



Merri-bek
City Council

Merri-bek City Council

Merri-bek Public Place Service Improvement Plan

September 2024

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Merri-bek City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waterways in the area now known as Merri-bek. We pay respect to their Elders past, present, and emerging, as well as to all First Nations communities, who significantly contribute to the life of the area.

Public Place Service Improvement Plan: Introduction

Council is responsible for many services, infrastructure and assets across our footpaths, streets, roads, shopping strips and activity centres, that together help ensure Merri-bek is clean, safe and inviting. As committed in the Council Action Plan, we have developed a Public Place Service Improvement Plan to help inform how we maintain, plan for and improve our public places across Merri-bek.

To help Council identify where to focus our efforts to better improve our public places, we sought feedback from the Merri-bek community. This involved analysing previous input from the Merri-bek community through customer enquiries and requests to identify the most common concerns in our public realm. This data was then used to create a survey whereby respondents were asked to identify the aspects of most (and least) concern in our public realm. Additional questions about these concerns, services and our overall public realm were then asked.

We also compared this to the results of our Community Satisfaction Survey for 2024.

This data and feedback has been used to create the Merri-bek Public Place Service Improvement Plan and identify initiatives, programs and ways to further improve our public realm and work with our community to do this.

Community Identify the top four areas for Improvement

Community Engagement

In July 2024 we asked the community to confirm which aspects of our public place and amenities they believe are most important for Council to focus on. This community feedback confirmed that the four most important concerns to the respondents were:

1. Dumped rubbish
2. Overflowing litter bins
3. Damaged footpath
4. Footpath cleaning, litter or sweeping.

Council has developed Public Place Improvement initiatives for each of these areas.

Merri-bek Public Place Service Improvement Plan Principles

The plan for service improvement has focused on these four principles:



Right service

Delivering the service that will best address the issue



Right time

Addressing issues in a prompt and efficient manner



Right place

Provide services where they are most needed



Right communications

Keeping our community informed and educated

Improvement Plan



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The following pages provide the details of this service improvement plan.

Officers will track the implementation of the actions. All actions are proposed to be commenced by September 2025.

Dumped rubbish



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Trend in requests

2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
9,181	10,457	1,707 YTD
0.4%	+13.9%	+1.2%

**Survey
rank #1**

Top
issue:
19%



2nd top
issue:
21%



In top 2:
40%

Current service

Respond to
request –
current target
response time
is 2 days
although
requires
review

Two dedicated
patrols
vehicles focus
on dumped
rubbish
(reactive not
proactive)

Shops Front
and Rear team
respond in
council car
parks and
shopping
precincts

Enforcement
opportunities
are limited
and no
dedicated
resource

Two mobile
CCTV cameras
enable
monitoring
(Glenroy and
Brunswick
presently)

Dumped rubbish



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Community suggestions



Work out why rubbish is being dumped



Work out where rubbish is often dumped



Can technology and education help discourage dumping?



How can we improve reporting of dumped rubbish?

Improvement Plan

Dumped rubbish education

- Promote how to and benefit of reporting
- Make reporting dumped rubbish easier
- Educate on fines and global cost of dumping

Service design

- Review service commitment
- Trial proactive patrols
- Increase 'one team' approach across Council

Waste collection promotion

- Promote booked hard waste with truck livery
- Promote booked hard waste to renters
- Linking community to recycling groups

Overflowing litter bins



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Trend in requests

2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
324	305	70 YTD
-46.4%	-5.9%	+94.4%

**Survey
rank #2**

Top
issue:
12%



2nd top
issue:
17%



In top 2:
29%

Current service

There are
780 general
waste bins
and 50
recycling bins
in streets and
parks

There are 37
solar-
powered
compacting
smart bins

Two crews
conduct
public litter
bin
collections
six days per
week

One crew
conducts
public litter
collection in
main strips on
Sunday

Respond to
report of
overflowing
bin – current
target
response time
is 2 days

Overflowing litter bins



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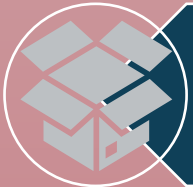
Community suggestions



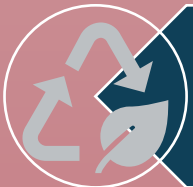
Empty bins more frequently
or put in more bins



Identify bin overflow hot
spots and target them



Engaging with local
businesses around waste
service options



Community clean up days
and enhanced reporting for
overflowing bins

Improvement Plan

Service design

- Including bins in asset management system
- Use more data to help with prioritisation
- Review locations of bins for ease of collection

Service offering

- Review collection time / frequency / bin capacity
- Make reporting easier
- Improve recycling bin collections

Education

- Work with shop owners to solve waste issues
- Sticker on bins to educate and to report bin issues
- Focus on sites with residential waste in public bins

Damaged footpath



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Trend in requests

2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
718	818	119 YTD
11.39%	+13.26%	+10.81%

**Survey
rank #3**

Top
issue:
16%



2nd top
issue:
10%



In top 2:
26%

Current service

Inspect
shopping
strip
footpaths
every 13
months

Inspect all
other
footpaths
every 25
months

Assess
damaged
footpaths
that are
concerning
to residents

Repair
footpaths
that are
uneven and
cracked

Renew
footpaths
that have
come to the
end of their
life

Damaged footpath



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Community suggestions



Improve proactive inspections of footpaths



Improve reporting and response commitment for damaged footpaths



Publish a public footpath renewal plan showing priorities



Account for all footpath users and get their help with issue prioritisation

Improvement Plan

Paths and tree roots

- Develop a suite of best practice solutions
- Train relevant staff in when to apply them
- Improve community understanding on approach

Work priorities

- Prioritise proactive inspections
- Use more data to help with prioritisation
- Link our request and allocation systems better

Community input

- When the Road Management Plan is reviewed in 2025, invite community input on the regime
- Ensure a strong voice for vulnerable user groups

Footpath cleaning



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Trend in requests

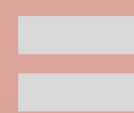
2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
776	786	112 YTD
+5.3%	+1.3%	+13.1%

**Survey
rank
#4**

Top
issue:
15%



2nd top
issue:
10%



In top 2:
25%

Current service

Footpath
sweeper
operates 7 days
per week

Sydney Road
Revitalisation
Pilot – operates
5 days per week

Shop fronts and
rears – operates
5 days per week

Footpath cleaning

Community suggestions

-  Pressure clean footpaths more often
-  Increase bin numbers and litter & bin pickup frequency
-  Work with retailers on their role in clean footpaths (waste, downpipes, etc)
-  Tailor solutions to suit locations – sporting clubs, night spots, shopping areas

Improvement Plan

Service design

- Vehicle improvements for better response
- Review shift timing for optimal operations
- Street sweeper pilot – reallocate footpath unit

Business role

- Bin locations to dissuade use by businesses
- Promote Council waste service options
- Condition street trader permits for cleanliness

Sydney Road initiative

- Assess the benefit of the increased resourcing
- Determine the relative value of different actions