



Merri-bek
City Council

Merri-bek Community News

September 2023



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Announcing our biggest capital works spend in 5 years

Merri-bek Community Awards – nominate today!

\$278,000 allocated to your budget ideas

Moving around in Merri-bek – our new Transport Strategy



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Merri-bek Language Link

Italiano	Italian	9280 1911
Ελληνικά	Greek	9280 1912
عربي	Arabic	9280 1913
Türkçe	Turkish	9280 1914
Tiếng Việt	Vietnamese	9280 1915
पंजाबी	Nepali	9280 0751
普通话	Chinese (Simplified)	9280 0750

National Relay Service:
13 36 77 or relayservice.com.au

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A message from our Mayor

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

It's hard to believe that we are over half way through 2023 already, and so much work has already been achieved this year. Earlier in June we adopted our 4 Year Council Budget 2023-27, that will see \$217 million allocated to some of our critical services and projects.

Included in this is our largest ever capital works program, totalling \$123.2 million towards things like more public toilets, reconstruction of roads and footpaths, more kindergartens and exciting major projects like the Saxon Street Arts and Community Hub in Brunswick and the redevelopment of Fawkner Leisure Centre. We are also almost doubling our tree planting budget to ensure there is plenty of shade and tree canopy across Merri-bek in the future. You can learn more about our budget and our Capital Works Program inside this edition.

It's also time to nominate any fellow community members or groups who have helped improved the quality of life of others in the 2023 Merri-bek Awards! A nominee could be anyone who lives, works, studies, plays or volunteers in Merri-bek, and is making a difference to our community. Learn more at merri-bek.vic.gov.au/merri-bek-awards

Sit back and enjoy this edition of Merri-bek Community News.

Cr Angelica Panopoulos
Mayor

Subscribe to our My Merri-bek e-newsletter

Be the first to hear about projects, events and initiatives happening in your local area. Have your say, and more.





New Mural

New mural brightens Fawkner Streets

We recently commissioned local artists Olana Janfa and Abbey Rich to create a community mural for Charles Mutton Reserve, Fawkner. Council invested \$20,000 in the project, from the play space upgrade budget which was \$150,000 for the 2022-23 financial year.

The artwork brings a range of bright colours – pinks and blues, yellows and oranges – to the local park. It also shows the joy to be found in our diverse community, sports and wildlife and celebrates community connections to underpin a bright, warm and empowering work of art.

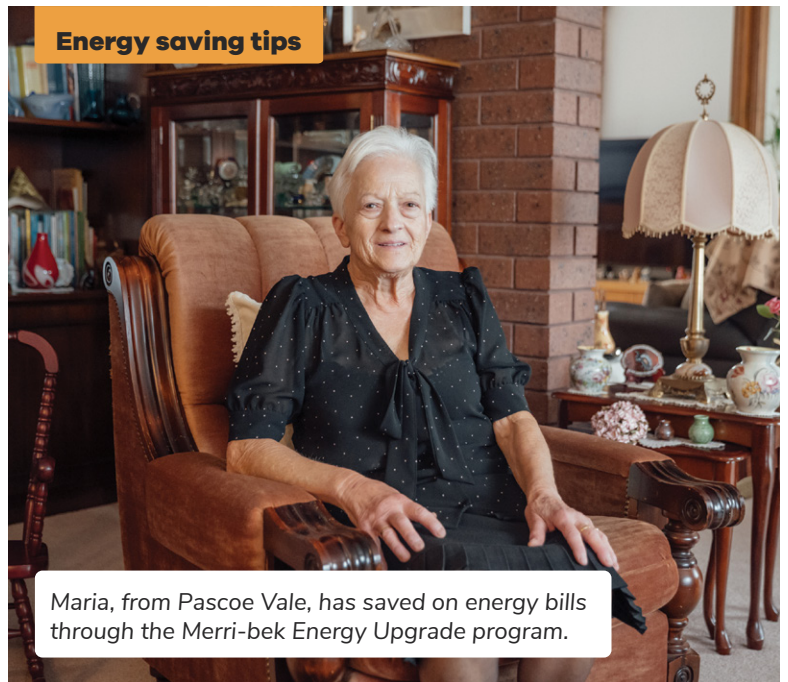
The work was selected from a range of proposals for its creativity, sense of community and suitability for the space.

While working on the project, Abbey and Olana had plenty of local fans:

"The work was so lovely to create alongside the playground during school holidays, seeing the kids watch us paint and be excited to see themselves in the mural was really special."

Head down to Charles Mutton Reserve, 86 Lorne Street, Fawkner, to experience the warmth and colours of the new artwork yourself.

Find out more about arts in Merri-bek
➔ merri-bek.vic.gov.au/arts



Energy saving tips

Maria, from Pascoe Vale, has saved on energy bills through the Merri-bek Energy Upgrade program.

Tips to keep warm and to reduce your energy bills

Set your heating to 18 – 20 degrees

When it's cold outside we may feel the need to turn our heater up high. But, setting it to 18-20 degrees will keep you comfortable and save you money. By lowering your thermostat by 1-degree cooler, you can decrease your heater bill by 15%.

Seal up draughts around windows and doors

Place door snakes at the bottom of doors and hang thick curtains on windows to keep the cold air out. You can buy draught-proofing strips from hardware stores to fill gaps around your doors.

Use your reverse cycle air-conditioner as a heater
Oak Park electrician Andrew says, "A lot of people don't realise how efficient new split systems are. They actually heat as well as cool and they do them both very well."

Apply for a Merri-bek Energy Upgrade

If you own your home and are on a low income, we can help you upgrade your home. **Council can pay up to \$2000 towards installing insulation and sealing up the gaps in your home to make it more comfortable.** Maria from Pascoe Vale (pictured) had insulation installed through the program and felt the benefits straight away.

'It's the best thing I've done. It's comfortable, especially in summer,' she says.

Find out more at the Zero Carbon Merri-bek website
➔ zerocarbonmerri-bek.org.au

Community ideas shape our latest budget

Late last year, we put the call out to the community for your ideas on projects, initiatives or programs to fund in our 2023/24 budget.

A total of \$250,000 was allocated to these ideas.

Merri-bek residents, community groups, sporting clubs, businesses and organisations were all welcome to contribute.

We received such a fantastic response, that Council increased the funding pool from \$20,000 to \$278,000 to include as many of the ideas as possible.

Some of the community ideas included more shade sails at parks, programs to support victims of domestic violence, bird nesting boxes and many more.

The community then voted on their favourite idea, and the top 3 projects were funded. We also decided to include an additional 3 because of the great suggestions we received as part of this process.

The successful community budget ideas for 2023/24:



\$80,000 for more shade structures in playgrounds and parks



\$33,000 will go to Take the First Step domestic violence prevention program



\$10,000 to install bird nesting boxes across Merri-bek



\$100,000 will increase accessible tennis facilities and reserves



\$50,000 for drinking fountains in shopping strips



Climate Action Merri-bek member Andrea Bunting and Merri-bek Mayor, Cr Angelica Panopoulos

Tania McKenna, Partnerships and Community Development Manager at Northern Community Legal Centre, and founder of 'Take the First Step' says,



Being able to get the message out that family violence help is available is a project close to my heart. This funding will support isolated newly arrived women to connect and access pathways to safety."

Project Officer Sarah Hussein agrees,



it's so important to link with local councils, so that we reach as many people who need help as possible."

Climate Action Merri-bek member Andrea Bunting says,



funding for additional drinking fountains along key shopping strips in Merri-bek is much needed."

She adds that the Community Budget Initiatives program has been a great idea and the \$50,000 funding for more public drinking fountains will help promote sustainability for years to come.

Stay up-to-date with future consultations at conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au

Your feedback is welcome

Do you have feedback on Merri-bek Community News? Email us at info@merri-bek.vic.gov.au



Learn about our biggest Capital Works Program ever!

In June this year we adopted our 4 Year Council Budget 2023-27, which includes \$123.2 million on brand new community facilities, upgrade works, and improvements right across Merri-bek.



This is our largest investment in capital works ever. Our goal is to ensure that whatever stage in life you're at, that we are investing in infrastructure and assets that will make your life in Merri-bek safe, healthy and happy.

Learn more about some of the exciting things we have planned over the next few years as part of our Capital Works Program.



Major construction projects: including the \$29 million Saxon Street Community and Arts Hub in Brunswick and the \$36.9 million redevelopment of Fawkner Leisure Centre



We're continuing to invest in road resurfacing and reconstruction, allowing safer routes through Merri-bek for both cars and for active transport



Upgrades to sport pavilions and clubs: we are going to be building a new pump track at Brunswick Velodrome, building new gender inclusive facilities at Moomba Park in Fawkner and accessible tennis facilities across Merri-bek



Building and upgrading parks in Merri-bek: we're investing \$1.1 million in a park at 260 Sydney Road and building a brand new park on the corner of Bell Street and Westgate Street in Pascoe vale



More public toilets: at Bonwick Street in Fawkner, Parker Reserve in Coburg and Snell Grove in Oak Park



\$2 million towards upgrading footpaths and bike paths

Learn more about our 4 Year Council Budget 2023-27, visit merri-bek.vic.gov.au/budget

COUNIHAN
GALLERY
IN BRUNSWICK

POLITICAL CONTEMPORARY LOCAL

Free entry
Wed to Sat, 11am to 5pm
Sun, 1pm to 5pm
233 Sydney Road, Brunswick



ARTS
MERRI-BEK

Installation view of Fever Dreams,
2023. Photo: Simon Fazio



The Voice to Parliament Referendum 2023 – Merri-bek says YES to voice, treaty and truth



Later this year, all eligible Australians will have their say in a referendum about whether to change the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice.

This Voice would be an independent and permanent advisory body, providing advice to the Australian Parliament and Government on matters that effect the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

When the Australian Government announces Referendum Day, all eligible Australians will be asked to vote yes or no for this change to our Constitution.

In 2021, Council signed a Statement of Commitment to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

Our signed Statement of Commitment supports the Uluru Statement of The Heart. The Uluru Statement of the Heart is an invitation to the Australian people from First Nations Australians. It asks Australians to walk together to build a better future by establishing a First Nations Voice to Parliament to enshrine in the constitution, and establish a Marakrrata (agreement making) Committee for the purpose of treaty making and truth telling.

Learn about our Statement of Commitment

➔ merri-bek.vic.gov.au/reconciliation

Here at Merri-bek we say YES to voice, treaty and truth.

Events

Stay up-to-date on community-led conversations and events at

➔ merri-bek.vic.gov.au/merri-bek-says-yes

How to enrol

For more information go to ➔ voice.gov.au

Social and emotional wellbeing support

Victorian Aboriginal Health Service

➔ vahs.org.au

☎ 9419 3000

First Peoples' Health and Wellbeing

➔ firstpeopleshealthandwellbeing.org.au

☎ 9070 8181

☎ 13YARN (13 92 76)

📍 If you need to speak with a counsellor urgently or outside of office hours

Football fever to continue in Merri-bek



We know so many of you watched the 2023 Women's World Cup, captivated by the history-making journey of The Matildas. Thank you Tillies!

Here at Merri-bek, we pride ourselves on being a leader in female participation in sports. We were proudly the first Victorian Council to prioritise the allocation and use of sporting grounds to clubs which demonstrate inclusiveness.

Freshly built, our new female-friendly changerooms and referee rooms at Sumner Reserve, Brunswick East, are just one example of our commitment to championing women and girls in sport. Just in time for the football fever to continue! These facilities are a welcome addition for the Brunswick Zebras Football Club and our local community, helping to increase participation in sport from women and girls.

Looking to get active and to join your own local sporting team?

Visit ➔ active.merri-bek.vic.gov.au

North East Ward



🕒 Completed June 2023

CB Smith Reserve & Fawkner Community Hub, Fawkner

We recently improved these community spaces by adding lighting across the car park, planting new shade trees with bike hoop protectors and providing 2 new pedestrian crossings and footpaths. We have also installed speed humps for safety, wheel stops and extended kerb outstands. We also added more pram crossings, new line marking and new signage.



🕒 Completed July 2023

Moomba Park Wetlands, Fawkner

We've recently created a new wetland, including a pond for the threatened Victorian frog species, the Growling Grass Frog, a loop walking track to enjoy, seating areas to relax on and vantage points for wildlife observation.

North West Ward



🕒 Completed July 2023

Kingsford Smith Ulm Reserve, Glenroy

We have installed a new solar-powered public toilet at the reserve. We're also working on an updated car park, shelter for the community, a solar-powered BBQ and solar-powered lighting for area safety and a dog park. We also helped the Oak Park Scout Group to improve the access path to their building.



🕒 In Progress

Payne Reserve, Pascoe Vale

We are refurbishing the existing public toilets in Payne Reserve to make them safe, accessible, clean, and environmentally sustainable. The refurbished facility will be open daily from 6am to 6pm, 7 days a week. It will be controlled by a powered, automatic locking system.

South Ward



🕒 Completed July 2023

Wylie Reserve, Brunswick West

We recently upgraded the existing small playspace and surrounds by rotating the swing and adding a shade tree, adding nature-based play equipment, adding additional trees and garden beds and more. We also added a gathering space with a large platform seat on gravel paving and various logs for informal seating.



🕒 In Progress

Kirkdale Park, Brunswick East

We are currently refurbishing the existing public toilets in Kirkdale Park to make them safe, accessible, clean, and environmentally sustainable. The refurbished facility will be open daily from 6am to 6pm, 7 days a week. It will be controlled by a powered, automatic locking system.



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Have your say

Moving Around Merri-bek

Have your say on our new transport strategy

We're developing a new 'Moving Around Merri-bek' Transport Strategy.

This strategy will guide our future transport projects and shape the way you move around Merri-bek, helping us work towards a more accessible and sustainable transport system that provides more choice for more people.

Throughout the strategy's development, there will be many opportunities for everyone in the Merri-bek community to provide feedback and to help develop the strategy.

We want to hear your thoughts, have your say online ➔ conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/moving-around-merri-bek



Open Space Strategy

Thank you to everyone who shared their thoughts on open space in Merri-bek, to help shape our new Open Space Strategy

We heard from more than 300 people via the Conversations Merri-bek website, community pop-up events and in-depth workshops.

Development of the draft Open Space Strategy is now underway, and will be available for community feedback later this year.

Learn more and stay up to date on the project ➔ conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/open-space-strategy



2023 Merri-bek Community Awards – nominate now!

The annual Merri-bek Community Awards are open to any group or individual whose activity has improved the quality of life of others in Merri-bek. A nominee could be anyone who lives, works, studies, plays, or volunteers in Merri-bek.

Merri-bek resident for the last 35 years, educator and community member, Mandy Ackman was awarded the 2022 Volunteer Award for her series of courses, *I'm Still Learning*.

After Mandy lost her husband to cancer, she was driven to create *I'm Still Learning*, a Not-for-Profit Organisation run by volunteers.

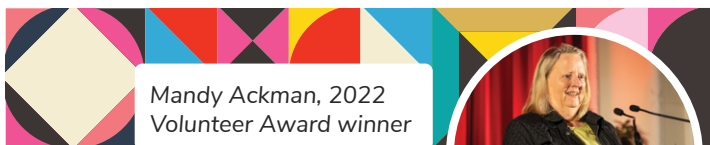
Whether you're wanting to learn basic cooking skills, car and home maintenance, woodwork or more, the courses at *I'm Still Learning* can help. Visit ➔ imstilllearning.org to learn more.

Do you know someone like Mandy in the Merri-bek community who deserves recognition?

Nominate them here ➔ merri-bek.vic.gov.au/merri-bek-awards

📅 Nominations close 5pm, Monday 18 September 2023.

📅 Winners will be announced the Community Awards Ceremony on Tuesday 31 October.



Mandy Ackman, 2022
Volunteer Award winner



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, and emerging, as well as to all First Nations communities who significantly contribute to the life of the area.



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