

## **Yarra City Council Draft LGBTIQ+ Strategy 2020 – 2024**

The Fitzroy Residents' Association welcomes the opportunity to respond to Yarra's Draft LGBTIQ+ Strategy and commends Council for its leadership.

The strategy, with its implementation plan, is an opportunity to rebalance funding priorities, bolster cases to leverage other funding sources and better acknowledge the Yarra's LGBTIQ+ residential population.

### **More LGBTIQ+ in Yarra**

A Victorian Population Health Survey (in the over 18 age bracket) reveals that about 10% of Yarra residents self-identify as LGBTIQ+. Yarra's new Social Justice Charter notes at least 1735 Yarra residents are living with their same-sex partner.

Yarra is also a key hub within Victoria for the LGBTIQ+ community, with a diverse range of services and businesses. An example is Hares & Hyenas on Johnston Street, Fitzroy, the only bookshop and community hub of its kind in Victoria.

Yarra is also home to very long-standing community bars and clubs providing safe places to meet (for example: gay venue The Laird, a pub in Abbotsford which has operated since 1980). Yarra's Gertrude Street, Fitzroy has been chosen as the location for a Spring 2021 State Government-hosted LGBTIQ+ celebration.

### **The Strategy**

The strategy's international law perspective provides valuable context for this plan. A recent State Government sheet of info-graphics (attached)

shows current progress at the Victorian level, and highlights statistics on safety and health for LGBTIQ+ Victorians.

Health and safety are key issues for the LGBTIQ+ community, and access to the safe spaces currently within Yarra is extremely important.

The State Government has released a Discussion Paper (see <https://engage.vic.gov.au/lgbtiqstrategy>) toward developing a whole of Victorian government LGBTIQ Strategy. Yarra Council could take a lead role encouraging all Councils to develop their own specific strategy and multi-year action plan.

Part of Yarra's Strategy should be to ensure that all relevant Yarra strategies refer to LGBTIQ+ engagement where suitable. Even given the relatively numerous Yarra LGBTIQ+ population, Yarra's new draft Community Engagement Strategy does not list engagement with these residents.

Yarra Council should also include a Commitment Statement relevant to its LGBTIQ+ population.

### **The Implementation Plan**

The implementation plan (2020 – 2024) is to commence at the beginning of 2021.

The FRA applauds and commends the importance of the first action in point 2.2.4. concerning intersectionality between the diverse communities that residents may be in, as well as the third action of investigating how to connect LGBTIQ+ residents within Yarra's Housing Estates.

The FRA recommends the following additions to Years 2 & 3 of the Plan:

#### *Year Two*

- A. That Yarra City Council “investigate the options for creating an LGBTIQ+ Art and History Museum, possibly via facilitation of an initial feasibility study. Such a shopfront, space or facility would be a community resource as well as a tourist attraction” and is best located close to public transport and cafés.

LGBTIQ+ history has proved very popular overseas, see the British Museum at: <https://blog.britishmuseum.org/love-is-love-uncovering-lgbtq-stories/> and <https://www.britishmuseum.org/visit/object-trails/desire-love-identity-lgbtq-histories>

- B. That Yarra City Council “work to ensure relevant LGBTIQ+ history (including past persecution before the current celebration) be accessible and investigate leading a regular Yarra City Queer History Month.”

*Year Three*

- A. That “Yarra Council City-funded health, aged care and family violence providers be required to commit to Rainbow Training for their staff during a defined period after they receive a Yarra grant.” Courses of 3 hours duration or longer are available. A range of training options are found at <https://www.rainbowhealthvic.org.au/training-programs>

Thank you.

Greg Chenhall, Deputy Chair

Martin Brennan, Chair

13 July 2020