



Jigsaw

Case study.



The challenge.

Yarra Libraries goals:

- ✓ Improve access & search-ability of documents
- ✓ Preserve and conserve historical records
- ✓ Create employment opportunities for people with disability

Richmond Library is one of Yarra Council's five local libraries, collectively known as Yarra Libraries. A foundation customer of Jigsaw Melbourne, Richmond Library's first digitisation project started in July 2021.

Kylie Carlson, Senior Coordinator Community Engagement and Partnerships at Yarra Libraries reached out to Jigsaw when she learned that Jigsaw was expanding to Victoria. Passionate about creating a more inclusive world, Kylie is a particular advocate of creating employment pathways for people with disability and immediately identified that Jigsaw could help digitise local historical records.

Richmond Library houses a unique local history collection. Presented with the opportunity to embark on a digitisation project, Melissa Gilmour, Collections and Local History Librarian, singled out an important body of documents.

The documents are a collection of City of Richmond annual reports from 1912 - 1944, each between 20 and 40 pages. They are beautifully produced records from their era, including financial statements, information about public health, charitable works, road building, and illustrated with lots of original photographs.

These valuable historical records could help foster connection to place and a real sense of community for Yarra residents but were not available for public viewing because of their age and fragility, and the need to preserve them.

The solution.

Melissa Gilmour sent the Jigsaw team one document as a trial. The Jigsaw team scanned the document using OCR (optical character recognition), converting the physical document into a searchable PDF. Delighted with the quality of the sample, Melissa delivered the full collection of annual reports for scanning.



The results.

The team checked in with Melissa throughout the project to share progress. Within the agreed timeline, the Jigsaw Digital team successfully digitised the 32 annual reports.

The original documents have been returned for safekeeping to the library. They are stored in special plastic envelopes, in a dark cupboard, to ensure that they remain well preserved and undamaged. Now that they have been digitised, anyone in the world can access, search, and enjoy these valuable local history records.

Melissa is delighted with the professional and friendly service she received from the team at Jigsaw: *"From the get-go, the trainees have done an exceptional job. It was clear from the sample document that they would deliver high-quality digital copies of our records - I completely trusted that they would do a good job. I'm so pleased these special records can now be enjoyed by anyone!"*

Kylie continues to advocate for inclusion and support Jigsaw. With lived experience as a parent of children with disability, Kylie believes society needs to keep pushing and creating opportunities to make the world more inclusive. *"I believe that everyone has something to contribute. Seeing how Jigsaw trains and prepares their trainees for mainstream work is fantastic; everyone has strengths and it is wonderful to see how Jigsaw helps their trainees - and the world - recognise their individual superpowers!"*

Yarra Libraries has identified a number of additional projects that they would like to embark on this year, including the digitisation of old photo albums, slides and historic newspapers. The Jigsaw team can't wait to get started!

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Melissa Gilmour - Richmond Library

OCR can be used for a variety of applications, including:

- Scanning printed documents into versions that can be edited with word processors, like Microsoft Word or Google Docs.
- Placing important, signed legal documents into an electronic database.
- Indexing print material for search engines.
- Archiving historic information, such as newspapers, magazines or reports, into searchable formats.
- Converting documents into text that can be read aloud to visually-impaired or blind users.

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Jigsaw is a social enterprise empowered by Fighting Chance. Fighting Chance builds social businesses to create a truly inclusive economy where people with disability have unbridled access to opportunity, dignity and prosperity.

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