



Maribyrnong
CITY COUNCIL

LIBRARY PLAN

2023-25



Acknowledgement of Country

Council is proud to represent a municipality with such an important Indigenous history and active community. Council acknowledges the traditional owners of this land, the Kulin nation, and appreciates the rich culture and contributions Indigenous Australians have made and continue to make to this City.



Maribyrnong Libraries

56 Paisley Street
Footscray VIC 3011
Phone: (03) 9688 0290

Fax: 9687 7793
Email: library@maribyrnong.vic.gov.au
www.maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/library



TIS 131 450

If you are deaf, hearing-impaired, or speech-impaired,
please use the National Relay Service TTY 13 36 77

Speak and listen 1300 555 727

Connect with us:



/maribyrnonglibraries



maribyrnonglibraries

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Photos by **Gianna Rizzo**
Quotes from library customers are anonymous
and not from the people featured in images.

FOREWORD

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INTRODUCTION

Maribyrnong Libraries are valued and much loved by the Maribyrnong community as places to borrow and read books, and as inviting spaces to learn and connect.

Libraries provide safe and welcoming spaces for all people and build community capacity by helping individuals improve their knowledge and skills, and access information. For many who live, work and study in Maribyrnong, libraries are an integral and highly valued part of their life and their community.

Libraries are increasingly identified as Council resources that directly support vulnerable members of the community. They are places to go during extreme weather events and a refuge for some on low and fixed incomes, struggling with the cost of heating and cooling their homes.

Over two million Victorians¹ are public library members – more than any other membership-based community institution. Libraries provide members free access to large collections of books, magazines, audio-visual materials, newspapers and online resources, and libraries help people to read, learn, discover, relax and connect every day.

For every dollar invested in Victorian public libraries, \$4.30 of benefits are generated for the local community².

Library services have been disrupted by lockdowns and pandemic restrictions, driving use of digital and online offerings. Residents from approximately 500 properties in the suburb of Maribyrnong were also impacted by extended isolation and the damage and displacement caused by the October 22 flood event. Council is mindful of the sustained impact these events have had on those library users, staff and more broadly, the municipality. The pandemic specifically reinforced the vital role libraries play in community connection, but has also changed the way in which our community engages with our libraries.

This Draft Plan has been developed with input from the community and staff, recognising industry best-practice, to support our response to current and emerging issues and opportunities. This two year plan focuses on the immediate development of our staff and the way in which we engage with our community to provide the programs, collections and services they need now, as well as providing a foundation for longer term thinking about library infrastructure and services to meet the future needs of the City.


1. Public Libraries Victoria 2020-21 PLV annual statistical survey summary report

2. Libraries Work! The socio-economic value of public libraries to Victorians. State Library of Victoria, 2018

"It's one of my favourite places. I have lots of spare time and like to come and study, read, spend time for leisure, for my mind and for research. It's a very beneficial place, for social connections and peaceful contemplation."




OUR PLAN ON A PAGE




Council vision

An inclusive, flourishing, progressive city that cares for both its residents and its environment.




Library vision

Welcoming, progressive libraries which inspire connection, learning and creativity.




Council values

- Respect
- Courage
- Integrity




Strategic themes


- Safe and welcoming spaces
- Learning and engagement
- Discovery and creativity
- Future-ready workplace




Principles that guide our work




Accessible and welcoming
Our customers are at the heart of everything we do. We seek to understand the diverse needs of our library community to ensure our libraries are safe places for all.




Collaborative and constructive
We work to understand the needs of our customers, colleagues and partners and believe that collective effort delivers strong outcomes.



Flexible and adaptable
We listen to our community and proactively adjust our approach to respond to emerging needs.



Curious and willing to learn
We constantly seek to learn more about our community, our profession and the way in which we can contribute to city life. We are not afraid to try new things, we learn from our mistakes and constantly seek better ways to serve our community.



Environmentally responsible and sustainable
We work to minimise our environmental impact and support our community to respond to climate emergency challenges.

"We have been coming to Baby Rhyme Time since bub was 6 weeks old. Invaluable for establishing connections with other parents during the really tough start to being a new parent."





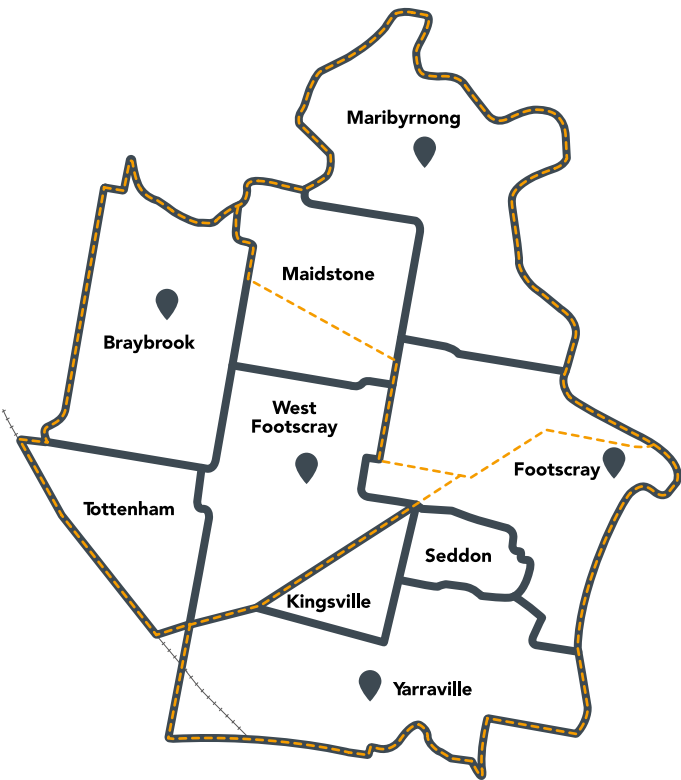
garden, Oink Oink Oink!
garden, Oink Oink Oink!
garden, Oink Oink Oink!
All we do, Tom Farmer?

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY

Our service

Maribyrnong Libraries provide programs and services for residents, workers and visitors to the municipality from five branches as well as online and in the community.

Figure 1 – Library branches in the City of Maribyrnong



Visit maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/library/branches for opening hours and branch locations

Our community

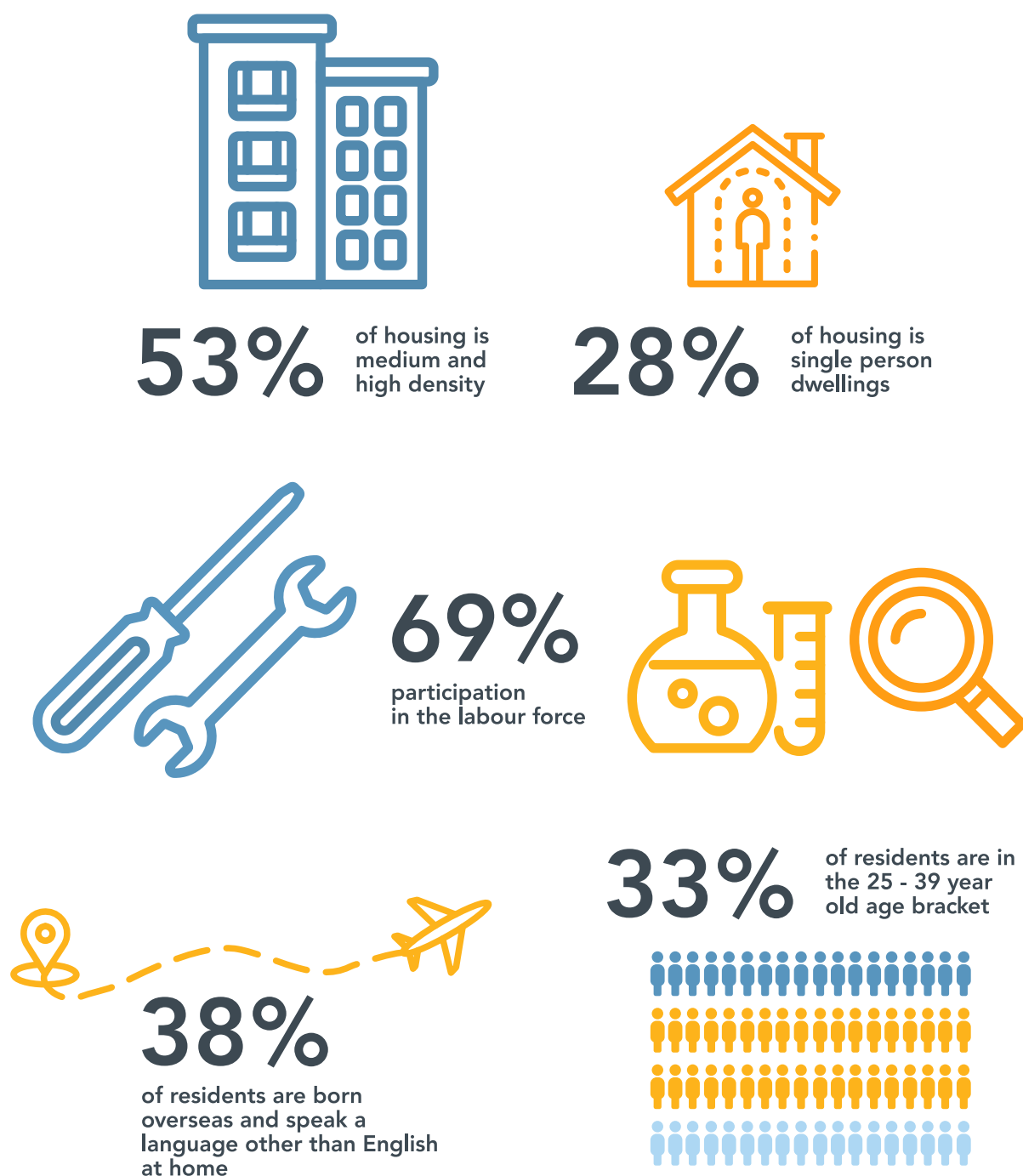
Our City's demographic characteristics are varied and changing with a large proportion of residents born overseas and speaking languages other than English at home. The population of 91,479 in 2022 is forecast to grow to approximately 155,056 by 2051, a 69% increase on the current population. The number of residents over the age of 60 is forecast to increase by 103%³. With significant population growth there is likely to be an increased demand for libraries and other community services over the medium term to long term.

Currently more than half of the municipality live in medium and high density housing with more than a quarter of the municipality living in single person dwellings.

Demand for programs aimed at culturally and linguistically diverse audiences, welcoming spaces, and initiatives that connect individuals and combat isolation will continue to be important over the period of the draft plan, during which the population is expected to grow by 3.8%.

3. i.d.community. City of Maribyrnong. Population Forecasts

Figure 2 – Our community



Library use

Our libraries are dynamic and changing. The services provided reflect our community profile responding to social, economic and cultural needs and usage is in line with trends across the State. People are borrowing more digital resources and fewer physical items. Our libraries are being used in different ways and there are fewer members, but more visitors. There are more programs, but attendances are still lower than before the COVID-19 pandemic. Bookings of public access computers are declining as more people use their own devices in our libraries, however free access to the internet and computers remains important for students, workers and people with no computer or internet access at home.

Maribyrnong Libraries are committed to deepening our understanding of our membership base and broader community. The principle of inclusion is already embedded in our practice but by better understanding the intersectionality of our library community, we can continue to improve the services we deliver and our impact for these communities.

Figure 3 – Current library usage



Engagement

Community feedback is at the heart of the 2023-25 Library Plan. Almost 4,000 comments were received from more than 1,300 people during October and November 2022. Community members were able to engage through our library branches, online and at a number of pop-up information sessions around the City.

Our community appreciates libraries. Despite changes in the way libraries are used, our community sees them primarily, as places to borrow books. Respondents also value access to a range of resources, the welcoming environment, and the ability to relax in spaces that are inclusive, calming and foster a sense of community.

Over 90% of responses were from existing users of Maribyrnong Libraries who expressed gratitude for current services, particularly the return of library services in the aftermath of COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions. Many lamented their inability to attend libraries during this time, however, they also celebrated the home delivery book service and appreciated the quick pivot to online services.

While each branch has its own identity and unique offerings, many services are valued by all library users including borrowing items, reading books and bringing children to the library primarily during the late morning and afternoon.



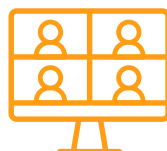
1,304
survey responses



5
community pop ups



3
school holiday workshops



3
staff workshops

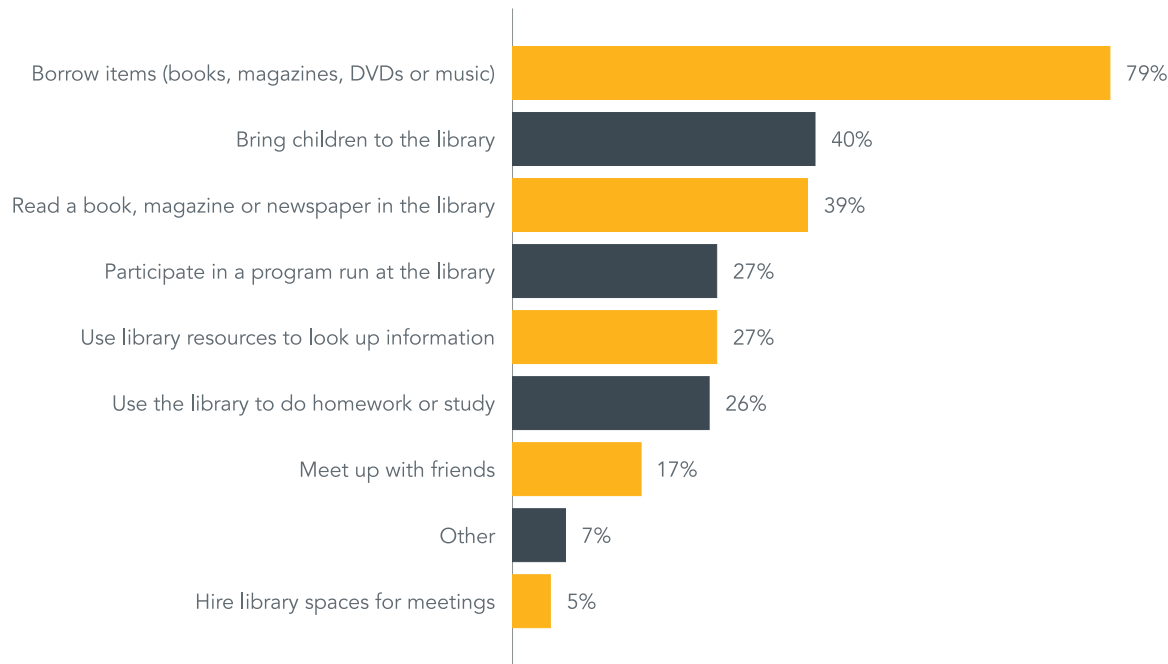
Figure 5 – What our community thinks about Maribyrnong Libraries



The majority of respondents exclusively visit Maribyrnong Libraries. Some use neighbouring libraries due to their proximity to home or broader array of available resources. Non-library users (less than 10% of respondents) listed access to collections and resources and welcoming library staff as things that would entice them to visit.

When thinking about the future, survey respondents envisioned a physical upgrade to some libraries that were looking 'tired', including Footscray Library. Suggestions included access to refreshments, more quiet spaces, and after-hours access particularly during peak periods such as exam time for students. Library users are interested in a broader array of programs including more author talks and seminars. Opportunities to provide 'maker spaces' or places where people can create, not just consume content, were also suggested as positive additions to the library offering.

Figure 6 – Library services valued by our community (%)





"The library is a life saver...especially during the lockdown when they offered delivery, collect services and book bundles. Our librarians are heroes without capes."

Our team and sector

Maribyrnong Libraries are staffed by a skilled workforce of 56 information professionals committed to serving our community.

In developing the draft Plan, staff identified opportunities to enhance the current service, and provided an understanding of day-to-day occurrences in our libraries and opportunities for improvement. Staff identified four key trends and themes:

- Ongoing impact of COVID-19
- Demand for fit-for-purpose, welcoming library spaces
- Critical need to support digital literacy
- Continued investment in staff skills and capabilities to support emerging community needs.

Impacts of COVID-19

The pandemic saw a rapid shift to online platforms and communications and hastened existing trends in service delivery, home-based working, online education and health support. The COVID-19 pandemic is still impacting libraries and is forcing institutions and individuals to rethink priorities in relation to the maintenance of good physical and mental health, social connections and the proximity of services in local communities.

Library spaces

There has been increased demand on adaptable spaces that offer the community flexibility, quiet spaces to study and work, informal seating and gathering spaces and program areas. These spaces must be supported by fresh and relevant library collections.

Awareness raising and partnerships

More than 20% of the City's population are library members, which is low compared with other municipalities. There is an opportunity to improve awareness of Maribyrnong Libraries through outreach and partnership development.

Digital literacy and digital inequality

Staff regularly support people with either low digital literacy and/or no computer or internet, to access and comply with online government services, fill in forms, and complete job applications. Helping bridge the digital divide is a priority for libraries, which provide access to fast speed Internet and Wi-Fi, computers and tablets, and digital literacy programs.

Leadership and Workforce Development

Changing community needs and rapid advances in technology continue to evolve the way in which we deliver our services. The need for continued investment in technology and a skilled, competent workforce with contemporary skills to adapt and innovate has never been more important.

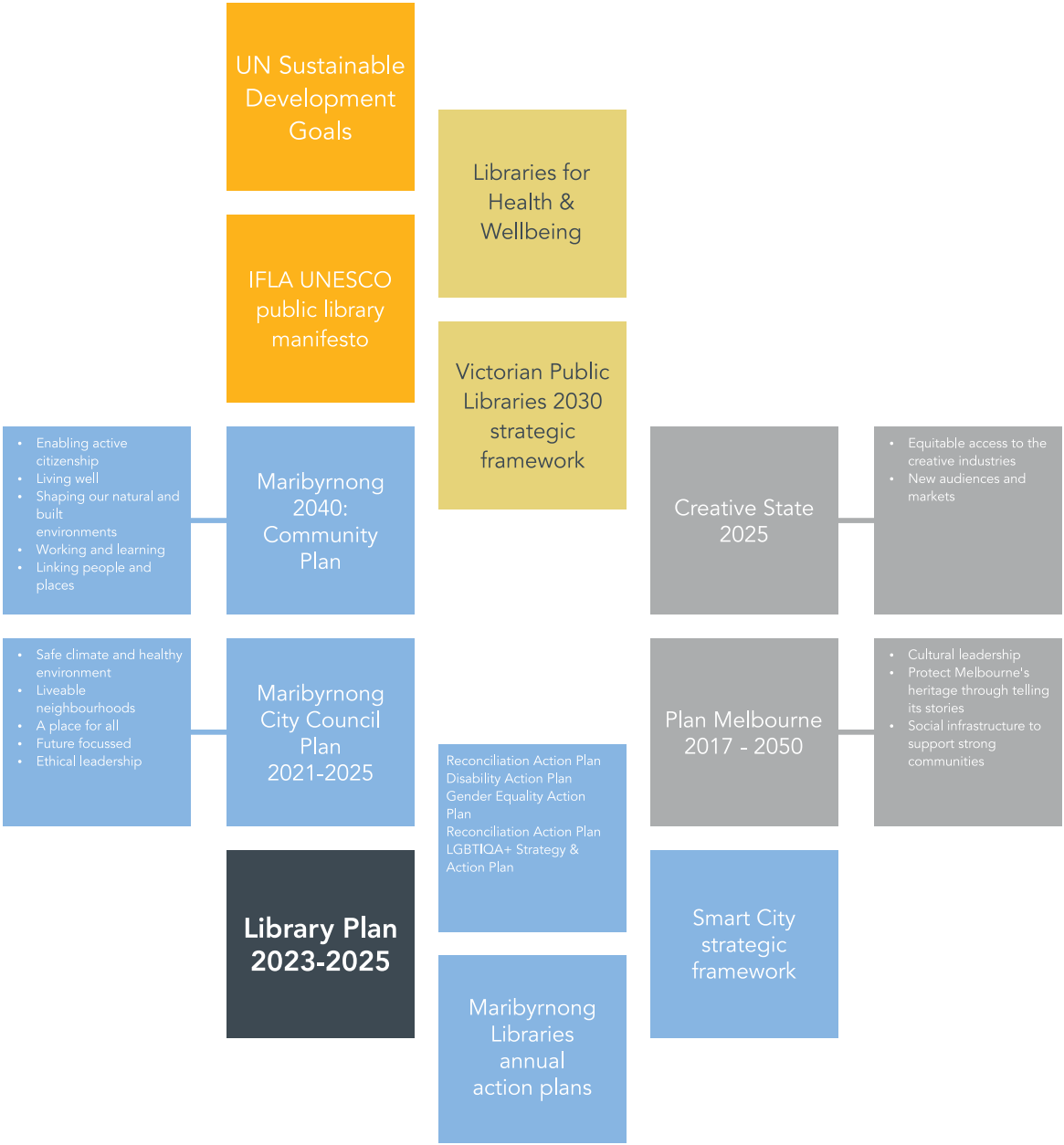
Figure 7 – What our team envision for Maribyrnong Libraries



STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The Library Plan 2022-25 directly responds to the Council Plan 2021-25. It is informed by international, state and local plans and policies, with all activities of Maribyrnong Libraries considered within this context.

Figure 8 – Strategic planning framework







"The library is a place that is constant, reliable and community focussed and it fills my cup every time I am in it."

PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The Draft Library Plan 2023-25 is designed to achieve our vision to be welcoming, progressive libraries that inspire connection and learning while supporting Council's vision to be an inclusive, flourishing, progressive city that cares for both its residents and its environment.

To deliver on this commitment, the Draft Plan is guided by four strategic themes:

- Safe and welcoming spaces
- Learning and engagement
- Discovery and creativity
- Future-ready workplace.

The Draft Library Plan provides the framework for a robust reporting and evaluation. Performance against the four strategic outcome targets will set a framework for this evaluation:

- We will demonstrate the value of our library service to our community by increasing our membership by 50% by 2025.
- 80% of program participants feel that they have gained knowledge or skills, developed confidence or feel more connected to their community by participating in our programs.
- We will demonstrate the value of the collection to our community through increasing our collection turnover to align with industry benchmarks.
- The skills and expertise of our workforce will be reflected through maintaining a very good to excellent rating by our customers.

In addition to these four overarching outcomes we also report as required against the Maribyrnong City Council Plan, the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework and other Council policies and strategies as required.

Each year we also set performance measures at a functional, branch or individual level based on inputs or drivers to achieve our outcomes. These performance measures are reported regularly to the Library Management Team and shared with Council's Executive and Senior Leadership Teams as required.



"I love the games and friends that I meet at the library, and the help I get from the staff with my school books and reading."

Safe and welcoming spaces

Outcome:

Our libraries are welcoming, uplifting and promote access and inclusion. Our spaces are havens for our diverse communities and encourage connection, learning and recreation.

Outcome measure:

We will demonstrate the value of our library service to our community by increasing our membership base by 50% by 2025.

By 2025 we will:

- Ensure our libraries are easy to access
- Increasingly take our libraries beyond branch walls
- Ensure our branches reflect the needs of our diverse communities

Key actions include:

- Developing a strategic and customer-focused Library and Facilities Infrastructure Plan that builds on Council's draft Infrastructure Plan.
- Reviewing our opening hours and service model to maximise community access.
- Implementing a marketing and communications plan to increase membership.
- Developing an outreach framework to help ensure our services meet the needs of the community and are well subscribed.
- Aligning all facilities, programs and services are aligned with Council's Reconciliation Action Plan, Disability Action Plan, Gender Equality Action Plan and the LGBTIQ+ Strategy & Action Plan.

Learning and engagement

Outcome:

Our service anticipates community needs, building literacy and social connection, supporting a thriving community.

Outcome measure:

80% of program participants feel that they have gained knowledge or skills, developed confidence or feel more connected to their community by participating in our programs.

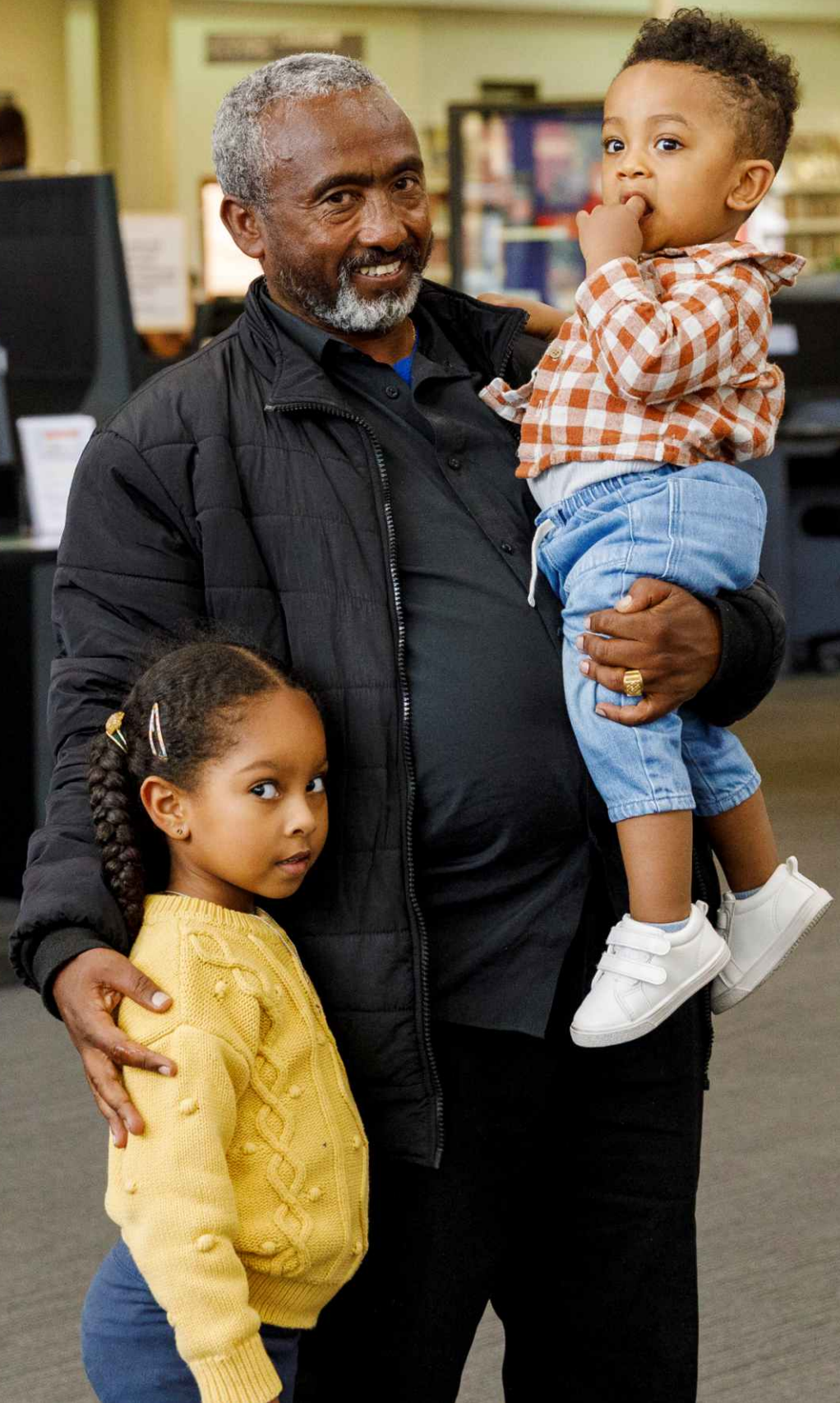
By 2025 we will:

- Enhance digital literacy skills within our community
- Increase participation in library activities by seeking to ensure our programs meet the needs of and interests of our community and celebrate our cultural diversity

Key actions include:

- Develop and deliver literacy programs.
- Develop a youth engagement plan.
- Explore partnerships with local key learning institutions
- Create a robust evaluation framework for our programs and services and review library programming to better reflect the current and emerging needs of the community.

**"We always feel at home when
we come to the library."**



Discovery and creativity

Outcome:

We provide experiences that inspire visitors to discover, create and explore. Our diverse communities see themselves reflected in our collection, services and programs.

Outcome measure:

We will demonstrate the value of the collection to our community through increasing the use of the collection to align with the average for Victorian public libraries.

By 2025 we will:

- Provide contemporary digital experiences that inspire and delight and provide ready access to library resources
- Seamlessly integrate technology into our branches to support discovery, creativity and access
- Ensure greater representation of First Nations stories within our collections

Key actions include:

- Customer-focused review and refresh of Maribyrnong Libraries website.
- Investigating new service offerings such as Library of Things.
- Identifying and developing partnerships to support creativity.
- Develop a strategic framework for collections and review our Collection Development Plan.

Future-ready workplace

Outcome:

Our staff have the skills, expertise and resources to provide a progressive, responsive and industry leading library service.

Outcome measure:

The skills and expertise of our workforce will be reflected through maintaining our high customer satisfaction rating.

By 2025 we will:

- Deliver and innovate services informed by data
- Ensure our team is supported by meaningful professional development opportunities
- Operate within a clear policy and procedure framework that is customer-focused, efficient, and supports innovation

Key actions include:

- Identify, review and integrate data sets.
- Implement a learning and development plan with a focus on First Nations and other cultural and awareness and competence, health and wellbeing, and technology skills.
- Review and refine our policy and procedure framework.
- Map library activities to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.



FOOD SCRAY LIBRARY

PARENTING
JUNIOR FICTION
CHILDREN'S
AREA

"A place where people of all types can come to and feel safe and welcomed."

