



Children's Services Strategic Framework 2007 - 2012



Executive summary

Yarra Plenty Regional Library's *Children's Services Strategic Framework* aims to develop services and programs based on children's needs and cultural experiences. We will build our services to encourage participation by embracing modern technologies, offering new cultural and learning experiences, and providing spaces to explore as an individual or as part of a group. We recognise that children, especially younger ones, are brought to the library by adults and we need to engage and encourage them.

We conducted an environmental scan to highlight the current best practice examples in the library world and other professional services target at children. The scan covered the following key components; overall trends, reading and writing, children's libraries, ICT (information Communication and Technology), curriculum support, and Councils' Early Years Programs.

The main trends identified are that children's perceptions of libraries are changing and children now need multimodal literacies, not just the ability to read and write but also to have media literacy and information literacy skills. The importance of fostering a love of reading is being increasingly recognised at the political level. The best new children's libraries are becoming interactive and merge the physical and the virtual.

Though identifying these examples we have been able to establish the path forward for YPRL and in our actions we have linked our plans with them. We have used these best practice examples and the consultation with key stakeholders to determine our strategies and actions.

Goals and priorities

1. Provide exciting and innovative library services for children
2. Promote and market children's library services
3. Partner and collaborate with other service providers

Introduction

Yarra Plenty Regional Library (YPRL) provides public library services on behalf of the Cities of Banyule and Whittlesea and the Shire of Nillumbik.

Service delivery is provided through eight branch libraries located at Diamond Valley, Eltham, Ivanhoe, Lalor, Mill Park, Rosanna, Thomastown and Watsonia. Two mobile libraries provide services including a specially designed vehicle that visits institutions for those residents unable to visit a library. There are toy libraries at Lalor, Diamond Valley and Eltham. The latter two are run independently by a local committee.

We believe public libraries should be seen as community centres with a strong community focus. Our aim is to build a library service around a connected, inclusive, informed community where libraries are highly valued and well used. We recognise the key role of the public library in fostering and encouraging a love of reading and learning.

The framework is based on the input gathered from workshops, discussion with parents attending a preschool story time, interviews with library staff, Early Years Plans of each Council and a literature review.

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this strategic framework is to provide an exciting vision of the future for library services and collections for children 0 – 12 years of age. Catering for the needs of this “digital native” cohort involves understanding the world they are living and growing up in and responding to their requirements for reading and information as well as safe places where they can interact with friends.

Research shows that children get ready to read years before they start school, even from birth. There are six skills (print awareness, print motivation, vocabulary, narrative skills, letter awareness, and phonological awareness) that lay the foundation for later success in reading and writing. Parents and caregivers can help develop these skills in the children in their care.

This framework develops strategies to encourage adults to bring their children to libraries and to promote the benefits of libraries, reading and literacy to our diverse communities, especially to those that do not have a culture of using libraries. It covers:

- The current situation
- Environmental scan
- Goals and priorities for the next 5 years
- Actions, timeframes and resources required

Links with strategic plan

Children's Services are specifically referred to in the YPRL Library Plan 2006 - 2010 under the goals of: *inclusive, informed and connected communities*.

Community Objective No. 1 : Connected Community	
Strategy	Actions
Promote libraries as cultural and community hubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a children's services brochure and bookmark • Develop branding for children's services
Maintain and develop partnerships and networks with key providers and stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with member councils to ensure they are achieving their desired outcomes from libraries • Identify potential partnerships with community groups, institutions, education (schools, TAFEs, universities), other libraries including National Library of Australia, State Library of Victoria, member councils • Lead in providing informal learning opportunities

Community Objective No. 2 : Inclusive Community	
Strategy	Actions
Celebrate culture, cultural diversity and heritage (in partnership with community)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise community participation in the use of libraries and library services • Liaise with member council to work in partnership in providing library programs • Develop partnerships with community groups • Ensure library services are available to all members of the community • Provide reading and literacy programs • Engage the community in learning and cultural activities • Participate in local festivals • Promote libraries as cultural places
Identify strategies to meet needs of target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Children's and Youth Strategy • Use Youth Workers to engage young people • Consult with young people to establish their requirements for library services

Community Objective No. 3 : Informed Community	
Strategy	Actions
Maintain and enhance research and study opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote use of online resources • Continue to develop and promote homework clubs • Promote awareness of resources to target groups
Maintain and develop partnerships with other learning providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with relevant providers eg U3A, adult learning, learning and living centres, to meet joint needs • Develop relationships with schools in the region

**Community
Objective No. 2 : Inclusive Community**

Strategy	Actions
Encourage a love of reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint Reading Co ordinator • Develop a vibrant program of activities to encourage the love of reading and improve reading, writing and information literacy skills • Assist with development of pre literacy skills • Increase information literacy skills in community • Increase ICT skills in community • Continue to provide bookaroo program for babies • Participate in state-wide and national reading programs with special emphasis on Summer Reading Program • Develop a winter writing program for 8 – 14 year olds

Demographics

Age	Banyule	% of pop	Nillumbik	% of pop	Whittlesea	% of pop	% of pop Victoria
0-4	6820	6	4175	7	8498	7	6
5-11	10196	9	7042	12	12591	11	10

Source ABS 2001 Census

Banyule

The size of the early years population (0-8 years) is greatest in the north-east of the municipality (Greensborough/St Helena/Eltham North), in the central area (Heidelberg/Rosanna/Viewbank), to the south (Ivanhoe/Eaglemont/Ivanhoe East) and the north east (Watsonia/Watsonia North/Bundoora). (Source: ABS 2001)

Nillumbik

Nillumbik is a relatively young community with 16% of the population aged 0 - 11 years old (11,217) Nillumbik has a significantly higher proportion of its population aged 0-14 (25%) compared with Victoria (20%).

74.6% of the population of Nillumbik is families with children, compared with North and West Metropolitan Region (58.9%) and Victoria (57.5%).

By 2024 it is projected that there will be a 5% increase in the total population in Nillumbik. Yarrambat and Plenty are experiencing housing development and a 14.4% increase in population is anticipated over this period in these areas. (Source: ABS 2001)

Whittlesea

The City of Whittlesea is the fastest growing municipality in the north of the State, recognised by *Melbourne 2030* as a growth area of significance, with a population of 127, 000 which is projected to double by the year 2030. Significant growth is expected in all age cohorts.

Children aged 0-12 years are a high proportion of persons living in the City of Whittlesea. Population projections from 2005 to the year 2016 indicate that although children marginally decline as an overall percentage of the population, the numbers of children significantly increases from 24, 327 to 31, 433 (Source: City of Whittlesea Population Projections December 2004)

Families with children are a significant demographic group in Whittlesea, as almost 74% of households in Whittlesea contain families with children compared to 64% of households with families across Victoria. (Source: ABS 2001)

Consultation

A forum with relevant departments of member councils, representatives from neighbouring libraries and other organisations that work with children was held in November 2006. The purpose of the forum was to identify current services to children, and what enhancements could be made to YPRL's services to children. Attendees were positive about the library and are happy with existing programs.

Feedback from the forum included:

- There is a need for new / fostering of existing partnerships, such as Maternal and Child health, to better engage families.
- The library should look for opportunities to go beyond the traditional library service and be more of a community place.
- The library should create spaces at libraries for children that are easy to access, inviting and inspiring.
- Library services and programs need to be flexible to meet the particular demographics of an area.
- There is a need to improve marketing through a strong brand concept.
- Promotion needs to be targeted to existing and emerging groups such as new mothers groups, playgroups and family day care providers.
- A strong outreach program needs to be developed to reach those who are not visiting libraries

A group of parents attending a preschool storytime were also consulted. Overall the parents are very appreciative of the sessions and made the following suggestions

- Hold activities throughout the year including school holidays
- Do not limit sessions by age, so families can attend.

Prior to the community workshop a staff session was held to brainstorm ideas and to gain input from practitioners at the branches.

Appendix A

List of Workshop invitees and attendees

Structure, staffing and skills

“The most important attribute [of the library service], and the one accorded the highest rating remains staff – the key resource to utilize in reinforcing users and attracting lapsed and non-users”¹

Each branch has a Children and Youth Services Librarian (CYS) who is responsible for children’s programs and ensuring the collection and information services meet the needs of children at their branch. There are competing demands for these staff that need to balance operational needs with outreach programs and activities for children and parents. The focus of the CYs is generally on 0 – 12 year olds. Community Liaison Officers support the CYs in marketing programs and developing schedules.

The Outreach Department is responsible for managing, developing and /or facilitating partnerships with other children’s service providers and local community groups and for working with branch staff to establish programs and activities. The department plays a key role in high level networking, branding and marketing.

The Reading and Literacy Coordinator supports branches and the mobile libraries to promote and encourage reading and literacy by supporting branch staff and networking with key agencies, council departments, community groups and library users.

Volunteers work with the library and assist in storytimes and other activities.

Current children’s collections & services

Public libraries assist in building reading and learning confidence for life, through programs and collections which promote reading as an enjoyable fun activity. They are often a new parents’ first port of call in introducing their newborn to the world of literature and reading. Libraries are a key institution for helping to improve academic outcomes for all children, in particular those from low-income families. They are a key place for parents and children to connect with others.

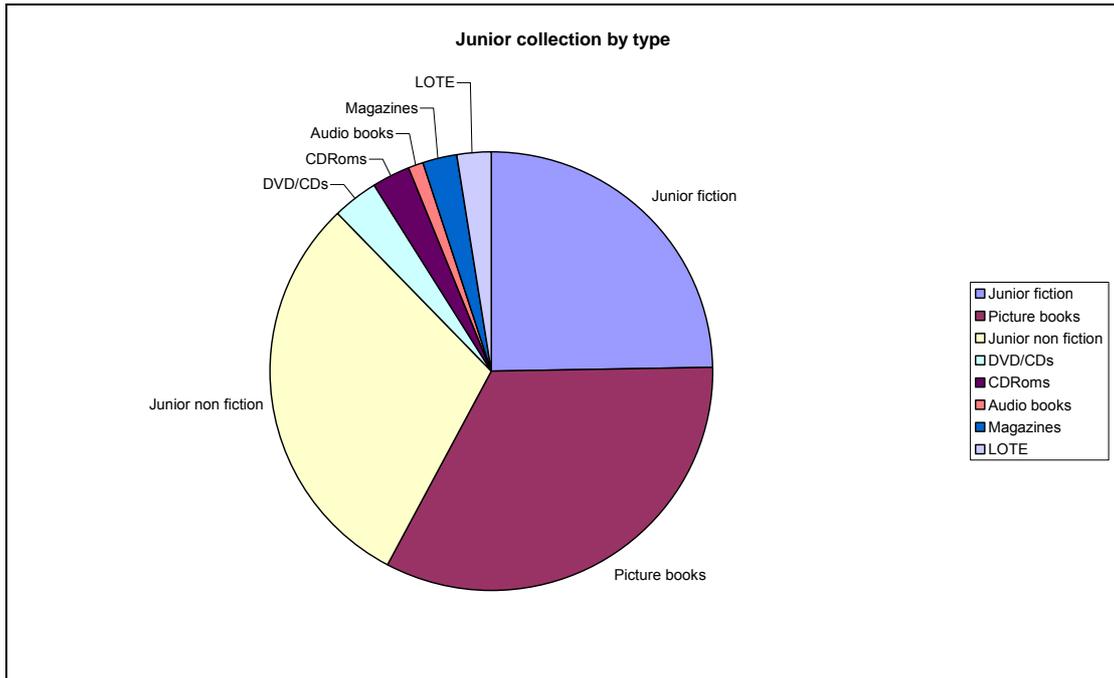
1. Current collection

The collection includes books, magazines, DVDs, videos, CDs, audiobooks, CDRoms, digital images, web pages, downloadable content, digital content and electronic resources.

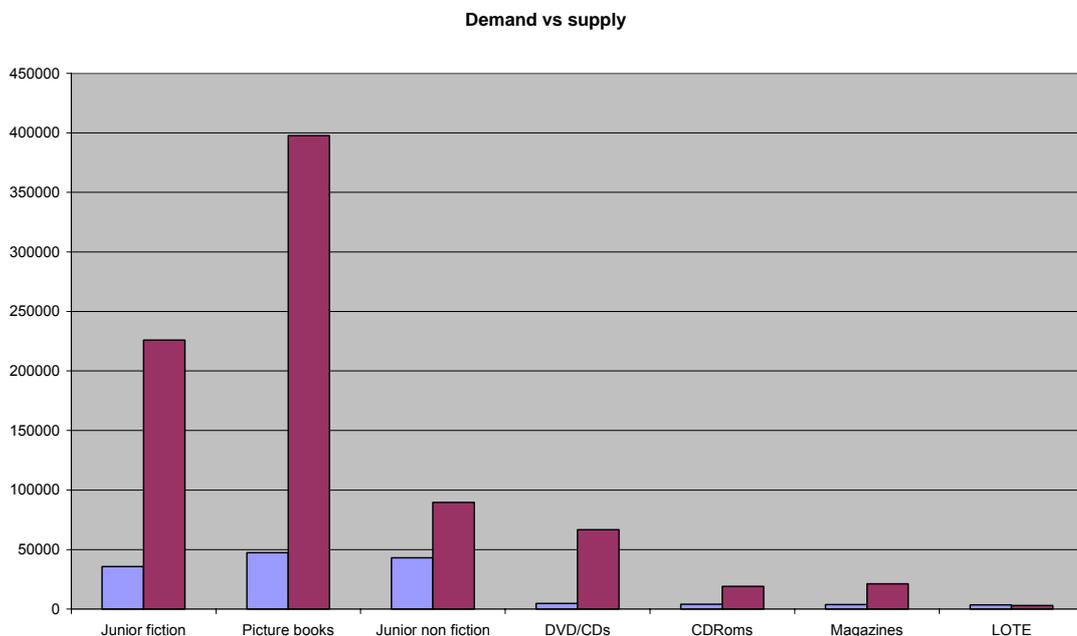
The general collection also contains resources on parenting skills, child psychology and other related areas. At Diamond Valley there is a specialised collection housed next to the children’s area.

¹ Nexus Regional Library Community Survey 2005

COLLECTION	DESCRIPTION	SPECIFICATION
Junior fiction 35,640 items 6.6% of total collection	Books written and illustrated specifically for children up to the ages of 12	Popular high demand, high interest fiction, critically acclaimed and/or award winning books, Australian, local authors and enduring works of fiction.
Picture Books 47,310 items 8.7% of total collection	Books written and illustrated for babies and children	Includes Easy starter/readers for beginner and emerging readers. Includes Board books for babies and toddlers
Junior non fiction 43,073 items 7.9% of total collection	Books containing facts or information	Includes a selection of material across a range of subjects, interests and age levels
Audio-visual 4,759 items .8% of total collection	DVDs/CDs	Popular high demand and high interest productions and TV series. Childrens and family feature films. Popular, high demand music for children eg. Wiggles, Bananas in Pyjamas. Hi-5 etc.
4,043 items .7% off total collection	CDRoms	Educational and recreational multimedia for children
Audio books 1,438 items .2% of total collection	Books recorded on to CD or cassette, digitally encoded or downloadable	Popular, high demand and interest titles. Includes downloadable ebooks through Tumblebooks
Magazines 3,832 items .7 % of total collection	Magazines with entertainment and informational value	Popular publications
Electronic resources (not counted as percentage of collection)	Downloadable content available via the Internet	Databases on various subjects, digital images and content
LOTE 3,434 items .6% of total collection	Resources in community languages	Picture books in German, Italian, French, Chinese, Somali, etc.



The recent Strategic Asset Audit of Victorian public libraries (2006) identified the mismatch between supply and demand – the current collection mix compared to circulation of the particular items and indicates the areas of collections that are over and under-invested. According to this measure the collection has much more non fiction than is being used by the community. It has less fiction, junior material (including picture books and children’s fiction) and CDs and DVDs than is being used.



The statewide audit highlighted the need for the library service to purchase significantly more picture books and children’s fiction.

2. Current programs and activities

The library offers a range of programs specifically for children. These are core programs that run throughout the year.

Bookaroo – one off session for parents about the importance of reading to babies, a free board book is provided upon joining. This is run in partnership with Maternal and Child Health nurses, who promote this program.

Baby Story Time for babies 0 – 12 months. Sessions include selected songs, rhymes, and fingerplays (Eltham and Lalor Libraries)

TinyTots for 0 - 3 years, newborns are welcome. Sessions include selected stories, songs, rhymes, and fingerplays (all libraries except Lalor and Ivanhoe)

Toddler Time for 12 months – 3 years. Sessions include selected songs, rhymes, and finger plays (Lalor Library)

Preschool Storytime for ages 3-5 years. Weekly sessions include stories, fingerplays, rhymes and activities (except school holidays.)

7Up for ages 7 - 12 years. Sessions include activities, book chats, new fiction (Diamond Valley, Mill Park and Thomastown Libraries).

Project Plus for primary school children. Homework help available weekdays (Mill Park and Thomastown Libraries)

School Holiday Programs for primary school children. Run during each term break and themed. The program usually involves one activity with a paid performer and one in house activity.

Summer Reading Club for 6 – 12 years old. State-wide project that runs through the summer break starting in December and finishing in late January. The target audience is children who can read independently and it is run at all branches. Each summer a different children's author supports the campaign. Kits are provided to children to encourage them to read and record their reading and there are also activity sheets.

National Simultaneous Storytime is organised by the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA). It takes place during National Literacy and Numeracy Week in September each year. Libraries across the country read the same book at the same time.

Premiers Reading Challenge is for all Victorian students in Prep to Year 9. The Challenge begins at the start of the school year school year and usually ends in August. The aim is to promote a love of reading. Traditionally the challenge is a school based program with support from public libraries that provide access to books listed in the challenge booklists.

Children's Book Week occurs in mid to late August and is designed to provide activities that celebrate the winning titles for the Children's Book Council of Australia's Book of the Year Awards. Libraries hold activities and promotions around a theme and promote the award winning books.

Parent Homework Help Sessions are designed to assist parents in helping their children with their homework.

The sessions may include the following topics:

- how to interpret homework sheets
- expectations
- how to access and use online resources and books

As well as these core ongoing programs, other activities are scheduled throughout the year to complement community festivals and events, special occasions or activities such as book launches.

These programs are selected on the basis of demographic and community need, and then taken up by specific branches. The demand and interest for programs is reviewed on an annual basis by the Outreach Manager and the Children's Librarians when planning for the following year is developed. We are moving to have common programs across the region, maximising the opportunities for marketing and badging.

3. Library spaces

All library branches have an area set aside for children. These have collections with a focus on children; some have children's sized furniture and rugs. Two branches - Ivanhoe and Lalor - have X-boxes in the library.

The size of the children's area is dependent on the floor plan and size of the branch library. No specific branding has been implemented to the areas and there is a limited amount of display boards or units to promote children's work. The areas are not vibrant, exciting or interactive and there is definite scope for improvement.

Toy libraries are run at Diamond Valley, Eltham and Lalor Libraries. The Nillumbik toy libraries are managed by community groups and funded independently. Lalor Library manages the toy library coordinated by the Children's Librarian with funding from the City of Whittlesea. There are no plans to change or add to the toy libraries in the region.

4. Partners

We work with the following departments of the three member councils:

Banyule City Council

Youth and Family services which includes the following sections: Early Childhood Services, Maternal and Child Health, Pre-school Liaison, Playgroup, Family Day Care, Art and Culture

Shire of Nillumbik

Community Services which includes the following sections: Community Services, Maternal and Child Health, Family Day Care, Arts and Culture

City of Whittlesea

Family services which includes the following sections: Children's Services, Inclusions Support, Kindergarten Liaison, Maternal and Child Health, Family Day Care, Playgroup

We also work with:

Schools

There are currently 94 Primary Schools in our region. We promote programs and activities to each school and ask them to advertise events in their newsletters and invite children and teachers to attend tours of the library or participate in our programs

Pre-School/Kindergartens

There are 73 Pre-schools within the region. We write to each centre at the beginning of the year outlining our services and inviting centres to visit the library or for the librarian to conduct a story session at their centre

Playgroups

There are approximately 70 playgroups within the region. We are involved in visiting playgroups to conduct storytime/baby time sessions

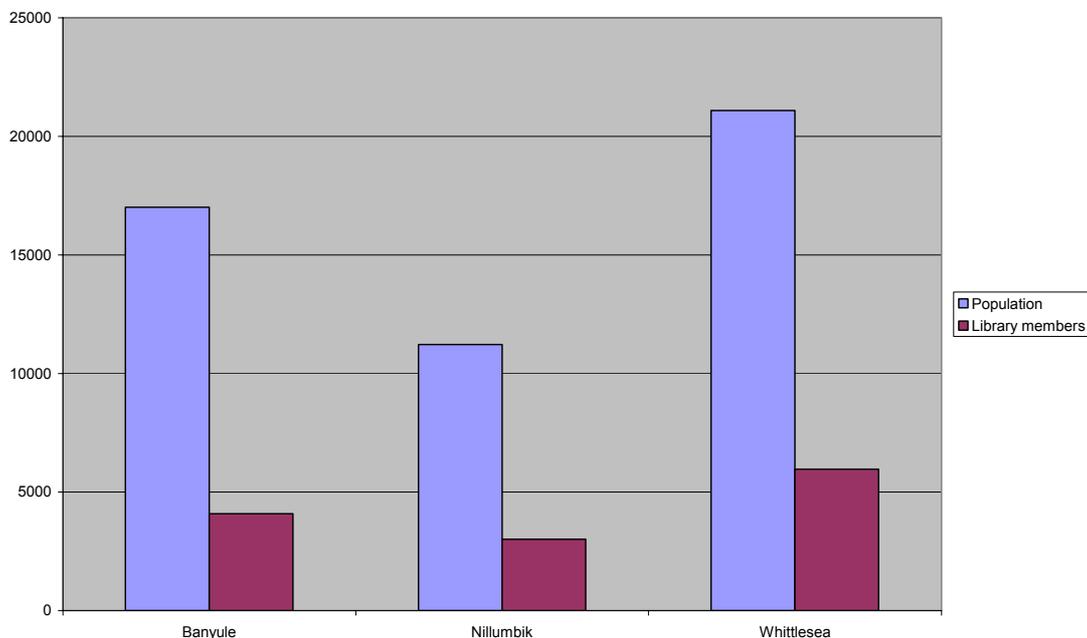
Childcare Centres

There are approximately 60 Childcare Centres. This includes occasional care (does not include family day care) within the region. We are involved in visiting childcare centres to conduct storytime/baby time sessions

5. Non-users

There are 13, 347 library members between the ages of 0-12year. (Banyule 4,086; Nillumbik 3,012; Whittlesea 5,966)

Library members as a proportion of total population 0 –12 years



These figures are low, and while many parents prefer that children borrow using an adult card, there is significant opportunity to increase the proportion of children with their own library card in the region.

Research tells us that it is parents, care givers and teachers who are the driving force to linking children with library services and the importance of reading. It is important to target this group in our marketing and outreach.

This strategy emphasises the importance of taking programs and activities out to the community. This will be done through collaborative efforts with Council departments and other organisations in areas that are not currently connected with the services we offer.

6. Evaluation/Feedback

Our evaluation processes are generally ad hoc and under developed. We use anecdotal reports from branch staff and also use the information provided through the annual Nexus Survey.

Feedback during this process from consultation with parents and the workshops has indicated a need to a more streamlined and consistent approach to providing opportunities for evaluation and feedback.

We will institute formal evaluation for each of our School Holiday Programs and twice yearly for the core activities.

Environmental Scan

Public libraries build reading and learning confidence for life through programs which promote reading as an enjoyable fun activity, particularly for children. Recent research suggests that promoting specific literacy-related activities during the years prior to school entry can improve future literacy outcomes for children in disadvantaged communities².

1. Overall trends

Literacy, media literacy & information literacy

The changing information world in which children are growing up demands a new concept in public libraries. Children need multimodal literacies in order to handle global complexities in a knowledge society.³ The ability to *read and write* is a cultural and democratic good. *Media literacy* is the ability to access, analyse, evaluate and communicate messages in a variety of formats. *Information literacy* is the ability to evaluate and critically assess information.

Community Expectations

The America Association for Library Service to Children recently conducted focus groups of students in grades 2-4. The purpose was to explore how early elementary children view the library.

While generally enthusiastic, most said they use the public library only occasionally, partly because they use school libraries and partly because that is how often their parents take them. The children who did not visit a public library said it was because their parents do not take them. The children said they believe more would use public libraries if they knew what was there for them and if their parents would take them.

It is clear that children's perceptions of the public library are changing. While most (especially girls) said they liked to read, books are not necessarily what draws them. Suburban kids, especially, said their families buy books and they use the library more for computers, movies and games.

Most of these 2nd-4th graders said they use the library more for fun than school. They said their homework often does not require a library and that they turn first to their teachers, parents and the Internet. Almost all the children said they seek out librarians to help them.

2. Reading & writing – some best practice examples

Little Big Book Club

The Little Big Book Club is a South Australian initiative to promote reading, the discussion of books and the promotion of South Australian and Australian authors. It is a state wide project that is a partnership between *The Advertiser* and the State Library of South Australia. The aim of the club is to provide each child aged between 6 – 12 months with a book bag which includes a book and materials about reading

² Lets Read, Murdoch Children's Research Institute, 2005

³ Libraries for a knowledge society: a bottom-up perspective. Kirsten Drotner, Danish Research Centre Advanced Media Materials, Aarhus May 2006.

with children. The initiative also provides regional branding opportunities for storytimes, author talks and activities held in libraries across South Australia.

Bookstart

Bookstart is a UK program which coordinates varied organisations in the common cause of bringing books to the very young. The combined efforts of library staff, health visitors, illustrators, publishers, booksellers, government departments throughout the UK and the Bookstart team deliver a bag of baby books and supporting literature to the families of 90% of the UK's children under one year.

Let's Read

Let's Read has been developed by the Centre for Community Child Health at Murdoch Children's Research Institute, Melbourne, in partnership with The Smith Family and is an initiative designed to promote reading to young children from birth. This program aims to provide parents with resources to help them learn about the importance of reading to their baby. The key component is a resource kit that includes:

- Simple parent information
- Age specific booklists
- DVD containing the simple parent information and books being read aloud in different styles (soon to be available in other languages)
- Board book
- Bag

Bi lingual Storytimes

Hume Global Learning Centre Libraries respond to community need by going out to the community to conduct storytimes in other languages. The library employs bilingual storytellers (Arabic, Turkish and Vietnamese) to take storytimes into playgroups, new mothers groups and school groups. The results are that more people are visiting the library that traditionally would not come.

3. Children's libraries – trends

The Interactive Children's Library

Aarhus Library in Denmark is developing prototypes of spaces in the library that challenge, support and promote curiosity in children's play and learning activities. The children's library is changing its focus from providing services for children to supporting children's self-initiated development, play and imagination. It merges the physical and the virtual library.

Library of 100 talents

Based in Heerhugowaard, Holland, this project uses the theory of multiple intelligence. This concept, developed by Dr. Howard Gardner, Professor of Education at Harvard University, covers linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial musical, bodily, naturalistic, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills.

The project aims to develop and put into practice a concept based on the ideas and the experiences of children themselves and to make it a practical concept for all libraries in Holland and elsewhere. Children have asked for more attractive colours and materials, to have the collection presented in a different way, to have young, friendly and dedicated staff, and to include multimedia.

ImagineON: The Joe & Joan Martin Center

The Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County created a new model of library services for youth. With the goal of creating a destination for families PLCMC now shares a facility with the Children's Theatre of Charlotte. The building opened in October 2005.

The partners share the mission to "bring stories to life" which has shaped everything from architecture to interactive exhibits to staffing. This new building challenges the traditional concept of public libraries and has a strong vision to excite and educate young minds at every stage of development. It brings a synergy between educational drama experiences and the critical skills of reading and learning.

Kidscorners

Utrecht Library in the Netherlands has created the concept of Kidscorners. These are pcs that can be used by pre readers:

- installed in almost all libraries but especially in immigrant neighbourhoods where computer-possession is still low
- targeted to children age 2- 7 i.e. pre-readers
- have two headsets so children can work with a friend or a parent
- have a graphic and/or spoken interface so no reading is required
- contain selected CDROMs that have an educational but fun content
- the educational content is directed either to learn to use a computer or to prepare for reading

4. ICT (Information Communication Technology)

ICT plays a significant role in many aspects of children's life today, and this will only increase in the future. The potential benefits of technology for young children's learning and development are well documented (eg Wright & Shade 1994). As ICT becomes easier to use and early childhood software proliferates, young children's use of technology becomes more widespread. Therefore, libraries have a responsibility to critically examine the impact of technology on children and be prepared to use technology to benefit children using our services and also as way of enticing children to visit the library.

Libraries have a role in shaping the ICT environment that is transforming the daily lives of children and families. There are several areas to address relating to technology and young children:

- benefits of appropriate use of technology in early childhood programs and services
- integration of technology into the library environment
- equitable access to technology, including children with special needs
- awareness and evaluation of software to avoid stereotyping and violence
- role of library staff and parents as advocates for appropriate use of technology.

With the potential of access to the Internet or other on-line "user friendly" networks young children can collaborate with children in other libraries, cities, states, and countries. Through electronic field trips in real time or via programs, children are able to share different cultural and environmental experiences. Email and telecommunications opportunities through the internet facilitate direct communication and promote social interactions previously limited by physical location.

Libraries are integrating the major providers of online content - Google, Amazon, iTunes, Youtube, MySpace, online games and others into online offerings to make their services relevant.

5. Curriculum support

Toronto Public Library recognises the importance of supporting learning and education outside of school. To support learning they have designed two programs Toronto Homework Club is a free program for children in grades 2-6 who are having trouble doing their homework. Children are paired up with a trained volunteer and meet once a week in a branch to play learning games to build confidence and make homework fun. The aim of the project is to provide children with the tools to learn, read and do a better job of their homework and to learn to love learning. Toronto Leading to Reading is a program for children in Grades 2 to 6 who can communicate in English but are reading below their grade level. It is not a Homework Club, but a chance for children to practice their reading and writing skills.

ACT Libraries offer a Virtual Library where students can access online homework help using Your Tutor. The Virtual library site also provides access to databases and online books.

6. Councils' Early Years Plans

Each of the member councils has an Early Year Plan either completed or in draft. As a result of concerted efforts, the interface councils of outer Melbourne have been successful in obtaining \$25 million over the next four years for programs for babies and preschool children. (*Banyule is not part of interface councils.*) Member councils are keen to work in partnership with the library to deliver programs relating to pre literacy.

Shire of Nillumbik

The Municipal Early Years Plan 2006-2010 is still in the planning stage with a discussion paper released in October 2006. The proposed direction for the next five years is to service developments, information and communication, planning and collaboration, healthier and safer environments for children and families.

Issues identified from consultation include; family life styles and needs; affordability and access; isolation and transportation; convenient, accessible and coordinated sources for information; parenting skills development and support; support and capacity development of volunteers and committees; demand for places in community-based child care centres; coordination of services; leadership and advocacy; funding challenges.

City of Whittlesea

The direction set in the MEYP is to create communities that value families and supports their parenting. There are six goals: services for families and communities; facilities for families and communities; advocacy; planning; strengthening community engagement and partnerships; and research and evaluation.

Through research the following risk factors were identified: low birth weight, high post natal depression rates, lower pre school attendance, high child protection notification rates, low breast feeding rates and a lack of appropriate services, which all impact

on a child's development. Risk factors can be reduced by a well funded coordinated flexible service system that reflects the community need.

The objectives and strategies identified in the MEYP Action Plan aim to have a sustained impact on risk factors that influence a child's ability to reach its full potential. It will do this by aiming for a coordinated, accessible and relevant service system for children and families.

Banyule City Council

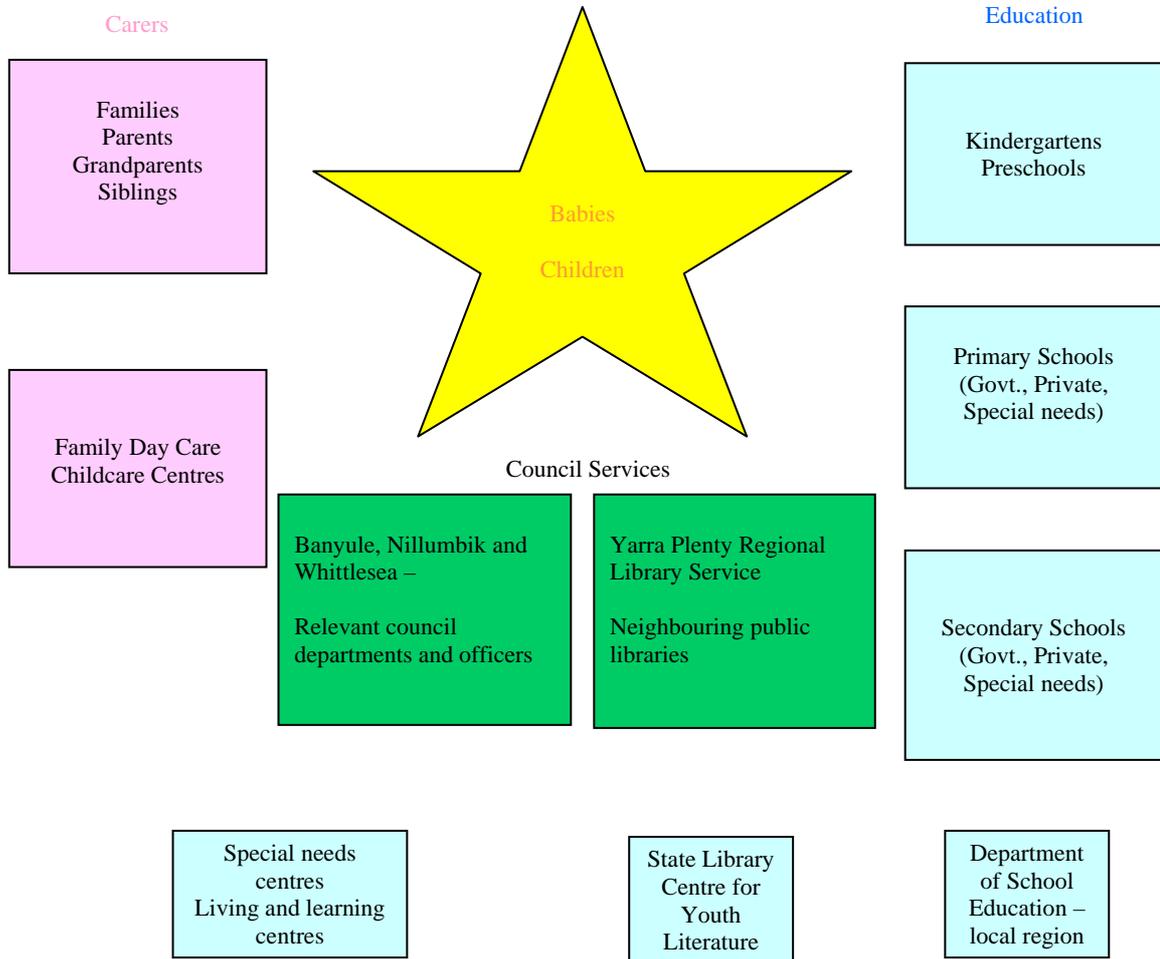
One of the key objectives of Banyule's early year's strategy is community development and support. Council aims to improve the health, development, learning and wellbeing of all children in Banyule from pregnancy through to transition to school.

Early Childhood Strategies key areas in Council 2006 - 2010

Banyule Early Years Plan 2006-2009 Building Futures	Nillumbik - Municipal Early Years Plan 2006 – 2010 Discussion paper	Whittlesea – Municipal Early Years Plan (MEYP) Draft 2005 - 2008	YPRL Children's Strategic Framework 2007 - 2012
Prevention	Service developments	Services for families and communities	Provide exciting and innovative library services for children
Early intervention	Information and communication	Facilities for families and communities	Promote and market children's library services
Promoting inclusion	Planning and advocacy	Advocacy	Partner and collaborate with other service providers
Community capacity building and decision making	Partnerships and collaboration	Planning	
Localised, connected services	Healthier and safer environments for children and families	Strengthening Community Engagement and Partnerships	
		Research and Evaluation	

The objective is to link with each Council's Early Years Plans, working where we can with relevant officers to achieve their outcomes. We will do this through on going liaison, communication of goals and objectives, and shared projects.

7. Stakeholders



1. Provide exciting and innovative library services for children

Ensure that physical spaces are inspiring, interactive and evolving.

While all branches have dedicated children's spaces they are generally bland and unexciting. These spaces should have flexible shelving, attractive and eye catching visual clues and spaces where new readers can be nurtured and inspired. We will create new library spaces, away from the structured Dewey and build a space with a strong ambition: to be inspiring. These spaces will be constantly changing with exhibits, displays, the latest releases and offers, various learning opportunities, workshops for children's own creativity, cultural events, and contests.

Collections will respond to demand

As outlined in the Collections Asset Plan, the library service is moving to demand driven collections. This means that there will be a significant increase in the number of picture books, junior fiction and audiovisual materials added to the collection, so that the number of items reflects the amount of usage.

The current picture book collection will be divided into three separate collections

- Picture books
- Board books
- Easy starter books.

The State-wide Audit identified easy starters as imperative but under-invested collection in public libraries. Easy starters are specifically targeted to encourage reading for beginner and emerging readers. This collection provides an impetus for children to continue building their reading skills and acts as a supplement to the readers available through primary schools. This collection needs visibility, promotion and to be easily accessible for parents and children.

Board books are quite often the first book babies will handle. The format makes these books very resilient and long wearing and assists young children with their motor skills with easy to turn pages.

Junior non fiction will change from being mainly curriculum support to reflecting the interests and recreational pursuits of younger children. These collections will be separated out from the adult non fiction to make them more accessible.

Services will be inclusive

To reach those children who come from a background that is not aware of public libraries we need to go out into the community to share the opportunities that libraries can offer. CYs will visit groups and facilities to run programs and promote the library service.

Programs and activities held at branches will not limit children by age, while still indicating the target market.

Regular programs will run throughout the year, including school holidays.

Children with special needs will continue to be welcomed to the library and encouraged to use the libraries services.

Provide programs that enhance reading and pre reading skills

We will partner with member council staff to ensure every baby born in the region has the opportunity to join the library and receive a book. This will build on our current Bookaroo program, which introduces new parents to the library and provides them with information on why and how to read to babies.

We will continue to offer our comprehensive program of storytimes for young children.

Grow a love of reading

We will provide programs, activities and collections that encourage children to read and engage with works of the imagination. We will grow the Summer Reading Program each year to increase participation. We will actively engage with the Premiers Reading Challenge, maximising the opportunities that this presents to promote reading and the use of libraries.

Encourage writing

We will encourage writing through a winter writing program. We will seek to partner with a prominent organisation to deliver this program which will be aimed at 7 – 12 year olds. The program will include writing workshops and publication of winning stories.

Offer opportunities for children to interact and participate in the library

We will consult with children when we are developing our collection development policy and when we are developing our programs.

We will encourage children to contribute to our website with their own content, including book reviews and stories.

We will offer online games in the library to encourage children to use the library as well as to provide opportunities for those who may not have them at home.

We will create Kidscorners which will encourage pre readers to become familiar with computers and assist in pre reading skills.

Actions:

- Create children’s areas that are welcoming, interactive and child centred. Transform 2 libraries per year
- Increase number of items in picture books, easy starters, junior fiction and audiovisual items to reflect demand based on turnover and gap analysis statistics
- Increase the easy starters’ collection to double its current size within two years. Identify and order this collection by levels for easy accessibility
- Increase board book collections – supply board books suitable for newborns eg black/white pictures
- Invest in popular digital downloadable resources

- Consult with parents, care-givers and children through established forums eg. Storytimes, school visits and Bookaroo sessions to gather community input in the development of the Collection Development Plan and the development of programs and activities
- Visit preschools and playgroups that cater to the newly arrived and NESB children
- Enhance and expand the Bookaroo program
- Implement Reading programs such as after school reading groups, expand 7up programs, partner with schools, online book clubs
- Evaluate programs and services on a regular basis – annually for core activities and as they occur for other activities.

2. Promote and market children’s library services

Aim for every child in the region to have a library card

A recruitment program will be developed and undertaken to encourage children to have their own library card.

Market and promote Children’s library services to organisations and groups that work with children

Create databases of relevant organisations and groups that need to be kept informed about children’s library services. Once this is developed, we will actively and regularly send information about our services and programs.

Develop a brand for children’s Library Service that is easily recognised

We will provide branding that is easily identified by children/parents and carers as being part of an exciting library service for children.

Develop a new look ‘children’s section’ for the web site

Utilise the web site and new and emerging technologies to promote the library resources, services and programs to children.

Encourage those who do not currently use the library

Increase outreach to those in the community who do not know about the services and programs offered at the library. Target parents and carers, and also visit children at their schools.

Actions

- Develop and implement a recruitment program to have every child in the region have their own library card
- Develop a strong Outreach Program for parents and children
- Identify non users
- Meet and present to service organisations and groups in the region
- Establish a Marketing Plan outlining children’s concept and brochure look and feel
- Include Children’s section in regional newsletter
- Target non users through a promotional campaign
- Develop a website with children’s section
- Implement a Children’s Winter writing, poem and drawing competition

3. Partner and collaborate with other service providers

Identify current and potential partners

Maintain and develop partnerships particularly with member Councils' children's services staff.

Actions

- Meet with new and existing partners
- Increase promotion of children's program and services to council departments and organisations
- Profile potential partners
- Strengthen Bookaroo partnership and program with Councils
- Partner with local papers

Actions, resources and timelines			
Actions	Timeline	Cost	Responsibility
Link in with actions of Early Years Plans where relevant	2006-2010		Outreach Manager and CEO
Create children's areas - 2 libraries per year	Complete by 2011	\$2000 -\$3000 per branch	BMs, CYS, Outreach Department
Increase collection in picture books, easy starters, junior fiction and audiovisual	June 2008	Within Collections budget	Collections Manager and CYS
Increase the easy starters' collection to double its current size within two years	July 2009	Within Collection budget	Collections Manager and CYS
Increase board book collections	June 2008	Within Collections budget	Collections Manager and CYS
Obtain popular digital downloadable resources	June 2008		Online resource coordinator and Collections Manager
Increase consultation with parents, care-givers and and activities	June 2009		Collections Manager, CYS, Outreach Department
Visit preschools and playgroups that cater to the newly arrived and NESB children	Ongoing		CYS and BMs and Outreach Department
Enhance and expand the Bookaroo program	February 2008		CYS and Outreach Department
Implement Reading programs	February 2009		CYS and Outreach Department
Evaluate programs and services on a regular basis	December 2007	\$400	CYS, BMs and Outreach Department
Develop and implement a recruitment program for every child to have their own library card	By June 2012	tbc	Manager outreach Marketing and media coordinator
Develop a strong Outreach Program for parents and children	Ongoing	\$4000	CYS, BMs and Outreach Department and relevant Council departments
Identify non users	June 2008		Outreach Department and CYS

Meet and present to service organisations and groups in the region	Ongoing		Outreach Department and CYS
Establish a Marketing Plan outlining children's concept and brochure "look and feel"	June 2008		CEO and Outreach Manager
Include Children's section in regional newsletter	June 2009 ongoing		Outreach Department
Target non users through a promotional campaign	February 2008		Outreach Department and relevant Council Departments
Develop a website with children's section	December 2007		Outreach Department and Online resource staff
Implement a Children's Winter writing, poem and drawing competition	June 2008		Outreach Department and CYS and BMs and local business or Leader Newspaper
Meet with new and existing partners	Ongoing		Outreach Department
Increase promotion of children's program and services to council departments and organisations	July 2008		Outreach Department
Profile potential partners	ongoing		Outreach Department and relevant Council Departments
Strengthen Bookaroo partnership and program with Councils	December 2007		Outreach Department
Partner with local papers	June 2008 ongoing		Outreach Department and Communications Departments at Council

Appendix A

Invitees and attendees at workshop

		Title	Organisation	Attended workshop
Anne Marie	Halewood	Co-ordinator Early Childhood Services	Banyule City Council	√
Dianne	Silver	Maternal & Child Health Co-ordinator	Banyule City Council	√
Roslyn	Marshall	Pre-school Liaison Officer	Banyule City Council	
Dawn	Veale	Co-ordinator Playgroups	Banyule City Council	
Margaret	Phillips	Co-ordinator Family Day Care	Banyule City Council	√
Gerry	Byrne	Youth services	Banyule City Council	√
Julie	Salomon	Manager Youth & Family Services	Banyule City Council	
Carmen	Capello	Inclusions Support Facilitator	City of Whittlesea	
Kathy	Panjari	Kindergarten Team Leader	City of Whittlesea	√
Vicki	Alford	Early Years Partnership facilitator	City of Whittlesea	√
Vanessa	Hatzindinas	Children's Services	City of Whittlesea	
Nadine	Klobucar	Kindergarten Liaison Officer	City of Whittlesea	
Belinda	Breheny	Co-ordinator Maternal & Child health	City of Whittlesea	√
Sue	Smith	Manager of Family Day Care	City of Whittlesea	
Brigid	Keele	Co-ordinator Playgroups	City of Whittlesea	√
Mary	Agostino	Manager of Family Services	City of Whittlesea	
Susan	Forbes	Community Services Officer	Shire of Nillumbik	
John	VanEsveld	Manager of Family Day Care	Shire of Nillumbik	

Deb	Ruiz-Dove		Shire of Nillumbik	
Tara	Frichitthavong	Manager of Community Services	Shire of Nillumbik	√
Margherita	Barbante	Manager, Children & Teenage Services	Darebin Libraries	√
Anna	Boland	Community, Literacy & Engagement Officer	Hume Global Learning Village	
Pam	Siostron	School Improvement Literacy & Numeracy	Northern Metropolitan Region Department of Education & Training	
Nella	Arthur	Program Manager	Playgroup Victoria	√
Caz	Smith	Children's & Youth Services Librarian	Moreland City Library Glenroy Library	√
Kat	Taylor	Youth Services Librarian	Hume Global Learning Village	
Paula	Smith	Youth Services & Niddrie Branch Manager	Moonee Valley Library Service	√
Paula	Kelly	Manager, Reader Development & Library Learning	Learning Services State Library of Victoria	√
Tina	Selenitscha	YPRL	Ivanhoe Library	√
Judy	Thomson	YPRL	Mill Park	
Diane	Flentjar	YPRL	DV	√
Tracey	Jermieson	YPRL	DV	
Sophie	Sterivo	YPRL	Thomastown	√
Sian	Smith	YPRL	Watsonia	√
Margaret	Tosello	YPRL	Lalor	
Amanda	Warneke	YPRL	Eltham	
Andrea	Webster	YPRL	Rosanna	√
Christine	Mackenzie	YPRL		