



Yarra Plenty Regional Library Strategic Plan 2008 – 2012

*Creating informed,
connected,
inclusive
communities*



Yarra Plenty Regional Library enjoys a reputation as an innovative, progressive and effective library service; providing library services to the municipalities of Banyule, Nillumbik and Whittlesea through 8 branches and 2 mobiles.

The role of the public library is evolving as people's information seeking behaviour changes and use of online media grows. The public library is increasingly being recognised as an essential community hub; a place where all are welcome and there is something for everyone. The public library builds community connections, facilitates learning opportunities and provides access to informational, educational and recreational resources.

To maintain its position as a leading Australian public library service and ensure that it remains relevant in a rapidly changing environment the library will pursue the following objectives over the next 4 years.

1. Libraries building community capacity

Building community capacity means libraries partnering with other agencies to deliver wider agendas (ie Council, State and Federal) and developing co-operative arrangements which will improve and expand services to the community.

Services need to be focussed and balanced according to social justice precepts and libraries can bridge the digital divide and offer equitable access to new technologies.

In order to have strong communities, there is a need to develop capacity. The library has a role in developing informed citizenry, of becoming a marketplace of ideas.

The library needs to identify opportunities to strengthen communities and recognise leverage in integrated activities.

In 4 years time:

- The library's role in improving reading and literacy is valued, measurable and recognised.
- Community outcomes are being achieved in libraries as part of the broader agenda of the three levels of government.
- Community learning opportunities are enhanced through libraries partnering with other learning organisations.
- Important issues of the day are highlighted, debated and discussed at the library.



Actions:

Deliver on actions identified in the Strategic Framework documents.

Develop the library collection to enable learning, encourage reading and improve literacy.

Focus on programs and services that enhance reading and pre reading skills.

Partner with member councils and community organisations to collaboratively deliver programs and services.

Develop programs to encourage debate and raise community awareness and knowledge - to create a marketplace of ideas.

2. Libraries as community hubs

The public library is increasingly being recognised as an essential community hub; a place where all are welcome and there is something for everyone. The public library builds community connections, facilitates learning opportunities and provides access to informational, educational and recreational resources.

With the increased focus on local places and local activity centres, the library service needs to have quality facilities and effective means of engagement with the capacity to pull together the energy that is in the community.



In 4 years time:

- The library is full of multi format content – informational and recreational – that is popular, current, relevant and in good condition.
- The library fosters community connections through cultural and learning events and programs.
- The library is visible and connected to the community and is marketed and promoted professionally and effectively.
- Quality spaces have different zones for activities, quiet spaces and reading. There are learning spaces, art work is incorporated in the building, IT is integrated and the presentation of libraries is impeccable.
- Libraries are the hubs of communities and are contemporary, sited in the right place, accessible and appropriate to their communities.

Actions:

Develop a forward plan with member councils for new libraries that respond to community needs and demands.

Develop a wide range of programs and events celebrating the diverse range of cultures in our communities.

Continually monitor and assess library buildings to ensure that they are well maintained, attractive and welcoming, and that spaces are fully optimised.

Continue to develop marketing and communication initiatives to ensure that people know what collections, programs, services and facilities are available at their library.



3. Libraries Online

Libraries are changing from being service providers to facilitating the creation of content. Relevant areas for public libraries are local history, local writing and local literature. Libraries are aware of the need to acquire and make accessible content “born digital” to ensure that they are providing the information that people require and to remain relevant in an increasingly online world.

New social networking technologies enhance the ability to find, share and combine information more easily.



In 4 years time:

- There is significant local content created in local history, literature and the arts.
- Social networking enables people to form new networks and interact online creating new communities of interest.
- The network is stable, redundant and secure. There are enough pcs, peripherals and equipment for people to access and create content.
- The Library Management System is at the leading edge and online content is easy to access and authoritative.

Actions:

Build content that documents life in Melbourne's north through participation in the Wikinorthia project.



Develop and promote online collections.

Engage with borrowers, promote programs and services, and encourage participation using social networking technologies.

Ensure the Network meets the needs of the library service.

Implement SirsiDynix's Enterprise Portal Solution, Rooms and the digital media archive module, Hyperion.

4. Skilled and confident library staff

In order to realise our exciting and positive vision for the future of our libraries we need to recruit, retain and develop a diverse, appropriately skilled workforce.

Library staff need to be familiar and comfortable with the new ways of engaging and helping users find information, gather knowledge and create content.

We need to invest in skills development to enable staff to deliver on our agenda, and staff need to the opportunity to acquire skills that will enable them to further their career in a sector that is constantly changing.

In 4 years time:

- There is a culture of learning and staff are skilled and confident in their roles.
- There is a safe and healthy workplace.
- There is an organisational culture of innovation and flexibility.
- Systems, processes and policies that facilitate effective management of all staff are in place.



Actions:

Ensure that staff development programs are relevant, interesting and encourage staff to learn new things.

Promote a safe and healthy workplace.



Promote an environment of innovative thinking, adaptability, flexibility and risk taking.

Implement systems, processes and policies that facilitate the effective management of all staff.

5. Seamless integrated technology

We value a culture of innovation and pride ourselves on providing resources, programs, services and up to date technology that are continually evolving to meet the needs of our community.

We strive for continuous improvement. We continually look for new ways of doing things and streamlining our processes. We value personalised services both in branches on online. We ensure that we are getting value for money.



In 4 years time:

- YPRL is considered a best practice public library.
- Technology is fully integrated and the network provides seamless, reliable and fast service.
- There is a culture of continuous improvement.
- RFID is fully utilised and is providing significant benefit.



Actions:

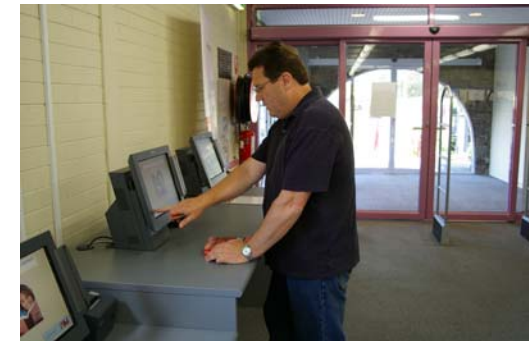
Redevelop the website and intranet.

Monitor and evaluate network performance to ensure it is providing the necessary bandwidth.

Ensure RFID is being exploited to provide maximum benefit including the introduction of automated returns.

Identify and prioritise key areas for review.

Identify process and system changes required to improve reliability and performance and implement.



6. Sustainable and responsible finance and governance

The Library Service is governed by a Board comprising 2 councillors from each of the 3 municipalities. The Audit Committee is a sub committee of the Board and advises it on financial and risk management issues.

Sustainability ratios measuring underlying result; liquidity; indebtedness; and investment gap are regularly monitored.

The library is proactive in ensuring that all legislative requirements are met and that all processes and procedures meet best practice through regular internal audits.

In 4 years time:

- The organisation is sustainable and appropriately funded, including realistic asset replacement.
- Strategic and operational plans are robust, meaningful and future oriented.
- Income from other sources is maximised.
- All relevant legislation and policies are complied with, to Best Practice standards.



Actions:

Ensure sustainable asset replacement including collections.

Meet budget targets.

Continually monitor spending to ensure best value is obtained from funding.

Monitor the Risk Management Plan so that it is a living document that accurately reflects the risks to the organisation and manage those risks.

Continue with the Internal Audit process, addressing areas of highest risk to the library service.

Use relevant benchmarking and best practice tools to improve performance.