

Public Libraries are safe (and neutral spaces)...when people aren't in them!

Leonee Ariel Derr

Malvern Library, Stonnington Library and Information Service, Melbourne, Australia.
lderr@stonnington.vic.gov.au



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Abstract

The libraries “of old” - mostly quiet, staid and occupied by sincere researchers and readers- have transitioned into the public libraries we know today: a seemingly paradoxical experience of quiet reading, study, and shared work adjacent to sound-filled, diverse spaces full of song, activity, and machine play. Ostensibly, everyone is welcome. It is also a space where the full spectrum of antisocial behaviour coexists. To acknowledge the evolution of libraries “of old” to how public libraries look, act, and behave today, is to address the evolution of how people engage in these spaces, with information, each other, and their communities. It is also to recognise and challenge the parochial assumptions aligned with an anachronistic understanding of libraries as “safe” or “neutral” spaces and offer alternatives- such as choosing to integrate language that sets a more accurate definition of contemporary library practice.

Responding to the notion of public library as a safe space, this paper will first reflect on the term “safe”, and thus “neutral”, when describing inner-city public libraries and librarianship as well as the risks involved when these words are inaccurately cast in a contemporary context. Within the frame of an alternate language, this paper will demonstrate the notion of the public library as a refuge in inner-city life rather than a sanctuary¹.

Keywords: Inclusive, inner-city, libraries, safe, sanctuary

¹ The definitions for refuge and sanctuary come from Macquarie Dictionary; their difference is marked by the expectation of immunity in a place of sanctuary which is traditionally a holy/religious space; refuge has the option of being safe, but does not inherently assume it. Macquarie defines refuge as “2.a place of shelter, protection, *or* safety.3.anything to which one has recourse for aid, relief, or escape.” (my italics)

Introduction: Why Language Matters

Historically, “[p]ublic libraries...maintained the tradition of silence” and established who was and was not welcome as evident “[i]n 1726, [when] King Charles VI declared Vienna’s great Hofbibliothek open to all visitors – all except ‘idiots, servants, idlers, chatterboxes and casual strollers’” (Kells, 2018). Kells’ recounting of what a library once was in his article “Loudest Libraries”, is part of a narrative that has shaped public libraries over time. King Charles’ “idlers” and “casual strollers” were part of a class structure that minimised unacceptable social interchanges and kept the well-behaved as far from the assumed characteristics and behaviours of those considered lesser. The legacy of what those libraries did offer- a quiet place to contemplate, research, and pursue knowledge and reading in solitude- is an accepted hangover. As societies have evolved, the ideologies behind King Charles’ libraries and, more locally, the 19th century Mechanic’s Institutes² where workers went to learn- and eventually became what were arguably the forbears of the public library in Australia- have shifted to be more inclusive of everyone. That inclusivity has leant a great deal to the trust that people feel toward public libraries today. This is not to underestimate the power of history, however. The more parochial notion of libraries remains a strong cognitive frame in the psyche of the public and reinforces the expectations of experience today. George Lakoff, a UC-Berkeley Linguistics Professor and author, states every institution has a frame consisting of two parts. The first being roles or “framing elements” within the institute and the second are the scenarios or “what happens in the frame” of that institute which sets the boundaries of the frame (Lakoff, 2008). Humans think in terms of these frames and

“[t]hese structures are physically realized (sic) in neural circuits in the brain. All of our knowledge makes use of frames, and every word is defined through the frames it neurally activates. All thinking and talking involves “framing.” And since frames come in systems, a single word typically activates not only its defining frame, but also much of the system its defining frame is in. More-over many frame-circuits have direct connections to the emotional regions...” (Lakoff, 2010)

What people think of and how they feel when they hear, read, or say the words “public library” are informed by the above cognitive framing that Lakoff speaks of; and, when the word *library* has had centuries of meaning loaded behind it to help form those frames, there can be a variety of assumed boundaries, behaviours and expectations that result. For instance, if we compare some library users’ assumption of a library being a hallowed space, a sanctuary in fact, with their perceived notion of the “right” kind of people using a library and *how* they should use the library with the contemporary understanding that public libraries today are inclusive and welcoming of all, there will be conflict. And much of this conflict arises from the emotions attached to the frame of the public library of old and the frame of libraries in a contemporary context. This conflict is not only amongst individuals using the library spaces, but is also evident in the behaviours between library staff members. Both frames are supported by the trust public libraries have built over time with their community and from the work practices of library staff. In spite of the definitional conflict arising from this cognitive framing, what results more broadly from this sense of trust is the belief in the inherent safety individuals may feel or expect to feel when in library spaces. And, this is where, when applying terms like “safe”, library staff, advocates, peak bodies and the broader culture of public libraries, must be careful. To name something, such as public libraries as

² “The mechanics’ institute movement emanated from Britain as a means of providing education and moral uplift to workers in the “mechanical arts” — the growing artisanal class who worked with machines and metals. Australia’s first institute opened in Hobart in 1827, just three years after the first in England” (Haigh, 2016; Baragwanath, 2000).

safe, is to set an expectation of meaning for that word, the related definitions an individual associates and attaches to that label, and the resulting behaviour that arises from assumption and expectation when that label is applied to a public space. Individuals have the right to describe their experience with public libraries in their own words. However, there are consequences when the organisation labels or references with metaphors³, especially those which reinforce parochial and anachronistic cognitive frames of public libraries. Consequences may be financial, can lead to a misunderstanding of what a library offers, what is expected of staff and behaviours within that expectation, whether these public spaces can protect against crime or varying types of assault on staff, and the provision of diverse information and knowledge to communities without censure and abdication. Adam Alter, author of *Drunk Tank Pink* writes in the New Yorker “as soon as you label a concept, you change how people perceive it. It’s difficult to imagine a truly neutral label, because words evoke images...are associated with other concepts...and vary in complexity” (Alter, 2013). For some people safety is the feeling they have of being included and of belonging compared to feeling and experiencing marginalisation in their broader community setting. For others, it is a more literal interpretation where the edifice of the library itself is a barrier between the outside world and them acting as physical, emotional and psychological safety. There is a striking difference between these two interpretations, though often the experiences are intermingled. Using the term “safe” flippantly not only comes with the aforementioned conflict with the public, it also undermines the experiences of staff who in their work place or in their broader organisation may feel marginalised due to how they identify, the colour of their skin, or their religious affiliation. Libraries cannot be safe spaces until staff benefit broadly from the same measures taken to ensure inclusivity and welcome for the community⁴.

Discussion: public libraries as refuge in metropolitan areas

Research, such as within the area of social capital theory (Putnam, 2001) and relating to understanding of “third place” (Oldenburg, 2009; (Cohen, Putnam and Feldstein, 2014), has shown public libraries’ influence in supporting wellbeing in the individual, and collectively in the community, equates to securing these communities’ socio-cultural and socio-economic futures (Cohen, Putnam and Feldstein, 2014). With statistics showing an increasing rate of individuals experiencing loneliness (Brown, 2017), third places like public libraries are for many people a place to connect. Individuals have opportunity when using public libraries to build relationships with those alongside them as well as build trust in the space and the staff who work there. The outcome is a sense of inclusion and belonging. Specific results from recent surveys articulate what Victorians value most in their public libraries. Starting at 95% and continuing down to 79%, responses to what was considered to be “very important” were, in descending order, the following (Communications & Public Relations, 2018):

- free access to internet
- help using technology
- supporting early literacy such as story time sessions
- access to collection

³ “Metaphors [used to describe libraries] are important because they go deeper down than our cognitive framing” (Talve, 2018). Talve collated metaphors captured as part of the *Creative Communities, Creative Libraries* survey performed in Australia, including “melting pot,” “civic jewel,” “lifeblood,” “sanctuary,” “paradise” and “oasis” (2018).

⁴ Some further reading on this issue can be found here. Though the issue is intrinsic to the notion of public libraries as “safe” spaces for those who work in them, not just visit, it is an issue that goes well beyond the word limit this paper allows. (Bethan, 2018; Bourg, 2018; de Jesus, 2014; Galvan, 2015; Masilamani, 2018)

- safe place to visit
- place to study
- place to go to feel part of the community and experience social inclusion

These valued offerings are at the heart of what public libraries are supposed to offer on a daily basis; it is no wonder that for generation after generation, public libraries as an institution have been considered trustworthy as they continue to fulfil the varying needs of their communities.

These communities, for the purpose of this paper, will include library services actually worked for and with. The first library service is The City of Melbourne's Libraries (CML) and is the capital city library service for the state of Victoria. The second is Yarra Libraries (YL) which is the library service for a council that is situated no more than 4kms from the city centre of Melbourne at its furthest library locations; and lastly Stonnington Library and Information Service (SLIS) with the Prahran Library 4.5kms from the city centre but with one of its four branches, Phoenix Park Library, at approximately 13kms from Melbourne's city centre. In order to understand the makeup of Victoria's inner-city public libraries mentioned for the context of this paper, refer to Appendix 1 which contains an overview of the council areas, brief information about the library services themselves, and of the surrounding community that may most engage with the services on offer. Within the context of these three metropolitan library services what follows is an overview of how library staffing, collections, and programming mix as a way of establishing library-as-refuge and building a welcoming and inclusive narrative for these communities⁵.

Library Staff

Each day library staff come into their work places bringing with them their stories, their experiences, and an infinite combination of possible events that mark them as individuals with feelings, thoughts, and layers of implicit bias that inevitably affect them and influence the way they behave at work with colleagues and with the community. "Implicit social cognition [or] implicit bias, refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner" whether we acknowledge this happens or not, it does (Kirwan Institute, 2015). Implicit bias is reinforced by media and general life interactions with other human beings. Just as we can be influenced by the media's ever-changing messages toward a bias, implicit bias as a human condition is malleable and alterable. Daily, libraries open and close their doors for the public; each individual that enters and exits these library spaces bring with them the loaded histories of their lives. It is important to recognise the infinite possible variables of human interaction that can occur at any given time. These interactions are not neutral. These interactions are not by default risky⁶, but they do not guarantee anyone's safety. An all too commonly observed example is assuming children will be safe when left unattended by an adult for extended periods of time. Library staff from these three inner city library services are not expected to monitor children at all times. However, it is not uncommon for primary school aged children, and younger, to be unattended because of the assumption of safety.

⁵ NB: the communities' awareness of the local library is often limited by that library service's ability to self-promote and be known to the public. Inclusivity and welcome is limited by an organisation's outreach activities and marketing/advertising reach.

⁶ English Oxford Living Dictionary defines risky as "Full of the possibility of danger, failure, or loss" (2018).

The three libraries mentioned above have an expectation that library staff offer equitable attention, support, and information seeking service for each individual. As written previously, this cannot be guaranteed because of the diversity of opinion, bias, and care individuals bring to their work practice. However, when a positive interchange occurs regularly over time, these experiences inform a perception that all staff are unbiased, balanced and effectively neutral in their approach when offering customer service. As a result, it can appear as if the library as an institution is neutral. These assumptions and expectations are not fundamentally problematic; yet, they undermine some public library organisations' work with, for, and on behalf of the evolving community of individuals and groups that engage with them, the principled and ethical standards by which those library staff should approach their work, and the basic, human compassion and inevitable social justice lens those public libraries claim to work through. Library staff are expected to strive to meet the expectations of the community and of their organisation's mission and values to create what is essentially an inclusive experience. However, libraries that are located in inner-city areas are at the mercy of the predictably unpredictable group of individuals who come through the doors daily. The centrality of inner-city libraries and, more often than not, ease of access to those libraries, the cost-free permission to be in the spaces with access to public toilets (their need not to be underestimated), and the general guarantee of human interaction with either staff or other members of the public, situates public libraries in the collective consciousness of the community. To even exist is to invite the whole world into library spaces. And, whether library staff or fellow community members like it or not, it is to invite the issues, pain, hopes, joys, fears, addictions, desires, laughter, and tears of our fellow humans into those spaces. The moment the lights turn on for staff set-up to open until the final person leaves the building at night, everyone in the building participates in the definition of what that library will be on that day. And each day thereafter will be as diverse and dynamic as the individuals who cross the threshold. Acknowledging this is a step toward inclusivity, openness, setting realistic expectations about what it is like to be in a public space, and establishing boundaries through policy and procedure to minimise risk and harm.

Collections

Collection strategies, policies and procedures exist to provide a framework for the development and management of collections and to ensure a variety of material is available for the public. They also exist to guide the processes of selection, acquisition, evaluation and de-selection and to ensure the survival of the collection in the face of challenges from staff and the public. This variety of material should be diverse and reflect as many perspectives and points of view as possible within the law. This offering of diverse knowledge, information and a setting to learn is vital in the context of today's social, political and economic climates and is not a neutral task and comes with risk. The information and knowledge sources on offer via public libraries and the staff who work in them is part of democracy in action and part of education of the citizenry. The importance of diversity in a collection is the ability for a text, an illustrative depiction of story, a piece of music or film to mirror someone's personal experience. It is also the chance for the imagination and knowing that one holds to be expanded via whatever medium of story they so choose from the (virtual) library shelves. This expansion and broadening of individual understanding of what it means to be human showcases the vastness of human experience. Items in collections are the artefacts by which people can experience belonging and feel less loneliness.

The vital importance of diverse collections in inner-city libraries is compounded by the fact that regular residential demographic data does not account for undocumented individuals (as in lack of address or identification documents due to homelessness, mental illness, domestic violence circumstances or other vulnerabilities that marginalise an individual in their community), the influx of non-residential library users both regionally and internationally, people with varying (dis)advantages in life, and so on. Though there may be a transience to these “visitors”, their needs are no more or less important than those whose data is captured in a census, documented via rates paid to council for their property, or the taxes they pay.

A specific example of how collections are part of creating a refuge in inner-city public libraries are how CML and YL provide gaming consoles and games at libraries which neighbour public housing estates, K-12 schools, universities, homeless services/ shelters, and hostels. It may seem to some as contrary to what a library “should be” or “should offer”, and, for others, it may seem a luxurious perk for a public library to have. However, the crux of it is, making gaming and games readily available and accessible at a public library acts as a socio-cultural levelling agent, provides an alternate form of storytelling and critical engagement with story, and is one of many “hooks” used to expose individuals to the vast number of services and other collection offerings. In practice, public libraries cannot be all things to all people; though, they surely try within scope of their particular organisation’s vision and goals.

Programming, partnerships, and events

Similar to collection management and its diverse possibilities to act as a “hook” for how individuals engage with the space and its holdings, programming and events have opportunity to create a “hook”. Through a variety of programming and events, CML, SLIS and YL showcase themselves to the public in a way which hopes to satisfy the infinitely diverse needs of individuals. When programmes and events are created on behalf of community, in collaboration or partnership with said community, and for the benefit of the community rather than library staff or organisational reward or “box ticking”, the result can be tremendous in terms of engagement. A public library as refuge is part space, part collections, part staff, and part service, program, and event offering. Just as a person’s experience will be influenced by who they engaged with on any given day, the validity and value of a program offered is determined by the people who happen to attend. To be successful in doing this is to ensure library program and events on offer intersect with the various ways people learn, the various areas of interest reflected in the collections, the pop culture trends of the community, and cross promotion and marketing with topical, current events in the city more broadly. Essentially it is not to assume all events must be text and book centred. To understand the importance of the variety of programming and events that should be offered is to understand that story and the ways we share, express, and interpret story is multi-faceted and lend toward one’s experience of inclusion, belonging and library-as-refuge.

Lastly, where libraries are able to allow members of the community to be information managers in their own right and facilitate workshops, run an event, or at least stimulate the process of implementation of an event, a layer of value is added that library-driven and library-staff-designed programming cannot mimic. For the three libraries referred to in this paper⁷, it is not just their community of users they are attempting to support, but also those elusive “non-users” who are hoped to be attracted to an event or participate in a program. It is

⁷ Examples of programming from CML, SLIS and YL are listed in Appendix 2.

for these libraries to regularly assess and interrogate why members of the community may not see themselves as belonging in the public library- is it that the library does not mirror their life experience nor appeal to their needs or goals? Programming, especially where attendees participate actively in the outcome of the session(s), offers the benefits of bridging connections as well as breaking down barriers. Caitlin Moran, author and social commentator from the UK writes

A library in the middle of a community is a cross between an emergency exit, a life raft and a festival. They are cathedrals of the mind; hospitals of the soul; theme parks of the imagination... they are the only sheltered public spaces where you are not a consumer, but a citizen...A human with a brain and a heart and a desire to be uplifted, rather than a customer with a credit card and an inchoate “need” for “stuff.” (2012).

This is a crucial reminder for inner-city libraries where there is a disparity between those who have and have not. For all three library services referenced in this paper, there are individuals and communities of individuals who live on the margins, are exposed to complex layers of vulnerability, and may not “fit” into the heteronormative, able-bodied, post-colonial system that has been established and normalised. Public libraries have the capacity to ensure programming and events uplift, educate, enhance, answer to, promote, and instil new knowledge and information into their communities.

Conclusion: Inner-city, public libraries are only as radical⁸ as the people who work in them

In a world of globalisation, populism, “fake news” and fear sown from ignorance of and inexperience with the “other”, public libraries have never been so vital to ensuring knowledge is learned and shared, and that the communities they serve thrive⁹. Public libraries as they are understood today aim to be inclusive places. Following the example of King Charles’ attitude towards “idlers”, this ethos not only remains present in the public imagination of libraries but staff often uphold this attitude. It must be understood that library staff can make library environments uncomfortable for some patrons. To complicate matters further, inclusivity is necessarily sacrificed when facing “anti-social” or aggressive behaviour from the public. The nature of ensuring that knowledge is shared as widely as possible to benefit community is at the heart of what makes public libraries- especially in metropolitan areas where the amount of high rise, high density living is more common- such an intrinsic part of those communities and lends toward inclusivity. Metropolitan city libraries, like those in the inner suburbs of Greater Melbourne, balance the fine line between policing and supporting; between banning a person in need of the services on offer; and educating/encouraging those who have more privilege and advantage in their community to remove their stigma and bias of others. So often the boundaries library staff put in place to protect themselves, dare I write to create a “safe” place to work, are the same boundaries put in place to protect the community from each other and uphold the ideal of refuge and inclusivity. These boundaries are to help minimise risk and harm, but do not guarantee anyone’s safety.

⁸ English Oxford Living Dictionaries defines radical as “1. (especially of change or action) relating to or affecting the fundamental nature of something; far-reaching or thorough...2.2 Characterized by independence of or departure from tradition; innovative or unorthodox” with specific credence on the second meaning in relationship to libraries in the contemporary context of a consumer-centric societal structure.

⁹ Macquarie Dictionary defines fake news as “disinformation and hoaxes published on websites for political purposes or to drive web traffic, the incorrect information being passed along by social media.”

People who work in public libraries have a responsibility to choose the labels to self-identify with awareness of their broader impact. To reframe the language to influence a better understanding of the role of public libraries for inner-city communities is necessary in the socio-cultural and political climate within which libraries function today. The importance of language lie in accuracy of meaning and representation of language used; this is why it is important to be impeccable with terms employed and the cognitive frames upheld when writing and talking about public libraries. Public libraries as refuge in communities and as a space to be creative, learn, read, play and relax is sufficient self-labelling without adding the weight of expectation tied to the concept of “safe”. The better funders, managers, and councillors in local government understand the truly dynamic, diverse, unpredictable nature of public library work as a social justice practice in action, the more inner-city libraries will be empowered to proactively respond to the immediate needs of the ever-changing demographic of people who cross the threshold daily- including the people who work in them- seeking a refuge and a place to belong. It is essential that public libraries buck the trend of claiming to be “neutral,” often a cop-out term used to avoid conflict. Public libraries should instead vie for being principled if not radical in practice: showing empathy and compassion whilst upholding the rights of every individual in the communities they serve.

Acknowledgments

I want to acknowledge the passionate work and support of library colleagues across the sector- too many to name here. City of Melbourne’s Libraries, Stonnington Library & Information Service and Yarra Libraries have library staff who work passionately to ensure the intersection of collections, programmes and events (along with their own attitudes and behaviours at work) coalesce to create an experience of welcome and belonging for colleagues and the community. Without their determination to help community feel connected to information, to each other, and to society along with the belief in equity and inclusivity, the examples provided in this paper would not have been achieved. Further acknowledgement is given to the organisations, inter-council departments, NGOs, and other local services that helped in collaboration and partnerships, evaluation and innovation, and iterative outcomes mentioned above. For public libraries to have the honour of being a trusted community institution is a reflection of community need and desire for access to information, a third place for individual pursuit, shelter and acceptance. This is no doubt a reflection of the grit, compassion, empathy, and long hours put in by impassioned library staff.

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Appendix 1: Community Profiles

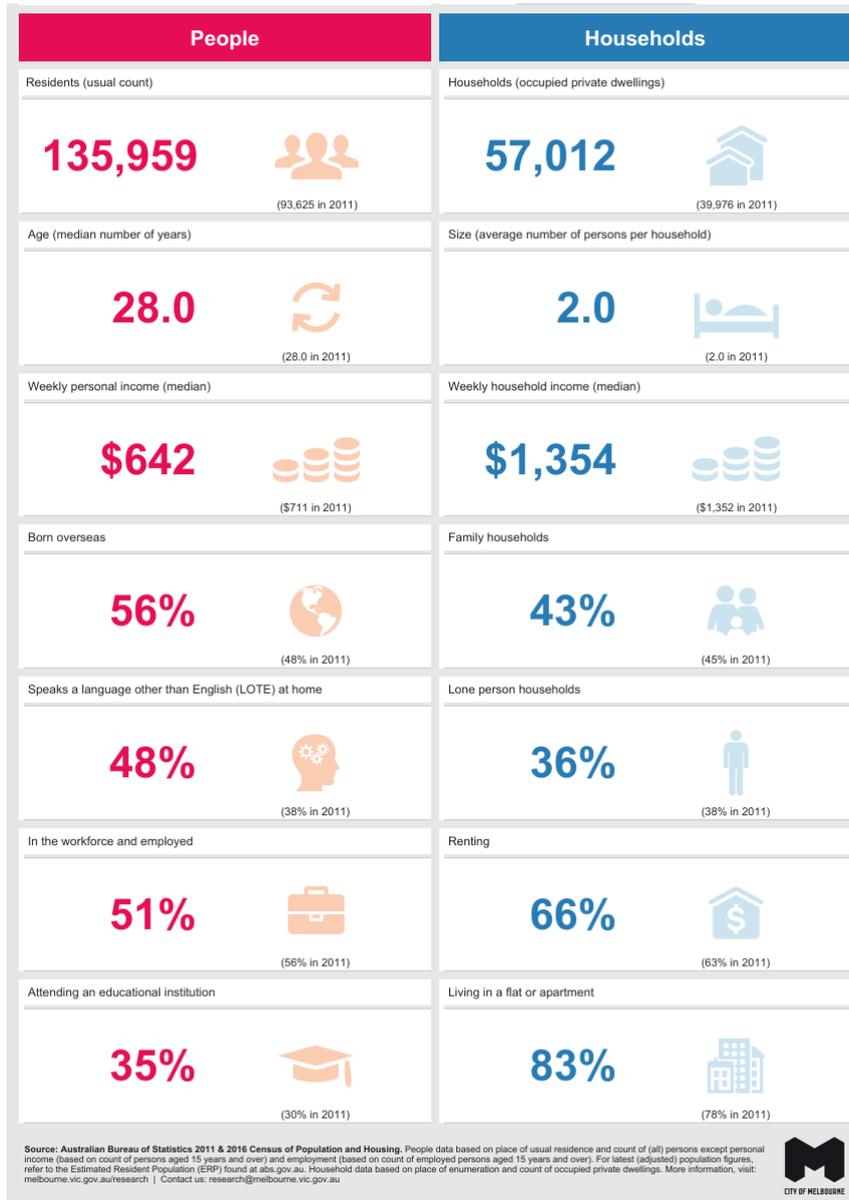
City of Melbourne's Libraries consist of six library branches within a 37.7 square kilometre area. As at the 2016 census, the population was 148,000 (City of Melbourne, 2018). Refer to Appendix 1, reference 1 for an overview of the demographic breakdown. However, the number of individuals who commute into the city to visit, work, play or study was last counted at just over 900,000 people on an average week day and is expected to top 1,000,000 people by 2021 (City of Melbourne, 2018). It is necessary to know the daily visitor and commuter count into the city as it helps to understand the library usage- especially City Library located centrally on Flinders Lane, which within 5 minutes walking distance in all directions is a central train station, hostels, language schools for learning English, tertiary education campuses, and support services provided by organisations both government and non-government intended for the full spectrum of human experience, including those most marginalised.

Yarra Libraries consist of four library branches within a 20 square kilometre area. As at 2017 City of Yarra council registered the population at 96,368 (City of Yarra Community Profile, 2018). Refer to Appendix 1, reference 2 for an overview of the demographic breakdown. The suburbs of Collingwood and Fitzroy are of specific note due to the lower scoring for the Social Economic Index for Area (SEIFA) which correlates to a higher level of disadvantage in those communities (REMPLAN Community, et al 2018). Both of these suburbs have a robust high rise community as part of public housing initiatives. Looking to Appendix 1, reference 3, is a map of low income households across the Yarra council area; the darker the patch, the higher the disadvantage. These areas are often collocated to public housing. The library in Fitzroy, located on Moor Street, is adjacent to one of the larger public housing complexes- Atherton Gardens- and is in walking distance for those living in Collingwood. This area, much like the City Library on Flinders Lane, has tertiary institutions nearby, hostels, schools, hospitals, an artery of public transport, and is in a prominent tourist area (Brunswick Street) and residential zone.

Stonnington Library and Information Service consists of four libraries within a 26 square kilometre area. As at 2017, City of Stonnington council registered the population at 114,138 (City of Stonnington Community Profile, 2018). Though this council is considered stereotypically as being of higher socio-economic advantage, there are areas of disadvantage

nearest two of SLIS' library branches, and reflect the circumstances of the above specifics mentioned in the YL and the CML demographic breakdown. Prahran Library and the Toorak/South Yarra Library both are intersection points for all types of human experience. Both libraries are located along major public transport arterial lines, both metro train and tram services, are within an active hub for tourism and corporate business, and are, if not across the road, within walking distance of high rise public housing estates and smaller blocks of commission housing. Refer to Appendix 1, reference 4 for an overview of the demographic breakdown.

Reference 1



Reference 2

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Regional Population Growth, Australia (22/15/1). Compiled and presented by: **id** the population experts

City of Yarra 2016

↔ No significant change since previous Census (less than ±0.5%) ▲ Increased since previous Census ▼ Decreased since previous Census

Median age 33 ↔ (0) Greater Melbourne 36 ↔ Victoria 37 ↔ Australia 38 ▲	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population 0.4% ↔ (0.0%) Greater Melbourne 0.5% ↔ Victoria 0.8% ↔ Australia 2.8% ↔	Couples with children 15% ▼ (-1.0%) Greater Melbourne 33% ↔ Victoria 31% ↔ Australia 30% ↔	Older couples without children 4% ↔ (0.3%) Greater Melbourne 8% ↔ Victoria 9% ↔ Australia 10% ▲
Lone person households 30% ▲ (0.6%) Greater Melbourne 22% ↔ Victoria 23% ↔ Australia 23% ↔	Medium and high density Housing 85% ▲ (6.9%) Greater Melbourne 33% ▲ Victoria 27% ▲ Australia 27% ▲	Median weekly household income \$1,949 ▲ (\$316) Greater Melbourne \$1,639 ▲ Victoria \$1,416 ▲ Australia \$1,431 ▲	Median weekly mortgage repayment \$500 Greater Melbourne \$421 Victoria \$391 Australia \$409
Median weekly rent \$432 Greater Melbourne \$355 Victoria \$330 Australia \$339	Households renting 50% ▲ (1.6%) Greater Melbourne 20% ▲ Victoria 28% ▲ Australia 29% ▲	Households with a mortgage 20% ▼ (-1.8%) Greater Melbourne 34% ▼ Victoria 33% ▼ Australia 32% ▼	Overseas born 29% ↔ (-0.1%) Greater Melbourne 34% ▲ Victoria 28% ▲ Australia 28% ▲
Language at home other than English 22% ▼ (-1.0%) Greater Melbourne 32% ▲ Victoria 26% ▲ Australia 21% ▲	University attendance 9% ↔ (0.1%) Greater Melbourne 8% ▲ Victoria 5% ▲ Australia 5% ▲	University qualification 48% ▲ (3.4%) Greater Melbourne 27% ▲ Victoria 24% ▲ Australia 22% ▲	Trade qualification (certificate) 8% ↔ (0.1%) Greater Melbourne 15% ↔ Victoria 17% ↔ Australia 19% ▲
Unemployment rate 5.3% ↔ (0.5%) Greater Melbourne 6.8% ▲ Victoria 6.6% ▲ Australia 6.9% ▲	Participation rate (population in labour force) 70% ↔ (0.4%) Greater Melbourne 62% ▼ Victoria 60% ▼ Australia 60% ▼	Public transport (to work) 28% ▲ (2.2%) Greater Melbourne 15% ▲ Victoria 12% ▲ Australia 11% ▲	SEIFA index of disadvantage 2016 1,035 Greater Melbourne 1,018 Victoria 1,010 Australia 1,002
Homeless persons estimated 2016 * 838			

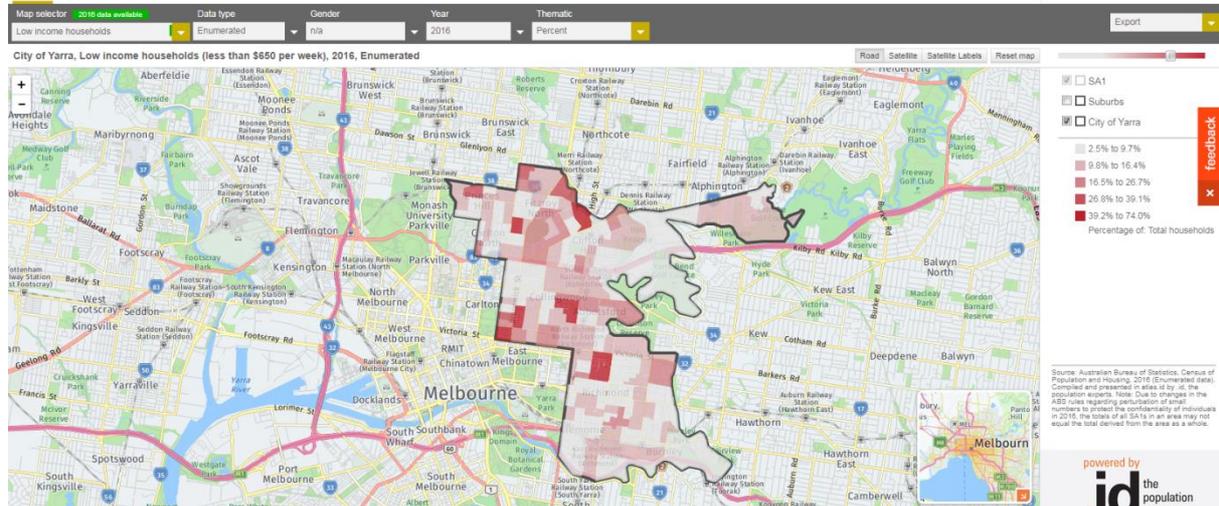
* Source: ABS, 2048 0 Estimating Homelessness, 2016

Reference 3 (courtesy of <https://atlas.id.com.au/yarra>)

idcommunity demographic resources

City of Yarra **social atlas**
 community profile | social atlas | population forecast

Maps | Analysis | Supporting info | Other resources



Reference 4 (courtesy of <https://profile.id.com.au/stonnington/highlights-2016>)

City of Stonnington 2016

◆ No significant change since previous Census (less than ±0.5%) ▲ Increased since previous Census ▼ Decreased since previous Census

Median age 35 ◆(0) Greater Melbourne 36 ◆ Victoria 37 ◆ Australia 38 ▲	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population 0.3% ◆(0.1%) Greater Melbourne 0.5% ◆ Victoria 0.8% ◆ Australia 2.8% ◆	Couples with children 20% ▼(-1.1%) Greater Melbourne 33% ◆ Victoria 31% ◆ Australia 30% ◆	Older couples without children 7% ◆(0.1%) Greater Melbourne 8% ◆ Victoria 9% ◆ Australia 10% ▲
Lone person households 32% ◆(0.4%) Greater Melbourne 22% ◆ Victoria 23% ◆ Australia 23% ◆	Medium and high density Housing 73% ▲(9.2%) Greater Melbourne 33% ▲ Victoria 27% ▲ Australia 27% ▲	Median weekly household income \$1,942 ▲(\$241) Greater Melbourne \$1,539 ▲ Victoria \$1,416 ▲ Australia \$1,431 ▲	Median weekly mortgage repayment \$506 Greater Melbourne \$421 Victoria \$391 Australia \$409
Median weekly rent \$405 Greater Melbourne \$355 Victoria \$330 Australia \$339	Households renting 44% ▲(3.0%) Greater Melbourne 29% ▲ Victoria 28% ▲ Australia 28% ▲	Households with a mortgage 21% ▼(-0.9%) Greater Melbourne 34% ▼ Victoria 33% ▼ Australia 32% ▼	Overseas born 31% ▲(2.0%) Greater Melbourne 34% ▲ Victoria 28% ▲ Australia 28% ▲
Language at home other than English 23% ▲(1.8%) Greater Melbourne 32% ▲ Victoria 28% ◆ Australia 21% ▲	University attendance 10% ▲(1.2%) Greater Melbourne 8% ▲ Victoria 5% ▲ Australia 5% ▲	University qualification 47% ▲(3.5%) Greater Melbourne 27% ▲ Victoria 24% ▲ Australia 22% ▲	Trade qualification (certificate) 8% ◆(0.2%) Greater Melbourne 15% ◆ Victoria 17% ◆ Australia 19% ▲
Unemployment rate 5.2% ▲(0.8%) Greater Melbourne 6.8% ▲ Victoria 6.8% ▲ Australia 6.9% ▲	Participation rate (population in labour force) 66% ◆(-0.2%) Greater Melbourne 62% ▼ Victoria 60% ▼ Australia 60% ▼	Public transport (to work) 28% ▲(2.6%) Greater Melbourne 15% ▲ Victoria 12% ▲ Australia 11% ▲	SEIFA index of disadvantage 2016 1,087 Greater Melbourne 1,018 Victoria 1,010 Australia 1,002
Homeless persons estimated 2016* 395			

* Source: ABS, 2049.0 Estimating Homelessness, 2016

Appendix 2: Examples of programmes and events

- CML, City Library remains open for WHITE NIGHT extravaganza
- CML & International AIDs Conference, special panel session on women's experiences of living positive, story collection via oral interview, and a communal tree of love at each library location in partnership with Living Positive Victoria and Positive Women Victoria
- CML & Front Yard Youth Service, Homework Tutor Program 2007-2009; photographic exhibition in the City Gallery with youth experiencing homelessness 2009; pop up library materials *in* Front Yard 2014-2015
- CML: Church of All Nations Homework Program from the Lygon and Drummond Street Housing Commission towers moving into the Kathleen Syme Library & Community Centre in order to gain access to better technology and free WiFi service
- CML & Midsumma Festival, in library and at the festival programming/events since 2009 including special story times, introduction of a queer collection, queer reading circles, exhibitions by local artists who identify as LGBTQIA+, documentary showing/history talks/exhibitions by the Gay and Lesbian Archives

- CML & Neighbourhood Justice Centre: free use of private meeting rooms for women at risk of or experiencing domestic violence to meet with specialists/lawyers (space perceived as innocuous by attendees so no fear of retribution from partners/significant others)
- SLIS, Tales out Loud- MECWACARE, Malvern East ongoing since 2015- Story Time for adults in care
- SLIS & Rotary Society- management of and donations as part of quarterly book sale to create second life for library items
- SLIS, Literature Alive Festival , from 2008 – 2016 and was a partnership between SLIS and the Children’s Literature of Australia Network (CLAN) (a subnetwork of the National Education and Employment Foundation (NEEF)). The festival ran over two weeks and celebrated children’s writing, illustration and storytelling. It included illustration and storytelling workshops for children, a panel discussion involving authors, illustrators, publishers etc, a few public events (pop up workshops at Prahran Market), an exhibition in libraries of artworks used in picture books. Festival workshops were conducted either in the library or in local primary schools
- SLIS, Aged care and assisted living (older adults and ABI (acquired brain injury) groups) - Library staff regularly deliver Tales Out Loud to aged care and assisted living facilities across Stonnington, occasionally delivering technology education sessions, including small group learning (eg iPad Basics) and one-to-one.
- YL, IADHOBIT Day at Collingwood Library; special story time sessions
- YL, Sensory Play groups and Story Time Sessions
- YL, Jazz on the Roof library summer programming
- YL, collaborator and funding partner for Napier Street block parties
- YL, funding partner for BLAKWIZ during Reconciliation Week
- YL, pre-opening of Bargoonga Nganjin, North Fitzroy Library community event in North Fitzroy – movie in the park
- YL, Aboriginal Housing Victoria, & SNAICC (National Voice for our Children) “One Million Stars to End Violence” <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-07-14/one-million-stars-against-violence-to-shine-commonwealth-games/8705516>
- YL, SLIS and CML all have programmes for children and adults that use art and craft to connect people with each other- Colour Me Calm, Collage Clubs, Kids' Craft Club, After School Kids' Club, Lego Builders, Lego Robotics,
- YL and SLIS both offer learning sessions in the digital/computer literacy spaces- one-on-one specific help, computer how-to classes, e-technology classes, and the collections and learning tools online that offer continuous content and learning opportunities when the library is closed
- YL and SLIS offer job and resume support writing sessions for those who may need extra help (re)entering the workforce