



Yarra Libraries

Local History

Collection Development

POLICY

1. Introduction

The Yarra Libraries Local History Collection is of central importance in supporting and enriching the community's understanding of its local identity as well as the past which has shaped the present. The acquisition, conservation and organization of these resources, prior to making them appropriately accessible for different levels of community need, is a primary responsibility of Yarra, one which cannot be appropriately shared with other Library services. While other library collections are regularly culled, Local History resources are of lasting and cumulative value for developing local knowledge and understanding.

The Yarra Libraries Collection Development Policy (YLCDP) guides and informs development of the general public library collections. The Yarra Libraries Local History Collection Development Policy is a companion document to the YLCDP, providing specialist advice to guide and inform local history collection requirements.

Yarra Libraries provides library and information services to residents, workers and visitors to the City of Yarra at its five branch libraries. Our service is enhanced by the Yarra Libraries virtual library, providing access to national and global electronic resources, including a growing number of online heritage resources.

2. Background

Our local communities have a strong sense of identity. Yarra's libraries are one of the main sources for people seeking information pertaining to the history of the area. There is a high level of interest in local studies and the libraries have close links with community based groups such as local historical societies. Numerous rural, interstate and overseas inquiries are also received.

The LHC is recognised as an important element of the library collection, particularly given that the municipality includes Melbourne's earliest municipalities. Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) states in its Policy and Planning Guidelines for Public Libraries that: "The public library has a responsibility to ensure that information about the history of the local community is collected, retained and made available."

The history of the local community shall encompass:

- 2.1 The area within the municipal boundary of the City of Yarra
- 2.2 As municipal boundaries change Yarra's heritage collections will draw on the resources of neighbouring libraries and other institutions to cover new areas.
- 2.3 The collection period encompasses the pre-settlement era (pre-1835) to the present.
- 2.4 The social, political, economic and physical history of the above areas, including all cultural and ethnic groups.
- 2.5 Where appropriate, materials with a wider area coverage than the City of Yarra will be included, (e.g. adjacent areas in other municipalities).

Yarra Libraries provide services and collections from five public libraries located at Carlton, Collingwood, Fitzroy, North Fitzroy and Richmond. All branches have a Local History collection, predating the formation of the City of Yarra, reflecting the diverse municipalities that amalgamated in 1994. These collections vary in size and content, according to their collection development precedent.

Yarra Libraries will develop the five Local History Collections as an integrated resource for the whole city. While each collection is housed in a separate library and will continue to be focussed on its former municipal area, the future development of Yarra's Local History Collection is based on meeting the educational and research needs of their different local communities in a comprehensive, consistent, coherent and equitable way.

Yarra Libraries is committed to an ongoing digitising programme to improve access to our collection. We have a digital asset management tool (Portfolio) which enables PDFs, images, videos, and audio files to be accessed and available via our online catalogue.

3. Local History Collection Development Policy Rationale

The Local History Collection Development Policy is an essential component of effective public library collection management. Informed by professional standards, driven by community need and the strategic planning process, the Local History Collection Development Policy communicates the parameters of the collection and a framework for its development.

The Collection Development Policy document has been developed by the Yarra Libraries specialist staff according to professional industry guidelines. Responsibility for collection development and delivery sits with the Co-ordinator Community Learning and Partnerships. For Local History resources, responsibility sits with the Team Leader Digital and Community Learning. These roles report to the Manager Library Services, who is responsible for policy delivery.

The purpose of Yarra's Local History Collection (LHC) is to serve the community through the acquisition, cataloguing, classification, preservation and provision of access to a well-organised and balanced collection reflecting Yarra's diverse cultural heritage, and meeting the needs of its diverse demographic profile.

It should conduct this in the following ways:

- 3.1 By acting as a source of information on the history of the City of Yarra. Recent materials held or related to collections in neighbouring municipalities will not be actively collected.
- 3.2 By continuing to acquire material relevant to the community in these designated areas.
- 3.3 By providing a safe and secure repository for material of past, present or future interest that might otherwise be lost to the community.
- 3.4 By acting as a central point of knowledge and contact for all interested parties, both users and collectors.
- 3.5 By ensuring that we protect our digital content aligning with best practice to ensure long term access.
- 3.6 Through the availability of contemporary LHC location tools.
- 3.7 By working cooperatively with Local Historical Societies.

The lasting historical and information value of the items in the LHC is more important than just visual appeal. The materials in this collection are intended for both general education purposes and specialised research. To maximise their longevity, they are not available for loan. Duplicate copies of some published resources may be available in the lending collection. Preservation and/or conservation work will be undertaken according to professional standards and advice. Material in poor condition may be withdrawn from public access. Where possible, access to document copies will be provided.

Yarra's branch libraries have differing storage and preservation capacities. Yarra Libraries therefore has the responsibility of ensuring that when unique material is acquired it is provided with appropriate archival storage in a suitable location for the integrated collection.

4. Policy Context

4.1 Council Plan

The direction of the *Yarra Libraries Strategic Plan* is notably characterised by strategic objectives of the City of Yarra. These are:

- Serving Yarra's Community
- Supporting a diverse and dynamic Yarra

4.2 Yarra Libraries Strategic Plan

The Yarra Libraries Strategic Plan is developed to accord with the priorities of the Council Plan framework. The Yarra Library Strategy 2017 – 2020 will inform the implementation of this CDP.

4.3 Yarra Heritage Strategy 2015 – 18

Refers to the objects, collections, documents and records of the City which encompass both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage.

5. Collection Development Framework

5.1 Collection Principles

The Yarra Libraries Collection Development Policy:

- Supports the development and delivery of identified strategic objectives and actions
- Supports the identification and allocation of collection funds for current and future priorities
- Ensures that objectivity and professional rigor inform the selection and weeding processes
- Provides guidelines for the collection, including subject profiles, depth of coverage and resource formats
- Provides an essential tool for induction, reference and ongoing staff training

5.2 Funding and Management

Sustainable funding for the purchase of library materials is critical to the development of the Yarra Libraries Local History collections.

Budgets for specific collections are reviewed annually by the Library Leadership Team, taking into account usage levels, community trends, special collection needs, developing trends and emerging formats. Local History specific funding to support cumulative use and storage needs will be submitted to the budget cycle for consideration in accordance with Council's priorities and strategic objectives.

5.3 Community and Stakeholder Engagement

Local History Societies in Yarra have a strong commitment to ensuring that the library acquires and preserves relevant Local history material. Yarra Libraries has a commitment to engaging with the community and uses a range of community consultation mechanisms. Local History Societies are welcome to provide suggestions and feedback by advising staff, attending local library branch meetings, using feedback forms at each branch and via the website. We also welcome any suggestions for items to purchase that fit our selection guidelines.

6. Access

6.1 Collection Access

Yarra Libraries ensures access by:

- Providing knowledgeable, friendly and helpful staff.
- Providing an online catalogue accessible via the library website offering 24/7 service.
- Providing prompt, ongoing, regular cataloguing of Local History new acquisitions which are added to the online catalogue, minimising backlog.
- Answering Local History enquiries that are received either via the library website, in person or by phone in a timely manner.
- Contributing to State or National co-operative ventures which will enhance access to Yarra's photograph collection.
- Investigating and contributing to any future digitization projects.
- Providing scanned copies of copyright-free digital images to individuals as requested. This may incur a small charge to cover the cost of providing images on a DVD.
- Working with Local Historical Societies to increase access via digitization of material
- Endeavouring to purchase duplicate copies to ensure lending copies of materials wherever possible and as the budget allows.
- Ensuring that fragile and unique material is handled appropriately.
- Ensuring that the library stores items in conditions that will assist long term preservation, with periodic review to ensure appropriate conditions for different formats.
- Purchasing digital formats or physical formats where available.

The local history collection is a non-lending collection and as such resources are not made available to other libraries through inter library loan (SWIFT, LibraryLink or Trove). In instances where Yarra has the last remaining copy of significant historical material, Yarra Libraries may provide duplicate copies for other organizations. On request, items may be made available for viewing at other branch libraries subject to condition of items and branch storage conditions

6.2 Policy Statement

- All materials purchased or donated for the LHC become the property of the City of Yarra.
- A donation form must be filled out by any person or institution wishing to donate items to the Local History collection. Donations are to be without restriction regarding use or future disposition.

- Any proposed acquisitions will be subject to the selection guidelines before inclusion in the collection. Worthwhile materials that do not fit the above criteria will be offered to other appropriate organisations/institutions.
- The LHC is a reference collection for use in the library only.

6.3 Policy Review

A review of the Local History Collection Development Policy, including a public comment process, will be conducted every four years to ensure that the collections are managed in accordance with contemporary professional standards in line with community expectations.

7. Scope

This is a non-lending collection, although lending copies for the general collection are purchased where possible. The aim of the Local History collection is to provide a range of materials reflecting the rich diverse heritage of the municipality. The library aims to acquire, describe and preserve resources relating to the City of Yarra in co-operation with Yarra's local history groups.

These individual collections consist of books, theses, photographs, newspapers, maps, periodicals, journal articles, pamphlets, ephemera, manuscripts, portraits, prints, microform, rare books, audio and videotapes, DVDs and electronic databases. The collection features small realia items.

Collections may also include artworks that best illustrate the physical, artistic, cultural, social and political history and development of the City of Yarra. Artworks will be acquired and managed in accordance with the City of Yarra Collection Management Policy. Art works may be referred to the Yarra Art and Heritage Collection according to the policy guidelines of that companion document.

8. Selection Criteria and guidelines

8.1 Responsibility

Staff responsible for management of the LHC will interpret and apply the selection guidelines for both purchases and gifts under guidance from library specialist staff.

8.2 Selection

The acquisition of material for the LHC must focus on the community and its needs. Collection of materials should be pro-active and retrospective. The following list, while not exhaustive, provides guidelines for the type of material that may be sought for inclusion:

8.2.1 Published histories or other works relevant to the area.

- 8.2.2 Oral history recordings, videotapes, films etc. made about the Cities of Yarra and its residents.
- 8.2.3 Records of local businesses and associations, schools, churches, sporting bodies, welfare organisations etc.
- 8.2.4 Papers of prominent local families/individuals, genealogies and manuscripts.
- 8.2.5 Family history research papers and publications relevant to the City of Yarra.
- 8.2.6 Reference material such as bibliographies, directories and guides. This may include guides to holdings of relevant material in other manuscript or archival collections.
- 8.2.7 Community based publications such as newspapers, magazines, gazettes, newsletters, etc.
- 8.2.8 Documents/research papers/photographs relating to buildings (private, commercial and public) and property.
- 8.2.9 Research papers and theses pertaining to local areas produced at a tertiary education level.
- 8.2.10 Studies undertaken by private or government bodies referring to, or having impact on, the local communities.
- 8.2.11 Photographic works of local historical interest including prints, postcard, slides and negatives.
- 8.2.12 Artworks by local artists or depicting local scenes or personalities or as fitting the criteria for acquisition within the City of Yarra Collection Management Policy.
- 8.2.13 Materials that provide instruction relating to genealogy, local history, preservation, oral history and similar topics.
- 8.2.14 Maps and plans including Survey plans, Land subdivision plans, Architectural plans and Aerial photographs.
- 8.2.15 Community archives of selected local organisations.
- 8.2.16 Ephemera, including leaflets, flyers, pamphlets, original documents such as land deeds, certificates and military papers.
- 8.2.17 Local authors writing about the City of Yarra.
- 8.2.18 Periodicals about local history and genealogy of Melbourne and Victoria.
- 8.2.19 Digital material which is relevant to the local area or Melbourne
- 8.2.20 All other relevant local history materials that meet selection guidelines.
- 8.2.21 Materials that will support education on City of Yarra local history.

- 8.3 Whenever possible, material should be acquired in duplicate for security and preservation reasons. The need for copies for lending should also be considered.
- Any materials deemed by the Team Leader Digital and Community Learning to enhance the collections of the LHCs or to enlarge its scope in a coherent way may be added to the collection, regardless of whether or not it falls into a category listed above or below.
- 8.4 Acceptance of donations to the permanent collections shall be made on the following conditions:
- 8.4.1. Consistency with Yarra Libraries' mission and the purpose of the LHC.
 - 8.4.2. Authority, authenticity and reliability.
 - 8.4.3. Educational, interpretive, research and/or exhibit value.
 - 8.4.4. Adequacy of documentation.
 - 8.4.5. Clear title available from the source of acquisition.
 - 8.4.6. Ability of the library to care properly for and use the acquisition.
 - 8.4.7 In selecting materials for purchase or accepting donations, the library shall be cognizant of the space and preservation constraints inherent in the local library, the research potential of the item, and the suitability of the material in Yarra Libraries comparative to other repositories.
 - 8.4.8 Gifts in the form of material for the LHCs are evaluated under the same criteria as purchased materials. The Team Leader Digital and Community Learning may decline to accept for the LHC any gift of material that seems inappropriate to the collection or that would be more appropriate in another repository. In such cases, the would-be donor should be informed of the scope of the LHC and, if possible, put in touch with an institution that might wish to accept the offered gift.
- 8.5 Yarra Libraries' justifications for not accepting gifts may include, but not necessarily be limited to the following:
- 8.5.1 Outside the library's scope.
 - 8.5.2 Deteriorated or lacking in physical integrity unless unique.
 - 8.5.3 Cannot be preserved.
 - 8.5.4 an inauthentic or duplicate document
 - 8.5.5 Limited relevance and research potential
- The limited shelving space in the LHC is a consideration in adding material to the collection. The Team Leader Digital and Community Learning may find it necessary to decline a large gift of material of a kind already included in the collection should there be insufficient shelving or space to accommodate it.
- 8.6 Donors of material to the LHC will be routinely asked to provide written documentation/information accompanying the gift to the library and giving the Library the right to dispose of the gift as they see fit. Gifts of collections

accepted by library specialist staff need not be retained as a whole, but may be divided, with some items put into the LHC, and remaining items donated-on or sold.

All primary source materials donated should be accompanied by identifying documentation together with any other relevant descriptive documentation including provenance and the donor's right to dispose of the material.

Artworks donated to the collection will be required to meet criteria outlined in The City of Yarra Collection Management Policy.

- 8.7 In instances where artefacts are offered, but not acquired due to inability to store or maintain, efforts should be made to record items as much as possible through photographs, measurement and description.

Selection Tools

These will include:

- Professional journals
- Online databases
- External professional advice
- Bibliographies

9. Format

While Yarra Libraries aims to cover a range of formats, exceptionally large items may be considered suitable for storage in the Council's Art and Heritage collection. All materials considered must be directly relevant to the collection parameters and we would need to always consider if storage space is sufficient.

It is preferable to include material in digital format subject to copyright reproduction and budget constraints. This includes the digitization of materials already held by the Yarra Libraries in order to maximise access to the collection. Opportunities to apply for grants to enable this will be pursued.

10. Weeding

Weeding is the term used to describe the process by which an item is withdrawn from the collection. Duplicate, irrelevant or damaged materials will be withdrawn by the Team Leader Digital and Community Learning with input from the specialist staff. We will consult with the relevant Historical Societies regarding relevance of content where required.

Items will remain in the collections as long as they retain their physical integrity, identity, and authenticity, and as long as they remain relevant and useful to the purposes and activities of Yarra Libraries. Withdrawals of materials will be considered when these conditions no longer prevail or if the Library should receive similar items in better condition. In all instances we will offer donations of any weeded material to other organizations which have an

interest and role in preserving historical information. Space is limited in our libraries. While not the sole determining factor, it may be a consideration in deciding to keep or withdraw material. The Yarra Libraries Local History collection is exempt from standard weeding processes.

11. References

- Yarra Libraries Collection Development Policy. Yarra City Council 2015.
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<http://alia.org.au/policies/free.access.html>
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- IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto.1994.
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<http://yarracityarts.com.au/arts-and-cultural-strategy-2011-2015/>