



CREATIVE MELTON 2030

A vision for
Libraries and Arts





A MESSAGE FROM COUNCIL

Creative Melton 2030 is a unique vision for our City. As an integrated plan, it identifies a number of priority areas for cultural development. It builds on Council's investment in, and community support for, Libraries and Arts for the next 10 years.

The City of Melton is experiencing a sustained period of rapid population growth, and this is predicted to remain strong for the next 35 years. During the last decade, the City's total population increased from around 100,000 to almost 165,000. It is projected that over the next thirty years, the population will increase by an average of 9,850 people each year. Our City is also home to a high proportion of families, particularly couples with young children. Across key determinants of social vulnerability, our residents experience relative disadvantage in respect of employment levels, education attainment, functional literacy and overall wellbeing.¹

Melton City Council envisions **a thriving community where everyone belongs**. The *Melton City Council and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021* outlines how Council delivers the services that our community needs, and outlines our residents' priorities through five themes:

- THEME 1** A proud, inclusive and safe community
- THEME 2** A thriving and resilient natural environment
- THEME 3** A well planned and built City
- THEME 4** A strong local economy and lifelong learning City
- THEME 5** A high performing organisation demonstrating leadership and advocacy

Creative Melton 2030 responds to the Council and Wellbeing Plan with a vision for **a vibrant City that values libraries, culture and creativity as essential for community wellbeing**. This vision is underpinned by four goals that coalesce around the following themes: **Access, Connect, Engage, Grow**.

Council is committed to promoting and protecting community wellbeing and mitigating social disadvantage, and acknowledges the fundamental role that libraries and the arts play in the making of vibrant, culturally rich communities. Public libraries are uniquely placed to support community engagement and strengthening. Our libraries are anchors for community life, offering people a 'third place' separate from home or work where they can interact, access information, technology, literacy support and learning opportunities. Through arts engagement and development, we support community wellbeing and respond to community needs, achieving both social and artistic outcomes.

Creative Melton 2030 is an aspirational plan for the culturally rich City that our community desires and deserves. Community engagement has been key to the development of this strategy, and has directly informed the goals and commitments outlined here. *Creative Melton 2030* presents a ground-breaking vision for our community that acknowledges the central role that investment in our cultural assets and creative pursuits plays in improving our quality of life. It conceives a future where libraries, culture and creativity are at the heart of our City's development and liveability. It provides a coordinated and confident vision that will inform our planning and programming priorities for libraries and the arts for the next decade, positioning Council to best meet the cultural and creative aspirations of our residents.

OUR CULTURAL ASPIRATIONS

Our vision for *Creative Melton 2030* is for a vibrant city that values libraries, culture and creativity as essential for community wellbeing. Our commitment to realising this vision will be actioned by goals that follow four themes: **Access, Connect, Engage, Grow**. The specific commitments of each goal relate directly to the cultural aspirations of our community.

Our cultural aspirations for *Creative Melton 2030* are:

- Equitable and local access to cultural experiences and activities
- A community connected with and through libraries and creativity
- Library and Arts services and programs that reflect community needs and aspirations
- A rich cultural fabric that evolves as we develop

Definitions

We have chosen to conceptualise this blueprint as a **cultural development plan**. Culture means more than the consumption of 'the arts'. It is a vital part of a healthy and connected community. Culture is both a society's values, aspirations and way of life; and the creative expression of these values as individuals, as members of a group, and as a community.

‘Culture is ... the social production and transmission of identities, knowledge, beliefs, values, attitudes and understanding; as well as, the way of life of a particular set of humans: including customs, codes and manners, dress, cuisine, language, arts, technology, religion and rituals; norms and regulations of behaviour, traditions and institutions. Therefore, culture is both the medium and the message – the inherent values, means and the results of social expression.’²

The arts is a conduit through which we manifest our culture.

Art is engendered by creativity and imagination. It can include but is not limited to painting, craft, textiles, photography, design, performing arts, music, photography, film, dance, architecture, literature, poetry. Cultural activities are informed by, and result in, new knowledge and ideas, aesthetic enrichment, appreciation of diversity, and connection to a shared identity. **Cultural assets include libraries, museums and galleries.** They can be places you visit to express your cultural identity, and/or the resources used to pursue creative practice; they are things of value because they contribute to a community's cultural life.

Cultural development is the process of enabling cultural activities towards the realisation of a desired future, by bringing professional artists and communities together to achieve social and artistic outcomes. This area of work is different to interculturalism and multiculturalism, which aim to ensure that people from CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds) have equal access to services, and to value diversity through relationship building, celebrating and sharing our cultures.



Planning Principles

We recognise that cultural development is a journey, a work in progress. A cultural development plan focuses on the *outcomes* we are aiming for rather than simply the activities we undertake to get there. Our approach is informed by the work of the Cultural Development Network. This network works to increase the expression of culture through the platform of the arts, libraries and heritage, and to build the capacity of local government and arts organisations. Cultural Development Network's Framework for Cultural Development Planning has been created as a guide for local government cultural plans that are evidence-based and outcomes-focused. It is:

- Based on values
- Directed toward goals
- Focused on outcomes
- Informed by evidence
- Underpinned by a theory of change
- Respondent to evaluation

The next ten years will deliver opportunities to evolve our cultural fabric as our City develops. These prospects, together with the aspirations outlined in this strategy, require an agile approach. The following factors will shape our strategic priorities for the next decade:

- Our rapid population growth and increasing diversity
- The limited reach of a dual branch library service in an expanding municipality
- A lack of purpose built arts and cultural facilities
- Community satisfaction rates with libraries and arts, and developing interest in accessing arts and cultural experiences
- The growing value of social cohesion as a policy goal and the powerful role of libraries and community cultural development in generating social wellbeing

Implementation

Key priorities will be implemented by

- Working closely with our community, education institutions, the creative sector, and industry peak bodies
- Creating partnerships across Council departments and with external agencies.

To achieve our goals, we will develop action plans that align with the renewal of our Council and Wellbeing Plan. Regular reviews will be scheduled over the life cycle of the plan to ensure that it remains current in a fast-changing City, can adapt and innovate to meet changing community needs, and ultimately, acts as a flexible road map for achieving our overarching objectives.





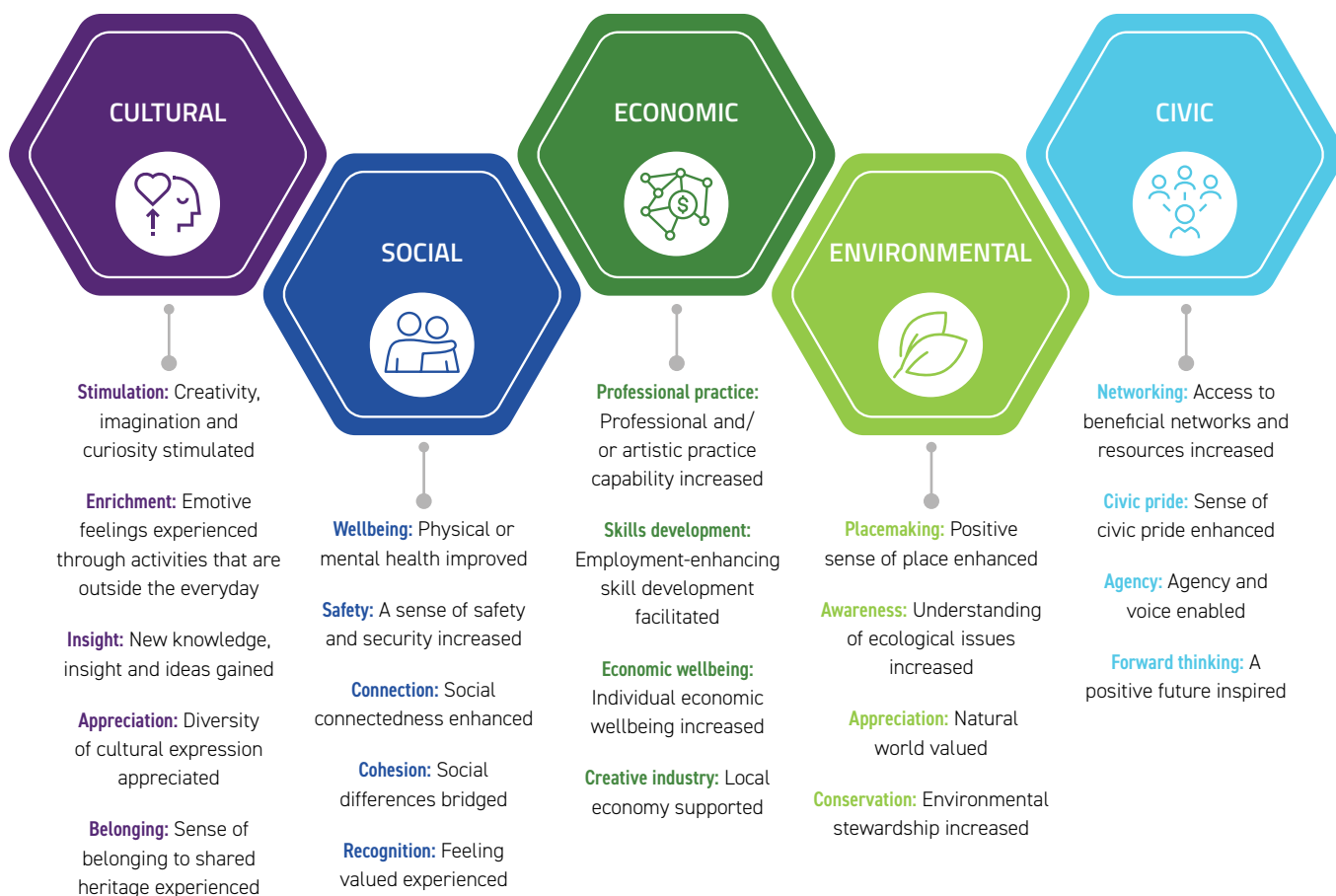
Measuring Our Success

In addition to Council's strategic indicators for measuring success, we will employ measurable **cultural outcomes** developed by the Cultural Development Network to assess the impact of our actions for our community. This nationally recognised evaluation framework has been adopted by the National Local Government Cultural Forum – a partnership of capital city councils, Australia Council for the Arts, and the Australian Local Government Association. Evaluation using measurable outcomes will give us solid evidence to reflect on, and refine current activities, and to develop future programs and services.

The **cultural outcomes** we will aim to inspire for our community include:

- **Stimulation:** Creativity, imagination and curiosity stimulated, resulting in increased desire to participate and/or create new cultural works.
- **Enrichment:** Emotive feelings experienced through activities that are outside the everyday, evoking joy, beauty, awe, wonder.
- **Insight:** New knowledge, insight and ideas gained, generating intellectual stimulation, deeper understanding, critical reflection and creative thinking.
- **Appreciation:** Diversity of cultural expression appreciated.
- **Belonging:** Sense of belonging to shared heritage experienced.

CDN's outcomes schema also enables us to capture the difference our work makes in the community against key indicators within the social, economic, environmental and governance domains of public policy:



OUR CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

Over the last two years, Council has been working through our libraries and arts services to develop our cultural landscape. The libraries and arts teams deliver a broad range of services across five interrelated functional areas:

Spaces

Our libraries and arts spaces are the meeting place of our community. They are vibrant, welcoming, flexible and functional spaces that engender community pride through their architectural design and integrated gallery spaces.

Resources

Our library collection is freely accessible, and supports the informational, learning and recreational needs of our community across a variety of platforms: print, digital and audio-visual. We collect, preserve and promote local culture in all its diversity, including historical and contemporary material.

Programs

Programs connect our community with our services and each other, and promote reading culture, learning and creativity. Program development is a collaborative process in partnership with other Council areas, community groups, learning providers, and the broader public library and creative sectors.

Technology

Access to information technology is equitable and free at our libraries, and enhances customer engagement. Our libraries provide innovative online library products, free onsite Wi-Fi and public PCs. Access to printing services is available for a fee.

Staff

Our staff actively engage with the community to promote access to our spaces, resources and programs. Library staff are knowledgeable about our collections, understand our community, and are skilled at using and interpreting information technology and digital products for our patrons. Staff expertise in areas such as reader development, local history, youth engagement, early years' literacy and emerging technologies enhances our service delivery. Specialist staff support community cultural development through participatory arts programs, curated exhibitions and arts learning programs.

Melton City Libraries

Local Government's provision and coordination of public library facilities and collections is legislated in the *Libraries Act* (1988) under the auspices of the Library Board of Victoria.

- Melton City Libraries are free, equitable and accessible for everyone.
- Over 46,000 library members are serviced by two permanent library branches located in Melton and Caroline Springs, complimented by online borrowing and learning services. Library Access Points, consisting of a book pickup and return system, have been established at Diggers Rest and Strathtulloh, with similar services planned for Aintree and Fraser Rise.

The City of Melton has enjoyed a long history of high-quality and well-used library services. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Mechanics' Institutes at Melton and Rockbank, and the Toolern Vale free library provided residents with books for loan. The Melton Mechanics' Institute library closed in 1966, and residents didn't get a new local library until 1979, when the Melton Library opened for the first time at 31 McKenzie Street.

In 2008, the City's second library opened in Caroline Springs. This library reflected the importance of partnership and integrated service within community, and at the time, was Victoria's largest and most integrated library facility.

In 2013, the new Melton Library and Learning Hub opened on the site of the original library, and became the first Australian library to be awarded a 5 star Green Star rating for public building design. The landmark building is more than four times bigger than the original library, and boasts an impressive suite of integrated facilities, services and programs.





Arts Engagement and Development

Local Government has an established role in enabling arts engagement for the community. This role can take the form of

- offering direct provision of programs and facilities;
- supporting and funding activities to build community engagement and open pathways to the arts;
- brokering and supporting partnerships, collaborations and networks.

Melton City Council provides some infrastructure to support arts engagement and coordinates a range of participatory programming.

- A cornerstone of our arts program is our diverse public art collection, which given our growth, is an opportunity for strategic development. Public art refers to art specifically created to be freely experienced in the public realm, outside of a gallery or museum. Public artworks vary in scale and permanency. They can stand alone or function as an integrated element of a building or plaza.
- Council produces an exhibition program that aims to provide emerging and professional artists with opportunities to profile their work. Exhibitions are selected based on a range of factors including strength of concept, quality of the work, suitability of the work for the venue, timing, and relevance to local themes and Council priorities. They are supported by a program of interpretation and appreciation.
- Melton City Council's arts team also delivers a variety of arts learning workshops to support skills development, and bring arts participation to new audiences.



CS Gallery is a contemporary exhibition space located at Caroline Springs Library and Learning Hub. It provides opportunities for artists and groups to exhibit and does not charge fees or commission.

Melton Library and Learning Hub provides a number of hanging walls for the presentation of visual art and community exhibitions, and features an audio-visual recording suite available for hire. The building incorporates significant works of public art into its design.

The Melton Civic Centre is one of the city's primary locations for Customer Service provided by Melton City Council. Displays of community art work are a feature of the centre's foyer.

Raglan Cottage provides studio space for artists-in-residence and community art groups.

Creative industry in Melton is developing. Over the last two years, local artists and makers, working predominantly in the visual arts, have begun to work together in an organised capacity to produce work for exhibition and sale. A number of private dance schools provide classes with professional teachers, and short courses are run across community centres who employ artists in a range of disciplines.



OUR CULTURAL DRIVERS

‘I have made friends with other mums through storytime meet ups and kids playing afterwards.’

Female, 35-49

Policy Context

The importance of cultural development planning is increasingly being recognised by local government in Australia and internationally. *Creative Melton 2030* is underwritten by, and supports, a number of strategies for cultural development:

Agenda 21 for Culture, United Cities and Local Governments’ policy statement on cultural development is the first document with a worldwide mission to support the cultural development role of cities and local governments. It advocates culture as the ‘Fourth Pillar’ of sustainable development, adding a fourth dimension to the three already existing pillars of economic viability, social inclusion and environmental balance.

The Australia Council for the Arts’ *Corporate Plan 2019-2023* sets out the priorities for Australian arts and creativity. Captured in the vision ‘creativity connects us,’ is the desire for ‘everyone to regularly experience the inspiration, satisfaction and wellbeing that stems from living a creative life.’³

Creative State – Victoria’s Creative Industry Strategy 2016-2020, the state government’s first creative industries strategy identifies five key areas for action:

- Backing creative talent
- Strengthening the creative industries ecosystem
- Delivering wider economic and social impact
- Increasing participation and access
- Building international engagement

Our services play out the anticipated models for the future library set out in the *Victorian Public Libraries 2030* (2013) Strategic Framework:

- The creative library where people seek skills and resources to develop and express shared learning and creativity.
- The community library fostering community connection, social engagement and lifelong learning.

These high level public policy frameworks and other council plans will influence the action plans we develop to roll out *Creative Melton 2030*.

‘Libraries are an important part of the community and can greatly help in enhancing community connectedness and integration and in combating social isolation and loneliness...’

Female, 35-49

Community Engagement

The views of approximately 2,200 people have informed the development of this plan, and the goals and commitments outlined here are directly reflective of their responses. This input has been through Council’s annual customer satisfaction survey, a library satisfaction survey, and directed community consultation.

2019 Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey

Council has conducted a yearly household survey for the past 5 years with the aim of measuring importance and satisfaction rates with Council’s services and facilities.

Of the 39 services and facilities included in the 2019 survey, Libraries rate in the top five with an ‘excellent’ satisfaction rate of (8.45%).

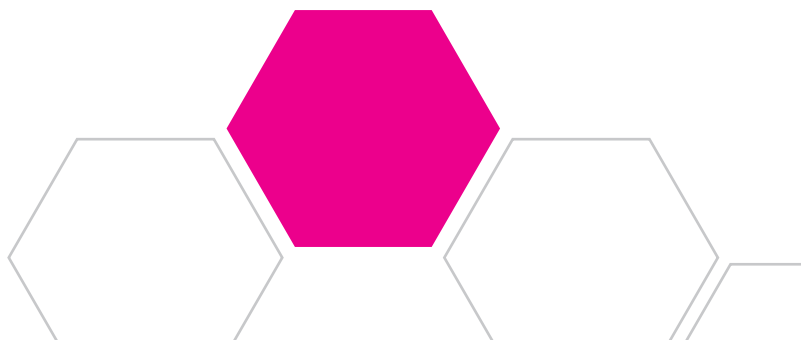
The category Public Art and Exhibitions was first included in 2018. Over the last two years, community satisfaction with Public Art and Exhibitions has increased significantly (up 8.5%), and its perceived importance has increased by 3.5%.

‘If the library is about cultural enrichment, chatting, meeting with friends, it certainly meets the brief.’

Female, 60+

‘I feel a strong sense of community when we visit.’

Female, 25-34



2018 Library Satisfaction Survey

In 2018, Melton City Libraries undertook an analysis of active, inactive and non-members to ascertain service usage and satisfaction rates. Overall satisfaction was 89.4% (4.47 out of 5).

Whilst borrowing a physical book is the most common activity for community members who visit our libraries (71%), 44% of users indicated that they use technology (Wi-Fi, Pcs, printers, scanners, photocopiers), and 26% had undertaken an interactive activity.

A number of questions were included to develop a better understanding of the impact the library has on the wellbeing of community members. It is clear from the findings that interaction with the library improves a range of wellbeing measures.

“[The library] has been a constant source of pleasure and information in my life, providing me with countless hours of entertainment and escape, as well as opportunities to improve my knowledge and life.”

Male, 60+

“I love going to the library and just picking out a dozen books for my kids and myself to read. We not only learn from the books, but escape the daily stresses by reading and sharing the books.”

Female, 35-49

“Melton City Libraries make a difference in my life by allowing me to learn and develop via reading and watching films.”

Female, 14-17

88%

Making people feel welcome



73%

Providing a safe place

66%

Making people feel part of the community



49%

Aiding learning, specifically in relation to hobby skills



41%

Helping with child literacy of those with children aged under 12



37%

Improving English skills of those who speak a language other than English



34%

Experiencing other cultures



21%

Making friends

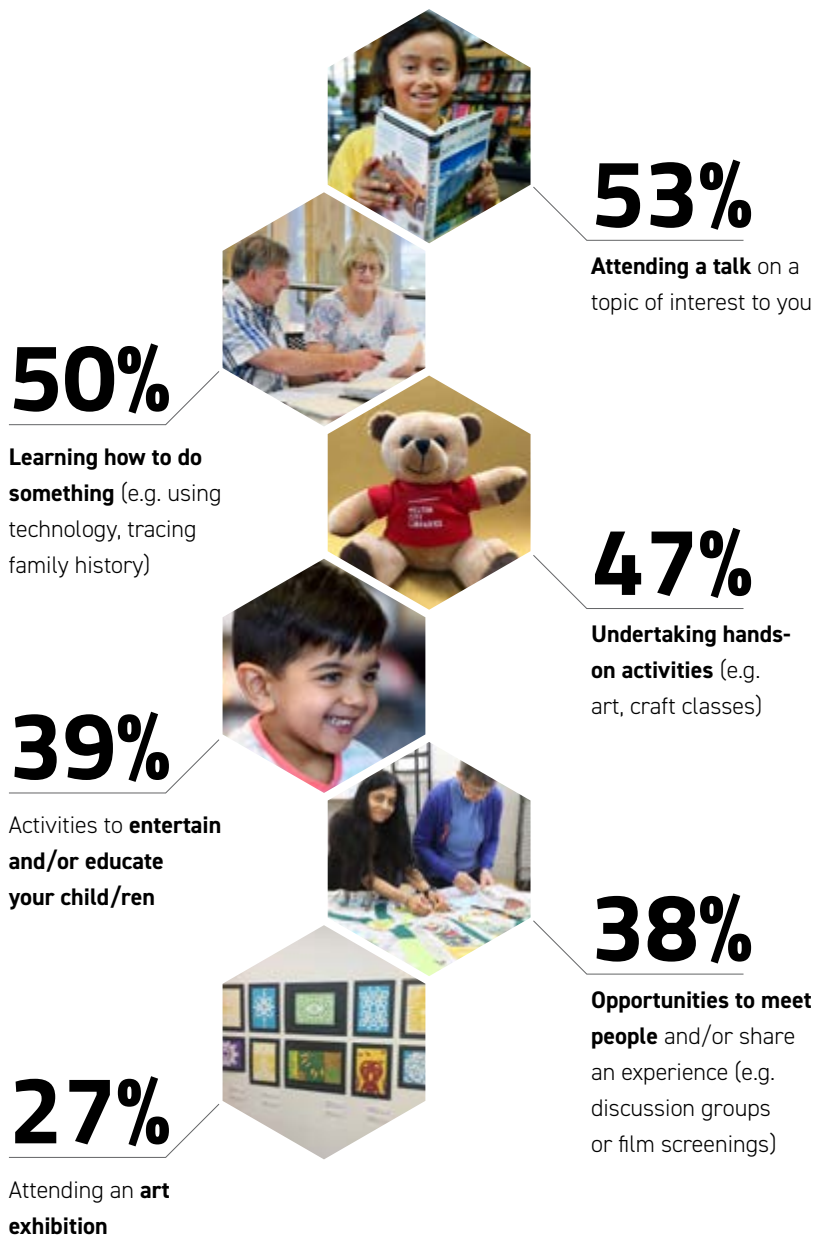


11%

Providing job-seeker help



The library satisfaction survey also enquired about recreational and learning topics so as to inform our program planning. Responses revealed a strong interest in learning, arts and craft, opportunities for social connection and programs for children:



‘It helps me to get access to the internet and it helped me to get a job.’
Male, 35-49

‘[It helps] my children to do their school work on a computer because we don’t have one.’
Female, 35-49

‘The library allows me affordable access to computer, printer and scanner use which in turn allows me to function as an employee of a not for profit organisation and as a member of social groups.’
Female, 35-39

‘When I was struggling with finding work, CS Library was like a lifeline for my sanity. Being so close to home, I could walk there and borrow books / mags to read and DVDs to watch. There were times when I ran out of data at home and being on a very limited budget, I could rely on the library in terms of using the wifi there to apply for jobs and check my emails, etc. It was much appreciated at a time when I couldn’t afford to just top up data or go catch a movie. It became one of my favourite places to give me a break from the monotony of being stuck in such a negative situation.’
Female, 50+

Our Libraries Satisfaction Survey asked respondents to reflect on a vision for the future of Melton City Libraries. Provision of lending materials remains the key activity, and around half envisioned the role of the library as facilitator of informal learning programs and/or as an inspiring and creative community hub:

2019 Community Consultation

In May 2019, we hosted a community forum in which we invited participants to explore what culture and creativity meant to them and their community and to consider how we can evolve our future service delivery.

Common themes identified as cornerstones of creativity and culture were:

- Unlocking new opportunities, experimenting and learning new things
- Nurturing and enabling imagination and creative expression
- Arts practice and engagement
- Cross-cultural engagement and social connection
- The manifestation of self, community and identity

Key cultural aspirations for the City also emerged:

- Culture and creativity should be incorporated into all aspects of Council and community
- Cultural and creative programming needs to be inclusive and reflective of our diverse community
- Council should generate opportunities for people to contribute
- Melton needs new spaces – purpose built facilities for performing arts, exhibitions and studio use

52%

A provider of **informal learning programs**



75%

A provider of **lending materials**



51%

An **inspiring** place to visit



50%

A **meeting place** for the community



49%

A **creative space**



47%

A **community hub** that embraces cultural and social diversity



47%

A place to experiences and learn about **new technology**



42%

A place to go to improve your **wellbeing**



38%

A provider of **formal learning programs**



OUR SOCIO-ECONOMIC DIVIDENDS

Reiterating our community's feedback, research shows that libraries and the arts play critical roles in supporting community health and wellbeing, delivering social, cultural and economic return.

Gateways to Literacy

There are so many reasons why reading matters.

Reading delivers a wide range of individual and social benefits, and is vital to creating an informed, imaginative and compassionate society.

The ability to read with fluency is an essential foundation for life: children first 'learn to read' and then they 'read to learn'. Our libraries build healthy and productive communities by supporting literacy at all life stages, particularly for the crucial learning between 0-3 years. Libraries' early years programs support parents as their child's first teacher to model good reading habits and instil in them a love for words, reading and learning.

The therapeutic benefits of reading for pleasure are well documented. The findings of the report, *Reading is good for you* (2018), commissioned by the Australian Publishers Association show that reading works better and faster as a stress reliever, compared with taking a walk, listening to music or having a cup of tea.

Reading helps us to explore our identity, new possibilities and where other people are coming from, even if we disagree with what they're saying. Research supports the role of reading fiction to improving empathy, detecting and understanding other people's emotions, a crucial skill in navigating complex social relationships.⁴

People learn to love reading by seeing others do it and by making choices about what to read by themselves. Libraries are the only publicly accessible sites that support the reading habit through our collections and programs like storytime, book groups and author talks.

*When it comes to reader engagement, public libraries are uniquely placed. We allow people to broaden their reading horizons at no cost to themselves. We offer a wide range of reading options, in a variety of formats... for free.*⁵

As well as offering general reading resources and fostering a culture of reading, libraries hold materials for people to improve their literacy levels as well as English as a Second Language (ESL) materials for people from other cultures to learn English.

Libraries also play an important role in supporting digital literacy and inclusion through free access to technology.

*Libraries serve as a major public outlet for free internet and assistance for people with no access, insufficient access, or insufficient digital literacy.*⁶





Connecting Communities

Libraries are anchors for community life, offering people a 'third place' separate from home or work where they can interact, recreate, access information, technology and learning opportunities. Libraries are safe and welcoming spaces that help to build cohesive communities.

“The fact that community members can enter a library without being a member, without an appointment, without having to disclose personal circumstances and without having to spend money makes this a truly democratic space.”⁷

From a population health perspective, support for community arts projects plays an important role in minimising social isolation, improving connectedness and is strongly related to mental health outcomes.⁸ The *National Arts and Health Framework* (2013), which has been adopted at federal and state levels highlights the significant role the arts plays to support community health through collaborative practice, programs and initiatives, and their flow-on effects such as employment creation, skills training and individual capacity development.

Community arts practice, by its very nature, brings people together. It enables us to explore and share our stories, to celebrate and learn about our diverse cultures. The Australia Council's 2017 report, *Connecting Australians*, showed that 73 per cent of Australians believe that the arts are an important way to gain different perspectives on a topic; 64 per cent consider that the arts help us

to understand other people; and 64 per cent think that the arts allow us to connect with others.

Studies confirm a strong link between the services provided by public libraries and the behaviours, skills, attitudes and values that support the development of more tolerant and cohesive societies.⁹ Libraries are cultural connectors – linking up communities through outreach to communities and cultural celebrations that stimulate cross-cultural conversation and understanding.¹⁰

Public Art plays a significant role in creating focal points for local identity, cultural meaning and significance, and investing precinct building with character. It can be a vehicle for expressing current issues, celebrating heritage, and inspiring the future.

Our libraries' local history and community collections play a vital role in conserving and engendering community pride, connecting communities to their past, present and future.

Return on Investment

Analysis by the Australia Council in 2015, *Arts Nation*, included a Wellbeing Valuation approach to estimate the relative worth of a non-monetary quality such as arts engagement, and found that the equivalent worth would be \$4,349 per person, per annum.¹¹

Libraries Work! The socio-economic value of public libraries to Victorians (2018), demonstrates that every dollar invested in Victorian public libraries generates \$4.30 of benefits to the local community. For the City of Melton, this return on investment is even higher at \$5.30¹².

Public libraries support economic and workforce development through job help programs and access to technology. Libraries are also increasingly providing spaces where start-ups and small businesses can work, research, communicate and collaborate with customers and business partners.



OUR CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Underscored by our community's feedback and the broader policy context, our vision for *Creative Melton 2030* is a vibrant city that values libraries, culture and creativity as essential for community wellbeing. Our commitment to realising this vision will be actioned by four goals that coalesce around the following themes: **Access, Connect, Engage, Grow**. The specific commitments of each goal relate directly to the cultural aspirations of our community.







GOAL 1: ACCESS

We know that the City of Melton is experiencing unprecedented population growth, and current access to cultural institutions is limited to opposite ends of the municipality. Our community has told us that they feel like they don't belong in the cultural and creative sphere. **We will support inclusion and access through planning equitable, localised and inclusive access to libraries and creative experiences.**

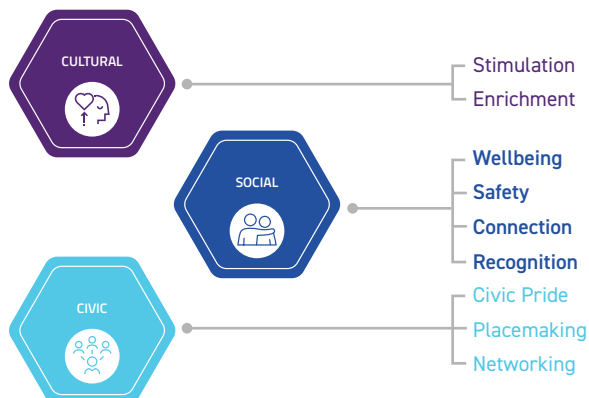
Objective

Everyone can access, and feels able to participate in, library services and creative experiences.

Our commitments

- 1.1. We will provide safe, welcoming and accessible spaces for all, and reduce barriers to access.
- 1.2. We will work proactively to engage the whole of community with libraries, learning and creativity.
- 1.3. We will support digital inclusion through access to technology, staff expertise and learning programs.
- 1.4. We will broaden opportunities for residents to access library collections and services beyond the library walls.
- 1.5. We will plan a network of libraries, and actively explore options for arts spaces to meet the growth of our community.
- 1.6. We will activate the arts in public spaces, community events and festivals.

Measurable outcomes



GOAL 2: CONNECT

We know that literacy is a critical factor in economic and social participation, removing barriers to education and employment. We recognise the impactful role that community cultural development plays in minimising social isolation and improving health outcomes. **We want to harness the power of literacy, learning and creativity to community wellbeing.**

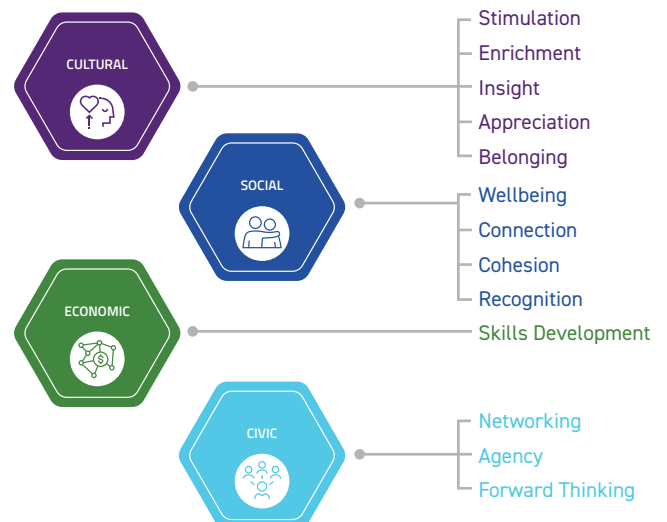
Objective

Through literacy, learning and creativity, we connect our community to each other, to learning, and to opportunities.

Our commitments

- 2.1. We will build a culture of reading to engage all ages and abilities with books and writing.
- 2.2. We will support literacy development for children just starting on the reading journey, adults who have missed out during their schooling, and community members who are learning English as a second language.
- 2.3. We will bring people together to celebrate our First Nations, local identity and diverse communities.
- 2.4. We will develop strategies to ensure we connect with important to reach communities.

Measurable outcomes





GOAL 3: ENGAGE

Our community has told us that cultural and creative programming needs to be inclusive and reflective of our diverse community. We know that meaningful community engagement is crucial to ensuring that our services remain relevant as our municipality evolves and changes. **We will employ reflective practice, act on evidence, and evaluate our actions.**

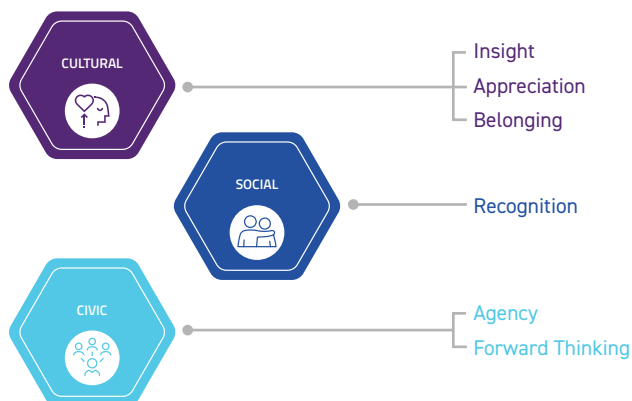
Objective

Our services and programs engage and reflect the needs and aspirations of our diverse community.

Our commitments

- 3.1. We will employ evidence based practice to develop and review services, collections and programs.
- 3.2. We will engage with artists to develop a visual arts exhibition calendar that responds to community issues and reflects our diverse demographic.
- 3.3. We will work in partnership to deliver collaborative services, and opportunities for community input.
- 3.4. We will invest in an agile workforce and innovative service delivery.

Measurable outcomes



GOAL 4: GROW

We know that investment in the arts reaps long-term cultural, social and economic dividends. Council will work with local organisations and groups to build their capacity, to develop networks and support creative industry. **We will enhance our services through a coordinated approach to arts engagement, and integration of arts and culture into infrastructure projects as our municipality grows.**

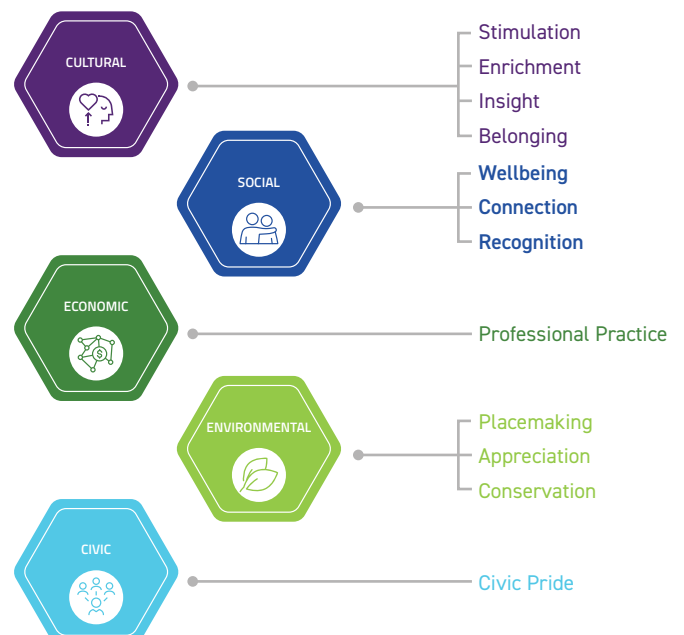
Objective

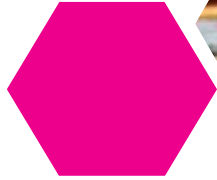
Our cultural fabric evolves as our community develops.

Our commitments

- 4.1. We will provide opportunities to enable grassroots community participation in creative activities and experiences.
- 4.2. We will invest in creative projects to bring professional artists and communities together to achieve social and artistic outcomes.
- 4.3. We will increase participation in, and access to, arts and culture experiences.
- 4.4. We will increase opportunities for the professional development of local artists and creative practitioners.
- 4.5. We will strengthen our sense of place through the development and maintenance of our public art collection.

Measurable outcomes





FACILITATING OUR CULTURAL AND CREATIVE FUTURE

To achieve the four goals of this plan, we will develop a series of two-year action plans. Regular reviews will be scheduled over the life cycle of the plan to ensure that it remains current and aligns with the renewal of our Council and Wellbeing Plan.

Service Planning Melton City Libraries 2030

Library membership in 2019 is just over 46,000, split fairly evenly across the two branches, representing close to 30% of the population.

To ensure equitable access to library services for all residents, additional service planning is required. When considering the library infrastructure required to respond to the significant growth in our population, we need to consider where and when additional space should be located, as well as new models for activating library services in growing communities. Looking ahead to 2030, Melton City Libraries will continue to evolve the way in which we deliver services. We can anticipate some of these changes from what is already happening in the sector, and projects we are currently trialling. Other changes will be driven by events and technologies yet unknown. Our commitments to service planning for libraries are to:

- (Re)-imagine the local library
- Continue to invest in outreach and engagement
- Plan for new library builds
- Attract and retain an agile workforce

(Re)-imagining the local library

Libraries have always been adept at adapting to the changing demands of community and emerging technologies alike. Discussions about the future size and location of library infrastructure cannot assume the continuation of service delivery as we know it. To look ahead 10 years, we should also consider how much our libraries have changed over the past decade, including:

- The use of RFID to facilitate self-checkout
- Increased access to technology through PCs, wifi, online services, e-collections and the library app

- A marked shift in staffing and skillsets to develop and deliver programs, support digital literacy
- The movement toward profile buying for collections and books coming to us shelf-ready, which has moved staff from the back room into customer service and community development roles

New growth fronts provide opportunities. Options for (re)imagining the local library include:

- **Moving away from 'flagship' libraries** toward embracing the neighbourhood branch library
- **Diversified service delivery**, including branch specialisation and differentiation of services – rather than each library offering the same service/collections/programs
- **Colocation with other community and cultural services** to deliver library services in multi-purpose hubs
- **Converging library services and arts/museum/gallery programming into a single cultural space**

Outreach services, including Home Lending Services and pop-up libraries provide opportunities to deliver services 'beyond the library walls', connecting us with community and vice versa.

In 2018, Melton City Libraries, in partnership with Lendlease, broadened our service delivery to the new community of Strathtulloh and Cobblebank by establishing the Atherstone Library Access Point in a community centre. This consists of an information kiosk and Remote Locker System, enabling library members to pick up reserved items, and return borrowed items. Library Access Points use the latest technologies to provide secure, safe, easy access to our library collections, and will be considered to improve access in suburbs located further from Town Centres, such as Diggers Rest and Eynesbury.

The way communities interact with libraries is always changing. Investment in mobile technologies and integration of e-collections ensures that customers can engage with the library service via their channel of choice. We will continue to invest in our 24/7 online library, and library app to enable 'anywhere, anytime' access to collections, databases and learning programs.



Library Workforce Planning

One constant throughout all this change has been the need for skilled staff to help people navigate technology and find information. Our future depends on the continued growth of the library professional skill set. There is a need to invest in developing an expanded view of the library professionals' role to ensure that staff are equipped to adapt to meet ongoing change by:

- Leveraging the diverse specialist skills within the team to foster creativity and innovation,
- Recruiting specialist skills to facilitate programming
- Developing strong capabilities to nurture partnerships and volunteers





Service Planning Arts Engagement and Development 2030

To successfully deliver this strategy, Council needs to be a leader and champion of arts and culture. In this role, we need to wear a variety of 'hats' including:

- **Host:** providing places and opportunities for artistic, cultural and creative activity to thrive.
- **Connector:** Creating networks, supporting local organisations and brokering partnerships.
- **Partner:** Working with community, developers and the cultural sector to promote community participation in the arts and achieve high quality outcomes.
- **Capacity builder:** Building a strong and creative community through arts education and professional development.

The City of Melton is in a great place to build our current arts program and map our community's needs for infrastructure to support arts engagement and development, both now and into the future. The challenges for Arts Engagement and Development will be to

- **foster audience development** and participation
- **support creative practise**
- **integrate arts and culture into new infrastructure projects**
- **develop partnerships**
- **invest in resources** to guide arts engagement and development

Audience Development and Support for Creative Practice

We will continue to invest in community cultural development projects to provide our community with opportunities to work together with established artists for social and creative outcomes reflective of our collection identity and connection to place.

We will develop our visual arts program to the point where community demand for a fit-for-purpose gallery space propels the development of a dedicated venue.

While collectives and organisations exist in the City, our burgeoning creative sector is largely characterised by individual practice, predominantly in craft. Council recognises the need to provide opportunities that both support and develop individual artistic practice and advance the development of creative industry in the City of Melton.

Arts Workforce Planning

We will advocate for staffing to adequately resource the development of our current program and increase capacity for community arts projects, public art delivery and program development.

Partnerships between individuals, groups and with Council are important ways to make the best use of resources and ensure ongoing sustainable cultural activity.



Library Infrastructure

Mapping current active library membership in the City against the distance of people's homes from their preferred library demonstrates that the closer a resident lives to a library, the more likely they are to be a library user. Library membership drops off once the distance from home to a library is greater than 3-4 kilometres.

Key growth areas for us now are Fraser Rise and Aintree. We envision a need for feasibility studies to be conducted to inform business planning for new library spaces in these areas – and paint a picture for when they should come on board, and what size they should be. In the immediate future, Library Access Points will also be installed in community centres at Aintree and Fraser Rise.

In the coming years it is predicted that Deanside, Bonnie Brook, and Cobblebank will all be experiencing similar growth, with the majority of assumed net migration gains being young couples and established families with children aged 0-14 years.

Looking further ahead, by 2036, based on state government projections, it is expected that the area spanning Rockbank and Mt Cottrell which has a current population of around 3,000, will be home to about 65,000 people, equivalent to the current population of Shepparton.¹³



Arts Infrastructure

As the City grows, we will ensure a targeted approach to integrated arts and cultural activities into new infrastructure projects and the delivery of community services. The development of new community centres in our burgeoning municipality provides opportunities to integrate spaces for arts learning and hanging walls to display community art work.

We will work with other Council areas to integrate arts experiences into new developments.

We will work with developers to establish coordinated planning for public art that reflects and engages our community.

We will undertake a feasibility study to determine the need for Arts and Cultural Facilities in the City of Melton. This will provide direction for future planning and development of facilities to meet community need.

As new activity centres come on board, we will be implement a strategic approach to arts engagement and development through the delivery of collocated library and cultural hubs.

Looking further ahead, the Precinct Structure Plan for Cobblebank sets aside land for a performance arts centre and library facility.



Moving forward, the development of road and rail infrastructure will make these library membership catchment areas even more distinct, with the rail-line and major roads potentially limiting accessibility to neighbouring suburbs.





Locations on the map are approximate and future library/cultural hubs are located in proposed Town Centres.

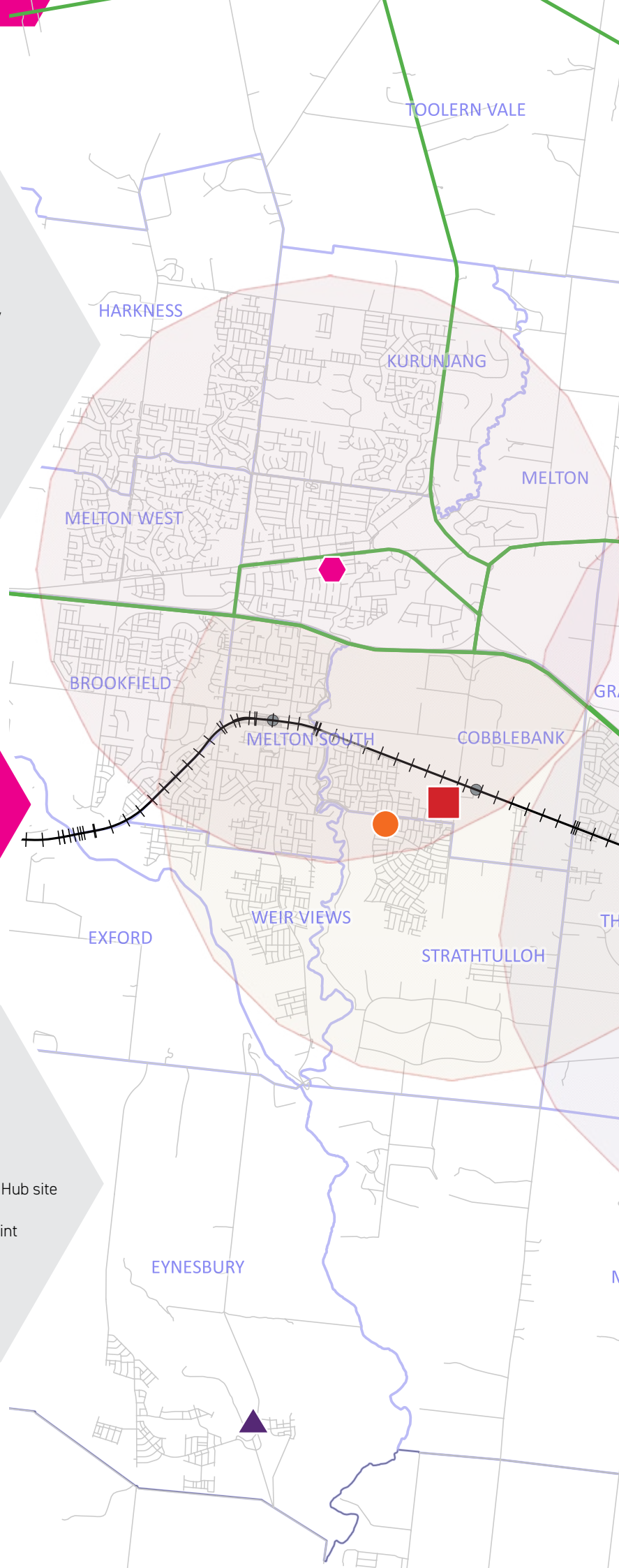
Mapped out here are:

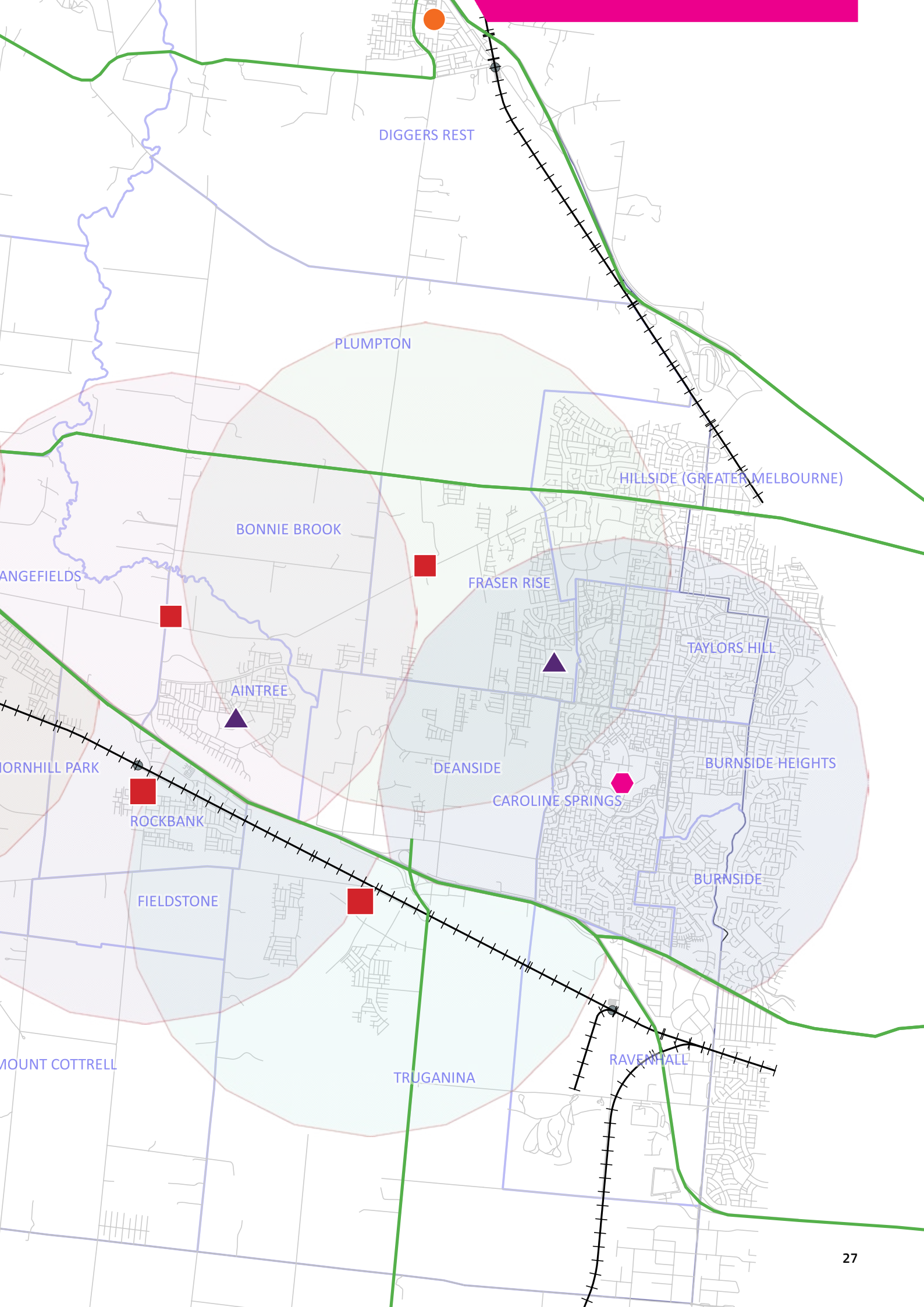
- **Current Libraries**
- **Library Access Points** (existing and future)
- **Proposed sites for future Cultural Hubs** incorporating library, community and creative services

This map represents existing and potential library membership catchment areas, utilising a 4 kilometre radius identified as the threshold for distance from home to library before membership drops off.

LIBRARY

-  Existing Library
-  Potential Library/Cultural Hub site
-  Current Library Access Point
-  New Library Access Point





APPENDIX 1

OUR COMMUNITY PROFILE

In 2018, the City of Melton had the 5th largest and 3rd fastest population growth rate in Victoria. We are experiencing a sustained period of rapid population growth at 5.4% per annum, and this is predicted to remain strong for the next 35 years. During the last decade, the City's total population increased from around 100,000 to almost 165,000. It is projected that between 2016 and 2051, the population of the City of Melton will increase by an average of 9,850 persons per year. A snapshot of our development in 2018 reveals the impact of rapid population growth:

	Yearly	Weekly	Daily
PEOPLE	8,095*	156	22
FAMILIES	2,680	52**	7
BABIES	2,711	52***	7

* Equal to one new primary school

** Equal to one new street

*** Equal to two new kinder classes

It is predicted that by 2030, the city's population will exceed 260,000 people. To be able to flourish against a backdrop of rapid change, Council recognises that our cultural facilities and services need to be able to flex and evolve as the opportunities and challenges of population development and a tightened economy ebb and flow. The City of Melton currently has 10 approved Precinct Structure Plans (PSPs) that guide the development in key residential and industrial areas within the municipality, with a further five PSPs still to be finalised with major employment precincts. The development of key activity centres within these precincts provides opportunities to align investment in new cultural infrastructure.

Our community is made up of a rich mix of cultural backgrounds and heritage, with 30% of the population born overseas, and 32% speaking a language other than English at home.

Our City is home to a high proportion of families (43%), particularly couples with young children (25%) – and more than 70% of residents are aged under 45. There is also evidence of ageing in place. The number and proportion of persons aged 65+

has increased in the last decade. By 2041, there will be more than 44,000 people in this category, an increase of 32,000.

Across key determinants of social vulnerability, our residents experience relative disadvantage in respect of employment levels, education attainment, functional literacy and overall wellbeing:

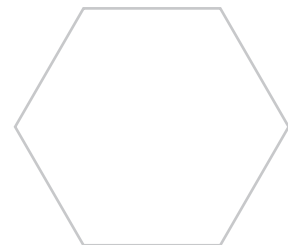
- Unemployment levels in Melton are 8.6% (the state average is 5.8%)¹⁴
- Youth unemployment sits at 17.1% (the state average is 11%)
- A significantly lower proportion of children aged 6 months to 4 years are read to by a family member every day (54.3%) compared to Victoria (69.6%)¹⁵
- The percentage of children deemed developmentally at risk as regards language and cognitive skills is 12% (the state average is 9%)¹⁶
- Fewer primary school students achieve national benchmark in literacy (93.2%) compared to the state average of 95.5%¹⁷
- Adult (English language) functional literacy averages 17% (the state average is 14%)¹⁸
- Residents reported a significantly lower wellbeing score of 74.2% (the state average was 77.3%)¹⁹
- 12.4% of households experience mortgage stress (the state average is 7.5%)²⁰





ENDNOTES

- 1 See Appendix 1, Our Community Profile
- 2 Hawkes, J., 2001, p.23
- 3 Australia Council for the Arts, 2019, p.4
- 4 Kidd, D.C., Castano, E., 2013
- 5 PLV Reader Development Special Interest Group, 2019, p.2
- 6 Gallop, G., 2019
- 7 Civica Group Limited, 2016, p. 10
- 8 See Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2014
- 9 State Library Victoria, 2014, p.19
- 10 State Library Victoria, 2014, p.12
- 11 Australia Council for the Arts, 2015, p.42-43
- 12 State Library Victoria, 2017, p.29
- 13 Butt, C., 2019
- 14 Australian Government Department of Employment, 2017
- 15 Victorian Department of Education and Training, 2016
- 16 Australian Early Development Census, 2018
- 17 Victorian Department of Education and Training, 2016
- 18 Victorian Department of Health and Human Services, 2014
- 19 Australian Bureau of Statistics Census, 2016
- 20 SGS Economics & Planning, 2019, p.70



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ARTWORK CREDITS

- Front/Back cover**George Rose, *Ravenhall Mural* [Detail], 2019.
- Inside cover/Back cover** . . .Chaco Kato and Dylan Martrell – Slow Art Collective, *Archiloom M* [Detail], 2018.
- Page 2, 3 and 12**Anu Patel, Barry Melder and community artists, *The Belonging Tree* [work in development], 2019.
- Page 3**Becky Bubble, performing at Djerriwarrh Festival, 2019.
- Page 7**Anu Patel, Barry Melder and community artists, *The Belonging Tree* [Detail], 2019.
- Page 7**Audrey Buttigieg Cardona, *Various works from Minding Monsters* exhibition, 2019.
- Page 8, 9**Tamirat Gebremariam, *Tutana Bradshaw* [Detail], 2019.
- Page 12***Papercut Colour* community exhibition facilitated by Anu Patel, 2018.
- Page 13**Artwork from the 2019 exhibition *Home*.
Artworks from left to right: Samantha Taylor, *Home is where the yarn is*, 2019; Slow Art Collective, *Archiloom:M*, 2018; Sofie Dieu, *Displacement*, 2018.
- Page 20**Georgie Nicholson and community artists, *What Knits Us Together* [Detail of work in development], 2018.
- Page 22**Simon Perry, *On Tap*, 2007.
- Page 25**Local artist Katrina Fiscaro in her studio with recent work.
- Page 30**Charles Anderson, *Words for Water*, 2006.
- Inside back cover**Kerrie Taylor, *Homecoming*, 2019.



