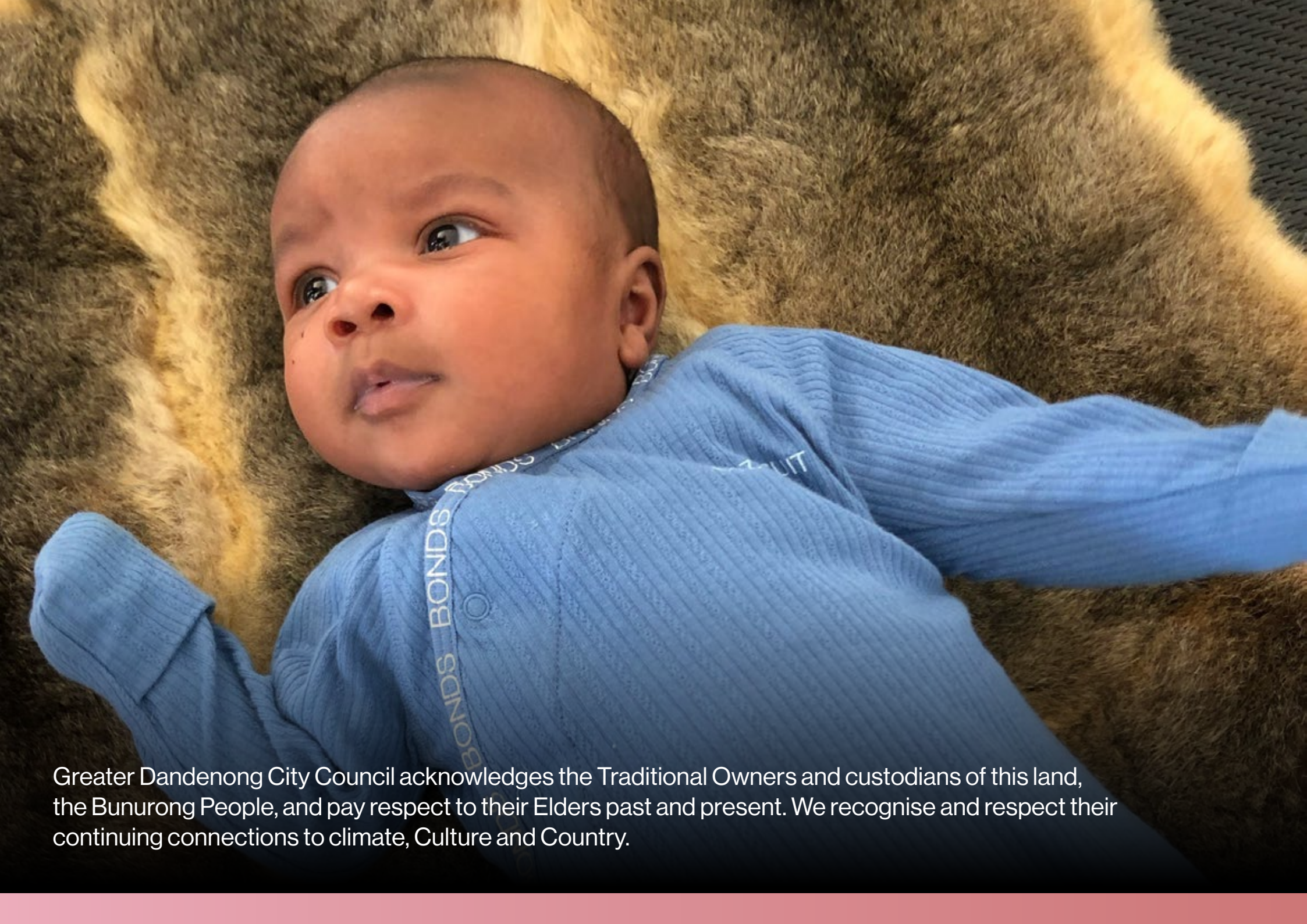




Children's Plan

Second Year Action Plan Report 2022-2023





Greater Dandenong City Council acknowledges 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 and Country.

Executive summary

The vision of the **Children's Plan 2021–2026** is for children and their families to be valued, celebrated, respected and supported to reach their full potential. It was created in consultation with children, local service providers and a number of Council departments. This integrated approach values collaborating with children aged 0–13 years, as well as acknowledging the critical role that parents, carers and their extended families play in supporting the development of each child's education, health and wellbeing.

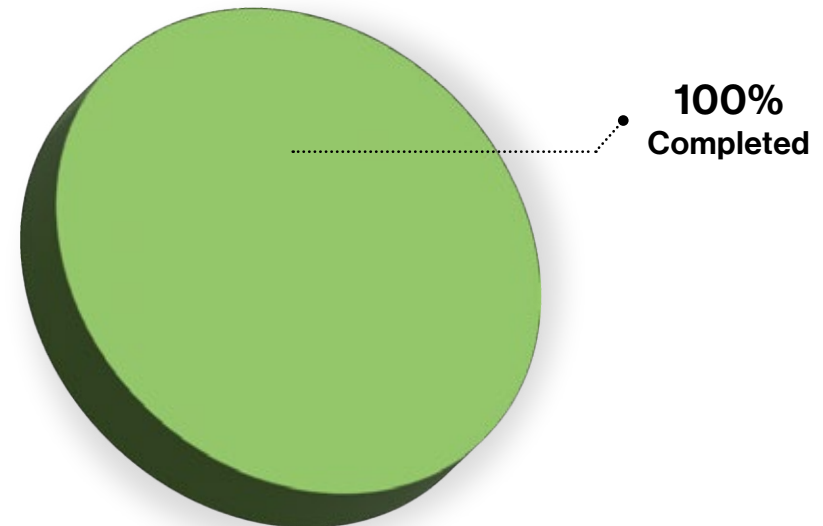
This report covers Council's progress on our annual actions in the second year of the Children's Plan, for the period 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023, and highlights a number of a key achievements.

The **Second Year Action Plan Report 2022–2023** contains 76 actions stemming from five strategic objectives. These actions are the responsibility of many different Council departments, and the delivery of the plan is a collaborative effort. In 2022–23, we are tracking well, with 100 per cent of planned actions completed.

Progress summary

Progress Key

	Percentage
● Completed	100 per cent
● Partially	
● Incomplete	



Strategic Objective 1: Provide leadership and advocacy in planning for children and families

The City of Greater Dandenong has a central role to play in local infrastructure, service planning and the provision of high quality, sustainable services. Council's close proximity to the community means it is well-placed to be an advocate for community needs. Council works with all levels of government, various sectors, organisations, services and community members to create effective community outcomes.



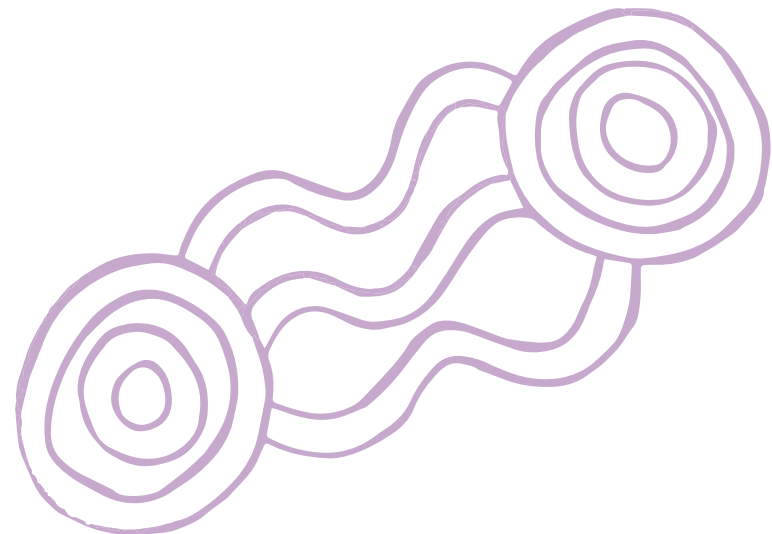
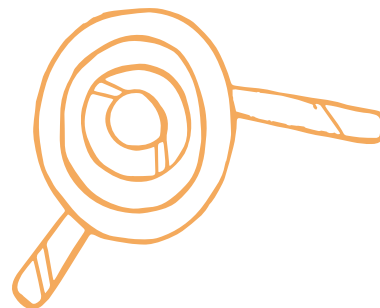
Child and Family Partnership network brought 43 external agencies together to support children and families.



We delivered the Dads' Support program, to connect 50 dads, support with information and resources and link to support services.



A new kindergarten opened in Dandenong North providing an extra 132 places for the community.



Strategic Objective 2: Strengthen health and wellbeing outcomes for children and families

Health and wellbeing encompasses physical, emotional and mental health. Council supports positive health and wellbeing outcomes for children and families through:

- universal health services
- health promotion and prevention activities
- building resilience in children and strengthening families
- early intervention support services
- promoting social inclusion and connectedness.



We delivered 'outreach' playgroups, actively engaging with culturally diverse families in Greater Dandenong, helping to develop social support networks.



Families in need of additional support were provided assistance through our Sleep and Setting program, which included 'outreach' sessions in families' homes.



Through the *New Directions* initiative, we engaged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in activities with health yarners sharing information and resources.

Strategic Objective 3: Support engagement in learning, skill development and vocational pathways

Learning 'is a continuous process throughout life', children 'learn through a variety of formal and informal experiences within the classroom and more broadly in their home and in the community.' Council supports the provision of high-quality early learning and care services.



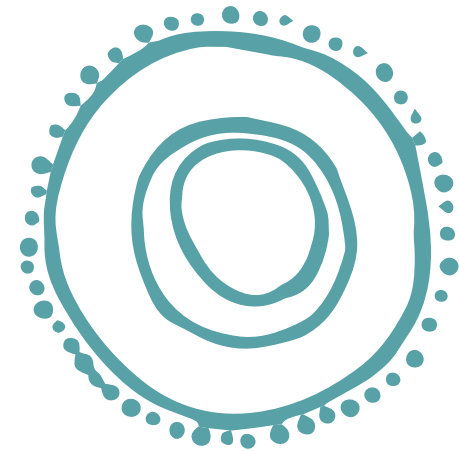
Our Community Engagement Officer supported 99 culturally and linguistically diverse families to navigate and access kindergarten and school programs.



Our Reading Buddies program provided reading support for 3,658 primary school aged children and their families in school and libraries.



Our Preschool Field Officers supported many educators in assisting children with additional needs with access, inclusion and participation in kindergarten.





Strategic Objective 4: Improve safety and accessibility for children and families to participate in the community

Council has an important role to play in supporting the safety of children and families from bullying, discrimination and in accessing public spaces and amenities throughout the municipality.



We held our annual Greater Dandenong *Children's Festival* and *Little Day Out*, planned in consultation with the Children's Advisory Group, and attracted 5,000 families and children.



We hosted an All Abilities Sports Day, in collaboration with Disability Sport and Recreation Victoria, for a day of inclusive sports for adults and children.



Our libraries offer a large number of in-library and outreach activities for children in Greater Dandenong. This includes a *Sensitive Storytime* program to help young children with sensory sensitivities participate and feel more comfortable.

Strategic Objective 5: Value active participation and engagement of children and families in the community

A child friendly city implements the 'Convention on the Rights of the Child' (1990) to local communities in partnership with children. Central to the Child Friendly City concept is that "Children have the right to voice their opinions and have these be taken into account in decisions that affect them."¹



Over 700 children were involved in a range of Council's planning and decision-making, regarding public spaces, libraries, getting active, climate change and the environment and waste.



A new Junior Mayor was elected by members of the Children's Advisory Group and gave a speech at local events including citizenship ceremony, Little Day Out, Sustainability Festival and, Reconciliation Week.



Around 45 Primary School students connected with real-world artists in collaborative woven art projects through the Artist-in-Schools Residency program.





Part B: Action Plan Progress

Strategic Objective 1: Provide leadership and advocacy in planning for children and families

The City of Greater Dandenong has a central role to play in local infrastructure, service planning and the provision of high quality, sustainable services. Council's close proximity to the community means it is well-placed to be an advocate for community needs. Council works with all levels of government, various sectors, organisations, services and community members to create effective community outcomes.

Priority	Action Name	Status	Progress summary
1.1 Facilitate local service networks and joint planning to meet the changing needs of children and families	1.1.1 Facilitate bimonthly Child and Family Partnership meetings	●	Five Child and Family Partnership bi-monthly network meetings were facilitated throughout the year, to support activities for children and their families, with 43 external partnering agencies attending.
1.2 Explore external funding opportunities to be responsive to policy change in implementing timely three-year-old kindergarten provision	1.2.2 Review Infrastructure Plan annually for timely infrastructure development	●	The Infrastructure Plan was reviewed against suburb-level information to ensure adequate infrastructure to meet the demands of both 3- and 4-year-old kindergarten. A new kindergarten opened in Dandenong North providing an extra 132 places for the community. Four kindergartens were supported to apply for grant funding to upgrade the facilities in order to meet the demands of both 3- and 4-year-old kindergarten.
1.3 Advocate for the provision of flexible, quality, affordable child-care options for families	1.3.1 Conduct mapping around local childcare fees	●	Annual data was collected for Family Day Care and Long Day Care Services in Greater Dandenong to enable Children's Services to identify demand for childcare and provide families with quality, competitive options.

● Completed ● Partially ● Incomplete

Priority	Action Name	Status	Progress summary
1.5 Advocate for the provision of support services dedicated to helping children and their families living in generational and situational disadvantage	1.5.1 Advocate for social and affordable housing for children and their families	●	<p>Council participates in the South Eastern Region Homelessness and Social Housing Charter Group of Councils, which focuses on coordinated advocacy and resource sharing to support the expansion of social and affordable housing in participating municipalities.</p> <p>Met with, and obtained resources from, Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA) regarding affordable housing options. Regional Local Government Homelessness and Social Housing Charter Group of Councils released the annual review survey on key issues and potential future work.</p>
	1.5.2 Partner with external agencies to plan and provide support services to children and families	●	<p>Council delivered a program to connect and support dads in the local area and link to support services, information and resources. The Dads' Support program was well attended by 315 attendees.</p> <p>Council established partnerships with key external family and support services under the Community Connection program and provided assistance to children and their families by referring them to services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 66 children were referred to playgroup with their dads • 80 children were supported with St Kilda Mums toys and books packs • 50 vulnerable families, children were provided nappies through The Nappy Collective program • 100 newly arrived refugee children were supported with new clothing through Servants of The Two Hearts (charity) and St Kilda Mums

● Completed ● Partially ● Incomplete

Priority	Action Name	Status	Progress summary
1.6 Advocate for additional funding sources to support the Community Hubs in Schools model	1.6.1 Participate in State Government Community Hubs in Schools meetings	●	The Australian Government extended funding to Community Hubs in Schools for three years, bringing the total number of locations to 94 across the country.
	1.6.2 Write Mayoral letters to local MP's to support ongoing funding commitment	●	As the funding was secured for an additional three years, Mayoral letters were not necessary. No further action required.
1.7 Undertake infrastructure planning to ensure timely and targeted provision of facilities and services for children and families	1.7.1 Review Infrastructure Plan and change management for three-year-old kindergarten	●	Kindergarten service providers in Council facilities met regularly with Council to plan for change and ensure the timely provision of 15 hours of 3-year-old kindergarten in 2023 and beyond. Regular discussions held with the Department of Education and the Victorian School Building Authority to support the municipality's future infrastructure requirements.
	1.7.2 Review Sport and Recreation facilities for timely infrastructure	●	All sports infrastructure was audited in April, May and June 2023. A draft sport and recreation infrastructure plan has been developed awaiting approval.
	1.7.3 Support children to inform the design of Council's Sport and Recreation facilities	●	Feedback on sport and physical activity participation preferences was captured as part of a Make Your Move workshop at the Children's Forum.
	1.7.4 Review and develop concept plans for open space, parks, and playgrounds to meet community needs	●	Local schools and early childhood settings were engaged in the consultation activities for Glendale Reserve playground and the Thomas Carroll Reserve playground. Children shared innovative and well considered design ideas for parks at an open space design workshop, 'Run, plan and socialise – designing our future parks' at the Children's Forum.

● Completed ● Partially ● Incomplete



Strategic Objective 2: Strengthen health and wellbeing outcomes for children and families

Health and wellbeing encompasses physical, emotional and mental health. Council supports positive health and wellbeing outcomes for children and families through:

- universal health services
- health promotion and prevention activities
- building resilience in children and strengthening families
- early intervention support services
- promoting social inclusion and connectedness

Priority	Action Name	Status	Progress summary
2.1 Increase participation of families with children aged 12 months and older in Maternal and Child Health consultations	2.1.1 Provide outreach Maternal and Child Health services at Dandenong PALS Playgroup and the Afghan Women's Group to improve family engagement	●	To support families new to the area, Maternal and Child Health attended Dandenong PALS group twice and all families were linked into the Maternal and Child Health Service for their child's Key Age and Stage consultations, and to other relevant supportive services. Enhanced Maternal and Child Health also attended Afghan Women's Group at Dandenong South Primary School Hub to meet Afghan families offer support and help foster trusting relationships.
	2.1.2 Provide outreach Maternal and Child Health services at childcare, family day care and playgroups	●	Maternal and Child Health provided six group sessions for Key Age and Stage consultations (at 18 months, 2 year and 3½ years), with 39 participants. Maternal and Child Health have provided 50 outreach visits to refugee families.

● Completed ● Partially ● Incomplete

Priority	Action Name	Status	Progress summary
2.1 Increase participation of families with children aged 12 months and older in Maternal and Child Health consultations (<i>continued</i>)	2.1.3 Promotion of Maternal and Child Health services to internal Council departments to strengthen referral pathways	●	Maternal and Child Health services were promoted via connections with multiple teams across Council, including Media and Communications, Community Development, Children's Services, Youth and Family Services, Immunisation, and Library Services, with an increase in family participation.
2.2 Increase attendance of vulnerable, refugee and newly arrived children at immunisation sessions	2.2.1 Partner with external service providers to support Refugee, asylum seeker and other newly arrived families to access immunisation sessions	●	<p>Refugee and Asylum Seeker and newly arrived families are supported to access immunisation services under Program for Refugee Immunisation Monitoring and Education (PRIME). PRIME also monitors a family's immunisation history against Australian vaccination standards.</p> <p>Students attending the Noble Park English Language School can receive catch-up vaccinations through Council's immunisation program.</p> <p>Council was successful applicant for the 2023 Glaxo Smith Kline Award (\$20,000), which will be used to provide vaccines not currently funded by state or federal immunisation programs.</p>
	2.2.2 Develop immunisation promotional tools for vulnerable, refugee, asylum seeker and other newly arrived children	●	Council's immunisation service employed a variety of promotional strategies, in conjunction with PRIME, such as information on Council's website, developing promotional videos and flyers (including translated materials) and service cards, to reach children of vulnerable population groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, refugees and newly arrived.

● Completed ● Partially ● Incomplete

Priority	Action Name	Status	Progress summary
2.2 Increase attendance of vulnerable, refugee and newly arrived children at immunisation sessions (<i>continued</i>)	2.2.3 Continue partnerships with Maternal and Child Health (MCH) to promote immunisation from birth, engaging with families of infants in the municipality	●	<p>To facilitate early and timely access to immunisation, Maternal and Child Health (MCH) nurses and Immunisation services cross-check immunisation records. Additionally, birth notifications are linked to an SMS service that invites parents to book an immunisation session and immunisation is promoted by MCH nurses during infant visits.</p> <p>A new initiative funded by South Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Network aiming to improve immunisation coverage rates in the municipality, will collaborate with MCH to reach families of children who are overdue for vaccinations.</p>
	2.2.4 Promoting immunisation to all children	●	<p>Council provides free immunisation to eligible people of all ages, in accordance with the National Immunisation Program. Families from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds including refugee and asylum seekers, are assisted through translated materials, and bilingual nurses and Immunisation Officers.</p> <p>The Australian Immunisation Register data is analysed and strategies to increase participation are focused on population groups and locations with low immunisation coverage areas. The program is promoted through website, text message, emails and social media, and via collaborations with organisations to engage families. An advice and education service is offered to any vulnerable and/or vaccine hesitant client.</p>
2.3 Encourage children and families to be physically active and participate in sport and recreational opportunities.	2.3.1 Continue to support Play Street Project	●	<p>A number of activities were organised as part of the 1000 Play Streets program, including a video promoting 1000 Play Streets and a promotion offering a membership with the Springvale Service for Children Toy Library which generated a number of enquiries.</p>

● Completed ● Partially ● Incomplete

Priority	Action Name	Status	Progress summary
2.3 Encourage children and families to be physically active and participate in sport and recreational opportunities. <i>(continued)</i>	2.3.2 Facilitate Go Active	●	Get Active Free, a Victorian government initiative encouraging people to be more active, was promoted across the municipality. 698 families applied for vouchers that reduce costs of participation. Opportunities for families to get active were also provided through partnerships with St Kilda Football Club, RecLink, Melbourne City Football Club, South East Leisure, Australian Football League, Football Federation Victoria and Disability Sport and Rec Victoria.
2.4 Support preventative health initiatives and education for children and families in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nutrition and healthy eating • dental health and hygiene • adequate sleep and exercise • self-care and resilience 	2.4.1 Promote Smiles for Miles van consultation with early childhood services and schools	●	Dental Health Services Victoria initiative, Smiles for Miles, supported by Monash Health, continue to offer free oral health promotion and dental check-ups to children. This was promoted to 37 primary schools and 63 early childhood services in Greater Dandenong.
	2.4.2 Promote sleep and settling programs to new parents	●	Sleep and Settling staff promote information sessions and outreach appointments internally across Council and via external agencies that support families in the municipality. All parents that identify a concern related to sleep and settling during their Key Ages and Stages visit at the Maternal and Child Health Service were offered support in the sleep and setting program. Sessions were also delivered as an outreach service, in the homes of families. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 82 Sleep and Settling Information sessions for age groups 0–6m, 6–12m and 12m+ • Outreach sessions offered to 230 families with a total of 798 hours of service delivery

● Completed ● Partially ● Incomplete

Priority	Action Name	Status	Progress summary
2.4 Support preventative health initiatives and education for children and families in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nutrition and healthy eating • dental health and hygiene • adequate sleep and exercise • self-care and resilience <i>(continued)</i>	2.4.3 Develop nutrition and healthy eating resources to support preventative health initiatives	●	The New Directions Project delivered a number of preventive health activities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, including sharing nutrition and healthy eating resources with mums, dads and Community participating in New Directions activities and shared by New Directions health yarners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swimming for Bubup (2x Peninsula Aquatic Recreation Centre, Frankston, and Casey Race) • Bay Mob events (2x Nairn Marr Djambana) • National Aboriginal Children's Day (Nairn Marr Djambana) • Bush Tucker Gardens Community event (Cranbourne) • Postnatal Mental Health Yarning Group (Nairn Marr Djambana)
	2.4.4 Partner with external agencies to promote preventative health programs and education	●	Internal and external collaborations continue to be established, through the VicHealth Local Government Partnership Program, which is now in its third year. Council has partnered with several external agencies including Monash Health, South East Leisure, Enliven, Casey Council and Cardinia Shire, VicHealth, Vic Kids Eat Well and Healthy Kids Advisors, Quit Australia, and several State Sporting Associations, and universities to promote preventative health programs and education.

● Completed ● Partially ● Incomplete

Priority	Action Name	Status	Progress summary
2.4 Support preventative health initiatives and education for children and families in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nutrition and healthy eating • dental health and hygiene • adequate sleep and exercise • self-care and resilience <i>(continued)</i>	2.4.5 Include children and young people in planning and policy creation	●	<p>Council worked in partnership with Monash University to adapt the Kids Co-designing Healthy Places Toolkit, designed to collect information and provide opportunities for children and young people to be involved in planning and policy creation. Children completed 60 surveys and 27 audits in the form of drawings and paintings. According to children's responses, removing rubbish from public places was a priority and a dirty public park was an unsafe environment for children to play. As a result, Council is now working on increasing the rubbish collection and delivering a Council waste and litter campaign.</p> <p>Children led several other planning projects during this reporting period, including the 'Get Active Get Moving' campaign, School Breakfast Resource to give children a healthy breakfast, and a healthy food workshop to assist Council to embed health food options into Council facilities.</p>
	2.4.6 Increase active travel to and from school	●	<p>An active travel campaign was co-designed with the Student Representative Council and the Children's Advisory Group, to encourage more local children to be active to and from school. Children worked with a local graphic designer, in workshops at the Children's Forum to design a logo and slogan for Active Travel across the municipality. A media release, newspaper article, website page, animated video, flyers, and social media was created for the launch, promoted to all primary schools to take part in the competition. A total of 3600 students from 11 schools participated in the 'Get Active Get Moving' campaign in 2023.</p>

● Completed ● Partially ● Incomplete

Priority	Action Name	Status	Progress summary
2.4 Support preventative health initiatives and education for children and families in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nutrition and healthy eating • dental health and hygiene • adequate sleep and exercise • self-care and resilience (continued)	2.4.7 Empower and enable women and girls to get active through local promotion of This Girl Can – Victoria 2023 and beyond	●	<p>A local 'This Girl Can' campaign was launched in Sept 2022 to encourage women to increase physical activity. Council worked with South East Leisure (SEL) and negotiated a membership deal for new customers in the four SEL-managed sporting and leisure centers within the municipality.</p> <p>A campaign across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, as well as Council's website, using VicHealth promotional material reached:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 65,000 households throughout the municipality, via Council News magazine. • A further 5 promotional opportunities were sent to the community, reaching approximately 341. • An additional 15 women and girls participated in the activities offered at the leisure centers and several have signed up to continue membership.
	2.4.8 Embed healthy food options in policy and council owned and operated places where children visit	●	<p>Collaboration between South East Leisure (SEL), Monash Health and City of Greater Dandenong Council led to the implementation of a 'Partnership Agreement' to increase healthy food options at all four of the SEL managed sporting and leisure centres. Monash Health will support educational campaigns at the centres to increase awareness about healthy eating, as well as setting targets for food suppliers to supply healthy options.</p> <p>Council's two library cafes are registered with the Vic Kids Eat Well campaign, which provides resources to support healthy food options being available in local settings, and is also partnering with the 'Healthy Kids Advisor' from Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden to provide hands on support for healthy eating in several local schools.</p>

● Completed ● Partially ● Incomplete

Priority	Action Name	Status	Progress summary
2.5 Increase awareness of mental health and supports available for children and families	2.5.1 Promotion of Mental Health Week	●	All Maternal and Child Health Centres offered clients mental health information and referred families to the Mental Health Victoria website during Mental Health Week.
	2.5.2 Strengthen partnerships with external providers to support mental health of children and families	●	The Child and Family Partnership is comprised of 12 community organisations that support the mental health of children and families. Information was shared in the bimonthly partnership meetings, which included the distribution of 17 flyers for mental health support services, and delivery of New Directions moms yarning post-natal support group.
2.6 Support initiatives to reduce the adverse effects of alcohol and drug use impacting children and their families	2.6.1 Promotion of community partners who provide support services to support children impacted by drug and alcohol use	●	Produced the “Tackling Indigenous Smoking” Champions video in partnership with the Tackling Indigenous Smoking Team at Dandenong & District Aborigines Co-Operative Ltd, General Practitioners from Bunurong Health, health professionals from Monash Health and Peninsula Health and mums, Bubup, aunties and Elders. A promotional poster with educational and referral information, plus a QR code linking to the video, was also created. Tackling Indigenous Smoking Yarning Circles and cultural engagement activities commenced, including promotional resources aiming to support the reduction of second-hand smoke in the home for babies. CatholicCare’s Alcohol and Other Drug Family Services, SECADA, Family Life joined the Child and Family Partnership bimonthly meetings.
2.7 Support opportunities for children and families to build social connections	2.7.1 Deliver First Time Parent Groups to families	●	All first time parents were invited to attend a First Time Parent Group before their infant was 12 weeks of age. Groups were offered online and face-to-face. Throughout the year, 49 First Time Parent Groups were delivered, with each group consisting of 6 sessions, for a total of 294 sessions.

● Completed ● Partially ● Incomplete

Priority	Action Name	Status	Progress summary
2.7 Support opportunities for children and families to build social connections <i>(continued)</i>	2.7.2 Facilitate Children's Advisory Group	●	The Children's Advisory Group provided opportunities for 168 primary students to share ideas and feedback with various Council teams to inform their work. Consultations provided opportunities to understand issues that are important to children, to hear their point of view, and in their own language, demonstrating Council's commitment to being a Child Friendly City. Participation included the Children's Festival, waste competition, Children's Forum, transition to secondary school, appointing a Junior Mayor, public speaking opportunity, Little Day Out and Springvale Reserve design.
	2.7.3 Facilitate supported and community playgroups	●	Over 700 families connected with local supported services like the National Disability Inclusion Scheme and Orange Door, in addition to early years children services such as kindergarten and Sleep and Settling programs, preschool field officer, Dads Group, community playgroups, and 25 Supported Playgroups. Regular training sessions were provided to 40 community playgroup leaders, to foster social connections among the 400 families that attend.
	2.7.4 Deliver Storytime, Baby bounce and Toddler time in Springvale and Dandenong Libraries	●	Early Years programs saw considerable growth this period, particularly the Springvale Library Baby Bounce sessions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall Baby Bounce: 71 sessions, 5861 participants • Overall Toddler Time: 66 sessions, 2227 participants • Overall Storytime: 72 sessions, 2692 participants

● Completed ● Partially ● Incomplete



Priority	Action Name	Status	Progress summary
2.8 Develop partnerships with key health and wellbeing agencies to deliver activities to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families	2.8.1 Deliver primary health and wellbeing activities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families	●	<p>The Indigenous Health Care Program - New Directions Project continued to deliver preventive health activities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. Activities included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four Balit Booboop Narkkwarren (Baby Makes 3 adaptation) days completed • Four Balit Booboop Narkkwarren Communities of Practice sessions completed with new facilitators • Swimming for Bubup sessions completed across Casey Race, and Peninsula Aquatic Recreation Centre, Frankston (25 children with adults attended) • NAIDOC week and Reconciliation Week events attended and supported - 3 community events in partnership with community partners, health yarners and mums, dads and their families • Antenatal & Lactation Yarning group sessions with health yarners, Mums and Dads • Postnatal Mental health and wellbeing yarning group at Nairm Marr Djambana <p>All groups and activities included cultural engagement activities, and received information about Maternal and Child Health, immunisation, lactation, postnatal and antenatal care, tackling indigenous smoking, dental and hearing checks.</p>

● Completed ● Partially ● Incomplete

Strategic Objective 3: Support engagement in learning, skill development and vocational pathways

Learning 'is a continuous process throughout life', children 'learn through a variety of formal and informal experiences within the classroom and more broadly in their home and in the community.' Council supports the provision of high-quality early learning and care services.

Priority	Action Name	Status	Progress summary
3.1 Promote and support children to enrol in and participate in 3- and 4-year-old Kindergarten programs, particularly vulnerable children	3.1.1 Promotion of kindergarten enrolments at supported and community playgroups	●	<p>Playgroup facilitators referred 52 vulnerable families experiencing language and technology barriers to enrol in kindergarten. These families were supported by Children's Services staff to enrol via telephone with an interpreter.</p> <p>Council visited 23 supported and community playgroups and provided families with flyers and information as well as practical assistance to enrol children in kindergarten.</p>
	3.1.2 Promotion of the benefits of kindergarten for both 3- and 4-year old's	●	<p>Almost 600 (592) families were supported to enrol their children in 3- & 4-year-old kindergarten. Children's Services attended kindergarten information sessions, playgroups, Maternal and Child Health group Key Ages and Stages information sessions, and a twilight information session, providing information to help families navigate enrolment processes for kindergarten and other early years services, along with hands-on support with registration.</p>
	3.1.3 Support children with additional needs inclusion into kindergarten	●	<p>The Preschool Field Officer program supported over 271 children for inclusion in 3- and 4-year-old kindergarten, through visits to services and phone calls with teachers within services. The Cultural and Linguistic Diverse Kindergarten Project has supported 99 children to enrol and access early start kindergarten, 3-year-old and 4-year-old kindergarten.</p>

● Completed ● Partially ● Incomplete



Priority	Action Name	Status	Progress summary
3.2 Strengthen the capacity of parents and carers to support children's learning and development	3.2.1 Deliver Family Literacy Project through reading buddies and reading programs in schools and early childhood services	●	<p>The Reading Buddy Program provides reading support for primary school aged children and their families.</p> <p>Annual Reading Buddies in Schools – 382 sessions with 3658 participants</p> <p>Annual Reading Buddies in Dandenong Library – 33 sessions with 373 participants</p> <p>Annual Reading Buddies in Springvale Library – 13 sessions with 38 participants</p>
	3.2.2 Support external agencies to deliver programs to strengthen parental capacity in children's learning	●	<p>The Child and Family Partnership is comprised of seven community organisations that work to increase the ability of parents and caregivers to promote children's learning and development. Supports include Monash Health delivering Antenatal Yarning Groups to local Aboriginal mums, dads and bubup.</p> <p>The 'Baby Makes Three' adapted champion training (Balit Booboop Narrkwarren) was attended by 9 external agencies.</p> <p>Regional Balit Booboop Narrkwarren Yarning Circle was delivered to share the champions implementation and learning from using the Baby Makes Three adaptation toolbox activities and resources.</p> <p>Strong Mums and Strong Bubups Yarning Circle and Lactation Support group was delivered in partnership with Monash Aboriginal Midwives, Maternal and Child Health and Australian Breastfeeding Association with cultural activities and health yarning.</p>

● Completed ● Partially ● Incomplete

Priority	Action Name	Status	Progress summary
3.3 Support initiatives and activities for successful transition of children through key educational milestones of kindergarten, school, and special education.	3.3.1 Support School Readiness Programs with local kindergartens and schools	●	<p>The Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Outreach program assisted 220 children in the transition to school.</p> <p>Following discussions with Foundation House, professional learning workshops for early years education staff and foundation educators from local feeder schools was coordinated.</p> <p>The Pre-School Field Officer, Best Start Facilitator and Team Leader Children's Services support, met to discuss increasing the use of interpreters between educators and parents in the kindergarten setting.</p>
3.4 Develop pathways for newly arrived and refugee families to access English language education to support children's literacy and learning	3.4.1 Promotion of referral pathways to Library and Community Hubs English language programs	●	Through networking and participating in seven meetings with Community Hubs in Schools, opportunities to promote referral pathways to Library and Community Hubs English language programs were established.
	3.4.2 Deliver weekly Conversation Circle sessions	●	<p>The steady flow of participants at Conversation Circle sessions at Dandenong Library highlights the ongoing need for this core literacy support service to our patrons.</p> <p>Annual figures: 34 sessions, 277 participants</p>
	3.4.3 Deliver Family Literacy Project	●	The Family Literacy Project engaged with Noble Park English Language School and was granted an exemption from reporting due the privacy of the children involved. This was a major achievement and demonstrates support from Mission Australia and the Department of Social Services. Successful recruitment and training of staff resulted in a steady increase in service delivery.

● Completed ● Partially ● Incomplete

Strategic Objective 4: Improve safety and accessibility for children and families to participate in the community

Council has an important role to play in supporting the safety of children and families from bullying, discrimination and in accessing public spaces and amenities throughout the municipality.

Priority	Action Name	Status	Progress summary
4.1 Support initiatives to address family violence	4.1.1 Inform the community about sources of advice and support in relation to family violence	●	In addition to brochures and at public events, information about family violence prevention and response is displayed on Council screens. Council collaborated with Women's Health in the South-East in public events and professional development activities. A 2-year review of Council's progress against goals in its Gender Equity Action Plan completed. A major submission was prepared for funding under the 'Free from Violence' grant program to advance gender equity and prevention of family violence in our community.
	4.1.2 Promote activities that support the prevention of family violence	●	Council organised a Walk Against Family Violence event to raise awareness which was well attended and received very positive feedback from participants.
4.2 Support positive parenting programs, to build the capacity of parents and carers	4.2.2 Deliver supported playgroups, new parent groups and outreach services to support parental capacity	●	770 families attended the 25 Supported Playgroups plus 88 families took part in-home support in parenting skill development.
4.3 Promote activities that encourage gender, race, and disability equity for children	4.3.1 Promotion of LGBTIQ+ networks and events	●	Council celebrated and participated in a number of events to raise awareness and promote inclusivity of LGBTIQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer/Questioning and Asexual) families, including Wear it Purple Day, IDAHOBIT (International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexism and Transphobia), Midsumma Pride March and Trans-Awareness Day, and ensure celebrations are welcoming for children and families.

● Completed ● Partially ● Incomplete

Priority	Action Name	Status	Progress summary
4.3 Promote activities that encourage gender, race, and disability equity for children (<i>continued</i>)	4.3.2 Deliver family story time for families with children with a disability	●	A new promotion strategy, with improved visibility on the website, increased the popularity of the Sensitive Storytime program, with many children transitioning to regular Storytime or Toddler Time program. Annual figures – 24 sessions with 189 participants
	4.3.3 Support and advocate for access and inclusion initiatives	●	Council's Disability Advisory Committee met quarterly and distributes an eNewsletter to over 300 recipients to promote inclusion programs and activities. Council also attends the Southern Region Disability Alliance network to share information about programs, events, and consultations and learn from others. Council attended the Springvale Park Special Development School Community Services Expo, along with the National Disability Insurance Scheme, Windemere, EACH and Alfred Health Carer services. The partnership with Link Health and Community continues to grows, with Link Health regularly attending library story time and playgroups.
	4.3.4 Deliver an all-abilities sport day	●	In partnership with Disability Sport and Recreation Victoria, an All Abilities Sports Day was held, with around 50 participants from across Melbourne including young children.
4.4 Provide welcoming, safe, inclusive, and culturally responsive services	4.4.1 Identifying opportunities for children to voice their experiences of engaging with Maternal and Child Health Services	●	Children's voices and the experience they have within the service is important in supporting change. Work continues with the Children's Services Development Officer to identify how children see the Maternal and Child Health Service, the Maternal and Child Health spaces, and to suggest areas of improvement to help with engagement.

● Completed ● Partially ● Incomplete

Priority	Action Name	Status	Progress summary
4.4 Provide welcoming, safe, inclusive, and culturally responsive services <i>(continued)</i>	4.4.2 Early years services supporting the Reconciliation Action Plan	●	Children's Services continued to support early years services and primary schools with the creation of their Reconciliation Action Plan, promoting the Narragunnawali platform and helping schools and services connect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early years' service providers, including Aboriginal Best Start Tartu Nganyin Bobop, the Department of Education, Koorie Engagement Support Officers and the Aboriginal Gathering Places. Eleven Greater Dandenong early years services and two primary schools are working on their Reconciliation Action Plan.
	4.4.3 Support early years providers to create inclusive services	●	The Preschool Field Officer program supported 70 early years services (for 3- and 4-year-olds) to create inclusive learning environments for all children and families that access the service, using a mix of face-to-face and online platforms to develop strategies.
	4.4.4 Ensure all Council staff complete Child Safe Standards training to comply with the new standards	●	Council has trained over 800 staff members plus a number of volunteers in Child Safe Standards. Training is embedded in the induction process, to reach new employees and volunteers. Council is developing a corporate training plan which includes Child Safe Standards.
4.5 Activate safe and accessible public spaces and amenities for children	4.5.1 Deliver Children's Festival and Little Day Out	●	Festivals and Events delivered the 11th Greater Dandenong Children's Festival that engaged 2,267 attendees and Little Day Out which engaged 5,000 attendees
	4.5.2 Creative activation of spaces and projects that are child appropriate	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged over 800 primary school students through artist-in-residence programs and a range of workshops and school holiday programs. Consultation with 50 children through the Children's Forum to test the viability of the gallery 'Kid's Kits', which resulted in the name and design changed, based on feedback.

● Completed ● Partially ● Incomplete



Strategic Objective 5: Value active participation and engagement of children and families in the community

A child friendly city implements the 'Convention on the Rights of the Child' (1990) to local communities in partnership with children. Central to the Child Friendly City concept is that "Children have the right to voice their opinions and have these be taken into account in decisions that affect them."¹

Priority	Action Name	Status	Progress summary
5.1 Support children to actively participate in planning of the natural, built, environmental and economic processes of Council that impact their daily living	5.1.1 Facilitate consultation with children around masterplans, parks, new facilities, and redevelopment	●	Consultation sessions were created to enable children to participate. 724 children shared their ideas and feedback in Council projects, including upgrades to Springvale Reserve, Glendale Reserve playground, your environment, active travel, home maintenance program, future park designs, design thinking at the library, design for new gallery, South East Leisure, Shape Springvale.
	5.1.2 Facilitate annual Children's Forum	●	Children's Services hosted its 7th annual Children's Forum with 86 students in grades 5 and 6 from 19 primary schools attending. Seven teams from across Council ran interactive workshops, along with a physical activity session run by South East Leisure. The student's ideas and feedback will help inform Council's future work.
	5.1.3 Consider opportunities to encourage participation of children within the planning and enhancement of our places and spaces	●	Students from primary schools in Noble Park collaborated with a range of artists to create new murals on walls and signal boxes across Noble Park. Students from primary and special development schools in Springvale contributed to the Springvale Revitalisation Action Plan, which aimed to welcome, engage and extend the of stay for children and young people in Springvale activity centre.
5.2 Provide opportunities for children to be involved in civic engagement and leadership	5.2.1 Facilitate Junior Mayor program	●	The Junior Mayor was elected by their peers, members of the Children's Advisory Group. The Junior Mayor attended citizenship ceremonies, Little Day Out, Snow Fest, Sustainability Festival, Reconciliation Week event and the One Tree Per Child program.

● Completed ● Partially ● Incomplete

Priority	Action Name	Status	Progress summary
5.2 Provide opportunities for children to be involved in civic engagement and leadership <i>(continued)</i>	5.2.2 Facilitate Children's Advisory Group	●	The Children's Advisory Group held 8 meetings, providing an opportunity for students to share their ideas and feedback with teams from across Council, and help inform their work. This included Children's Forum, Children's Festival, Little Day Out, Springvale Reserve, waste management, what it means to be child-friendly.
	5.2.3 Facilitate Junior Children's Advisory Group	●	The Junior Children's Advisory Group includes 230 children from prep to grade 6, across 3 primary schools, giving them the opportunity to share their voice in consultations including Shape Springvale, Springvale Reserve, playground designs, Snow Fest, Glendale Reserve and Thomas Carroll Reserve.
	5.2.4 Support children to inform activities and events at Springvale Community Hub	●	Consultation with children and young people continued at Springvale Community Hub. In response to a request from younger users of the space, sports equipment is now available to borrow and use in the outdoor areas. The Hub hosted the Children's Advisory Group and Council Officers continue to work with local schools to facilitate consultation. Opportunities to provide feedback into the programming and activation of the Hub are offered to children and families through formal and informal channels.
5.3 Support initiatives that promote a positive sense of pride in culture, identity and belonging for children	5.3.1 Facilitate arts engagement opportunities (including consultations and programming) with families, children and primary schools.	●	Over 20 child and family-friendly workshops were delivered as part of the Art Series, QuickArts online workshops, and exhibition public programming. The annual Artist-in-Schools Residency program commenced, connecting approx. 45 primary school students with real-world artists for a series of workshops to create woven artworks. These works were then displayed at Springvale Community Hub as part of the Children's Festival.
	5.3.2 Support children to inform council and community events that are inclusive and child friendly	●	Engaged children through a variety of activities including Children Advisory Group consultations (62 children) and Young Animator competition.



Priority	Action Name	Status	Progress summary
5.4 Celebrate the contributions of children as active citizens	5.4.1 Facilitate regular articles and promotional material highlighting the role of the Junior Mayor, Children's Advisory Group, and the Children's Forum	●	The Junior Mayor featured in 4 articles in Council News. Several social media posts featured the work of the Children's Advisory Group across Council, including the annual Children's Forum.
	5.4.2 Acknowledgement of Children's Advisory Group members at the Children's Forum with the Mayor presenting them with a certificate	●	The Mayor attended the Children's Forum in October 2022 and presented all 34 Children's Advisory Group members with a certificate and thanked them for their contributions throughout the year.
	5.4.3 Participate in Victorian Child Friendly Cities and Communities Network and Advisory Group to share children's contribution local voice	●	Children's Services staff attended Victorian Child Friendly Cities and Communities Network and Advisory Group meetings, which brought together 91 people from organisations throughout Victoria, to provide opportunities share examples of best practice in a Child Friendly City and learn from others.
5.5 Support children to participate in climate change and sustainability measures impacting community life	5.5.1 Consider how to enhance current activities with internal and external groups that deliver climate change and sustainability education to children	●	<p>Opportunities to support children to participate included facilitating workshops at the Children's Forum entitled 'Your Environment, Your Voice', consulting with the Children's Advisory Group to gather feedback on activities and themes for the 2023 Sustainability Festival, Climate Resilience workshop with home schooled children (in partnership with the Home School Network), a virtual incursion exploring Australia's geographic and climate history with several primary schools within Greater Dandenong, and supporting children as stallholders at the Sustainability Festival, displaying the sustainable initiatives their schools undertake and discussing this with the community.</p> <p>Sustainability officers participated in the Discover Dandenong Creek Festival, hosting a stall with a number of fun and engaging activities for children.</p>

Priority	Action Name	Status	Progress summary
5.5 Support children to participate in climate change and sustainability measures impacting community life <i>(continued)</i>	5.5.2 Facilitate opportunities for children to contribute to the development of Council's Community Engagement and Mobilisation Plan	●	Children were consulted to assist with the development of Council's Community Engagement and Mobilisation Plan, through the public consultation process, at the Sustainability Festival, Children's Forum and at multiple meetings of the Children's Advisory Group.
	5.5.3 Support children to inform Council's sustainability events, festivals, and activities	●	Sustainability officers attended the Children's Advisory Group meeting and Children's Forum to seek feedback on ideas for the 2023 Sustainability Festival.
	5.5.4 Listen to children's voices, views, and needs on climate change and sustainability and respond to these through Council's initiatives	●	Key activities included children and primary schools contributing to the development of Council's Community Climate Change Engagement and Mobilisation Plan, plus climate change and sustainability themed workshop, 'Your Environment, Your Voice' at the Children's Forum.
	5.5.5 Deliver waste management programs in schools	●	56 education sessions delivered, reaching 1,282 students across 10 schools.
	5.5.6 Encourage children to inform delivery waste minimisation, recycling, and litter prevention messages	●	'Follow Your Waste' videos that promote key waste and recycling messages, were created in collaboration with the Children's Advisory Group and feature local children.

● Completed ● Partially ● Incomplete



Endnotes

¹UNICEF, 2022, The Child Friendly Cities Initiative: Guidance Note, available: https://www.childfriendlycities.org/media/1446/file/Guidance_note_-_Child_Friendly_Cities_Initiative.pdf



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