



# Public Libraries and Sustainability in Victoria

March 2025

Jess Anderson (Goulburn Valley Libraries)

& Rachel D'Arcy (Brimbank Libraries)

Barrett Reid Scholarship, State Library of Victoria

Cover page image: Cobram Library <https://www.archdaily.com/895883/cobram-library-and-learning-center-cohenleigh-architects> (Tom Blachford)

# Acknowledgements

Jess Anderson from Goulburn Valley Libraries and Rachel D'Arcy from Brimbank Libraries gratefully acknowledge the support of State Library of Victoria, Library Board of Victoria, Public Libraries Victoria and their respective library services during this scholarship.

This report was produced through the awarding of the Barrett Reid Scholarship to the authors by the Library Board of Victoria.

The authors would also like to thank Sarojini Krishnapillai of Thompillai for support with resource development and report production intended for public library staff across Victoria.

Information compiled in this report is current at time of publication. It is intended as a guide only and may not be relevant to all circumstances. Writers of the report and our partners have no liability to any users of the information contained in this report.

2023 - 2024 Barrett Reid Scholarship project.

Authors: Jessica Anderson, Goulburn Valley Libraries, Rachel D'Arcy, Brimbank Libraries and Sarojini Krishnapillai, Thompillai, February 2025.

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# Executive Summary

This report explores the scope to improve sustainability in the Victorian public library sector.

It has been produced by Jess Anderson and Rachel D'Arcy, library professionals with a passion for addressing climate change, social justice and environmental challenges in their field.

First and foremost, they recommend a system of Quality Standards tailored to the Victorian library context.

They have based their findings on extensive research into how libraries are engaging with the United Nations [Sustainable Development Goals](#) and what models provide an effective avenue for meeting these goals.

A standout feature of this report is the inspiring breadth of local sustainability programs many libraries are already delivering, providing significant lessons for future work in the sector.

The authors are grateful for the support of the State Library of Victoria in awarding them the 2023-24 Barrett Reid Scholarship, allowing them to undertake this important work.

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Image: Jess and Rachel attending the Global Sustainable Development Congress, Bangkok, 2024 (supplied)

# 1. Introduction

As free, accessible and credible sources of information, libraries have long been recognised as crucial partners in achieving the United Nations [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs). The SDGs were developed at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro in 2012. The SDGs are a set of 17 goals that seek to address urgent environmental, political and economic challenges around the world.

As 'community anchors', public libraries are uniquely positioned to lead on sustainability because they:

- Exist in a trusted, safe, and supportive setting
- Are a source of credible, evidence-based information
- Provide crucial digital literacy skills that are free and accessible.<sup>1</sup>

Public libraries can both reduce their own ecological footprint while continuing to build on the sustainability partnerships they have already embarked on.

This report examines green certification programs like the US Sustainable Libraries Certification Program and Denmark's SDG-aligned libraries as well as public declarations of support for sustainability such as the United Kingdom's Green Library Manifesto.

It aims to equip Victorian public libraries with the tools and knowledge to continue to implement sustainable practices, ultimately reinforcing their role as stewards of environmental and social wellbeing in their communities.

Image (Right): State Library of Victoria  
<https://architectureau.com/articles/gone-to-seed-grasslands-at-the-state-library-of-victoria/> (Linda Tegg).



# 2. About the Authors

Jess Anderson (she/her) and Rachel D'Arcy (she/her) are the 2023-24 recipients of the [State Library Victoria Barrett Reid Scholarship](#).

The Barrett Reid Scholarship is awarded to Victorian public library professionals who demonstrate outstanding leadership and vision, providing them with a unique opportunity to embark on in depth research on a topic relevant to the future of public libraries.

Jess and Rachel made the decision to use their scholarship to investigate sustainability and to develop resources to support the progress of sustainable development as it applies to public libraries.

Jess and Rachel are recognised leaders in their field and have presented at conferences, to colleagues and to the media about the subject of sustainability and public libraries.

They are the co-conveners of the Public Libraries Victoria Sustainability Special Interest Group, which includes representatives from over 41 library services around the state.



Libraries Change Lives is an initiative of Public Libraries Victoria and the State Library of Victoria, Highlighting the value of public libraries and celebrating the essential services they deliver.  
<https://librarieschangelives.org.au/>



Jess is the Library Branch Coordinator at [Goulburn Valley Libraries](#) in Victoria's north-east. She works directly with her community at Cobram Library, just south of the NSW border on the Murray River.

Jess wants to ensure the perspective of rural and regional Victorians is embedded into the sustainability conversation, believes in the power of positive change and infusing sustainable thinking into everything libraries do.

Image: Jess Anderson (Goulburn Valley Libraries)

Rachel is the Library Team Leader & Portfolio Lead at [Brimbank Libraries](#) in the vibrant and culturally diverse heart of Melbourne's West. She is also an accredited Dietitian and Nutritionist. Her dual expertise enables her to blend a passion for lifelong learning with a commitment to fostering equitable access to information and improved outcomes.

Rachel is deeply passionate about the role public libraries play in championing accessibility, promoting connection and health equity and advancing sustainability within their communities. Rachel is dedicated to embedding these values into all facets of her work.

Image: Rachel D'Arcy (Brimbank Libraries)



Rachel and Jess produced this report by undertaking:

- The [RMIT Short Course in Sustainability and Social Impact](#) to explore the integration of sustainability and social impact into organisational frameworks and strategies.
- The [Global Sustainable Development Congress 2024](#) in Bangkok, Thailand to connect with global leaders and practitioners and explore actionable strategies for achieving the UN SDGs.
- Primary research about what libraries in Australia and around the world are doing in the sustainability space, including accreditation, certification and other initiatives.
- Interviews with 16 professionals from the fields of First Nations knowledge, sustainability, local government, waste management and community programming which formed the basis of the case studies.
- Consultation with Angela Savage (CEO, Public Libraries Victoria) and Felicity Macchion (CEO, Goulburn Valley Libraries).
- Consultation with the following [Public Libraries Victoria](#) Special Interest Groups (SIGs):
  - Sustainability* (Members who attended the October 2024 Special Interest Group meeting from various library services across Victoria).
  - Collections* (Coralie Kouvelas, Manager Collections & Library Systems, Yarra Plenty Regional Library and Aidan Murphy, Collections & Information Services Coordinator Wyndham City Council).
  - Library Operations* (Narelle Stute Acting Unit Manager, Arts & Culture, Merri-bek City Council, Jess Saunders, Manager Engagement & Operations, Goldfields Library Corporation and Karen Reiter, Library Customer Service Coordinator, Bayside City Council).
  - Library Partnerships & Programs* (Catie Maher, Library Programs Lead, Bayside City Council and Sally Fornaro, Manager, Realm Library, Your Library).
- Interviews with a series of library and sustainability professionals nationally and internationally including:
  - Rebekkah Aldrich Smith and Matthew Bollerman, American Sustainable Libraries Initiative
  - Ellie Hansford Program, Lead Education, ResourceSmart Schools Program, Sustainability Victoria
  - Kristine Fjord Tolborg, CHORA 2030, Danish Public Libraries
- Engagement of sustainability consultant, Sarojini Krishnapillai of Thompillai, to assist with research, resource development, report production and Josha Krishnapillai of Thompillai for report design.

## This library supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals



# 3. Proposed Quality Standards for Sustainability in Victorian Public Libraries

Image: Rooftop at narm ngarrgu Library and Family Services  
<https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/narm-ngarrgu-library-and-family-services>  
 (City of Melbourne)

# Background

Sustainability is a critical focus for public libraries, enabling them to address environmental and social challenges at the same time as creating opportunities for positive engagement with their communities.

Public libraries - like other community-centered services - can also lead by example by embracing formal sustainability reporting against quality standards.

The process of reporting not only aligns libraries with emerging national and global standards but also enhances libraries' reputation as proactive and responsible entities.

It provides a structured way to measure and communicate their impact and identify areas for improvement.

Starting or strengthening this journey positions libraries as sustainability champions, fostering a culture of innovation and responsibility within the communities they serve.

However, to effectively report on their sustainability efforts, libraries must first understand what they are reporting against and establish a clear starting point.

The Quality Standards for Sustainability in Libraries offers a set of interconnected, realistic and achievable benchmarks designed to support and guide services throughout their sustainability journey.

These standards recognise that while some libraries may have progressed in certain areas, others may require additional support, resources or direction to address them.

Image: Emerald Hill Library, South Melbourne.  
<https://www.paulmorganarchitects.com/emerald-hill-library-and-heritage-centre> Paul Morgan Architects)

The Quality Standards are divided into six key areas:

**QS1 First Nations Engagement**

**QS2 Waste Reduction**

**QS3 Reducing Carbon Footprint**

**QS4 Community Engagement & Programming**

**QS5 Green Purchasing**

**QS6 Staff Leadership & Training**

Each standard is aligned with the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) and includes a clear rationale accompanied by a checklist of practical actions that libraries can choose to undertake to meet these benchmarks.

The standards are informed by research into international library sustainability models, interviews with library and sustainability professionals and ten documented case studies of sustainability initiatives within Victorian libraries (all outlined earlier in this report).

Together, these standards provide a roadmap for libraries to embed sustainability into their operations and services and foster thoughtful and permanent change.

Please note that many if not all of the following Quality Standards will require some form of collaboration, partnership and support from local and/or state government agencies.

# QS1. First Nations\* Engagement

QS1 is aligned to the following United Nations SDGs



Sustainability programming in libraries needs to acknowledge the profound connection between First Nations knowledge and environmental sustainability.

Australia's First Nations people have over 60,000 years of continuous stewardship and care for country; this ancestral connection is outlined in the [Uluru Statement from the Heart](#).

Libraries should be delivering programs that elevate First Nations voices and which blend traditional knowledge with modern sustainability science.

A culturally inclusive and relevant approach could include First Nations storytelling, programming, collections, services and artworks which foster a deeper appreciation for the cultural and environmental significance of the area in which the library is located, as well as a broader understanding of national issues.

Building design and service initiatives like those developed at narm ngarrgu Library & Family Services (Case Study 5.1) and Brimbank Libraries (Case Study 5.7) demonstrate how First Nations voices and environmental knowledge can be centred within and celebrated by libraries.

Embedding these practices requires thoughtful collaboration with First Nations communities to create inclusive spaces that honour their knowledge and history.

A clearly articulated approach, supported by visible acknowledgements and educational materials would strengthen this commitment.

\*Some communities in Australia prefer the term First Nations Australians while others prefer the term Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. This report has used both terms depending on the context of use.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY



**"HERE IS THE SUN"**  
STRETCH UP HIGH



**"HERE IS THE LAND"**  
TOUCH THE EARTH



**"HERE ARE THE RIVERS"**  
WIGGLE YOUR ARMS LIKE FLOWING RIVERS



**"HERE IS THE BAY"**  
JOIN THE RIVER TO THE CURVED BAY



**"WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE BUNURONG PEOPLE ON WHOSE LAND WE LEARN AND PLAY"**  
HANDS ON YOUR HEART

© Illustrations by Georgia Ensor

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

## KULIN NATION IS MADE UP OF FIVE GROUPS:

**BUNURONG/BOON WURRUNG – THE BOON WURRUNG/BUNURONG  
WOIWURRUNG (WOY-WUR-RUNG) – THE WURUNDJERI PEOPLE  
WATHAURONG (WATH-ER-RUNG) – THE WATHAURONG PEOPLE  
TAUNGURUNG (TUNG-GER-RUNG) – THE TAUNGURUNG PEOPLE**

**DJA DJA WURRUNG (JAR-JAR-WUR-RUNG) – THE DJA DJA WURRUNG OR JAARA PEOPLE**

**THESE FIVE GROUPS WERE MADE UP OF SMALLER GROUPS.**

**THE ‘YALUKIT WILLAM’ WAS THE GROUP OF THE BUNURONG/BOON WURRUNG WHO LIVED ON THIS SIDE OF THE BAY IN WHAT IS NOW HOBSONS BAY.**

**KULIN NATION = GREATER MELBOURNE (BUT EVEN GREATER)  
BUNURONG = BAYSIDE COUNCILS (FRANKSTON TO WERRIBEE RIVER)**

## BOOKS IN OUR COLLECTION TO DIG DEEPER:

**KULIN TALES SEVEN SEASONS OF THE BUNURONG - SONIA MARIE  
NYERNILA : LISTEN CONTINUOUSLY. - ARTS VIC  
YALUKIT WILLAM : THE RIVER PEOPLE OF PORT PHILLIP- EIDELSON, MEYER  
BUNDJIL CREATION STORY-CAROLYN BRIGGS  
“MONOMEETH MIRAMBEENA BOOBOOPS”  
“THANK YOU CHILDREN” - IN BUNURONG LANGUAGE**



Scan me for more information on these titles

## The Checklist

### Acknowledgement, Recognition and Reconciliation

- Completion of a [Reconciliation Action Plan](#) (RAP) - if Council wide, has this been adopted and aligned by and within the Library team?
- [Acknowledgement of Country](#) included in other programs, meetings and events.
- Development and use of a children's specific Acknowledgement of Country for use in Children's Story Time and events (for example see [Hobsons Bay City Council](#)).
- Regular cultural awareness training tailored to staff roles, such as [acknowledgethis.com.au](#) or [VACCA](#), to increase authenticity and confidence in engagement.

### Programming, Partnerships and Engagement

- Sustainability programming to reflect the connection with First Nations knowledge, be culturally inclusive and relevant, blending traditional knowledge with modern sustainability science.
- Programming, storytelling and art which encourages a deeper appreciation for the cultural and environmental significance of your library's local area.
- Ongoing consultation and engagement with local First Nations groups for cultural guidance, co-designed programming and shared initiatives.
- Program delivery includes First Nations themes (Storytimes, Young Adult and Adult Programming) on a regular basis, not just during special themed weeks.

### Collection Representation

- The First Nations collection is separately labelled as such to highlight significance.
- Explore significance of seasonal calendars such as the [Eastern Kulin Seasonal Calendar](#) to promote understanding of First Nations land management and care.
- Expansion of Indigenous collections to include books, movies and other media by and about First Nations people, ensuring broad representation.
- Diverse and accessible collections reflecting local and national First Nations perspectives, promoted ongoing.

### Cultural Presence in Library Spaces

- Permanent displays or commissioned First Nations artwork or cultural elements in and around library spaces.
- Inclusion of a map of Aboriginal Australia, such as the [AIATSIS](#) map that depicts language, social or nation groups of Aboriginal Australia.
- Employment pathways for First Nations people within the library team.

### Other

- We encourage you to reflect on other ways your service is working to achieve this quality standard.
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IMAGES Children's Acknowledgement of Country, Hobsons Bay City Council,  
<https://www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au/Libraries/Children-Young-People/Acknowledgement-of-Country-with-our-Childrens-Librarians>

## QS 2. Reducing Carbon Footprint

QS2 is aligned to the following United Nations SDGs



Reducing the carbon footprint of public libraries both demonstrates environmental leadership and inspires collective action.

Libraries can focus their efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through energy-efficient operations, sustainable procurement, waste reduction and responsible management of resources.

Initiatives such as e-waste bins and recycling stations, renewable energy integration, and green building designs—like those seen in the Glenroy Community Hub and Library (Case Study 5.2) and the Goulburn Valley e-waste project (Case Study 5.5) —highlight some of the practical pathways to carbon reduction.

In addition to operational changes, libraries can amplify impact by promoting awareness through programs, workshops, collections focused on climate literacy and sustainable living.

It can also extend into festivals and campaigns such as the Whitehorse Manningham Healthy Me, Healthy Planet program (Case Study 5.10), which promoted the co-beneficial relationship of climate action with improved personal health and wellbeing outcomes.

Collaborating with councils and local environmental groups can strengthen the efforts a library takes to embedding sustainable practices.

Reducing a library's carbon footprint is an evolving process, requiring innovation, commitment and can incorporate community participation to lay the groundwork for a more sustainable future.

## The Checklist

### Energy Efficient Operations

- Install visible energy meters and education for staff and community on energy saving practices like turning off lights or using efficient lighting controls.
- Offer energy saver kits / efficiency kits including loaning of thermal cameras to the community.
- Conduct routine energy audits to identify inefficiencies and reduce energy use.
- Replace traditional lighting with LED bulbs across all facilities.
- Retrofit buildings with energy-efficient HVAC systems and improved insulation.

### Sustainable Transport

- Provide EV charging stations in areas surrounding libraries
- At all appropriate libraries, make bike racks available to the community.
- Offer resources on public transport options, including local maps and apps.
- Promote community challenges that encourage walking or a sustainable mode of transport to encourage sustainable trips to the library.
- Work with the council to transition to a fully electric fleet for library transport services, including mobile libraries and for staff using fleet for outreach.

### Renewables & Green Building Practices

- Collaborate with council programs to integrate renewable energy sources, like solar panels.
- Prioritise upgrading older buildings to improve energy efficiency and comfort, especially during extreme weather.
- Incorporate passive cooling/heating strategies, such as green roofs and natural ventilation.
- Investigate, consider and work in line with passive building design and green building practices for new library builds and renovations.
- Advocate for sustainable building practices in future library construction projects.

### Community Engagement & Education

- Work with your council's Sustainability Team to host sessions on energy conservation and sustainable living.
- Enact and advocate for resilience budget lines to safeguard opening for the community during extreme weather, offering heat refuge and power during outages.
- Highlight [“This Library Supports the SDGs”](#) campaign in library spaces.
- Encourage a consideration of SDG alignment in the program/event planning process.
- Highlight SDG alignment on event posters and booking pages.
- Establish monitoring systems for program statistics to track program and SDG alignment (Add SDGs as a filter to program statistics, such as Storytime - SDG 4)

### Other

- We encourage you to reflect on other ways your service is working to achieve this quality standard.
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# QS 3. Waste reduction

QS3 is aligned with the following United Nations SDGs



By embedding waste management into policies and practices, public libraries can significantly reduce their environmental impact while serving as catalysts for sustainability and community education.

Libraries have a responsibility to future generations to adopt and model the principles of “reduce, reuse, and recycle,” aligning with initiatives like the [American Sustainable Libraries Initiative](#) and Sustainability Victoria’s [ResourceSmart Schools program](#).

Tracking and managing waste not only develops awareness but also saves on operational costs, offering environmental benefits such as reducing landfill contributions and conserving resources.

Libraries can encourage communities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adopt sustainable behaviours through programming, access to relevant collections and information to inspire collective community action.

Exemplary initiatives such as Goulburn Valley Libraries’ e-waste program (Case Study 5.5) and the Yarra Plenty Regional Library Services’ Repair Cafe (Case Study 5.8) demonstrate how libraries can partner with councils to educate communities on appropriate ‘reduce, reuse, and recycle’ practices.

Libraries can also expand efforts to include waste audits, improve recycling systems and deliver programs that educate on responsible consumptions and reducing waste.

These actions position libraries as leaders in reducing waste and in turn can foster a culture of environmental stewardship within their communities.

## The Checklist

### Waste Reduction Practices

- Provide clearly labeled recycling bins in all public and staff areas to promote responsible waste disposal.
- Assess and minimise paper waste by adopting practices that support less frequent printing and ensuring materials printed are relevant to the community and space.
- Explore ways to share resources if you have surplus.

### Community Engagement, Education and Programming

- Offer basic waste management education for staff, encouraging better recycling habits.
- Offer library space to host basic waste management education sessions for the community in partnership with council waste education/sustainability teams, encouraging better recycling habits. Suggestions may include workshops on composting, upcycling & mending and DIY repairing electronics and homegoods.
- Ensure e-waste bins are appropriately managed with clear guidelines and regular collection.
- Incorporate waste minimisation into all library events by eliminating single-use plastics, using reusable materials, and encouraging patrons to bring their own items (e.g. cups or bags).

### Partnerships and Collaboration

- Strengthen relationships with council waste and circular economy teams to ensure alignment and access to resources such as composting systems and e-waste disposal bins.
- Build partnerships with all relevant councils for libraries operating across multiple LGAs, advocating for consistent waste management practices in library branches.
- Collaborate with local circular economy initiatives and integrate into library programs (i.e. Repair Cafe, bike repair groups, and food rescue and redistribution).
- Partner with local organisations (hospitals, schools, playgroups, kinders, aged care) to redistribute deselected library materials.

### Policies and Systems

- Develop a comprehensive policy or strategy to reduce waste.
- Identify appropriate staff members in council who could support the library to reduce waste.
- Seek out council support to conduct a waste audit with the space and use the results to advocate for improved waste management practices within councils and the community.

### Other

- We encourage you to reflect on other ways your service is working to achieve this quality standard.  
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# QS4. Green purchasing

QS4 is aligned with the following United Nations SDGs



Green purchasing, or sustainable procurement, integrates environmental and social considerations into everyday purchasing decisions, ensuring libraries operate in alignment with broader sustainability goals.

By prioritising eco-friendly and ethical suppliers, libraries can reduce waste, lower their carbon footprint and support local economies.

Initiatives like Myli’s Library of Things (Case Study 5.6) also demonstrate how sustainable procurement can extend beyond operations to community engagement and collections.

Simple and practical steps include using 100% recycled paper and building supplier lists for ethical purchases.

[The Royal Danish Library](#) (Case Study 4.5) provides an excellent example of sustainable procurement guidelines which could be supported by local councils.

Challenges like higher costs and shorter product runs with smaller, local suppliers underscore the importance of collaboration, advocacy and innovative approaches to procurement.

Libraries should feel encouraged to develop purchasing policies that prioritise sustainability, factoring in packaging, ingredients, local sourcing and end-of-life impacts to model responsible consumption and inspire community action.

## The Checklist

### Sustainable Sourcing Practices

- Source office supplies and materials from certified sustainable or eco-friendly suppliers with transparent ESG available.
- Use recycled or sustainably sourced paper in photocopiers and printers.
- Add a sustainability lens to your supplier selection process. For example: Look for suppliers that demonstrate carbon neutrality.

### Partnerships and Collaboration

- Develop partnerships with local organisations, to source materials for craft and educational programs.
- Develop service offerings that model sustainable procurement, such as the development of Library of Things.
- Establish cooperative purchasing agreements with other libraries or teams to leverage buying power for sustainable goods and services.
- Work with council Circular Economy or Sustainability teams to align library procurement with council green purchasing objectives.
- Check with Sustainability Victoria’s [Buy Recycled Directory](#) for office equipment and stationary.

### Policies and Guidelines

- Develop a policy, goal or statement to eliminate single-use plastics within the library service.
- Implement a library-specific procurement policy that prioritises locally produced goods and services, or products with environmental certifications (Fair Trade, Rainforest Alliance, Bcorp, etc).
- Include sustainability requirements in contracts with vendors, encouraging them to demonstrate environmental consideration and impact practices. You may wish to ask medium to large size businesses for their ESG prior to contracting their services.

### Supplier and Product Recommendations

- Develop a list of recommended sustainable suppliers for regular library purchases.
- Identify suppliers that demonstrate leadership in climate positive, carbon neutrality/negative and environmental responsibility.
- Encourage the use of locally produced goods to minimise transportation impacts and support the local economy.

### Funding

- Identify and apply for grant opportunities to support green purchasing and reduce upfront costs.

### Other

- We encourage you to reflect on other ways your service is working to achieve this quality standard.  
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# QS5. Community Engagement & Programming

QS5 is aligned with the following United Nations SDGs



This standard emphasises the critical role libraries play in fostering environmental leadership, promoting sustainability education and strengthening community connections.

Through initiatives like Bendigo Library’s Sustainable Saturdays (Case Study 5.4), Yarra Plenty Regional Library Repair Cafe (Case Study 5.8), Whitehorse Manningham’s Healthy Me, Healthy Planet campaign (Case Study 5.10) and Melton Library’s Sustainability Festival (Case Study 5.3), libraries showcase diverse approaches to driving local action on global issues.

Libraries are uniquely positioned as trusted community institutions to educate the public about climate change, waste management and resource conservation.

By providing programs that enhance climate literacy, teach practical sustainability skills and highlight the importance of environmental stewardship, libraries empower individuals and communities to adopt sustainable practices in their daily lives and advocate for systemic change.

Libraries’ efforts in this space ensure they remain integral to shaping informed, resilient and environmentally conscious communities.



IMAGE: Library at the Dock, in Melbourne’s Docklands, was the first public building in Australia to receive a six-star Green Star Public Building rating when it opened in 2014.  
<https://architectureau.com/articles/library-at-the-dock/> Dianna Snape

## The Checklist

### Sustainability Education and Awareness

- Deliver programming with sustainability themes such as recycling, composting, or energy conservation.
- Consider community gardens, rooftop or other green spaces within outdoor library areas where possible.
- Promote library resources (collections, databases) that improve climate literacy and empower individuals to respond to the climate crisis.
- Include sustainability-themed displays or resource lists aligned with library collections to raise awareness and inspire action.

### Community Engagement and Partnerships

- Host standalone events like repair cafés, seed swaps, or upcycling workshops to encourage sustainable practices.
- Strengthen relationships with local councils to align sustainability initiatives and leverage resources.
- Partner with local organisations to deliver targeted initiatives like community clean-up days or ongoing environmental education programs.
- Consider how library spaces could be used and hired to host regular environmental discussion groups or SDG-themed meetups.
- Actively advocate for regional or state-level policy changes and best practices in sustainability within the library network.

### Themed Events and Campaigns

- Deliver programming during special themed weeks - [Plastic-Free July](#) activities or [Earth Day](#) celebrations.
- Introduce small challenges for the library community, such as encouraging the use of reusable [Boomerang](#) bags at library events.
- Develop gamified challenges with rewards for sustainable actions, such as attending eco-themed programs or using library-provided green resources.
- Develop library campaigns with programs, ie: “Sustainable Living Month.”
- Roll out large-scale campaigns like “Eco Passports” where library users track sustainable actions across various activities.
- Collaborate with councils or community organisations to integrate themed events into larger campaigns.

### Inclusive and Accessible Sustainability Resources

- Incorporate environmentally friendly messaging into promotional materials and library receipts to reinforce sustainable habits.
- Design specific programs or outreach for under-resourced areas, rural communities, or marginalised groups.
- Begin tracking and reporting on sustainability-related program attendance as part of library statistics.

### Sustainability Programs

- Host programming on sustainability topics (such as composting, energy conservation, or upcycling).
- Organise book sales or redistribution to reduce waste and prevent collections from ending up in landfill where possible and appropriate.
- Provide space for community partners who could deliver specialised programming such as urban gardening classes, beekeeping or beginner repair workshops.
- Use library spaces as maker hubs for sustainability-focused activities, such as DIY upcycling stations (a kit of sewing machines, for example).
- Collaborate with councils to integrate library spaces into community sustainability programs like circular economy hubs.
- Lead innovative projects such as neighborhood composting programs, tool lending libraries, or solar panel installation workshops.

### Other

- We encourage you to reflect on other ways your service is working to achieve this quality standard. You may also wish to document down the different sustainability themed programs your service has delivered this year.

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Wodonga Library  
<https://www.jwparchitects.com.au/projects/hyphen-wodonga>  
 (Bec Haycraft)

# QS6 Staff training and Leadership

QS6 is aligned with the following United Nations SDGs



One notable finding of this report has been that successful implementation of SDGs in libraries requires ongoing investment in staff leadership and training.

Library employees are the key to embedding sustainability across all aspects of library operations.

When libraries invest in training programs, recognise staff talents, create opportunities for leadership and support innovation, they cultivate a culture where sustainability becomes a natural part of operations and decision-making.

The UK's [Green Library Manifesto](#) (Case Study 4.7) provides an example for Victorian libraries as it focuses on the everyday contributions of library staff to the sustainability agenda.

## The Checklist

### Capacity Building

- Regularly invite council teams, such as Sustainability, Waste or Emergency Management to speak with library staff at staff meetings to share updates and opportunities.
- Use planning days to gather ideas for sustainability-focused community programming, aligning efforts with council initiatives and strategies.
- Provide ongoing professional development and networking to build staff capacity in sustainability, empowering staff to integrate sustainable practices into their roles and champion sustainability for your library service.
- Promote knowledge-sharing within the library sector by participating in conferences and special interest groups on sustainability.
- Develop a [Green Library Manifesto](#) for library staff to sign onto to inspire action and ideas.

### Partnerships and Collaboration

- Collaborate with the local council to align library efforts with municipal sustainability initiatives and support staff to work on sustainable projects.
- Nominate a staff member to participate in PLV Sustainability SIG Meetings.
- Formalise partnerships with council departments and local sustainability groups to co-develop sustainability programs and share resources.
- Apply for sustainability related grants and funding opportunities.

### Library Operations

- Begin integrating simple, visible sustainability efforts into daily operations, such as reducing paper usage or encouraging recycling practices among staff.
- Embed the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into library strategies, policies and planning to align with global efforts.
- Develop a green team within the service to oversee the integration of sustainable practices.
- Use a comprehensive sustainability framework to guide all aspects of library operations, from procurement to programming.
- Consider nominating library sustainability efforts for internal council / regional / state based awards.

### Transparency and Advocacy

- Begin tracking sustainability initiatives internally, categorising reported programs and services, building the foundation for future reporting and transparency.
- Highlight sustainability milestones and successes in annual reports and community newsletters.
- Develop a Sustainability page on your library's website to demonstrate your commitment, including sustainable initiatives offered and broader commitment to sustainable goals.
- On marketing and promotional collateral, outline what SDGs the promotion (program, service offering) aligns with.

### Other

- We encourage you to reflect on other ways your service is working to achieve this quality standard.

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IMAGE Library staff are at the heart of green libraries.  
@noisyframe via canva.com

# 4. Research from Victoria and around the world

## 4.1 Current Initiatives in Victoria:

Public Libraries Victoria (PLV) Sustainability Portal

## 4.2 Current Initiatives:

Australian Library and Information Association's Greening Libraries Project

## 4.3 Australian Case Study:

Sustainability Victoria - ResourceSmart Schools Program

## 4.4. International case studies.

## 4.5 International Case Study:

Denmark's Royal Library and Danish Library Association.

## 4.6 International Case Study:

US Sustainable Libraries Certification Program

## 4.7 International Case Study:

UK's Green Libraries Partnership and Manifesto

Image: Warrnambool Library

<https://www.archdaily.com/996766/warrnambool-learning-and-library-centre-kosloff-architecture/63f356e92b866c7b30470f0a-warrnambool-learning-and-library-centre-kosloff-architecture-photo>

(Derek Swalwell).

## 4.1 Current Initiatives in Victoria: Public Libraries Victoria (PLV) Sustainability Portal

Public Libraries Victoria (PLV) is the peak body for public libraries in Victoria, representing and advocating for almost 300 library branches (50 library services) across the state.

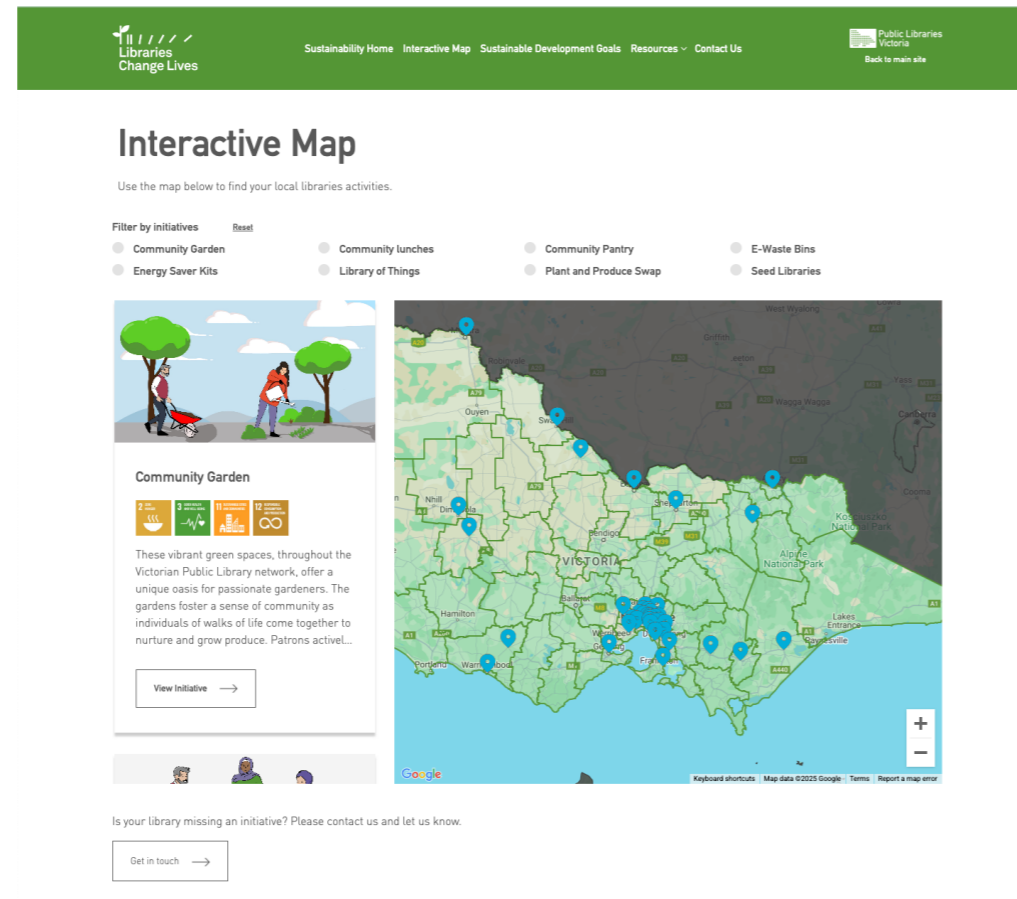
As part of this work, and in addition to the establishment of the Sustainability Special Interest Group (SIG), PLV developed the [Sustainability Portal](#) to empower libraries and communities to engage in sustainability efforts.

The portal lists a range of resources including which libraries in Victoria are hosting sustainable initiatives such as Community Lunches, Energy Saver Kits, Library of Things, E-Waste Bins and Seed Libraries.



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

The PLV Sustainability Portal includes an interactive map of which libraries are hosting these initiatives as well as indicating which Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) the initiatives align with (see below diagram).



## 4.2 Current Initiatives: Australian Library and Information Association's Greening Libraries Project

The Australian Library and Information Association's (ALIA) is the national body for the Australian library and information services sector.

In 2021 ALIA commissioned the *Greening Libraries Project* report in recognition of the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) as the framework within which libraries can work towards being more sustainable. ALIA highlighted the following SDGs to be of particular relevance to libraries:

3. Good Health and Well Being
4. Quality Education
11. Sustainable Cities and Communities
13. Climate Action
16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
17. Partnerships for the [SDGs] goals

In 2022 ALIA released the *Greening Libraries Report* and reviewed literature on libraries and sustainability as well as providing the following (mostly Australian) case studies:

1. Woollahra Libraries, NSW.
2. Noosa Library Services, QLD
3. National Library of Australia, ACT
4. Charles Sturt University Library, regional NSW
5. The Grove Library, WA
6. Longwood Public Library, Middle Island, New York, USA (recipient of US Sustainable Libraries Initiative certification, see 4.6 below).



IMAGE Rooftop at Bargoonga Nganjin (North Fitzroy Library) provides green space for library users. [https://groupgsa.com/work/bargoonga-nganjin-north-fitzroy-library-and-community\\_hub/](https://groupgsa.com/work/bargoonga-nganjin-north-fitzroy-library-and-community_hub/)

ALIA's SDG Stretch Targets Baseline Report ([March 2023 Update](#)), outlines the progress of Australian libraries towards specific SDG stretch targets.

The report shows that Australian libraries are making significant progress towards SDG-aligned goals, with achievements in digital inclusion, open access, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement, climate action and lifelong learning.

The report does not mention sector-wide sustainability reporting or a requirement for libraries to track and report on their environmental impact.

The authors look forward to further collaboration between PLV, ALIA and other interested libraries in this area.

## 4.3 Australian Case Study: Sustainability Victoria - ResourceSmart Schools Program

The [ResourceSmart Schools \(RSS\) Program](#) is delivered by Sustainability Victoria, a Victorian Government agency tasked with reducing waste and advocating for a circular economy in Victoria.

Although not a library program, ResourceSmart Schools provides a model that could be replicated to embed sustainability into library operations.

Schools participating in the ResourceSmart Schools Program are supported by a Facilitator to use the ResourceSmart Schools Online portal (RSS Online). There are five modules to guide schools through sustainability actions for school governance and culture, along with water, waste, biodiversity and energy.

In addition to engaging with over 1600 schools around Victoria the program has saved more than \$60 million in energy bills and diverted 168,000cm<sup>3</sup> waste from landfill.

The ResourceSmart Schools Program provides a clear, metrics-driven, and curriculum integrated approach for evaluating and improving environmental performance, ensuring that schools not only comply with best practice but also excel in sustainability efforts.

There are some parallels with the Whitehorse Manningham Libraries' *Healthy Me, Healthy Planet Program* (Case Study B10, later in this report), which also engages library members to improve sustainability outcomes by tracking and reporting their participation via an app. The Healthy Me, Healthy Planet program had the additional benefit of using software staff were familiar with through previous library reading challenges.

### Lessons for the sector

An online portal to record progress against standards would allow libraries to measure progress easily. The PLV Sustainability Portal could be used as the platform for libraries to track and measure their progress against sustainability markers.



IMAGE @rekapola via canva.com

## 4.4 International case studies.

IFLA is the leading global organisation representing libraries and advocating for their interests worldwide. IFLA's Environment, Sustainability and Libraries Section ([ENSULIB](#)) aims to empower librarians to inspire their communities toward environmentally sustainable actions. It achieves this by sharing resources on green librarianship, amplifying the voices of eco-conscious librarians and library initiatives worldwide, leading by example and providing a platform for discussion and collaboration.

IFLA's draft [Guidelines for Green and Sustainable Libraries](#) were released for comment in February 2025. The guidelines are comprehensive, broad ranging and include an extensive list of case studies, references and funding opportunities sourced from around the globe.

As part of these guidelines, IFLA proposes five principles for green and sustainable libraries:

1. Library building and equipment
2. Monitoring and evaluation
3. Staff training and development
4. Operations and maintenance
5. Library services and programs

The authors of this report note that all five principles have significant overlap with the Proposed Quality Standards for Sustainability in Victorian Public Libraries developed for this report. A major difference is that in the Victorian and Australian context, First Nations Engagement is given separate and significant weighting.

In Europe there are a range of responses and approaches to sustainability in the library sector. Public libraries have a well developed framework in some countries, while others are very much at the beginning of the journey.

The [Second European Report on Sustainable Development Goals and Libraries](#), profiles the progress of 17 European countries whose libraries are working towards meeting their SDG goals.

Comprehensive surveys were completed by library associations in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

One of the report's major findings in terms of how SDGs relate to libraries is that they are:

"...not only about projects, they are also about how library personnel and users perceive and apply them in their everyday work."<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, and related to the above, one of the report's conclusions which has implications for training and professional development programs for staff in Victorian public libraries is that:

"The crucial point for the successful implementation of SDGs is librarians' awareness [of sustainability]."<sup>4</sup>



IMAGE @hazellam via canva.com

## 4.5 International Case Study: Denmark's Royal Library and Danish Library Association.

Denmark's Royal Library (RDL) is an example of a public library that has a climate strategy aligned with a national sustainability vision.

As outlined in *A Greener Library: Climate Strategy 2025*, the RDL aims to be climate neutral by 2050 in line with Denmark's national aim of climate neutrality.<sup>5</sup>

The RDL comprises Denmark's State, University and Royal Libraries and its rich history dates back to the establishment of the University of Copenhagen in 1482.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to the premise that all public libraries are 'sharing economies', where information, materials and education are available for all, the RDL also focuses on four key climate areas:

1. Building and warehouse operations
2. Transport and logistics
3. Purchasing and materials
4. Waste and recycling (circular economy)

The RDL has noted the crucial role of working with relevant government departments to gain baseline data, as well as gain assistance for libraries to meet climate targets.

It also noted the library is in a unique position to connect and collaborate with the community on a number of levels.

Denmark's network of public libraries, the [Danish Library Association](#), has a slightly different approach, engaging with the UN's SDGs through a process of formal certification.

This process begins with library employees making suggestions relating to sustainability and library operations, forming the basis of a three-year work plan divided into the following broad categories:

1. Anchoring. Are staff engaged in sustainability and does the library have sustainability as an overarching goal?
2. Knowledge. How well does the library provide information, programs, and collections relating to sustainability?
3. Engagement. How well does the library engage with its community about sustainability?
4. Internal Operations. How embedded are the goals of waste reduction, green spaces and eco-buying?

SDG certification takes place once the library has made significant progress in terms of initiatives and activities within all four categories.<sup>7</sup>

### Lessons for PLV

Aligning library sustainability strategy with formal Government targets is an important step of the process.

Libraries could integrate their sustainability goals and work with local and/or state government agencies, gaining support for specific schemes and targets..

The use of a small number (four in the case of RDL) areas would be a manageable approach for libraries to use in Quality Standards/Annual Reporting.



IMAGE (right) The Royal Danish Library, one of Copenhagen's most recognisable landmarks.  
<https://www.archdaily.com/913400/the-royal-library-shl> (Adam Mork)

## 4.6 International Case Study: US Sustainable Libraries Certification Program

The Sustainable Libraries Certification Program (SLCP), established by the American Sustainable Libraries Initiative (SLI), is a pioneering effort to integrate sustainability into public, academic and school libraries in the US and Canada.

The program has been designed to assist libraries in embedding sustainability principles into their operations, programming and community engagement strategies. The SLCP supports libraries to enhance their sustainability practices through a structured framework and a series of benchmarks. It provides library leadership with a structured path to increase environmental stewardship, economic feasibility and social equity.

The program separates out public, school and academic libraries. For public libraries (the subject of this report) the twelve categories for consideration under the certification are:

1. Organisational Commitment
2. Energy
3. Materials Management – Waste & Recycling
4. Materials Management – Purchasing
5. Transportation
6. Land Use
7. Water
8. Collective Impact
9. Social Cohesion
10. Community Resilience
11. Financial Sustainability
12. Collections

The program encourages libraries to live their values 'out loud' and lead by example for their communities. The American Library Association (ALA) has been a visible partner of the SLCP, producing training materials to create the National Climate Action Strategy for Libraries.

The SLCP process can take one to two years to complete and requires libraries to pay a sliding scale membership fee to participate in.<sup>8</sup>



IMAGE: The Charlotte and William Bloomberg Medford Public Library in the US state of Massachusetts has more than 600 solar panels, making it a 'net-zero' building which creates more energy on site than it uses.  
<https://www.archdaily.com/987376/charlotte-and-william-bloomberg-medford-public-library-schwartz-silver-architects> (Paul Burk)



IMAGE The American Library Association (ALA) and the Sustainable Libraries Initiative (SLI) released the National Climate Action Strategy for Libraries (NCAS) in 2024.  
<https://www.libraryjournal.com/story/ala-and-sustainable-libraries-initiative-release-national-climate-action-strategy-sustainability>

### Lessons for PLV

Although the U.S. Sustainable Libraries Certification Program (SLCP) offers many valuable lessons for Australian libraries, it would require adaptation in the local context.

The cost of participation and need for a local steering group could present challenges. Certification would be a lengthy process that most libraries are unlikely to have the staff resources to commit to in the current economic context.

A cost-effective model, perhaps subsidised through government or partnerships, would make participation feasible, but it is envisioned this would require long advocacy efforts.

Adapting categories to the Australian context would be integral, such as focusing on water management or bushfire/extreme disaster resilience and aligning the program with the SDGs would strengthen its relevance in an Australian context.

A better use of resources might be annual or biennial reporting against clear standards which challenge libraries to continually improve their sustainability outcomes.



Image: The Atherton Public Library in San Mateo County, California, features quiet reading spaces which honor the region's famous redwood forests.

<https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2023/09/01/2023-library-design-showcase/> (Bruce Damonte)

## 4.7 International Case Study: UK's Green Libraries Partnership and Manifesto

The Green Libraries Partnership (GLP) is a wide ranging consortium project of the British Library, the National Library of Scotland, Research Libraries UK, Consortium of National and University Libraries (Ireland) as well as a range of other arts and research bodies.<sup>9</sup>

It focuses on the current and potential contribution of libraries and library staff to the sustainability agenda.

The GLP was established in 2022 in response to the United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Glasgow, Scotland in 2021 (also known as COP26).

One of the GLP's key actions has been the development of the [Green Library Manifesto](#), which over 100 UK libraries have signed onto.



IMAGE: The UK's Green Library Manifesto grew out of the Green Libraries Partnership (GLP).  
 @inspirasign via canva.com

The GLP has also produced four case studies each with quite different approaches to climate change and sustainability. Some of the highlights of these case studies are:

- Hampshire County Council (south-west of London, UK).
  - Specific staff are designated as 'Climate Champions' within the library service.
  - Focus on the role of the library as a source of information on climate change, in particular making information accessible to groups not usually part of climate change conversations.
- Oldham Libraries (near Manchester, UK):
  - Oldham is a Library of Sanctuary, welcoming refugees and asylum seekers into its local community. It seeks to highlight the voices of those least often heard in the debate on climate and as part of this work has connected with libraries in Germany doing similar work in this area.
  - 2021 Climate Connections project to encourage diverse, migrant and working-class local people to have a voice in the climate movement.
- Suffolk Libraries (south-east England)
  - Environmental Grant Program focused on professional development and which aims to empower library staff to develop and lead environmental projects.
  - The library has an [Environmental Policy](#) and environmental plans and progress are now a standing item at Suffolk Libraries Board and Senior Leadership Team meetings and at local staff meetings.
- Juraj Šižgoric City Library, (Sibenik, Croatia)<sup>10</sup>
  - Hosted [Carbon Literacy Training](#) for staff members.
  - Launched new Environmental Book Collection

### Lessons for the sector

The manifesto is a deliberately broad set of principles which can be used to underpin local strategies, plans and programs.

It is more a conversation starter for staff and partners than a definitive document or accreditation process.

It is an inclusive process that has wide ranging potential for application in advocacy and for staff development in Victoria.

The PLV Sustainability SIG could instigate the development of a similar document for use across the Victorian public library sector.

IMAGE Juraj Šižgoric Public Library, Sibenik, Croatia  
[https://www.ifla.org/wp-content/uploads/files/assets/environmental-sustainability-and-libraries/documents/croatia\\_sibenik\\_grubisic\\_reiter.pdf](https://www.ifla.org/wp-content/uploads/files/assets/environmental-sustainability-and-libraries/documents/croatia_sibenik_grubisic_reiter.pdf)

# 5. Library Case Studies - Victoria

A key part of this report has been to undertake primary research in the form of 10 case studies featuring Victorian public libraries.

Each case study showcases at least one outstanding sustainability credential and features interviews with at least one public library professional and/or expert in the field of First Nations knowledge, sustainability, local government, waste management and community programming.

The case studies include programs running in Melbourne's cosmopolitan CBD, small rural towns, newly built state-of-the-art libraries and thriving regional communities.

They present an inspiring snapshot of the work a number of Victorian public libraries are already undertaking to embrace sustainability and provide key suggestions for other libraries wanting to start or accelerate their work in this direction.

Whilst highlighting an extraordinary array of creative, engaging and powerful programs, the list is not intended to be prescriptive or definitive.

Many excellent programs have not been included in this report only because of the need for brevity.

Image: Library at the Dock, Melbourne Docklands  
<https://architectureau.com/articles/the-library-at-the-dock/> (Dianna Snape).

The programs profiled are:

## 5.1 narm ngarrgu (Queen Victoria Precinct, City of Melbourne)

First Nations voices, storytelling and artworks.

## 5.2 Glenroy Library (City of Merribek)

Integrated community services hub and internationally recognised sustainable building excellence.

## 5.3 Melton Library (Melton City Council)

Learning Festival to help local residents save money and understand sustainability.

## 5.4 Bendigo Library (Goldfields Library Corporation)

Sustainable Saturdays which reflect the local community's passion for sustainability.

## 5.5 Cobram Library (Goulburn Valley Libraries)

Helping solve the e-Waste challenge in Regional Victoria.

## 5.6 Myli (West Gippsland Libraries)

Library of Things to grow the sharing economy beyond books.

## 5.7 Sunshine Library (Brimbank City Council)

First Nations mural and storytelling with local elder Auntie Jeanie.

## 5.8 Yarra Plenty Regional Library

Repair Cafe where community members help repair rather than sending items to landfill.

## 5.9 Heat Safe Refuges

The role of public libraries as cool spaces in a warming climate.

## 5.10 Whitehorse Manningham Libraries

Healthy Me, Healthy Planet program to demonstrate the health benefits of climate actions.

## 5.1 narm ngarrgu, City of Melbourne

*"Telling stories of country, culture and colonisation."*

The narm ngarru library can be linked to the following SDG's



*The City of Melbourne respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land we govern, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong / Boon Wurrung peoples of the Kulin and pays respect to their Elders past and present.*

*We acknowledge and honour the unbroken spiritual, cultural and political connection they have maintained to this unique place for more than 2000 generations.*

*We accept the invitation in the Uluru Statement from the Heart and are committed to walking together to build a better future.<sup>11</sup>*

Libraries in the City of Melbourne reflect the thriving, vibrant mix of people living in the city's boundaries.

IMAGE Right: Rooftop at narm ngarrgu, Queen Victoria Market Precinct, Melbourne  
 (Abigail Varney)  
<https://landscapeaustralia.com/articles/a-civic-sensibility-narm-ngarrgu-library-and-family-services/#img-2>

Local and international students, young people, tourists and families living in high rise apartments are all regular visitors to the City of Melbourne's libraries, which are as different as its demographics.

The City of Melbourne has the following branches: City Library, East Melbourne, Kathleen Syme, Library at the Dock, North Melbourne, Southbank and narm ngarrgu. It also hosts two toy libraries, the Hotham Hub in the CBD and the Chapel in Carlton. Over 140 people work across these 9 branches.

Rachel and Jessica spoke to Anne-Maree Pfaber, Manager of City of Melbourne Libraries and Lori Long, the Venue Programs Team Leader about narm ngarrgu.

narm ngarrgu (pronounced nahrrm narr-GUW) opened in November 2023 in the busy Queen Victoria Market precinct. The name 'narm ngarrgu' translates to 'Melbourne Knowledge' in Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung language. The library is a beautiful study in a retrofit that centres the living culture of First Nations people.\*

Library management and staff worked alongside Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elders, artists and community to reflect their knowledge systems and bring the new Library and Family Services centre to life.

The Library features a dedicated children's library, a new family services centre as well as maker spaces. A community rooftop terrace features native plants, a giant eel trap and coolamon as well as a children's play area.





IMAGE Giant eel trap artwork, rooftop terrace, narm ngarrgu.

<https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/artworks-narm-ngarrgu-library-and-family-services>

The building is also home to public artworks by renowned First Nations artist Maree Clarke (Mutti Mutti, Yorta Yorta, Boon Wurrung and Wemba Wemba) as well as curated contemporary artworks, and heritage items found on site during construction.<sup>12</sup>

The project was an opportunity to celebrate everyday art as well as provide an essential piece of engagement in the ongoing story about colonisation in Victoria.



IMAGE First Nations Artist Maree Clarke (Mutti Mutti, Yorta Yorta, Boon Wurrung and Wemba Wemba).

<https://museums.vic.gov.au/bunjilaka/about-us/birrarrung-gallery/maree-clarke/>

Maree was commissioned to produce a suite of artworks that tells the First Nations story of the narm ngarrgu site, as she explains:

“In the children’s library I’ve designed the carpet to represent the seven seasons of the Kulin Nation through plants and animals.

I’ve also designed the forest on the mirror glass that’s down the passageway so children will again be able to see themselves reflected in the forest on their way to the beautiful library.

We also cast my husband’s coolamon [image below] in cast iron and fabricated a six metre eel trap [image above] with a three metre flute that is on the terrace for the children to climb on and crawl through.

The main library carpet with the beautiful watercolour with the maps of the Kulin Nation over the top, people will get to learn about the five clans of the Kulin Nation.

And what better place to learn about that, than in a library.”<sup>13</sup>

Maree collaborated with artist [Hillary Jackman](#), designers and artisans from [Artery Cooperative](#), a prominent Melbourne-based artist collaboration, as well as the project designers to create a richly layered immersive environment.



IMAGE Artists Maree Clarke, Hillary Jackman, Nicholas Hovington and Ellen Sayers with the coolamon.

<https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/news/your-guide-to-narm-ngarrgu-library>

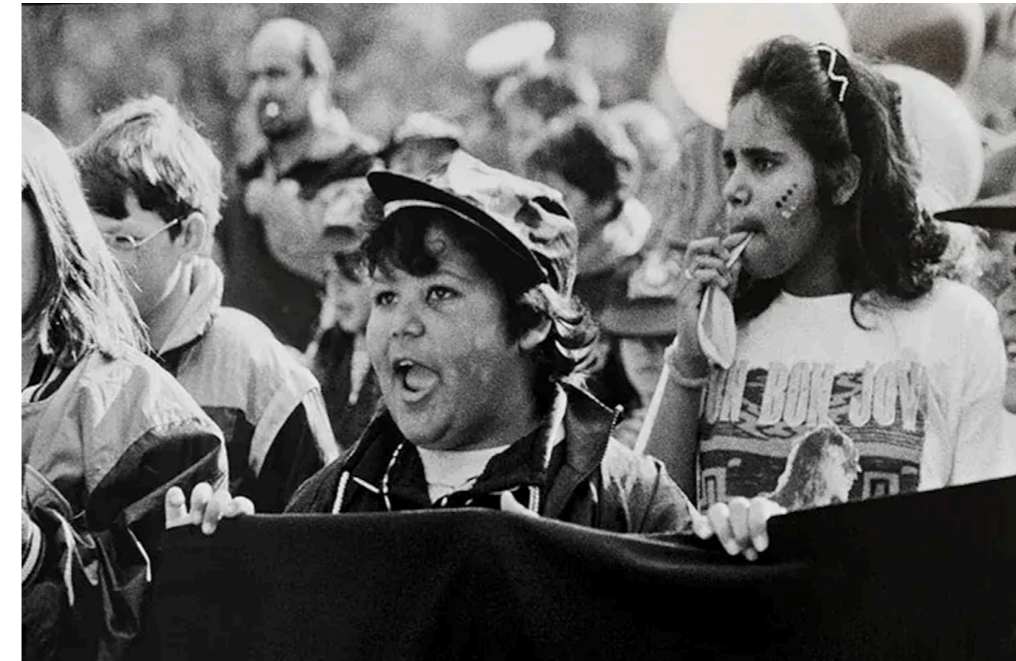


IMAGE “Protest”, by Maree Clarke, displayed in narm ngarrgu.

<https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/artworks-narm-ngarrgu-library-and-family-services>

#### Anne-Marie explains that;

“The City of Melbourne library team wanted to work within a framework that celebrated Aboriginal culture and the arts right from the very beginning.

We worked alongside Aboriginal Melbourne, which advises the City of Melbourne on Aboriginal culture, reconciliation and action.

So we took this as our starting point, to centre Aboriginal culture, art and achievements, not just aesthetically but politically.

At the beginning of narm ngarrgu the building was just a shell.

That blank canvas was a perfect opportunity for us to explore how we could celebrate Aboriginal culture.

We had an Aboriginal lead in the design and development team.

We got Maree Clarke involved, we used art from within the City of Melbourne’s collection as well as new art.

The aim was to make a culturally safe space and we wanted the process and the outcome to be a celebration of First Nations culture.”

#### According to Lori:

“The feedback we have from Aboriginal communities has been clear for a long time.

Don’t just invite us to NAIDOC [National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee] week or to your event opening.

Be authentic, be deep and start a long lasting relationship.

For example, we have a partnership with [Killara](#), a First Nations organisation that provides social and community programs.

We provide space for Killara and other organisations like them in the library and their presence helps to make First Nations people feel welcome and a part of this place.

At our recent Seniors Festival, events were 100% led by First Nations people - including the catering!

One of the pivotal things narm ngarrgu does is connect young Aboriginal people with libraries through the podcasting studio, maker space and art making spaces

Groups like [Yarn Strong Sista](#), a First Nations early childhood education organisation, can book spaces for free.

But we can’t build these types of relationships by just staying inside the library.

We need to go to events held by First Nations communities - art exhibitions, conferences, festivals and gigs - and talk to people, make connections to bring back into the library space.”

Anne-Marie sums up her pride in the new library:

“narm ngarrgu has been so successful since it opened last year.

It’s what our community wanted and it’s getting used a lot.

First Nations groups needing somewhere to meet, students coming in to study for exams, story time for young children, artistic creations in the maker space - these are just some of the things happening here on a regular basis.

We have made room for people to think and reflect in a very busy city place.

We love it.”

\*The terms First Nations and Aboriginal are used interchangeably in this story.

## 5.2 Glenroy Community Hub, City of Merri-bek

*“Library of the future!”*

The Glenroy community hub can be linked to the following SDG's



*The City of Merri-bek recognises the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waterways in the area now known as Merri-bek.*

Merri-bek is bordered by Merri Creek to the east and Moonee Valley Creek to the west and is home to some of Melbourne's most densely populated suburbs.<sup>14</sup>

Five libraries are located within the council boundaries: Glenroy, Brunswick, Coburg, Fawkner and Campbell Turner (Brunswick West).

The Glenroy Library recently underwent an extensive and complete overhaul, re-emerging as part of the Glenroy Community Hub.

Rachel and Jess asked Judy Spokes, Co-ordinator of the Glenroy Community Hub, why the Glenroy Library now exists as part of the Hub.

“After 50 years, the Glenroy Library had outgrown its building. In addition to needing a bigger and brighter space, we also wanted to co-locate the library with essential community services.

Today the Hub houses the library along with a kindergarten, Maternal and Child Health Centre, Long Day Care, Community Health Centre and an expanded Neighbourhood House.”

By building the Hub on the site of the old Glenroy Primary School, the project was able to reuse old buildings and breathe new life into them - embracing the 'adaptive reuse principle' - as well as retaining green space from the existing school grounds.



IMAGE Glenroy Community Hub <https://zerocarbonmerri-bek.org.au/sustainability/>

Judy was involved in the Hub's design and development process from the project's origins in 2017.

“The Hub has normalised co-locating multiple local government services. It enriches the Glenroy community by envisioning their growing and changing needs into the future. At the Hub, we see our residents and their families from birth to the final years of their life.

A baby might be brought in for their first Maternal and Child Health appointment at two weeks old, join a parents group, come to Story Time in the library at 6 months old, attend kindergarten at three years old, borrow their first book in primary school...the story goes on.”

From a library point of view, the colocation and partnerships with other services means a whole new cohort of customers coming into engage with library services. It's a constant cycle of renewal and futureproofing for libraries.

In its first two years of operation, the Hub hosted 1400 events, demonstrating its strength of connection into the wider community.



IMAGE Drumming workshops hosted by African Drumming in the Glenroy Community Hub courtyard (Jacinta Keefe) <https://www.designinc.com.au/insights/moreland-celebrates-the-opening-of-glenroy-community-hub>

The Hub is also home to a community garden, two prayer rooms and the library has a recording studio. But despite hosting what seems like an astonishing number of services, the Hub hasn't stopped thinking about new partnership opportunities, as Judy explains:

“In 2024 we are planning for the old [Glenroy Primary School] bike shed to be converted into a social enterprise cafe, for people with intellectual disabilities to gain work and social opportunities.”

Developing the Hub was a complex, visionary and, at \$30 million, expensive project. The Hub has a net-zero energy objective within the wider council objective of net zero emissions. It's built on the twin climate imperatives of energy efficiency and 100% renewable energy production.

The project is a major part of Merri-bek Council's wider sustainability credentials. In 2018, Council declared a climate emergency in Merri-bek, calling on urgent action on climate change by all levels of government in Australia. The Council committed to reduce its emissions by 75% by 2030 and to become net zero by 2035.<sup>15</sup>

Merri-bek Council wanted to showcase its sustainability leadership through the building process and this is reflected in the acclaim the Hub has received. The Hub was a 2024 recipient of commendation by the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) for Fostering Community Connection. It has won two Master Builders Association Awards.

The Hub's contractor, Building Engineering, won the Best Sustainable Project Award and the Award for Excellence in Construction of Commercial Buildings in the \$20m – \$30m category, where it was hailed “as a demonstration of the City of Merri-bek's commitment to world-leading, sustainable design”.<sup>16</sup> The Hub was also the Winner of the Public Buildings Category at the Architecture and Design 2022 Sustainability Awards.<sup>17</sup>

The Hub is also the first building of its kind in Australia to receive the internationally recognised 'Passive House' certification. The certification refers to a building design and process based on extremely high levels of energy efficiency, comfort and clean air standards.<sup>18</sup>



IMAGE - The team behind the Hub – Building Engineering, WSP Australia, TTW Engineers, Kieran Leong and Bohemia Hookham and Aileen Ma Head of Building Projects for the Moreland City Council, received the internationally recognised Passive House certification. <https://www.designinc.com.au/insights/moreland-celebrates-the-opening-of-glenroy-community-hub>

Judy explains that one of the markers of the Hub's success is how great it makes people feel:

“Both staff working in the library and other services as well as the community using the centre are so happy with the building design, because it feels so different from any other building.”

This is because the Hub is a ‘biophilic’ building. These buildings ‘bring the outside in’. They celebrate nature by using natural light, timber materials and embracing contemporary objectives for public facilities that promote wellbeing. This can be hard to quantify but are huge contributors to community health, wellbeing and resilience.

As Judy sums up:

“The Hub is a masterclass in social and environmental leadership by Merri-bek Council. It covers so many different services and will serve the wider community well into the future. I’m really proud to have been part of making it happen”.



Image courtesy of Dianna Snape

## YOUR LIBRARY HAS BOOKS ABOUT...

- **FIRST NATIONS CULTURE**
- **GARDENING TO GROW FOOD**
- **REPAIRING YOUR CLOTHES**
- **STAYING HOPEFUL ABOUT THE FUTURE**
- **SAVING MONEY AND ENERGY**
- **PLANTS IN YOUR LOCAL AREA...**



IMAGE @jammasftrria via canva.com

## 5.3 Learning Festival, Melton Library

“We are bridge builders!”

Sustainability festivals can be linked to the following SDG's:



Melton City Council acknowledges the Kulin Nations as the Traditional Owners and custodians of this land and pays respect to their Elders past and present.

Melton lies on the outer fringes of Melbourne, about 40 kilometres west of the CBD.

With over 200,000 people it is the second fastest growing area in metropolitan Victoria.<sup>20</sup>

Like other regions experiencing rapid growth without comprehensive government planning, Melton has suffered a serious shortage of public transport, health and community services. It currently has only two library branches, Melton and Caroline Springs.

Rachel and Jess spoke to Silvia Velez, Lifelong Learning Projects Officer at Melton Library about why sustainability is so important to her library.

“We are a very diverse community.

Like neighbouring Brimbank City Council, we have many young families, as well as new and emerging communities speaking a wide range of languages.

We need to consider where our community is coming from in terms of their education, literacy and economic background.

Like most of Melbourne's West, we are really feeling the impact of financial stress post-COVID.

We see our library and community services stretched to the limit as more and more vulnerable families and individuals depend on them.

We recognise people are under significant financial pressure and our messaging and outreach on sustainability reflects that.

IMAGE: City of Melton Learning Festival Program  
<https://www.melton.vic.gov.au/News-Media/City-of-Melton-Learning-Festival-is-back>

As a UNESCO learning city, Melton Library has hosted an annual Lifelong Learning Festival since 2018.

Sustainability has always been at the core of the festival but the Library staff take their demographic into account and know that at the household level, saving money is the number one issue.

Hosting a workshop on the issue of food waste, for example, is an opportunity to demonstrate how much money can be saved as well as avoiding food ending up in landfill.

The Library often gets ideas for workshops by talking to sports, youth and interfaith groups, frequently the heartbeat of the local community. The focus is tips that can save people money and avoid making people feel guilty.

Bridging the cultural divide in terms of environmental protection and not being seen as punitive is especially important for newly arrived communities, particularly in how initial engagement takes place.

One of the biggest issues in Melton is household energy efficiency, as Silvia explains:

“Most new developments in Melton consist of very big houses with poor insulation, small gardens and little to no tree cover. It is a very poor model for future predictions of climate change.

In summer, Melton is an average of three degrees hotter than the Melbourne CBD due to lack of green space.

Melbourne’s western suburbs have tree canopy coverage (percentage of land area covered by trees) of approximately 5 – 10%, whereas other Melbourne suburbs are evenly spread across the 10 – 30% range.<sup>21</sup>

To address this, Melton Council is aiming to plant 7000 trees a year in the municipality.

But this target is not being met due to objections by householders worried about leaf litter or needing the nature strip for parking.

So the council has a Landscape Auditor and Tree Planner who talks to communities about the benefits of trees to manage extreme heat and we have outreach events in the library to assist with this.”

Melton Library has also hosted workshops on switching home heating and cooking from gas, which primarily consists of [methane](#), a greenhouse gas more potent than carbon dioxide.

“Tim Forcey delivered workshops from *My Efficient Electric Home Handbook* to provide advice on improving comfort and energy use in peoples homes, and what are the best ways to do this given financial and time restraints.

We are also looking to buy some induction hot plates to loan out for our Library of Things so that people can see how it works to change from gas to electric for cooking.”



IMAGE My Efficient Electric Home Handbook, Tim Forcey (Murdoch Books, 2024).

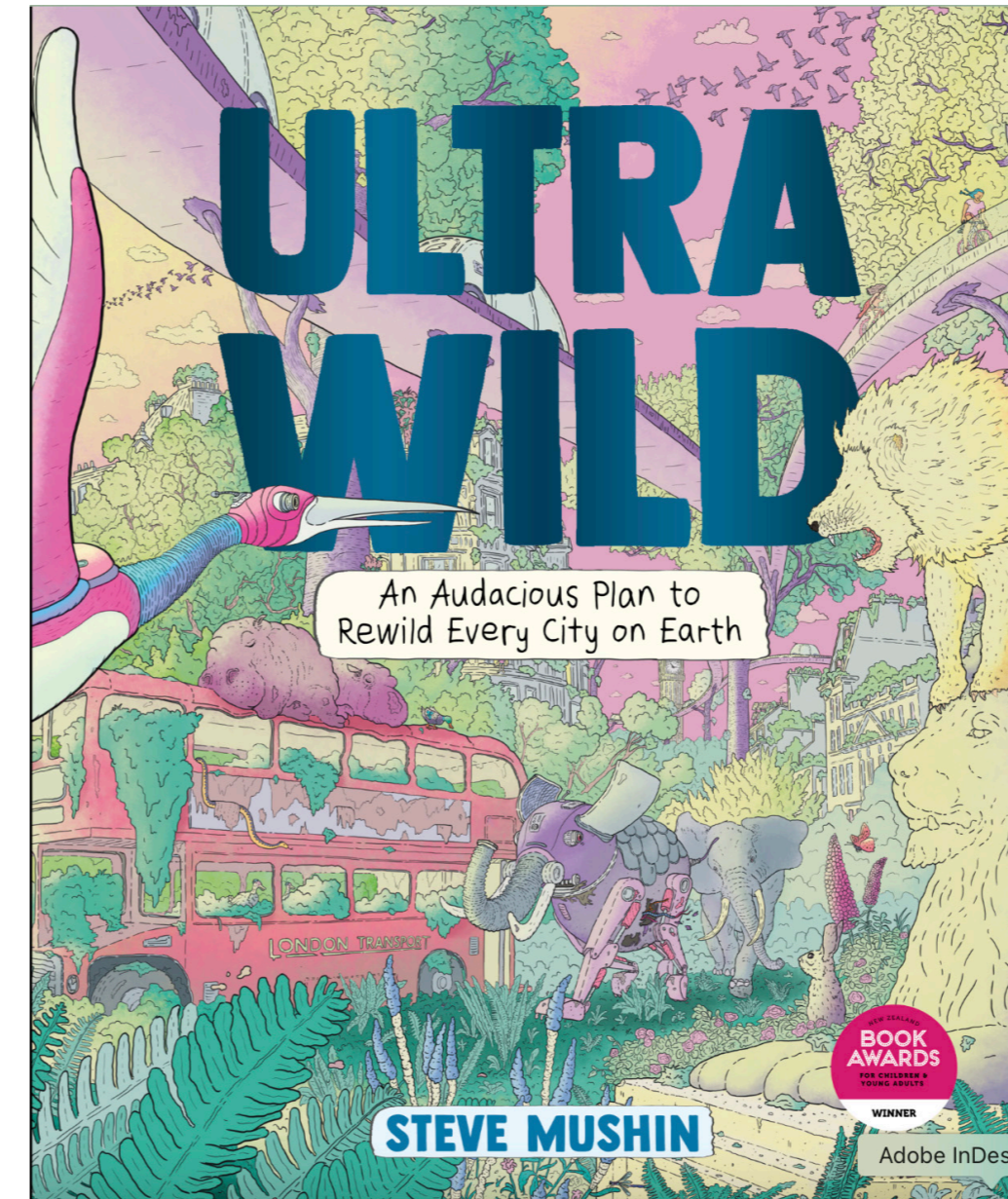


IMAGE UltraWild, Steve Mushin (Allen & Unwin, 2023)

Silvia also sees the Library playing a crucial role in early environmental literacy.

As part of the 2024 Festival, Steve Mushin delivered an intensive workshop for all ages to promote “rewilding” designs with children’s author Steve Mushin. Steve is the author of [Ultrawild](#), a children’s book about creative solutions to the climate crisis.

Ultrawilding refers to bringing wildness back into modern day cities and transforming cities to be more liveable and sustainable.

The workshop creatively engaged children in the problem solving, scientific and imaginative aspects of climate change.

The Libraries are now planning a second workshop for 2025, in collaboration with the Council’s Open Space Planning staff, where community members can apply their new design skills to a site-specific area in the municipality.

Silvia sums up the success of Melton Library’s Learning Festival:

“We normally have 600 people come through the library on a Saturday: the festival brought in 1700, so a really big increase in patron numbers.

It celebrates our sustainability champions through short story, photo or drawing competitions which have all proved really popular.

Melton Library plays a big role in local climate justice action.

We provide hopeful and positive opportunities for engagement, particularly for children who have shown to be the most keen to learn.

We are looking forward to entering an exciting new stage with the development of the City of Melton’s Sustainability Strategy in 2025.”

## 5.4 Sustainable Saturdays

Bendigo Library, Goldfields Library Corporation.

*“Libraries invented the sharing economy!”*

Sustainable Saturdays can be linked to the following SDG's:



*The City of Greater Bendigo is located on the traditional lands of the Dja Dja Wurrung and the Taungurung Peoples of the Kulin Nation. They are the traditional custodians of this land.<sup>22</sup>*

The Goldfields Library Corporation (GLC) employs over 100 staff and covers four Local Government Areas: Greater Bendigo, Loddon, Mount Alexander and Macedon Shires.

GLC has branches in Bendigo, Castlemaine, Eaglehawk, Gisborne, Heathcote, Kangaroo Flat, Kyneton, Romsey, Woodend as well as library agencies in the tiny towns of Tarnagulla, Elmore, Inglewood, Wedderburn, Boort, Axedale, Dingee and Pyramid Hill.<sup>23</sup>

As the largest branch, Bendigo serves over 100,000 people including newly arrived communities with diverse language and cultural backgrounds.

Rachel and Jess spoke to Robin Pearson, the Manager of Bendigo Library about Sustainable Saturday, a hugely popular initiative the library has been hosting since 2019.

“Sustainable Saturday grew from the passion of our staff who wanted to focus on what we can do for and with our communities to make a change.

What we love about Sustainable Saturday is that it brings people of all ages into the library. People who work and can't come during the week or school kids who play sport after school. There's often different parenting and carer mixes on the weekend too.

It shakes up our Saturdays and it has become the ultimate all-ages event where the education is incidental. They are fun, free, engaging and extremely popular.

We usually have about 500 people through the doors on a Saturday but on a Sustainable Saturday that number can swell to 1200.

Bendigo Library's last Sustainable Saturday for 2024 will be looking at Slow Fashion. This is a global movement encouraging people to look at the environmental impact of the clothing they buy.<sup>24</sup> One of Bendigo Library's staff members used to be a wedding dressmaker and they are using their creative dressmaking skills to inspire events for the day. Some of the events Bendigo Library have planned:

- Visible mending workshop to encourage people to repair and reuse clothes rather than throw them away;
- Screening of a documentary on the social and environmental costs of fast fashion;
- Clothing swap where people exchange their preloved clothes and;
- Display by Bendigo Embroiderers Guild to showcase and connect with the local crafter community.



IMAGE Visible mending advice:

<https://www.mcreativej.com/post/9-things-to-know-before-visibly-mending-a-garment>

Talking to Robin, there are two areas that stand out when thinking about how other libraries could go about implementing their own version of Sustainable Saturday.

### 1. Work with what you've got

Bendigo Library doesn't have a formal sustainability team but they have a group of passionate staff, which counts for a lot according to Robin.

“Sustainable Saturday cultivates the passions of our staff, it builds on their skills and on their talents.

Engage the person in your staff group who is keen to take a project like this on. It might not be a manager or librarian but just make sure to give them enough time to prepare.

Of course we could be doing more if we had more staff - no one is going to argue with that. But by working with our existing resources, we have still drummed up an enormous community response.

Leaning on your local community and organisations is essential given the resource challenged nature of most public libraries. In this case, the Greater City of Bendigo has been very supportive of Sustainable Saturday, providing a councillor or staff member to attend and speak if required, providing infrastructure like banners, communications

support to promote the event as well as connections to relevant environmental organisations.

### 2. Make something for everyone

Robin explains how the program is developed.

“We run four programs a year and each one of them will have a different theme. We work with local partners, we look at what the book clubs are doing (see below), we have a look at what's been topical lately and go from there.

So our Sustainable Saturday event in March 2023 which focused on climate change, for example, was inspired by the local book club's choice of Greta Thunberg's No One Is Too Small To Make A Difference.”

IMAGE (right) No One is Too Small to Make a Difference, Greta Thunberg (Penguin, 2021)

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

**GRETA THUNBERG**



**NO ONE IS TOO SMALL TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

Of course not everyone can attend on a Saturday so Bendigo Library has other events to supplement the community's growing interest in sustainability, for example extra storytime programs during National Water Week.

The Library's large native aquarium, which celebrates efforts to restore Bendigo Creek, is a focus of these events. The aquarium is over three-metres long and is home to native fish and vegetation, including some that were previously extinct in the wild. These include Southern pygmy perch, Murray-Darling rainbowfish, Southern purple-spotted gudgeon and Australian smelt. The Bendigo Creek is also celebrated in a mural at the library created by First Nations artist Troy Firebrace.



IMAGE Troy Firebrace in front of his mural at the Bendigo Library.

<https://www.bendigoadvertiser.com.au/story/8019881/aboriginal-artists-murals-draw-on-connection-to-country/>



IMAGE Bendigo Library Aquarium  
<https://www.ncgrl.vic.gov.au/a-sustainable-future/>

Robin sums up the success of the program:

“Fundamentally, Sustainable Saturday builds relationships with library patrons. It’s an important piece of engagement work for us. We harness the love for the environment our staff have to develop the program.

We think carefully about budgets for speakers and materials and end up gaining more than we spend in terms of engagement benefits.

One of our staff members is so passionate about Sustainable Saturday that even though she is ‘retiring’, she’s going to come back to do the Saturday programs. She just loves those events so much.”

IMAGE Right Libraries can help promote a zero-waste lifestyle through community programs and sustainable purchasing policies.  
 @dailycreative via canva.com

## Zero-waste Lifestyle tips

Let's try to have zero-waste lifestyle with these tips!

**WASTE AUDIT**  
Do I really need to buy this now?

**REDUCE SINGLE-USE ITEMS**  
Bring your own cloth bags, reusable water bottle and steel cutlery.

**REDUCE**  
Consider if you can borrow or rent something rather than buying.

**RECYCLE**  
Check where and how something can be recycled.

**COMPOSTING**  
Start composting your food scraps and garden waste.

## 5.5 Cobram Library and Moira Shire Council

“Stepping up to the e-waste challenge”

E-Waste bins can be linked to the following SDG's

**11** SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

**12** RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

**17** PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

Goulburn Valley Libraries operates within the traditional country of the Yorta Yorta and the Taungurung peoples.



IMAGE Cobram Library, north-east Victoria (Tom Blachford)  
<https://thelocalproject.com.au/galleries/gallery-cobram-library-learning-centre-cohen-leigh-architects-local-project-cobram-vic-australia/>

It's hard to imagine life today without a mobile phone or a cable to charge it with.

But all too often these essential items break, stop working or need replacing, leaving us with the question: where do they go?

This was the question that Jess Anderson, Branch Manager of Cobram Library, in Northern Victoria, was grappling with.

Cobram Library is on the lands of the Yorta Yorta people.

The library is part of Goulburn Valley Libraries (GVL) which also has branches in Avenel, Euroa, Mooroopna, Nathalia, Shepparton, Violet Town, Nagambie, Numurkah, Tatura, Yarrowonga as well as a mobile library service. GVL serves over 110,000 people.<sup>25</sup>

For this story, Jess spoke with Bethan McKay, who works in Waste Management at Moira Shire Council. John Polhill, Manager of Infrastructure Partnerships at Sustainability Victoria, the Victorian Government agency tasked with accelerating the transition to a circular economy, also provided background for this case study.

### Many toxic substances are found in everyday electronics

\* Brominated fire retardants

Processes used in informal e-waste recycling can release additional toxicants that accumulate in the food chain

Electronic items must be recycled appropriately to protect people and the environment from dangerous contamination!



Be wise about #eWaste

IMAGE Toxic substances found in electronic goods.  
<https://www.dceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/env/pages/d347d42b-d755-481b-bc38-71683b5d1958/files/e-stewardship-evidence-report-2021.pdf>

In 2021, Bethan and Jess formed a partnership to address the growing problem of electronic waste, also known as e-waste, in the Moira Shire.

And it's not just a problem for Moira. Electronic waste is the fastest growing category of waste in Australia. It refers to any item with a plug, battery or power cord that's no longer working or wanted. It covers a whole range of items from phones and refrigerators to fluorescent light tubes.<sup>26</sup>

In Victoria, e-waste was banned from going to landfill in 2019. Sustainability Victoria funded the upgrades of 140 local government transfer stations across Victoria, as well as seven e-waste and battery recyclers.

Because e-waste contains toxic materials it must be separated from the storing, processing and disposal of other waste, as it poses serious risks both to human health and the environment.

In addition to these dangers, electronic goods contain extremely valuable materials that can be recovered for reuse.

In order for this to happen safely, e-waste must be handled and stored correctly to avoid leakage and the release of hazardous substances into air, water or soil.<sup>27</sup>

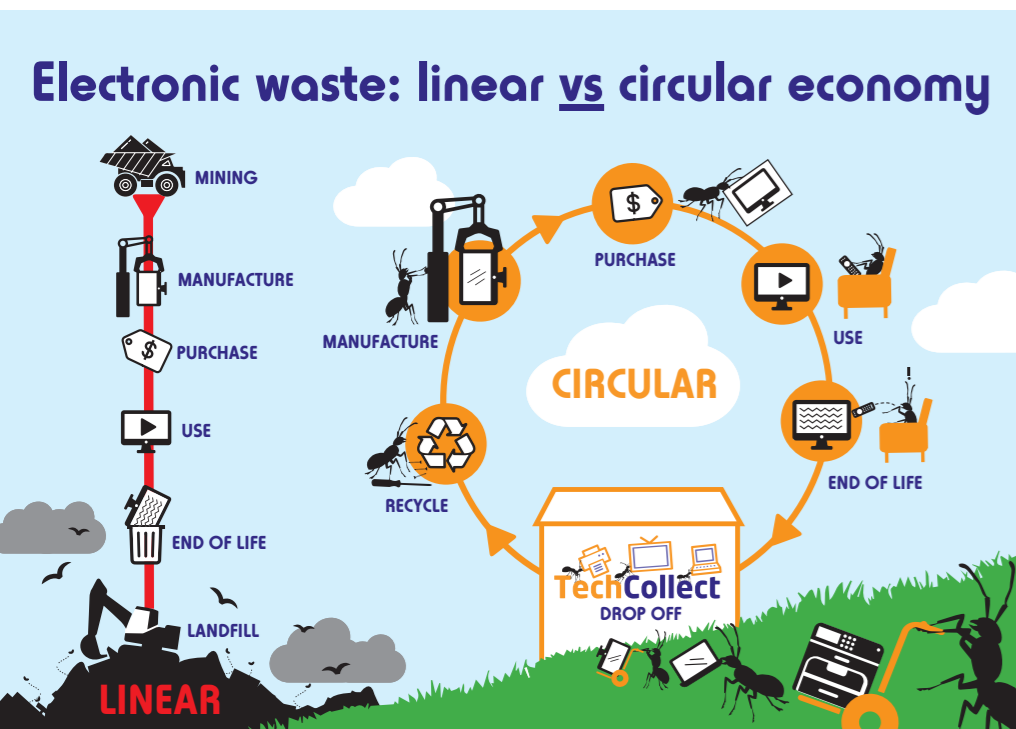


IMAGE Comparison of linear to circular economy  
<https://techcollect.com.au/>



IMAGE Canada's Electronic Products Recycling Association has produced a guide for consumers about why electronic goods should not end up in landfill. Australia needs to step up in this space.  
<https://becgreen.ca/now-is-the-time-to-recycle-your-electronics/>

John from Sustainability Victoria explains that

“Victoria’s e-waste problem goes to the heart of the circular economy challenge.

It requires multi-level government commitments, as electronic goods are almost all produced offshore.

Mandating requirements for importers to recover and recycle electronic goods is a Commonwealth responsibility.

We are still only recycling around 60% of e-waste and we urgently need to increase that amount.<sup>28</sup>

However Federal Government action on this essential part of the puzzle has stalled.

So the Victorian Government is planning to introduce its own model for Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for batteries in conjunction with the Queensland and New South Wales Governments.”

Back in Cobram, the first step Jess and Bethan took was temporarily installing an e-waste recovery station at Cobram Library.

For Jess, this was initially driven by the library's need to manage its own growing e-waste problem. Damaged DVDs, for example, were being sent to landfill.

“We installed Cobram Library’s e-waste recovery station as part of our “Recycling Week” program but the response from the public was so encouraging we decided to make it permanent.

E-waste is a global problem - it's the fastest growing category of waste - and here in Cobram we needed to play our part in addressing the issue.”



IMAGE E-Waste Recovery Station made from 100% post-industrial recycled plastic. Located in Mornington, Rosebud, Hastings and Somerville libraries, Mornington Peninsula Shire Council.  
<https://www.mornpen.vic.gov.au/Your-Property/Rubbish-Recycling/Recovery-Stations>

There are now e-waste recovery stations at Yarrawonga, Nathalia, Numurkah as well as the Council offices in Cobram.

Moira Shire also has a mobile recovery station that can be set up at schools in the region for six-week stints, providing opportunities to engage and educate children, parents and teachers.

Jess explains that since their installation, the recovery stations have sparked a range of conversations with library patrons:

“It’s a really interesting starting point to discuss what can and can’t be recycled.

Someone came into the library to drop off some batteries and we started chatting about what else could be recycled.

She ended up coming back with her old mobile phones and cables that had been sitting in a drawer.

Having that conversation both diverted those items from going to landfill and they sent their valuable components to be reused.”

Bethan’s advice for libraries looking to establish e-waste stations in their space is to get in touch with their council:

“We have had such a positive response from the community to the e-waste initiative between Cobram Library and the Moira Shire Council.

I would really encourage libraries to be in touch with the Sustainability or Waste teams at their local council to see if a similar partnership is possible for them.

We looked at the figures for Cobram’s tip and it is estimated to be full in just over a decade.

We can’t just keep putting things in a hole where they become someone else’s problem in future.

Since the e-waste recovery bins were installed in the Cobram Library, 140kgs of hazardous waste has been diverted from landfill.

Cobram Library plays an essential role for the local community, who are trying to answer a really curly question: how can we keep toxic chemicals out of the environment and away from our communities.”

## 5.6 Library of Things, Myli

“Growing the sharing economy.”

Library of Things can be linked to the following SDGs:



Myli acknowledges the Gunai, Kurnai, Bunurong and Wurundjeri peoples as the traditional custodians of the land on which our services are located.

We recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are these lands' first storytellers and that there is so much more we can learn from First Nations cultures.<sup>29</sup>

Myli is a not-for-profit organisation previously known as West Gippsland Libraries.

It covers the Shires of Cardinia, Baw Baw, South Gippsland and Bass Coast, covering around 240,000 people. There are 115 staff working across 18 branches.

Jess spoke with Cassie Woodhouse, the Executive Manager of Collections at Myli:

“We cover a wide range of south-east Victoria, including farming, coastal and urban areas .

It's a big population base and we are always looking for ways to tailor our services for our communities in terms of our collections.”

One of the most successful collection initiatives at Myli has been Library of Things.”

Library of Things is a collection of items other than books, DVDs or magazines. It includes large objects such as surfboards and stand-up-paddleboards (SUPs) as well as electrical goods such as GoPros, digital film scanners and induction cooktops.

The membership is separate from the usual library membership with about 30 new people signing up each month.

Cassie told Jess about some of the more successful initiatives from the new program :

“One of the most popular items at Library of Things has been the GoPro.

It's an expensive item [around \$1500] so for someone wanting to try one out or just use it for a weekend, borrowing rather than buying makes so much sense.

Another really popular item is the digital film scanner, which people are using to digitise photos, slides and film negatives.

Documenting and researching family history has always been extremely popular with library members so being able to restore and share images using the scanner has really built on this interest.

Being a Library of Things member is being part of the sharing economy.

It means borrowing rather than buying something that might end up sitting on a shelf at home for most of the time, saving money and resources.”

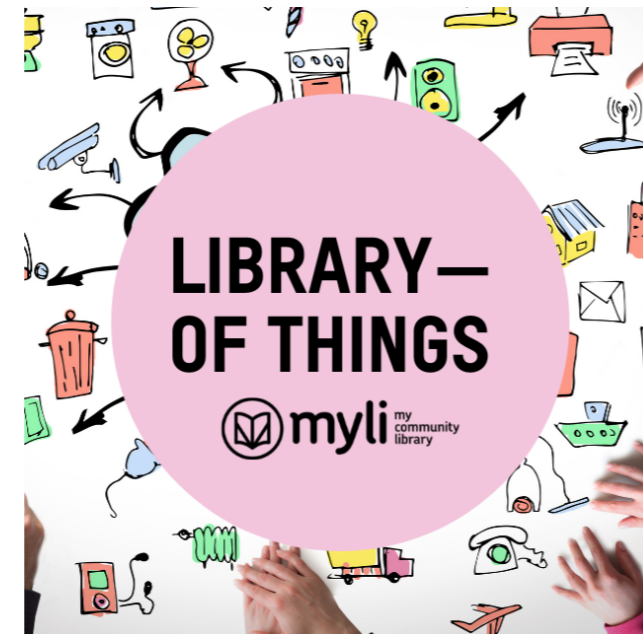


IMAGE Myli's Library of Things  
<https://www.myli.org.au/cms/content/uploads/2024/06/LOT-Catalogue-August-2024.pdf>

## GoPro Deluxe Kit

Compact, durable action camera captures 4K video and high quality photos. Waterproof and with versatile mounting options for adventures of all kinds.



### Pick up location(s):

All staffed libraries

### Loan Period:

2 weeks

### What's included:

1 x plastic tub containing 1 x cloth case that contains GoPro Hero 12, 1 x enduro battery, 1 x floating hand grip, 1 x head mount, 1 x bike mount, 1 x charging cable, 2 x mounting pins, 1 x 128 GB micro SD card with adapter, 1 x mounting piece -- and 1 cloth case that contains 1 x fetch dog harness, 1 x mounting pin, 1 x mounting piece.

## LIBRARY-OF THINGS

ENTERTAIN/LEISURE

Scan to place hold or visit [myli.au/goprokit](https://www.myli.org.au/goprokit)



IMAGE The GoPro is one of the more popular items for loan at Myli Library of Things  
<https://www.myli.org.au/cms/content/uploads/2024/06/LOT-Catalogue-August-2024.pdf>

Myli supports community members in more isolated parts of the region as items can be put on hold and will be transported by the library to that branch.

The process of deciding what to buy for the Library of Things collection reflects Myli's relationships with the broader community.

“We recently had a community survey which is how we came up with the next four items for the collection: a window cleaner, phonics kits (to support early literacy), VR [Virtual Reality] headsets and an outdoor projector.

The survey was a great promotional opportunity in itself as many people did not know Library of Things existed as a separate program to the usual library collection.

Library of Things has been so popular, with around 80% of the collection being borrowed each month.

And generally speaking people have been very careful with things they borrow!”

Library of Things also sparked a great partnership opportunity with Cardinia, Baw Baw, South Gippsland and Bass Coast Shire Councils.

The councils funded 15 Home Energy and Water Energy Efficiency Kits and 12 induction cooktops to encourage more energy efficient and comfortable housing as well as explain what the transition to home electrification might look like

Home electrification refers to the gradual upgrading of fossil-fuel powered appliances to modern energy-efficient replacements powered by renewable electricity.<sup>30</sup>

Replacing gas stove tops with induction stove tops can be daunting and expensive, so being able to borrow one from Library of Things can ease that transition process.

So far 32 libraries around Victoria have taken the plunge and set up their own Library of Things with a range of items for loan.

## PORTABLE INDUCTION COOKTOPS



- RESOURCES**
- All Resources
  - Library of Things
  - Language
  - eResources
  - Gardening and Sustainability
  - Read
  - eBooks
  - eAudiobooks
  - News & Magazines
  - Movies
  - Programs
  - Social groups
  - Watch
  - Services
  - Learn
  - Kids
  - Ancestry
  - Coding
  - Databases

The Portable Induction kit is designed to support and empower residents serviced by Myli libraries to reduce their impact on climate change. The kit will enable you to try an induction cooktop for cooking.

IMAGE Portable Induction Kits are now available through Library of Things  
<https://www.myli.org.au/resources/portable-induction-cooktops/>

For those still thinking about how to dive into this part of the sharing economy, Cassie has these suggestions:

1. Manage and oversee all the items in one department.
2. A risk register is essential
3. Check your insurance regularly.
4. Ensure items are regularly recalled to be tested and tagged if required.
5. Make borrowing guidelines clear to make it straightforward for staff.
6. Know your capacity and set policy guidelines such as:
  - What are the size restrictions of your courier to transport items between branches?
  - Do we have room to store larger items such as a surfboard?
  - Is something like a telescope too fragile to transport between branches?

As Cassie sums up:

“We are always talking with our staff and community about new ideas for Library of Things.

Based on recent feedback one of the things we are looking at in 2025 is Sustainable Party Kits with reusable items.

If you're having a party, it means you can avoid buying disposable plates, cups and cutlery, all of which end up in landfill.

Libraries are fundamentally about avoiding wasteful culture because we support the community to reuse items instead of buying them.

Library of Things is a logical and exciting extension into a whole new area, engaging a new and growing community of borrowers.”

Home > Resources > Library of Things

## DIGITAL FILM SCANNER



Scan color and Black and White negatives and 50 mm slides to digitally preserve mementos, and keep them vivid for years to come.

- RESOURCES**
- All Resources
  - Library of Things
  - Language
  - eResources
  - Gardening and Sustainability
  - Read
  - eBooks
  - eAudiobooks
  - News & Magazines
  - Movies
  - Programs
  - Social groups
  - Watch
  - Services
  - Learn
  - Kids
  - Ancestry
  - Coding
  - Databases

IMAGE Sustainable Party Kits are a new item being considered by Myli for Library of Things  
<https://www.partykitnetwork.org/>

## 5.7 Knowledge and Wisdom Mural Sunshine Library

“Public art connects us to place, culture, and each other.”

The Knowledge and Wisdom Mural can be linked to the following SDGs:



Brimbank Libraries respectfully acknowledges and recognises Wurundjeri and Bunurong Peoples as the Traditional Custodians of this land and pays respect to their Elders, past, present and future.<sup>31</sup>

Brimbank Libraries in Melbourne's West serves some of Melbourne's most culturally diverse communities.

It has branches in Deer Park, Keilor, St Albans, Sunshine and Sydenham as well as four small 'street' libraries.

The Knowledge and Wisdom mural, on the wall of the children's section of Sunshine Library, is the work of Aunty Jeanie Mason, a proud Barkandji/Bakandji woman, artist and 2024 Brimbank Citizen of the Year.



IMAGE Aunty Jeanie's mural at Sunshine Library titled "Knowledge and Wisdom". Image courtesy of Richard Orjis, Brimbank City Council.



IMAGE Aunty Marjorie 'Jeanie' Mason standing in front of her wall mural at Sunshine Library. Image courtesy of Richard Orjis, Brimbank City Council.

Brimbank Libraries in Melbourne's West serves some of Melbourne's most culturally diverse communities.

It has branches in Deer Park, Keilor, St Albans, Sunshine and Sydenham as well as four small 'street' libraries.

The Knowledge and Wisdom mural, on the wall of the children's section of Sunshine Library, is the work of Aunty Jeanie Mason, a proud Barkandji/Bakandji woman, artist and 2024 Brimbank Citizen of the Year.

Aunty Jeanie grew up on the Baaka (Darling) River, in Wilcannia, north-western New South Wales.

Her mum frequently took her and her eight siblings out bush and taught them about medicinal plants, what to eat and what to look for.

This was instrumental in Aunty Jeanie growing up with her culture and her language.

Aunty Jeanie has lived in the Brimbank area for 30 years and became involved with the local community through her professional background working in community services.

She is passionate about education and improving opportunities for the Aboriginal community to strengthen connections to culture and community.

Through this work she is a member of the Brimbank Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consultative Committee.

The Knowledge and Wisdom mural celebrates Aboriginal knowledge and storytelling.

The artwork features a woman who is a teacher, a central figure surrounded by seven children—representing the days of the week—who listen and learn about caring for Country.

Vibrant depictions of native animals, rivers and flora illustrate the interconnectedness of people and the environment.

When approached by the Arts and Culture Team at Brimbank City Council, Aunty Jeanie knew straight away what to paint on the library wall:

“I knew exactly what I would do...because I thought to myself, I have seen the storytelling happening in that space before.

For children, a picture tells a thousand words.

It is clear that it's about...connection to the local environment and it's about telling the stories of the land so that everyone can get on board and understand how it is we properly care.

It felt like the most appropriate painting for the space.”

Aunty Jeanie drew inspiration from the teachings of her mother, who passed down knowledge of traditional foods, medicines and the natural world.

Through this artwork, Aunty Jeanie ensures these teachings continue to inspire younger generations.

“Like my mum always said, look after the land, it looks after you.

“When a tree got knocked down on the Darling [river], [my mother] used to say, another one gone.

For years I wondered why she had a sad look on her face while saying this.

You know it's part of our culture, part of us growing up, our living.

I think if our ancestors came back today and saw the state of many of our rivers, they would be very upset.”



IMAGE A work in progress - Aunty Jeanie painting the mural, later completed in early 2024. Image courtesy of Richard Orjis, Brimbank City Council.



IMAGE A child places their painted hand print on the mural at the launch celebration in March 2024. Photo courtesy of Tegan Connolly, Brimbank City Council.

The mural's creation was deeply collaborative.

The project team incorporated Libraries, Arts & Culture, Building Maintenance and of course Aunty Jeanie Mason.

The mural is a living expression of Brimbank's [Public Art Policy](#):

“Public art is a vital thread within the social and cultural fabric of the contemporary city...

[it] connects people and place, offering a common focus and inclusive platform for interpretation, imagination, engagement and identification.”

At the mural's launch in March 2024, community members placed handprints on the artwork, symbolising their commitment to care for Country.

Brimbank Libraries worked with the Brimbank Arts & Culture team to bring this project to life, strengthening community ties and showcasing public libraries as inclusive spaces for cultural expression.

The mural embodies sustainability by preserving and sharing cultural heritage while promoting themes of environmental stewardship.

It has become a centerpiece for cultural programming at Sunshine Library, sparking conversations about sustainability and inclusivity.

It serves as a tool for education, inspiring children and adults alike to care for their environment and respect Aboriginal traditions, as Aunty Jeanie's vision explains:

“The purpose of the Knowledge and Wisdom mural at Sunshine Library is to share stories that teach, heal and connect.”

The success of the mural demonstrates the power of partnerships and Rachel encourages libraries looking to create a public art project to not worry about size:

“It doesn't have to be large scale to become a talking point.

The mural has been a way to embed sustainability and cultural connection into the Library.

We see the mural as a foundation for future projects that educate, inspire and unite the community.”

## 5.8 The Repair Cafe

### Yarra Plenty Regional Library

#### “Fixing the Loneliness loop”

The Repair Cafe can be linked to the following SDG’s:



Yarra Plenty Regional Library acknowledges the Wurundjeri, Woi-wurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners of this Land, paying respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past, present and emerging who have resided in the area.

We support the Uluru Statement from the Heart.<sup>32</sup>



IMAGE Mernda Neighbourhood House in Whittlesea is part of the Repair Cafe movement with a program including bike maintenance, clothes mending and tool sharpening.  
<https://www.merndanh.org.au/repair-cafe>

Rachel and Jess spoke with Coralie Kouvelas, Acting Collections & Library Systems Manager at Yarra Plenty Regional Library (YPRL) in Melbourne’s Northern suburbs about their innovative repair cafe partnership program.

YPRL has branches in Diamond Valley, Eltham, Ivanhoe, Lalor, Mernda, Mill Park, Rosanna, Thomastown, Watsonia and Whittlesea, as well two mobile libraries and a home library service.

Coralie explained that:

“We co-designed the Repair Cafe program with our community.

This codesign also involved working with the First Nations community [mob] and was a new way of working.

We found the co-design approach with mob/community and how our library service supports Caring for Country.

At the beginning we asked: what do you want repaired?

From there we worked with local Neighbourhood Houses, Mens Sheds and other community spaces to find the right meeting places.”

#### Repairers’ have included:

- Retirees with lots of time on their hands;
- Former musicians who know how to repair guitars;
- A TV repairman who can also fix toasters;
- Young people interested in sustainable fashion fixing broken zippers in jeans;
- A furniture upholsterer with advice on mending fabric in old chairs;
- Dance troupes wanting to make their own costumes and;
- Lawyers able to provide advice to individuals seeking safety from family violence.



IMAGE Yarra Plenty Mobile Library visits over 50 nursing homes and retirement villages for those unable to visit their local library branch.  
<https://www.kinart.com.au/project/ypri-outreach-truck/>

Coralie makes it clear that for the repairers, the payoff is in the social connection.

“The Repair Cafe is so much more than fixing things and preventing waste.

Volunteers get to meet all different types of people, of all ages and put their skills and passion on show.

People come in who still have their 1982 stereo with a record player.

Vinyl is back in and the Hume Library now has a record collection for loan!

A car mechanic explained how to check your oil and change a tyre.

It might seem simple but it saves a lot of money and lots of people don’t know how to do it”

Social isolation is just one of the problems libraries are tackling in Victoria.

Between 2001 and 2009, the highest proportion of people reporting feeling lonely were aged 65 and older.

By 2021, the group suffering the most loneliness were aged 15–24 years, a big shift towards younger people feeling isolated and alone.<sup>33</sup>

One of the most powerful stories shared by Coralie about the Repair Cafe began during the boredom and loneliness of Covid.

“There was a group of young men who had been hanging around and driving dangerously on the road out the front of the library.

The police had been called several times.

One day when I finished work, one of these young guys was asking me about my car.

I suggested coming to the Mens Shed to talk to some of the blokes who know a lot about V8s, muscle cars and where to drive fast safely - places like Calder Park.

Over time, the two generations forged lasting friendships.

The older guys helped find some of these younger guys’ jobs, mentored them and even helped find apprenticeships for some of them.

The Mens Sheds were happy as their memberships went up!

This is at the heart of the Repair Cafe: building unlikely and powerful social connections.”

Image: Librarian Coralie Kouvelas’ 1972 Ford XA coupe.

Coralie has the following suggestions for other libraries who might be considering running their own version of a Repair Cafe:

- Know your partners - local councils, neighbourhood houses or Mens Sheds that might co-host the Cafe.
- Co-design the program with your community: ask them what they would like fixed!
- The library collection must move in some way. We are not a library without our collections.
- Don’t be afraid to try something new: if it doesn’t work, find out why.
- Keep doing the things that are working well.
- Ensure insurance and other compliance issues are covered off before you start.
- Keep your library strategy in mind when planning.
- Keep things as simple (and cheap) as possible.

Coralie sums up the Repair Cafe:

“Stopping our stuff just going into landfill is really difficult.

But the Repair Cafe is a step in the right direction.

It’s a teaching opportunity, it’s about learning skills, wrapped up in social connection, trying to improve sustainability.

It’s a beautiful thing to be part of.”

# 5.9 The role of Libraries as Heat Safe Refuges

Libraries as Heat Safe Refuges can be linked to the following SDG's:



A scorching summer's day might seem like the best time for a trip to the local pool to cool down with a swim and an icy pole.

But for people with health conditions, mobility issues or on low incomes, finding somewhere safe, free and welcoming to spend a hot day can be extremely challenging.

Added to this problem is the fact that some Melbourne suburbs are Urban Heat Islands (UHI) or very hot areas with lots of asphalt and little tree cover.

UHIs are very uncomfortable places to be because they absorb and radiate heat during heat waves, a problem that is being amplified by climate change.

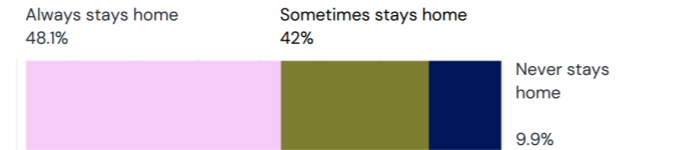
To help people stay safe during heat waves, some places have been designated as 'heat safe spaces' to provide relief from extreme heat and help prevent heat-related illnesses and deaths.

These include pools, libraries, neighbourhood houses and shopping centres.

Libraries are a particularly accessible heat safe space for vulnerable community members as they are free.

## Survey results

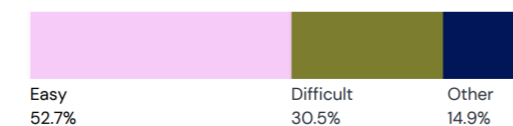
### Where do you go when it gets hot?



The most popular locations were shopping centres, pools and libraries.



### How easy is it for you to keep cool at home?



### If you go somewhere cool, how long do you stay?

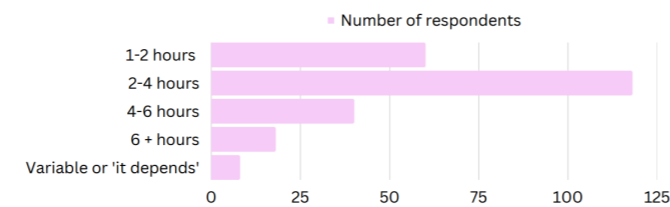


IMAGE Where do you go when it gets hot? <https://swelteringcities.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Cool-safe-spaces-report-1.3-2023.pdf>

Some libraries, such as those in the City of Yarra in Melbourne's inner North, are able to extend their opening hours during a heatwave and some are also part of the [Open Library](#) scheme.

This allows library members to gain access to extended library hours (with additional terms and conditions).

Others, like Foster, a small town of 1200 people in South Gippsland, now have [24-hour library access](#), so library members can come in at any time.

Sunshine Library and Sydenham Library, (Brimbank Libraries) in Melbourne's West, extended their opening hours during a four day heatwave in March 2024 to allow for residents who needed respite from the 35+ degree heat .

The Libraries team have also been part of another initiative with Brimbank City Council.

Ashley Onori is Brimbank's Climate Emergency Officer:

"During hot weather events, Libraries and Neighbourhood Houses, with the council's support, have been able to give away free cooling packs, provide cold water and information about keeping cool at home and for especially vulnerable community members, support getting home in the extreme heat."

**Beat the heat at the library**

Sunday extended opening hours

St Albans | Sunshine | Sydenham

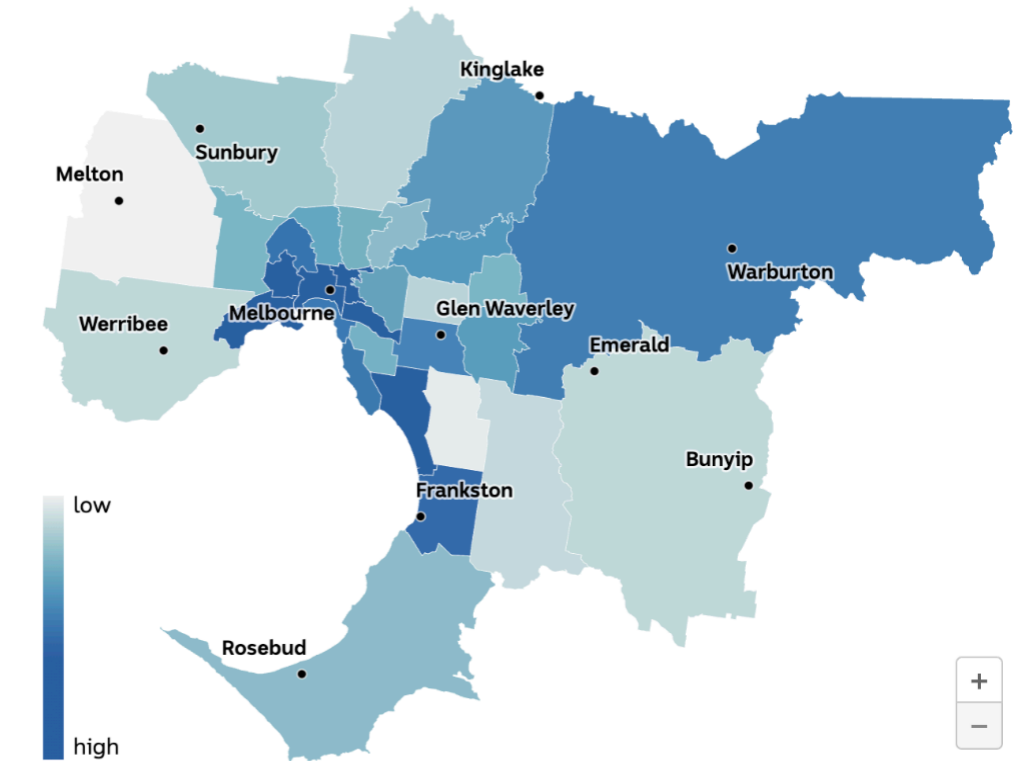
10am - 6pm

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

**Brimbank Libraries**  
Imagine, Explore, Discover, Connect

### Melton has the worst library access in Melbourne

Number of libraries per 100,000 people in each local government area



ABC News / Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics/Public Libraries of Victoria / Map data: ABS / Get the data

The Urban Heat Island effect is particularly strong in Brimbank and Melbourne's West compared to other parts of the city, due to fewer trees and green spaces, so supporting residents in extreme heat events is particularly important.

For rapidly growing communities like Melton in Melbourne's west, where over 200,000 residents are served by two library branches and [four borrow-and-return access points](#), the need for additional library facilities is becoming increasingly important.<sup>34</sup>

In [Victoria's Infrastructure Strategy 2021-2051](#), Infrastructure Victoria noted that Melton has the fewest number of libraries per head of population in Melbourne.

Like Brimbank, Melton also suffers from the Urban Heat Island effect, putting its residents under even more pressure in hot weather, with fewer libraries to escape to.

Angela Savage, Chief Executive Officer of Public Libraries Victoria explains:  
 “The role of libraries as heat safe spaces is one more reason additional libraries are urgently needed in the rapidly growing suburbs of Melbourne.  
 Older libraries are also in need of energy efficient and cooling equipment upgrades.  
 We know that libraries are a lifeline for many vulnerable communities.  
 Extreme heat waves mean providing a cool, quiet and free space is essential.  
 Funding from Local and State Governments needs to keep up with the growing demands on library resources.”

### Victoria's climate has already changed - observed as of 2024

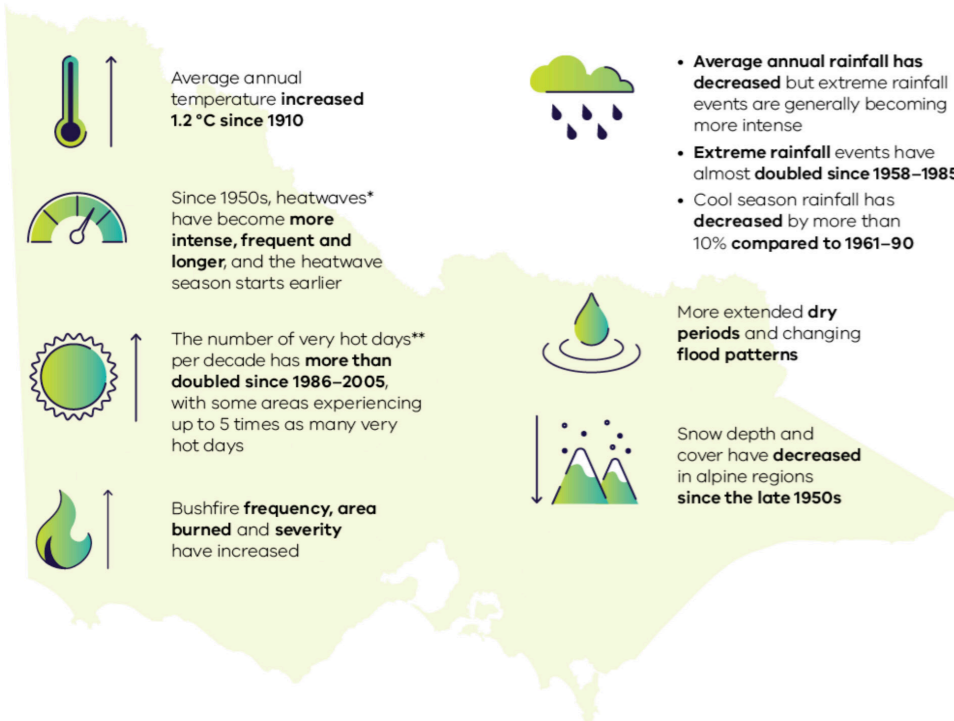


IMAGE Victoria's Climate Science Report (2024), <https://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/victorias-changing-climate>

## Heatwaves: Australia's Deadliest Disasters

Heatwaves cause more deaths than all other disasters combined and can cause:

- Power failures and blackouts;
- Public transport breakdowns;
- Interruptions to social services and businesses;
- Stress on trees and other vegetation and;
- Increased demand on health and emergency services, which can have additional detrimental effects on already vulnerable people.

For example, the 2014 Victorian heatwave contributed to 167 excess deaths and caused more than 600 hospitalisations.<sup>35</sup>

Even more concerning is the fact that extreme heat disproportionately affects Australia's most vulnerable communities including the elderly, young children, pregnant people and people living with chronic health conditions and disabilities.

These are often the communities least likely to have access to air conditioning or to be able to afford to run it continuously during a heatwave.

In addition, vulnerable people may live in homes that are not well-insulated or ventilated, making it difficult to cope with extreme heat events.

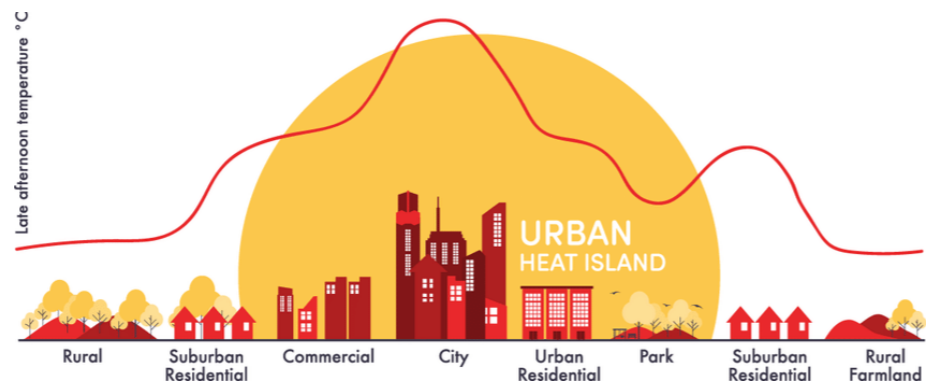


Image: Urban Heat Island Effect <https://community.wmo.int/en/activity-areas/urban/urban-heat-island> (World Meteorological Organization)

## 5.10 Healthy Me, Healthy Planet

### Whitehorse Manningham Libraries

“Partnership Powerhouse!”

Healthy Me, Healthy Planet can be linked to the following SDG's:



Whitehorse Manningham Libraries acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung peoples as the Traditional Owners of the land and waterways known as Whitehorse and Manningham.

We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

The Whitehorse Manningham Regional Library Corporation (WML) in Melbourne's south-east has branches in Blackburn, Box Hill, Bulleen, Doncaster, Nunawading, The Pines, Vermont South and Warrandyte.

Jess and Rachel spoke to Katie Norton, Manager Collections and Information Services at WML about a multi-partner program the library worked on when Melbourne was in and out of COVID lockdowns.



IMAGE Healthy Me, Healthy Planet participant, Whitehorse Manningham Libraries.

Healthy Me, Healthy Planet (HMHP) incorporated nearly 40 programs during 2021-22 and showcased the library's vibrant community connections and strong program delivery experience.

HMHP is an evidence-informed program designed to promote the health benefits of climate action.

It empowers participants with the skills and knowledge to improve personal health and wellbeing while contributing to a resilient and sustainable community.

Participation was supported by free education sessions catering to diverse knowledge levels and cultural needs.

For example Box Hill and Doncaster have a high Chinese language speaking population so materials were also translated into Chinese.



IMAGE - The Physical Challenge Card was produced in both English and Chinese to engage with Whitehorse Manningham Library's Chinese speaking community.

WML partnered with Deakin University's [Health, Nature and Sustainability Research Group](#), who provided expert advice on program design, evaluation and research.

Other partners and involved groups included:

- The State Library of Victoria
- Public Libraries Victoria
- Whitehorse Council
- Manningham Council
- Burwood Brickworks Shopping Centre

Community members were invited to join the Healthy Me, Healthy Planet challenge, choosing from ten monthly actions to make simple, healthy and sustainable lifestyle changes and track their progress through a gamified app with prize incentives.

The challenges were based on the Victorian Government's Health Achievement Program, specifically the "Six Climate Actions" designed to benefit both public health and climate action:

1. Increase active travel
2. Eat more plants
3. Reduce waste
4. Use less energy
5. Connect with nature
6. Get climate ready

The program evaluation found that Healthy Me, Healthy Planet enhanced participants' health and wellbeing and climate/environmental knowledge and attitudes.

It also showed that libraries are effective venues for health promotion due to their trusted, supportive position and strong community networks.

The project demonstrated how libraries can contribute to local councils realising their obligations to consider climate change when preparing a municipal public health and wellbeing plan, which is now required by law in Victoria.

As a result, Healthy Me, Healthy Planet will be featured as a case study in the revised [Tackling climate change and its impacts on health through Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan \(MPHWP\)](#), Victorian Department of Health guidelines for local government.

Delivery of the pilot program was made possible with support from the State Library of Victoria's Libraries for Health and Wellbeing Innovation Grants Program.



IMAGE - Healthy Me, Healthy Planet participants, Whitehorse Manningham Libraries.

However, this model is adaptable for many public libraries using existing resources and programming expertise from libraries, council sustainability departments and external community partners, as Katie explains:

"The program used the software we already had for reading challenges, so library staff knew how to use it and we didn't have to buy it.

We know how to design and deliver programs that will appeal to our community - that's the easy part for us!

We had monthly prizes for participation then a grand prize at the end, local businesses were happy to support us with prize donations.

We developed a resource page on our website to support participation with information about farmers markets and volunteer opportunities.

We would love it to be rolled out statewide and believe that is really achievable!

It's been independently tested as an impactful model.

Researchers noted the potential for wider impact with a broader roll out.

Every library/council delivers programs that you can incorporate into this.

We have the Warm Winter Read and the Big Summer Read.

Why not Sustainable Spring?"

Katie explains that one of the biggest lessons for WML is the value they brought to the table in terms of their cultural capital:

"Because library patrons are so engaged, we brought real access to the community.

Librarians know our community so well because we talk to people every day.

The impact we have is because of those connections as well as our understanding of our member council's strategic objectives.

We know how to make a program accessible and achievable.

We might not be experts in sustainability, health promotion or research methods.

But we are experts in building partnerships, community engagement and programs."

Katie's advice to other libraries:

"Develop programs which provide the opportunity for libraries to make strong and lasting relationships with the health promotion, marketing and sustainability branches of your local council.

Through continuing relationships built during this program, we now have Energy Saver Kits and Induction CookTops in our Library of Things.

We have showcased Whitehorse Manningham Libraries as well as given our community something tangible and encouraging to do both about their health and climate change.

I'm really proud of what we achieved with this project."



IMAGE - Health Me, Healthy Planet participant

## 6 Conclusion

As the world faces up to the reality of the climate emergency and communities face collective feelings of uncertainty, this report brings much needed stories of resilience, creativity and positive change.

The authors wanted to highlight these uplifting moments - innovation, community spirit and progress - that remind us of what is possible when people come together with purpose and hope.

The case studies from Victorian libraries and international and national frameworks highlight the effectiveness of integrating sustainability principles into everyday operations and programming.

In particular, the ResourceSmart Schools model offers a valuable blueprint for Public Libraries Victoria (PLV). A Sustainable Library Dashboard or similar tool would enable libraries to track and communicate their progress towards sustainability goals while aligning with sector-wide quality standards.

Given the existing digital infrastructure of the [PLV Sustainability Portal](#), there is significant potential to support the implementation of such a system, allowing individual libraries to monitor and report on their sustainability efforts and quality standards effectively.

Additionally, the idea of library services being mentored through a certification program emerged as a key theme across international models and would likely be well-received in the Victorian library context. Libraries excel in building and maintaining partnerships and collaborating with experts who bring specialised skills and knowledge.

Partnering through the implementation of a certification program with an organisation with expertise in sustainability would support program integrity. Securing funding through a budget bid may be necessary to establish and sustain such an initiative.

Throughout this research, the intersection of library collections and sustainability emerged as a recurring theme. Libraries have long functioned as pioneers of the circular economy, with lendable collections exemplifying the principles of resource sharing and reuse. The fundamental practice of borrowing, returning and re-lending reinforces the role of public libraries as an inherently sustainable institution.

However, one critical question—how libraries should manage the end-of-life cycle for collection items—extends beyond the scope of this scholarship and warrants further exploration.

From interviews and hours of in-depth reading, the authors discovered numerous practices in this area - redistribution to community organisations, responsible recycling initiatives, partnership with book suppliers to name just a few. Development of sector-wide guidelines for end of life collections management would be a worthwhile scholarship or long-term project.

The authors also made the observation that other significant sustainability concerns, including deaccessioned library equipment and sustainable water management within buildings, fell outside the scope of the report.

These would be worthwhile considerations for commentary when undertaking any future public library sustainability strategies.

Sustainability in libraries is an ongoing journey that requires innovation, adaptability, and commitment. Initiatives such as waste reduction strategies, community education, and responsible purchasing illustrate the tangible benefits of sustainable library practices.

By adopting the principles outlined in this report and striving toward continuous improvement, libraries can play a critical role in shaping a more sustainable and resilient future for all.

Image: Melton Library

<https://fjstudio.com/projects/melton-library-3/> (John Gollings)

## 7 Foot Notes

<sup>1</sup> Patrick, R. et al “Healthy Me, Healthy Planet: Evaluation of a pilot planetary health library program”, Health Promotion Journal of Australia, June 9 2024

<sup>2</sup> <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/first-peoples-australia>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.eblida.org/Documents/Second-European-Report-on-SDGs-in-Libraries\\_Full-Report2022.pdf](https://www.eblida.org/Documents/Second-European-Report-on-SDGs-in-Libraries_Full-Report2022.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.eblida.org/Documents/Second-European-Report-on-SDGs-in-Libraries\\_Full-Report2022.pdf](https://www.eblida.org/Documents/Second-European-Report-on-SDGs-in-Libraries_Full-Report2022.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.kb.dk/en/policies-and-strategies/greener-library-climate-strategy-2025>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.kb.dk/en/about-us/timeline>

<sup>7</sup> <https://chora2030.dk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/SDGs-and-Libraries-Inspirational-examples.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.sustainablelibrariesinitiative.org/about-us/program-faq>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.cilip.org.uk/page/aboutGreenLibraries>

<sup>10</sup> [https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.cilip.org.uk/resource/resmgr/cilip/advocacy/green\\_libraries/frontpage/glp\\_case\\_studies\\_2022\\_ra.pdf](https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.cilip.org.uk/resource/resmgr/cilip/advocacy/green_libraries/frontpage/glp_case_studies_2022_ra.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/library-locations-and-opening-hours>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/artworks-narrm-ngarrgu-library-and-family-services>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UP5pBRirUB4>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/exploring-merri-bek/about-merri-bek/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/my-council/about-council/our-sustainability-story/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://zerocarbonmerri-bek.org.au/about/glenroy-community-hub/#:~:text=The%20Glenroy%20Community%20Hub%20won,%2420m%20%E2%80%93%20%2430m%20category.>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.sustainablebuildingawards.com.au/news/2022-winners/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.passivhausassociation.com.au/passivhaus-fundamentals>

<sup>19</sup> <https://living-future.org.au/biophilic-design/>

<sup>20</sup> [https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0022/703453/DTP0552-Victori-in-Future-2023-report.PDF](https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0022/703453/DTP0552-Victori-in-Future-2023-report.PDF)

<sup>21</sup> [https://cur.org.au/cms/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/greening-the-west\\_online.pdf](https://cur.org.au/cms/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/greening-the-west_online.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/acknowledgement-country>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.ncgrl.vic.gov.au/libraries>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.oxfam.org.uk/oxfam-in-action/oxfam-blog/7-facts-about-sustainable-fashion/>

<sup>25</sup> [https://www.gvlibraries.com.au/assets/files/documents/annual\\_reports/GV\\_Libraries\\_Annual\\_Report\\_23-24.pdf](https://www.gvlibraries.com.au/assets/files/documents/annual_reports/GV_Libraries_Annual_Report_23-24.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/circular-economy-and-recycling/at-home/recycling-at-home/e-waste>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.epa.vic.gov.au/for-business/find-a-topic/manage-e-waste/about-ewaste>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/research-data-and-insights/research/research-reports/victorian-e-waste-material-flow-analysis>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.myli.org.au/>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.solar.vic.gov.au/reasons-to-electrify-your-home>

<sup>31</sup> <https://brimbanklibraries.vic.gov.au/visit-us/locations/sunshine-library/>

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.yprl.vic.gov.au/>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www1.racgp.org.au/newsgp/clinical/loneliness-epidemic-plaguing-young-australians>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/guides-and-resources/Data-spatial-and-insights/melbournes-vegetation-heat-and-land-use-data>

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