



Moreland
City Council

Economy and the Arts



<https://conversations.moreland.vic.gov.au/Imagine-Moreland>

Topic snapshot

A vibrant Moreland with a strong local economy, a thriving creative sector and attractive arts and business precincts provides residents with access to housing, education, cultural opportunities, recreation and a healthy lifestyle. Opportunities to participate in the arts and cultural life of the city enriches the life of Moreland citizens.

Businesses provide stable jobs for local people and contribute to Moreland's culture. Economic recovery from Covid-19 will be slow, marked by a greater awareness of public health risks, heightened anxiety and a reluctance to invest, due to the potential for further restrictions and disruption. Supporting the resilience and adaptability of Moreland's local industries, creative sector and precincts will ensure the ongoing vitality of the city.

The key issues are:

- 1. Economy:** supporting local business recovery and job creation.
- 2. Creative industry:** supporting the creative industry as key to Moreland's identity and vibrancy.
- 3. Sole traders:** supporting sole traders to be viable, grow and create more local jobs.
- 4. Precincts:** Enhancing business and employment prospects through key growth sectors and projects.

Relevant Council services

Place-making and property development

- Build 'place capital' – or local social and economic value – by engaging with people through large and small projects.
- Facilitate large projects including strategic property development that aims to transform Moreland's centres.

Arts and culture

- Festivals Moreland – a series of festivals throughout the year including Moreland's much-loved Brunswick Music Festival, Sydney Road Street Party, Fawkner Festival and Coburg Night Markets.
- Counihan Gallery - municipal public gallery for Moreland City Council presenting contemporary art exhibitions focusing on social justice, political and cultural themes and managing the Moreland Art Collection.
- Public Art - management of the public art collection which contribute to making public spaces and parks vibrant, now boasting over 50 works. In addition, Moreland also has established a successful Graffiti Intervention Program which is designed to address issues of unwanted graffiti and tagging.
- Artists Supports - a range of activities designed to support local artists and creative sector including several grant programs as well as a series of residency programs and professional development programs (for example, Community Artists in Residency Program and Business Skills Program for local artists and arts organisations).

Economic Development and Business support

- Boost for Business package of programs to aid businesses to recovery from Covid-19.
- Business concierge – Business Approvals Moreland – one-on-one support with new business to help them navigate how to set up a new business and how to apply for the right permits.
- Business support – an annual mix of training and support programs to build the capacity and leadership of businesses to run effectively.
- Shopping strip activation programs improving shopfronts and providing marketing and development programs.
- Specific marketing programs like Love Moreland Buy Local encouraging the community to purchase their goods and services from local businesses.
- Dedicated HOTLINE to help business with their issues.
- Working with partners like RMIT Brunswick and Creative Victoria to build and support Moreland's creative enterprise community.

Data and community feedback

Moreland economy (pre Covid-19)

- Over the last 20 years, Moreland has been transitioning from a manufacturing based to service-based economy. In 2019 the top 5 employment industries in Moreland were Health Care and Social Assistance, Retail, Education and Training, Construction and Manufacturing (NIEIR 2019).
- Healthcare and Social Assistance is the fastest growing industry in Moreland providing an additional 1,325 local jobs over the past five years (NIEIR 2019).
- Manufacturing still plays an important role in the Moreland economy and is third largest in terms of value (\$430m in 2019). Food product manufacturing and boutique and bespoke makers are key manufacturing industries in Moreland (NIEIR 2019).
- As Moreland moves to a service-based economy, population growth becomes a key driver of the economy (id Consulting 2020a). Population growth will be impacted in the short to medium term due to the Covid-19 and the restrictions on overseas migration into Australia, which has been a key driver of Moreland's population growth.
- The Moreland economy has been steadily growing over the last 5 years however the rate has slower than Victoria. In 2019 there were 46,840 jobs located in Moreland, an increase of 4,000 (9%) over the previous five years (NIEIR 2019).
- There are around 14,500 businesses located in Moreland (ABS 2019), the majority of which (70%) are sole traders / micro businesses (not employing any staff).

Arts, culture and creative industries

- Cultural and creative occupations account for 8.5% of the total employed Moreland workforce. This is significantly higher than the national creative workforce which is 4.2% (Australia Council for the Arts, 2020).
- In 2017 Moreland was home to 178 arts venues and spaces, including a range of performing arts and visual arts and crafts spaces and spaces like the Counihan Gallery and Mechanics Institute in Brunswick (MCC 2017).
- Moreland City Council has an extensive festivals and events program including the Brunswick Music Festival and the Sydney Road Street Party to community festivals such as the Coburg Carnival, Fawkner Festival, Glenroy Festival, Carols by the Lake and the Coburg Night Market (MCC 2017).
- The community has a very high satisfaction with arts and cultural opportunities provided by Moreland City Council (Wallis 2020).

Covid-19 Impacts

- 6.7% of Moreland residents lost their job from June to September 2020; without JobKeeper job losses would have been nearly double (13.3%) (NIEIR 2020).
- In July this year, just over 12,000 Moreland residents (10.7% of working population) were being paid Job Seeker or Youth Allowance; this an increase of nearly 8,000 since December 2019.
- Accommodation and Food Services, Retail, Other Services, Construction, Arts and Recreation have been the hardest industries in Moreland since the start of the pandemic (NIEIR, 2020).
- There are 662 Accommodation and Food Services businesses employing 3,191 people (NIEIR, 2019); this sector is predicted to lose 1,463 jobs or 2,470 without Job Keeper (NIEIR 2020).
- In April 2020, a survey with Moreland businesses ranked 'Promoting a buy local campaign' as their top choice for support and requested financial support and relief and leniency with rent and Council rates (MCC 2020).



Key issue 1: Economy

Supporting local business recovery and job creation

Issues overview

Covid-19 began affecting local businesses as early as February 2020. Many businesses are in financial distress and currently only surviving with government support packages like JobKeeper. Supporting the recovery of our business community will maintain and create local jobs for Moreland’s growing population and have a positive impact on the community’s health and wellbeing. Two of Moreland’s local industries most impacted by the pandemic are accommodation and food services, and retail. Both are significant local employers and major contributors to the vibrant Moreland culture. The arts and creative industries, over-represented in Moreland, provide opportunity for future growth through job creation and tourism.

Opportunities

- Relieve the mounting pressure on businesses through initiatives such as the Boost for Business Covid-19 response package, reviewing council’s Special Rates and Charge schemes and removing red tape for businesses.
- Support the industries hardest hit by Covid-19 through initiatives such as expanding outdoor dining and council’s Shopping Strip Renewal program.
- Upgrade Moreland’s network infrastructure to provide public Wi-Fi across council buildings and facilities.
- Leverage council’s significant procurement spend to build the viability of local businesses and support the employment of under-represented groups.
- Preference employment and procurement practices that create positive local, social and environmental outcomes and encourage local businesses to do the same.

Challenges

- Difficult to accurately predict the future of local jobs and business closures due to unprecedented nature of a pandemic.
- The end of the JobKeeper scheme, currently scheduled for March 2021, will result in higher local job losses and resident unemployment.
- Uncertainty for businesses due to the pandemic, impacts of climate change on supply chains, changing consumer expectations, rising energy costs and insurance premiums.
- Council’s budget to provide support and respond to future outbreaks is limited.

Issues overview

Moreland's creative community is well-established and has played a significant role in contributing to the identity, community well-being and economic success of Moreland.

Moreland has developed a reputation for the arts. The conditions that have made Moreland an attractive place for artists to establish and thrive are increasingly vulnerable due to the gentrification of Melbourne's inner urban areas. The pressure to accommodate significant urban growth, a shrinking pool of arts funding and the devastating impacts of Covid-19 threaten the sustainability of the creative industries in Moreland.

Moreland's artistic reputation has far reaching economic benefits, driving support for business precincts, broader tourism, and its night-time economy. New evidence suggests that participation in the arts helps communities develop a sense of belonging, forges social cohesion, stimulates curiosity and the ability to engage with different perspectives, and can have a range of beneficial effects on health, wellbeing and educational outcomes (A New Approach, 2019)



Key issue 2: Creative Industry

Supporting the creative industry as key to Moreland's identity and vibrancy

Opportunities

- Support local creative industries through the existing Arts Infrastructure Plan.
- Provide affordable making spaces for artists which are fit-for-purpose and help with financial security through regulatory processes.
- Adopt a recovery lens when reviewing the Arts Infrastructure Plan.
- Support the local live music scene through actions such as planning controls and sector development.
- Adapt the existing Moreland's festivals program to the new Covid normal so that it can continue to have a positive impact on the community.

Challenges

- The effects of Covid-19 on the local arts community and creative industries has dramatically changed their needs and requirements.
- Local artists have suffered significant job losses, funding losses, and continuing venue closures.
- Federal government expenditure on the arts and creative industries has decreased by 18.9% per capita over the past decade and is not keeping up with Australia's population growth (A New Approach, 2019).



Key issue 3: Sole Traders

**Supporting sole traders to be viable,
grow and create more local jobs**

Key issue 3: Sole Traders

Issues overview

Nearly 10,000 businesses in Moreland are sole traders. Sole traders are represented across all local industries but operate predominantly in transport, postal and warehousing, construction, professional and technical services, and arts and creative industries.

With the right support this pool of microbusinesses presents unique employment opportunities and a significant contribution to Moreland's economy.

Financial support packages that have sustained most businesses through Covid-19 were not available to sole traders until September 2020. These businesses will likely require considerable support to recover and grow.

There is demand for small workspaces from micro, start up and small businesses focused in the service and creative sector. These businesses are choosing to locate in Moreland because of its proximity to where they live, and the connection to the CBD.

Sole traders often don't have the capacity to grow their business and create jobs. However, if supported, the high number of sole traders in Moreland offers a unique potential for future job creation.

Opportunities

- Explore a dedicated program, Plus One, that aims to assist sole traders to build and grow their employment capacity.
- Encourage collaboration amongst sole traders to identify new markets, promote their businesses and build clusters of learning in shared workspaces.
- Work with existing partners (RMIT and Ethical Property) to develop relevant business and entrepreneur support programs.

Challenges

- Sole traders are a time-poor cohort, focussed on day-to-day business tasks and do not traditionally work collaboratively. Engaging them will take dedicated resources, funding and programs that are currently unsupported.
- Council's A Job in Moreland forecast has revealed that the future of commercial space is more likely to be filled by shared spaces. These are a great fit for sole traders but, at this stage, are not plentiful. Attracting large developers to build these dedicated spaces in Moreland is a challenge because they typically cannot charge the rent required to recoup their investment.



Key issue 4: Precincts

Enhancing business and employment prospects through key growth sectors and projects

Issues overview

Moreland has 3 principal activity centres, Brunswick, Coburg and Glenroy, which are areas of growth and activity. There is a need to enhance these vibrant hubs through urban renewal initiatives to promote community participation. Encouraging private sector investment will create significant employment opportunities and ensure activity centres provide a diverse range of shopping, services to the community.

Brunswick is set to become a hub for creatives, with the State Government announcing the Brunswick Design District. The Brunswick Design District will foster and support the creative sector eco-system. The development of several sites within the district is underway. These will create employment opportunities, positive social outcomes and culturally significant places. Two notable projects are 420 Victoria St (formerly the Brunswick Business Incubator) which will act as an anchor site for the district and support new enterprise; and the redevelopment of 33 Saxon St (currently known as Siteworks) will deliver a fully funded, socially inclusive community hub.

Coburg has the potential to attract investment, generate employment opportunities and become a place where people visit, live, shop and play. This potential comes from the Coburg Initiative which includes the proposed development of Coburg Square and Coburg Health Precinct. The Coburg Initiative has the capacity to deliver 9,805 new jobs, over 350,000 square metres of increased floor area and 5,800 new dwellings. The development of Coburg Health precinct would support Moreland's growth in the allied health employment sector.

Other large-scale industry projects such as the Level Crossing Removal Projects (LXRP), TriCare Aged Care Facility, Pentridge Precinct Development, Holiday Inn Coburg North and Bunnings Warehouse Brunswick will provide significant jobs and growth in Brunswick and Coburg.

Key issue 4: Precincts

Opportunities

- Accelerate the creation of the Brunswick Design District to make it a national destination for all types of design centred activity.
- Advance the design and development of 33 Saxon Street to create new jobs in construction and provide a new community-based facility which will support the Moreland community's Covid-19 recovery.
- Deliver state of the art CovidSafe infrastructure through The Coburg Initiative, which will also enhance our activity centres.
- Advance the sale of the Coburg Health precinct site with Medela Properties to deliver an integrated health precinct. The sale will create immediate employment opportunities in construction activity and long-term employment benefits once the precinct is operational. The revenue from this sale will fund further Coburg Initiative projects such as the construction of a decked car park facility in Louisa Street.

Challenges

- The creative sector within the Brunswick Design District has experienced huge financial loss through the pandemic and access to funding is very limited. Grants and incentives are needed to facilitate short to medium term recovery.
- The Brunswick Design District as an area of significance it is yet to be considered a priority precinct by the State Government. Covid-19 restrictions have limited wide engagement and slowed progress.
- The sale of the Coburg Health Precinct land is yet to undertake a public consultation process and there is a risk that the sale could be protracted by community opposition.
- State Government funding will be highly competitive with Covid-19 recovery efforts likely to minimise the availability of future funds.
- Securing development partners to co-fund redevelopment of sites in Coburg is challenging. The feasibility of each Coburg development is interconnected creating challenges around equitable distribution of benefits and costs.



Related projects and strategies

Service/Project/Strategy	Description	Links
Boost for Business Covid-19 Response Package	A funded package of Covid-19 support programs.	www.moreland.vic.gov.au
Economic Development Strategy 2016-2021	Guides an Action Plan of activity for 5 years.	
A Job in Moreland	Guidance for where the community work, the types of jobs we do and how this may change over the next 15 years.	
Brunswick Design District	MOU	Hoping the website will be active by mid-November
Coburg Health Precinct Sale	Partnership with Medela Properties to deliver a Health Precinct at 82 Bell Street Coburg underway.	Councillor Briefing Slide Show
Coburg Square	A project which will catalyse the economic transformation of central Coburg to drive jobs and upgrade the existing public realm through development of Council owned land.	https://www.moreland.vic.gov.au/planning-building/strategic-plans/coburg-square/
Level Crossing Removal Program	A major construction blitz is underway to remove the level crossings by raising the rail line over the road in various locations throughout Moreland along the Upfield Line.	https://levelcrossings.vic.gov.au/
Saxon Street	A socially inclusive community asset in the heart of Brunswick that will support a variety of community, creative and commercial uses.	http://www.saxonstreet.com/ https://www.moreland.vic.gov.au/about-us/projects/community-space-projects/33-saxon-street-brunswick/

Related projects and strategies

Service/Project/Strategy	Description	Links
Arts Infrastructure Plan	Strategy to support the physical arts spaces and creative industry.	https://www.moreland.vic.gov.au/events-recreation/arts-and-gallery/arts-infrastructure/
Creative Capital Arts and Culture Strategy	Strategy designed to increase access to and engagement of community in Council's Arts and Culture program as both participants and audiences.	https://www.moreland.vic.gov.au/events-recreation/arts-and-gallery/arts-strategy/
Counihan Gallery in Brunswick Strategic Plan	Newly endorsed 5-year strategic business plan.	https://www.moreland.vic.gov.au/events-recreation/arts-and-gallery/counihan-gallery-strategic-plan/
Flourish: Arts Recovery Grants	New once-off funding program to support the local arts community combining two existing funding programs.	https://www.moreland.vic.gov.au/events-recreation/arts-and-gallery/arts-grants/flourish-arts-recovery-grants-program/



References

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- Business Impact Survey Report
- Economic Development programs – includes Boost for Business
- id economy
- Economy and Employment summary document - Attachment
- Grattan Institute?
- id Consulting A Job In Moreland
- Arts and Culture
- Places Framework
- Smart Cities
- The Coburg Initiative
- 33 Saxon Street Brunswick – Architectural Concept Plans
- Brunswick Design District – Memorandum of Understanding.

References - data

A New Approach, Insight series of reports (A New Approach Thinktank), 2019, <https://www.humanities.org.au/new-approach/reports/>

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Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2020, Counts of Australian Business, including Entries and Exits < <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/economy/business-indicators/counts-australian-businesses-including-entries-and-exits/latest-release>>

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National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) 2020, modelled Covid-19 impacts compiled and presented in economy.id by .id Consulting

National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) 2018, compiled and presented in economy.id by .id Consulting

Moreland City Council 2020a, Unemployed and Residents at Risk of Unemployment Brief

Moreland City Council 2020b, Population and Forecast Brief - Summarise population change, forecasts and potential Covid-19 impacts

Moreland City Council 2020c, Covid-19 Business Impact Survey, available on request

Wallis Group Consulting 2018, 2019 and 2020, Moreland Community Satisfaction Survey

¹The Coburg Initiative <https://www.moreland.vic.gov.au/about-us/activity-centres/coburg-activity-centre/>