

# **Yarra business handbook 2025**

# Wominjeka | Welcome

Dear business owner,

I am so proud to be Mayor of a city that is home to some of Melbourne's most vibrant and popular shopping and hospitality precincts. Our small businesses are a vital part of Yarra's eclectic and unique identity.

Yarra produces \$33.7 billion in economic output each year and is home to 98,000 jobs.

Our 12 commercial precincts, each with their own personality and character, are some of the most popular and well-known shopping precincts in Melbourne. Whether you're looking to eat, shop, drink, explore, or enjoy world-class live music - you can find it all in Yarra.

To ensure our businesses continue to succeed, we encourage residents and visitors to shop local.

For the sixth year, we have developed this comprehensive handbook with tips and information to help you run your business.

This is just one of the ways we are supporting businesses in 2025. We're also supporting events and activations, providing you access to local economic and property data, slashing bureaucratic red tape to assist with business permits, connecting you with grant opportunities and much more.

Wishing you a successful, safe and prosperous year.

**Cr Stephen Jolly**  
**Mayor, City of Yarra**



## Acknowledgement

Yarra City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and true sovereigns of the land now known as Yarra. We also acknowledge the significant contributions made by other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to life in Yarra. We pay our respects to Elders from all nations and to their Elders past, present and future.

On the cover: Edinburgh Gardens, Fitzroy North

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**National Relay Service** TTY 133 677 then (03) 9205 5555

**Languages** 中文 9280 1937 Italiano 9280 1931

العربية 9280 1930 Ελληνικά 9280 1934 Español 9280 1935

REF 20,296

# Councillors

The Yarra community is represented by nine elected councillors.

Individual councillors can consult with their constituents and advocate on their behalf, but they can only make decisions as a collective.

This Council was elected on 12 November 2024 for a four year term.

To speak to your councillors visit [yarracity.vic.gov.au/councillors](https://yarracity.vic.gov.au/councillors)

**Sharon Harrison**

Boulevard Ward

**Edward Crossland**

Curtain Ward

**Sophie Wade**

Hoddle Ward

**Evangeline Aston**

Langridge Ward

**Andrew Davies**

Lennox Ward

**Stephen Jolly**

MacKillop Ward

**Meca Ho**

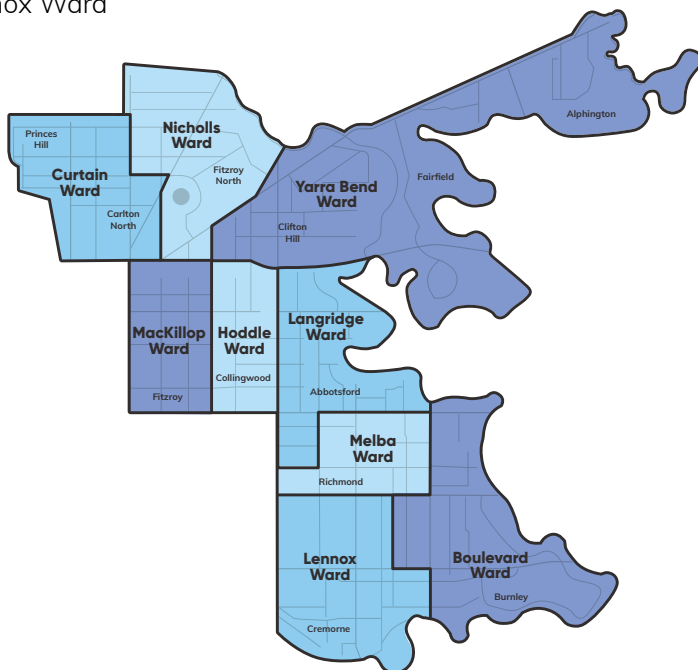
Melba Ward

**Kenneth Gomez**

Nicholls Ward

**Sarah McKenzie**

Yarra Bend Ward



# Local jobs, for local people

YarraCityJobs.com.au



Find **your**  
**opportunity**





# Business support

## Yarra City Jobs

Our free, online employment portal for businesses and job seekers in Yarra. List your job vacancies and create free job ad posters to print and display in your business.

You can also view CVs and contact job seekers who are looking for work in Yarra. Scan the QR code or visit [yarracityjobs.com.au](http://yarracityjobs.com.au)



## Economic data

We give you access to a range of valuable economic data from our annual audits of our retail and service precincts, plus insights from the Victorian and Australian governments.

Scan the QR code to learn more about your postcode and suburb, including local industries, workforce characteristics, government projects and tourism.



## Yarra Business News

Over 15,000 businesses receive our regular business e-newsletter, containing the latest business news, important updates, grant opportunities, and upcoming events. Scan the QR code to subscribe.



## Free training and events

We hold regular B2B training and networking events where local businesses share knowledge on their topic of expertise.

Contact Yarra's Economic Development team if you are interested in presenting an event.

## Business associations and trader groups

Business associations and trader groups run independently from the Council to organise activities, marketing campaigns and events to benefit local traders. Contact our Economic Development team if you are interested in joining or starting a trader group.



Rathdowne Village, Carlton North

## Mentoring

We offer free mentoring sessions to new and existing business owners in Yarra.

Running a small business can be difficult, lonely and financially stressful. Talking with someone who's been there before can be a great way to help you address any problems.

Scan the QR code for details on how to access mentoring.



## Retail and service precincts

In Yarra, we have 12 distinct retail and service precincts, each with their own personality and character. Scan the QR code to discover our precincts.



## Organising an event

Yarra hosts a diverse range of festivals and events every year, including Johnston Street Fiesta and Victoria Street Lunar New Year Festival.

When planning an event, there are regulations, permits and approvals that need to be considered. Scan the QR code for our guide on how to plan an outdoor event in Yarra.



## Free mental health and business support

Free and confidential support to improve your financial, business and emotional well-being is available to all Yarra business owners, your employees and family.

Call the Partners in Well-being hotline on **1300 375 330** from 9am to 10pm weekdays and 9am to 5pm on weekends.

Or visit [partnersinwellbeing.org.au](https://partnersinwellbeing.org.au)





Capital Barbering, Nicholson Village, Carlton North

# Planning and compliance

## **Australian Business Licence and Information Services (ABLIS)**

ABLIS is a free online tool to help you find out what licences, permits, approvals, and regulations you may need for your business. Complete the quick survey at [ablis.business.gov.au](https://ablis.business.gov.au)

## **Business concierge**

Want to open a new business in Yarra, buy an existing business, or move your existing business to a new location? Our Economic Development team offers a business concierge service, giving you a contact person at the Council to help guide you through the permit and registration process. Scan the QR code to contact our business concierge.



## **Work area permits**

If you are undertaking minor works, such as painting the outside of your shop, and need to use the road or footpath for a ladder or scaffolding, you'll need a work area permit. For larger scale works you'll need a road occupation permit. Other permits may apply too. Scan the QR code for more information and to apply for your permit online.



## **Graffiti removal**

We prioritise the removal of offensive graffiti from Council property. We will remove graffiti from private property where it has a significant impact in one of our retail and service precincts or an area of high prominence. We provide free graffiti removal kits and paint vouchers to help you with self-removal. We cannot remove graffiti above 2 metres in height, that cannot be reached from the ground, or graffiti on second storey surfaces. Property owners are responsible for removing graffiti from their private property as part of general maintenance. Scan the QR code to read more.





## Building permits

You need a building permit for most residential, commercial and industrial works.

Irrespective of the costs of works, this can include the following:

- New buildings
- Alterations and additions to current buildings
- Pergolas (roofed), verandahs and shade sails
- Change of use of a building (e.g. warehouse to dwelling)
- Minor structures (carports, roller doors)
- Outbuildings (garages and sheds)
- Fences and retaining walls
- Demolition of an existing building
- Structural works
- Swimming pool or spa.

Contact a registered private building surveyor or scan the QR code for more information.



## Heritage considerations

Two-thirds of Yarra is covered by a heritage overlay which means that a planning permit is required to construct a building, carry out works, demolish and remove a building or its parts (including painting, fences and signage).

Visit [mapshare.vic.gov.au/vicplan](https://mapshare.vic.gov.au/vicplan) to find out what planning controls (zones and overlays) apply to your premises, including whether your property is in a heritage overlay.

Scan the QR code to learn more about heritage in Yarra.



## Health registrations

### Food businesses

Under the Food Act 1984, all premises where food is handled or sold must register with, or notify, their local council. This tells us the location of all food premises in Yarra, so we can monitor and help you comply with your obligations, handle and sell safe and suitable food, and prevent misleading conduct. Scan the QR code for more information.



### Temporary and mobile food businesses

If you wish to sell food from a temporary or mobile premises, you must register or submit a notification via FoodTrader.

For more information visit [foodtrader.vic.gov.au](https://foodtrader.vic.gov.au)

### Personal care and body art services, and tattooists

Under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*, all businesses that provide personal care and body art services must register their premises with their local council. This tells us the location of these premises so we can monitor and help you comply with your obligations to prevent the transmission of infectious diseases to customers. Scan the QR code for more information.



### Tobacco sales

The display, sale and use of tobacco products is regulated by the Tobacco Act 1987. The types of products you can sell is restricted and certain signage is mandatory. Selling e-cigarette (vape) products in retail settings is no longer permitted. Smoking and vaping are not permitted in indoor areas or outdoor dining areas. Please contact our health department to discuss the requirements before selling tobacco or e-cigarette products. Scan the QR code for more information.



## **Footpath trading**

The Council is responsible for managing trading activities in public spaces in Yarra, and ensuring safe access for all footpath users.

You need a footpath trading permit (public space licence) to place items on the footpath outside your business, including:

- Tables, chairs and umbrellas
- An advertising sign
- Planter boxes, screens or promotional items e.g. goods displays.

You can also apply to use your neighbour's footpath area (with their permission). Scan the QR code to apply online.



## **Parklets**

Parklets allow hospitality businesses in eligible locations, use on-street car parking bays directly outside their premises for permanent outdoor dining.

Establishing a parklet requires significant financial investment. Before you apply, we recommend you thoroughly explore the costs involved to ensure a parklet is feasible for your business. Scan the QR code to read the guidelines and apply online.



## **Rubbish, recycling, glass, and food & garden organics (FOGO)**

Businesses can use either the Council waste service, a private waste collection service, or both.

The Council collection service is suitable for waste from staff kitchens and bathrooms only, not for waste that is produced by your customers or your business. Specialised private collection services are available that better suit these types and volumes of waste.

The day your Council bins are collected depends on your location.

With a private waste service, you can schedule as many collections as you need. These services can cater to all types of waste your business may generate.

All bins, whether they belong to Council or a private service, must only be placed out for collection just prior to collection and returned to your private property as soon as practicable.



When placing your bins out, you must ensure they do not cause an obstruction, bin lids are completely closed and all rubbish is contained within the bins. You cannot place any waste next to your bins, including cardboard boxes.

For a private waste service, you should schedule collections for when your business is operating, and not leave your bins on the street when the business is closed and not trading.

To prevent the people overfilling your bins, you can install a lock to prevent this from happening. You cannot install locks on Council bins. Scan the QR code to read more about business waste collection.

## Vacant properties

Each year, Yarra's Economic Development team visits approximately 3,000 businesses across our 12 retail precincts to record vacancies and monitor trends. We have no control over the private property market and rental prices, nor can we force property owners to rent their vacant properties. We know vacant properties can be seen as detrimental to our precincts. To reduce their impact, you can:

### 1. Request to use their vacant footpath space

If your business is next to a vacant property, you can seek approval from the owner to use their footpath space. Please contact us if you wish to do this, as you will need a permit.

### 2. Seek permission to remove graffiti from the building

Ask for written permission from the property owner to request graffiti removal on their behalf.

It is against our General Local Law to cause or allow land to be kept in a condition which is unsightly or detrimental to the amenity of the neighbourhood.

## Homelessness and rough sleeping

As in many cities around the world, homelessness across Melbourne is growing.

The main reasons people become homeless are:

- Lack of affordable housing
- Domestic violence
- Poverty
- Disability
- Mental health
- Alcohol and other drug issues.

### What can I do if I see someone who looks homeless?

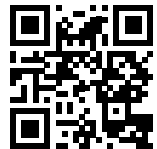
It is not against the law to be homeless, and all Victorians have a right to be in public places. Our approach to homelessness recognises the principles of Victoria's Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities in treating all people with respect and dignity.

However, as people experiencing homelessness may have a history of trauma leading to behaviour that can seem antisocial, if they seem distressed, are a danger to themselves or to others, have a child under 18 years old with them, are damaging property or the environment please call **Victoria Police on 000**.

For medical emergencies call **Ambulance on 000**.

Scan the QR code to tell us about a rough sleeping site by using our online reporting tool.

For any other concerns or to help someone who is sleeping rough, call us on **9205 5555** or Launch Housing outreach team on **8598 1111**.



To locate support services nearby such as meals, clothes, showers, accommodation, or laundry services, visit **[askizzy.org.au](https://askizzy.org.au)**



## What do we do about homelessness?

There are limited ways for local government to help people experiencing homelessness; however our staff play an important role in partnership with the homelessness outreach team at Launch Housing.

We also advocate to the Victorian and Australian governments to increase funding, support and housing to those who need it most. Currently there is no national plan to address homelessness and the affordable housing crisis.

## What about begging?

Begging is illegal under the Summary Offences Act and enforcement is the responsibility of the police. You can report begging to Victoria Police by calling **131 444**.

Scan the QR code for more information on homelessness and support services.



## Syringe disposal

We provide a range of free services to ensure that needles and syringes are disposed of safely, including:

- Over 90 syringe disposal bins located across Yarra and in all public toilets, serviced regularly
- Regular patrols by our cleaning staff in key areas
- Responsive collection of inappropriately discarded syringes.

Scan the QR code to report a discarded syringe you would like us to collect safely.





Gertrude Street, Fitzroy

# Parking

## Parking permits

If there is no off-street parking at your business you may be eligible to apply for a business parking permit. The number of permits your business is eligible for is determined by the length of the street frontage. Scan the QR code to check if your business address is eligible for parking permits.



## Loading zones

You can use a loading zone if your vehicle has a goods registration classification, or is a passenger vehicle, truck or van with a permanently fixed sign on both sides of the vehicle. Scan the QR code to apply for a new loading zone bay near your business.



## Parking sensors

We have installed sensors in the parking bays in most of our key retail and service precincts. This provides data around occupancy and length of stay. Parking sensors support efficient turnover of parking spaces and helps on street parking be more readily available for residents, businesses, shoppers and visitors.

It also allows us to manage the limited parking spaces on our streets in a fair and equitable way for everyone.

Each precinct has spaces designed to enable quick, medium and long-term visits to ensure our streets are accessible to all.

## Parking meters

All parking meters in Yarra are cashless and no longer accept coin payments. Payment is only accepted by credit card and the PayStay app.



*glou*  
SUSTAINABLE  
WINE DISPENSARY



Smith Street, Fitzroy

# Sustainability

The Council is committed to supporting sustainable business action, and becoming the destination for zero-emission businesses and those focused on climate action and the circular economy. Through our 2024-2030 Climate Emergency Plan, we have committed to helping businesses take action against climate change. Here are some of the simplest and most effective ways to reduce your business emissions.

## Join our Sustainable Business Yarra newsletter

Do you have sustainability goals, or are you interested in learning how to reduce your electricity costs, waste and emissions?

Our Sustainable Business Yarra e-newsletter brings together all of our sustainability resources, and provides a platform for businesses to share their sustainability stories and knowledge with each other and the wider community. Scan the QR code to subscribe.



## Energy efficiency

Energy efficiency is about using less energy to achieve the same outcomes. This means you can reduce your businesses expenses and greenhouse gas emissions all at once.

We have developed an energy efficiency checklist for you to identify easy ways to reduce your energy and increase the comfort of your premises. The checklist covers a variety of energy uses including heating and cooling, lighting and appliances. Refer back to the checklist regularly to ensure you keep your energy use as low as possible.



## Solar power

Rooftop solar is a great way to reduce your energy bills whilst also reducing your carbon footprint. We have partnered with SunSPOT solar calculator for you to assess the potential for solar at your premises. Visit [sunspot.org.au](https://sunspot.org.au) to discover your estimated savings.





Abbotsford Convent, Abbotsford

## Switch to renewable energy to power your business

As well as on-site renewables, businesses are switching to renewable electricity contracts to further reduce their carbon footprint. To make this easier and cheaper, Yarra City Council is leading the Business Renewables Buying Group to assist medium to large energy users to procure renewable energy directly from the grid. Small organisations can also investigate purchasing GreenPower from your electricity retailer. Scan the QR code to learn more.



## Transitioning Yarra to a circular economy

In contrast to the linear “take, make, waste” way that materials currently flow through our economy, the circular economy is based on three principles, driven by design:

- Design out waste and pollution from the beginning
- Continue the circulation of products and materials at their highest value longer
- Regenerate nature

The circular economy is a resilient system that is good for business, people and the environment. Sign up to the Sustainable Business Yarra e-newsletter to receive information on how other Yarra businesses are becoming circular, as well as information on grants, resources, events and opportunities for collaboration.

## Circular Economy Map

We’ve developed an online directory to identify and support local circular businesses. Yarra’s Circular Economy Map celebrates and promotes businesses, community initiatives and public spaces that demonstrate aspects of the circular economy through their products, services, or business practices. Scan the QR code to explore the map and add your business.



# Looking to shift your business to 100% renewable electricity?

Join a group of like-minded  
businesses pooling energy  
together to access more  
affordable renewable deals.



Be part of  
our next  
program.



**Take  
Climate  
Action**



## Electronic waste

Electronic waste is banned from landfill and must be disposed of at a designated collection point.

Electronic waste is anything with a battery or a plug, including phones, laptops, appliances, vapes and toys.

Batteries are classified as explosive waste which can cause fires within collection vehicles or waste sorting and processing facilities, so please take them to your closest e-waste drop off.

Find your closest e-waste drop off point

**[businessrecycling.com.au](https://businessrecycling.com.au)**

## Waste and recycling resources

We've created a tool kit for businesses with practical tips on how to

- Use our glass, rubbish, recycling and food and garden organics bins
- Assess your and your supply chains' waste
- Engage your staff
- Responsibly dispose of items that don't belong in your bins.



Our resources include posters you can print and display in your workplace to help your staff understand which waste items go in which bin.

Scan the QR to download the free tool kit.





St Georges Road, Fitzroy North



# Make your business accessible

## Good access is good business

Did you know that 1 in 5 people in Australia have a disability?

You might be missing out on potential customers if your premises is not accessible to everyone.

Irrespective of age or ability everyone should have equal access to enjoy our local retail and service precincts, hospitality businesses, retail shops, entertainment venues and cultural events.

## Meeting your legal responsibilities

In Australia, the law says that customers with disabilities should be able to access your goods or services just like any other customer.

If a customer with a disability cannot get into your building or cannot access your goods or services they could make a complaint of discrimination under the Disability Discrimination Act.

Making your business more accessible is also likely to make it safer for both customers and staff, and could have an effect on your public liability and workplace safety responsibilities.

Some examples of small adjustments that you can make for little to no cost include:

- Making simple changes to your shop layout.
- Providing menus with large print.  
(Plain fonts at least size 14 point).
- Making sure doormats are secure and level with the surrounding floor.
- Providing good customer service.
- Keeping any footpath furniture at least 1.5m from the building line.

If your business is accessible, let people know through your website and social media.

Scan the QR code to see a full list of suggestions.





Victoria Street Lunar New Year, Richmond

# Additional resources

Our website has some great resources which we encourage you to check out at [yarracity.vic.gov.au/business](https://yarracity.vic.gov.au/business)

You may also wish to access the following services:

## **Partners in Wellbeing**

Free, confidential, one-on-one support to improve your financial, business and emotional wellbeing. Call **1300 375 330** from 9am to 10pm on weekdays, and 9am to 5pm on weekends.

[partnersinwellbeing.org.au](https://partnersinwellbeing.org.au)

## **Small Business Victoria**

Support for Victorian businesses with free guidance, services and skills you need to successfully start, run, grow and transform your business.

[business.vic.gov.au](https://business.vic.gov.au)

## **Victorian Small Business Commission (VSBC)**

Free and low-cost dispute resolution and mediation with leasing agreements. VSBC empowers Victorian small business owners with the right tools to avoid or resolve disputes quickly, so you can focus on your business.

[vsbc.vic.gov.au](https://vsbc.vic.gov.au)

## **Fair Work Ombudsman**

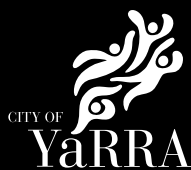
Education, assistance, advice and guidance to employers and workers regarding workplace laws, pay, leave, and the Fair Work Act.

[fairwork.gov.au](https://fairwork.gov.au)

## **Australian Tax Office**

Responsible for administering the Australian federal taxation system, superannuation legislation and other associated matters.

[ato.gov.au](https://ato.gov.au)



## **Yarra City Council**

PO Box 168

Richmond VIC 3121

9205 5555

[info@yarracity.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@yarracity.vic.gov.au)

[yarracity.vic.gov.au](http://yarracity.vic.gov.au)

## **Customer service centres**

Richmond Town Hall

333 Bridge Road, Richmond

Collingwood Town Hall

140 Hoddle Street, Abbotsford

