

Challenges and the future

Here we talk about the City of Moreland, how we are meeting the challenges we face and our focus for the future.

Moreland is a diverse and vibrant municipality located between 4km and 14km north of central Melbourne.

Moreland covers the suburbs of:

- Brunswick
- Brunswick East
- Brunswick West
- Pascoe Vale
- Pascoe Vale South
- Coburg
- Coburg North
- Hadfield
- Fawkner
- Glenroy
- Oak Park
- Gowanbrae
- small sections of Fitzroy North and Tullamarine.

Moreland is bordered by Merri Creek to the east, Moonee Ponds Creek to the west, Park Street to the south and the Western Ring Road to the north.

Population, growth and the impacts

In recent years, Greater Melbourne has grown rapidly. Moreland is one of the fastest growing municipalities outside of Melbourne's growth areas.

In the last 15 years, Moreland's population has grown by a third (34%). It has increased from 140,872 in 2006 to an estimated 188,762 in 2020¹.

The reasons for this growing population in Greater Melbourne and Moreland are:

- migration from overseas
- increased life expectancy
- a growth in births.

Looking forward, as Greater Melbourne is forecast to grow, so is Moreland. Before Covid-19, our forecasts suggested our population will grow by another 23% by 2036². This will see our population increase to 228,425. That's an extra 42,658 future residents. We do not know yet what level of impact the Covid-19 pandemic will have on our population growth.

We are continuing to plan for the services needed to support new residents and the greater pressure on infrastructure. We have strategies on the key challenges facing Moreland:

- transport and how we move around our city
- maintaining and increasing parks and open spaces

- reaching our zero carbon targets by 2040
- housing accessibility and affordability.

We are working for the best possible planning outcomes for our community. We are focusing on:

- higher quality building design
- increased planting of canopy trees
- redevelopment that maintains or increases local employment opportunities
- protecting our valued heritage places
- environmental sustainability
- fully accessible housing.

The Moreland Design Excellence Scorecard is one way we are encouraging better quality development. Our scorecard goes beyond the acceptable standards of the planning scheme to deliver additional community benefits.

Diversity

Moreland has a long history of welcoming new residents from all over the world.

In the post-war period, migrants from Italy and Greece made up most of the city's new residents. Today, the largest groups of new arrivals are from India, Pakistan and China³.

These changing migration patterns contribute to a vibrant community of residents and businesses. Today over 1 in 3 residents in Moreland were born overseas, in more than 100 countries around the world³. At home, residents are most likely to speak Italian, Arabic, Greek or Urdu if not speaking English. As many as 140 different languages can be heard across the community³.

People of all ages live in Moreland. But we have a slightly younger median age (34 years) when compared with Greater Melbourne³.

The largest age group in Moreland is 25 to 34-year-olds. They make up 25% of our total population. The city is also home to approximately 36,000 young people under 18 years and over 23,000 people 65 years and older⁴.

Housing

Families make up the largest proportion of households in the city (37%). Many Moreland residents choose to live in homes with friends and housemates³. The proportion of these group households is higher than the metropolitan average (9% compared with 5% in Greater Melbourne).

One in 4 homes in Moreland are people living alone³. Pre-Covid 19 population forecasts suggest this will increase to 28% of all homes by 2036. This will make single households the largest household type in Moreland.

Over half of all households in Moreland are owner occupied or in the process of being purchased. But a growing number of households rent. In 2016, over 1 in 3 Moreland homes were rented. This is higher than the Greater Melbourne average (33% compared with 26%)³.

Renting is not only common among young people. An increasing number of families are living in rental accommodation. Between 2006 and 2016 there was a rise in the proportion of renters across nearly all age groups⁴.

Moreland has also seen a large rise in townhouse and apartment living in recent years (in 2016, 44% of all homes). Increasingly, all types of households are living in these homes, including families⁶.

Business and economy

Moreland is home to a vibrant community of local businesses and employment opportunities.

Moreland was an early industrial centre, but its economy has changed over the years. Residents were historically much more likely to work in manufacturing. Today, the health and service sectors are our largest employers⁷.

Moreland is also the proud home to a vibrant creative sector, supporting a wide range of arts and cultural activities⁸.

Most working Moreland residents work outside of the municipality. Only 15% of employed people in Moreland live and work in the same local area. This is very low compared to other Australian municipalities⁵.

The unemployment rate in Moreland rose over the last year as we faced the Covid-19 pandemic. Unemployment rose from 5.4% in March 2020 to 8.1% in March 2021⁹.

Transport

Population growth has the potential to adversely affect the liveability of Moreland. This is through worsening congestion, pedestrian safety and amenity. Transport also accounts for more than one quarter of carbon emissions in Moreland^{10, 11}.

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, our community travelled to and from work, and around the city, in a variety of ways:

- Over half of workers travel to work by private vehicle, as either a driver or a passenger.
- Just over 1 in 3 residents use public transport (train, tram or bus) for their trip to work.
- Another 10% of people either use a bike (7%) or walk (3%)¹⁰.

Approximately three quarters of homes in Moreland are within 400m of public transport⁵. This is approximately a 5-minute walk.

Getting people where they need to be for work, education or leisure as sustainably as possible is a key challenge for Moreland.

Open space

Moreland's major public open spaces include Merri Creek Linear Park, Coburg Lake Reserve and CB Smith Reserve.

But we have one of the lowest rates of open space per person (28.3m²) in the Metropolitan area¹². There are parts of Moreland where residents do not have access to public open space that they can walk to.

Forecast population growth will continue to put pressure on access to open space. Our A Park Close to Home initiative is helping ensure all residents have access to quality open space close to where they work, live and play.

Health and wellbeing

Many factors shape the health and wellbeing of Moreland residents. Overall, the health of Moreland residents is good. It is consistent with the rest of Victoria.

Over half of adults in Moreland live with chronic conditions¹³. Heart disease and osteoporosis are more common in Moreland than across Victoria. As many as 20,000 people in Moreland live with a broad range of disabilities¹⁴.

One in 4 adults in Moreland live with anxiety or depression¹³. People have reported higher rates of anxiety and depression since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic¹⁵.

Physical and mental health outcomes are not the same for everyone in Moreland. Income, education, employment and social support contribute to health inequalities. The Covid-19 pandemic has also affected the ability of people to access health care and lead healthy lives.

Climate emergency

Climate change is a dangerous threat to life. We are already experiencing hotter summer days, more frequent floods and droughts. Climate change is a risk to our health and wellbeing, and the economy, not just the environment.

Moreland is proud to be a leader in taking action against, and responding to, climate change. Our Zero Carbon Moreland 2040 Framework sets the vision and pathway for zero carbon emissions across our community by 2040¹⁶.

Moreland is particularly susceptible to heat building up in our urban areas due to climate change. This is due to:

- the number of solid surfaces in places like our shopping strips
- low levels of tree and vegetation cover
- rapid urban densification that has occurred over the last 15 years.

This type of urban heat places significant stress on vulnerable members of our community. We have implemented an Urban Heat Island Effect Action Plan to tackle this issue. This plan covers water sensitive urban design, stormwater harvesting and tree planting. By creating new parks – our A Park Close to Home project – we are reducing the urban heat island effect. These parks add canopy trees and passive irrigation, and create greener public spaces.

Green cover, including tree and shrub cover, in Moreland is one of the lowest in the metropolitan area. We have 15% green cover compared to 25% in neighbouring Darebin and 16% in Moonee Valley¹⁷. There has been a decline in trees on private land in recent years. This is largely from the high rates of housing development. We are working to increase canopy cover in public areas through our Urban Forest Strategy 2017-27.

Our amendment C189 on canopy trees seeks to provide better quality space for canopy planting in new developments. It is currently with the Minister for Planning for approval. We also adopted the Moreland Nature Plan and the Integrated Water Management Strategy 2040 and associated action plan in August 2020.

Burning fossil fuels for energy is the largest source of carbon emissions for the Moreland community. Moreland's emissions come from:

- electricity (59%)
- gas (21%)
- transport (17%)
- waste (3%).

It is up to all of us to work together to be part of the solution to climate change. This includes demanding state and federal governments put in place policies to enable Australia to transition to a zero-carbon future.

Covid-19 and other financial impacts

We have already outlined the impact of Covid-19 on our services in the section 'Covid-19: how we were affected' from page 12. The pandemic has also had an impact on our financial position. This is because

of its impact on our revenue and the economy. As a provider of front-line community support, we respond to those in need, which is challenging to fund.

The State Government's rate cap has continued to put financial pressure on our budget. Our total revenue from rates was capped at a 2% increase for the 2020-21 financial year. The rate cap poses financial challenges as costs often increase at a higher rate than the cap. But we are committed to delivering council services within these constraints.

Kerbside waste service reform

In February 2020, the State Government outlined that a new 4-stream waste and recycling system will be rolled out in partnership with Victorian councils. This is to:

- improve the quality of material collected at the kerbside
- reduce waste being sent to landfill.

Councils have until 2027 to introduce the new glass service (purple bin lid). They have until 2030 to introduce a food and garden organics (FOGO) service (light green bin lid).

We have been consulting with the community about changing our service. This includes making the FOGO and glass collection available to all households. We continue to encourage households not already using the FOGO service to opt in.

We are working towards implementing the kerbside service changes in 2022-23. This will start with a proposed move to a booked hard waste service in the second half of 2022.

Aged care

Older people have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. We are committed to supporting our older residents to live and age well. And to remain living independently at home for as long as possible.

We are focused on supporting older residents to be connected to their community. This is part of the implementation of our Living and Ageing Well Framework. We have engaged our community and started implementing the Our Place Moreland program. This program aims to support all older people of Moreland.

The findings from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety and the Commonwealth Government response continue to have an impact on aged care services. We have been granted funding until June 2022 for services and aged care assessments. This was an extension to previous arrangements.

New local government act

The State Government has described the *Local Government Act 2020* (the 'Act') as the most ambitious and comprehensive reform of local government in Victoria for 30 years. The new Act came into operation in March 2020. It is being implemented in 4 key stages.

The new Act has a new set of overarching governance principles and 5 sets of supporting principles. These are principles that all councils must follow to build accountability and transparency.

The new Act affects many different areas of our work. We have already adopted governance policies and an updated Community Engagement Policy. This new policy outlines our commitment to genuinely involving our community in decision making. This is so we can deliver better outcomes. New governance policies include a new code of conduct for Councillors, Governance Rules and gift and expenses policies.

Please read more in the 'Statutory Information' section of this report from page 128.

Sources

- 1 *Estimated Resident Population (ERP) City of Moreland*, ID Consulting 2020, <http://profile.id.com/moreland/population-estimate>
- 2 *Population projections for Moreland*, ID Consulting 2017, (available upon request)
- 3 *2016 Census of Population and Housing*, Australian Bureau of Statistics
- 4 *Estimated Resident Population (ERP)*, Australian Bureau of Statistics 2019
- 5 *Australian Urban Observatory 2018*, <https://auo.org.au/>
- 6 *A Home in Moreland Report*, ID Consulting 2018
- 7 *City of Moreland Thematic History*, Historica 2010, <https://www.moreland.vic.gov.au/globalassets/areas/strategic-planning/moreland-thematic-history.pdf>
- 8 *6 2017-2022 Arts and Culture Strategy*, Moreland City Council 2017
- 9 *Small Area Labour Markets (SALM) publication*, Department of Education, Skills and Employment, Australian Government 2021, <http://dese.gov.au/>
- 10 *Moreland Integrated Transport Strategy 2019*, GTA Consultants 2019
- 11 *Zero Carbon Moreland Framework 2040*, Moreland City Council 2019
- 12 *VPA (2017) Metropolitan Open Space Network*; Moreland City Council (2021)
- 13 *Victorian Population Health Survey 2017*
- 14 *Propensity for disability based on ABS Population Census 2016 and ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing, and Carers*
- 15 *Moreland City Council 2020, Understanding the community during a pandemic report*
- 16 *Urban Forest Strategy 2017-2027*, Moreland City Council 2017
- 17 *Moreland's 2020 Canopy report* by Player Piano Data Analytics