

RESHAPING GREATER DANDENONG

May 2023



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OVERVIEW

The City of Greater Dandenong is a municipality rich with diversity and located in an area which has considerable economic benefit on a state and federal level. Whilst I have spent many years in local government as a Director and CEO this city has many new and interesting challenges unique to its diverse community and I look forward to providing leadership and guidance to Council in addressing these.

Greater Dandenong is well placed to be a sector leader in the provision of inclusive, high-quality services for multicultural communities.

Whilst Greater Dandenong is Australia's most culturally diverse municipality it is also part of the southeast Melbourne region which is one of the country's most important economic centres and houses a national employment and innovation cluster. Over 50 per cent of our rates income is from commercial and industrial so meeting the needs of both residents and businesses is critical. To do this requires strong partnerships, clear strategies and a focus on planning for our future.

I committed to Council that I would present them with a report of my first 100 days with Greater Dandenong which includes my observations, the challenges we are facing as an organisation and the key areas we have an opportunity to strengthen in order to drive the delivery of our Council Plan.

My focus for the first 100 days has been to understand the organisation and the community it serves and seek to highlight areas of opportunity to further enhance the quality of the services we provide.

I have met with our workforce to seek their opinions on the issues, challenges and opportunities facing the City of Greater Dandenong and they raised a number of topics regarding culture, work/life balance, and community,

The three most consistent themes across the sessions were:

1. Communication, in particular the value of cross collaboration.

2. Technology and the critical need to have fit for purpose technology solutions.

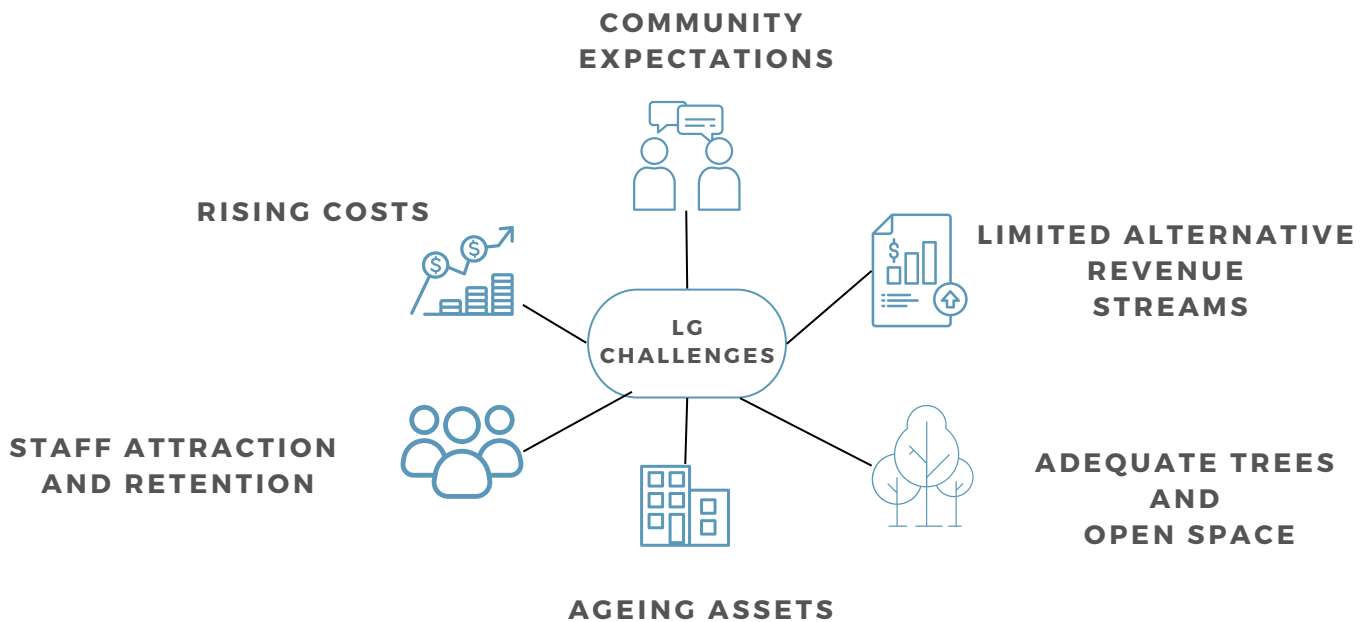
3. Financial sustainability, and the real need for additional resources to meet the needs of the community.

I have also undertaken a number of site visits, spent time on the phones in Customer Service, toured our parks and gardens, and rode with the sweepers in our cleansing team.

Meeting with key stakeholders to build positive relationships has been a priority and I have spent time with many people over the past six months including community organisation representatives, local business owners, State and Federal Government MPs and staff from neighbouring Councils who face many of the same challenges as us.

CHALLENGES

The local government landscape has changed and business as usual no longer exists. We face various challenges, financially, socially and environmentally, and these will continue to evolve over the next few years. These include:



The commitment to delivering on our current Council Plan and its strategic objectives continues but it is evident that a number of areas are still in need of improvement. The key topics discussed at the Councillor and Executive Team planning day were:

- under resourcing in areas which impact the organisation's reputation and readiness for the future
- the need for a more strategic, future focussed approach to planning
- increasing the effectiveness of how we manage our community's expectations and enhancing the ways in which we engage with them

- the desire for a cohesive, inclusive and high performing culture which unifies Councillors and officers.

Greater Dandenong has been delivering highly valued services and support to the community for decades. With the increasing challenges, in particular our financial viability, we need to develop forward thinking strategies, embrace new and innovative ways to engage, and streamline our systems and processes. Strengthening these will enable Council to build a stronger foundation to deliver on our focus areas.

To do this we will concentrate on six areas which will help us deliver on our Council Plan and Community Vision.

WHAT WE WILL FOCUS ON

A ROADMAP FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE



PEOPLE AND CULTURE

- Attracting and retaining highly skilled staff.
- Empowering our people
- Resourcing the organisation to enhance our connection to the community and provide a quality customer experience
- Implementing an organisational structure which aligns with our strategic direction
- Investigating new models of employment within our local community to provide opportunities for residents.
- Increasing the diversity of our workforce to better reflect our community.
- Understanding our expertise and skills gaps.



FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

- Reviewing Council's financial sustainability and investigating new opportunities to increase Council's revenue stream through partnerships and government advocacy.
- Driving efficiency and determining where we are able to reduce costs.
- Undertaking a review of Council's services and implementing a staged improvement program.



CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

- Making the customer the centre of everything we do.
- Providing culturally accessible services
- Enhancing our digital technology and implementing the new Customer portal.
- Investigating alternative options for customer feedback.



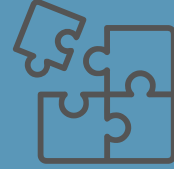
SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES

- Continuing to ensure the security of our data.
- Increasing the speed of decision making.
- Integrating our systems and updating our digital technology to improve the speed and efficiency of our processes.
- Progressing our target to be a paperless organisation by 2026.



COMMUNICATIONS, ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY

- Undertaking community engagement processes which are designed with our community.
- Increasing our advocacy to help fund major projects.
- Developing a Community Engagement Resourcing Plan to enhance the way we engage with our community.
- Investigating translation software options and strategies to enhance our translation services.
- Exploring options for enhancing communication and engagement through the Greater Dandenong Council News magazine.



STRATEGY AND FUTURE PLANNING

- Strengthening our future planning.
- Ensuring alignment between our strategies and the community vision.
- Being transparent and accountable for our strategic direction.
- Reviewing Council's performance measures.
- Developing a set of organisational KPI's which track progress against the recommendations of this report.

