

## ANZSOG CASE PROGRAM

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### The City of Melbourne's narm ngarrgu Library and Family Services

**An ANZSOG Teaching Case by Marinella Padula**

**Keywords:** narm ngarrgu, City of Melbourne, libraries, information services, social inclusion, collaboration, place-focused approach, place-based approach, public value, First Nations, Aboriginal, Indigenous, cultural competence, cultural safety, community hubs, third-place, project management, local government, council, positive public administration, decolonisation

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#### Abstract

The City of Melbourne's (CoM) original plan to open a purpose-built childcare centre as part of the \$1.7 billion Queen Victoria Market precinct redevelopment had to be rethought due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Left with a partially fitted-out building, the Council decided instead to establish a new city library and family services centre. Supportive leadership gave the project team scope to think ambitiously about what this facility could be and do. However, they were guided by 3 key principles.

1. Incorporate Aboriginal languages, stories, cultural practice and wisdom into the design, experience and operation of our library spaces.
2. Ensure no one in the community is left behind by reaching as many residents, workers, students and visitors as possible and being responsive to their needs.

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3. Continue to foster a sense of belonging to ensure our city and its community thrives (City of Melbourne, 2021b p.i).

Despite a relatively tight schedule, dozens of stakeholders and big aspirations, *naarm ngarrgu* was completed on time and budget in late 2023. Lauded for its innovative use of space, materials and resources, the facility was rapidly embraced by a broad range of users, including First Nations groups. *naarm ngarrgu* – meaning ‘Melbourne knowledge’ – represents an instructive example of place-focused policy and design but also invites consideration of the role of libraries, now and into the future.

### Key lessons

Place-focused approaches can be used in a variety of ways to better meet the needs of communities and achieve broader policy goals. Meaningful consultation and collaboration with Traditional Owners is a process, not just an event. Libraries play a significant role in fostering social inclusion, as well as economic development. However, there are questions as to whether they are increasingly being compelled to compensate for deficiencies in other areas of government.

### ANZSOG case development statement

The author recognises the sensitivities and responsibilities inherent to being a non-Indigenous writer discussing Aboriginal communities and issues. The case has been developed with direct input (interviewed to inform the case) and sign off from First Nations people involved in the development of the *naarm ngarrgu* Library and Family services case, along with external peer review and internal review by a First Nations Senior Advisor at ANZSOG.

## The City of Melbourne’s *naarm ngarrgu* Library and Family Services

### Change of plan

In late 2019, the City of Melbourne’s Queen Victoria Market and Precinct renewal program<sup>1</sup> was underway, including construction of a \$500 million mixed-use development (City of Melbourne, 2022a).<sup>2</sup> Located opposite the market, the Munro site was set to feature private rental apartments, social housing, a boutique hotel, car parking, plus retail and hospitality outlets. The City of Melbourne (CoM) also planned to add a purpose-built childcare and family services centre. However, as the COVID-19 pandemic progressed, the need for a 120-place childcare facility seemed far less pressing. The question now was how to make best use of the 3-storey, partially fitted-out building.

Across the road sat the historic Queen Victoria Market where hundreds of produce stalls and other retail traders received some 10 million visitors per year, making it both a culinary cornerstone and major tourist attraction (City of Melbourne, 2023a). It was surrounded by one of the most diverse, densely populated and fastest growing residential precincts in Australia, noted Victoria Sorbera, then Strategy Lead at CoM’s Creative City branch. Apartment living was the norm, particularly for the many international students drawn by the area’s proximity to universities and leisure opportunities. Meanwhile, families with children were a growing demographic and needed access to relevant services and facilities.

Close to 150,000 people lived within the City of Melbourne in 2021 – a figure forecast to double within two decades (City of Melbourne, n.d.). Although COVID had stalled this growth somewhat, the impact was not expected to be long-term (Barraclough, 2022). Pre-COVID, another ~900,000 people visited Melbourne daily (City of Melbourne, 2021b, p.4). However, after multiple lengthy lockdowns, the pandemic had significantly curbed visitation, especially amongst office workers. By 2022, numbers were rebounding (City of Melbourne, 2022b) but CoM, local businesses and the Victorian government were all keen to keep the figures trending upwards and had launched a variety of initiatives to entice people back to the city.

<sup>1</sup> This was part of a \$1.7 billion redevelopment of the broader market precinct which was set to include new residential towers and parkland.

<sup>2</sup> This was occurring alongside several urban renewal projects in inner Melbourne which aimed to create residential and economic precincts with affordable housing, community services, modern infrastructure and strong transport links.

## COVID's silver lining

Manager of CoM Libraries, Anne-Maree Pfabe, had been scouting for a new library location for some time. The City Library in Flinders Lane was fast outgrowing its premises and CoM's five other libraries were located outside the central business district.<sup>3</sup> CoM libraries operated as a part of a distributed network and while each location shared key operational characteristics, e.g. lending books, each also had a particular emphasis which reflected the surrounding area (Exhibit A). Two functioned as conventional neighbourhood libraries, three focused on community programming and creative facilities, while the City Library was known for its strong social support.

In 2021, libraries were part of the Council's Business Economy and Activation branch<sup>4</sup> and Pfabe's then Director put forward the Munro building as a suggestion. After further investigation and discussion, a proposal for a combined library and family services hub was presented to Council and accepted in October 2021. An initial budget of \$14 million (later increased to \$15.7 million, including \$1.2 million<sup>5</sup> from the state government) was also allocated (Isaacs, 2023).

Pfabe had already established several pop-up libraries, including one near the market for community access during COVID. Its success helped make the case for the Munro site. However, Sorbera recalled, the weight of expectation was high: 'It was the first significant capital build right for council coming out of COVID, as well as the first new library for the municipality in 10 years,' she noted. 'There was recognition of the critical role libraries play in communities...Library services are real anchors of community and neighborhoods, delivering so much more than just books. They provide places where people can gather, connect, access information and fully participate in civic life.'

The timeline would also be tight, Director of City Projects Jonathan Kambouris, observed, with delivery expected towards the end of 2023. In the past similar projects had often progressed in a more sequential fashion with different divisions<sup>6</sup> completing their tasks then handing over to others. The project 'sponsor' or 'client' wasn't necessarily the end user. This time, however, a new project management framework was fostering a different collaborative approach: The reason for that is the changing notion that this isn't just an asset that we're building. It's a service that we're providing. It's shifting the mindset from output to outcomes. The output may be the building, but the outcome is what we're actually focused on.'

Another important shift, according to Kambouris, was the realisation, 'that we do need to engage across the organisation. Some of the opportunities for improvement we identified on past projects was engaging early enough with all the parts of them.' To this end, each of the different Council divisions with a major role or a stake in the project were recruited to form the Project Working Group to be led by Libraries and Family Services. 'The challenge with this project, and a common challenge that we have, is: what operating model should be developed?' Kambouris recalled. Working out the operating model at the start, alongside design questions for example, meant that they could avoid problems after handover when staff were already working in the building. A Project Control Group of branch leaders was also assembled to oversee progress and report to Council.

Although this project would be somewhat constrained by time and the building's existing features, Sorbera and Pfabe, nonetheless recalled a strong sense of commitment and enthusiasm across Council. It was an opportunity, not just to create something functional but to think ambitiously and expansively about what this kind of community hub could be. Fortunately, they had a head start.

## Listening and learning

CoM's Future Libraries Framework (2021) was created in response to the fact that the City of Melbourne was growing and changing, along with the needs and expectations of residents and visitors. It was also created to align library services with Council-wide goals and objectives laid out in the City of Melbourne's 2021-2025 Council Plan, Aboriginal Reconciliation Action Plan, and Health and Wellbeing Action Plan. These goals included: boosting Melbourne's

<sup>3</sup> The State Library of Victoria is a reference library only, operated by the Victorian state government.

<sup>4</sup> The City of Melbourne was comprised of 5 main branches (Finance & Corporate, City & Community Services, Business, Economy & Activation, Infrastructure & Amenity, Strategy Planning & Climate Change) plus an Executive Services Branch

<sup>5</sup> \$1 million of the total was made available via the Victorian Government's Living Libraries infrastructure program which provided funding for councils to provide new or updated library infrastructure that would offer demonstrable benefits to communities such as improving engagement and access to educational opportunities.

<sup>6</sup> Each City of Melbourne branch consisted of multiple divisions according to functional area.

economic development, promoting community wellbeing, centering Aboriginal culture, celebrating the city's diversity, and improving accessibility and affordability (City of Melbourne, 2021a, p.18).

Regarding the Aboriginal Reconciliation Plan, the Council declared that 'reconciliation will be embedded in our core business and decision-making at every level' (City of Melbourne, 2021c, p.9). This committed CoM to 'meaningful engagement with Aboriginal communities' and promoting 'respect for Aboriginal heritage, cultures and knowledge,' (p.9). Truth-telling – being honest about the past and its ongoing impacts – was a key pillar of reconciliation.

The Future Libraries Framework laid out the Council's vision for libraries as the city moved into an extended period of upheaval and uncertainty post-COVID – economically, socially and technologically. The document explained how libraries could help realise CoM's social and economic goals and was designed to provide guidance when determining funding, operational and delivery priorities (City of Melbourne 2021b, p.7). While the Framework laid out a variety of objectives, they were organised around three key principles:

1. *Incorporate Aboriginal languages, stories, cultural practice and wisdom into the design, experience and operation of our library spaces.*
2. *Ensure no one in the community is left behind by reaching as many residents, workers, students and visitors as possible and being responsive to their needs.*
3. *Continue to foster a sense of belonging to ensure our city and its community thrives (City of Melbourne 2021b, p.i).*

With these principles in mind, project staff canvassed the community and stakeholders for their input. To begin with, Director of City Design Jocelyn Chiew noted: 'We have tremendous intelligence to draw on here at the City of Melbourne. Our Knowledge Bank is a central repository that brings together voices from various dialogues with the community, including events, workshops, and other consultation processes.' CoM was also continuously collecting feedback from the public via its digital portal Participate Melbourne.<sup>7</sup> This enabled them to gauge demand for certain services and features, as well as map it to different parts of the municipality. Pfabe used the market pop-up library site, and others in the network, to inform users about the new community hub and seek their views, while consultations were convened with different stakeholder groups such as market traders.

Analysis revealed that, overall, residents and prospective users wanted safe, accessible spaces for study, work and social interaction, a wide range of programs and events, child-focused areas and activities, linguistically diverse collections and opportunities to connect with community, history and heritage. More broadly, they wanted to learn new skills, meet new people, improve their health and wellbeing and connect with those around them (Exhibit B). One group CoM made sure to engage with at the earliest opportunity was the Traditional Owners of the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung lands upon which the new library and family centre would sit.

## Culture and place

Narrm, or Melbourne as the city came to be known, has been a significant meeting place for more than 2000 generations (CoM). So what did it mean for Melbourne to be an 'Aboriginal City' in accordance with the Council's Reconciliation Action Plan? For Director of Aboriginal Melbourne Jason Eades, 'It's about how we as a city embrace our Aboriginal identity and how that is reflected in us as a city,' he said, 'It's about making sure that Traditional Owners have the opportunity to see themselves in our city and that we as a city we provide opportunities to really educate the broader community about a culture that really makes us quite distinct and unique, as opposed to being a city anywhere in the world.'

The project group members, with guidance and support from his team, began by approaching the elders of Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people to discuss the project. It was vital to do this as early as possible to allow adequate space for dialogue, relationship building, and internal consultation. Elders, especially, had many commitments to community and demands on their schedule. The labour inherent to sharing knowledge and the emotional impost was not always fully appreciated. 'One of the challenges on things like this, particularly when you're representing culture, is making sure that you're doing that respectful engagement,' Eades explained, 'Often in council we're working to timelines and the like, and they don't always marry up with the kind of decision time that is required for Traditional Owners.'

<sup>7</sup> Called 'Participate Melbourne' the website allowed users to find out about CoM plans and projects, complete surveys, provide feedback, attend consultations and submit questions: [participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au](https://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au)

One symbolic but very important matter was to gain permission to name the building *narrm ngarrgu* Library and Family Services Centre.<sup>8</sup> *narrm ngarrgu* – meaning ‘Melbourne knowledge’ – would represent the many types of knowledge embodied by the collections, building, and community. Libraries, Pfabe observed, had traditionally hewed to a western-centric view of knowledge and knowledge transmission. Here, Indigenous wisdom, experience and ontology would be at the fore. While *narrm ngarrgu* would still have books and other texts, including collections of Indigenous writing and First Nations subject matter, it was also designed to incorporate and share knowledge in other ways – through art, storytelling, ceremony, exploration and social connection.

Early in the process, Sorbera recalled meeting with elders such as Uncle Alan Wandin to learn about the precinct’s history as part of the Yarra (Birrarung) River floodplain. That knowledge was fed into the design and landscaping of the building’s rooftop terrace garden – a feature originally created for the childcare centre, noted Chiew. Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung consultants proposed a space which reflected the different landscapes of Melbourne pre-contact. Elder Uncle Dave Wandin advised the landscape architects on culturally significant plants such as spiny-headed mat-rush, bulbine lily and murnong. Local soil and stone types were also incorporated into the design which included forest, grassland and coastal-inspired zones. It wasn’t a simple assignment. Multiple plants were not readily available, prompting the designers to seek out stock themselves (Overell, 2023). The terrace garden, adjoining the children’s library and family services centre, also featured a large-scale representation of an Aboriginal eel trap that children could explore.<sup>9</sup> Another special feature was a ritual coolamon (bowl shaped vessel) for on-site smoking ceremonies (Exhibit C).

Yet *narrm ngarrgu*’s Aboriginal influence was apparent well before the third floor. A restructure in 2019 which moved Library Services into the Creative City<sup>10</sup> division of the Council, was a fortuitous one. It enabled the kind of close collaboration which made art a literal part of the building, rather than an afterthought, noted David Fitzsimmons, Creative Urban Places Project Lead. Celebrated artist and Mutti Mutti/Yorta Yorta, Boon Wurrung/Wemba Wemba woman, Maree Clarke was commissioned to create pieces for the project. She also assisted curator Megan Evans with the selection and placement of artworks which told of the site’s First Nations history and the ancestral knowledge of its people. This extended from the rooftop sculptures to the carpet itself. Designed around the theme ‘walking on country’ pre-colonisation, the flooring designed by Clarke depicted the seven seasons of *Narrm* and the five Kulin nations of south central Victoria.

At the entry to the children’s library, a mirrored mural placed young viewers amongst local plants and animals. Meanwhile, *Narrm*’s more recent past was visible in a photo gallery of Aboriginal protest (Exhibit C). Reflecting on her approach, Clarke said: ‘I wanted to create and integrate pieces that reflect the Kulin Nation culture and knowledge that have always been here – giving anyone who walks into the building a chance to connect in a playful and thoughtful way,’ (Clarke, 2023).

Holding space for each artist’s process to unfold whilst keeping the project on track was one of the challenges of Fitzsimmons’ role. As was balancing the creative vision alongside practical considerations. Another challenge was ‘guarding against the expectation that public art can solve social problems,’ Fitzsimmons remarked. However, in *narrm ngarrgu*’s case art could work to not only educate the wider community but also help Aboriginal people feel at ease. Fitzsimmons recalled a Wurundjeri contributor to *narrm ngarrgu* telling him: ‘When I come to the city, I’m completely disoriented, it doesn’t feel like my land. But if I saw that acknowledgement of my country [in the spaces around me] I would feel completely oriented in my place.’

Small details such as dual Woi-wurrung and English signage was another way *narrm ngarrgu* worked to create a welcoming atmosphere. Uncles Alan Wandin and Ron Jones provided names for the different spaces. Meanwhile, to assist First Nations visitors in making the most of *narrm ngarrgu* and other municipal libraries, the council also created a number of roles, including an Aboriginal Library liaison officer. One initiative was the decision to make event and meeting spaces free for First Nations groups to hire. The general public would also have opportunities to connect with First Nations culture via workshops, yarning<sup>11</sup> sessions and other events.

<sup>8</sup> Sensitivities regarding the use of some Aboriginal words by non-Indigenous persons meant that naming requests needed to be considered by appropriate elders.

<sup>9</sup> Originally woven from grasses, Eel traps were a notable Aboriginal innovation dating back more than 20,000 years which allowed communities to trap and harvest eels – an important food source and trading commodity.

<sup>10</sup> Creative City manages the City of Melbourne’s arts and culture portfolio

<sup>11</sup> Yarning is a conversational process amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that involves the telling of stories as a way of transmitting cultural knowledge.

naarm ngarrgu's 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century history was a further consideration. During Melbourne's early colonial era, the precinct served as Melbourne's first cemetery and included an Aboriginal burial area. By the 1870s however, the original cemetery had closed (though many bodies remained) and the Queen Victoria Market commenced operations. Over the next century and a half, it became not only an important produce outlet but a touchpoint for immigrant communities who worked and shopped there. It also introduced countless Australians to new cuisines and helped shape Melbourne's reputation as a culinary destination.

This history was also significant to Melburnians, some of whom were very concerned about the Queen Victoria Market redevelopment erasing the precinct's character. Friends of Queen Victoria Market was a lobby group formed in opposition to the precinct redevelopment. Consisting of local residents, market traders and the wider community, the group was concerned about loss of amenity and architectural integrity, as well the transformation of a vibrant, egalitarian market into a bland, expensive shopping centre (Friends of the QVM, 2014).

Although there was no specific objection to naarm ngarrgu itself, the library created a dedicated local history collection which included a display of artefacts retrieved from site excavations. It also engaged a local history librarian to develop programming around the area's more recent past.

### **Making space and changing lives**

The CoM's Future Libraries Framework recognised the importance of libraries in promoting inclusion, social equity and human wellbeing (Future Libraries Framework, p.1). It also acknowledged the contributions libraries made towards creating sustainable, culturally vibrant and economically thriving cities. Research by SGS Economics & Planning in 2018 estimated that every \$1 in library funding returned \$4.30 in benefits to Victorian communities (Future Libraries Framework, p.6). Increased solo living, remote working and economic inequality was likely to see the significance of libraries grow even further. 'All these people living in their apartments, they're not connecting to each other,' Pfabe observed but she had seen the capacity of libraries to weave individuals into communities.

For the precinct's large migrant and international student population, many of whom came from Asian countries, naarm ngarrgu developed a collection of Chinese, Korean and Japanese language titles, as well as materials for English learners. Students, local and international, benefitted from a variety of different spaces designed for quiet study, conversation or relaxation. They also created a multi-function area that could operate as a screening room, lecture theatre and event space.

For young families, naarm ngarrgu would act as a convenient service hub and child-friendly destination. The children's library, garden terrace and family service centre were all located on level 3, allowing children to move easily between the spaces and enjoy some valuable outdoor exploration. Separation from the other library levels also gave more space and privacy to visitors using the Council-run Family Services centre which offered child and maternal health checks, counselling, immunisation and playgroups for local families.

Adults, meanwhile, would have the opportunity to expand their horizons. In addition to reading, researching, working and pursuing social/recreational activities such as board game and book clubs, users would also be able to book 'maker spaces' equipped with podcasting studios, 3D printers, sewing machines and laser cutters. The library also planned a wide range of programming and services to promote upskilling and economic participation, such as business start-up assistance. This was designed not only to help residents but nearby market traders looking to branch out or test new products as well. Maker spaces existed at several other CoM locations and enabled people to access equipment they might not otherwise have the space or money for. From repairing clothes to printing medical prototypes, council staff had seen numerous examples of how these facilities could enrich and transform lives.

naarm ngarrgu also intended to make a difference by reaching out to vulnerable individuals. The Queen Victoria Market precinct, like most of central Melbourne, had a sizeable homeless population. Many struggled with mental health and/or substance abuse. The City of Melbourne believed that libraries should help to address social justice issues such as racism and homelessness (City of Melbourne, 2021b, p.5). Libraries, Pfabe observed, were one of the few safe, comfortable places where unhoused people could spend time. It was also a place where they could access community outreach and other services. In 2019, the nearby City Library was the first in Australia to hire a social worker to help vulnerable visitors, and the program would be extended to naarm ngarrgu.

Research and anecdotal evidence suggested that many community members with complex needs were increasingly reliant on libraries: as a refuge from heat, cold and loneliness; or as a de facto information and assistance centre. Charles Sturt University's Dr Jane Garner found that the growing migration of government and financial services online had seen a corresponding increase in people turning to library staff: 'If you go to Centrelink and say, 'I want to go on the housing list'. They'll say, 'Here's a URL. You can go onto that website and register yourself and fill out a form', and then they'll send them away," she said, 'There's nowhere there for them to do that work, so the library is the place that they'll come because that's the only place you can get free access to a computer and the internet and somebody who will sit there with you and help you type it (Sanders, 2024). She advocated greater recognition and resources for the kinds of support libraries and librarians were providing.

To reduce barriers for all library users, CoM libraries also abolished overdue book fines in 2022. Perhaps counterintuitively, the number of overdue items fell by 40% (City of Melbourne, 2023b). narm ngarrgu also decided to make laptops available for loan on-site and provide digital literacy staff to help struggling users. Visitors with high support needs and carers, meanwhile, would be able to access a specially equipped bathroom with hoist – one of 14 in the city.

Thinking about who would access narm ngarrgu and how prompted the project team to consider the operating model from the beginning, recalled Jonathan Kambouris. While the council wanted to be as inclusive as possible, it had to be balanced with the obligation to protect people and property. Other library locations had used external security companies with mixed results, explained Pfabe. Agency staff didn't always have the right skills or understanding to deal with the complex demands of the setting.

The project team instead settled on a 'concierge model' where security guards employed by the City of Melbourne and provided with additional customer service and first aid training would greet patrons and help direct them around the library. Insourcing security would ensure staff had a consistent and calibrated approach to dealing with situations, in line with CoM's objectives. The operating model also informed how the space was laid out, noted Chiew. For instance, ensuring that the Family Services area was separate from whilst still connected to the other children's areas.

## Responses and reflections

After much discussion, collaboration and effort, the refit began in early 2022 and narm ngarrgu opened in November 2023, on time and budget. The project team and control group were pleased with the results but how would it be received by its intended users? From the outset, recalled Sorbera, the response was 'overwhelming'. Both visitor numbers and borrowed items exceeded expectations, while bookings for creative maker spaces quickly filled up. narm ngarrgu was also attracting a diversity of users. Students, despite having most things at their fingertips or doorstep via the internet, embraced the space, as did market shoppers, families and others.

Multiple First Nations groups had also welcomed narm ngarrgu, observed Eades, holding gatherings and workshops inside and on the rooftop terrace. Project members noted, however, that engagement with Traditional Owners had tapered off somewhat. Minor misunderstandings arose and couldn't always be immediately addressed in the project's latter stages. While traditional custodians were still supportive of narm ngarrgu, project members were reminded of the importance of frequent communication and the ongoing work required in long-term relationships between Aboriginal and government organisations.

Looking back over the project, Sorbera noted that it was 'very cross-organisational' involving approximately 20 of some 35 different CoM divisions. This was in addition to the many external stakeholders, contractors and suppliers that project staff had to liaise with. Though the situation could have resulted in paralysing indecision, conflict or unsatisfying compromise, Chiew felt the project's numerous stakeholders had actually been an asset in achieving their outcomes. It also helped that several key contributors, such as the project architects and artist Maree Clark, had worked on previous council projects and had existing working relationships.

Although there were occasional debates or disagreements about aspects of the project, for example, how artworks on carpets would be maintained over time, they didn't derail progress. Pfabe attributed this to solid underlying principles, strong commitment and a clear shared vision for narm ngarrgu which extended from the top of the organisation down. Kambouris also cited strong governance and the council's new project management framework as positive driving factors.

For Fitzsimmons, narm ngarrgu served as a successful example of how public art could be integrated into a project and saw its potential to inform future endeavours across the municipality. Although narm ngarrgu was only one building in a city of thousands, Eades saw it as more than merely gestural: 'It's not just about paying lip service or saying "here's a nice artwork", it was showing that we can go much, much deeper than that,' he continued: 'As a society, the things that we value are reflected in the cities we build and we've had such an uncomfortable relationship with our past. Projects like narm ngarrgu can help us with addressing that discomfort, laying the truth bare and then pointing how can we go forward as a society.'

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## Exhibit A: City of Melbourne Libraries

Neighbourhood Models	Community Hubs	Supportive Social Connector
Traditional library offering Stand-alone service	Strong community connections and programs Creative studios	Strong social support focus High diversity and volume of patrons
<b>East Melbourne Library</b>  A balanced atmosphere and connection to the natural environment create a local nexus for life-long learning.	<b>Library at the Dock</b>  A catalyst for community, creative and cultural development in an emerging neighbourhood.	<b>City Library</b>  Popular with workers, students and visitors. CBD location. Small eclectic building with limited capacity for innovative programing.
<b>North Melbourne Library</b>  A community focused library. Caters for a variety of people from various cultural backgrounds.	<b>Kathleen Syme Library</b>  Offers unique spaces and special equipment to enable deeper engagement with patrons.	
	<b>Southbank Library, Boyd Community Hub</b>  A creative and convivial community centre that adds character to the city, south of the Yarra River Birrarung.	

Source: City of Melbourne, 2021b, p. 3.

## Exhibit B: Community consultation results

# A NEW LIBRARY IN THE CITY

## Community consultation results

**AIM** The City of Melbourne is developing a new library in the heart of the Queen Victoria Market precinct.

We asked how you might use this exciting space, what you would like to see there and how the library will contribute to your community.

### How we engaged you:

**318** people

submitted  
an online survey.

**53** conversations

were held  
at our libraries.

**350+** children

engaged at school  
and library programs.

Ongoing cultural  
consultations  
with  
Traditional Owners.

### What you'd like the library to include:



#### STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY

- A place for community connection
- Safe, inclusive and accessible space
- Aboriginal culture and heritage
- Foster creativity and exhibitions



#### COLLECTION

- Books, glorious books!
- Easy to browse and discover
- Tool library
- Books in community languages



#### LOCATION

- Great location
- Connection to the market
- Showcase diverse history



#### SPACES

- A place to work, learn, read and study
- Zoning of quiet and busy areas
- Rooftop garden and greenery
- Good Wi-Fi and access to power points



#### PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

- Diverse range of events for all ages
- Talks, workshops, book clubs
- Makerspace
- Community led events and groups



#### CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

- Areas for families to relax
- Place to explore and learn
- Sensory educational play areas
- Story times, playgroups, after school programs

### Community aspirations

Respondents were asked to select their aspirations for the future. This will influence library collections and programs. The top 5 were:



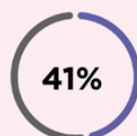
Improve my  
wellbeing



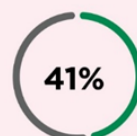
Connect with my  
local community



Learn  
a new skill



Meet new  
people



Improve my  
physical health

### How we'll use this feedback

Feedback will contribute to the development of the concept plan, inform the fit-out of the library space and help determine what the library offers, including its collections and programs.

"Strong connection to recognising Aboriginal significance of the land - this is an especially important theme evolving in our Melbourne community."

"A place to escape the busy city."

"Spaces for little ones to play and hang out, and to support new parents and new people in the city to make friends."

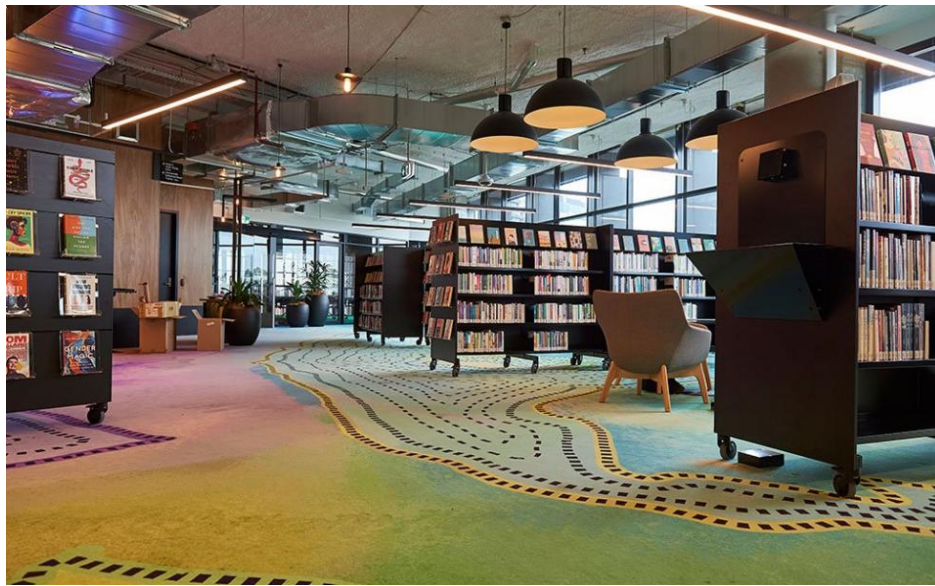


For more information  
[participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/munro-library](https://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/munro-library)



CITY OF MELBOURNE

Source: [https://hdp-au-prod-app-com-participate-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/1716/5283/4397/4169\\_Munro\\_Library\\_infographic\\_Poster\\_Web.jpg](https://hdp-au-prod-app-com-participate-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/1716/5283/4397/4169_Munro_Library_infographic_Poster_Web.jpg)

**Exhibit C: narm ngarrgu images**

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



Children's Library Entrance. Source: <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/news/your-guide-to-narm-ngarrgu-library>





Rooftop terrace. Source: Abigail Varney, <https://www.bushprojects.com.au/landscape-designs/narrm-ngarrgu-library-and-family-services-terrace>



Eel trap, rooftop terrace. Source: Diana Snape, <https://www.bushprojects.com.au/landscape-designs/narrm-ngarrgu-library-and-family-services-terrace>

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