



CITY OF GREATER DANDENONG
ANNUAL REPORT
2008 - 2009

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 9000 businesses
- Variety of bushwalks and talks held on regular basis
- Revitalisation of Central Dandenong underway
- 170 parks and reserves
- Multi-million dollar Drum Theatre
- Land area of 129.5 square kilometres

Great Times

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

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Great People

- Over 135 000 residents
- People from 156 nations
- More than half our residents born overseas
- Over 70 000 people employed locally
- Over 400 local community groups and service clubs
- An active and committed volunteer community
- Gabriella Cilmi named Ambassador for Council's Youth Service Centre

Great Shops

- Dandenong Market Redevelopment
- 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

Message from the Mayor

The City of Greater Dandenong celebrated a number of significant milestones this year.

A central focus for Council has been the revitalisation of both central Dandenong and Springvale.

Construction of the much-anticipated Dandenong Market redevelopment commenced. The project, due for completion next year, includes a large fresh food section, increased space for fruit and vegetables and a new general merchandise hall. New offices, loading facilities and cool stores will also form part of the works.

The market redevelopment will provide broad economic benefits to the entire city, positioning Greater Dandenong as the regional shopping destination of the south-east and ensuring the market's long-term future.

This, coupled with other State Government works planned as part of the revitalisation of central Dandenong, will significantly change the face of the regional capital.

The \$20 million transformation of Lonsdale Street will create a pedestrian friendly boulevard. It will form the centre piece of our city and will ensure Dandenong remains an accessible place to shop, eat and meet.

Work also commenced on the \$7.7 million Springvale Service for Children. This integrated early years project will include a kindergarten, child care, toy library, maternal and child health and community based support services for children and families.

This is a unique development, bringing together a wide range of services into one integrated program.

The enhanced program opens up fantastic opportunities for children and makes it easier for families and the community to engage with a number of different services at one location.

The Budget provided for \$29.94 million in new capital works projects for 2008-2009, including \$11.5 million for major projects and \$6.3 million in asset renewal works.

Together with the Dandenong Market Redevelopment and the Springvale Service for Children other vital projects throughout the city included a new pavilion at Warner Reserve, significant improvements to Tattersson Park, improved library resources, plus improvements to local buildings, footpaths, roads, drainage and streetscapes.

Council also successfully secured Federal Government funding for the Noble Park Pool Redevelopment.

Council's view is that the Noble Park Swim Centre is more than just a pool.

The redevelopment will have a strong focus on families and young people and Council is working closely with the community to ensure this important facility continues to meet their needs well into the future.

The Drum Theatre has cemented itself as the jewel in Dandenong's crown, welcoming almost 100,000 people through its doors and hosting more than 280 different events. During the year some of the biggest names in showbiz have treaded the boards at The Drum. These include the Australian Ballet, Oz Opera, John Wood, David Hobson and Silvie Paladino.

Council's ever-popular community grants program gave over \$1 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 grants programs in the state.



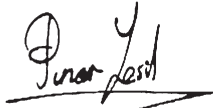
Once again our volunteers provided an invaluable service to the community. A total of 252 people gave a significant 27,346 hours of their time. Their contribution and tireless efforts for the city were recognised during National Volunteer Week.

Renowned as a city offering exciting festivals and events, Council was again home to a variety of community festivals, ranging from the Dandenong Show, the Lunar New Year, Australia Day 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.

Please take the time to read over the many highlights of 2008-09 throughout this report. These are the results of the combined efforts of councillors, the executive team, staff, residents and our strategic partners, who I thank and congratulate.

It's been an honour to be Mayor of such an exciting city. I look forward to playing an important role in the continued growth and development of Greater Dandenong well into the future.



Cr Pinar Yesil
Mayor

CEO Overview



I have previously described the journey for this Council as both exciting and challenging.

We are continually faced with challenges in the Local Government sector.

From diverse community interests seeking flexible, affordable and often unique service solutions to implementing capital improvements that continue to meet the needs of a changing community.

These are the challenges we work to overcome everyday – all within a financial framework that balances expenditure growth against revenue constraints.

Council is ready for these challenges and is a sector leader in the way it responds.

The excitement of this 'City of Opportunity' continues to grow with fantastic outcomes emerging for our community.

The development profile of central Dandenong is changing as Council-run works, private works and 'partnership' works begin to take effect. Other developments are also underway or have been completed in the last year in both the Springvale and Noble Park activity centres.

The continuing benefits of EastLink are felt right across our city with improved access for our industrial sector and a rich array of environmental improvements including new parks, bike paths and pedestrian access.

The society, environment and economy are being underpinned to cope with and sustain the many challenges faced including in 2008-09, the Global Financial Crisis.

In 2008-09, works commenced on Stage 2 of the Dandenong Market development. Council let a tender for the \$17 million expansion and refurbishment of this iconic facility. By April 2010 patrons and traders will enjoy a shopping and trading environment which will match any market on offer.

Council's established partnership with VicUrban and the Department of Planning and Community Development continues to yield exciting results for the city. The construction of the George Street Bridge has now been contracted and this vital connection between Cheltenham Road and the Dandenong activity centre will be delivered in late 2010.

Elsewhere in the broader Dandenong precinct, private development at Arkana was nearing completion and has established a new and modern profile on the southern horizon. Residential development on Council's Metro 3175 is progressing well with the overall development envelope now clearer following the completion and opening of the Cheltenham Road realignment. It is anticipated that 2010 will see higher density developments abutting this road, leading to a more vibrant Dandenong Activity Centre.

Council secured through agreement, 21 hectares of high quality remnant bushland in Dandenong South.

This land is home to significant vegetation including the largest Red Gum woodland reserve in West Gippsland.

Our commitment to protecting this land underscores Council's dedication to sound environmental management and will form a legacy for future generations.

In addition, Council has remained vigilant in its protection and security of other parcels of land and vegetation that warrant such intervention. Much of this lies in Dandenong South and Keysborough South and creates a landscape around which sympathetic residential and industrial development can occur.

Two significant strategic development plans were finalised this year – Dandenong South Industrial (C87) and Keysborough South residential (C36). The former creates 1,000 gross hectares of land for modern industrial development. This continues the important role our municipality plays as a key contributor to State outputs and job creation, as well as providing more than 2,400 new home sites.

Greater Dandenong's commitment to the revitalisation of other activity centres continued when construction commenced on the Springvale Integrated Children's Services Centre in Lightwood Road.

An agreement was also reached for a Council-owned car park on the corner of Buckingham and Balmoral Avenues in Springvale to be privately developed. This will add great car parking options, a good mix of uses and further enhance central Springvale.

The City of Greater Dandenong's commitment to sport and recreation was reinforced with funding allocations and the commencement of works at key locations including Tatterson Park, the Springvale Sports Ground, Shepley Oval and Warner Reserve.

As a means to overcome the Global Financial Crisis and in recognition of the challenges faced by local governments in funding and maintaining community infrastructure, the Commonwealth Government made significant grants available for such works.

It is a testament to the community advocacy efforts of this Council that \$7.27 million in funding was secured from the Federal Government for the upgrade of the Noble Park Swim Centre. The Noble Park Pool project – focused on a holistic response to the needs of the community rather than being "just a pool" – will remain an important project going forward, ultimately delivering much needed services in this city.

Council remains financially sound but is also aware of the challenges which lie ahead. Council does not take for granted revenues from rates and has adopted policies that seek to ensure that genuine hardship is accommodated and that it manages its rating responsibility in a prudent manner.

Council achieved an underlying operational surplus of \$5.054 million. After considering non-operating income and expenditure, the surplus was \$18.652 million against a budget of \$17.802 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, footpaths) and exclude cash costs such as capital expenditure.

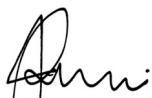
Council spent \$22.964 million on capital improvements during the year, \$14.105 million of which was on renewal and upgrades to existing infrastructure assets and \$8.859 million on major projects.

The funding of basic infrastructure – roads, paths and drains – remains a challenge but it is pleasing to report that in addition to the \$1.460 million spent on municipal wide road renewal works in 2007-08, a further \$2.451 million was spent on this essential area in 2008-09. This significant investment continues to underpin the importance of Council's maintenance and protection of current assets.

It is critical that council remains vigilant in the management of activity and expenses to ensure we continue to successfully meet the growing demands of our community.

2008-09 has now passed. We have much to celebrate as a community. We have taken significant steps and are proud to be recognised as an organisation that has served the community well. However we realise that any such celebrations will be short-lived as we look towards new challenges and opportunities in 2009-10.

Along with my executive team and the wonderful staff of this organisation, I look forward to another strong year of achievement and community satisfaction.



John Bennie
Chief Executive Officer