



Freedom of Information Statements

Part II of the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic) (FOI Act) requires government agencies, such as the City of Yarra (Council), to publish a number of statements designed to assist members of the public in accessing the information it holds.

These statements provide a non-exhaustive list of the types of documents held by the Council, the functions we perform and how members of the public may access the information we hold.

Statement A – Council and its functions

Statement B – Public transparency

Statement C – FOI procedures

Statement D – Council’s documents

Statement E – Publications and social media

Statement F – Committees

Statement G – Reading room

We aim to make our documents and information easily accessible to the public. If you cannot locate the information you are seeking after reviewing these statements and conducting a search on our website, we encourage you to contact us on 9205 5555 or email info@yarracity.vic.gov.au before making a Freedom of Information (FOI) request.

In many instances, we will be able to provide you with the information you are seeking without going through a formal process.

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Responsible officer	Information Management Lead
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Statement A – Council and its functions



History

In 1994 the City of Yarra was formed by the amalgamation of the then cities of Collingwood, Fitzroy and Richmond and part of the former City of Northcote.

About Council

The City of Yarra is an inner metropolitan municipality which is home to a diverse community of approximately 100,000 people.

Yarra's 19.5 square kilometres includes the suburbs of:

- Abbotsford
- Alphington (part)
- Burnley
- Carlton North (part)
- Clifton Hill
- Collingwood
- Cremorne
- Fairfield (part)
- Fitzroy
- Fitzroy North (part)
- Princes Hill
- Richmond



The Council

The municipality is divided into nine wards: Boulevard Ward, Curtain Ward, Hoddle Ward, Langridge Ward, Lennox Ward, MacKillop Ward, Melba Ward, Nicholls Ward and Yarra Bend Ward. Each ward is represented by 3 councillors. The nine Councillors that make up the Yarra City Council elect a Mayor and Deputy Mayor from among their number. Yarra's Councillors are:

Boulevard Ward

Cr Sharon Harrison

Langridge Ward

Cr Evangeline Aston

Melba Ward

Cr Meca Ho

Curtain Ward

Cr Edward Crossland

Lennox Ward

Cr Andrew Davis

Nicholls Ward

Cr Kenneth Gomez

Hoddle Ward

Cr Sophie Wade

MacKillop Ward

Mayor, Cr Stephen Jolly

Yarra Bend Ward

Deputy Mayor, Cr Sarah McKenzie

Organisation Structure

The organisation is led by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO is responsible for establishing and maintaining an appropriate organisational structure for the Council and ensuring the effective and efficient management of the day to day operations of the City.

There are five divisions, each led by a General Manager:

- City Sustainability and Strategy
- Infrastructure and Environment
- Community Strengthening
- Corporate Services and Transformation
- Governance, Communications and Customer Service

Our functions

The role of Council under section 8 of the Local Government Act 2020 is to provide good governance in its municipal district for the benefit and wellbeing of the municipal community. A Council provides good governance if it performs its role in accordance with the overarching governance principles:

- (a) Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law;
- (b) Priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations;
- (c) The economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted;
- (d) The municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making;
- (e) Innovation and continuous improvement are to be pursued;
- (f) Collaboration with other Councils and Governments and statutory bodies is to be sought;
- (g) The ongoing financial viability of the Council to be ensured;
- (h) Regional, state and national plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision making;
- (i) The transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

In giving effect to the overarching governance principles, Council must take into account the following supporting principles:

- (a) The community engagement principles (see section 56 of the Local Government Act 2020)
- (b) The public transparency principles (see section 58 of the Local Government Act 2020)
- (c) The strategic planning principles (see section 89 of the Local Government Act 2020)
- (d) The financial management principles (see section 102 of the Local Government Act 2020)
- (e) The service performance principles (see section 106 of the Local Government Act 2020)

Acts of parliament

Many of our powers and functions are derived from other acts of parliament. The following list contains some of the Victorian acts that apply to the performance of our powers and functions.

- Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006
- Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012
- Building Act 1993
- Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
- Children Youth and Families Act 2005
- Climate Change Act 2017
- Conservation, Forests and Land Act 1987
- Cultural and Recreational Lands Act 1963
- Dangerous Goods Act 1985
- Development Victoria Act 2003
- Disability Act 2006
- Domestic Animals Act 1994
- Domestic Building Contracts Act 1995
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- Electoral Act 2002
- Electricity Safety Act 1998
- Emergency Management Act 1986
- Emergency Management Act 2013
- Environment Protection Act 2017
- Estate Agents Act 1980
- Family Violence Protection Act 2008
- Fences Act 1968
- Filming Approval Act 2014
- Fines Reform Act 2014
- Fire Services Property Levy Act 2012
- Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988
- Food Act 1984
- Freedom of Information Act 1982
- Gambling Regulation Act 2003
- Graffiti Prevention Act 2007
- Health Records Act 2001
- Local Government Act 1989
- Local Government Act 2020
- Major Transport Projects Facilitation Act 2009
- Planning and Environment Act 1987
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014
- Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008
- Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012
- Public Records Act 1973
- Residential Tenancies Act 1997
- Road Management Act 2004
- Road Safety Act 1986
- Rooming House Operators Act 2016
- Second-hand Dealers and Pawnbrokers Act 1989
- Service Victoria Act 2018
- Sex Work Act 1994
- Sheriff Act 2009
- Sport and Recreation Act 1972

Copies of Victorian legislation are available on the Parliament of Victoria website.

Local laws

Council's General Local Law (consolidated) comprises the General Local Law adopted in 2016 together with the amendments inserted upon the making of the General (Consumption of Liquor in Public Places) Amendment Local Law in 2021.

Copies of Council's Local Laws are available on our website.

Services

The City provides services across a wide range of portfolios. These service groupings are shown below, categorised according to the Strategic Objectives in the City of Yarra Council Plan.

Strategic Objective 1 Climate and environment

- Sustainability Services
- City Works

Strategic Objective 2 Social equity and health

- Aboriginal Partnerships
- Building and Asset Management
- Aged and Disability
- Community Development
- Compliance Services
- Family, Youth and Children's Services
- Library Services
- Property and Leisure Services
- Social Strategy

Strategic Objective 3 Local economy

- Arts, Culture and Venues
- Economic Development

Strategic Objective 4 Place and nature

- Building Services
- City Strategy
- Heritage
- Open Space Management
- Statutory Planning

Strategic Objective 5 Transport and movement

- Infrastructure, Traffic and Civil Engineering
- Parking Services
- Strategic Transport

Strategic Objective 6 Democracy and governance

- Advocacy and Engagement
- Customer Service
- Corporate Planning and Performance
- Digital and Transformation
- Finance
- Governance and Integrity
- Organisational Culture, Capability and Diversity
- People and Culture
- Risk and Safety

More detail about each of these services can be found in the City of Yarra Annual Budget, which is adopted by Council in June each year and available on our website.

Council Meetings

Council exercises powers that affect members of the public both at Council meetings and by Council officers acting under delegated authority. Council Meetings are held at Richmond Town Hall, are open to the public and anyone is welcome to attend. The meetings are also available to watch via a livestream on Council's website.

Council meeting agendas and minutes are available on Council's website for meeting dating back to 2014, with the papers for earlier meetings made available on request.

Business Papers for meetings of the Councils that predated the establishment of the City of Yarra on 22 June 1994 are available from the Public Records Office of Victoria.

Statement B – Public transparency



Council has adopted a Public Transparency Policy to give effect to the public transparency principles in the Local Government Act 2020 by specifying which Council information is made publicly available and explaining how it may be accessed.

The Public Transparency Policy identifies documents in four classes:

- Information that is freely and proactively published;
- Information that is available on a public register or similar;
- Information that is available under administrative release;
- Information that is available under the Freedom of Information Act.

The information that is freely and proactively published is:

Councillors

- Councillor details
- Councillor oaths and affirmations
- Declarations of councillor induction training
- Election campaign donation summary
- Councillor expense reports
- Personal interest return summaries
- Councillor Gift Policy
- Councillor code of conduct

Council and Committees

- Governance Rules
- Council Meetings Operations Policy
- Meeting Schedule
- Agendas
- Minutes
- Meeting recordings
- Instruments of delegation to delegated committees
- Council Committees Policy
- Advisory committee terms of reference
- Audit and Risk Committee Charter

Council Policies

- Community Vision
- Council Plan
- Procurement Policy
- Public Transparency Policy
- Community Engagement Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Privacy and Health Records Policy

- Domestic Animal Management Plan
- Municipal Public Health Plan
- Municipal Strategic Statement

Financial Planning

- Annual Budget
- Financial Plan
- Asset Plan
- Revenue and Rating Plan
- Annual Report

Staff

- Personal interest return summaries
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Policy
- Workforce Plan
- Local Laws
- Local Laws
- Local law incorporated documents

Open Data

- Open Data Policy
- Open Data datasets

External Documents

- Councillor Conduct Panel determinations
- Governance Directions
- Compliance Exemptions
- Notice of appointment of Municipal Monitor

The Public Transparency Policy is available on Council's website.

Statement C – FOI procedures



Which documents are available under freedom of information?

The legislation governing freedom of information in Victoria is the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic) (the 'Act').

The Act sets out which documents are available, how applications are processed, and what privacy and other restrictions apply before documents can be released.

In essence, the general principle of freedom of information is that all documents in our possession should be available to the public, subject to certain limitations. Freedom of information does not give applicants unlimited access to documents.

There are several important restrictions on the types of documents available under freedom of information. For example, documents which may not be available include:

- 'exempt documents' such as internal working documents, law enforcement documents, documents relating to legal proceedings, or documents affecting the personal privacy of other people.
- documents which are already publicly available or available by paying a fee under another Act.
- documents which were created before 1 January 1989.

Unless required by law, letters of complaint are not released where they would reveal the personal details of the complainant. For example, a letter from a resident complaining about a neighbour's dog would not usually be released.

How long will my freedom of information request take?

The Act provides that if we don't notify you of our decision within 30 days of your application, you have the right to appeal to the Victorian Information Commissioner. We endeavour to process your application by this deadline, but cannot guarantee a specific response time.

In some instances, older files may be required to be retrieved off-site from archives. Documents cannot be released until we have assessed them in accordance with the Act.

To avoid disappointment, you should plan ahead and lodge your application as soon as possible.

What documents should I ask for in my freedom of information request?

When requesting documents, make your application as specific or detailed as possible. If you seek a particular document, tell us. This will help us search for the document and respond promptly to your request.

For example, if you seek a photocopy of a specific report, try to tell us the date of the report, the title or subject of the report, the specific address or street the report relates to, or the time period it relates to.

If your request is too broad or not detailed enough to allow us to find the document you are looking for, it may be delayed or even refused.

How much does it cost to apply for a freedom of information request?

The freedom of information application fee is two fee units. We will not start processing your application until you pay the application fee. In some instances there may be additional processing fees (such as search, supervision or photocopying costs) but we will tell you about these costs, if relevant.

How to make a freedom of information application

Apply online

To apply online, you will need to:

- complete the online application
- make payment at the time of application by Mastercard or Visa card

Apply by mail

To apply by mail, you will need to:

- download and complete a Freedom of Information application form
- send your application form, together with a cheque or money order payable to "Yarra City Council" covering the application fee to:

The Freedom of Information Officer
Yarra City Council
PO Box 168
RICHMOND VIC 3121

Apply in person

To apply in person, you will need to:

- download and complete a Freedom of Information application form
- bring your completed form to one of Council's Customer Service Centres and make a payment in person. Payment by cash, Mastercard, Visa card, cheque or money orders are all accepted.

Apply by email

We do not recommend the lodgement of an application by email, as we cannot accept payments that way so you will still need to make a payment using one of the avenues listed above. We also find that applications submitted on a completed form are faster to process as we usually have all the information we need and don't need to seek further clarification.

If you still wish to apply by email, you will need to:

- send details of the documents requested in an email with "Freedom of Information" in the subject line to info@yarracity.vic.gov.au
- separately make a payment of the application fee via one of the mechanisms listed above (online credit card payment, cheque by mail or payment in person)

Enquiries

Applicants can make enquiries about Freedom of Information matters by calling Council on 9205 5555, or by emailing info@yarracity.vic.gov.au.

Principal Officer

Council's principal officer is the Chief Executive Officer, Sue Wilkinson.

Statement D – Council’s documents



Council collects, creates and stores a broad range of electronic and hard copy documents. The types of documents that we have in our possession include:

- Agendas and minutes/notes of meetings;
- Animal registration applications and registrations issued;
- Annual and financial reports;
- Building and planning permits and associated documents including plans;
- Building enforcement documents;
- Correspondence (general and Councillor);
- Council records relating to elections, elected representatives, resolutions, agendas and minutes of meetings;
- Council publications, including newsletters;
- Disclosures and declarations of conflict of interests, gifts, and public interest disclosures;
- Documents submitted by third parties;
- Internal administration documents relating to staff management and the operation of Council;
- Organisational and staffing records, financial and resource management records, audit records and internal operating procedures;
- Legal documents including Local Laws, contracts, leases, agreements, licences, instruments of delegation, instruments of appointment and authorisations, legal advice and court documents;
- Local Laws permit applications and permits issued;
- Mailing lists;
- Maternal and child health records, including immunisation records;
- Media releases and general advertising;
- Memorandums of Understanding and Service Agreements;
- Officer reports and recommendations;
- Policies, guidelines, strategies and plans, including their development and implementation;
- Public and stakeholder consultation processes and outcomes;
- Records of the administration and enforcement of legislation and Local Laws;
- Reports prepared by external consultants;
- Requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 and files and papers relevant to the consideration of those requests;
- Residential parking permit applications and permits issued;
- Risk management assessments;
- Standard operating procedures;
- Surveys, statistics and data;
- Tenders and tender evaluations;
- Training material; and
- Written and verbal complaints received and records of any subsequent investigations.

Files within these categories are held and maintained in accordance with best practice records management principles and relevant legislation. This includes regular archiving and disposal of records undertaken in accordance with approved schedules.

Statement E – Publications and social media



Council has a range of publications, websites and social media accounts which provide information for residents, businesses and visitors to our city.

Websites

www.yarracity.vic.gov.au	The official website of the City of Yarra
https://arts.yarracity.vic.gov.au	The official website for Yarra City Arts
https://leisure.yarracity.vic.gov.au	The official website for City of Yarra leisure
https://library.yarracity.vic.gov.au	The official website for Yarra Libraries
https://aboriginalhistoryofyarra.com.au/	A website about the about the Aboriginal history of the area on which the City of Yarra now stands.

Newsletters

Yarra News	A hard copy community magazine, providing timely and interesting news about our services, projects, local events and community initiatives. Yarra News is distributed every two months to more than 54,000 households and businesses across the City of Yarra.
Yarra Life	A monthly e-newsletter with news, community events and consultation opportunities.
Yarra Leisure	An e-newsletter allowing subscribers to keep up to date with the latest news, programs, events and more from Yarra Leisure.
Yarra City Arts	An e-newsletter providing information about all the latest exhibitions, arts news, events and creative opportunities in Yarra.
Yarra Libraries	An e-newsletter providing information about programs and events, resources and news from Yarra Libraries.
Yarra Business	An e-newsletter containing business news, invitations to events and networking opportunities, grant information and useful business tips.
Your Say Yarra	Your Say Yarra is Yarra Council's community engagement tool and lets you provide feedback on plans and decisions that impact the community. The monthly email newsletter ensures subscribers never miss a chance to have their say.
Yarra Environment	An e-newsletter containing news, resources, events and information on sustainability in Yarra.
Yarra Grants	An e-newsletter allowing subscribers to be the first to hear about grant opportunities from Yarra Council and other grant funding bodies for local people and communities.

Social media

City of Yarra	Facebook – Yarra City Council Facebook - Celebrating Aboriginal Culture in Yarra Twitter - @YarraCouncil Instagram - @cityofyarra LinkedIn – Yarra City Council
Yarra Leisure	Facebook (Leisure) - Yarra Leisure Facebook (Golf) – Burnley Golf Course Instagram - @yarra.leisure Twitter - @YarraLeisure
Yarra Arts	Instagram - @yarracityarts Instagram - @leapsandboundsmusicfest Facebook – Leaps and Bounds Music Festival Youtube - @yarracityarts3880
Yarra Libraries	Facebook - Yarra Libraries Instagram - @yarralibraries Twitter - @yarralibraries Vimeo - Yarra Libraries Soundcloud - Yarra Libraries
Yarra Business	Facebook - Gleadell Street Market Instagram - @gleadellstreetmarketofficial
Yarra Youth Services	Facebook – Yarra Youth Services Instagram - @yarryouthservices Instagram - @richmondouthhub

Statement F – Committees



Council has established the following committees:

Delegated Committee

Section 63 of the Local Government Act 2020 provides that Council may establish a delegated committee to exercise delegated powers on behalf of the Council. Details of Council's delegated Committees are as follows:

Planning Decisions Committee	A committee comprising all nine Councillors (with three Councillors rostered on at any one time) with the formal delegated authority to consider certain planning applications on Council's behalf.
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Audit and Risk Committee

Section 54 of the Local Government Act 2020 provides that Council must establish and Audit and Risk Committee. Details of the Audit and Risk Committee are as follows:

Audit and Risk Committee	The role of the Audit and Risk Committee is to provide independent and objective assurance and assistance to the Yarra City Council and its Chief Executive Officer on Council's risk management, control and compliance framework, and its external financial and performance accountability and responsibilities. In addition, the Committee provides advice to Council that will assist Council in fulfilling its corporate governance and oversight responsibilities.
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Advisory Committees

Council has established 13 advisory committees which enable community members to have input into our policies, directions and activities.

All advisory committees operate in accordance with the Council Committees Policy, which sets out the role of committees and how they operate, explains how members are selected, provides behavioural expectations for members and sets out a number of transparency and operational provisions.

Each advisory committee also has a terms of reference, which describes the role of that committee, the membership composition and any specific provisions which apply.

Active Ageing Advisory Committee	The Active Ageing Advisory Committee provides information, support and advice to Council on the needs, interests and well-being of people aged 50 +
Active Transport Advisory Committee	In recognition of the climate emergency, the Active Transport Advisory Committee provides Council with advice to support its objective of reducing car dependency in the community and increasing the use of active transport throughout the municipality.
Arts Advisory Committee	The Arts Advisory Committee provides a formal mechanism for Council to consult with key stakeholders, seek specialist advice and enable community participation in arts and cultural planning and development.

Business Advisory Group	The Business Advisory Group is a forum for business representatives to provide Council with feedback and practical advice regarding ways in which Council can engage with and further assist key sectors within the business community. The Committee provides strategic advice to us on issues that affect the business community in Yarra.
CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee	The Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Committee supports the Council in the performance management process for the Chief Executive Officer and, where required, the employment of a new Chief Executive Officer.
Community Awards Committee	The Community Awards Committee provides recommendations on the recipients of the Yarra Community Awards.
Disability Advisory Committee	Yarra's Disability Advisory Committee provides advice and support to us on how we can improve the wellbeing of people with disability and their carers.
Environment Advisory Committee	The Environment Advisory Committee represents interests pertaining to all aspects of urban environmental sustainability including (but not limited to) climate change; resource efficiency across water, waste and energy; urban greening and natural capital; local food systems; and the built environment, by providing advice to Council on policy, strategy and other strategic opportunities to progress the organisation's response to these issues.
Heritage Advisory Committee	The Heritage Advisory Committee provides advice to Council on heritage matters including Yarra's natural, built and cultural heritage.
Multicultural Advisory Group	The Multicultural Advisory Group provides a structure for on-going communication and consultation between multicultural communities and Yarra City Council across a broad range of issues impacting on those communities.
Rainbow Advisory Committee	The Rainbow Advisory Committee provides information, support and advice, and a mechanism for communication and consultation between LGBTIQ+ communities and Council on issues affecting the LGBTIQ+ community.
Yana Ngargna Advisory Committee	The Yana Ngargna Advisory Group has been established as a partnership between Yarra City Council and the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.
Yarra Libraries Advisory Committee	The Yarra Libraries Advisory Group provides advice on issues relating to public library services across the City of Yarra.

Statement G – Reading room



The City of Yarra will make a reading room on request to inspect documents made available following a Freedom of Information request. The reading room can be made available at either of the following locations:

Collingwood Town Hall

140 Hoddle Street, Abbotsford

Hours: 8.30am–5pm, Monday–Friday (excluding public holidays)

Richmond Town Hall

333 Bridge Road, Richmond

Hours: 8.30am–5pm, Monday–Friday (excluding public holidays)

If it is necessary to view documents not available in hard copy (such as electronic documents, video or audio recordings), the necessary equipment can be provided for use in the reading room.