

Greater Dandenong Council News

Alex Wilkie Nature Reserve Sense Trail

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Customer Service Centres


Dandenong Civic Centre
225 Lonsdale Street, Dandenong

Springvale Community Hub
5 Hillcrest Grove, Springvale

Keysborough Customer Service
Shop A7 Parkmore Shopping Centre,
Keysborough

All correspondence to:
Greater Dandenong Council News
PO Box 200
Dandenong VIC 3175
Email: news@cgd.vic.gov.au

 **Phone: 8571 1000**

 **Fax: 8571 5196**

 **www.greaterdandenong.com**


 **@greaterdandy**

 **facebook.com/greaterdandenong**

 **cityofgreaterdandenong**

 **youtube.com/citygreaterdandenong**

 **TTY: 133 677**
Speak and listen: 1300 555 727
relayservice.gov.au

 **TIS: 131 450**

 **council@cgd.vic.gov.au**

Important Numbers

- Emergency calls
- Police / Fire / Ambulance 000
- Street lighting faults/
non-operational
- United Energy 13 20 99
- Traffic signal faults/
non-operational 8571 1000
- Hoon Hotline 1800 333 000
- Hard Waste Collection
WM Waste Management
Services 9721 1915
- Australian Animal
Protection Society 9798 8415
- RSPCA 9224 2222
- Nurse on Call 1300 606 024

Mayor's message

Welcome to the latest edition of Greater Dandenong Council News. This magazine covers events happening in our city across September and October.

Due to Council Elections on Saturday 24 October, Council will soon enter something called a Caretaker Period. This period, which runs from 23 September to 24 October affects Council communications and prevents us from putting a magazine out in October.

This magazine will preview some things happening across the next two months, including one of our most popular annual, family-friendly events – the Children’s Festival. Now in its ninth year the festival will be delivered entirely online. Find out more on page 8.

Spring is a beautiful time in Greater Dandenong and while we can’t travel far from home at the moment we can still enjoy the outdoors. If you are walking around your neighbourhood find out how you can record plant and animal species in a Biodiversity Blitz on page 10.

By the time you read the next edition of this magazine my time as Mayor will have come to an end. I would like to thank my fellow Councillors for their support during my time as Mayor. I would also like to thank all of you. This is a diverse, vibrant and resilient community that I am proud to call home and I have enjoyed representing you all.




**Mayor
Cr Jim Memeti**

My City



The Dandenong Wetlands, off Heatherton Road, Dandenong North is a series of wetlands which provide habitat for native wildlife and improve the water quality of the Dandenong Creek. The parkland is a bird spotters delight, with the presence of ducks, herons and birds of prey. During the evening you can also hear frogs calling around the wetlands. This aerial shot was taken in 2019. *Photo: Thomas Barnes.*

Front Cover: Council’s Environmental Education Officer Kirstine Oh explores the Sense Trail at Alex Wilkie Nature Reserve. *Photo: Hilton Stone.*



This publication is available in alternative formats upon request.



Different ways to pay your rates



Council offers a number of options to pay your rates, including over the phone, online or via direct debit instalments.

At the time of publishing this article Council's customer service centres were closed to the public. Those used to paying their rates in person at a customer service centre have a variety of options available.

- ▶ Pay online at mygreaterdandenong.com, postbillpay.com or via BPay using your internet banking portal
- ▶ Pay by cheque which can be mailed to Council
- ▶ Pay over the phone using a credit card or via BPay using telephone banking
- ▶ Pay in person at an Australia Post outlet.

There are two options for those wishing to pay in instalments.

Pay by four instalments (this is the default option)

- ▶ First instalment due 30 September 2020
- ▶ Second instalment due 30 November 2020
- ▶ Third instalment due 28 February 2021
- ▶ Fourth instalment due 31 May 2021
- ▶ Instalment reminders are sent out for the final three payments.

Pay by nine instalments

- ▶ Payable via direct debit only
- ▶ First instalment due by 30 September
- ▶ All other instalments due at the end of each month until 31 May 2021
- ▶ No reminders are sent about instalments as they are automatically direct debited from your nominated account.



**Visit greaterdandenong.com/rates for more information.
For assistance phone 8571 1000.**

Council rates during COVID-19

Since March this year Council has seen a significant increase in the number of residents contacting us for support.

Job losses and other financial pressures have seen some residents struggle to keep on top of household expenses, but Council continues to offer support to our most vulnerable residents.

We have extended the Jobseeker allowance waiver until 30 November 2020. For those residents receiving Jobseeker, Council will provide relief in the way of a \$200 waiver off your 2020–21 rates bill. You must apply for this waiver, it will not be automatically applied.

Residents who applied for the waiver on their 2019–20 rates notice can apply for the waiver again. You can apply via an online form found on Council's website.

We encourage residents to continue paying their rates on time where possible. The next instalment is due on 30 September.

Things you can do to reduce the balance of your rates:

- ▶ Make smaller weekly/fortnightly payments immediately so the amount due on 30 September is smaller
- ▶ Enter into a payment arrangement with Council to pay off your rates over an extended period
- ▶ Enter into a temporary payment arrangement where you will only be requested to make payments you can afford.

If you have lost employment and are having difficulty paying rates for your principal place of residence you may qualify for further assistance under Council's Hardship Policy.

Visit greaterdandenong.com/rates or phone 8571 1000 for more information.

Councillor Contacts



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Red Gum Ward
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Red Gum Ward – Mayor
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Silverleaf Ward
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Silverleaf Ward
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maria.sampey@cgd.vic.gov.au

Council Meetings



Council meetings are held on the second and the fourth Monday of the month, at 7pm.

The September meetings will be held:

Monday 14 September

Monday 28 September

During October there will only be one meeting due to the Council Elections.

That meeting will be held:

Monday 12 October

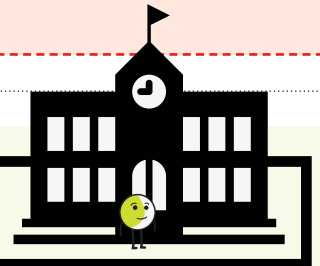
The 28 September and 12 October meetings will be held during Caretaker Period in the lead up to Elections, so

no significant decisions will be made. We encourage the public to view meetings live via our webcast service.

The general public can still submit questions for Public Question Time.

➔ To view meetings online or to find out more about Public Question Time simply go to greaterdandenong.com/councilmeetings

Council Elections



Stand for Council

Victorian council elections are held every four years and give people an opportunity to influence the change they would like to see in their community by standing for council.

The COVID-19 restrictions mean campaigning will look different this year, but the Minister for Local Government is keen to see a range of candidates that represent the diverse community in which we live.

For information about the mandatory training candidates must undertake, please visit greaterdandenong.com/ and search for Council Elections or phone Council's Governance Unit on 8571 1000.



Voting

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) conducts the elections on behalf of Council.

The VEC will automatically post a ballot pack to every enrolled voter between 6–8 October. Completed papers must reach the VEC's Election Manager in the envelope provided with the ballot papers by 6pm on Friday 23 October 2020. Please do not send them to Council.

In some circumstances, voters may be able to vote early and in person at the VEC's temporary office at 279 Lonsdale Street, Dandenong. The VEC's office will enforce strict COVID-19 safe practices to ensure the safety of VEC staff and voters.

➔ For information visit vec.vic.gov.au or phone 131 832.

Cr Zaynoun Melhem

► Silverleaf Ward



I want to start this column by thanking the residents of Greater Dandenong and particularly Silverleaf Ward for giving me a chance to represent them on Council.

It has been a great first term and there have been many highlights over the past four years. I want to highlight a few of the bigger projects that are making a difference for local residents.

I love walking my dog, and a 2019 survey of residents revealed that many would appreciate separate off-leash areas for smaller dogs. Tirhatuan Park is home to a fenced dog off-leash park and soon a second fenced area will be added, allowing for the separation of large and small dogs, giving walkers a greater sense of safety.

Sports enthusiasts are also being catered for at Tirhatuan Park, with the recent resurfacing of tennis courts and the addition of a new basketball court that should be completed and ready for action in time for summer.

While parks and reserves are open for walkers and joggers during the COVID-19 pandemic, the equipment has been closed to keep residents safe and healthy and slow the spread of the virus. Last year Council carried out a series of upgrades at Lois Twohig Reserve in Dandenong North and while sports clubs are on hiatus and the shelters and

exercise equipment can't yet be used, I hope to see people out there enjoying the facilities when restrictions ease.

Community safety is an important issue for me, and I am pleased to see that a project to install 10 CCTV cameras at the Brady Road shops is making locals feel safer. The cameras combine to cover the carpark, shop fronts (including those in Shalimar Avenue) and the rear laneway.

This is just a small snapshot of the work that goes into making our city a great place to live, work and play.

📍 **If you would like to contact me about anything please email me at zaynoun.melhem@cgd.vic.gov.au or phone me on 0466 518 082.**

► Lightwood Ward

While COVID restrictions mean residents have been unable to visit the new Springvale Library, there is a lot of anticipation about what this new building will do for the community. Once restrictions are eased we will be able to welcome small groups into the library and further down the track community groups will be welcomed into the meeting rooms and communal spaces.

As a Councillor for the City of Greater Dandenong I am very proud to have seen this project come to completion. Next month residents get their chance to have a say in who will represent them on Council.

The Electoral Roll closed on 28 August, so if you are not already enrolled to vote, it is too late. If you are considering running for Council you must register between 17–22 September.

Election Day is 24 October 2020, but voting will happen via post. The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) will deliver ballot packs to voters' homes from

6–8 October. You will have to return them to the VEC by Friday 23 October. The process will be explained in the packs. I encourage you all to have your say in these elections as Councillors are elected to represent you.

I would like to send a special thank you to members of the Victorian Vietnamese community who have worked together to help protect our community from the spread of Coronavirus. This group has handmade thousands of cloth facemasks which they are distributing to the community for free.

I have many to give away to residents who need them. You can visit my milk bar at 26 Darren Road, Springvale South and pick up a free mask.

In the meantime, I would like to encourage you all to follow the latest advice from the State Government and Chief Medical Officer and do your bit to slow the spread of the virus.

Cr Loi Truong



📍 **If you would like to get in touch with me you can email me at loi.truong@cgd.vic.gov.au or phone me on 0466 004 618.**

Keeping time at Rowley Allan Reserve



Council recently built a new timekeeper's box at Keysborough's Rowley Allan Reserve.

The ground level box makes access easier for those helping keep score and sound the sirens for football and cricket matches. The previous timekeeper's box was on the roof of the pavilion and was accessible only via a ladder.

The box is required to accommodate two people and have views of all parts of the oval. It is also needed to stop spectators from interfering with timekeeper's duties.

While the box has been unable to be used due to the COVID-19 pandemic, once community sport resumes it is expected to be a welcome addition to the suburban sports ground.

A draft concept plan for Rowley Allan Reserve is currently being developed following a period of consultation with residents in July/August.

The reserve is home to football, cricket, netball and lawn bowl facilities, as well as a senior citizen's club and a playground. It is located on Cheltenham Road, Keysborough.

Seniors' Festival

Usually in October Greater Dandenong celebrates positive ageing via the Victorian Seniors' Festival.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic local activities and workshops for this year's festival have been cancelled.

We continue to celebrate our seniors, but this year things will look a bit different.

The State Government will deliver the 2020 Seniors' Festival direct to your home, via a reimagined program including online performances, recorded interviews and storytelling.

 Visit seniorsonline.vic.gov.au to see more.


Open air fires

Backyard burn offs are not allowed in Greater Dandenong without a permit. Open air fires are considered a risk to the environment and the safety of all residents.

Lighting fires in incinerators and open air fires, including in firepits, is also not allowed without a permit.

Permits may be granted if there are no other means of disposing of waste, however residents are encouraged to contact a Fire Prevention Officer on 8571 1000 to discuss their issues before applying for a permit.



 **If you smell offensive smoke or toxic smells related to a fire contact Council on 8571 1000, or if you feel like you are in danger phone 000.**

Keysborough South Community Hub



The draft design for the Keysborough South Community Hub was recently released for public comment and generated a high level of interest and excitement within the community.

The design builds on previous planning and consultation undertaken over recent years and incorporates the unique attributes of the chosen site.


The community hub will be located on the corner of Chapel and Villiers roads in Tatterson Park, and will incorporate a variety of community services and multi-purpose facilities and spaces.

Key features include:

- ▶ Community activity and meeting rooms suitable for a range of programs and activities
- ▶ Community lounge to incorporate an outreach library service and spaces for work/study and socialising
- ▶ A 'makers space' for arts and crafts
- ▶ Community kitchen
- ▶ Kindergarten and Child Care rooms
- ▶ Consulting suites for Maternal and Child Health and other specialist services

- ▶ Reception, administration, storage and amenities
- ▶ External seating areas, playgrounds, basketball half court and amphitheatre
- ▶ Car parking
- ▶ Space for a mobile coffee cart (pending expression of interest process).

Construction of the community hub is expected to begin by mid-2021.

 **Visit greaterdandenong.com/keysboroughsouthcommunityhub for more information and to view plans.**



Road works

Road projects across Greater Dandenong have continued to roll out in 2020, helping to improve the journey for motorists.


Works to upgrade the intersection of Chandler and Cheltenham roads in Keysborough began in August and are expected to be completed soon.

A dedicated left hand lane is being added to the intersection, with asphalt being laid over a gravel section on Chandler Road.

During construction Chandler Road was closed to northbound traffic between Ellsa Close and Cheltenham Road. Detours were put in place.

The Federal Government's Blackspot Program funded an upgrade at the intersection of Windsor Avenue and St Johns Avenue in Springvale.

The intersection was closed for about three weeks during August, while works were carried out.

 **Residents with enquiries about these road projects can contact Stuart Pyke on 8571 1000.**



exciting
activities

Children's Festival



Be part of a new story this spring school holidays for the ninth annual Greater Dandenong Children's Festival.

The 2020 festival will look different to previous years with COVID-19 affecting how activities will be delivered.

Virtual circus classes, a short story competition and an online version of the Little Day Out all feature in this year's program.

The Children's Festival starts on Saturday 19 September and runs right through the school holidays, featuring the Little Day Out's 'Big Day In' on Sunday 27 September.

The theme is A New Story, which focuses on two aspects of new beginnings – the season of Spring and classic children's books.

This year's festival introduces 'A New Story' short story competition for children. The winning entry will be brought to life as an animation in time for next year's festival.

Other exciting activities include the circus skills workshops with Dreaming Space, cooking classes with Dandenong Market and a scavenger hunt offering some great prizes.

There will also be online writing classes, zine-making classes and workshops of all kinds of dance delivered live to your loungeroom.

This festival is proudly sponsored by Bank of Melbourne.



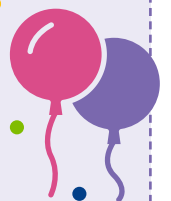
Visit greaterdandenong.com/childrensfestival for a full range of activities.

Big Day In

The annual Little Day Out will be replaced by the Big Day In during this year's festival.

Join us on Sunday 27 September for lots of fun from the comfort of your own home.

Join in this all-day pyjama party with the Mexican Music Man's Singalong, the Dreaming Space Funky Monkey Family Beach Dance Party and the Kazoos' Bed Time Stories show. If you had a sleep in and are still in your PJs, then we've got you covered with Guru Duru's all ages pyjama disco.



Visit greaterdandenong.com/bigdayin to register then join us from 11am-4pm for all the fun.

Enrol for kindergarten now

Kindergarten (also known as preschool) is early education for children in the year before they start school.



It gives children important opportunities to learn, make friends and develop skills through a play-based curriculum, and helps prepare them for the transition to primary school.

Kindergarten is offered in a range of settings including community kindergartens, childcare centres, children's centres and schools. Eligible children can attend a sessional program which offers 15 hours of kindergarten per week, or an integrated program which combines kindergarten with childcare.

Enrol your child now for kindergarten in 2021. Children must turn four on or before 30 April 2021 to be eligible to attend a funded kindergarten program.

Children from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background, or who have had contact with Child Protection or been referred to Child FIRST, are eligible to access the Early Start Kindergarten program at low cost or free in the two years prior to attending school.

...learn, make friends and develop skills through a play-based curriculum



➔ Visit greaterdandenong.com/childergarten or phone 8571 1000 for more information.

Book Week

This year Children's Book Week (October 17–23) will celebrate the wonderful world of nature and those adventurous enough to dive in with the theme "Curious Creatures, Wild Minds".

Every year the Children's Book Council of Australia brings children and books together with a unique theme to

celebrate literacy and storytelling.

Greater Dandenong Libraries will host a series of "curious and wild" performances and author talks for the "curious and wild minds" of our local schools as well as a performance for the public.

➔ Visit greaterdandenonglibraries.com for more information.





Biodiversity Blitz

Our local wildlife needs you.

The City of Greater Dandenong has joined with the City of Casey to record indigenous plants and animals that live across our neighbouring municipalities.

Download the *iNaturalist* app on your smartphone or tablet then take a walk around your neighbourhood to help capture local species. The app helps you identify different species and then records them to the Atlas of Living Australia.

The Biodiversity Blitz includes some healthy competition between Casey and Greater Dandenong for who can record the most species. Council will be offering prizes for individual and school entrants into the competition.

It's as simple as:

Step 1 Download the *iNaturalist* app from your favourite app store

Step 2 Register online to participate

Step 3 Start recording.

You don't need to be an expert on wildlife or plant species to take part.



Visit greaterdandenong.com/biodiversityblitz for more information.



Sense Trail celebrates 30th anniversary



For the past three decades visitors to a Springvale South reserve have been learning about the environment by immersing themselves in the elements.

Alex Wilkie Nature Reserve is a magnificent 1.8-hectare remnant bushland reserve situated in a built-up urban environment.

The Sense Trail is an important part of the reserve and provides an ideal setting for education programs for schools and the general community, as well as a place for our youngest visitors to practice nature play.

With its scented native and indigenous plants, bushfood trail and focus on natural play it is the perfect location to encourage visitors to use senses to increase perception and awareness of the natural environment.

Thirty years ago the rangers at Alex Wilkie Nature Reserve continued Alex Wilkie's vision of using the

reserve for environmental education for young and old by designating an additional area of land next door for bushland education.

The Sense Trail now operates as a key site for nature play and this year through a Victorian State Government grant Council was able to expand the frog pond and add in a boardwalk and educational sign about local frogs.

Alex Wilkie reserve is open to the public from Friday September 4, however the visitors centre will remain closed until restrictions ease.

We encourage resident to enjoy a self-guided tour and see if you can hear (or even catch a glimpse of) our resident pobblebonk frogs.

The Sense Trail is open to the public every Friday from 9am–3pm and the third Sunday of every month from 10am–5pm.

The reserve is located in Mackay Street, Springvale South. Visit greaterdandenong.com for the latest information on park opening hours.

...there are rules around the use of offleash areas



Sharing our parks with pets



In these unprecedented times, we all need some exercise and fresh air, including our four-legged friends.

Off-leash areas are a great place to enjoy both, if everyone is considerate and respectful of all park patrons.

Many park users will have noticed an increase in people out walking their dogs. During Stage 3 and 4 lockdowns Council has kept fenced dog off-leash parks open, but we remind visitors to practice good hand hygiene when opening and closing gates at these parks.

Please remember there are rules around the use of offleash areas to protect all users and their pets. These rules can be seen on signage at the entrance to the areas.

- ▶ Dogs must only be off-leash in areas designated by Council
- ▶ Dogs can be exercised off-leash only within these designated areas and must be put back on leash when they leave the sign posted area
- ▶ Dogs must be no more than 50m from the person walking them and under effective control by voice command or hand signal at all times
- ▶ Dogs must not be allowed within 20m of a designated cycling path or track, unless they are separated from the track by a fence of at least 1.2m height
- ▶ Dogs must not be allowed to chase people or other animals
- ▶ Any droppings left by a dog must be cleaned up and disposed of properly.



Visit greaterdandenong.com/dogoffleash for more information.

Garden waste can feed the earth



Did you know that by using your garden waste bin correctly you can enjoy the best quality food?

The green lid garden waste bin is taken to a processing plant where it is turned into nutrient-rich compost that is used to help farmers grow food crops and pastures.

By making sure only the right items are placed into your bin you will be helping to create a high-quality compost which is sent to gardens and farms across Victoria. Just like us soil needs food and the better fed the soil is, the healthier the crops they grow.

It is important to only place grass, small branches, flowers, leaves and weeds in your green lid bin. Other items, such as plastic, glass, bricks and building rubble can contaminate a truckload of green waste, making the whole load unusable.



Visit greaterdandenong.com/waste to find out what happens to your garden waste and exactly what can go into your garden waste bin.



striking artwork

Wominjeka

...recognition of the Bunurong and Wurundjeri peoples



A large scale artwork overlooks Harmony Square and recognises Greater Dandenong's links to our nation's first people.

Installed in July, the striking art work was created by Dandenong-based Aboriginal artist Ian Harrison. It celebrates the Aboriginal concept of 'wominjeka' (welcome) and reflects Council's

recognition of the Bunurong and Wurundjeri peoples of the Kulin nation's custodianship of the land where the City of Greater Dandenong sits.

The design of *Wominjeka* reflects local narratives relevant to Dandenong and includes a local shield depicting the emu and goanna.

More of Ian's work can be seen locally, including at Drum Theatre. He also recently completed a project at Tirhatuan Park where reclaimed red gum branches were painted with traditional Aboriginal iconography. *Spreading the Message* was completed with the help of local school students.

Garden upgrade for Corio Reserve

A Springvale South reserve will receive a garden upgrade in a bid to help cool the neighbourhood.

Corio Reserve, on Corio Drive, will be improved thanks to a grant from the Federal Government's Community Environment Program Grants. The grant aims to keep temperatures down by planting gardens and street trees that increase shade.

Increased shade produces a cooling effect in summer and has proven to

significantly reduce heat mortality rates for old and frail people during extreme heat days. Other benefits include connecting environments, reducing air pollution and making a neighbourhood more comfortable and pleasant.

Shady environments can also reduce reliance on air conditioning, which may result in lower electricity costs for some households.

Under Council's Urban Tree Strategy – *Greening Our City* we have implemented a 10-year planting program to increase tree canopy cover across the city. Corio Reserve will also have a beautiful native garden planted to attract birds and insects and Council



believes the works would benefit users of the park and neighbouring households.

➤ If you would like to know more about the works or want to comment please contact Council on 8571 1702.

This Girl Can – Make her Move



Keeping active while observing restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic has proved a challenge, but there are many ways to keep moving.

Prior to the pandemic Council worked in collaboration with the VicHealth *This Girl Can* program, Reclink, Centre of Multicultural Youth and Volleyball Victoria, to engage female residents in physical activity.

Several activity groups, including freestyle golf, volleyball lite, and social soccer were organised over three weeks in March.

The program targeted older women at Parkglen Retirement Village, carers and young families attending Ellendale Play Group, and young people visiting JC Mills Reserve. The campaign was successful, with more than 150 residents engaging in weekly physical activity for the three-week period.

Extensive research suggests that women avoid physical activity for many different reasons and the program aimed to encourage young girls and women of all ages to reframe their idea of activity.

Following the success of the program, Council will run more *This Girl Can* activities for female residents when lockdown restrictions ease.

In the meantime visit thisgirlcan.com.au to find out more and access online resources.

The health and wellbeing of all residents is a priority for Council and we encourage residents to find ways to keep active within the current restrictions.

Taking a walk close to home, playing outside with your children or pottering in your garden are simple ways to get moving.

Online resources including exercise videos for all fitness levels are also available.

At the time of publication, our local swimming pools and recreation centres were closed, however the YMCA offers online resources to encourage activities for families.



Visit nobleparkaquaticcentre.com.au or dandenongoasis.com.au for more information.

Residents are encouraged to follow the latest COVID-19 restrictions as advised by health authorities when exercising outside of the home.

National award for youth project

A campaign against family violence conceived by Greater Dandenong youth has been recognised at the 2020 National Awards for Local Government.

The Youth United Against Family Violence project received the top award in the category Addressing Violence Against Women and Children. The project is now in the running for the 2020 National Award for Excellence in Local Government.

In 2019 ten youth ambassadors were selected to lead a project to change attitudes and behaviour towards family violence.

They chose three key messages and developed short video advertisements aimed at reaching their peers. The youth



ambassadors guided the entire creative process with help from Momentum Studios Australia.

Greater Dandenong Mayor Jim Memeti said he was proud of the young people involved in the project.

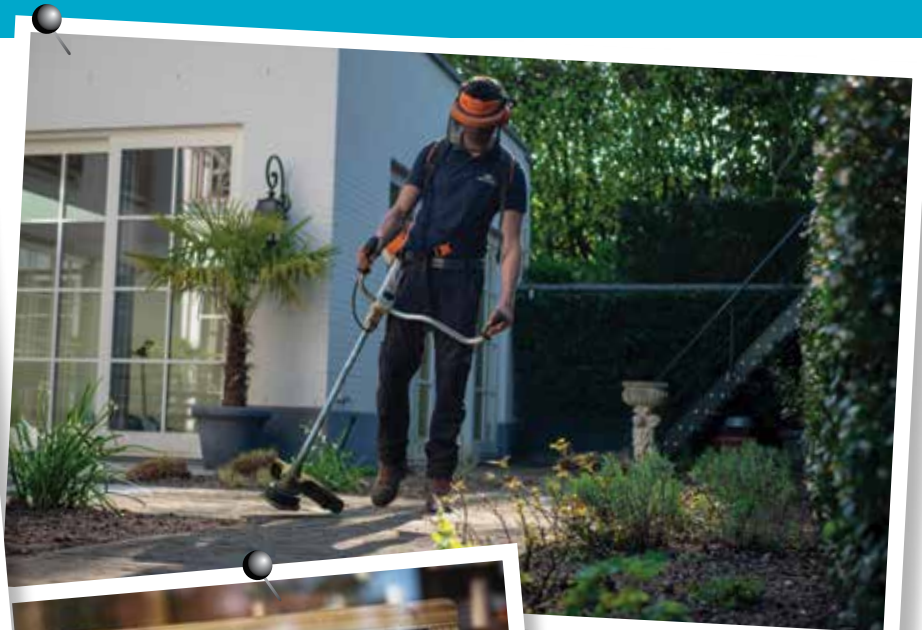
“This is an important issue in our community and young people often feel like they are not part of the conversation,” Mayor Memeti said.

“Through this project these young people have been able to use their voices and reach out to their peers. I am sure these videos will make a difference for so many and not just within our own community.”

The advertisements were launched at last year’s Greater Dandenong Walk Against Family Violence.

Council’s Youth and Family Services will use the advertisements as part of education campaigns for local youth, but these plans were delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic forcing Victoria into lockdown and the closure of local schools for the first time in March. The advertisements were instead used in a social media campaign that reached more than 200,000 people.

Visit youth.greaterdandenong.com to see the videos.



GO LOCAL FIRST

A national campaign encouraging Australians to support local businesses is hoping to stimulate the economy and keep jobs.

Early May 2020 data showed our city supported 98,000 jobs and had an economic output of more than \$39 billion. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted local employment with the Greater Dandenong unemployment rate estimated to have increased by at least four per cent in recent months. The hardest hit businesses were in the retail trade, and accommodation and food services.

While many businesses have adapted their offerings to suit the current circumstances, some are relying on the ongoing support of loyal customers to get them through.

The Go Local First campaign is funded by the Australian Government and supported by the Council of Small Business Organisations Australia (COSBOA). Go Local First promotes the idea that if we buy and spend

locally, we keep local jobs, and supporting our local economy we can help the nation's economy recover in the long term.

Research commissioned by COSBOA shows that Australians are spending more at local businesses since the introduction of COVID-19 lockdowns in March, but ongoing restrictions are preventing many from doing more.

Greater Dandenong is home to thousands of small businesses. These businesses collectively make a significant economic and an enormous social contribution to our community.

These are businesses where our children get their first jobs. They support local charities, sporting clubs, kindergartens and schools. They remember our names and our regular orders. They are the heart and soul of our community and they rely on our business.

There are businesses we rely on everyday, from the local café to bakers, butchers and greengrocers. There are also businesses that we turn to less frequently, including tradesmen and accountants. By keeping these businesses afloat you are supporting local families.

In last month's *Greater Dandenong Council News* we featured the Great Bites Open for Business initiative, listing local food businesses who continue to serve coffee, snacks and meals throughout the lockdown period.

This month we ask residents to show their support for all local business by sharing and tagging their stories on social media with the tags #greatbitesopenforbusiness and #golocalfirst.

Visit golocalfirst.com.au to find out more about the campaign and how to get involved.

If you have a food business and wish to be involved in Council's marketing campaign, complete an online form to be featured on the website. Visit greaterdandenong.com/greatbitesopenforbusiness to find out who is open for business or to list your own.



Support for residents

The COVID-19 pandemic has been affecting residents for the past six months and will continue to affect us all for some time to come.

There are a range of support services set up to help everyone, including those suffering financial hardship, medical concerns, housing issues and personal distress.

Council is working with local charities and support agencies to help our most vulnerable residents with material aid.

Demand on local support services has become more difficult during the pandemic, but we are doing our best to support those most in need.

Greater Dandenong residents needing immediate support can phone the COVID-19 hotline on 1800 675 398 and select option 3. You will be put straight through to a Red Cross volunteer who will be able to connect you with the right support. This phone service operates 24 hours a day.



Any agencies interested in contributing to Council's material aid efforts or residents needing further help with getting support can email materialaidenquiries@cgd.vic.gov.au.

Here are some other resources to help connect you with support.

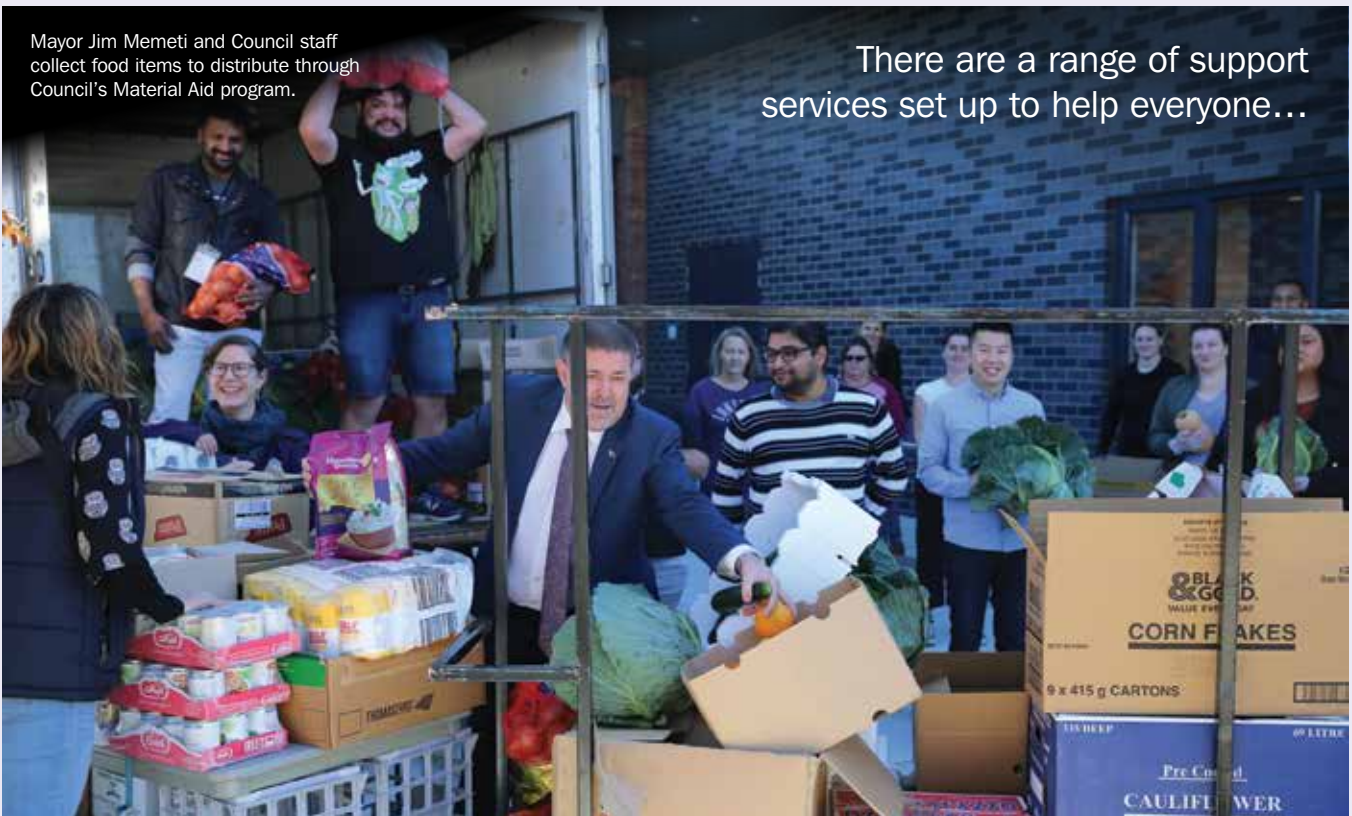
- ▶ To find out more about the Coronavirus infection and the latest advice from the State Government and the Chief Medical Officer visit vic.gov.au/coronavirus
- ▶ People with disabilities and their carers can phone the **Carers Advisory Line on 1800 514 845** or the **National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) on 1800 800 110**
- ▶ Parents seeking crisis support can phone the **Parents Helpline on 132 289** (8am–12pm seven days)

- ▶ International students can visit studyinaustralia.gov.au or phone **1300 981 621**
- ▶ Information for immigrants and visa holders can be found at covid19.homeaffairs.gov.au
- ▶ Those suffering from family violence can contact **Safe Steps Family Violence Crisis Response Centre on 1800 015 188** (24 hours) or **RESPECT on 1800 737 732** (24 hours)
- ▶ Housing tenants who need advice can visit tenantsvic.org.au
- ▶ For legal advice on issues relating to COVID-19 visit legallaid.vic.gov.au
- ▶ Workers seeking advice on leave, standing down employees and general rights relating to COVID-19 can visit coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au.

Council has also extended a rate waiver to residents receiving the Jobseeker payment until 30 November 2020. For more information refer to page 3 in this magazine.

 **Visit greaterdandenong.com for more information.**

Mayor Jim Memeti and Council staff collect food items to distribute through Council's Material Aid program.



Greater Dandenong

Children's Festival

Online

Create a New Story
19 September - 4 October 2020

