



Annual Report 2001-2002

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2001-2002

The image shows a close-up, low-angle shot of a large, industrial metal gear or flywheel. The metal is heavily rusted and has a warm, orange-brown patina. The gear has several thick spokes radiating from a central hub. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the textures and curves of the metal against a dark, shadowed background.

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## Greater Dandenong at a Glance

The City of Greater Dandenong is a dynamic and diverse city well-known for its significant industrial centre which forms a second city at the south-eastern edge of Melbourne.

Spanning 129.5 square kilometres, Greater Dandenong is the transport hub of the south-east, providing easy access to road, rail, air and sea transport facilities. Over 7,000 firms employing nearly 70,000 people conduct their business within Greater Dandenong.

Immigrants from 140 nations have chosen Greater Dandenong as their home, and account for 52% of the city's population of 124,500. The influx of cuisines, lifestyles, faiths and cultures make Greater Dandenong a thriving metropolis that people flock to shop in from all over Melbourne.

Located at the heart of Melbourne's most rapidly growing industrial and commercial region, Greater Dandenong is set to play a key role in the enormous industrial, commercial and social opportunities which will follow an anticipated population rise of 35% in the region over the next ten years.



# Year in Review

## A SAFE CITY

Safe Shop Program extended	23 new retailers
Response to illegal drugs	Launched new website, information cards published and education sessions held
Community Safety Program	Secure Seniors Co-ordinator appointed and 2 year action plan developed
Safety audits conducted	10 audits
New street lights	\$328,910 spent, 92 lights installed
Police resources	Police resources currently above agreed operational levels, has enabled foot and bicycle patrols and additional traffic patrols to be scheduled
Health inspections	3,725 inspections, increase of 9%

## WELL PLANNED GROWTH

Cities for Climate Control targets	Milestone 4 achieved - Greenhouse action plan implemented
Greenhouse gas emissions	Reduction of 45.2 tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> by introducing LPG powered vehicles Reduction of 122.7 tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> by introducing new lighting and heating/cooling systems Green energy for street lighting purchased
New business investment	\$82.75M invested through council activities
New job opportunities	603 jobs created through the council's involvement
Waste management	Waste to landfill increased by 56 tonnes (3.1% increase) Recycling has increased by 374 tonnes (4.6% increase)
Spending on city's infrastructure	\$12.75M spent
Drainage improvements	\$1.07M spent, with 18 of 19 projects completed

## PROVIDING BETTER SERVICE

Customer service	164,610 visitors to service centre, increase of 13% 162,608 calls to call centre, decrease of 11%, drop out rate reduced by 0.77%
www.greaterdandenong.com	147,006 visits, increase of 50%
Daily media	34 mentions/features
Community newsletter	6 editions produced
External Council meetings	4 meetings held outside chamber
Use of multilingual phone line	3,029 calls, increase of 8%
Financial performance	\$3.011M debt reduction

### **SAFE MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE AND GOODS**

Local roads improved	63 projects completed to value of \$2.8m, \$1,125,000 in "Black Spot" funding received
40km/h speed limit	Introduction advocated adjacent to schools
Footpaths	\$1,057,482 spent
Public Transport Plan	Year 1 actions implemented, Public Transport Reference Group formed
Bus shelters	10 shelters installed

### **VIBRANT COMMUNITY**

Leisure facility investment	\$500,962 spent on improvements
Library services improved	899,392 visitors, decrease of 0.3%
Arts Centre	32,249 visitors, increase of 16.3%
Library internet access	54,600 hours of usage
Training for retail traders	2 programs delivered
Public Art	1 project completed, 2 projects commenced
Bikepaths	\$91,751 invested with 100% of Bicycle Path Program completed

### **SERVING THE NEEDS OF FAMILIES, YOUTH AND OLDER PERSONS**

Public Health Plan	Reviewed and extended
Gaming	23 out of 24 actions of Gaming Strategy completed
Older Persons	45 new Community Aged Care Packages approved 146 new volunteers recruited, increase of 8%
Human Services funding	12% increase in annual funding
Playgrounds upgraded	\$261,508 invested
Local Law infringements issued	172 infringements issued, decrease of 62%
Dogs registered	11,208 dogs registered, increase of 55%
Parking fines	24,748 fines issued, increase of 35%

### **REGIONAL LEADERSHIP**

Infrastructure	63 road improvement projects completed
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## 2001-2002 Vision & Mission



### **Our Vision**

To be recognised and acknowledged by our residents and others as Melbourne's Second City in all aspects of the life of our city.

### **Our Mission**

We place great importance on listening to the views and needs of our residents and ratepayers. This ongoing consultation has resulted in identifying a number of important things that you, our community, want, need and expect. These things form the basis of our 'Community Charter' - a series of simple, short statements that set out what you can expect from your council. This is how we will achieve Our Vision - to be recognised and acknowledged by you as Melbourne's Second City.



## 2001-2002 Community Charter

### Our Commitments to You

#### The Voice of the People

We will:

- Ensure your city is one in which you feel safe and are safe in all aspects of your life through the delivery of planned, preventative and reactive community safety programs.
- Ensure your city is one in which planned growth and diversified employment growth provide an attractive, efficient, productive and healthy environment with a high quality of life.
- Ensure your city provides services to a standard that reflects your needs and preferences. A city where your council listens to you, responds to you and consults with you regularly.
- Ensure your city is one in which people and goods can move about easily on foot or using motor vehicles, bicycles, buses and trains; on streets, bikeways and pedestrian pathways that are safe, attractive and functional.
- Ensure your city is a vibrant community in which to live, work, learn and relax. A city where families can enjoy leisure and recreational activities, have a strong sense of community, participate fully in council activities and have pride in where they live.
- Ensure your city, with its diverse population, will promote programs that are multicultural, embrace good health, encourage the arts and serve the needs of families, youth and older persons.
- Provide regional leadership to ensure the further provision of quality services to our community by both private and public organisations.

## Mayor's Message



Greater Dandenong, Melbourne's Second City, had much to be proud of in 2001-2002.

2001-2002 was a year of unprecedented economic growth for the city and a year in which a number of significant announcements were made by the Commonwealth and State Governments which will ensure the long-term economic and social sustainability of the Greater Dandenong community. The most significant of these announcements was the decision by the Commonwealth and State Governments to jointly fund the construction of the Scoresby integrated transport corridor. This \$900M investment is important to the future of Greater Dandenong and all municipalities in eastern and south-eastern Melbourne. Combined with another announcement – the Victorian Government's designation of Dandenong as a centre for the application of transport orientated development strategies – the council's proposals for a new and stronger Dandenong over the next few years will become a reality.

The announcement of joint Commonwealth and State funding for the Scoresby integrated transport corridor is only one part of what will be a long process of ensuring that road transport and public transport systems address the economic, environmental and social problems that beset the city. The public transport components of the Scoresby project are particularly important to Greater Dandenong and will be the focus of the council's planning over the next few years. Without strong linkages to a public transport service that meets the needs of the Greater Dandenong population, and that of surrounding municipalities, the Scoresby integrated transport corridor project will not meet the expectations of the community. Improved integrated public transport is crucial to the long-term future of our city.



While the announcement of funding for the Scoresby integrated transport corridor was the largest funding announcement in 2001-2002, there were a number of other funding initiatives announced that were of lesser scale, but of no lesser importance. Additional funding from Commonwealth or State Governments was announced in 2001-2002 for the following program or service areas:

- Services to older persons (additional Home and Community Care [HACC] and Community Aged Care Packages [CACAP] funds)
- Maternal and child health (funding for injury prevention and support to families where English is a second language)
- Child care (additional support funding for child care services across the city)
- "Black Spot" funding (funding for upgrades of a number of sections of roads and intersections where there have been injury-related accidents)
- Library services (additional funding for the provision of library materials, including foreign language titles)
- Business networking (the establishment and expansion of networking opportunities for women in business)
- Recreation (funding for a number of sports facility upgrades)
- Municipal Drug Strategy (funding for year 2 implementation projects)

This is by no means a comprehensive list of all of the funding available to the council from Commonwealth and State Government, but nevertheless provides a good indication of the breadth of support that has been provided to Greater Dandenong in 2001-2002. The provision of this funding also reflects the commitment of councillors and staff to advocate for additional revenue in order to expand services and develop new initiatives.

This additional funding, combined with the sound decisions made by the council as part of its 2001-2002 financial plan, ensured that the city continued to grow and took steps to meet the ever increasing demand for services.

While the council is sometimes portrayed in the local press as being unable to make a quick decision on what seem to be relatively small matters, there can be no question about its capacity to work strategically and to practise sound financial management. This is reflected in this Annual Report, particularly in terms of the progress made in achieving some of the council's long-term strategic goals and the financial outcome for the year.

Decisions made by the council during the course of the last twelve months in relation to environmental sustainability, strategic land use planning, community building and strategic planning in areas as diverse as waste management and leisure are all evidence of a commitment to long-term planning.

Greater Dandenong also has an enviable record in terms of its commitment to consultation and involvement of the community. Activities that are everyday and second nature to this city are still only being thought of, or experimented with, in other municipalities. Examples of this include the use of trained facilitators as part of the consultation process associated with many planning applications. Another example is the consultation process that is associated with the development of long-term strategies. Techniques used in these areas include public forums, focus groups of interested individuals and organisations, market research and the use of reference committees made up of key stakeholders, general users and expert advisers. The use of interpreters and the production of printed material in relevant languages also ensures that all members of the community have the opportunity for input.

The council has also been active in exploring new areas of community involvement, particularly in terms of the use of the internet, which will be increasingly important.

The key to the council's success in these areas lies in the concept of partnership. The council regards itself as a partner with stakeholders, service users and the community. The key to the success of these relationships is the council's willingness to listen as part of the consultation and involvement process. Listening is a skill that many government organisations give lip service to, but rarely practice. Greater Dandenong is the exception; we not only listen, but we also ensure we provide feedback on the actions we either plan or take.

One of the initiatives taken by the council during 2001-2002 associated with community involvement, relates to identifying actions to improve community pride. Greater Dandenong is a great city. It is, and has been, the home to tens of thousands of families who have enjoyed a rich, rewarding and satisfying life as a resident. The implementation of the "Local Heroes" program in 2001-2002, following the success of the "Living Treasures" program conducted over the previous two years, is an example of the council ensuring that it takes actions to increase community pride. The "Local Heroes" program was developed in conjunction with 'The Journal' and highlights the achievement of one of the "unsung" heroes of our community each month.

One of the outcomes of the "Local Heroes" program has been to highlight the breadth of achievement and capacity in the Greater Dandenong community. Greater Dandenong has high achievers in every area of human endeavour and it is important that the community recognises and celebrates this success.

## Mayor's Message Cont.

The "Local Heroes" program was extensively promoted through the council's quarterly newspaper, '2nd City News', as were a wide range of other council initiatives. This publication continues to grow in stature, with recent market research identifying that 68% of households read '2nd City News' on a regular basis. While local newspapers remain the primary source of community information on council affairs and activities, '2nd City News' is nevertheless growing in its importance as a source of council news.

Our website – [www.greaterdandenong.com](http://www.greaterdandenong.com) – is also being increasingly used by residents and others as a source of information and as a way of more efficiently doing business with the council. Version three of [www.greaterdandenong.com](http://www.greaterdandenong.com) was launched during the course of 2001-2002 and continues to be recognised as one of the best local government websites in Australia. This is reinforced through continuing feedback from other municipalities across Australia and a wide range of business and community representatives.

The addition of two sub-sites to [www.greaterdandenong.com](http://www.greaterdandenong.com) during 2001-2002; dealing with drugs and community safety, was also a highlight of the year. These two sub-sites are a first for local government in Australia and are increasingly used as a source of information for people well outside the boundaries of Greater Dandenong.

The council was also successful in 2001-2002 in continuing to progress some important projects concerned with the future of the city. Amongst these include development of the former saleyards land in Cheltenham Road, Dandenong, upgrade of the Dandenong Produce Market and the revitalisation of key retail precincts including Dandenong Central Business District, Noble Park and Springvale.

While public announcements will be made about the future directions for the former saleyards land and Dandenong Produce Market in 2002-2003, all of 2001-2002 was spent in ensuring that strong, strategic and financial plans are in place to enable these developments to proceed. Development of both of these projects is regarded by the council as crucial to the long-term sustainability and development of the Dandenong Central Business District.

The other major project that requires some comment relates to redevelopment proposals for the Dandenong Town Hall. The council did not make a decision on the future direction of this project during 2001-2002 despite a number of reports and a great deal of information being put before it. A decision will be made in 2002-2003 which will ensure that the Dandenong Town Hall continues to play an important part in the cultural and social activities of the community.

There were many other highlights during 2001-2002, too many to mention within the constraints of these remarks. 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 Greater Dandenong.

Greater Dandenong is a vital and dynamic city. As Melbourne's Second City, we enjoy an international reputation as a location where people of differing cultures and faiths can live together in harmony. In a world increasingly beset by tensions, wars and racial unrest, Greater Dandenong can be seen as a role model to the rest of the world. Greater Dandenong recognises the role we can play in this area and is eager to take up the challenge to demonstrate to the world that anything is possible, when there is goodwill and the capacity for people to talk together and to listen.



Cr Paul Donovan  
Mayor

# Chief Executive Officer's Report



## Year in Review – 2001-2002

2001-2002 was a year of success for the City of Greater Dandenong. As Melbourne's Second City, we contributed to the continuing international recognition of Melbourne as a global city known for its living environment, lifestyle and business opportunities. Our contribution was in all three of these areas as evidenced through our achievements in improving the management of our environment, improvements to the services offered to our community and the growth in business investment we attracted. Greater Dandenong can also be proud of the way in which it has worked with its community over the last 12 months to make the most of opportunities that have come our way, and to find the best possible solutions to all of the challenges that have arisen.

Through sound financial management and a continued commitment to our five-year corporate and financial plan, Greater Dandenong achieved good financial, environmental and service outcomes for the year.

## Customer Service

The delivery of quality customer service to residents remains a principal focus. Our approach to customer service is continuously reviewed to ensure that we remain focused on the outcomes required by our customers whether contact be made through our call centre, our service centres, our website, or by letter.

Our call centre dealt with 162,608 calls during 2001-2002, answering 93% within 15 seconds (three rings or less). Eighty-seven percent of calls handled by our call centre resulted in the enquiry being resolved by a member of the call centre staff.

Our three service centres served 72,557 customers, of which 86% had their enquiry resolved at first contact.

Call centre hours were extended during 2001-2002, with call centre coverage now being provided from 8am to 5.30pm on weekdays and between 9am and 1pm on Saturdays. Other new initiatives taken in 2001-2002 included improvements to credit card phone payment options and the introduction of online payment of rates and other accounts. Use of both of these methods of payment continues to increase.

A total of 24,670 requests for service were received from the community during 2001-2002. Ninety-nine percent of these requests were resolved within published service quality guarantees. The three largest service request types were for building maintenance (including graffiti) 2,900, residential amenity (local laws, animal control and parking) 2,449 and street hazards (fallen branches, overflowing drainage pits and damaged footpaths) 2,351.

In addition to the requests listed above, the council also dealt with 5,760 pieces of correspondence requiring a response within 10 working days. Ninety-four percent of correspondence was responded to within this service quality guarantee.

# Chief Executive Officer's Report Cont.

## Local Government Leader

Greater Dandenong continued to show leadership in the local government sector in 2001-2002, resulting in significant benefits to our community, as well as recognition by Commonwealth and State Governments. This leadership is demonstrated through our commitment to extending services to the community (particularly through the use of the internet), maintenance of our service charter program, our approach to the Victorian Government's Best Value requirements, continuous improvement of business systems and a willingness to find the best possible solution to the range of issues raised by our community.

Specific examples of this leadership in 2001-2002 included release of version three of [www.greaterdandenong.com](http://www.greaterdandenong.com). The Greater Dandenong website is widely regarded as one of the most user-friendly and information-rich in the local government sector in Australia.

Closely allied to the release of version three of [www.greaterdandenong.com](http://www.greaterdandenong.com) was the launch of version two of the council's intranet site, WebStar. WebStar ensures all staff are informed of current developments and aids in improving efficiency and effectiveness by delivering consistent, up-to-date information to everyone. Version two of WebStar also included an online learning module on occupational health and safety.

## Community Engagement

Working with the community to ensure decisions of Council are understood, creating opportunities for community input into decision making and ensuring the involvement processes that form part of the council's everyday responsibilities are able to be accessed by the community are essential parts of Greater Dandenong's commitment to consultation and engagement.

Initiatives taken in 2001-2002 included continuation of the practice of facilitated consultation meetings on planning approvals and expansion of the customer research panel to 346 participants. A series of community forums under the general title of "Consulting Without Insulting", led to the establishment of the Ethnic Communities Council of the South East (ECCOSE). Other initiatives included consultation and involvement in the preparation of community plans as part of the Commonwealth Government's "Strengthening Communities" program and the Victorian Government's "Community Building" program.

## Community Safety

Results of the annual state-wide survey of 'Community Perceptions of Crime and Safety' released early in 2001-2002 highlighted the continuing level of concern of the community with personal safety in homes, public places and public transport. Concern for personal safety in Greater Dandenong remains higher than state averages, although it was pleasing to note that in all but one category, residents reported feeling safer in 2001-2002 than in previous years. Improvements were recorded in how safe residents felt in their own home during the day and on the streets, buses and trains during the day and night. This was a pleasing result and highlights the importance of the continuing commitment the council has shown to improving community safety.

A highlight of 2001-2002 was the release of 'SafetyMatters', a community safety website – [www.greaterdandenong.com/safety](http://www.greaterdandenong.com/safety). This website, is the first such municipal community safety site in

Victoria and provides a wide range of information to residents, as well as direct connections to other relevant safety sites including Victoria Police, emergency services and Neighbourhood Watch.

The council also launched two new community safety programs in 2001-2002 – 'Eyes on the Street' and 'Secure Seniors'. Both programs have a focus on providing information to residents to better inform them on how they can improve the safety of their environment. Both programs will continue in 2002-2003.

Another important community safety initiative taken during 2001-2002 was the introduction of a requirement for all planning applications to be assessed against safe design guidelines. This same requirement was also placed on the design of all of the council's capital projects.

Community safety remains an important priority for the City of Greater Dandenong and will continue to be a corporate priority for the future.

## Our response to Illegal Drugs

Problems associated with the illegal use of drugs remains a priority for the council. During 2001-2002, action continued on the implementation of the Municipal Drug Strategy supported by funding made available by the Victorian Government through the Department of Human Services.

Actions taken during 2001-2002 included the launch of a drug-related website – [www.greaterdandenong.com/drugs](http://www.greaterdandenong.com/drugs). This site provides a comprehensive source of information on drugs, their effects and local initiatives relevant to the Greater Dandenong community, particularly parents and young people. As with the 'SafetyMatters' site referred to earlier, 'DrugAction', is the first such site launched by a local government authority in Victoria. Since its launch late in 2001-2002, the site has attracted a great deal of positive feedback.

During 2001-2002, three new drug-related services were initiated in the city. Southern Health, through South East Alcohol and Drug Services (SEADS) were funded by the Victorian Government to provide drug safety services within the city. The council, through its Municipal Drug Strategy, provided funding to the Fitzroy-based Mary of the Cross Centre to establish a drug counselling service in Noble Park, the Cyrene Centre, and to the Heatherton Christian Community to establish ARC House Rehabilitation Centre. All three of these services provide new options for families and intravenous drug users within the Greater Dandenong community.

A wide range of other activities and programs continued in this area during 2001-2002. The three community-based drug action committees/forums continued to mature and contributed significantly to community information and awareness by holding a series of community discussion forums. These forums were well attended by a wide range of residents, retailers, representatives of community organisations and community-based service providers.

Other achievements in 2001-2002 included the completion of a review of best practices in the retrieval and disposal of discarded needles and syringes and the production of information cards for intravenous drug users.

The council is committed to reducing the harm associated with illegal drug use on families, young people, the economy and the well-being of our city.

### Our Financial Performance

The financial statements for 2001-2002 show a deficit of \$10.758 million for the year against a budgeted surplus of \$1.204 million. The deficit was principally caused by a \$6.719 million write-off of assets recognised in error in previous asset valuations and purchase of land located at 22-28 Clow Street, Dandenong for \$4.1 million. The write-off of assets arose from a comprehensive audit of the council's infrastructure assets during the year. Total non-current assets are now valued at \$689.395 million compared to \$599.025 million in the previous year. Excluding the write-off of assets mentioned above, the council's financial situation after depreciation was \$0.63 million worse than in the previous year. This reinforces the need for the council to continue to carefully manage its financial resources into the future.

Debt was also further reduced in 2001-2002 to \$6.6 million, a reduction of 21% from 2000-2001.

### Capital Works

In 2001-2002, the council continued towards meeting its commitment to spend \$65 million on capital works over a five-year period, with \$18.921 million spent. This result was above budgeted expenditure of \$17.061 million due to the land purchase at 22-28 Clow Street, Dandenong. Works not completed in 2001-2002 will be completed in 2002-2003.

### Legal Disputes

Two long-running legal disputes moved closer to resolution in 2001-2002.

A judgment was made in the Federal Court action initiated by former Home Care employees, resulting in reinstatement and changes in contract arrangements with the council's Home and Community Care service provider. Compliance with all aspects of the judgment will be achieved in 2002-2003.

Resolution to the dispute with the City of Kingston in relation to unfunded superannuation liability was also reached in 2001-2002. Documents concluding the dispute will be exchanged in 2002-2003.

### Food Safety Standards

Improvement to food handling and food safety standards remained an important focus in 2001-2002. A total of 3,725 inspections were undertaken during the course of the year and 485 food samples taken. In addition, a number of successful educational and information forums were held with food manufacturers and retailers. These sessions were well attended and the feedback received from participants positive.

While the vast majority of food manufacturers and retailers involved in the food industry have responded positively to the council's partnership approach, a number of seizures and prosecutions occurred during the year. Several of these prosecutions resulted in large fines being handed down as a result of court proceedings.

The council's effort in this area was recognised through an improvement in community satisfaction with enforcement of local laws (including food safety) over the last 12 months as measured through the Annual Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey.

### Best Value

During 2001-2002, the council continued with the development of its Best Value Program. The focus during 2001-2002 was on the continued development of staff to undertake service reviews in a manner that will provide for the implementation of service improvements. Activities undertaken during the course of 2001-2002 included the completion of a change management program by all but a handful of staff, completion of a work-life survey of staff to establish a "benchmark" for the Best Value program and continued effort to clearly identify activities and outcomes at an individual business unit level.

Significant effort continued in 2001-2002 to complete the on-line management tool to be used by staff in completing their service review. This aspect of the Best Value project was 95% complete at the end of 2001-2002 and will be implemented in 2002-2003. Use of this management tool will ensure that Best Value service reviews at Greater Dandenong not only reflect best practice across the sector, but will set the benchmark in terms of meeting community, council and government expectations.

The Greater Dandenong Best Value Program will deliver demonstrable service improvement that is understood and tangible to our residents.

### Service Charters

Greater Dandenong continued to develop its service charter program in 2001-2002, with reviews of 39 service charters being completed during the course of the year. As a result of these reviews, significant changes are proposed to the following charters:

- Parks
- Information Management Services
- Asset Management Services
- Financial Services
- Town Planning
- Cultural Development

All of these service charters will be re-released in 2002-2003.

A total of five payments were made to residents during 2001-2002 for failure to meet service quality guarantees set in service charters. All but one of these service quality guarantee failures related to a failure by the council to acknowledge, or respond, to correspondence within 10 working days.

### Regional Roads

The announcement by the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments to jointly fund the construction of the Scoresby arterial was one of the highlights of 2001-2002. This is a project that the council has lobbied for funds to be provided to for a number of years and it was pleasing to see it move from being a proposal to a reality.

During the course of 2001-2002, the council continued its efforts to obtain funds for the construction of the Dingley Bypass and upgrade of the Princes Highway/Springvale Road intersection. Both of these projects remain high priorities and we will continue to lobby for funds to be set aside for these projects in 2002-2003.

# Chief Executive Officer's Report Cont.

## Local Roads

Resident concern with traffic speed and safety in local roads remains a significant concern across the city. The introduction, in 2000-2001, of the 50km/h speed limit in residential streets has had some effect in reducing the incidence of vehicle accidents on local roads, but driver behaviour remains largely unchanged. The level of demand for council intervention to solve local road problems through the provision of local area traffic management schemes continued at the same level in 2001-2002 as in previous years.

The council was successful in 2001-2002 in obtaining "Black Spot" funding for projects in seven locations. The most significant of these was for the installation of traffic signals at the intersection of Dandenong Valley Hwy and Abbots Road, Dandenong South. Traffic volumes in this section of the city are at high levels and the installation of these lights will result in a reduction in accidents and traffic congestion at this location.

## Gaming

The council continued to work with local gaming venue operators and community-based organisations providing support for people with gaming problems during the course of 2001-2002. All gaming venues in the city participated in an audit to assess compliance with the 'Responsible Gaming Charter'. The council is also working with gaming venue operators to develop a consistent approach to the provision of funds by venue operators to community-based organisations.

## Community Satisfaction Survey

Results of the state-wide Local Government Annual Community Satisfaction Survey were released in May 2002. Overall community satisfaction with the performance of the council remained the same in 2001-2002 as in 2000-2001 at 68.

Improved results were achieved in satisfaction ratings of the council's performance in the areas of local roads and footpaths, health and human services, enforcement of by-laws (including food safety), economic development and the application of town planning. The only area of responsibility where there was a fall in resident satisfaction was in the appearance of public areas where the 2001-2002 score of 65 was one point below that achieved in 2000-2001.

A particularly pleasing result was the improved rating of customer contact to 76 from 75 in 2000-2001.

The council's score for community engagement, a new measure included in the survey for the first time in 2001-2002, was 66 and was the highest score in the group of 18 councils with which Greater Dandenong's results were compared.

## Improving the Environment

2001-2002 has been a year of significant achievement by Greater Dandenong in meeting environmental targets. A decision to purchase "green" energy for street lighting will result in a saving of 7,399 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> over the next two years and resulted in the council receiving an award from the Cities for Climate Protection Australia organisation. The council also met milestones "four" and "five" of the Cities for Climate Control program in 2001-2002. Greater Dandenong is one of only 16 municipalities across Australia who have achieved this level of recognition.

Other initiatives undertaken in 2001-2002 include the successful installation of another gross pollutant trap to reduce litter entering the drainage system. The council remains committed to installing one additional pollutant trap each year for the next five years.

The council also began the process of converting all of its vehicle fleet from petrol to natural gas. This program will continue over the next few years as vehicles are changed over.

Other environment improvement activities undertaken during 2001-2002 included a number of environmental forums open to the community, the introduction of solar lighting into public areas, the installation of modified lighting in all but a few council buildings and production of the fourth Greater Dandenong Annual State of the Environment Report.

## Waste Management

A 10-year waste strategy – "Thinking Globally, Acting Locally" – was adopted by Council in March 2002 and will form the basis of ongoing waste reduction strategies. The plan will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it remains relevant and that targets are being met.

The 2001-2002 target to reduce the volume of domestic waste being deposited to landfill to an average of 13.05 kilograms per household per week was not achieved. The average for the year was 13.69 kilograms per household per week, a disappointing result given the effort put into improved education and service. Community education will be continued in 2002-2003 to ensure this important target is met.

While the waste to landfill target was not met, the volume of material being recycled by residents exceeded the target set for 2001-2002. Total recycling tonnage increased from 8,072 tonnes in 2000-2001 to 8,446 tonnes in 2001-2002, representing an average of 3.61 kilograms per household per week, 0.66 kilograms more than the target set for the year. This was an excellent outcome and reflects the commitment of Greater Dandenong residents to recycling.

The projected target for an increase in the number of residents participating in the green waste service introduced in 2000-2001 was not met during 2001-2002. This is attributed to the price of the service and is a matter that will be considered by the council in a review of the service in 2002-2003.

During 2001-2002, the council also completed the task of withdrawing from management of commercial waste for a small number of retailers in the city. Retailers affected by this decision are now dealing directly with commercial waste management companies.

## [www.greaterdandenong.com](http://www.greaterdandenong.com)

As indicated earlier, one of the highlights of 2001-2002 was the release of version three of [www.greaterdandenong.com](http://www.greaterdandenong.com) and the expansion of the site to include specific information on community safety and drugs. The transition to this new site was well managed and the time and effort that went into design has been rewarded with the site continuing to be one of the 10 most accessed local government internet sites in Australia.

### Business Development and Employment

The record levels of investment in new industrial and commercial buildings in Greater Dandenong recorded in 2000-2001 continued in 2001-2002. The target of \$100 million of investment in new commercial industrial buildings was exceeded, with \$161.9 million in new building development being recorded to the end of June. This is a 44% increase on the level of investment in 2000-2001 and highlights the continuing level of demand for industrial properties. Taking into account plant, equipment and other costs associated with this level of investment, it is likely that between \$350 and \$400 million has been invested in the industrial sector of the city during 2001-2002.

This level of investment has an obvious flow-on to the employment market and, while it is not possible to provide precise figures, it is estimated that between 600 and 800 new jobs were created in the city as a direct result of this investment.

The announcement by the Victorian Government during 2001-2002 of the intention to build a synchrotron at Monash University was also important to the future of Greater Dandenong. The location of this facility will provide local manufacturers and engineering companies with access to world-class technology to assist with product design and manufacture.

### Services to Older Persons

Greater Dandenong has a commitment to the provision of services to older persons which is second to none in Victoria.

Additional Commonwealth funding for Community Aged Care Packages (CACP) of \$160,000 and for Home and Community Care (HACC) of \$178,248 were received during 2001-2002. This additional funding allowed the council to extend services, resulting in an estimated 5% increase in the hours of direct service delivered to clients.

Services in the area of delivered meals, adult day activities support services and supported accommodation (HL Williams Court) continued in 2001-2002 to similar levels to that achieved in the previous year.

### Children's Services

The council was successful in obtaining additional support for child care providers during the course of 2001-2002. An amount of nearly \$300,000 in additional funding was obtained which was paid directly to childcare service providers. Funding was also received for a number of service innovations during 2001-2002, particularly in the area of maternal and child health.

### Library Services

The extended opening hours for the Springvale and Dandenong Libraries introduced during 2000-2001 were continued in 2001-2002, resulting in continuing high levels of satisfaction by the community with the quality of library services provided. Visits to our two static libraries and single mobile library unit in 2001-2002 totalled 899,392. More than 1.3 million items were borrowed.

Internet access was further extended in 2001-2002 through the integration of the English Language and Literacy Program with the general internet access program. This new "web zone" was introduced into the Springvale Library during the course of

2001-2002 and has proved to be highly successful. A similar "web zone" is to be introduced into the Dandenong Library early in 2002-2003. Computers in the library were accessed for a total of 76,667 hours in 2001-2002, demonstrating how important this aspect of library service has become.

### Land Use Planning

Economic activity, as measured through planning applications lodged for approval, continued at record levels in 2001-2002. Unfortunately, the high level of activity resulted in targets set for turnaround times for approvals in 2001-2002 not being met.

Turnaround time for planning approvals able to be dealt with under delegated authority in June 2002 was 47 days, as opposed to a target of 25. Reasons for the target not being met relate to the continuing high number of applications being received referred to above and a sector-wide shortage of qualified planning staff.

Action was taken during the course of 2001-2002 to address this situation, with a decision being made to engage additional resources to expand the planning team by three full-time staff. This decision will have an impact during 2002-2003 as these staff become trained and familiar with the Greater Dandenong Planning Scheme.

The planning amendment process to allow limited urban development of part of the Keysborough South area of the city was finalised during 2001-2002. This project has now proceeded to the stage where development plans have been approved and land sales commenced. Demand for land in this new development area has been high, with each stage of the development achieving a high proportion of pre-release sales.

### Dandenong Produce Market

Strategic planning for future development of the Dandenong Produce Market continued during 2001-2002.

The council's commitment to redevelop the Produce Market has been welcomed by the majority of existing stallholders who see the opportunity to further enhance their business and to benefit the city as a whole.

Planning for this redevelopment will continue in 2002-2003. It is anticipated that plans of the redevelopment proposal will be put on exhibition during the first half of 2002-2003 and a final decision made to proceed in the second half of that year.

### Former Stockyards Land – Cheltenham Road, Dandenong

Planning for the future development of this land continued during 2001-2002. Following a tender process initiated in 2000-2001, the council entered into an agreement with the Urban and Regional Land Corporation (URLC) to prepare a detailed development proposal for the site. Discussion of this proposal will be completed in the first quarter of 2002-2003 and will be followed by a period of community consultation before any development proceeds.

The proposals being developed by the URLC in conjunction with the council will see this land being developed primarily for residential purposes. Development of this land will build a strong linkage between the residential community of Dandenong

# Chief Executive Officer's Report Cont.

South and the Dandenong CBD and will also be an important step in the continuing revitalisation of the Dandenong Central Business District.

## **Dandenong Town Hall Redevelopment**

The council continued to consider development options for this building during the course of 2001-2002. The project remains a high priority for council and a final decision on redevelopment will be made in 2002-2003.

## **Dandenong Central Business District – Revitalisation**

During 2001-2002, the Victorian Government designated Dandenong as one of five areas in metropolitan Melbourne to be considered for redevelopment as part of its Transport Orientated Development (TOD) strategy. As a result of this announcement, a number of initiatives have been taken by the council and the Victorian Government, through the Department of Infrastructure (DOI), to examine how this strategy can be best applied in Dandenong to achieve the Government's objectives and those of the council to revitalise the Dandenong CBD. While this work will continue during 2002-2003, initial discussions have identified the importance of attracting residential living back into the centre of Dandenong and the need to plan for new linkages between the Dandenong rail station and key activity nodes within the city.

Implementation of the TOD strategy has the potential to ensure that Dandenong not only continues to have a future, but is strengthened in its capacity to be seen as a CBD area of the same importance as the City of Melbourne.

## **Purchase and Sale of Assets**

Two significant property transactions were completed in 2001-2002.

In June, the council acquired land located at 22-28 Clow Street, Dandenong. This strategically placed property will create new opportunities for revitalisation of the Dandenong central business district.

The second significant transaction was the decision by the council to sell part of Glendale Reserve, Springvale, to Minaret College. Purchase of this land by Minaret College will allow the school to construct community and recreational facilities. This transaction will be completed in 2002-2003.

## **Governance**

Elections for the City of Greater Dandenong are scheduled for March 2002-2003. Action was taken during the course of 2001-2002 to complete a review of electoral boundaries in accord with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1989 to ensure that the council was able to successfully conduct elections within this timeframe.

## **Community Building**

During 2001-2002, funds were successfully obtained through the Victorian Government's Community Capacity Building Program to initiate a project in Noble Park. This program, "Proud to Participate," focuses on building community confidence, pride and capability in the Noble Park area. The model developed in Noble Park will be evaluated to assess whether it can be applied across the whole of the city.

## **A Lesson For The World**

The world crisis, caused as a result of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, placed a new focus on the ability of diverse communities to work and live together.

The international situation resulted in the "spotlight" being shined on cities such as Greater Dandenong where there is clear evidence of the ability of people of all faiths, beliefs and origins to work together in a co-operative and harmonious manner. Organisations such as the Greater Dandenong Interfaith Network are increasingly being seen by others as examples of how communities can work together, even in times of acute international stress.

## **Performance Statement**

The Performance Statement that forms part of this Annual Report has been derived from the Monthly Report against Annual Plan targets prepared for Council for the month of June 2002. What appears in the Performance Statement is a "cut-down" version of the June Monthly Report to meet the requirements of the annual audit process. In order to meet these requirements much of the commentary that forms part of the June Monthly Report has been excluded from this report. In addition, all Annual Plan targets met during the course of the year as little as one day later than a target date is shown as "Not Achieved". This results in a false impression being given of overall progress against Annual Plan targets. Of the 189 targets set in the Annual Plan 59.7% were completed as at the end of June.

For full details of the June Monthly Report of progress against Annual Plan targets for 2001-2002 please visit our website at [www.greaterdandenong.com](http://www.greaterdandenong.com) and look under Council and Annual Plan.

## **Future Focus**

The City of Greater Dandenong continues to be a strong and capable contributor to the economic growth, social growth and vitality of Greater Melbourne. A number of the projects commenced in 2001-2002 will ensure that the city continues to play this role well into the future and that, longer term, it will become an even more important part of the fabric of Greater Melbourne.

The planning process put in place by Greater Dandenong through its Corporate and Annual Plan, its commitment to engaging with its community and to working with all stakeholders continues to be the principal characteristic of its governance and style. Combined with sound financial, business, social, resource and environmental management, Greater Dandenong will achieve even greater success in future years.

The City of Greater Dandenong management team and I sincerely thank all staff and everyone who has helped us to achieve our vision for 2001-2002. We look forward to the future with confidence.



Warwick Heine  
Chief Executive Officer