

FEBRUARY / MARCH 2026

yarralife



Our advocacy priorities

Accessibility improvements across Yarra

How to electrify your home

Your Councillors

To find more about your Ward Councillors visit yarracity.vic.gov.au/Councillors

Below are contact details for your Ward Councillors.



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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:

Yarra's Multicultural Partnership officer Amani Godwin, right, and 2025 Person of the Year, Thi Mai Tran.

Message from the Mayor

Hello Everyone,

I hope you've had a positive start to 2026 and have been enjoying time in and around our neighbourhoods with friends and family.

I was honoured to be re-elected Mayor by my fellow Councillors back in November. This year, Council remains focused on the things that matter most to people who live, work and spend time in Yarra.

As we head towards the Victorian State Election in November, Council has set out a clear Advocacy Roadmap to guide our work and to get funding support for a growing Yarra. Council is continuing to campaign to secure free health services in Collingwood and Fitzroy at CoHealth. This is a critical service for our community, so please check out the Yarra website and our socials to stay up-to-date and get involved where you can.

Council will also continue to advocate strongly to protect our public housing towers and the thousands of residents who call them home. I'll be stepping up pressure on the State Government and calling on the opposition to stop the demolition of the towers immediately.

Making Yarra more inclusive is a priority. Council is working to improve accessibility across our places, programs and services, supported by tangible upgrades and investments that help people with disability, carers and families participate fully in community life (read more inside this edition).

This edition also celebrates the 2025 Yarra Community Awards. I congratulate all the winners and nominees whose leadership and care make a real difference across our City.

Council is also taking action to protect what makes Yarra unique. Late last year, we approved a new Live Music Precincts strategy, which is now progressing toward an amendment to the Yarra Planning Scheme. This work is about giving greater protection and support to venues, artists and audiences, and ensuring live music remains part of Yarra's fabric.

This is going to be another big year for Yarra Council. Thank you for your engagement and passion for our community. I look forward to seeing you around Yarra.

Cr Stephen Jolly
Mayor, City of Yarra



Latest news

Remember to renew your pet registration

Do you own one of Yarra's adorable cats or dogs? Keeping your pet's details up to date is important so we can reunite you with your pet if they become lost, and so we can get in touch with information about pet registration. Pet registration renewals will be sent to you soon, with the annual deadline of 10 April fast approaching.

To keep your pet as protected as it can be, be sure to let us know if any of the following changes have occurred since your pet was last registered:

- Moved to a new address
- Your contact details have changed
- Your pet has been desexed
- Your pet has sadly passed away or is missing

It's every pet owner's responsibility to make sure their pet's registration is renewed before 10 April each year. You may be issued an infringement notice if you don't do this on time. Renew online at yarracity.vic.gov.au/pets

My Smart Garden – how it's helping Yarra residents grow greener

My Smart Garden is a free home-gardening program supported by councils across Melbourne, offering workshops, resources and practical tips to help people grow food, reduce waste and create climate-resilient gardens.

In the latest impact survey of 377 participants, we learned just how much the program is helping our community:

- **80%** are now growing vegetables better or more often than before
- **75%** are recycling food and green waste more effectively
- **73%** have propagated their own plants from seed or cuttings
- **32%** have made new connections in their community.

Find upcoming workshops, tips and resources at mysmartgarden.org.au



Find out more at
yarracity.vic.gov.au/news



Connie Benn Early Learning Centre recognised for leadership in children's wellbeing

Fitzroy's Connie Benn Early Learning Centre has been recognised at the 2025 Victorian Early Years Awards for its outstanding work supporting children's health and wellbeing.

The centre now exceeds National Quality Standards, thanks to its trauma-informed practice, dedicated staff training, sensory-rich wellbeing room and close partnerships with families and local services. It's a strong example of Yarra City Council's commitment to high-quality early years support.

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 for details. All meetings are live streamed at webcast.yarracity.vic.gov.au

- Tuesday 10 March, 6.30pm
Richmond Town Hall
- Tuesday 14 April, 6.30pm
Fitzroy Town Hall

Advocating for our community

Call to action in the lead up to the State Election in 2026

Council has adopted an Advocacy Roadmap. It provides an overview of Council's advocacy agenda for influencing State and Federal government policies and funding decisions that will shape our City.

Did you know Yarra is the second smallest council area in Victoria, at only 19 sq km?

We're also one of the most diverse socially, culturally and economically.

The Victorian Government has designated the City of Yarra as an 'activity centre', with a target of 44,000 new dwellings by 2050. This means the population of Yarra will double over the next two decades. We are advocating for the community to have a strong say in how their neighbourhoods will be shaped into the future.

Yarra has limited land, ageing assets, and an existing need for more open space, community infrastructure and sporting facilities.

We have large pockets of vulnerable people, the highest number of public housing residents in Victoria, and the cost of housing is out of reach for our key workers.

Securing funding and unused government land to deliver open space and community infrastructure requires strong, sustained advocacy to both the Federal and Victorian governments.

We are also advocating for the Victorian Government to better maintain its roads and upgrade stormwater and drainage infrastructure to prevent flooding. Strong advocacy is also needed to ensure that residents have access to the services they need, that our streets are safe, there is adequate accessible transport and our businesses are thriving.

We want to continue to be a liveable City, a jobs-rich City, a City of diversity and a vibrant destination City. That vision includes busy high streets, commercial investment, vibrant events and festivals, and a flourishing night-time economy supported by lots of live music.

Campaigning for what matters

As the current Victorian Government seeks another term and candidates from across the political spectrum seek to be elected, Yarra City Council and our community will be actively campaigning for what matters.

The City of Yarra includes the electorate of Richmond, and parts of Brunswick and Northcote. All three seats are likely to be closely contested. On behalf of everyone who lives, works and plays in our City, Council will seek to influence political party and candidate policy positions and commitments. Council will also host community forums with candidates, and support community and stakeholder voices to be heard through a variety of channels.

Council's campaign agenda highlights requests based on evidence of need and adopted Council positions:

- 1 Ensure that public health services continue supporting vulnerable people in Yarra.
- 2 Move the North Richmond Medically Supervised Injecting Room (MSIR) to a more appropriate location and provide expanded rehabilitation and recovery services.
- 3 Commit capital funding to upgrade Richmond Library.
- 4 Release unused land at 2 River Street, Richmond for community use to increase kindergarten places and create open space for the growing community.
- 5 Commit capital funding and fast track planning approvals for a key worker affordable housing project on Council land at Collingwood Town Hall.
- 6 Commit \$3.7 million to refurbish Alphington Bowls Club to meet accessibility standards and expand its community uses.
- 7 Commit to building a North Richmond community hub and fund sufficient services to meet immediate need and growing demand across a spectrum of community services.
- 8 Protect Yarra's unique live music industry by establishing a live music precinct, with fit for purpose regulations and greater support for artists, the local industry and grassroots events.



Learn more and get involved:
yarracity.vic.gov.au/community-advocacy
And keep an eye out for opportunities to get involved in advocacy as the State Election draws nearer.



Inclusive Yarra

Yarra City Council is working to improve the accessibility of our places, programs and services to create a more inclusive Yarra for people with disability. Council is also advocating to the Victorian Government to upgrade its public transport infrastructure to meet disability accessibility standards.



Working for You

As part of making Yarra more accessible for everyone, we have been installing more accessible parking bays, building ramps, adding tactiles to our footpaths, redeveloping toilets and making childcare more sensory friendly. Last financial year we spent almost \$3 million on upgrading footpaths to make our paths safer for all users.

Here are a few projects we have invested in to build a more accessible Yarra:

- Conducted access audits on 14 Council sites.
- Acoustic panelling in local kindergartens for sensory friendly environments.
- Acoustic booths for Yarra Libraries.
- Lighting improvements in Council-owned buildings.
- Redeveloping the accessible toilet and installing an accessible carpark and a ramp at Coulson Pavilion.
- Accessibility improvements to Fitzroy Swimming Pool.
- Accessible entrance at our Abbotsford Maternal and Child Health Centre.
- Widening the doorway and installing an automatic door at Carlton Hall and adding an accessible drinking fountain.
- Installing accessible doors and handles of public toilets.

Sports and recreation

A number of sports clubs in Yarra offer accessible and inclusive programs.

- **Collingwood City Soccer Club:** Collingwood City Eagles All Abilities Soccer Program (people with an intellectual or physical disability aged from eight to adulthood).
- **Collingwood Basketball Association:** Collingwood All Stars Access for All Abilities (boys and girls aged six to 16 years with special needs).
- **Reclink Footy:** Collingwood Magpies (all ages and abilities).

- **Yarra Tri Club:** Partnership with Inclusive Sports Training (IST) creating pathway programs for athletes with disability and neurodivergent individuals).

More sports and recreational programs for people with disability can be found on the AAA Play website at aaaplay.org.au



Libraries

Our libraries have the following offerings to make services more accessible:

- Home Library Service: Free delivery of books, audiobooks, and other resources to Yarra residents who cannot visit the library.
- Programs with a predictable structure, using visual schedules and timers to reduce anxiety and help children anticipate what's next.
- Staff trained in inclusive practices and sensory-friendly techniques to support neurodivergent children.
- Accessible PCs, large-print multimedia keyboards, and a trackball mouse with scroll ring for easier navigation.
- Hearing loops available at information desks, which can also be arranged for programs and events.
- Early literacy programs for preschoolers.
- Changing Places toilet at Bargoonga Nganjin (North Fitzroy Library). This includes an adult-sized height-adjustable changing bench, ceiling hoist system, peninsular toilet and automatic door for wheelchair access.
- Accessible study booth at Richmond Library: Sound-insulated with an automatic sensor door, suitable for quiet study or video calls.

Leisure programs

Yarra's leisure centres have had more than 1,000 visits a year for the Empower and Empower+ programs, designed for people living with chronic conditions and disabilities.

We also offer accessible swimming lessons through Yarra Leisure's Access All Abilities program, providing personalised swimming lessons for students who need additional support in the water.

Learn more about our leisure centre programs at yarracity.vic.gov.au/leisure



Support for carers

Carers play a vital role in our community, and a number of supports are available:

- **Monthly Carers Walk:** Held on the last Monday of each month starting at Abbotsford Convent, followed by a free morning tea.
- **Companion Card:** Free entry for carers at our leisure centres.
- **Carer Card:** Victorian Government discounts across retail, travel, attractions and more.
- **Carer Gateway:** Free emotional support, counselling, respite and practical assistance (delivered locally by Merri Health).

Yarra Youth Centre

We have recently added a temporary accessible wheelchair ramp and installed acoustic panelling at Yarra Youth Centre. Other features at the centre include:

- Quiet sensory rooms if participants need to take time to regulate their emotions.
- An elevator to support access to the upstairs music and recording studios.
- Flexible participation; no bookings required for most programs and activities.

Solar Savers

An easier way to electrify your home

Researching energy upgrades can be time consuming and overwhelming. Where do you start? Who can you trust? What's a fair price?

The Solar Savers program eliminates this hassle. The Council-backed initiative has already done the hard work — vetting quality suppliers and negotiating competitive pricing for heating/cooling systems, hot water heat pumps, insulation, draught proofing, induction cooktops, solar panels, batteries, EV chargers and home energy assessments.

Any Yarra resident or business can visit Solar Savers to receive up to three no-obligation quotes for any of these products and services from trusted, accredited suppliers. No more endless research, no more wondering if you're making the right choice. It makes it easy to electrify everything!

Learn more online at solarsavers.org.au/register-yarra



How it works:

- 1 Register
- 2 Select products
- 3 Get your free quotes
- 4 Install

Tracking Yarra's climate action journey

Council committed to keeping our community informed about how we're responding to the climate emergency — and we're delivering. Our first Climate Emergency Plan Annual Report offers a clear snapshot of our progress and the steps we're taking together towards a sustainable future.

Key achievements include:

- **54 households** received thermal comfort upgrades to their homes as part of the Climate Safe Rooms and Yarra Home Energy Upgrades programs.
- **3,007 people** attended our climate emergency events and programs.
- **70 community members** from under-represented communities developed climate advocacy and leadership skills through the Climate Voices program.
- Council has leased land and supported Evie Networks to install **eight fast charging bays** outside Richmond Library and Piedimonte's in Fitzroy North.

- **892 indigenous and native trees** with a mature height of 10+ metres were planted through the 2024/25 tree planting program.
- Yarra Libraries extended the **Library of Things** to include thermal imaging cameras, energy efficiency kits and portable induction cooktops.

Read the full report online at yarracity.vic.gov.au/climate



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

YOUR SAY YARRA

Get involved in Yarra's projects

Want to have a say on making a difference in your neighbourhood? We want to hear from you!

Visit yoursayyarra.com.au — our online platform where you can have your say on council projects, how your rates are spent and upgrades in your local area. From parks, parking and roads to community programs, your voice matters.

Get involved, stay informed and make a difference in your community.



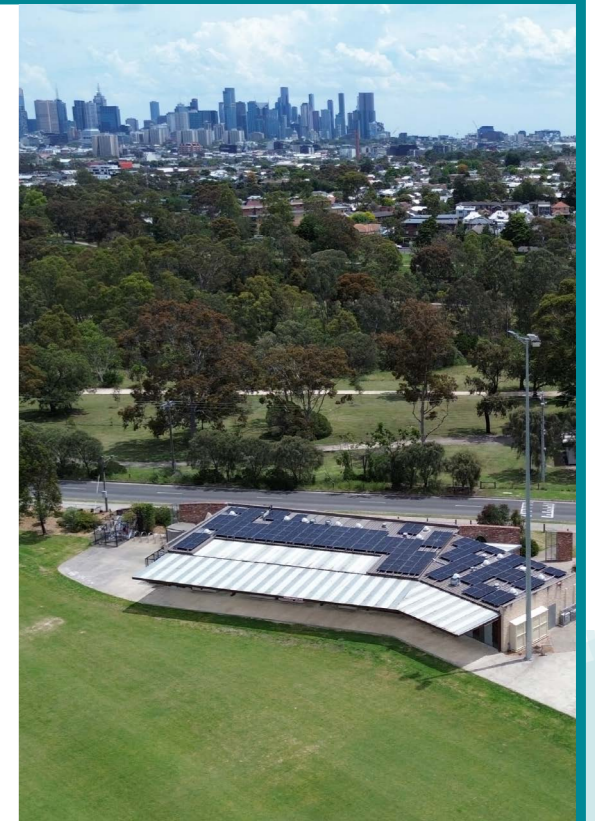
Local energy, local benefits

Council's Community Charge project is an initiative that shows how buildings across Yarra can help increase locally-generated clean and renewable energy.

With support from the Victorian Government's 100 Neighbourhood Batteries program, we have deployed 162 kW of solar panels and 360 kWh of batteries on four community buildings: Alphington Park Pavilion, Fairlea Reserve Netball Complex, Maxwell Sutherland Pavilion and Mark Street Hall.

Electricity usage for field lighting and space heating in these buildings now comes from energy that was captured during the day. The batteries also export renewable energy into the local grid during times where demand for electricity is high, allowing surrounding homes and businesses to benefit from this locally generated renewable electricity.

Savings will be distributed annually to local community groups through Yarra Community Grants.



Celebrating our local heroes

YARRA COMMUNITY AWARDS 2025



Each year, we honour the everyday heroes who make outstanding contributions to our community with our Yarra Community Awards.

We want to thank everyone who took the time to submit a nomination this year. It has been uplifting and inspiring to learn more about the fantastic people and projects that make Yarra such a special place to be.



These are just a few of our fantastic winners! Visit yarracity.vic.gov.au/awards to see the full list of winners and read their stories. Nominations for the 2026 Community Awards will open in July.

Young Person of the Year: Minh Chau Doan

Minh's passion and dedication towards culturally aware leadership fosters safer spaces, more inclusive programs and inspires other young people across Yarra, making her this year's Young Person of the Year.

She brings a strong sense of inclusion, empathy, and leadership to everything she does. As a proud Vietnamese Australian and LGBTQIA+ community member, she has been an active mentor for young people in our community through sport. She co-designs inclusive programs and promotes wellbeing.

Minh also leads gender-based violence prevention workshops, supports queer youth, and volunteers at community events like the Youth Services Careers Expo and Ramadan and Eid celebrations.



Person of the Year: Thi Mai Tran

Mai uses her voice and connections with her community to fight for better outcomes for residents in Yarra — and that's why she's the 2025 Person of the Year.

Mai is a respected community leader at the Richmond Public Housing Estate, supporting residents after the Victorian Government's plan to demolish public housing towers.

She's worked tirelessly to keep neighbours informed, united, and aware of their rights (especially older Vietnamese residents) by sharing updates in English and Vietnamese.

Being in her 80s doesn't hold her back from being a strong advocate for her community. She has helped to reduce fear, strengthen community ties, and encourage resilience during a time of upheaval.

Community Initiative of the Year: Richmond Community Market

The Richmond Community Market is a vital hub addressing food insecurity and fostering inclusion in Yarra — earning it the title of Community Initiative of the Year.

Located in the Richmond public housing estate, it offers affordable, culturally inclusive food and supports wellbeing, especially for older and diverse residents. With more than 100 people attending weekly, it reduces isolation and builds community.

In 2025, the market served over 2,780 community members and distributed nearly 10,000kg of fresh produce. Events like Cultural Diversity Week and the contribution of more than 620 volunteer hours highlight the role of this important initiative in promoting dignity, connection and resilience through food.



What's on

LuliePalooza

Saturday 21 March 2026, from 11.30am
Victoria Park, Abbotsford

The fifth annual Victoria Park Rock 'n' Roll block party is back, bigger and bolder than ever. This wild rock 'n' roll street celebration returns with two stages, 12+ live bands, skate demos, showbags, local food and drinks, and surprises from Lulie Tavern, all in one epic open-air event. Visit our website for tickets and more information.



Visit yarracity.vic.gov.au/events for more information and discover other events happening near you.

Dancing from the Heart: Seniors Dance series

Sundays 22 March, 26 April and 31 May
2pm to 4pm

Collingwood Town Hall, Collingwood

Love to dance? You're invited to a joyful new series celebrating Active Ageing in Yarra. Each month, people aged 65+ can enjoy two hours of music, movement and social connection in Collingwood Town Hall's historic ballroom. Expect familiar tunes, a fabulous MC and a warm, welcoming atmosphere — including a short group dance to get everyone moving.

Locally grown discovery tours

Fitzroy: Tuesday 24 March, 1pm to 2.45pm
meet at Fitzroy Library

Collingwood: Tuesday 31 March, 1pm to 2.30pm
meet at Collingwood Library

Discover a thriving community of growers in and around Collingwood and Fitzroy. Visit community gardens and meet the people who create and nurture them. If you've ever wondered 'how does that grow there?' this walking tour is for you! Bookings required, visit mysmartgarden.org.au

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

This edition of Yarralife has been printed on 100% recycled paper.



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
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العربية	9280 1930
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