Community Safety Strategy

2027 - 2030



DRAFT

Greater Dandenong

Acknowledgement of country

We acknowledge the Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters, now known as the City of Greater Dandenong. We honour their enduring connection to Country, their Cultural knowledge, and their sustainable stewardship of these lands and waterways over thousands of generations.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present, recognising their vital role in preserving and protecting the sacred lands and waterways of their Ancestors, their places, Traditional Cultural practices, and stories. We also acknowledge the Bunurong Land Council as the Registered Aboriginal Party, responsible for caring for the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage of this area.

In the spirit of reconciliation, we value the opportunity to learn from and work alongside Bunurong peoples, as Traditional Custodians.



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Mayor's Message

On behalf of Greater Dandenong City Council it gives me great pleasure to introduce our Community Safety Strategy 2027-2030.

Our city is proudly one of the most diverse communities in Australia. This diversity is our strength and shapes a vibrant, welcoming place where people from many backgrounds live, work and belong. It also reminds us of the importance of ensuring everyone feels safe, supported and encouraged to take part in community life.

Feeling safe is fundamental to wellbeing and belonging. It influences how people use public spaces, connect with others and participate in everyday life. This strategy focuses on strengthening both the experience and perception of safety across our neighbourhoods.

This Strategy sets a clear direction for visible, inclusive and place-based action. It outlines how Council will act as a leader, advocate and partner, working closely with Victoria Police, government agencies, community organisations and residents to deliver consistent and coordinated initiatives that respond to local needs.

This work has been shaped by the voices of our community. We spoke to residents from diverse backgrounds and businesses, alongside service providers and subject matter experts, to understand lived experiences and identify priorities. Their insights are central to this Strategy.

We all have a role to play in creating a safe community. By working together we can build stronger connections, improve trust and create safer environments for everyone.

I am proud of the collaborative effort behind this strategy and confident it will help create a city where all people feel welcome, valued and safe.

Councillor Sophie Tan

Mayor of Greater Dandenong

Local Area Commander

Victoria Police is proud to continue its strong partnership with the City of Greater Dandenong in supporting safer, more connected and resilient communities.

Community safety is most effective when it is a shared responsibility. While Victoria Police plays a critical role in preventing and responding to crime, long-term improvements in community safety are achieved through collaboration between police, local government, community organisations and residents. This Strategy reflects that collective approach and provides a clear framework for addressing the complex issues that impact community wellbeing.

The City of Greater Dandenong has a long history of working closely with Victoria Police to identify emerging challenges, strengthen local responses and support initiatives that enhance perceptions of safety. Through established partnerships, information sharing and coordinated action, we can better address issues such as crime prevention, community confidence, public safety and social cohesion.

The Greater Dandenong Community Safety Strategy 2027-2030 demonstrates Council's commitment to creating a safer municipality and provides an important platform for collaborative action over the coming years. Victoria Police welcomes the Strategy and is committed to supporting its implementation through ongoing engagement, problem-solving and partnership-based approaches.

Together, we can continue to build safe, inclusive and connected neighbourhoods where people feel secure, supported and able to participate fully in community life.

Inspector Cameron Prins

Greater Dandenong Local Area Commander

Purpose

To guide coordinated initiatives and priorities that improve how safety is experienced and perceived by the community, delivering visible, inclusive and place-based safety outcomes over the next three years.



Introduction

As Australia's most culturally diverse municipality, Greater Dandenong continues to grow as a place where people feel welcomed, supported and encouraged to take part in community life. Feeling safe, wherever we are and however we participate, is a fundamental part of that experience.

Council recognises that community safety is strengthened when many voices and sectors work together. Residents, traders, community groups, services, Victoria Police and all levels of government contribute to creating safer environments. Council's role is to bring these efforts together, align shared priorities, and invest in actions that promote confidence, trust and wellbeing.

The Community Safety Strategy 2027–2030 reflects Council's commitment to collaboration and whole-of-organisation approach. It outlines how different parts of Council work together to deliver consistent, coordinated and preventative safety responses. Integrating community safety into broader planning across areas such as urban design, local laws, youth engagement, health promotion and community development.

The Strategy draws on two years of community engagement - including the Council Plan 2025–29 consultation reaching 3,382 people, and a dedicated Perceptions of Community Safety Survey with 253 responses from residents, businesses and partner organisations. Community insights highlighted both the issues that matter most and the aspirations people hold for their neighbourhoods, guiding the Strategy's focus on practical, community-informed action.

By promoting shared responsibility, strengthening networks and improving access to information, the Strategy supports a city where safety is experienced, not just expected.

Community safety emerged as the single most important priority for residents - reinforcing the need for a dedicated strategy that responds to what our community told us matters most. The consultations formed the basis of three key priorities that will guide Council's work over the next three years:

Safe People
Safe Places
Safety Partnerships

Our strategic context

Council's Integrated Planning Framework (IPF) outlines Council's planning in the long, medium, and short term.

The Community Safety Strategy (the Strategy) is a 'Priority Strategy' for Council. This means it provides strategic guidance on a critical focus area for Council that will enable it to achieve its long-term vision and objectives and service commitments.

The Strategy responds to the strategic objectives of the Council Plan 2025-29, and adopts one objective as its vision:

A socially connected, safe and healthy city

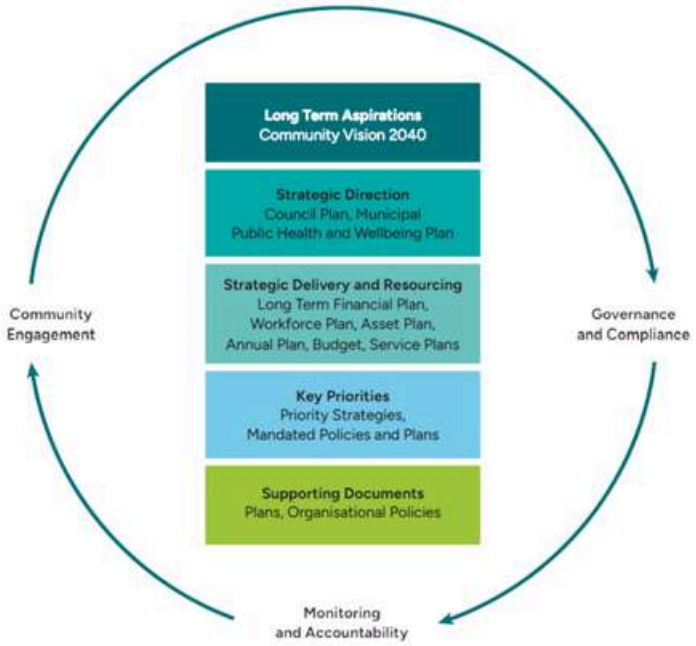


Figure 1: Intergrated Planning Framework



Guiding principles

Council is committed to the following guiding principles to support the successful implementation of this Strategy.

These principles guide our decision-making, inform our actions, and shape how we work in partnership to strengthen community safety across Greater Dandenong.



Leadership & collaboration

Play a leadership role, listen to the expertise of our community and work collectively across sectors.

Equity, diversity & inclusion

Embed an intersectional and differential framework, respecting the unique needs of those in our community, into all that we do.

Evidence informed

Use research-based evidence and voices of individuals in our community to guide decisions and inform Council's role in crime prevention.

Continous Improvement

Consistently evaluate our actions and use the results to improve our efforts.

Engagement

Engage our community in discussion to promote active engagement in community life.

Strategic interdependencies

Community safety is a collective effort. It is shaped by decisions, investment and actions across all levels of government, and strengthened through the contribution of community organisations, businesses and residents. Recognising the strengths each partner brings, and understanding where Council fits within that broader landscape, directly shapes the Strategy. It clarifies where Council can lead, where we need to advocate, and where we must work alongside others to achieve shared goals.

Federal government

National frameworks:

- National Housing and Homelessness Agreement
- National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-32
- National Drug Strategy 2017-26

Their role:

- Commonwealth law and order
- Medicare, health services and funding
- Immigration
- Funding for research and evidence-base development

State government

Strategies and Plans:

- Department of Justice and Community Safety - Crime Prevention Strategy
- Victoria Police Drug Strategy 2020-25
- Victoria Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan
- Homelessness and Housing Support Guidelines 2025

Their role:

- Laws and human rights
- Public health
- Social housing
- Criminal justice and crime reduction
- Grant funding for community support programs
- Liquor control and licencing

City of Greater Dandenong

Council's strategic roles:

Lead | Bringing together government and services to coordinate effective responses.

Advocate | Championing local priorities and the needs of our community.

Facilitate | Connecting people, services and spaces to enable collaboration.

Partner | Working alongside community and services to deliver integrated responses.

Community agencies and partnerships

These are groups that collaborate with local councils, government agencies and other stakeholders to address various community needs and issues. Partners and organisations include health services, nonprofit organisations addressing social issues, faith-based organisations, educational institutions, neighbourhood associations, community groups and clubs.

Community

Residents, businesses owners and traders play a crucial role in creating a safe, more vibrant and cohesive community. Through participation in neighbourhood watch groups, volunteering, engaging in educational events, active participation in community, promoting respect and inclusion, and reporting incidents and crime, the community can be safer and more cohesive.

Our municipality

Greater Dandenong is home to **167,400 residents,** from more than **150 countries.** Spanning 129 square kilometres in Melbourne's south-east, it's also a major regional employment hub, with more than **113,000 people working within the municipality**.



Our community

Greater Dandenong is characterised by significant social and demographic diversity, alongside varying levels of socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. Some residents experience economic and social pressures, such as lower household incomes, higher unemployment and financial hardship, which can place strain on wellbeing and increase vulnerability. Understanding this context is important in shaping preventative community safety initiatives.

OUR DIVERSITY

61%
of residents born overseas

Over 130
different languages spoken

88%
of adults agree multiculturalism makes life better

We are a designated Refugee Welcome Zone

**Census 2021 & VPHS 2023*

PRESSURES SHAPING COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

33%
of residents report feeling lonely (higher than metro Melbourne 23%)

9.8%
of residents experienced racism in the last 12 months (higher than Victoria average of 6.9%)

8.4%
unemployment rate

11.8%
of residents had run out of food, and not been able to afford more in the last 12 months

**VPHS 2023 & Dept. Employment and Workplace Relations June 2026*

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

290 people
identified sleeping rough since 2022

34%
engaged in service support

**Dandenong Zero data*

2,366
residents are homeless (1.5% of population, highest in Victoria)

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

PLACES AND SPACES

200+
Parks, sports reserves and playgrounds

3
major activity centres

1,151km
of footpaths

7
Neighbourhood Houses and Learning Centres

Greater Dandenong is a major regional employment hub, with more than 113,000 people working locally, led by Victoria's strongest manufacturing sector. Our vibrant activity centres, renowned multicultural dining, and bustling retail and market precincts create social, cultural, and economic vitality. Together, they make Greater Dandenong a key destination in Melbourne's southeast.

Greater Dandenong has a range of social and demographic considerations and is a host to a range of socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. Common challenges in Greater Dandenong include low levels of income, high levels of unemployment, and high levels of financial hardship, which can place pressure on community wellbeing and are factors that may contribute to the city's higher-than-average rate of alleged offences compared to metropolitan Melbourne.

These and other conditions are key concerns for Council and represent important opportunities to strengthen community wellbeing and improve safety outcomes across Greater Dandenong.



Developing the strategy

The Community Safety Strategy was developed through a strong evidence-based approach, drawing on contemporary research, local data and crime-prevention literature to understand the factors that influence safety and wellbeing. This was combined with meaningful engagement with the community and key stakeholders to ensure the Strategy responds to local experiences and priorities.

The development process was guided by four stages:



Research	Consultation	Development	Implementation
Council reviewed crime-prevention research, literature and local data to understand the key social, economic and environmental factors influencing safety in Greater Dandenong.	Council listened to residents, businesses, service providers and partners to better understand local safety concerns, priorities and lived experiences across Greater Dandenong.	Research and community feedback were analysed to identify key themes, priorities and opportunities. These insights informed the development of place-based and preventative actions.	The Strategy is implemented through coordinated, partnership-led and place-based actions that respond to identified community safety priorities.

Understanding community safety

WHAT THE RESEARCH TELLS US

Research in crime prevention and community safety consistently points to four key drivers of safer communities:

- **Place and environment**
- **Social connection**
- **Early intervention and harm reduction**
- **Partnerships and coordination**

Community safety is the condition in which people feel secure, supported and able to participate fully in community life. It is about more than reducing crime - it goes beyond policing and security alone and recognises that the perception of safety is just as important as the experience of safety itself. When people feel safe, they are more likely to connect with others and participate in community life.

Evidence shows that crime is influenced by a combination of social, economic and environmental factors, and that strengthening protective factors - such as social connection, access to services, safe public spaces and infrastructure, and opportunities for participation - is essential to supporting safer, more resilient communities.

Community safety also encompasses broader issues that affect people's ability to move safely through and participate in community life, including road safety. Like crime prevention, road safety outcomes and road trauma are influenced by social, economic, behavioural and environmental factors, requiring a collaborative approach that promotes safe environments, awareness and responsible behaviours.



Local profile of safety in Greater Dandenong

Local crime statistics and the 2026 Annual Community Satisfaction Survey data have been used to build a picture of safety in our city, and to directly inform the actions within this Strategy.

Community Satisfaction Survey, 2026

8 in 10
feel safe during the **day**

4 in 10
feel safe in public at **night**

6 in 10
residents **feel safe** in **public transport**

6 in 10
residents **feel safe** in the **activity centres**

Community Safety Survey 2025



55%
of respondents linked unsafe feelings to **public alcohol and drug use**

There is strong support for community connection, but low participation in formal safety forums.

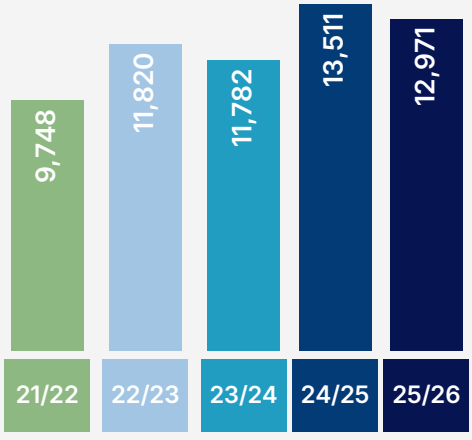
46%
have sought help or advice from police

14%
connect with neighbourhood watch

12%
engage in online support or campaigns

Five-year trend

Rate of offences
(per 100,000 persons)



Top crimes reported - Year ending June 2026

(per 100,000 persons)

1,840
Steal from a motor vehicle

938
Criminal damage

1,295
Breach of Family Violence Order

1,222
Other theft

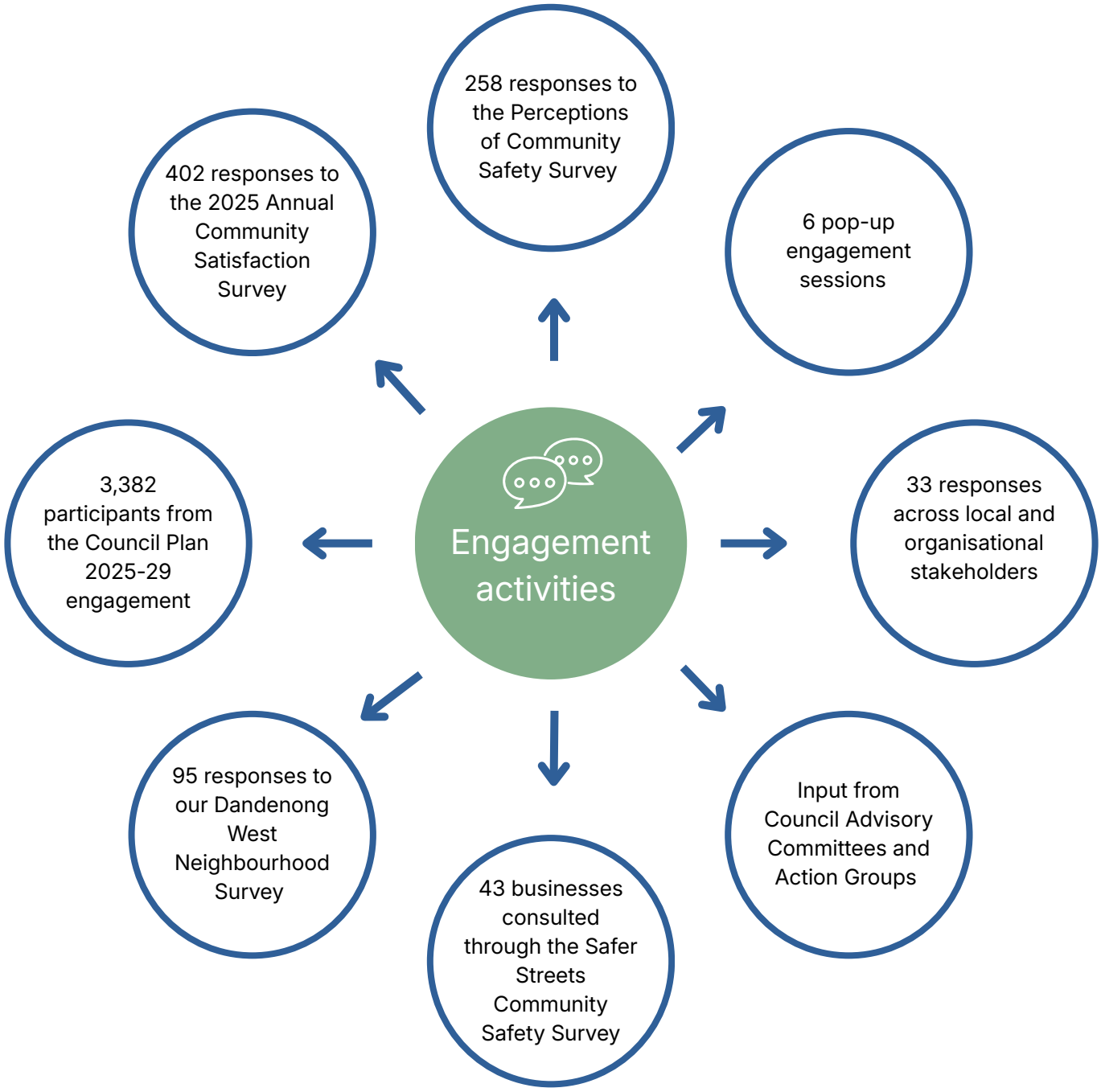
746
Motor vehicle theft

767
Drug possession

Crime Statistics Agency, Victoria, June 2026

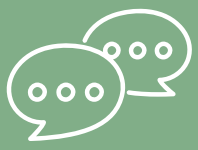
Community consultation

The engagement stage of the Strategy was informed by a range of inputs, bringing together diverse voices and perspectives to shape its focus and key priorities.



What our community told us

Residents, businesses and partners shared what safety means to them and where Council can play a stronger role in supporting a safer, more confident community. Based on the feedback, the following were identified as most valuable to our community:



Stronger social connections

Over half of respondents agreed that building relationships and reducing isolation can help prevent crime.

Partnerships with Victoria Police

Working in partnership with Victoria Police was the most strongly supported action, identified by around **70%** of respondents.

Reducing alcohol and drug harm

Alcohol and other drug use was identified by **more than half** of respondents as a key safety concern.

Support for vulnerable people

Many residents emphasised the importance of supporting people experiencing homelessness and other forms of disadvantage.

Safety education and awareness

Access to timely information, safety education and crime-prevention advice was valued.

Fair and inclusive communities

Respondents identified economic disadvantage, language and cultural barriers, and fear of crime as key challenges to safety and cohesion.


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VICTORIA - THE EDUCATION STATE

Our focus

Our Community Safety Strategy delivers targeted policies, programs and specialist advice to strengthen both actual and perceived safety across the city. Shaped by what our community told us, and grounded in local evidence, the Strategy is structured around three key focus areas that reflect the priorities residents, businesses and partners identified as most important.

Our focus area	Our aspirations	Our success indicators
 **Safe people**	Communities where people feel supported, connected and safe to participate in everyday life.	Residents feel safe. Residents are engaged, knowledgeable and aware to keep safe.
 **Safe Places**	Our spaces are vibrant and safe for the community to enjoy.	Enhancing perceptions of safety. Spaces have been designed with safety in mind.
 **Safety partnerships**	A strong network of recognised partners working together to improve community safety.	Strengthened coordination and participation in safety partnerships

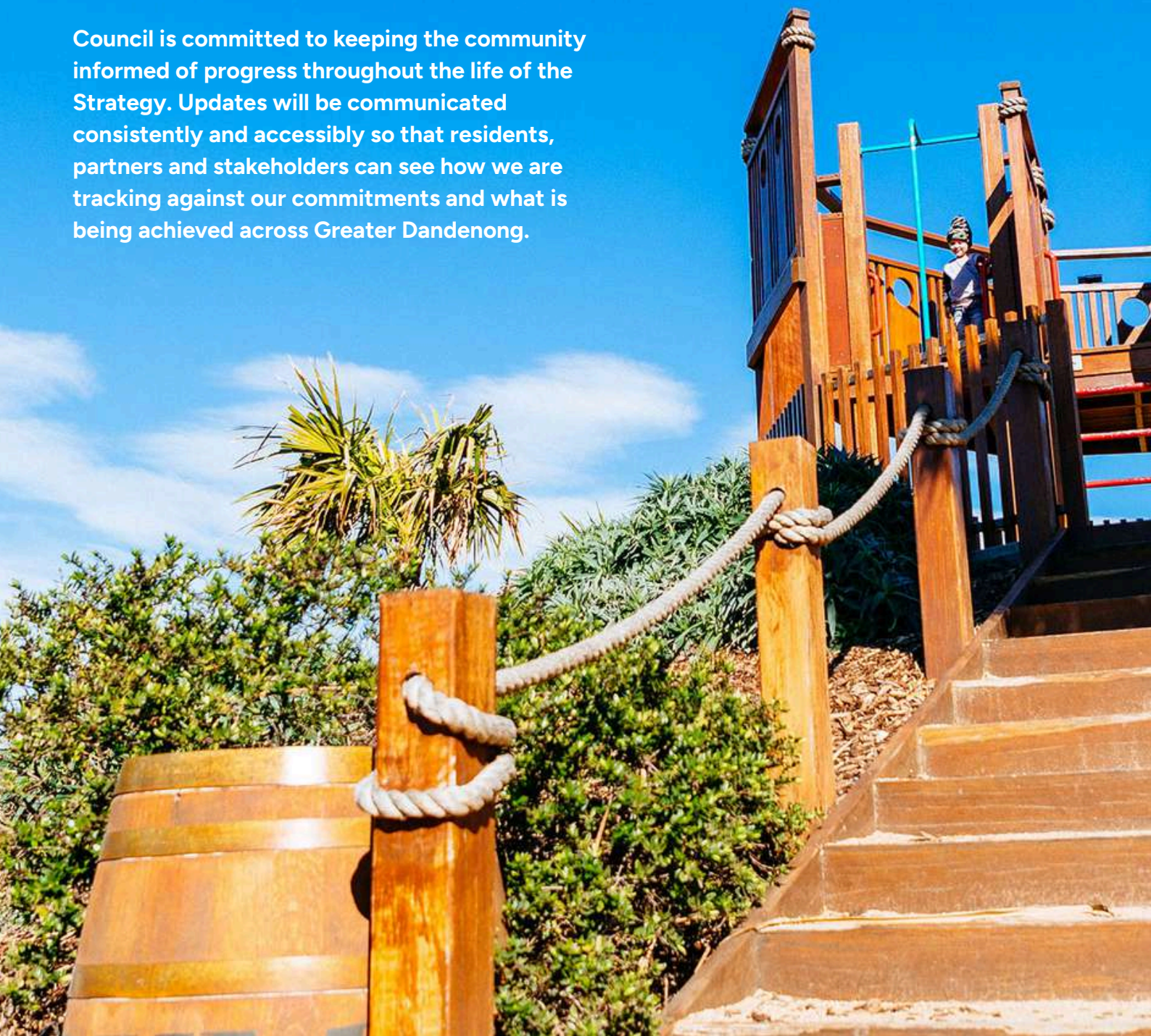
Monitoring and communications

The Strategy will be implemented over three years (2027–2030).

An Annual Action Plan will accompany this Strategy to align with the objectives of the Greater Dandenong Council Plan 2025–29. The actions will be clear, measurable, and directly relevant to achieving the identified strategic priorities.

Progress against the Action Plan will be reported annually. This will be supported by a structured monitoring and evaluation framework that tracks progress against agreed indicators, measures community outcomes, and enables continuous improvement.

Council is committed to keeping the community informed of progress throughout the life of the Strategy. Updates will be communicated consistently and accessibly so that residents, partners and stakeholders can see how we are tracking against our commitments and what is being achieved across Greater Dandenong.





Action Plan

2027 - 2030

Focus 1: Safe people

A community where residents don't just feel safe — they help create safety. Through meaningful participation in prevention, co-designing local responses and accessing the services and support they need, people in Greater Dandenong are empowered to shape the safety of their own neighbourhoods.

Aspiration: Communities where people feel supported, connected and safe to participate in everyday life.

How we will measure success:

- **More people feel safe in public places during the day and at night.**
  Measure: % of residents who feel safe in public during the day and at night
- **Residents know how to stay safe and where to get support when they need it.**
  Measure: % of residents who report feeling informed about how to stay safe and access support
- **More people sleeping rough are connected to the support services they need.**
  Measure: % of people identified as sleeping rough who are engaged with services

Priority		Council's Role
1.1	Support and deliver targeted harm-reduction and public education campaigns to improve awareness of community safety, alcohol and other drug-related risks, and reporting pathways.	**Lead | Facilitate | Advocate**
1.2	Respond to the local homelessness crisis by delivering Council's commitments under the Dandenong Zero Project, including coordinated outreach and rapid response to support individuals and families sleeping rough.	**Lead | Partner | Facilitate**
1.3	Advocate for funding to deliver targeted community safety outreach, referrals and on-ground presence in priority activity centres, through partnerships with suitable community service providers.	**Partner | Advocate**
1.4	Conduct a biennial Community Safety Survey using a consistent longitudinal methodology to monitor changes in safety perceptions over time, measure the impacts of Council and partner interventions, and identify emerging and evolving community safety issues to inform evidence-based and timely responses.	**Lead**
1.5	Prevent and respond to family violence through increased awareness, education and access to support.	**Advocate | Partner | Facilitate**

Focus 2: Safe places

A community where places don't just feel safe — they are designed for safety. Through thoughtful planning, inclusive design and ongoing activation of public spaces, The City of Greater Dandenong Council creates environments that reduce harm and support wellbeing.

Aspiration: Our spaces are vibrant and safe for the community to enjoy.

How we will measure success:

- **By 2030, more residents will report feeling safe in activity centres.**
  Measure: 75% of residents will report feeling safe in activity centres
- **Priority public spaces are upgraded to support community safety.**
  Measure: 100% of identified priority public spaces have completed safety upgrades by 2030
- **By 2030, residents' feelings of safety at night will be similar to those reported across metropolitan Melbourne.**
  Measure: City of Greater Dandenong's night-time safety rating is within 10% of the metropolitan Melbourne average

Priority		Council's role
2.1	Actively support and promote community-led safety initatives through Council communication, resources and capacity building.	**Lead | Partner | Facilitate**
2.2	Support pop-up community safety and engagement sessions in activity centres with police, outreach services and Council, focusing on visibility, trust and connection.	**Lead | Partner | Facilitate**
2.3	Deliver and align actions under Council's Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) Framework to address alcohol and drug-related harms that impact community safety.	**Lead | Facilitate**
2.4	Advocate to state and federal governments for funding to support place-based, community-led crime prevention and safety initiatives in priority neighbourhoods.	**Advocate**
2.5	Deliver targeted safety and security infrastructure upgrades across Dandenong and Noble Park activity centres, including lighting, streetscape improvements, CCTV and protective treatments, funded through the federal Strengthening Community Safety Grant.	**Lead | Partner**
2.6	Rollout of Council's CCTV Renewal Project to modernise surveillance infrastructure and improve safety perceptions in priority public spaces.	**Lead**
2.7	Use place activation, such as festivals, events and cultural programming as community safety tools that activate public spaces, strengthen social cohesion and improve perceptions of safety, including night-time safety.	**Facilitate | Partner**
2.8	Develop and implement a Road Safety Plan to guide Council's strategic approach to reducing road trauma and improving community safety outcomes through safer roads, paths and public transport.	**Lead**

Focus 3: Safety partnerships



A community where safety is everyone's responsibility — strengthened through collaboration and shared action. By working in partnership with community, agencies and key stakeholders, we can bring together the knowledge, resources and expertise needed to prevent harm and respond to local challenges.

Aspiration: A strong network of recognised partners working together to improve community safety.

How we will measure success:

- **Council and Victoria Police work together to improve community safety.**
  Measure: % of residents who report that the Council–Victoria Police partnership is effective
- **Strong partnerships help address community safety challenges.**
  Measure: Number of joint initiatives and coordinated efforts delivered through Council-partner agency relationships.

Priorities		Council's role
3.1	Lead and facilitate a Community Safety Partnership with Victoria Police and key agencies to coordinate place-based and intelligence-led responses to crime and antisocial behaviour.	**Lead | Partner | Facilitate**
3.2	Establish a Council Community Safety Steering Committee to coordinate activity across Council, align responsibilities, and support a consistent organisation-wide approach to safety.	**Lead**
3.3	Advocate for increased Victoria Police resourcing for neighbourhood policing, including enhanced foot patrols, evening and weekend presence, and responses in identified hotspots.	**Advocate**
3.4	Strengthen Council's coordinated response to rough sleeping and 'hidden homelessness' by leading and contributing to multi-agency and regional homelessness partnerships, including the Victorian Alliance to End Homelessness and the South East Homelessness and Housing Alliance.	**Lead | Partner | Facilitate**
3.5	Partner with Victoria Police to deliver an annual Neighbourhood Policing Forum to enable residents to help shape local safety priorities and receive direct updates from police and Council.	**Partner**
3.6	Deliver an annual Community Safety and Crime Prevention Forum.	**Lead | Partner | Facilitate**

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Acknowledging
Bunurong Country

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