

Putting Customer First Strategy

2026-2029

Maribyrnong
CITY COUNCIL

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Acknowledgement of Country

Maribyrnong City Council is proud to represent a municipality filled with important and significant Aboriginal history. It acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this land, the Kulin Nation, and acknowledges the rich culture and considerable contributions Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have made and continue to make to this City.

We recognise and celebrate the enduring connection of First Nations peoples to the lands, waters, and skies. We are committed to working in partnership with First Nations communities to foster a future grounded in equity, respect, and shared prosperity.



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Our vision

A sustainable, vibrant city where history is acknowledged, differences are respected, and diverse communities are supported to connect and thrive.

Our values

Respect

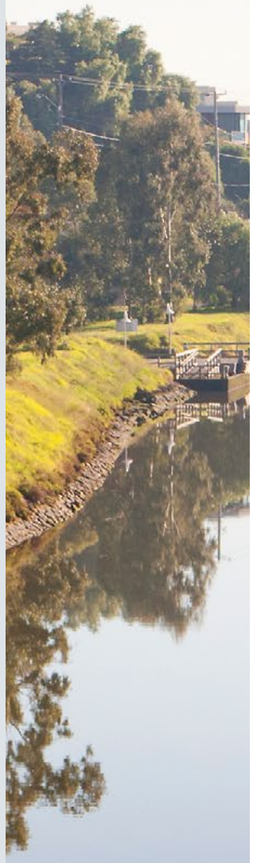
inclusiveness, empathy, communication and goodwill.

Courage

innovation, considered risk, creativity, problem-solving, initiative, accountability and responsibility.

Integrity

honesty, loyalty, ethical behaviour and trustworthiness.



Council goals

The goals below are from Council's Council Plan 2025–29. This strategy supports them by improving how you experience Council services.

Ethical governance

Council will govern ethically, with consultation, integrity and transparency.

Wellbeing and safety

Council will create actively engaged, socially connected, and healthy communities.

Environmental sustainability

Council will create and shape healthy built and natural environments.

Thriving community

Council will drive innovation and future-focused change to shape a resilient and adaptable city.

Connected community

Council will build a connected, vibrant city where neighbourhoods thrive.



About this strategy

The Putting Customers First Strategy sets a clear direction for how Maribyrnong City Council will improve the way you experience our services.

Putting customers first isn't one team's job. It's how we all work.

People contact us every day to ask a question, report an issue, use a service or seek support. These interactions shape trust and confidence, and whether Council feels easy to deal with.

Our goal is simple: to help you.

That means services that are simple, clear and reliable. You can access what you need, understand what will happen next, and feel confident your request will be handled fairly and respectfully.

This strategy explains what we will improve over the next three years. It sets out clear priorities, actions and measures to guide this work across Council.

It also sets expectations for how we work: we will communicate clearly, take ownership, work across teams and follow through to questions and requests.

Why we're doing this

It's time to improve the way we deliver services.

Maribyrnong is growing quickly. Demand for services is increasing and expectations are higher than ever. People expect services to be easy to access, clear to navigate and reliable to use.

When this happens well, trust grows. When it doesn't, trust is lost quickly.

We know that today, people can still experience:

- unclear timeframes
- inconsistent information
- the need to follow up or repeat their story

This strategy sets a clearer, more consistent approach so services are easier to access, easier to understand and more reliable.

Strategy summary

We make it easy to get things done with Council.
You should not need to understand how Council works to get what you need.

We are focusing on four priorities:

Easy to Access and Get Things Done

We make it easy to find what you need and get it done.

1

Doing What We Say We Will Do

We do what we say, and we do it on time.

2

People who care and take responsibility

We listen, we own your request, and we help.

3

Open, Fair and Inclusive

We make fair decisions and explain them clearly.

4

Together, these will make services simple, clear and reliable.

How it all fits together

We listened to what you told us and looked at our service data. That helped us set four clear priorities. Each priority includes the changes we will make, how you will notice the difference, and how we will track progress and share updates with you.

Customer experience

What it means

Customer experience is what it is like to deal with Council from first contact to final outcome.

It is about:

- *How easy it is.*
- *How clear things are*
- *Whether we do what we said we would.*

Our **customers** are people and organisations who contact us to use Council services, visit our places and spaces, or ask our staff for help.

Customer service is how we help when you contact Council. It includes how we:

- *Respond to questions and requests*
- *Handle requests*
- *Share information*
- *Fix problems*
- *Follow the right steps and rules.*

Who this is for

Maribyrnong is a diverse and growing community.

People use our services in different ways. We design services so you can understand them, access them and use them easily.

We design our services for people with different needs, including:

- People who prefer online services and those who prefer face to face
- Long term residents and newly arrived community members
- People with simple requests and those with more complex needs
- Businesses and community organisations.

Our services need to work for everyone in our community.

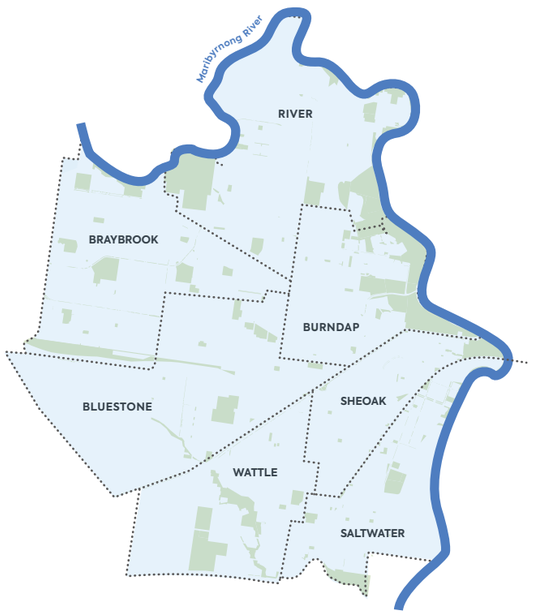


Our community

Demographic snapshot

Our place

Maribyrnong covers **31 km (3,121 hectares)**[1] and is one of Melbourne's most diverse and fast-growing inner-west communities. This diversity shapes how Council designs services. We aim to deliver services that are inclusive, accessible and responsive to the needs of a changing community.



Population and growth

94,650 residents at 30 June 2025

155,000 forecast population increase 2026-2051

51% Population growth projected

This rapid growth will significantly increase demand for services, infrastructure and community facilities.

Cultural diversity

38% of residents born overseas

Top countries of birth (excluding Australia) are:

- Vietnam
- India
- China
- United Kingdom
- and New Zealand

Maribyrnong is one of Victoria's most culturally diverse communities.

Housing Profile

20% own their home outright

32% have a mortgage

36% rent privately

5% live in social housing

Business and employment

55,900 local jobs

57,000 employed residents

9,200 registered businesses (2024)

8.7% business growth since 2021

Education and skills

70% have completed Year 12

40% hold a Bachelor's degree

9% currently attending tertiary education[3]

Open space and recreation

153 open spaces

315.3 hectares of open space

10% of total land area is open space

How it feels to deal with Council

We receive over 100,000 questions and requests each year across phone, online, email and in person.

We resolve around 45 per cent at first contact. The rest need follow-up from one or more Council teams.

These are the moments that shape how you experience Council.

The most common reasons people contact us include:

- Waste services
- Parking
- Amenity issues
- Animal registration
- Rates

You can contact us in different ways:

- Phone
- Email
- Online services & apps
- In person

We aim to make all contact options feel connected and consistent.

How people contact us

In 2025, we received 55,200 requests through a range of contact options:

Phone
43%

Email
27%

Apps
18%

Website + Portal
10%

In person
2%

Each channel has a distinct role.

Phone and in-person contact often support more complex or urgent questions.

Digital channels provide convenient and accessible pathways for routine requests.

Locations

Council also delivers community-facing services through a network of locations across the municipality.

Customer service for general questions and requests is available at the **Footscray Civic Precinct and Community Hub**.

Council also operates:

5 libraries:
Braybrook, Footscray, Maribyrnong, Yarraville and West Footscray

4 community centres:
Braybrook, Maidstone, Maribyrnong and Yarraville

Maribyrnong Aquatic Centre

These locations are important access points for services, programs and community connection.

Your journey

The customer journey map outlines the typical steps a person takes when interacting with Council.

1. Need

You have a question, request or issue and decide to contact Council.

2. Contact

You contact us in the way that suits you. This may be online, by phone, email or in person.

3. Confirm

We confirm your request. We tell you what will happen next and when.

4. Action

We assess your request and progress it with the right team. We keep you updated if needed.

5. Outcome

We tell you the result and any next steps. You can provide feedback.

This journey map helps us understand what works well and what needs to improve.

It shows where clear information and coordination matter most.



Doing things differently

People expect:

- Clear timeframes, regular updates and follow-through
- Mobile-friendly services at any time
- Consistent information across every channel
- Easy access to services and information when needed.

Our growing community and demand for services

Maribyrnong's population is growing rapidly. This growth will increase demand for services, facilities and infrastructure.

Housing and business trends also shape what people need from Council.

A growing, mobile population and expanding business community require services that are scalable, easy to access and responsive to diverse needs.

Working smarter

Council is also constantly evolving and changing the way we work. With increasing demand and rising expectations, we need to find efficiencies in how we work so we can deliver better outcomes with the resources we have.

This is an opportunity to simplify processes, reduce duplication and make decisions faster. By being more nimble and working across teams, Council can respond to change, strengthen community trust and deliver services with greater clarity, consistency and confidence.

What you told us

We hear from our community through surveys, feedback and engagement.

You told us you want:

- Clear, easy-to-understand information
- Realistic timeframes and progress updates
- Easy access to services (online and in person)
- Friendly, respectful service.

Across all channels, you want to know what will happen next, how long it will take, and who is handling your request.

Overall, results are improving and we want to keep building on that by making it simpler and more consistent to deal with Council.

Over the past two years, the community has provided insights and findings that have helped guide the Putting Customers First Strategy refresh.

This included:

- Annual Community Satisfaction Survey 2025 with **800 residents responses**
- **317 responses** to the Phase 1 community engagement (to inform this strategy and community engagement policy)
- **Over 1,500 responses** to our short survey sent after we close a request.

An engaged and vocal community

Our annual community satisfaction survey and end-of-request surveys help us understand what matters to people. They also show why we must keep listening and be clear about how we use feedback to improve our services.

Community confidence in Council is improving

Overall satisfaction with Council's performance has increased to **7.1 out of 10** - the **highest result recorded** for Maribyrnong following **three consecutive years** of improvement.

Satisfaction with Council's **website** remains very good at **7.6 out of 10**. We also know we can do more to make it easier for people to access Council services.

Customers also left an average satisfaction rating of **4 out of 5 stars** from **1,500** responses, through a short survey sent after a request was completed.

In this survey, customers indicated that **80% of requests were completed in a reasonable timeframe**, while **78%** felt they had been **kept adequately informed of progress** during their request.

Council received over 55,000 service requests in 2025. The top request categories included:

- Waste services, dumped rubbish and kerbside collection
- Roads, footpaths and building maintenance
- Parking, permits and infringements.

Early engagement to inform this strategy highlighted a clear need for better responsiveness and clearer communication.

Some people experienced delays and felt unsure about the progress of their enquiries.

They told us they want:

- More personalised email responses
- Consistent use of reference numbers
- Better coordination of complex issues
- More welcoming customer experiences.

What matters most when dealing with Council

What we heard is clear, customers value:

- Clear information about services, events and programs
- Clear timeframes and updates when something changes
- Being able to reach the right person when needed
- Being treated with respect
- Fair and transparent decisions.



Our service promise

Our promise

We are here to help.

How we'll work

These principles guide how we deliver services and bring our customer experience promise to life.

1. Clear and Transparent

We use plain language. We explain what will happen next and when.

If something changes, we will let you know.

2. Consistent and Reliable

You receive the same quality of service, no matter how you contact us or which team is involved.

We set clear standards, follow through on what we say, and work together so your request is handled consistently from start to finish.

3. Respectful

We treat you with professionalism, empathy and fairness.

We expect respectful behaviour in return.

We create a safe and inclusive environment for both customers and staff.

What success looks like

For our community
People can access services easily, understand what to expect and feel confident their request is handled consistently and respectfully.

For Council
Staff are supported to deliver consistent services. Clear processes and stronger coordination reduce repeat contact and improve outcomes.



Customer charter

We are here to help

We deliver service that is clear, reliable and respectful.

This Customer Charter explains what you can expect when you contact Council and what helps create a positive experience for everyone.

What you can expect from us

Clear and transparent communication

We will:

- Share accurate, helpful information
- Explain what will happen next and when you can expect an update
- Let you know if there is a change or delay
- Make information and services easy to access.

Consistent and reliable service

We will:

- Respond to questions and requests promptly
- Treat every question and request seriously and fairly
- Work across teams to resolve requests as efficiently as possible
- Follow through on the commitments we make.

Respectful interactions

We will:

- Greet you politely and introduce ourselves
- Treat you with respect, fairness and professionalism
- Listen and consider your concerns
- Provide a safe and supportive environment for staff and customers

When we will respond

There are a few different ways to contact Council to ask a question, make a request or share feedback.

Our **service standards** explain when you can usually expect to hear back from us. This many not be the closure of the enquiry, but it will be an update on your question or request.

Phone	We will answer your call within 3 minutes. You can also choose a callback.
Email, Website, My Maribyrnong Portal	We will acknowledge you and provide an update within 3 working days.
Social media (not a customer service channel)	We will send an automatic acknowledgement. For help, please contact us by phone, email, online or in person.
In person	We will try to help you straight away. If we can't, we will tell you how long it will take. For complex issues, you may need an appointment. Please call ahead to book or request a callback.
Mobile Apps	We will acknoweldge you and provide an update within 3 working days (for example, in SendSnapSolve).

What we ask from you

To help us deliver great service, we ask that customers:

- Treat staff and other community members with respect
- Provide all relevant and accurate information when lodging requests
- Allow reasonable time for Council to respond to complex enquiries.

We're here to help, and we ask everyone to treat our staff with respect. We may end contact if someone is abusive.

Help us improve

Your feedback helps us improve how we serve the community.

You can:

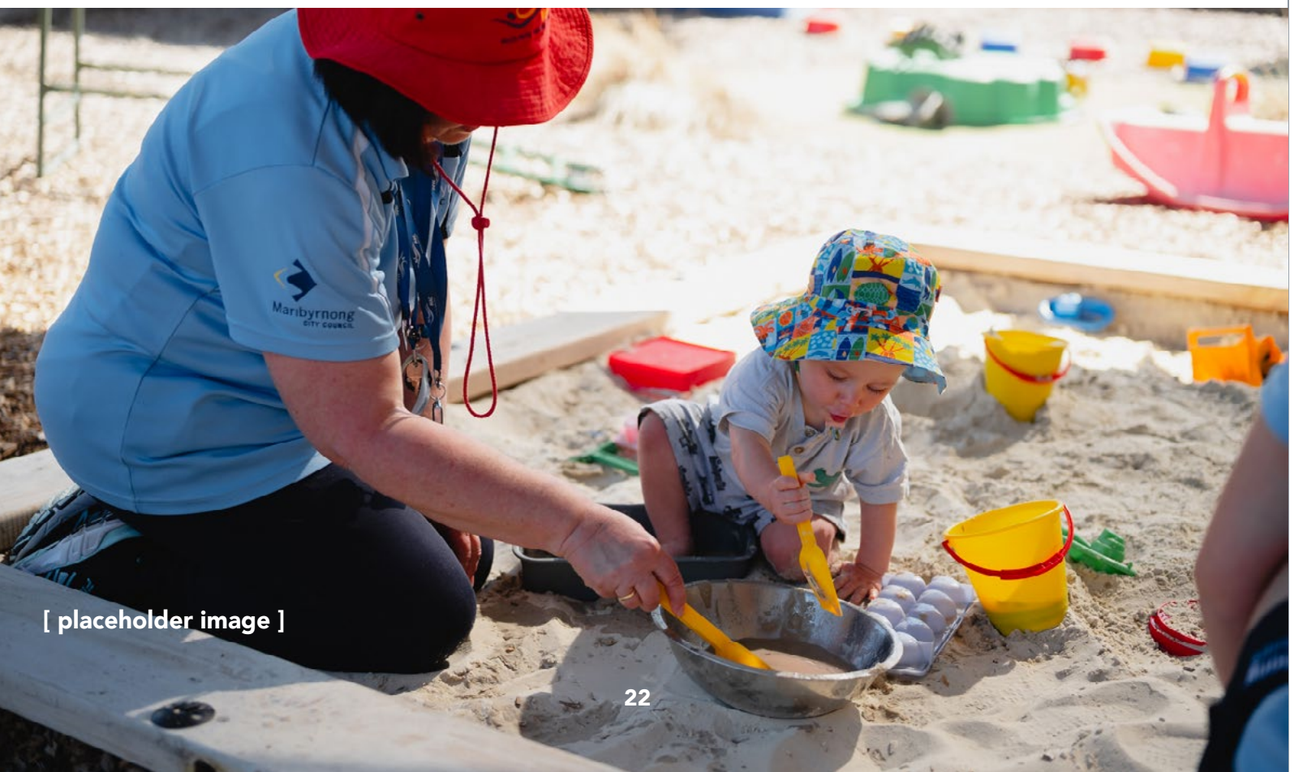
- Provide compliments or suggestions
- Lodge a complaint if something has not met expectations
- Participate in surveys or community engagement opportunities.

Complaints and concerns

To make a complaint or raise a concern, visit maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/About/Contact-us/How-to-lodge-a-complaint or call Customer Service. The more detail you can share, the better we can help.

We will:

- Acknowledge your complaint and provide an update within 3 working days.
- Ask you for further information or details if required.



[placeholder image]

How we will improve

This plan shows how we will improve your experience with Council over the next three years. It turns what we heard from the community and staff, and what our service data shows, into clear actions.

The four priorities below describe what you should be able to expect each time you deal with us. They guide how we design services, support our staff and make sure we follow through.

Priority 1: Easy to access and get things done

We make it easy to find what you need and get it done.

As our community grows, you should be able to access our services quickly and easily. We will remove unnecessary steps, connect our systems and make it simpler to contact us in the way that suits you.

Priority 2: Doing what we say we will do

We do what we say, and we do it on time.

You should be able to trust that we will follow through. We will set clear standards and keep you updated if things change.

Priority 3: People who care and take responsibility

We listen, we own your request, and we help.

Good service comes from people who are supported to do their job well. We will build a strong customer-first culture, with clear ownership and leaders who back good service.

Priority 4: Fair, open and inclusive

We make fair decisions and explain them clearly.

Our community is diverse. Services should work for everyone. We will make information and services easier to access, be clear about decisions, and use community feedback to keep improving.

Priority 1:
Easy to access and get things done

We make it easy to find what you need and get it done.

What you will notice

- You won't need to repeat your story when your request moves between teams
- You will know what to expect after lodging a request
- You will receive clearer updates on progress
- Online services will be easier to use for common tasks
- Different contact channels will feel more connected and consistent.

What we are doing

- Improve online request tracking so you can view progress and updates
- Provide clear confirmation messages outlining next steps and expected timeframes
- Improve coordination between Customer Service and service teams
- Connect systems across phone, online and in-person channels to reduce duplication
- Expand digital self-service options for common requests
- Introduce SMS or email updates for key service requests.

How we will measure it

- First Point Resolution rate – proportion of questions and requests resolved at first contact
- Digital self-service usage – proportion of requests submitted online or through digital channels
- Average response time to customer questions and requests – across phone, online and service requests.

Our commitments

Year 1 – Strengthen core service access	**Year 2** – Integrate systems and simplify journeys	**Year 3** – Enable proactive and smarter services
1. Guide customers to provide the right details upfront when submitting a request 2. Handle customer requests the same way, regardless of how they are received (phone, email, online, in person) 3. Provide customers with clearer confirmation and updates on their requests.	1. Expand digital self-service for common, high-volume requests 2. Reduce the need for customers to repeat information as requests move between teams 3. Improve tracking of requests from first contact through to completion.	1. Provide proactive updates and notifications where possible 2. Make it quicker and easier for customers to report issues accurately 3. Continue simplifying customer journeys across channels.

Priority 2:
Doing what we say we will do

We do what we say, and we do it on time.

What you will notice

- You will receive realistic timeframes when you lodge a request
- You will be informed if something changes or is delayed
- Service quality will feel consistent, regardless of department or location
- Outcomes will be clearly explained so you understand what has been done.

What we are doing

- Publish clear service standards outlining response and delivery timeframes
- Provide guidance on how and when requests are resolved
- Introduce proactive updates when timelines change
- Strengthen first-contact resolution for common questions
- Improve monitoring of service performance and backlogs.

How we will measure it

- Service request completion time compared with service standards
- Number of overdue service requests
- Customer satisfaction with service outcomes.

Our committments

Year 1 – Establish clear service standards	**Year 2** – Embed continuous improvement	**Year 3** – Build a stronger performance culture
1. Define clear service standards and expected delivery timeframes 2. Improve monitoring of service request backlogs and completion times 3. Introduce consistent reporting on key service performance measures.	1. Regularly review service performance to identify improvement opportunities 2. Address common causes of repeat requests and service delays 3. Share examples of good customer service and service improvements.	1. Use service data to improve services before issues escalate 2. Review service standards to ensure they reflect demand and expectations 3. Strengthen how the organisation learns from service performance data.

Priority 3:
People who care and take responsibility

We listen, we own your request, and we help.

What you will notice

- You will experience respectful, professional and helpful service
- You will receive clear and accurate information from staff
- You will know who is responsible for your enquiry
- Interactions will feel fair and consistent across Council.

What we are doing

- Clarify ownership of questions and requests across teams so you receive consistent responses
- Include customer service expectations in every role
- Provide training and guidance to support high-quality customer interactions
- Recognise and reinforce strong customer-first behaviours across Council
- Support staff to manage complex situations professionally and consistently.

How we will measure it

- Customer satisfaction with staff interactions
- Customer Service training participation
- Staff confidence in resolving customer questions and requests.

Our commitments

Year 1 – Strengthen frontline capability	**Year 2** – Expand resolution capability	**Year 3** – Embed a customer-first culture
1. Provide training and guidance for staff managing customer questions and requests 2. Clarify roles and expectations for customer service across Council 3. Support staff in managing complex or challenging customer interactions.	1. Increase the range of enquiries Customer Service can resolve directly 2. Improve collaboration between Customer Service and service teams 3. Make customer experience issues visible to leaders so they can act early.	1. Embed customer service expectations into onboarding and development 2. Recognise and celebrate strong customer service across Council 3. Strengthen shared responsibility for customer outcomes across Council.

Priority 4:
Fair, open and inclusive

We make fair decisions and explain them clearly.

What you will notice

- Services will be accessible to people of different backgrounds, abilities and needs
- You will better understand how decisions are made and how services are delivered
- You will see how your feedback is used to improve services over time
- Council will communicate more clearly about performance and outcomes.

What we are doing

- Design services that consider language, accessibility and digital confidence
- Improve how Council communicates decisions and service commitments
- Strengthen how complaints and feedback are recorded, analysed and addressed
- Use community feedback and engagement to inform service improvements
- Provide clearer reporting on service performance and outcomes.

How we will measure it

- Customer satisfaction with fairness and transparency
- Complaint resolution time
- Participation in engagement and feedback activities.

Our commitments

Year 1 – Improve transparency and communication	**Year 2** – Strengthen community insight	**Year 3** – Build community trust and accountability
1. Improve how Council communicates decisions and service commitments 2. Strengthen how complaints and feedback are recorded and addressed 3. Improve access to information across multiple formats and channels.	1. Improve how customer feedback is analysed and shared across teams 2. Enhance engagement with diverse and under-represented communities 3. Show how customer feedback is informing service improvements.	1. Provide clearer reporting to the community on service performance 2. Demonstrate how community feedback has influenced decisions 3. Continue strengthening inclusive and accessible service design.

Tracking progress

This strategy explains how we will make it easier to deal with Council over the next three years. We will roll out changes in stages across Council services.

Leaders will support this work, and we will build it into service planning and how we track performance.

We will track progress by:

- How quickly we respond and deliver services
- What you tell us in surveys and community feedback
- Complaints and how we resolve them
- How well we work together across Council to deliver consistent service

We will share updates with the community every six months. Once a year, we will publish a fuller report on what has improved and what we are working on next.

Improving customer experience is ongoing. We will keep listening and making changes so our services stay clear, reliable and meet the needs of our growing community.

Sources

Demographic data is sourced from material compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions) https://id.com.au. This material is a derivative of ABS Data that can be accessed from the website of the Australian Bureau of Statistics at www.abs.gov.au.

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