

STRATEGIC ADVOCACY FRAMEWORK 2018-2021



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Yarra City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri as the Traditional Owners of this country, pays tribute to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Yarra and gives respect to Elders past and present.

FOREWORD

This document guides the advocacy efforts of Yarra City Council both in its role as a single Council and as a member of a range of Local Government associations and peak bodies.

Intended to be used as a resource, this Framework is a key priority of the 2017-2021 Council Plan.

This Framework, seeks to provide a nexus between the City of Yarra's proud history of advocating on behalf of its community and outcomes. It does this by outlining Council's strategic advocacy priorities in a planned, coordinated and resourced approach to facilitate action and results.

These priorities have been identified through a process of evidence based research and benchmarking, consultation and the Council Plan 2017-2021.

This Framework explores:

- the term 'advocacy' and successful advocacy
- the local, state and federal context for strategic advocacy in Yarra
- Yarra's current narrative and vision
- Yarra's demographics and where this is leading Yarra
- the parallels of strategic advocacy and 'confidence and trust'
- Framework Objectives
- An advocacy agenda matrix
- Implementing the Framework
- Communication support
- Priority advocacy projects

The methodology in preparing the Framework involved:

- Desktop analysis and background research of:
- Existing Council Plan 2017-2021 vision and strategic priorities (which were the subject of community consultation)
- Other projects and issues that form part of Council's existing advocacy agenda
- Current and projected demographics for Yarra

INTRODUCTION

The City of Yarra is experiencing substantial change, growing in both population and economic activity. This change brings with it a range of complex issues that impact on our community including planning and construction, protecting heritage, sustainability, parking, traffic, sustainable transport, public housing, and affordable housing and community services.

Our role in influencing decision makers to support policy change and positive outcomes in each of these areas, as well as investment in our city is crucial. To enable this we need to be clear about what our advocacy priorities are and have a planned, coordinated, evidence-based and resourced approach to advocacy that facilitates action and results.

Advocacy is representing Council and community views and needs to decision makers to achieve agreed outcomes. Strategic Advocacy is focused on achieving the longer term and substantive outcomes Council seeks.

Strategic advocacy features:

- Representing our community
- Telling the “Yarra story” to government and community (and having clear and consistent messaging about key issues and needs over a long period of time) (see page 7)
- Influencing policy and decision makers
- Attracting and securing investment
- Enabling and supporting strategic partnerships
- Building council and community capacity for advocacy
- Championing community disadvantage
- Research to inform decisions and funding applications
- Strengthening our reputation as a leader in local government, an advocate for our community and experts in our field.

Successful advocacy results in:

- funding to implement priority projects and initiatives
- a change in government policy
- promoting social justice issues
- stronger ties with our strategic partners
- greater confidence and trust in Council
- a more capable and resilient community
- strong leadership at the local, state and federal level

CONTEXT

Legislative context

The Victorian Local Government Act identifies that Councils have a legitimate role to play in advocating for the needs of their communities and municipality.

Section 3E of the Local Government Act 1989 (The Act) states:

- (1) The functions of a Council include –
- (a) Advocating and promoting proposals which are in the best interests of the local community;
 - (b) Raising revenue to enable it to perform its functions

Section 3D of the Local Government Act 1989 (The Act) states

- (1) The role of a Council includes-
- (a) acting as a representative government by taking into account the diverse needs of the local community in decision making;
 - (b) Advocating the interests of the local community to other communities and governments.

Council Plan

Yarra's 2017-21 Council Plan focuses on enhancing services and facilities, and identifying new projects that will improve Yarra's liveability. The Plan outlines a range of strategies and initiatives that we will implement to achieve our vision for a Yarra that is a 'vibrant, liveable and sustainable inner city that the community can be proud of'.

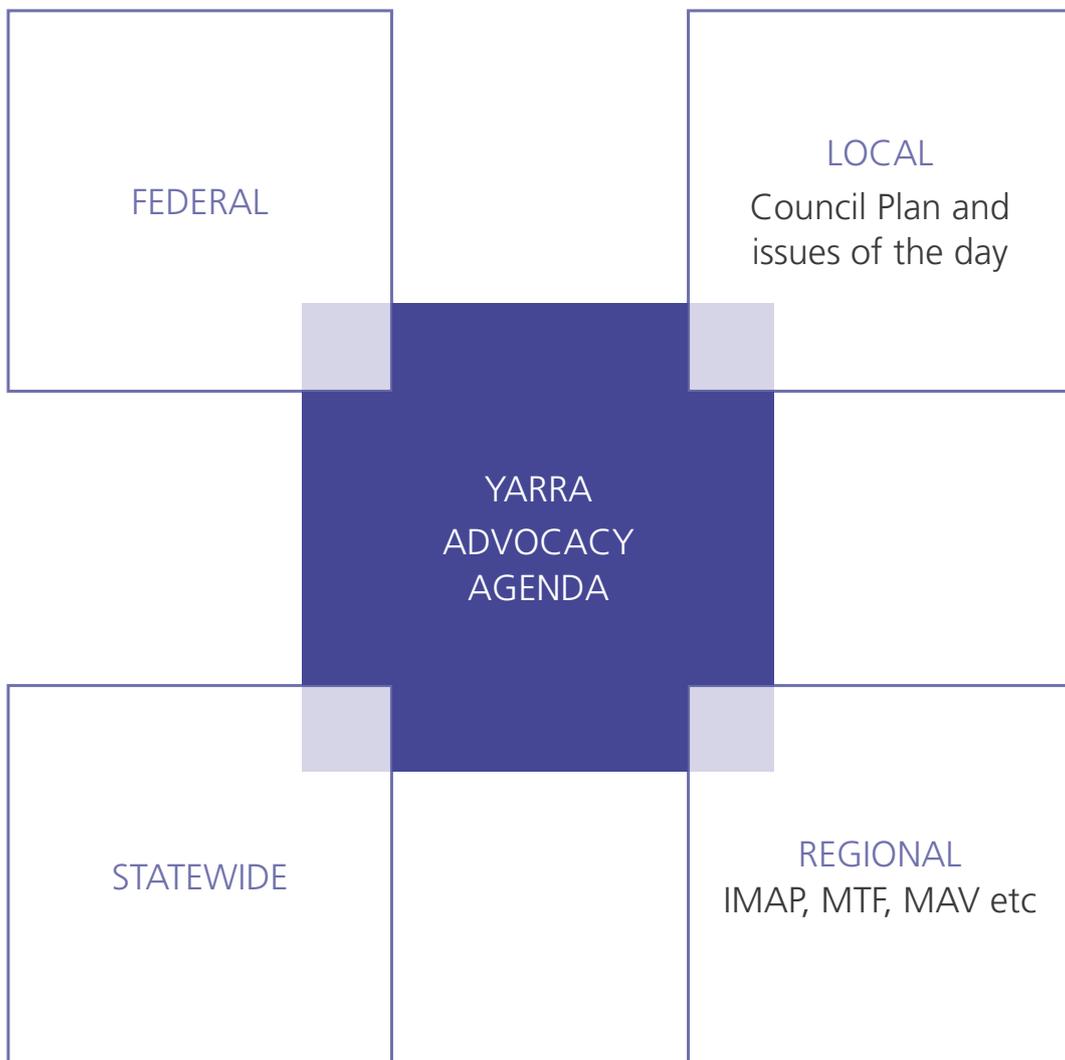
In a first for Yarra, it also incorporates our Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

The seven strategic objectives in the Plan are:

1. **A healthy Yarra:** Community health, safety and wellbeing are a focus in everything we do
2. **An inclusive Yarra:** Inclusion, diversity and uniqueness are welcomed, respected and celebrated
3. **A sustainable Yarra:** Council leads on sustainability and protects and enhances its natural environment
4. **A liveable Yarra:** Development and growth are managed to maintain and enhance the character and heritage of the city
5. **A prosperous Yarra:** Local businesses prosper and creative and knowledge industries thrive
6. **A connected Yarra:** Connectivity and travel options are environmentally sustainable, integrated and well-designed
7. **A leading Yarra:** Transparency, performance and community participation drive the way we operate

Yarra Council currently advocates at a number of levels.

Council's role is one of leadership and support at all levels. All four levels are interconnected.



Local level advocacy

Over the years Council has initiated or participated in advocacy campaigns of varying levels, significance and success. For example, advocacy has been undertaken on topics such as- sustainable transport including Doncaster Rail and against the East West Link, Clearways, overhead powerlines, planning issues, night time economy, indoor sports stadium, AMCOR, affordable housing, public education, harm minimisation strategies, Occupy Melbourne just to name a few.

Local advocacy has also involved building better relationships with community, NGOs and business representative groups including environmental organisations, local residents associations, disability advisory groups, traders groups, emergency services and transport bodies.

Regional level advocacy

Council is an active contributor to Local Government partnership groups and external bodies including the Inner Melbourne Action Plan (IMAP), the Metropolitan Transport Forum (MTF), IMAP (Inner Melbourne Action Plan) Implementation Committee, Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (NAGA), Doncaster Rail LG Group, Darebin Creek Management Committee (DCMC), Mayors for Peace, Metropolitan (Local Government) Waste Management Forum (MWMG), Merri Creek Management Committee and the Road Safety Action Group Inner Melbourne (RSAGIM), just to name a few.

Many of these regional bodies have clear advocacy agendas which Council supports and contributes to.

State, Federal and International level advocacy

Council advocates on behalf of its community to State and Federal Government members of parliament and public servants on matters of policy and funding. At times, Council will advocate on international issues. It also actively contributes to advocacy campaigns co-ordinated by the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) and the Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA).

Synergies between advocacy levels

Our advocacy role across all levels is one of leadership and support. Typically the levels are interconnected, for example local issues are likely to have synergies at a regional, state and federal level. This "issues" based advocacy has generally been undertaken on an "as needs" basis rather than as part of planned, considered and resourced organisational advocacy strategy. The effectiveness of this type of advocacy is varied.

Each advocacy campaign requires a varying level of resourcing from across the organisation. In many cases this resourcing is not formally recognised through the budget process but instead expected to be "added on" to existing branch programs, services and activities. As is the nature with advocacy, often the more successful a campaign is within the community, the more of Council's time and resources it demands.

This Framework seeks to guide us towards a more coordinated approach that capitalises on all opportunities, while at the same time is clear about resource requirements and risk associated advocacy.

Strategic Advocacy sits within the Office of the CEO. The role of this unit is to provide high level advice and guidance to the CEO on Yarra's advocacy agenda based on the objectives and actions in this Framework.

YARRA'S DEMOGRAPHICS AND POPULATION DATA

By 2036 Yarra is expected to grow to a total of 117,000 residents (from 93,000 in 2016). The implications and opportunities of growth and change in Yarra are substantial and require careful managing and active advocacy to ensure the best outcomes for the community.

- The City of Yarra has a relatively young population with 30.6% in the 25 to 34 age group, compared with 16.3% for greater Melbourne. There are fewer households with children (21.2% compared to 43.5%), significantly more group households (12.8% compared to 4.7%), and just over half our residents are renting, compared to just under a third in greater Melbourne.
- About a fifth of our community speaks a language other than English at home, compared to just over a quarter in greater Melbourne. The most widely spoken non-English languages in Yarra are Vietnamese, Greek and Mandarin. There are 385 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in Yarra.
- Yarra is economically and socially diverse. While about a quarter of households earn over \$3,500 per week, more than one quarter earn less than \$1000 per week and many are living with economic hardship and social disadvantage. Around 10% of our community lives in public housing. Nearly half of Yarra residents have a Bachelor degree or higher, and just under a third have no tertiary qualifications. As our population continues to grow and general socio-economic status improves, there will be increasing importance for telling the underlying story of disadvantage and social justice to ensure appropriate access to funding and service responses
- Yarra has a thriving local economy employing nearly seventy thousand people. The largest employer is the health sector, which accounts for over a fifth of all jobs, closely followed by the retail food and accommodation sector. Most of Yarra's workers (86%) live outside the municipality.

This growth, brings with it opportunities and challenges. For example opportunities exist to continue to strengthen Yarra's position as a leading sustainable city, explore innovative and strategic ways to address parking, traffic management and transport and how we embrace our vibrant and growing night time economy. Challenges will include the increased demand for services, facilities and infrastructure particularly public transport and cycling facilities, open space and accessible community facilities and services. Council is committed to managing this growth while protecting and enhancing Yarra's heritage and culture.

YARRA'S VISION AND NARRATIVE

Yarra Council is committed to advocating on behalf of its current and future communities. In representing the views and needs of the community to decision and policy makers, Council aims to build strong, just, healthy and connected communities. Underpinning these aims, are Yarra's strong ethical, sustainable and social justice principles.

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. The municipality has long been a progressive city that has welcomed diversity and values the contribution of many voices and cultures.

Due to its inner-city location, Yarra continues to experience significant pressure for redevelopment and land use change. Yarra wants to see a balanced approach to growth that preserves the area's heritage and culture. It wants to ensure that developments contribute positively to the following objectives-

- Good design outcomes to contribute to an appealing urban environment
- Community infrastructure such as affordable housing, community facilities and green space.
- Better environmental outcomes
- Yarra's unique liveability attributes.
- Heritage values.

This growth will continue to put increased demand on Yarra's services, facilities and infrastructure particularly public transport and cycling facilities, open space and family, youth and children's services.

Council plays a pivotal role in strengthening the municipality's economic development by providing strong advocacy and leadership. Employment is growing and has shifted away from manufacturing to be predominantly managers and professionals in service industries. Council has a strong vision

for economic development within the city, based upon the principles of innovation and sustainability and quality employment. Having regular communications, sharing information and research and putting in place the right economic incentives, infrastructure and economic levers will assist in driving good economic outcomes.

Council will be looking at new revenue streams and partnerships opportunities that:

- Support vibrant and diverse neighbourhoods and centres
- Enhance local employment activities
- Foster and promote vibrant arts, cultures and communities
- Contribute to the development and maintenance of the local and regional economy.

A critical component of planning for future communities is the liveability and sustainability of the municipality in the long term. In 2012, Yarra City Council was recognised as Victoria's first carbon neutral local government and in 2016 City of Yarra was recognised as the Sustainable City of the Year by Keep Victoria Beautiful. Yarra continues to lead the local government sector in sustainability but given the climate emergency the world is facing there is an urgent need to advocate to other tiers of government for immediate action to mitigate its worst effects.

As community expectations grow, for additional infrastructure, services and community focused state/federal government policies, Yarra will need to transform the way we respond and advocate. Improving integration and collaboration across municipal boundaries is just one opportunity to "do more with less". Yarra will look to innovative and creative solutions to work with stakeholders in advocating for change.

CONFIDENCE AND TRUST

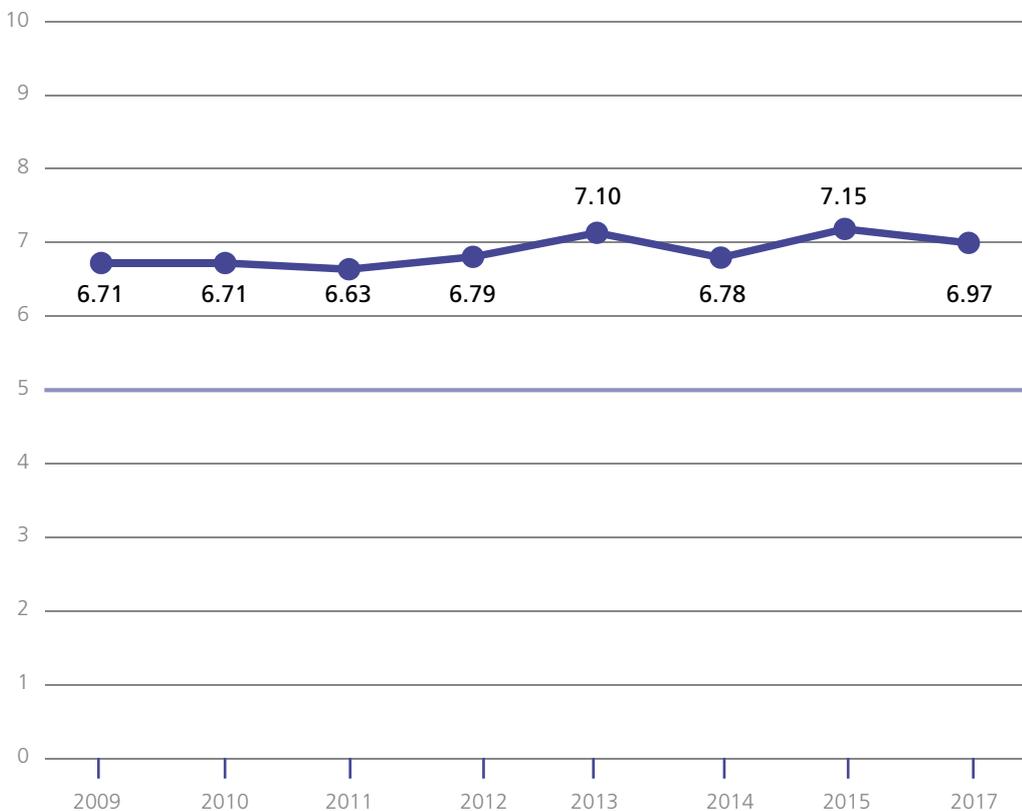
The Yarra community has a high level of trust and confidence in Council to deliver vital services, protect their liveability, communicate and consult and advocate on their behalf to all levels of government and other stakeholders. This is measured annually in Council's Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey with six indicators:

- Overall performance
- Responsibility to the environment
- Community consultation
- Advocacy
- Responding to local needs
- Maintaining trust and confidence

Trust and confidence is intangible and grows over time when a community, organisations or other level of government have faith in the reliability, durability, credibility and ability of Council. This measure is inextricably linked to all other measures. The more trust and confidence a community has in Council, the more faith they have in council across all measures. Strategic advocacy can enhance community confidence in Council by strengthening relationships, building capacity and attracting funds and resources that strengthen municipal outcomes.

Satisfaction with Council's overall performance

Yarra City Council - 2017 Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey scale from 0 (very dissatisfied) to 10 (very satisfied)



STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIPS

Identifying new strategic partnerships and supporting our existing networks will enable Council to best position the municipality for future challenges and opportunities. Over the next four years, Council will focus on developing mutually beneficial relationships with decision makers and key influencers – making them aware of joint opportunities for project delivery, community projects or initiatives and investment opportunities.

Due to Yarra's location and economic strengths it is well positioned to collaborate and connect with local industry and businesses, universities, subject matter NGO's, experts, peak community groups and government agencies/departments. Often each sector works in silo, rarely integrating efforts. Where it can, Yarra will connect community leaders and organisations, NGOs or philanthropic groups and service providers to achieve positive and durable long term change.

By representing the interests of the community in a range of forums, Council will increase its capacity to attract additional resources to the municipality and seek to resolve complex issues that affect the liveability of the city. Yarra is committed to advocating to State and Federal Governments on key issues, and supporting proposals that best serve the interests of the community as a whole.

We will do this by supporting and contributing to the following strategic partnerships:

Local Government/sector partnerships

Yarra will continue to lead policy debates in the sector on areas of strategic interest and importance to the Yarra community, inner metropolitan Melbourne and the local government sector. Yarra will collaborate and leverage the collective capability, where our advocacy objectives align at a formal and informal level.

This will be achieved through ongoing dedicated Officer resourcing and contribution to the advocacy objectives (where aligned with Yarra) of the Municipal Association of Victoria, the Metropolitan Transport Forum (MTF), IMAP (Inner Melbourne Action Plan) Implementation Committee, Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (NAGA), Doncaster Rail LG Group, Darebin Creek Management Committee (DCMC), Mayors

for Peace, Metropolitan (Local Government) Waste Management Forum (MWMG), Merri Creek Management Committee and the Road Safety Action Group Inner Melbourne (RSAGIM).

In the past Yarra has been recognised for its progressive leadership on subjects such as climate change and sustainability, public transport, refugees and asylum seekers, harm minimisation, affordable and public housing, and night time economies.

Council partnership needs

- Project has clear objectives and a nexus with Council Plan priorities and advocacy agenda.
- Budget / resources are available if applicable

Local Government sector partnerships needs

- Clear understanding of Council's position and level of commitment
- Appropriate funding and resources

State and Federal Government Partnerships

Relationship and reputation management are critical in advocacy. How well we work with other tiers of government will to a certain extent shape how government seeks to engage with us. Working in partnership with other tiers of government, results in greater community benefits.

Yarra will seek to enhance build long term politically strategic partnerships by identifying opportunities for governments to participate, showcase, pilot or partner with Yarra in delivering critical projects or policies.

Yarra is an innovative, creative and solutions-focused Council that will work with its partners to harness the opportunities and manage the challenges presented by population growth, provide support to vulnerable community members, protect and enhance Yarra's heritage and culture whilst reducing the city's environmental footprint.

Some of the key relationships that Yarra will be focusing on to advance our advocacy priorities are-

- Local Members of Parliament (State and Federal)
- Government Ministers (State and Federal)- In particular, Transport, Environment, Water, Education, Planning, Housing, Local Government, Education

Government Department Secretaries and Directors (State and Federal) - In particular, The Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources, Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Justice and Regulation, Department of Education and Training, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Department of Treasury and Finance.

- Government statutory agencies (state and federal) Sustainability Victoria and Parks Victoria.

Council partnership needs

- Project has clear objectives and a nexus with Council Plan priorities and advocacy agenda.
- Budget / resources are available if applicable

State/Federal Government sector partnerships needs

- Trust and confidence in Council's ability to deliver funded project
- Clear understanding of Council's position and level of commitment
- Appropriate funding and resources

Community or Peak Body partnerships

Supporting Yarra's community or local government regional groups to build capacity in advocating for change, is an important component in influencing decision makers.

It is also the basis for enabling grassroots community advocacy which improves the lives of those involved and builds trust and confidence in Council.

Yarra is fortunate to have a number of peak community, neighbourhood, resident and/or advocacy groups located within the municipality that focus on a broad range of issues and subjects including sustainable transport, environmental sustainability, planning, heritage and neighbourhood amenity, health and wellbeing, business, open space, and others.

A challenge is to balance competing demands from community groups and to demonstrate consistency so that community groups can feel confident in support they receive from Council.

Council partnership needs

- Project has clear objectives and a nexus with Council Plan priorities and advocacy agenda
- Budget / resources are available if applicable

Community or peak body partnerships needs

- Trust and confidence in Council's leadership
- Clear understanding of Council's position and level of commitment
- Appropriate funding and resources
- Opportunities to build capacity, local knowledge and leadership

Yarra plays an important role as a member of Australian Local Government Association, Municipal Association of Victoria, Victorian Local Government Association and numerous regional groups such as IMAP, ISMMF and IMNMF.

Business and Industry partnerships

Yarra Council is committed to building and supporting a strong local economy that provides for an innovative and sustainable community. There are more than 13,600 businesses operating within the municipality, making Yarra home to one of the largest economies in metropolitan Melbourne.

The three largest industries in Yarra, in terms of employment are-

- health care and social assistance (18%),
- professional, scientific and technical services (14%)
- retail trade (12%)

Yarra will seek to develop mutually beneficial relationships with our larger industries where our advocacy objectives and priorities align. Some of the key industries within Yarra are-

- St Vincent's Hospital
- Epworth Hospital
- Australian Catholic University
- Kangan TAFE
- GE office in Burnley
- CUB brewery in Abbotsford.

One growing area of business is Yarra's night time economy. With an increase in apartment living, Yarra's night precincts will continue to be highly sought after as people seek a diverse choice of food, good quality bars and pubs, live music and other unique and vibrant qualities of our key precincts.

Another growing area of business and source of employment is the number of planning developments and constructions underway and predicted for Yarra over the next decade.

Balancing both of these issues in terms of the needs of the community and business will require advocacy at a local and state level.

Council partnership needs

- Project has clear objectives and a nexus with Council Plan priorities and advocacy agenda
- Budget / resources are available if applicable

Business and Industry partnerships needs

- Trust and confidence in Council's leadership
- Benefit to business / Industry
- Clear understanding of Council's position and level of commitment
- Appropriate funding and resources

STRATEGIC ADVOCACY FRAMEWORK OBJECTIVES

This Framework proposes 8 strategic objectives:

Objective	How we will achieve it
<p>1 Set organisational advocacy agenda and priorities</p>	<p>Through evidence based research using the Council Plan and other available publications, data and information, benchmarking, consultation, intelligence on current government policies. Advocacy priorities to be reviewed annually. The advocacy priority projects are to be sourced from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Plan and policies (planned and budgeted approach) • Council resolutions as they arise (require full scoping and costing) • Issues of the day as they arise (not planned and may require resourcing.) • Government budget and policy cycles, policy announcements, election cycles.
<p>2 Influence decision and policy makers</p>	<p>Through carefully planned and resourced advocacy campaigns/actions (as outlined in the organisational advocacy agenda) which could include for example, correspondence, delegations, council resolutions, strategic partnerships, marketing and promotion.</p>
<p>3 Attract and secure funding and resources to Yarra for major projects</p>	<p>Through carefully planned and resourced advocacy involving identification of available funding sources, application and outcomes. Advocacy could take the form of grant submissions, correspondence, delegations, council resolutions, strategic partnerships, marketing and promotion etc.</p>
<p>4 Build upon our strategic partnerships</p>	<p>Through shared understandings, connections, agreements and formal alliances with people, organisations, peak bodies, councils and government that have the willingness and capability to support Council's advocacy and influence policy and decision makers.</p>

Objective	How we will achieve it
5 Share the Yarra story	By telling the Yarra story to government and the community and having consistent and compelling messaging on Yarra's values, priorities, leadership, actions and successes. Advocacy would focus on education and awareness of key issues, informing stakeholders about opportunities and challenges faced by Yarra.
6 Build trust and confidence in Council and Yarra	Through an advocacy agenda which reflects the leadership, ability, reliability and consistency of council to advocate on behalf of its community on issues of importance to them.
7 Build the advocacy capacity of Council and the community	By promoting a culture of advocacy, encouraging and enabling participation, building the community's ability to advocate on its own behalf, sharing skills, knowledge and expertise, mobilising of resources and reducing duplication of effort and information.
8 Strengthen our position as a leading local government and experts in our field	Through strategic partnerships, strong positions on policy that aligns with Yarra's values and principles, innovation, marketing and communication, awards etc.

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