



Finance and Human Services Committee Agenda

**to be held at 6.30 pm on Tuesday 1 April 2008
at the Richmond Town Hall**

ADVISORY

**The Finance and Human Services Committee is not a decision making body.
The recommendations of the Committee are considered by the
full Council at its subsequent ordinary meeting.**

Order of business

- 1. Statement of recognition of Wurundjeri Land**
- 2. Attendance, apologies and requests for leave of absence**
- 3. Declarations of pecuniary interest and conflict of interest**
- 4. Committee business reports**
- 5. Confidential business reports**

1. Statement of Recognition of Wurundjeri Land

“Welcome to the City of Yarra. Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri community as the first owners of this country. Today, they are still the custodians of the cultural heritage of this land.

Further to this, Council acknowledges there are other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have lived, worked and contributed to the cultural heritage of Yarra.”

2. Attendance, apologies and requests for leave of absence

Anticipated attendees:

Councillors

- Cr Kathleen Maltzahn (Chairperson)
- Cr Judy Morton (Mayor)
- Cr Paul D’Agostino
- Cr Jackie Fristacky
- Cr Gurm Sekhon

Council officers

- Ivan Gilbert (Acting Chief Executive Officer)
- Adrian Murphy (Acting Director Community Programs)
- Craig Kenny (Director Organisational Development)
- Bryan Lancaster (Director Asset Management)
- Bruce Phillips (Director City Development)
- Roma O’Callaghan (Acting Manager Governance and Manager People and Organisational Development)
- Margaret Elvey (Governance Adviser)

3. Declarations of pecuniary interest and conflict of interest

4. Committee business reports

Item		Page	Rec. Page	Report Presenter
4.1	Integration of Sustainability into Council Report Writing and Decision Making	6	13	Mark Dornau – Manager Environmental Services
4.2	Yarra Libraries Strategic Plan 2008-2012	22	28	Helen Baker – Manager Cultural and Library Services
4.3	Neighbourhood Matching Fund – An Analysis of the Seattle Model	47	60	Isha Scott – Manager Community Planning and Advocacy
4.4	Councillor Delegate for the Aboriginal Advisory Group	61	61	Isha Scott – Manager Community Planning and Advocacy

Public submissions procedure

When the chairperson invites verbal submissions from the gallery, members of the public who wish to participate are to:

- (a) state their name clearly for the record;
- (b) direct their submission to the chairperson;
- (c) speak for a maximum of five minutes;
- (d) confine their remarks to the matter under consideration;
- (e) refrain from repeating information already provided by previous submitters; and
- (f) remain silent following their submission unless called upon by the chairperson to make further comment.

5. Confidential reports

Item	Page	Rec. Page	Report Presenter
5.1	Contractual Matter		
5.2	Contractual Matter		
5.3	Matter prejudicial to Council and/or third parties		
5.4	Contractual Matter		

4.1 Integration of Sustainability into Council Report Writing and Decision Making

Executive Summary

Purpose

This report details the method for improved integration of sustainability principles into report writing with the objective of ensuring better informed Council and organisational decision making.

Based on internal and external consultations, it is recommended that the Agenda Management System (AMS) process occurring within the CITY Project framework will provide an excellent opportunity to ensure the integration of sustainability assessment and decision support systems into the process.

The CITY Project and AMS element has been initiated in the past two weeks with an estimated completion date of June 2008.

Proposal

That council:

- (a) notes the report and endorses integration of triple bottom line / sustainability assessment tools into the Agenda Management System process review; and
- (b) receives a further report on development and implementation plans of triple bottom line / sustainability assessment tools in the Agenda Management System in July 2008.

4.1 Integration of Sustainability into Council Report Writing and Decision Making

File: 33/30/07 (I08/404)
 Responsible Officer: Director Organisational Development & Manager
 Environmental Services

Purpose

This report details the method for improved integration of sustainability principles into report writing with the objective of ensuring better informed Council and organisational decision making.

Background

1. Council at its meeting on 21 August 2007 (Item 7.3) resolved:

"That a report be prepared for the October cycle of Council on the applicability to the City of Yarra of the Triple Bottom Line tools promoted by the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) or comparable tools, including the capacity of Council to utilise such tools."

2. Yarra City Council adopted the Sustaining Yarra principles in October 2003 (see Attachment 1) which have since formed the basis for the 2005/09 Council Plan framework, amendments to the standard report template, assessment tools for capital works, performance measurement and project initiation processes. These principles have been instrumental in encouraging holistic decision making and cross organisational integration in terms of policy and strategy development and implementation.

What is Triple Bottom Line (TBL)

3. Triple Bottom Line (TBL) is a concept coined by John Elkington whereby rather than simply assessing the merit of an action on financial grounds (single bottom line), it instead reviews Environmental, Social and Financial impacts equally. This thinking is not new, and is widespread across all sectors of the community, including local government.
4. Whilst the traditional variables in TBL are environmental, social and financial, TBL is now simply seen as incorporating holistic sustainability principles across all the planning, decision making, and reporting of an organisation. Many organisations choose to add other variables they may see are outside the aforementioned three pillars of sustainability, with local governments sometimes including cultural or economic benefits as separate important pillars. This is often referred to as the Quadruple Bottom Line (QBL) or simply sustainability.

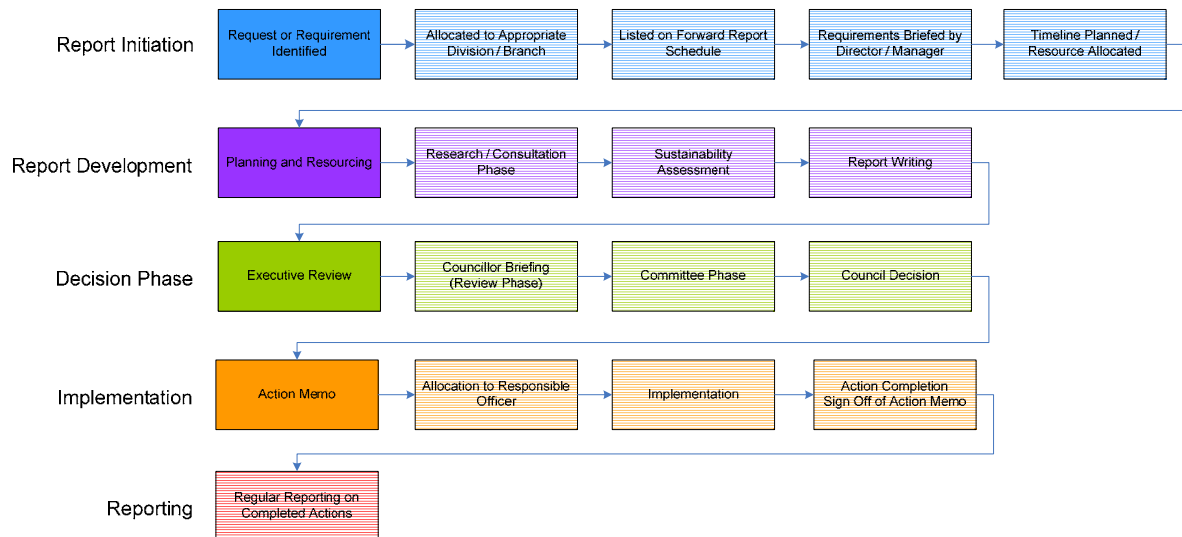
TBL in Local Government

5. In local government there are many areas where TBL can be factored into decision making and planning. Some examples include:
 - (a) development of council vision, principles, goals;
 - (b) long term planning (eg. Council Plan, 10 year budget);

- (c) decision making (eg. Council Reports, budget bids, capital works bids); Purchasing;
 - (d) community grants; and
 - (e) reporting.
6. In reality, basically everything Council does could be evaluated based on TBL criteria, though in many cases this will occur in an informal way.
 7. The incorporation of TBL into Council processes is therefore focused on ensuring that the TBL elements have been taken into consideration equally, the process and decision documented, and staff are educated in how to use the tools and to evaluate issues from what may be beyond their specialist focus area. This also gives other staff and elected members a better understanding of how a decision has been made, and documentation for future reference.

Yarra Council Decision Making Process

8. The key focus of this report is on how to incorporate TBL into Councils' decision making process, through the Council reporting process.
9. The objective of the Council reporting process is to provide the best information available to inform Council decision making in the best interests of the community. The Council decision making process is paramount in terms of policy making and endorsement of strategy and action plans in pursuit of strategic objectives.
10. For the purposes of this report the following graphic outlines the standard phases in the development of a typical Council report. It must be noted that reports generally follow the process as outlined below but there is currently no standard process within Council.



TBL/ Sustainability in the Decision Making Process – Current State

11. Reports to Council currently respond to a document template that provides standard headings for writers. In terms of assessment against sustainability

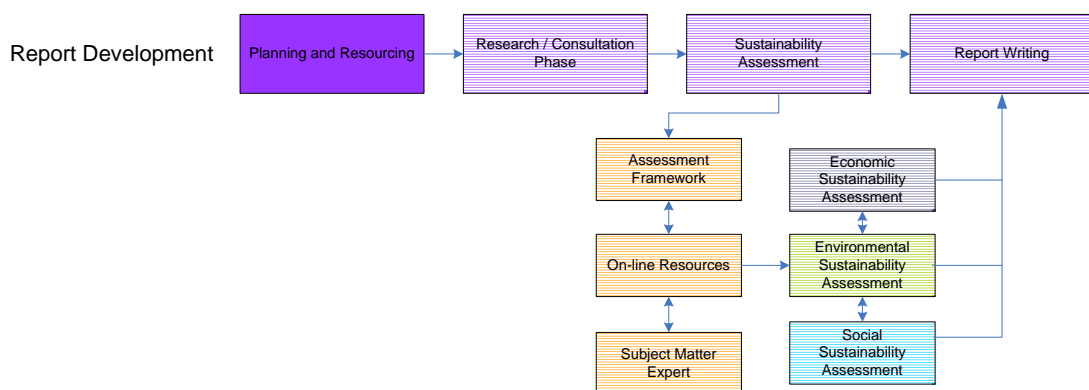
principles, the quality of reports is determined largely by the skill and interest of the writer as there are no systemic decision support or review systems in place.

12. Report requirements are generally briefed by managers or directors although there is no standard process by which this happens across the organisation. It is estimated that there are 50 to 60 regular report writers across Council and it is these key staff that any decision support system, training and protocol will need to target.
13. The current report template seeks responses to the financial, economic, social, and environmental implications of the subject of the report but does not provide guidance or support in terms of how a writer should respond. An expanded report framework with a series of relevant questions under each of the "triple bottom line" elements was used for around 12 months but was withdrawn due to lack of progress on implementation of the agenda management system which was to be the decision support mechanism. A copy of this expanded template is attached as Attachment 2.
14. In the absence of decision support systems or formal internal referral, the quality of sustainability assessment is variable depending on the skills and experience of the writer. This ultimately means that reports can be predisposed to the specific experience of or professional domain of the writer except in exceptional circumstances where the author has well-rounded skills across all specialist areas.

TBL/ Sustainability in the Decision Making Process – Future State

15. A number of decision support systems which integrate sustainability principles have been developed within local government over the last 5 to 8 years. These provide guidance and support to writers in planning and developing integrated and holistic reports. The systems are reasonably simple in terms of their construct and overall improvement of quality of information and reports relies upon training and development of writers and appropriate resourcing of subject matter experts.
16. The basis of all decision support systems is the provision of a framework which is applied at various points during the report development and writing process. The framework will normally include the following elements for each of the sustainability assessment sections:
 - (a) prompt questions and issues that the writer will need to respond to if applicable to the particular report;
 - (b) resources and materials to assist the writer make informed judgements at each stage. These are typically web-based resources that are accessible via an intranet site and maintained by a subject matter expert within Council. This will include currently available resources such as the community profile, community survey outcomes, research material, green-house gas calculators and the like; and
 - (c) internal subject matter experts who are available for advice and consultation.

17. When an author commences planning for a report they will undertake various steps as outlined below:
- (a) planning and resourcing – making judgements about scope of report, timelines and resources required to complete the task;
 - (b) research & consultation – will include elements such as environmental scan, literature review, benchmarking, internal and external consultation;
 - (c) sustainability assessment – deliberate assessment of the report subject in terms of sustainability principles. This will include:
 - (i) responding to assessment framework;
 - (ii) accessing standard resources from an on-line database (i.e. greenhouse gas calculator); and
 - (iii) seeking advice from internal or external subject matter expert.
 - (d) report writing – development of the report with transparent responses to the sustainability assessment process.
18. A typical assessment process is outlined in the diagram below:



19. In order to provide a foundation for organisational learning and development a growing library of assessments should be compiled and be available for report writers so that assessments for similar future reports can be updated and will not need to be reinvented.
20. A quality review role will be built into the report development or agenda management system to ensure that organisational standards are being consistently applied. This will link back into the training and development of report writers to ensure that Council is receiving the best information available to inform decisions.
21. The integration of new requirements such as the Human Rights Charter would simply mean integration of assessment elements, requisite training and development of report writers and allocation of subject matter experts.

Implementation – CITY Project

22. The CITY Project has as its core objective the integration between core business applications across Council to better support efficiency in business processes and provide better quality information for decision making. One of the key processes that has been included in the first phase is the Agenda Management System (AMS).
23. It has been determined that the AMS will look at the “end to end” processes related to the development of reports: from initiation to review and approval, the compilation of agendas for decision making forums and tracking the implementation of Council decisions. The CITY Project will review and improve processes, develop appropriate systems supports and implement the improvements.
24. This provides an excellent opportunity to ensure the integration of sustainability assessment and decision support systems into the process. The project management approach applied will ensure that this is delivered in a controlled and transparent manner.
25. The CITY Project and AMS element has been initiated in the past two weeks with an estimated completion date of June 2008.
26. An internal reference group will be established to provide input to the AMS development and the integration of sustainability assessment and decision support systems. External organisations will also be consulted were required.
27. Staff training and capacity building for use of the AMS, especially the sustainability assessment and decision support systems, will occur once complete.
28. Based on discussions with ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, and Ernst & Young (two of the leading organisations in this field), it was recommended that whilst imbedding TBL into the Council Reporting Process is a great first step, the strategic context needs to be mapped, and linked to councils values.
29. Council has undertaken a preliminary audit of current organisational processes to review linkages and opportunities to incorporate sustainability, including priorities for action (refer to Attachment 3).

Consultations

30. This report was developed in partnership between Organisational Development and Environmental Services.
31. External consultation occurred over many months with Kate McKeand and Helen Scott from ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability who run a consulting arm called “Sustainability Services” dedicated to providing TBL services to the local government sector. ICLEI also run the international Centre for Public Agency Sustainability Reporting. Unfortunately, ICLEI recently notified Council that they will not be in a position to assist in the development of TBL services at Council this financial year.

32. Discussions have also occurred with Kirsty Jennings, Senior Manager, Environment and Sustainability Services, from Ernst & Young. Upon request, Ernst & Young submitted a draft engagement letter indicating their recommended steps to incorporate a TBL approach to business across council operations and an approximate cost.

Financial Implications

33. There will be no economic implications of this report, beyond actions and activities that are already budgeted for.

Economic Implications

34. Economic implications will be more strongly embedded into Council decision making processes in the future, thus improving future outcomes.

Environmental Implications

35. Environmental implications will be more strongly embedded into Council decision making processes in the future, thus improving future outcomes.

Social Implications

36. Social implications will be more strongly embedded into Council decision making processes in the future, thus improving future outcomes.

Council Plan, Strategy and Policy Implications

37. This report relates very strongly to Council's Council Plan, policies and strategies, as well as the Council Sustaining Yarra Principles, in that the AMS system developed will ensure that Council's visions are taken into consideration when developing reports to inform Council decision making.

Conclusion

38. The CITY Project has as its key objective the improvement of 15 key business processes over the coming six to 12 months. The Agenda Management System provides an excellent vehicle for the integration of triple bottom line / sustainability tools and assessments into the process of developing reports for Council decision making. The project is already underway and has the "end to end" process included in its brief.
39. There are a number of decision support tools that have been developed within local government over past years and access to the requisite intellectual property will not be difficult to achieve.
40. An internal reference group will be established to provide input to the AMS development and the integration of sustainability assessment and decision support systems. External organisations will also be consulted were required.

RECOMMENDATION

41. That Council:

- (a) notes the report and endorses integration of triple bottom line / sustainability assessment tools into the Agenda Management System process review; and
- (b) receives a further report on development and implementation plans of triple bottom line / sustainability assessment tools in the Agenda Management System in July 2008.

CONTACT OFFICER: Mark Dornau
TITLE: Manager Environmental Services
TEL: 9205 5720

Attachment 1 – Sustaining Yarra Principles
Attachment 2 – Expanded Report Template
Attachment 3 – Quick Sustainability Audit – March 2008

Attachment 1: Sustaining Yarra Principles

The City of Yarra has developed a series of principles based on the recognition that our actions impact on the ecological processes that support all life on earth and the quality of life of future generations. Entitled 'Sustaining Yarra', these principles will create a culture of sustainability across the organisation, and are being incorporated into existing projects, internal systems, external services and workplace practices.

Definitions of sustainability have a common theme concerning the integration of sound environmental, social, cultural, and economic principles. A number of definitions however, also incorporate good governance, which reflects the acceptance that our civic and commercial leaders should also embrace responsible sustainability.

The Sustaining Yarra principles have been adopted by Council to balance the competing pressures of economic, social, cultural and environmental development.

The principles will guide Council's corporate planning processes, including the Council Plan and annual budget, and ensure sustainability is integrated into decisions and actions across the organisation.

Sustaining Yarra consists of the following eight key principles.

Protecting the future

Sustainability is about ensuring a future. It requires that caution be practiced in the present by avoiding serious or irreversible damage to natural ecosystems, and by adopting a common sense approach when the consequences of our actions are uncertain.

Protecting the environment

Sustainability is primarily based on the recognition that natural ecosystems must be preserved and enhanced to allow all life to continue.

Economic viability

Sustainability incorporates a strong economic base, requiring transparency, accountability, and sound economic management.

Social equity

Sustainability demands that all people have equal opportunity to live a successful and healthy life. This means achieving more equitable circumstances for the current generation while ensuring that the interests and needs of future generations are not compromised.

Cultural vitality

Sustainability involves fostering cultural knowledge and traditions to create a richer community.

Community development

Sustainability needs to involve everyone; requiring the support, commitment, and involvement of the whole community through genuine partnerships.

Continuous improvement

Sustainability requires that we look for ways to improve our systems and practices, and to adopt changes when necessary.

Integrated approach

Sustainability demands the integration of environmental, economic, social, and cultural objectives, to achieve positive and lasting outcomes. This means giving equal consideration to all objectives and principles, and seeking an integrated strategic approach in all circumstances.

Attachment 2: Expanded Report Template

X.X Expanded Report Template

File: AM 328-05, 55/ 60/19/02-05
 Responsible Officer: Director, Organisational Development

Purpose

Background

Consultations

7. Discuss the salient aspects of any advice received from internal or external parties.

Financial Implications

8. Discuss the actual or estimated costs of the proposal (distinguishing between capital and recurrent costs).
9. Detail any financial implications of the proposal, both immediate and long term.
10. Detail whether it is a budget item or whether special allocation is required. Identify potential source of funding as appropriate.
11. Detail any reference to the Annual Plan or Budget.

Economic Implications

12. Provide details of the direct and indirect economic implications that this proposal will have for the Yarra community and businesses. There may be immediate impacts, such as the creation of new jobs or increased private investment. However, there may also be longer-term implications through such things as improved transport infrastructure or improved services provision.
13. Important things to consider include:
 - (a) transport infrastructure;
 - (i) access to employment opportunities;
 - (ii) reduced traffic congestion;
 - (iii) improving access to public transport services;
 - (b) services provision;
 - (i) improved access to or delivery of key services (gas, water, electricity, telecommunications, sewerage and waste disposal);
 - (ii) cost of services;

- (c) commercial and industrial investment;
 - (i) investment directly related to the proposal;
 - (ii) contribution to Yarra's capacity to attract future investment;
- (d) local employment;
 - (i) jobs created or lost;
 - (ii) types of jobs; and
 - (iii) employment for people with special needs.

Environmental Implications

13. What are the environmental implications of the proposal? Is there a way of evaluating the cost of natural capital employed? This might be measured by things such as:
- (a) energy use and greenhouse emissions;
 - (i) total energy consumption;
 - (ii) total greenhouse gas emissions;
 - (iii) alternative fuel sources;
 - (b) water consumption and disposal;
 - (i) water consumption;
 - (ii) waste water generation (quality and quantity);
 - (iii) stormwater run-off (quality and quantity);
 - (c) waste minimisation;
 - (i) total waste produced;
 - (ii) waste recycling and re-use;
 - (iii) prescribed or industrial waste;
 - (d) land management and biodiversity;
 - (i) number and range of native plants;
 - (ii) reduction of weed vegetation and pest animals;
 - (iii) native vegetation restoration; and
 - (iv) protection of significant flora and fauna.

Social Implications

14. What are the social implications of the proposal? Are there meaningful issues to consider, such as knowledge, skills developed or lost, levels of resilience, mutuality and trust within the community? This might be measured by such things as:
- (a) sense of community;
 - (i) cultural activities;
 - (ii) stakeholder participation;
 - (iii) recognition of diversity;
 - (iv) cultural heritage;
 - (v) social cohesion;
 - (b) community services;
 - (i) range and quality of services for different groups (children and families, young people, elderly people and people with disabilities);
 - (ii) accessibility of services;
 - (iii) cost of services;
 - (c) community health and well-being;
 - (i) recreation facilities, public safety;
 - (ii) health services and facilities;
 - (iii) public health implications;
 - (d) education and skills development;
 - (i) number and quality of education options for the community;
 - (ii) life-long learning opportunities;
 - (iii) meeting local needs;
 - (e) transport;
 - (i) safety for travellers;
 - (ii) emissions and fuel consumption;
 - (iii) public transport usage;
 - (iv) walking and cycling; and
 - (v) transportation needs of all people.

Council Plan, Strategy and Policy Implications

15. Outline how this matter relates to Council's Plan, policies and strategies.

Legal Implications

16. How does this matter relate to legislation?
17. What are Council's obligations?
18. Summarise any legal advice received.

Other Issues

19. Provide any other relevant information that does not fall into one of the above categories.

Options

20. Outline the various ways that Council could resolve this matter.

Option 1 – Insert Title of Option

21. Insert description of option. Include pros and cons.
Option 2 – Insert Title of Option

22. Insert description of option. Include pros and cons.

Option 3 – Insert Title of Option

23. Insert description of option. Include pros and cons.

Proposal

24. Summarise proposal and include rationale for preferred option.

RECOMMENDATION

25. Insert the preferred option, using formal and unambiguous language that could potentially be adopted by Council without alteration.

CONTACT OFFICER: **Insert name of Report Presenter**
TITLE: **Insert position title of Report Presenter**
TEL: **Insert telephone number of Report Presenter**

Attachment 1 – Insert Name of Attachment
Attachment 2 – Insert Name of Attachment

Attachment 3 – Quick Sustainability Audit – March 2008

Element	Tasks	Status	Priority
Building Corporate Knowledge and Skills Base			
	Awareness sessions on Sustainability Principles to be planned and conducted for Executive, Senior Managers, Policy and Program Managers.	Previously conducted and will be a priority for 2008/09 to integrate with new Agenda Management System.	High
	Discussion document developed and circulated to raise awareness of sustainability principles and application in project initiation, planning and decision systems.	Completed in 2003/04. Document to be reviewed and re-circulated.	High
	Interactive workshops for report writing staff and key staff in land use planning, direct service, policy and environmental management positions within Council.	Refer to Agenda Management System implementation.	High
	Report writing templates and training to be reviewed and revised to incorporate Sustaining Yarra principles.	Refer to Agenda Management System implementation.	High
	Intranet database of on-line resources, tools, tips and techniques to be developed as a corporate resource to support decision making.	Refer to Agenda Management System implementation.	Medium
	Review of Council's policy framework and principles.	Policy Management Framework due for review in 2008/09.	Medium
	Reported performance measurement to be reoriented from "activity measures" to "state of community" and developmental measures.	KPI review will be re-initiated in current year.	Medium
	Council Plan and Annual Report framework to be revised to reflect sustainability / TBL orientation.	Completed in 2003/04. Council Plan Framework will be reviewed by incoming Council in December 2008 to May 2009.	Medium
	Performance development review process for all staff to be reviewed and updated to incorporate principles.	Performance review process is currently under review through CITY Project. This will be completed in 2008 calendar year.	Medium
Adopting a Strategic Perspective			
	Overt consideration of sustainability in 2004 – 2009 Council Plan as an over arching theme.	Sustaining Yarra Principles adopted and integrated into planning framework. Completed in 2004/05.	Medium

Element	Tasks	Status	Priority
	Ensure Branch Service Plans have sustainability incorporated as key strategy.	Sustaining Yarra Principles adopted and integrated into planning framework. Completed in 2004/05.	Medium
	Asset management strategy to incorporate Sustaining Yarra principles.	Completed in 2004/05. Further work on asset management assessment process to be completed in current year.	High
Strategic Partnerships			
	Form strategic alliances with regional and local sustainability groups.	Partnership arrangements are ongoing and could be strengthened.	Low
	Form strategic partnerships with key State and Federal Departments and non-government agencies.	Current relationships to be reviewed and more strategic approach taken.	Medium
	Seek mentoring support for key staff from experienced practitioners.	Ongoing program of mentoring and support for key staff.	Medium
	Share knowledge within local government corporate planning special interest group.	Ongoing dialogue occurring.	Medium
	Ensure sustainability issues are on IMAP and other regional agendas. Integrated land use planning is a key expression of sustainability in practice.	Ongoing activities.	Medium
	Best practice case studies to be shared across regional Council's.	Communications	Medium
Fostering Productive Diversity			
	Review of Organisational Values to encourage integrated approach to decision making and organisational practice.	Organisational culture inventory will have a significant impact on review of values and behaviour in workplace.	High
	Planning for multi-disciplinary approach to the development and implementation of sustainability.	Cross organisational groups on Asset Management and Research & Policy developed in 2004/05. These are continuing to focus on holistic decision making and integrated planning.	Medium
	Community consultation on key issues within the municipality.	Consultation & Engagement Strategy developed and implemented. Neighbourhood Planning under active consideration.	High

4.2 Yarra Libraries Strategic Plan 2008-2012

Executive Summary

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek endorsement by Council for the draft of the Yarra Libraries Strategic Plan 2008-2012 prior to a call for public comment on the draft.

Key Issues

In 2007 the Yarra Melbourne Regional Library Corporation was dissolved and Yarra City Council subsequently made a commitment to the community and staff of the five Yarra based libraries to maintain the service with an in-house model of management.

An important part of the library service's integration into Council is the establishment of a strategic plan which is aligned to Council's corporate planning framework and reflects the mission and objectives of the organisation.

The draft Strategic Plan has been developed in response to the emerging trends and priorities within the Yarra community that will impact on the library service over the next five years and through a thorough community consultation process.

The plan outlines a framework for implementing strategies and actions that will achieve the mission of the service as *'an integral part of the local neighbourhood, providing high quality library services, a reader-centred approach and supporting community activities and services'*.

Financial Implications

The implementation of the majority of the actions in the plan will be undertaken within existing resources; however some new programs will require additional resources from Council.

A nominal budget of \$20,000 has been included as a new initiative in the Cultural and Library Services' service plan for the 2008-2009 financial year to allow for the implementation of actions of high priority as identified in the plan.

Council Plan, Strategy and Policy Implications

The Council Plan 2007-2011, includes the strategy to 'strengthen the role of the Yarra Libraries to ensure greater usage and access, through the development of...the Yarra Libraries Strategic Plan 2008-2012'.

PROPOSAL

That Council endorse the draft Yarra Libraries Strategic Plan 2008-2012 for final community comment.

That following completion of the community comment phase, a further report, together with consideration of any feedback received, is presented to Council for final approval of the draft plan.

4.2 Yarra Libraries Strategic Plan 2008-2012

File: 52/20/05
 Responsible Officer: Manager Cultural and Library Services

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to seek endorsement by Council for the draft of the Yarra Libraries Strategic Plan 2008-2012 prior to a call for public comment on the draft.

Background

2. Yarra Libraries was formed in April 2007 following the dissolution of the Yarra Melbourne Regional Library Corporation (YMRLC). Yarra Council made a commitment to the community and staff of the five Yarra-based libraries to maintain the service with an in-house model of management.
3. The former YMRLC was required to strategically plan for the service under amendments to the Local Government Act 1989 (Local Government (Democratic Reform) Act 2003).
4. An important part of the library service's integration into Council is the establishment of a strategic plan which is aligned to Council's corporate planning framework and reflects the mission and objectives of the organisation.
5. The Centre for Leadership and Management Pty Ltd assisted Council to develop a strategic plan which would set the direction for Yarra Libraries for the next four years.
6. The development of the plan included an environmental scan (stage one) to analyse the library's current and likely future strategic environment. This incorporated initial research using Council reports and plans; demographic data; community and consumer feedback; and trends and innovations in library technology, systems and services at state, national and international levels.
7. Comprehensive consultation was conducted (stage two) through strategic directions workshops and focus groups to build an understanding and support for the planning process and plan.
8. The attached draft Yarra Libraries Strategic Plan (stage three) was developed for presentation and refinement by Council.
9. The draft Strategic Plan supports Yarra Libraries mission to be *'an integral part of the local neighbourhood, providing high quality library services, a reader-centred approach and supporting community activities and services'*.
10. The plan outlines the current services and programs provided by the library and recognises the significant opportunities provided through the ongoing integration of the service as a business unit of Council. This integration includes the development of stronger links with Council units and community organisations to identify opportunities for joint projects and partnerships.

11. The plan explores the emerging trends and priorities within the Yarra community that will impact on the library service over the next five years. The five priority areas for the plan respond directly to these issues:
 - (a) Priority one: Services
 - (b) Priority two: Community Engagement
 - (c) Priority three: Information and Communication Technology
 - (d) Priority four: People and Culture
 - (e) Priority five: Finances and Assets
12. The action plan then outlines the strategies and new initiatives required to implement the plan and gives indicative timeframes for each of these actions. The annual service planning process will allocate the specific timelines and resources required to achieve each action for that year.

Consultations

13. The consultation process was guided by Yarra's consultation model and the process itself; with input from Councillors, Council staff (including library staff) and community groups and residents, served as a tool to promote Yarra's new service to these key stakeholders.
14. A series of consultations were facilitated by the Centre for Leadership and Management and included the following:
 - (a) Strategic Directions Group workshops with nominated Councillors and Council officers, including the senior management team of the library service;
 - (b) internal consultation workshops with staff from the Cultural and Library Services branch and the broader organisation; including representatives from Organisational Development, Family and Children's Services, Aged and Disability Services, Yarra Access, Assets and Environmental Services; and
 - (c) external consultation workshops for members of the friends of the library and local history groups, local service providers and individuals. Members of the Yarra Matters panel who were identified as non-users were also invited to attend a focus group.
15. Further to this, information provided from a heritage workshop in August 2007 (at which 16 members of Council and the community attended a round table discussion regarding local history collections, historical societies and Council support) was included in the consultation outcomes.
16. The draft of the plan will go out for public comment in April 2008. Draft documents will be sent directly to those who participated in the workshops. The public submission process will also be promoted at Council customer service points; such as town halls, libraries, leisure centres and on Council's website.

17. Feedback and comments will be presented to Council for consideration prior to adoption of the plan in June 2008.

Issues

18. A number of emerging trends will impact on library services in the City of Yarra over the coming years. These trends have been identified through community consultation and the analysis of demographic data. Key emerging trends include:
- (a) information technology and the virtual library. Over the past five years, the number of users who access the library's website has grown, as has the resources available through the web. The rising popularity of Web 2.0 technologies (blogs, wikis, pod-casting and social networking sites) promotes opportunities for collaboration between organisations and patrons;
 - (b) children and young families in Yarra. There is a predicted increase in the population of children in the identified catchments in Yarra. This growth will increase demand by families using the libraries as both a meeting place with their young families and as a place of early education;
 - (c) high income residents in Yarra. Higher income earners entering the municipality may purchase services that are otherwise offered by the libraries, thereby decreasing library usage and inadvertently shaping future service provision. The challenge faced by Yarra Libraries is how to engage this sector;
 - (d) CALD communities in Yarra. With gentrification impacting on the CALD community numbers, it will be important for libraries to promote and incorporate access and diversity into their services to protect the social and cultural diversity of Yarra; and
 - (e) Young people and technology. Generations X & Y present challenges in the provision of library material and in engaging these generations through the latest technology as an entry point to library services. Yarra libraries will need to maintain the most up to date communication technology to attract these potential users.

Financial Implications

19. The draft plan identifies key areas of priority and work over the next five years. Some of the actions will be undertaken within existing resources; however others will require additional resources from Council and these are identified in the action plan.
20. A nominal budget of \$20,000 has been included as a new initiative in the Branch's service plan for the 2008-2009 financial year to allow for the implementation of actions of high priority as identified in the plan.

Economic Implications

21. In Australia the total local and state government investment in local public libraries is \$550 million per annum - about 7c per Australian per day. This is equal to the budget of one large Australian university with 35,000 students or

equivalent to only 1.6% of the total \$40 billion pa expenditure on institutional education in Australia.

22. Over the last thirty years the state government's public library grant has declined proportionally from a 50:50 sharing of costs with local government to the current situation where the state government contribution is on average 20.5% of the cost of operating public libraries.
23. It can be assumed that the cost shifting seen to date will continue and the burden of financial support will lie with local government. It is imperative that Council strategically plan for the library service, both financially and in relation to the services that are relevant to the community.

Environmental Implications

24. Although there are no direct environmental implications of the plan, it should be noted that the library service is currently involved in a number of projects which respond to environmental sustainability issues:
 - (a) the North Fitzroy Library feasibility study includes an assessment of opportunities to incorporate environmentally sustainable design (ESD) principles; and
 - (b) the Carlton Library recently received a grant from Sustainability Victoria as part of the Solar in Schools Program. The grant will allow for the installation of solar panels in a highly visible location on the exterior of the building. System performance data will be logged with Sustainability Victoria and the program will promote the viability of solar energy in public and private buildings.
25. This illustrates the potential to utilise libraries to promote environmental and other social issues to users and the broader Yarra community.

Social Implications

26. Recent Australia-wide market research on social values, lifestyle and cultural change confirms that public libraries are highly valued by the community as they contribute to the promotion of social capital and are seen to be independent from political and economic influences.
27. Overall satisfaction with public libraries remains very high with 33% 'very satisfied' and 86% 'totally satisfied'. In the context of other public services, public libraries rank with Australia Post and pharmacies as the 'gold standard'. This reflects a growing distinction in the public's mind between those services which are seen to have retained their old-fashioned, human touch as opposed to privatised outsourced services. (MPHP, Yarra Council p18)

Council Plan, Strategy and Policy Implications

28. The Council Plan 2007-2011, includes the strategy to 'strengthen the role of the Yarra Libraries to ensure greater usage and access, through the development of...'the Yarra Libraries Strategic Plan 2008-2012'.

Legal Implications

29. The draft strategic plan has no legal implications.

Other Issues

30. There are no issues.

Proposal

31. The draft strategic plan is attached for Council consideration. It is proposed to make the draft plan available for final community comment, prior to formal adoption by Council.

32. The draft plan explores the emerging trends and priorities within the Yarra community that will impact on the library service over the next five years. The five priority areas for the plan respond directly to these issues:

- (a) Priority one: Services

This priority addresses the challenge to meet the needs of the changing community. As Yarra's community continues to change at a dramatic rate, so too must the library service. The transient Yarra population and the potential to engage with current non-library users in particular, pose new challenges for the library service.

- (b) Priority two: Community Engagement

This priority recognises that the library is increasingly seeking to partner with the local community and community groups, Council and its services, other libraries and agencies. Opportunities lie in these partnerships to develop new programs and services that respond to the needs of particular community groups.

- (c) Priority three: Information and Communication Technology

This key area of priority recognises that the library is experiencing increased demand for virtual library services. There is a demand for innovative and efficient access to ICT, particularly from young people.

- (d) Priority four: People and Culture

This priority looks at supporting our workforce and our place within the broader organisation. Staff recruitment and retention, IT savvy staff and the ongoing integration with Council services are key areas of focus.

- (e) Priority five: Finances and Assets

This priority responds to the needs of the changing library population and the need to review the physical spaces within libraries and how they support users and services. Further to this, good asset and financial management will ensure the library service is cost-effective and strategic.

33. The action plan outlines the strategies and new initiatives required to implement the plan and gives indicative timeframes and costs for each of these

actions. The annual service planning process will allocate the specific timelines and resources required to achieve each action for that year.

RECOMMENDATION

34. That Council endorse the draft Yarra Libraries Strategic Plan 2008-2012 for final community comment.
35. That following completion of the community comment phase, a further report, together with consideration of any feedback received, is presented to Council for final approval of the draft plan.

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Attachment 1 – Yarra Libraries Strategic Plan 2008-2012



Yarra Libraries Strategic Plan 2008-2012

Yarra Libraries
City of Yarra

DRAFT at March 2008

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Welcome

Welcome to the City of Yarra, Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri as the first owners of this country. Today they are still the custodians of the cultural heritage of this land. Further to this, Council acknowledges there are other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have lived, worked and contributed to the cultural heritage of Yarra.

Mayor's Message

To be inserted at final draft

Executive Summary

Public libraries are an important part of the community's social infrastructure. They are a focus for social interaction, and their wide range of services are respected and valued by all segments of the community. Libraries create better informed communities by providing free access to information technology, community information, materials for leisure and lifelong learning, and various community programs.

In April 2007, following the dissolution of the Yarra-Melbourne Regional Libraries Corporation, Yarra Libraries became a business unit of the City of Yarra. With five libraries in the municipality, there is a combined membership of 44,000 members and a collection of over 240,000 items.

The Yarra Libraries Strategic Plan 2008-2012 has been developed in alignment with Council's strategic planning framework. It provides an overview of the current community and existing library services, an analysis of future trends and challenges, and a strategy for action.

The plan was developed through a thorough community consultation process and identifies five priority areas for the service over the next five years. These areas are; services, community engagement, information and communication technology, people and culture, and finance and assets.

In order for the library to continually serve the community, it must be able to adapt to the changing needs of its users, and also to societal shifts and expectations in general. The City of Yarra is a community in constant transition and the strategic objectives of the plan reflect this.

Key actions include nurturing collaborative partnerships with Council and community organisations, engaging the community in the development and implementation of new programs that meet their needs, identifying new and innovative ways to encourage non-users to discover their libraries and developing the library's online presence in response to the emerging technologies and changing expectations.

The plan will guide the development of Yarra Libraries over the next five years and each year, through Council's annual service planning process, actions will be reviewed and prioritised to ensure the library is meeting the needs of the community now and into the future.

1. Background

1.1 Our Community

Who we are

The 73,501 people who make up the City of Yarra continue to reflect all walks of life. Whilst the majority of people are in the middle age brackets (18-64) and are reasonably well educated, the households of Yarra are filled with a mix of couples, families and single people.

Yarra residents come from a mix of cultures (both English and non English speaking), of which most residents are extremely proud.

The economic backgrounds of Yarra residents continue to be polarised, with the well off increasing in number and the low income households still strongly represented. Whilst a reasonable number of residents own or are purchasing their homes, a significant number are renting (with over one in ten in public housing).

Many Yarra residents are community orientated, involved in recreational activities and with strong networks. These people care about "what's happening in the community." However, highlighting the mix that is Yarra, there are those who feel on the edge and not as much part of the community as they should.

Yarra residents are proud of where they live, and the research shows they are willing to fight to keep the things that matter.

What Matters to us

Yarra residents are proud of their suburbs' heritage and "look" and what matters most is maintaining the "integrity" and history of their municipality – both culturally and, most importantly, physically. Yarra residents care about their outdoor and arts based lifestyle that allows them to view other cultures and participate in community life. What matters is that the facilities, open space and cultural and musical events are maintained and continually developed in order to sustain their celebratory lifestyle.

The micro (Yarra) and macro (world) "environment" matter greatly to the community. Yarra residents want to make sure that in 2020 the City of Yarra has maintained (and improved where necessary) its parks, open space and bicycle tracks, and they hope this occurs in the broader "environmental" context of creating a sustainable city (in terms of energy and water). Yarra residents have well and truly begun implementing energy savings activities, and it appears that increasing their commitments in this area and helping the "global" environment is something that really matters in 2007 and beyond.

A Picture of Yarra, Yarra City Council, December 2007

1.2 Our Council

Since April 2007, Yarra Libraries has been a business unit of the City of Yarra.

The mission of the City of Yarra is to 'celebrate our history, diversity and culture and, through leadership and services, create a better future.'

This strategic plan sits within the Council's planning framework. Each year Yarra Council sets its strategic direction through the Council Plan.

The 2007-2011 Council Plan recognises the new position of the library service as an integrated in-house service. In 2007-2008, the relevant key Councillor priorities include to:

- Progress the North Fitzroy Library development;
- Continue the integration of Yarra Libraries into core Council business.

Further to this, within the key theme of People, Communities and Neighbourhoods, a strategy is to 'strengthen the role of the Yarra Libraries to ensure greater usage and access.' Specific actions identified include:

- Continue the integration of Yarra Libraries into Council's core business;
- Commence consultation on the suite and design for the North Fitzroy Library;
- Implement a new Library Management System;
- Develop the Yarra Libraries Strategic Plan 2008-2012.

Yarra Council Plan 2007-2011, Yarra City Council, 2007

1.3 Our Libraries

Yarra Libraries has five branches and a virtual library:

Carlton Library

667 Rathdowne Street, North Carlton

Collingwood Library

11 Stanton Street, Abbotsford

Fitzroy Library

128 Moor Street, Fitzroy

North Fitzroy Library

240 St Georges Road, North Fitzroy

Richmond Library

415 Church Street, Richmond

Virtual Library

www.yarracity.vic.gov.au/library

Yarra Libraries was formed in April 2007 following the dissolution of the Yarra Melbourne Regional Library Corporation (YMRLC). The YMRLC was established in 1995 and integrated three existing library services; Carringbush Regional Library, Fitzroy Public Library and Melbourne City Libraries.

In 2006, Melbourne City Council decided against renewing the existing agreement and Yarra City Council subsequently made a commitment to the community and staff of the five Yarra based libraries to maintain the service with an in-house model of management.

The unit sits within the Cultural and Library Services branch which also includes Arts and Cultural Services and Civic Facilities. The branch is part of the Community Programs directorate.

The senior management team for the library includes; the Manager Cultural and Library Services, the Coordinator Collections and Services, and the Coordinator Library Development. Yarra Libraries employs 35.1 EFT staff.

1.3.1 Our Services

In 2006/2007 Yarra Libraries recorded 1,200,000 loans and an active membership of 44,000 members. There were a total of 849,255 visits to the five branches and 603,677 visits to the virtual library. Members had access to approximately 240,000 items in nine languages.

Yarra Libraries provides a wide range of services which reflect the rich cultural and demographic diversity of the communities it supports. With a particular strength in its cultural and linguistically diverse (CALD) collections, a range of services are offered from the five branches and virtual library. Each branch has a specialist area of interest that reflects the local community and a range of key services are coordinated across the five branches. These include:

Carlton Library

This award winning, architecturally designed building offers visitors a stimulating and dynamic library space within the heart of the North Carlton café precinct. The service's Reader Development program operates from the library and the upstairs meeting room is often the location for interesting author talks and book groups.

Collingwood Library

Housed in a historic former church, the renovated facility includes a popular meeting space and is in close proximity to the Collingwood Housing Estate, so the branch services a wide range of communities. Multi-cultural services are a focus at the library, with the first Arabic speaking library staff member based here and supporting the Arabic collection. More recently, new activities include Sunday afternoon recitals from the former choir loft and a music program for young children.

Fitzroy Library

Situated in the heritage listed Fitzroy Town Hall, the library was extensively renovated and now provides a comfortable and welcoming space for the diverse Fitzroy community. Located near to the Atherton Gardens Housing Estate, the library provides a homework club and is a popular meeting place for young people. Staff make regular visits to the local Maternal and Child Health Centre, schools and community services and Chinese internet classes are held in the library's computer room. Meeting rooms, an exhibition space and a significant Local History Collection offer the community a range of additional services.

North Fitzroy Library

Located in the busy St Georges Road shopping precinct, this small shop-front library offers the community easy access to the service's wider collections. Even though it is a small space, the branch offers a wide range of reader services and book groups and is always buzzing with activity. A study into the feasibility of developing a new North Fitzroy Library branch is currently underway.

Richmond Library

The largest library in the service, this branch has the most loans and members. The facility includes a number of significant Council and community based tenants; including Carringbush Adult Education, Richmond and Burnley Historical Society, the Women's Art Register and the Richmond Maternal and Child Health Centre and Toy Library. A large community meeting space, theatrette and exhibition space make this facility a significant community resource.

Virtual Library

Through the City of Yarra website, library members have 24 hour, 7 days a week access to the library catalogue, reservations and renewals. The Chinese, Arabic and Vietnamese pages detail many of our services in those languages. Somali will be included in the near future. The library website has numerous online resources, a calendar of events and community information. Through the online resources site, you can access up to date information including:

- Thousands of online journals covering a wide range of topics such as business, computers, current events, economics, education, environmental issues, health care, hobbies, humanities, law, literature and art, politics, science, social science, sports, and technology.
- Full text Australian newspapers (The Age/Australian/ Herald-Sun) searchable by keyword going back to 1996.

- Over 200 full text E-books on IT & Business related areas (copyright free & fully downloadable).
- A reliable international health database with latest research findings written in an easily accessible format.
- Local Government Guide online.
- An Online interactive computer training course.
- General encyclopaedias, including Encyclopaedia Britannica.

On both the kids and youth sites, there is information on authors, books, awards and book groups including ideas about what to read and a spot for young people to have their own reviews posted. As well as listing things to do at the library (not all of them involving books!); there is information on things to do in Melbourne, a place to post your own art and writing online, and homework programs. Students can research for their assignments with the online databases and useful web site links.

Reader Services

Coordinated from the Carlton branch, the service offers a range of activities; such as author talks, new book days, support for book clubs and guides to resources offered. The aim is to increase people's confidence and enjoyment of reading, expand their reading choices, and provide opportunities to share their reading experiences. For example, the Readers Day events program includes bookmarks that patrons can put into books of their choice to guide others, 'live' book group discussions and a list of Vietnamese talking books recommended by library patrons (available in the library and via the website).

Children's and Youth Services

This service is coordinated from the North Fitzroy branch. Yarra Libraries runs a number of programs aimed at introducing children and their carers to the range of services available through the library. Children's and Youth librarians from each branch regularly conduct 'Babies and Books' sessions for new parent groups as part of Maternal and Child Health Centre programs in Yarra. These programs discuss issues with new parents such as book sharing with babies and early literacy development.

Baby Story-time sessions for 12-18 month old babies are currently being offered at the Fitzroy, Richmond, Collingwood and Carlton branches. Preschool Story-time sessions are offered throughout the year and include craft, games and puzzles. Other programs to entice young readers include "Little Sing", a free and informal singing program at Collingwood library for pre-schoolers and their carers to play with songs from around the world. Parents often meet in the libraries to share books informally before and after many of these sessions.

Homework clubs for school aged children are held at Carlton and Fitzroy and school holiday activities are held at each library for primary school age children.

Inter-Library Loans

The Inter-Library Loans (ILL) service is available for patrons to request items from other library services within Australia. The items are requested through the library website and delivered at no or a minimal cost to the user to the library of their choice. This service is coordinated through Technical Services based at the Fitzroy branch.

Technical Services

Technical Services is based at the Fitzroy branch and provides support for the library management system (LMS) and also manages the processing of materials for the five library sites.

Home Library Service

Access to collections and services for home bound patrons are coordinated from the Richmond branch. Free selection and delivery of library material is offered to people living in Yarra who are unable to visit their local library and clients are visited on a set day every four weeks. Visits are also made to nursing homes and other institutions.

Multicultural Services

This service is coordinated from the Collingwood branch. The library aims to provide a broad range of books, materials & services for all sections of the community including those from Non-English speaking backgrounds.

Vietnamese and Chinese reading months are run each year with associated programs of events encouraging community participation. Other promotions include patrons' Recommended Reading bookmarks and Quick Choice selections in Vietnamese, occasional bi-lingual story-time sessions and celebrations of cultural festivals. Times when the public will always find the Vietnamese, Chinese and Arabic speaking members of staff in the library are well publicised. In partnership with U3A, very popular Chinese internet classes are coordinated from Fitzroy library.

Information Services and Local History

Libraries work closely with the local historical societies, sharing resources and cooperating in the delivery of valued services to the community. Staff will often work with society members to answer complex or detailed queries about local history and genealogy. A range of events are also organised each year such as local author talks and walks. This service is coordinated from the Richmond branch.

Other Services

Yarra Libraries offers inclusive, flexible and welcoming community spaces. Library membership and access is free to anyone, whether from Yarra or outside the municipality. Internet and computer access is free along with affordable photocopying services and meeting room hire. In addition to these services, in partnership with the many local community groups, Yarra Libraries has exhibition spaces, children and adult literacy programs, entertainment and cultural events.

1.3.2 Our Collections

Yarra Libraries offers a wide range of resources and a professional, knowledgeable and friendly staff who are able to assist members to find what they are looking for.

Collections are regularly assessed to ensure that they are up to date and relevant to the community's changing needs. They include:

- Fiction and non fiction books for adults, young adults and children.
- AV materials (music CDs, CD-ROMs, DVDs, videos).
- LOTE materials (including Chinese, Vietnamese, Somali, Greek, Italian, Arabic, Spanish, Turkish).
- Bilingual picture books in various languages.
- Aboriginal resources collection.
- Talking books (audio cassette, CD and MP3).
- Large print fiction and non-fiction books.
- Local history collections (including maps and photographs).
- Reference materials.
- Online access to databases.
- Magazines and newspapers.
- Language kits.
- Adult literacy kits.
- The Ewing Trust collection.

1.3.3 Community Feedback

Yarra Libraries encourages patrons to provide feedback through staff, feedback forms at each branch and via the website.

Responses from a number of recent surveys (the City of Yarra general survey 2007 posted to 664 Yarra Panel members in July 2007 and a survey posted to 700 Yarra Matters panel members and 600 random residents in November 2006) indicated that Yarra Libraries offers a comprehensive public library service for its community. Some key results are:

- 54% of Yarra Panel members believed that Yarra Libraries were most important to access ahead of doctors, dentists, banks, chemists, recreational activities and sporting activities (ahead of libraries in importance were supermarkets, parks and open spaces, cafes and restaurants).
- 90% of residents surveyed considered libraries to be average or higher in importance than local events and festivals (78%) and ovals and sports grounds (77%).
- Residents rated libraries as second highest in terms of satisfaction with community facilities. Neighbourhood houses/community centres came first.
- 62% recalled using or observing libraries in the past twelve months. This was the highest recall for any community facility or event.

2. Our Plan

2.1 Context

The former YMRLC was required to develop and publish a strategic plan for the service under amendments to the Local Government Act 1989 (Local Government (Democratic Reform) Act 2003). The last strategic plan for the YMRLC was developed for the 2006-2011 period. The first Yarra Libraries Strategic Plan references the key themes of the previous plan in recognition of the context in which this new plan has been developed.

Following the dissolution of the YMRLC in April 2007, an important part of the Library's integration into Council was the establishment of a strategic plan which was aligned to Council's own corporate plan and mission. The plan has been developed in the context of this changing environment which has important implications for the library's role.

The Centre for Leadership and Management Pty Ltd assisted Council to develop a strategic plan which would set the direction for Yarra Libraries for the next four years. The consultation process was guided by Yarra's consultation model and the process itself, with input from Councillors, Council staff (including library staff) and community groups and residents, would serve as a tool to promote Yarra's new service to these key stakeholders.

The Strategic Plan is aligned to Council's objectives and focuses on the needs of the current and potential library users within the community.

The agreed methodology commenced with an environmental scan (stage one) to analyse the library's current and likely future strategic environment. This incorporated initial research and gathering of Council reports and plans; demographic data; community and consumer feedback; and trends and innovations in library technology, systems and services at state, national and international levels.

Comprehensive consultation was conducted (stage two) through strategic directions workshops and focus groups to build an understanding and support for the planning process and plan. Internal consultations included Councillors, officers and the executive, and the Library Management Team. External consultations included members of friends of the library groups, historical societies, individual users and community groups (for example Holden St. Neighbourhood House and Lady Gowrie Child Care Centre).

A draft Yarra Libraries Strategic Plan (stage three) was developed for presentation and refinement by Council. Once ratified, the draft plan is sent to the wider community for feedback (stage four), further refinement and finally adoption by Council.

2.2 Our Mission

Yarra Libraries is an integral part of the local neighbourhood, providing high quality library services, a reader-centred approach and supporting community activities and services.

2.3 Our Values

Yarra Libraries values:

- Free core public library services
- Equity of access
- Quality services which we plan, develop and evaluate to pursue excellence
- Respecting the diversity of our community
- Courteous, responsive and efficient staff
- Team work and partnerships
- Open and varied communication

3. Emerging Trends

A number of emerging trends will impact on library services in the City of Yarra over the coming years. These trends have been identified through community consultation and the analysis of demographic data. Key emerging trends include:

3.1 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND THE VIRTUAL LIBRARY

Users are becoming more comfortable with web-based information and content services. Over the past five years, the number of users who access the library's website has grown, as has the resources available through the web. Communication via email for reservations and overdue items is now the dominant communication method for Yarra patrons.

The rising popularity of Web 2.0 technologies (blogs, wikis, pod-casting and social networking sites) promotes opportunities for collaboration between organisations and patrons. Patrons expect to be able to access these applications and the challenge will be how Yarra Libraries will respond to these expectations. To ensure these services are provided, library staff will also be required to be appropriately trained and savvy in such IT applications.

3.2 CHILDREN AND YOUNG FAMILIES IN YARRA

There is a predicted increase in the population of children in the identified catchments in Yarra. Collingwood and Richmond-Cremorne are expected to experience the greatest growth in young children aged 0-5 years between 2004 and 2016.

This growth will increase demand by families using the libraries as both a meeting place with their young families and as a place of early education. The challenge will be for Yarra Libraries to reflect these changing demographics with appropriate services and spaces in the right locations.

3.3 HIGH INCOME RESIDENTS IN YARRA

Professionals and high income earners are moving into the municipality, changing the traditional demographic of households with low incomes or financial hardship. Higher income earners entering the municipality may purchase services that are otherwise offered by the libraries, thereby decreasing library usage and inadvertently shaping future service provision.

The challenge faced by Yarra Libraries is how to engage this sector. This may be through promoting existing services in new ways and identifying services that are not currently offered. The provision of the latest information and communication technologies is also vital to ensure that this group's needs are catered for.

3.4 CALD COMMUNITIES IN YARRA

Yarra is moving toward a less diverse population with a decline in the number of families where both parents do not speak English at home. With gentrification impacting on the CALD community numbers, it will be important for libraries to promote and incorporate access and diversity into their services to protect the social and cultural diversity of Yarra.

3.5 YOUNG PEOPLE AND TECHNOLOGY

Technology plays a central role in the lives of young people who are up to date with communication technology as both a form of communication and entertainment.

Generations X & Y present challenges in the provision of library material and in engaging these generations through the latest technology as an entry point to library services. Yarra libraries will need to maintain the most up to date communication technology to attract these potential users.

4. Priorities

Taking into consideration current community demographics, the emerging trends, and feedback from the consultation process, five priority areas have been identified for Yarra Libraries over the next five years. The priority areas are: services, community engagement, information and communication technology, people and culture, and finance and assets:

4.1 SERVICES

- **Responding to changing community demographics.**
Changing demographics include a projected increase in the number of children being born in the City of Yarra in the next five years, an increase in 25-35 year old residents, an increase in high income residents, declining numbers of older people and CALD families living in Yarra, and an increase in the rental population to more than 50 per cent.
- **Promotion of library services to new residents and non users.**
There is a specific group in Yarra that either use library services minimally or not at all. There is a need to encourage access to library services for transient public housing tenants (over 3,000 tenants, many of whom are new migrants and refugees), and for those that currently do not visit libraries at all, possibly because they are unaware of what libraries offer.

4.2 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- **Strengthening engagement with key stakeholders through partnerships.**
The library is increasingly seeking to partner with the local community and community groups, Council and its services, other libraries and agencies. Opportunities lie in these partnerships to develop new programs and services that respond to the needs of particular groups – carers with young children, older people, people with disabilities, Indigenous groups, CALD communities, new migrants and young people.

4.3 INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- **Predicting and responding to user needs in information technology.**
The library is experiencing increased demand for virtual library services. The use of the website, web catalogue and databases has significantly increased in Yarra against a declining numbers of loans. There is a demand for innovative and efficient access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT), particularly from young people, including demands for the latest DVDs and CDs and Web 2.0 technologies

such as blogs and podcasting. There is also great potential for the use of ICT in the provision of library services delivered to homebound people.

4.4 PEOPLE AND CULTURE

- **Staff attraction and retention.**
There is a need to attract and retain staff from a declining pool of graduates and potential employees in the public library sector by being recognised as an employer of choice with opportunities for professional development and an attractive organisational culture and vision.
- **ICT savvy staff.**
The development and strengthening of staff skills and knowledge in ICT applications will assist the service in meeting the changing role of the public library.
- **Integrating with Council.**
The integration of the service as a business unit of the City of Yarra poses opportunities for the alignment of systems and processes, new services, staff opportunities and a positive organisational culture.

4.5 FINANCES AND ASSETS

- **Library spaces for non-library use.**
In responding to the needs of the changing library population, there is a need to review the physical spaces within libraries and how they support users and services.
- **Asset management.**
By utilising Council's Asset Management Information System (AMIS), the library can ensure the timely and cost-effective maintenance and refurbishment of existing infrastructure and strategically plan for the future needs of users.
- **Financial management.**
The library needs to identify alternative sources of revenue, grants and funding to ensure it continues to offer up to date collections and state of the art information technology.

5. Action Plan

It is recognised that Yarra Libraries has a range of services and areas of work that are ongoing. The action plan identifies new initiatives that respond to the areas of priority and provides indicative timeframes for the implementation of each action.

The timeframes are; ongoing; short-term (for implementation in the first year); medium-term (years 2-3 of the plan) and long-term (years 4-5). The annual service planning process will allocate the specific timelines and resources required to achieve each action for that year.

An ongoing focus for Yarra Libraries is the development of stronger links with community organisations to identify opportunities for joint projects and partnerships. Yarra Libraries also continues to work internally with other Council departments to create new collaborative partnerships. These internal relationships will also support Council in its priority to engage the community and undertake planning at a neighbourhood level.

Strategy	Action	Timeframe ongoing, short, medium and long-term	Resource Implications
5.1 SERVICES Strategy: Provide a range of high quality library services to the diverse and changing Yarra community.	Existing services 1. Review the delivery of story-time sessions in library branches which are experiencing high demand to identify ways of engaging these patrons in other library services. 2. Develop the Aboriginal Resources Collection at Fitzroy Library in consultation with relevant Council units and Council's Aboriginal Advisory Group. 3. Review library opening hours in response to the development of the North Fitzroy Library branch.	Short Medium Long	Within existing resources Within existing resources. Within existing resources Additional operational costs may be

	<p>4. Expand the Home Library Service to trial book groups in aged care facilities.</p> <p>5. Work directly with relevant Council units to identify service gaps and develop new programs which expand library services to CALD communities.</p> <p>New services</p> <p>6. In partnership with Yarra Youth Services and local schools, engage young people to identify and shape library services that are relevant to them (e.g. youth website, wikis, blogs, wireless hotspots, youth book groups, poetry readings, school self confidence programs).</p> <p>7. Initiate the program Pageturners, which links volunteers with primary school aged children in the library to help children with literacy through reading together. A pilot at Fitzroy Library will target the significant numbers of children from CALD communities frequenting the library on their own. If successful, the project could be expanded to other libraries.</p> <p>8. Provide input into the investigation of the feasibility of a community bus service that includes libraries.</p>	<p>Short</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Short</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>required</p> <p>Within existing resources</p> <p>Within existing resources Implications assessed as part of investigations</p> <p>Within existing resources Implications assessed as part of investigations</p> <p>Within existing resources Pilot will identify resource implications</p> <p>Within existing resources</p>
<p>5.2 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</p> <p>Strategy: Engage the Yarra</p>	<p>9. Undertake targeted consultation with young people, non-users and CALD communities to determine their specific library needs.</p> <p>10. Increase access to local history, the City of Yarra Art and Heritage Collection</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Short</p>	<p>Within existing resources</p> <p>Within existing resources</p>

<p>community in the planning and delivery of services.</p>	<p>and artworks by the community through the provision of exhibition spaces in collaboration with the Arts and Cultural Services unit.</p> <p>11. Actively promote the library service internally across Council and identify opportunities to cooperate on mutually benefiting initiatives and projects.</p> <p>12. Develop an innovative promotion and marketing strategy in consultation with Council's Communications Unit to promote the breadth of library services to non-users; including Yarra's high income residents and transient rental population.</p> <p>13. Implement new signage and displays in the libraries that provide a point of contact and information sharing about Council and community services.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>Within existing resources</p> <p>Within existing resources Implications assessed as part of strategy</p> <p>Capital Works implications</p>
<p>5.3 INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY</p> <p>Strategy: Proactively plan for and meet the technology needs of current and future Yarra residents.</p>	<p>14. Implement a strategy for the improvement of the Library Management System for more efficient user access. Specific actions include:</p> <p>a. Improve the catalogue search and display capabilities for non-Roman scripts to expand its application to CALD communities.</p> <p>b. Remain proactive in the Swift Consortium to ensure that the needs of Yarra patrons are addressed in library system enhancements.</p> <p>15. Develop the Virtual Library as a significant access point for library services that embraces new technologies. Specific actions include:</p> <p>a. Further develop the library's website by undertaking a usability review to ensure that it is informative and a point of access to the</p>	<p>Short</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Short</p>	<p>Within existing resources</p> <p>Within existing resources</p> <p>Within existing resources</p>

	<p>community's information needs.</p> <p>b. Investigate and utilise Web 2.0 and other emerging technologies (e.g. podcasting in English and other languages, blogs, and wikis).</p> <p>c. Improve access to online resources in languages spoken by emerging communities.</p> <p>16. Investigate ways in which the Home Library Service can provide patrons with access to new technologies.</p> <p>17. In consultation with Council's Information Services unit, develop a library technology strategy which assists the adoption of new technologies.</p> <p>18. Implement wireless computer access at Fitzroy Library to allow the use of personal laptops.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Short</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Short</p>	<p>Within existing resources New program costs may be required</p> <p>Within existing resources</p> <p>Within existing resources Implications assessed as part of investigation</p> <p>Within existing resources Implications assessed as part of strategy</p> <p>Within existing resources</p>
<p>5.4 PEOPLE AND CULTURE</p> <p>Strategy: Support an organisational culture that encourages friendly, knowledgeable and competent library staff.</p>	<p>19. Develop a workforce strategy for the professional development of current staff and recruitment of new staff in partnership with the People and Organisational Development Branch. Specific actions include:</p> <p>a. Develop a graduate program with educational providers to attract new library staff.</p> <p>b. Develop a comprehensive staff induction, training and development strategy that incorporates best practice learning e.g. staff exchanges, rotations, acting opportunities, mentoring and peer-to-</p>	<p>Long</p> <p>Short</p>	<p>Within existing resources Implications assessed as part of strategy</p> <p>Within existing resources Implications assessed as part of strategy</p>

	<p>peer skill coaching.</p> <p>c. Up-skill staff on a regular basis in ICT applications to enable them to manage new technologies.</p> <p>d. Ensure library staff have access to corporate training and professional development opportunities offered by the broader organisation.</p> <p>20. Continue to develop and promote an OH&S culture by maintaining a healthy and safe workplace.</p> <p>21. Ensure that all library policies and procedures are consistent with Council's.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Within existing resources Implications assessed as part of strategy</p> <p>Within existing resources Implications assessed as part of strategy</p> <p>Within existing resources</p> <p>Within existing resources</p>
<p>5.5 FINANCES AND ASSETS</p> <p>Strategy: Provide high quality library infrastructure and buildings that are environmentally friendly, cost efficient and respond to the needs of users.</p>	<p>22. Undertake an audit of library facilities and infrastructure and incorporate into the AMIS to ensure their timely upgrade as required.</p> <p>23. Review existing floor plans and uses of space within the libraries and implement a capital works program that responds to the changing needs of the community (e.g. the provision for both quiet and noisy spaces) and meets Council's commitment to the incorporation of environmentally sustainable design.</p> <p>24. Explore opportunities to integrate the promotion and booking of library facilities such as meeting rooms, exhibition spaces and the Richmond library theatre by the community to ensure equity of access.</p>	<p>Medium</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>Within existing resources Implications assessed as part of audit</p> <p>Within existing resources Capital works implications assessed as part of audit</p> <p>Part of CITY Project outcomes and within existing resources of</p>

	<p>25. Develop a new North Fitzroy Library branch.</p> <p>26. Identify other sources of revenue, grants and funding to meet the demands for increased services. Specific actions include:</p> <p>a. Review of the debt collection policy.</p> <p>b. Review fees and charges annually and investigate fee options for services such as home delivery, postage and book groups.</p> <p>c. Continue to contribute to the state wide investigation of collaborative procurement models for collections.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Branch Capital Works (\$6M)</p> <p>Within existing resources Implications assessed as part of review</p> <p>Within existing resources. Increased revenue implications assessed annually</p> <p>Within existing resources Potential savings assessed as part of investigations</p>
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4.3 Neighbourhood Matching Fund – An Analysis of the Seattle Model

Executive Summary

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an analysis of Council's community grants program against the Seattle model of a Neighbourhood Matching Funds (NMF) program.

Key Issues

Council requested a report on the feasibility of establishing a Neighbourhood Matching Grants program (Seattle model), benefits to Yarra and how it could be operationalised.

The NMF program enables local communities to identify priorities and through an in-kind contribution, obtain matched funding from local government. Applicants can include neighbourhood based organisations, community organisations and ad-hoc groups that form for a specific purpose.

Council's existing community grants program supports the implementation of a number of key strategic plans adopted by Council, provides funding to maintain social and community programs and encourages action relating to emerging issues.

Financial Implications

Council's current program, across seven streams, amounts to \$2 million in direct funding. Introduction of a trial NMF program would require an additional \$50,000 in the first year.

Environmental Implications

It is proposed that the trial will link directly with the Yarra Local Sustainability Strategy and support the delivery of projects which build on environmental awareness within local neighbourhoods, with the nature of local projects being determined by the community at the neighbourhood level.

Social Implications

The report notes that the NMF program aims to foster a strong sense of community, increased participation, recognition of diversity and aims to build social cohesion.

PROPOSAL

It is proposed that Council pilot the Neighbourhood Matching Funding program with a focus on environment based projects, in conjunction with the existing Community Grants program.

4.3 Neighbourhood Matching Fund – An Analysis of the Seattle Model

File: 40/30/03/07-08
Responsible Officer: Manager Community Planning and Advocacy

Purpose

1. The purpose of the report is to provide an analysis of Council's community grants program against the Seattle model of a Neighbourhood Matching Funds program.

Background

2. Council requested a report on the feasibility of the establishment of a Neighbourhood Matching Grants program including:
 - (a) benefits of this type of program;
 - (b) conduct of a pilot program;
 - (c) nominal neighbourhoods and options;
 - (d) existing grants programs that could be replaced by this program;
 - (e) existing budget line items that could be reallocated in future years to this program;
 - (f) governance, decision making, consultation, engagement, communication and reporting mechanisms and processes required to support this program; and
 - (g) sources of funding for proposals for these initiatives from other levels of government.
3. Council representatives attended a seminar on Neighbourhood Matching Grants in 2007 and had the opportunity to hear Jim Diers speak about the development of the Neighbourhood Matching Funds Program in Seattle, USA. This relates to Council's current development of a Neighbourhood Planning approach to community engagement for Yarra.
4. Neighbourhood Planning is a method of engaging local people in the decision making processes that ultimately impact upon their lives and neighbourhood. It relies on representatives of local communities working with Council to develop a vision and Plan for their neighbourhood and also, importantly, the local community working with Council to identify practical and sustainable methods for realising this Plan. The City of Yarra is committed to engaging with its residents and is committed to Neighbourhood Planning.

5. The City of Yarra runs a community grants program which serves a number of functions for both Council and the community. The current program relies on applications made by community groups and not for profit organisations to the program. The mix of grants currently delivered includes:
- (a) direct giving to a community group or organisation for a project that is identified as important to them. This includes the annual grants program which provides grants up to \$10,000 per project. These grants are primarily for one off projects which meet criteria including:
 - (i) community capacity building;
 - (ii) assist to achieve key strategic goals of Council e.g. Municipal Public Health Plan, Multicultural Policy, Youth policy, Municipal Early Years Plan, Arts Plan and the Environment Strategy; and
 - (iii) celebrating community e.g. through community celebrations, cultural events and arts projects;
 - (b) strategic achievement of key policy platforms of Council. This objective runs across all the grant categories; and
 - (c) delivery of key services and other functions to the community including:
 - (i) aged care programs;
 - (ii) toy library service;
 - (iii) foster care service;
 - (iv) youth services programs;
 - (iv) programs which support the health and wellbeing of Indigenous communities; and
 - (vi) environment programs which meet statutory requirements.

Consultation

Yarra Grants Program

6. Officers across Council branches have responsibility for assessing and monitoring the progress of grants which are awarded to projects in their area of responsibility including: Children's Services, Aged Services, Arts and Culture, Sport and Recreation, Youth and Community Planning and Advocacy branches. This also provides an opportunity to engage with community groups around issues, needs and opportunities. The community representatives on the assessment panels also oversee the assessment process, provide feedback on programs, highlight community need and assist with decision-making.

7. The current grants program is maturing in terms of its scope, processes and administration. This follows a period of integration of new categories (2004-05) and processes over the past three years. At evaluation meetings each year, the grants round is discussed and any improvements identified. In 2007- 2008 these largely concerned how to manage the administrative load of the grants program and also achieve the capacity building or support roles associated with the grants. It is expected that a specialised database for the grants program being developed through the CITY Project will free up officers' time to undertake more of the value adding aspects of the grants program such as working with groups to develop ideas into viable projects and supporting them better through the life of a grant project.
8. Each year information sessions are held in the lead up to the grants round and information about the community is forthcoming in these forums and the subsequent application process. This information is used by the officers to inform their practice and decision making processes. It also informs the scope of the Community Empowerment Program, a capacity building program which is run leading up to each round of grants. This year as a result of information gathered from previous grants rounds, a Certificate Four in Business (Governance) is also on offer to Yarra groups as well as a number of workshops on running community associations and managing grants. This program arose directly from feedback and observations made through the grants program. No specific consultations have occurred with the community in relation to a Neighbourhood Matching Fund model of grant making. This report proposes a way forward that includes internal consultation and community engagement.

Neighbourhood Matching Grants – the Seattle Model

9. The model of grant making in Seattle was developed over some time by the Seattle local government and aligns with a neighbourhood approach to community planning and engagement. Matching grants involve communities identifying a need or concern and documenting or pledging what they will contribute to a project to match the monetary contribution of the local government. This can be through a contribution of in-kind, cash or both. The following description from the publication by Jim Diers "Neighbourhood Power" provides further information:

"The Neighbourhood Matching Fund supports local grassroots action in neighbourhoods. It is a resource available to neighbourhood groups interested in doing projects that address a specific community need and that also build community. Neighbourhood based groups can apply for and receive funds to carry out neighbourhood initiated planning, organising or improvement projects in partnership with the City of Seattle. Neighbourhood Matching Fund dollars are matched by the community's contribution of volunteer labour, donated materials, supplies, services or cash."
10. The Seattle model includes *small grants* and applications for these grants are open four times per year, for amounts of up to \$1,500. These small grants are reviewed by a rotating team of the Seattle "Department of Neighbourhood" staff.

11. *A large projects fund* accepts applications once each year for projects that are over \$15,000 and up to \$100,000. The larger grants must be completed within a year and are reviewed by citizens in a District Council and a “Citywide” review team.
12. In the Seattle program a number of different kinds of groups can apply:
 - (a) neighbourhood based organisations or residents or businesses;
 - (b) local community based organisations that advocate for the interests of minority groups; and
 - (c) ad-hoc groups of neighbours who form a committee solely for the purpose of a specific project.
13. As with the Yarra grants program individuals are not generally awarded grants (although Yarra does give development grants to individual artists and athletes). The Seattle model requires some form of legal structure or that a group has a fiscal sponsor to assist with managing the project. This aspect of the program does not seem to be an impediment to neighbourhood groups’ involvement in the US.
14. The assessment processes for applications to the Neighbourhood Matching Fund are interesting and the criteria are similar to some but not all of Council’s assessment criteria. The criteria in the Seattle model include:
 - (a) community benefit - approach to a community problem, clear need, builds community i.e. creates strong bonds between neighbours and greater connections in the community (also a Yarra criteria);
 - (b) participation – opportunities to involve neighbours in shaping and carrying out the project, promotes interaction of a diverse community eg renters/owners, business/residents (also a Yarra criteria);
 - (c) project feasibility –the project is well planned and ready to implement and has budget which reliably represents the project expenses (also a Yarra criteria); and
 - (d) match – the proposed matching inputs are realistic and appropriate to the project and are documented. Groups need to submit pledge documents with their applications around the matching contributions (not explicitly a Yarra criteria to date).
15. In relation to the matched component – at least 25% must come from the neighbourhood itself i.e. not from other funding bodies. All volunteer labour is valued at \$12 per hour – a different rate would apply in an Australian context. The requirement to document all components of the matching contribution is quite rigorous.
16. A further point of interest is that design components and neighbourhood organising projects need to contribute more than half the dollar amount requested. This maintains a focus on achieving outcomes for the community rather than simply planning or designing. Importantly other kinds of grant funding from the City of Seattle cannot be counted as part of the neighbourhood match.

17. The method of payment of the Matching Grants is somewhat different to that of Council's grant program. A contract is signed and payments are made in instalments. As costs for the project are incurred and invoices come in, the City is billed and the payment is used by the community group to pay the invoices for the project to date. A report is also provided at this time. Reporting is deemed a matching contribution. This method would be significantly more time consuming for the community and Council than the present Yarra system and require additional administration, however it is a method already used for some larger grants from Council where greater engagement is required.

Financial Implications

18. Currently Council invests in a range of programs to the community for the purposes described in paragraph 6. The motion throws up questions about Council's program. An analysis of where the funding is allocated and the activities it currently supports follows. This is not a list of the projects funded but provides a picture of the scope of the grants program to consider in the context of the matching grants framework.

Yarra's Existing Grants Program

19. The Annual Grants program provided grants to the value of \$504,658 in 2007-2008. These grants are for amounts up to \$10,000 and the applications that were successful covered a broad range of community activities. The grant streams are also referred to in paragraph 5.
20. The current Yarra grants program has grown over many years in response to community needs and priorities. It has tended to include a component of service delivery. In 2004 a new component to the grants was introduced which was specifically designed to limit the direct requests to Council at budget submission stage. The resultant Emerging Issues and transitional Community Partnership grants (1) were tied to key Council policies and building capacity to respond to new issues. These grants tended to be to organisations rather than community groups. The budget allocation for these grants is currently \$474,528.
21. A group of more historic grants also called Community Partnership (2) Grants primarily fall into the service delivery category and the total funding available for these is \$363,258. This figure includes just under \$98,000 to three environmental management committees for the Merri, Darebin and Yarra waterways and an annual grant to the Collingwood Children's Farm of around \$52,000. These grants are indexed for CPI.
22. There are also ongoing Community Partnership grants within the Arts and Cultural Services area of Council. These are for major festivals and events within Yarra and this category has a budget of \$148,000. Major events such as Fiesta and the Lunar Festival are included in this category as are more specialised but still statewide events such as the Melbourne Queer Film Festival and NAIDOC in the Park.
23. In addition, Council provides grants to the nine Neighbourhood Houses which support Yarra residents. The budget allocation for these grants in 2007-08 is \$433,500. This is not a competitive or open round but an operational contribution to each of the Neighbourhood Houses with an attached Funding Agreement.

24. State Government (HACC) and Council funding is combined to provide further support to the Yarra community through the Social Support and Nutrition grants. These two categories primarily support older adults and people living with a disability. The total grant funding for these categories is \$147,032.
25. The total allocation across this range of grants is \$2,070,008 in 2007-2008. A recent benchmarking exercise undertaken by Our Community for the City of Monash reveals that Yarra is one of the largest grant makers of the local governments surveyed.
26. A summary of the grants provided by Council to the community follows.

Grant Category	07-08 Amount	Purpose
Annual Grants	\$504,658	Provide funding for small to medium sized projects and initiatives that respond to social, cultural, recreational and economic needs of Yarra residents. Funding is provided and offered on an annual basis.
Emerging Issues Grants	\$197,262	Projects that respond to emerging issues including those identified in key Council strategies and policies e.g. drugs and alcohol, emerging communities, women, youth. Two year funding.
Community Partnerships 1	\$277,266	Community Partnership Grants are intended to support more substantial projects that address major strategic priorities for Council. Three year funding.
Community Partnerships 2	\$363,258	Funding for service provision and facilities for the Yarra community, primarily in family and children's services, aged services and environment services.
Community Partnerships 2 (Arts)	\$147,032	Cultural Festivals Grants support a diverse range of events that showcase, celebrate and support local cultures, peoples, places and arts practice.
Neighbourhood Houses	\$433,500	Aims to enhance the quality of life of residents of Yarra by forging partnerships with Yarra's Neighbourhood Houses to contribute to a high quality, outcome focused, service which is responsive to local needs.

Grant Category	07-08 Amount	Purpose
Nutrition	\$147,032	Support to groups by providing centre-based meals and/or food parcels. Focus on older people, people with disabilities and their carers, and those experiencing disadvantage or risk.
Social Support		Increase the range of social and recreational opportunities available to senior citizens and people with disabilities & their carers.
Total	\$2,070,008	

27. The analysis above of the allocation of grants indicates there is a component of the grants which are not “open” grants such as the Neighbourhood House funding and the Community Partnership (2) grants which are allocated more on historic and recurrent funding arrangements. The Partnership Grants (2) include those for service delivery, festivals and events, Collingwood Children’s Farm and support for the environmental committees. When this funding is subtracted from the total pool, the remaining annual allocation is \$1,126,218. A decision about the objectives, criteria, allocation and focus of the next grants round will be required by Council in response to a report in May.
28. Any calculation of Yarra’s contribution to the community through the grants program leads to the conclusion that this is a huge investment in the well-being of the Yarra community. Assessment against seven other municipalities appears to indicate that Yarra is in the top three grant makers, and possibly the largest, depending on the information being compared in the benchmarking study. The question for consideration in this report is whether the Neighbourhood Matching fund model would enhance or improve the existing grants program and how this may be achieved?
29. It is proposed that Council pilots a Neighbourhood Matching Fund model in the coming financial year through a program of neighbourhood grants attached to the Environment Strategy. This is a key action within the draft Yarra Local Sustainability Strategy. A new initiative bid for \$50,000 to provide ten small grants of up to \$5,000 will be requested. This bid is directly related to the new initiative bid for a Neighbourhood Planner. Part of the role of the Neighbourhood Planner will be to engage with the community on projects they identify for their neighbourhood. The pilot also relates to the Community Gardens project which was the subject of a Council resolution last year. The three would work closely together using a neighbourhood planning framework.
30. The Council Plan includes an action to develop neighbourhood planning. The neighbourhood matching grants model aligns with this action.

Economic Implications

31. The grants program will have both direct and indirect economic implications for the Yarra community and businesses. These are difficult to quantify without undertaking a complete Social Impact Assessment for the grants. Longer-term impacts through improved service provision are also difficult to quantify, however there is increasing understanding that community involvement and

early intervention have economic outcomes. The most often quoted of these is that for every dollar invested in early intervention \$7 is saved later in the juvenile justice system and in other costs to the community. This benefit could be loosely applied to other community development activities in assessing impacts.

32. Grants through Yarra's program such as the Project Respect grant to support women to move from prostitution into employment have direct social and important economic benefits as outcomes. Other economic benefits of the grants are achieved through attracting visitors to Yarra such as through the major festivals program.
33. The Seattle Neighbourhood Matching Fund appears to harness funds for community projects which may otherwise have gone unaddressed. The volunteer input is significant in this model and fundraising activities are also used to garner resources which go back into the community.
34. The most significant benefit to the community of the Seattle approach is the building of connections between community members and the strengthening of neighbourhoods that result. This is clearly the prime motivator for the development of the Seattle model and the funding is targeted to maximise these benefits. Such benefits are again, hard to measure but Community Indicators Victoria does measure some of the indicators for community strength and these could be tracked over time. Any direct impact of a grants program would be difficult to differentiate but the Yarra Matters Panel provides another source of specific feedback on any new ways of delivering grants to the community.

Environmental Implications

35. The proposed pilot is directly linked to the draft Yarra Local Sustainability Strategy and to the delivery of projects which build environmental awareness and action within local neighbourhoods. The nature of the projects would be determined by the community with each contributing \$10,000 of value into a neighbourhood (\$5,000 from Council and \$5,000 from the neighbourhood group). As noted this builds on the neighbourhood planning approach which is being implemented within Council.

Social Implications

36. The Neighbourhood Matching Fund in Seattle clearly intends to foster:
 - (a) a sense of community through; increased stakeholder participation; and
 - (b) recognition of diversity and building social cohesion.
37. The matching program is not usually focused on community services but could have an impact on a range of community health and well-being outcomes including through improved;
 - (a) recreation facilities and public safety;
 - (b) public health; and
 - (c) responses to local needs;

38. The social impact of the matching grants is mainly through the engagement of people in their neighbourhoods and in their contribution to the project. Building links between neighbours has a positive and lasting effect on well-being and social cohesion.

Council Plan, Strategy and Policy Implications

39. There is no Council Plan Actions in relation to matching grants. The report is prepared in response to the Council motion at paragraph 2.

Legal Implications

40. All Council decisions need to be assessed within the framework of the Human Rights Charter (Victorian Government January 2008). The human rights which are protected under the Charter are: freedom, respect, equality and dignity. The decision before Council is not one which will impact directly on human rights but decisions about any future grants will need to be made in a way which considers the Charter. The Human Rights Charter reflects other Council policies including the Multicultural Policy and Action Plan, the Yarra Aboriginal Partnerships Plan and the Disability Action Plan to name a few.
41. Should Council introduce a new method of grant making its obligations will be similar to the existing program i.e. ensure accountability for grants funding, require invoices and receipts and a signed Funding Agreement with successful recipients. From time to time grant activities of Local Governments are subject to review by the Auditor General.

Other Issues

42. The report so far has attempted to draw out the key features of the Seattle model and contracts them with Yarra's grants program.
43. This section of the report returns to the original questions in the motion from Council and seeks to answer each point from paragraph 1 (points italicised) as a way of teasing out a preferred option.
44. The *benefits of this type of program* have been most strongly demonstrated in the community building aspects of the program. Undoubtedly great projects have also been realised but the Seattle local government clearly places the highest value on the amount of neighbourhood involvement that is generated. This is a highly beneficial activity for communities. The Seattle local government resources the program through a special department which in 2002 employed 100 people and had a budget of \$12 million. This department is essentially about community empowerment.
45. In order to *conduct a pilot program* Council would need either to re-allocate existing funding from the grants program or allocate new funds through the budget process. A new initiative bid will be developed for the purpose of conducting a trial of the neighbourhood matching grants. The trial is proposed with a focus on supporting environmental initiatives. While this is not a true application of the matching funds model – i.e. the community is given specific parameters around the projects, it will provide an opportunity to test the matching model and the resources required to administer and support it.

46. Yarra has ten neighbourhoods identified – these are suburb based and may be too large for projects on a neighbourhood level. In Seattle the average neighbourhood has about 5,000 residents, includes a shopping or business precinct and there are 100 neighbourhoods in total. *While officers could nominate neighbourhoods and options* it is proposed that the community puts forward their view of their neighbourhoods through the application process. This would then inform the process of neighbourhood planning going forward.
47. *Replacing existing grants programs with this program* is not completely viable given the commitments Council has to many existing programs and events. It may be possible to replace a component of the Annual Grants Program with matching grants over time. This would require a careful staging of the introduction of the program including community consultation and significant additional resources if the Seattle model is an indication of the real resource requirements to run this model of grants.
48. The *reallocation of existing budget line items in future years to this program* would be a natural action if the model was to be adopted or introduced to replace some of existing grants categories. This would depend upon resources available to conduct a matching grants program.
49. It would appear that the *governance, decision making, consultation, engagement, communication and reporting mechanisms and processes required to support this program* are similar to the existing program but more intensively resourced. Differences in the level of engagement and consultation and in greater reporting and contribution requirements of the community would need to be accommodated. Again a trial would test this model and provide “real time” information about the level of resources required to succeed. This would include the issue of incorporation and the need for auspice arrangements for some groups. It works in Seattle – we need to establish if it would it work in Yarra.
50. A common experience of local government is that *sources of funding for such initiatives from other levels of government* are rare. There is the Volunteer Support Grants program which would assist neighbourhood groups to function. There may be other ad-hoc funding opportunities that the community could apply to. This would vary with the content of projects and is similar to what currently occurs where community applicants with the experience to do so, seek funding from a range of sources. Based on past experience and a scan of the way governments deliver funding, it is unlikely that the other levels of government would fund Council to undertake such a program.
51. Finally in examining the Seattle model it is apparent that the guidelines and information provided to the community by the local government is excellent. The Yarra program has tried to reduce the amount of information in the guidelines but in fact this may have been misguided. While attempting to reduce the burden on community groups it may in fact have been missing an opportunity to inform the community well. This will be considered in the development of the 2008-09 grants round.
52. The strengths of the Neighbourhood Matching Fund program in Seattle are many. Some of these strengths are shared with Council's own grants program. It is useful here to highlight further key features of the approach many of which are shared with Council's program:

- (a) people are organised around what interests them not what interests the grant makers. Respect for people's culture and language and existing networks is key;
- (b) the program addresses immediate, concrete and achievable projects not insurmountable social problems;
- (c) the projects build strong community organisations and leaders;
- (d) there is a high level of accountability required of the groups matching the grants;
- (e) the approach foster increased participation including growing new leadership that is based in community organisations not vested in self proclaimed leaders; and
- (f) the assumption is that communities and governments together can achieve more than either can when acting alone.

Options

53. Two options are examined in this section of the report.

Option 1 – Trial a round of environment neighbourhood matching grants

54. As discussed in the report a trial of the Neighbourhood Matching Grants approach could be undertaken within the context of the environment and provide grants of up to \$5,000 to ten neighbourhood projects across Yarra. This would link with the neighbourhood planning approach to community engagement and the Community Gardens project supported by Council in 2007. The trial would need to be evaluated against:

- (a) criteria for the matching grants program;
- (b) resources required and any additional resource demands that arise;
- (c) interest from the community and outcomes of projects; and
- (d) the level of community involvement achieved through the approach.

Option 2 – Retain existing grants program and monitor opportunities to integrate a neighbourhood matching model

55. The existing grants program has been described extensively in the report and has many valuable features including:

- (a) provides a large amount of funding to the community for projects which are identified both by the community and Council;
- (b) the program is driven by Council priorities which are based on community consultation, social research and are informed by a constant interaction with the community-based sector on community needs;

- (c) there is a broad base of grants including welfare, sport, arts and social support projects. The grants also aim to support people across their life cycle in Yarra, from children to older adults;
 - (d) there is significant support provided to community groups to build skills through the grants program and the associated community empowerment program; and
 - (e) there is a finite level of resources available to administer, manage and develop the grants program.
56. This option to continue with the existing program and look for opportunities to integrate a neighbourhood matching model would allow the continuation of the benefits of the existing grants program and time to engage with the community on the matching grants model. The development of the neighbourhood planning approach to community engagement would continue.

Conclusion

57. The Yarra grants program is an established and well regarded part of the services that Council provides to its community. It is also one of the most significant contributions of seven inner metropolitan Councils through a grant program. The program supports the community through:
- (a) investing in projects and programs that meet community needs and priorities;
 - (b) supporting celebrations that bring community together through events and festivals;
 - (c) funding to programs, projects and services that meet strategic priorities that have been developed with the community through Council policies and strategic plans; and
 - (d) provision of social support and nutritional support to those most vulnerable in the Yarra community.
58. This range of programs have been provided for a number of years and the program is constantly evolving to better reflect the diverse needs of Yarra's community. The implementation of a trial of a neighbourhood matching program would represent an additional innovation to the grants program to engage other sections of the community and build capacity at the neighbourhood level.
53. It would not be prudent to simply shift to a new model of grants despite its success in the US. The work required to make such a shift is significant and requires community consultation and engagement. Council's Grants Officer is currently on secondment to the CITY project so this is not an ideal time to embark on such a significant change. A trial of the matching grants fund approach would provide the opportunity to test the merits and resources needed to run such a program.

RECOMMENDATION

54. It is recommended that:

- (a) Council approves a trial of a Neighbourhood Matching Fund grants program based on the Seattle model with a focus on the environment;
- (b) that the trial is contingent upon funding being allocated for this purpose as part of the 2008-09 New Initiative Budget;
- (c) that the community participates in identifying Yarra's neighbourhoods through the trial with a maximum of ten neighbourhood projects being available for an amount up to \$5,000 (total of \$50,000) and matched by the community;
- (d) that the successful neighbourhood projects reflect the geography of Yarra fairly; and
- (e) that the trial is evaluated to determine the success or otherwise of the approach.

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4.4 Councillor Delegate for the Aboriginal Advisory Group

File: 50/15/03/01/04
Responsible Officer: Isha Scott

Purpose

1. To request that Council appoint a new delegate to the Aboriginal Advisory Group.

Background

2. The Aboriginal Advisory Group (AAG) was established as a partnership between Yarra City Council and the local Indigenous Australian community. It provides Council with strategic advice regarding issues pertinent to social justice, Reconciliation, celebration and awareness of local Indigenous history and improving Council services.
3. The AAG provides an ongoing structure for consultation between the Indigenous community and Council. This has included the fields of health, housing, sport, employment, heritage, training and legal issues. The AAG has also provided advice and feedback on diverse project areas such as Smith Street, NAIDOC week events, the naming of streets and laneways and the Sporting Heroes project, to name a few.
4. The Council delegate is the Co-Chair of the AAG with Elder, Annette Xiberras. The Co-Chairs share responsibility for chairing meetings and attending official functions.
5. The AAG meets bi-monthly at a venue in the community. Local organisations attend and minutes are distributed to over sixty people including Wurundjeri Elders via the Wurundjeri Tribe Land Compensation and Cultural Heritage Council.
6. The AAG is responsible for over-seeing the implementation of Council's Aboriginal Partnerships Plan 2004-2008. The roles and responsibilities of the AAG include information, advice, strategic planning, participation, access and responsiveness.
7. The Councillor elected in December is not able to attend the AAG meetings due to other commitments and a new delegate is sought.

RECOMMENDATION

8. That Council appoint a new delegate to the Aboriginal Advisory Group to support the ongoing implementation of Council's Aboriginal Partnerships Plan.

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5. Confidential business reports

The following items were deemed by the Chief Executive Officer to be suitable for consideration in closed session in accordance with section 89 (2) of the *Local Government Act* 1989. In accordance with that Act, Council may resolve to consider these issues in open or closed session.

Recommendation

1. That the meeting be closed to members of the public, in accordance with section 89 (2) of the *Local Government Act* 1989, to allow consideration of:
 - (a) contractual matters; and
 - (b) matters prejudicial to Council and/or third parties.
2. That all information contained within the Confidential Business Reports section of this agenda and reproduced as Council Minutes be treated as being and remaining strictly confidential in accordance with the provisions of sections 77 and 89 of the *Local Government Act* 1989 until Council resolves otherwise.