

SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2025

# yarralife



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Celebrating our  
LGBTIQA+ community

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Restoring Yarra's  
ecosystems

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Join our new street  
garden program

## Your Councillors

To find more about your Ward Councillors visit [yarracity.vic.gov.au/Councillors](http://yarracity.vic.gov.au/Councillors)

Below are contact details for your Ward Councillors.



**MACKILLOP WARD**  
**Cr Stephen Jolly, Mayor**  
stephen.jolly@yarracity.vic.gov.au  
0437 856 713



**YARRA BEND WARD**  
**Cr Sarah McKenzie, Deputy Mayor**  
sarah.mckenzie@yarracity.vic.gov.au  
0427 052 602



**BOULEVARD WARD**  
**Cr Sharon Harrison**  
sharon.harrison@yarracity.vic.gov.au  
0427 731 722



**CURTAIN WARD**  
**Cr Edward Crossland**  
edward.crossland@yarracity.vic.gov.au  
0400 326 812



**HODDLE WARD**  
**Cr Sophie Wade**  
sophie.wade@yarracity.vic.gov.au  
0400 570 763



**LANGRIDGE WARD**  
**Cr Evangeline Aston**  
evangeline.aston@yarracity.vic.gov.au  
0427 279 953



**LENNOX WARD**  
**Cr Andrew Davies**  
andrew.davies@yarracity.vic.gov.au  
0498 648 663



**MELBA WARD**  
**Cr Meca Ho**  
meca.ho@yarracity.vic.gov.au  
0419 844 362



**NICHOLLS WARD**  
**Cr Kenneth Gomez**  
kenneth.gomez@yarracity.vic.gov.au  
0407 571 295

You can also reach your Councillors by calling **9205 5055** or sending a letter to **c/o PO Box 168, Richmond VIC 3121.**

**On the cover:**  
Rick (left) and Ernie from Bent Twig Alliance.

## Message from the Mayor

Hello Everyone,

Welcome to a new look (and new name) Yarralife. I hope you enjoy reading about all the wonderful work happening across Yarra, including in your local community with our ward wrap for each of our nine local Councillors.

As I prepare to finish my term as Mayor in early November, I want to thank our community for the privilege of serving you over the past year. Every day, I have worked hard on your behalf, and it has been an honour to lead during a year of action as we prepare for a growing Yarra.

Together, we've delivered progress on important priorities. The Collingwood Town Hall housing project is moving ahead — a unique initiative to provide affordable housing for the young people who keep our local economy alive but are being priced out of the local market. We've also advanced the Richmond Library redevelopment, laying the groundwork to refurbish and potentially expand this much-loved community hub.

We've committed to a major review of kerbside and parking rules, including who can access permits, recognising that nearly half of our residents in apartments currently receive none. At the same time, we are undertaking a full review of waste and recycling services, looking at service types, frequency and costs — ensuring fairness for all, especially those currently outside the system.

Alongside these projects, Council has continued to take strong steps on climate action, reducing emissions, supporting active transport and investing in a more sustainable future for Yarra.

These are just some of the priorities we've tackled, with many more to come in the three years ahead. While I will no longer be Mayor from mid-November, I look forward to continuing to work on the many opportunities our great City has, with Councillors and the community.

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



## Latest news

### Yarra gives evidence to inquiry into redevelopment of public housing towers

Mayor Stephen Jolly and Cr Meca Ho appeared at a public hearing for the State Government's Parliamentary Inquiry into the redevelopment of Melbourne's public housing towers in July. Council strongly opposes the blanket demolition of all 44 towers and rejects the narrative that these homes are beyond redemption when no public engineering assessments or costings have been released to prove it. The Mayor expressed Council's opposition to the State Government's slated demolition, citing the lack of sufficient evidence that tower upgrades were not viable. The Mayor's appearance gave voice to concerns that had been shared directly from residents.

Council called on the State Government to make the relevant documents public, to ensure that the decision to demolish the towers was made based on sound advice. As an alternative to blanket demolition of all towers, the Mayor called for a site-by-site approach that values refurbishment and retention of community. He also stressed the urgent need for a comprehensive masterplan — not just for the estate, but for the whole precinct; based on population projections and future need. This would ensure effective provision of community amenity, including open space and kindergarten places.

Hearings for the Inquiry into the redevelopment of Melbourne's public housing towers are ongoing.

### More parking on Elizabeth Street, while keeping bike lanes

Council has approved the baseline concept design plan for the Elizabeth Street Cycling Corridor in North Richmond. The chosen design was recommended by officers and one of four options presented to Councillors following a road safety audit.

The plan will maintain the protected bike lanes and create 24 new parking spots on Elizabeth Street. It will see updated parking restrictions on and around Elizabeth Street and install footpath trees, speed cushions (on some side streets) and a contraflow bike lane on Jonas Street.



Find out more at  
[yarracity.vic.gov.au/news](http://yarracity.vic.gov.au/news)

### Council Meetings

Meetings take place at Richmond and Fitzroy Town Halls. For upcoming Council Meeting dates, and if you would like to attend, please visit [yarracity.vic.gov.au/meetings](http://yarracity.vic.gov.au/meetings) for details. All meetings are live streamed at [webcast.yarracity.vic.gov.au](http://webcast.yarracity.vic.gov.au)

- 14 October – Council Meeting
- 11 November – Council Meeting
- 12 November – Extraordinary Council Meeting (Mayoral election)



## Get involved in Yarra's projects

Share your feedback about upcoming Council projects and share your thoughts and ideas for Yarra. Your input will help us make decisions that reflect the needs and priorities of our community.

Sign up to our engagement e-newsletter to stay informed and have your say. Scan the QR code or visit [yoursayyarra.com.au](https://yoursayyarra.com.au) to find out more.



## Help us keep Yarra streets green

Yarra is trialling a six-month, community-led street garden program and we're looking for green-thumbed neighbours to help turn bland streetscapes into pocket habitats. Plant out and maintain a garden bed, nature strip garden or tree square (you'll receive free local native plants and practical guidance) or nominate a larger street bed for Council to possibly make over for everyone to enjoy.

Choose how to get involved:

### Option 1: Plant and maintain your street garden

- Check the guidelines
- Talk to your neighbours and Dial Before You Dig (DBYD) for underground services.
- Complete the online Street Garden questionnaire and registration form on our website to claim your free plants.

### Option 2: Identify a bigger site for Council review

- If you have a space in your neighbourhood that needs a refresh, contact Council and we will investigate what's possible.
- If the site is suitable, join in to help care for it.



### Why give it a grow?

- Boost neighbourhood biodiversity.
- Cool and beautify your street.
- Meet and connect with fellow gardeners (and maybe form a 'Growing Group' to look after a space together).



Scan the QR code, visit [yarracity.vic.gov.au/street-garden](https://yarracity.vic.gov.au/street-garden) or call 9205 5555 to find out more.



## Annual grants applications now open

Your community organisation can share in \$1.54 million in funding towards your project through our 2025/26 Yarra Grants Program. Grants are available in three categories: small (up to \$4,000), medium (up to \$20,000) and large (up to \$40,000). They will be awarded through six themed funding streams.

**Applications close at 11.59pm on Sunday 19 October.**



Learn more and submit your application at [yarracity.vic.gov.au/annualgrants](https://yarracity.vic.gov.au/annualgrants)

## Youth trainees establishing their careers at Yarra

We're proud to have provided young public housing residents with work experience and employment pathways through our Youth Traineeship program. Facilitated by Yarra Youth Services, four trainees recently took part in a 20-week program working across council sites. The program helps remove barriers to local training and employment.

Collingwood's Leyan, 19 (right), has stayed on as a casual library officer at Fitzroy Library after supporting programs like Library in Homes; and Richmond's Luul, 22 (left), now works in our childcare centre kitchens after her Connie Benn Centre traineeship. Luul said Youth Services supported her since she arrived from Somalia.

"If it wasn't for Yarra – not just this program but helping me with a lot of behind-the-scenes personal and career stuff – it wouldn't have been possible."



# Bringing Nature Back to Yarra

## Climate Emergency Plan 2024–30 – Year 1 nature highlights and what's next

One year into Yarra's Climate Emergency Plan 2024–30, we're working on "Yarra is Caring for Country". This means caring for land and water guided by Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung knowledge. We are prioritising climate-resilient indigenous and native planting, and treating the Birrarung (Yarra River) and its parklands as one living and integrated natural entity.

### Year 1 progress

The Bringing Nature Back to Yarra program received \$520,000 in 2024/25. We reinstated original vegetation, strengthened wildlife corridors along waterways and provided winter foraging opportunities for the threatened grey-headed flying-fox.

81,110 local native tubestock of 70+ species were planted by staff. We have increased our biodiversity space to 2.1 hectares.



### Here are the main sites we have chosen for our native planting:

- Burnley Golf Course Stage 2 (25,270 plants)
- Fairfield Park Seed Orchard (8,000 plants)
- Quarries Park Plains Grassy Woodland (6,430 plants)
- Loys Paddock (4,600), Halls Reserve (2 x 4,000 plants)
- Gray Street (4,000 plants)
- Yambla Reserve (2,400 plants)
- Flockhart Reserve (3,210 plants)
- City Works Depot Pollinator Hub (400 plants)
- Friends of Merri Creek Labyrinth (400 plants)

### Looking ahead

**Local Environmental Projects Program (2026):** The Federal Government has allocated \$50,000 to **Revegetating the Birrarung – Bring Nature Back to Alphington**, supporting climate resilience, habitat connectivity and expanded open space managed for biodiversity.



Sign up to the **Yarra Environment eNewsletter** for updates about environment and climate related news, events and stories.

### Great Southern Bioblitz 2025 (24 to 26 October):

Yarra is teaming up with councils across metropolitan Melbourne to represent Greater Melbourne. Help showcase our biodiversity by taking photos or making sound recordings of wild plants and animals using iNaturalist. Let's show the world the incredible biodiversity of Melbourne! Get involved at [greatsouthernbioblitz.org](https://greatsouthernbioblitz.org)

### Nature connection in Yarra

Yarra City Council, in partnership with Mappa Outdoor, is running events to deepen understanding of local wildlife, ecosystems and the impacts on biodiversity — plus the actions we can all take to protect and regenerate nature. From plant identification to birding experiences and night wildlife walks, visit [yarracity.vic.gov.au/nature](https://yarracity.vic.gov.au/nature) for upcoming dates.

### Walk Talk Swim Birrarung

Walk Talk Swim empowers the next generation of urban waterway stewards and swimmers. Delivered with Regeneration Projects, the program offers immersive, practical learning and community conversations about our connections and future visions for the Birrarung (Yarra River). This aligns with Yarra's Climate Emergency Plan and our commitment as a Signatory of the Swimmable Cities Charter. Learn practical ways to care for the Birrarung and share ideas for future river swimming places at these upcoming events. [walktalkswim.org](https://walktalkswim.org)



### Flow by the Birrarung: Tai Chi and Banh Mi Lunch for Seniors – FREE

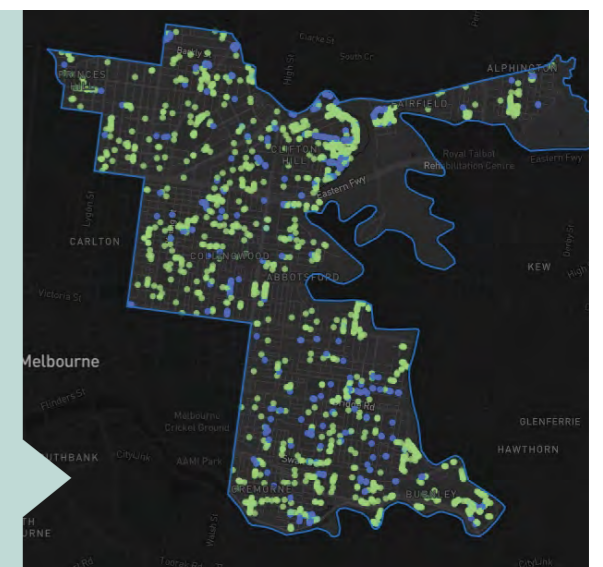
**Wednesday 8 October, 10am to 11.30am**  
**Collingwood Children's Farm, Abbotsford**

Hosted as part of Victorian Seniors' Festival, gather for gentle exercise by the river, then enjoy a slow wander through the farm to learn about local biodiversity and making the river healthier and for future generations. Bookings required. Call 9205 5555. Turn to page 11 for more Victorian Seniors Festival events.

### Track our tree planting progress in real time

Did you know that Yarra's Urban Forest Dashboard tracks our tree planting progress in real time? The green dots on the map show trees planted this calendar year, while the blue dots represent locations that will be planted before the tree planting season ends in October. You can also find out about Yarra's 190 significant trees, the 486 different tree species found in Yarra, and more!

Explore our urban forest at [trees.yarracity.vic.gov.au](https://trees.yarracity.vic.gov.au)





# Advocating for our community



## Reduced speed limits

The State Government has reduced the speed limit on Lygon Street to 40km/h, following sustained advocacy from Council. Together with the City of Melbourne and Merri-bek City Council, we're making Carlton's streets safer for all road users with a 40km/h speed limit between Elgin Street and Park Street.

## Council works with local government network partners

At May's Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) State Council, four of Yarra's notices of motion passed, calling on the State Government to improve its stormwater infrastructure, community safety, graffiti removal and fire safety regulations. Yarra is among many councils to express strong opposition to the legislated changes to the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund, which made Victorian councils responsible for collecting this levy along with council rates. The Mayor spoke out against the changes, explaining the unfair cost to our community members.

In June, the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) Annual General Assembly passed Yarra's motion urging the Federal Government to increase funding for new community infrastructure. Yarra secured almost \$10 million last year for local upgrades, but more is needed. We'll keep advocating to the State and Federal Governments to invest in our sports facilities, recreation centres, parks, kindergartens, libraries and cultural spaces.

CEOs and Mayors of the Municipal 9 (M9) councils recently met with the State Local

Government Minister Nick Staikos. Discussion topics included the future of rate capping and inadequate State Government funding for public libraries and maternal child health services.



Scan the QR code to stay up to date on how we're advocating for the community or visit [yarracity.vic.gov.au/advocacy](http://yarracity.vic.gov.au/advocacy)

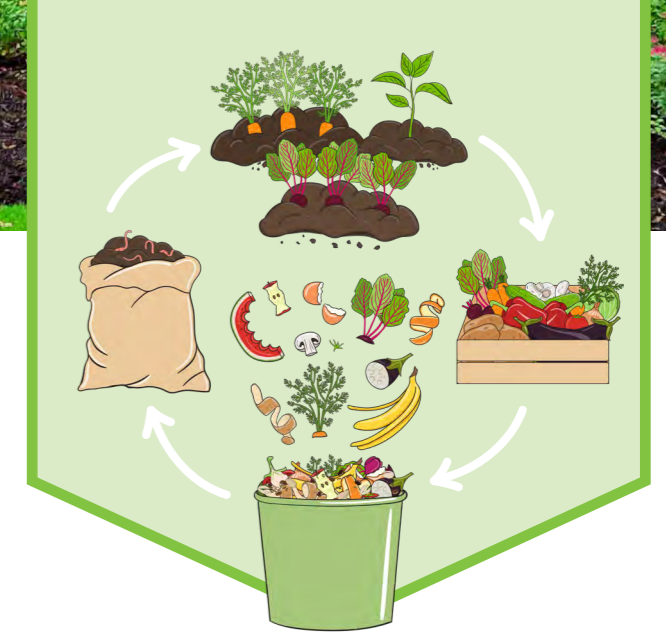
# Full-cycle FOGO

## Scraps to soil – and shrinking landfill costs

Our food and garden organics (FOGO) service is closing the loop by turning the food and garden materials collected in your lime-green-led FOGO bin into compost and mulch for Yarra's parks and community gardens.

In the year since the service launched in July 2024, more residents are using the service, and less waste is going to landfill — helping the environment and reducing costs.

- FOGO up: 3,007 tonnes collected, up from 184 tonnes
- Landfill down: 11,874 tonnes collected, down 1,192 tonnes
- Higher diversion overall: 39.89%, up from 32.17%
- Recycling up: 3,626 tonnes collected, up 25% from 2,894 tonnes



Every tonne we keep out of landfill reduces the Victorian landfill levy and other landfill costs: charges that are ultimately passed on to the community.

- 71 cubic metres of compost returned to Yarra across 62 council and community sites. That's about 2,958 household FOGO bins worth of recovered organic material.

Put your food scraps and garden clippings in the FOGO bin — it helps limit levy pressure while also cutting methane emissions from landfill.

## Abbotsford residents turn hard waste into community gold

When Abbotsford resident Anna Rizio (second from left) saw skip loads of perfectly good furniture leaving her Parkhouse apartment complex in 2023 — each one costing the owners corporation \$3,000 — she pitched a smarter and more sustainable fix.

Since April 2024, her Parkhouse Sustainable Program has run a volunteer-led "swap spot" in the loading bay of the 530-unit Abbotsford complex. On Thursday evenings, residents drop off unwanted household items; then on the first Sunday of each month roller doors go up and anyone in the area can browse and take treasures home — free!

With 28 neighbours on roster, the space stays tidy, items stay in use and Parkhouse hasn't hired a single skip, saving six to eight loads of landfill and thousands of dollars.



### Join the conversation

Yarra Council is forming a Sustainability in Apartments Network to swap ideas and learn about council- and government-supported opportunities to support sustainability and waste management. Scan the QR code or call **9205 5555** to get involved.



## Rainbow seniors building friendships at Bent Twig Alliance

Older LGBTIQ+ residents looking for friendship and support are invited to join the Bent Twig Alliance, Yarra's social group for rainbow elders and their allies. It's a place where shared life experiences help foster genuine connection and understanding.

Meeting fortnightly on Thursdays at the Djerring Centre in Abbotsford, the free get-togethers offer a relaxed space to "meet, connect and be". Activities are shaped by members — from coffee catch-ups and guest speakers to bus trips, movies and the occasional sausage sizzle in the park.

Rick, who has been a Bent Twig member since the group was established in 2018, is welcoming community members to the group. "We're keen to reach people in the area who are still at home doing what we all used to do, scrolling on the computer or just passing time, before this group came along and gave us something fun and meaningful to be part of," he said. "These guys are my family now," retired school crossing guard, KJ, added. "I feel like they've accepted me and there's no judgement — we know each other's pain and what we're going through."

Newcomer Tex discovered Bent Twigs after experiences at other all-ages LGBTIQ+ groups didn't hit the mark. He found the mix at the Bent

Twigs felt right and guest speakers provided relevant information. "One week Justice Connect showed us how to sort our wills; this week it was aged-care packages and NDIS," Tex said. "Mostly, though, we sit around, chat, reminisce and laugh."

The Bent Twigs' welcoming ethos supports Council's commitment to creating an age-friendly, inclusive City where everyone feels at home.

If you or someone you know is aged 50+ and identifies as LGBTIQ+, drop in to the next session or call 9205 5555 to learn more. You can also visit their Facebook page for information.

**Bent Twig Alliance LGBTIQ+ Seniors and Allies Luncheon – FREE**  
Thursday 9 October, 11.30am to 2.30pm

Join us at the Djerring Centre for a welcoming sit-down lunch as part of this year's Victorian Seniors Festival. Bookings required – call 9205 5555 to secure your spot.



## Victorian Seniors Festival 2025

Celebrate positive ageing with us as the Victorian Seniors Festival returns this October. There are plenty of free events taking place across Yarra during the state-wide festival – below are just a few highlights.

### Try-a-Class Week at Yarra Leisure

Monday 6 October to Saturday 11 October  
Richmond, Collingwood and Fitzroy

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

Sample yoga basics, aqua-move, mind-body stretch and beginner strength circuits across six days of free taster classes. Check the online timetable, then book at the relevant reception desk – places fill quickly.

### #oldisbeautiful launch and exhibition

Friday 10 October, 10.30am to 11.30am

Richmond Library  
Register online or call 9205 5555

Join us for the launch of a powerful photographic celebration of ageing and the beauty of older people. Listen to guest speakers and connect with the faces behind the photos over light refreshments. The exhibition will run throughout October.

### Community Morning Tea

Saturday 11 October, 11am to 12 noon

Fitzroy Learning Network,  
198 Napier St, Fitzroy

Share a cuppa and easy conversation in Fitzroy Learning Network's sun-filled courtyard. A simple, social way to celebrate Seniors Festival. Just turn up – no booking needed.

Victorian  
Seniors  
Festival  
2025



# CONNECT CREATE CELEBRATE

1–31 October



### Italiano Open Day at Willowview

Thursday 16 October, 10.30am to 11.45am  
Willowview Centre, 6 Eddy Court, Abbotsford  
Register online or call 9205 5427

Come for a tour of the centre. Join us for morning tea/coffee and cakes, and fun-filled Italian themed activities around the centre. Have a chat with our Italian participants and Willowview staff to find out more about the benefits and fun of joining our groups.

### Dancing from the Heart

Sunday 26 October, 3pm to 5pm

Collingwood Town Hall  
Register online or call 9205 5555

Experience the traditional dance of some of Yarra's wonderful ethnic seniors' clubs. Easy-to-learn steps, great music and loads of fun – come as you are, everyone is welcome. Free entry but bookings are essential.



Please visit  
[yarracity.vic.gov.au/events](http://yarracity.vic.gov.au/events) or  
phone 9205 5555 for more  
events and last-minute changes.

# What's on

## AFLW at Victoria Park

Victoria Park, Lulie Street, Abbotsford

Footy fans have plenty of opportunities to catch their favourite AFLW team in action as the 12-round season continues. Collingwood will face-off with Richmond at Victoria Park on Sunday 19 October for the season's Pride Round; the Pies will also host the Brisbane Lions at Vic Park in Round 12. Tickets are \$15 through Ticketmaster and under 18s are FREE. See the full fixture at [afl.com.au/aflw](http://afl.com.au/aflw)

## Sally Hepworth on Mad Mabel

Wednesday 8 October, 6.30pm to 7.30pm  
Fitzroy Town Hall

From the New York Times bestselling author of *The Soulmate* and *Darling Girls* comes a deliciously surprising novel of friendship and family with a side of suspense, secrets and murder. See Sally in conversation and hear from one of Australia's brightest fiction stars about her newest release *Mad Mabel*.



Visit [yarracity.vic.gov.au/events](http://yarracity.vic.gov.au/events) to learn more and discover more events.

## Remembrance Day

Tuesday 11 November, 10.30am to 11.30am  
Richmond War Memorial  
Barkly Gardens, Richmond

Join Yarra City Council and Richmond RSL at the Richmond War Memorial to commemorate 107 years since the Armistice that ended the First World War took place. We will remember the loss of life from the First World War, as well as other wars and conflicts. The ceremony will begin at 10.30am with speeches, an official wreath-laying ceremony and a minute's silence at 11am.

## Childrens' Clothing Swap

Saturday 29 November, 10am to 12pm  
Richmond Library

Join us for the last Clothing Swap of 2025! Kids grow up really fast. Keeping them dressed can be a challenge! This is a sustainable, free way to make sure your children always have something to wear. Bring along a bag of clean clothes in good condition, suitable for children under five, and take home a bag in return. There will be changing facilities, comfy couches and toys to play with — and we'll have pre-loved library books for you to take home, free of charge!

## Wurundjeri 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.

## Stay connected with Yarra

- Online at [yarracity.vic.gov.au](http://yarracity.vic.gov.au)
- Sign up for our community engagement e-news and have your say on projects at [yoursayyarra.com.au](http://yoursayyarra.com.au)
- Follow us on Facebook or Instagram ([@cityofyarra](https://www.instagram.com/cityofyarra))
- Register for our monthly e-news at [yarracity.vic.gov.au/yarralife](http://yarracity.vic.gov.au/yarralife)

## Speak your language



If your language is not listed below, please call our interpreter service on **9280 1940** and quote REF 20476.

Italiano	9280 1931
Español	9280 1935
中文	9280 1937
العربية	9280 1930
Ελληνικά	9280 1934
Tiếng Việt	9280 1939