



Australian Learning
Communities Network Inc.
(ALCN)



Incorporated in NSW.

No: 9883167

Australian Registered Body No
113 273 859

Annual Report
2023-2024

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION:	2
EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENTS	3
THANK YOU	5
WELCOME	5
ADVOCACY	5
INFORMATION CLEARING HOUSE ON LEARNING CITIES AND LEARNING COMMUNITIES	6
COMMUNICATION.....	6
RESEARCH/PUBLICATIONS/WEBINARS.....	6
NETWORKS	8
MEMBERSHIP FUNDS	9
APPENDIX: A SNAPSHOT SAMPLE OF AUSTRALIAN LEARNING CITY ACHIEVEMENTS 2023	10
1. BALLARAT CITY COUNCIL, VIC.....	10
2. BRIMBANK, VIC.....	12
3. CANNING CITY COUNCIL, WA	15
4. MELTON CITY COUNCIL, VIC.....	17
5. CITY OF PORT ADELAIDE ENFIELD, SOUTH AUSTRALIA	18
6. TOWNSVILLE CITY COUNCIL: TOWNSVILLE CITYLIBRARIES, QUEENSLAND	19
7. WOLLONGONG CITY COUNCIL, NSW	21
8. WYNDHAM, VIC.....	22

Introduction:

This Annual Report summarizes the work of the ALCN Inc. and our place-based learning cities and learning communities over the period May 2023 until May 2024.

Our learning cities and learning communities of place create ‘people-centered’, ‘action-oriented’ lifelong learning programs across all life stages. In doing so, as the UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning says that they are creating local action to contribute to global goals such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals, for example, SDG 4 “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”, and UN SDG 11 – “sustainable cities and communities.”

Examples of the action-orientated work can be seen in Appendix A which includes a snapshot of such programs, strategies, and events of eight cities including City of Canning in Western Australia, Wollongong in New South Wales, Port Adelaide Enfield in South Australia, Townsville in Queensland, and the City of Ballarat, the City of Brimbank, the City of Melton, and the City of Wyndham in Victoria.

Our professional development program has grown. Topics covered in our Friday Forums (now known as Learning Forums) include First Nations Discussions, Community Engagement, ‘Pearls of Wisdom’ about positive aging, the City of Ballarat’s Lifelong Learning Profile, Wollongong – a Learning City Journey and Governance Frameworks for Partnerships. We also coordinated speakers for two Webinars in partnership with ALA and RMIT University. Speakers were from UNESCO UIL, RMIT, ALA, Phayao Learning City in Thailand, as well as our own Learning Cities of Hume, Wyndham, and Canning. Six editions of the ALCN Ripples Newsletter reported on this work in more detail.

ALCN Inc. welcomes feedback on this Final Report, and please continue to send further contributions highlighting your incredible work which we will include in our newsletters. Please contact alcn@bigpond.com.

Dr. Leone Wheeler, Hon. CEO, ALCN

Executive Appointments

In accordance with decisions of the 2023 AGM held on 30 May 2023, the following members were appointed for a two-year appointment from June 2023 until June 2025.

- Diane Tabbagh, Wyndham City Council, Victoria. Diane was reappointed as Chair of the ALCN
- Silvia Velez, Melton City Council, Victoria.
- Diane Hillier, Wollongong City Council, New South Wales
- Kay Delahunt, Tamworth Learning Region, New South Wales

Other appointments were:

- Jim Saleeba continued as Treasurer for the 2023 financial year but flagged his retirement. Leone Wheeler acted as Treasurer between August 2023 until February 2024 when Dianne Hillier was appointed interim Treasurer in February 2024 (appointment to be ratified at the 2024 AGM).
- Peter Kearns, AM, continued as expert advisor to the Executive.

Note: Sharyn Wheatcroft, Wyndham City Council provided secretarial support for the ALCN, and coordinated the Friday Forums (now renamed Learning Forums) in partnership with Silvia Velez and Leone Wheeler.

The Executive and roles for the period June 2023 until June 2024:

Name	Executive position	Additional responsibilities
Dr Leone Wheeler	Hon. CEO, Secretary and Acting Treasurer (August 2023-February 2024)	Overall coordination responsibilities and Public officer. Newsletters. Mentoring student intern. Coordinating Webinars.
Diane Tabbagh (Wyndham City Council, Victoria)	Chair, Victorian Metropolitan contact. UNESCO GNLC member	Chairing ALCN Executive meetings, mentoring student intern, promoting ALCN. Wyndham also assisted with secretarial duties and Learning Forums.

Jim Saleeba	Treasurer until August 2023 and then mentor to Leone Wheeler	Reconciling accounts and organising the audit.
Silvia Velez – Melton City Council (Victoria)	Member, Victorian Metropolitan contact. UNESCO GNLC member.	Coordination of Learning Forums with Sharyn Wheatcroft, Wyndham City Council
Dianne Hillier – Wollongong City Council, NSW.	Member, NSW Metropolitan contact	Interim Treasurer from 13 February 2024, contributing to Webinars and newsletters.
Dr Donna Goldie, Townsville City Council, Queensland	Queensland contact.	Contributions to Friday Forums, Webinars, and newsletters.
Caroline Jones, City of Canning, Western Australia	Western Australian contact. UNESCO GNLC member	Contributions to Friday Forums, Webinars, and newsletters.
Benita Parsons, Port Adelaide Enfield (PAE), South Australia	South Australian contact	Contributions to Friday Forums, Webinars, and newsletters.
Kay Delahunt, Tamworth Regional Council	NSW rural contact	Local government contact
Peter Kearns, AM		National and International Learning City Advocate

Notes:

Dianne Hillier replaced Lara Pugh as Wollongong’s representative with support from her then manager Dr Jenny Thompson. Caroline Jones, City of Canning, in Western Australia resigned from her position and has been replaced by Ben Armstrong, A/Service Lead Community Learning and Capacity. Two long-standing members of the ALCN Executive – Jan Simmons from Ballarat representing regional Victoria and Max Eastcott, CEO of Gwydir Shire, representing regional New South Wales resigned from the Executive in November 2022. Kay Delahunt, Tamworth Regional Council replaced Max on the Executive.

During the period Jim Saleeba, former Hon. CEO/public officer, treasurer and information resource person retired from his position as treasurer. Dr Leone Wheeler added acting treasurer to her role, and was pleased that Dianne Hillier, with the support of her managers at Wollongong City Council, is interim treasurer with ratification at the AGM in May 2024. Carina Clement, Team Leader Library and Museum at the Albury City Council, acts as the second signature on all payments. Schnelle Partners, Albury, will continue to audit the ALCN annual accounts.

The Executive now meets via online video (Microsoft Teams) regularly and communicates through email or by phone on a constant basis as issues emerge or to membership demands. Thank you to Sharyn Wheatcroft, Wyndham for secretarial support to the Executive Committee.

Privacy

The Executive is conscious of the privacy issues affecting members. So, to avoid confusion that can arise with ease of electronic communication, circulation to and the point of contact for members is restricted to:

- Leone Wheeler – for issues affecting the membership.
- Those Executive members listed above.

Members' details are distributed only after expressed consent of members.

Thank you!

We farewell Caroline Jones from the City of Canning and thank her for her contribution to our knowledge sharing community. Caroline put us in touch with experts who shared information about Canning's journey to become a UNESCO Learning city; providing a city-wide learning city evaluation framework based on social impact; co-designing a cultural ambassador's program and constant updates for our newsletter.

What can I say about Jim Saleeba and the treasurer's role. Jim is the founder of the ALCN and as a result of many years of work left the ALCN in a stable financial position which is very helpful as we think about our future direction and how we can support our members in their community strengthening work.

Welcome:

We welcome Joanne Lockwood, Coordinator Ballarat Library and Learning, Ballarat City Council. Joanne gave a wonderful presentation on the lifelong learning profile of the City of Ballarat in November 2023. We look forward to sharing more stories about one of Victoria's vibrant regional cities. We also welcome Dr Jenny Thompson, as an individual member. Jenny brings a wealth of knowledge having worked as a senior manager in local government and the university sector. We have already benefited from Jenny's membership as a facilitator for our Governance Framework for Partnership forum.

Advocacy

ALCN Inc. will meet with or make representations to parliamentarians, State Authorities, or key agencies to argue for recognition of and support for the work of learning communities and learning cities throughout Australia and internationally. In 2023/2024 members of our Executive were involved in promoting learning communities and learning cities locally, nationally, and internationally (Refer to the Appendix).

In 2023/2024 Executive Members:

- Coordinated two professional development Webinars –. (*Refer to Research and Publication section for details on partners and topics*)
- Coordinated the LearnWest *Lifelong Learning Stories* – (Wyndham City Council, Melton City Council).
- Continued as active members of UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC) – Wyndham, Melton and Canning.
- Liaised with Adult Learning Australia on one Webinar and RMIT University on another.

- Played an important role in contributing significant content and Webinars for PASCAL International Observatory and the UNESCO GNLC.

Information Clearing House on Learning Cities and Learning Communities

The ALCN website (alcn.com.au) and Facebook page (@aus.alcn) are the organisation's main clearing house with information about learning cities, links to the learning community strategies, stories, evaluation tools and research of our partners. The site also links to international partners - the PASCAL International Observatory and UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC).

We thank Andrew Williamson, our web and host manager, for continued generous assistance with the site.

Communication

The main method of communication is through our newsletter entitled "Ripples" which is sent to our members, posted on Facebook, and the PASCAL International Observatory Website.

The newsletter is the main way we communicate with our membership. Six Ripple Newsletters were sent out in the past year (May 2023-May 2024). The newsletters contain stories about our learning communities; notices of events; reviews; articles of interest; updates from UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities; Adult Learning Australia and PASCAL International Observatory. Archived copies of these newsletters can be accessed [here](#).

Research/Publications/Webinars

This year the focus was on our professional development program and two streams of PD emerged. The first was external Webinars undertaken in partnership with RMIT University and Adult Learning Australia. We were pleased to attract excellent presenters from UNESCO UIL in Hamburg, Germany, Phayao Learning City in Thailand, RMIT University, as well as from our dynamic learning cities. The second stream is more internally focussed. Topics are chosen by our members and the format favours informal discussion and information sharing. *The ALCN Learning Forum* is a collaborative and informal platform where practitioners come together to share experiences and insights. We encourage everyone to actively participate by reflecting on our presenters' work, asking questions, and sharing your own experiences.

The following Webinars and Learning Forums took place:

Webinars:

- ALCN/RMIT University. 22 September 2023. *Lifelong learning for Life and Work* including the following presentations.
 - *Advantages of Extending the Learning City Approach into other areas of Local Government and beyond* featuring George Osborne, Manager Economic Development, from Hume City Council. Friday 22 September 2023.
 - *Learning and/or earning: "Tensions between learning for the economic sphere (jobs) and learning for well-being/democracy presented by Maren Klein, Research Fellow, EU Centre of Excellence, RMIT University*
 - *The background paper for the RMIT presentation was:*

- Maren Klein, Jose Roberto Guevara, Bruce Wilson, 2023, Maren Klein, Jose Roberto Guevara, Bruce Wilson, 2023, *Learning and/or earning: “Tensions between learning for the economic sphere (jobs) and learning for well-being/democracy.* Available [here](#).

A summary about this highly informative Webinar is available in our Ripples newsletter – October 2023 [here](#).

- **ALA/ALCN Webinar.** 4 October 2023. on ***Stories from UNESCO Learning Cities - Building Inclusive and Sustainable Learning Partnerships.***

In this Webinar our aim was to ensure we maintained a link with UNESCO UIL; highlight two of our Australian UNESCO Learning Cities and connect with Phayao Learning City in Thailand.

- Mr Raúl Valdés -Cotera, Team Leader at the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning in Hamburg, Germany, and coordinator of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)’s Global Network of Learning Cities spoke about *the UNESCO GNLC.*
- Gauri Thanasingam, Community Development Officer, Welcoming Cities, City of Canning, Western Australia and Dr Sally Lamping, Director of Teaching and Learning, School of Learning and Teaching, Curtin University spoke about *the Canning Cultural Ambassadors program.*
- Associate Professor Phanintra Teeranon, Assistant to the President of the University of Phayao and leader of the “Phayao Learning City” project spoke about Phayao Learning City for All.
- Ms Diane Tabbagh, Coordinator Learning Community and Ms Hayley Jarvis, Senior Resilience Officer, Wyndham City Council spoke about *Wyndham: Growing a Resilient Learning City.*

A summary of the presentation is available in our Ripples newsletter – October 2023 [here](#).

Learning Forums:

In 2023 the Friday Forums are organised jointly by Silvia Velez, Melton City Council and Sharyn Wheatcroft, Wyndham City Council with Leone Wheeler assisting with topics and speakers.

- Guevara, R. J., 30 May 2023, ***Reflections on place-based learning cities and learning communities, Annual General Meeting, ALCN, Available [here](#).***
- ALCN Friday Forum 26 May 2023. ***First Nations Discussion.*** Romana Shepherd and Donna Goldie - Townsville City Council, discussed Aboriginal engagement at Townsville Citylibraries. A summary is available in the Ripples newsletter [May/June Ripples 2023.](#)
- ***ALCN Friday Forum, October 27, 2023. Principles and Processes of Community Engagement; reflecting on engaging with diverse communities*** presented by Danielle Marie, Brimbank City Council. Danielle shared her journey of developing a learning strategy, highlighting valuable tips and best practice. Sharyn Wheatcroft also reflected on the community engagement process involved in developing Wyndham’s next learning community strategy. A summary of the forum is available in Ripples December 2023 [here](#).
- ALCN Friday Forum 8 December 2023. ***The Lifelong Learning Profile of the City of Ballarat and the “Pearls of Wisdom” pilot project, Melton.*** Joanne Lockwood, Coordinator Ballarat Library and Learning, and Silvia Velez from Melton presented and copies of their presentation are available [here](#).
- ALCN Learning Forum 23 February 2024. ***Wollongong – a Learning City Journey – the challenge of picking up a project mid-stream.*** Dianne Hillier, Learning City Project Leader. A full report is available in [Ripples April 2024.](#)

- ALCN Learning Forum 21 March 2024. *Governance Framework for Partnerships Learning Forum*. Speakers were Dr Leone Wheeler, Hon. CEO ALCN, on the principles of good governance; Ms Diane Tabbagh Coordinator Community Learning, Wyndham City Council on **Adaptability of Governance Structures – lessons from the field and Dr Jenny Thompson**, Senior Consultant at the University of Newcastle’s Institute for Regional Futures reflecting on the session. A full report . A full report is available in [Ripples April 2024](#).

Story Template

The ALCN, has developed a story template to guide our practitioners in the writing of stories for the network. See the following city profiles.

Learning City Profiles:

- The City of Ballarat - <https://alcn.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Ballarat-Profile-for-ALCN.pdf>
- The City of Canning - <http://lcn.pascalobservatory.org/participants/canning>
- Port Adelaide Enfield, South Australia <https://alcn.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/PAE-Profile-for-Learning-Cities.pdf>
- [Tamworth Region](https://alcn.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/ALCN-Tamworth-Profile20_2_2023.pdf) - https://alcn.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/ALCN-Tamworth-Profile20_2_2023.pdf
- Learning City Profile – the City of Wyndham (<http://lcn.pascalobservatory.org/participants/wyndham-city-council>).

If you are interested in submitting a story using one of our templates, please contact Leone Wheeler.

Good Practice Examples of Australian Learning City/Learning Community Practices, Plans and Policies

This table illustrates current good practice examples of Learning City/Learning Community plans. Brimbank updated its learning strategy in 2023, and Wyndham in 2024, the city of Ballarat in 2022, while Tamworth and Canning are in the process of renewal.

The City of Ballarat, Vic	The City of Ballarat Libraries and Learning Strategy 2022-2027
Brimbank City Council, Vic	Brimbank Lifelong Learning Strategy 2024-2029
The City of Canning, WA	Learning City Strategy 2020-2024
Tamworth Regional Council, NSW.	Tamworth Regional Cultural Plan 2018-2023
Wyndham City Council, Vic	2024-2029 Learning Community Strategy

Networks

Regional Networks

The ALCN encourages the formation of regional learning networks. These networks can support and share ideas and resources locally.

A good example of a cross Council Network is *Learn West* which meets regularly to share knowledge. Its membership includes Maribyrnong; Wyndham; Brimbank; Melton; Hobsons Bay; Darebin; Maribyrnong; and Hume.

Adult Learning Australia

ALCN Inc. and ALA continue to collaborate on matters to do with the promotion of lifelong learning throughout Australia. This year we jointly coordinated the Webinar - *Stories from UNESCO Learning Cities - Building Inclusive and Sustainable Learning Partnerships. (2023)*.

UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities

ALCN Inc. supports the **UNESCO's Global Network of Learning Cities** and promotes UNESCO's GNLC newsletters and webinars to our members. Australia has four local government areas that are members of the GNLC, including the City of Melton, and the City of Wyndham in Victoria, Circular Heads in Tasmania, and the City of Canning in Western Australia.

Mr Raúl Valdés -Cotera, Team Leader at the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning in Hamburg, Germany, and coordinator of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)'s Global Network of Learning Cities spoke about the UNESCO GNLC at the ALA/ALCN Webinar on 4 October 2023.

PASCAL International Observatory

ALCN Inc. is a member of this international network, and this has enabled, as well, individual members, upon registering, to keep abreast of developments in other parts of the world.

Leone Wheeler is a member of the Board of PASCAL International Observatory. Our members play an active role in the work of PASCAL. Canning, Wyndham, Gwydir, and Wollongong are featured on the PASCAL Learning City Network (LCN). Wyndham regularly participates in Webinars and is an active participant of the group *Reimagining Economic Futures*, while Gwydir Learning Region, Ballarat and Tamworth are members of the *Urban-Rural Learning Initiatives* group.

Membership Funds

These funds were audited through the certificated auditor. This financial statement is recommended by the Executive for approval by members at the Annual General Meeting. The statement is then circulated to members.

The previous requirement for forwarding the audited financial details to the NSW Office of Fair Trading has been changed and overall funds of the ALCN Inc. are now the prerequisite level for reporting.

This report was compiled by the Executive for circulation prior to a motion of acceptance at the Annual General Meeting of the ALCN. Financial Statements are tabled at the AGM and are available to members upon request.

Appendix: A Snapshot Sample of Australian Learning City Achievements 2023 Calendar Year

The following is a snapshot of some of our learning cities and communities report on their activities for the 2023 calendar year. This information will also feature in our Ripples Newsletters for 2023.

1. Ballarat City Council

In December 2023, Joanne Lockwood Coordinator, Ballarat Library and Learning, presented at an ALCN Friday Forum a very comprehensive lifelong learning profile for the City of Ballarat. This covered the demographics, education system, formal and non-formal learning opportunities and learning city developments. This section of the report covers learning city developments and future initiatives. Download the full report from [here](#).

Learning City Developments

In 2022, Ballarat Libraries launched its new Libraries and Learning Strategy 2022-2027. This key document, aligned with the broader Council Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals, emphasized the importance of literacy, lifelong learning, digital inclusion, and wellbeing.

Specific learning related actions from the strategy include:

- Develop and deliver, in partnership with aligned community partners, lifelong learning programs and resources to improve skills in adult literacies, digital literacies, financial literacies, health literacies and information literacies.
- Investigate the City of Ballarat becoming a UNESCO Learning City.
- Complete the refurbishment of the current Ballarat Library – which will include a range of dedicated learning spaces.

2023 saw significant steps taken in achieving each of these actions. Learning programs offered through the library have diversified and expanded. With a strong focus on digital literacy and online safety, particularly for at-risk groups like older people, the library has provided one on one and small group learning programs to help bridge the digital divide and empower the community to fully participate in the online world, safely and confidently. Partnerships have been established with NBN Co., Ballarat Hackers' Space, the Brainery and others to deliver programs in new areas such as creative technology, coding and robotics, Smart Homes and more.

Together with Services Victoria and Services Australia the libraries have facilitated financial literacy courses for young people as they enter the workforce and independent living situations as well as older people preparing for retirement. Jobs Victoria advocates have been regular visitors to all three library branches offering job readiness and employment application advice and services.

A Vic Health grant has seen the beginnings of a community garden and associated learning program in partnership with Food is Free Inc. This program will be developed further in 2024. Other health and wellbeing learning programs included The Art of Bonsai, Turning Sleep into Wellbeing and Wellbeing through Storytelling and Creativity.

New areas of learning programs in 2023 also included Civic Literacy with a well-attended and informative event aimed at demystifying the referendum process. This was delivered by the Ballarat Reconciliation Action Group with

the support of Ballarat Community Health, Childrens and Family Services (CAFS), Ballarat Libraries, and The Eureka Centre.

In October, Ballarat Libraries recognized International Media Literacy Week with a series of events. Think U Know presented to parents and carers on tools to help young people use the internet and social media safely, RMIT FactLab discussed their work and how everyone can spot online scams, mis and dis-information and Van Badham took audiences on a whirlwind tour of online conspiracy theories and cults based on her research for book Qanon And On: A Short and Shocking History on Internet Conspiracy Cults.

Learning programs for Children have long been a strength of the Libraries and Lifelong Learning team and this continues to grow and develop each year. Early literacy development is well supported through regular, age-specific storytime and reading programs. A highlight of this has been the enormously successful and impactful Bulldogs Read program support by Ballarat Libraries and the Western Bulldogs Football Club (AFL) with ten local primary schools participating. This program is in its 5th year and has grown significantly in that time. STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Maths) programs are also regular features of the After 3pm and School holiday programs. Successes in this space include Code Club and MoonHack, Young Einsteins Science Club, LEGO Club, Ghost Writers creative writing program for teens, and digital art courses using ProCreate. Most recently, the teams have introduced dance/movement and music classes for pre-schoolers in partnership with several local social enterprises, the Wendouree Neighbourhood House and the Eureka Centre.

Other work conducted in 2023 has included the beginnings of a City of Ballarat Learning Network. The Network will include the Libraries and Lifelong Learning team, Economic Development and Visitor Economy team, The Art Gallery of Ballarat, The Eureka Centre, Intercultural Services, Children and Family Services, Youth Services, Aging Well, Creative Cities, Arts and Events and the Community Inclusion team. While still in the very early stages, it is hoped the various internal stakeholders will continue to collaborate and partner in learning programs offered to the Ballarat Community.

The Libraries and Lifelong Learning team also met with external stakeholders and have fostered ongoing and productive partnerships with all four neighborhood houses and the Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council. These partnerships assist in meeting the learning needs of culturally and geographically diverse groups within Ballarat and provide a more effective way of engaging with disadvantaged and hard to reach cohorts within Ballarat.

Key Priorities for future development

- Opening of a newly refurbished and expanded Ballarat Library with dedicated learning spaces
- Opening and activation of Community Hubs in Lucas (already operating), Ballymanus (early 2024), Sebastopol (late 2024), and Buninyong (2025/6). These will offer low-cost learning programs in a diverse range of areas as well as co-locating with kindergartens, Maternal Child Health, senior citizen clubs and others.
- Continued development of both internal and external learning networks
- Further investigation of UNESCO Learning City and participating in the Australian Learning Communities Network (ALCN)
- Deliver our first Learning Festival – possibly in August 2024.

Contact person: Jo Lockwood, Coordinator Ballarat Library and Learning
joanelockwood@ballarat.vic.gov.au

2. Brimbank, Victoria

- Jennifer Brus, Senior Library Services and Programs Officer

2023 – 2024 saw the completion and adoption of the **Brimbank Lifelong Learning Strategy 2024-2029**.

The following initiatives support the implementation of the **Brimbank Lifelong Learning Strategy 2018-2023** and the newly adopted strategy, a framework for building better learning outcomes.

The Strategy guided Council actions to improve learning outcomes in Brimbank through a life stage approach with a focus on the following life stages:

- i) Early Years (birth to compulsory school age)
- ii) School Years (compulsory school age 6-16 years)
- iii) Young People (post-compulsory school age, 17 to early adulthood)
- iv) Adults (25 – 60 years)
- v) Later Life (60 years and beyond)

Early Years

- Pilot of Dari –English bilingual story times at Brimbank Libraries to introduce and support families with early literacy and introduce them to wider services
- Brimbank Libraries were awarded Multicultural story time grant of \$105,750. Funds will be used to work in partnership with *Village Response Collective* to deliver 80 sessions Tongan and Samoan story times over the next four years. Grant money will also be used to have 80 sessions of inclusive story times with Auslan interpreters of the next four years.
- Piloting a community led Cantonese story time at the Sunshine Library.
- Project in partnership with Everyday Independence to build staff capacity in Libraries & early years to support families with early years speech development and school readiness

School Years

- Hosted Schools and Community Organisations Exchange Network professional development focused on supporting young people through School refusals and emotional resilience
- Second Schools and Community Organisations Exchange topic will be on Loss & Grief
- Partnering with Ardoch foundation to deliver Literacy Buddies, a program to support grade 4 students at Sunshine Heights Primary School with literacy, writing and social skills.
- Brimbank Council continued its \$30,000 scholarship grant to Western Chances to enable more Brimbank students to be supported to stay at school and continue to tertiary education. Western Chances support students to stay at school with practical assistance such as transportation costs, IT, text books and stationery.

Young People

- Strengthen the connection between schools and young people that identify with the LGBTQIA+ community LGBTQIA+ community with IDAHOBIT, Wear it Purple Day, Pride Month and other activities at local schools
- Collaborated with Lively.org to facilitate intergenerational digital literacy workshops for seniors in the CALD community, giving young people work experience and employment readiness.
- Brimbank Libraries engaged young community members to deliver workshops on writing, motivation and Study Skills, resulting in confidence building, work readiness and speaking and presenting skills.

- In partnership with Brimbank Learning Futures invested in VR headsets loaded with interview skills software to give young people virtual experience of interview techniques
- Brimbank Learning Futures in partnership with Libraries and Ardoch will be delivering a council careers reverse interviews with 50 local year 10 students. Small groups of students rotate through and talk to council staff. The students get the opportunity to ask staff about their role, how they got into this area of work, whether they needed to study and what a typical day looks like.

Adults

- A partnership has also been developed with Foundation House and Gen West to support the women through a 10 week mental health workshop series. Additional information and early years support will be embedded into this to support the women's parenting journey in Australia.
- A number of workshops have been run through Libraries to target financial literacy and education to support people to navigate increased cost of living, mortgage stress, and debt. Workshops included 'Budgeting Basics', 'Bills and your money' and 'Debt Support'
- Brimbank Libraries launched a new Makerspace at the Deer Park Library. This has provided a place where informal, collaborative learning and discovery can take place through hands on creation, via use of a combination of art and technology

Older Adults

- Brimbank Libraries received State Government Digital Literacy funding for older adults to enable increased learning participation online throughout 2023.
- Exploring a variety of intergenerational learning opportunities, including IT Help sessions for older adults which facilitated by young people trained by Lively.
- Purchased VR headsets for seniors programming – Through virtual reality headsets, participants will be able to use their imagination to explore new opportunities and experiences from meditation, creative pursuits, health and wellness, games and virtual travel for seniors.

Broader initiatives that supported the community across all life stages included:

Broader initiatives that supported the community across all life stages included:

- **Digital Literacy Funding:** Brimbank Libraries received from the Victorian Government under the Digital Literacy for Seniors Program, enabled Libraries to provide additional support for older Victorians through Brimbank libraries. This assisted library staff in the delivery of a number of initiatives aimed at equipping individuals with the tools and knowledge needed to thrive in today's digital landscape. Over 800 participants attended a variety of programs including:
 - One-on-one sessions: tailored small group sessions and workshops for larger audiences. PC Classes ranged from introductory Basic PC Skills through to more advanced PowerPoint and Web Design classes.
 - Group Classes: Class sets of iPads offered community members the use of a device, data and weekly tuition by library staff for a six week program, encouraging self-paced learning relevant to individual needs and interests.

- Workshops aimed at creatives: Hands-on workshops supportive of creative endeavours gave participants the opportunity to learn to format and finesse large documents in MS Word, and to record, edit and share stories with professional podcasting equipment.
- Disability Groups: A supportive space was provided for community members with a disability to engage in regular digital learning sessions
- The 2024 **Brimbank Writers & Readers Festival** encouraged a love of reading and literature, celebrating creativity and diversity, and promoting lifelong learning in Brimbank for all ages and interests. The 10 day festival consisted of workshops, author talks, panel discussions and storytelling including the launch of a magazine by aspiring young writers, a short story writing competition, an illustration and writing session for children, zine making, and manuscript editing and a self-publishing sessions. We also had five of the events translated with an Auslan interpreter.
- Seventeen Brimbank Libraries staff were trained in **Auslan Level 2** this year to better support members of the Deaf community to access services, participate in programs, and build positive relationships.
- **Brimbank Learning Partnerships and What's Nexpo:** Community Learning and Participation, Youth Services, Economic Development, Leisure and Brimbank Learning Futures (BLF) have been collaborating to deliver 2024 National Careers Week activities and an employment expo. Led by BLF, the Careers week consists of seven activities for young people including resume and job interview workshops, a short qualification course, an intersectional human library event, a cricut build and bond session, and a local jobs showcase event. Brimbank Local Jobs Showcase will support local employment opportunities for young people by providing information and resources, and connecting them with local employers and business owners.
- **Brimbank Learning Futures** provided an opportunity for young people and their parents/caregivers to learn about all things apprenticeships putting on an information night in February in partnership with MEGT. They also delivered a series of micro credential training opportunities providing an opportunity for community to access low cost short courses to build on their skills and qualifications. Courses include, white card, RSA, barista training, first aid and food handling.

3. Canning City Council

- Written by Ben Armstrong, A/Service Lead Community Learning and Capacity, City of Canning

The City of Canning is a member of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities and its Learning City Strategy 2020-2024 sets the strategic framework for lifelong learning in the Canning community.

The City of Canning is located on Whadjuk Noongar Boodjar, the lands of the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation and 51% of its population are born overseas.

Key Achievements:

1. Reconciliation Strategy and Aboriginal Engagement Programs

Council endorsed the City's first Reconciliation Strategy 2024-2028 and associated annual action plan. The Strategy includes Canning's unique vision for reconciliation and highlights three key outcome areas including 'Celebrating Culture and Learning'.

With Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the City of Canning will deliver community learning opportunities about traditional culture.

The City's Ngalang Kadjin Moorditj (our spirit strong) program has engaged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys aged 14 and 15 from Lynwood Senior High School and Cannington Community College to connect to country, learn Noongar language and culture and to build a strong sense of personal belonging. The program takes students out on country to craft didgeridoos, to yarn and learn about potential career pathways.

The City held its first annual Elders lunch during NAIDOC Week and delivered truth-telling to the Canning community in partnership with Sister Kate's Home Kids Aboriginal Corporation (a stolen generations organisation).

A community-led, co-designed intercultural community learning opportunity arose through working with the City's Cultural Ambassadors. Canning residents representing 15 different cultures met on the banks of the Djarlgarro Beeliar (Canning River) to learn about Noongar culture from Noongar Elder Uncle Len Yarran. Participants also learned about Chinese culture through the active participation in Dragon Boating, facilitated in partnership with the Fury Dragons Dragon Boating Club.

2. Lifelong Learning, Libraries and Programming

In 2023, the City of Canning enabled lifelong learning through delivering a contemporary library service and programs that included 362,159 library visitors, the loan of 391,176 physical items and delivered 1,164 program sessions attended by 18,815 participants.

Examples of programs include Rhymes and Stories offering essential language and literacy skills for ages 0-5, Drone Coding workshops for ages 8-12, cooking classes with a professional local chef for adults as well as Lego for seniors.

The Canning on the Go Van (outreach service) has promoted lifelong learning, libraries, and programming at a range of community events including the Canning Show, Global Streets, Youth Fest, and the Muddy Hands festival.

3. Environmental Education and Sustainability

The Canning River Eco Education Centre underwent a \$100,000 minor refurbishment that created a specialised library collection focussing on First Nations, environmental education, and sustainability. This project was part-funded by the State Library WA.

The centre is located at Kent Street Weir. The weir was built in 1926 to separate the freshwater and saltwater within the Canning River and now has two unique ecosystems. 176 educational activities engaging 4,051 students were delivered from the Centre in partnership with the WA State Government. A further 40+ community learning programs and workshops are delivered each year about environmental education and sustainability.

4. Intercultural connection and learning

The purpose built award-winning Hillview Intercultural Community Centre in Bentley is a safe space for people to come together from all backgrounds to connect, celebrate various cultures and learn new skills.

Annually, over 47,000 people visit Hillview Intercultural Community Centre with 2,400+ bookings made to delivery community learning programs and cultural events. Majority of learning at the centre is community-led.

The inaugural Hillview Community Dialogue Series engaged over 200 community members. Each of the four sessions focusses on a specific question that results in deep listening, raw conversations, and emotive connections.

The Canning Cultural Ambassador program is a unique program recruiting residents from culturally diverse backgrounds to help generate information flow and feedback between their own ethnic minority communities and the City. The current program has recruited 15 Cultural Ambassadors who live locally, attend meetings, input into City programs and services and are empowered to deliver community led and City supported projects. This program is immensely valuable to the City and is starting to be replicated by other Local Governments across Australia.

5. Youth Engagement

The City of Canning delivered the second and final year of its Youth Engagement Framework, a strategic framework to engage young people in the community. 3,900 young people have been engaged through youth programs as well as the delivery of two dedicated Youth spaces fostering more informal connections and learning.

The City of Canning initiated an Urban Arts Hoops and Wellbeing Program which is a late-night programming for at-risk young people. The term-based program has engaged residents in a range of sports, arts and community learning activities throughout 2023.

4. Melton City Council, Victoria

- *Written by Silvia Velez, Lifelong Learning Projects Officer, City of Melton*

Melton City Council continues to deliver enhanced outcomes for the community in engagement, empowerment, activity, and community learning objectives through online and face-to-face programming and events as well as learning policy and strategy development. This year the restructure at Melton Council changed the Lifelong Learning Portfolio from the Community Centres to the Libraries.

The highlights of the year included:

1. 2023 Lifelong Learning Festival

The Melton Lifelong Learning Festival aims to continue to engage the City of Melton community in meaningful ways to foster a culture of inclusive learning regardless of age, ability, interest, or other potential barriers. This year the Lifelong Learning Festival was launched at the Melton Library and closed a week later at the Caroline Springs Library.

- The opening day celebrations took place at the Library. The atmosphere was vibrant and celebratory, with over 1200 community members assisting and engaging with a variety of free activities and food. The events during the day included partnerships with several internal and external learning providers with programs for every age group.
- During the week, events were delivered across the Libraries with a well-attended closing ceremony at Caroline Springs Library.

The rebranding of the festival was as follows:

Celebrate
wonder.

Celebrate
curiosity.

Celebrate
fun.

Celebrate
knowledge.

Celebrate
learning.



2. Learn West Network

As part of Learn West, the Melton City Council participated in the collection of learner stories through a video project and part of the campaign to promote lifelong learning.

3. ALCN Friday Forum

We also participated in the ALCN Friday Forums, providing logistical support and active participation. Silvia Velez spoke about The Pearls of Wisdom program aimed at Elders giving them the opportunity share lessons learnt and promote positive ageing, storytelling, and connection.



5 City of Port Adelaide Enfield, South Australia

Written by Belinda Parsons, Community and Cultural Development Leader, City of Port Adelaide Enfield.

The City of Port Adelaide Enfield (PAE), South Australia, Impact Project – 2023

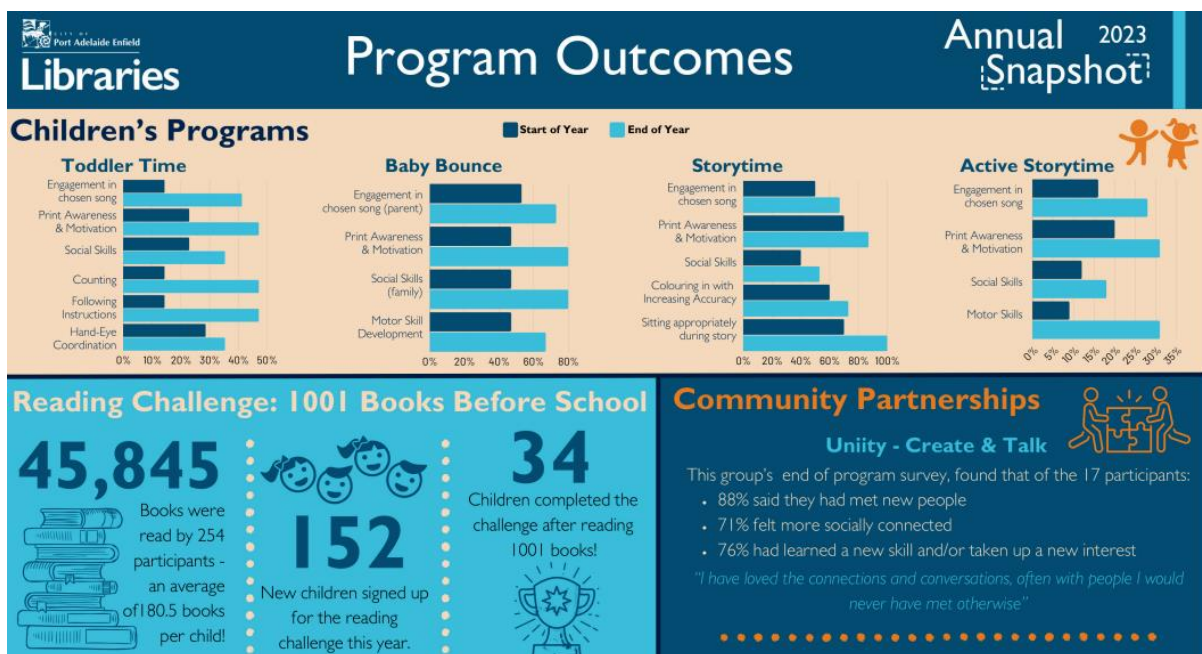
The City of PAE Libraries in 2023 had a project to implement tools to measure outcomes delivered by library programs. We used a mix of quantitative and qualitative surveys to compile this data.

Many ongoing sessions used *Most Significant Change* technique in a survey question to the regular participants.

For early literacy programs, staff made observations of skill levels in Term One and Term Three, then measured the improvement.

Other survey questions relevant to the sessions were asked at one-off ad hoc programs.

The data was then compiled with some quotes and stories into a two-page infographic. This was shared with the team, Managers and Executive.



It was a great way to celebrate the impact of our work and reinforce to staff and stakeholders the impact of programs to the community.

We also asked our Partner organisations, who receive free room hire and marketing support, to share their participant surveys and stories.

The stories highlighted showed relevance to our City Plan and Library Service Strategy.

One great story from our Adult Literacy class:

A long-term participant in the program began coming to learn to fill in forms independently. He struggled to read and write his name, address, and other information. He is now reading Dante’s Peak – Penguin Reader Level 2 adaptation of the novel.

Another impact story from a Scrabble Club

A participant brought to our attention an unintended outcome of the program. Some people with disability and their carers have been attending Scrabble Club. Another participant wrote that they had not only improved their Scrabble skills, but also learned about disabilities and how to communicate between with a wide range of people in the community.

The team are now reviewing these data sets and considering what changes we can make to programs to further improve outcomes in 2024.

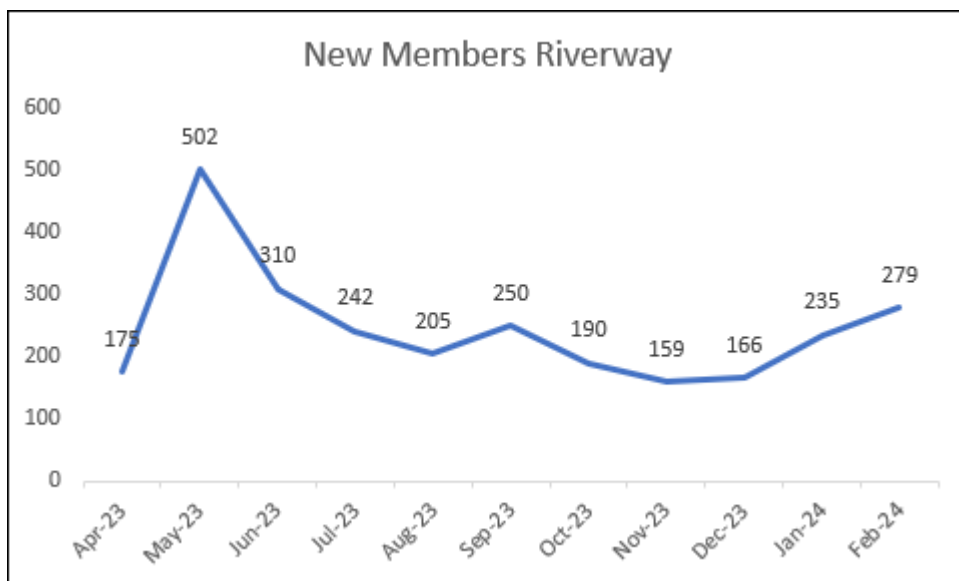
6. Townsville City Council: Townsville Citylibraries, Queensland

Written by Dr Donna Goldie, Coordinator Learning and Information Services, Townsville City Council

Key Highlights 2022-2023

GRAND OPENING OF RIVERWAY LIBRARY

- 145, 262 people have visited Riverway Library since we opened on 29th April 2023 to 29th February 2024
- 4,933 new members since opening



INSTALLATION OF NEW SELF-SERVE TECHNOLOGY (non-formal Learning Infrastructure)

- 24/7 Book Lockers
- Book Return Shelving

GROWTH OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH LIBRARY SERVICES

Our Mobile Library service expanded to the new suburb of Elliott Springs. This is a new growth area with over 10,700 dwellings. Elliott Springs features one of the largest mixed-hubs in Queensland and will one day be home to more than 26,000 people. Currently the Mobile Library visits every fortnightly on a Wednesday from 11am – 1pm. Currently visitation numbers are low, however with projected population growth we expect the visitation numbers to also grow.

We have also been able to provide a mobile stop at the Deeragun Community Centre on a weekly basis every Thursday from 10am – 12:30pm.

Our Home Service – delivers seven (7) runs to 100 active Home Service Customers. These deliveries include one-on-one assistance with profiling and selections, as well as assisting and troubleshooting with eResources.

CITYLIBRARIES RIVERWAY

The story has just begun for Citylibraries Riverway, Townsville City Council's newest library which opened in April 2023.

The \$8.5 million project provides a mixed-use facility designed for the community's needs and features a 'creative hub' for digital production as well as a refurbished Ecoactive Centre near the playground.

Establishing the library at Riverway has given the surrounding community a local library, and also reenergised the broader community precinct.

The project was fully funded by Townsville City Council across two financial years, creating 12 jobs for Townsville residents.

Accessibility was a strong focus throughout the design and construction phase, ensuring visitors of all abilities can safely use all spaces within the new library. This includes accessible toilets and wheelchair-accessible entry into all meeting spaces.

We have three library locations – Riverway, Aitkenvale and the City – as well as a mobile library service.

The opening event in late April was attended by close to 10,000 people, with celebrations featuring family-favourites Bluey and Bingo.

Alongside the new library, Pinnacles Gallery reopened with exhibition *Leftover Love – New Directions* featuring three North Queensland artists.

With the addition of Citylibraries Riverway to the precinct's existing facilities of art gallery, lagoon, boardwalks, barbecues, gardens, nationally-rated sporting fields and Riverway Stadium, the Riverway Precinct is a standout community and cultural hub.

COLLECTIONS AND RESOURCES

2023 was a big year for the Operations and Resources team, with the highlight being the opening of the new Citylibraries Riverway. The Collections team were responsible for resourcing the new library with collection, understanding the space, shelving capacity whilst meeting community needs. Collection services which had been on pause during COVID-19 and the staffing challenges it brought were reintroduced. With the opening of the new library, the resourcing team supported the largest event the library has ever produced, including rostering people and deploying equipment where needed. With the opening of a new library, a new Style and Brand Guideline for Townsville Citylibraries was developed to ensure a consistent voice and image. A major feature of operations in 2023 was the recruitment and onboarding of new library casuals and other key roles to support extended library hours which were implemented at two library branches to ensure access to library facilities and services as requested by community.

LIBRARY PROGRAMS - FIRST 5 FOREVER (F5F)

For children 0-5 years and their caregivers, we have our First 5 Forever (F5F) programs. These programs are: Baby Rhyme Time, Toddler Time, Storytime and outreach such as Messy Play and Songtime in the Park (just to name a few). We have also introduced two new programs on a Friday and Saturday. Programming on these days have been requested by our community and comprise:

- **Baby Stay and Play:** a weekly program on Friday morning for children aged 0 to 18 months. The aim of the program is to provide a play-rich environment for infants, while providing an opportunity for carers to socialise, build networks of support in the community and provide relief from stress.
- **The Storytime program** runs weekly on Saturday and is open to all ages. In this program, facilitators engage children and parents in various forms of play, followed by reading and singing with the group. Throughout the delivery, the facilitator also provides key messages to parents on the importance of talking, reading, singing and playing during early childhood development.
- **Little Bang** is a STEAM experiential program run weekly on Saturday, aimed at children aged from 3 to 5 years old, but open and welcoming to all ages. The program is run as a drop in program to encourage all levels of engagement, as children engage with program topics varying from construction and engineering to the natural world. Children are encouraged to explore the topics and resources themselves, with the facilitator encouraging parents to provide guidance where necessary.

LIBRARY PROGRAMS AND ACTIVATIONS

Townsville Citylibraries continues to offer a suite a programs for people of all ages. We have introduced a MixHaus facility which offers digital studios and creative equipment such as a 3D printer, laser cutter, sewing machines and a collaborative space for people to use. Other programs include: one:one technology support, community display spaces, homework mentoring, community book clubs and homework mentoring. As well as these regular programs, Citylibraries offer a range of events and activities for people of all ages throughout the year at our branches and outreach.

7. Wollongong City Council, NSW

Wollongong City is in the process of consulting internal and external stakeholders in the formation of their Learning City Strategic Plan, having developed a draft and started workshopping this. This consultation will continue through 2024. The city's Library, Community Facilities and Development, Environmental, Art Gallery, Surf Safety and Youth learning environments, inter alia, provide a solid foundation for this strategy.

8. Wyndham, Victoria

Diane Tabbagh, Coordinator Learning Community, Libraries and Community Learning, reports on many highlights implementing [Wyndham's Learning Community Strategy 2018-2023 \(LCS\)](#) by the Council.



2023 SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS

- OVERVIEW OF THE LEARNING COMMUNITY STRATEGY 2018-2023

The [Learning Community Strategy 2018-2023 \(LCS\)](#) is Wyndham's driver for innovation and change in learning, and functions as a roadmap for developing an equitable, inclusive, and innovative learning community. Lifelong Learning forms the guiding principle of the Strategy, driving social, economic, environmental, and cultural life in the community. The Strategy includes 18 key actions, which are organised according to 4 themes:

- CELEBRATING living and Learning
- ADVOCATING for equity and quality in service provision
- FACILITATING partnerships and collaboration across sectors
- INNOVATING learning and fostering new entrepreneurial spirit

2023 was the final year of this Strategy. Wyndham's next Learning Community Strategy 2024-2029 will be adopted by Council in 2024 and its Learning Community will collaborate on the implementation of a new Action Plan.

KEY 2023 LEARNING COMMUNITY STRATEGY ACTION ACHIEVEMENTS:

Learning Festival as Wyndham's Signature learning event

With the theme of *"Our Thriving, Creative Community"* the free WLF provided a week-long celebration of lifelong learning from 1 to 7 September, including a diverse array of 78 fun, engaging, and stimulating activities spanning Arts, Sports & Recreation, The World of Work, Biz and Tech, Environment & Sustainability, Wellbeing & Self-Care, History, Culture & Diversity, Food & Cooking, and Families & Children! Events were as varied as a Young Scientist of Wyndham Competition, Vietnamese Cooking, a Supercharge Your Marketing with ChatGPT workshop, Financial Wellness sessions, Drumming workshops, Indian Dance performances, Job Seeking Skills workshops, Planting and Growing, Food & Fitness classes, Strengthening Family Connections, CPR training, and many more engaging experiences.

The Wyndham Learning Festival (WLF) is Wyndham’s largest annual learning event, promoting and celebrating learning across the lifespan. Having an annual learning festival provides a series of free learning opportunities across the expanse of Wyndham, features a diverse range of activities catering to individuals of all ages and interests, and fosters a culture of lifelong learning while also embracing new events, sponsors, and participants that reflect the community's diversity and vitality.

In its eighth year in 2023, the WLF is led by Wyndham Community and Education Centre (Wyndham CEC) with support from Wyndham City Council (WCC) – both organisations sharing a passion for learning and recognising the far-reaching social, economic, environmental, and cultural benefits of promoting lifelong learning.

The Festival was launched with the signature “WYNtalk: Celebrate the Magic of Storytelling with Mem Fox”, held on 1 September at the Wyndham Cultural Centre, featuring renowned author and educationalist Mem Fox, sharing insights into her illustrious career, and celebrating 40 years of "Possum Magic". Student performers from the local Suzanne Cory High School provided musical entertainment, and Festival Sponsors Victoria University and Pacific Werribee Shopping Centre were celebrated. The light refreshments offered were a nod to the Australian food featured in the Possum Magic book with the lamingtons, minties and Anzac biscuits heartily enjoyed by the crowd.

The WLF evaluation report is available here: <https://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/services/wyndham-learning-city/learning-city-resources>

Strong Advocacy to Ensure Learning for All

Whilst Wyndham City is currently reviewing its advocacy functions and plans for the future, the following specific advocacy requests were met:

The 2023-24 State Budget included funding for:

- New schools to open in 2025:
 - Riverdale North Primary School (Interim Name)
- New schools to open in 2026:
 - Point Cook South P-9 (Interim Name)
 - Point Cook South Specialist school (Interim Name)
- School upgrades:
 - (unspecified) Saltwater P-9 College
 - \$7 million Alamanda P-9
 - \$3 million Warringa Park School

Education Roundtable

The 2023 Wyndham Education Roundtable was delivered in June: our annual multi-sector, interactive event to identify key strategic planning and resourcing issues impacting Wyndham’s learning sectors and to facilitate solutions and knowledge sharing through key learning sector stakeholders and partnerships. After meeting online for the past two years, the 2023 meeting provided an in-person opportunity to review the Action Plan Update developed at the 2022 Education Roundtable. The key focus for discussions this year was on the future priorities for learning in Wyndham, giving the group an opportunity to contribute to the development of Wyndham’s next Learning Community Strategy 2024-2029. The attendee list included over 30 dynamic education and learning leaders from across Wyndham who collaborated to exchange ideas about their vision for the future of learning in the municipality, in the context of our wider Education and Learning Strategy focused on supporting the community to be lifetime learners.

Principal's Breakfast

The annual Principal's Breakfast reaffirms Council's commitment to support and develop collaborative partnerships with Wyndham principals and all local schools. Council recognises the importance of a collaborative approach that builds partnerships that will help to deliver outcomes for all in our community. The intention of the annual Breakfast is to strengthen our partnerships through our willingness to listen, collaborate and work together to promote learning and education in Wyndham.

Over 120 Principals and Assistant Principals gathered in May at Wyndham's Encore Events Centre to enjoy a delicious breakfast and networking opportunity with Councillors and Council staff. The event also provided an opportunity for these important educators to be part of the process of developing the next Learning Community Strategy 2024-2029. Participants were invited to share their ideas on the future priorities for learning in Wyndham. Views, ideas, and feedback gathered provided powerful insights to inform Council's Learning Community agenda and will facilitate solutions and knowledge sharing. Key issues highlighted as challenges by the group included student disengagement; the need for additional Department of Education support in proportion to the demands in Wyndham; more visible and ready access to local community services (including allied health, First Nations support, cultural translators, mentoring, leadership skills); school safety/infrastructure; and the difficulty in recruiting teaching staff.

Inclusion and Equity

The Learning Community Team exhibited at the 2023 Volunteer Expo in March, in collaboration with Wyndham Community Education Centre (Wyndham CEC) with the goal of connecting with local community, providing information on learning community events, and networking with other local organisations. With 450 attendees and 55 local stall holders participating, the Expo was a positive experience for the local community to find out about local volunteering opportunities and register their details with the exhibitors. Attendees looking for community activities received information on the upcoming Wyndham Learning Festival in September, information on Libraries programs and events, discovered WynLearn What's On, and learning opportunities at Wyndham CEC and had the opportunity to input into the Learning Community Strategy 2024-2029 consultations. With registrations for event holders to submit an event for the 2023 Wyndham Learning Festival about to open, the expo provided an opportunity to spread the word and make strong direct connections. The Expo also provided an opportunity for the Learning Community Unit's final community engagement session on the evaluation of our current Learning Community Strategy 2018-2023.

The Learning Community Unit took part in the annual Mock Job Interview Program with Warringa Park Specialist School in July. This program provides secondary school students with the experience of being interviewed for an employment opportunity, in a safe environment with support and encouragement. During the mock interview, students were supported to practice and build interview techniques using role play with typical interview questions and scenarios. Students gained confidence to answer questions, developed career skills in applying for a job, engagement with career pathways, awareness of body language and organising to attend a job interview.

Libraries and Learning were actively involved in the Wyndham Central College Community Connections week, held in September to promote fitness and celebrate diversity. During this event, the Library Pop Up Van served as an interactive station, with staff raising awareness about Libraries and Learning services with the school families, providing them with valuable insights into our resources available. The aim to infuse a strong sense of community and engagement into this space, making it a vibrant and inclusive gathering for all was achieved.

The Library IT unit partnered with Wyndham CEC to deliver a range of digital literacy courses during Seniors Month in October, delivered to enthusiastic seniors across a range of library and community learning centres across Wyndham.

Rounding out the year, the Learning Community unit exhibited at the 2023 Wyndham Seniors Expo in November, actively participating in the delivery of information helping Wyndham citizens to age well and live their best lives. The team provided information to hundreds of attendees who were eager to hear about local learning opportunities and raised awareness about the Wyndham Learning Festival and our learning portal WynLearn What's On.

Strengthen Literacy and Numeracy Network

The Library Children's Team developed a pilot early years program called "Sharing Stories", aiming to engage harder-to-reach families in Wyndham with the programs and services at Wyndham Libraries and raise awareness about the benefits of sharing stories from birth for literacy development. The program was developed in response to data showing high levels of developmental vulnerability in Wyndham, exacerbated by COVID 19 lockdowns and strains on early years services. The Children's Team worked closely with local stakeholders including VICSEG New Futures, supported community playgroups and IPC Health to identify families with children aged 0-5 years who might benefit from the program. As part of the program the Children's Team delivered outreach Rhyme Time sessions to local VICSEG New Futures playgroups with families from a CALD background. During the outreach visit, each family received a free, take-home library bag with a variety of early literacy information and resources. The bag also included a token to exchange for a free board book from any Wyndham Library branch.

Aboriginal Culture Driving New Ways to Learn

Some key highlights from across Council units include:

- An Indigenous Cultural Infusion event took place in March at the Point Cook Library leading up to Cultural Diversity Week. The Library and Neighbourhood Hubs units collaborated to host an Indigenous event, launched with an Acknowledgment of Country and Smoking ceremony. Over 50 people attended from a combination of Council, Youth services, Maternal Child health, Library staff, Public and Community centre hirers including those from senior groups and AMEP class. Two Indigenous infusion early years sessions followed, hosted in the Point Cook Library, with 70 Children and 45 Parents, Grandparents and Carers attending. With over 166 attendees across 3 events, feedback from the day has been overwhelmingly positive.
- Sharing of resources and links with Education networks to support commitments to embedding Aboriginal perspectives across all aspects of learning, including a rich array of materials and opportunities for online professional development such as Reconciliation Victoria's 'Reconciliation in Education Webinar: Starting your reconciliation journey', a webinar on reconciliation in Victorian education including an introduction to the Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education program. The Learning Community unit attended the Maggolee Webinar: Local Government support for the Uluru Statement.
- The National Reconciliation Week theme this year was 'Be a Voice for Generations' encouraging all Australians to be a voice for reconciliation in tangible ways in our everyday lives. This nationally significant week is a time for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures, and achievements, and to explore how each of us can contribute to achieving reconciliation in Australia. Wyndham Libraries celebrated with First Nations stories being read at Rhyme Times and Story Times, book displays and booklists for the community. The Children's Library team also delivered a First Nations session story time to the Victorian

Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) playgroup in the Point Cook Community Learning Centre community rooms playgroup.

- The Learning Community Unit purchased Indigenous Education Range Lanyards for promotion purposes at learning events throughout the year, which have been enthusiastically received.
- NAIDOC Week is held across Australia and celebrates and recognises the history, culture, and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Celebrating the theme “For our Elders”, Libraries ran Indigenous Infusion workshops for kids, special crafts, and Story Times and a Wayapa Wuurrk workshop for adults. Wayapa Wuurrk is a philosophy acknowledging and honouring the fundamental Australian indigenous principle of ‘Caring for Country’, fostering a deeper understanding and responsibility to sustainably connect with and care for, the earth, the lands, waters, air spaces as well as all beings between.
- Wyndham Library Branches with seed libraries were excited to introduce a range of indigenous seeds into their collections, offered as an additional ‘bonus’ packet that seed library members can collect. Indigenous plants are those that are not only native to Australia but are specific to the Wyndham area. Wyndham’s rapid urban expansion has removed significant amounts of local flora, resulting in habitat loss for local wildlife. Planting indigenous seeds in your garden is a great way for the community to give back to the natural environment by restoring some of the flora that originally grew in the region.
- Council advanced the journey towards Reconciliation with the endorsement of its second Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2023 – 2025. The RAP was officially launched in October, following formal endorsement from Reconciliation Australia and adoption by Council. The launch event saw great support from Council with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor & Wyndham Reconciliation Action Committee (WRAC) Co-Chair, Councillors, Wyndham’s CEO, Senior Leadership Team, and many staff attending. Guests were captivated by stories from the moving Keynote Speaker, Aboriginal Olympic boxer and artist, Brad Hore and Wyndham’s Coordinator First Nations Unit. The RAP launch also saw strong support from our WRAC and community members who have been invested in the development throughout the RAP journey. Local indigenous businesses featured with the procurement of the services of *Indigiprint* to print the RAP booklets, *Bunji Catering*, who provided delicious bush tucker inspired food, and indigenous photographer T.J. Garvie.

The establishment of the Wyndham Reconciliation Advisory Committee (WRAC), consisting of nine First Nations community members and three non-Indigenous community members has provided the platform for engagement between First Nations and non-Indigenous communities with Council across a broad range of issues and in setting a new Reconciliation vision for the 2023-2025 RAP. The RAP provides Council with a framework to understand and achieve its vision for Reconciliation with First Nations People. As a learning community, there is a responsibility for all to contribute to reconciliation through our own sphere of influence, through thoughtful engagement, and innovation and codesign to strongly show our commitment to implementing our RAP to bring about long-term systemic change.

The Learning Community unit delivered the second annual WYNTalk for 2023 in November, featuring keynote speaker Jillian West speaking from the heart – “Cultural Yarn with Jillian West: Embracing and Honouring Aboriginal Culture and Identity”.

Sensitively and thoughtfully MC’d by Council’s Coordinator First Nations unit, the WYNTalk provided a platform for a Cultural yarn to take place between Jillian West and Mayor Cr Jennie Barrera, co-chair of Wyndham Council’s WRAC, exploring ways in which the Wyndham community can connect with the ideas of Reconciliation, truth-telling and standing with our First Nations community.

With 114 registrations and attendees both in person and online, the audience were engaged, informed, and moved, as Jillian shared ways in which the Wyndham community can acknowledge, respect and value Aboriginal culture and identity. As a proud Palawa woman from the islands of Bass Strait and proud Bunurong woman from Point Nepean born in Victoria with a lengthy career supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in work, education, and support in their life journey, Jill spoke passionately, sharing her experiences growing up in Australia and generously sharing her ideas on how we can all be better allies to Aboriginal people.

The enthusiastic audience were Welcomed to Country with a Smoking Ceremony by a Bunurong Land Council elder, then ushered inside the Point Cook Library for the Cultural Yarn, where they were encouraged to use the opportunity to pause, reflect and make a commitment to learning, growing, and being a changemaker for a better future for us all. Local indigenous businesses featured with the procurement of the services of *Jarrah Catering*, who provided delicious bush tucker inspired food, and indigenous photographer *T.J. Garvie*.

You can view the WYNTalk Cultural Yarn [recording here](#).

Developing Local Leaders in Local Communities

Wyndham’s Building Blocks Community Leadership Program has been operating since 2014, with 21 courses to date. With the theme ‘Reconciliation – Allies in Community Leadership’ the 2023 Wyndham Building Blocks program provided an opportunity for eligible community members to build and strengthen their capacity in community leadership and participation, immersing themselves in First Nations culture, history, practices, and truths. Following the classroom theory element (which included a Walk on Country excursion), three project groups formed. Each group developed and led projects, embedding the learning from the course, and bringing reconciliation and culture to life and to the community.

The three projects were:

- Cultural Learning for Multicultural communities (Aboriginal culture, history, and artifacts)
- Kinder Knowledge Building (First Nations Story Telling, Learning and Childrens Activities)
- Yarning Together (Women’s Yarning Circle and Craft Day)

Each project created space for local community to build connections and deepen their knowledge of First Nations peoples. All 12 participants embraced the experience this course has provided, gaining skills to walk alongside our First Nations peoples towards reconciliation and developing confidence to be Allies in the Community. Participants enjoyed a graduation and celebration in November at Wunggurrwil Dhurrung Community Centre.

Alumni as Leadership Mentors

Since the cessation of Alumni Master Classes Series pilot project, the Community Strengthening Unit has continued to engage Wyndham Building Blocks Alumni to not only provide feedback to Council initiatives but also to participate in local learning opportunities such as those offered through the Community Training Calendar. Wyndham Building Blocks Alumni were also invited to participate in the Wyndham Learning Festival as hosts of learning activities or as participants in the learning opportunities on offer across the municipality.

Wyndham Community & Education Centre’s (Wyndham CEC) mentoring pilot, in partnership with local manufacturing company Vertech Hume has continued in 2023. Three workers from the Karen community meet every six weeks with Vertech Hume’s CEO, Tamas Hume, and a bi-cultural mentor. Through the program the workers are developing the skills and confidence to step up into management roles by mid-2024. Noteworthy is that fact that

Tamas Hume was a participant in the Gordon's Institute's Executive Leadership program, clearly demonstrating that the pilot has succeeded as an innovative approach to the '*alumni as leadership mentors*' action. Based on this pilot, Wyndham CEC has implemented a similar mentoring approach with two other Wyndham employers – Diamond Valley Pork and Hilton Foods, both in Laverton North.

Two other mentoring programs being developed in Wyndham include:

A crucial component of the Priority Workforce Project led by Council's Social and Economic Inclusion unit involves mentoring. Project partners include AMES Australia, Equal Ed, Youth Projects, and Wyndham CEC. The Priority Workforce Project supports up to 100 job ready candidates into sustainable employment across the horticulture, agribusiness, and transport & logistics industries. As part of the project, Equal Ed & Youth Projects have developed a mentoring program to support new employees in their first 26 weeks in the job.

Plans are underway for 2024, as part of the service offer of the Women's Micro-business Hub, for Wyndham CEC to establish a mentoring program that will connect local businesswomen to women who need support to set up a micro-business. Wyndham CEC will establish a group of 8-10 mentors with relevant industry expertise and match to the women connected to the micro-business hub.

Engaging, Participating and Leading Globally

Throughout 2023 Wyndham has continued its local, national, and global engagement and participation. The following is a snapshot of some of Wyndham's contributions:

A representative from Wyndham continues to hold a place on the executive of the Australian Learning Communities Network (ALCN), chairing this important network and offering secretariat support enabling the ALCN to continue to offer proactive collegiate support and resources to learning cities and communities across Australia.

The [PASCAL International Observatory](#), is a global alliance of researchers, policy analysts, decision makers and locally engaged practitioners from government, higher education, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the private sector. Wyndham continues its active participation in the PASCAL special interest group "Reimagining Inclusive Economic Futures", a network of cities and city-regions sharing a focus on developing a secure economy whilst working towards achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. Through regular meetings and presentations, the group exchanged knowledge and experiences, providing network members with global insights and reflections on each other's work.

Wyndham Learning City was invited to join the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities "Education for Sustainable Development" (ESD) cluster working group. The group met regularly throughout the year, with the goal of sharing information on Education for Sustainable Development and Climate Action and local sustainability projects. This links directly with the topic of the next UNESCO International Conference on Learning Cities in 2024.

ESD utilises education to empower learners of all ages to act for environmental integrity, economic viability, and a more equitable society. The group promotes a lifelong learning approach to Education for Sustainable Development – starting from pre-primary to adult education and beyond. In May, the online meeting was hosted by Shanghai and Hamburg members of the group and included presentations on "the work of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme"; "Wetland Cities" (by the Mayor of Bandar Khamir, Iran); and "Wildplastic" (City of Hamburg).

Group members were invited to share good ESD practice from their own cities. The Wyndham Learning Community unit shared the Climate Futures Youth Leaders' Summit held in April. With the aim of empowering and educating

young people to act on climate change, the Summit brought together like-minded young people to work towards creating a sustainable future; raised awareness of the impacts of climate change and provided young people with practical ways to engage in the conversation. The working group members were impressed with the fact that Climate Futures Youth Leaders, the organisers of the Summit, are a group of empowered young people aged between 16-26 volunteering to advocate for the environment and climate change.

In October, in a collaboration between the Australian Learning Cities Network (ALCN), Adult Learning Australia and the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, Wyndham presented a case study at the webinar *Building Inclusive and Sustainable Learning Partnerships*. This highly engaging and well-received webinar featured stories from UNESCO's GNLC members from the City of Wyndham, City of Canning (Western Australia) and the City of Phayao, (Thailand) providing the global audience with the opportunity to discuss how their cities and communities address the big issues facing communities around the world. Issues addressed included enhancing engagement with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities through a Cultural Ambassador program; utilising a collaborative approach to city management through the engagement of a range of key stakeholders to address climate challenges; the global sustainability agenda; and Wyndham's Green Living Series, a transformative initiative nurturing the community's interest in sustainability and green living. Discussions involved solutions tackled at a local level through a commitment to lifelong learning.

Raul Valdes, the Coordinator of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC) shared valuable insights into the global initiative during his presentation. Since its inception in 2013, the GNLC has been instrumental in promoting policy development, forging links, fostering partnerships, and building capacity within learning cities. It serves as a crucial platform for cities to share knowledge and learn from one another while supporting local actions that contribute to global change. One of the key focuses for 2024 is positioning learning cities at the forefront of climate action, highlighting the significance of education in addressing pressing global challenges and to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) at the local level.

Arising from a collaboration between the Learning Cities of Wyndham and Melton and the ALCN has been the *Friday Forums*, an informal series of "conversations" about issues learning communities are facing locally and nationally. Led by leading-edge learning practitioners, topics have included "Lifelong Learning for Life and Work"; an introduction to the "Learning Region of Tamworth"; a "First Nations Discussion: Aboriginal Engagement and National Sorry Day"; and "Principles and Processes of Community Engagement: Reflecting on Engaging with Diverse Communities". The Forums are well-attended by a range of local, national, and international audiences, generate thoughtful and inspirational dialogue and have spun off into the sharing of resources and other collaborations in areas of interest.

The LearnWest Network's purpose is to provide a shared, collaborative space for experienced and emerging Learning Community practitioners in the North and West of Melbourne (Wyndham, Melton, Brimbank, Hobson's Bay, Maribyrnong, Hume, and Darebin). The Network forms a community of practice where people who are passionate about lifelong learning can work together to drive the necessary changes to increase the economic and social capacity of our communities.

Since 2021, the Network has collaborated on an annual joint project. The 2023 project, titled "CONNECT – SHARE – LEARN" involved the promotion of lifelong learning through the sharing of a diverse collection of lifelong learning stories through the network's own social media. The project promoted, showcased, celebrated, and fostered lifelong learning, and its benefits for social connection, intergenerational learning, positive health, and economic outcomes.

Each Local Government Area (LGA) contributed 2-3 learner stories, making a collection of stories reflecting the diversity of all LGA's. The promotional material developed will continue to be available to be rolled out over time, and commenced 1-7 September to coincide with Adult Learners Week, the Wyndham Learning Festival, and the Melton Learning Festival.

Further to the LearnWest project, Wyndham Learning City were invited by UNESCO GNLC to showcase the voices of our learners to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the UNESCO GNLC, conveying what the GNLC represents and sharing what it means to be part of a learning city. A story of inspiring local learner "Meetra" was shared.

Wyndham's Learning Community Unit were invited to present the ways in which Wyndham mobilises resources and manpower to improve equity and inclusion in education and learning for its citizens at the Thai government's Equitable Education Fund (EEF) webinar in November. This international knowledge-sharing webinar focused on "Building a Learning City: Fostering Inclusivity and Equity." EEF actively supports the efforts of local Thai cities in establishing an ecosystem that promotes lifelong learning for all residents. The webinar provided an invaluable platform for exploring and exchanging knowledge and experiences related to the opportunities and challenges associated with advancing inclusivity and equity to encourage lifelong learning for individuals and communities. Snapshots from Learning Cities of Damietta, Egypt, Khon Kaen Province in Thailand, and Wyndham, Australia illuminated the global diversity and evidence-based practices that underpin the need for inclusive and equitable education for lifelong learners. Feedback received from the organisers included:

The webinar was broadcast live on the EEF Facebook page, and the recorded session can be viewed here:

<https://fb.watch/orEOKmM5b1/>

Enabling Innovation & Entrepreneurship

The initiatives delivered under this action in 2023 included the WYNNovation Festival, Innovate Business Growth Program, the Annual Training Calendar, the Barry Jones Oration, and Digital Futures Network:

- The month-long WYNNovation Festival kicked off with the WYNNovation Summit at Encore Events Centre, bringing together businesses, entrepreneurs, and innovators who shared their ideas and experiences, and explored opportunities for collaboration. Guests were treated to three keynote speakers, along with networking activities and an exhibitor area which showcased local innovation businesses, SPARK members and a popular Buy Local stand which showcased some key items made in Wyndham. The WYNNovation Summit is committed to promoting economic growth and innovation in the region. The WYNNovation Masterclass featured experienced innovation coach and consultant, Mark Dobson, who shared his invaluable expertise with the highly engaged attendees. Business owners, entrepreneurs, and professionals from various industries in Wyndham and beyond attended, asking insightful questions, participating in group activities, and enjoying the interactive nature of the workshop which supported the fostering of collaboration and knowledge sharing. The Festival wrapped up with the WYNNovation Pitch Competition, which brought together innovators and entrepreneurs from across the Wyndham City area to showcase their innovative business ideas. The competition aimed to support and promote local talent, providing them with a platform to showcase their ideas and potentially secure funding to turn their dreams into reality. Pitchers went through an intensive three stage program to learn the art of pitching, then at the finale eleven went on to pitch their idea. Global sign language dictionary **SignHow** took out the grand prize of \$5,000.
- The Innovate Business Growth Program was split into two different cohorts: the **Innovate to Excelerate** aimed for those business owners to move up a level and which have been operating for less than four years; the **Innovate to Regenerate** cohort targets those businesses that have operated for four years or more and

are more experienced in their business journey. Business came from various sectors including retail, IT, hospitality, professional services and health, and participants were a mix of initial growth stage and mature businesses. Over three months, participants attended group workshops and one-on-one coaching sessions to support their entrepreneurship and innovation.

- Wyndham City offered its usual free business training on a range of topics such as how to grow a business using social media and digital marketing, search engine optimisation, starting a business and retail merchandising. These training sessions ranged from one hour to 3 hours long and were all face-to-face to creating an opportunity for the participants to network further.
- The Barry Jones Oration aims to raise the profile and importance of learning and skills development, innovation, creativity, technology, and critical thinking in Wyndham City. Since its inception in 2012, this special event has grown to be one of the most significant on Wyndham City’s business calendar. Named in honour of the former Federal Member for Lalor and Minister for Science, Professor Hon. Barry Jones AC FAA, FAHA, FTSE, FASSA, this event is delivered by Wyndham City, with the generous support of the event sponsor – The Gordon. Wyndham business, political and community leaders came together for an inspiring and thought-provoking Oration delivered in 2023 by prominent barrister and former head of the Law Council of Australia, Fiona McLeod AO SC. With the theme “Hearts, smarts and fierce resolve – leading humanity back from the brink”, the mesmerising keynote featured insights from Fiona’s justice experience and using the complexities of trauma, encouraged the audience to help create a better future.
- Wyndham City is collaborating with Deakin University to bring accessible digital, business, and financial literacy programs to Wyndham businesses and community through our libraries and SPARK, under the new Digital Futures Network. Key initiatives will enable our community and businesses to better understand, communicate, operate, and live in an ever-changing digital world. Throughout the year, free business training sessions were hosted on a variety of topics to upskill local entrepreneurs and ensure the local business community is ready for success, including the ‘How to grow your business’ series where participants learnt practical ways to achieve an increase in turnover and sales using digital tools like LinkedIn, TikTok, Google Local Search and Search engine optimisation (SEO).

Future Space

SPARK has established itself as a collaborative space to support and mentor digital, tech start-ups and entrepreneurs, to scale up their concepts and products, to commercialisation. As Wyndham City Council’s Innovation Hub, SPARK focuses on developing an innovative and entrepreneurial based ecosystem within, strengthening of the knowledge economy, and increasing employment in the region.

A new cohort of members was welcomed in 2023 commencing a 12-month residency program. SPARK entered into a community partnership agreement with the Startup Network, Australia’s largest independent startup community of over 5,000 founders, mentors, and investors. This partnership will enable Wyndham businesses access to the Network’s programs and services.

Community “Hackathons”

This Action has been modified to incorporate the Annual Coding Champs Competition held between August – October, after trialling traditional “Hackathons” with limited community interest.

Council's Libraries and Learning unit hosted the 5th annual Wyndham Coding Champs awards night at Point Cook Library in November. The competition ran from the 14 August – 8 October and was supported with Coding workshops run throughout August and September (including one as part of the Wyndham Learning Festival: *Getting Started with Scratch*) across the Manor Lakes Library, Julia Gillard Library Tarneit, Point Cook Library & Werribee Library.

The awards event was a successful evening with all Wyndham Coding Champs participants and family members invited to come along to celebrate coding and gaming in all formats, culminating in the announcement of the competition winners. A total of 100 community members attended the event. The evening featured an array of games, including Nintendo Switch and board games, with a special emphasis on the shortlisted participants. These individuals were invited to showcase and discuss their projects on the big screen, offering insights into their creative processes and problem-solving efforts.

All the impressive entries can be seen at Smart Studio: <https://scratch.mit.edu/studios/34143731/>.

The Wyndham Coding Champs competition supports digital literacy amongst young people, as well as helping to foster continuing connection to the library and lifelong learning.

Creative Learning Programs

Highlights of the Arts & Culture team's contribution to the community's learning options and opportunities include:

- A series of Wundergym programs providing professional development programs for local artists and creatives to further their practice. Highlights included mentorship by established artist Elvis Richardson and presentations held at the National Gallery of Victoria. The outcome of the program was an exhibition presented as part of Melbourne Fringe in association with Hobson Bay.
- Accessible digital art workshops were delivered to participants over two months in 2023 providing community members with skills in creating projection artwork, operating a projector, developing, and presenting smartphone clips and audio/podcast content.
- A series of workshops was held for and with young people aged 18 – 25 years old to teach skills in event photography as part of the Youth Resource Centre Festival.
- Local Time was an 8-week residency program for local artists to expand their practice by facilitating workshops with community members. Four artists were engaged in four community centres with 19 workshops conducted for adults and children. The residency programs included workshops in ceramics, writing and drawing.
- Public Art development workshops were conducted online as part of the commissioning process for new artworks. These workshops and information sessions aimed to increase the participation of emerging artists to present artwork in the public realm.
- Notably, the Wyndham Art Gallery led a range of talks and tours for the public, including a significant increase in school tours and learning groups. The Gallery team provided insight and learning for small groups as well as a public program of artist talks and workshops.
- The Arts and Culture team were excited to manage a temporary community art space, The Annex, located next to the Wyndham Cultural Centre. The space hosted and programmed a series of skill development workshops for children and adults. Highlights include established arts organisation *Indirect Object* as resident

artists, resulting in the outcome of an internal painted mural by community, based on the wildlife of Werribee River.

Civics Learning and Social Cohesion

Wyndham Community & Education Centre (Wyndham CEC) continued to deliver a range of civics learning programs under this action in 2023:

- **Walk through Education** – The launch of a 20-minute documentary provides a lasting showcase of formal and informal learning options in the Wyndham area, including kindergarten, primary schools, tertiary education, vocational education, adult community classes including community centres and community sheds.

Wyndham CEC commenced a new 'Walk through Education' program at Manor Lakes College specifically focusing on the Secondary School experience and parents from the Communities of Burma. The project seeks to build on how schools might strengthen their culture of parental engagement looking at the challenges and strengths that exist to facilitate this. Topics covered include Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, Decision Making and Collaborating with Community. By addressing unique needs and challenges, the project empowers parents to play an active role in shaping their young peoples' educational pathways and fosters a supportive and inclusive educational environment. A further outcome is that parents will be more knowledgeable and motivated to explore their own learning and career pathways. This project will continue into 2024 with workshops, parent-led discussions, cultural events, and other identified activities taking place in the school.

- **The Wyndham Anti-Racism Support Network (WASN)** commenced in 2023, committed to providing practical support for individuals facing racism by helping them understand their rights, offering a listening ear, and providing guidance on reporting incidents to relevant authorities. The network aims to enhance community capacity to respond effectively to racism through workshops, particularly focusing on incidental counselling at the beginning of the year.

As a member of the Victorian Alliance of Anti-racism networks, Wyndham CEC collaborates with others across the city, sharing insights and resources to address issues and campaign for change. As the network lead Wyndham CEC has contributed to the Australian Human Rights Commission's (AHRC) National Anti-Racism Framework through research interviews, aiding in the preparation for its implementation. The AHRC seeks to improve its understanding of existing government anti-racism policies, identify expansion opportunities, and address gaps in the design of the National Anti-Racism Framework to bring about systemic change.

- **Living & working in Australia** - across 2023, Wyndham CEC delivered the Living & Working in Australia short course to 126 community members seeking Australian citizenship. In addition to a trainer, the program includes support from settlement case workers. Both MiCare and Wyndham CEC refer clients to this program.

LOOKING FORWARD

As 2024 begins, Wyndham will finalise the development of the next Learning Community Strategy 2024-2029. Please contact us if you would like to be kept up to date with our Learning Community activities:

wynlearn@wyndham.vic.gov.au.