

## Chief Executive Officer's message

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**We felt the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic throughout 2020-21, in every part of our community and our organisation. During these tough times, it has been our priority to keep everyone safe and connected. We focused on trying to ensure no one is left behind.**

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We have worked to minimise the many impacts of the pandemic: social, health and economic. We have diverted resources to help those most affected. We have done this while working within our strategic objectives of:

- strengthening our community
- supporting a progressive city
- governing responsibly.

This annual report covers the year to 30 June 2021. As with the year before, our response to Covid-19 had an impact on the goals set before the pandemic. Our performance for 2020-21 was 72% completion of all 58 council plan actions. This was a strong result, despite 21% of actions being assessed as having had a moderate or high impact from the Covid-19 pandemic.

### Supporting our community

Moreland was a key site when the second wave hit Victoria in 2020. We stepped up and supported the State Government in its emergency response and relief activities.

Our staff helped with incident management and supported urgent community outreach. We found sites for initial testing operations. We worked in collaboration with a range of local agencies to do what we could for our community.

As well as tailoring our services to the restrictions, we also looked forward, planning how we could support our community to recover from the pandemic. In September 2020, we surveyed community members to learn more about the impact of the pandemic. We already knew that 95% of local businesses had reported adverse impacts on their operations.

Moreland Councillors endorsed our draft Covid-19 recovery plan in May 2021. This plan outlines priority areas and recommendations to help our community 'build back better'. Our plan focused on:

- households in financial distress
- the toll on the mental health of the Moreland community
- the impact of technological barriers
- isolation, discrimination and family violence
- the significant impacts on local businesses and the economy.

We wrapped up our participation in the State Government-funded Working for Victoria program in April 2021. By the end of the program, we had employed approximately 300 people this way. We accomplished important work in Covid-19 communications and support, and caring for important community facilities and assets.

## Tackling future challenges

We have not lost our focus on the long-term work we must deliver for our community. During 2020-21, we began development on our:

- community vision
- 4-year council plan
- 4-year council budget
- 10-year asset plan
- 10-year financial plan.

This focus on good governance was supported by our implementation of the requirements of the new *Local Government Act 2020* (the 'Act'). We updated our policies and approach to reflect the Act's new principles. We delivered our Imagine Moreland engagement program to advise on our new council plan. For the first time, we established a deliberative community panel to put together a community vision for the future of Moreland.

We continued to pursue our critical climate change goals within the Zero Carbon Moreland program. One key step forward was the establishment and implementation of our Environmental Management System. We will use this to measure the environmental impact of our operations. It will also direct how we mitigate these impacts and decrease our carbon footprint.

We consulted widely on changes to our kerbside waste service. This will help us put in place the 4-bin waste and recycling service mandated by the State Government. These changes will help reduce waste sent to landfill and improve the quality of our recycling.

## Listening to our community

Council adopted a revised Community Engagement Policy in 2020 This has continued our improvements to the way we consult, engage and listen. We have also implemented a Community at the Heart program to improve community experiences of our customer service, which includes many projects. To support this improved customer service, we launched a new website in June 2021.

During the year we increased our community satisfaction score across many service areas, often by a small amount. There is more work to do, but this was pleasing to see.

This has been a challenging year. Thank you to our Councillors, residents and businesses for everything you do for Moreland.

**Cathy Henderson Chief Executive Officer**