

# Our Achievements

## 2024/25 Financial Year





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# Our highlights

## Message from the Councillors

We are pleased to present a summary of our achievements for the 2024/25 financial year to the Maroondah community.

As we reflect on the past year, it continues to be important to recognise the work that has been achieved to create a positive future for Maroondah. To ensure we are well placed to meet the needs and aspirations of our community, we have successfully completed the final year of the *Council Plan 2021-2025*, and adopted the new *Council Plan 2025-2029*.

The *Council Plan 2025-2029* reflects the priorities identified by the Maroondah community following development of the new community vision *Maroondah 2050 - Our future together*. Over the past two years, Council worked with the community, key stakeholders and partners to ensure that the new Maroondah 2050 Community Vision captures the hopes and aspirations of the Maroondah community as we look ahead to 2050.

Other strategic and long-term planning has also taken place during this time resulting in the completion of the *Maroondah Physical Activity Strategy 2024-2029*; *Maroondah Transport Strategy 2025-2035*; *Road Management Plan 2025-2029*; *Asset Plan 2025-2035*; *Financial Plan 2025/26 to 2034/35*; and the *Public Toilet Policy 2024-2029*.

We have continued to plan for the future of our two key activity centres. Development in the Ringwood Metropolitan Activity Centre is continuing to take shape in response to land use guidance in the Masterplan. This includes construction of a new \$33.6 million Activity Centre Carpark adjacent to the station on Bedford Road, and significant new developments along Maroondah Highway and surrounding locations within the activity centre.

Council has also continued to work with key stakeholders, user groups and the community on the development of the *Croydon Activity Centre Structure Plan 2025* and the Croydon Community Wellbeing Precinct. The Structure Plan is nearing completion and will respond to the expected population growth, with Main Street continuing to serve as an important local destination.



(L-R) BACK: Cr Rob Steane OAM; Cr Nate Henderson; Cr Chris Jones and Cr Paul Macdonald.

(L-R) FRONT: Cr Catherine Gordon; Cr Daniella Heatherich; Cr Kylie Spears, Mayor; Cr Linda Hancock, Deputy Mayor and Cr Claire Rex.

The detailed design for the Cultural Hub, within the Croydon Community Wellbeing Precinct, continues to be progressed. With Australian Government funding of \$5 million contributing towards the arts and cultural space, and Victorian Government funding of \$1 million towards the new library, we look forward to construction commencing later in 2025. The detailed design for the Multipurpose Hub continues, with Australia Government funding of \$7.5 million received in December 2024. We also look forward to construction commencing later in 2025.

Our advocacy work with the Victorian and Australian Governments continued to seek funding opportunities for a range of significant projects that will benefit the Maroondah community.

Maroondah received over \$50 million in funding during 2024/25 in response to Council advocacy activities. This included Australian Government funding of \$7.5 million for the revitalisation of Croydon Main Street and \$2 million towards the construction of a new multipurpose pavilion at North Ringwood Reserve. The Australian Government and Melbourne Water have committed \$30 million towards Stage 2 of the award-winning Reimagining Tarralla Creek project. The Victorian Government's commitment of \$1 billion for a new Maroondah Hospital sees Council continuing to advocate to the Government to ensure improved outcomes for the Maroondah community from the project delivery. Council also continued to work with the Level Crossing Removal Authority to ensure community focused outcomes from the removal of crossings at Dublin Road, Bedford Road and Coolstore Road, and from the construction of new stations at Ringwood East and Croydon. With each project now completed, the asset rectification and handover phase to Council has commenced.

Regional partnerships and initiatives continue to be a focus of Council to ensure we get the best outcomes for the Maroondah community. This includes actively supporting the Eastern Region Group of Councils (ERG), which works collaboratively to achieve integrated advocacy and planning, as well as joint procurement for shared services, supported by a four-year strategic plan. The ERG works closely with other regional groups including the Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action and the Regional Local Government Homelessness and Social Housing Group Charter.

Council's *Annual Budget 2024/25* and *Financial Plan 2024/25 to 2033/34* continued to be based on sound financial management, together with an understanding of the rising cost of living facing ratepayers. The Financial Plan 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.

The Financial Plan demonstrates our long-term financial sustainability and ensures we can continue to invest in community facilities and services while operating within the rate cap environment set out under the Victorian Government's Fair Go Rates System. Maroondah City Council complied with the Victorian Government's 2024/25 rate cap of 2.75 per cent over the average property rate.

We are very proud of the work that has been achieved over the past 12 months by the organisation, in partnership with Councillors and the community. Council has continued its best practice service delivery while ensuring prudent financial management and investment in Council's employees to ensure they have the skills, knowledge and tools to meet the needs of the Maroondah community. The significant achievements of the past year should be celebrated and are detailed throughout this report.

We commend the *Our Achievements 2024/25* as a record 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 and is located 25 kilometres from the central business district. Maroondah is home to 119,354 residents and 44,167 households. The age structure of Maroondah’s population is similar to the Victorian state average.

Maroondah is a substantially urban residential municipality and 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.

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 many bus routes linking the City with other regions. Sustainable transport links also continue to expand with 684 kilometres of footpaths and 68 kilometres of shared paths.

Maroondah has a regional health precinct including a major public hospital and a large private hospital, educational facilities that cater from early childhood learning to higher education, two libraries, arts and cultural centres, and a range of community centres. Maroondah is also home to a range of world-class recreation and sporting facilities including Aquanation, Maroondah Nets, Ringwood Golf and Maroondah Edge.

Maroondah is currently home to 649 hectares of Council-owned/managed land including 578 parks and reserves. There are more than 750,000 trees (mostly native species) in parks and reserves providing shade and shelter, helping to control water runoff, evaporation and erosion, and providing a home for wildlife.








Location of the City of Maroondah

Over 10,000 businesses operate within the City, with over 97 per cent of these being small businesses employing less than 20 people. The largest employing industries are the health care, retail trade, manufacturing and construction sectors. In total, businesses in Maroondah provide employment for over 48,000 people and the municipality has an annual economic output of \$21.9 billion (2.1 per cent of the output generated in Greater Melbourne).

Ringwood, a designated Metropolitan Activity Centre, offers a diverse range of shops, services, jobs and housing, along with numerous public transport options. Croydon, Heathmont and Ringwood East are also designated as activity centres.

## 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



# Our history

For more than 35,000 years the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung People of the Kulin Nation were the Traditional Custodians of the land now known as the City of Maroondah. The Wurundjeri Woiwurrung People have a deep spiritual connection to the land and waterways, and a unique ability to care for Country.

Kulin Nation refers to an alliance of five tribes (language groups) who live across a geographical area which encompasses Melbourne and its outer regions. Their collective territory extends around Port Phillip and Western Port bays, 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

These language groups were connected through shared moieties (where everything is split in half but must come together to form a whole), Bunjil (wedge-tailed eagle) and Waa (crow). Bunjil is the creator spirit and Waa the protector of the waterways.

The Wurundjeri Woiwurrung People take their name from the Woiwurrung language word 'wurun' meaning the Manna Gum (*Eucalyptus Viminalis*) which is common along 'Birrarung' (the Yarra River), and Djeri the grub, which is found in, or near the tree.

The Traditional Country of the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung People is defined by natural and environmental features, most significantly by water. The direction of the water flow provides a clear indication of the shape of Country and reflects the cultural understanding of the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung People as the "people of the Birrarung" (Yarra River). The Birrarung and the waters flowing into it are the Traditional Country of the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung People.

European settlers began arriving in the area in the 1830s and started 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, it was then renamed to Oxford Road, and finally it was given its current name of Mount Dandenong Road. The area gradually became more widely known, as it was used by bullock teams heading for the goldfields in Woods Point and the Great Dividing Range.

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

The Borough of Ringwood was proclaimed in 1924 and 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.

Originally, Croydon was part of the Shire of Lillydale's South-West Riding. Unlike some neighbouring towns, it was not planned by the Department of Crown Lands and Survey but eventuated from the private subdivision of crown land in the Parishes of Warrandyte, Mooroolbark, and Ringwood. Due to its population density, the severance of Croydon from the Lillydale Shire was requested in 1957. The Shire of Croydon was subsequently declared in 1961.

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

Maroondah City Council was formed on 15 December 1994 by the amalgamation of the former Cities of Croydon and Ringwood, as well as parts of the former Shire of Lilydale and the former City of Doncaster and Templestowe.





Ringwood Clock Tower

# 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 outcomes

Under the Maroondah 2040 Community Vision we are working towards eight future outcomes.



### 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.

From 1 July 2025, the new *Maroondah 2050 - Our future together* Community Vision will replace the Maroondah 2040 Community Vision.

Over a two-year period, Council worked alongside the Maroondah community to understand their values, aspirations and priorities for the municipality, looking ahead to the year 2050. The *Maroondah 2050 - Our future together* Community Vision brings together more than 9800 responses from our diverse community, recommendations of the Maroondah Community Panel, and research into emerging trends, opportunities and challenges to set the future direction for Maroondah.



## 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 2024/25

We supported activities aimed at reducing harm associated with family violence



In 2024/25, Council continued our participation in the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence campaign, working in partnership with Monash and Knox City Councils to host a well-attended webinar *Start the Conversation*, which focused on the key drivers and impacts of family violence, supports available, and strategies for preventing family violence. The partnership also collaborated on Are You Safe at Home Day by hosting the webinar *Know your Rights – Navigating Family Violence Supports*.

In addition, Council has delivered various initiatives through the Freedom from Violence program including the Re-Capture Equity project to promote the positive and diverse representation of Maroondah residents in Council publications, delivering Safe and Equal training for 65 employees, and providing two Dads Chat programs for fathers and other male caregivers of newborns.

## We worked in partnership to plan and deliver services and experiences in the Croydon Community Wellbeing Precinct



Artist impression

The Croydon Community Wellbeing Precinct seeks to bring together a range of community services, programs, and activities for people of all ages, across a number of accessible and integrated community hubs. In 2024/25, Community Hub user groups settled into the space and explored collaboration opportunities which included the Occasional Care Op Shop, and an intergenerational project involving young people, U3A, and the Croydon Seniors Centre. Council was also successful in securing \$1 million from the Victorian Government for the new library in the Cultural Hub. The new library will be a state-of-the-art facility, and feature a black box theatre, multipurpose rooms, and Council Customer Service.

## We implemented the Maroondah Liveability, Wellbeing and Resilience Strategy 2021-2031



Council has undertaken a range of actions to enhance the liveability, wellbeing and resilience of the Maroondah community including: collaborating with more than 12 community organisations to deliver the first Growing Wellbeing Activity Day in October 2024; a series of events during the annual Victorian Seniors Festival to promote positive ageing; a comprehensive community engagement process with First Peoples organisations and community members to inform the development of a Reconciliation Plan; and developing a partnership agreement with Maroondah's Neighbourhood Houses.

An update to the *Maroondah Liveability, Wellbeing, and Resilience Strategy* is also underway to ensure the Strategy remains current and relevant, with adoption planned for later in 2025.

## We adopted the Physical Activity Strategy 2024-2029



The *Physical Activity Strategy 2024-2029*, developed with input from the Maroondah community, was adopted by Council in July 2024. The Strategy highlights current challenges which impact the physical activity levels of the general community, as well as specific population groups, and outlines a range of tailored approaches and opportunities for Council to implement to reduce these barriers. To address the challenges and to make moving an easier option for people, the Strategy focuses on four key outcome areas: increasing active travel; spaces and places which encourage physical activity; supporting diversity in sport; and connecting with our least active residents.

## We implemented a Fair Access Policy for gender equitable distribution of sports infrastructure



Developed in collaboration with partner Councils, the *Melbourne East Region Fair Access Policy* provides a consistent regional approach to fair access and the allocation of community sport and recreation infrastructure. Achieving gender equality will require implementing diverse approaches for women and girls, men and boys, transgender, and gender-diverse people so as to achieve similar outcomes for people of all genders. It will require partnerships with state sporting associations, local sports associations and leagues, and local sport and active recreation clubs.



## 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 2024/25

#### We advanced planning to reinforce the sense of place in local neighbourhoods



The Liveable Neighbourhoods project focuses on working with communities to plan for places that are more liveable, vibrant and inclusive. Croydon South and Ringwood North have been chosen as the first focus areas due to their potential to improve the quality of life for local communities within a walkable area, and to build on previous community projects.

During 2024/25, a range of community engagement activities, including online surveys and place planning workshops were undertaken with local Croydon South and Ringwood North communities with the aim of identifying opportunities to bring social, economic, and environmental benefits to these local neighbourhoods. During 2025/26, the draft plans for Croydon South and Ringwood North will be placed on public exhibition for further community comment and feedback.

## We worked in partnership to strengthen the Bayswater Business Precinct



The *Bayswater Business Precinct Transformation Strategy* sets out a vision and series of actions to achieve a sustainable and prosperous future for the Bayswater Business Precinct. Implementation of the Strategy continued in 2024/25 with a contract awarded to develop a structure plan for the Precinct. In addition, a business case for the development of a proof of concept for a physical Bayswater Business Precinct connector hub is currently in progress. Engagement with businesses and other partners continues to be a key focus of this work.

## We identified and facilitated co-working opportunities and spaces in Maroondah



Council continues to investigate opportunities regarding the expansion of co-working facilities across Maroondah as part of a potential regional cluster of co-working spaces. Partnership opportunities are being explored with the Melbourne East Regional Economic Development Group of Councils to determine reciprocal co-working arrangements across different sites, as well as the joint procurement of operating systems. Local opportunities in vacant Council sites and facilities are also being assessed, in addition to private/public partnership opportunities in Maroondah activity centres.

## We continued to support and celebrate Maroondah businesses



In 2024/25, Council's BizHub continued to provide assistance and information to businesses including access to mentors, relevant workshops and training events, along with information on funding available to strengthen business activities. The Business Concierge function also provided targeted information, particularly regarding starting a business in Maroondah, and navigating the permit process.

In May 2025, Council delivered BizMonth25, in partnership with Swinburne University of Technology, which included 16 business focused events and workshops for over 400 attendees. The Women in Business event in November 2024 also provided an opportunity for businesswomen to come together over brunch to learn, celebrate, connect and collaborate. The 2024 Maroondah Business Excellence Awards held in August 2024 celebrated outstanding Maroondah businesses across a range of industry sectors.

## We worked in partnership to plan for and support the rollout of funded three and four-year-old kindergarten in Maroondah



Council has continued to work with the Victorian Government, as well as other providers, in regard to the rollout of the *Best Start, Best Life* kindergarten reforms. The reforms include an increase in the hours of funded kindergarten for three and four-year-old children. In 2024/25, the Department of Education provided updated population data for Maroondah to develop a revised Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan, addressing impacts of the reforms for three and four-year-old kindergartens in Maroondah. Council is analysing these impacts and opportunities to support advocacy aimed at achieving the best outcomes that meet local needs.



## 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 2024/25

#### We continued the redevelopment of Karralyka



Council has continued the staged redevelopment of Karralyka. Works to extend the Karralyka foyer space have been completed and the space was officially opened to the community with a special event in May 2025. The lounge and bar space offers a light-filled area including an extended bar service and elevated menu offerings. The space will also play host to Council's special events such as future theatre program launches. Enhancements have also been made to the western building entry, which included the renewal of surrounding landscaping, and upgrading of balustrades to improve accessibility. Upgrades to the lower foyer and further accessibility improvements will be progressed in future years subject to funding.

#### We continued to deliver a range of events and performances



In November 2024, approximately 30,000 people visited the Maroondah Festival to enjoy a wide range of activities and attractions. Maroondah Carols was held in December 2024 at Town Park in Croydon involving preshow entertainment, wonderful performers, the Maroondah Carols Band, food vendors, a free kids zone, and firework show. Council also hosted three Celebrate Maroondah events – Superhero Sunday at Athelstane Reserve, Dogs' Day Out at Parkwood Oval, and an outdoor movie night at Charles Allen Reserve. Karralyka also continues to remain a significant regional theatre and function centre, selling 56,325 tickets across 190 performances over the year.



## We celebrated art in the community



The *Reignite Croydon - Laneway Lights* project is illuminating three laneways adjacent to Main Street, Croydon with captivating artwork showcasing the talent and creativity of local artists. This project was developed in partnership with the Victorian Government Living Local fund with the aim of improving the amenity of Croydon, increasing visitation to Main Street, and enhancing pedestrian safety. A new large-scale public art commission *Blazing Trails* by Melbourne Murals, highlighting the role of female athletes in cricket and celebrating the female-centred design of the venue, was installed at Maroondah Edge. Celebrating the Chin community in Maroondah, a selection of woven fabrics from different regions of Myanmar were installed in Croydon's multipurpose Community Hub at Civic Square as part of the Croydon Community Wellbeing Precinct project.

## We celebrated First Peoples Arts and Culture



Council continued to support and collaborate with First Peoples communities, artists, leaders and organisations to present and promote a range of First Peoples arts and cultural practice in Maroondah. These included a First Peoples mentorship artist opportunity offered as part of the *Reignite Croydon - Laneway Lights* project in partnership with Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place; an artwork by mentee artist Alinta Koehrer (Wurundjeri/Yorta Yorta) and mentor artist Kirsten Baade celebrating Indigenous flora; *Marrup Biik - Spirit Land* video installation by artist Simone Thomson (Wurundjeri/Yorta Yorta) depicting a spiritual map of Maroondah, in partnership with PixAll animation company; local Wiradjuri artist Stacey Peyton also featured with the *Guguburra* exhibition. The striking Elders double portrait also continued to grace the entrance to Council's Realm building, depicting local First Peoples Elders by artist Amanda Wright.

## We commenced developing a new Creative Maroondah Strategy



The *Arts and Cultural Development Strategy 2020-2025* has set Council's strategic direction for arts and culture for the past five years. The impacts and outcomes of this Strategy are being evaluated in collaboration with our community and creative industry stakeholders, to help inform the priorities for a new Creative Maroondah Strategy. Community engagement will focus on service/program priorities across the entire Creative Places portfolio: Arts and Cultural Services (comprising Wyreena Community Arts Centre, Maroondah Art Gallery and ArtSpace at Realm); Public Art and Creative Placemaking; Arts Development; and Arts Activation. The new Strategy will also include the suite of Karralyka offerings - theatre programs, functions and events, community halls, K-Cafes and delivered meals (Meals on Wheels) and will capture major precinct planning, development and activation initiatives, creative economies and regional cultural tourism initiatives.



## 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 2024/25

#### We continued implementation of the Sustainability Strategy 2022-2031



Implementation of Council's *Sustainability Strategy 2022-2031* continued in 2024/25 with: the adoption of the *Maroondah Transport Strategy 2025-2035*, which presents a plan to promote and expand active transport options across Maroondah; participating in and hosting the Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action; undertaking community consultation for neighbourhood place plans for Ringwood North and Croydon South; along with promoting the My Home Energy and Water Saver Kits through Your Library. Council also hosted the Maroondah EcoGathering at Karralyka in July 2024, bringing together the Maroondah community to share ideas for community-led sustainability actions.

A Climate Change Plan is under development and will provide a holistic approach to managing climate change mitigation, adaptation and risk across Council and the community. This Plan will be placed on public exhibition later in 2025.

## We implemented a series of Biolink Action Plans that implemented the Maroondah Habitat Connectivity Plan



Through the *Maroondah Habitat Connectivity Plan 2021* Council has identified eight biolinks to enhance habitat connectivity in Maroondah. The first Biolink Action Plan – the *Mullum Mullum Creek Biolink Action Plan 2025-2035* – was developed with the community and adopted by Council in December 2024. The Action Plan provides clear direction and focus for Council and the community to protect and improve the wildlife corridor along the Mullum Mullum Creek over the next 10 years. Planning for the Dandenong-Tarralla-Bungalook Creeks Biolink is underway, focusing on actions for seven fauna species.

## We worked in partnership to enhance Tarralla Creek



Melbourne Water has secured a \$9.8 million grant from the Australia Government Urban Rivers Catchment Program for Stage 2 of the Reimagining Tarralla Creek project, with the remaining funding (\$17 million) coming from Melbourne Water's Reimagining Your Creek program. Stage 2 works aim to extend the naturalised creek downstream from Vinter Avenue to Eastfield Road. Melbourne Water is leading the delivery of the project in partnership with Maroondah City Council; Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action; Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water; and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.

## We led advocacy on postponing the glass only bin service



In 2024/25, Council led sector advocacy on the costs and benefits of the Victorian Government proposed glass only bin service. Research findings prepared by this joint advocacy group were presented to the Minister for Environment with discussions continuing regarding benefits, costs and possible alternatives to this service. A total of 33 councils are now advocating to the Victorian Government to reconsider the mandated implementation of a glass only service due to the financial impact of this introduced service on local communities.

## We implemented Council's annual streetscape enhancement program



In 2024/25, Council's streetscape enhancement program focused on identifying trees under power lines. Six street renewal projects were completed, planting around 2000 advanced trees on nature strips. A mix of native and exotic species were chosen based on site characteristics. Additionally, 6650 understory plantings and 540 trees were added to parks and reserves. Maroondah now has over 35,672 indigenous plants in bushland reserves. Neighbourhood tree renewal projects began in the Golf Links Estate in Croydon, and planting activities extended to walking/cycling routes near six primary schools in Maroondah.



## 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 2024/25

#### We supported works to remove three railway crossings



As part of the Victorian Government's Level Crossing Removal Project, the level crossings at Bedford Road, Dublin Road and Coolstore Road were removed between March and July 2024; and new stations constructed at Ringwood East and Croydon. The Dublin Road level crossing was removed in June 2024 and the new Ringwood East Station opened in July 2024. The new station creates safer and more direct links between the Ringwood East shopping precinct, public transport and upgraded parking with about 460 car spaces. The Coolstore Road level crossing was removed in July 2024, and the new Croydon Station opened in August 2024. In addition to a premium station, the Croydon Transport Hub features a 14-bay bus interchange, car parking for 284 vehicles and 10 motorcycles, and new road connections, providing a modern and safe Croydon Station precinct.

## We progressed development of a new Activity Centre Carpark in Ringwood



Construction of a new car park at 1 Bedford Road, in the Ringwood Metropolitan Activity Centre, commenced in January 2024. The \$33.6 million project is being funded by the Australian Government and Council and will provide additional parking spaces for commuters, residents and visitors, reduce parking congestion on the nearby local streets and station carpark, and improving amenity and connectivity to Ringwood train station. A portion of the original Blood Brothers storefront has been retained and has been relocated to a more prominent position on the site to retain the corner store significance of the original building.

## We developed the Maroondah Transport Strategy



The *Maroondah Transport Strategy 2025-2035* was adopted by Council in April 2025. The Strategy builds on the achievements of the previous integrated transport, bicycle, and pedestrian strategies, and sets the strategic direction and areas of focus for Council to take action to deliver an efficient, integrated, sustainable, accessible, and safe transport system. Once implemented, the community will see improvements to pedestrian, cycling, parking, and public transport infrastructure, along with critical road upgrades on Canterbury, Dorset and Yarra roads and Maroondah Highway.

## We worked in partnership to undertake renewal works on the Mullum Mullum Creek and continued footpath construction in the Principal Pedestrian Network



Council worked in partnership to commence renewal works on the Mullum Mullum Creek trail. The first priority section, from Liris Court to Ashcombe Drive, was completed in December 2024. The section from Marilyn Crescent to Kalinda Road will be renewed in 2025/26.

Construction of footpaths continued along Maroondah's Principal Pedestrian Network, with an additional 3.82 kilometres constructed in 2024/25 at a total value of \$1.5 million. Completed works include Harrison Street, Wildwood Grove and Hill Street in Ringwood; Dickson Crescent in Ringwood North; Maroondah Highway (Dampier Grove to Hillcrest Avenue) in Ringwood; Shasta Avenue, Russet Road and Victoria Street in Ringwood East; and Lincoln Road (Croydon Road to Dorset Road) in Croydon.

## We advocated to the Australian and Victorian Governments for the provision of new and upgraded transportation infrastructure



Council was successful in securing \$1.36 million from the Australian Government Black Spot Program for Eastfield Road and Railway Avenue intersection upgrades. A further \$794,000 was allocated for traffic and pedestrian improvements in Ringwood, Ringwood North, Croydon Hills, and Kilsyth. Funding from the Active Transport Fund has also been secured for shared user paths along Greenwood Avenue in Ringwood (\$680,000) and Liverpool Road in Kilsyth (\$464,000). Joint Australian and Victorian Government Road Blitz Program funding of \$3.5 million has been allocated to prepare a detailed business case for intersection improvements at Yarra Road and Maroondah Highway.



## 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 2024/25

#### We continued the staged redevelopment of the Croydon Community Wellbeing Precinct



*Artist impression*

Planning and design work for the staged redevelopment of the Croydon Community Wellbeing Precinct continued during 2024/25. The next phase of developing this vibrant precinct is the construction of two Hubs for the community. Construction of a Cultural Hub on the corner of Mt Dandenong Road and Civic Square will begin later in 2025. The Hub will serve as a central gathering place, offering a range of services for the community including a state-of-the-art library, performance and events spaces, multipurpose rooms, meeting spaces, Council Service Centre, café and more.

A Multipurpose Hub is also planned for the precinct. This Hub will replace the current Keystone Hall next to the Croydon Athletics Track and will connect with the new bowling greens. The Multipurpose Hub will be home to Croydon Bowls Club, Croydon RSL and currently accommodated sporting groups. Early works associated with the development of the new Hub are scheduled to commence later in 2025.

## We progressed development in the Ringwood Metropolitan Activity Centre and Croydon Activity Centre



Council has been successful in securing \$15 million in funding from the Australian Government for the Croydon Community Wellbeing Precinct and Croydon Main Street Revitalisation project. Construction of the next stage of the Croydon Community Wellbeing Precinct will commence later in 2025, and community consultation for the revitalisation of Main Street Croydon was undertaken in June 2025. Advocacy for the Maroondah Highway Boulevard project continued in 2024/25, and progress was made on the landscape masterplan for Staley Gardens in Ringwood. The landscape plan will realise the community's vision for Staley Gardens.

## We worked in partnership to implement the objectives of Victoria's Housing Statement for the Ringwood Metropolitan Activity Centre



Council worked closely with the Victorian Planning Authority regarding updates to the Ringwood Metropolitan Activity Centre Masterplan. In April 2025, the Victorian Government gazetted new controls that implement the updated Masterplan and introduced a new zone around the activity centre – the Housing Choice and Transport Zone (HCTZ). While generally supportive of the changes to the Masterplan, Council has some concerns about the application of the HCTZ, which encourages increased housing density of up to six storeys on larger lots and four storeys on smaller lots. It is also considered that some areas in the catchment are not walkable.

## We undertook flood mitigation works



As part of Council's ongoing commitment to reducing the impacts of flooding on properties and the community, Sherbrook Drainage Catchment Upgrades were completed in September 2024. This project formed Stage 4 of the broader Ringwood Metropolitan Activity Centre project with all stages now complete. In addition to the drainage catchment upgrades, road renewal and accessibility improvements were also completed within Charter Street from New Street to Market Street.

## We enhanced community spaces



In 2024/25, Bungalook Reserve in Bayswater North, Little John Reserve in Warranwood and San Martin Reserve in Croydon North underwent improvement works including the renewal of ageing play equipment, enhancing nature play areas and making the playspaces safer and more accessible for all users. Grayswood Reserve skate precinct in Kilsyth South also underwent renewal works with the purpose-built facility designed to meet the needs and skill levels of local skaters, bike riders, roller bladers and other wheel users. Street planting, carpark improvements, pathway connectivity, and improved lighting enhancements were also undertaken at Norwood Reserve, and capital improvement works at three local shopping centres – Bedford Road in Ringwood East, Maroondah Village in Croydon North, and Clegg Avenue in Croydon – including tree planting, upgraded garden beds and footpath widening have improved the amenity of the centres for traders and visitors.



## 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 2024/25

#### We supported culturally and linguistically diverse families



Council's Kindergarten Outreach Program supports children and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to enrol and participate in kindergarten. The program supports those who have recently arrived in Australia to navigate enrolment forms and documentation requirements, provides translation assistance, and connects families with local schools, supported playgroups, maternal child and health services, and refugee support services.

In addition, Council offers supported playgroup and parent education sessions for culturally and linguistically diverse groups, and works in partnership with Ringwood Church of Christ to facilitate Burmese Storytime and Play sessions for Burmese families with children aged 0 to 5 years. Burmese dialects are spoken as well as English, with the sessions providing information for parents and caregivers to support the health and wellbeing of the whole family through storytime, craft, music, group activities, play, socialisation and guest speakers.



## We supported our young people to connect and thrive



Council has continued to provide a range of programs to support young people in Maroondah including: EV's Hangout, a free weekly social drop-in program for young people aged 12 to 25 years; the Artventurers and Artbreakers programs aimed at young people aged 10 to 14 years and 18 to 25 years; as well as two support groups for young people that met fortnightly to talk about factors impacting them, build strong peer connections and engage in a range of activities. In addition, the 2024 Maroondah Youth Awards honoured over 145 young people for achievements in teamwork, leadership, creativity, and perseverance. The *EV's Years: Passing the Mic* event in May 2025 showcased both legacy and contemporary artists in celebrating the rich legacy of EV's Youth Centre as a live music venue ahead of development commencing on the Croydon Community Wellbeing Precinct.

## We promoted social connection and wellbeing for our Seniors



Council has continued to support older people through a range of programs aimed at enhancing social connection and wellbeing for people with support needs, those who are more independent, as well as providing assistance to carers. Council celebrated the Victorian Seniors Festival in October and November 2024, with a Seniors Wellbeing Luncheon and Wellbeing Expo. The GenConnect program has also continued, enabling socially isolated older people to volunteer at Maroondah's Occasional Care service on a weekly basis. Council has piloted a Growing Older and Living Well newsletter which provided updates about events, social activities, resources and support programs for older people living in and around Maroondah.

## We promoted inclusion for our LGBTIQ+ community members



Council prides itself on being an inclusive and supportive organisation, with a commitment to promoting gender equality and gender diversity. In May 2025, Council proudly celebrated IDAHOBIT day and our LGBTIQ+ local community through its various social media channels, as well as with Council employees, across multiple sites. Council also has a number of programs supporting LGBTIQ+ community members, including two welcoming and safe support programs for young people; and the Mature Rainbows support group for LGBTIQ+ people aged 50+. In addition, the third Poolside Pride event was held at Aquanation in February 2025. The event brought together LGBTIQ+ individuals of all ages, along with their friends and allies, for a day of entertainment, food, and fitness activities.

## Maroondah celebrates National Reconciliation Week



Maroondah celebrated and recognised National Reconciliation Week in May 2025 with a community event at Ringwood Town Square and Realm. In partnership with Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place, Mullum Creations, Your Library and Eastland, the event featured an Acknowledgement of Country, Smoking Ceremony, didgeridoo performance, and Mullum Market featuring First Peoples arts and culture, as well as food and children's activities. The *Marrup Biik* exhibition, developed by Simone Thompson in collaboration with PixALL, was also held at ArtSpace in Realm during this week, and Council employees held a fundraising event to support programs run by the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency.



## 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 2024/25

We worked in partnership with the Victorian Electoral Commission to coordinate a Council Election in October 2024 for the 2024-2028 period



In the lead up to Local Government elections the Victorian Local Government sector adopts an election period mode to avoid actions and decisions that may be interpreted as influencing voters or binding an incoming Council. Council's *Election Period Policy* was updated in July 2024, ahead of the election period commencing on 17 September 2024. Victorian Local Government Elections were held on 26 October 2024, and Council worked closely with the Victorian Electoral Commission to coordinate the election in Maroondah. Following declaration of the election, new Councillors were sworn into office on 11 November 2024. The next general election for Council will be held on 28 October 2028.

## We engaged the community to develop a new Community Vision and prepared a Council Plan



The new *Maroondah 2050 – Our future together* Community Vision was adopted by Council in May 2025. This new Vision brings together over 9800 responses from our diverse community, recommendations from the Maroondah Community Panel, and research into emerging trends, opportunities and challenges, to set the future direction for Maroondah. The *Council Plan 2025-2029* was adopted by Council in June 2025 and describes the medium-term objectives, strategies, initiatives, services, and performance indicators of Council, in working towards the Maroondah 2050 Community Vision.

## We engaged the community to inform a broad range of strategies, plans and projects



Extensive community and stakeholder consultation was undertaken over the past 12 months to help shape important strategies, plans and projects of Council. The community were provided with an opportunity to provide feedback on Council's *Road Management Plan 2025-2029*, *Maroondah Bicycle Network Plan*, *Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029*, *Communications Strategy 2025-2029*, *Croydon Main Street Revitalisation*, *Liveable Neighbourhoods Place Planning*, and Council's future strategic documents including the *Council Plan 2025-2029*, *Asset Plan 2025 to 2035*, *Financial Plan 2025/26 to 2034/35*, *Annual Budget 2025/26* and *Revenue and Rating Plan 2025/26 to 2028/29*.

## We provided grant funding to local groups and organisations



Council provided more than \$200,000 in funding to 90 not-for-profit Maroondah community organisations and groups as part of the 2024/25 Community Grants Funding Program. Recipients came from a diverse range of community groups and organisations, with a significant amount of funding allocated to emergency relief activities, mental health programs, as well as programs which support children, young and older people, people with disability, First Nations Peoples and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. A further \$26,000 was provided to seven cultural and community organisations through the 2024/25 Arts and Cultural Grants Program.

## We supported the Maroondah Youth Wellbeing Advocates program



The Maroondah Youth Wellbeing Advocates program aims to foster dialogue between young residents (aged 15 to 25) and Council, focusing on youth wellbeing. Supported by the Engage! grants program, participants contributed insights to various Council Plans and initiatives, including the Maroondah Reconciliation Plan and Maroondah 2050 Community Vision. The program has recently undergone a review and update with input from 12 local young people. Following recruitment in May and June 2025, 16 young adults will commence participation in the revamped program from July 2025.

**To contact Council**

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