

APRIL / MAY 2026

# yarralife



## YARRA DECIDES: STATE ELECTION 2026

This State Election 2026, let's speak up for Yarra. Pages 5-8



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# 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](mailto:stephen.jolly@yarracity.vic.gov.au)  
0437 856 713



## BOULEVARD WARD

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## HODDLE WARD

**Cr Sophie Wade**

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## LANGRIDGE WARD

**Cr Evangeline Aston**

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## LENNOX WARD

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## MELBA WARD

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## NICHOLLS WARD

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## YARRA BEND WARD

**Cr Sarah McKenzie**

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0427 052 602

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

# Message from the Mayor

Hello Everyone,

Great to have you back for the second edition of Yarralife for 2026.

Over the past few months, Councillors have been deep in the trenches putting together the draft Budget for 2026/27. The big focus hasn't changed — the everyday stuff people actually rely on. Cleaner streets. Better parks. Safer roads and footpaths. And on top of that, we're putting serious investment into the community facilities people use.

Now it's your turn to have a say. Jump onto the Your Say Yarra website and tell us what you think before 15 May. And if you want to speak directly to Council, make a submission and you'll be welcome to come along to our special Council Meeting on Tuesday 2 June at Fitzroy Town Hall.

We're also stepping up our advocacy in the lead-up to the State Election in November. In this edition you'll see a section called Yarra Decides, which lays out what we're pushing all political parties to commit to — things like protecting free primary health services in Collingwood and Fitzroy, opening up unused government land in Richmond for parks and kinder places, investing in affordable housing for key workers, and defending Yarra's legendary live music scene.

Keep an eye on our socials – we'll be sharing ways you can get involved and help us put pressure where it counts.

Over past months you will have seen a conscious effort by the Council to put front and centre the issues of State Government cost shifting. Cost shifting has an impact on the services Council can deliver for our community and we are calling on the State Government to hand back the estimated \$10 million every year being taken out of Yarra.

Thank you, as always, for your passion for our community. I look forward to seeing you around Yarra.

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



# Latest news

## Ticketless booking at our leisure centres

Yarra Leisure has launched a new ticketless system for Group Exercise classes at its venues, which include Richmond Leisure Centre, Collingwood Leisure Centre and Fitzroy Swimming Pool.

Members and multi-visit pass holders no longer need to collect paper tickets from reception and can instead use their wristband or FOB tag to tap through the turnstiles. Casual visitors will need to continue to check in with the customer service team.

This move will eliminate paper waste and make entry faster and more seamless for visitors. Classes can be booked via Yarra Leisure's online client portal or at reception.

For more information visit [yarracity.vic.gov.au/ticketless-bookings](http://yarracity.vic.gov.au/ticketless-bookings)

## Introducing Yarra Life Audio

Council is proud to introduce Yarra Life Audio — an audio version of our community magazine designed to make Yarra Life even more accessible for residents.

This new service complements our print edition, offering a full narration of the latest issue produced entirely in-house. Yarra is one of the first councils in Greater Melbourne to launch its own audio version of a community news publication.

Most importantly, Yarra Life Audio provides greater accessibility for people who prefer to — or need to — receive news and information through audio. It supports Council's commitment to improving access and inclusion for everyone.

Listen to the April/May 2026 edition of Yarra Life Audio on our website. You can also download the print edition and Ward wraps on our Yarra Life page: [yarracity.vic.gov.au/yarra-life](http://yarracity.vic.gov.au/yarra-life)



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



## New policy to support Yarra's growing older community

Council has adopted a new Ageing Well Policy to support our older residents. The policy recognises that people age in diverse ways and ensures this is reflected in how services and public spaces are designed. It sets priorities to remove barriers, improve access and celebrate the contributions older people make to our city. Council will report annually on progress and review the policy each year.

### 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)

- **Tuesday 12 May, 6.30pm**  
Richmond Town Hall
- **Tuesday 2 June, 6.30pm**  
Fitzroy Town Hall  
(Extraordinary Council Meeting for the hearing of submissions on the 2026/27 Annual Budget)
- **Tuesday 9 June, 6.30pm**  
Fitzroy Town Hall

# Let's shape a better Yarra together

The City of Yarra includes 65,000 homes, 18,500 businesses, 19.2 square kilometres of streets and more than 97,000 residents. We want you to be a part of every decision that improves your community.

## Have your say on Yarra's draft Budget

This year's Budget backs essential services and what people love about Yarra as we prepare for significant growth — while keeping rates within the cap, helping buffer cost-of-living pressures.

With waste, construction, insurance, utilities and other costs rising faster than revenue — and with global instability, including conflict in the Middle East, continuing to place inflationary pressure on the economy — we're budgeting carefully to protect services now while planning responsibly for the future and significant growth — around 44,000 new dwellings by 2050.

We're investing in what people use and see every day. That includes a capital works program of around \$40 million prioritising safety, cleaner streets, better parks, improved customer service, and renewing and maintaining key assets.

### Draft Budget highlights

- \$9.3m on creating new inclusive open space and improved accessibility to parks, sportsfields and playgrounds.
- \$6m on electrification of the Collingwood Leisure Centre, as well as upgrades to ventilation and cooling.
- \$3m on the Brunswick Street Oval.
- \$1m on the Alphington Bowls Club pavilion.
- More than \$7.3m on road renewal, footpath, kerb and laneway works.
- More than \$4m on stormwater/drainage.
- More than \$1.6m on active transport.
- Around \$1.1m on road safety.

### Quality services for the whole community

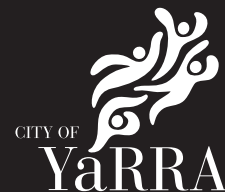
Here are some of our major community projects:

- \$1.4m for Yarralea Kindergarten
- \$350,000 for Richmond Library design work
- \$380,000 for equipment renewals at your three Leisure Centres
- \$1.2m on graffiti removal
- \$750,000 on tree planting programs



Please look at the draft Budget on at [yoursayyarra.com.au](https://yoursayyarra.com.au) or scan the QR code and give us your feedback.

THIS STATE ELECTION  
NOVEMBER 2026



# YARRA DECIDES

LET'S SPEAK UP FOR YARRA

## YARRA NEEDS

- ✓ Unused State Government Land for open space and kindergarten places (2 River Street, Richmond is available!)
- ✓ Free primary health care must continue in Collingwood and Fitzroy and expanded rehabilitation and recovery services
- ✓ Community Infrastructure and services for our growing population in areas that need it most
- ✓ Keep our vibrant live music scene alive (support artists, venues and festivals!)
- ✓ Affordable housing for key workers (capital funding please!)



SCAN TO LEARN HOW YOU CAN TAKE  
ACTION OR VISIT  
[YARRACITY.VIC.GOV.AU/YARRA-DECIDES](https://yarracity.vic.gov.au/yarra-decides)

## ADVOCATING FOR OUR COMMUNITY

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

The City of Yarra is home to over 100,000 people, the workplace of almost 125,000, and a destination for millions of people every year.

Our City has over 19,000 businesses and generates more than \$37 billion of economic output annually.

Eighty-eight percent of our residents live in medium and high-density dwellings, but only 13.5% of our land is public open space, one of the smallest proportions per person in metropolitan Melbourne.

We're diverse, we're proud, we're strong advocates for what we believe in.

**The Victorian Government has set a target for us to grow by 44,000 dwellings over the next 25 years. This means almost doubling our housing stock and our population.**

The next State Government must support us to make sure that Yarra continues to be a great place to live, do business, work and play.

The City of Yarra has limited land, ageing assets, and an existing need for more open space and community infrastructure and services.

The Victorian Government has land in Richmond that has been sitting, unused, for over five years. Releasing 2 River Street, Richmond for community use is a once in a generation opportunity.

Most of the Victorian Government's public transport infrastructure in Yarra doesn't meet the accessibility standards in its own legislation. Community participation is a fundamental human right – this needs to be fixed.



**PLEASE JOIN WITH US TO  
ADVOCATE FOR OUR CITY,  
OUR COMMUNITY AND OUR  
BUSINESSES**

✓ JOIN US ✓ TAKE ACTION

# IN THE LEAD UP TO THE STATE ELECTION IN NOVEMBER 2026

## We're calling on all parties and candidates to step up and commit to providing what our City needs.



**Our thriving live music scene is the envy of the world, but is in danger. Other jurisdictions are directly supporting their local artists and venues. The Victorian Government must also act.**

Free primary health services in Collingwood and Fitzroy which support our most vulnerable residents are in danger of closing without government support. This must not happen.

The key workers who keep our economy going, our streets safe, and provide our health and community services can't afford to live in Yarra.

North Richmond is the most under-served part of our City and is growing. The community needs a family and community services hub.

**State Government shifting costs on to rate payers is a threat to services, businesses and council budgets**

Councils are the primary delivery partners for many services co-funded with the State Government.

Many critical services, like libraries and maternal and child health, used to be funded half by the State Government, half by councils.

Yarra City Council now funds 80% of library operations and an estimated 55-60% of maternal and child health.

**Enough is enough.  
The State must pay up!**



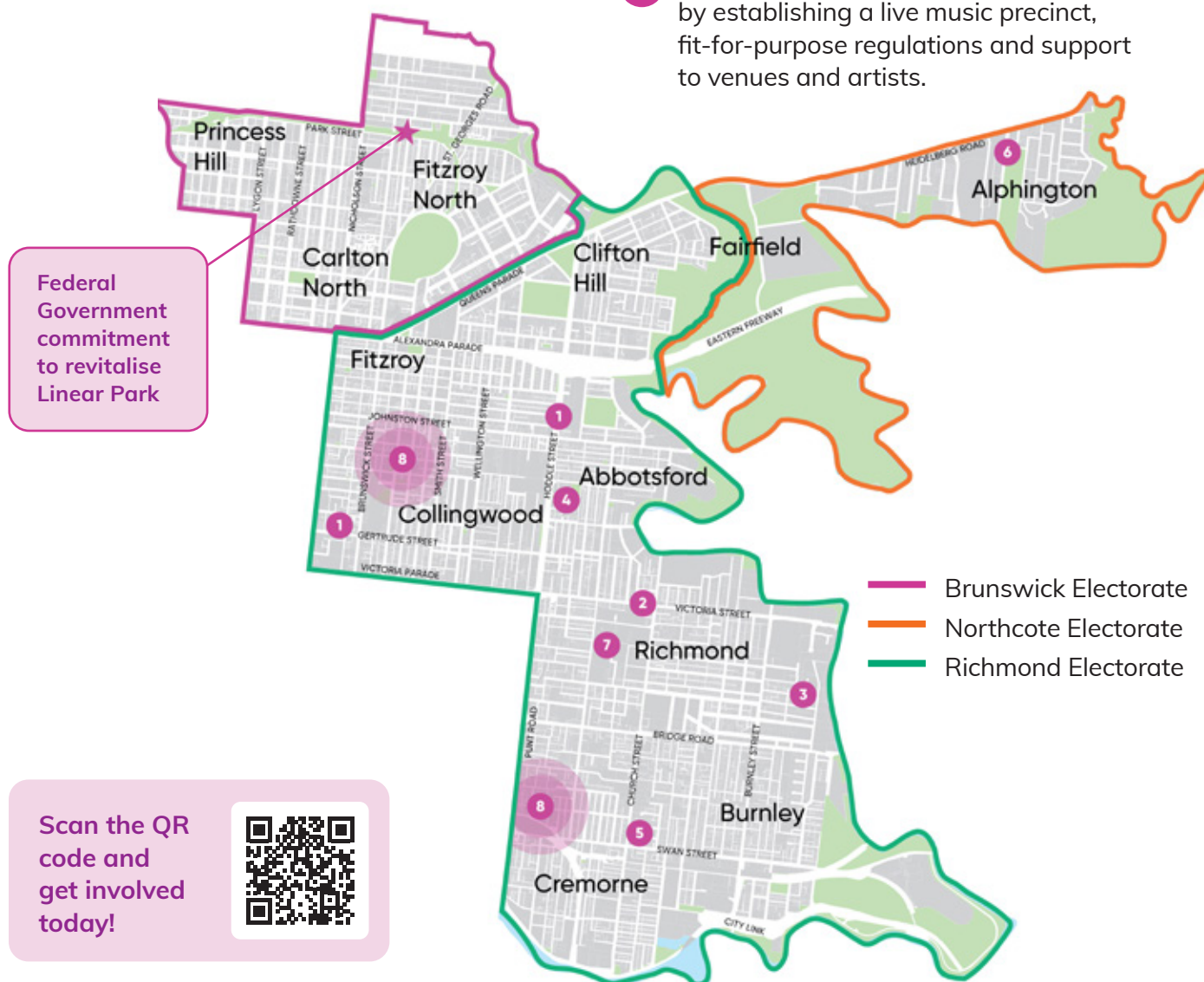
## Council wants everyone's voices to be heard

- ✓ Come to our campaign launch – a sausage sizzle on Saturday 2 May at Annette's Place, River Street, Richmond (11am to 1pm)
- ✓ Keep an eye out for the details of community events and forums with candidates
- ✓ Contact your local candidates so they know what's important to you!



## Yarra City Council is calling on all parties and candidates to commit to:

- 1 Stop the closure of free public health services in Collingwood and Fitzroy, delivered by cohealth
- 2 Commit to building a North Richmond community services hub in one of our fastest growing precincts
- 3 Release unused government land at 2 River St, Richmond for open space and kindergarten places
- 4 Commit capital funding and fast track planning approvals for key worker affordable housing on Council land
- 5 Commit capital funding to upgrade Richmond Library
- 6 Help refurbish Alphington Bowls Club to meet accessibility standards and expand its community uses
- 7 Move the Medically Supervised Injecting Room away from the primary school and homes and expand rehabilitation and recovery services
- 8 Protect Yarra's unique live music industry by establishing a live music precinct, fit-for-purpose regulations and support to venues and artists.



The City of Yarra is Abbotsford, Burnley, Carlton North, Clifton Hill, Collingwood, Cremorne, Fitzroy, Fitzroy North, Princes Hill, Richmond, (parts of) Alphington and Fairfield.

All captured in the electoralates of Richmond, Northcote and Brunswick and within the Northern Metropolitan Region.

# Making changes to heritage buildings: It's easier than you think!

Yarra is home to many beautiful heritage buildings, protected through heritage overlays that help conserve important heritage streetscapes and places.

If your home or business is in a heritage overlay, you may need a planning permit to carry out some works. While this can sound complicated, many property owners are surprised to learn how straightforward the process can be.

## Sustainability and accessibility

Some of the permit requests Council receives are for installing solar panels and improving disability access. Sustainability and accessibility are core priorities for Yarra, and Council officers are ready to help residents and business owners make changes that support renewable energy and inclusive access, while respecting heritage values.

In most cases, planning permits are issued, and officers are always ready to work with applicants to suggest modifications that allow projects to proceed in a way that fits with a building's heritage significance.



## Help is available

If your property is covered by a heritage overlay, a permit is usually required for most external works, including renovations, construction or fencing.

Most common questions about heritage-listed properties are answered online. If you need further guidance, Council staff are available to help.

Find out more at [yarracity.vic.gov.au/heritage](http://yarracity.vic.gov.au/heritage) or contact us: call 9205 5555 or email [info@yarracity.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@yarracity.vic.gov.au)

## New Deal for Schools kicks off for 2026

Our New Deal for Schools program is back for a third year, and we're delighted to be partnering with Richmond West Primary School in 2026.

Over the next few months, we'll be delivering a series of workshops and special events at the school, promoting the benefits of active transport. The aim of the program is to provide children and parents with the confidence and skills to walk, ride and scoot safely to school.



We began this year's program by celebrating National Ride 2 School Day with the students and school community in early March. As part of the partnership, we will be working with the school to develop a program of other activities to suit their needs. This could include bike safety checks, open streets days, safe routes to school audits and guided active travel days.



Find out more about the program scanning the QR code or visit [yarracity.vic.gov.au/new-deal-schools](http://yarracity.vic.gov.au/new-deal-schools)



# Start your Saturday at the Gleadell Street Market

Every Saturday morning, Richmond's Gleadell Street transforms from a street into a vibrant market for the community.

Whether you're a serious home cook, or just looking for a tasty treat or two, this longrunning community market has something for everyone. There's an incredible selection of fresh produce, baked goods, meat and artisanal treats from a diverse mix of traders waiting for you.

**When:** Every Saturday, 7am – 1pm (Note: The market is closed on certain public holidays).

**Where:** Gleadell Street, Richmond

Supporting the Gleadell Street Market means supporting the community. Grab your tote bags, bring your morning cravings and pick up some delicious bargains.

## More Yarra markets

There's also several other great markets operating on weekends in Yarra; including the Carlton Farmers Market, Fitzroy Market and the Rose Street Artists' Market. Find out more at [yarracity.vic.gov.au/markets](http://yarracity.vic.gov.au/markets)

## Retail Ready

A free program designed to help people explore the retail industry, develop practical skills and build confidence to gain employment.

- Introduction to retail and customer service
- Store presentation, merchandising and communication skills
- Hands-on learning in a clothing hub
- Visit to Victoria Gardens and meet retail managers
- Resume, cover letter and interview preparation
- Optional unpaid volunteer shift for additional experience
- Receive a Certificate of Participation
- Pick an interview outfit from the Thread Together Clothing Hub
- Ongoing support and retail opportunities!



**THREAD TOGETHER**

### Taking registrations now!

To register or find out more, scan the QR code, call 0488 940 971, or email [learningbank@yarracity.vic.gov.au](mailto:learningbank@yarracity.vic.gov.au)

# Brighten your nature strip with Yarra's street garden program

Yarra City Council's Street Garden Program is a way you can help brighten up your front nature strips, increase greenery and support biodiversity across our City.

Richmond's Greg McLean registered for the program and was quickly able to transform what was "a pile of dirt and about three blades of grass" outside his Highett Street home.

He was able to collect some free mulch from Council's recycling centre in Clifton Hill and 50 free tube stock of native plants from the Victorian Indigenous Nurseries Co-op in Fairfield.

Greg also got some advice and tips from team members and was able to create his new garden bed in the space of one afternoon on a weekend.

"It's such a huge improvement from before. My three-year-old daughter absolutely loved it, and was very keen to help plant and water," he said.

Greg said the best part about creating his street garden was the interactions and connections he formed with neighbours and onlookers.

"As people were walking along, they were really interested in what we are doing," he said. "And I've had more interaction with my neighbours than I've had in my entire time living here, just through this."

## Get involved

Find out more information and apply for our Street Garden Program at [yarracity.vic.gov.au/street-garden](http://yarracity.vic.gov.au/street-garden)



my  
smart  
garden

From practical workshops to expert advice and free resources, My Smart Garden helps Yarra residents reduce waste, boost biodiversity and garden for a changing climate.



Scan the QR code to explore upcoming events and sign up for updates at [mysmartgarden.org.au](http://mysmartgarden.org.au)

## 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](http://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.



YOUR SAY  
YARRA



# What's on

## Dancing from the Heart: Seniors Dance series

Sundays 26 April, 31 May, 30 August,  
27 September, 18 October • 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. Call **9250 5555** or email **info@yarracity.vic.gov.au** for more information.

## Reclink Community Cup

Sunday 14 June

Gates open 11am, match starts 2.20pm  
Victoria Park, Collingwood

The much-loved annual charity football match between the Megahertz (community radio staff) and the Rockdogs (musicians) is back for another year! Watch the star-studded teams battle it out for the Community Cup alongside great live music and other entertainment, raising funds and awareness for Reclink Australia.

For tickets, line-up updates and more information, visit **communitycup.com.au** and click on the Melbourne event link.

## Save the date!

Leaps and Bounds Music Festival is back 16 to 26 July! Enjoy live music across Yarra venues, celebrating artists, community and the sounds that bring our city alive this winter



Visit [yarracity.vic.gov.au/events](http://yarracity.vic.gov.au/events) for more information and discover other events happening near you.

## 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)
- Register for our monthly e-news at [yarracity.vic.gov.au/yarralife-e-newsletter](http://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
Español	9280 1935
中文	9280 1937
العربية	9280 1930
Ελληνικά	9280 1934
Tiếng Việt	9280 1939