

Our Achievements

2023/24 Financial Year





Clockwise 380
Ringwood and Croydon Loop

8901

PT
K/NET/C
224B AG

Rewards that actually reward

Croydon Loop 380

PT

PT
Ringwood Station

Contents

Our highlights	4
Our city	6
Our history	8
Our Vision	10
A safe, healthy and active community	12
A prosperous, and learning community	14
A vibrant, and culturally rich community	16
A clean, green and sustainable community	18
An accessible and connected community	20
An attractive, thriving and well built community	22
An inclusive and diverse community	24
A well governed and empowered community	26

Our highlights

Message from the Councillors

We are pleased to present the Maroondah City Council Our Achievements 2023/24 to the Maroondah community and to the Minister for Local Government.

While the Annual Report reflects on Council's activities during 2023/24, we continue to have our sights firmly set on the future. To ensure we are well placed to achieve our goals, we have successfully completed the third year of the current four-year Council Plan as well as having updated the Year 4 Council Plan, in June 2024.

The *Council Plan 2021-2025* has now been updated to reflect the Year 4 initiatives. These are based on the community directions in *Maroondah 2040 - Our future together*, as well as the outcomes of a range of community engagement activities undertaken throughout 2023/24.

As we look to the future, we have worked in partnership with the Maroondah community to develop a new community vision. Over the past 12 months Council has engaged with the local community, key stakeholders and partners to ensure that the new Maroondah 2050 vision captures the

hopes and aspirations of the community as we look ahead towards the year 2050. The new vision will be finalised in 2025, the first year of the new Council term.

Other strategic and long-term planning has also taken place resulting in the completion of the: *Maroondah Physical Activity Strategy 2024-2029; Maroondah Extended Outdoor Dining Policy; Public Toilet Policy 2024-2029, and the Stadium Sports Strategy.*

Council has also continued to work with our community to implement the actions and outcomes from the *Maroondah COVID-19 Recovery Plan*. This plan has been recognised within the local government sector, winning the 2022 LGPro Corporate and Community Planning Award.

We have continued to plan for the future of our two key Activity Centres. The Ringwood Major Activity Centre (MAC) Masterplan 2018 was completed in December 2021 when the Victorian Government gazetted Amendment C130 to the Maroondah Planning Scheme. Development in the Ringwood MAC is continuing to take shape in



(L-R) BACK: Cr Kylie Spears; Cr Paul Macdonald; Cr Marijke Graham; Cr Tony Dib OAM JP and Cr Linda Hancock.
(L-R) FRONT: Cr Tasa Damante; Cr Rob Steane; Cr Mike Symon; and Cr Suzy Stojanovic.

response to the land use guidance in the Masterplan, with approximately \$360 million of investment over the past 12 months. This includes the new commercial building on Bond Street, Ringwood, the commencement of the new Activity Centre Carpark adjacent to the station on Bedford Road, and significant new developments along Maroondah Highway.

In addition to Ringwood, in Maroondah's second activity centre, Council has continued to work with key stakeholders, user groups and the community on the development of the Croydon Structure Plan and the Croydon Community Wellbeing Precinct. The Structure Plan is nearing completion and will respond to the expected population growth, with Main Street continuing to serve as an important local destination. As planning progresses for the Community Wellbeing Precinct, we celebrated the completion of the Community Hub in July 2023, which is now home to a range of community groups including Croydon Central Kindergarten, Maroondah Occasional Care, Croydon U3A, Croydon Senior Citizens Centre, Maroondah Community Assist and Council's Maternal and Child Health Service. The detailed design for the Cultural Hub continues to progress, with Federal funding of \$5 million contributing towards the arts and cultural space, we look forward to construction commencing in late 2024.

Our advocacy work with the Victorian and Australian Governments continued to seek funding opportunities for a range of significant projects that will benefit the Maroondah community. Commitments during 2023/24 include Australian Government funding of \$1.35 million for major traffic safety improvements at the intersection of Eastfield Road, Morinda Street and Railway Avenue, Ringwood East. The Victorian Government has committed \$1 billion for a new Maroondah Hospital and Council is advocating to the government to ensure improved outcomes are realised for the Maroondah community from the project delivery. We also continue to work with the Level Crossing Removal Authority to ensure excellent outcomes from the removal of crossings at Dublin Road, Bedford Road and Coolstore Road and from the construction of new stations at Croydon and East Ringwood, due for completion by the end of 2024.

Regional partnerships and initiatives continue to be a focus for Council to ensure we get the best outcomes for the Maroondah community. This includes actively supporting the Eastern Regional Group of Councils (ERG), which works collaboratively across the region to achieve integrated advocacy and planning as well as joint procurement for shared services. The ERG works closely with other regional advisory groups/committees including the Eastern Alliance for

Greenhouse Action, the Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance and the Homelessness and Social Housing Group Charter.

While the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic had a profound impact on our community and organisation, Council continued to provide the majority of its services during the various stages of government restrictions over the three-year period (2020, 2021 and 2022). However, the long-term closures, and short reactive shutdowns combined with continued restrictions well in to 2022, resulted in cumulative financial losses to Council of approximately \$30 million (from the long-term closure of our leisure facilities, and a redirection of resources and/or funding to respond to impacts of the pandemic over this three-year period).

Council's 2023/24 Budget and Long-Term Financial Strategy (LTFS) continued to be based on sound financial management. They balance an understanding of the rising cost of living facing ratepayers, as well as managing the ongoing financial impacts of the pandemic. The LTFS outlines Council's projected financial position for the next 10 years and provides a guide to the community, Council, and staff regarding an analysis of options to guide decision-making about the future directions and operations of Council.

The LTFS illustrates our long-term financial sustainability and ensures Council can continue to invest in community facilities and services while operating within a rate cap environment, as set out in *The Local Government (Fair Go Rates) Act 2015*. Maroondah City Council complied with the Victorian Government's 2023/24 rate cap of 3.5 per cent, over the average property rate of Council.

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

Council commend it as a record of the extent of what has been accomplished to ensure our City, and the Maroondah community, continues to be able to actively participate, and is prosperous, vibrant, sustainable, accessible, thriving, inclusive and empowered.

Our city

The City of Maroondah covers a land area of 61.4 square kilometres in Melbourne’s outer east and is located 22 kilometres from the Central Business District. The area is a developed residential municipality, with an estimated population of 117,434 residents and 44,167 households, with an average of 2.66 people per household.

Maroondah includes the suburbs of: Bayswater North, Croydon, Croydon Hills, Croydon North, Croydon South, Heathmont, Kilsyth South, Ringwood, Ringwood East, Ringwood North and Warranwood. The city also includes small sections of Kilsyth, Park Orchards, Vermont and Wonga Park.

With little remaining land available for greenfield residential development, future population growth will be stimulated by housing consolidation and medium density housing development .









Maroondah has the strategic advantage of being located at the north-eastern junction of the Eastern Freeway – EastLink corridor. There are two train lines and bus routes linking the city with other regions. Our sustainable transport links continue to expand, with on-road cycling paths and 39 kilometres of shared trails, including the Mullum Mullum Creek Trail, the EastLink Trail, Tarralla Creek Trail, the Box Hill to Ringwood Rail Trail, and the Dandenong Creek Trail.



Location of the City of Maroondah

Acknowledgment of Country

We, in the spirit of Reconciliation, acknowledge the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation as Traditional Custodians of the land now known as the City of Maroondah, where Indigenous Australians have performed age old ceremonies. We acknowledge and respect their unique ability to care for Country and their deep spiritual connection to it. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

-  Council service centre
-  Train lines
-  Train stations
-  Creeks
-  Community houses
-  Parks
-  Leisure facilities
-  Arts and cultural centres



Our history

Before European colonisation, the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung People of the Kulin Nation were the traditional custodians of the land now known as the City of Maroondah for more than 35,000 years. The Wurundjeri People have a deep spiritual connection to the land and a unique ability to care for Country.

The Kulin Nation refers to an alliance of five tribes (language groups) who are the Traditional Owners and lived across a geographic area that encompasses Melbourne and its outer regions. Their collective territory extends around Port Phillip and Western Port, up into the Great Dividing Range and the Loddon and Goulburn River valleys. The five Kulin Nation language groups are:

- Boonwurrung (Boon-wur-rung)
- Dja Dja Wurrung (Jar-Jar-Wur-rung)
- Taungurung (Tung-ger-rung)
- Wathaurung (Wath-er-rung)
- Woiwurrung (Woy-wur-rung), commonly known as Wurundjeri.

The language groups were connected through shared moieties (divided groups) – the Bunjil (wedge-tailed eagle) and Waa (crow). Bunjil is the creation spirit of the Kulin and Waa the protector of the waterways.

The Wurundjeri People take their name from the Woiwurrung language word ‘wurun’ meaning the Manna Gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis*) which is common along ‘Birrarrung’ (Yarra River), and ‘djeri’, the grub which is found in or near the tree. The traditional Country of the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung People are defined by natural and environmental features, significantly by water. The direction of water flow provides a clear indication of the shape of Country and reflects the cultural understanding of the Wurundjeri People as the “people of the Birrarung” (Yarra River). The Birrarung and the waters flowing into it are considered to be the traditional Country of the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung People.

European settlers arrived in the 1830s and commenced using the land for grazing cattle. The original Ringwood village emerged in the mid to late 19th century, following the initial sale of land and the local proliferation of grazing, fruit growing, antimony mining and brick making activities.

The first constructed road through the area led to Mount Dandenong and was known as Sawmill Road, then Oxford Road, then finally given its current name of Mount Dandenong Road. The area became better known as it was used by bullock teams heading for the gold fields in Woods Point and the Great Dividing Range.

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

The proclamation in 1924 of the Borough of Ringwood coincided with the electrification of the railway line, encouraging township development and subdivision. Electric trains were in service between Ringwood and Croydon in 1924 and were extended to Lilydale in 1925.

During its early days, Croydon was part of the Shire of Lillydale’s South-West Riding. Unlike some neighbouring towns, it had not been planned and proclaimed a town by the Department of Crown Lands and Survey but resulted from the private subdivision of crown land in the Parishes of Warrandyte, Mooroolbark and Ringwood. Severance of Croydon from Lillydale Shire was requested in 1957 since it was the most densely populated part of the Shire. The Shire of Croydon was declared in 1961.

Considerable suburban expansion during the post-war period gave rise to the declaration of the City of Ringwood in 1960 and formal recognition as part of the broader metropolitan region. Eastland was established in 1967 as a major ‘new format’ retail centre. In 1971, the City of Croydon was declared, reflecting increased residential development and population growth in this area.

Maroondah City Council was formed on 15 December 1994 by the amalgamation of the former Cities of Croydon and Ringwood, and parts of the former Shire of Lillydale and the former City of Doncaster and Templestowe. The term ‘Maroondah’ is named after an aboriginal word meaning ‘leaf’ which symbolises the green environment of the city.



MAROONDAH
2050



Development, density and urban projects are well served and
Opportunities for local connection and inclusion
for the future of Maroondah
What report



Our Vision

Maroondah will be a vibrant and diverse city with a healthy and active community, living in green and leafy neighbourhoods which are connected to thriving and accessible activity centres contributing to a prosperous economy within a safe, inclusive and sustainable environment.



Our future community outcomes

Council has worked with the community to refresh the vision for the future of the municipality. *Maroondah 2040 - Our future together* identifies a range of preferred outcomes for the community looking ahead to the year 2040. The community's future vision is:



A safe, healthy and active community

In 2040, Maroondah will be a safe, healthy and active community where all people have the opportunity to experience enhanced levels of social, emotional and physical wellbeing.



An accessible and connected community

In 2040, Maroondah will be accessible for all ages and abilities with walkable neighbourhoods, sustainable transport options, and a safe integrated transport network.



A prosperous and learning community

In 2040, Maroondah will be a thriving regional centre of economic activity and education, where the sustainable growth of local businesses is supported, and diverse lifelong learning opportunities are accessible for all community members.



An attractive, thriving and well built community

In 2040, Maroondah will be an attractive, sustainable and well built community with thriving activity centres and a network of neighbourhoods where everyone has the opportunity to live, work and play locally.



A vibrant and culturally rich community

In 2040, Maroondah will be a vibrant and creative community recognised for celebration of the arts, cultural expression and diverse entertainment options.



An inclusive and diverse community

In 2040, Maroondah will be an inclusive and equitable community where all people are valued, supported and socially connected, and diversity is embraced and celebrated.



A clean, green and sustainable community

In 2040, Maroondah will be a resilient community committed to sustainable living, enhancing our natural environment, and providing leadership in responding to climate change.



A well governed and empowered community

In 2040, Maroondah will be an empowered community actively engaged in local decision making, led by an innovative community inspired Council that collaborates regionally and proactively champions local needs.



A safe, healthy and active community

In 2040, Maroondah will be a safe, healthy and active community where all people have the opportunity to experience enhanced levels of social, emotional and physical wellbeing.

Our highlights in 2023/24

We supported activities aimed at creating an active community



In October 2023, Run Maroondah saw 271 participants take part in the 10km, 15km, and 5km run/walk events at HE Parker Reserve in Heathmont, additionally, children joined in a 1.2km mini fun run. The event saw a 39% increase in participation compared to the previous year. In April 2024, the Maroondah Night Run attracted 576 participants who ran or walked the 5km course at the Ringwood Golf Course. People were adorned with glow products and bright costumes. Aquanation now features a Wellness Suite for Reformer Pilates programs and recovery, and the gymnastics program at Aquahub reopened in May 2024 offering a state-of-the-art facility to meet growing demand. Both Ringwood Golf and Dorset Golf experienced record-high attendance in 2023/24, with 18,000 more rounds played than the previous year. In addition, the Movement Expo 2024, held in partnership with 20 community clubs and organizations, took place at Maroondah Nets in April 2024.

We implemented the Physical Activity Strategy 2024-2029 and Stadium Sport Strategy



The Maroondah community has collaborated on a new Physical Activity Strategy for 2024-2029, set for Council adoption in July 2024. This strategy addresses challenges affecting physical activity levels and proposes tailored approaches to overcome barriers. It focuses on increasing active travel, creating spaces for physical activity, supporting diversity in sport, and engaging with the least active residents. Additionally, Council endorsed the Maroondah Stadium Sports Strategy in September 2023, identifying the need for more indoor courts. The strategy analysed existing facilities and outlined actions to meet community demand for sports like badminton, basketball, netball, pickleball, table tennis, and volleyball over the next decade.

We progressed development of the Croydon Community Wellbeing Precinct



The staged redevelopment of the Croydon Community Wellbeing Precinct (CCWP) continued during 2023/24. During the year, a range of collaborative activities were undertaken between community groups based in the newly redeveloped Hub B (located in the former Council service centre and offices). This Hub now houses a number of local community groups including U3A, Croydon Central Kindergarten, Maroondah Occasional Care, Croydon Senior Citizens, Maroondah Community Assist and Croydon Maternal and Child Health Service. Activities undertaken included sharing resources through the Occasional Care Op Shop, and an intergenerational project that included young people, U3A and Croydon Seniors.

We supported activities aimed at reducing harm associated with family violence



The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence is a global campaign from the 25 November to 10 December each year, promoting gender equality and action against gender-based violence. In 2023, Council partnered with numerous organisations to undertake community initiatives. These included book displays at the Realm and Croydon Libraries, the 'Let's talk about: Respect, Equality & Relationships' program at EV's Hangout, billboards in prominent locations, and the 'We Need To Talk' community event featuring family violence advocate Tarang Chawla as well as a panel discussion with Men's Line and Eastern Community Legal Centre. An Impact for Women session was also held for Council employees, who donated items for those escaping family violence.

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



A *Health and Wellbeing Action Plan 2023-2025* was finalised in October 2023 outlining the priority actions that Council plan to undertake to achieve positive community health and wellbeing outcomes aligned to the *Maroondah Liveability, Wellbeing and Resilience Strategy 2021-2031*. The Action Plan highlights a range of activities relating to focus areas of healthy lifestyles, liveable neighbourhoods, safe communities, social inclusion, embracing diversity and social harms. Implementation of priority actions from the Plan will continue into 2024/25.

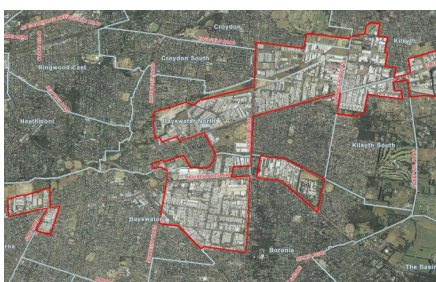


A prosperous and learning community

In 2040, Maroondah will be a thriving regional centre of economic activity and education, where the sustainable growth of local businesses is supported, and diverse lifelong learning opportunities are accessible for all community members.

Our highlights in 2023/24

We worked in partnership to strengthen the Bayswater Business Precinct



Following the formal adoption of the Bayswater Precinct Transformation Strategy in June 2023, a formal governance structure was put in place by the three partnering councils, Knox, Maroondah and Yarra Ranges, to monitor and guide activities. The Strategy identifies four strategic themes and 20 associated actions. Work in the precinct has focused on: building awareness via social media and a dedicated website; engaging businesses; hosting events to connect businesses; commencing the development of a spatial plan to inform long term development; and progressing the case for an enterprise hub in the precinct.

We successfully transitioned the Eastern Regional Libraries services to a Beneficial Enterprise Model.



Eastern Regional Library Corporation was formally transitioned to a new beneficial enterprise, Your Library Limited, commencing on 1 July 2023. Your Library Limited has been approved as a charitable organisation, and donations are tax deductible. The library services have continued to be provided seamlessly throughout the transition period

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



Council is working with the Department of Education and the Victorian School Building Authority to address the impacts of the Best Start, Best Life kindergarten reforms in Maroondah. The reforms aim to increase funded kindergarten hours for three and four-year-old children. Increased pre-prep hours will begin in 2024, with all children having access to 30 hours per week by 2026. Aboriginal and vulnerable children will be eligible for up to 25 hours per week from 2026, expanding to 30 hours per week from 2028. Council has conducted feasibility studies for early years infrastructure and is awaiting an update to the Kindergartens Infrastructure and Services Plan (KISP) from the Department of Education.

We progressed development of the Ringwood activity centre enhancements to Maroondah Highway Boulevard and Staley Gardens



The Ringwood Metropolitan Activity Centre (RMAC) has seen a substantial increase in the number of residents and business activity, and anticipates an even greater economic investment over coming years. Maroondah Highway Boulevard is being transformed into an urban and landscape gateway, with improvements in urban design and potential changes to traffic flow. Staley Gardens in Seymour Street is undergoing redevelopment based on extensive community consultation. Draft design principles have been created, and further consultation with residents and local businesses will occur in late 2024.

We planned enhancements for local neighbourhoods



Council continues to participate in the *Local Neighbourhoods Municipal Planning Project* providing access to grant funding and the opportunity to work with the Victorian Government to plan for local neighbourhoods in Maroondah. Planning has commenced for undertaking community engagement for one to two local centres to determine land use planning outcomes, as well as having a focus on placemaking. This work will be funded by a grant from the Victorian Planning Authority, and is planned occur after the completion of the upcoming Council elections. In addition, a Maroondah Eco Gathering community event was held in July 2024, to encourage and create community connections with a focus on local neighbourhoods..



A vibrant and culturally rich community

In 2040, Maroondah will be a vibrant and creative community recognised for celebration of the arts, cultural expression and diverse entertainment options.

Our highlights in 2023/24

We celebrated First Peoples Arts and Culture



Council continued supporting and collaborating with First Peoples communities, artists, leaders, and organisations to showcase and promote First Peoples arts and culture in Maroondah. Key projects included the *Mullum Mullum Blak Arts* exhibition during NAIDOC Week 2023 and the *Grounding and Connecting: Indigenous Trees and the Dreaming* exhibition during Reconciliation Week 2024. Walking tours, exhibitions, and the Arise group exhibition highlighted First Peoples artists from Maroondah and beyond. The *Culture Warriors talk* on International Women's Day featured Aunty Zeta Thomson, Simone Thomson, and Alinta Koehrer discussing their practices as well as their connections as artists and Wurundjeri/Yorta-Yorta women.

We commenced redevelopment of Karryalyka



Council will undertake the construction of the Karryalyka Foyer extension as part of the staged redevelopment works over the coming year. Council will also continue to advocate for external funding opportunities to enhance Karryalyka to meet community needs into the future.

We continued implementation of the Arts and Cultural Development Strategy 2020-2025



The Arts and Cultural Development Strategy 2020-2025 continued to be implemented with a focus on being a culturally active community, having vibrant places, and being a city that values the arts. Major projects included planning for a black box theatre in the Croydon Community Wellbeing Precinct and the Reignite Croydon - Laneway Lights project. Council received \$100,000 in funding to empower young people's voices in creative programs until December 2025, through the delivery of an Arts Activators youth arts program at Maroondah Federation Estate as well as other projects. Throughout the year, 345 programmed activities engaged diverse audiences, artists, and partners. The Maroondah Arts Collective introduced monthly catchups and professional development events for local artists. The Arts and Cultural Grant Program funded seven projects, and the Maroondah Arts Advisory Committee provided valuable advice on maximizing arts and cultural opportunities in Maroondah.

We celebrated art in the community



Four new public artworks were commissioned from open call-out for the *Reignite Croydon - Laneway Lights* project, supported by funding from Council and the Victorian Government's Living Local Fund. Three art incubators and three exhibition projects at ArtSpace at Realm included: *Neighbourhood Tales* photography by Selina Ou and toddler storytime sessions; contemporary group show *Doubt (Again)*; *Voices from the Void* participatory sound installation by Daniel O'Toole and Leap Night event; and the *Hidden Orchard* theatre production and video installation with local company Fresh Theatre and historical groups. Wyreena enjoyed strong visitation of 82,072 and participation of 4,189 people across the year, with 255 programmed activities including arts classes and workshops, special events such as Halloween House in partnership with creative resident True Fairies and micro-residency with local YourDNA Creative Arts group .

We continued to deliver a range of events and performances



In November 2023, approximately 20,000 people visited the Maroondah Festival to enjoy a wide range of activities and attractions. Maroondah Carols were held in December 2023 at Town Park, Croydon and was a night filled with preshow entertainment, wonderful performers, the Maroondah Carols Band, delicious food vendors, a free kid's zone and a spectacular firework show that lit up the Maroondah night sky. Three events were run which included two movie nights, one at Wyreena Community Arts Centre in February 2024 and one at Gracedale Park in March 2024 as well as a music in the park event at Ringwood Lake Park in February 2024. The Maroondah FReeZA Program (Baseline Productions) has continued to deliver successful, high quality live music and other cultural events.



A clean, green and sustainable community

In 2040, Maroondah will be a resilient community committed to sustainable living, enhancing our natural environment, and providing leadership in responding to climate change.

Our highlights in 2023/24

We worked in partnership to enhance and reimagine the Tarralla Creek



Over a number of years, Council has worked with the local community to transform a 500-metre section of Tarralla Creek and the Croydon Wetlands, between Norton Road and Vinter Avenue into a redeveloped open space and waterway. Over the past 12 months, Council has continued to work with Melbourne Water to advocate for funding to enable works to progress on future stages of this creek revitalisation project.

We commenced development of a Climate Change Plan



Work has continued during 2023/24 to develop *Council's Climate Change Plan*. In 2024, a cross-Council climate change risk assessment was conducted to identify the risks facing Council and the Maroondah community into the future, due to climate change and will inform Council's adaptation response.

We implemented the Sustainability Strategy 2022-2031



Council's *Sustainability Strategy 2022-2031* recognises the interconnected relationship between the natural environment, social systems, and the economy in Maroondah. The Strategy focuses on six outcome areas: built environments, climate change, community connections, green economy, green infrastructure, and governance. In 2023/24, implementation has continued, including planning the Maroondah Eco Gathering in July 2024. The event aimed to inspire community collaboration and engagement for a healthier and more resilient Maroondah. Other outcomes include the development of a State of the Environment Report, recognition of sustainable businesses through Maroondah Business Excellence Awards, and the use of the Trellis utilities management platform for emissions reporting.

We implemented the Waste, Litter and Resource Recovery Strategy 2020-2030



Council has made significant progress in implementing its *Waste, Litter, and Resource Recovery Strategy 2020-2030*. The new Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) service was successfully launched in May 2023, with a strong focus on both evaluating and monitoring its performance during the first year. Education and engagement programs have resulted in high participation rates and minimal contamination. Other initiatives, such as recycling drop-off events, collaborative grant projects, a reusable nappy program, and contamination reduction programs, are also being actively delivered.

We implemented a streetscape enhancement program



The streetscape enhancement program continued with the completion of nine street renewal projects and the planting of approximately 2,000 new trees in nature strips throughout the municipality. These urban trees offer numerous benefits, including filtering pollutants and providing habitat and food for birds and other wildlife. Additionally, 6,650 understory plantings and grasses, along with 540 trees, were planted in parks and reserves. Overall, there are now approximately 35,672 indigenous plants and trees thriving in bushland reserves.

We prepared and implemented a series of Biolink Action Plans that implemented the Maroondah Habitat Connectivity Study



The Mullum Mullum Creek Biolink is the first of eight biolinks identified in Maroondah to improve habitat connectivity and wildlife movement. Community input on the draft Mullum Mullum Creek Biolink Action Plan was sought in November and December 2024 to gauge support, provide feedback on actions, and suggest additions. A two-year implementation plan is being prepared and expected to be finalised in the first half of 2024/25



An accessible and connected community

In 2040, Maroondah will be accessible for all ages and abilities with walkable neighbourhoods, sustainable transport options, and a safe integrated transport network.

Our highlights in 2023/24

We supported the removal of three railway crossings



Level Crossing Removal works have progressed well in 2023/24 with major construction activities being undertaken at all three sites resulting in the removal of the Bedford and Dublin level crossings and the permanent closure of the Coolstore Road level crossing in early 2024. The new Ringwood East station is scheduled to open in July 2024 and the new Croydon train station in August 2024, both being a year ahead of schedule. Construction of the new car parks, bicycle paths and landscape works are scheduled to be completed in late 2024.

We made local traffic management improvements.



Council undertook intersection safety improvement works at the intersection of Campbell Street and Canterbury Road in Croydon. While also reducing vehicle speeds, the raised pavement crossing constructed at the intersection provides both enhanced accessibility and pedestrian safety. Treatments aimed at improving pedestrian accessibility and encouraging reduced speeds were also constructed at the intersection of Braden Brae Drive and Eden Valley Road in Warranwood, and at the intersection of Waterloo Steet and Blenheim Street in Heathmont. Design works to improve road safety at the intersection of Old Lilydale and Carcoola Road in Ringwood East is underway.

We progressed development of a new activity centre carpark in Ringwood



Council has progressed development of the Ringwood Activity Centre Carpark (at the corner of Bedford Rd and Warrandyte Rd, Ringwood) including relocating the original Blood Brothers storefront to a prominent position on the site. The new carpark will provide additional parking spaces for commuters, residents and visitors; reduce parking congestion on the nearby local streets; and improve amenity and connectivity to Ringwood train station. The \$33.2M project is being funded by the Australian Government (\$29.7M), with Council funding (\$3.5M) for the project. The carpark is scheduled for completion in late 2025.

We worked in partnership to undertake renewal works on the Mullum Mullum Creek and Colchester Road shared trails



Council completed its engagement with the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation on the preliminary design plans for the renewal and enhancement of the Mullum Mullum Creek Trail, between Marilyn Crescent and Highland Avenue. Council has continued the implementation of its footpath construction program to provide improved pedestrian safety and Council's footpath construction program for 2023/24 is now complete with three kilometres of footpath constructed at a total value of \$1.48 million.

We adopted the Maroondah Flood Map



Council has collaborated with Melbourne Water to develop an updated flood map for Maroondah. This map will guide Council's stormwater maintenance program, emergency management planning, and capital works projects. It will also aid in assessing proposed future developments in the area. While Council's stormwater drainage network is designed to handle most storm weather events, significant events can exceed its capacity, resulting in stormwater overland flow paths. Council strives to minimise the impact of these flow paths on private properties. Understanding the potentially affected areas is crucial for reducing the impact of flooding by facilitating community preparedness. After community engagement and feedback, the Maroondah Flood Map was formally adopted by Council in March 2024.

We worked in partnership to implement road improvement works



Upgrades to the section of Plymouth Road between Narr-Maen Drive and Yarra Road in Croydon Hills were completed in late 2023. The improvements include new traffic lights and pedestrian crossings to enhance road safety and traffic functionality. These projects were delivered by the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP/ VicRoads) in partnership with Council.



An attractive, thriving and well built community

In 2040, Maroondah will be an attractive, sustainable and well built community with thriving activity centres and a network of neighbourhoods where everyone has the opportunity to live, work and play locally.

Our highlights in 2023/24

We developed a new Croydon Structure Plan



The Draft Croydon Major Activity Centre Structure Plan was made available for consultation from August to October 2023, with submissions being reviewed in early 2024. The Structure Plan is now currently being reviewed in light of the recent changes announced by the Victorian Government in relation to future housing targets for all municipalities across the State.

We worked in partnership to facilitate a sustainable approach to urban redevelopment



Greening of the Greyfields is an innovative approach to residential renewal, which involves landowners working together to redevelop at the same time, to positively transform neighbourhoods to be more sustainable and have greater neighbourhood character. Council continues to promote the benefits of the *Greening the Greyfields* project and remains committed to working with landowners and developers to progress development within the precinct. Amendments C134maro and C136maro for the two identified residential precincts were gazetted in the Maroondah Planning Scheme during 2022/23.

We continued the staged redevelopment of the Croydon Community Wellbeing Precinct



Council continued with the staged design of the broader precinct aligned with the previously endorsed Croydon Community Wellbeing Precinct Masterplan. The Precinct will be home to numerous vital Council and community services, as well as integrating indoor and outdoor spaces that provide for activation, inspiration and empowerment. The next phase of developing this vibrant precinct is a community and cultural hub that will serve as a central home for a number of community groups and will include amenities such as: a Council Service Centre, a state-of-the-art library, cafe, and a performance and events space. Planning and design works for this hub are underway, with construction works commencing in early 2025.

We redeveloped a range of new play spaces



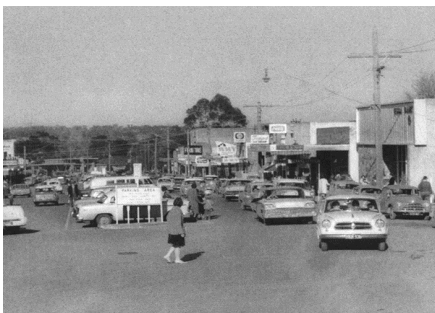
Council has completed play space renewal works at Longview Reserve, Danielle Crescent Reserve, Laura Court, Chandra Avenue Reserve and Cantala Crescent Reserve. These play spaces included equipment renewal, pathway, furniture and soft landscaping works completed during 2023/24.

We undertook flood mitigation works



Council has continued to work in partnership to develop flood mitigation solutions for central Croydon, as well as projects to be undertaken in New Street in Ringwood, Sherbrook Avenue catchment in Ringwood, and Scenic Avenue and Wingate Avenue catchments in Ringwood East. The Sherbrook Catchment (Stage 3) drainage upgrades in Ringwood from Bourke Street to Charter Street were completed in November 2023. Stage 4 of the drainage upgrade works along Charter Street from New Street to Market Street were completed in late July 2024. Council is also continuing to investigate and explore options for flood mitigation in central Croydon, with external agency partners/catchment authority partners.

We adopted Amendment C148maro to the Maroondah Planning Scheme



In March 2024 Council adopted Amendment C148maro to the Maroondah Planning Scheme in accordance with the independent Planning Panel's recommendations, (except in relation to the Sunbower Display Village Precinct). The Independent Panel indicated that it was satisfied that the methodology adopted by Council which met the guidance provided by the Victorian Government, and was well founded and strategically justified. Following adoption, Council submitted the Amendment to the Minister for Planning for approval.

Image: Croydon, in the 1960s, showing busy traffic and the centre-of-the-road parking

(Source: Croydon Historical Society, Croydon Then and Now)



An inclusive and diverse community

In 2040, Maroondah will be an inclusive and equitable community where all people are valued, supported and socially connected, and diversity is embraced and celebrated.

Our highlights in 2023/24

We helped develop a sense of connection for local new dads



Council has piloted *DadsConnect* groups within the maternal child health service. The groups provide an opportunity for first-time Dads to connect with other dads in Maroondah and share experiences as well as providing practical information such as sleep and settling, play ideas and community resources.

We promoted inclusion for our LGBTIQ+ community members



Maroondah City Council prides itself on being an inclusive and supportive workplace, with a commitment to promoting gender equality and gender diversity. Council proudly celebrated IDAHOBIT day and its LGBTIQ+ community through social media channels as well as with employees across multiple sites. Council delivered the second annual Poolside Pride event at Aquahub and the Found Family all ages LGBTIQ+ holiday event in partnership with the FReeZA program. Mature Rainbows, Council's peer LGBTIQ+ social support group for any community members 50 years or over. Maroondah is the second Council in Victoria to facilitate a peer LGBTIQ+ social support group for older people.

Maroondah celebrates National Reconciliation Week



In partnership with Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place, Mullum Creations, Your Library and Eastland, Council recognised National Reconciliation Week on the 28 May 2024, including the Mullum Market, featuring First Nations arts and culture stalls, food and free arts play. The event was attended by approximately 800 people across the day at Ringwood Town Square and Realm. Reconciliation was also the theme during story time at the Realm Library on the day. The Grounding and Connecting: Indigenous Trees and the Dreaming exhibition, developed in partnership with MMIGP, was also open during the week and the Reconciliation Network of employees hosted a fundraising event during the week to support the programs of the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA).

We promoted social connection and wellbeing for our Seniors



Council has continued to support older people through various programs, projects and the Seniors festival aimed at social connection and wellbeing. Council's Seniors Festival was held in October. It comprised a Morning Melodies show and morning tea at Karralyka, followed by a Seniors Expo with 20 community organisations, clubs and groups. During September 2023, Council participated in the #OldisBeautiful project, in partnership with Elder Rights Advocacy, by hosting a workshop for older people to explore what beautiful means to them. The Council social inclusion and wellbeing team has recently developed additional Commonwealth Home Support subsidised programs in community-based settings across the municipality including in Croydon, Ringwood, and Heathmont eg: Kerrabee Moves, Dinner at Louisa's for isolated older people, Crafternoon, Kerrabee Art program and, pottery and classes at Wyreana.

We supported our young people to help them to connect and thrive



In December 2023, Council launched a new specific website that integrates the events calendar to highlight youth-focused or youth-inclusive events in the municipality. The website also promotes Council's social media channels and offers a Live Chat function for young people to connect with support. It features improved accessibility functions such as language translation, Easy English, and text-to-speech technology. The Maroondah Youth Awards recognised the achievements of over 130 young people in categories like Teamwork, Leadership, Creativity, and Perseverance. Ongoing programs include EV's Hangout, a free weekly social drop-in program for ages 12 to 25, and *Artventurers* and *Artbreakers*, social art programs for young people aged 10 to 14 and 18 to 25, promoting peer connectedness and art creation .



A well governed and empowered community

In 2040, Maroondah will be an empowered community actively engaged in local decision making, led by an innovative community inspired Council that collaborates regionally and proactively champions local needs.

Our highlights in 2023/24

We provided community grant funding to local groups and organisations



Council provided more than \$200,630 in funding to 90 Maroondah community organisations and groups who benefitted as part of the 2023/24 Community Grants Funding Program. There are three schemes which cover community development initiatives, small equipment requirements, and emergency food relief. Recipients in 2023/24 came from a diverse range of community groups and organisations, with a significant amount of funding allocated to emergency relief activities, mental health programs, as well as programs which support children, young and older people, people with disability, First Nations Peoples and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.

We implemented an expansion of e-services for Statutory Planning



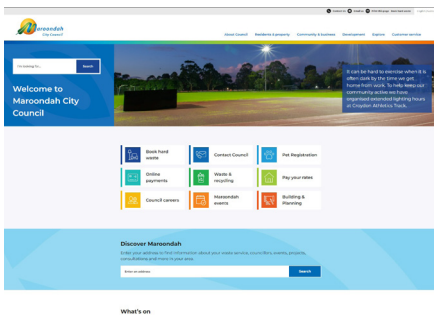
In 2023/24 Council made improvements to e-services to provide a more efficient and transparent planning process for the Maroondah community. These improvements include options for online meetings with planning officers, a streamlined approach to the lodgement process, along with updated Council website information to support applicants through the planning permit process.

We engaged the community to inform a broad range of projects



Over the past year, Council has engaged with the Maroondah community on over 16 projects, ranging from enhancement plans, infrastructure projects, and strategy and policy development. Some of these include: Maroondah 2050; Heritage Amendment c148MARO; Mullum Mullum Biolink; Croydon Major Activity Centre Structure Plan, Revitalisation of Jumping Creek (in Warranwood); Extended outdoor dining in Maroondah; the Community Local Law; the Stadium Sports Strategy; Physical Activity Strategy; Ringwood Street and Loughnan Road traffic improvements; Plan East - Plan for Victoria regional consultation and advocacy; Communications and Customer Service Strategy; Public Toilet Policy; the Transport Strategy; Bicycle Network Review; Grayswood Skate redevelopment; and Staley Gardens design principles .

We enhanced our provision of customer service and communications to the community



Council now has a customer service presence on level 2 at Realm, in addition to the ground floor desk, enabling a seamless customer experience for community members visiting the building and seeking assistance from Council services. The Maroondah City Council website was redeveloped in 2023 and the BizHub Maroondah website will be redeveloped in early 2025 . Continued upgrades to our online channels, ensure Council remains engaged, up-to-date and provides useful information to the Maroondah community. Over the 2023/24 financial year, there was over 7 million impressions and 300,000 engagements with the local community through these platforms. In October 2023, Aquanation and Aquahub Facebook pages successfully merged into one unified Facebook page called 'Maroondah Leisure Aquatics and Fitness' which aligns with ongoing efforts to streamline and enhance member experiences across all of the aquatic and fitness facilities.

We continued to invest in sexual harassment prevention training



Council has continued to invest in sexual harassment prevention training during the 2023/24 financial year. This is consistent with Council's strategic objectives of achieving and maintaining legal compliance, providing a safe working environment, and a positive workplace culture. Particular focus was placed on supporting new leaders, equal opportunity contact officers and occupational health and safety representatives. These initiatives are designed to further increase awareness, encourage reporting, and effectively respond to and resolve concerns raised by people in the workplace.

We supported the Maroondah Youth Wellbeing Advocates program



The Maroondah Youth Wellbeing Advocates (MYWA) program, funded by the Victorian Government's Engage! grants program, promotes young people's wellbeing and engages them in community matters. In 2023/24, MYWA co-designed the Maroondah Student Voice forum and provided input into various strategies and projects including the Maroondah 2050 Community Vision, Maroondah Arts Activator program, Staley Gardens Design principles and the Maroondah Youth Awards.

To contact Council






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Translating and Interpreter Service

13 14 50

National Relay Service (NRS)

13 36 77

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