# Libraries Plan
# 2024-26

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## Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians

We acknowledge that we are on the Traditional Lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong peoples of the East Kulin Nations and pay our respect to their Elders past and present.

We extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We acknowledge their living connection to Country, relationship with the land and all living things extending back tens of thousands of years.

# PLAN ON A PAGE

## OUR MISSION

## CONNECTING PEOPLE AND IDEAS

## OUR IMPACT

### KNOWLEDGE

A place of information, lifelong learning and building skills.

### CULTURE

A place to experience and reflect on history, diversity and art.

### CREATIVITY

A place to create, innovate, be inspired and pursue ideas.

### CONNECTION

A place to meet others, be heard and belong.

## OUR FUTURE

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

| 01. A PLACE FOR ALL | 02. FUTURE FOCUSED | 03. VALUED & THRIVING |
|---|---|---|

### 2030 AMBITIONS

- Our community is at the heart of our service. We are informed by their voices, needs and aspirations.
- Everyone who visits our libraries feels safe, welcome, and included.
- Stonnington's unique history and heritage, including indigenous stories, is well preserved and showcased.
- We empower our community to live well, learn and connect with others at any age.

- Our buildings are modern, accessible, and optimised to support a full program of activity.
- We embrace technology and data insights to deliver an efficient and seamless service.
- Informed by community insights and industry trends, we provide spaces, technologies and equipment to create and innovate.
- Our staff are equipped with the right skills, tools, and knowledge to deliver service excellence.

- Our libraries are vibrant hubs of activity with strong connections to the local area.
- We champion the vital role of libraries within cities and communities.
- We have a strong and sustainable funding base to support contemporary services and infrastructure.
- We make smart partnerships to achieve stronger outcomes more efficiently and effectively.

### KEY TARGETS (BY 2026)

- 50 member and visitor surveys conducted annually.
- 93%* or more users report feeling safe and welcome when using the library service.
- 63%* or more users believe the library has helped them to learn and gain new skills.
- 60%* or more users believe the library has encouraged them to become more engaged in the community.

- 20,000 program attendees.
- 90% or more satisfaction rating for library programs and events.
- 69%* or more users agree the library is changing in ways that increase its relevance to them.

- 50,000 members.
- 365,000 visitors.
- 741,000 loans.
- 20% of programs delivered by external partners.
- 95%* or more users agree the library is an important part of the place where they live.

*Targets are based on national average for libraries participating in the Public Libraries Evaluation Network (PLEN) in 2022/23 and may be adjusted once baseline survey data for our libraries is available.

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# STRATEGIC CONTEXT

**Community Vision 2040**

*'Our community is a safe, inclusive and creative city that celebrates and embraces its vibrancy of cultures. Walking the tree lined streets, we pay respect to the influence of the Nation's First Peoples, past and living, on a modern, sustainable and interconnected way of life that supports the good health and wellbeing of all. Welcome to Stonnington 2040.'*

▼

**Council Plan 2021 – 25**

**DIRECTION 1**

**A thriving and unique place**

1.1 Identity and destination

1.2 Thriving and desirable businesses

1.3 Pride of place and character

1.4 Active transport and connected city

**DIRECTION 2**

**An inclusive and healthy community**

2.1 Health and wellbeing

2.2 Diverse, inclusive and safe

2.3 Public and green spaces

2.4 Sustainability and climate action

**DIRECTION 3**

**A people-centred and future ready city**

3.1 Community focus, connection and engagement

3.2 Enhanced customer experience

3.3 Engaged and capable people

3.4 Fit for purpose operating model and resource management

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**Creative Stonnington (Arts and Culture Strategy) 2023-26**

**PRIORITY 1: Communities connected through creativity**

**PRIORITY 2: Vibrant places that attract discovery**

**PRIORITY 3: Dynamic cultural and creative industries**

**Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-25**

**PRIORITY 1: Healthy and well**

**PRIORITY 2: Respectful and safe**

**PRIORITY 3: Connected and supportive**

▼

Cultural Diversity Action Plan | LGBTIQA+ Action Plan

Birth-25 Action Plan | Ageing Well Action Plan

▼ ▼

**Libraries Plan**

▲ ▲

**Supporting Council Strategies/Plans**

Reconciliation Action Plan

Disability Inclusion Action Plan

Place-Led Economic Development Strategy

Safer Stonnington (Community Safety) Plan

Sustainable Environment Strategy

Climate Emergency Action Plan

Community Infrastructure Plan (Draft)

Smart City Strategic Framework

Active Stonnington Strategic Framework

Workplace Gender Equality Action Plan

Advocacy Plan

**State strategies, policies & guidelines**

Victorian Public Libraries 2030 Strategic Framework

State Library Victoria: Strategy Plan 2022 – 2026

Libraries for Health and Wellbeing: A strategic framework for Victorian public libraries towards 2024

ALIA Standards and Guidelines for Australian Public Libraries

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*The Future Stonnington Community Vision and Council Plan are subject to periodic review. This plan should be read as consistent with the Council's most current adopted Vision and Council Plan. Note that any specific actions or initiatives outlined in this plan are not binding upon the Council but may inform future planning and resourcing and, subject to Council decision, be endorsed as part of its Annual Plan and Budget.*

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# OVERVIEW

Our story started way back in 1860 as Victoria's pioneering municipal library. Since then, we have built a thriving network of three main library branches, a History Centre and two pop-up library spaces. We welcome more than 330,000 people through our doors every year – that's the equivalent of 3 visits by every Stonnington resident. At the heart of our service is a simple yet powerful ethos: *connecting people and ideas*. This mission fuels our commitment to serving as a place where knowledge is gained, culture thrives, creativity flourishes, and connections are forged.

## Purpose

### A roadmap for our next chapter

The role of libraries is constantly evolving in response to the communities they support and the environment in which they operate. Our plan will guide our continued development alongside our community over the coming years. We are committed to providing the best possible service for our community, now and always.

Our plan is built upon three overarching objectives:

- **A place for all:** Ensuring inclusivity, accessibility, and relevance for everyone.
- **Future focused:** Embracing innovation and adaptability to meet future demands effectively.
- **Valued and thriving:** Establishing greater support and resilience to sustain a vibrant and dynamic service.

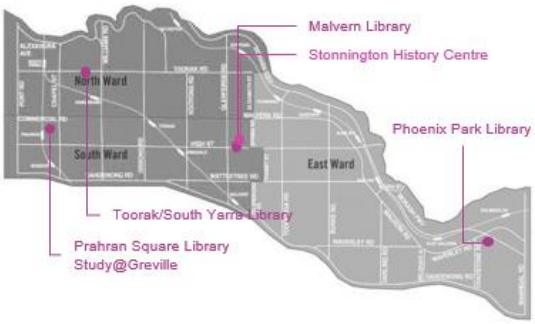
Each strategic objective is underpinned by four long-term ambitions and a total of 16 actions have been prioritised for achievement over the next two years. These initiatives span a spectrum of activities, from enhancing our physical spaces to expanding community partnerships, all aimed at improving outcomes for the people we serve.

As we embark on this journey, we recognise the challenges ahead. Our population is growing, fuelling need and expectation for expanded programming, additional space, more modern technologies and state of the art facilities. This pressure to keep pace is at odds with the financial realities faced by local governments today. State government funding reductions and rate caps, along with rising service costs and inflation rates, pose as a significant obstacle to growth. While there is a general expectation that local governments provide library services, there is no legislative requirement to do so. This makes libraries vulnerable to competing priorities and budgetary constraints.

Despite this, we remain firm in our commitment to progress. We will focus on leveraging our strengths, fostering partnerships, and thinking creatively to meet the needs of our community. With thoughtful prioritisation and strategic resource allocation, we can navigate the path ahead emerging stronger and better equipped to serve our community.

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## Our libraries




Each of our libraries is distinct, informed by their place context, history, size, and community demographic. Collectively, our libraries and History Centre are open for a total of 238 hours per week, including weekend and evening hours.

All Stonnington libraries offer a full range of resources, services and programs including:

- physical and digital collections of literature, film and music
- events and programs including children's story times, baby time rhyme, school holiday programs, book clubs, author and book talks, technology information sessions, lifestyle workshops and local history programs.
- access to meeting rooms
- public access computers, free Wi-fi, printing, scanning and photocopying facilities

We also operate outreach services including a Home Library Service for residents who are physically unable to visit our libraries and storytime at kindergartens, childcare services, and the Prahran Child and Youth Wellbeing Hub.

**Toorak/South Yarra Library**

Located in South Yarra near the Chapel Street Precinct, the Toorak/South Yarra Library is Stonnington's largest and most visited library. The service operates from an iconic building well loved by the broader community. Its proximity to high density living means it is used as a work, study, or recreation space and is highly popular with secondary and tertiary students.

The Toorak/South Yarra Library has the largest meeting room space, which is the primary event and program space for the library service, hosting author talks, information sessions, and workshops and, at times, attracting close to 100 attendees. The meeting room can also accommodate increased demand for study space during peak periods such as exam time. Children's programs remain well attended throughout the year.

**Malvern Library**

Located near Glenferrie Road and High Street, Malvern Library is the second-largest library and accumulates the highest total loans across Stonnington libraries. It is highly used by young and older families and attracts students from neighbouring schools. The library also has a large contingent of older, repeat customers who increasingly use the library for social connection.

All programs are well attended, with a high demand for children's programs, particularly since COVID-19. Optimising space for work and study and improving the connection between the library and Stonnington History Centre have been identified as key opportunities to improve the visitor experience.

**Stonnington History Centre**

Located alongside the Malvern Library, the History Centre collects, preserves, and shares the history and stories of our local area. The History Centre is home to key historical records and artifacts including Council minutes, newspapers, blueprints, and photographs. While it is mainly paper-based, records are being digitised and made available online to ensure their longevity. The centre attracts locals and visitors seeking various artifacts and photographs, including buildings and family histories. The centre has been running a successful family history club for several years.

**Phoenix Park Library**

Located in the easternmost part of Stonnington, Phoenix Park Library is situated in a community hub and primarily serves the local community. Visitation is lower at this site, attributed to poor public transport access and limited integration with surrounding facilities.

It is highly utilised by families and has started to attract higher numbers of children to its programs. The library also runs many programs for older adults, including book chats and knitting clubs, and is the primary location for the Seed Library. The Home Library Service operates from this site as it is near many aged care facilities and provides a delivery service to these facilities.

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**Prahran Square Library**

Currently operating from a pop-up space in Prahran Square following its temporary relocation from Prahran Town Hall, the Prahran Square Library attracts similar visitation levels to Phoenix Park despite being half the size. Its proximity to high-density living and the Chapel Street Precinct encourages active and public transport use, with walking the preferred method of transport for many customers. Current children's programs are well attended; however, the size of the library limits visitation and the capacity for additional programming and multifunctional spaces to work and study.

**Study@Greville**

Our newest pop-up location, stationed in our oldest home. Study@Greville opened in March 2024 in the Prahran Town Hall to accompany Prahran Square Library as a work and study space. The space brings new life to the otherwise dormant Prahran Town Hall, while planning continues for its redevelopment as a creative, cultural and community hub featuring a brand new, state-of-the-art library.

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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 01

# A PLACE FOR ALL

Libraries are essential hubs of information and encounter, welcoming everyone, no matter their circumstance. We play many different roles for the people who visit us; a safe and peaceful place to relax, explore local history, discover stories, spend time with children, work, study or access information and technology. Our libraries promote literacy, curiosity and civic engagement, strengthening community wellbeing and resilience. This is, and always will be, our core business. Together with our community, we will continue to shape a future service that meets their diverse needs and aspirations.

## Drivers of change

| | |
|---|---|
| **Population growth** | A growing population is increasing demand for services and extended library operating hours. Changing demographic and lifestyle patterns will also impact the services, community infrastructure and programs required to meet the diverse needs of the community as it grows. |
| **Social issues** | Libraries are one of the few free, universally accessible spaces available for all community members, and are often seen as safe havens for people experiencing personal challenges or crises. Ongoing support for social and physical vulnerability, including social isolation, mental health issues, family violence, drug and alcohol dependence, and homelessness, remains an essential role for libraries. Some libraries are now employing social workers to provide direct support to individuals and connect them with other services. |
| **Misinformation** | The vast amount of information available to the public and the pace at which it can be shared exposes the risks of misinformation and fake news. Communities are turning to libraries as credible and authoritative sources of information and truth. |

## 2030 Ambitions

- Our community is at the heart of our service. We are informed by their voices, needs and aspirations.
- Everyone who visits our libraries feels safe, welcome, and included.
- Stonnington's unique history and heritage, including indigenous stories is well preserved and showcased.
- We empower our community to live well, learn and connect with others at any age.

| Priority Actions (2024-26) | | Cost | Funding |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1.1 | Develop and conduct an annual member and visitor survey and update post-event surveys utilising the Culture Counts Public Libraries Evaluation Network (PLEN) platform, to gather additional community feedback to help shape programs and monitor performance against industry benchmarks. | $ | Existing |
| 1.2 | Develop a suite of library snapshots that profile the unique identity of each of our libraries, including their distinct strengths, opportunities and user preferences, to enable more tailored service and infrastructure planning, staff development an advocacy. | $ | Existing |
| 1.3 | Install permanent Acknowledgement of Country signs at all building entrances and explore other opportunities to better reflect First Nations history and culture in our service. | $ | Existing |
| 1.4 | Undertake a service review of the Stonnington History Centre including benchmarking with other councils, with a focus on increasing accessibility and sustainability of the service. | $ | Existing |
| 1.5 | Review existing agreements with partner organisations and explore the development of a formal application portal for third party organisations looking to conduct a program or event in our libraries. | $ | Existing |

**KEY:** $ = $0 - $50,000 | $$ = $50,000 - $250,000 | $$$ = $250,000+

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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 02

# FUTURE FOCUSED

Engagement with our libraries over the past ten years has changed, reflecting the rising importance of libraries as a place to study, work and socialise. In the future, we must be poised to adapt to new social trends and the changing landscape of information and technology, further embracing digital resources, interactive technologies, and collaborative spaces. To support this continued progression, our service will require staff equipped with interdisciplinary skills and collaborative partnerships with local organisations, educational institutions, and other experts.

## Drivers of Change

| | |
|---|---|
| **Digital transformation and artificial intelligence** | In an increasingly digital world, there is a growing demand for digital collections and online resources, e-services, cutting-edge technologies, and digital literacy programs. The emergence of artificial intelligence is also opening new possibilities for automated cataloguing, enhanced information retrieval and personalised user experiences. The urgency to adopt new processes and the need for operational agility have also created new skills and knowledge requirements for the library workforce. |
| **Remote and hybrid work** | Remote and hybrid working remain at far higher levels than before the COVID-19 pandemic, placing additional pressure on libraries to provide meeting and co-working spaces, high-quality Wi-Fi, video conference facilities, and even extended operating hours. More than ever, libraries are being used by students, freelancers, small business and entrepreneurs as places to develop and collaborate. |
| **Climate change** | Libraries provide a safe place as more frequent and severe weather events and conditions occur. Embedding sustainable design principles and optimising existing infrastructure and services can also mitigate the lack of open space and support long-term sustainability. |
| **State of the art libraries** | Increasingly, libraries are evolving from simple transactional services to dynamic, experience-based ones. The newest and most creative libraries feature stunning architecture and have a broader cultural focus, nurturing creative development, expression and collaboration. This may challenge the traditional idea of what a library is and who it is for. Common features of modern libraries are cafes, galleries, workshops, makerspaces with access to equipment and tools, and studios for rehearsing, recording and editing content. |

## 2030 Ambitions

- Our buildings are modern, accessible, and optimised to support a full program of activity
- We embrace technology and data insights to deliver an efficient and seamless service.
- Informed by community insights and industry trends, we provide spaces, technologies and equipment to create and innovate.
- Our staff are equipped with the right skills, tools, and knowledge to deliver service excellence.

| Priority Actions (2024-26) | Cost | Funding |
|---|---|---|
| 2.1 Develop recommendations for a new creatively focused library as the primary anchor within an arts and cultural hub at Prahran Town Hall, informed by global trends and user feedback. | $ | Existing |
| 2.2 Optimise the layout and spaces in each of our existing facilities to enhance flexibility and support diverse user needs. | $-$$ | Existing / New (scope dependant) |
| 2.3 Establish a long-term view of infrastructure priorities to meet contemporary library standards and future community need, including the exploration of:<br>a. Better integration of services across the Phoenix Park precinct.<br>b. Options to improve the flexibility and usability of the Toorak/South Yarra meeting room.<br>c. Improved connection between Malvern Library and Northbrook. | $ | Existing |

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| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2.4 | Explore opportunities to implement an 'open access' library model to offer self-service member access to the library outside standard operating hours and seek associated grant funding toward delivery. | $-$$ | New |
| 2.5 | Undertake a review of the integrated library management system to ensure optimal functionality and consistent service experience. | $$ | Existing |
| 2.6 | Develop a Library Workforce Plan to ensure our team has the skills and resources needed to meet the needs of our community and provide contemporary and innovative service. | $ | New |

**KEY: $ = $0-$50,000 | $$ = $50,000-$250,000 | $$$ = $250,000+**

## SPOTLIGHT: A reimagined Prahran Library at Prahran Town Hall

Officially opening in 1860 as Victoria's first municipal library, Prahran Library has served the Stonnington community for over 160 years. It has seen many transformations, including its most recent relocation to Prahran Square. It is now embarking on a new and exciting opportunity to be part of the Prahran Town Hall redevelopment and transformation of the iconic Chapel Street precinct.

Council has endorsed the redevelopment of Prahran Town Hall to become the cultural and creative heart of Prahran and provide new opportunities for the community and creative industries. This significant undertaking will include the return of the library to the historic building as an anchor tenant. Prahran Library has the opportunity to become a destination for the local community and visitors alike, with a focus on creatively curated collections, artistic development spaces and specialised programs.

Investment to support the redevelopment of Prahran Library will be essential to realise its full potential in driving visitation to the Chapel Street precinct, regaining Prahran's reputation as the creative heart of our city, and supporting a healthy, engaged, and productive community.

Elements to explore for the redeveloped Prahran Library include:

- opportunities for co-located services
- open and flexible spaces with broader functionality, such as:
  - teaching, training, and workshop facilities
  - social spaces, community lounges, and quiet areas
  - formal business centres with co-working spaces, meeting rooms and video conference facilities
  - makerspaces
- visual art and historical displays
- on-site food and beverage offerings
- sustainable design principles
- contemporary technology such as mobile check-outs and, mobile help kiosks and swipe-accessible lockers
- consultation with Traditional Owners and Elders to ensure the design reflects and honours local indigenous history and culture and welcomes First Nations peoples
- extensive calendar of events, programs, and activities for all ages.

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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 03

# VALUED AND THRIVING

Libraries have a proven benefit not just to the people who use them but to the broader communities, places and economies they operate within. It is estimated that that Victorian public libraries attract over 30 million visitors annually and generate $4.30 in benefits for every dollar invested. However, as library visitation continues to increase across Victoria, funding is being outpaced by population growth. Where historically library funding was contributed equally by state and local governments, Council now funds over 85% of our library operating costs. Without adequate funding services cannot be sustained, let alone grow in the way they need to meet contemporary standards, demands and expectations. More than ever, we must ensure our libraries are supported and equipped to thrive and evolve by reinforcing our vital role, igniting community interest and making a compelling case for investment from stakeholders. Collaboration and partnerships will become increasingly vital to achieve continued growth and success.

## Drivers of Change

| | |
|---|---|
| **Financial pressures** | Limited resources but increased demand for services continues to place financial pressures on libraries. Rising interest rates, high inflation, and the cost-of-living crisis are also impacting the community, highlighting the importance of accessible and free services but equally, the growing difficulty of maintaining them. There is a strong positive relationship between recurrent library funding and library visitation. The more funding a public library receives, the more likely people are to visit. Additional funding per capita allows libraries to generate greater net benefits without diminishing returns. In a challenging economic environment, libraries will need to explore new revenue sources and actively pursue additional funding to support our service offering. |
| **Service integration** | Communities are increasingly advocating for integrated hubs or 'one stop shops' where complementary services are available in a single place so that access is streamlined and more convenient. Accessing various services, especially healthcare and social services, can be daunting and inefficient when dispersed across multiple agencies or locations. Service integration also fosters collaboration among service providers, enabling more holistic and coordinated support tailored to the needs of communities. For libraries, integration may involve strategic partnerships to expand the range of programs offered within a library, or physical co-location with another community service on a temporary or permanent basis. |

## 2030 Ambitions

- Our libraries are vibrant hubs of activity with strong connections to the local area.
- We champion the vital role of libraries within cities and communities.
- We have a strong and sustainable funding base, enabling contemporary services and infrastructure.
- We make smart partnerships to achieve stronger outcomes more efficiently and effectively.

| Priority Actions (2024-26) | Cost | Funding |
|---|---|---|
| 3.1 Improve marketing and communication to attract new users to the service and raise the profile of our libraries and the role they play in the community. | $ | Existing |
| 3.2 Partner with Council's Economic & Place Development team to deliver more small business support and workforce initiatives from our libraries. | $ | Existing |
| 3.3 Advocate for increased operational funding from the Victorian Government to support a growing population through improved infrastructure and digital upgrades. | $ | Existing |
| 3.4 Consider how philanthropy and sponsorships could be leveraged to support library funding requirements. | $ | Existing |
| 3.5 Leverage our libraries as community hubs to connect people with other Council departments and external services, particularly those focused on social support, by enabling them to run drop in sessions, special events or engagement forums. | $ | Existing |

**KEY:** $ = $0-$50,000 | $$ = $50,000-$250,000 | $$$ = $250,000+

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| Summary of Priority Actions (2024-26) | | Cost | Funding |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Strategic Objective 01: A place for all** | | | |
| 1.1 | Develop and conduct an annual member and visitor survey and update post-event surveys utilising the Culture Counts Public Libraries Evaluation Network (PLEN) platform, to gather additional community feedback to help shape programs and monitor performance against industry benchmarks. | $ | Existing |
| 1.2 | Develop a suite of library snapshots that profile the unique identity of each of our libraries, including their distinct strengths, opportunities and user preferences, to enable more tailored service and infrastructure planning, staff development an advocacy. | $ | Existing |
| 1.3 | Install permanent Acknowledgement of Country signs at all building entrances and explore other opportunities to better reflect First Nations history and culture in our service. | $ | Existing |
| 1.4 | Undertake a service review of the Stonnington History Centre including benchmarking with other councils, with a focus on increasing accessibility and sustainability of the service. | $ | Existing |
| 1.5 | Review existing agreements with partner organisations and explore the development of a formal application portal for third party organisations looking to conduct a program or event in our libraries. | $ | Existing |
| **Strategic Objective 02: Future focused** | | | |
| 2.1 | Develop recommendations for a new creatively focused library as the primary anchor within an arts and cultural hub at Prahran Town Hall, informed by global trends and user feedback. | $ | Existing |
| 2.2 | Optimise the layout and spaces in each of our existing facilities to enhance flexibility and support diverse user needs. | $-$$ | Existing / New (scope dependant) |
| 2.3 | Establish a long-term view of infrastructure priorities to meet contemporary library standards and future community need, including the exploration of:<br>a. Better integration of services across the Phoenix Park precinct.<br>b. Options to improve the flexibility and usability of the Toorak/South Yarra meeting room.<br>c. Improved connection between Malvern Library and Northbrook. | $ | Existing |
| 2.4 | Explore opportunities to implement an ‘open access’ library model to offer self-service member access to the library outside standard operating hours and seek associated grant funding toward delivery. | $-$$ | New |
| 2.5 | Undertake a review of the integrated library management system to ensure optimal functionality and consistent service experience. | $$ | Existing |
| 2.6 | Develop a Library Workforce Plan to ensure our team has the skills and resources needed to meet the needs of our community and provide contemporary and innovative service. | $ | New |
| **Strategic Objective 03: Valued and thriving** | | | |
| 3.1 | Improve marketing and communication to attract new users to the service and raise the profile of our libraries and the role they play in the community. | $ | Existing |
| 3.2 | Partner with Council's Economic & Place Development team to deliver more small business support and workforce initiatives from our libraries. | $ | Existing |
| 3.3 | Advocate for increased operational funding from the Victorian Government to support a growing population through improved infrastructure and digital upgrades. | $ | Existing |

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| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3.4 | Consider how philanthropy and sponsorships could be leveraged to support library funding requirements. | $ | Existing |
| 3.5 | Leverage our libraries as community hubs to connect people with other Council departments and external services, particularly those focused on social support, by enabling them to run drop in sessions, special events or engagement forums. | $ | Existing |

**KEY: $ = $0-$50,000 | $$ = $50,000-$250,000 | $$$ = $250,000+**

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# MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Our plan provides clear direction for our service and a focus for the next two years through the delivery of 16 priority actions. Targets have been set against each of our ambitions which enable us to examine our progress and adjust as we need to stay on track.

Progress will be reported on through Council's Annual Report, along with a more detailed Progress Report demonstrating key achievements, service data and user feedback. At the conclusion of the initial two-year period, the plan will be refreshed with new priority actions factoring in these insights along with any emerging issues and opportunities.

## Service insights

| | Baseline (2022/23) | Target (by 2026) |
|---|---|---|
| **Members*** | 42,137 | 50,000 (+19%) |
| **Visitors** | 332,000 | 365,000 (+10%) |
| **Number of loans** | 706,500 (44% digital) | 741,000 (+5%) |
| **Online visits (social media, website and library app)** | 248,000 | 273,000 (+10%) |
| **Program attendance** | 18,201 (at 640 programs) | 20,000 (+10%) |
| **Proportion of programs delivered by external partners** | 10% | 20% (+100%) |

**Memberships are archived after 3 years of inactivity.*

## Community insights

We interact with and hear from our community every day. However, to gather formal, comparable insights we will utilise the Public Libraries Evaluation Network (PLEN) platform delivered by Culture Counts. PLEN is a nation-wide data collection initiative designed to help libraries better understand and illustrate their value and impact, beyond visitor numbers and lending statistics.

By embedding PLEN measures into our member and visitor surveys, we will collect consistent evidence of our role in strengthening community wellbeing, across areas including literacy and lifelong learning, digital inclusion, community engagement, economic and workforce development, and personal development and wellbeing.

| | Baseline (2022/23) | Target (by 2026) |
|---|---|---|
| **Number of member and visitor surveys conducted per year** | General feedback form and state-wide census survey only | 50 surveys |
| **Average program and event satisfaction rating** | Not captured | 90% satisfaction |

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## PLEN Dimension Targets

PLEN dimensions will be integrated into our community survey tools in the first year of implementation, therefore we don't yet have a baseline to inform our targets. Instead, we have set an initial target using with the national results reported in 2022/23 as our benchmark. These results represent the combined outcomes from 33 participating libraries collecting 8,667 survey responses across 5 states in Australia. Some targets may be adjusted in Year 2 (2025/26) depending on the findings from our own community surveys.

| | Alignment with Strategic Objectives | Target (by 2026) |
|---|---|---|
| **Role**<br>The library is an important part of the place where I live | Valued and thriving | 95% agree |
| **Safe and trusted**<br>The library makes me feel safe and welcome | A place for all | 93% agree |
| **Literacy**<br>The library has encouraged me to read more | A place for all | 84% agree |
| **Learning**<br>The library has helped me to enjoy learning | A place for all | 76% agree |
| **Relevance**<br>The library is changing in ways that increase its relevance for me | Future focused | 69% agree |
| **Creativity**<br>The library has helped me be more creative in my own life and work | Future focused | 64% agree |
| **Skills**<br>The library has helped me to learn new skills | A place for all | 63% agree |
| **Connection**<br>The library has encouraged me to become more engaged in the community | A place for all | 60% agree |
| **Time with children**<br>The library has helped me to spend more quality time with my children | A place for all | 58% agree |
| **Digital connection**<br>The library helps me to be more digitally connected to others | A place for all | 42% agree |
| **Enterprise**<br>The library has helped me to improve the success of my business | Future focused | 28% agree |

# Appendix 1: Our community *PLEASE DESIGN USING VISUALS*

## Community profile

The City of Stonnington is located in Melbourne's inner south-eastern suburbs and includes the suburbs of Armadale, Kooyong, Malvern, Malvern East, Prahran, Toorak and parts of Glen Iris, South Yarra and Windsor. A short distance from the centre of Melbourne and alongside the Yarra River, the city is primarily a residential area, with some commercial, industrial, office and institutional land uses. Stonnington is also well known for its large activity centres including Chapel Street, Glenferrie Road, High Street, Chadstone, Toorak Road and Hawksburn Village which service the local community and attract visitors from across Melbourne, interstate and internationally.

| **Our community profile** | | | |
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| Residents: | 106,418 | Speaks a language other than English at home (Top 5: Mandarin, Greek, Cantonese, Spanish, Italian) | 22% |
| Density: | 4,151 persons per square km | Proportion of homes that have an internet connection | 83% |
| Median Age: | 35 | Do not own a car | 16% |
| Household income: | $1,942 median per week | Need assistance due to a disability | 4% |
| Aged 20-34 years: | 31% | University degree or other higher education | 38.5% |
| **Home ownership** | | | |
| Fully own house | 27% | Renting | 43.3% |
| Mortgage | 23% | Public housing | 2.6% |
| Not stated | 3% | | |
| **Households** | | Average household size: | 2.03 |
| Couples with children: | 19% | One-parent families: | 6% |
| Couples without children: | 25% | Older couples without children: | 8% |
| Single-person households | 37% | Medium and high-density housing: | 75% |

Source: id profile Stonnington, 2023

## Forecast insights

By 2036, Stonnington's resident population is expected to reach an estimated 137,000 residents, with growth concentrated in Prahran, South Yarra, Malvern, and Malvern East. Demographic trends will influence demand for library services, spaces and programs.

| Demographic trend or change | Impact on library services |
|---|---|
| **Increasing total population** | • More multifunctional spaces<br>• Larger collections (physical and digital)<br>• Extended operating hours and services<br>• More partnerships and collaborations<br>• Greater variation in programming |
| **A large percentage of lone-person households** | • Increased social connection and networking programs<br>• Improved health and wellbeing programs |
| **Increasing numbers of non-English language speakers** | • Larger LOTE collections<br>• Increased English language programs<br>• Increased social connection and networking programs |

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| **An ageing population and increasing number of older person households** (concentrated in the eastern parts of the municipality) | • Increased outreach programs and services<br>• Increased social connection and networking programs<br>• Lifestyle and retirement programs<br>• Increased digital literacy programs<br>• Accessible library spaces<br>• More volunteer opportunities |
| **Young person households** (generally located in the western parts of the municipality) | • Increased youth and skills workshops and programs<br>• Quiet space to work and study<br>• Free Wi-Fi |
| **Areas of high social-economic disadvantage** (generally located in the western parts of the municipality) | • More referral pathways and access to services<br>• Improved access to computers and technology<br>• Increased social connection and networking programs<br>• Jobs and skills programs<br>• Safe and accessible spaces |

## Engagement results

As part of the development of this plan, community members, Library staff and other areas of Council were consulted to better understand their experience of the library service, what they value most about the service, and their ideas for the future.

The information, issues and ideas shared through this process have helped to develop the strategic priorities, which reflects the needs and aspirations of the Stonnington community and the changing environment for public libraries.

### Key findings

- People that use a library service tend to do so on a very regular basis, at least once a month and often more frequently.
- Proximity to home or work is the key reason people visit a branch library or use library resources, followed by availability of the physical collection, and feeling welcome or comfortable.
- Borrowing from the physical collection and looking up or reserving an item through the online catalogue remain the services which people are most likely to use and consider most important.
- People feel it is most important library staff can assist them with technology, including the online catalogue, electronic and online resources, the self-checkout facilities and the library website.
- Ratings of amenity and condition of the libraries ranged from good to excellent.
- Generally home library users are not able to or require support to use the online library resources.

### What people value most about our libraries

- The spaces available to study, to read, and for children, because they are quiet, safe, comfortable and welcoming.
- The breadth of the collection and availability of physical collection items.
- The ability to reserve items including the click and collect service, particularly throughout COVID-19 lockdowns.
- The staff because they are friendly, welcoming, helpful and knowledgeable.
- For Home Library users, the interaction with, and the care shown by library staff are just as important as the access to collection items and makes a significant difference to their lives.

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## What people would like to improve about our libraries

Operations

- Extending the range or amount of the physical collection.
- Enhancing the diversity and accessibility of the collection, including the local history collection.
- Reviewing opening hours and loan duration.
- Enhancing the accessibility and findability of information.
- Increasing the number of programs and activities.
- Enhancing partnerships with other teams across Council.
- Being more inclusive, engaging and accessible for young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with a disability, and families/children who have additional needs.

Facilities

- More spaces available for hire/use by individuals and small groups
- More spaces to support study, work and children.
- Separate spaces to support quiet activity and noisy activity.
- More outdoor spaces.
- Improving the physical connection between the Phoenix Park Library and the other facilities in the precinct, including the playground.
- Embedding sustainable design and universal design principles into all library spaces.

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