



City of Greater Dandenong
ANNUAL REPORT
2006-2007



**GREATER
DANDENONG**
City of Opportunity

Our Vision:

Greater Dandenong is a great place to live, work and invest with great people for neighbours, colleagues and friends:

- where people from all cultures and nations are welcomed, involved and well cared for;
- where everyone contributes to building a dynamic sustainable future as the regional capital of the south-east;
- where achievements are recognised and proudly celebrated.

Our Values:

We respect all members of our community, our Councillors and people we work with, actively building relationships to strengthen our shared desire for a better future.

We strive for excellence in customer service and courageously challenge everything we do as we seek to improve our services.

We act with integrity, professionalism and honesty to ensure everyone can rely on what we say and do.

Guiding Principles:

In all we do, we consider:

Cultural Diversity – as one of Australia’s most multi-cultural communities we can build on our unique aspects which set us apart.

Opportunity for all – everyone has opportunities to achieve their own goals and positively change their situations through life long learning and employment.

Sustainability – longevity, prosperity, protection and growth for residents, businesses and the environment.

Advocacy – others will know what we want, why we want it and why it is in their best interest to help us achieve it.

Partnerships – strong working partnerships are built with those who can help us achieve shared goals.

Triple Bottom line +1 – balance is achieved between the need for economic growth, social connectedness, environmental stewardship and democratic civic decision making.

Great Place

- Dynamic and diverse city
- Recognised as the capital of the south east
- Victoria’s manufacturing heartland
- Home to 9,000 businesses
- 170 parks and reserves
- Home to Sandown International Raceway
- Multi-million dollar Drum Theatre, now open
- Land area of 129.5 square kilometres

Great Times

- Festivals held monthly
- Sandown Racing
– cars, horses and greyhounds
- Scenic bike paths stretching from Jells Park to Carrum beach
- 200 active sports clubs
- Indoor and outdoor swimming pools
- Largest basketball stadium in the southern hemisphere
- Victoria’s largest Lunar New Year festival

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Great People

- Over 130,000 residents
- People from 156 nations
- More than half our residents born overseas
- Over 70,000 people employed locally
- 150 local community groups and service clubs
- An active and committed volunteer community
- National women's basketball champion team

Great Shops

- A thriving and bustling Dandenong Market
- 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

Message from the Mayor

The City of Greater Dandenong is proud to have had another positive and productive year.

Investing in the future

Following the successful completion of several major projects last year, the momentum continued with a number of significant milestones in 2006-2007. These included the construction of the new State Volleyball Centre at the Dandenong Stadium, the completion of stage one of the Dandenong Market redevelopment, continued improvements to Tattersson Park, and a number of new public art projects.

Under the umbrella of Council's revised City Improvement Program budget, there has been significant investment in vital projects throughout the city.

Centre of the South East

The Drum Theatre is now in full operation, attracting 46 major touring shows for the year and patronised by visitors from around the region. Some of the big name acts included Carmen by OzOpera; Merchant of Venice by Bell Shakespeare; The Blonde, Brunette and the Vengeful Redhead; Renee Geyer; Vika and Linda Bull; Macbeth by Bell Shakespeare; and more.

The initiatives underway for revitalising central Dandenong are already making their mark. These include new gateway flags, floral displays, signage and public art. The Dandenong central business district is a more colourful, clean, safe and enjoyable place, and this trend will continue. One of our aims is to set a high standard that will attract people to the area and keep them coming back, whether for shopping, dining or entertainment.

Investment in community

Council's ever-popular community grants program gave over \$1.6 million to around 200 community groups and individuals for local projects, events and activities. This continues to be one of the most generous local government grant programs in the state.

Once again our volunteers provided an invaluable service to the community, the number of which grew to 296 giving an amazing 33,877 hours of their time. During National Volunteer Week we thanked and congratulated these amazing people who work tirelessly for others in need.

Council made significant progress in planning new community facilities, including the development of a Dandenong Community Facilities Plan and setting the wheels in motion to establish a new Springvale Children's Service Centre. Consolidation of the Visy Cares Centre and establishment of The Castle as a fully operational music and youth venue also demonstrated Council's strong support for youth and community building activities.

Environment and culture

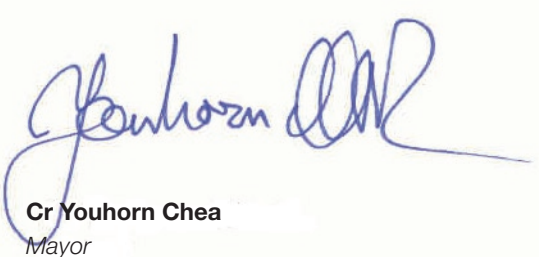
The Dandenong wetlands regional playground was completed, along with refurbishment of three local playgrounds. Continuing our focus on environmental initiatives, various waste minimisation activities were carried out during the year and over 18,000 new seedlings were planted.

Renowned for our wide variety of exciting international festivals and events, Council supported 21 community festivals, including the Dandenong Show, the Lunar New Year Festival and Carols by Candlelight. The vibrancy and diversity of celebrations in Greater Dandenong is one of our key strengths in building community spirit and providing local entertainment.

Achievement and success

Please take the time to read over the many other highlights of 2006-2007 presented in this Annual Report. These are the results of the significant combined efforts of the executive team, staff, Councillors, residents and our strategic partners – all of whom I thank and congratulate.

I'm extremely proud to be Mayor of such an exciting city, and I look forward to serving the community during what I know will be another year of endless opportunities for people in Greater Dandenong.



Cr Youhorn Chea
Mayor

CEO OVERVIEW

As the first full year of my tenure as CEO at the City of Greater Dandenong draws near, I can state how exciting and fulfilling the period has been. Upon accepting the position, I said how much I was looking forward to helping lead the city into the future, and helping the city reach its full potential. I recognised that incredible changes were taking place across the city and wanted to be part of the journey.

I'm very proud to say that journey is continuing with full momentum. 2006-2007 has been another year of growth, change, and increased 'opportunities' for the City of Greater Dandenong.

Major projects

The revitalisation of central Dandenong continues to be one of the most ambitious projects ever undertaken in the city. Strategic initiatives have been undertaken by Council, in partnership with VicUrban, the Department of Planning and Community Development and the Dandenong Development Board, in an effort to provide positive changes to the city streetscape and overall amenity. The culmination of this work has resulted in the development of an Urban Masterplan to provide the planning impetus required to realise the aspirations of the community and partnership agencies for central Dandenong.

A two-year program of exciting on-ground projects commenced this year within central Dandenong, and saw the completion of new pedestrian signage, numerous public art projects, floral displays, alfresco dining incentives, Little India cultural tours, new bus shelters, additional flag poles and gateway decorative lighting. All have been highly successful and will continue over the coming twelve months.

Central Dandenong has been a primary focus of revitalisation, however Council has not overlooked the needs and aspirations of other activity centres with essential strategic and operational planning work also underway in Springvale and Noble Park.

Council's focus is on its entire municipality and future work, and resource and investment allocation, will give consideration to the broadest needs of this diverse city.

\$9.3 million was spent on expansion of community assets which included work on the State Volleyball Centre at the Dandenong Stadium, the Dandenong Market redevelopment, and open space works in the Tattersson Park, Keysborough.

Planning for the Community

Our annual preparation and review of the Council Plan again created an opportunity to have a whole of Council approach to planning, by engaging interested parties in the process. This helps us to create a unique plan that embraces the widest level of community need.

Council again embraced the Best Value legislation and the opportunities it brings us to challenge what we do and how we do it, as well as to consider how we may do things differently. It also allows us to consult with the community on their needs. Given the ongoing financial and operational challenges all councils face it is critical that we include all elements of Best Value in our organisation. It is our view that the community we serve expect, and are entitled to receive, the highest levels of service we can provide.



Advocacy

The City of Greater Dandenong continued its outstanding record for advocating on behalf of the needs of the municipality. In 2006-2007 this involved proposals such as grade separation (of road and rail) at Springvale Road and Heatherton Road; arterial road upgrades; community services funding for central Springvale; regional public transport; and further government investment in the revitalisation of central Dandenong. These are just some of the projects that will continue to be brought to the fore as we endeavour to advance our 'City of Opportunity'.

Financial Position

Council's financial position improved by \$18.3 million during the year. This incorporated an operating surplus of \$12.4 million of which \$8.2 million was in the form of new infrastructure assets contributed by developers. There was an increase in asset valuations of \$5.9 million. Council invested \$21.9 million in capital expenditure for the year, with \$12.6 million of this on renewal and upgrades to existing infrastructure assets.

In structuring our five year Financial Plan, Council has continued to take a responsible position to manage borrowings and has a long-term plan in place to reduce its overall debt. This plan includes generating an annual operating surplus to better manage operating costs. Each year we need to strike a balance between keeping rates to a minimum amid rising operational costs and ageing infrastructure. Greater Dandenong does this particularly well, offering some of the lowest residential rates in Victoria.

Looking forward

As I commence a new year at the helm of this great city, I look forward to the projects, challenges, and many opportunities presented. Along with my professional and dedicated Executive team and committed staff, we anticipate another strong year of growth and positive outcomes in Greater Dandenong, reinforcing its status as the 'City of Opportunity'.

I would also like to thank Councillors, staff and the community for their combined commitment and hard work towards making Greater Dandenong an even better place to live, work, visit and invest.



John Bennie
Chief Executive Officer