

Library Strategic Plan 2022-2026

Our next chapter



Yarra City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and true sovereigns of the land now known as Yarra. We also acknowledge the significant contributions made by other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to life in Yarra. We pay our respects to Elders from all nations and to their Elders past, present and future.

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Message from the Mayor

I am proud to present Yarra Libraries draft Strategic Plan 2022-26. This draft plan outlines Council's direction for library services over the next four years and guides the different approaches we need to take to ensure our library services continue to meet the growing and diverse needs of our community.

The challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic gave us an opportunity to adapt our services and explore new ways of engaging with our community when we were unable to offer library services in person. We found innovative ways to link our services by delivering them through online channels.

This draft plan allows us to continue to build on those innovative approaches and grow the number of people in Yarra who engage with our libraries. It aims to ensure our libraries cater for the needs of our community, including as those needs change over time.

Libraries help build an inclusive, resilient and connected community. Whether you are a resident of our public housing estates, a student, a parent or an older person, our libraries provide services and spaces for all.

We recognise now, more than ever, the need to connect with one another and to foster a lifelong love of learning, reading, playing and creating.

Our libraries are well-positioned to leverage mobility, infrastructure and partnerships, to reshape how we can help our community to thrive over the next four years, as we rebuild, enhance and activate our library spaces.

This draft strategic plan demonstrates Council's commitment to work in partnership with community, to listen to its residents and to achieve the best outcomes for Yarra. More than 500 community members shared their ideas for the future of our libraries and their feedback has helped shape and inform our strategic direction for the next four years.

I am excited to present Yarra Libraries next chapter and to witness firsthand the positive impact our libraries will continue to make over the next four years as we deliver on our promise that libraries really do change lives.



Cr Sophie Wade
Mayor City of Yarra



Our vision

Yarra Libraries change lives.



Our purpose

To deliver valuable and life-changing experiences that enable our community to thrive.

Our values and behaviours

We are guided by our values. They drive our behaviours and how we act.

Accountability

Why: Trust builds relationships, if we are trusted we succeed.

How: We own what we do and expect others to do it as well.

Respect

Why: When people feel valued, they make a difference.

How: We include all, diversity is our strength.

Courage

Why: Choosing to do good, matters.

How: We include all, diversity is our strength.

Themes

Yarra Libraries will support our community to access, build, connect and discover what they need to live their best life. Our community will thrive through the valuable and life-changing experiences we deliver.

A **Access**
Access Yarra Libraries' spaces and services when and where they are needed.

B **Build**
Build the skills, knowledge and resilience needed to live their best life.

C **Connect**
Connect with our team, partners, community and businesses.

D **Discover**
Discover endless potential to learn, explore and create.

Current state and future state

Our team of 49 employees operate across our five branches and deliver our services and programs both onsite and across the City of Yarra. We will continue to evolve to meet the growing demands on our community.

	2021	2026
City of Yarra population	105,887	118,443
Library members (Equivalent % of population)	45%	50%+
Loans (Physical and digital)	922,576	1,000,000+
Programs and events	2,936	3,000
Branches/pop-ups	5	5+

Yarra 2036 Community Vision

Yarra is a vibrant, safe and inclusive environment. We celebrate and embrace our diversity and connection to each other and the land. Our community is empowered to work together and support one another with respect and trust.

Our Next Chapter strategically aligns to several themes and priorities of the Yarra Community Vision:

Strong and vibrant community

- We will ensure a trusting, safe and welcoming environment to invite active participation of people from all backgrounds with tolerance and acceptance.
- We will create opportunities for meaningful exchange of our experiences, culture and arts.

Social equity

- We will ensure a fair and equitable quality of life is possible, regardless of your age, ability, ethnicity, gender or religion.
- We will ensure there are platforms for everyone to share their voices and to be heard and supported, and we will respect and acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Yarra and make their stories and values visible in the community.

Shared spaces

- We will ensure our spaces are made physically accessible and welcoming to people of all abilities, linguistic, cultural backgrounds and age groups.
- We will continue to adapt our spaces to reflect changing needs of our diverse community.

Our Next Chapter also aligns with several strategic objectives and initiatives outlined in the Council Plan 2021-25:

Social equity and health

- We will deliver campaigns and strategies to remove barriers and promote access and inclusion.
- We will support and provide opportunities to celebrate culturally significant days and events, bringing together diverse cultures and increasing intercultural understanding.
- We will support and promote LGBTIQ+ community and culture.
- We will work in partnership with stakeholders including the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing to support social and public housing communities with increased access to digital connectivity, tools and training.

Place and nature

- We will deliver promotion, education, awareness and nature engagement programs and opportunities.
- We will advocate for, develop strategic partnerships, plan and deliver accessible community infrastructure and services.

Climate and environment

- We will embed climate emergency responses, circular economy approaches and conscious consumption across Council directorates and branches and promote this within the community.
- We will engage and support the community to participate in climate emergency actions, including in relation to health-related impacts.

Local economy

- We will enable opportunities, including in the planning development process, for public art, spaces for artists to work and vibrant events in indoor and outdoor settings to enhance the arts sector and everyday creative experiences.

Our big impact stories

These stories highlight some of the ways we already deliver on our vision, and set the foundation for us to continue to deliver life-changing experiences.

“As a fresh graduate who had never worked in Australia before, I’m very grateful for the resources Yarra Libraries have provided. Nell and Todd offered me tremendous help revising my resume and prepared me job interviews. I got my first ever job within a month of attending Resume Rescue - It wouldn’t have been possible without their help.”

Resume Rescue provides free, one-on-one support for our community to build the skills in resume writing and ensure they have the best opportunities for meaningful employment.

“I finished my six assessments in nine months; at the start I was really struggling and took six months to finish my first unit. I was very lucky to have all of this when I first came to Australia.”

Homework Help is a long-running support program delivered in partnership with Young Assets Foundation for students of all ages to develop study skills and receive direct support from qualified tutors.

“Each time I go into the library, I look for a familiar face to compliment them on their good work. I doubt that any of you have a true sense of what a wonderful service you provided during COVID and how much it was appreciated.”

Emergency food relief was distributed from our libraries in 2020/21 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We worked in partnership with local charities and organisations to prepare and deliver ~75,600 meals.



Diversity and inclusion statement

The City of Yarra is a vibrant and diverse municipality. It is the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people, and a place of special significance for the broader Aboriginal community.

We are an inclusive municipality, with a high proportion of same sex couples, almost one fifth of our residents are from non-English speaking backgrounds, and almost a quarter speak a language other than English at home. A high proportion of residents are living with socio-economic disadvantage, in what is an otherwise relatively affluent municipality.

Our city has an increasing number of older residents, despite a median age less than the state average. This diversity ensures the City of Yarra is dynamic with a lively culture built on a rich history.



Our community needs

We embrace and celebrate the diversity of our community by meeting local needs with local solutions.

We partner with service providers and local organisations to create common aims and leverage our collective intelligence and resources to help our community thrive.

We work to reduce barriers for marginalised community groups to access our services and connect with us.

We aim to close the gap with vulnerable and elderly community members and ensure people of all ages can access, build, connect and discover.

Library spaces and community places

Our libraries are modern and our services reflect the diverse needs in our community. Through adapting and investing in digital and physical assets, and the talent in our team, we now deliver a rich variety of touch points for our community with services that they can enjoy across Yarra and beyond.

We offer five vibrant hubs across the City of Yarra that are welcoming, accessible and flexible, with a view of making them available more often.

We have a wealth of online resources available 24/7 and exist in digital channels, producing and sharing content that meets a variety of learning and recreational needs.

We show up in unexpected places and reach into the community to promote and increase engagement with our services.



Our team and the way we work

We love our community, and this drives us to deliver the library services they deserve.

We are a diverse team that reflects our community. Our individual passions and skills combine to deliver a unique point of difference at Yarra.

We are creative and vibrant in our approach and reliable and responsible in the way we deliver our library services.







We challenge the norms and encourage new thinking to innovate the way we work and create new services and solutions.







We are proud of our reputation as a team that is willing to lead in our field as we are not afraid to see the future in different ways.

Sustainability matters

We are committed to maximising the sustainability of our libraries. To achieve this, we have expanded on the goals and targets set by the Australian Library and Information Association in response to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

Our sustainable development goals

Goal	Outcome
 Literacy ALIA Stretch Target #1 UN SDG 4 - Quality Education	Our contribution to literacy in all its forms is recognised and our libraries are embedded in strategies for early language and literacy, digital inclusion and media literacy.
 Access to knowledge ALIA Stretch Target #2 & 3 UN SDG 16 - Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	Adoption of open access practices and principles enables our community to benefit from knowledge.
 Equitable access ALIA Stretch Target #4 UN SDG 16 - Peace, Justice and Strong Institution	Everyone in our community has access to public library services online and 90% have access to a physical public library service point.
 Culture and heritage ALIA Stretch Target #5 UN SDG 4 - Quality Education	We collaborate with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to ensure the collection and management of resources is culturally informed and respectful.
 Sustainable communities ALIA Stretch Target #6 UN SDG 13 - Climate	An open and transparent position on climate change.
 Health and wellbeing ALIA Stretch Target #7 UN SDG 3 - Good Health & Wellbeing	Our libraries are acknowledged as centres for personal development and wellbeing.

Goal	Outcome
 Diversity and gender equality ALIA Stretch Target #8 UN SDG 5 - Gender Equality	Our workforce, collections and services reflect the diversity of Australia's population and local communities.
 Lifelong learning ALIA Stretch Target #9 UN SDG 4 - Quality Education	We commit to lifelong learning for our own workforce and we provide opportunities for all Australians to pursue lifelong learning.
 Global citizenship ALIA Stretch Target #10 UN SDG 17 - Partnerships for the goals	We are actively engaged with libraries and library associations in the region and internationally.
 Economic growth UN SDG 8 - Decent work and economic growth	Our contribution to economic development at the micro level is recognised and our libraries are utilised as generators of economic activity.
 Responsible consumption UN SDG 12 - Responsible Consumption and Production	Our libraries promote circular economy initiatives and encourage the reduction of food and material waste
 Food and hunger UN SDG 2 - Zero Hunger	Our libraries provide access and/or pathways to finding fresh and nutritious food.

Our success measures

We measure our success on the stories we create and the lives that we change. To do this we must measure what matters most for our community and teams.

Sustained community satisfaction

Positive trend in Council Community Survey scores to measure satisfaction and promotion of Yarra Libraries.

Increased access to our spaces

Optimum service hours and increased self services offered through 'Open Libraries.'

Seamless service channels

Increased access to library and other Council services seamlessly through integration

Increased team engagement

Engagement scores reflect Yarra Libraries as a valued place to work.

Increased council collaboration

Cross Council partnerships to engage community in the delivery of Council services.

Increased usage

Growth in usage of online collections and quality of resources.

Community-led programming

Growth in knowledge and skills sharing by community for community.

Award-winning libraries

Recognised as leading in library innovation and service delivery nationally and globally.

Streamlined customer experiences

Reduced complexity in accessing all Yarra services via library touch points.

Increased community voice

Positive impact of Library Advisory Committee to shape the future of our libraries.

Strong partner outcomes

Targeted outcomes through coordinated community partnerships and shared goals.

Increased volunteering

Greater engagement and community impact from volunteers.

Our Next Chapter

The four themes of our Next Chapter articulate the various outcomes our community can expect when engaging with us, and help drive our integrated objectives across Council.

A

Access

Our goal is to ensure access for all by reducing barriers for our community. We will continue to find novel solutions and new ways to ensure everyone can reach our resources and share our spaces, places, people and programs.

B

Build

Our goal is to increasingly support self improvement and positive life skills that allow our community to live well and thrive.

C

Connect

Our goal is to connect our community in as many ways as possible, leveraging all available digital and physical channels. We will bridge the digital divide and sustain our valued human connections.

D

Discover

Our goal is to deliver increasingly vibrant and helpful points of discovery for our community through our collections, programming, partners and places.



Yarra City Council

PO Box 168, Richmond, VIC 3121

Bargoonga Nganjin, North Fitzroy Library
182 St Georges Road, North Fitzroy

Carlton Library
667 Rathdowne Street, North Carlton

Collingwood Library
11 Stanton Street, Abbotsford

Fitzroy Library
128 Moor Street, Fitzroy

Richmond Library
415 Church Street, Richmond

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