



Brimbank
City Council



Brimbank Lifelong Learning Strategy 2024-2029

– building better learning
outcomes for all

Acknowledgement

Brimbank City Council respectfully acknowledges and recognises the Wurundjeri and Bunurong Peoples, as the first story tellers and holders of ancestral knowledge in Brimbank, who have passed on their learning through generations. As the Traditional Custodians of the land on we which we learn, we pay respects to their Elders, past, present and future.

Brimbank Lifelong Learning Vision

Brimbank City Council will work with the community and partner organisations to support and encourage a community of lifelong learners to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence to fully join in community life.

Brimbank City Council's Lifelong Learning Strategy 2024-2029 will encourage and support residents to join in learning over their lifetime. The Lifelong Learning Strategy is a long-term guide for Council and its partners, aimed at improving the social and economic outcomes of individuals and the community.

Council will work with partner organisations and community members to:

- create new approaches and partnerships
- develop and promote different pathways to learning
- promote better learning results throughout the municipality.

Yearly implementation plans will support the aims and objectives of the strategy. Every life stage will be included in these plans so that no one is left behind. Yearly planning will allow Council to be flexible so that it can respond to changes in the community, current trends, and community needs and expectations.

“Lifelong learning empowers us to innovate, adapt, and create sustainable solutions for a better future”

David Atchoarena, Director (2018-2023) of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning.





What is lifelong learning and lifewide learning?

Learning is everywhere – learning takes place in many places outside the classroom - in your garden, when socialising with friends, in your workplace or at your local community centre or library. Learning supports the whole person, by helping us to build better relationships, improve our health and wellbeing, and helps us to get a job and manage our finances.

Adult Learners Australia confirms this through the following definitions:

Lifelong learning recognises that learning occurs continuously throughout life. It helps people deal with new challenges and respond to ever-changing cultural, social and economic circumstances by developing their skills, knowledge and capacity to think critically.¹

Lifewide recognises that learning can occur simultaneously in all learning contexts (home, community, workplaces and institutions) and different learning settings (formal, non-formal and informal).²

Lifelong and lifewide learning provides a framework that supports people to:

- reach their potential
- better anticipate transitions
- self-manage their health and wellbeing.

Resilient and inclusive communities are nourished by a culture of lifelong learning, which enables them to live more productively in a diverse, multicultural society; enjoy the full benefits of citizenship and solve complex social and economic problems.³

1 Adult Learning Australia website
<https://ala.asn.au/our-partners/policy/>

2 ibid

3 Ibid

Purpose and Council role

The purpose of the Brimbank Lifelong Learning Strategy 2024-2029 is to guide Council's actions to improve learning outcomes in Brimbank.

To support Brimbank community members of all ages to have the skills, knowledge and confidence to pursue opportunities for economic and social connection.

Council will:

- **Partner** with community, local services, and the education sector, both formal and informal, to open up opportunities and benefits
- **Inform** the community of opportunities, programs, services and learning initiatives available
- **Co-design programs** and solutions with community members to meet community needs and expectations
- **Advocate** for investment to improve learning access and opportunities
- **Deliver** a wide range of low or no cost learning programs and opportunities
- **Monitor** the progress of learning and achievement to back to the community

Gender Equality

Council is strongly committed to achieving gender equality and work towards this by promoting gender equality in learning for everyone. Learning and education leads to better opportunities, more people in education, and jobs that pay more. In general, women earn less than men over their lifetime. The Brimbank Lifelong Learning Strategy 2024-2029 is a long term approach to removing barriers and improving education levels, including the gender pay gap and inequality in the workplace.



Brimbank City Council's Vision

A transformed Brimbank that is beautiful, thriving, healthy and connected.

By 2040, the Brimbank community will be healthy and safe and we will be united through a sense of belonging and pride.

Our City will be inclusive, resilient, innovative and vibrant and our people will share equally in the City's prosperity and opportunity.

The environment will be protected and enhanced and Brimbank's diverse neighborhood and housing will offer something for everyone.

Council's Strategic direction

Opportunity and Prosperity - A future focused, transforming city where all have opportunities to learn and earn – a prosperous place for all.



Our Community Snapshot

Highest level of education obtained



Bachelor or higher degree	Advanced diploma or diploma	Vocational	No qualification
19.8% Brimbank	8.2% Brimbank	14.6% Brimbank	48.3% Brimbank
29.2% Victoria	9.8% Victoria	16.7% Victoria	36.5% Victoria

Housing



Own	Renting	Mortgage	Other	Not stated
34.4% Brimbank	25.3% Brimbank	31.6% Brimbank	1.6% Brimbank	6.9% Brimbank
31% Victoria	27.4% Victoria	34.6% Victoria	1.7% Victoria	5.2% Victoria

Disabilities

14,975
people or
7.7%
of the population

in City of Brimbank
reported needing help
in their day-to-day lives
due to disability, with
5.9%
overall in Victoria



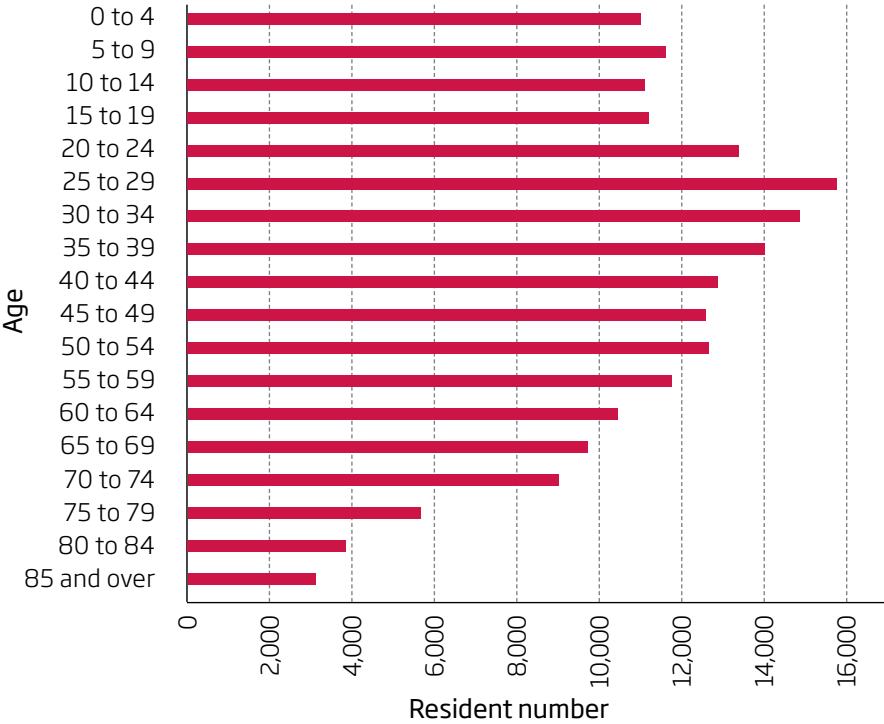
Born overseas

48.2%
Brimbank
30%
Victoria



Brimbank's Estimated Resident Population

By ages stats in life stages



Languages

LOTE/home spoken top 10

Vietnamese
Filipino/Tagalog
Greek
Arabic
Macedonian
Maltese
Cantonese
Italian
Croatian



Labour



Brimbank

Victoria

Employed
Full-Time

53.3%

56.2%

Employed
Part-Time

31.9%

32.3%

Internet

No access to wifi/ internet at home

16.6%

Brimbank

13%

Victoria



The story so far

Brimbank City Council developed its first Community Learning Strategy in 2010 to highlight how important learning is. Council listened to community feedback to improve the 2014-2017 and 2018-2023 strategies and have built on the successes of the earlier strategies.

Some of the achievements of the 2018-2023 strategy include:

- An ongoing Burmese and English bilingual story time program which assisted parents to support their children's learning through language and literacy development and the promotion of the value of home languages.
- Homework and learning help was delivered through programs for primary and secondary students to support learning outside of school. These included homework groups run in partnership with Equal Ed.
- An online school outreach portal was built to help schools in Brimbank to book library visits based on school topics, to help classroom learning and to provide real life experiences and connections to community and council services.
- Young people helped Council design career workshops in four schools (Keilor Downs, Brookside, Braybrook and Sunshine College), for students between 8 and 11.
- Local Afghani women helped Council design a program of workshops to connect Afghani women to social, financial, educational and health services.
- An *iPad Learning* program to help seniors increase their digital literacy skills. The program runs for six weeks with a different topic each week. Seniors take home an iPad with data to practise what they learnt between classes. Providing the data and iPads gives seniors a chance to learn and be included in online learning.
- In partnership with other Councils, two online *Learning for Earning* festivals were delivered. They included skills workshops and talks about employment opportunities in the west. This helped people during the covid-19 pandemic by connecting community members to employers, industry leaders, learning and employment services so that they can be aware of job opportunities.
- During lockdowns, Council moved services online so that people could still access learning programs when everything was closed. Seniors and vulnerable community members were contacted by phone to help them get online to join programs and continue access to council services.

During the lifespan of the 2018-2023 strategy there were improvements in lifelong learning outcomes in Brimbank:

- 3.7% more people in Brimbank have completed year 12 ⁴
- The percentage of Year 5 students at or above the national minimum literacy standard has increased from 92.8% to 94.2%⁵
- The percentage of Year 9 students who were meeting national literacy standards in Brimbank grew to 88.9% ⁶
- The number of young people living in Brimbank experiencing unemployment dropped from 2,910 in 2018 to 1,720 in 2021 ⁷
- 3.8% more residents now have a Bachelor degree or higher ⁸
- The number of seniors involved in work or learning who are 55 years and over has increased to 16.7% ⁹.

There is still work to be done in the following areas to improve learning outcomes in Brimbank:

- The number of children under five in Brimbank that do not meet developmental milestones is high
- Literacy and numeracy standards across all tested year levels are lower in Brimbank than the Victorian average (NAPLAN)
- The unemployment rate in Brimbank is higher than the Victorian average
- Adults in Brimbank are more than three times as likely not to have attended formal schooling compared to the Victorian average

4 <https://profile.id.com.au/brimbank>

5 <https://www.nap.edu.au/>

6 Ibid

7 <https://profile.id.com.au/brimbank>

8 Ibid

9 <https://profile.id.com.au/brimbank/employment-status>

Consulting with the community

The evaluation of the 2018-2023 strategy included consultation with community, service providers and council teams, as well as an online survey of Brimbank community members.

Feedback highlighted the changing needs of our community over the past five years, including the Global Covid-19 pandemic and its effects on the community.

Community needs included the importance placed on:

- Digital literacy
- English language skills
- Access to social programs and volunteer opportunities to support the mental health of residents
- Access to more transport options
- Helping young and senior people into education, employment and community life after lockdowns
- Helping very young children who spent much of their lives in lockdown to be ready for school.

Consultation was based on United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) major building blocks of a learning city, a world recognised framework for lifelong learning.



The six building blocks are:

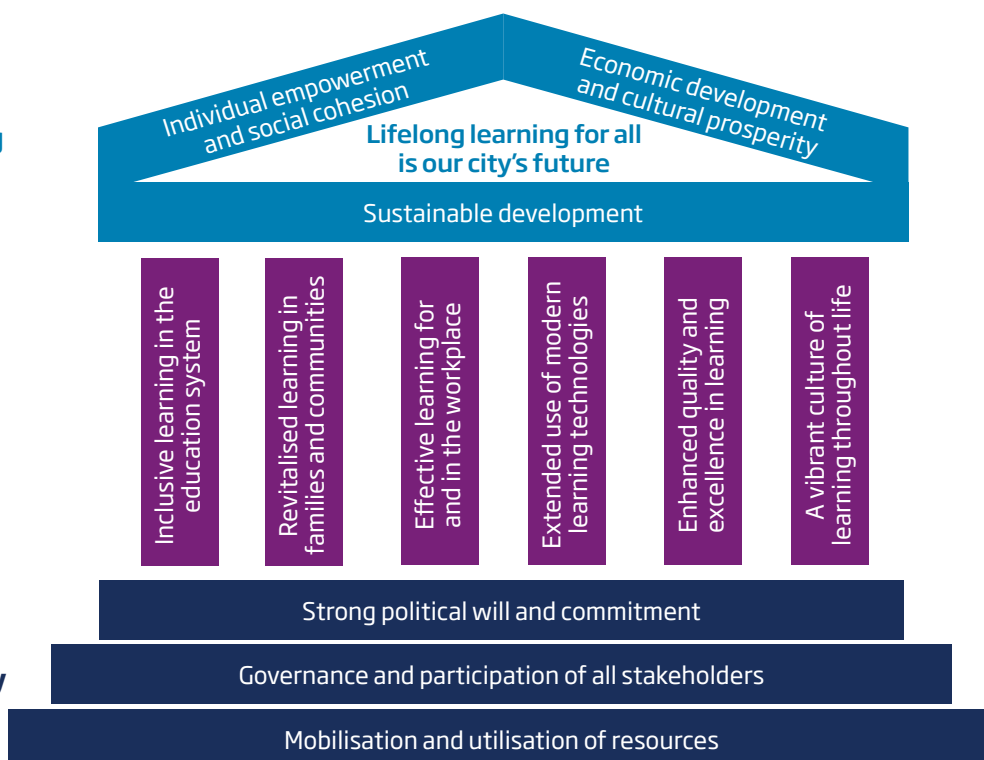
- Inclusive learning in the education system
- Revitalized learning in families and communities
- Effective learning for and in the workplace
- Extended use of modern learning technologies
- Enhanced quality and excellence in learning
- A vibrant culture of learning throughout life

The building blocks can be used as a guide by local government and organisations to promote lifelong learning in their communities. They support individual empowerment, social connection, economic growth, cultural richness and sustainable development.

Wider benefits of building a learning city

Major building blocks of a learning city

Fundamental conditions for building a learning city



The Brimbank Lifelong Learning Strategy 2024-2029 aligns with the building blocks, and guides the community on their lifelong learning journey. In line with Together We Are Brimbank, the Brimbank Lifelong Learning Strategy also supports the realisation of the UNESCO Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically goals:

- 3 Good health and well-being
- 4 Quality education
- 5 Gender equality
- 8 Decent work and economic growth
- 11 Sustainable cities and communities
- 17 Partnerships for the goals

The **Sustainable Development Goals** are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and improve the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere. The 17 Goals were adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, as part of the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** which set out a 15-year plan to achieve the Goals.¹⁰

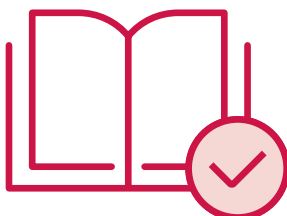
The UNESCO building blocks and the SDG framework are linked to each of the strategy life stage objectives. This will enable Brimbank to think globally through acting locally, to ensure our work improves the lives of those in our community.

UNESCO Sustainable Development Goals

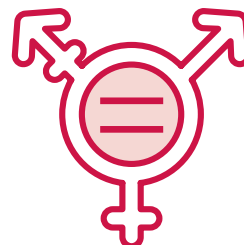
3 Good health and well-being



4 Quality education



5 Gender equality



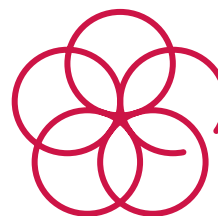
8 Decent work and economic growth



11 Sustainable cities and communities



17 Partnerships for the goals



¹⁰ The United Nations: Sustainable Development Goals Agenda website <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/>

Guiding Principles

Learn together – respect lived experience, we work with community to support diverse learning styles, needs and expectations

Inclusion – Increase access to education and learning for all by addressing barriers to participation, particularly those based on gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, age, sexuality and ability

Innovation – look for new and better ways and be open to fresh ideas and approaches to learning

Partnership – Work with a range of partners sharing leadership and respecting expertise

Advocacy – Support improved access to best practice learning opportunities and resources in Brimbank.



Priorities for Life Stages – Early Years (birth to compulsory school age)

Aim: supported learning environments for babies and preschool children at home and in the community

Our community said:

- Encourage children to value learning
- Provide family friendly activities
- Have events in home languages

Objectives:

- Support parents and carers in their roles in children's lives
- Promote language, literacy and numeracy as important life skills
- Promote the value of home languages
- Advocate for access to early learning resources and pre-school opportunities
- Learning experiences and environments support and reflect the diversity of families including non-binary, LGBTQIA+, men as caregivers and single parents

Council will monitor our communities progress against the following measures:

- Data from Australian Early Development Census (AEDC)
- Success stories from community and partners
- Pre-school and kindergarten enrolment data
- Bi-lingual story time attendance
- Library data for items borrowed in languages other than English
- Connections to SDGs and UNESCO building blocks

“Reading aloud with children is known to be the single most important activity for building the knowledge and skills they will eventually need for learning to read”

– Marilyn Jager Adams PhD

Learning together at Playgroup - Bianca and Oscar's story

First time mother Bianca found guidance offered by community playgroups helped her to navigate her journey as a new parent. Bianca was able to receive assistance and reassurance when needed and also be provided with helpful tips from playgroup leaders, to support Bianca as Oscar's first teacher.

“Being a covid baby, it took a while for Oscar to feel familiar with people and I think playgroups have supported this – especially now he recognises some of the faces of other playgroup members. The staff have supported me in so many ways, including how to put learning into play, activities for identifying body parts and things he sees, as well as using songs to improve his language development. Being part of playgroups has made me feel more assured about my role as a parent in Oscar's growth and development”



Priorities for Life Stages – School Years (compulsory school age, 6-16)

Aim: School age children and teenagers in Brimbank have access to a wide range of engaging and practical learning opportunities

Our Community Said:

- More homework support
- More activities and groups to bring everyone together to learn
- Career practitioners in each school
- Help with pathway and subject selection
- Access for everyone
- Better public transport
- Opportunities for women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)

Objectives:

- Promote the value of learning and encourage additional learning support, such as family learning opportunities, out of school learning and study help
- Build positive relationships between schools and community
- Support best practice models with schools, families and community to assist families to help children transition through school
- Advocate for more investment in Brimbank's public school system and safe, affordable transport to schools and services
- Advocate for more resources and help for students who are at risk of leaving or have disconnected from school

Council will monitor our communities progress against the following measures:

- Percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard for literacy (NAPLAN)
- Developmental milestones for children entering school (AEDC)
- Brimbank Resilient Youth Survey outcomes
- Success stories from community and partners
- Connections to SDGs and UNESCO building blocks

Practical experience for the future - Binusha's story

In 2021 Binusha was selected as a member of the Brimbank Youth Council (BYC). Binusha was the youngest in the group at 15 years old. Over two years of being part of the program Binusha develop core skills including teamwork, leadership and project management skills.

Being a Youth Councillor has given Binusha access to, and the confidence to participate in additional opportunities. *"BYC has helped me apply for scholarships, giving me the beneficial experience I need. Working on projects and applying that to outside of BYC. This year I started working at a newspaper club at school and applied the knowledge of meeting agenda and minutes and working in project groups to the work at school."*

Binusha has actively contributed to other council projects, including young people magazine *The Bold Source*.



Priorities for Life Stages – Young People (post compulsory school age, 17 to early adulthood)

Aim: Young people have positive further education, employment and learning opportunities and choices

Our Community Said:

- Better public transport
- Address lack of practical job skills for young people
- Free courses
- Pathways to employment and further study support

Objectives:

- Support diverse learning and educational opportunities
- Promote career and training pathways and readiness for employment and practical skills for adapting to changing work environments
- Encourage opportunities for young people to be involved in community activities
- Focus on young people with priority needs and those facing barriers to learning, representing young people's different lived experiences and barriers based on gender, sexuality, ethnicity and ability
- Support parents and carers to help young people with school, work and wellbeing
- Advocate for better supports for young people who have disconnected from education or training

Council will monitor our communities progress against the following measures:

- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data on how many young people go to TAFE or University
- ABS data on how many students finish year 12
- ABS data on how many young people are working
- Success stories from community and partners
- Connections to SDGs and UNESCO building blocks

Learning practical skills and making friends - Josh's story

Through Brimbank Learning Futures (BLF), 19 year old Josh was able to gain practical skills and receive a Certificate 1 in Café Operations. The course, offered in partnership with the Jesuit Community College, supported eight young people to learn new skills and gain accredited modules in barista theory, food and kitchen safety, as well as Responsible Serving of Alcohol (RSA).

"The six-week course at Brimbank Learning Futures was a great experience, and I enjoyed learning in a small group environment with other young people." After the course, Josh stayed in touch with many of the course participants and soon afterwards, found a job at a café not far from his home. Josh also works in retail, and is considering his options for future study.

"I love this type of work. I enjoy the early mornings, making myself my first coffee, talking to customers, and making them their morning coffee."



Priorities for Life Stages – Adults

(25 – 60 years)

Aim: Adults participate in lifelong learning for quality of life, creativity, employment and community and social connections

Our Community Said:

- Diversity and inclusion is important
- Value community connection
- Better access to information and communication
- More opportunities for volunteering
- Lack of accessibility
- Classes available in first languages
- Impact on personal growth due to caring responsibilities

Objectives:

- Encourage diverse and affordable adult learning opportunities, co-designed with community, with consideration of childcare options to encourage parents and carer's to attend
- Create opportunities for volunteering and community connection
- Promote formal training and informal learning opportunities to support pathways to employment
- Create opportunities for adults to improve English language and literacy skills and to maintain their first languages

Council will monitor our communities progress against these measures:

- ABS data for highest education levels
- Success stories from community and partners
- ABS data for proficiency in English
- Connections to SDGs and UNESCO building blocks

“If we want to achieve our goal, then let us empower ourselves with the weapon of knowledge and let us shield ourselves with unity and togetherness”

Malala Yousafza

Learning digital skills at Brimbank Libraries - Biak's story

“I never touch the computer before and now I know how to turn on/off the computer, I am familiar with the computer. I have learnt basic keyboard skill and I know short cut. I can save files, download the files, and send email with the attached file. I could pay the bill online I do not need to go to the Post Office, and also I could transfer the money through mobile banking. I joined the Library membership and I know how to log in to the computer. In the past I scared to go into the library. Now Moe (Burmese tutor) explained to us about the services of the Library and now I do not scare anymore. I have confidence to go to any Library by myself and I could access the computer. Moe taught us in Burmese and I could ask if I do not understand, that is really good to have Moe teaching us in my own language. I got new friends and the opportunity to reconnect with friends. I liked to learn in a group as well as one on one”. - Biak



Priorities for Life Stages – Later Life

(60 years and older)

Aim: The community builds on the lived experience and knowledge of older adults, supports intergenerational partnerships, and lifelong learning is recognised as part of healthy ageing

Our Community Said:

- Value intergenerational learning
- Promote diversity and inclusion
- Volunteering is highly valued
- Social isolation is a barrier
- Value lived experience
- Increase access to information

Objectives:

- Promote a range of accessible, formal and informal learning options
- Support volunteering opportunities that promote diversity and inclusion
- Create opportunities to develop digital literacy and other skills to increase social engagement and community connection
- Acknowledge and celebrate lived experience
- Encourage opportunities for intergenerational learning

Council will monitor our communities progress against the following measures:

- Success stories from community and partners
- ABS data on volunteers
- Engagement in community groups (Brimbank City Council data)
- ABS data on engagement
- Connections to SDGs and UNESCO building blocks

“Each day presents an opportunity for learning”

Lailah Gifty Akita

Learning beyond retirement - Terry's story

Terry moved to St. Albans as a seven year old in 1959. Terry hated school and eventually trained as a fitter and turner before undertaking a 46 year career as a long haul truck and coach driver. Terry always had a keen interest in woodworking but was time poor during his working life and did not have much of an opportunity to pursue it as a hobby.

After his retirement, Terry and a neighbour decided to visit the Westvale Men's Shed where he found a welcoming community of like-minded people, learning practical skills and safety. *“There's a great bunch of blokes and some very knowledgeable woodworkers in the group, who continually help me and others learn skills from where we are at. I am proud to say I've not just had the opportunity to learn these skills, but I have also made new friends and have a good social outlet. I really, really enjoy it.”*

Terry's connection with Westvale's Men's Shed has also opened him up to other learning opportunities at Westvale Community Centre. He has also taken computer and cooking classes over the past few years. Terry and the other Men's Shed members have also supported intergenerational learning, where they have mentored groups of young people from neighbouring primary schools who regularly visit and undertake woodworking activities with members of the Men's Shed.



Brimbank City Council would like to acknowledge and thank the community for their contribution to the development of the Brimbank Lifelong Learning Strategy 2024-2029.

Brimbank City Council

Telephone 9249 4000

Email info@brimbank.vic.gov.au

Post PO Box 70, Sunshine, VIC 3020

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