

# Bare to Beautiful City of Boroondara

Prepared for the Metropolitan Partnerships  
Development Fund (MPDF), Inner South-east  
Metropolitan Partnership



## Acknowledgements

City of Boroondara wishes to acknowledge the Inner South-east Metropolitan Partnership and the Victorian Government, The Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions for their invaluable contribution to support our local community to deliver the Bare to Beautiful program.

We thank the following for their support in the management and delivery of the program:

- Decal artist - Yan Yan Candy Ng of Thoughts Come True
- Decal printing and installations - Inspired Printing
- The 18 landlords and real estate agents of the vacant shops activated (and the many others who we engaged with to explore interest from).
- 9 local musicians who helped deliver the 22 music performances - *Klezmeritis, The Jazz Associates, La Mauvaise Réputation, Stiletto Sisters Duo, Alejandro Espino Aldana, Bohemian Nights, Simon Paparo, Gustavo Moreno and Kekoson*
- The 10 trader associations and their marketing coordinators who assisted with research, assistance, and marketing to their precincts throughout the program to locate vacant shops and promote the music performances
- Photographers - Alex Sibbison (Masterworks Media Productions), Inspired Printing installation team, City of Boroondara Council Project and Event Officers
- Videographer - Alex Sibbison (Masterworks Media Productions)
- City of Boroondara Officers (working group and steering group members)

*The City of Boroondara acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and original custodians of this land. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.*

# Table of contents

1. Executive Summary .....	4
2. Introduction .....	6
2.1 Background .....	6
2.2 Project Description .....	6
2.3 Project Objectives and Deliverables .....	7
2.4 Project Target Audience .....	8
2.5 Project supporters/partners .....	8
3. Project Delivery .....	9
3.1 Delivery approach.....	10
3.2 Delivery milestone activities .....	11
3.3 Project Governance and Stakeholders .....	12
3.4 Delivery engagement.....	14
3.5 Delivery in illustration.....	15
3.6 Delivery Challenges.....	28
4. Outcomes and Recommendations .....	29
4.1 Results .....	29
4.2 Lessons .....	31
4.3 Recommendations.....	33
4.4 Evaluation methods .....	34
Appendix 1: Bare to Beautiful promotional flyers.....	37
Appendix 2: Feedback questionnaires used to evaluate project outcomes .....	39

## 1. Executive Summary

The City of Boroondara was one of four Councils that received the Metropolitan Partnerships Development Funding (MPDF) under the Inner South-east Metropolitan Partnership. In 2021, funds from the MPDF program were available to deliver projects which progress regional economic and social recovery. The City of Boroondara successfully received \$40,000 under the Shopping Strip and Activity Centre Reactivation category to assist in the activation of City of Boroondara's shopping precincts through the Bare to Beautiful Program.

The project addressed the fact that vacant properties often impact the overall ambience of a shopping precinct, detracting from other businesses and creating the perception that the area is in decline. Like many shopping precincts across Victoria, the vacancy rate of commercial properties significantly increased as a result of COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions.

The impact of sustained commercial vacancies within and around a shopping precinct include:

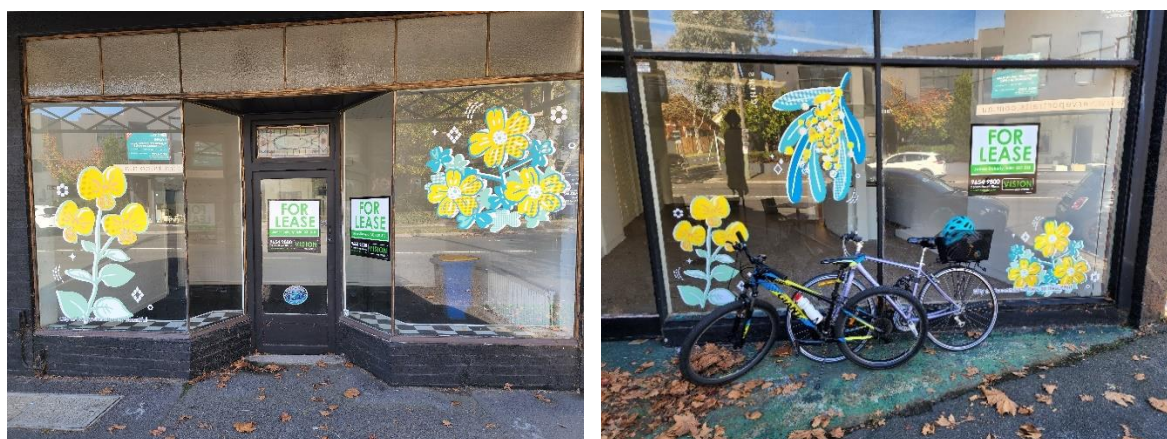
- Difficulty in attracting and retaining businesses to the precinct
- Reduced foot traffic
- Reduced feeling of pride among locals and nearby businesses
- Perception that an area is in decline, unsafe and unkempt
- Reduced or loss of vibrancy, identity and character.

The project aimed to address these impacts and in doing so:

- attract and retain existing tenants
- develop new and improved existing relationships Council has with landlords, businesses, managing real estate agents and trader associations
- increase visitation and dwell time in Boroondara's shopping precincts
- market/promote Boroondara as an attractive location to do business

As part of the Bare to Beautiful program, Council partnered with local landlords, real estate agents and trader associations to activate vacant shopfronts across Boroondara's 53 shopping precincts and installed 18 temporary floral decals/stickers on windows.

Unique floral decal designs for each suburb/suburb cluster were designed and developed by a local artist, Yan Yan Candy Ng, with the flowers unique or found in the local area.



A new aspect to the program was added in November 2021 with roving musicians serenading in and around the shopping precincts that Bare to Beautiful participating properties were

located, to add additional vibrancy to the streets and shopping precincts for the local community to enjoy.

Data collection and measurement on the direct impacts from the project's outcomes were a little harder to obtain than first expected, given that many of the outcomes and achievements were in relation to vibrancy, overall mood and recovery post COVID-19. The project delivery was also impacted by ongoing lockdowns in 2021 and this did make evaluation harder considering vacant shops continued to increase and continued to be impacted into 2022. It also became apparent that vacancy is a hard thing to measure, considering a vacant shop does not always mean it is vacant and looking for a new tenant or owner, as it can also be due to renovations or temporary hibernation.

The overall success of the project however, was measured in the positive feedback received, the observations made during Street Sounds music performances and how well they were engaged by the local community and business community. The decals also provided vibrancy and an attractive feel back to some of the precincts where vacant shops can have a negative impact. There was also no record of any vandalism or graffiti to any of the shops included in the program during the activations which was a positive outcome.

The engagement of a local artist to design the decals meant that we could support and promote a local artist with this opportunity, noting that the arts sector felt the effects of lockdowns and restrictions heavily too. Additionally, the company which completed the installations appreciated the chance to be involved and the local musicians enjoyed the opportunity to gain work and return to performing to live audiences again.

Overall, the project improved community and business wellbeing and community connections. The feedback received after the street performances was positive and encouraging to the overall objective of assisting with general recovery to the shopping precincts across Borroondara.

Some of the data collected included:

- The Bare to Beautiful program decorated 18 vacant shopfront windows and delivered 22 musical performances.
- Over 90 landlords and real estate agents were engaged to seek potential vacant shops to participate in the program.
- Assistance via 10 trader association Marketing Coordinators was provided to reach vacant shop owners and agents
- Over 160 vacant shops were identified and contacted to seek interest to participate in the program over the entire project lifecycle



## 2. Introduction

The City of Boroondara is one of four Councils that received the Metropolitan Partnerships Development Funding (MPDF) under the Inner South-east Metropolitan Partnership. In 2021, funds from the MPDF program were available to deliver projects which progress regional economic and social recovery. The City of Boroondara received \$40,000 under the Shopping Strip and Activity Centre Reactivation category to assist in the activation of Boroondara's shopping precincts through the Bare to Beautiful Program.

As part of the Bare to Beautiful program, Council partnered with local landlords, real estate agents and trader associations to activate vacant shopfronts across Boroondara's 53 shopping precincts and installed 18 temporary floral decals/stickers, designed to re-invigorate and assist in the economic recovery of Boroondara's shopping precincts following the COVID-19 pandemic.

### 2.1 Background

The City of Boroondara has a population of 176,632 and includes 25,248 registered local businesses (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021). The City is 10km east of the Melbourne CBD and easily accessible by all forms of transport, including trams and trains, and major arterial roads. Boroondara is known for its tree-lined streets, quality housing, recreational facilities, health facilities (including the Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre at The Austin Hospital, Kew) and a number of small private hospitals. There are also two tertiary institutions, Swinburne University of Technology and the University of Melbourne (Hawthorn Campus), as well as many private and public schools. Boroondara has 53 established activity centres and shopping centres that includes several neighbourhood retail centres and many high quality cafes and restaurants.

In the financial year ending June 2021, the City of Boroondara:

- reported a Gross Regional Product of \$12.39 billion
- was the location for 81,609 jobs
- included 99,186 employed residents.

(Source: Economy.id, City of Boroondara Economic Profile)

The City's largest employing industry in 2021 was Health Care and Social Assistance, with 14,584 jobs. Other key industries include Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (12,065 jobs), Education and Training (11,852 jobs) and Retail Trade (9,842 jobs).

(Source: Economy.id, City of Boroondara Economic Profile)

### 2.2 Project Description

The Bare to Beautiful Boroondara Program was designed to assist in the COVID-19 economic recovery of Boroondara's retail precincts by activating vacant commercial shopfronts with temporary floral decals/stickers on windows designed by a local artist, with the flowers unique or found in the local area. In doing so, the project aimed to create place-based custom window art across Boroondara's shopping precincts.

The City of Boroondara was one of four Councils in receipt of the 2021 Metropolitan Partnerships Development Funding (MPDF) under the Inner South-east Metropolitan Partnership to deliver this program via projects which progress regional economic and social recovery. The City of Boroondara received \$40,000 under the Shopping Strip & Activity Centre Reactivation category to assist in the activation of Boroondara's 53 shopping precincts through the Bare to Beautiful Program.

The project addressed the fact that vacant properties often impact the overall ambience of a shopping precinct, detracting from other businesses and creating the perception that the area is in decline. Like many shopping precincts across Victoria, the vacancy rate of commercial properties significantly increased as a result of COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions.

The impact of sustained commercial vacancies within and around a shopping precinct include:

- Difficulty in attracting and retaining businesses to the precinct
- Reduced foot traffic
- Reduced feeling of pride among locals and nearby businesses
- Perception that an area is in decline, unsafe and unkempt
- Reduced or loss of vibrancy, identity and character.

The project aimed to address these impacts and in doing so:

- attract and retain existing tenants
- develop new and improved existing relationships Council has with landlords, businesses, managing real estate agents and Trader Associations
- increase visitation and dwell time in Boroondara's shopping precincts
- market/promote Boroondara as an attractive location to do business

### **2.3 Project Objectives and Deliverables**

The Bare to Beautiful program aim was to support the economic recovery of Boroondara's retail precincts by activating vacant shopfronts with temporary floral decals designed by a local artist, helping to retain and attract new tenants; increase visitation to local retail precincts; and improve the ambience of retail precincts.

The key objectives to achieve this were:

- Use best endeavours to retain existing tenants in Boroondara's shopping precincts
- Seek to attract new tenants to Boroondara's shopping precincts - specifically to the commercial properties participating in the program
- Increase the sense of satisfaction and pride in the local shopping precinct amongst visitors as well as businesses
- Establish new and/or improved relationships between local landlords, 10 Trader Associations and managing agents whose commercial properties/shopping precincts they own, manage and/or represent that will benefit from the project
- Increase Council's awareness and knowledge of other possible opportunities for utilising and activating vacant commercial shopfronts into creative spaces - for example, as pop-up galleries, shared workspaces, etc.

The key deliverables established to achieve this were:

- Aim for 15-20 vacant commercial shopfronts across at least four of Boroondara's shopping precincts to be activated through the installation of floral decals/stickers on windows.
- A unique set of floral elements created for use in each precinct which reflect the plants in the respective local gardens, with the decals being assembled in a range of different ways to create diverse window displays.

Due to the ongoing lockdowns experienced in Victoria in 2021, an additional objective was added to the project in late 2021 to complement the vacant shop activations and assist with returning vibrancy to the precincts by way of Street Sounds music performances.

The aim of ‘Street Sounds’ was to re-energise Boroondara’s local economy by engaging the public at local shopping precincts and attracting visitation. The initiative also aimed to lift the spirits of local traders and the community through a series of two hour sets of high-quality pop-up musicians and performers, roving around the locations of the activated vacant commercial shopfronts or where a precinct had outdoor dining parklets and other outdoor dining locations.

The alignment of this addition with the original objectives of Bare to Beautiful included:

- Increase the sense of satisfaction and pride in the local shopping precincts amongst visitors as well as businesses
- Contribute to retaining existing tenants in Boroondara’s shopping precincts
- Possibly assist to attract new tenants to Boroondara’s shopping precincts

Key additional benefits included:

- Injecting a sense of vibrancy to shopping precincts
- Encouraging visitors to linger for longer in shopping precincts
- Assisting traders to feel supported

## 2.4 Project Target Audience

It was expected that several shopping precincts across the City of Boroondara would participate in the program, whereby residents and visitors to Boroondara would have the opportunity to enjoy an outdoor gallery ‘experience’ across the municipality, along with the addition of music to add vibrancy to the streets.

For landlords of the vacant shops, the creative window displays aimed to:

- bring vibrancy and visual appeal back to local shopping strips
- reduce likelihood of graffiti or vandalism
- attract new tenants and keep those that are existing
- increase visitation.

## 2.5 Project supporters/partners

A summary of the internal and external supporters and partners involved in Bare to Beautiful included:

Stakeholder	Communication Type / Method	Communication Timing
Metropolitan Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Email</li> <li>• Phone</li> </ul>	Ongoing throughout project
City of Boroondara Internal Project Steering Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide feedback and advice</li> <li>• Face-to-face and online meetings</li> </ul>	Monthly
City of Boroondara Project Working Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet to discuss upcoming activities</li> <li>• Face-to-face and online meetings</li> </ul>	Weekly
Trader Associations (in place around City of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback on project progress and achievements</li> </ul>	Monthly and ad hoc



Boroondara to represent 10 major shopping centres)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss possible properties to participate</li> <li>• Face-to-face and online meetings, as well as phone</li> </ul>	
Landlords and managing agents of vacant commercial properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback on project progress and achievements</li> <li>• Discuss possible properties to participate</li> <li>• Face-to-face and online meetings, as well as phone</li> </ul>	Monthly and ad hoc
Council's communications/promotions team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback on project progress and achievements</li> <li>• Face-to-face and online meetings, as well as phone</li> </ul>	Monthly and ad hoc
Other Councils delivering similar projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback on project progress and achievements</li> <li>• Face-to-face and online meetings, as well as phone</li> </ul>	Ad hoc
City of Boroondara community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project announcement/ press release/ social media</li> </ul>	Start and end of project

### 3. Project Delivery

A total of 18 shopfronts were activated as part of the Bare to Beautiful project:

Count	Vacant property address	Suburb
1	818 Glenferrie Road	Hawthorn
2	1/1210 Toorak Road	Camberwell
3	48 Cotham Road	Kew
4	50 Cotham Road	Kew
5	192 High Street	Ashburton
6	66B Doncaster Road	Balwyn North
7	252 High Street	Ashburton
8	323 Doncaster Road	Balwyn North
9	903 Burke Road	Camberwell
10	1 / 304 High Street	Kew
11	Shop 3 / 555 Riversdale Road	Camberwell
12	100 Denmark Street	Kew
13	190 High Street	Ashburton
14	48 Cotham Road (activated again due to new lease falling through)	Kew
15	50 Cotham Road (activated again due to new lease falling through)	Kew
16	361-363 Canterbury Road	Surrey Hills
17	365 Canterbury Road	Surrey Hills
18	296A Canterbury Road	Surrey Hills

### 3.1 Delivery approach

The project was delivered across several stages, noting the ongoing challenges faced due to COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions experienced throughout 2021.

Many stages were one off occurrences, while some were ongoing throughout the duration of the project.

#### One off:

- Development of Project Plan, including timelines. It was anticipated that the decals will be in place for at least four months, unless the property becomes leased earlier
- Development of Communications Plan, including key messages for landlords, managing agents and trader associations involved in the promotion and delivery of the project
- Development of template MOU/agreements between Council and landlord/managing agent
- Development of a promotional flyer as well as key messages and letter/email templates to promote Program to key stakeholders
- Establishment of an Internal Steering Group to provide general advice and oversight
- Confirmation of roles and responsibilities for Project Working Group members
- Development of processes for communications with landlords/managing agents of vacant commercial properties, as well as printing and installation of decals
- Contractor procurement processes - quotes from artists and contractors to print and install decals
- Appointment of artist and contractor to print and install decals
- Design of decals for each participating shopping precinct
- Coordination of Street Sounds performances for activation in the locations where decals were installed to add extra vibrancy on weekends
- Evaluation report at the conclusion of the project which highlights the project's outputs and outcomes.

#### Ongoing

- Implementation of Communications Plan, including sending letters and emails to landlords and agents of vacant commercial properties and promotion of Street Sounds events
- Signing of MOU/agreements between Council and landlord/managing agent for each activation
- Follow-up landlords and managing real estate agents of vacant properties who received letters/emails about the Program
- Ongoing liaison with Trader Association Marketing Coordinators to establish any new vacancies, help promote Street Sounds programs, establish landlord connections
- Internal Working Group meetings to monitor the implementation of the project
- Print and install decals on windows (noting removal was the responsibility of the tenant or landlord).
- Development of relationships with managing agents of commercial vacant shopfronts
- Discussions with other Councils delivering similar programs to gain insights and learnings for how the project could be improved
- Promotion of project through Council and non-Council channels
- Photos taken of vacant commercial properties participating in project
- Photos and video footage of the Street Sounds performances for future promotion

### 3.2 Delivery milestone activities

The Project key milestone activities for Bare to Beautiful Boroondara included:

Milestone
Development of Project Plan
Confirm roles and responsibilities of internal Project Working Group
Organise and deliver first meeting of Project Steering Group
Development of processes for managing communications with landlords and managing agents, as well as installing decals
Development and implementation of Communications Plan (including ongoing promotions during different stages of the project)
Development of artist brief
Appointment of artist to develop decals
Recruitment of landlords/agents of vacant properties - approx. 90 agents contacted via email, phone and/or letter in the first round
Development of vacant shop data collection to be gathered by Business Engagement Officers including photos to determine suitability and number of vacant shops
Development of first round of decal designs for three different shopping precincts
Appointment of contractor to print and install decals
Printing and installation of decals on vacant commercial shopfronts - Between July and December 2021, 13 commercial shopfronts signed up to participate in Bare to Beautiful across six different shopping precincts in Boroondara - Greythorn Central, North Balwyn, Ashburton, Camberwell, Hartwell and Kew
Development of a map function on Council's Love Local Life website ( <a href="http://www.lovelocallife.com.au">www.lovelocallife.com.au</a> ) - a directory listing businesses located in Boroondara - which lists all Bare to Beautiful properties
Consulted with the 6 traders' associations whose shopping precincts feature shopfronts participating in Bare to Beautiful regarding Street Sounds music program to set dates and locations for November and December 2021
Liaised with Council's Arts and Culture team to organise and book in musicians for Street Sounds performances
Delivery of 12 x 2 hour Street Sounds musical performances on Saturday mornings across the 6 shopping precincts in Boroondara featuring the Bare to Beautiful program between mid-November and end of December 2021
In early 2022, additional vacant shop data was collected from online research on 67 properties listed across 20 real estate agents who were contacted to seek additional properties to participate.
Between March and May 2022, 5 new commercial shopfronts signed up to participate in Bare to Beautiful across four different shopping precincts in Boroondara - Kew, Surrey Hills and Canterbury Road.

## Milestone

Delivery of 10 x 2 hour Street Sounds musical performances on Saturday mornings across the seven shopping precincts in Boroondara featuring the Bare to Beautiful program between mid May and end of June 2022.

### 3.3 Project Governance and Stakeholders

An internal Project Steering Group was established to meet monthly for the purpose of providing advice and feedback on the implementation of the project. The group was comprised of Council senior representatives from Local Economies, Placemaking and Strategic Planning teams, and listed below under 'stakeholders'.

A Project Working Group was also established and met on a weekly basis. The Project Working Group comprised of officers responsible for the implementation of the project and met to discuss decal installations, recruitment of additional locations and ongoing project delivery needs. This provided an avenue to identify new location sites in a shopping precinct, and discuss new design options as each shopping precinct aimed to design and install decals which represent flora unique to the specific area. These meetings were also used to discuss any learnings to date, as well as further opportunities to promote the project.

#### Project stakeholders:

Name and title	Organisation/Department	Purpose / Role and phase of Project (Initiation, Planning, Delivery, Closing)
Alana Smith, Senior Economic Development Officer	Local Economies team, City of Boroondara	Project oversight/manager (until Jan 2022) - initiation, planning, delivery.
Melissa Reid, Economic Development Officer - Activations and Sustainability	Local Economies team, City of Boroondara	Project oversight/manager (from Jan 2022) - planning, delivery, closing.
Nancy Multari, Coordinator Local Economies	Local Economies team, City of Boroondara	Project advice and feedback (from Jan 2022) - delivery, closing.
Shanley Price, Placemaking Implementation Officer	Placemaking team, City of Boroondara	Delivery of project
Eugenia Zoubtchenko, Senior Placemaking Officer	Placemaking team, City of Boroondara	Delivery of project
Tony Smith, Arts Programming Officer	Arts & Culture, City of Boroondara	Delivery of project

Sophie Patterson	Senior Communications Officer, City of Boroondara	Delivery of project
Kate Henderson	Senior Communications Officer, City of Boroondara	Delivery of project
Shiranthi Widan, Coordinator Strategic Planning	Strategic Planning team, City of Boroondara	Feedback and advice through internal group (to meet monthly)
Lucinda Bakhach, Local Economies Lead	Local Economies team, City of Boroondara	Feedback and advice through internal group (to meet monthly)
David Cowan, Head of Placemaking	Placemaking team, City of Boroondara	Feedback and advice through internal group (to meet monthly)
Nick Lund, Manager, Liveable Communities	Liveable Communities department, City of Boroondara	Feedback and advice through internal group (to meet monthly)
Landlords of vacant properties across Boroondara	Range of landlords with properties across Boroondara	Agree to install floral decals on the windows of their vacant shopfronts
Managing agents of vacant properties across Boroondara	Range of real estate agents with a presence in Boroondara	Promote to landlords the opportunity to draw attention to their vacant properties through the installation of floral decals on windows
Presidents and marketing coordinators of Boroondara's 8 Trader Associations	Boroondara's 8 Trader Associations	Promotion of the Program to landlords and agents they have a relationship with. Compile a list of vacant properties in the shopping precincts they represent
Artist	Yan Yan Candy Ng of Thoughts Come True	Design of floral decals - several elements were designed for each shopping precinct
Contractor engaged to print and install decals	Inspired Printing	Print and install decals on windows of vacant commercial shopfronts
Musicians	A range of artists were engaged for these performances across Boroondara	Delivery of Street Sounds music activations

### 3.4 Delivery engagement

Engagement Activity	Community (inc numbers)	Impacts
Email, phone	<p>Traders Associations = 10</p> <p>Partnered and liaised with Boroondara's 10 Traders Associations about the program. They were involved in identifying possible commercial properties for us to approach.</p> <p>They also promoted the program to their key stakeholders, such as landlords and managing agents they have relationships with.</p> <p>They were also a key marketer of the Street Sounds music performances via social media channels for their precincts.</p>	<p>As a result of engaging with the Trader Associations, we identified commercial properties to approach about the program. Many of them have had personal relationships with landlords and/or managing agents which they have been able to leverage, resulting in sign-ups to the program. Trader Association Marketing Coordinators, regularly attend their precincts and this provided further value as they were able to provide support and assistance with identifying new vacant shops that became available to approach either directly with the landlord or via the Real estate agent.</p> <p>Phone interviews and online surveys were conducted with Trader Association Marketing Coordinators. Feedback assisted us to understand the benefits and challenges of the program to traders and the local shopping precinct.</p>
Email, phone, post, Survey/interviews (over the phone or via email)	<p>Landlords/owners of vacant commercial properties and real estate agents managing vacant commercial properties - engaged with over 90 agents</p>	<p>Through contacting managing agents and landlords via a variety of channels, we informed them of the program.</p> <p>The development of strong relationships with real estate agents was important, given they represent landlords.</p> <p>Phone interviews and online surveys were conducted with real estate agents. Feedback assisted us to understand the benefits and challenges of the program to traders and the local shopping precinct.</p>

### 3.5 Delivery in illustration

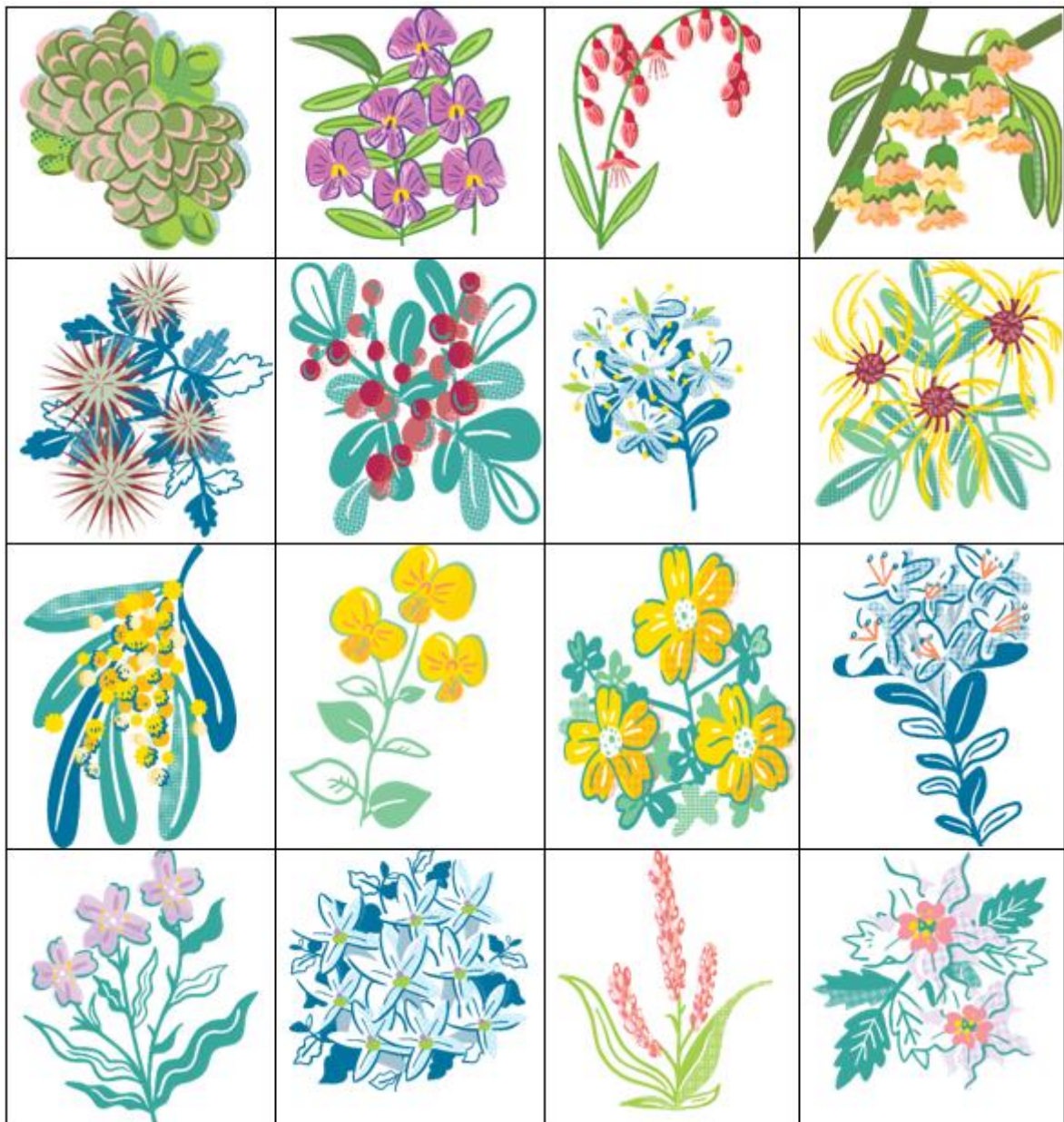
- Design of the decals

Completed by Yan Yan Candy Ng of Thoughts Come True

<https://www.thoughtscometrue.com>

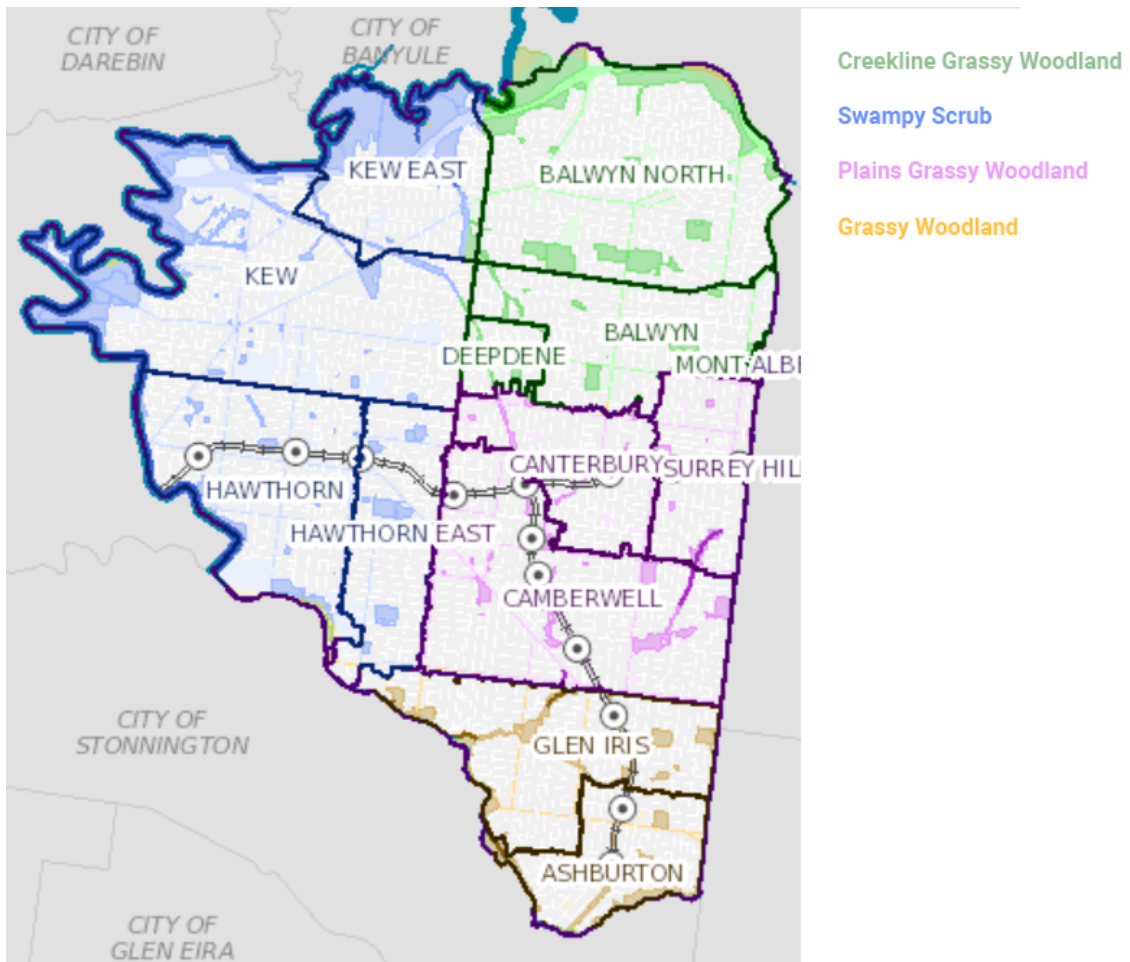
The flowers selected in the Bare to Beautiful project were derived from the Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVC) 1850 categories. The Boroondara municipality contains several ecological classes and hosts significant diversity in ecologies. Notably, using categories from the EVCs, we have Creekline Grassy Woodlands, Grassy Woodlands, Plains Grassy Woodlands and Swampy Scrub. These four categories were spatialised across the municipality to determine which species would be used on which properties in the Bare to Beautiful program. From each category, Council selected four species for their colouring and representation of each EVC, to be illustrated by artist Yan Yan Candy Ng.

These are illustrated below:



The commercial vacancies provided an opportunity to represent vegetation, once habited in these areas, creating a common community between neighbouring suburbs. A common community is reflected in daily movement patterns, social patterns and native vegetation distribution.

Each of the species selected occur naturally within their EVC, and each EVC was designated to a relevant area of Boroondara:





- Promotional flyers  
Developed and distributed to vacant shop landlords and real estate agents in 2021.



### LOOKING TO DRAW ATTENTION TO YOUR VACANT SHOPFRONT?

City of Boroondara's Bare to Beautiful program can help

**We will help you to activate your vacant shopfront through a temporary creative window display.**

**What are the benefits?**

- Draw attention to your vacant shopfront and stand out from your competitors
- Attract new tenants
- Reduce likelihood of graffiti or vandalism.

**How does it work?**

- Display is quick and easy to install and remove
- Inside of shop remains visible from outside for easy viewing by prospective tenants
- There is no cost to you and no access to shopfront required

To express your interest in participating, please email Alana Smith, at [localeconomies@boroondara.vic.gov.au](mailto:localeconomies@boroondara.vic.gov.au) or call 9278 4814.

Places are limited – first in best dressed.



### LOOKING TO DRAW ATTENTION TO YOUR VACANT SHOPFRONT?

City of Boroondara's Bare to Beautiful program can help

**We will help you to activate your vacant shopfront through a temporary creative window display.**

**What are the benefits?**

- Draw attention to your vacant shopfront and stand out from your competitors
- Attract new tenants
- Reduce likelihood of graffiti or vandalism.

**How does it work?**

- Display is quick and easy to install and remove
- Inside of shop remains visible from outside for easy viewing by prospective tenants
- There is no cost to you and no access to shopfront required

For more information, visit: [www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/bare-to-beautiful](http://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/bare-to-beautiful)

To express your interest in participating, please email Alana Smith, at [localeconomies@boroondara.vic.gov.au](mailto:localeconomies@boroondara.vic.gov.au) or call 9278 4814.

Places are limited – first in best dressed.



- Installation of the first 13 Bare to Beautiful shopfronts in 2021  
13 commercial shopfronts signed up to participate in Bare to Beautiful across 6 different shopping precincts in Boroondara - Greythorn Central, North Balwyn, Ashburton, Camberwell, Hartwell and Kew.

Some before and after photos of the installations:



A selection of photos of the other installations during this stage:



100 Denmark Street, Kew



903 Burke Road, Camberwell



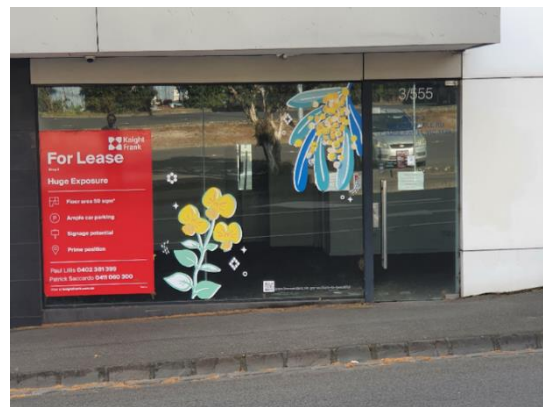
1/1210 Toorak Road, Camberwell



323 Doncaster Road, Balwyn North



1 / 304 High Street, Kew



3/555 Riversdale Road, Camberwell

- [Map of participating properties on City of Boroondara's Love Local Life website - https://lovelocallife.com.au/](https://lovelocallife.com.au/)

lovelocallife

Keywords: All Regions: Bare to ... Filter by tags

Results: Search completed. Found 11 matching records.

**48 Denmark Street**  
This creative window is where you can find these beautiful art illustrations which are representing the unique and beautiful flowers in Kew.

**Shop 3 / 555 Riversdale Road**  
This creative window is where you can find these beautiful art illustrations which are representing the unique and beautiful flowers in Camberwell.

100 Denmark Street - Love Local

lovelocallife.com.au/listings/100-denmark-street/


lovelocallife

Home • Bare to beautiful • 100 Denmark Street

This creative window is where you can find these beautiful art illustrations which are representing the unique and beautiful flowers in Kew.

For more information on this program visit [www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/about-council/news-and-media/boroondara-news/bare-beautiful](http://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/about-council/news-and-media/boroondara-news/bare-beautiful)


- Social media post on Council's page to promote the Bare to Beautiful program

 **City of Boroondara** ✓  
29 July at 17:00 · 🌐

We're decorating vacant shopfronts across Boroondara with beautiful botanical illustrations created by artists 🌻

In an effort to bring vibrancy back to our local shopping precincts after the impacts of COVID-19, you'll begin to see windows adorned with decals of flora and plants native to Boroondara.

Read more about the Bare to Beautiful program here:  
[www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/bare-to-beautiful](http://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/bare-to-beautiful)



BOROONDARA.VIC.GOV.AU

**Bare to Beautiful**  
We are decorating vacant shopfront windows with botanical illustra...

👍 86      15 comments 4 shares

👍 Like      💬 Comment      ➦ Share

- Local media coverage:

An article which featured in “The Standard” on the 18<sup>th</sup> June 2021. The Standard showcases journalism by students at Swinburne University. It is at the centre of the university’s journalism program and helps students improve their skills by commissioning, developing and publishing stories that matter to a wide audience.

<http://www.theswinstandard.net/2021/06/18/from-bare-to-beautiful-empty-shopfronts-get-a-community-friendly-makeover/>



ARTS, COMMUNITY / June 18, 2021

## From bare to beautiful: empty shopfronts get a community-friendly makeover



Bare to Beautiful is breathing life back into empty store fronts with botanical decals. Image: Boroondara Council Bare to Beautiful.

SHARE:  
[f](#) [t](#) [g+](#) [✉](#)

**Boroondara Council is covering vacant shopfronts with locally designed floral decals to reinvigorate tired shopping strips. Rosie Mountjoy, Macy Saddington and Elizabeth Weinberg report.**

A Boroondara council program aimed at promoting community growth in the wake of Covid-19, entitled Bare to Beautiful, will see empty storefronts covered with large botanical decals.

### Most recent



**ENVIRONMENT**  
**The move into sustainability: the next generation of cryptocurrency mining**



**POLITICS**  
**Left in limbo: new government, but refugees' fears**

[continue](#)

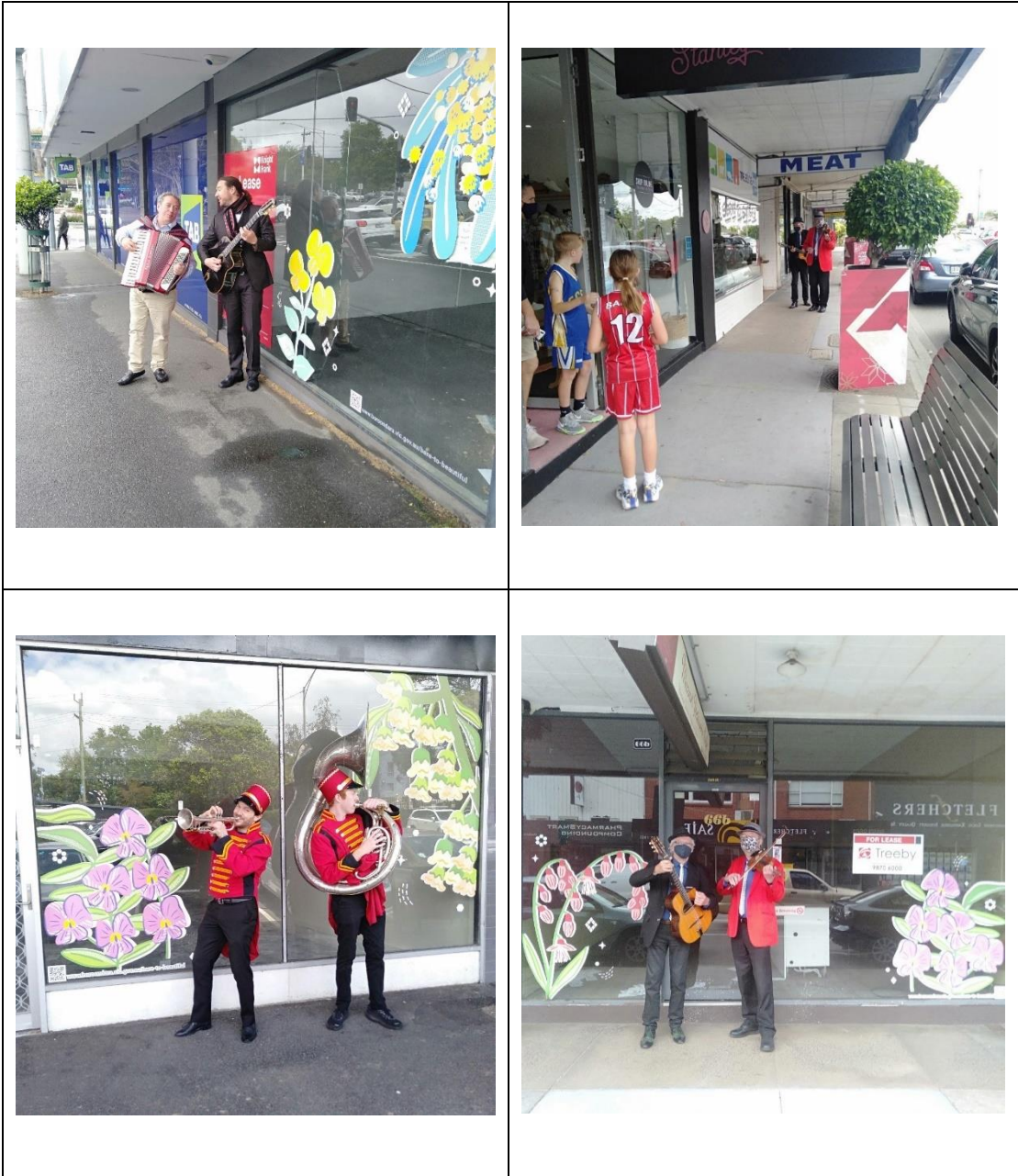


**GAMING**  
**Ground-breaking roleplaying musical videogame hits final**

[stages](#)

- 12 Street Sounds music performances in November and December 2021

Music was organised in Camberwell, Balwyn North, Ashburton and Kew



- Installation of an additional 5 Bare to Beautiful shopfronts in 2022  
5 new commercial shopfronts signed up to participate in Bare to Beautiful across four different shopping precincts in Boroondara - Kew, Surrey Hills and Canterbury Road.



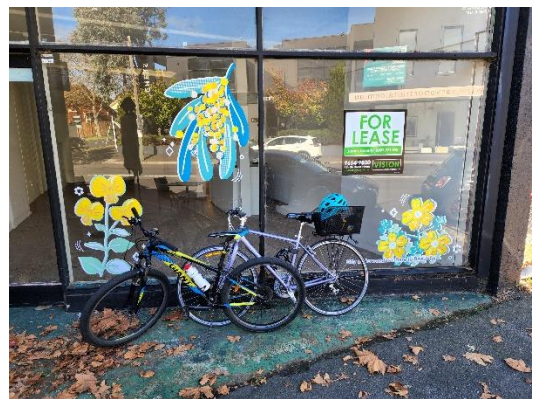
365 Canterbury Road, Surrey Hills



48 Cotham Road, Kew



50 Cotham Road, Kew

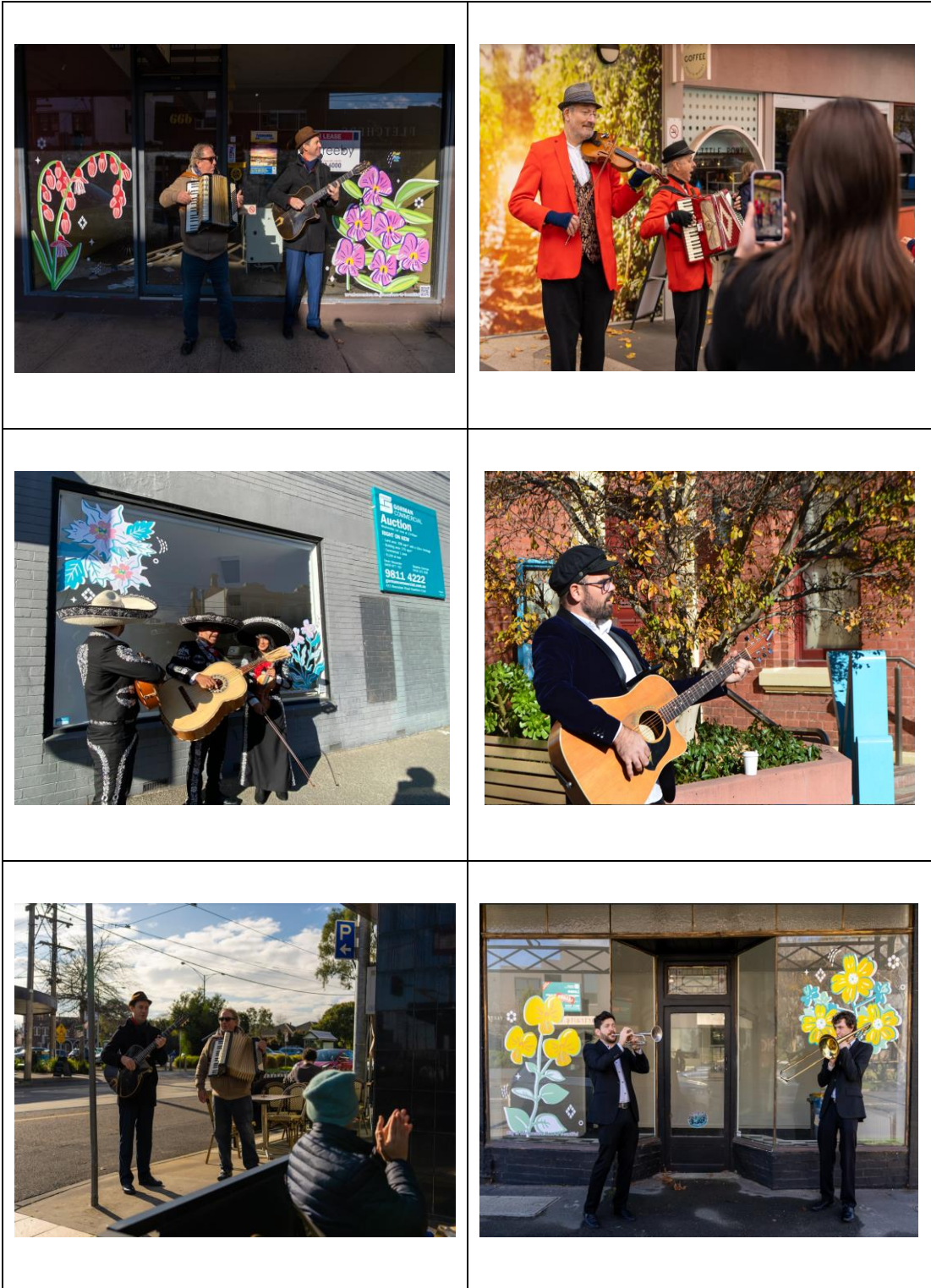


361-363 Canterbury Road, Surrey Hills



- 10 Street Sounds music performances in May and June 2022

Music was organised in Kew, Hawthorn, Canterbury, Ashburton, Camberwell, Balwyn North and Surrey Hills



- Social media coverage on Council's media channels and supported by key stakeholders.

**City of Boroondara** May 27 at 5:00 PM

The weather might be cooling down but Street Sounds is back this winter to warm your ears! Head on down to your local shopping village to enjoy the music, grab a warm drink, and a tasty treat and explore the shops.

The music begins this Saturday morning with dynamic Latin American music at High Street Kew accordion/violin duo Bohemian Nights at Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn.

For more details and to check who's performing when and where as part of the Bare to Beautiful Street Sounds program, visit our website: <https://bit.ly/314ky3x>

The Bare to Beautiful program is being delivered by City of Boroondara in partnership with the Victorian Government.

#SuburbanDevelopment #LivingLocally #SuburbanRevitalisation #MetroPartnerships



BOROONDARA.VIC.GOV.AU  
**Street Sounds**  
Enjoy free roving entertainment at our local shopping strips and community precincts this Su...

Instagram

cityofboroondara • Follow


cityofboroondara 📸 This month is your last chance to head down and enjoy the Bare to Beautiful Street Sounds program. 🎵

This Saturday, you'll find upbeat jazz at Canterbury Road, Surrey Hills and French gypsy swing tunes at Doncaster Road Balaclava North. Then next Saturday 25 June, come and visit Union Road, Surrey Hills to enjoy more live tunes. Find out more via link in bio.

This round of Street Sounds is part of Bare to Beautiful, one of many initiatives we've introduced to support local businesses and shopping precincts in Boroondara during COVID-19 recovery. Over the past year, we've also been decorating vacant shopfront windows

31 likes  
7 days ago

Log in to like or comment.



**Camberwell Shopping - We've got it all!** 15h

On Saturday, June 4, Camberwell Junction will come alive with authentic Cuban music performed by **Kekoson** as part of the Bare to Beautiful project, delivered by **City of Boroondara** in partnership with the Victorian Government. The event will be held at 903 Burke Rd and Shop 3, 555 Riversdale Rd from 11am to 11.45am and 12.15pm to 1pm. Be sure to visit and enjoy the tunes!



- [Bare to Beautiful Street Sounds video](#)

Click link to view: [Bare to Beautiful video](#)



### **3.6 Delivery Challenges**

The ongoing COVID-19 lockdowns during 2021 resulted in delays to many aspects of the project - decal installations, sourcing vacant shopfronts, keeping track of new vacant shops and conducting the Street Sounds components. Also in early 2022, the emergence of the Omicron COVID-19 variant added additional delays to seeking further vacant shops to participate due to limited real estate agent availability, landlords being away or unavailable.

As many managing Real Estate agents and landlords were (and still are) facing increased pressure on a variety of fronts (for example, some landlords were having to face the challenges associated with having a vacated property and the financial implications of this, and some managing agents have shared that they have become debt collectors and counsellors on top of their existing role), therefore many were not in the right frame of mind to consider participating in the program at the time. This meant that we did not always receive responses to our attempts to contact managing agents about the program. To address this, we ensured the communications sent out to managing agents were short and included a picture of a property participating in the body of the email (rather than relying on them to download an attachment) so that they could quickly understand the program and its benefits. To save time, we also developed a short email on behalf of managing agents to on forward to landlords informing them of the program.

As many managing agents were working from home in 2021 and some in 2022, we originally contacted many by post via their office address, however many agents at the commencement of the program did not receive the promotional material. We therefore addressed this by following up via phone and sending key promotional material via email.

Another challenge faced was that not all vacant properties are listed online, or they could be listed as being vacant online but recently leased. To address this, we learnt that the best way to identify vacant properties is to speak with the responsible agent. This of course was time consuming, not only for our project delivery team, but also the agents.

In October 2021, over 90 managing agents and/or landlords of vacant commercial properties in Boroondara had been contacted about the program via email, phone or letter, with the majority receiving one to two follow-up calls to remind them about the program. Although the number of vacant shops were rising after the impacts of lockdowns in many precincts, it was a challenge to get interest or even just a reply from landlords or the managing agents. These challenges coupled with project delays due to the impacts of COVID-19, resulted in Council proposing the Street Sounds concept, to tie in with the decal activations and add vibrancy to these locations which was well received in 2021 and again in 2022 to complete the project. To date, the Street Sounds program continues to receive positive feedback and interest in our shopping centre precincts.

## 4. Outcomes and Recommendations

“The Victorian Government engages Metropolitan Partnerships to respond to social and economic impacts of COVID-19 specific to their region; and funded projects to contribute to on-ground local place-based solutions that respond to the impacts of COVID-19”. We believe that the Bare to Beautiful project achieved this with bright, floral, window decal installations that added colour and vibrancy across our shopping centres. The introduction of the Street Sounds music performances also added to the vibrancy benefiting the businesses and local community; lifting their spirits and sharing positive energy within their local shopping precincts particularly when shops reopened and people returned to the streets.

### 4.1 Results

- The Bare to Beautiful program decorated the windows of vacant shopfronts with original artworks designed by local artist Yan Yan Candy Ng from Thoughts Come True.
- Musicians were engaged to highlight the Bare to Beautiful windows and add vibrancy to those areas and other major shopping precincts to assist with their recovery from COVID-19 impacts.
- The Bare to Beautiful program decorated a total of 18 vacant shop windows.
- The Bare to Beautiful program delivered a total of 22 musical performances.
- Of those vacant shops with decal installations, none were targeted with graffiti. This strategy reinforced graffiti prevention to help reduce any likelihood of this occurring, which in turn would possibly detract potential tenants or new owners.
- Engagement with many local landlords and real estate agents was positively strengthened and mutual benefits achieved, by offering a free program to help benefit the property and help attract attention to the shopfronts, something Council cannot always offer support with.
- The project also helped Council to continue to strengthen relationships with the main precinct Trader Associations. Especially in 2021 when many businesses were doing it tough, this gave everyone something positive and different to offer which was well received in most cases.
- Feedback from neighbouring businesses, noted the decals and music brought an increased sense of satisfaction and pride in the shopping precincts for the visitors and businesses.
- Some of the vacant shops that had decals installed, did remain vacant for six months or longer, therefore it was hard to get a true indication of whether the decals did help attract new tenants or purchasers in what was a flooded market of vacant shops in many areas.
- The Street Sounds musicians commented that getting the Street Sounds music performance jobs was a great lift to their spirits, to allow them to perform live again, which was also something restricted during the COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions.

Some comments/feedback received via interviews with Trader Association Marketing Coordinators, Landlords and Real Estate Agents which help support the results include:

*“At Hartwell, the performers from Klezmeritis said there were community members showing their appreciation with words like ‘fabulous’ and ‘thank you’.”*

*“At Camberwell the reception for Paul and Sal from La Mauvaise Reputation was also very positive with some pedestrians clapping as they walked”*

*“Nice to see people are happy being out and shopping”.*

*“Any help to make the precinct look more vibrant and attractive to tenants is well worthwhile. Adding simple decals is an inexpensive way to make the area more inviting”.*

*‘Neighbouring shops had commented that it ‘brightened up the street’*

*“Definitely a bucketload of positive feedback regarding the music from both traders and the community..... Both the decals and musicians were a very good idea to give the shopping strips a facelift. This sentiment is shared by the Greythorn Traders Association and the public I spoke to about these initiatives”.*

*“Yes, the murals added colour to the location, made the shop more attractive and showed that the precinct was ‘cared for”.*

*“I think what they did do well was distract from an empty shop front and instead filled the void with their colour and vibrance. I think it was a great idea”.*

*“Yes – reduce graffiti and possible break ins”*

*“The good thing about this program is that we have built new relationships with managing real agents which we could leverage for other opportunities to address vacant commercial spaces in the precinct”.*

*“We get great feedback whenever we do street entertainment on how vibrant the street is - it all contributes to the vibe we were going for”.*

*“Restaurants were really grateful for the music”.*

*“As the Bare to Beautiful participating properties are in the outer areas of Camberwell Junction shopping precinct (Burke Hill and Riversdale Rd), the businesses surrounding them really enjoyed being able to experience live and roving music at their doorstep”.*

*Landlord: “It’s a great initiative, the decals look great, so bright on the street”*

*Landlord: “Thank you, the decals on the shopfront look excellent”*

*Managing agent: “This is a great initiative from the Council, if only other Councils did it”*

*“Musicians showed great musical skill and ability to improvise and adjust for audiences (eg the Mexican musicians performed a Mexican style version of ‘baby shark’ for a young audience member!)”.*

*“Responses from community members were every positive and enthusiastic”.*

*“Hundreds of community members engaged, both directly on the streets and also in vehicles passing by”.*

## **4.2 Lessons**

There were several lessons drawn from this project, including challenges during Victoria’s ongoing COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions and beyond.

The lessons were:

- A bright floral decal, can help brighten a shopfront and lift the spirits of the community and surrounding businesses.
- Live music was something missed by the community and was well received (including by the artists who were thrilled to get some work and chance to perform on the streets live again).
- Not all vacant shops are looking for new tenants or buyers. Many were vacant due to landlord decisions, renovations, redevelopments, or a business which may have gone into hibernation during the COVID-19 pandemic or other reasons.
- Real estate listings can change very quickly - by the time lists were prepared to review and make contact, many properties were already under offer, going to auction or leased.
- Many vacant shops, including those which were decorated, remained vacant for six months or longer (some still vacant now).
- Landlords and agents liked that participating in the Bare to Beautiful program didn’t involve handing over keys for the installations to occur (no access to shopfront required) or blocking the entire window (as they want prospective tenants to be able to view the inside of the property from the outside). These were quite important factors and key selling points for many of the participants.
- It was found that more properties were leasing at a lower rate (than market rate) especially those who were recently vacant, expected to be a result of the large increase of vacant shops that emerged in 2020 and 2021.
- During the project, it became evident that there were now two segments of landlords, pre COVID-19 and post COVID-19. This was a result of landlords seeking to sell due to financial needs, however investors also seeking new opportunities and exploring options after many were able to save money during 2020 and 2021 to fund new investments. The pre and post landlords also came with different levels of enthusiasm - many of the pre COVID-19 landlords were tired, under financial pressures due to no tenant and worried about what was next, and many of the post COVID-19 landlords were new, fresh and also ready to invest in renovations.

- It was very hard to analyse the direct impact of the decal installations and whether they assisted with retaining existing tenants in Boroondara's shopping precincts or attract new tenants. A lot of the feedback from landlords and real estate agents did indicate that they did not feel the decals did help attract any direct enquiries. This was something hard to measure however as general appeal and vibrancy can be different for every individual.
- The project also helped Council become aware of other possibilities that could be explored with vacant shopfronts, such as pop-up shops, co-working spaces, pop up galleries. These do have their limitations however (insurance, cost, duration, landlord interest) and requires more investigations in this area.

Some comments/feedback received via interviews with Trader Association Marketing Coordinators, Landlords and Real Estate Agents to support the lessons include:

*"Great idea to use decals that don't cover the entire window as agents are always keen to have shops available for prospective tenants to look in and see the space".*

*"Any opportunities to trial business opportunities - pop-ups in vacant commercial properties - it's not easy to do short-term leases - if it can be facilitated through Council that would be great"*

*"City of Melbourne are doing a lot in this space - could we have a low rent period?"*

*"Landlord may be happy to have an exhibition space in their property for a short period of time for free - definitely worthy of consideration".*

*"The good thing about this program is that we have built new relationships with managing real agents which we could leverage for other opportunities to address vacant commercial spaces in the precinct".*

*"The performers could have been more groovy - more vibrant - rather than people playing a banjo - a bit dated".*

*"General issues relate to utilities and insurances - landlords will make anyone using the space pay for these - may not be worthwhile for a short period of time".*

*"I have tried this before - but we covered the whole windows and agents and tenants couldn't view into the space which was a problem".*

*"Not sure how much it contributes to generating interest amongst tenants but I still think it's worth doing".*

*"Our sales people did have a few more enquiries about the property participating in the program but it's hard to attribute the decals to this".*

*"Shop is still up for lease".*

*"Appreciate the sentiment but hard to know if it makes a difference - live music".*

*"Live music brings life to the space".*

*"The property has not been advertised "For Lease" as the site is being developed and the shop has been vacant for quite a while now".*



*“On average shop remain vacant for about 9 months. Some larger sites remain vacant for much longer”.*

*“Conversely, some businesses 'survived' lockdowns only to find it too difficult to continue as the new variant swept through and rent relief finished and costs rose/staff hard to get”*

*“I think what they did do well was distract from an empty shop front and instead filled the void with their colour and vibrance. I think it was a great idea. We would have loved more on our shopping strip, but understand there were some owner issues and getting their approval”.*

*“Properties that are going to lease quickly - not worth putting the decals on because would be taking down quite quickly”.*

### **4.3 Recommendations**

One of the key learnings which ended up being a key message to communicate is that landlords and agents would prefer that no external party is required to access the inside of their shopfront as this involves handing over keys and possibly considering insurance coverage. As the program involved installing decals on the front of windows, no access to the inside of the property was required, and this was a key selling point.

Another interesting insight discovered in the early planning of the project was that managing agents and landlords would prefer that their window is not completely blocked/covered as this impedes the ability of potential tenants to view the inside of the property and affects the amount of natural light through the window. This of course makes perfect sense and a great recommendation for a project like this, or for other projects like pop-up art installations and creative spaces.

Due to the ongoing lockdowns and restrictions, the addition of the Street Sounds live music performances was also a positive inclusion to the project which complemented the vacant shop decals well and helped bring vibrancy to the areas in an additional way. This would certainly be something of benefit if the project was to be repeated, to add an additional method to help with the idea to help uplift the local resident and business community. This component was also well received by the musicians, as they too had experienced loss in work of live music performances, so this assisted them to work again, and get back to the performing jobs they love.

Opportunities for improvement, as provided by a Trader Association representative, was to include theming the decals so that they represent ways the commercial shopfront could be utilised by a future tenant. For example, the decal 'parts' could have included images of coffee mugs, an office setting, food, clothing, etc to represent a possible café, bar, retail store or professional service business. Such imagery could assist to ignite thinking about possible uses for the space amongst prospective tenants.

Key to the delivery of the program were strong relationships with managing agents - and the ability to develop these if they were not already in place. Following up agents via phone was crucial and email or posting information did not generate enough replies. Strong relationships with Trader Associations, especially those who were happy to leverage their connections by introducing us to landlords and agents they had relationships with was also important for the success of the program.

Some comments/feedback received via interviews with Trader Association Marketing Coordinators, Landlords and Real Estate Agents to support the recommendations include:

*“The decals were good and brightened up shop fronts but it wasn’t clear what they were for. I think it would have been better if they were an image of what the vacant space could be with a tag line – “imagine your florist here!”; “Set up your café here where you’re always in the sun”; “Put your new office here and join us in Ashburton Village!”*

*“Suggestion for the future: Decals could have been themed to what the space could be used for / what it could be - could be coffee, clothing - something clever and quirky - make it yours - this would assist to ignite thinking it could be used for”.*

*“Yes, the music and decals were valued by traders”.*

*“I think the decals were lovely – and helped to make what can look like an unsightly, empty property look more appealing. If it were to happen again, I think the decals could be brighter, as opposed to pastel as I am not sure they stood out as much as they could have”.*

*“As our empty stores are all at the extreme ends of our street, where there tends to be no foot traffic (or very little) I don’t think the music was a help”.*

*“The decals were good and brightened up shop fronts but it wasn’t clear what they were for. I think it would have been better if they were an image of what the vacant space could be with a tag line – “imagine your florist here!”; “Set up your café here where you’re always in the sun”; “Put your new office here and join us in Ashburton Village!”*

#### **4.4 Evaluation methods**

Data collection and measurement on the direct impacts from the project’s outcomes were a little harder to obtain than first expected, given that many of the outcomes and achievements were in relation to vibrancy, overall mood and recovery post COVID-19. The project delivery was also impacted by ongoing lockdowns in 2021, this did make evaluation harder considering vacant shops continued to increase and continued to be impacted into 2022. It became apparent that vacancy is a hard thing to measure, considering a vacant shop does not always mean it is vacant and looking for a new tenant or owner.

The overall success of the project however, was measured in the positive feedback received, the observations made during Street Sounds music performances and how well they were engaged by the local community and business community. The decals also provided the vibrancy and attractive feel back to some of the precincts, where vacant shops can have a negative impact. We also did not record any vandalism or graffiti to any of the shops included in the program which was a positive outcome.

The engagement of a local artist to design the decals meant that we could support and promote a local artist with this opportunity, noting that the arts sector did feel the effects of lockdowns and restrictions, along with the company which completed the installations and also the musicians who appreciated the opportunity to gain work, and do the job they love of performing to live audiences again.

Overall, the project also assisted with perceptions of wellbeing and community connections amongst the residents and business community. The feedback received after the street performances was positive and encouraging to the overall objective of assisting with general recovery to the shopping precincts across Boroondara.

Some of the data that was able to be collected included:

- The Bare to Beautiful program decorated 18 vacant shopfront windows and delivered 22 musical performances.
- Over 90 landlords and real estate agents were engaged with to seek vacant shops to participate in the program.
- Assistance via 10 Trader Association Marketing Coordinators was provided to reach vacant shop owners and agents
- Over 160 vacant shops were identified and contacted to seek interest to participate in the program over the entire project lifecycle

Vacancy rates were also collected in 2020, 2021 and 2022 to view the changes over these challenging times.

- Vacancy rates obtained in November 2020 showed:

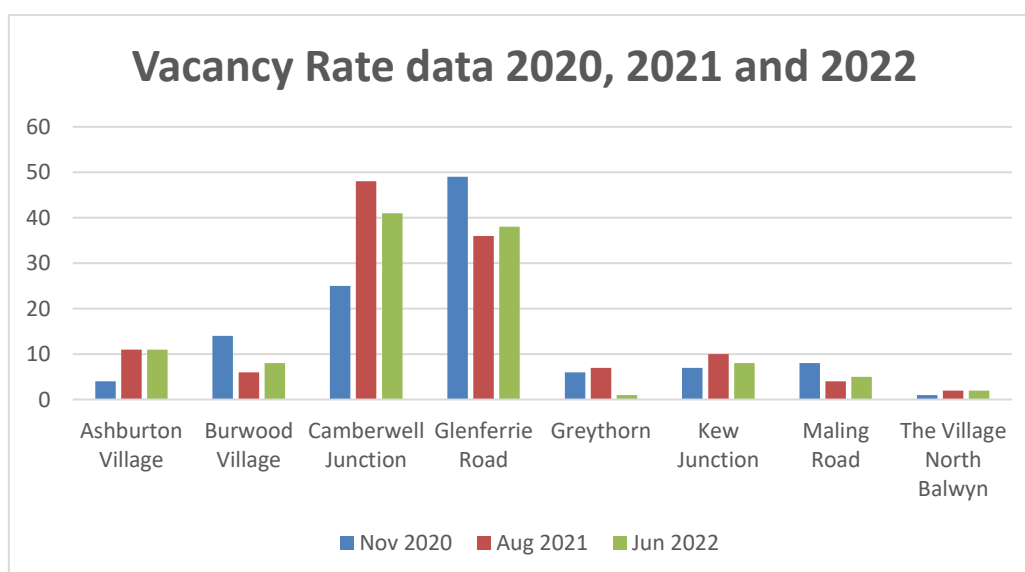
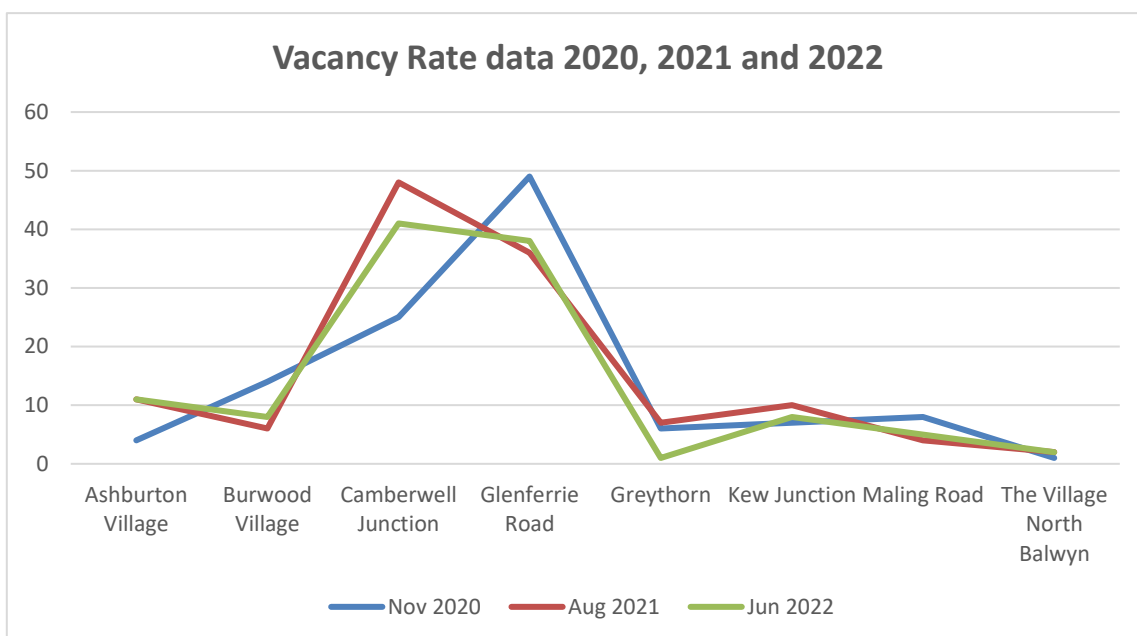
Precinct	Shops	Number Vacant	Vacancy Rate
Ashburton Village	142	4	2.82%
Burwood Village	101	14	13.86%
Camberwell Junction	692	25	3.61%
Glenferrie Road	604	49	8.11%
Greythorn	73	6	8.22%
Kew Junction	588	7	1.19%
Maling Road	80	8	10.00%
The Village North Balwyn	72	1	1.39%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2352</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>4.85%</b>

- Vacancy rates obtained in August 2021 showed:

Precinct	Shops	Number Vacant	Vacancy Rate
Ashburton Village	142	11	7.75%
Burwood Village	101	6	5.94%
Camberwell Junction	692	48	6.94%
Glenferrie Road	604	36	5.96%
Greythorn	73	7	9.59%
Kew Junction	588	10	1.70%
Maling Road	80	4	5.00%
The Village North Balwyn	72	2	2.78%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2352</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>5.27%</b>

- Vacancy rates obtained in June 2022 showed:

Precinct	Shops	Number Vacant	Vacancy Rate
Ashburton Village	142	11 (includes 3 under renovation)	7.75%
Burwood Village	101	8	7.92%
Camberwell Junction	692	41	5.92%
Glenferrie Road	604	38 (includes 3 under renovation)	6.29%
Greythorn	73	1	1.37%
Kew Junction	588	8	1.36%
Maling Road	80	5	6.25%
The Village North Balwyn	72	2	2.78%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2352</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>5.27%</b>



## Appendix 1: Bare to Beautiful promotional flyers

Flyer developed at the start of the project in April 2021 to start to promote the opportunity - a mock up window photo was used while design works were still being finalised.



### LOOKING TO DRAW ATTENTION TO YOUR VACANT SHOPFRONT?

City of Boroondara's Bare to Beautiful program can help

**We will help you to activate your vacant shopfront through a temporary creative window display.**

#### What are the benefits?

- Draw attention to your vacant shopfront and stand out from your competitors
- Attract new tenants
- Reduce likelihood of graffiti or vandalism.

#### How does it work?

- Display is quick and easy to install and remove
- Inside of shop remains visible from outside for easy viewing by prospective tenants
- There is no cost to you and no access to shopfront required

To express your interest in participating, please email Alana Smith, at [localeconomies@boroondara.vic.gov.au](mailto:localeconomies@boroondara.vic.gov.au) or call 9278 4814.

Places are limited – first in best dressed.



Updated flyer developed later in 2021 once several shopfront activations had occurred. Promotion continued, with actual product delivery photos.



## LOOKING TO DRAW ATTENTION TO YOUR VACANT SHOPFRONT?

City of Boroondara's Bare to Beautiful program can help

**We will help you to activate your vacant shopfront through a temporary creative window display.**

### **What are the benefits?**

- Draw attention to your vacant shopfront and stand out from your competitors
- Attract new tenants
- Reduce likelihood of graffiti or vandalism.

### **How does it work?**

- Display is quick and easy to install and remove
- Inside of shop remains visible from outside for easy viewing by prospective tenants
- There is no cost to you and no access to shopfront required

For more information, visit: [www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/bare-to-beautiful](http://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/bare-to-beautiful)

To express your interest in participating, please email Alana Smith, at [localeconomies@boroondara.vic.gov.au](mailto:localeconomies@boroondara.vic.gov.au) or call 9278 4814.

Places are limited – first in best dressed.



## **Appendix 2: Feedback questionnaires used to evaluate project outcomes**

### **Feedback questionnaires**

*Council will collect feedback via one-on-one interviews with representatives from Trader Associations, managing agents, landlords and traders located in the shopping precincts where decals have been installed to gain their feedback and insights into the impact of the project and the extent to which the decals have:*

- *Contributed to enhancing the vibrancy of the shopping precinct*
- *Assisted participating properties to become leased (i.e attracted new tenants to the shopping precinct).*

*A series of targeted interview questions will be developed for each stakeholder.*

These interview questions were:

### **Feedback - Bare to Beautiful program**

#### **Traders' associations - question set one**

1. To what extent do you feel the presence of the decals and the live music on Saturdays has contributed to achieving the objectives of the Bare to Beautiful program?
2. Have you heard any feedback/comments from local traders located near the decals or where the music was being played?
3. What other suggestions do you have for how both Council and TAs could activate vacant commercial spaces?

#### **Traders' associations - question set two**

1. To what extent do you feel the presence of the decals or the live music on Saturdays has contributed to achieving these objectives?
2. Have you heard any feedback/comments from local traders located near the decals or where the music was being played?
3. What other suggestions do you have for how both Council and TAs could activate vacant commercial spaces?

#### **Real estate agent questions:**

The Bare to Beautiful program which has involved two main activities to bring vibrancy to Ashburton Village and other shopping precincts in Boroondara - decals on the windows or vacant commercial shopfronts and live music on a few Saturday mornings had a number of objectives:

- Contribute to the attraction and retention of tenants in Boroondara's shopping precincts
- Increase the sense of satisfaction and pride traders and local residents and visitors feel in the local shopping precinct

- Establish new and/or improved relationships between local landlords, traders' associations and managing agents
  - Increase its awareness and knowledge of other possible opportunities for utilising and activating vacant commercial shopfronts into creative spaces - for example, as pop-up galleries, shared workspaces, etc.
1. To what extent do you feel the presence of the decals or the live music on Saturdays has contributed to achieving these objectives?
  2. Have you heard any feedback/comments from local landlords such as the one currently participating ( 66B Doncaster Road Balwyn North) or traders located near the decals or where the music was being played?
  3. What other suggestions do you have for how both managing agents and Council could activate vacant commercial spaces?

### **To the Real Estate Agents**

We thank you again for participating in the City of Boroondara Bare to Beautiful program in 2021 and 2022.

As you will recall, PROPERTY XXXXX was included in this program.

Funded by the State Government, Bare to Beautiful aimed to support the economic recovery of Boroondara's retail precincts by activating vacant shopfronts with temporary floral decals designed by a local artist and then complemented with Street Sounds music performances for additional vibrancy in the area. The project addressed the fact that vacant properties often impact the overall ambience of a shopping precinct, detracting from other businesses and creating the perception that the area is in decline.

To assist us with the review and reporting of this program, we would appreciate your answers to a few quick questions on the program\*:

1. Do you feel the decals on the vacant shop helped attract any interested tenants or owners?
2. Did you receive any comments about the decals on the vacant shop (positive or negative)?
3. If this program was offered again, would you be interested in participating? Did you see value in it (like reduced graffiti etc)?
4. Could you kindly share some insight in relation to the number of vacant shops currently around Boroondara, the interest levels for new tenants/landlords, turnover times of properties and how this has perhaps changed post COVID-19?
5. Any other comments or feedback?

Again we appreciate your time and look forward to your feedback.

*\*please note all feedback will be collated and aggregated to report back to the funding body, State Government, DJPR and any quotes used would be anonymous.*



### **To the Trader Associations**

We thank you again for assisting us with the planning and delivery of the City of Boroondara Bare to Beautiful program in 2021 and 2022 which included the decals and Street Sounds.

Funded by the State Government, Bare to Beautiful aimed to support the economic recovery of Boroondara's retail precincts by activating vacant shopfronts with temporary floral decals designed by a local artist and offering music in these areas. The project addressed the fact that vacant properties often impact the overall ambience of a shopping precinct, detracting from other businesses and creating the perception that the area is in decline.

To assist us with the review and reporting of this program, we would appreciate your answers to a few quick questions on the program\*:

1. Do you feel that the decals on the vacant shops and music helped to attract any interested tenants or owners to view the property?
2. Did you receive any comments about the decals or music from traders or the community (positive or negative)?
3. If this program was offered again, would the association support this again and see value in it?
4. Could you kindly share some insight in relation to the number of vacant shops currently in your precinct, the interest levels for new tenants/landlords, turnover times of properties and how this has perhaps changed post COVID-19?
5. Any other comments or feedback?

Again we appreciate your time and look forward to your feedback.

*\*please note all feedback will be collated and aggregated to report back to the funding body, State Government, DJPR and any quotes used would be anonymous.*