



**Darebin  
Libraries**

# **DAREBIN LIBRARIES STRATEGY 2014-19**



**“Libraries are wonderful places of learning,  
adventure, instruction and fun!”**

Reservoir Library customer, 2014

**“A library must be about engendering a love of reading, a thirst for knowledge and a sense of adventure in us all. So it must have lovely enticing nooks and bean bags and big tables and loads of books on display. I love our libraries – we are so lucky.”**

Northcote Library customer, 2014



## OUR VISION

Darebin Libraries vision states the outcomes the Darebin community can expect from engaging with your public library.

Connect. Discover. Learn.

## OUR MISSION

Our mission statement commits us to serving the Darebin community.

Darebin Libraries will inspire and enable our diverse community to learn and grow.

- » We are a welcoming, inclusive and safe place where anyone can read, study, work, relax and share.
- » We provide easy access to library collections, programs, services and resources that meet the needs of our community.
- » We understand, respond to and support the lifelong learning aspirations of our community.



## OUR VALUES

Darebin Libraries staff will be guided by and share the following values with library customers, other Darebin City Council departments, partners and the Darebin community:

- » respect and understanding
- » access and equity
- » partnership and collaboration
- » enthusiasm and creativity
- » transparency and accountability.

**“I have discovered the library since becoming a mother in the last 12 months and realised what an incredible community asset it is. I have often walked out of there wanting to write a love letter to everyone who makes the library possible! I have been many times with my son. We take home many books and have enjoyed many stories, songs and CDs at home too. I can stay as long as I like and not feel the need to spend money or feel pressured to leave! I have met other parents there, including our neighbours. I also sneak in a book or two for myself and have begun reading more widely. The location is great, it’s close to shops and walking distance from my home and public transport. I have attended some of the talks and performances and increasingly appreciated the amount of activity that one can get involved with. It has also been the place where I found out about events taking place in the community.”**

Preston Library customer, 2014

**“The library is a wonderful resource that celebrates community, access to information and ideas, and the joy of reading, learning and discovery. It is available to all and does not discriminate, but welcomes and is a haven in the midst of Darebin.”**

Northcote Library customer, 2014



## OUR GOALS

Darebin Libraries are a place of knowledge, inspiration and adventure. In our library branches, online and through our outreach programs we will create opportunities for our community to learn and grow.

Over the next five years we will focus on four key goals:

### Goal 1: The pride of our community

A modern public library is welcoming, well-resourced, vibrant and community focused.

We will provide the Darebin community with relevant physical and digital collections, deliver engaging educational and cultural programs, reinvigorate and creatively use library spaces, and reach out so everyone can access our services.

### Goal 2: Knowledge-driven innovation

To best meet the needs of our diverse community – citizens, community groups and businesses – we must understand who you are, what motivates you and what library services you need to realise your potential.

We will develop and promote innovative and collaborative approaches to community engagement, service delivery and community connection, informed by consultation with library customers, partners and stakeholders, through research of contemporary practice and analysis of feedback and trends.

### Goal 3: Embracing technology

Digital technologies are now an integral part of everyday life, continually transforming the way we live, work and learn.

We will assist library customers to develop the skills and confidence needed to effectively use current and emerging digital technologies and facilitate access to online information and resources.

### Goal 4: Excellent professional service

New technology, shifts in community demographics and increasing customer expectations are changing the demands on public libraries.

We will continue to provide high quality library services by empowering and equipping our staff with the knowledge, skills and resources to respond professionally to the needs of library customers and the Darebin community.

## A CONSULTATIVE APPROACH

Darebin Libraries is committed to a consultative approach to the development, implementation and review of the Darebin Libraries Strategy 2014–19. The Strategy builds on Connecting Community Darebin Libraries Strategy 2007–12, and was informed by:

- » a comprehensive review of current literature and research on library trends and contemporary library services
- » analysis of data and research on the Darebin community
- » a survey of 1,300 library customers
- » interviews with community stakeholders and current and potential partner organisations
- » workshops with library management and staff
- » a workshop with Darebin City Council management and staff.

The Darebin Libraries Strategy Reference Group provided ongoing advice and feedback on the development of the Strategy.

**“I value the fact that it is there for the community, and is free. I can afford to buy books and DVDs, and have a uni education – but many people can’t and don’t. The library is a central point of community connection and social capital, and an essential place for people’s study, education and relaxation. Just knowing it is there, as a resource or a refuge, is the most valuable thing.”**

Preston Library customer, 2014

## AN EVER-CHANGING WORLD

Over the past few decades Australia and the wider world have simultaneously experienced massive demographic shifts, huge technological growth and significant social change – shaping the way we live, work, study and play.

- » Australia has both an ageing population and is experiencing a baby boom. Baby Boomers are entering retirement but have a strong desire to continue their involvement in the broader world and lifelong learning.
- » Overseas migration is overtaking natural increase as the principal driver of population growth. It is predicted that in the next decade two-thirds of Australia’s population growth will be through net migration, particularly from Asia.
- » Children and youth who are ‘born digital’ integrate technology seamlessly into their lives. They access information, learn and communicate in ways that older generations do not, preferring to draw on and create information via the internet and communicate via social networking sites, tools and apps.
- » Twenty-four per cent of Australian households or one in 10 Australians live alone and are potentially socially isolated.
- » Forty-six per cent of Australians do not have the literacy and numeracy skills needed to meet the complex demands of everyday life and work.
- » As a community we are moving away from the idea of learning as preparation for life and work to learning as an integral part of life and work. Lifelong learning is about providing opportunities for individuals to learn and empowering them to be confident and creative in all roles, circumstances and environments.

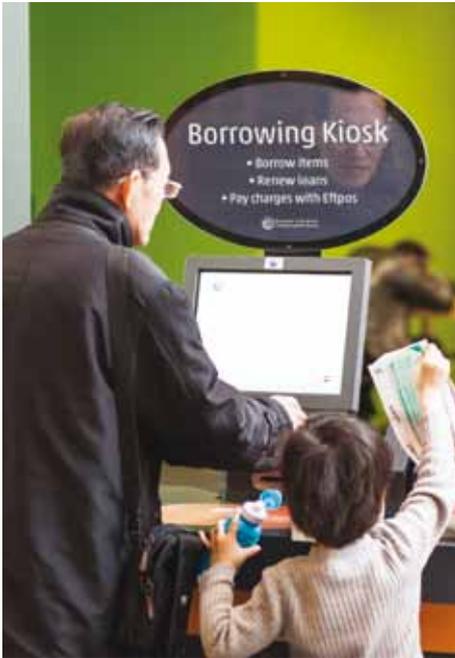
- » Digital technologies are now pervasive in our lives. Wherever we are, mobile devices and internet access enable us to link to others, discover content and apps, conduct business or attend lectures from remote locations and carry out lots of other activities.

**This dynamic landscape is having an impact on public libraries worldwide, challenging them to continue to deliver services in new and innovative ways. The best libraries are showing that by responding intelligently and flexibly to change they can support better outcomes for their communities. Libraries connect with citizens and provide them with access to better information, technology and skills development, enabling them to contribute to the economic and social health and wellbeing of the community.**

Today a successful library must:

- » support literacy and reader development across all ages
- » facilitate access to lifelong learning opportunities
- » help to bridge the digital divide and provide seamless access to information and the internet
- » strengthen communities by stimulating cross-cultural engagement and promoting diversity and cultural heritage in partnership with community organisations
- » be a place of creative expression and experiential learning
- » reach out to people through expanded off-site services and creative use of virtual spaces.

**At the same time a public library has a critical role in contemporary society as the ‘third place’, a place apart from home and work that is safe and free for all to access.**



**“I value the setting in which the library exists, those beautiful gum trees and grasses and the fact that I can see out when I am in there. Equally, I value the fact that the library is there as a resource to the community of Darebin, constructed and paid for by our rates. Libraries are really important to the building of social capital. The Darebin community is diverse. I love it when I visit - I see mums and dads and kids (some of whom were born outside Australia) lapping up the papers, the book readings, the access to internet. Libraries are SO important to retain, support and foster.”**

Preston Library customer, 2014

## DAREBIN COMMUNITY PROFILE

The City of Darebin has one of the largest, most diverse communities anywhere in Victoria in terms of cultures, languages, faiths and beliefs, income, lifestyles and occupations, talents, sexualities and gender identities. The Darebin community cherishes this diversity and values it as an important civic asset. Darebin Council’s Diversity Statement acknowledges the contributions of communities, migrants and refugees who have settled in the municipality and made it their home: “Their endeavours have enriched the economic, social, cultural, artistic, community and civic character of the city and created a cosmopolitan locality where variety and difference are welcomed and encouraged.”

### Darebin’s diverse and changing population

- » In recent years Darebin has experienced strong population growth, with a current population of around 144,000 people. This is projected to increase to 159,000 people by 2021.
- » About six per cent of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Melbournians live in the City of Darebin.
- » More than 40 per cent of Darebin’s residents were born overseas. The major contributing countries are Italy, Greece, India, China, the United Kingdom and Vietnam. Twenty-six per cent of Darebin residents arrived in Australia within the past five years.
- » Nearly half of Darebin’s residents speak a language other than English at home, with more than 118 languages spoken.

- » Religious affiliation is strong in Darebin, particularly with Christian, Islamic and Buddhist faiths. More than one-third of residents have no religious affiliation.
- » Fifteen per cent of Darebin residents are aged over 65 years - one of the largest populations of older people in Victoria. It is estimated this group of residents will make up one-quarter of the population by 2031.
- » Although the overall Darebin population is ageing, there is growth in younger age groups in Northcote, Fairfield and Bundoora.
- » Almost one in five Darebin residents has a disability.

Darebin has been a traditional manufacturing area. This focus is rapidly changing to one which is increasingly diversified and service-based. Retail, manufacturing, education/training and health/community services employ half of Darebin’s

working population. A significant proportion of the population experiences a relatively high level of socio-economic disadvantage.

The City of Darebin's growing appeal as a place to live, work and invest brings with it considerable change and challenges for Council as we strive to represent the interests of and support the entire Darebin community. Within this context Council recognises the importance of quality library services. Darebin Libraries actively contribute to several of the strategic objectives outlined in the Council Plan 2013-2017. In particular:

- » Goal 2: Healthy and Connected Community – Build a safe, inclusive and equitable community where all feel socially well connected, respected and valued
- » Goal 4: Thriving and Creative Culture – Foster inspiration, celebration, innovation, creativity and diversity in Darebin's arts and culture and encourage it to thrive, entertain, challenge and delight

Darebin Libraries provide convenient, accessible library services, events and facilities which cater for the cultural, educational and recreational needs of the community, fostering social interaction, community connectedness, cultural engagement, lifelong learning and economic wellbeing.

Darebin Libraries is also an important contributor to the achievement of the City of Darebin's 2013-2017 Health and Wellbeing Plan goals by:

- » strengthening opportunities for children to develop, thrive and learn in their early years (Goal 1)
- » supporting equitable lifelong learning opportunities and outcomes (Goal 2)
- » providing safe and accessible places for people to live well, play and connect (Goal 4).

## DAREBIN LIBRARIES PROFILE

Darebin Libraries has four branches in Melbourne's northern suburbs, at Fairfield, Northcote, Preston and Reservoir. We also provide a Home Library Service to Darebin residents and access to library collections and services via the library website.

### Darebin Libraries in 2013-14

- » 115,000 registered library members
- » 630,000 physical visits to library branches and 341,000 visits to the library website
- » 205,000 print, audio-visual and digital collection items
- » 65% of collection under 5 years old
- » 1.28 million loans of collection items (including downloads of eBooks and eAudiobooks)
- » 64,575 computer bookings on 22 public access internet PCs
- » 39,000 wifi sessions
- » 516 library events with 34,100 attendees
- » Open 214 hours per week.

As well as the traditional role of lending resources and providing information services, Darebin Libraries embrace social inclusion and equity for all as part of our core values. We provide a free service to all including collections and programs targeting residents of all ages delivered from our four branches, online and via off-site programs.

Council's commitment to Darebin Libraries is demonstrated through the inclusion of library-specific strategies in corporate plans and capital expenditure budgets for library upgrades. The 2014-15 capital works program includes funds to complete the Reservoir Community and Learning Centre – the new community hub that includes the relocated Reservoir Library, Maternal and Child Health Services, Toy Library, Youth Services and Customer Service.

**“A community space for knowledge, meeting and activities. A valuable place to generate ideas and proposals. A good snapshot of who our local community is. A lovely space to see children working with and enjoying books and activities run by libraries. Children sometimes come up and show you what they are looking at or reading – that's excellent interaction.”**

Fairfield Library customer, 2014

# ACTIONS

Over the next five years Darebin Libraries will strategically direct its resources and energies to delivering high quality library services, collections, programs, spaces and experiences to and for library customers. Many actions will be implemented within the next 12 to 18 months, with others coming to fruition over the life of the plan.

These actions will collectively contribute to the achievement of our strategic goals and be managed against six key result areas:

1. Welcoming places and spaces
2. Dynamic collections
3. Strengthening our community
4. Innovation
5. Working together
6. Knowledgeable, creative and accountable

## Key result area 1: Welcoming places and spaces

We will present welcoming, purposeful and safe library facilities that are accessible to all and reflect the vibrancy and diversity of our community

1.1	Ensure our library branches are attractive, comfortable, vibrant, welcoming and create a sense of belonging	
»	1.1.1 Provide public access to Preston and Northcote Libraries courtyards	2014-15
»	1.1.2 Improve our youth spaces following consultation with young people and community stakeholders and research into best practice	Ongoing 2014-19
»	1.1.3 Reinvigorate our library branches eg floorplans, displays, signage and updated furniture and fittings	Ongoing 2014-19
»	1.1.4 Actively pursue funding opportunities to support the enhancement of our library branches	Ongoing 2014-19
1.2	Encourage and support community use of libraries as meeting places for formal and informal activities	Ongoing 2014-19
1.3	Ensure our strategies, plans, policies and procedures continue to promote equity, inclusion and accessibility for all and don't discriminate or exclude community members from membership and accessing library resources and services	Ongoing 2014-19
1.4	Redesign our website to improve navigation and accessibility, provide information in community languages and innovatively promote library services and activities	2016-17
1.5	Expand our outreach services through sustainable service models	2016-17 then ongoing

## Key result area 2: Dynamic collections

We will provide dynamic physical and digital collections that respond to customers' reading, information, learning and entertainment needs

2.1	Review and develop our collections, resources and programs to ensure they reflect and meet the diverse and changing needs of our community	2015-16 then ongoing
2.2	Improve literacy service offering through research of best practice and community demographics	2015-16 then ongoing
2.3	Investigate the feasibility of lending devices to support use of the digital collections	2015-16
2.4	Ensure our community are aware of and able to use our collections and resources	2015-16 then ongoing
2.5	Provide more digital material in English and community languages	2016-17 then ongoing

**“I value free and open access to resources and shared public space that benefit me and the whole community. Public libraries are one of the backbones of a civilised and equitable society. They should be a MAJOR focus of local government service provision.”**

Northcote Library customer, 2014

### Key result area 3: Strengthening our community

We will deliver customer-focused educational and cultural programs, events and strategic partnerships that encourage reading, inspire learning, increase skills and strengthen our community connections

3.1	Develop a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Framework which articulates our current services, programs and resources and identifies future actions to support Council's priority languages	2014-15
3.2	Deliver an annual calendar of events that delivers community learning, literacy and reader development, celebration of cultural diversity and community engagement for our customers and targeted groups (eg seniors, youth, children, new arrivals and those from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, indigenous, GLBTIQ and vulnerable learners)	Annual 2014-19
3.3	Develop and deliver initiatives to encourage our residents and visitors to appreciate diversity, learn English and other languages, and provide learning opportunities for our community that foster inclusion and engagement, especially for new settlers and disadvantaged groups	Ongoing 2014-19
3.4	Take our library into the community through off-site events	Ongoing 2014-19
3.5	Investigate and showcase the value of our library to support learning, education, arts and culture through partnerships and programs	Ongoing 2014-19
3.6	Develop social inclusion indicators for targeted programs	2015-16
3.7	Expand our Home Library Service for residents of all ages who are unable to access our library services due to isolation, age, disability or illness	2018-19

### Key result area 4: Innovation

We will leverage the power of innovation and technology to design, develop and implement better library services

4.1	Develop a Darebin Libraries Technology Strategy to meet and support the current and future needs of our community	2014-15
4.2	Implement easy access for one-time customers (ie computer and printer use)	2014-15
4.3	Develop an action plan to improve access to our local and family history resources, especially online	2014-15 then ongoing
4.4	Embed and improve our customer self-service model to ensure it is easy to interact with library services and staff are available to support community information needs	Ongoing 2014-19
4.5	Participate in library industry initiatives to ensure our awareness of library trends and assess their applicability and appropriateness for implementation	Ongoing 2014-19
4.6	Provide accessibility computers at each branch	2015-16
4.7	Undertake and receive accreditation as an eSmart Library	2015-16

**“I value being able to borrow books. It is such a basic thing but immeasurably important. I just love the whole concept of libraries. I love that they are one of the few things in life that are free and thus can be accessed by anyone and everyone. I love that there are a variety of things you can do at your library. I love that they act like a community centre. I love that they provide access to computers and the internet for those who would not ordinarily have access to these things. I love that they are places of education and places of culture. I love that it’s the kind of place you can go to alone and not feel awkward for being on your own and feel very safe. But fundamentally, I just love that I can go and borrow books and read them!”**

Northcote Library customer, 2014

## **Key result area 5: Working together**

We will nurture partnerships with our community, government, education providers and business organisations to enhance community outcomes and opportunities

5.1	Develop partnerships with priority community groups and organisations to raise awareness of our programs, resources and spaces and develop and deliver services targeted to their needs	Ongoing 2014-19
5.2	Participate in Statewide Public Library Development Projects in partnership with State Library of Victoria and Public Libraries Victoria Network	Ongoing 2014-19
5.3	Develop and embed an ongoing consultation plan to provide increased opportunity for our community to provide regular feedback	2015-16 then ongoing
5.4	Partner with and promote the library to other Darebin City Council departments as a place to promote, deliver and leverage Council services	2015-16 then ongoing
5.5	Participate in and implement the State Government’s Victorian Library collaborative statewide initiatives (if funded)	2015-16 then ongoing

**“The staff are friendly and approachable. On the odd occasion when I have found it necessary, they have been flexible and helpful. I spend my time upstairs in the children’s section with my two and a half year old grandson and five year old grandson. They choose the books they want me to read and I choose a comfy chair. We are out of the way of the adult section so are free to play a bit of chasy at the end of our session. No one comes up to shush us. It has been a wonderful experience for us all and a wonderful introduction to the world of books.”**

Northcote Library customer, 2014

## **Key result area 6: Knowledgeable, creative and accountable**

We will grow the capacity of our staff and establish organisational processes and structures to enhance our individual and collective ability to professionally meet the needs of our library customers

6.1	Investigate best practice and applicability of shelf-ready services and recommend the best service model	2014-15
6.2	Monitor and evaluate the Darebin Libraries Strategy 2014-19 and communicate outcomes to our library customers, Council and community stakeholders	Annual 2014-19
6.3	Undertake regular analysis of our library and community data to improve our knowledge and understanding of community needs and develop targeted services and programs	Ongoing 2014-19
6.4	Develop and implement ongoing professional development for our staff to ensure their skills, knowledge and capability meets the current and future needs of our library service	Ongoing 2014-19
6.5	Continue encouragement of staff development opportunities including competitive higher duties recruitment, secondments and accredited training	Ongoing 2014-19
6.6	Ongoing evaluation of our staffing structure to ensure it supports current and future operational needs	Ongoing 2014-19
6.7	Strengthen leadership capability and foster creativity and engagement with library services	Ongoing 2014-19
6.8	Conduct library-wide training needs analysis to assess our staff capability and confidence with current and future library service provision	2015-16
6.9	Actively seek feedback from our library customers eg conduct surveys and snap chats	2015-16 then ongoing
6.10	Undertake the Being the Best We Can self-evaluation	2016-17
6.11	Redevelop our intranet to improve communication and enhance access to organisational information	2017-18

## Darebin Libraries

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[darebinlibraries.vic.gov.au](http://darebinlibraries.vic.gov.au)

**Fairfield Library** 121 Station Street, Fairfield

**Northcote Library** 32-38 Separation Street, Northcote

**Preston Library** 266 Gower Street, Preston

**Reservoir Library** 17-21 Ralph Street, Reservoir (to mid 2015) | 23 Edwardes Street, Reservoir (from mid 2015)

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