

**CITY OF  
GREATER  
DANDENONG**



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*Melbourne's 2<sup>nd</sup> City*

**CITY OF GREATER DANDENONG**

*1998/99 Annual Report*

## OUR VISION

Greater Dandenong, Melbourne's 2nd City, is a thriving and successful regional centre that has attracted substantial private investment and is home to a large residential population. Our focus for the next year will be to continue to develop the City's potential by attracting further investment, improving infrastructure and capitalising on our multicultural vitality.

We will continue to create a clean, attractive, and safe City where people are free to live, work and play.

## OUR MISSION

The City of Greater Dandenong will work closely with all that have an interest in the City's future - people from the public, private and community sectors.

## THE COMMUNITY CHARTER - OUR PROMISE

We will:

- ◆ Work in partnership to create a City where people feel safe and have pride in their community.
- ◆ Co-operate with our community to support aged people with disabilities, young people and families.
- ◆ Promote the City of Greater Dandenong as a major centre of commerce, industry and government for Melbourne's rapidly expanding south-east region.
- ◆ Play a lead role in developing the City as a major centre for arts, cultural and entertainment activities.
- ◆ Continue to promote the City's strong tradition in sport and recreation.
- ◆ Take action to improve the built and natural environments.
- ◆ Encourage the distinctive and lively character of local shopping centres throughout the City.
- ◆ Ensure that all citizens have the opportunity to be involved and participate in the decision-making process.
- ◆ Manage the City in the most cost-effective manner possible, and ensure that all services provided meet the needs of our citizens.

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## MAYOR'S MESSAGE

An important event took place during 1998/99 which was a milestone in the development of our great City;

the launch of the City of Greater Dandenong as Melbourne's 2nd City. This launch, and the subsequent endorsement of this by the Premier of Victoria, the Hon Jeffrey Kennett, MLA, was of great significance. As with the return of democratically-elected Councillors in March 1997, I believe it was a defining moment in the history of the City.

Why was this so important? Its importance lies not just in the adoption of a marketing slogan, but in the image that Greater Dandenong as Melbourne's 2nd City conveys to the world. It portrays a City of hope and vitality, with a future that is integrally linked to the growth and prosperity of Melbourne and Victoria - truly a milestone in the evolution of our new City.

The year 1998/99 was also a period of considerable economic, social and cultural growth for the City.

The continuing high level of construction of new industrial and office buildings in Dandenong South, Springvale South and Noble Park highlights the strength of our economy. Not only does this continuing

development add to the revenue base of the municipality; more importantly, it provides job opportunities. This boost in development, combined with a positive national economic outlook, has resulted in Greater Dandenong having one of the lowest unemployment rates it has experienced for the last decade. Unfortunately, this low unemployment rate is not uniform across all sectors of our population, with unemployment still remaining high for young people and persons aged forty-five years or more. Unemployment rates in these two areas of our population are less than they were in 1997/98, but are still too high.

To address this issue, Council will continue to support the development of a vibrant local economy through economic and employment development, tourism development, planned growth and the expansion of business opportunities.

From a cultural perspective, the highlight of 1998/99 was the International Cultural Games Festival held in December 1998. Attended by representatives from thirty-four countries, more than 25,000 people participated in activities associated with the Cultural Games Festival over its eight-day program. What particularly impressed me with the games was the number of school-aged children who attended activities and took part in learning traditional and cultural games from other countries. The games festival was an overwhelming success and an event of international scale that every citizen in the City should be proud of.

Another highlight of 1998/99 was the recognition Council received for its work in community safety and diversity action planning. Council received awards from the Victorian Government and Australian Government respectively in these two important areas of activity within our City. While these awards were presented to Council, they reflect the positive contribution and attitude the whole of the City's population brings to these important activities.

Of course, there were many other highlights during the 1998/99 year, too many to mention within the constraints of these introductory remarks. A review of the information contained in this Annual Report will highlight the extent of those achievements and why I believe we should be celebrating the completion of a very successful year for our City.

While 1998/99 was certainly a year of great achievement, it would be wrong of me not to identify some of the ongoing social problems we still face. Of these, the impact of the use of illegal drugs is probably the most significant. Council spent many hours in 1998/99 determining how to best respond to the problems associated with illegal drug use. The actions Council has taken to work with its community to reduce the impact of this problem, is the best outcome I believe we can achieve in the current circumstances. We will continue to focus on our commitment to community safety, and will continue to work closely with Victoria Police to minimise any public safety issues.

Our work with other cities on this problem was instrumental in an agreement being reached by the mayors of fifteen cities across Australia to work together to reduce the impact of illegal drug use on our society. The signing of this historic agreement highlights that the problems associated with illegal drug use are neither confined to, nor unique to, the City of Greater Dandenong. Actions to continue to reduce the impact of illegal drug use will be undertaken in 1999/2000 and for many years to come.

It has also been pleasing to see a reduction in racism over the last twelve months, a matter of concern raised in the 1997/98 Annual Report by my predecessor, Cr Roz Blades. Greater Dandenong is the best example in Australia of the positive benefits of multiculturalism. Other parts of Australia look to Greater Dandenong for leadership and I am pleased that we continued to provide this during 1998/99.

1998/99 was a very successful year for the City of Greater Dandenong and again reflects the very positive future there is for this City and its community. I encourage all members of our community to actively participate in facilitating the future development of our municipality.

Cr Naim Melhem

Mayor



## CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

*“People are  
always blaming  
their circumstances  
for what they are.  
I don't believe in*

*circumstances. The people who get on in this  
world are the people who get up and look for  
the circumstances they want, and, if they  
can't find them, make them.”*

- George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950)

These words by George Bernard Shaw appropriately sum up the success of the City of Greater Dandenong in 1998/99. The City has continued to grow, prosper and achieve at a time when the community's attitude to government at all levels continues to be both cynical and critical. At Greater Dandenong, we have proven that by adopting a positive outlook, providing quality customer service and delivering reliable, consistent services we cannot only earn the respect of our community, but grow that respect to new levels.

As indicated by the Mayor in his introductory comments to this Annual Report, the emergence of Greater Dandenong as Melbourne's 2nd City signals its importance to the economy of Melbourne and Victoria, and the pride and sense of purpose of the whole of our community. Greater Dandenong is not just a good place to live, work and play - it is a dynamic community with a leadership role in the economic, social

and cultural development of Melbourne. The significant part Greater Dandenong has to play in Melbourne's future will become even more obvious over the next few years.

1998/99 was a year of achievement in many areas of Council endeavour as evidenced by the achievements recorded in this Annual Report. The one disappointing aspect of our performance during 1998/99 was the failure to complete all capital works by June 30, 1999. While the completion rate was disappointing, it was higher than in the previous year which indicates improvements are continuing to be made. A higher target has been set for the 1999/2000 year and staff are confident this will be achieved.

Results of the 1999 Office of Local Government Community Satisfaction Research reinforces the positive gains made by Greater Dandenong in all areas of activities. These results, detailed later in this Annual Report, reflect the level of effort put in by all staff to more closely meet community expectations in the provision of information and services. It was particularly pleasing to see a continuing improvement in resident satisfaction with the advocacy provided by Council on their behalf and with our direct response to their requests for information and services. This latter improvement reflects the positive action taken to improve the operations of our telephone call centre and responses to correspondence. While there is still room for improvement in these areas, it is nevertheless pleasing to see that the improvements we have made are recognised by our community.

Another highlight of the 1998/99 year was

the release of Council's *General Service Charter* and individual service charters for forty-four of our business units. Greater Dandenong is a leader in this area of local government across Australia, a fact recognised by the Minister for Local Government when launching the General Charter and the first group of individual business unit service charters in December 1998. In his speech at the launch, the Minister praised the foresight of Councillors in supporting the development of the Service Charter program and the courage of staff in being prepared to declare to the community the level of service they can expect when dealing with Council. Council's Service Charter program has drawn praise from all around Australia and will continue to do so as service charters for the remaining thirty-three businesses are released during the 1999/2000 year.

A further highlight of 1998/99 was the gazettal of Council's new Planning Scheme. This gazettal, in April 1999, marked the end of nearly three years of development work by Council staff, including extensive consultation with the community. The new scheme offers surety and certainty for residents, business operators and developers. The scheme will be reviewed on an annual basis and amendments made if aspects of the scheme are found to be not in accord with the requirements of the community.

One aspect of the new scheme which was particularly pleasing to see implemented was recognition of the heritage of our City. This City has a remarkable social and physical heritage and it is great to see this recognised

and protected in the new Planning Scheme. Stage 2 of Council's Heritage Study will be completed during 1999/2000 and will further reinforce the importance of heritage to our future.

As indicated earlier, 1998/99 was a year of great achievement for the City of Greater Dandenong. This report details, albeit in summary form, a large number of those achievements as well as some failures. It is indicative of the open style of government adopted by the Councillors of our City that this report details failures as well as achievements. Both are seen as an opportunity for further growth by all staff of the City. Greater Dandenong is a City of pride and achievement, and this is reflected in the work and attitudes of all Greater Dandenong staff.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all staff of the City of Greater Dandenong for their efforts during 1998/99. Through a team approach, we have seen considerable further improvement in the level of service delivery to the Greater Dandenong community and I am confident this will flow through to the 1999/2000 year and beyond.

Greater Dandenong is truly Melbourne's 2nd City in all aspects of its operations and services.

Warwick Heine

Chief Executive Officer