

# Annual Report

## 2011–2012





## Our Vision:

Greater Dandenong is a City of Opportunity with quality buildings, places and facilities, and where people of all ages, cultures and backgrounds can reach their potential to live secure, happy and fulfilling lives for generations to come.

## Our Goals:

### A city planned for the future

- Places and buildings
- Travel and transport
- Activity and economy

### A thriving and creative city

- Employment and education
- Places and facilities
- Activity and economy

### A healthy community and environment

- Places and buildings
- Wellbeing in the community
- The environment

### A city of respect

- Community pride
- Living and working together
- The generations

### A leading Council

- Effective governance
- Excellence in local government
- The best place to work
- Engaging with the community
- Customer focus



## Great Place

- Dynamic and diverse city
- 635 km of local roads and 993 km of footpaths
- Recognised as the capital of the south east
- Victoria's manufacturing heartland
- Home to over 12,000 businesses
- 513 hectares of open space
- Variety of bushwalks and talks held on regular basis
- Revitalisation of Central Dandenong underway
- 170 parks and reserves
- Land area of 129.5 square kilometres

## Great People

- Over 140,000 residents
- People from 150 nations
- 60 per cent of residents were born overseas
- 55 per cent are from non-English speaking backgrounds
- Over 70,000 people employed locally
- Over 400 local community groups and service clubs
- An active and committed volunteer community

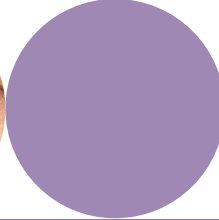
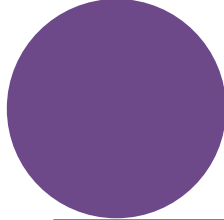
## Great Times

- State of the art cultural facilities including Drum Theatre
- Arts events and festivals held monthly
- Sandown Racing – cars, horses and greyhounds
- 53km bike and shared paths
- Scenic bike paths stretching from Jells Park to Carrum beach
- 200 active sports clubs
- Largest basketball and volleyball stadium in the southern hemisphere
- Noble Park Aquatic Centre and Oasis swimming pools
- Victoria's largest Lunar New Year festival

## Great Shops

- Dandenong Market redevelopment completed
- Little India and Afghan Bazaar cultural precincts
- Modern shopping complexes at Dandenong and Keysborough
- Wide variety of fresh produce, seafood and meat
- Over 50 Asian restaurants and specialty supermarkets
- Extensive range of factory outlets







# Snapshot of Greater Dandenong

## Geography and Population

- Greater Dandenong encompasses an area of 129.5 square kilometres in Melbourne's south-east, approximately 35km from Melbourne's CBD
- Around 142,000 people live in Greater Dandenong

## Cultural Diversity

- The City of Greater Dandenong is the most culturally diverse community in Victoria
- Greater Dandenong is the second most diverse community in Australia, with residents from over 150 different birthplaces
- Over half (60 per cent) of our population were born overseas, with 55 per cent from nations where English is not the main spoken language, double the Melbourne metropolitan average of 26 per cent
- Birthplaces include Vietnam, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, India, China, Italy, Greece, Bosnia, Afghanistan, New Zealand and Britain
- The number of Greater Dandenong residents born overseas rose 13,700 between 2006–2011 including more than 6,000 Indian-born residents, nearly 2,000 Sri Lankans, 1,100 Vietnamese and 900 Afghans
- The number of residents from Sudan halved to 800, accompanied by declines in the number of residents from the United Kingdom, Croatia, Greece and Italy
- The diversity of this city is reflected in the range of religious faiths including Buddhism (18 per cent) of residents, Islam (11 per cent), Hinduism (4 per cent) and Christianity (50 per cent)

## Spoken Languages

- Nearly two-thirds (64 per cent) of Greater Dandenong residents speak languages other than English – the largest proportion in Victoria and double the metropolitan average of 31 per cent – including Vietnamese, Khmer, Chinese, Greek, Punjabi and Sinhalese

*For detailed demographic information about the City of Greater Dandenong please visit [www.greaterdandenong.com](http://www.greaterdandenong.com) and search on the word "demographic"*







# Contents

<b>Our Vision</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Community Relations</b>	<b>51-56</b>
<b>Our Goals</b>	<b>2</b>	Community Plan – Imagine 2030	52
<b>Snapshot of Greater Dandenong</b>	<b>5</b>	Health and Wellbeing in our Community	53
<b>Message from the Mayor</b>	<b>8</b>	Prevention Community Model – Preventative Health	54
<b>Chief Executive Officer's Report</b>	<b>10</b>	State of the Environment Report	54
<b>Performance Highlights</b>	<b>13-18</b>	Disability Action Plan	55
<b>Corporate Governance</b>	<b>19-34</b>	<b>Community Grants Program</b>	<b>57-72</b>
The Council	20	<b>Service Summaries – A Year in Review</b>	<b>73-96</b>
Ward Map	21	<b>Performance Statements</b>	<b>97-118</b>
Your Councillors	22	Strategic Objectives, Indicators and Key Activities for 2011-2012	99-112
Council's Role	24	Progress against Financial Targets	113-114
Councillors Code of Conduct	24	Certifications of the Performance Statement	115
Council Meeting Online	24	Auditor-General's Office – Independent Auditor's Report	116-117
Council Meetings	24	<b>Management Comment on the Financial Report 2011-2012</b>	<b>119-126</b>
Council's Accessibility, Transparency and Accountability Charter	25	<b>Financial Report Year Ended 30 June 2012</b>	<b>127-182</b>
Councillor's Remunerations	25	Certifications of the Financial Report	179
Councillor Representation and Community Consultations	26	Auditor-General's Office – Independent Auditor's Report	180-181
Advocacy	29	<b>Standard Statements Year Ended 30 June 2012</b>	<b>183-193</b>
Audit Advisory Committee	30	Certifications of the Standard Statements	193
Whistleblower Protection Act	31		
Freedom of Information (FOI)	32		
Municipal Emergency Management	33		
<b>Our Organisation</b>	<b>35-50</b>		
Organisation Structure	36		
Our Staff	37-41		
Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)	42		
Asset Management	43		
City Improvement Program	44		
Service Improvement Process (Best Value)	46		
Risk Management	48		
National Competition Policy (NCP)	48		
Compliance: 2011-2012	49		



## Message from the Mayor

The past year has been a significant one for the City of Greater Dandenong. The city has celebrated a number of key milestones – the most notable of which have been the opening of the Noble Park Aquatic Centre and the funding of Council's new civic precinct in Dandenong.

### **Noble Park Aquatic Centre**

One of the most significant projects completed this year was the Noble Park Aquatic Centre. This \$21.2 million project was predominantly funded by Council. The City of Greater Dandenong contributed \$12.4 million towards the total project costs, along with \$7.3 million from the Australian Government and an additional \$1.5 million from the Victorian Government. Officially opened to the public in February 2012, this significant community asset incorporates a new 50-metre outdoor pool, new water play areas for children and youth, an indoor warm water pool, multi-purpose community spaces and new barbecue and picnic areas. This project is an enormous community asset not only for local Noble Park residents but also for the wider Greater Dandenong community, and is a drawcard for visitors from the entire south-east region.

### **New civic precinct**

The civic precinct site on the corner of Lonsdale and Walker streets will feature a new state-of-the-art regional library spread over 2,500 square metres, an outdoor community space designed in the spirit of Melbourne's Federation Square, new community meeting spaces, and will provide easy access to Council services.

Council's investment in this \$63.7 million project complements significant public and private investment in the revitalisation of central Dandenong.

The new municipal building project, due for completion in 2014, will act as the heart of the entire south-east region and is something our community can and will be immensely proud of.

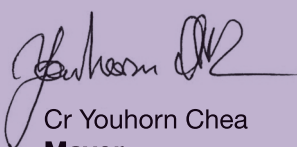


## Festivals and events

Renowned as a city offering exciting festivals and events, Council was again home to a variety of community festivals including the Dandenong Show, Lunar New Year, Australia Day and Carols by Candlelight. Greater Dandenong also took part in the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival for a second year running which featured a World Fare event at the Dandenong Market, a Progressive Yum Cha tour in Springvale and a Sicilian Regional Banquet. The Drum Theatre also hosted the popular Emerge Festival.

The vibrancy and diversity of celebrations in Greater Dandenong is something we are very proud of and something Council will continue to foster in the year ahead.

Please take the time to read over the many highlights of 2011–2012 throughout this report. There are so many significant achievements our community can be incredibly proud of.



Cr Youhorn Chea  
**Mayor**



“One of the most significant projects completed this year was the Noble Park Aquatic Centre.”



## Chief Executive Officer's Report

With the four-year term of your elected Council complete in late 2012, this report provides an opportunity to pause and reflect on not only the past 12 months but also the entire period.

At the outset, I commend to you the efforts and achievements of your elected Council in taking this City along a journey of growth and improvement. I have great confidence that a newly elected Council from November 2012 will continue their good work.

Greater Dandenong has enhanced its standing and reputation as a prominent city in a developing region.

Its role as a Central Activity Area (CAA) within Melbourne's 'poly-centric city' framework has grown, and it is well-regarded as a revitalising city that:

- increasingly responds to regional needs
- has principal and neighbourhood activity centres that reflect growing standards of amenity and opportunity
- is well-served by public transport (but with many remaining needs)
- has significantly improved infrastructure and assets
- remains a centre for employment in the region.

### Measurable Improvements

In 2011–2012, important perception surveys were undertaken of many stakeholders with a direct, indirect and more casual interest in our principal activity centre – central Dandenong. This independent and objective research by Sweeney found that perceptions of safety along with other related matters of amenity, economic, retail and business strength had increased significantly over the past two years. There remain opportunities for further improvement but importantly, the trend is strong and in the right direction. I firmly believe that when next surveyed (in 2013–2014), respondents will have experienced even greater improvements.

"Greater Dandenong has enhanced its standing and reputation as a prominent city in a developing region."



## Council's Strategic Focus

Measurable improvements such as this are the outcome of a strategic focus by Council to:

- advocate for better outcomes
- secure partnerships in the delivery of community needs
- commit to the progressive enhancement of community infrastructure
- create a sound and sustainable financial strategy that can ensure operational resourcing and capital investments that satisfy community expectations.

## Advocacy

Advocacy has always been a high priority for Council and in 2011–2012 significant benefits of long-term efforts on matters of community importance materialised. The Noble Park Aquatic Centre was opened with the support of Federal and Victorian government funding partners. The Victorian Government also confirmed its commitment, and proceeded to tender, for the grade separation of Springvale Road and the Dandenong rail line – another strategic matter that has been the subject of many years of advocacy.

## Governance

Governance has been another imperative of Council and an area which has seen many recognised achievements. Leadership and independent governance structures at the Dandenong Market and Drum Theatre introduced in 2011–2012 have raised the good governance bar even higher and will have positive impacts in 2013 and beyond. These changes highlight the intention of Council to make the Dandenong Market and the Drum Theatre as successful as possible. These are courageous decisions by Council – showing true leadership and recognising that, at times, decision making can benefit from external voices that bring added independence and skills.

## Capital Investment

Capital Investment has increased over the term of this Council, growing in the past two years from \$33.8 million in 2010–2011 to \$45.5 million in 2011–2012.

It is anticipated that this trend will continue as:

- existing infrastructure ages and requires renewal or refurbishment
- needs for new infrastructure are proven
- Council's capacity to fund this investment grows.

The latter remains a challenge, but difficult decisions continue to be taken that will result in higher operating surpluses and thereby a greater capacity to fund capital improvements.

These challenges include:

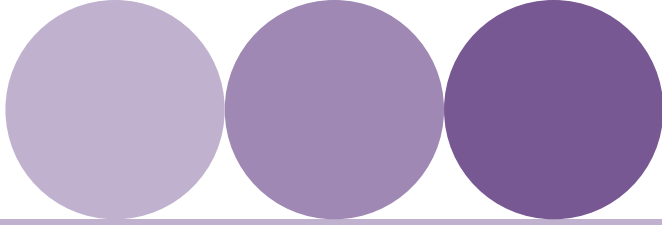
- refining and containing operating expenditures
- pursuing external grant funds through partnerships and advocacy as outlined above
- increasing other revenues while maintaining rates at an appropriate level.

This reflects prudent financial management and Council has once again demonstrated its commitment to this core responsibility.

## Sound Financial Management

Council's underlying operating result was a deficit of \$1.16 million. A key contributor to the outcome was Council's requirement to contribute \$10.57 million to the \$406 million shortfall in the Local Authority Defined Benefits Superannuation Scheme (as at 31 December 2011). After adjusting for this significant item, Council's underlying operating result would have resulted in a \$6.25 million improvement on the 2010–2011 result. After considering non-operating income and expenditure, the surplus was \$22.45 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 Developers (eg roads and footpaths) and exclude cash costs such as capital expenditure. In 2010–2011, and in the spirit of transparency and accountability, Council took a position on the presentation of its financial position seeking to 'normalise' income, expenditure and resulting operating surplus (or deficit) in an effort to present to you, our stakeholders, an annual profile that is more comparative by removing the occasional vagaries of one-off and significant items.



This approach required the City of Greater Dandenong to demonstrate considerable leadership within the Local Government industry with the Victorian Auditor-General deeming it inconsistent with Accounting Standards before reversing this viewpoint a year later. Council remains by independent assessment in a sustainable financial position and it is the objective of Council to further strengthen this desirable position.

### **Capital Improvements**

Of the \$45.55 million spent on capital improvements during the year, \$22.18 million was on renewal and upgrades to existing infrastructure assets and \$21.33 million on major projects.

The funding of basic infrastructure – roads, footpaths and drains – is always a challenge but it is pleasing to report that in addition to the \$5.27 million spent on municipal-wide road renewal works in 2010–2011, a further \$7.31 million was spent on this essential area in 2011–2012. This significant investment continues to underpin the importance of Council's maintenance and protection of existing assets.

An extensive list of 137 improvement projects was completed in 2011–2012 and these are outlined in this report.

Undoubtedly, the single most important project – by virtue of its size, value, potential to impact favourably on the local economy and ability to enhance service delivery for many years to come – is the new Municipal Building Project in central Dandenong. The project has been significantly advanced this year thanks to a sound decision process which led to the appointment of contractors to build the new civic complex. This complex will centralise Council's staff and services, create a new library of regional importance, establish a new civic heart in Dandenong and provide wonderful indoor and extensive outdoor meeting spaces for the community. From early 2014, Council expects to showcase a new image in a new place for a new era of service delivery.

I thank Council for its leadership and the many wonderful staff who remain committed to local government service within the City of Greater Dandenong.

**John Bennie**  
*Chief Executive Officer*

“Council remains by independent assessment in a sustainable financial position and it is the objective of Council to further strengthen this desirable position.”