

21 MUNICIPAL STRATEGIC STATEMENT**21.01 MUNICIPAL PROFILE****21.01-1 Overview**

The City of Greater Dandenong acknowledges the Kulin Nation people as the traditional custodians of land on which the City is located.

The City of Greater Dandenong was established on 15 December 1994 by the merger of the former City of Dandenong, approximately seventy percent of the former City of Springvale and small parts of the former Cities of Berwick and Cranbourne.

The City occupies 129.6 square kilometres and its centre is approximately thirty kilometres east of the Melbourne Central Activities District (CAD). It includes the suburbs of Dandenong, Dandenong North, Dandenong South, Springvale, Springvale South, Noble Park, Keysborough, Lyndhurst and Bangholme.

The population is rapidly ageing and was estimated at 130,941 in 1997, with a projected decline to 128,028 in 2011. Fourteen percent of families are sole-parent.

Greater Dandenong has an extremely culturally diverse population with 137 different nationalities represented, of which forty-six percent were born overseas. Thirty-eight percent are from non-English speaking backgrounds. The most significant ethnic grouping is the Asian-born population, which is one of the highest concentrations in metropolitan Melbourne. Migration patterns reflect areas of global conflict and world “hot spots”.

Incomes in Greater Dandenong are characteristically low compared with metropolitan Melbourne. Unemployment has traditionally exceeded regional and State levels by three to four percent although there has been a decline in unemployment rates in recent years. The labour force is relatively low skilled, with sixty-seven percent of the population without tertiary qualifications.

Dandenong CAD is regarded as metropolitan Melbourne’s second retail and business centre, due to its size and its historic and strategic regional role. Greater Dandenong is the major focus for economic development in the eastern region of metropolitan Melbourne. Greater Dandenong’s large industrial areas house some key national and international organisations. New “high-tech” industry is steadily replacing the automotive industry upon which the region historically depended.

Extensive transport networks link Greater Dandenong with Melbourne’s rapidly expanding south-east region and provide excellent access to the Melbourne CAD, ports and airports. Proposed improvements to the transport network, including the Scoresby Integrated Transport Corridor, Dingley Freeway and Westall Road duplication, will add to the City’s role as a key regional transport hub.

21.01-2 Housing

Most housing stock is aged between twenty to forty years, but there are some areas with dwellings in excess of 100 years old. Areas of newer housing are located in the north-east and central-southern areas with in-fill development occurring across the municipality.

Dwellings are typically single-storey weatherboard and brick veneer detached houses on traditional “quarter-acre” blocks. Higher density housing is generally located in proximity to railway stations and major shopping centres, in particular the Dandenong CAD, with a significant level of this comprising rental accommodation.

Housing in the non-urban areas to the south ranges from modest farm houses to large and well-appointed dwellings on rural-residential allotments, subdivided generally only ten to 15 years ago.

21.01-3 Industry

Greater Dandenong has approximately 3,190 ha of industrially-zoned land (approximately one-quarter of the municipality) in close proximity to major freight and passenger transport routes including the Gippsland rail-line, the Princes Highway, Dandenong Valley Highway, South Gippsland Highway, Western Port Highway and the South-Eastern Freeway, and also to the Mitcham-Frankston Freeway Reservation.

Industry ranges from small scale light industries in older established areas to newer, general industrial estates, with large allotments and purpose-built factories.

Key industries located in Greater Dandenong include metal fabrication, automotive components, general engineering, medical/pharmaceutical production, electronics and scientific instruments, food processing and distribution and waste recycling and resource recovery.

The Dandenong Industrial 2 Precinct (previously known as the Dandenong Offensive Industrial Zone or “DOIZ”) is of national economic significance because it is one of only three strategic locations within metropolitan Melbourne where industries which require significant buffers from sensitive uses can operate. It includes a diverse range of industries, in particular food processing establishments licensed for export purposes and resource management industries.

Large areas of land at Keysborough and Lyndhurst which are the subject of a structure plan (“Structure Plan – Extension to Dandenong South Industrial Area”, SGS Economics & Planning, 2005) are also available for future industrial development. The “vision” for these areas is that they should host a cluster of “new economy” manufacturing, wholesaling, transport and storage businesses.

The Eastern Treatment Plant provides sewage and wastewater treatment facilities for most of eastern Melbourne and is a major utility which needs to be protected.

21.01-4 Business and commerce

The Dandenong CAD is Melbourne’s second largest retail and commercial centre, with over 300,000m² of retail and office floor space. It contains a number of regional offices for local, state and federal government bodies, extensive retail areas such as Dandenong Plaza and the Dandenong Market, and a major new public transport interchange.

Another main commercial centre is Springvale, which has the highest concentration of Asian retail outlets in eastern Melbourne. Parkmore in Keysborough and Noble Park are the two other major shopping centres in the municipality.

There are more than forty strip shopping centres within the municipality, varying widely in size and level of commercial activity.

21.01-5 Non-urban area

Most non-urban land is in the southern portion of Greater Dandenong. This is part of the metropolitan south-east non-urban area, and contains a wide variety of land uses, both urban-related and rural. These include grazing, market gardening, poultry farms, dog-related establishments, Bunurong Memorial Park Cemetery, the National Water Sports Centre, the Eastern Treatment Plant, and various religious and sporting institutions.

The northern or Keysborough part of this area has been under pressure for more intensive development for a number of years. In response to this pressure, Council has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Kingston, Frankston and Casey City Councils. This sets out the strategic principles and process for planning of the non-urban area.

21.01-6 Open space and recreation

Greater Dandenong's open space includes bushland areas, parks, reserves, roadside and railway corridors and undeveloped areas, many of which provide habitat for significant flora and fauna. The City has several areas of significant ecological value including wetlands and remnant woodlands and grasslands communities. These areas require appropriate measures to ensure their protection and this is addressed by use of appropriate overlays.

Major open space areas include Alex Wilkie Nature Reserve, Tirhatuan Park, Fotheringham Reserve, Tatterson Park, Coomoora Woodland and the Dandenong Creek floodplain, which showcase natural bushland and wetland habitats. Greaves and Ross Reserves have significant areas of remnant vegetation.

Major sporting facilities include the Sandown horse, car and dog racing complex, the National Water Sports Centre, the Keysborough Golf Club and leisure complexes for swimming and fitness. There are thirty large areas for sporting events, 136 smaller ones for passive pursuits, and approximately fifty kilometres of bicycle paths and walking trails.

There are five main waterways in Greater Dandenong: Dandenong Creek (15.5 km), Mile Creek (9 km), Eumemmerring Creek (13.5 km), Mordialloc Creek (5 km) and Patterson River (4 km). Water quality issues in these creeks are common to many of Melbourne's urban streams.

The Dandenong Creek floodplain plays a vital role in controlling the floodwaters of Dandenong Creek and provides opportunities for conservation of habitat areas, wetlands and passive recreation.

21.01-7 Heritage and culture

Greater Dandenong is home to a wide range of Aboriginal and post-European settlement historical assets. There are significant groups of highly valued "scar trees" and other relics of Aboriginal culture, and a number of residential, community, commercial and industrial buildings and sites potentially suitable for heritage protection.

Several local Historical Societies are active and have been of assistance in preparing a municipal Heritage Inventory, completed in July 1998. At this stage, many buildings are protected under the scheme, including "Heritage Hill", a complex of three historic buildings set in picturesque grounds. The scheme applies a Heritage Overlay to these sites, but this number will be increased significantly when a detailed analysis of the Heritage Inventory is undertaken.

The City's multi-cultural population has given rise to many nationally-based performing arts ensembles and Council is active in supporting these as well as sponsoring an annual municipal-wide cultural festival.

Council manages the Dandenong Community Arts Centre and the Walker Street Gallery, which provide facilities for numerous community cultural groups. Feasibility studies are being undertaken for a major performing arts and conference centre in the Dandenong CAD.

From our Aboriginal heritage, through a period of profound change to the present, a number of themes define the heritage of Greater Dandenong. The key themes below combine to make up *the heritage significance of Greater Dandenong*. The themes also provide important contexts that allow us to make judgements about the heritage values of natural and cultural heritage sites.

Aboriginal Period

Aboriginal people lived throughout the local foothills, woodlands and grassy meadows for over 20,000 years, particularly along major waterways such as Dandenong Creek and on elevated sand dunes within Carrum Swamp. These areas are particularly important ones where intact subsurface remains of Aboriginal cultural heritage sites have been found. The most visible reminder of the Aboriginal past is a broad band of scarred trees running between Keysborough and Lyndhurst, possibly the largest concentration of such sites in Victoria. The words 'Dandenong' (derived from *tanjelong* loosely meaning 'meeting place') and 'Eumemmerring' derive from a pre-contact language no longer in use, but present day descendants of Bunurong people can still identify the location and meaning of their cultural heritage sites.

Early Settlement Period

William Hovell first ventured into the area around Dandenong in 1827. Pastoral sites in this region were being leased and settled in the late 1840s. The township of Dandenong developed where regional roads crossed the Dandenong Creek and Dandenong became a frontier outpost for travellers and businesses travelling to Gippsland. The original road network remains, as do some of the original hotels.

Vast forests of red gum and sheoak trees supplied colonial demands for timber and charcoal. Draining of the Carrum Swamp dramatically altered the local ecosystem, replacing it with pastureland and market gardens. Scattered stands of river red gums still give a sense of the majestic forests that once covered the land. Some farm landscapes along Thompsons Road reflect the agrarian heritage of the city.

Dandenong as the major regional centre of southeast Victoria

Dandenong found its early role as the most important meeting and marketplace in south-eastern Victoria. Primary producers and customers from a vast hinterland flocked to the Dandenong Markets to buy and sell goods, produce and livestock, providing economic stimulus to other business activities, industries and services. At the junction of the Gippsland and South Gippsland road and rail systems, Dandenong is still at the confluence of transport routes from South Eastern Victoria. The existing Dandenong Town Hall was constructed in 1890 and housed the law courts, shire offices and Mechanics Institute.

In addition to Dandenong Town Hall, significant heritage sites from this period include Dandenong Park (gazetted in 1873), Dandenong Cemetery (1857), the Springvale Necropolis (1901) and churches, residences and school buildings.

Within the Shire of Dandenong, Keysborough remained an enclave of pastoral properties and market gardens dignified by its own early church and school. Springvale sprung up around the train station in the late 1880's and the first shop in Noble Park opened in 1912.

Manufacturing and Industrial History

Dandenong's present role as the manufacturing and industrial centre of Victoria is built on a solid base which began in the mid to late 1800s. Post World War II industrialisation and manufacturing resulted in the location of the state's major companies in Dandenong and Springvale which lead directly to significant changes in the demographic profile and settlement pattern in the city. The influence of the area on the development of the regional, state and national economies is reflected by:

- Remnant farm and market garden landscapes in the southern portion of the City reflecting the dominance of primary production, and now forming part of the south eastern green wedge;
- The current Dandenong Market for goods and produce, and the former livestock market site;
- The vast complex of buildings of the WW II manufacturing giants Minster Carpet, General Motors, International Harvester and HJ Heinz; and

- An industrial heritage reflecting significant engineering achievements, now largely represented in archival records.

Migration History and Cultural Diversity

Population profiles of Dandenong in the 1840-50's show large numbers of English, Scots and Irish settlers, together with people from South Africa, Prussia, Mauritius, Germany, Norway and China. By 1933, Dutch, Swedish, Danish, Syrian and Italian migrants were represented in the census data and an influx of migrants after World War II gave the Dandenong Shire the dynamic ethnic qualities for which the region is now known. Italians, Germans, Maltese, Poles, Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Latvians and people from the Netherlands arrived, followed by Greek and Greek-Cypriots in the 1950/60's, along with many Russians. The Federal Government's Enterprise Migrant Centre opened in Springvale in 1970, offering temporary accommodation to immigrants. People from over 140 different countries now call Greater Dandenong home. Different ethnic groups have built many different social and sporting clubs and places of worship giving the City an array of churches, mosques and temples unique in Victoria.

Sporting and Entertainment History

Sandown Park has developed as a multi-venue focus for horse, greyhound and motor racing for enthusiasts. The Springvale Football Club Grandstand is an early example of the infrastructure built to house the clubs. The Dandenong Bowling Club was established in 1882 and provided with a site in Dandenong Park in the 1930s.

The City's multi-cultural population has given rise to many nationally-based performing arts ensembles and Council is active in supporting these as well as sponsoring an annual municipal-wide cultural festival. Council manages the Dandenong Community Arts Centre and the Walker Street Gallery, which provide facilities for numerous community cultural groups. The Dandenong Town Hall still contains an early "bioscope" projection room.

21.01-8 Traffic and transport

Extensive transport networks link Greater Dandenong with all sectors of the metropolitan area and the south-east region. These networks include public transport and major arterial roads providing access to the Melbourne CAD, ports and airports. The road network is vital to the movement of freight to local, interstate and international markets. The Dandenong Station train/bus modal interchange is a major regional public transport hub.

The proposed Dingley Freeway and the Westall Road duplication represent a significant expansion of, and enhancement to, the municipality's transport network. The future of the Scoresby Integrated Transport Corridor, linking Ringwood to Frankston via a series of new freeways and arterial road improvements, is currently under review by the Roads Corporation. If implemented, these works will further improve the strategic regional position of Greater Dandenong.