

City of Greater Dandenong Advocacy Priorities for 2025 – 26



**GREATER
DANDENONG**
City of Opportunity



Introduction

The Greater Dandenong City Council is committed to representing the needs and aspirations of our vibrant community. We actively pursue partnerships with the Australian and Victorian Governments, other councils, and advocacy groups to strengthen our collective voice and secure the resources needed to drive meaningful change.

Our engagement with peak bodies further amplifies the voice of local government, helping to shape policy reform that reflects the values of our residents. The key focus areas of our strategic objectives remain unchanged from 2021, underscoring the enduring aspirations we all share for Greater Dandenong:

- A socially connected, safe and healthy city
- A city that respects and celebrates diversity, our history and the arts
- A city of accessible, vibrant centres and places
- A green city committed to a sustainable future
- A city that supports business, entrepreneurship, quality education and employment outcomes
- A Council that demonstrates leadership, responsible use of public resources and a commitment to investing in the community

What's inside

This document outlines Council's advocacy priorities for 2025–26, supporting engagement with Members of Parliament and key stakeholders. It presents ten focus areas, each with a one–two page summary detailing:

- The opportunity
- Why it matters
- What Council is asking for

We invite our local MPs and partners to collaborate with us in delivering meaningful outcomes for Greater Dandenong.

Advocacy 2025–26



1 Back Your Neighbour



2 Poverty Is Everyone's Business



3 Housing



4 Transport



5 Sport and Open Space

6 Business and Employment

7 Sustainability

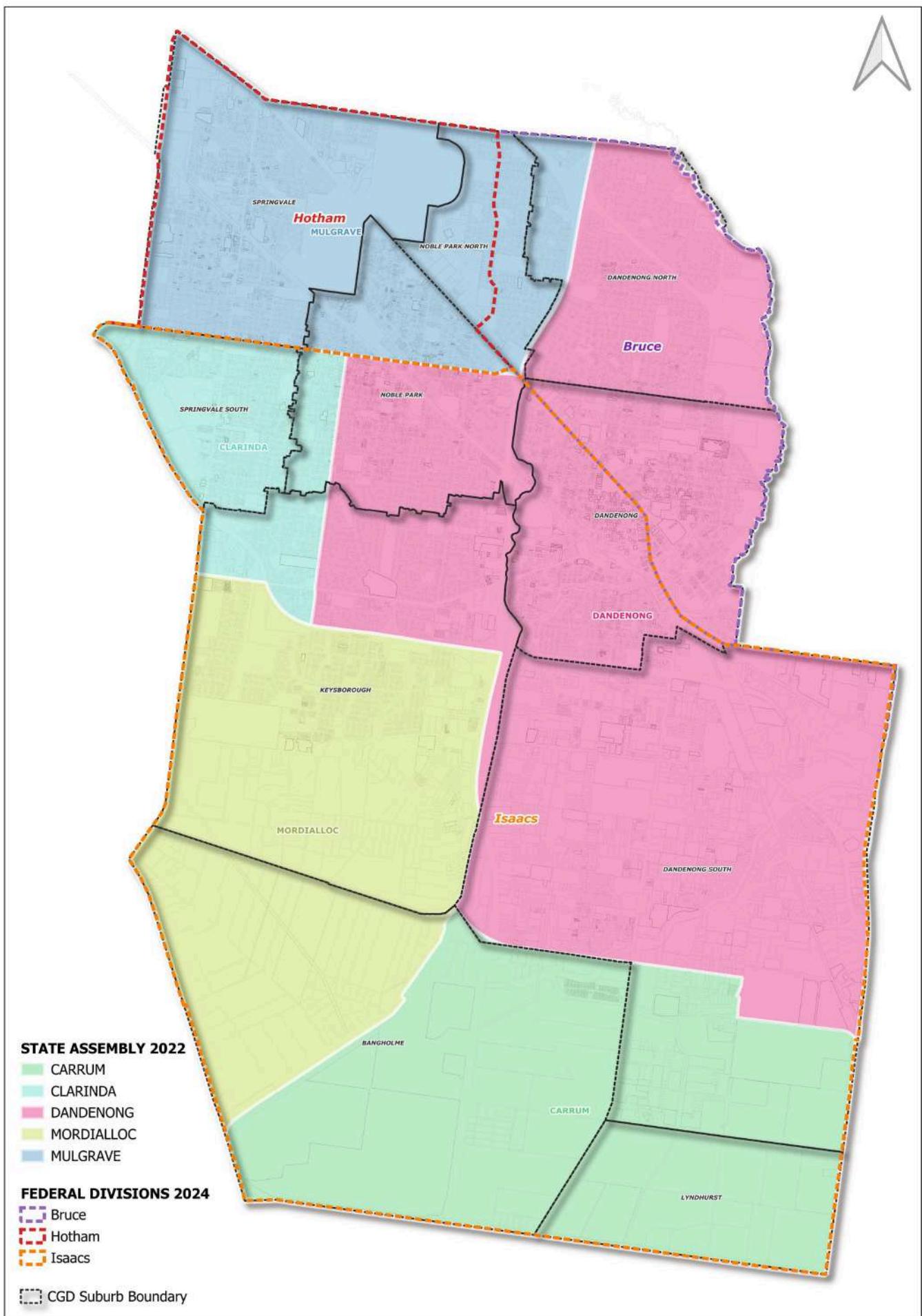
8 Major Projects



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10 Gambling

Boundaries of State and Federal Electorates



Community Snapshot

Population



167,000 residents in 2024. Predicted to grow over the next decade to **185,000**

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2023



615 residents are of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage

Source: Census 2021



over **154** birthplaces

Source: Census 2021



2/3 of people are born overseas



24,000 migrants have arrived since 2016



5,500 immigrants settled in 2022–23

Source: Census 2021



700 people seeking asylum, the second highest number in Victoria

Source: Settlement Reports, 2022/23.

Employment



Unemployment rate **6.4%**

114,506 people work in Greater Dandenong

Source: REMPLAN June 2024

Housing



62% owned or being purchased



2,366 people are homeless or living in severely overcrowded dwellings



1/5 of renting households are at risk of housing related financial stress or homelessness

Back Your Neighbour



The opportunity

Council welcomes the Federal Government's reforms of the Protection Visa system, which has offered permanency to thousands of refugees in Greater Dandenong.

There are still at least 700 people in the City who face the prospect of persecution and conflict in their homelands. Granting them permanent residency would provide safety and protection for children and families.

Why it matters

BACK YOUR
NEIGHBOUR

The 'Back Your Neighbour' campaign led by Council, is supported by **over 40 Local Governments** and more than **70 community organisations nationally**.

Greater Dandenong is home to the second highest number of people living on Bridging Visas in Victoria.

Many families and children in Dandenong do not have work rights and/or access to basic services. As a result, they live in poverty and seek desperate financial and material aid from local services and Council.

From **2024**, Council's **Community Connector program** has supported **over 1,000 families** many of whom are people seeking asylum—with food, clothing, and emergency relief.

What Council is asking for

- Provide **a fair and clear path for refugees** with unresolved immigration status to get permanent protection.
- Give people a **valid visa with work rights** so they can support themselves.
- Make **health care, financial help and important services easier to access** so people can participate fully in society.

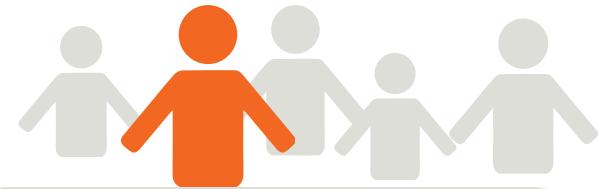
Poverty is Everyone's Business Campaign



The opportunity

Greater Dandenong continues to experience some of the highest rates of poverty in Victoria. Council is seeking support from all levels of government to deliver a coordinated, place-based response through an investment of **\$2 million annually over five years** to lead place-based initiatives tackling **food insecurity, homelessness, financial hardship, and social exclusion**

1 in 5 people in Greater Dandenong live below the poverty line.



Since 2020 Council has invested **\$1.7 million** in poverty alleviation with a further **\$8.8 million** invested in community grants.

Why it matters

Rising living costs and limited affordable housing continue to deepen disadvantage. The Anti-Poverty Consortium, a partnership between Council and local organisations, delivers practical support and advocates for long-term change by elevating the voice of lived experience and working together to create community-driven solutions.

What Council is asking for

Food security

- \$200,000 for community education, food production, and 'help yourself' events.

Early intervention and education

- \$254,000 supporting new arrivals to connect to community via expanding Council's Community Connector program.
- \$159,000 for the Multicultural Community Engagement Network to educate through a multicultural lens about people seeking support early and not delaying engagement.

Monitoring and Evaluation \$30,000

Place-based community support

- \$287,000 to fund financial counsellors and 'bring your bill' events by grass-roots community organisations.
- \$150,000 to test innovative solutions for addressing local disadvantage.

Homelessness

- \$790,000 social work outreach for hotspots as modelled by the South East Community Links and Metro Trains pilot.

A place for respite

- \$130,000 for Cornerstone Contact Centre to provide a safe place for rough sleepers to seek respite.

Housing



The opportunity

Greater Dandenong aims to be a vibrant, inclusive community with diverse housing options. Council is committed to net zero goals and integrating sustainability into housing affordability to support growth and resilience.

Council is investigating the viability of the car park at 32–34 Warwick Avenue being located underground to allow affordable residential housing development at surface level—an innovative step toward sustainable urban renewal.

Among renters in Greater Dandenong, 21% of families live in acute financial hardship, compared to 16% across Victoria.



Why it matters

Housing costs in Greater Dandenong have risen faster than incomes for decades, leaving many residents behind. In 2023, only 6% of rentals were affordable for low-income earners.

By creating **affordable, diverse housing on public land**, Council can **ease housing pressure, support local jobs**, and make Dandenong a more inclusive, sustainable place to live.

What Council is asking for

- **\$5million** Funding for upfront costs of constructing underground carpark infrastructure to allow for future Social or Affordable housing construction.
- Use of State Government land in central Dandenong for an affordable and Social housing project.
- A single clear definition of affordable & social housing to aid achieving housing development targets.
- For the inclusion of a mandatory provision in the Planning Scheme to require residential developments to provide a contribution towards affordable housing.
- For greater flexibility in the Planning Scheme to allow for a variety of housing stock that can be utilised as affordable/social housing e.g. tiny homes

Transport



The opportunity

Greater Dandenong is advocating for key transport upgrades to improve safety, access, and connectivity. Priorities include **\$16 million** for the Jacksons/ Elonera/ Chandler Road corridor, completing the Djerring Trail and safer intersections.

Why it matters

Safe, accessible transport is vital for community wellbeing and economic growth. Upgrades to the Jacksons Road corridor will reduce accidents and improve traffic flow. **Completing the Djerring Trail** will boost active transport and ease congestion.

What Council is asking for

Road safety projects

- **\$4 million** in infrastructure upgrades and improvements to the Jacksons Road, Elonera Road and Chandler Road corridor including pedestrian signals on Chandler Road near Yarraman Road.
- **\$4 million** for the removal of the Heatherton Road roundabout in Noble Park, to be replaced with traffic lights.

Djerring Trail Extension

The Djerring Trail was proposed as part of the Caulfield to Dandenong level crossing removals but was only delivered up to Yarraman Station and needs to be extended into Dandenong CBD.

- **\$8 million** Construction of the Djerring Trail cycling corridor



Transport continued



The opportunity

Greater Dandenong is seeking to improve transport access and equity through better bus connectivity, targeted route upgrades, and a trial demand-responsive service in Dandenong South. These initiatives will support access to jobs, education, and services –especially for older adults and people with disabilities. The Dandenong Bypass extension is a major road infrastructure project that will finalise the last section of the arterial road construction.

Why it matters

Better public transport links will connect residents to jobs and services, while safer intersections and lower speed limits will protect pedestrians. **Accessible options for older people and those with disabilities** will ensure Greater Dandenong is inclusive for all. Completing the Dandenong Bypass will ease congestion and support safer active transport.

What Council is asking for

Accessible options – Public transport and road infrastructure improvements to allow access to businesses and employment areas, particularly Dandenong South.

- Fund a 12-month trial of a Dandenong South Demand Responsive Bus Service for the Dandenong South National Employment and Innovation Cluster.
- Support for combining existing bus routes to provide continuous services through Dandenong CBD.
- Funding and support to **extend route 814 to Monash University** and reinvest savings into Springvale South services.
- More consistent, reliable and accessible public transport options for people with a disability and older people when using taxis and other ride sharing providers.

Dandenong Bypass Completion and Active Transport Corridor

\$500 million Extend Dandenong Bypass to South Gippsland Fwy including an associated cycle path. The Dandenong/Dingley Bypass has progressively been delivered over the last decade. The extension of the bypass between the South Gippsland Highway and the South Gippsland Freeway is the last section of this arterial road link to be constructed.

Sport and Open Space



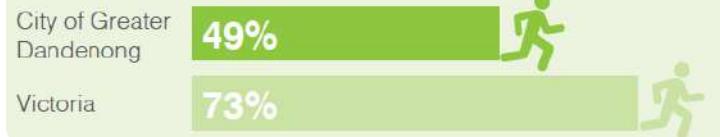
The opportunity

Greater Dandenong is seeking investment to upgrade key sport, recreation, and cultural spaces. Projects include revitalising Springvale's Multicultural Place and Boulevard, and improving reserves such as Greaves, JC Mills, Ross, Warner, and Robert Booth. Council also supports the renewal of cultural spaces like Dandenong New Art and Walker Street Gallery, and the expansion of public art across the city.

Why it matters

Upgrading sporting fields, reserves, and cultural spaces is essential for building active, healthy, and connected communities.

Who meets Australian physical activity guidelines?



In Greater Dandenong, physical activity levels are low, and health outcomes lag behind other areas in Victoria. These projects will provide safer, more accessible places for sport and recreation, while celebrating the city's rich cultural diversity through creative spaces and public art.

What Council is asking for – Open Space

- **\$10 million** to revitalise Springvale through upgrades to the **Multicultural Place** and **Springvale Boulevard**.
- Ongoing support for community hubs and gathering places in response to emerging local needs.
- For the **renewal of cultural spaces**, including Dandenong New Art (DNA Lab) and Walker Street Gallery.
- The **expansion of public art** to enrich spaces and reflect the city's cultural diversity.

Sport and Open Space continued



What Council is asking for – Sport

Dandenong Victorian Electorate

- **\$450,000** for lighting installation at Oval One, **Greaves Reserve**. Fully designed and shovel ready.
- **\$3 million** to renew the hockey pitch surface, fencing, and lighting at **JC Mills Reserve**. Detailed design underway.
- **\$380,000** to renew the **batting cage** at **Robert Booth Reserve**. Detailed design underway.
- **\$800,000** Frederick Wachter Reserve – Pump Track. Fully designed and shovel ready.
- **\$1.2 million** Frederick Wachter Reserve – Public Active Recreation Infrastructure (incl. multi-court (basketball & futsal), bouldering, picnic facilities, landscaping, furniture). Fully designed and shovel ready.

Mulgrave Victorian Electorate

- **\$2 million** to develop the Southern Precinct Soccer Field at Warner Reserve. Detailed design underway.

Clarinda Victorian Electorate

- **\$400,000** Burden Park Lawn Bowls Amenities Upgrade. Fully designed and shovel ready.
- **\$200,000** Burden Park Fenced Dog off Leash Area. Fully designed and shovel ready.
- **\$600,000** Alan Corrigan Reserve – Playground Upgrade. Fully designed and shovel ready.

Mordialloc Victorian Electorate

- **5.2 million** Tatterson Park – Public Active Recreation Infrastructure (incl. multi-court (basketball & futsal), skate park, picnic facilities, landscaping, public lighting, furniture). Fully designed and shovel ready.
- **1.8 million** Tatterson Park – Playground Extension/Bike Education. Fully designed and shovel ready.



Business and Employment



The opportunity

Greater Dandenong is advocating for targeted renewal and investment to strengthen local economies and employment hubs in Springvale, Noble Park, and Dandenong. Council is working with government and industry to attract businesses, improve infrastructure, and ensure the region is investment-ready. This includes supporting key industries, and enhancing access to education, health, and aged care services.

In June 2024, the unemployment rate in Greater Dandenong was 6.4%, compared to 4.0% State-wide.

The City's economic output was \$58.23 billion and regional exports valued at \$29.72 billion in 2023.

Source: REMPLAN



Why it matters

Greater Dandenong is **jobs-rich but opportunity-poor**—with high demand for labour, yet high unemployment and a large pool of available workers. This mismatch between supply and demand must be addressed to ensure residents can share in economic growth, participate in community life, and build skills for the future

What Council is asking for

- **An integrated planning and infrastructure implementation approach** aligned with the State government's Activity Centre Plans.
- **Dandenong South National Employment and Innovation Cluster.** A commitment from State Government to develop the Framework Plan.
- **Investment in enabling/catalyst infrastructure** to promote and support business attraction and retention.
- **Investment for infrastructure** and a supply of zoned land across the GSEM area to ensure the South East region is investment ready.
- Funding to develop and pilot a **strategic activation and events program** to drive economic and visitation outcomes for our Activity Centres. **\$1million over 3 years.**
- **Promotion of Greater Dandenong and the Southern State Significant Industrial Precinct (SSIP)** as a key economic hub and destination of choice for key industry investment. Leveraging the proposed Dandenong South Intermodal Terminal.
- **Promotion of Greater Dandenong to high-quality education, health, and aged care providers** to improve liveability and address growing demand.

Sustainability



The opportunity

Greater Dandenong City Council is seeking investment to support and facilitate Council's emergency action on climate change and its commitment to net zero. To achieve this, Council is seeking opportunities to invest in climate resilient infrastructure, promote energy upgrades for the business sector and the community, and support programs, education and activities that promote sustainability and a circular economy.

Why it matters

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What Council is asking for

- Increased investment in programs, education and activities to promote a circular economy by reducing waste and improving opportunities for reuse.
- Increased investment in climate resilient infrastructure that reduces the impact of climate change on the community.
- Programs to support and advocate to the local business sector and wider community regarding the importance of reducing emissions through electrification, energy efficiency upgrades and other methods.

Major Projects



The Opportunity

Greater Dandenong is seeking investment in key projects to support a growing, diverse community, upgrading Dandenong Station, exploring a new rail link and delivering a central Community Hub.

Why it matters

These projects will improve transport, education, and community amenity making Greater Dandenong safer, more connected, and inclusive, while boosting local opportunities and long-term resilience.

What Council is asking for

Council is advocating for **\$400 million** to **Upgrade Dandenong Station**:

- Construct a fourth train platform for Cranbourne Line Duplication.
- Extension of the lengths and widths of platform 1 and 2 to new generation trains and current standards.
- DDA accessibility between platforms.

Council is advocating for the construction / renovation of Paddy O'Donoghue Centre to create a **Noble Park Library Lounge**. It is costed at around **\$800,000** for construction works and to develop the site into a mini community hub model. Approximately

\$630,000 per year would enable Council to undertake a two-year pilot approach to ensure continued operations for the site.

\$20 million in funding towards the construction of the **Dandenong Community Hub**. This will contribute to the costs of the co-design process, refine the concept plan, and incorporate key design elements that ensure environmental sustainability.

Multicultural Place Upgrade

With around 10,000 people a day, this popular public gathering space is where people meet up and proceed to the many exciting shopping and eating experiences within Springvale.

The concept design to revitalise Multicultural Place and the adjacent laneway includes new street furniture, pavement upgrades, lighting and art interventions, green spaces, improved waste management infrastructure, seating/tables for outdoor dining, recreation and play spaces.

Estimated Budget: \$3.5 million

Community Safety



The opportunity

Community safety in Greater Dandenong involves reducing crime, anti-social behaviour, supporting vulnerable community members and promoting social cohesion.

It's more than just policing and security – it's about building a cohesive, resilient community where everyone feels safe and connected.

Why it matters

Investing in community safety helps address the root causes of crime, creating safer, more resilient neighbourhoods. With the right support, communities can **flourish and prosper**, fostering a sense of belonging, wellbeing, and opportunity for all residents.

What Council is asking for

Crime prevention initiatives

- **\$500,000** to deliver innovative programs and community models across three years that address the causes of crime, family violence and improve perceptions of safety.
- **\$500,000** to increase perceptions of safety across Dandenong Activity Centre through infrastructure upgrades employing Crime Prevention through Environmental Design principles.

Top crimes reported in Greater Dandenong



2,480
Theft from a motor vehicle



1,229
Criminal damage



1,583
Breach of family violence order



1,163
Drug possession



1,545
Theft



1,135
Steal from a retail store

Family Violence

2,584
Family violence incidents



75%
victim survivors are women

8th
highest breach of intervention order rate across all Victoria

Gambling



The opportunity

For many residents, gambling is a cause of financial hardship, poverty, personal stress, family conflict and violence, unemployment and even homelessness.

Governments have the means to take steps to reduce the enduring burden of gambling losses, thereby improving the financial wellbeing of residents, easing family conflict and improving welfare of the community.

Why it matters

In the past year alone, \$141 million was lost to electronic gaming machines (EGMs or 'pokies') in Greater Dandenong – the second highest rate of losses in Victoria. Meantime, the aggressive advertising of sports gambling prompts a growing number of young people to gamble regularly.

In communities of financial disadvantage and soaring housing costs, measures to reduce gambling losses would improve the prosperity and wellbeing of many local families.

What Council is asking for

- Reductions in State Government 'caps' or limits upon the number of EGMs permitted in communities of elevated gambling losses and socio-economic disadvantage.
- A prompt and full implementation of the State Government's planned pre-commitment scheme.
- Further funding for measures to prevent, and respond to, gambling-related problems.
- A national ban on gambling advertising.
- Prohibition of donations to Australian political parties or candidates by the gambling industry.



Acknowledging
Bunurong Country

Greater Dandenong City Council acknowledges and pays respects to the Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation, as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters in and around Greater Dandenong.

We value and recognise local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultures, heritage, and connection to land as a proud part of a shared identity for Greater Dandenong.

Greater Dandenong City Council pays respect to Elders past and present and recognises their importance in maintaining knowledge, traditions, and Culture in our Community.

Greater Dandenong City Council also respectfully acknowledges the Bunurong Land Council as the Registered Aboriginal Party responsible for managing the Aboriginal Cultural heritage of the land and waters where Greater Dandenong is situated.



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