

Maroondah focus

Your Community Newsletter



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Maroondah's

Business Week October 11-15

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Mayor's Message

For the Maroondah community, the Winter ArtsFest turns winter into something to look forward to with delight. This year's ArtsFest opened with a Diversity Discovery Day, where children from diverse backgrounds enjoyed arts, craft and musical performances. The program gained momentum from there with performances at Karralyka, exhibitions at Wyreena and Maroondah Gallery, the Polyglot Puppets at Eastland and plenty of concerts, dance and drama. There was something for everyone. It has become a much anticipated season and I was delighted to meet so many of our community at these events. Thank you to all who participated and made our Winter ArtsFest such a warm season of events.

And make a note in your diary for the forthcoming Maroondah Business Week from 11 to 15 October. There will be a number of activities and opportunities for businesses and the Expo in particular will be of interest to the wider community. The variety of businesses we have in the municipality is amazing and the special week will showcase many of these.

I am very pleased for our youth that we have secured funding for a skate park. There will be a great deal of consultation and research undertaken now to ensure we get a first class facility.

The Road Management Act 2004 has now been introduced into Victorian law. Some of the provisions of the new legislation take effect immediately and others will be introduced on or before 1 January 2005. We will all be learning a great deal more about this legislation as Council complies with the Act and implements the changes required. A significant change already undertaken was Council's decision to hand back responsibility of arterial roads to VicRoads as the most capable and appropriate authority.

With the many community groups and activities I am privileged to attend as Mayor, my term of office is a busy one. I have enjoyed meeting with the community and participating in many events and I appreciate the feedback I have been receiving. In the remaining months of my term I hope to be able to include many more activities, especially those that, in other circumstances, I would not otherwise have the opportunity to attend.

Best wishes
Cr Neil Rose
Mayor of Maroondah

This year's Maroondah City Council photo competition received a total of 100 photos capturing the essence of having Fun in Maroondah. A Pentax digital camera from Croydon Camera House was won by Trish Mucha with our cover photo entitled Simple Pleasures - Mullum Mullum Creek Trail.

A Meal for Mary

...and many like her who look forward to their meal and the friendly faces of those who so kindly bring it to their door.

The average Meals on Wheels day begins bright and early in Council's kitchen where Joedy, Natasha and Eddie peel spuds and get the meat on the go. They have already studied the menu choices made by each person who receives a meal. They know exactly what to prepare for people who are vegetarian or need low salt, low sugar, high fibre or diabetic meals. They have also sorted through the personal preferences to be sure they 'hold the broccoli' as requested!

The kitchen crew do this daily - five days a week - for around 70,000 meals each year.

Piping hot and fresh from the kitchen, the meals are taken off to a distribution centre at either Croydon or Ringwood where some of



1. Joedy Somers, Natasha Stirling and Eddie Somers start their day.



2. Just some of our wonderful and much appreciated volunteers at the distribution centre.



5. Bron makes her way to Mary's front door with the meal and some friendly conversation at the ready.



6. Bron hardly has to knock because Mary is expecting her friend.

the 220 volunteers are waiting to get them packed into vehicles and on their way.

Mary's meal is placed into the capable hands of Bron and David Richards. They know exactly what to do - they have been volunteers for more than four years.

"We have been living in Croydon for 17 years now and when we retired we thought this would be a great opportunity to give back to the community," Bron says.

So it's out on the highway and off to Mary's with the soup, hot main meal and a dessert.



3. Bron the jockey and David the driver have Mary's meal all set to go



4. Just a quick check of the street directory before setting off.

"We usually see the same folk each week and they look forward to seeing us. Sometimes we are the only people they see all day. We treat them like our friends."

Mary is expecting her friends and already has the table set. "The volunteers are very nice people and it's great to see them every day. It certainly is a wonderful service," she says.

And is Mary ever stuck for conversation? Not likely, especially in winter, as she is a keen Demons supporter. "They had a great win on the weekend against St Kilda and I couldn't wait to see Bron and talk about the game."

Bon Appetit Mary!

Volunteers are very welcome. If you can help out, contact Annette Ward or Jan Walkley on 1300 88 22 33.



7. "Thanks Bron - come on in"



8. Mary sets the table ready for lunch



Councillor Jo-anne Taylor 'on the bus' with children from Ruskin Park Primary School and 'Bus Driver' Sharon Morrow.

New school bus has legs

Driving your children to school each day will soon be a thing of the past with Maroondah Council's Walking School Bus program.

Councillor Jo-anne Taylor said the Walking School Bus has been developed in an effort to change school travel patterns and provide children with more exercise and confidence in road safety.

The Walking School Bus consists of two or more adult volunteers called the "Driver" and the "Conductor" and up to 12 children. Each bus walks along a set route - picking up or dropping off children as they go.

At the moment, Council has four local primary schools involved with the program - Bayswater North, Ruskin Park, Great Ryrie, and Kalinda. More schools in the Maroondah area are set to

jump on board the program and other schools are encouraged to join in.

"Local schools, who are involved in the program are pleased that it not only promotes healthy exercise, but also increases safety around the school in the morning and afternoon when the level of traffic congestion increases," said Cr Taylor.

"In Melbourne, more than 80 per cent of children are driven to school. The Walking School Bus offers a healthy and safe method of transport to school, and with everyone helping out it gives parents more time on the days they are not rostered to walk," said Cr Taylor.

If you would like to develop a Walking School Bus program for your school, contact Tim Watson at Maroondah Council on 1300 88 22 33.

The department of youth takes off in Maroondah!

A great new Council initiative will make life better for the youth of Maroondah with the brand new, improved Maroondah Youth Information Card.

Launched on 5 July by the Mayor, Councillor Neil Rose, the Maroondah Youth Information Card not only provides young people with a list of after hours support numbers they can use when life isn't going so well, but helps their hip pocket nerve by providing discounts at a wide range of businesses.

Councillor Paul Denham is a big supporter of the Maroondah Youth Card. "The card is aimed at around 20,000 young people in Maroondah between the ages of 12 and 25. To get the Maroondah Youth Information Card, the only requirement is that holders live, study or work in Maroondah," said Cr Denham.

The card was launched at the popular Croydon Leisure Centre, one of the locations where the card will be available. Other distribution points will be through Maroondah Secondary Schools, youth service providers, Council's Customer Service Centres, libraries, recreational facilities, EV's Youth Centre and local businesses.

Apart from a wide range of businesses that are offering discounts to card holders, young people can also get discounts at various recreational facilities.

Maroondah Council received \$5000 from the Ringwood Branch of the Commonwealth Bank to create the card.

"It's great to see how many businesses have got behind the scheme, which will encourage loyalty from the often tricky 12 - 25 year old market, and Council is especially grateful to the Ringwood Commonwealth Bank for its fine support of the project," said Cr Denham.

Capital works highlights

Council's capital works program ensures the renewal of vital infrastructure, such as roads, drains and footpaths, and facilities, which include reserves and buildings, streetscapes and open spaces.

The seven pictures shown on these pages highlight the variety of capital works projects completed and planned for the Maroondah community.



Advocating to improve major roadways

Council successfully advocated for funding to improve Canterbury Road with \$15 million funding from VicRoads to upgrade the road to a dual carriageway.



Bridging the gap

The Mullum Mullum bridge completes the Cultural Heritage Trail, part funded by a Centenary of Federation Grant, and highlights the Indigenous and early European uses in the valley through interpretive signs. \$78,000.



Creating wetlands for the enjoyment of all

Narr Maen Wetlands is a storm water treatment wetland in the headwaters of Jumping Creek, which includes 22,000 aquatic plants. Council funding \$160,000 with \$138,000 from the EPA – Victorian Stormwater Action Program.



Developing community playspaces

Council was successful in receiving a grant for the development of a fully accessible play and recreational environment, which people of all ages and abilities may enjoy, at Maroondah Federation Estate. (Concept shown above.)

Services to our Community

Local government plays an important role in providing services for the welfare and enjoyment of the community. There are more than 120 different services including waste collection, road construction, parks and community facilities, personal support and services for the frail and elderly, youth, children and community activities. In addition to service planning and delivery, Council is responsible for the development and maintenance of community assets and facilities.

Each year Council presents to the Maroondah community an up-dated rolling three-year Corporate Plan that sets out the vision, key themes and strategies to achieve the objectives identified in *Maroondah 2025: A Community Planning Together*, which is Maroondah's long term vision. The Corporate Plan is now available on line at www.maroondah.vic.gov.au



Sheltering our community while at play

Steel shelters were erected over picnic areas to provide shade and shelter at Exeter Road Reserve (pictured) Lipscombe Park, Woodland Park, Yarrunga Reserve and Packham Place Reserve. \$30,000.



Building safer roads and footpaths

A new footpath on the north side of Eastfield Road pedestrian bridge crossing over Tarralla Creek links the footpath and bike path, formalising the entrance to the service road and improving pedestrian and cyclist safety. \$65,000.

Protecting significant native vegetation

Barnsdale Forest (Cnr Glenvale Road and Barnsdale Way) retarding basin works to improve drainage and protect significant native vegetation and allow ongoing maintenance access. \$36,000.

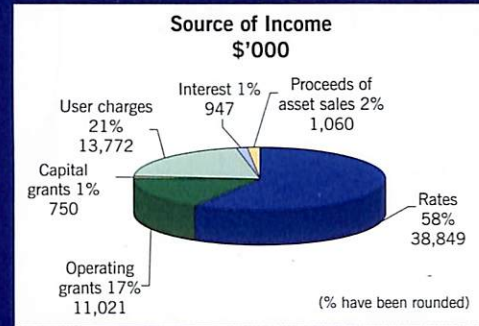


The Budget for 2004-05

When Council comes to prepare its annual budget, it takes into account legislative requirements and accounting standards, the long term finances to service the community's needs, works and services required throughout the year, and sources of income, which includes government grants, fees and charges.

Sources of income

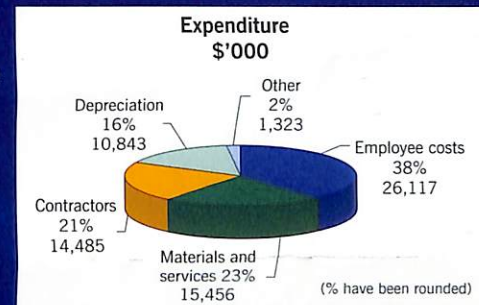
In Maroondah, rates and charges comprise 58 per cent of the revenue available to Council. The balance of income comes from funding from State and Federal Governments, user charges and interest from investments.



Income from user charges will increase by 5.45% per cent (by \$700,000) and income from the Victorian Grants Commission has been budgeted to rise by \$20,000 based on provisional advice received.

Expenditure plan

A major portion of the budget provides everyday services and facilities for the community. Despite the impact of cost shifting by both State and Federal Governments, Council continues to provide quality services and facilities.



Roads and footpaths, drainage facilities, street lighting and tree planting, indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, parks and reserves, libraries, galleries and community houses are typical of the facilities provided by Council. Maternal and child health, aged and youth services, recreation and cultural services are just some of the services provided.

Valuations

The rise in property values does not mean extra monies for Council. Councils do not collect more in their total rate revenue based on variations in property values.

Valuations effectively change the mix: some ratepayers will pay more and some will pay less. The outcome to Council in the actual amount of income remains the same.

Maroondah elected to adopt the "Capital Improved Value" (CIV) method of valuation in 2003, as this is considered to be the most equitable method to distribute the rate liability amongst the community.

A General Valuation is required to be undertaken every two years in accordance with the Valuation of Land Act 1960.

A general valuation of all properties in the City was undertaken during 2003-04. The effective date for setting levels of value for this general valuation was January 1, 2004. The values assessed will be applied to all rateable properties for the Council financial year 2004-05.

A General Valuation in itself does not increase or decrease revenue for the Council, but rather is used to ensure the distribution of rate burden remains fair and equitable over time.

The two-year valuation cycle was introduced by the State Government to ensure equity, transparency and to reduce where possible significant movements in rate levels between General Valuations.

Saturday Morning Customer Service

The Croydon Civic Square and Eastland Service Centres will both open on Saturday mornings commencing Saturday 4 September for a trial period of 6 months.

Councillor Joe Cossari believes residents will benefit from the extended hours on Saturday.

"Saturday morning service has been a potential option for some time. It will enable families and individuals to conduct their Council business out of office hours and combine it with their usual Saturday shopping," said Cr Cossari.

Another change to Council's Service Centres will be the closing of the Main Street Service Centre in Croydon with the expiration of its lease on Friday 27 August.

The Main Street Customer Service team have been busy informing their regular visitors of the change and directing them to the Croydon Civic Square Service Centre, which will be their new "local".

Croydon Civic Square Service Centre is within walking distance from the central transport and banking area of Main Street, opposite the Croydon Library. There is plenty of parking and easy access into the building.

Staff at Main Street said, "The Customer Service team will miss the Main Street Service Centre – but we all know that this is a great opportunity to increase our service to the community."

Fire levy – not home insurance

Council is currently delivering this year's 2004-05 rates notice to households and businesses within the municipality, on which is shown the Fire Services contribution. This amount goes in total to the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board (MFESB) and should not be confused with the fire levy shown on most home insurance policies. The MFESB charge is not a form of home fire insurance but a municipal charge under State Government legislation.

Council's Financial Hardship Policy

Council has extended its Financial Hardship Policy following the introduction of CIV. This will allow a property owner to apply for a waiver of up to 75 per cent of the net increase in rate liability since 2002-03, after deduction of the year-to-year Council-determined increase in the rate level. This is subject to a minimum levied rate amount of \$300 per annum.

Waivers will be considered on the general rate and to be eligible, applicants must demonstrate that they do not have assets or an income base that would reasonably enable them to meet full general rate costs in the current year.

Applications for the waiver must be made in writing on the appropriate form. All details provided on the form are protected under Council's Privacy Policy and will be used only for the express purpose of determining eligibility for the waiver. Waivers will be granted at the discretion of Council.

Around *the* Wards



Peter Gurr — Arrabri

Some wonderful things are happening in Maroondah, especially with the Ringwood Town Centre. As a member of the Town Centre Working Party I am happy to report that the next three years will be a very exciting time as we start to see many plans take shape.

In our own backyard, Grayswood Reserve has a new shade and picnic setting. There has been some resurfacing of a large section of Dandenong Creek Trail and improved directional and safety signs. There is also a new circuit path around Gracedale Park. Glen Park celebrated Reconciliation Week with a flag raising ceremony attended by 200 to mark the occasion.

I am delighted also to report the "horse pond" on the De Felice land is now a preserved and protected asset.



This small patch of scrubland has been there for years and it's wonderful to see this patch of green in an industrial area.

Peter can be contacted on 0417 377 145.

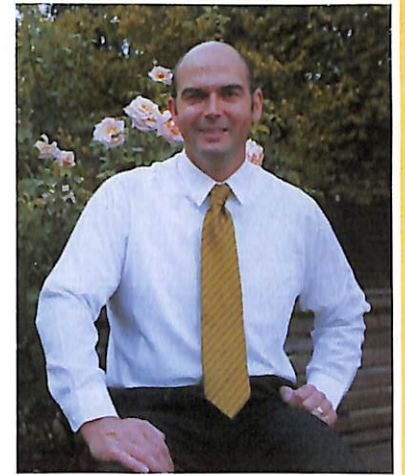
Paul Denham — Clocktower

I'm happy to report that improvements to Greenwood Avenue are about to commence. These works will provide a better linkage between the Ringwood town centre and the many facilities located within that part of our Ward. Also, an outdoor recreation play area is being developed at Maroondah Federation Estate thanks to some financial assistance from the State Government. It's an exciting project that will cater for a wide range of age groups, abilities and interests. Access to our community facilities at Bedford Park has been greatly improved by the recent asphaltting of more of the car parks there. Meanwhile, works have been scheduled to complete the renewal of the main oval fence at HE Parker Reserve, weather permitting.

Finally, a special hello to the children from Heathmont East

Primary School who were such wonderful hosts when I visited there recently. I had a great time listening to your excellent musicians and learning all about litter from your fantastic posters!

Paul can be contacted on 0417 106 016.



Joe Cossari — Loughnan's Hill

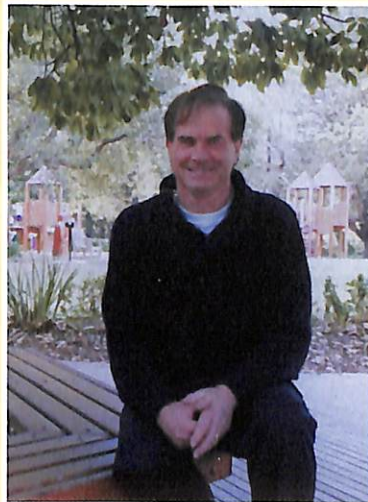
There has been a great deal of activity along Maroondah Highway, and with the exciting Ringwood Transit City projects there will be a great deal more in the coming months. We will see a revitalisation of the area. Shortly Beds-R-U's will take up residence on the former Juice Nightclub site, Retravision are redeveloping the former Ringwood Bowl site and an Aldi supermarket is being added to Ringwood Square.

On a personal level, I was recently honoured to receive an award from the Italian Government for my work with the Italo-Australian Community.



And, as a final note, I extend my thanks to those who so kindly sent their condolences on the recent sad loss of my father. My family appreciated your kindness. After taking a short break, I am now back into my routine and pleased to hear from anyone in my Ward on any concerns they wish to talk through with me.

Joe can be contacted on 0417 377 683.



Les Willmott JP — Wyreena

Planning continues to be a key community issue and I am happy to report a victory with Richardson Road where Council refused a permit for a development that would remove significant vegetation. VCAT up-held our decision on appeal. On the other side of the ledger, after refusing an application for 18 units in Bonnie View Road, VCAT overruled Council, and allowed 17 units on the site. The neighbourhood character studies have been incorporated into our planning scheme and will give greater protection to neighbourhoods. As chair of that group I thank the community for their hard work in developing these invaluable guidelines.

I am pleased to be a member of the Ringwood Transit City Ministerial Advisory Committee and also on the Ringwood Town Centre Working Party.

Having been a local Councillor for many years, my experience will assist the shaping of Maroondah as we move into this very exciting phase.

In June I attended the opening of the Friends of Wyreena Exhibition and was impressed by the standard of entries. It was wonderful to see so many local artists of all ages putting their creativity on show in a wonderful gallery space like Wyreena.

Les can be contacted on 0417 391 743.

Jo-anne Taylor — Mullum

I am very pleased to report the official opening of the Mullum Mullum Cultural Heritage Trail, including a new suspension bridge, and can recommend a visit. At Ringwood Lake the remaining section of pathway has been sealed and soon the new playground equipment installation will be complete.

The bollards work at Mullum Reserve is finished and embankment works will commence when the weather improves. Council and user groups worked together on this project, which is a tremendous example of working together for a good outcome. We attended the flag raising ceremony at Glen Park Community Centre, where the Australian, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags were raised and local students participated with speeches and presentations.

Our family enjoyed Diversity Day at

Maroondah Federation Estate where there were lots of great activities for children and mine would certainly agree to that! There were workshops, performances and entertainment all day – an ideal family outing.

Jo-anne can be reached on 0409 003 048.



Maureen Naylor — Yarrunga

Narr Maen Reserve has again featured in our Ward with the stormwater treatment wetland complete, a new circuit path and fences. Local schools stencilled messages on the stormwater pit lids and we also had a very successful community planting day to start the revegetation program in the bushland area. This was part of the 'Know Your Parks' program and it was tremendous to see so many taking part in a very enjoyable community activity. And, thanks to a grant from Melbourne Water, we have also commenced wetlands revegetation along Andersons Creek.

I am delighted to report a victory for the community and Council's planners with a reduction from 33 proposed units to 15 in Warrandyte Road. We also successfully negotiated a long-term agreement for one building on each allotment.

And even more good news for community advocacy — we have