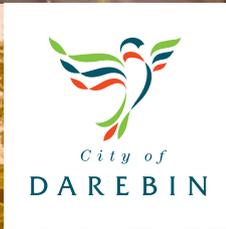




**Darebin  
City Council**

**Annual  
Report  
2020—21**



**the place  
to live**



Alphington | Bundoora | Coburg | Fairfield  
Keon Park | Kingsbury | Macleod | Northcote  
Preston | Reservoir | Thornbury

### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people**

Darebin City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the traditional owners and custodians of the land and waters we now call Darebin and affirms that Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people have lived on this land for millennia, practising their customs and ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal.

Council acknowledges that Elders, past, present and emerging are central to the cohesion, intergenerational wellbeing and ongoing self-determination of Aboriginal communities. They have played and continue to play a pivotal role in maintaining and transmitting culture, history and language.

Council respects and recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities' values, living culture and practices, including their continuing spiritual connection to the land and waters and their right to self-determination. Council also recognises the diversity within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities have had and continue to play a unique role in the life of the Darebin municipality. Council recognises and values this ongoing contribution and its significant value for our city and Australian society more broadly.

*Extract from Darebin City Council's Statement of commitment to Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people 2019.*

### **Darebin's Diversity Statement**

Situated on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people, the City of Darebin is now home to a diverse community of people with different socio-economic status, gender, age, ability, race, culture, ethnicity, language, sexuality, sex characteristics, gender identity, beliefs, occupations, income, education, carer status and household type. The Darebin community cherishes this diversity and values it as an important civic asset.

Darebin City Council acknowledges the history and contributions of the various communities, migrants and refugees who have made the municipality their home. Their endeavours have enriched the economic, social, cultural, artistic, community and civic character of the city and created a cosmopolitan locality where variety and difference are welcomed and encouraged.

Council also acknowledges that who we are today as a municipality rests on the history of loss and dispossession inflicted upon Aboriginal people, past and present, despite their strengths, resilience and continued contributions to our city.



## CONTENTS

---

<b>2020-2021 Highlights</b>	<b>02</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>06</b>
Message from the Mayor	07
Message from the Chief Executive Officer	10
Quick facts	12
Financial summary 2020-2021	14
Our services	17
<b>Our Performance</b>	<b>18</b>
Overview	20
Darebin Council Plan 2017-2021	21
Goal 1—A sustainable city	22
Goal 2—Opportunities to live well	30
Goal 3—A liveable city	38
Goal 4—A strong economy	44
Goal 5—Involving our diverse communities	48
Goal 6—A well-governed Council	52
<b>Contact us</b>	<b>56</b>



# 2020–2021 Highlights

For more details about our performance in 2020–2021, go to page 54.

You can read the Council Plan 2017–21 on our website ► [darebin.vic.gov.au/CouncilPlan](https://darebin.vic.gov.au/CouncilPlan)

# 114<sup>kg</sup>

per person per year of waste to landfill

# 89.6%

satisfaction with public arts and cultural infrastructure

# 95.3%

satisfaction with Council's festivals and events

▼  
**25.5%**

down from 2019–20

▲  
**4.5**

percentage points up on 2020

**GOAL 1** pages 22–29

## A sustainable city



### Highlights

Council's Rewilding Program saw 200,000 indigenous trees, shrubs, grasses and groundcovers planted throughout many parks and open space areas.

Council achieved carbon neutral certification in 2020–2021.

Council successfully met its 2016 goal of doubling the amount of solar power in Darebin in late 2019 – one year early.

### Results

#### Amount of solar power generated in Darebin (kW)

**TARGET:** 36,000 kW by 2021

**RESULT:** 40,855 kW ► **TARGET MET**

#### Volume of waste to landfill (kg per person)

**TARGET:** Reduce by 1kg per person each year

**RESULT:** 114kg per person, down from 153kg per person in 2019–2020 ► **TARGET MET**

### Looking forward

Delivering Council's exciting climate and circular economy agenda.

Delivering Council's new approach to transport management – a three-year rolling Local Area Place Making program.

Delivering the \$60m Capital Works program (Big Build in 2021–2022).

# Opportunities to live well



## Highlights

Community service leases were renewed, including 18 Children's Services sites.

Construction of the new Narrandjeri multi-sports stadium is on track to be up and running early next year.

Delivered new playgrounds, sports fields and lighting, solar panels, energy efficiency works, accessible toilets and facility upgrades.

Designs were completed for the Northcote Aquatic and Recreation Centre (NARC) so that the project can proceed to the tendering of works.

## Results

### Proportion of children up to 5 years fully immunised (%)

**TARGET:** Increase to 95% by 2021

**RESULT:** 95.3% ► **TARGET MET**

### Satisfaction with Council's festivals and events (%)

**TARGET:** 85% year-on-year

**RESULT:** 95.3% ► **TARGET MET**

## Looking forward

Awarding the Northcote Aquatic and Recreation Centre (NARC) contract and building one of the first 6-star Green Star, gas-free aquatic centres in Australia.

Delivering an expanded activity centres-focused program to shape our city of the future, including revitalisation, outdoor dining and parklets, shade, cleanliness, pride, place activations and programs, and thriving retail centres.

Supporting Early Childhood Services to provide funded three-year-old kindergarten in Darebin from 2022 onwards and collaborating to create additional kindergarten capacity through infrastructure projects.

# A liveable city



## Highlights

Endorsement of Council's advocacy plan for the level crossing removal project ('Preston Reconnected') to ensure the delivery of well-designed new open spaces and pathways along the rail corridor, and provision of disruption support to traders and the community.

Implemented Bituminous Resurfacing program for a total spend of \$1.7 million.

Substantial progress on the Development Contributions Plan planning scheme amendment and further work on the Open Space levy.

## Results

### Satisfaction with condition of sealed local roads (%)

**TARGET:** 85% year-on-year

**RESULT:** 86.2% ► **TARGET MET**

### Satisfaction with public arts and cultural infrastructure

**TARGET:** 85%

**RESULT:** 89.6% ► **TARGET MET**

## Looking forward

Complete the review and submission of Council's four-year Domestic Animal Management Plan.

Continue to look at the way technology can improve how we engage with our community on the key issues dealt with by Council.



13,582

registered local businesses of all kinds

▲ 425

more than 2019

83.2%

satisfaction with Council's performance in making decisions in the interests of the community

\$128<sup>k</sup>

electronic gambling machine losses per day

▼ 17.9%

less than 2019-20

GOAL 4 pages 44-47

# A strong economy



### Highlights

700+ business visitations were undertaken, providing general business recovery information and linking through to support.

2,354 calls were received on the business support line.

120 businesses received support through an extended outdoor dining project

1,300+ additional seats were provided to local cafes, restaurants and bars.

### Results

#### Number of registered local businesses of all kinds

TARGET: Increase  
RESULT: 13,582 ► TARGET MET

#### Number of reactivated vacant shopfronts

TARGET: Increase  
RESULT: 4 ► TARGET NOT MET

### Looking forward

Develop an Economic Development Strategy to attract new industries and investment in sectors such as food, health, renewables, creative, circular economy and digital industries.

Invest \$6.3 million in initiatives to support existing and new industries to ensure that Darebin's economy is robust and resilient.

# Involving our diverse communities



## Highlights

Council continued to support the rights and wellbeing of refugees and people seeking asylum.

A Community Engagement Policy was adopted before the legislative due date.

Community engagement was undertaken for the Darebin 2041 Community Vision, 2021–2025 Council Plan (incorporating the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan) and Financial Plan 2021–2031.

## Results

**Satisfaction with Council's performance in making decisions in the interests of the community (%)**

**TARGET:** 80% year-on-year

**RESULT:** 83.2% ▶ **TARGET MET**

**Electronic gambling machine losses in Darebin (\$'000s/day)**

**TARGET:** Reduce below \$231,000

**RESULT:** \$128,000 ▶ **TARGET MET**

## Looking forward

Implementation of a Community Engagement Policy that will put the community at the heart of our decision-making.

Ongoing work to be responsive and respectful to the current and emerging aspirations of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The construction phase of the Intercultural Centre project.

# A well-governed council



## Highlights

Successful induction of the newly elected Council (November 2020).

Council's Redeployment Program continued through to early 2021.

Development of a draft Asset Management Strategy and Plan to support and guide the long-term planning of Council's assets.

Key customer experience initiatives were launched, including Customer Commitments and a new complaints handling process and procedure.

Review of 300 Council processes to improve service.

## Results

**Satisfaction with Council decisions (rating out of 100)**

**TARGET 2019–2020:** 68.8

**RESULT 2020–2021:** 68.1

**Councillor attendance at Council meetings (%)**

**TARGET 2019–2020:** 93.1

**RESULT 2020–2021:** 98.0

## Looking forward

Developing Council's 10-Year Asset Plan.

Go-live of the new corporate website will improve accessibility to up-to-date information.

Implementation of the 2021–2025 Council Plan through the adoption of the Corporate Plan and new Unit Work Plans.

The new Integrated Finance System went live on 1 July.



# Introduction



# Message from the Mayor

**This has been a challenging year for Council and the community. COVID has continued to affect many of Council's services and programs, from libraries and maternal and child health services to parks and road maintenance, as well our festivals and events. It's also affected Council's routine operations such as holding a Council meeting that the public can attend and ask questions in person. I've missed seeing residents and local business owners in the public gallery.**

I am proud of Council's response to the many challenges faced by the community throughout this year.

To support our economy, Council provided assistance grants worth more than \$540,000 to 237 local businesses. Council also created 1300 additional seats at cafes and restaurants through transformed parklets and laneways. In total, 120 businesses were supported with additional outdoor dining seating.

Our strong commitment and support for the arts and creative sector also continued. Our Autumn 2021 FUSE festival ran successfully within COVID restrictions, featuring 160 artists at 18 locations across Darebin. In addition, Council provided \$160,000 to arts organisations and live music venues to help them adapt their businesses to COVID restrictions.

We supported the most vulnerable members of our community to get through COVID, with more than 1800 people supported through our Community Navigation Service to access vital emergency relief and other support. We provided funding for emergency food relief, homelessness and family violence agencies in Darebin, as well as redeploying staff to work in these services.

Notwithstanding COVID and the associated restrictions, Council continued to deliver on its priorities. Some of Darebin's highlights from the last year are included here.

Darebin is the lead council in securing new electricity contracts for 46 Victorian councils to switch to 100% renewable energy from 1 July 2021. Our streetlights, libraries, sporting facilities and town halls will now be powered by renewable energy. The new deal, VECO (the Victorian Energy Collaboration), was launched on 20 May 2021 and received national media attention.

---

# 48,691kw

solar power generated in Darebin

# ↑ 16.9%

up on 2019-20

## INTRODUCTION

## Message from the Mayor continued

# \$50.08m

total capital works  
expenditure

▲  
**4.4%**

up on 2019-20



VECO is the largest emissions reduction project ever undertaken in the Australian local government sector. Victorian councils have come together to drive investment in renewable energy, resulting in pooling 240GWh of electricity. This is equivalent to powering 45,000 homes with renewable energy or taking 90,000 cars off the road.

Our popular Solar Savers program continues to grow and has now delivered more than 7900kW worth of solar for the Darebin community since its inception.

Darebin's new Rewilding Program saw an incredible 200,000 indigenous trees, shrubs, grasses and groundcovers planted throughout many parks and open space areas. These new plantings are already making significant contributions to the local amenity and biodiversity values of each site.

We also planted 3,400 trees to provide canopy and habitat in the future. This work is bringing to life Council's open space strategy 'Breathing Space'.

Like many in the community, Council worked hard to support members of our community who were concerned about the detention of asylum seekers at the Mantra Bell hotel in Preston for more than a year. Council participated in a multi-agency and community advocacy campaign for the release of the men. This assisted in the release of most of these men into the community, with Council supporting their health, wellbeing and access to services once released.

We have continued to deliver on Age Friendly Darebin initiatives, such as the trial of cafe meals, Home Care Package trial, digital connection support for older people and an intergenerational gardening trial.

We spent more than \$50 million on capital works including:

- Construction of the Narrandjeri stadium (multi-sports stadium in John Cain Memorial Park) is well underway and on track to be completed later this year.
- Beavers Road bridge across the Merri Creek was completed in September 2020.
- \$5.4 million to renew footpaths and \$7.9 million on playgrounds, sporting ovals, pavilions and lighting upgrades.

Central Preston is undergoing a transformation, with the State Government removing four level crossings and rebuilding two train stations. Council is working hard to get the best possible outcomes for the community from this major work.

In addition, the State Government is considering a new planning scheme for the privately owned Preston Market, which would see significant construction on the site and most of the market being rebuilt in a different part of the site. Council is worried that this change could destroy 'the heart' of the market and Preston. Council has been advocating to preserve the market in its current location, so that it continues to offer fresh, affordable and diverse food for generations to come. This will remain a key priority for Council.

Council elections were held in October 2020 with nine Councillors elected, each representing a single local ward. Working through an independent Darebin Deliberative Panel, made up of 39 members, the new Council developed a 20-year Community Vision in 2021. The Vision will guide Council's work across its services and programs, including planning, growth and development.

I'm also grateful for the hundreds of suggestions, ideas and feedback to Council in the development of our new four-year Council Plan. We heard from Aboriginal communities, young people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, older residents, local businesses, and more.

This feedback was then handed to the Darebin Deliberative Panel, whose members reflect the diversity of the community. The Panel formed plans on how to best meet the expectations of the community within the budget available. This deep engagement gives me confidence that our new Council Plan reflects the views of the community.

I look forward to working with my Councillor colleagues, the officers and the community on the implementation of the new Council Plan.

**Lina Messina**  
Mayor

# Message from the Chief Executive Officer

While the last 12 months have been a truly extraordinary period for everyone, one thing that hasn't changed has been Darebin Council's unwavering focus on serving and supporting the community.



As CEO I have been so proud to lead our incredible team of more than 1300 staff across the organisation over the last year.

Throughout the year they have continually stepped up in so many ways with professionalism, creativity and commitment. They have adapted and delivered our essential and highly valued community services in and out of lockdowns safely and put care and compassion at the heart of everything we do.

Our officers have been with the community every step of the way — from supporting aged and disability clients directly in their homes, to delivering maternal and child health, immunisation and early years services, to supporting young people and people facing homelessness, to keeping our streets clean and safe, to maintaining waste and recycling services, to supporting businesses, the arts and community groups, to maintaining and rewilding our parks and open spaces, to maintaining local laws, animal control, traffic, health, planning and development services, to innovating our library and recreation services, maintaining our customer service information lines and keeping the community informed and connected.

In doing this we have worked to strengthen our recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities as First Nations Peoples, and the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters we now call Darebin. We have deepened our partnerships with diverse communities and developed a Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Strategy to ensure we overcome barriers and bring everyone to the table at Darebin.

This was all done while enabling hundreds of staff to work from home remotely, remaining connected to the organisation and each other and supported through our 'Stay Well, Stay Connected' program. This encompassed health and wellbeing, changing ways of working, workplace culture and connection, and redeployment program streams.

The redeployment program ensured staff whose jobs were impacted by COVID-19 restrictions continued to be employed, while also providing valuable support to the community.

Through this program, our people showed great flexibility in adapting to new roles, from planting trees, to supporting the community through our extraordinary multi-million dollar COVID-19 Resilience and Recovery Package, to working with partner agencies to support people who were vulnerable.

Our number one priority throughout the pandemic has been the health and wellbeing of staff and the community. We have focused on this in every strategy and action, and emphasised the importance of working together with kindness, compassion and goodwill.

This has stood us in good stead across the organisation and the community as together we have navigated the challenges of COVID, and it will continue to do so in the year ahead.

It has not all been about COVID, however, and we have progressed many key initiatives and flagship projects while delivering the daily services our community relies on.

As outlined in this Annual Report, some of the highlights across Darebin include:

- Accelerating the Rewilding Program through staff redeployments to plant more than 6,700 trees in bushland, parks and streets across parks and open spaces.
- Endorsing 'Breathing Space: Darebin Open Space Strategy', which is a plan to improve local biodiversity and ensure all residents live within walking distance of quality open space.
- Appointing Darebin's first City Designer to ensure Darebin delivers high standards of architectural design within the City. This is part of our larger mission to ensure Darebin is sustainable, accessible and liveable into the future while supporting a rapidly growing and diverse population.
- Delivering a community-minded and fiscally responsible budget, while responding to the COVID-19 pandemic in a meaningful, practical and tangible way

Our path through the past three years was guided by the Darebin Council Plan 2017-2021, which addressed critical challenges and produced many of the fantastic community outcomes outlined in this Annual Report. We are incredibly proud of all we have achieved in this period.

I would like to thank all our staff for their incredible work over the past year and I look forward to what we can achieve in the year to come.

**Sue Wilkinson**  
Chief Executive Officer

# 77.2%

perception of safety in public areas (at night)

# ▲ 3.6

percentage points up on 2020

## Quick facts



### Place of birth

**59%**

born in Australia

**33%**

born overseas

(main countries: Italy, China, India, Greece, United Kingdom, Vietnam, New Zealand and Lebanon)

**8%**

not stated

### Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

**0.8%**



### Languages spoken at home

**36.9%**

speak a language other than English at home

**82**

languages in total

- 56% English only
- 7% Italian
- 6% Greek
- 4% Mandarin
- 3% Arabic
- 2% Vietnamese
- 15% other
- 7% not stated



### Households

**60%**

live with family

**26%**

live alone

**8%**

live in group houses

**6%**

other



### Place of birth of parents

**58%**

have either one or both parents born overseas



### Ages

**16%**  
children 0-14

**13%**  
young people 15-24

**57%**  
25-64

**14%**  
64+



### Tertiary qualifications

**40,282**

**32.7% bachelor degree**  
(compared with 27.5% Greater Melbourne)



### Religion

**40**

**religions in total**

55% religious  
36% not religious  
9% not stated



### Employment

**70,306**

**residents employed in 2016**

**60%**  
full-time

**38%**  
part-time

**5,433**  
or **7.2% were unemployed**  
(6.8% Greater Melbourne)



### Income

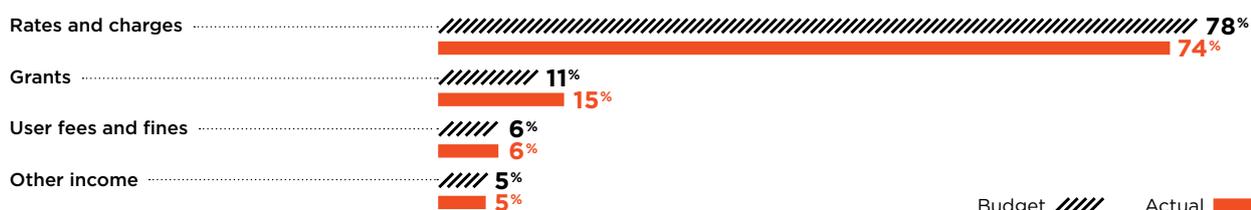
**\$1,420**

**weekly median**  
(\$1,539 Greater Melbourne)

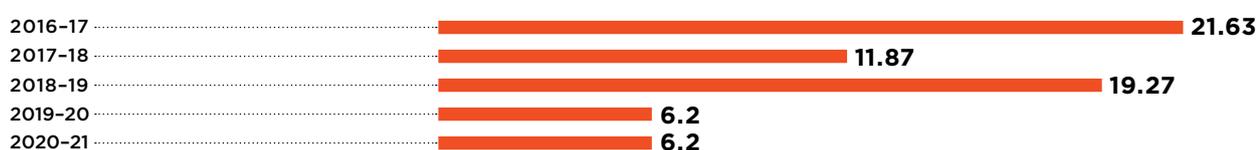
**39%**  
have a personal income  
of less than \$500 a week

# Financial summary

## Sources of revenue 2020–21



## Net operating result (\$ million)



## Capital works (\$ million)



Darebin City Council strives to ensure that our community's needs are met while also keeping an eye to the needs of future generations. Our community expects and deserves an efficient and productive administration that provides excellent service and value for money. We are committed to excellence in the delivery of our core services and to ensuring our efforts meet the diverse needs of our community.

### In brief

- Revenue of \$182.60 million, with 74% coming from rates and charges.
- Expenditure of \$176.42 million, with 52% attributable to employee costs and 30% for materials and services.
- Surplus of \$6.18 million.
- Net assets of \$1.49 billion, including community facilities and infrastructure.
- Cash and financial assets held of \$64.58 million, which is \$8.95 million less than the previous year.

### Operating result

The operating result is a key figure to assess Council's financial performance. It is calculated by deducting the total expenses for the year from total revenues. Although Council is a not-for-profit organisation, it should still generate a surplus to ensure future financial sustainability.

For the year ended 30 June 2021, Council achieved an operating surplus of \$6.18 million, which was a \$0.14 million decrease from the 2019–2020 result. The main reasons for the decrease were: revenue increased by \$1.36 million; employee costs increased by \$5.93 million; and materials and services decreased by \$4.72 million.

The Revenue and Rating Plan 2021–2025, which expresses the strategic objectives, plans and strategies in financial terms, was adopted by Council in June 2021 and shows surpluses will continue to be achieved in all years over the period 2021–2022 to 2024–2025 while maintaining existing service delivery. These surpluses are critical as they are the primary source of funding for the renewal, replacement and upgrade of community infrastructure through Council's capital works program, which will average \$55.39 million a year over the next four years to 30 June 2025.

\*Note: this incorporates Council's participation in the Working for Victoria Program, which accounted for \$4.32 million of the increase in employee costs (recovered via a State Government grant).

## Capital works

The capital works program is an essential part of Council's stewardship role. It provides effective management of our infrastructure assets, which give the community access to services and facilities and support Council's delivery of services.

The Statement of Capital Works details the \$44.67 million of capital works spending across Darebin for 2020–2021. This includes \$20.70 million on asset renewal, \$5.13 million on asset upgrade, \$1.46 million on asset expansion, and \$17.38 million on new assets.

More broadly defined, total capital works expenditure was \$49.84 million. This included \$44.67 million from capital accounts and close to \$5.17 million from operating accounts.

## Cash flow

Cash and cash equivalents have increased by \$4.81 million to \$47.73 million. The main movements during the year were a cash inflow from operating activities of \$36.84 million, offset by a cash outflow of \$31.95 million for investing activities. Council continues to hold an appropriate level of cash to ensure liquidity. Council undertook no borrowings during the 2020–2021 year and had no outstanding borrowings at 30 June 2021.

## Financial stewardship

As part of the annual reporting process, Council's key officers were required to complete a detailed questionnaire validating financial data and providing an opportunity to flag impaired assets, contingent liabilities and other relevant items. This process increases accountability across the organisation and provides strong financial stewardship.

## Our future

It is important that the results in this report for 2020–2021 are viewed in the context of Council's long-term financial strategic objectives, which are reflected in the Council Plan 2021–2025 and articulated in the Revenue and Rating Plan 2021–2025.

The key principles in the Revenue and Rating Plan 2021–2025 that underpin long-term financial planning are:

- We will maintain the scope and standard of ongoing services provided to the Darebin community and be flexible to address changing community needs with innovative services and facilities, including Darebin's

\$3.2 million financial assistance package to residents and job seekers and \$6.3 million towards an ongoing business economic recovery package.

- During the financial year, there was a 26% increase in asset renewal expenditure. This will contribute to closing the renewal gap over the long term and help to improve the sustainability of infrastructure assets. This, in turn, will result in better infrastructure for the community, in line with the long-term financial and strategic plan. We will continue to focus on renewing community assets such as roads, footpaths, open space and buildings to ensure they are maintained at an appropriate standard to meet required service levels. We will improve our asset management practices by reviewing our key asset management policies, strategies, plans and procedures.
- We will ensure that Council maintains ongoing underlying surpluses that allow the funding of ongoing service delivery to the community, the timely renewal of community assets and assets required for ongoing service delivery, and new community assets.
- We will ensure Council holds sufficient cash and other assets to meet payment obligations to suppliers and employees as they fall due.

Council has forecast rate increases at 1.5% in 2021–2022 and 1.75% onward for 2022–2023, 2023–2024 and 2024–2025.

We will need to undertake the essential conversation with our community on how the aspirations set out in our Council Plan, along with the related services and infrastructure development, may best be achieved and funded in an increasingly restricted financial environment since the advent of rate capping.

While financially sustainable, Darebin is heavily dependent on rate revenue to deliver our services. The introduction of rate capping has had a significant impact on our Revenue and Rating Plan 2021–2025 and Financial Plan 2021–2031.

Our financial accounts were audited and issued an unqualified audit opinion by the Victorian Auditor-General. Refer to page 122 for the full Financial Report including Auditor-General reports.

Council's careful financial strategies and balanced long-term planning enabled rate rises to be limited to 1.5% in 2021–2022.



# Our services

## For families

- Building upgrades and improvements to Council-owned early learning centres and kindergartens
- Construction of new playgrounds
- Family services
- Immunisation
- Kindergarten and childcare registration systems for community-managed services
- Library services, e.g. collections and events and programs
- Maternal and child health services
- Parent education sessions
- Playground maintenance, upgrades and improvements
- Playgroups and Toy Library
- School crossing supervisors
- Street lighting and signage
- Swimming lessons
- Youth engagement programs

## For older people and people with disabilities

- Access to senior citizen facilities
- Assessment for aged and disability services
- Community transport
- Delivered meals (Meals on Wheels)
- Domestic assistance
- Flexible respite
- Funding and support of older adults, groups and clubs
- Home library service
- Home maintenance
- Improved accessibility to Council-owned facilities, including improvements to senior citizens' centres
- Information, advocacy and support of individuals and groups in relation to aged and disability programs
- Library services, e.g. digital literacy support programs, resources and collections, events and programs, exercise classes, special needs swim classes
- Navigation support for older residents
- Older person housing sponsorship program
- Personal care
- Social support groups

## For businesses

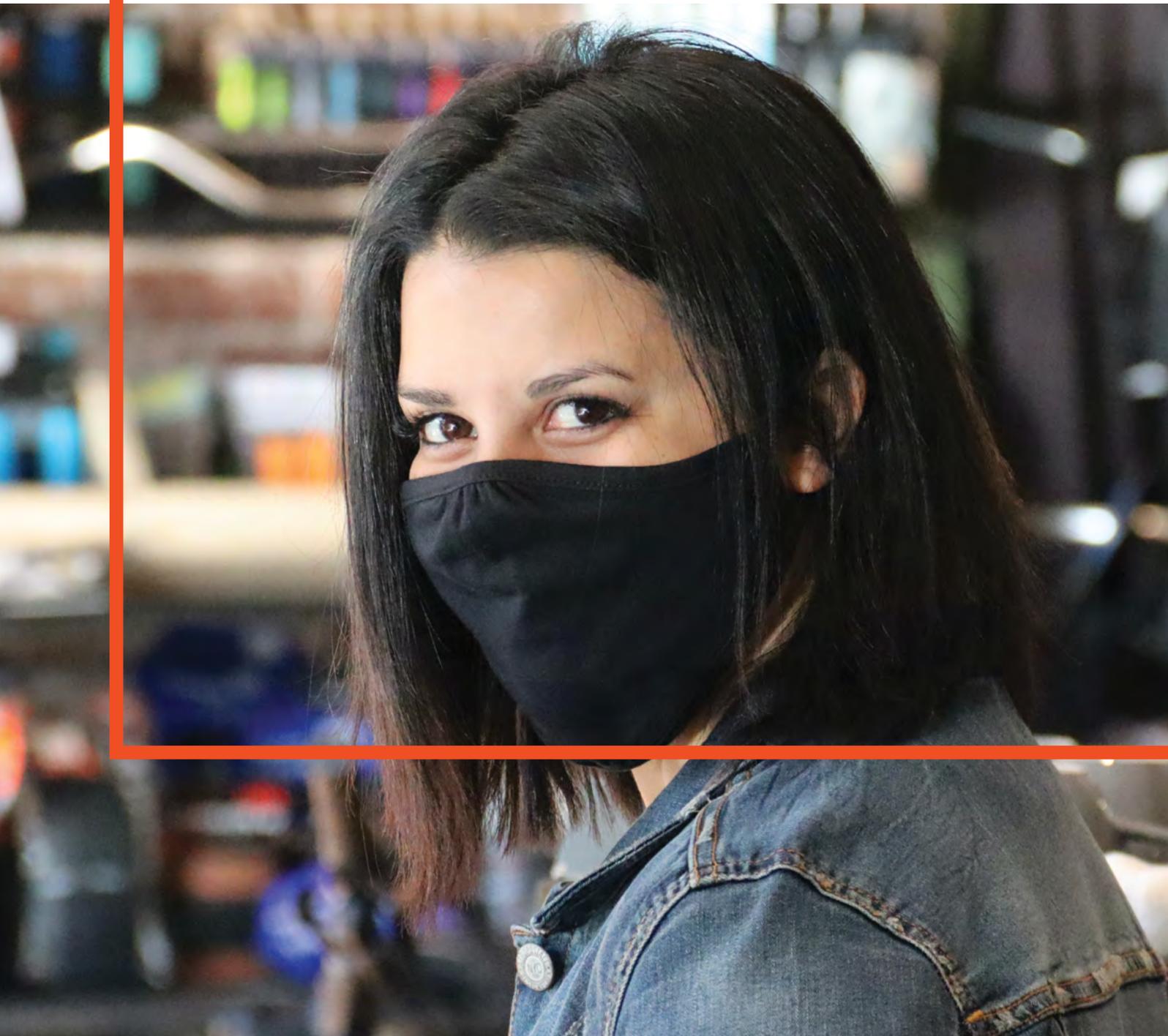
- Business permits
- Business support and education
- Food and health business registrations and regulation
- Food safety regulation programs
- Improvements to local retail activity centres
- Library services
- Networking opportunities
- Tobacco control

## For the whole community

- Actively engage with newly arrived populations, migrants and refugees
- Art and heritage including Council's indoor and outdoor art works
- Arts events, exhibitions, performances, festivals and cultural programs
- Building services and planning permits
- Collection of waste and recycling
- Community facilities and building maintenance, repair and upgrade
- Community safety and crime prevention programs
- Construction of new community facilities
- Construction of new community gathering spaces in our parks
- Education and leadership on environmental sustainability
- Employment programs
- Encourage and provide increased opportunities for sustainable transport
- Graffiti removal and prevention
- Information about pests and pollution
- Leisure facilities
- Libraries
- Local law enforcement
- Maintenance of local amenities and facilities
- Natural resource management
- Parking permits
- Parks and open spaces
- Playspaces, skate parks and outdoor fitness equipment
- Pet registration
- Provide training and education to encourage more local businesses and jobs
- Publications including quarterly print newsletter Darebin Community News and monthly online newsletter, Your Darebin
- Raise awareness of gender equity and violence against women
- Road and footpath maintenance
- Sporting facilities
- Strategic rainwater management, both quality and quantity, e.g. local flood mitigation, rain gardens and water harvesting treatments
- Street cleansing
- Support sustainable food and environment initiatives
- Volunteering programs



# Our performance



# Overview

**The Report of Operations outlines our 2020–2021 performance against the major initiatives in Council’s 2020–2021 Budget. It also reports on the Darebin Council Plan 2017–2021 goals and its 16 Big Actions. Big Actions also form the majority of the major initiatives of the Budget 2020–2021.**

## **Integration with Council Plan and Council Budget**

Our Integrated Strategic Planning Framework was reviewed and updated in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* in 2020–2021. The chart on page 56 illustrates how the Annual Report and the Council Plan are integrated with the business planning and reporting cycle.

The Council Plan is a strategic document that describes the vision, mission, goals, strategies and targets that guide our work for a four-year period. Each year an annual action plan is established to deliver the Council Plan – the Council Plan Action Plan. The Strategic Resource Plan 2018–2022 complemented the Council Plan 2017–2021 and described how key projects and objectives would be resourced. Please note: the Strategic Resource Plan 2018–2022 has been superseded by the Financial Plan 2021–2031 adopted on 28 June 2021 alongside the new Council Plan 2021–2025.

Every financial year the Annual Budget sets out funding for the projects and services to be undertaken. It outlines the major initiatives that directly contribute to the achievement of our Council Plan goals. The Budget is also integrated with the annual Council Plan Action Plan, which details the key items that Council will implement over the financial year.

Within the organisation, long and medium-term strategies drive the development of individual business management plans and set out key performance indicators for each department. These plans serve to ensure that the objectives of the Council Plan are implemented.

The Annual Report 2020–2021 shows our progress in realising the vision of the Council Plan 2017–2021. Detailed performance reports on the organisation’s progress against the annual Council Plan Action Plan are also posted quarterly on our website:

▶ [darebin.vic.gov.au/CouncilPlan](https://darebin.vic.gov.au/CouncilPlan)

---

# \$540k

worth of assistance grants provided to:

# 237

local businesses



## OUR PERFORMANCE

### Overview

The Annual Report and the Council Plan are integrated with the business planning and reporting cycle.



# Darebin Council Plan 2017–2021

The vision for the Council Plan 2017–2021 was: ‘A greener, bolder and more connected city’. The Plan responded to the changing world we face, particularly the climate emergency, a growing population, a changing economy, growing inequality and reduced funding.

The 2020–2021 Annual Report is the fourth and last reporting year of the Council Plan 2017–2021.

The Council Plan has six goals, each with three attendant strategies. Each strategy has several actions, which are listed in the Council Plan Action Plan Progress Report 2020–2021 available at: ► [darebin.vic.gov.au/CouncilPlan](https://darebin.vic.gov.au/CouncilPlan)

The goals were developed after extensive consultation with our community and other stakeholders and reflected the shared priorities of our diverse community.

For each goal, we have reported on:

- services and their costs
- Big Actions
- highlights and achievements
- challenges
- performance indicators and our results
- future plans.

We have reported on our progress for 2020–2021 against each of the actions in the Council Plan Action Plan Progress Report 2020–2021, which can be found on our website at:

► [darebin.vic.gov.au/CouncilPlan](https://darebin.vic.gov.au/CouncilPlan)

## GOAL 1

### A sustainable city

PAGE 22

## GOAL 2

### Opportunities to live well

PAGE 30

## GOAL 3

### A liveable city

PAGE 38

## GOAL 4

### A strong economy

PAGE 44

## GOAL 5

### Involving our diverse communities

PAGE 48

## GOAL 6

### A well-governed Council

PAGE 52

# A sustainable city

**We will be leaders in creating a sustainable city through local innovation projects that address climate change.**

**STRATEGY 1.1**

We will become an energy and water-efficient city and reduce waste.

**STRATEGY 1.2**

We will increase sustainable transport through safer streets for walking and cycling, and advocacy for public transport.

**STRATEGY 1.3**

We will expand and improve our network of open and green spaces, parks and natural environments to provide the lungs for our city and reduce the impacts of climate change.

There are 40 actions listed under Goal 1 in the Council Plan Action Plan for 2020–2021. The following section shows progress against the Big Actions from the Council Plan and provides highlights from the Action Plan. Progress comments on all 40 actions relating to this goal can be found at:

► [darebin.vic.gov.au/CouncilPlan](https://darebin.vic.gov.au/CouncilPlan)


**Budget allocated to Goal 1**

NET COST	2020-21 \$'000
Budget	34,241
Actual	34,537
Variance	(296)

## Services for Goal 1

While all departments contribute to the achievement of each of our goals, these services specifically relate to Goal 1.

**Note:** The service areas in the table align with the 2020–2021 budget and are consistent with the Council Plan 2017–2021.

### A sustainable city

SERVICE AREA	DESCRIPTION	NET COST 2020-21	
		\$'000	
<b>Environment and natural resources</b>	Develops and implements policies and programs that contribute to sustainability within Council and the community. Responsible for the Climate Emergency Plan, Natural Heritage Strategy, Sustainable Water Strategy, Sustainable Water Use Plan, Urban Forest Strategy and the Waste Management Strategy.	Budget	<b>3,836</b>
		Actual	<b>4,323</b>
		Variance	<b>(487)</b>
<b>Open spaces, parks and natural environment</b>	Responsible for the management and maintenance of approximately 600 hectares of open space, including 90 playgrounds, several wetlands, pathways, seating, garden beds, waterways, pedestrian bridges, catchments, dams and street trees and 100,000 trees in parks and reserves.	Budget	<b>14,744</b>
		Actual	<b>14,332</b>
		Variance	<b>412</b>
<b>Sustainable transport</b>	Develops policy and project delivery for transport management and safety.	Budget	<b>2,296</b>
		Actual	<b>1,775</b>
		Variance	<b>521</b>
<b>Waste management</b>	Collection of domestic garbage and recyclables, green waste and dumped rubbish, street and right-of-way cleansing, the hard waste collection service, and management of the contract for the operation of the Resource and Recovery Centre in Reservoir.	Budget	<b>13,364</b>
		Actual	<b>14,107</b>
		Variance	<b>(743)</b>



## GOAL 1

# Big Actions

- Completed
- Delayed, delivery will be complete in 2021
- Will not be delivered in 2021

---

### Big Action 1 ► ●

#### **Double solar power in Darebin**

The Solar Saver Program continues to inspire broad solar uptake across Darebin, with Council successfully meeting its 2016 goal of doubling the amount of solar power in Darebin in late 2019, one year early. With Darebin residents being such strong solar supporters, the amount continued to grow into 2020–2021. The Solar Saver Program has now delivered more than 7,900kW worth of solar for the Darebin community since its inception.

---

### Big Action 2 ► ●

#### **Create a new Darebin Energy Foundation (now the Climate Emergency Darebin Advisory Committee), a climate emergency think-tank and initiative innovator to address climate change**

Council created the Climate Emergency Darebin (CED) Advisory Committee in 2018. Since then, CED has provided advice and feedback to Council for the implementation of Council's Climate Emergency Plan. Highlights include developing strategic advocacy in collaboration with national networks, providing advice that helped form the Climate Emergency Australia Network, and advising on climate mobilisation activities such as community leader workshops and reducing greenhouse emissions through Council operations.

---

### Big Action 3 ► ●

#### **Dramatically improve walking and cycling**

Highlights include completing the Northcote Thornbury Streets for People corridor to support safer streets. We've also successfully secured with others more than \$2 million in funding from the Victorian Government through the Northern Regional Trails Strategy for better walking and cycling routes in Reservoir and Bundoora. We have advocated to the State Government for the Heidelberg Road pop-up bike lanes, which were used by more than 50,000 cyclists each month. Throughout COVID-19, cycling has increased between 100 and 150%.

---

### Big Action 4 ► ●

#### **Advocate for better public transport**

Following Council's advocacy, the State Government announced additional tram services between Docklands and Preston in response to COVID-19. Additional train services were added on the Mernda and Hurstbridge lines. Council worked on implementing new advocacy positions for an electric bus between the Route 11 terminus and Reservoir Station as an interim solution until the Route 11 tram is extended, and to bring forward the northern section of the Suburban Rail Loop. Other ongoing public transport advocacy to the State Government included accessible tram stops and bus network reform.

---

### Big Action 5 ► ●

#### **Establish a Nature Trust to create more open space across Darebin**

Council has established the Darebin Nature Trust Advisory Committee, which brings together a group of community members with a broad range of biodiversity expertise. The Committee has provided significant input and guidance on the biodiversity aspects of Council's new open space strategy, Breathing Space, the Gardens for Wildlife program that launched in June 2021 and the Biodiversity Management Plan.

---

### Big Action 11 ► ●

#### **Increase our tree canopy and urban forest**

Planting is ongoing but this project stage is complete, with RAPID Canopy the main planting program being implemented this financial year for streetscape planting. All planting sites were assessed, with some tree planting completed before stage 4 lockdown restrictions were enacted. To date, 3,400 trees have been planted in streetscapes. Preston West and Reservoir East have been planted. More than 5,000 indigenous tube stock plants have been planted in bushland areas and more than 200,000 tube stock plants have been planted as part of Rewilding Darebin. Two hundred park trees have been planted.

## Highlights and achievements

# 10%

reduction in gross carbon emissions from Council operations

# 24%

of Darebin streets now have a 40km/h speed limit

▶ A total of 3,400 trees were planted through Council's RAPID Canopy program.

▶ Council achieved a 10% reduction in gross carbon emissions from its operations in 2020–2021. This was largely due to solar installations, energy efficiency upgrades and reduced energy use due to COVID-19 closures. By switching to 100% renewable energy via VECO (the Victorian Energy Collaboration), Council expects to halve gross emissions in 2021–2022.

▶ Council achieved carbon neutral certification in 2020–21, thereby achieving the goal in the Climate Emergency Plan of net zero emissions from Council operations.

▶ Council's Rewilding Program saw 200,000 indigenous trees, shrubs, grasses and groundcovers planted throughout many parks and open space areas. These new plantings are already making significant contributions to the local amenity and biodiversity values of each site.

▶ Darebin has been the lead council in securing new electricity contracts for 46 Victorian councils to switch to 100% renewable energy from 1 July 2021. Our streetlights, libraries, sporting facilities and town halls will now be powered by renewable energy. Victorian councils have come together to drive investment in renewable energy, resulting in pooling

# 200k

indigenous trees, shrubs, grasses and groundcovers planted throughout many parks and open spaces

240GWh of electricity. This is the equivalent to powering 45,000 homes with renewable energy or taking 90,000 cars off the road.

▶ Delivered 14 drainage projects, on budget and on time, in 2020–2021 for a total spend of \$950,000. This included the first permeable paving road project within Darebin (Bundoora Golf Course car park).

▶ Delivered active transport projects, including improved access at the Wood Street Bridge for walkers and cyclists and bicycle lane safety improvements on Wingrove Street, Alphington.

▶ Following Council's advocacy, the State Government announced additional tram services between Docklands and Preston to respond to COVID-19. Additional train services were also added on the Mernda and Hurstbridge lines.

▶ Installed raised zebra crossings at the intersection of Hawthorn Road and Herbert Street, Northcote, to provide slow points for vehicles and safer crossing points for pedestrians for a total spend of \$108,000.

▶ Made improvements to the intersection of Cheddar Road and Dole Avenue, Reservoir, for a total spend of \$1.76 million. The project included improved traffic control by installing traffic signals and widened the road to provide a dedicated right turn lane into Dole Avenue.

▶ Plants, soil and mulch were donated to community groups to revitalise railway areas while contributing to Council's Rewilding Program.

▶ Secured State Government approval to roll-out two new 40 km/h zones in Darebin, with changes rolled out by the end of June 2021. With these changes, 24% of Darebin streets now have a 40km/h speed limit.

▶ The Solar Saver Program continued to inspire broad solar uptake across Darebin, with Council successfully meeting its 2016 goal of doubling the amount of solar power in Darebin in late 2019 – one year early. With Darebin residents being such strong solar supporters, the amount continued to grow into 2020–2021. The Solar Saver Program has now delivered more than 7,900kW of solar energy for the Darebin community since its inception.

### Challenges

– Delays in supply of materials required for capital works caused by pandemic restrictions and hold-ups with international freight.

– The increasing complexity and volume of resident transport enquiries, as the impact of COVID-19 changes the transport environment.

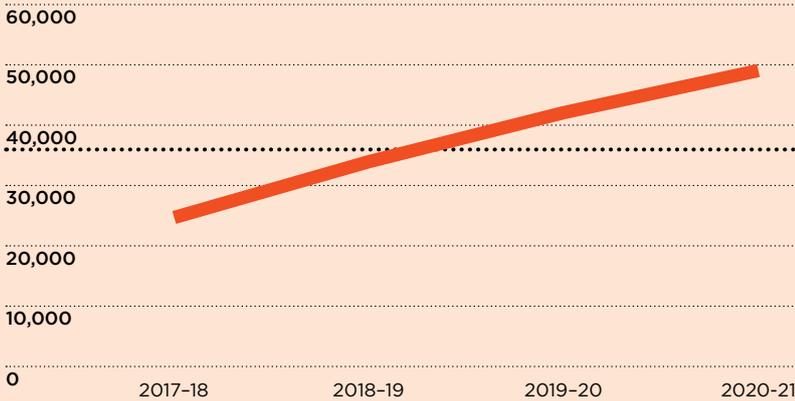
– Working remotely, experiencing restricted access for contractors to do works during Victoria's hard lock downs. Adapting to different ways of working, showing significant resilience and working through problems in a collaborative way.



## GOAL 1

# Performance indicators and results

### Amount of solar power generated in Darebin (kW)

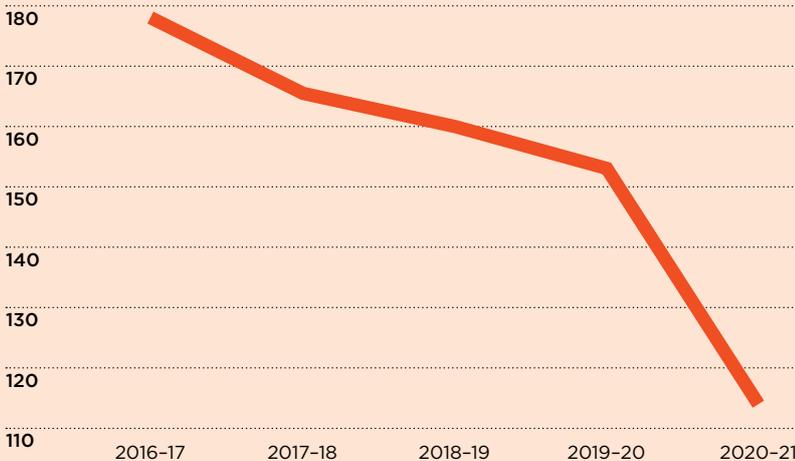


Source: Clean Energy Regulator (data from households or businesses that have claimed a Small Generation Unit (SGU) - Solar Panel).

**TARGET:** 36,000kW by 2021

**STATUS:** ▶ TARGET MET

### Volume of waste to landfill (kg per person)



Source: Tonnage records, Municipal Recycling Facility and Estimated Residential Population (Australian Bureau of Statistics).

**TARGET:** Reduce by 1kg per person each year

**STATUS:** ▶ TARGET MET

Note: the data in this chart does not include Mixed Use Developments (MUDs) as these are privately serviced.

### Satisfaction with waste services (%)



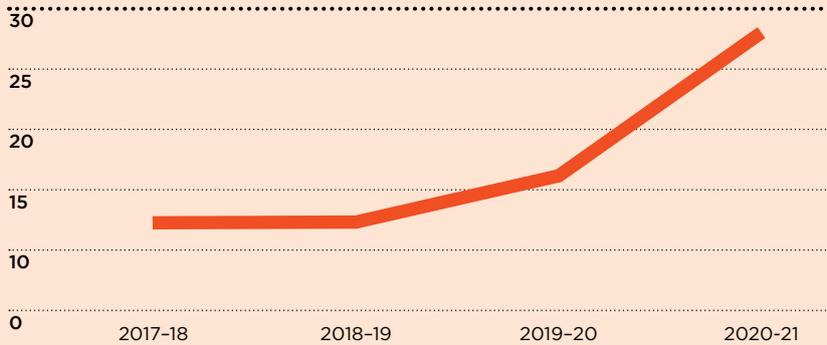
Source: Darebin City Council Community Satisfaction Survey

**TARGET:** 80% (year-on-year)

**STATUS:** ▶ TARGET MET

### Proportion of municipality with 40km/h speed limit (%)

Source: Darebin Asset System and GIS



**TARGET:** 30% by 2021

**STATUS:** ▶ GETTING THERE

### Cycling counts in selected areas (% increase)

Source: Combination of counts from VicRoads bicycle counters and Council's bicycle counters on St Georges Road and Darebin Creek Trails.



**TARGET:** 12% increase by 2021

**STATUS:** ▶ OFF TRACK

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on levels of cycling in Darebin and across Australia. There were large increases reported for recreational cycling but also significant reductions in cycling for commuting due to working from home arrangements. Only one of the six permanent bicycle counters used to compile the data are located on recreational routes, which accounts for the drop in the numbers for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 financial years.

### Satisfaction with footpath maintenance and repairs (%)

Source: Darebin City Council Community Satisfaction Survey.



**TARGET:** 80% (year-on-year)

**STATUS:** ▶ OFF TRACK

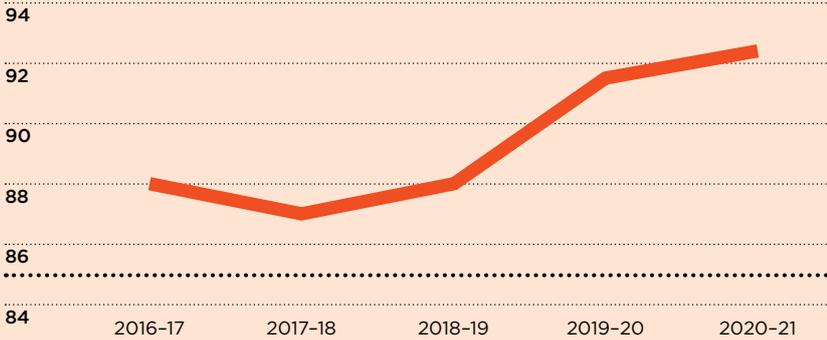


## GOAL 1

# Performance indicators and results

### Satisfaction with the maintenance of parks, reserves and open space (%)

Source: Darebin City Council Community Satisfaction Survey.

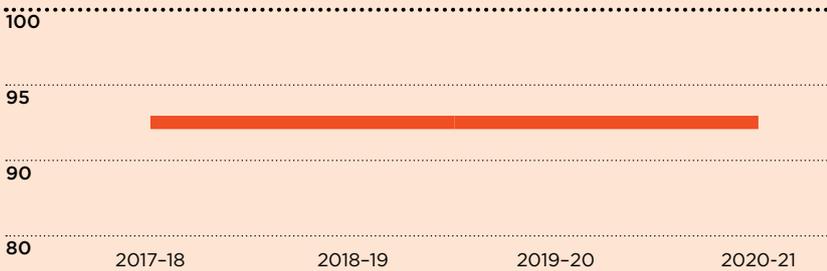


TARGET: 85% year-on-year

STATUS: ▶ TARGET MET

### Proportion of residents that live within 500 metres of open space (% of residents)

Source: Darebin Asset System, GIS and 2016 Census data.



TARGET: 100% by 2021

STATUS: ▶ OFF TRACK

It will take Council longer than 2021 to meet this target. Council has progressed an open space levy on developers, which is expected to increase funding available to accelerate achievement of this target.

Council has also successfully advocated for the level crossing removals to be elevated, creating large new open spaces underneath. When the works are completed, these will significantly enhance access to open space. Council's new open space strategy (Breathing Space) will guide our work towards improving the quality of open spaces and parklands and the overall amount of public open space.

### Proportion of tree coverage on public land (%)

Source: Council's thermal imaging and urban forest monitoring audit of the municipality.



TARGET: 25% by 2028

STATUS: ▶ GETTING THERE

Data collection for this indicator is on a five-year cycle and will be collected again in 2023 and 2028.

## Private vehicle usage (km per weekday per person)

Source: Victorian Integrated Survey of Travel and Activity (VISTA)



**TARGET:** No target has been adopted for this dataset.\*

**STATUS:** NOT APPLICABLE

\*The originally adopted target is not suitable for the available dataset.

As at 2018-19 (the most recent period for which data is available), the result was trending in the wrong direction. However, Council supports the local community to make sustainable transport choices by providing safe infrastructure and working with communities to deliver behaviour change programs. These include Streets for People, Octopus Schools, and ongoing maintenance and renewal

Please note: The strategic indicator 'Increase Council's use of water from non-drinking sources' is not reported here as the relevant dataset is still in development. The 2017-2018 figure provided in the 2018-2019 annual report has since been found to be incorrect.

## Looking forward

- ▶ Delivering Council's exciting climate and circular economy agenda, including the Solar Saver Program that will now include energy efficiency and support for our most vulnerable. Investigating opportunities for a step-change in big renewal updates, a business power purchase agreement, and reviewing the Climate Emergency Plan.
- ▶ Delivering Council's new approach to transport management – a three-year rolling Local Area Place Making program. This proactive approach will put community at the heart of transport decision-making and achieve strengthened, integrated transport outcomes for our community.
- ▶ Delivering the \$60 million capital works program (Big Build in 2021-2022) that will enable increased accessibility for all to community facilities and programs, improve the amenity of retail activity centres, support physical activity participation and generally lead to community pride in Darebin.
- ▶ Work will continue to further reduce local street speed limits to 40km/h.

A detailed Council Plan Action Plan for 2021-2022 can be found at:

▶ [darebin.vic.gov.au/CouncilPlan](https://darebin.vic.gov.au/CouncilPlan)

# Opportunities to live well

We will improve the wellbeing of people in our community by providing opportunities for them to live their lives well.

**STRATEGY 2.1**

We will ensure health and social services meet our community’s needs across their life-course.

**STRATEGY 2.2**

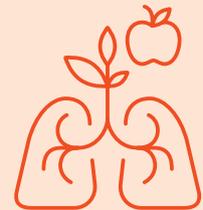
We will expand opportunities for participation and social connection through sport, physical activity, arts, culture and other leisure activities.

**STRATEGY 2.3**

We will expand life-long learning opportunities to enable local people to learn, develop their interests and secure good-quality work.

There are 50 actions listed under Goal 2 in the Council Plan Action Plan 2020–2021. The following section shows progress against the Big Actions from the Council Plan and provides highlights from the Action Plan. Progress comments on all 50 actions relating to this goal can be found at:

► [darebin.vic.gov.au/CouncilPlan](https://darebin.vic.gov.au/CouncilPlan)


**Budget allocated to Goal 2**

NET COST	2020-21 \$'000
Budget	19,802
Actual	18,539
Variance	1,263

## Services for Goal 2

While all departments contribute to the achievement of each of our goals, these services specifically relate to Goal 2.

**Note:** The service areas in the table align with the 2020–2021 Budget and are consistent with the Council Plan 2017–2021.

### Opportunities to live well

SERVICE AREA	DESCRIPTION	NET COST 2020-21	
		\$'000	
<b>Aged and disability</b>	Provides a range of services to assist older people and those with a disability and their carers who wish to live independently and remain active in the community. Services and activities include general home care, personal care, respite care, home maintenance, housing support, support to navigate the My Aged Care system, dementia care, meals and community transport.	Budget	<b>5,230</b>
		Actual	<b>4,614</b>
		Variance	<b>616</b>
<b>Families, youth and children</b>	Responsible for a mix of service delivery, policy and community partnership projects that target Darebin's children, youth and their families. It includes school holiday programs, early childhood resources and liaison, help for early years services to support children with additional needs, a pre-school enrolment service, centralised child care waiting list, support to playgroups, a toy library, maternal and child health services, an immunisation program and youth services.	Budget	<b>5,464</b>
		Actual	<b>4,738</b>
		Variance	<b>726</b>
<b>Recreation and leisure</b>	Recreation policy, planning and programming; facility management; sports development and liaison; specialist recreation programming for disadvantaged groups and individuals; and information provision. Responsible for Council's major recreation facilities at the Darebin Community Sports Stadium, Darebin International Sports Centre, Northcote Aquatic and Recreation Centre and the Reservoir Leisure Centre.	Budget	<b>4,850</b>
		Actual	<b>5,220</b>
		Variance	<b>(370)</b>
<b>Learning and libraries</b>	Responsible for our library services at Fairfield, Northcote, Preston and Reservoir and e-book, e-audiobook and e-magazine collection loans via our virtual library at <a href="http://www.darebinlibraries.vic.gov.au">www.darebinlibraries.vic.gov.au</a>	Budget	<b>4,258</b>
		Actual	<b>3,968</b>
		Variance	<b>290</b>

## Big Actions

- Completed
- Delayed, delivery will be complete in 2021
- Will not be delivered in 2021

---

### Big Action 6 ▶ ●

#### **Create a new park, playground, oval and children's hub on the site of the old Ruthven Primary School in Reservoir**

Based on community feedback, Council decided to develop this site as a nature-based park and not to proceed with a children's hub. A master plan to create a nature-based and biodiverse park at the former Ruthven Primary School was adopted by Council on 29 June 2020. Concept plans for a new playspace and nature play area were shared with the community in February 2021 and endorsed by Council on 24 May 2021. Consultation on the playspace was delayed because of the 2020 lockdowns and this also delayed construction. Construction is set for the second half of 2021, and the playspace is scheduled to open by late 2021. A draft planting plan has been created to guide rewilding at Ruthven Park and, in conjunction with Darebin Nature Trust and the former Ruthven Community Reference Group, a planting list has been established.

---

### Big Action 7 ▶ ●

#### **Build a multi-sports stadium**

The outdoor courts have been completed and practical completion has been issued. The Narrandjeri Stadium has progressed significantly and is at 62% completion. All the services are in, the concrete, steel and timber structures have been erected and roof work is underway. Outside the building, the tree cells and retaining wall are also under construction, and the intersection works at the entry from Darebin Road have commenced and are 15% complete. Completion date for all works is scheduled for early December 2021.

---

### Big Action 8 ▶ ●

#### **Renew the Northcote Aquatic and Recreation Centre**

The project has progressed significantly. The design is completed and at a stage where the architects can be novated to a construction contractor. Following an EOI process, three contractors were shortlisted for tendering. The construction tenders closed on 17 June 2021 and tenders were received from the three short-listed contractors. The panel is evaluating the tenders and aiming to issue a report to Council with a Contractor recommendation in August 2021.

---

### Big Action 9 ▶ ●

#### **Reimagine and revitalise seniors' clubs**

The refurbishment of these centres is complete and refreshed internal spaces at these centres will encourage opportunities for increased mixed use of these facilities by more diverse communities, not just seniors' groups, which will support the revitalisation of the use of these facilities.

## Highlights and achievements

- ▶ Changes to service delivery across Youth Services due to remote delivery provided an opportunity to target further support and initiatives to young people, with a specific focus on those who were most vulnerable or experiencing disadvantage. The service expanded contact hours by more than 50% at our youth facilities and youth outreach program.
- ▶ Community service leases were renewed, including 18 children's services sites. Kids Under Cover has a land lease for the site at 1 Spring Street, where it has built Village 21. This comprises one-bedroom studios for young people experiencing homelessness.
- ▶ Completed an Intergenerational Gardening Program trial, which included 61 participants and more than 300 hours of client contacts.
- ▶ Construction of the Narrandjeri Stadium is continuing, with 62% completed. The level one concrete slab work is complete; structural steel and roofing underway; and work for a retaining wall has started at the northern end.
- ▶ Council consulted with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation about names for the new multi-sports stadium. This resulted in three names being put forward for the community consultation. Narrandjeri Stadium (which means 'Women Leader' in Woi-wurrung language) was the community's overwhelming favourite, receiving more than half of all votes.
- ▶ Council delivered 10 new community gardens at the Bundoora Park Farm, using recycled iron from the Reservoir Crossing Removal Project.
- ▶ Council obtained a \$10 million, low-interest loan from the State Government to help deliver the Northcote Aquatic and Recreation Centre.
- ▶ Council committed to a 12-month partnership with Job Access through its Employer Partnership Program. Finalised in June 2021, the no-cost partnership has strengthened the organisation's capacity to attract, recruit and retain people with a disability in our workforce.
- ▶ COVID responses by Library Services to support the community have included: free online exercise classes, online library events (Story Time and Rhyme Time and Conversation Café), continuing the shower program for people experiencing homelessness, library home delivery service for people who cannot get out of the house, redeploying staff to the Rewilding Program, phone calls to our library and Reservoir Leisure Centre users who do not have access to the internet or emails and delivery spots.
- ▶ Darebin Road intersection works to improve access and pedestrian safety at the John Cain Memorial Park entrance included new traffic signals and pedestrian crossing, shared footpaths and bus stop relocation.
- ▶ Delivered Age Friendly Darebin Year 2 activities (services), including: a Cafe Meals trial (20 participants accessed meals at local cafes); expanded community transport to deliver community bus excursions for seniors; and a Home Care Packages Continuity of Care trial (20 clients continued to receive home support services from Darebin as part of their Home Care Package).
- ▶ Delivered Age Friendly Darebin Year 2 activities (social inclusion and participation), including: Digital Access and Empowerment – completed digital learning trial in partnership with Libraries, Equity and Wellbeing and Your Community Health; support for Aboriginal Elders, progressing work with Elders to set up a local business; co-design of services, programs and service information and brochures; participation in Fuse Festival and Climate Action Program.
- ▶ Delivered new playgrounds, sports fields and lighting, solar panels, energy efficiency works, accessible toilets and facility upgrades.
- ▶ Designs were completed for the Northcote Aquatic and Recreation Centre so that the project can proceed to the tendering of works.
- ▶ FUSE Autumn 2021 included 16 events (13 of them free), featuring 160 artists at 18 locations across Darebin. All 16 events had live, face-to-face components to them, which were managed effectively in accordance with COVID-safe plans.
- ▶ Implemented Community Navigation and Social Connection and Inclusion programs as part of the Community COVID Support Program.
- ▶ Improvements were made to our open spaces with adapted playspace designs for Ruthven Park and Penders, construction of a pocket park at Oakover Road, upgrades at Vale Reserve and CH Sullivan Reserve playspace, as well as rewilding initiatives.
- ▶ In 2020, Council developed a new arts outreach initiative titled Dear Darebin: A Mail Art Project. Intended to help alleviate loneliness and isolation resulting from pandemic lockdowns, the project aimed to assist those in our community who may not have access to a computer or smartphone by reaching out to them and in turn helping them to reach out and connect.
- ▶ In 2020, with the closure of Council's public art gallery due to COVID-19, the Bundoora Homestead Art Centre pivoted the much-loved A1 Darebin Art Salon into an online exhibition from 10 July to 4 September. More than 100 high-quality submissions to the 2020 Salon were received, including 33 entries by culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) artists and 22 entries by artists with disability. Artists ranged across all age groups and stages of their career. More than 1,200 votes were cast on the exhibited artworks and the online exhibition was shared directly to Facebook more than 1,000 times.

## Highlights and achievements

- ▶ In partnership with Moreland City Council, Darebin Council received \$1.6 million as part of the Jobs Victoria Advocate Program. Six Jobs Victoria Advocates were employed to support job seekers across the Darebin and Moreland communities until 30 June 2023. Advocates will work through a place-based model in the East Preston and East Reservoir communities, as well as supporting youth and CALD job seekers across the municipality. The team will also include a full-time Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Identified Advocate, working across Darebin, Moreland and parts of Banyule.
- ▶ 'Let's Take Over 2021' took over the Northcote Town Hall on 19–20 February with a multidisciplinary arts event designed and delivered by 15–25 year-olds. Now in its third year, 'Let's Take Over' is a professional development program for 10 young people with a variety of diverse experiences. They are guided through 16 weeks of artistic and leadership training and are given the keys to the Northcote Town Hall to put on their own arts event. A total of 270 patrons attended, split into intimate COVID-safe groups. 'Let's Take Over' has developed a strong reputation for building the next generation of diverse artistic leaders.
- ▶ Logs and nature-based equipment were installed to promote bush kinder activities and outdoor education.
- ▶ Our six senior citizens' centres were refurbished to make them more welcoming and accessible for our community and senior citizen groups and to support groups with COVID-safe practices.
- ▶ Redevelopment of the Hardiman Reserve Reservoir hockey pitch.
- ▶ Successful grant applications have included: \$3.9 million for the Aboriginal Women's and Girls' Wellness Centre at the Sir Doug Nicholls Reserve; \$1.0176 million for three sports field light projects in Reservoir; and \$25,000 for the Darebin and Yarra Libraries Health and Wellbeing Innovation Grant.

- ▶ The Darebin Assertive Outreach Program continued, supporting people sleeping rough throughout 2020 and COVID lockdowns. In its first full year of operation, the program has: received 199 referrals for support (including individuals and groups of people referred to the program); supported 160 people to access brief intervention and 83 to with ongoing case management; and assisted 46 people into accommodation, with 15 being placed in long-term housing.
- ▶ The Darebin Early Years Resource Van expanded its collection of resources available to kindergartens and child care centres across Darebin. This included the development of more than 50 new kits that support early childhood services to provide welcoming and inclusive environments for all children.
- ▶ The Supported Playgroup service was not permitted to deliver face-to-face playgroup sessions or face-to-face in-home support (parent coaching sessions) due to the lockdowns. Staff adapted to this by providing virtual contact with families through group communications such as email, WhatsApp and SMS texts. Staff also provided individual support via telephone. A total of 268 parents were supported via a group and 91 vulnerable families were provided with individual parenting coaching via online platforms.
- ▶ Through the Redeployment and Working for Victoria programs, the Parks and Open Space Department engaged more than 60 people to join the team on a temporary basis. Council staff showed incredible adaptability, agility and resilience to help 60 people who had lost their jobs to upskill each individual while making a significant contribution towards enhancing the natural environment and amenity of parks.
- ▶ Two playspaces were renewed to ensure appropriately designed and safe equipment that enhances children's play experience and development: Johnson Park and Clyde Community Hall.

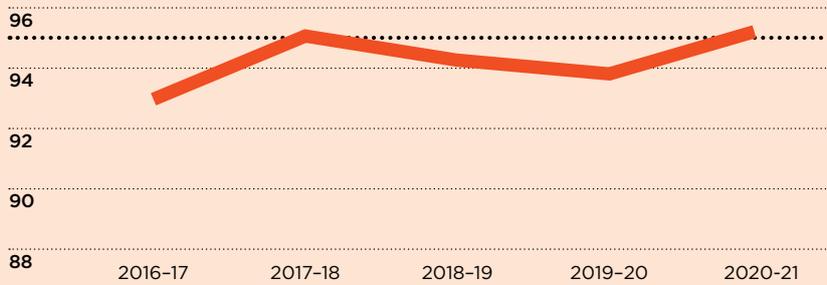
## Challenges

- Arts programming and community programs under COVID capacity limits or, more broadly, how to assist the community to rebuild and get back together in a way that promotes safe and celebratory environments, both indoor and outdoor.
- COVID has been an across-the-board challenge: adapting to change, working virtually, working in uncertainty, reinventing services, making sure the community and staff are safe in our new service provision models, and keeping up with restrictions and managing change fatigue while still providing community services.
- Creative sector resilience and Council's response to investment. The need emerging out of COVID lockdowns and disruptions. Ensuring Council investments are done in a coordinated and planned manner with other tiers of government. Targeting Council investment where there are gaps in support and ensure it invests where there is immediate and urgent need in the sector.
- Negotiating multiple lockdowns, services closures and reopenings, and changing public health advice was challenging for the Youth Services team (and many other teams). It was difficult to make definite plans during 2020–21 due to the uncertainty the pandemic produced. After the second lockdown in the first and second quarter of the year, young people reported becoming digitally fatigued. This meant the service needed to innovate constantly to maintain connections with young people.
- The mental health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on children, young people and families was a massive challenge that will require an ongoing and sustained response.
- The ongoing impact of the pandemic on the community and service users and continuing to provide services to meet changing needs. This was overlaid with the impact of COVID on the workforce from ongoing lockdowns, increased isolation and changes to service requirements in order to continue to provide services safely.
- The ongoing uncertainty of funding while the Federal Government responds to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

# Performance indicators and results

## Proportion of children up to 5 years fully immunised (%)

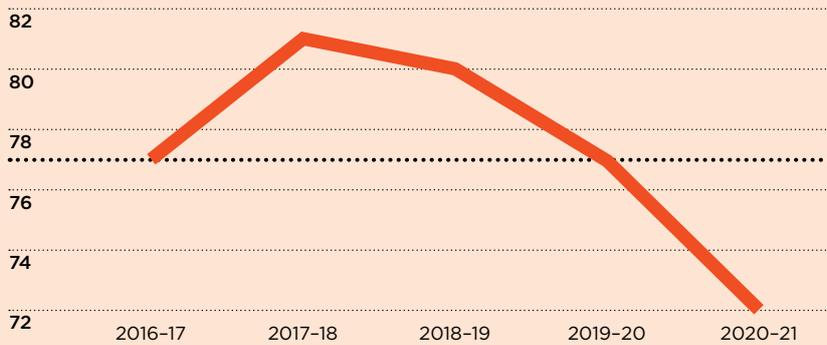
Source: Australian Immunisation Register



**TARGET:** 95% by 2021  
**STATUS:** ▶ **TARGET MET**

## Participation in the Maternal and Child Health Service (%)

Source: Child Development Information System.

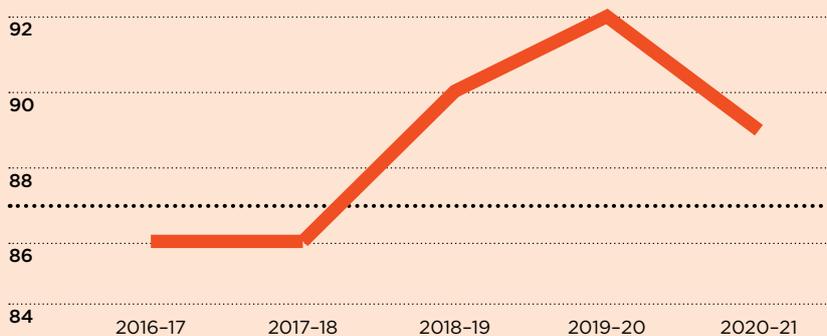


**TARGET:** Increase from 2016-2017 baseline  
**STATUS:** ▶ **OFF TRACK**

The Maternal and Child Health Service has continued to support families during the COVID pandemic by offering a range of options to conduct assessments. They ranged from face to face, using an online platform and telephone. The parents in consultation with the nurse decided on the best approach. The approach was also directed by the COVID pandemic climate.

## Satisfaction with aged care services (%)

Source: Internal Council survey.



**TARGET:** 85% year-on-year  
**STATUS:** ▶ **TARGET MET**



## GOAL 2

# Performance indicators and results

### Satisfaction with Council's festivals and events (%)

Source: Darebin City Council Community Satisfaction Survey.



TARGET: 85% year-on-year

STATUS: ▶ TARGET MET

### Kindergarten participation rate (%)

Source: Department of Education and Training



This is the most recent data available on the DET website

TARGET: 87% year-on-year

STATUS: ▶ ON TRACK

---

## Looking forward

- ▶ Awarding the Northcote Aquatic and Recreation Centre contract and building one of the first 6-star Green Star, gas-free aquatic centres in Australia.
- ▶ Delivering an expanded, activity centres-focused program to shape our city of the future, including revitalisation, outdoor dining and parklets, shade, cleanliness, pride, place activations and programs, and thriving retail centres.
- ▶ Expanding our place-based community development in East Reservoir and East Preston. As a significant focus of the 2021–25 Council Plan, this provides a further opportunity to work with the community to support resilience and recovery. It also provides an opportunity to engage with public housing residents across both neighbourhoods.
- ▶ Extending opening hours at the Reservoir Library to include Sundays and one late night per week for the Libraries After Dark Program.
- ▶ Ongoing implementation of Age Friendly Darebin initiatives and the expansion of trials following evaluation to become new programs/services where appropriate.
- ▶ Reopening our venues and facilities to full capacity. Designing and delivering events and festivals that bring our community back together after a long year of lockdown, disruption and limitations.
- ▶ Supporting Early Childhood Services to provide funded three-year-old kindergarten in Darebin from 2022 onwards and collaborating to create additional kindergarten capacity through infrastructure projects.
- ▶ The continued involvement of young people in the design and delivery of initiatives that directly support young people’s recovery from the pandemic. This includes initiatives that continue to address young people’s mental health and employment. Also, the establishment of support, in partnership with schools, to connect students with Darebin Youth Services and our staff, supports and programs.
- ▶ Volunteering is a crucial aspect of our Darebin community. It contributes to the community’s social wellbeing through connection, participation, and by supporting community services delivered by Council. In the year ahead we will be delivering a coordinated approach to volunteering with Council across our diverse communities to ensure our commitment to volunteer participation and engagement is articulated and delivered through a shared vision, planning, transparent processes, appropriate resourcing, fairness and equity.

A detailed Council Plan Action Plan for 2021–2022 can be found at:

▶ [darebin.vic.gov.au/CouncilPlan](https://darebin.vic.gov.au/CouncilPlan)

# A liveable city

**We will ensure our planning system facilitates high-quality and sustainable development that extracts social, environmental and economic benefits for our community.**

**STRATEGY 3.1**

We will encourage and facilitate appropriate high-quality development in identified areas to create opportunities for living accessibly to public transport, infrastructure, open space and attractive, safe public areas.

**STRATEGY 3.2**

We will support our creative industries to ensure the city grows as a significant arts and creative centre.

**STRATEGY 3.3**

We will manage local roads, buildings and public spaces to make our city safer, cleaner and more attractive.

There are 41 actions listed under Goal 3 in the Council Plan Action Plan for 2020–2021. The following section shows progress against the Big Actions from the Council Plan and provides highlights from the Action Plan. Progress comments on the 41 actions relating to this goal can be found at:

► [darebin.vic.gov.au/CouncilPlan](https://darebin.vic.gov.au/CouncilPlan)


**Budget allocated to Goal 3**

NET COST	2020-21 \$'000
Budget	27,163
Actual	22,756
Variance	4,407

## Services for Goal 3

While all departments contribute to the achievement of each of our goals, these services specifically relate to Goal 3.

**Note:** The service areas in the table align with the 2020–2021 Budget and are consistent with the Council Plan 2017–2021.

### A liveable city

SERVICE AREA	DESCRIPTION	NET COST 2020-21 \$'000	
<b>City development and health</b>	Provides support and advice to Council with respect to the Darebin Planning Scheme (strategic planning) as well as delivering services to ensure compliance with building legislation and industry standards (statutory planning). Responsible for Council's environmental health service (enforcement of the <i>Food Act</i> , <i>Health Act</i> , <i>Tobacco Act</i> and <i>Environmental Protection Act</i> and associated regulations).	Budget	<b>6,861</b>
		Actual	<b>5,318</b>
		Variance	<b>1,543</b>
<b>Creative culture and events</b>	Provides a program of arts and cultural events and activities and develops policies and strategies to facilitate arts practice in the municipality. Management and operation of the Bundoora Homestead Art Centre and the Darebin Art and History Collection, and coordination of Darebin Arts Centre and Northcote Town Hall Arts Centre and community venues.	Budget	<b>5,962</b>
		Actual	<b>5,629</b>
		Variance	<b>333</b>
<b>Civic compliance</b>	Responsible for Council's animal management, local laws, planning enforcement, traffic enforcement and School Crossings Supervision Service.	Budget	<b>2,723</b>
		Actual	<b>2,231</b>
		Variance	<b>492</b>
<b>Facilities and infrastructure management and maintenance</b>	Responsible for planning, management and maintenance of roads, footpaths, drains, bridges, facilities, properties as well as the network of street, directional, parking, regulatory and advisory signs. Oversees and coordinates the capital works program including the delivery of major infrastructure projects.	Budget	<b>11,617</b>
		Actual	<b>9,578</b>
		Variance	<b>2,039</b>



## GOAL 3

# Big Actions

- Completed
- Delayed, delivery will be complete in 2021
- Will not be delivered in 2021

### Big Action 12 ▶ ●

#### Expand our land subdivision levy

Council has nearly finalised a draft implementation and enhancement plan for the Open Space Strategy. This will support the planning scheme amendment to increase the levy that developers contribute towards public open space. This project has required additional work that was not originally expected to give it the best chance of success. This follows recent Planning Panel feedback on similar projects at other councils. The timeline for this project has therefore extended by 12 to 18 months. In 2021–22, the final stages of the planning scheme amendment process are expected to take place including Planning Panel consideration and then final consideration by Council to seek approval from the Minister for Planning.

### Big Action 13 ▶ ●

#### Create a Developer Contributions Scheme

Council has prepared a municipal Development Contributions Plan (DCP) to allow Council to collect funds from new development to contribute to the costs of infrastructure. The proposed plan was exhibited for community and stakeholder consultation in 2020, through Planning Scheme Amendment C170dare. At its meeting of 22 March 2021, Council considered all submissions and decided to refer the amendment to an independent Planning Panel. A Panel hearing was held in May 2021 and a report will be provided to Council in early 2021–2022. The Panel report will make recommendations about the amendment for Council's consideration and, at that stage, Council can decide to adopt the amendment with or without changes before submitting it to the Minister for Planning for approval.

### Big Action 14 ▶ ● [Discontinued]

#### Create a new suburb for Northland

Progress on the Northland Urban Renewal Precinct planning has been disrupted due to significant changes in State Government policy in early 2020, which prioritises industrial uses in this area. Considering this change, and that slower population growth is now expected as a result of COVID-19, Council decided to put this project on hold in 2020–2021 and will reconsider it at a later date.

### Big Action 15 ▶ ●

#### Use the opportunity created by the Government's removal of road and rail crossings

Major works for the removal of four level crossings in the Bell to Preston Level Crossing Removal Project (LXRP) have started. Council continues to advocate for several key changes, particularly to the design of the commuter car park at Bell Station (to be relocated to the west entirely, or access provided from the west via Bell Street at a minimum) and a safer design for pedestrians and cyclists at Cramer Street, near the Preston Market. Council's clear advocacy position is outlined in our adopted advocacy document, Preston Reconnected. As major works for the project progress, Council will continue to engage with the LXRP to improve outcomes for Darebin residents.

### Big Action 16 ▶ ●

#### Develop a plan for the revitalisation of central Preston

Major projects underway in central Preston, particularly the Level Crossing Removal Project and the State Government review of planning controls for the Preston Market precinct, create a once-in-a-generation opportunity to plan for Preston into the future. Council decided to focus its effort on these significant opportunities and continue the structure plan update more slowly than initially anticipated. Council officers continued to strongly advocate for Council's objectives in these two projects. Council is also developing a structure plan to strengthen town planning controls relating to land use, development, transport and public space, to enhance the Preston High Street centre. Substantial preparatory work has been undertaken for the structure plan, including background studies, a transport plan and a built form framework, which is nearing completion. The structure plan itself will be prepared following community engagement in the 2021–2022 financial year.

## Highlights and achievements

# \$20k

Arts Recovery Partnership Grant received by eight organisations

- ▶ Ageing electrical infrastructure was an unacceptable risk for Bundoora Farm, Bridge Darebin, Operations Centre workshops, and Merrilands Community Centre. Updates increased reliable power supply with reductions in lost time due to outages.
- ▶ Community engagement on the Heidelberg Road Corridor proposed plans to introduce built form and heritage controls and consider rezoning to support more local jobs.
- ▶ Completed Bundoora Park Flood Mitigation, including: 140 linear metres of drainage pipes and box culverts; seven stormwater pits and three end walls; 155m<sup>2</sup> of footpath poured; and 80m of retaining wall built.
- ▶ Eight organisations received a \$20,000 Arts Recovery Partnerships Grant and each has been assigned a Council officer. The grants are part of Darebin's COVID-19 Community and Local Business Resilience and Recovery Package. The grants were designed to help Darebin's creative businesses, arts organisations and live music venues to test and adapt their operations in a COVID-safe way and support artists as they return to practice.
- ▶ Endorsement of Council's advocacy plan for the level crossing removal project (Preston Reconnected) to ensure the delivery of well-designed new open spaces and pathways along the rail corridor and provision of disruption support to traders and community.
- ▶ Endorsement of Council's submission to the Victorian Planning Authority's draft planning framework for the Preston Market Precinct, advocating for the protection of the Preston Market's social, cultural and heritage values, along with high standards for design excellence and sustainability.
- ▶ Implemented Bituminous Resurfacing Program for a total spend of \$1.7 million. Council annually invests funds to protect its road network by resurfacing, prioritising by age, condition and traffic volumes.
- ▶ Improvements to Maryborough and Blake Street Kindergarten cost \$200,000 and included: LED light fitting replacement; patching and painting; kitchen replacement; anti-slip vinyl replacement; child-friendly bathroom fittings; front gate; and higher fencing.
- ▶ Increased morning and afternoon Animal Ranger park patrols to provide education and awareness of *Domestic Animal Act* and on-lead areas and reduce the number of dog attacks as a result of a greater presence in the parks.
- ▶ Installed new rainwater tanks at the Operations Centre, providing total storage of 65,000L Rainwater can be used to flush toilets and fill vehicle tanks to water plants throughout the municipality.
- ▶ Removal of gas appliances and asbestos at the following facilities: Blake Street Kindergarten; Keon Park Tennis Club; Darebin Brass Band Hall; Mayer Park Reserve Pavilion; Kingsbury Youth Club; and Leinster Grove Community Hall.
- ▶ Renewal of the Darebin Brass Band Hall (Cramer Street, Preston) at a cost of \$180,000 included: Colorbond® steel roof, gutters, downpipes and fascias; structure and plaster repairs, internal and external painting; and kitchen and amenities upgrade.
- ▶ Replacement of the fire indicator panel at City Hall and Solaris buildings at a cost of \$40,000 and included: installing external warning devices; ensuring Council meets legislative obligations; and ensuring that building users were safe.

- ▶ Substantial progress was made on the Development Contributions Plan planning scheme amendment and further work was done on the open space levy to ensure developers are paying their fair share of providing infrastructure to support a growing city.
- ▶ Under the Working for Victoria initiative, Council was funded for 110 FTE six-month positions to be filled by eligible candidates who had lost their jobs due to the impacts of COVID. The work included: cleaning of buildings and public spaces; planting and parks improvement works; IT and digitisation service improvement works; website communications; community support services to neighbourhood houses; and support roles for other small organisations and local business.
- ▶ The upgrade of Bundoora Homestead's heating and cooling cost \$200,000, providing a better amenity for staff and visitors, lowering the daily electricity and gas consumption, and reducing the facility's carbon emissions.
- ▶ The upgrade of the Darebin North East Community Hub direct digital control cost \$50,000, facilitating best practice energy efficient controls, reporting and asset management.

### Challenges

- Although improved during this year, the ongoing recruitment of suitable school crossing supervisors remains a challenge.
- Balancing enforcement actions and community expectations during COVID continues to be a challenge to service delivery.
- Delays in time frames for some of our planning projects due to the need for various actions and approvals from the State Government.
- The ongoing and unknown impact the COVID pandemic might have on planning for our city and demand on open spaces.

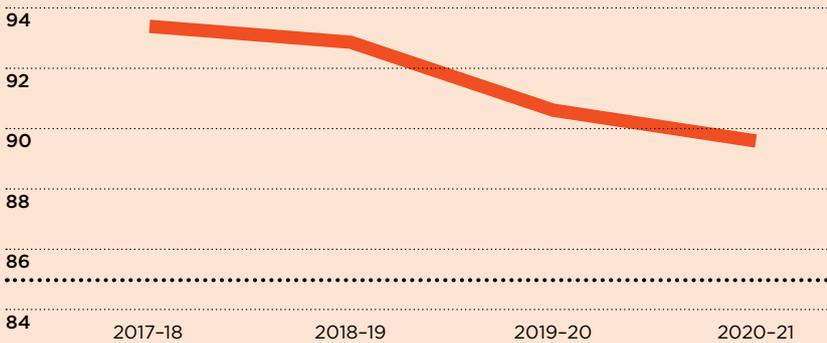


### GOAL 3

## Performance indicators and results

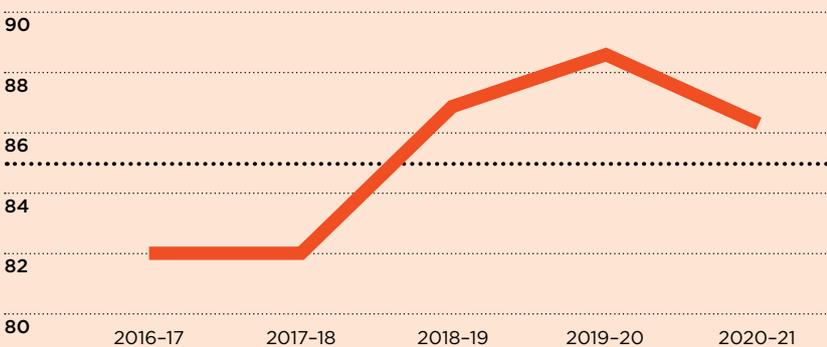
### Satisfaction with public arts and cultural infrastructure (%)

Source: Darebin City Council Community Satisfaction Survey.



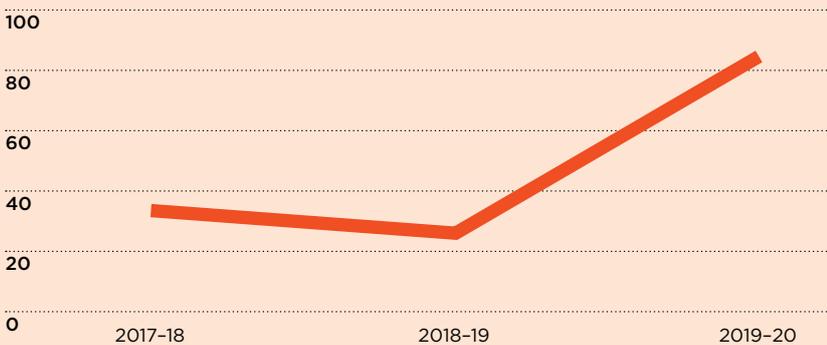
### Satisfaction with condition of sealed local roads (%)

Source: Darebin City Council Community Satisfaction Survey.



### Reduction in number of crashes on speed-reduced roads

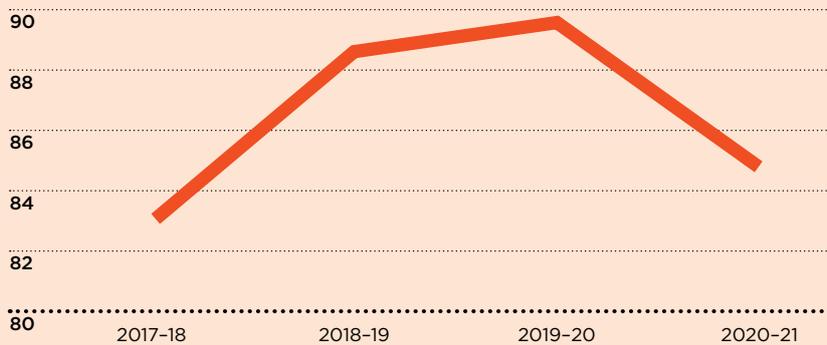
Source: VicRoads crash stats website (multi-year averages on locations used to compare rates).



Data for 2020-21 was not available at the time of writing. Data available in 2019-2020 for almost 50km of Darebin roads that have had a speed reduction showed there were 82 fewer crashes than measured crash rates prior to the change. This was a 193% improvement on the previous year, largely due to an increase in the total length of speed-reduced roads and the safety benefits of roads with lower speed limits

### Satisfaction with public spaces (%)

Source: Darebin City Council Community Satisfaction Survey.



TARGET: 80% year-on-year

STATUS: **▶ TARGET MET**

### Perception of safety in public areas (at night) (%)

Source: Darebin City Council Community Satisfaction Survey.



TARGET: 80% year-on-year

STATUS: **▶ GETTING THERE**

Council has been addressing last year's low scores on perceived safety at night with public infrastructure projects designed to improve activation and safety in specific public spaces.

## Looking forward

- ▶ Complete the review and submission of Council's four-year Domestic Animal Management Plan.
- ▶ Continue to look at the way technology can improve how we engage with our community on the key issues dealt with by Council.

A detailed Council Plan Action Plan for 2021-2022 can be found at:

▶ [darebin.vic.gov.au/CouncilPlan](https://darebin.vic.gov.au/CouncilPlan)



# A strong economy

We will support and attract a diversity of local businesses and industries by fostering an environment in which they can thrive.

### STRATEGY 4.1

We will foster an environment that ensures our local businesses succeed – from large industries to microbusiness and freelancers.

### STRATEGY 4.2

We will enable and activate space, including vacant shop fronts and Council facilities, to accommodate different businesses and industries.

### STRATEGY 4.3

We will pursue regionally significant economic opportunities to drive growth and sustainability for our region.

There are 11 actions listed under Goal 4 in the Council Plan Action Plan for 2020–2021. The following section shows progress against the Big Actions from the Council Plan and provides highlights from the Action Plan. Progress comments on all 11 actions relating to this goal can be found at:

► [darebin.vic.gov.au/CouncilPlan](https://darebin.vic.gov.au/CouncilPlan)



### Budget allocated to Goal 4

NET COST	2020-21 \$'000
Budget	4,116
Actual	3,271
Variance	845

## Services for Goal 4

While all departments contribute to the achievement of each of our goals, these services specifically relate to Goal 4.

**Note:** The service areas in the table align with the 2020–2021 Budget and are consistent with the Council Plan 2017–2021.

### A strong economy

SERVICE AREA	DESCRIPTION	NET COST 2020-21	
		\$'000	
<b>Economic recovery/development</b>	Economic development develops and implements strategies and activities to foster and promote a sustainable business sector to provide local employment. We work with local trader and business associations to help them improve business performance. We work with neighbouring municipalities to develop and implement regional economic growth.	Budget	<b>4,116</b>
		Actual	<b>3,271</b>
		Variance	<b>845</b>

## Big Actions

- Completed
- Delayed, delivery will be complete in 2021
- Will not be delivered in 2021

### Big Action 10 ▶ ●

#### Reinvigorate the Darebin Arts Centre

An upgrade to the Darebin Arts Centre's HVAC (heating, ventilation, air-conditioning) was completed in June 2020. This upgrade significantly improved the service delivery and experience of patrons and artists at the venue, while also providing environmentally sustainable improvements. Workforce planning has concluded as part of the new business model, which is in line with Council's endorsed five-year strategy of transforming the facility into a dedicated arts centre.



## GOAL 4

# Highlights and achievements

# 120

businesses were provided with a health check

# \$745

savings per business per year from Light\$mart upgrades

# 700+

business were provided with general recovery information

### COVID response: business support

- ▶ 18 businesses participated in a Business Recovery Program. Each received tailored business development and growth strategy support.
- ▶ 120 businesses were provided with a 'health check', including reviewing online marketing and guidance on funding and government supports.
- ▶ 700+ business visitations were undertaken, providing general business recovery information and linking through to support.
- ▶ 1,400+ businesses were listed and promoted on the Darebin Business Map.
- ▶ 2,354 calls were received on the Business Support Line. Information provided included grant information, outdoor dining and connection to other forms of support and assistance with permits.

### COVID response: outdoor dining

- ▶ 120 businesses received support through an extended outdoor dining project.
- ▶ 1,300+ additional seats were provided to local cafes, restaurants and bars.
- ▶ 25 parklets and laneways were transformed. This was equivalent to opening between 30 and 40 seated cafes on our footpaths and laneways.
- ▶ Funded a job-matching program for hospitality businesses.

### COVID response: COVID recovery

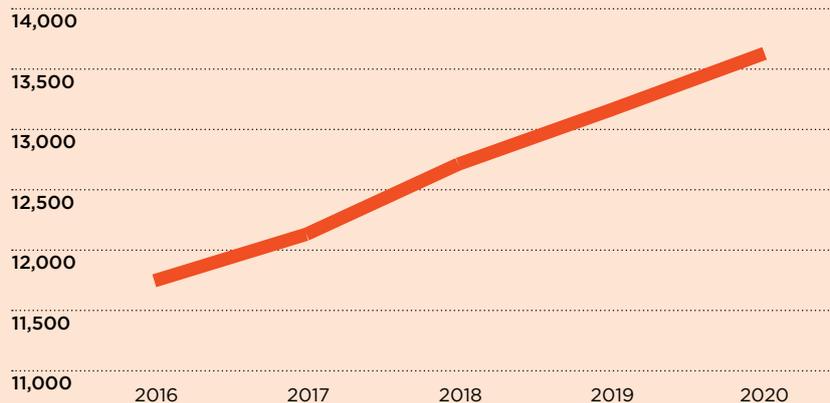
- ▶ Council has scaled up its apprentice and trainee program as part of its community employment and job pathway commitments, leveraging new and existing state and federal government funding. We have partnered with local enterprise Intowork and the Brotherhood of St Laurence's 'Given a Chance' program. The program is a social enterprise designed to support disadvantaged job seekers into paid employment.
- ▶ Forty-two LED Light\$mart upgrades were implemented with Darebin businesses and organisations. The average saving per business was \$745 per year and the total annual CO<sup>2</sup> abatement for this year's retrofits was 147 tonnes. In total, we now have upgraded lights in 281 Darebin businesses/organisations through Light\$mart, changing 18,862 lights and saving businesses \$542,000 in electricity costs each year and abating 3,675 tonnes of CO<sup>2</sup>.

### Challenges

— Supporting Darebin's business community through the various rounds of COVID restrictions, especially due to the impact on those experiencing disadvantage or from multicultural backgrounds and frontline sectors such as retail and hospitality.

## Performance indicators and results

### Number of registered local businesses of all kinds



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exits, Cat. No. 8165.0.

**TARGET:** Increase

**STATUS:** ▶ **TARGET MET**

Data for this indicator is collected in June and released the following February, so there is a long delay between collection and release.

### Number of reactivated vacant shopfronts



Source: Darebin City Council's internal records.

**TARGET:** Increase

**STATUS:** ▶ **OFF TRACK**

The reduced number of shop front reactivations was due to the impacts of the pandemic and lockdowns on local businesses and landlords.

## Looking forward

- ▶ Community engagement on where housing and development should be located and strengthening our neighbourhood character provisions.
- ▶ Develop an Economic Development Strategy to attract new industries and investment in sectors such as food, health, renewables, creative, circular economy and digital industries.
- ▶ Invest \$6.3 million in initiatives to support existing and new industries to ensure that Darebin's economy is robust and resilient; job creation at scale and job creation and industry sector partnerships to attract new industries and investment.

A detailed Council Plan Action Plan for 2021-2022 can be found at:

▶ [darebin.vic.gov.au/CouncilPlan](https://darebin.vic.gov.au/CouncilPlan)

# Involving our diverse communities

We will lead on equity and recognise our diverse community as our greatest asset for solving future challenges.

**STRATEGY 5.1**

We will ensure our services, facilities and programs benefit all, including our most vulnerable.

**STRATEGY 5.2**

We will bring the ideas of our diverse community into our decision-making.

**STRATEGY 5.3**

We will be responsive and respectful to the current and emerging aspirations of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Darebin.

There are 29 actions listed under Goal 5 in the Council Plan Action Plan for 2019-2020. The following section shows progress against the Big Action from the Council Plan and provides highlights from the Action Plan. Progress comments on all 29 actions relating to this goal can be found at:

▶ [darebin.vic.gov.au/CouncilPlan](https://darebin.vic.gov.au/CouncilPlan)


**Budget allocated to Goal 5**

NET COST	2020-21 \$'000
Budget	11,397
Actual	10,908
Variance	489

## Services for Goal 5

While all departments contribute to the achievement of each of our goals, these services specifically relate to Goal 5.

**Note:** The service areas in the table align with the 2020–2021 Budget and are consistent with the Council Plan 2017–2021.

### Involving our diverse communities

SERVICE AREA	DESCRIPTION	NET COST 2020-21	
		\$'000	
<b>Communication, advocacy and engagement</b>	Using demographic data to undertake consultation, facilitation, engagement and evaluation to inform the promotion and advocacy of social justice, community inclusion and equity. Work with other levels of government, partners, stakeholders and media on issues that are important to the Darebin community.	Budget	<b>2,423</b>
		Actual	<b>2,007</b>
		Variance	<b>416</b>
<b>Customer service</b>	This service provides the customer interface for several services and a wide range of transactions. Service is accessed via customer service centres, a telephone call centre, our website and an after-hours emergency service.	Budget	<b>2,564</b>
		Actual	<b>2,468</b>
		Variance	<b>96</b>
<b>Equity and wellbeing</b>	This service develops policy and implements community development and community-led projects that address disadvantage and make Darebin a healthier, safer and more inclusive place for all residents.	Budget	<b>3,104</b>
		Actual	<b>3,202</b>
		Variance	<b>(98)</b>
<b>People and development</b>	Provides support to the organisation on strategic issues such as change management, workforce planning, leadership development and organisation development.	Budget	<b>3,306</b>
		Actual	<b>3,232</b>
		Variance	<b>74</b>

## Big Actions

- Completed
- Delayed, delivery will be complete in 2021
- Will not be delivered in 2021

### Big Action 10 ▶ ●

#### Advocate for better public transport\*

Following Council's advocacy, the State Government announced additional tram services between Docklands and Preston in response to COVID-19. Additional trains were also implemented on the Mernda and Hurstbridge lines. Council has worked on implementing new advocacy positions for an

electric bus between the Route 11 terminus and Reservoir Station as an interim solution until the Route 11 tram is extended, and to bring forward the northern section of the Suburban Rail Loop. Other ongoing public transport advocacy to the State Government includes accessible tram stops and bus network reform.

\*Note: A well-developed transport system has particular benefits for disadvantaged segments of the population.

## Highlights and achievements

- ▶ ‘Be Kind’ and ‘Love Local’ campaigns on social media have had a favourable response.
- ▶ Council adopted a Community Engagement Policy before the legislative due date, with close to 690 community members engaged during four consultation meetings, three drop-in sessions, five workshops, and through telephone, online and hardcopy surveys.
- ▶ Council continued to be responsive and respectful to the aspirations of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Committee (DAAC) guided and participated in the development of Ganbul Gulin, a film documenting the story of Council’s decision to end national celebrations on 26 January. Further to this, Council advertised 18 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-identified positions and 371 staff members completed Aboriginal cultural awareness training.
- ▶ Council continued to support the rights and wellbeing of refugees and people seeking asylum. Council welcomed 26 men released from immigration detention into the Darebin community after a long period of advocacy with local partners. Council celebrated Refugee Week with an exhibition of tapestries made by women and girls from refugee and asylum-seeker backgrounds, a joint statement from Northsiders with Refugees and Refugee Action Collective, along with a statement from Mayor Cr Lina Messina in support of refugees and people seeking asylum.
- ▶ Council launched a new Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Strategy to support our people to recognise and remove systemic barriers and work inclusively together right across our organisation.
- ▶ Council launched the Women and Leadership 2020 program to give women and non-binary people from across sectors the opportunity to expand their knowledge, skills and confidence. Thirty participants from across Darebin’s business and community sectors and Council developed skills and knowledge to support and enable one of Council’s key goals – to lead on equity and recognise our diverse community as our greatest asset for solving future challenges.
- ▶ Public Space Jam is a new monthly program initiative that is delivered in public spaces to connect with young people in a post-lockdown environment. Public Space Jams aim to connect young people with Darebin Youth Services through fun and engaging activities while providing quick and timely support and referrals to young people in a welcoming space. Four events have been delivered since December 2020, with positive engagement and feedback from young people, partners and the community.
- ▶ The community engagement undertaken for the Darebin 2041 Community Vision, 2021–2025 Council Plan (incorporating the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan) and Financial Plan 2021–2031 captured the voices of almost 3,000 community members.
- ▶ The Darebin Intercultural Centre project’s cyclical consultative process allowed for a constant flow of input, discussion and feedback between each of the parties and has ensured that the concept design delivered on community aspirations for the centre. The co-design process was an excellent investment for the project design, resulting in superior design outcomes and strong community advocacy for the Intercultural Centre and its future programs. It demonstrated the commitment required from Council and design teams to honour the approach of ‘with us, not for us’.

▶ The third Darebin Schools Yarning conference was delivered online, celebrating the 2020 NAIDOC theme ‘Always Was Always Will Be’. Eighteen schools and more than 700 students and teachers participated. The students shared their reflections and poems in response to the Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Committee (DAAC) Statement ‘Our Black Lives Matter’. Highlights of the conference included Uncle Bill Nicholson’s Welcome to Country, sharing his thoughts about the meaning of ‘Always Was, Always Will Be’ and the smoking ceremony.

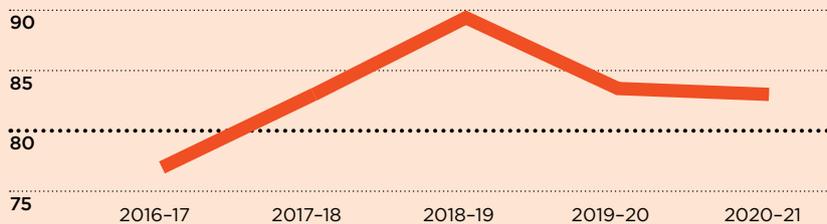
### Challenges

- COVID-reactive communications on top of ‘business as usual’ and adjusting to not being able to print *Darebin Community News* and no longer having local Leader newspapers (closed down permanently due to the pandemic).
- Ensuring that equity and diversity considerations were applied to projects and events that moved into an online format due to COVID-19 restrictions. This required new and innovative ways to ensure equity and diversity lenses continued to be applied in online formats.
- Supporting the needs of the community throughout lockdowns, especially due to the exacerbated impact on communities experiencing disadvantage, including East Preston and East Reservoir. For many, including those living in public housing, their limited access to online services, programs and digital resources reduced their ability to participate in the community and to connect with their friends and family.
- The cumulative impact of COVID-19 and the implementation of a principles-based *Local Government Act*, which included deliberative engagement legislative requirements for Council strategic plans.

## Performance indicators and results

### Satisfaction with Council's performance in making decisions in the interests of the community (%)

Source: Darebin City Council Community Satisfaction Survey.

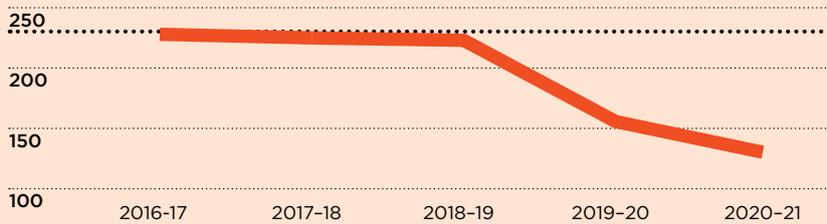


TARGET: Above 80% year-on-year

STATUS: **TARGET MET**

### Electronic gambling machine losses in Darebin (\$'000s/day)

Source: Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation.



TARGET: Reduce below \$231,000

STATUS: **TARGET MET**

Due to pandemic restrictions, venues closed on 23 March 2020 and stayed closed until October 2020.

## Looking forward

- ▶ An Intercultural Centre Programming Think Tank from September 2021 to February 2022.
- ▶ Implement our responsibilities under the *Gender Equality Act 2020* with the development of a Gender Equality Action Plan. The Plan will align with our existing work as part of Council's Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.
- ▶ Implementation of a Community Engagement Policy that will put the community at the heart of our decision-making.
- ▶ Implementation of the Darebin Access and Inclusion Plan.
- ▶ Increasing opportunities for children and young people to influence decisions about the issues that matter to them.
- ▶ Ongoing work to be responsive and respectful to the current and emerging aspirations of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This will include development of a memorandum of understanding with Aboriginal Housing Victoria and the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, and ongoing implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy actions in order to achieve a minimum of 5% employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by Council.
- ▶ Telling the story of our diverse community, with an overarching communications plan in place.
- ▶ The construction phase of the Intercultural Centre project.

A detailed Council Plan Action Plan for 2021-2022 can be found at:

▶ [darebin.vic.gov.au/CouncilPlan](https://darebin.vic.gov.au/CouncilPlan)

# A well-governed Council

We will be a leading, modern, and open Council to meet our challenges, now and in the future.

**STRATEGY 6.1**

We will implement the best delivery models to optimise efficiency and value.

**STRATEGY 6.2**

We will find new ways to deliver long-term financial sustainability.

**STRATEGY 6.3**

We will communicate our progress on the actions in this Council Plan to residents, community leaders, community organisations, business, industry and Victorian and federal governments to ensure we can all act together.

There are 28 actions listed under Goal 6 in the Council Plan Action Plan for 2020–2021. There are no Big Actions for this goal. The following section provides highlights from the Action Plan. Progress comments on all 28 actions relating to this goal can be found at: ► [darebin.vic.gov.au/CouncilPlan](https://darebin.vic.gov.au/CouncilPlan)


**Budget allocated to Goal 6**

NET COST	2020-21 \$'000
Budget	21,622
Actual	22,368
Variance	(746)

## Services for Goal 6

While all departments contribute to the achievement of each of our goals, these services specifically relate to Goal 6.

**Note:** The service areas in the table align with the 2020–2021 Budget and are consistent with the Council Plan 2017–2021.

### A well-governed Council

SERVICE AREA	DESCRIPTION	NET COST 2020-21 \$'000
<b>Mayor and Council</b>	The Mayor and Councillors are responsible for the governance and leadership of the community, and for providing strategic direction to the organisation.	Budget 1,857
		Actual 2,007
		Variance (150)
<b>Corporate governance</b>	This service includes direct administrative support to the Mayor and Councillors and coordination of Council and committee meetings. It also includes the Chief Executive Officer, Executive Management team, administration of Council business, policy support and corporate risk.	Budget 4,719
		Actual 5,579
		Variance (860)
<b>Digital services</b>	This service provides Council with digital platforms to improve business performance and allows timely and informed decision-making. This service enables and enhances improved service provision to Council and the community.	Budget 7,423
		Actual 7,246
		Variance 177
<b>Financial services</b>	Provides financial services and support to internal and external customers and includes management of Council's finances, raising and collection of rates and charges, and valuation of properties.	Budget 4,354
		Actual 4,097
		Variance 257
<b>Fleet services</b>	Responsible for oversight of the fleet required to support Council's service provision.	Budget 3,269
		Actual 3,440
		Variance (171)

## Highlights and achievements

# 50k

# \$3.2m

spent on trees, plants and grasses planted during Council's Redeployment Program

financial assistance package in the form of local spending vouchers

▶ A review of risk management and compliance services resulted in a new risk management and fraud prevention framework, strengthening our risk management and fraud and corruption approach.

▶ Adopted a \$3.2 million financial assistance package featuring \$50 and \$30 spend local vouchers for residential ratepayers and a \$50 shop local voucher for eligible job seekers.

▶ Council developed a 20-year Community Vision through a Deliberative Panel that was representative of the Darebin community. The Darebin 2041 Community Vision was adopted by Council on 28 June 2021. The vision will guide Council's work across its services and programs, including planning, growth and development. The Community Vision and underpinning pillars were incorporated into the 2021–2025 Council Plan (along with the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan), which was also adopted on 28 June.

▶ Council renewed 13 insurance policies to safeguard Council activities and assets.

▶ Council's Redeployment Program continued through 2021. The program aimed, where possible, to redeploy those staff whose usual jobs had been negatively affected by COVID-19 to suitable temporary assignments. Our redeployed staff helped plant more than 50,000 trees, plants and grasses to rewild Darebin's parks and gardens; serviced the Rates Support Hotline; took part in City Clean-Up; were part of a full review of Council's policies and procedures; and provided support with the rollout of Darebin's Community and Business Resilience and Recovery Package.

▶ Development of a draft Asset Management Strategy and Plan to support and guide the long-term planning for Council's assets.

▶ Digitisation of Council forms continued, with more than 50 forms digitised in 2020–2021.

▶ Implementation of the new principles-based *Local Government Act 2020*, including adoption of governance rules for Council meetings and other key practice and process changes.

▶ Invested \$6.3 million towards an ongoing economic recovery package that included investment in economic development and COVID recovery, namely job creation and industry sector partnerships to attract new industries and investment such as food, health, renewables, creative, circular economy and digital industries.

▶ Key customer experience initiatives were launched, including 'Customer Commitments' and a new complaints handling process and procedure.

▶ Large customer service call volumes and customer support due to COVID.

▶ Reviewed and updated internal-facing policies including associated process and procedure mapping.

▶ Reviewed Council's unused and underutilised properties to inform planning for future years.

▶ Successful induction of a new Council in November 2020.

▶ The Budget 2021–2022, Financial Plan 2021–2031 and Revenue and Rating Plan 2021–2025 were all adopted unanimously.

▶ The Darebin Change Journey, Council's flagship workplace and culture change program, delivered 28 projects and initiatives that focused on creating a great place to work; putting the community at the heart of everything we do; making our everyday work easier by streamlining our systems; and achieving community goals in our Council Plan. All these combine to ensure Council has a modernised and skilled workforce able to cohesively deliver on Council's key services and projects. Ten are still in progress to be completed through to mid-2022.

▶ The Darebin Toy Library was reviewed to ensure the service continued to be contemporary, accessible, affordable and responsive to Darebin's diverse community, particularly those most vulnerable and/or experiencing disadvantage. The findings of this review will shape the future service model and delivery to a diverse community.

▶ The objectives of the Social and Sustainable Procurement Policy have resulted in a significant increase in the number of contracts awarded to local businesses.

▶ The outlook over the four-year budget indicates Council will rebound and remain financially sustainable despite the challenges created by COVID and rate capping.

▶ Three hundred Council processes were examined, improved and mapped in Promapp.

## Challenges

- Ensuring operational continuity and team building in the COVID/working-from-home environment.
- Ensuring the health, wellbeing and connection of our workforce during continued uncertainty caused by COVID-19, particularly those staff providing frontline services and support.
- Implementing changes arising from the new *Local Government Act 2020*, which had consequences across the organisation and the way we engaged with the community, while at the same time inducting a new Council in very short time frames.
- Increased demand and community expectations linked to increased usage of parks and open spaces as a result of the COVID pandemic.
- The management of the cash reserve balance throughout the year as ratepayers choose to defer their rate instalment payments to June 2022.
- The ongoing and unknown impact the COVID pandemic might have on Council's financial sustainability in the short-to medium-term.

## Looking forward

- ▶ Developing Council's 10 Year Asset Plan.
- ▶ Establishment of a Corporate Plan and Unit Work Plans to underpin the delivery of the 2021-2025 Council Plan.
- ▶ Finalisation of the Townhall Avenue lease to provide for social and affordable housing.
- ▶ Go-live of the new corporate website will improve accessibility to up-to-date information.
- ▶ Implementation of the 2021-2025 Council Plan.
- ▶ Ongoing embedding of the *Local Government Act 2020* to continue to refine and improve our governance practices.
- ▶ Review Council's land holdings with a view to informing long-term strategic decisions relating to acquisitions, disposals and use of assets.
- ▶ Setting direction for service reviews to support and enhance the organisation.
- ▶ The new Integrated Finance System went live on 1 July. The Oracle Cloud solution will provide a contemporary finance platform that facilitates automation and future expansion and provide a single source of truth for financial reporting, planning and forecasting data.
- ▶ Undertake a review on a proposed separation of waste charges and the rating of public and social housing.

A detailed Council Plan Action Plan for 2021-2022 can be found at:

▶ [darebin.vic.gov.au/CouncilPlan](https://darebin.vic.gov.au/CouncilPlan)

**Note:** There are no Big Actions or Performance Indicators for Goal 6



## Corporate Strategy Unit

PO Box 91  
Preston, Victoria 3072

Telephone: 8470 8888  
Facsimile: 8470 8877  
After hours: 8470 8889

[mailbox@darebin.vic.gov.au](mailto:mailbox@darebin.vic.gov.au)  
ABN 75 815 980 522

## Feedback details

We would love to hear your feedback about this report. Comments, concerns or suggestions should be addressed to the Planning and Reporting Unit.

## Council Customer Service Centres

### Preston Customer Service Centre

Darebin Civic Centre  
274 Gower Street, Preston  
Hours: 8.30am–5pm Monday to Friday

### Northcote Customer Service Centre

Northcote Library Complex  
32–38 Separation Street, Northcote  
Hours: 8.30am–5pm Monday to Friday

### Reservoir Customer Service Centre

Community and Learning Centre  
23 Edwardes Street, Reservoir  
Hours: 10am–5pm Monday to Friday

---

Please note that, during COVID-19 restrictions, customer service centres may be closed to walk-ins; however, the call centre remains open from 8.30am–5pm each day, and you can contact us on 8470 8888 or send us a message via email: [▶ mailbox@darebin.vic.gov.au](mailto:mailbox@darebin.vic.gov.au)

This report contains a summary of the performance of Darebin City Council over the 2020—2021 financial year. If you would like a section of this report translated, please call our Multilingual Telephone Line (03) 8470 8470.

### English

This report contains a summary of the performance of Darebin City Council over the financial year.

### Arabic

يتضمن هذا التقرير ملخصاً لأداء مجلس مدينة داربين خلال السنة المالية.

### Chinese

本报告包含戴瑞宾市议会整个财政年度的绩效概要。

### Greek

Η παρούσα έκθεση περιέχει περίληψη της απόδοσης του Δήμου Darebin για το οικονομικό έτος.

### Hindi

इस रिपोर्ट में वित्तीय वर्ष के दौरान Darebin सिटी काउंसिल के प्रदर्शन का सारांश दिया गया है।

### Italian

Questa relazione contiene un resoconto della performance del Comune della City di Darebin nel corso dell'anno finanziario.

### Macedonian

Овој извештај содржи краток преглед на сработеното од страна на Општината на Дарембин во текот на финансиската година.

### Nepali

यस प्रतिवेदनमा यस आर्थिक वर्षमा डारेबिनका नगर परिषद्को कार्यसम्पादनको सारांश समावेश छ।

### Punjabi

ਇਸ ਰਿਪੋਰਟ ਵਿੱਚ ਪੂਰੇ ਵਿੱਤੀ ਸਾਲ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਡਾਰਬਿਨ ਸਿਟੀ ਕੌਂਸਲ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਦਾ ਸਾਰ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹੈ।

### Spanish

Este informe contiene un resumen del desempeño del Concejo Municipal de la ciudad de Darebin durante el año fiscal.

### Somali

Warbixintaani waxay ka kooban tahay waxqabad kooban oo Golaha Degmada Darebin ee sanad dhaqaalaadka.

### Urdu

اس رپورٹ میں ڈیربن (Darebin) سٹی کاؤنسل کی مالی سال کے دوران کارکردگی کا خلاصہ شامل ہے۔

### Vietnamese

Bản báo cáo này có phần tóm tắt thành tích của Hội đồng Thành phố Darebin trong năm tài chính.

## CITY OF DAREBIN

274 Gower Street, Preston  
PO Box 91, Preston, Vic 3072  
T 8470 8888 F 8470 8877  
E [mailbox@darebin.vic.gov.au](mailto:mailbox@darebin.vic.gov.au)  
[darebin.vic.gov.au](http://darebin.vic.gov.au)



**National Relay Service**  
[relayservice.gov.au](http://relayservice.gov.au)

If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, contact us through the National Relay Service.



**Speak Your Language**  
T 8470 8470

العربية	Italiano	Soomalii
繁體中文	Македонски	Español
Ελληνικά	नेपाली	اردو
हिंदी	ਪੰਜਾਬੀ	Tiếng Việt