



Merri-bek
City Council

Merri-bek Council Action Plan

2025-26

Quarter Four Report



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Merri-bek City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waterways in the area now known as Merri-bek. We pay respect to their Elders past, present, and emerging, as well as to all First Nations communities who significantly contribute to the life of the area.

Executive Summary

This report demonstrates Council's ongoing commitment to the sustainable, equitable, and transparent management of funds on behalf of Merri-bek ratepayers, key stakeholders, and the broader community.

In accordance with sections 88 and 90 of the Local Government Act 2020, Council adopted the revised Community Vision 2025–2035 and Council Plan 2025–2029 on 10 September 2025.

The Council Action Plan 2025–26 outlines the specific actions to be undertaken during the first financial year to implement the Council Plan. All actions in the Action Plan are resourced through the 2025–26 Annual Budget, which forms part of the broader 2025–2029 Budget.

This Fourth Quarter Performance Report provides an update on the delivery of the Council Action Plan 2025–26.

In summary, the status of the 79 actions in the plan is as follows:

Number	Percentage	Status	Definition	Traffic Light
20	25%	Concluded	Completed, achieved	✓
56	71%	In Progress	On track	●
2	3%	Withdrawn	On hold or removed	●
1	1%	Proposed Withdrawn	Proposed hold or removed	●

The rest of this report below provides a detailed progress update for each action below including:

- A description of the action
- The percentage complete against what was planned for this financial year
- The status in the form of a traffic light (see table above); an
- Relevant officer commentary.

Theme 1: Care for nature and climate resilience

Strategic Objective 1: To create a flourishing and climate resilient Merri-bek by improving wildlife and nature connectivity, greening and cooling for healthier streets and public realm, and engaging the community in meaningful climate action.

Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
1	Plant and nurture suitable trees in tricky places, parks, and streets		City Infrastructure	The annual tree planting season commenced in May 2026 and is scheduled for completion by September 2026, with a target of planting 2,800 trees across Merri-bek. The program continues to prioritise increasing canopy cover and shade within parks and open spaces, supporting improved environmental outcomes and enhancing the comfort, liveability and amenity of public spaces for the community.
2	Investigate opportunities to reduce impacts of urban heat and increasing heatwaves by collaborating to get more shade trees in places like schools, retirement villages, and backyards		Place and Environment	The Tree for Me pilot program, which supports tree planting in schools, retirement villages and residential backyards, has been developed. Engagement with a retirement village is ongoing, with a focus on tree maintenance, volunteer opportunities and exploring potential planting opportunities within the site. A planting date at a primary school has been confirmed, supported by strong leadership and engagement from the Junior School Council.
3	Facilitate native understorey planting trial project		City Infrastructure	The native understorey planting trial project has now concluded, with Council completing preparatory works across all project sites, including Moomba Park (Fawkner), Westbreen Creek (Pascoe Vale), Kernan Avenue Reserve (Pascoe Vale South), Park Street Linear Reserve (Brunswick East), and Yaruk'ho Wilam Edgars Creek Parkland (Coburg North). Community planting days have been delivered and/or scheduled across several sites as part of the 2026 planting program.
4	Commence the biodiversity and climate change resilience top-up research grant program		City Infrastructure	Development of the biodiversity and climate change resilience top-up research grant program progressed, with implementation planned for 2026–27 following finalisation of program guidelines and stakeholder engagement.
5	Facilitate the Lizards with bikes: revitalising the Coburg Velodrome underpass project		City Infrastructure	This project saw the successful completion of the mural and new plantings, which were celebrated through a community planting day and opening event held in June 2026.
6	Deliver key stormwater harvesting and wetland projects as outlined in the Integrated Water Management Action Plan		Place and Environment	Detailed design and planning for priority stormwater harvesting and water-sensitive urban design projects continued during the reporting period. Community engagement and feasibility work progressed, with some detailed design activities requiring further consultation, cultural heritage planning and alignment with updated flood modelling before they can be finalised.

Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
------------	--------	--------	-------------	----------

7	Deliver outcome-focused Integrated Water Management planning for the Coburg and Brunswick activity centres to enhance liveability, manage stormwater and flood, support water efficiency, and build climate resilience		Place and Environment	Contributions to Integrated Water Management (IWM) outcomes within Coburg and Brunswick have been progressed through the following initiatives: - The final Integrated Water Management Roadmap has been prepared by Melbourne Water in partnership with Merri-bek, in collaboration with IWM Forum members led by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA). - Integrated Water Management considerations were incorporated into Merri-bek's submission to the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) for the Built Form Overlay for the Merri-bek cluster (Brunswick and Coburg), supporting alignment with broader water-sensitive urban design outcomes. - Integrated Water Management principles were embedded in the Coburg Central IWM Plan as part of the 'Coburg is Here' concept through the provision of subject matter expertise via the project working group.
8	Promote and support an inclusive energy transition, including solar and thermal subsidies for low-income households		Place and Environment	Highlights delivered throughout the 2025-26 financial year include: - Delivery of the Multi-Cultural Communities World Environment Day event in Fawkner, attended by more than 300 community members and featuring 29 community and Council stalls. Post-event evaluation found that 86% of attendees felt more motivated to make sustainable choices, while 100% reported feeling more connected to Council. - Implementation of the Home Energy Subsidy Program, which, following a delayed commencement, supported the installation of thermal upgrades (including insulation and draught-proofing) for 12 low-income households and solar photovoltaic systems for three households during the reporting period. A further 33 households are continuing to progress through the program. - Delivery of two DIY Draught-proofing for Renters workshops, attended by a total of 43 participants. - Delivery of a Community Energy information session attended by 18 community members. - Delivery of a winter communications campaign encouraging residents to transition to all-electric appliances to reduce household energy costs and improve home health outcomes, resulting in 136 residents seeking quotes through program partner Solar Savers.

Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
9	Deliver circular economy community initiatives and trial a fortnightly rubbish service		Place and Environment	During the quarter, circular economy initiatives included community workshops on DIY eco skincare products, cloth nappies and reusable period products; hosting a Mending Circle in partnership with Fashion Revolution Australia and Merri Menders; and expanding the reusable subsidy to cover continence products. Council also promoted Circular Campus to Community events in collaboration with RMIT.

				The findings of the fortnightly rubbish trial were shared with trial participants via mail and with the broader community through a final stage of engagement. The 2025-26 financial year also marked the completion of the fortnightly rubbish trial program, culminating in Council's decision to transition to a municipality-wide fortnightly rubbish service from July 2027.
10	Increase awareness and capacity of the Merri-bek community on heat and flood risks to support resilience building	●	Place and Environment	Implementation of the Climate Resilience Communication Plan has commenced. The Plan will provide web-based public information on climate risks in Merri-bek, which will in turn support face-to-face engagement with at-risk groups. An Urban Heat Forum was attended by around 60 participants from Council and various community groups in March. The forum has sparked community conversations about actions to address urban heat.
11	Commence Oak Park Sports and Aquatic Electrification and Plant Room Renewal Project	●	Community	Building permits have been completed, and construction works are commencing. The works and commissioning are due to be completed by the end of September 2026, in preparation for the upcoming summer season.
12	Expand Council's practice to ensure Council buildings and infrastructure are environmentally sustainable in their planning, design, and implementation. In the first year, focus on tangible increases to recycled content. Over four years work towards new buildings and infrastructure that is 100% renewably powered, lower carbon, reflect circular economy principles, consider ways to be more climate resilient and adapted and work is prioritised to reflect greatest need.	●	City Infrastructure	This action was endorsed to be withdrawn from further reporting at the May 2026 Council meeting and were adopted in the 2026-27 Action Plan as: - Action 84: Deliver climate vulnerability improvements to the following Council owned facilities; Fawkner Maternal Child Health, Yooralla Community Hub and Newlands Senior Citizens Centre. 3 City Infrastructure - Action 85: Develop and implement a whole-of-program capital works prioritisation framework that integrates asset condition, service need, climate vulnerability, social, economic, disability, inclusion and environmental considerations.

Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
13	Continue reducing carbon emissions of Council's fleet	●	City Infrastructure	Merri-Bek City Council has ordered six new Zero-Emissions Light Commercial vehicles in 2025/26 and taken delivery of four with the remaining two due in the first half of July. Procurement planning for the purchase of an additional six vehicles early next financial year has commenced. Energy needs will be supported by council's growing network of Council and community charging stations. Evaluation and trial periods continue for Zero-Emissions Heavy Fleet assets through engagements with the industry to ensure the plant provided to our operators is safe and fit-for-purpose for both operators and the community. Given this plant is essential for

				council to deliver the essential services to the community we are working ensure that the required energy is available to drive this category of plant at asset delivery.
14	Continue to advocate for Environmentally Sustainable Design outcomes in the planning scheme to State Government	✓	Place and Environment	Merri-bek is a member of the Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment (CASBE) and works closely with other member councils to provide feedback and undertake advocacy activities throughout the year. The 2025-26 financial year has been characterised by significant state planning reform and a strong focus on retaining Environmentally Sustainable Development (ESD) standards within the planning process. CASBE meets periodically with the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) to advocate for these outcomes and will continue to do so as required. Other advocacy activities undertaken during the year included a joint submission with the Greenhouse Alliances to the Inquiry into Renewable and Affordable Energy for Apartments. Merri-bek has also continued to support CASBE's advocacy efforts through the provision of feedback on submissions and correspondence, and participation in strategic workshops.
15	Promote the delivery of more climate resilient, less carbon intensive and more nature-inclusive private developments through providing clearer guidance for environmentally responsive design, promoting, and negotiating improved outcomes through the planning permit application process and subsequent proactive enforcement of planning conditions	●	Place and Environment	Environmentally sustainable development outcomes continue to be progressed in line with planning reforms. This includes on-site stormwater management measures such as rainwater tanks, raingardens and permeable paving, as well as external shading to protect north-facing windows from summer heat and support the installation of solar panels in new developments. The proactive enforcement program for environmentally sustainable development also continues, with a focus on improving on-site outcomes, including the delivery of larger raingardens near creeks. Officers are also exploring opportunities to improve the overall design quality and sustainability performance of new buildings through pre-application meetings and broader educational initiatives.

Theme 2: Healthy and inclusive communities

Strategic Objective 2: To support accessible facilities, programs, services, housing that promote community wellbeing, and connection for all ages, abilities, genders, and cultures, fostering a safe, inclusive, and thriving Merri-bek community.

Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
16	Investigate possibility for renewal of Pascoe Vale Outdoor Pool		Community	Investigations and costings for the Pascoe Vale Outdoor Pool have been completed, and a report is being finalised for presentation to Council outlining the overall investment required to maintain Council's six aquatic and leisure centres. This work forms part of the broader update to the Aquatic and Leisure Strategy 2018-2038, which has also been completed.
17	Review progress of the 20 years Aquatic and Leisure Strategy		Community	The review of the Aquatic and Leisure Strategy has been completed, including investigations and costings associated with Council's six aquatic and leisure centres. A report is being finalised for presentation to Council, outlining the actions and investment required to maintain these facilities over the next 10 years and informing future capital works planning and budgeting.
18	Facilitate support for the Youth Holistic Outreach Program		Community	A new funding and service agreement is being developed along with a revised program model to be delivered in the new financial year.
19	Challenging gender-based violence through youth led initiatives		Community	Delivery of the 'Take the Lead' program has been successfully completed at Coburg High School and Pascoe Vale Girls College. Across the program, young women participated in interactive sessions exploring topics including gender roles and stereotypes, the drivers of violence against women, respectful and unhealthy relationship dynamics, recognising red flags, help-seeking pathways, and available legal and community support services. Engagement across both schools was consistently strong. Students contributed thoughtfully to discussions and activities and demonstrated increasing confidence in sharing ideas and engaging with topics that can often feel sensitive or difficult to discuss. A key achievement of the program was creating opportunities for meaningful youth participation and co-design. Through consultation and creative activities, students co-designed campaign materials, including posters and social media content focused on promoting women's empowerment and challenging restrictive gender stereotypes and expectations. A consistent theme across both schools was hearing directly from students about the pressures and expectations they experience and creating space to reflect on how these can impact wellbeing, relationships, confidence and future opportunities.
20	Scope options to provide additional free third spaces for children, young people, and families		Community	Engagement with young people has been undertaken to understand the needs and aspirations for 3rd spaces. Engagement occurred via a range of techniques and forums. This including a survey that received more than 400 responses and a Youth Summit that was held on 25 June 2026, attended by students from a range of primary and secondary schools across Merri-bek. The feasibility study into the creation of additional free third spaces will inform a report that is scheduled to be presented to Council in late 2026.
21	Progress the development of the Brunswick Early Years Hub		Community	The builder has been appointed, and ground works are underway on site. A formal sod-turning event with the Minister for Children is planned in the coming months to mark the

Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
				commencement of the construction phase of the facility, which is scheduled for completion by late 2027.
22	Increase awareness of library early literacy programming through partnership with MCH	✓	Community	A partnership approach has been established between Merri-bek Libraries and Maternal and Child Health services to increase awareness of early literacy opportunities. Development of video resources promoting early literacy programs and services is underway and will support consistent messaging by Librarians and Maternal and Child Health Nurses when engaging with new parent groups.
23	Deliver and extend outdoor help program for seniors for 2025/26	✓	Community	The Outdoor Help Program for older residents continued to be successfully delivered throughout 2025/26, supporting older people to maintain safe and accessible outdoor spaces and remain living independently at home. Demand for the program remained strong, with participation increasing significantly compared to the previous year. During the year, the program supported 427 older residents across all Merri-bek suburbs, representing a 63% increase in participation from the previous year. The program reached residents from 19 different cultural backgrounds, demonstrating its broad accessibility and value to the community. While a small number of more complex requests were unable to be completed within the financial year, these will continue to be managed through ongoing program delivery arrangements.
24	Deliver the ageing well navigation support program to older residents	✓	Community	Over the past few months, the Age Well Program provided one-to-one support to 99 people and connected with a further 217 community members through 18 outreach events. In response to community feedback and identified needs, a series of monthly themed information sessions was delivered, alongside presentations, workshops and community events in partnership with a range of local organisations. Ongoing collaboration with medical professionals, charities, food relief providers and other essential services has continued to strengthen referral pathways, while consistent internal and external promotion has supported increased community awareness and access to services. Across the 2025-26 financial year, the Age Well Program supported 275 older residents through personalised one-to-one assistance, helping them navigate the aged care system, connect with social and physical activity opportunities, and plan confidently for the future. An additional 883 people were engaged through a total of 60 outreach events delivered throughout the year.

Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
25	Deliver programs addressing food security through local markets, referral, and voucher	●	Community	A successful launch event for the VicHealth-funded Community Food Alliance project was held in April, attracting more than 100 community members and representatives from local food organisations. Alliance partners, including Merri Food Hub, CIS Merri-bek, Fawkner Food

	systems, strengthening local procurement and logistic			Bowls and Open Table, hosted stalls where participants could learn about their role in the partnership. Community members were encouraged to get involved by shopping at the twice-weekly Merri Food Hub markets, referring clients requiring food vouchers, or volunteering with partner organisations. Council also partnered with CERES to deliver the sold-out Olives to Oil Festival as part of the My Smart Garden program. Residents joined friends and neighbours to collect locally grown olives, many of which would otherwise have gone to waste. The olives were then processed and returned to participants as olive oil.
26	Review and implement Social Cohesion Plan		Community	A key achievement of the Social Cohesion Plan was the Women in Small Business Empowerment project in Fawkner, delivered with SisterWorks. Co-designed with local women, it supported 12 women from diverse backgrounds to build skills, confidence, and connections to grow their business ideas, while providing a supportive space to share experiences and overcome barriers. In 2026, the Democracy Lab engaged 23 Merri-bek participants across eight sessions ,creating a practical space to explore democratic participation, share ideas, and build confidence, skills, and connections for community involvement. This quarter, 15 women graduated from the Go Girls Foundation program at Glenroy Hub. The program helped them build confidence, practical skills, and independence, supporting their path to employment through workshops, coaching, and community support. The Hume and Merri-bek Anti-Racism Support Network was set up in 2025 with local community services. The Network hosted a community workshop to help people share their experiences and highlight priorities for addressing racism. The Network also ran two free training sessions for staff, building their confidence, skills, and knowledge to respond to racism with care and understanding. The Merri-bek Interfaith Network brought people from different faiths together to build understanding and connection. Members took part in World Environment Day in Fawkner, ran a Places of Worship bus tour, and organised a Peace Pole planting for World Interfaith Harmony Week. These activities helped people learn from each other and build stronger community relationships.
Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
27	Evaluation and development of a human rights policy		Community	The evaluation of the Human Rights Policy has been completed, with key findings informing engagement on the development of the new Human Rights Policy and consideration by the Health, Wellbeing and Social Inclusion Advisory Committee. The evaluation found that the Policy has strengthened Council's systems, capabilities and practices to support human rights and has contributed to more inclusive and accessible services and programs. Community satisfaction with Council's support for diversity, inclusion and human rights remains high, with a satisfaction rating of 7.5 out of 10. The evaluation

				supports the continuation and strengthening of the Human Rights Policy in its next phase (2026-2036).
28	Create Library of Things plan for Merri-bek libraries	●	Community	A Library of Things Plan has been developed and the collection will continue to grow in line with the plan.
29	Deliver the Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan including Functional Zero and Assertive outreach	●	Community	Key achievements during the reporting period included the extension of the Assertive Outreach Program for a further three years. Opportunities to increase the sustainability and impact of the program through collaboration with neighbouring councils, including Banyule and Darebin, continue to be explored. Planning has also commenced for the Merri-bek Zero strategic workshop to identify shared priorities and strengthen access to services and supports.
30	Advocate for systemic changes to enable a socially just and climate resilient Merri-bek.	●	Place and Environment	This quarter, Officers appeared at the hearing of the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into renewable and affordable energy for apartments. Work continued with local government, Strata and social sector partners on advocacy for energy upgrades of apartments in lead up to the state election.
31	Embed library social worker program	●	Community	Referral processes have been developed and implemented. Library staff have been trained in identifying and referring potential clients into the Library Social Work Program. The Library Social Work Program began operating in April 2026. The service operates Tuesday - Thursday at Brunswick Coburg and Glenroy Libraries as a short-term assistance and referral service. Since April, the Library Social Workers have provided secondary consults to library staff 39 times and 11 community members have been referred into the program.
32	Explore, including through partnership arrangements, ways to improve health, access and inclusiveness in public & private spaces for people in precarious housing such as access to toilets and bathrooms, seating under shelter, showers, lockers and a place to heat food as well as improved access to services	✓	Community	This action forms part of the broader Homelessness Strategy. During the reporting period, opportunities to strengthen partnerships with service providers have continued to be explored to increase access to facilities and support for people experiencing homelessness, including services such as mobile laundry and shower facilities. Council's leisure centres at Brunswick, Coburg and Fawkner have continued to provide access to shower facilities as part of this support.
Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
33	Develop and implement Gender Equality and Family Violence Action Plan	●	Community	During the reporting period, Council continued to strengthen the Family Violence Network and contribute to regional collaboration initiatives focused on family violence prevention and response, led by Women's Health in the North. Evidence and learnings gathered throughout the past 12 months are also informing the development of Council's new Human Rights Policy, the Gender Equality (Community) Plan 2026-2028, and other relevant strategic plans and actions.
34	Deliver an annual Tobacco education and enforcement program	●	Place and Environment	Across the 2025-26 financial year, a total of 209 tobacco education visits were undertaken, including proactive visits to retailers, food premises and outdoor locations where signage is required. Signage was provided and installed at locations where required.

35	Develop and implement First Peoples self-determination strategy		Community	The development of Council's First Peoples Self-Determination Strategy progressed throughout the 2025-26 financial year through ongoing partnership and engagement with First Peoples communities and organisations. Key activities informing the development of the Strategy included continued monthly cultural consultations with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elders, which provided strategic advice to Council across a range of policies, plans and projects, and ongoing engagement through the First Peoples Advisory Committee. In May 2026, the Advisory Committee appointed a new Aboriginal community Co-Chair and considered priority matters relating to First Nations procurement opportunities and support for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung aspirations for the Ballert Mooroop site. In June 2026, Council delivered a Truth-Telling and Effective Allyship workshop to strengthen organisational capability and support the development of a culturally informed and responsive self-determination approach. Council also continued to participate in a Municipal Association of Victoria initiative with eight Victorian councils to strengthen public understanding of Treaty and develop positive, values-based narratives that support First Peoples self-determination and reconciliation outcomes. Through its community grants program, Council supported the establishment of The Brunswick Circle, a multicultural reconciliation initiative that strengthens relationships between migrant, refugee and First Nations communities.
----	---	---	-----------	---

Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
36	Partner with the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service to investigate options, locations and co-design culturally safe programs and services that promote and improve access to Councils Aquatic and Leisure Centres addressing a range of barriers for Aboriginal Victorians		Community	Council continued to partner with the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service and the contracted aquatic and leisure service provider to investigate options, locations and the co-design of culturally safe programs and services that improve access to Council's aquatic and leisure facilities for First Nations communities. This work has focused on identifying barriers to participation and opportunities to strengthen culturally safe and accessible service delivery. This remains a priority area under the new contract term and the associated four-year rolling Strategic Plan.
38	Progress plans and projects to revitalise and improve central Coburg		Place and Environment	Council endorsed the updated Central Coburg Framework Plan and Development Standards in June 2026. The endorsed documents incorporate community feedback received during consultation on the draft Framework Plan undertaken between November and December 2025.

39	Deliver the Merri-bek Affordable Housing Action Plan		Place and Environment	Implementation of the Merri-bek Affordable Housing Action Plan progressed throughout 2025-26 through continued advocacy, strategic planning and partnership development activities. Council officers continued to work with government agencies and housing providers to advance accessible and inclusive housing opportunities, including First Peoples housing on Council-owned land. During the year, officers prepared and submitted detailed analysis to inform the Department of Transport and Planning's consideration of amendments to the affordable housing permit provisions for two major developments in Brunswick and Coburg proposed by Assemble Communities. Officers also provided expert advice to support the development of the Central Coburg Framework and Development Standards, which include a significant affordable housing contribution and were adopted by Council on 10 June 2026.
40	Support the development of Ballerdt Mooroop site/community hub with engagement of local First Peoples communities and Traditional Owners		Community	This year, Ballerdt Mooroop Day was coordinated by the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, with support from Merri-bek City Council. Around 250 people from the Aboriginal and wider local community gathered to celebrate the significant and long-anticipated transfer of the Ballerdt Mooroop site from the State Government to Wurundjeri ownership, marking an important step in cultural recognition and self-determination. The day commenced with a Welcome to Country and a smoking ceremony, setting a respectful and meaningful tone for the celebrations. Attendees were invited to listen to a panel discussion featuring Wurundjeri leaders, who shared insights into the cultural and historical importance of the site including potential future uses of the site. The program also included a dance workshop led by the Djirri Djirri Dance Group, along with a variety of community stalls, educational displays, and engaging children's activities, creating a vibrant and inclusive atmosphere for all who attended.

Theme 3: Beautiful and liveable city

Strategic Objective 3: Create safe, accessible streets and public spaces that support vibrant communities, active travel, rest and relaxation, and community pride, while ensuring development and growth are well managed and local character is celebrated, ensuring Merri-bek is a welcoming, liveable, and connected place for all.

Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
41	Facilitate additional public toilets in parks & reserves	●	City Infrastructure	Council has adopted the 2026/27 Capital Works Program, which includes the delivery of two new public toilets at Fran Reserve and Cox Reserve during 2026/27. These projects have been incorporated as actions within Year 2 of the Council Action Plan and will be reported on accordingly.
42	Deliver Park priorities	●	City Infrastructure	Council continues to finalise the concept design for the new park at 568 Sydney Road, Brunswick, with community consultation on the design planned for late 2026. Council has also commenced work on its new Park Close to Home project in Fawkner, with further information and community consultation to occur in late 2026. During the year, Council completed upgrades to several parks, including Gervase Reserve in Glenroy and H.M. Dowd Reserve in Pascoe Vale. Council also delivered a new park at York Street, Pascoe Vale, as part of the Park Close to Home Program.
43	Deliver increased shade in Victoria Mall	✓	Place and Environment	In collaboration with local businesses, Council has delivered 16 new in-ground market umbrellas in Victoria Mall, improving shade and amenity within this important public space.
44	Implement hooning prevention measures in reserve carparks in Glenroy	✓	City Infrastructure	Temporary hooning prevention measures have been implemented and are being monitored at Middle Street Reserve, Hadfield, A.T.C. Cook Reserve, Glenroy, and Wallace Reserve, Glenroy. Following the implementation of these interim measures, detailed design work is underway at the Glenroy sites to investigate opportunities to increase tree canopy cover and incorporate integrated water management and water-sensitive urban design elements within the car parks. The Wallace Reserve site experienced multiple instances of vandalism; however, the infrastructure has since been reinstated and continues to be monitored.
45	Implement the outcomes of the community engagement for the Stage 1 Pilot - Dog Walking in Merri-bek initiatives at 8 different reserves, including improving Gilpin dog park	●	City Infrastructure	Detailed community workshops have been completed as part of the conclusion of Stage 1 of the pilot project. The findings of seven of the eight Stage 1 sites were presented and adopted by Council to be made permanent in the April 2026 Council Meeting with the eighth park being presented to Council in the first quarter of 2026/27. The Gilpin Park enclosed dog park upgrade has also been completed, including the creation of a new enclosed area for small dogs adjacent to Pearson Street. Ongoing implementation of this initiative will continue through the Council Action Plan 2026/27.
46	Engage the community in the review of and update of the Domestic Animal Management Plan	✓	City Infrastructure	This action was achieved in the previous quarter.
47	Engage the community in the review of and update of the Local Law	●	City Infrastructure	Progress remains on track. Initial community consultation was undertaken between April and May 2026, resulting in 129 survey responses and 11 written submissions. Recent work has included the preparation of a draft Local Law and internal consultation activities. The next phase of work,

Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
				scheduled for July 2026, includes completion of a legal review, with further community consultation anticipated in the second quarter of the 2026/27 financial year.
48	Adopt a new Road Management Plan and implement the changes resulting from its review	✓	City Infrastructure	The Road Management Plan was reviewed in time to meet the statutory deadline of 31 October and was subsequently endorsed by Council at the October Council meeting. The changes have now been implemented and embedded into ongoing operations.
49	Deliver the Streets for People Plan priority projects	●	Place and Environment	Delivery of Streets for People priority projects is progressing across multiple locations. During the quarter, work continued on the Hope Street and Breese Street projects, including refinement of project proposals in response to community feedback. Council also approved a 12-month extension of the Barrow Street, Coburg trial road closure, incorporating safety modifications and ongoing monitoring. Planning has also progressed for the Harding Street-Munro Street and Albert Street projects.
50	Deliver sustainable transport initiatives that improve options for people walking and riding throughout Merri-bek	●	Place and Environment	Council advanced a range of sustainable transport initiatives to improve walking and cycling options across Merri-bek. Progress was made on the School Transport Precincts Program, including engagement with the Merri-bek Primary School community to support access improvements. Planning for key walking and cycling infrastructure projects continued, including improvements to the Merri Creek Trail at Bowden Reserve and Clara Street, as well as the delivery of Streets for People priority projects. Council also promoted sustainable travel behaviour change through staff travel initiatives and participation in Healthy Streets training.
51	Deliver the Ride & Stride behaviour change program plus priority infrastructure upgrades around schools, to foster safe and active travel to and from school	●	Place and Environment	Highlights have included: - The launch of the largest Ride & Stride e-bike subsidy program to date, with more than 119 families supported. In response to the national fuel crisis, the program expanded beyond primary schools to include childcare centres and kindergartens. Of recipients, 67% identified as women or gender diverse. - Collaboration with the City of Kingston on the development of an Open Streets National Toolkit, scheduled to be launched in July. - Drafting of Council's first School Precincts Plan, including a co-design workshop with the first Ride & Stride school. - Throughout the 2025-26 financial year, Council continued to work with 16 Ride & Stride schools, while Open Streets initiatives were delivered regularly at five schools, supporting increased participation in active and sustainable travel.
52	Support the expansion of the Electric Vehicle (EV) charging network across Merri-bek	●	Place and Environment	Throughout the 2025-26 financial year, a range of projects contributed to the expansion of electric vehicle charging infrastructure across Merri-bek. The Home-to-Street Electric Vehicle Charging Trial achieved more than 20 installations and has now progressed to the evaluation stage, with expressions of interest closed. Installation of the dual electric vehicle charger at The Grove is nearing completion, with final bay line marking and energisation by Jemena remaining. Investigations have also continued into the potential installation of a fast charger near the Brunswick Tram Depot. In addition, community consultation on the introduction of pole-mounted electric vehicle chargers was completed during the year.

Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
53	Deliver the W heatsheaf Road Glenroy streetscape improvement project (over two years)		Place and Environment	This action has been placed on hold for the remainder of the financial year, with Council endorsing this position at its February 2026 Council meeting due to external factors impacting delivery. As a multi-year initiative, the action has been included in the Year 2 Council Action Plan 2026-27.
54	Ensure Council is well briefed to support the best possible design outcomes from major planning applications		Place and Environment	Most major planning proposals are determined by Council resolution at Planning and Related Matters (PARM) Council meetings. Generally, proposals that exceed structure plan height limits or major application referred to Council by the Minister for Planning, are considered by Councillors. All major planning applications undergo a review process with expert input from Council's urban design, environmentally sustainable development, and heritage advisory teams. In 2025/26 Council was briefed and considered the following major proposals at PARM Council meetings: • 253 -259 Brunswick Road, Brunswick - six storeys • 2 Florence Street, Coburg - seven storeys • 278-282 Albert Street, Brunswick - nine storeys • 932 Sydney Road, Coburg North - mixed-use development including warehouse, service station and convenience restaurant • 90 Bell Street, Coburg - Coburg Health Hub • 50-52 Breese Street and 655-661 Sydney Road Brunswick (Brunswick Market) - townhouses
55	Reporting on Ministerial planning permit decision-making through the Quarterly Planning Permit Activity Reporting to the Planning & Related Matters Council Meeting		Place and Environment	The Quarterly City Development Activity Report includes details of Ministerial applications. In the 2025-26 financial year, the following Ministerial application has been reported to the Planning and Related Matters Council meeting: MIN/2025/7 - 50-52 Breese Street and 655-661 Sydney Road, Brunswick, for 43 townhouses, reported to the March 2026 meeting.

Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
56	Ensure the review of the Merri-bek Planning Scheme leads to a framework that supports great housing, employment, and liveability in Merri-bek		Place and Environment	This action is on track. Work is underway to ensure the Merri-bek Planning Scheme continues to provide a clear and effective framework of local policies and controls to guide the location and form of housing growth. A Planning Scheme Review, aligned with the Department of Transport and Planning's 2026 guidance note and the finalised Housing Target Scorecard, is being prepared and is on track to be presented to Council in October 2026.

Theme 4: Thriving economy and culture

Strategic Objective 4: A lively and inclusive Merri-bek where the economy supports local business and industry growth, celebrates artistic and creative expression, and connects the community through vibrant cultural experiences.

Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
57	Continue to develop the Brunswick Design District in partnership with RMIT University and Creative Victoria, with a focus on supporting economic opportunities and job growth in design-related businesses	●	Place and Environment	Over the reporting period, Council: - Partnered with RMIT University and Creative Victoria to deliver the Melbourne Design Week x Brunswick Design District Open Studios event, featuring a two-day public program across 12 design and creative studios in Merri-bek. Promotional videos were also produced for participating businesses to support ongoing marketing and engagement. - Delivered significant upgrades to the Brunswick Design District website, including the development of a new directory showcasing more than 100 creative spaces within and surrounding the precinct. - Commenced an update of the Brunswick Design District signature brochure to further promote the precinct's creative industries and destination.
58	Implement safety & amenity improvements in major activity centres including Glenroy, Brunswick, and Coburg	●	Place and Environment	Safety and amenity improvements in major activity centres continue to progress through project planning, issue assessment and coordination with related transport and place-based initiatives. During the quarter, Council continued advocacy for improvements to the Sydney Road tram corridor, including alignment with the Victorian Government's accessible tram stop program. Council also investigated local safety issues, including at the Barkly Street and Lygon Street intersection, and identified a school crossing request for future consideration. Work also continued on activity centre access and parking management through the Victorian Government's Activity Centre reform process. In addition, development of the Road Safety Plan commenced, with work progressing towards the implementation of the Brunswick and Coburg 30 km/h speed limit trial zones.
59	Belair Street, Glenroy, on-street garden bed	●	Place and Environment	Council has finalised the detailed design for the Belair Avenue streetscape project, which will enhance greening and improve the amenity and appearance of the precinct. Targeted community engagement has been undertaken with local businesses to inform and refine the final design. The project is now ready for delivery in the 2026/27 financial year.
60	Deliver the West Street Streetscape Renewal Project (over two years)	●	Place and Environment	Council is progressing the delivery of streetscape improvements to West Street, Hadfield, to enhance the amenity and appearance of the shopping strip. Works remain on track for completion by the end of the calendar year, with progress to date meeting the delivery targets for this financial year.

Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
------------	--------	--------	-------------	----------

61	Deliver priority actions from the Places for People Plan		Place and Environment	On 10 June 2026, Council endorsed Merri-bek's Places for People Plan, Council's long-term strategy for delivering high-quality public spaces that support the vibrancy, sustainability and liveability of shopping strips and activity centres. Delivery of several high-priority opportunities identified in the Plan has commenced, including projects at West Street, Hadfield; Post Office Place, Glenroy; and 568 Sydney Road, Brunswick.
62	Develop a Public Art Policy		Community	This action was achieved in the previous quarter.
63	Deliver the Merri-bek Economic Development Action Plan		Place and Environment	Throughout the 2025/26 financial year, including during the fourth quarter, the Economic Development Unit continued to deliver Year 2 actions under the Economic Development Action Plan, including: • Delivered six business events (and yearly total of 36 business skills workshops and networking events). • Delivered of a major Brunswick Design District event for Melbourne Design Week • Continued progression of Business Friendly Council service improvement initiative (ongoing during 2026). • Continued support to Sydney Road Brunswick and Central Coburg business associations, including regarding their proposed respective renewals. • Delivered a Shopfront Improvement project in Melville Road and commenced a similar project in Victoria Mall, Coburg; • Delivered ongoing social media support to West Street shopping strip during the Shopping Strip Renewal works. • Facilitated 66 business permit concierge processes. • Produced and distributed (incl. via YouTube, Council socials, Palace Cinema) new Investment Attraction video - Merri-bek: The Smart Choice for Business. • Progress two State Govt grant funded Multicultural Business Precinct Revitalisation projects in Coburg and Glenroy. • Launched, with three neighbouring Councils, new Greening our Business website and tool for businesses aspiring to greater environmental sustainability. • Supported six businesses to attend NorthLink Circular Economy forum to assist them to learn how to improve their circular business practices. • Held second annual Tourism Roundtable for Merri-bek's visitor-economy involved businesses, precincts and stakeholders.
Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
64	Maintain the Commercial Priority Planning Service to facilitate well prepared planning permit		Place and Environment	The Urban Planning Unit continues to provide its Commercial Priority Service to support new and expanding businesses in navigating the planning process. From July 2025 to June 2026, as a Business Friendly Council, Merri-bek processed 30 commercial priority planning

	applications that can deliver new or increased local employment opportunities			applications through this service, to help facilitate new and/or expanding businesses that provide increased opportunities for local employment in Merri-bek.
65	Deliver expanded Merri-bek murals street art program	✓	Community	The 2025-26 financial year saw the delivery of several significant public art projects across Merri-bek. Murals have been delivered at Fleming Park, East Brunswick (designed as a celebration of Treaty by artist Robert Michael Young), Shirley Robertson Children's Centre, Coburg (co-designed with children and artist Amanda Newman), Oxygen Youth Space, Coburg (by young, local First Peoples artist Njarala Paton), Union Street, Brunswick (by Camilo Delgado in collaboration with PRONIA), and Glenroy Community Hub (by Marco Pennacchia in response to the rainbow crossings/mural report).
66	Scope project to activate underutilised community spaces for arts and performance	●	Community	Findings will be presented to Council in August 2026. This action will continue under the next stage of the scoping process which will be to establish three community venues for increased performance and arts usage.
67	Refresh festival program in line with community needs	●	Community	Council deferred its decision on the refreshed festival program to allow for community consultation in July, with a Council decision scheduled for September. As this work extends beyond the current reporting period, it will continue under the Year 2 Council Action Plan as Community engagement and partnership planning to develop a refreshed festival program.
68	Redesign grants program to support more opportunities to create, learn and connect	●	Community	The review and redesign of the Community Grants Program has been deferred to enable a more comprehensive program review and redesign process. Subject to Council endorsement, this work will be progressed through the Year 2 Council Action Plan during the 2026/27 financial year.
69	Develop scope for Fawkner Library redevelopment to increase opportunities to learn and connect	●	Community	An information-gathering process has been undertaken to invite ideas from the Fawkner community on the future design of the library. A concept design has subsequently been developed and costed, incorporating a more flexible and functional layout with increased floor space.
70	Undertake design competition for the Coburg Library and Piazza concept design	●	Community	The milestone set for this action was achieved in the previous quarter.

Theme 5: Engaging and responsible council

5: A responsive and engaged Merri-bek that prioritises excellent service, embraces engaging communication methods, advocates community needs, and continues to uphold sustainable financial management and accountable governance that builds trust and collaboration with the community.

Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
71	Develop Customer Experience Strategy		Community	A Customer Experience Strategy is currently in development and is scheduled to for delivery by August 2026.
72	Deliver advocacy activities that support council priorities		Business Transformation	Regular engagement continued with local State and Federal Members of Parliament, alongside collaboration with key advocacy partners, including the Northern Councils Alliance, Melbourne's Nine (M9), the Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment, the Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action, and the Mayoral Taskforce for People Seeking Asylum. During the quarter, Council published its 2026 Victorian State Election Advocacy Priorities to support engagement with Members of Parliament and election candidates. Council also advocated for improved infrastructure funding for growing communities through engagement with Infrastructure Victoria and made submissions to the Victorian Government's Inquiry into Anti-LGBTIQ+ Hate Crimes and the Commonwealth Royal Commission into Antisemitism and Social Cohesion. These submissions advocated for strengthened government leadership, enhanced partnerships, and initiatives that promote community cohesion. During the quarter, Council secured \$2.968 million in Victorian Government funding for the Raeburn and A.G. Gillon Reserve Stormwater Harvesting Scheme, McDonald Reserve Hockey Pitch Stage 1, and raised priority crossings in Glenroy. Council also secured \$1.2 million in Australian Government funding for the Enhancing Edgars Creek Corridor Project.
73	Increase editions and page count for Community News		Community	This action was achieved in the previous quarter.

Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
74	Continue the Merri-bek Community Connectors program	✓	Community	During 2025-26, the program engaged 20 Community Connectors representing more than 11 communities and languages, including Greek, Italian, Turkish, Bangla, Pashto, Nepali, Arabic, Vietnamese, Urdu, Mandarin and Dari. Throughout the year, Connectors communicated Council information through their own trusted community networks, reaching an average of 300 people per Connector and an overall audience of more than 65,000 community members across Merri-bek. Some key highlights have included: • Shared more than 180 Council messages in multiple languages through trusted community networks, increasing awareness of Council services, programs, events, consultations and funding opportunities among multicultural communities. • Contributed to strong participation outcomes across Council initiatives, including: ○ 450 of 1,074 Council Plan Community Panel expressions of interest from multicultural community members; ○ a 42% increase in multicultural participation in the Community Budget Ideas process; ○ 31% of Advisory Committee applications from migrants and refugees; and ○ a 45% increase in kindergarten enrolments from multicultural families following targeted in-language communications. • Increased participation in Council events, programs and consultations by supporting culturally appropriate communication and community engagement. • Provided real-time community feedback to inform Council planning, communications and service delivery, helping to improve accessibility and cultural responsiveness. • Reviewed translated communications for more than 55 major Council campaigns, ensuring information was accurate, culturally appropriate and accessible. • Completed tailored Community Leadership and Advocacy training and Council's Child Safe training, strengthening leadership capability and supporting safe participation for children and young people. • Participated in more than 11 in-person meetings, providing community perspectives on key Council initiatives, including Community Budget Ideas, Community Grants, fortnightly rubbish collection, Centre Coburg revitalisation and accessible communications and engagement policies.
Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments

75	Maintain the planning and building on-line booking service for improved customer convenience and freely accessible high-quality advice		Place and Environment	Both the Urban Planning and Building Services online booking systems continue to operate effectively, providing improved access to professional town planning and building advice and services at no cost to community members who are unable to attend Council offices in person.
76	Integrate climate risk into Council processes and systems, focusing on risk management, finance, and asset management and capital works planning		Place and Environment	During the 2025-26 financial year, Council continued to strengthen its approach to climate risk management and adaptation planning. This included a review of operational risks associated with flood impacts on Council buildings, with officers coordinating preparedness actions to reduce potential impacts and improve organisational resilience. Council's project to assess climate and financial risk has also progressed significantly during the year. Climate change-related expenditure, including activities to reduce carbon emissions, respond to climate risk, loss and damage, and enable climate action, is being identified and quantified. This work will support future decision-making regarding the prioritisation of programs and activities, as well as capital and operational budget planning.
77	Update Merri-bek's open space and developer contribution models		Place and Environment	Merri-bek's open space and developer contributions reform program is progressing as planned. The new Development Contributions Plan (DCP 2.0) has been authorised by the Minister for Planning and completed formal public exhibition on 17 June 2026. Separately, Amendment C235mbek, which proposes an updated Public Open Space Contribution Rate, continues to progress through the Planning Panel process. Following receipt of the final Panel Report, Council will consider the Panel's recommendations and determine whether to adopt the amendment, with or without changes.
78	Complete or commence construction of every project listed in Merri-bek's first Development Contributions Plan before 30 June 2026		City Infrastructure	This action has been marked complete with all projects commenced or completed to enable acquittal of the Developer Contributions Plan. There are two projects that have not commenced construction, Kendall Harding Bridge and HK Kinder (Volga St), both projects are currently in the final stages of the design phase with significant enough progress made on each project to acquit the Developer Contribution requirements.
79	Finalise designs for the Breese Street precinct improvements		Place and Environment	Option 2 - Central Shared Zone was endorsed by Council at its March 2026 meeting. Funding for detailed design has been included in the draft 2026/27 Budget. Detailed design and delivery planning are progressing, with construction staging to be aligned with the Level Crossing Removal Project