



GREATER
DANDENONG
City of Opportunity

Children's Plan 2021–2026

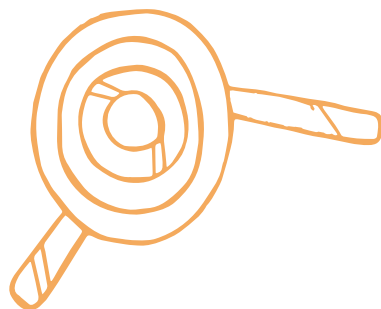




The City of Greater Dandenong respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of this land, their spirits and ancestors. We recognise and respect their continuing connections to climate, culture and Country.

Contents

Introduction	2
Development of the Plan	3
Review and development of the Plan	3
The role of Council	3
A social model of health	4
A demographic snapshot of children and their families	7
Integrated Vision and Strategic Planning	8
' <i>Children and their families are valued, celebrated, respected and supported to reach their full potential</i> '	8
Principles	9
Strategic Objective 1: Provide leadership and advocacy in planning for children and families	10
Strategic Objective 2: Strengthen health and wellbeing outcomes for children and families	12
Strategic Objective 3: Support engagement in learning, skill development and vocational pathways	14
Strategic Objective 4: Improve safety and accessibility for children and families to participate in the community	16
Strategic Objective 5: Value active participation and engagement of children, and families in the community	18
Definitions	20
Appendix A: Aligned Council Plans and Strategies	20
Endnotes	20



Introduction

Commitment

The City of Greater Dandenong, as a Child Friendly City, is committed to supporting and providing opportunities for children and their families.

Council is guided by the UNICEF Child Friendly Cities Framework and being a signatory to the Victorian Child Friendly Cities and Communities Charter. The Charter has been developed specifically for Local Governments, organisations and individuals to take actions that protect the rights of children up to the age of 18 years. It is primarily concerned with increasing participation and creating child-friendly environments.

The City of Greater Dandenong upholds the Victorian Charter for Human Rights and Responsibilities. The Charter contains 20 rights to protect freedom, respect, equality and dignity and all Local Governments, along with the State Government and other public authorities, must adhere to it.

The City of Greater Dandenong complies with the Victorian Child Safe Standards and Reportable Conduct Scheme. The Standards and Scheme seek to prevent the abuse of children to the age of 18 years and are mandatory for all organisations providing them with services.



Vision

The City of Greater Dandenong's vision for children and their families is to be valued, celebrated, respected and supported to reach their full potential.

Strategic approach in planning for children

The Children's Plan outlines an integrated approach in working together with and for children 0–13 years, acknowledging the important role of parents, carers and their extended families in supporting each child's development in education, health and wellbeing.



Development of the Plan

The development of the Children’s Plan has been informed by an extensive evidence-base developed by Council, including:

- Consultation with children, local service providers and relevant Council departments;
- A review of relevant policy frameworks at a local, state and federal level;
- Benchmarking activities;
- Review of the objectives of Council’s Imagine 2030 Community Plan, Council and Community Wellbeing Plans;
- Review of the previous Children’s Plan 2015–2019;
- Review of other Council strategies and plans to ensure an alignment of activities.



Review and development of the Plan

The City of Greater Dandenong will undertake annual action plans to accompany the Children’s Plan review. The review of the plan will consider:

- The extent to which the actions have been implemented over the course of the plan
- To identify emerging trends and opportunities
- Being responsive to changing needs and interests of children and their families.

The role of Council

The City of Greater Dandenong is uniquely positioned to support positive outcomes for children and families. Council’s close contact with the community is well placed to listen to the voices of children and families directly and to facilitate community participation. Council provides a wide range of essential services and supports to children and families. Council’s role is diverse and includes:

Leader: collaborate with tiers of government and service providers, to identify needs and mobilise innovative responses.

Planner: together with service providers, stakeholders and community, identify gaps and opportunities for responses.

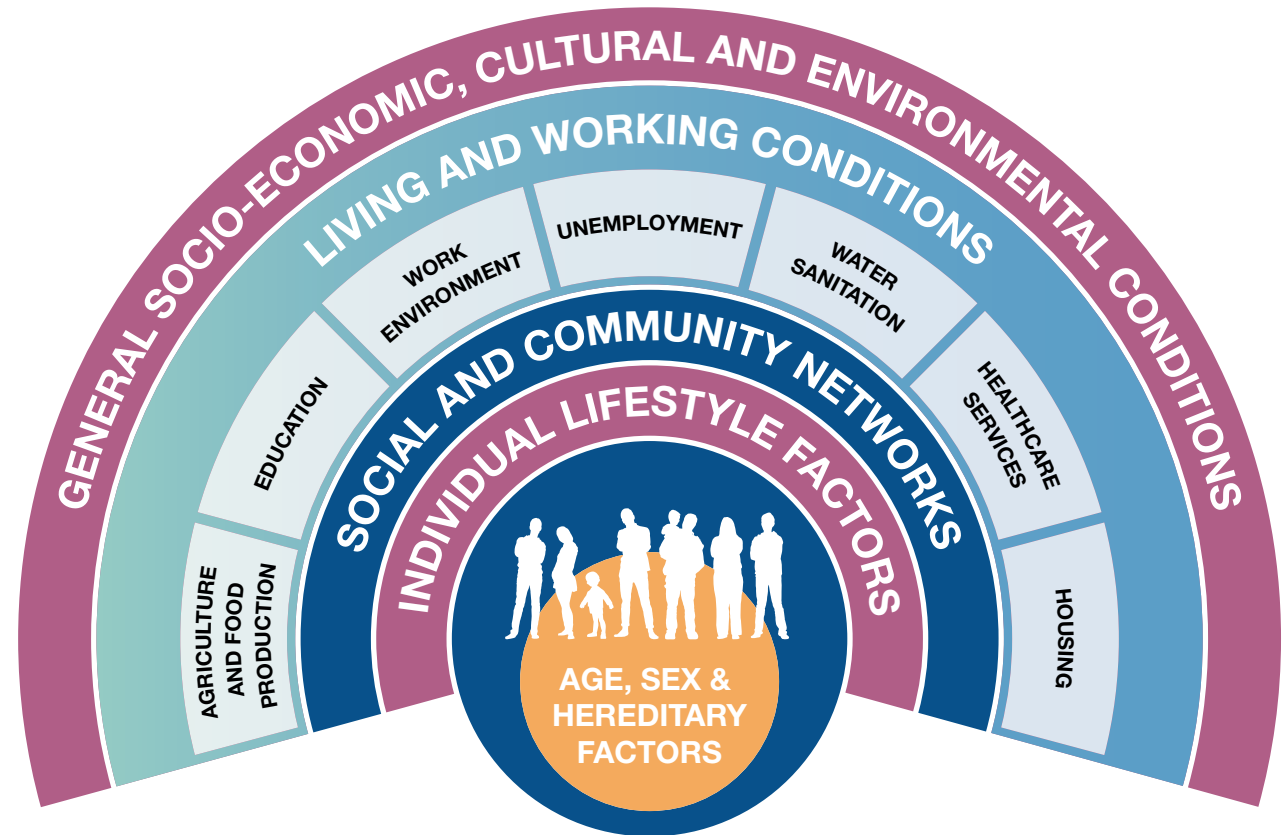
Advocate: provide advocacy on local needs and priority areas of concern for children, young people and families.

Provider: facilitate opportunities for children, young people and their families to actively participate in community and civic life.

A social model of health

Council works from a social model of health, recognising the multiple factors influencing a persons' health and wellbeing by individual characteristics, lifestyle factors, social, economic and environmental factors. Children wellbeing is also strongly influenced by their family and community context. All levels of government have a key role to play in supporting families and shaping the community.

All levels of government have a key role to play in supporting families and shaping the community.







A demographic snapshot of children and their families



Child population expected to grow by almost 4,000 in next five years to 2025



Australia's most culturally diverse municipality



Second highest number of birth notifications in the southern metropolitan Melbourne area



Approximately one-quarter of people seeking asylum in Victoria were living in the City of Greater Dandenong



0.3% of the population in the City of Greater Dandenong are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (516 people)



19% live in a single parent family



Residents from 157 different birthplaces and well over half (64%) of its population born overseas



446 children aged 0–13 years have a 'severe or profound' disability



55% of children aged 0–13 years live with parents/carers in a couple family



175,000 people live in Greater Dandenong



Approximately 19% are children aged 0–13 years

Integrated Vision and Strategic Planning

‘Children and their families are valued, celebrated, respected and supported to reach their full potential’

IMAGINE 2030 COUNCIL PLAN	COUNCIL PLAN	COMMUNITY WELLBEING PLAN	CHILDREN’S PLAN
THEME	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	PRIORITIES	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES
OPPORTUNITY	An open and effective Council	Safety, engagement and social cohesion	Provide leadership and advocacy in planning for children and families
PEOPLE	A vibrant, connected and safe community		
PEOPLE	A vibrant, connected and safe community	Mental and physical health	Strengthen health and wellbeing outcomes for children and families.
PEOPLE	A vibrant, connected and safe community	Learning and employment	Support engagement in learning, skill development and vocational pathways
PEOPLE	A vibrant, connected and safe community	Safety, engagement and social cohesion	Improve safety and accessibility for children and families to participate in the community
PEOPLE	A vibrant, connected and safe community A creative city that respects and embraces its diversity	Safety, engagement and social cohesion	Value active participation and engagement of children and families in the community

Principles

Council is committed to the following principles which underpin the development and implementation of the City of Greater Dandenong's Children's Plan

1. Leadership, Advocacy, Planning and Partnerships

Lead, advocate, plan and work in partnership to strengthen the local service system to be responsive to the changing needs of children and families.

2. Child and Family Centred Practice

Facilitate a strengths-based partnership approach in engaging families to uphold the best interests for children.

3. Continuous Improvement

Strive for continuous improvement that is evidence-based and consultative in the development of programs and services for children and families.

4. Participation and Engagement

Engage children in meaningful discussion and decision-making as active members in the community.

5. Diversity

Reflect and value the diversity of children backgrounds, opinions and experiences in the community.

6. Climate Change and Sustainability

Engage children in discussions on climate change and sustainability measures impacting their community.



Strategic Objective 1: Provide leadership and advocacy in planning for children and families

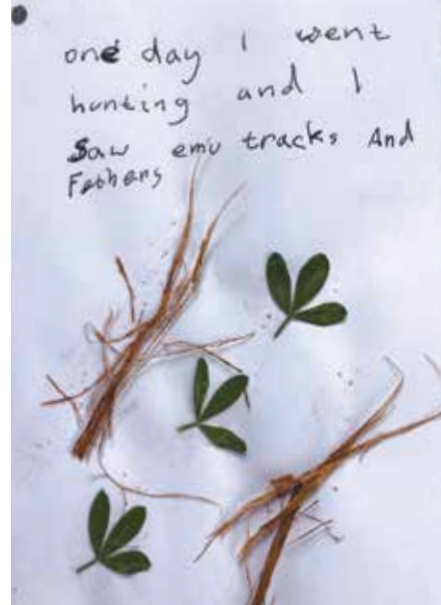
The City of Greater Dandenong has a central role to play in local infrastructure, service planning and the provision of high quality, sustainable services. Council's close proximity to the community means it is well-placed to be an advocate for community needs. Council works with all levels of government, various sectors, organisations, services and community members to create effective community outcomes.



Children have told us they value working with the Council to make decisions, having a say in their city and helping the community.¹

STRATEGIC KEY ACTIONS	OUTCOMES
1.1 Facilitate local service networks and joint planning to meet the changing needs of children and families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsive service planning for community needs
1.2 Explore external funding opportunities to be responsive to policy change in implementing timely three year old kindergarten provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External funding secured to meet community infrastructure needs
1.3 Advocate for the provision of flexible, quality, affordable child-care options for families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased access to child-care
1.4 Advocate for continued funding to the national quality reforms for child-care and early childhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National quality reforms funded
1.5 Advocate for the provision of support services dedicated to helping children and their families living in generational and situational disadvantage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased opportunities for social and economic participation
1.6 Advocate for additional funding sources to support the Community Hubs in Schools model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Hubs in Schools funded
1.7 Undertake infrastructure planning to ensure timely and targeted provision of facilities and services for children and families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely infrastructure development to meet community needs

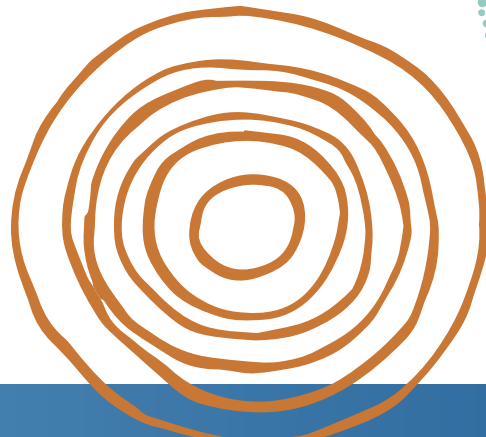




Strategic Objective 2: Strengthen health and wellbeing outcomes for children and families

Health and wellbeing encompasses physical, emotional and mental health. Council supports positive health and wellbeing outcomes for children and families through:

- universal health services
- health promotion and prevention activities
- building resilience in children and strengthening families
- early intervention support services
- promoting social inclusion and connectedness.



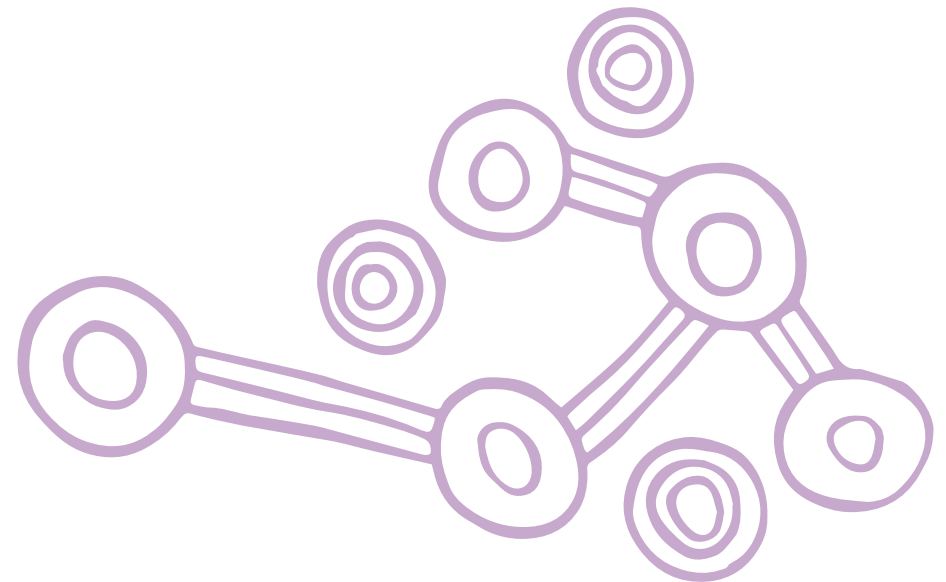
Children have told us that ‘being healthy’ means not only being physically fit and well but also ‘having a nice positive mind’ and being ‘happy, energetic and ready to learn.’²

STRATEGIC KEY ACTIONS	OUTCOMES
2.1 Increase participation of families with children aged 12 months and older in maternal and child health consultations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early identification of developmental vulnerabilities in children over 12 months of age • Improved maternal health outcomes
2.2 Increase attendance of vulnerable, refugee and newly arrived children at immunisation sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved immunisation rates across vulnerable cohorts
2.3 Encourage children and families to be physically active and participate in sport and recreational opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced barriers for participation in sport and recreation • Improved physical and mental health and wellbeing
2.4 Support preventative health initiatives and education for children and families in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nutrition and healthy eating • dental health and hygiene • adequate sleep and exercise • self-care and resilience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved physical and mental health wellbeing • Reduction in obesity and health related problems • Build resilient communities
2.5 Increase awareness of mental health and supports available for children and families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved mental health and wellbeing
2.6 Support initiatives to reduce the adverse effects of alcohol and drug use impacting children and their families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced alcohol consumption and drug abuse
2.7 Support opportunities for children and their families to build social connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved social connectedness
2.8 Develop partnerships with key health and wellbeing agencies to deliver activities to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families



Strategic Objective 3: Support engagement in learning, skill development and vocational pathways

Learning 'is a continuous process throughout life', children 'learn through a variety of formal and informal experiences within the classroom and more broadly in their home and in the community.' Council supports the provision of high quality early learning and care services.



Children have told us that education is important as it helps community and families be better, to communicate with everyone, and to get a job in the future.³

STRATEGIC KEY ACTIONS	OUTCOMES
3.1 Promote and support children to enrol in and participate in 3 and 4 year old Kindergarten programs, particularly vulnerable children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased participation rates in 3 and 4 year old kindergarten programs
3.2 Strengthen the capacity of parents and carers to support children’s learning and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased parenting skills • Improved learning outcomes for children
3.3 Support initiatives and activities for successful transition of children through key educational milestones of kindergarten, school and special education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children successfully navigate key transition periods of education
3.4 Develop pathways for newly arrived and refugee families to access English language education to support children’s literacy and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved English language literacy and learning

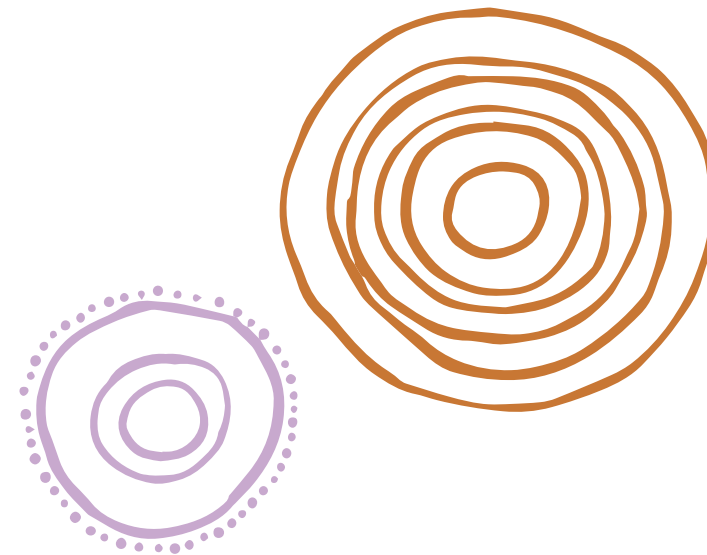


Strategic Objective 4: Improve safety and accessibility for children and families to participate in the community

Council has an important role to play in supporting the safety of children and families from bullying, discrimination and in accessing public spaces and amenities throughout the municipality.

Children have told us that they feel safe when they are with people they know will support and protect them⁴

STRATEGIC KEY ACTIONS	OUTCOMES
4.1 Support initiatives to address family violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduced incidence of family violence
4.2 Support positive parenting programs to build the capacity of parents and carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved parenting skills
4.3 Promote activities that encourage gender, race and disability equity for children	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved personal safety
4.4 Provide welcoming, safe, inclusive and culturally responsive services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved safety and accessibility
4.5 Activate safe and accessible public spaces and amenities for children	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved perception of safety





Strategic Objective 5: Value active participation and engagement of children, and families in the community

A child friendly city implements the 'Convention on the Rights of the Child' (1990) to local communities in partnership with children. Central to the Child Friendly City concept is that children's 'voices and opinions are taken into consideration and influence governance, decision making at a local level including laws, policies, programs and budget to improve the lives of children and to create sustainable environments now and into the future.



“Sometimes adults have a different way of thinking while children have a different way from adults which can really help.”⁵

STRATEGIC KEY ACTIONS	OUTCOMES
5.1 Support children to actively participate in planning of the natural, built, environmental and economic processes of Council that impact their daily living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved children’s participation in Council planning processes
5.2 Provide opportunities for children to be involved in civic engagement and leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active participation in civic engagement • Development of leadership skills
5.3 Support initiatives that promote a positive sense of pride in culture, identity and belonging for children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved sense of identity and belonging
5.4 Celebrate the contributions of children as active citizens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formalised recognition
5.5 Support children to participate in climate change and sustainability measures impacting community life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active participation in climate planning processes



Definitions

Universal service – everyone in a population has access to publicly available communication network of facilities and services

Appendix A: Aligned Council Plans and Strategies

- A Safe and Harmonious Greater Dandenong. A community safety plan for Greater Dandenong 2015–22
- Greater Dandenong People Seeking Asylum and Refugees Action Plan 2018–2021
- City of Greater Dandenong Disability Action Plan 2017–2023

- City of Greater Dandenong Reconciliation Action Plan 2017–2019 (updated 2019 to extend to 2020)
- City of Greater Dandenong Library Strategy 2018–2023 and Library Strategy Action Plan 2018–2021
- City of Greater Dandenong Open Space Strategy (Draft 2019)
- City of Greater Dandenong Make Your Move Physical Activity Strategy 2020–2030 (Discussion Paper)
- Greater Dandenong Climate Change Strategy 2020–2030 (Draft)
- Youth and Family Strategy 2015–2020 & 2021–2026 (Draft)

Endnotes

- ¹ City of Greater Dandenong (2020) Children’s Advisory Group member feedback noted within November meeting minutes.
- ² City of Greater Dandenong (2018) Activate Us Workshop, reported in the *City of Greater Dandenong Children’s Voice 2018 Report*.
- ³ City of Greater Dandenong (2018) Voice Lab Workshop, internal report.
- ⁴ City of Greater Dandenong (2019) Voice Lab workshop, reported in the *Children’s Forum 2019 Report*.
- ⁵ City of Greater Dandenong (2019) Voice Lab Workshop Transcript.

Indigenous symbols throughout the Children’s Plan have been extracted from Emma Bamblett’s painting commissioned for the Reconciliation Action Plan. For artwork descriptions please visit greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/reconciliation-action-plan





 (03) 8571 1000
 council@cgd.vic.gov.au
 greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au



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



TIS: 13 14 50

Follow us:

