

DANDENONG NORTH COMMUNITY FORUM
24 September 2015, 7.00pm – 8.30pm
Jan Wilson Community Centre



MINUTES

Attendees:

Councillors:

Cr Sean O'Reilly (Mayor), Cr Maria Sampey (Chair – Ward Councillor), Cr John Kelly (Ward Councillor) and Cr Roz Blades

Council Officers:

Lisa Roberts (Manager Governance), Peter Shelton (Manager Regulatory Services), Sharon Sykes (Senior Coordinator Community Planning), Jo Thorn (Mayor & Councillors Executive Assistant), Phil Robertson (Service Unit Leader Parks & Waste)

Victoria Police Members:

Inspector Bruce Kitchen (Local Area Commander for Greater Dandenong), Sergeant Pam Hawker, Representatives from Highway Patrol (Simon and Daniel)

Community Members:

22 attended

Business:

Formal business started at 7.03pm

Speaker	Comments
Mayor Sean O'Reilly	Welcome to everyone here tonight. The main agenda for the evening is community safety which contributes to the liveability in this city. We have members from Victoria Police who will discuss crime prevention and hoon driving and council officers to discuss graffiti and waste services. We also have a fact sheet available about rate capping. Please feel free to ask any questions at any time. Firstly I will ask Bruce Kitchen from Victoria Police to discuss community safety and crime prevention.
Inspector Bruce Kitchen	<p>I will give you a quick overview of some of the issues in the general area. Up this end of Greater Dandenong the major crimes we deal with are theft of, and theft from, motor vehicles, hoon behaviour, drug activity and general burglary. Theft from motor vehicles has increased but drug activity has decreased. Tonight is your night to ask questions so don't be shy.</p> <p>Victoria Police has many initiatives on the go. One is called the <i>Safe Suburbs Taskforce</i> which is based in Springvale and works from 4.00pm onwards depending on where the issues are between here and Pakenham – this includes a focus on hoon behaviour particularly coming up to grand final season and the improved weather. The problem with hoon behaviour is that it is unpredictable. News is spread by phone and Facebook on the day so it is difficult to plan for any of these events. We need people to tell us if they hear of any of these messages getting around. If you have sons or grandsons involved and you hear about any events, then let us know. Residential burglary is also an issue.</p> <p>On all issues, we work closely with Council and meet regularly to discuss how we can work together to minimise impacts on the community.</p>

Speaker	Comments
Sharon Sykes	<p>At Council, I work in the area of Community Development and community safety sits within that. We work with Victoria Police, the Department of Justice and other organisations to help keep Greater Dandenong as safe as possible for everyone. Your Council has just adopted a Community Safety Plan. Copies are available – all you have to do is contact Council or visit the website. Lots of work has been put into the plan and extensive consultation has been had with Victoria Police and other organisations. There are six main areas of the plan which I will summarise for you now.</p> <p>Greater Dandenong has a diverse, multicultural community and there is a need to have a greater understanding between us and among us. Diversity brings opportunities and challenges.</p> <p>Preventing family violence is a major issue in our community. Victoria Police works to address violence when it occurs and Council works to try and help prevent violence before it occurs.</p> <p>Council works to improve the accessibility and safety of its public places through design and how those spaces are used and made to feel safe and welcoming.</p> <p>Council works to improve safety for road users, pedestrians and public transport users, particularly at transport hubs and railway stations.</p> <p>Alcohol and drug abuse can be caused by and attributed to many issues. Council works with many organisations to help reduce abuse that affects people's health and wellbeing.</p> <p>The use of emerging technologies such as social media provide our community with great opportunities but also exposes young and vulnerable people to risk because it touches them in their own homes. Technology however also provides us with opportunities to use it in emergency situations.</p> <p>Council's Community Safety Plan will last for next eight years and will be continually reviewed with Victoria Police and other organisations.</p>
Peter Shelton	<p>At Council, I am responsible for Parking Enforcement and Local Laws so on a day-to-day basis my teams work with vehicle parking and abandoned vehicles. Incorrectly parked vehicles and trucks and abandoned vehicles can create a perception that users can get away with unlawful activity and this creates a mindset that can lead to other related hoon-type behaviour. Council has a team of nine parking officers that work seven days a week and who rely on people to call any problems in with abandoned vehicles and parked trucks which can limit lines of sight and create safety concerns.</p>
Simon – Victoria Police Highway Patrol	<p>Unfortunately, Dandenong South is known Melbourne-wide as a hooning area. 100-200 cars can be parked in the area at 2.00am on any given morning. The main thing Victoria Police needs is information and intelligence coming in from residents and bystanders. This could be any sort of information such as cars that are just parked and waiting or new burnout marks on a particular road. If you see a car leaving burnout marks then ring Crimestoppers on 1300 333 000 and let them know the registration numbers of those cars. That is all you need to do – you don't need to get involved in any way. You can remain anonymous but contactable. Your information is confidential. Most hooning charges are jailable, so people to get punished. Around the residential area, activity could just be as random as someone just going up and down the street a couple of times. Just keep an eye out and report it. Activity might not seem like much at the time but if you see something small, that is out of place, call Crimestoppers and leave the information with them.</p> <p>It is so hard to target this unpredictable activity so if you do hear of anything through relatives or Facebook let Victoria Police know through either Crimestoppers or 000 (Triple 000). It is better to call these two numbers than ringing individual police stations as the calls are logged and records are properly kept.</p>

Speaker	Statement/Question	Response By	Response
Resident	Do you ever provide any feedback to people who provide any information? I have provided information to Dandenong station. I have never had any response and it is easy to feel that I have wasted my time.	Simon – Highway Patrol	It is always best to specifically report any issues to Crimestoppers or Triple 000 and specifically request feedback.
	I have some video footage that I can provide to you.	Inspector Bruce Kitchen	We will follow up with you tonight. Keep in mind that some footage cannot be used as evidence due to quality and privacy constraints.
Resident	I have spent many hours lying awake listening to someone driving around hour after hour.	Simon – Highway Patrol	All I can ask you is to call up Triple 000 when the situation occurs. Someone will be sent if they are available and if they are not they will follow it up. Again if you can get a registration number, that is even better. Some nights there are just so many call outs, that we cannot make it to every one – the area we cover is quite extensive. Keep ringing up the Triple 000 number and the call will be placed in a priority queue. Also, if you know of any neighbours or locals that tend to hoon around we need to know about them as well.
Resident	Do you ever use unmarked cars?	Simon – Highway Patrol	Yes
Resident	Licola Crescent gets hoons all the time.	Simon – Highway Patrol	Yes it is well known across Melbourne and we struggle to pin them down when they are there. Getting to the right place at the right time is difficult but even if we can get there and disperse them that is good. If we keep them moving so they can't start up then that is a good thing.
Resident/Cr Maria Sampey	We get a lot of cars lining up Halton Road then skidding and burning up the road. At 3.00am the parking bays at this Centre are full of cars for about 20 minutes at a time. By the time someone from Victoria Police comes out they are gone.	Simon – Highway Patrol	Please don't stop calling either Crimestoppers or Triple 000 with the information though.
Resident	Why don't we have an area like Sandown Park set aside especially for hoons?	Simon – Highway Patrol	They did have something organised at Sandown once but participants were so stupid they had to shut it down. No insurers would cover an event like this. Participants would have to meet certain standards and they just don't. They drive their parents' cars. They drive uninsured cars. They drive with worn tyres. There are good groups however like the classic car group that do meet up at times. They don't hoon around; they just meet, show off and talk about their cars.

Speaker	Statement/Question	Response By	Response
Cr John Kelly	Does not being able to chase hinder catching hoons?	Simon – Highway Patrol & Sergeant Pam Hawker	Dandenong has the highest catch rates and there are heavy consequences that are paid. One of our challenges is that registration numbers are often stolen on cars caught in hooning activities. You may have noticed a few recent articles in the papers about stolen cars. The plates of those stolen cars are often used in hooning and other illegal activities.
Resident	I just like to give a big thank you to Cr Maria Sampey for arranging traffic calming works in Alpine Crescent.		
Cr Sean O'Reilly	If Princes Highway is a prominent road used for hooning couldn't we work with VicRoads to utilise cameras more effectively?	Simon – Highway Patrol	They can only use cameras in certain areas. There are also cameras on private property but that is a challenge. Public cameras have to be put up for specific reasons.
Resident	Trucks parked on roads make it difficult to see what is going on and record any information.	Cr Sean O'Reilly	If you are having trouble with any trucks parking on roads, please call Peter Shelton at Council on 8571 5100 and advise him of the details.
Speaker	Comments		
Cr Sean O'Reilly	Thank you to Simon and Daniel from Victoria Police Highway Patrol for attending tonight. Now I will introduce Phil Robertson from Council to talk to you about Council's graffiti and waste services.		
Phil Robertson	<p><i>Presentation provided.</i></p> <p>Council provides footpath and street cleaning 365 days a year. Street furniture is cleaned weekly and there is periodic cleaning of all wheelie bins. Council has 786 public litter bins emptied seven days a week. Council sweeps every street once a month. Council also has a regular program of manual litter pick up using a disability employment service, Gateway, Department of Corrections personnel on community-based works orders and Council staff. Council also maintains all of its parks. Council's Waste Education Officers attend festivals, tree planting days and other events to educate the community and raise awareness of its litter, waste and recycling management practices.</p> <p>Of course, when you put so much into keeping the city clean, it is disheartening to do all this work and then see it defaced by graffiti. Council has a proactive to remove graffiti as soon as possible whereby we go into main shopping centres once a week and scour major roads once a month and remove anything we find.</p> <p>Council will remove graffiti from Council owned buildings and structures and assist residents in removing graffiti from private buildings and structures by providing a graffiti removal kit.</p> <p>We also have a customer request and response service so please ring Council and report any graffiti as soon as you see it. That is the most important message I can give to you tonight - to report the crime of graffiti to Victoria Police and to report it separately to Council to have it removed. The process of reporting its removal at council is as important as the process of reporting the crime if we want to stay on top of it.</p>		

Speaker	Statement/Question	Response By	Response
Resident	How many do you catch? There used to be a group of them that did the rounds and did different areas at a time.	Phil Robertson/Sergeant Pam Hawker	We have tracked it in the past and most of the graffiti is done by a small handful of people. Much of it gets done during school holidays. Perpetrators do come from far and wide but again, they are very hard to catch unless we get footage and proof. Victoria Police does keep a data base of all the tags and records so they can be traced and identified. Penalties do include having to clean graffiti off in some instances.
Resident	Do you use graffiti proof signage?	Phil Robertson	We do sometimes but it is very expensive and not always practical.
Resident	I regularly walk my dog and there is so much dog poo on the reserves it is disgraceful especially on a Monday after the weekend.	Peter Shelton	Dog droppings like graffiti are a constant nuisance and it is very hard to catch culprits. We have 12,000 registered dogs in the city and we recently did a survey to see what people thought about combating the problem. Council could provide people with tools so that may make it easier for people to pick up the droppings. We are looking at whether to put out bags and bins but it is an issue that we are constantly looking at. People are different in different areas. For example, at Tirhatuan Park, residents are terrific and bags are used all the time. Different solutions are needed for different areas.
Cr Sean O'Reilly	Does anyone have any other questions on any issues at all?		
Resident	Are residential recycling bins audited?	Phil Robertson	Our current contractors have the technology in their trucks used for recording a variety of service issues including contaminated recycling bins – the hopper is designed to hold the rubbish to allow a photo of contaminants to be taken and GPS mapped against the address. This information is downloaded at the end of the day, the image is populated into a contamination letter and sent to the resident. We are looking to take the next step of engaging with those residents with follow-up visits however this would result in a resource issue we will need to overcome. The technology relies on the driver taking the photo at the right time. Council advocates strongly for a more state-wide approach to community education on recycling with Cr John Kelly taking a lead role in this at Local Waste Management Forums.
Resident	We need more disabled parking at the Jan Wilson Community Centre/	Peter Shelton	I will follow up on that after this session is over by getting the resident's details.
Resident	The IN gates at this community centre have been vandalised and not replaced. They have been missing for many months and I have rang Council many times with no response.	Cr Sean O'Reilly	Lisa will follow up with you after this session and get your details.

Cr John Kelly	Practically everyone has a mobile phone these days. Could everyone put the application <i>Snap Send Solve</i> on their phones or ask their kids to download it on their phones and then you can put a call through to Council in no time at all?	Cr Sean O'Reilly	All you need to do is take a photo and the application automatically takes the address and will email Council which then gets logged into our customer service system.
Speaker	Comments		
Inspector Bruce Kitchen	Just one final comment – I am on the committee with Peter Shelton in relation to CCTV coverage of the city and as you know, there are many CCTV camera around the city. If we identify issues here at the Jan Wilson Community Centre we may be able to advocate for getting some cameras put in here but we do have to prioritise where they go.		
Mayor Sean O'Reilly	Thank you to everyone for attending tonight especially Victoria Police, the Councillors and Council staff and thank you to the community for your interest and giving your time. It's been a very informative session. Council should and does listen to the community and I am certainly proud of the way this council listens and at least puts up a response. You may not always agree with our responses but it is important that you are listened to. Councillors are always available for your queries and feedback. Thank you for giving your time and caring about your community. Please complete the evaluate form before you leave so we can improve on the format of them in future.		

Formal meeting closed at 8.15pm. (Informal discussion closed at 8.50pm)