

# Council Plan 2013-17

(Amended by Council resolution 23 June 2015)

## Councillors

Councillors were elected in October 2012 for a four-year term.

### **Langridge Ward**

Cr Geoff Barbour

Cr Stephen Jolly

Cr Amanda Stone

### **Melba Ward**

Cr Misha Coleman

Cr Simon Huggins

Cr Phillip Vlahogiannis

### **Nicholls Ward**

Cr Roberto Colanzi

Cr Jackie Fristacky

Cr Sam Gaylard

<b>COUNCILLORS</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>A STORY OF YARRA</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>WHAT IS A COUNCIL PLAN</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: CELEBRATING YARRA'S UNIQUENESS</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: SUPPORTING YARRA'S COMMUNITY</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: MAKING YARRA MORE LIVEABLE</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4: ENSURING A SUSTAINABLE YARRA</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5: LEADING LOCAL GOVERNMENT</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>STRATEGIC RESOURCE PLAN</b>	<b>30</b>

## Executive Summary

The City of Yarra is experiencing substantial change, growing in both population and economic activity. In the five years to 2011, employment in Yarra has grown by 18% to around 68,000 jobs. In the eight years to June 2011, those calling Yarra home had grown by 14% to a total population of around 80,000.

Council expects the City's popularity to continue, with the proximity to the Central Business District, sustainable travel options and vibrant community life unequalled in Melbourne. Yarra's escalating house prices are testimony to this trend and has spurred a pace of housing development unseen here in the last century.

With this change comes opportunity and challenges, and more crucially, choices. This Council Plan sets out Council's strategic direction for the next four years – a statement on what is important and valued in our City as well as a path for how we will work to manage change and enhance the City's services and liveability.

The 2013-17 Council Plan will focus on enhancing services and facilities, and identifying new projects that will improve Yarra's liveability. Five Strategic Objectives set out this direction:

<b>Celebrating Yarra's uniqueness</b>	Yarra is unique. A community different to the other 78 Victorian municipalities. There is a long history and deep identity that matter to people living, moving or visiting Yarra. Our decisions and priorities must respect this.
<b>Supporting Yarra's community</b>	There are strong community values that drive Council services and activity, as well as the representations to State and Federal Governments on community needs and views.
<b>Making Yarra more liveable</b>	Yarra is experiencing rapid change. Many feel this change is too fast. Growth and development need to add to what is valued in Yarra not detract from it. Consideration is needed for how the City's growth can be consistent with local values and amenities.
<b>Ensuring a sustainable Yarra</b>	Council has made significant inroads into reducing Council's environmental 'footprint'. We need to continue this as well as working to reduce the community's 'footprint' through advocacy and partnerships.
<b>Leading local government</b>	There has been a significant improvement in Council's fiscal management and customer responsiveness over the last few years. Our new focus is on how to ensure services meet changing community need and preferences, and emphasising efficiency and effectiveness in these services.

Each strategic objective is discussed, noting the drivers for work over the next four years. Also outlined are strategies that will focus Council's activities and indicators that will assist in measuring progress.

Key initiatives over the next four years will include:

- sustainability – including Yarra Energy Foundation, cogeneration projects, water harvesting.
- community infrastructure improvement – including completing the Collingwood Town Hall refurbishment, Lourdes Children's Centre, North Fitzroy Community Hub, Indoor Sports Centre, GTV9 Community Centre.

- strategic advocacy to State and federal Governments to achieve community priorities – including Trains not Tolls campaign, land use planning and sustainable growth.
- new public open space – including Church Street Richmond and Docker Street Richmond.

### **Acknowledgement**

Yarra City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri people as the Traditional Owners of the country within the council's boundaries. Today they remain the custodians of the cultural heritage of this land. Yarra City Council also acknowledges that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have lived, worked and contributed to the cultural heritage of Yarra.

## A story of Yarra

### **Location**

Yarra is a vibrant inner-city municipality, wrapped around the north and east of Melbourne's Central Business District. On its south and east Yarra is bordered by the Yarra River and Merri Creek, the west borders Melbourne's sport and entertainment precinct, the world heritage-listed Exhibition Building and gardens, and further north Princes Park.

### **Wurundjeri**

The Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation are the Traditional Owners of the land that is now known as the City of Yarra. Their relationship with the land extends back tens of thousands of years to when their creator spirit 'Bunjil' formed their people, the land and all living things. All Wurundjeri clan members knew their land in great detail, including the best times to visit each area according to weather and availability of food. In line with this, land boundaries for each clan were clearly defined, with strict protocols governing access to the land of other clans.

The settlement and development of Melbourne impacted heavily upon the Wurundjeri. Land was sold, bush was cleared for the creation of roads and buildings, and wetlands were drained. Frontier clashes, pollution and introduced diseases also led to a dramatic decline in the population. From 1860 onwards, the government began to establish a series of reserves, onto which the Aboriginal people were 'vigorously compelled' to move. Many of the Wurundjeri moved to Coranderrk (Healesville), which was created by a group of Kulin in 1863, and retrospectively approved by the Government.

The opening of Australian Parliament took place in 1901 in the Exhibition Building, Carlton Gardens, with no Aboriginal people invited to the ceremony. The White Australia Policy was passed the same year. From the 1920s onwards, the Aboriginal community of Melbourne began to steadily increase with the wave of people leaving the missions. These were not just Wurundjeri people, but Aboriginal people from many tribes and nations around the country. By the 1950s, Fitzroy supported a community of more than 300 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, with many living in surrounding inner city suburbs.

Today, Gertrude Street in Fitzroy is considered the most historically significant strip in urban Aboriginal Victoria. It was the birthplace of some of the most influential Aboriginal organisations in the country, centre stage for the fight for civil rights and also the place where many Aboriginal people found family for the first time. Despite the impacts of colonisation, Wurundjeri and other Aboriginal people survived and remain active in the community – practising culture, performing ceremonies and passing on knowledge to the younger generation.

### **Colonisation and early history**

Parts of what is now known as the City of Yarra were settled from around the 1840s, with the population growing quickly due to economic growth associated with the 1850s gold rush. Suburbs of Fitzroy, Collingwood, Abbotsford and Richmond developed into early centres of industry and manufacturing and remnants of this history can still be seen in the old factories, warehouses and silos that remain. Yarra also boasts three 19<sup>th</sup> Century Town Halls – comprising the former municipalities of Collingwood, Fitzroy and Richmond.

Yarra reached its peak population around the mid-1960s when the former Cities of Collingwood, Fitzroy and Richmond had a combined population of over 101,000 residents. This population declined, from the 1970s reaching a low of around 54,000 in 1991, reflecting decreasing household and family sizes and people moving to larger

houses and blocks in the new outer suburbs. Manufacturing has progressively shifted from the area, moving to Melbourne's south-eastern and western suburbs.

### **Gentrification**

Yarra's housing prices accelerated from the late 1980s compared to Melbourne's average, being 9% higher in 1987 to 80% higher in 2007. This increase initially reflected growing demand for proximity to the CBD for work and relatively affordable housing. Progressively the increase in professionals moving to Yarra's suburbs created demand for new services and businesses which has in turn attracted others. Easy access to public transport with opportunities for walking and cycling to destinations has also operated as a major drawcard, particularly in the last decade.

These features all served to revive Yarra's population with resident numbers increasing again to around 80,000 by 2011, with population anticipated to again reach 100,000 in the next 15 years. Heritage cottages, terraces and former warehouses were renovated and extended, and small to medium size apartments have popped up throughout.

### **Social Diversity**

Fundamental to Yarra's identity and history has been its social diversity: the rich mix of cultures and communities, first home to many migrants and refugees, and the spread of families from poor to affluent backgrounds. Changing housing, shopping strips and local employment, as well as the declining affordability of homes, are all impacting on this diversity.

New migrants to Yarra are now more likely to be more highly educated professionals or people starting businesses. People choose to set up in Yarra for its vibrant inner-city lifestyle.

### **New residents**

Many people are drawn to Yarra for its arts, culture, restaurants and bars as well as its natural environment, and closeness to work, shopping and recreation. Our rich history and cultural diversity are also drawcards for new residents. Over the last decade Yarra has grown by around 1,200 residents per year.

There is a significant turnover of Yarra residents. In the five years between the last Census more people moved into, or within Yarra, than remaining in the same dwelling. Of those recording their previous address, 54% were at a different address 5 years earlier: comprising, 17% who lived somewhere else in Yarra, 46% moved to Yarra from somewhere in Victoria, 15% from elsewhere in Australia and 21% from overseas.

Demand for what Yarra has to offer has fuelled property prices over the last twenty years. As house prices have escalated the demographic profile of new residents has changed, with Yarra attracting more qualified, professionally employed residents, particularly aged between 25 and 50 years old.

### **A new Yarra?**

Change has been a constant state for Yarra across the last 200 years. What is new is the rate of change and the type of change. Large apartment buildings have started to rise, particularly in Yarra's inner-suburbs, a sign that 'vertical living' will become another style of housing in Yarra. Around 8,000 new residents are expected in the Victoria Street East precinct alone over the next 15 years.

Employment is growing, with around 10,000 jobs added in Yarra in the last 5 years, and has shifted away from manufacturing to be predominantly managers and professionals in service industries.

Yarra's suburbs now boast many innovative cafes, restaurants, galleries and live music venues, drawing people from across Melbourne, interstate and internationally. Yarra is central to creative Melbourne.

For more information on Yarra such as its services, history, attractions or community profile visit [www.yarracity.vic.gov.au](http://www.yarracity.vic.gov.au)



## What is a Council Plan

### Council Plan

A Council Plan provides guidance to councillors, staff, community, State and Federal governments, and local service providers on how Council aims to respond to the opportunities and challenges facing the municipality over the next four years. With over 650 equivalent full-time staff and an annual expenditure of over \$160 million in 2012-13, the Council Plan assists bringing together work across a wide range of services.

In this way a Council Plan is more a 'strategy' indicating medium to long range thinking rather than detailed instructions or a map of what Council will do.

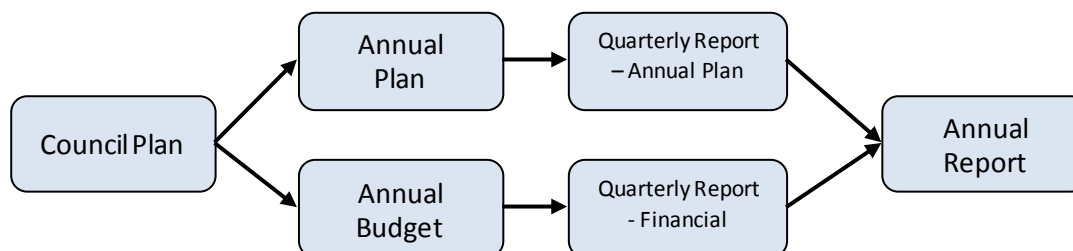
Whilst we can plan for the known – service improvements or scheduled capital works – much of the value of the Council Plan is in providing guidance on how to deal with the unknown: the demographic changes, legislative reform, intergovernmental relations, partnerships or funding that may become available along the way.

### Performance Framework

A broader 'performance framework' sees the four year Council Plan delivered through an Annual Plan and Annual Budget, with progress reported through quarterly reports and finally an Annual Report.

Where the Council Plan sets medium-term direction, the Annual Plan and Annual Budget set short-term activities and initiatives that Council will undertake.

#### Overview of the 'strategic' planning and reporting framework



Progress against the Annual Plan and Budget will be reported to Council following the end of each quarter. This monitoring will ensure key actions and projects are delivered on time and within budget, with any variations clearly explained.

A more comprehensive assessment of Council's achievements are set out in the Annual Plan, prepared and presented to Council around September each year.

## Role of Local Government

Local government is one of the three tiers of government in Australia, alongside the State and Commonwealth Governments.

Under Australia's federal system of government, specified powers were assigned to the national government through the Australian constitution, State governments are empowered under State constitutions, while Victorian Councils are largely empowered under the Local Government Act 1989 (Vic).

Under that Act, the "primary objective of a Council is to endeavour to achieve the best outcomes for the local community having regard to the long term and cumulative effects of decisions" .

Council strives towards this objective through many different approaches providing services with the most extensive reach of the three tiers of government. Significant Council roles include:

- local service delivery (e.g. waste collection and recycling, libraries, childcare, delivered meals),
- infrastructure provision, improvement and maintenance (e.g. roads, footpaths, streetscape improvements, open space, community centres, recreation facilities),
- strategic planning including for activity centres (e.g. land use),
- regulation and enforcement (e.g. Council's Local Laws, permits),
- facilitation (e.g. economic development),
- representation and advocacy (e.g. social justice issues, lobbying for better public transport, working with other tiers of government and organisations),
- community development (e.g. supporting Neighbourhood Houses, community grants program), and
- partnerships and funding agreements (e.g. working with service providers to assist new migrants).

Local government is required to deliver a wide range of services under Victorian legislation or funding agreements with State and Federal Governments, which needs to be considered when reviewing services. Council also needs to act consistently with State, Commonwealth and international legislation such as the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, and United Nations human rights conventions that Australia is party to.

For more information about local government see the Victorian Government's Guide to Local Government or visit the websites of the local government peak bodies and centres:

Local Government Victoria: [www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/localgovernment](http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/localgovernment)

Australian Local Government Association: [www.algn.asn.au](http://www.algn.asn.au)

Municipal Association of Victoria: [www.mav.asn.au](http://www.mav.asn.au)

Victorian Local Governance Association: [www.vlga.org.au](http://www.vlga.org.au)

Australian Centre for Excellence in Local Government: [www.acelg.org.au](http://www.acelg.org.au)

## Strategic Objective 1: celebrating Yarra's uniqueness

Yarra is unique. A community different to the other 78 Victorian municipalities. There is a long history and deep identity that matter to people living, moving or visiting Yarra. Our decisions and priorities must respect this.

### Introduction

Identity is a passionate and recurring theme throughout Yarra. This is about our community diversity, our history and our sense of place – be it our street, neighbourhood, suburb or municipality.

An ongoing focus for Council is how to keep a sense of history and place, as reflected by streetscapes, shops and houses, as well as how to pay tribute to the lived history, connecting with the stories and experiences of those who came before us and shaped the character of Yarra.

### Cultural identity

Council is deeply committed to acknowledging and celebrating the Aboriginal history of Yarra. This includes both the history of the Wurundjeri around the time of European colonisation and the more recent history of Aboriginal organisations, services and activism around Gertrude Street, Fitzroy, from the 1950s until today.

Yarra has a proud, long, history of labour, social, environmental and political activism. Yarra's residents have always been part of shaping both Melbourne and the nation, examples of this include: Fitzroy Legal Service, the first free community legal service in Australia; 2002 'Let Them Stay' Campaign to allow East Timorese asylum seekers to stay in Australia; and 15 years of advocacy through the Yarra Drug and Health Forum for a harm-reduction approach to injecting drug-use.

Community diversity has been a key feature of Yarra's evolution. Successive waves of refugees and migrants have made Yarra home, beginning in the post-war era with our Greek and Italian communities, our Vietnamese community 1970s, followed by Chinese and East Timorese communities and in the last 10 years, by our east-African community.

Some reminders of these migration waves and the vibrant communities they spawned within Yarra are still evident in streetscapes and individual buildings. One much loved example hailing from the 1960s, the misspelt "aqua profunda" gracing a wall of the Fitzroy swimming pool. This is an emblematic and iconic testament to our diverse cultural heritage cherished by those within, and far beyond, the City of Yarra.

Today Yarra continues to draw in many new migrants, including younger professionals and families moving to Australia for work. New residents are drawn to live in Yarra for our rich and dynamic cultural life, be it the thriving arts and cultural scene, live music, restaurants, bars and cafes, or the parks and natural environment.

Cultural diversity is a feature of Yarra's demography that Council values and seeks to foster. An ongoing challenge for Council is to connect with and to empower its culturally diverse communities. Further, Council understands that in delivering services to the community due consideration needs to be given to cultural diversity.

Council continues to build on its tradition of recognising and celebrating cultural diversity. It sponsors more than 20 cultural festivals and events each year, including two of Melbourne's most popular cultural festivals – the Johnston Street Fiesta celebrating Spanish-speaking cultures, and the Victoria Street Lunar Festival, showcasing our Asian communities. Council will also continue to name of streets and other public places to recognise the contributions of its diverse cultural communities.

## **Social Diversity**

Public housing residents are fundamental to Yarra's unique social fabric. Over 8,000 people – 10% of our population – live in public housing. Yarra's public housing comprises three large estates at Collingwood, Fitzroy and North Richmond, and many smaller blocks across the municipality.

Yarra's public housing has been pivotal in providing migrants and refugees a home. Many have since relocated, within Yarra or to wider Melbourne, whilst others have remained. Generally, public housing in Yarra offers great access to community and health services, great transport and a vibrant, multicultural community.

Over one-fifth of public housing residents in Yarra receive a Disability Support or Carer's Pension highlighting the importance of access and inclusion issues for our community. New public housing developments should also comply with Australian Standards and the Disability Discrimination Act in order to provide more appropriate public housing for people with disabilities and older persons.

Increasing house prices challenge Yarra's community diversity. There is a great disparity between the disadvantaged in Yarra, and those on high incomes. There are also many older residents who are asset rich but income poor. Strategies to create more affordable housing for low- to middle-income households are essential to maintaining a diverse community that includes strong representation of older and younger residents, people from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, new waves of migrants and refugees, and people working in key local jobs across hospitality, administration and retail, as well as education, health care and other services.

## **Creative Places**

Yarra is host to a wide range of arts and cultural venues, including live music venues, artist studios and over 60 galleries, all of which contribute to the character and identity of our neighbourhoods. Yarra is home to the Abbotsford Convent with its unique mix of studios and galleries, food, markets, open air cinema and so many other activities.

There is a variety of community meeting places across the municipality that contribute to our creative city. We have nine neighbourhood houses, five libraries, three town halls, community meeting rooms on our public housing estates as well as many parks and open spaces. These support residents and visitors to come together to celebrate, enjoy cultural events or meet up with friends, neighbours and family.

These places are a part of Yarra's creative economy, along with many small to medium businesses working in media, design, technology and education, and the many professionals and consultants based in Yarra, providing thousands of jobs for local residents and those in neighbouring municipalities.

## **Yarra's Local Economy**

Yarra is also a great place to do business and to work. Its proximity to the CBD as well as its accessibility by public transport make Yarra an obvious choice. From artists and craftspeople, with their studios in the Abbotsford convent and around Gertrude and Brunswick Streets, to the traders on our shopping strips through to the increasing number of IT businesses who call Cremorne home, our municipality has much to offer business and business forms an integral part of our community.

With over 68,000 local jobs, Yarra is a significant part of Melbourne's economy. Around 10,000 extra jobs have been added in Yarra over the five years to 2011.

The key business precincts in Yarra are home to a wide range of businesses and strong and innovative business communities. Former industrial areas have been transformed and are now key locations for creative industries and new employment

opportunities. The retail sector is well represented by Yarra's unique and vibrant strip shopping precincts, and is one of the major employers in Yarra.

Yarra has a large community and health services sector – including three community health centres (North Richmond, North Yarra and Inner-East) as well as St Vincent's and the Epworth Hospital. Higher education is represented by the Australian Catholic University and Kangan TAFE. Other large employers and businesses in Yarra include the GE office in Burnley and the CUB brewery in Abbotsford. Small and home-based businesses, as well as strip shopping precincts, are also an important feature of our local economy.

The three largest industries in Yarra, in terms of employment, are health care and social assistance (18%), professional, scientific and technical services (14%) and the retail trade (12%). Yarra workers are predominantly employed as professionals (33%), clerical and administrative workers (16%) and managers (16%). The size of our health care and social assistance industry reflects our diverse community and the extent of people living with disabilities. It also plays a role in attracting people from diverse backgrounds and needs to the municipality.

Yarra residents predominantly work as managers or professionals (58%, compared to 37% for metropolitan Melbourne), with the three most common industries they work in being professional, scientific and technical services; health care and social assistance; and, education and training. Yarra residents have higher formal qualifications, with 45% of those 15 years or older holding a degree or higher qualification (compared to 24% for metropolitan Melbourne).

## **Heritage**

So much of Yarra's identity is defined by its built heritage form. Yarra's heritage streetscapes document the city's development, with modest worker housing in close association with handsome mansions of the wealthy. Yarra's heritage buildings are not only significant examples of changing architectural styles, but an important record of economic and social change as later factories and warehouses replaced earlier houses.

Yarra has a remarkably high proportion of heritage listed buildings and Council actively defends this heritage from inappropriate development. Around 28,000 of its 35,000 properties protected by the heritage overlays in the Yarra Planning Scheme.

Yarra's main retail shopping strips play a significant role within the inner city. With their strong heritage character they host an eclectic mix of shops, restaurants and cafes and make an important contribution to Yarra's tradition of being a major retail and recreation destination.

The Yarra River is a significant feature in the city's identity. The Yarra was an important physical identity in the former Cities of Collingwood and Richmond. Historically, the River was Melbourne's water supply and central to early industry and employment. This industry, such as abattoirs and tanneries, substantially degraded the River leading to early environmental legislation to prohibit further industry on the Yarra and later to efforts to rehabilitate the River.

It forms an important ecological corridor and provides a range of local settings for recreation and relaxation. Council is committed to protecting the river corridor from encroachment by development whilst also improving its landscape and habitat.

Retaining and enhancing what is unique about Yarra will take strong representation – strategic advocacy – to State and Federal Governments as well as property developers to ensure that development models used elsewhere should not be applied to Yarra.

Development in Yarra should be guided by a community vision of what is locally important. Growth in housing, local employment and population should be consistent

with local vision and values. Protecting the human scale of Yarra and protecting the heritage character of our low-rise strip shopping centres, with pockets of high-rise, is an important part of this vision.

Heritage shopping strips can be maintained whilst being upgraded and developed to reflect DDA requirements. This is seen as good business as it will ensure that people with disabilities and older people can continue to shop and enjoy recreational activities in Yarra.

The challenge which Council must address in a variety of ways is that ministerial and VCAT decisions frequently overrule the community's strong commitment to protect and enhance its architectural heritage and the natural environment.

### **Key Achievements**

Refurbishment of Collingwood Town Hall, an important part of our 19<sup>th</sup> Century heritage, to make it more accessible to the community and an appropriate office space to run services.

Redevelopment of Victoria Park, an iconic football ground, opened to community access. The redevelopment won the Parks and Leisure Australia national award for excellence in the parks category.

Celebrating Aboriginal history in Gertrude Street, online Wurundjeri history project.

Funding and design of the Victoria Street gateway, recognising our significant Vietnamese and Chinese communities.

Council contributed to the development of new social housing, recognising the importance of retaining our City's social diversity. Council provided a 40 year lease of a Brunswick Street property that supported a 14 unit development and \$600,000 to provide an additional 15 community housing units in projects funded by the Federal and State Governments. Council's participation in the Atherton Gardens Hub development allowed 152 new social housing units to be built on top of a community services centre.

### **Focus for next 4 years (strategies)**

1. Protect heritage and the Yarra River corridor.
2. Recognise the value of Yarra's Aboriginal cultural heritage.
3. Foster and promote Yarra's arts, culture, history, diversity and vitality.
4. Represent the community's views and needs, through strategic advocacy to State and Federal Governments, as well as local services and organisations.
5. Engage and strengthen connections with diverse groups in our community.
6. Support Yarra's business community and celebrate and promote sustainable, innovative and creative business.
7. Advocate to businesses, landowners and State Government to ensure Yarra's commercial and retail businesses are provided in accessible buildings.
8. Strengthen relationships with key community partners such as Australian Catholic University, St Vincent's Hospital, Epworth Hospital and others.
9. Advocacy for increased social and affordable housing in Yarra, including a minimum of 5% of apartments designed to be wheelchair accessible and comply with DDA standards.

### **Measure of success (strategic indicators)**

- Condition of Council owned heritage building assets.



- Increased participation in arts and cultural activities in Yarra.
- Numbers attending events and activities for cultural and ethnically diverse communities at Yarra Libraries.
- Sustained or increased space, both Council and privately owned, available for creative practice.
- Number of new MOUs established with key community partners.

**Initiatives (over the next 4 years will include)**

- a) Complete the Heritage Gaps assessments and seek improved planning controls to protect Yarra's heritage buildings.
- b) Advocate to State Government for improved controls and active inclusion in the Yarra River Corridor project.
- c) Investigate feasibility of refurbishment of Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall (Hoddle Street) to return it to active community service.
- d) Establish City of Yarra Room to Create Charitable Fund.
- e) Design and open GTV 9 Community Centre.
- f) Prepare new economic development and tourism strategies that reflects and celebrates Yarra's uniqueness.
- g) Establish MOU framework with community partners.
- h) Increase participation of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities as well as people living with disabilities, in consultations.

## Strategic Objective 2: supporting Yarra's community

There are strong community values that drive Council services and activity, as well as the representations to State and Federal Governments on community needs and views.

### Introduction

Yarra is a great place to live, to raise families, with access to a wide range of services, support and facilities, and is home to a diverse community.

Council provides many local human services and facilities important to the community's health and wellbeing. This includes ensuring early childhood health, education and development, providing support and opportunities for younger adults, ensuring access and inclusion for people with disabilities, supporting positive ageing, as well as assisting older residents and people with disabilities to remain in their homes. Sports, recreation facilities and infrastructure encouraging active lifestyles are also important to local wellbeing as are thriving local businesses offering jobs and services.

### Social justice

Council has a strong commitment to achieving social justice outcomes for our residents: improving the opportunity and capacity for citizens to participate in our society. Council will continue its work with the community sector and other levels of government to challenge discrimination, and address disadvantage, whether based on income, age, gender, sexuality, cultural background or abilities.

In particular, Council has been working with existing and emerging migrant communities as well as Yarra's indigenous community. Through local projects, Council's Community Grants Program and building relationships between residents, service providers and Council, more opportunities are available for residents to be active in their community.

The Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, alongside other State and Commonwealth legislation such as the Disability Discrimination Act provide clear values and processes to guide Council and the community.

### Different needs and attributes

Inclusion is an important community value and focuses on how we ensure all residents can participate in their community and access services – regardless of age, gender, sexuality, income, education, skills, cultural background, language skills or disability. Combating exclusion is part of achieving inclusion. The multiple and linked problems many people face, such as unemployment, poor health, poor housing, and lack of access to services, facilities and getting around.

Yarra is home to Victoria's largest public housing community, with over 8,000 residents living in public housing as well as residents living in community housing and other supported accommodation. With a decline in funding for new public housing during the 1990s and 2000s, there has been a relative decline in the amount of public housing. This has led to public housing being prioritised to those with the greatest needs. High-rise public housing has a high concentration of the greatest disadvantage.

Enhancing the quality of life for our public housing residents is important, both preserving the green and open space for tenants as well as nurturing the social cohesion on the larger estates.



There are also residents, particularly retirees, who may be 'asset rich' because they own their home but cash poor in that they are dependent upon Government pensions or limited superannuation and investments.

Yarra is also home to a generally well-off community. 'Gentrification' has turned Yarra from working class to middle class suburbs, as more educated and professionally-employed people choose to move to inner-city suburbs for their 'bohemian' character and proximity to work, night-life, public transport and other services. According to Australian Taxation Office figures, Yarra now has the second highest median wage in Victoria.

This makes Yarra Victoria's most socially and economically diverse community – a large very-disadvantaged population lives alongside the more prosperous. Yarra has more high and more low-income households than the Melbourne average. Yarra is the only municipality that has a high proportion of its population living in very disadvantaged neighbourhoods – 9% of residents live in a collector district with a disadvantage index value below 700 (a value of 1,000 is the average for Australia). Yarra is also home to a greater proportion of single person and group households compared to the Greater Melbourne average.

Yarra has a relatively high turnover of residents, and a greater proportion of young to middle aged adults, and this is set to continue as our population grows. Fortunately, in Yarra this group are also more likely to volunteer: according to Census data, two in three of Yarra's volunteers are between 20 and 44 years old.

Council plays an important role in enhancing community cohesion by supporting opportunities for volunteering and community activities through our nine Neighbourhood Houses and other community centres and through projects funded by our Community Grants program.

This diversity is what makes Yarra such a vibrant and culturally rich community.

## **Council Services**

Council supports community wellbeing through many of its services – particularly to families and children, youth and older people as well as residents with a disability. These services range from ensuring access to basic services as well as targeted support for high-needs groups.

Fundamental to Council's service delivery is a strong values base: a long history of innovative, progressive and respectful community services, with more recent work to improve the sustainability of these services through energy efficiency, sourcing renewable energy, reducing waste, reducing water use and improving building design.

In Family and Children's services, Council provides Maternal and Child Health Services for all residents with young children, as well as meeting local needs through playgroups for parents and children as well as Council run preschools, child care centres, after school programs and youth programs and support services.

Aged and Disability services provides support to older residents and people living with disabilities in Yarra such as home care, personal care, respite care, delivered meals and community transport.

Public health services are also vital to maintaining community health, such as immunisations, inspections of food premises, controlling infectious diseases or monitoring retailers to prevent the sale of tobacco to children.

Local recreation, leisure and sports facilities – the range, standard and capacity – are important to supporting community wellbeing. Council provides three 'leisure' centres – at Collingwood, Fitzroy and Richmond – as well as the Burnley Golf Course, 17 sports grounds, an athletics track and three lawn bowls facilities. Community focused programs include the Living Longer Living Stronger targeting people over 50, and the

Community Gym Memberships supporting clients of local community and health services.

Council also leads the way in providing infrastructure to encourage bike riding as a sustainable means of travel, as well as supporting informal activities such as running or dog-walking.

Community facilities are platforms for Council and community services as well as providing meeting and activity space for Yarra's many community groups.

### **Key Achievements**

Upgrade of Collingwood Leisure Centre.

Maternal & Child Health Service created as part of the new North Richmond Community Health centre on Lennox Street.

Acquisition of a site on St George's Road for a North Fitzroy Community Hub and work with community to finalise plans.

New funding agreement negotiated with Yarra's 9 Neighbourhood Houses.

Promoted harm minimisation policies for illicit drug users.

### **Focus for next 4 years (strategies)**

1. Champion rights to civic and community participation for residents experiencing social disadvantage.
2. Continue to create a resident-friendly city that reduces isolation, improves access to the built environment and builds social connections.
3. Undertake Community Infrastructure Planning for all Yarra neighbourhoods to inform advocacy, funding applications and developer contribution negotiations.
4. Encourage greater social cohesion and participation through volunteer initiatives and community development activities.
5. Support Yarra's disadvantaged community into employment through direct recruitment, social procurement or development of social enterprises.
6. Deliver Council services that meet community priorities and needs.
7. Ensure Council strategies and plans address community aspirations and needs and work to deliver outcomes in a highly integrated manner.
8. Ensure Council's Asset Management Plans deliver infrastructure and facilities that are fit for purpose.
9. Implementation of the new Disability Action Plan continuing our focus on the empowerment of residents with a disability.

### **Measure of success (strategic indicators)**

- Number of submissions made to State and Federal Governments on Yarra's diverse socio-economic profile.
- Number of new strategies and plans that consider disability access and inclusion.
- Community Infrastructure Plans developed for all Neighbourhoods.
- Volunteering Strategy adopted by Council.
- Service review framework adopted by Council.
- Number of service areas reviewed in accordance with the service review framework each year.

- Achievement against actions and targets in Asset Management Plans.

**Initiatives (over the next 4 years will include)**

- a. Conduct advocacy campaign on Yarra's diverse socio-economic profile and social justice issues.
- b. Develop a volunteering strategy in consultation with community partners.
- c. Review the business case for the development of the Lourdes Children's Hub *(amended by Council resolution 23 June 2015 from 'Complete construction and commence operation of Lourdes Children's Hub'.)*
- d. Complete construction and commence operation of North Fitzroy Community Hub.
- e. Continue to advocate for the development of a major Indoor Sports Facility for the Yarra community.
- f. Complete plans for the future infrastructure required to deliver library, leisure and child care services.
- g. Renew and adopt Yarra's Health Plan.
- h. Renew and adopt Yarra's Disability Action Plan.
- i. Develop a service review framework and undertake a review of the long term direction of all Council services.
- j. Complete Buildings Asset Management Plan.

## Strategic Objective 3: making Yarra more liveable

Yarra is experiencing rapid change. Many feel this change is too fast. Growth and development need to add to what is valued in Yarra not detract from it.

Consideration is needed for how the City's growth can be consistent with local values and amenities.

### Introduction

Maintaining Yarra's valued qualities whilst the City continues to grow – both in residents, workers and visitors – will occupy more of our attention. Mediating conflicting needs and competition for space – parking, travel, recreation, social, environmental needs – will require considered community engagement and creative innovative solutions.

### Liveability

Liveability is about the qualities of Yarra that are important to people, why they want to move here or remain living here. A diverse community has many views on what is important, and this is in itself a key quality to Yarra's liveability - community engagement and participation in discussing what is important, shaping a direction and working together to realise this.

Property development and growth should be accompanied by making Yarra more sustainable, adding positively to the City's high-quality buildings, improved sustainable transport capacity, and creating new and enhanced community facilities and public space. Yarra's heritage not only helps to define the city's identity it also enhances the community's interest in how the city develops. Design excellence which respects and complements heritage while providing universal access will help protect the city's qualities whilst allowing access for all.

Council will continue to work with developers to ensure their projects are designed with the needs of our diverse community in mind.

Yarra's Local Laws, raising awareness of them and where necessary enforcing them, are also part of managing activities and behaviour in the municipality.

### Competition for space

In the last eight years Yarra's population has grown by 14%, in the last five years local jobs increased by 17%, and the City's skyline is changing as new apartment buildings are constructed. Open space and community activity space are critical to a more participatory community, supporting arts and cultural activity, and space for community interaction. Council is working to ensure all residents are close to public parks and community centres and has an aspirational target to increase open space per capita.

As a small municipality that is largely built up there are few easy opportunities to create new community spaces, whether parks, plazas or facilities. Redevelopment of major sites offers an avenue to negotiate significant new public spaces. Creating more capacity in existing facilities such as sports grounds, leisure centres and around Town Halls will also improve community access to space.

Council has worked to create new open space through converting a former car park (Peel Street, Collingwood), activating a vacant lot (Lennox Street, Richmond) and closing roads to create small green spaces (such as in Richmond Hill or Oxford Street, Collingwood). However, the cost of land in Yarra and preparation of sites is increasingly expensive. Developer contributions to open space go some way towards acquiring land and developing parks.

Plans for the North Fitzroy Community Hub, the redevelopment of Victoria Park and plans for a community centre at the former Channel 9 studio in Richmond will create purpose built community spaces.

Suburbs such as Cremorne lag behind other parts of the municipality in availability of open space. Addressing this as our residential population and local workers increase is a priority. Creative approaches will also help to increase the availability of spaces, increasing the hours they can be used or improving their ability to manage increasing use.

### **Responding to increased urban density**

Greater population density across Melbourne, including in inner-urban areas, is important to ensuring that a larger Melbourne does not need to encroach further into Victoria's farmland and natural bush. Inner-urban areas have existing infrastructure that is underused or able to be expanded efficiently, although some require upgrading to cope with increased demand.

Yarra is advocating for balanced growth, enabling higher-density housing where appropriate whilst retaining Yarra's heritage, a 'human scale' to the size of development and ensuring that developments contribute positively to community infrastructure such as affordable housing, community facilities and green space. Development also needs to account for pressure on existing infrastructure with limited or stretched capacity.

### **Managing change**

Much of Yarra's significant residential development occurs in busy residential areas, and close to or in activity centres. Conflict can arise due to the impacts on residents and businesses during construction, as well as the impacts from changed land use post-construction.

Yarra's compact nature and the extent of property development has required Council to focus more on construction management. This work aims to reduce the impact of development on neighbouring residents whilst also protecting Council assets.

The proximity of business and activity centres to residences, also gives rise to conflict both from the hours and types of activity and residential neighbours. Victoria's planning system has not always proved effective at reducing or avoiding this conflict with little consideration of existing businesses and residences and their activity. Along with a review of the Yarra Planning Scheme, strategic advocacy to the State Government is needed to achieve our vision for Yarra.

Council has undertaken research and consultation into the night time economy, to look at how our diverse activity centres can be encouraged to accommodate a growing population, whilst proactively working to address the amenity issues that arise such as litter, noise and traffic. Research estimates Yarra's night time economy at \$665 million per annum and supporting 3,000 jobs in the municipality.

### **Inner Melbourne Action Plan**

IMAP is a partnership between Maribyrnong, Melbourne, Port Phillip, Stonnington and Yarra councils, and recognises the value of connection between creative cities and economic development:

“An Inner Melbourne Region that embodies creativity, liveability, prosperity and sustainability in a range of diverse neighbourhoods. A region where the 19th century character informs modern development to create pedestrian oriented places – places that support a tolerant and inclusive community and provide a variety of experiences and opportunities for residents, workers and visitors; a region that responds to its capital city role by supporting arts, entertainment, retail, regional facilities and the functions of the port.”

The IMAP partnership recognises the many similar issues and opportunities facing inner-city communities and presents a stronger base for advocacy in working with State and Federal Governments. Eleven key strategies are outlined in the Plan, with 57 actions to progress these strategies over the next 5-10 years.

### **Sustainable transport**

Improvements to Yarra's sustainable transport capacity is critical to accommodating a growing population. Council can work on major improvements to cycling and walking infrastructure. Council's Parking Strategy works to balance the needs – and limited road space for parking – of residents, workers, people with disabilities, and visitors to Yarra.

However, stronger advocacy to State and Federal Governments by Council and the community is needed to significantly improve public transport infrastructure and capacity. This applies particularly to Melbourne's middle-ring and growth areas, as their car dependency results in increased congestion from through traffic in inner suburbs. Enhanced public transport capacity is also needed to ensure trams and trains are able to serve Yarra residents and workers in peak periods.

There has been minimal investment in Victoria's public transport capacity in the last century. There is no room for more road investment that exacerbates congestion on local and arterial roads.

Sustainable transport capacity is important to growing Yarra's local economy and employment.

### **Achievements**

Reviewed the *Environment Local Law* and the *Roads and Council Land Local Law*.

New public spaces including Peel Street Park and Oxford Street Park in Collingwood, and on the corner of Lennox and Butler Streets in north-west Richmond.

Lowered speed limits on Yarra's local roads – around 80% have a 40 kph limit.

Adopted and implemented Economic Development Strategy, Tourism Strategy and undertaking research and consultation on the Night Time Economy.

Coordinated service responses to the issues arising from public drug and alcohol use.

Bicycle infrastructure has supported increases in cycling as a sustainable travel choice.

Successfully opposed Clearway extensions.

### **Focus for next 4 years (strategies)**

1. Manage competing demands for use of public and green open space.
2. Continue to identify opportunities to convert road spaces and laneways for parks or improved pedestrian spaces.
3. Increase amount of public and open space in areas with least access, in accordance with the Open Space Strategy.
4. Advocate to protect green and open spaces on Yarra's public housing estates.
5. Upgrade and refresh Leisure Centres, sports and recreation facilities and grounds to meeting growing demands.
6. Seek to achieve more communal private open space within large developments
7. Increase cycling through improved access and infrastructure.
8. Increase pedestrian activity and safety through improved access and infrastructure. This needs to include improved access for mobility aid devices.



9. Advocate for public transport improvements.
10. Continue to implement Council's Local Area Traffic Management Study (LATMS) program.
11. Manage competing parking needs of residents, business and visitors.
12. Manage change in Yarra's built form and activity centres through community engagement, land use planning and appropriate structure planning processes.
13. Protect Council assets through effective proactive construction management .
14. Improve disability access to community amenities and built environment.

**Measure of success (strategic indicators)**

- Number of new parks planned, and constructed.
- Completion of bicycle and pedestrian assets in accordance with the adopted capital works program.
- Number of LATMS precinct plans designed and constructed per annum.
- Updated Parking Strategy endorsed by Council.
- Effective metrics and measures established to monitor rate of growth and change in Yarra.
- Completion of the Yarra Planning Scheme review and preparation of a revised Planning Scheme.
- Increased use of disability access audits for Council facilities.
- Monitor and improve turnaround times of planning applications and appeal rates.

**Initiatives (over the next 4 years will include)**

- a) Acquire land for development or redevelop existing land as open space in accordance with the Yarra Open Space Strategy.
- b) Lobby for the extension of the Melbourne bike share scheme into Yarra and other inner-city areas.
- c) Actively monitor developments of the proposed east-west road tunnel through Yarra.
- d) Advocate for Melbourne Metro and Doncaster Rail project, and other public transport improvements, as a priority for Federal and State funding.
- e) Update Yarra's Parking Strategy, including the needs of our diverse population.
- f) Resolve strategic traffic and parking issues within the Abbotsford Convent Precinct.
- g) Advocate to State Government on rate of growth and change within Yarra.
- h) Develop an over-arching strategy that seeks to preserve community values and amenity through the effective management of urban growth and the rate of change within Yarra.
- i) Complete master planning for the redevelopment of the Fitzroy Town Hall, Richmond Town Hall and Collingwood Town Hall Precincts.
- j) Implement emerging parking enforcement technologies to improve efficiency and effectiveness of parking enforcement operations.
- k) Review the Yarra Planning Scheme including the Municipal Strategic Statement and Local Policy.
- l) Complete the Victoria Street Gateway project.

## Strategic Objective 4: ensuring a sustainable Yarra

Council has made significant inroads into reducing Council's environmental 'footprint'. We need to continue this as well as working to reduce the community's 'footprint' through advocacy and partnerships.

### Introduction

Reducing Yarra's environmental footprint is critical – including a target to become carbon neutral by 2020, reduce waste going to landfill, increase renewable energy use, improve biodiversity, increase local food production, use more locally collected rainwater to reduce storm water run off and dependency on Melbourne's water catchments.

In November 2012 Yarra became the first Victorian Council to be certified carbon neutral. This reflects our commitment to reducing the City's environmental footprint – the resources we use to live – such as reducing the use of potable water and energy, as well as reducing waste going to landfill. In 2011 Yarra was named as the Sustainable City of the Year, acknowledging the wide range of programs working to make Yarra more sustainable.

### Reducing greenhouse gases

Greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane, from burning fossil fuels and decomposing waste, are building up in the earth's atmosphere in turn driving climate change. Increasing average temperatures, more extreme weather patterns such as storms and heatwaves, and rising sea levels are impacting globally.

Reducing greenhouse gases requires more efficient energy use, major reductions in the use of fossil fuels and a shift to renewable energy sources. Council also needs to adapt our services and facilities to the climate change that has already occurred.

### Reducing potable water use

Melbourne's current water catchments and dams need to cater for an increasing population. Much of our water use is not for drinking or other uses requiring high quality (potable) water. Water for gardens, cleaning and toilets can be sourced in other ways, especially from collecting and storing rainwater. Reduced use of potable water will avoid the need for new dams or reliance on desalination plants, both of which have significant negative environmental impacts.

### Reducing Waste

Effective waste management is essential to ensuring the City of Yarra remains sustainable. Waste management is a major community service provided by Council; over 14,000 tonnes of domestic rubbish and almost 10,000 tonnes of recycling are collected annually; Council also provides street sweeping and manages 600 park and street waste bins.

Minimising waste and increasing recycling and reuse are important environmental priorities for Council. In particular, Council is working to reduce the amount of food waste going to land fill.

The Waste Management Plan 2009-14 has focused on encouraging behavioural change at individual and community levels through a combination of direct Council action, education, the sponsoring of new community programs, and supporting community groups.



### **Encouraging urban agriculture**

Community gardens have long been an important part of neighbourhoods, particularly in the inner city, offering people a place to meet, to socialise and to share a knowledge and interest in gardening. Guidelines for supporting urban agriculture have been developed, which simplify the process for community groups to identify new community garden sites. Urban agriculture offers a means to reducing the amount of food required to be produced outside of Yarra and transported here. Whilst in some parts of the City residents have backyards or community gardens and can grow their own fruit and vegetables, an increasing number of residents live in apartments with no, or limited, garden space.

Creating new garden plots or planter boxes can provide people with this opportunity to reduce their environmental impact by growing some of their own food.

### **Increasing vegetation and biodiversity**

As a highly built up municipality there is little natural vegetation in Yarra other than along the Yarra River and Merri Creek. Planting more street trees and native vegetation helps retain and enhance Yarra's biodiversity, support wildlife and improve amenity.

Trees are also important in providing shade in our streets, parks and around playgrounds as well as reducing the 'heat island effect' whereby built surfaces retain day time heat increasing the day and night time average temperatures. Increased vegetation is also fundamental to improving water and air quality in Yarra.

### **Key Achievements**

Yarra certified as Victoria's first carbon neutral Council

Acknowledged as Sustainable City of the Year in 2011

Residents have acknowledged Council's leadership in reaching a more sustainable Yarra, as seen in the Annual Customer Service Survey results.

Council's energy consumption was reduced by 22.3% (June 2012) from 2000, through initiatives such as installing energy efficient street lights. Council is generating our own energy through small scale cogeneration power plants at Yarra's swimming pools, as well as installing solar panels and / or solar hot water systems on 25 Council buildings.

Establishment of the Yarra Energy Foundation to support the community reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions.

Implemented year 1, 2 and 3 Waste Management Plan Actions.

### **Focus for next 4 years (strategies)**

1. Develop and renew Council's key environmental strategies.
2. Initiate and implement strategies to reduce Council's carbon emissions and energy use.
3. Support the community to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
4. Increase implementation of water-sensitive urban design.
5. Encourage urban agriculture.
6. Initiate and implement strategies to reduce Council's potable water consumption.
7. Initiate and implement strategies to reduce waste to landfill in Yarra.
8. Advocate to State and Federal Governments on their responsibility to achieve a sustainable Yarra.

**Measure of success (strategic indicators)**

- Targets in the new Environment Strategy met for the following measures:
  - Reduction in Council's energy use
  - Reduction in community emissions
  - Reduction in Council's potable water use
  - Council's energy needs generated from renewable (and low carbon local energy sources)
- Council's carbon neutral status (zero net emissions) for council operations retained.
- Stormwater and Drainage Asset Management Plans completed.
- Waste per household going to landfill reduced in accordance with the new Waste Management Strategy 2014-20.

**Initiatives (over the next 4 years will include)**

- a. Renew and adopt the Yarra Environment Strategy.
- b. Progress implementation of Council's Urban Wildlife Management Plan.
- c. Develop a climate adaptation strategy for Council operations.
- d. Investigate feasibility of an Urban Forests Strategy.
- e. Continue Council support for the work of the Yarra Energy Foundation.
- f. Initiate and progress Energy Performance Contracts as a means of targeted reduction in energy usage.
- g. Develop and implement new Waste Management Strategy 2014-20.

## Strategic Objective 5: leading local government

There has been a significant improvement in Council's fiscal management and customer responsiveness over the last few years. Our new focus is on how to ensure services meet changing community need and preferences, and emphasising efficiency and effectiveness in these services.

### Introduction

A changing and divergent community requires an agile and responsive organisation. To maximise value to our community, the services and facilities they want, it is critical that Council review our services to ensure they are relevant and appropriate.

### Leadership

As noted earlier, Yarra has long been a leader in service development and innovation. Sustainability and social justice are strongly held community values, and are important drivers for Council's infrastructure and service delivery.

Equity and universal access are central to Yarra's services and infrastructure provision: for migrants and refugees, Aboriginal Australians, people living with a disability, men and women, across all ages, for those economically disadvantaged and for people identifying as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex or queer.

Council works closely with the community to represent and advocate for the rights and needs of our community, challenging State and Federal Governments to remove barriers to participation and to ensure that future generations grow up in a sustainable world.

### Divergent needs

Increasing residents, workers and visitors means greater competition for limited space. Council needs to be better at engaging the community in discussing these pressures, identifying compromises and finding creative ways to increase access to space.

This is a significant change in how we see our service delivery and will require different skill sets and collaboration across the organisation. From the late 1960s until the 1990s Yarra had a declining population and community needs were about improving existing infrastructure and community services.

A further 20,000 residents are expected to move in to Yarra within the next 15 years, raising our population to over 100,000. By then it is anticipated that more than a quarter of Yarra's residents will live in high-rise apartment buildings. Surveys of residents in new apartments, and the predominance of small apartments in new developments, tells us that most residents will be 25-50 year olds, highly educated, professionally employed, and living in Yarra to enjoy an active lifestyle.

Along with new families moving into Yarra's existing homes, this represents an underlying shift in community expectations and service needs. Cleaning and maintenance of Yarra's five main activity centres, and its smaller neighbourhood shopping precincts, will be critical. Demand for traditional Council services may change – a greater expectation of more flexible, responsive and customised services that can be accessed by all is likely.

Council will also need to manage diverging needs and interests between a more affluent and disadvantaged populations. The challenge will be to provide meeting points in services for all residents, maintaining important universal services and celebrating our diversity, whilst ensuring that residents can access specialised services as needed. Innovation in reviewing our services will be essential. Council has

intentionally kept rises in concession fees for Council services below inflation levels to ensure services are affordable to those on the lowest incomes.

### **Recognition of service delivery**

Council's overall performance and service delivery has been acknowledged in successive community surveys. Improving responsiveness was a focus in the previous Council Plan. Annual Customer Service Survey demonstrate that Council's services are generally meeting community expectations and rated at similar or higher levels compared to other Councils surveyed.

A program of continuous improvement will be needed to ensure that services evolve and innovate to suit Yarra's changing community. Organisational development, systems integration and process improvement will be important in building on Council's service standards. Council has improved the delivery of its Capital Works program, which is important to maintaining community access to services and facilities, and maintaining this is a priority.

### **Financial management**

Council achieved a sound financial position by the end of the previous Council Plan. It , cleared a significant long-standing debt, undertook renewal of key buildings and community facilities and improved the maintenance of infrastructure, whilst keeping rate rises consistent with the cost index for local government.

A new challenge for Council will be identifying future community infrastructure needs – providing facilities and public spaces in the right locations for a growing population. Council's Building Asset Management Plan (BAMP) will review the current condition of buildings and estimate the cost for bringing these to a standard fit for their purpose. This Plan will identify the buildings that are currently underutilised, are not appropriate for service needs or are not in a condition to be used. Prioritising future renewals will need to account for where the most critical service demands are across Yarra.

Financial management is also about ensuring Council extracts best value from its contracted services and procurement processes. Robust tender processes as well as strong contract management are essential to delivering the best services to our community.

### **Key Achievements**

Council has also worked to become debt-free and address our asset renewal gap. Council has achieved this while keeping property rates relatively low. With an increase in the City's property base due to development, the increase in average property rates has been kept around the Local Government Cost Index. This Index more realistically measures the actual cost increases in running local government services compared to the Consumer Price Index which measures changes in the purchasing of consumer services and goods.

Yarra's award winning staff Health & Wellbeing Program.

Improving customer service and responsiveness has been acknowledged.

### **Focus for next 4 years (strategies)**

1. Align vision, values and organisational culture.
2. Encourage and support a workforce that reflects our community's diversity.
3. Enhance internal systems and processes, and their integration, to improve community service delivery and governance support.
4. Build Council's emergency management and recovery response.

5. Build community engagement to inform Council's policy development and decision making.
6. Enhance access to Council information and services, including wider use of digital media.
7. Seek to achieve best practice standards, measured by benchmarking all services.
8. Enhance procurement and contract management practice to extract better value for money.
9. Enhance productivity and business support, and reduce risk for critical business processes.

**Measure of success (strategic indicators)**

- Agreed project management principles implemented.
- Council adoption of strategic advocacy framework.
- Achievement of Customer Guarantee targets.
- Overall Performance (as measured through the Annual Customer Service Survey).
- Successfully obtain funding as a result of strategic advocacy.
- Implement new/upgraded finance system.
- Council remains high performing against VAGO Financial Sustainability Indicators.
- Completion of Capital Works projects.

**Initiatives (over the next 4 years will include)**

- a. Adopt an Organisational Development Strategy and progressively implement actions.
- b. Develop and adopt Employment Diversity Strategy, encompassing Council's employment of people with disabilities, older and younger residents, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, women and Aboriginal people.
- c. Develop and implement an internal service level and agreement framework to ensure efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of all services.
- d. Commit to an organisational continuous improvement program.
- e. Develop, and implement agreed project management principles to improve project completion.
- f. Implement process improvement and innovation framework.
- g. Review Council's emergency management and recovery in light of the Victorian Government changes and as part of the North-West Metropolitan Collaboration.
- h. Review the consultation and engagement strategy.
- i. Develop a strategic advocacy framework for Council adoption.
- j. Establish periodic strategic planning sessions with Executive and Council to work on emerging issues and matters of significant importance to the community (links to strategic advocacy, research and organisational agility).
- k. Advocate for improved State and Federal funding to local government.
- l. Develop a Revenue Strategy to identify alternative income sources for Council services and capital works.

# Strategic Resource Plan

## Budgeted Standard Income Statement

For the four years ending 30 June 2017

	Forecast		Strategic Resource Plan Projections		
	Actual	Budget	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
<b>Income</b>					
Rates	79,774	<b>84,876</b>	90,308	96,088	102,237
Parking revenue	25,732	<b>27,276</b>	28,912	30,358	31,572
Charges, fees and other fines	20,537	<b>22,318</b>	23,419	24,444	25,313
Reimbursements and contributions	4,640	<b>4,483</b>	4,707	4,943	5,140
Grants - operating (recurrent)	9,411	<b>9,317</b>	9,596	9,884	10,181
Grants - capital (non-recurrent)	1,776	<b>2,047</b>	1,698	1,357	7,322
Net gain on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment.	385	<b>403</b>	450	398	421
Interest revenue	991	<b>1,001</b>	733	972	1,178
<b>Total income</b>	143,246	<b>151,721</b>	159,823	168,444	183,364
<b>Expenses</b>					
Employee benefits	56,260	<b>61,577</b>	64,530	67,853	71,709
Contract payments	18,230	<b>18,927</b>	19,400	19,985	20,986
Materials and services	38,003	<b>36,796</b>	38,858	40,145	41,626
Bad and doubtful debts	1,985	<b>2,025</b>	2,066	2,107	2,149
Depreciation and amortisation	18,399	<b>18,767</b>	19,142	19,525	19,915
Finance costs	156	<b>819</b>	621	565	506
<b>Total expenses</b>	133,033	<b>138,911</b>	144,617	150,180	156,891
<b>Surplus (deficit) for the year</b>	10,213	<b>12,810</b>	15,206	18,264	26,473
<b>Other comprehensive income</b>					
Other	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Comprehensive result</b>	10,213	<b>12,810</b>	15,206	18,264	26,473

## Budgeted Standard Balance Sheet

For the four years ending 30 June 2017

	Forecast	Budget 2013/14 \$'000	Strategic Resource Plan		
	Actual 2012/13 \$'000		Projections		
			2014/15 \$'000	2015/16 \$'000	2016/17 \$'000
<b>Current assets</b>					
Cash and cash equivalents	21,943	<b>25,181</b>	27,189	32,388	34,472
Trade and other receivables	6,631	<b>7,167</b>	7,667	8,137	8,564
Accrued Income	141	<b>141</b>	141	141	141
Prepayments	214	<b>214</b>	214	214	214
Inventories	142	<b>142</b>	142	142	142
<b>Total current assets</b>	<b>29,072</b>	<b>32,845</b>	<b>35,353</b>	<b>41,022</b>	<b>43,533</b>
<b>Non-current assets</b>					
Trade and other receivables	20	<b>20</b>	20	20	20
Investments in associates	204	<b>204</b>	204	204	204
Financial assets	5	<b>5</b>	5	5	5
Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	1,450,140	<b>1,491,994</b>	1,504,259	1,541,858	1,565,312
<b>Total non-current assets</b>	<b>1,450,369</b>	<b>1,492,223</b>	<b>1,504,488</b>	<b>1,542,087</b>	<b>1,565,541</b>
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>1,479,441</b>	<b>1,525,068</b>	<b>1,539,841</b>	<b>1,583,109</b>	<b>1,609,074</b>
<b>Current liabilities</b>					
Trade and other payables	13,202	<b>13,510</b>	13,826	14,150	14,481
Trust funds	976	<b>996</b>	1,016	1,036	1,057
Provisions	10,791	<b>11,115</b>	11,449	11,792	12,146
Interest-bearing loans and borrowings	1,074	<b>1,127</b>	1,183	1,242	1,305
<b>Total current liabilities</b>	<b>26,043</b>	<b>26,748</b>	<b>27,474</b>	<b>28,220</b>	<b>28,989</b>
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>					
Provisions	855	<b>881</b>	907	934	962
Interest-bearing loans and borrowings	12,895	<b>11,300</b>	10,116	8,874	7,569
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>	<b>13,750</b>	<b>12,181</b>	<b>11,023</b>	<b>9,808</b>	<b>8,531</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>39,793</b>	<b>38,929</b>	<b>38,497</b>	<b>38,028</b>	<b>37,520</b>
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>1,439,648</b>	<b>1,486,139</b>	<b>1,501,344</b>	<b>1,545,081</b>	<b>1,571,554</b>
<b>Equity</b>					
Accumulated surplus	563,277	<b>574,624</b>	587,027	599,913	621,749
Asset revaluation reserve	862,659	<b>896,340</b>	896,340	921,813	921,813
Other reserves	13,712	<b>15,175</b>	17,977	23,355	27,992
<b>Total equity</b>	<b>1,439,648</b>	<b>1,486,139</b>	<b>1,501,344</b>	<b>1,545,081</b>	<b>1,571,554</b>



**Budgeted Standard Cash Flow Statement**

For the four years ending 30 June 2017

	Forecast		Strategic Resources Plan Projections		
	Actual 2012/13 \$'000	Budget 2013/14 \$'000	2014/15 \$'000	2015/16 \$'000	2016/17 \$'000
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>					
Rates and charges	80,020	<b>84,723</b>	90,145	95,914	102,053
Parking revenue	23,794	<b>25,028</b>	26,609	28,047	29,259
Government grants	11,187	<b>11,364</b>	11,295	11,241	17,503
User fees and charges	21,391	<b>22,160</b>	23,320	24,352	25,234
Interest	991	<b>1,001</b>	733	972	1,178
Other revenue	4,640	<b>4,483</b>	4,707	4,943	5,140
Payments to employees	(53,447)	<b>(58,498)</b>	(61,303)	(64,460)	(68,123)
Payments to suppliers	(55,249)	<b>(55,415)</b>	(57,942)	(59,806)	(62,280)
<b>Net cash provided by operating activities</b>	<b>33,327</b>	<b>34,846</b>	<b>37,564</b>	<b>41,203</b>	<b>49,964</b>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>					
Proceeds from sale of property, plant & equipment	885	<b>903</b>	950	898	921
Payments for infrastructure, property plant & equipment	(29,131)	<b>(31,123)</b>	(34,758)	(35,154)	(47,053)
<b>Net cash (used in) investing activities</b>	<b>(28,246)</b>	<b>(30,220)</b>	<b>(33,808)</b>	<b>(34,256)</b>	<b>(46,132)</b>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>					
Finance costs	(300)	<b>(14,886)</b>	(1,748)	(1,748)	(1,748)
Proceeds from borrowings	-	<b>13,500</b>	-	-	-
<b>Net cash (used in) financing activities</b>	<b>(300)</b>	<b>(1,386)</b>	<b>(1,748)</b>	<b>(1,748)</b>	<b>(1,748)</b>
Change in cash held	4,781	<b>3,240</b>	2,008	5,199	2,084
Cash at beginning of financial period	17,160	<b>21,941</b>	25,181	27,189	32,388
<b>Cash at end of financial period</b>	<b>21,941</b>	<b>25,181</b>	<b>27,189</b>	<b>32,388</b>	<b>34,472</b>



## Budgeted Standard Capital Works Statement

For the four years ending 30 June 2017

	Forecast		Strategic Resource Plan Projections		
	Actual	Budget			
	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
<b>Capital works areas</b>					
Roads, footpaths, kerbs and channels	6,757	<b>9,636</b>	12,925	12,306	12,852
Drainage	1,021	<b>995</b>	0	0	0
Transport and road safety	1,173	<b>1,710</b>	1,765	1,407	2,261
Information systems	1,175	<b>1,766</b>	1,216	1,839	987
Open space improvements	4,951	<b>4,987</b>	6,355	5,949	4,753
Buildings/properties	14,021	<b>13,097</b>	9,876	10,960	25,380
Plant and equipment	2,676	<b>2,327</b>	3,088	2,680	2,922
<b>Total capital works</b>	<b>31,774</b>	<b>34,518</b>	<b>35,225</b>	<b>35,141</b>	<b>49,155</b>
<b>Represented by:</b>					
Asset renewal	23,903	<b>22,944</b>	18,625	18,935	17,744
New assets	5,853	<b>8,491</b>	14,196	13,029	29,071
Asset expansion/upgrade	2,018	<b>3,083</b>	2,404	3,177	2,340
<b>Total capital works</b>	<b>31,774</b>	<b>34,518</b>	<b>35,225</b>	<b>35,141</b>	<b>49,155</b>