





MAYOR'S MESSAGE

I am pleased to present Yarra City Council's Middle Years Strategy 2014– 2017. This inaugural strategy document will guide the planning and delivery of services, programs and activities for Yarra's middle years children and young people aged 8-12 years over the next three years.

This Middle Years Strategy is a first for Yarra - and the first of its kind for Local Government in Victoria. We are proud to be leading the way for children in the middle years age group.

Council is aware that many middle years children and young people may be falling through the gaps in current programs. These programs have traditionally focused on the addressing the needs of the early years (0 - 8 years) and young people (12 - 25 years).

This strategy was developed after extensive community consultation with children and young people; their families and schools; early years, family and youth service providers to ensure it reflects the needs, interests and aspirations of Yarra's children and young people; and their families.

Middle years children and young people aged 8 to 12 years comprised of 3% of the municipality's population or 2,430 individuals. The middle years of childhood are a significant period of physical, emotional and social growth.

This strategy represents a new way of thinking about how services and programs need to be planned and delivered for this age group to ensure that all children in Yarra grow into healthy and resilient young people.

Council is committed to ensuring that there is an integrated and coordinated approach to the planning and delivering of services and programs across key life phases – early years, middle years and youth, and that they are focused at key transition points.

The Middle Years Strategy 2014-2017 has been developed as part of an integrated policy platform that will compliment Yarra's Early Years Plan 2014-2017 and the new Youth Policy 2013 – 2016.

These new policies provide a foundation from which Council will build shared understandings, a common language and consistent approach to supporting and working with children, young people and families in Yarra that are culturally appropriate and inclusive.



Cr Jackie Fristacky
Mayor – Yarra City Council

WURUNDJERI 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.



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INTRODUCTION

The City of Yarra has a strong commitment to ensuring the health and wellbeing of all children and young people who live, work, study and/or visit the municipality. It has a proud history of planning and delivery of services in response to the social, health and educational needs of families, children and young people.

The City of Yarra is an inner metropolitan municipality which is home to a diverse community of about 79,500 people. The traditional owners of the land are the Wurundjeri Aboriginal people who originally inhabited the area that is now known as Fitzroy, Richmond and Collingwood. Yarra continues to be an important meeting place for Aboriginal people in Victoria.

Middle years children and young people aged 8 to 12 years comprise 3% of the municipality's population, or 2,430 individuals. The middle years of childhood are a significant period of physical, emotional and social growth. For most children this is a happy and healthy time of their lives in which they explore their independence, with minimal disruptions. For others however, this can be a time of heightened risk and increased challenges when many children disengage from school, start withdrawing from their family, increase risk-taking behaviour, and start to experiment with drugs and alcohol.

Research shows that the middle years offers a 'window' time for prevention and intervention so that risks can be addressed early so that emotional, social or behavioural problems do not arise later on. It is a time when positive social interaction, safety at home and in their community, good role modelling, and opportunities for play and positive experiences of the world can make all the difference.

The Middle Years Strategy is an inaugural strategy document for Yarra City Council and has been developed in recognition that many middle years children and young people are falling through the gaps in current programs. These programs have traditionally focused on the addressing the needs of the early years (0–8 years) and young people (12–25 years). This Strategy represents a new way of thinking about how services and programs need to be planned and delivered for this age group to ensure that all children in Yarra grow into healthy and resilient young people.



WHAT ARE THE MIDDLE YEARS?

The middle years describes a period in a child's life between early childhood and adolescence. Across sectors, governments and academia there are variations in relation to what constitutes middle childhood. For example the research community commonly define middle years as 9 to 14 years¹, while the education sector often defines middle years as the last few of years of primary school (Years 6 and 7) and the first few years of secondary school (Years 8 and 9) – an age group of around 10 to 15 years. Community and sector organisations also vary in their definitions of what constitutes the middle years i.e. as 8 to 12 years, or 9 to 14 years².

For the purposes of this strategy and in response to the aforementioned gap between Council's Early Years Strategy (0–8 years) and Youth Policy (12–25 years), the middle years is defined here as children and young people aged 8 to 12 years.



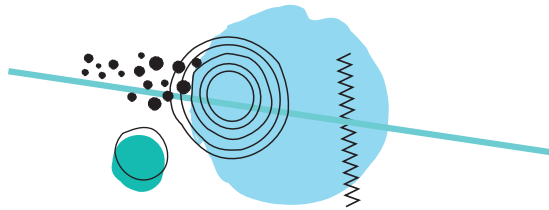
THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MIDDLE YEARS

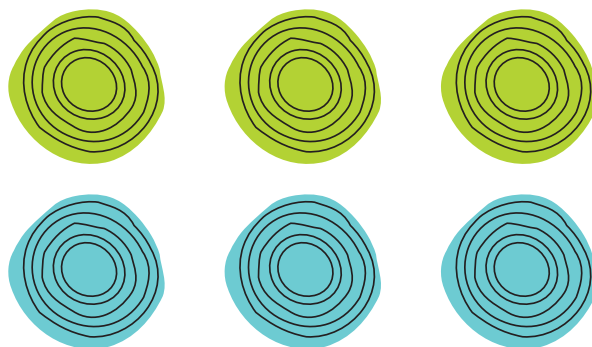
Traditionally little attention has been paid to the middle years as the early years and youth agendas have largely dominated the research and policy landscape. However, in recent years there has been an increasing recognition by service providers, researchers and policy makers that the middle years are a critical period of transition and development for children. Key features of this childhood stage include:

- major physical, emotional, cognitive and social development
- the onset of puberty
- the development of autonomy and greater independence from parental oversight and control
- an increased importance and influence of peer relationships
- the transition from primary to secondary school³.

During this critical time of development, major changes occur on multiple levels in a child's life and this is often a time when children will engage in risk-taking and experimental activities as they transition to independence. An emerging body of research has identified that the middle years is a period of heightened risk, particularly for vulnerable children that can include challenges such as:

- disengagement from school and decline in motivation and achievement
- disengagement from family and/or peers
- an increased susceptibility to effects of alcohol because of major brain developments
- experimentation with drugs and alcohol
- challenges relating to gender and sexuality identity
- emergence of symptoms of mental health disorders⁴.





However, research shows that the middle years is also a key intervention period when risks can be identified and addressed. The identification and response to early warning signs such as disengagement from school is crucial to preventing more serious social, emotional and behavioural problems later on. Services and programs need to focus on prevention and early intervention that strengthen protective factors to support healthy development and/or reduce risk factors that contribute to adverse outcomes.

It is also important that during this time of rapid development and flux middle years children and young people are supported within the context of their lives – by peers, schools, family and community so they can flourish during adolescence and grow into healthy, happy and connected young people⁵. This means that families, schools, community agencies and service providers need to be involved in discussions to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the developmental needs and challenges of middle years children and young people. And further, a collaborative and inclusive approach to the planning and delivery of new services and programs will ensure that they are evidence-based, localised and responsive.



CURRENT RESEARCH

Over the last five years, research has started to emerge that has highlighted the policy and service gaps for the middle years. As this evidence and practice knowledge grows, there has been corresponding pressure for targeted policies and programs to be developed that are more suited to the developmental needs of this age group.

In 2011, research undertaken by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY), identified the top five developmental challenges facing children as they transition into early adolescence as:

1. physical development
2. social and emotional development
3. peer relationships
4. self-esteem/body image
5. transition to independence.

Other challenges include: cognitive development, education, school transition, technology and social media, place in society and positive role models⁶.

ARACY's Middle Years Project identified that middle years issues crossed over multiple portfolio or service areas and that despite some of the good work that was occurring, it was found to be fragmented and often piecemeal. Key sites for supporting middle years children and young people were identified and these included the family, schools, and the community. Key factors that influenced healthy social and emotional development of middle years children and young people were identified as:

- good quality parent/child relationships in early adolescence to provide a secure base from which children are able to cope with the multitude of changes
- an understanding of the increasing role played by peers in the lives of young adolescents and how this can be exploited to promote positive health outcomes particularly during the transition from primary to secondary school
- the role of teachers with expertise in middle years teaching and learning as pivotal to successful developmental and educational outcomes; and
- an understanding of the pervasive influence of technology and social media on the lives of children and young people and how they can be used to provide positive cultural messages⁷.



The Commissioner for Children and Young People in Western Australia released an Issues Paper in 2011 which reiterated the importance of the middle years. It identified that developmental needs of children in their middle years appeared to be relatively neglected in Australian policy and practice, including in Western Australia. The paper outlined a need to have a better understanding of the needs of middle years children, identification of the supports that currently exist in Western Australia, and to identify services and program gaps⁸.

In 2012, the Western Australian Department for Communities and the Commissioner for Children and Young People, in partnership with the ARACY, held seminars that focussed on the social and emotional development of Aboriginal children aged 9 - 14 years. Seminars were held for a variety of audiences including parents, the Aboriginal community, government agencies and not-for-profit organisations. Research by the National Research Centre for Aboriginal Children, Families and Community and Murdoch University identified the key issues faced by Aboriginal children in the middle years that include:

- children feel judged by their skin colour
- 1 in 3 children experienced racism at school from their peers
- children with mixed parentage experience more challenges in their peer groups and struggle more with their identity
- children with low self-esteem often lack racial coping strategies when communicating and negotiating with the non-Indigenous community
- children with low self-esteem are likely to become dependent on Indigenous peer groups, where negative behaviour may be normalised.

This research found that racial incidents often increased during the middle years as children start to notice negative external feedback which shapes behaviour, expectations and a sense of belonging. Alternatively, the research identified the great benefits of celebrating Indigenous culture particularly during the middle years such as an increase in school attendance, improved self-esteem and school behaviour, and an enhanced sense of connectedness⁹.

In 2012, ARACY brought together a range of researchers, policy makers and practitioners to develop and define measurable outcomes or goals, and provide a common framework for taking action on the wellbeing of Australia's children and youth. The *Nest - National Plan for Child and Youth Wellbeing* and draft Action Agenda¹⁰ launched in September 2013 was developed to provide a guiding framework for the development of evidence-based, preventive and sustainable approaches to improve child and youth wellbeing across Australia. The national agenda is driven by five operational principles which include commitments to:

- a long-term, evidence-informed approach
- prevention and early intervention
- a life-stage approach
- the child at the centre
- collaboration and 'working smarter' using an outcomes approach.

In 2013, the *Building the Scaffolding – Strengthening Support for Young People in Victoria Report*¹¹ outlined findings from a survey (conducted in 2012) of 213 community, school and government service providers in Victoria which included a focus on the middle years. The research identified that many councils and service providers were now seeing much younger children present at youth services and that this had led to many extending services to a younger age group such as 10 years. Over sixty per cent of respondents indicated that there was a need for services for children between 8 to 12 years in their local government area/s that were currently not being provided. Key gaps in service provision included:

- lack of recreational facilities, events, clubs, and groups for this age group
- lack of capacity to support middle years children with challenging behaviours and specialist mental health needs
- the critical transition between primary and secondary school and gaps in education support
- the need for more support for children with disabilities
- the need for early intervention programs, such as anger management, conflict resolution, behavioural management programs to deal with behavioural issues when they begin to emerge; and
- addressing specific cultural needs of CALD communities to be addressed in program development.

Barriers to providing services for the middle years that were identified included funding, workforce development, and service appropriateness. In addition the report identified that services provided to children and young people in Victoria tended to be compartmentalised and focused on chronological ages rather than the transition and connections between ages leading to gaps in policy and service provision particularly in the middle years¹².

These issues were also echoed at the *Middle Years Unchartered Territory Conference* in March 2013 held in the City of Yarra, where over 120 representatives from schools, local governments and the youth sector came together to raise awareness of the middle years (8–14 years). Conference and workshop speakers identified the current gaps in middle years' service provision in Victoria, as well as the barriers that limit organisations' ability to provide programs and services to the middle years. Key recommendations from the conference include:

- the development of policy and funding models to enable organisations to work across the life course (0–25years)
- building the capacity of the workforce that supports middle years children and young people
- seeking the views of children and young people about the issues they face
- strengthening early intervention support through effective partnerships
- working with families and integrating family services with children's and youth services
- developing, and investing in, tools that enable the measurement and evaluation of service outcomes; and
- continuing to invest in middle years-focused research, forums and workshops¹³.

The Australian Child Wellbeing Project is research that is still underway and is being conducted by a consortium of researchers at Flinders University (Adelaide), the University of New South Wales (Sydney), and the Australian Council for Educational Research (Melbourne). This research looks specifically marginalised groups and what is important for young people's wellbeing from children's own perspectives. *The Understanding Children's Perspectives on Wellbeing The Australian Child Wellbeing Project: Phase One Report*, launched in September 2013, outlines findings from surveys with 100 Australian young people (aged 8–14), which included Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, young people with disability, young people in regional and remote Australia, economically disadvantaged young people, and young people in out-of-home care. Groups of young people considered to be in 'the mainstream' were included for comparison.

The research found that 'family' was nominated most frequently as the primary 'domain' concerning young people's wellbeing. Other domains frequently mentioned included friends, school, health, community, feeling good about yourself, and money and material goods (though these domains often meant different things to different groups of young people). Many of the findings reported were consistent with other Australian and international research on young people's wellbeing. Findings from this research is now being used to design and conduct a nationally representative survey of wellbeing among young people aged 8–14 years, to be piloted in early 2014 and rolled out nationally in July–September 2014. This survey will provide important information for policy makers, service providers, schools and researchers about Australian child wellbeing¹⁴.



POLICY CONTEXT

Responding to the needs of children and young people is guided at the broadest level by the covenants and legislation outlined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child and the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities. Policy and program responses fall within The Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 and the Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005.

In addition, the Child Friendly Cities Framework (CFC) is a global initiative aimed at translating the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child into action at the local level. The Framework outlines the participatory processes necessary to incorporate the Convention into local government processes. A child friendly city is the embodiment of the Convention on the Rights of the Child at the local level, which in practice means that children's rights are reflected in policies, laws, programmes and budgets. In a child friendly city, children are active agents; their voices and opinions are taken into consideration and influence decision making processes. The CFC Framework for Action outlines 9 Building Blocks for a Child Friendly City, i.e., structures and activities of government which are necessary to engage children's active involvement, to ensure a children's rights perspective in all relevant decision-making and equal rights of access to basic services¹⁵.

Research now highlights the importance of the early and middle years as a foundation for children's future health and wellbeing. There are currently no Federal or State policies that specifically set out an approach to the middle years. Instead, early years and youth agendas have largely dominated the Federal and State policy landscape and the assumption has been that middle years will be captured between both of these age groups¹⁶. Therefore, what follows here is an outline of key policies that are relevant to, or have an impact on, middle years children and young people, depending on age and developmental needs.

In April 2009, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) endorsed the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020*¹⁷. The framework outlines a long-term approach to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of Australia's children and aims to deliver a substantial and sustained reduction in levels of child abuse and neglect over time. The National Framework uses the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child definition of a child as 'anyone under the age of 18 years'. It provided at the time, an unprecedented level of collaboration between Australian, State and Territory governments and non-government organisations to protect children.

In 2012, the *National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care*¹⁸ was introduced which outlined strategies for the delivery of better quality services and the promotion of good educational and developmental outcomes for Australian children attending long day care, family day care, outside school hours care and preschool. Specifically it focuses on better qualified staff and improved staff-to-child ratios, providing national standards in education, health and safety, physical environment and staffing; and introducing a new transparent ratings system that enables parents to compare services and make informed choices about which service best meets their child's needs.

Other Federal Government policies relevant to the middle years includes the *National Strategy for Young Australians*¹⁹ which sets out the Australian Government's vision for young people aged 12 to 24 years to be safe, healthy, happy and resilient and to have the opportunities and skills they need to learn, work, engage in community life and influence decisions that affect them.

In New South Wales, the Government started to undertake work in this area based on the 2008 inquiry conducted by the NSW Parliamentary Committee into the needs and issues facing 9–14 year olds. The Committee published a report in 2009 *Children and Young People aged 9–14 in NSW: The Missing Middle* that identified that the ages of 9 and 14 were crucial to physical, social and emotional development, and "provided a key opportunity for positive intervention to help children and young people reach their full potential"²⁰. The NSW Government published a response to the Committee's recommendations in 2010 which proposed a whole-of-government approach to the middle years, that included the establishment of regional plans to address middle years issues and services that involved local governments²¹.

In Victoria, key policy frameworks for early and middle years include: the *Blueprint for Early Childhood Development and School Reform*²² which outlines a five year reform agenda for early childhood services and schools that aims to drive improvement and integration to deliver the outcomes for all children and young people. In addition the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework For All Children from Birth to Eight Years*²³ (VEYLDF) has been developed by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development in partnership with the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority provides outline for the advancement of all children's learning and development from birth to eight years. It identifies five Early Years Learning and Development Outcomes for all children from birth to eight years linking the learning outcomes from the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia to the AusVELS curriculum in schools. The Outcomes provide a shared language for all early childhood professionals and families to use when planning for children's learning and development.

In relation to young people aged 12 to 24 years the key policy in Victoria is the *Engage, Involve, Create: Youth Statement* which outlines the Victorian Government's commitment to the early identification and early intervention in supporting the health and wellbeing of young people and to ensuring support is available and accessible.

The *Protecting Victoria's Vulnerable Children Inquiry Report*²⁴ provides a comprehensive overview of the challenges facing vulnerable children, young people and families in Victoria and the reforms required to better support them. It outlines 90 recommended reforms and highlights the need for more integrated and multidisciplinary services. Following the report, the Victorian Government established the new Children and Young People's Commission and developed a reform agenda outlined in *Victoria's Vulnerable Children: Our Shared Responsibility Directions Paper*²⁵. The paper recognises that responsibility for improving outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and families is shared across government and sets out a whole of government vulnerable children's framework.

2012 and 2013 has been a significant period of policy reform at both a Federal and State level and these reforms seek to fundamentally change the shape of service delivery across Australia. In Victoria significant government and sector reforms include:

- the implementation of Victoria's economic reform agenda
- the piloting of the new case management model, Services Connect within the Department of Human Services (DHS)
- the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's (DEECD) review of its approach to vulnerable children and young people
- the implementation of The Service Sector Reform delivered in a partnership between the Department of Human Services, the Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS) and the Office for the Community Sector within the Department of Planning and Community Development
- reforms outlined as part of the Victorian Homelessness Action Plan
- the Economic Study on Service Delivery Reform and Disadvantage; and
- the introduction of the Disability Care Australia Scheme (previously known as National Disability Insurance Scheme -NDIS) from 1 July 2013.

In Victoria, local government is a major provider, planner and coordinator of services for children, young people and their families. All local governments are required to develop a Municipal Early Years Plan (MEYPs) as a framework for appropriate service delivery and infrastructure provision for children aged 0–8 years, and some councils have extended this to 10 years of age. However there is no statutory requirement for councils to have a middle years or youth policy strategy or plan.

This strategy has been informed by policy trends, current International and Australian research, and information gained from extensive consultations to identify local issues, needs and trends.

The Middle Years Strategy 2014–2017 is aligned with the Yarra Council Plan 2013–2017, in particular with strategic objective 1 – celebrating Yarra’s uniqueness; and strategic objective 2 – supporting Yarra’s community. It is also aligned with other City of Yarra strategic plans and strategies which include:

- Yarra Aboriginal Partnerships Plan 2011–2014
- Yarra Health Plan 2013–2017
- Yarra Libraries Plan 2013–2016
- Open Space Strategy 2006–2016
- Multicultural Policy 2010–2014
- Arts and Cultural Strategy 2011–2015
- Disability Action Plan 2010–2013
- Yarra Environmental Strategy 2013–2017
- Bicycle Strategy 2010–2015
- Safer Yarra Plan 2011–2014
- Yarra Social Media Policy 2013–2015.

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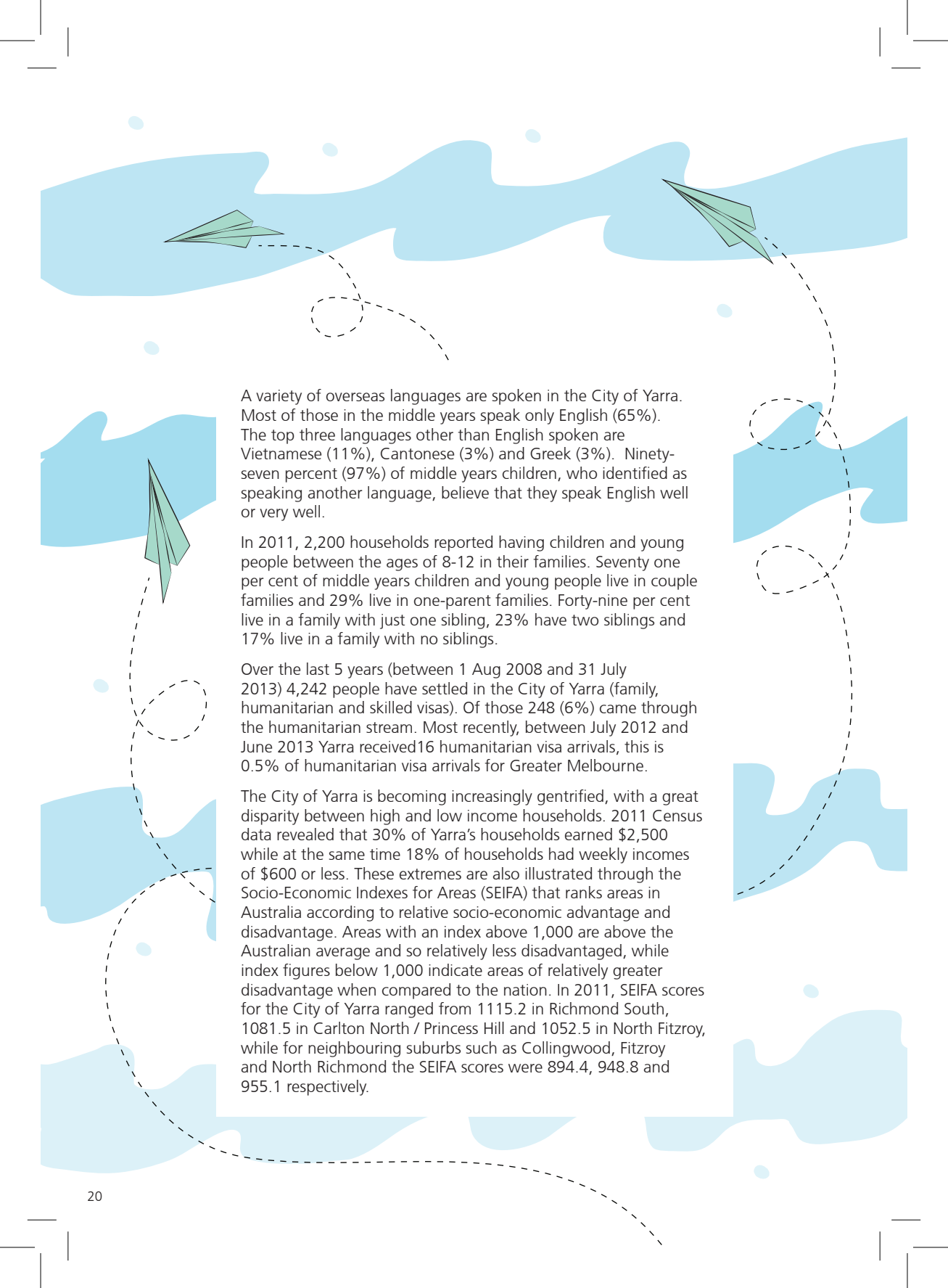
MIDDLE YEARS CHILDREN IN YARRA

Yarra is a vibrant inner-city municipality that includes the suburbs of Abbotsford, Burnley, Clifton Hill, Collingwood, Cremorne, Fitzroy, North Carlton, North Fitzroy, Princes Hill, Richmond, and parts of Alphington and Fairfield. The following data draws from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011 Census and municipality level information, including forecasted figures, to provide information about Yarra's middle years population, recognised by the City of Yarra as young people aged 8 to 12 years.

In 2011, the Census population of the City of Yarra was 74,800 people. Middle years children and young people aged 8 to 12 years comprised of 3% of the municipality's population, or 2,430 individuals. 2011 Census data indicated there were 14,170 children and young people aged 8-25 years living in Yarra and the middle years were approximately 20% of this cohort.

Projected forecast figures show the population of Yarra is estimated to increase from 83,615 in 2013 to 110,511 by 2031, and the number of households will increase from 37,335 to 50,265. The middle years population in Yarra is forecast to be 2,569 in 2013 and set to increase to 3,298 in 2031, increasing by 22%.

2011 Census data indicated 80% of middle years children and young people living in the City of Yarra were born in Australia. Of the remaining 20%, the top five overseas birthplaces, in order, are England, Vietnam, Sudan, the United States and Ethiopia. Yarra is a culturally diverse municipality. Notably, in relation to the top-five overseas birth places, middle years children and young people born in Vietnam predominantly call Richmond home and Yarra's Sudanese middle years population live solely in Fitzroy and Collingwood.




A variety of overseas languages are spoken in the City of Yarra. Most of those in the middle years speak only English (65%). The top three languages other than English spoken are Vietnamese (11%), Cantonese (3%) and Greek (3%). Ninety-seven percent (97%) of middle years children, who identified as speaking another language, believe that they speak English well or very well.

In 2011, 2,200 households reported having children and young people between the ages of 8-12 in their families. Seventy one per cent of middle years children and young people live in couple families and 29% live in one-parent families. Forty-nine per cent live in a family with just one sibling, 23% have two siblings and 17% live in a family with no siblings.

Over the last 5 years (between 1 Aug 2008 and 31 July 2013) 4,242 people have settled in the City of Yarra (family, humanitarian and skilled visas). Of those 248 (6%) came through the humanitarian stream. Most recently, between July 2012 and June 2013 Yarra received 16 humanitarian visa arrivals, this is 0.5% of humanitarian visa arrivals for Greater Melbourne.

The City of Yarra is becoming increasingly gentrified, with a great disparity between high and low income households. 2011 Census data revealed that 30% of Yarra's households earned \$2,500 while at the same time 18% of households had weekly incomes of \$600 or less. These extremes are also illustrated through the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) that ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. Areas with an index above 1,000 are above the Australian average and so relatively less disadvantaged, while index figures below 1,000 indicate areas of relatively greater disadvantage when compared to the nation. In 2011, SEIFA scores for the City of Yarra ranged from 1115.2 in Richmond South, 1081.5 in Carlton North / Princess Hill and 1052.5 in North Fitzroy, while for neighbouring suburbs such as Collingwood, Fitzroy and North Richmond the SEIFA scores were 894.4, 948.8 and 955.1 respectively.



As this shows, particular suburbs of Yarra are home to a high proportion of residents living with socio-economic disadvantage. Over 8,000 people, 10% of the Yarra population, live in public housing. Yarra's public housing comprises of three large estates in Collingwood, Fitzroy and North Richmond, and many smaller blocks across the municipality. Approximately 533 middle years children and young people were living in public housing in 2011, which is 26% of Yarra's middle years population. Of this group, the largest numbers that live in state owned housing reside in Richmond (179), Fitzroy (146) and Collingwood (127).

Many middle years children and young people living in state owned housing are from newly arrived and refugee backgrounds that have experienced trauma, persecution and/or displacement from their country of origin. In addition, they also face multiple challenges in Australia relating to settlement, adjusting to a new culture, learning a new language, and having to navigate new education and social systems and environments.

In addition to the middle years children and young people living in Yarra, large numbers along with their families come into the municipality to study and/or visit. The City of Yarra has 18 primary schools and 11 secondary schools (7 Government, 2 Catholic and 2 independent). From the education data that is known, the majority (89%) of middle years children and young people that live in Yarra are enrolled in primary school, with 11% enrolled in secondary school.

In an increasingly digital world, middle years children and young people require access to the Internet for education, health and leisure activities. Currently, broadband Internet provides the fastest connection. Households with no service connection may be disadvantaged in this technological era. Over 80% of middle years children and young people have some type of Internet connection, and 31% that do not have an Internet connection reside in Richmond²⁶.

COUNCIL'S ROLE

Yarra Council has varied roles in relation to middle years children and young people. These roles currently comprise:

- **Direct service delivery** of vacation care activities, out of school hours care, children and family services, library services, recreation and leisure activities, youth services and programs, and community planning, safety and advocacy
- **Provider and/or manager** of community facilities that enable Council and other organisations to provide services and programs for middle years children and young people
- **Funder** of programs and activities by community / youth organisations to broaden opportunities and activities for middle years children and young people such as adventure play activities, homework clubs, school holiday programs and arts programs
- **Research and planning** for services and facilities to meet the needs of middle years children and young people
- **Advocacy** on behalf of middle years children and young people to influence other levels of government and other organisations.

Future roles for Council that will be developed over the next three years include:

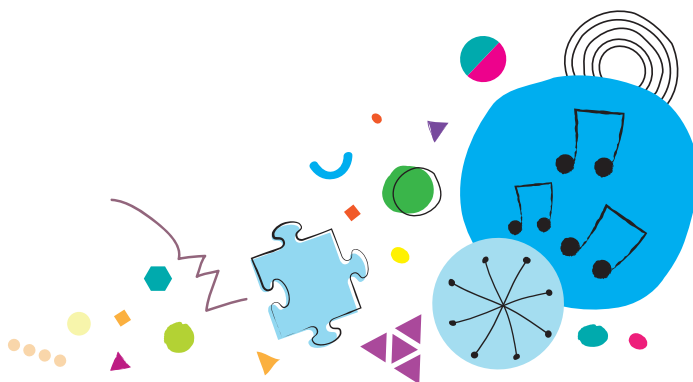
- **Community capacity builder** through provision of forums, workshops and support to organisations to encourage information sharing, enhanced professional development and workforce development, and local collaboration
- **Facilitator** of a range of partnerships and networks to build a strong, coordinated and responsive service system for middle years children and young people
- **Partner** with families, schools, community agencies, local, state and federal governments, and service providers to develop and implement services, and/or advocate for shared goals to support the developmental needs of middle years children and young people.



The *Middle Years Strategy 2014–2017* will guide the planning and delivery of services and programs over the next three years for middle years children and young people aged 8 to 12 years who live, study and/or visit Yarra.

- better understand the unique developmental needs, strengths and challenges of the middle years in Yarra
- enhance current services and programs to strengthen protective factors to support healthy development and/or those that reduce risk factors to reduce adverse outcomes
- review, plan and deliver effective targeted prevention programs that respond to identified needs
- enhance and build the capacity of sectors to maximise the potential of and support the middle years
- develop a coordinated approach across Yarra to service and program development that integrates across early years and youth services to build a holistic response to the developmental needs and priorities of the middle years.

This strategy is supported by a three year Action Plan that details the key goals, actions, and outcomes that are proposed over the next three years to implement the strategy across Council. Budget for implementation of the Middle Years Strategy and Action Plan are subject to annual Council approval.



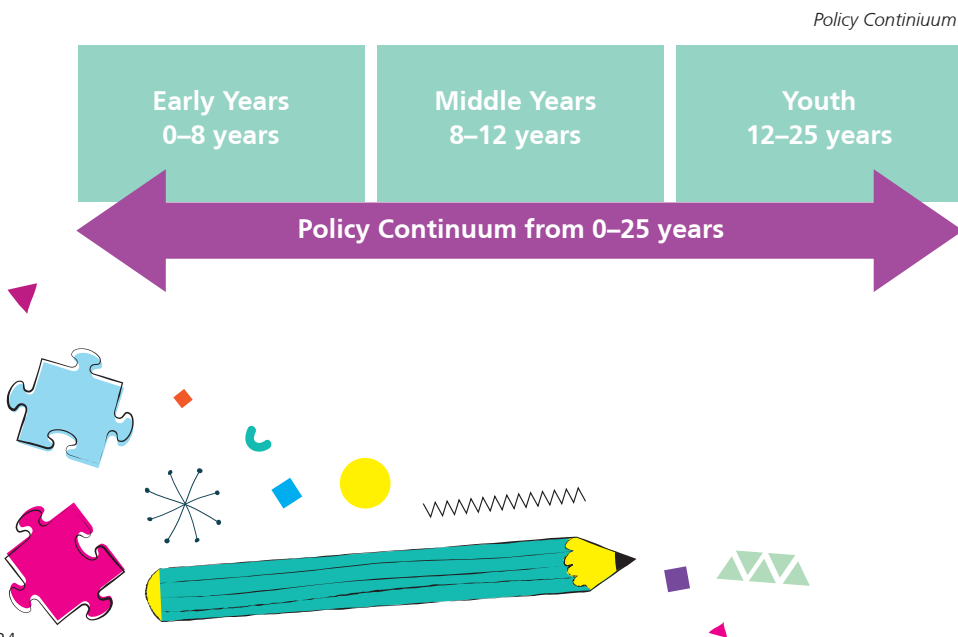


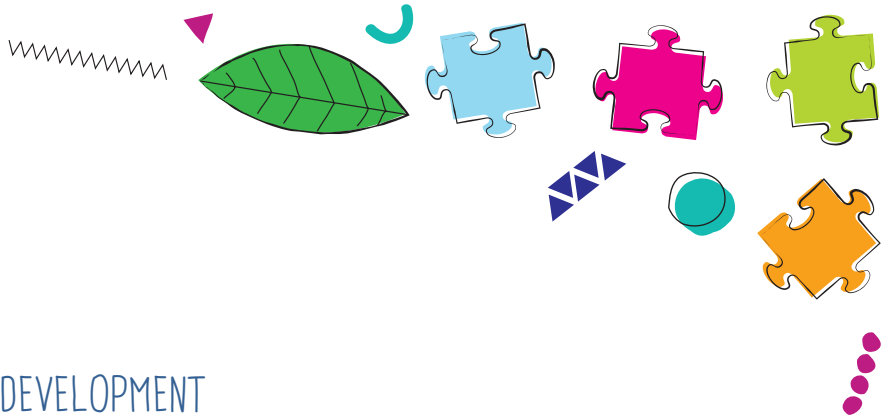
POLICY CONTINUUM FROM BIRTH TO 25 YEARS

While it is important to recognise the unique developmental needs, issues and challenges facing children in the middle years, this strategy is framed by an understanding that it is important to integrate middle years policy and service initiatives into early childhood and youth agendas to continue to build a holistic picture of childhood and adolescence.

Council is committed to ensuring that there is an integrated and coordinated approach to the planning and delivering of services and programs across key life phases – early years, middle years and youth, and they are focused at key transition points.

The Middle Years Strategy 2014–2017 has been developed as part of an integrated policy platform that compliments the Early Years Plan 2014–2017 that provides strategic direction for the delivery of programs for children from birth–8 years, and the new Youth Policy 2013–2016, that provides the framework for the delivery of services for young people aged 12–25 years. This will mean there will be a policy continuum in Yarra from birth to early adulthood (0–25 years). These new policies provide a foundation from which Council will build shared understandings, a common language and consistent approach to supporting and working with children, young people and families in Yarra that are culturally appropriate and inclusive

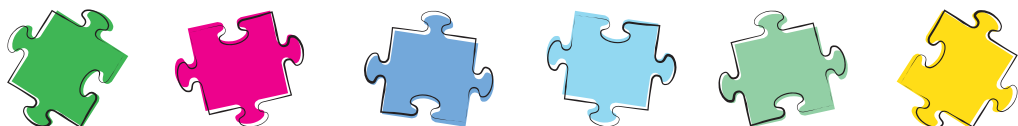
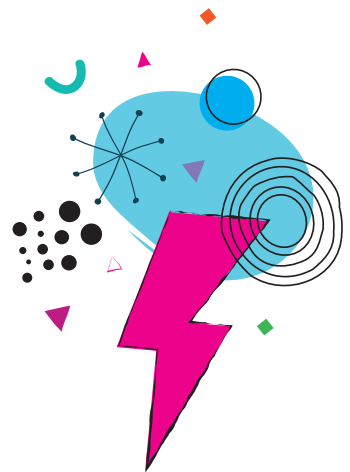




POLICY DEVELOPMENT

This policy has been informed by extensive consultations and research. This has included:

- mapping of Federal and State Government policies
- examination of the latest Australian research
- development of the Yarra Middle Years Profile Report 2013
- mapping of City of Yarra's role in supporting children and young people
- household surveys
- online sector surveys
- local government benchmarking
- world café discussion group at the Yarra Youth Providers Network
- focus group discussions at key local community and sector networks
- consultations with early and middle years children and their families
- consultations with early and middle years sectors in Yarra
- internal consultations across Council branches.



WHAT MIDDLE YEARS CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE, AND FAMILIES TOLD US

Middle years children and young people, and their families were consulted to inform the development of this strategy. Many children spoke about how they loved the parks, the swimming pools, shops and the communities they lived in. The natural environments in Yarra were also very important to them. For example children said:

"I like being in the City of Yarra because I have a lot of kind friends, we are close to the city; I can (go) to the swimming pool"

"I like park with real grass, real tress and real nature and fresh air"

"I like the friendly people; I like the community I live in. I also like the schools"

Public transport and the accessibility to the city, services and facilities were also identified by both children and families as a positive aspect of Yarra. The adventure playground, Collingwood Children's Farm, school, and libraries were also identified as important:

"You have a lot of public transport and they come frequently enough....That everything is a walk away. It's always busy so you don't feel lonely or deserted"

"They are all easily accessible by walking, low or no cost, cater for a range of children of different ages and are not wildly commercial and engage all the siblings"

"The school has the mentality that if you're stuck, the school is the first port of call. The school can refer to other services"

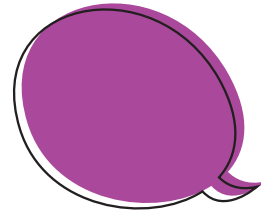
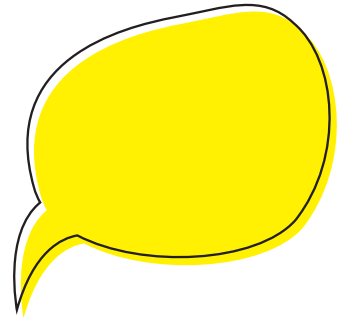
Many 8–12 spoke about having access to spaces that were tailored just for their age group, and about having the opportunity to share their ideas and opinions on a range of issues.

"There's heaps of stuff for the little kids, but we don't want to play dress ups"

"I don't feel safe around older kids"

"Kids should be able to vote"

"There should be a kid prime minister"



Barriers to services and programs identified by families include:

- lack of parking and the amount of traffic
- lack of adequate toilet facilities in parks
- cost of membership to facilities and clubs
- difficulty accessing information about services and programs
- playgrounds and equipment not suited to age group
- lack of programs available especially in weekends
- weather dependent programs
- areas/spaces not safe for children.

Safety and environmental issues were raised as of concern for many in the middle years. Issues were raised in particular in relation to drug use, anti-social behaviour, traffic, litter and pollution, smoking and public drunkenness.

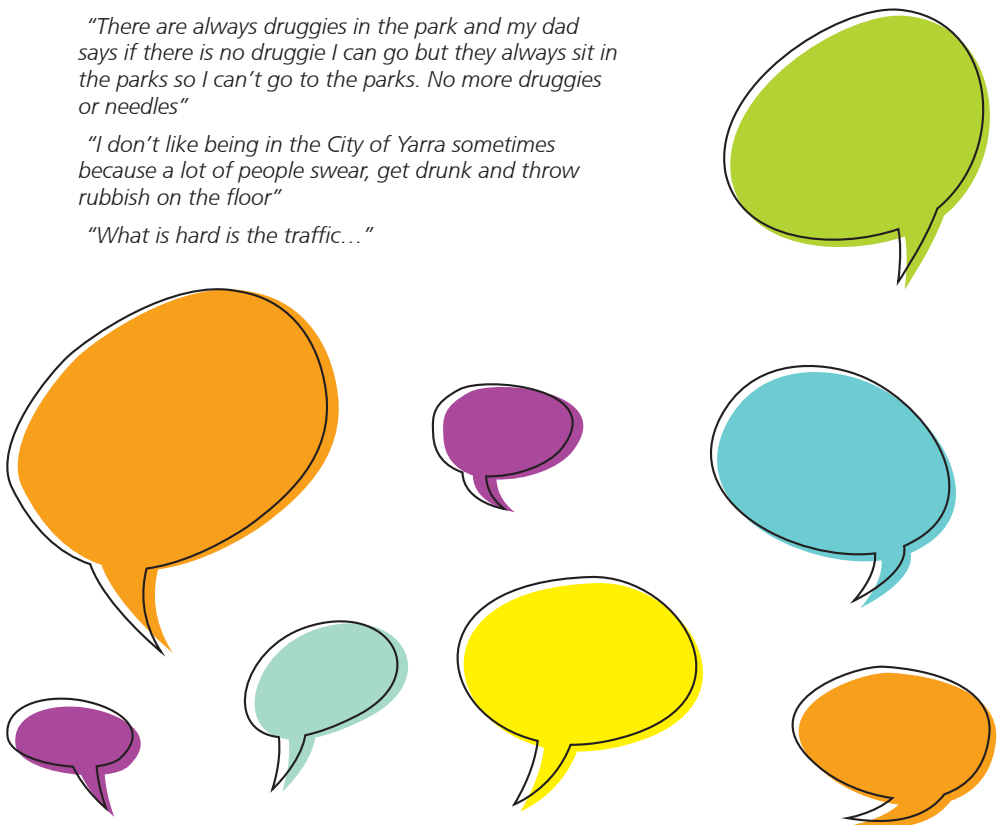
For families, these issues also raised concerns for them around their child's independent mobility and general safety in the community.

For example:

"There are always druggies in the park and my dad says if there is no druggie I can go but they always sit in the parks so I can't go to the parks. No more druggies or needles"

"I don't like being in the City of Yarra sometimes because a lot of people swear, get drunk and throw rubbish on the floor"

"What is hard is the traffic..."



Areas that were identified by children and families to be improved or developed include:

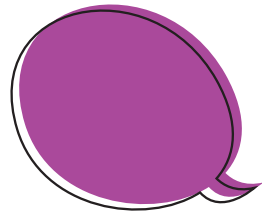
- safety, including more safe spaces specifically for the middle years
- additional services and programs such as more after school programs, excursions and weekend activities, more after school hours care, more bilingual classes and improvements to public transport
- access to information about existing programs and services
- more support for families such as parent education workshops
- opportunities for more physical activities and recreational programs
- more natural spaces and resources such as more parks, facilities and equipment for 8–12 age group
- environmental issues such as less traffic and more bicycle facilities
- quality and quantity of schools
- free internet areas for children and young people.

For example:

"Walk more and less cars for less pollution"

"I don't have any pets. I would like to play with animals"

"I would make a rule to make people stop swearing, getting drunk, throwing stuff on the floor and make it a welcoming place"



WHAT HOUSEHOLDS TOLD US

736 households, both with and without children and young people at home, were randomly selected across Yarra to conduct a survey that explored the priority areas for Council in relation to children and young people; factors that contribute to a happy life; and the biggest worries and concerns faced by those in the middle years.

Top three factors that were identified as contributing to a happy life for middle years children and young people in Yarra were:

1. family/personal relationships
2. personal and public safety
3. access to quality education.

The top five priority areas for Council to focus on in the next three years were:

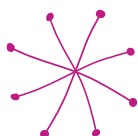
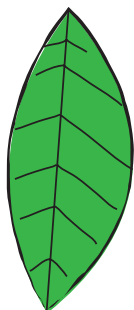
1. health and wellbeing of children and young people
2. ability to move around the city safely and independently
3. ability to access the services they need
4. opportunity to learn and develop
5. positive relationships with family and friends.

The top five biggest worries and concerns that were identified by households include:

1. safety and crime (both personal and public)
2. traffic (safety and congestion)
3. drugs and alcohol.
4. lack of access to quality/local education
5. lack of/limited access to recreational activities.

Other concerns that were identified included: family/relationship breakdown/conflict; health issues; lack of access to employment; environmental issues and lack of access to parks and open space. Overwhelmingly, households considered that Yarra is a good place for children and young people to live or grow up (85%)²⁷.





WHAT SCHOOLS, CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES TOLD US

67 representatives from schools, and children, youth and family service organisations were consulted in 2012 in relation to the needs of middle years children and young people in Yarra along with further 60 sector representatives in 2013.

Key issues in Yarra that were identified include:

- issues in relation to primary to secondary school transition
- anxiety, low self-esteem and mental health issues
- lack of targeted recreational, engagement and participation programs especially after-school, in weekends and during school holidays
- lack of positive role models
- disengagement from family and/or schools
- lack of parental engagement
- lack of alternative educational settings/programs targeted at this age group
- exposure at early age to drug and alcohol use
- availability of age appropriate/specific support services
- language and cultural difficulties
- family breakdown and conflict
- boredom.

In addition, a number of challenges were raised by schools, community agencies and youth service providers in relation to the delivery of targeted services and programs which include:

- lack of specific funding for this age group as funding is in relation to early years or youth
- lack of targeted programs which means 8–12 years is a significant gap as they are not catered for in early years services, but are too young to access youth services
- more services and programs are required that meet the developmental needs of this cohort as there is increasing demand on other service areas
- need to strengthen educational engagement at school to minimise risk of disengagement
- specific cultural needs of CALD communities need to be addressed in service and program development
- prevention and early intervention programs that identify and address risks early
- workers not trained to work with this age group and often work with a different model of practice i.e. youth services
- lack of best practice models and research.



Key priority areas for Council over the next three years that were identified include:

- planning and development of targeted programs in partnership with middle years children and young people, their families, schools and the community
- provision of meaningful activities for middle years children and young people especially in the weekends and during school-holidays
- development and delivery of prevention and early intervention programs across the life course
- support for more coordinated policy development and service planning at local level
- opportunities for enhanced parental engagement in programs
- support to schools to identify risk factors early
- support for sector and schools to better understand, and respond to, the developmental needs of the middle years.



OUR VISION FOR MIDDLE YEARS CHILDREN

Our vision for middle years children and young people (8–12 years) in the City of Yarra is that:



PRINCIPLES

Our middle years strategy is underpinned by six key principles:

- ***Child at the centre*** – the child in their own right is entitled to services that will promote and maintain their health and wellbeing.
- ***Child and youth participation*** – Children and young people's strengths, interests and abilities are recognised and celebrated, and their voices are heard. Young people are actively involved in decision making.
- ***Inclusive and accessible*** – All middle years children and young people are valued, respected and included. They have fair and equal access to opportunity and support.
- ***Valuing diversity*** – The diversity of Yarra is recognised as a valuable asset to our community and that diversity is integrated into all aspects of planning, policy and service delivery.
- ***Effective partnerships*** – Partnerships with families, education providers, the community and sectors underpin the development and implementation of services and initiatives.
- ***Strengths-based*** – The strengths of children, young people, families and carers, communities, schools, agencies and services are recognised and built upon.



KEY GOALS AND ACTIONS

GOAL 1 MIDDLE YEARS CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE SAFE AND HEALTHY

Outcome: Middle years children and young people feel safe, are confident, and have a strong sense of self-identity and self-esteem. They have their physical, developmental, psychosocial and mental health needs met and can adapt and cope with new challenges and changes as they emerge.

Actions:

We will:

- 1.1 Continue to enhance current services and programs such as after school care and vacation care programs, recreation and leisure programs and children, family and youth services to strengthen protective factors and support healthy development.
- 1.2 Work with Communities that Care, Victoria Police and schools to plan, develop and deliver effective prevention programs that target identified needs.
- 1.3 Continue to support the provision of structured and unstructured play activities in Yarra such as the provision of Community Partnership Grant funding to Fitzroy Adventure Playground.
- 1.4 Continue to support projects that enhance the health and wellbeing of middle years children and young people and their families through the provision of the Yarra Community Grants Program and other partnerships.
- 1.5 Form partnerships to support the delivery and enhancement of a broad range of affordable sports and recreational activities, programs, and access to sports competitions and clubs to meet diverse needs and interests.
- 1.6 Enhance existing support for the middle years by exploring, planning and developing a targeted individual support program.
- 1.7 Ensure the availability of spaces and places across Yarra that are inclusive, safe, welcoming and meet diverse needs and interests.



GOAL 2: MIDDLE YEARS CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE CONNECTED AND VALUED

Outcome: Middle years children and young people have secure attachments to their family, peers, school and community and have positive role models. Their views are taken into account on issues that matter to them and they have opportunities to contribute to their community.

Actions:

- We will:**
- 2.1 Plan and deliver affordable targeted engagement programs during school holidays, after school and on weekends that provide positive role models and enhance connections to peers, families and communities
 - 2.2 Ensure that middle years children are engaged as citizens; they are consulted, and have input into, the planning and development of Council and community decisions including policies, infrastructure, open spaces, programs and services.
 - 2.3 Provide opportunities for middle years children and young people to access information, connect and network via new web and mobile technologies and age appropriate social networking tools.
 - 2.4 Support opportunities for those in the middle years to explore, contribute to and celebrate their community and cultural identity.
 - 2.5 Support parents to nurture connections and foster healthy choices.



KEY GOALS AND ACTIONS

GOAL 3: MIDDLE YEARS CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE ENGAGED IN LEARNING

Outcome: Middle years children and young people are learning through a variety of formal and informal experiences at school, home and in their community. These experiences enable them to reach their full potential and maximise their life opportunities.

Actions

- We will:**
- 3.1 Continue to support the sustainability of the Yarra Education Youth Commitment to ensure innovative and coordinated responses to the educational needs of the middle years.
 - 3.2 Support and enhance programs that strengthen school connectedness, focus on transition from primary to secondary school, increase student aspiration and enhance parent engagement in all aspects of learning.
 - 3.3 Continue to support the development and delivery of targeted creative arts programs through Creative Yarra Grant funding.
 - 3.4 Continue to provide welcoming, inclusive, and safe spaces, programs and activities at Yarra Libraries that enhance skills and learning, and improve digital and information literacy and social interaction.
 - 3.5 Continue to support homework clubs across the municipality and other programs and spaces that engage young people in learning.
 - 3.6 Provide diverse opportunities for all middle years children and young people to learn new skills, nurture a sense of curiosity and gain enjoyment from learning.

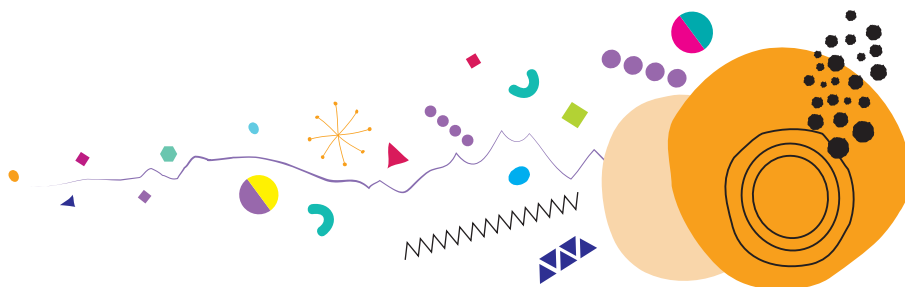


GOAL 4: SERVICES ARE COORDINATED, RESPONSIVE AND EVIDENCE-BASED

Outcome: Partnerships and collaborations with families, schools, services and the local community are robust and effective. Appropriate and responsive supports are developed for middle years children and young people, especially those that are hard to engage or vulnerable.

Actions:

- We will:**
- 4.1 Continue to work in partnership with schools, community agencies and sectors to ensure a coordinated approach to the planning and delivery of future programs to meet the diverse needs across Yarra.
 - 4.2 Continue to collaborate with middle years children, families and service providers to undertake research to identify and understand the developmental needs and challenges of middle years children and young people in Yarra.
 - 4.3 Plan and support the delivery of parent and sector forums and workshops that build the capacity of families, schools, community agencies and services.
 - 4.4 Support partnerships with service providers to ensure supported and coordinated transition from children's programs and services through to youth programs and services.
 - 4.5 Work with the sector to support effective and targeted promotion and communication to ensure awareness of programs and services available.
 - 4.6 Maintain and build robust partnerships with community agencies, schools and service providers to improve the sharing of information, expertise and knowledge.
 - 4.7 Develop partnerships to improve data collection and build sector capacity to undertake, monitor and evaluate services and programs to ensure continued learning and enhanced service provision for middle years children and young people.
 - 4.8 Advocate for, and contribute to, Federal and State Government policies and programs for the middle years.

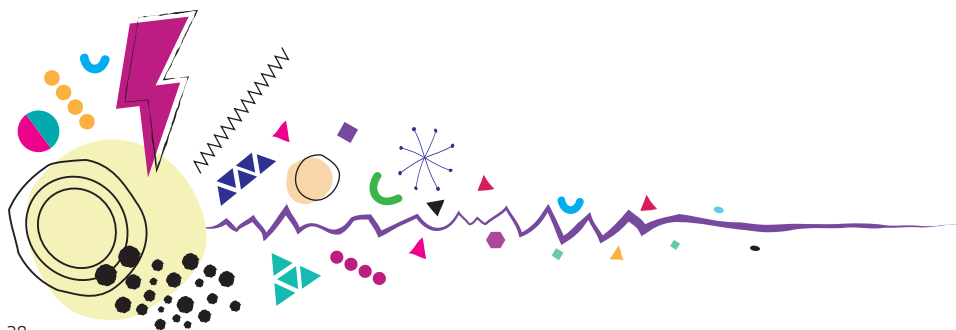


THREE-YEAR ACTION PLAN 2013-2016

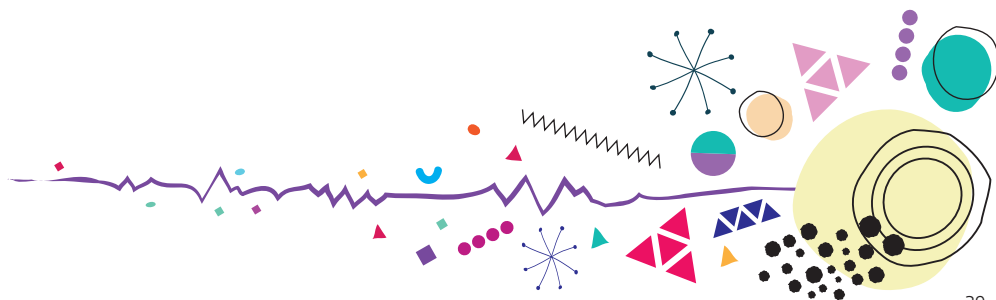
GOAL 1: MIDDLE YEARS CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE SAFE AND HEALTHY

Outcome: Middle years children and young people feel safe, are confident, and have a strong sense of self-identity and self-esteem. They have their physical, developmental, psychosocial and mental health needs met, and can adapt and cope with new challenges and changes as they emerge.

ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES
1.1 Continue to enhance current services and programs such as after school care and vacation care programs, recreation and leisure programs, and children, family and youth services to strengthen protective factors to support healthy development.	Lead: Family, Youth and Children's Branch, Recreation and Open Space Branch Middle years children and young people Schools Community groups and agencies Children, family and youth service providers	Year 1,2,3	Existing/New
1.2 Work with Communities that Care, Victoria Police and schools to plan, develop and deliver effective developmental prevention programs that target identified needs.	Lead: Youth & Middle Years Unit Victoria Police Schools Community agencies Children, family and youth service providers	Year 1,2,3	Existing/New
1.3 Continue to support the provision of structured and unstructured play activities for middle years children and young people in Yarra such as the provision of Community Partnership Grant funding to Fitzroy Adventure Playground.	Partners: Youth and Middle Years Unit, Community and Corporate Planning, and Fitzroy Adventure Playground Middle years children and young people Families Community agencies Schools Children, family and youth service providers	Year 1,2,3	Existing



ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES
1.4 Continue to support projects that enhance the health and wellbeing of middle years children and young people, and their families through the provision of the Yarra Community Grants Program and other partnerships.	Lead: Community and Corporate Planning Youth and Middle Years Unit Community Agencies Schools Victoria Police Children, family and youth service providers	Year 1,2,3	Existing
1.5 Form partnerships to support the delivery and enhancement of a broad range of affordable sports and recreational activities, programs, facilities and access to sports competitions that meet the needs and interests of middle years children and young people.	Partners: Youth & Middle Years Unit, Recreation and Open Space, Leisure Services, Access Yarra Branches Middle years children and young people Families Community agencies Schools Children, family and youth service providers	Year 1,2,3	Existing/New
1.6 Enhance existing support for the middle years by exploring, planning and developing a targeted individual support program.	Partners: Youth & Middle Years Unit, Family Services Schools Community agencies Children, family and youth service providers	Year 2,3	New
1.7 Ensure the availability of space and places across Yarra that are inclusive, safe, welcoming and meet diverse needs and interests.	Partners: Youth & Middle Years Unit, Arts, Culture and Venues Unit, Library Services, Recreation and Open Space, Leisure Services, Building & Property, Community and Corporate Planning Branches Schools Community agencies Children, family and youth service providers	Year 2,3	Existing/New



THREE-YEAR ACTION PLAN 2013-2016

GOAL 2: MIDDLE YEARS CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE CONNECTED AND VALUED

Outcome: Middle years children and young people have secure attachments to their family, peers, school and community, and have positive role models. Their views are taken into account on issues that matter to them and they have opportunities to contribute to their community.

ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES
2.1 Plan and deliver engagement programs during school holidays, after school and in weekends that provide positive role models and enhance connection to peers, families and communities.	Lead: Youth & Middle Years, Children's Services Middle years children and young people Families Schools Community agencies Children, family and youth service providers	Year 2,3	New
2.2 Ensure that middle years children and young people are engaged as citizens; they are consulted, and have input into, the planning and development of Council and community decisions including policies, infrastructure, open spaces, programs and services.	Lead: Youth & Middle Years Unit Community and Corporate Planning, Middle years children and young people Schools Recreation and Open Space	Year 2,3	New
2.3 Provide opportunities for middle years children and young people to access information, connect and network via new web and mobile technologies and age-appropriate social networking tools.	Lead: Youth & Middle Years Unit, Library Services, Communications and Customer Service Branch Middle years children and young people Schools	Year 2,3	New
2.4 Support opportunities for those in the middle years to explore, contribute to and celebrate their community and cultural identity.	Lead: Youth & Middle Years Unit Community and Corporate Planning Schools Community agencies Children, family and youth service providers	Year 2,3	New
2.5 Support parents to nurture connections and foster healthy choices.	Partners: Youth & Middle Years Unit, Children's Services, Family Services Schools Parents Children, family and youth service providers	Year 2, 3	New



THREE-YEAR ACTION PLAN 2013-2016

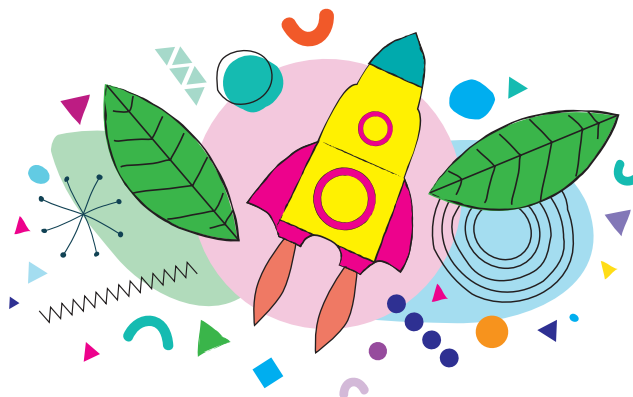
GOAL 3: MIDDLE YEARS CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE ENGAGED IN LEARNING

Outcome: Middle years children and young people are learning through a variety of formal and informal experiences at school, home and in their community. These experiences enable them to reach their full potential and to maximise their life opportunities.

ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES
3.1 Continue to support the ongoing sustainability of the Yarra Education Youth Commitment to ensure innovative and coordinated responses to the educational needs of the middle years.	Lead: Yarra Education Youth Commitment Youth & Middle Years Unit Schools Higher Education Providers Local Businesses Community agencies Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) Inner Northern Local Learning and Employment Network (INLLEN)	Year 1,2,3	Existing
3.2 Support and enhance programs that strengthen school connectedness, focus on transition from primary to secondary school, increase student aspiration and enhance parent engagement in all aspects of learning.	Partners: Youth and Middle Years Unit, Inner Northern Local Learning and Employment Network (INLLEN), Schools, Yarra Education Youth Commitment Middle years children and young people Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD)	Year 1,2,3	Existing/New



ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES
3.3 Continue to support the development and delivery of a creative arts program through Creative Yarra Grant funding.	Partners: Visionary Images, Arts, Culture and Venues Unit and Youth & Middle Years Unit Middle years children and young people Creative arts organisations Children, family and youth services Schools Department of Human Services Victoria Police	Year 1,2,3	Existing/New
3.4 Continue to provide welcoming, inclusive and safe spaces, programs and activities at Yarra Libraries that enhances skills and learning, improves digital and information literacy and social interaction.	Lead: Yarra Library Services Youth & Middle Years Unit Middle years children and young people Schools	Year 1,2,3	Existing
3.5 Continue to support homework clubs across the municipality and other programs and spaces that engage the middle years in learning.	Partners: Youth and Middle years Unit, Community and Corporate Planning Schools Children, family and youth services	Year 1,2,3	Existing
3.6 Provide diverse opportunities for middle years children and young people to learn new skills, nurture a sense of curiosity and gain enjoyment from learning.	Lead: Youth & Middle Years Unit Middle years children and young people Schools Communications and Customer Service Community Agencies Children, family and youth services	Year 2,3	New

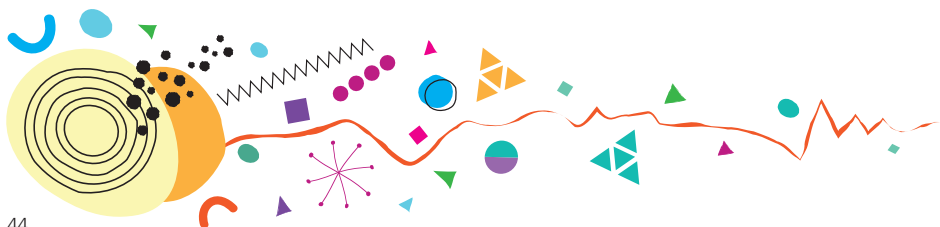


THREE-YEAR ACTION PLAN 2013-2016

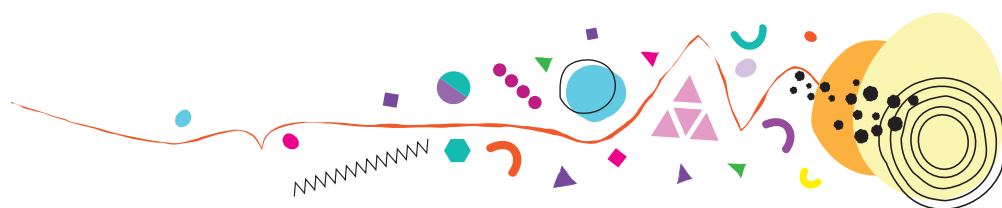
GOAL 4: SERVICES ARE COORDINATED, RESPONSIVE AND EVIDENCE-BASED

Outcome: Partnerships and collaborations with families, schools, services and the local community are robust and effective. Appropriate and responsive supports are developed for middle years children and young people, especially those that are hard to engage or vulnerable.

ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES
4.1 Continue to work in partnership with schools, community agencies and sectors to ensure a coordinated approach to the planning and delivery of future programs for the middle years in Yarra.	Partners: Council branches, schools, community agencies, children, youth and family service providers, Department of Human Services, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD), Victorian Commission for Children and Young People	Year 1,2,3	Existing/New
4.2 Continue to collaborate with middle years children, families and service providers to undertake research to identify and understand the developmental needs and challenges of middle years children and young people in Yarra.	Lead: Youth & Middle Years Unit Youth Affairs Council of Victoria Victorian Council Social Services Research institutes and universities Community and Corporate Planning	Year 1,2,3	Existing/New
4.3 Plan and support the delivery of parent and sector forums and workshops that build the capacity of families, schools, community agencies and services.	Lead: Youth and Middle Years Unit, Children and Family Services Schools Community agencies Children, family and youth services	Year 2,3	New
4.4 Support partnerships with service providers to ensure supported and coordinated transition from children's programs and services through to youth programs and services.	Lead: Youth and Middle Years Unit, Children and Family Services Schools Community agencies Children, family and youth services	Year 1,2,3	Existing/New



ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES
4.5 Work with the sector to support effective and targeted promotion and communication to ensure awareness of programs and services available.	Partners: Youth & Middle Years Unit, Children and Family Services, Library Services, Recreation and Open Space, Leisure Services, Community and Corporate Planning Branches, Middle years children and young people, Community Agencies Schools, Department of Human Services, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD)Victorian Commission for Children and Young People	Year 1,2,3	Existing/New
4.6 Maintain and build robust partnerships with community agencies, schools and service providers to improve the sharing of information, expertise and knowledge.	Partners: Youth & Middle Years Unit, Children and Family Services, Library Services, Recreation and Open Space, Leisure Services, Community and Corporate Planning Branches, Middle years children and young people, Community Agencies Schools, Department of Human Services, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD)Victorian Commission for Children and Young People	Year 1,2,3	Existing/New
4.7 Develop partnerships to improve data collection and build sector capacity to undertake, monitor and evaluate services and programs to ensure continued learning and enhanced service provision for middle years children and young people.	Lead: Youth and Middle Years Unit Corporate Planning Branches, Community Agencies Schools, Department of Human Services, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) Victorian Commission for Children and Young People Children, family and youth services	Year 2, 3	New
4.8 Advocate for, and contribute to, Federal and State Government policies and programs for the middle years.	Lead: Council Branches Federal & State Government Departments Middle years children and young people Community Agencies Youth Affairs Council of Victoria Victorian Council Social Services Children, family and youth services	Year 1,2,3	Existing/New





REVIEW AND EVALUATION

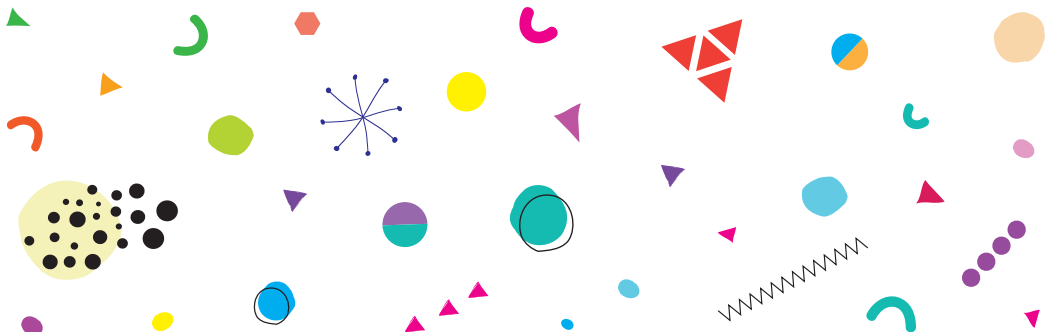
Council will review the Middle Years Strategy 2014–2017 and Action Plan on an annual basis and will work in partnership with middle years children and young people, families, the community, schools and sectors to ensure it responds to identified needs.



ENDNOTES

- 1 NSW Children and Young People Committee on Children and Young People and ARACY (2011)
- 2 CMC Consulting, *City of Yarra Middle Years Research Report*, Melbourne, September 2012.
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- 4 Commissioner for Children and Young People Western Australia, *Middle Years Issues Paper 7 – July 2011*, Western Australia, 2011
- 5 Ibid, 2011
- 6 ARACY (2011) *'betixt and between: A Report on ARACY's Middle Years Project focusing on the developmental needs of Australian children aged 9-14'*. Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Western Australia Commissioner for Children and Young People, 2011, *Middle Year' Issues Paper 7 – July 2011*, Western Australia, 2011
- 9 Western Australian Department for Communities, the Commissioner for Children and Young People and the Australian Research Alliance for Children, *Social and emotional development in the middle years: A report of the 2012 Middle Years Seminar Series*, Western Australia, 2012. *Seminar Series*
- 10 Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth, *Draft The Nest Action Agenda*, September 2013 www.aracy.org.au/documents/item/138
- 11 Victorian Council of Social Service and the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, *Building the Scaffolding – Strengthening Support for Young People in Victoria*, Melbourne, 2013
- 12 Ibid, 2013: 78.
- 13 Inner City Regional Youth Affairs Network, *Middle Years Unchartered Territory Conference and PD Day Report*, Melbourne, March 2013.
- 14 Australian Child Wellbeing Project, *The Understanding Children's Perspectives on Wellbeing The Australian Child Wellbeing Project: Phase One Report*, NSW, Melbourne and South Australia, September 2013. www.australianchildwellbeing.com.au/research-findings-resources

- 15 www.childfriendlycities.org
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Commonwealth of Australia, *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020*, 2009
- 18 Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, *National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care*, Canberra, 2012.
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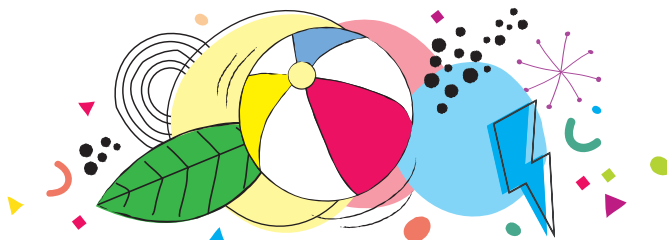
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