



Our Library Strategy

2024-2029



MORNINGTON
PENINSULA
Shire

Acknowledgement of Country

Mornington Peninsula Shire acknowledges the Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation who have been the custodians of this land for many thousands of years, and pays respect to their Elders past and present. We acknowledge that the land on which we live, work and play 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 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, culturally and linguistically diverse community members, LGBTIQ+ and gender diverse community as well as priority population groups, including children, youth and over 55s). This Strategy has been developed based on meaningful engagement with our community, stakeholders and Shire staff and aligns with relevant evidence-based research and policy directions.



Our Councillors

Mornington Peninsula Shire is divided into six wards with a total of 11 councillors.

Briars

- Cr Steve Holland 0410 905 085
- Cr Anthony Marsh 0435 610 745
- Cr Despi O'Connor 0435 569 710

Watson

- Cr Kate Popper 0466 519 551

Seawinds

- Cr Simon Brooks 0468 591 993
- Cr Antonella Celi 0408 974 143
- Cr Debra Mar 0466 255 385

Cerberus

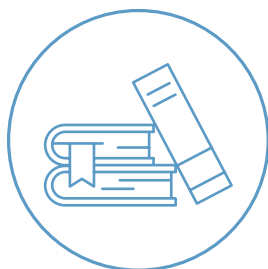
- Cr Lisa Dixon 0435 630 007

Nepean

- Cr Sarah Race 0466 237 655
- Cr Susan Bissinger 0401 297 978

Red Hill

- Cr David Gill 0437 129 016



“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, author

Mayor's Message



I am proud to present Mornington Peninsula Shire's *Our Library Strategy 2024-2029* 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 health and wellbeing. Our Libraries represent 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 holding meetings, and puzzle enthusiasts getting a photocopy of the day's crossword.

Our Library Strategy 2024-2029 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 five years, we aim to refresh Our Library facilities, explore innovative service models, target our programs to encourage learning and reading across the lifespan, and continue to ensure 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 Simon Brooks
Mayor, Mornington Peninsula Shire**

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

CEO's Message



Our Library Strategy 2024-2029 outlines the Mornington Peninsula Shire's vision for delivering 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 the introduction of the Our Library Van service (in 2025), 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

“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 Strategy



OUR VISION

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.

OUR PRINCIPLES

Re-Imagine

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

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.

Belong

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

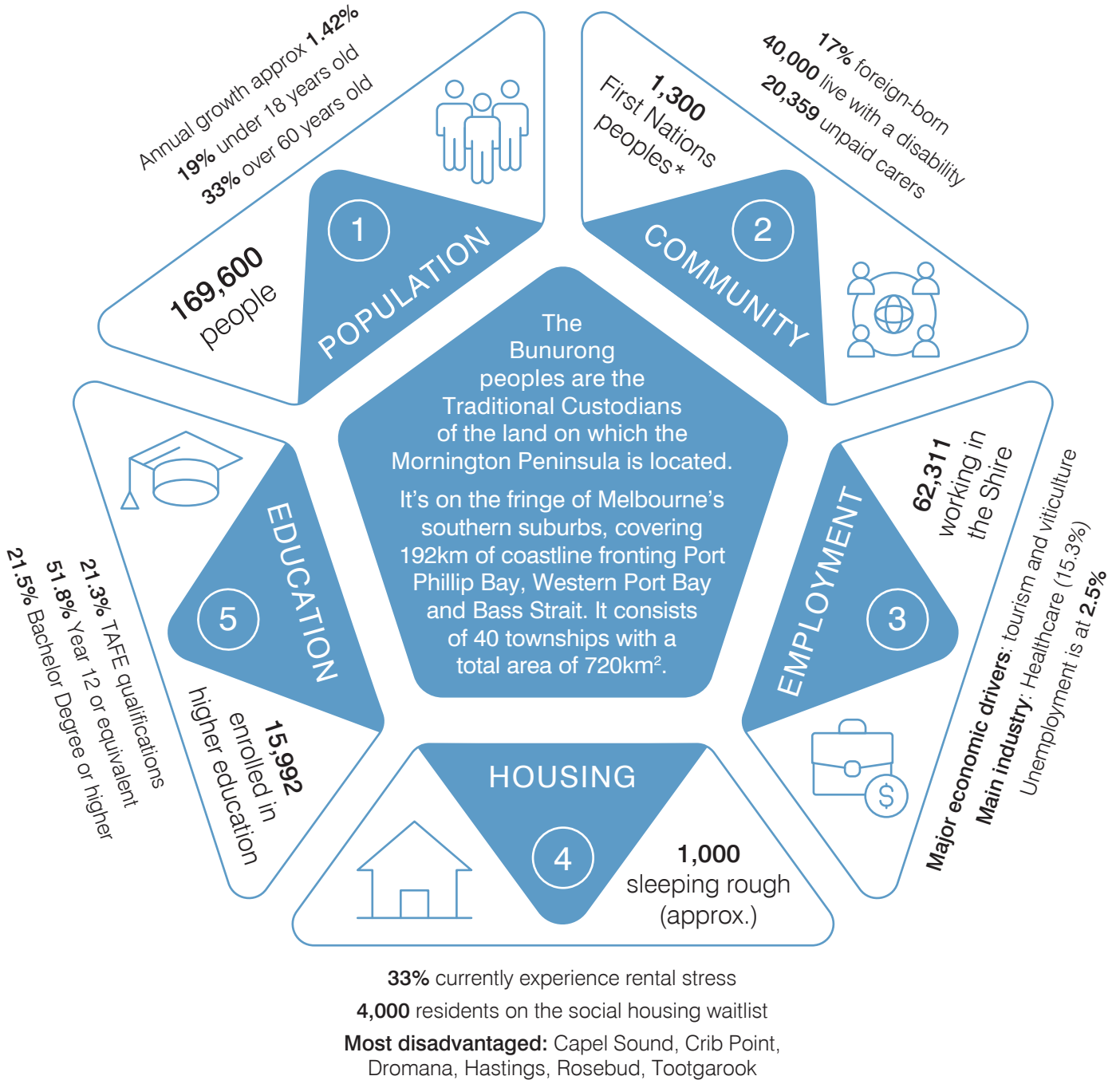
OUR OUTCOMES

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

OUR DELIVERY

- Supported and overseen by Library Strategy Working Group
- Annual Action Plans
- Library User Surveys
- Annual Reports prior to budget process

Our community at a glance



*First Nations peoples = Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Why are libraries so 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 to foster critical thinking, social connection, positive literacy outcomes, life-long learning, and a love of reading. This in turn delivers a wide range of individual and social benefits that are critical in establishing an informed, imaginative and compassionate society.

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:



is a better, faster stress reliever than a walk, music or a cup of tea.



helps us explore identity and new perspectives, even if we disagree



helps improve key social skills e.g. empathy and understanding others

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

Libraries allow 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 providing general reading resources and fostering a culture of reading, libraries house materials for people to improve their literacy levels, including Languages Other Than English (LOTE).

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.**

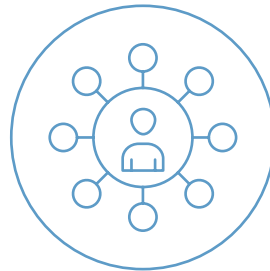
What our community told us

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 our library **10 out of 10**
- Average customer satisfaction 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.



It highlighted the important role of 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.

Respondents noted high levels of friendly, professional customer service provided by library staff.



Areas of improvement identified:

- 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.

“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 Library at a glance



Our physical libraries are located at:

- Hastings
- Mornington
- Rosebud
- Somerville (incorporates a small customer service hub)
- Our Library Van (launching 2025)
- Sorrento Community Centre

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



We carefully curate our collection to meet the changing needs of our community.

It is accessible and relevant to community members of all ages and backgrounds.

This includes fiction and non-fiction books, picture books, audiobooks, talking books, magazines, newspapers, 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 eBooks, eAudiobooks, eMagazines, digital newspapers, 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 material and resources not held by Our Library.



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

We support the Home Library Service and the volunteers who 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 Library Van, launching in 2025, will be stopping at key locations across the Peninsula taking services and resources on the road, reaching a broader scope of our community.



Each year we deliver over 1,000 community programs, both in-house and through outreach.

We design our programs to support literacy, lifelong learning, and activities that 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 early years.

- Workshops and demonstrations ranging from from music and craft to creative writing.
- Digital literacy classes and workshops empowering the community to use online resources and devices with confidence.
- Programs that support social connections and reduce isolation.
- 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 who do not have access at home or elsewhere can connect and access online resources.

Working from home is now common practice across many industries and businesses.

Our resources support those in the community who have a hybrid model in their workplace.

Our meeting rooms and spaces are available for community groups to book, for a small fee.



Our Library 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 to achieve their full potential by offering creative programs, useful services and helpful resources.

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

Strategy Alignment

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.



State Government

State Library of Victoria
Libraries for Health and Wellbeing Strategic Framework 2024

Public Libraries Victoria
Strategic Plan 2023-2027

Mornington Peninsula Shire

Peninsula 2024: Our Shared Community Vision

Council and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025

We All Belong Inclusion Strategy (new)

Reconciliation Action Plan

Peninsula Creative Cultural Strategy

Gender Equality Strategy

Our Strategy aligns with the **Public Libraries Victoria (PLV) Strategic Plan 2023-2027** as follows:

- Ensure 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 the best value from suppliers and partners and to improve access to library collections through shared services.
- Promote the value of public library services to the community.
- Ensure the Shire actively engages with the community on service improvements and initiatives to demonstrate excellence and clarity of purpose.

This Strategy aligns with **Peninsula 2040: Our Shared Community Vision** as follows:

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.

This Strategy aligns with the **Council and Wellbeing Plan 2021-25** 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.

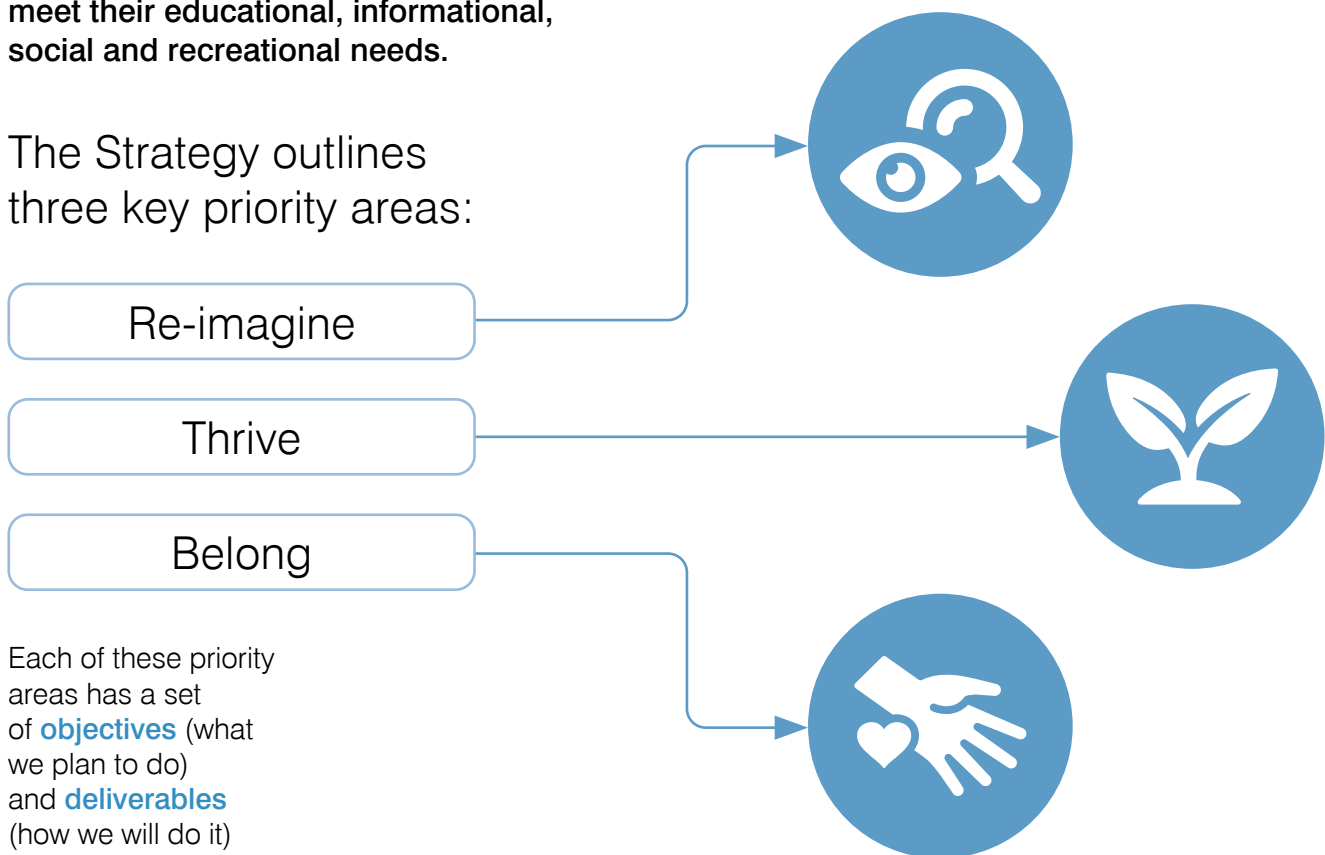
Strategic Objective 3.3: A community in which people from all generations, backgrounds and abilities can access local services.

Strategic Objective 3.4: A community with vibrant arts, culture, sport and recreational opportunities that foster connections and participation across generations, backgrounds and abilities.

Strategy Framework

Our Library Strategy 2024-2029 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 educational, informational, social and recreational needs.

The Strategy outlines three key priority areas:



Each of these priority areas has a set of **objectives** (what we plan to do) and **deliverables** (how we will do it) as outlined over the next four pages.

“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

Priority Area 1

Re-imagine



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

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 existing library facilities.
- Investigate creating 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 while delivering value for money.
- Re-launch and re-invigorate outreach services, including Our Library Van (OLiV) and annual reviews.
- Investigate the feasibility of alternative library service models including library lockers at key locations across the Shire.
- 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 in place of some outreach locations.
- 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.
- 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 and our community.
- Advocate for increased staffing and resources as additional library locations and services are made available.

Priority Area 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.

2.1 Deliver targeted programs that enable lifelong learning across the lifespan from babies to older people.

- Deliver exceptional early years literacy programs across all branches and outreach initiatives.
- Develop and deliver event opportunities that connect and engage older people, including intergenerational programs and events.
- Develop and strengthen relationships with preschool, primary and secondary schools to support their objectives through visits, relevant resources and awareness of library services.
- 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.
- 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.
- Establish a Children's and Youth Programs Librarian position to develop, deliver and support programs across all libraries and through outreach.

2.2 Prioritise efforts and resourcing for improving literacy across the lifespan.

- Work with appropriate committees and working groups to guide, oversee and support efforts to improve literacy through library services.
- Foster partnerships with key adult literacy support organisations to facilitate and support adult literacy learning.

- Consider the viability and implementation of specialist collections such as those supporting adult literacy.
- Advocate for ongoing resources for delivery of the 'Ready, Set, Read' and 'Story Dogs' early literacy programs.
- Ensure staff have the necessary skills and experience to assist community members with digital literacy queries.
- Undertake a review and update of the Our Library website to ensure accessibility for low literacy.

2.3 Ensure library environments are welcoming, safe and prioritise cultural heritage with and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members.

- Meaningfully engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members to enable self-determined services and programs.
- 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.
- Facilitate opportunities for community to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture.
- 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.
- 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.
- Celebrate National Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC Week, and other significant First Nations events in our libraries in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.

2.4 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.

- Maintain and promote a vibrant collection that is representative of our diverse community including translated resources.
- Make use of appropriate communication tools including signage, door stickers, staff badges and flags that show people of all backgrounds that they are welcome.
- Identify and address barriers that prevent people with a disability from meaningfully participating in programs and accessing services.
- Ensure programs and services cater to different needs, such as sensory processing, access and communication.
- Engage with culturally and linguistically diverse communities to share and protect cultural heritage, beliefs, traditions, and stories.
- Engage with LGBTIQ+ and gender diverse community members to ensure our programs, events and services are appropriately promoting and embracing diversity.
- Support and deliver inclusive events and festivals aligned to key awareness days/months.



2.5 Offer meaningful support for people experiencing disadvantage and difficulty.

- Partner with relevant health and social service organisations to enable efficient referral pathways and the use of libraries for outreach.
- 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.
- Continue to deliver and review weekend services to ensure community have access to safe and welcoming library spaces every day.

“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

Priority Area 3

Belong



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

3.1 Deliver programs and services that contribute to reducing social isolation and loneliness.

- Deliver and advocate for in-house, outreach and virtually-delivered programs that aim to connect older and isolated people.
- Deliver programs to prevent, recognise and respond to mental health and wellbeing concerns.
- Support and participate in local and regional initiatives that focus on suicide prevention and positive mental health and wellbeing.
- Deliver and promote group activities (e.g. book clubs, knitting groups, 'Chatty Cafes') and other programs that lead to strengthened community social interactions.

3.2 Encourage and embrace new library users

- Connect with existing and potential new library users regularly through e-newsletters, calendar of events and promotion through print media and social media.
- Development and delivery of a communications plan and new promotional collateral to increase community and stakeholder awareness of and use of library services.
- Actively collaborate with Shire teams, community groups, networks and organisations to promote library services.
- Examine ways to continue relationships with new library patrons obtained through delivery of one-off events and programs.
- 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.
- Undertake an annual membership drive targeting demographic indicators such as low school readiness and low adult literacy.

3.3 Support the community to adapt post-COVID and to respond effectively to climate change.

- Create post-COVID-19 environments and processes that remove barriers to entry and distance library users from their COVID experience.
- Plan for potential future emergency and/or pandemic events to ensure community members can continue accessing library services where possible.
- Support community members who are working in a 'hybrid' model by providing appropriate working spaces and facilities.
- Support and help foster local businesses by providing resources and facilities within our libraries and services to promote new ideas and adaptation to change.
- Explore partnership opportunities for programs and events that address the Shire's public health and wellbeing priorities.
- Provide opportunities for community members to enhance their climate change education, understanding and impact to enable positive change in our community.
- 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.

Strategy

Delivery and review



“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 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:

- Improve 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 surveys 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.

Service Centres

ROSEBUD

90 Besgrove Street, 3939

HASTINGS

21 Marine Parade, 3915

MORNINGTON

2 Queen Street, 3931

SOMERVILLE

1085 Frankston-Flinders
Road, within Somerville
Library, 3912

Our Libraries

 5950 1710

 askalib@mornpen.vic.gov.au

 facebook.com/ourlibrarymornpen

 [@morningtonpeninsulalibraries](https://www.instagram.com/morningtonpeninsulalibraries)

Contact the Shire

 1300 850 600 (24 hours) or 5950 1000

TTY: 133 677 then ask for 1300 850 600

TIS: 131 450

NRS: connect to NRS on www.relayservice.com.au
then ask for 1300 850 600

 customerservice@mornpen.vic.gov.au

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