

Delivering services to you

We provide more than 150 services to our community.

These include:

- waste management
- delivering meals
- parks and open spaces
- supporting local businesses
- regulating traffic
- supporting older people in their homes.

Our staff oversee the planning permit process and animal registrations. We also clean the streets and provide services to local families and children.

These services, and the creation and maintenance of community infrastructure, support the wellbeing and prosperity of our community.

We also plan for development and ensure we are accountable for the money we spend.

For more on our achievements, read the 'Our performance' section of this report from page 43. There we talk about how we have delivered our services and the challenges we faced.

Snapshot of key services in 2019-20

- 1,183 planning permit applications received
- 75,848 meals delivered
- 38,899 kilometres of streets swept
- 5,040 trees planted
- 487,202 visitors to our libraries*
- 1,175,728 library loans including 262,429 e-resources and 913,299 physical items, with a 65% increase in loans of e-resources
- 14,794 kids at our 766 children's program sessions at our libraries
- From April to June 2020, all children's programs at our libraries were offered online. This saw:
 - 62 online children's programs offered in English with 40,767 views
 - 19 online storytime sessions offered in Italian, Greek, Arabic and Turkish with 12,412 views
- 893,477 total attendance at Active Moreland facilities**
- 711,209 visits to year-round aquatic and leisure facilities
- 121,981 attendees at Active Moreland water safety and learn-to-swim programs
- 182,268 visits to outdoor aquatic facilities (including Oak Park)
- 104,957 visits to outdoor aquatic facilities (including Oak Park) – just swim
- 8,398 Active Moreland members
- 12,406 dogs and cats registered
- 15,784 tonnes of co-mingled recycling collected
- 11,929 tonnes of food and garden waste collected
- 3,091 tonnes of hard waste collected

- 29,456 tonnes of garbage collected
- Total number of immunisations:
 - 4,095 under 5s
 - 2,561 high school students
 - 1,044 adults

* Due to COVID-19 restrictions, our 5 libraries were closed to the public from Wednesday 18 March until Monday 8 June. From Tuesday 9 June, 3 libraries re-opened with a maximum of 20 people allowed at the one time. These forced closures and restrictions lead to a 37% decrease in library attendance during the 2019-20 financial year.

** Closure of our Active Moreland venues from 18 March due to COVID-19 had a significant impact on attendances and memberships.

COVID-19: how we were affected

The COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on every part of our work in the final months of 2019-20.

Some of our services – like leisure centres – had to close. Others – like our libraries and youth services – had to find new ways to deliver their services.

Most of our core services continued. We kept providing essential support for older or vulnerable residents and increased our services such as providing meals and food relief. We put extra health and hygiene measures in place. We kept collecting waste and recycling, and continued maintaining our roads. We kept maintaining our parks and open spaces, which have been so important for exercise and recreation during the pandemic.

In March we introduced a range of initiatives to help individuals, local businesses and community groups:

- We allowed ratepayers to enter a payment arrangement or defer their rates until 30 June 2021 without any interest charged.
- We began making extra wellbeing checks on our home support residents, and fast-tracked new clients.
- We waived food registration renewal fees for hospitality businesses and refunded fees for cancelled events.
- We turned off parking meters.
- We made sure all artists and contractors affected by the cancellation of the Brunswick Music Festival were paid.
- We waived fees for sporting clubs and gave 3 months of rent relief to tenants in our buildings.
- We also introduced a guarantee of 7-day payment terms for suppliers for the duration of the emergency.
- We made \$80,000 available to support immediate community responses to the pandemic.

Libraries

After our libraries closed, we stopped late fees and introduced a new service – Books to Your Door – in May. From its introduction in early May to the end of June, 244 residents registered for a monthly contactless delivery of a bag of 10 library books.

We also expanded our Home Library Service for older or homebound members of the community. Almost 7,000 extra books were delivered to these people in their homes from March to June.

We continued author talks and storytime online via Facebook and YouTube. Our social groups continued using Microsoft Teams.

We promoted e-resources and provided help with technology over the phone. We also introduced an iPad lending scheme.

Leisure and aquatic centres

All our leisure and aquatic centres closed, and memberships were automatically suspended. We provided online workouts for members and the community to help them keep active.

Young people, older people and families

We modified our Maternal and Child Health service for families. We provided a mix of short face-to-face consultations and telehealth, online support groups and breastfeeding support during this time. Our immunisation services kept running with extra health and hygiene measures in place.

Our Oxygen Youth Space had to close. Our team started to provide direct support to Moreland's young people in different ways. We used text messages and phone and video calls.

We replicated some programs online and developed new initiatives to continue our engagement and support to young people.

We worked to tackle social isolation among our older residents. We began a program of initiatives including:

- linking people via voice and video chat
- increased meal deliveries
- increased shopping support
- loan of iPads
- community art projects.

Community consultations

We made changes to how we engaged with communities on matters that impact and interest them. Between March and June, we continued to talk with our community about key projects. These included:

- our budget
- the Moreland nature plan
- improving community safety at Merri Creek.

We hosted conversations online through our Conversations Moreland website and ran postal surveys. We also organised phone-ins. During these events the community could call us to talk to us about a project.

In May we launched an online portal to help our community continue to connect with us. The portal is called Short Tales: Our Moreland Stories. Community members can share their experiences of the pandemic and feel inspired about a positive future.

Being kind

When the pandemic began, we started a campaign to support community morale. We also wanted to build resilience and make sure locals did not feel alone or isolated. This was our Be Kind campaign.

In a partnership across the organisation, we identified the needs of our more vulnerable community members. From May, we increased our communications to this audience. We promoted health information, as well as information about relief and support services.

We shared our targeted messages in our usual ways. This included our website, social media and extra editions of our *Inside Moreland* magazine. But we also explored other methods of reaching vulnerable groups. These included:

- hard copy mail outs
- a video in different community languages
- community networks.

We engaged 7 newly arrived residents with strong networks within their communities to share important information. They passed on information in their language to other members of the community. These 7 residents speak 6 community languages.

We also provided updates to local service providers and community organisations. They could sign up to receive our regular COVID-19 community support newsletter.

Support for businesses

We designed our Boost for Business programs and activities to help Moreland businesses. These are a range of programs, big and small, that support or enable businesses to stay viable, adapt and respond to their customers and new markets.

Our free online workshops and courses covered a wide range of themes. These included wellbeing, resilience, digital solutions, marketing and more. We also set up a dedicated hotline to help businesses.

Our Love Moreland Buy Local campaign encouraged the community to buy their goods and services locally. We also implemented a trial vacant shop renewal and activation program.

Support for the arts

Our support for local artists grew rapidly as the pandemic unfolded. This support to over 70 artists and arts organisations included:

- enabling changes to our existing requirements to adjust for COVID-19 closures and changes
- supporting grant applications to other levels of government and funding bodies
- linking artists and arts organisations to emergency service providers.

Workforce impacts

Our response to COVID-19 was informed by our Pandemic Plan. We activated our Business Continuity Plan to prevent disruptions to our essential services. We worked in partnership with local and state emergency relief partners to fulfil our responsibilities as outlined in the state relief plans.

We initiated alternative ways to deliver our services. And we implemented extra safety measures to protect staff and customers in our front facing services.

We planned swiftly for the impact of working from home. This meant that when the time came, we were able to mobilise hundreds of staff to work from home within a few short days.

As the pandemic progressed, we activated our emergency management response when this was required and implemented our relief and recovery plan.

We redeployed staff from services that were unable to function as usual. This involved our staff retraining or taking on new duties. These duties supported our adjusted service delivery, business continuity and relief and recovery efforts.

To support our staff, we implemented a safety net for leave during the pandemic. We committed to wage guarantees for casual and part-time staff.

In May we began participating in the State Government's Working for Victoria scheme. This helps Victorians who have lost their jobs during the COVID-19 recession find work. As at 30 June we had recruited 75 of these roles.

We also developed a way to run virtual council meetings over our live-streaming platform.

Community satisfaction

Every year we ask our community how they feel about our services. This is our Community Satisfaction Survey.

The survey asks questions about services including:

- waste management
- parking, roads and footpaths
- public spaces
- planning and decision making
- consultation and communication
- support services, libraries and lobbying
- customer service.

In 2020, there was no significant change in our performance from the previous year. Overall, we achieved an index score of 61. This was 1 higher than the previous year (2019).

A higher score (closer to 100) is better than a lower one.

When asked about the direction of our performance:

- 19% of survey respondents said our performance had got better
- 68% said our performance had stayed the same
- 13% said our performance had got worse.

The community rated a variety of our services highly. These included:

- library services (78)
- supporting the diversity of the Moreland community (75)
- providing arts and cultural opportunities (71)
- recreational facilities (69).

These have consistently been our top-performing service areas over the past 3 years.

Several areas saw improved scores from the previous year. These were:

- family support services (68 in 2020, up from 65 in 2019)
- keeping your local area generally free of litter (63 in 2020, up from 60 in 2019)
- decisions made in the interest of the community (56 in 2020, up from 54 in 2019).

Our lowest levels of satisfaction were in:

- parking facilities (45)
- planning for population growth (45)
- our general town planning policy (46)
- traffic management (49).

These areas have been areas for improvement over the past 3 years.

The survey also asked the community what, in their opinion, should be our main service priority in the next 12 months. The key themes in their feedback were transport and open space/street maintenance.