



Merri-bek
City Council

Draft Children, Young People and Families Strategy 2026-2029

Children's Version

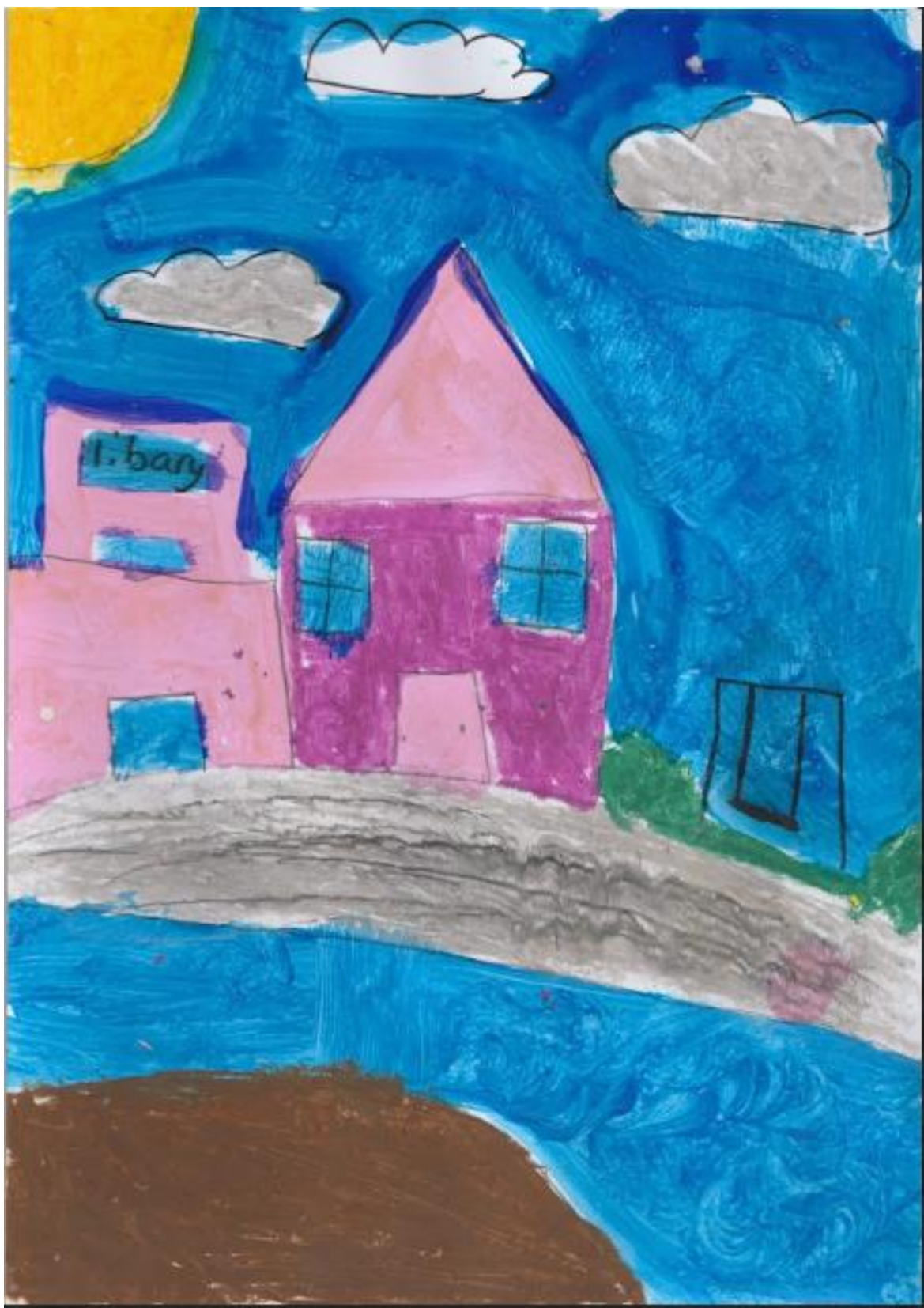


Acknowledgement of traditional custodianship

Merri-bek City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waterways in the area 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.

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'This Drawing is a bright and colourful town with a clear river and bike tracks and park. It also has a bright clear sky.' Sophie aged 12

Introduction

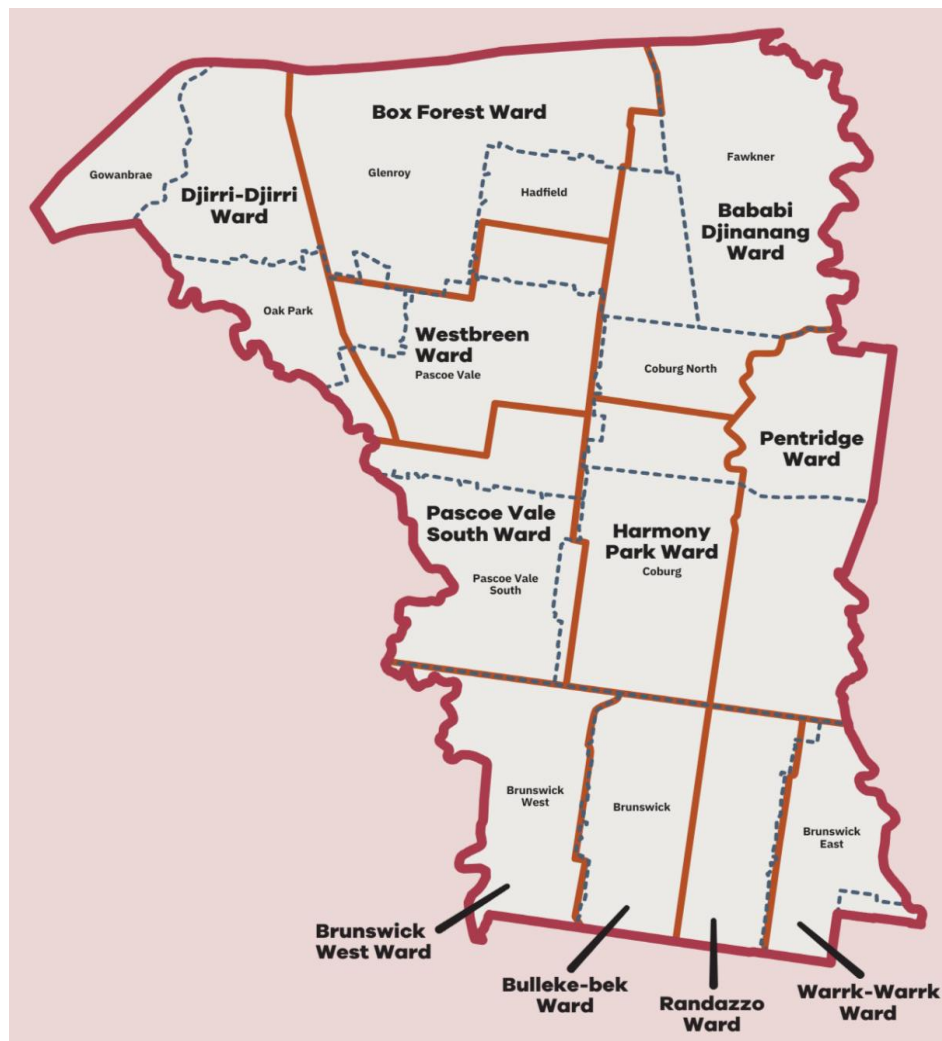
Merri-bek City Council has drafted a new Children, Young People and Families Strategy 2026-2029.

A strategy means a plan for how to achieve something:

- What we want to do
- How we're going to do it

Why did we make the strategy? We want to make sure that Merri-bek is a happy, healthy, safe and fun place for children, young people and families to live and learn.

 **Can you find the suburb where you live on the map?**



How we made the draft strategy

We asked children, young people and families three questions:

1. What do you like about living in Merri-bek?
2. What are the issues or challenges for children in Merri-bek?
3. What would make Merri-bek a better place for all children?

How did we get the feedback?



Surveys

For different groups and ages available online and in printed form.

We asked lots of people to share their ideas using surveys. You could fill them out online or on paper.



Art Activities

For children to provide feedback for this project.

Children shared their ideas through fun art activities. There were special activity books where children could:

- Draw what they like about Merri-bek
- Show what would make Merri-bek an even better place

There were two options:

- For younger children (ages 2–8)
- For older children (ages 9–12)



5 'Pop-ups'

at local community spaces around Merri-bek.

We set up 5 pop-up spots where people could come and share their ideas.

These were held at:

- Coburg Farmers Market
- Glenroy Library
- Fawcner Leisure Centre
- Glenroy Hub
- Brunswick Baths

Anyone could stop by, learn about the strategy, and tell us what they think.



8 Focus Groups

We also talked with different groups of people to hear their ideas.

We spoke with 8 groups, including:

- Young people from Merri-bek
- LGBTQIA+ young people
- School principals
- Children's groups
- People who work in community services
- Council staff

These conversations helped us understand what people think and what they need.

We made this strategy by listening to lots of people in our community.

More than **1,400 people** shared their ideas!

This included:

- Children
- Young people
- Families
- People who help and support others

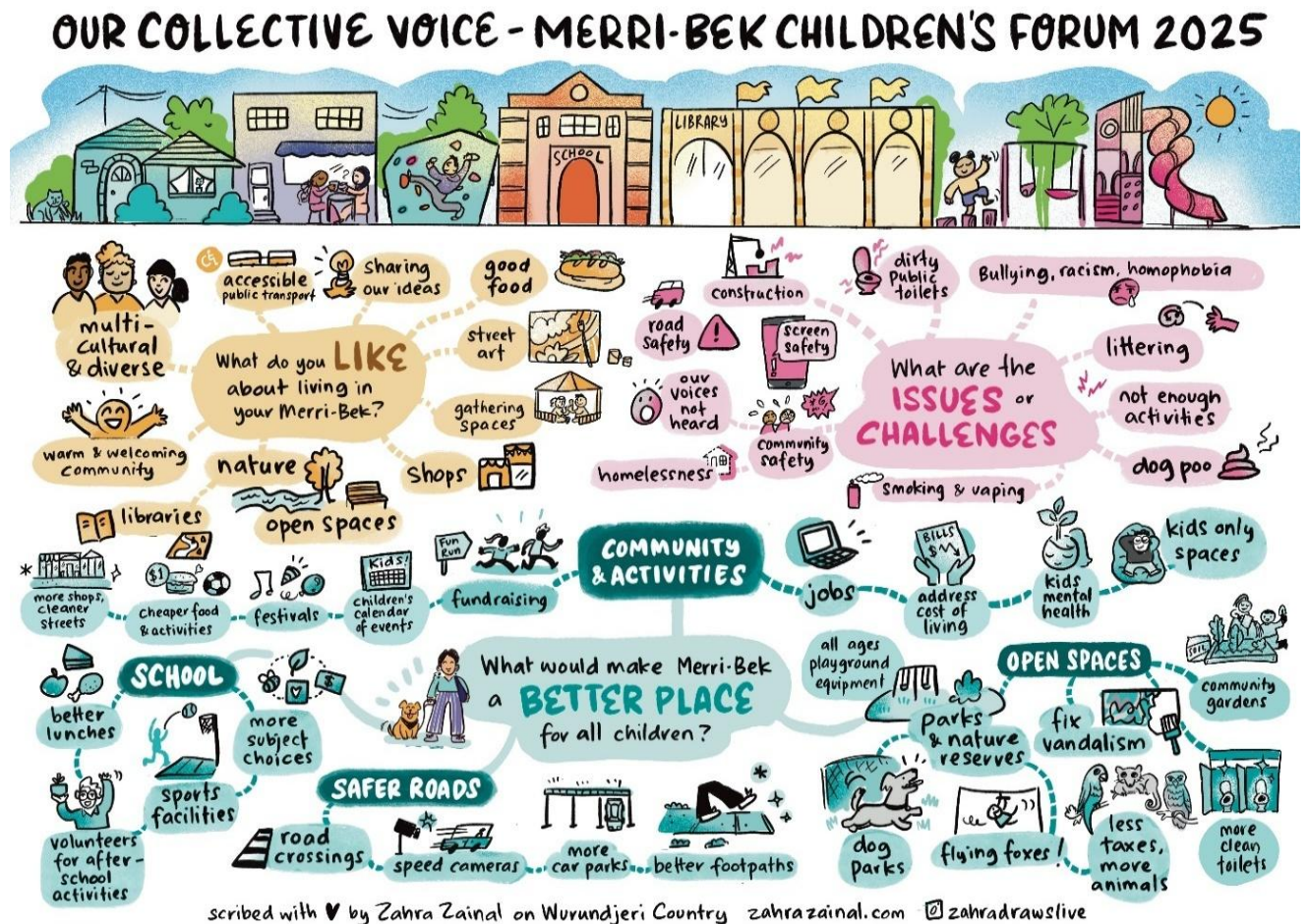
Most of the people we heard from were children:

- Many were aged **0 to 11 years**
- Lots were aged **5 to 11 years**

Most people we spoke to live in Merri-bek, and many were from **Coburg**.

What we heard from children, young people and families

Below is the infographic of what the children said at the Children's Forum.



🔍 **Circle the topics that are important to you**

Here are some of the main ideas people shared:

People really like parks, libraries and places to meet and being kind, including everyone, and feeling part of a community is very important.

Some people are worried about:

Mental health (feelings and wellbeing), Money and cost of living, getting the help and services they need, Some groups, like migrant and refugee families, can face extra challenges.

What people told us helped us decide what is most important and what actions to take in our strategy.

Our three main priorities

These are the 3 most important things children, young people and families told us:

Health and wellbeing.

We want everyone to:

- Feel healthy and safe
- Get support when they need it
- Look after their bodies and their feelings

Connection and inclusion

We want everyone to:

- Feel like they belong
- Be included and treated fairly
- Join in and be part of their community

Learning and thriving

We want everyone to:

- Learn new skills
- Have chances to grow and try new things
- Do well and reach their goals

What happens next

Each priority has a few goals to help us, plan activities and programs and make sure we support what the community needs

Our three main priorities:

1. Health and wellbeing

We want children, young people and families to:

- Play and be active.
- Feel safe and cared for Get help from health services.
- Have thier basic needs met.
- Live in a clean and healthy environment.

Our Vision

Merri-bek is a place where all children, young people and families feel safe, valued and have the opportunities and support they need to be happy, healthy, to learn and thrive.

2. Connection and Inclusion

We want children, young people and families to:

- Feel included and connected.
- Have a say and be heard.
- Use spaces, services and activities that welcome everyone.

3. Learning and Thriving

We want children, young people and families to:

- Learn and grow from an early age.
- Build skills for life.
- Get support through different stages of life.



Your voice is shaping what we do now, and in the future.

Merri-bek Childrens Forum August 2025

What council will do next

Make a plan- We will make plans using your ideas.
These plans will show what we are going to do.

Work together- People at Council will work together and with others in the community to make these ideas happen.

Take action- We will:

- Make services better
- Work with other groups
- Keep listening to the community
- Speak up for what children, young people and families want and need

How we will make it happen

Work together- We will work with community groups and families so everyone is supported.

Be fair and inclusive- We will make things easier for everyone and support people who need extra help.

Listen to children and young people- Your ideas and voices will help guide decisions.

Support families- We know families are important, so we will support parents and carers too.



This world has clean energy, and everyone is friendly' Anonymous aged 11



'This picture is about future Merri-bek. This Merri-bek includes clear rivers, safer streets and is a living organism' Chloe aged 11

How we will know if the strategy is working

- **We will check our work** – We will look at what we said we would do and see if we did it well.
- **We will see if things are getting better** – We will check if our actions are making a difference for children, young people, and families in Merri-bek.
- **We will collect more information** – We will gather feedback and use council data to help us understand what is working.
- **We will share what we learn** – Each year, we will report on our progress and use the feedback and new learnings to make the next plan even better.



On my paper I put what I think future Merri-bek should look like. On the dogs harness it says, 'future Merri-bek'. I also added ducks, ducklings and a recycling bin' Caitlin aged 10.

How to find out more about the strategy

To learn more about the draft strategy and provide your feedback, visit [Children, Young People and Families Strategy | Conversations Merri-bek](#)

How you can get involved and have your say at council

Join the Children's Reference Group.

Contact Bonnie Thomson BNthomson@merri-bek.vic.gov.au or Teneha Greco TGreco@merri-bek.vic.gov.au

Join the Youth Ambassadors.

Contact Lillian Dunn LDunn@merri-bek.vic.gov.au

Accessibility statement

We want this document to be easy for everyone to read and understand.

We have:

- Used simple and clear language
- Included headings and short sections to make it easy to follow

If you need this document in another format, we can help.

You can ask for:

- Large print
- Easy Read version
- Translations into other languages
- Help to understand the information

If you would like support or a different format, please contact us:

accessibility@merri-bek.vic.gov.au

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