

FEDERAL BUDGET SUBMISSION 2026/27



**INVEST
CARDINIA**

TOGETHER WE RISE



Acknowledgement of Country

Cardinia Shire Council acknowledges the Bunurong and Wurundjeri peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the land and waterways across our region. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and recognise their deep and enduring connection to Country. Guided by our community, we strive for a future grounded in truth, respect, equity, and cultural safety, where everyone feels connected and has the opportunity to thrive.

Our Inclusive statement

Cardinia Shire Council encourages a sense of belonging within our shire.

We support an inclusive community comprised of people from diverse backgrounds, including and not limited to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from cultural and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, those identifying as LGBTIQ+, people of faith, and people of all ages, genders and abilities.

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

I'm proud to share Cardinia Shire Council's key advocacy priorities and seek support and investment from the Federal Government to help address critical needs across our shire.

We're one of Victoria's fastest-growing municipalities, with more than 135,000 residents and an average of three new households joining our community every day. Over the next decade, our population is expected to grow by almost 35,000 people.

This growth brings incredible opportunities, as well as significant challenges.

To help support our continued growth and ensure our shire remains a great place to live, Council is committed to delivering essential services and infrastructure for our community. But there is so much more to be done.

Cardinia Shire, like many growth areas, needs funding and support to keep up with growing demand for new roads, parks, sporting facilities and other infrastructure. Unfortunately, many of our community's needs remain unmet. Without adequate funding, we risk falling behind in delivering the infrastructure and services that our community needs and deserves.

Our 2026–27 Pre-Budget Submission highlights the key projects for which we're seeking Federal Government support.

Our priority projects include:

- Cardinia Life regional basketball and gymnastics stadium redevelopment: co-investment from the Victorian and Australian governments is sought to deliver the \$60 million stage one redevelopment through an equal three-way funding partnership.
- Lang Lang truck bypass: \$57 million in funding is needed for a dedicated bypass for heavy vehicles that connects South Gippsland's extractive industries to the South Gippsland Highway.
- Strategic road sealing package: co-investment from the Australian and Victorian governments is required to seal priority unsealed roads across the shire to improve emergency access, community safety, and climate resilience.
- Parks and open space package: co-investment from the Australian and Victorian governments is needed to deliver three critical open space projects that provide safe, inclusive recreation opportunities for young people and families across Cardinia Shire's growth corridor.

– Officer District Park:

\$7 million to deliver stage two.

– PB Ronald Reserve, Pakenham:

\$10 million for stage one.

– McMullen Recreation Reserve, Officer:

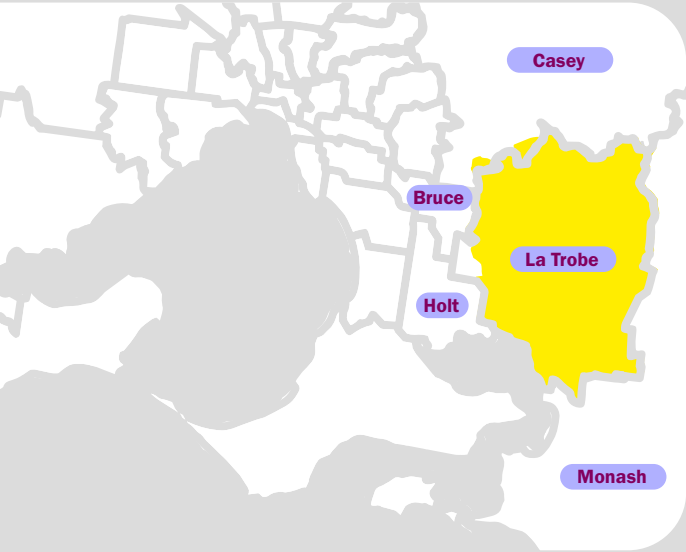
\$10 million.

We remain committed to advocating for what our growing community needs. We're calling on the support of the Australian Government to help make these projects a reality, and to make a positive difference to the lives of people who call Cardinia Shire home.

CR BRETT OWEN

Mayor,
Cardinia Shire
Council





CARDINIA COMMUNITY PROFILE



An average of **3 new households** move into the shire **every day**



Gross Regional Product of **\$6.4 billion**



Over 60% of residents leave the area for work every day

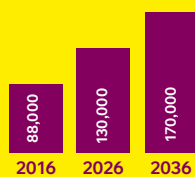


Land area of **1,280km²**

Victorian Government target of **30,000** new homes in Cardinia by 2051



Construction of over **22,000** new homes are forecast between 2021 and 2036



Current population of **over 130,000**

42,000 people have moved into the area in the last decade alone

Population is predicted to rise by another **40,000** over the next decade



Home to over **33,000 jobs**, primarily in the construction industry



Only 5.2% of rental properties are considered affordable



17% of mortgagees are experiencing mortgage stress and **42%** of renters are experiencing rental stress



Over 800km of unsealed roads, representing more than half the local road network and **equal to the distance between Melbourne and Sydney**



Home to **over 200** parks, playgrounds, reserves, and sporting facilities



Contains only **one 24-hour police station** and **no full-service hospital**



Less than 4% of residents walk or use public transport to get to work

ADVOCACY PRIORITIES SNAPSHOT

Cardinia Shire Council is proud to partner with the Australian Government to help achieve shared policy goals. Investment in Council's advocacy priorities will help to deliver on a variety of key government strategies, including:

- **National Preventative Health Strategy**
- **National Obesity Strategy**
- **National Road Safety Strategy**
- **National Sport Strategy**
- **National Housing Accord**
- **Threatened Species Strategy**
- **National Urban Policy**
- **National Electric Vehicle Strategy**



The project	The ask	The benefit	Page
Parks and Open Space Package	Officer District Park – Stage 2 (\$7m) PB Ronald Reserve Pakenham – Stage 1 (\$10m) McMullen Recreation Reserve Officer (\$12.6m)	Improving participation in our area's most popular sports, ensuring that our youth are engaged and healthy.	8
Cardinia Life Regional Basketball and Gymnastics Stadium Redevelopment	\$60m split between all three levels of government.	A modern and future-proofed basketball centre that incorporates a new gymnasium and other key amenities.	9
Lang Lang Truck Bypass	Delivery of a dedicated bypass route (estimated \$57m) for heavy vehicle trucks connecting South Gippsland's extractive industries to the South Gippsland Highway.	Supports safe and efficient heavy vehicle and freight movements whilst protecting vulnerable road users.	10
Strategic Road Sealing Package	Co-investment with Council to seal priority unsealed roads across Cardinia Shire.	Improved emergency access, community safety, and climate resilience.	11

The project The ask The benefit Page

Sporting Pavilion Equitable Access Package	\$8m for IYU Regional Athletics Pavilion \$2.1m for Nar Nar Goon Recreation Reserve Pavilion \$340,000 for Pakenham Outdoor Pool	Encouraging female and disabled residents to get involved in sports by modernising ageing and outdated pavilions with accessible replacements.	12
Financial Sustainability of Local Government	Dedicated growth area funding opportunities that enable infrastructure investment.	Better service delivery and additional local investment, reducing pressure on state and federal governments.	13
Officer Town Centre Activation Package	\$6m for the Officer Library and Community Hub Delivery of the Officer North-South Arterial	Kickstarting a vibrant community and economic hub in the heart of Officer.	14
Racecourse Road Duplication	Delivery of an estimated \$60m road duplication and intersection.	Removal of the last major bottleneck in the Pakenham road network.	15
Princes Highway Safety and Connectivity Upgrades	\$25m to complete business cases outlining design solutions for four dangerous intersections.	A safer and more efficient national freight network without outdated and dangerous intersections.	16
Defending Native Species Package	\$2.45m over five years to protect the Southern Brown Bandicoot through biolink projects and habitat restoration. \$2.1 million for a Growling Grass Frog Management Plan, including plans for 20 new wetlands \$400,000 over four years to undertake Fauna Monitoring for Threatened Species \$7.1 million to deliver the Officer South PSP Integrated Water Management plan	Protection of endangered native flora and fauna from urban development and unsustainable water use.	17

Unlocking Officer South Employment Precinct	\$8.7m for the construction of the Lower Gum Scrub Bridge External delivery of the Thompsons Road Expansion \$5.8m for the construction of the Centenary Boulevard Bridge	Delivery of a state significant industrial and commercial hub, enabling 20,000 new jobs.	18
Pakenham Revitalisation	Partnership with other levels of government to deliver key pieces of infrastructure.	Sparking economic development with a modern, pedestrian-first CBD for a rapidly growing suburb.	18
EV Charging Stations	Co-investment for a Cardinia led rollout of public EV charging (fast and destination chargers) at priority car parks and activity centres.	Supporting the climate transition by enabling increased consumer choice.	19

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE PACKAGE

The project	The ask	The plan
Officer District Park Stage 2	\$7m State and Federal co-investment	Addition of a regional level skatepark, mountain biking tracks, and a cafe to one of the region's most popular parks.
PB Ronald Reserve Redevelopment	\$10m State and Federal co-investment	Major makeover of central Pakenham's main park, including a new event stage and lawns, expanded skate park and outdoor gym, and additional picnic shelters and barbecues.
McMullen Recreation Reserve	\$12.6m State and Federal co-investment	Planning and delivery of a brand new reserve catering to the high growth sport of soccer, as well as lawn bowls and cricket.



A preventative solution

More than 30% of Cardinia Shire's population is under 18, significantly higher than the Victorian average. With another 35,000 residents projected to live in the area within a decade, investment is needed now to provide the recreation opportunities that will support healthy and social kids.

These projects are not just opportunities for recreation. They are preventative measures that address community and government concerns with rising health costs and youth crime by keeping young residents active, occupied, and engaged with their communities and peers. These projects represent long-term investments in the safety, health, and wellbeing of the community that will help reduce overall government spending by treating the cause, not the symptoms.

Equity for the outer suburbs

The number of children and young people in Cardinia Shire has long outpaced Council's ability to deliver sufficient outdoor recreation facilities alone. Most sporting clubs in the growth corridor, regardless of code, are playing late into the night and are still forced to turn away new players that they have no capacity for. Young people are finding limited alternatives with Cardinia Shire hosting only one skate park and no mountain bike tracks, for example.

Parents moving to the region are increasingly seeing a divide between the outer suburbs and the rest of Melbourne, where modern parks and ovals are abundant. Cardinia Shire is doing its part to deliver on government housing goals, but a lack of corresponding infrastructure investment is widening the gap even as housing costs encourage more families to move to growth areas.

This is especially true in Pakenham, where limited and ageing recreation opportunities further exacerbate socio-economic disadvantage; and Officer, where a population of more than 28,000 residents have to share a single major park that remains unfinished.

CARDINIA LIFE REGIONAL BASKETBALL AND GYMNASTICS STADIUM REDEVELOPMENT

The Ask

- **\$20 million** each from the Victorian and Australian Governments to match a \$20 million commitment from Cardinia Shire Council.
- This is a once in a generation overhaul of Cardinia Shire's sole aquatic and recreation centre and can only be delivered with external support.
- Council knows just how urgent this project is and has already made a major financial commitment to progress delivery.



The facts

- 35,000 more people will call Cardinia Shire home in the next decade, with 30% under 18.
- Basketball participation in Cardinia Shire is growing at more than 7% annually, almost double the 4% annual growth rate across the rest of Victoria.
- Cardinia Life is directly adjacent to the most disadvantaged areas of Cardinia Shire, according to the ABS' SEIFA Index.
- Organised sport is a preventative measure that keeps kids healthy and away from anti-social activities, reducing government spending on future health and crime interventions.

Bursting at the seams

Cardinia Life was a first-class facility when it opened in 2006. Two decades later, the population it serves has more than doubled and major repairs are needed to keep it functional. Interest in basketball in particular has exploded nationwide, coinciding with huge growth in the number of young people living in Cardinia Shire – 77% of local players are now under 20.

Demand is so high that despite courts being booked until well after 10pm each night, new teams and players have to be turned away, with registrations closing early for the last five seasons. Other recreation options that would normally be available at facilities like this do not exist in the region, with gymnastics in particular being a vital part of the redevelopment that will foster a sport with one of the highest female participation rates.

With no room for new participants at Cardinia Life, parents face a drive of 30 minutes or more to get their kids to a similar facility – with no guarantee it has space to spare.

An urgent issue

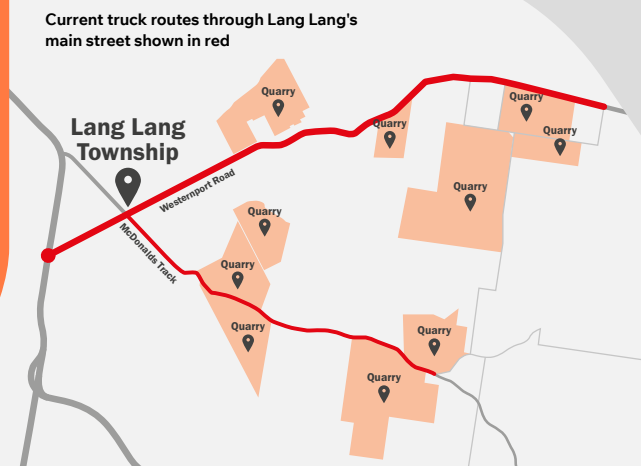
Council has already measured a drop in overall sport participation rates, which is particularly acute in Pakenham where Cardinia Life is the local recreation facility. Lack of action to date has already had a negative impact on mental and physical health among residents who are often totally disengaged with sport after being turned away from Cardinia Life. Further inaction risks entrenching a divide between Melbourne and Cardinia's already disadvantaged areas.

Cardinia Life also requires major capital works and maintenance to remain functional and energy efficient in the long-term, placing a substantial financial burden on Council and reducing the amount of funds available to spend on other essential projects locally. Games are frequently cancelled due to recurrent roof leaks and inadequate cooling resulting from ageing infrastructure and the absence of climate-resilient, sustainable design. The smart decision is to invest in a major refurbishment that reduces operating costs and improves the financial and environmental sustainability of Council, making us a more proactive partner for other levels of government.

LANG LANG TRUCK BYPASS

The Ask

- \$57 million from the Victorian and Australian Governments to begin planning and construction of a dedicated truck bypass in Lang Lang.
- Residents have been trying to get dangerous heavy vehicles off the main streets of Lang Lang for over a decade – during this time the Victorian Government has continued to authorise expansions to the local quarries and more trucks. Council is urgently seeking support to establish an alternative route that connects quarries directly to the South Gippsland Highway for easy access to construction sites across the city.



The plan

Council will construct a dedicated bypass for trucks travelling from sand quarries in Lang Lang towards the South Gippsland Highway, diverting them from local roads.

Council has already commenced land acquisitions and initial planning of the bypass, as well as making multiple submissions to the Victorian Government in response to their plans to expand the quarries. We are calling on the Commonwealth to help us support the quarry industry without jeopardising the safety and wellbeing of the Lang Lang community.

Why is this vital?

Sand extraction is a major industry in Lang Lang and the Victorian Government is actively encouraging the expansion of existing quarries. Lang Lang sand is essential to the building industry across Melbourne.

However, all trucks must pass through the main streets of Lang Lang to reach the rest of Melbourne. Currently, an average of 50 trucks an hour are travelling on each of Lang Lang's main local roads. This is an average of one truck every 1.2 minutes, all day long. In order to support this major industry, the residents of Lang Lang deal with degraded roads, dangerous streets, and constant air and noise pollution. In situations like this, residents should always be put first.

A bypass would improve traffic flow for quarry trucks and other heavy vehicles travelling through Lang Lang and futureproof the area by accommodating more trucks with larger loads. Most importantly, the project would make the main street a safe and enjoyable place for businesses and the community.

Benefits to the community

Residents will once again be able to enjoy the businesses and amenities of their town centre. Enjoying a coffee outside the local cafe or taking kids to the park without dealing with noise and fumes from dozens of trucks is something that all Australians expect from their communities, and Lang Lang residents deserve no less.

More than 200 students eachday cross a major truck route to get to Lang Lang Primary School and its sole bus stop. In addition to constant noise and dust, the danger of trucks racing past the school entrance and bus stop is not something that any parent should have to worry about on a daily basis.

The quarries are also a significant source of local jobs in the region and the sand that they extract is vital to construction companies across Cardinia Shire. The bypass will support the local economy and encourage growth in this industry without compromising the liveability of Lang Lang.

STRATEGIC ROAD SEALING PACKAGE

The Ask

- Funding support to expand our \$12 million annual road sealing budget.
- Council needs help to guarantee safe exit routes in disaster-prone areas of the shire, aligning with the goals of the Australian Government's Disaster Ready Fund.
- As the climate becomes more unpredictable, better preparation is needed and Council does not have the funds to do this alone.



Guaranteeing safe access

Cardinia Shire is experiencing the full effects of climate change, making reliable evacuation routes more important than ever. However, even with regular maintenance unsealed roads can quickly wash away during storms or become inaccessible for large CFA vehicles in bushfires.

As these extreme weather events become more common, it is increasingly important that Council has the resources to improve our climate resilience. Sealing key routes guarantees that communities can evacuate safely and that emergency services can enter at-risk areas. Emergency preparedness measures like this are strongly supported not just by residents but by local CFA and SES members.

The facts

- Council is responsible for maintaining 831kms of unsealed roads – one of the largest road networks in Melbourne and equivalent to the distance between Melbourne and Sydney.
- Despite the higher upfront investment, sealed roads often have a lower overall cost than unsealed roads due to the high maintenance requirements over the lifetime of the latter.
- Cardinia Shire is one of the most disaster-prone areas of Melbourne, commonly experiencing:
 - Bushfires, with the entire Dandenong Ranges area included in the Victorian Government's Bushfire At-Risk Register.
 - Flooding, in southern areas of the shire near the Bunyip River and Western Port Bay.
 - Major storms, with power and road access frequently being cut off in the Dandenong Ranges area.

Protecting equity and financial sustainability

Unsealed roads have short lifespans and require frequent grading, drainage works, and other maintenance to remain functional. This places a major financial burden on Council's budget that can increase dramatically and unexpectedly when roads must be cleaned up after natural disasters.

As a growth area, Council already has major infrastructure responsibilities that must be funded from a very small rate base. Building the libraries, ovals, and community facilities that support the rapidly growing population is Council's top priority, and one that is already significantly underfunded. Maintenance costs for an extensive unsealed road network consume money that would generate a more meaningful social and economic return if it were invested in new community infrastructure.

Support from the Australian and Victorian governments to seal key roads not only improves community resilience during natural disasters but also fosters a more financially sustainable local government that can proactively support government goals on well-located housing by building long overdue community facilities.

SPORTING PAVILION EQUITABLE ACCESS PACKAGE

The project	The ask	The plan
IYU Regional Athletics Pavilion	\$8m	Construction of a permanent pavilion for the incomplete athletics track and field, one of the only facilities of its kind in Cardinia Shire. Replaces small and limited temporary changerooms.
Nar Nar Goon Recreation Reserve Pavilion	\$2.1m	Replacement of ageing, male-only changerooms with an inclusive, accessible, and modern pavilion that can accommodate women, children, and players with a disability.
Pakenham Outdoor Pool	\$340,000	Modernising the outdated changerooms, first aid room, and kiosk, as well as energy upgrades to reduce operating costs and emissions.



Fostering inclusion

Cardinia's population has shown an immense appetite for sport and recreation. Providing high-quality facilities that enable all residents to access the sports that they love is essential to supporting wellbeing, regardless of gender and ability. Only a quarter of Australians with a disability participate in sport, despite three quarters wanting to, with women with a disability facing even lower participation rates.

Despite this, many Cardinia Shire sporting pavilions still rely on decades-old amenities that are in poor condition and create barriers for women, children, and disabled residents. Community feedback has consistently raised the lack of up-to-standard facilities at these locations as the reason interested players do not engage with sport locally.

Growing costs

Facilities that have not been refurbished since the last century not only impose social and health costs but also place a financial burden on Council and the clubs that operate from them. Numerous sporting clubs have expressed concern for their financial sustainability due to dwindling player counts as locals travel further to access better pavilions or gender-specific leagues. The lack of investment in these projects threatens the viability of self-sufficient local sport, impacting players of all ages, genders, and abilities, as well as the community they are part of.

The oldest pavilions are also the most costly for Council. Maintenance expenses are significant, energy efficiency opportunities are missed, and there are major compliance risks. External support to deliver major refurbishments frees up funding to support other major investments that help support the goals of the Australian Government, making Council a much more effective partner.

Community perspective

Current and interested users of each of these facilities have been vocal about their desire for pavilions that meet the expectations that all Australians have.

- Schools in Nar Nar Goon no longer use their local recreation reserve due to the lack of any dedicated female facilities, disability accommodations, or even private showers.
- IYU Athletics Track is the only athletics ground in Cardinia Shire but does not yet have its own pavilion, instead supporting just a fraction of possible users with temporary portable bathrooms.
- Pakenham Outdoor Pool helps alleviate pressure on the over-capacity Cardinia Life Aquatics Centre, but its decades-old equipment is costly to operate and outdated changerooms discourage attendance on busy days.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Ask

- Additional funding from all levels of government is needed if local councils are to continue providing the level of services expected by residents.
- In particular, Council is calling for the Australian Government to establish a Planning for Growth Fund, dedicated to long-term infrastructure in growth corridors.
- The Australian Government should recognise that growth areas face particularly significant challenges in raising revenue and reducing costs.



The plan

Council is seeking recognition that the local government sector is bearing an increasing number of legislated responsibilities and costs but is receiving less and less financial support from higher levels of government. This is particularly acute in Victoria, where there is a rate cap.

To address this imbalance, existing programs such as the Thriving Suburbs Program should be supplemented with a larger, long-term funding initiative dedicated to growth areas. Outer suburban councils face the highest infrastructure demands yet operate with the lowest rate bases, forcing them to deliver essential, high-quality infrastructure under financial constraints that more established metropolitan and regional areas never experienced. Without targeted investment, these growth corridors risk a widening liveability gap - one that will disproportionately affect first-home buyers and young families for decades to come.

An urgent issue

Across the local government sector, costs have been rising at a rapid pace – significantly greater than the consumer price index. This is particularly acute in the construction sector, which makes up 45% of total Cardinia Shire Council spending.

Council currently forecasts a shortfall of \$100-\$200 million between the DCP and ICP funds that developers provide and the true cost of infrastructure that we must deliver. This is up to four times greater than the \$50 million debt limit the Victorian Treasury places on councils.

Without new revenue opportunities, the financial sustainability of local governments is becoming increasingly precarious. Council is being forced to prepare for a period of managed decline, where the quality and quantity of services is cut in order to preserve our finances. In this situation, it is the community that pays the price.

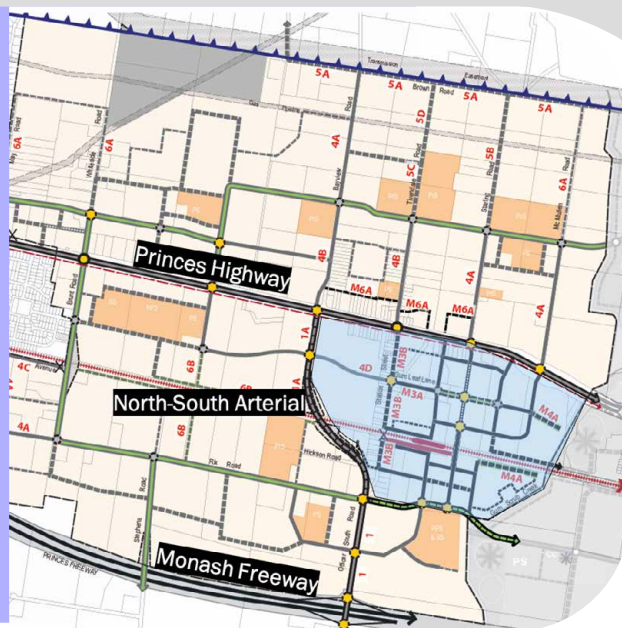
Jeopardising housing

Cardinia Shire and other growth areas have been home to the vast majority of housing development nationwide in recent years. Cardinia alone is projecting almost 35,000 new residents in the next decade as we continue to support state and federal housing goals.

These new residents have deep concerns that they have moved into second-class neighbourhoods, where the priority of the government is to maximise housing rather than deliver infrastructure that fosters a liveable community. Council needs support to expand our infrastructure delivery program and ensure that we host well-located housing with access to libraries, sporting ovals, and community centres.

OFFICER TOWN CENTRE ACTIVATION PACKAGE

The project	The ask	The plan
Officer Library and Community Hub (Detailed design)	\$6m	A second library for Cardinia's growth corridor and Officer's first community venue in the new town centre.
Officer North-South Arterial	External investment	Reduce congestion through the new Officer Town Centre by establishing a dedicated route connecting it to both the Monash Freeway and Princes Highway.



Keeping housing well-located

Officer is a microcosm of the challenges that outer suburban growth areas face, with a population that will grow from 28,000 to almost 38,000 over the next decade, but with no central hub for economic or social activity in the suburb. Residents have no choice but to get in the car and travel to Pakenham or Beaconsfield to shop and eat.

Completing the Officer Town Centre will provide an example of how higher density, mixed use activity centres can be implemented in growth areas dominated by larger homes. This model can be replicated alongside other train stations to foster economic development and reduce reliance on private vehicles while meeting housing goals.

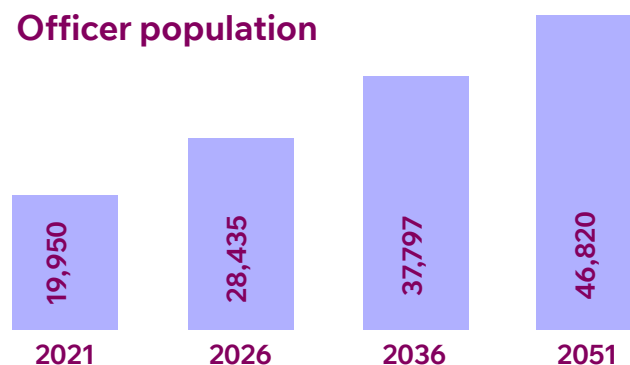
Kick starting development

Officer Town Centre is shovel-ready, with some early housing and retail already in place. However, delivery has been stalled without the key enabling infrastructure required to kick start major development.

The Officer North-South Arterial is an essential transport link that will keep heavy traffic off pedestrian-first streets and away from schools. In addition to providing congestion-free access to the town centre precinct and train station, it will also unlock further housing development in northern Officer by providing a direct link for commuters to the Monash Freeway.

Whilst the arterial is vital for accessing the town centre, the Library and Community Hub is key to encouraging foot traffic and creating a social hub in the centre of the development. With 17% of Officer in housing stress, providing access to social services currently only available in Pakenham or outside Cardinia Shire is long overdue.

Officer population



RACECOURSE ROAD DUPLICATION

The Ask

- Victorian and Australian Government co-investment to deliver an estimated \$60 million road duplication and intersection upgrade in the heart of Pakenham's growth area.
- Pakenham residents have been crying out for solutions to congestion on their way to work and school. This project will complement existing road projects and deliver the final missing link in Pakenham's commuter transport network.
- Council is asking for support to add new lanes and upgrade a major intersection to remove a key bottleneck and ensure that Pakenham and Pakenham East are prepared for high levels of population growth in the immediate future.

Why is this vital?

Council welcomed a \$400 million road package from the Australian and Victorian governments in recent years that has upgraded of McGregor Road, Healesville-Koo Wee Rup Road, and part of Racecourse Road. However, without a fully duplicated Racecourse Road, bottlenecks are simply shifted around. Taxpayer funding spent on the upgrades is undermined when traffic merges back to a single lane in each direction on the rest of Racecourse Road.

Racecourse Road is a key connection between the north and south of Pakenham, and the Monash Freeway in particular. With a majority of residents travelling towards the city for work every morning, a congestion-free link between the Princes Highway and Monash Freeway is essential for a functional road network.

The facts

- 65% of Cardinia residents travel to work by car, with just 1.2% using the train or bus.
- 64% of residents work outside of Cardinia Shire.
- A 10-minute trip along Racecourse Road can balloon to over 30 minutes during peak hour and will only get worse as Pakenham grows by more than 7,000 residents in the next decade.

Futureproofing for growth

The \$400 million Pakenham Roads Upgrade was a costly intervention that was required to accommodate over 22,000 new residents that moved to the suburb in the decade before construction started. Prior planning could have enabled earlier action before costs rose and congestion reached a breaking point.

By 2041 another 20,000 people will live in Pakenham, with Pakenham East planned to be a major housing-focused suburb in its own right. Duplicating Racecourse Road now is a sensible, forward-thinking response to this unavoidable growth.



PRINCES HIGHWAY SAFETY AND CONNECTIVITY UPGRADES

The Ask

- \$25 million Australian and Victorian government co-investment to deliver a business case and masterplan to inform the construction of four highway-grade separated interchanges along the National Princes Highway between Tynong and Bunyip.
- The intersection upgrades will address major safety issues, prepare the highway for rapid growth in Cardinia and Baw Baw shires, and address a priority project from the Federal Princes Highway Corridor Strategy.



The plan

Council will partner with other levels of government to deliver a business case and masterplan that outlines the safest and most effective solutions to the current intersections linking Tynong, Garfield, and Bunyip to the Princes Highway. These plans will then be used to deliver the new interchanges with the support of the Australian and Victorian governments.

The Victorian Government has already trialled reduced speed zones around the current intersections. Council is now calling on both the Victorian and Australian governments to help us plan and deliver a permanent solution, as called for in the Federal Princes Highway Corridor Strategy.

Why is this vital?

These four intersections have caused four fatalities and 56 serious injuries since 2012 and yet no permanent solution has been planned.

The current intersections do not include slip lanes or overpasses, forcing vehicles entering the highway to pull out in front of oncoming traffic. Cars turning right to enter or exit the highway are forced to cross two lanes of traffic with oncoming traffic travelling up to 100 km/h. The lack of slip lanes or an overpass and limited space for vehicles to queue when giving

way in the highway median strip means that traffic builds up easily, resulting in rushed and frustrated drivers who are more likely to make mistakes when entering the highway. This compounds the danger and will only get worse as the population of the surrounding areas continues to grow.

The fast-tracked development of Pakenham East will see approximately 20,000 new residents moving to Cardinia Shire in the coming years. At the same time, the population of towns along the Princes Highway in both Cardinia and Baw Baw shires continues to grow.

Benefits to the community

These intersections are known for near misses and fatal accidents. Council's priority is to ensure the safety of residents, and significant improvements to road design are needed to ensure visitors and locals arrive at their destinations safely and on time.

These towns also host significant tourism, mining, and agricultural industries and the volume of local traffic, visiting families, and heavy commercial vehicles using these intersections is growing. Fostering both economic development and safety requires modern, fit-for-purpose intersections.

DEFENDING NATIVE SPECIES PACKAGE

The project	The ask	The plan
Koo Wee Rup Biolink Project	\$2m over five years	Major revegetation, pest control, and community education campaign to preserve isolated habitats of endangered Southern Brown Bandicoot from further urban development.
Lovers Lane Biolink, Garfield	\$200,000 over four years	Improving water quality and native plant numbers to prevent habitat fragmentation of the endangered Southern Brown Bandicoot.
Growling Grass Frog Management Plan	\$2.1m	Plans for 20 wetlands to be constructed in the Cardinia Road Employment Precinct.
Southern Brown Bandicoot Habitat Restoration	\$250,000 over five years	Small-scale revegetation projects in key areas, complementing larger-scale biolink works.
Fauna Monitoring for Threatened Species	\$400,000 over four years	Collaboration with landowners to protect habitats and allow agriculture-friendly monitoring of Growling Grass Frog and Swamp Skink populations.
Officer South PSP Integrated Water Management	\$7.1m	Delivery of cutting-edge water harvesting projects to protect water quality and public health in the new Officer South PSP.



Acting before extinction

The Southern Brown Bandicoot is a nationally endangered species due to decades of housing development occurring on key habitats and only 340 have been recorded locally in the past decade. Biolink projects that will preserve and expand habitat will be essential to reversing the drop in bandicoot numbers and safeguarding the key role they play in soil health and water filtration.

The same urban expansion that is threatening the bandicoot will also have a long-term impact on the water supply and quality in Cardinia Shire, with flow on impacts on other threatened species like the Growling Grass Frog and Swamp Skink. Major commercial developments, such as the Cardinia Road and Officer South Employment Precincts, are essential to the regional economy but are particularly threatening to local water sources and pose risks to both biodiversity and agriculture if not planned and mitigated appropriately.

Setting an example

Cardinia Shire balances a number of key government priorities all competing for the same land and water – housing, agriculture, industry, and the natural environment. These projects provide a series of low-cost and high-impact actions that build on previous Council engagement with more than 300 residents to protect the interests of locals, farmers, and businesses whilst rejuvenating threatened species.

Helping to set an example for appropriate developments will allow the Australian Government to deploy effective solutions under the Threatened Species Strategy and Action Plan in outer suburban regions nationally and help avoid more costly interventions caused by further inaction on endangered environments.

OTHER PROJECTS



Unlocking Officer South Employment Precinct

The Officer South Employment Precinct is a state significant industrial and commercial development that will create 22,000 new jobs on the doorstep of Melbourne's rapidly growing south east suburbs, directly linked to the M1 Freeway.

Council, alongside other Greater South East Melbourne councils, is calling for support to deliver an expanded Thompsons Road, a dedicated freeway interchange, the Officer Bypass, and key bridges that will unlock this major economic opportunity.

This enabling infrastructure will unlock the potential of the precinct for a diverse range of innovative industrial and manufacturing operations, aligning with the economic resilience and net zero goals of the Future Made in Australia plan. Delivering on these goals will require affordable industrial land that remains close to existing transport links, education centres, and other highly skilled industries.

For more information visit:

vpa.vic.gov.au/project/officer-south-employment



Pakenham Revitalisation

Council is seeking the partnership of the Victorian and Australian governments to create a modern, people-first town centre for the rapidly growing Pakenham community that incorporates easy access to public transport, a community hospital, and a welcoming, walkable retail precinct. Residents expect a safe, vibrant town centre that supports an all-hours economy.

Council is planning to build on major Victorian Government investments in the precinct, including the new Pakenham Station, Pakenham Community Hospital, and upgrade of Drake Place, Pakenham. Partnering with the Australian Government, as envisaged in Council's Urban Precincts and Partnerships Program application, will deliver further enabling infrastructure, including safer intersections, pedestrian-first streetscapes, and lighting and safety upgrades.

For more information visit: creating.cardinia.vic.gov.au/pakenham-revitalisation-project

OTHER PROJECTS



EV Charging Stations

- Cardinia Shire has just 10 public electric vehicle chargers in only three locations.
- Transport emissions account for almost a quarter of Cardinia Shire's total greenhouse gas emissions.
- Cardinia Shire lags behind not just metropolitan Melbourne but also lower-population regional centres in Gippsland.
- AusNet data shows strong EV interest locally, with the lack of public chargers a major barrier.

Council is seeking co-investment to rapidly expand the number of chargers available and ensure they are located in high-traffic, public areas. Cardinia Shire is also a major tourist destination for households across Melbourne. The lack of local charging infrastructure not only limits the number of tourists that consider a trip to Cardinia Shire to be feasible, but also dampens interest in purchasing an electric vehicle across Melbourne as longer travel options become less feasible. Reliable charging infrastructure in key tourist destinations will be essential to encouraging higher EV adoption rates.

Cardinia Shire Council

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