



Maribyrnong
CITY COUNCIL

MARIBYRNONG

MESSENGER

Winter 2025

www.maribyrnong.vic.gov.au

MEET OUR
CITIZEN OF
THE YEAR:
RANDA
BEIROUTI

NEW
FOOTSCRAY
MURAL TO
HONOUR
AUNTY MARGE
TUCKER MBE

NEW KINDERGARTEN
OPENING IN
MARIBYRNONG



A MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Welcome to the Winter edition of Maribyrnong Messenger.

It was a pleasure to recognise our local heroes in the 2025 Civic Awards Ceremony – and to do so in our new facilities was a highlight also. You can read more about our Citizen of the Year, Randa Beirouti on page 4, along with the rest of our heroes that make a positive difference in our community on page 6.

Also aimed at making an impact in our municipality is Council's Community Grants program – applications will open in July. Visit our website for further details:

maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/communitygrants

The City of Maribyrnong prides itself on being an inclusive community, and it is one of the aspects I love most about our community. Reconciliation Week (27 May-3 June) and NAIDOC Week (6-13 July) are two significant milestones that Council supports and recognises as a way to learn about our shared histories, culture, and achievements, including exploration into ways in which we can all contribute to reconciliation efforts in Australia. Please head to our website to learn more about the ways you can get involved. I urge our community to get involved and experience events to progress and celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Thank you to everyone who shared their feedback – in-person and online – on the Proposed Annual Budget and Draft Revenue and Rating Plan. In 2025/26, we are proposing a budget of \$144.78 million to prioritise essential services and community needs, with a focus on road maintenance, major projects, and open space. The Proposed Annual Budget is also based on a 3 per cent increase in total rates revenue in line with the rates cap. Like other Councils in Victoria, we are also facing significant financial challenges with the costs of delivering services and infrastructure increasing, along with our population. Council manages community funds supporting delivery of a number of services to nearly 92,000 residents, and we have prepared a Proposed Budget that shows our continued investment in some of the core functions our community values.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of Maribyrnong Messenger.

**Councillor
Pradeep Tiwari,
Mayor of the City
of Maribyrnong**



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COUNCIL MEETING DATES

The meetings will be held at the Civic Precinct and Community Hub, 61 Napier Street, Footscray.

JUNE

Tuesday 17 June, 6:30pm: Council

Wednesday 18 June, 6.30pm: City Development Delegated Committee

JULY

Tuesday 22 July, 6.30pm: Council

Tuesday 29 July, 6.30pm: City Development Delegated Committee

AUGUST

Tuesday 19 August, 6:30pm: Council

Tuesday 26 August, 6.30pm: City Development Delegated Committee

Meetings are live streamed via Council's YouTube channel, and community members can submit questions for public question time online before the meeting commences.

Please note the meeting schedule is current at the time of printing. Visit **maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/meetings** or phone **9688 0200** for more information.



FOOTSCRAY: PROUD PAST, VIBRANT PRESENT AND BRIGHT FUTURE

Footscray is a vibrant and culturally-diverse suburb with a long history, and a community passionate about its success.

A thriving hub of arts, culture, community, and recreation, Footscray is growing in popularity as a place to live, with more than 7,000 new houses completed, underway or approved in the previous 10 years.

Footscray is in the midst of a period of revitalisation – from community amenity, community safety, public art, economic and cultural development, and open space and recreation upgrades.

Key improvements in the CBD include the installation of new lighting infrastructure, and the activation of previously empty shopfronts, turning them into thriving community spaces. Byron Plaza has undergone improvement works, and a project to increase plantings is being implemented in the laneway next to the Barkly Street Chemist Warehouse.

Council is also dedicated to event activation and event support through programs like Love Your West and grants funding. Data from Spendmapp shows Footscray has seen a 30 per cent increase in spending at retail and hospitality businesses between 2019 and 2025.

The arts sector has welcomed the launch of the Creative Places Pilot Program, which provides creative spaces in under-utilised commercial properties in the Footscray CBD, as exhibition spaces, shopfronts and workshops.

At Madder Square, works will soon be underway to resurface 220 square metres of concrete for the installation of a half-court for ball sports. Another tree planting project will be completed by June at the northern end of Nicholson Street. In the past 12 months, Council has also completed the construction of Lilardia Park, as well as completed the transformation of Footscray Park's Western Lawn.

Council continues to advocate to the State Government for a portion of the current Footscray Hospital site – once the new hospital is open – for use as open space and affordable housing.

Community safety is a high priority for Council, and we are working with community service providers and Victoria Police to provide a safe City for our residents and visitors.

Council maintains a CCTV system in the Footscray CBD, has installed additional lighting and reconstructed Dalmahoy Street for greater community amenity – all to support community safety.

We also remain committed to a partnership-based approach with our community leaders and traders, seeking long-term solutions to the social and mental health challenges impacting Footscray.

This includes considering additional investment to support improved amenity in Footscray, and strongly advocating to the State Government and relevant authorities for increased support services in the West.

For more information, visit maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/footscraycbd



LOVE ALL, SERVE ALL:

SELFLESS SERVICE FROM THE HEART

CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST CESAR CHAVEZ ONCE SAID 'PEOPLE WHO GIVE YOU THEIR FOOD, GIVE YOU THEIR HEART' – AND THAT PERFECTLY SUMS UP WHAT RANDA BEIROUTI DOES FOR HER COMMUNITY.

Randa Beirouti's desire to help as many people as possible close to home has led to an operation that unifies the generosity of 130 volunteers, several businesses and the wider inner west community.

Every Monday night in Nicholson Street Mall, you will be able to see Reaching Out in the Inner West of Melbourne providing meals, fresh produce and health necessities to community members in need.

Originally servicing Melbourne's northern suburbs, Randa decided to turn her attention to Footscray.

"To be truly human is to be able to support one another. And that's my life's dedication – for serving other people in need, as is the charity's purpose," Randa said.

When she started at the organisation 13 years ago, Reaching Out in the Inner West of Melbourne wasn't a charity organisation, instead they started by simply providing food and clothing for people in need. All that changed in 2020 when the organisation began supporting about 50 people a week.

"As soon as COVID hit, we had to become an incorporated body – we technically weren't a charity before that. Within a week, the organisation was incorporated and we didn't miss a single Monday in providing support for those in need in the community," Randa said.

In the first few weeks following COVID, there were very few people on the street, and about 10 people sought support. As the community rode out the COVID wave, the need for support did not diminish, and as time went on, more people began showing up on Monday nights.

"In the last 18 months it's grown from about 200 people, up to 500-600 people," Randa said.

It is a massive operation, with 130 volunteers including 20 cooks, 13 vehicles, and numerous businesses and organisations who support them.

The charity's week begins on Monday when Randa and a contingent of volunteers load prepared meals, fresh produce and goods and provide the Nicholson Street Mall outreach service.

With so much generosity for donations and support, the charity has been able to expand its operations.

"We have a Wednesday outreach in the car park at Footscray's Baptist Church on Paisley Street. Twice a week we have food for Unison Housing and Housing Commission, and our three street pantries at Gordon Street Little Pantry, Pilgrim Open Pantry and Paisley Street, which are stocked up to four times a week," Randa said.

"In excess of 1,000 people are supported each week, on a regular basis."

On a Friday, cooks pick up their ingredients to make the 400 meals over the weekend that will be used for the following Monday night.

"The cohort of people seeking support has changed dramatically. Previously it was a few people experiencing



homelessness, and while they are certainly still there, coming out of COVID, it can be anybody.

"About 60 per cent of people we service on Mondays are young people – international students who are struggling." Randa said one thing the international students always needed was warm clothing and bedding.

"We are on the lookout for jackets and blankets as we head into winter – and we'll still be giving them away in December, that's Melbourne weather for you," she said.

"We would also love more volunteers – whatever time you have to give. But you have to be willing from the heart. Our motto is: Love all, serve all."

Randa's love of and dedication to her community was recognised at the 2025 Civic Awards in late March, where she received the Citizen of the Year Award.

"I am appreciative for it, and it's actually really good for the charity, and it's good for the people that are receiving the service. And if it attracts more people to help and support us, in terms of donating time or goods, that's good.

"The recognition I dedicate to our charity and our supporters, businesses and volunteers."

To learn more about Reaching Out in the Inner West of Melbourne, to make a donation, or enquire about volunteering, visit www.facebook.com/groups/252482409442971

LOCAL HEROES

NAMED IN 2025 CIVIC AWARDS PRESENTATION

COUNCIL HELD ITS ANNUAL CIVIC AWARDS PRESENTATION ON 27 MARCH 2025, A MOMENTOUS OCCASION TO RECOGNISE, CONGRATULATE, AND SHOW OUR APPRECIATION TO THE LOCAL HEROES AND BUSINESSES THAT MAKE OUR CITY UNIQUELY MARIBYRNONG.



All the nominees have played an important role in helping make our City a great place to work, study, visit and play. From our volunteers, businesses, those involved in sports and the arts; to those who bring people together through to leadership and support – it is this connection to community that is irreplaceable.

This year's Civic Award winners reflect this in the best possible way, and recognise the everyday heroes that contribute to Maribyrnong being a beacon of community strength.

Congratulations to the winners and nominees for their efforts in contributing to our City, making it a destination where everyone feels welcome and supported.



CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARD

RANDA BEIROUTI



CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARD:

Randa Beirouti

Randa is passionate about helping people experiencing homelessness and hardship, through the charity Reaching Out in the Inner West, which she has been part of for the past 13 years.

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD:

Angela Ashley-Chiew

Angela is a dedicated community organiser and climate advocate with over a decade of service in the City of Maribyrnong.

LES TWENTYMAN YOUTH LEADERSHIP AWARD:

EDWARD LE

Edward has committed much of his time to supporting the people of Maribyrnong, particularly young people.

COMMUNITY STRENGTHENING AWARD:

L2R Dance

Since its establishment, L2R Dance has become a prominent community-driven organisation, offering free dance programs across Melbourne's West, with a focus on young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

ENTERPRISE MARIBYRNONG INNOVATIVE BUSINESS AWARD:

Reem Sweid, The Chestnut Tree

The Chestnut Tree has become a local institution, positively impacting the community by providing a space that fosters social connections, supports local authors, and boosts West Footscray's reputation as a cultural destination.

ENTERPRISE MARIBYRNONG AWARD FOR NEW AND EMERGING BUSINESS:

Azhar Habib, Little Africa Precinct

Azhar has been a tireless advocate for the Little Africa Precinct in Footscray, where he has made significant contributions to improving the local trading environment as the inaugural president of the Little Africa Traders group.

ENTERPRISE MARIBYRNONG CONTRIBUTION TO BUSINESS COMMUNITY AWARD:

Vincent Verduci, Verduci Lawyers

Vincent has made a significant impact in the Footscray business community through his successful 55-year career as a legal practitioner. Vincent was the youngest ever Mayor of the City of Footscray in 1977 and served as a local Councillor for nine years.

ARTS AWARD:

The Art Room, Erika Gofton and Ilona Nelson

The Art Room stands out for its inclusive, empowering environment, especially for women, advocating for women's empowerment and creative expression through exhibitions, talks, and a supportive space for artists.

ACTIVE MARIBYRNONG SPORTING AWARD:

Maribyrnong Swifts Football Club

The Maribyrnong Swifts Football Club is a leader in promoting inclusivity and gender equality in sports, by offering a wide range of football programs catering to women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals of all ages and abilities.

LGBTIQA+ LEADERSHIP AWARD:

The Iceberg Foundation

The Iceberg Foundation is a trailblazer in supporting LGBTIQA+ communities, particularly forcibly displaced individuals, black, Indigenous and people of colour (BIPOC), and neurodivergent people.

MAYORAL AWARD:

Stacey Earsman

Through her café, Stacey has cultivated a welcoming environment where people from all backgrounds can come together and enjoy a shared love of coffee. Her commitment to inclusivity and supporting the local community is reflected in every aspect of her business.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

SINCE JULY 2024, COUNCIL HAS BEEN ENGAGING WITH THE COMMUNITY ON KEY AREAS YOU WOULD LIKE US TO FOCUS ON IN THE MUNICIPALITY.



SETTING THE FUTURE DIRECTION FOR THE CITY OF MARIBYRNONG

The community's thinking has been encapsulated in a proposed updated Community Vision, a draft four-year Council Plan, a draft Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, as well as reviews of the Asset and Financial plans.

So far, around 2,500 residents have been engaged and have provided 700 comments online or at in-person events, and through a deliberative engagement process. Feedback included support for maintaining or improving current services, support for infrastructure to keep pace with our growing population, and a willingness to accept higher-up front costs for more sustainable outcomes and cost savings in the future.

This feedback has helped inform the draft Council Plan 2025-29, one of our key documents that underpins our strategic direction over the next four years, along with the updated Asset and Financial plans and the draft Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan.

For the first time, the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan is a standalone document that considers where local government is best placed to take action.

We are now sharing the draft documents for community feedback to ensure we captured your thinking correctly. You can share your feedback online or by speaking to Council staff at an in-person engagement event until midnight Sunday 15 June 2025.

Be part of the conversation at yourcityyourvoice.com.au/communityplan

DISCUSSING THE PLANS FOR FUTURE HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS

With an estimated 155,000 new Maribyrnong residents needing 71,200 dwellings by 2051, it is important we have enough housing in the right locations to create neighbourhoods that are liveable and sustainable.

Council began a conversation with the community last year to understand their ideas and priorities on how we can accommodate everyone's housing needs, and what residents enjoyed about where they live.

Community feedback indicated that Council should prioritise green and open space along with

proximity to public transport when considering new development. Trees and landscaping, and a high level of design and quality of buildings were also identified as key priorities.

When it comes to choosing where to live, proximity to key services, transport and shops, and affordability were the most important factors for respondents.

Council has now drafted a Discussion Paper, which identifies four key themes to help guide a future Housing Strategy:

- Diverse housing for a thriving and inclusive community
- Growing sustainably with our natural environment
- Enhancing the character and liveability of our neighbourhoods
- Convenient and accessible living.

This Discussion Paper will be shared for community feedback in mid-June 2025 to ensure we have correctly understood the community's priorities and preferences, prior to a draft Housing Strategy being released for feedback later in 2025.

To stay updated you can follow the Housing Strategy at yourcityyourvoice.com.au/housing

NAMING PROPOSAL FOR THE COMMUNITY PARK AT THE CIVIC PRECINCT AND COMMUNITY HUB

In early 2025, Council officially opened the Redeveloped Civic Precinct and Community Hub on the corner of Hyde and Napier streets.

This included a new community park with lawns, picnic tables, benches, water bubblers, and native landscaping. A vibrant curved wall artwork by Indigenous artist Tommy Day III is also in the space, along with a rock gathering circle in the south-east corner of the park.

To reflect the City of Maribyrnong's indigenous history, we have been in conversations with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrong Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation about a proposal for the park's name, and we will soon share this proposal with the community for feedback.

The proposed name is 'balit bargoongagat banhul' – balit bargoongagat translates to strong people linked together (community) and banhul translates to park in Woi-wurrong language.

To learn more about the proposed name, and to share your feedback via the short survey, please visit

yourcityyourvoice.com.au/communitypark

Feedback will open on 28 May and will close 27 June 2025.



STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE THROUGH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS



Pictured recovery program activities.

RESIDENTS ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE UPCOMING COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS DAY, AN EVENT DESIGNED TO EMPOWER THE COMMUNITY WITH ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE AND TOOLS FOR EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

The event will take place on 22 June 2025 and aims to provide local residents with the opportunity to learn vital flood and storm preparedness strategies, while also offering a chance to connect with key organisations involved in preparedness, flood and storm planning.

The initiative follows the 2022 Maribyrnong River flood, which had a significant impact on the local community. In response to this, Council established a Community Recovery Committee (CRC) to gather feedback and insights from residents. The CRC identified preparedness as a priority for both those directly affected by the flood and the wider Maribyrnong community, leading to the development of various programs and activities to support this priority.

The Community Preparedness Day is a unique opportunity for all members of the Maribyrnong community to come together, learn about emergency preparedness, and for some, take the first step in creating their own personalised emergency plans.

The goal is to ensure that everyone, whether impacted by the flood or not, is better prepared for future emergencies. The Community Preparedness Day will be a family-friendly event featuring a wide range of activities. Visitors can engage with emergency preparedness information stalls, where they will learn about the resources available to

enhance their readiness and the importance of having a personal emergency plan. There will also be interactive activities for all ages, including preparedness games aimed at educating kids about safety and emergency readiness.

This event is a collaboration with Moonee Valley City Council and is part of a broader effort by Council to support both flood-affected residents and the wider community. Alongside this event, Council is launching key initiatives to boost preparedness.

This includes the Maribyrnong Neighbourhood Flood Network, where community leaders are trained by VicSES and the Australian Red Cross to share crucial flood-risk and preparedness information with their neighbours.

A Community Planning Day will also be held for flood-impacted residents in Maribyrnong to create a community emergency plan based on learnings from October 2022.

Additionally, a Red Cross REDI Plan workshop will be held in May, followed by several drop-in support sessions to provide additional opportunities for residents to develop and refine their emergency plans with guidance from Australian Red Cross volunteers. These sessions will be held in collaboration with Moonee Valley City Council.

EVENT DETAILS

Community Preparedness Day

Sunday 22 June 2025

Location: Maribyrnong Community Centre, 9 Randall Street, Maribyrnong

More information: maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/Flood

These programs are jointly funded by the Federal and State Governments.

MAKE THE PLEDGE THIS PLASTIC FREE JULY

SMALL STEPS, BIG DIFFERENCE

Join millions of people around the world who will be making an effort to reduce landfill and protect the environment this July – by taking small steps together, we can make a real difference.

Although plastics codes 1, 2 and 5 can be recycled via the yellow-lidded mixed recycling bins, other types of plastics are unable to be recycled at all. Therefore, choosing to refuse is key to solving the plastic problem.

Local volunteer Matt from Yarraville's new clean-up group says "the most common plastic items we've picked up are plastic food wrappers and bubble tea cups".

Council is encouraging the community to select one plastic item and swap it for a reusable option during July. For example, swap plastic food wrap for airtight containers or keep a reusable drink container handy.

Plastic Free July isn't about being perfect – it's about starting with small steps that

build sustainable habits into the future.

It only takes a minute to register for Plastic Free July online – remember to include Maribyrnong as your local government area, so your contribution counts towards our collective efforts.

Plastic Free July and Council will be hosting several events including a public celebration at the end of July for all challenge takers in our community. For more information and to register, visit: www.maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/plasticfreejuly

CIVIC PRECINCT AND COMMUNITY HUB EV CHARGERS



A new publicly available electric vehicle (EV) charging hub has been installed at the Civic Precinct and Community Hub in Footscray, featuring three dual DC chargers. Each charger delivers up to 150kW of power, enabling up to six electric vehicles to charge at once.

The addition of this latest site brings the total in Footscray to five fast chargers available across ten charging bays.

Evie Networks is the operator of these chargers, leasing the car spaces from Council for their operation. EV drivers are required to download the Evie app to access the charging services. Information regarding charging fees is available on Evie's website.

DECLUTTERING YOUR HOME? TAKE ADVANTAGE OF COUNCIL'S HARD RUBBISH COLLECTION SERVICE.

Most residents are entitled to one free hard rubbish collection each year, and booking one is simple – just visit our website to request your collection

Typical household items are accepted, but if your items are still in good

condition, we encourage you to donate or reuse wherever possible.

However, items like car batteries, household batteries, gas bottles, used motor oil, e-waste (including white goods), cannot be collected by

this service. You can properly dispose of these items at your local recycling facility.

To request a hard rubbish collection, visit: maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/hardrubbish



AUNTY MARGE TUCKER MBE

TO BE CELEBRATED WITH NEW MURAL IN FOOTSCRAY

COUNCIL HAS WELCOMED GRANT FUNDING FROM THE STATE GOVERNMENT'S VICTORIAN WOMEN IN PUBLIC ART PROGRAM TO CREATE A LARGE-SCALE MURAL CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF AUNTY MARGARET (LILARDIA) TUCKER MBE (AUNTY MARGE), A PROUD YORTA YORTA AND WIRADJURI WOMAN – AT THE LOCAL PARK THAT ALSO CARRIES HER NAME.

Supported by members of the public across Victoria who voted on potential projects throughout the state, a two-wall mural will be installed at Lilardia Park in Footscray, to honour Aunty Marge. It will be produced by Grace Dlabik from BE. ONE CREATIVE and brought to life by an all-female Indigenous creative team, led by Wiradjuri artist, Jessi Rebel, with assistance from Amina Briggs (Boonwurrung, Ugar, Erub), Kiri Tawhai (Whadjuk Noongar, Ngapuhi, Ngati Tuwharetoa) and Kee'ahn Bindol (Yalanji, Jirrbal, Badu islande). Jessi Rebel shares Country with Margaret Tucker and her planned artwork aims to embody the nurturing care, and connection that defined Aunty Marge's work. The commission

ensures her legacy is actively carried forward through the empowerment of Indigenous women in the arts.

Aunty Marge was a passionate Aboriginal rights activist who played a key role in founding the Australian Aborigines' League and in establishing the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service. She made history as the first woman to sit on the Victorian Aboriginal Welfare Board in 1964 and then in 1967, the Commonwealth Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. In 1983, the Margaret Tucker Hostel was established for vulnerable Aboriginal women and children and in 2001, she was inducted to the Victorian Honour Roll of Women, among the first to receive the honour.

As a trailblazer in so many areas, this mural will serve as a lasting reminder of her legacy. It's especially fitting

that it will be placed in Lilardia Park, named in her honour, and that an all-female Indigenous team will carry forward her work of empowering and uplifting the community.

Located in the Joseph Road Precinct in Footscray, Lilardia Park provides residents living in the area with much needed public open space. The \$2.3 million project (including land purchase), jointly funded by the State Government, includes passive open space, garden beds, tree planting, seating areas, and a sheltered picnic space, as requested by the community. The mural, scheduled to be installed in November 2025, will serve as both a tribute to Aunty Marge's pioneering activism and as a symbol of the enduring contributions of Indigenous women to the arts and social justice.



NEW KINDERGARTEN ON TRACK TO OPEN AT MARIBYRNONG COMMUNITY CENTRE

FAMILIES IN MARIBYRNONG WILL HAVE ACCESS TO EXPANDED EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION OPTIONS, WITH THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE NEW KINDERGARTEN AT THE UPGRADED MARIBYRNONG COMMUNITY CENTRE.

The \$2 million redevelopment – including \$1.8 million in funding from the State Government – has transformed the Centre into a modern, welcoming and inclusive space for the local community. As part of the project, 66 new licensed kindergarten places have been created, helping meet the increasing demand for early years education in the area.

The upgraded facility features two purpose-built playrooms, dedicated children's amenities, staff office space, and a secure outdoor play area designed to encourage active exploration and engagement with nature.

The much-loved community centre also received refurbishments to the existing multi-purpose room and amenities; while staying open throughout the works – strengthening the Centre's ability to deliver a wide range of services to the broader community. These include adult education classes, literacy and language programs, health and wellbeing workshops, and a variety of recreational and cultural activities.

The revitalised Maribyrnong Community Centre reflects Council's ongoing commitment to investing in infrastructure that meets the evolving needs of its growing population. Council will be engaging the community to provide feedback on the naming of the kindergarten as the Sarah Carter Kindergarten – in honour of the late Councillor and her significant community contributions. For more information please visit yourcityyourvoice.com.au



TURNING UP THE HEAT: WARM WINTER READS RETURNS

THIS WINTER, MARIBYRNONG LIBRARIES IS CRANKING UP THE COSINESS WITH WARM WINTER READS – A CELEBRATION OF LITERATURE, CREATIVITY, AND COMMUNITY.

Running through the chilly months, the program is packed with something for everyone. Book lovers can gather in cosy book chat groups to share favourites over a complimentary cup of tea or coffee. Short story stations scattered throughout the libraries invite visitors to slow down and sink into bite-sized fiction.

For aspiring writers, the Warm Winter Reads writing competition returns in June and July, with categories for both poetry and seven-sentence stories. Open to all ages, the contest offers prizes across three age brackets: under 12, 13-18, and 18+. Winners will be announced at a special event in August featuring a fast-paced 'pressure cooker style' writing challenge: just 30 minutes to craft a masterpiece!

Also in August, spoken word artists can sharpen their skills in a hands-on workshop before stepping into the spotlight at a Poetry Slam competition, serving as a local heat for a national tournament.

Whether you're writing your first poem or just looking for your next great read, Warm Winter Reads is your library card to a season of storytelling magic. Come in from the cold and into the pages.

For more information please visit maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/library

INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATE



REVITALISATION OF BELOVED LOCAL FACILITY TO BEGIN THIS YEAR

The much-loved Footscray Trugo Club will be getting a facelift, with a modern and functional facility due to be constructed this year to support the Club's activities and enhance community participation.

The Footscray Trugo Club Pavilion Renewal Project will revitalise this historically significant community asset while addressing the evolving needs of the club, with works expected to begin mid-2025.

KICKING DOWN BARRIERS TO FEMALE SPORTS PARTICIPATION

Works are underway to create new female friendly change rooms at McIvor Reserve.

The development addresses the need for compliant and accessible change rooms to support the growing participation of women in soccer, particularly at Yarraville Glory Football Club, where female participation has surged by 357 per cent over the past four years.

The new facility, funded with over \$1 million from the State

Government through the West Gate Neighbourhood Fund as part of the West Gate Tunnel Project, will feature two change rooms, two amenities rooms, and a store room.

This upgrade marks a significant step toward creating an inclusive environment for female athletes, fostering even greater growth and encouraging more women and girls to get involved in sport locally.



OUR NEWEST GREEN SPACE IN FOOTSCRAY

THE ONCE-VACANT LOT AT SALTRIVER PLACE NEAR THE MARIBYRNONG RIVER AT FOOTSCRAY WHARF IS NOW AN OPEN GREEN SPACE, FEATURING LAWNS, GARDENS, AND PICNIC AREAS, THANKS TO INPUT FROM LOCAL RESIDENTS.

This transformation followed feedback from local residents who expressed a desire to replace the informal car park with an open, functional area. The new space now features a lawn area, garden bed and tree planting, offering a refreshing place for the community to enjoy.

With the works now complete, we encourage you to explore the new green space, which supports the ongoing upgrades to Footscray Wharf and enhances the Maribyrnong River waterfront for community use.

MARIBYRNONG MOVES TO ELECTRIFY COUNCIL FACILITIES FOR A GREENER FUTURE

Council is one step closer to achieving its goal of zero emissions by 2023, with the announcement of a \$2.5 million grant from the Federal Government to transition Maribyrnong Aquatic Centre (MAC) from natural gas to electricity.

The funding will support the replacement of MAC's existing gas

infrastructure with a centralised heat pump system, reducing 1,220 tonnes of carbon emissions annually.

The upgrade, which is a key action within Council's Climate Emergency Strategy, will enhance energy efficiency, provide thermal comfort through cooling, and save approximately \$400,000 a year on operational energy costs.

The emission reduction will account

for 93 per cent of Council's gas-related emissions and 41 per cent of its total emissions.

Council is now exploring opportunities to reduce even more emissions from its Operations Centre in West Footscray.

Together, these upgrades will have a significant impact on Council's carbon footprint and reinforces its commitment to sustainability both now and into the future.

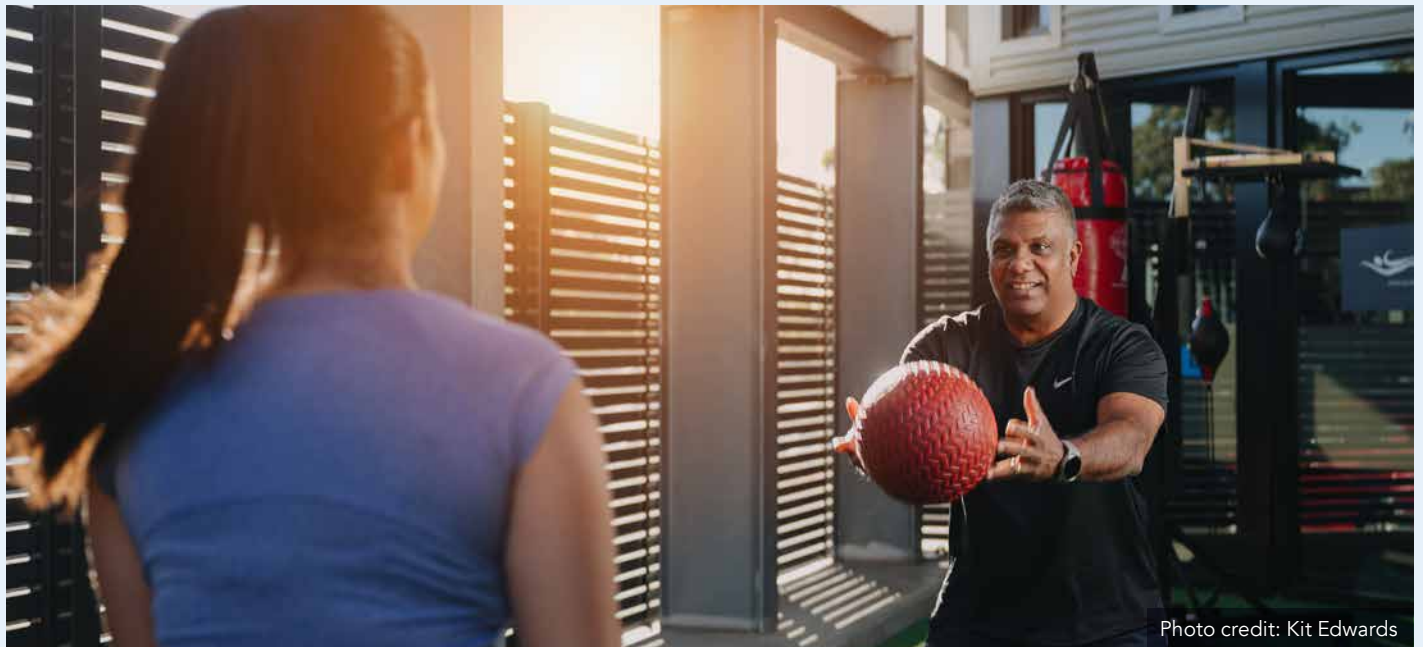


Photo credit: Kit Edwards

MAC'S HEALTH CLUB GETS A POWERFUL ADDITION

MARIBYRNONG AQUATIC CENTRE'S HEALTH CLUB NOW BOASTS A FUN NEW OUTDOOR SPACE, WHILE ALSO HELPING YOU GET YOUR DAILY DOSE OF SUNSHINE.

The once plain entryway to the Health Club has now been transformed into an outdoor training area, optimising the previously disused space to enhance amenity and resources for MAC members.

The newly added training area is equipped with a wide range of quality fitness equipment to support all workout intensity levels – from low impact to

dynamic, full-body workouts. From battle ropes and push sleds to kettlebells, barbells, boxing equipment, and TRX suspension trainers, the space caters to a variety of training preferences.

A key feature of the new outdoor area is its focus on functional training, which is increasingly popular due to its emphasis on exercises that replicate real-life movements. Whether it's small group sessions, circuit training, or

individual workouts, this outdoor zone offers a range of exciting opportunities for members to engage in a range of fitness activities.

Whether you're looking to take your fitness to the next level, engage in a fun group activity, or simply enjoy a workout in the fresh air, the new outdoor training area at Maribyrnong Aquatic Centre supports your health and wellbeing.

WHERE STYLE MEETS PRECISION

YOUNG HABBITT BARBERS



Young Habbitt Barbers officially opened its doors in Seddon earlier this year, bringing a fresh and modern approach to men's grooming. Founded by Yahya, who also owns the original Young Habbitt in Werribee, this new location continues his mission to create spaces where people feel connected, seen, and inspired.

The name Young Habbitt reflects more than just a fresh fade, it is about building positive routines early on and always striving for growth. It is grooming with intention. Also available is Luxedo, Yahya's complementary fashion brand, which merges luxury tailored suits with the raw edge of streetwear, offering a unique blend of style and substance.

Yahya opened Young Habbitt not just to cut hair, but also to create something deeper – a community hub grounded in authenticity, growth, and creativity. It is a place where barbers and clients can share stories and walk away with more than just a clean cut.

Among the most popular styles at Young Habbitt right now are sharp skin fades with textured crops, sleek modern mullets, and clean tapers – each tailored to the individual's vibe and personal style.

Pop into the new Seddon shop; see what they can offer beyond a fresh cut, and a tailored suit.

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For requests, comments and questions about Council services and programs, go to maribyrnong.vic.gov.au or call Customer Service on 9688 0200.

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