



Whitehorse
Manningham
Libraries

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Literacy Strategy 2017-2021

Endorsed by Library Board 24 May 2017

Literacy

Literacy: the capacity to understand, use, reflect on and engage with written texts, in order to achieve goals, to develop knowledge and potential, and to participate in society.¹

In 2015 Victoria's public libraries, including the State Library of Victoria and all municipal and regional library services, committed to:

- ▶ raising reading and literacy levels and outcomes within the community
- ▶ creating and upholding best practice standards of design, delivery and review of reading and literacy programs
- ▶ ensuring government, the community and library partners fully understand the vital role public libraries play in providing reading and literacy programs, collections and services for people across all life stages.

Reading and Literacy for All: A Strategic Framework for Victorian public libraries, 2015-2018 described the unique role of public libraries in reader and literacy development. The Strategic Framework profiled current library programs, identified shared priorities for action, and established a robust approach to evaluating the impact of public libraries on Victorians' reading and literacy levels. Building on the considerable work already done by Victorian public libraries in reader and literacy development, the Strategic Framework provided a context and foundation for public libraries' future reading and literacy initiatives.

Whitehorse Manningham Libraries supports literacy development within its community through a mix of popular and well-attended programs aimed at improving early years' literacy, adult literacy and English language fluency. This Literacy Strategy details how, within the context of *Reading and Literacy for All* and in response to local needs, Whitehorse Manningham Libraries will continue and extend its efforts to raise reading and literacy levels in the cities of Whitehorse and Manningham.

1. Industry report. *Reading and Literacy for All: A Strategic Framework for Victorian Public Libraries, SLV and PLVN, 2015.*

Australia's literacy challenge



Literacy is a tool for daily life in modern society. It is...a building block of development, an essential complement to investments in roads, dams, clinics and factories. Literacy is a platform for democratization, and a vehicle for the promotion of cultural and national identity. ...For everyone, everywhere, literacy is, along with education in general, a basic human right...Literacy is the road to human progress and the means through which every man, woman and child can realize his or her full potential."

- Kofi Annan, UN Secretary General

2. *Reading and Literacy for All: A Strategic Framework for Victorian Public Libraries, SLV and PLVN, 2015.*

In an increasingly competitive global environment, with the transition from an industrial to a knowledge economy, and faced with unparalleled technological advancement at work and at home, literacy is an essential life skill for people of all ages. It is fundamental to all learning and integral to civic, social and economic participation. *Reading and Literacy for All* describes Australia's literacy challenge across all life stages.²

Parents and carers are a child's first teachers, and the home environment (in particular the extent to which children acquire literacy skills and habits from the adults raising them) is the key to early childhood literacy. Children who are read to six to seven times a week have a literacy level almost a year ahead of children who are not read to at home. However, not all children have parents who are able to read to them. Research shows that early learning participation in Australia is among the lowest in the developed world (Australia ranks 34 of 36 OECD countries). Children from poorer families and those from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background are most at risk of starting school with fewer literacy prerequisites.

It is also known that children who start school behind typically stay behind. That is, if a child is a poor reader at the end of first grade, there is a 90% chance that they will still be a poor reader at the end of fourth grade. Regular testing of 15 year old Australian children's scores on reading, maths and scientific literacy have shown statistically significant declines since 2000, while other countries have shown improvement.

Many adults in Australia face barriers every day of their lives because they cannot read or write, or have limited English language skills (despite being fluent in another language). The ABS reports that in 2012 up to 46% of Victorians did not have the literacy skills they need to cope with the complex demands of everyday life and work in a knowledge-based economy. It is estimated that more than half a million Victorians aged between 15 and 74 years have 'very limited' literacy skills. Research indicates that low levels of literacy and education can have serious implications for an individual's life and health outcomes (e.g. increased likelihood of social isolation and mental health issues).

Ultimately, every individual's personal, social, economic and mental wellbeing is enhanced through active engagement in all aspects of life – at home, at work, at leisure. Yet these outcomes are jeopardised by literacy levels that do not meet expected standards.

The Whitehorse Manningham Community

Whitehorse Manningham Regional Library Corporation (WMRLC) provides public library services to the neighbouring Cities of Whitehorse and Manningham in Melbourne's eastern suburbs.

The City of Whitehorse is located 15 kilometres east of Melbourne and has an estimated population of 166,000. Whitehorse's suburbs include Blackburn, Box Hill, Burwood, Forest Hill, Mitcham, Mont Albert, Nunawading, Surrey Hills and Vermont.

Manningham City Council to the north of Whitehorse, includes the suburbs of Bulleen, Doncaster, Donvale, Park Orchards, Ringwood North, Templestowe, Warrandyte and Wonga Park. Manningham had an estimated resident population of 119,000 in 2015.

While there are some demographic differences between the residents of Whitehorse and Manningham, there are significant similarities that differentiate the two municipalities from much of metropolitan Melbourne. Most notably, Whitehorse and Manningham have³:

- ▶ an older population with a median age among the highest in Melbourne – 24% are aged 60 years or more, 57% are between 18 and 59 years, and only 19% of residents are aged under 18
- ▶ a high proportion of residents (39%) born overseas
- ▶ a high proportion of residents (37%) who speak languages other than English (notably Mandarin and Cantonese)

- ▶ Chinese as the major cultural group, with the proportion of the population speaking Chinese expected to increase, eclipsing the Italian and Greek speaking populations in the area
- ▶ many households made up of couple families, with the area seen as an attractive place for families to live and learn – with correspondingly fewer single parent families and lone person households
- ▶ education levels well above the state average (in terms of Bachelor degrees or higher)
- ▶ below average labour force participation and employment levels, influenced in part by the size of the older retired population
- ▶ a high proportion of households (79%) with an internet connection
- ▶ professional employment and average household income levels above the metropolitan benchmark
- ▶ a high proportion of adults who are not fluent in English (5.8%) significantly higher than the Victorian average (4%). In suburbs such as Doncaster, Bulleen and Burwood, one in twelve adults is not fluent in English, with as many as one in eight adults in Box Hill not fluent in English.

Overall, the Whitehorse Manningham population is considered to be relatively advantaged in terms of income, educational attainment, occupation, housing ownership and employment, although there are pockets within some suburbs that are relatively disadvantaged.

3. 2011 census – Community Profiles, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013.

Whitehorse Manningham Libraries

WML operates one of the most actively used public library services in Victoria through eight branches, its library website, a Home Library Service and outreach services in the Cities of Whitehorse and Manningham.

WML provides library users with access to an extensive range of print and electronic resources and programs that meet community needs and expectations.

The library's collection contains nearly 400,000 items including fiction and non-fiction titles, junior and teenage collections, talking books and DVDs, magazines, periodicals and collections in community languages, predominately Chinese. The library provides a wide range of programs in library branches and community locations. These include very popular early years' literacy programs, reading clubs, holiday programs and homework help for school age children. The library also offers programs that support adult literacy and development of English language skills, build digital literacy and celebrate the community's rich cultural heritage.



Our Vision

A library open for all to discover a world of possibilities.

At Whitehorse Manningham Libraries in 2015-16 there were:



104,000 registered members
& 45,000 active borrowing members



2.9 million loans
of physical and digital library items



1.3 million visits
to library branches



70,000 attendances
at library programs



750,000 uses of library computers
and the library wifi



1 million visits
to the library website.



65,921 attendances
at early literacy programs

Readership levels among library members in Whitehorse and Manningham are among the highest in the state. With an average of 64 loans per active member per year, Whitehorse Manningham ranks 4th highest among Victoria's 46 public library services. The average turnover of physical collection items is ranked 5th at 7.4 loans per item per year, with the turnover of digital items ranked 4th at 9.3 downloads per year.



Our Mission

To provide opportunities that inspire our community to read, learn, connect and create.

A literacy focus to secure our future

Whitehorse Manningham Libraries will play an active and leading role in securing the future of our community by taking a strategic and collaborative approach to addressing the literacy challenge in Whitehorse and Manningham.



This approach combines a clear focus on:

- ▶ population cohorts with literacy development needs that the library can best support
- ▶ the assets that the library can use to support improved literacy outcomes.



Priorities Cohorts

Early years literacy

Improving educational outcomes

English for non-english speakers

Enabling community connections

Adult literacy

Facilitating social engagement and workforce participation



Library Assets

Quality literacy programs

Collections for our community

Community partnerships

Places to learn

Efficient planning and resourcing

Confident and capable staff

Literacy priorities

Understanding Australia's literacy challenge in the context of the Whitehorse Manningham community indicates that there are three priority community cohorts where the library can make a real contribution to improving literacy outcomes.



Everything should be done to encourage YOUNG people to borrow AND read books. They need to have a love of READING fostered into them - both from Parents and the Library."

Priority Cohorts

Early years literacy	Improving educational outcomes
	<p>Education is a high priority for families in Whitehorse and Manningham. Many families choose to live in the area as it provides access to high performing schools and quality educational opportunities.</p> <p>According to the 2015 Australian Early Development Census a relatively high proportion of pre-school age children in Whitehorse and Manningham are developmentally on track in the language and cognitive skills domain (Whitehorse 92.0% and Manningham 89.3% vs Victoria 84.7%)⁴. Across the two municipalities only 6.2% of children are considered developmentally 'at risk' in language and cognitive development, with 2.8% considered 'vulnerable' (vs Victoria 8.9% and 6.3%). This reflects a local population that generally has above average levels of education, literacy and professional employment.</p> <p>Ensuring that Australian communities have universally high levels of early years literacy is the surest way of securing the nation's long-term social and economic prosperity. Whitehorse Manningham Libraries will continue to work with families to ensure that their children start school ready to learn.</p>
English for non-English speakers	Enabling community connections
	<p>Despite having an, on average, highly educated and literate population, the proportion of adults in Whitehorse Manningham that are not fluent in English (5.8%) is significantly higher than the Victorian average (4.0%). In suburbs such as Doncaster, Bulleen and Burwood one in twelve adults is not fluent in English, with as many as one in eight adults in Box Hill not fluent in English.</p> <p>Many residents who do not speak English are older people who are fluent in another language.</p>

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4. Australian Early Development Census, 2015. <http://www.aedc.gov.au/resources/2015-aedc-results>.



Literacy priorities

Priority cohorts

Continuing...

English for non-English speakers	Enabling community connections
	<p>Lack of fluency in English can limit a person's capacity to engage and participate independently with society, to support children with early English literacy development, to access public and community information, and to access health and support services.</p> <p>Whitehorse Manningham Libraries will work with community organisations to engage non-English speakers and assist them to improve their ability to speak and read English.</p>
Adult literacy	Facilitating social engagement and workforce participation
	<p>Adults who have difficulty reading and writing have limited opportunities for workforce participation and career advancement. Easy access to government information, community services, public transport, education and online services is not something that they can take for granted.</p> <p>Addressing adult literacy is a complex problem as there is little information to assist in identifying adults who have difficulty reading and writing. Although adults with low levels of foundation skills are known to exist in all communities, many have developed coping mechanisms that efficiently mask their literacy gaps from family, friends and co-workers.</p> <p>Filled with books, libraries are not a place where people with reading difficulties feel naturally comfortable. But with reading material for people at all levels, spaces to learn alone or with others, and eight community locations, Whitehorse Manningham Libraries will work with adult education providers to support acquisition of literacy skills.</p>

Library assets

Whitehorse Manningham Libraries has a solid asset base upon which to build more targeted and more effective literacy support initiatives.



The library is a very important part of getting my kids to read and learn how to use the many resources that the library has to offer.”

Library assets

Quality literacy programs	<p>Whitehorse Manningham Libraries make a unique contribution to early years literacy through Story Time programs that inspire a love of reading, teach foundation literacy and reading skills, model effective reading behaviours, and encourage adult family members and carers (as a child's first teachers) to read to and with their children on a regular basis.</p> <p>In partnership with community groups and organisations the libraries will refine and expand the range of literacy programs they offer and support.</p>
Collections for our community	<p>Whitehorse Manningham Libraries' physical and digital collection comprises nearly 400,000 items for people of all ages and readers at all levels. This includes a substantial collection of picture books, board books and early readers for young children learning to read. It also includes more than 22,000 collection items in languages other than English, with 19,000 fiction and non-fiction items in Chinese and 1,500 items in each of Greek and Italian.</p> <p>The libraries update their collections every year, targeting their collection investment on the basis of feedback from library users and community partners. This gives them the capacity to extend their collection to support adults with low literacy levels and adults learning English as an additional language.</p>
Community partnerships	<p>Over recent years Whitehorse Manningham Libraries has expanded and strengthened its connections and relationships with schools, education providers, Council, community groups and service organisations. This has promoted and opened up access to library services.</p> <p>Through alignment of intent and resources, stronger community partnerships have also enhanced the scope, reach and quality of library programs, services and support.</p> <p>The libraries will continue to explore opportunities to establish strong productive and mutually beneficial community partnerships that enhance literacy outcomes among priority population cohorts.</p>

Continuing...

Library assets

Continuing...

<p>Places to learn</p>	<p>Many school and university students use their local library as a place for individual and/or group study. Tutors often meet their students at the library.</p> <p>Free Wi-Fi and computers in library branches offers access to tools for learning and access to resources and information.</p> <p>There is considerable interest among community organisations in using library facilities to host literacy and learning activities in a 'safe familiar accessible community space'.</p> <p>Through its network of library branches Whitehorse Manningham Libraries will continue to be an accessible place for learning – for those seeking a quiet study space, as well as those wanting to collaborate with other learners.</p> <p>Currently some library branch spaces are inadequate to meet the need for early literacy program and family reading spaces. Library spaces must evolve to provide flexible spaces to meet the program, service and collection needs of the community.</p>
<p>Efficient planning and resourcing</p>	<p>This Literacy Strategy is aligned with Whitehorse Manningham Libraries' Strategic Plan. It articulates the Corporation's priorities for supporting literacy development in the next four years.</p> <p>Community engagement, collaboration and partnership development, and evaluation are specific priorities within the Strategy.</p>
<p>Confident and capable staff</p>	<p>Library staff are very experienced at delivering engaging early years literacy programs. Staff in branch libraries connect with users of their local library on a personal and professional basis.</p> <p>Professional development and support will be provided to assist staff in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ encouraging parents and carers to read to children at home ▶ work with community partners, and the Chinese community in particular, to facilitate access to English language learning programs ▶ identify and support adults with low literacy.

In using the assets at the library's disposal to improve literacy outcomes for the targeted community cohorts, Whitehorse Manningham Libraries will focus on building more and stronger relationships with external partners, and developing programs which reflect the community's learning needs.

Reader development

Public libraries contribute to literacy in the community through all life stages by encouraging, facilitating and celebrating reading for pleasure. In addition to its focus on the three identified priority cohorts, Whitehorse Manningham Libraries will continue to support reader development by helping all readers, from the highly literate to those with low literacy, to access and enjoy relevant reading material. This will be demonstrated through the library's collection development policy, design and implementation of reader development programs across different age groups and literacy levels, and high levels of customer service provided by library staff.

Action plan

Over the next four years Whitehorse Manningham Libraries will use its collections, programs, facilities and connections to support improved literacy outcomes in the three priority cohorts. The activities listed in the following tables (to be updated annually) will strengthen the library's role in local literacy development and help to secure the community's future.



Action plan

Priority Cohort	Early Years Literacy	English For Non-English Speakers	Adult Literacy
Library Asset	<i>Improving educational outcomes</i>	<i>Enabling community connections</i>	<i>Facilitating social engagement and workforce participation</i>
Quality literacy programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Ensure Story Time format meets early childhood curriculum requirements. ▶ Ensure Story Time format meets needs of children with dyslexia. ▶ Work with schools, kindergartens, and maternal and child health nurses to encourage the idea of reading in the home. ▶ Promote Story Times as a school readiness tool. ▶ Hold Family Literacy Workshops to give parents coaching and tips on how to read to their children and better prepare them for school. ▶ Promote 1000 Books Before School program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Develop EAL Conversation Circles. ▶ Expand access to One on One volunteer tutor program. ▶ Develop EAL Reading Circles. ▶ Develop programs to encourage telling of people's own story. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Hold Family Literacy Sessions (title to be developed) incorporating adult literacy learning with the child's learning. ▶ Continue to offer Lifeskills Program (e.g. employment/ job conversion, legal system). ▶ Continue to offer 'hook' lifelong learning programs to attract non-users to library branches. ▶ Continue to offer programs encouraging reading for pleasure

Continuing...

Action plan

Continuing...

Priority Cohort	Early Years Literacy	English For Non-English Speakers	Adult Literacy
Library Asset	<i>Improving educational outcomes</i>	<i>Enabling community connections</i>	<i>Facilitating social engagement and workforce participation</i>
Collections for our community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop the early years collection to complement literacy programs (e.g. loans linked to activities). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involve CALD users and community representatives in collection development activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand the easy reading adult fiction collection as bridging resources to support literacy development.
Community partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot book outreach program in conjunction with two local childcare centres. Take advantage of parents' priority on education to promote early years literacy programs as contributing to school readiness. Develop promotional pack and contact primary schools to encourage school/family visits to the library. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaise with local literacy support providers to run outreach programs promoting library services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaise with welfare service providers to identify individuals who could benefit from Family Literacy sessions and explore outreach opportunities.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streamline partner engagement with the library through clearly defined contact points and positions. Deepen access with existing partners (including Council, maternal and child health nurses), then expand partnership activity to other organisations. Use partner organisations and community representatives to shape the provision of literacy programs, collections and services. 		
Places to learn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review library branch spaces to create welcoming, comfortable family reading and early literacy program spaces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with member councils and local migrant information organisations to identify the role the library could play in addressing the learning needs of participants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with partner organisations (e.g. AMES, Pines Learning Centre) to increase access to library facilities for community-based literacy programs participants.

Continuing...

Priority Cohort	Early Years Literacy	English For Non-English Speakers	Adult Literacy
Library Asset	<i>Improving educational outcomes</i>	<i>Enabling community connections</i>	<i>Facilitating social engagement and workforce participation</i>
Efficient planning and resourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus communication activity (especially partner engagement) on: improving literacy outcomes for individuals and priority cohorts (first); and library assets to support literacy development (second). Establish evaluation and data collection processes to identify and demonstrate the impact of library literacy actions. Consider spaces that better support flexible program delivery, reading and learning spaces in branch library redevelopment 		
Confident and capable staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all Youth Services Librarians have attended SLV literacy training. Investigate staff training on teaching literacy to children with English as an additional language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate staff training on facilitating EAL programs for adults with English as an additional language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate staff training on identifying and engaging English-speaking library users with low literacy.

Measuring the impact



85% of community survey respondents said “the library impacts my life in a positive way.”

Whitehorse Manningham Libraries will systematically monitor and evaluate the impact of the actions described in its Literacy Strategy. It will compile, analyse and use data from existing sources (e.g. ABS, AEDC), as well as establishing its own community-based data collection processes. The library's evaluation activities will contribute to increased understanding of the contribution the library makes to improving literacy outcomes, improved targeting and refinement of library programs and collections, and more informed strategic engagement with community partners, the library sector and government.

In assessing and interpreting the impact of Whitehorse Manningham Libraries' Literacy Strategy it is understood that the library is just one of many agencies and factors that influence literacy outcomes. Therefore, while the library will be accountable for achieving its goals in relation to organisational capability and community engagement, it has considerably less direct control over participation and literacy outcomes.

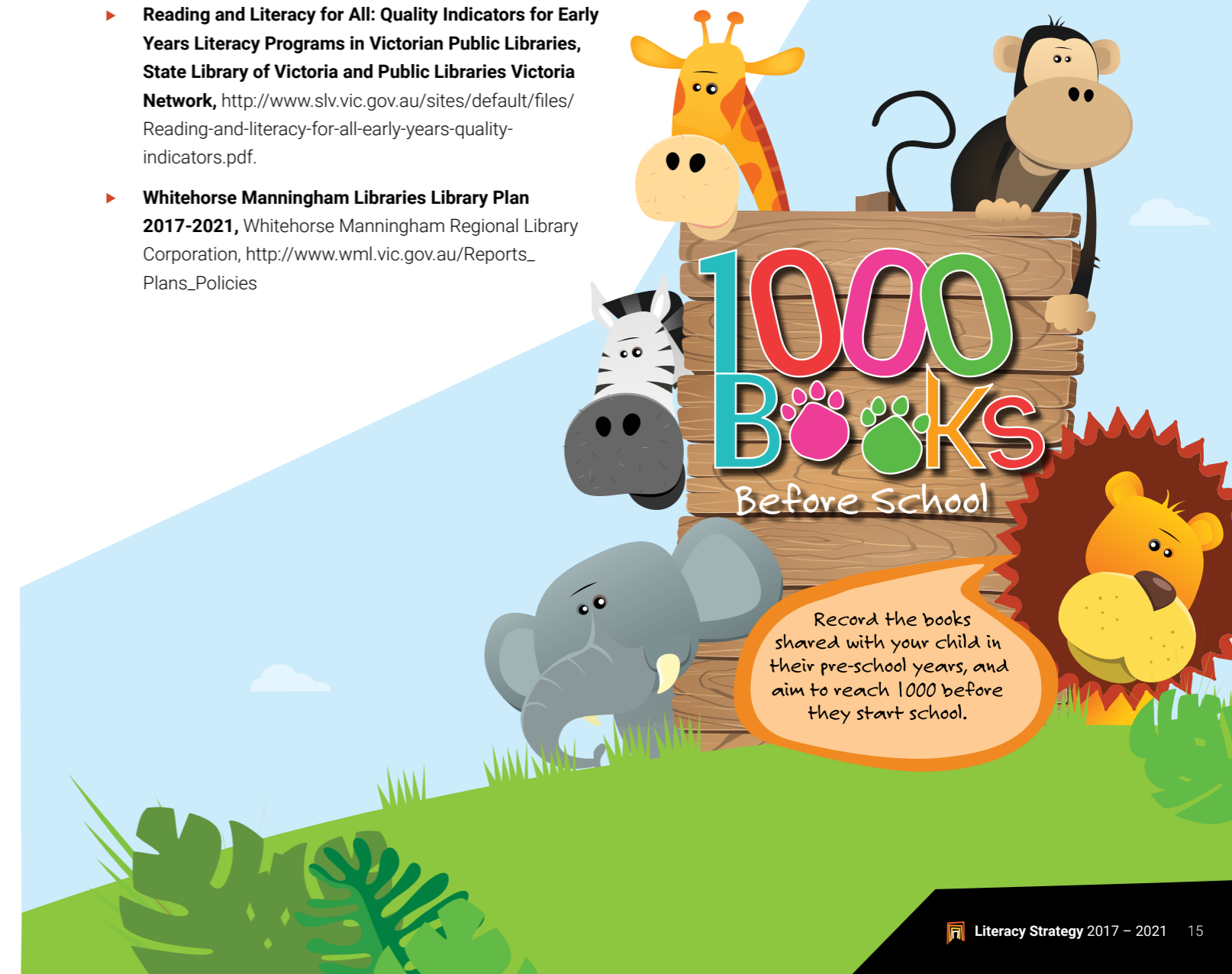
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Indicator	Measure	Target
Organisational capability		
Understanding of community literacy needs	Regular compilation and analysis of statistical data on early years, English language and adult literacy in Whitehorse Manningham	Annual update
Program quality	Annual audit of early years' literacy programs. Source: Reading and literacy for all. Quality Indicators for Early Years Literacy Programs	Increase
Professional development	Number of staff participating in 'literacy-focused' professional development activities	Increase
Literacy partnerships	Number of partner organisations actively engaged with the library in providing literacy support to the Whitehorse Manningham community	Increase
Engagement and participation		
Program delivery	Number of literacy support programs run by the library	Increase
Participation in literacy programs	Number of pre-school age children attending Story Time programs	Increase
	Number of adults actively engaged in Story Time programs	Increase
	Number of children registered for 1000 Books Before School	Increase
Use of collection	% of children registered for 1000 Books Before School on track to achieve 1000 books	Increase
	Number of adult attending literacy programs run by or with the library	Increase
	Number of loans of early years collection items	Increase
Access to literacy support	Turnover of early years collection items	Increase
	Number of loans of adult literacy collection items	Increase
	Number of partner organisations delivering literacy programs using library facilities and/or collections	Increase
Literacy outcomes		
School readiness	% of pre-school age children 'vulnerable' or 'at risk' in language and cognitive development. Source: Australian Early Development Census (AEDC)	Reduce
Reading	Average number of times per week that children aged 8 or less are read to by an adult	Increase
	NAPLAN results for reading in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in local schools	Increase
Fluency in English	% of adult population who are not fluent in English Source: ABS census data	Reduce

* 'Story Time' programs include all early years' programs run by the library (e.g. Baby Karaoke, Tiny Tots, Story Time).

References

- ▶ **Australian Early Development Census, 2015**, <https://www.aedc.gov.au/>.
- ▶ **Community Profile – City of Manningham**, <http://profile.id.com.au/manningham>.
- ▶ **Community Profile – City of Whitehorse**, <http://profile.id.com.au/whitehorse>.
- ▶ **Industry Report. Reading and Literacy for All: A Strategic Framework for Victorian Public Libraries 2015-18**, State Library of Victoria and Public Libraries Victoria Network, <http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/Reading-and-literacy-for-all-industry-report.pdf>
- ▶ **Reading and Literacy for All: A Strategic Framework for Victorian Public Libraries 2015-18**, State Library of Victoria and Public Libraries Victoria Network, <http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/about-us/collaborations-affiliations/public-libraries/reading-literacy-strategic-framework>.
- ▶ **Reading and Literacy for All: Quality Indicators for Early Years Literacy Programs in Victorian Public Libraries, State Library of Victoria and Public Libraries Victoria Network**, <http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/Reading-and-literacy-for-all-early-years-quality-indicators.pdf>.
- ▶ **Whitehorse Manningham Libraries Library Plan 2017-2021**, Whitehorse Manningham Regional Library Corporation, http://www.wml.vic.gov.au/Reports_Plan_Policies



Blackburn

Cnr Blackburn & Central Rds
Blackburn Vic 3130
9896 8400

Box Hill

1040 Whitehorse Rd
Box Hill Vic 3128
9896 4300

Bulleen

Bulleen Plaza, Manningham Road
Bulleen Vic 3105
9896 8450

Doncaster

MC Square, 687 Doncaster Road
Doncaster Vic 3108
9877 8500

Nunawading

379 Whitehorse Rd
Nunawading Vic 3131
9872 8600

The Pines

Cnr Reynolds & Blackburn Rds
East Doncaster Vic 3109
9877 8550

Vermont South

Pavey Place
Vermont South Vic 3133
9872 8650

Warrandyte

Warrandyte Community Centre
168 Yarra Street
Warrandyte Vic 3113
9895 4250

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