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Whitehorse Manningham Regional Library Corporation

Strategic Plan 2021 - 2025

Draft

Acknowledgement of Country

Whitehorse Manningham Libraries acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the traditional owners of the land. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging

This publication is printed on 100% recycled paper and used plant-based ink.

Administration

1040 Whitehorse Road, Box Hill, 3128

PO BOX 3083, NUNAWADING BC, VIC 3131

Phone 03 9896 4333

Fax 03 9896 4348

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FORWARD

The disruption and challenges brought about by the global pandemic has highlighted just how important libraries are in supporting community wellbeing. We have received many positive messages telling us how the library brought sunshine to someone's day, kept them feeling connected, helped them learn a new skill or provided an escape through a good read.

Out of challenge comes change. Our libraries responded throughout a number of 'lockdowns' and restrictions with agility, creativity and a continued commitment to delivering a high level of service to our community. While our physical libraries, collections and in-house programs and services will continue to be at the core of what we do, over the next four years we will continue to grow our offering of virtual and outreach services.

Key strategic priorities that will shape WML's service from 2021 -2025 include:

- **Growing our range of virtual services** including eBooks, other digital resources and virtual programs
- **Strengthening our customer centric service**, policies and practices to reduce barriers to accessing library services
- **Extending the reach of our services** and increasing the **marketing and promotion** of available services
- Working with our member councils on a **long-term plan for library services across the two municipalities**, including infrastructure planning for improved library buildings and exploring alternative service and governance models
- Identifying opportunities to **enhance and create value** through collaboration, efficiencies and innovation
- **Adapting to change** and building resilience by leveraging new and emerging technology and growing our workforce capability and capacity

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Whitehorse Manningham Libraries (WML) operate one of Victoria's most well utilised and respected public library services with eight physical branches across the municipalities of Whitehorse and Manningham, in addition to an extensive offering of virtual and outreach services.

WML's Strategic Plan 2021 -2025 has been developed as the key document that outlines the direction for our library services over the next four years. The library Plan:

- identifies WML's strategic goals;
- details the key strategies and actions to achieve these goals over the next four years
- provides indicators to measure success and outcomes; and
- is supported by a Strategic Resource Plan that identifies the resources required to achieve our goals.

Significant consultation with the community and other key stakeholders has been undertaken in developing the following four key strategic goals for WML:

1. **Experience:** to be an inclusive and welcoming people centered service
2. **Learning and Engagement:** to enable an informed and engaged community
3. **Collaboration:** to extend the benefit and reach of library services
4. **Performance:** to be a flexible, resilient and high performing organisation

Underpinning the Library Plan is WML's vision, purpose, values and principles that will guide our approach and the way we work.

Purpose

To strengthen and inspire our community by providing opportunities to learn, create, connect and imagine.

Vision

A vibrant and inclusive library service that enriches our community

Values

*Respect
Collaboration
Integrity
Curiosity
Agility*

Strategic Goals

*Experience
Learning & Engagement
Collaboration
Performance*

Guiding Principles

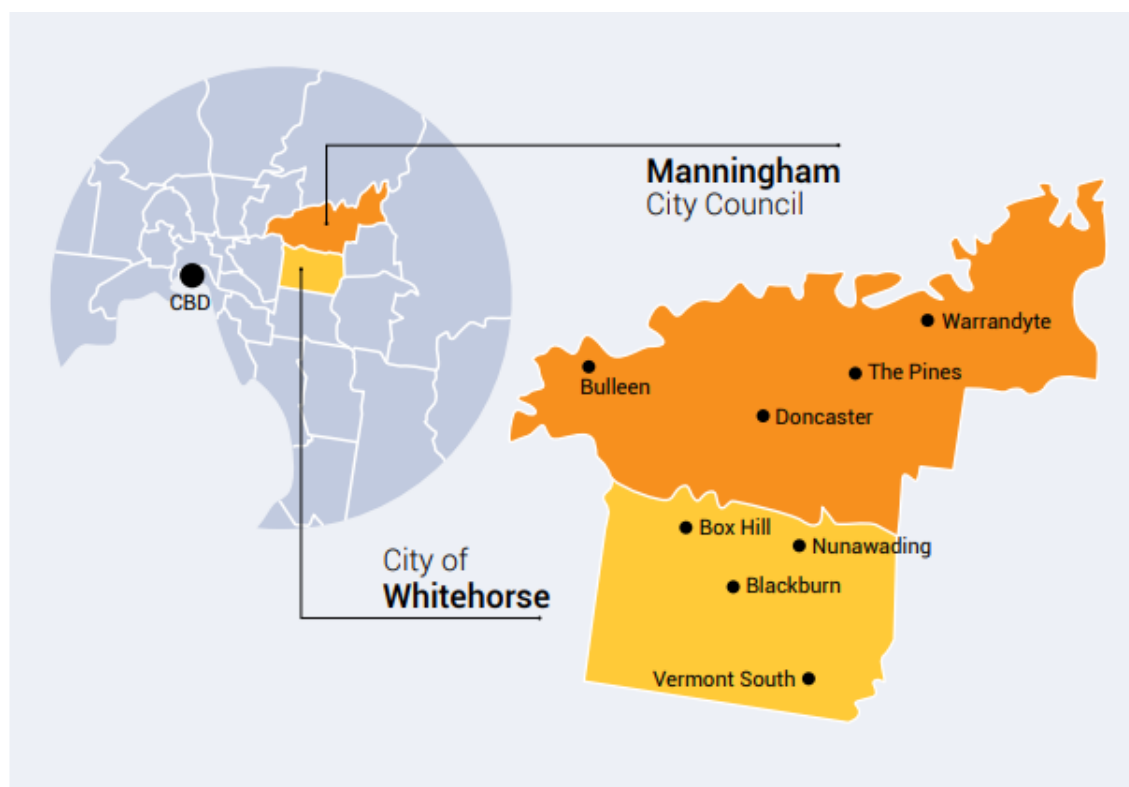
*Customer centric
Well-being
Inclusive
Responsive
Best practice*

Action Plans

How we will achieve our goals

OUR LIBRARY SERVICE

Whitehorse Manningham Libraries is proud to be one of the most actively used public library services in Victoria. Our services are inclusive and are available to the whole community through eight physical locations, Outreach, Home Library Services and Virtual services via the library website. Services are delivered using a wide range of methods and formats to meet the diverse needs of our community.



Governance

The Whitehorse Manningham Regional Library Corporation was established in 1995 under the Victorian Local Government Act 1989. Library services to the Cities of Whitehorse and Manningham are delivered by the Library Corporation under the Regional Library Agreement. Responsibility for governance oversight of the Corporation rests with the Library Board comprised of:

- two Councillors appointed from each member council
- a delegated Officer of each member council
- one Community Representative appointed by each member council.

The Chief Executive Officer of the Library Corporation is responsible to the Board for effective planning, management and financial control of library operations.

Key services and programs

Graphic to be inserted:

Physical and digital collections and resources

Library Spaces

Public access technology

Information and Customer Services

Learning, Literacy and Lifestyle programs and activities

Outreach Services

Web services

Volunteer and work experience opportunities

A snapshot of our library service usage in 2018/19 & 2019/20

WML has high levels of customer satisfaction with library services (8.65 out of 10 in 2021)

Covid-19 severely impacted library services in the 2019/20. For planning purposes, the results from 2018/19 have also been included as they are more indicative of normal operations.

Measure	2018/19	2019/20
Total Loans	3,132,829	2,490,332
Total visits	1,332,790	938,943
New Members	15,657	12,786
Total Library Members	93,189	100,136
Attendances at library programs and events	81,581	52,873
Visits to our website	1,329,860	1,250,416
Total eResources Loans	445,690	513,229
Total eBook Loans	50,539	79,740
New items added to the collection	63,858	63,770
Wi-Fi connections	585,416	396,697
Total number of volunteers	160	158
Home Library Service Loans	61,326	47,169*

*Refers only to home library service clients, not the general community who received home delivery due to the impact of Covid-19.

OUR COMMUNITY

Whitehorse Manningham Libraries services an Estimated Residential Population (ERP) of 309,664 and covers a geographic area of 178 square kilometres.

The Cities of Whitehorse and Manningham share relatively similar demographics, but have compared to metropolitan Melbourne, quite distinctive populations. They each have:

- a high proportion of older people and a low proportion of children under 12 years
- high average socio-economic status and high aspiration families
- a very large Chinese community, as well as increasing Malaysian and Indian populations

Whitehorse also has a high proportion of tertiary students aged 18-24 years.

Forecast population growth in Whitehorse (13% in 10 years) and Manningham (9%) is lower than in inner and outer Melbourne and will be concentrated in Doncaster and Box Hill.

It is estimated that at least 40% of the regional population are library users. 33% were library members in 2019-20.

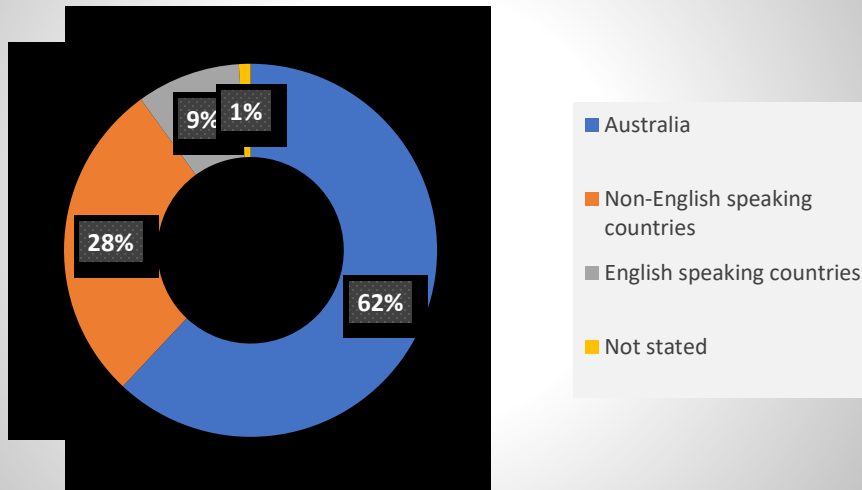
The growth in areas of higher population density continue to create demand for access to alternative living, work and social spaces. Our libraries will experience increased use as a recreational, meeting and study spaces. Our libraries are important community hubs contributing to community well-being and connection.

Approximately 39.5% of the library community's population speaks a language other than English as their main language. This is a higher rate than the Greater Melbourne average of 32.3%.

Language Spoken at Home*	Whitehorse LGA	Manningham LGA	Greater Melbourne
Mandarin	12.9%	10.7%	4.1%
Cantonese	5.3%	8.1%	1.7%
Greek	2.5%	6.1%	2.4%
Italian	1.4%	4.2%	2.3%
Persian/Dari/Hazaraghi	0.7%	1.9%	0.8%
English only	59.4%	53.6%	62.0%

*Source: Community Profiles for the Cities of Whitehorse and Manningham, profile.id, <https://profile.id.com.au/whitehorse> and <https://profile.id.com.au/manningham>.

Country of Birth



Measure	Manningham	Whitehorse	Greater Melbourne
Median Age	43 years	38 years	36 years
% Born overseas	39.9%	38.4%	33.8%
Aged over 70	15.7%	12.9%	9.7%
0-18 years	20%	20.4%	21.6%
Language at home other than English	42%	37%	32%
Participation rate in labour force	58%	60%	62%
Couples with children	40%	34%	33%

OUR STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Our Library Plan 2021 – 2025 represents the outcomes of a broad range of consultation and engagement processes undertaken to determine the future priorities for Whitehorse Manningham Libraries. Engaging and listening to our community's changing expectations and needs ensures that WML continues to deliver relevant services. Alignment with our member councils' strategic goals supports positive outcomes for the community.

Key sources that have informed the Library Plan included a review of local and global library trends, analysis of WML activity data, community feedback and consultation with library staff, our member Councils and other key stakeholders.

At the core of our Library Plan is the universal principle that equal access to information builds strong and healthy communities.

Public libraries enhance the local area amenity and generate direct and indirect benefits that are enjoyed by both those who use libraries and those who don't. The landmark report *Libraries Work! The socio-economic value of public libraries to Victorians* (SGS Economics and Planning, 2018) found that for **every dollar invested in public libraries in Victoria, \$4.30 of benefits was generated for the local community.**

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations (UN) *Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* is an integrated framework of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) spanning economic, environmental and social development. By fulfilling this agenda, “no-one will be left behind”.

Services delivered by Whitehorse Manningham Libraries contribute to at least 12 of the 17 SDGs, including:



Source: United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto

The third version of the IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto was published in 1994. It continues to be internationally recognised as a clear statement of the fundamental principles of the public library service.

Freedom, prosperity and the development of society and of individuals are fundamental human values. They will only be attained through the ability of well-informed citizens to exercise their democratic rights and to play an active role in society. Constructive participation and the development of democracy depend on satisfactory education as well as on free and unlimited access to knowledge, thought, culture and information.

The public library, the local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development of the individual and social groups.... The public library is the local centre of information, making all kinds of knowledge and information readily available to its users. The services of the public library are provided on the basis of equality of access for all, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language or social status.

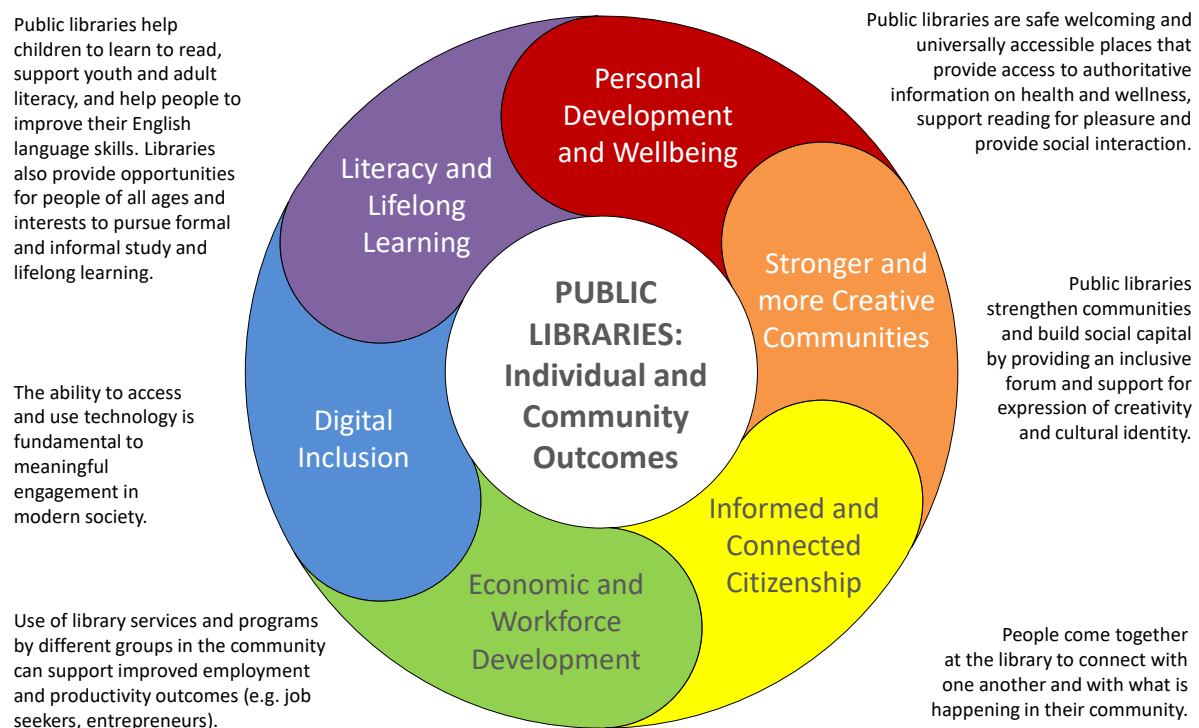
Source: www.ifla.org/publications/iflaunesco-public-library-manifesto-1994

Australian Public Library Standards

The Australian Public Libraries Alliance and Australian Library and Information Association (APLA/ALIA) statement on public libraries is based on the principle that freedom of access to Australian public library and information services is essential:

- to enable all community members to participate in and contribute to society, including the democratic process;
- to actively contribute to social inclusion; and
- to enable people to contribute to the economic wellbeing of their families and the nation.

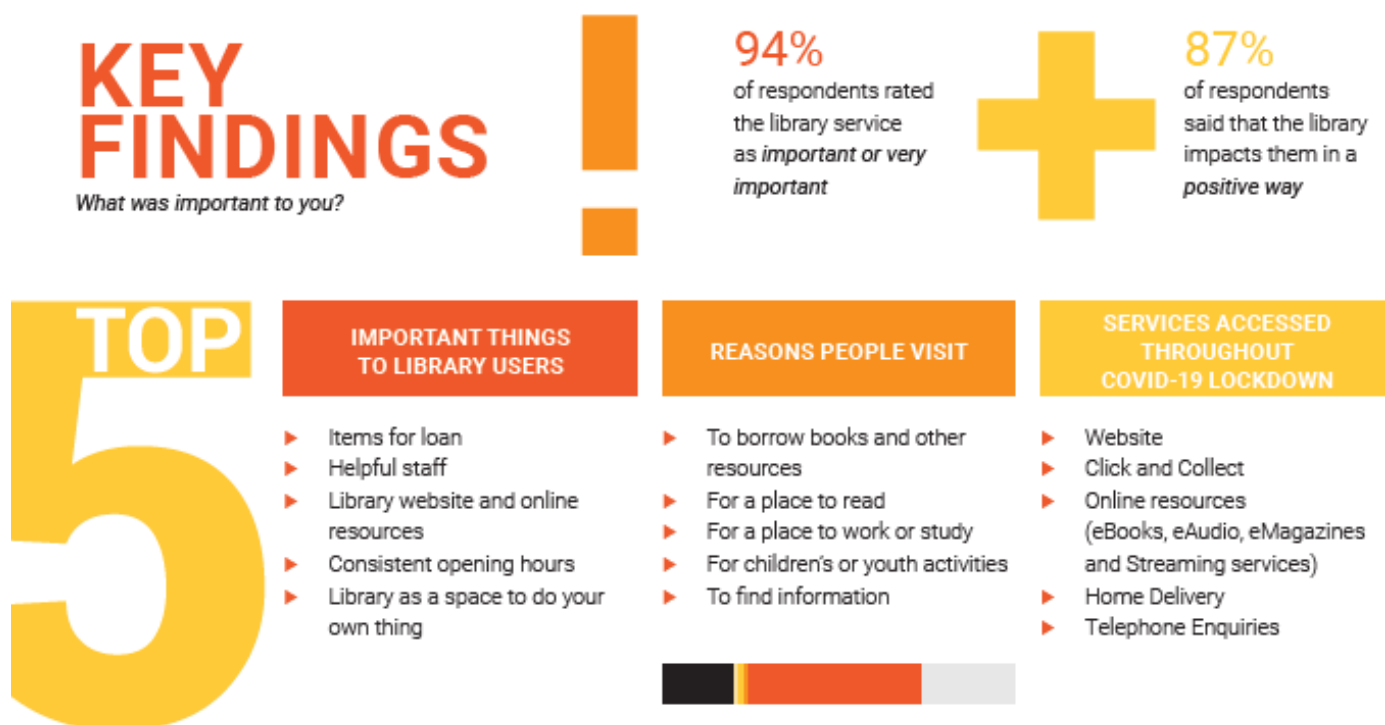
APLA/ALIA Standards and Guidelines for Australian Public Libraries articulate the wide spectrum of individual and community outcomes that public libraries deliver.



Source: APLA/ALIA Standards and Guidelines for Australian Public Libraries, December 2020.

Community Engagement

In February 2021 an independent community survey was undertaken with close to 2,000 responses.



THE MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS STRONGLY AGREED OR AGREED THAT THE LIBRARY



Impacts their life in a positive way



Helps them find the information they need



Encourages them to read more



Increases their knowledge



Impacted their live in a positive way throughout the pandemic and lockdown period.

35% of respondents took the time to provide us with additional comments.



Thank you to the huge number of people of people who **thanked staff and council** for services provided throughout the pandemic.

Congratulations to WML for a wonderful offering of services during lockdown. I am amazed how adaptable the library service was as well as the additional changes that have been implemented since lockdown.



Early Literacy Programs were rated 8.13 out of 10.

The libraries are very essential and necessary part of our community. They have saved a lot of money for my family, encouraged my kids to read more and the staff are wonderful.



82% of respondents used the Library website or online services over the last 12 months.

Online workshops through Zoom were invaluable. I lost my job because of COVID and they were helpful for my mental well-being and connection with the community.

WHAT CAN WE DO BETTER?



Increase our collection of digital resources



Get our message out that reservations are now FREE



Review other fees and charges



Review our programs and the times they are scheduled



Promote our Suggested Purchase service

"I read so much more during covid and the changes the library made - such as free reservations, extending borrowing periods and especially the amazing home delivery of books - made SUCH a positive difference to me and my family. We are very thankful for such a great local library!"

YOUR LIBRARY

What would you like your library to look like?

- ▶ Clean and up to date facilities.
- ▶ Increased seating
- ▶ Increased program spaces
- ▶ Increased quiet study areas.
- ▶ Extended and consistent opening hours.

OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Our vision

A vibrant and inclusive library service that enriches our community

Our purpose

To strengthen and inspire our community by providing opportunities to learn, create, connect and imagine.

We value

Respect - treating everyone with respect, dignity and courtesy

Collaboration - working together to achieve better outcomes

Integrity – being open, honest and accountable

Curiosity – being open to learning and exploring ways to improve

Agility – being flexible and adaptable to change

Principles that guide our service

Customer centric – striving to achieve the best customer experience

Well-being - supporting positive mental and physical health

Inclusive – providing equitable and accessible services to a diverse community

Responsive - to evolving community needs and expectations

Best practice – striving to be the best in all that we do and deliver

Strategic goals

Over the next four years, the following four strategic goals and priorities will set the direction for the way Whitehorse Manningham Libraries works to ensure the services we deliver continue to respond to the diverse needs of our community.

Goal 1: Experience

Objective – To be an inclusive and welcoming people centered service

To achieve this we will:

- provide inclusive, safe and accessible services for all
- provide exemplary customer first service
- work proactively to grow our reach
- plan for places and spaces that support the delivery of contemporary library services

Goal 2: Learning and Engagement

Objective: To enable an informed and engaged community

To achieve this we will deliver services, resources and programs that:

- support and promote life-long learning and literacy
- encourage a culture of reading
- foster a sense of belonging, connection and wellbeing
- support digital inclusion
- celebrate our communities' diverse culture and heritage

Goal 3: Collaboration

Objective: To extend the reach and benefit of library services

To achieve this we will:

- build strong relationships with stakeholders and community partners
- deliver collaborative services and programs
- participate in networks to share knowledge and ideas
- provide meaningful volunteer engagement and work experience opportunities

Goal 4: Performance

Objective: To be a flexible, resilient and high performing organisation

To achieve this we will:

- implement robust governance practices
- employ sound financial management practices
- advocate for investment in public libraries
- build the capability and capacity of our people
- create value through efficiencies and innovation
- employ evidence-based practices to develop and review services

KEY ACTIONS 2021 -2025

The strategies and key actions that will be implemented over the next four years to deliver on our mission are outlined below. Actions will be reviewed annually

Goal 1: Experience

Objective – To be an inclusive and welcoming people centered service

Strategies	Actions
Provide inclusive, safe and accessible services for all	Development of an Access and Inclusion Plan
	Review and redesign of services to reduce barriers to access
	Develop and implement policies and practices that support safe, accessible and inclusive physical and digital spaces
Provide exemplary customer first service	Implementation of a customer centric culture and service policies and practices
	Provide staff with access to training opportunities and customer service tools
	ICT systems and services that support customer needs and expectations
Work proactively to grow our reach	Implementation of the Marketing and Communications Strategy and plans
	Pop-up presence at community festivals and other locations
	Identify gaps in service reach and strategies to connect with a broader community
	Extend outreach services and programs
Plan for places and spaces that support the delivery of contemporary library services	In collaboration with our member councils, plan for physical infrastructure renewal and improvements
	Maintain our physical library spaces and assets

Goal 2: Learning and Engagement

Objective: To enable an informed and engaged community

Strategies	Key Actions
Support and promote life-long learning and literacy	Deliver a program of events and activities that provide opportunities for lifelong learning, and economic and civic participation
	Provide skilled staff that are equipped to help our community benefit from our collections, technology and services
	Deliver targeted initiatives that support literacy development
Encourage a culture of reading	Deliver reader development initiatives and services that support reading for recreation, information and education
	Implement a Collection Development Strategy that supports community needs across a range of formats and reading abilities
	Increase the volume and breadth of our digital collection content
Foster a sense of belonging, connection and wellbeing	Host and deliver events and activities that support social inclusion, connection and a sense of belonging
Support digital inclusion	Provide access to technology, internet and related facilities
	Provide technology learning programs and staff expertise
	Increase staff capacity to provide appropriate technology support
Celebrate our communities' diverse culture and heritage	Promote local history and culture by supporting access to collections and programs
	Participate in member council heritage and cultural diversity initiatives
	Provide resources relating to First Nations history and culture and activities that support our member councils' Reconciliation Action Plans

Goal 3. Collaboration

Objective: To extend the reach and benefit of library services

Strategies	Actions
Build strong relationships with stakeholders and community partners	Seek out new potential partnerships
	Strengthen the relationship between the library, member councils and other community partners
	Review partnership establishment processes and procedures
Deliver collaborative services and programs	Develop and deliver beneficial collaborative program and service initiatives
	Encourage the use of library spaces by external partners for the delivery of complementary programs
Participate in networks to share knowledge and ideas	Participate in the development and delivery of statewide public library initiatives
	Connect with local, national and international counterparts to share insights and best practice
Provide meaningful volunteer engagement and work experience opportunities	Offer targeted work experience opportunities
	Implement the Volunteer Engagement Strategy

Goal 4. Performance

Objective: To be a flexible, resilient and high performing organisation

Strategy	Actions
Implement robust governance practices	Ensure compliance with regulatory and legislated requirements
	Effectively control exposure to risk
Employ sound financial management practices	Develop Strategic Resource Plans and annual budgets that support the achievement of library plan strategies within the available funding
	Ensure that new initiatives that require funding are supported by well-developed and costed business cases
	Reinvest efficiency savings into strategies identified in the Library Plan
Advocate for investment in public libraries	Pursue alternative funding opportunities
	Advocate at a local and state level to raise the profile of and investment in public libraries
Build the capability and capacity of our people	Collaborate with member Councils in the development of the long- term vision for library services across the two municipalities
	Support staff engagement in professional development opportunities
	Implement a workforce development plan to attract and retain the people and skills needed to deliver library services into the future
Create value through efficiencies and innovation	Promote an organisational culture that facilitates the expected standards of work practice and behavior
	Regular review and audits of strategies, policies, procedures and practices
	Identify opportunities to reduce our environmental impact
Employ evidence-based practices to develop and review services	Explore opportunities for cost savings through collaborative arrangements
	Seek stakeholder perspectives to inform the development of strategies and service planning
	Collect and analyse qualitative and quantitative performance and impact data

MEASURING OUR SUCCESS

We will use a range of qualitative and quantitative data to measure our performance and success.

The *APLA-ALIA Standards and Guidelines for Australian Public Libraries, 2021* form the basis of our key service performance indicators. The standards and guidelines set expectations for provision of community-based public library services. WML also uses a range of other indicators to measure corporate performance.

Key Performance Indicators

Library expenditure per capita
Total number of staff (FTE) per capita
Opening hours per week
Expenditure on library materials per capita (physical and digital)
Number of collection items per capita
Number of public access devices and access to wifi and printers
% of resident population who are registered library members
Number of library visits per capita
Number of loans per capita
Turnover of stock - <i>Number of loans per physical collection item</i>
Electronic service use <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Number of visits to the library website</i>• <i>Number of hours use of public access devices</i>• <i>Number of wifi sessions in the library</i>
Program participation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Attendance at library programs per capita</i>• <i>Participant impact evaluation</i>
Customer satisfaction rating
Outreach services <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Number of partnerships</i>• <i>Number of volunteers</i>• <i>Number of outreach activities</i>
Marketing and Promotions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Number of social media engagements</i>• <i>Number of e-news subscriptions</i>
Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Strategic planning activities</i>• <i>Reporting and compliance</i>• <i>Risk rating status</i>

STRATEGIC RESOURCE PLAN 2021 - 2025

The WML Strategic Resource Plan 2021 – 2025 supports the delivery of the Library Plan objectives. The Strategic Resource Plan is reviewed annually and is published in the WML Annual Budget. This document is available on the WML webpage at wml.vic.gov.au

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