

Message from the Mayor and CEO

Our 2018-19 Annual Budget continues to invest in a vision for a vibrant, diverse and progressive city with a sustainable future as outlined in our Council Plan 2017-21.

We're delivering valued infrastructure projects, programs and services with a \$148.6 million Annual Budget that includes over \$60 million on capital works.

We're proud to deliver a fiscally responsible budget that plans for the long-term and keeps costs down which is one of our continuing objectives.

There are the usual challenges we've had to meet with this budget - the maintenance of aging infrastructure, planning for rapid population growth and maintaining excellence in program and service delivery - all within the 2.25% rate cap imposed by the Victorian Government.

We've prioritised those essential services that focus on building healthy and inclusive communities, quality places and spaces, a connected city that is clean and green and that supports economic prosperity.

Council delivers more than 70 services across the areas of recreation, libraries, maternal and child health, animal management, sustainability, infrastructure, planning and other services. We're spending over \$100 million on maintaining these services that are well-used by the community.

We continue to collect, as required, the Landfill and Fire Services levies and forward these to the State Government.

Some key projects in our Annual Budget include:

- Parks, Open Space and Streetscape's \$8.247 million including the planting of trees in streets, boulevards, and parks across the City
- footpath and cycle ways \$2.1 million
- \$8.227 million to improve Council-owned roads
- retaining the pensioner rebate rate at \$189.55
- \$4.3 million - the Church Street Children's Centre will be redeveloped to increase the number of community based child care and kindergarten places in Footscray
- green street lights \$100,000

Our Long Term Financial Strategy and Plan also takes into consideration coming changes to the regularity of land valuations and the introduction of a new rating system. The Valuer-General will now be the sole authority on land valuations that will take place annually instead of bi-annually. The next general revaluation will be in the 2019/2020 financial year for implementation on 1 July 2019.

It is important to note that property revaluations do not increase the amount of rate revenue raised by Council - it only redistributes who pays the rates.

Council is also expected, in accordance with State Government Legislation, to introduce a new rating system in coming years. This system is called the Capital Improved Value (CIV) rating system and will be applied across all Victorian Local Government Areas. We currently use the Net Annual Value (NAV) rating system, proven to be the most fair for our residents. The CIV is the site value plus any improvements to the land (i.e. structures such as a house/garage etc.). We will keep you informed as to which financial year the new system will be rolled out in our City once the State Government confirms the new requirements for the legislation.

Through this Budget we continue to build on a foundation that is fiscally responsible and shows good governance, creating a future of which we can be proud.



Cr Cuc Lam, Mayor
Stephen Wall, Chief Executive Officer

