



**Merri-bek**  
City Council



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**May/June 2026**

# Merri-bek Community News

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## **Celebrated young artist transforms Oxygen Youth Space**

A bright new mural now graces the exterior of Oxygen Youth Space, painted by Njarala Paton, a Brunswick-based Year 12 student and emerging First Nations artist of Ngarigo Monero, Gunai and Gunditjmara heritage.

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.



## Message from our Mayor

Councillor Nat Abboud

Welcome to your latest edition of Merri-bek Community News.

As the days get cooler and wombats venture out to forage in the winter sun, we're in Waring, Wombat Season on the Wurundjeri calendar. There's still plenty happening across our community: events to enjoy, places to discover and ways to get involved.

I'm delighted to share that a stunning new mural now graces Oxygen Youth Space, created by Njarala Paton — a Brunswick-based Year 12 student and emerging First Nations artist. The youngest of just 5 artists commissioned as part of the historic First Peoples Treaty process, her work weaves cultural knowledge with a bold, contemporary style.

This issue also highlights the wonderful work happening across our 7 Neighbourhood Houses. They are welcoming, inclusive spaces shaped by the people who use them. Whether you're looking to learn something new, meet your neighbours or volunteer, your local Neighbourhood House has something for you. Turn to pages 4 and 5 to find out more, or pages 6 and 7 to read in your language.

Across Merri-bek, parks and open spaces continue to be upgraded and improved. Check the back page for the latest updates on works in your area.

Finally, if you or someone you know is aged 65 or over, our free Home Safety Check is well worth a look. Read more on page 10.

Enjoy this edition, and stay warm out there.

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### Accessible to everyone

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### Speak with us in your language



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

如需了解更多您语言版本的信息，请致电 **9280 0750**

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

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

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

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

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

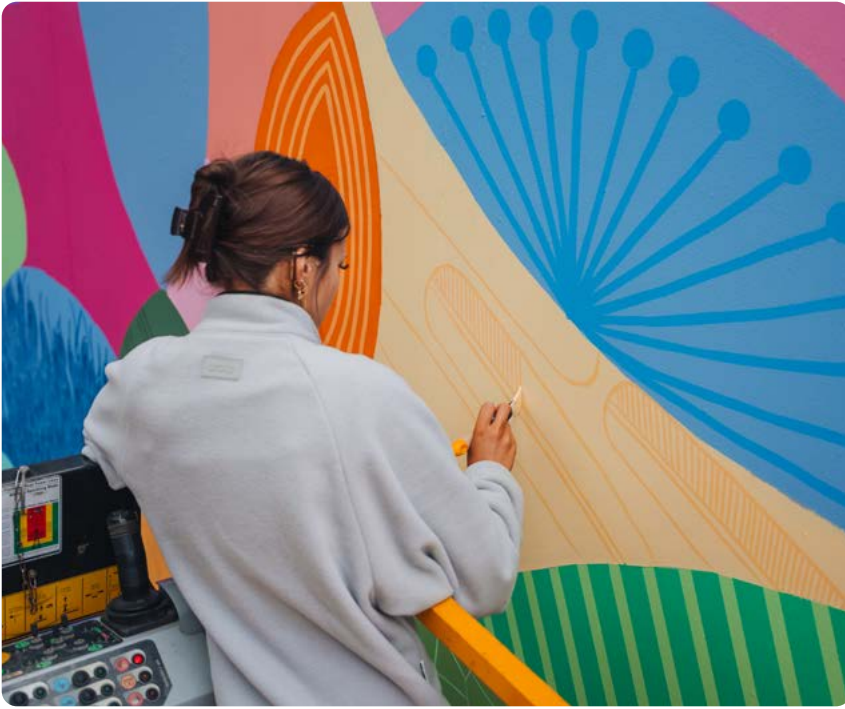
अपनी भाषा में अधिक जानने के लिए,  
**9280 1918** पर कॉल करें

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

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

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

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



Njarala Paton working on her bright, new mural at Oxygen Youth Space.

## Celebrated young artist transforms Oxygen Youth Space

A bright new mural now graces the exterior of Oxygen Youth Space, painted by Njarala Paton, a Brunswick-based Year 12 student and emerging First Nations artist of Ngarigo Monero, Gunai and Gunditjmara heritage.

Beginning with a sketch on an iPad, Njarala scaled the design onto the wall using a grid, painting the large-scale work over a number of weeks during the autumn school holidays.

Njarala is the youngest of just 5 artists commissioned to represent regions of Victoria as part of the historic First Peoples Treaty process. When asked about the commission, Njarala says it felt special to be chosen for the project.

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**“It’s cool, especially being the youngest one and to have my artwork represent the south-east region of Victoria,” Njarala reflects.**

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“It’s special to share what I’ve learned from my family, my great grandpa and great grandma especially who were well recognised artists,” Njarala reflects. “I’m pretty inspired by them.”

“My uncles also work on shields, and one has a canoe in the museum. You can see some of those similar shapes in my mural. But I’ve used bolder colours, not as many neutral ones.”

Knowledge carried forward is visible in the mural itself, which weaves methods passed down through Njarala’s family with her own bold, contemporary style.

The result brings local knowledge, innovative art and a strong emerging voice to this much-loved community space.



ENOKi. Yurringa, Yurri, Yurratha (detail), 2026, digital illustration.

## First Peoples arts thriving across Merri-bek

Njarala’s mural is one of many powerful expressions of First Peoples arts across Merri-bek.


This year’s Brunswick Music Festival featured First Peoples artists throughout the program – from Worimi sound composer Leon Rodgers’ immersive exhibition GULAN to closing night performances by Pirritu (Ngiyampaa) and Fred Leone (Butchulla) at Gilpin Park

Since September 2025, Merri-bek has welcomed a dedicated First Peoples Arts Officer to support self-determined programming across the municipality. A mural honouring Treaty for Victoria by Robert Michael Young (Gunnai, Wiradjuri, Gunditjmara, Yorta Yorta and Bunurong) has also been installed at Fleming Park in Brunswick East.

You can also head down to Counihan Gallery to see Dja Dja Wurrung/Yorta Yorta artist, ENOKi’s MULANA until Sunday 19 July.

ENOKi’s work has graced the Sydney Opera House and is now showing locally at Coburg Library and Brunswick’s Michelle Guglielmo Park.

**Follow Arts Merri-bek to stay across upcoming events:**

 [artsmerri\\_bek](https://www.instagram.com/artsmerri_bek)



New to Melbourne, Shanta made friends and learnt new skills at the cooking class. "It was a wonderful experience."

## Where community comes to life – your Neighbourhood House

Just around the corner is a place where you will always find a warm welcome. Merri-bek's 7 Neighbourhood Houses are spaces for the community to gather, to learn, to share stories and to feel a sense of belonging.

Every Neighbourhood House reflects its local area, offering a mix of social, creative, educational and support programs for people of all ages and backgrounds. You might pick up a new hobby, improve your English, get help with digital skills, or simply enjoy a cuppa and a conversation.

Whether you're new to the area, looking to meet people, or wanting to get more involved locally, your Neighbourhood House is a place to feel connected and included.

Drop in for a chat with staff about what's on, share an idea or find out about volunteering opportunities. Neighbourhood Houses rely on the generosity of local people.

### **Brunswick Neighbourhood House** 43a De Carle Street, Brunswick

#### **Cook, connect, share**

The Cook & Cater Program at Brunswick Neighbourhood House is a great example of what Neighbourhood Houses are all about. Led by chef Cassandra Hogan, this fun, hands-on course teaches you to prepare delicious dishes from around the world — think spinach rotolo, Korean banchan and more — while also helping prepare the free Community Lunch. It's a space to build confidence, learn practical skills and meet people you might not otherwise cross paths with.

Recent participant Shanta loved the experience: "I made friends, learnt recipes from different cultures, and felt a real sense of acceptance and sharing."



#### **Cook & Cater Program:**

Thursdays, 9.30am – 1.30pm during term time. \$75 (\$65 concession, ACFE eligibility applies). Term 3 starts 13 July. Book via [bnhc.vic.edu.au](http://bnhc.vic.edu.au) or call **9386 9418**.

#### **Free Community Lunch:**

Second and fourth Thursday of the month, 12pm. Everyone welcome. Come along for a delicious vegetarian meal.

## What's on this winter

Contact your local Neighbourhood House to find out about the many more courses, activities and events on offer.



### **NECCHi East Coburg Neighbourhood House**

32 Nicholson Street  
Coburg

#### **De-Stash: Textile Craft Mornings**

Got fabric sitting around? Bring it along and make something new with locals. All skill levels welcome, we learn from each other. Morning tea and machines provided.

Monday mornings, 10am – 12pm, until Monday 22 June. Call **9913 5472** or email [enquiries@necchi.org](mailto:enquiries@necchi.org)



### **Sussex Neighbourhood House**

7 Prospect Street  
Pascoe Vale

#### **Pascoe Vale Repair Cafe**

Don't throw it away, fix it! Bring broken or worn items to the Repair Cafe, where volunteers are ready to help. Bikes, clothing and more welcome.

1st Sunday of every month, 10am – 1pm. Call **9354 2210** or email [enquiries@sussexnh.org.au](mailto:enquiries@sussexnh.org.au)



### **Fawkner Neighbourhood House**

79 Jukes Road  
Fawkner

#### **High School Homework Support**

Bring your homework and we'll provide a quiet space, a helping hand, and the tools to study with confidence. Snacks provided! All volunteers have WWCC and Police Checks.

Wednesdays 3.15pm – 5.15pm, until and including Wednesday 17 June. Call **9359 1824** or email [michelle@fawknernh.org.au](mailto:michelle@fawknernh.org.au)



### **Glenroy Neighbourhood House**

5B Cromwell Street  
Glenroy

#### **Walk and Talk Group**

Join our free social walking group — good for your body, better with company. Come along to explore the local area, move well and meet new people. Registration required.

Wednesdays, 9.30 – 10.30am. Call **9304 3910** or email [admin@gnh.org.au](mailto:admin@gnh.org.au)



### **NECCHi Newlands Neighbourhood House**

20 Murray Road  
Coburg North

#### **Rainbow Playgroup**

Are you part of an LGBTIQ+ family? Join this parent-led playgroup. Drop in any time, all ages welcome. Come connect, play and build community.

Fridays at 3pm. 5, 12, 19 and 26 June. Call **8528 2332** or email [enquiries@necchi.org](mailto:enquiries@necchi.org)



### **Reynard Street Neighbourhood House**

104a Reynard Street  
Coburg

#### **Seeds of Change**

Join our nurturing gardening program for women and non-binary people. Horticultural education, volunteering and employment pathways will be explored.

Monday mornings, starting Term 3. Free. Call **9386 7128** or email [volunteercoordinator@rsnh.org.au](mailto:volunteercoordinator@rsnh.org.au)



### Italian | Italiano

#### Ti piacerebbe far parte della tua comunità locale?

Le Neighbourhood House di Merri-bek sono luoghi del vicinato dove puoi imparare nuove competenze e prendere parte ad attività.

A Merri-Bek ci sono 7 Neighbourhood Houses, incluse quelle a Brunswick, Coburg, Glenroy, Fawkner e a Pascoe Vale.

Le Neighbourhood House offrono programmi educativi, sociali e di supporto per persone di età e culture diverse.

#### Nelle Neighbourhood House puoi:

- partecipare ad attività come arti e artigianato, ginnastica dolce, pranzi comunitari, corsi di informatica, corsi di inglese, gruppi di camminate e programmi per la salute e il benessere
- parlare con il personale dei tuoi interessi e chiedere informazioni sulle attività
- fare volontariato e contribuire a supportare programmi e attività

Visita il nostro sito web per trovare la Neighbourhood House più vicino a te.

### Greek | ελληνικά

#### Θέλετε να γίνετε μέλος της τοπικής σας κοινότητας;

Τα Neighbourhood Houses (Σπίτια της Γειτονιάς) στο Merri-bek είναι τοπικοί χώροι όπου μπορείτε να μάθετε νέες δεξιότητες και να συμμετάσχετε σε δραστηριότητες.

Υπάρχουν 7 Neighbourhood Houses σε όλο το Merri-bek, συμπεριλαμβανομένων των περιοχών Brunswick, Coburg, Glenroy, Fawkner και Pascoe Vale.

Προσφέρουν εκπαιδευτικά, κοινωνικά και υποστηρικτικά προγράμματα για άτομα διαφορετικών ηλικιών και πολιτισμών.

#### Σε ένα Neighbourhood House, μπορείτε να:

- συμμετάσχετε σε δραστηριότητες όπως τέχνες και χειροτεχνίες, ήπια άσκηση, κοινοτικά γεύματα, μαθήματα υπολογιστών, μαθήματα Αγγλικών, ομάδες πεζοπορίας, καθώς και προγράμματα υγείας και ευεξίας
- μιλήσετε στο προσωπικό για τα ενδιαφέροντά σας και να ρωτήσετε για τις δραστηριότητες
- γίνετε εθελοντές και να βοηθήσετε στην υποστήριξη προγραμμάτων και δραστηριοτήτων

Επισκεφθείτε την ιστοσελίδα μας για να βρείτε το πλησιέστερο σε εσάς Neighbourhood House.



## Yaşadığınız bölgede topluluğun bir parçası olmak ister misiniz?

Merri-bek'teki Neighbourhood House (toplum merkezleri), yeni beceriler öğrenebileceğiniz, yeni insanlarla tanışabileceğiniz ve çeşitli etkinliklere katılabileceğiniz yerlerdir.

Merri-bek genelinde Brunswick, Coburg, Glenroy, Fawkner ve Pascoe Vale dahil olmak üzere 7 Neighbourhood House bulunmaktadır.

Bu merkezlerde farklı yaşlardan ve kültürlerden insanlar için eğitim, sosyal ve destek programları sunulmaktadır.

## Bu merkezlerde şunları yapabilirsiniz:

- sanat ve el işi etkinliklerine katılabilir, hafif egzersiz yapabilir, topluluk yemeklerine katılabilir, bilgisayar ve İngilizce kurslarına gidebilir, yürüyüş gruplarına ve sağlık programlarına katılabilirsiniz
- ilgi alanlarınız hakkında çalışanlarla konuşabilir ve etkinlikler hakkında bilgi alabilirsiniz
- gönüllü olabilir ve programlara ile etkinliklere destek olabilirsiniz

Size en yakın merkezi bulmak için web sitemizi ziyaret edin.

## في Neighbourhood Houses يمكنك:

• المشاركة في أنشطة متنوعة مثل الفنون والحرف اليدوية، والتمارين الرياضية الخفيفة، ووجبات الغداء الجماعية، ودروس الحاسوب، ودروس اللغة الإنجليزية، ومجموعات المشي، وبرامج الصحة والعافية

• تحدث إلى الموظفين واستفسر عن اهتماماتك والأنشطة المتاحة

• التطوع والمساعدة في دعم البرامج والأنشطة

تفضل بزيارة موقعنا الإلكتروني للعثور على أقرب Neighbourhood Houses إليك

## هل ترغب في أن تكون جزءًا من مجتمعك المحلي؟

Neighbourhood Houses في Merri-bek هي أماكن محلية يمكنك فيها تعلم مهارات جديدة والمشاركة في أنشطة متنوعة

s يوجد سبعة Neighbourhood House في Merri-bek بما في ذلك Brunswick, Coburg, Glenroy, Fawkner و .Pascoe Vale

تقدم هذه المراكز برامج تعليمية واجتماعية وهي داعمة للأشخاص من مختلف الأعمار والثقافات





A Community Grant helped The Bike Shed at CERES get over 100 bikes to people who needed them most last year, says Manager Andrew Stark.

## Grants to help your community thrive

Our Community Grants Program is here to support the people and groups who make our neighbourhoods such vibrant places to live. Whether you're running a community project, organising activities that bring people together, or simply keeping a local group going, there may be funding available to help.

Andrew Stark manages The Bike Shed at CERES in Brunswick, where volunteers repair and redistribute donated bikes, and secondhand bikes find new homes through weekend sales. A Community Strengthening Grant from Merri-bek Council in 2025 gave the shed a real boost.

"Last year we got 100 bikes out for charity," Andrew says. "The grant meant we could make sure every single one had a helmet, light set and lock to go with it. We also used some of the grant money to buy repair tools. It's been really helpful."

The grant gave the shed the financial security to explore what it could do. "This year," Andrew adds, "even without the grant, we're pretty much getting the

same amount of bikes ready. It just gave us the push and the confidence to really get there."

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### Grants currently open

#### Community Participation Grant

Got a community idea that can't wait? This grant provides quick-response funding for programs and activities that build participation and connection, including projects that fall outside the usual annual grants cycle. Community groups and organisations can apply for up to \$3,000 per project.

#### Membership Activity Grant

If you're part of a local incorporated group that meets regularly to tackle isolation and keep community life active, this grant is for you. Eligible Merri-bek-based groups can receive up to \$3,000 per year for 3 years — helping cover the everyday costs that keep a group running, from transport and refreshments to insurance and shared meals.

To find out more or apply, visit [merri-bek.vic.gov.au/community-grants-2026](https://merri-bek.vic.gov.au/community-grants-2026)

## Time for a Local Law refresh

### What is the General Local Law?

The General Local Law sets out the rules Council uses to keep Merri-bek safe, clean and liveable for everyone. And we want to hear from you about it. Just some of the rules we're looking to change relate to:

- Managing overgrown or dangerous land.
- Keeping pets and animals on private property.
- Improving vehicle and road safety.
- Protecting Council assets and better management of building sites.

### Why is the General Local Law under review?

Our community changes over time, and our Local Law should too. A review helps make sure the rules still protect people's health, safety and shared spaces.

### Where we're at

Thank you to everyone who shared their thoughts during Round 1 of consultation. We're now reviewing your feedback to help draft a new Local Law.

## Round 2 is coming up in September

Sign up to Conversations Merri-bek, to be notified when it opens and have your say on the Draft Local Law **from 14 September to 11 October 2026.**

To learn more visit

➔ [conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/local-law](https://conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/local-law)





A member of the Forest Establishment Team, Susie helps plant around 2,500 across Merri-bek each year.

## Merri-bek's tree planting season is underway

Winter might not seem like obvious planting weather, but it's actually the perfect season. Cooler, wetter conditions give newly planted trees the best chance to establish before summer heat arrives.

Each year, Council plants around 2,500 trees across your streets and parks. It's part of a long-term goal to double canopy coverage across Merri-bek by 2050, helping to cool our neighbourhoods as the climate warms.

Trees do more than provide shade. They clean the air, reduce stormwater runoff, support wildlife, and add real economic value by maintaining property prices, supporting local businesses, and cutting the long-term costs of heat and flooding.

For the planting team, it's also about the long game. The trees going in this winter will still be growing long after we're gone. They will provide shade, clean air and cooler streets for future generations.

### The people behind the planting

Planting a street tree is more hands-on than you might expect. There's a lot of care that goes into every single one.

Susie Garth from Council's Forest Establishment team has watched trees lost to old age, vandalism, and the pressure of new driveways and subdivisions.

For Susie, being part of the team that replants and restores that canopy, and watching those trees grow year after year, makes the work feel worthwhile. "Everything in life needs trees to survive, and trees need help from us to survive," she says.

Most holes are dug by hand to avoid damaging underground services. Before planting, Council's tree team carefully considers species and site selection. It's one of the most important steps in the process.

Each tree is then planted with:

- charcoal and gypsum for a strong start
- a water well for deep watering on maintenance runs
- stakes and ties that support the tree while still allowing it to move and develop
- mulch to lock in moisture and feed the soil.

It's this combination of careful planning and hands-on work that gives every tree the best chance of growing strong for generations to come.

### Come and plant with us

Join Council and volunteers on the ground for National Tree Day, one of Australia's biggest community planting events.

**When:** Sunday 26 July, 10am – 12pm

**Where:** Edgars Creek Parkland  
104–110 Newlands Road, Coburg North

Gloves and equipment provided.

Please wear sturdy, closed-toe shoes.

All welcome. BBQ provided.

Learn more at [merri-bek.vic.gov.au/plant2026](https://merri-bek.vic.gov.au/plant2026) or call **9240 1111**.

## A free check-up for your home

Our Home Maintenance Service has been helping older residents live safely and comfortably at home for years, and we've recently added something new.

If you're aged 65 or over and registered with My Aged Care, you may be eligible for a free Home Safety Check. One of our friendly, experienced staff will come to your home and check everything from door and window locks to smoke alarms, taps, light globes, fly screens and more. It's also a great chance to chat through any concerns and get some practical advice.

If anything needs attention, repairs can be arranged for a small fee covering time and materials.

The response so far has been positive. Brunswick-resident Monika loved the thoroughness of her visit:

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**"We found some things to be repaired, small things but important things. I'm so happy that Council offered this free service check."**

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Donald, from East Brunswick, was equally happy: "They explained everything to me, what they were going to check. I was so happy with the service."

To book a free Home Safety Check or find out more about our Home Maintenance Service, call **9240 2302**. For a My Aged Care referral, call **1800 200 422**.



Fawkner resident Zavi has upgraded her home through the program.

## Ready to go all-electric? Lower bills, cleaner energy

Join other Merri-bek residents such as Zavi in Fawkner who has upgraded her home to all-electric to bring down her family's bills and fuel costs, and to switch to clean, green energy.

"We need to leave something better for our future generations," Zavi says. "So for me it was crucial to get the solar panels installed and to make my home all electric."

Not sure where to start? Access quotes from trusted, council-vetted suppliers through 1 simple process.

Merri-bek has partnered with Solar Savers to help you access quality energy upgrades and services, including solar systems and battery storage, split system heating and cooling, electric vehicle chargers and much more.

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Get quotes to go electric at  
[➔ zerocarbonmerri-bek.org.au/electrify](https://zerocarbonmerri-bek.org.au/electrify)



## National Simultaneous Storytime celebration

Let's read the picture book Luna ROO all together! For kids and families. Celebrate the joy of reading, storytelling and connection. Free. No need to book.

➔ **Wednesday 27 May, 11.45am**  
Coburg Library, Corner Victoria and Louisa Streets  
9353 4000 | [libraryevents@merri-bek.vic.gov.au](mailto:libraryevents@merri-bek.vic.gov.au)



## Conversation Café

If English is not your first language and you would like to practice, or participate in some interesting intercultural conversations. Join a friendly and relaxed group.

➔ **Every Thursday 7.30 to 8.30pm**  
Glenroy Library,  
50 Wheatsheaf Road  
8311 4100 | [libraryevents@merri-bek.vic.gov.au](mailto:libraryevents@merri-bek.vic.gov.au)



## World Environment Day

Celebrate World Environment Day with Merri-bek's multicultural communities. Hear faith leaders speak on sustainability, meet locals championing eco-friendly living, and share a delicious communal lunch. Activities for all ages.

➔ **Saturday 13 June, 11am to 1pm**  
Fawkner Community Sport Hall,  
77 Jukes Road, Fawkner  
[zerocarbonmerri-bek.org.au/environment-day](https://zerocarbonmerri-bek.org.au/environment-day)



## Sleep and settling support for you and your baby

Did you know you can get 24/7 phone advice from our qualified nurses? Call the MCH Line on **13 22 29** anytime for free, confidential advice from a qualified MCH nurse, or drop into your local Maternal and Child Health Centre.



## Council meetings

Did you know that we livestream and record our Council meetings? Council holds meetings to conduct the business of Merri-bek. Councillors represent the local community in making important decisions that affect how Merri-bek is run. Community members can also submit questions and statements online to be read at the meetings.

➔ **When: 10 June and 8 July, 6.30pm**  
**Where:** Online at [merri-bek.vic.gov.au/livestream-meetings](https://merri-bek.vic.gov.au/livestream-meetings)

## Works in your area



### ATC Cook Reserve, Glenroy

Fencing improvements are complete. A new accessible concrete path has replaced the existing gravel circuit. Replacement fencing and solar light works currently underway.



### Morris Reserve, Pascoe Vale South

Plumbing and drainage works are underway. Street art is brightening the CityLink laneway, including a nod to a local beekeeper. A solar light for safety, fitness stations, new seating, and a playspace all coming soon.



### Ivan Page Reserve, Glenroy

Park upgrades are underway. Garden beds, log and rock edging, and a drinking fountain have been installed. Crews are currently installing shade sails, irrigation, play equipment and more. The park will reopen in June.



### Dunstan Reserve Childcare Centre, Brunswick West

To support future kindergarten programs, we are expanding the Dunstan Reserve Childcare Centre, increasing capacity from 72 to 94 kindergarten places. The project includes a new kindergarten room, a new outdoor play space and more.



### A new library and piazza, Coburg

We're excited to share the draft concept design for the new Coburg Library and Piazza, bringing a modern library and green space to the heart of Coburg. Learn more at [conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/coburg-library-piazza](https://conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/coburg-library-piazza)



### Balfe Park flood rectification works, Brunswick East

Balfe Park is a much-loved space for sport, recreation and community life in Brunswick. Works beginning late 2026 will improve drainage, reshape the playing surface, and make it safer and more sustainable.

## Your local Councillors



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