Darebin Libraries and Learning Strategy 2020–24

Outcomes 2020–21

GOAL 1: EQUITY OF ACCESS

We will provide services, resources and facilities that enable all community members to access our libraries.

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Collections that meet the needs of the Darebin community

Consult with our community to better understand their evolving needs and preferred collection formats

✓ Collection items purchased based on feedback and loans analysis to reflect the diverse needs of the Darebin community

✓ 'Suggest a Purchase' implemented so customers can request items to be purchased or borrowed from another library

Increase the number of community languages in our collections

✓ Spanish and Macedonian collections added following community consultation

Balance the transition from physical to digital collections in line with community use and need, responding to evolving COVID-19 impacts

✓ Increased investment in digital collections to support our community in response to stay-at-home measures:
  » *The Age* online free for library members
  » more ebooks and eaudiobooks on BorrowBox and CloudLibrary apps
  » more than 3,000 emagazine titles available through RBDigital app
  » launched Libby app for emagazines, ecomics and eaudiobooks
  » increased Kanopy limits for film and documentary steaming
  » launched LOTE Online for Kids and Clarity English services: Practical Writing, Study Skills Success and Tense Buster
  » Premiers' Reading Challenge funding fully allocated to digital content

✓ Reimagined and adjusted activities to support safe access to our physical collections:
  » contactless home library service deliveries
  » Click and Collect established for reservations and bookclubs
  » reopened library branches (when restrictions allowed) with COVID-Safe plans, building caps and group limits to enable browsing

✓ Actively donated withdrawn materials to our community:
  » book giveaways at Reservoir Community and Learning Centre and immunisation sessions
  » through partnerships with neighbourhood houses, schools, supported playgroups, youth hub and aged care facilities
  » supported Alphington Community Centre *Blind Date with a Book* program and Refugee and Asylum Seeker toy drive

✓ Increased promotion of digital collections through fortnightly *The Library at Home* enewsletter and Facebook posts resulting in increased awareness and usage

Increased library access

Review library fines and charges to reduce barriers to use

✓ Extended existing loans, paused overdue fines and book recovery activities to lessen the financial impact for our customers from March 2020 to June 2021

✓ After consideration in the 2021–22 budget deliberations, library fines remain

Review library opening hours

✓ Reservoir Community and Learning Centre will open on Sundays in 2021-22

✓ Libraries After Dark will continue at Preston Library on Thursdays in 2021-22

✓ Libraries After Dark extended to Reservoir Community and Learning Centre on Tuesdays in 2021-22

Expand the reach of the home library service to include socially isolated groups

✓ Contactless home library service delivery ensured continued support of vulnerable community members during restrictions

✓ When deliveries were paused, staff called customers to maintain social connection and provide digital literacy support

✓ Consulted with customers, community groups, disability support organisations and relevant Council teams to develop a home library service promotion plan

✓ Service eligibility has expanded to include carers, children and youth, with new brochures developed and translated into Greek, Italian, Macedonian, Mandarin and Vietnamese

Increased awareness and use of library services, especially by communities at risk of exclusion

Collaborate with our partners, community and other Darebin City Council departments to raise awareness of Darebin Libraries services, especially with communities at risk of exclusion

✓ Working with Juno Rapid Response Clinics and Darebin Ethnic Communities Council to tailor library service information

✓ Collaborated with and presented to Council teams to identify opportunities to work together to support our community

✓ Preston Library hosted an interview with Cr Susan Rennie and Kate Sommerville to promote the benefits of Libraries After Dark

GOAL 2: A THRIVING AND RESILIENT COMMUNITY

We will promote and support the wellbeing and resilience of our community through increased opportunities for lifelong learning and social connection.

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Events that meet diverse community needs

Revise the Events Framework to increase the number of events that focus on the needs of communities at risk of exclusion and delivered in partnership with other Darebin City Council departments and community organisations and groups

✓ Framework and targets revised to increase our focus on the needs of communities at risk of exclusion

✓ Delivered online and outreach learning programs embedding STEAM principles for children and youth

✓ Online Storytimes and Rhyme Times delivered bi-weekly including bilingual videos and readings covering Aboriginal and multicultural themes

✓ Partnered with Islamic Society of Victoria and Preston Mosque for a Virtual Cuppa with a Childrens Librarian session

✓ Delivered diverse school holiday programs including Hakawati Refugee Stories and Dadirri Mindfulness for young people

✓ Hosted a digital art exhibition by Farhad Bandesh, a refugee in detention, in partnership with Northsiders with Refugees

✓ Adapted Conversation Café to an online format to support English-language practice and social connections, with most participants coming every week and increased engagement with the online program during lockdowns

✓ Researching Aboriginal Family History talk delivered in partnership with Koorie Heritage Trust, State Library of Victoria, Public Records Office of Victoria and National Archives of Australia

Increase the number of events delivered in community languages

✓ Stay-at-Home Storytimes in Somali and English (2), and French and English (2)

✓ 'How to make Gemista' event delivered in Greek

✓ *Learn Auslan* and *Future Girl* events with Asphyxia

✘ *Due to restrictions, this is the same number of community language events as the previous year.*

Opportunities to participate in lifelong learning

Expand programs that foster lifelong learning, using digital delivery in response to COVID-19 impacts

✓ Reimagined content and digital delivery of events and programs:
- » online Storytimes and Rhyme Times including bilingual videos and readings covering Aboriginal and multicultural themes
- » hosted a digital art exhibition by Farhad Bandesh, a refugee in detention, in partnership with Northsiders with Refugees
- » online sessions on accessing Centrelink: 'Digital Services, Online Accounts and myGov', 'Debt Prevention and Compliance', 'Jobseeker Payments and Looking for Work'
- » Youth United activism event on Facebook with Youth Services
- » regular craft activities, cooking sessions and programs focused on mental health and wellbeing including 'Surviving Lockdown'
- » partnered with Merri Creek Management Committee to deliver 'Discovering the Frogs of Darebin' webinar

✓ Transitioned some events (Storytime, Rhyme Time, Conversation Café, Makers Corner, Book Chat) back to face-to-face delivery when restrictions allowed

✓ Launched webpage to support, encourage and promote lifelong learning opportunities and local learning organisations

✓ Developed how-to-guides and FAQ sheets to support digital literacy

Increase digital literacy support across a variety of online platforms in partnership with community organisations

✓ Commenced Age Friendly Darebin pilot project with Your Community Health and Aged and Disability team to address digital divide for seniors without access to devices or internet through Introduction to digital literacy for carers program

✓ Promoted Online Safety for Grandparents and Carers by Office of the eSafety Commissioner

✓ Conducted BeConnected program in partnership with Hellenic Women's Group at Northcote Library

✓ Delivered session to PRACE and The Bridge teams on Darebin Libraries eresources

Implement volunteering opportunities within the library

✓ Words on Wheels do-it-yourself kits have been loaned to Hilltop and Westgarth Aged Care Centres for volunteers to run memory evoking sessions

✗ *Not progressed in 2020-21; is a future focus*

Provide opportunities for communities to connect with Darebin's local history and culture

✓ Podcast and self-guided walking tour 'History on High' included in Spring 2020 FUSE program to provide a snapshot of Darebin's rich and diverse history

✓ Provided Darebin content and imagery for Northland ANZAC display

✓ Received Public Records Office Victoria (PROV) grant to assess and identify solutions for uncatalogued donated historical items

Consult local businesses to identify their learning and development needs and implement collections, events and programs to support them

✘ *Not progressed in 2020-21; is a future focus*

Help the Darebin community meet the challenges of the climate emergency

Collaboratively develop services, collections and programs to increase community understanding and knowledge to meet the challenges of the climate emergency

✓ Collaboratively created collection resources lists for Fight for Planet A, Darebin Climate Challenge eResources, 16 Days of Activism, Sustainable Living, Earth Day, Sustainable Gardening, World Environment Day and to promote recycling

✓ Home Efficiency Tool Kits and Thermal Camera Tool Kits added to our collection to support reduced home energy use and greenhouse gas emissions in partnership with Climate Emergency team

✓ Shared information about our solar panels, battery storage and LED lighting upgrades to inspire our community to explore similar energy efficiency activities

✓ Seed Library established at Northcote Library

✓ Buzz and Dig Seed Saving workshop and seed mix giveaway in collaboration with Northcote Library Food Garden to recognise World Bee Day

Help the Darebin community meet the challenges of the COVID-19 recovery

Work with the Darebin Community and Business Recovery Taskforce and other Darebin City Council departments to implement services, collections and programs to help communities understand and meet the challenges of the COVID-19 recovery

✓ Participated in Council's COVID-19 Community and Local Business Resilience and Recovery response and redeployed library staff to Grants Hotline, and to help establish the Community Navigation Service

✓ Supported the development and distribution of *Do It: Darebin Creek* zine, developed by Skypunch with Darebin Arts as something for local residents to do as part of daily exercise during lockdowns

✓ Delivered events to support community members at risk of exclusion focused on employment and health and wellbeing: Understanding Your Employment Rights (for people from a CALD background), Career Chat and Learn as well as sessions on accessing Centrelink and 'Surviving Lockdown'

✓ Hosted a Work for Victoria employee who focused on community engagement activities

✓ Commitment (when libraries reopen) to support Darebin and Moreland City Council's Jobs Advocate Program which connects community members who are looking for work to information, advice and services

- ✓ Partnership established with Brotherhood of St Laurence to provide outreach services to residents of Supported Residential Services to access library services, collections and programs once restrictions allow
- ✓ Extended existing loans, paused overdue fines and book recovery activities to lessen the financial impact for our customers during the COVID-19 restrictions from March 2020 to June 2021
- ✓ Met with Reservoir Traders Association to explore reactivation of precinct

GOAL 3: WELCOMING SAFE SPACES

We will create welcoming, safe, flexible and inclusive physical and digital spaces.

Enhanced welcoming, safe, flexible and inclusive spaces to meet diverse and changing community needs

✓ Blinds installed at Preston Library to support evening events

✓ Replaced Northcote Library roof

✓ Preston Library switchboard upgraded to support solar panel installation

✓ CCTV upgraded at Preston and Northcote Libraries

✓ Returns chutes upgraded at all branches

✓ New people counters installed at all branches

Investigate the feasibility of new and refurbished libraries

✓ Preston Library feasibility study report completed

✓ Feedback provided on Northcote Plaza redevelopment which explored a new location for the Northcote Library

Work with communities to co-design spaces that are welcoming, safe, flexible, comfortable, inclusive and accessible for all

✗ *Postponed to 2021-22 due to focus on responding to rapidly changing COVID restrictions and limited access to physical branches*

Explore and implement ways to provide both quiet and collaborative spaces

✓ COVID-Safe Storytimes and Rhyme Times held in Fairfield Community Room to enable quiet spaces during these events

✗ *Trial of zoned spaces postponed to 2021-22 when library branches reopen for public access.*

Appropriate technology to meet changing needs

Upgrade the Darebin Libraries website

✓ Enhanced current website to improve usability and accessibility including updating content and creating new pages to support library services

✓ Actively participated in the Council website redevelopment project

Upgrade the Darebin Libraries app

✓ Released and promoted upgraded Darebin Libraries app which improved access to and visibility of library services and digital collections

Improve access to digital resources and use technology to support the delivery of services, responding to evolving COVID-19 impacts

✓ Fortnightly *The Library at Home* enewsletter to ensure customer communications while branches are closed or access is restricted

✓ *Ask a Librarian* service incorporated into Library Reception and increased staffing to support higher call rates from customers at home

✓ Facebook content expanded to engage customers with the library eg staff recommendations, behind-the-scenes staff profiles

✓ Delivered library events and programs through online platforms in response to stay-at-home measures and restrictions

✓ Summer reading program adapted to online environment: Branch Out readers advisory program for junior readers

✓ Ancestry (family history platform) available from home since March 2020

✓ Scanner purchased and implemented to support digitisation of local history materials

✓ Upgraded the library management system to support Darebin Libraries app upgrade and new inter library loan approach through Trove Collaborative Services

✓ New print management solution launched which includes scanning and mobility printing

✓ Device kiosks with laptops launched at Northcote and Preston Libraries to expand the number of computers available for customer use

GOAL 4: RESPONSIVE SERVICES

We will continue to build Darebin Libraries' capacity to provide services to meet our community's needs.

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A community-led approach to the design and delivery of library services and resources

Implement Darebin Community Engagement Strategy and Framework

✓ Established improved stakeholder engagement for Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC Week and Deadly Reads initiatives

Identify, encourage and support opportunities for community-led initiatives in libraries

✓ In partnership with Youth Services, Yarra Libraries and Yarra Youth and Middle Years, Darebin Libraries received a SLV grant for $25,000 to deliver Hearts and Minds. Using co-design principles, a group of young people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and CALD backgrounds will develop and deliver a project in 2022 addressing the challenge: How can libraries support youth mental health and wellbeing?

Continuously improving customer service

Reinvent library service delivery and customer service models in response to evolving COVID-19 impacts

✓ Contactless home library service deliveries

✓ Click and Collect services established (with improvements when re-established)

✓ Reopened library branches (when restrictions allowed) with COVID-Safe plans, building caps and group limits to enable browsing, access to computers and community meeting rooms

✓ Inclusion of captions on online videos to improve accessibility for people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing

✓ Participated in #librarieschangelives campaign: branding included in new Darebin Libraries and Learning Strategy and use of hashtag on relevant Facebook posts including those of community members describing why they love being back in our library spaces

Provide staff with customer service and engagement training and support their ongoing professional development

✓ Assertive Communication Over the Phone
✓ Connecting and Responding to Homelessness in the City of Darebin
✓ Introduction to psychological first aid
✓ Negotiation and Crisis Intervention training
✓ Aboriginal Cultural Awareness
✓ Manual Handling
✓ Co-design

Knowing our impact

Consult communities to identify how they are using libraries, what we are doing well and where we can improve

✓ Re-established improved and more responsive Click and Collect service following customer and staff feedback
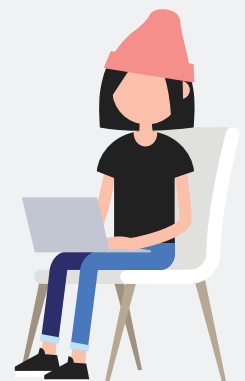
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