



Merri-bek
City Council



Radiant and full of personality, Sunny embodies the spirit of the Bolder campaign, which celebrates ageing with confidence and joy, read more on page 5.

October/November 2025

Merri-bek Community News

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charging trial

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.

We are committed to ensuring our communications are accessible to everyone in our community. If you require this magazine in an alternative format, please contact us on **9240 1111** or **communications@merri-bek.vic.gov.au**

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Message from our Mayor

Cr Helen Davidson

Hello and welcome to the Spring edition of Community News!

This edition is filled with stories and updates on the important services and projects that make a difference to our community. From our expanded Lactation Service, giving families more support during those crucial early years (page 4) to a pilot program improving the way people, dogs and the environment share our parks and open spaces.

Spring is also the perfect time for a clean-up, so don't miss the details on how to book your free hard waste collection (page 3).

We are leading a groundbreaking trial that makes Electric Vehicle (EV) charging possible, from your home (page 10). We've also profiled the crucial work of our Environmental Health Officers, who help keep food safe in our local businesses (page 8). In this edition, you will read about our new BOlder project, celebrating the lives and wisdom of older residents (page 5) and the Merri-bek Summer show returning to the Counihan Gallery this year, including a Children's Gallery.

And don't forget to mark your calendars for Carols by the Lake and the Coburg Night Market, two of the highlights of our Summer event calendar.

I encourage you to take a moment to explore this magazine and discover the many ways Council is working alongside you to create a safe, welcoming and inclusive Merri-bek.

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

तपाईको भाषामा थप जान्नुको लागि,
9280 1910 मा कल गर्नुहोस्

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

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

For more information visit **merri-bek.vic.gov.au/your-language**



Spring cleaning? Book your free hard waste collection

Spring is the perfect time to declutter, but what do you do with those large items that can't go in your bins or be donated?

Merri-bek's **hard waste collection service** makes it easy and affordable to get rid of unwanted household items.

Booking a hard waste collection will not only keep your property tidy, but it will also prevent waste from blocking footpaths and roads and reduce pests such as rats or birds. It's also a great way to dispose of your waste responsibly and sustainably.

Who can book?

Households who pay Merri-bek's annual waste charge are entitled to **up to 2 cubic metres per financial year**—that's either **one 2-cubic-metre collection or two 1-cubic-metre collections**—completely free.

Tenants living in properties where the waste charge is paid by the owner can also access the service.

Not on the waste charge? No worries! You can book a **paid collection** anytime for just **\$100 per cubic metre**, which is much cheaper than commercial services or hiring a skip.

How to book your collection

1. **Book online:** Merri-bek Hard Rubbish Collection
2. **Call the contractor directly:** 9721 1915
3. **Call Customer Service:** 9240 1111

Once your booking is confirmed, you'll receive a brochure explaining **what can go in your hard waste collection** and how the process works.

Preparing your waste

- **Items MUST be placed neatly on your nature strip ONLY on the weekend before your collection.**
- Don't have a nature strip or need help with your booking? Call **9721 1915** to arrange a safe alternative location.

What can you include?

- ✓ Old or broken furniture.
- ✓ Up to 10 pieces of timber (max 1.5m, no protruding nails/screws).
- ✓ Boxes of odds and ends.
- ✓ Porcelain, ceramics, and window glass (glass **MUST** be wrapped and labelled 'glass').
- ✓ Tools and lawn mowers.
- ✓ Large toys or sporting equipment.
- ✓ Mattress and bed base (one per household).
- ✓ Whitegoods like stoves, washing machines, dishwashers, and refrigerators (always remove doors).
- ✓ E-waste (anything with a plug, battery, or cord) – learn more on our eWaste page.
- ✓ Bulk cardboard and bundled branches (must be indicated on your booking form).

To book your hard waste collection scan the QR code or visit:
 ➔ merri-bek.vic.gov.au/hard-waste





Sasha and Anthony with Maternal and Child Health Nurse Bridget at Merlynston Centre.

Lactation services in Merri-bek

Breastfeeding provides lifelong benefits for babies and their families. While it's a natural process, it often takes patience, practice, and support and this is where our dedicated breastfeeding support service can make all the difference.

Funded by Council and the Department of Health, the free service is delivered through three Maternal and Child Health (MCH) centres across Merri-bek. Since opening our first Breastfeeding Support Clinic in 2008, followed by a second in 2017, and most recently a third at **Balam Balam Place in Brunswick**, we've seen firsthand the positive impact this support provides to families.

Staffed by experienced MCH nurses, including International Board-Certified Lactation Consultants, the clinics offer a safe, welcoming space where parents can receive expert advice, reassurance, and care.

The early weeks after birth can be particularly challenging, especially as many families leave hospital within 24 to 48 hours. Timely support can help overcome breastfeeding challenges and build confidence.

Sasha a new parent reflected on the accessibility of the service: **"The breastfeeding clinic in Merri-bek really helped us get immediate support when things were progressing so quickly at home. Being able to come in, get advice and feedback right away, was the biggest benefit."**

Our MCH nurses support all parents, regardless of how they choose to feed their baby whether breastfeeding, supplementary feeding, or a combination of both. This inclusive, non-judgemental approach ensures every family feels informed, supported, and confident.

Lactation Consultant and MCH nurse Bridget emphasises the importance of early intervention: **"The first few weeks are crucial, they shape milk supply and how a baby learns to feed. That's why coming in early can make such a difference."**

Through these clinics, Merri-bek continues to champion the health and wellbeing of families, helping parents feel supported, connected, and empowered on their feeding journey.

Ask your Maternal and Child Health nurses about accessing our dedicated breastfeeding supports. For MCH appointments call **9240 1111**

Merlynston Maternal Child Health Centre
Bain Reserve, Merlyn St, Coburg North

Coburg Maternal and Child Health Centre
1 Wardens Walk, Coburg

Balam Balam Place Maternal Child Health Centre
15 Phoenix St, Brunswick

Merri-bek says no to ageism and yes to celebrating age with BOlder

In celebration of Senior's Festival and our amazing diverse older community, Merri-bek has launched BOlder, a photographic and storytelling project celebrating the lives, experiences and contribution of older people in our community.

The project aims to challenge stereotypes of age and ageing and highlight the value, wisdom and contribution older people make to our community.

Project participants were asked about their perspectives on age and shared some valuable advice.

To view the online exhibition and read the stories about participants visit:

➔ conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/bolder

To find out more about what Merri-bek does to support and celebrate older members of our community visit:

➔ merri-bek.vic.gov.au/olderpeople



“
Always try to be positive, no matter what. That's the first priority because that's what will get you through.
”

Suzanna



“
Look forward and be hopeful. And never give up. Never give up.
”

Mahshid



“
Trust yourself. Trust your gut. Take a few more risks and be bold in that space to find your place. Don't be so anxious about the risk of failure.
”

Mark



People, dogs and the environment – sharing open space in Merri-bek

Merri-bek City Council has launched a 6-month pilot program in 8 parks to better balance the needs of people, dogs and the environment in the municipality's open spaces.

The 6-month pilot program is designed to allow Council to test different approaches to improving how users share parks and open spaces.

The parks involved in the pilot include:

- Gilpin Park, Brunswick
- Wylie Reserve, Brunswick West
- Fleming Park, Brunswick East
- Harmony Park, Coburg
- Robinson Reserve, Coburg
- Tate Reserve, Coburg
- Lorne Street Reserve, Fawkner
- GE Clarke Reserve, Glenroy

Each park will have different changes applied that are specific to the unique context and user groups of each space.

Some of these changes include:

- The introduction of zoned areas for on-leash and off-leash uses (Gilpin Park and Fleming Park).
- Creating new off-leash areas in previously on-leash parks (Tate Reserve, Harmony Park and GE Clarke).
- Providing a new fenced dog park in an on-leash park (Lorne Street Reserve).
- Timed access for dogs off-leash in new designated areas (Robinson Reserve).
- Restricted access to habitat zones to preserve biodiversity and sensitive environments (Tate Reserve).
- The installation/upgrading of lighting to improve visibility after dark (Fleming Park and Wylie Reserve).

Community members can provide feedback at any time throughout the pilot. This will inform how the interventions tested in the pilot will be rolled out in other parks and open spaces in the future.

Community members can provide feedback on the pilot by visiting:

➔ conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/dog-walking



Italian | Italiano

Condivisione delle aree verdi a Merri-bek

Stiamo sperimentando alcune nuove regole per chi passeggia con i cani nei parchi di Merri-bek.

Lo scopo di queste regole è garantire che le persone, i cani e l'ambiente siano tutelati in modo equo.

Vogliamo sapere cosa ne pensi di questi cambiamenti.

Puoi condividere la tua opinione fino all'inizio del 2026 visitando il nostro sito:

👉 conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/dog-walking?ljs=it

Se hai domande o desideri parlare con qualcuno nella tua lingua, chiama il numero **9280 1911**.

Arabic | عربي

مشاركة المساحات الخضراء في Merri-bek

نقوم بتجربة بعض القوانين الجديدة للأشخاص الذين يأخذون الكلاب للمشي في حدائق **Merri-bek**.

الغرض من هذه القوانين هو التأكد من أنه يتم الاعتناء بالناس والكلاب والبيئة بشكل عادل.

نريد أن نعرف ما هو رأيك بهذه التغييرات.

يمكنك تقديم التعليقات حتى أوائل عام 2026 من خلال زيارة موقعنا الإلكتروني:

👉 conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/dog-walking?ljs=ar

إذا كانت لديك أي أسئلة أو ترغب في التحدث عن هذا الأمر مع شخص ما بلغتك الأم، يرجى الاتصال على الرقم **9280 1913**.

Greek | ελληνικά

Μοιραζόμαστε τους πράσινους χώρους στο Merri-bek

Δοκιμάζουμε ορισμένους νέους κανόνες για τα άτομα που βγάζουν βόλτα τους σκύλους τους στα πάρκα του Merri-bek.

Σκοπός αυτών των κανόνων είναι να διασφαλίσουμε το ότι οι άνθρωποι, οι σκύλοι και το περιβάλλον αντιμετωπίζονται όλοι δίκαια.

Θα θέλαμε να μάθουμε το τι νομίζετε σχετικά με αυτές τις αλλαγές.

Μπορείτε να στείλετε τα σχόλιά σας έως τις αρχές του 2026 επισκεπτόμενοι την ιστοσελίδα μας:

👉 conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/dog-walking?ljs=el

Αν έχετε οποιοσδήποτε ερωτήσεις ή θέλετε να μιλήσετε γι' αυτό με κάποιον στη γλώσσα σας, καλέστε το **9280 1912**.

Turkish | Türkçe

Merri-bek'te yeşil alanların paylaşımı

Merri-bek parklarında köpek gezdiren insanlar için bazı yeni kurallar deniyoruz.

Bu kuralların amacı, insanların, köpeklerin ve çevrenin adil bir şekilde korunmasını sağlamaktır.

Bu değişiklikler hakkında ne düşündüğünüzü bilmek istiyoruz.

👉 conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/dog-walking?ljs=tr adresindeki internet sitemizi ziyaret ederek 2026 yılının başına kadar görüşlerinizi bize bildirebilirsiniz.

Sormak istediğiniz herhangi bir şey varsa veya bu konuyu kendi dilinizde biriyle konuşmak istiyorsanız lütfen **9280 1914** numaralı telefonu arayın.

Keeping our community safe: the role of Environmental Health Officers

Ever wondered who ensures the food you eat at cafés and restaurants is safe? Merri-bek's Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) play a vital role in protecting public health by inspecting food businesses, tattoo and personal care venues, caravan parks, and aquatic centres.

We sat down with our Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) to ask them key questions on what they do and how they do it to keep our community safe when consuming food and beverages from premises in Merri-bek.

How critical is your work?

"Consuming unsafe or contaminated food can cause serious illness," says one officer. Prompt response to complaints is essential, especially for suspected food poisoning. EHOs prioritise high-risk cases to protect the community.

What severe foodborne illnesses have you seen?

The team has investigated a range of cases, including Listeria, which can be deadly for older people and unborn babies. Officers work with businesses to identify the source and prevent further harm.

How can businesses help?

Food businesses must provide safe food and comply with laws. Regular audits, staff training, and maintaining a positive food safety culture help protect customers. EHOs are available to advise and support compliance.

What happens if a business is non-compliant?

Officers use a risk-based approach: warnings, improvement orders, fines, or in serious cases, closure or prosecution. Unsafe food includes anything that could harm a customer, while unsuitable food may be damaged or perished.

What should people do if they notice unsafe food?

Report it to Council with supporting evidence. Complaints are confidential and help ensure the food sold in Merri-bek is safe. EHOs focus on food safety, not quality issues like taste or appearance.

Learn more about the role of our Environmental Health Officers in keeping our community safe:

➔ merri-bek.vic.gov.au/eho



Image left: Merri-bek Summer Show: (Be)Longing. 2024. Photo Jess Ibacache. Image right: Leon Van de Graaff installing work by Amaya Iturri in the 2024 Merri-bek Summer Show. Photo Josh Simpson.



Merri-bek Summer Show 2025: Love in Crisis

The Merri-bek Summer Show returns to the Counihan Gallery this year, inviting local artists to respond to the theme **Love in Crisis**. The exhibition explores love in its many forms – from quiet acts of care to collective action – as a way of resisting, healing, and imagining a more compassionate future.

This year we are excited to introduce a Children's Gallery and activity station alongside the exhibition, where kids can create their own artworks in response to the theme.

As part of the exhibition, the 9th Noel Counihan Commemorative Art Award will be presented, recognising an artist whose work engages with the theme and broader social, political, or environmental ideas. The \$4000 non-acquisitive prize, sponsored by Merri-bek City Council, will be announced at the opening on Saturday 8 November. Visitors

can also vote in the \$1000 People's Choice Award which is supported by the Sydney Road Brunswick Association, and a Climate Activism Award will honour work addressing climate justice.

The exhibition runs from **8 November to 18 December 2025**. In January 2026, the gallery's windows will showcase the drawings created by our young visitors, which will be visible from Sydney Road while the gallery is closed.

Learn more: ➔ merri-bek.vic.gov.au/counihan-gallery



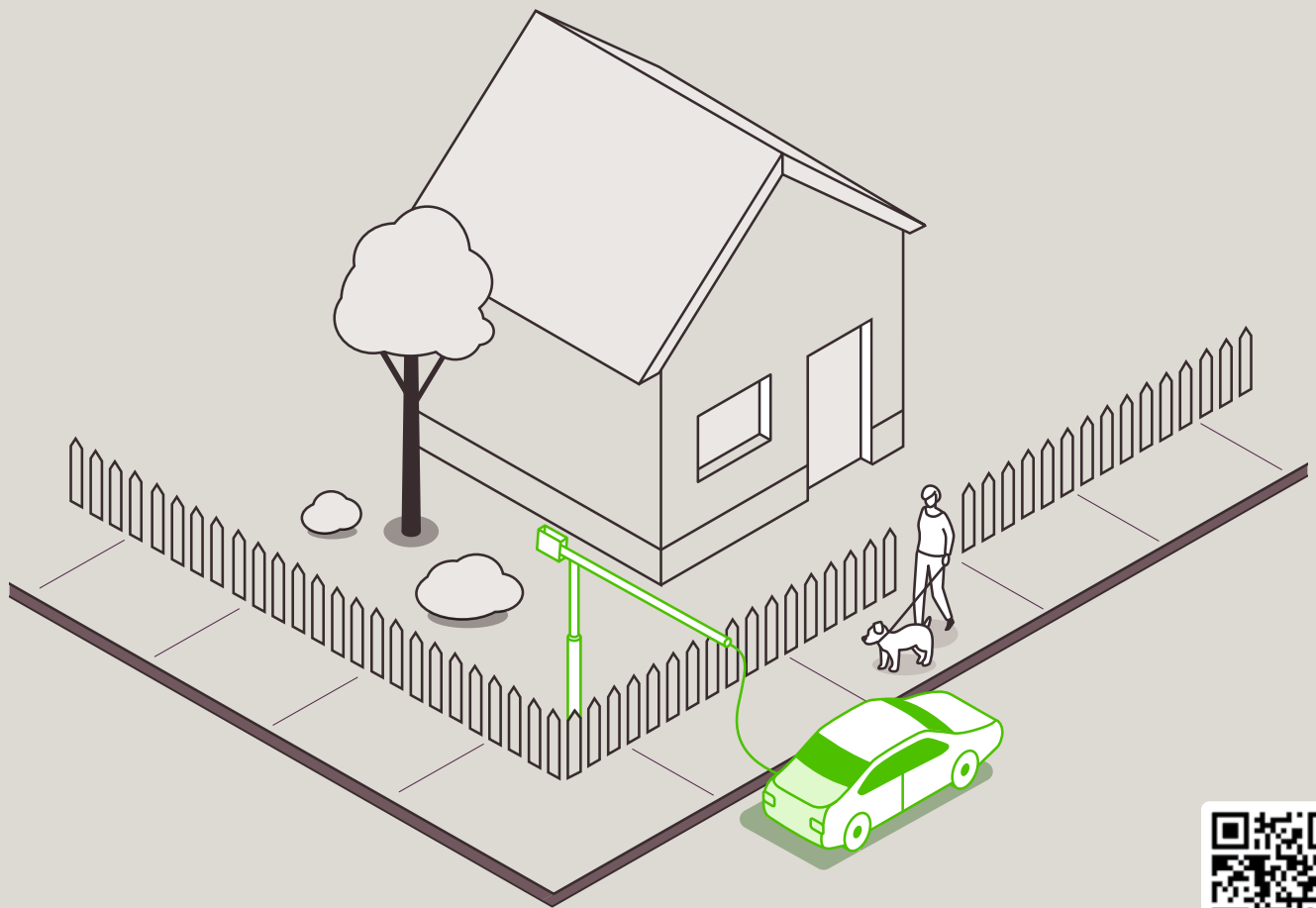
Treaty is here

Australia's first Statewide Treaty has reached Parliament, a historic milestone in Victoria's decade-long Treaty journey.

The in-principle agreement between the Victorian Government and the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria marks a new relationship built on respect, trust and integrity. It acknowledges our past while creating an opportunity for all Victorians to move forward together.

We are proud to support this journey with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and the broader First Peoples community.

➔ Learn more: firstpeoplesvic.org



Join Merri-bek's first on-street EV charging trial

No driveway? No problem.

Charge your Electric Vehicle (EV) at home – even when it's parked on the street.

A clever retractable boom runs a cable safely over the footpath to your EV, then folds away when not in use.

Merri-bek City Council in partnership with Vehicle Charging Solutions Australia (VCSA), bringing affordable charging to Merri-bek.

Are you interested in being part of the trial?

conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/ev-charging-trial

Smoke pollution and residential burning

There have been recent reports of unpermitted open-air burnings in some parts of Merri-bek. We have rules on incinerators and open-air burning so that we can keep everyone safe and happy in the community.

Council does not allow burning of rubbish, green waste or any domestic items such as building materials, furniture or packaging.

You can only have a fire on your property if:

- It's for cooking food or heating inside the home.
- It's in a safe and appropriate device.
- The device you are using is commercially built for the purpose of cooking food or heating.

Smoke pollution and unpermitted residential burning is dangerous to people's health and is very harmful to people with lung or heart conditions, young children, pregnant women, and older people.

First try to talk to your neighbour or the resident if you are affected by smoke from their property. If talking to your neighbour doesn't address the problem, you can talk to us by reporting hazardous open-air burning. Call **9240 1111**, email info@merri-bek.vic.gov.au or visit merri-bek.vic.gov.au/public-health-safety



Nepali Storytime

Step into a world of stories, songs, and crafts at Nepali Storytime!

Perfect for kids and families, this fun, interactive session is held in Nepali, and everyone is welcome.

No bookings needed.

➔ **First and third Wednesday of each month, 6:30 pm**

Glenroy Library
50 Wheatsheaf Road, Glenroy
8311 4100 | libraryevents@merri-bek.vic.gov.au



Girls' and Women-Only Boxing Classes

Get fit, have fun, and boost your mood with weekly boxing sessions! Learn shadow boxing, bag work, and strength exercises in a supportive, all-women environment.

➔ **Tuesdays, 5:30–6:30 pm**

Oxygen Youth Space
4–8 Gaffney Street,
Coburg North
1800 699 688 | merribekyouth@merri-bek.vic.gov.au



Glenroy Library Community Food Swap

Swap homegrown produce, seeds, recipes, and more while meeting fellow locals! A fun, sustainable way to share and discover new goodies. No bookings needed, just bring something to swap.

➔ **Saturday 6 December, 2–3 pm**

Glenroy Library
50 Wheatsheaf Road
8311 4100



Merri-bek End of Year Business Gathering

Wrap up 2025 with an evening of connection, celebration and inspiration. Join businesses from across Merri-bek as we toast the year's achievements and look ahead to the opportunities of 2026.

➔ **Tuesday 9 December, 5:30 pm**

Post Office Hotel
229–231 Sydney Road, Coburg

SAVE THE DATE

Carols by the Lake 2025

Saturday 6 December, 6:30–9:00 pm

Join us for a magical evening of festive cheer by the lake.

Coburg Night Market 2025

Thursday 11 – Saturday 13 December, Bridges Reserve

Three nights of food, handmade treasures, live music, and family fun!

Image credit – Coburg Night Market 2024, Simon Fazio



Works in your area



Holbrook Reserve new sports pavilion, Brunswick West

A new eco-friendly pavilion is coming to Holbrook Reserve, Brunswick West. It will feature gender-inclusive change rooms, upgraded amenities, accessible facilities, and social spaces, creating a welcoming, sustainable environment that supports local sports and community events.



New park on York Street, Pascoe Vale South

As part of our Park Close to Home initiative, a new park is undergoing construction and will feature accessible play equipment, a grassed area, barbecues, bike parking, toilets, and drinking fountains. Designed with community input, it will be a welcoming space for play, picnics, and relaxation.



Narre Narre Stadium, Oak Park

Narre Narre Stadium in Oak Park is getting a major upgrade with a refurbished basketball court. Works include replacing the floor and subfloor and installing a high-performance sports surface, creating a safe, durable, and high-quality space for the community.



Moomba Park Pavilion upgrade, Fawkner

Moomba Park Pavilion is being upgraded with modern, gender-inclusive change rooms, showers, a match officials' room, first aid area, kitchen, kiosk, and social spaces. The improvements will create an inclusive, accessible, and sustainable facility for players, officials, and the community. The current project budget is approximately \$2.3 Million.



Harding Street Bridge Replacement, Coburg

The Harding Street Bridge over Merri Creek is being replaced to improve safety, accessibility, and durability. Following extensive community consultation with Merri-bek and Darebin residents, the feedback is shaping the final design, ensuring the new bridge remains a key, welcoming link for walkers, cyclists, and nature lovers.



Gervase Avenue Reserve upgrade, Glenroy

Park upgrades have begun with a relocated playspace, new gathering area with seating and shelter, a half basketball court, access paths, shade trees, and garden beds, creating a safer, more enjoyable space for the community.

Your local Councillors



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0417 583 664
SBolton@merri-bek.vic.gov.au



Box Forest Ward
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CMiles@merri-bek.vic.gov.au



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