YARRA PLENTY
REGIONAL LIBRARY

AGENDA PAPER

and
accompanying documents
for the

Ordinary Meeting of the Board
of the
Yarra Plenty Regional Library Service

Thursday 31 August 2023
at
6.00pm

Watsonia Library 4-6 Ibbottson Street,
Watsonia 3087

TO BOARD MEMBER
Yarra Plenty Regional Library Board Meeting will be held on:

DATE AND TIME:
Thursday 31 August 2023 at 6.00pm

LOCATION:
Watsonia Library
Community Room
4-6 Ibbottson Street
Watsonia 3087

APOLOGIES:
If you cannot attend the meeting, please email dlamb@yprl.vic.gov.au
by **Monday 28 August 2023**

Chief Executive Officer

Table of Contents

A. Welcome and Apologies

B. Acknowledgement to Traditional Custodians

"YPRL acknowledges the Wurundjeri people as the traditional custodians of the land and we pay our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past, present and emerging, who have resided in the area".

C. Disclosures of Interest, declaration of Pecuniary and Conflict of Interest

D. Confirmation of the Minutes of the Meeting 22 June 2023

E. Presentation of General Reports

SECTION E

Presentation of General Reports

Agenda Item 1:   Watsonia Library Branch Manager Presentation (NOTING)

Responsible Officer:	Chief Executive Officer
Author:	Lynne Siejka, Coordinator Programs and Engagement Watsonia Library

REPORT

SUMMARY

A verbal presentation to be delivered by Lynne Siejka, Coordinator Programs and Engagement, Watsonia Library.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board resolves to RECEIVE and NOTE the presentation.

M: _____

S: _____

Agenda Item 2:   Watsonia Town Centre Update (NOTING)

Responsible Officer:	Chief Executive Officer
Author:	Kath Brackett, Director Community Wellbeing Banyule City Council

REPORT

SUMMARY

A short presentation will be provided by Kath Brackett and Natasha Swan from Banyule City Council updating the Board members on the redevelopment of the Watsonia Town Centre.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board resolve to RECEIVE and NOTE the presentation from Banyule City Council.

M: _____

S: _____

Agenda Item 3:   CEO Report (NOTING)

Responsible Officer:	Chief Executive Officer
Author:	Jane Cowell, Chief Executive Officer
Attachment:	3a – External Meetings Attended by CEO June 2023 to August 2023
	3b – Dashboard Q4 2022-2023

REPORT

Board and Governance

**Community Survey:** YPRL undertook its biennial survey during the month of July. Almost 4,000 community members completed the survey, which was provided both in print and online and in multiple languages (English, Arabic, Greek, Hindi, Italian, Macedonian, and Punjabi). Questions covered areas such as About you; Your experience with our libraries; and Our services. Questions were also included to help YPRL assess the impact of our four library plan priorities of Knowledge & Learning; Connection; Wellbeing; and Organisational Strength. More information will be provided to the board after the analysis is completed.

**Uluru Statement from the Heart:**

Implementation of the Board's unanimous decision to endorse the Uluru Statement from the Heart commenced with the endorsement announced on our website and social media channels.

Actions taken to demonstrate our commitment include the installation of Uluru Statement from the Heart support banners in prominent locations in all Branches and the Mobile Library and updating our Acknowledgement of Country and email signatures to include "We support the Uluru Statement from the Heart".
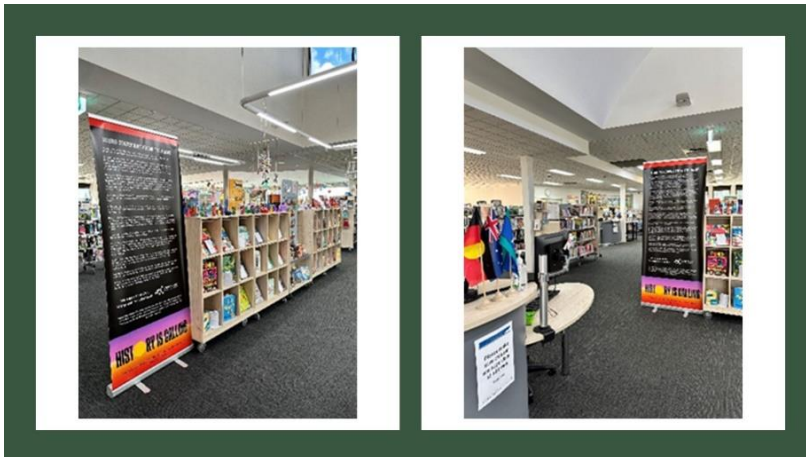
All YPRL staff have completed compulsory training on "A voice to Parliament" and support resources and scripts have been developed to support staff responding to questions from the public. Individualised support and communication have been provided to our First Nations staff. We continue to provide access to information about the Uluru Statement from the Heart and the Voice referendum. Our program of information sessions for the public continued including Shelley Ware and Aunty Janine Coomb talking about the Uluru Statement from the Heart at Eltham Library, two pop in sessions at Eltham Library for the public to chat with Nillumbik Council Officers about the Voice, and three community forums with the First People's Assembly discussing Treaty at Mill Park, Lalor and Ivanhoe Libraries.

Knowledge and Learning

Warm Winter Read: WWR focusses on promoting and encouraging healthy reading habits to adults and raising the profile of libraries within the community. PLV's state-wide reading campaign is a winter-long reading program which also sees 8 high profile Victorian authors raising awareness about the benefits of reading and promoting books they have enjoyed reading from other Victorian authors. YPRL has played a significant role in developing the campaign for PLV both in 2022 and 2023 with an emphasis on reader-to-reader engagement and the use of a community reading goal display in each of our branches to encourage community reading and borrowing. Staff have designed curated displays, staff recommendations and marketed the campaign during customer interactions. This focus has resulted in adult fiction loans for the period of June/July 2023 up by 6% compared to last year's campaign.

Family History Month: Soldiers and aliens, Vandemonians, writing family history, eResources, Indian, Sri Lankan, Chinese and British Family History and more captured the attention of family history researchers and others this August as part of our family history month programming. It also featured: a panel discussion on the changes to mothering, a tour of the Nillumbik cemetery and reminiscences sessions on family heirlooms. The wide program also invited crafters to learn how to crochet a remembrance poppy to dedicate to their Anzac ancestor. We partnered with expert speakers including Professor Janet McCalman AC and Dr June Factor (University of Melbourne) and the Nillumbik Cemetery Trust. Our community have a strong interest in Family History and have appreciated the range of programs we offer throughout August – even poor weather for a cemetery tour didn't keep them away.

SNAICC day and Deadly Collection launch: Friday, August 4, 2023, marked _SNAICC National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day._ Children and families gathered at YPRL to celebrate, listen to stories, sing songs and learn about First Nations culture at simultaneous Storytimes across all branches. This year's theme was _Little Voices, Loud Futures_. It was a day for community to celebrate First Nations culture and strength and a day for the library, to support First Nations children and families. Children's Day was a wonderful opportunity for YPRL to launch the new Deadly Collection at all branches. This project began in our children's collection and will continue to be implemented into all areas of the YPRL collection, the aim being to highlight material created by First Nations creators to ensure it is highly visible and easily accessible. This has involved consultation through co-design with various local First Nations people and groups. The new artwork that designates the Deadly Collection was designed by Wurundjeri Artist Alex Kerr (see story behind the design below). This collection reflects community feedback enabling the books and stories

of First Nations people to be easy to see, to touch, to connect with and to locate on our website and in all our library branches, hubs and outreach services. This was a special event for YPRL and the Ivanhoe Library and Cultural Hub, as we continue to build cultural connections and to form bonds with First Nations community to support knowledge and truth telling and to encourage new people to connect with us and to feel welcome and culturally safe within our spaces.

The Deadly Collection logo and collateral were designed by Wurundjeri Artist Alex Kerr, who has let us know that the blue, white and orange circles represent meeting places depicting those who visit the library with Bunjil (eagle) the creator watching over us all while we conduct business on country. The curved path shows the cultural journey that the library and the community are all currently on, and will continue on, in the sharing of cultural knowledge through the books to the community. Lastly, we have the two Kangaroo footprints in the colours of both the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander flags - which represent both peoples and their connection to the stories in the collection.

Scam Watchers: Scam Watchers is a monthly program that brings together the community to learn more about digital safety and to discuss participants first-hand experience with scams. The aim of this program is to address the fear and uncertainty around potential scams to make community feel more confident with the digital world. A secondary outcome has been connection through the shared experience of receiving scam calls or emails and a sense of not being alone as a target, instead framing this as a normal (albeit unpleasant) part of the digital world. Topics covered in these sessions include how to report scams and how to use the Scamwatch website as a resource for information.

Social Seniors Project 2023: Over the last two months, we have been working closely with aged care facilities and retirement villages to provide technical assistance to seniors – supported by the Telstra Social Seniors grant available through PLV received in 2022. The grant provided multiple sessions across four facilities, with each session providing 2 hours of one-on-one assistance with residents using their laptops, smartphones and iPads. We assisted residents with issues ranging from turning on a desktop computer, to how to use a smartphone to make a call, to doing a system update on a laptop and much more in between. The residents and lifestyle coordinators were very happy with the service with many requests for return visits.
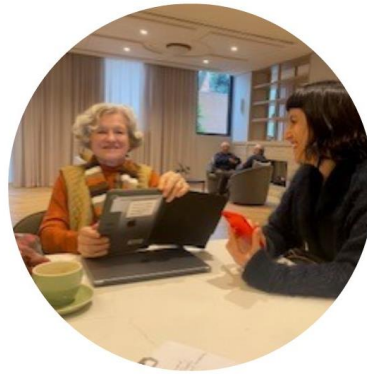
June July School Holiday Program: During the winter school holidays, 1477 participants attended 54 school holiday program events held in branches and community locations. Outreach experiences promoting YPRL to the broader community were held at Galada and Donnybrook Hubs, Edendale Farm, Banyule Nillumbik Tech School, Jindi Community Centre, and the Bellfield and Macleod Community Halls. The second week coincided with NAIDOC week, and 215 participants engaged in Indigenous arts, storytelling, dance and games experiences. Science and technology workshops including coding continue to be popular across the region.
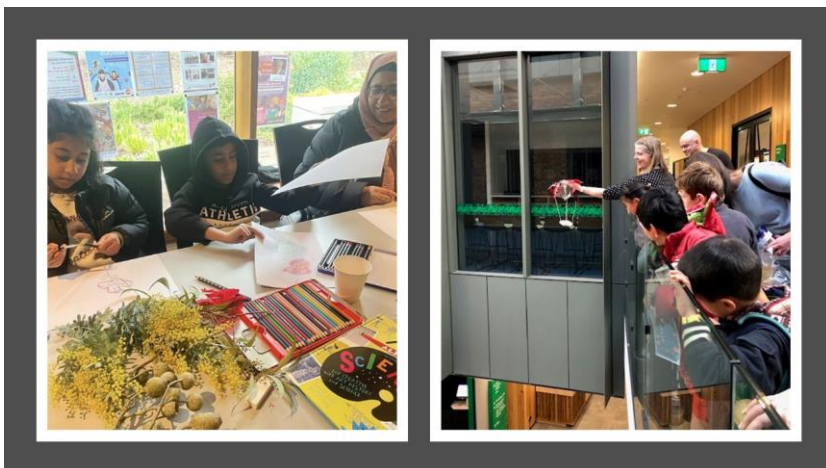
Connection

Refugee Week: In June, Thomastown Library partnered with Whittlesea Community Connection (WCC) and CoW for a Refugee Week event held at TRAC and the library. The settlement team at WCC invited newly arrived women to attend a free Zumba session followed by a library tour and lunch in the Maker Space. This space was chosen by WCC as several of the women has expressed that they missed doing craft from their home countries.

Approximately 40 women attended, with most never coming to the library before. Some had been to our Galada Hub but had no idea we ran so many different events, or had Maker Spaces, at our branches.

Chatty Café: Chatty Café is a national program that brings people together in public places like libraries, cafes, pubs, and community centres for a chat, decreasing isolation and connecting community. YPRL has been running Chatty Café sessions across multiple branches, and the program is currently working well at Mill Park and Watsonia as part of the Libraries After Dark program. Regulars return week after week, sometimes travelling some distance to join. One participant at Mill Park recently came along to Chatty Café on their birthday, saying that they could have done something different, but they wanted to have a chat and see everyone like usual – it's a highlight of their week.

Talking Together: YPRL was awarded a Libraries for Health and Wellbeing grant for $77,960 from State Library Victoria, Public Libraries Victoria, and VicHealth, to work to engage the Somali community in West Heidelberg and bring them in to the library, where they had previously reported feeling unwelcome. We engaged two Somali staff to work as Community Program Officers, and they led an amazing project which exceeded all expectations, leading to strong engagement across the Somali community. Over 2200 people attended Talking Together events, including Storytimes, school holiday events, a CALD careers expo, an art exhibition and launch, the Somali Cultural Festival, and more. Engagement with the Somali community continues, with the last stage of the grant program, a mentoring and tutoring program in partnership with Happy Brain Education, continuing through to the end of the year; a partnership with the Islamic Museum of

Australia, who are running some public programming in our libraries; and ongoing outreach visits to Himilo Community Connect Playgroup.

Eltham Refurbishment- June 2023: After extensive internal renovations over June/July 2023, the refurbished Eltham Library reopened to the public on July 3, 2023. The works included upgrades such as replacing the information desk, new furniture in our learning lounge, young adult and community area, improved study spaces as well as collection spotlights for our most borrowed topics by the Eltham community. These new improvements give our community even more opportunities to connect, learn, and thrive and participate.

As a patron commented, *"In seeing the inclusive spaces and communication within the library, I see this not just as a place where I feel safe, but where everyone can feel safe."* The Eltham community has enjoyed the new and improved spaces with all areas of the library seeing improved activation. If you come to Eltham, you will definitely feel the excited buzz in the air. The official opening will be held 28 September 2023, with the relaunch of our Alan Marshal artwork. The final furniture delivery will be arriving over the next few weeks as it is released from quarantine at the Melbourne docks.

Warm up with YPRL: Understanding that the rising cost of living and social isolation is impacting many YPRL has been focussing on staying warm and connecting with others during the winter evenings. YPRL hosted a series of events regionally over July and August where communities have been welcomed with a warm drink, a biscuit and a chat. Over 20 events were held including cooking classes, comedy nights, singing and dancing, and chatty cafes. Passive activities including craft for kids, crosswords, puzzles were also on offer. Our members joined us for 1700 cups of hot chocolate (including 26kg of marshmallows), 300 cups of coffee and tea and and 2800 biscuits.

Media Mentions:

Publication	Number of Mentions
ABC	1
ArtsHub	1
Herald Sun	1
Mirage News	3
North Central Review	1
Socialist Alliance	1
Star Weekly	3
Your Child - Whittlesea	2

Social Media		
Followers:	Engagement	Reach
73,555	12,436	91,487

Wellbeing

Comedy Night with James Liotta – Libraries After Dark: Ongoing feedback from the community, including from the Living Well in Lalor Expo, has identified that many people are looking for escapism and entertainment, and want to be able to come to the library for something fun and free. In response, local comedian James Liotta was booked in to perform

at Mill Park and Lalor libraries as part of the Winter Connection program. The Mill Park event was a huge success with over 220 people attending a show with lots of audience participation. *'Absolutely love, love the library and all the free events and programs etc. Thank you!!!'*

Jobs Fair: Over two weekday mornings in July the City of Whittlesea Business Engagement and Support Unit/ Economic Development Department partnered with Lalor and Thomastown Libraries to host a Jobs Fair, an initiative to connect residents with industry and services within the City of Whittlesea to better support their financial education, employment opportunities and offer invaluable resources and advice. Across the two libraries approximately 200 Community members met representatives from Industry jobs such as caravans, transport and logistics, construction, vehicle assembly as well as organisations from the careers and training advice sector including Melbourne Polytechnic skills and Job Centre and SYC. Support and financial counselling coupled with self-employment assistance also proved very popular amongst our community members with large groups of people visiting the resume review service. The Thomastown Library event proved to be an astounding opportunity for the providers to network with each other and make referrals while Lalor Library experienced an unexpected outcome: a community member was offered two jobs on the spot after having lengthy discussions with service providers.

South East Asian Women: In August, Thomastown Library hosted a Wellbeing Workshop for South East Asian Women. This event was facilitated by Veera Brave Girl, supported by City of Whittlesea and The Orange Door. The event focused on the following 3 topics.
- *Healthy Me* – healthy relationships, consent, gender identities, respect
- *Healthy Body* – contraception, period health
- *Healthy Mind* – information regarding IVO, divorce, breaking myths regarding deportation, legal entitlements, reporting avenues and migrant's rights (for temporary visa holders). Raise awareness of the support The Orange Door can provide.

Attendees commented that although the topics were very serious, they felt safe in the library environment and would like to continue to come to events like this at Thomastown Library.

Organisational Strength

Charles Sturt University course review: YPRL Executive Manager, Public Participation was invited by CSU to review and provide advice on their updated Library and Information degree and masters subject Marketing of Libraries & Information Agencies. This paid consulting work took place during July and recognises YPRL's staff expertise in the provision of Library and Information studies.

Shared Leadership Program: Public Libraries Victoria and State Library Victoria deliver the Shared Leadership Program, which focuses on increasing the leadership capabilities of public library leaders through theoretical, practical and experiential learning opportunities. The selection process for this program is highly competitive (there are only 15 places for Victorian public libraries offered every two years) and YPRL had two candidates selected in the latest cohort - Senior Managers Ian Wedlock and Kate Ferguson.

'It's been an amazing networking opportunity; I've grown in confidence as a leader and learned to trust my own voice and judgement' Kate Ferguson

'Our team created a report including case studies and recommendations to continue growing a diverse library sector workforce for the future! We had 277 library staff respond from across Victoria and created eight case studies. The program has left me feeling more passionate about the library sector and given me the confidence to take on the challenge of moving into higher roles in the industry.' Ian Wedlock

State Library Victoria / Public Libraries Victoria workgroups: SLV and PLV partner on projects that support the leadership, strategy, and capability building of public libraries in Victoria and are underpinned by the Library Act 1989. 3 YPRL staff nominated and were selected for each of these workgroups and for the next 3 years, these projects will focus on:
- Stage 2 of the *Libraries for Health and Wellbeing* project (Jane Cowell CEO – YPRL representative)
- *Future Ready library sector* (Robyn Ellard, Executive Manager, Public Participation – YPRL representative)
- *Cultural Competencies for library staff* (Coralie Kouvelas, Branch Manager – YPRL representative)

Grants:

- Applied for a Digital Sisters grant from Be Connected for digital literacy activities targeted at migrant and refugee women, to be run out of Lalor and Thomastown - $20,000 - not successful.
- Talking Together grant from SLV / PLV (information above) was acquitted in July 2023 - $77,960

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board resolves to RECEIVE and NOTE the CEO Report.

M: _____

S: _____

CEO External Meetings June 2023 to August 2023

Date	Meeting Participants	Meeting/Event/Topic
19 June In person	ABC Q&A program	Audience participation.
21 June Online	Sander van Kempen – IFLA	Discuss eLending Special Interest Group matters.
26 June Online	Cathie Warburton, ALIA CEO	Discussion regarding ALIA response to the IFLA decision to hold 2024 conference in Dubai.
26 June In person	Jo Wilson, Michael Finney and Ellen Kessler, Banyule City Council Ian Wedlock and Trinh Luu, YPRL	Catch up meeting regarding the Bellfield Community Hub.
27 June Online	International Federation Library Association (IFLA) Public Libraries Section members	IFLA Public Library Section Business Meeting June 2023. (After hours)
28 June Online	Margaret Allen, IFLA Public Libraries Chairperson	Finalise response from the IFLA Public Libraries Division to IFLA Board regarding the decision to hold the IFLA Conference 2024 in Dubai and associated human rights issues.
29 June Online	ALIA Board	ALIA out of session Board meeting regarding the ALIA response to IFLA relating to the proposed venue for the 2024 IFLA Conference.
30 June In person	Architect Mat Foley – Content Studio Trinh Luu, YPRL	Defects assessment walk through of Eltham Library following refurbishment.
3 July Online	International Federation Library Association (IFLA) Members	New Volunteers welcome meeting. Global audience, after hours.
3 July Online	International Federation Library Association (IFLA) Public Libraries Section members	Discuss IFLA WLIC24 Conference location and concerns regarding human rights issues and exclusion of LGBTQI+ committee (After hours)
5 July Online	YPRL CEO Employment Matters Sub Committee – Cr Alison Champion, Administrator Lydia Wilson, Cr Natalie Duffy. Margaret Devlin, Consultant, Centre for Organisation Development (CFOD)	CEO Annual Performance Review interview for 2022-2023.

Date	Meeting Participants	Meeting/Event/Topic
5 July Online	Architects K2LD, Luke Claringbold and Matthew Trawn Joe Kelly and Steven Kirkilis, Banyule City Council Consultant Elena Shchuchkina, UT Consulting Ian Wedlock & Trinh Luu, YPRL	Review AV and IT proposal for the new Rosanna Library
10 July Online	Agata Chmielewski – City of Whittlesea Anthony Traill – City of Whittlesea	Regular partner meeting.
10 July Online	ALIA Board Members President duties	Scheduled ALIA Board Meeting.
11 July Online	Kath Brackett – Banyule City Council	Regular partner meeting.
12 July Online	Anthony Traill, Rebecca Simpson & Andrew George – City of Whittlesea Robyn Ellard & Kate Ferguson – YPRL	City of Whittlesea Library Review discussion.
12 July Online	Margaret Devlin, Consultant Centre for Organisation Development	Debrief following the YPRL CEO Employment Matters Sub Committee Annual Performance Review report.
18 August – 25 August In Person	International Federation of Libraries Association (IFLA) Annual Conference. Rotterdam, Netherlands	Attendee for the Annual IFLA conference.
20 August In Person 11am – 1.30pm	Chaired IFLA Public Libraries Section Committee meeting	Agenda included a country public library update from the 12 countries represented on the committee
20 August 1.30pm - 3pm	Invited to attend IFLA Metropolitan Public Libraries Section Committee meeting.	Topic discussed: Revision of the International Public Library Guidelines and a joint working party to develop the new guidelines.
18 August LocHal Tilburg Satellite	Libraries as Actors for Climate Empowerment Joint program with Public Libraries and Environment and Sustainability Sections	Part of the working party to deliver this 1 day satellite program Presenters from Europe, Canada, US and Asia on library sustainability and climate change programs.

Date	Meeting Participants	Meeting/Event/Topic
		Panellist to discuss how libraries can increase their role in supporting the SDGs and support communities to prepare for climate change.
22 August In person	Senior Manager Publisher Taylor and Francis and Chairpersons from Metropolitan Libraries, Library Buildings Sections to discuss new sponsorship for the Public Library of the Year award for 2024-2026	

MEMBERSHIP [1]

Total Members:
Banyule: 39,415
Nillumbik: 29,161
Whittlesea: 55,409
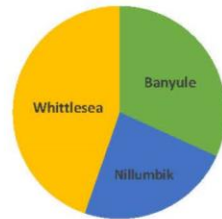
Active Members (Q4): 41,408

New Members: 5,459

OUR BUSINESS

2022/2023 Q4: 1 Apr–30 Jun

New Members Totals

	Apr-Jun 2022	Apr-Jun 2023
Banyule	1,631	1,758
Nillumbik	1,308	1,302
Whittlesea	2,039	2,384

Branch Visits: 322,692 (19.25% increase) [2]

Visits

Banyule   Nillumbik   Whittlesea

USAGE

App Hits: 99,576

Catalogue Hits: 116,403

Website Hits: 205,895

Wi-Fi Total Sessions: **34,808**
Banyule: 16,487
Nillumbik: 6,504
Whittlesea: 11,817

Tablet
Mobile
Desktop

EVENTS

In person events: 1,131

Event attendees: 25,836

YARRA PLENTY REGIONAL LIBRARY
1 April – 30 June 2023

99,576 app uses

1,131 in person events with 25,836 attendees

40,839 eBooks downloaded
49,052 eAudios downloaded
205,895 website visits
18,543 eMags downloaded

5,459 NEW MEMBERS

38 blogs posted

eNewsletter
58,414 Users subscribed
104,403 Emails opened
11,589 Links clicked

STAFF ³

Staff Total: 162
Full Time: 40
Part Time: 107
Casual: 15

EFT Budget: 100.03   EFT Actual: 99.92

Staff EFT is within budget.

Turnover: 1.76%   (previously 4.76%)   *15.2% total YPRL turnover for 2022/23 compared to 15.9% average as per Meerkin and Apel recent survey.

Absenteeism: 6.79%

Absenteeism
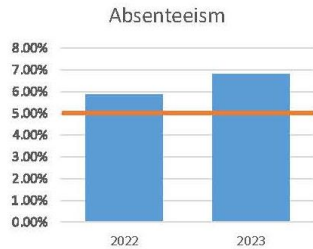
KPI: Under 5%
*KPI adjusted following consultation with other similar organisations

Volunteer Total: 115

TRAINING

	2022	2023
Training Hours Delivered	755.00	749.25
Average Training Hours per Employee	4.66	4.63

Full Time   Part Time   Casual

OUR PEOPLE & FINANCE

2022/2023 Q4: 1 Apr–30 Jun

PROJECTS

	On Time, On Target
	Delayed
	Under Evaluation

Mernda Community Library	🟢
Public PC Replacement	🟢
Lalor and Thomastown Library Refurbishment	🟢
Records Management/Intranet/Microsoft 365 Migration	🟢
Outreach Vehicle Replacement	🟠

FINANCES

Budget: How are we tracking?

EOFY 2023 - Financial Report
30 June 2023

Operating Result Year End 2022/23
Unfavourable to budget $537K

YTD Capital Expenditure
Over budget $560k

Cash Balance
$ 6.4 million
In line with operating result and capital expenditure

Working Capital Ratio
2.17
Minimum level 1:1

Accounts Receivable increased $33k

Accounts Payable increased $22k
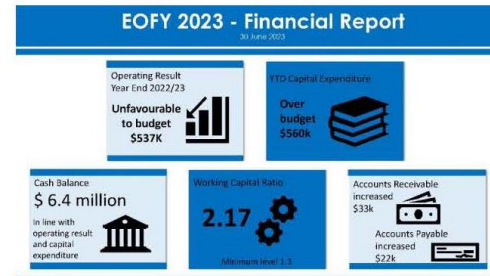
COLLECTION

Total Physical and Digital Collection: 403,243

Total Digital Items: 60,743 [4]

Total Physical Items: 342,500

Total Digital Items

■ eBooks ■ eAudiobooks ■ eMagazines

OUR ASSETS

2022/2023 Q4: 1 Apr–30 Jun

LOANS

Total Physical Items

2022: Banyule 118,486; Nillumbik 76,071; Whittlesea 144,973
2023: Banyule 111,197; Nillumbik 80,186; Whittlesea 151,117

■ Banyule ■ Nillumbik ■ Whittlesea

Total Physical Loans

	Apr-Jun 2022	Apr-Jun 2023
● Banyule	208,220	202,312
● Nillumbik	174,788	158,124
● Whittlesea	190,025	196,840
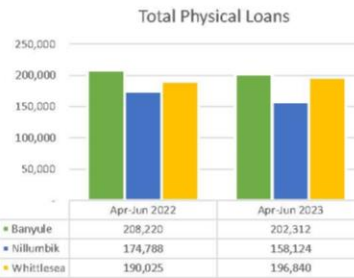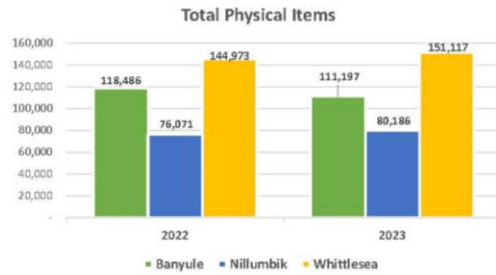
Total Physical Loans: [5]
557,276   (2.7% decrease)

Total Digital Loans:
108,434   (12.77% increase)

New Collection Items (Physical and Digital): 45,121

New Physical Collection Items: 39,005

New Physical Items

Banyule: 2022 13,976; 2023 12,466
Nillumbik: 2022 10,731; 2023 11,154
Whittlesea: 2022 16,568; 2023 15,385

■ 2022 ■ 2023

Total Digital Item Loans Apr - Jun 2023

	2022 eBooks	2022 eAudio	2022 eMags	2023 eBooks	2023 eAudio	2023 eMags
Series1	37,564	40,669	17,922	40,839	49,052	18,543
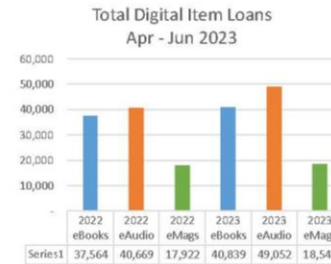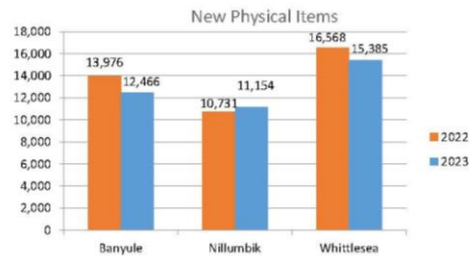
FOOTNOTES

1. Growth in memberships continue as we include a strong focus on new members within all our programming.
2. Library visitation continues to increase despite the closure of Eltham for refurbishment and reduced service at Rosanna.
3. COVID19 and seasonal Flu continues to impact absenteeism numbers across the organisation.
4. eMagazines added to the Dashboard for the first time. Demand and usage for this format is growing significantly.
5. The reduction in physical loan figures is attributed to the closure of Eltham and reduced service offer at Rosanna.

Agenda Item 4:   End of Financial Year 2022/2023 Financial Report (NOTING)

Responsible Officer:	Chief Executive Officer
Author:	Luciano Lauronce, Finance and Administration Manager
Attachment:	4a – Draft 2022/2023 Financial Report
	4b – RSD Audit Financial Management Letter
	4c – RSD Closing Report

REPORT

SUMMARY

This report includes the Financial Summary and the draft Financial Report for financial year 2022/2023. The draft 2022/2023 Financial Report is for Board's consideration and resolution to adopt 'in principle', subject to RSD Audit review, YPRL Audit Committee approval, and VAGO's response, for submission to the Minister of Local Government.

INTRODUCTION

The 2022/2023 Financial Summary report presents the major events during the financial year, the performance against budget, and YPRL financial position against the financial sustainability indicators.

The draft 2022/2023 Financial Report is for general-purpose financial report and consists of a Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Changes in Equity, Statement of Cash Flows, Statement of Capital Works and Notes to these financial statements. The draft 2022/2023 Financial Report is accompanied with RSD Audit Financial Management Letter and Closing Report.

REPORT

2022/2023 Financial Summary

The financial year 2022/2023 has been distinctive by high inflation levels, tighter monetary policy resulting on higher interest rates, and a solid labour market. YPRL, under this economic environment, was able to maximise the return from investment, secure grant funding, control its employee costs based on the long-term Enterprise Agreement, and materialise process efficiencies.

The major events in the financial year were:

- Secured grant funding for infrastructure projects and specific one-off programs.
- Increased investment return.
- Restructured Public Participation department and reviewed other roles across the organisation.
- Significant progress towards implementing Microsoft 365 environment.
- Written-off of obsolete technology.

- Refurbished Eltham Library and YPRL head office at South Morang.
- Acquired a new outreach vehicle.

Operating Result

As of 30 June 2023, YPRL has achieved an unfavourable operating result to budget by $537k. The variance to the previous Quarterly Financial Report forecast is mainly explained by the write-off of obsolete technology for $188k (net book value).

Operating Result
For the year ended 30 June 2023

	Budget 2022/2023 $	Actual 2022/2023 $	Variance $	Notes
Income				
Contributions - monetary	13,758,187	13,758,187	-	
Grants - Operating	2,883,139	2,961,243	78,104	(1)
Grants - Capital	-	87,629	87,629	(2)
User fees and charges	241,509	230,026	(11,483)	
Interest income	3,200	271,489	268,289	(3)
Other income	153,237	240,130	86,893	(4)
Total income / revenue	**17,039,272**	**17,548,704**	**509,432**	
Expenses				
Employee costs	10,903,613	11,488,893	(585,280)	(5)
Materials and services	3,968,741	4,264,534	(295,793)	(6)
Depreciation	1,681,910	1,680,730	1,180	
Amortisation – right of use assets	104,236	104,181	55	
Utilities charges	369,128	347,831	21,297	
Finance costs - leases	11,644	10,908	736	
Net loss on disposal/write-off of assets	-	188,813	(188,813)	(7)
Total expenses	**17,039,272**	**18,085,890**	**(1,046,618)**	
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	**-**	**(537,186)**	**(537,186)**	

Notes

(1) Awarded grants for specific 'one off' programs including Digital Literacy for Seniors, Healthy Body and Healthy Minds, and Indigenous Art.
(2) Awarded Living Library Infrastructure Grant to acquire a new outreach vehicle.
(3) Additional interest income as per cash rate increments favouring term deposit investments and the maximisation of the amount invested.
(4) Favourable variance due to workcover reimbursement income that offsets employee costs.
(5) Unfavourable variance because of changes in YPRL's organisational structure to provide a better service to the community.
(6) Additional expenses to complete the implementation of Office 365 SharePoint environment, including Microsoft Teams, new intranet, document management, and security. The unfavourable variance also includes the expenditures related to YPRL's head office and Eltham branch refurbishments that did not meet the capitalisation criteria.
(7) Wide area network (WAN) equipment (radio and antennas) was written-off as a result of accessible internet connection at all branches. The WAN equipment was acquired in 2006 and the technology is now obsolete with no market value.

Capital Expenditure

As of 30 June 2023, overall capital expenditure totals $1.74m and compared unfavourably to budget by $560k.

Capital Expenditure
For the year ended 30 June 2023

	Budget 2022/2023 $	Actual 2022/2023 $	Variance $	Notes
Bookstock	1,646,233	1,540,612	105,621	(1)
Plant and equipment	89,917	755,128	(665,211)	(2)
Total capital works expenditure	**1,736,150**	**2,295,740**	**(559,590)**	

Notes:

(1) Favourable variance due to unavailability of physical book collection that meets YPRL selection criteria.
(2) Unfavourable variance mainly explained by YPRL Board decision to refurbish YPRL's head office and Eltham branch. YPRL solid financial position allowed to fund these projects from accumulated surplus.

Investment Performance

The focus of YPRL for the financial year 2022/2023 was to maximise the allocation of funds in "at call" and "term" deposits and achieve the best investment result in the current macroeconomic conditions.

The Reserve Bank of Australia, in response to inflation pressures, set the official cash rate at 4.10% in June 2023 after 10 increases since July 2022. Under this macroeconomic environment of higher interest rates, YPRL was able to generate a strong investment result from the asset allocation in "at call" and "term" deposits.

The investment performance for the financial year 2022/2023 was:

- Interest income (accrual basis): $271k
- Average investment return: 3.79% pa (per annum)
- Average 3-month Bank Bill Swap Rate (BBSW) midpoint average: 3.20%
- Average RBA's cash rate: 2.96% pa
- Weighted average investment duration: 117 days
- Counterparty: Commonwealth Bank Australia

As of 30 June 2023, the investment asset allocation comprises:

At call deposits
- Allocation: $176k
- Interest rate: 4.10% pa

Term deposits
- Allocation: $6m
- Average interest rate: 4.30% pa
- 3-month Bank Bill Swap Rate (BBSW) midpoint average: 4.35%
- RBA's cash rate: 4.10% pa
- Average maturity: 30 days
- Counterparty: Commonwealth Bank Australia

Financial Sustainability ratios

YPRL defined financial indicator levels to assess its financial position at the end of each financial year, at the time of budget discussion, or when decision involves accumulated surplus or reserve funds.

Indicator	Measure	Target	Actual 2022/2023
Underlying result	Measures the ability to generate surplus in the ordinary course of business, excluding non-recurrent capital grants, non-monetary asset contributions and other contributions, to fund capital expenditure from its net result. **Calculation** Adjusted underlying surplus (or deficit) / adjusted underlying revenue.	0%	(3.58%)
Working capital	Measures the ability to pay existing liabilities in the next 12 months. A ratio of one or more means that an entity has more cash and liquid assets than short-term liabilities. **Calculation** Current assets/current liabilities	1.3	2.17
Investment gap	This compares the rate of spending on renewing, restoring, and replacing existing assets with depreciation. Ratios higher than 1.0 indicate that spending on existing assets is faster than the depreciation rate. **Calculation** Renewal and upgrade expenditure/ depreciation	Over 0.90	1.37

Although the underlying result compares unfavourably to the target, YPRL continues to remain financially sound and maintain a strong liquidity position with a working capital ratio of 2.17.

Draft 2022/2023 Financial Report

The draft 2022/2023 Financial Report is for general-purpose financial report and consists of a Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Changes in Equity, Statement of Cash Flows, Statement of Capital Works and Notes accompanying these financial statements. The general-purpose financial report complies with Australian Accounting Standards (AAS), other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board, the Local Government Act 1989 (as per the transitional provisions of the Local Government Act 2020) and the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014.

The draft 2022/2023 Financial Report is accompanied with RSD Audit Financial Management Letter and Closing Report.

CONSULTATION

Consultation was held with the Executive Leadership team and the Finance team during the preparation of this report.

CRITICAL DATES

General Purpose Financial Statements must be signed by YPRL Board signatories, approved by VAGO and provided to the Minister for Local Government by 30th September 2023.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

All financial implications are included in the body of the report.

POLICY STRATEGY AND LEGISLATION

Section 138 of the Local Government Act (1989) as amended states that a quarterly finance report is to be presented.

LINKS TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategy:

- **Organisational strength:** Investment in our staff, capacity, and governance to ensure we are capable and ready to adapt, learn and empower our communities in environmentally and socially responsible ways

Priorities:

- Governance and technology.
- A resilient and thriving organisation

DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Under section 80C of the Local Government Act 1989 officers providing advice to the Library must disclose any interests, including type of interest.

The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with the relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

CONCLUSION

The financial year 2022/2023 has been distinctive by high inflation levels, tighter monetary policy resulting on higher interest rates, and a solid labour market. As of 30 June 2023, both operating result and overall capital expenditure compared unfavourably to budget by $537k and $560k, respectively. Notwithstanding, YPRL continues to remain financially sound and maintain a strong liquidity position with a working capital ratio of 2.17.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board resolves to:

1. **RECEIVE and NOTE the End of Financial Year 2022/2023 Financial Summary**

    M: _____

    S: _____

2. **RECEIVE and NOTE the RSD Audit Management Letter and Closing Report**

    M: _____

    S: _____

3. **ADOPT the DRAFT 2022/2023 Financial Report 'in principle', pending RSD Audit Review, YPRL Audit Committee approval, and VAGO's response, for submission to the Minister for Local Government**

    M: _____

    S: _____

4. **ENDORSE two (2) members of the YPRL Board as signatories on the Final 2022/2023 Financial Report for submission to the Minister for Local Government**

    M: _____

    S: _____

[This document will be provided separately once it has been received from the External Auditors]

[This document will be provided separately once it has been received from the External Auditors]

[This document will be provided separately once it has been received from the External Auditors]

Agenda Item 5:   Adoption of Annual Report 2022-2023 (DECISION)

Responsible Officer:	Chief Executive Officer
Author:	Robyn Ellard, Executive Manager Public Participation
Attachment:	5 – Draft Annual Report 2022-2023

REPORT

Yarra Plenty Regional Library (YPRL) produces an Annual Report detailing the organisation's activities throughout the preceding year.

The Annual Report monitors progress against YPRL's Library Plan 2021 - 2025.

INTRODUCTION

This report is for the Board's approval.

REPORT

The 2022-2023 Annual Report shows YPRL's continued commitment to engaging with our communities. With a focus on creating safe spaces through our Pride Month events, the work on the Accessibility Action Plan, and the formal adoption of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, YPRL has become a safer, more welcoming and inviting space for our communities this year.

We delivered the Talking Together program with the local Somali Australian community in West Heidelberg and embedded First Nations knowledge and culture into our School Holiday Programs. While we engaged our local seniors in a virtual trip back to their hometowns. The community has responded to this programming, with over 118,000 people attending more than 4,600 events this year.

We refurbished Eltham Library and increased the collection at the Galada Click & Collect Hub, and we closed Rosanna Library and moved into the wonderful Pop-up Library while the new building is developed. Meanwhile our library service also saw a range of digital modernisation initiatives to ensure that the technology and workspaces remain fit for purpose into the future.

CONSULTATION

Consultation undertaken with Senior Leadership Team.

CRITICAL DATES

- Draft approved by Board 31 August 2023
- Design and publish by 23 September 2023
- Send to Minister by 30 September 2023.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil

POLICY STRATEGY AND LEGISLATION

This report is developed in accordance with the Local Government Act 1989 (as amended) Section 131.

LINKS TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategy:

- **Organisational strength:** Investment in our staff, capacity, and governance to ensure we are capable and ready to adapt, learn and empower our communities in environmentally and socially responsible ways.

Priorities:

- People and capacity
- Governance and technology
- A resilient and thriving organisation

DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Under section 80C of the Local Government Act 1989 officers providing advice to the Library must disclose any interests, including type of interest.

The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with the relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

CONCLUSION

The 2022-2023 YPRL Annual Report demonstrates the achievements of the library service over the year. The directions set by the Board in the Library Plan 2021-2025 are continuing to drive a codesign approach, a solid foundation that YPRL will continue to build on. Adaptability, partnership, and innovation are all showcased within the report clearly demonstrating *#ThisLibraryHas*.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board resolves to APPROVE and ADOPT the Draft Annual Report 2022 – 2023

M: _____

S: _____

Acknowledgement of Country

Yarra Plenty Regional Library acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation, the traditional owners of this Country, paying respect to Elders past, present, and emerging, who have been an integral part of the region's history. We acknowledge the leadership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the right to self-determination in the spirit of mutual understanding and respect. We support the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

Recognition of Diversity and Inclusion

Yarra Plenty Regional Library is committed to equality, inclusivity, and respect. We welcome and respect everyone in our communities irrespective of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, ability, or generation.

Our Vision

Informed creative communities: connected, empowered, and well.

Our Purpose

To provide opportunities for our diverse communities to read, learn, create, connect, and live well. Supported by equitable access to collections, technology, programs, and welcoming and safe spaces.

Our Role

To facilitate: working with our diverse communities to support and realise opportunities.
To connect: creating places where everyone is welcome, a safe place for all.
To listen: ensuring our communities are part of everything we do.
To build capability: empowering our diverse and vibrant communities to participate.
To share and create stories: ensuring our local stories are created, shared, and heard.

Our Values

Respect for all: promoting connection and fairness.
Integrity: honest and trustworthy.
Service: community focussed, accessible, valued by our customers and team members.
Empower: supportive, innovative, and inclusive of diversity of thought.

Bag 65 Bundoora VIC 3083
(03) 9408 7888
ypmail@yprl.vic.gov.au

*INSERT [YPRL_Logo_Footer_A4_black] *

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About us
Our plan on a page
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YPRL Board Members
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Wellbeing
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       Connect to local experts
Connection
       Participation and belonging
       Outreach

About us

Yarra Plenty Regional Library (YPRL) is a service that welcomes everyone. Our branches are safe spaces where communities can come together to meet, learn, create, and work. Every day, thousands of residents of the City of Banyule, the City of Whittlesea, and the Nillumbik Shire read a book, find the information they need, connect with friends and family, learn or discover, work or study, meet new people or simply relax – all at their local library.

Our libraries are open to everyone: from the very young attending their first Storytime session to the young-at-heart coming together to tell stories over a cup of tea. We see researchers and students sitting across the table from job seekers and entrepreneurs. We provide services to people from any culture or age group and at every stage in life. We are there for our community, making a difference to people's lives. We are proud of our service and of our exceptional staff who make it possible to support the communities of Banyule, Whittlesea, and Nillumbik.

Read on for the story of how we grew and innovated throughout the year, supporting our community through rising cost of living and a world of digital transformation. Whether helping users skill up to get their next job, or their first job, we are unwavering in our commitment to help our communities learn, grow and discover something new every day.

*INSERT image [YPRL illustrated Map] *

Our Library Plan
INSERT [Plan on a Page] from Library Plan

Message from the Chair – Alison Champion
*INSERT image [Cr Champion] *

As the Chair of the Library Board, I am pleased to present the 2022–23 Yarra Plenty Regional Library (YPRL) Annual Report. I welcome Cr Natalie Duffy back to the Board as well as welcoming Cr Rick Garotti and Ms Agata Chmielewski. I thank the departing Board Members Ms Kate McCaughey, Cr Elizabeth Nealy, and Cr Frances Eyre for their wonderful contributions to the library.

The outcomes achieved by the service throughout this year are a testament to the work YPRL staff have done to reactivate library usage across Banyule, Nillumbik and Whittlesea. Libraries are vital community spaces and their existence aids in our recovery from the pandemic. In March, YPRL

visitation surpassed pre-pandemic levels for the first time since the mandated shutdowns. This shows how highly the community values our public libraries as places where they can play, learn and grow.

Throughout the year, YPRL has continued to champion inclusion, diversity and tolerance, adding collection items and creating programming for everyone in our communities. From Pride Month events, to the work on the Accessibility Action Plan, or the formal adoption of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, all of these actions make YPRL a safer, more welcoming space for our communities. And it is clear that our communities love their local libraries and the opportunities they provide.

It's great to see the ongoing investment in library spaces continuing to improve services. The wonderfully refurbished Eltham Library has now been completed, and the Galada Click & Collect Hub also had a glow-up with new signage and shelving increasing the number of items available and showcasing the full services available through the library. Meanwhile, the library service saw a range of digital modernisation initiatives to ensure that technology and workspaces remain fit for purpose into the future. Rosanna staff worked diligently to pack up the old Rosanna Library and move into the wonderful Pop-up Library alternative that will be their contact point with the local community until the new library is built and opened.

Creating welcoming spaces is only part of the puzzle, with the activities and information available within the buildings being another crucial part. The Board has continued to be amazed at the incredible programming that comes out of the library service, delivering to the needs of the community. Activities like the Talking Together program, engaging with the local Somali Australian community, the Armchair Travel program, taking some of our senior citizens back to their hometowns through the power of virtual reality, and the work of all of our branches embedding First Nations activities and knowledge sharing into YPRL's School Holiday Programs.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge and thank my fellow Board members and our Member Councils for the significant role they play in bringing such vital library services to the community, and I thank the CEO and the 162 dedicated, hardworking library staff for their hard work and service. It is so wonderful to see such an engaged and collaborative team working so hard to deliver for the residents of Banyule, Nillumbik, and Whittlesea.

Message from the CEO – Jane Cowell
*INSERT image [Jane] *

What a fantastic year we have had at YPRL continuing to grow the library services and activities and watching our community respond by joining in and joining up – we now have 156,426 members across our network of branches and hubs, meaning we welcomed over 20,000 new library users in the last year.

At YPRL, we have been working hard to create inviting spaces where all members of our diverse community feel safe, respected and included. As part of our commitment to diversity and inclusion, we have embedded the principles of codesign within all aspects of our work. Utilising codesign principles means that we work with targeted communities, library users and staff in a collaborative process to collectively design, develop and refine library programs, spaces, collections and other services to better meet their unique needs. In 2022/23 we have delivered a range of programs and services with a basis in these principles, including the Talking Together outreach programming with the Somali Australian community in West Heidelberg, consultation with young people in developing safe, LGBTIQA+ inclusive creative spaces at Eltham Library, and embedding First Nations knowledge and culture into our School Holiday Programs. The

community have responded to this in droves, with over 118,000 people attending the more than 4,600 events we held this year.

Our digital transformation is also well underway and as an organisation we are always working to improve the systems we use to ensure that we have the capability to provide library services now and into the future. We need these tools to streamline processes and become more productive and cost efficient, ensuring we provide the community with value for money library services as well as astounding customer service! The rollout of Microsoft 365 has provided us with more flexible and adaptive systems that enable greater collaboration, improve efficiency and security and increase information security and control. Additionally, the introduction of our new SharePoint-based intranet has facilitated seamless communication and expanded opportunities for information sharing among our staff.

I have tremendous gratitude for all of YPRL's staff and volunteers for the flexibility, dedication and commitment to community that they have shown over the last year. Special acknowledgment goes to the Board for their support in empowering YPRL to deliver forward-looking and adaptive library services. Equally deserving of appreciation are our customer service staff, who tirelessly collaborate to develop and deliver culturally safe, inclusive programs and services tailored to the diverse communities within our regions. Collectively, we've curated captivating programs, resources, and inviting spaces that, as you will see below, deeply resonate with every member of our community.

*INSERT [Stats - Board] *
*INSERT [Board Photos] *

Commented [BE1]: See stats document

YPRL at a glance

Infographic

- Hairy Maclary left Donaldson's Dairy 2,866 times
- Readers visited the Bridgerton family in Regency London 455 times
- The youngest member to join was just 9 days old when they joined at the Mobile Library (Mernda stop)
- Members spent more than 2,700 hours (about 3 and a half months) listening to Prince Harry read his memoir *Spare*
- DCI Vera Stanhope cracked the case 3,214 times
- The tide rose for *The Rising Tide* 736 times
- James Patterson's *Escape* broke out of our collection 580 times
- 558 borrowers had Dinner with the Schnabels
- *Yiayia Next Door* had 494 visitors from the library
- *Thrifty Gardening* inspired 411 to get outside
- 359 went in search of the *Paris Bookseller*
- 460 sets of eyeballs wanted to look at *My Darling Daughter*
- 10 emus is the most spotted by Mobile Library staff in a single day!
- Provide access to library branch for 571.5 hours each week and to library services for a further 172 hours through the mobile library and hubs
- 1,263,489 visitors to library branches which averages to 3 visits from each person across our communities
- 156,426 library members – that is more than the number of people who attended the AFL Preliminary Finals in 2022 – with 44,160 members borrowing a physical item this year – that is more than the population of Wodonga
- 16,905 people opened the YPRL app 386,512 times – an average of 1,059 times a day – to place 98,961 reservations and renew 66,574 loans

Commented [BE2]: These stats will be designed as infographics and either made into a page, or spread about the document, depending on design requirements

- 2,693,546 loans – which means that on average each library user always has one item on loan from us.
- 403,243 items in the collection and if they were all returned at the same time, we'd need over 8 kilometers of shelving to hold them all!
- We held 4,605 events with 118,289 participants, averaging 12 events and 324 participants every day
- Delivered 32 Storytime sessions each week to an average of 1,465 people
- There were 1,833,110 hours of eAudiobooks listened to... think of how many daily commutes or vacuuming session that is!
- Our communities spent 1,201 hours learning new things with LinkedIn Learning
- This year the Mobile Library travelled more than 15,753 kilometers, that's enough to drive around Australia on Highway 1!
- Over half a million minutes of TV & Movies streamed on Kanopy. That's the equivalent of a library member watching their favourite show non-stop for the whole year!

Year in review

Outcome: Wellbeing
Help individuals and communities to better engage in, understand, and take positive actions to support their mental and physical health.

Safe and inclusive spaces and programs are paramount to the way in which YPRL not only connects our communities to free and accessible information, knowledge, and experts in key areas such as health and wellbeing, early literacy development, and reading for pleasure to support mental health but also to support skill development and strengthen people's capacity for better health outcomes in adult life. Public libraries across Victoria have a strategic focus on health and wellbeing, working towards the *Libraries for Health and Wellbeing: a strategic framework for Victorian public libraries towards 2024* (bit.ly./YPRL-LfHaW).

Priority: Mental, physical, and social wellbeing
Contribute to the wellbeing of our community through inclusive and safe programs, spaces, and opportunities, promoting health literacy, health and wellbeing programming and collections, and programs for those experiencing social isolation

Libraries play a key role in supporting the wellbeing of our community. From providing informal opportunities to connect with others, to programs like Chatty Café that are designed to reduce social isolation, the library is always a welcoming place. With experiences of social isolation and loneliness rising in Australia, the role of the library in supporting social and mental health is vital. Many people come along to programs and gain benefit from being in a group with others and just having a chat.

*INSERT [Stats – Services snapshot] *

Indicator	Measure	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Loans	Number of Items borrowed	3,103,974	2,291,906	1,391,280	1,835,001	2,289,256
Program Attendance	Number of participants in programs and activities	176,926	132,941	30,555	72,299	118,289
Visitation Total	Door count	1,556,371	1,147,140	537,335	714,864	1,263,489
Opening Hours	Hours per week	537.5	537.5	628.0	723.0	741.0

> **Commented [BE3]:** These element will be designed tables in the annual report, we are just presenting the raw data here.

Late Night Libraries
As part of the Libraries After Dark program, Mill Park, Thomastown and Watsonia libraries stay open until 10.00pm on selected days, offering a much-needed alternative option for those at risk of harm from gambling. Instead of turning out the lights and closing our doors to the community,

these libraries transform into vibrant evening hubs that offer a diverse range of activities and provide safe spaces for people to meet and connect away from gaming venues.

Evening events are designed to encourage learning, relaxation and social engagement. Attendees engage in skill-building and creative experiences while also benefiting from extended access to traditional library resources. Our Libraries After Dark highlights include live music; night markets; art and craft sessions; cooking demonstrations; art therapy; and positive aging activities.

These warm, welcoming, and inclusive nights have helped to build social connection and combat loneliness, especially for vulnerable members of our community.

SDG 3 Good Health & Wellbeing

An inclusive Christmas experience
Since 2014, YPRL has been at the forefront of providing open and inclusive programming that embraces families with neurodiverse children. Among our most beloved initiatives is the Sensitive Santa program. Tailored to the specific needs of children on the autism spectrum, these sessions take place in a carefully managed library environment where families can enjoy a magical Christmas experience without unnecessary stressors like crowds and noise.

With Sensitive Santa, neurodiverse children and their families can feel confident that they have the support and understanding they need. YPRL engages with families to plan for each individual session to create a customised experience that meets the needs of the children and their families.

In December 2022, Sensitive Santa was expanded to a full weekend event at Mill Park Library, welcoming 22 families with neurodiverse children. Each family enjoyed a 20-minute session with Santa where volunteers from the Diamond Valley Photographic Society were able to capture hundreds of photos. For many, this was their very first photo taken with Santa.

Demand for the Sensitive Santa sessions is growing every year. Sessions provided in 2022 were drawn from more than 80 EOIs from families – a wonderful sign of the value of this program as well as an increasing community need.

Quote:
"*Sensitive Santa was such an amazing experience for the boys. Navigating life with an Autistic member of our household can be amazing but it is difficult and isolating when we can't attend things that our friends would. Thanks again for a wonderful experience, the boys had so much fun!*" – Emily

SDG 3 Good Health & Wellbeing
SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities

Reading big over summer
Every summer, libraries across Victoria encourage regular engagement with library collections to keep children reading over their break from school. Aimed at primary school children, Public Libraries Victoria's *Big Summer Read* aims to overcome the 'summer slide' in reading levels over the school holidays to counteract potential literacy losses.

The 2022/23 *Big Summer Read* at YPRL drew 760 registrations, with more than 6,000 books read and borrowed as part of the program. We delivered a range of targeted family-friendly events in support of the summer reading challenge, including a special illustration workshop with the talented Zeno Sworder offered as a prize and enjoyed by 30 readers who took part in the challenge.

It was fantastic to see increased engagement with our junior collections across the board, but we saw particularly significant gains across all four libraries in the City of Whittlesea especially at Lalor and Thomastown.

SDG 3 Good Health & Wellbeing
SDG 4 Quality Education

*INSERT [Stats – Library overview] *

Indicator	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Population - Regional (ABS Estimates Resident Population)	418,510	426,963	433,698	422,629	427,062
Total Members	141,641	118,443	120,899	135,957	156,426
Members as % of population	33.84%	27.00%	28.00%	32.17%	36.63%
Active Users	74,875	64,518	53,113	56,439	67,243
Mobile Library Locations	13	13	13	13	13
Collection items total	407,465	403,799	436,944	506,751	492,186
New Collection items	96,030	116,424	72,809	91,987	119,802
eCollection Usage	473,749	549,086	587,028	547,682	539,419
Wi-Fi Sessions	267,574	210,152	75,508	76,464	125,694
Public Access Internet sessions	191,218	131,834	37,998	42,941	87,682
Total eAccess	2,370,642	2,341,531	1,918,946	2,443,293	3,168,125
Programs total	7,726	4,383	1,613	2,209	4,605
Staff (EFT)	93.17	93.19	96.32	97.34	99.92

The warmth of a good read
Warm Winter Read is a statewide winter reading program created by Public Libraries Victoria to inspire healthy reading habits and make reading a daily routine during the colder months.

At YPRL, we encouraged our community to get reading via the Beanstack reading tracking app, distribution of official Warm Winter Read bookmarks and other promotional items, a fantastic blogs series with cosy reading recommendations, and curated in-branch displays to inspire library visitors to take part. We were thrilled to see 2,700 readers take part and read as part of the program over the course of the nine-week campaign.

SDG 3 Good Health & Wellbeing

A crafty community
In November 2022, Watsonia Library and Mill Park Library played host to talented local makers and crafters at our Twilight Community Craft Market. An array of small businesses – many proudly owned and operated by women – descended on our library spaces to showcase their creativity and skills in a vibrant community setting.

Market stalls were held by a diverse range of makers from enthusiastic teens to experienced adults, many of whom were engaging in first time testing of new products in an environment where they could hone their customer service skills.

Community organisations also took the chance to get involved, with the Country Women's Association, and members of library knitting groups lending their support to the market. Local businesses were generous in their support of the community events, providing everything from live music to catering.

SDG 3 Good Health and Wellbeing
SDG 5 Gender Equality
SDG 8 Decent Work & Economic Growth

Community stories
Every day we hear amazing stories about the positive impact of our library services to the lives of our users. The YPRL Community Storytelling project was developed to bring these stories to light and demonstrate the role and value of our libraries in our diverse community.

In mid-2022, library staff signed up for a training session led by the talented local storyteller Lara McKinley. The training encompassed various skills including story discovery, framework creation, effective interviewing techniques, photography, and quick editing.

Eager to put their skills to use, YPRL's newly trained storytellers embarked on a project for Library and Information Week 2022. They collected tales from a group of library users and shared these across YPRL's social media platforms, website and other channels. The community response was fantastic, particularly on Twitter, where the stories reached a large group of Twitter users and even caught the attention of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in the United Kingdom, sparking international interest.

These stories not only showcase the library's positive influence on individuals, but also emphasise the transformative role of libraries and their significance in fostering community, reducing loneliness and isolation and connecting library users with literature, art and culture (bit.ly/3s68b4M).

SDG 3 Good Health & Wellbeing

Learning to live well
The Living Well in Lalor Expo was created to provide the local community with free advice and support on how to navigate cost-of-living pressures in a welcoming and inclusive setting. On Saturday 20 May 2023, Lalor Library offered an array of drop-in sessions which included health presentations, mortgage stress and financial service information, craft and exercise activities, a First Nations Storytime, and a range of wellness exhibitions.

Developed in partnership with U3A, DPV Health, City of Whittlesea, Innovation Youth Centre, and many local businesses, the Living Well in Lalor Expo was underpinned by codesign principles to ensure community needs and interests would be reflected in every session and presentation.

The expo attracted more than 750 attendees who happily borrowed from specially curated collections that were on display, and many kicked up their heels to join in a line dancing session too! As part of the Coats for Kindness program, 55 coats were also collected for donation to provide warm clothing to people in need.

Quotes

"What a great day, I just smiled all day and forgot all about being lonely." – Helen 73

SDG 3 Good Health & Wellbeing

Sensational seniors

Throughout October 2022, YPRL marked Seniors Month by hosting 39 events throughout the region. Highlights included a harp performance,, landscape painting workshops,, and a platform for lively chats and new friendships in a discussion group. We also hosted intergenerational Storytimes, offered in partnership with Nillumbik Positive Aging, Bunnings, healthAbility, Estia Health, and Apollo Parkways Preschool, and attracting participants ranging from 3 to 103 years old.

YPRL also partnered with Whittlesea Council and Victoria Police to roll out specialised life skills sessions which included lessons in scam awareness and a 'Healthier You' safety session with a crime prevention officer. Older people in our community were better equipped to navigate digital technologies after developing tech skills, attending smart phone help sessions and device fixes at our Repair Café.

SDG 3 Good Health & Wellbeing

Pride on display

For Pride Month 2022, YPRL rolled out a range of events to promote understanding, inclusivity, and acceptance, and create a welcoming space for all while highlighting the rich experiences and stories within the LGBTQIA+ community. This program included: a presentation by acclaimed author Will Kostakis sharing his insights into the LGBTQ+ characters and themes present in his work, a Pride Weaving Workshop at Thomastown Library, a Pride Community Collaborative Art Project at Whittlesea Library, a Teen Pride Chill Zone to foster a sense of belonging and safety at Lalor Library, and a Pride Family Fun Afternoon promoting acceptance and celebrating diversity at Diamond Valley Library. We also hosted two Online Rainbow Storytimes with drag performer Frock Hudson, who read books by the many authors and publishers who reached out to offer the digital performance rights to YPRL in direct response to the move of our IDAHOBIT Rainbow Storytime to online.

Throughout the month, all library branches also offered Rainbow Shoelace Project bead kits for members of the LGBTQIA+ community and allies to wear on their shoelaces in a show of support. The program was well-received by attendees and provided a brilliant opportunity to reaffirm YPRL's commitment to fostering acceptance and inclusivity in our community.

SDG 3 Good Health & Wellbeing
SDG 10 Reduced Inequality

*INSERT [Stats – Library usage] *

Location	Members	Loans	Reservations	Public Access Internet Sessions	Wi-Fi connections
Diamond Valley	8,317	121,025	27,654	3,742	4,638
Eltham	20,822	258,958	57,042	10,102	19,879
Ivanhoe	16,757	239,183	60,866	16,254	47,461
Lalor	17,466	91,524	13,152	18,011	8,027
Mill Park	26,088	294,322	46,693	14,816	24,308
Rosanna	10,119	111,506	33,629	2,161	4,578
Thomastown	8,304	55,015	12,996	8,260	5,922
Watsonia	12,539	194,189	45,572	10,530	9,701
Whittlesea	3,551	39,121	9,452	2,278	1,980
Mobile Library	4,283	36,654	5,157	-	-
Outreach Vehicle	1,026	11,208	2,285	-	-
Digital Members	27,086	823,666	-	-	-
Donnybrook		494	149	-	-
Galada		5,665	1,902	-	-
Hurstbridge Hub		6,726	3,837	-	-

Priority: Connect to local experts
Work alongside experts to bring the best to our local communities by inviting, including, and hosting wellbeing partners within our spaces, and partnering with member councils to deliver better outcomes.

As librarians, we believe in quality information and the power of experts. Our programs, services, and spaces are informed by best practises, and we link our community to the best people to support their needs. This includes partnering with our three member councils to amplify their services, as well as working together with our community partners to expand what we can offer.

Adding our Voice
Reconciliation Week at YPRL was a powerful and enriching experience for our communities, offering an opportunity to delve into shared histories, culture, and achievements, with a range of thoughtful events under the national theme: Be a Voice for Generations.

Throughout the week, First Nations Storytimes at Thomastown and Whittlesea libraries nurtured an appreciation for First Nation storytelling and traditions. The Family Storytime and First Nations children's play session at Ivanhoe Library, in partnership with Banyule City Council, further celebrated the local cultural heritage of First Peoples.

Emphasising the critical role of libraries in fostering dialogue, our Reconciliation Week program included an insightful In Conversation event on the Uluru Statement from the Heart. Led by Yankunytjatjara and Wirangu woman Shelley Ware and Wotjobaluk woman Aunty Janine Coombs, the event shed light on the significance of the Statement for Aboriginal people and the broader Australian community.

At YPRL, we recognize the pivotal role libraries play in facilitating discussions around reconciliation by providing access to vital information and resources and creating culturally safe spaces. Reconciliation Week served as a testament to our commitment to building understanding and supporting reconciliation efforts within our communities.

SDG 4 Quality Education
SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities

A Festival for Booklovers

YPRL's annual Booklovers Festival, held in November, embraced a diverse program focused on self-expression, connection, and skill development with informative and engaging author talks and workshops tailored to the creative interests of the local community.

A standout event featured author Christos Tsiolkas and Public Libraries Victoria CEO Angela Savage in a captivating conversation at Ivanhoe Library. The pair shared the books that profoundly influenced them, discussed the crucial role of libraries and teachers in fostering a love for literacy and reading, and considered the intricacies of the creative process. The theatrette audience was buzzing with excitement at the session and left with a lengthy list of borrowing recommendations.

The Booklovers Festival provided a space for celebrating the magic of reading and writing as well as reaffirming the role of the library in the lives of established and aspiring authors.

SDG 3 Good Health & Wellbeing
SDG 4 Quality Education

Putting a spotlight on Code Club

YPRL's Code Clubs are instrumental in encouraging young people to develop foundational knowledge of the technologies that play an enormous role in their lives. After noticing YPRL's work running Code Club online during lockdowns, the Telstra Foundation reached out to us, suggesting a partnership to develop a video to promote both Code Clubs generally and the support of the Telstra Foundation.

In July, the Telstra Foundation arranged for a camera crew to film an in-person coding session in action at Diamond Valley Library. YPRL staff members Orit Elijah and Jane Petryszyn led the session where participants were provided with Code Club t-shirts to wear for filming. YPRL CEO Jane Cowell also provided an interview detailing the reasons for running Code Club and the history of the program at YPRL. In appreciation of everything that we do the Telstra Foundation gifted us a voucher to use to invest in updating our tech equipment.

The final video featuring Diamond Valley Library has been used to promote the Telstra Foundation and their support of Code Clubs nationally (bit.ly/47zdgCP).

SDG 4 Quality Education

Pop-up vaccinations

In July 2022, The Multicultural Awareness of Covid Immunisation (MACI) team from City of Whittlesea partnered with DPV Health and YPRL to deliver COVID-19 booster doses for community members in a series of pop-up sessions.

Feedback from the community indicated that visitors were pleased to have ready access to vaccinations in a familiar location. The sessions proved so popular that the partnership continued to deliver vaccination pop-ups on Tuesdays throughout August and September.

The pop-up was instrumental in improving access to vaccinations, but it had the dual effect of providing an opportunity for library users to reconnect with the service and reengage with their favourite programs in-branch.

Quote

"Mill Park Library was by far the most successful site in recent months for the COVID mobile vax model that was implemented across the municipality, consistently attracting double digit figures every week." – MACI staff

SDG 3 Good Health & Wellbeing

Celebrating culture

Diamond Valley Library has proudly unveiled two artworks by renowned Wurundjeri and Yorta-Yorta Traditional artist Simone Thomson. A grant through the Nillumbik Community Fund assisted YPRL in commissioning the works. Ms Thomson wrote in her letter of support for the project that "It is extremely important to have visual elements of Aboriginal Culture present in a place of knowledge and learning and to be accessible for the wider community. Users of the space will feel a sense of ownership to the art as they gain understanding of the Dreaming stories and their symbols. Aboriginal people who use the library will also feel a sense of belonging and inclusiveness and importantly – cultural safety."

These pieces pay profound respects to the Wurundjeri Peoples and commemorate the region's millennia of history as a gathering site and can now be admired on the walls of Diamond Valley Library. Titled *'Bargoongagat Kyinandoo Wilam – Gather at the Clever Hut',* the artist has paid tribute to the local area throughout the work.

SDG 3 Good Health & Wellbeing
SDG 4 Quality Education
SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities

Creative networking

On Tuesday 16 May 2023, Diamond Valley Library hosted the Creative Industries Networking Event: Good art, Good Business, in partnership with the Nillumbik Economic Development and Tourism Team. The event provided a platform for local creatives to explore the ways in which the Nillumbik Creative Industries Team fosters creative entrepreneurship, in addition to highlighting promotional and practical opportunities both within the library and across the wider Nillumbik community.

The evening began with a Smoking Ceremony conducted by Uncle Bill before the unveiling of two art works by Simone Thomson. Following the launch of her artwork, Simone joined Lisa Radford, artist, writer, and Board Member for The National Association for the Visual Arts, and Tess Edwards Baldessin, founder and President of Baldessin Studio, on a panel where the three discussed their creative inspirations and experience establishing themselves as working artists.

The event had a fantastic turnout and provided invaluable networking opportunities for artists, emphasising the transformation of creative practices into successful businesses.

SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth
SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities

<u>**Outcome: Connection**</u>
Create places and spaces for people throughout our communities to connect, belong and actively engage with each other.

Libraries are all about connection. Through our spaces, our programs, our partners, and our welcoming staff, we create an environment of belonging where people of all ages and backgrounds can actively engage with each other. We connect people with books, ideas, diverse services, and with their local and wider communities. Through regular programs, drop in Maker Spaces, special events, and friendly chats with our staff, the library is somewhere that everybody can feel welcome, safe, and valued. Through our Mobile Library, our Community Hubs, and our outreach programming, that connection goes far beyond the walls of our library buildings,

engaging with people where they are and delivering what they need. Our creativity, innovation, and partnership mindset has meant that we can get library programs out into more community locations every year so that the library can come to you, wherever you need it.

Priority: Participation and Belonging
Deliver places, spaces, and services that provide safe, accessible digital environments and programs, volunteering, and other opportunities to participate, and increased participation in our service.

Libraries are spaces where people belong. Our programs are inclusive, accessible, and community-driven, giving people opportunities to connect. They reflect our diverse community. This year, people have returned to our spaces and our programs in ever-increasing numbers. Opportunities for connecting and belonging also come through volunteering, and we treasure our amazing team of volunteers who enable us to expand the reach of what we do.

*INSERT [Stats – Library membership] *

Location	Banyule	Murrindindi	Nillumbik	Out-Area	Whittlesea	Total
Diamond Valley	1,527	7	6,198	233	352	**8,317**
Eltham	2,470	26	16,991	998	359	**20,844**
Ivanhoe	14,405	5	157	1,904	286	**16,757**
Lalor	165	5	57	1,128	16,111	**17,466**
Mill Park	616	46	308	952	24,166	**26,088**
Rosanna	9,465	1	139	374	140	**10,119**
Thomastown	120	1	25	654	7,504	**8,304**
Watsonia	11,210	9	334	512	474	**12,539**
Whittlesea	334	82	41	114	2,980	**3,551**
Mobile Library	271	12	1,993	40	1,967	**4,283**
Home Library	20	0	7	0	19	**46**
Outreach Vehicle	277	1	276	2	470	**1,026**
Library Support Services	7,271	129	2,227	9,965	7,494	**27,086**
	48,151	**324**	**62,322**	**28,753**	**16,876**	156,426

School holiday fun
YPRL's school holiday programs continue to thrive, evident in our strong registration numbers and impressive turnout. We are focussed on enhancing community access and aim to craft diverse offerings that engage the wide spectrum of families within our library community.

Throughout September our branches buzzed with activity, attracting families seeking entertaining and educational activities to make the most of the school break. All-day attractions like board games, giant chess, movies, and puzzles provided free enjoyment as many contend with rising cost-of-living pressures.

STEAM programming took centre stage in January, featuring coding, augmented reality, and RoboGirls sessions alongside artistic activities like tie-dying and *Let's Make Art!*, presented in collaboration with the National Gallery of Victoria. Events engaging with First Nations culture were offered at every branch with events around Indigenous Infusion, Indigenous Storytelling (run by the Cultural Infusion Foundation), or Indigenous plants.

Come April families flocked to our branches, taking part in more than 50 events catered to nearly 1,500 attendees. Highlights included a regional Lego Tournament, Indigenous Dance and

Storytelling, Escape Rooms, Boomerang Throwing, and a digital programming jam. Our outreach extended to various community hubs, with school holiday sessions providing the opportunity to learn and connect.

SDG 3 Good Health & Wellbeing
SDG 4 Quality Education

Summer sensations
YPRL's Homegrown Summer is an annual regionwide initiative presented each January to build community engagement and social connections through a series of fun and interactive events. This year we delivered nineteen events, drawing community into our branches to connect with each other, support local businesses and artists, and borrow our collections. These events showcased local cuisine in markets, offered gardening and food preparation insights, and presented live music.

Feedback highlighted the desire of our users to shift away from their screens and towards shared activities, strengthening connections by taking time out and enjoying activities as a community. Homegrown Summer is a fantastic summer celebration that kindled connections, nurtured creativity, and fortified our community.

SDG 3 Good Health & Wellbeing

Engaging young minds
A collaboration between Banyule Youth Services and YPRL, Immersive Worlds was a program designed specifically to encourage young people to return to the library by creating opportunities to connect. Held at Ivanhoe Library, Immersive Worlds blended virtual reality experiences, Dungeons & Dragons sessions, and an escape room event, along with various other games. It drew an impressive attendance with nearly sixty young people ranging in ages from 12 to 22 years-old joining in. Many of those attending were first-time library visitors.

Immersive Worlds created space for young people to explore diverse interests and meet new friends in a safe and social setting, reaffirming the library as an inviting hub for exploration and positive interaction. It was fantastic to observe groups form and exchange contact information, emphasising the event's success in forging new connections amongst young people who might otherwise experience isolation.

SDG 3 Good Health & Wellbeing

Youth takeover Mill Park Library
Following on from the success of a series of Youth Takeover Nights at Mill Park Library, the City of Whittlesea Youth Services Baseline team and Mill Park Library joined forces to roll out a special Baseline 'Battle of the Brains' event.

Held as part of the Baseline School Holiday Program, the event drew in attendance from 28 young people to take part in an exciting trivia contest on the beautiful outdoor deck area. A steady supply of slushies from a slushie machine fuelled the trivia session and added fun to the occasion.

Baseline Youth Development Officer Lisa Wellington shared her tremendous feedback: "The event was so well attended, and all the young people enjoyed themselves, we could not have run that event and had such a fantastic turn out without [YPRL] support."

SDG 3 Good Health & Wellbeing

Australian Muslim Writers Festival
In October 2022, YPRL partnered with the Right Pen Collective, a local group whose mission is to connect, support and inspire Australian Muslim writers. The partnership saw Lalor Library act as a satellite venue for the Australian Muslim Writers Festival (AMWF), hosting a schedule of fantastic events for attendees of all ages. Offering a range of creative workshops, the Festival invited Australian Muslims and people from all backgrounds to share their passion for storytelling.

The AMWF 2022 theme 'Our Table' sought to discover the role of diverse writers in Australian publishing and to amplify the voices of Muslim writers as they explore identity and personal experience. As part of the festival, Lalor Library hosted a fantastic family day that showcased Muslim children's writers Nazeem Hussain, Ozge Sevindik Alkan and Huda Hayek, creating an opportunity for writers, publishers, illustrators and community to feel welcome, and to explore and promote literacy and writing for young children.

"It was wonderful to see the children so excited and enjoying themselves but what is more valuable is seeing the Muslim writers of the future and them seeing themselves represented here today in the authors who are sharing their stories with them." – Participating author

SDG 3 Good Health & Wellbeing
SDG 4 Quality Education
SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities

A real-time response to cost-of-living concerns
Continuing our commitment to the community, a diverse and ever-evolving series of events and activities have been introduced across YPRL to support the community with information and advice to assist in the cost-of-living crisis over the last year.

Driven by community feedback, YPRL staff have rolled out tailored events on an ongoing to encourage the use of our library services and collections as a cost-saving measure, in addition to providing education in priority areas like cooking, energy saving, sustainability, entertainment and keeping active.

Events have included sessions on saving at the supermarket and basic car maintenance, health talks and cooking demonstrations using the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden, as well as resume building and clothes mending workshops.

YPRL's cost-of-living sessions demonstrate our commitment to listening to our community and responding to needs as they are identified, to provide relevant and meaningful support to our users.

Quote:

"Over the last year my rent has increased so much, the cost of living has gone up and it's come to the point where I can't afford the basics. A while ago I read in a council flyer that the library has free internet. It's such a beautiful place and the staff are always so welcoming." – Bev, retired library user

SDG 3 Good Health & Wellbeing

Recognising our volunteers
YPRL volunteers play a pivotal role in delivering our rich array of programs and events, an offering

that would not be possible without the generous contributions of a diverse group of individuals. Our volunteers are instrumental in some of our most loved programs, from social connection through Reading Dogs and Chatty Café, to skill-building at Tech Help, Chess Club and Line Dancing sessions.

The unwavering support of our volunteers towards both our staff and the community is instrumental in delivering the meaningful programming that is core to what libraries do. To our invaluable volunteers: we recognise and appreciate your dedication and effort in fostering positive connections in the community and supporting lifelong learning at YPRL.

Soo Nickels Celebrating 20 Years
Soo Nickels is a proud wife, mother, and soon-to-be grandmother, with a legendary status as an intrepid traveller and adventurer. She is also an avid reader, community supporter and library volunteer with YPRL. Soo first volunteered with us in 2003, when she started off helping out with our Home Library Service before moving into assisting staff and users in branches.

YPRL is immensely grateful for Soo's dedication to our library and her two decades of making meaningful connections and supporting the YPRL community through change and challenges.

SDG 3 Good Health & Wellbeing
SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth

Priority: Outreach *Look beyond our existing places to build strong links with local communities, engage with youth, CALD, and First Nations communities, and explore and test colocation and integration of services.*

You don't need to be in our library buildings to access library services or programs. Online programming and our eLibrary means that more of our community can engage with us from the comfort of their own homes, while the Home Library Service offers a valuable lifeline in delivering print books and magazines to our house-bound patrons. Our outreach programming continues to expand all over the community, from storytimes in different locations, to school holiday events, festivals, and visits to nursing homes, kinders, schools, and shopping centres.

Expanding our reach
YPRL's network of Click & Collect Hubs extends our reach into more locations to provide better access to physical collections for those who may not live near a library branch.

Hurstbridge Hub has been fantastically successful site of community activation and continues to grow. Our Hurstbridge Hub-based library users can return items, collect holds, and browse and borrow from a curated collection of books and resources. YPRL also delivers weekly storytime sessions and school holiday programming at the hub, with support from staff at Eltham and Diamond Valley libraries.

Donnybrook Hub, supported by Whittlesea Library, is another site of growing community engagement – evident in the strong attendance at school holiday programs delivered at the site. Visitors to the Shared Cup Café are enthusiastic borrowers from the hub's collection. YRPL staff run regular storytimes and the number attendance from first-time families is a sure sign of the need to support early years literacy in the area.

Galada Hub has become a spot for locals to meet, borrow and engage with library programs including Storytime, School Holiday programs and a Conversation Café pilot. Approximately 1300

children have attended Galada storytimes over the last year and a small refurbishment has allowed a doubling of the collection which now includes Book Express and an extended children's section which is well loved by the onsite kindergarten. Galada is supported by Thomastown and Lalor, with wonderful support from council's Community and Activity Centre staff.

SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities
SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities

Library on wheels
YPRL's Mobile Library is on the road five days a week, 46 weeks a year. Making 13 stops at 12 locations, and has welcomed nearly 24,000 visitors this year. Mobile library users have borrowed over 36,000 items and more than 400 new members have signed up at stops.

The Mobile Library team is essential to our outreach, regularly delivering to 40 kindergartens, daycare centres, schools and community groups. At any one time, 1,400 mobile library items will be in the hands of our outreach community.

During Eltham's closure in June 2023, the Mobile Library received additional outreach programming support and offered storytimes. Dozens of children joined in and loved the chance to enjoy picture books together. We serve as a dynamic regional hub, with a dedicated team, personalised services and outreach programming building a community among library users as a branch that comes to those who would otherwise not have one nearby.

Quote:
"The Mobile Library means being met with warm and friendly greetings by lovely staff who always make the time to chat and learn my interests, whilst also being kind enough to keep an eye out for and reserve any books that they think my children or I may enjoy."

SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities
SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities

*INSERT [Stats – Social media] *

Social media			
Platform	**2021/22**	**2022/23**	**Growth**
eNewsletter	50,857	58,315	14.66%
Facebook	6,893	7,269	5.45%
Instagram	3,584	3,923	9.46%
Twitter	2,352	2,326	-1.11%
LinkedIn	848	958	12.97%
Total	**64,534**	**72,791**	**12.79%**
Digital interactions			
Platform	**2021/22**	**2022/23**	**Growth**
Digital Program Engagement	3,688	1,076	-70.82%
Website	1,364,675	1,613,496	18.23%
Online catalogue	367,902	415,322	12.89%
YPRL App	283,917	386,512	36.14%

Using Storytime as Outreach

YPRL has committed to running outreach Storytimes in key locations to maintain community connection and our early literacy focus during the development of the new Rosanna Library. We have partnered with Banyule City Council and Kids First to deliver weekly Storytimes at Banyule Community Health, Macleod Community Hall, and Bellfield Community Hub. Storytime attendance is increasing each week and we are receiving fantastic feedback from families delighted to still have Storytime sessions near home.

"It's fantastic to have a Storytime here in Macleod! I have a really lovely half day out with my two children now. We are able to have a play on the playground, watch some trains, and come to Storytime." – Macleod Storytime attendee

SDG 3 Good Health & Wellbeing
SDG 4 Quality Education

National Science Week
In August 2022 YPRL celebrated National Science Week, hosting sixteen events delivered over the course of a fortnight. More than 330 attendees participated in the fun and educational sessions, with some travelling across the region for the occasion.

Highlights included the Science Discovery Dome Mobile Planetarium, coding sessions, Minecraft, and events featuring kaleidoscopes and optical illusions. Beyond cultivating scientific curiosity and an interest in technology, our Science Week events provided a warm and welcoming space for families to bond while discovering fantastic STEAM collections and programs.

SDG 4 Quality Education

Home services lifeline

YPRL's Home Library Service (HLS) has bounced back post-lockdown. Over the last year, more than 6,000 loans have been provided to housebound and low-mobility library users. We have streamlined onboarding process for new Home Library users and volunteers to ensure we are able to provide the best services to our HLS users.

Our HLS is a critical service providing a vital lifeline to the world of literature, film, culture and current affairs. Housebound and low-mobility users are at a higher risk of social isolation, and the connection created between clients and volunteers through the HLS reduces loneliness.

For one widowed client, the HLS is life changing: "I would be lost without it." Our HLS volunteers value the experience too: "I find it really rewarding enabling people to continue their love of reading."

YPRL's HLS is expanding to meet the rising community need. We will partner to build ongoing capacity within the service so that we can continue to enrich the lives of those who access our services from home.

SDG 3 Good Health & Wellbeing
SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities

*INSERT [Stats – Grants received] *

Name of Grant	Funding body	Purpose	Amount received
JumpStart	VicHealth	Codesigned healthy eating & gardening workshops for youth	$12,500.00
Digital Literacy for Seniors	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions	Providing digital literacy programming for seniors	$91,216.00
			$103,716.00

Outcome: Knowledge and Learning
Together we build capacity and confidence for people across our communities to meaningfully participate in work and community life.

Through our collections, programs, and partnerships, YPRL supports the community to learn and grow. We are a community of readers, with both print and digital loans increasing this year. Borrowing books remains one of the main reasons that our members visit library branches, with both leisure reading and knowledge seeking highly valued. YPRL provides one of the largest and most up-to-date collections in Victoria, with more than 400,000 books and 20+ eResources to support our community to learn, create, and live well.

Another key reason people visit our libraries is to engage in our wide variety of events and programs. From our youngest attendees of Baby Storytime through to our oldest attendees of social chat groups, our programming offers something for everyone. YPRL programs are creative, innovative, and responsive to community needs.

Priority: Programs and Pathways
Develop programs and pathways that focus on partnerships for youth capacity building, pathways to employment, community resilience, and community-led programming and collections.

Library programs educate, entertain, inspire, and connect. Our codesign approach to programming puts community needs at the centre of all we do. We partner with others and collaborate to make the most of everything we have. From our daily Storytimes, providing quality early years education to families, through to specialised programming such as Family History Month and Maker Space inductions, we foster creativity and curiosity, build skills, and encourage innovation.

Nurturing literacy and inclusion
YPRL Storytimes continue to captivate children, families and carers, inspiring a love of reading, words and language. Delivered to more than 1,465 people each week, our early years literacy programs offer welcoming and enjoyable opportunities to gather, read, learn, sing and create. Families and carers are supported to build knowledge, skills and confidence to nurture children's reading and language development beyond the library.

Storytimes reflect YPRL's diverse communities, creating inclusive opportunities to experience various languages, cultures, traditions and perspectives. In 2022–23 our regular Storytimes included First Nations, bilingual and intergenerational sessions, with feature programs celebrating significant dates such as Reconciliation Week, IDAHOBIT, Pride Month and NAIDOC Week.

Storytimes are offered across all YPRL branches, with staff regularly delivering outreach sessions at our library Hubs, community locations, early childhood services and schools. Select Storytimes and early years programming features special guests in collaboration with community partners such as local health services and our member Councils.

SDG 3 Good Health & Wellbeing
SDG 4 Quality Education

*INSERT [Stats – Storytime sessions] *

Storytimes	Sessions	Attendance
Diamond Valley	177	8,231
Eltham	294	17,083
Ivanhoe	196	12,204
Lalor	199	5,276
Mill Park	211	11,986
Rosanna	176	6,477
Thomastown	126	3,166
Watsonia	178	8,787
Whittlesea	145	2,909
Online	3	70
Total	1,705	76,189

National Simultaneous Storytime

National Simultaneous Storytime (NSS) in an engaging annual event that aims to promote the value of reading and literacy. Each year highlights a picture book created by an Australian author and illustrator to be read simultaneously to children across the country.

In 2023, more than 2 million children across Australia sat down to listen to *The Speedy Sloth* written by Rebecca Young and illustrated by Heath McKenzie. YPRL invited special guest readers for each of our NSS sessions to read the book, from Banyule City Cr Alison Champion and Cr Tom Melican; from City of Whittlesea Administrator Lydia Wilson, and staff Janine Morgan, Amelia Ryan, Anthony Traill; and from Nillumbik Shire Mayor Cr Ben Ramcharan and Cr Natalie Duffy.

YPRL's NSS activities focussed on reading, literacy, wellbeing, connectedness, and belonging. YPRL also invited local primary schools and kindergartens to visit our libraries to enjoy The Speedy Sloth and other stories, choose some books to take home, and participate in sloth-themed activities. NSS was a fantastic event highlighting the joy of reading is a social setting.

SDG 3 Good Health & Wellbeing

Insights into family history

Each year, our Family History Month program offers opportunities for family history researchers and others interested in the past to engage in a series of events to help get started or sharpen skills. Family History Month events provide attendees with a fascinating journey into their ancestral past, fostering connections, uncovering stories, and enriching understanding.

YPRL partnered with the University of Tasmania's Family History Department and Melbourne Dead Persons Society to present Family History Month events including talks by authors and research experts; a cemetery tour; opportunities to workshop research challenges; an introduction to family research session; digital story creation lessons; photo digitisation sessions; and DIY family 'food memory' bookmaking. Our most popular sessions were Celebrating 150 Years of State Schooling, Writing Migrant Family History and No Ordinary Convict.

SDG 3 Good Health & Wellbeing

Havens of innovation

We take pride in our diverse Maker Spaces across our library branches and Council areas, each offering unique avenues for creativity, entrepreneurship, and learning.

Diamond Valley Library's garden Maker Space nurtures connection, wellbeing, and knowledge through programs focused on sustainability and garden play. YPRL has partnered with The Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation to deliver a monthly program where children use produce from the garden to learn about healthy eating.

Thomastown Library's textile Maker Space is a haven for crafters and now provides borrowing access to sewing and overlocker machines. With a lending library that offers frame looms, printmaking gear, and tool boxes, it serves as a vibrant creative space where YPRL and our partners have delivered events such as lantern making, and hosted expert-led clothes mending workshops.

Ivanhoe Library's design Maker Space empowers self-directed tech creativity via 3D printing, laser cutting, and Cricut – a smart cutting device controlled by an app. This year, more than 150 new participants completed safety inductions and started exploring 3D printing and laser cutting.

We are committed to maintaining cutting-edge Maker Spaces to create hubs of innovation and learning. Staff are currently investigating the future of the new Rosanna Library Maker Space and looking at how to best meet community need in the Mill Park Maker Space to ensure we're delivering for our community now, and into the future.

SDG 3 Good Health & Wellbeing
SDG 8 Decent Work & Economic Growth
SDG 11 Sustainable Cities & Communities

***INSERT [Stats – All YPRL events] ***

Location	Events			Participants		
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Banyule	305	693	1457	6,123	13,636	40,894
Nillumbik	138	379	1007	3,708	12,734	33,972
Whittlesea	398	756	2120	7,256	40,111	42,769
Online	881	381	21	14,458	5,818	654
Total	**1,722**	**2,209**	**4,605**	**31,545**	**72,299**	**118,289**

Gathering for Children's Day
Thomastown Library hosted a vibrant Children's Day gathering on 4 August, drawing hundreds of families into the library to celebrate. Children's Day is a time for the community and partners to come together, to connect, to share information and to support each other. It's a reminder of connection to culture and Country, of children growing up strong and safe and knowing their cultural traditions.

We were privileged to have several Elders attend, share experiences and speak, with sessions including a reflection by Uncle John Baxter on Wominjeka. Local Elders connected with our library plan and have worked with staff to map our principles to the idea "Proud in culture, strong in spirit" in Aboriginal culture, making meaningful links and connections.

A feature of this event was the collaborative work by the City of Whittlesea Early Years team, Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA), Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS), Yarn Strong Sista, the Victorian Government *Best Start* initiative, Thomastown Neighbourhood House, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Bubup Wilam, Playgroup Victoria and other organisations to put on a special celebration. We were delighted to welcome 90 new YPRL members on Children's Day.

This event held a unique significance for us, as it helped establish cultural underpinnings and welcomed people who might not typically use our libraries. Our intention is to further develop and expand upon this experience as we look ahead to the next year.

SDG 3 Good Health & Wellbeing
SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities

Advocating for community employment opportunities
YPRL has partnered with Job Advocates Australia to provide regular pop-up sessions in our libraries, supporting jobseekers across the region with advice on local employment opportunities, employment support, and low or no-cost education and training. Job Advocates Australia also share information and tips about getting a job, including resume refreshes, and connect attendees with additional services such as housing support or counselling.

The Job Advocates Program received promotion in our Storytimes and throughout our libraries to highlight the employment and training opportunities available to support people re-entering the workforce.

SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth

Priority: Information and resources
Build on our existing collections, assets, and services through investment in digital resources, collections, and assets; resources that are reflective of our diverse communities; supporting local creatives; early years, adult, and digital literacy.

Quality and reliable information is a touchstone of library services. Our collections remain one of the key drawcards in our spaces, as people visit every day to read, learn, discover, relax, and connect with information. This year, we worked hard to align our collection with our community and reviewed our community language collections to best reflect who we are. We have had exciting upgrades and additions to our spaces, including a new reading retreat at Greensborough Plaza, and have focussed on making collections appealing and simple to browse.

Our collections
In the past year, our collections made their way into the hands and onto the screens of our community members 2,693,546 times as they continue to delight, empower, and inform. This represents a 47% increase in loans throughout 2022–23 compared to the previous year, as usage continues to rebound after the pandemic. Our updated *Collection Development Policy* ensures our collections are responsive to community needs, support local creatives, celebrate First Nations culture, and reflect and support our diverse communities. Nine out of ten titles suggested for purchase were acquired by the library as community driven acquisitions continue to build dynamic physical and digital collections to meet the needs of our community.

We added more than 30 items to our local history collections, including *Whittlesea's Dark Past* by Mill Park Library's very own Jack Chan, a publication that was funded by a Local History Grants Program. More than 500 items were also added to our Digital Archives, including the Mary Zhou collection of drawings of local landmarks in the City of Banyule; contemporary photos taken as part of the Whittlesea Township walking map project; community newsletters; and YPRL organisational archives.

Loans from our eLibrary reached another all-time high, now accounting for more than 15% of our total collection loans and rounding out our eighth year of consecutive digital loan growth.

eAudiobooks remain our strongest trending format, allowing our users to relish the convenience of enjoying a book on the move. We also saw significant growth across our Children's digital platforms, with Story Box Library and LOTE4Kids both rising in usage by over 50%.

Our priorities for the digital collection this year were increasing breadth, reducing the wait time for popular titles, and a stronger focus than ever before on community driven acquisitions. We purchased more copies than ever before of in demand titles to reduce the average wait time for holds by 88%.

SDG 3 Good Health & Wellbeing
SDG 4 Quality Education

*INSERT [Stats – Collection statistics] *

Collection Stats	2021/22	2022/23
Items		
Total Physical Items	**353,384**	**342,500**
Banyule	123,104	111,197
Whittlesea	149,591	151,117
Nillumbik	80,689	80,186
Total digital Items	**60,412**	**60,743**
eBooks	40,746	39,011
eAudio	16,985	19,005
eMags	2,681	2,727
Total collection (physical and digital)	**413,796**	**403,243**
Loans		
Total loans of physical items	**1,835,002**	**2,289,237**
Banyule	686,193	835,381
Whittlesea	606,230	776,644
Nillumbik	542,579	677,212
Total Loans of digital items	**396,747**	**404,309**
eBooks	153,052	149,394
eAudio	168,133	183,311
eMags	75,562	71,604
Total Loans (physical and digital)	**2,231,749**	**2,693,546**
Turnover		
Turnover all items	**5.4**	**6.7**
Phyisical Items	5.2	6.7
Banyule	5.6	7.5
Whittlesea	4.1	5.1
Nillumbik	6.7	8.4
Digital Items	6.6	6.7
Purchases		
New items	**92,227**	**93,189**
Banyule	32,818	37,284
Whittlesea	37,440	27,271
Nillumbik	21,969	28,634

Introducing a Braille collection

YPRL is dedicated to responding to the diverse needs of our community. We know it is incredibly important for children to have access to books and have committed to adding and growing a Braille collection with 34 picturebook titles added this year so that readers with vision impairment can enjoy stories from our collection. These titles were also read at Storytimes to increase community awareness and introduce all children to Braille reading. We want to ensure that every child can engage with our collections and develop a love for reading.

Braille books employ a tactile writing system using a series of raised dots on pages to represent letters, numbers and punctuation. Children's Braille picture books contain images along with both

Braille and lettering for the sighted, offering a wonderful way for sighted and visually impaired readers to enjoy books together.

The foundations of early literacy depend upon an early introduction to reading. Holding a book and sharing a moment with caregivers strengthens bonds and initiates familiarity with language, spelling and punctuation, contributing significantly to a child's developmental journey.

The role of reading is pivotal in children's learning and development, and Braille books can help children with impaired vision to learn and develop in a format tailored to their needs. We are committed to growing this collection to ensure that all our library families can enjoy reading together.

SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities

More sought-after titles

YPRL's popular Book Express collections provide a bookstore experience in our libraries, allowing visitors to browse sought-after titles and blockbuster releases to borrow right away. Dedicated Book Express shelving originally featured at the entrances of Mill Park, Eltham, Watsonia and Ivanhoe Libraries, but in the last year this was expanded to all branches after a pop-up Book Express trial during the 2022 *Warm Winter Read* campaign indicated that the community wanted this trending collection to be available at all of our libraries.

The Book Express collection looks to bestseller lists with a 'no holds: no waiting' approach. We have made sure to refine and optimise our selection processes to tailor available titles to our local communities and strengthen the breadth of this collection.

Book Express titles are borrowed an average of 4.3 times across a three-month period. With a three-week loan, the Book Express collection is borrowed at a very fast pace! In total, Book Express titles were borrowed 12,862 times in 2022–23. As an extremely popular feature of our collection that drives foot traffic in our physical libraries, we are committed to offering this option to YPRL readers on an ongoing basis.

SDG 3 Good Health & Wellbeing

Expanding our eLibrary

Use of YPRL's digital collections is growing and there is an appetite in the community for an expanded offering in this space. This year, we have increased the arts and culture as well as language learning options for our library users.

Four new digital resources were added to YPRL's eLibrary including Craftsy – a database containing over 1,400 instructional videos for creative hobbies; Qello – a streaming platform containing the world's largest collection of live concerts and music documentaries; Classica – a streaming platform featuring recordings of classical music concerts, opera and ballet; and Clear Pronunciation – a library of video tutorials for English learners of all levels to introduce the sounds of Australian English.

YPRL will keep seeking opportunities to expand our popular eLibrary with digital collections and platforms that meet the needs of our diverse community by increasing opportunities to learn, connect, and be entertained.

SDG 3 Good Health & Wellbeing

Finding the facts
YPRL was the first library in Victoria to offer free access to *The New York Times,* an essential daily news source with a reputation for ethical, thoughtful, high-quality journalism. Our library users have unlimited onsite access to *The New York Times* when connected to library Wi-Fi, and can access from home with an unlimited redeemable 24-hour subscription token.

Libraries play a vital role in offering dependable resources for digital literacy, teaching source reliability assessment, and countering misinformation. Offering free access to the award-winning journalism of *The New York Times* is a fantastic way to build toward the achievement of these learning outcomes.

SDG 4 Quality Education

CALD Survey sparks expansion of in-language digital collections
This year, we surveyed our Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) community in ten community languages to find out which of our language collections they currently access, what they would like to see more of in those collections, and if they would like more expansive digital collections in their language.

We heard from more than 220 library users, with the general themes across all community language groups requesting more bilingual books for children; more bestselling Fiction titles; and more Adult Nonfiction books on popular topics like Psychology and Cooking.

As a result, we added 4,500 eBooks and eAudiobooks in the top 8 community languages spoken in our region to our eLibrary, and feedback from survey participants fed directly into our 2023–24 physical collection acquisition specifications.

SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities

*INSERT [Stats – Library visitation] *

Location	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	% Change
Diamond Valley	110,161	78,924	22,219	32,570	67,068	105.92%
Eltham	267,087	190,181	104,138	131,349	195,911	49.15%
Ivanhoe	164,039	122,938	66,062	155,262	295,509	90.33%
Lalor	298,611	207,459	84,662	92,455	168,923	82.71%
Mill Park	161,134	130,499	65,508	100,247	173,133	72.71%
Rosanna	128,847	111,096	67,692	59,596	73,629	23.55%
Thomastown	144,051	103,684	43,257	43,245	102,484	136.98%
Watsonia	197,435	141,359	62,446	66,481	133,888	101.39%
Whittlesea	49,962	35,942	21,351	23,132	42,852	85.25%
Mobile Library	35,044	25,058	18,880	10,527	23,976	127.76%
Total Library Visits	**1,556,371**	**1,147,140**	**556,215**	**714,864**	**1,277,373**	**78.69%**

Eltham Library's revamp
In March 2023, Eltham Library bid farewell to old, not-so-faithful book sorter Bessie, which returned and sorted the collections circulating through Eltham for the last 10 years. In Bessie's stead, staff welcomed our sleek, state-of-the-art new book sorter, quickly dubbing it "The Big Labookski, AKA The Dude."

Our new, improved and smaller book sorter is the little engine that can! This Australian made machine was even built with a local touch, with an Eltham resident and library user contributing their electronic engineering expertise to its design. This machine can process as many books as can be returned at one time and provides much excitement as library users of all ages watch their returns on the journey along the conveyor belt and into the return trolleys. We love seeing the noses plastered to our return room windows as visitors watch "The Dude" get to work! Eltham staff and patrons alike have welcomed this new addition to the team, and appreciate its new role in easing a significant manual handling task.

We also undertook extensive internal renovations in June 2023, Eltham Library is ready to unveil its newly refurbished space on 3 July 2023. Enhancements include a redesigned information desk, upgraded furnishings in the learning lounge, young adult and community zones, improved study spaces, and engaging collection spotlights highlighting the Eltham community's most borrowed books. Improvements to Eltham Library's spaces will create a more usable and inviting environment for library users to connect, learn, and thrive.

SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities

Rosanna Library's new chapter
In March, Rosanna Library closed its doors in preparation for construction of the new library. Built in the early 1970's, Rosanna Library has been a much-loved place for learning and connection but, as Rosanna has grown and changed, so have the needs of the community. In the weeks leading up to the original library's closure, library users engaged in a series of events created to capture memories and experiences of the Rosanna Library.

In a partnership with Woolworths, Banyule City Council will deliver a new Rosanna library – a proposed three storey, 1600sqm building incorporating indoor and outdoor spaces in the heart of Rosanna. The new space will expand the children's area and offer co-working and study spaces, community meeting rooms, quiet zones, a podcasting and recording studio, Maternal Child Health services and the Banyule Toy Library.

YPRL has partnered with Banyule City Council to deliver the Rosanna Library Pop-Up just a few minutes' walk away from the original library to serve library users. The Rosanna Library Pop-Up services include: Click & Collect, curated collection, printing and photocopying services, newspapers, computer access and Wi-Fi. Since opening, the pop-up has received more than 10,000 visitors and loaned over 15,000 items.

SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities

Galada Community Hub upgrade
In February 2023, the Galada Community Hub underwent a vital upgrade to meet the growing demand for collection in the space. Enhancements included new shelving, permanent signage and book displays, creating a more user-friendly experience and a stronger presence for YPRL in the centre.

Shelving updates and the introduction of stand-alone units for picture books have effectively doubled the collection available at the Hub. The addition of clearer signage and wall displays not only aids in creating connections in outreach visits but also incorporates inviting focal points. An interactive addition to the Hub are new book recommendation spots, collaboratively maintained by YPRL staff, Galada Community Centre staff, and community members sharing the common goal of telling others about the books they love.

The revamped children's shelving improves access to age-appropriate books for families and kinder groups, while the addition of Book Express in the Galada collection extends access to the newest and most sought-after items amongst library users. The Galada upgrade has made this much-loved YPRL Hub more inviting, usable and accessible, and has significantly improved the experience of library users visiting the space.

SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities

Updating our Support

Our Library Support Services (LSS) office in South Morang was closed for refurbishment from late July until mid-November 2022. During this time, our support staff relocated to branches and filled nearly every available space.

The refurbishment included new lighting, carpet and a complete transition to hotdesking for all of our support staff, with the CEO and manager offices transitioned into meeting rooms. Sit-stand desks were installed, and laptops with docking stations provided to all of our support staff, allowing them to be more efficient on the go and when helping out in branch.

SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities

Connecting communities

Greensborough Plaza has established a Reading Retreat space with support from YPRL. The Greensborough Reading Retreat invites people to donate books that can be taken, read, and then returned to the space for others to enjoy. YPRL has provided items from our collection to offer for borrowing from the Retreat, with staff consistently refreshing and the selection available to the community.

The Reading Retreat is a great space to promote our services to an engaged local community. Information on how to access YPRL's eLibrary and details of our library programs are available, and a 'Meet a Librarian' engagement opportunity and Storytime session were arranged for its launch.

YPRL will be utilising the Reading Retreat space to better understand the needs of the Greensborough community and gauge areas of interest to inform future library programming, including potential school holiday activities and a queer book group for young people. We are thrilled to be involved in activating local spaces and developing our understanding of the community in Greensborough.

SDG 3 Good Health & Wellbeing

Enabling dialogue on Treaty

In February 2023, Thomastown Library hosted a Treaty Community Forum presented by the First People's Assembly. The forum was an opportunity to "hear about the Self Determination Fund and processes for Treaty-making in Victoria, have a yarn, ask questions and help us shape the next steps on the journey."

The Treaty Community Forum achieved a fantastic turnout with attendance by local library regulars, staff from Thomastown Library and the City of Whittlesea, along with members of the wider community. YPRL looks forward to continuing to support Treaty and the First People's

Assembly of Victoria by providing a safe and welcoming space for community and allies to meet and discuss the path ahead.

SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities

Outcome: Organisational Strength
Investment in our staff, capacity, and governance to ensure we are capable and ready to adapt, learn and empower our communities in environmentally and socially responsible ways.

Behind the scenes, YPRL is committed to supporting our staff to enable them to serve our communities. We empower our staff through training, good structures and governance, and the right technology, so that they can focus on delivering what our communities need. Having the right infrastructure in place makes our staff more confident and adaptable to coming change. We see our staff as a major asset and invest in them accordingly, supporting their development, career progression, and wellbeing. Our responsibility to our community is one that we take seriously. As well as delivering high-quality library services, we take a sustainability lens to all that we do. Libraries inherently support sustainability in the community, with our model of shared resources, and we are always striving for ways to do better. As we work to update several of our spaces, we re-use and repair materials where we can, and prioritise the use of sustainable materials in all our activities.

Priority: Governance and technology
Strengthen our service by ensuring effective governance-strengthening decisions and partnerships; technology as an enabler for delivering services; technology that improves user experience.

YPRL takes a continuous improvement approach across the board, and that includes governance and technology. We have undertaken large-scale work to upgrade our digital environment, with a migration to Microsoft Office 365, a new corporate intranet, a major PC upgrade, new reporting systems, and a new expense management system. These upgrades mean that our staff can continue to produce high-quality work, supported by the most streamlined systems.

Digital Transformation
YRPL has made significant progress toward the outcomes in our Information and Communications Technology (ICT) strategy and Digital Transformation Plan. Our shift to Microsoft Office 365 from the old on-premises data centre enables authorised staff to access corporate data securely anytime, anywhere, enhancing internal collaboration. This change has changed the way we work and collaborate and with a change management action plan was put in place to aid staff throughout this transition.

We have launched a new corporate intranet and digitised our corporate forms, enhancing communication, information availability and delivering efficiency and productivity improvements. YPRL is focused on continual improvement of our new digital environments.

Despite vendor delays, our corporate PC and Laptop deployment project is underway with the cloud PC management environment and the procurement process completed. Deployment will be completed when devices are delivered.

YPRL continues to enhance staff's cyber security awareness through targeted training, with a dedicated training platform aiding in building a robust defence against cyber threats. These initiatives position YPRL to offer agile library services, poised to tackle future challenges effectively.

SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities

Digital Transformation at YPRL: Finance
Our Digital Transformation is supporting more efficient management of finance requirements at YPRL and we have delivered significant innovations. Our Financial Sustainability Framework is a comprehensive plan to ensure the long-term stability of YPRL's financial health and lay the foundation for strategic decision-making that aligns with the organisation's objectives. We have an Investment Policy and Strategy that to optimally allocates resources, maximise returns, and maintain a controlled risk exposure.

An internal review of YPRL's Payroll function assessed the design and effectiveness of our internal controls embedded into payroll processes, identified potential risks, and sought opportunities to improve related practices. Auditors concluded that YPRL has established appropriate payroll management practices fortifying YPRL financial integrity and enhancing employee trust and satisfaction. We implemented a new corporate card expense management system, representing a significant leap forward in streamlining financial processes and reinforcing YPRL's commitment to efficiency and transparency. The system seamlessly integrates all corporate card transactions into a centralised platform that optimises expense tracking, reconciliation, and reporting.

We launched a new financial reporting system which harnesses advanced technology to empower our staff and stakeholders with real-time, insightful data for informed decision-making. And we presented as a panellist in the "IT Systems Transformation Panel" at the FinPro (Local Government Finance Professionals) seminar where we were able to showcase our organisational practices as a best-of-breed approach in leveraging technology to enhance financial operations, sharing our learnings with the broader library sector.

SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities

*INSERT [Stats – Professional Membership] *
*INSERT [Stats – Processes Updated] *

Commented [BE4]: See stats document

Priority: Environmental and social sustainability
Responsible, relevant, and conscious organisation through ensuring diverse and inclusive practice; environmental and socially sustainable practice and procurement.

At YPRL we are welcome and here for everyone in our communities. Our work around inclusion and diversity is fundamental to all that we do, as we truly believe that libraries are for everyone. Building on programming such as Sensitive Santa, we're doing a thorough review of our accessibility across our services, spaces, and programs as part of our Accessibility Access Plan. Through the Talking Together program we have connected into the Somali Australian community and brought the benefits of library engagement to a new audience. Ongoing work with the LGBTQIA+ community has included IDAHOBIT events across the region.

Sustainable Refurbishment
YPRL prioritised sustainable practice in refurbishing both corporate and library spaces this year. At Eltham Library, this meant choosing to repurpose much of our existing furniture and joinery instead of buying new such as cushions in the children's area being reupholstered; table legs on PC desks were used elsewhere; existing shelving units were retained and revitalised; timber bay ends were resurfaced; and chairs and tables were refinished rather than replaced.

During our Library Support Services upgrade we used the same sustainable mindset. Most of YPRL's retired furniture was not sent landfill, with 70% donated for reuse. We were also able to improve the quality of lighting while reducing energy use by moving to LED – a change we

anticipate will save an estimated 40% on power consumption and bills. YPRL is committed to ensuring our libraries and offices are up to date and fit for purpose while prioritising sustainability as a cornerstone in our decision making moving forwards.

SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities
SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production

Celebrating Inclusion
On 17 May 2023, YPRL marked International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT) with a planned rainbow storytime hosted by Eltham Library. The inviting family event was to feature drag performer, Frock Hudson, reading from inclusive children's books, bringing stories of inclusion to the community. Unfortunately, the session was moved online based on police advice, where more than 3,000 people have now viewed the inclusive message, a far greater number than could ever have fit in the library for an in-person event. This fantastic turnout demonstrated the importance of positive visibility and representation for LGBTIQA+ families in our library spaces.

Eltham Library received an immense amount of support from rainbow families in and around Eltham, as well as families from near and far. Our IDAHOBIT event became a catalyst for forging new community partnerships, firmly establishing the library as a safe space to celebrate IDAHOBIT and for our diverse library families to feel truly seen and embraced.

Quotes
"Thank you so much for spreading the Rainbow love for IDAHOBIT day. This means so much for Rainbow families and all of us in the trans and queer community! Love to all the staff."

"Dear library staff, Thank you for supporting next week's IDAHOBIT drag storytime. As a member of the queer community, I find hope in the darkness when people and organisations like you stand up for people like me."

SDG 3 Good Health & Wellbeing
SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities

Embracing the Uluru Statement from the Heart
In June 2023, the YPRL Board of Directors made the unanimous decision to endorse the *Uluru Statement from the Heart* in full. This is a positive step in continuing to build a strong and respectful relationship with our First Nations community and this endorsement signifies the library's commitment to promoting positive change within the community.

We recognise the vital role public libraries can play in supporting the Uluru Statement and fostering understanding of First Nations culture. Public libraries are uniquely positioned to support the *Uluru Statement from the Heart* and contribute to reconciliation efforts. We can ensure accurate information is accessible and work with our local First Nations communities to provide educational opportunities to learn more about First Nations culture. By sharing information and collaborating with our First Nations communities and organisations, as well as our councils, YPRL is providing our communities with trusted resources to make informed decisions in the upcoming referendum.

SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities

Accessibility in Action
YPRL is working to make our services more accessible and ensuring our staff can identify and

address barriers to library services for people with disability is crucial to this effort. Disability confidence in libraries supports both staff and library users and a key action from our Accessibility Action Plan involves assessing and improving staff confidence in the space. We conducted a survey which indicated there was a varying degree of confidence among staff.

In response to the survey findings, we offered opportunities for staff to attend customer disability training and take on the role of branch champion. Staff who completed the training reported increased confidence in understanding and addressing accessibility issues and felt more empowered to advocate and promote greater understanding, empathy, and respect for people with disability in our libraries.

By reviewing our service through an accessibility lens, our staff are able to contribute to our Accessibility Action Plan and build a more welcoming and inclusive library service that actively seeks out and removes barriers to access. Each change brings YPRL one step closer to ensuring our libraries meet the needs of everyone in our community.

SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities

Priority: People and capacity
Invest in our people through building people's capability and capacity; creating opportunities for growth and learning.

YPRL is nothing without our amazing staff. Our continued investment in our teams through training, professional development, and an all staff development conference mean that our library staff are engaged, in touch with industry trends, up to date with best practise, and are leaders across our libraries. A new internal structure has given more opportunities for staff to grow, develop, and progress.

*INSERT [Stats – YPRL staff] *

Staff Totals	Number of Staff	% of YPRL Workforce
Full Time	40	25%
Part Time	107	66%
Casuals	15	9%
Total	162	

Public Participation Restructure
In early August 2022, YPRL announced a restructure in the Public Participation department. Three new senior positions were created to increase engagement with councils, partners, and community, replacing three existing Branch Manager roles.

These three new positions of Senior Manager, Engagement and Operations have a regional portfolio, liaise with councils, and lead a culture of community codesign. In addition, three Team Leader: Operations positions were created to support the Senior Manager positions. Consultation took place with all YPRL staff throughout August and the staff's union (Australian Services Union) were fully informed during the process.

SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities

Yarra Plenty Regional Library All Staff Conference

After a three-year hiatus, the Staff Professional Development Conference made a triumphant return in 2023. Held on Friday 3 March at Plenty Valley Arts & Convention Centre the day saw a record surge in attendance fuelled by the enthusiasm and energy of staff enjoying the opportunity to connect in person.

The day started on a high note, with a brilliant presentation from Banyule City Council First Nations Lead Zali Mifsud. Her insights shed light on the need to integrate First Nations perspectives within our libraries and vital importance of the *Uluru Statement from the Heart* and upcoming referendum.

We were grateful to hear from all our expert presenters, including Dr Barbara Barbosa Neves and Prof Alan Peterson from Monash University, Leanne Hart from hart2heart, and our moderator Margaret Devlin from the Centre for Organisational Development.

We have received brilliant feedback so far from staff and presenters indicating that our Staff Professional Development Conference is tremendously valued opportunity for learning and connection at YPRL. We look forward to delivering another great program in 2024.

SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities

*INSERT [Stats – External Training] *
*INSERT [Stats – Conference attendance] *
*INSERT [Stats – Presentations] *
*INSERT [Stats – Articles] *
*INSERT [Stats – Internal Training] *

> **Commented [BE5]:** See stats document

Priority: A resilient and thriving organisation
Secure and grow our organisation through: financial diversification; development of a new business model in response to Local Government Act 2020 *requirements.*

YPRL continues to grow as an organisation through creative solutions such as supporting smaller libraries to deliver library services, maintain a library management system and sharing collection. Service level agreements with Murrindindi Library Service and Warrnambool Library Service leverage our strengths and give these smaller organisations access to higher level systems and services than they could otherwise afford.

Employee Wellbeing
YPRL is committed to supporting its employees' overall health and happiness and has implemented a range of initiatives to invest in staff wellbeing for a healthy, motivated and productive workforce.

Our staff Wellness Hub Portal is regularly updated with resources to support staff members' mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing. While our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a valuable resource for employees and managers seeking confidential counselling and support for personal or work-related issues. Employees can access an EAP Portal with a monthly eMagazine, and an array of resources on individual mental health and wellbeing, nutrition and lifestyle. Employees can also access specialist helplines for First Nations, LGBTIQA+, and domestic and family violence. YPRL also shares a monthly *Well at Work* newsletter offering information on wellbeing topics as well as practical tips, success stories, and recipes. The newsletter has been well-received with a good subscriber base indicating that employees find the content valuable and engaging and are keen to stay informed about health and wellness matters at YPRL.

SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities

Service Level Agreements

YPRL and Murrindindi Library Service (MLS) have maintained a long-standing, mutually beneficial service level agreement (SLA) since 1996 which continues strongly to this day. Our newer relationship with Warrnambool Library Service (WLS) began in 2021, and WLS opened the Warrnambool Library and Learning Centre in October 2022, welcoming South West TAFE into their shared facility. YPRL supports WLS and MLS with Library Management System support and collection services.

These partnerships offer financial benefits by sharing systems, collections, and expertise, but there is additional value to our users in sharing systems, collections and learnings with each other. YPRL is proud to support smaller libraries in the delivery of library services to their communities.

"*I have found our partnership with YPRL to be a valuable and generous asset. Everyone I have spoken with has been supportive and inspirational with their time, advice and patience and have mentored me, even if they've been unaware. YPRL's attention to detail and their dedication to their communities through empathetic collection management and programs, and their dedication to creating a community space for all, are an inspiration.*" – Michelle Whatnall, Coordinator Murrindindi Library Service

SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities

*INSERT [Organisation Chart] *

> **Commented [BE6]:** This will be redesigned for the final report

Information Privacy Act

The Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 is designed to protect the private information of individuals. The Corporation has a Privacy Policy available on the library website. No complaints were received during 2022–2023.

Freedom of Information
The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* provides people with the opportunity to obtain information held by state and local government departments and authorities. The Act gives people the right to request documents relating to their personal affairs. YPRL did not receive any requests during 2022–2023.

Public Interest Disclosures
In accordance with the provisions of s. 58 of the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012*, the Corporation has a procedure for dealing with disclosures made under the Act. The Executive Manager Corporate Services is the Corporation's Protected Disclosure Coordinator. YPRL has not received any disclosures directly nor has it received any referrals from the Ombudsman during 2022–2023.

Financial Summary
INSERT [VAGO Report] to come

YPRL Highlights

Embedding Recognition into our School Holiday Programs
Yarra Plenty Regional Library (YPRL) recognises the vital role public libraries play in fostering understanding of and engagement with First Nations culture. In mid-2022, our codesign work with local First Nations communities resulted in calls for stronger representation of First Nations history and culture within our library spaces and programs. In response to this, YPRL made a commitment to embed First Nations cultural experiences in all of our School Holiday Programs.

This pledge reflected our Library Plan, which highlights that creating ongoing opportunities for children and young people to connect with First Nations people increases meaningful engagement and learning. So, we worked with a range of First Nations artists, presenters and organisations to design and deliver a suite of traditional and contemporary activities acknowledging and celebrating the significance of First Nations culture and history throughout the region.

Our staff have also been supported to learn from and deliver First Nation activities in the library setting. In late-2022, staff members attended the City of Whittlesea Early Years and Conservation Conference, strengthening community connection, collaboration and inclusion. This conference fostered knowledge sharing and skill development in traditional play-based practices. At this time, local First Nations facilitator Aunty Sharon Hughes encouraged our staff to learn about and deliver a Possum Skin Painting inspired event at Lalor Library. In this session, children and families engaged with the practice through discussion, film demonstration, learning resources, and experimentation with natural paint on calico.

Community response to our First Nation programming has been very positive. At the Possum Skin Painting session, children were excited to tell their own stories through painting, and were able to talk about their own families about what they thought was important to share in their artwork. Parents commented that they had never heard about the artform before and thought it was wonderful to see their children exploring it.

Mill Park Library and Thomastown Library also introduced digital experiences of First Nations culture during School Holiday Programs in 2022, including *Dhinawan in the Sky* and *Thalu: Dreamtime is Now*. Created by Tess Reading, a Gomeroi woman from Tamworth for Code Club Australia, *Dhinawan in the Sky* engages children in coding and animation activities, inspired by traditional knowledge of the Dark Emu Dhinawan, star tracing stories, and time. Directed by Tyson Mowarin, *Thalu: Dreamtime is Now* immerses participants in ground-breaking virtual reality

experiences, exploring stories, cultural heritage and contemporary issues of the Ngarluma Aboriginal people of northern Western Australia.

Moving forwards, all YPRL branches will continue to offer a range of opportunities to engage with First Nations culture during our School Holiday Programs and beyond. Children have participated in boomerang throwing, traditional games, performance and music making at their local library, while parents and carers increasingly report positively of these experiences.

"Will you be doing more of these? He had such a good time and it's so good for them to be learning from Elders." – parent of participant

Sharing the rich and ancient heritage of Australia's first peoples, our programs supporting First Nations presenters and organisations have included Aunty Karen Lovett; Eva Jo Edwards; Sharyn Lovett; Morningstar Performing; Cultural Infusion; and The Nikki Visaj Movement and we thank all these people and organisations for sharing their inclusive, enriching and informative, dance, didgeridoo, art and craft, and storytelling activities.

Continued collaboration with local First Nations artists and presenters for our School Holiday Programs has significantly contributed to increased acknowledgement and representation of the culture of First Nations People throughout our communities, as well as inspiring new relationships and partnership opportunities for YPRL. A suite of creative activities will continue to be designed and curated by First Nations creators, including staff, to further opportunities to embrace, showcase and increase community engagement with local First Nation culture, stories, and practices in our libraries.

By offering unique and meaningful engagement with First Nations culture beyond what children might encounter in the classroom, YPRL's School Holiday Program activities continue to support increased community awareness and respect for First Nation histories, languages, traditions and contributions. In the spirit of reconciliation and truth-telling, events and activities will also amplify local First Nations voices and stories, inspired by and reflecting YPRL's growing Deadly Collection and recent support for the *Uluru Statement from the Heart*.

Kate Hansen
Programs Manager
Yarra Plenty Regional Library

Deborah Fothergill
Coordinator, Programs and Engagement
Lalor Library
Yara Plenty Regional Library

SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities

How We're Talking Together
At Yarra Plenty Regional Library (YPRL) we work hard to make our libraries welcoming, inviting, and inclusive spaces for the whole community. But in 2022, we found out through some feedback to council that the local Somali Australian community in West Heidelberg did not feel welcome in library spaces and didn't think that libraries were there for them.

We know that using libraries connects people not just to books and education but also to their local communities and the people around them, leading to improved social, mental, and physical

health outcomes. So we started planning how we could make our library spaces more welcoming to the local Somali Australian community.

In April 2022, we learned that we had been successful in our application for a *Libraries for Health and Wellbeing* Grant to the value of just under $80,000, to engage with the Somali community, create a deliberate welcome, codesign some programming to bring them in to the library, and promote better health and wellbeing for the community through library engagement.

This project was driven by our Community Program Officers, Mahamed Hassan Awl and Aisha Ahmed, who were both employed under the grant. Mahamed and Aisha are both local Somali Australians and brought with them strong networks and a rich understanding of the community. Having the program led by members of the community we were trying to engage meant that we were able to jump straight into meaningful conversations and connections.

An outreach program was also established where staff from the Rosanna Library visited the Himilo Playgroup and once a month a Storytime session has been held at the Charles La Trobe-Olympic Village Primary School. These sessions have been well received by the Somali Australian parents and their children, they enjoy the interaction with the Storytime presenter and have learnt new songs. The parents are very grateful that the library visits the playgroup as it is a safe and calming environment for their children.

Throughout the year, Aisha and Mahamed built connections with community and partners including Himilo Community Connect. In the September 2022 school holidays, a suite of Somali-focused programming brought lots of people into Ivanhoe Library and Cultural Hub for the first time, enjoying a Mario Kart tournament, a Somali Storytime, a CALD movie night with free pizza, as well as a robot event at the Bell St Mall.

As part of the evaluation for the school holiday events, Aisha and Mahamed identified that a gap for the Somali Australian community was career development. Young Somali Australians are highly educated, more so than the broader Australian population, but they are less likely to be in employment. They are also less likely to know what they want to do with their lives and often lack role models that look like them in their desired fields. So, Aisha and Mahamed decided that a CALD Careers Expo in the library would be a good way to support the community, promote connection, and ultimately lead to better health and wellbeing outcomes.

This event happened in December 2022 at Ivanhoe Library and Cultural Hub, in partnership with Himilo Community Connect. Over 250 people attended, with a number connecting with employers and even getting jobs on the day. Exhibitors included employers, education services, councils, and legal services, and sessions ran through the day including interview skills and a very popular panel featuring people talking about their own journeys to success.

The grant program culminated in a two-week Reliving Somalia Festival at Ivanhoe Library and Cultural Hub. This program consisted of a series of events through the fortnight, including an art installation in the gallery space at the library in partnership with Banyule Arts and a Somali Cultural Festival on Sunday 5 March 2023 to finish the exhibition and the main grant program.

The vibrant exhibition drew crowds from across Melbourne and attracted social media attention globally. Somali poets performed at the exhibition launch and there was a ceremonial unwrapping and sharing of a traditional wedding meat dish. The exhibition itself featured a striking vinyl wall wrap replicating a Somali landscape, a woven replica of a traditional Somali hut, lots of hand weaving and artifacts, and a series of proverbs (very important in Somali culture) matched with photos of Somalia. Other events during that period included Baati Night, a special evening for

women with games and dancing; a weaving workshop with one of the artists; a FIFA competition; and a Somali Storytime.

The Somali Cultural Festival was held out the front of Ivanhoe Library and Cultural Hub, and featured Somali food and stallholders, singers, dancers, and music, as well as a jumping castle, fairy floss, and so on. This event was not just for the local Somali Australian community and was a showcase of Somali culture that was shared with the wider community.

Talking Together aimed to bring the Somali Australian community into the library and foster stronger community connection with an increased sense of community belonging. The results have been highly successful, thanks to having community members at the heart of the project, both through a codesign approach and through employing Somali Australian staff. There has been a significant and sustained increase in Somali Australian people using the library, leading to positive social and mental health outcomes for the community.

Kate Ferguson
Senior Manager Engagement and Operations
Mill Park Library
Yarra Plenty Regional Library

Jane Petryszyn
Coordinator, Programs and Engagement
Rosanna Library
Yarra Plenty Regional Library

SDG 3 Good Health and Wellbeing
SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities

Visiting Home in Virtual Reality
At Yarra Plenty Regional Library (YPRL) we recognise the value of play and gaming as an opportunity for education, socialisation, fun, and engagement across a range of demographic groups. At our libraries you are never too young, or too old, to engage in play! In partnership with a range of council and health services, Diamond Valley Library delivered an innovative digital program that incorporates gaming and virtual reality into our programming.

Following on from the *Be Connected* program, staff identified an opportunity for further digital inclusion programs for older people. Our *Armchair Travels* program is designed for older people that are interested in exploring virtual reality, gaming, and augmented reality. It highlights the broad outcomes of life-long learning, health and wellbeing, and social connection. Virtual reality is much more than simple entertainment, it's a way to reinvigorate the mind, stimulate imagination, strengthen social connections, and for most of our participants, boldly try something they have never attempted before! *Armchair Travels* has impacted the lives of our participants through meaningful and shared experiences in virtual reality that stimulate memories, drives social engagement, and bringing joy. It offers a lot of opportunities for patrons to drive their own experience. They might choose an adventure, or a location to visit, and can even lead explorations of virtual environments with others.

In one *Armchair Travels* session library users travel through an online tour of a destination of their choice, all while sitting in the safety of a comfy chair in the library. Many of the patrons have used this technology to travel back to their hometowns, cities they have visited, or countries their families migrated from and reliving memories or stories of yesteryear and traverse through the area and rediscover their past. This is otherwise impossible for many of them, due to health or financial barriers making physical travel to these places impossible. By using virtual reality, they

are able to reconnect with their past, share with their family and friends the similarities or differences of their favourite places or experiences.

Through the virtual world, our users are immersed in a brand-new experience alongside their friends and family. But the real magic of virtual reality happens when the headsets come off, after a virtual reality experience, patrons are often eager to talk about what they have seen, where they have been, and are often keen to share some long-forgotten stories of their own past or hometowns. These memories then unlock conversations about food, family, friends, and fears. The discussions afterward are always engaging for the entire group who usually have lots of questions about the virtual visits. One community member, John (78) used the opportunity to visit Thailand and experience some of their history and culture, without leaving his seat. He said that the experience was so real that he felt like he was actually there.

Whilst there are many clinical and health benefits to group virtual reality sessions, sharing joyful moments and experiencing joy is what these sessions are all about. *Armchair Travels* is delivered as a monthly program increasing digital literacy for older people. The success of this program has been a highlight for staff and partners and our community, and we have received requests for more sessions across the library service.

We have also leveraged this engagement to also increase our opportunities for collaboration on other digital literacy programs that explore the curiosity of our users, resulting in brain training games, scam awareness training, tech help, intergenerational storytime, and more. These codesign opportunities have enabled our staff to design future meaningful programming and collaboration with older people in our communities. We have continued to deliver *Armchair Travels* in a variety of branches and expos and are looking forward to future opportunities to explore the virtual world with many others through public play in our library services.

"They absolutely loved it, was all the talk on the bus back, over lunch and transport home. Thank you so much. It made our day especially when one of the ladies who has very poor eyesight gave it a go. The look on her face and smile was priceless when she was able to see the images. They were keen to come back!" – healthAbility over 65+ Connect Well Group

Cristopher Pizarro
Coordinator, Programs & Engagement
Lalor Library
Yarra Plenty Regional Library

Teresa Dober
Coordinator, Programs & Engagement
Diamond Valley Library
Yarra Plenty Regional Library

SDG 3 Good Health & Wellbeing
SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities

[END OF DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023]

Agenda Item 6:   Information and Communication Technology Use Policy (DECISION)

Responsible Officer:	Chief Executive Officer
Author:	Sajeeva Tennekoon, Executive Manager Technology & Assets
Attachment:	6. – Information and Communication Technology Use Policy

REPORT

SUMMARY

This report is for the Board's approval.

INTRODUCTION

Attached is the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Use Policy developed for YPRL. The policy outlines the guidelines, expectations, and responsibilities related to the use of ICT resources within the organisation. Its purpose is to ensure a secure, efficient, and responsible use of technology while promoting a conducive environment for staff and patrons.

REPORT

The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Use Policy for YPRL establishes a foundation for responsible, secure, and efficient technology usage within the organisation. By adhering to the guidelines outlined in this policy, employees, volunteers, and patrons contribute to a digital environment that fosters productivity, respect for privacy, and compliance with ethical and legal standards. This policy aligns with the library's commitment to providing exceptional service and ensuring the safety and well-being of all stakeholders.

The policy's primary goals are to:

Promote Responsible Use: The policy emphasises responsible and ethical use of ICT resources, including computers, networks, internet access, and digital services. It outlines the expectations for appropriate conduct while utilising these resources.

Ensure Security: The policy defines security measures to protect sensitive data, digital assets, and the organisation's network infrastructure. It highlights the importance of adhering to cybersecurity best practices and reporting any security incidents promptly.

Support Productivity: The policy encourages the productive use of ICT resources to enhance organisational efficiency and effectiveness. It provides guidelines for using technology tools to fulfill job responsibilities while avoiding excessive personal use.

Respect Privacy: The policy outlines guidelines for respecting the privacy of library patrons and colleagues. It emphasises the responsible handling of personal and sensitive information in compliance with relevant privacy laws.

Prevent Unauthorised Activities: The policy prohibits engaging in unauthorised activities, including accessing or distributing inappropriate content, hacking, unauthorised sharing of passwords, and other actions that may compromise network integrity.

To ensure successful implementation of the ICT Use Policy, the following steps will be taken:

1. Communication and Training: A comprehensive communication plan will be executed to inform all employees, volunteers, and patrons about the policy's existence, purpose, and guidelines.

2. Monitoring and Enforcement: Regular monitoring of ICT resource usage will be conducted to identify any policy violations or security breaches.

3. Policy Review: The policy will be periodically reviewed to reflect technological advancements, changes in regulations, and evolving organisational needs. Feedback from staff and patrons will be solicited to ensure continuous improvement.

CONSULTATION

Other council policies and Australian university policies and guidelines.

CRITICAL DATES

N/A.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A

POLICY STRATEGY AND LEGISLATION

This policy is connected to sixteen (16) Acts/Regulations listed within the Related Legislation section and an annual policy review strategy.

LINKS TO LIBRARY PLAN

Outcome:

- **Organisational strength**: Investment in our staff, capacity, and governance to ensure we are capable and ready to adapt, learn and empower our communities in environmentally and socially responsible ways.

Priorities:

- People and capacity.
- Governance and technology.

DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Under section 80C of the Local Government Act 1989 officers providing advice to the Library must disclose any interests, including type of interest.

The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with the relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board resolves to RECEIVE and ADOPT the YPRL Information and Communication Technology Use Policy

M: _____

S: _____

Policy Adopted by Board – August 2023	
Policy Name	**Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Use Policy**
Version number	2.0
Policy date	August 2023
Date to be reviewed	August 2025
Responsibility	Executive Manager Technology & Assets
Related YPRL Policies and Procedures	Internet Access Policy Privacy Policy Responsible Conduct Policy Employee Code of Conduct Social Media Policy Email Communication Procedure Responsible Conduct Procedure

Purpose:

This policy is to outlines the requirements of Yarra Plenty Regional Library (YPRL) in the use of its Information and Communication Technology (ICT), which includes all business applications and systems, data and equipment.

Scope

This policy applies to employees, contractors, consultants, casuals, and other workers at YPRL, including all personnel affiliated with third parties (users).

This policy applies to YPRL owned or leased, Internet/Intranet/Extranet-related systems, including but not limited to computer equipment/peripherals, software, operating systems, storage media, network accounts providing electronic mail, and internet browsing.

Inappropriate use exposes YPRL to risks including virus and malware attacks, compromise of network systems and services, and legal issues.

Effective security requires the participation and support of all YPRL employees, volunteers and contractors that deal with information and/or information systems. It is the responsibility of every computer user to know this and to conduct their activities accordingly.

Related Legislation

YPRL makes this Policy in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* and Section 19 of the *Work Health* and *Safety Act 2011* regarding the provision of a safe working environment. This Policy is also made to ensure that permitted use of YPRL's Corporate ICT facilities is consistent with other relevant laws, policies and practices regulating:

- copyright breaches and patent materials legislation;
- anti-discrimination legislation;
- defamation legislation;
- the Spam Act 2003;
- practices regulating discriminatory speech and the distribution of illicit and offensive materials, particularly those that are sexual or pornographic in nature.

Definitions

Employees for the purposes of this policy refers to: all YPRL permanent or casual employees, consultants, contractors/subcontractors, and any of their employees whilst engaged in work for YPRL.

Volunteer refers to a person who is willing to work for the benefit of YPRL of their own free will and without coercion, with no expectation of or right to, payment except for authorised reasonable reimbursement for out -of-pocket expenses. For the purpose of this policy, volunteer also includes students on placement or work experience.

Policy

Use, storage and management of electronic or digital information is a vital component of YPRL's functions and operations. This applies equally to the Library Management System, corporate and financial information, communications and marketing, and organisational and operational requirements/information.

To achieve our goals, and to meet legal and practical requirements and to maintain good governance, YPRL will ensure the provision of appropriate and fit for purpose infrastructure, systems and procedures.

1. General Use and Ownership

While YPRL's Information Communication & Technology department (ICT) provides a reasonable level of privacy, users should be aware that the data they create on corporate systems remains the property of YPRL. Because of the need to protect YPRL's network, YPRL cannot guarantee the confidentiality of information stored on any network connected device belonging to YPRL.

Employees are responsible for exercising good judgment regarding the reasonableness of personal use of corporate systems. The Code of Conduct provides the guidelines concerning personal use of Internet/Intranet/Extranet systems. When in doubt employees should consult their supervisor or manager.

For security and network maintenance purposes, authorised individuals within YPRL may monitor equipment, systems and network traffic at any time. YPRL reserves the right to audit networks and systems on a periodic basis to ensure compliance with this policy.

Users should also be aware that any YPRL records (including email) may have to be disclosed in court proceedings or in investigations by authorities and regulatory bodies or in response to a Freedom of Information application or other official enquiry.

2. Security and Proprietary Information

The users are expected to be aware of Privacy and Public Records legislation and obligations especially in regard to confidential information. Examples of confidential information include but are not limited to:

- company confidential documents;
- corporate strategies;
- competitor sensitive;
- trade secrets;
- specifications;
- all customer data, and research data.

Employees should take all necessary steps to prevent unauthorised access to this information.

Employees must use extreme caution when opening e-mail attachments or URL links received from unknown senders, which may contain viruses, e-mail bombs, or Trojan horse code.

3. Access to ICT Systems

All staff will be provided access to YPRL ICT applications at levels based on the need for access. As soon as practicable at commencement of employment or commencement of duties.

Users are only permitted access to YPRL's systems and applications using their own authorised ID.

Users must not share their own ID or password with other users nor allow other users to access systems or applications by using their own ID or password.

4. Email Chat and Communication Activities

The following activities are strictly prohibited:

- Sending unsolicited messages, including the sending of "junk mail" or other advertising material to individuals who did not specifically request such material (email spam).
- Any form of harassment via any messaging platform e.g. email, telephone or posts, chat whether through language, frequency, or size of messages.
- Unauthorised use, or forging, of email header information.
- Solicitation of email for any other email address, other than which aligns with Communications Policy.
- Creating or forwarding "chain letters" or "pyramid" schemes of any type.
- All staff emails are not to be sent without explicit approval from an Executive Manager.

5. Unacceptable Use

The following activities are, in general, prohibited. Users may be exempted from these restrictions during the course of their legitimate job responsibilities (e.g. systems administration staff may have a need to disable the network access of a host if that host is disrupting production services). Exceptions are granted by the relevant Executive Manager.

Under no circumstances is a user at YPRL authorised to engage in any activity that:

- Is illegal under local, state, federal or international law;
- Involves the creation or distribution of any disruptive or offensive messages including comments about race, gender, hair colour, disabilities, age, sexual orientation, pornography, religious beliefs and practice, political beliefs or national origin. In addition, sending or receiving any material that is obscene, hateful or objectionable material;
- Involves pornographic or other sexually explicit or offensive material;
- Involves uploading, downloading or transmitting commercial software or copyrighted material in violation of its copyright.
- Involves accessing internet radio stations or other music sites;
- Involves undertaking personal commercial ventures or business activities not related to YPRL business.

The lists above are by no means exhaustive but attempt to provide a framework for activities which fall into the category of unacceptable use.

6. System and Network Activities

The following activities are strictly prohibited:

- Violations of the rights of any person or company protected by copyright, trade secret, patent or other intellectual property, or similar laws or regulations, including, but not limited to, the installation or distribution of "pirated" or other software products that are not appropriately licensed for use by YPRL.
- breaking laws of copyright, moral rights or intellectual property – note: this includes illegal copies of software, music, video, images;
- porting software, technical information, encryption software or technology, in violation of international or regional export control laws, is illegal. The appropriate manager should be consulted prior to export of any material that is in question.
- Introduction of malicious programs into the network or server (e.g., viruses, worms, Trojan Horses, e-mail bombs, etc.).
- Revealing your account password to others or allowing use of your account by others. This includes family and other household members when work is being done at home.
- Using a YPRL computing asset to actively engage in procuring or transmitting material that is in violation of sexual harassment or hostile workplace laws in the user's local jurisdiction.
- Effecting security breaches or disruptions of network communication. Security breaches include, but are not limited to, accessing data of which the employee is not an intended recipient or logging into a server or account that the employee is not expressly authorised to access, unless these duties are within the scope of regular duties.
- Providing information about, or lists of, YPRL employees to parties outside YPRL.

7. Use of Internet

The internet is a valuable resource and information gathering tool which is widely used across the organisation. All YPRL staff have access to the internet, however it is important to note that internet use during work hours should mainly be for business use; other personal use may be conducted during breaks or for short periods when needed and do not affect work practices.

All internet browsing can be tracked including sites visited, duration and content.

Users viewing or downloading content that is deemed inappropriate for the workplace, or breaching the permitted use of internet procedures, may be subject to disciplinary actions.

YPRL's internet connection must not be used for any illegal or unethical activity or personal business activity and must not be used in a manner that would compromise the security of any computer system or network whether owned or managed by YPRL or not.

Specifically, staff should not:

- Use the YPRL internet for conducting a personal business
- Access, download or distribute from offensive, inappropriate or gambling sites
- Access or download game sites
- Access sites for the purpose of streaming audio or visual material not related to the Library service's business

When working on their desktop within YPRL's premises users must use the internet connection provided from this equipment.

Requirements for use of the internet by Library customers is outlined in the Internet Access Policy available on the YPRL website.

Responsibilities

The **CEO and Executive Leadership Team** is responsible for:

- Ensuring that training for the Information and Communication Technology policy and procedures is implemented.
- Procedures are in place to address any breach of the policy.

Employees are responsible for:

- Ensuring they are familiar with and adhere to the YPRL Information and Communication Technology Use Policy; Completing the training for the Information and Communication Technology policy and procedures.
- Being aware of all cyber security threats and take all reasonable precautions and abide by best practice guidelines.

Volunteers are responsible for:

- Ensuring they adhere to the YPRL Information and Communication Technology Use Policy.

Breach of Policy

All employees, contractors and volunteers are required to comply with this policy. If an employee or volunteer breaches this policy, they may be subject to disciplinary action. In serious cases this may include termination of employment.

[END OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY USE POLICY]

Agenda Item 7:   YPRL Mobile Library Stop Review (DECISION)

Responsible Officer:	Chief Executive Officer
Author:	Robyn Ellard, Executive Manager Public Participation
Attachment:	7 – I & J Management Service Mobile Stops Review Report

REPORT

SUMMARY

This report is for Board Members' decision.

INTRODUCTION

In March 2023, YPRL engaged a consultant (I&J Management Services) to review the Mobile Library Service schedule. The consultants' remit was to review the current Mobile Library Service schedule (which has been largely unchanged since 2013), the changing needs of local communities, the additions of new click and collect hubs and community libraries, and member councils' individual future requirements and strategies.

REPORT

The mobile library currently operates Monday to Friday weekly, making 14 stops at 13 locations across the Cities of Banyule (1), Nillumbik (10 stops) and Whittlesea (3 stops).

Due to the opening of a new community library in Mernda town centre in late-2023, the opening of the Galada hub click and collect and the possibility of using the smaller Outreach Service vehicle in 2025 for the mobile library, we took the opportunity to assess the current operating times and locations serviced. This review would determine if there was a more efficient way to run the service by altering stop lengths (depending on demand), add more stops to service other communities and examine options to maximise community access to library services.

The consultants engaged with each Council's respective stakeholders, YPRL staff and management teams, in addition to referencing the loan and visitation statistics for each stop. The consultants visited each stop in the current schedule to meet with members who used the mobile library, and they reviewed each mobile stop location from the perspective of safety such as locations of school zones. The consultants were also provided with information from the safety and compliance review conducted by an external Heavy Vehicle Supply Chain contractor that included requirements to ensure compliance with NHV regulations such as break times and duration between stops.

The report provides YPRL's current mobile library schedule and identifies three options for delivering the Mobile Library Service efficiently to our member councils:

1. **Tweak** option recommends minor changes to the current schedule to standardise stop duration and reduce the distance travelled by 9kms less each week. It also includes the addition of two extra hours a week on Mondays.

2. **Push** option recommends changes to the current schedule to standardise stop duration and reduce the distance travelled by 9kms less each week. This option also takes into consideration local community organisations, mobile library members and staff feedback regarding schedule start times and duration. Loan and door counter information was also used to inform mobile library stop duration. This option has no cost or staffing impacts although there is an increase in the service from 30.5 hours to 33.5 hours.

Below are key differences between the **Push** option and the **Current** mobile schedule**:**

Nillumbik
- St Andrews stop shifted from Tuesday afternoons to Wednesday mornings when the community centre is open (currently closed on Tuesday mornings).
- Warrandyte North stop shifted from Wednesday mornings to Tuesday lunch time due to a request from the local Kindergarten.
- Panton Hill stop moving to an earlier time on the same day (Tuesdays) to build capacity in the schedule for an additional stop.
- Yarrambat stop shifted to Tuesday afternoons to create space for an additional, new two-hour stop at Orchard Road Community and Early Learning Centre in Doreen. This stop has also been reduced from three hours to two hours due to consistent low visitation in the first hour of this stop.
- Hurstbridge stop time to be shifted slightly.
- Two Diamond Creek stops to be merged into one longer stop on Wednesdays. This takes the weekly stop time from 4 hours twice a week to 4.5 hours once a week. Combining these two stops reduces the number of kilometres the truck travels each week and decreases wear and tear. There is greater community use of the mobile on Wednesdays than Thursdays and this reduces significantly in the final hour on Thursdays. The average number of visitors each hour on Wednesdays is 11 people and on Thursdays it is 6 people per hour.

City of Whittlesea
- Mernda stop removed with the opening of the new Community Library.
- Epping (Galada) stop removed with the opening of a Click and Collect at the Galada Community Activity Centre
- Doreen (Laurimar) stop shifted from Mondays to a similar time on Thursdays to improve efficiency and logistics in the route.

Banyule City Council
- Heidelberg West stop schedule to remain the same.

3. **Stretch** option requires the inclusion of the smaller Outreach Vehicle (currently being used to provide a service to aged care facilities) to provide the capacity in the fleet needed to achieve the recommendations. This option includes an additional third evening stop in the schedule for the City of Whittlesea on Mondays and the option of Saturday mornings to be used for outreach programming and festivals across the three member councils. This option would increase the service from 30.5 hours over 5 days to 39.5 hours over 6 days and add additional cost for the expanded service.

CONSULTATION

Consultation was conducted with:

- community members using the Mobile Library at each stop during the review
- local community organisations, such as schools and community facilities, near each mobile stops
- member council executive staff
- ASU and YPRL consultative committee, and the Mobile Library staff.

CRITICAL DATES

Implementation of the new schedule in February 2024 will require a lead time of a minimum of 4 months to update signage at all mobile stops, create marketing collateral to promote changes and staff consultation for new rosters.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

All financial implications are contained within the body of this report and associated attachments.

POLICY STRATEGY AND LEGISLATION

Under the Local Government Act 1989, Section 186a,.

LINKS TO LIBRARY PLAN

Outcome:

- **Knowledge and learning:** Together we build capacity and confidence for people across our communities to meaningfully participate in work and community life.
- **Connection**: Create places and spaces for people throughout our communities to connect, belong and actively engage with each other.
- **Organisational strength:** Investment in our staff, capacity, and governance to ensure we are capable and ready to adapt, learn and empower our communities in environmentally and socially responsible ways.
- **Wellbeing:** Help individuals and communities to better engage in, understand and take positive actions to support their mental and physical health.

Priorities:

- Information and resources
- Participation and belonging
- Outreach
- Governance and technology
- Environmental and social sustainability
- Mental, physical and social wellbeing
- Connect to local experts

DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Under section 80C of the Local Government Act 1989 officers providing advice to the Library must disclose any interests, including type of interest.

The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with the relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

CONCLUSION

YPRL has reviewed the options provided and considering the individual council's strategies and service needs and our community's needs, is recommending option 2 *Push* be implemented in February 2024. This option anticipates the City of Whittlesea's growing community needs, while providing Nillumbik Shire with a service that is better supported by local community organisations and City of Banyule a continuation of its Heidelberg West service.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board resolves to APPROVE the adoption of option 2 *Push* as outlined in the Mobile Stop Review report with a plan to review the schedule in 12 months' time.

M: _____

S: _____

MOBILE LIBRARY STOP REVIEW

August 2023

I & J Management Services

Yarra Plenty Regional Library

Mobile Library Stop Review
August 2023

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

1. In July 2021 YPRL engaged I & J Management Services to review YPRL's mobile library and outreach services and to make recommendations for future service delivery to communities with limited access to physical library branches.

2. The review found that the single mobile library service meets different community and Council needs in each LGA.
   - In Nillumbik's smaller rural townships the mobile delivers both **service inclusion** (in terms of providing place-based local services) and **social inclusion** (in terms of providing a gathering point for the community).
   - In Banyule the mobile stop at Heidelberg West delivers **equity** to a disadvantaged community.
   - In Whittlesea the mobile delivers **access** by seeding library use in emerging communities until they reach a point where they warrant more permanent service models.
   - The mobile library also facilitates improved **early years' literacy** outcomes through book deliveries to around 30 local childcare centres, kindergartens and schools.

3. In April 2023 YPRL engaged I & J Management Services to review the mobile library stops and examine options for more efficient scheduling to maximise community access to library services.

YPRL's mobile library service

4. YPRL's mobile library currently operates on a **weekly schedule** (Monday to Friday) making **14 stops at 13 locations** across the Cities of Banyule (1 stop), Nillumbik (10 stops) and Whittlesea (3 stops). The mobile stops at Diamond Creek on both a Wednesday afternoon and a Thursday evening.
   - Stop lengths vary from 1 hour (Mernda) to 3 hours (Epping, Heidelberg West, Yarrambat).
   - Stops occur at/or near primary schools and early learning centres, community centres and shopping strips.

5. The current mobile **schedule has been largely unchanged since 2013**, with only minor variations to the timetable in the past 10 years. However, during this time significant extension of residential areas has occurred, particularly in the City of Whittlesea. In addition, YPRL has extended its service options by introducing small library access points at Hurstbridge, Galada and Donnybrook, and has plans to extend this model further.
   - The **COVID pandemic** and the closure of the mobile and restricted access for extended periods of time from March 2020 to April 2022 also had a significant impact on use of the mobile library, with visitation and borrowing levels at most stops having not yet returned to pre-COVID levels.
   - Despite this, the mobile library continues to be a much-loved and highly-valued community-focused component of YPRL's service network.

Observations

6. Analysis of mobile library use, visits to each mobile stop and discussions with mobile staff and Council representatives have highlighted areas where the current schedule and service could be **more efficient and safer**, as well as opportunities for **future service enhancement**.
   - Issues have been identified with every stop in the current schedule.
   - The findings are summarised – stop by stop – in the following tables.

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Mobile stop	LGA	Location	Schedule	Use	Access	Facilities
Heidelberg West	B	X	✓	X	X	✓
Arthurs Creek	N	✓	X	✓	XX	✓
Christmas Hills	N	✓	XX	✓	X	✓
Diamond Creek (W/Th)	N	XX	XX	✓	X	✓
Hurstbridge	N	✓	XXX	X	✓	✓
Kangaroo Ground	N	✓	✓	XX	✓	X
Panton Hill	N	✓	XX	✓	XX	✓
St Andrews	N	✓	XXX	X	✓	✓
Warrandyte North	N	✓	X	X	✓	XX
Yarrambat	N	✓	X	✓	✓	X
Doreen (Laurimar)	W	XXX	X	X	X	X
Epping (Galada)	W	✓	XXX	X	✓	✓
Mernda	W	✓	XX	✓	✓	✓

✓	No major observation/issue		XX	Observation/issue
X	Minor observation/issue		XXX	Major observation/issue

Mobile stop	Day, time	Observation / Suggestion
Heidelberg West	Fri 9-12	Tight entry turn into car park between bollards. Consider alternative location beside Olympic Lesiure Centre, ~100m away.
Arthurs Creek	Thu 9.45-12	Reduce stop duration from 2.25 to 2 hours. Mobile parks very close to a main road so safer options should be considered.
Christmas Hills	Fri 2-4	Exiting the current stop is unsafe for the mobile and other road users. Mobile should close half an hour earlier to allow it to leave before the speed limit on Eltham-Yarra Glen Rd increases to 80km/h.
Diamond Creek	Wed 3-5 Thu 6.30-8.30	Consider merging the two stops to one longer stop that accommodates both current user groups. Consider a change of location to Community Bank Stadium.
Hurstbridge	Tue 6-8.15	At a minimum, reduce the stop to 2 hours. Consider ceasing the service now there is a Click and Collect in Hurstbridge and lesser use of the mobile.
Kangaroo Ground	Wed 12.30-2.30	Concern with duty of care as children leave the school unsupervised to visit the mobile during their lunch break.
Panton Hill	Tue 10.30-12.30	Access to Panton Hill requires the mobile to drive nearly halfway to St Andrews before turning and returning to Panton Hill.
St Andrews	Tue 2-4.30	Mobile visits on Tuesday when Wadambuk Community Centre is closed. The Centre opens on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday.
Warrandyte North	Wed 10-12	Yarra Warra Preschool is changing its session times on a Wednesday and would like the mobile to visit earlier.
Yarrambat	Thu 2-5	Use of the mobile does not warrant a 3 hour stop.
Doreen (Laurimar)	Mon 1-2.30	Mobile should move around the corner to the safer, more visible and agreed location in Armidale Road.
Epping (Galada)	Mon 9-12	Opening of Library Hub at Galada Community Centre makes current stop redundant.
Mernda	Mon 3-4	Potential closure with the opening of the Mernda Library Hub later in 2023.
General	Signage	Correct and standardise signage at all mobile stops.
General	Power	Arrange for onsite access to power at Doreen, Kangaroo Ground and Mernda.
General	Facilities	Explore opportunities to improve parking surfaces and levels, especially at Warrandyte North, Kangaroo Ground and Yarrambat.

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Guiding Principles

7.   In considering potential improvements to the mobile library schedule the review has been guided
     by the following principles:
     A.   The mobile library is an integral **part of YPRL's wider service network**. Scheduling of the
          mobile cannot be considered in isolation of alternative service models.
     B.   At each current or proposed location the mobile library **plays one of two key roles**:
          –   delivering library services to small (mostly rural) townships where the size of the
               resident population does not warrant investment in a permanent service option
          –   delivering library services to emerging or growing communities as an interim until
               they warrant a more permanent service option.
     C.   **Efficiently use the mobile library asset** by maximising use to meet service demand
          (especially in growth areas) but minimising use where it is not needed or alternatives exist
          (e.g. targeted use of a mid-sized outreach vehicle will prolong the life of the mobile library).
     D.   **Maintain service continuity** and service levels in existing locations where this is feasible,
          including continued deliveries of book boxes to schools and early learning centres.
     E.   Standardise mobile stops to **visits of 2 hours** that start and finish on the hour or the half
          hour. [Shorter stops limit community access, while longer stops spread the same level of use
          over a longer period of time. People find it more difficult to remember times that involve
          quarter hours.]
     F.   **Avoid late evening finishes** (in the interests of staff wellbeing) unless there is a compelling
          level of service demand.
     G.   Develop a schedule that is **safe** and allows **sufficient tim**e for:
          –   take down, travel between stops and set up at a new stop
          –   staff rest breaks
          –   driving limits of a heavy vehicle.

Potential Options

8.   In considering potential options for the mobile library service it must be understood that there are
     infinite 'possibilities', even under the guiding principles listed above. Therefore, any proposition
     presented here might be adapted further by shifting/swapping spots in the schedule.

9.   It must also be understood that none of these options should be implemented without first
     undertaking **consultation with affected stakeholders**, including the local communities, Council
     representatives and YPRL outreach and mobile staff.

10. The review presents **three scenarios – Tweak / Push / Stretch –** each of which takes the current
     schedule further from its existing state.
     -    **TWEAK**: This scenario retains much of the sequencing of the current schedule (in terms of
          days and approximate times) but standardises stop duration and incorporates some obvious
          or agreed changes in terms of stopping Epping (Galada) and moving Doreen (Laurimar). Even
          this simple scenario opens up considerable scope for City of Whittlesea to deploy the mobile
          library in its western growth corridor on a Monday (e.g. Epping North, Kirrip, Wollert,
          Donnybrook). TWEAK does not address the St Andrews stop being on the wrong day.
     -    **PUSH**: This scenario has four key differences from TWEAK:
          ▪   Mernda is dropped (with the opening of the Library Hub), further freeing up Monday
               for City of Whittlesea
          ▪   St Andrews is shifted to Wednesday morning, swapping day and time with
               Warrandyte North and pushing Panton Hill earlier on a Tuesday
          ▪   Yarrambat is shifted to Tuesday afternoon to make room for a possible stop at
               Orchard Road Community and Early Learning Centre in Doreen
          ▪   Hurstbridge is retained but potentially serviced by the mid-sized outreach vehicle, not
               the mobile library.

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- **STRETCH**: This scenario anticipates a fourth early evening stop in City of Whittlesea on Monday which would still have the mobile back to the depot in Epping by around 8.30. It also considers the possibility of using the mobile library and/or other YPRL outreach vehicles for community engagement and promotional purposes on Saturday mornings. This might, for example, involve regular monthly or purposefully promoted stops at sports stadiums, shopping centres, school fetes and community festivals.

11. The proposed changes to the schedule are summarised in the table below, with the timetables mapped on the following pages.
    - While the reduction of time spent at some stops might be seen as a reduction in service this is (in practical terms) not likely to be the case (and the current times at some stops appear to exist only to fill space between stops). People in the affected communities (Hurstbridge - 15 minutes, Arthurs Creek -15, St Andrews -30, Yarrambat -60) will still have access to the mobile library for 2 hours per week. Diamond Creek goes from 2 stops to one but the total time on site actually increases by 30 minutes, and the Laurimar stop is 30 minutes longer.
    - It is estimated that the TWEAK scenario (for example) will see the mobile library vehicle:
        - on site/open for an **extra 2 hours per week** (32.5hrs vs 30.5hrs on current schedule)
        - away from the depot for only 45 minutes extra (~ 50hrs vs 49.25hrs)
        - travelling 9km less distance (287km vs 296km) with equivalent driving time (~6.5hrs).

Mobile stop	Current	TWEAK	PUSH	STRETCH
Epping (Galada)	Mon 9 to 12	Dropped	Dropped	Dropped
Doreen (Laurimar)	Mon 1 to 2.30	Thu 12 to 2	Thu 12 to 2	Thu 12 to 2
Mernda	Mon 3 to 4	Mon 3 to 4	Dropped	Dropped
Panton Hill	Tue 10.30 to 12.30	Tue 11 to 1	Tue 9 to 11	Tue 9 to 11
St Andrews	Tue 2 to 4.30	Tue 2.30 to 4.30	Wed 9 to 11	Wed 9 to 11
Hurstbridge	Tue 6 to 8.15	Tue 5.30 to 7.30	Tue 5.30 to 7.30 (?ORV*)	Tue 5.30 to 7.30 (ORV* or drop)
Warrandyte North	Wed 10 to 12	Wed 9 to 11	Tue 12 to 2	Tue 12 to 2
Kangaroo Ground	Wed 12.30 to 2.30	Wed 12 to 2	Wed 12 to 2	Wed 12 to 2
Diamond Creek	Wed 3 to 5 Thu 6.30 to 8.30	Wed 3 to 7.30	Wed 3 to 7.30	Wed 3 to 7.30
Arthurs Creek	Thu 9.45 to 12	Thu 9.30 to 11.30	Thu 9.30 to 11.30	Thu 9.30 to 11.30
Yarrambat	Thu 2 to 5	Thu 2.30 to 4.30	Tue 3 to 5	Tue 3 to 5
Heidelberg West	Fri 9 to 12	Fri 9 to 12	Fri 9 to 12	Fri 9 to 12
Christmas Hills	Fri 2 to 4	Fri 1.30 to 3.30	Fri 1.30 to 3.30	Fri 1.30 to 3.30
Whittlesea #1		Mon 9 to 11	Mon 9 to 11	Mon 9 to 11
Whittlesea #2		Mon 12 to 2	Mon 12 to 2	Mon 12 to 2
Whittlesea #3		Mon 5 to 7	Mon 3 to 5	Mon 3 to 5
Doreen (Orchard Rd)			Thu 2.30 to 4.30	Thu 2.30 to 4.30
Whittlesea #4				Mon 6 to 8
Stadiums, Shopping Centres, Fetes and Festivals				Sat 9 to 1

Note: Shading in the table identifies when there is a change from one scenario to the next.
* ORV = Outreach vehicle.

12. It is **also recommended** that:
    - Signage be standardised (and corrected) at all mobile stops.
    - Onsite access to power to be installed at Doreen, Kangaroo Ground and Mernda.
    - Parking surfaces and levels be improved at Warrandyte North, Kangaroo Ground and Yarrambat.
    - Protocols for supervision of students be confirmed at Kangaroo Ground Primary School.
    - Moving the Diamond Creek stop to Community Bank Stadium be explored.

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YPRL Mobile Library Schedules

CURRENT	9.00	9.30	10.00	10.30	11.00	11.30	12.00	12.30	1.00	1.30	2.00	2.30	3.00	3.30	4.00	4.30	5.00	5.30	6.00	6.30	7.00	7.30	8.00
Monday	Epping (Galada) 9.00 to 12.00								Doreen (Laurimar) 1.00 to 2.30				Mernda 3.00 to 4.00										
Tuesday				Panton Hill 10.30 to 12.30							St Andrews 2.00 to 4.30								Hurstbridge 6.00 to 8.15				
Wednesday			Warrandyte North 10.00 to 12.00					Kangaroo Ground 12.30 to 2.30					Diamond Creek 3.00 to 5.00										
Thursday		Arthurs Creek 9.45 to 12.00									Yarrambat 2.00 to 5.00									Diamond Creek 6.30 to 8.30			
Friday	Heidelberg West 9.00 to 12.00										Christmas Hills 2.00 to 5.00												

TWEAK	9.00	9.30	10.00	10.30	11.00	11.30	12.00	12.30	1.00	1.30	2.00	2.30	3.00	3.30	4.00	4.30	5.00	5.30	6.00	6.30	7.00	7.30	8.00
Monday	Whittlesea #1 9.00 to 11.00						Whittlesea #2 12.00 to 2.00						Mernda 3.00 to 4.00				Whittlesea #3 5.00 to 7.00						
Tuesday					Panton Hill 11.00 to 1.00						St Andrews 2.30 to 4.30							Hurstbridge 5.30 to 7.30					
Wednesday	Warrandyte North 9.00 to 11.00						Kangaroo Ground 12.00 to 2.00						Diamond Creek 3.00 to 7.30										
Thursday		Arthurs Creek 9.30 to 11.30					Doreen (Laurimar) 12.00 to 2.00				Yarrambat 2.30 to 4.30												
Friday	Heidelberg West 9.00 to 12.00							Christmas Hills 1.30 to 3.30															

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PUSH	9.00	9.30	10.00	10.30	11.00	11.30	12.00	12.30	1.00	1.30	2.00	2.30	3.00	3.30	4.00	4.30	5.00	5.30	6.00	6.30	7.00	7.30	8.00
Monday	Whittlesea #1 9.00 to 11.00						Whittlesea #2 12.00 to 2.00						Whittlesea #3 3.00 to 5.00										
Tuesday	Panton Hill 9.00 to 11.00						Warrandyte North 12.00 to 2.00						Yarrambat 3.00 to 5.00					Hurstbridge 5.30 to 7.30 (potentially via ORV)					
Wednesday	St Andrews 9.00 to 11.00						Kangaroo Ground 12.00 to 2.00						Diamond Creek 3.00 to 7.30										
Thursday		Arthurs Creek 9.30 to 11.30					Doreen (Laurimar) 12.00 to 2.00						Doreen (Orchard Road) 2.30 to 4.30										
Friday	Heidelberg West 9.00 to 12.00								Christmas Hills 1.30 to 3.30														

STRETCH	9.00	9.30	10.00	10.30	11.00	11.30	12.00	12.30	1.00	1.30	2.00	2.30	3.00	3.30	4.00	4.30	5.00	5.30	6.00	6.30	7.00	7.30	8.00
Monday	Whittlesea #1 9.00 to 11.00						Whittlesea #2 12.00 to 2.00						Whittlesea #3 3.00 to 5.00						Whittlesea #4 6.00 to 8.00				
Tuesday	Panton Hill 9.00 to 11.00						Warrandyte North 12.00 to 2.00						Yarrambat 3.00 to 5.00					Hurstbridge 5.30 to 7.30 (via ORV or drop)					
Wednesday	St Andrews 9.00 to 11.00						Kangaroo Ground 12.00 to 2.00						Diamond Creek 3.00 to 7.30										
Thursday		Arthurs Creek 9.30 to 11.30					Doreen (Laurimar) 12.00 to 2.00						Doreen (Orchard Road) 2.30 to 4.30										
Friday	Heidelberg West 9.00 to 12.00								Christmas Hills 1.30 to 3.30														
Saturday	Stadiums, Shopping Centres, Fetes and Festivals 9.00 to 1.00																						

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. 2023 Mobile Library Stop Review

In March 2023 Yarra Plenty Regional Library (YPRL) engaged I & J Management Services to review the mobile library service's current schedule and stops. As at March 2023 YPRL's mobile library operates on a weekly schedule making 14 stops at 13 locations – 9 locations (10 stops) in the Shire of Nillumbik, 3 in the City of Whittlesea and 1 in the City of Banyule. [Note: The mobile library stops at Diamond Creek (Nillumbik) on both Wednesday afternoon and Thursday evening. Hurstbridge (Nillumbik) currently has both a Click and Collect Hub and a mobile stop.]

With a new 200m² community library opening in a shopfront in Mernda town centre in mid-2023 and the possibility of YPRL adding a smaller 7.5-metre-long Isuzu NQR 450 truck to its suite of outreach vehicles in the next 12 months, YPRL will soon have spare capacity on its mobile library schedule. Therefore, it was considered an opportune time to assess the mobile library's current operating times and locations and determine if stops should be retained, extended, added or deleted.

The Mobile Library Stop Review is to include a thorough assessment of mobile library usage by stop as well as relevant documents, plans and strategies that underpin the

work of YPRL and community-based services offered by the three member Councils. The Review is also to take into account a 2021 review of YPRL's Mobile and Outreach Services conducted by I & J Management Services and a review of vehicle location, viability and compliance conducted by Supply Chain Compliance in 2023. Consultation was expected to involve:

- representatives from each of the three Councils
- the YPRL Senior Leadership Team
- mobile library and associated outreach staff
- VicRoads (re timed access to specific locations).

The Review will produce recommendations and options for mobile library service levels, including: location; length of time at stops; parking and access availability for a semi-trailer (or the smaller truck at harder to access locations); expansion of the timetable to include more evenings and/or weekend stops; and staffing requirements. The aim of the Review is to assist YPRL in delivering an equitable and affordable mobile library service with locations that meet YPRL's strategic objectives and align with member Council's future plans and intended community outcomes.

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1.2. YPRL mobile library service

YPRL's mobile library service is currently operational via a 2019 Mercedes Benz 6-wheel 3-axle 19-metre prime mover and trailer. It houses approx. 9,000 collection items including books, DVDs, magazines, audiobooks and large print publications. Facilities include a service desk, two public computers with internet access, wifi, a dedicated children's area and a small staff storage area.

The mobile library operates from Monday to Friday with varying opening and closing times, the earliest opening being 9am (Mon, Fri) and the latest closing being 8.30pm (Thu). It has 14 stops at 13 locations, with 30.5 total weekly opening hours (see also Appendix 1).

- Shire of Nillumbik (9 locations): Arthurs Creek, St Andrews, Hurstbridge, Yarrambat, Panton Hill, Christmas Hills, Diamond Creek (2 stops), Kangaroo Ground, Warrandyte North
- City of Whittlesea (3 stops): Epping, Mernda, Doreen.
- City of Banyule (1 stop): West Heidelberg.

Day	Location	LGA	Service times			Duration (hrs)
Monday	Epping	WHI	9.00	to	12.00	3
	Doreen	WHI	1.00	to	2.30	1.5
	Mernda	WHI	3.00	to	4.00	1
Tuesday	Panton Hill	NIL	10.30	to	12.30	2
	St Andrews	NIL	2.00	to	4.30	2.5
	Hurstbridge	NIL	6.00	to	8.15	2.25
Wednesday	Warrandyte North	NIL	10.00	to	12.00	2
	Kangaroo Ground	NIL	12.30	to	2.30	2
	Diamond Creek	NIL	3.00	to	5.00	2
Thursday	Arthurs Creek	NIL	9.45	to	12.00	2.25
	Yarrambat	NIL	2.00	to	5.00	3
	Diamond Creek	NIL	6.30	to	8.30	2
Friday	Heidelberg West	BAN	9.00	to	12.00	3
	Christmas Hills	NIL	2.00	to	4.00	2

The current mobile stops have been in operation since 2013 with some minor variations in the timetable. However, during this time significant extension of residential areas has occurred, particularly in the City of Whittlesea. In addition, YPRL has extended its service options by introducing small library access points at Hurstbridge, Galada and Donnybrook, and has plans to extend this model further.

The mobile library is staffed by two Band 5 officers who work together at some times or on their own at other times. A relief driver is used for later shift times. A VW Caddy Van is used to carry stock to and from

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the mobile library and Diamond Valley Library (the mobile's collection base) and to and from kindergartens, schools and community groups as required. Key staff responsibilities on the mobile library include:

- customer service duties
- general library and collection responsibilities
- mobile library operations (including driving, cleaning and managing maintenance of the truck)
- completion of mandatory safety and rest logs before and during their shift.

When not in use the mobile library is housed at the City of Whittlesea's Epping Works Depot. Over the course of a week the mobile travels approximately 300km in around 6½ hours of driving time.

In 2021-22, a year partially affected by COVID-related restrictions on access to public libraries, the YPRL mobile library had 3,807 library members and made 49,963 library loans.

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2. CURRENT MOBILE LIBRARY STOPS

In April 2023, I & J Management Services visited all current mobile library stops with one of the mobile library staff and YPRL's Outreach Services Manager to inspect the sites and discuss:

- vehicle access
- safety and site facilities
- user profile, volume of use and patterns of use
- opportunities for improvement.

The findings from these visits are detailed in Appendix 2 and summarised below. Mobile library use is summarised in Appendix 4.

2.1. Summary of current stops

The current schedule has been in place for 10 years and for the most part works well in delivering library services to small and emerging communities that have limited access to other library service points. There are, however, opportunities for improvement or service enhancement at nearly every site. Some of these relate to when, where and for how long the mobile library stops (e.g. where stop duration is inconsistent with demand). Others relate to site access, facilities, customer/staff safety and service efficiency (e.g. where the schedule requires the driver to drive well past a stop to access it safely).

The status of the current mobile library stops is shown using the following markers:

✓   No major observation/issue, no change required
X   Minor observation/issue, minor recommendation/suggestion
XX   Observation/issue, recommendation/suggestion
XXX   Major observation/issue, major recommendation/suggestion

Generic or 'whole of service' issues (e.g. inconsistent and inaccurate signage) have not been incorporated into this assessment.

Mobile stop	LGA	Location	Schedule	Use	Access	Facilities
Heidelberg West	B	X	✓	X	X	✓
Arthurs Creek	N	✓	X	✓	XX	✓
Christmas Hills	N	✓	XX	✓	X	✓
Diamond Creek (W/Th)	N	XX	XX	✓	X	✓
Hurstbridge	N	✓	XXX	X	✓	✓
Kangaroo Ground	N	✓	✓	XX	✓	X
Panton Hill	N	✓	XX	✓	XX	✓
St Andrews	N	✓	XXX	X	✓	✓
Warrandyte North	N	✓	X	X	✓	XX
Yarrambat	N	✓	X	✓	✓	X
Doreen	W	XXX	X	X	X	X
Epping	W	✓	XXX	X	✓	✓
Mernda	W	✓	XX	✓	✓	✓

2.2. Summary of issues

The key observations and/or issues associated with each of the mobile library stops are listed in the following tables (and detailed in Appendix 2).

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City of Banyule (1 stop)

Heidelberg West	Banyule	Friday 9.00 to 12.00
Location	▪ The stop is currently opposite shops at Olympic Village, requiring a tight entry turn between the bollards. Driving straight into a parking spot in Alamein Rd beside the Olympic Lesiure Centre would be more convenient, slightly closer to the primary school, and is only 100m away and in direct line of sight from the current stop. The new parking spot would require a small cut-out from the grass beside the footpath, possible moving of the footpath and installation of a power box.	

Shire of Nillumbik (9 locations, 10 stops)

Arthurs Creek	Nillumbik	Thursday 9.45 to 12.00
Schedule	▪ Reduce stop duration from 2.25 to 2 hours, say 10.00 to 12.00.	
Use	▪ Explore opportunities for greater use of the mobile by students at Arthurs Creek PS.	
Access	▪ Explore alternative (safer) parking options in the same location outside the school.	

Christmas Hills	Nillumbik	Friday 2.00 to 4.00
Schedule / Access	▪ Shift the stop half an hour forward to 1.30 to 3.30, allowing the mobile to leave before 4.00 and enter Eltham-Yarra Glen Rd when the speed limit is only 40 km/h.	

Diamond Creek	Nillumbik	Wednesday 3.00 to 5.00
		Thursday 6.30 to 8.30

Schedule	▪ Canvass community feedback on changing:
	  – the number of stops (from two per week to one per week)
	  – the timing of the stops (to 3.30 to 7.30 – or 3.00 to 7.00 … 2.30 to 6.30)
	  – the location of the stops (to Community Bank Stadium).	

Signage	▪ Update signage at the mobile stop.	

Hurstbridge	Nillumbik	Tuesday 6.00 to 8.15
Use	▪ The presence of the Click and Collect service in Hurstbridge and declining use of the mobile bring into question the need for this stop. Use should be monitored over the next 6 months, with a view to deciding on continuation or cessation from 2024.	
Schedule	▪ At a minimum, reduce the scheduled stop to 2 hours and change the schedule to have the mobile visit from 5.00 to 7.00 or 5.30 to 7.30.	

Kangaroo Ground	Nillumbik	Wednesday 12.30 to 2.30
Facilities	▪ Explore opportunity to install power at the stop.	

Panton Hill	Nillumbik	Tuesday 10.30 to 12.30
Access	▪ Access to Panton Hill is inefficient and requires the mobile to drive through Panton Hill and nearly half the way to St Andrews before returning to Panton Hill. Canvass community feedback on swapping the order of the Panton Hill and St Andrews stops (that is, start at St Andrews, return to Panton Hill).	
Signage	▪ Correct and standardise signage at the mobile stop.	

St Andrews	Nillumbik	Tuesday 2.00 to 4.30
Schedule	▪ Canvass community feedback on shifting the stop to Wednesday morning (any time between 9am and 1pm) or any other time when the Wadambuk Community Centre is open (Monday, Wednesday, Thursday morning). As part of this consultation, and as an alternative, also canvass community feedback on swapping the order of the Panton Hill and St Andrews stops on a Tuesday.	

Warrandyte North	Nillumbik	Wednesday 10.00 to 12.00
Schedule	▪ Yarra Warra Preschool is changing its session times on a Wednesday. To accommodate these changes and ease congestion/maintain safety in the car park have the mobile visit from 9.00 to 11.00.	
Use	▪ Explore opportunities to activate community usage.	
Facilities	▪ Explore opportunities to improve the surface of the car park, and ideally have a more level parking spot.	

Yarrambat	Nillumbik	Thursday 2.00 to 5.00
Schedule	▪ Reduce the stop duration to 2 hours, say 2.30 to 4.30.	
Facilities	▪ Explore opportunities to level the site and remove the camber.	

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City of Whittlesea (3 stops)

Doreen	Whittlesea	Monday	1.00 to 2.30
Location Schedule	▪ Move to the proposed new location in Armidale Road as soon as possible. ▪ Explore opportunities to promote and activate usage (e.g. changing the schedule to a mid-afternoon timeslot – say 2.30 to 4.30, installation of appropriate signage).		
Epping	**Whittlesea**	**Monday**	**9.00 to 12.00**
Schedule	▪ Remove stop from the mobile schedule.		
Mernda	**Whittlesea**	**Monday**	**3.00 to 4.00**
Schedule	▪ Monitor use of the mobile library stop at Mernda when the new community library opens at Mernda Town Centre to determine the impact on mobile use – and possible closure, retention or expansion of the mobile stop.		

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3. AN INTEGRATED SERVICE DELIVERY NETWORK

3.1. Factors for consideration

Exploration of improvements and enhancements to YPRL's mobile library schedule is much more than consideration of operating or logistical efficiency. The mobile library is part of an integrated multi-LGA library service delivery network, and its schedule is influenced by a mix of complementary and competing contextual factors. These are:

- **Political**: Does a member Council consider it politically necessary or appropriate to deliver this service to the community (in this location at this time)? For example, in Nillumbik the mobile library provides place-based services in townships which otherwise have limited service infrastructure and access. With no related major civic developments in the pipeline the mobile library enables the Shire to provide a highly-valued regular onsite service presence.
- **Financial**: Is each Council willing and able to pay for delivery of the mobile library service, given the cost of maintaining the vehicle and competing demands on a limited rate base?
- **Value-based**: Is there community demand for the service (in this location at this time)? Can and will the community access and use the mobile at levels that warrant the investment of Council funds and deliver net benefits to the community?
- **Ethical**: Should the mobile act as a substitute library for primary schools and pre-schools that choose not to maintain their own library collection? Given the known value of children reading in terms of literacy and language and cognitive development, the hosting of children on the mobile (scheduled or occasional, supervised or unsupervised) and the delivery of book boxes is undoubtedly a good thing. But is this consistent with Councils' expectations of YPRL?
- **Operational**: Can YPRL practically deliver a mobile library service that is safe for customers and staff and compliant with all regulatory requirements? Relevant considerations include driver safety requirements, vehicle set-up and shut-down, road safety, customer parking and access, and staffing levels.
- **Logistical**: Can YPRL schedule the mobile to deliver the services (in these locations at these times)? Does the schedule make efficient use of a significant vehicular asset, staff time and the on-board collection and space?

The Mobile Library Stop Review recognises these factors and understands that what might be, for example, logistically efficient might not be best value for the community. And that while operational and political factors might be (for a large part) non-negotiable, financial and logistical factors are more flexible.

3.2. Key roles of the mobile library

The 2021 review of YPRL's mobile and outreach services found that the mobile library meets different community and Council needs in each LGA.

> *"In Nillumbik, especially in smaller rural townships where the size of the resident population does not warrant investment in a permanent fully-staffed library branch (e.g. St Andrews, Christmas Hills, Arthurs Creek, Panton Hill), the mobile library delivers both **service inclusion** (in terms of providing place-based local services) and **social inclusion** (in terms of providing a gathering point for the community).*
>
> *In Banyule, the mobile stop at Heidelberg West delivers **equity** to a disadvantaged community, with the hope that this can contribute to increased community capability and aspirations.*
>
> *In Whittlesea, the mobile library delivers **access** by acting as an interim service outlet, seeding library use in emerging and growing communities until they grow to the point where they warrant provision of more permanent service model."*

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The review also noted that the mobile library facilitates improved early year's literacy outcomes through delivery of book boxes to local childcare centres, kindergartens and schools (see Appendix 3). Around 30 participating facilities get a regular (e.g. weekly, fortnightly) drop of books selected by the mobile staff (approx. 30 books per box and 30,000 items per year). Deliveries near the stops are done from the mobile, with those further away done by one of the mobile drivers using the VW Caddy Van as a shuttle service.

In summary, YPRL's mobile library plays two key but different roles for the member Councils.

1.   It delivers library services to small (mostly rural or peri-urban) townships where the size of the resident population does not warrant investment in a permanent fully-staffed library branch (e.g. many of the Nillumbik stops).

AND

2.   It delivers library services to needy, emerging and growing communities, being a seeding or interim service option that meets local demand until investment in more permanent flexible or branch models is required (e.g. the Whittlesea stops).

3.3. Alternative service models

It is also important to understand where the mobile fits within the broader context of contemporary delivery of public library services.

Public libraries deploy a combination of four basic service models – library branches; online services; mobile and outreach services; and flexible service approaches (see Appendix 5). Each model plays a different role in the library network – reaching out to different audiences, facilitating convenient access and encouraging increased and widespread use of library services across the community.

YPRL's mobile library is clearly part of the mobile and outreach service group. In recent times its place in the network has been influenced by the opening of flexible service approaches such as the Hurstbridge Click and Collect service and the Library Hub at Galada Community Centre. YPRL's upcoming purchase of a new mid-sized outreach vehicle will also complement the mobile library.

> Recognising all of these factors, the Mobile Library Stop Review has proceeded on the understanding that:
>
> i)   at each current or proposed location the mobile library plays one of the two critical roles identified above, AND
> ii)   that the mobile is an integral part of YPRL's wider service network and cannot be considered in isolation of alternative service models.

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4. IMPROVING SAFETY AND ACCESS

In establishing an efficient mobile library schedule there are some non-negotiable elements that must be given primary consideration.

4.1. Public safety and security

The first of these is public safety, which includes road safety for the mobile drivers, other road users and pedestrians, as well as safety for library customers on or around the mobile library. The status of five of the current mobile stops raise various safety issues (as detailed in Appendix 2).

- **Christmas Hills (critical)**: The exit from Christmas Hills PS onto the Eltham-Yarra Glen Rd is not safe for the mobile driver and other road users. The 80 km/h speed limit on Eltham-Yarra Glen Rd drops to a 40 km/h school zone between 2.30 and 4.00. With this stop currently scheduled to finish at 4pm on a Friday afternoon, and assuming 10 minutes for packing up, in theory the mobile driver has to make a right-hand turn from an unsealed upslope across and into 80 km/h traffic on a curve in the road. In practice, the mobile drivers close the stop and pack up early so they can exit before 4pm. The scheduled finish at Christmas Hills must be brought forward to allow the mobile to leave before 4pm and enter Eltham-Yarra Glen Rd when the speed limit is a safer 40 km/h.
- **Arthurs Creek (moderate)**: The mobile currently stops on a narrow strip of land between the footpath outside Arthurs Creek PS and Arthurs Creek Road, with its rear wheels just off the white line on the edge of the road. Drivers approaching Arthurs Creek from Doreen (in the west) have a sweeping uphill left-hand turn past the Mechanics Institute Hall and the back of the mobile library before cresting the rise at the school's level crossing and turning right down the hill toward the CFA. Drivers from both directions have average to poor visibility of the mobile vehicle. Public parking is at the Community Centre on the other side of the school crossing. There is no obvious fix to this concern and the mobile drivers pull as far away from the road as they can. While it would be safer if the mobile could park 5-10m forward from its current location, this would require removal of the safety bollard which holds the school crossing flags. There is a slightly larger parking space even further forward (~10-20m) beyond the school crossing, although this is used as a teachers' car park and the mobile would partially block the school gate.
- **Warrandyte North and Yarrambat (slope)**: Both Warrandyte North and Yarrambat have stops where the mobile library parks on a slope – Warrandyte North from front to back, Yarrambat from right to left. The slopes are noticeable to and regularly commented on by library users, and while they affect the user experience, they do not diminish it. There may be implications for customers with limited mobility. Any opportunities to level the parking spots should be considered. The surface of the school car park at Kangaroo Ground is also considered poor.
- **Kangaroo Ground (protocol)**: This stop is well-attended by primary school students who are allowed to visit the mobile during their lunch break (the mobile visits from 12.30 to 2.30). However, their attendance on the mobile is unsupervised by the school unless one of the teachers on yard duty comes on the mobile to borrow items or collect reserves for themselves. Duty of care for students on the mobile is not clear as getting on board the mobile requires students to independently leave the school grounds during the course of the school day (albeit only 5-10m from the school gate and into the school car park). Access protocols should be discussed and agreed with the school Principal.

The review has also identified some general issues in terms of access and community awareness of the mobile, notably the inconsistent and outdated (and in some cases inaccurate) signage at the mobile stops. Ideally, signage at each stop would:

- clearly indicate the presence of the mobile library and the time and day of its visit
- clearly specify parking restrictions to enable the mobile to safely access the designated spot
- incorporate relevant Council and YPRL branding.

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It is also noted that the mobile library does not have access to power at Doreen, Kangaroo Ground and Mernda – requiring it to be powered by the on-board generator. Ideally, on site power would be accessible at all mobile stops.

4.2. Staff safety and wellbeing

The second set of safety concerns relates to staff safety and wellbeing. These include:

- **Transition**: Staff must have sufficient time to pack up from one stop, drive to the next stop and set up again within the time allocated in the mobile schedule. Average driving times between stops currently range from around 15-30 minutes. The scheduled gaps between stops vary from 30-120 minutes (which also allows some time for book deliveries to schools and early learning centres). Staff mostly, but not always, adhere to the published schedule (e.g. early departure from Christmas Hills). Any changes to the schedule must incorporate appropriate transition times (i.e. generally 30-60 minutes).
- **Breaks**: Staff rostering and mobile scheduling must allow staff to have standard meal and rest breaks. Mobile staff with shifts over 5 hours are entitled to a 45 minute unpaid meal break at times agreed with YPRL. Staff who work shifts of more than 4 hours but less than 7 hours are entitled to one 10 minute relaxation break. Staff on shifts of 7 hours or more are entitled to two 10-minute work breaks. Mobile staff typically take breaks between stops or at stops when two staff are rostered on. Staff mostly, but not always, take their fully allocated breaks.
- **Driving limits**: Mobile library drivers must not exceed mandated daily driving limits for heavy vehicles (i.e. hours and distances). They also require time to complete necessary driving records. Mobile drivers comply with these requirements, and given the distances travelled on any day do not exceed mandated limits.
- **Evening hours**: As far as possible, within the constraints of maintaining a timely service to meet local demand, it would be preferable to limit the number of hours that mobile library staff spend driving the mobile in dusk and darkness, especially on semi-rural roads. The latest current finish time is 8.30 at Diamond Creek on Thursdays, with an 8.15 finish at Hurstbridge on Tuesdays (and 5.00 at Diamond Creek on Wednesdays). The drive to the City of Whittlesea depot in Epping from Diamond Creek and Hurtsbridge is around 25-30 minutes, meaning that staff do not currently finish their shifts on Tuesdays and Thursdays until around 9.15. Reductions in evening hours might be achieved by removing late stops or bringing forward closing times.

In considering potential changes to the mobile library stops the review has been guided by the following principles (in addition to those outlined in Section 3).

i)   Develop a schedule that is safe and allows sufficient time for:
      –   take down, travel between stops and set up at a new stop
      –   staff rest breaks
      –   driving limits of a heavy vehicle.
ii)   Avoid late evening finishes (in the interests of staff wellbeing) unless there is a compelling level of service demand.

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5. EFFICIENT SCHEDULING

5.1. Stop duration, start and finish times

The final set of principles guiding the review's recommendations address time and use. That is, the schedule of stops should be both impactful (in terms of giving local communities meaningful access to mobile library services at convenient times) and logistically efficient (in use of the vehicle and staff time).

The review has been mindful of:

i) maintaining service continuity and service levels in existing locations where this is feasible and in accord with Council intentions, including continued deliveries of book boxes to schools and early learning centres

ii) efficiently deploying the mobile library asset by maximising use to meet service demand (especially in growth areas) but minimising use where it is not needed or alternatives exist (e.g. targeted use of a mid-sized outreach vehicle would prolong the life of the mobile library)

iii) standardising mobile stops to visits of 2 hours that start and finish on the hour or the half hour.

In terms of the third of these principles (stop duration), it is noted that stops with a small window of access limit community access, while longer stops run the risk of simply spreading a given level of potential use over a longer period of time. For example, it is thought that most current mobile library users at Yarrambat could find a time to attend the mobile within a shortened 2 hour window if this was the option (i.e. shifting from 3 hours between 2.00 and 5.00 to 2 hours between 2.30 and 4.30). However, this approach cannot be extended too far as below some time threshold potential customers will find it too hard to tightly schedule their mobile visit into a narrow time slot. Therefore, the review has based its recommendations on (for the most part) 2 hour mobile stops.

It is also noted that some people find it more difficult to remember times that involve quarter hours. There are only two such stops on the current schedule – 8.15 close at Hurstbridge on Tuesday evening (with reportedly no-one on the mobile beyond 8pm) and 9.45 start at Arthurs Creek on Thursday morning (with attendance tending to start from around 10am). To aid customer memory, most mobile stops should start and finish on the hour.

5.2. Time and location

Finally, it should be noted that maximising use of the mobile library is influenced by the combination of time and location. That is, having the mobile visit at a time and in a place that increases the likelihood of people being able and willing to visit. This understanding is already evident in the existing schedule and should be factored into any decisions about future mobile library locations, especially in the City of Whittlesea's growth areas.

To demonstrate, Mernda is the mobile stop with the highest rate of visits per hour and loans per hour. It might be argued that this is because the stop is only one hour long and therefore use is compressed into this narrow window of time. But more important is the fact that the stop is immediately outside a primary school and is present at the end of the school day, meaning that parents collecting their children from school can go straight onto the mobile as a family without having to make any additional logistical effort. The mobile stop is also only 100m from Mernda Village Kindergarten, Mernda Village Community Activity Centre and Mernda Village Shopping Centre. The people are there and the mobile is there.

Conversely, the stop at St Andrews is immediately outside the Wadambuk Community Centre and Men's Shed. The Centre is open and hosts community activities and a café on Monday. Wednesday and Thursday.

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The mobile, which currently has the lowest number of loans per hour, visits on a Tuesday. Might it not make more sense for the mobile to try attending St Andrews on a Wednesday morning (say) when it is known that people will be in that activity precinct?

While the combination of time and location does NOT guarantee high levels of mobile use, it is likely to give the community a good level of access to the service.

Current stop	Time	Closest activity point	Nearby activity points (~100m)
Epping (Galada)	9-12	Community centre	Shops
Heidelberg West	9-12	Shops	Primary school, leisure centre
Arthurs Creek	9.45-12	Primary school	Community centre
Warrandyte North	10-12	Early learning centre	CFA
Panton Hill	10.30-12.30	Recreation reserve	Neighbourhood House, primary school, pre-school, general store
Kangaroo Ground	12.30-2.30	Primary school	Pre-school, general store
Doreen (Laurimar)	1-2.30	Primary school	Kindergarten, community centre, shops
Yarrambat	2-5	Cafe	Primary school
Christmas Hills	2-4	Primary school	-
St Andrews	2-4.30	Community centre	Men's Shed
Mernda	3-4	Primary school	Kindergarten, community centre, shops
Diamond Creek	3-5 6.30-8.30	Community centre	Recreation reserve
Hurstbridge	6-8.15	Primary school	Shops

In thinking about future mobile stops, the following observations might inform decisions.

Time of mobile stop (approx.)	Suggested location
Morning (say, 9-11)	Primary school, kindergarten or early learning centre to align with drop-off times
Midday (12-2)	Retail or commercial precinct to attract people over lunchtime
Afternoon (3-5)	Primary school, kindergarten or early learning centre to align with pick-up times
Evening (6-8)	Shopping centre, sport stadium or transport hub (e.g. railway station, bus interchange) when activity is busiest
Any time	Community centre when activities are scheduled (often mid to late morning and late afternoon/early evening)

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6. SUGGESTED SCHEDULES (RECOMMENDATIONS)

The YPRL Mobile Library Stop Review has taken a range of factors into consideration in framing potential improvements to the mobile schedule. These include:

- the guiding principles outlined in Sections 3 to 5:
    - on the role of the mobile library and its place in the entire service network
    - on public and staff safety and secutiry
    - on continuity of service and maximising the value of a community asset
    - on efficient scheduling of mobile stops
- the stop-by-stop assessment of the circumstances and use of each current mobile stop as documented in Section 2 and Appendix 2
- insights from the mobile library staff and leadership
- feedback from Council representatives about current and future service priorities.

In terms of efficient scheduling of the mobile library, the following improvements are recommended.

Mobile stop	Current	Observation / Suggestion
Doreen (Laurimar)	Mon 1-2.30	-
Epping (Galada)	Mon 9-12	Cease due to Library Hub
Mernda	Mon 3-4	Close when Mernda Library Hub opens?
Panton Hill	Tue 10.30-12.30	Avoid driving well past Panton Hill to do a U-turn back to the stop
St Andrews	Tue 2-4.30	Visit when Wadambuk Community Centre is open (e.g. Monday, Wednesday, Thursday).
Hurstbridge	Tue 6-8.15	Reduce stop duration to 2 hours / Close due to Click and Collect?
Warrandyte North	Wed 10-12	Visit earlier to fit changed session times at Yarra Warra Preschool
Kangaroo Ground	Wed 12.30-2.30	-
Diamond Creek	Wed 3-5 Thu 6.30-8.30	Merge two stops to one longer stop that accommodates both afternoon and early evening users
Arthurs Creek	Thu 9.45-12	Reduce stop duration to 2 hours
Yarrambat	Thu 2-5	Reduce stop duration from 3 hours
Heidelberg West	Fri 9-12	-
Christmas Hills	Fri 2-4	Finish stop no later than 3.30

However, it must be understood that there are infinite 'possibilities', even under the guiding principles listed above. Therefore, any proposition presented here might be adapted further by shifting/swapping spots in the schedule.

It must also be understood that NONE of these options should be implemented without first undertaking consultation with affected stakeholders, including the local communities, Council representatives and YPRL outreach and mobile staff.

The review presents three scenarios – Tweak / Push / Stretch – each of which takes the current schedule progressively further from its existing state.

6.1. Scenario 1 - TWEAK

This scenario retains much of the sequencing of the current schedule (in terms of days and approximate times) but standardises stop duration and incorporates some obvious or agreed changes in terms of stopping Epping (Galada) and moving the location of the stop at Doreen (Laurimar).

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CURRENT	9.00	9.30	10.00	10.30	11.00	11.30	12.00	12.30	1.00	1.30	2.00	2.30	3.00	3.30	4.00	4.30	5.00	5.30	6.00	6.30	7.00	7.30	8.00
Monday	Epping (Galada) 9.00 to 12.00								Doreen (Laurimar) 1.00 to 2.30				Mernda 3.00 to 4.00										
Tuesday				Panton Hill 10.30 to 12.30							St Andrews 2.00 to 4.30								Hurstbridge 6.00 to 8.15				
Wednesday			Warrandyte North 10.00 to 12.00					Kangaroo Ground 12.30 to 2.30					Diamond Creek 3.00 to 5.00										
Thursday		Arthurs Creek 9.45 to 12.00									Yarrambat 2.00 to 5.00									Diamond Creek 6.30 to 8.30			
Friday	Heidelberg West 9.00 to 12.00										Christmas Hills 2.00 to 5.00												

TWEAK	9.00	9.30	10.00	10.30	11.00	11.30	12.00	12.30	1.00	1.30	2.00	2.30	3.00	3.30	4.00	4.30	5.00	5.30	6.00	6.30	7.00	7.30	8.00
Monday	Whittlesea #1 9.00 to 11.00						Whittlesea #2 12.00 to 2.00						Mernda 3.00 to 4.00				Whittlesea #3 5.00 to 7.00						
Tuesday					Panton Hill 11.00 to 1.00							St Andrews 2.30 to 4.30						Hurstbridge 5.30 to 7.30					
Wednesday	Warrandyte North 9.00 to 11.00						Kangaroo Ground 12.00 to 2.00						Diamond Creek 3.00 to 7.30										
Thursday		Arthurs Creek 9.30 to 11.30					Doreen (Laurimar) 12.00 to 2.00					Yarrambat 2.30 to 4.30											
Friday	Heidelberg West 9.00 to 12.00									Christmas Hills 1.30 to 3.30													

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The changes recommended by the TWEAK scenario are summarised in the table below. These changes address all of the scheduling and timing issues mentioned EXCEPT for the potential change of day for St Andrews and the inefficient driving manoeuvre at Panton Hill, both of which are part of the Tuesday timetable. TWEAK also retains the mobile stop at Hurstbridge, although usage since the introduction of the Click and Collect service at Hurstbridge indicates that this stop is no longer required.

Mobile stop	Current day and time	Changes to schedule
Epping (Galada)	Mon 9 to 12	Dropped
Doreen (Laurimar)	Mon 1 to 2.30	Thu 12 to 2
Mernda	Mon 3 to 4	No change
Panton Hill	Tue 10.30 to 12.30	Tue 11 to 1
St Andrews	Tue 2 to 4.30	Tue 2.30 to 4.30
Hurstbridge	Tue 6 to 8.15	Tue 5.30 to 7.30
Warrandyte North	Wed 10 to 12	Wed 9 to 11
Kangaroo Ground	Wed 12.30 to 2.30	Wed 12 to 2
Diamond Creek	Wed 3 to 5 Thu 6.30 to 8.30	Wed 3 to 7.30
Arthurs Creek	Thu 9.45 to 12	Thu 9.30 to 11.30
Yarrambat	Thu 2 to 5	Thu 2.30 to 4.30
Heidelberg West	Fri 9 to 12	No change
Christmas Hills	Fri 2 to 4	Fri 1.30 to 3.30

What this scenario does do is open up considerable scope for City of Whittlesea to deploy the mobile library in its western growth corridor on a Monday. The current stop at Mernda is retained, at least until the opening of the Library Hub at Mernda, and potentially even for a few extra months to see whether current Mernda mobile users actually make the transition to the new Hub. But by moving Doreen (Laurimar) to a Thursday between Arthurs Creek and Yarrambat (given that the mobile currently drives past Doreen at this time on a Thursday anyway) there are now three possible mobile slots on a Monday. These might be used by City of Whittlesea at locations in Epping North, Kirrip, Wollert or Donnybrook. And even a 7pm finish at Donnybrook would have the mobile back at the depot in Epping soon after 7.30.

6.2. Scenario 2 - PUSH

The PUSH scenario includes all of the changes suggested in TWEAK but with four additional amendments.

▪   Mernda is dropped (with the opening of the Library Hub), further freeing up Monday for use by City of Whittlesea.
▪   St Andrews is shifted to Wednesday morning, swapping day and time with Warrandyte North and pushing Panton Hill earlier on a Tuesday.
▪   Yarrambat is shifted to Tuesday afternoon to make room for a possible stop at Orchard Road Community and Early Learning Centre in Doreen after the stop at Laurimar.
▪   Hurstbridge is retained but potentially serviced by the mid-sized outreach vehicle, not the mobile library.

The potential use of the outreach vehicle at Hurstbridge is recommended as a 'proof of concept' of the model of deploying different assets to meet different needs. Mobile demand at Hurstbridge does not require the full mobile service and the mid-sized vehicle is an alternative. There is also an argument for 'resting' of the mobile to prolong its lifespan, and PUSH does not require the mobile to drive from Yarrambat to Hurstbridge and back to the depot for that Tuesday evening slot.

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PUSH	9.00	9.30	10.00	10.30	11.00	11.30	12.00	12.30	1.00	1.30	2.00	2.30	3.00	3.30	4.00	4.30	5.00	5.30	6.00	6.30	7.00	7.30	8.00
Monday	Whittlesea #1 9.00 to 11.00						Whittlesea #2 12.00 to 2.00						Whittlesea #3 3.00 to 5.00										
Tuesday	Panton Hill 9.00 to 11.00						Warrandyte North 12.00 to 2.00						Yarrambat 3.00 to 5.00					Hurstbridge 5.30 to 7.30 (potentially via ORV)					
Wednesday	St Andrews 9.00 to 11.00						Kangaroo Ground 12.00 to 2.00						Diamond Creek 3.00 to 7.30										
Thursday		Arthurs Creek 9.30 to 11.30					Doreen (Laurimar) 12.00 to 2.00					Doreen (Orchard Road) 2.30 to 4.30											
Friday	Heidelberg West 9.00 to 12.00							Christmas Hills 1.30 to 3.30															

STRETCH	9.00	9.30	10.00	10.30	11.00	11.30	12.00	12.30	1.00	1.30	2.00	2.30	3.00	3.30	4.00	4.30	5.00	5.30	6.00	6.30	7.00	7.30	8.00
Monday	Whittlesea #1 9.00 to 11.00						Whittlesea #2 12.00 to 2.00						Whittlesea #3 3.00 to 5.00						Whittlesea #4 6.00 to 8.00				
Tuesday	Panton Hill 9.00 to 11.00						Warrandyte North 12.00 to 2.00						Yarrambat 3.00 to 5.00					Hurstbridge 5.30 to 7.30 (via ORV or drop)					
Wednesday	St Andrews 9.00 to 11.00						Kangaroo Ground 12.00 to 2.00						Diamond Creek 3.00 to 7.30										
Thursday		Arthurs Creek 9.30 to 11.30					Doreen (Laurimar) 12.00 to 2.00					Doreen (Orchard Road) 2.30 to 4.30											
Friday	Heidelberg West 9.00 to 12.00							Christmas Hills 1.30 to 3.30															
Saturday	Stadiums, Shopping Centres, Fetes and Festivals 9.00 to 1.00																						

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6.3. Scenario 3 - STRETCH

The final STRETCH scenario, however, pushes the use of the mobile library further by adding two extra components to the schedule.

The first of these is a fourth early evening stop in City of Whittlesea on Monday which would still have the mobile back to the depot in Epping by around 8.30. If the Monday locations in Whittlesea's western corridor were staged from south to north or north to south during the day there would be little impact on the vehicle with only a few extra kilometres added every week.

The second possibility in the STRETCH scenario is to use the mobile library and/or other YPRL outreach vehicles for community engagement and promotional purposes on Saturday mornings. This might, for example, involve regular monthly or purposefully promoted stops at sports stadiums, shopping centres, school fetes and community festivals.

Given the presence of the Click and Collect facility in Hurstbridge the Review also recommends that use of the Hurstbridge mobile stop continue to be monitored to determine its viability.

Summary

The proposed changes to the mobile library schedule anticipated through the three scenarios are shown in the table below. Shading in the table identifies when there is a change from one scenario to the next.

Mobile stop	Current	TWEAK	PUSH	STRETCH
Epping (Galada)	Mon 9 to 12	Dropped	Dropped	Dropped
Doreen (Laurimar)	Mon 1 to 2.30	Thu 12 to 2	Thu 12 to 2	Thu 12 to 2
Mernda	Mon 3 to 4	Mon 3 to 4	Dropped	Dropped
Panton Hill	Tue 10.30 to 12.30	Tue 11 to 1	Tue 9 to 11	Tue 9 to 11
St Andrews	Tue 2 to 4.30	Tue 2.30 to 4.30	Wed 9 to 11	Wed 9 to 11
Hurstbridge	Tue 6 to 8.15	Tue 5.30 to 7.30	Tue 5.30 to 7.30 (?ORV*)	Tue 5.30 to 7.30 (ORV* or drop)
Warrandyte North	Wed 10 to 12	Wed 9 to 11	Tue 12 to 2	Tue 12 to 2
Kangaroo Ground	Wed 12.30 to 2.30	Wed 12 to 2	Wed 12 to 2	Wed 12 to 2
Diamond Creek	Wed 3 to 5 Thu 6.30 to 8.30	Wed 3 to 7.30	Wed 3 to 7.30	Wed 3 to 7.30
Arthurs Creek	Thu 9.45 to 12	Thu 9.30 to 11.30	Thu 9.30 to 11.30	Thu 9.30 to 11.30
Yarrambat	Thu 2 to 5	Thu 2.30 to 4.30	Tue 3 to 5	Tue 3 to 5
Heidelberg West	Fri 9 to 12	Fri 9 to 12	Fri 9 to 12	Fri 9 to 12
Christmas Hills	Fri 2 to 4	Fri 1.30 to 3.30	Fri 1.30 to 3.30	Fri 1.30 to 3.30
Whittlesea #1		Mon 9 to 11	Mon 9 to 11	Mon 9 to 11
Whittlesea #2		Mon 12 to 2	Mon 12 to 2	Mon 12 to 2
Whittlesea #3		Mon 5 to 7	Mon 3 to 5	Mon 3 to 5
Doreen (Orchard Rd)			Thu 2.30 to 4.30	Thu 2.30 to 4.30
Whittlesea #4				Mon 6 to 8
Stadiums, Shopping Centres, Fetes and Festivals				Sat 9 to 1

* ORV = Outreach vehicle.

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APPENDIX 1. MOBILE LIBRARY SCHEDULE

YPRL's weekly mobile library schedule as at April 2023 is as shown below.

Day	Location	LGA	Address	Service times	Duration
Monday	Epping	WHI	Mossfield Rise (at Galada Community Centre)	9.00am to 12.00noon	3 hrs
	Doreen	WHI	40 Painted Hills Road (at Laurimar PS)	1.00pm to 2.30pm	1.5 hrs
	Mernda	WHI	72 Mernda Village Drive (at Mernda PS)	3.00pm to 4.00pm	1 hr
Tuesday	Panton Hill	NIL	3 Bishops Road (at Memorial Park)	10.30am to 12.30pm	2 hrs
	St Andrews	NIL	35 Caledonia Street (at Wadambuk Community Centre)	2.00pm to 4.30pm	2.5 hrs
	Hurstbridge	NIL	989 Main Hurstbridge Road (at Hurstbridge PS)	6.00pm to 8.15pm	2.25 hrs
Wednesday	Warrandyte North	NIL	186 Research-Warrandyte Road (at Yarra Warra Pre-school)	10.00am to 12.00noon	2 hrs
	Kangaroo Ground	NIL	10 Graham Road (at Kangaroo Ground PS)	12.30pm to 2.30pm	2 hrs
	Diamond Creek	NIL	30 Main Hurstbridge Road (at Diamond Creek Community Centre)	3.00pm to 5.00pm	2 hrs
Thursday	Arthurs Creek	NIL	900 Arthurs Creek Road (at Arthurs Creek PS)	9.45am to 12.00noon	2.25 hrs
	Yarrambat	NIL	466 Ironbark Road (opposite Post Office)	2.00pm to 5.00pm	3 hrs
	Diamond Creek	NIL	30 Main Hurstbridge Road (at Diamond Creek Community Centre)	6.30pm to 8.30pm	2 hrs
Friday	Heidelberg West	BAN	8 Moresby Court (at Olympic Shopping Centre)	9.00am to 12.00noon	3 hrs
	Christmas Hills	NIL	1409 Eltham-Yarra Glen Road (at Christmas Hills PS)	2.00pm to 4.00pm	2 hrs

* LGA   BAN = Banyule   NIL = Nillumbik   WHI = Whitttlesea

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APPENDIX 2. ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT MOBILE LIBRARY STOPS

I & J Management Services and YPRL staff visited each of the current 13 mobile library stops in April 2023 to assess site access, facilities and safety and to consider opportunities for service improvement. The following tables document, for each location:

- site description
- site use, including (where possible) usage statistics
- site facilities, including vehicle access, signage, power and site maintenance
- observations on timing and service improvement
- recommendations.

ARTHURS CREEK		Nillumbik
Schedule	Thursday 9.45 to 12.00 2.25 hrs	
Location	900 Arthurs Creek Road	
	▪ Mobile stops next to the school crossing in a narrow stretch of land between Arthurs Creek PS and Arthurs Creek Road.	
	▪ The school is located next to the Arthurs Creek Mechanics Institute Hall and opposite the small Arthurs Creek Community Centre. The school precinct is the most central and regularly-attended location in Arthurs Creek.	
	▪ The only alternative would be near the Arthurs Creek Fire Station opposite Ryders Flat Reserve, although this would likely prevent use of the mobile by the school.	

Use				
Visits	2018-21	24 visits per hour	Ranked 7th	Overall rating
	2023	13 visits per hour	Ranked 8th	HIGH to
Loans	2018-21	84 loans per hour	Ranked 3rd	MODERATE
	2021-23	47 loans per hour	Ranked 3rd	
Profile	▪ Used by a small number of local community members to access the collection.			
	▪ One group of students (from a total population of ~ 60 students) brought on board the mobile by their teachers to borrow and return books. A good level of borrowing. Particular value for neurodiverse students who can access sensory story and board books.			

Facilities		
Vehicle access	X	Mobile parks on very narrow strip between the footpath outside the school and Arthurs Creek Road. The back wheels are just off the white line on the edge of the road.
		Parking spot abuts the school crossing which is where the road curves on the crest of a small rise with average to poor visibility for drivers from both directions.
		Mobile cannot move forward as it would hit the posts which hold the school crossing flags. It is assumed that the school crossing cannot move. There is a slightly larger parking space further forward beyond the school crossing, although this is used by teachers to park their cars and would partially block the school gate.
	~	Students have 20m walk along the footpath from the school gate to the mobile entry.
		Customer parking is in the Community Centre opposite the school.
Signage	~	Small parking limitation sign on Arthurs Creek Road is the only indication that a mobile library visits the area. Mobile is visible as drivers go past.
Power	✓	Onsite power accessible from nearby pole
Site maintenance	~	Mobile parks on semi-rough unsealed surface.

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Observations	• No demand-based reason why this stop is 2.25 hours when most stops are only 2 hours. Some customers say that they can nevere remember the actual opening time (9:45am) so tend to comne at 10:00 am when they know it is open. • Parking location is not ideal and potentially dangerous if drivers are not careful going past the mobile. However, options are limited in this location and the alternative location would likely see reduced use.
Recommendations	• Explore parking options beyond the school crossing. • Explore opportunities for greater use of the mobile by school students. • Reduce stop duration to 2 hours, say 10.00 to 12.00. • Standardise signage at the mobile stop.

CHRISTMAS HILLS				Nillumbik
Schedule	Friday 2.00 to 4.00 2 hrs			
Location	1409 Eltham-Yarra Glen Road (at Christmas Hills PS) • Mobile stops in the school's unsealed car park, just outside the school gates. • The school is the only community facility in Christmas Hills, there are no practical alternatives (e.g. shops, community centre/hall).			
Use				
Visits	2018-21	20 visits per hour	Ranked 12th	Overall rating HIGH to MODERATE
	2023	15 visits per hour	Ranked 7th	
Loans	2018-21	74 loans per hour	Ranked 5th	
	2021-23	48 loans per hour	Ranked 2nd	
Profile	• Used by a small number of local community members for the collection, technology access and social interaction. • 2 classes from the primary school (~30 students) are brought on board the mobile by their teachers to borrow and return books. • Some parents visit the library with their children after school finishes.			
Facilities				
Vehicle access	X Dangerous exit from school grounds to Eltham-Yarra Glen Rd after 4pm. The speed limit on Eltham-Yarra Glen Rd is normally 80 km/h, but it is a 40 km/h school zone between 2.30 and 4.00. With this stop finishing at 4pm, and allowing a few minutes for packing up, the driver has to make a right hand turn from an unsealed upslope into 80 km/h traffic on a curve in the road. Where possible, drivers currently pack up early so they can exit before 4pm. ~ Parking involves a multi-point manoeuvre between trees in the school's unsealed car park.			
Signage	X No signage on the Eltham-Yarra Glen Rd to indicate that a mobile library visits the area. Mobile is not visible from Eltham-Yarra Glen Rd.			
Power	✓ Onsite power accessible from nearby pole.			
Site maintenance	~ Mobile parks near a skip bin in the school car park. If skip bin is placed in the wrong location (as occasionally happens) the mobile has to park in a slightly different position.			
Observations	• The exit onto the Eltham-Yarra Glen Rd is not safe for the mobile driver and other road users. Changing the stop time to finish at 3.30 or 3.45 would allow the mobile to leave before 4pm and enter Eltham-Yarra Glen Rd when the speed limit is only 40 km/h. • Changing the closing time to 3.30 or 3.45 is unlikely to have an impact on overall use of the mobile. • A 1.30 start would still allow staff sufficient time to shut down from Heidelberg West, travel, have lunch and set-up in time for the afternoon stop.			
Recommendations	• Change schedule to Friday 1.30 to 3.30. • Install appropriate signage on the Eltham-Yarra Glen Road. • Standardise signage at the mobile stop.			

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DIAMOND CREEK				Nillumbik
Schedule	Wednesday	3.00 to 5.00	2 hrs	
	Thursday	6.30 to 8.30	2 hrs	
Location	30 Main Hurstbridge Road (at Diamond Creek Community Centre)			
	▪ Mobile stops in curved car park area outside the Diamond Creek Community Centre. Plenty of customer parking.			
Use				
Visits	2018-21	24 visits per hour	Ranked 8th	
	2023	9 visits per hour	Ranked 10th	Overall rating
Loans	2018-21	41 loans per hour	Ranked 13th	MODERATE
	2021-23	42 loans per hour	Ranked 6th	
Profile	▪ Overall, usage levels at Diamond Creek across the two stops are rated as 'moderate'.			
	▪ Visits and loans per hour vary slightly between the Wednesday afternoon and the Thursday evening times (within this moderate range), and the clientele is different. Visits per hour in March 2023 were around 11 on Wednesdays and 6 on Thursdays (with very few people visiting the mobile after 7.30 on Thursdays).			
	▪ Wednesday tends to be families with children who come to the mobile after school. Sacred Heart Catholic PS is 350m north of the Community Centre, Diamond Creek PS is around 600m west, and Diamond Creek East PS is 750m east. Most of this use is browsing and collection of holds.			
	▪ Thursday evening customers are mostly adults (including regulars) who come to browse the collection and borrow. Loans per visit are nearly double that on the Wednesday. A small number of families bring children after dinner.			
Facilities				
Vehicle access	~	Mobile drives straight in to the car park from Main Hurstbridge Road. Occasionally cars park in the dedicated mobile space and staff go to the Community Centre to find the vehicle owners.		
Signage	X	No signage re the mobile library. Parking signs only indicate restriction times, not the attendance of the mobile. This absence of detail probably contributes to people parking in the nominated bays at restricted times.		
Power	✓	Onsite power accessible from nearby pole.		
Site maintenance	✓	Mobile parks in bitumen car park.		
Observations	▪ Diamond Creek's two stops on the schedule cater for different types of users. Wednesday is mainly after school traffic. Thursday is mainly adults who work out of the area and cannot get to an afternoon timeslot.			
	▪ The main question is, does the moderate level of use warrant two stops in Diamond Creek? Would a single 4-hour stop from 3.30 to 7.30 cater for both groups more efficiently? Would a 5.30 to 7.30 time be better on a Thursday?			
	▪ Then there is the question of what is the best location, for either or both stops? The Community Centre is centrally located between the three primary schools in Diamond Creek. However, consideration could be given to approaching Vic Roads to get access to the bus stop outside the Community Bank Stadium (further up Main Hurstbridge Road). The Stadium is busy year round with sporting and recreational activities in the late afternoon and early evening. The stop would be only 200m from Diamond Creek East PS, potentially increasing visitation from families at that school. There is plenty of customer parking at the Stadium and/or the primary school. And the bus stop is in a dedicated cut away off the main road.			
Recommendations	▪ Canvass community feedback on changing:			
	– the number of stops (from two per week to one per week)			
	– the timing of the stops (to 3.30 to 7.30 – or 3.00 to 7.00 … 2.30 to 6.30)			
	– the location of the stops (from the Community Centre to Community Bank Stadium).			
	▪ Update signage at the mobile stop.			

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DOREEN (Laurimar)		Whittlesea
Schedule	Monday 1.00 to 2.30 1½ hrs	
Location	40 Painted Hills Road (at Laurimar Primary School)	
	▪ Mobile stops in Painted Hills Road around the east side of Laurimar PS.	
	▪ A short walk-through from the front of the primary school takes people past a shopping strip and into the Laurimar Town Centre. A Community Centre with kindergarten and Maternal and Child Health Centre is at the west end of the primary school (200m away from and out of view of the mobile stop).	
	▪ City of Whittlesea has given approval to move the stop to the west end of the school, closer to the Community Centre and shopping centre.	

Use					
Visits	2018-21	35 visits per hour	Ranked 12th		
	2023	7 visits per hour	Ranked 12th	Overall rating	
Loans	2018-21	46 loans per hour	Ranked 11th	LOW	
	2021-23	37 loans per hour	Ranked 8th		
Profile	▪ Usage is currently rated 'low', and among the lowest in the network. This is not helped by:				
		– a lack of promotion of the mobile location			
		– the mobile stop being hidden around a corner out of sight of the school entrance and shopping centre car park			
		– a lunchtime/early afternoon timeslot that misses people who are out and about in the morning and any after school traffic.			

Facilities		
Vehicle access	X	Parking is difficult in a narrow side street. People often park in the bus space during the restricted times. With no way of identifying or contacting these people (they could be at the shopping centre or school) the bus is forced to park on the grass further along Painted Hills Road.
Signage	~	Parking restriction signage only. No signage promoting the mobile library.
Power	X	No onsite power, generator is used. Power is accessible at the proposed alternative site.
Site maintenance	X	Mobile stops in paved cut-away parking spaces off Painted Hills Road. Overhead trees are not always pruned to allow access.

Observations	
	▪ Agreed location on the west side of the school is superior to the current stop. It is closer to key activity points (i.e. school, Community Centre, shops) and is not affected by overhanging trees. Move should be made as soon as possible.
	▪ It is hoped that moving the location of stop will increase use. This would also be assisted by better onsite signage and promotion of the mobile to the Laurimar community.
	▪ Beyond the change in location, an early afternoon timeslot is typically the slowest part of the day. Activation of shoppers at the nearby Laurimar Town Centre might be better in the morning or mid to late afternoon. Use generated from the Community Centre would also better in the morning (and to a lesser extent the afternoon). Use from the primary school would be maximised around the end of the school day (approx. 3.30).

Recommendations	
	▪ Move to the proposed new location in Armidale Road as soon as possible.
	▪ Explore opportunities to promote and activate usage (e.g. changing the schedule to a mid-afternoon timeslot – say 2.30 to 4.30, installation of appropriate signage).
	▪ Standardise signage at the mobile stop.

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EPPING				Whittlesea
Schedule	Monday	9.00 to 12.00	3 hrs	
Location	Mossfield Rise (at Galada Community Centre)			
	▪ Mobile stops outside the Community Hub in Epping, which now has its own 'click and collect' micro-library.			
Use				
Visits	2018-21	30 visits per hour	Ranked 6th	
	2023	17 visits per hour	Ranked 5th	Overall rating
Loans	2018-21	90 loans per hour	Ranked 2nd	MODERATE
	2021-23	36 loans per hour	Ranked 10th	
Profile	▪ Mobile stop at Galada originally served an emerging new community in Epping, and was one of the busiest stops on the schedule.			
	▪ Shopping and activity precinct now well-established, and with a micro-library on site at Galada Community Centre use of the mobile has dropped significantly.			
Facilities				
Vehicle access	✓	Mobile parks immediately outside the external entrance to the Library Hub.		
Signage	~	Mobile library parking signage is adequate. Community centre signage does not clearly indicate the presence of the library.		
Power	X	No onsite power, generator is used.		
Site maintenance	✓	Mobile parks on dedicated level bitumen roadside park.		
Observations	▪ With a micro-library in place at the Community Centre, right where the mobile stops, there is no reason to continue with this stop. The only reason why a customer would come on board the mobile at Galada would be to speak with the mobile staff.			
	▪ Longer term, subject to population growth and demand, it is likely that a full-service library branch will be required in Epping.			
Recommendations	▪ Remove stop from the mobile schedule.			

HEIDELBERG WEST				Banyule
Schedule	Friday	9.00 to 12.00	3 hrs	
Location	8 Moresby Court (at Olympic Village Shopping Centre)			
	▪ Mobile stops in the car park opposite the Olympic Village shops.			
	▪ The stop is close to the Olympic Village shops, Olympic Village Green playground, Olympic Leisure Banyule (swimming pool), Charles Latrobe P-12 College Primary Campus and Banyule Community Health Centre.			
Use				
Visits	2018-21	22 visits per hour	Ranked 10th	
	2023	8 visits per hour	Ranked 11th	Overall rating
Loans	2018-21	53 loans per hour	Ranked 8th	LOW
	2021-23	33 loans per hour	Ranked 11th	
Profile	▪ Mobile services a highly disadvantaged community in an urban area.			
	▪ General community use of collections (regular borrowers) and computers.			
	▪ Mix of parents with young children, women working from home, older residents and ESL students from the nearby TAFE.			
	▪ Some use for social inclusion and job-seeking support.			
	▪ Usage has been down since COVID, but starting to pick up again in 2023.			
	▪ From a 'use' perspective only, questionable whether three hours is needed.			
Facilities				
Vehicle access	~	Tight entry turn between bollards into shopping area car park. Occasionally cars park in the dedicated mobile space and staff have to walk through the shops to find the vehicle owners.		
Signage	~	Parking signage is adequate, although not always complied with.		
Power	✓	Onsite power accessible from nearby pole.		
Site maintenance	✓	Mobile parks on unsealed car park.		

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HEIDELBERG WEST		Banyule
Observations	•	Getting to the stop currently requires a tight entry turn between bollards into the shopping area. Driving straight into a parking spot in Alamein Rd beside the Olympic Leisure Centre would be more convenient, slightly closer to the primary school, and is only 100m away and in direct line of sight from the current stop. The new parking spot would require a small cut-out from the grass beside the footpath, possible moving of the footpath (to allow access past the library pop-out) and installation of a power box.
	•	Council is committed to providing library services in this location but open to use of different service models (i.e. may not need to be a mobile vehicle). Creation of a micro-library at the Banyule Community Health Centre (150m from current stop) is an option.
Recommendations	•	Move mobile stop to Alamein Rd outside Olympic Leisure Centre.
	•	Standardise signage at the mobile stop.
	•	Explore opportunities to activate usage. If this does not increase use consider reducing the stop duration to 2 hours.
	•	Longer term, install a micro-library at Banyule Community Health Centre.

HURSTBRIDGE				Nillumbik
Schedule	Tuesday	6.00 to 8.15	2.25 hrs	
Location	989 Main Road (near entrance to Hurstbridge Primary School)			
	• Mobile stops in a secure pull-off between Main Road and the primary school.			
	• Mobile stop is 900m / 2 minutes' drive from the Click and Collect library at the Hurstbridge Community Hub in Graysharps Road. The library is open from 9am to 3pm Monday to Friday, the Hub is open 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.			
Use				
Visits	2018-21	31 visits per hour	Ranked 5th	
	2023	10 visits per hour	Ranked 9th	Overall rating
Loans	2018-21	43 loans per hour	Ranked 12th	LOW
	2021-23	33 loans per hour	Ranked 12th	
Profile	• Mobile is scheduled to accommodate people who cannot get to a library during the day. In the past this included commuters who returned to Hurstbridge after work and families who would bring in school age children after a busy day at school and sport. Usage was mainly of collections (collect and return, browse and borrow) with little demand for computer or wifi services.			
	• More recently, post-COVID and since the establishment of the Click and Collect service at the Community Hub, visitation has dropped significantly.			
	• Overall usage is rated 'low' with borrowing per hour in 2018-21 and 2023 lower than all except one other stop.			
Facilities				
Vehicle access	✓	Mobile drives straight in off Main Road and turns left on exit before doing a U-turn at a roundabout 300m up the road.		
Signage	✓	Parking signage is adequate.		
Power	✓	Onsite power accessible from nearby pole.		
Site maintenance	✓	Mobile parks on bitumen bus parking area off the main road.		
Observations	• The mobile stop is well situated at the primary school, but unlike other stops this does not generate usage because it is an evening stop.			
	• Many Hurstbridge residents now have an alternative way of accessing library collections at the Community Hub. The Click and Collect closes at 3pm so there is still scope for providing a late afternoon/evening stop to accommodate commuter/out of area demand.			
	• The 8.15 finish means that the drivers do not get back to and away from the depot in Epping until around 9.30. Bringing forward the schedule, say from 5.00 to 7.00 or 5.30 to 7.30, would have minimal impact on usage as few			

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	- people come on board beyond this time, and allow drivers to be finished at the depot by around 8.45. This could be accommodated from the previous stop. - Given the establishment of the Click and Collect service and low level of mobile use the continued need for this stop must be questioned.
Recommendations	- Monitor use of the mobile over the next 6 months, with a view to deciding on continuation or cessation from 2024. - Consider installation of lockers at the Hub for collection of holds out of hours. - Reduce the scheduled stop to 2 hours. - Change the schedule to have the mobile visit from 5.30 to 7.30. - Standardise signage at the mobile stop.

KANGAROO GROUND				**Nillumbik**
Schedule	Wednesday	12.30 to 2.30	2 hrs	
Location	10 Graham Road (at Kangaroo Ground Primary School) - Mobile stops in the Kangaroo Ground PS car park, immediately outside the school gate. - Mobile stop is 100m from the Kangaroo Ground pre-school (across the school car park) and 100m from the Kangaroo Ground General Store (across busy Eltham-Yarra Glen Road). - PTV bus Route 578 Eltham Station to Warrandyte stops in the Kangaroo Ground PS car park at around 4pm on weekdays.			
Use				
Visits	2018-21	34 visits per hour	Ranked 4th	
	2023	49 visits per hour	Ranked 1st	Overall rating
Loans	2018-21	59 loans per hour	Ranked 7th	HIGH
	2021-23	45 loans per hour	Ranked 4th	
Profile	- Main use is by primary school students who are allowed to visit the mobile during their lunch break (1.20 to 2.30). Students have their own library cards. - The number of visits is high as students come on board to browse and chat to the library staff, but loans per visit is low (currently 0.9 vs 1.9 across all stops in the schedule). - Some teachers come on the mobile to borrow items or collect reserves. - While the school Principal is very supportive of the children accessing the library, their attendance on the mobile is unsupervised by the school unless one of the teachers on yard duty comes on the mobile. Duty of care is not clear as to enter the mobile students independently leave the school grounds (but not the school precinct) during the course of the school day. - There is some (limited) community use at this stop. - A box of books is dropped off at the pre-school every fortnight. - Overall usage is rated 'high' with visits per hour (49) currently higher than any other mobile stop and loans per hour (45) the 4th highest amount.			
Facilities				
Vehicle access	✓	Mobile turns left off Graham Road and drives straight into the car park.		
Signage	✓	Parking signage is adequate.		
Power	X	No onsite power, generator is used. Power could be supplied.		
Site maintenance	✓	Unsealed car park has pot holes and slopes. Mobile parks to minimise the camber and allow customers to access from the bitumen footpath.		
Observations	- The mobile stop is well-situated at the primary school and well-attended by students during their lunch break. More than any other stop, Kangaroo Ground raises the issue of whether YPRL (through the mobile) should be acting as a substitute for a school library. The mobile clearly delivers a valuable service and is facilitating children's reading in the home. - Ideally, the standard of the car park could be improved (sealed?), although this does not have a major impact on the mobile service.			

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Recommendations	• Standardise signage at the mobile stop.
	• Explore opportunities to install power at the stop.
	• Clarify duty of care responsibility with Kangaroo Ground PS.

MERNDA				Whittlesea
Schedule	Monday	3.00 to 4.00	1 hr	
Location		72 Mernda Village Drive (at Mernda Primary School)		
		• Mobile stops near the side entrance to Mernda PS.		
		• Mobile stop is 100m from Mernda Village Kindergarten, Mernda Village Community Activity Centre and Mernda Village Shopping Centre.		

Use				
Visits	2018-21	83 visits per hour	Ranked 1st	
	2023	33 visits per hour	Ranked 2nd	Overall rating
Loans	2018-21	95 loans per hour	Ranked 1st	VERY HIGH
	2021-23	71 loans per hour	Ranked 1st	
Profile	• Mernda is clearly the busiest mobile stop in the schedule, with loans and visits per hour well ahead of nearly all other sites. This is influenced by having a good location close to activity centres (i.e. schools, shops), plenty of nearby parking and a short opening duration which concentrates use into a single hour of operation.			
	• Being the last stop on a Monday and being relatively close to the mobile depot in Epping, the mobile drivers often stay beyond the published 4.00 closing time to allow more people to access the library. Either the published opening times should be amended or this practice discouraged.			

Facilities		
Vehicle access	✓	Mobile pulls into nominated parking bays along Mernda Village Drive.
Signage	~	Parking signage is adequate. No sign promoting mobile library.
Power	X	No onsite power, generator is used. Power could be supplied.
Site maintenance	✓	Mobile parks on bitumen roadside.
Observations	•	A community library is proposed to open at the Mernda Town Centre in 2023. This is some distance from Mernda Village and it is not yet clear if people who currently use the mobile library will (by choice) transition their library use to the new facility. The distance between Mernda Village and Mernda Town Centre is about the same as the distance between the full service libraries at Lalor and Thomastown. People who access education, community and retail services at Mernda Village can walk to the mobile. Mernda Town Centre will be a drive away.
	•	Therefore, there is an argument to retain the Mernda Village mobile stop at least for a little while after the opening of the community library to understand the impact on use.
	•	As it stands, if the Mernda Town Centre Library were not opening there is a strong case for expansion of the Mernda Village mobile stop to at least 1½ hours (3.00 to 4.30), if not 2 hours (3.00 to 5.00).
Recommendations	•	Monitor use of the mobile library stop at Mernda when the new community library opens at Mernda Town Centre to determine the impact on mobile use – and possible closure, retention or expansion of the mobile stop.
	•	Standardise signage at the mobile stop.

PANTON HILL				Nillumbik
Schedule	Tuesday	10.30 to 12.30	2 hrs	
Location		3 Bishops Road (at Memorial Park)		
		• Mobile stops at Memorial Park in the centre of Panton Hill. The stop is within 100m of the Panton Hill Primary School, Panton Hill Pre-school, Panton Hill General Store and Living and Learning Nillumbik – Panton Hill Neighbourhood House).		

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PANTON HILL				Nillumbik
Use				
Visits	2018-21	45 visits per hour	Ranked 2nd	Overall rating
	2023	28 visits per hour	Ranked 3rd	HIGH to
Loans	2018-21	79 loans per hour	Ranked 4th	MODERATE
	2021-23	37 loans per hour	Ranked 9th	
Profile	▪	Use was very strong prior to COVID but has dropped away in the past two years.		
	▪	Overall use is still rated 'high to moderate'.		
	▪	Main use is by Panton Hill PS who bring classes over to the mobile one class at a time.		
	▪	Book boxes are delivered to Panton Hill PS (weekly), Panton Hill Kindergarten (fortnightly) and the Panton Hill Playhouse (fortnightly – at the Neighbourhood House).		
	▪	Regular use by community members (mainly borrowing), and the mobile is on a popular walking route so some incidental access from passers by.		
Facilities				
Vehicle access	X	Mobile cannot manouevre a right hand turn at the small roundabout in Panton Hill. Mobile drives through Panton Hill toward St Andrews and does a U-turn several km up the road to enable it to drive back through the roundabout and straight into the stop at Memorial Park. On departure the mobile goes through the roundabout again to its next stop at St Andrews.		
Signage	X	Three signs in the vicinity to show the mobile's presence and parking restrictions. All are inconsistent.		
Power	✓	Onsite power accessible from nearby pole.		
Site maintenance	✓	Level bitumen parking area.		
Observations	▪	Give the inefficiencies in accessing the site it would make sense to swap the order of the Panton Hill and St Andrews stops so that the mobile starts at St Andrews and then drives straight back into Panton Hill. Any change would need to be discussed with local communities, Panton Hill PS and the Wadambuk Community Centre at St Andrews.		
	▪	Some signage suggests that the mobile stop commences at 10.15. The published timetable has a 10.30 start.		
Recommendations	▪	Canvass community feedback on swapping the order of the Panton Hill and St Andrews stops.		
	▪	Correct and standardise signage at the mobile stop.		

ST ANDREWS				Nillumbik
Schedule	Tuesday	2.00 to 4.30	2½ hrs	
Location	35 Caledonia Street (at Wadambuk Community Centre)			
	▪	Mobile stops immediately out the front of the Wadambuk Community Centre.		
	▪	The Men's Shed at St Andrews is next to the Community Centre.		
	▪	St Andrews Primary School is 100m down the road, with the St Andrews General Store a further 100m along Caledonia Street.		
Use				
Visits	2018-21	23 visits per hour	Ranked 9th	Overall rating
	2023	16 visits per hour	Ranked 6th	
Loans	2018-21	50 loans per hour	Ranked 9th	LOW
	2021-23	29 loans per hour	Ranked 13th	
Profile	▪	The presence of the mobile is highly valued by the local community, which has undergone significant change since the Black Saturday bushfires in 2009.		
	▪	Use dropped off during and after COVID and is beginning to pick up. The main burst of activity comes at around school closing time (3.25) with family borrowing.		
	▪	Overall use is rated 'low'.		

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ST ANDREWS		Nillumbik
Facilities		
Vehicle access	✓	Mobile drives straight in to its parking spot in the paved Wadambuk car park. The mobile takes up about five of the 15 marked parking spaces at the Centre.
Signage	~	Parking signs indicate the location of the mobile library. Small A4 sign in the window of the Community Centre advertises the mobile's presence.
Power	✓	Onsite power accessible from nearby pole.
Site maintenance	✓	Level bitumen parking area.
Observations	▪	Mobile stops in St Andrews on a day when Wadambuk Community Centre and the nearby Men's Shed are closed. While acknowledging that the mobile takes up some of the parking spaces immediately outside Wadambuk, it would seem to make more sense to have the mobile on site when other activities were occurring within the community precinct. This option was endorsed by Manager at the Community Centre who would look for opportunities to cross-promote activities through the Centre's fortnightly e-newsletter.
	▪	Wadambuk Community Centre is open 9am to 4pm on Mondays and Wednesdays, and 9am to 1pm on Thursdays. The Men's Shed at St Andrews is open 9am to 1pm on Wednesdays and 7pm to 10pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays.
	▪	If the mobile stopped at St Andrews on a Wednesday (any time between 9am and 1pm) all three community facilities would be open simultaneously. However, this would remove access for families currently accessing the mobile library after school on a Tuesday.
	▪	Beyond the mobile library, increased activation of library services in St Andrews might also be achieved through running school holiday programs and/or adult programs at Wadambuk and having a small onsite collection available from within the Centre.
	▪	See also vehicle access issues at Panton Hill.
Recommendations	▪	Canvass community feedback on shifting the stop to Wednesday morning (any time between 9am and 1pm) or any other time when the Wadambuk Community Centre is open.
	▪	As part of the consultation above, canvass community feedback on swapping the order of the Panton Hill and St Andrews stops on a Tuesday.
	▪	Standardise signage at the mobile stop.

WARRANDYTE NORTH				Nillumbik
Schedule	Wednesday	10.00 to 12.00	2 hrs	
Location	186 Research-Warrandyte Road (at Yarra Warra Preschool and Bush Kinder)			
	▪ Mobile stops in the car park outside the pre-school.			
	▪ The car park also serves the volunteer-based Warrandyte North Fire Station.			
	▪ Mobile location is 3 minutes' drive from the Warrandyte Library in the City of Manningham (run by Whitehorse Manningham Libraries). Warrandyte Library is open for 28 hours per week over 5 days and may soon trial an extended hours 'open access' model.			
Use				
Visits	2018-21	21 visits per hour	Ranked 11th	
	2023	7 visits per hour	Ranked 12th	Overall rating
Loans	2018-21	46 loans per hour	Ranked 11th	LOW
	2021-23	37 loans per hour	Ranked 8th	
Profile	▪ Mobile services small local community and the pre-school.			
	▪ General community use is primarily of collections (regular borrowers).			
	▪ Drop ins have not picked up post-COVID interruptions, with visits per hour currently only one third of pre-COVID levels.			
	▪ Yarra Warra PS get a box of books delivered each week and schedule some on-mobile experiences for the children			

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WARRANDYTE NORTH		Nillumbik
Facilities		
Vehicle access	~	Vehicle access into the car park is straightforward and safe. Exiting the car park requires a reversing manouevre and right hand turn onto an uphill gradient, which can affect traffic coming up the hill. 12.00 departure is also pick up time at the kindergarten, so one of the drivers momentarily blocks parents' entry to the site to allow the mobile to exit.
Signage	✓	Large sign visible to the community. Parking signage is adequate.
Power	✓	Onsite power accessible from nearby pole (accessible through a small gate in the fence).
Site maintenance	X	Unsealed park has a number of pot holes (which affect visitors more than the mobile). The mobile has to park with a significant (and disorienting) slope from front to back. This is a concern for any library users with limited mobility.
Observations	▪	Overall use is low, probably the lowest level of use of any of the mobile stops. Other than the pre-school there are few visitors. This may be affected by the proximity to Warrandyte Library in neighbouring Manningham LGA.
	▪	There is no case for extending the duration of this stop, and the time spent could arguably be reduced with little impact on the community.
	▪	Yarra Warra are looking to change their pre-school session times on Wednesday to 8.30 - 11.30. They are concerned that families will not be able to access the car park at pick up time if the mobile is still present through to midday. Ideally, for Yarra Warra, the mobile schedule would be changed to visit from 9.00 to 11.00.
Recommendations	▪	Change the schedule to have the mobile visit from 9.00 to 11.00 (to fit in with the pre-school).
	▪	Explore opportunities to improve the surface of the car park, and ideally have a more level parking spot.
	▪	Explore opportunities to activate usage.
	▪	Standardise signage at the mobile stop.

YARRAMBAT			Nillumbik
Schedule	Thursday 2.00 to 5.00 3 hrs		
Location	466 Ironbark Road (opposite Tancks Corner Cafe)		
	▪ Mobile is located at a bus stop opposite a café and Australia Post pick up point, about 100m from Yarrambat PS on the opposite side of road from the school gate.		
	▪ The Yarrambat General Store, which is where the stop is located, has now closed down.		

Use				
Visits	2018-21	18 visits per hour	Ranked 13th	
	2023	23 visits per hour	Ranked 4th	Overall rating
Loans	2018-21	39 loans per hour	Ranked 10th	MODERATE
	2021-23	47 loans per hour	Ranked 7th	
Profile	▪	Moderate level of community use.		
	▪	Even though the General Store has closed there is still a sense that this is a community 'hub' given the proximity to the school, café and Australia Post point.		
	▪	There is not a lot of off-road parking close to the mobile location so people tend not to stay on the mobile for very long.		
	▪	Yarrambat PS is a large school (approx. 630 students) and has its own library that students visit with their class every week. Consequently, Yarrambat PS does not send classes to the mobile.		

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YARRAMBAT		Nillumbik
Facilities		
Vehicle access	✓	Mobile parks in a bus stop. Access is straightforward and safe.
Signage	~	Parking signage is adequate.
Power	✓	Onsite power accessible from nearby pole.
Site maintenance	X	Paved road surface that cambers to the left, which can be disorienting for customers when they step onto the vehicle.
Observations	▪	A solid level of loans is spread over a 3 hour stop. There is no obvious need for 3 hours, and this could be reduced to 2 hours as long as it allowed for some community visitation prior to the end of the school day and some post-school traffic associated with school pick-up (between 3.30 and 4.00).
Recommendations	▪	Reduce the stop duration to 2 hours, say 2.30 to 4.30.
	▪	Explore opportunities to level the site.
	▪	Standardise signage at the mobile stop.

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APPENDIX 3. BOOK DELIVERIES

The mobile library drops boxes of books at schools, kindergartens and childcare centres upon request. Most participating facilities get a regular (e.g. weekly, fortnightly) drop of books selected by the mobile library staff (approx. 30 books per box).

Days of delivery are not hard-set, although most happen on the day when the mobile is in the vicinity. The deliveries near the stops are done from the mobile. Those further away are done by the VW Caddy Van by one of the drivers going to or from the mobile on changeovers.

The following table lists the facilities currently on the mobile library roster (at May 2023). 106 boxes delivered per month equates to around 3,180 items per month or 30,000 items per year (allowing for closures during school holidays)

Day	Facility Childcare / Kinder / School		Location LGA		Activity*		Boxes per month
Mon	Galada Kindergarten	K	Epping North	W	½ box / week	V	2
					1 box / week	M	4
Mon	Epping North YMCA ELC	C	Epping North	W	½ box / fortnight	V	1
Mon	Wollert One Learn	C	Wollert	W	1 box / week	D	4
Mon	Laurimar Kindergarten	K	Laurimar	W	½ box / fortnight	V	1
Mon	Mernda ELC	C	Mernda	W	½ box / week	V	2
					1 box / week	M	4
Tue	Panton Hill Playhouse	C	Panton Hill	N	1 box / fortnight	V	2
Tue	Panton Hill Kindergarten	C	Panton Hill	N	1 box / fortnight	M	2
Tue	Panton Hill PS	S	Panton Hill	N	2 box / week	V	8
Tue	St Andrews PS	S	St Andrews	N	1 box / week	V	4
Wed	Yarra Warra Kinder	K	Warrandyte North	N	1 box / week	V	4
Wed	Little Scooters ELC	C	Research	N	2 box / month	D	2
Wed	Research Kindergarten	K	Research	N	2 box / month	D	2
Wed	Kangaroo Ground Kinder	K	Kangaroo Ground	N	1 box / fortnight	M	2
Wed	Diamond Creek Kinder	K	Diamond Creek	N	1 box / fortnight	M	2
Wed	Story House ELC	C	Diamond Creek	N	1 box / month	M	1
Wed	Kangaroo Ground PS	S	Kangaroo Ground	N	2 box / week	V	8
Wed	Diamond Creek East PS	S	Diamond Creek	N	½ box / week	M	2
Wed	Diamond Creek PS	S	Diamond Creek	N	½ box / week	M	2
Wed	Sacred Heart PS	S	Diamond Creek	N	½ box / week	M	2
Thu	Yarrambat Kinder 1	K	Yarrambat	N	1 box / fortnight	M	2
Thu	Yarrambat Kinder 2	K	Yarrambat	N	1 box / fortnight	M	2
Thu	Smiling Children ELC	C	Yarrambat	N	1 box / fortnight	V	2
Thu	Arthurs Creek PS	S	Arthurs Creek	N	½ box / week	V	2
					2 box / week	M	8
Thu	Yarrambat PS	S	Yarrambat	N	½ box / week	V	2
Fri	Olympic Village Kinder	K	Heidelberg West	B	1 box / fortnight	M	2
Fri	Olympic Village PS	S	Heidelberg West	B	4 box / month	M	4
Fri	Christmas Hills PS	S	Christmas Hills	N	½ box / week	V	2
					1 box / week	M	4
-	Orchard Road Daycare	C	Doreen	W	1 box / week	D	4
-	Story House ELC	C	Doreen	W	1 box / month	D	1
-	Ashley Park PS	S	Doreen	W	2 box / month	D	2
-	Al Siraat K-12 College	S	Epping	W	8 box / month	D	8
Total							106

* Visit / Mobile delivery / Drop off

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APPENDIX 4. MOBILE LIBRARY USE

Note: Due to ongoing changes in YPRL systems from 2020 and intermittent COVID shutdowns or service restrictions there is no consistent longitudinal data on reservations, loans, renewals and returns by mobile stop. For example, due to COVID restrictions the mobile library did not operate from:

- *20 March to 29 June 2020 (inclusive) ... 14.5 weeks*
- *9 July 2020 to 26 January 2021 (inclusive) ... 29 weeks*
- *31 May 2021 to 30 June 2021 (inclusive) ... 4.5 weeks.*

The mobile is also typically off-road for a period every January for maintenance.

The following analysis uses the best data available, recognising that it is not indicative of 'normal' or 'full year' use of the mobile library. However, it is assumed that the relativities between stops have not been significantly influenced by the data constraints.

Analysis from 2021 review of Mobile and Outreach Services conducted by I & J Management Services

General

The mobile library had total membership of more than 3,000 people in 2020-21. Membership increased during this year as people (during COVID) chose to join and use this local service rather than visit their library branches (when they could within public movement conditions).

Mobile library	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Membership	2,006	2,277	2,034	3,168
Visits	21,131	35,044	25,058	18,880
Loans	63,236	102,118	73,605	35,475
Loans per visit	3.0	2.9	2.9	1.9
% of YPRL total				
Membership	2.1%	2.3%	2.3%	3.2%
Visits	1.3%	2.3%	2.2%	3.4%
Loans	2.0%	3.3%	3.0%	2.2%
Loans per visit YPRL	1.9	1.9	2.0	1.9

Visits to the mobile library peaked in 2018-19 due to a campaign of increased community engagement by mobile library staff. Unfortunately COVID put a brake on visitation to the mobile which dropped off in 2019-20 and 2020-21. However, during this time visits to the mobile library increased as a proportion of total YPRL visits – from 1.3% in 2017-18 up to 3.4% in 2020-21.

Loans from the mobile also increased in 2018-19 but dropped away during COVID. Prior to COVID the average number of loans per mobile visit was aroun 50% higher than the rate of borrowing in YPRL's library branches.

Mobile library use by location

Mobile library data from July 2018 to June 2021 illustrates the changes in use of the mobile library over that time, as well as differences between the average number of visits at each location. Epping (at Galada), Panton Hill and Mernda are the busiest stops in terms of the total number of people who visit the mobile library (average 83-90 visits per week). However, Mernda is open for only one hour per week, and is therefore by far the busiest stop in terms of visits per hour – around 3-4 times the rate seen at most stops.

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In this three year period four stops had peak visitor numbers over 100 per stop (Kangaroo Ground – 145, Epping – 140, Panton Hill – 135 and Mernda – 120), with five (Arthurs Creek – 10, Yarrambat – 12, Christmas Hills – 13, Kangaroo Ground – 15, and Warrandyte North – 19) having fewer than 20 customers at least once. At most stops the average door count numbers were fairly consistent over time.

With average visits at most stops around 20-30 per hour, a visit time of around 5 minutes means that at any one time there are 2-3 customers on the mobile.

Average visit levels increased at all stops in 2021. From an overall average of 788 visits per week in the two pre-COVID years from July 2018 to June 2020, average attendance during the four months of opening from late January 2021 to end May 2021 increased by 47% to 1,156 per week. This indicated growth from a pre-COVID 26 visits per hour across the mobile network to 38 visits per hour during early 2021. Visits to the mobile at Kangaroo Ground, for example, more than doubled from 29 to 61 per hour. Mernda increased 42% from 77 to 110 visits per hour – averaging a visitor every 30 seconds.

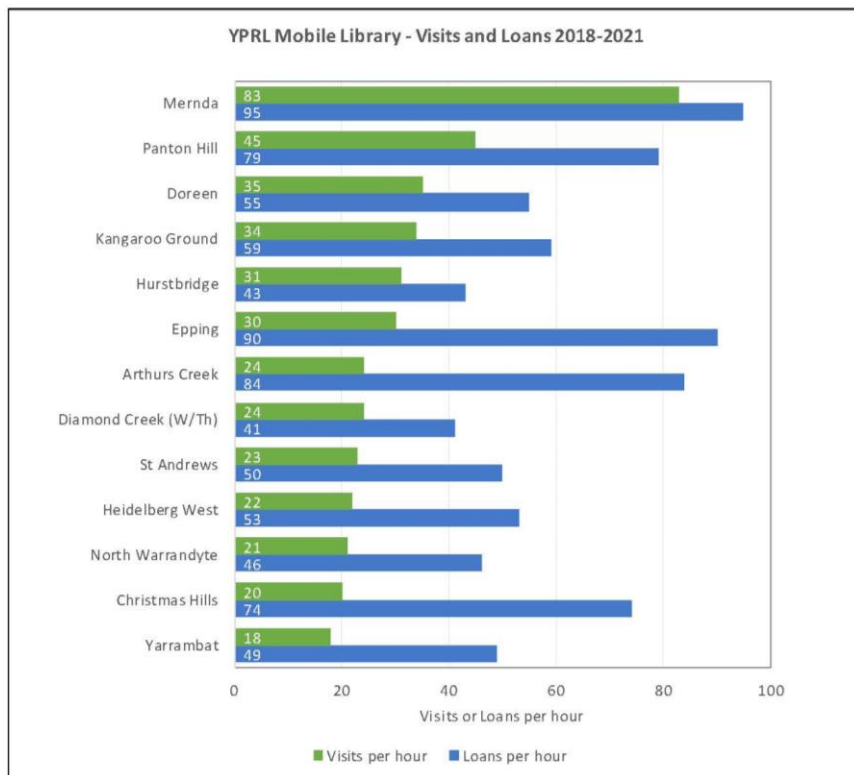| Location	Stop duration (hours)	Visits			Loans		
		Avge per week	Per hour	Per hour (rank)	Total	Per hour	Per hour (rank)
Mernda	1	83	83	1	1,335	95	1
Panton Hill	2	89	45	2	2,512	79	4
Doreen	1.5	53	35	3	1,152	55	7
Kangaroo Ground	2	67	34	4	2,008	59	6
Hurstbridge	2.25	70	31	5	1,538	43	12
Epping	3	90	30	6	3,760	90	2
Diamond Creek (W)	2	49	25	7	2,782	41	13
Diamond Creek (Th)	2	46	23	10			
Arthurs Creek	2.25	54	24	8	3,216	84	3
St Andrews	2.5	59	23	9	1,983	50	9
Heidelberg West	3	65	22	11	2,864	53	8
Warrandyte North	2	42	21	12	1,564	46	11
Christmas Hills	2	40	20	13	2,672	74	5
Yarrambat	3	55	18	14	2,522	49	10
Total	**30.5**	**61**	**28**		**35,484**	**60**	

In terms of the volume of mobile library loans:

- the Whittlesea stops have the highest (Epping) and the lowest total number of loans (Mernda, Doreen)
- the one Banyule stop at Heidelberg West has a relatively high volume of loans
- the number of loans across the mobile network is well-spread, from a maximum of 10.6% of the total at Epping down to 3.2% at Doreen.

However, the picture looks quite different when it comes to total loans per opening hour. Mernda averaged 95 loans per hour (on top of its 83 visits per hour) and Epping had 90 loans per hour. This suggests that these locations may merit longer or multiple stops, although this could have the effect of spreading borrowing across a longer time period and may not attract additional customers. Arthurs Creek (84), Panton Hill (79) and Christmas Hills (74) also had relatively high numbers of loans her hour, supported by borrowing from the local primary schools. The remaining eight stops had between 59 and 41 loans per hour. Diamond Creek having the lowest loan rate calls into question the value of having two stops there during the week. Clearly the afternoon and evening spots increase access for different users, but this same argument could also be applied to other locations.

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YPRL Mobile Library - Visits and Loans 2018-2021

Stop	Visits per hour	Loans per hour
Mernda	83	95
Panton Hill	45	79
Doreen	35	55
Kangaroo Ground	34	59
Hurstbridge	31	43
Epping	30	90
Arthurs Creek	24	84
Diamond Creek (W/Th)	24	41
St Andrews	23	50
Heidelberg West	22	53
North Warrandyte	21	46
Christmas Hills	20	74
Yarrambat	18	49

Visits or Loans per hour

■ Visits per hour   ■ Loans per hour

Loan data from July 2021 to March 2023

Visits to and loans from the YPRL mobile library continued to be directly affected by COVID access restrictions up until April 2022. Thereafter, as has been the case for all public libraries and many other community-based activity facilities, there has been a slow but growing increase in regular customer use.

From July 2021 to March 2023 There were 71,000 loans made from the mobile library. 14% of these loans were made at Diamond Creek (open for 4 hours per week), with 9% at Yarrambat and Arthurs Creek and 8% at Epping, Heidelberg West and Chrstmas Hills. Doreen and Mernda had the lowest total number of loans, although they are also open for the least amount of time.

Based on an estimate of hours of access and weekly stops, there was an average of 39 loans per hour over this 21-month period. This is well below the 60 loans per hour reported from July 2018 to June 2021. In terms of total loans per hour Mernda continued to have the highest rate at 71 per hour (down from 95 in the earlier period). Christmas Hills, Arthurs Creek, Kangaroo Ground and Doreen continued to rate relatively highly, with average borrowing of between 44 and 48 loans per hour.

Notably, Epping's ranking dropped significantly, influenced by the opening of the Click and Collect Service at the Galada Community Centre. Conversely, borrowing at Diamond Creek stayed steady at 41-42 loans per hour, which saw it move up the rankings from 13th (last) to 6th.

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Location	Stop duration (hours)	Total loans	% mobile loans	Loans per hour	Loans per hour (rank)
Mernda	1	3,882	5.5%	71	1
Christmas Hills	2	5,706	8.0%	48	2
Arthurs Creek	2.25	6,333	8.9%	47	3
Kangaroo Ground	2	5,334	7.5%	45	4
Doreen	1.5	3,620	5.1%	44	5
Diamond Creek (W/Th)	4	10,074	14.2%	42	6
Yarrambat	3	6,644	9.4%	37	7
Warrandyte North	2	4,409	6.2%	37	8
Panton Hill	2	4,408	6.2%	37	9
Epping	3	5,972	8.4%	36	10
Heidelberg West	3	5,907	8.3%	33	11
Hurstbridge	2.25	4,414	6.2%	33	12
St Andrews	2.5	4,294	6.0%	29	13
Total	**30.5**	**70,997**	**100%**	**39**	

Visits March 2023

A small sample of current usage data has been captured for a 5-week period from 1 March to 4 April 2023. This included one public holiday (Monday 13 March) and two days when the mobile was off the road (Thursday 2 March, Friday 3 March).

Location	Stop (hours)	No. of weeks	Total visits	Max. visits	Min. visits	Avge. visits	Visits per hour	Visits per hour (rank)
Kangaroo Ground	2	5	485	150	26	97	49	1
Mernda	1	4	131	46	15	33	33	2
Panton Hill	2	5	278	82	27	56	28	3
Yarrambat	3	4	271	99	40	68	23	4
Epping	3	4	208	105	5	52	17	5
St Andrews	2.5	5	200	53	33	40	16	6
Christmas Hills	2	4	120	38	9	30	15	7
Arthurs Creek	2.25	4	119	37	23	30	13	8
Diamond Creek (W)	2	5	108	29	14	22	11	9
Hurstbridge	2.25	5	114	57	4	23	10	10
Heidelberg West	3	4	93	35	13	23	8	11
Warrandyte North	2	5	73	17	10	15	7	12
Doreen	1.5	4	41	13	6	10	7	13
Diamond Creek (Th)	2	4	45	19	7	11	6	14
Total	**30.5**	**4-5**	**2,286**	**150**	**4**	**37**	**17**	

This data indicates that mobile library usage is well down on previous levels, with an average of only 17 visits per hour across the 5 weeks. This number would have been even lower without the attendance of sizeable school groups coming on to the mobile at Kangaroo Ground and Panton Hill.

Summary

Taking all mobile usage data into account (acknowledging the deficiencies and inconsistencies that exist), and placing a slightly greater emphasis on recent usage levels than historical ones, each of the mobile stops has been given an 'average' usage rating. As shown in the following table.

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Location	Visits per hour		Loans per hour		Visits per hour (rank)		Loans per hour (rank)		Usage rating
	2018-21	2023	2018-21	2021-2023	2018-21	2023	2018-21	2021-2023	
Mernda	83	33	95	71	1	2	1	1	Very high
Kangaroo Ground	34	49	59	45	4	1	7	4	High
Christmas Hills	20	15	74	48	12	7	5	2	High to Mod
Arthurs Creek	24	13	84	47	7	8	3	3	High to Mod
Panton Hill	45	28	79	37	2	3	4	9	High to Mod
Yarrambat	18	23	49	37	13	4	10	7	Moderate
Epping	30	17	90	36	6	5	2	10	Moderate
Doreen	35	7	55	44	3	13	6	5	Moderate
Diamond Creek (W/Th)	24	9	41	42	8	10	13	6	Moderate
St Andrews	23	16	50	29	9	6	9	13	Low
Hurstbridge	31	10	43	33	5	9	12	12	Low
Heidelberg West	22	8	53	33	10	11	8	11	Low
Warrandyte North	21	7	46	37	11	12	11	8	Low
Total	28	17	60	39					

YPRL Mobile Library - Visits and Loans per hour 2018-2021 and 2023
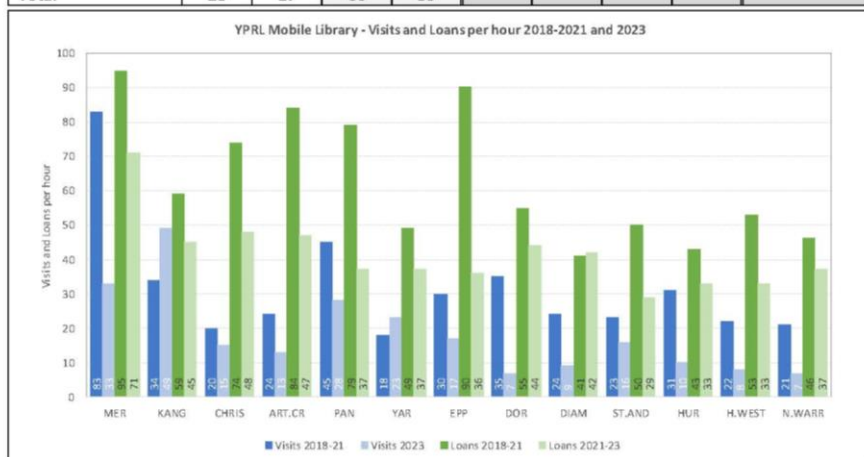
Note: for the purpose of this table the two Diamond Creek stops have been combined into one.

- Mernda clearly has the highest usage per hour figures, in part due to only having a 1 hour stop
- Kangaroo Ground has solid loan and visitation rates, with Christmas Hills and Arthurs Creek also having good borrowing rates
- Panton Hill is currently experiencing much lower use than in previous years, as is Epping
- Conversely, Yarrambat has been holding ground on visits and loans
- Doreen and Diamond Creek have good borrowing levels, but visitation has dropped away markedly
- St Andrews, Hurstbridge, Heidelberg West and Warrandyte North have the lowest usage rates, with three of these (excluding Warrandyte North) having usage spread over visits of more than 2 hours.

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APPENDIX 5. CONTEMPORARY LIBRARY SERVICE MODELS

A modern public library can be anywhere and everywhere – 24/7. Library collections, programs and services are now being delivered in different ways to different users in different places at different times. Familiar and well-loved branch libraries staffed by welcoming, knowledgeable and helpful professionals are now complemented by digital, mobile, outreach and express library services that take the library out and into the community, offering customers greater levels of access and convenience.

Contemporary public libraries deploy a combination of four basic service models. Each model plays a different role in the library network – reaching out to different audiences, facilitating convenient access and encouraging increased and widespread use of library services across the community.

The branch network is the foundation of service delivery, with 90% of library users saying that they visit a library branch at some stage during a year. Online and digital services took on increased importance through the COVID period in maintaining service continuity and providing users with new ways to access library collections, programs and services. Around 25-30% of library borrowing is now digital.

LIBRARY BRANCHES
- Local branch library
- Most familiar and most used model
- Located in activity centres
- Vary in size (200-3,000 m²)
- Fully-staffed
- Offer full service range

ONLINE / DIGITAL
- Anywhere anytime access
- Library website and app
- Browse catalogue, reserve/extend items
- Download digital resources
- View online programs

MOBILE / OUTREACH
- Take library to where the people are
- Services delivered in the community, often with partner organisations
- Large mobile vehicles being phased out/replaced by more smaller options

FLEXIBLE / EXPRESS
- Emerging models are often variants of other types
- Library lounge (unstaffed)
- Pop up libraries
- 24/7 open library
- Book vending machines, kiosks

While the network and online models continue to evolve, the most significant changes in coming years are expected to occur in the growth of outreach services and the introduction of flexible and express service models.

Mobile and outreach models take library services out into the community – beyond the walls of the library to meet people where they are. The most well-known example is the mobile library (as at YPRL), typically a large custom-made prime mover and semi-trailer housing up to 15,000 collection items, on-board computers and wifi, and pop-out activity and reading spaces that stops at select community locations on a weekly or fortnightly schedule. Due to high set-up costs, driver licensing requirements and limited vehicle flexibility some mobiles are beginning to be replaced with smaller more agile vehicles (carrying a smaller collection) that retain connection to the community but can be used by other library staff for a variety of complementary purposes (e.g. attending schools, nursing homes, festivals and fetes). Other outreach models include pop-up libraries at community events (e.g. festivals, school fetes, shopping centres, bus stations), delivery of literacy and reading programs at kindergartens and childcare centres, and book delivery services for housebound readers and people living in residential facilities (e.g. aged care homes). These outreach models can be delivered through a mobile vehicle (e.g. an Outreach Service van) or can occur independently of a mobile service.

Flexible or express library models are innovative approaches to filling the gap between permanent full-service library branches and mobile or outreach services. They deploy community facilities and/or technology-enabled solutions to offer a limited range of library services (especially access to collections) in convenient community settings. Express library models may provide basic services to emerging

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communities in high growth areas and communities poorly serviced by the network of permanent libraries, or they may enhance access to basic library services in key community nodes. Depending on population catchment, geographical location and the presence of other facilities, express library services may range from staffed or unstaffed shopfront facilities, library lounges or reading rooms with limited boutique collections, wifi and limited programming to self-service options such as vending machines, lockers or wifi hotspots facilitating resource downloading (e.g. YPRL's Hurstbridge Hub or Galada Community Hub).

'Open libraries' combine staffed or 'fully serviced' opening hours with 'self-serviced' hours, using the self-serviced hours to provide safe and secure access to the library for longer periods during the day, in the evenings, or over the weekend.

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Agenda Item 8:   Six Monthly OHS Report (NOTING)

Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer

Author: Robert Green, Executive Manager Corporate Services

REPORT

SUMMARY

This report is for the Board's information.

INTRODUCTION

This report provides a summary of incidents for the 1 January 2023 – 30 June 2023 period and an update on activities undertaken as part of YPRL's OHS management system.

REPORT

YPRL's OHS management system is made up of the following elements:

- Policies, procedures, and planning
- Incident reporting
- OHS Committee
- Employee training
- WorkCover management

1. **Policies, procedures, and planning**
   The following procedures are under review by the OHS Committee:

   - Building Break-in
   - Catering
   - Emergency
   - Evacuation
   - Incident Reporting and Management
   - Threats
   - Facilities and Amenities
   - Health and Wellbeing
   - Mobile Library Safety

Safety Moments continue to be a standard agenda item at all meetings and continues fostering YPRL's Safety First culture.

2.   Incident Reporting

A total of Sixty-seven (67) reports were submitted between 1 January to 30 June 2023. This included fifty-three (53) incidents, thirteen (13) hazards, and one (1) near miss. A summary and comparison of incidents by type for the period is shown in Table 1, and a breakdown of incident types by location is provided in Table 2.

Table 1: Incident Summary and Comparison		
Incident Type	**No. Incidents 1 Jan to 30 Jun 2023**	**No. Incidents 1 Jan to 30 Jun 2022**
Inappropriate Behaviour	13	29
Burglary/Theft	0	2
Patron Injury/Illness	15	13
Staff Injury/Illness	10	5
Property/Building Damage	3	9
Other	12	5
TOTAL	**53**	**63**

Table 2: Summary of Incident Types by Location (1 Jan to 30 Jun 2023)							
Incident Location	**Inappropriate Behaviour**	**Burglary/ Theft**	**Patron Injury/ Illness**	**Staff Injury/ Illness**	**Property/ Building Damage**	**Other**	**Total No.**
Diamond Valley	1	0	4	1	1	1	8
Eltham	2	0	2	0	0	0	4
Ivanhoe	2	0	2	5	0	2	11
Lalor	5	0	0	1	0	1	7
LSS	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Mill Park	1	0	2	1	0	0	4
Mobile Library	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
Outreach Vehicle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rosanna	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
Thomastown	2	0	1	0	0	3	6
Watsonia	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
Whittlesea	0	0	2	0	0	3	5
Total	**13**	**0**	**15**	**10**	**3**	**12**	**53**

Incident Trends:

Thirteen (13) of the fifty-three (53) incidents reported related to a range of inappropriate and unacceptable behaviours exhibited by patrons. We continue to provide staff with additional skills to cope with responding to these types of incidents, and staff were reminded to refresh their skills and knowledge in the Librarians Guide to Homelessness, which has released new training materials around De-escalation of aggressive behaviours.

Fifteen (15) incidents related to patron injury/illness included five (5) children with various injuries/illnesses. There were ten (10) adult injuries/illnesses requiring staff support.

There were ten (10) staff injury/illness reports relating to lower back/shoulder pain, bumps to head, finger caught in concertina door, dizziness, trips, items falling onto staff.

There were three (3) incidents relating to Property/Building Damage including damage to tyre and rim on mobile library, damage to door, and graffiti.

Twelve (12) incidents were reported as Other, relating to building issues and patrons' actions.

There has been a decrease in incidents reported from this time last year by 10.

There has been a decrease in reported incidents of:

- Inappropriate Behaviour
- Burglary/Theft
- Property/Building

There has been an increase in reported incidents of:
- Other
- Patron Injuries/Illnesses
- Staff Injuries/Illnesses

Thirteen (13) reports advised of hazards relating to Risks of injury to a person such as tripping, uneven ground, kettle left in teen area, mushrooms growing in garden, loose screws, mould in mobile library, faulty door mechanism, lack of external lighting on mobile library, broken gate latch, booths awkward to move, slipping hazard in public toilet.

3. OHS Committee

There are currently nine (9) appointed Health and Safety Representatives (HSR's) across the region with scheduled bi-monthly OHS Committee meetings occurring, and two Management Representatives.

There have been four (4) meetings this calendar year.

During the reporting period the OHS Committee:

- Continued to review the OHS manual procedures
- Share Safety Moments
- Review of OHS Policy
- Review Emergency Response Kits
- Discuss and review incident and hazards
- Review of Risk Assessment template
- Discuss key dates of interest and planning of events

4. Employee Training

All employees were required to complete annual OHS training, with completion rates for 2023 shown below. ***Depending on the renewal due date, the completion rates will vary.***

Topic	Current Completion Rate	
Bullying and Harassment	60%	
Bullying and Harassment for Managers and Supervisors	67%	
OHS Duty of Care for Victorian Employees	75%	

Topic	Current Completion Rate
OHS Duty of Care for Victorian Managers and Supervisors	71%
Equal Employment Opportunity for Employees	75%
Equal Employment Opportunity for Managers	66%
Social & Digital Media and the Workplace	72%
Incident Investigation for Leaders & Health and Safety Representatives	76%
Manual Handling	75%
Fraud and Corruption Awareness and Prevention	75%
LGBTIQA+ Awareness in the Workplace	97%

Several other health and safety training sessions were offered during the reporting period including:

- HSR 5 Day course (1)
- HSR Refresher (2)
- Advanced Body Language (3)
- Building Aboriginal Cultural Competency (31)
- Contact Officer (2)
- CPR Refresher (5)
- Creating Child Safety Champions (3)
- Defibrillator Training (24)
- Disability Managers and Inclusive Customer Service (19)
- Fire Safety (25)
- First Nations – Walking in Two Worlds (2)
- How to back up a co-worker during a crisis (1)
- How to deal with problem behaviours related to COVID-19 (3)
- Injury Management (8)
- Librarians Guide to Homelessness – Core (7)
- Librarians Guide to Homelessness – De-Escalation 501 (24)
- OHS for Managers and Supervisors (2)
- Psychological Risk Webinar (4)
- Responsible Code of Conduct (1)
- Staff Professional Development Day (128)
- Supply Chain Compliance for Management (10)
- Uluru Statement (74)
- Trauma-informed Librarianship – How trauma impacts staff and patrons (8)
- Understanding Vicarious Trauma in the Workplace (1)
- What is Disability (2)

Two (2) new Health and Safety Representatives were appointed and have completed the 5 Day HSR Training.

There are thirteen (13) First Aid Officers across the region. Two (2) First Aid Officers are needing to complete CPR Refresher training.

5. Ergonomics

Ergonomic assessments for workstation setup post office refurbishment have been rolled out to all LSS staff (28). Once future branch refurbishments and the PC refresh (part of the digital transformation project) have taken place further ergonomic assessments will take place.

6. Expiry of COVID-19 vaccination information regulations

Following the revocation of the Occupational Health and Safety Amendment (COVID-19 Vaccination Information) Regulations, employers including YPRL who recorded or held COVID-19 vaccination information specifically under these regulations have 30 days to destroy that information.

7. WorkCover Management

For the period, there is currently two (2) active and ongoing WorkCover claims.

During this reporting period zero (0) staff have accessed paramedical support services.

Please note that as of today this active number has reduced to one. This live claim is low risk and will drop off within due course.

CONSULTATION

Senior Leadership Team and OHS Committee representatives.

CRITICAL DATES

N/A.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

All financial implications are contained within this report.

POLICY STRATEGY AND LEGISLATION

N/A

LINKS TO LIBRARY PLAN

Outcome:

- **Organisational strength**: Investment in our staff, capacity, and governance to ensure we are capable and ready to adapt, learn and empower our communities in environmentally and socially responsible ways.

Priorities:

- People and capacity
- Governance and technology

DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Under section 80C of the Local Government Act 1989 officers providing advice to the Library must disclose any interests, including type of interest.

The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with the relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board resolves to RECEIVE and NOTE the Six-Monthly OHS Report

M: _____

S: _____

Agenda Item 9:   Library Plan - Year 2 Action Plan Report (NOTING)

Responsible Officer:	Chief Executive Officer
Author:	Jane Cowell, CEO
Attachment:	9. – YPRL Library Plan Year 2 Action Plan Summary

REPORT

SUMMARY

This report is for the Board members' information.

INTRODUCTION

The acquittal of the second year of the YPRL 2021-2025 Library Plan actions gives the Board an understanding of what has been achieved during the year. This attached report is for noting and includes the Action Plan for Year 3 of the Library Plan.

REPORT

2022-2023 has been a positive year where YPRL has achieved the majority of its Year 2 actions as planned.

Key Highlights have been our focus on:

- Continuing to build on our codesign capabilities, resulting in a further deepening of our engagement with First Nations peoples.
- Increasing collection use including our digital items by 7.6%, the percentage of new items loaned out at 96.65%, and 90% of all community collections requested were purchased.
- Delivering programs that reflect community interests and needs, which has led to 118,289 attendees this year (almost triple the total compared with 2021-2022).
- Continuing to strengthen our business systems and efficiencies.
- Strengthening our cybersecurity capability both in staff understanding and skills, and our systems and working towards compliance with the Australian Essential Eight Cybersecurity Maturity.

Our Year 3 Action Plan continues with these approaches and includes continuing to engage our communities through codesign approach, working closely with member councils and further building collaborative partnerships. Our focus on growing our membership base and increasing collection use will continue. We will also work with our member Councils to investigate innovative ways to deliver our services to a growing community.

CONSULTATION

Senior Leadership Team.

CRITICAL DATES

N/A

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil

POLICY STRATEGY AND LEGISLATION

Local Government Act 1989, Section 197(d) Library Plan

LINKS TO LIBRARY PLAN

Outcomes:

- **Knowledge and learning:** Together we build capacity and confidence for people across our communities to meaningfully participate in work and community life.
- **Connection**: Create places and spaces for people throughout our communities to connect, belong and actively engage with each other
- **Organisational strength**: Investment in our staff, capacity, and governance to ensure we are capable and ready to adapt, learn and empower our communities in environmentally and socially responsible ways.
- **Wellbeing:** Help individuals and communities to better engage in, understand and take positive actions to support their mental and physical health.

DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Under section 80C of the Local Government Act 1989 officers providing advice to the Library must disclose any interests, including type of interest.

The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with the relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board resolves to RECEIVE and NOTE the Library Plan – Year 2 Action Plan Report.

M: _____

S: _____

Outcome 1.   Knowledge and Learning

Together we build capacity and confidence for people across our community to meaningfully participate in work and community life.

Library Plan Action 1.1	Provide up to date lending resources that resonate with our community through multiple channels of service delivery		
Year	**Actions**	**Performance Measures**	**Outcome**
Year 2 – 2022-2023	Encourage and promote the works of local writers through our collections and programs. Review and Update our Collection Development Policy and procedures Review our Languages Other Than English (LOTE) offering with community including: • Codesign one LOTE collection with community. • Language eResources marketing • Edutech – eLanguage partnership – Program where schools partner with YPRL to utilise transparent languages online Codesign a "Deadly Collection" with our First Nations community	YPRL Collection HQ KPI report % of new items loaned in the first year of purchase – keep at or above 95% Maintain or improve patron satisfaction rating for Collections which patrons need or want – Survey Rating 8.28 Maintain or improve the satisfaction of the prompt turnaround of requests – Survey Rating 8.70 Increase in % of loans of eBooks, eAudiobooks and eMagazines as a % of total loans.	Improved efficiency in collection acquisition, maintenance and management: Well used collection Sustained loans at industry trend levels Grow local author engagement in programs, collections and marketing strategies

Outcome 1.   Knowledge and Learning

Together we build capacity and confidence for people across our community to meaningfully participate in work and community life.

YEAR 2 REPORT– LIBRARY ACTION PLAN 1.1: Provide up to date lending resources that resonate with our community through multiple channels of service delivery

- The Collections Development Policy received a major update, strengthening our commitment to collections that reflect the needs of our diverse communities
- eLibrary resources added included: The New York Times, Craftsy, Qello, Classica & Clear Pronunciation
- The CALD collections review was undertaken resulting in some significant changes to our held print language collections. Some 'legacy' language holdings will be retired and 8 focus language collections were identified. This year we focused on strengthening our language eResource offerings and building these digital collections. This review was undertaken with a codesign focus and branch LOTE Champions conversed with community members through programs, branch engagement and translated signage and community survey which received over 260 responses.
- The KPI for percentage of new items with one or more circulation within the first year of purchase is at 96.65%
- For physical loans we rank 1st in the state and 3rd for the combination of physical and digital loans. We also rank 1st for turnover.
- Our percentage of physical collection items that cover a range of Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity (DEI) topics went up from 18.7% in 21-22 to 20.4% for 22-23
- Lendable digital collections increased in loans by 7.6% and accounts for 15% of all library loans.
- The collections plan for a new Deadly Collection was developed under the advice from local First Nations peoples and elders. Starting with our DVD collection a focus group of local Wurundjeri community members recommended titles for purchase that would showcase the history, talent and pride of First Nations peoples in a true example of community driven acquisitions.
- Met with School Library Association of Victoria (SLAV) to discuss how YPRL could support teachers and students across their network. In an on ongoing capacity, their widely shared newsletter, will promote specifically selected eLibrary resources eg. Transparent Languages to their network to be used personally or in the classroom
- Delivered Booklovers Festival with an emphasis on writing workshops around wellbeing and lived and varied experiences of mental health/illness and neurodiversity. These workshops were facilitated by local authors and their work was promoted and supported in collection. The festival also garnered opportunities for local writers to connect and form writing groups and support.

Outcome 1. Knowledge and Learning
Together we build capacity and confidence for people across our community to meaningfully participate in work and community life.

YEAR 2 REPORT– LIBRARY ACTION PLAN 1.1: Provide up to date lending resources that resonate with our community through multiple channels of service delivery (continued)

- Partnership with Busybird Publishing to assist and support local authors in their publishing journey through co designed workshops, partnership with the Grief Cocoon to deliver workshops to connect local writers and community members together in an intimate and safe space to explore and express their grief, trauma and loneliness through creative writing, initiated EOI opportunity for local writers and creatives to pitch their events, workshops, and book launches to be part of regional library programs.
- 7.6 satisfaction rating with the collection
- 7.2 with turnaround of collection request.
- YPRL is able to fill 90% of customer requests

I am an avid reader and enjoy selecting and reserving a range of books. In the current economic situation I feel lucky to be able to do this and maintain my well-being without being financially impacted. Great community resource.

Outcome 1.   Knowledge and Learning
Together we build capacity and confidence for people across our community to meaningfully participate in work and community life.

Library Plan Action 1.2	Develop a partnered program focused on increased skill levels in the community		
Year	**Actions**	**Performance Measures**	**Outcome**
Year 2 – 2022/2023	Implement a Regional Literacy Strategy that augments the usage and impact of collections and programs to help build literacy capabilities in the community Continue to develop through codesign a program focused on employment and job readiness and entrepreneurial skills in partnership with other local providers Implement the Digital Inclusion Action Plan to build digital literacy skills within our communities. Increase YPRL participation with member Councils Youth teams. Review the YPRL Family Literacy program against the three member councils' strategies on early years literacy and child development.	Events and activities for children are valued (benchmark: Survey Rating average 95.5% of respondents) Events and activities for adults are valued (benchmark: Survey Rating average 94.4% of respondents) Increased partnered programs focused on key skills that will aid the community to recover from the pandemic Number of hours of programs provided YPRL receives a *fully meets* or *Exceeds* in State Library Victoria / Public Libraries Victoria Early Years Level 1 Indicators for regional EYs programs	Consultation stage of to inform Regional Literacy Strategy complete Increased alignment with member Councils community outcomes strategies YPRL delivers quality events / programs meeting community needs.

Outcome 1.   Knowledge and Learning
Together we build capacity and confidence for people across our community to meaningfully participate in work and community life.

YEAR 2 REPORT– LIBRARY ACTION PLAN 1.2: Develop a partnered program focused on increased skill levels in the community

Early Years Literacy:
- YPRL family literacy program review against councils' early years literacy strategies - not completed, but we continue to design and deliver responsive EYs literacy programs with each member council. For example, culturally safe First Nations storytimes, Children's Week programming, Baby Cafe & Bookaroo and EYs training delivered for council staff and community.
- Partnering with Speech Pathologists Australia providing 'Speechie' program to parents and caregivers during storytimes
- Partnering with Playgroup Victoria to support local playgroups with EYs literacy and connections to the library
- YPRL has continued working on the Regional Literacy Strategy (now titled '*Reader Development and Literacy Action Plan*') in line with SLV / PLV's review of the statewide public libraries EYs literacy strategy.

SLV / PLV EYs measure
YPRL received a *Fully Meets for Level 1 assessment for all EYs programs*. Average number of hours of early years literacy programs delivered each week – has almost doubled from previous year. We've had an increase in the number of children participating in early years literacy programs each week and the turnover rate (loans per collection item) for board books, picture books and eBooks for pre-school age children has increased

Employment and job readiness:
- Delivered a Careers Expo as part of the Talking Together to support CALD communities in job skills, resume writing and interview skills. A number of attendees were matched with employers and secured positions or interview with local providers.
- Continued hosting Job Advocates Victoria program across the region, supporting job readiness, skill development, referrals and application support. Information package of collection resources were developed by staff to hand out. These included resources such as LinkedIn Learning.

Outcome 1.   Knowledge and Learning

Together we build capacity and confidence for people across our community to meaningfully participate in work and community life.

YEAR 2 REPORT– LIBRARY ACTION PLAN 1.2: Develop a partnered program focused on increased skill levels in the community (continued)

Digital Inclusion:

Digital Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2025 year 1 report completed and approved by the board in early 2023. Some highlights:

- Working with Telstra Foundation to film for Code Clubs Australia https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZPSGSB-f2eY
- Partnered with Melbourne University to deliver digital health literacy to seniors
- YPRL hotspot program extended for another 12 months and expanded partnerships into youth organisations and health agencies

Feedback: *"My son has been working with youth services and it's been really tough. Getting him to school has been a nightmare. Then Han's let us know about the hot spot program. As a single parent and the high cost of living, I just cannot afford anymore, just getting to work with petrol over $2 per litre something just has to give. This program helped my son get back to school, make friends, socialise, organise simple things like Centrelink, personal banking and much more. Fantastic support and keep up this amazing work. We are now regulars at Mill Park library, and I even had my whole street join up, and we love our local library".* Terry 51

Council collaboration – youth

Youth Co-Design project delivered in collaboration with member Council Youth Services teams, informing planning for increased strategic and responsive programming for young people, these include attending festivals, working with Baseline for youth takeover nights at Mill Park and Nillumbik Youth Council partnership and continued partnering with BCC youth teams.

"I enjoyed working and generating ideas with other young people" - codesign participant

General programs:

- Over 4600 hours of programming delivered across the community in 2022 – 2023, with 118,289 attendances recorded.
- 97.5% of those surveyed agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'I value the range of activities and events for children' - this is an average rating 8.6/10.
- 94.7% of those surveyed agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'I value the range of activities and events for adults' - this is an average of 7.9/10.
- Overall YPRL has increased our partnered programs, currently we have 347 partnerships with businesses, education, health and community organisations. Events delivered in partnership include Children's SNAICC day, Intergenerational storytime, Reconciliation Week, Rising Cost of Living events, wellness expos, Community Health & Safety Expo, Melbourne Design Week, National Science Week and International Women's Day.

The children programs offered by the library during school term and holidays help me to keep the children occupied meaningfully without paying any cost. I deeply appreciate what the libraries are doing.

Outcome 1. Knowledge and Learning
Together we build capacity and confidence for people across our community to meaningfully participate in work and community life.

Library Plan Action 1.3	Develop the 2022 – 2026 Maker Spaces & Entrepreneur spaces plan		
Year	**Actions**	**Performance Measures**	**Outcome**
Year 2 – 2022/2023	Collaborate with member Councils to connect local micro business owners and creative entrepreneurs with opportunities, networking, programs and collections. Implement Creative Communities Action Plan, including grow the number of drop-in community use Maker Space activities. Codesign with Mill Park and Rosanna communities on their local Maker space requirements.	Opportunities provided for staff to participate in technology-related PD. Delivery of coordinated regional program. Increase in local and statewide partnerships that support local startups and entrepreneurs. YPRL supports the three member councils' Economic Development Strategies.	Increase in maker space use by community. Increase in volunteer engagement with the Maker spaces. Community groups to benefit from codesigned programs and partnerships that support local small businesses and creative industries.

Outcome 1. Knowledge and Learning
Together we build capacity and confidence for people across our community to meaningfully participate in work and community life.

YEAR 2 REPORT – LIBRARY ACTION PLAN 1.3: Develop the 2022 – 2026 Maker Spaces & Entrepreneur spaces plan

Creative communities Action Plan 2021-2025 year 1 report completed in late 2022. Some highlights include:

- Partnering with CoW, to deliver a Coworking space in Thomastown Library.
- Lalor Library hosting the Australian Muslim Writers Festival, including a writer's workshop for children, providing exposure to the LOTE collection and supporting self-publishing
- Hosting a creative industries event at Diamond Valley Library with the Nillumbik Economic Development team, this included launching artwork by First Nations artist Simone Thomson.
- Providing collections that support creativity and provide inspiration and instruction, including extensive print resources, craft-based eresource Craftsy and music therapy through Quello and Classica.
- Staff participated in training in AI and VR, and staff attended the PLV conference which included new technology. Peer learning opportunities were also supported in the maker spaces
- A regional series of Small Business Support events, such as Business Marketing, Business Planning, Social Media and Content Marketing delivered by local entrepreneur Rebecca Sharkie
- Hosting of Business Victoria workshops to support existing businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs throughout the region, in partnership with Monarch Institute.
- Increased Maker Space induction and drop-in sessions at Ivanhoe Library & Cultural Hub and Thomastown Library. Thomastown didn't previously offer inductions sessions, creating a barrier to those who weren't confident to use the equipment and ILCH has increased induction sessions including offering Supported Sunday Sessions and Open Studios.

YPRL Maker Spaces and Maker Markets continue to support local businesses, offering opportunities for a range of creators, makers and business owners to create and showcase their products and services whilst engaging local community. In 2022/2023, YPRL hosted 3 Maker Markets, with an average attendance of 330 and 35 stalls.
"My library helped me develop, make, and work my business. Above all it is the reason I earn an income, thank you."
"I even started a home business using Thomastown Makerspace and continue to receive my local libraries support. Thank you, Thomastown!"
"The library is an escape for me to work on my small business plan. There are too many distractions at home. So I appreciate the library for this reason."

Outcome 2. Wellness

Helping people and communities to better engage, understand and make positive actions to support their mental and physical health

Library Plan Action 2.1	Collaborate with member councils and other key health organisations to deliver and host programs and events		
Year	**Actions**	**Performance Measures**	**Outcome**
Year 2 - 2022/2023	YPRL participation with Councils' community programs including community festivals. Continue region-wide approach to community and cultural events within YPRL, prioritising delivery of multi-library events and programs. Apply for relevant grants and opportunities from Council and other sources to increase program funding. YPRL to support and engage with member council and regional community wellness, cultural and inclusion strategies and events.	YPRL participates in at least 3 council festivals annually. YPRL delivers at least 6 regional programs annually. Increased grant funding for regional projects and programs. YPRL amplifies (through marketing and media opportunities) councils' community wellness and cultural programs	YPRL has a strong branded presence at community events. YPRL communities have improved access to well-coordinated events and programs

Outcome 2. Wellness

Helping people and communities to better engage, understand and make positive actions to support their mental and physical health

YEAR 2 REPORT – LIBRARY ACTION PLAN 2.1: Collaborate with member councils and other key health organisations to deliver and host programs and events

Festivals, cultural events and wellness programs

YPRL participated in a range of festivals, events and programs that support member councils' strategies around wellness, community culture and inclusion and connection including:

- Nillumbik Wattle Festival
- Banyule Youth Fest
- City of Whittlesea Community Festival
- Whittlesea Ageing Well Expo
- Walking Thomastown
- Pride Month, Harmony Day, Reconciliation Week, Local History Month, IDAHOBIT and Finders Keepers.

Council wellbeing programs

YPRL collaborates with member Councils and local health and wellbeing organisations to deliver a range of events and activities including School Holiday Program events. Highlights include:

- Healthy Minds, Healthy Bodies successful grant application. This wellbeing program is being co-designed with young people.
- In 2023, YPRL introduced a monthly regional program responding to the rising cost of living, with programming in areas such as budgeting, economical cooking, minimising subscriptions, energy saving, sustainable practices, entertainment and keeping active to promote and maximise opportunities to save money.
- Supported by the Whittlesea Youth Commitment, Lalor Library hosted 16 Year 11 students from Lalor North Secondary College as part of Finding My Place program. Over a six week period, students engaged with a range of career development activities during active, motivational sessions as well as site visits to Mernda Mushroom Exchange and Melbourne Polytechnic Epping.
- Diamond Valley's *Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden* program to engage children and adults with healthy eating through events such as the Cooking Book group, Toddler Garden Play and School Holiday Program events.
- Lalor Library hosted a Live Well Expo, in partnership with City of Whittlesea, Whittlesea Community Connections, DPV Health, Whittlesea U3A and Innovation Youth Centre

Outcome 2. Wellness

Helping people and communities to better engage, understand and make positive actions to support their mental and physical health

YEAR 2 REPORT – LIBRARY ACTION PLAN 2.1: Collaborate with member councils and other key health organisations to deliver and host programs and events (continued)

Council wellbeing programs (continued)
- Every branch has a well-used Seed library
- Participated in inaugural PLV Warm Winter Read program. The first state-wide reading program for adults which aims to build healthy reading habits, create new readers, introduce readers to a wide variety of titles and promote local writers.
- YPRL delivers a range of programs that support wellbeing such as Armchair Travel program for our senior citizens to experience their hometowns through the power of virtual reality, chatty café and the 4Cs (Conversation, Collection, Cuppa and Cake) program supported by Nillumbik community bus, as well as Active Arvos and Youth Takeovers - all in multiple branches
- YPRL amplifies councils' community wellness and cultural programs through posts shared from councils' social media pages on YPRL social media platforms and the inclusion of a permanent section in our regular *What's On* eNews for council programs and activities

Libraries have always been safe spaces for me as they are progressive hubs of knowledge. Eltham library is very inclusive and lgbt friendly and since losing my job I have gone there more regularly as a free place to socialise, stay warm, apply for jobs and read and relax.

Grants:

Grant title	Funding body	Outline	Total	Result
Jumpstart	VicHealth	Codesigned healthy eating & gardening workshops for youth	$12,500.00	Successful
Digital Literacy for Seniors	Dep't of Jobs, Precincts & Regions	Providing digital literacy programming for seniors	$91,216.00	Successful
Young & Connected	Telstra Foundation	Codesigned peer to peer book recommendations for young people	$10,000	Not successful
Multicultural Women's Group Grants	Whittlesea Community Connections	Women Living Well – at Galada	$5,000	Not successful
Local History Grants Program	Public Record Office Victoria	Homeland: a codesigned digital exhibition program of culturally significant objects of local first-generation migrant community members	$14,882.05	Pending

Outcome 2. Wellness
Helping people and communities to better engage, understand and make positive actions to support their mental and physical health

Library Plan Action 2.2	Deliver and promote the Libraries After Dark projects funded by the Responsible Gambling Foundation		
Year	**Actions**	**Performance Measures**	**Outcome**
Year 2 - 2022/2023	Participate in LAD working group to measure outcomes and impact Continue the LAD program with Banyule City Council at Watsonia which concludes 1st quarter 2023 Develop an ongoing and sustainable model for the LAD program at Thomastown Library through partners and grants	YPRL supports the three member councils' strategies for gambling reduction and harm minimisation, through the provision of a range of alternative recreational and leisure activities.	Libraries become viable alternative providing a healthy and safe destination for at-risk community members.

Outcome 2. Wellness
Helping people and communities to better engage, understand and make positive actions to support their mental and physical health

YEAR 2 REPORT – LIBRARY ACTION PLAN 2.2: Deliver and promote the Libraries After Dark projects funded by the Responsible Gambling Foundation

YPRL supports each member councils' strategies for gambling reduction and harm minimisation through the provision of evening events and activities that connect people through Libraries After Dark (LAD) programming, in welcoming, comfortable and safe environments, outside of hotel type venues. The program is hosted by Mill Park, Thomastown (until end of 2023) and Watsonia (continuing for another 12 months utilising the addition of Rosanna staffing) branches. YPRL has supported CoW's advocacy efforts in applying for grants to support the continuation of LAD at Thomastown Library.
2022/2023 highlights include:

- Community Singing
- Art Therapy Workshops
- Maker Markets
- Life Skills Workshops (e.g. car maintenance)
- Live Music
- Week Without Violence programming
- Health and Wellbeing Workshops
- Writing Workshops
- Games
- Brain Health activities
- Chatty Café (see below for a community story)
- Cooking Demonstrations & Workshops

"I feel lighter and happier and connected to new people who are kind and lovely to be around."
"Wonderful happy evening. Lovely meeting new people, more please."
"There's always a real buzz in the library on Thursday evenings. There are children playing chess, scrabble groups and people using the computers. It is great to see a range of ages engaging in different activities. We really hope these Thursday evening programs continue in the future."
- Watsonia Libraries After Dark participants

Outcome 2. Wellness
Helping people and communities to better engage, understand and make positive actions to support their mental and physical health

YEAR 2 REPORT – LIBRARY ACTION PLAN 2.2: Deliver and promote the Libraries After Dark projects funded by the Responsible Gambling Foundation (continued)

Chatty Café at Libraries After Dark
YPRL has begun a weekly Chatty Café program through LAD. This worldwide program invites the community to just come along, meet other people and have a chat in a safe, friendly environment. There is no set agenda. Such a program is aimed at addressing the very issue of loneliness in the community.

A community member who experienced a very difficult 2022 has recently started attending Libraries after Dark. She told us that after supporting two ill parents and placing them into aged-care and then having her partner leave her over the Christmas period, she found herself lonely and isolated. Her life had become a revolving door of going to work and coming home to an empty house. Her son suggested she come to the library and that's where she discovered the Chatty Café. She has since reported that Chatty Café has allowed her to socialise again, take her mind of her responsibilities for a while, and connect with other community members, including reconnecting with an old friend who happened to attend.

Outcome 2. Wellness
Helping people and communities to better engage, understand and make positive actions to support their mental and physical health

Library Plan Action 2.3	Develop a Programming Framework underpinned by YPRL's Library Plan and in alignment / partnership focus with member Councils and community with wellness and connection as a core outcome

Year	Actions	Performance Measures	Outcome
Year 2 - 2022/2023	Embed and evaluate the Programming Framework with staff Continue Co-Design training for key staff Establish partnerships and collaborative working opportunities to extend the reach and breadth of YPRL's programs and promotion of collections and resources. Participate in Statewide Libraries for Health and Wellbeing project Deliver the Grant Project Talking Together with the Australian Somali community of West Heidelberg	Events and activities for adults are valued (benchmark: user survey rating average 94.4%) Framework implemented. Increased partnered programs Evaluation complete and outcomes implemented. Develop an Impact Evaluation measure (and benchmark) for relevant YPRL programs to be reported annually Grow visits to library (benchmark 2019/20: 2,415,592) 3 separate audience development focus groups undertaken.	Impact of library service better understood YPRL delivers quality events / programs meeting community needs YPRL is an integrated library service delivering cohesive, consistent services.

Outcome 2. Wellness

Helping people and communities to better engage, understand and make positive actions to support their mental and physical health

YEAR 2 REPORT – LIBRARY ACTION PLAN 2.3: Develop a Programming Framework underpinned by YPRL's Library Plan and in alignment / partnership focus with member Councils and community with wellness and connection as a core outcome

Program Framework & Health and Wellbeing

- YPRL's Program Framework was approved by the Board in 2021. In early 2023 YPRL Program Manager evaluated the framework and associated processes through consultation with the Program Coordinators. This has resulted in some minor changes to the program approval process to streamline the turnaround times
- 97.5% of those surveyed in the recent community survey agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'I value the range of activities and events for children' - this is an average rating 8.6/10.
- CEO is on the SLV / PLV workgroup for the Libraries for Health and Wellbeing project
- Talking Together grant delivered (and acquitted in July 2023).
- Impact evaluation measure (and benchmark) not yet finalised.

Codesign

6 more co-design champions participated in an intensive training program, facilitating and delivering a project with 3 target audiences (First Nations, CALD and Youth). Outcomes include:

- Increased visibility of First Nations culture across library collections, programming and spaces (Uluru Statement from the Heart banners, First Nations flags, launch and ongoing development of the Deadly Collection)
- First Nations events in every School Holiday Program, increased First Nations storytimes, regional SNAICC Day partnership and delivery
- Recommendations by young people to support program design, and continued consultation with Youth Co-Design Team (young people and Council Youth Services staff) to inform and direct programming (YouthFest, Healthy Minds Healthy Bodies, school outreach).

A second round of *introduction to co-design* training was offered to all programming staff to continue to embed this cultural change.

"It was really nice to just be able to give ideas without being immediately shut down or questioned." codesign participant

"Thank you for giving us the opportunity to work with you on this! It means a lot." codesign participant

"The environment was very welcoming and allowing of ideas." codesign participant

Outcome 2. Wellness
Helping people and communities to better engage, understand and make positive actions to support their mental and physical health

YEAR 2 REPORT – LIBRARY ACTION PLAN 2.3: Develop a Programming Framework underpinned by YPRL's Library Plan and in alignment / partnership focus with member Councils and community with wellness and connection as a core outcome (continued)

Partnerships

Overall, YPRL has 347 partnerships with local business, health, education or community organisations. These include organisations such as Banyule Community Health, HealthAbility, DPV Health, Playgroup Victoria, Araluen, Bubup Wilam, Himilo Community Connect, National Gallery of Victoria, Carers' Victoria, Whittlesea Hume Local Learning and Employment Network, Job Advocates Victoria, Happy Brain Education, Islamic Museum of Australia, VACCA, Lalor Living and Learning Centre, Local Food Connect, Melbourne Polytechnic, Olympic Adult Education, Plenty Valley Arts, Reconciliation Banyule, Robogals, Watsonia Traders, Whittlesea Community Connections, Women's Health in the North, Writers Vic, Ziebell's Farmhouse, Department of Health Macleod YMCA, Mirvac.

The library' has always been part of my life and I'm profoundly grateful that I'm a reader. When I was homeless, I joined multiple libraries. My active memberships enabled me to keep my life going by using the internet, and the spaces, and borrowing books. The library gave me dignity and anonymity.

Visitation

The 2022-2023 visitation number was 1,277,373. While we've not yet achieved our benchmark figure, we are continuing to grow our visitor numbers and for the month of March, our visitation numbers surpassed pre-pandemic levels for the first time since the mandated shutdowns.

Outcome 2. Wellness
Helping people and communities to better engage, understand and make positive actions to support their mental and physical health

Library Plan Action 2.4	Develop and implement a Disability Action Plan.		
Year	**Actions**	**Performance Measures**	**Outcome**
Year 2 - 2022/2023	Implement Accessibility Action Plan 2022-2024 and continue to embed these actions across all branches	Accessibility Action Plan finalised	An inclusive culture where staff, stakeholders and patrons of all abilities feel welcomed and can access YPRL services.

Outcome 2. Wellness
Helping people and communities to better engage, understand and make positive actions to support their mental and physical health

YEAR 2 REPORT – LIBRARY ACTION PLAN 2.4: Develop and implement a Disability Action Plan

- Accessibility Action Plan (Disability Action Plan) was approved by the board in 2022 after consultation with member councils' disability officers
- YPRL maintains membership of AND (Australian Network on Disability). This membership provides support using and applying the Access and Inclusion index tool when we review practices, policies and procedures. We also have access to AND's resources to support accessibility best practise.
- A staff confidence and skills survey was conducted in early 2022-2023 to assess the gaps and barriers for staff providing accessible services and programs. The survey results highlighted that staff didn't have the confidence or skills to know how to ask our community how we can better support their day-to-day access to our library. These results have been the focus of our staff training over this year with disability confidence training providing the opportunity to view and discuss potential accessibility barriers and the changes we can action.
- The outcome of the training has improved staff confidence to both engage with people with disability and to support small, immediate adjustments within our branches to reduce a barrier experienced by a person with a disability (and to plan for future adjustments). Some changes have been to review collection locations and provide more accessible locations such as moving large print and audio books nearer to the entry for people with low or vision impairments and support people with neurodiversity in our recruitment practices by providing interview questions to all candidates 24 hours beforehand.
- We also continue to review our digital platforms, services, collections and programs through the disability lens. This year we have added a collection of 34 Braille children's picture books from publishers; Vision Australia and Sensee. The collection introduces all children to Braille and enhances community awareness of vision impairment through popular and fun picturebook titles available for borrowing and have been read at storytime sessions. This collection was a trial that's proving successful and will be continued as part of our permanent collections.

Outcome 3: Connection

Creates places and spaces for community to connect, belong and actively engage with each other.

Library Plan Action 3.1	Maximise the efficiencies of the new Library App and Website		
Year	**Actions**	**Performance Measures**	**Outcome**
Year 2 - 2022/2023	Library App – pursue notifications within the YPRL App Website: • Improve discoverability within the website • Investigate integrated CRM and EDM	Increase in Library App downloads Increase in Website hits	Increase in Library App downloads Increase in Website hits

Outcome 3. Connection

Creates places and spaces for community to connect, belong and actively engage with each other

YEAR 2 REPORT – LIBRARY ACTION PLAN 3.1: Maximise the efficiencies of the new Library App and Website

Library App – push notifications from our App provider have not been released yet but are expected with the next update
Added functionality to our App to enable lending at temporary locations and other off-site locations e.g. for festivals, outreach programs, pop-up library events etc.

The absolute BEST service is the Library app, it's very easy to use, and you can check online at any time, then collect your book from the hold shelf. I always recommend the app strongly to friends and colleagues.

App downloads
2021-22 - 283,917
2022-23 - 386,512
Which is a 36% growth

Website – YPRL has improved discoverability of our events and programs on the website via a new events discoverability layer on website. This means our community can more easily search for events and programs using new filters for themes (such as Growing Healthy Lives, or Creative Minds etc), or via their preferred branches or location, or by date or via audience (for example children or youth)

Website visits:
 21-22 - 1,364,675
 22-23 - 1,613,496
Which is a 18% growth

Outcome 3: Connection
Creates places and spaces for community to connect, belong and actively engage with each other.

Library Plan Action 3.2	Promote the Library services, resources and programs		
Year	**Actions**	**Performance Measures**	**Outcome**
Year 2 - 2022/2023	Use evidence and audience development to drive marketing campaigns Analyse Statewide YPRL community survey responses to develop key marketing messages Build greater skills in data analysis and evidence for the development of programs, services and resources.	Grow marketing and media engagement Maintain or grow visits to library Maintain or grow number of library members (benchmark 2020, 118,443)	Increased awareness in the availability and value of YPRL services. Position YPRL as a leading library service within Victoria's public library network.

Outcome 3. Connection

Creates places and spaces for community to connect, belong and actively engage with each other

YEAR 2 REPORT – LIBRARY ACTION PLAN 3.2: Promote the Library services, resources and programs

Maintain or grow visits to the library – we had 1,277,373 library visits in 2022-23 compared with 714,864 in the previous year

Maintain or grow number of library members – achieved – we have 156,426 members compared with the benchmark of 118,443.

Grow marketing and social media engagement:

- Digital marketing followers in 2022/23 is 72,791 compared with 64,534 in 2021/22
- Website visits in 2022/23 is 1,613,496 compared with 1,364,675 in 2021/22

Engagement in our social media platforms and eNews continue to grow strongly. The YPRL Community Storytelling project was developed to tell the stories of how library services improve the lives of our users. Staff developed a project for Library and Information Week 2022 where they collected tales from a group of library users and shared these across YPRL's social media platforms, website and other platforms. The community response was fantastic, particularly on Twitter, where the stories reached a large group of Twitter users and even caught the attention of CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals) in the UK, sparking international interest.

Outcome 3: Connection Creates places and spaces for community to connect, belong and actively engage with each other.			
Library Plan Action 3.3	**Strengthen our relationship with and develop greater awareness of our local indigenous heritage**		
Year	**Actions**	**Performance Measures**	**Outcome**
Year 2 - 2022/2023	Investigate improved representation of our local indigenous community within Library buildings, collection and programs	YPRL supports the three member councils' reconciliation action plans and charters YPRL has a strong relationship with local indigenous groups and council	An inclusive culture where Aboriginal staff, stakeholders and patrons feel welcome and supported.

Outcome 3. Connection

Creates places and spaces for community to connect, belong and actively engage with each other

YEAR 2 REPORT – LIBRARY ACTION PLAN 3.3: Strengthen our relationship with and develop greater awareness of our local indigenous heritage

- Through a codesign process, the Deadly Working Group developed guidelines for the Deadly Collection encompassing Early Years materials to be highlighted, expanded and featured throughout the collection, also increasing discoverability and searchability of this collection.
- We revised and updated our First Nations cataloguing headings according to the Indigenous Referencing Guidance for Indigenous Knowledges from CAVAL and the Indigenous Archives Collective
- Simone Thomson, a proud Woi-Wurrung Wurundjeri / Yorta-Yorta woman and artist, painted two new mural artworks for Diamond Valley Library, funded with the help of the Nillumbik Community Fund. YPRL commissioned these works as a celebration of First Nations culture, to strengthen community connection, and to be a visual reminder of the heritage of Country. Part of the Yarra Plenty Regional Library Art Collection, the works are titled *Ngarrga Yaluk – Dance along the Creek* (children's area) and *Bargoongagat Kyinandoo Wilam – Gather at the Clever Hut* (wall facing the entrance the library).
- Opportunities for children and young people to connect with and learn from First Nations people during School Holiday Program events has increased meaningful engagement with and celebration of Indigenous culture and history across the region. In 2022/2023, all branches worked with a range of First Nations artists, presenters and organisations to design and deliver a suite of traditional and contemporary activities.
- Continued rolling out Cultural Competency training including *Building Aboriginal Cultural Competence in the Workplace*
- YPRL Executive and First Nations staff participated in SLV / PLV cultural competency and safety consultation and training
- Consultation with First Nations community elders to hang the Indigenous map of Australia in every library branch. 20% of the proceeds of each of these maps is being donated to a different Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander charity
- Uluru Statement from the Heart unanimously endorsed by the board in June 2023. YPRL will roll out practical actions over 2023-2024

"Will you be doing more of these? He had such a good time and it's so good for them to be learning from Elders." – parent of participant

Outcome 3: Connection Creates places and spaces for community to connect, belong and actively engage with each other.			
Library Plan Action 3.4	**Tell local stories to strengthen a sense of place and pride**		
Year	**Actions**	**Performance Measures**	**Outcome**
Year 2 - 2022/2023	Develop a plan to migrate Local History resources to one place	Increased accessibility to digital local history and genealogy collections Grow the historical digital collections Grow the collection and presentation of local Aboriginal history.	Collection, preservation and curation of local community stories Support of local history organisations Participation in 1Lib1Ref Wikipedia campaign to increase local content on Wikipedia. Consolidation of YPRL local history channels

Outcome 3. Connection

Creates places and spaces for community to connect, belong and actively engage with each other

YEAR 2 REPORT – LIBRARY ACTION PLAN 3.4: Tell local stories to strengthen a sense of place and pride

- Local & Family History Strategic Framework was reviewed and identified as a strategic document for transformation into an Action Plan, the *Local & Family Stories Action Plan* has been drafted to include actions to develop a Digital Local and Family History Collections Plan.
- Plan developed to retire WikiNorthia and migrate content to our website with a new Local History blog stream. The 1lib1ref staff campaign has lost traction, it will evolve into a community led program for Year 3.
- Added 35 Titles to Print Local History collections, 55 Local Newspaper Indexes, and 535 Digital Local History collection. This includes adding newsletters from Andrew Ross Museum and Friends of Eaglemont to our collections
- Partnered with Victorian Aboriginal News (VAN) to share the *Referendum '23 Tapes Podcast* through our eLibrary resources and added transcripts and recordings to Local History digital archive collection
- Images from our collection featured as wallpaper at Galada Hub
- Program Highlights:
  - Whittlesea township local history walk added to Walking Maps hosted by Victoria Walks supported by VicHealth
  - Partner: Nillumbik Shire Council and Yarra Plenty Heritage group Network members in an ongoing project to research origins of place and road names in the Shire of Nillumbik
  - Contributed several stories to the Greensborough Historical Society's publication *Memories of the Shire of Diamond Valley 1964-1994*
  - Multiple successful Family History Month and Local History Month events with over 124 people attending
  - Book Launch for *Becoming a Mother: an Australian History* by local author Carla Pascoe Leahy with 60 people in attendance

Outcome 3: Connection			
Creates places and spaces for community to connect, belong and actively engage with each other.			
Library Plan Action 3.5	**Maximise the potential of new Library spaces and buildings and investigate new models of library service delivery.**		
Year	**Actions**	**Performance Measures**	**Outcome**
Year 2 - 2022/2023	Replace the Mobile Library Service Trailer subject to available funding Review the Mobile Library stops Replace the Outreach Vehicle with a new vehicle subject to available funding Community consultation with Retirement Villages and Aged Care Homes regarding the type of library service delivered Investigate other services for seniors including community bus library visits, home library, and specialist activities in partnership with key providers.	Brief for new vehicles developed and costed. Grow visitation at the new Ivanhoe Library and Cultural Hub Grow visitation at the newly refurbished Diamond Valley Library Grow visitation at Mill Park Library	Increased visits Increased membership Increased loans Increased partnerships

Outcome 3. Connection

Creates places and spaces for community to connect, belong and actively engage with each other

YEAR 2 REPORT – LIBRARY ACTION PLAN 3.5: Maximise the potential of new Library spaces and buildings and investigate new models of library service delivery

- Consultation for mobile stop review and opening hours completed and report and recommendations delivered to the board for review and implementation in 2023-2024
- Repaired mobile trailer and re-assessing for future as it's not supported by LLIP (Living Libraries Infrastructure Program) grant funding
- Outreach vehicle – received Living Libraries Grant, purchased vehicle and at the tender stage for fit out of the vehicle
- Community consultation with aged care facilities regarding future service model
- Partnered with Greensborough Plaza shopping centre after feedback from community to provide collection loans for their 'Reading Retreat' space
- Partnered with Nillumbik council to trial a program that supports engagement for residents who are unable to access library branches. Conversation, Collection, Cuppa and Cake program is delivered at DV and participants use Nillumbik community bus to get to the library. In conversation with Banyule for a similar program,
- Working with councils on hubs at Galada and Kirrip including new service model.
- Working with councils on community libraries at Mernda and the Rosanna pop up (to ensure library access during the new build).
- Working with Banyule City Council on new Rosanna building
- City of Whittlesea library review participation
- Eltham refurbishment
- Partnered with Nillumbik on successful grant application for DV learning garden and final design

Visitation growth for Mill Park, Ivanhoe Library and Cultural Hub and Diamond Valley Libraries – achieved

	2021-2022	2022-2023
DV	32,570	67,068
MP	100,247	173,133
ILCH	155,262	295,509

Outcome 4: Organisational Strength – investment in our staff, capacity, and practice

Library Plan Action 4.1	Develop and implement People and Culture actions and initiatives, including staff health and wellbeing initiatives and OH&S practices.		
Year	**Actions**	**Performance Measures**	**Outcome**
Year 2 - 2022/2023	Implement 2022/23 initiatives including: Employee Engagement Survey results reviewed, shared and action plans designed and implemented Review & build an improved People & Culture Intranet page Develop and deliver recruitment and selection learning program for hiring managers Deliver 2022/23 staff learning program and leadership learning program. Continue to build safety first culture	Satisfaction of library users with library staff knowledge as measured by library users Satisfaction of library users with library staff service as measured by library surveys Training delivered within budget as per approved training calendar Decrease Workplace Injury claims Majority vote obtained for the proposed EBA	A culture which inspires, supports and develops our people Policies and procedures which support workplace health, safety and wellbeing Staff have the appropriate skills and knowledge to undertake their role New Agreement in place

Outcome 4. Organisational Strength

Investment in our staff, capacity and practice

YEAR 2 REPORT – LIBRARY ACTION PLAN 4.1: Develop and implement People and Culture actions and initiatives, including staff health and wellbeing initiatives and OH&S practices

Employee Engagement Survey
- Results shared with all staff at the Staff Development Day including 79% response rate eclipsing 2018 survey of 68%
- Executive reviewed results in consultation with Organisational Psychologist
- Actions resulting from the survey;
    - Designed new organisational structure to support engagement, career development pathways, team effectiveness and library priorities
    - Engaged same Organisational Psychologist to facilitate Staff Development Day to promote engagement and wellbeing actions including mindfulness activities to build staff resilience
    - Refurbishment of LSS & Branch Work areas to encourage greater cross team collaboration
    - Designed a leadership program for all existing and new managers around communication and feedback

Staff Development Day
- 144 attendees out of 167 staff – most attended Staff Development Day in YPRL history
- External presentations on contemporary library topics such as Loneliness, First Nations issues and Change Resilience & Wellbeing
- Organisational Psychologist workshops on Strengthening our culture and Living our Values & Behaviours
- Feedback from staff and management alike has been resoundingly positive

Learning Program/Training
- Performance Planning and individual external coaching for Senior Managers
- Shared Leadership Program for two Senior Managers
- Due to the impact of Digital Transformation across the organisation has meant that the Recruitment & Selection learning program has been differed to early 2023/24
- Continued and ongoing training for Aboriginal Cultural Competency & Awareness for all staff
- Continued Homelessness training and LGBTQIA+ Awareness Training
- Comprehensive Cyber training program for all staff
- Successfully delivered the Annual L&D Calendar organisational wide

Outcome 4. Organisational Strength

Investment in our staff, capacity and practice

YEAR 2 REPORT – LIBRARY ACTION PLAN 4.1: Develop and implement People and Culture actions and initiatives, including staff health and wellbeing initiatives and OH&S practices (continued)

Wellness
- 2023 Flu Vaccination campaign – 180 Vouchers issued and 68 used.
- Continued promotion of the Wellness Hub Program including the delivery of the staff 'Well at Work' newsletter
- Promotion of EAP including several Rapid Response sessions
- Ergonomic roll out of Workstation Setup to all refurbished work areas

Safety Work Culture
- Chain of Command work for heavy vehicles to come into line with recent legislative updates
- Purchase & installation of six defibrillators for organisational wide branches
- Reduction in incident reports due to safety moments being integrated into all staff meetings
- Implementation of App based Safety checks for monthly Branch OHS reviews

Customer satisfaction rating – from recent Community Survey
- 8.4 - Satisfaction of library users with library staff knowledge
- 8.8 - Satisfaction of library users with library staff service

The library allows me to learn, to research, to meet others and to have a safe and friendly place to visit. The friendliness and expertise of the staff is one of the best parts of the library experience. Being able to suggest book purchases is a wonderful facility. Having a mobile library is great for those of us who do not travel to Eltham or Diamond Valley. Keep up the fantastic service. It so very much appreciated.

Outcome 4: Organisational Strength – investment in our staff, capacity, and practice

Library Plan Action 4.2	Business Systems Improvements		
Year	**Actions**	**Performance Measures**	**Outcome**
Year 2 - 2022/2023	Library Management System (LMS) Improvements 　　Develop a Children's Catalogue on the LMS 　　Implement 　　New Book Groups management system Investigate the options for a child friendly section of the YPRL website. Deliver any requirements of the Gender Equality Act 2020 as they apply to Regional Library Corporations Improved business analytics and Business reporting across Business and within the LMS Cloud migration of network drives completed Library Support Services Laptop Deployment Corporate PC fleet refresh with new (SOE) Mobile device Management solution implementation including Eltham Book sorter replacement Replace Excel based forms with Digital smart forms	Maintain an 8.0 + customer satisfaction rating Business systems operating 98% business hours Successful annual reporting delivered to member Councils, State Government and Public Libraries Victoria Increased collaboration with member Councils	Customer satisfaction rating achieved. Productivity efficiencies achieved Increased automation

Outcome 4. Organisational Strength

Investment in our staff, capacity and practice

YEAR 2 REPORT – LIBRARY ACTION PLAN 4.2: Business Systems Improvements

Customer satisfaction rating – from recent Community Survey
- 8.4 - Satisfaction of library users with library staff knowledge
- 8.8 - Satisfaction of library users with library staff service

Development of a Gender Equality Act 2020 project plan with budget implications to meet the new regulations deferred to Year 3 pending approval of the Gender Equality Amendment Regulations.

LMS improvements: Children's catalogue options were investigated, and no appropriate solutions were identified at that time. Added functionality for Book Groups to be self-managed i.e., groups can manage their own title reservations for upcoming meetings, training was delivered to groups and ongoing support is provided.

Continued improvements to the analytics function for statistical reporting and initiated and scoped with all business unite requirement is being identified for self-service and real time business reporting.

All YPRL network drives have been migrated to office 365 cloud environment with streamlined 24X7 access and significant user experience improvements. Library Support Services is now equipped with individual laptops and docking stations with no dedicated desks which continues our themes of anywhere anytime working strategy.

Vendor selection and procurement process was completed the corporate Personal computer and Laptop replacement program, deployment to site being delayed due to supplier chain delivery delays by the vendor. This process includes the retirement of legacy Pc management system.

A cloud based modern PC fleet and software environment management solutions was implemented which will provide visibility for required operational management and significant improvements in the new software deployment.

We continue to replace the legacy forms with modern digital smart forms in line with the with our digital transformation program, there are considerable number of reports.

Book sorter at the Eltham Library was replaced with new state of the art system replacing the 15-year-old device that was servicing the community.

Outcome 4: Organisational Strength – investment in our staff, capacity, and practice

Library Plan Action 4.3	Security, Privacy and Governance (ICT)		
Year	**Actions**	**Performance Measures**	**Outcome**
Year 2 - 2022/2023	- Business Continuity Plan – Determination and documentation of Business Continuity Management strategy (BCM) and then followed by development of Capability - Disaster Recovery Plan and back systems review post data migration to cloud. - Penetration Testing completed both internal and external. - Cybersecurity improvements are actively investigated and implemented – Essential Eight ACSC (Australian Cyber Security Centre) guidelines - Develop a staff Intranet solution - Implement the planned Records Management solution.	Zero data loss Compliance requirements met	Internet and Library Wi-Fi available

Outcome 4. Organisational Strength

Investment in our staff, capacity and practice

YEAR 2 REPORT – LIBRARY ACTION PLAN 4.3: Security, Privacy and Governance (ICT)

In line with best practice recommendations both internal and external penetration testing has been conducted and recommendations and outcomes of the report being addressed.

As per ACSC (Australian Cyber Security Centre) guidelines - we have conducted an assessment against the essential eight requirements. We continue to improve and strengthen our systems and processes to meet the recommended standards.

Our legacy Intranet system was replaced with modern SharePoint based system that is an accessible by all staff from any device any time. This has become a single point of access for all corporate information and has significantly improved end user experience for our staff. We are working with some of the departmental sites for improved usability and content.

Our records management system implementation is in progress with the new MS team's folder structure   implementation, retention policy requirements have been identified by the organisation. Implementation will continue in the 2023 – 2024 budget year.
Backup systems and disaster recovery systems delayed due other systems priorities and dependency on the cloud network migration.

Outcome 4: Organisational Strength – investment in our staff, capacity, and practice

Library Plan Action 4.4	Deliver responsible financial management and business planning		
Year	**Actions**	**Performance Measures**	**Outcome**
Year 2 - 2022/2023	Review opportunities for improvement of YPRL financial processes and implement best practices. Establish a sound financial framework (Stage 1). Create a records management strategy plan Create a Gender Equality Regulation project plan with budget implications to meet the new regulations	Regular monitoring and review of budget and progress against Annual Action Plans Reviews due in 21/22 completed Improved efficiencies and financial visibility Complete audits & commence adoption of recommendations Completed financial processes review, and best practices implemented as needed. Completed financial framework Business model revised and proposal presented Assessed financial systems	Budget on track and Library Plan implemented Financial processes are improved Financial framework is established New business model identified Roadmap for system improvements

Outcome 4. Organisational Strength

Investment in our staff, capacity and practice

YEAR 2 REPORT – LIBRARY ACTION PLAN 4.4: Deliver responsible financial management and business planning

Financial Sustainability Framework and Investment Policy and Strategy.
A comprehensive Financial Sustainability Framework was developed and endorsed and approved by the Audit Committee and Board. This framework not only ensures the long-term stability of YPRL's financial health but also lays the foundation for strategic decision-making that aligns with the organisation's objectives.

In combination with this, YPRL has articulated a robust investment policy and strategy. This strategy optimally allocates resources, maximizes returns, and maintain a controlled risk exposure.

Internal Audit Plan – Review of Payroll function

As part of the internal audit plan, an internal review of YPRL's Payroll function took place. The objective of the review was to assess the design and effectiveness of internal controls embedded into YPRL's payroll processes, and to identify potential risks and opportunities to improve related practices. The internal auditors concluded that YPRL has established appropriate practices with respect to management of payroll. This result not only fortified YPRL financial integrity but have also enhanced employee trust and satisfaction.

Corporate Card Expense Management System

YPRL has successfully implemented of a new Corporate Card Expense Management System. This is a significant leap forward in streamlining financial processes and reinforcing YPRL's commitment to efficiency and transparency. The system seamlessly integrates all corporate card transactions into a centralised platform that optimises expense tracking, reconciliation, and reporting.

Outcome 4. Organisational Strength

Investment in our staff, capacity and practice

YEAR 2 REPORT – LIBRARY ACTION PLAN 4.4: Deliver responsible financial management and business planning (continued)

Financial Reporting System

YPRL introduced a cutting-edge financial reporting system. This accomplishment is another example to the YPRL's commitment to harnessing advanced technology for the benefit of the organisation's financial management. This system empowers stakeholders with real-time, insightful data, thereby facilitating informed decision-making.

Finance Intranet

The Finance intranet was developed and went live on the YPRL SharePoint intranet. The intranet seamlessly unlocks all the information that staff needs to know including frequently asked questions, guidelines, videos, forms, induction material, and payroll calendar, amongst others.

Records Management

A Records Management Strategic Plan was developed establishing the timeline for implementation roadmap. The project is underway and has been combined with the comprehensive migration to Microsoft 365 environment that will enhance YPRL records keep practices, enhance security, and embrace seamless organisation

- Development of a Gender Equality Act 2020 project plan with budget implications to meet the new regulations deferred to Year 3 pending approval of the Gender Equality Amendment Regulations.
- Business model proposal deferred to year 3

Outcome 4: Organisational Strength – investment in our staff, capacity, and practice

Library Plan Action 4.5	Investigate new opportunities for Service Level Agreements with other Councils		
Year	**Actions**	**Performance Measures**	**Outcome**
Year 2 - 2022/2023	New Business Model - • Continue to investigate requirements to transition to a new business model • Consult with Councils on a draft Constitution • Develop a deeper understanding of "wind-up" requirements regarding assets, leases, and long-term contracts.	Increased partnerships / collaborations	YPRL formal collaborations are increased.

Outcome 4. Organisational Strength
Investment in our staff, capacity and practice

YEAR 2 REPORT – LIBRARY ACTION PLAN 4.5: Investigate new opportunities for Service Level Agreements with other Councils (completed)

- Existing Service Level Agreements (SLAs) (Murrindindi and Warrnambool) renewed
- Submitted EOI to expand or combine our businesses with another regional library corporation
- Held discussions with other councils about potential SLAs
- No work on Business model proposal - deferred to year 3

F. Continuation of matters lapsed from previous meetings

G. Consideration of action petitions and joint letters

H. General Business

I. Reports from delegates appointed by the Board to other bodies

J. Urgent Business

K. Confidential Meeting (meeting closed to the public as per 89 (2) of the Local Government Act 1989

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board resolve that the Confidential Meeting be held in camera at………………..

M: _____

S: _____

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board resolve that the Ordinary Board Meeting be reopened to the public at…………

M: _____

S: _____

[END OF YPRL ORDINARY BOARD MEETING]