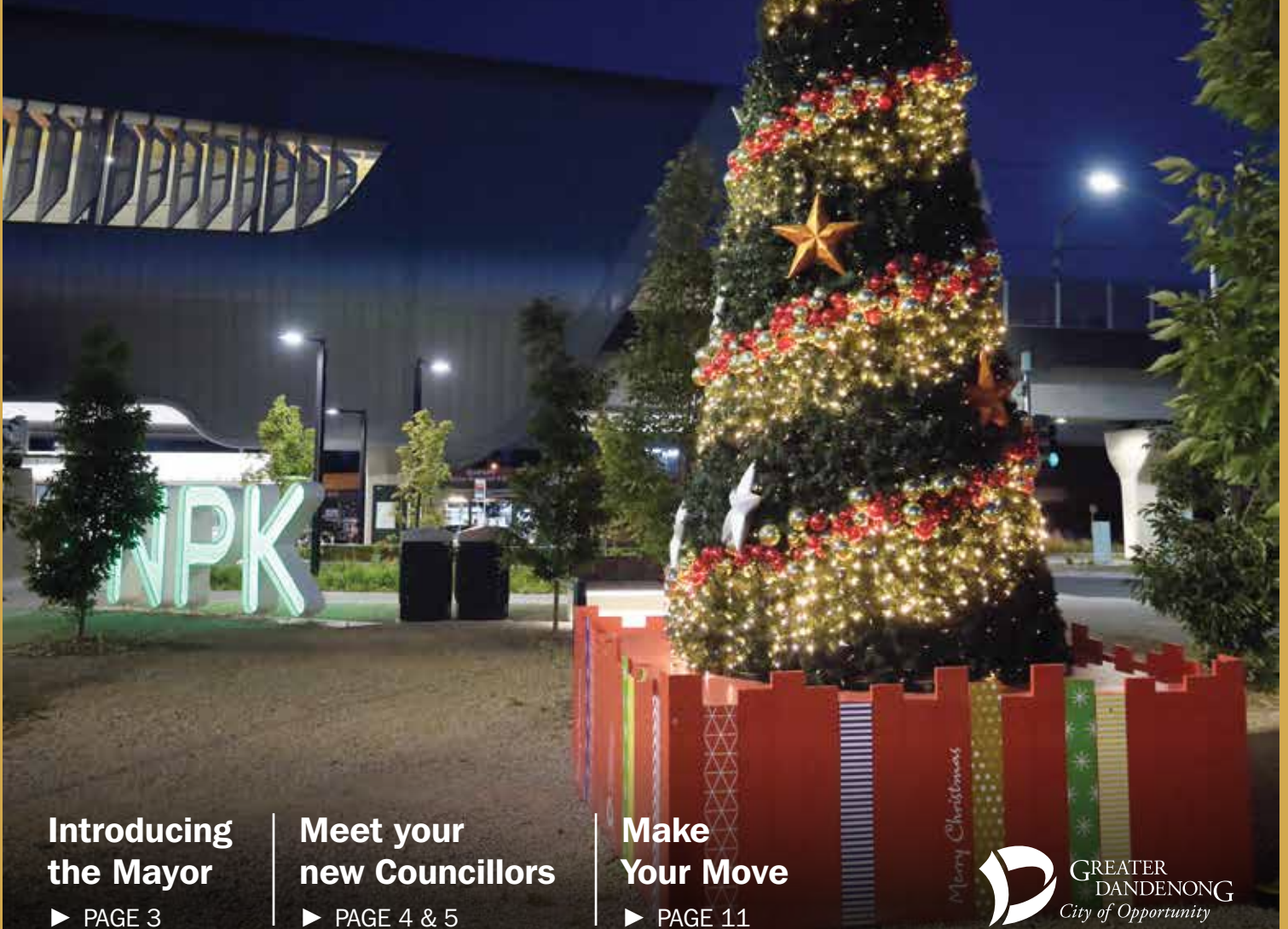


Greater Dandenong Council News

Christmas in Greater Dandenong

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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.vic.gov.au



@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 issue of Greater Dandenong Council News covering December and January.

During 2020 we have faced some challenging times. The global COVID-19 pandemic has placed pressure on all of us, financially and emotionally.

The people of Greater Dandenong are resilient, and I have been proud to see how our residents and businesses have pulled together to support one another in these uncertain times. Unfortunately some people have used this pandemic to blame certain sections of our community and specific cultural groups for positive cases in our city.

The City of Greater Dandenong is the most culturally diverse city in Australia. Our residents come from 157 different birthplaces and speak more than 200 different languages. This diversity is our strength and is what makes Greater Dandenong such a vibrant and welcoming place to live.

Council has always supported all of our residents and we continue to do so. The fight against the Coronavirus is one we have tackled as a whole community and we applaud the efforts of every person who stayed home during the tough restrictions, and who continues to wear a mask, practice good hygiene and observe social distancing guidelines. Together we have been able to slow the spread of the virus.

Council has worked to keep every member of the community informed. This has proved challenging at times, but we continue to work with community leaders and those who can help spread our message in every language. Now more than ever, it is vital to ensure all members of our community feel supported and engaged as we continue to affirm that everyone is welcome and everyone belongs.

Only recently our new Council was sworn in. Read about my plans for my term as Mayor on the opposite page, then turn to pages 4 and 5 and read about the councillors who will serve you for the next four years.

Read about Greater Dandenong's Christmas spirit on page 8, then turn to page 9 to hear about plans to celebrate Australia Day in 2021.

As we farewell 2020, I would like to wish you and your loved ones a Merry Christmas and a happy and safe journey into the new year.



**Mayor
Cr Angela Long**



This publication is available in alternative formats upon request.

Introducing our new Mayor

Cleeland Ward Councillor Angela Long has been elected Mayor of the City of Greater Dandenong for the third time. Cr Long brings a wealth of experience to the role having served as a councillor between 1997–2005, and from 2008 to now. Cr Long was previously elected Mayor in 2000 and 2012.

Having lived in Greater Dandenong almost all her life, Cr Long has worked with the Dandenong and District Aborigines Corporative for a number of years, is a life member of the North Dandenong Cricket Club, patron and public officer of the Bunjil Aboriginal Dance Group, president and life member of the Dandenong Day Nursery, Honorary member of the Noble Park RSL, member of the North Dandenong Senior Citizen's Club and Life Governor of the Freemasons Homes and Hospital.

Cr Long is passionate about supporting the community, particularly youth.

“The opportunity to represent the residents of one of Australia's most vibrant municipalities is one I take very seriously, and I'd like to thank my fellow Councillors for having the confidence in me to lead this great city over the next twelve months,” Cr Long said.

Cr Long said she is committed to developing this city's future and representing the needs of all residents as we recover from the events of 2020.

“The events of this year have hit Greater Dandenong residents particularly hard. The pandemic has affected our most vulnerable residents significantly. I am proud of the significant investment Council has made towards the recovery of this great city, and I look forward to working with my fellow Councillors to ensure our residents and businesses can bounce back.”

“Whilst I am very much looking forward to the year ahead, I also want to take time to acknowledge the work of my predecessor, Cr Jim Memeti who has served the city incredibly well as Mayor during the previous 12 months,” Cr Long said.

“Jim played an exceptional role in leading Council and the community through a very turbulent year, which included a number of critical support services and financial aid for our residents.”

Despite the challenges of 2020, Cr Long said this year's achievements have set up the City of Greater Dandenong for success in the year ahead.

“This year's opening of the Springvale Community Hub, upgrades to sports grounds across the municipality, strengthening of business support as they reopen after lockdown – there's a lot to celebrate and a lot to look forward to.”

“This year has been a year of new beginnings in many ways. Not only can we see five fresh new faces on Council, we have elected our first Deputy Mayor, Cr Sophie Tan.”

Cr Angela Long will be supported by Cr Sophie Tan, who has been elected as Deputy Mayor for the next 12 months.

Under the *Local Government Act 2020*, a Deputy Mayor must specifically perform the role and exercise any of the powers of the Mayor if the Mayor is unable for any reason to attend a Council Meeting, is incapable of performing the duties of office of Mayor for any reason or if the office of Mayor becomes vacant throughout the mayoral term.



Councillor Contacts



Cleeland Ward – Mayor
Cr Angela Long
Ph/Fax: 9795 6574
0466 004 616



Dandenong North Ward
Cr Bob Milkovic
0435 237 051
bob.milkovic@cgd.vic.gov.au



Dandenong Ward
Cr Jim Memeti
0434 560 239
jim.memeti@cgd.vic.gov.au



Keysborough South Ward
Cr Rhonda Garad
0435 107 584
rhonda.garad@cgd.vic.gov.au



Keysborough Ward
Cr Tim Dark
0466 403 914
tim.dark@cgd.vic.gov.au



Noble Park North Ward
Cr Lana Formoso
0435 530 536
lana.formoso@cgd.vic.gov.au



Noble Park Ward – Deputy Mayor
Cr Sophie Tan
0466 793 727
sophie.tan@cgd.vic.gov.au



Springvale Central Ward
Cr Richard Lim
0435 627 164
richard.lim@cgd.vic.gov.au



Springvale North Ward
Cr Sean O'Reilly
0422 523 258
sean.oreilly@cgd.vic.gov.au



Springvale South Ward
Cr Loi Truong
0466 004 618
loi.truong@cgd.vic.gov.au



Yarraman Ward
Cr Eden Foster
0435 202 645
eden.foster@cgd.vic.gov.au

MONDAY

14

DECEMBER

MONDAY

25

JANUARY

Council Meetings

Just one Council meeting will be held in each month for December and January.

All Council meetings are held at the Dandenong Civic Centre from 7pm. Check our website updates as to when these will reopen to the public.

The last meeting of 2020 will be held:

Monday 14 December

The first meeting of 2021 will be held:

Monday 25 January

The general public is always welcome to attend meetings and can now ask their questions in person during Public Question Time, but did you know you can watch Council meetings live via our webcast service?

You can keep up with all the latest decisions, hear questions from residents and find out the many ways your local councillors are serving the community.

➔ The view meetings online or to find out more about Public Question Time simply go to greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/council-meetings

DECEMBER
JANUARY



Meet your Council

Results of the Greater Dandenong City Council election have been declared with the following Councillors elected to represent the community across 11 single-councillor wards.

This year's election was conducted in exceptional circumstances associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite this, the election achieved its highest ever average turnout for local council elections in Victoria at 81.4 per cent.

Councillors represent all members of the community. A great place to live, work and invest, the City of Greater Dandenong is a place where people from all cultures and nations are welcomed, involved and well cared for and achievements are recognised and celebrated.

**Cleeland Ward – Mayor
Cr Angela Long**

I have lived in Greater Dandenong almost all of my life. I am committed to developing this city's future and representing the needs of all residents. I want to increase positive perceptions of safety within the community, and I am particularly interested in continuing



my work with the Dandenong and District Aborigines Cooperative and ensuring we continue to support all sectors of our community, particularly our youth. I have served as a Councillor from 1997–2005 and 2008–present. I am very passionate about working with the Greater Dandenong community including, but not limited to, the industrial and commercial sector.

**Dandenong North Ward
Cr Bob Milkovic**

I have been a local resident for the past 22 years, ever since I have migrated to Australia. Working in our local area has given me a good understanding of the issues we are facing and the determination to solve them. Being a part of this community for so long has put me in a unique position to experience firsthand what our wonderful city needs to be reignited and revived. My priority would be to assist in creating a place we can all once again be proud to call home and with your support, we can do it.





Meet your Council

Dandenong Ward

Cr Jim Memeti

I'm a proud Dandenong resident of more than 40 years. I was first elected to Council in 2005 driven by my desire to change perceptions of Dandenong. During my time on Council I have been privileged to be involved in a number of key milestones for this city. I am most proud of the Dandenong Civic Centre (completed in 2014) and the Springvale Community Hub (completed in 2020). I remain committed to achieving the best possible results for everyone who lives and works in this city. I have served as a councillor from 2005–present.



Keysborough South Ward

Cr Rhonda Garad

My vision for Keysborough South Ward is for a community well supported to face the challenges of COVID and thrive in the post pandemic recovery. I will work for a safer, stronger, fairer community, providing high quality facilities and services. I am a health professional, former small business owner and I have a strong track record as a voice for community groups, or listening and then developing plans that respond to community needs.



Keysborough Ward

Cr Tim Dark

I grew up in Keysborough and having spent most of my life here the needs of our residents and ratepayers are my top priority. I actively support local sporting clubs and work hard to secure improvements to sporting facilities and reserves. The rebuilding and recovery of our community following the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions is a priority. I am committed to improving our physical environment and community safety. I have served as a councillor from 2016–present.



Noble Park North Ward

Cr Lana Formoso

I love our area, but I believe that we can do better. I think we need a fresh approach. My priority is to listen more to the community and improve services and facilities. I have lived in Greater Dandenong all my life and am now raising my family here. I am committed, available, energetic, and ready to listen and work hard for our area. I am a teacher and a volunteer for the State Emergency Service (SES) and many local sports and social clubs.



Noble Park Ward – Deputy Mayor

Cr Sophie Tan

It's been a great honour representing our local community, where I have lived for over 25 years. I was proud to be elected as the first female Cambodian Councillor in Victoria since 2019–present. I have been a strong and committed advocate for the local community, securing funding for Ross Reserve upgrade, re-development of Noble Park Aquatic Centre Gymnasium, plans for revitalising the Noble Park Activity Centre and reserves. I love our local community and am proud to represent you. I will keep working hard to make our neighbourhood an even better place.



Springvale Central Ward

Cr Richard Lim

My vision for Greater Dandenong is to attract new residents and visitors, support local jobs, and businesses and make this city a desirable place where everyone can enjoy our rich culture, strengthening our sense of community and local economy. I hope to achieve this by improving infrastructure and local education, preventing littering, increasing public safety, supporting community groups, raising awareness of all cultures and promoting senior health. I have a renowned passion for the community through decades of philanthropy work and running Lim's Pharmacy in Springvale since 1991.



Springvale North Ward

Cr Sean O'Reilly

As now one of the more experienced councillors, I look forward to working with my colleagues and setting goals for how our council can be the most well-run, efficient and responsive council in Victoria. Challenges will continue, but I believe council has an important role in connecting and uniting the community so that we move in the one direction. As always, you can contact me anytime.



Springvale South Ward

Cr Loi Truong

I resettled in Australia in 1983 after living in Hong Kong as a refugee of the Vietnam Conflict. One of my key goals is to assist the migrant community to integrate with the Australian way of life. I place high priority in developing a harmonious community and addressing the resettlement issues new Australians face. I work to raise the profile of issues facing less privileged members of the community. I strive to improve the quality and safety of public places and parks. A Councillor since 2008, I take great pride in giving something back to Australia to say thank you for the opportunity to live and raise my family here.



Yarraman Ward

Cr Eden Foster

Our neighbourhood is a great place to live but it's time for a fresh approach. I want to help get the basics right, including rubbish removal, cleaning graffiti, repairing roads, parks and footpaths, and taking a new approach to services for the youth and seniors. I grew up locally and still live and volunteer in Noble Park. As a secondary school psychologist, I understand how important it is to keep our youth engaged. I was raised on values of fairness, equality and compassion. Residents will always be able to rely on me to listen and act on their concerns.



Council services have been reopened in line with advice from the Chief Health Officer. To keep up to date with the latest please visit greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au or phone 8571 1000.

Customer Service Christmas Hours

Friday 25 December:
Christmas Day CLOSED

Saturday 26 December:
Boxing Day CLOSED

Monday 28 December:
Boxing Day public holiday CLOSED

Tuesday 29 December:
Normal hours resume

Friday 1 January:
New Year's Day CLOSED

Monday 4 January:
Normal hours resume

Library Christmas Hours

Friday 25 December:
Christmas Day CLOSED

Saturday 26 December:
Boxing Day CLOSED

Sunday 27 December:
CLOSED

Monday 28 December:
CLOSED

Tuesday 29 December:
Reduced hours

Wednesday 30 December:
Reduced hours

Thursday 31 December:
Reduced hours

Friday 1 January:
New Year's Day CLOSED

Saturday 2 January:
Reduced hours

Sunday 3 January:
Reduced hours

Monday 4 January:
Reduced hours

For specific opening hours visit greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au or phone 1300 630 920.

Creative Industry Space



Greater Dandenong Council wants to hear from local residents interested in the introduction of a new art space in the heart of Dandenong.

Council is considering redeveloping a disused industrial building into a creative industry space for the development of artistic capability and would like to hear from people who would potentially use the space.

The building in question is the former Precinct Energy Plant at the corner of Halpin Way and Moysey Lane, Dandenong. It is next to the old Masonic Hall, which is being developed into the new Greater Dandenong Gallery of Art.

The building could include space for creative artforms such as digital and new media art, film, game design, live art, community theatre, music production and performance, as well as catering for more traditional art forms.

The current building has no natural light source so uses would be limited, however Council wants to explore how creators could use the space and how it could be used to add to our already vibrant arts community.



Visit greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/creative-industry-space for more information and to have your say. The survey closes on Sunday 20 December.

Council's new website



If you have visited the Greater Dandenong website lately, you will have noticed we have had a major update.

Launched in November, the new website is a significant step in Greater Dandenong's digital transformation journey.

This project has seen us completely redesign and rebuild our corporate website, including brand new websites for the Drum Theatre and Youth Services.

Some highlights of the new corporate website include:

- ▶ a modern and easy to navigate design
- ▶ an improved search function
- ▶ a help bot
- ▶ dedicated pages for Council works and projects, parks and venues, and consultations
- ▶ Google translate across all website pages.

The website is accessible on all devices so residents can access Council information whenever and wherever they need to.



Visit greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au and explore. Council welcomes your feedback so please fill out our online feedback form.



The site has been occupied by various retail pharmacies serving the community from the late 1800s to the 1980s...

new
laneway

Vanity Lane

Council is working to create a new pedestrian laneway between Lonsdale and Thomas streets in central Dandenong.

The Vanity Lane project will see the demolition of the fire-damaged building at 275 Lonsdale Street, and the new laneway will capture the historical significance of the site.

The site has been occupied by various retail pharmacies serving the community from the late 1800s to the 1980s and was associated with several notable families and individuals.

The Couve family ran the pharmacy from 1911–1919. During that time their two sons were enlisted and sent to Gallipoli where they were among the first Dandenong boys to be killed in action.

The longest serving pharmacist, Charles McKeon, owned the shop from 1952–1976. His son Simon did not follow into the family's business, but established his own path and in 2011 he was recognised as 'Australian of the Year' for his charitable and community endeavours.

These stories are among those to be celebrated by the Vanity Lane project. Another key aspect of the laneway design will include medicinal plants and

greenery creating a garden effect.

During recent consultation on the project, respondents asked for a safe, clean and bright laneway that would help tell local stories and give the community pride in the local area.

Construction of the new lane will commence in 2021.

 **Visit greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/vanity-lane-project-consultation to find out more.**

Free parking in Dandenong


Until 31 December 2020, Council will waive all on-street parking fees in central Dandenong.

We hope this gesture encourages shoppers to support businesses in the retail precinct.

While the parking is free, time limits still apply and will be enforced. This offer does not include off-street car

parks in central Dandenong or the Dandenong Market car parks.

Council encourages residents to support local businesses while shopping over the festive season, and hopes that by shopping local we can help Greater Dandenong businesses recover from the challenging events of 2020.

 **Visit greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/parking for more information.**



Seasons Greetings from your Councillors



At the end of what has undoubtedly been a challenging year, now is the time to reflect on what has been achieved and to look forward to a promising 2021.

As newly-elected Councillors for the City of Greater Dandenong we look forward to representing and serving you during the year ahead.

We know that we face many challenges left over from the COVID-19 pandemic on 2020, but we are proud of the resilience this community has shown and we look forward to working with you all to build a vibrant and connected community.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a safe, peaceful and joyous festive season with your loved ones, and all the very best for the new year.



Council is bringing the festive spirit to Greater Dandenong with bright and oversized Christmas decorations dotting the city.

A colourful festive mural has been placed on the steps leading to Harmony Square, where a new 9m Christmas tree stands.

Dandenong Library's display window builds the festive atmosphere with the return of a life-sized Nativity scene.

Christmas trees have also been placed on Douglas Street, at Aubrey Moss Reserve, and in Springvale's Multicultural Place.

The Springvale Community Hub is a new location for decoration, with a giant Santa and reindeer taking pride of place in front of the new facility.

These large decorations are complemented with a range of smaller ones in all activity centres, including Christmas themed tree and pole surrounds and decorated public seating, metal Christmas trees in Springvale and "pole and dove" installations in Noble Park.



Visit greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/christmas for more information about the festive season in Greater Dandenong.

Christmas Carols



For the first time since it began 73 years ago and despite the odds faced in 2020, the Greater Dandenong Carols went ahead as a virtual event this year.

The sing-along concert on Friday 11 December was hosted by Denis Walter

and featured stars such as Rhonda Burchmore and The Winding Road Project.

Local talents were also showcased including the Greater Dandenong Band, With One Voice Choir, Dandenong Primary School and former X-Factor Australia finalist Mary Ann Van der Horst.

Although performances were socially distanced and viewers were physically

apart, audiences were able to celebrate together with the community and even received a special live greeting from Santa in the comfort of their own homes. If you missed it, the concert is available to watch for a limited time.



Visit greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/carols for some Christmas cheer.



Myths, fairy tales and legends at the library

Greater Dandenong Libraries is calling on all primary school aged children to join the Summer Reading Club and discover lots of reading fun and a chance to win some great prizes.

Dare to encounter the world of Myths, Fairy Tales and Legends these school holidays and enter the realm of your imagination where stories come to life.

Register online or phone the library on 1300 630 920 and complete reading logs to go into prize draws. There will be fun competitions across the summer and parents can even review their favourite books for a chance to win.

As an added bonus, the school with the most Summer Reading Club Registrations will win a visit from a guest author.

Greater Dandenong Libraries hope to host a grand finale and prize presentations on Saturday 23 January, however this depends on restrictions in place. Participants will be advised of any celebrations.

Registration is now open and you can keep reading until Tuesday 19 January. Visit greaterdandenonglibraries.com/src for more information and to register.

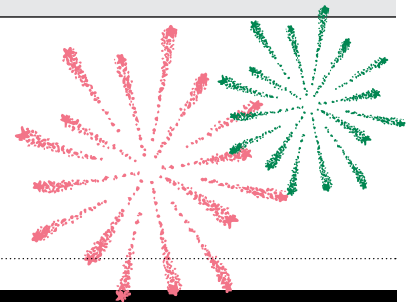
Australia Day Festival 2021

The City of Greater Dandenong is looking forward to celebrating the Australia Day Festival 2021. As the most culturally diverse community in Australia it is an important celebration of all our stories.

In 2021 celebrations will look a little different to other years but Council's Festival and Events team is planning new exciting ways to deliver this popular event to our residents which will also keep our community safe and healthy. The event will bring back last year's popular beach theme and will feature a variety of performances and creative and sporting activities. A key part of the program will be young people showcasing their talents via the FReeZA performance space.

Australia Day Festival 2021 will be a great way to celebrate the people who help make our city a great place to live, work and play. It will also celebrate our communities' amazing resilience and capacity for embracing change.

Visit greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/australia-day to register your interest and to keep up to date with the latest information on the Australia Day Festival 2021.



Calling all Ninja Warriors

Burden Park in Springvale South has opened a new active play area, based on the Ninja Warrior concept.

The first of its kind in Victoria, the course is designed for children aged 12 years and above. With a QR code for community championships, it's sure to generate healthy competition and provide a fun way to stay fit.

This is one of the many exciting parks and playground projects across the City of Greater Dandenong.

For more information on our parks, playgrounds and improvement projects visit greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au





Wildflower meadow in Dandenong

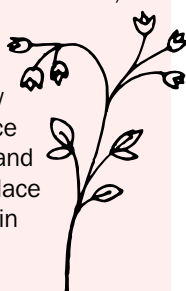
A new wildflower meadow has been created in central Dandenong and the colourful addition is bringing nature into the cityscape.

The concept was first trialled last year by Council's Parks and Gardens Team in a lawn area in Settlers Square near the Dandenong Train Station.

The beautiful display became an unexpected experience for passers-by and was well-shared and liked on social media.

The latest meadow can be found in Pultney Street, Dandenong. It was planted in mid-October and began to bloom in mid-November, attracting birds and insects to the area.

The wildflower meadow needs less maintenance than traditional lawns and creates a welcoming place to visit while shopping in central Dandenong.



Biodiversity

Biodiversity can be defined as the variety of all living things, including the different plants, animals and micro organisms, and the habitats and ecosystems they form.

Having a biodiverse environment is important to help create a healthy community. The healthier and more diverse each ecosystem or environment is, the more it can withstand the impacts of change.

Pressures like climate change, land clearing and pollution cause threats, but healthy and diverse environments stand a better chance of adapting under pressure.

Recently Council redeployed staff from departments affected by COVID-19 restrictions into the Parks Team. These staff have supported the planting of 54,000 native seedlings across our city growing our biodiversity.

In an encouraging sign that works over recent years are having a positive impact, we have recorded the return of a near threatened species at wetlands in Tatterson Park. The Blue-billed Duck in the above photo was recently spotted by residents. This species has not been seen locally for some time.



The City of Greater Dandenong and surrounding areas have some of Melbourne's most amazing environments. Our landscape is defined by a beautiful network of creeks, sandhills and flood plains, supporting some incredible plants, animals and insects like Blue-banded Bees, the Grey Headed Flying Fox, Powerful Owls, Sun Orchids, Growling Grass Frogs and our iconic Red Gums.

After declaring a Climate and Ecological Emergency at the start of 2020, Council is now looking to gain a better understanding of our biodiversity and how we can improve it for a better future for all.

We are working on a Biodiversity Action Plan and will soon ask for feedback on the draft Plan. Visit greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/biodiversity-action-plan-consultation to learn more.

More trees for Greater Dandenong

A series of above ground tree planter boxes have been installed in busy pedestrian locations throughout Dandenong and Noble Park.

The trees aim to improve the amenity of busy locations and provide comfort for visitors in the form of shade.

The trees first appeared in Springvale's Multicultural Place and have added much-needed foliage and greenery to the outdoor square.

With COVID-19 restrictions easing across Victoria, the placement of these planter boxes is perfectly timed to welcome people back to the activity centres.



Council recognises that many people have placed a high value on connecting with nature during the restrictions imposed by the pandemic. This project helps balance the hard paved surfaces of urban environments with natural features and helps reduce the impact of climate change increasing temperatures in built up urban areas.



It's time to Make Your Move



Council's new **Make Your Move Greater Dandenong Physical Activity Strategy**

2020–2030 is our plan to help transform the lives of people living in Greater Dandenong.

We are calling on residents to increase activity to help make a positive impact on all aspects of life, including physical and mental health.

Figures released by the state's peak health body VicHealth show that Greater Dandenong is falling behind the rest of Victoria in key health indicators.



Across Victoria 68 per cent of adults and 25 per cent of children are considered overweight or obese.

In Greater Dandenong the rate of people with type 2 diabetes is 36 per cent, compared to 9 per cent across all of Victoria.

Only 49 per cent of adults in our city achieve daily physical activity targets, compared to 73 per cent across the state.

The mental health indicators for Greater Dandenong residents also show significantly lower resilience levels than the Victorian average.

These facts represent more than numbers – they represent people's lives. Physical activity is shown to affect every part of a person's life, from health and happiness to future opportunities.

➔ We want to show you there are many easy and affordable ways to get moving. Visit greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/make-your-move to find out more.

Multi-sport courts

Parks and reserves across Greater Dandenong offer opportunities for all members of the community to get active.

Council is committed to providing environments to encourage physical activity and over the past few years has installed multi-sports courts at five reserves. The courts give visitors the chance to play a range of sports on marked courts.

Four full-sized courts can be found at Ross Reserve in Noble Park (pictured), Burden Park in Springvale South, Dandenong Park and the Urban Park in George Street, Dandenong.

Another half-sized court has been built at Tatterson Park in Keysborough.

At all reserves the courts add another opportunity for visitors to be active and sit alongside walking tracks, sporting ovals or children's play equipment.

At Ross Reserve the hybrid soccer/basketball court is next to the world class Noble Park Skate Park, and is within a short walk of outdoor exercise equipment, the Noble Park Aquatic Centre (NPAC) and the Noble Park Athletics Track.



Providing the opportunity and environment for our community to be more active is a focus of the Make Your Move Physical Activity Strategy 2020–2030.

YEAR IN REVIEW



On Tuesday 31 December, 2019, more than 12,000 people welcomed the New Year in at a community celebration in central Dandenong. As fireworks lit up the night sky families, friends and neighbours pledged to make 2020 a great year.

It's fair to say 2020 did not go to plan, but the Greater Dandenong community's resilience has shone through the tough times.

By March the COVID-19 pandemic hit, affecting residents and businesses across our city, nation and the world. Thrown into a new world of social distancing restrictions and lockdown – our community needed varying levels of support as we navigated an unprecedented health and economic crisis. Council invested in a relief package, which included rate relief for pensioners and people receiving the State Government's JobSeeker allowance.

A Material Aid program also launched, supporting thousands of locals with emergency food and material supports.

While tight restrictions were introduced across Victoria, Council worked to continue to provide services to the community, redeploying staff across Council operations and switching many programs to online delivery.

Art workshops, library storytimes and youth support services were delivered virtually, helping to keep our residents connected.

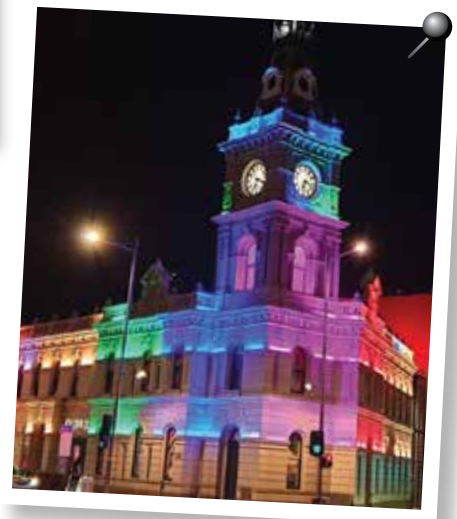
In May the Drum Theatre was lit up in rainbow colours as Council launched the LGBTIQ+ Inclusion statement to coincide with IDAHOBIT (International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia).

In June we adopted the 2020–21 Budget, recognising that adaptability would be the key as we move out of the initial COVID-19 pandemic and into a new 'COVID Normal'.

In August plans for the Keysborough South Community Hub got the green light from Council. We also celebrated the completion of the Springvale Community Hub, but the building only recently opened to the public for limited services due to ongoing restrictions.

In September we joined with 12 other Council's in Melbourne's east and south east to call for urgent action for more social housing to end homelessness.

2020



In October Greater Dandenong residents went to the polls to elect the new Council for the next four years. Councillors Youhorn Chea, Peter Brown and Matthew Kirwan retired from Council and following the counting of votes collected via postal ballot five new councillors were sworn in at a special meeting on 19 November. Councillors Zaynoun Melhem and Maria Sampey were not re-elected. The contributions of all five non-returning Councillors are appreciated by the Greater Dandenong community.

In a year that was marked with uncertainty, Greater Dandenong community members can be proud of the efforts they have made to support one another.

As we move into the New Year, we look forward to seeing our residents and businesses thrive in a changed world.

Food waste recycling



Kitchen scraps and food waste can soon be added to your green lid garden waste bin.

Starting from 5 April 2021, all Greater Dandenong residents with a garden waste bin will be able to reduce their waste to landfill by recycling food scraps alongside garden clippings, grass and leaves.

The green lid bin will become a food and garden waste bin, but there will be no additional cost for residents who already have the bin.

If you do not currently have a garden waste bin and would like one please contact Council's customer service team on 8571 1000. There will be a cost associated with adding this bin to your waste services.

Food and garden waste will be collected and taken to a local composting facility where it will be turned into high quality compost that is sold to Victorian farmers.

With the help of the Greater Dandenong community we can support the reduction of waste going to landfill and contribute to the creation of great quality compost to support our farmers.

Council would like to encourage residents who already compost organic food scraps to keep up this practice, however the new service can take all food scraps, which reduces the amount of waste put into your red lid bin.



The new service does not start until 5 April 2021 and information detailing the changes will be sent to every household before they take effect. In the meantime visit greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/waste to find out more.

2021 Community Calendar

Greater Dandenong is a beautiful city and we have captured some of its most photogenic sights for the 2021 Community Calendar.

The calendar, which came free with this magazine, features the kerbside waste collection schedule alongside handy waste and recycling tips.



If you did not receive a copy of the calendar or if you would like extra copies you can pick one up from Council's customer service centres or phone 8571 1000.

Tell us your Budget priorities for 2021-22

What do you think are the most important priorities for Greater Dandenong? What would you like to see Council spend next year's budget on?

Council would like to hear what is important to you and what you would like to see included in the 2021-22 Budget. A consultation process was undertaken in October however we would like to give more residents and stakeholders the opportunity to participate now the new Council has been elected.

Greater Dandenong Council spends approximately \$160m each year and is responsible for delivering a range of services to its local community. These services include:

- ▶ Children and families – childcare, maternal and child health, immunisation
- ▶ Health and wellbeing – disability services, home and community care, food safety
- ▶ Your home – rubbish and recycling, planning and building permits, pet registrations
- ▶ Sport and leisure – sportsgrounds, leisure centres, parks and gardens, festivals and events
- ▶ Roads and safety – roads and footpaths, car parks, street lighting
- ▶ Community - libraries, theatre and the arts, community centres

The consultation will run until 15 January 2021.

To submit your ideas please:

Click: greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/budget-consultation-2021-22

Phone: 8571 1000

Visit: Dandenong or Springvale customer service centres or libraries

Local businesses giving back



heartfelt thanks

Council would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to the many businesses who have donated food and essential goods to vulnerable residents via Council's Material Aid Program. The program will extend into 2021 to help residents still feeling the strain from financial stress caused by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Here we share stories from three local businesses. **If you own a business and would like to contribute email materialaidenquiries@cgd.vic.gov.au**

Granny's Food


Granny's Food is based in Dandenong South and specialises in producing Eastern European dumplings. The business has supported the community by donating more than 130kg of frozen dumplings for distribution in food parcels.

The COVID-19 lockdowns reduced product demand at local grocers and delis, and slowed their plans for growth. CEO Tatiana Kuzovova said the family-run business was not eligible for State Government income support and could not get a bank loan for three months.

Despite their challenges Tatiana jumped at the chance to support the Material Aid Program. She said she could personally relate to the hardships experienced by many in our community. When she first came to Australia from Russia, Tatiana said she had no family or social support, with her husband initially denied a visa.

"I was alone with a new baby and not eligible for government support," she said.

Donating to the program has provided Tatiana the chance to give back to her local community.

 **Visit grannysfood.com.au for more information about the business.**

Yingda

Yingda is a Springvale-based electronics retailer who has co-ordinated donations from 26 businesses from across Melbourne. They have so far collected more than 13,000 face masks, 4,000 rolls of toilet paper and over 500 bottles of hand sanitiser.

Yingda's Director, Lulu Yin, first appealed for donations via an online WeChat network of migrant business owners across Melbourne in May 2020.

Shane Shen is one of the staff who coordinated the donations and said they reached out to 100 businesses, with 26 offering to help Greater Dandenong.

"We have been collecting donations like toilet paper...we fundraised for the second and third batch (of goods) and we're still arranging the fourth batch, so there'll be more to donate," Mr Shen said.

Yingda has delivered invaluable material relief to our community's most vulnerable, but it has also helped to connect business owners and build strong networks for businesses who have had to meet new challenges during the pandemic.

 **Visit yingda.com.au to find out more about the company.**


Alexander Produce

Dandenong Market traders Alexander Produce answered a call from market management to support Council's Material Aid Program. Deciding they had the equipment and the transport the family-run business knew they could make a difference. Since March 2020 they have supplied more than \$150,000 worth of produce, including donating more than 400kg of high-quality fresh food from their own market stall.

Like many businesses Alexander Produce has been hit hard financially by the pandemic, particularly by the introduction of travel restrictions. CEO Alex Alexopoulos said with most customers living outside the 5km radius the business estimates it was running at 35 per cent of its usual activity during the harsher stages of lockdown.

"We finally received JobKeeper... but it's still not enough to cover the cost of business. We have customers, restaurants and suppliers, you know, and they're in trouble too," Alex said.

"(Our contribution is) for the community that has supported us throughout all these years, so now it's our turn to try and help them as well, for everyone to get through these trying times."

 **Visit alexandersfruit.com.au for information about the business.**

FOOD FROM HOME




For many of us food carries a strong association with our culture and family. Growing, making and sharing food is an easy way for us to connect with others.


Greater Dandenong City Council is encouraging residents to get involved in a new campaign designed to foster connection. Led by health-based charity Enliven Victoria, Food from Home aims to encourage more people to grow their own food at home.


Launched last month, Food from Home hopes to remove some of the barriers to growing food at home and will provide simple resources and create opportunities for gardeners to connect.

To receive a free seed pack, simply borrow any book, magazine or DVD/Blu-Ray on gardening, sustainability or climate change from Greater Dandenong Libraries. Speak to library staff for more information.

 **Visit foodfromhome.org to learn more and register for free seeds.**

Follow this project on social media at:

 @foodfromh0me

 @foodfromh0me

Don't lose sight of your vision



While 2020 has been a challenging year dominated by a global health emergency, it's still important for residents of Greater Dandenong to remember to look after their everyday health – especially their vision.

The Vision Initiative is reminding all Victorians to not lose sight of their vision and get regular eye tests, because 90 per cent of vision loss is avoidable or treatable if it is identified early. Don't wait for symptoms, book an eye test today.

Springvale optometrist Dr Loan Quach advises residents against ignoring changes in vision.

"Optometry practices are open and taking COVID safe precautions. You do not need a referral, if you are due for an eye check or have noticed a change to your vision, call your optometrist today to make an appointment," Dr Quach said.

Eye tests can be arranged directly through an optometrist and are often covered by Medicare. Alternatively speak to your GP to arrange a referral to an ophthalmologist.

Key tips for looking after eye health:

- ▶ Make sure you have regular eye checks, especially if you are over 40
- ▶ Protect your eyes from the sun by wearing a hat and sunglasses when outside
- ▶ Wear safety goggles eye protection when playing sports like squash, or performing activities like hammering, welding, mowing the lawn or gardening
- ▶ Do not smoke
- ▶ Maintain a healthy diet with regular exercise
- ▶ Manage your health including diabetes, blood pressure and cholesterol.

Managed by Vision 2020 Australia, the Vision Initiative is a Victorian Government funded integrated eye health promotion program which aims to prevent avoidable blindness and address the impact of vision loss in the Victorian community.

 **Visit www.visioninitiative.org.au for more information.**



Don't wait for symptoms, book an eye test today.

It's time to



Council has launched it's Make Your Move Greater Dandenong Physical Activity Strategy 2020-2030

Our aim is to support you to be more physically active because we know your health improves when you move, including your heart and joint health. Getting active also lowers your risk of diseases like type 2 diabetes.

To find out more and learn how you can Make Your Move visit:
greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/make-your-move