



City of Greater Dandenong **CHILDREN'S** *plan*





Acknowledgement

The City of Greater Dandenong Council would like to acknowledge the contribution of community partners, families and children who provided advice and participated in the consultation process to develop the Children's Plan.

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land and pay respects to elders, past and present.

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1 STRATEGY OVERVIEW & ACTION PLAN

MAYOR'S FOREWORD

The City of Greater Dandenong is a place of great diversity and opportunity. The community is one of immense cultural richness, which respects and supports people of all ages and backgrounds.

Children are an important part of our community, accounting for almost 1 in 5 residents. In total, there are approximately 27,000 children and adolescents aged 0-14 years and an annual birth rate of 2,225.

Looking after our children and ensuring they have the best start to life is something that we take seriously. Providing all children with the opportunity to grow, learn, develop and thrive in a safe and caring environment is a responsibility we all share across the community.

The City of Greater Dandenong is a Child Friendly City. The Children's Plan has been developed utilising UNICEF's Child Friendly Cities framework and the Victorian Local Government Association Child Friendly Cities Charter.

Council acknowledges the importance of continuing to invest in the health and wellbeing of children and their families as part of its broader focus on supporting a healthy and sustainable community. As a community, we know that providing children with the best start to life in their early years and supporting children throughout childhood delivers significant long-term benefits for individuals, families and communities.



On behalf of my fellow Councillors we look forward to working in partnership with families, key agencies, service providers and the community to achieve the expected outcomes and aspirations of this Children's Plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "S O'Reilly".

Mayor,
Cr Sean O'Reilly

DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION & REVIEW OF THE CHILDREN'S PLAN

DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The Greater Dandenong Children's Plan 2015-2019 has been developed through an extensive process of review of the Municipal Early Years Plan 2010-2014 through community and stakeholder engagement.

The Children's Plan addresses policy priorities of State and Federal governments and has responded to the unique issues, challenges and opportunities identified for children and families in the City of Greater Dandenong. Specifically, the Plan recognises and responds to the cultural, language and socio-economic diversity.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Central to the development of the new Plan has been the consultation with hundreds of children in various care and education settings throughout the City. There has also been broad engagement with parents and families, service providers, and all Directorates across Council.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Children's Plan will be implemented by the Greater Dandenong City Council over the four year period 2015-2019. Implementation of the Plan will be a shared responsibility across all

departments, nominated in the action plan, reflecting a whole of Council commitment to improve outcomes for children and families.

Wherever possible, Council will identify opportunities to work in partnership with State and Federal governments, other agencies and service providers, community groups and families to improve outcomes for children in Greater Dandenong.

GOVERNANCE AND REVIEW

The Executive Committee of the Greater Dandenong Child and Family partnership meets bi monthly to review the progress of the Children's plan.

This information is provided to Council in an annual report.

This Plan will also have a final review in mid 2019, with a view to developing a new Plan for the period 2020-2024. The review of this Plan will consider:

- The extent to which actions have been implemented over the four years (output)
- The extent to which, through both the Plan and other influencing factors, the health and wellbeing of children aged 0-12 years and their families have improved (outcomes)

- What measures have been most successful in influencing good early years outcomes and why.

The review process will also identify emerging issues, trends and opportunities to enhance the health and wellbeing of children and families in Greater Dandenong.



OUR VISION FOR CHILDREN: A CHILD FRIENDLY CITY

COUNCIL'S VISION FOR CHILDREN

The City of Greater Dandenong is a Child Friendly City, in which all children are valued, respected and celebrated.

- > Children are given opportunities to learn and develop their potential
- > Families, services and the broader community work together to ensure children are safe at all times and have access to services
- > Children have access to environments and services to improve their health and wellbeing
- > Children have opportunities to connect with other children, to their family, to their community and to the environment they live in
- > Children's voices are heard through consultation in planning and implementation of programs



INTRODUCTION

The City of Greater Dandenong is committed to supporting children to have the best start to life and ensuring they have the opportunity to grow, learn and develop throughout childhood.

The Children's Plan 2015-2019 provides Council with a strategic framework to direct its efforts over coming years in improving the health and wellbeing of children and their families. The purpose of the plan is to articulate Council's role and priorities in supporting children and to identify a range of new and ongoing actions to implement over the coming four-year period.

The Plan has been developed within the context of the City of Greater Dandenong Council Plan, Community Wellbeing Plan and Social Model of Health and integrates with the directions of these strategies.

The Children's Plan is presented in two parts. The first part outlines Council's key directions and action plan: what Council will do to improve outcomes for children and their families. The second part of the Plan provides background information, demographics and a summary of key children's issues and challenges.



COUNCIL'S ROLE IN IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN

The City of Greater Dandenong provides an extensive range of services and supports for children and families across the municipality. Council plays an essential role in supporting children and their families, which in many cases would otherwise not be provided in the community. Council has the unique ability in the community to bring together all four environments that underpin a healthy and sustainable community: social, economic, environmental and cultural. Through Council's proximity to the community, it has capacity to identify and respond to emerging needs and issues.

Council's role in improving outcomes for children and their families is diverse and includes the role as: advocate, planner, leader, facilitator, partner, manager, broker, service provider, researcher, facility provider and program funder.

Council recognises a continued investment of its time, resources and commitment to improving outcomes for children and their families is critical to the long-term enhancement of community health and wellbeing and the achievement of its overarching vision for Greater Dandenong as a safe, vibrant city of opportunity for all – to visit, work, live and play.

Many of the functions of Council in improving outcomes for children and their families is not mandated or required under legislation. In many cases Council makes a decision to invest in a particular program, service, facility or project in response to an identified community need, leading the way in making a positive difference for children and families.



Research into early childhood development continues to confirm that achieving the best start to life together with a seamless service system from birth is critical to an individual's long-term health and wellbeing throughout life. A positive childhood lays the foundation for a healthy, happy and successful life and enables a person to grow, thrive and participate fully in their community.

CHILD FRIENDLY CITY COMMITMENT

The City of Greater Dandenong is a Child Friendly City. The Children's Plan has been developed utilising UNICEF's Child Friendly Cities framework and the Victorian Local Government Association Child Friendly Cities Charter.

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

Some of the key initiatives that contribute to Greater Dandenong being a 'Child Friendly City' are:

- Demonstrating leadership in welcoming children and families of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds into our services, activities and facilities
- Engagement of other levels of government and services and organisations through the facilitation of a Child and Family Partnership
- Consultations with children that recognises children as active citizens
- Providing opportunities for children to participate and contribute to planning
- Providing a physical environment that supports healthy learning, development and wellbeing through footpaths and walkways, parks and playgrounds, sporting facilities, swimming pools and libraries, and neighbourhood facilities
- Providing infrastructure that supports best practice education and care as in 26 kindergartens, 6 early learning and care facilities, 10 Maternal and Child Health facilities and 7 local community and neighbourhood centres
- Up to date data regarding our children that informs planning of services, strategies and activities
- Integrated planning processes through Council Plan, Community Wellbeing Plan and Children's Plan to improve outcomes for children
- Collaboration and partnership with Community, including parents, services providers and government bodies and agencies
- Addressing safety and security concerns in parks, public facilities and transport
- Improved safety concerns and advocacy through media i.e. 'White Ribbon Day' campaign

KEY DIRECTIONS

The Children's Plan 2015-2019 contains five key directions that were identified through the consultation process with children, families, service providers and other key stakeholders. The following table illustrates the five key directions and how they align with the Council Plan themes and Community Wellbeing Plan priorities.

COUNCIL PLAN		COMMUNITY WELLBEING PLAN		CHILDREN'S PLAN
THEME		PRIORITIES		KEY DIRECTION & GOAL
PEOPLE	➡	Education, Employment and Lifelong Learning	➡	Improved learning for children To improve learning, development and educational outcomes for children in the City of Greater Dandenong.
PLACES	➡	Safer Communities	➡	Safe & accessible communities for children To improve safety and accessibility for children to confidently and independently participate in the city.
PEOPLE	➡	Collaborative Health and Wellbeing Planning Physical Activity, Leisure and Recreation	➡	Improved health & wellbeing of children To create an environment that supports children's health and wellbeing.
OPPORTUNITIES	➡	Building Healthy and Sustainable Communities	➡	Connections for children To create opportunities for children to connect with family, friends and the wider community and environment.
OPPORTUNITIES	➡	Building Healthy and Sustainable Communities	➡	Voices of children To provide children with the right to freedom of expression, to seek and receive information and influence decisions that affect them.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

Council will support the five key directions through a range of new and ongoing initiatives. All 54 actions and their implementation details are outlined in the following action plan section.

Of all actions contained in this Plan, Council has identified the following 10 priority actions:

1. Language, literacy and numeracy

Develop an initiative to improve children and parents' language, literacy and numeracy skills. This will include a strengthened focus on encouraging parents to read to children and increasing the accessibility of children's books for all families.

2. Engagement with children

Implement an annual engagement process with children throughout Greater Dandenong aimed at providing them with the opportunity to express their opinion about the city they want and their priorities. Outcomes will inform Council planning and decision-making. This will include hosting an annual Children's Forum and Children's Festival.

3. Health & wellbeing

Support and build on existing initiatives focussed on improving children's nutrition, physical activity and dental health.

4. Early learning education

Advocate for ongoing funding for children to access both 3 and 4 year old kindergarten programs. This is in recognition of the demonstrated benefit of two years of early childhood education brings to a child's development and school readiness, particularly for vulnerable children.

5. Social disadvantage

Advocate for the provision of support services dedicated to helping children and families living in generational and situational disadvantage.

6. High quality and integrated Council services

Plan and develop a best-practice integrated Community Hub in Central Dandenong and Keysborough South, incorporating services for families children and young people.

7. Engaging refugee & asylum seeker children and families

Provide opportunities for volunteers to better engage and support newly arrived asylum seeker and refugee families to discover Greater Dandenong and settle into their new home. This will include introducing families to key services and facilities.

8. Family violence

Support and build on existing initiatives focussed on tackling family violence, with a particular emphasis placed on highlighting and addressing the impact on children.

9. Celebration of children

Promote the City of Greater Dandenong as a Child Friendly City and celebrate children of all backgrounds, ages and abilities.

10. Flexible and quality childcare

Support and advocate for the provision of flexible models of quality childcare to cater for the needs of people who live and work in the City of Greater Dandenong.

KEY DIRECTION 1 – IMPROVED LEARNING FOR CHILDREN

GOAL

To improve learning, development and educational outcomes for children in the City of Greater Dandenong.

No.	Action	Responsibility	Indicators	Planning & Implementation Years
1.1	Language, literacy and numeracy Develop an initiative to improve children and parents' language, literacy and numeracy skills. This will include a strengthened focus on encouraging parents to read to children and increasing the accessibility of children's books for all families. Explore concept of children's book recycling / exchange scheme.	Community Arts Culture & Libraries Community Wellbeing	Improved rates of parental reading to children. Improved NAPLAN literacy and numeracy results.	1-4
1.2	Early learning education Advocate for ongoing funding for children to access both 3 and 4 year old kindergarten programs. This is in recognition of the demonstrated benefit of two years of early childhood education brings to a child's development and school readiness, particularly for vulnerable children.	Community Wellbeing	Increased number of vulnerable children participating in 3 year old kindergarten program	1
1.3	National Quality Reforms Advocate on behalf of all children for ongoing, permanent government funding to fully implement the national quality reforms for child care and early childhood education.	Community Wellbeing	Federal Government commitment to fund 15hrs kindergarten on ongoing basis.	1-2
1.4	Learning in all environments Promote the importance to parents and carers that they are the first educators in a child's life and the home environment is a key component to lifelong learning.	Community Wellbeing	Increased parental awareness of the importance of learning at home.	1-4
1.5	Playgroups Encourage and support all children to participate in playgroups, particularly vulnerable children and families, for the benefit of early learning, social skill development and parental connection to services.	Community Wellbeing	Increased participation in playgroups, especially vulnerable children and families	1-4

No	Action	Responsibility	Indicators	Planning & Implementation Years
1.6	Kindergarten participation Promote and support children to enrol in and participate in 3 and 4 year old kindergarten programs, particularly vulnerable children. Includes provision of central enrolment services aimed at maximising equitable access to kindergartens throughout Greater Dandenong.	Community Wellbeing	Increased participation rates in 3 and 4 year old kindergarten programs	1-4
1.7	School transition Support initiatives and activities aimed at supporting positive transitions for children from kindergarten into primary school and from primary school into secondary school.	Community Wellbeing	Successful transition programs in place for all children entering primary and secondary school.	1-4
1.8	School holiday activities Increase awareness of opportunities available for children during school holidays, including promotion of school holiday activities provided at Council and community facilities.	Community Wellbeing Community Development Facilities and Recreation	Increased awareness of and participation in school holiday activities	1-4
1.9	Before and after school care Advocate for improved before and after school care options in Greater Dandenong	Community Wellbeing	Affordable and accessible before and after school care options available throughout the municipality.	1-4
1.10	Refugee & asylum seeker language Partner with Settlement Services, Greater Dandenong Libraries and English language schools to support children and families of refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds to develop their English language skills beyond initial funded courses.	Community Arts Culture & Libraries Community Wellbeing	Increased opportunities for refugee and asylum seeker families to develop English language skills.	1-4
1.11	Learning through libraries Promote membership and use of Greater Dandenong Libraries as a welcoming, safe and interesting environment in which to learn and connect to the community.	Community Arts Culture & Libraries Community Wellbeing	Increased membership and attendance at Greater Dandenong Libraries by families and children.	1-4

No	Action	Responsibility	Indicators	Planning & Implementation Years
1.12	Infrastructure planning Undertake infrastructure planning to ensure timely and targeted provision of facilities and services to meet the growing and changing needs of the Greater Dandenong community.	Community Wellbeing Infrastructure Planning City Improvement Planning & Design	Timely provision services and infrastructure to meet community needs	1
1.13	Structure planning Ensure that local environment and new structure plans for Dandenong, Springvale and Noble Park capture and reflect the needs, interests and priorities of children and families.	Infrastructure Planning City Improvement Planning & Design	New structure plans specifically respond to the needs, interests and priorities of children and families.	1
1.14	Creativity and play Deliver and support recreation, arts and cultural events that foster children's creativity in play and physical activity.	Community Wellbeing Community Development, Facilities & Recreation Community Arts Culture and Libraries	Children actively participate in creativity, play and physical activities	1-4
1.15	Evaluation Develop and implement an evaluation framework to assess the long-term benefits of integrated children's services hubs on school sites.	Community Wellbeing	Evaluation framework developed and implemented.	1-2



KEY DIRECTION 2 – SAFE & ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITIES FOR CHILDREN

GOAL

To improve safety and accessibility for children to participate in the city.

No	Action	Responsibility	Indicators	Planning & Implementation Years
2.1	High quality and integrated Council services Plan and develop a best-practice integrated Community Hub in Central Dandenong and Keysborough South, incorporating services for children and young people.	All Council Departments	Integrated Community Hubs planned for Central Dandenong and Keysborough South.	1-4
2.2	Family violence Support initiatives focussed on tackling family violence, with a particular emphasis placed on addressing the impact on children.	All Council Departments	Ongoing family violence initiatives implemented with a focus on children.	1-4
2.3	Community safety Develop strategies with key partner agencies to improve community safety and perceptions of community safety.	All Council Departments	Improved community safety and perceptions of safety.	1-2
2.4	Welcoming, safe & culturally responsive services Provide Children and Family services that are welcoming, safe and culturally responsive.	Community Wellbeing Community Development Facilities & Recreation	Increased participation at children and family services Dandenong.	1
2.5	Water Safety Provide information and education initiatives aimed at improving water safety for children.	Community Wellbeing Community Development Facilities and Recreation	Water safety initiatives delivered and promoted.	1-4
2.6	Access and participation Review facilities and services to ensure they are accessible for children of all ages and abilities.	All Council Departments	Improved accessibility for children of all ages and abilities.	1-2

No	Action	Responsibility	Indicators	Planning & Implementation Years
2.7	Improved public transport Inform and advocate to transport authorities and the State Government of the needs of children and families accessing public transport, including route upgrades, timetabling, safety and other service improvements.	Community Wellbeing Infrastructure Planning Strategic Planning & Transport	Improved Public transport is provided in Greater Dandenong for families and children.	1-2
2.8	Walking and cycling city Develop a walking and cycling strategy in which people feel able and safe to move through the city on foot and bicycle.	Community Development Facilities & Recreation City Improvement	Increased rates of walking and cycling by children and families.	1
2.9	Children and family friendly public spaces Engage children and families in process of identifying opportunities to make public spaces and facilities more friendly and accessible.	Planning & Design City Improvement	Improvements to public spaces to make them more friendly and accessible for families and children.	1-4
2.10	Child Friendly City website Develop an interactive webpage on Council's website that provides maps and information about child friendly places to go in the City of Greater Dandenong.	Community Wellbeing Communications & Customer Service	Child Friendly City website established.	1
2.11	Breastfeeding welcome Promote spaces and places as being welcoming for mothers to breastfeed their children.	Community Wellbeing	Scheme established to accredit and promote spaces and places as being breastfeeding welcome spaces.	1-4
2.12	Disability Ensure mainstream and disability services provide self-determined access and inclusion for children with a disability.	Community Wellbeing Community Development Facilities & Recreation Community Care	Increased access, understanding and partnerships developed.	1-4

KEY DIRECTION 3 – IMPROVED HEALTH & WELLBEING OF CHILDREN

GOAL

To create an environment that supports children's health and wellbeing.

No	Action	Responsibility	Indicators	Planning & Implementation Years
3.1	Health & wellbeing Support campaigns focussed on improving children's nutrition, physical activity and dental health.	Community Wellbeing Community Development Facilities & Recreation	Range of initiatives implemented with a focus on nutrition, healthy eating, physical activity and dental health.	1-4
3.2	Flexible and quality childcare Further support and advocate for the provision of flexible models of quality childcare to cater for the needs of people who live and work in the City of Greater Dandenong.	Community Wellbeing	Enhanced provision of flexible models of quality childcare.	1-2
3.3	Social disadvantage Advocate for the provision of support services dedicated to helping children and families living in generational and situational disadvantage.	All Council Departments	Increased opportunities for social and economic participation.	1-2
3.4	Physical activity Promote the importance of children and young people participating in a minimum of 60 minutes of moderate to intense physical activity each day.	Community Wellbeing Community Development Facilities & Recreation	Increased rates of children achieving minimum recommended levels of daily physical activity.	1-4
3.5	Promoting walking Promote, encourage and support walking for children and their families for improved access to services, social connectivity and health benefits.	Community Wellbeing Community Development Facilities & Recreation	Increased rates of children and families walking.	1-2
3.6	Outdoor access and recreation Encourage increased recreational and open space uses through the implementation of the Green Wedge Plan.	Planning & Design	Increased use of recreational and open space in Green Wedge areas.	1-4

No	Action	Responsibility	Indicators	Planning & Implementation Years
3.7	Healthy eating education ork in partnership with other services to provide families with practical, interesting and accessible education on positive nutrition and healthy eating options. Includes education about childhood obesity and diabetes and the link to healthy eating and physical activity.	Community Wellbeing	Range of healthy eating education initiatives delivered	1-4
3.8	Food security Develop a sustainable business strategy to support children and their families to have access to healthy and sustainable food supplies.	Business Environmental Health	Children and their families have access to healthy and sustainable food sources	1-4
3.9	Promotion of children and family services Provide the community with resources on family and children's services options for parenting, child care and education.	Community Wellbeing Communications & Customer Service	Increased awareness of family and children's services information	1
3.10	Maternal & Child Health Encourage participation in MCH services to improve attendance at Key Ages & Stages visits, including a focus on increasing participation rates in older children.	Community Wellbeing	Increased participation rates in MCH Key Ages & Stages visits, particularly for children aged 1-5 years.	1-4
3.11	Immunisation Develop strategies to Increase immunisation rates for children aged 0-4 years and for young people of secondary school age. Focus on maintaining immunisations up to date as children get older.	Environmental Health	Increased immunisation rates, particularly for children aged 1-5 years.	1-4
3.12	Breastfeeding Promote the many benefits of breastfeeding for mothers and babies.	Community Wellbeing	Increased breastfeeding rates at both 3 and 6 months.	1-4
3.13	Children in rooming houses Provide information on alternate housing and support services available to families with children living in rooming houses.	Environmental Health	Reduced incidents of children living in rooming houses	1-4

KEY DIRECTION 4 – CONNECTIONS FOR CHILDREN

GOAL

To create opportunities for children to connect with family, friends and the wider community and to the environment they live.

No	Action	Responsibility	Indicators	Planning & Implementation Years
4.1	Engaging refugee & asylum seeker children and families Work with the Child and Family Partnership to explore opportunities for volunteers to better engage and support asylum seeker and refugee families to discover Greater Dandenong and settle into their new home. This will include introducing families to key services and facilities.	Community Wellbeing	Initiative established to link volunteers and asylum seeker and refugee families and connecting them with services.	1-2
4.2	Engagement and Celebration Facilitate a Children's Festival each year, creating opportunities to celebrate children and provide a range of fun, affordable and accessible activities for children and their families.	Community Arts Culture & Libraries Community Wellbeing	Children's Festival held each year.	1-4
4.3	Intergenerational connections Explore opportunities to link up children with older members of the community to establish social connection, learning opportunities and the possibility for reverse tutoring.	Community Wellbeing Community Development Facilities & Recreation	Initiative established to link children and older members of the community.	1-4
4.4	Libraries and playgroups Promote, support and encourage children and families to connect with their local libraries and local playgroups.	Community Arts Culture & Libraries Community Wellbeing	Increased visitation to libraries and participation in playgroups.	1-4
4.5	Parental employment opportunities Identify and develop volunteering and work experience opportunities for parents with children to acquire work readiness in literacy and numeracy skills.	Community Wellbeing Business Development	Increased opportunities for parents to volunteer and Increased opportunities for volunteering and work experience.	1-4



No	Action	Responsibility	Indicators	Planning & Implementation Years
4.6	Playground development Facilitate children's input to the design to playground design and development.	Community Wellbeing Planning & Design	Future playground developments incorporate children's input to design.	1-2
4.7	Access to natural environment Facilitate children's input in reviewing the open space and playground strategies to ensure the benefits of natural play are encouraged and accessible to all children.	Planning & Design	Open space and playground strategies address access to natural environment for children.	1-3
4.8	Access to Culture and Heritage Support the initiatives and actions of the Local Indigenous Community Partnership, Aboriginal Best Start, Bridging the Gap.	Community Wellbeing	Increased opportunities for children to connect to culture and heritage	1-4
4.9	Access to Community Hubs in Schools Advocate to State and Federal government for ongoing support and resourcing of the community hubs in schools model to support newly arrived and migrant children and families.	Community Wellbeing	Ongoing support and funding resources for projects that support newly arrived and migrant families	1

KEY DIRECTION 5 – VOICES OF CHILDREN

GOAL

To provide children with the right to freedom of expression, to seek and receive information and influence decisions that affect them.

No	Action	Responsibility	Indicators	Planning & Implementation Years
5.1	Engagement with children Implement an annual engagement process with children throughout Greater Dandenong aimed at providing them with the opportunity to express their opinion about the city they want and their priorities.	All Council Departments	Comprehensive annual engagement process with children implemented to capture children's opinions about the city they want and their priorities.	1-4
5.2	Celebration of children Continue to promote the City of Greater Dandenong as a Child Friendly City and positively promote and celebrate children of all backgrounds, ages and abilities.	All Council Departments	Children positively promoted and celebrated through various communication platforms throughout the year.	1-4
5.3	Sharing of children's views Develop internal protocols and processes to systematically share the captured views and ideas of children across all Council departments.	Community Wellbeing	Protocols and processes established to systematically share captured views and ideas of children across all Council departments.	1-4
5.4	Children input to community assets Consult children in the planning and design of community assets.	Community Wellbeing Planning & Design City Improvement	Children consulted in the scoping and design of community assets.	1-2
5.5	Profiling voices of children Identify a range of opportunities to periodically profile the voices of children in public, including through Council publications, local media and the Civic Square & Screen.	Community Wellbeing Media & Communications Customer Service	Voices of children publicly broadcast periodically through print and audio/visual media.	1-2
5.6	Consulting with children training Develop a framework and training material to guide Council staff across the organisation in how to effectively and appropriately consult with children.	Community Wellbeing	Engaging children framework and training material developed and rolled out across Council departments.	1-2



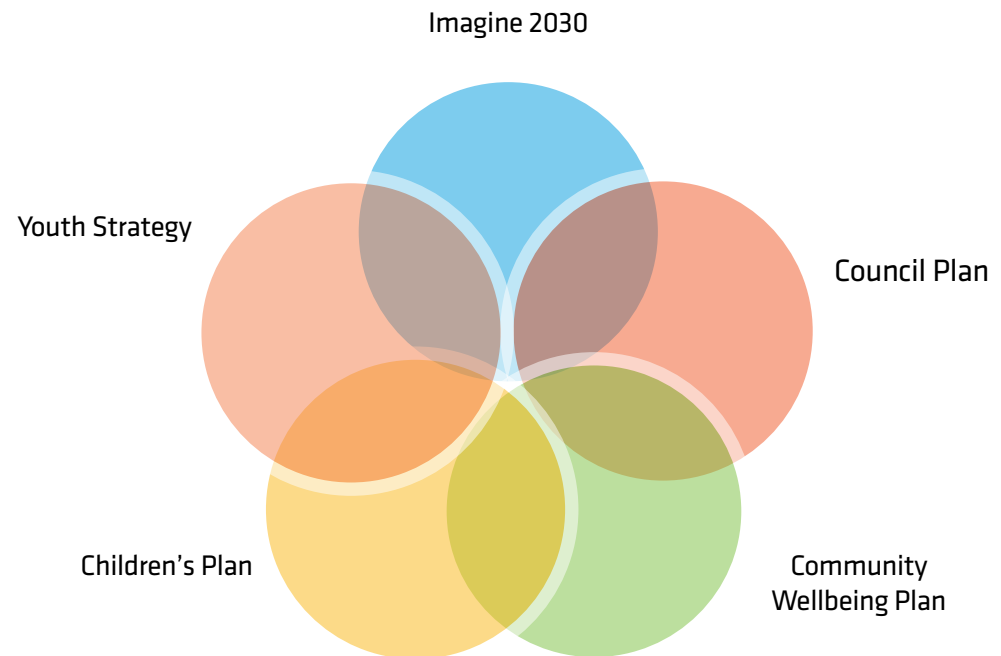
APPENDIX

PLANNING CONTEXT, STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT, COMMUNITY PROFILING

PLANNING CONTEXT

The development of the City of Greater Dandenong Children's Plan 2015 – 2019 sits firmly in the context of Council's integrated approach to strategic planning and management and supports the long-term vision expressed in 'Imagine 2030'. In particular, the Children's Plan fully integrates with and supports the objectives of the Council Plan and the Community Wellbeing Plan and Youth Strategy– three of Council's key strategic planning documents.

The Plan has also been developed in the context of the Social Model of Health that is referenced in Council's Community Wellbeing Plan. The Social Model of Health provides a framework for understanding the complex social, economic and physical conditions where people live, learn, work and play which support good health and wellbeing of residents.

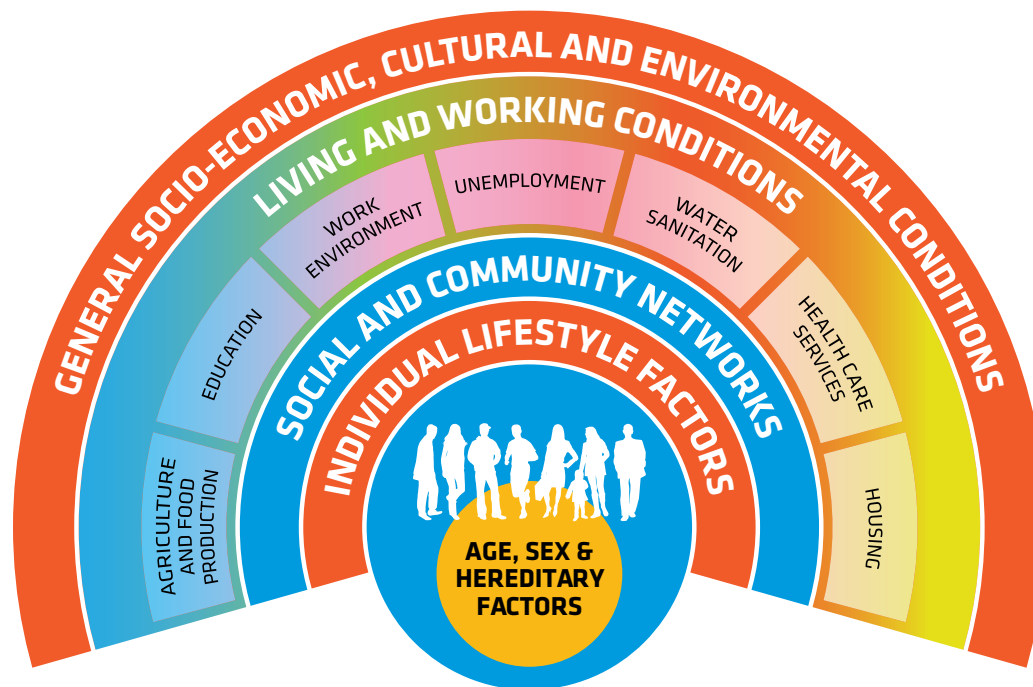


SOCIAL MODEL OF HEALTH

The Social Model of Health model recognises that a number of factors contribute to building and maintaining healthy environments.

The key components of the Social Model of Health include:

- Acknowledgement of the broader determinants of health, including social, economic, cultural and environmental factors
- The importance of involvement, and empowerment, of the community sector and community groups
- The reduction of social inequities
- Equitable access to health care.



COUNCIL PLAN

PEOPLE	PLACE	OPPORTUNITY
<p>A healthy, active and safe community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote healthy lifestyles • Promote physical activity, leisure and recreation • Community participation and lifelong learning • Provide community facilities to promote community participation • Ensure public health standards are maintained • Improve safety in public spaces and improve perceptions of safety in Greater Dandenong • Take a lead role to prevent family violence in the community • Provide support for families and children • Engagement and support for young people • Inclusion and support for the health and wellbeing of older people • Promote responsible pet ownership 	<p>An environmentally sustainable city</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a greener city • Respond to Climate Change and promote sustainable options to achieve real change within the community • Best practice waste management and promotion of recycling • Sustainable transport options • Maintain parks and reserves - promote recreation in the natural environment and promote conservation 	<p>A thriving and resilient economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote Greater Dandenong as a regional centre of business excellence and showcase the success of the sector • Investment attraction • Utilise new technologies for a stronger and more competitive business sector • Consolidate Dandenong as the Regional capital • Revitalise Springvale activity centre • Revitalise Noble Park activity centre • Support a strong retail sector and Neighborhood Activity Centres • Promote Tourism and Visitation to the city • Capacity building for economic development, to create stronger and more competitive businesses • Focus on employment pathways and opportunities – skilled people for local businesses to employ and connections for residents into good jobs • Promote a resilient economy and foster wellbeing

PEOPLE	PLACE	OPPORTUNITY
A city that celebrates its diversity with pride	A city planned for the future	A proactive Council that listens and leads
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote access and equity to all of council's services and across the city • Promote civic pride and participation • Promote community celebration and showcase the cultural diversity of the city • Promote arts, culture and heritage across the city 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best practice urban design and development, and activation to create livable neighborhoods and workplaces • Attract investment and residential, commercial and industrial development in the city • Plan for population growth and demographic change • Management of local roads, traffic and parking • Effective planning and management of Council's infrastructure to ensure it is responsive to contemporary environmental conditions • Advocate for improved transport options within the city and regionally to improve access to our city • Ensure a safe environment for the community • Create a clean and attractive city we can all be proud of • Implement the City Improvement Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the ways we communicate with our residents and stakeholders and increase Council's web presence • Engage and consult our community to promote an open dialogue with Council and facilitate active input into Council's decision making processes • Transparency and accountability of Council's decision making and activities • Sound financial management for a sustainable Council • Sound organisational management promoting best practice, continuous improvement and innovation • An organisation of excellence for streamlined service delivery • Proactive and responsive customer service function across council • Greater Dandenong as employer of choice

The City of Greater Dandenong Council Plan 2013-2017 outlines the key strategic actions that Council will oversee during its four-year term. The Plan comprises three key areas and six strategic objectives with a range of key priorities under each objective. The Children's Plan 2015-2019 directly responds to these objectives and priorities.

COMMUNITY WELLBEING PLAN DIRECTIONS

The City of Greater Dandenong Community Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017 outlines the key strategic actions that Council and partner organisations will implement to improve the health and wellbeing of residents. The Plan comprises the three key areas of the Council Plan, 5 priority areas and a range of objectives under each.

PEOPLE	Collaborative Health and Wellbeing Planning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improved local health and wellbeing results are achieved through a coordinated and strategic health planning approach. 2. Opportunities are found to integrate the aims of the Healthy Together Greater Dandenong Initiatives within Council and the wider community.
	Physical Activity, Leisure and Recreation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilities and programs are provided which help increase participation in sport, leisure and the arts. 2. More participation in physical activity results from providing adequate, good quality parks and open spaces. 3. 'Active transport' (walking, cycling and public transport) is encouraged throughout Greater Dandenong.
PLACE	Safer Communities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Community is made safer through well-planned, designed built and natural environments. 2. Actual safety is improved and residents feel safer because effective community safety initiatives are implemented. 3. Residents, especially women and children, are safer at home due to measures aimed at preventing the causes of family violence.
OPPORTUNITY	Education, Employment and Lifelong Learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expanded educational and employment opportunities lead to improved results for children and young people. 2. Local business sector thrives and more jobs are available in the City due to support from Council and stakeholders. 3. Opportunities are created for lifelong learning through libraries, neighborhood houses and the arts and cultural sector.
	Building Healthy and Sustainable Communities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More residents adopt healthy lifestyles as a result of active encouragement to do so in workplaces, schools, early childhood services and sports clubs. 2. Resources are provided that encourage participation. 3. Conditions are created that improve the living standard of residents, who feel more included in the community. 4. Initiatives are undertaken to promote social inclusion for all members of the community. 5. The Council and its partners respond to climate change and its effects upon health.

STATE & FEDERAL GOVERNMENT POLICY DIRECTIONS

The City of Greater Dandenong Children's Plan 2015-2019 relates to a number of key state and federal government policy directions.

Key policy frameworks that have influenced the development of this Plan include:

State Government

- Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
- Victorian Early Years Framework 2009
- State of Victoria's Children Report 2012
- Victorian Early Years Strategic Plan 2014
- Victoria's Vulnerable Children: Our Shared Responsibility 2013 -2022
- Engage Involve Create - Youth Statement
- 2011 Victorian Families Statement
- Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2013 – 2018

Federal Government

- National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020
- National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care 2009
- Belonging, Being & Becoming: the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia 2009
- My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Child Care in Australia 2011

The National and Victorian Early Years Framework is pivotal to the development of the Children's Plan. Five key outcomes are reflected to ensure:

- Children have a strong sense of identity
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
- Children are confident and involved learners
- Children are effective communicators.



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING (DET) PRINCIPLES FOR HEALTH & WELLBEING

Another important planning context for the City of Greater Dandenong Children's Plan 2015-2019 is the DET Principles for Health & Wellbeing - Underpinning effective professional practice across DET services. The Principles for Health and Wellbeing underpin effective professional practice in and across DET health and wellbeing services, early childhood services and schools, to promote and support young Victorians' optimal health, wellbeing and educational outcomes. Refer to Appendix A for the eight principles.

This document acknowledges that health and wellbeing is an important outcome in its own right, but it is also a pre-condition for learning and employment, and is an indicator of successful education. It identifies five dimensions of health and wellbeing that contribute to the development of the 'whole' person.

Learning, development and skills

Includes active participation and engagement in learning, having functional skills to participate meaningfully in all aspects of one's life, being competent as a learner and problem-solver; and having a sense of meaning.

Social and emotional wellbeing

Includes positive mental health/absence of mental health problems, self-awareness, emotional intelligence, self-regulation, resilience, interpreting the world positively and pro-social values and behaviour.

Supportive relationships

Includes having positive family bonds and friendships, the ability to rely on a trusted adult, experiencing a sense of belonging and engagement and being involved in age appropriate learning and activity.

Physical health

Includes physical health / absence of health problems, oral health, nutrition and weight, physical fitness and self-management, including sleeping.

Safety and material wellbeing

Includes sense of safety at home and where children and young people learn and play, being safe from injury and harm, having access to daily essentials and adequate and stable housing.

The Principles for Health and Wellbeing underpin effective professional practice in and across DET health and wellbeing services, early childhood services and schools, to promote and support young Victorians' optimal health, wellbeing and educational outcomes.



HEALTH AND EDUCATION

Healthy children and young people learn better. Research shows that health behaviors during childhood and adolescence can have a significant effect on both academic performance and educational attainment. For example, anxiety and depression appear to be negatively associated with both short and long-term educational outcomes. Conversely, health status and physical exercise have a positive effect on educational performance.

Health and wellbeing are also an indicator of a successful education. There is considerable international evidence demonstrating that education influences health through a range of mechanisms such as income, access to health care and better employment opportunities. (DEECD, 2014)



THE UNIQUE CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY IN GREATER DANDENONG

Improving children's outcomes in the City of Greater Dandenong has its unique challenges and opportunities. Many children are born into families where English is not the main spoken language and where their cultural traditions, practices and understandings are based on cultural backgrounds of their parents. The language and cultural background of children has a strong impact on their learning, social and wellbeing outcomes and development.

Some of the key factors that increase the complexity and challenge of engaging and supporting children and their families in Greater Dandenong include cultural and language diversity and socio-economic conditions.

The City of Greater Dandenong is the most culturally diverse municipality in Victoria, and the second most diverse in Australia, with residents from over 156 different birthplaces. More than four-fifths (81%) of Greater Dandenong residents who gave birth in 2011/12 were born overseas, coming from 85 different birthplaces.

The cultural diversity of the Greater Dandenong community is reflected in the range of languages spoken. Approximately 55% of all residents were born in countries where English is not the main spoken language and nearly two-thirds (64%) of residents speak a language other than English. This is the largest proportion of residents in Victoria. Almost nine-tenths (88%) of women who gave birth in 2011/12 spoke languages other than English in their homes, covering 69 different languages.

In total, 19,000 residents (14.5% of the population) have limited fluency in English, which is much higher than the metropolitan average of 4%.

The City of Greater Dandenong experiences a relatively high level of socio-economic disadvantage, as measured through the Australian Bureau of Statistics Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA). This index reflects a wide range of social conditions including employment, income, education and fluency in English. Overall, education, employment and income levels are lower in Greater Dandenong than other areas.

These conditions present a range of challenges to individuals, households and service providers.

Another significant challenge for improving outcomes for children in the City of Greater Dandenong is the extent of vulnerability in children. The Australian Early Development Census measures how young children are developing across Australia, as they begin school. The most recent AEDC assessment identified that the City of Greater Dandenong has approximately twice the proportion of children assessed as being vulnerable in multiple domains. Domains of particular significance in terms of the proportion of children assessed as vulnerable include social skills and communication skills & general knowledge.

While these key factors can have an impact on the learning, social and well being outcomes and development of children the City of Greater Dandenong, they also present a significant opportunity to make a difference, improve children's outcomes and influence a better community for generations to come.

Consistent with the prudent approach of prevention being better than cure, Council remains committed to continuing to invest in its youngest residents and providing them with the best possible start to life.

AN INSIGHT TO GREATER DANDENONG CHILDREN'S AND FAMILIES PROFILE

POPULATION

The City of Greater Dandenong has a resident population of 147,000¹, which is forecast to increase to an estimated total of 160,000 by 2024. The number of residents in Greater Dandenong has risen by almost 20,000 during the past two decades, which is mainly attributed to residential developments in Keysborough South, central Dandenong and dispersed construction across the city.

Within the overall population, there are an estimated 27,000 children and adolescents aged 0-14 years (18.4%), 20,000 young people aged 15-24 years (13.6%), 75,000 people aged 25-64 years (51.0%) and 22,000 older residents over 64 years of age (15.0%)².

In total, just over 10% of the population is aged over 70 years.

¹2014 estimate

²Variances in total population figures is a result of different source years.

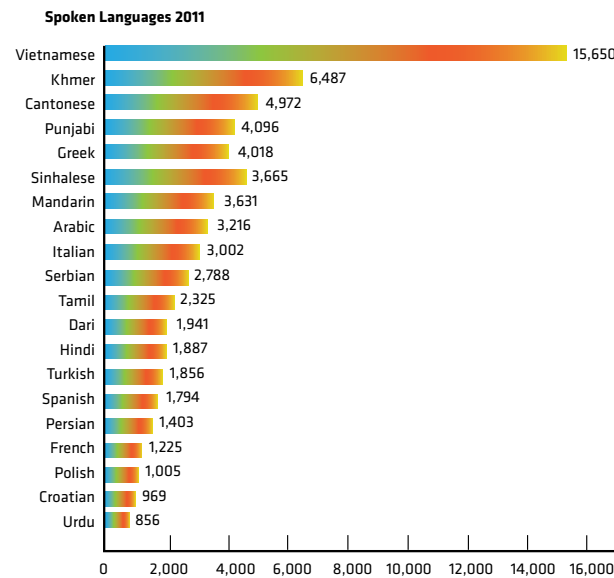


CULTURAL DIVERSITY

The City of Greater Dandenong is the most culturally diverse municipality in Victoria and the second most diverse in Australia. More than 60% of the Greater Dandenong population was born overseas, with residents coming from more than 156 different countries of birth. Outside of Australia, major countries of birth include Vietnam, India, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, China, Afghanistan, New Zealand, Italy, England, Bosnia and Greece.

One of the many factors influencing cultural diversity in the City of Greater Dandenong is the high rate of recently arrived migrant settlement. Greater Dandenong welcomes one of the largest numbers of settlers in any Victorian municipality. Approximately one third of all migrant settlers are humanitarian immigrants, largely from countries such as Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Iran and Pakistan.

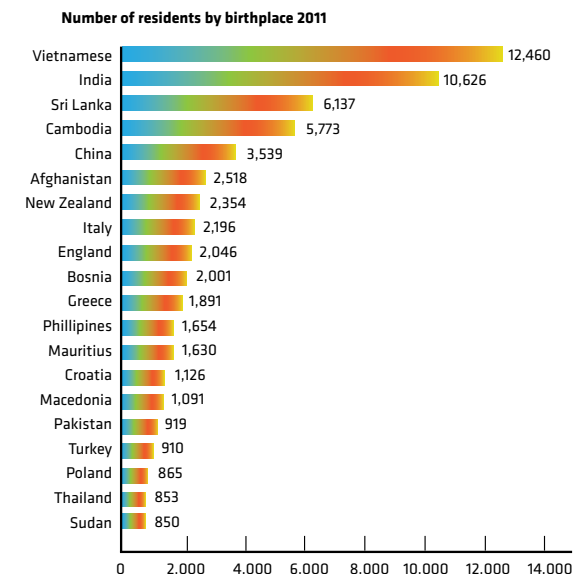
The cultural diversity of the Greater Dandenong community is reflected in the range of languages spoken. Approximately 55% of all residents were born in countries where English is not the main spoken language and nearly two-thirds (64%) of residents speak a language other than English. This is the largest proportion of residents in Victoria. The languages spoken by the highest number of residents are Vietnamese, Khmer, Chinese, Greek, Punjabi and Sinhalese.



In total, 19,000 residents (14.5% of the population) have limited fluency in English, predominantly amongst the Vietnamese, Khmer and Cantonese speaking residents. This is much higher than the metropolitan average of 4%.

Another significant reflection of the cultural diversity with Greater Dandenong is its blend of religious faiths. There are more than 100 places of worship across the city.

In total, 50% of residents adhere to Christianity, 18% to Buddhism, 11% to Islam and 4% to Hinduism.



CHILDREN & FAMILIES

In total, there are 47,000 households in Greater Dandenong, of which 37,000 are family households and the balance lone person households. Of the family households, 24,050 have children of various ages.

There are approximately 27,000 children and adolescents aged 0-14 years in Greater Dandenong, accounting for 18.4% of the population. In 2012, the population of children in the city comprised approximately:

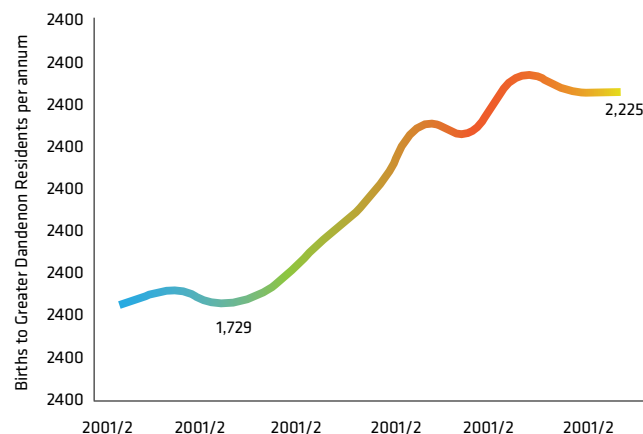
- 9,600 children aged 0 to 4 years
- 8,400 aged 5 to 9 years
- 8,200 aged 10 to 14 years

The future population of children depends largely on the rate and level of new housing developments in the city – which tend to attract young families. In terms of newborns, the current birth rate in Greater Dandenong has continued to increase significantly over the past decade to a current level of 2,225 per annum³.

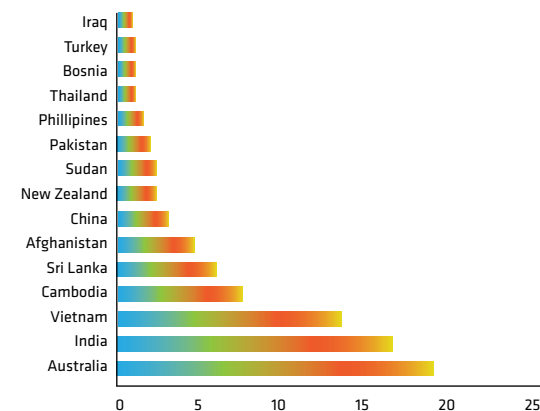
Many children are born into families where English is not the main spoken language and where their cultural traditions, practices and understandings are based on cultural backgrounds of their parents. The language and cultural background of children has a strong impact on their learning, social and well being outcomes and development.

Over four-fifths (81%) of the Greater Dandenong residents who gave birth in 2011/12 were born overseas. Among their 85 different birthplaces were India, Vietnam, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and China – which together account for over half these maternal birthplaces.

Almost nine-tenths (88%) of women who gave birth in 2011/12 spoke languages other than English in their homes. The 69 different languages spoken by these women included Vietnamese, Khmer, Punjabi, Dari, Kiswahili and Sinhalese.



Per cent of women who gave birth in 2011/12



³ 2011/12 year

KEY CHILDREN'S HEALTH & WELLBEING INDICATORS

Key indicators of children's health and wellbeing in the years prior to starting school includes visits to Maternal and Child Health, the age of mothers giving birth, rates of breastfeeding and immunisation rates. Good health is an important element in a child's quality of life as it can influence participation in many aspects of life, including schooling and recreation. Good health or its absence has an impact on the capacity of children to learn and develop well. A good healthy start to life increases the likelihood of positive health and learning outcomes for children.

MATERNAL & CHILD HEALTH (MCH) VISITATION

In Victoria, the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) service supports families in the areas of parenting, health and development of parent and child from birth to school age. Participation in MCH Key Ages & Stages visits is considered essential, both for the assessment of children's health, wellbeing and development and the opportunity to link parents and children into other services.

The following data indicates that participation in the MCH service in Greater Dandenong is comparable with Victorian averages shortly after birth, though considerably lower than Victorian averages at the age of 2 years.

Children visiting Maternal and Child Health	CGD	VIC
Children who visit Maternal and Child Health at 4 weeks	97%	96%
Children who visit maternal and Child Health at 2 years	72%	79%

IMMUNISATION RATES

Immunisation is a simple, safe and effective way of protecting children against diseases that can cause serious illnesses and sometimes death. Immunisation is a free service provided by the City of Greater Dandenong to protect the health and wellbeing of children. Immunising children not only protects them from serious diseases but also other children in the community.

The following data indicates that immunisation rates in Greater Dandenong are comparable with Victorian averages at the age of 1 year, though slightly lower at age 2 years and significantly lower at the age of 5 years.

Immunisation rates	CGD	VIC
Children fully immunised at 1 year	90%	90.5%
Children fully immunised at 2 years	91%	92.7%
Children fully immunised at 5 years	86%	92.4%

BREASTFEEDING

Breastfeeding provides a range of benefits for both mothers and babies. It provides babies with an increased resistance to infection and disease, satisfaction from hunger and thirst and lessening of the risk of allergy and food intolerance. For mothers the benefits include convenience and low cost, it is fresh, clean and safe, it can sooth a fussy baby and it helps create a close and loving bond between mother and baby.

Breastfeeding rates have significantly improved in the City of Greater Dandenong over the past years. Despite these improvements in breastfeeding rates, the following data indicates that breastfeeding rates (fully breastfeeding) in Greater Dandenong are lower than Victorian averages at the age of 3 months. Breastfeeding rates in Greater Dandenong become more comparable with Victorian averages as children reach 6 months of age. This is due to a reduction of breastfeeding across Victoria, rather than an increase in Greater Dandenong. The data also highlights that, consistent with trends across the state, that the proportion of children fully breastfed reduces significantly between 3 and 6 months of age.

Breastfeeding rates (fully)	CGD	VIC
Children fully breastfed at 3 months	46%	63%
Children fully breastfed at 6 months	31%	37%

NUTRITION

Children's nutrition plays a critically important role in influencing overall health and wellbeing. The Dietary Guidelines for children and young people in Australia recommend a daily minimum of two serves of vegetables daily for children aged 4–7 years and three serves of vegetables daily for young people 8–18 years.

The Dietary Guidelines for children and young people in Australia also recommend a daily minimum of one serve of fruit daily for children aged 4–11 years and three serves of fruit daily for young people 12–18 years.

The following data indicates that the proportion of children aged 4–12 years who eat the minimum serves of vegetables each day is significantly lower in Greater Dandenong compared to metropolitan Melbourne and Victorian averages. The data also indicates that the proportion of children aged 4–12 years who eat the minimum serves of fruit each day is lower in Greater Dandenong compared to metropolitan Melbourne and Victorian averages, though not as significant as the difference with vegetable consumption.

Nutrition	CGD	MELB.	VIC
Children aged 4–12 years eating at least minimum serves of vegetables daily	23%	37%	39%
Children aged 4–12 years eating at least minimum serves of fruit daily	80%	87%	86%

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Regular physical activity is essential for positive health and wellbeing of children. Australia's physical activity guidelines state that children and young people aged 5-18 years should participate in a minimum of 60 minutes of moderate to intense physical activity each day.

The following data indicates that the proportion of children aged 5-18 years who participate in a minimum of 60 minutes of physical activity each day is significantly lower in Greater Dandenong compared to metropolitan Melbourne and Victorian averages.

Physical activity	CGD	MELB.	VIC
Children aged 5-18 years who are physically active for at least 60 minutes a day	61%	70%	71%

KINDERGARTEN PARTICIPATION

Kindergarten provides children with an educational program the year before they start primary school. Kindergartens are funded by the State Government through the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and are staffed by degree qualified early childhood teachers. Participation in kindergarten supports children's learning, growth, socialisation and

development. It is recognised both in Australia and overseas that participation in a high quality kindergarten program will have a long lasting impact on a child's life.

The following data indicates that participation in a funded four year old kindergarten program in Greater Dandenong is lower than the Victorian average.

Kindergarten participation	CGD	VIC
Children participating in 4yo kindergarten	87.9%	93.9%



AEDC

The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) is a population measure of how young children are developing in Australian communities. The AEDC measures five areas, or domains, of early childhood development: physical health and wellbeing; social competence; emotional maturity; language and cognitive skills (school-based); and communication skills and general knowledge. These are important areas of child development and also good predictors of adult health, education and social outcomes. AEDC results assist service providers and agencies to develop strategies and activities that will best meet the needs of young children and their families in the local community.

The following data indicates that the proportion of children in Greater Dandenong assessed as vulnerable in one or more AEDC domain is almost twice the rate of children throughout Victoria. Even more significant is that the proportion of children in Greater Dandenong assessed as vulnerable in two or more AEDC domains is more than double the Victorian rate.

Domains of particular significance in Greater Dandenong are (1) social skills and (2) communication skills and general knowledge. Localities with the highest rate of vulnerability according to the AEDC results include: Dandenong South, Springvale, Dandenong North, Springvale South and Keysborough.

AEDC results (2012)	CGD	VIC
Vulnerable in one or more domains	37.1%	19.5%
Vulnerable in two or more domains	19.8%	9.5%

AEDC domains (2012)	CGD	VIC
Social skills	17.5%	8.1%
Communication skills & general knowledge	20.2%	8.0%
Physical	13.1%	7.8%
Emotional	12.2%	7.2%
Language & cognitive	11.2%	6.1%

AEDC results by locality (2012)	One or more domains	Two or more domains
Dandenong	34.5%	14.2%
Springvale	44.1%	27.1%
Dandenong North	39.5%	22.8%
Dandenong South	68.5%	46.1%
Keysborough	34.2%	18.1%
Noble Park	25.4%	10.8%
Noble Park North	22.1%	4.4%
Springvale South	36.2%	20.2%

SOCIO ECONOMIC ATTRIBUTES

The Australian Bureau of Statistics publishes a number of measures of social and economic advantage and disadvantage of an area based on information collected through the Census of Population and Housing. One key measure is the socio-economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA). SEIFA indexes provide an insight to the average socio-economic characteristics of the people, families and households living in the area, rather than individuals, and include a range variables such as employment, income, education and fluency in English.

Based on 2011 Census data, the City of Greater Dandenong has a SEIFA index of 895, which ranks it as the most disadvantaged municipality in the state.



PRIORITY ISSUES & OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN IN GREATER DANDENONG

The City of Greater Dandenong is constantly monitoring and assessing key issues and outcomes for improving the health and wellbeing of children and their families. Understanding these priority issues and outcomes informs Council's planning and decision making in regard to the provision of funding, support and services.

Key priority issues and outcomes for improving the health and wellbeing of children and their families in the City of Greater Dandenong have been identified through analysis of:

- The Council Plan 2013-2017
- The Community Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017
- State and Federal Government policies plans and funding directions
- Current research into early childhood development and children's health and wellbeing
- Feedback from Council staff, partner organisations and other service providers
- Engagement with children and families in the City of Greater Dandenong.

The following summary of priority issues and outcomes for improving the health and wellbeing of children and their families provides a clear and objective rationale for what Council does and commits to into the future. The Children's Plan 2015-2019 Action Plan responds to these identified priority issues and outcomes. While issues and outcomes have been grouped into specific categories, most of the issues are interlinked.

Education & care

- Improving early childhood education and care
 - Increasing kindergarten participation rates
 - High quality education and care settings and services
 - Improving literacy and numeracy rates
 - Providing children with the knowledge and skills for life and learning
- Increasing school participation rates
 - Providing young children with opportunities to learn and thrive
 - Ensuring that children are engaged in and benefiting from educational opportunities
 - Strengthening the early childhood and teaching workforce

Early childhood development

- Language development
 - Behavioural development
 - Early childhood brain development
- Socialisation and social development
 - Secure attachment
 - Play based learning

Maternal health

- Increasing MCH visitation rates
 - Increasing breastfeeding rates
 - Maternal health during pregnancy, including healthy nutrition and reducing smoking, drug and alcohol consumption
- Antenatal and post natal depression of mothers
 - Increasing participation in playgroups

Health & wellbeing

- Improving nutrition and dental health of children and families
 - Increasing physical activity levels
 - Maximising social interactions and connectivity of children and families
 - Reducing social isolation
- Reducing incidence of childhood obesity
 - Increasing immunisation rates
 - Engagement in decision making processes
 - Sense of identity and belonging by children
 - Reducing drug and alcohol use by parents
-

Services

- Improving early childhood service quality, accessibility, affordability and integration
 - Increasing early childhood workforce qualifications
 - Creating quality learning and care environments and standards
 - Improving access to services, particularly by vulnerable families
 - Providing early intervention and responsive services
 - Increase service coordination and integration
 - Focussing on all children and families through universal care and support
 - Quality and regulation
- Targeted support for children with disabilities, children of indigenous background and children with additional needs
 - Increasing access to services by vulnerable families
 - Workforce and leadership development
 - Timely assessment, referral and early intervention for children and families with complex needs
 - Strengthening workforce across early childhood development and family support services
 - Ensuring the provision of inclusive service delivery and cultural competencies
 - Strengthening the evidence base that underpins service planning and delivery

Protective and risk factors

- Enhancing protective factors for children:
- Secure attachment with a primary carer
 - Breastfeeding
 - Good nutrition and physical activity
 - Stimulating play-based learning experiences
- Reducing risk factors for children:
- Abuse and neglect, exposure to violence, harsh and inconsistent discipline
 - Insecure attachment, for example related to maternal depression
 - Living with adults who abuse alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, especially during pregnancy
 - Low birth weight, and poor diet
 - Chronic health or disability
 - Growing up in poverty.

Diversity & difference

- Respect for diversity and difference as a strength, and helping children develop a positive sense of self and culture

Socio-economic conditions

- Increasing household employment and income
 - Increasing household education attainment
- Supporting improved language and literacy skills of parents to facilitate greater engagement in services and participation in community activities

Safety and security

- Reducing incidence of and exposure of children to family violence
- Improving community safety
- Providing children's environments that are nurturing, culturally appropriate and safe

Equity

- Bridging current inequities between children and families of different cultural backgrounds, including Indigenous families
- Ensuring that language and cultural backgrounds do not present a barrier to children and families accessing services and participating in the community

Vulnerable families

- Improving assessment to identify vulnerable children
- Improving the effectiveness of 'no wrong door' referral pathways across universal, targeted and intensive early childhood and family support services
- Improving outreach and engagement with vulnerable families in supporting child development in the home and in participating in services at all levels, especially universal health, early childhood education and care, and family support

Parenting and care

- Ensuring that families are confident and have the capabilities to support their children's development
- Providing quality early childhood development services that support the workforce participation choices of families
- Increasing access to information about the risk and protective factors for child development and the services and supports available for children and families
- Increasing community awareness about the importance of early childhood, the value of children, role of parents and those who work with children

Early childhood infrastructure

- Expanding the supply, modernising and rationalising existing early childhood infrastructure
 - Developing service integration models
 - Building community-level responses
 - Building partnerships in infrastructure models
-

DEFINITIONS

Child

- Child under 'The Convention on the Rights of the Child' is defined as a human being below the age of eighteen years unless the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

Young People

- Young People defined by the City of Greater Dandenong are those aged between 12-25 years in accordance with national and state definition of young people.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND THANK YOU

We would like to acknowledge and thank everyone who participated in the consultations and development of this Children's plan:

- Parents and children from Heatherhill Kindergarten, Dandenong South Primary, Dandenong Primary School, St Gerard's Primary School
- The 60 agencies represented at Greater Dandenong Child and Family Partnership
- Staff from Greater Dandenong Council
- Parents and children who participated in consultations at community playgroups, parks, kindergartens, child care centres and Greater Dandenong shopping centres.



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