Local and Family History
Strategic Framework
2011 – 2016

Fostering a sense of place
Executive Summary

The vision for Local and Family History at Yarra Plenty is to foster a sense of place in our communities through our collections and services. The purpose of this strategy is to identify our audience, ensure our content and collections remain relevant and accessible to all; connect and strengthen our partnerships and role in the community; and promote the opportunities we have to add value to the community through services, programs and branding linked to Local and Family History.

To achieve our vision “fostering a sense of place” we have identified 4 goals we wish to achieve in the area of Local and Family History in the next 5 years. These goals are:

1. Creating local content
2. Developing and maintaining collections
3. Creating strong connections
4. Promoting services and collections

These goals will be achieved by the completion of 12 projects over the next 5 years:

Project 1 – Digitising images: To gather and make accessible historical and contemporary images of the region and to digitise 5,000 images by 2016.

Project 2 - Wikinorthia: Update Wikinorthia website to enable easier uploading of information and to include video and audio, improve security and reach the wider community.

Project 3 – Create ebooks: Identify suitable titles and create 5 ebooks from the collection for publication to be made available on Internet Archive.

Project 4 – Digitising newspapers: Continue to participate in the State Library of Victoria / PLVN Newspaper digitisation project which aims to make accessible through Australian Newspapers online all Victorian newspapers of the World War 1 era in readiness for the ANZAC centenary.

Project 5 - Membership of local history groups: Become a financial member of Local History groups to encourage and support these groups.

Project 6– Participation at Festivals: Participate in targeted local festivals in partnership with local history groups to promote services and interest in local history and to capture community stories.

Project 7 – Genealogy Interest Groups: Formalise Genealogy interest groups that meet regularly at branch libraries to facilitate sharing knowledge and expertise.

Project 8 – Research your home: Develop a program that enables people to discover the history of their home, street and locality in partnership with LGAs.

Project 9 – Using library spaces to showcase local heritage: Utilise the spaces that Branch libraries have to display photographs, art works and memorabilia that showcases local history.

Project 10 - Writing articles for local papers: To promote local history collections through local newspapers.
Project 11 - Canvas Prints: Create a library of large canvases of local history images that can be used for display and loaned to schools and community groups.

Project 12 – Postcards: Create a series of postcards that will promote our local history collections.

Our success will be measured by the actions outlined in this strategic framework. These will all be achieved with the support of staff, partnerships with local councils and other key stakeholders and community member contributions.
Fostering a sense of place

1. Introduction

Public libraries operate within the context of community. They play a vital role in fostering an individual’s sense of place in their community. Libraries are increasingly taking a leadership role in promoting local history studies in their communities. They are also often among the first ports of call in a family history researcher’s journey to document their genealogy.

Often the library is one of the first places to start searching for the amateur family history researcher, to seek out what and where the next steps in their research should be. There is anecdotal evidence suggesting that the most used resource on a library website after the catalogue is the local history resources page.

There is a very strong local history community in the Region, with nine local history groups in Nillumbik, two in Banyule and one in Whittlesea. As well as these groups there are cemetery trusts, historical sites (e.g. Montsalvat) local council heritage sections and other key stakeholders who also play a role in the local history landscape.

Local studies librarianship has changed dramatically in the last 30 years, and the pace of change shows little sign of slackening. Local studies librarians have had to transform their collection strategies, the range of materials they provide, and the ways in which they cater for and give access to the public, as well as to adapt to new technologies, ways of connecting and promoting.

What is Local and Family History?

Local history is the building block for larger regional and national histories. Public libraries and others (State and National) have taken on the responsibility to be custodians of local history collections which traditionally start with physical collections but increasingly there is a community expectation to also have information accessible online and so presenting local history on the web becomes a natural next step.

Providing access to information about a local area fosters A Sense of Place for the community – a belonging, a connection incorporating civic pride.

There is also a very active group of volunteers in the community managing valuable resources and collections with minimal funds and resources. These people and organisations need support in their endeavours.

Genealogy is increasingly a pastime that people are taking up for a number of reasons. These include uncovering a family mystery or proving a family story, continuing other people’s research or a desire to understand ethnic roots. Television programs such as “Who do you think you are?” and “In their Footsteps” also influence individuals researching their family history.
Libraries will continue to play a vital role in helping researchers to navigate their way in finding the exact information they are looking for. Only a small proportion of the world’s genealogical records are currently online although it is predicted that in the future content will be much more easily available including through social networks. The increasing use of smartphones and apps such as QR codes opens up new opportunities to expose history at its source. There will be many family history applications and online social networks will continue to grow, for instance, Facebook already stores more photos than any other site in the world.

The next five years will see exciting developments and advances in accessing information. Today is the best time to be a family or local history researcher because information can be accessed as never before.

2. Rationale

Yarra Plenty Regional Library 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, Rosanna, Watsonia, Lalor, Mill Park and Thomastown. A mobile library services more remote locations across the region as well as places where the community is less likely to access a branch library. A mobile outreach vehicle visits aged and residential care facilities. Local history collections are located at 4 branches: Ivanhoe, Eltham, Diamond Valley and Mill Park.

We believe that to be most effective, public libraries need to have a strong community focus, enabling reading, learning and meeting in physical and virtual spaces thus fostering connected, inclusive and informed communities. Libraries play an important role in enabling communities to connect with their past and foster a sense of place by connecting collections, users and staff.

3. Framework Methodology and Scope

The Local History and Genealogy Strategic Framework 2006-2011 was developed and implemented in late 2006. It was the first strategic frameworks to be formulated after the re organisation of services based out of Library Support Services and the establishment of the Community Engagement department.

The framework was developed with the assistance of a facilitator and focused on collections and resources. Consultation with staff, key stakeholders and the community was held through workshops and the key discussions presented at the time covered place, access, digital content, collection policy, promotion, partnerships, training and grants.

Many of the goals have been achieved from the strategy and the Local History Librarian’s role has evolved to focus more on outreach, strengthening partnerships and digitising material.

The goals and objectives of that strategy were:
- Dynamic collections
- Accessible collections
- Well managed collections
- Valued and well use collections
- Enhanced genealogy resources and services
Key outcomes from the original strategy have been:

- The development of a regional Local History Forum known as the Yarra Plenty Heritage Forum which meets quarterly and regularly attracts 30 participants
- Creation and implementation of branding for Local History services and programs
- Dynamic and accessible collections
- Enhanced genealogy resources and services including a blog and wiki.

Major achievements are:

- Merging of five collections into four focussed Local History collections
- Fulfilling the recommendations from the Collections Significance Assessment Reports including collecting and making accessible material relevant to
  - Eltham and Heidelberg artists
  - Immigrant communities of Heidelberg West
  - Melbourne Olympic Games 1956.
- Establishing the website Wikinorthia: documenting life in Melbourne’s north
- Establishing and developing Reminiscences programs
- Digitising and rehousing the Diamond Valley image collection
- Migrating and adding historical images to Hyperion archive
- Partnering with City of Whittlesea in the Whittlesea Cultural Heritage Program
- Creating a Local History month in November
- Creating a Family History month in August
- Developing and delivering staff training on researching and using local history and genealogy resources.

4. **Current Activity**

Local and Family History is core business for public libraries. We provide free access to popular databases such as Ancestry and Find My Past and a wide range of materials in our collections. There is specialised and valuable local material in our secure collections that is not readily available elsewhere. We hold regular programs and events at all branches during Family History month in August and Local History month in November. Attached as Appendix A is a detail account of activities and resources currently undertaken.

5. **Links to Other Strategic Planning Documents**

The *Local History and Family History Strategic Framework* gains strength by being integrated with other Strategic Frameworks and plans, as well as Member Councils’ plans and strategies. The delivery of local and family history services is an important means of achieving goals set out for the organisation in the *Strategic Plan 2008-2012*.

5.1 Libraries building community capacity

- Ensure that the local history and genealogy collections are dynamic, accessible, well managed, valued and well used
- Partnering with other agencies to deliver programs.

5.2 Libraries as community hubs

- Building community connections, facilitating learning opportunities and providing access to informational and educational resources for family and local history.
5.3 Libraries Online
- Ensure that we promote and make accessible local and family history collections online
- Embrace online tools and strategies to promote local and family history
- Change from service providers to facilitating the creation of content.

5.4 Skilled and confident Library staff
- Ensuring library staff are comfortable with engaging library patrons in the use of local and family history resources and creating content.

5.5 Seamless integrated technology
- Embrace online tools and strategies to promote local and family history.

5.6 Sustainable and responsible finance and governance
- Ensuring local and family history activities and events are sustained through existing funding, grant applications, partnerships with member council services and community groups.

The Strategy links with other YPRL strategic documents:
- Arts and Culture Strategic Framework 2010-2015
- ICT Strategic Plan 2011-2013
- Collections Strategic Framework 2011-2016 (draft)
- Older Adults Strategic Framework 2011-2016.

It also links with Member Councils’ plans:

**City of Whittlesea Cultural Plan**
Mission Statement “To identify, reflect, strengthen, utilise and support our community’s cultural values, creative capacity and potential”

**Shire of Nillumbik Arts and Culture Plan**
Growing our Arts and Culture: a cultural plan for Nillumbik Shire 2011 – 2017 (draft as at 27 September 2011)
The cultural plan goals includes connected communities, creative space and places, creative economy, communication and leadership and creative communities

**Shire of Nillumbik Heritage Strategy: identifying and conserving Nillumbik’s cultural heritage**
Vision: The Shire of Heidelberg’s Cultural Heritage will be conserved, enjoyed and appreciated by generations of residents and visitors.

**Banyule Heritage Policy and Plan (draft).**
Vision Statement “The City of Banyule recognises protects and celebrates its rich and diverse heritage, proactively conserving this legacy for the benefit of the community now and into the future”
And with other community organisations such as:

**Combined Nillumbik Historical Societies Strategy 2011-2014**
Strategic Goals: The group will meet on a quarterly basis to create a network of shared ideas and direction for Heritage in the Shire. The group visits other heritage sites, finds ways to develop awareness of Nillumbik’s heritage and together develop opportunities and explores ways in which to promote and sustain the heritage offer.
6. **Goals and Priorities**

Over the next 5 years the library will concentrate on 4 goals: creating local content; developing and maintaining collections; creating strong connections; and promoting services and collections. It will achieve these goals through 12 projects to be completed over this period.

6.1 **Creating Local Content**

The public library has a special role in creating local content through capturing stories, collecting and making accessible photographs and encouraging contributions from the community.

**Project 1 – Digitising Images**

**Aim:** Gather and make accessible historical and contemporary images of the region and to digitise 5,000 images by 2016.

**Description:** There are physical historical images in both the Eltham and Whittlesea local history collections. Only a small number of these have been digitised. Local historian Kevin Patterson provides the library with contemporary images of the Diamond Valley area including shopping centre development and construction, local parks and historical sites. There are significant collections held by local history groups and individuals. There are opportunities to extend partnerships in collaborative projects with local history groups including digitising and hosting images from their collections using the Portfolio digital archive.

Currently access to our image collection is disjointed and not all digitised images are available online. The collection is currently being migrated from the legacy Hyperion Digital Media Archive (a module of the Library Management System) to the new Portfolio digital asset management system. This will provide access through the library’s website and discovery layer.

**Outcome:** Professionally digitised images ensure high quality copies which can be used for publication projects and online content projects such as Wikinorthia as well as being available through the library’s website. Digitisation preserves physical items for the future.

**Cost:** $37,500 for 5,000 images over 5 years

**Project 2 - Wikinorthia**

**Aim:** Update Wikinorthia to enable easier uploading of information and to include video and audio and improve security.

**Description:** Wikinorthia is a joint project between YPRL, Moreland City Libraries and Darebin Libraries. It was developed by Vicnet with funds provided through the State Library of Victoria and Viclink as a Libraries Building Communities Demonstration Project and was launched in 2008. It can be viewed at [http://wikinorthia.net.au](http://wikinorthia.net.au). The project is governed through a Memorandum of Understanding between the 3 partners.

**Outcome:** The partners wish to improve the design of Wikinorthia to enable more functionality and ease of use and to ensure its ongoing sustainability. They are
currently seeking Expressions of Interest from web developers to update the site, enhance it and make it more dynamic and user friendly.

Cost: $15,000

6.2 Developing and Maintaining Collections

Local history collections will continue to be developed and all relevant local material will be acquired and housed in the appropriate collection. The collection, both physical and digital, is the core element of public libraries.

Project 3 – Create ebooks

Aim: Identify suitable titles and create 5 ebooks from the collection for publication to be made available on Internet Archive.

Description: There are a number of items in the collection that would be suitable to convert to ebooks including items from the Whittlesea Free Library collection at Mill Park.

Outcome: Providing local history content is an ideal way and natural progression for public libraries to contribute to digital collections. It will also make these items accessible to everyone as items in our local history collections can only be used in the library.

Cost: $7,500

Project 4 – Digitising Newspapers

Aim: Continue to participate in the State Library of Victoria / PLVN Newspaper digitisation project

Description: This project aims to make accessible through Australian Newspapers online all Victorian newspapers of the World War 1 era in readiness for the ANZAC centenary.

Outcome: Greater accessibility to this important local resource.

Cost: no cost to library

6.3 Creating Strong Connections

Maintaining and strengthening connections with individuals and groups interested in local and family history, for example the Yarra Plenty Heritage Forum, is a key goal. We will continue to work with Member Councils to support and facilitate programs and services, for example themed months and Council Heritage programs.

Project 5 - Membership of local history groups

Aim: Join Local History groups to encourage and support these groups.

Outcome: By becoming financially supportive of local history groups, it will strengthen our partnerships and add to the strength of grant funding applications.

Cost: $360 pa.
Project 6 – Participation at Festivals

Aim: Participate in targeted local festivals in partnership with local history groups to promote services and interest in local history.

Description: There are a number of local festivals where it would be appropriate to have a presence to showcase collections and services.

Outcome: greater community awareness of the library’s collections and services.

Cost: $300 per festival

Project 7 – Genealogy Interest Groups

Aim: Formalise Genealogy interest groups that meet regularly at branch libraries to facilitate sharing knowledge and expertise.

Description: There is considerable experience in the community that can be shared in the area of family history research. The library will continue to organise guest speakers who are experts on various topics.

Outcome: Emphasises the library’s role in learning, by using our available resources including databases, and meeting and encourages more people to discover and collaborate on their family history.

Cost - $1000 per year

6.4 Promoting Services and Collections

Using the new branding “Life Stories” we will develop new programs and services thus building on the brand awareness in the community. The monthly themes (August – Local History and November – Family History) will be expanded to encourage community engagement. We will continue to use online tools and social networking to promote local history and family history in branches and the wider community and we will support Local History groups and continue to facilitate the Heritage Forum.

Project 8 – Research Your Home

Aim: Develop a program that enables people to discover the history of their home, street and locality.

Description: We will work with Member Councils and Local History organisations to identify resources and methods for researching a house’s history.

Outcome: Providing the opportunity for people to find out more about their own spaces fosters a sense of place in the community.

Cost: nil

Project 9 – Using Library Spaces to Showcase Local Heritage

Aim: Utilise the spaces that Branch libraries have to display photographs, art works and memorabilia that showcases local history.
Description: Using already available items organise regular displays at branch libraries.

Outcome: By highlighting the history of an area a sense of place will be fostered in the community.

**Project 10 - Writing Articles for Local Papers**

Aim: Promote local history collections through local newspapers

Description: On a regular basis we will work with journalists and provide a local historical image from our collections relevant to the local area or a major event (e.g. South Morang train station opening or the Olympics) to be published with a story.

Outcome: Promote the collection and highlight local events and history.

**Project 11 - Canvas Prints**

Aim: Create a library of large canvases of local history images that can be used for display and loaned to schools and community groups.

Description: We already have six large canvases of images from our Diamond Valley Collection. A similar collection for each municipality will be established to be used for display and also can be loaned to schools and community groups and for display at community festivals. These images will be accompanied by kits with descriptions of the photos. Images will be chosen that will work well with primary school age children.

Outcome: Utilising our local historical images and extending access to physical photos outside the library. Schools include local history components as part of their curriculum; and one big photo on display in front of a classroom can generate more interest and discussion than limited books and photo copies.

Costing: $585 per set

**Project 12 – Postcards**

Aim: Create a series of postcards that will promote our local history collections.

Description: A postcard concept (3 styles) will be developed to promote the library’s local history collections. These postcards will be available for posting to anyone, anywhere in the world and will be distributed through libraries and partners.

Outcome: Promotion of collections and showcasing the local area.

Cost: $10,000 - $25,000

**7. Enabling the vision**

**Partnerships**

We have a number of existing partnerships throughout the region and with our partners we apply for grants and share resources to achieve common goals, meet community needs and become more sustainable. We will continue to develop wider networks and strengthen partnerships with Member Councils and the community.
The major means of achieving this is through the facilitation of the Yarra Plenty Heritage Forum.

**Media**

Key communication tools used to promote services, events and programs are through regular media releases to local newspapers and council newsletters. Writing more articles for publications in professional journals will increase the awareness to the wider community enabling us to be known as a leading library service in this area.

**Marketing and promotion**

We now have a branding concept and in the next step is to obtain a banner and implement the branding on all print materials linked to Local and Family History programs and events.

A Local and Family History brochure was developed in July 2011 and will be distributed to all community service points and local history groups and post cards will be produced.

**Volunteers**

The library has almost 300 registered volunteers and to enhance services and digitisation we will continue to seek out volunteers with an interest and expertise in local and family history. Specialised projects ranging from photographing local sites to scanning newspaper indexing will continue to enrich our collection and resources.

**Staff**

Confident and skilled staff will support and offer high level customer service in the area of local and family history by assisting with database access, online resources, collection knowledge and establishing programs on themed months to showcase and connect with the community. Training will be included in the Training Calendar each year to ensure that staff are knowledgeable about local history and genealogy.

**Facilities and resources**

There are spaces, collections, technology (lighting, computers, sound system, iMacs, projectors and screens), staff skills and knowledge to stage events, training and performances. Mill Park, Eltham, Diamond Valley and Ivanhoe libraries have designated local history rooms or areas.
## Actions, resources and timelines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CREATING LOCAL CONTENT</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Digitising images – To gather and make accessible historical and contemporary images of the region.</td>
<td>LFHL</td>
<td>5000 images by 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wikinorthia – Update Wikinorthia website to enable easier uploading of information and to include video and audio and improve security</td>
<td>Member Libraries</td>
<td>2012</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING COLLECTIONS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Create ebooks – Identify suitable titles and create e-books from the collection for publication on Internet Archive</td>
<td>LFHL</td>
<td>2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Digitising Newspapers – continue to participate in SLV/PLVN newspaper digitisation project which aims to make accessible through Australian Newspapers online all Victorian newspapers of the World War 1 era in readiness for the ANZAC centenary</td>
<td>LFHL</td>
<td>One per year</td>
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<td><strong>CREATING STRONG CONNECTIONS</strong></td>
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<td>Membership of local history groups – become a financial member of local history groups to encourage and support these groups</td>
<td>LFHL</td>
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<td>Participation at Festivals – Participate in targeted festivals in partnership with local history groups to promote services and interest in local history and capture community stories</td>
<td>LFHL with branch staff</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Genealogy Interest Groups – establish genealogy interest groups that meet regularly at branch libraries to facilitate sharing knowledge and expertise</td>
<td>LFHL with branch staff</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<td><strong>PROMOTING SERVICES AND COLLECTIONS</strong></td>
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<td>Research your home – Develop a program that enables people to discover the history of their home, street and locality.</td>
<td>LFHL</td>
<td>2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using Library Spaces to showcase local heritage – research project using QR codes.</td>
<td>LFHL with branch staff</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing articles for local papers</td>
<td>LFHL with Media Marketing co-ordinator</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canvas Prints – Create a library of large canvas prints of local history images.</td>
<td>LFHL</td>
<td>2014</td>
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<td>Postcards – Create a series of postcards to promote local history images collection</td>
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<td>Action</td>
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<tr>
<td>PROMOTE LOCAL AND FAMILY HISTORY</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop project to promote Anzac Centenary</td>
<td>LFHL with grant funding and possible partners</td>
<td>2013 for implementation 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop project to promote Centenary of Hurstbridge Railway line</td>
<td>LFHL with Combined Nillumbik History Groups</td>
<td>2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identify heritage photos for postcard marketing project and implement</td>
<td>LFHL with funding</td>
<td>2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promote and canvas prints to schools and community groups</td>
<td>LFHL</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Keep up to date with new resources via physical and online resources – blog</td>
<td>LFHL New Technologies Co-ordinator</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide a Reference service to people who are unable to physically access the local history collection. Promote this online</td>
<td>LFHL Seniors &amp; Volunteers Co-coordinator Web Services Co-ordinator</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<td>Develop staff skills and encourage “champions” for local history, genealogy and Wikinorthia in each branch via (non-compulsory) training.</td>
<td>LFHL</td>
<td>Yearly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plan and co-ordinate Family History Month (Aug) and Local History Month (Nov)</td>
<td>LFHL and CL’s</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop other canvas prints collections for use by schools and community groups</td>
<td>LFHL, Media and Marketing, branch staff</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<td>Task</td>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Start/End</td>
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<tr>
<td>Produce a banner with “Life Stories” logo</td>
<td>LFHL/Media and Marketing</td>
<td>2010</td>
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<td>Continue displays at Diamond Valley Community Support Greensborough Shopping Centre</td>
<td>LFHL</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<td>Give talks in branches and community groups.</td>
<td>LFHL</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Look at using static display cases for promotion of local and family history including use by local history groups.</td>
<td>LFHL with relevant BMs and CLs</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Continue to post regularly to LH &amp; Genealogy blogs at Blogger and website till RSS feeds enabled on YPRL and then lapse Blogger sites.</td>
<td>LHFL</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Give talks to community groups</td>
<td>LFHL</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expand canvas prints collection and develop accompanying kits</td>
<td>LFHL with grant funding</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contribute to planned Library Newsletter</td>
<td>LFHL with marketing and media co-ordinator</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Continue to actively use Twitter and Blogs to promote LH &amp; G. Look at using Twitter as a proactive reference service.</td>
<td>LFHL. Goal to have 1000 followers by end of 2012</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
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Appendix A

Document on Yarra Plenty Regional Library
What we do now in Local and Family History 2011
Current Activity

The Local and Family History Librarian (title change from Local History Librarian mid 2011) as part of Community Engagement (formerly Outreach) leads and manages the delivery of high level programs for local and family history access and information services to the community as well as building and strengthening partnerships.

Key responsibilities of this part time position include:

- Promote local and family history
- Promote Local history collections and family history resources
- Develop partnerships
- Provide direction and support to staff and branches.

Events and Programs

Heritage Forum

The Yarra Plenty Heritage Forum has been a very successful initiative, which was initially suggested at the community workshop for the first Strategic document.

The Heritage Forum meetings are held four times a year. They are facilitated and co-ordinated by the Local and Family History Librarian and hosted by member groups at various locations. It is an opportunity for local history groups, council representatives and like minded organisations with an interest in local heritage to come together for informal networking and information sharing.

The meetings are limited to two representatives per group with usually between 15 and 20 people attending each meeting representing about 18 organisations. This will vary each meeting.

Sometimes meetings have guest speakers, sometimes not, but all provide an opportunity for people who are passionate about local history to come together and share their stories.

"Just to say that we thought Detlev's presentation this morning was well worth attending. Although we may be aware of some aspects of the presentations its often a session such as this that gets one motivated and encourages one to move forward on such matters." - June 2011

The Heritage Forum and active membership of the Combined Nillumbik Historical Societies which also meet quarterly have cemented the role of the library in the local history community. The networking that also takes place is also important as groups get to know about each other, their resources, activities and role in the local community. Partnerships are important. They can be beneficial at all levels from providing a support letter to a grant application, to offering donations of surplus local history material to partnering in digitisation, oral history projects and more.
The City of Whittlesea Cultural Heritage Program

YPRL has had a strong partnership with the City of Whittlesea in presenting this program. We have been involved since 2003. It is unique in Victoria – it celebrates the City of Whittlesea’s cultural diversity, history and heritage through a variety of informative events, cultural festivals and tours. It provides an opportunity to celebrate Whittlesea’s:

- Aboriginal heritage, through the land and sites of significance
- Architectural heritage and early European history
- Local historical landmarks and pioneer settlement
- Rich personal and cultural heritage including the migration of Chinese, Indian, Italian, Macedonian and Maltese communities

Family History Fest
Is a regular monthly program which runs out of Diamond Valley Library from February to November. It provides a series of information sessions on topics of interest for the beginning family history researcher. They may be delivered by the Local and Family History Librarian or a local specialist usually delivered as a free service.

Family History Month
Is a themed program of events which bookends National Family History Week throughout August throughout the region. Each branch participates with at least one speaker or activity for the month. In 2011 there were 16 events throughout the month which included talks by UK genealogist Lady Mary Teviot and family history sessions where researchers were encouraged to come together to do their research with assistance on hand.

Local History Month
Is a themed program of events which operates during November throughout the region. Most branches participate with at least one speaker for the month. In 2011 there will be 10 events throughout the month. Events will include author talks and the re-launch of the updated website of the Heidelberg Historical Society.
Partnerships

Key partnerships with member councils have included a strong link with the City of Whittlesea Cultural Heritage Program in promoting the program and hosting specific events at the Whittlesea branches. We have also partnered with the Whittlesea Historical Society as part of this program in presenting Yan Yean: a history of Melbourne’s early water supply Forum (2007) and Epping Cemetery Tour (2009).

We have contributed to the Nillumbik community workshops and feedback in the development of both the Arts and Culture Strategy and the Heritage Strategy. We are also an active member of the Combined Nillumbik Heritage Groups Inc.

We have contributed comments to the development of the Banyule Heritage Policy and Plan.

In September 2011 we commenced a partnership with the Sydney DPS family history group who manage the website “The Ryerson Index”. The Local and Family History Librarian manages volunteers who are indexing death notices from our archive of Leader newspapers.

In early 2011 YPRL was invited to assist Andrew Ross Museum, in partnership with the Nillumbik Reconciliation Group, in the distribution of databases on Aboriginal history. Grant funding for this project was successful.

In November 2011 we will be participating in the City of Banyule’s Malahang Community Festival. We will also be partnering with the Heidelberg Historical Society on this day.

Collections

Local History

Local history collections have been around as long as public libraries.

YPRL have unique local history collections of more than 1400 items including books, photographs, documents, local government reports, environmental studies, oral histories, Council minutes, newspapers, local history group newsletters and more. Featured collections include early settlers, local organisations, Alan Marshall (author), 1956 Olympic Games, the Heidelberg School (artists), Heidelberg urban development, early farming, multicultural communities, Yan Yean Reservoir and more.

Most items can only be accessed in the library. Since 2006, a policy has been in place to purchase duplicate copies of popular and recent titles so that they can be borrowed for home use and meet the immediate demand of a newly published title. It is imperative that items in the local history collection remain in a secure environment, are non-circulating and are preserved for prosperity.

The collections serve in a tangible way to connect the community to its history and heritage. In 2006 Significance assessments were conducted on each collection.
Recommendations from these assessments were reflected in the previous strategy and in this one.

There are four unique collections held at Diamond Valley, Eltham, Ivanhoe and Mill Park.

**Diamond Valley** – represents the past boundaries of the former Shire of Diamond Valley. This region includes Plenty, Diamond Creek and Greensborough. Main themes: Early settlers, local institutions and organisations, urban development, social and urban planning issues, natural environment, local writers, aboriginal heritage and the Diamond Valley Art collection.

**Eltham** – represents the past boundaries of the Shire of Eltham and current boundary of Nillumbik – includes in particular Eltham township and the rural areas of the Shire. Main themes: Early settlers, gold mining, local institutions and organisations, Eltham lifestyle, mud brick building, natural environment, cultural heritage, local Art History, Alan Marshall collection

**Ivanhoe** – represents the former City of Heidelberg and boundary of the current City of Banyule except for Greensborough. Main themes: Early settlers, local institutions and organisations, Council activities, urban development and housing, including Walter Burley Griffin estates and houses, Melbourne 1956 Olympic Games and Olympic Village, Art – the Heidelberg School, natural environment.

The Rosanna local history collection was merged with Ivanhoe in 2007.

**Mill Park** – represents the past and present boundaries of the Shire/City of Whittlesea. Main themes: Early farming communities and families, Yan Yean Water supply, early institutions, including schools and the Janefield community, urban development, including the Peter Lalor co-operative, multicultural communities, including the Westgarthown community, natural environment, local artists and sport.

Mill Park have the oldest items in the local history collections with books from the original Whittlesea free library and correspondence regarding that library which were donated by the Whittlesea Historical Society when the collection was first established at Lalor Library.

These collections have not been exploited to their fullest potential. For example images could be identified for use as postcards for marketing purposes.

Sources could be identified for the basis of articles for Wikinorthia. An indexing program of the contemporary Leader newspapers commenced in 2010 (Heidelberger 1966- Diamond Valley News 1974- , Whittlesea Post 1977- ). In September 2011 a project was commenced to index the death notices from “The Heidelberg Leader”. In October we will commence “The Diamond Valley Leader”. These are sent to the Sydney DPS who manage “The Ryerson Index” website and upload the data.

There is a concern for the availability of shelf space for the future physical expansion of these growing collections. There are opportunities in the future to look at digitising books from the collections and creating e-books.
Digital collections

Local historical images can be accessed via the online catalogue. There are currently more than 1335 items accessible. Images come from a variety of sub collections, including hard copy images we own and others from local history groups.

Acquiring, digitising, cataloguing and housing images is an ongoing and time consuming but very worthwhile project.

Some images are also accessible online via Picture Victoria (a member of Picture Australia, which is now accessible via TROVE).

Since 2008 some images have been stored in the archive Sirsi product Hyperion. This includes all the Reflections of Diamond Valley Project which consisted of about 700 photos.

Hyperion is to be replaced by the end of 2011 with the Portfolio digital asset management system.

Older images, in particular a series from Whittlesea, are on stand alone HTML pages which were being hosted by YPRL until Bibliocommons was introduced and the links from the catalogue records were lost. These images need to be housed on Portfolio and the bibliographic records updated. This now forms part of a backlog of work, which also includes processing (and digitising) hard copy photos. We receive a regular donation of contemporary photos of the Diamond Valley area taken by local historian Kevin Patterson.

Digital Collections include:

**Reflections of Diamond Valley**
Launched in November 2009, this project was a result of a $10,000 local history grant funded via Public Records Office Victoria.

Presenting and preserving the story of the former Shire of Diamond Valley an old collection, deteriorating and off public access, was rehoused, digitised, catalogued and made available online. Examples from this collection include Diamond Valley miniature railway, construction and opening of Greensborough Shopping Centre, gold mining at Christmas Hills, establishment of Yarrambat Park, Plenty River, pioneer grave site, Army displays at Watsonia barracks, Freedom of the City 1985, construction of Binni Shell Diamond Creek, Diamond Creek Town Fairs and reprints of more historic photos of Greensborough and Diamond Creek in particular.

A set of six large canvas prints measuring 860 mm x 645 mm – terrific for display and discussion in a classroom setting - and accompanying notes are also available from this collection for display use and community groups’ loan and use.

**Nillumbik** - Includes a selection of images from the Nillumbik Historical Society, relating to the Diamond Creek and Greensborough areas. No hard copies held.
**Heidelberg** – Includes a selection of images from the Heidelberg Historical Society. No hard copies held.

**Whittlesea** – Includes the Bicentennial Photograph collection organised according to locations. Additional photos were also collected in 2001 as part of a Centenary of Federation project.

**Eltham** – A collection of several hundred black and white photographs. Some of these photographs have been digitised. A well loved collection these black and white photographs were gathered in a council/community collaboration in preparation for the publication of “Pioneers and Painters: one hundred years of Eltham and its Shire” by Alan Marshall published in 1971.

There is also a small collection of photographs relating to Black Saturday which were purchased in 2010.

We also have electronic PDF copies of the Andrew Ross Museum (Kangaroo Ground) newsletter “Chronicle” archive.

In addition we have purchased recently digitised items from Heidelberg Historical Society including:

- The Heidelberg News (newspaper) 1897-1920 (searchable in PDF format)
- The Evelyn Observer (newspaper) 1882-1901, which we have as desktop resources. (this can only be browsed only – due to the old text not recognised by OCR recognition
- “Heidelberg Historian” newsletter of the Heidelberg historical Society Aug 1967 -

**Genealogy**

Some print resources are regularly purchased for family history researchers, including magazine subscriptions. These are especially useful for the casual and beginner researcher. The collection concentrates on Victorian, then Australian resources only, with some New Zealand resources.

Dedicated PCs in every branch (except Thomastown) have desktop resources also available. These include in particular all of the available Victorian historical indexes (known as Digger). Additional genealogy resources are held at Diamond Valley, Ivanhoe and Mill Park Libraries. These include resources on microfiche and other desktop CD-Rom resources.

There has also been a limited multimedia collection made available for loan in the past. Increasingly online resources in the form of subscription databases and free websites are among the first ports of call for a family history researcher.

YPRL will continue to ensure that the local history and genealogy collections are dynamic, accessibly, well managed, valued and well used.
Grants

A local history grant of $10,000 for the Diamond Valley digitisation project was received in 2008. In early 2011 YPRL, together with Andrew Ross Museum in partnership with the Nillumbik Reconciliation Group, were successful in a grant application for the conversion to CD and distribution of databases on Aboriginal history.

Support letters from YPRL have assisted local history groups in obtaining funding for a variety of projects including digitising newspapers and the purchase of equipment.

The Local and Family History Librarian continues to actively seek out and apply for grant funding and seek partnerships for local history projects – as well as supporting community organisations in their own projects by supplying support letters.

Grant funding can be particularly useful for digitisation, oral history projects history compilation, publishing projects and more.

Digital Resources

Electronic Sites

The National Library of Australia’s TROVE website is the premier Australian free website for local and family history research at http://trove.nla.gov.au/

The digitised Australian historic newspapers are an essential tool for Australian family and local history research.

This free service offers fully indexed and digitised Australian newspapers from beginning of publication to 1954. Currently included in the service is a selection of newspapers for all capital cities and many regional and smaller country newspapers. All content from each newspaper is provided, including personal notices, advertisements, examination and sporting results, etc. Help may be found on the TROVE home page and demonstration videos on YouTube.
The service can be used to search for birth, death and marriage notices, shipping
arrivals, news articles about family members, court proceedings, government notices,
real estate and many other items. It can be used to date photographs of unknown
source and glean information about long forgotten subjects and practices. It provides
a good starting point or clues for further research in other sources.

This site includes books, images, maps, archives and historic newspapers including
local titles. These include:
- Advertiser (Hurstbridge, Vic. : 1922-1939)
- Eltham and Whittlesea Shires Advertiser (Vic.: 1940-1942)
- Eltham and Whittlesea Shires Advertiser and Diamond Creek Valley
  Advocate (Vic. : 1917-1922)
- Evelyn Observer and Bourke East Record (Vic. 1902-1917)
- Evelyn Observer, and South and East Bourke Record (Vic. : 1882-1902)
In addition to
- The Argus (Melbourne, Vic. : 1848-1954) and other Victorian newspapers.

Databases such as Ancestry Library Edition, although primarily a family history
resource, are also useful for local history researchers. Useful databases on Ancestry
include Australian electoral rolls, Australia cemetery index and others.

Online Resources

Blogs

In March 2006 the Local History blog was established on Blogger. In October of that
year the Genealogy blog was established. The aim of both continues to be to inform
the local community of current news and events, and new resources, which would be
of interest or benefit to a family or local history researcher.

http://yplocalhistory.blogspot.com/
http://ypgenealogy.blogspot.com/

Blogger provides good ongoing statistics on page views, popular posts and audience.
These statistics can be broken down to now, week, month, all time. The Local
History blog has had over 8000 page views since inception with its reading audience
including Australia and United States of America.
The Genealogy blog has had over 12,800 page views since inception.

Page views do not reflect accurately the number of individuals reading the blog posts however as many people now subscribe to blogs through a reader, of which there are a number. Subscribers to Google Reader are posted on the dashboard. There are 17 for genealogy and 10 for local history.

After five years, postings are still regularly posted, ideally weekly. Blogging now also takes place on the YPRL website. Both blogs will be continued to be maintained until RSS facilities can be accessed for the YPRL blogs.

**Twitter**

A Twitter account @Infolass currently has over 450 Followers. Twitter is a social networking and microblogging service, enabling its users to send and read messages called tweets. Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters displayed on the user’s profile page. There are 100 million active users around the globe.

**Flickr**

An underused Flickr account exists at: [http://www.flickr.com/photos/25816694@N08/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/25816694@N08/) Flickr is an image and video hosting website and online community. It is free up to a certain limit.

**Databases**

Increasingly resources for genealogy are appearing online. Every YPRL branch has access to:

- Ancestry Library Edition
- Find My Past.com.au (introduced July 2011)
- Find My Past.co.uk (introduced July 2011)
- Times Digital Archives
- 19th Century British Newspapers
- British Newspapers 1600-1900
- Burney Collection Newspapers
- Documents Online (UK National Archives) (From October 1 2011)

Database retrieval statistics for the last few years have indicated Ancestry is the most used database, followed by British Newspapers 1600-1900 and the Burney Newspapers collection.
Ancestry

One of the leading suppliers of online family history records, Ancestry is also one of the main resources for international research. It has a wide range of content. Since 2006 the brand has marketed itself to the community through television advertisements and sponsoring of TV shows such as “Who do you think you are” and “In their Footsteps”. Australian and New Zealand content is also being regularly added to Ancestry and includes convict records, immigration records, cemetery records, electoral rolls and more. There has also been a marked increase for records on European countries (there were no records for Italy in 2006). It also includes the heavily used:

- England, Scotland and Wales census collection 1841-1901
- England and Wales Civil registration Index 1837 – present

Find My Past

One of the leading suppliers of online family history records, this site currently offers access to a collection of over 50 million historical records covering Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and the Pacific Islands. The Australasia collection includes: cemetery records, death records, probate, land and court records, migration records, criminal reports, electoral rolls, directories, almanacs and government gazettes and military records. New Zealand records include electoral rolls 1853-1864.

The UK collection includes the complete UK census collection 1841-1911, births, marriages and deaths dating from the mid 1800s to 2005/2006, divorce records dating from the early 1500s, Boer War, WW1 and WW2 records and more.

Times Digital Archives

The Times Digital Archives is a fully searchable database of The Times newspaper. Original newspaper images 1786-1985 can be searched and viewed.
Documents online (National Archives UK) (Commenced October 1, 2011)

The official public archives of the UK government containing over 1000 years of history with over 2.3 million downloaded records in 2010–11. It includes digital images of wills (probate records), Army, Navy and Air Force records, Cabinet Records, pictures, photographs and historical documents from the Public Record Office and more.

Search results for all of these databases may include for example digitised primary records (source created by an eyewitness of an event) such as census records, military service records or an entry in a church register. These will often be PDF documents or JPG images.

Researchers using these databases in the library are encouraged to save their successful search result or original images found to portable USB drives for easy transfer to home computers.

Wikinorthia

Wikinorthia is a partnership within the northern region of Melbourne, consisting of Darebin Libraries, Moreland City Libraries and Yarra Plenty Regional Library and was launched in 2008. It is an online encyclopedia designed to document life in the Northern suburbs of Melbourne. These three library services encompass five local council areas including Moreland, Darebin, Banyule, Nillumbik and Whittlesea.

Wikinorthia is an innovative project that encourages people across five local councils with rich cultural histories and diverse communities to get together and tell their stories providing a snapshot of life in the north of Melbourne now as well as the past. The project is the first of its type in Victoria, and in fact, Australia. Search Wikinorthia for local topics of interest and add your own. This is a great example of local studies and the participatory web and a collaborative online project. “Crowd sourcing” is a current buzz word and Wikinorthia has the potential for this as people continue to add content and personal stories and photographs.

Articles of particular interest include:

- Growing up in a Brunswick Terrace - parts 1 & 2 contributed by a Nillumbik local historian
- Nillumbik Street Names
- Banyule Street Names
- Whittlesea Street Names
- Pentridge Prison – this has been accessed over 3000 times. It has had information added by four other users.

History is narrative-driven; Wikinorthia is a showcase of community history and is the perfect base for people to contribute their stories.

A re-invigoration and update to the site, in consultation with Moreland and Darebin is planned to be underway by the end of 2011.
Local History and Genealogy landing pages have been established on the Bibliocommons website. Lists are created on an ongoing basis for local history and genealogy and comments posted to relevant items in the catalogue. Regular posts are added to the blogs, including book reviews.

**Staff Training**

Non-compulsory training days for staff have been offered in the past with over 50 staff trained in 2010 – focusing on Local History collections, Victorian Historical Indexes, Wikinorthia, Ancestry and Times Digital Archives. Staff training also provides staff with a better understanding of the role of the LHFL, putting a face to a name and visa a versa.

**Marketing**

A Life Stories Logo was developed in 2009

In 2011 a professional brochure was developed to promote Local and Family History services to the community.

Window displays twice a year at Diamond Valley Community information at Greensborough Shopping Centre

Canvas prints of images from the Reflections of Diamond Valley collection are available for loan to community groups

Regular submission of events to Australian Family Tree Connections and “Unlock the Past” website and other online forums.

The Local and Family History Librarian gives talks in branch libraries and community groups.

**Volunteers**

The Local and Family History Librarian manages several volunteers based out of Library Support Services. Tasks include in house scanning of newspaper articles
and YPRL archives, placing photos in photo albums, uploading photos to the Hyperion archive, newspaper indexing and more recently indexing of death notices to be sent to the Sydney DPS group who manage The Ryerson Index website. She has also assisted volunteers in kit compilation for the Words on Wheels program.
Appendix B

Reference to images in Strategic Framework and Bibliography
Description of Photographs:


Page 9 – Bundoora – Old factory trucks on cheese factory McKimmies Rd, property. (2010) Photographer: Kevin Patterson

Page 19 – Redleap Stables, Mill Park

Page 20 – Eltham Train over trestle bridge with former Shire Offices in background (1981)

Page 21 – Kinglake Big Ben tree (1917)

Page 23 – Kangaroo Ground War Memorial Tower

Page 24 – Main Road, Eltham

Page 26 – Diamond Creek

Bibliography

List of documents/resources referenced in the documentation of the strategic Framework.

Sudden spike in climbing the family tree

Why Genealogy is important
http://www.genealogyintime.com/GenealogyResources/Articles/why_genealogy_is_important_page1.html

Family History in the Future

Genealogy goes prime time and it’s not for the retired anymore
APENDIX C

Local History Groups & LGA representatives 2011
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<td>Brendan Smith</td>
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<td>Pam Lawson</td>
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<td>Hurstbridge &amp; District Local History Group</td>
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<td>Russell Yeoman</td>
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