



Mooroolbark Place Plan

Engagement and Discussion Paper
September 2026

Acknowledgement of Country



Yarra Ranges Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri and other Kulin Nation peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of these lands and waterways.

We pay our respect to all Elders, past, present, and emerging, who have been, and always will be, integral to the story of our region.

We proudly share custodianship to care for Country together.



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yarraranges.vic.gov.au

mail@yarraranges.vic.gov.au

Phone: 1300 368 333

What is place planning?

A Place Plan allows Council to work with community to establish the strategic direction for a place. The vision and actions will steer future investment and decision making.

Place planning is a collaborative, approach to building thriving communities. It focuses on understanding what makes a place unique and identifying the priorities that will help it thrive over the long term.

The Place Plan will take an intergenerational approach, setting a shared direction for Mooroolbark over the next 20 years and beyond. Long-term planning is critical in providing a clear and transparent roadmap for the future, helping the community understand what can realistically be delivered over time and how projects, funding and investment may be prioritised and staged.

It also enables Council to balance competing priorities and demonstrate how diverse community aspirations will be considered, sequenced and progressed towards a shared long-term vision.

By establishing short-term, medium-term and ongoing goals, the Place Plan will make it clear what we are working towards, what comes first, and why.

Unlike traditional planning approaches that may focus on individual projects or services, place planning looks at the bigger picture. It puts the community at the centre of decision-making and considers the social, economic and environmental factors that contribute to quality of life.

Through the place planning process, Council works closely with local communities to understand local issues, opportunities and aspirations. This helps identify the priorities that matter most to the people who live, work and visit the area.

Council will work with the community to develop a shared vision and identify an action plan to address the issues and opportunities, providing a road map for future project development and enabling advocacy for future funding and investment.



The Place Plan will guide and prioritise future projects, with actions integrated into Council's annual business planning processes and delivered by relevant teams. While the Plan does not allocate dedicated funding, it establishes a clear pipeline of projects and priorities that will guide future investment and decisions.

Where funding constraints limit delivery, Council will continue to advocate for additional investment and pursue partnerships to help progress priority outcomes identified through the Place Plan.

Through meaningful community engagement and rigorous research Place Plans establish Council's strategic intent for a place over 20 years or more, based on five overarching principles.



PRINCIPLE A: Culture, community & service needs

A

What is the current population telling us about this township?

Appropriate policies, support services and resources are based on a clear understanding of the community's aspirations, needs and culture.



PRINCIPLE B: Economic prosperity & wellbeing

B

How can we improve resilience and help a township flourish through changes occurring on a global scale?

Collaborations and partnerships are built on connections to place which creates shared value and a thriving and resilient community, delivering maximum impact for economic, physical and environmental wellbeing.



PRINCIPLE C: Transport, movement, public space & infrastructure

C

How can we best use common land in our townships?

Well-structured and welcoming public spaces integrate multiple functions, such as public transport and active transport, recreation and conservation areas, vibrant and attractive streets and meeting places.



PRINCIPLE D: Future land use & development

D

How will townships in Yarra Ranges respond as Melbourne develops?

Policy, planning and investment attraction help guide development and use of private land and buildings in order to support public and social activity.



PRINCIPLE E: Leadership & governance

E

How will we sustain and manage Council and community effort?

Planning for place and making those plans a reality involves many different parties and processes. Ongoing management is required to implement actions and evaluate their effectiveness once completed.

Project Plan

Extensive community engagement will inform the Mooroolbark Place Plan.

This includes interviews, advertised drop in sessions, pop ups, involvement in community events, workshops with community representatives, and online feedback opportunities.

Phase 1

Community engagement -
Understanding issues and opportunities

Phase 2

**Engagement & Discussion Paper -
Summarise feedback and share
with community**

Phase 3

Community representative workshops -
Prioritise themes, develop actions and
establish community vision

Phase 4

Draft Place Plan -
Consolidate feedback, outcomes of
workshops and present Draft Place Plan
for community feedback

Phase 5

Community Engagement Report-
What we heard, how will we respond to
it and why

Phase 6

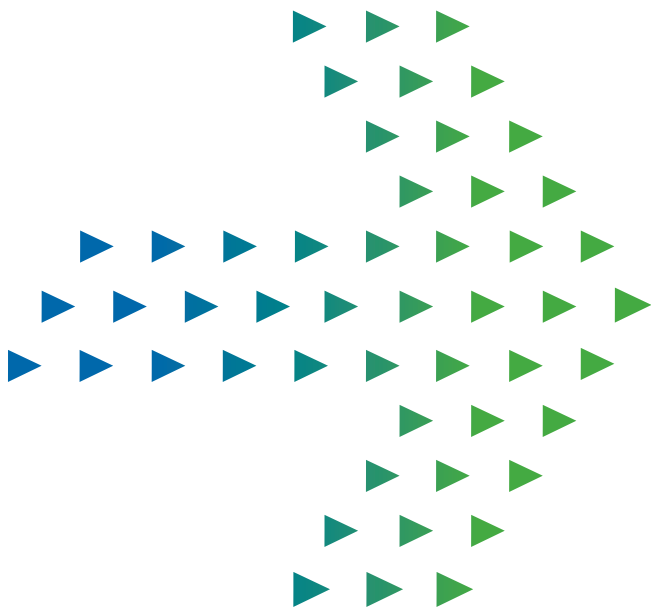
Final Mooroolbark Place Plan



Mooroolbark Community Garden

Mooroolbark Place Plan

The Mooroolbark Place Plan is an opportunity for the community to help shape the future of Mooroolbark. The project aims to understand what people value most about the town, identify opportunities for improvement, and develop a shared vision for Mooroolbark's future.



The Place Plan will help guide Council's long-term planning and decision-making by reflecting community priorities and aspirations.

It will also create opportunities for Council, residents, businesses, community groups and other stakeholders to work together to deliver improvements over time. The shared vision developed through this process will help inform future infrastructure, services, programs and investment in Mooroolbark.

As a major service centre in the eastern Yarra Ranges, Mooroolbark supports not only local residents but also people from surrounding areas who visit for shopping, employment, education, community services, recreation and social connections. For this reason, engagement includes input from a broad range of community members, ensuring the Place Plan reflects the experiences and needs of those who live, work, and spend time in Mooroolbark.

Community feedback gathered during the initial engagement phase will be considered alongside local data, strategic planning documents and background research to identify key priorities and opportunities for the township.

These priorities will then be explored through a series of community workshops, which will bring together community representatives, service providers and Council Officers. Working collaboratively, the group will help develop actions and recommendations for the Place Plan, drawing on the strengths, values and aspirations of the Mooroolbark community.

Together, this process will create a shared vision to guide future decisions and help ensure Mooroolbark remains a vibrant, welcoming and connected place for current and future generations.

Phase one engagement

Who we spoke to

From May through to July 2026, the project team spent time in Mooroolbark connecting with community groups, sports clubs, service providers, organisations, local business and community.

This involved advertised drop in sessions at the Mooroolbark Library and Community Centre, pop up engagement sessions at the shops and playspaces. Visits to club and group events, junior sports training, attending community events and meeting with local business owners. We heard about what people value about Mooroolbark, where there are opportunities for improvement and what should be the priorities for the future.

How did people hear about the project?



2,841 people registered with interest in Mooroolbark received an email notification regarding the project's Shaping Page.



1,180 visitors viewed the project Shaping Page.



4 weeks of social media for the project promoting ways to engage.



Pop up engagement events were held in public spaces.



Advertised engagement sessions were held at the Mooroolbark Library and Community Centre.



Businesses were approached for interviews.



Flyers were displayed on Community Noticeboards across town.



Signage promoting the project was displayed around the activity centre, community buildings and recreation facilities.

How did people give feedback?



307 people provided feedback through face-to-face interviews.



162 contributions were received through the project's Shaping Page.



571 community votes were made on the project's Shaping Page.



6 detailed written submissions were received from community.



Community groups, sports clubs, businesses, service providers and organisation contributed through interviews and engagement sessions.



Roving interviews at the Celebrate Mooroolbark Festival and the Community Garden Market.



Advisory Groups from Council including, Disability Advisory Group, Sustainable Environment Advisory Committee, Health & Wellbeing Advisory Committee, Positive Ageing Reference Group and Youth Advisory Committee.

What we heard

When we asked community what they **love about Mooroolbark** we heard that they value its strong community connections, village atmosphere, accessible services, vibrant community facilities and clubs, and the leafy green environment.

Residents appreciate being able to meet their daily needs locally while enjoying a welcoming, safe and inclusive township that supports participation, volunteering and community life.

These are the things that are most important to community, so need to be acknowledged and maintained over time as the town develops.

The key themes that came through community consultation when discussing **opportunities and future vision** include:

A  Culture, community & service needs	B  Economic prosperity	C  Transport, movement, public space & infrastructure	D  Future land use & development	E  Leadership & governance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community connections • Community services • Crime & public safety • Youth activities • Vulnerable community supports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity centre • Streetscape • Parking • Economic viability • Disability inclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks & play spaces • Roads & parking • Pedestrian movement • Community facilities • Streetscape improvements • Urban aquatics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing & development • Roads & parking • Paths & trails • Environment & green spaces • Private development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport services • Sustainable environment • Public land • Private development

What we heard



PRINCIPLE A: Culture, community & service needs

A

The community of Mooroolbark have told us:

Community connections

- Community initiatives and events are highly valued by community.
- Local sporting clubs and community groups are strongly supported and appreciated.
- There is a high level of appreciation for the contribution volunteers make to the community; however, concerns were raised about volunteer support and succession planning.

There are a small group of people doing so much for the township. We need to see more people coming through to help and support the community programs and initiatives.

Love events like Celebrate Mooroolbark and the community garden market, we can just walk down and enjoy them.

I am so grateful for the team (food relief services) they are so kind. There are some weeks I don't think I could get by without their support. It's just been getting harder and harder.

Community services

- Library staff and activities are highly valued.
- Services and activities delivered through the Community Centre are not widely known and would benefit from stronger promotion.
- The lack of a centrally located Maternal and Child Health Centre is barrier for many young families.
- Inconsistencies and gaps in youth support services were identified.
- There is general satisfaction with access to health services, with many noting that services not located within Mooroolbark are available nearby.
- Those reliant of public transport are disadvantaged in accessing some health and community services.

I have to travel by train to Lilydale for Maternal Child Health Services, Sometimes I just miss the appointment because it's too hard. I wish we had something in town, maybe with the library.

Youth support programs are very inconsistent. Funding comes and goes, and relationships are lost. It's hard to make a lasting impact.

Promotion of community activities and volunteer programs, letting people know the diversity of activities available and the benefits of getting involved.

What we heard



PRINCIPLE A: Culture, community & service needs

A

The community of Mooroolbark have told us:

Crime and public safety

- Many people raised concerns about antisocial behavior in parks, including exposure to alcohol and drug use, drug paraphernalia, and other antisocial activities.
- Requests were made for infrastructure such as improved lighting and CCTV to increase perceptions of safety.
- Many community members requested a full-time police presence within the town centre.

“Hookey park has a drinking culture that we need to stop. We need a quick and strong response to complaints from our Police.”

“I don't let my boys ride their bikes down the park by themselves anymore, incase things are going on.”

Vulnerable community supports

- Many people feel homelessness is a growing issue.
- Food support services have seen an increase in need.
- Food support services are highly valued by people experiencing homelessness, struggling families, and older residents.
- Suggestions were made for appropriate community facilities that provide access to services, shelter and amenity.

“Homelessness is a growing problem. We see lot's of rough sleepers... we should provide spaces to assist like bathrooms with shower facilities or even access to washing machines. Basic amenities allowing people dignity.”

Youth activities

- Requests were made for a greater variety of activities catering to different age groups and interests.
- Some community members felt that providing more affordable activities and spaces for young people could help reduce antisocial behavior.
- Some supported continued investment in sporting facilities, while others felt formal sporting clubs receive a disproportionate share of funding.

“Investment in activities for tweens that aren't into sport - Dungeons and Dragons, Youth Book Club, Games Library for older kids. Not everyone enjoys club sport.”

“I'd like to see the focus continue on sports facilities because that's the stage of life my family is at. We have young kids who we want to be active in sport.”

“Not much for teenagers, the original blue light disco started in Mooroolbark but now it is gone. The centre lacks a youth hub or activities for teens.”

What we heard



PRINCIPLE B: Economic prosperity & wellbeing

B

The community of Mooroolbark have told us:

An accessible service centre

- Many people called for an accessible public toilet to service the shopping precinct.
- Opportunities to improve accessibility in centre were highlighted.
- Personal connections with local businesses are important to community.
- Many people appreciate having local shops and services, including the greengrocer and post office.
- There were concerns about the loss of the local bank, with a lack of awareness of the Community Bank still in centre.

“We need public toilets to service the shops. The park toilets are too far and don’t feel safe.”

“The community is changing, we have more families and diversity, we want to make sure we maintain the local character over time. People at the shops are friendly, we recognise each other, I live alone and its important for me to come to a place with familiar faces and people willing to say hello.”

“Accessible walkways are important. Decorative features look good but cause unstable ground and tripping hazards”

“Keep the local character, support our local shops, build a vibrant street. Drop permits for outdoor dining and support businesses to activate the streets. More foot traffic will lead to better economic outcomes, which leads to trader confidence and more local jobs.”

Parking

- Businesses requested changes to parking time limits to better accommodate varied customer needs.
- Some noted that the station multi-deck car park regularly reaches capacity, and connections to overflow long term parking spaces are not well lit.

“Service businesses like the Doctors are monopolising all the Brice Avenue Parking and impacting my business. Customers just keep driving if they can’t get a park.”

“When I can’t get a park at the Station I park at the Terrace, but the walk back to the car at night can be a bit intimidating.”

What we heard



PRINCIPLE B: Economic prosperity & wellbeing

B

The community of Mooroolbark have told us:

“

I'd like to see our main street with outdoor dining, and music and culture/art spaces. Places like Belgrave have so much more going on.

”

Economic prosperity

- Local businesses need to be supported by community to remain viable.
- There is strong community support for a second supermarket.
- Access to trains opens up employment opportunities across Melbourne for many.
- Many enjoy local employment opportunities.
- Some suggestions for funding supports and initiatives focused on local businesses.

“

More locals need to support us smaller local businesses. So many shop at convenience centres like Chirnside Park.

”

“

We support local clubs as much as we can, but don't really see many members coming in to support our business.

”

Streetscape

- Street art throughout the activity centre is highly valued.
- Some people felt the centre would benefit from a refresh.
- Community would like to see a vibrant main street with outdoor activation, including dining and busking.
- Many people appreciate the diversity contributed by multicultural businesses.
- People generally like the design elements incorporated into the new station precinct.

“

Such a diverse township, lots of different people and a growing multicultural community.

”

“

I love all the artwork around Mooroolbark, especially the library. It looks incredible.

”

What we heard



PRINCIPLE C: Transport, movement, public spaces & infrastructure

C

The community of Mooroolbark have told us:

Parks and playspaces

- Refresh existing play spaces and provide greater variety for different age groups.
- Requests for more youth-focused infrastructure such as a skate park and half basketball courts.
- Improve access to informal soccer and volleyball facilities for community groups.
- Concerns around safety of Hookey Park with poor visibility and surveillance from surrounding properties.
- Hookey Park and Red Earth Reserve are not well connected to the activity centre.
- Provide additional infrastructure, including shelters, shade trees, seating, and bins.
- The maintenance and safety of public toilets were raised as significant concerns.

Roads and parking

- Numerous opportunities for improvement were identified, particularly around school zones, key intersections, and the maintenance of both State and local roads.
- Parking in residential streets was raised as a concern particularly in areas experiencing increased housing density.

“Street parking is a big issue with all the developments. People have more cars than space these days and it makes the streets hard to get around and unsafe!”

“Parking on Hull Road on the same side as St. Peter Julian Eymard needs to be made accessible for parents and caregivers to drop their kids off to school. Currently parking is only allowed on the opposite side, which actually makes no sense.”

“We need welcoming spaces for our young people. Shelters and seats, as well as active recreation spaces. Half courts, soccer pitches, volleyball. Places where young people can gather and do activities”

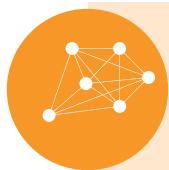
“We have some lovely playspaces but they really only cater for younger children.”

“The public toilets at Hookey Park are in terrible condition. They need to be fixed, it’s unsanitary and feels unsafe.”

Streetscape improvements

- Many comments related to the appearance and amenity of the shopping precinct.
- The station precinct was generally viewed positively.
- Strong support for the existing street art and requests for additional public art.
- Requests included more seating, shade structures, consideration of pedestrian movement, accessibility and consistent lighting.

What we heard



PRINCIPLE C: Transport, movement, public spaces & infrastructure

C

The community of Mooroolbark have told us:

Community facilities

- Community facilities, particularly the library, are highly valued; however, the need for additional space and facility upgrades was highlighted.
- Suggestions for the development of an accessible, integrated facility that brings together multiple services and activities.
- External lighting around community facilities and carparks needs improvement.
- Requests to improve signage and wayfinding for community facilities.
- Stronger connections of facilities to the activity centre and residential areas.

“

The Community centre needs better signage and lighting. I know where I'm going and I still sometimes miss the entrance at night.”

“

We have great services and activities but the community infrastructure is dated and not very nice. The Library and Community Centre, could use a refresh.”

Urban aquatics

- Significant feedback was received regarding the need for an urban aquatics centre, to service the local community.
- Positive feedback was provided about the facilities at Aquahub Croydon, with suggestions that Council consider these facilities in future planning.

“

We need a heated pool back where locals can access it and long enough so you are swimming laps not circles.”

Pedestrian movement

- Gaps in the path network were identified.
- Requests were made for improved lighting along some paths, particularly between the station and surrounding residential areas beyond the main activity centre.
- The activity centre is generally considered reasonably accessible, but feedback highlighted opportunities to improve accessibility.

“

I'd like to see more focus on the cycling network. Signage, lighting and ongoing connections. This will encourage active transport, and healthy free recreation.”

“

I'd like to develop a cohesive walkable township, with safe and easy access to transport options.”

Urban Aquatics and Leisure Facility

Note: A business case and feasibility study for an Urban Aquatics and Leisure Facility is currently being developed as a separate project to the Place Plan. All feedback relating to aquatic facilities will be shared with the project team for consideration.

“

We need a warm water rehabilitation pool. Croydon is too busy.”

What we heard



PRINCIPLE D: Future land use & development

D

The community of Mooroolbark have told us:

The Terrace Shopping Mall

- The Terrace was identified as a key opportunity for a mixed-use development.
- Many people would like to see the site refreshed and activated with more businesses.
- Some community members support a full redevelopment if it results in greater diversity of services, shops and restaurants, while others would prefer a refresh of the existing structure.
- Many people noted the importance of retaining existing community uses within the site.

I would like to see the Terrace Shopping Centre properly redeveloped, with retail and commercial business, as well as space for community uses. Developers need to remember community in the design of a

Privately owned sites

Note: Council's role in relation to privately owned development sites is through planning controls and advocacy. Council assesses planning applications and helps guide development outcomes in line with community needs and planning policy. While Council can set policy direction and planning controls for towns it cannot control if private land owners choose to develop their land. Where appropriate, Council can advocate for outcomes that benefit the community while working within the planning framework. Feedback related to private property is further explored under Principle E: Leadership and Governance. (page 17)

Housing and development

- Concerns were raised about maintaining neighbourhood character through high-quality development outcomes and managing housing density.
- Requests were made for stronger controls to protect established trees and gardens during redevelopment.
- Many comments highlighted parking impacts associated with higher-density developments.
- Requests were made for a greater diversity of housing types, particularly smaller, single-storey dwellings that support ageing in place and provide more affordable options for young and vulnerable people.

Make developers invest in parks and gardens with all new developments, so we get quality green spaces.

Prefer Low rise development or the first level of all development blocks should be single storey dwellings, even with lifts some people don't feel comfortable going higher - what if there is a power outage and people with mobility issues end up trapped in their home.

Paths and trails

- Community members requested that accessible pedestrian connections to the activity centre and multi-use trails be considered as part of all future development approvals.

I'd like to see more accessible paths from housing to the centre. Wide paths with lighting for safety, so you can walk after 5pm in the winter.

What we heard



PRINCIPLE D: Future land use & development

D

The community of Mooroolbark have told us:

Environment and green spaces

- Community members highlighted the importance of public green space as housing density increases and private gardens become smaller.
- Brushy Creek was identified as a valued environmental asset that would benefit from increased care, maintenance and enhancement.
- Many comments about the opportunity to better utilise the two Retarding Basins.
- Many comments identified poor management and missed opportunities associated with the VicRoads land at the corner of Cardigan and Hull Roads. Suggestions ranged from increasing biodiversity to providing active recreation infrastructure, including youth spaces, a skate park, or a fenced dog park.

“The Red Earth Community Park retarding basin in Mooroolbark is an underutilised public asset. During winter, it’s too wet to serve as a sports field, and in summer, it turns into a hot, shadeless paddock. Despite its central location, it offers minimal recreational or environmental value. However, the site holds exceptional potential. By reimagining the basin as a wetland complex, it can continue its essential flood-retention role while transforming into a tranquil green heart for Mooroolbark.”

“What’s going on with VicRoads land corner of Cardigan and Hull Roads? The maintenance of this land has been getting worse. I’d like to see this space developed into a quality open space for community to use.”

Roads and parking

- Significant feedback related to parking pressures around new developments and school zones.
- Some feedback focused on parking time limits and accessible parking within the activity centre.
- Concerns were raised about peak-period traffic and how growth associated with developments such as the Kinley Estate will be managed as they are completed.

“Traffic around the primary school is terrible during peak times. We need a safer school crossing on Colchester Road.”

“The one way bridge off Mooroolbark Road already causes delays and frustration at peak times. How will it manage the increased population at Kinley over the next decade?”

“Simplify the road network, complex intersections like 5 ways have always been hard for unfamiliar drivers to navigate, with increased congestion during peak periods this is becoming a big issue. As development in Mooroolbark and Kinley estate continues this traffic will become a problem for all community.”

What we heard



PRINCIPLE E: Leadership & governance

E

The community of Mooroolbark have told us:

Transport services

- Community members expressed disappointment with the frequency of bus services and the availability of bus stops.
- Many community members raised concerns that the FlexiRide booking system is not accessible for all users, particularly those with limited digital skills, vision impairment, literacy challenges, or other accessibility needs.
- Requests were made for Council to continue advocating for improvements to these services.

“Some areas don't even get the local weekend service and during the week it's not frequent enough”

“FlexiRide booking service is hard to navigate, I need to get my daughter to make bookings for me. I have real mobility issues and need the service for short local trips, but have been told several times that the trip is too short and they won't take me - but I can't walk that far.”

“The booking system is too hard for many. I have a disability and can't use apps on the mobile, but can't always get through on the phone booking system.”

Sustainable environment

- Brushy Creek was identified as an under-appreciated environmental asset that requires ongoing care and attention.
- Community members called for Council, Melbourne Water, and the community to work together on waterway health and biodiversity initiatives.

“Transform Brushy Creek into an interesting and engaging precinct feature. Imagine revitalised native landscaping, welcoming seating areas, boardwalks, and public art that connect our shopping strip directly to nature. Let's turn this overlooked creek into a destination that brings people together and boosts our local economy.”

“Take better care of Brushy Creek. It is terrible the way it is left with rubbish and weeds taking over. The walk along there should be a sanctuary, we should celebrate this natural asset, but it is just a mess. I'd like to see this cleaned up and improve the appearance/experience for community.”

What we heard



PRINCIPLE E: Leadership & governance

E

The community of Mooroolbark have told us:

Land corner Cardigan/Hull Roads

- Community members would like to see this site better maintained and activated for community use.
- There is an expectation that Council will advocate and partner with Melbourne Water to achieve improved outcomes for the site.

“

The green area beside Mooroolbark CFA has so much potential to be a nature haven with indigenous gardens. It would improve appearance as well as create wildlife habitat.

”

Coles car park

- Numerous complaints were received regarding the line marking and functionality of the Coles car park.
- Community members view this as a safety issue and would like Council to encourage the site owners to invest in safe and accessible movement throughout the car park.

“

Coles carpark is poorly designed, ignoring pedestrian movement and causing many conflicts in movement.

”

“

Better signage in coles carpark as after all this time people still go the wrong way. The arrows keep fading which is ridiculous. They have been redone so many times. All car spots should be angled therefore it will be a lot harder to drive the wrong way.

”

The Terrace Shopping Mall

- The community expects Council to take a stronger role in ensuring high-quality development outcomes for this site.

“

Mooroolbark Terrace is a major drag for the township ... It's such a missed opportunity for the centre of town. It could be a wonderful multi purpose site incorporating community groups, retail and hospitality within a beautifully landscaped precinct. If done right liveability for Mooroolbark would improve greatly.

”

“

Don't want to see the Terrace over developed ... This should be a refresh or low density build, don't increase the heights.

”

“

Mooroolbark is a great place with great people; but it remains stained and stranded from development by the infamous Mooroolbark Terrace ... Council and State Government simply MUST have some planning levers to force an outcome for this site.

”

“

The Mooroolbark Terrace site remains one of the most prominent barriers to the suburb achieving its full potential.

”

Mooroolbark - A quick look

Note: The data in this report has been sourced from Profile.id using 2021 Census data, collected by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). The ABS conduct a national census every five years.

POPULATION

In 2026 Mooroolbark has approximately 24,542 **residents**

24,542 RESIDENTS



Lower percentage of **seniors** aged over 75 years

6.4% compared to 7.2% for Yarra Ranges

37
years old

MEDIAN AGE

58.9% of the population are between the ages of 25-64 meaning most of the population is **workforce age**

Average number of **children** in families.

1.9



9.6%



There is steady population **growth forecast** over the coming 10 years 9.6% growth 26,899 by 2046, reinforcing Mooroolbark's role as a mature and evolving township.

HOUSEHOLD TYPE & INCOME

HOUSEHOLD INCOMES



24% high income, \$3,000+ per week

53% middle income, \$800 - \$2,999 per week

17% low income, less than \$800 per week



78.5%

78.5% of households in Mooroolbark are **families with children**, compared with 46% across Yarra Ranges.

95% of dwellings in Mooroolbark are **separate house**, with only 4.6% of dwellings being **medium density**



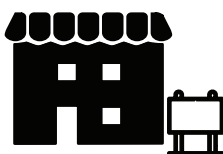
Lower proportion of **lone person households** Mooroolbark 18.7% compared to 20.6% across Yarra Ranges

Mooroolbark housing tenure compared to Yarra Ranges

31% **Own** compared to 34%

45% **Purchasing** compared to 47%

20% **Renting** compared to 14%

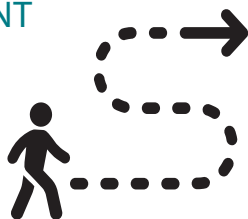
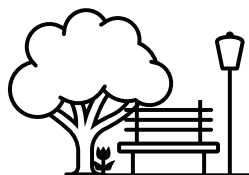


Above average median weekly **household income** \$1,992 compared to \$1,881 across Yarra Ranges

PUBLIC SPACE AND COUNCIL FACILITIES

PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT

There are opportunities to improve **pedestrian connections** around the township



Mooroolbark lacks enough quality accessible **Open Space**.



There are opportunities to increase **accessibility** in the activity centre

Ageing **community facilities**, with widespread maintenance issues and general lack of accessible community spaces.



CULTURAL EXPRESSION

82% of households only **speak English** compare to 88% across Yarra Ranges



47%

47% of residents identify as having **no religion**

Largest Growth Change

People with **Burmese ancestry** moving to Mooroolbark has increased by 83% from 2011 to 2021

Most common **Countries of birth**

- Australia 75%
- England: 3.8%
- Myanmar: 3.3%
- India: 1.6%
- China (excluding SARs and Taiwan): 1.5%



0.9% of the population identify as **Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander**



24% of **overseas-born** residents compared to 21% across Yarra

JOBS, BUSINESS SECTORS AND TRAINING

Top 5 Industry Sectors of residents:

- Construction 13.8%
- Health Care & Social Services 13.5%
- Retail Trade 9.9%
- Education & Training 9.6%
- Manufacturing 8.8%



96%
EMPLOYED

96% of residents in the labour force age group were **employed**. 58% of them are employed full time

4%
UNEMPLOYED

4% of residents in the labour force age group were **unemployed** compared to 3.5% across Yarra Ranges

Growth in residents achieving **vocational qualifications**.

38.4% with no qualifications in 2021 compared to 46.8% in 2011



COMMUNITY SERVICES AND HEALTH

34.5% of the population live with at least one **long-term health condition**, compared to Yarra Ranges average of 35%

34.5%



Most common health conditions:

- Mental Health 10.3%
- Asthma 9.7%
- Arthritis 8.4%



Mooroolbark has the highest level of **childcare** access in Yarra Ranges



Mooroolbark has an undersupply of **residential aged care**

TRANSPORT NETWORKS AND CAR USE

Public transport **infrastructure** is well established with the Mooroolbark Railway Station and public bus terminal, set beside a multi-deck car park



2.5% of working residents **travel to work** by public transport

The multideck carpark and station services residents from other townships, not on the trainline

3.1% of households **do not have a car**



89.7% of households **have 2 or more cars**

There are limited bus service available on Sunday's



Mooroolbark is also serviced by **FlexiRide**, an on-demand public transport service that provides flexible bus connections through an online booking system.

Mooroolbark - A deeper look

Mooroolbark is located approximately 35 kilometers east of Melbourne's CBD, on the lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation. Situated at the gateway to the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges, Mooroolbark is one of Yarra Ranges Council's largest urban centers and has long served as an important residential, commercial and community hub for the surrounding region.

Originally established as a rural settlement, Mooroolbark experienced significant growth following the extension of the railway line in the late nineteenth century and suburban expansion throughout the twentieth century. Today, the township combines its established suburban character with strong connections to the natural landscapes that define the Yarra Ranges. Its activity centre provides a range of retail, health, education, recreation and community services that support both local residents and people living in surrounding townships.

Mooroolbark offers the benefits of a well-connected urban centre within a distinctive natural setting, which is highly valued by its residents. The township is serviced by the Lilydale railway line and a network of bus routes, providing access to employment, education and services across Melbourne's east. At the same time, residents enjoy close proximity to parks, open spaces, sporting facilities and regional attractions, contributing to Mooroolbark's reputation as a family-friendly and accessible place to live.

The township sits within the upper reaches of the Balla Balla Creek catchment, which forms part of the broader Yarra River (Birrarung) system. Waterways, parklands and areas of native vegetation are important features of the local landscape, supporting biodiversity, recreational opportunities and connections to nature. Together with its strong sense of community, these environmental assets help shape Mooroolbark's identity as a vibrant and welcoming township that continues to evolve while maintaining its unique character.



Hookey Park, Mooroolbark

Natural environment

Mooroolbark's natural environment is one of its defining features, providing a strong connection between the urban township and the broader landscapes of the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges.

Located within the foothills of the Dandenong Ranges, the township is characterised by its leafy streets, significant tree canopy, open spaces and views to surrounding hills, which contribute to its distinctive sense of place and is a priority to the community.

A network of waterways and drainage corridors runs throughout Mooroolbark, including Brushy Creek, Balla Balla Creek and their tributaries. These waterways form part of the broader Yarra River (Birrarung) catchment and play an important role in supporting local biodiversity, managing stormwater and providing opportunities for recreation and environmental education. Creek corridors also create valuable habitat links for native flora and fauna, connecting parks, reserves and remnant vegetation across the township.

Mooroolbark is home to a range of parks, reserves and natural areas that support both environmental and community outcomes. Spaces such as Hookey Park, Red Earth Community Park and the Brushy Creek Trail provide opportunities for recreation, active transport and connection with nature. These green spaces contribute to community wellbeing while also helping to protect and enhance local biodiversity.

The township's landscape is influenced by its proximity to significant environmental assets, including the Dandenong Ranges National Park and the wider Yarra Valley region. This setting was highlighted as highly valued by residents during consultation.

As the community grows and evolves, the protection and enhancement of Mooroolbark's natural environment remains important. Community see opportunities in conserving and developing further tree canopy, improving waterway health, supporting biodiversity and ensuring access to high-quality open space, which will contribute to the township's livability, resilience and unique character for future generations.



Brushy Creek, Mooroolbark

Historical context

Mooroolbark is located on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation, who have lived, travelled through and cared for this Country for tens of thousands of years. The waterways, forests and fertile landscapes of the area provided important resources and supported strong cultural, spiritual and social connections that continue today.

The name 'Mooroolbark' is believed to be derived from Wurundjeri language, although its exact meaning and origins are contested. Early European records suggest the meaning is 'Red Earth', whereas more recent interpretation from Wurundjeri cultural sources suggests it comes from "moorool" meaning 'great water' and "bik" meaning 'place'; "place of great water".

European settlement in the Mooroolbark area began in the mid-nineteenth century, with early land clearing focused on timber harvesting, grazing, orcharding and agriculture. The area's rich volcanic soils, access to water and proximity to Melbourne made it an attractive location for farming and rural industries.

A significant turning point in Mooroolbark's development came with the arrival of the railway in 1887. Improving connection to Melbourne, supporting the transport of agricultural products and encouraging further settlement. The township gradually developed with local businesses, schools, churches and community facilities emerging to service the growing population.

Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, Mooroolbark maintained a largely rural and semi-rural character, known for its orchards, small farms and open landscapes. Edna Walling an influential Australian landscape designer, left a lasting legacy in Mooroolbark through the creation of Bickleigh Vale in the 1920s. She transformed bushland into a distinctive village inspired by the English countryside, combining carefully designed cottages, winding lanes and integrated gardens. Her vision established a unique landscape and heritage precinct that remains highly valued today.

Following World War II (1945), population growth across Melbourne's eastern suburbs accelerated and Mooroolbark experienced substantial residential development. New housing estates, community infrastructure and commercial services transformed the township into a growing suburban centre while retaining strong links to its rural heritage and surrounding natural environment.

Today, remnants of Mooroolbark's agricultural and railway history remain visible through heritage buildings, community stories, established landscapes and historic sites throughout the township. The railway station continues to play an important role as a transport hub, while places such as the former Brushy Creek settlements, historic homesteads and early township precincts provide connections to the area's past.

Since the post-war period, Mooroolbark has also been shaped by successive waves of migration from across Europe, Asia and other parts of the world. This has contributed to the township's social, cultural and economic development, helping to create the diverse and inclusive community that exists today. The many cultures, traditions, languages and experiences represented throughout Mooroolbark continue to enrich community life and strengthen the township's character.

Mooroolbark's story reflects the enduring cultural connection to Country of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people, together with the area's rural settlement, post-war growth and migration, leading to its evolution into a community focused contemporary township.



Mooroolbark RSL Memorial

Mooroolbark's people

Mooroolbark is home to a growing and diverse community of more than 24,000 residents and serves as one of the largest urban centres within the Yarra Ranges.

The township is characterised by a balanced age profile, strong family presence and a high level of community participation. With a median age of 37 years, Mooroolbark is slightly younger than both Victoria and Australia as a whole, reflecting its appeal to families, working-age residents and young people.

Families are a defining feature of the community. Nearly one in five residents are children aged 0–14 years, while almost two-thirds of the population are of working age. The number of families has continued to grow over time, demonstrating Mooroolbark's ongoing attraction as a place to raise children and establish long-term roots.

Mooroolbark is also becoming increasingly diverse. While many residents were born in Australia, the community has been enriched by successive waves of migration, particularly since the post-war period. People from a wide range of cultural backgrounds now call Mooroolbark home, contributing to the township's social, cultural and economic life. This diversity is reflected in local schools, businesses, community organisations and cultural connections that continue to strengthen the township's identity.

The community demonstrates many of the characteristics of an established suburban area, including high rates of home ownership, strong workforce participation and strong local networks. A growing rental population highlights the importance of housing choice and accessibility for younger residents, key workers, small households and people at different stages of life.





KILSYTH SPIDER
WINE-LIPPED SPID

Housing

Mooroolbark's residential character is defined by leafy neighbourhoods, low-rise housing and strong connections to open space and community infrastructure.

Mooroolbark has experienced steady population growth over recent decades, resulting in increasing demand for housing while maintaining its established suburban character.

Well positioned to accommodate a broader range of housing opportunities over time, its railway station, commercial centre, community facilities and transport connections make it an attractive location for a variety of household types and life stages.

While detached family homes remain the dominant housing form, there is increasing demand for smaller dwellings, accessible housing and housing options that enable older residents to remain within the community as their needs change.

The **Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme** identifies Mooroolbark as a Large Neighbourhood Activity Centre, these centres focus on convenience retail, grocery shopping, and community services, often serving surrounding areas.

The **Neighbourhood Character Study** was adopted by Council in 2024, it assesses the current and preferred future character of townships. The study characterised Mooroolbark as mostly regular allotments within a grid based street network, particularly close to the activity centre.

Residential development largely dates from the post 1950s period, with dwellings that are typically single or double storey, detached, and architecturally diverse. Brick and weatherboard construction with pitched roof forms is common, contributing to a consistent yet varied streetscape character.



Recent infill development has introduced greater diversity in built form, creating an evolving neighbourhood character. Although the prevailing scale remains low and generally compatible with the established suburban pattern, it is likely that we will continue to see change in the area to facilitate the growing population. Recent State Government planning reforms that have reduced Council's ability to introduce local, tailored neighbourhood character provisions into the planning scheme will also play a role in how neighbourhood character evolves.

The Study identified the preferred future character for Mooroolbark with areas of Urban Consolidation focused around the activity centre, and the broader Mooroolbark area categorised as Garden Suburban.

Home ownership remains a defining characteristic of the community. Around four in five households either own their home outright or are paying off a mortgage, indicating a stable and well-established residential base.

At the same time, around one in five households rent their home, a proportion that is higher than the Yarra Ranges average. This highlights Mooroolbark's important role in providing housing choice for renters, including young adults, smaller households, the ageing, key workers and residents seeking affordable access to services and public transport.



The **Housing Strategy** was adopted in 2024 and sets out the policy framework to guide residential development and deliver appropriate housing in suitable locations. It identifies that new housing is expected to be concentrated in urban areas such as Mooroolbark, and that there is an emerging need for smaller, more affordable medium and high-density housing as household types are forecasted to change. The town centre is recognised as a Substantial Change Area, with opportunity for higher density, multi level development that can integrate residential uses above ground floor retail, commercial, and community services.

Areas further away from the centre fall into the incremental change areas where more moderate and lower intensity development is preferred, allowing for some unit and townhouse development while maintaining the neighbourhood and landscape character of the area.

Health and wellbeing

The health and wellbeing of the Mooroolbark community is supported by a combination of local health services, community facilities, open spaces, sporting infrastructure and social connections, providing residents with access to a range of services that contribute to physical, mental and social wellbeing.

Mooroolbark's population profile supports positive community health outcomes. The township has a relatively young median age of 37 years and a strong working-age population, alongside a significant number of families with children. This demographic mix contributes to demand for a diverse range of health and wellbeing services, including maternal and child health, youth services, active recreation opportunities, preventative health programs and support for older residents.

Mooroolbark benefits from a range of health and community services located within and around the township centre. These services, combined with public transport access and proximity to larger regional health facilities in Lilydale and Melbourne's eastern suburbs, help residents access essential healthcare, support services and community programs.

While Mooroolbark benefits from access to a range of health and community services, there are identified gaps in service provision. Despite the township's significant population of young families, limited Maternal and Child Health services are currently provided within Mooroolbark, requiring many families to travel to neighbouring townships to access these important early years services.

At the other end of the age spectrum, Mooroolbark has a growing population of older residents, yet there is a limited supply of residential aged care and aged support accommodation within the township. As the community continues to age, increasing access to local services and housing options that support older residents to age in place will become increasingly important to meeting the changing needs of the community.

Many programs that assist young people, migrant communities and vulnerable residents rely on short-term or cyclical funding arrangements. This can create challenges for service providers in maintaining continuity of programs, retaining skilled staff and responding to changing community needs over the long term. As Mooroolbark's population continues to grow and diversify, there is an increasing need for stable and sustainable investment in community support services that promote social inclusion, build community connections and improve health and wellbeing outcomes.

The township demonstrates many of the characteristics associated with positive community health and resilience, including strong workforce participation, relatively high rates of home ownership, established neighbourhoods and strong community networks. These factors contribute to social connectedness, economic stability and community resilience, which are recognised as important determinants of health and wellbeing.

Mooroolbark's economy

Mooroolbark is identified by the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme as a major urban activity centre that serves both local residents and surrounding communities. Encouraging its continued growth as a vibrant mixed-use centre, with a stronger local economy, more employment opportunities, additional housing close to services and public transport, and an enhanced town centre environment that encourages investment, visitation and community activity.

Mooroolbark supports a diversified local economy anchored by retail, education, construction, and health services. The Activity Centre provides local employment opportunities and serves as a commercial hub for surrounding residential areas.

Its railway station, major road connections and proximity to employment centres in Melbourne's eastern suburbs enable many residents to commute for work while continuing to support local businesses and community facilities.



Brice Avenue, Mooroolbark

Key economic strengths

- Stable population of more than 24,000 residents supporting local services and businesses.
- High levels of home ownership, reflecting long-term residential stability.
- Skilled workforce with strong vocational and post-school qualification attainment.
- Family-oriented demographic profile generating ongoing demand for retail, recreation, education and community services.
- Good transport connections supporting access to employment across Melbourne's east.

Residents are most commonly employed in construction (13.8%), healthcare and social assistance (13.5%), retail trade (9.9%), education and training (9.6%) and manufacturing (8.8%). The suburb has a particularly strong trades and construction workforce, complemented by growing employment in healthcare and education. These sectors provide the foundation of Mooroolbark's economic resilience, supporting local spending, business activity and demand for services within the Mooroolbark Activity Centre.

Although Mooroolbark has a stable workforce and higher than average median household income compared to the broader Yarra Ranges municipality, there are still pockets of high disadvantage within this community.

Glossary

Accessibility – The ease of reaching destinations. Highly accessible locations, enable a person, regardless of age, ability or income, to reach many activities or destinations quickly. People in places with low accessibility can reach fewer places in the same amount of time.

Activity centre – Activity centres are a focus for services, shopping, employment and social interaction. They are where people meet, relax, work and often live. Usually well-served by public transport, they range in size and mix of uses from local strip shopping centres to traditional town centres and major regional centres.

Aesthetic – Aesthetics refers to the way we perceive, assess and feel about towns and cities. This can include the buildings, the use of space, the overall population density. Aesthetics includes both the appearance (beauty) and the functionality (accessibility, services, etc.).

Affordable housing – Housing that is appropriate for the needs of a range of low to moderate income households, and priced so these households are able to meet their other essential basic living costs.

Collaboration – The action of working together to achieve something.

Community infrastructure – Infrastructure provided in the public domain for community use, which is generally maintained by Council. This could range from facilities or parks through to park benches and bins.

Governance – The system by which something is controlled or operates, and the way in which authorities or people are responsible for something.

Land use – The purpose for which the land has been or is being or may be developed. The activity on the land.

Neighbourhood character - Neighbourhood Character is the combination of natural features, buildings, streets, landscapes and public spaces that creates the unique identity, appearance and sense of place of a neighbourhood.

Stewardship – The job of supervising or taking care of something, in the context of Place Planning this may include working towards a shared vision established to achieve a thriving community.

Subdivision – The act of subdivision means the division of a land parcel into two or more parts. It is also a term used for the resulting pattern of blocks and lots, and streets.

Vision – Is a statement defining the future priorities for a township or place, it should be aspirational yet realistic. The vision sets a direction, outlining goals and priorities to be worked towards over time.

Priorities – The things that are regarded as the most important.

Quality-of-life – A perception or measure of a community's wellbeing in the context of the place that they live.

Walkability – Walking environments that best balance safety, connection, accessibility and enjoyment.



