

Our Library Strategy

2024 – 2029



**MORNINGTON
PENINSULA**
Shire

Acknowledgements

Mornington Peninsula Shire acknowledges the Bunurong people who have been the custodians of this land for many thousands of years; and pays respects to their Elders past and present.

We acknowledge that the land on which we meet is the place of age-old ceremonies, celebrations, initiation, and renewal; and that the Bunurong people's living culture continues to have a unique role in the life of this region.

We are committed to protecting the health and wellbeing of people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, culturally and linguistically diverse, LGBTIQ+ and gender diverse backgrounds as well as populations across the lifespan.

This Strategy has been developed based on meaningful engagement with community, stakeholders and Shire staff and in alignment with relevant evidence bases and policy directions.



“Libraries store the energy that fuels the imagination. They open up windows to the world and inspire us to explore and achieve and contribute to improving our quality of life. Libraries change lives for the better.” – Sidney Sheldon

Message from the Mayor

I am proud to present Mornington Peninsula Shire's *Our Library Strategy 2024-2028* which outlines Council's direction for our library services and captures our community's vision for an adaptable service that continues to meet diverse, ever-changing needs.

Public libraries are a living embodiment of their community and integral in enhancing the health and wellbeing. Our Library represents the Mornington Peninsula – inclusive, connected and multi-faceted. They are safe and welcoming environments that create opportunities for lifelong learning and enable a sense of belonging, connection, and self-expression. Our loyal users are proud of their library and appreciate the meaning it gives to their lives.

We tailor our library services to meet the needs of people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds. It is pleasing to walk into any of Our Library facilities to see older people borrowing large print books and DVDs, young families and children with bags of picture books, students and lifelong learners interacting with one another, people working and meeting, and puzzle enthusiasts getting a photocopy of the day's crossword.

Our Library Strategy has been informed by meaningful community and stakeholder engagement. A survey undertaken in 2022 of over 1,000 Mornington Peninsula library users and community members indicated an average customer satisfaction score of 8.5 out of 10, with 48% of respondents rating their library 10 out of 10. Respondents highlighted the high levels of friendly and professional customer service provided by our library staff and the important role of their libraries in supporting mental health and wellbeing and being a place for people to connect with their community.

Over the next 5 years, we aim to refresh Our Library facilities, explore innovative service models, target our programs to encourage learning and reading across the lifespan, and continuing ensuring we offer safe and welcoming spaces for connection.

I encourage everyone in our community to continue embracing and enjoying our wonderful library services into the future.

Councillor Steve Holland
Mayor
Mornington Peninsula Shire



Message from the CEO

Our Library Strategy 2024-2029 outlines the Mornington Peninsula Shire's vision for the delivery of a library service that contributes to creating a vibrant, connected, and inclusive community. The Strategy has been developed to support our *Peninsula 2040* Community Vision, the Shire's *Council and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025* and in alignment with state and local policy directions.

Our organisation is committed to the highest standard of performance, behaviour and service, as guided by our five core values – integrity, courage, openness, respect and excellence. Our Library team is leading the way in delivering an innovative, flexible and dynamic service with and for our local community.

We are committed to creating opportunities for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds. We achieve this through offerings such as our Mobile Library, literacy programs, accessible technology, diverse collections, events and forums, art exhibition spaces, and intergenerational initiatives.

The Strategy sets out three key priority areas: *Re-imagine, Thrive and Belong*. These will guide our approach to providing high quality and inclusive programs, services, spaces and collections that enhance the wellbeing of people who live, work and visit the Mornington Peninsula.

The Strategy represents the Shire's commitment to ensuring Our Library will be a sustainable service that embraces the wonder of lifelong learning for generations to come.

John Baker
Chief Executive Officer
Mornington Peninsula Shire



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*“Our community spirit thrives, with safe accessible and inclusive spaces for all.”
- library user*

“It’s a great space for those who want to connect with their community. For me, it’s about fostering a love of books and literacy in my two-year-old daughter who is excited to go to the library.” – library user

Our Library Strategy on a page

Our vision		
<p>Our Library is a dynamic public library service, providing a welcoming, inclusive and stimulating environment where lifelong habits of learning and self-expression are encouraged, a love of reading is nurtured, and where library users can meet their education, information, social and recreation needs.</p>		
Our priorities		
1. Re-Imagine <p>Our library facilities and service models are well planned and designed to ensure they create welcoming and inclusive spaces which inspire innovation.</p>	2. Thrive <p>Our Library delivers targeted, equitable and culturally safe services that aim to enhance the health and wellbeing of community members of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.</p>	3. Belong <p>Our Library environments enable opportunities for community to meaningfully connect, feel included, and be confident to express themselves.</p>
Our outcomes		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved early years, adult, and digital literacy• Development of meaningful relationships• Reduced digital exclusion• Increased healthy habits• Improved knowledge, skills, and confidence• Increased sense of belonging• Timely access to support services		
Our delivery		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supported and overseen by Library Strategy Working Group• Annual Action Plans• Annual Reports prior to budget process• Annual Library User Surveys		

“It is a focal point in my family’s life. As a family we love to read, the access to books, as many as we want, whenever we like, is a privilege we are so grateful for. It is our happy place.” – library user

Our community at a glance

Location

The Bunurong peoples are the traditional custodians of the land on which the Mornington Peninsula is located. The Mornington Peninsula is located on the fringe of Melbourne's outer southern suburbs and covers 192km of coastline fronting Port Phillip and Western Port Bays and Bass Strait with a total area of 720 square kilometres.

Mornington Peninsula Shire Council is an 'interface Council'. This means the local community does not yet have access to all of the services available in Melbourne's metropolitan areas thereby requiring travel outside of the municipality.



Population

The Mornington Peninsula Shire currently has a population of 169,600. Annual population growth is around 1.42%. During 2020 to 2022 the population spiked due to an increase in people moving to the municipality following extended COVID-19 restrictions.

There are more than 40 towns and villages along the Port Phillip side of the Peninsula from Mount Eliza to Portsea, and on the Western Port side from Baxter, Hastings, Crib Point and Balnarring. As well as larger population centres such as Mornington, Rosebud and Sorrento, there are smaller populations spread out across the Peninsula including Flinders, Merricks, Red Hill, Somers, Shoreham, St Andrews Beach and Tuerong.

The Mornington Peninsula community continues to emerge from COVID-related restrictions and lockdowns and faces a dynamic and challenging environment economically and socially.

Life expectancy

Life expectancy for women is around 84.5 years and for men 80.4 years. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, it is approximately 10 years less for both men and women.

In 2021, 19% of the population were children and young people aged under 18 years and 33% were older people aged over 60 years. This highlights that our local community is comprised of a combination of young families and an ageing population.

Diversity

There are more than 1,300 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on the Mornington Peninsula, with approximately half aged less than 30 years.

There is a high proportion of English-speaking residents on the Shire relative to other municipalities and low cultural and linguistic diversity, although this is changing. Of the 17% of residents born overseas, 8% were born in the United Kingdom and 1% in New Zealand. Amongst non-English speaking residents, Italy is the largest at 0.7% of the population. The three largest ancestries on the Shire are English (45%), Australian (37%) and Irish (12%).

There are nearly 40,000 people living with disability on the peninsula, of whom 10,530 need daily assistance and 4,188 receive support from the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). There are also 20,359 carers providing unpaid assistance to a person with a disability, long term illness or old age.

There is a lack of comprehensive data on community who identify as LGBTQIA+, however Australians of diverse sexual orientation, sex and/or gender are estimated to comprise at least 10% of the population.

Housing

In 2021, 40.7% of the population fully owned their home and 33.2% had a mortgage. In regard to the rental market, 16.2% of the population rent their dwelling and 1.4% of the population reside in social housing.

The current social and affordable housing crisis is having a significant impact on the Mornington Peninsula community, with 33% experiencing rental stress and an estimated 1,000 people sleeping rough each night (the fourth worst local government area in Victoria). Close to 4,000 community members are currently on the social housing waiting list.

Transport and vehicle ownership

Public transport linkages bus routes radiate out from Frankston station to both sides of the Peninsula with some local routes running from Rosebud and Sorrento, including the FlexiRide service. There is, presently, no 'cross Peninsula' bus routes which would negate the need to travel in and out of Frankston. The Stony Point railway line connects with trains to and from the city at Frankston.

The Mornington Peninsula is unique as it is served by two ferries providing connection to the Bellarine Peninsula from Sorrento and Cowes from Stony Point.

Car ownership on the Mornington Peninsula is relatively high with the Census (2021) noting that 3.5% of the population do not own or have access to a vehicle, compared to 8.2% in Greater Melbourne. Capel Sound has the highest percentage of the population without a vehicle with 7.8%.

The Census (2021) showed that 58.9% of the population on the Mornington Peninsula had more than two vehicles compared to 51.5% in Greater Melbourne.

Employment

It is estimated that 62,311 people work in the Shire with health care (15.3%), construction (14.4%), retail (12.3%), accommodation and food services (10.1%), education and training (8.5%) and manufacturing (6.7%) being the main sources of employment. Tourism is a main driver of employment supporting around 3,700 jobs or 6% of the total number of people employed. As of December 2022, 2.5% of the Shire's population was unemployed.

Education and training

Educational institutions on the Mornington Peninsula range from small to medium sized primary schools to large secondary schools. There are also a mix of private and independent schools across the Peninsula, and Chisholm Institute of TAFE has a campus at Rosebud. Many primary schools are either not equipped with a school library or if they are it is often not staffed by a teacher-librarian.

In 2021, 51.8% of residents had completed year 12 or equivalent in schooling and 21.5% had completed a Bachelor or higher in tertiary education. Further, 21.3% had attained some type of vocational qualification through TAFE or equivalent which was higher than Melbourne.

In lower socioeconomic areas such as Hastings, Rosebud and parts of Mornington, low school attendance and low literacy rates are significantly impacting educational outcomes and school completion.

Economic indicators

Tourism has and will continue to be a major driver of economic activity on the Mornington Peninsula particularly in summer months. Viticulture is also a strong contributor with numerous well-known wineries established across the Mornington Peninsula due to ideal weather and soil conditions.

In terms of heavy industry, BHP-Billiton's Hastings steel plant is a major provider of employment and support to ancillary industries particularly in Hastings. The Royal Australian Navy's *HMAS CERBERUS* at Crib Point is the nation's leading training school for naval recruits.

Socio-economic indicators

The Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (SEIFA) indicates a disparity across the Shire. There is a mix of high and low proportions of disadvantage as defined by factors such as low income, poor literacy levels and high levels of social isolation, single person households and homelessness. Townships experiencing a high proportion of disadvantage include Capel Sound, Crib Point, Dromana, Hastings, Rosebud and Tootgarook.

The ability to read with fluency is an essential foundation for life.

Children first 'learn to read', then they 'read to learn'.

This continues as they move through all stages of their lives.

Why libraries are important

Research has shown that public libraries play a pivotal role in supporting community health and wellbeing, and delivering social, cultural, and economic return. They help foster critical thinking, social connection, positive literacy outcomes, life-long learning, and a love of reading, which in turn delivers a wide range of individual and social benefits which are critical in establishing an informed, imaginative and compassionate society.

“It is a place where I have purpose, a place to be, where I can connect with others instead of being lonely at home” – library user

Our libraries help to establish healthy and productive communities by supporting literacy development at all stages of life, beginning with the crucial learning between 0-3 years. Our Library’s *Ready, Set, Read* early years initiative supports parents to model good reading habits and instil in their children a love for words, reading and learning.

The *Reading is good for you* (2018) report, commissioned by the Australian Publishers Association, documents the therapeutic benefits of reading for pleasure. Reading:

- works better and faster as a stress reliever, compared with taking a walk, listening to music or having a cup of tea.
- helps us to explore our identity, new possibilities and where other people are coming from, even if we disagree with what they’re saying.
- helps to improve empathy and detect and understand other people’s emotions, a crucial skill in navigating complex social relationships.

When it comes to reader engagement, public libraries are uniquely placed. They are the only publicly accessible facilities that support the reading habit through our collections and programs like storytime, book groups and author talks.

Libraries enable people to broaden their reading horizons, free of charge. They offer a wide range of reading options, in a variety of formats. As well as offering general reading resources and fostering a culture of reading, libraries hold materials for people to improve their literacy levels, including Languages Other Than English (LOTE) materials for people to learn English. Libraries also play an important role in supporting digital literacy through free access to technology.

Libraries are safe and welcoming spaces that help to build cohesive communities. Community members can enter a library without being a member, without an appointment, without having to disclose personal circumstances and without having to spend money, making libraries a truly democratic space. Libraries are also increasingly providing spaces where community members can work, research, communicate and collaborate, which supports hybrid working models.

Research shows a strong link between the services provided by public libraries and the behaviours, skills, attitudes and values that support the development of more inclusive and cohesive societies. Libraries stimulate cross-cultural conversation and understanding. Local history and community collections play a vital role in conserving and engendering community pride and connecting communities to their past, present and future.

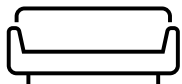
The report *Libraries Work! The socio-economic value of public libraries to Victorians* (2018), demonstrates that every dollar invested in Victorian public libraries generates \$4.30 of benefits to the local community.

Our Library at a glance



Our physical **libraries** are at:

- Hastings
- Mornington
- Rosebud
- Somerville (incorporates a small customer service hub)
- Sorrento Community Hub (pop-up library)



Our libraries are safe spaces. They provide quiet areas for study or reading, meeting rooms and areas for groups to meet and interact on a regular basis.



We carefully curate our **collection** to meet the needs of the changing community. It is accessible and relevant to community members of all ages and backgrounds.



This includes fiction and non-fiction books, picture books, magazines and newspapers, CDs and DVDs, online databases and manuals, games and even a seed library.

Our collection development strikes a balance between traditional print-based materials and e-resources. These include e-books and e-magazines, music and streaming platforms for movies and documentaries.

To support our culturally and linguistically diverse community members, Our Library participates in the inter-library loan service across Victoria which provides access to translated and first language collections.

Our Library's **services** and **collections** are accessible not only through our physical branches.



We operate a **Home Library Service** with volunteers that deliver material to patrons. They help to maintain social connectedness and reduce isolation by building relationships with those in the community who are unable to visit a physical library.



Our **Book Delivery Service** (Click & Deliver) provides a drop-off and pick-up service for library members who live in the Mornington Peninsula Shire.

Our **Mobile Library and Outreach Van** provides a blended traditional 'mobile library service' at key stops. It also delivers targeted outreach programs and visits (*The library that comes to you*)



Our Library's **staff** are the heart and soul of the library service.

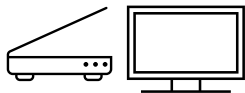
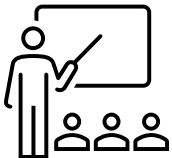
Our team are committed to supporting our community's needs in a caring and respectful way. We work together with the community to help them achieve their full potential by offering creative programs, useful services and helpful resources.



Each year we deliver over 1,000 community programs to in-house, outreach and virtual audiences.

We design our programs to support literacy, lifelong learning and help foster social connection and wellbeing. They include:

- Storytime sessions targeting babies, toddlers, pre-schoolers and families.
- 'Ready, Set, Read' outreach and in-house programs. These support literacy development for babies and foster a life-long love of reading.
- Author talks catering to all interests and ages.
- Workshops and demonstrations covering a broad range of interests from music and craft to creative writing.
- **Digital literacy** classes and workshops empowering the community to use a range of online resources and devices with confidence.
- Programs that support social connections and reduce isolation. This includes Chatty Café, an opportunity for older members of the community to meet over light refreshments.
- Seed library to encourage at-home edible gardening.



Our Library provides access to **technology** such as PCs and iPads, scanners, and printers. We support the community to build confidence in using these tools.

We provide free internet and Wi-Fi across our libraries. Those in the community that do not have access at home or elsewhere are able to connect and access online resources.



Working from home is now common practice across many industries and businesses. Our resources support those in the community that have a hybrid model in their workplace.

Our meetings rooms and spaces are made available for community groups to book.

“A place for early literacy and access to amazing books for the kids to change each week and I love using Borrow Box. Such a great place to be. I wish I used the library like I do now with my first two kids.” – library user

“I totally rely on my library. Books keep me going. I have mental health issues and books are my escape from depression.” – library user

What our community told us

In 2022, the Shire engaged with library users and community members using a survey to gather information about their satisfaction with Our Library and their future aspirations. There were more than 1,000 responses.

The survey found that:

- 48% rated their library 10 out of 10
- Average customer satisfaction score was 8.5 out of 10
- 90% of library users feel safe at the library
- 82% believe the library welcomes people from all walks of life
- 78% believe the library is a hub for community connections.

Respondents noted high levels of friendly, professional customer service provided by library staff. They also highlighted the important role of their libraries in:

- providing access to books, magazines, DVDs and other resources
- supporting children's literacy and education
- helping people to learn new things
- supporting mental health and wellbeing
- providing comfortable spaces to just be
- being a place for people to connect with their community.

The areas of improvement identified were:

- the look and feel of the library buildings
- longer opening hours
- variety in the collection and access to new release titles
- coffee and tea provisions
- improvements to Wi-Fi speed, website and catalogue usability
- a larger Somerville Library with longer opening hours.

The 2022 Victorian public library survey report noted that:

- There is a wide appeal for public libraries, its collections and services across all demographics and people of different socio-economic status which is broadly consistent with the Victorian population in terms of age, gender, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status and language background.
- The way people access public library services is multi-faceted with:
 - 26% of people using the library more than once a week
 - 82% of respondents visiting the library to borrow books and periodicals
 - 60% seeking help from library staff
 - 31% wishing to use the wifi
- There is a very high level of customer satisfaction with people valuing the role they play in supporting reading, literacy, digital inclusion and wellbeing.
- The range of library services provided to the community is diverse and expanding over time – not just a place to borrow material but also a place to work, rather than at home, study

and reducing the digital divide by providing access to government information and services and helping people seek employment.

- The borrowing of material is higher amongst an older cohort of users and in regional and rural areas where there is often an older population.
- The use of technology including Wi-Fi is highest amongst younger people in inner city areas but very highly valued in rural areas.
- Libraries in interface Councils such as Mornington Peninsula Shire host more family groups and have fewer people that come to the library alone.
- People appreciate the difference libraries make to their personal lives.
- Libraries were impacted significantly from COVID with dramatic drops in attendances and borrowing of physical items but significant spikes in the use of digital content either streamed or borrowed from the library's collection.
- People want bigger and more accessible libraries and library services ranging from more flexible spaces, longer opening hours and outreach into the community.

“It’s a safe meeting place and space to hang out. You don’t have to spend money, justify your presence or do/say/be anyone in particular. I love knowing that the library is just there as a safe space to take quiet refuge in, to explore new worlds without expectation.” – library user

“The library is a major source of wellbeing. It’s a place that calms me, educates me and briefly connects me to other people. I love libraries!” - library user

How Our Library Strategy aligns

Our Library Strategy 2024-2029 aligns with state-wide, and local efforts to deliver effective, efficient, and sustainable public library services that are relevant and connected to the community's vision.



Public Libraries Victoria (PLV) is the peak body for public libraries across the state. The purpose of PLV is to advocate for improved funding, champion the role of the sector and the importance of libraries to communities and enable collaboration across the sector.

Our Library Strategy aligns with the PLV's **Strategic Plan 2023-2027** as follows:

- Promoting the value of public library services to the community.
- Ensure that Shire staff are proactively trained and have appropriate resources to develop and deliver engaging and effective programs.
- Leverage the Shire's PLV membership to obtain best value from suppliers and partners and to improve access to library collections through shared services.
- Ensure the Shire actively engages with the community on service improvements and initiatives to demonstrate excellence and clarity of purpose.

The State Library of Victoria's (SLV) ***Libraries for Health and Wellbeing: A strategic framework for Victorian public libraries towards 2024*** outlines the role and priorities of Victoria's public libraries in supporting community health and wellbeing. *Our Library Strategy* aligns with the three community priorities identified in SLV's *Libraries for Health and Wellbeing*:

1. Skills and habits: Communities are empowered
2. Resources and information: Communities are supported
3. Belonging and participation: Communities are connected

The ***Peninsula 2040: Our Shared Community Vision*** was developed by Mornington Peninsula community members and launched in 2021. It sets out seven key principles and community goals aimed at enhancing the liveability and sustainability of the Mornington Peninsula. The *Our Library Strategy* aligns with the following *Peninsula 2040* principles:

1. Addressing climate change
2. Integrated public transport and accessibility infrastructure
3. Support an inclusive, connected and safe society
4. Innovative planning and development of the local economy
5. Encourage and expand education, sports and arts opportunities.
6. Protect and enhance all elements of our natural land, sea and biodiverse environments.
7. Plan and regulate responsible and innovative housing development.

The Shire's ***Council and Wellbeing Plan 2021-25*** is developed in alignment with legislative requirements under the Local Government Act 2020 and Public Health Act 2008. Our Library Strategy aligns with the themes and strategic objectives outlined in the Council and Wellbeing Plan as follows:

- **Theme One:** A healthy natural environment and well-planned townships
 - Strategic Objective 1.4 An accessible built environment that supports diverse, current and future community needs.
- **Theme Two:** A robust, innovative and diverse economy.
 - Strategic Objective 2.1: A community that has access to world class local learning opportunities through all stages of life.
- **Theme Three:** A flourishing, healthy and connected community.
 - Strategic Objective 3.2: A resilient and confident community where everyone connects and is supported.
 - Strategic Objective 3.3: A community in which people from all generations, backgrounds and abilities can access local services.
 - Strategic Objective 3.4: A community with vibrant arts, culture, sport and recreational opportunities that foster connections and participation across generations, backgrounds and abilities.

“A library levels the playing field. Public libraries in particular make all information available to all people regardless of income, disability, or social status.” – library user

Our Library Strategy Framework

Our Library Strategy aims to realise a vision for providing a welcoming, inclusive and stimulating environment where lifelong habits of learning and self-expression are encouraged, a love of reading is nurtured, and where library users can meet their education, information, social and recreation needs.

The Strategy outlines three key priority areas:

1. Re-Imagine
2. Thrive
3. Belong

Each of these priority areas has a set of objectives (what we plan to do) and deliverables (how we will do it) as outlined below.

1 RE-IMAGINE		
Our library facilities and service models are well planned and designed to ensure they create welcoming and inclusive spaces which inspire innovation.		
	Objectives	Deliverables
1.1	Plan for building, revitalising, and maintaining library infrastructure and facilities based on community needs.	Deliver targeted and regular community and stakeholder engagement to understand community needs.
		As needed, refresh, reconfigure, adapt, and modernise <i>existing</i> library facilities using co-design approaches with community members and stakeholders.
		As needed, plan and design <i>new</i> library facilities in collaboration with relevant Shire team and co-designed with community members.
		Ensure a mix of flexible and accessible spaces within library facilities to enable a broad range of use for community members.
1.2	Explore and implement innovative library service models including mobile and outreach services.	Review the current service model to determine if it meets the needs of the community whilst delivering value for money.
		Re-launch and re-invigorate the mobile library service, including an annual review.
		Investigate the feasibility of alternative library service models including library lockers at key locations across the Shire.
		Undertake review of the 'click and deliver' service in line with the mobile library service review.
		Investigate funding opportunities for innovative local history software packages, promoting the increased use and access to local history collections and programs.
		Investigate the feasibility of establishing new services using a '24/7' model to possibly replace the mobile stop on Saturday.
		Understand and adapt to technological advances that meet community needs, particularly online collections and services as well as innovative use of apps and the library website .

1 RE-IMAGINE

Our library facilities and service models are well planned and designed to ensure they create welcoming and inclusive spaces which inspire innovation.

	Objectives	Deliverables
		Review online subscriptions based on usage data and suitability to the needs of the community and make changes as required.
1.3	Prioritise improved access to library facilities, underpinned by universal design and environmentally sustainable design principles.	Support advocacy for improved public transport and active travel infrastructure to enable people to access our libraries without the use of cars. As needed, apply the Shire's Universal Design Policy, Environmentally Sustainable Design Policy and Equity Impact Assessment tool to new or updated programs, services and policies.
1.4	Deliver a dynamic customer service and memorable library experience for all.	Prioritise proactive adherence and timely response to Child Safe Standards. Provide ongoing opportunities for staff to develop, network, train and discover emerging trends and technologies to respond to digital literacy queries and ensure a memorable experience for our patrons. Evaluate staffing structure and rosters to ensure resourcing meets the needs of the library service. Advocate for increased staffing and resources as additional library locations and services are made available.

"I love being able to read such a range of material, order new books, ask for any help and know I will be treated with respect. I read a lot and don't want to buy books. I think lending libraries are 1,000% essential in every community worldwide." - library user

2. THRIVE

Our Library delivers targeted, equitable and culturally safe services that aim to enhance the health and wellbeing of community members of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.

	Objectives	Deliverables
2.1	Deliver targeted programs that enable lifelong learning across the lifespan with a focus on early years, adults and families, and older people.	<p>Deliver exceptional early years literacy programs across all branches and the mobile library outreach van.</p> <p>Develop and deliver event opportunities that connect and engage older people, including intergenerational programs and events.</p> <p>Develop and strengthen relationships with pre-schools, primary and secondary schools to support their objectives through visits, relevant resources and awareness of library services.</p> <p>Develop and strengthen connections with the Shire's Youth Services team and Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) to support young people with their literacy, lifelong learning and recreational needs.</p> <p>Continue to work in partnership with Peninsula Advisory Committee for Elders (PACE) and the Shire's Positive Ageing team to ensure programs and events are responsive to the needs of older people.</p> <p>Establish Children's and Youth Services Librarian positions to develop, deliver and support programs across all libraries and through outreach.</p>
2.2	Prioritise efforts and resourcing for improving literacy across the lifespan.	<p>Work with appropriate committees and working groups to guide, oversee and support efforts to improve literacy through library services.</p> <p>Foster partnerships with key adult literacy support organisations to facilitate and support adult literacy learning.</p> <p>Consider the viability and implementation of specialist collections such as those supporting adult literacy.</p> <p>Advocate for ongoing resourcing for delivery of the 'Ready, Set, Read' and 'Story Dogs' early literacy programs.</p> <p>Ensure staff have the necessary skills and experience to assist community members with digital literacy queries.</p> <p>Undertake a review and update of the Our Library website to ensure accessibility for low literacy.</p>
2.3	Ensure library environments are welcoming, safe and prioritise cultural heritage with and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members.	<p>Meaningfully engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members to enable self-determined services and programs.</p> <p>Work in partnership with First Nations organisations including Bunurong Land Council and Willum Warrain gathering place to understand and respond to community needs and strengths.</p> <p>Facilitate opportunities for community to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture.</p> <p>Continue to source and develop an accessible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collection in conjunction with the State Library of Victoria's Indigenous Resource Centre and the Shire's Reconciliation Inclusion Officer.</p>

2. THRIVE

Our Library delivers targeted, equitable and culturally safe services that aim to enhance the health and wellbeing of community members of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.

	Objectives	Deliverables
		<p>Create and maintain systems to easily identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collections in collaboration with the State Library of Victoria and the Victorian History Library.</p> <p>Celebrate National Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC Week, and other significant First Nations events in our libraries in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.</p>
2.3	<p>Ensure library environments are welcoming, safe and nurturing with and for people with disability and from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse, LGBTIQ+, and gender diverse backgrounds.</p>	<p>Maintain and promote a vibrant collection that is representative of our diverse community including translated resources.</p> <p>Make use of appropriate communication tools including signage, door stickers, staff badges and flags that show people of all backgrounds that they are welcome.</p> <p>Identify and address barriers that prevent people with disability from meaningfully participating in programs and accessing services.</p> <p>Ensure programs and services cater to different needs, such as sensory processing, access and communication.</p> <p>Engage with culturally and linguistically diverse communities to share and protect cultural heritage, beliefs, traditions, and stories.</p> <p>Engage with LGBTQIA+ and gender diverse community members to ensure our programs, events and services are appropriately promoting and embracing diversity.</p> <p>Support and deliver inclusive events and festivals aligned to key awareness days/months.</p>
2.4	<p>Offer meaningful support for people experiencing disadvantage and difficulty.</p>	<p>Establish a Social Worker Librarian position to develop and deliver programs and policies that support community need.</p> <p>Partner with relevant health and social service organisations to enable efficient referral pathways and the use of libraries for outreach.</p> <p>Continue to promote library facilities as welcoming and non-judgmental spaces for people experiencing homelessness, family violence and/or other challenges to feel safe and supported.</p> <p>Continue to deliver and review weekend services to ensure community have access to safe and welcoming library spaces every day.</p>

*“The library Home Delivery Service is my lifeline. The delivery staff are so friendly and continuous supply is so important for my mental wellbeing.” –
library user*

3. BELONG

Our Library environments enable opportunities for community to meaningfully connect, feel included, and be confident to express themselves.

	Objectives	Deliverables
3.1	Deliver programs and services that contribute to reducing social isolation and loneliness.	<p>Deliver and advocate for in-house, outreach and virtually delivered programs that aim to connect older and isolated people.</p> <p>Deliver programs to prevent, recognise and respond to mental health and wellbeing concerns.</p> <p>Support and participate in local and regional initiatives that focus on suicide prevention and positive mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Deliver and promote group activities (e.g. book clubs, knitting groups, 'Chatty Cafes') and other programs that lead to strengthened community social interactions.</p>
3.2	Encourage and embrace new library users	<p>Connect with existing and potential new library users regularly through e-newsletters, calendar of events and promotion through print media and social media.</p> <p>Development and delivery of a communications plan and new promotional collateral to increase community and stakeholder awareness of and use of library services</p> <p>Actively collaborate with Shire teams, community groups, networks and organisations to promote library services.</p> <p>Examine ways to continue relationships with new library patrons obtained through delivery of one-off events and programs.</p> <p>Seek out stories capturing 'Libraries Change Lives' and share these proactively with our media and other outlets Improve library signage and visibility including use of 'finger pointer' signage in surrounding areas.</p> <p>Undertake an annual membership drive targeting demographic indicators such as low school readiness and low adult literacy.</p>
3.3	Support the community to adapt post-COVID and to respond effectively to climate change.	<p>Create post-COVID-19 environments and processes that remove barriers to entry and distance library users from their COVID experience.</p> <p>Plan for potential future emergency and/or pandemic events to ensure community members can continue accessing library services where possible.</p> <p>Support community members that are working in a 'hybrid' model by providing appropriate working spaces and facilities.</p> <p>Support and help foster local business by providing resources and facilities within our libraries and services to promote new ideas and adaptation to change.</p> <p>Explore partnership opportunities for programs and events that address the Shire's public health and wellbeing priorities.</p> <p>Provide opportunities for community members to enhance their climate change education, understanding and impact to enable positive change in our community.</p>

3. BELONG

Our Library environments enable opportunities for community to meaningfully connect, feel included, and be confident to express themselves.

Objectives

Deliverables

Provide resources and relevant programs to the community to develop and enhance skills in the protection and enhancement of the natural environment, flora and fauna including better farming practices.

Provide the community with access to resources and programs that help promote greener living and innovative house design.

“I’m working from home. I use the library as a place to escape to, to be in a different environment. And I love it – a really great place.” – library user

“The library gives me a chance to study and read books for free. I can’t really afford to buy books anymore and borrowing books from the library makes me feel happy. Being in the library makes me feel comforted and safe.” – library user

How Our Library Strategy will be delivered and reviewed

Our Library will be responsible for implementing, monitoring, and reviewing this Strategy. This will be overseen by an internal Library Strategy Working Group consisting of representatives from relevant Shire departments and external stakeholders. Prioritising working in partnership will enable objectives and deliverables to be meaningfully aligned with community needs and aspirations.

The following outcome indicators from the State Library of Victoria's *Libraries for Health and Wellbeing Strategic Framework* will help to track progress of objectives:

- Improved early years, adult, and digital literacy
- Improved knowledge, skills, and confidence
- Development of meaningful relationships
- Increased sense of belonging
- Reduced digital exclusion
- Timely access to support services
- Increased healthy habits

To effectively and consistently monitor and review the Strategy, Our Library will:

- Develop an annual action plan to track progress in alignment with annual budget process
- Provide a report on the annual action plan to Council each year
- Undertake an annual survey to reflect on the progress of the Strategy and capture emerging issues and trends.
- Regularly liaise with our key stakeholders such as schools and other community organisations to review program delivery, collections, and services.

“Libraries allow children to ask questions about the world and find the answers. And the wonderful thing is that once a child learns to use a library, the doors to learning are always open.” – Laura Bush
