Moreland City Council

Mayor's Speech 2006

Harmony, democracy and peace
Friends, citizens and Council colleagues of Moreland.

May I begin by paying my respects to the local Indigenous people of Moreland in acknowledging that we are on the traditional tribal lands of the Wurundjeri people. I offer my respect to the Elders and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

I am very proud to be standing here today, again elected Mayor of this great municipality. It is a role that I accept as a great honour and hope to lead Council to achieve its aspirations for the coming year.

Before I go any further, could I pay tribute to the outgoing Mayor, Cr Mark Higginbotham. Mark has shown considerable leadership in the role this year.

Last year’s Council election and the new electoral structure delivered a more diverse representation to the Council chamber and Mark was up to the task of pulling the Council team together and ensuring that all voices were heard.

Mark’s personal style of conversation, humility, honesty, good humour and commitment to his passions have added to the office of Mayor. These are rare qualities for a politician, but Mark is a rare politician.

He is someone who really cares about his community. On behalf of everyone at Council, I thank you for a sterling job well done.

Over the past year, Council has faced many challenges. Our community has always been proudly multicultural and diverse. Unfortunately, many government leaders in this country, in Canberra and elsewhere, are playing on community fears and misunderstandings.

The outcomes of these actions are demonic to say the least. They manifest fear and vilification, instances seen this year in our community. More broadly, legislative changes recently passed by the Federal Government will erode civil liberties in this country, a position Council has stood firmly against.

Our community has a strong commitment to social justice, human rights and democracy. We are a peace-loving and law-abiding community. These are important values that I hold dear and hope that steady heads prevail to enjoy and embrace peace rather than spreading fear and hate.

I personally will advocate for Moreland to continue to be a safe and happy place to live, raise a family, run a business and to work. This will continue to be the Moreland way.
I see some significant themes for the coming year:

**Harmony**
- Our community has been challenged by the tone of recent public debate. Our community and Council need to respond in a constructive way to these challenges.

**Transport**
- With increasing traffic pressures and issues around public transport, transport continues to be a significant issue for our community. Some of these issues are outlined later.

**Activity Centres**
- Planning is at the heart of Council’s function. The coming year will see a milestone in the development of Central Coburg 2020 and then the development of the structure plans for the activity centres of Brunswick and Glenroy.

**Civic Pride**
- We are proud of our community and that should be reflected in the works programs that are undertaken by Council. Initiatives for the coming year will further enhance amenity and coordinate Council programs to make Moreland a better place.

Last year’s Mayor’s speech formed the basis of the Council Plan 2005 - 2009, commitments which have been scheduled into the Council organisation. Tonight’s speech reinforces some of those commitments, introduces some new initiatives and broadly outlines the agenda for Council for the coming year.
Social Development
Detailed Commitments

Harmony

Moreland is proud of the rich cultural diversity of our community.

For generations Moreland has been the favoured place for many, from many continents, from many cultures, for many reasons. We are indebted to these people for what they have added to our community.

Our community has a strong commitment to social justice and human rights. Council will continue to confront ignorance and prejudice in any manifestation and calls on our community to do the same.

Council acknowledges that faith and worship are significant to many in our community, as are culture and identity. Harmony and understanding have brought us together and will continue to be our binding threads. We will continue to take a lead role to foster and celebrate our multicultural community.

Council will conduct a Harmony Round Table, facilitating a public exchange of ideas and understanding, bring together faith and community leaders, and individuals in the community. This will be a vigorous and responsive dialogue that will report to Council for action.

Arts and Culture

Council will review the Moreland Arts Strategy in conjunction with the Moreland Arts Board, including the funding framework. Arts and culture is a continually evolving area and Council is resolved that the needs of the community will be met across the City.

Festivals

Council will continue to support important community festivals. We will particularly support those activities that focus on youth, health, well-being, harmony and community participation, in conjunction with community organisations, leisure providers and sports clubs.

Council will continue to ensure all festivals embrace waste minimisation initiatives.

Library Services

Council will continue its commitment to the community for library services, particularly increased funds for the purchase of new books at CPI. Council believes in the need for continual improvement and will continue this along with the completion of a strategic review of Moreland’s library service.

Council will continue the excellent ‘Readmore’ program that enhances community knowledge and skills, improves literacy and connects people.

Council will continue to support the Moreland Home Library service, a tremendous program that expands our excellent library service into the homes of our frail and elderly citizens.

Community Capacity

2006 will see the further implementation of the Glenroy and Fawkner community capacity building programs, which will include opening a new multipurpose facility, incorporating a learning centre, occasional childcare, community health services and community meeting space in Cromwell Street, Glenroy.

Child Care and Early Years

Council will implement the municipal Early Years Plan. Council will continue to advocate for and facilitate the development of additional childcare and early years services, particularly for children and families with vulnerabilities. Council will connect with other organisations with similar needs to focus its advocacy in this important area.
Social Development
Detailed Commitments

Aged Care
Council will continue to work with all levels of government and advocate for the adequate provision of aged care services within the municipality.

Council will identify suitable sites for high-care aged care facilities, provide assistance for planning and licensing proposals, and generally support both private providers and not-for-profit organisations to build new facilities in Moreland.

Council will continue to work with other aged care providers to coordinate the provision of a range of services to better support older frail aged people in their homes.

Education
Council reiterates its belief that a strong, free public education system is fundamental to any forward-thinking community. Council will continue to advocate that all Moreland schools receive the funding necessary to ensure that all students have access to well-resourced schools.

Council will, as a matter of urgency, advocate for the earliest possible opening of the Coburg Senior Secondary College.

Sport and Recreation
Council will continue its program for the refurbishment and redevelopment of sporting facilities across Moreland. Council will complete the design for the City Oval Grandstand community facility to improve amenity and to better cater for the needs of sports clubs, seniors groups and local residents.

Council will improve disability access for the Oak Park Aquatics Centre and investigate additional service provision.

Council will evaluate the required upgrades to equipment, plant and aquatics at the Brunswick City Baths.

Council will complete master planning for sports facilities for the land adjacent to the Coburg Senior Secondary College in partnership with the Department of Education and Training to cater for the needs of school students and the broader community.

Council will continue the sporting clubs forum as an important communication tool between sporting clubs and Council.

Neighbourhood Houses
Council recognises the important role of neighbourhood houses in our community. Council will advocate to the State Government for adequate funding and resources for neighbourhood houses. In conjunction with this, Council will complete the Neighbourhood House Strategy for Moreland.

Disability Action Plan
Council will continue to implement the Moreland Disability Action Plan, the Metro Access Plan and will investigate the provision of access maps across the City.
Environmental Sustainable Design (ESD)

Sustainable Tools for Environmental Performance Strategy (STEPS) and Sustainable Design Scorecard (SDS)

Council will complete the Sustainability Tools for Environmental Performance Strategy project by preparing an implementation program and an amendment to incorporate STEPS into the planning scheme.

Council will campaign intensively for legislative and policy change to strengthen environmental sustainable design (ESD) provisions within the State Government, aiming for Victoria to lead Australian best practice.

Watershed - Implement the Watershed Program

Council will implement components of Moreland’s integrated water management program, including stormwater management, water conservation and water sensitive urban design.

Moreland Environmental Sustainability Strategy

Council will undertake consultation, finalise the strategy and develop an implementation plan for the Moreland Environmental Sustainability Strategy.

Moreland Greenhouse Abatement Strategy and Greenhouse Action Plan


Economic Development

Local Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan

Council has a clear commitment to economic development and will undertake a process of continuous review to set and deliver priorities in this area. Council will develop a Local Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan in 2006 to lead Council in this area.

Moreland Community Enterprise Centre (MCEC)

The Moreland Community Enterprise Centre (MCEC) was established in 2000 to support and attract new business development. The centre provides offices and shared services for 16 private businesses and community enterprises. In 2006, Council will work with the centre to develop a new business plan.

Council will also examine alternative models and opportunities for further business incubation, to encourage the provision of employment growth across the City.

Online Business Directory

Council will develop an online business directory to help support local businesses and employment growth in the City.

Retail Enhancements

Council will continue to implement the capital works program to enhance retail areas, and continue to work with traders through the Shopping Centre Enhancement Scheme.

Local Purchasing

Where possible, Council will purchase locally.

Strategic Planning

Accessible and Affordable Housing

Council will continue to explore avenues to increase the number of accessible dwellings in Moreland. Council will strongly advocate for the necessary changes in the design of buildings through the Victorian Building Regulations, to ensure our community is inclusive of all and that the needs of our ageing populations are adequately catered for.

Council will finalise its Affordable Housing Strategy and continue to advocate for affordable housing across Moreland.
Kodak Site Redevelopment

Council is saddened by the closure of Kodak, which operated from Coburg over the last 40 years. Council expects the tender process conducted by Kodak for its former site to be concluded in 2006.

Council will ensure that whatever replaces Kodak on that site recognises the contribution of Kodak workers and their families to our community as well as contributing to Moreland in a positive manner, socially, environmentally and economically.

Retail and Commercial Land Use Study

In 2006, Council will finalise the Retail and Commercial Land Use Study and develop a strategy and implementation plan that addresses future directions for commercial, retail and mixed land use and development.

Moreland Heritage Review and Projects

Moreland has been a leader in the protection of our heritage, particularly our Indigenous heritage. Council will embark upon a program to ensure that our heritage controls are up to date.

Council will review all sites in previous studies and identify new and potential sites for inclusion in the planning scheme and investigate the need for interim protection for sites of particular significance or threat.

Open Space Contributions

Council will continue to maintain and improve public open space by allocating adequate resources for maintenance and refurbishment of existing and additional open space.

Open space contributions by developers will ensure that we maintain and expand our open space for all residents. In 2006, Council will prepare a planning scheme amendment to introduce compulsory open space contributions by developers.

Activity Centres

Council considers the development and completion of structure plans for activity centres of critical importance to the community. Council has matched this with the allocation of resources and personnel to do this task to a premium standard. This is an epicentre of priority for Moreland and, in recognising its importance, Council will produce a whole-of-organisation approach, championing these very important projects.

Central Coburg 2020 Structure Plan

Council will continue to lobby the State Government to support implementation of Melbourne 2030, particularly:

- joined up government approach;
- improved utilisation of State-owned land in Coburg;
- funding of Coburg Transport Interchange;
- implementation of the Coburg Integrated Transport Plan - Management of Sydney Road, Bell Street, Upfield Line, tram superstops;
- implementation of the Bell Street Smart Bus;
- advocate for the location of State offices in Coburg; and
- improve the quality of stormwater discharge to Merri Creek.

Council will complete the structure plan for Coburg for presentation to the Minister for Planning and incorporation into the Moreland Planning Scheme.

Brunswick and Glenroy Activity Centres

Council will accelerate the preparation of the Brunswick Activity Centre Structure Plan, which will plan the development of Brunswick as a Major Activity Centre.

Council will commence work on the structure plan for Glenroy, undertaking critical research into social and cultural needs planning. Interim height controls will be sought for both these localities.
Civic Precinct

Council will commence the Civic Precinct Master Plan.

Urban Planning

Urban Planning is a key function of Council. Through Council, the amenity of our local community is improved, public health and safety is maintained and residents can have a say in the future of their neighbourhoods.

Council will continue to build upon the recent positive advancements in service delivery in the operations of our planning system. We will continuously improve internal processes and communication with the community by using and enhancing information available in Council’s communication tools, website, Inside Moreland magazine and over the counter.

Council will continue to advocate to the State Government for increases to scheduled fees for planning applications, particularly those for large-scale developments.

Brown Field Sites

Changes of industry in Moreland have left a number of derelict and problematic sites which are not being redeveloped. The dereliction of these sites is an eyesore and a threat to public safety.

Council, in conjunction with the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) and the Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA), will lobby State Government regarding derelict building sites, particularly to give Councils the power to secure sites in the interests of public safety, and immediately secure the sites following a significant incidents (such as fires) and the ability to recoup the cost of this through the Courts.

Local Laws

Council will undertake a review of all local laws within Moreland to address the needs and requirements of the community.

Northern Sewerage Project

Council is committed to the best outcome for the community regarding the Northern Sewerage Project. This is a project of metropolitan significance. The project is necessary to prevent reoccurring spills into the Merri and Moonee Ponds Creeks. Council is committed to advocating on behalf of the community in minimising the impacts to residents and amenity during and post construction.
City Infrastructure
Detailed Commitments

Open Space

Moreland’s Open Space Strategy commits Council to improving and expanding our open space facilities.

In 2006, Council will develop new playgrounds for Gowanbrae and ATC Cook Reserve in Glenroy. Council will also undertake amenity improvements to:

- JP Fawkner Reserve;
- CB Smith Reserve;
- ATC Cook Reserve;
- Charles Mutton Reserve;
- Oak Park Reserve; and
- Gowanbrae.

Council will also explore funding and partnership opportunities with local schools in areas of high priority for open space and will commence investigations into memoranda of understanding that benefit both the schools and local communities.

Creeks

Council will continue to work in partnership with the Merri Creek Management Committee, the Moonee Ponds Creek Committee and other local friends groups. Council will continue to support and improve the natural habitat and open space along all of our precious creeks and waterways.

Footpaths, Roads and Drains

Council will continue to upgrade footpaths and allocate $1.4 million dollars to the footpath renewal program.

Council will undertake and complete the reconstruction of Sheffield Street in Coburg, Valerie Street, Pascoe Vale and partial right of way reconstruction and drainage works in John Street, Brunswick.

As part of the BlackSpot funding program, safety improvements will be undertaken at the intersection of Napperby and Victoria Streets, Brunswick.

Glenroy Road, between Cardinal and Widford Streets, will be resurfaced and footpath renewal works will occur on Pascoe Vale Road from Oak Park to Glenroy. In Karkby Street, Coburg, the retaining wall will be reconstructed, and drainage improvement works will take place near the Moonee Ponds Creek and Owen Street, Brunswick.

Council will commence implementation of the Drainage Asset Management Strategy, after completing due consultation with the community.

Bicycles

Council will continue to advocate strongly for the successful bid for State funding to complete the Upfield Bicycle Path to the Western Ring Road, ensuring that cyclists across the City have access to quality bike paths.

Council will advocate for the installation of pedestrian operated signals at both the Park Street and Dawson Street crossings of the Upfield Bike Path.

Pedestrians

In partnership with VicRoads, Council will allocate funding to pedestrian-operated signals at Anselm Grove, Glenroy.

Council will undertake a review of the Merri Creek Trail in conjunction with Darebin and Yarra Councils to identify and analyse risk areas, particularly from Dights Falls on the Yarra River to Mahoneys Road in Reservoir.

Council will continue to extend the successful Walking School Bus Program within Moreland.

Public Toilets

Council will continue its program of upgrades to public toilets and the installation of new toilets in parts of the City.
City Infrastructure

Waste
Council will develop a new Moreland Waste and Litter Strategy.
Council will undertake a mobile bin recycling service to the south of Moreland.

Managing Road Space - Parking
Council is committed to managing road space for all users in an equitable manner. Road space, including parking spaces, is a finite resource that needs to be shared. This is why Council completed its Parking Strategy in 2005.

In 2006, we will begin to implement the Parking Strategy, by developing Parking Action Plans and commencing Local Area Parking Plans (LAPP).

Green Fleet
Council will implement its Green Travel Plan and continue to reduce the size of the passenger vehicle fleet. We will also continue to move to more environmentally-friendly fuel models.

Sustainable Transport
Moreland has a long commitment to agitating for all residents to have sustainable transport choices. Council will continue to work towards expanding sustainable transport options across the municipality across a number of modes.

Council will review the Moreland Integrated Transport Strategy to help attain these goals.

Public Transport
Council will campaign for amenity improvements involving public transport, including renewing train stations, tram stops and bus stops.

Council will campaign for amenity improvements to rail corridors, specifically the removal of litter. Moreland will seek an accord with relevant authorities and the community.

Council will advocate for improvements to public transport in Moreland including:
- fifteen-minute frequency SmartBus along Bell Street;
- funding of the Coburg Interchange;
- improved operating hours for bus services at night and on weekends;
- more frequent trains on the Upfield Line and an upgrade of the North Melbourne station;
- new bus routes in areas with inadequate services;
- tram line extensions;
- TravelSmart in Moreland;
- review of ticket zonings;
- lower speed limits in strip shopping centres including Sydney Road and Lygon Street; and
- disability compliant tram stops.

Civic Pride
Council will commence a City Improvement Program to implement a range of programs based around building civic pride. Council will take a whole-of-organisation approach to link existing programs and projects.

Council will construct new gateway signage to the City and in selected precincts.
Community Engagement

Council recognises the historic engagement the Moreland community has with its representatives. Council recognises that it is incumbent in seeking new and appropriate ways of connecting citizens with their representatives. Council has a responsibility to improve connectivity with emerging communities within Moreland and ensure Council’s services are responsive to these citizens.

Council further commits to community engagement, specifically a greater commitment to grassroots engagement.

Council will develop a Strategic Communications and Research Plan to progressively address ongoing issues of community engagement, participation and community building. This will include greater use of Council’s website and publications.

Council will place Councillor expenses on its website, in line with other councils, ensuring greater transparency.

Payments

Council will expand opportunities for payments of rates and fines online and through credit card payments.

IETEC

Council’s information technology capacity will take a major step forward in the coming year. 2006 will see the commencement of Moreland’s IETEC project, a project that will modernise management of resources and access to information. Council is committed to seeing this project through and providing a model system for local government.

Celebration of Democracy

Council is committed to recognising the tenth anniversary of the restoration of democracy in Moreland. Council will work with local history groups, past Councillors and the community to commemorate this significant event.
In conclusion, I reiterate how proud I am to again be elected Mayor. It is an honour bestowed to very few people and I appreciate how privileged I am to be in this position.

I would like to thank all Councillors for their hard work in their various roles.

Thank you for again committing to these responsibilities and contributing to a common goal of good governance for the citizens of Moreland.

I commend Council officers and staff for their ongoing professionalism in their roles. Without your assistance, contribution, commitment and hard work, Moreland would not be in the position that it is today.

Moreland has a tremendous legacy, both at Council and in the community. We have a tradition of participating in decision-making, volunteerism and community organisations. I would thank all members of the community who have contributed to this legacy. I would like to conclude by encouraging the youth in our community to continue these roles and play a major part in what will be the future Moreland.

I look forward to working with you all over the coming year.

Finally, on behalf of Moreland City Council, have a safe and happy New Year.
Councillors
Elected November 2004 for four years

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North-East Ward

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