

GEELONG REGIONAL LIBRARY CORPORATION

LIBRARY INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

GEELONG
REGIONAL
LIBRARIES



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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Geelong Regional Library Corporation (GRLC) is a partnership of four member Councils - Borough of Queenscliffe, City of Greater Geelong, Golden Plains Shire and Surf Coast Shire. Together they provide region-wide shared library services through a network of branches that includes the Geelong Library & Heritage Centre (Central Library), sixteen branch libraries, two mobile library services, outreach services and an extensive range of eServices available via website.

The GRLC services an area of 5,513 km² and includes the State's fastest growing region with a population of 310,575 in 2019 forecast to grow by nearly 70,000 in the next decade. In addition to the large geographic area covered, there are two other notable characteristics of the network, which are: the large number of library branches for the population (highest number of library branches of all library services in Victoria), and the size of the branches. There is one library for every 18,000 people in the region and several libraries are small for the populations they serve.

Broadly, the GRLC branch network can be described as a cluster of libraries in the centre of Geelong including the Geelong Library & Heritage Centre (GLHC), Geelong West, Chilwell, Highton and Belmont. A ring of libraries then serve outer suburbs that include Newcomb to the east, Corio to the north and Waurin Ponds to the south. Beyond the Geelong metro area, there are seven branch libraries that serve discreet growth areas or townships and their catchments. These include Lara, Leopold, Drysdale, Ocean Grove (City of Greater Geelong), Torquay (Surf Coast Shire), Queenscliff (Borough of Queenscliffe) and Bannockburn (Golden Plains Shire). The Barwon Heads Library and the Western Heights College Libraries are community access libraries located in schools.

The Geelong region's economy is in transition, and jobs in traditional manufacturing and heavy industries have declined significantly in recent years. There are now a growing number of jobs in new industry sectors including insurance, health, education, advanced manufacturing, creative and cultural industries, tourism, biotechnology, research and development and intensive agriculture in the north and west.

To remain relevant in this rapidly changing environment library services have successfully adapted and grown over the last decade. The buildings and spaces that house library collections, services, programs and people must continue to evolve and respond to the demands of 21st century library users.

This Plan has been prepared following analysis of information from a number of sources that include; a visual inspection of library buildings, interviews with library branch managers, a review of library catchments, an examination of usage data and analysis of customer feedback and comments provided in the 2018 Library User Survey. In addition to this a scan has been undertaken more broadly of strategic documents and guidelines impacting on library services including Council Plans from the City of Greater Geelong, Golden Plains Shire, Surf Coast Shire and the Borough of Queenscliffe.

In the 2018 Library User Survey, library members identified a number of opportunities for improvement to library facilities. The issues differ from branch to branch and have been highlighted in the branch reviews at the rear of the document, however, the key issues can be grouped around the following themes;

- Noise – inadequate space for quiet reflection, study and work, mobile phones users, noisy programs such as children's Storytime
- Building size and amenity – not big enough; looks tired and dated; no toilets
- Power – not enough power points to recharge devices

- Furniture – looks tired and worn; not enough chairs, tables, study and informal seating;
- Parking – not enough; not close by
- Collections and shelving – not big enough; not enough of the right things; shelving too low or too high or inappropriate
- Self check and returns chutes – not enough and or in the wrong places.

Decisions regarding infrastructure models and the extent of library networks and building infrastructure provision sit appropriately with member Councils. The Plan recommends that library renewal and development be informed by best practice in public library service provision through the use of *People Places* (a guide for the development of public library buildings) and the *Guidelines, Standards and Outcome Measures for Australian Public Libraries* (a guide for developing service levels in public libraries). These reference documents should underpin any library development projects in the region.

It is also proposed that decisions to advance library projects in the Geelong region be informed by eight *Guiding Principles* as follows:

1. New libraries will meet *People Places* building area standards.
2. Equity and fairness in development and renewal
3. Local community needs will drive library design and renewal
4. Libraries are for everyone and will engender pride in the community
5. Libraries will be accessible to all and feature universal design
6. Libraries will be “future proofed”, built and redeveloped for the future incorporating Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) principles and flexibility
7. New libraries in the region will be developed in partnership and/or located with other services
8. Libraries will be primary access points for new and emerging technologies

A proposed Service Model Hierarchy provides a framework in which libraries for different communities and catchments can be scaled. It is in summary:

Central Library - the Geelong Library & Heritage Centre providing central library and heritage services to the wider region;

Branch Libraries - suburban and town based libraries providing a range of community focussed services including Bannockburn, Belmont, Corio, Drysdale, Geelong West, Newcomb, Lara, Leopold, Ocean Grove, Queenscliff, Torquay and Waurn Ponds.

Community Libraries - providing a local service that is complemented by services in larger nearby branches. They are the smaller libraries and library services in schools and include Chilwell, Highton, Barwon Heads and Western Heights College. It would also cover alternative models of service delivery such as book depots;

Mobile Libraries – providing services to remote and rural communities;

E-Library Services - website access to all online library resources 24/7.

The final section of the Plan provides an overview of each of the branches in the GRLC library network including their size, usage, membership, special features, location, catchment and growth, community feedback, development opportunities, recommended improvements and timeframes. The Branch Summaries are presented in alphabetical order in Chapter 10 and the table on Page 4 provides a summary of the recommended scale and timing of improvement works across the network.

SUMMARY OF INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT BY TIMEFRAME AND TYPE

Time Frame	Minor Refurbishment	Major Refurbishment	New Library	Planning and Design	Review
Short term 0-3 Years	Chilwell Highton Waurin Ponds	Corio Queenscliff		Drysdale – New library Lara – New library Ocean Grove – Library expansion Torquay – New library	
Medium Term 3-5 Years		Belmont Geelong West Newcomb Ocean Grove	Drysdale Lara Torquay	Armstrong Creek – New library	Barwon Heads
Long Term 5-10 years			Armstrong Creek		Bannockburn GLHC Leopold

The GRLC has a deep understanding of how building improvements could enhance library services for communities based on professional expertise and experience. While this Plan provides an overview of the status of library facilities and makes recommendations about the nature and the timing of facility improvements, member Councils have responsibility for planning, funding and delivering capital improvements or new library developments.

The preparation of this Infrastructure Development Plan for libraries across the region will guide the GRLC and member Councils about future plans for the evolution of library facilities. It will also assist with stakeholder consultation processes, the co-ordination of funding applications and the allocation of resources within our organisations to ensure that library facilities are the best they can be for the communities they serve.



2. INTRODUCTION

The Geelong Regional Library Corporation (GRLC) is a partnership of four member Councils – Borough of Queenscliffe, City of Greater Geelong, Golden Plains Shire and Surf Coast Shire. Together they provide region-wide shared library services through a network of branches that includes the Geelong Library & Heritage Centre (Central Library) sixteen branch libraries, two mobile library services, outreach services and an extensive range of eServices available via the website.

In September 2009 the City of Greater Geelong adopted a ***Public Library Buildings Development Strategy*** that had been prepared in partnership with the GRLC to assist with planning for the renewal and development of libraries in the City. For the past ten years the Strategy has provided a valuable framework and guide for library development around Geelong. It established that there was a need to renew and develop library facilities in order that the buildings remain attractive and relevant to the community, and articulated a framework to guide that work. Pleasingly, the majority of recommendations in the Strategy were delivered. Though the Strategy was predominantly a document for the City of Greater Geelong, the GRLC Board adopted the planning and development guidelines and principles it contained. Four major redevelopments and refurbishments and six new libraries have been built across the region.

In the ***Reading Ahead Geelong Regional Library Corporation Library Plan 2017 to 2021***, the GRLC has committed to reviewing the 2009 ***Public Libraries Building Development Strategy*** and developing a new plan that includes the libraries of all member Councils. At the conclusion of this planning process the Board will have a Library Infrastructure Plan that provides;

- A region-wide and strategic view of the library infrastructure renewal and development needs and opportunities for the next ten years.
- A framework for the development and renewal of library buildings – using the ***People Places*** best practice building design and development guidelines, and GRLC specific Guiding Principles.
- Recommended priorities for action and time frames, based on an objective assessment of the condition of the facility, the needs of the community and population growth.
- A planning document that can be used to advocate for resources to ensure our library buildings remain up to date and attractive, fit for purpose and capable of delivering the library services needed and expected.
- A plan that can inform the GRLC's annual capital expenditure for Furniture, Fittings and Equipment in library branches.

It will help ensure library buildings in the network;

- Present welcoming, purposeful and safe library facilities that are at the heart of the community.
- Provide facilities that can accommodate engaging library programs, events and activities encouraging a lifelong love of reading and increase social inclusion.
- Provide spaces for learning, study, work and leisure.

Importantly, the provision of library services by the member Councils helps to fulfil obligations to provide services and facilities that contribute to community wellbeing and prosperity. This commitment is articulated in all member Councils' plans. The important role that libraries play in connected and informed society has also been expressed in a number of state, national and international strategies and statements and they are referenced in Chapter 12.



3. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

WHY A PLAN

To remain relevant and responsive in a rapidly changing society library services have successfully adapted and grown over the last decade. The buildings and spaces that house library collections, services, programs and people must also evolve to respond to demands of modern library users. This Plan captures the current status of branches in the library network and foreshadows changes in the local environment that can impact on library usage. It provides member Councils and the GRLC with information about opportunities to improve facilities, guided by development principles.

As mentioned in the introduction, the City of Greater Geelong, with the GRLC, prepared a *Public Library Buildings Development Strategy* in 2009 to assist with the planning, renewal and development of libraries across the City. It is important that this strategic approach continues and expands to cover the entire region's library network. The Plan will guide decision making and help ensure critical work is prioritised and appropriate resources are available.

DEVELOPING THE PLAN

The Plan has been prepared following the analysis of information from a number of sources. To assist in the development of the Plan, and early in the process, the GRLC Board was asked to endorse a set of Guiding Principles and the Service Model Hierarchy. Further to this, the following has been undertaken:

- Visual inspection of library buildings
- Semi-structured interviews with library branch managers about the condition of library buildings, furniture, equipment and opportunities to better meet users' needs
- Analysis of the catchment area the library serves
- Examination of branch data relating to visitation, service usage and membership
- Analysis of comments in the 2018 Library User Survey about ways to improve branch libraries (as they relate to facilities)

The development of the plan has also involved a broad review of trends, plans and policies impacting on library services including review of:

- Current trends.
- Demographic information about growth and changes in population characteristics.
- Local, state and national policy and plans that relate to library service provision.
- Library standards and guidelines.

GROWTH IN THE REGION

The GRLC serves an area of 5,513 km² which includes Geelong, Victoria's largest regional city. The four local government areas served by the GRLC have a combined forecast population of 310,675 in 2019 expected to grow to 350,096 in 2026 and 378,502 in 2031. Geelong is Victoria's fastest growing region with Golden Plains and Surf Coast Shires also expected to experience significant population growth by 2031.

TABLE 1 – FORECAST POPULATION FOR GRLC MEMBER COUNCIL AREAS

Year	Forecast Population				Total
	City of Greater Geelong	Surf Coast Shire	Golden Plains Shire	Borough of Queenscliffe	
2019	251,540	32,651	23,384	3,100	310,675
2026	282,038	37,948	26,826	3,284	350,096
2031	303,834	41,801	29,507	3,360	378,502

Note: Data sourced from i.d.community population forecast and other statistical information available on member Council and G21 websites in February 2019.

This rate of population change is faster than forecast growth in the rest of regional Victoria. The urban development of 2,600 ha of farming land at Armstrong Creek will accommodate the bulk of Geelong and the region's growth in the near future. The Armstrong Creek Growth Area Master Plan shows the area will provide housing for up to 65,000 people in approximately 22,000 residential homes.

CHANGE IN THE REGION - AN ECONOMY IN TRANSITION

The Geelong region is in transition from an industrialised economy to a knowledge and service based economy. Jobs in the region's traditional manufacturing sector and heavy industries have declined significantly in recent years. The loss of several large employers has contributed to direct and indirect job losses across the region. Challenges of unemployment and underemployment continue and the regional workforce is looking for opportunities to re-skill. Commonwealth, State, Local Government and Deakin University initiatives are facilitating employment growth in new industry sectors in insurance, health, education, advanced manufacturing, creative and cultural industries, tourism, biotechnology, research and development and intensive agriculture in the north and west.

New organisations and business hubs in Geelong include WorkSafe, National Disability Insurance Agency and the Geelong Innovation and Technology Hub.

LIBRARY USE AND KEY OUTCOMES

Public libraries are used by a wide cross section of the community. The proportion of people that belong to a local library varies from community to community for a range of reasons including educational and cultural background, proximity to a library, the appeal of the library service, the size of the building, the collection, programs and events, location and amenity.

Across Victoria the number of members of public libraries is 2.2 million meaning one in three residents are members. More people belong to libraries in Victoria than any other membership based community institutions, such as the AFL and other sporting clubs, community or cultural institutions. In the Geelong region 124,000 people are members of Geelong Regional Libraries.

There are needs in the community that libraries are well placed to meet. There is an important place for well-resourced and connected library services, given that one in seven children start school with language and cognitive skills that make them at risk or vulnerable, and one in four Victorians aged 15-74 is functionally illiterate. The computer and internet access that libraries provide is still vitally needed as one in seven Victorian households has no internet access¹.

¹ 2016 Census ABS

The opportunities for social connections provided by libraries are critical as one in four Victorian households has a person living alone and one in five Victorians is over the age of 60². Library members are typically older and 62% of GRLC library members are women³. There are few other resources in communities that offer so much and are free. This is important to the large number of library users that are retired and/or on low incomes⁴.

The 2016 *Guidelines, Standards and Outcome Measures for Australian Public Libraries*⁵ describe six key outcomes from the work of libraries. If libraries are to succeed in delivering for communities they must strive for more than traditional measures of library output such as the number of loans or visits. These individual and community outcomes result from libraries helping people to improve their knowledge and skills or change attitudes and behaviours. Library spaces must be suitable and sufficiently flexible to deliver these outcomes which include:

- **Literacy and lifelong learning.** For a long time public libraries have played a valuable role in helping children to learn to read through storytime programs and children's collections. While this continues to be a cornerstone of library programming, libraries also offer programs and resources to support adult literacy and digital literacy, as well as collections, programs and facilities that enable and encourage people of all ages and interests to pursue formal and informal study and lifelong learning.
- **Stronger and more creative communities.** Public libraries strengthen communities and build social capital by providing an inclusive forum and support for expression of creativity and cultural identity. They preserve the past, celebrate the present and embrace the future by ensuring free and equitable access for all people, collecting and promoting local cultural content, and celebrating diversity and promoting intercultural conversations and tolerance.
- **Digital inclusion.** The ability to access and use technology is becoming a prerequisite for effective participation in society. Today, the only way to access some information, government and business services is through the internet. Yet 14% of Australian households do not have internet access. Libraries play an important role in supporting digital inclusion and bridging the digital divide. Libraries provide free access to computers and the internet, technical support to computer users, and training to people with low levels of digital literacy.
- **Informed and connected citizenship.** Many people come to their local library to connect with one another and find out what is happening in their community. The library is becoming the new 'town square', a non-commercial place in a busy central location close to or co-located with other community facilities, education and cultural organisations.
- **Personal development and wellbeing.** Everyone is welcome to use the library as they choose, be this reading for pleasure, meeting friends and people with common interests, accessing everyday information, accessing information that supports health and wellness, managing personal finances or being somewhere safe with other people.
- **Economic and workforce development.** Public libraries support economic and workforce development by helping people develop literacies and skills, providing access to the internet to allow people to search and apply for jobs online and access to computers to allow people to write job applications. Libraries have always provided spaces where start-ups and small businesses can work, research, communicate and collaborate with customers and business partners.

² 2016 Census ABS

³ 2019 GRLC Membership Database

⁴ 2016 Geelong Regional Library Corporation Community Survey

⁵ *Guidelines, Standards and Outcome Measures for Australian Public Libraries*, Australian Public Library Alliance and Australian Library and Information Association, 2016.

4. LIBRARY FUNDING

In the present funding environment 80% of funding for the GRLC comes from member Councils, 14% from State Government recurrent library grant and around 6% of income is generated through user fees, small grants and other income.

LIBRARY AGREEMENT

The Library Agreement of the GRLC's four member Councils details the terms and the conditions of the provision of library services and how the costs for the service will be apportioned. The Agreement has been made in accordance with Section 196 of the *Victorian Local Government Act* and is reviewed every five years.

Section 7 of the Agreement, *Equity and Operating Costs*, describes the responsibilities for costs associated with operating the service and costs associated with the assets used by the service. The assets of the Council to be used by the GRLC (buildings) and the assets of the GRLC (collections, ICT, fleet), are detailed in Schedules 1 and 2 of the Agreement. Each year the GRLC prepares a budget that details the costs of operating the service.

The GRLC is responsible for the maintenance, repair, replacement and operating costs of all of its assets which include collections (physical and virtual), ICT equipment, and fleet vehicles. It is also responsible for the maintenance, repair, replacement and operating costs of all assets transferred to the GRLC by the member Councils, such as furniture.

Councils are responsible for providing buildings, the initial purchase of furniture and equipment in new libraries and the initial purchase of mobile libraries from which library services are provided by the GRLC. The costs of providing and maintaining library buildings are the responsibility of the member Councils. Buildings provided by Council may be Council owned or leased.

In preparing annual budgets for the Corporation allowance is made for the depreciation of the assets of the GRLC which includes lending materials, furniture, equipment and vehicles. The value of depreciation of the GRLC assets has grown substantially over the last three years with the opening of the Geelong Library & Heritage Centre.

Decisions regarding infrastructure models and the extent of library networks and building infrastructure provision sit appropriately with member Councils. It is member Councils that make decisions regarding capital improvements or when new library developments will occur within their respective municipal boundaries, and the GRLC that manages all aspects of the library services delivered from those buildings.

LIVING LIBRARIES GRANTS

The Victorian State Government's Living Libraries Infrastructure Program (LLIP) enables Victorian councils and regional library corporations to deliver new or renewed library infrastructure for their communities. The LLIP is the only Government sponsored capital works funding program specifically for libraries. The program helps councils provide library facilities that meet the changing needs of communities through two categories: minor works, and major works. Funding of up to \$750,000 is available for major works.

In the last decade the LLIP has invested in the development of the new Waurin Ponds, Bannockburn and Leopold static libraries, the Bellarine and Surf Coast Mobile Library and the refurbishment of the Geelong West Library and the Golden Plains Mobile Library. Funding has just been confirmed for the forthcoming Queenscliff Hub which includes the library. The preparation of an Infrastructure Development Plan for libraries across the region will assist in the co-ordination and preparation of funding applications to this highly competitive program.

5. DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES - **PEOPLE PLACES** AND LIBRARY STANDARDS

People Places⁶ is both a theoretical and practical resource with different sections that relate to specific parts of the overall methodology involved in the planning and design of a new or refurbished public library building. Sections can be used independently, collectively or in sequence depending on what is appropriate for the particular project. As a resource, the document can be useful in any matter involving the planning and design of public library buildings. It not only explores issues relating to library design but also makes clear the processes needed to deliver a successful library development project.

New library buildings and thoughtful refurbishments of existing libraries increase memberships and visits. An essential element of the success of new libraries is good design and location. Design of public libraries now considers: striking design; distinctive spaces for diverse user groups; retailing approaches to ambience and collection display; high quality interior design; comfortable 'non-institutional' furniture; appropriate lighting and signage; pervasive Information and Communications Technology; and eating and drinking facilities. Recent experience in Australia and overseas has demonstrated that well planned and beautifully designed libraries increase usage and provide a range of significant community wellbeing and liveability outcomes.

Library development projects can be long, complex and difficult. **People Places** has been used widely by councils and library services across Australia as a framework to ensure the development process is well considered and comprehensive – delivering the best possible public library for the communities they serve. **People Places** also emphasises new models for library provision with an emphasis on the integration of modern technology into library functions and design.

It is recommended that **People Places** be used as the guiding document to assist member Councils and the GRLC in the planning, design and development of new libraries and library refurbishments.

GUIDELINES, STANDARDS AND OUTCOME MEASURES FOR AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

While **People Places** is a comprehensive guide to the development and refurbishment of library buildings, the *Guidelines, Standards and Outcome Measures for Australian Public Libraries*,⁷ establishes complementary national standards and guidelines for modern public libraries around Australia. The new guidelines describe and benchmark all aspects of service delivery including;

- Governance
- Library collections (physical and digital resources and content)
- Staffing numbers and levels
- Library building standards
- Budget (operational, salary and capital)
- Technology and other web based services

These guidelines are useful in establishing service levels and measuring performance and should also be used to inform library development projects.

⁶ *People Places; A Guide for Public Library Buildings in New South Wales. Third Edition. June 2012*

⁷ *A Guidelines, Standards and Outcome Measures for Australian Public Libraries. Australian Library and Information Association and the Australian Public Library Alliance, 2016*

6. LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT - GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Guiding Principles in this Plan are aligned with the Vision, Mission and Values of the GRLC as expressed in its 2017-21 Library Plan. The Mission of the GRLC is:

To be an exemplary library service. We create opportunities for our community to read, learn, work and connect with each other and the world:

- ***By providing safe and welcoming places and spaces***
- ***By facilitating equitable access to collection, programs, information and technology***
- ***By nurturing discovery, creativity and innovation***
- ***Through knowledge, expertise and encouragement of library staff***

The Mission makes explicit the commitment of the organisation to provide spaces and places that are safe and welcoming, and this is fundamental to the delivery of an exemplary library service.

For many people the local library is the most important civic and community space in a neighbourhood, and increasingly councils are committing large amounts of money and resources to new library developments. These buildings are amongst the largest investments council will make in civic infrastructure and this level of importance places a high degree of expectation on the final outcome in terms of both the library service and the built form.

Underpinning the following principles is a commitment to best practice and to utilising the best available expertise to deliver each stage of all future library developments including library staff, library space planners, architects, interior designers, accessibility consultants and building firms.

6.1 New libraries will meet *People Places* building area standards

An effective library service has a number of elements including appropriately trained staff, well curated collections, access to new technologies, physical (and virtual) access, opportunities to participate in lifelong learning and cultural programs and fit for purpose spaces from which to deliver them. *People Places*, with its population and service based benchmarks, has been used in the development of many new and successful public library building projects around the country. The guide assists councils and library staff create places that fulfil the vision and needs of their communities. The guide recommends:

PROJECTED POPULATION SERVED	MIN M ² PER 1,000
fewer than 20,000	57.5
20,001 to 35,000	39
35,001 to 65,000	35
65,001 to 100,000	31
more than 100,000	28

6.2 Equity and fairness in development and renewal

Library development and renewal will promote fairness and equality in outcome. GRLC acknowledges there are barriers faced by some people to accessing library services and that not everyone has the same and equal opportunity to participate. These barriers can emerge through a range of factors such as social disadvantage, poverty, disability, illiteracy and cultural background. The library service will prioritise direction of resources to communities who have the greatest needs in order to address issues of inequity that exist in the region.

6.3 Local community needs will drive library design and renewal

The development of libraries will be informed by characteristics of the communities they serve - rather than a one size fits all approach. Library spaces will be flexible and capable of meeting the needs of the wide range of people who visit libraries. For example, there will spaces for children's activities and programs, spaces for young people to meet, study and socialise and quiet spaces for reading and study. Libraries will be designed to function as the "third place" or "community living rooms", particularly small libraries in neighbourhoods. Space design will be characterised by considerations of human scale, the placement of comfortable furniture and gathering places. Libraries in areas of disadvantage may focus on Information Technology provision and training, literacy development, collections and programs.

6.4 Libraries are for everyone and engender pride in the community

The library is a neutral space for everyone - welcoming the broadest, most diverse audience. All new and redeveloped libraries will be quality civic spaces of which the community can feel proud. New libraries will be designed with a strong relationship to the streets, open space and buildings that surround them. Spaces around libraries will invite people to come together and sit, chat, take a break or meet with others. The library should be a visible symbol of local culture and identity. High quality design will capture and then express these characteristics effectively and meaningfully.

6.5 Libraries will be accessible to all and feature universal design

Universal design⁸ is design for everyone. This principle ensures that libraries meant for everybody are accessible by everybody. *Universal design is about creating facilities, built environments, products and services accessible to people of all abilities, and as far as possible, without adaptations. Universal design makes everything usable for as many people as possible from the beginning, so that changes aren't needed later.*⁹ It is relevant to all members of the community, those with mobility or accessibility needs and those without them, because at some time anybody could develop or be caring for someone with accessibility needs. Importantly, the application of universal design principles helps ensure public libraries remain available to older members of the community for reading, social connections and autonomy.

6.6 GRLC Libraries will be "future proofed", built and redeveloped for the future incorporating Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) principles

Building relevance and flexibility can ensure the library will be there to help communities navigate rapidly changing times. "A future-proof library builds on the concept of sustainability or green design to include consideration of how the building will respond to rapid, unpredictable change that will continue to transform our social, economic and environmental reality."¹⁰ Future-proof libraries are designed for perpetual relevance through a process that engages the community and the built-in ability to respond to changing needs. A future proof library is:

- Designed and built with the long term in mind.
- Makes people feel elevated, comfortable and social. This includes the provision of quality, purpose designed furniture and fittings that reflect the ethos of the library.
- Unique to its local economic, social, cultural and environmental context.
- Located central to the paths people take on their daily treks.

⁸ The term Universal Design and the seven principles defining the concept first coined by Cornell and Colleagues, North Carolina State University.

⁹ Making our infrastructure accessible for everyone <https://www.vic.gov.au/infrastructureplan/resources/articles/making-our-infrastructure-accessible-for-everyone.html>

¹⁰ 23 Brown, William M. Library by Design Supplement to Library Journal, Fall 2008



- Green designed with consideration given to walkability, cycling, transport, air quality, natural ventilation, daylighting, energy positive features such as energy resource effectiveness, water and waste management, better building envelope and systems, recycling of resources, life cycle maintenance.
- Flexible, adaptable and reconfigurable spaces that can adjust and adapt to a changing context. We will see more demands for flexibility in facilities of all kinds.
- Preference for new buildings structural systems that minimize use of interior columns with a raised floor plenum allowing for almost ductless delivery of heating, cooling and ventilation in a manner that offers better indoor air quality and comfort along with energy costs savings. It also allows for plug and play rewiring for data and power.

In existing buildings other solutions need to be found to increase the flexibility of existing space through things like collections on wheels which can be moved to create space for programs and activities.

6.7 New libraries in the region will be developed in partnership and/or located with other services

Libraries are often the key anchor tenant that attracts the highest usage and broadest spectrum of community in multi-service developments. When planned and delivered effectively, libraries can be catalysts and contributors to urban and rural regeneration. Partnership arrangements help consolidate the capital cost of investment in different types of community infrastructure. It brings people to one place where they can receive multiple services. Possible future partnership scenarios include:

- Civic Landmark Library delivering comprehensive and in depth services in a town square or cultural precinct context. Libraries linked with Heritage Centres, Galleries, Museums, Civic Hall, Theatres, Tourist Information Centres, Council Administration and Customer Service Centres.
- Community Hub Library co-located with synergistic services such as Community Centres, Community Learning Centres, Childcare Centres, Maternal and Child Health Centres, Youth Spaces, Informal and Formal Education Providers, Social Support agencies, Community Health providers.
- Recreation Hub Library linked with indoor sporting centres, playing fields, aquatic centres and youth centres.
- Retail Hub Library located in commercial precinct undertaken with developer contribution funds or leased. Particular care must be taken to ensure that community outcomes are paramount in the planning and delivery of such a library and that planning and design guidelines including location, size and design are not compromised.

6.8 GRLC Libraries will be primary access points for New and Emerging Technology

Public libraries provide technology as a core service and enabler. They are primary access points to digital infrastructure, information and resources. Libraries should incorporate dedicated learning spaces that raise awareness of new technologies, increase digital inclusion and provide opportunities for practical skills development.

Increasingly services and information is only provided online, and not all people have the knowledge and equipment to access the information and services they need. Libraries play an important role in providing computers and training to develop digital literacy in the community.

Free Wi-Fi, space for use of mobile devices and access to computers and printers are important, but innovations in technology will require flexible and adaptable design to enable libraries to continue their important role in providing access to leading edge technologies. Library facilities must be able to respond to changes and redundancy in technology.

7. SUMMARY OF 2018 GRCL LIBRARY USER SURVEY

The GRCL conducts a comprehensive survey of library users every two years. The participation rate in the survey is consistently high (3,500 surveys were completed in 2018 by a diverse range of users). The information generated in the survey is robust and reliable. Results are reviewed at each branch and across the network to identify trends and emerging issues. Amongst many other things, the 2018 Survey invited participants to nominate one thing the GRCL could do to improve their branch library. This question elicits a range of responses which have been grouped into key themes.

At some libraries there will be significant commentary on a specific issue for example, lack of toilets, and where that relates to this Plan it will be highlighted in the Branch Summary. Other issues raised such as lending periods and opening hours do not relate to facilities and are generally addressed through a review of policies, procedures, usage and budget. There are other issues, such as noise in libraries, which can be dealt with through a combination of policy and behavioural change, and alterations to the physical environment.

The key themes with implications for facilities are as follows:

- Noise – inadequate space for quiet reflection, study and work, mobile phones users, noisy programs such as children's Storytime
- Building size and amenity – not big enough; looks tired and dated; no toilets
- Power – not enough power points to recharge devices
- Furniture – looks tired and worn; not enough chairs, tables, study and informal seating;
- Parking – not enough; not close by
- Collections and shelving – not big enough; not enough of the right things; shelving too low or too high or inappropriate
- Self-check and returns chutes – not enough and or in the wrong places.

The feedback received is a rich source of information that will help inform planning and delivering improvements in library infrastructure. Alongside feedback from service managers, changes in usage patterns and community demographics, analysis of this community response helps ensure the management and staff understand how the service is being experienced and where the service can be improved.



8. THE GRLC NETWORK CHARACTERISTICS AND CATCHMENTS

The GRLC serves a large geographic area of 5,513 km² and a population of 310,515 (2019 forecast). Covering four regional and rural municipalities, GRLC has an extensive network of branches and dispersed user base compared with other Victorian public library services, which typically serve a more concentrated geographic area.

The branch network can be described as a cluster of libraries close to the centre of Geelong including the GLHC, Geelong West, Chilwell, Highton and Belmont. A ring of libraries then serve suburbs branching out from the centre of Geelong that include Newcomb to the east, Corio to the north and Waurin Ponds to the south. Beyond the Geelong metro area, there are seven branch libraries that serve discrete growth areas or townships and their catchments. These include Lara, Leopold, Drysdale, Ocean Grove (City of Greater Geelong), Torquay (Surf Coast Shire), Queenscliff (the Borough of Queenscliffe), and Bannockburn (Golden Plains Shire). The Barwon Heads Library and the Western Heights College Libraries are community access libraries in schools.

Two notable characteristics of the GRLC are the large number of library buildings and their size. A number of libraries are small for the populations they serve when compared to recommended library standards. This sometimes reflects the age of the library buildings and their history as local libraries servicing small local government areas prior to local government amalgamations in the mid 1990s.

It is proposed that some changes be made to the Service Model Hierarchy in the 2009 *Public Library Building Development Strategy*. The first is the removal of the Sub-regional Branch Library category. Library development projects undertaken over the last decade at Bannockburn, Lara, Waurin Ponds, Torquay and Leopold show that there is no clear distinction made between the development of sub-regional and branch libraries.

It would appear that the characteristics of the catchment area – the size and nature of the population, co-location with other community services, proximity to retail and commercial centres, budget and the availability of developable land have been major influences in the development outcomes and service, and not necessarily whether the library was deemed to be a branch or sub-regional service. This is the same for operating issues like opening hours and collection size which are more closely related to user needs, service goals and budget.

The second change is to include the Highton and the Chilwell Libraries in the Community Library category. These libraries have a limited capacity to meet all users' needs because of their size. The objective of this approach is to focus the service to meet the needs of primary users. Barwon Heads Library and Western Heights Library would also be classified as Community Libraries.

The proposed Service Model Hierarchy for libraries across the network is as follows:

1. **Central Library** – the Geelong Library & Heritage Centre providing central library and heritage services to the wider region.
2. **Branch Libraries** – suburban and town based libraries providing a range of community focussed services including Bannockburn, Belmont, Corio, Drysdale, Geelong West, Lara, Leopold, Newcomb, Ocean Grove, Queenscliff, Torquay and Waurin Ponds. Future provision Armstrong Creek.
3. **Community Libraries** – providing a local service that is complemented by services in larger nearby branches. They are the small libraries and library services in schools and include Chilwell, Highton, Barwon Heads and Western Heights College. It would also cover alternative models of service delivery like book depots.
4. **Mobile Libraries** – servicing remote and rural communities.
5. **E-Library Services** – Website access to all on-line library resources 24/7.

A detailed description of the Services Model Hierarchy forms Chapter 9 of this Report.

REVIEWING AND RENEWING LIBRARY BRANCHES AROUND CENTRAL GEELONG

At the time of writing this report the City of Greater Geelong was undertaking a Social Infrastructure Review in order to produce a blueprint that will guide social infrastructure investment. While the City is maintaining all of its current libraries, there is an opportunity to rethink how the cluster of libraries around the centre of Geelong can evolve to better serve local communities.

The GLHC, Chilwell, Geelong West, Highton and Belmont libraries are relatively close together, vary greatly in size and capacity and are used by people for different primary purposes. Renewal or redevelopment of these libraries should be informed by a close examination of their primary users. Consideration should be given to serving primary users' needs as a priority (particularly in the smaller libraries) while channelling other users to nearby larger libraries to access a wider range of programs, services and collections.

DETERMINING LIBRARY CATCHMENTS AND SERVICE LOCATIONS

When planning for the provision of library services consideration is given to the area and the population to be served, and this often described as the catchment. Public library catchments are informed by factors that can include population and housing density, geography, transport infrastructure, community needs and characteristics, history, the presence of other community services and educational institutions, budget and resources.

Other factors in trying to establish library catchments relate to the behaviour of users. Library members do not always belong to and use the library that is nearest to where they live, and library members often use multiple branches. Branches may be used because they are conveniently located close to where people shop, where children go to school, near other recreation facilities or Council service centres, are on the way to or from work or because other branches are just too far away. Some branches are used because of programs and events they run or the facilities they have that may include generous spaces to read, study and work. Other branches are used because of the size and scope of the collections or because people have a relationship with other users or staff.

Area catchments for GRLC libraries in locations like Lara, Torquay, Bannockburn and Ocean Grove are more easily described because they are a distance from other libraries and they serve discreet population centres. By contrast the catchments of libraries in the centre of Geelong like Chilwell, Geelong West, Highton, Belmont and the GLHC are difficult to describe because they are close together, service overlapping catchments and the services they offer are vastly different due to the availability of floor area.

Councils need to have a vision and plan for library services and facilities, like the plans prepared for sport and recreation and arts and cultural activities. This Infrastructure Plan should be used to assist Councils in their deliberations about library service and facility provision because of the very important role libraries play in improving community wellbeing.

9. SERVICE MODEL HIERARCHY - GRLC LIBRARIES

The Service Model features a five-tiered hierarchy of library provision with the Geelong Library & Heritage Centre providing central library and heritage services to the wider region. There are ten Branch Libraries providing suburban and town based services, four Community Libraries complementing larger nearby branches and/or servicing smaller communities and Mobile Libraries servicing remote and rural communities.

CENTRAL LIBRARY CATCHMENT: 200,000 PLUS

Geelong Library & Heritage Centre functions as the Central Library for the City of Greater Geelong and the wider Geelong region. It is located in the cultural and civic centre of the City alongside the Performing Arts Centre and the Art Gallery, with education, hospitality and retail services nearby. It is a destination and the flagship library for the City and the GRLC. It includes the GRLC headquarters providing network-wide services, supervision and support. It features specialist collections, access to extensive Information Technology, multi-purpose function spaces, meeting rooms, catering facilities and café. It also features the region's main repository of heritage collections in the Heritage Centre. It hosts regional cultural and literary activities and events, learning programs, outreach services, extended opening hours 7 days per week, and incubates new programs and services for delivery around the network.

BRANCH LIBRARIES CATCHMENT: 10,000 - 25,000

Branch Libraries provide a range of relevant programs, activities and services to suburban areas and towns and their catchments. Collections will be shaped to meet community needs. Catchments will be defined by factors including proximity to other branches, surrounding current and future populations, transport links, local employment opportunities, and proximity to retail, education services and other community facilities. Branches will strive for retail opening hours including one evening per week where possible. Branches may be co-located with complementary services for example Council Customer Service Centres, community hubs, recreational hubs, retail centres and education hubs. Current provision: Bannockburn, Belmont, Corio, Drysdale, Geelong West, Lara, Leopold, Newcomb, Ocean Grove, Queenscliff, Torquay and Waurin Ponds. Future provision: Armstrong Creek.

COMMUNITY LIBRARIES (INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE MODELS OF SERVICE DELIVERY) CATCHMENT UP TO 10,000

The Community Library provides tailored services in typically smaller buildings to meet primary users' needs. They complement services provided by larger libraries nearby. They have a community lounge feel and include popular collections, holds and returns, public internet access, informal seating and study areas. The Community Library can be a space within an existing facility such as a school (for example, Western Heights Secondary College Library) or community facility such as the 'The Well' Smythesdale Hub. It could incorporate access to school library facilities or provision of a Depot Library located within existing/other infrastructure. Proposed provision; Barwon Heads, Chilwell, Highton and Western Heights College. Future provision; 'The Well' Smythesdale Community Hub.

MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICE

Current provision includes the Bellarine & Surf Coast Mobile Library and the Golden Plains Mobile Library. Services rural townships and communities areas generally at least 20 kilometres from a branch library.

E-LIBRARY SERVICES CATCHMENT: ALL POPULATIONS

Provides 24/7 website access to library catalogue, eBooks, eAudiobooks, music, magazines, newspapers, local and global information, electronic databases, wireless printing, web applications.

TABLE 2 - LIBRARY INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY BY BRANCH

No	Location	Area m ²	Service Model	Development/Renewal Activity 2009-2018	Development/Renewal Activity 2019-2029
1	Bannockburn	540	Branch Library	New Library opened 2012	Review: Long term 5-10 years
2	Barwon Heads	180	Community Library	Identification of alternate models of service delivery not completed.	Review: Medium term 3 – 5 years
3	Belmont	950	Branch Library	Redevelopment complete 2010	Major Refurbishment: Medium term 3-5 years
4	Chilwell	210	Branch Library	Feasibility Study to co-locate with Maternal and Child Health Centre completed in 2009. No action taken.	Minor Refurbishment: Short term 0-3 years Possible Expansion: Medium term 3-5 years
5	Corio	995	Branch Library	Redevelopment completed 2005. Plan for replacement as Part of Northern ARC Redevelopment deferred.	Major Redevelopment: Short term 0-3 years
6	Drysdale	240	Branch Library	Refurbished 2011	Planning and design: Short term 0-3 years New library: Medium term 3-5 years
7	GLHC	6,000	Central Library	Completed 2015	Review: Long term 5-10 years
8	Geelong West	550	Branch Library	Refurbished 2008	Major Refurbishment: Medium term 3-5 years
9	Highton	135	Branch Library	Recommended investigation to redevelop and expand the Library not completed.	Minor Refurbishment: Short term 0-3 years Possible Expansion: Medium term 3-5 years

No	Location	Area m ²	Service Model	Development/Renewal Activity 2009-2018	Development/Renewal Activity 2019-2029
10	Lara	450	Branch Library	New interim library opened 2011	Planning and design permanent library: Short term 0-3 years Construct permanent library: Medium term 3-5 years
11	Leopold	700	Branch Library	Opened December 2018	Review: Long term 5-10 years
12	Newcomb	750	Branch Library	Redeveloped in 2007	Major Refurbishment: Medium term 3-5 years
13	Ocean Grove	370	Branch Library	Redesigned service area and minor refurbishment 2014	Review opportunities for library expansion: Short term 0-3 years Major Refurbishment: Medium term 3-5 years
14	Queenscliff	268	Branch Library	Redevelopment and extension plans prepared	Major Refurbishment: Short term 0-3-years
15	Torquay Library	380	Branch Library	Redeveloped and extended 2013	Plan and design new library: Short term 0-3 years Construct new library: Medium term 3-5 years
16	Waurm Ponds	970	Branch Library	New Library opened 2011	Refurbish outdoor area: Short term 0-3 years
17	Western Heights College Library	350	Community Library	Opened September 2011	Review: Medium term 3-5 years
18	Armstrong Creek	2,000	Branch Library		Plan and design new library: Short term 0-3 years Construct new library: Medium term 3-5 years

TABLE 3 - SUMMARY OF INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT BY TIMEFRAME AND TYPE

Time Frame	Minor Refurbishment	Major Refurbishment	New Library	Planning and Design	Review
Short term 0-3 Years	Chilwell Highton Waurin Ponds	Corio Queenscliff	Drysdale	Drysdale – New library Lara – New library Ocean Grove – Library expansion Torquay – New library	
Medium Term 3-5 Years		Geelong West Belmont Newcomb Ocean Grove Chilwell	Lara Torquay	Armstrong Creek – New library	Barwon Heads Western Heights College
Long Term 5-10 years			Armstrong Creek		Bannockburn GLHC Leopold

10. LIBRARY BRANCH – FACILITY AND DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS

The following section provides an overview of each of the static branches in the GRLC library network including their size, usage, membership, special features, location, catchment and growth, community feedback, development opportunities and recommended improvements and timeframes. Usage data is based on information collated in the GRLC 2017/18 Annual Report. Population forecasts have been sourced from the community profiles prepared by id.community on member Council websites. Community feedback about facility improvements has been sourced from the 2018 Library User Survey. The Branch Summaries are presented in alphabetical order.



BANNOCKBURN LIBRARY

Size: 540m²

Total hours open: 36.5 hours per week, including one evening and Saturday mornings

Visits: 58,551 | Loans: 69,866 | Collection size: 14,745

Members: 4,144

Special features: This library is located within the Bannockburn Cultural Centre and shares an outdoor reading courtyard with other facility users. The library service accesses other spaces in the Centre by arrangement. There are meeting rooms with movable walls available for community hire.

LOCATION, OWNERSHIP AND CONTEXT

Bannockburn Library is on land managed by the Golden Plains Shire on High Street Bannockburn. It is part of the Bannockburn Cultural Centre and is across the road from the new St Mary McKillop Catholic Primary School. The Bannockburn Library also serves as the Bannockburn Primary School library under an Agreement between the Department of Education and Training Victoria and the Golden Plains Shire Council. In 2018 the primary school was relocated in 2018 to a new P to 12 school about one kilometre away.

The GRLC works closely with the Golden Plains Shire to provide a library service and programs to meet local needs. It complements activities delivered in the Cultural Centre, making it an important community hub for local residents and students.

CATCHMENT AND GROWTH

Golden Plains is situated between Victoria's two biggest regional centres, Geelong and Ballarat. It covers 2,705 km² with a forecast population of 23,384 in 2019 dispersed in 56 communities and 16 townships around the Shire. Bannockburn is the largest town in Golden Plains with a forecast population of 5,750 in 2019. It is anticipated that the Bannockburn will nearly double in size over the next decade with increased residential development and retail services, like major supermarkets, being provided locally. The population of the Shire is expected to increase to 29,507 by 2031. New library members are typically young families buying affordable land and housing. Over 60% of employed residents travel out of the Shire for work¹¹.

USAGE TRENDS

During 2017/18, Bannockburn Library experienced a decline in visits and loans as a direct result of the state primary school being relocated to the new Bannockburn P-12 College. The new St Mary Mackillop Catholic Primary School is small, but is anticipated to grow significantly over the next five years.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ON FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

There were few facility related comments in the 2018 Library User Survey from Bannockburn Library users. The most frequent facility related comment was a desire for more private reading and study areas because of the noise generated by school use of the library. Comments were also made about an all-weather cover over the returns chute, parking and power points.

DEVELOPMENT NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The library was opened in 2012 and is well maintained. The HEART Project, being managed by Council, will see the development of a Water Play Park, more children's services, a youth space and car parking on the land at the rear of the library. This will impact on the outdoor seating and landscaped area used by the library, and provides an opportunity to re-examine how this area can better meet library user needs.

¹¹ Golden Plains Shire Council 2019 website



The use of the space by primary school students (in addition to the regular children's programs) does make this library noisy at times. The space does not cater well for informal use by young people and there is a demand for more informal seating, chairs and tables. This would meet the needs of older members as well. The staff desk is very large. The landscaped areas around the library are not actively maintained by Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The library is big enough to meet the needs of the community for the next five years and should be reviewed after this time.

Immediate assessment of current layout to identify opportunities for minor changes and the provision of new and appropriate furniture for study and informal reading.

Review. Long Term 5-10 years.

BARWON HEADS LIBRARY

Size: 180m²

Total hours open: 13 hours per week, including Saturday mornings

Visits: 11,046 | Loans: 54,278 | Collection size: 7,338

Members: 1,706

Special features: The Barwon Heads Library is located in the Barwon Heads Primary School and operates as joint use. The library is open two afternoons and two mornings per week.

LOCATION AND CONTEXT

The Barwon Heads Library is a community access library housed in the Barwon Heads Primary School. The building is owned by the Victorian Department of Education and Training and the Department is responsible for all maintenance and utility costs. The library is not in the main street of the town or within a retail precinct. Access to the library by the community occurs for 13 hours per week via an agreement (unwritten) between the primary school principal, the City of Greater Geelong and the GRLC.

The library is very small with limited opportunities to free up space for uses other than housing the collection. The library's main use is to provide curriculum support materials to primary school students who make up around a third of the membership and library services to all ages.

CATCHMENT AND GROWTH

Barwon Heads is a seaside township with a forecast population in 2019 of 4,761. The Barwon Heads Library is 3.5 km from the Ocean Grove Library. There is no significant population growth forecast for the area over the next decade.

USAGE TRENDS

A significant increase in usage was experienced in 2017/18, including an increase in membership by 22%, visits by 85% and loans by 31%.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ON FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

There were few facility related comments made in the 2018 Library User Survey from Barwon Heads Library users other than to continue the provision of library services in Barwon Heads and to provide greater opening hours.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The formalisation of an agreement between the City of Greater Geelong, the Barwon Heads Primary School and the GRLC to codify the responsibilities of each party in relation to this shared service and the building would be beneficial. Decisions about the upgrading of the facility sit with the school and the Department of Education and Training.

Consideration could be given to the relocation of the library to the proposed cultural centre in Barwon Heads, or relocation to a shopfront in the main shopping precinct in Barwon Heads. Some new furniture was purchased in 2018 and the adult collection expanded.

RECOMMENDATION AND TIMEFRAME

Review. Medium term 3-5 years.



BELMONT LIBRARY

Size: 950m²

Total hours open: 63 hours per week, including 5 nights per week and all day Saturday.

Visits: 250,395 | Loans: 327,346 | Collection size: 43,533

Members: 13,608

Special features: A large collection for all ages, meeting room available for community hire and a City of Greater Geelong Customer Service Centre.

LOCATION AND CONTEXT

The library was built in 1981 and the last major refurbishment was in 2010. The library building is Council owned and co-located with a Council Customer Service Centre. Belmont is the third largest and second busiest library in the GRLC network. There is good main street access in the busy Belmont shopping precinct. There is ample free parking at the rear of the building and a landscaped park at the front of the library with reading themed public art. The library is accessible and is in close proximity to schools, public transport and safe pedestrian access.

CATCHMENT AND GROWTH

Belmont Library draws users from the surrounding suburbs of Belmont, Highton, Wandana Heights and parts of Grovedale where the forecast population in 2019 is over 50,000. However, the catchment of the Belmont Library also overlaps with the catchments of the nearby Highton Library (1.8km away), Waurin Ponds Library (4.1km) and the Geelong Library & Heritage Centre (3.7km). Belmont Library is also easily accessed by other growing communities to the south and west.

USAGE TRENDS

There are competing demands for the use of space in this quite large library. There is a big collection and inadequate flexible space in the library for programs and events. The children's and youth areas are very small. There is a demand for more power, study spaces and informal seating. The library can be noisy and sound travels easily around the space. Consideration should be given to the provision of additional, discrete quiet areas. Without extending the size of the library, improvements to the service could be made through modifications to the internal layout.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ON FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

The most frequent facility related comments made in the 2018 Library User Survey were that the library looks dated and is requiring upgrade. A number of comments were made about the need to create quiet study and reading areas and observations were made about the way noise travels. Comments were also provided about inappropriate shelving, parking difficulties and describing the children's space as too small.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

As a priority the library space should be modified to increase the size and functionality of the children's space and provide more chairs, tables and resources for young people and for study. The front third of the library seems underutilised but improving the use of the space is not simple because of the fixed horseshoe table containing the PCs and associated cabling. The carpets need replacing, the heating and cooling systems are old, and the lighting in certain parts of the library is poor. Much of the furniture purchased at the time of the 2010 redevelopment requires replacement.

RECOMMENDATION AND TIMEFRAME

Replacement of furniture. Short term 0-3 years.

Major refurbishment. Medium term 3-5 years.



CHILWELL LIBRARY

Size: 216m²

Total hours open: 30.5 hours per week, including Saturday mornings

Visits: 31,828 | Loans: 47,588 | Collection size: 13,021

Members: 1,416

LOCATION AND CONTEXT

The library is located on Russell Street, Chilwell in a Council owned building adjacent to the Chilwell Maternal Child Health Centre, and a public park. Parking for the library is on-street and limited. There are no public toilets in the library. The library is amongst the smallest in the network at 216m².

CATCHMENT AND GROWTH

Chilwell Library is located in a part of Geelong with overlapping catchments which are serviced by a number of libraries. It is 2.8 km from the Belmont Library, 1.8 km from the GLHC and 1.9 km from the Geelong West Library. Newtown has a forecast population of 10,596 in 2019 and is expected to grow by 4% over the next decade. Interestingly, there is an expected growth of 19% in the population of people of retirement age. It is proposed that the library be reconceived as a Community Library serving the needs of primary users in the local area, complementing the services provided by larger libraries nearby. At the time of writing, maintenance of the library was commencing, including a repaint, new carpet and furniture replacement.

USAGE TRENDS

The library has a loyal membership which has stayed relatively unchanged over the last five years. The opening of the new GLHC, less than 2 km away, in 2015 had little impact on the use of this library. The collection is small due to limited space and there are more items returned to this library than are borrowed.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ON FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

The most frequent facility related comments made in the 2018 Library User Survey were about the need to upgrade the building because of its age and appearance. The next most frequent responses were about the inadequate size of the building, the need for more space for children's activities, the need for a toilet and more parking.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The library has a limited capacity to host the range of programs and activities offered at larger GRLC libraries. The opportunity to expand the library was explored by City of Greater Geelong in 2009, but no redevelopment occurred. The social infrastructure plan being prepared by the City may also determine a future direction for the library. There are opportunities to better integrate the library with the park and the Maternal and Child Health Centre, although any investment in the site should take account of the close proximity of three other large branches. Expansion of the floor area to at least 500m² is recommended.

RECOMMENDATION AND TIMEFRAME

Maintenance and refurbishment. Short term 0-3 years.

Possible expansion. Medium term 3-5 years.



CORIO LIBRARY

Size: 995m²

Total hours open: 50 hours per week, including two evenings and all-day Saturdays

Visits: 148,446 | Loans: 149,924 | Collection size: 33,575

Members: 9,981

Special features The Corio Library has a large multi-purpose meeting room. It also shares its location with a community hall (Centenary Hall) and the Waterworld Aquatic Centre.

LOCATION AND CONTEXT

The library was built in 1972 and refurbished in 2005. The building and land is owned by the City of Greater Geelong. The library is near the busy intersection of the Princes Highway and Cox Road in Corio, and while it shares the site with a large sports and recreation facility the location away from a local retail precinct is a disadvantage. The library is one of the largest in the network.

The library is adjacent to the soon to be redeveloped Waterworld Aquatic Centre (as part of the Northern ARC Health and Wellbeing Hub) and the new Barwon Health medical facility (to be opened in 2019). The redevelopment of Waterworld and Centenary Hall will bring to the precinct contemporary, integrated community health and wellbeing services and facilities including; a 25-metre pool, hydrotherapy pool, learn to swim, gymnasium, a multipurpose community space, consulting suites and car parking. No upgrades to the Corio Library are proposed as part of the Northern Arc project other than attending to the public realm. Access to the current library building is good; off-street parking is adequate (although will come under pressure as the proposed developments take place) and there are public toilets on site.

CATCHMENT AND GROWTH

The levels of disadvantage in this area are amongst the highest in the State. The library serves a population catchment that includes Corio and Norlane with a population forecast in 2019 of 24,378. The forecasting data suggests growth in the order of 10% to 2031 for Norlane and virtually no growth in Corio.

USAGE TRENDS

Corio Library users borrow less than other users of GRLC library services and use PCs and Wi-Fi more. The demand for technology support is higher here than any other place in the network. There are more programs being run and issues emerging around the need for quieter areas for people working, meeting and studying. Higher levels of outreach are undertaken by the library staff at Corio than in other areas to encourage usage by families and young people in particular. Visitation to the library is steady.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ON FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

The most frequent facility related comments made in the 2018 Library User Survey were about the need for private reading and study areas and the need to upgrade the building because of its age and appearance (particularly external appearance). Comments were also made about upgrading the toilets, shelving, seating, power points and parking.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The floor space of the library is adequate, but the layout of the library no longer meets the needs of the community. Opportunities exist to improve access to quiet meeting spaces, the flooring, lighting, front door access, toilet facilities, the service area, returns area, the children's and youth areas, shelving, furniture, carpets, lighting and importantly the external appearance of the building. The meeting room requires urgent attention, including the kitchen facilities.



Minor improvements to the public realm have been foreshadowed in the Northern Arc Project with a focus on the integration of outdoor spaces between the facilities. The new development will amplify issues around the appearance of this ageing building.

RECOMMENDATION AND TIMEFRAME

Major redevelopment. Short term 0-3 years.

DRYSDALE LIBRARY

Size: 240m²

Total hours open: 50.5 hours per week, including one evening and all-day Saturday.

Visits: 135,067 | Loans: 180,734 | Collection Size: 20,163

Members: 7,734

Special features: Shopfront in retail area and includes a City of Greater Geelong Customer Service Centre.

LOCATION AND CONTEXT

Drysdale Library was refurbished in 2011 resulting in increased floor area, new carpet, furniture, fittings and equipment including technology. The library is located on Hancock Street in the main retail precinct of the Drysdale township. The library is in a shopfront leased by the City of Greater Geelong until November 2022.

Council is responsible for building maintenance and essential services, but other issues such as external painting or cleaning of the shop is the responsibility of the building owner. Parking for the library is on-street and there are car parks nearby servicing supermarkets. At 240m² the library is significantly undersized to meet current and future population requirements. There is no meeting room and limited space for study or the use of personal devices. There is limited space for programs and activities and back of house space for City of Greater Geelong Customer Service and library staff and library service functions. No toilets are available.

CATCHMENT AND GROWTH

While the township of Drysdale has a forecast population in 2019 of 4,816, its catchment includes areas to the east and the north along Bellarine Peninsula. This includes Clifton Springs, Curlewis, Indented Head, St Leonards, Point Lonsdale, and Portarlington. This is one of the fastest growing regions in the City of Greater Geelong. The forecast estimated population in 2019 for this catchment area is 21,000. This is forecast to grow to 27,104 in the next decade. Part of the catchment is also serviced by the Bellarine and Surf Coast Mobile Library.

USAGE TRENDS

Drysdale is a busy library for its size. Visits and loans to this library have been steady over the last five years. This library has served an older demographic as the area has always been attractive to retirees. New and affordable housing developments have resulted in an increase in the number of young families moving to the area. There are increasing numbers of young people seeking to use the library space but there are limited areas for this to occur.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ON FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

There were many facility related comments made in the 2018 Library User Survey including requesting a bigger library and more space for seating, reading and study. The next most frequent responses related to the need for a toilet in the library, better parking and less low shelving.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

There are very limited development opportunities on this site because of the building's size and because the building is not owned by Council. City of Greater Geelong has plans to build a new library in Drysdale to cater for the needs of this growing community. The size of the catchment and projected population growth suggest a new library in the order of at least 1,200 m² plus learning spaces and community meeting rooms.

RECOMMENDATION AND TIMEFRAME

Confirm library development site and commence planning and design. Short term 0-3 years.

Construct new library. Medium term 2-4 years.



GEELONG LIBRARY & HERITAGE CENTRE

Size: 6,000m²

Total hours open per week: 74

Visits: 456,934 | Loans: 335,373 | Collection size: 83,201

Members: 22,477

Special features: The GLHC functions as the central library for the GRLC region. It houses the GRLC headquarters, the Geelong Library and the Geelong Heritage Centre. It operates over five public levels that include a dedicated children's and youth space on level 1, special collections including Arts & Literature and Heritage and has a major events space on level 5. The ground floor of the library has an 80 seat café that is operated by a private business under a licence agreement with the City of Greater Geelong.

LOCATION AND CONTEXT

The GLHC was completed in 2015 after more than a decade of planning. It is a landmark architecturally designed building that anchors the Geelong civic and cultural precinct; provides a broad range of programs and services with a focus on learning, information and technology. It features special collections, a heritage centre and spaces for a wide variety of community, government and corporate activities and events.

The library is the largest in the network. The library can be easily accessed by public transport and is adjacent to the beautifully landscaped and historic Johnstone Park. There is little free parking near this library on weekdays and there is more pressure on paid parking spots around this library than at any other branch. Nevertheless, there are many visitors who walk from the nearby TAFE, university or school, or combine a visit to the library with work or shopping or travel by train to the library as tourists to the City.

CATCHMENT AND GROWTH

As the Central Library it has certain attributes, detailed in the Service Model Hierarchy, that distinguish it from other libraries in the network. It attracts a wide range of users from all over the City and the region. Users borrow items, attend programs that range from storytime to technology talks, they study, attend meetings and conferences, attend special events and exhibitions, recreate and socialise. The Central Library has a regional catchment for events and activities that occur only at this library. These activities include the Word for Word National Non-Fiction Festival and partnerships with cultural institutions such as the Geelong Gallery, Back to Back Theatre and the National Museum of Australia.

Growth around the region is strong as more and more people seek access to affordable housing outside of Melbourne in a location with study and work opportunities and a range of lifestyle choices. The population of the City of Greater Geelong is forecast to be 251,540 in 2019 and grow to over 300,000 by 2031.

USAGE TRENDS

The Geelong Library & Heritage Centre will celebrate its fourth birthday in 2019. The library attracted 457,000 visitors in 2017-18 and is still developing programs, services and collections to meet user's needs. The GLHC has more visits per hour than any other library in the network and it has a relatively low rate of borrowing per visit. This tells us that many people who visit this library do so for reasons other than to borrow from the collection. Many GRLC members use this library in addition to their regular library.

FEEDBACK ON FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

The most common (by a significant margin) facility related comments in the 2018 Library User Survey were about the lack of and/or the expense of parking around the GLHC. The next most



frequent response related to access to more quiet spaces and reading nooks, and the need for more tables where people could use their own device for work and study. Comments were also made about more power outlets and providing swivel stools so people could read books on lower shelves.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

There are opportunities to review and improve the current use of the library in relation to furniture, seating and study areas, and the collection layout in line with the comments in the user survey and the observations of the Branch Managers.

RECOMMENDATION AND TIMEFRAME

Review. Long term 5-10 years.

GEELONG WEST LIBRARY

Size: 550m²

Total hours open: 49 hours per week, including two weekday evenings and all day Saturday.

Visits: 155,322 | Loans: 219,613 | Collection size: 32,042

Members: 11,518

Special features: The library includes a City of Greater Geelong Customer Service Centre.

LOCATION AND CONTEXT

The library building is owned by the City of Greater Geelong and has been in the same location on Pakington Street for many years. This library was refurbished and extended in 2008. It is well located in the main retail precinct of Geelong West with good car parking at the rear of the building.

CATCHMENT AND GROWTH

The library is small for the volume and level of activity undertaken. The local community was very keen for the library to remain at this location prior to the last redevelopment, despite there being limited opportunities to expand the library on this site. The Geelong West Library is one of a number of libraries close to the centre of Geelong. The GLHC is 1.3 km from Geelong West Library and 1.9 km from the Chilwell Library. The catchment of this library overlaps with these libraries and is not expected to increase significantly over the next decade. The library also serves a catchment to the north and west which includes the suburbs of Herne Hill, Hamlyn Heights, North Geelong and parts of Bell Park and Bell Post Hill.

USAGE TRENDS

Visits and loans at this library have fluctuated over recent years in the lead up to and after the opening of the GLHC three years ago but has now stabilised.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ON FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

The most frequent facility related comments made in the 2018 Library User Survey were about the need for private reading and study areas, increasing the size of the library and provision of toilets within the building. Comments were also made about reducing the frequency of flooding in the library, more comfortable seating and parking.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

There was a major refurbishment over 10 years ago. There are opportunities to freshen up the external appearance of the library and improve the internal layout. The separate children's zone works quite well in this small library, although there are insufficient informal seating options and study areas around the library for users seeking quiet work areas. The staff desk is large and staff assistance could be delivered from a much smaller area in conjunction with self loan stations. The library does not have a public toilet (although there is a public toilet located behind the Geelong West Town Hall building within 100m) and this is a source of constant criticism by users. Any renewal of this library should be undertaken in the context of the other library services nearby.

RECOMMENDATION AND TIMEFRAME

Major Refurbishment. Medium term 3-5 years.



HIGHTON LIBRARY

Size: 135m²

Total hours open: 30 hours per week, including Saturday mornings

Visits: 39,056 | Loans: 49,406 | Collection size: 10,389

Members: 2,572

Special features This library is the smallest in the GRLC network.

LOCATION AND CONTEXT

The Highton Library was built in 1977 and is owned by the City of Greater Geelong. The library underwent a minor interior refurbishment with new carpet and new circulation desk in 2004. It is located in the Highton Village retail precinct on Roslyn Road, adjacent to Safeway Supermarket. Parking is available in the supermarket carpark and on street. Access for residents with disabilities is limited due to the steep ramp and there are no public toilets in the library.

The size of the library limits the provision of the usual level of library service impacting on collection size, reader seating and study spaces, staff areas and work space, meeting rooms and areas for specialist programs.

CATCHMENT AND GROWTH

The Highton Library is located on the eastern boundary of Highton, 1.8 km away from the Belmont Library and 4 km from the Waurn Ponds Library. A number of reviews of the City of Greater Geelong library network over the last 20 years have examined usage and viability of the Highton Library and smaller libraries in the network. The forecast population in 2019 is 22,979, with 5% growth expected in the next decade.

The Highton Library is located near the Highton/Belmont boundary. Growth to the west of this library in suburbs like Wandana Heights and Ceres, and proposed increases in housing density in Highton suggest that that demand for library services will continue to grow in the medium term.

USAGE TRENDS

Because of the small collection and convenient location it is a popular library for picking up reserved items; more items are returned to this library than are borrowed from it and the 24 hour book return facility is well-used. A large proportion of Highton Library members use other libraries to borrow items. Visits to the Highton Library have remained fairly constant over the last five years while loans have reduced by around 20%.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ON FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

The most frequent facility related comments made in the 2018 Library User Survey were about the need to refurbish the building because of its age and appearance and build a bigger library. Comments were also made about provision of toilets.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Given its size, proximity to other libraries, location within the Highton shopping precinct and usage characteristics this library should be re-envisioned as a Community Library to meet the needs of primary users. The library is very dated inside and out. The internal beams on the ceiling of the library need to be repainted and the internal exposed brick is dark and makes the space feel small. The library needs new carpet; window coverings; shelving; seats and tables and service desk. The exterior of the library is uninviting with a steep ramp and decking that requires maintenance.



There may be opportunity to relocate the library depending on the outcomes of the Highton Village Urban Design Framework and Social Infrastructure Plan, both currently underway at the City of Greater Geelong.

RECOMMENDATION AND TIMEFRAME

Refurbish and possibly redevelop. Medium term 3-5 years.

LARA LIBRARY

Size: 450m²

Total hours open: 47 hours per week

Visits: 71,281 | Loans: 72,851 | Collection size: 16,009

Members: 5,361

Special features This is an interim library opened by the City of Greater Geelong in 2011.

LOCATION AND CONTEXT

Lara is a residential and rural town located 15km northeast of Geelong, inland from the Princes Freeway to Melbourne. The City of Greater Geelong opened the interim Lara Library in 2011 in close proximity to the Community Centre, the Maternal and Child Health Centre and retail area. A permanent library facility will be built at the time of the commercial redevelopment in the town centre.

CATCHMENT AND GROWTH

The 2019 population forecast for Lara is 17,438, and it is forecast to grow to around 22,175 by 2031. The township also serves the surrounding rural area. The nearest GRLC branch is Corio Library which is around 10km to the south-west along the Princes Highway. There is a large number of new homes being built in the area, a large shopping centre has been developed nearby and the library is around the corner from the Lara Community Centre and other children's services.

The interim library is small for the catchment it serves and the building has limitations in terms of wheelchair and scooter access. It is basic in its construction and layout. There are no meeting spaces and the program space is inadequate given the limited community infrastructure in the area. It is difficult to grow the service in this space, but issues around service provision should be overcome when the new larger permanent library is built.

USAGE TRENDS

The Lara Library is servicing a growing community that includes many young families. Visits to the library are growing, although loans have declined over the last five years. Increasingly young people and students are using the space to access Wi-Fi, study and socialise.

Community feedback on facility improvements

The most frequent facility related comments made in the 2018 Library User Survey were about the need for Lara to have a bigger permanent library. Other comments include the need for quiet private reading and study areas and improving physical access to the building.

Development needs and opportunities

The building is in relatively good condition, although it does look like a temporary and portable structure. The library collection could be refreshed and shelving and furniture rearranged to improve the flexibility of the space. Disabled access to the library needs to be addressed. A new library with the capacity to deliver a full suite of library programs and services to a growing community is required. Using the *People Places* benchmarks for library floor area the requirements for the projected population is a minimum of 1,000m².

RECOMMENDATION AND TIMEFRAME

Detailed planning and design for permanent Lara Library. Short term 0-3 years.

New Library. Medium term 3-5 years.



LEOPOLD LIBRARY

Size: 600m² (plus 100m² meeting space)

Total hours open: 50 hours per week, including Saturday mornings

Collection size: 17,428

Special features: The Leopold Library occupies the ground floor of the Leopold Community Hub and includes a community access meeting room that seats up to 100 people.

LOCATION AND CONTEXT

The Library is located in the Leopold Community Hub on Council land on Kensington Road between the Leopold Primary School and the Leopold Child and Family Centre. This is the newest Library in the GRCL network. It has been many years in the planning, originally conceived as part of a large integrated community infrastructure project for the Leopold township and surrounds. The Community Hub has its own dedicated free parking; a hard surfaced forecourt designed for community gatherings; links to walking and bike paths and has a landscaped area at the rear that will incorporate a community garden.

The Leopold Community Hub and Library is the second stage of the community infrastructure project which started with the opening of the Child and Family Centre in 2015. The Library service has been designed to complement and extend the services operating in the precinct that focus on children and families. At the same time, the library caters well for other users seeking space for study, work, reading, relaxing and socialising.

The location of the library in the Community Hub is a drawcard for the whole facility, which will be home to the Leopold Community and Learning Centre and a range of other community focussed services and activities. The Community Hub has meeting rooms of various sizes for hire, a commercial kitchen, changing places toilet facilities and counselling suites.

CATCHMENT AND GROWTH

The library provides for the Leopold township with a forecast population of 13,752 in 2019 which is forecast to grow to 16,668 by 2031. It is anticipated the library will attract users from a catchment, beyond the township, to parts of Wallington and Curlewis to the east and Moolap to the west, but it is early days in terms of use for this library. People in the local area are adjusting to having more than just a weekly mobile library stop, and will gravitate to this modern library with its generous opening hours, new collection, free access to the internet and technology and a range programs for children, young people and adult learners. Users of other older and smaller libraries in Drysdale and Newcomb may also be tempted to shift to this newer, more spacious facility.

It is also the case that the library is an easy drive from both the Bellarine Highway and Portarlington Road, major arterial roads on the Bellarine Peninsula that carry traffic to and from Geelong. People may start to use this library as part of their commutes in and out of the City.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

As this library is less than 6 months old there are no obvious development needs other than the completion of the landscaped spaces around the Community Hub and Library and the establishment of the new Community Garden.

RECOMMENDATION AND TIMEFRAME

Review. Long term 5-10 years



NEWCOMB LIBRARY

Size: 488m²

Total hours open: 42.5 hours per week, including one evening and Saturday mornings

Visits: 98,973 | Loans: 136,875 | Collection size: 23,417

Members: 8,007

Special features: The Newcomb Library is located in the Newcomb Central Shopping complex. library staff access and manage a large multi-purpose meeting room on level one of the building the library occupies.

LOCATION AND CONTEXT

Newcomb Library is located in the Newcomb Central Shopping Centre on the corner of the Bellarine Highway and Wilsons Road. The library was redeveloped along with the shopping centre in 2007 with tenure over the space for 99 years. Parking is available as part of the shopping centre carpark. Co-location with a City of Greater Geelong Maternal and Child Health Centre has enabled a productive partnership to develop with an early years focus in programming for the local community.

CATCHMENT AND GROWTH

The forecast population growth over the next decade in the nearby suburbs of Newcomb, Whittington and St Albans Park is 12%. The suburbs of Whittington and Newcomb are relatively disadvantaged with some of the lowest SEIFA indices in the City of Greater Geelong. The opening of the Leopold Library in 2018 may have an impact on usage of this library as it has served a large catchment in the eastern part of the City for many years.

USAGE TRENDS

Visits to the Newcomb Library have been steady over the last three years. Because of the high levels of disadvantage in the suburbs around this library, there is a heavy focus on programming and outreach to children and young families. Demand for PC access and for digital literacy development is high. Demand for casual seating and desk space is increasing. Often children's programs are conducted in the upstairs meeting room because of the lack of space in the library and because they are so popular and noisy. There is a lack of small informal meeting space and privacy in this busy library. Young people do not use the library in the numbers they should because there is insufficient space, seating and other furnishings to meet their needs.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ON FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

The most frequent facility related comments made in the 2018 Library User Survey were about the need to increase the size of the library, utilise the upstairs area better and increase space for quiet reading and study. Comments were also made about improving the children's area and parking.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

There are no significant new developments occurring in Newcomb or surrounds that will impact on the service however the library is undersized for the current and future population requirements. Access to carparking is good and the location of the library close to shops and the Maternal and Child Health Service works well. The last refurbishment work at the library occurred twelve years ago and refurbishment of the building in the near future could improve service outcomes.

The meeting room on level one of the building provides a large space for programs and events and there is an opportunity to review uses of this space for the benefit of library users and program participants. The sliding door and gates at the entry to the library need replacement to improve access. The service desk is oversized given the self check facilities now available



in the library. A remodelling of this area could increase the space for casual seating, and study areas. The interior needs repainting and the carpets need to be replaced. The roof in the upstairs meeting area leaks.

There is an opportunity to increase the space available for library services through the leasing of additional space in level one directly above the library. The space has been leased by a number of private gyms over the years and is frequently vacant.

RECOMMENDATION AND TIMEFRAME

Major refurbishment and possible expansion. Medium term 3-5 years.

OCEAN GROVE LIBRARY

Size: 370m²

Total hours open: 49.5 hours per week

Visits: 127,524 | Loans: 207,069 | Collection size: 27,367

Members: 9,333

Special features The library is co-located with a City of Greater Geelong Customer Service Centre and a Community Health Centre.

LOCATION AND CONTEXT

The library is located on the corner of Presidents Avenue, situated opposite a medium sized shopping centre. The library is part of a purpose built facility constructed in 1993 and is co-located with Bellarine Community Health and the City of Greater Geelong Customer Service Centre, providing a convenient community hub for local residents. There are shared toilet facilities and foyer that provides access to all three services. There is on-street parking, 15 spaces at the rear of the library facility and a shopping centre car park diagonally opposite. Over the last five to 10 years a range of other services including childcare services and sports facilities have developed in the precinct.

At 370m² this is a small, busy library that could benefit from access to other spaces in the building on a permanent basis. It is too small for the population served. The staff area is large enough but not functional given it is a passageway to the rear of the building. There are no meeting rooms and insufficient space for library programs and events. More casual seating and study areas are required and information technology provision should be increased.

CATCHMENT AND GROWTH

Ocean Grove's forecast population in 2019 is 15,190 and is projected to grow to 16,797 by 2031. This library also services residents of Barwon Heads and other rural parts of the Bellarine Peninsula suggesting the current catchment is well over 20,000 people and will increase over the next 10 years. The library has very limited expansion potential should the other services remain where they are. Applying the *People Places* benchmark requires a library of at least 1,200 m².

USAGE TRENDS

Visits have been steady over the last three years. As a popular holiday destination, Ocean Grove has an influx of visitors during the summer holidays. This swells the use of the library dramatically – particularly people wanting to access PCs, printers and free Wi-Fi.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ON FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

There were a large number of facility related comments made about the Ocean Grove Library in the 2018 Library User Survey. The most frequent comments made were about the need for a bigger library to serve the growing community, the need for private reading and study areas and better parking. Comments were also made about shelving and lack of seating and power points.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The building exterior looks dated. There have been no changes since it was built 25 years ago. There is a demand for access to power for personal devices and casual seating space. Because of the size of the library, there is no space for quiet reading, and there are insufficient work and study desks. Programming is compromised by the space which can be overwhelmed when popular children's programs are being run.

In addition to space constraints the library needs new floor coverings and re-painting, the air-conditioning needs to be upgraded and storage improved. The service desk is large considering



the library's size. This library needs a complete review of the collection arrangement including the provision of more face out display and mobile shelving. Acoustics in the space are poor.

More space is required to provide the library service this community needs and to comply with library service standards.

RECOMMENDATION AND TIMEFRAME

Investigate opportunities to expand the library space in the current building or seek an alternative location. Short term 0-3 years.

Establish larger library. Medium term 3-5 years.

QUEENSCLIFF LIBRARY

Size: 268m²

Total hours open: 30.5 hours per week

Visits: 27,354 | Loans: 48,722 | Collection size: 14,374

Members: 2,657

Special features: The library is co- located with the Queenscliff Visitor Information Centre and adjacent to the Queenscliffe Historical Museum.

LOCATION AND CONTEXT

The Queenscliff Library opened in 1887 and is well located in a beautiful heritage building on the main street in Queenscliff. The library shares the building with the Visitor Information Centre. The building serves important information needs for the community – helping preserve local history; providing tourist information; and providing a range of library services from collections, children's programs and access to computers.

There is adequate parking provided on-street. The library is small, which limits its capacity to provide a full range of services, and there is shared access to a small meeting space in the building. The collection is large for the building size.

CATCHMENT AND GROWTH

The Queenscliff Library serves a quite discrete geographic population of people in the Borough. This is a small community of just 3,000 people with limited growth forecast over the next decade. The population is older than Victoria's average with 50.5% of the Borough's population aged 60 years and over, compared with 21% for the rest of Victoria¹². There is a high proportion of retirees and lower than the Victorian average number of children and young people living in the Borough. During the night of the last census, 55.9% of private dwellings were unoccupied, confirming there is a large temporary population as many property owners only holiday or live part-time in the Borough. 58% of the permanent resident population live in Point Lonsdale.

USAGE TRENDS

The Borough of Queenscliffe has the highest proportion of residents as library members of all member Councils. During holiday seasons library usage is boosted by holiday-makers who access the usual library services, particularly free Wi-Fi.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ON FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

The most frequent facility related comments made in the 2018 Library User Survey were about the need for a bigger library, including more seating, private reading and study areas. Requests were also made for a self-loan station, more technology and better heating.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Borough of Queenscliffe is about to embark on a multimillion dollar design and development of a new Queenscliff Hub that will provide an integrated model for the delivery of library services, tourist information services and the Historical Museum. This project offers a great opportunity for significant improvements in physical space and the delivery of library services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Major redevelopment 0-3 Years (as per the Queenscliff Hub redevelopment plans).

12 2016 Census ABS



TORQUAY LIBRARY

Size: 380m²

Total hours open: 45.5 hours per week

Visits: 104,792 | Loans: 167,931 | Collection size: 21,141

Members: 8,339

Special features The library is housed within a building that is also tenanted by Surfing Victoria and in a precinct that includes the Australian National Surfing Museum. The library is impacted by seasonal use with an influx of holiday makers during the holidays.

LOCATION AND CONTEXT

Torquay Library is the only static branch in the Surf Coast Shire. The library is not in a highly visible or prominent location, off the Surf Coast Highway behind shops in a retail and recreation precinct. The library building is owned by the Surf Coast Shire. Car parking is shared with the shopping centre and is adequate.

The library had a major upgrade in 2013 which included the expanding the space by approximately 70m². Carpet was replaced in the old section of the library in 2018 and the children's collection and programs space was relocated.

CATCHMENT AND GROWTH

The Torquay Library is supported by a mobile library that operates a weekly timetable of visits to Aireys Inlet, Lorne, Deans Marsh and Winchelsea. The 2019 forecast population for the Surf Coast Shire is 32,651 and is forecast to grow to 41,801 by 2031. The population of Torquay and the nearby catchment including Jan Juc, Bellbrae and Bells Beach is forecast to grow to 28,260 by 2031¹³. The community is characterised by a large number of retirees and, increasingly, young families are moving to the area. The library is significantly undersized for the current catchment population.

USAGE TRENDS

Visits and loans have been stable over the last three years. Programs for young people and children have increased patronage of the library by these target groups, but informal use by young people is impacted by a lack of casual seating and study areas. As a popular holiday destination, the Surf Coast has an influx of visitors during the summer holidays. This swells the use of the library dramatically – particularly people wanting to access PCs, printers and free Wi-Fi.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ON FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

The most frequent facility related comments made in the 2018 Library User Survey were about the need for a bigger library to serve the Surf Coast community, including private reading and study areas. Comments were also made about another self check station, furniture, shelving and better disabled parking.

DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS

Council considered a feasibility study in 2015 that investigated the development of a new cultural centre and performance space at the sports and recreation centre adjacent to the Torquay Library. The study did not describe a new larger library as part of the proposal; rather, it indicated that the library would stay where it was as a complementary service to the cultural centre. Further feasibility work was completed in 2018 to assess the cost of redeveloping and operating the recreation centre as a black box theatre and exhibition space. The scope of the feasibility study did not include or reference any new library development.

¹³ .id community population forecast Surf Coast Shire website.



There are limitations to the expansion of the library on its current site to a size that can accommodate the range of library services required now and into the future. Lighting in the building could be improved and while the air-conditioning is satisfactory there are three different systems operating in the space. There is limited casual seating, study and youth space.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A plan be prepared that expresses the intentions of the Surf Coast Shire Council with regard to library services across the municipality, including development plans for the Torquay Library. Short term 0-3 years.

New Torquay Library with a floor area of at least 1,200m².

Planning for new Library 0–3 years and New Library built 3–5 years

WAURN PONDS LIBRARY

Size: 970 m²

Total Hours open: 60 hours per week

Visits: 155,850 | Loans: 237,869 | Collection size: 29,918

Members: 10,638

Special features Meeting room available for hire during and after library opening hours and City of Greater Geelong Customer Service Centre.

LOCATION AND CONTEXT

The Waurm Ponds Library was opened in 2011 and is located adjacent to Leisurelink and the Waurm Ponds shopping precinct. It is a bright, modern two storey building that features a meeting room that is also used for library programs. There is a large amount of car parking provided for activities in the precinct. The landscaping and external appearance of the building is good.

CATCHMENT AND GROWTH

The Waurm Ponds Library serves established suburbs like Waurm Ponds and Grovedale with a combined forecast population in 2019 of 19,894, and rapidly growing areas in the southern part of Geelong including Mount Duneed, Marshall, Charlemont and Armstrong Creek. Young families moving into the area making good use of the library and children's programs. In the next five years it is anticipated that the Armstrong Creek Library will be completed to provide for the rapidly expanding Armstrong Creek, Mt Duneed and surrounding areas.

USAGE TRENDS

Visits and loans at this library have grown over the last three years. Outreach work to childcare facilities, kindergartens and schools is bringing large numbers of children and families who participate in regular programs and activities. Residents moving in to new housing developments in Armstrong Creek are also contributing to the growth in usage.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

It is appropriate to review how the space is working given the library has been operating for eight years. The children's area is reportedly too small and the area at the rear of the building, envisaged as an outdoor library activities space, has not worked well. It is recommended that this area be enclosed and used to better accommodate the children's collections and activities. The open staircase to the second storey of this building carries sound making the library noisy. Acoustics could be improved. The carpet needs replacing in parts, internal repainting is required and some furniture needs to be renewed.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ON FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

Despite the young age of the Waurm Ponds Library there were still a number of facility related comments made in the 2018 Library User Survey. Noise travels easily around the library because of its open layout across two levels. A number of comments were made about the small size of the children's area, the under use of the external area and library patrons competing with leisure centre users for parking. Comments were also made about introducing a café, more and better seating for private reading and study, returns chute and increasing the number of power points.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Minor refurbishment (maintenance). Short term 0-3 years.

Major refurbishment outdoor space. Short term 0-3 years.



WESTERN HEIGHTS COLLEGE

Size: 350m²

Total hours open: 44.5 hours per week during school term and 21 hours per week during holidays

Visits: 9,590 | Loans: 12,317 | Collection size: 5,545

Members: 856

Special features: Joint Use Library providing access for local residents to the GRLC collection.

LOCATION AND CONTEXT

Community access is provided to a library housed in the secondary school library on Vines Road in Hamlyn Heights. The building is owned by the Victorian Department of Education and Training and the Department is responsible for all maintenance and utility costs. The terms of community access to the library are described in a formal agreement between the Department of Education and Training and the City of Greater Geelong.

The library provides a different level of service from other GRLC branches focused mainly on the provision of access to GRLC collections. There are no public access PCs and there is no Wi-Fi available for library members. The library is staffed by employees of the school through the Department of Education and Training.

CATCHMENT AND GROWTH

The library is located between the Geelong West Library, 3.9 km to the south east and Corio Library 7.4 km to the north.

USAGE TRENDS

Usage of the library by the community has increased over the last couple of years, but relative to other branches is very low. The Bellarine & Surf Coast Mobile Library, which operates for up to 24.5 hours per week, has 12,697 visits compared with the 9,590 visits to Western Heights over 44 hours per week in a school term.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ON FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

There were few facility related comments made in the 2018 Library User Survey by Western Heights Library members. The most frequent facility related comment was that there should be an after-hours return chute. Other comments included that it should be larger and that there should be a separate section for children.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The GRLC has a small collection within the school library and there are limitations to how the service can be developed. The limitations do impact on patronage. There is access to a more comprehensive suite of library services nearby at Corio and Geelong West Libraries.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND TIMEFRAME

Review. Medium term 3-5 years.





11. PLANNING FOR NEW LIBRARY INFRASTRUCTURE

In May 2005 the City of Greater Geelong resolved to prepare a plan that looked at the timeframe and costs of the development or renewal of libraries at Waurin Ponds, Lara and Armstrong Creek and redeveloping or replacing the Geelong City, Geelong West and Drysdale Libraries. This resolution of Council informed the development of the *Public Library Buildings Development Strategy* in 2009.

A number of library development projects have been completed including the construction of new libraries at Waurin Ponds, Lara, Leopold and the Geelong Library & Heritage Centre. The major work that remains outstanding from that Geelong City Council decision is the development of the new replacement library at Drysdale (highlighted in the Drysdale Library Branch Summary) and the construction of a new library at Armstrong Creek.

This Plan has incorporated recommendations for the development of new, including replacement libraries, in Drysdale, Torquay and Lara (replacing the interim library) in the Branch Summaries. The GRLC will consult further with member Councils to determine if their planning work relating to community and social infrastructure provision foreshadows expanded library service provision. The following describes the rationale for a new library at Armstrong Creek.

ARMSTRONG CREEK LIBRARY

The Armstrong Creek Library will service the primary growth corridor in the Geelong region. Once fully developed, the Armstrong Creek Urban Growth Area is expected to accommodate approximately 25,000 homes, 22,000 new jobs, a population upwards of 66,000 people and extensive areas of passive, active and environmental parkland. The Armstrong Creek Urban Growth Plan states: "The scale of the new development will enable the provision of a comprehensive range of community facilities and services such as schools, a library, medical centres and meeting spaces. These will reflect leading edge thinking in terms of efficient and convenient service delivery. Community facilities and services to serve the new community will be provided early in the life of the development to ensure convenient access for new residents."

Council and the GRLC have held preliminary discussions about the proposed location of a new 3,000m² library within the retail centre of Armstrong Creek. This large facility should provide a full suite of contemporary library services to all members of the community from the one location. The facility would also support the provision of Outreach Services to the community.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND TIMEFRAME

Detailed planning and design. Short term 0-3 years.
Construction of new library. Medium term 3-5 years.

SMYTHESDALE WELL

At the time of writing, installation of technology and equipment to enable loans, returns and pick up of holds was underway at Golden Plains Shire's Smythesdale Well. The objective being to enhance access and services delivered from the mobile library service which currently stops in Smythesdale on Friday mornings for 1.5 hours and every third Saturday of the month 9am to 12 noon coinciding with the monthly community market.

Smythesdale residents are Golden Plains Shire's second largest community and Haddon, Smythesdale and surrounding district have a combined population of just over 5,000 residents. There is an opportunity to consider and plan for the establishment of a static library in the medium term (3-5 years). Though the Service Model Hierarchy (page 19) recommends a branch library for catchment populations ranging from a minimum of 10,000 to 25,000, the dispersed nature of the population in Golden Plains Shire and the long distance to Bannockburn Library needs to be taken into consideration. Other options including neighbouring library services available must also be considered. All Victorians are able to join any library service in Victoria irrespective of whether they reside in the local government area where the library is situated. External funding opportunities include the State Government's Living Libraries Infrastructure Program..



12. PLANS AND POLICY CONTEXT

The provision of library services in the region is informed by policies that are developed at an international, national, state and local level. Those policies illustrate the broad and multifaceted role that libraries play in communities from building informed civil societies that are essential to functioning democracies to anchor services in community hubs that are free for everybody. The policy context for the renewal and development of library services in the region includes;

CREATIVE COMMUNITIES - THE CULTURAL BENEFITS OF VICTORIA'S PUBLIC LIBRARIES, STATE LIBRARY OF VICTORIA (2014)

The role of public libraries as cultural institutions in the sense that they involve the collection and dissemination of knowledge and knowledge-producing artifacts, such as books, art and local history collections is well understood. But the ways that public libraries contribute to culture-making is less clear. Increasingly libraries are being used to showcase and support community creativity. This report used quantitative data, extensive community consultation and case studies from public libraries across the state to understand the role of public libraries as long-term and dynamic contributors to Victoria's cultural landscape.

The report emphasised that innovative and up-to-date space design is critical if public libraries are to build on and extend their role as cultural and creative hubs. The future of libraries will rely heavily on the right design approach allowing the balanced use of space involving;

- the physical building and its interiors
- the flexibility of spaces and how they can accommodate multiple needs and uses
- the use of contemporary design to create a welcoming and uplifting atmosphere
- the design of digital interfaces and websites.

VICTORIAN PUBLIC LIBRARIES 2030 - STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK (2013)

This ambitious strategy document looked beyond the usual three or four year planning cycle and explored the role of the public library in 2030. The Strategy proposed that public libraries in the future extend their traditional content management and distribution role in different directions along the content spectrum: between creation, management and distribution, and consumption. By adopting a broad sense of purpose and identity, and a capacity to adapt to changing social trends, libraries could continue to provide great value to communities.

The Strategy describes two strategic options for library services in 2030: the Creative Library and the Community Library. The Creative Library is where people will create content and seek skills and resources to develop and express their creativity. The Community Library is a place where people will consume content and will seek classes, workshops and spaces that support 21st century literacies and learning. In both scenarios, public libraries have an opportunity to continue the transition from passive, product-based environments to ones that deliver active, service-based experiences.

The Strategy Framework goes on to describe what services are on offer are in the community and creative library with implications on a wide range of areas including staffing; the housing of physical and digital collections; the documenting and warehousing of local history, culture and knowledge; the provision of business centres for local telecommuters; and the provision of community literacy and learning programs, training and workshops.

The Strategy also describes the need for a range of spaces in the Community and Creative Libraries including less space for physical collections; spaces for individual and group learning; telecommuting facilities; social spaces and lounges that provide a community 'living room' feel; communal meeting spaces for forums, public lectures and information sessions; archival spaces provide local history collections in print and digital formats; studios for rehearsing, recording and editing content and café and catering facilities to encourage social interaction.

UNESCO PUBLIC LIBRARY MANIFESTO

The UNESCO Public Library Manifesto provides the most significant international statement concerning public libraries. It gives expression to the belief in the public library as a living force for education, culture and information, and as an essential agent for the fostering of peace and spiritual welfare. The Manifesto emphasises that public library services should be:

- provided on the basis of equality of access for all
- physically accessible to all members of the community
- relevant to local needs and conditions
- responsive to the needs of those who cannot, for whatever reason, use the regular services and materials of the library.

It expresses that the following key missions which relate to information, literacy, education and culture should be at the core of public library services:

1. creating and strengthening reading habits in children at an early age;
2. supporting both individual and self-conducted education as well as formal education at all levels;
3. providing opportunities for personal creative development;
4. stimulating the imagination and creativity of children and young people;
5. promoting awareness of cultural heritage, appreciation of the arts, scientific achievements and innovations;
6. providing access to cultural expressions of all performing arts;
7. fostering inter-cultural dialogue and favouring cultural diversity;
8. supporting the oral tradition;
9. ensuring access for citizens to all sorts of community information;
10. providing adequate information services to local enterprises, associations and interest groups;
11. facilitating the development of information and computer literacy skills;
12. supporting and participating in literacy activities and programmes for all age groups, and initiating such activities if necessary.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Every four years Victorian Councils prepare a Council Plan that describes, at a high level, the strategic intentions of Council for the following four years. The Plans are updated and reviewed annually. Council Plans vary in the number of key themes or strategic objectives they are framed around, but they broadly include:

- Community connectedness and wellbeing
- Supporting the local economy
- Managing the natural environment
- Managing and planning the built environment and growth
- Financial management, leadership and governance

Library services provide a range of opportunities to deliver on outcomes in Council Plans, particularly in relation to equity and inclusion, community wellbeing and economic development. Libraries provide opportunities for diverse groups - but particularly older people, children,

families and people on limited incomes - to come together and access services for free in a safe environment. They provide a wide range of recreational, educational, social and business related opportunities for the community and are amongst the most popular things that Councils provide to the community. The presence of a local library signals a commitment by Council to the development of an informed, connected and engaged citizenry.

The following is a short summary of the 2017-2021 Plans of the four member Councils identifying where the work of library services supports or could be developed to fulfil some of the strategic intentions of the Plans.

BOROUGH OF QUEENSLIFFE COUNCIL PLAN 2017-2021

- The Vision of the Borough of Queenscliffe is ***The Borough remains a safe haven defined by its unique heritage, rich culture and significant natural environment. It is a special and restorative place for an involved and caring community and our visitors.***
- The Plan has a key strategic objective around Community Wellbeing- ***To enhance community well-being by providing a safe environment where people are involved, healthy and active in recreation, arts and culture.*** Strategies to achieve this include; increase participation in sport, recreation and lifelong learning opportunities; enhance opportunities for participation in arts and cultural activities; and support families, children and young people by facilitating access to services and community facilities.

The Borough will use the maintenance or improvement of the result of the G.R.L.C user survey as one indicator of the extent to which Council has delivered on its strategic objectives related to community wellbeing.¹⁴

GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE COUNCIL PLAN 2017-21

- This Plan includes a Vision ***To provide a healthy, safe, vibrant, prosperous and sustainable community supported by strong leadership, transparent governance and community partnerships.***
- There are four key strategic directions in the Plan the first of which is to ***Promote Healthy and Connected Communities.*** It states that Council is ***committed to creating a healthy active and safe community that provides opportunities for all residents, especially young people and older residents, to connect and engage with their community.*** The Plan talks about community development initiatives that increase people's opportunities to participate in community life.
- Council is also committed to the ***Enhancement of the Local Economy, and to advocate for education, vocational and lifelong learning opportunities to support skill development and employment opportunities for people at all life stages.*** The Plan also talks about encouraging greater investment in the Shire through creative industries, local events and festivals.
- The Council's Health and Wellbeing Plan priorities (incorporated in the Council Plan) include ***Connected Communities; to increase support for community groups to provide opportunities for social interaction.***¹⁵

CITY OF GREATER GEELONG COUNCIL PLAN 2018-2022 – PUTTING OUR COMMUNITY FIRST

- The Plan outlines how Council will work towards making Greater Geelong a clever and creative city-region. This Council Plan is informed by a 30-year community vision for the municipality called ***A Greater Geelong: A Clever and Creative Future*** which includes a number of aspirations for achieving that vision.

The Council Plan attends to a range of issues including multiculturalism, safety, the environment, growth, health and wellbeing, arts and culture, tourism and the attraction of new investment.

¹⁴ Borough of Queenscliffe Council Plan 2017-2021

¹⁵ Golden Plains Shire Council Plan 2017-21

It also states that "Social equity is a key consideration for our services and facilities and we're planning to focus on the areas that need them most". There are 11 strategic priorities in the Plan, a number of which bear direct relevance to the provision of library services as follows;

- **Informed social infrastructure and planning:** Delivering accessible and attractive community infrastructure based on need.
- **A more inclusive and diverse community:** Supporting activities that improve social connections in our community; Further developing programs that support older people and young people in our community.
- **Vibrant Arts and Culture:** Working with the Geelong Regional Library Corporation to deliver efficient and effective services and programs with measures of success that include 20% active library membership and the maintenance of visitation to key cultural facilities that include the GLHC.
- **Innovative Finance and Technology:** Increasing Wi-Fi in public spaces and community facilities.¹⁶

THE SURF COAST SHIRE COUNCIL PLAN 2017-2021

- The Plan sets goals for priorities, including infrastructure, community life, renewable energy, transport corridors, digital technology, customer service and financial responsibility. The Plan highlights issues around population growth, preserving and enhancing the natural environment and townships, economic development and tourism. The Vision for the Shire is **An engaged, innovative and sustainable community.**
- The Plan has been framed around five key themes and the following themes and strategic actions relate to Council's provision and development of library services. The first strategy in the Plan relates to Community Wellbeing, with one of the main objectives to **Support people to participate in and contribute to community life by developing and implementing a program to support communities of place and interest, and opportunities for them to identify and achieve their community aspirations.**
- The second key strategy relates to Balancing Growth with a key strategic objective to **ensure infrastructure is in place to support existing communities and provide for growth.** Two strategies articulated to achieve this are to; **ensure appropriate funding mechanisms are in place to support future growth including developer contributions and to advocate for supporting infrastructure.**
- The next key strategy with a bearing on library service provision relates to a Vibrant Economy. It has a key strategy to **Strengthen the vitality of town centres.** Town centres are a good place to be and an important part of community life and work is to be done to **identify and support the economic and social drivers of town centres within the Shire.**¹⁷

¹⁶ City of Greater Geelong Council Plan 2018-2022 – Putting Our Community First

¹⁷ The Surf Coast Shire Council Plan 2017-2021



GEELONG
REGIONAL
LIBRARIES

