



# Maribyrnong Libraries Plan 2019-2023

## *Libraries for All, Libraries for Life*

The transformation of public library services, in Australia and around the world, is being driven by evidence that investment in libraries is an investment in the strength, capability and resilience of the community. Every dollar spent on Maribyrnong Libraries delivers four times its value.<sup>1</sup>

**Purpose:** The Maribyrnong Libraries Plan 2019-2023 articulates the libraries' mission in serving and supporting a growing and evolving community over the next four years. The Plan:

- describes the important role contemporary public libraries play in building community capacity and connections
- positions Maribyrnong Libraries to align with the City's emerging social, economic and cultural context
- identifies the libraries' strategic priorities and significant actions
- articulates Council's commitment to investment in public library services and facilities that are in line with community needs and expectations.

### Council vision and values

*"A vibrant, diverse and progressive city striving for a sustainable future."*<sup>2</sup>

Maribyrnong Libraries contribute to the achievement of Council's vision and strategic objectives, in particular Objective 2: Healthy and Inclusive Communities – "Council will provide and advocate for services and facilities that support people's wellbeing, healthy and safe living, connection to community, cultural engagement and whole of life learning."

### Library mission

Maribyrnong Libraries provide access for all to contemporary library collections, programs, information resources, services and facilities. We:

- enable reading, learning and personal growth
- connect people with one another and the world of information and ideas
- build the capacity of our diverse community
- foster social, digital and cultural inclusion.

### Guiding principles

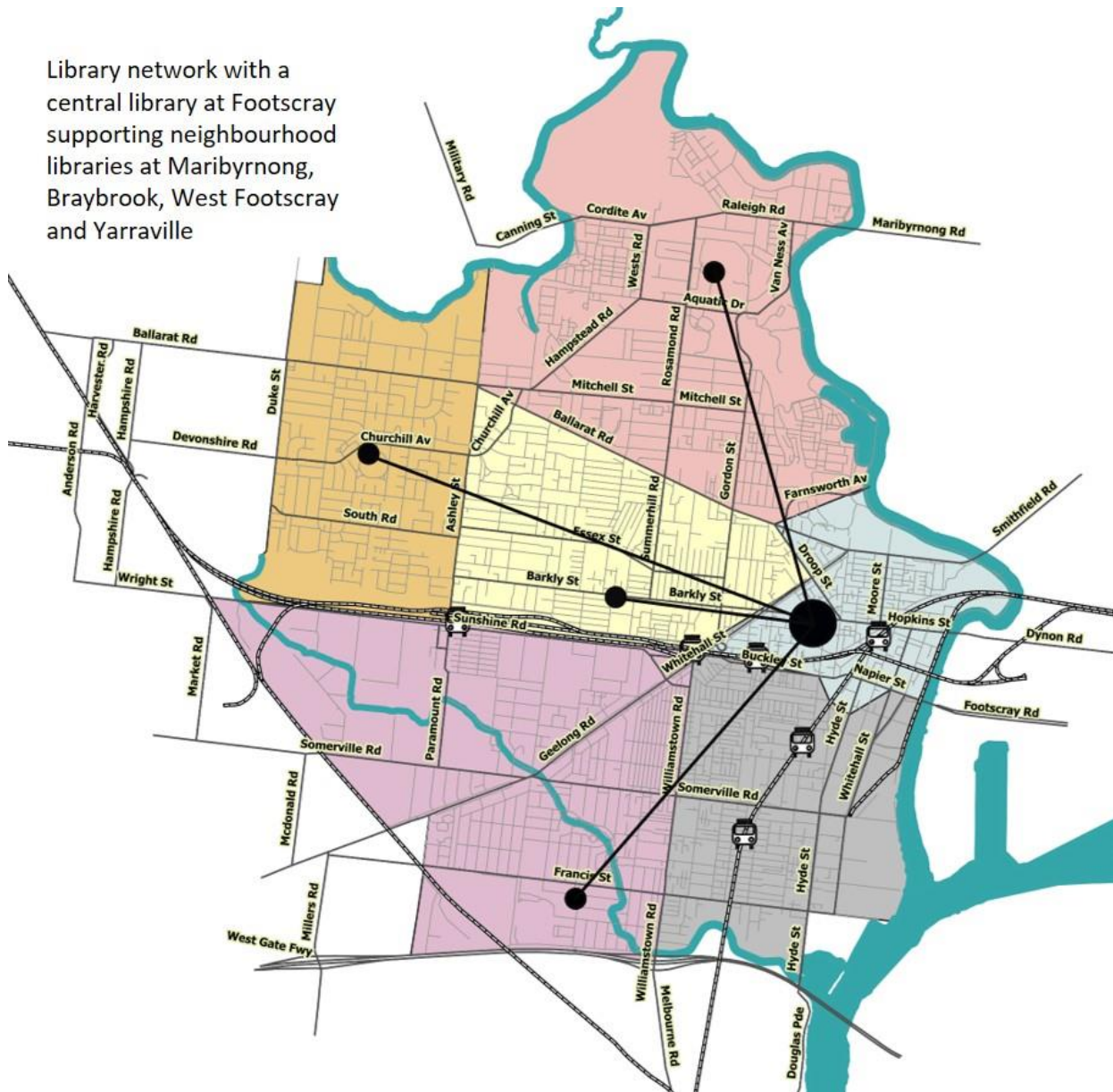
Principle	Description
Inclusive	Our libraries are safe, welcoming and accessible to people of all ages, interests, cultural backgrounds, abilities and incomes.
Responsive	Our library collections, programs, services and facilities are designed to meet community needs and expectations and delivered to create great customer experiences.
Connected	Our libraries contribute to urban vitality, local identity and sense of place, and are important focal points and gathering places for the community.
Coordinated	Our municipal and neighbourhood libraries form an integrated network of service points, that works with Council and non-Council partners to empower the community.



## Integrated service network

Maribyrnong Libraries balance regional efficiency with local demand through an integrated network of library service points. All neighbourhood libraries provide access to collections, programs and services that meet the unique characteristics of each population precinct. The Footscray Library is the municipal centre for collection management, program development and library administration. Future network planning will recognise the population and growth characteristics of each of the City's six planning precincts.

Library network with a central library at Footscray supporting neighbourhood libraries at Maribyrnong, Braybrook, West Footscray and Yarraville





## 21<sup>st</sup> century libraries

Public libraries around the world are places for discovery and connection. They democratise access to knowledge and facilitate access to the information skills needed for a digital future. Libraries are centres of community culture and act as a barometer for the health and vitality of a community.

*“The public library, the local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development of the individual and social groups. ... The public library is the local centre of information, making all kinds of knowledge and information readily available to its users. Library services are provided on the basis of equality of access for all, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language or social status.”<sup>3</sup>*

New library models are shifting the focus of library services from traditional measures like the number of visits and loans to the outcomes that are achieved for individuals and the community. In promoting universal literacy and closing gaps in access to information, 21<sup>st</sup> century libraries contribute to achievement of the United Nation’s 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals – notably in relation to quality education, reducing inequalities, sustainable communities and strong civic institutions.<sup>4</sup> Australian Library and Information Association’s national public library guidelines<sup>5</sup> describe the difference that participation in and use of library services can make in people’s lives, in terms of:

- literacy and lifelong learning – including early years’ literacy and adult learning
- digital inclusion – especially for those in the community who do not have internet access or lack the skills to use digital services
- stronger and more creative communities – building on community spirit captured in libraries
- personal development and wellbeing – being places where people can nourish their soul
- economic and workforce development – supporting job-readiness, literacy and digital skills.





The latest phase of the global evolution of public libraries is occurring in response to major population and social trends, new workforce skill needs and rapid technological advancements. In the coming years Maribyrnong Libraries will be faced with increasing demand for 24/7 access to physical and virtual library collections, services and support.

The libraries must respond to:

- increased demand for use of libraries as a safe, welcoming and culturally inclusive space at the heart of the community where people can read, relax, connect, learn and work
- increased use of the library website, apps and digital technologies to access ebooks and library services
- increased expectations of libraries as a partner in delivery of lifelong learning opportunities.

This will involve a shift in staff responsibilities from transactional roles undertaken behind the library desk to more transformative information, learning and support roles that take place on the library floor and in community locations, delivered collaboratively with partner organisations and other Council Departments.

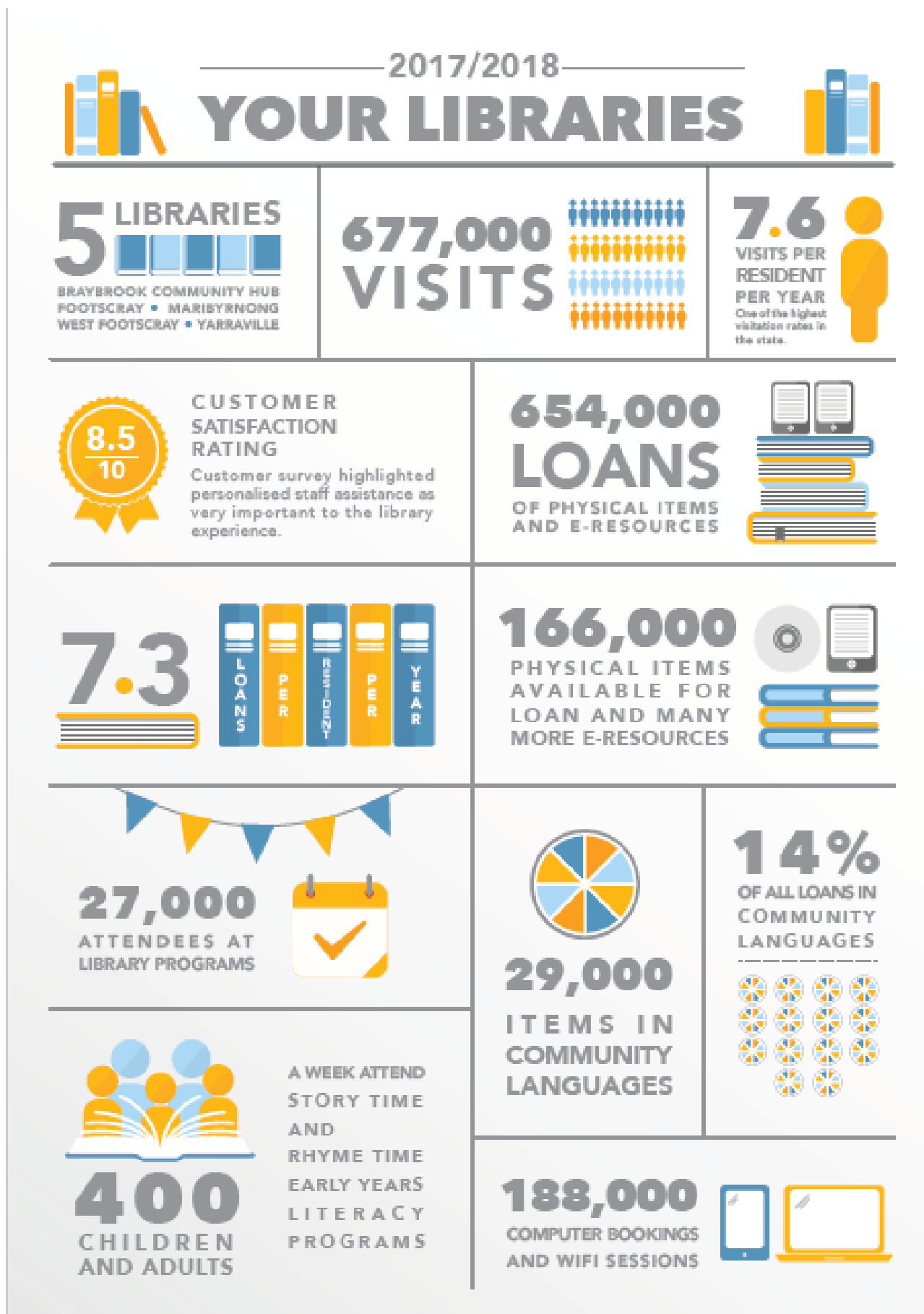
### Today's library

Maribyrnong Libraries are a well-used and well-loved part of the City's social fabric. The central library at Footscray, open 7 days a week, is a meeting place, a reading space, somewhere to study or dig into the past, and a place to reflect under the trees in the courtyard. It offers extensive lending collections, a large LOTE collection and activity spaces. The new library at Braybrook Community Hub is also open 7 days a week, and is located within a multi-purpose hub. Smaller branch libraries at West Footscray, Maribyrnong (Highpoint) and Yarraville provide their local communities with access to collections, programs, computers, wifi and reading/study spaces. Branch services are complemented by the library website, a Home Library Service, inreach and outreach services delivered in community locations.

The libraries are well-supported by Council, which makes a significant investment in collections and staffing each year to ensure that the libraries continue to meet emerging community needs.

*"The library meets my needs very well. The staff are always courteous and helpful. I am a senior citizen who lives alone and the only time I have human contact is at this library. They are always willing to help me and take an interest in my wellbeing."* (Library user, 2017 Community survey)









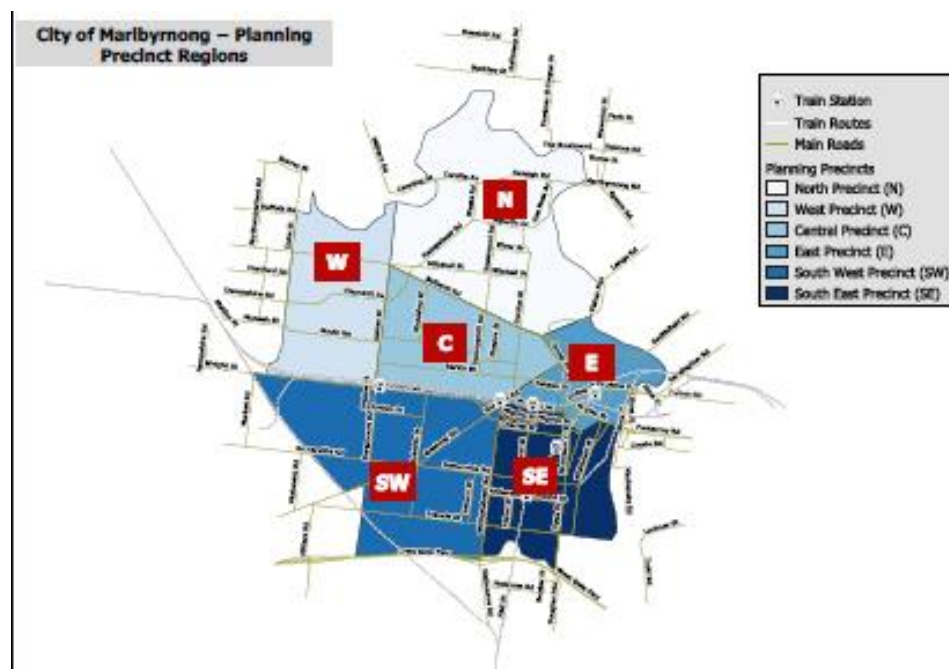
## Maribyrnong Libraries in a growing and evolving City

Maribyrnong is a diverse and dynamic city in Melbourne's inner west. It has undergone rapid population change in the past 10 years and is forecast to change even more dramatically in the next 10 to 20 years. Population growth, urban redevelopment, gentrification and a transitioning economy are leading to an influx of new residents, businesses and opportunities – all changes which will influence demand for and provision of library services.

Census data and other research highlight the changing face of Maribyrnong<sup>6</sup> and the implications for provision of local library services.

### Population and demographic characteristics

A municipal population approaching 90,000 in 2018 is forecast to increase to 123,000 by 2028 and 157,000 in 2041 (+72%). The highest **long-term population growth** rates from 2018 will be seen in the East (+260%) and North (+98%) planning precincts which take in Footscray and Maribyrnong, with more modest growth in Yarraville, Seddon and Braybrook. Closure of large industrial sites (e.g. Maribyrnong, Braybrook) has provided a **supply of land for new residential developments** to accommodate some of the population growth. **Gentrification** in the south-eastern parts of the City has seen the arrival of new residents with higher median household incomes and often different service needs and interests to longstanding residents.



Maribyrnong Libraries must plan for infrastructure to accommodate increased service demand, noting that four of Maribyrnong's five libraries are currently at or over capacity. Flexible spaces ensure that a single facility can be used by multiple community members and groups for a variety of activities and reasons. Co-location of service points in activity centres (e.g. Council, education, retail, community, recreation) enhances user access and increases service utilisation and return on public investment. **Increased housing density** will also create demand for libraries to be a 'third space' (an alternative to home or work) where people can recreate and congregate, supporting social connections in a safe inviting environment

Average levels of education, employment and income have risen over the last decade, however, the City now experiences greater **socio-economic inequality** with higher proportions of households at both ends of the income spectrum. Braybrook, Maidstone, West Footscray and Footscray rank below the City average on the SEIFA index of disadvantage<sup>7</sup>, with Braybrook in the 4<sup>th</sup> percentile of disadvantage nationally. Seddon, Yarraville and Maribyrnong have above average rankings. Consequently, the libraries will need to identify, respond to and manage different



service needs and expectations in different parts of the City, including internet access, literacy support, reader development, and learning and social engagement programs. To help address **education inequality**, Maribyrnong libraries can collaborate with education providers at all levels (early years, schools, university, VET) to complement education programs through access to relevant collections, study spaces, homework clubs and tutoring spaces.



In the 1950s large numbers of migrants settled in the Maribyrnong area, and it remains one of the most ethnically diverse areas of Victoria. Maribyrnong's **multicultural diversity** is constantly evolving, with recent new arrivals from India, Vietnam, Myanmar, China and the Horn of Africa. These communities are in constant transition with around 40% of residents born overseas and speaking languages other than English. Maribyrnong Libraries have a large collection in community languages, and provide English language support programs and opportunities for cross-cultural and cross-generational engagement.

While the Australian population is ageing, with Baby Boomers leaving the workforce and increased life expectancy, new residential developments have meant that Maribyrnong also has a relatively young population with a large proportion of infants and young adults (e.g. Kingsville, Seddon, Yarraville). **Young families** look to their library for early years' literacy programs and collections – onsite and in community locations. The City has a high proportion of young adults attending Victoria University and other tertiary institutions. **Tertiary students** typically seek 24/7 access to individual and group study spaces, as well as reliable internet access. **Ageing communities**, with a wide range of financial circumstances, family arrangements, cultural backgrounds and life preferences, need access to a diverse range of community facilities, including support services and programs for recreation and participatory learning. Baby Boomers are also likely to be more educated, articulate and opinionated, and be more demanding of choice and quality in their services and opportunities. **Intergenerational learning** will be a feature of our future, with libraries a place where all can come together as one.





### A changing economy

**Rapid technological change** and a shift to eGovernment and **digital economy** will require libraries to work with community and education providers to facilitate access to current and emerging technologies, and assist people at risk of digital exclusion to develop skills needed to participate in a digital society. The nature of work is also changing, with increasing labour market demands for **21<sup>st</sup> century skills**, a 24/7 workforce and the rise of the **gig economy**. Maribyrnong Libraries will be faced with demand from families with dual working parents and people working less traditional hours to efficiently access library services at different times and in different ways. This requires libraries to look at different service models from a '9 to 5 library branch'.



### Council planning for the future

Maribyrnong City Council is planning to enhance civic and social infrastructure in partnership with State and Federal Government programs and other sector partners. Projects where enhanced infrastructure may be considered include:

- Footscray Activity Centre and Footscray Library, Community and Cultural Hub (the NeXT Project)
- Footscray Learning Precinct – championing excellence in all stages of education in Melbourne's inner west
- Footscray University Town – an innovative partnership between Victoria University and Council to revitalise Footscray as a hub of knowledge, learning, creativity and opportunity
- Department of Defence site and the Highpoint Activity Centre
- Bradmill and Kinnears sites – creating opportunities for innovative approaches to delivery of community-centred library services.

These projects will require master planning processes in which community needs will be clearly documented to ensure any planned social infrastructure produces wide community benefits. Funding and delivery partnerships with developers may incorporate access to library services at activity centres.







### Complementing Commonwealth and State Government initiatives

The introduction of the NDIS, the NBN roll-out, and the continued shift from service access at Centrelink offices to eGovernment place new demands on different population cohorts that have implications for provision of public library services in population centres (e.g. access to the internet and one-on-one assistance in completing government forms).



The Victorian Government's *Education State* targets commit the education system to giving each student the opportunity to excel, higher rate of language and STEM literacy, development of creative and critical thinking skills, and breaking the link between disadvantage and education and employment outcomes. Public libraries, especially with their role in early years' literacy, can support learning and skill outcomes in many different ways.



Victoria's first creative industries strategy, *Creative State*, aims to engage more Victorians in cultural and creative endeavours. The strategy notes the role of local government in supporting arts and culture and providing access to, and increasing participation in, cultural and creative industries. This could include provision of co-working spaces and hubs, leveraging partnerships with property owners, philanthropists and other stakeholders to unlock creative spaces in suburban areas.



### **Strategic priorities**

In the next 4 years Maribyrnong Libraries will concentrate on five strategic community-focused priorities.

- |                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Places for all                                    | Precinct-based planning to provide safe, welcoming and inclusive library places and spaces – onsite and online – that are well-known, well-used and accessible to all                          |
| 2. Opportunities to learn, create and belong         | Deliver collections, programs, information services and technology access that meet the diverse needs of the community and actively encourage inquiry, exploration and discovery               |
| 3. Stronger and more connected communities           | Empower our community by increasing free and universal access to knowledge and information, supporting learning and literacy through all life stages, and celebrating languages and cultures   |
| 4. Productive community and stakeholder partnerships | Engage with our community to understand their library needs, and collaborate with Council, community, government and business partners to enhance service options, reach, quality and outcomes |
| 5. Great customer experiences                        | Maintain a professional, innovative and accountable workforce culture that is focused on exceeding customer and community expectations.                                                        |



## Action plan

Maribyrnong Libraries will develop, implement and review annual action plans that detail short and medium-term actions that respond to our strategic priorities. These plans will be complemented by the Library Building Strategy 2019 which sets out guidelines for future investment in the City's library facilities. Our annual action plan will articulate measureable actions and we will be accountable to our community for delivering against these plans.

### 1. Places for all

*Precinct-based planning to provide safe, welcoming and well-designed library places and spaces – onsite and online – that are well-known, well-used and accessible to all*

- Provide spaces that encourage social connections and use of Council facilities as 'third spaces'.
- Facilitate the renewal and development of contemporary community infrastructure that is multi-purpose and multi-generational.
- Future-proof libraries with involvement from Council teams and external experts to ensure facilities are adaptable and can incorporate new technologies and services.

### 2. Opportunities to learn, create and belong

*Deliver collections, programs, information services and technology access that meet the diverse needs of the community and actively encourage inquiry, exploration and discovery*

#### Collections

- Develop and implement Collection Management Guidelines which define principles by which library collections are managed.
- Develop innovative and flexible planning, purchasing and provision models relevant to our diverse communities and responsive to all life stages.

#### Programs

- Adopt a community needs-based approach to assessing our program provision.
- Explore meaningful service partnerships which provide mutually beneficial outcomes in program delivery.
- Ensure that programs enhance social and economic participation.

#### Information technology

- Provide relevant, contemporary information technology resources and programs at all libraries, that reflect national and global trends and community needs.

### 3. Stronger and more connected communities

*Empower our community by increasing free and universal access to knowledge and information, supporting learning and literacy through all life stages, and celebrating languages and cultures*

- Develop and implement a Libraries Marketing and Communications Strategy.
- Engage and be led by the community in developing and informing the future direction of library services.

### 4. Productive community and stakeholder partnerships

*Engage with our community to understand their library needs, and collaborate with Council, community, government and business partners to enhance service options, reach, quality and outcomes*

- Pursue and build on partnerships that give access to resources, learning and events that respond to feedback and address community needs.
- Improve formal/informal collaboration and partnerships with other Council services and external partners.
- Explore innovative partnerships with neighbouring local government areas to identify collaborative regional network opportunities.

### 5. Great customer experiences







*Maintain a professional, innovative and accountable workforce culture that is focused on exceeding customer and community expectations*

- Build a community development culture through targeted communication and opportunities for learning.
- Provide greater opportunities for community feedback to inform enhanced customer service.
- Be a learning organisation that learns and innovates to thrive in a rapidly changing environment.
- Continue to invest in and resource a library service that reflects and responds to the growth and changing needs of the community.



## Tomorrow's libraries

Through implementation of this Library Plan our libraries will be well-positioned to respond to the emerging demands of a vibrant, diverse and growing Maribyrnong community. The delivery of the Library Building Strategy 2019 will set out guidelines for future investment in the City's library facilities.

<b>Footscray Library</b> 	<b>Today</b> 80,000 collection items 323,000 visits per year 332,000 loans per year 4,600 program attendees 47,000 computer sessions 36,000 wifi sessions (across all branches) 1,500 m <sup>2</sup> library space	<b>Tomorrow</b> An expanded library as an integral part of the revitalised city centre and Community and Cultural Hub (the NeXT Project).
<b>Braybrook Library</b> 	<b>Today</b> 28,000 collection items 171,000 visits per year 97,000 loans per year 3,400 program attendees 16,000 computer sessions 750 m <sup>2</sup> library space	<b>Tomorrow</b> Fully activated library spaces and service provision in line with community needs and broader cultural expectations.
<b>West Footscray Library</b> 	<b>Today</b> 18,000 collection items 83,000 visits per year 79,000 loans per year 5,700 program attendees 9,000 computer sessions 488 m <sup>2</sup> library space	<b>Tomorrow</b> Future exploration to optimise the capacity of the facility within the context of the West Footscray Neighbourhood Framework.
<b>Maribyrnong Library</b> 	<b>Today</b> 19,000 collection items 51,000 visits per year 52,000 loans per year 3,300 program attendees 6,000 computer sessions 565 m <sup>2</sup> library space	<b>Tomorrow</b> Exploration of all options within the precinct to develop a larger and more flexible library on a new site when the current leasing arrangement expires in 2028.
<b>Yarraville Library</b> 	<b>Today</b> 13,000 collection items 49,000 visits per year 77,000 loans per year 10,000 program attendees 2,800 computer sessions 242 m <sup>2</sup> library space	<b>Tomorrow</b> Exploration of options to expand capacity to support growth of local community.
<b>Library website</b> 	<b>Today</b> - 6,000 digital resources - 17,000 downloads of ebooks	<b>Tomorrow</b> Dynamic user-friendly online opportunities to access digital collections, learning programs, databases and local information resources.



## References

1. State Library of Victoria and Public Libraries Victoria Network, *Libraries Change Lives*, 2018.
2. Maribyrnong City Council, *Council Plan 2017/21*.
3. IFLA/UNESCO *Public Library Manifesto*, 1994.
4. ALIA, *Australian Libraries support the Sustainable Development Goals*, 2018.
5. APLA/ALIA, *National Guidelines, Standards and Outcome Measures for Australian Public Libraries*, 2016.
6. ABS 2016 Census, ABS 2011 Burden of Disease survey, and Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations labour market data.
7. ABS Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) index of disadvantage.