

# Our Achievements

## 2020/21 Financial Year





*A 'come and try' walking sports for seniors event was held at Maroondah Nets in Heathmont*

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*Realm is at Ringwood Town Square and is home to Council's service centre, ArtSpace, and library*



# Our highlights

## Message from the Councillors

We are pleased to present a summary of our achievements for the 2020/21 financial year to the Maroondah community.

As we reflect on the past year, it is important to recognise the work that has been done to create a positive future for Maroondah. To ensure we are well placed to meet the needs and aspirations of our community, we have developed the new four-year *Council Plan 2021-2025*, based on the community directions in *Maroondah 2040 – Our future together*, and the feedback from the community through the many consultation activities undertaken.

Other strategic and long-term planning has taken place resulting in the completion of a new *Children and Families Strategy*; a new two-year Youth Strategy Action Plan; and a new *Maroondah Liveability and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-2031*, which will provide longer-term direction and the key priorities to improve the health and wellbeing of the Maroondah community. In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Council has also prepared a *Maroondah COVID-19 Recovery Plan*.

We continued to plan for the future of our two Activity Centres. The *Ringwood Metropolitan Activity Centre Masterplan 2018* was adopted by Council in November 2018. Council has prepared Amendment C130 to implement the objectives and strategies of the Masterplan. The process for inclusion of C130 in the Maroondah Planning Scheme has progressed, with the Amendment submitted to the Department of Land, Water and Planning.

Council has continued to work with key stakeholders, user groups, and the community on the development of the Croydon Community Wellbeing Precinct Masterplan and the development of concept plans for the various community and recreational hubs. This long-term project will bring together a range of community services, programs and activities for people of all ages and abilities within a parkland setting in the Croydon Activity Centre.

Council also continued its advocacy to the Victorian Government and the Australian Government, resulting in over \$14 million for a range of significant projects that will benefit the Maroondah community. In addition we continue to actively support and participate in regional partnerships and initiatives to achieve integrated advocacy and planning.

We have successfully completed the fourth year of the four-year Council Plan during one of the most challenging years in recent history.



(L-R) BACK: Cr Tony Dib OAM JP; Cr Suzy Stojanovic; Cr Paul Macdonald; Cr Nora Lamont; Cr Rob Steane; (L-R) FRONT: Cr Tasa Damante; Cr Marijke Graham; Cr Mike Symon; and Cr Kylie Spears

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on our community. Council has continued to provide the majority of its services during the various government restrictions over the past 12 months. However, the long-term closures during 2020 and short reactive shutdowns during the first half of 2021 has resulted in a cumulative loss of approximately \$20 million across the past two financial years and a redirection of resources and/or funding in excess of \$10 million to COVID-19 response. These closures particularly impacted our leisure facilities including Karralyka, Aquanation, Aquahub and golf courses.

While noting the above, Council's 2020/21 Budget and Long Term Financial Strategy (LTFS) continued to be based on sound financial management, as well as an understanding of the rising cost of living facing ratepayers along with consideration of the significant financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The LTFS outlines Council's projected financial position for the next 10 years and provides a guide to the community, Council and management in their analysis of options and decision making about the future directions and operations of Council.

While we continue to manage the impacts of COVID-19, we are very proud of the work that has been achieved by the organisation, in partnership with the Councillors and the community. The significant achievements of the past year should be celebrated and are detailed throughout this report.

We commend it as a record of the extent of what has been accomplished to ensure our city, and the Maroondah community, continues to be active, prosperous, vibrant, sustainable, accessible, thriving, inclusive and empowered.

# Our city

The City of Maroondah covers a land area of 61.4 square kilometres in Melbourne's outer east, 22 kilometres from the Central Business District. The area is a substantially developed peri-urban residential municipality, with an estimated population of 119,401 residents and 47,021 households with an average of 2.54 people per household.

It includes the suburbs of Bayswater North, Croydon, Croydon Hills, Croydon North, Croydon South, Heathmont, Kilsyth South, Ringwood, Ringwood East, Ringwood North and Warranwood. The City also includes small sections of Kilsyth, Park Orchards, Vermont and Wonga Park.

With little remaining land available for greenfield residential development, future population growth will be mainly stimulated by housing consolidation and medium density development.

Maroondah has the strategic advantage of being located at the north-eastern junction of the Eastern Freeway - EastLink corridor. There are two train lines and a large number of bus routes linking the City with other regions. Our sustainable transport links continue to expand, with on-road cycling paths and 40km of shared trails, including the Mullum Mullum Creek Trail, the EastLink Trail, the Tarralla Creek Trail and the Dandenong Creek Trail.



*Location of the City of Maroondah*

## Acknowledgment of Country

We, in the spirit of Reconciliation, acknowledge the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation as Traditional Custodians of the land now known as the City of Maroondah, where Indigenous Australians have performed age old ceremonies. We acknowledge and respect their unique ability to care for Country and their deep spiritual connection to it. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.



Council service centre

Train lines



Train stations

Creeks



Community houses



Parks



Leisure facilities



Arts and cultural centres



# Our history

Before European colonisation, the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung People of the Kulin Nation were the traditional custodians of the land now known as the City of Maroondah for more than 35,000 years. The Wurundjeri People have a deep spiritual connection to the land and a unique ability to care for Country.

The Kulin Nation refers to an alliance of five tribes (language groups) who are the Traditional Owners and lived across a geographic area that encompasses Melbourne and its outer regions. Their collective territory extends around Port Phillip and Western Port, up into the Great Dividing Range and the Loddon and Goulburn River valleys. The five Kulin Nation language groups are:

- Boonwurrung (Boon-wur-rung)
- Dja Dja Wurrung (Jar-Jar-Wur-rung)
- Taungurung (Tung-ger-rung)
- Wathaurung (Wath-er-rung)
- Woiwurrung (Woy-wur-rung), commonly known as Wurundjeri.

The language groups were connected through shared moieties (divided groups) – the Bunjil (wedge-tailed eagle) and Waa (crow). Bunjil is the creation spirit of the Kulin and Waa the protector of the waterways.

The Wurundjeri People take their name from the Woiwurrung language word 'wurun' meaning the Manna Gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis*) which is common along 'Birrarung' (Yarra River), and 'djeri', the grub which is found in or near the tree. The traditional Country of the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung People are defined by natural and environmental features, significantly by water. The direction of water flow provides a clear indication of the shape of Country and reflects the cultural understanding of the Wurundjeri People as the "people of the Birrarung" (Yarra River). The Birrarung and the waters flowing into it are considered to be the traditional Country of the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung People.

European settlers arrived in the 1830s and commenced using the land for grazing cattle. The original Ringwood village emerged in the mid to late 19th century, following the initial sale of land and the local proliferation of grazing, fruit growing, antimony mining and brick making activities.

The first constructed road through the area led to Mount Dandenong and was known as Sawmill Road, then Oxford Road, then finally given its current name of Mount Dandenong Road. The area became better known as it was used by bullock teams heading for the gold fields in Woods Point and the Great Dividing Range.

The railway line from Melbourne commenced its eastward development in 1861 extending to Lilydale through Ringwood and Croydon in December 1882. This resulted in a consolidation of township facilities, including the provision of local churches, banks and schools to accommodate a growing population. The line to Ferntree Gully followed soon afterwards.

The proclamation in 1924 of the Borough of Ringwood coincided with the electrification of the railway line, encouraging township development and subdivision. Electric trains were in service between Ringwood and Croydon in 1924 and were extended to Lilydale in 1925.

During its early days, Croydon was part of the Shire of Lillydale's South-West Riding. Unlike some neighbouring towns, it had not been planned and proclaimed a town by the Department of Crown Lands and Survey but resulted from the private subdivision of crown land in the Parishes of Warrandyte, Mooroolbark and Ringwood. Severance of Croydon from Lillydale Shire was requested in 1957 since it was the most densely populated part of the Shire. The Shire of Croydon was declared in 1961.

Considerable suburban expansion during the post-war period gave rise to the declaration of the City of Ringwood in 1960 and formal recognition as part of the broader metropolitan region. Eastland was established in 1967 as a major 'new format' retail centre. In 1971, the City of Croydon was declared, reflecting increased residential development and population growth in this area.

Maroondah City Council was formed on 15 December 1994 by the amalgamation of the former Cities of Croydon and Ringwood, and parts of the former Shire of Lillydale and the former City of Doncaster and Templestowe. The term 'Maroondah' is named after an aboriginal word meaning 'leaf' which symbolises the green environment of the city.





*Rob Bast, Yellow Tailed Black Cockatoos 2018, carved acacia stump. Located at 84 Longview Road, Croydon South*

# Our Vision

Maroondah will be a vibrant and diverse city with a healthy and active community, living in green and leafy neighbourhoods which are connected to thriving and accessible activity centres contributing to a prosperous economy within a safe, inclusive and sustainable environment.





## Our future community outcomes

Council has worked with the community to refresh the vision for the future of the municipality. *Maroondah 2040 - Our future together* identifies a range of preferred outcomes for the community looking ahead to the year 2040. The community's future vision is:



### A safe, healthy and active community

In 2040, Maroondah will be a safe, healthy and active community where all people have the opportunity to experience enhanced levels of social, emotional and physical wellbeing.



### An accessible and connected community

In 2040, Maroondah will be accessible for all ages and abilities with walkable neighbourhoods, sustainable transport options, and a safe integrated transport network.



### A prosperous and learning community

In 2040, Maroondah will be a thriving regional centre of economic activity and education, where the sustainable growth of local businesses is supported, and diverse lifelong learning opportunities are accessible for all community members.



### An attractive, thriving and well built community

In 2040, Maroondah will be an attractive, sustainable and well built community with thriving activity centres and a network of neighbourhoods where everyone has the opportunity to live, work and play locally.



### A vibrant and culturally rich community

In 2040, Maroondah will be a vibrant and creative community recognised for celebration of the arts, cultural expression and diverse entertainment options.



### An inclusive and diverse community

In 2040, Maroondah will be an inclusive and equitable community where all people are valued, supported and socially connected, and diversity is embraced and celebrated.



### A clean, green and sustainable community

In 2040, Maroondah will be a resilient community committed to sustainable living, enhancing our natural environment, and providing leadership in responding to climate change.



### A well governed and empowered community

In 2040, Maroondah will be an empowered community actively engaged in local decision making, led by an innovative community inspired Council that collaborates regionally and proactively champions local needs.





## A safe, healthy and active community

In 2040, Maroondah will be a safe, healthy and active community where all people have the opportunity to experience enhanced levels of social, emotional and physical wellbeing.

### Our highlights in 2020/21

We commenced the establishment of a regional cricket hub at Jubilee Park



The Jubilee Park sporting precinct hosts a range of sporting clubs and includes the Russell Lucas Oval, which is a Premier Grade cricket ground. Successful Council advocacy to the Victorian Government resulted in \$2 million in funding for the redevelopment of the RO Spencer Pavilion at Jubilee Park which will become home to the Ringwood District Cricket Association and to Cricket Victoria's new Eastern Metro Zone association. The design and construction contract for RO Spencer Sporting Pavilion was endorsed by Council in September 2020 and is due for completion in 2021. Further advocacy for Stage 2 of the precinct is currently underway.

## We continued to redevelop sporting infrastructure across Maroondah



Council was successful in advocating for Federal and Victorian Government funding for the redevelopment of multipurpose pavilions located in sporting reserves across Maroondah. Some of these improvements include female-friendly change rooms, large multipurpose rooms, amenities, upgraded lighting, carparking and landscaping. The redevelopment of Silcock Reserve in Croydon (\$5.5m) is complete whilst redevelopment works for the Proclamation Park Sporting Pavilion in Ringwood (\$3.25m) and Dorset Recreation Reserve in Croydon (\$4m) are well underway. Planning has also commenced for the redevelopment of multipurpose pavilions at Springfield Reserve (\$3.2m) and Ainslie Park in Croydon (\$1.5m).

## We worked to develop the Maroondah Liveability, Wellbeing and Resilience Strategy 2021-2031



Council has conducted extensive background research and community consultation to develop the new *Maroondah Liveability Wellbeing and Resilience Strategy 2021-2031*. The current *Maroondah Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021* is due to conclude in 2021 and will be replaced by the strategy which incorporates a range of future health and wellbeing priorities for Council, including those associated with longer-term coronavirus (COVID-19) community recovery. Once finalised, the Strategy will provide direction to inform action plans for health and wellbeing, disability, active and healthy ageing, and gender equality across Maroondah.

## We kept the community connected and encouraged kindness and goodwill



The Be Kind Maroondah campaign was launched during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic to keep the community connected during periods of social isolation and encourage kindness and goodwill. Several initiatives were undertaken across three themes; Be kind to yourself; Be kind to others; and Be kind to business. Council in conjunction with Neighbourhood Connect and local community houses offered free workshops for people interested in making a difference in their neighbourhood by becoming a 'Community Connector'. The 'Knit One, Warm One' project provided an opportunity for local knitters to help those sleeping rough or struggling financially. The Sunflower Effect project encouraged residents to plant sunflower seeds in their front garden or in a pot to bring some hope and brightness into Maroondah streets.

## We undertook a strategic review of Maroondah Golf



Council has undertaken a review of golf in Maroondah to ensure the sport is sustainable in the future. Maroondah City Council owns and operates two 18-hole public golf courses, Dorset Golf Course (Dorset) and Ringwood Golf Course (Ringwood) which are collectively known as Maroondah Golf. The *Maroondah Golf Strategy 2020-2030* was adopted in July 2020, following extensive public consultation with the Maroondah community, and outlines key actions that will enable golf within Maroondah to remain financially sustainable, achieve performance targets and increase participation levels.





## A prosperous and learning community

In 2040, Maroondah will be a thriving regional centre of economic activity and education, where the sustainable growth of local businesses is supported, and diverse lifelong learning opportunities are accessible for all community members.

### Our highlights in 2020/21

We are working in partnership to guide development of the Ringwood Metropolitan Activity Centre and Croydon Major Activity Centre



Council has promoted the Ringwood Metropolitan Activity Centre (MAC) and the Croydon Major Activity Centre as two of Melbourne's premier urban destinations. During 2020/21, a number of current activity centre projects have been put on hold in order to focus on economic recovery during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Stakeholder engagement continued with Queensland Investment Corporation (QIC), who own and operate Eastland, and Croydon Main Street Traders Association, with support provided to these organisations during coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions and the following recovery phase.



## We continued a strategic review of shopping centres in Maroondah



Council is reviewing Maroondah's 31 neighbourhood shopping centres to complement the 20-Minute Neighbourhood Project. The review will guide where to prioritise replacing of bins, targeted cleaning and weed and graffiti removal. The review was also adjusted to include coronavirus (COVID-19) economic recovery planning, focusing on short-term actions to improve financial outcomes for each of these shopping centres.

## We supported local businesses to expand outdoor dining opportunities



Council applied to the Victorian Government for \$500,000 from the Outdoor Eating and Entertainment Grants package for local businesses and trader associations. The Street Activities Extension Permit scheme provided temporary outdoor dining options for over 84 hospitality businesses to adapt their dining and table services in line with restrictions during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Council will continue to expand the scheme, supporting eligible hospitality businesses to shift service onto footpaths, streets, laneways and on-street car parking spaces. Permit fees have been waived until June 2021.

## We provided business support for Ringwood East Neighbourhood Activity Centre



Council was successful in advocating for \$100,000 in Victorian Government funding through the Neighbourhood Activity Centre Renewal Fund to enable infrastructure improvements in Ringwood East. This funding has helped to support local business recovery through creation of parklets, landscaping, footpath improvements and arts and cultural installations. The project sought to encourage visitors to the centre and recognise cultural heritage through activation of vacant shops and enhancement of existing business shop fronts through art installations, delivered in partnership with Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place.

## We supported education programs and essential services through Maroondah community houses



In response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Maroondah community houses offered a range of accredited education programs and community programs online, provided childcare services for essential workers and support emergency relief services. Central Ringwood Community Centre was successful in receiving a Victorian Government *Let's Stay Connected* grant to provide resources for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, a digital device loan scheme for isolated and vulnerable community members and a community wellness program.



## A vibrant and culturally rich community

In 2040, Maroondah will be a vibrant and creative community recognised for celebration of the arts, cultural expression and diverse entertainment options.

### Our highlights in 2020/21

#### We commenced implementation of the Arts and Cultural Development Strategy 2020-2025



Council has commenced implementing the Maroondah *Arts and Cultural Development Strategy 2020-2025*, which outlines Council's role in leading, partnering and supporting arts and cultural development across Maroondah over the next five years. The themes of the strategy include: a culturally active, engaged and connected community; vibrant places and spaces; and a flourishing, creative city that values the arts. Key projects currently underway include significant public art commissions for multi-level commuter carparks and planning for arts and cultural facilities to support the performing arts, including in the Croydon Community Wellbeing Precinct.



## We commenced planning for the redevelopment of Karralyka



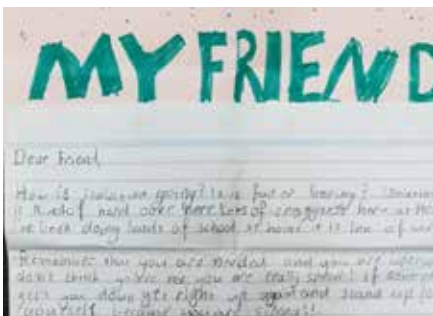
Council has commenced design works for a \$15 million redevelopment of Karralyka. Proposed works over the next few years will include a new entrance foyer, an additional function room, outdoor plaza space and improved accessibility. The Stage 1 works including major upgrades to heating, cooling, electrical systems and a backup generator have been completed.

## We celebrated Indigenous arts and culture across Maroondah



Council continued to support and work in close partnership with local Indigenous artists, community leaders and organisations to promote a wide range of arts and cultural practices within Maroondah. A three-month program in the Ringwood arts precinct included two permanent Indigenous public art and Council's first Indigenous public art commission was installed in the foyer of the new Council Chamber at Realm in consultation with a local Indigenous elder to ensure awareness and appreciation of Indigenous arts and culture in Maroondah. A series of new public art elements were also installed as part of the Ringwood East Place Activation Project, including a large wall mural, a pavement mural, and decorative planter boxes. A temporary 'pop-up' exhibition was installed as part of Reconciliation Week activities, showcasing work by Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place artists.

## We re-engaged the community through creative expression



Council engaged the community during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic through shared stories and experiences including *Notes of Kindness*, an intergenerational and multi-art form cultural recovery project which involved working with local choirs for community healing and resilience. The project used letters of kindness that were exchanged between nursing home residents and primary school children in Maroondah during periods of lockdown in 2020. Choirs and other community members worked with local artists and cultural leaders to develop a series of installations and performances incorporating storytelling, music, film and visual installations presented at Karralyka in July 2021. Council also provided support to local groups to deliver a range of recovery projects. One of the 2020/21 recipients of Maroondah's Arts and Cultural Grant Program was Yarrunga Community Centre's *ISO Art*. This program allowed participants to express their experiences of isolation during coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions, share emotions through art and assist with mental health self-care and recovery.





## A clean, green and sustainable community

In 2040, Maroondah will be a resilient community committed to sustainable living, enhancing our natural environment, and providing leadership in responding to climate change.

### Our highlights in 2020/21

#### We achieved Carbon Neutral Certification



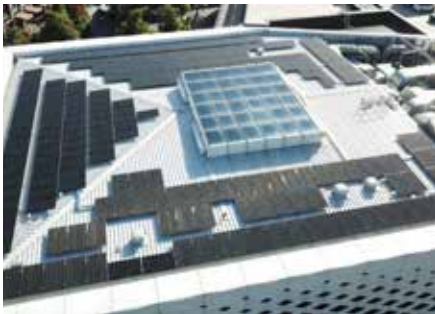
Council committed to becoming carbon neutral in 2008 and has now achieved Carbon Neutral certification. Certification recognises that Council's operations are removing as much carbon from the atmosphere as is being put in. Over the past several years, changes have been made to services and facilities to achieve our commitment to become carbon neutral including: 5-Star Green Star certification for the Realm offices through sustainable building features such as high efficiency glazing, solar PV panels and water tanks to reuse rainwater runoff. Building energy efficiency upgrades were also delivered to Council facilities under an Energy Performance Contract program that will save up to \$200,000 in energy costs annually and a reduction of 1500 tonnes in greenhouse gas emissions. Council will continue to implement projects to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, purchase carbon offsets and annually report on emissions to support our ongoing certification.

## We powered community infrastructure with renewable energy



Council joined the Victorian Energy Collaboration as part of its commitment to sustainability. Launched in May 2021, the project is Australia's largest ever local government emissions reduction project and will see 46 councils pool their electricity needs into a single renewable energy contract called a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA). The long-term contract will power streetlights, libraries, recreational spaces, infrastructure and public buildings across Maroondah with 100% renewable energy.

## We worked towards introducing the Maroondah Environmentally Sustainable Design Policy into the Maroondah Planning Scheme



Council's commitment to environmentally sustainable design (ESD) in the planning, design, construction, operation and management of Council buildings and assets is outlined in the Maroondah Environmentally Sustainable Design Policy. The Local Policy Planning Scheme Amendment was exhibited in early 2021 with submissions considered before the Amendment was adopted by Council in March 2021. Council has requested approval of the Amendment from the Minister of Planning to enable inclusion of the Policy in the Maroondah Planning Scheme.

## We worked in partnership to implement the Reimagining Tarralla Creek project



Council is working in partnership with Melbourne Water, Yarra Valley Water and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) on the project design and construction of the Tarralla Creek Connects project. The project is one of five trial sites for Melbourne Water's 'Re-imagining Your Creek' program that looks to enhance the natural environment, create a place for community to connect to nature, improve connectivity, and deliver a resilient and maintainable waterway. Council is working with project partners to enhance the area located between Dorset Road and Eastfield Road, by adopting contemporary urban design and landscaping ideas and incorporating suggestions from the community.

## We finalised a new strategy to inform waste collection, landfill and sorting recyclables contracts



Council has developed a 10-year *Waste, Litter and Resource Recovery Strategy*, which informs each of Maroondah's waste contracts. Key changes over the next decade include introducing a food and garden organics service; sending waste to an advanced waste and resource recovery facility instead of landfill; a glass only recycling service; and standardising bin lids. Tenders and contracts for waste collection, landfill and the receipt and sorting of recyclables are planned to be completed alongside the strategy.





## An accessible and connected community

In 2040, Maroondah will be accessible for all ages and abilities with walkable neighbourhoods, sustainable transport options, and a safe integrated transport network.

### Our highlights in 2020/21

#### We progressed planning for new activity centre carparks



Council was awarded \$60 million in funding from the Australian Government for new activity centre carparks in Croydon, Ringwood, Heathmont and at Heatherdale Station. The carpark in Devon Street, Croydon will see the removal of the existing carpark layout, to be replaced with a multi-level carpark that will include improved disability parking and access. Other changes will include improvements to the urban environment of Pierson Drive and Council will provide safer pedestrian paths, additional landscaping and trees, safer traffic movements and screened bin storage at the rear of the Main Street shops. Planning has continued for the Ringwood, Heathmont and Heatherdale carparks, with locations now confirmed for both Ringwood and Heathmont. A feasibility study has been undertaken to identify a suitable location for a the carpark at Heatherdale Station.



## We delivered renewal and accessibility improvement works in Ringwood East



Council implemented a range of infrastructure renewal and accessibility improvement works in Ringwood East, with Australian Government funding through the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program. Accessibility improvements included: construction of a new footpath on the east side of the road, linking Knaith Road to Railway Avenue; construction of three indented disabled parking spaces adjacent to Knaith Road Reserve; construction of an accessible ramp to the Senior Citizens Centre in Knaith Road Reserve; and conversion of the existing crossing into a raised pedestrian crossing at the intersection with Railway Avenue. Council is continuing advocacy for further Australian Government Local Roads and Community Infrastructure funding for improvements to streetlights, footpaths, bike paths and walking tracks.

## We delivered road upgrades and flood mitigation works



Council was awarded funding from Federal Roads to Recovery for the rehabilitation of Lincoln Road between Dorset Road and Hull Road in Croydon. Works were completed in October 2020, including the reconstruction and widening of the road, kerb and channel, drainage upgrades, bicycle lanes, installation of street lighting, pedestrian operated signals and improvements to the service roads. Construction commenced for the road and drainage upgrade at New Street in Ringwood in October 2020. Other works completed included flood mitigation drainage upgrades, service relocation works and road reconstruction activities.

## We constructed 4 kilometres of new footpaths



Council has continued to implement the footpath construction program to provide better pedestrian safety. The \$880,000 footpath construction program for 2020/21 resulted in new footpaths along 14 roads across Maroondah including: Balmoral Road, Towerhill Drive and Major Street in Ringwood North; Eastfield Road in Croydon; Laurence Grove, Patterson Street, Seares Drive and Ian Avenue in Ringwood East; Tunbury Avenue, Strathallyn Road, New Street, Holyrood Crescent and Ireland Street in Ringwood; and Bellbird Court in Heathmont.

## We made local area traffic management improvements



Council delivered a range of traffic management improvements in conjunction with the Safe Travel in Local Streets program funded by the Transport Accident Commission (TAC). Works included traffic calming measures and street lighting upgrades in Allendale Road in Croydon and roadway improvements in Bond Street in Ringwood, including a pedestrian crossing upgrade. Traffic calming measures were installed in Morinda Street in Ringwood East; Loma Street, Parkgate Drive and Reilly Street in Ringwood; Patrick Avenue, Palmer Avenue and Warriem Road in Croydon North, and Mount View Parade and Newman Road in Croydon. Intersection upgrade works to improve safety were completed at Mount View Parade and Newman Road in Croydon; and Patrick Avenue and Palmer Avenue in Croydon North.



## An attractive, thriving and well built community

In 2040, Maroondah will be an attractive, sustainable and well built community with thriving activity centres and a network of neighbourhoods where everyone has the opportunity to live, work and play locally.

### Our highlights in 2020/21

#### We progressed development of a new Croydon Structure Plan



Council continued development of a Croydon Structure Plan to replace the previous version adopted in 2006. During 2020/21, Council undertook background research into the issues facing Croydon, including demographic, employment and business, and land and housing supply and demand, to more accurately plan for the future growth of the Croydon community. This resulted in an Issues and Opportunities paper with public comment sought in mid-2021 to inform the draft Croydon Structure Plan.



## We progressed development of the Croydon Community Wellbeing Precinct



Council is transforming the existing Croydon Civic Precinct into the Croydon Community Wellbeing Precinct (CCWP) which will focus on delivering improved community spaces, wellbeing facilities, family and children facilities, arts and cultural spaces, sport and recreation facilities, and open space. These combined features will also improve accessibility and connectivity for the community. The CCWP Masterplan was endorsed by Council in July 2020 and works commenced in early 2021 with the first of the community groups (Kinder and Occasional Care) moving in to Community Hub B. Other community groups located in the Precinct will move into Community Hub B during 2021.

## We planned and implemented playspace renewal in local parks



During 2020/21, Council was successful in advocating for \$600,000 in Victorian Government funding for enhancements at McAlpin and Yarrunga Reserves. At McAlpin Reserve in Ringwood North, the existing playspace will be upgraded to include all-inclusive equipment to benefit all ages and abilities, including: the creation of a new playspace closer to amenities; upgraded furniture; shelters; pathways; and landscaping. Improvement works at Yarrunga Reserve in Croydon Hills will provide a safer space for pre-teens and young adults, improve a pedestrian bridge and enhance BMX jumps. During the year, improvement works were undertaken at the Nangathan Way Reserve in Croydon North including new play equipment, a new picnic and shelter area, a basketball and netball multisports area and landscaping works. Planning and design works were also undertaken for forthcoming playground improvement works at Cobain Reserve in Ringwood.

## We commenced implementing outcomes of Neighbourhood Character and Vegetation Reviews



Council adopted the *Maroondah Vegetation Strategy 2020-2030* in March 2020, which will seek to identify the best locations for improving habitat connectivity across the municipality to allow more nature throughout Maroondah. A spatial modelling program is being used to model existing connectivity for key focal species, and to identify locations that offer the greatest opportunity for improving connectivity. The strategy Action Plan will be guided by an advisory group comprising representatives with local knowledge and expertise.



## An inclusive and diverse community

In 2040, Maroondah will be an inclusive and equitable community where all people are valued, supported and socially connected, and diversity is embraced and celebrated.

### Our highlights in 2020/21

We worked in partnership to support older people and vulnerable residents during COVID-19



During the challenges of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Council has ensured the continuation of essential support services for older and vulnerable residents. Services include meal delivery, an adapted Shopping Bus service, and additional welfare calls made to clients of the Regional Assessment Service and socially isolated clients through the Maroondah Police Seniors Register. Council partnered with Victoria Police and a network of local churches who provided and delivered 400 hampers to isolated community members in the weeks leading up to Christmas. Council also worked in partnership with support providers, agencies and volunteers to provide food relief to disadvantaged people, with free takeaway meals being available six nights a week, across three different venues. During the winter months, Council partnered with Winter Shelter and Central Ringwood Community House to provide bathroom and shower services to people experiencing homelessness.



## We adopted the Homelessness Charter



Council has partnered with 12 other local councils in adopting a joint Homelessness Charter and advocacy campaign. The campaign calls for urgent action for social housing to end homelessness whilst the Charter focuses on a shared commitment to advocate for inclusive housing growth, and scoping land to be repurposed for adaptable housing.

## We are continuing to implement the Disability Policy and Action Plan 2019-2021



The *Disability Policy and Action Plan 2019-2021* incorporates a range of initiatives across Council operations to remove barriers to discrimination whilst meeting legislative obligations for people with disabilities, their families and carers. A range of actions were undertaken by Council during 2020/21 across themes of social and economic inclusion, services and information, design, infrastructure and transport, and advocacy and leadership. Highlights included: working in partnership to broaden the scale of the 'Porn is not the Norm' project; ongoing NDIS support for local recipients; advocating for the inclusion of sensory rooms in key community facilities; a workshop with local carers to provide input and understand service needs during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic; and the continued community leadership of Council's Disability Advisory Committee.

## We finalised development of a Children and Families Strategy



In August 2020, Council adopted a new *Children and Families Strategy* after extensive community consultation with children, young people, parents, carers and school staff. The strategy intends to ensure children aged 0 to 12 and their families are a priority in Maroondah and highlight Council's commitment to creating a connected community where all children and their families thrive. An initial two-year action plan has also been adopted to inform Council's short-term activities to implement the strategy.

## We continued our commitment to workplace equality



Council has proactively pursued a range of organisational readiness initiatives in the past 12 months to fulfil the requirements of the new *Gender Equality Act 2020*. A cross-Council workplace equality working group was established to seek employee feedback on how gender and equal opportunity has influenced their working life, review Equal Opportunity policies and processes, identify gender equality improvements and initiatives and build awareness of workplace equality and inclusion principles. Through this project, Council is well placed to respond to the requirements of the new Act and ensure Council is an inclusive and respectful workplace for all. As part of our obligations, Council will undertake workplace audits, gender impact assessments, develop an Action Plan, and submit progress reports.



## A well governed and empowered community

In 2040, Maroondah will be an empowered community actively engaged in local decision making, led by an innovative community inspired Council that collaborates regionally and proactively champions local needs.

### Our highlights in 2020/21

#### We developed and implemented a COVID-19 Recovery Plan and emergency relief referral process



Council's emergency relief and recovery framework coordinates the delivery of recovery initiatives to meet the social, health and wellbeing and economic needs of the community. During the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Council has worked to identify community needs and impacts through consultations including a COVID-19 Survey which was translated onto nine languages and received almost 3000 responses, and 100 interviews with local agencies, schools, organisations and businesses, informing Council's initial Impact Assessment Report. The *Maroondah COVID-19 Recovery Plan* was adopted in March 2021 highlighting Council's priority actions in responding to the social and economic wellbeing needs of the Maroondah community. The local relief and referral system strengthened partnerships with local relief agencies to ensure services to vulnerable people and groups continued despite restrictions. The referral service was expanded to include practical and emotional support through the MaroondahConnect initiative and to match community members with local social inclusion initiatives.



## We completed and adopted the new Council Plan 2021-2025



Council worked alongside Maroondah community stakeholders to prepare a new *Council Plan 2021-2025*, which was adopted in June 2021. To support development of the Council Plan, a community panel of 40 representatives participated in a deliberative engagement process over 10 sessions to provide input to Council on topics such as health and wellbeing, liveable neighbourhoods, environmental sustainability and Council assets. This document forms Council's medium-term plan in responding to the aspirations and outcomes of the community vision identified in *Maroondah 2040 - Our future together*.

## We supported community recovery through COVID-19 with community grants



Council established the COVID-19 Community Grants Funding Program to provide funding for eligible community organisations and charities to address the immediate needs of the community and introduce initiatives to support community recovery. Through this program, nine agencies were provided with \$75,685 in funding as part of the COVID-19 Emergency Relief Grants Scheme to support vulnerable community members. A further 14 community organisations were provided with \$41,178 in funding through the COVID-19 Community Wellbeing Grants Scheme to support community-led COVID-19 recovery initiatives.

## We commenced making changes under the new Local Government Act 2020



Council has adopted a number of policies during 2020/21, as required by the new *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act). New policies include: election, public transparency and audit and risk policies, as well as strengthening governance procedures based on good governance and transparency. The Act aims to improve local government democracy, accountability and Council operations by introducing a set of overarching guiding principles which include: community engagement, public transparency, strategic planning, good practice guidelines, service performance, and expanded financial management principles. The first phase of reforms took effect on 6 April 2020, with implementation to continue until 30 June 2022.

## We continued to engage the Maroondah community



Council's commitment to community engagement is reflected in our *Community Engagement Policy and Toolkit*. Following a review, a revised Policy was endorsed by Council in March 2021. The policy is guided by International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) principles which are considered to be the benchmark for the practice of community engagement. Over the past 12 months, Council has engaged the Maroondah community on 47 different projects ranging from enhancement plans, infrastructure projects, and strategy and policy development. To support development of the *Council Plan 2021-2025*, a community panel of 40 representatives participated in deliberative engagement process over 10 sessions in February and March 2021 to provide input to Council on topics such as health and wellbeing, liveable neighbourhoods, environmental sustainability and Council assets.

**To contact Council**






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**Translating and Interpreter Service**

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**National Relay Service (NRS)**

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