations section at the front of this Agenda. The applicable obligations considered and applied are:
    - The Overarching Governance Principles of the *Local Government Act* 2020.
    - *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities* 2006.
    - Related Council Policies, Strategies or Frameworks.

Attachment 1:
Recommended Appointments for Membership of Positive Ageing Advisory Committee

Aviva Brindley Aviva works in the aged care sector. She supports older Chinese community members through volunteering and community engagement.
Charmaine Young Charmaine is a Greater Dandenong resident who is actively involved in a range of community and senior groups, including carer and community hub networks.
Jeanette Keane Jeanette is a Greater Dandenong resident actively involved in programs that support older people through social connection, lifelong learning and wellbeing activities. She has been a previous member of the Positive Ageing Advisory Committee.
Julie Klok Julie is a Greater Dandenong resident and is involved in many volunteering roles across Greater Dandenong. She has been a previous member of the Positive Ageing Advisory Committee and was awarded 2023 Volunteer of the Year.
June Fletcher June is a Greater Dandenong resident actively involved in community programs for older people and helps seniors understand the supports available through ageing and wellbeing initiatives.
Mark Osborn Mark is a Greater Dandenong resident with extensive experience in aged care leadership, in residential care. He supports initiatives that promote healthy ageing, social connection and intergenerational opportunities. He has been a previous member of the Positive Ageing Advisory Committee.
Mary D'Silva Mary D'Silva is a Greater Dandenong resident actively involved in a large seniors group and has extensive experience supporting older people through community projects, events and senior-focused initiatives.
Nina Koufomanolis Nina has experience supporting and engaging with older people through community activities and networks within Greater Dandenong.
Paolina (Lee) Evans Lee is a Greater Dandenong resident actively involved in supporting older people through community groups and her work in mental health and wellbeing.
Paulette De Netto Paulette is a Greater Dandenong resident involved in local community groups with a particular focus on the community connections that this involvement brings.
Teresa Rechichi Teresa is a Greater Dandenong resident with a long history of community involvement, including leadership roles in senior community groups and local committees.

4.3.7 Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee Minutes

Responsible Officer: Executive Director Strategy & Corporate Services

Attachments:
1. Draft Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes - 11 August 2026 [**4.3.7.1** - 5 pages]

Officer Recommendation

That Council notes the Draft Minutes of the meeting for the Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee as provided in Attachment 1 to this report

Executive Summary

1. At the Council meeting held 23 April 2018, Council resolved in part to invite Advisory Committees and Reference Groups to submit meeting minutes for Council endorsement. This resolution also allowed interested Councillors (and those that attend these Committees and Reference Groups) to speak to the meeting about items discussed at these meetings.
2. This report recommends that the Draft Minutes of the Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee meeting held on 11 August 2026 as provided in Attachment 1 to this report be noted by Council.

Background

3. Greater Dandenong Council is represented on a wide range of Committees, Reference Groups and Advisory Groups which frequently reflect the interests of individual Councillors in serving the broader community in their role. A full listing of these appointments is confirmed each November at Council's Meeting to elect the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and is available via Council's website.
4. The resolution of Council made on 23 April 2018 provides for Minutes of meetings held by Advisory Committees or Reference Groups to be submitted to Council for information purposes and for noting. To ensure they are provided to Council in a timely manner, Minutes of these Advisory Committees or Reference Groups are submitted to Council typically in a draft form (in that they have not yet been adopted by the relevant Committee). If significant material changes occur when they are adopted by the Advisory Committee or Reference Group, then those particular Minutes would then be resubmitted to Council for noting.
5. As such, Draft Minutes are provided as Attachment 1 to this report.
6. There are no financial implications associated with the development and submission of this report.

Links to Community Vision and Council Plan

7. This report is consistent with the following principles in the Community Vision 2040:
   - Safe and peaceful community.
   - Embrace diversity and multiculturalism.

8. This report is consistent with the following strategic objectives from the Council Plan 2025-29:
    - A socially connected, safe and healthy city.
    - A city that respects and celebrates diversity, our history and the arts.
    - A Council that demonstrates leadership, responsible use of public resources, and a commitment to investing in the community.

Legislative and Policy Obligations

9. This report has considered Council's legislative and policy obligations (where applicable) as outlined in the Report Considerations section detailed in the front of this Agenda. The applicable obligations considered and applied are:
    - The Overarching Governance Principles of the *Local Government Act* 2020.
    - Related Council Policies, Strategies or Frameworks.

Greater Dandenong

Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee Minutes	
Date	Tuesday 11 August 2026
Time	9.30 – 11.30am
Venue	Hybrid Meeting – Dandenong Civic Centre, Formal Meeting Room and Online via Microsoft Teams
Chair	Kylie Reid (Chisholm Institute)
Attendees:	Lauren Riddle (Life Without Barriers), Ifrin Fitlock (Sisterworks), Farisa Ibrahimi (Victorian Afghan Association Network [VAAN]), Adwin Town (Voice of Outer South East), Abbas Amiry (Refugee Resource Hub – Asylum Seeker Resource Centre [ASRC], Dhileepan Amirthalingam (Justice and Freedom for Ceylon Tamils), Community Advocacy Officer (CGD). Guests: Dr Ali Reza Yunerspour, CEO Wattle Pathways, Lynda Ford OAM, iGen Foundation - Youth and Migrant Entrepreneurship, Employment Hub Lead (CGD).
Apologies	Mayor, Cr Sophie Tan (CGD), Vinay Lakshman (South East Monash Legal Service [SECL]), Marziyah Razi (Settlement Service International [SSI]), Chaw Po (Community Member), Peter McNamara SECL), Diversity and Literacy Librarian (CGD).

	AGENDA ITEM	Action	LEAD
1.	**Welcome - Acknowledgement of Country** The Chair opened the meeting and acknowledged the Traditional Custodians of the land, the Bunurong People, and paid respect to Elders past and present. **Recognition of Jacqui McBride's Contribution** The Chair acknowledged the significant contribution of Jacquie McBride, former Manager of the Refugee Health Clinic at Monash Health and a founding member of MAPSAAC. Members noted her longstanding commitment to supporting refugees and people seeking asylum, particularly through challenging periods including COVID-19, restrictions on work and study rights, and the Refugee Health Clinic volunteer and scholarship programs. Members expressed their appreciation for Jacqui's service to the community and the Committee.		
2.	**Confirmation of Previous Minutes and Actions** The minutes of the 12 May 2026 meeting were noted. Actions Update • Refugee Legal presentation slides distributed. • Refugee Council of Australia follow-up completed. • Headspace Dandenong follow-up completed. • Ongoing discussion regarding student engagement and transition pathways continues through relevant networks.		
3.	**Guest Presenter – Wattle Pathways. Dr Ali Reza Yunerspour, CEO** **An overview of Dr Yunerspour's professional background including**:		

	• University of Melbourne ○ Academic Internships Coordinator in the School of Social and Political Sciences, Faculty of Arts. ○ Coordinated student internship and work-integrated learning (WIL) programs. ○ Conducted research on education in conflict societies and emergency settings. ○ Researched refugee and asylum seeker issues in Australia, including refugee education outcomes. ○ Completed a PhD examining equity and admission practices in Afghanistan's higher education system. ○ Published academic research and commentary on education, Afghanistan, refugee issues and social cohesion. • The Indigo Foundation's education programs in Afghanistan. ○ Supported and helped deliver the Indigo Foundation's education programs in Afghanistan. ○ Contributed to education initiatives benefiting approximately 10,000-11,000 students in rural Afghan schools. ○ Worked with programs operating across dozens of rural schools to improve access to education in conflict-affected communities. ○ Drew on this experience in his University of Melbourne research and teaching focused on education in conflict societies. Dr Yunerspour also shared his personal experience arriving in Australia as a refugee and highlighted changes in educational pathways available to newly arrived young people. **Wattle Pathways**, a social enterprise established to address educational inequity through: • Subsidised tutoring for students from Years 3-12. • Civic education and leadership programs. • Parent engagement and support. • Reinvestment of profits to support disadvantaged students, particularly those from refugee backgrounds and students with disability. Dr Yunespour outlined a tutoring program currently supporting 30 refugee-background students across Melbourne, developed in partnership with Foundation House and local schools. Demand for the program significantly exceeds available places, with over 50 students currently on a waiting list. He also discussed the "Rise and Lead" program for disengaged young people, particularly boys, which focuses on school engagement, identity, leadership and respectful relationships. Early findings suggest interventions are most effective in Years 7 and 8 before disengagement becomes entrenched. **Discussion:** • Educational disengagement among newly arrived and Australian-born young people. • Transition challenges from English language schools into mainstream education.		

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	• Parent expectations and understanding of educational pathways. • The growing influence of economic factors on young people's educational decisions, particularly pathways into construction and trades. Members may refer suitable young people and families to Wattle Pathways programs where appropriate.		
4.	**Guest Presenter – iGen Foundation - Youth and Migrant Entrepreneurship. Lynda Ford OAM.** Lynda Ford presented on youth and migrant entrepreneurship and shared the work of the iGen Foundation. She outlined how entrepreneurship can support economic participation, self-determination and social inclusion for migrants, people from refugee backgrounds and young people. **Key points included**: • Migrants are highly represented among Australia's business owners and make significant contributions to employment creation and workforce training. • Refugees are disproportionately entrepreneurial, but entrepreneurship is often overlooked as a settlement pathway. • Entrepreneurial thinking can benefit individuals beyond business ownership by enhancing problem-solving, confidence and workforce participation. **Successful entrepreneurship programs including:** • Cultov8. • Keeping it in the Family. • Invest in a Young Entrepreneur. • Youth entrepreneurship incubator programs supporting young people to establish and grow businesses. A significant focus of the presentation was the distinction between multiculturalism and interculturalism. Lynda emphasised the importance of intentional relationship-building between diverse groups to strengthen social cohesion and community understanding. **Discussion:** • Opportunities to strengthen intercultural engagement. • Challenges in securing funding for entrepreneurship programs. • The importance of supporting young people and newly arrived communities to access networks, mentors and business opportunities.	Circulate presentation slides.	Community Advocacy Officer.
5.	**Information Sharing** **Census Concerns** Adwin raised concerns regarding anxiety among some refugee, asylum seeker and undocumented community members about participation in the national Census and broader concerns about migration policy and community confidence. Members discussed the need for ongoing community education and reassurance. **Employment Service Access for Bridging Visa Holders**		

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	Lauren Riddle (Life Without Barriers) raised concerns regarding clients holding bridging visas being declined by several mainstream employment service providers due to visa eligibility requirements. Discussion highlighted: • Difficulties accessing employment services. • Concerns about clients experiencing repeated service rejections. • Potential opportunities through specialist refugee and asylum seeker employment programs. Kylie Reid to raise this issue through the Dandenong Skills and Jobs Network and follow up with Lauren offline. Abbas offered referrals to his organisation's employment support program. **SisterWorks Employment Programs** Ifrin from SisterWorks advised that demand for employment support has reached unprecedented levels, with approximately 150 women currently on a waiting list. The organisation is increasing its focus on employer partnerships to create additional employment pathways. Employment Opportunities: Members were advised of emerging apprenticeship and labouring opportunities through Bricklayers Australia, particularly for people from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds. Contact details will be circulated to members. **Refugee Resource Hub – ASRC** Adult English Classes: Abbas advised that English language classes continue to be available and welcomed referrals from Committee members.	Raise employment service access concerns for bridging visa holders through Dandenong Skills and Jobs Network. Circulate employment opportunity information from Bricklayers Australia.	Kylie Reid. Ifrin Fitlock.
6.	**On Site Visit - Dandenong Pathway to Employment Hub** Members attended an on-site visit of the new Dandenong Pathway to Employment Hub located at 4/225 Lonsdale Street, Dandenong. The Hub provides tailored employment support, advocacy and workforce participation assistance to community members across Greater Dandenong and surrounding areas. **Key discussion points included:** • The Hub currently operates three days per week (Tuesday, Thursday and Friday) from 10.00am to 4.00pm. • There are no eligibility requirements, with services available to people living in Dandenong and surrounding regions. • The Hub is not a job placement service. Its primary role is to assist individuals to identify barriers, access information and connect with the most appropriate employment, training or support services. • Hub staff have recently met with Services Australia to address community concerns regarding understanding eligibility for income support payments and application processes.		

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	• Pathway Officers bring experience across Workforce Australia, Indigenous Employment Australia (IEA) and other employment services and can provide guidance to participants navigating employment systems. • Members discussed situations where people feel inadequately supported by their employment providers. The Hub can advocate on behalf of participants, with their consent, and provide information about changing providers or moving from online to face-to-face servicing arrangements. • Staff noted that many people are unaware of the additional supports and benefits available through employment service providers and they can assist participants to better understand these opportunities. • Current Hub users are predominantly older jobseekers seeking employment assistance. Through one-to-one conversations, staff often identify additional barriers and refer individuals to relevant services, including résumé assistance and other employment readiness supports. • The Hub is exploring the development of employment-focused workshops and information sessions to further support community members. • Members were advised that the Hub offers hot-desking space and is seeking greater utilisation by service providers and community organisations to encourage collaboration and improve local service integration.		
7.	**Close of Meeting** 11.30am **Next Meeting** Tuesday 10 November 2026.		

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4.3.8 LGBTIQA+ Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Responsible Officer: Executive Director Strategy & Corporate Services

Attachments:
1. Draft LGBTIQ A+ Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes 18 August 2026 [**4.3.8.1** - 4 pages]

Officer Recommendation

That Council

1. **NOTES the Draft Minutes of the meeting for the LGBTIQA+ Advisory Committee as provided in Attachment 1 to this report; and**
2. **ENDORSES the Committee's recommendation at Section 5 of the minutes requesting that Mayoral Letter be sent to Victoria Police's Local Area Commander expressing appreciation for their efforts in investigating recent homophobic incidences within Greater Dandenong.**

Executive Summary

1. At the Council meeting held 23 April 2018, Council resolved in part to invite Advisory Committees and Reference Groups to submit meeting minutes for Council endorsement. This resolution also allowed interested Councillors (and those that attend these Committees and Reference Groups) to speak to the meeting about items discussed at these meetings.
2. This report recommends that the Draft Minutes of the LGBTIQA+ Advisory Committee meeting held on 18 August 2026 as provided in Attachment 1 to this report be noted by Council.
3. Section 5 of the Committee's minutes recommends to Council that a formal Mayoral letter of appreciation be sent to the Local Area Commander of Victoria Police expressing appreciation of Victoria Police's efforts and commitment to community safety in relation to their investigation of recent homophobic incidences in Greater Dandenong.

Background

4. Greater Dandenong Council is represented on a wide range of Committees, Reference Groups and Advisory Groups which frequently reflect the interests of individual Councillors in serving the broader community in their role. A full listing of these appointments is confirmed each November at Council's Meeting to elect the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and is available via Council's website.
5. The resolution of Council made on 23 April 2018 provides for Minutes of meetings held by Advisory Committees or Reference Groups to be submitted to Council for information purposes and for noting. To ensure they are provided to Council in a timely manner, Minutes of these Advisory Committees or Reference Groups are submitted to Council typically in a draft form (in that they have not yet been adopted by the relevant Committee). If significant material changes occur when they are adopted by the Advisory Committee or Reference Group, then those particular Minutes would then be resubmitted to Council for noting.
6. As such, Draft Minutes are provided as Attachment 1 to this report.

7. There are no financial implications associated with the development and submission of this report.

Links to Community Vision and Council Plan

8. This report is consistent with the following principles in the Community Vision 2040:
    - Safe and peaceful community.
    - Embrace diversity and multiculturalism.
9. This report is consistent with the following strategic objectives from the Council Plan 2025-29:
    - A city that respects and celebrates diversity, our history and the arts.
    - A Council that demonstrates leadership, responsible use of public resources, and a commitment to investing in the community.

Legislative and Policy Obligations

10. This report has considered Council's legislative and policy obligations (where applicable) as outlined in the Report Considerations section detailed in the front of this Agenda. The applicable obligations considered and applied are:
    - The Overarching Governance Principles of the Local Government Act 2020.
    - The Gender Equality Act 2020.
    - Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006.

LGBTIQA+ Advisory Committee 18 August 2026 Minutes	
Date	Tuesday 18 August 2026
Time	6.15pm-8.15pm
Venue	Dandenong Civic Centre – Formal Meeting Room, Level 2
Chair	Brad Woodford (Community Member)
Attendees	In-person: Scot Gay (Community Member), Julie Jones (Community Member), Aloma Davis (Community Member), Advocacy Officer – Minute Taker. Online: Kye Aziz (Many Coloured Sky).
Apologies	Daniel Mersin (Community Member), Phillip Lamaro (Community Member), Fiona Vuong (South East Monash Legal Service), Sam Kariotis (Community Member), Cr Isabella Do (Greater Dandenong Council).

	AGENDA ITEM	ACTIONS	LEAD
1.	**Welcome - Acknowledgement of Country** The Chair opened the meeting and provided the Acknowledgement of Country.		Chair.
2.	**Welcome New Member** The Committee welcomed new member Aloma Davis, who provided a brief introduction and shared her interest in advocating for LGBTIQA+ inclusion and support for young people and families. Members introduced themselves and their connection to the Committee.		
3.	**Guest Presentation – Switchboard Victoria** Peter Naughton, Out & About Program Worker from Switchboard Victoria, provided an overview of the organisation's history, services and programs. These included: • Switchboard support line and referral services. • Rainbow Door crisis support service. • QTBIPOC (Queer, Trans, Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour) programs. • Out & About visiting program for LGBTIQA+ seniors. • Suicide prevention initiatives. • Rainbow Families program. • Training and workforce development opportunities. • Regional outreach activities. Discussion focused on: • Opportunities to promote the Out & About program within Greater Dandenong. • Increasing visibility of services available to LGBTIQA+ seniors. • Potential collaboration around Pride Month, Seniors Month and other awareness activities.		

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	• The importance of addressing social isolation and increasing community connection. Council to promote relevant Switchboard Victoria services through future LGBTIQA+ webpage updates and community information resources.	Promote relevant Switchboard Victoria services.	Advocacy Officer.
4.	**Previous Actions Update:** • **Foundation House** ○ Connecting Foundation House with Youth Services - Completed. ○ Provision of Council space for programs - Ongoing. ○ Foundation House to provide a program needs list remains - Ongoing. • **Pride Messaging and Social Media** – Completed. Media and Communications provided feedback regarding moderation practices. Members noted: ○ Keyword filtering and manual moderation processes are in place. ○ Council balances visibility, community engagement and potential harm when considering social media posts. ○ Council encourages prioritisation of key dates of significance each year. Discussion included: Members acknowledged the challenges of managing social media and balancing content across Council's diverse communities. While understanding these constraints, some members felt the feedback was cautious regarding LGBTIQA+ visibility and noted concern that references to potential offence or risk could unintentionally limit promotion of LGBTIQA+ content. • **Grant Funding** ○ Promote grant opportunities through committee networks – Completed. ○ Encourage partnerships with community organisations – Completed. • **Gambling Policy Draft** ○ Members to provide feedback on draft policy – Completed. ○ Community Advocacy Officer to share draft and contact details – Completed. • **Guest Presenter –** Jeremy Oliver, Victoria Police's LGBTIQA+ Portfolio Manager. ○ Vic Pol to provide Resource links, newsletters and materials for Council webpage – Ongoing. • **Community Engagement** ○ Explore adding subscription feature on Council LGBTIQA+ webpage – Ongoing. ○ Ensure opt-in/opt-out compliance – Ongoing. • **Future Guest Speakers -** Ongoing ○ Invite organisations to discuss inclusivity in local spaces – South East Leisure will be attending 24 November meeting, and invitation has been sent to Dandenong Market. • **Recommendation to proceed to Council for endorsement of Aloma Davis as new Committee Member** – Completed.	Investigate inclusion of a subscription or mailing list feature on the LGBTIQA+ webpage.	Advocacy Officer.

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5.	**LGBTQIA+ Community Safety: Victoria Police Investigation and Recent Arrests in Greater Dandenong** The Chair provided an update regarding recent police action in relation to homophobic attacks involving the use of dating applications to target and assault gay men within Greater Dandenong. Members noted: • Victoria Police had recently charged five individuals. • Investigations remain ongoing. • The importance of encouraging reporting and supporting victims was acknowledged. • The Mayor had publicly acknowledged the incidents and thanked Victoria Police for their work. The Committee unanimously endorsed a recommendation for the Council to send a Mayoral letter to the Victoria Police, Local Area Commander of Greater Dandenong, expressing appreciation for their efforts and commitment to community safety in relation to the recent homophobic incidents in Dandenong.	Coordinate a request for a formal letter of appreciation from the Mayor to the Victoria Police, Local Area Commander of Greater Dandenong.	Advocacy Officer.
6.	**LGBTIQA+ Action Plan Endorsement** Members congratulated one another on the successful endorsement of the LGBTIQA+ Action Plan 2026-2028 by Council. The Committee acknowledged: • The contribution of all members. • The significant work undertaken by Council officers. • The importance of the Action Plan as a foundation for future work and advocacy.		
7.	**Action Plan Priorities and Next Steps** The Committee discussed its role in supporting implementation of the Action Plan. Key themes identified included: Community Engagement and Visibility: • Updating and strengthening Council's LGBTIQA+ webpage. • Increasing awareness of days of significance and available services. • Developing communication channels with community members. Youth Engagement: Members highlighted the lack of local, visible LGBTIQA+ youth-specific opportunities and discussed: • Potential collaboration with Youth Services. • Exploring youth-focused social and support programs. • Strengthening support pathways for young people and families. Inclusive Spaces: Members discussed: • Rainbow Tick accreditation and inclusive practice frameworks. • Encouraging local services and venues to consider inclusive practices. • Learning from guest speakers and industry organisations. **Action** Members to consider and identify practical ways the Advisory Committee can best support the implementation of the LGBTIQA+ Action Plan over the next 12 months, including providing lived experience advice, monitoring progress, identifying emerging	Committee to identify priorities and opportunities to support Action Plan implementation	Committee members.

	community needs, and promoting opportunities for community engagement. This discussion will continue at the November meeting.	over the next 12 months.	
8.	**Upcoming Days of Significance** **Wear It Purple Day** Council staff activities will include: • Wearing purple. • Email signatures and Teams backgrounds. • Awareness raising and artwork activities across Council sites. **International Pronouns Day** Staff planned initiatives include: • Pronoun awareness and education. • Promotion of inclusive language. • Increased visibility through staff communications and identification materials. **Transgender Awareness Week** Members were advised of: • An Open Mic Night in partnership with Mind Australia, Foundation House, Headspace Dandenong and Justice Q. • A community film screening delivered in partnership with Monash Council.	Provide additional event details to the committee once they have been confirmed.	Advocacy Officer.
9.	**Other Business** • Julie Jones advised she had completed radio training with JOY 94.9 and may commence broadcasting in the future. • Members discussed the importance of tracking and reporting Action Plan achievements to demonstrate progress and support future advocacy opportunities. •		
10.	**Close of Meeting** The Chair thanked members for their participation and contributions. Meeting closed: 8.15 p.m.		

DRAFT

4.3.9 Report on Matters Discussed at Councillor Briefing Sessions and Pre Council Meetings

Responsible Officer: Executive Director Strategy & Corporate Services
Attachments: **Nil**

Officer Recommendation

That Council RECEIVES and NOTES the information contained in this report.

Executive Summary

1. As part of Council's ongoing efforts to improve transparency in Council processes, matters discussed at Councillor Briefing Sessions & Pre-Council Meetings (other than those matters designated to be of a confidential nature) are reported on at Council meetings.
2. The matters listed in this report were presented to Councillor Briefing Sessions & Pre-Council Meetings during the period 17 August – 14 September 2026.

Background

3. The Executive Team and associated staff at Greater Dandenong City Council host Councillor Briefing Sessions and Pre-Council Meeting on a regular basis (weekly) to inform Councillors about the work officers are undertaking, share information, obtain feedback and discuss strategies and options for current and future work.
4. To ensure transparency in this process matters discussed at Councillor Briefing Sessions and Pre-Council Meetings (other than those matters designated to be confidential under the Local *Government Act* 2020) are reported on at Council meetings. This report represents matters discussed at the Councillor Briefing Sessions & Pre-Council Meetings during the period 17 August 2026 – 14 September 2026.

Matters Presented for Discussion

Item		Councillor Briefing Session/Pre-Council Meeting
1	***General Discussions*** Councillors and Council officers briefly discussed the following items: a. Upcoming State Election Caretaker period; b. Changes to Councillor Briefing Session Schedule; and Agenda items for the Council Meeting 17 August 2026.	***Pre-Council Meeting (PCM) – 17 August 2026***
2	***Economic Conditions, Industry and Investment Trends*** Councillors were presented with an overview of the national and local economic environment, Greater Dandenong's economic strengths and the trends influencing industrial land, logistics, investment and employment across Melbourne's south-east.	***Councillor Briefing Session (CBS) – 24 August 2026***
3	***Business Audits and Activity Centre Performance*** Councillors were presented with the latest findings from Greater Dandenong's Business Audit program, a longitudinal study undertaken since 2016. The session explored key trends across Dandenong, Springvale and Noble Park Activity Centres, including business composition, vacancies, retail performance, cultural precincts and how the centres have changed over time.	***Councillor Briefing Session (CBS) – 24 August 2026***
4	***Business, Investment and Economic Stakeholder Engagement*** Councillors discussed the importance of businesses to Greater Dandenong's prosperity, Council's role in supporting economic growth, placemaking and investment, and practical approaches to economic stakeholder engagement. The session explored how Councillors can help build productive relationships with businesses and industry, better understand local opportunities and challenges and contribute to informed economic decision-making.	***Councillor Briefing Session (CBS) – 24 August 2026***

5	***Risk Appetite – Scyne Advisory*** Councillors participated in a Risk Appetite Workshop as part of the implementation of its refreshed Risk Management Framework, with the objective of defining the level and type of risk Council is willing to accept in pursuit of its strategic objectives. The workshop built on previous councillor and executive training and considered survey feedback to develop indicative risk appetite settings, discuss areas of differing views, and establish measurable risk tolerance thresholds to support informed decision-making across Council operations. While there are no immediate financial implications, the eventual risk appetite adopted may influence future investment in governance, compliance, assurance, systems, training and resourcing.	***Councillor Briefing Session (CBS) – 7 September 2026***
6	***Dandenong Market Board (DMPL) Presentation*** Councillors were presented with the 2026 Dandenong Market financial report by the Dandenong Market Board Members.	***Councillor Briefing Session (CBS) – 7 September 2026***
7	***Children, Youth and Families Strategy*** Council reviewed the draft Integrated Children, Youth and Family Strategy 2027-31, which provides a single five-year framework to guide services and support for children, young people and families across Greater Dandenong. Informed by extensive community consultation, the strategy outlines five key priority areas and will be presented to Council in September 2026 seeking endorsement for public exhibition and feedback.	***Councillor Briefing Session (CBS) – 7 September 2026***
8	***Complaints Policy and Implementation Plan*** Council were briefed on the revised Complaints Policy following a comprehensive review informed by legislative requirements, internal audit recommendations, Victorian Ombudsman guidance and stakeholder consultation. The updated policy introduces a clearer and more consistent complaints handling framework, strengthens accountability, accessibility and organisational oversight, and supports continuous improvement through enhanced recording, reporting and analysis of complaints. Council also noted the proposed implementation approach, including supporting procedures, staff training, centralised complaint management and future assessment of resourcing requirements through the Complaints Handling Uplift Program.	***Councillor Briefing Session (CBS) – 7 September 2026***

9	***General Discussions*** Councillors and Council officers briefly discussed the following items: a. Christmas photos and welcome videos; b. Federal Government Comm Support at Home Program funding; c. Upcoming Audit & Risk Committee Meeting; d. Closure of all Libraries on Friday 11 September 2026; and Agenda items for the Council Meeting 17 August 2026.	***Councillor Briefing Session (CBS) – 7 September 2026***
10	***Young Leaders Presentation*** Councillors received a presentation from the Young Leaders 2026 participants outlining the outcomes of their Youth & Democracy 101 Forum and project examining nitrous oxide use in the community. Participants presented key findings, community insights and recommendations aimed at reducing harm to young people, minimising community impacts and strengthening regulatory responses.	***Councillor Briefing Session (CBS) – 14 September 2026***
11	***Dandy Vibe Pilot Program Review*** Councillors noted the outcomes of the Dandy Vibes Summer Activation Pilot Program 2025/26, which delivered 23 community-led activations across Central Dandenong and attracted more than 5,300 participants. The program enhanced community engagement, cultural participation and activation of public spaces, while identifying opportunities to improve future place activation initiatives.	***Councillor Briefing Session (CBS) – 14 September 2026***
12	***2026 Ramadan Night Market Evaluation*** Council noted the findings of the 2026 Ramadan Night Market evaluation, which confirmed the event delivered significant cultural, community and economic benefits while highlighting the need for stronger governance, compliance and operational arrangements to support its continued growth. Councillors were advised that a further report will be presented to a future Council Meeting seeking direction on future support options and governance requirements for the 2027 event.	***Councillor Briefing Session (CBS) – 14 September 2026***

13	***Councillor Representation for 2026/2027*** Council noted the updated schedule of Councillor liaison and representative positions and invited Councillors to consider their preferred appointments for the forthcoming Mayoral term. Councillor nominations will be sought at the Councillor Briefing Session on 12 October 2026, with recommended appointments to be presented to the Annual Council Meeting for endorsement.	***Councillor Briefing Session (CBS) – 14 September 2026***
14	**Finance Reports** ***Annual Budget and Quarterly Forecasting Framework 2026-27*** Council received a presentation on the proposed Annual Budget and Quarterly Forecasting Framework, which would replace the current amended budget, mid-year budget and forecast processes with a single annual budget supported by quarterly forecasts. The proposed framework aims to reduce administrative burden, improve financial oversight and strengthen the management of financial risks and opportunities. ***2025-26 Financial Statements and Financial Report*** Council received a briefing on the draft 2025-26 financial results, including an operating surplus of approximately $19.3 million, capital works expenditure of $85.8 million and cash and investments of $224.8 million. Councillors were advised that the results remain subject to final VAGO audit clearance and will be considered at the 21 September 2026 Council Meeting. ***Investment Policy 2026 Update*** Council received a presentation on the proposed update to Council's Investment Policy following its scheduled three-year review. The proposed changes strengthen governance and oversight arrangements while maintaining existing investment objectives and Council's preference for fossil fuel free and green investment options.	***Councillor Briefing Session (CBS) – 14 September 2026***
15	***General Discussions*** Councillors and Council officers briefly discussed Agenda items for the Council Meeting 21 September 2026.	***Councillor Briefing Session (CBS) – 14 September 2026***

Apologies

5. Councillor Lana Formoso and Councillor Isabella Do submitted an apology for the Pre-Council Meeting on 17 August 2026.
6. Councillor Rhonda Garad submitted an apology for the Councillor Briefing Session on 7 September 2026.
7. Councillor Jim Memeti submitted an apology; Councillor Loi Truong did not submit an apology or a leave of absence for the Councillor Briefing Session on 14 September 2026.

Legislative and Policy Obligations

8. Section 9 of the *Local Government Act* 2020 (LGA2020) states that a Council must in the performance of its role give effect to the overarching governance principles.
9. Reporting on matters discussed at Councillor Briefing Sessions and Pre-Council Meetings gives effect to the overarching governance principles (in particular, section 9(i) of the *Local Government Act* 2020) in that the transparency of Council actions and information is ensured.

4.3.10 List of Registered Correspondence to Mayor and Councillors

Responsible Officer: Manager Governance, Integrity, Legal & Risk

Attachments:
1. List of Registered Correspondence to Mayor and Councillors CM 260921 [**4.3.10.1** - 2 pages]

Officer Recommendation

That the listed items for the period 3 August 2026 to 28 August 2026 provided in Attachment 1 to this report be received and noted.

Executive Summary

1. Consistent with Council resolutions regarding registered incoming correspondence addressed to the Mayor and Councillors, Attachment 1 to this report provides a list of this correspondence for the period 3 August 2026 to 28 August 2026.

Objective
CONNECTED. COLLABORATIVE. COMMUNITY.

Correspondences addressed to the Mayor and Councillors received between 03/08/2026 - 28/08/2026 - for officer action - total = 1

Correspondence Name	Correspondence Dated	Date Record Created	Objective ID	User Assigned
Email from the Chief Executive Officer of Royal Life Saving Society Australia promoting the WE SWIM program and inviting Council participation in grant opportunities.	8/26/2026	8/26/2026	fA402670	Mayor & Councillors Office

NB: Users assigned may have changed by the time of the Council Meeting. Correct at time of report production only.

Objective
CONNECTED. COLLABORATIVE. COMMUNITY.

Correspondences addressed to the Mayor and Councillors received between 03/08/2026 - 28/08/2026 for information only total = 5

Correspondence Name	Correspondence Dated	Date Record Created	Objective ID	User Assigned
Letter from the Minister for Local Government advising 2026–27 Public Libraries Funding Program grant allocation to Greater Dandenong City Council.	4-Aug-26	4-Aug-26	A13981149	Mayor & Councillors Office
Email from Macedon Ranges Shire Council advising the resignation of the Mayor and the election of a new Mayor and Deputy Mayor for the remainder of the 2026 term.	4-Aug-26	4-Aug-26	A13981472	Mayor & Councillors Office
Email from a resident to the Mayor seeking responses on subdivision approvals, parking and traffic impacts, emergency access, and Council accountability for housing growth.	9-Aug-26	10-Aug-26	A14011657	Mayor & Councillors Office
Letter from the Chief Executive Officer of VicScreen announcing the launch of Film Friendly Online Training for Victorian councils and public agencies.	11-Aug-26	11-Aug-26	A14018328	Mayor & Councillors Office
Email from a representative of the Vietnamese Catholic Community in Melbourne seeking Council assistance with additional parking arrangements for a major community event in Keysborough.	16-Aug-26	17-Aug-26	A14031597	Mayor & Councillors Office

5 NOTICES OF MOTION

5.1 NOTICE OF MOTION NO. 27 - PROTECTING THE RIGHT TO SEEK ASYLUM

Responsible Officer: Executive Director Strategy & Corporate Services
Author: Cr Isabella Do

Preamble

1. The Australian Government is reportedly considering changes to the protection visa system that could prevent people from lodging an application for protection if they do not apply within a specified period after arriving in Australia, potentially as short as 30 days.
2. This very short deadline could prevent people with a genuine need for international protection from having their circumstances properly assessed.
3. There are many reasons why a person may not be able to seek protection immediately after arriving in Australia. These may include trauma, limited English language skills, exploitation, family or domestic violence, lack of awareness of Australia's legal system, difficulty accessing immigration or legal assistance, or circumstances in a person's country of origin changing after their arrival.
4. A person does not cease to have a need for protection simply because they were unable to lodge a claim within a very short administrative timeframe.
5. The City of Greater Dandenong is the most multicultural community in Victoria, built on decades of refugees settling here from around the world. It has a longstanding commitment to supporting people seeking asylum and refugee communities and has previously advocated to State and Federal Governments on matters affecting people seeking asylum.
6. Greater Dandenong is also home to a significant community of people seeking asylum, with approximately 2000 people seeking asylum residing here, the largest in any Victorian municipality. Council has an established role in national advocacy through the Mayoral and Councillor Taskforce Supporting People Seeking Asylum which it started and leads. The taskforce is a coalition of over 40 local councils across Australia.
7. Council's advocacy on this issue is therefore consistent with its longstanding humanitarian advocacy and its existing role in representing and advocating for people seeking asylum in the community.

Motion

That Council:

1. **EXPRESSES its opposition to any proposal to introduce a short time limit on a person's ability to lodge an application for protection in Australia;**
2. **CALLS on the Australian Government to ensure that people who may have a genuine need for international protection have a fair and accessible opportunity to have their claims assessed on their merits;**
3. **RECOGNISES that people seeking protection may face circumstances that prevent them from making an application immediately after arrival, including trauma, language barriers, exploitation, family or domestic violence, lack of access to legal assistance, or changes in circumstances in their country of origin;**
4. **REAFFIRMS the City of Greater Dandenong's longstanding commitment to supporting people seeking asylum and its established advocacy role on matters affecting people seeking asylum and refugee communities, while recognising that any loopholes should be addressed to prevent misuse of the protection visa system and to ensure a more streamlined merits review process, including to reduce delays affecting migration, the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), Centrelink, aged care and other administrative review matters;**
5. **WRITES urgently to the Prime Minister and relevant Federal Ministers expressing Council's concerns to any arbitrary or excessively short time limit for protection applications and highlighting the potential impact on people seeking asylum living in Greater Dandenong;**
6. **REQUESTS that the Mayor, on behalf of Council, raise this matter through the Mayoral and Councillor Taskforce Supporting People Seeking Asylum, seeking coordinated advocacy by local governments to the Australian Government;**
7. **REQUESTS that Council's Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee be informed of this resolution and invited to provide advice on any further advocacy or community engagement considered appropriate;**
8. **REQUESTS that other Victorian councils, particularly Refugee Welcome Zones and councils supporting significant communities of people seeking asylum, be contacted seeking their support for joint advocacy on this issue; and**
9. **REQUESTS that a media release be issued outlining Greater Dandenong Council's position and that Council's advocacy webpage be updated with this resolution and any associated advocacy actions.**

5.2 NOTICE OF MOTION NO. 28 - PROPOSED TELECOMMUNICATIONS FACILITY – TIRHATUAN LAKES, ROWVILLE

Responsible Officer: Executive Director City Futures
Author: Cr Rhonda Garad

Preamble

1. A planning application has been lodged with Knox City Council for a telecommunications facility on land adjoining 5 Police Road, Rowville, comprising a telecommunications tower approximately 35 metres high and approximately 36.3 metres in total height including antennas. Although located within Knox, the proposed site is immediately adjacent to the City of Greater Dandenong, and the tower would have a significant visual and amenity impact on neighbouring Greater Dandenong residents.
2. The proposal has generated significant community concern, with approximately 160 objections lodged and an online petition attracting 565 verified signatures as at 15 September 2026. The concerns include residential amenity, visual impact, native vegetation and potential impacts on Dandenong Creek, Tirhatuan Wetlands and associated habitat.
3. The City of Greater Dandenong supports reliable telecommunications infrastructure but considers that infrastructure should be located where it can meet community needs while avoiding or minimising impacts on residents and significant environmental and recreational areas. Council therefore seeks Knox City Council's support for a comprehensive assessment of alternative sites before the proposed location is approved.

Motion

That Council NOTES:

1. **The proposed telecommunications facility on land adjoining 5 Police Road, Rowville, within the City of Knox, being Planning Application P/2026/6008, comprising a telecommunications lattice tower approximately 35 metres in height and approximately 36.3 metres in total height including antennas;**
2. **That the proposed development is immediately adjacent to the municipal boundary of the City of Greater Dandenong and has the potential to significantly affect residents, open space and environmental values within the City of Greater Dandenong;**
3. **That approximately 160 objections have been lodged with Knox City Council in relation to the proposed telecommunications facility, as reported by the community campaign on 10 September 2026;**
4. **The substantial community support opposing the proposed location, with an online petition recording 565 verified signatures as at 15 September 2026;**
5. **That residents of the City of Greater Dandenong have raised concerns regarding the proposed facility, including;**
    a. **its visual impact and effect on residential amenity;**
    b. **its proximity to Dandenong Creek;**
    c. **potential impacts on Tirhatuan Wetlands and associated habitat;**
    d. **potential impacts on threatened and migratory species;**
    e. **the removal of native vegetation;**
    f. **construction and traffic impacts;**
    g. **the proposed access arrangements from Stud Road;**
    h. **potential drainage and floodplain impacts; and**
    i. **the broader impact of a 35-metre-plus telecommunications structure on a highly valued natural and recreational precinct.**
6. **That residents within the City of Greater Dandenong are directly affected by the proposed location notwithstanding that the responsible authority for the planning application is Knox City Council;**
7. **The documented ecological significance of the proposed location and its connection with Dandenong Creek, Tirhatuan Wetlands, Police Road Retarding Basin and Tirhatuan Park, including habitat for threatened and migratory species;**
8. **That residents have identified an existing telecommunications facility at the corner of Stud Road and Wellington Road, Rowville, which already accommodates multiple telecommunications carriers, and have called for co-location or expansion of existing infrastructure to be properly investigated as an alternative to constructing a new telecommunications tower;**
9. **The importance of reliable telecommunications infrastructure to the community and that the City of Greater Dandenong does not oppose the provision of telecommunications infrastructure where appropriately located; and**

10. However, that the provision of telecommunications infrastructure should seek to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on residential amenity, environmentally significant areas, community open space.

That Council REQUESTS:

11. The Mayor write to the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer of Knox City Council advising of the significant concerns of the City of Greater Dandenong regarding the proposed location of Planning Application P/2026/6008, and that Knox City Council to give particular consideration to the interests of residents of the City of Greater Dandenong who may be affected by the proposal, notwithstanding that the proposed facility is located within the City of Knox;

12. Knox City Council not support the proposed location and that, should a suitable alternative location be identified, Knox City Council encourage the applicant to pursue that location in preference to the proposed site adjoining 5 Police Road, Rowville;

13. The Chief Executive Officer to seek confirmation from Knox City Council regarding;

a. the current number of objections and submissions received;

b. whether the submission period has been extended and, if so, the revised closing date;

c. whether co-location or expansion at existing telecommunications facilities has been fully investigated;

d. the environmental assessments undertaken in relation to Dandenong Creek, Tirhatuan Wetlands and associated habitat;

e. how the interests of affected residents within the City of Greater Dandenong will be considered in determining the application; and

14. That Knox City Council provide a written response to the Chief Executive Officer and that the response be circulated to all Councillors; and that the Chief Executive Officer report back to Council on the outcome of Council's representations and any response received from Knox City Council.

6 REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS/DELEGATED MEMBERS AND COUNCILLORS' QUESTIONS

The principal purpose of this item in the Council Meeting Agenda is for Councillors to report on their attendance, observations or important matters arising from their liaison or representation with groups for which the Councillor has been formally appointed by Council. In accordance with the documented 'protocol' that applies to either liaisons or representatives, Councillors should raise matters of importance during this item. Other matters may also be reported.

If a Councillor chooses to speak, the name of the conference/event and the Councillor will be noted in the Minutes for that meeting. If a Councillor requires additional information on the conference/event to be listed in the Minutes, they must submit it in writing to a Governance staff member by 12.00pm the day following this Council Meeting.

Question time is provided to enable Councillors to address questions to members of Council staff. The guidelines for asking questions at a Council meeting are included in the current Governance Rules.

Councillors have a total of 15 minutes each to report on their attendances at meetings, conferences or events and to ask questions of Council staff.

7 URGENT BUSINESS

No business may be admitted as urgent business unless it:

a) relates to or arises out of a matter which has arisen since distribution of the Agenda; and

b) cannot safely or conveniently be deferred until the next ordinary meeting and unless agreed to by a majority of those Councillors present at the meeting.

8 CLOSE OF BUSINESS