

12.7

Directorate
Acting Director
Manager
Attachment(s)

Annual Community Report Cards for Community Learning and Participation

Community Wellbeing

Ashley Fleming

Mohammed Isah

1. Report Card - Learning and Youth Jobs 2023-2024 [**12.7.1** - 7 pages]
2. Report Card - Neighbourhood Houses and Community Centres 2023-2024 [**12.7.2** - 8 pages]
3. Report Card - Creative Brimbank 2023-2024 [**12.7.3** - 8 pages]
4. Report Card - Library Services 2023-2024 [**12.7.4** - 14 pages]

Purpose

For Council to note the Annual Community Report Cards for Library Services, Neighbourhood Houses and Community Centres, Creative Brimbank and Learning and Youth Jobs (**Attachments 1 to 4**).

Officer Recommendation

That Council notes the Annual Community Report Cards for Library Services, Neighbourhood Houses and Community Centres, Creative Brimbank and Learning and Youth Jobs at Attachments 1 to 4 to this report.

Background

Social inclusion, employment opportunities, lifelong learning and creativity underpin programs and services offered through Libraries, Arts facilities, Neighbourhood Houses and Brimbank Learning Futures (BLF) to support better health, wellbeing, social and economic outcomes for individuals and the community.

These annual report cards include community usage data and project highlights addressing actions and priorities from the following strategies:

Library Strategy 2020-2025:

Council's libraries are designed to foster lifelong learning and provide a range of learning, social and cultural activities, programs, resources and services.

Neighbourhood Houses and Community Centres Strategy 2019-2024:

This Strategy provides a framework to transform Council's neighbourhood houses into sites of belonging and learning for all.

Cultural Strategy 2024-2028, Festival and Events Policy and Strategy 2022-2025:

These documents collectively outline how Council will support arts and cultural development and its role as host and producer, custodian, enabler, partner and patron.

Brimbank Lifelong Learning Strategy 2024-2029:

This Strategy is a long-term approach to improving social and economic outcomes and recognises learning as a driver for positive change.

Brimbank Youth Jobs Strategy 2018-2023:

The Brimbank Youth Jobs Strategy 2018-2023 was developed by local young people for local young people, providing a framework for considering and responding to high youth unemployment rates in Brimbank. Brimbank Learning Futures (BLF) is a lifelong learning hub with innovative outreach engagement and responsive programming that connects young people and adults to learning and pathways.

Matters for Consideration

A major focus of Council's work right across Brimbank is to support people of all ages and from all backgrounds to learn and develop skills that over time will lead to work, which in turn supports social and economic benefits for individuals and the community. Baseline measures set up to track Council progress showed positive improvements this year. They included an increase in people completing Year 12, an increase in Naplan literacy standards, a drop in youth unemployment, more people attending TAFE, more people with a variety of qualifications and an increase in the number of people aged over 55 working or learning.

Council's efforts to support community to learn and thrive continued to stretch from captivating young residents right through to older adults. Tens of thousands of people attended programs including playgroups and story time in libraries, study support for school students and those sitting important high-school exams and adult learning and employment programs.

Among Council's successes was Vic Kids Eat Well small bite 'Switch to healthier snacks' & Boost veggies and salad' accreditation at West Sunshine Community Centre and Sydenham Neighbourhood House. There has been a number of strategies to increase the availability of fresh fruits and vegetable options across all council Neighbourhood houses, Library and Community Centres including the delivery of 9 seminars with more than 180 attendees on health eating and wellbeing.

Visits to Council's five libraries increased 116 per cent and Brimbank's neighbourhood houses and community centres all achieved Carers Friendly Accreditation. Level 1 Auslan training was provided for 40 staff and level 2 training provide to 10 staff.

Council made a significant investment in psychosocial support programs and activities this year to address the enduring effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on community mental health and wellbeing. Extensive community consultation with over 450 participants informed program development to ensure alignment with community priorities.

Improvements to Council Centers included a Library review that highlighted a benchmark achievement for the Council. Brimbank libraries was ranked first in customer satisfaction among like metropolitan local government libraries in Victoria and achieved a state-wide ranking of twelfth.

More than 157,000 Brimbank residents were welcomed through the doors at STACC, a 20% increase on the previous year. Community events funded through the Festivals and Events category of the community grants program saw over 305,000 people engage with these activities, a 97% increase on last year.

The Bowery Theatre also saw significant increases with 66 performing arts events up from 48 the previous year and in turn an increase in attendance with over 8,500 audience members.

Community Engagement

- Services and programs delivered during 2023-2024 were informed by extensive community engagement, including:
 - Regular feedback from customers, residents, and community groups accessing libraries, neighbourhood houses, arts facilities, and BLF services.
 - Direct feedback from program participants, both in-person and online.
 - Collaborative program development with young people, such as career workshops.
 - Consultation with the Brimbank Arts Advisory Committee on public art and mural commissions.

Resource And Risk Implications

Resource requirements were met within the Annual Budget 2023/2024.

There are no community, environmental, financial, regulatory or safety risk implications identified.

Legislation/Council Plan/Policy Context

This report supports the Council Plan 2021-2025 strategic direction and objective of:

1. People and Community - A welcoming, safe and supported community - An inclusive place for all

- Wellbeing and Belonging - Responsive services that support mental and physical wellbeing

3. Opportunity and Prosperity - A future focused, transforming city where all have opportunities to learn and earn - A prosperous place for all

- Earning and Learning - Everyone has access to education, training and lifelong learning to support their aspirations

4. Leadership and Governance - A high performing organisation that enacts the vision and decisions of Council through the delivery of quality and innovative services - A fairer place for all

- Engaged and Responsive - Community insights are valued to enhance connection and engagement with Council.

This report complies with Library Strategy 2020-2025, Neighbourhood Houses and Community Centres Strategy 2019-2024, Arts and Culture Strategy 2024-2028, Festivals and Events Policy and Strategy 2022-2025, Brimbank Lifelong Learning Strategy 2024-2029 and Brimbank Youth Jobs Strategy 2018 – 2023.

Council officers contributing to the preparation and approval of this report, have no conflicts of interests to declare.



Learning and Youth Jobs

Annual Report Card 2023-2024

Brimbank City Council supports a range of activities that foster better learning and employment outcomes for the community.

The Brimbank Lifelong Learning Strategy provides a long-term approach to improving social and economic outcomes and recognises that learning is a driver for positive change. The 2023-2024 financial year saw the adoption of the fourth Brimbank Lifelong Learning Strategy 2024-2029 in November of 2023, building on the work of previous years.

The Brimbank Youth Jobs Strategy 2018-2023 was developed by local young people for local young people, providing a framework for considering and responding to high youth unemployment rates in Brimbank. Brimbank Learning Futures (BLF) is a lifelong learning hub with innovative outreach engagement and responsive programming that connects young people and adults to learning and pathways. BLF is an integral part of delivering the Local Jobs for Local People - Youth Stream in 2024.

Partnerships to enhance Lifelong Learning and Employment outcomes

Council and Brimbank Learning Futures has continued to build on its strategic partnerships in 2023/2024 developing new partnerships and enhancing and expanding existing partnerships for the benefit of the Brimbank community. Partners including Jobs Victoria providers, Victoria University Skills and Jobs Centre, Department of Education and Training, headspace, Orygen Youth Mental Health, MiCare, Jesuit Community College, Settlement Service International, Djerriwarrh Community & Education, Expression Australia, I CAN Network, RMIT, Good Things Foundation, Lively, NGV, CoHealth, Good Shepherd and Legal Aid, The Youth Junction amongst others.

These services support council to provide a range of programs and activities to the community.

Council works with these and other partners and stakeholders to add value to each other's programs for enhanced learning and education and to offer better learning and career pathway outcomes for our community.



Learning programs and services by life stage:

Early Years

- ✓ Parents supported in their roles in children's lives through the promotion of language, literacy and the value of home languages, through the trial of Dari-English bilingual story times, introducing families to early literacy and wider council services and learning programs.
- ✓ Awarded State Government Multicultural story time grant of \$105,750. Funds will be used to work in partnership with Village Response Collective to deliver 80 sessions of Pasifika languages story times over the next four years and 80 sessions of inclusive story times with Auslan-English story times
- ✓ Piloted a community led Cantonese - English bilingual story time to support local families to foster a connection to their home language and provide social support for isolated new mums
- ✓ Working in partnership with Everyday Independence to build staff capacity in libraries & early years to support families with early years speech development and school readiness.
- ✓ Learning-rich programs for pre-school children met through 27,599 attendances at 885 early years pre-literacy and children's literacy programs in libraries.
- ✓ Over 500 families with children aged between 0-5 participated in Brimbank Smalltalk groups and in-home support. Smalltalk focuses on helping parents increase their knowledge of and participation in local, community-based services, and to access more opportunities for community-based social and personal support.
- ✓ Libraries partnered with Smalltalk to increase literacy opportunities for families in the home via an outreach program for playgroup settings, including playgroup story time sessions and a book borrowing program.



School Years & Young People

- ☒ School aged children were supported through the biannual Schools Exchange Network program, a partnership between Brimbank Council, Good Shepherd, Melbourne City Mission and representatives from the Department of Education and local schools. Two professional development sessions for teachers and services working with young people in Brimbank were delivered on how to support young people through School Refusals and emotional resilience, and Loss and Grief.
- ☒ Partnered with Ardoch foundation to deliver Literacy Buddies, a program to support grade 4 students at Ardeer Primary School with literacy, writing and social skills. Held over six months, school children exchange letters with council staff, enhancing their social and literacy skills and developing positive experiences with adults.
- ☒ Brimbank Council continued its \$30,000 scholarship grant to Western Chances to enable more Brimbank students to be supported to stay at school and continue to tertiary education. Western Chances support students to stay at school with practical assistance such as transportation costs, IT, textbooks and stationery.
- ☒ Strengthened the connection between schools and young people that identify with the LGBTQIA+ community through IDAHOBIT, Wear it Purple Day, Pride Month, and other activities with local schools.
- ☒ Collaborated with Lively.org to facilitate intergenerational digital literacy workshops for seniors in the CALD community, giving young people work experience and employment readiness, confidence and presentation skills and public speaking skills.
- ☒ Brimbank Libraries engaged young community members to deliver workshops on writing, motivation and Study Skills, resulting in confidence building, work readiness and speaking and presenting skills.
- ☒ Brimbank Learning Futures in partnership with Libraries and Ardoch Foundation delivered a council careers session. Twenty-eight students met with twelve council staff to learn more about their role and the pathway they took to get there.
- ☒ Launched a rebrand of the annual update of Homework and Study Clubs in Brimbank with a section on wellbeing for young people resource.
- ☒ Continued subscription to Studiosity, a free online tutoring program which provides study help to all students and community members through subject matter experts, that is provided free of charge to the community. The service also supports job seekers by providing feedback on their resume and cover letter and assists with job search skills.
- ☒ Homework and learning support was delivered through 69 education support programs and activities delivered in Neighborhood Houses, with 134 regular attendees.

Adults & Later Life Learning

- ✓ A partnership was developed with Foundation House and Gen West to support Afghan women through a 10-week mental health workshop series. Additional information on early years support was embedded into the program to support the women's parenting journey in Australia.
- ✓ Workshops delivered to target financial literacy and education to support people to navigate increased cost of living, mortgage stress, and debt. Workshops included Budgeting Basics, Bills and your money and Debt Support.
- ✓ Brimbank Libraries received State Government Digital Literacy funding for older adults to enable increased learning participation online throughout 2023. This assisted library staff in the delivery of a number of initiatives aimed at equipping individuals with the tools and knowledge needed to thrive in today's digital landscape. Over 800 participants attended a variety of programs from basic to advanced skill development.
- ✓ Libraries delivered 1,454 adult programs attended by 5,701 participants in partnership with internal and external stakeholders on varied topics, including financial literacy workshops, wellbeing and mindfulness, art and craft, cultural experiences, author talks, writing workshops, digital literacy, self-awareness and job seeking, amongst other topics.
- ✓ Annual update of English Language programs in Brimbank resource developed.
- ✓ In collaboration with the Learn West Network, launched local learning stories during Adult Learners Week highlighting the learning journeys of community members in Brimbank. Stories were published quarterly in the Celebrating Learning newsletter, online on the Discover Learning in Brimbank website, and on the Learn West webpage.
- ✓ Celebrating Learning newsletter distributed online, sharing local projects, good news stories, information and resources relating to learning in all its forms.
- ✓ 154,675 page views on Discover Learning in Brimbank, an online directory of no charge and low-cost activities, courses and programs available in Brimbank through Council and community service providers. This is a 26.5 % increase from the previous year.



Learning and Employment innovation

- ✓ In partnership with Village Response Collective, four Pasifika women trained in story time delivery to support literacy development in Samoan, Tongan, Tovalu and English. The women will be employed to deliver bilingual story times in Brimbank over four years.
- ✓ In collaboration with Lively.org employed one local young Brimbank community member to deliver intergenerational digital literacy programs
- ✓ Piloted the use of virtual reality (VR) careers exploration and interviews with schools and community groups, including Hester Hornbrook Academy and Western English Language School. VR headsets are loaded with careers experiences and interview skills software to give young people virtual experience of different careers and an opportunity to practice interview skills.
- ✓ In collaboration with Matchworks and Victoria University, participated in the Rainbow Jobs expo aimed at connecting LGBTIQ+ community and others to employment opportunities and supports.



Brimbank Learning Futures - supporting young people and community with their career pathways

- ✓ Weekly one on one Careers Counselling Sessions held in partnership with Victoria University Skills and Jobs Centre's career counsellor. This program assisted 154 residents with careers advice, resumes and job readiness support at Brimbank Learning Futures and St Albans Library.
- ✓ Improved young people's entrepreneurial skills through skill building workshops and events including the Makers Market End of Year event and Showcase attracting 130 participants.
- ✓ Provided paid opportunities for young people to contribute to co-design committees, consultations and supporting a range of community events and programs.
- ✓ Partnered with St John's Ambulance to deliver CPR and First Aid accredited and non-accredit courses in 3021 and 3020 as part of the Defib in your street program.
- ✓ Partnered with Jesuit Community College and Brimbank Neighbourhood House unit to deliver training opportunities for community, including, Food safety, barista training, white card, computer skills and responsible service of alcohol. These low or no cost courses were delivered to 125 community members.
- ✓ Delivered training opportunities for women in trades, including partnering with Women in Trades Australia for information sessions and delivering a Women's White Card - Safety Induction Training. 20 women participated in these sessions.
- ✓ Collaborated with Brimbank Neighbourhood Houses to support education and employment through accredited courses, career counselling, and community engagement, improving connections with local schools and offering tailored support for local residents.
- ✓ Community Learning and Participation units collaborated with Youth Services, Economic Development, and Leisure to deliver National Careers Week activities including employability and youth interview skills workshops and the Brimbank Local Jobs Showcase. Over 300 residents attend seven local activities during careers week.
- ✓ Delivered the 'Your Career Your Way' program for sixteen women aged 45+, providing employment support and skills training through a partnership with Victoria University Skills and Jobs Centre.
- ✓ Worked with young people and Brimbank Youth Services to co-design Linked In Real Life, a monthly networking opportunity for young people to connect them to leaders in different industries and discuss career pathways in a safe and supportive environment.



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Brimbank Neighbourhood Houses and Community Centres

Annual Report Card 2023-2024

Brimbank Council Neighbourhood Houses and Community Centres provide opportunities for people to connect and learn, strengthen cultural identities, and build a sense of belonging in individuals and groups across all life stages.

Much was achieved in the fifth year of the Council's Neighbourhood Houses and Community Centers Strategy and Action Plan 2019-2024, and momentum continues to build in evaluating the past 5 years in preparation of the development of the 2025 - 2030 strategy and action plan.

In 2023-2024 in response to community needs and aspirations during tough economic periods and increased cost of living pressures, the focused was on building community resilience and agency through capacity-building and psychosocial support programs, as well as initiatives that improve health, wellbeing, and economic outcomes.

Highlights

Neighbourhood Houses and Community Centres continued to support the community with access to services to improve health and wellbeing outcomes.

- ✓ Developing multi-use outdoor spaces at three Community Centres, fostering community engagement through partnerships, innovative projects and initiatives that transformed street art stereotypes, thereby enhancing social connections and community-led activities.
- ✓ Enhanced young people's entrepreneurial skills through organising events like Makers Showcase, hosting the Makers Market End of Year event and Showcase attracting 130 participants, and facilitating network growth through Linked-In Real Life, alongside impactful entrepreneurial and diversity-focused workshops.
- ✓ Partnered with Brimbank Learning Futures achieved significant outcomes including accredited hospitality courses, micro-credential programs, tax assistance for low-income earners, youth mentoring in music industry skills, VCE study support, extensive career counselling, and successful employment placements.
- ✓ Partnered with St John's Ambulance to deliver CPR and First Aid accredited and non-accredit courses in 3021 and 3020 as part of the Defib in your street program.
- ✓ Implemented a range of programs at Neighbourhood Houses to combat social isolation. Some of these activities' programs including ballroom dancing, gardening, and psychosocial support
- ✓ Engaged with Westvale Men's Shed to expand programming and utilise outdoor spaces effectively, fostering partnerships and intergenerational skills sharing.
- ✓ Partnered with local organisations to deliver psychosocial support programs, offered online parenting support in collaboration with Relationships Australia, and piloted an All-Abilities Health and Wellbeing Program with Inclusion Melbourne and Reclink.
- ✓ Implemented strategies to increase the availability of fresh fruits and vegetable options across all council managed Neighbourhood houses and community canterers. Have delivered 9 seminars with more than 180 attendees on health eating and wellbeing, Achieved the Vic Kids Eat Well small bite 'Switch to healthier snacks' & Boost veggies and salad' accreditation at West Sunshine Community Centre and Sydenham Neighbourhood House.
- ✓ Partnered with VU Skills and Jobs Centre, Maternal & Child Health, and MiCare to successfully implement the 'Your Career Your Way' program, delivering courses in computing and digital skills to 25 women from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds aged 45 and over, bilingual first aid information sessions to over 40 parents, and Department of Health-funded first aid training to 60 parents.
- ✓ Partnered with VU Skills and Jobs Centre to launch the 'Your Career Your Way' Return to Paid Employment workshop for women aged 45 and above.
- ✓ Provided volunteers with opportunities to contribute meaningfully to social and community outcomes that align with community needs and strategic goals. Across Neighbourhood Houses, volunteers were engaged for an average of 102 hours per week, with an annual replacement value of \$229,500.



Highlights in Leadership, Partnerships, and Innovation in Programming

Provided leadership to the Brimbank Neighbourhood Houses Strategic Partnership (made up of both Council managed and Community run NH/CCs)

- ✓ The Brimbank Neighbourhood Cluster met quarterly, marked by collaborative engagement, enriching discussions, and strategic planning efforts that highlighted stakeholders' dedication to community development. The session established a strong groundwork for continued collaboration to progress key initiatives and setting a positive path for the 2024-25 year. The Cluster anticipates leveraging these discussions to implement impactful actions that will benefit the entire community in line with the Neighbourhood Houses Strategic Partnership Agreement and Action Plan for 2022-2025.
- ✓ Provided grants totaling \$140,000 to four community managed Neighbourhood Houses. This included \$35,000 per house as part of the Council's annual contribution grant.
- ✓ Partnered with St John of God Ambulance to support the Defib in Your Street CPR training program, facilitated by St John Ambulance. This initiative aims to establish some of the safest locations in Australia by responding to sudden cardiac arrest incidents. Throughout 23/24-year weekly training sessions were held across Council managed Neighbourhood Houses with over 400 residents in 3021 trained and 17 publicly accessible defib's installed. The programs have been able to reach over 3000 community members through informal awareness raising and eLearning courses.
- ✓ Celebrated Neighbourhood House Week. "Stronger Together," was the theme. Range of come and try programs and collaborative initiatives were delivered across all houses and centres. Over 250 people came together for activities such as morning teas, social gatherings, dance, historical and site tours, walks, art and craft workshops, exercise, gardening, and tree giveaway. The week enabled staff and community to strengthen relationships and forge new ones, at the same time create awareness of programming and services.

Support Children and Families to Connect and Learn

- ✓ Organised over 40 sessions of no-to-low-cost school holiday activities, benefiting over 500 families across various locations within the municipality. They fostered positive relationships, strengthen family bonds, promoted health and wellbeing, and improved the skills, independence, resilience, and sense of belonging of children and young people in Brimbank. Activities offered included sports clinics, arts-based activities, robotics, and other interactive play sessions designed to engage and inspire.
- ✓ Delivered more than 150 play group sessions with approximately 500 families reached. The program supports and connects parents, and focuses on promoting children's developmental domains (cognitive, language, physical and social-emotional) of children aged six months to five years and building family relationships.
- ✓ Delivered more than 150 Physical activity sessions for ages 7 to 13 years reaching 200 participants. These sessions offered a range of activities including basketball, soccer, tennis, and catering for a range of abilities.
- ✓ Delivered 153 arts sessions and 69 education-based programs reaching more than 800 participants to increase self-confidence, expression, identity and belonging.
- ✓ Partnered with Relationships Australia Victoria to deliver parenting support programs and Tuning into Kids - Circle of Security for parents & carers.
- ✓ Partnered with Brimbank's Early Years Network to design and deliver engagement activities in Brimbank aimed at increasing awareness amongst vulnerable families of Child Maternal health services and to improve service access.
- ✓ Partnered with several local primary schools in Kings Park to conduct a 6-week Street Art workshop, engaging several students under the guidance of a young local street artist.

Support Young People to Connect and Learn

- ✓ Provided over 15 Youth programs and events, over 150 sessions held with 2,000 young people attending.
- ✓ Delivered several art exhibitions at the Hunt Club Community Arts Centre that attracted over 1000 attendees. These exhibitions explored themes such as mental health, identity, freedom, and agency, with a notable highlight being 'Re Present' highlighting artwork created by local talents.
- ✓ Continued 'The House!' creative arts program for young people, facilitated by young people themselves. The program attracted 43 participants from diverse cultural backgrounds, with sessions held twice weekly.
- ✓ Partnered with Brimbank Youth Services, Sydenham Library and Youth Support + Advocacy Service to deliver 'Chill Out,' a drop-in youth program offering local young people a safe space after school for recreational activities, connection with services, and employment support.
- ✓ Held an end-of-year Makers Market at Sydenham Neighbourhood House. The event highlighted music performances from 'The House' music program, community performances, and displayed art designed by young local entrepreneurs.
- ✓ Provided placement opportunities for secondary and tertiary students to gain practical experience and contribute to community initiatives.
- ✓ Partnered with the Royal Children's Hospital Festival for Healthy Living to organize the Dream BIG Youth Music Festival for R U Ok Day. Over 350 young people aged 8 to 25 from 16 schools in Brimbank, Melton, and Wyndham participated, promoting positive mental health from a youth perspective. The event, held at the Bowery Theatre and livestreamed, reached over 1,000 viewers.



Create a Culture of Race Equity in everything we do

- ✓ The Unit's team represents 19 distinct cultural backgrounds. This diversity is spread across all genders, band levels, including leadership roles.
- ✓ The Unit continued to embed First Nations knowledge and awareness into activities. These include Indigenous Sensory Garden aimed at increasing awareness of Aboriginal culture and educating community about the significance of Indigenous plants. NAIDOC Week programming for all life stages and the embedment of Acknowledgement of Country as standard practice in meetings, programs, and events.
- ✓ Celebrated Cultural Diversity week with three small scale events, where 145 people attended. The Unit hosted a story-sharing event in celebration of Refugee Week attended by 50 people.
- ✓ Partnered with local culturally and linguistically diverse community groups to support with self-determined activities and programs to address self-identified need in their communities.
- ✓ Build Intergenerational Connections and Support Adults and Seniors to Connect and Learn:
- ✓ Delivered a 6-week intergenerational program Future Woodworkers Project in local primary schools. Participants from Westvale Men's shed mentored students equipping them with basic woodworking skills.
- ✓ Implemented Men's Health education programs as part of the Westvale Community Centre Men's Shed Program.
- ✓ Provided support to community members to access the Power Saving Bonus and Tax Help program.
- ✓ Partnered with Brimbank Maternal and Child Health Services and local organisations to deliver support to newly arrived women who are at risk of isolation. This included enrolments into childcare and kindergarten, access to essentials such as prams, car seats, children's clothes and toys and driving lessons.
- ✓ Partnered with local community groups and organisation to deliver women's health and wellbeing initiatives such as arts therapy, physical activity and social sessions including celebrating International Women's Day where local women engaged in a variety of health and art-based workshops and activities to learn strategies to improve mental and wellbeing.
- ✓ Provided 15 in person and online activities and two small scale events for Men's Health Week, concluding with a main event engaging more than 400 people from cross section of the community to learn about men's health and wellbeing.
- ✓ Supported digital inclusion and access by delivering targeted programs and training to vulnerable communities to increase skills to enhance wellbeing and connection. These included computer, device and smartphone classes, drop-in computer access and assistance with online self-learning tools. Attended by more than 350 participants.
- ✓ Provided over 200 community programs through 3000 sessions to enhance learning, improve health and wellbeing, increase physical activity, reduce isolation, support family and social connections and sense of belonging.
- ✓ Provided access to several community gardens across the municipality and delivered sustainable living workshops covering a range of topics including gardening, nutrition, and mitigation of food insecurity. The initiative contributed to improved health and wellbeing through increased social connection, culturally valued activities, and active living.



Working with a wide range of organisations to better serve Brimbank communities

- ✓ Partnered with over 90 community groups to deliver community-led programs supporting health, wellbeing, lifelong learning, and pathways to employment, while enhancing community connection and resilience. This collaboration has facilitated locally tailored and evidence-based solutions to address local needs and issues, promoting better futures for residents.
- ✓ Partnered with local community groups, organisations and schools to provide opportunities for community to connect, learn about local programs, and access services tailored for all life stages.



Case study: Helping to keep a young Sudanese man focused on his creative passion

Neighbourhood Houses provides a variety of safe spaces for community to work, study, meet, and connect. Sydenham Neighbourhood House has a recording studio where a young Sudanese man, D Kuir, or DK as he is known, can often be found laying down tracks, rapping and singing.

'I've been singing and rapping since I was 11 years old. When I was about 17, I decided to take my music seriously and so far, I've written over 400 songs. I try to get to Sydenham every day to get in the zone and record music.'

'I've seen too many people I know go down the wrong path with life. I'm using music to make a better life,' said DK.

Mohammed Isah who is the Neighbourhood House Unit Coordinator is proud of the positive difference DK is making to his life.

'It's great when we see a community member loving what they do and really making the most of the spaces on offer. DK really sticks out in my mind as someone who was dedicated and determined to work at their passion. The resources on offer to the community can make a huge difference in the life course a young person can take.'

Search for D Kuir on YouTube and you'll see slick music videos showing this young man living his best life.



Brimbank Council Managed Neighbourhood Houses and Community Centres

📍 Cairnlea Community Hub

59 Carmody Drive, Cairnlea, VIC 3023

📍 Delahey Community Centre

70 Copperfield Drive, Delahey, VIC 3037

📍 Hunt Club Arts and Community Centre

775 Ballarat Road, Deer Park, VIC 3023

📍 Sydenham Neighbourhood House

Level 1, 1 Station Street, Watergardens Town Centre, Taylors Lakes, VIC 3038

📍 West Sunshine Community Centre

25 Kermeen Street, Sunshine West, VIC 3020

📍 Westvale Community Centre

45 Kings Road, St Albans, VIC 3021

📍 Keilor Community Hub program spaces

704B Old Calder Highway, Keilor, VIC 3036

📍 Brimbank Learning Futures

80B Harvester Road, Sunshine, VIC 3020

For further information contact:

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Photographed by Carla Gottgens

Creative Brimbank Arts and Culture Unit

Annual Report Card 2023-2024

Attachment 12.7.3

Major Successes

YOUNG, BLAK & DEADLY

Young, Blak and Deadly is an ongoing career development and mentoring program run in partnership with independent artist, Lisa Maza (Meriam/Yidindji/Dutch). Starting in 2021, the program is for Blakfulla, Koori/e, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people who want to connect with passionate Blakfulla Creative Professionals in the arts and media industries. The program provides opportunities to learn new skills, connect with other young, blak and deadly locals, and learn about the creative industry from industry leaders. Young, Blak and Deadly partners with artists and arts organisations to work with Koorie Engagement Support Officers (KESOS) and schools. Our partners include Western Edge Youth Arts, LiveFM and Copperfield College.

In our May 2024 session at Bowery Theatre, the students learnt how to create and produce a radio show which included interviewing professional artists.

"Working in the arts can be an exciting adventure as well as a fulfilling career path. It takes creativity and hard work and is such an important way to ensure our stories continue to be told our way." - Lisa Maza.



Major Successes

BE BOLD FESTIVAL

The Be Bold Festival is Council's community arts festival. Held annually, it celebrates Brimbank's diverse communities through cultural practices, visual art, theatre, music, dance, food and more. In 2023, the festival engaged 2750 audience members and over 80 arts and cultural practitioners.

Programming highlights included the Welcome to Country and boomerang throwing by Uncle Ian Hunter, the inflatable dragon, Giant Lac Long Quan (Vietnamese) which stood as a centrepiece on Errington Reserve. The 20 year celebratory performance of the

Brimbank Multicultural Community Choir, roaming giant puppet seagulls by Snuff Puppets, fluorescent painting in the dark, several multicultural recipes shared in the Cultural Kitchen including one from renowned chef and local, Shane Delia (Middle Eastern), the Resonate youth music showcase, Obang (Korean) a theatre installation in the Bowery Theatre, the ever-popular St Albans Foodie Tours, participatory family fun at the Kooky Karnival and performances by L2R Dance, Tinikling (Philippines) and Kud Dukat (Bosnia).



Attachment 12.7.3



Photographed by Carla Gottgens

Major Successes

RESONATE - BOWERY MUSIC SERIES

Resonate is a music development program that showcases local musicians alongside internationally renowned acts to build artists' profiles and audiences.

Resonate was a two-part series curated by PBS DJ, MzRizk bringing together a line-up of diverse musicians and headlined by First Nations singer, Ziggy Ramo and soul songstress, THNDO. Supports included nationally renowned bands and MCs including Cool Out Sun, Bilalli, HALO Vocal Ensemble, YARA and Immy Owusu. In 2024 the program included a youth development initiative that enabled five young musicians the chance to perform in this series alongside mentors.

Resonate had a visual design component that saw young people participate to develop neon lighting for the stage design. Several other carefully curated elements came together to build a world of music including foyer lighting and performances, cultural catering, audience outreach, documentation and the gallery exhibitions.

The 2024 program was funded with support from the Victoria State Government's On the Road Again program delivered by Music Victoria to bring live music back across the state.



Photographed by Nam Nguyen



Photographed by Nam Nguyen



Photographed by Nam Nguyen

Major Successes

MURAL PROJECTS

As part of our ongoing mural program to transform public spaces, six new murals have been painted across the municipality. One of the highlights is a vibrant mural added to complement the recently upgraded playground at Monash Pizzey Reserve. These murals help prevent graffiti, create a sense of place, and build community pride.

Artist Stephanie Cartledge, known for using eco-friendly materials and bold geometric illustrations, created three designs centred around the endangered growling grass frog. To engage the local community, residents were invited to vote for their favourite design through Your Say Brimbank.

Stephanie's work emphasises the beauty and significance of the natural world, highlighting the important intersection of art, community, and environmental awareness.



Photo: Stephanie Cartledge, Monash Pizzey Reserve Mural, 2024

Major Successes

PUBLIC ART TRAIL MAPS

Creative Brimbank supports our vibrant, inclusive and thriving arts ecosystem to enrich the lives of community members and contribute to the identity and wellbeing of Brimbank.

To continue the commitment to connecting the arts and community, two Public Art Trail Maps have been created. Using these maps, everyone is invited to explore Brimbank by foot or bike and discover public art in their neighborhood. The map aims to be an accessible physical guide to Council's public art collection, engaging with the community, encouraging participation, and attracting visitors from outside the municipality to visit the area. To promote the maps and the public artwork, a video series has been created that profiles the artists behind the works, which can be viewed on the Creative Brimbank YouTube channel, Instagram, and Facebook profiles.



Arts and Culture Programs – Fast Facts

Bowery Theatre

8,578

Audience attendees
to performances or events

66

Performing arts events
by curated artists and hirers

4

performing artists or groups
supported by a Bowery Residency

Youth Arts Programs

1,128

Attendees
at youth and FreeZa workshops

75

Workshops delivered
For youth and FreeZa

38

Young musicians
Supported as performers

Visual Arts

828

Attendees
to art workshops and public programs

6

New murals
across the municipality

17

Artists
supported through the studio program

St Albans Community Centre

157,219

Visitors
for programs and events

2,378

Bookings
for regular activities, casual use, events and functions

Community Cultural Development

150

Attendees
at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs and events

306

Workshops in
music, visual arts, circus, creative writing and dance

6120

Attendees
at community arts workshops and events

Community Festivals

305,047

Attendees
at community led events

27

Events
Delivered by community safely

550

Volunteers

66,000

Hours
of volunteer time at events

Creative Brimbank - Online Stats

2,858

Facebook followers

570

YouTube subscribers

546,000+

people reached through social media (Facebook and Instagram)

1,877

Instagram followers

2,874

Creative Brimbank subscribers

254,500+

actions taken on our website

Brimbank City Council

Telephone 9249 4000

Email info@brimbank.vic.gov.au

Post PO Box 70, Sunshine, VIC 3020

Hearing or speech impaired?

- TTY dial 133 677
- Speak & Listen 1300 555 727
- www.relayservice.gov.au, then enter 03 9249 4000



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131 450

Local call costs apply



Use Brimby, the online virtual assistant
brimbank.vic.gov.au



DRAFT

Library Services Report Card

2023-2024

Imagine, Explore, Discover, Connect.

Attachment 12.7.4

Brimbank Libraries

Libraries Change Lives - Building a connected community



Brimbank Writers & Readers Festival 2024

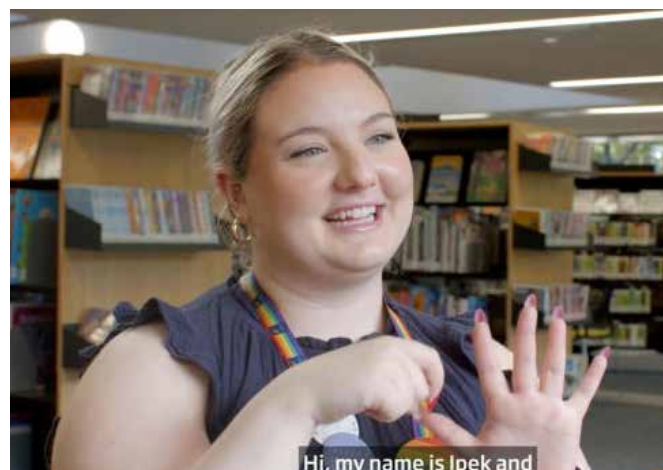
- ✓ The 2024 Brimbank Writers & Readers Festival had an extremely successful opening night event with Melburnian of the Year Kon Karapanagiotidis, Hamed Allahyari, Norni Bero and Jaclyn Crupi talking about family, heritage, food, and connection. *"Just wanted to congratulate you on an incredible event tonight - wow! I didn't want it to end. What a panel. Such a privilege to hear everyone's experiences; their passion was so inspiring and Paul's facilitation was fantastic. A nice reminder too that everyone has an incredible story to tell and to cherish tradition which can and is so often taken for granted. I and could see many others in the audience were really touched by the event so a huge thank you for your work in pulling it together and having me along tonight"* - Natalie

"Congratulations on a fantastic event this evening - I really enjoyed all the speakers, the interviewer did a great job, and the food was delicious! You hit the trifecta!! You and the team have obviously put in a lot of work and it paid off. I was really touched by the stories and the audience were clearly really moved" - Diane



A focus on Inclusion at Brimbank Libraries

- ✓ Training of Brimbank Libraries staff in Auslan has continued over the 23/24 year. An additional 17 staff have gone on to complete Level 2 Training. Staff at St Albans Library were able to put their Auslan training into practice during a grade 3 and 4 school visit to the library. After being asked to wear a listening device by the teacher to support one of the students with their hearing, the staff member made eye contact with the young student and in Auslan, introduced herself and asked the students' name. The student's eyes lit up as he signed his name in response. Staff were able to support the student throughout the visit, helping them to browse the collection, borrow items and importantly, feel included. Staff observed that the student, who was noticeably overwhelmed at the beginning of the session, had immediately relaxed when connecting with staff through Auslan, and left the session beaming after waving and giving the thumbs up to staff. Staff at another Brimbank Libraries branch were also able to support a family attending an early year's science program 'Little Scientist Club'. The staff noticed the mother and son signing together and were able to sign with the family through the 4-week program. The Auslan Training initiative was presented at the 2024 National ALIA Conference in Adelaide and inspired many library services to consider Auslan training for their staff.



Staff support customer to get her dream job!

✓ "A couple of weeks ago you (library staff) helped me out by signing me up, booking me a study booth and providing me with headphones so I could do an online interview. You absolutely saved my day and I think you were fabulous. I wanted to follow up and let you know I got the job! It's my DREAM JOB in Darwin! I'm so totally thrilled. It wouldn't have happened without you and I'm so grateful. Librarians bring a lot of joy to the world'. - Jennifer

Library staff really do change lives and are the most invaluable resource in supporting customers. 9,731 room bookings were recorded across Deer Park and Sunshine Libraries highlighting the value of our spaces for library customers, and 960 digital inclusion and job search support programs and sessions were delivered, assisting 2399 individuals.

Accessibility Program for all abilities at Sydenham Library

✓ The inaugural five-week accessibility program for all abilities has concluded. Participants were excited to be involved in the program and learn new things, and it has provided carers the opportunity to network and learn from each other. It allowed carers and participants to meet and make new friends, as well as making participants feel more welcome and comfortable in library spaces.

Engaging with young people at Sydenham Library

✓ At Sydenham Libraries, our recent 'Loud in the Library' event proved to be a resounding success, drawing in a diverse group of young people. Among the attendees were three Year 12 students who discovered the event through their school newsletter. One of these students, a dedicated library enthusiast, shared an inspiring insight. She proudly told our staff that she subscribes to the library's Eventbrite page, keeping her friends informed about youth programs. With a grin, she added, "There's free food, why wouldn't you?"

The event also showcased the thoughtfulness of our younger patrons. A Year 7 student impressed the staff with his consideration for his friends' dietary needs. Before indulging in the provided refreshments, he approached the staff to ensure there were pizza options suitable for his friends - one who couldn't eat pork and another who avoided beef. Once assured of his friends' well-being, this young man's curiosity turned to library memberships, eagerly inquiring about the process and benefits.

The impact of 'Loud in the Library' extended beyond the event itself. The following week, we were delighted to see four young men who had attended the event return, this time bringing adults with them to sign up for library memberships. This heartening turn of events demonstrated the power of engaging youth programs in fostering a love for libraries and reading among our community's younger generation.



Seniors Digital Literacy Project - Supporting Self-Confidence and Skill Development

- ✓ As part of the Victorian government funded Seniors Digital Literacy Project, library staff facilitated weekly eHelp Drop-in sessions at Sunshine Library. Sessions supported community members to grow their skills and self-confidence in using technology. One customer was very eager to learn about iPads and tablets and what kind of device would suit his needs. The customer found a tablet on sale that had the features he was interested in, and he brought it in to the next session. Staff helped him with setup and introduced basics such as how to turn the device on, swiping and tapping and using the on-screen keyboard. The customer soon progressed to email, internet and downloading apps. Over the following weeks, the customer was excited to discover entertainment through streaming TV services, reading eBooks, listening to music, checking cinema websites for current screenings, as well as accessing library mobile print services. Months later the same customer visited the library and staff could see that his understanding and skills had improved greatly. The customer was able to comfortably navigate his tablet and had independently downloaded new apps and customised his device. 800 community members participated in the Seniors Digital Literacy project in 2023.



Creativity in the Maker Space

- ✓ Since its launch in September 2023, the Deer Park Makerspace has become a vibrant hub of creativity and community engagement. With 90 programs hosted and 421 attendees, it has quickly established itself as a popular service. The space has also cultivated a dedicated following, with 185 community members achieving "Super User" status and an impressive 120 booked visits outside of regular class hours.

The impact of the Makerspace extends far beyond numbers. Many participants have reported significant improvements in their mental health. One customer with a disability shared how the space has become a positive outlet, encouraging them to leave home and explore their creativity. Another attendee, visiting from a rehab center at Sunshine Hospital, expressed appreciation for the change of pace and the welcoming library environment during a mug design class.

The Makerspace's appeal has even reached beyond our borders when a visitor from the UK discovered the space while planning her trip via Eventbrite. Intrigued by the offerings, she booked a session for the 'Upcycle Your Clothes' workshop before leaving the UK and brought along one of her grandmother's vintage dresses, which she transformed into a cute scrunchie during the session, creating a unique memento of her visit.

These stories underscore the Makerspace's role not just as a creative outlet, but as a catalyst for personal growth, rehabilitation, and cross-cultural connections. It has quickly become an integral part of the community, offering diverse opportunities for learning, socializing, and self-expression.



Supporting the Community in a Heat Wave - Brimbank Library HeatSafe Packs

✓ Recognizing Brimbank residents' vulnerability to the heat island effect, all Brimbank Library branches served as cooling refuges during extreme heat. To extend support beyond operating hours, Libraries in collaboration with other council units created HeatSafe packs, which included a microfibre neck towel and a postcard with heatwave safety information and emergency contacts. During the project, 327 HeatSafe kits were distributed on days over 30 degrees. Staff walked around the library on hot days offering neck towels and support information to those impacted by the heat. Taxi vouchers were also made available to community members who were walking home or catching public transport in extreme heat. The impact this project had on the community was substantial and noted through several stories captured throughout the project. Many community members of all ages expressed happiness and relief when using the neck towels. Library staff noted that the community were impacted by the heat in various ways, such as walking to the library, waiting for public transport after school, and having no air conditioning at home. The library provided a safe space for them to cool down, access the towels, cool water and obtain important information to support their health in extreme heat. Library staff recorded kit distribution details to evaluate the project and plan future initiatives aimed at supporting the community's health and wellbeing as the community adapts to the effects of the changing climate. Over the Labour Day long weekend, the Library team extended Sunshine Library opening hours to support the community with a cool space on Sunday. Staff also opened both the Sydenham and Sunshine Library on the Monday public holiday to serve as a haven from the heat. The CEO publically thanked the Library Staff in her Staff news update: "Thank you to all the [library] staff who were involved in managing this over the weekend and helped our community throughout the heatwave."

School Holidays

✓ School holiday programs are growing in popularity, with over 1000 participants attending. Each program features a diverse range of engaging activities that cater to various interests and ages, in a safe and welcoming learning environment for all participants. Activities have included Science Shows, Author and Illustrator workshops, STEAM learning and much more.

A record number of participants joined this years BIG Summer Read, a competition designed to keep children reading across the summer holidays to keep up their literacy skills. Nearly a thousand children (989 to be exact) registered for the summer program, with 287 of them actively participating in various literacy support activities. These engaging programs kept families involved in learning throughout the summer break. The diverse offerings included tech taster sessions, live action role-playing games, and STEAM-based activities, providing a rich mix of educational experiences.



Attachment 12.7.4



Reading Buddies Program at St Albans Library

- ✓ St Albans Library is fortunate to partner with St Albans Secondary College for the Reading Buddies program to enable children a safe space to practice their reading. Fourteen high school students volunteered time out of their busy schedules on Tuesday afternoons to listen to local children reading aloud. Throughout 2023/24, a total of 117 children visited the library and practiced their reading 413 times. Over 700 books were enjoyed with one prep child reading 75 individual books, followed closely by a grade 2 child with 74 books. It was a pleasure watching the children's literacy skills improve, as well as their confidence. The program is also an opportunity for the high school students to gain confidence and do some volunteering in their local community. The coordinator at St Albans Secondary College said "THANK YOU! This program is just outstanding and my students write passionately about it when applying for tertiary scholarships. They get as much out of it as the children." One of the students regretfully had to scale back her volunteering because of Year 12 commitments but had this to say "I would like to formally thank you for giving me the opportunity to join the Reading Buddies program last year. It was truly a fantastic journey. It's more than just "helping the kids' enhance their reading skills... During those times, we're able to connect to them, get to know them a bit with their fun little stories when a character in their storybook triggers a memory in their minds. It's also fulfilling to witness their progress as they become more and more confident with reading (especially when they can finally choose any book that catches their eye!) So, thank you. For opening this door for me. For guiding us when the kids are being a bit naughty. And for ensuring a safe space for everyone to grow."



The Sustainability Portal - Sustainability information support for Victorian Communities and Library Staff

- ✓ The Public Libraries Victoria (PLV) Sustainability Portal, launched in February 2024, has been a game-changer for our community, supporting both library professionals and local residents in their sustainability efforts. The portal, which has been featured in respected news and journal articles such as INCITE (Australian Library & Information Association), ALIA Green, Public Libraries Victoria News, and ENSULIB (International Federation of Libraries Association), offers comprehensive resources aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Highlighting sustainable initiatives like seed libraries and e-waste bins, the portal has significantly raised environmental awareness and action within our city and has supported library staff to begin having conversations with community about the SDGs. Brimbank Libraries are represented on an interactive map for having the following sustainable initiatives accessible to the community in their spaces: Seed Library, Library of Things, E-Waste Bins and Energy Saver Kits. The website was created by a Brimbank Libraries staff member, who has since been awarded a scholarship through the State Library Victoria. The scholarship will be undertaken during 2024 and focuses on developing a Sustainable Development framework and Sustainable Accreditation program intended for Victorian Public Libraries. The Sustainability Portal was presented at the ALIA 2024 National Conference. By celebrating an industry culture and focus on sustainability, the PLV Sustainability Portal is proving to be an invaluable asset to our community's environmental and social well-being.

 <https://www.plv.org.au/sustainability-home/>



Music at Brimbank Libraries

- ✓ St Albans Library hosted local band 'The Hackets', a music group made up of members with and without disability, with three of them being Brimbank locals. Guitarist and singer Peter is a stalwart regular at our libraries! Initially a cover band, they have branched out into writing their own songs, culminating in their recent album 'So Faar, So Good'.

Locally acclaimed musician Harrie remarked "they've sold more merch tonight than I ever have!" Another listener said "they've got clear roots in Beatles and Creedence Clearwater Revival, but they've totally owned it and made it their own." Staff member Jennifer added, "Peter came into the library on Saturday and we had a good chat about the show, he was stoked." Peter said *"it was great to perform in my home suburb. We all felt so welcome. Thank you."*



Providing better access to eBooks

- ✓ Brimbank Libraries has introduced access to eBooks via cloudLibrary. This new digital lending platform replaces our previous Libby platform, and offers enhanced features allowing the community to discover and access more eBooks than ever before. cloudLibrary allows community members access to over 65,000 eBook titles, compared to around 8,000 we had available via Libby. This increased range of titles is thanks to the platform supporting libraries to share access to their collections, meaning we can offer this increased collection within a similar financial investment to Libby.

Curiosity and Learning

- ✓ Starting in mid-2023 all five branches of Brimbank Libraries improved access to Junior Non-Fiction materials, separating these titles from the Adult collection. Junior Non-Fiction collections have been housed close to other Junior materials, and have enhanced child-friendly signage within the collection.

The move improves the visibility of the collection, encourages children to explore its contents for general curiosity – not just for school projects, and increases exposure to topics that celebrate diversity, and celebrate our cultural heritage.

Since implementing the change, there has been a 35% increase in the number of loans of Junior non-fiction materials.



WELCOMING SPACES

New Shade Sail at Keilor Library Outdoor Lounge

- ✓ In response to community feedback, Keilor Library has had a new shade sail installed in its outdoor learning lounge. The addition of the shade sail not only offers a cool respite for visitors but also opens up exciting possibilities for expanded programs and activities, fostering a dynamic learning environment for all community members. So far the area has been utilised for a children's petting zoo, gardening workshops and bee keeping sessions.



Improved child friendly shelving at Keilor Library

- ✓ The Keilor Library has recently installed enhanced picture book shelving, resulting in a more open and inviting environment for community members to sit and relax. This newly designed space is also utilised for the delivery of children's programs and now features improved accessibility for individuals with prams and wheelchairs.



New gaming area at St Albans Library

- ✓ In response to community feedback, the St Albans library has introduced a new gaming area to better meet the interests and recreational needs of its customers. This initiative reflects the library's commitment to adapting its services based on the evolving preferences of the community.

The gaming area is equipped with various gaming consoles and an array of popular video games, designed to appeal to a wide range of age groups and interests. This addition aims to foster a sense of community, encourage social interaction, and provide a modern recreational space within the library.

The response to the new gaming area has been overwhelmingly positive, with many community members expressing their enthusiasm and appreciation. The introduction of this space is expected to attract a more diverse audience to the library, enhancing its role as a dynamic and inclusive community hub.



Libraries has a strong finish to financial year

- ✓ Brimbank Libraries have recorded a strong finish to the 2023/24 financial year. Loans of the library collection have increased from the same time last year across all 5 library branches.

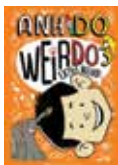
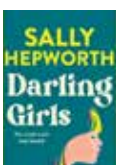
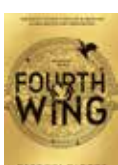
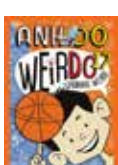
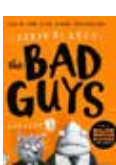
In the last 12 months, libraries have made improvements to increase access to our junior non-fiction collections – this has led to an overall 35% increase in the usage of junior non-fiction across all libraries – with Sydenham Library recording a 62% increase.

The recent introduction of cloudLibrary has seen an increase in usage of eBooks compared to the previous Libby platform – around 87% from April.

Top Circulating Titles for the financial year are dominated by children's authors Aaron Blabey and Anh Do – taking 10 out of the 15 top spots.

Top Charts

Top circulating titles for 2023-2024 financial year

1		2		3	
4		5		6	
7		8		9	
10		11		12	
13		14		15	

Attachment 12.7.4

Supporting Work Experience Students

- ✓ Brimbank Libraries is committed to supporting work experience opportunities for secondary and tertiary students requiring placement to complete their course. In 2023-2024 libraries supported 25 paid and non-paid placements across the five library locations. Library Industry placements provide students an opportunity to put into practice theory learnt in their course, positively support the library profession whilst also offering the libraries unit opportunity to recruit outstanding library professionals when vacancies exist. Placements for Secondary, Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL), Duke of Edinburgh and special needs students are designed to build positive relationships and build on student strengths.

A solid start to early years literacy

- ✓ A proud parent visited the library to collect a certificate on behalf of his son who completed the "1000 Books Before School" challenge. The family's joy was palpable as they shared how this program had transformed their young reader. Thanks to the library's initiative, their son had developed a deep love for reading, a gift that will undoubtedly serve him well throughout his life.

To commemorate this milestone, the parents organized a celebration - they threw a literature-space themed party for him, blending his newfound passion for reading with the wonders of outer space. This creative fusion not only marked the child's accomplishment but also highlighted how the library's programs can spark imagination and foster a lifelong love of learning.

The family's gratitude and enthusiasm serve as a heartwarming testament to the profound impact libraries can have on young minds and the communities they serve.



Happy 30th Birthday Deer Park Library!

✓ Deer Park Library celebrated its 30th Birthday on Thursday 28 September 2023 with 1245 people through the library doors. Many VIPs also attended, including past Deer Park Library team members, Brimbank Mayor, Councillors, the Members of Parliament for Kororoit and Western Metropolitan Region, Brimbank Leadership Team and Public Libraries Victoria CEO.

Family fun activities were held across the afternoon including a magic show, sausage sizzle, party games and face painting. Three birthday competitions were held, with 718 entries collected.

The newly developed Maker Space was officially opened and 35 people toured the space, all eager to come back and be inducted as super users.

"What a beautiful show put on for the kids for the b'day celebration. Very honoured, privileged & blessed to be a part of this celebration. Thank You!"



Launch of Aunty Jeanie Mason's Mural "Knowledge and Wisdom" at Sunshine Library

✓ On Wednesday 20 March 2024 Community members, Council staff and Councillors celebrated Bakandji artist and Brimbank local Aunty Jeanie Mason and her latest public artwork 'Knowledge and Wisdom'. The large mural, which was painted over several weeks, depicts a large central figure surrounded by young people, flora, fauna and the river coursing a path across the wall. The artwork, located in the children's area of Sunshine Library, captures the essence of public libraries: spaces for sharing and learning knowledge and wisdom through storytelling and access to reputable information. Aunty Jeanie generously led a hand-printing workshop at the event that saw both young and old pressing their handprint onto the wall in paint. The mural, which is housed in the library storytelling space, will serve as a point of creativity and inspire young families and community members for decades to come.



Sunshine Library Sleeper Lounges - supporting rest and relaxation at Brimbank Libraries

- ✓ In response to community feedback, the library purchased three sleeper lounges designed to provide a safe, comfortable space for rest and relaxation. These lounges have been placed in quiet areas of the library to support people who require a safe space to rest. The initiative was developed to address the immediate needs of those experiencing homelessness. By offering these spaces, the library not only provides temporary relief but also fosters a sense of dignity and belonging. Alongside the sleeper lounges, staff are able to provide information about local support services, including housing advice and mental health resources, to offer a holistic approach to community wellbeing. This initiative underscores the libraries commitment to inclusivity and the libraries role as a sanctuary for all members of the community.



Brimbank Libraries- Koha Update

- ✓ Brimbank Libraries Management System (Koha) upgrade came with several enhancements for community members, including:
- **Digital Barcodes for customers** - Customers are now able to log in to their library accounts to generate a digital library barcode, which can be added to their phones using apps such as Google Wallet, and used at library information desks & self-serve kiosks.
 - **Improved opt-out of automatic renewals** - Customers can now fully opt in or out of automatic renewals.
 - **Improved Holds** - Customers can now go online to change the pickup location of holds of their reservations via their own device.
 - **Improved Online Memberships** - Customers can join online and instantly receive a fully functioning digital membership that allows immediate access to online resources.
 - **Translated Notices** - Customers will now be able to choose their language of choice to receive their notices.

Raising little scientists at Brimbank libraries

- ✓ A delighted mother shared a heartwarming story about her young daughter's love for Sydenham Library. The little girl, captivated by her experience at the library's Little Scientist Club program, now refers to it as the "science library." This early exposure to scientific concepts has sparked a keen interest, making library visits a much-anticipated activity.

The child's enthusiasm doesn't stop at science programs. She's also formed a special bond with the library's plush resident - a stuffed dog that "lives" in the children's area. This cuddly companion has become an integral part of her library experience, adding a touch of comfort to her visits.

This illustrates how early positive experiences in libraries can foster a lasting love for learning and libraries for young customers.

Game On - Karaoke from 5-8 Friday night.

✓ Friday night at the library transformed into a lively scene as "Game On" kicked off with karaoke from 5-8 PM. The space buzzed with energy as over 30 young people gathered, filling the air with music, laughter, and the aroma of pizza.

As the evening progressed, the room became a melting pot of musical genres and generations. Young voices belted out tunes ranging from classic rock to contemporary pop.

The event drew a mix of familiar faces and newcomers. Many Deer Park regulars, excited to stay after hours, made up a large portion of the crowd. Two shy newcomers, who had heard about the event from Copperfield College found their own ways to enjoy the night without stepping up to the microphone. They engaged in spirited Mario Kart battle on the Nintendo Switch, tackled giant Connect 4, and even carved out a quiet corner to watch videos together, taking advantage of the library's WiFi.

The atmosphere was one of inclusivity and encouragement, coupled with a sense of safety and belonging that permeated the space. The young attendees appreciated having a space created just for them, with minimal adult presence.

Watching these young people interact – sweet, hilarious, and genuinely good company – reinforced the value of events like these. It wasn't just about the karaoke or the games; it was about creating a space where they could be themselves, express their passions, and connect with one another in a safe and welcoming environment.

Breakdown of Activity by Library Service Point

Library	New members	Visits	Loans	Help Desk	Program Attendance
Deer Park	2275 ▲ 521	122,574 ▲ 16,363	184,186 ▲ 36,449	45954 ▼ 2,065	15,519
Keilor	997 ▲ 507	36,334 ▲ 3,322	74,702 ▲ 13,526	12,781 ▼ 253	3,931
St Albans	2,045 ▲ 631	132,893 ▲ 7,459	110,867 ▲ 10,177	44,387 ▲ 897	14,012
Sunshine	5,191 ▲ 837	378,158 ▲ 75,308	258,229 ▲ 50,983	44,555 ▼ 11,355	14,516
Sydenham	2,060 ▲ 420	151,954 ▲ 13,903	176,251 ▲ 53,195	30,282 ▼ 149	12,198
Online	1,789 ▲ 195	1620,168 ▼ 141,565	658399 ▲ 122,205	N/A	3,565

Count does not include multiple people in a household

Library collections and loans

		Change from 2022/2023
Physical loans	843,995	▲ 202,090
Digital loans (eBooks, audiobooks and ePress)	624,787	▲ 529,383
Total loans – Physical and Digital	1,468,782	▲ 731,473
Total loans of Community Language Collections	53,539	▲ 8,594
Most popular book and ebook	Fourth Wing by Rebecca Yarros	
Most popular picture book	The Speedy Sloth by Rebecca Young	
New library resources added to the collection	94,535	▲ 38,287
Total Number of physical resources in the collection	178,177	▼ 678
Total Number of electronic resources in the collection	48,185	▲ 12,489
Library collections in community languages	19	0

Library membership

		Change from 2022/2023
New Library members	12,613	▲ 2,954
New Online members	1,789	▲ 195
Total Library members	129,082	▲ 11,079
Facebook subscribers	4351	▲ 205
Instagram Followers	1986	▲ 159
YouTube subscribers	741	▲ 66

Library visits

		Change from 2022/2023
Visits to the five library branches	821,913	▲ 116,355
Visits to the Online Library	1,316,005	▼ 304,163
Visit to Library Catalogue	1,142,897	▲ 141,106
Total visits	3,280,815	▼ 46,702

Customer Support

Help desk support	190,884	▲ +102,209
PC Sessions	85,959	▲ +35,389

Library programs

		Change from 2022/2023
Programs held	3565	▲ 123
Attendance library programs (front facing)	60176	▲ 3070
Early Years 0-5	27599	▲ 1143
Children 6 - 12	16,949	▲ 256
Young People 13 - 25	5518	▲ 305
Adult	5,701	▲ 521
Seniors	1370	▲ 708
Attendance Brimbank Writers & Readers Festival	560	▲ 23
Views of online programs	36,881	▼ 12,280

Brimbank Libraries

Deer Park Library,

4 Neale Road Deer Park

Keilor Library,

704B Old Calder Highway, Keilor

St Albans Library,

71A Alfrieda Street, St Albans

Sunshine Library,

301 Hampshire Road, Sunshine

Sydenham Library,

1 Station Street, Taylors Lakes

Online Library **brimbanklibraries.vic.gov.au**

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