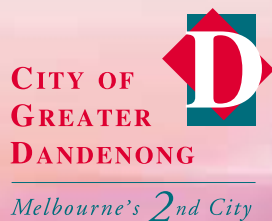


Annual Report

1999–2000



City of Greater Dandenong - 1999-2000 Annual Report

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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.

MAYOR'S MESSAGE



It is with great pleasure I introduce the City of Greater Dandenong 1999-2000 Annual Report. The report highlights the achievements of our city during 1999-2000 and the pride Councillors and staff have in continuing to provide services to our community.

In 1999-2000, even more than in 1998-1999, Council continued to promote Greater Dandenong as Melbourne's 2nd City through all of our activities and actions. The leadership role assumed by our city in tackling social, economic and political reform during 1999-2000 has enhanced our status as Melbourne's 2nd City and reinforced the significant role we play in the growth and prosperity of Melbourne and Victoria.

The partnership that Council formed with local manufacturers to lobby for a higher local content in contracts signed by the State Government to replace Victoria's rail and tram rolling stock was just one example of this leadership. This campaign attracted national attention and highlighted the need for government to address local content as part of the drive for the privatisation and corporatisation of public assets such as the rail and tram network. While the outcomes of this campaign can only be described as moderate in terms of our ambitions, it nevertheless did result in an increase in local content for the replacement of Victoria's train and tram rolling stock.

During 1999-2000, Council also played an important role in the ongoing community debate about how to best manage the current crisis we face with injecting drug use. Our continued commitment to harm minimisation as the most appropriate response to managing the drug crisis at the local level attracted widespread praise and criticism. The open manner in which Council was prepared to discuss how to best manage the drug crisis at the local level generated intense debate culminating in a public meeting on the possible trial of an "injecting facility" in Springvale attended by nearly 900 people.

While the community still remains divided on how to best manage the drug issue, one of the positive outcomes of the Council's open approach has been to bring together, at the local level, people with strong and diverging views on the most appropriate way to manage the situation. This outcome is an indicator of the strength and resilience of the Greater Dandenong community to address complex and controversial social issues and arrive at a situation where there can be sensible ongoing discussion to identify and implement solutions.

1999-2000 was also an election year for the City of Greater Dandenong resulting in three new Councillors being elected. I would like to express my congratulations to the three new Councillors - Cr Geraldine Gonsalvez, Cr Maria Sampey and Cr Kevin Walsh. I would also like to publicly thank former Councillors Phil Reed, Greg Harris and Sharon Harris for the contributions they made to the City of Greater Dandenong during their period as Councillors from 1997 to 2000.

Safety in public places, local neighbourhoods and homes remains one of the highest priorities of our residents as demonstrated through Council's Annual Residents' Survey and research undertaken by the Crime Prevention Unit of the Department of Justice. Council is aware of this and has committed more resources in 2000-2001 than in any previous year to assist the community in addressing this problem.

A pleasing highlight of 1999-2000 was the number of residents who became involved in community consultation activities. Including the 1,100 residents who took part in Council's Annual Consumer Survey, more than 5,000 residents were involved in assisting Council in preparing the Corporate Plan 2000-2005. This involvement was principally through attendance at forums, workshops and focus groups. The level of community involvement in this planning activity reflects the interest the community has in the future and the work of its Council.

A number of activities commenced in 1999-2000 that will reach a conclusion in 2000-2001. Among these is Council's ongoing campaign to retain Waverley Park and its surrounds as a recreation asset for the people of eastern and south-eastern Melbourne. Council's vision for the creation of an "Albert Park" recreation facility in this region of Melbourne remains strong and is a matter we will continue to fight for in the forthcoming year.

Council also moved a step forward to finalising policy for the retention and preservation of its non-urban areas in 1999-2000. Amendments to the Greater Dandenong Planning Scheme were exhibited and a panel hearing convened, resulting in a recommendation to undertake further work that will be completed in 2000-2001. The establishment of a sound policy foundation for the retention of the non-urban areas of the city is an important part of Council's vision for the future.

There were many other highlights during 1999-2000, 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 these achievements and why I believe we should celebrate the completion of a very successful year for our city.

As indicated earlier, 1999-2000 was a very successful year for the City of Greater Dandenong. This success reflects the positive future there is for the city and its community.

The City of Greater Dandenong is Melbourne's 2nd City in more than name and I encourage all members of our community to actively participate in facilitating the future development of our municipality.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Angela Long'.

Cr Angela Long

Mayor

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT



Improving our understanding and management of relationships with our customers has been one of the main themes of Greater Dandenong in 1999-2000. By working more constructively with our customers, we have achieved more in 1999-2000 than we have in any previous year.

While we are proud of our achievements in 1999-2000, we also recognise the need to continue to improve. Amendments to the Local Government Act in 1999-2000 by the Victorian Government to remove compulsory competitive tendering provisions and replace them with a set of Best Value Principles provides a positive framework against which improvement can be planned, implemented and reported.

Our focus on understanding and improving the relationship we have with our customers in 1999-2000 is at the heart of Best Value and positions us to take advantage of this new legislative framework unencumbered by the bureaucracy that surrounded compulsory competitive tendering. Our ability to achieve this will be reflected in our 2000-2001 results.

Our 1999-2000 Annual Report has been prepared in the same spirit as in previous years in keeping with our commitment to open government. The report celebrates the successes we have enjoyed during the year, but also highlights those areas where improvement is possible and, in some instances, necessary.

Improvements from 1998-1999 include our financial results, a higher level of completion of capital works and improved levels of community satisfaction as measured through the annual Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey.

A disappointing aspect of our performance in 1999-2000 was a reduction in the number of targets set in our Annual Plan that were fully achieved. While we achieved more of our Annual Plan targets in 1999-2000 than we did in 1998-1999, fewer were actually achieved on time. This matter will be given close attention in 2000-2001.

While I have indicated earlier our financial position has improved in 1999-2000 from 1998-1999, this is not immediately obvious from the financial statements. Our operating statement has been adversely impacted by a large increase in depreciation due to an increase of \$173,933,000 in the value of our assets as a result of a revaluation of these assets. This increase in depreciation has resulted in a requirement to make a significant adjustment to our 1999-2000 operating statement. This requirement has resulted in our 1999-2000 financial position moving into deficit despite a positive outcome for the year.

It was particularly pleasing to see continued improvement in community satisfaction with our performance as measured through the annual Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey. Our 1999-2000 results demonstrated improved community satisfaction with our overall performance across all areas of responsibility. Community satisfaction is highest with waste services and lowest with economic development and the maintenance of local roads and footpaths. While community satisfaction with waste services increased in

1999-2000, satisfaction with economic development activities and maintenance of local roads and footpaths remained the same, or fell. It was particularly pleasing to see continued improvement in community satisfaction with the advocacy provided on behalf of the community and with our direct response to requests for information and services. Full results of the 1999-2000 Customer Satisfaction Survey are shown in the body of the Annual Report.

Greater Dandenong was recognised during 1999-2000 as a Best Practice organisation in a number of areas of activity. The receipt of a Gold Award for our work in Community Safety, acknowledgment by Mr Chris Sidoti, Australian Human Rights Commissioner, for our work in Diversity and further acknowledgment of our leadership in the development of Service Charters by the Victorian Government were all appreciated. In addition, the city received accreditation for our work in Occupational Health and Safety through SafetyMap, and our commitment to Environmental Improvement through the Cities for Climate Control Program. All of these achievements reflect the hard work and effort of all staff of the city in ensuring we perform to the highest possible levels.

A further highlight of 1999-2000 was the continuing level of investment by the private sector in new industrial development in the city. Building approvals for new industrial properties in the city during 1999-2000 exceeded \$130 million. Taking into account further investment in plant and equipment as companies move in to these newly built factories, it is likely that the total investment in new industrial development in Greater Dandenong in 1999-2000 was in excess of \$200 million. Unfortunately, it is not possible to determine the number of new job opportunities created by this investment, but there can be no doubt that there have been hundreds of new job opportunities created in the city during 1999-2000. These new job opportunities more than compensated the small number of businesses that closed during the year, although some of these closures attracted widespread media attention.

As indicated earlier, 1999-2000 was a year of great achievement for the City of Greater Dandenong. This report details, 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 our city that this report details failures as well as achievements.

In conclusion, I wish to thank all staff of the City of Greater Dandenong for their efforts during 1999-2000. Through adopting a team approach, we have seen considerable further improvement in the level of service delivered to the Greater Dandenong community. I am confident this improvement will continue into 2000-2001.

Greater Dandenong is Melbourne's 2nd City.

Warwick Heine

Chief Executive Officer