

Greater Dandenong
ANNUAL REPORT
2016-17



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OUR GREAT CITY



OUR GREAT CITY

Great Place

- ▶ Recognised as the capital of Melbourne's south-east
- ▶ Victoria's manufacturing heartland and home to 12,500 businesses
- ▶ Home to 234 land reserves, 35 sports reserves and 33 bushland areas covering approximately 51 hectares
- ▶ Revitalised activity centres – Dandenong, Springvale and Noble Park
- ▶ Quality infrastructure including 683km of local roads and 61km of bike paths, 1,084km of footpaths and 127 playgrounds.

Great People

- ▶ Home to over 160,000 residents from over 160 different birthplaces
- ▶ 64 per cent of residents born overseas
- ▶ 70 per cent of residents speak languages other than English
- ▶ An active and committed volunteer community.

Great Times

- ▶ State-of-the-art cultural facilities including the multi-million dollar Drum Theatre
- ▶ Arts events and festivals held monthly
- ▶ Over 150 active sports clubs
- ▶ Over 400 local community groups and service clubs
- ▶ Indoor and outdoor swimming pools
- ▶ Victoria's largest Lunar New Year Festival
- ▶ Major events including Snowfest, Sunset Cinema and New Year's Eve celebration.

Great Shops

- ▶ The iconic Dandenong Market
- ▶ Melbourne's first Indian cultural precinct
- ▶ Afghan Bazaar cultural precinct
- ▶ Significant South East Asian cultural precinct
- ▶ Community shopping facilities in Dandenong, Keysborough, Noble Park and Springvale
- ▶ Diverse cultural cuisines from around the world
- ▶ Thriving small neighbourhood shopping centres/strips.

Snapshot of Greater Dandenong

Geography and Population

The City of Greater Dandenong encompasses an area of 129 square kilometres in Melbourne's south-east, approximately 35km from Melbourne's CBD. Over 160,000 people live in our city.

Cultural and Language Diversity

Greater Dandenong is the most culturally diverse locality in Victoria, with over half of its population born overseas, from more than 160 different birthplaces. Major birthplaces include Vietnam, India, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, China, New Zealand, Pakistan and the Philippines.

The number of overseas-born residents in Greater Dandenong has risen steadily in recent years to 64 per cent, a 4 per cent increase since 2011. This is the second highest proportion in Victoria after the City of Melbourne. Each year a further 1,800 recently arrived migrants settle in Greater Dandenong, the fourth highest rate of settlement in Victoria. One in five of these settlers are refugees, largely from Afghanistan, Burma, Thailand and Iran.

The cultural diversity of this city is also reflected in the wide range of religious faiths identified. These include Christianity 41 per cent, Buddhism 16 per cent of residents, Islam 14 per cent, and Hinduism 6 per cent.

Nearly two-thirds of the residents of Greater Dandenong speak languages other than English. Among the more widely spoken languages in this community are Vietnamese, Khmer, Punjabi, Mandarin, Cantonese and Greek. Approximately 18 per cent of residents however have limited fluency in spoken English, over three times the metropolitan level and the highest in Victoria.



41%
Christianity

12,500
businesses

35km
from
Melbourne's
CBD

**683km of local
roads and 61km
of bike paths**

16% Buddhism

Over
160,000
residents

234 land
reserves

**Over 150 active
sports clubs**

127 playgrounds

14%
Islam

35
sports
reserves

**70% of residents
speak languages
other than English**

**An area of
129 square
kilometres**

6% Hinduism

**1,084km
of footpaths**

51
hectares
of bushland

**Home to
residents
from over
160 different
birthplaces**

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Our Vision

Greater Dandenong is a safe and vibrant city of opportunity for all – to visit, work, live and play.

Our Key Strategic Objectives

People

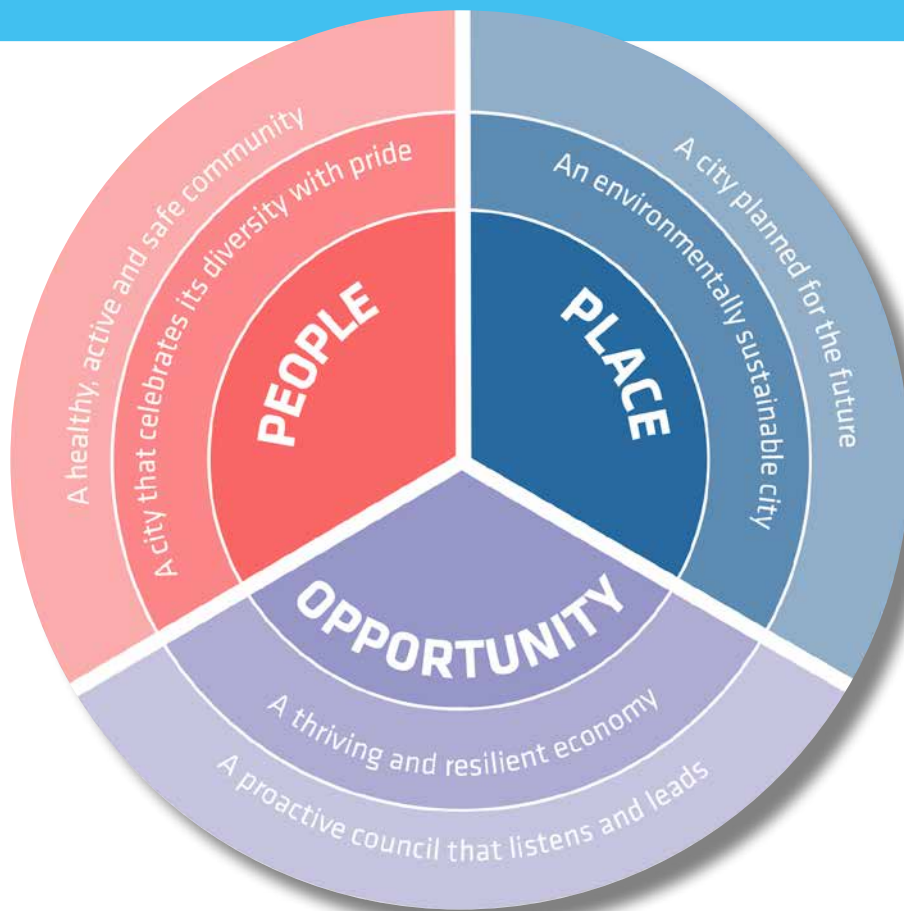
- ▶ A healthy, active and safe community
- ▶ A city that celebrates its diversity with pride

Place

- ▶ An environmentally sustainable city
- ▶ A city planned for the future

Opportunity

- ▶ A thriving and resilient economy
- ▶ A proactive council that listens and leads





OUR GREAT CITY

Message from the Mayor

It has been another challenging year for the local government sector, with a number of external constraints placed on Council's funding pool.

The introduction of rate capping by the State Government has placed additional funding pressures on Council and has left us to answer how we can continue to do more with less.

I am very proud to say that the City of Greater Dandenong has risen to the challenge and has managed to successfully deliver key infrastructure projects and services in line with community needs.

Our main priority has always been to ensure that our community has access to the best possible services and facilities.

This financial year we invested more than \$47 million in the renewal, expansion, and upgrade of assets, including just over \$9 million on pavilion upgrades and redevelopments and \$9.5 million on roads, drains, and footpaths.

Council continues to recognise the community's need for quality facilities and Council has invested in projects which support this view. This year marked a significant year for Springvale and the former site of the Springvale Council offices.

One of the most significant projects completed this year was the redevelopment of the Springvale City Hall. The Springvale City Hall redevelopment includes new heating and cooling, improved lighting and upgraded acoustics. A new terrace has also been built on the northern side of the town hall, making the facility more attractive for function hire and hosting key community events.

The redevelopment forms part of the Springvale Community Precinct Project which is being delivered over two stages – the first being the redevelopment of the Springvale City Hall and the second the construction of the Springvale library and community hub. This significant Council investment in Springvale will see the site of the former Springvale Council offices on Springvale Road transformed into a world-class community facility, providing a variety of learning, leisure and cultural spaces. I am pleased to report that design work is progressing well and further work on this key community project will continue with gusto in 2017–18.

The City of Greater Dandenong is a vibrant and diverse community and this has been showcased through the vast array of festivals and events held in the city this past year.

Harmony Square Dandenong, together with its very popular Urban Screen, has cemented itself as a highly sought after community space with a number of key festivals including New Year's Eve held there this year.

For the first time Dandenong was also a satellite location for the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne. This celebration of culture and film was a fantastic way to highlight the State Government's recognition of Dandenong as Victoria's first ever Indian cultural precinct. Events such as this not only enhance our city's growing reputation as a tourism destination, but also celebrate our city's vibrancy and cultural diversity.

Events like these, along with the annual Lunar New Year Festival in Springvale and Snow Fest are a fantastic boost for the local economy and have created significant investment opportunities for the region.

Food continues to be a drawcard for visitors with both Dandenong and Springvale attracting significant positive media exposure for their diversity and quality of cuisine. In the year ahead the City of Greater Dandenong is committed to growing its reputation as a tourism destination, as well as fostering the diversity for which it is now widely known.

Please take the time to read about the highlights of 2016–17 throughout this report. This document is a testament to what Government and the community can achieve when they work in partnership and with a shared vision.

Thank you to my fellow councillors and to all the staff at the City of Greater Dandenong who have played a pivotal role in our success during the past year. I am proud of what we have achieved. The foundations we have built during the past 12 months have set us up for an exciting future.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jim Memeti'. The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

Cr Jim Memeti
Greater Dandenong Mayor

Chief Executive Officer's Report

A continuing theme in these annual reports has been the progress that Council is making in 'revitalising' the municipality through infrastructure investment.

New infrastructure, or upgrades to existing infrastructure, continues at unprecedented levels as Council strives to exceed resident expectations for city wide renewal.

Civic facilities, sports facilities, streetscapes, parks, roads and footpaths – and even those 'hidden' but essential assets such as drains, have all been of the highest priority for Council in its annual expenditure of increasingly scarce resources.

Since delivery of the major civic precinct facilities in Dandenong, Council's key focus has been on the **Springvale Civic Masterplan** and this year has seen the completion of Stage 1, the refurbishment of the Springvale City Hall, and commencement of detailed planning for future stages. These include a Springvale Community Hub which will house a Library, Customer Service Centre, community meeting rooms and a new home for the Springvale and District Historical Society. Council remains on track to deliver this milestone project in 2020.

These iconic projects however do not detract from Council's capacity to meet its obligations for fundamental asset renewals, drains, footpaths and roads, and Council is making steady progress in maintaining this vast network at an optimal service level.

Council has not overlooked its operating obligations either and this report outlines many significant achievements in recurrent service delivery. I echo the Mayor's suggestion and encourage all readers to scan the 'Performance Highlights' detailed in this report as it is encouraging to note the levels of achievement and performance.

A new Council was elected during this year and my own assessment is that Council has hit the ground running, completing many of the initiatives of the previous Council and developing new initiatives of its own. This is good, sound governance in action where the needs of a community take precedence and no time is wasted in putting those needs to the forefront. A new Council Plan has been adopted and the balance of this four-year Council term will be spent delivering services, managing community assets, and building a stronger Greater Dandenong community.

Council's Strategic Focus

In 2016–17, Council has demonstrably maintained its focus on:

- ▶ **Advocacy for better outcomes** – Council's ongoing call for grade separations has translated to significant works-in-progress at Corrigan Road, Heatherton Road, Chandler Road and Abbotts Road. These elevated solutions have been the subject of much community interaction and debate but will deliver, in all cases, greater permeability for pedestrians and motor vehicles at ground level and areas such as Ross Reserve and the Noble Park village will be enhanced by the outcomes of this major State project.
- ▶ **Securing partnerships in the delivery of community needs** – evidenced by stronger, ongoing relationships with State and Federal agencies in the support of disadvantaged people; speaking up for and supporting refugees and new arrivals to this city; tackling the impacts of problem gambling on vulnerable people; continuing a strong stand to eradicate violence against women; advocating for greater controls over sales of packaged liquor (for the anti-social implications that this generates); and pursuing improved and environmentally sustainable outcomes throughout the city.
- ▶ **Commitment to the progressive enhancement of community infrastructure** – with increasingly high levels of capital investment including essential investment in renewals (looking after the infrastructure we already have).
- ▶ **Creating a sound and sustainable financial strategy that can ensure operational resourcing and capital investments that satisfy community expectations** – highlighted in this last year in particular, by satisfactory operations and ongoing capital investment in a rate capped environment.



Sound Financial Management

Council's operating result was a surplus of \$51.73 million. It is important to note that these surpluses are 'accounting surpluses' which include a range of non-cash items such as depreciation on Council assets, assets written off, assets gifted to Council by

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developers (eg. roads, footpaths and open space) and exclude cash costs such as capital expenditure.

Through sound and prudent leadership by Council, and management by staff, Council remains in a healthy financial position although it must again be stated, that this will be tested into the future by the compounding effect of rate capping.

Despite these obvious challenges, Council remains focused on its purpose and objective – to provide quality services and assets to the people and businesses of this city. As stated in previous years, Council will not allow its hard fought and sound financial position to be unreasonably impacted by external challenges.

Capital Improvements

\$44.76 million was spent on capital improvements during the year with \$19.10 million spent on asset renewals and a further \$10.26 million on upgrades to existing infrastructure assets.

It is pleasing to report that the funding of basic infrastructure (roads, footpaths and drains) in 2016–17 was maintained at \$10.97 million. This investment continues to underpin the importance of Council's maintenance and protection of existing assets.

An extensive list of improvement projects was completed and these are outlined elsewhere in this report.

2016–17 was by any measure, another successful year for Greater Dandenong Council. It saw the conclusion of many key outcomes for an outgoing Council and the announcement of a new vision and new objectives from an incoming Council. That a community may have experienced a seamless transition from one Council term to the next is a tribute to the stability and focus on good governance by a community focused Council.



I commend the Council on its leadership and achievements in 2016–17 and thank the many wonderful staff who remain committed to local government service within Greater Dandenong City Council.



John Bennie PSM
Chief Executive Officer

New infrastructure continues at unprecedented levels as Council strives to exceed resident expectations for city wide renewal.

