



**Merri-bek**  
City Council

# Merri-bek Community News

March 2025

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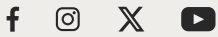


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Merri-bek City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the traditional custodians of the lands and waterways in the area now known as Merri-bek, and pays respect to their Elders past, present, as well as to all First Nations communities, who significantly contribute to the life of the area.

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March 2025

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Email us at  
→ [info@merri-bek.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@merri-bek.vic.gov.au)



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## Message from our Mayor

Cr Helen Davidson

Hi and welcome to Merri-bek Community News.

I'm so excited to share with you our first edition of the year, full of key projects and capital works that will continue to shape our community.

Work on our 2025-2029 Council Plan is now well underway. This plan will guide Council's work for the next 4 years and is created in collaboration with our community. You can read more on page 3.

Our popular Community Budget ideas program is also back. So many wonderful ideas have been suggested, thank you to everyone who participated! Turn to page 4 to find out what made the shortlist.

We have exciting news from our A Park Close to Home program. The site at York Street, Pascoe Vale, is moving along well with the final designs for the park now complete. To find out more about A Park Close to Home program, flick to page 6.

I am delighted that our wonderful facilities at Fawkner Leisure Centre and Balam Balam Place are now open for the community to enjoy. For more information on the new and improved Fawkner Leisure Centre, head to page 6. To read more about the state-of-the-art creative and accessible community hub Balam Balam Place and other capital works projects, head to page 7.

We also have so many great events coming up! Brunswick Music Festival will kick off with the much-loved Sydney Road Street Party on Sunday 2 March. You can read more and explore the line-up on page 8. Glenroy Festival is also coming up on Sunday 4 May to celebrate the vibrant and diverse community of Glenroy; for details check out page 6.

There's so much more to discover inside! So grab your favourite drink, get comfortable, and dive into all the exciting things Council is doing in your Merri-bek community this summer.

### Speak with us in your language

Per maggiori informazioni nella tua lingua, chiama il numero **9280 1911**

如需了解更多您语言版本的信息，请致电 **9280 0750**

Για να μάθετε περισσότερα στη γλώσσα σας, καλέστε το **9280 1912**

Para saber más en tu idioma llama al **9280 1916**

لمعرفة المزيد بلغتك، اتصل  
بالرقم **9280 1913**

Để tìm hiểu thêm bằng ngôn ngữ của bạn, hãy gọi **9280 1915**

اپنی زبان میں مزید جاننے کے لیے  
پر کال کریں۔ **9280 1917**

अपनी भाषा में अधिक जानने के लिए,  
**9280 1918** पर कॉल करें

तपाईंको भाषामा थप जान्नुको लागि,  
**9280 1910** मा कल गर्नुहोस्

To speak with us in a language not listed here, please call **9280 1919**

Kendi dilinizde daha fazla bilgi edinmek için **9280 1914**'ü arayın

For more information visit [merri-bek.vic.gov.au/your-language](https://merri-bek.vic.gov.au/your-language)



## Planning for the future of Merri-bek

After the election of a new council, every Victorian council is required to refresh their Community Vision and develop a new four-year Council Plan. This process is guided by the Local Government Act 2020.

### What is the Council Plan?

The Council Plan sets the overarching goals and objectives that Council aims to achieve during its term. This includes long-term aspirations related to the community's development, environmental sustainability, economic growth and public wellbeing. When developing the Council Plan, newly elected Councillors are guided by the Community Vision and public priorities. The plan will reference our refreshed Community Vision and how the people of Merri-bek see the future of the municipality.

### Where are we now in this process?

To refresh our Community Vision and assist Councillors with development of the Council Plan, we assembled a Community Panel and a Youth Panel. The Youth Panel invites young people to actively participate in local decision-making and promotes intergenerational dialogue. In February, both groups spent three days deliberating on what is important for Merri-bek's future. The Community Panel was formed from 44 Merri-bek residents randomly selected from over 950 applications and representing the demographic diversity of our municipality. Young voices were represented by 24 people of diverse backgrounds and cultures.

The work of these two panels laid the foundation for our Councillors to formulate community priorities and strategic objectives for Merri-bek's Council Plan 2025-2029.

### What happens next?

Once the strategic documents are endorsed, Council will exhibit the draft 10-year Community Vision, long-term Asset Plan, long-term Financial Plan and four-year Council Plan (incorporating the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan) for public viewing and community feedback for a minimum of 20 business days. We expect this broader community engagement to happen throughout July and August 2025.

To keep up-to-date with the new Council Plan and Community Vision visit [conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au](https://conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au)



## Travel on the Upfield Line?

Melbourne's north is booming and will soon be home to more than 1.5 million people. Public transport services in the north are not meeting our community's needs. But investment in the Upfield rail line now will connect Melbourne's north for the future. You can be a part of the solution! Tell us your experience of transport in the north at

[connectmelbournenorth.com](https://connectmelbournenorth.com)

## Streets for People

We're developing our new Streets for People Plan, which will help us clarify how Merri-bek streets function in the wider transport system and assist us make changes to streets that benefit all users. The draft plan identifies a network of streets we will consider for improvements in the coming years. It will be released on Conversations Merri-bek for community feedback this March. Follow along on [conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/projects-transport/streets-for-people](https://conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/projects-transport/streets-for-people) to read the draft plan when it's published and provide your feedback.

## Join conversations on Council activities that affect you



Visit  
[conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au](https://conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au)

We are committed to ensuring our communications are accessible to everyone in our community. If you require this issue of Community News in an alternative format please contact us at [communications@merri-bek.vic.gov.au](mailto:communications@merri-bek.vic.gov.au) or 9240 1111

# Community Budget Ideas

In Merri-bek, about 1 in 3 people speak English as their second language. We've translated some information about Community Budget Ideas so everyone can get involved. [Learn more here](#) ➔



## English

### Community Budget Ideas

Earlier this year, we invited our community to share their ideas for our 2025-26 budget.

You can now vote for your favourite ideas:

- Scan the QR code to visit our website
- Log in or register your details
- Click on the 'support' button to vote for a maximum of 3 ideas

If you don't want to vote online, or you need assistance, please call **9240 1111**.

Voting closes Sunday 9 March.

## Greek | Ελληνικά

### Ψηφίστε για ιδέες σχετικά με τον

προϋπολογισμό, σελίδα 7

Ιδέες Κοινοτικού Προϋπολογισμού

Νωρίτερα φέτος, καλέσαμε την κοινότητά μας να μοιραστεί τις ιδέες της για τον

προϋπολογισμό μας για το έτος 2025/26.

Για να ψηφίσετε τις ιδέες που προτιμάτε:

- Σαρώστε τον κωδικό QR για να επισκεφθείτε τον ιστότοπό μας
- Συνδεθείτε ή εγγραφείτε με τα στοιχεία σας
- Κάντε κλικ στο κουμπί «support» για να ψηφίσετε έως και 3 ιδέες

Αν δεν θέλετε να ψηφίσετε ηλεκτρονικά ή χρειάζεστε βοήθεια, καλέστε στο **9240 1111**.

Η ψηφοφορία κλείνει την Κυριακή 9 Μαρτίου.

## العربية | Arabic

### أفكار ميزانية المجتمع

وفي وقت سابق من هذا العام، قمنا بدعوة المجتمع لمشاركة أفكارهم بشأن ميزانيتنا لعام 2026/2025. للتصويت على أفكارك المفضلة:

- امسح رمز الاستحابة السريعة لزيارة موقعنا الإلكتروني
- قم بتسجيل الدخول أو تسجيل بياناتك
- انقر على زر "support" للتصويت على 3 أفكار كحد أقصى

إذا كنت لا ترغب في التصويت عبر الإنترنت، أو كنت بحاجة إلى مساعدة، يرجى الاتصال بالرقم 9240 1111. آخر يوم للتصويت يوم الأحد الموافق 9 آذار / مارس 2025.

## Italian | Italiano

### Idee per il bilancio comunitario

All'inizio di quest'anno abbiamo invitato la comunità a condividere le loro idee per il nostro bilancio 2025/26.

Per votare le idee che preferisci:

- Per visitare il nostro sito scansiona il codice QR
- Accedi o registra i tuoi dati
- Clicca sul tasto 'support' per scegliere fino a un massimo di 3 idee

Se non vuoi votare online o se hai bisogno d'assistenza, chiamaci al numero **9240 1111**.

Le votazioni chiudono domenica 9 marzo.

## Turkish | Türkçe

### Topluluğun Bütçe Fikirleri

Bu yılın başında, topluluğumuzu 2025/26 bütçemiz için fikirlerini paylaşmaya çağırdık.

En sevdiğiniz fikirlere oy vermek için:

- İnternet sitemizi ziyaret etmek için karekodu taratın
- Oturum açın veya hesap oluşturun
- En fazla 3 fikre oy vermek için "support" düğmesine tıklayın

İnternet üzerinden oy vermek istemiyorsanız veya yardıma ihtiyacınız varsa **9240 1111** numaralı telefonu arayın.

Oylama 9 Mart Pazar günü sona erer.







## "There's a real sense of community"

Our new Fawkner Leisure Centre is now open! Following a \$36.8 million redevelopment, the state-of-the-art centre offers accessible, sustainable facilities for everyone. Recently, we caught up with local resident and longtime member, Anthony Manovella to see what he thinks of the new space.

### How long have you been a member at Fawkner Leisure Centre?

For over 40 years now! One of my earliest memories is actually coming here for swimming lessons. In prep, we used to walk hand-in-hand from school — very cute looking back. Mum was also a yoga teacher here, so there's a big family connection too.

### What do you love about the new Fawkner Leisure Centre?

I look out at the pool and remember meeting my school friends, hanging out under the trees, the gym; there's a bit of nostalgia.

But the facilities now are so, so much better! It's way more accessible, there's lots of shade outside to protect people from the sun. The gym is fantastic and full of new equipment.

I've also been here so long that I know a lot of people; there's a real sense of community. On reopening day, I saw about half a dozen people who were members before [the centre closed for redevelopment]. It's so nice to catch up.

I also love that there's a wide demographic of people who come here. Older people, younger people, people from all backgrounds; there's something for everyone and it feels very inclusive.

### What facilities do you use at the centre and what do you like about them?

I primarily use the gym but a couple of days a week I'll also use the pool and swim laps. Physically it makes me feel great. I'm retired, but previous to that I had a pretty high-stress job. I actually used to come here on my lunch breaks to swim some laps. It was a wonderful way to de-stress.

For more information on Fawkner Leisure Centre visit [active.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/centres/fawkner-leisure-centre](https://active.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/centres/fawkner-leisure-centre)



## News in brief

### Glenroy Festival

On Sunday 4 May, celebrate the vibrant and diverse community of Glenroy with free entertainment, delicious food, community stalls and activities for the whole family. Come down to the Glenroy Community Hub and Bridget Shortell Reserve from 11am to 3pm.

### Aged care reforms

The New Aged Care Act will start on July 1 2025, bringing a range of improvements for older people, including easier entry and access to services. For those using the Commonwealth Home Support Program services, there will be no changes until after July 1 2027. The Support at Home program will replace current packages from July next year. Your package provider will offer more information on this transition. For new service assessments, contact My Aged Care at **1800 200 422**. Starting January 1, all assessments will be managed by the new Single Assessment Service. To read more, visit [health.gov.au/our-work/aged-care-reforms](https://health.gov.au/our-work/aged-care-reforms)

### Meow!

Through extra funding from the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, we're helping keep more of Merri-bek's cats healthy through heavily discounted (or free) cat ownership services (including desexing, microchipping and vaccinations). For a limited time, you'll only pay \$50, and if you have a concession card, it's free. To register, fill out the forms at [merri-bek.vic.gov.au/living-in-merri-bek/animals-and-pets/pet-desexing](https://merri-bek.vic.gov.au/living-in-merri-bek/animals-and-pets/pet-desexing)

### Year in review

Did you know that in 2023-2024 we delivered 59,928 meals to Merri-bek residents, planted 2,718 trees and collected 26,431 tonnes of rubbish? You can find a copy of our annual report at one of our libraries, or read it online at [merri-bek.vic.gov.au/my-council/news-and-publications/annual-report](https://merri-bek.vic.gov.au/my-council/news-and-publications/annual-report)

## We love our parks, playgrounds and sports grounds

Here's what's been happening in our community's green and open spaces.



### Sunny Days

While playing sport or having a picnic this season, remember to stay cool with these tips:

**Stay hydrated:** Drink plenty of water throughout the day. Carry a reusable bottle with you.

**Stay cool:** Visit the park or the pitch in the morning or evening - avoid outdoor activities during the hottest part of the day (10 AM - 3 PM). Keep blinds closed and stay in air-conditioned spaces if possible.

**Never leave anyone in a car or hot place:** Cars heat up fast - never leave adults, kids, or pets unattended.

**Dress for the weather:** Wear light, loose-fitting clothes, a hat, and sunscreen.

**Check on vulnerable people:** Look out for elderly neighbours, friends, and those most at risk.

**Stay informed:** Download the VicEmergency app or tune in to AM radio for updates.

**Care for animals:** Make sure pets stay in a cool place with adequate water and consider putting out some water for wildlife.

Learn more about staying safe during extreme heat and caring for pets at [betterhealth.vic.gov.au/extreme-heat](https://betterhealth.vic.gov.au/extreme-heat)

In an emergency, call 000. For hearing or speech impairments, contact VicEmergency via the National Relay Service on 1800 555 677.

### Howzat!

This March, construction will begin on the Raeburn Cricket Net Upgrade. The cricket nets at the reserve were built in 1979 with minor upgrades since. They are now at the end of their lifecycle and becoming unsafe for users. In May 2024, the State Government announced funding of \$175,000 towards the upgrade of the nets, and the club saw a successful Council Community Budget bid of \$100,000 to go towards the project and have also received a Cricket Victoria grant of \$40,000.

The Cricket Club host 15 teams at Raeburn Reserve consisting of both male and female teams. As we upgrade the nets, we will be embracing environmentally friendly practices. To find out more, visit [conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/raeburn-cricket-net-upgrade](https://conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/raeburn-cricket-net-upgrade)



### Updates on York Street

Our A Park Close to Home plan aims to ensure the Merri-bek community live within 500 metres walking distance to a park or open space, and within 300 metres for those living in our busiest areas. As part of this plan, we purchased the property at the corner of York and Westgate streets in Pascoe Vale South, to turn it into a public open space.

At the beginning of 2024 we asked the community, 'What type of park would you like this to be?' and heard from 346 people – thank you, Merri-bek residents! Your feedback informed the development of the final design, featuring a sheltered play area, picnic tables, drinking fountains and more.

Stay tuned for updates, and in the meantime explore the final design of the park in 3D at [conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/york-street-park/explore](https://conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/york-street-park/explore)



### Subscribe to My Merri-bek eNewsletter

Want to receive news and updates straight to your inbox?





## Balam Balam Place, Brunswick

The \$30 million redevelopment of 15 Phoenix Street is complete! There are dedicated spaces for maternal and child health services, multi-purpose community rooms, commercial office spaces and an improved connection to the Brunswick Baths. The name Balam Balam means butterfly in Woi-wurrung and symbolises beauty, transformation, creativity, and the strength of community. Registrations are now open for creatives and community groups interested in using the space to meet and gather.



## Wheat sheaf Road, Glenroy

Wheat sheaf Road is an important link to Glenroy Station, recently upgraded as part of the Level Crossing Removal works. We're improving the section between Glenroy Road and Plumpton Avenue. The upgrades, like footpath reconstruction, will improve the presentation of Wheat sheaf Road, and make it easier and safer to visit.



## Dawson St bike lanes, Brunswick

Designs for the Dawson Street bike lanes are set for installation over the April school holiday period. New concrete separators will replace the temporary, rubber infrastructure, along with road resurfacing and fresh linemarking to create a safe and easy-to-use bike connection for riders of all skill levels to enjoy. These lanes were originally installed as a 12-month trial and endorsed for permanent installation based on community feedback.



## CB Smith Reserve, Fawkner

CB Smith Reserve on Jukes Road is home to Fawkner Library and other council services that make up Fawkner Community Hub. New works, including a car park upgrade to improve accessibility and pedestrian safety, additional lighting and pathway improvements make the precinct a safer and more engaging space for the community. The playground area has also been made more accessible for children.



## Sewell Reserve, Glenroy

We heard that you want fenced dog parks in Glenroy! The new Sewell Reserve fenced dog park is a perfect spot for smaller or more relaxed pups. You'll find it between the sports pavilion and the netball courts on Glenroy Road. Included in the upgrade is a bunch of natural shade, many seating options, a variety of terrain for dogs to navigate, double-gated access points at each end of the park and a drinking fountain with a dog bowl.



## HW Foletta Park, Brunswick

HW Foletta Park is an area in Brunswick that is enjoyed by many – and it was time for an upgrade! We received your thoughts and suggestions about what changes you wanted to the playground in the small park, including the addition of monkey bars, roofed playing areas and a variety of sitting options.



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Councillors**

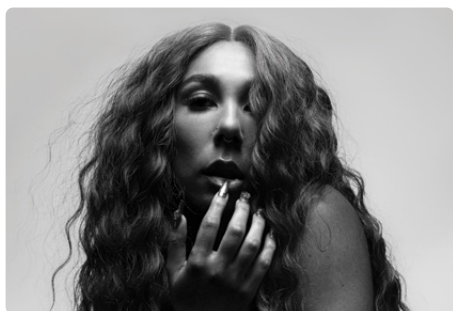


## Sydney Road Street Party

Sydney Road Street Party caused absolute scenes on social media in 2024 when multiple spontaneous dance parties erupted amongst the crowd during the day-long event. This year's family-friendly party returns with music, performance, snacks and treats, spectacle and sun! Block out your calendar for this not-to-be-missed iconic Melbourne event.

**When:** Sunday 2 March,  
12pm to 6pm

**Where:** Various venues on  
Sydney Road, Brunswick, from  
Brunswick Road to Victoria Street



## Miss Kaninna and Elsy Wameyo with 6 Seasons of Gariwerd by Amos Roach

Gilpin Park hosts the incredible Miss Kaninna, a proud Yorta Yorta, Dja Dja Wurrung, Kalkadoon, and Yirendali woman whose music fearlessly carries forward the storytelling traditions of her ancestors. Joining her is Elsy Wameyo, a Nairobi-born, Adelaide-raised artist whose music reflects her journey of identity and self-discovery. Drawing from hip-hop, R&B and gospel, her songs are rich with themes of heritage, resilience and personal growth.

**When:** Friday 7 March, 6.30pm

**Where:** Gilpin Park



## Everybody Rocks!

Everybody Rocks! is back with another awesome showcase of musicians with disabilities, neurodivergent artists and their allies. The mixed-genre lineup includes the 'Trauma Doof' of Our Carlson, the political hip-hop of Combat Wombat, B2B Racorage, post-punk gems Screensaver, Skink Tank, Hot Tubs Time Machine and Inkrewsive MCs. Everybody Rocks! is dedicated to spotlighting talent while advocating for better accessibility in Melbourne's live music venues.

**When:** Friday 7 March, 6pm

**Where:** The Penny Black



## Bahamadia with Kaiit and CD

Bahamadia, a trailblazing rapper, producer and educator from Philadelphia, has been redefining hip hop since her 1996 debut *Kollage*. Joining her is Kaiit, the Melbourne-based neo-soul sensation with a global fanbase. Winner of the 2019 ARIA Award for Best Soul/R&B Release, Kaiit has captivated audiences with their buttery vocals and uplifting anthems. Also see R&B soulstress CD, from Melbourne's western suburbs.

**When:** Saturday 8 March, 6.30pm

**Where:** Gilpin Park



## Habibi Hafla and BMF Presents: Golden Threads

All are welcome to the free community day that brings together and celebrates our Arab diaspora communities. Featuring Yara, Tarabeat X MzRizk and Hip Hop Hoe (DJ) plus food, activities and market stalls.

**When:** Sunday 9 March

**Where:** Fleming Park



## Kutchia and Friends

Kutchia is a proud Mutti Mutti, Yorta Yorta, Nari Nari senior Songman who combines his lived experiences, cultural activism and deep community connections when sharing his music and wisdom. The powerful truth-telling of his journey as a survivor of the Stolen Generations is transformative. This event is Kutchia's invitation to come together 'around the campfire' to share songs, cheeky yarns and profound experiences.

**When:** Monday 10 March

**Where:** Yubup Park



**Merri-bek**  
City Council