

City of Greater Dandenong  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
2007-2008



## 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
- 170 parks and reserves
- Home to Sandown International Raceway
- Multi-million dollar Drum Theatre
- 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 and volleyball 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
- Little India and Afghan 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

Greater Dandenong was again at the forefront of development and innovation over the past twelve months, and I'm proud to report on another positive year for the city.

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

The revitalisation of central Dandenong in partnership with VicUrban and the Dandenong Development Board gained momentum, with plans now well underway for the redevelopment of Lonsdale Street. This will significantly change the face of this regional capital.

Work commenced on the \$50 million Dandenong Arkana Development, which will combine street level shops with a conference centre and 56 serviced apartments to be operated by Punt Hill Apartment Hotels. In addition it will contain approx 4,800 square meters of new office space and associated parking.

Grenda Corporation also relocated to its new 2.3 hectare site in Cheltenham Road after 54 years at its old Foster Street depot. The state-of-the-art \$14 million head office and bus depot is now the company's new home.

The Springvale Structure Plan was finalised and put out for public exhibition. This plan supports Council's strategic directions as well as the State Government's Melbourne 2030 strategy.

Extensive public art and street beautification projects were implemented right across the city, including the railway underpass public art project to brighten up Noble Park.

Council's City Improvement Program invested \$18.2 million in vital projects throughout the city, including the Dandenong market redevelopment, Tatterson Park improvements, and State Basketball and Volleyball centre, plus improvements to local buildings, drainage, footpaths, roads and streetscapes.

The Drum Theatre was again a highlight attraction throughout the year, hosting 46 major shows for visitors from right throughout the region. Some of the big name acts included The Australian Ballet, Bruce Mathiske in concert, Bell Shakespeare, Julie Anthony, and David Hobson.

Council's ever-popular community grants program gave over \$1.1 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 285 people gave a significant 34,162 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 new Springvale Children's service centre. This integrated facility will set a new standard in the provision of children's services across the country.


Almost 24,000 seedlings were planted at the 31 community tree planting events. This year saw 1482 residents get involved in these activities, a marked increase on previous years. Council also launched the Public Place Recycling program at the Dandenong Basketball Stadium, which is expected to have a significant impact on the amount of waste going to landfill.



Renowned as a city offering exciting festivals and events, council was again home to a variety of community festivals, ranging from the Dandenong Show to the Lunar New Year 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 2007-08 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 and diverse city. I look forward to being an active part of Greater Dandenong's continued growth and development into the future.

  
Cr. John Kelly  
Mayor

## CEO Overview



I recognised when I accepted the position of CEO more than two years ago that the journey ahead would be both exciting and challenging.

This is a city that is undergoing significant change, and along with change comes new challenges and new opportunities.

2007/08 was a significant one for the city and its residents. An exciting mix of on-ground projects started taking shape, most notably the revitalisation of central Dandenong.

Our established partnership with VicUrban and the Department of Planning and Community Development continues to yield exciting results for the city.

Planning works for the George Street Bridge Project were finalised this year and tenders for commencement of works will be called in 2008/09. This will provide an important connection between Cheltenham Road and the Dandenong activity centre, linking the new home of Grendas bus lines, Metro 3175 and the revitalised activity centre.

The Dandenong Market redevelopment continues to progress well, with Stage 2 of construction due to commence in late 2008. The redevelopment will provide broad economic benefits to the entire city and ensure the market is a landmark regional shopping destination for the south-east.

Two significant projects were completed at the Hemmings Park youth precinct – a new BMX track and lighting upgrades. The track complements the other youth based activities in the area while the unique lighting system enhances both the park and the pedestrian bridge across Princes Highway, signifying the entrance to the activity centre.

Council has also delivered on a number of key initiatives this year which will lay the foundations for planning into the future.

These include the Springvale Structure Plan, Noble Park Structure Plan, Dandenong South Industrial Structure Plan, Keysborough South residential Planning Scheme Amendment C36 and a Residential Neighbourhood Character Policy.

The City of Greater Dandenong's status as a regional home for elite sports was further enhanced with the opening of the renovated and expanded Dandenong Basketball and State Volleyball Centre. This significant development was the result of a successful partnership between Council, the State Government and participating sports bodies and hopefully, will be replicated with other sport and development opportunities into the future.

Greater Dandenong's commitment to the revitalisation of Dandenong and Springvale will continue in 2008-09 when construction commences on the Springvale Integrated Children's Services Centre.

Much of last year was spent securing a site for this progressive service model which will set a benchmark for children's services well into the future.

In 2007-08 Council faced significant challenges in developing a long-term financial plan that provided sufficient funding to renew Council's ageing assets, while continuing to facilitate the revitalisation of all activity centres in the municipality.

Council continued its commitment to sustainability and sport for people at all levels with an investment of \$180,000 in the continuation of its warm season grass program. CGD is now a leading Council in the provision of grass surfaces that are more tolerant to drought conditions and therefore, remain playable for longer periods.

Council remains financially sound but is aware of the challenges which lie ahead. We recognise that costs are continuing to rise and community expectations are high.

Council's financial position improved markedly during 2007-08 with cash funds held at year end increasing from \$9.5 million to a balance of \$21.86 million at June 2008. This improved cash balance allows Council to fully fund its liabilities and has ensured Council's liquidity ratios are now appropriate.

In terms of financial operating results, Council recorded an underlying surplus of \$2.80 million which was an excellent result. Council had previously been incurring underlying deficit outcomes and to now reach a position where our annual operations is no longer eroding our net assets is very significant for long term financial sustainability.

Beyond the underlying operational result, other one-off accounting adjustments such as assets provided to Council by developers in the form of infrastructure, asset sale proceeds (net of the book value of the assets) and capital grants and contributions, took the final accounting surplus for the year to \$9.198 million.

It's important to note here that this increased surplus does not reflect a more favourable financial position. Operating surpluses are essential to meet our capital and infrastructure investment needs now and into the future.

Council spent \$17.87 million on capital expenditure during the year, \$10.54 million of which was on renewal and upgrades to existing infrastructure assets. \$7.33 million was spent on major projects, including the State Volleyball/Basketball Centre, acquisition of land towards a future child care centre in Springvale and drought related works such as setting up water tanks across the city's ovals and other recreational facilities. Council also invested \$2.49 million on replacing fleet and equipment essential in maintaining and cleaning the city's roads, drains and other infrastructure assets.

Another expenditure highlight was the \$1.9 million spent on municipal wide road patching. This significant investment underpins the importance of Council's maintenance and protection of current assets.

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

As we head into another exciting year, I look forward to leading the organisation in the pursuit of new challenges and opportunities. Together with my committed Executive team, we anticipate another strong year of growth and development in Greater Dandenong, reinforcing its status as the 'City of Opportunity'.



**John Bennie**  
*Chief Executive Officer*