

Strategic Advocacy Framework

November 2013

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1. **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 a resource, this Framework is a key priority of the 2013-17 Council Plan.

While it has been developed by the Communications Branch, it will be owned by all divisions within Council given the priorities sit across a number of areas and issues.

This Framework, which is a first for Yarra, 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 2013-2017.

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 this Framework involved:

*Desktop analysis and background research of:*

* Existing Council Plan vision and 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
* Benchmarking with other “like” councils, reviewing status of existing advocacy priorities

*Consultation*

* Executive strategic discussion (workshop)
* Meetings with Directors and Managers
* Councillor discussion at briefing
1. **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, affordable housing and community services.

Council’s 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, co-ordinated, 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
1. **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 –
2. Advocating and promoting proposals which are in the best interests of the local community;
3. 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-
2. acting as a representative government by taking into account the diverse needs of the local community in decision making:
3. Advocating the interests of the local community to other communities and governments.

The strategic advocacy priorities within the Framework are captured within the Yarra’s Strategic Risk Register.

**Council Plan**

Yarra’s 2013-17 Council Plan focuses on enhancing services and facilities, and identifying new projects that will improve Yarra's liveability. The five strategic objectives in the Plan are:

1. Celebrating Yarra’s uniqueness
2. Supporting Yarra’s community
3. Making Yarra more liveable
4. Ensuring a sustainable Yarra
5. Leading local government

Advocacy features strongly in the Council Plan and can be referenced on 18 occasions.

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| --- | --- |
| Page 4 | Ensuring a sustainable Yarra: Council has made significant inroads into reducing Council’s environmental ‘footprint’. We need to continue this as well as working to reduce the community’s ‘footprint’ through **advocacy** and partnerships.  |
| Page 5 | Key initiatives over the next four years will include: **Strategic advocacy** to State and federal Governments to achieve community priorities – including Trains not Tolls campaign, land use planning and sustainable growth.  |
| Page 10 | Significant council roles include: representation and **advocacy** (e.g. social justice issues, lobbying for better public transport, working with other tiers of government and organisations). |
| Page 11 | Cultural identity: Yarra has a proud, long, history of labour, social, environmental and political activism. Yarra's residents have always been part of shaping both Melbourne and the nation, examples of this include: Fitzroy Legal Service, the first free community legal service in Australia; 2002 ‘Let Them Stay’ Campaign to allow East Timorese asylum seekers to stay in Australia; and 15 years of **advocacy** through the Yarra Drug and Health Forum for a harm-reduction approach to injecting drug-use. |
| Page 13 | Retaining and enhancing what is unique about Yarra will take strong representation – **strategic advocacy** – to State and Federal Governments as well as property developers to ensure that development models used elsewhere should not be applied to Yarra. |
| Page 14 | Focus for the next few years:* Represent the community’s views and needs, through **strategic advocacy** to State and Federal Governments, as well as local services and organisations.
* **Advocacy** for increased social and affordable housing in Yarra, including a minimum of 5% of apartments designed to be wheelchair accessible and comply with DDA standards.
 |
| Page 18 | Focus for the next four years:* Undertake Community Infrastructure Planning for all Yarra neighbourhoods to inform **advocacy**, funding applications and developer contribution negotiations.
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| Page 19 | Initiatives (over the next 4 years will include): (a) Conduct **advocacy** campaign on Yarra’s diverse socio-economic profile and social justice issues.  |
| Page 21 | Managing change: Along with a review of the Yarra Planning Scheme, **strategic advocacy** to the State Government is needed to achieve our vision for Yarra. |
| Page 22 | Inner Melbourne Action Plan: The IMAP partnership recognises the many similar issues and opportunities facing inner-city communities and presents a stronger base for **advocacy** in working with State and Federal Governments. |
| Page 22 | Sustainable transport: (However) stronger **advocacy** to State and Federal Governments by Council and the community is needed to significantly improve public transport infrastructure and capacity. |
| Page 24 | Strategic Objective 4 Ensuring a sustainable Yarra: Council has made significant inroads into reducing Council’s environmental ‘footprint’. We need to continue this as well as working to reduce the community’s ‘footprint’ through **advocacy** and partnerships. |
| Page 29 | Strategic Objective 4 Ensuring a sustainable Yarra: Measure of success (strategic indicators) * Council adoption of **strategic advocacy** framework.
* Successfully obtain funding as a result of **strategic advocacy**.
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| Page 29 | Strategic Objective 4 Ensuring a sustainable Yarra: Initiatives (over the next 4 years will include):* (i) Develop a **strategic advocacy** framework for Council adoption.
* (j) Establish periodic strategic planning sessions with Executive and Council to work on emerging issues and matters of significant importance to the community (links to **strategic advocacy**, research and organisational agility).
* (k) **Advocate** for improved State and Federal funding to local government.
 |

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, Clearways, overhead powerlines, planning issues, night time economy, indoor sports stadium, AMCOR, harm minimisation strategies, HAF master planning, local resident issues and Occupy Melbourne.

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 Melbourne’s Northern Metropolitan Mayors and CEOs Forum (NMMF), Inner South Metropolitan Mayors’ Forum (ISMMF), 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).

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

**State and Federal levels advocacy**

Council advocates on behalf of its community to State and Federal Government members of parliament and bureaucrats on matters of policy and funding. 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**

Council’s 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 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 Council towards a more coordinated approach that capitalises on all opportunities, while at the same time is clear about resource requirements and risks associated advocacy.

As a first step Council recently established a Strategic Advocacy Unit responsible to the Executive Manager Communications and Customer Service. 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.

1. **Yarra’s demographics and population data**

Between 2011 and 2031 Yarra is expected to grow by over 31,000 people to a total of 110,000. 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.

Some other key demographics are:

* Yarra has the second highest population density across inner Melbourne LGA’s- 4,079 persons per sq km and median land consumed per dwellings of 180 sqm.
* Yarra is Victoria’s most socially and economically diverse community.
* Just under 5,000 public housing dwellings in exist in Yarra, compromising 13% of all dwellings in Yarra and 7% of all Victoria’s public housing stock.
* Significantly, 33% of Victoria’s high rise public housing is in the City of Yarra.
* In the five years to 2011, employment in Yarra has also grown by 18 % to approximately 68,000 jobs.
* This unprecedented growth is a result of number of factors, Yarra’s proximity to the CBD, the central location between inner north and inner south, and access to jobs in the south east. Yarra is also one of the most sought after residential locations due to its proximity to public transport, shops and services, recreational activities and the night time economy.
* Denser living, particularly in the form of apartments, demonstrates a desire for 'vertical living' close to services and facilities. Approximately 8,000 new residents are expected in the Victoria Street East precinct alone over the next 15 years.

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.

1. **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, with around 10,000 jobs added in Yarra in the last 5 years, and has shifted away from manufacturing to be predominantly managers and professionals in service industries. Council has a strong vision for economic development within the city, based upon the principles of innovation and sustainability. 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. Yarra continues to lead the local government sector in sustainability and will work with other tiers of government and industry to accelerate community action on climate change.

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.

1. **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 Service 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.

1. **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, Victorian Local Governance Association Melbourne’s Northern Metropolitan Mayors and CEOs Forum (MNMF), Inner South Metropolitan Mayors’ Forum (ISMMF), 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.

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| **Council partnership needs** | **Local Government sector partnerships needs** |
| * Project has clear objectives and a nexus with Council Plan priorities and advocacy agenda.
* Budget / resources are available if applicable
 | * 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 our government relationships 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, Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure, Department of Environment and Primary Industries, Department of Human Services, Department of Health, Department of Justice, Department of Education and Childhood Development, Department of State Development, Business and Innovation, Department of Treasury and Finance.
* Government statutory agencies (state and federal)-Office of Living Victoria, Sustainability Victoria, Parks Victoria.

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| **Council partnership needs** | **State/Federal Government sector partnerships needs** |
| * Project has clear objectives and a nexus with Council Plan priorities and advocacy agenda.
* Budget / resources are available if applicable
 | * 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.

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| **Council partnership needs** | **Community or peak body partnerships needs** |
| * Project has clear objectives and a nexus with Council Plan priorities and advocacy agenda.
* Budget / resources are available if applicable
 | * 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.

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| **Council partnership needs** | **Business and Industry partnerships needs** |
| * Project has clear objectives and a nexus with Council Plan priorities and advocacy agenda.
* Budget / resources are available if applicable
 | * 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
 |

1. **Strategic Advocacy Framework Objectives**

This Framework proposes 8 strategic objectives:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **#** | **Objective** | **How we will achieve it** |
| 1 | Set organisational advocacy agenda and priorities | Through evidence based research using the Council Plan and other available publications, data and information, benchmarking, consultation, intelligence on current government agendas. Advocacy priorities to be reviewed annually.The advocacy priority projects are to be sourced from:* 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.
 |
| 2 | Influence decision and policy makers | 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 etc |
| 3 | Attract and secure funding and resources to Yarra for major projects | Through carefully planned and resourced advocacy involving identification of available funding sources, application and outcomes. Advocacy could take the form of correspondence, delegations, council resolutions, strategic partnerships, marketing and promotion etc |
| 4 | Build upon our strategic partnerships  | 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. |
| 5 | Share the Yarra story  | By telling the Yarra story to government and the community and having consistent and compelling messaging esousing 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 |

1. **Strategic Advocacy Agenda Matrix**

All advocacy issues are important, but it is not possible to advocate at an equal level for all the issues on Council’s agenda. Yarra’s advocacy agenda should be realistic and achievable. Too many advocacy priorities of organisational significance can dilute the quality of advocacy provided and impact Council’s budget and resources. This Framework establishes an advocacy agenda with *three levels* (or advocacy types) so that Council can maximise effort, resources and organisational political capital.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Level | Type / Descriptor | Context | Project lead and resources |
| **LEVEL 1**Strategic Advocacy of ‘organisational’ significanceAdvocacy requiring cross- organisational Input and collaboration | * Major municipal issue of broad strategic organisational priority
* Major issue subject to Council resolution
* Advocacy priority in the Council Plan
* Longstanding reputational issue
 | * A political element or sensitivity to the issue that results in a specialized focus and /or whole of organization coordination.
* Council is not succeeding in having its concerns or issues addressed through the standard channels of government engagement.
* The initiative or policy change requires extensive media, communications and/or stakeholder involvement /management.
 | Responsible Director with direct involvement/support from the Strategic Advocacy unit and broader Communications branch.Budget may be required for priority projects. |
| **LEVEL 2**Strategic Advocacy involving a specific area of Council | * Council project seeking a particular outcome such as decision /funding /support etc
* Localised advocacy priority listed in Council Plan
* Issue of the day that requires short term approach to advocacy
 | * An issue that relates to a particular Council service, activity or challenge that requires some advocacy generated from the local branch.
 | Responsible Director with some support the Strategic Advocacy unit and broader Communications branch.Budget may be required for priority projects. |
| **LEVEL 3**Advocacy driven by external project or association | * Peak body or sector-wide advocacy project which Yarra supports and contributes to
* Advocacy priority listed in Council Plan
 | * Council seeking to advocate in line with Council Plan values and vision to influence external political and/or policy decisions
* Will provide opportunities to demonstrate leadership and share expertise.
 | CEO or responsible Director/Manager with support from the Strategic Advocacy unit and broader Communications branch.Budget may be required for priority project. |

1. **Implementing the Framework**

**Actioning priorities**

Regardless of the Advocacy level, a detailed “strategy and implementation plan” must sit behind each advocacy priority. Each project strategy should:

* Determine project sponsor, roles and responsibilities
* Undertake legislative and policy analysis, research, benchmarking, consultation
* Establish objectives and agreed outcomes
* Identify options and opportunities available
* Document indicators of success
* Identify key stakeholders
* Identify and upskill key participators
* Develop actions and tactics
* Understand timeframes/milestones
* Budget for and allocate appropriate resources – staff, other
* Define risks
* Develop communications/marketing strategy
* Evaluate / reposition

**Roles and Responsibilities**

Below provides an overview of each of the important functions in supporting the delivery of the Advocacy Framework:

|  |  |
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| Role | Responsibility |
| Council | * Decision making (ie: agree to Advocacy Framework and priorities)
* Receive quarterly updates on forward planning of advocacy opportunities.
* Participation (either active or passive) to drive key advocacy priorities
* Proactive strategic relationship management
 |
| Mayor  | * Principal public spokesperson on issues
 |
| Executive Group | * Drive key priorities of the Advocacy Framework
* Proactive strategic relationship management
* Strategic and tactical decision making quarterly
* Receive quarterly updates on forward planning of advocacy opportunities
 |
| Managers | * Project managers implement advocacy projects, supported by the Coordinator of Strategic Advocacy and the Communications branch.
* Proactive strategic relationship management
* Receive quarterly updates on forward planning of advocacy
 |
| Strategic Advocacy Unit | * Provide advice and support to divisions in implementing advocacy projects
* Proactive strategic relationship management
* Strategic and tactical decision making quarterly
* Build capacity in advocacy techniques and strategies
* Develop advocacy kit and tools
* Develop key messages
* Develop forward plan of opportunities to work with strategic partners in driving advocacy projects/priorities- i.e policy launches, local government sector meetings, policy reviews, state/federal budgets, pilot proposals
 |
| Communications branch | * Work with Council, Executive and Strategic Advocacy Coordinator to identify proactive media and communication opportunities for advocacy projects
 |
| All staff | Build their internal advocacy capacity to ensure they are aware of:* Council’s organisational Advocacy Agenda
* The need for having clear objectives and goals when planning any form of advocacy
* Knowing what the government of the day wants to achieve
* Ensuring there is quantitative and qualitative evidence to support Council’s position/case
* Collaborating-work as a team (group of Councils, Council with business community, Council with community)
* Understanding the political and policy cycle-budget cycles, legislative and policy
* Creating advocates within the community-who are the champions of the issues? Who are the third parties to help support Yarra’s advocacy goals?
 |
| Strategic advisory groups  | * Provide advice to Council on strategic advocacy project/s
* Proactive strategic relationship management
* Understanding Council objectives and goals
 |

**Community involvement**

Some advocacy projects will benefit from community participation. Involving the community requires:

* Community trust and confidence in Council
* Community capacity, energy and willingness to get involved
* Leadership from Council throughout the life of the project
* Community leaders (either individual or group)
* Resourcing and support from Council

**Communication support**

Advocacy requires significant communications and marketing support. A communications plan should be developed for each advocacy priority addressing:

* Communications objective
* Research and analysis
* Key stakeholders and partners (including CALD community)
* Key messages
* Platforms for communications
* traditional media and publications
* digital media / social media
* delegations and meetings
* consultation and information
* Communications actions and implementation
* Budget required for communicating
* Measures to evaluate success
1. **Priority Strategic Advocacy Projects - Years 1-4**

Priority projects for Levels 1 and 2 have been identified using the Advocacy Agenda Matrix in this Framework.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Advocacy priority | Alignment with Advocacy ObjectivesSee page 13 | Alignment with Council Plan | Type | Key Stakeholders  | Strategic Opportunities | Notional Timeframe |
| Sustainable Transport | Objectives 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 | Strategic Objective 3.Making Yarra more liveable4.Ensuring a sustainable Yarra | Level 1: Organisation wide | DTPLI, PTV, DTF, local community groups, peak transport bodies, local government sector, business, community, media | Influence government policy/funding allocation for Doncaster Rail, Melbourne Metro and EWL allied projects and other Yarra transport objectives. Partner with peak bodes and local govt sector such as MTF, IMAP, ISMMF, MAV, VLGA to advocate for improved Yarra and Melbourne wide sustainable transport outcomes. Work with the media, Yarra community groups and the business community. | Years 1 and 2 |
| East West Tunnel  | Objectives 2,3,6 | Strategic Objective 2. Supporting Yarra’s community3. Making Yarra more liveable | Level 1: Organisation wide | Premier of Victoria, Minister for Transport, DTPLI, Linking Melb Authority, Consortia, community, media, Metropolitan and Regional Councils. | Notwithstanding Council’s strong opposition to the EWL, advocacy would be in the form of influencing Consortia tenders to ensure mitigation projects are realised. | Year 1 |
| Planning and construction -Balancing growth and protecting heritage | Objectives 2,5,6  | Strategic Objective 2 Supporting Yarra’s community3.Making Yarra more liveable | Level 1: Organisation wide | Metropolitan Planning Authority (MRA), DTPLI, property developers, review, media, community | Influence key stakeholder by demonstrating that Yarra is a leader in inner-urban Community Infrastructure Planning. Influence state policy /decision/settings and developer outcomes by working closely with all stakeholders. Educate and inform local government sector, state government of Yarra's plan to accommodate growth whilst achieving social, economic and environmental objectives. | Years 2,3 |
| Identify state and federal govt funding sources | Objectives 2,3,4 | Strategic Objective 5. Leading local government | Level 1: Organisation wide | State/federal government departments/statutory agencies, industry/business associations and groups within Yarra, not for profit, Universities | Identify and maximise Yarra's bids for government funding grants and one off projects by partnering with business'/industry/peak groups to proactively position key council projects with state/federal governments. Identify delegation opportunities and ministerial visits for Yarra to showcase projects and potential pilot opportunities. Collaborate with local government sector groups and other councils to influence positive regional outcomes. | Years 2,3,4 |
| Develop Yarra community narrative | Objectives 5,6,8 | Strategic Objective 1. Celebrating Yarra’s uniqueness | Level 1: Organisation wide | Government, community, Industry, business, media | Work with the community to develop a 20 year community vision for Yarra. Share the 'Yarra story' with the aim of developing partnerships, attracting funding and building confidence and trust. | Years 2,3 |
| Sustainable City | Objectives 2,3,4,5,6,8 | Strategic Objective 4. Ensuring a sustainable Yarra | Level 2Local Branch Advocacy | International, national, state and local - Community, industry, business, peak groups, not for profits, Universities, subject matter experts, media | Deliver advocacy objectives of the Environment Strategy.Support advocacy initiatives of Yarra Energy Foundation.Establish Yarra as a global leader in local government. Build strategic partnerships within and outside the municipality to deliver key environment objectives. | Years 1,2,3,4 |
| Major Indoor Sports Facility | Objectives 2,3,4 | Strategic Objective 2. Supporting Yarra’s community | Level 2Local Branch Advocacy | DTPLI, DTF, EPA, DEPI, Minister for Sport and Recreation, Melbourne Northern Metropolitan Mayor's Forum, media, private industry, community, peak bodies | Partner with state government/ developer/consortia to advocate and develop alternative sites (permanent and temporary). Collaborate and work with Melbourne Northern Metropolitan Mayor's Forum to support proposal for regional community benefit | Years1,2,3,4,5 plus |
| Night Time Economy | Objectives 2,3,4,5,8 | Strategic Objective 3.Making Yarra more liveable | Level 2Local Branch Advocacy | Small Business Victoria, Yarra Service providers and agencies, Yarra Business Associations, IMAP project plan, media and community | To support Yarra’s vibrant night time economy but at same time minimise nuisance impacts for residents living in and around these entertainment precincts. Articulate the actual responsibilities of local government and improve the accountability of State and Commonwealth Government and their agencies | Ongoing |
| Affordable, Accessible &Social Public Housing Option | Objectives 2,3,4,6 | Strategic Objective 3. Making Yarra more liveable | Level 2Local Branch Advocacy | Department of Human Services, Developer partnerships, community housing organisations, local NGO's, IMAP | Work in collaboration with IMAP highlight the pressing need for an increase in social and affordable housing in Yarra across the region. Strengthen strategic alliances with housing association and peak groups in identifying the needs | Ongoing |
| Yarra River Corridor | Objectives 2,3,4 | Strategic Objective 4.Ensuring a sustainable Yarra | Level 2Local Branch Advocacy | DTPLI, Melbourne Water, other council partners, environmental groups, community and media | Support the Yarra River environs awareness campaign (as an initiative in the Yarra Environment Strategy). Develop strategic partnerships with stakeholder councils and government agencies to protect and improve water quality of the Yarra and keep it free from encroachment | Years 2,3 |
| Secondary School Education Provision | Objectives 2,3,4,6 | Council resolution,Strategic Objective 2. Supporting Yarra’s community | Level 2Local Branch Advocacy | DEECD, Minister for Education, Yarra primary/secondary School community, media, community and University sector | Work with the school and broader community and to enhance education provision within Yarra, by brokering discussions with the Department. Collaborate with neighbouring councils to identify opportunities. Work with school community to identify areas for enhancement of facilities and school offer | Years 1,2 |
| Yarra's Diverse Socio Economic Profile | Objectives 2,3,4,5, | Strategic Objective 2. Supporting Yarra’s community | Level 2Local Branch Advocacy | State/Federal Government Departments, non-Government Organisations & community services, community and media | Inform, educate and influence key stakeholders through an advocacy campaign in collaboration with community | Ongoing |
| Amcor Site | Objectives2,3, 4 | Council resolutionStrategic Objective2.Supporting Yarra’s community3.Making Yarra more liveable4. Ensuring a sustainable Yarra  | Level 2Local BranchAdvocacy | DTPLI, DEPI, Office of Living Victoria, Private Sector developer | Influence and highlight Yarra’s sustainability agenda and potential for the site to be a pilot for enhanced social and environmental outcomes. Influence developer and advocate for community based outcomes | Year 1 & 2 |
| Harm Reduction Strategies | Objectives2,3,4,5,8 | Strategic Objective2. Supporting Yarra’s community | Level 2Local BranchAdvocacy | Department of Health, Minister for Mental Health/ Community Services, Department of Human Services, AMA, Yarra Drug & Health Forum, Yarra Community Health, Victoria Police, Yarra's 3 Community Health Centres, media | Influence state government policy by working behind the scenes with harm reduction advocates, build capacity to influence, build the case for a change in policy through strategic partnerships, share research | Year 1,2,3,4 |
| Yarra Bend Park | Objectives2, 3 | Strategic Objective 2.Supporting Yarra’s community3. Making Yarra more liveable | Level 2Local BranchAdvocacy | Parks Victoria, City of Boroondara, community and media | Secure long term control over Yarra Bend Park to ensure future provision of sporting fields for Yarra’s growing community.Leverage off current option for short to medium term control from Parks Victoria | Year 2 |

\*In addition to the strategic advocacy priorities identified in the Framework, there are a myriad of advocacy initiatives that will continue to be delivered and reported on by each division.

1. **Conclusion**

Council has a strong commitment to advocacy both in its own right and in supporting community advocacy efforts. Successful advocacy outcomes rely on considered planning and resourcing, establishing and fostering Yarra’s strategic relationships and collaborating with partners to achieve positive community change.

The framework is a high level strategic plan that identifies the advocacy projects and priorities to guide the organisation in achieving its advocacy objectives. By having a planned, evidence-based and resourced approach to advocacy, Council maximises its impact.

The framework also aims to create a ‘culture of advocacy’ across Council by identifying how people can be a part of the advocacy agenda and how people can build Yarra’s influence. Relationship and reputation management are important components in influencing decision makers. People’s experience of working with us will shape how they seek to engage with us and the types of opportunities that may present themselves.

Community aspirations and needs are key pillars of the framework and Council will continue to work closely with the community to realise these outcomes in the short, medium and longer term.

For further information contact Joanne Mulcahy, Executive Manager Communications, Customer Service on 9205 5142 or Brooke Colbert, Strategic Advocacy Co-ordinator on 9205 5122.