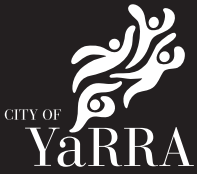


Business Handbook

2026



Message from Mayor

Dear Business Owner,

I am proud to be Mayor of a City that is home to some of Melbourne's most vibrant and well loved shopping and hospitality precincts. Our local businesses are central to the City of Yarra's eclectic character and unique identity.

From bustling retail and service precincts to passionate sole traders and innovative entrepreneurs, Yarra has 16,744 registered businesses, generates \$37.3 billion in economic output each year and supports around 98,000 local jobs.

Our 12 commercial precincts, each with their own distinct personality, are among Melbourne's most popular destinations. Whether people are looking to eat, shop, drink, explore, or enjoy world class live music, Yarra has something for everyone.

To help ensure our businesses continue to thrive, we encourage residents and visitors alike to shop local and support the businesses that make our City so special.

For the seventh year running, we have developed this comprehensive handbook, offering practical tips and key information to support you in running your business.

This handbook is just one way we are supporting you. We are also investing in events and activations, providing access to local economic and property data, reducing red tape to assist with business permits, connecting businesses with grant opportunities, and much more.

Wishing you all the best in your business.

Cr Stephen Jolly.
Mayor, City of Yarra



Front cover Brunswick Street
Back cover Queens Parade
Photographer Matt Krumins

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 and present.

Councillors

The Yarra community is represented by nine elected councillors. Individual councillors can consult with their constituents and advocate on their behalf, but they can only make decisions as a collective.

MACKILLOP WARD

Cr Stephen Jolly, Mayor

BOULEVARD WARD

**Cr Dr Sharon Harrison,
Deputy Mayor**

CURTAIN WARD

Cr Edward Crossland

HODDLE WARD

Cr Sophie Wade

LANGRIDGE WARD

Cr Evangeline Aston

LENNOX WARD

Cr Andrew Davies

MELBA WARD

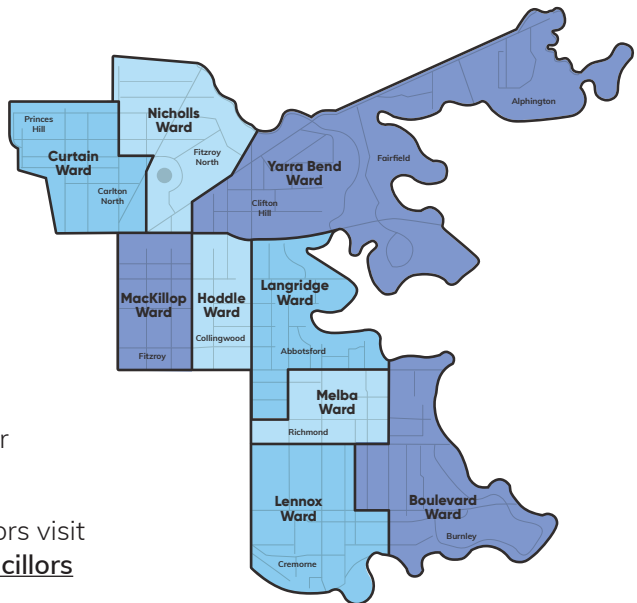
Cr Meca Ho

NICHOLLS WARD

Cr Kenneth Gomez

YARRA BEND WARD

Cr Sarah McKenzie



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

To speak to your councillors visit yarracity.vic.gov.au/councillors

National Relay Service TTY 133 677 then (03) 9205 5055

REF 20731

Languages 中文 9280 1937 Italiano 9280 1931 Tiếng Việt 9280 1939
العربية 9280 1930 Ελληνικά 9280 1934 Español 9280 1935 Other 9280 1940

Business Support

Yarra has a diverse and evolving economy, spanning professional and knowledge based services, health and education, retail and hospitality, manufacturing, and creative and cultural industries. These sectors are reflected across Yarra's network of activity centres and employment precincts, where businesses attract customers, collaborate and contribute to thriving, place based economies. [Click here to discover our precincts.](#)

Economic Development Team

The Economic Development team works with local businesses and partners to support business growth, strengthen precincts, attract investment, and build a resilient and diverse local economy. Contact Yarra's Economic Development team via business@yarracity.vic.gov.au or by calling **9205 5555**.

Business Concierge

Do you want to open a new business in Yarra, buy an existing business, or move your existing business to a new location? Our Economic Development team offers a business concierge service, giving you a contact person at the Council to help guide you through the permit registration process and support your business to thrive in Yarra. [Contact our business concierge.](#)

Yarra Business News

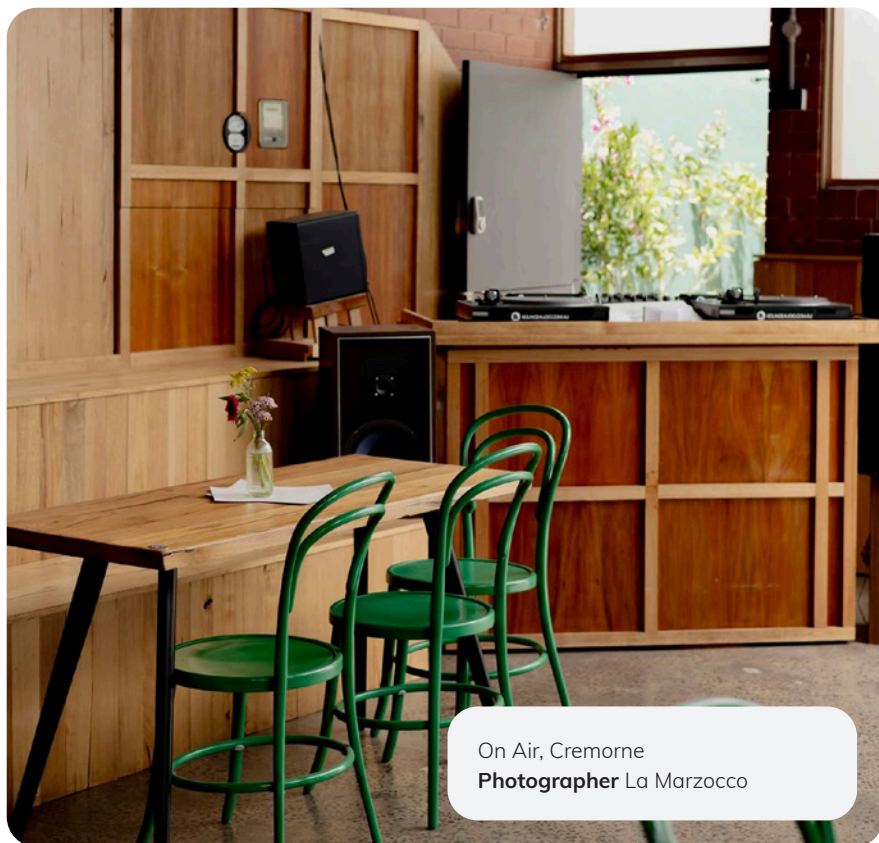
Over 15,000 businesses receive our regular business e-newsletter, containing the latest business news, important updates, grant opportunities, and upcoming events. [Subscribe here.](#)

Yarra City Jobs

Our free, online employment portal for businesses and job seekers in Yarra. List your job vacancies and create free job ad posters to print and display in your business. You can also view CVs and contact job seekers who are looking for work in Yarra. [Visit Yarra City Jobs.](#)

Commercial Property Lookup

Are you looking to lease a commercial property, but not quite sure if it's right for you and your business? Check the address with our free commercial property look up, and you'll receive a report with property details, council demographics, and permit details. No sign up required, and it's completely free. [Visit Commercial Property Lookup.](#)



On Air, Cremorne
Photographer La Marzocco

Liquor Forum

The Yarra Liquor Forum brings together licensed venues, Victoria Police, residents and Council to share information, discuss local issues and support responsible alcohol management. The forum offers a practical space for collaboration, regulatory updates and problem solving, helping venues operate responsibly while contributing to safe and vibrant neighbourhoods. [Learn more and join the forum.](#)

Business Associations and Trader Groups

Several business associations and trader groups run across Yarra. These groups are independently run with the support of Council to organise events and marketing campaigns that benefit local traders. [Contact our Economic Development team](#) if you are interested in finding a local group to join or in kick-starting a new trader group.

Organising an Event

Yarra supports our community and businesses to create and deliver a diverse range of festivals and events every year, including Victoria's Pride Street Party, Johnston Street Fiesta and Victoria Street Lunar Festival.

If your business has an idea for an event or you'd like to plan an event with your wider business community, please [contact Economic Development](#) for support. When planning an event, there are regulations, permits and approvals that need to be considered. [Learn more about how to plan an event in Yarra.](#)

Precinct and Economic Data

Each year, Yarra's Economic Development team visits around 3,000 ground floor businesses across the municipality's 12 retail precincts to monitor vacancies and trends.

This data is published in Precinct Pulse fact sheets, providing snapshots of occupancy, tenancy change and industry mix to inform place based economic development and future planning. [Access the Precinct Pulse fact sheets.](#)

Yarra City Council values the use of data to support informed decision making for both Council and the local business community. [Click here](#) to explore relevant evidence based insights about your precinct.

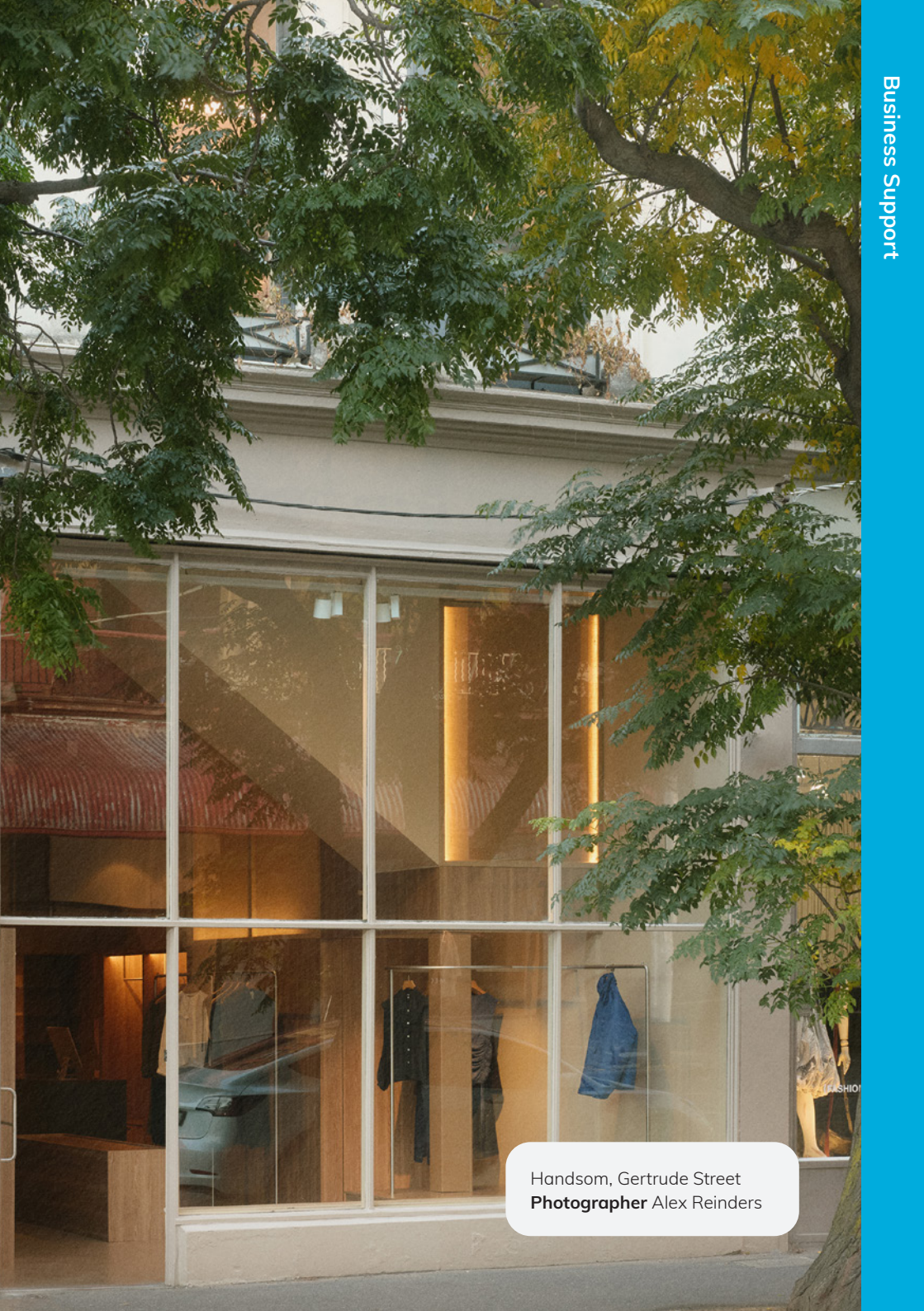
Business Grants

Yarra's Community Grants program supports projects that align with three key principles: promoting access and equity, delivering local benefit, and enabling participation. The program includes a Vibrant and Resilient Local Economies stream, which is open to groups of businesses working together. [Learn more about Community Grants.](#)

Grant Guru

The City of Yarra has partnered with Grant Guru to provide the 'City of Yarra Grant Finder' to all local businesses, community groups, not-for-profits and individuals. The site provides a comprehensive list of grant and funding opportunities available to Yarra's community.

Register to receive emailed alerts for new grants, save your favourites and access tips to help you apply for grants. [Visit Grant Guru.](#)



Handsom, Gertrude Street
Photographer Alex Reinders



Rathdowne Street
Photographer Matt Krumins

Victoria Street Revitalisation Project

Council is developing a Revitalisation Plan for the Victoria Street Precinct of North Richmond and Abbotsford in partnership with residents, local businesses, and the private sector.

The Plan will outline a series of short, medium, and long-term initiatives aimed at transforming the precinct, making it greener, more attractive, and safer for everyone. The Plan will also continue to celebrate the Vietnamese community's role in Victoria Street's cultural and economic identity. [Learn more about the Plan.](#)

Learning Bank

The Learning Bank is a community space on Victoria Street, Richmond, delivered by Yarra City Council in partnership with the Victorian State Government. It supports local residents and businesses to connect, learn and build skills through business training, digital literacy support, and community programs.

The space is home to the Retail Ready Program and the Thread Together clothing hub for eligible community members. The space is also available to hire. [Find out more about the Learning Bank.](#)



Bridge Road
Photographer Matt Krumins

Community Support

The following information is designed to help businesses support vulnerable community members and feel safe.

Urgent Support

When there is an immediate threat to health and safety such as illegal activity, a drug overdose, you are in danger or someone is a danger to themselves, call **000**.

Non-urgent Support

For non-emergency situations, call Police assistance on **131444**.

To report crime anonymously, call Crimestoppers on **1800 333 000**.

For 24 hours, 7 days a week information on alcohol and drug issues (including syringe programs), contact DirectLine on **1800 888 236**.

cohealth offers a Public Intoxication Response Service, call **000** and advise you are reporting a person intoxicated in public.

If your concern is about a young person using alcohol or drugs (under 25 years) call Youth Support Advocacy Service on **9415 8881** (Monday - Friday, 9am-5pm).

To locate support services nearby such as meals, clothes, showers, accommodation, or laundry services, [visit Ask Izzy](#).

St Vincent's Mental Health Emergency is available 24 hours 7 days a week on **1300 558 862**.

cohealth offers a needle and syringe outreach program, available Monday to Friday. Day outreach (9.30am-5.30pm) **9448 5530**, evening outreach (7.30-10.30pm) **0418 179 814**. Email: innerspace@cohealth.org.au

For removal of syringes or related litter from private property, businesses, streets or public spaces, call **9205 5555** or [find out more](#) including a map of syringe disposal locations.

Rough Sleeping

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

The Crisis Contact Centre (CCC) provides an after hours service for people experiencing homelessness. Phone: **1800 627 727** or **9536 7777**.

You can also call Launch Housing on **9288 9611** or email info@launchhousing.com.au

If the situation is not urgent or unsafe, you can report the issue to Yarra Council to follow up. Phone **9205 5555**, email roughsleeping@yarracity.vic.gov.au or [tell us about a rough sleeping site](#).

Yarra Zero

In 2023, the City of Yarra launched Yarra Zero, an initiative aimed at achieving Functional Zero homelessness for people sleeping rough in the municipality. Functional Zero – the point where more people are moving into stable housing than are entering homelessness.

We also advocate to the Victorian and Australian governments to increase funding, support and housing to those who need it most. [Find out more about Yarra Zero](#).

[Learn more about rough sleeping](#) including a guide for responding to rough sleeping and squatting in Yarra.

Community Support Guide

You can download a PDF poster of Your Local Support Community Guide for your home or business to help you respond to complex needs and specialist situations. Available in English, Arabic, Chinese and Vietnamese language versions. [Download your guide](#).



The Commons, Cremorne
Photographer Dianna Snape

Business Permit and Compliance Information

Permits, approvals and regulatory requirements are an important part of setting up and operating a business in Yarra. The information below outlines the key licences, permits and registrations that may apply. Council's business concierge is available to help you navigate the process and identify what applies to your business.

Australian Business Licence and Information Services (ABLIS)

ABLIS is a free online tool to help you find out what licences, permits, approvals, and regulations you may need for your business. This is a useful first step to undertake before contacting our [business concierge](#) for information on the permits you will require to operate in Yarra.

[Complete the quick survey.](#)

Planning Permits

A planning permit may be required if you're changing how a property is used, undertaking building or external works, installing signage, or operating in an area affected by planning controls such as heritage or flood overlays.

Permit requirements vary depending on the proposal, so businesses are encouraged to check early with Council to confirm whether approval is needed before works or operations begin. Our [business concierge](#) will advise when you need a planning permit. You can also call Statutory Planning Business Support on **9205 5373** for advice or visit the Richmond Town Hall counter during business hours to speak to a planner (no appointment needed). [Access more information on planning permits.](#)

Planning Pre-Application Service

If you are already aware of planning permit requirements you can also take advantage of the planning pre-application service we offer. This is an opportunity to understand the assessment process and get feedback on application requirements. [Learn more about the pre-application service.](#)

Building Permits

You will need a building permit for most commercial, industrial and residential works. This includes alterations and additions to current buildings and structural works. What you need will depend on your build. To check what permits and consents you need, contact a registered private building surveyor and [find out more here](#).

Health Permits

Food Businesses

Under the Food Act 1984, all premises where food is handled or sold must register with, or notify, their local council. This tells us the location of all food premises in Yarra, so we can monitor and help you comply with your obligations, handle and sell safe and suitable food, and prevent misleading conduct. [Register your food business](#).

Temporary and Mobile Food Businesses

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

In addition to FoodTrader, if you are planning to sell food from a temporary or mobile premises on Council land, you will need a [temporary public space permit](#).

Personal Care and Body Art Services and Tattooists

Under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008, all businesses that provide personal care and body art services must register their premises with their local council. This tells us the location of these premises so we can monitor and help you comply with your obligations to prevent the transmission of infectious diseases to customers. [Register your business](#).

Aquatic Facilities

If you provide an aquatic facility such as a swimming pool, plunge pool or spa, you will also need to register this with Council. [Apply to the business concierge](#) for information on required permits.

Tobacco Sales

The display, sale and use of tobacco products is regulated by the Tobacco Act 1987. The types of products you can sell is restricted. You must be registered with Tobacco Licensing Victoria to sell tobacco, and there are signage and other restrictions to tobacco displays. Selling and displaying e-cigarettes (vapes) products in retail settings is not permitted.

Smoking and vaping are not permitted in indoor areas or outdoor dining areas. Please contact our health department to discuss the requirements before selling tobacco or e-cigarette products. [Find out more](#) about complying with tobacco legislation.

Local Laws Permits

Footpath Trading

The Council is responsible for managing trading activities in public spaces in Yarra, and ensuring safe access for all footpath users. You need a footpath trading permit to place items on the footpath outside your business, including:

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

You can also apply to extend your footpath trading area and use your neighbour's footpath area, even if it is a vacant property (with their written permission). [Apply for a footpath trading permit.](#)

Parklets

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

Establishing a parklet requires significant financial investment. Before you apply, we recommend you thoroughly explore the costs involved to ensure a parklet is feasible for your business. [Read the guidelines and apply.](#)

Other Considerations

Work Area Permits

If you are undertaking minor works, such as painting the outside of your shop, and need to use the road or footpath for a ladder or scaffolding, you'll need a work area permit. For larger scale works you'll need a road occupation permit. Most road occupation applications require a pedestrian/traffic management plan prepared by a suitably qualified professional, along with a current public liability certificate.

If the works require a building permit, an asset protection permit may also be necessary. Other permits may apply too. [Learn more about road and footpath occupation permits.](#)

Heritage

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

[Enter your address in VicPlan](#) to find out what planning controls (zones and overlays) apply to your premises, including whether your property is in a heritage overlay. [Learn more about heritage in Yarra.](#)

Graffiti Removal

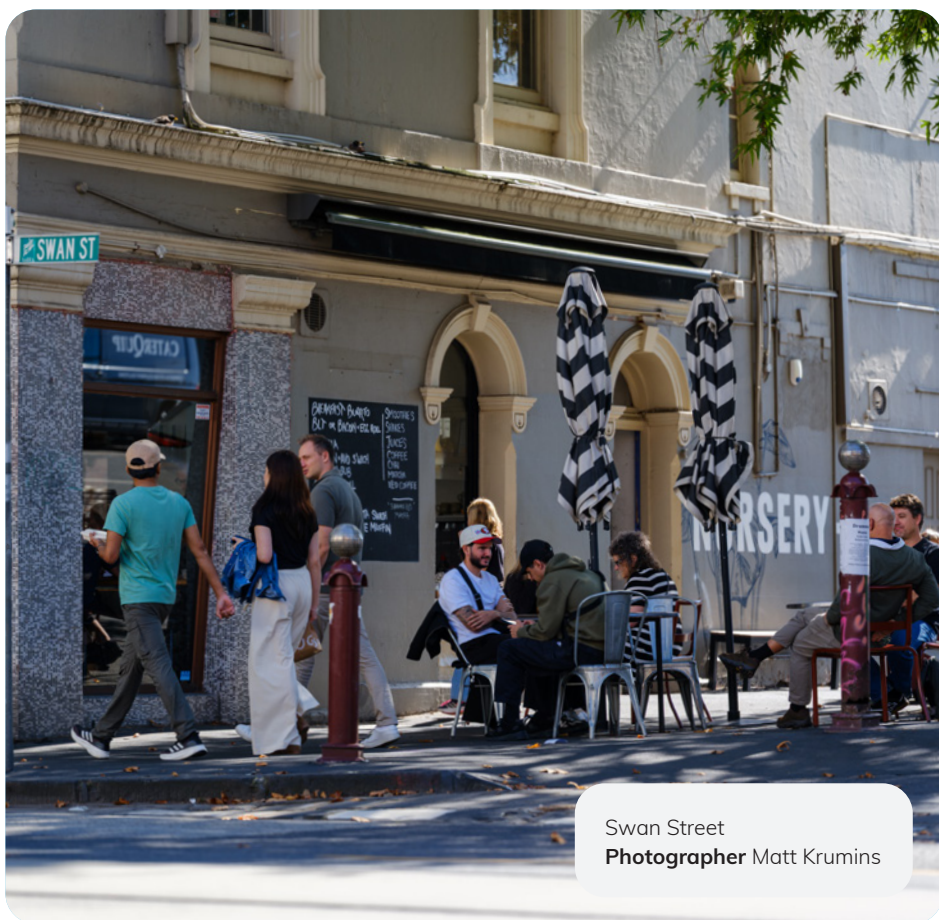
We prioritise the removal of offensive graffiti and graffiti on Council assets and highly visible areas, including ground level surfaces along footpaths. Property owners are responsible for removing graffiti above 2–3 metres, in laneways, or within their property boundaries. Council provides free graffiti removal kits and paint vouchers to support self removal, and businesses may seek written permission from vacant property owners to request assistance on their behalf.

Under the General Local Law, land must not be kept in an unsightly condition or one that detracts from neighbourhood amenity. [Find out more about graffiti removal.](#)

Waste Management

Businesses can use Council waste services, private waste collection services, or both. Council's service is for staff kitchen and bathroom waste only, while private services can manage customer waste and larger volumes with collections scheduled as needed.

Collection days vary by location. Bins must be placed out no earlier than 24 hours before collection and returned within 24 hours after, must not obstruct public space, have lids closed, and contain all waste (no items beside bins). Private collections should occur during business hours, and bins must not be left out when the business is closed. Locks are permitted on private bins but not on Council bins. [Learn more about business waste collection.](#)



Swan Street
Photographer Matt Krumins

Parking

Parking Permits

If there is no off-street parking at your business, you may be eligible to apply for a business parking permit. The number of permits your business is eligible for is determined by the length of the street frontage and whether off-street parking exists or has existed previously at the property. [Find out more and apply.](#)

Loading Zones

You can use a loading zone if your vehicle has a goods registration classification, or is a passenger vehicle, truck, or van with a permanently fixed sign on both sides of the vehicle. [Apply for a new loading zone bay near your business.](#)

Live Music Parking Permit

To support Yarra's live music scene, Council offers a live music parking permit that helps musicians safely load and unload equipment at registered venues. The permit provides transferable access to nearby loading bays, making setup and pack down easier for performers and venues alike. [Find out more and apply.](#)

Parking Meters

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

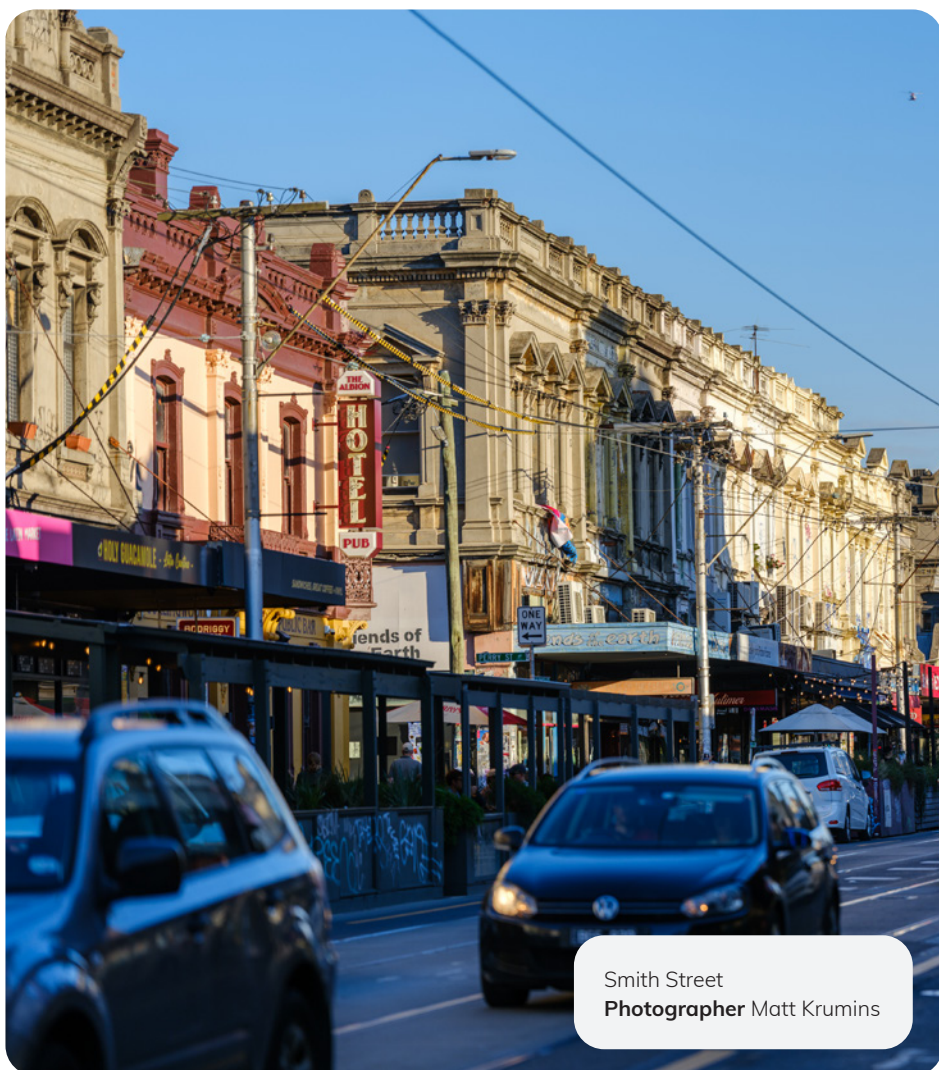
Bike Parking

Cycling is a popular way to get around Yarra. You can contact Council to request a bike hoop outside your business. Locations are assessed for safety and suitability before installation. Call Customer Service on **9205 5555** or email info@yarracity.vic.gov.au to make a request.

Electric Vehicle Charging

Yarra is supporting the transition to electric vehicles through facilitating the expansion of public charging infrastructure and helping businesses better understand EV charging opportunities.

Businesses and residents can explore available public EV charging locations across the municipality via [PlugShare](#), including several fast-charging sites facilitated by Council and powered by 100% renewable energy. [Learn more about EV charging.](#)



Smith Street
Photographer Matt Krumins



búl, Brunswick Street
Photo provided by búl

Sustainability

Through our Climate Emergency Plan 2024-2030, Council is committed to supporting sustainable business action, and Yarra is becoming the destination for zero-emission businesses and those focused on climate action and the circular economy. Here are some ways to green your business.

Sustainable Business Yarra Newsletter and Webpage

Do you have sustainability goals, or are you interested in reducing energy costs, waste and greenhouse gas emissions? The Sustainable Business Yarra e-newsletter shares the latest news, events and grants to help you green your business, while the webpage brings together all available sustainability resources. [Visit the webpage and subscribe.](#)

Energy Efficiency

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

On our webpage you will find an energy efficiency checklist for you to identify ways to reduce your energy use and increase the comfort of your premises. The checklist covers a variety of energy uses including heating and cooling, lighting and appliances. Refer to the checklist regularly to ensure you keep your energy use as low as possible.

[View the checklist and learn more.](#)

Electrification, Solar Power and Battery Storage Systems

Moving from gas to electric appliances, rooftop solar and batteries are great ways to reduce your energy bills whilst also reducing your carbon footprint and supporting the energy transition. [Visit Solar Victoria](#) to find authorised solar & battery installers in your area and information about electrification and rebates.

Electric Vehicles

2026 is a great year to consider switching to an electric vehicle.

A large range of electric vehicles (EVs) are now available in Australia, with price points for all budgets. There is now an EV option for almost all business functions including motorcycles, cars, utes, vans and trucks. [Visit the Electric Vehicle Council](#) for information and resources.

Switch to Renewable Energy to Power your Business

As well as on-site renewables, businesses are switching to renewable electricity contracts to further reduce their carbon footprint. Yarra businesses can participate in the [Business Renewables Buying Group](#), which was originally established by Yarra City Council, to assist medium to large energy users to procure renewable energy. [Click here to learn more](#) about how we are supporting renewable energy production and helping businesses switch to renewables.

Transitioning Yarra to a Circular Economy

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

- Design out waste and pollution from the beginning
- Circulate products and materials at their highest value for longer
- Regenerate nature

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

Circular Economy Map

We have developed an online directory to identify and support local circular businesses.

Yarra’s Circular Economy Map celebrates and promotes businesses, community initiatives and public spaces that demonstrate aspects of the circular economy through their products, services, or business practices.

[Explore the map and add your business.](#)



Brunswick Street
Photographer Matt Krumins

Electronic Waste

Electronic waste cannot be disposed of in landfill and must be taken to a designated collection point. It includes any item with a battery or plug, such as phones, laptops, appliances, vapes and toys. Improper disposal, particularly of batteries, can cause fires in collection and processing facilities so please take them to your closest e-waste drop off.

[View our A-Z Waste and Recycling Guide](#) or [visit Recycling Near You](#) for more information.



Church Street
Photographer Matt Krumins



St Georges Road
Photographer Matt Krumins

Accessible and Inclusive Business

Good Access is Good Business

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

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

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

Meeting your Legal Responsibilities

Australian law requires businesses to ensure customers with disabilities can access goods and services in the same way as other customers. If a person with a disability cannot access your premises or services, they may make a discrimination complaint under the Disability Discrimination Act. Improving accessibility can also support safer environments and help meet workplace safety obligations.

Many accessibility improvements can be made at little or no cost, such as adjusting shop layouts, providing large print menus (plain font, at least 14 point), securing doormats, keeping footpath furniture at least 1.5 metres from the building line, and offering inclusive customer service. If your business is accessible, let people know via your website and social media. [Learn more practical tips.](#)

Rainbow Yarra

Rainbow Yarra supports and celebrates Yarra as a welcoming, inclusive and safe place for LGBTIQ+ communities. The program advocates for equality and inclusion across the municipality and connects people with local LGBTIQ+ community groups, venues and friendly businesses through its Rainbow Directory. [Visit Rainbow Yarra.](#)

Additional Resources

Our website has some great resources which we encourage you to check out at yarracity.vic.gov.au/business. You may also wish to access the following services:

Partners in Wellbeing

Free, confidential, one-on-one support to improve your financial, business and emotional wellbeing. Call **1300 375 330** from 9am to 5pm Monday-Friday. partnersinwellbeing.org.au

Small Business Victoria

Support for Victorian businesses with free guidance, services and skills you need to successfully start, run, grow and transform your business. Services include the Small Business Bus which travels to locations around Victoria offering business mentoring. business.vic.gov.au

Victorian Small Business Commission (VSBC)

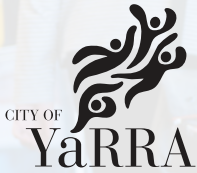
Free and low-cost dispute resolution and mediation with leasing agreements. VSBC empowers Victorian small business owners with the right tools to avoid or resolve disputes quickly, so you can focus on your business. vsbc.vic.gov.au

Fair Work Ombudsman

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

Australian Tax Office

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



Yarra City Council

PO Box 168, Richmond VIC 3121

9205 5555

info@yarracity.vic.gov.au

yarracity.vic.gov.au

Customer Service Centres

Richmond Town Hall

333 Bridge Road, Richmond

Collingwood Town Hall

140 Hoddle Street, Abbotsford