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Context

The City of Maroondah is located 22 kilometres east of the Central Business District, strategically positioned at the north-eastern junction of the Eastern Freeway and EastLink. It is a substantially developed residential municipality that includes the suburbs of Bayswater North, Croydon, Croydon Hills, Croydon North, Croydon South, Heathmont, Kilsyth South, Ringwood, Ringwood East, Ringwood North and Warranwood. The City of Maroondah also includes parts of the suburbs of Kilsyth, Park Orchards, Vermont and Wonga Park.

There are numerous parts of the municipality that possess special environmental and landscape characteristics. The municipality is physically dominated by two ridgelines, the Wicklow Hills Ridge and the Loughnan-Warranwood Ridge, with intervening waterways and floodplains that form part of two main water catchments. The Mullum Mullum Creek, Jumping Creek and Brushy Creek are tributaries of the Yarra River, while Tarralla Creek and Bungalook Creek are tributaries of the Dandenong Creek which forms a large part of the municipality's southern boundary.

The ridgelines and their extensive coverage of natural bushland and large canopy trees play a prominent role in defining the landscape and character significance of the municipality. Near-continuous canopy tree cover, interspersed by rooftops, dominates views to the ridgelines. The hills help define the sense of place and provide views from dwellings and streets that are evident both within and outside the municipality.

The first inhabitants of the area were the people of the Kulin Nation, having lived here for at least the past 40,000 years. European settlers arrived in the 1830's and commenced using the land for grazing cattle. The original Ringwood village emerged in the mid to late 19th century, following the initial sale of land in the 1850s. The proclamation in 1924 of the Borough of Ringwood coincided with the electrification of the railway line to Croydon which provided a stimulus for development and subdivision. Considerable suburban expansion during the post-war period gave rise to the declaration of the City of Ringwood in 1960 and the City of Croydon in 1971.

In the twentieth century, with improved transport to Melbourne in the form of a fast and efficient rail service from Maroondah, better roads to the district and the increased car ownership, the locality evolved as a desirable residential area. Development after World War II transformed much of Maroondah from a cluster of country communities to a suburb of Melbourne. Numerous smaller and medium size industries were also established in the Post-War years, to create one of the major industrial and employment centres of Melbourne's eastern suburbs.

Maroondah is a well-established municipality that blends the best of both city and country lifestyles. There are older, more established residential areas along the railway lines and major transport routes and newer residential pockets in the northern and south-eastern parts of Maroondah. With no land available for residential greenfield development, new dwellings will occur through consolidation and medium density development.

Architectural styles and street layout reflect the dominant trends of the eras in which they were developed. Closer to the railway line and Maroondah Highway – the older 'core' of Maroondah – housing is characterised by post-war architectural styles set on rectilinear street layouts (with some notable exceptions such as the Walter Burley Griffin subdivision in Croydon) and including a mix of brick and weatherboard homes. Suburbs on the periphery of the municipality in hilly topography were the latest to be developed and exhibit curvilinear streets and contemporary, reproduction-style homes, almost exclusively in brick. The mix of development is again given a modicum of consistency through the existence of established gardens.

Compared to metropolitan Melbourne Maroondah has a slightly greater proportion of people aged 45 to 69 years and a smaller proportion of young adults (aged 20-34 years). Cultural diversity is increasing with immigrants arriving from Burma, China, Malaysia, India, Thailand and Iran. Maroondah is home to the largest Burmese community in Melbourne's Eastern Region.

There are over 9,000 businesses in Maroondah that provide employment for over 44,000 people with small business comprising over 96 percent of these organisations. Most businesses are in the construction, property and business services, finance and insurance, retail trade and manufacturing sectors, while the largest employers are the manufacturing, retail trade and health care sectors. Industrial land in Bayswater forms part of a major industrial and economic hub and is home to many national and international firms.

Maroondah has two major retail centres in Ringwood and Croydon. Ringwood is one of the largest retail centres in Melbourne and is identified as a Metropolitan Activity Centre in *Plan Melbourne* , and Croydon as a Major Activity Centre. The Two Neighbourhood Activity Centres are located adjacent to Ringwood East and Heathmont train stations. There are a range of service and retail precincts clustered along the Maroondah Highway corridor and 21 smaller local shopping centres throughout the municipality.

Maroondah Hospital plays a vital role in providing easy access to general, surgical, emergency and specialised medical services in the eastern metropolitan region of Melbourne.

The municipality is serviced by two train lines, five train stations and 21 bus routes. Some areas have limited public transport and residents in those areas are reliant on private vehicles. Sustainable transport links include a network of footpaths, on-road cycling paths and shared paths on major trails including the Mullum Mullum Creek, EastLink, Box Hill to Ringwood, Carrum to Warburton and Dandenong Creek trails.