



Maribyrnong  
CITY COUNCIL

MARIBYRNONG

# MESSENGER

Summer 2024

[www.maribyrnong.vic.gov.au](http://www.maribyrnong.vic.gov.au)

## A GOOD NEWS STORY: MEET THE FITHALL FAMILY

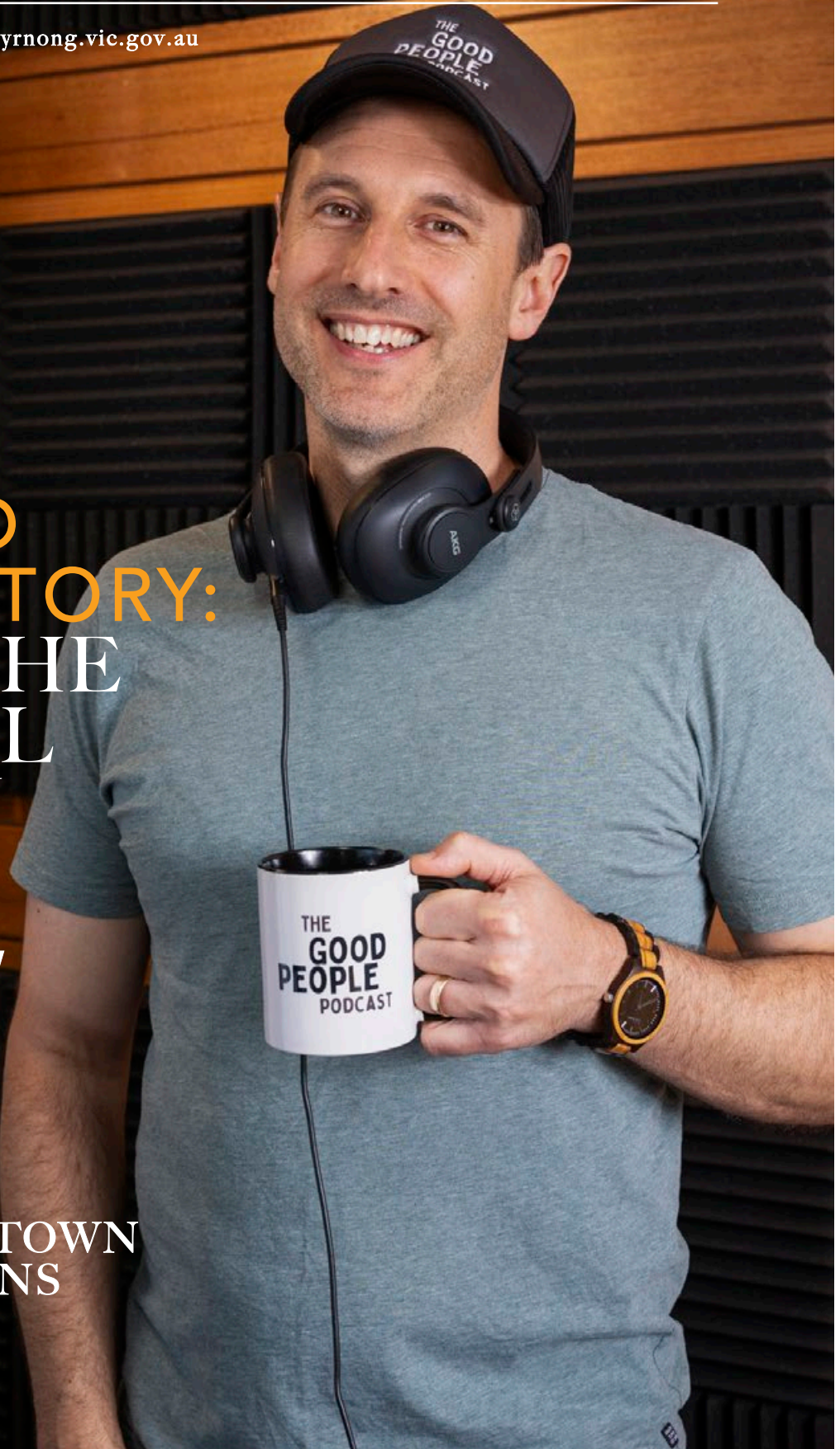
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GET TO KNOW  
YOUR NEW  
COUNCILLORS

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RENOVATED  
FOOTSCRAY TOWN  
HALL REOPENS

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## Welcome to the summer edition of Maribyrnong Messenger.

The local government elections, which took place last month, saw the introduction of a new electoral structure, transitioning from three multiple councillor wards to seven single councillor wards. This change, introduced by the Victorian Electoral Commission, aims to enhance direct oversight and community representation across wards.

We extend a warm welcome to our new councillors who were sworn in to Maribyrnong City Council on 13 November and invite you to learn more about them on page 6 as they step into their roles advocating for our community.

Reflecting on the milestones of our previous financial year is an essential way for us to ensure we are meeting the needs of our community. In October, we released our 2023/24 Annual Report to keep our community and stakeholders informed about Council activities, ensuring transparency in how ratepayer funds are spent. Notably, it highlights 85 per cent of the actions outlined in the Council Plan were completed with over \$75 million in capital improvements also invested across the City. To read the full report, visit: [www.maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/annualreport](http://www.maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/annualreport)

We now turn our focus to the preparation of a new Council Plan, which will be shared with the community for feedback in the first quarter of 2025, and the preparation of the 2025/26 Annual Budget, to ensure Council delivers important services and facilities to the community in a financially-sustainable way that meets the needs of our residents.

Because preparing the Budget can be something of a balancing act, we are currently looking to understand community funding priorities to help determine resources and allocations for services, projects, and capital works. You can share your spending preferences and any feedback by midnight Sunday 8 December 2024 at [yourcityyourvoice.com.au/budget25-26](http://yourcityyourvoice.com.au/budget25-26)

It is time to also reflect on our local heroes who have made a significant contribution to the community. With nominations for the 2025 Civic Awards now open, show your appreciation to the many individuals and businesses who selflessly give back to our community by nominating them for an Award. Head to page 8 to view the award categories and how to submit a nomination.

As Christmas approaches, there are a range of free local activities and events being hosted across the City – read more on page 10. Stay safe this festive season, and enjoy the warm weather coming our way.

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## COUNCIL MEETING DATES

The meetings will be held at the Town Hall.

### FEBRUARY

Tuesday 18, 6.30pm: Council

Tuesday 25, 6.30pm: City Development Delegated Committee

### MARCH

Tuesday 18, 6.30pm: Council

Tuesday 25, 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](http://maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/meetings) or phone **9688 0200** for more information.

# CIVIC PRECINCT & COMMUNITY HUB OPEN FOR BUSINESS

IN-PERSON CUSTOMER SERVICE  
ENQUIRIES RETURN TO THE  
UPGRADED FOOTSCRAY TOWN HALL



**With the renovation of the historic Footscray Town Hall as part of the Civic Precinct and Community Hub redevelopment now complete, Council is returning to its home on the corner of Hyde and Napier Streets in December.**

Starting 2 December, our in-person Customer Service enquiries desk will relocate from Footscray Library to the reception area in the foyer of the new building. Please be aware that the Customer Service desk at Footscray Library will be permanently closed from that date.

Our return to the Town Hall follows a two year redevelopment, which has seen the heritage building restored to its former glory with a range of meeting rooms and a multi-purpose function space being returned to the community for their use. Starting in February 2025, these spaces will be available for community bookings.

As part of the redevelopment, new entrances have been established, offering access from Hyde Street, Napier Street and Lawson Street. For those travelling by car, parking is available via Lawson Place, off Hyde Street.

A new community park has also been created, with shade, seating, and a focus on soft surfaces and cultural and Indigenous history, in line with what we heard from the community.

The park adjoins the new two-storey office and community building, which has been built with sustainability front of mind. This includes the use of timber and carbon neutral certified concrete and plasterboard to support a 45% reduction in upfront carbon emissions. A roof mounted solar and centralised all-electric thermal heating system have also been installed along with a 60,000 litre water tank allowing rainwater to be recycled for the toilets and park irrigation.

Breastfeeding and change room facilities and a multi-faith room will also be available to the community when the Civic Precinct and Community Hub opens for customer enquiries. There will also be 20 bike spaces and in early 2025, three electric vehicle fast chargers, which can accommodate up to six vehicles simultaneously.

#### **Civic Precinct and Community Hub**

61 Napier Street, Footscray

Enter via Hyde, Napier or Lawson streets

For more information, visit [maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/townhall](http://maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/townhall)



# A GOOD NEWS STORY

WHAT STARTED AS A FAMILY ACTIVITY HAS EVOLVED INTO A FEEL GOOD VENTURE THAT HAS DELIVERED 56,000 MEALS TO PEOPLE IN NEED, SUPPORT FOR SMALL BUSINESSES, AND A PLATFORM TO HIGHLIGHT THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF OTHERS – AND THERE IS A PLAN TO DO EVEN MORE GOOD IN THE FUTURE.

**I**t all began 20 March 2020 on a considerably unhappy day for Andy Fithall, when he was made redundant from his newly acquired audio engineering job due to the looming threat of COVID-19.

Having only worked there three weeks, he was the first to be made redundant. And with this his second redundancy for the year, the first as a result of bushfires, he admits to feeling somewhat anxious and depressed that day.

Within 24 hours though, recognising others suffering similar pandemic experiences were probably feeling much the same as he was, Andy decided to take action.

“I pitched an idea to “the troops” (his boys) that why don’t we make – because the only thing on TV was doom and gloom, COVID stats, fearmongering and more – a good news show.”

Two days later on 22 March, ‘In Other Good News’ aired for the first time ‘live’ on Andy’s personal Facebook page.

A family affair, Andy and then eight year old son Reuben were co-hosts, with youngest son Sonny, then six, the behind the scenes producer. Reuben read the stories, sharing the good news of and for locals, while Sonny moved the cameras around and changed out the videos to be played.

The trio continued broadcasting most nights around 7pm throughout the first wave of COVID. The more they produced, the more they learnt, improving their production



values and technical set up, and even developing their own theme song and a logo.

The Fithall brothers say they have both learned a lot from their time in front of and behind the microphone.

"I like seeing how much I progressed in producing the episodes. Looking back at the first episodes there were lots of blackouts and pauses, but by the last one, I feel I was doing a lot better," Sonny said.

For Reuben the highlight was being invited on air with radio journalist, Jacinta Parsons.

"We usually had a home-schooled class at that time, but during that day, the kids in my class kept putting in our class chat 'Reuben's on the radio!'. I got to be a news correspondent," he said.

It wasn't long before 'In Other Good News' morphed from talking about good stuff to 'doing good' stuff.

"At the end of the first wave we broadcast Funkin' for Foodbank, which was a live telethon broadcast on Facebook. We had celebrity hosts Dan and Dani from The Block, a live band, politicians, and Dave McNamara, the CEO of Foodbank Victoria as guests. This was all live and we raised \$6,000," Andy said.

And that was just the start of their fundraising efforts for Foodbank. As the second wave of COVID hit, the Fithalls expanded into the coffee business, creating their own line of coffee beans, named Grindhog Day by the community, which they began selling to continue to support their chosen charity.

Four and a half years later, the money donated from sales of their Grindhog Day beans has resulted in the creation and distribution of almost 56,000 meals for people in need, as of October 2024. Coffee beans are still available through the 'In Other Good News' website.

Once Reuben and Sonny were able to return to school and "just be kids again", Andy went solo. He started 'The Good People Podcast', in which he interviewed a variety of people about all the good they were doing and highlighting more goodness in the community.

In 2023, Andy won the Community Strengthening Award at the annual Civic Awards event hosted by Council, for his work in spreading good news in the community. Earlier this year, he also won the Best Interview Podcast in the 2024 Radio Today Podcast Awards for his series.

"That was amazing. I was really shocked when I saw I was one of the finalists, it was an impressive group of people. I was really emotional because you don't know who is listening, and you don't know what the judges are looking for, so to get that recognition was really great," he said.

Andy also co-founded Ground Level, which is a support network for small businesses, not-for-profits and charities, which focuses on health and wellbeing, and reintegrating in the wake of lockdowns and COVID.

And if that wasn't enough – in even more 'good news' there's more good to come. Before the end of the year Andy wants to launch 'The Good Machine'.

"Social need, collaborations and partnerships go into the machine, something happens, and then out of the machine spits an initiative, or a product or service that has something good," he said.

For a man who is clearly not prepared to just talk the talk, but who also walks the walk, there is only one thing left to say: "Good luck, Andy!"

Find out more about Andy, Grindhog Day, and all his good work at [iogm.com.au](http://iogm.com.au)



# MEET YOUR COUNCILLORS

## PRADEEP TIWARI BLUESTONE WARD

I am committed to a council that celebrates and supports every community member, regardless of age, cultural background, or sexuality. My goal is to create a more inclusive, vibrant community where everyone can thrive. I believe in working together with residents, traders and all other community members to achieve goals. I have served my local community for over ten years, with events, representing them in stakeholder groups with Council, and creating events to bring community together. I have lived in the local area for 39 years and seen its ups and downs and believe I can help in enhancing it.

## CUC LAM BRAYBROOK WARD

As a Councillor for 11 years and two-time Mayor, I have a strong community connection, which enables me to negotiate and advocate for the best outcomes for my residents. I will always listen to the needs and concerns of Braybrook residents to serve them as best possible. My vision for Maribyrnong is to ensure residents receive improved and affordable social housing, as well as increased green spaces and clean streets.

Maribyrnong's new Councillors (L-R), Cr Mohamed Semra, Cr Bernadette Thomas, Cr Susan Yengi, Cr Cuc Lam, Cr Pradeep Tiwari and Cr Samantha Meredith.  
Absent: Cr Elena Pereyra.



## **MOHAMED SEMRA**

### **BURNDAP WARD**

My goal is to create a more sustainable, liveable, and affordable Maribyrnong, where all community voices are uplifted and supported. I want to ensure we have leadership that listens, fights for fairness, and addresses the challenges we face with a focus on inclusive, people-centered solutions.

As an award-winning human rights activist with extensive experience in advocacy, not-for-profit management, and social entrepreneurship, I bring a community-centred approach to decision-making. My expertise in driving social change, fostering inclusivity, and managing diverse programs equips me to represent and uplift all voices in our community.

## **SUSAN YENGI**

### **RIVER WARD**

As the gateway to the West, the City of Maribyrnong will be a vibrant, thriving hub where residents feel safe, connected, and valued. I envision a community where residents receive value for their rates, businesses are supported to succeed, and our natural ecosystems and green spaces are protected and nurtured.

With extensive experience in community development, project management, and leading a successful social enterprise, I know how to bring people together and advocate on key issues to government and business. I am recognised for my honesty, integrity, dedication, and empathy, and am committed to upholding these values as your Councillor.

## **SAMANTHA MEREDITH**

### **SALTWATER WARD**

Our community should be one where everyone has what they need to thrive, not just survive. Together we can continue building a supportive, vibrant and diverse community where everyone is valued and where we all play our part in protecting our local environment and climate.

As a local teacher, I know how important it is to listen, to value diverse perspectives and how to negotiate to get results. I'll bring these skills to my role as your councillor, where I'll work to achieve the best outcomes for our community.

## **BERNADETTE THOMAS**

### **SHEOAK WARD**

As your Councillor since 2020, I understand how Maribyrnong City Council operates and how to get results for our community. I'm a trusted and effective advocate who works collaboratively with residents and councillors from across the political spectrum with a proven track record of delivering for our community.

Our community cares about our neighbours, our local environment and our planet. Together we can continue building a supportive, vibrant and diverse community where everyone has what they need to thrive and where we play our part in protecting people and our local environment.

## **ELENA PEREYRA**

### **WATTLE WARD**

Everyone in our community should have everything they need in life to thrive. Maribyrnong City Council plays an important role in achieving this, from supporting affordable housing, investing in public transport as well as cycling and walking infrastructure, and essential community services like libraries and community childcare.

As someone with deep connections in our community, I understand what we need from our local government. As a parent and foster carer, I know how important it is to listen and negotiate, attributes I will bring to the role of Councillor.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT UPDATE



## THE FOUNDATION FOR OUR MUNICIPALITY'S FUTURE

**Council is moving into what is known as the 'deliberative' phase of engagement on the Community Vision, and Council, Asset and Financial plans.**

This is where we get into more detail around the challenges we are facing and seek guidance from residents around ways we can address these. Primarily, this is around how we can continue to deliver services and manage assets to meet community expectations on a constrained budget.

Conversations will be held with a representative group during three Foundations for Tomorrow workshops, supported by kitchen table conversations with diverse networks, and an online deliberative survey.

The survey and kitchen table conversations are an opportunity to extend the deliberative dialogue further into the community. You'll find the survey at [yourcityyourvoice.com.au/communityplan](https://yourcityyourvoice.com.au/communityplan) with dates and times for kitchen table conversations, which will be hosted at locations across the municipality providing opportunity to sit and talk with us and provide your insights and perspectives.

The deliberative phase follows broader engagement, which began in mid-2024, to understand if residents thought the Community Vision, endorsed in 2018, is still relevant, and initial thoughts on the strategic objectives the

community would like considered in a new Council Plan. The conversation was then broadened to help inform reviews of the Asset and Financial plans, including asking residents to identify the service categories Council currently delivers that are of most importance to them.

More than 500 residents provided responses – via 13 in-person events, online via Your City Your Voice and hard copy postcards. There was support for the current Community Vision, noting some feedback around embracing our history and differences, and a greater focus on our diverse and sustainable community. There was a mixed response in terms of how we should manage our community assets, and some calls to review our current expenditure.

We'll be unpacking this feedback further during the Foundations for Tomorrow workshops, kitchen table conversations, and deliberative survey.

The collective feedback will help inform the development of new draft plans which we will share with you for further comment early in 2025.

Complete the survey by midnight Sunday 15 December 2024 via [yourcityyourvoice.com.au/communityplan](https://yourcityyourvoice.com.au/communityplan)

This is an exciting opportunity to help influence the key strategic documents that determine future service delivery for the whole municipality.



# RECOGNISING OUR LOCAL HEROES

The passion and dedication of our community is something every person who passes through our municipality benefits from. Show your appreciation for someone you know who makes a difference by nominating them for one of the eight Civic Awards.

## CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARD

Nominate an inspirational role model that has made an outstanding contribution to the City of Maribyrnong in the area of community, health, education, environment, arts or sport.

## VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Nominate an individual for their outstanding achievements as a volunteer.

## LES TWENTYMAN YOUTH LEADERSHIP AWARD

Nominate an individual who is under the age of 25 for their exceptional leadership work.

This year, the Youth Leadership Award has been renamed to honour Les Twentyman, in recognition of his lifelong advocacy for Victoria's most vulnerable communities, particularly in the area of youth justice.

## COMMUNITY STRENGTHENING AWARD

Nominate an individual or not-for-profit organisation for its outstanding work.

## ENTERPRISE MARIBYRNONG AWARDS

Nominate a local business for its contribution to the City of Maribyrnong in one of the following sub-categories:

- Contribution to Business Community Award
- Innovative Business Award
- New and Emerging Business Award

## ACTIVE MARIBYRNONG SPORTING AWARDS

Nominate a Maribyrnong-based club, team, or individual involved with, or contributes to, community sport and recreation.



Photo by Kit Edwards

## ARTS AWARD

Nominate an individual, community group or organisation for outstanding contributions to the arts in the City of Maribyrnong.

## LGBTIQA+ LEADERSHIP AWARD

Nominate a LGBTIQA+ individual or group for their outstanding leadership achievements in the LGBTIQA+ community.

Nominations close 5pm Friday 13 December 2024. For more information, visit [maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/civicawards2025](http://maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/civicawards2025)

## HIGH-TECH SWIMMING LESSONS

### Maribyrnong Aquatic Centre is using technology to support children learning to swim.

Maribyrnong Aquatic Centre has rolled out a new solution to help improve marking and assessment of students in its Learn to Swim Program. Swimming instructors are now equipped with Learn to Swim tablets that enable them to mark off and assess a child's

swimming ability and skills in real time while in the water with students.

This digital solution will better enable parents and guardians to see the key areas their children are excelling in, or might need to focus on to improve their child's confidence in the water. The system also provides a historical record of the child's development that is also transferable to other swim

Centres should they move away.

To find out more about Learn to Swim or enrol your children (or yourself) in swimming lessons get in touch with Maribyrnong Aquatic Centre.

**Maribyrnong Aquatic Centre,**  
1 Aquatic Drive, Maribyrnong  
[maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/mac](http://maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/mac)

# SUMMER TIME IN MARIBYRNONG

ENJOY THE FESTIVE SEASON AND BEYOND THIS SUMMER!

## BRAYBROOK PICNIC IN THE PARK

Aeroplane Park, Braybrook Community Hub

Friday 6 December, 6 – 8pm

Get into the holiday spirit with Farmer Darryl and his animals. Don't forget to say hello to Santa! Top it all off with a delicious free sausage sizzle.

## FESTIVE FRI-YAYS

Civic Precinct and Community Hub

61 Napier Street Footscray

Friday 13 and Friday 20 December, 4 – 9pm

Join us at Council's new Civic Precinct and Community Hub to experience the magic of a "white Christmas" in our giant Christmas snow globe (snap a photo inside it with the family!). Get creative with our arts and crafts activities which will include Augmented Reality 3D workshops and colouring fun. The second instalment of Festive Fri-Yays will also feature the Santa Paws event which is perfect for families and their four-legged friends.



## YARRAVILLE CAROLS IN THE GARDENS

Yarraville Gardens

Saturday 16 December, 5 – 8pm

Soak up the beautiful sunset and enjoy the festive cheer with your family at the Yarraville Gardens.

## NEW YEAR'S EVE FIREWORKS

Western Lawn, Footscray Park

Tuesday 31 December

Celebrate New Year's Eve with family and friends at our free, annual fireworks spectacular in Footscray Park. This year's show is headlined by the Ferguson Rogers Process – a new project from two of Australia's most beloved musical minds Tim Rogers (You Am I) and Lance Ferguson (The Bamboos). Fireworks will take place at 9.30pm.

## EAST MEETS WEST LUNAR NEW YEAR FESTIVALS

Byron Plaza and surrounds, Footscray

Sunday 12 January

## BRAYBROOK ACTION SPORTS AND MUSIC FESTIVAL

RampFest Indoor Skatepark, Braybrook

Sunday 19 January

## MIDSUMMA WESTSIDE

Various locations across Melbourne's west

19 – 29 January

## QUANG MINH TET FESTIVAL

Quang Minh Temple, Braybrook

Tuesday 28 January

## VIETNAMESE TET LUNAR NEW YEAR AND 50 YEARS FREEDOM EXHIBITION

Eastern Lawn, Footscray Park

16 – 17 February

## 'BIN IT BETTER' KERBING POOR RECYCLING HABITS

NOT SURE WHAT TO DISPOSE OF WHERE? WE GET IT – IT CAN BE CONFUSING.

**The 'Bin it Better' campaign launched in April was designed to help residents do the right thing to ensure waste for landfill ends up in the red lidded bin, recycling in the yellow lidded bin, and Food and Garden Organics (FOGO) in the green lidded bin.**

Generally, our community seems to get it. During an initial survey, we heard from 636 residents – who were largely doing it right.

The key areas for improvement were ensuring items such as coffee pods, tea bags, compostable products, liquids and oils and plastic bags were properly disposed of in the red lidded bin and NOT in the green lidded bin as they contaminate the bin. On the flip side,

residents are encouraged to keep food and garden waste out of the red lidded bins, using their lime-green lidded bins for this type of household waste.

As the 'Bin it Better' campaign enters the next phase, we're focusing on raising awareness of the importance of disposing of e-waste, such as batteries and electronics, responsibly.

E-waste and batteries should never be placed in any bin, as they can explode and pose a risk to both the community and the environment.

To help ensure e-waste is properly managed and does not end up in landfill, we've developed some information brochures and bin stickers as helpful reminders. These resources are available in seven languages and can be ordered from our website or by calling 9688 0220.

We're also undertaking a follow-up 'Bin it Better' survey to better understand and how you want to learn about recycling.

Your feedback will help shape future waste education programs and support our continued efforts to divert waste from landfill.

To order brochures and stickers, sign up for workshops, and take the survey, visit [maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/bins-and-recycling](http://maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/bins-and-recycling)

Additionally, to further reinforce sustainable waste management practices, Council will be hosting workshops at local schools focusing on the items that belong in the Food and Garden Organics/FOGO (green-lidded) bins. Schools wanting to take part can schedule a free workshop by visiting [maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/bin-it-better-at-school](http://maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/bin-it-better-at-school)



## LOW WASTE IDEAS THAT WON'T RUBBISH THE PLANET

**As the weather warms up and people start thinking about gatherings and celebrations, here are some practical tips to help you host an eco-friendly party.**

### SUSTAINABLE DECORATIONS

Choose reusable or organic/natural decorations. Cloth banners, fabric tablecloths, potted plants, and natural elements like flowers or branches from your garden make for beautiful, waste-free décor. Avoid balloons, plastic strings, tinsel, and single-use plastic decorations as they break down into small pieces and are often mistaken for food and ingested by wildlife.

### ECO-FRIENDLY TABLEWARE

Instead of disposable plates and cups, opt for reusable dishware or consider choosing compostable plates, utensils, and cups made from materials like bamboo, palm leaves and banana leaves – this cuts down on plastic waste.

If you don't want to purchase a new set of crockery or cutlery, check your local community Facebook groups for reusable party packs that you can borrow and return for free after your event. Local groups in Melbourne's western suburbs have tubs in circulation that contain plates, bowls, cups, forks, platters – and even an emergency candle kit/matches in case you forget!

### LOCAL AND SEASONAL FOOD

Support Victorian farmers by sourcing seasonal ingredients from a Slow Food Farmer's Market or a purveyor of local goods.

### SUSTAINABLE PARTY FAVOURS

If you plan to hand out party favours, consider eco-friendly options like reusable tote bags, plant seeds, or homemade treats.

### WASTE MANAGEMENT

Set up designated bins for recycling, compost, and waste so guests can easily dispose of items responsibly. Council's 'Bin it Better' campaign supports residents in reducing waste by offering resources for proper disposal and recycling, visit: [maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/bin-it-better](http://maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/bin-it-better)

TAKE OUR  
'BIN IT BETTER'  
SURVEY

Share your recycling habits with us!  
Visit: [maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/bin-it-better](http://maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/bin-it-better)



# EMPOWERING LOCAL CREATIVES

## WITH CREATIVE PLACES

**C**ommunity is at the heart of Creative Places, with a series of events designed to connect artists, community members, and property owners. These gatherings will include a launch event and networking sessions. Pop-up performances and activities will pepper the pilot program, ensuring the community remains involved throughout.

The initiative will also showcase a public art project displaying images from a local photographer in large-format decals and

a bold new billboard to bring art directly to the streets. As the pilot unfolds, Council is eager to explore expressions of interest from other property owners who may wish to participate in future iterations of Creative Places, which not only aims to enhance the cultural fabric of Footscray but also establish a precedent for how communities can repurpose spaces to support and celebrate creativity.

For more information please visit: [maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/creativeplaces](https://maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/creativeplaces)

## MAIDSTONE COMMUNITY CENTRE EXPANDS INDIGENOUS PROGRAMMING

**The Centre is celebrating community interest in new Indigenous programming.**

To help foster deeper connections to Indigenous culture and history among locals, Maidstone Community Centre has introduced a range of new programs, with strong attendance and positive feedback from attendees.

One of the standout new projects is the Tales of the West Anthology – a collection of writings from students who participated in workshops led by teacher Rosanna Morales. The anthology features short stories, reflections, and poems that reflect the students' experiences in the western suburbs, intertwined with the rich history of Indigenous Peoples. The preface, written by Traditional Custodian Robert Ogden, adds an authentic voice to this community-driven narrative. Throughout 2024, the Indigenous Waterways Blackbird Tour has also offered participants a unique opportunity to explore the Maribyrnong River. Guided by Robert Ogden, participants are able to learn about the significance of these waterways to Indigenous culture, enriching their understanding of local heritage. These popular tours will return in 2025, enabling more community members to connect with our City's Indigenous roots.

Another exciting initiative for Maribyrnong's youngest residents, Little Wombats, is an Aboriginal cultural program designed for pre-schoolers aged between 3-5 years old. This interactive program includes storytelling, music, and arts activities that engage young children while introducing them to Indigenous culture. With themes exploring bush tucker, art, and native animals, Little Wombats will also continue in 2025, providing a platform for learning and cultural connection.

Through these programs, Maidstone Community Centre is providing accessible ways for locals to learn about Indigenous culture, ensuring the voices and stories of the community are heard and celebrated.

Explore the programs at Maidstone Community Centre in their newsletter: [maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/communitycentres](http://maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/communitycentres)



## FIND YOUR SUMMER READS AND MORE IN OUR DIGITAL LIBRARY

**Discover a wide range of digital collections, easily accessible from home or on holidays, making it simple to stay informed and entertained over the summer break. It is free to join and borrow at Maribyrnong Libraries!**

All library members have free access to eMagazines and online newspapers via the library catalogue, major mastheads including News Corp publications on Pressreader, and popular news, culture and entertainment on the Borrowbox and Libby apps. Our digital library helps you stay in the know on news and engaged with hobbies totally free and 24/7. For booklovers, BorrowBox and Libby offer a broad selection of eBooks and audiobooks. Log in with your Maribyrnong Libraries membership for immediate access to bestsellers, popular fiction, young adult non-fiction and more. Our newly added Comics Plus subscription offers thousands of comic books, graphic novels and manga, available immediately without the need to make a reservation.

Parents, families and carers of children can take advantage of on-demand online story times through Story Box Library, where Australian authors and entertainers read classic children's books. There are also a range of options to keep kids engaged, entertained and happy over the holidays with free streaming on Kanopy Kids, interactive books in 60 plus languages including Auslan on LOTE4Kids, and hundreds of fun and educational games designed for children aged 3-11 years on Busy Things.

All you need is a Maribyrnong Libraries membership for free access to these items and more on our Digital Library and Kids Digital Library. Get reading and listening now by visiting the Maribyrnong Libraries website to discover digital collections: [maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/digitallibrary](http://maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/digitallibrary)



## INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATE

### RECWEST AND SHORTEN RESERVE UPGRADE PENDING

DETAILED DESIGN PROGRESSING TO FACILITATE WORKS.

Following community engagement and site investigations, Council endorsed an updated Master Plan for the RecWest Leisure Centre and Shorten Reserve upgrades in August 2024.

Both have now entered detailed design.

Works are expected to start on the Shorten Reserve Oval Upgrade in June 2025, continuing until December 2026.



This work will include soil compaction, creating a new turf profile, releveling, upgrading irrigation, improving drainage, and installing a new turf cricket table.

New cricket nets and playground upgrades will follow, along with works on the RecWest facility.

### KEY ROAD WORKS PAVING THE WAY TO A MORE INTER-CONNECTED COMMUNITY

JOSEPH ROAD, COWPER STREET AND SUMMERHILL ROAD UPGRADES WILL ENHANCE SAFETY, ACCESSIBILITY AND IMPROVE AMENITY.

#### JOSEPH ROAD

Construction began in March 2024, focusing on Joseph Road from Hopkins Street to the Heavenly Queen Temple.

Stage 1 and 2 are now complete, including the installation of lights and tree pits, with trees planted in the area to increase canopy cover.



Stage 3 is currently underway, with retaining walls installed, and underground service works and kerb and concrete channel installations underway. Pavement works began in mid-November 2024, and the completion of Stage 3 is anticipated before the end of this year.

Stage 4 will see works progressing toward Hopkins Street. These works are integral to the conversion of the Joseph Road Precinct from a former industrial area into a mixed-use precinct, enhancing public amenity by upgrading roads, improving street lighting, and installing bike lanes, a raised pedestrian crossing, and new parking bays.

#### COWPER STREET

We're also making progress on the long-awaited upgrade for Cowper Street, which began in March 2024.

Key features include a new road surface, improved drainage,



pedestrian footpaths, a footbridge, and enhanced lighting. Retaining walls and other miscellaneous works are also being undertaken.

Asphalt and concreting works have been completed from Lyons Street up to the point of the current road closure at Harris Street.

## SUMMERHILL ROAD

Summerhill Road is the last of the key distributor roads to be reconstructed.

Works began in June 2024, with the replacing of curbs and channels now complete.

While the project has experienced some delays, resurfacing between Ballarat Road and Eden Street is expected to be underway early in 2025, incorporating community feedback for better pedestrian crossings.



## YARRAVILLE LIBRARY RELOCATION TO SUPPORT A VIBRANT NEW COMMUNITY SPACE

**A FUTURE MOVE FROM ITS CURRENT LOCATION ON WEMBLEY AVENUE TO THE BRADMILL PRECINCT AT 341–351 FRANCIS STREET HAS BEEN CONFIRMED.**

The new site will provide up to five times the current floor space, enabling improved facilities like meeting rooms, a digital lab, and areas for children and teens.

This transition follows community engagement where over 800 residents expressed a desire for a larger, modern library, recognising the existing library is in poor condition and does not meet accessibility requirements.

Next steps include planning and budgeting for a potential opening in 2028.



## TRANSFORMATION OF FORMER NURSERY SITE UNDERWAY

Following an extensive engagement process, the first of the planned upgrade works at the former Lae Street Nursery site in West Footscray are now complete.

They include a gathering circle, optimised path connections, irrigated grass areas, tree planting, a garden bed, and new boundary fences.

Stage 2, including the construction of a shelter over the gathering circle, as well as a nature trail and garden bed planting is scheduled to begin early in 2025.

The design was informed by the Lae Street Advisory Group, comprising local residents, who met around a dozen times between 2022 and 2023 to share their vision for the new open space.

Their transformative ideas were translated into a Concept Plan approved by Council in late 2023.

# BUSOG

TRADITIONAL FILIPINO CUISINE  
WITH A MODERN TWIST



**B**usog, located in West Footscray, is a family-owned Filipino restaurant founded by Denis Valdejueza, who serves as both director and chef. Opened in early October, Busog is a collaborative effort between Denis and his daughter, who takes charge of the kitchen. Their shared passion for food and family is evident in every dish they create and the warm atmosphere they cultivate.

The restaurant's name, derived from the Tagalog word for "full" or "satisfied from food," perfectly captures their mission to ensure every customer leaves feeling happy and content.

Among the standout dishes

are Daeng na Bangus, a delectable fried milkfish accompanied by a salted egg salad, the spicy and crispy Dimonyo Pata (pork hock), and the indulgent Crispy Palabok, a dish of fried vermicelli noodles topped with shrimp gravy.

Denis describes Busog as "a restaurant full of love that makes everyone full." Each dish is crafted with care, embodying the family's dedication to quality and tradition. At Busog, the love for food and family shines through, creating a dining experience that nourishes both the heart and the stomach.

**Shop 1/553 Barkly Street  
West Footscray  
[instagram.com/busog\\_au](https://www.instagram.com/busog_au)**

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For requests, comments and questions about Council services and programs, go to [maribyrnong.vic.gov.au](http://maribyrnong.vic.gov.au) or call Customer Service on 9688 0200.

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