



Geelong Regional Library Corporation

BOARD MEETING AGENDA

Thursday 27 August 2026, 5:30pm

Geelong Library and Heritage Centre Boardroom
& MS Teams



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SECTION A - PROCEDURAL MATTERS

1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Geelong Regional Library Corporation acknowledges the Wadawurrung People of the Kulin nation, and the Gulidjan and Gadubanud Peoples of the Maar nations as the Original Owners of the lands on which our library services operate. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge and celebrate First Nations Peoples of this land as the custodians of learning, literacy, knowledge and story.

2. ATTENDEES

BOARD MEMBERS	
Cr Liz Pattison (Chair)	Surf Coast Shire
Cr Elise Wilkison (Deputy Chair)	City of Greater Geelong
Cr Emma Sinclair	City of Greater Geelong
Cr Rowan D. Story AM RFD	City of Greater Geelong
Cr Trent Sullivan	City of Greater Geelong
Cr Mick McCrickard	Colac Otway Shire
Cr Owen Sharkey	Golden Plains Shire
Cr Isabelle Tolhurst	Borough of Queenscliffe
COUNCIL OFFICERS	
Damian Waight	General Manager, Community Life, SCS
Amie Higgs	Acting Executive Director City Life, CoGG
Ian Seuren	General Manager Development & Community Services, COS
Jonathan Daly	Director of Community, Planning and Growth, GPS
Abbey Tatterson	Manager, Customer Experience, Borough of Queenscliffe
GRLC OFFICERS	
David Semmens	Chief Executive Officer
Skye Wilson	Director, People, Culture and Strategic Engagement
Deanne Verity	Acting, Director, Community Experience
Daniyal Ali	Manager, Finance and Governance
Dr Lucy Davies	Manager Heritage Services
Tanya Robertson	Executive Assistant
GUESTS	
Anoja Bandara	Acting Manager, Financial Audit Victorian Auditor-General's Office

3. APOLOGIES

Cr Rowan D. Story AM RFD

4. INTERESTS, CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND PECUNIARY INTERESTS

5. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES DATED 25 JUNE 2026

Recommendation

That the draft minutes of the Board Meeting held 25 June 2026 be confirmed.

SECTION B – PRESENTATIONS

6. DRAFT ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2025–2026 (CONFIDENTIAL)

David Semmens, Chief Executive Officer

Anoja Bandara | Acting Manager, Financial Audit Victorian Auditor-General's Office
(Presenting the Draft Closing Report)

Recommendation

This report and associated documents will be distributed early next week.

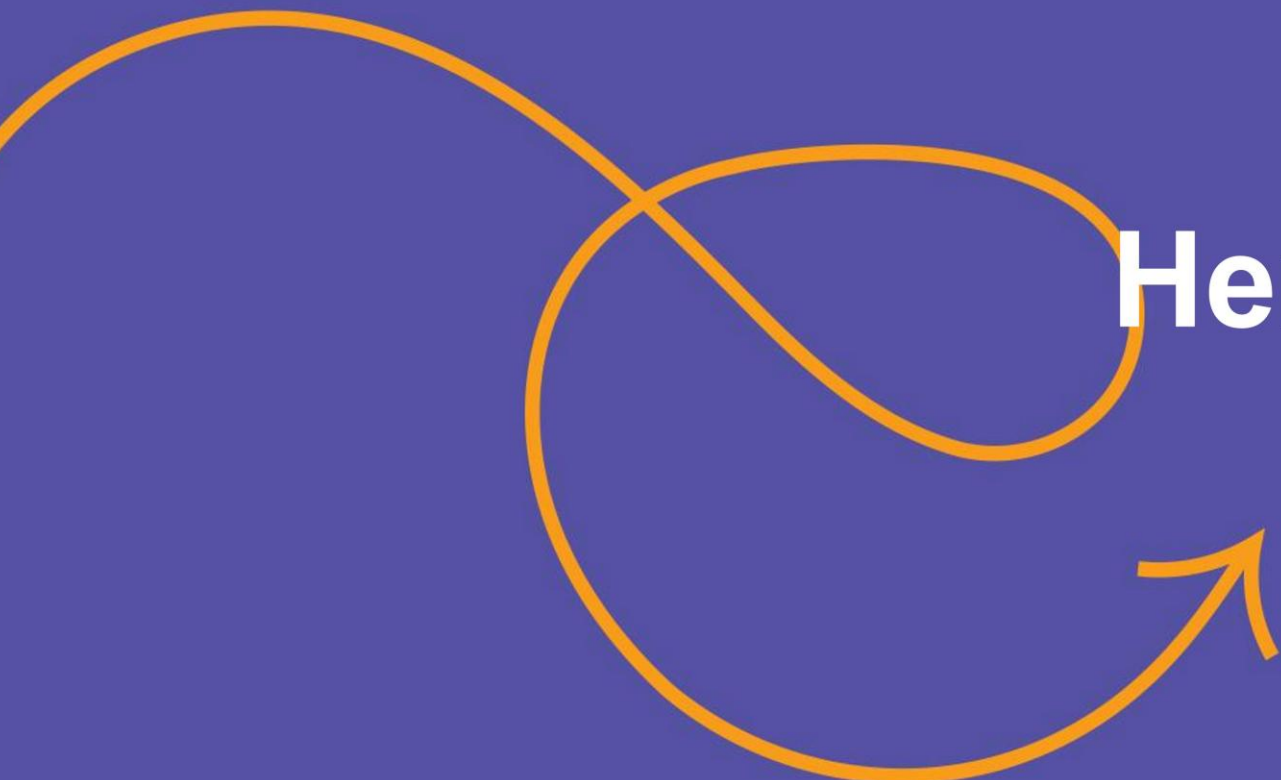
7. HERITAGE SERVICES PLAN 2025-2029 – YEAR 1 UPDATE

Dr Lucy Davies, Manager Heritage Services

Recommendation

That the Heritage Services Plan Update be noted.

GEELONG
REGIONAL
LIBRARIES



Heritage Service Plan 2025 - 2029 Year 1 update

AUGUST 2026

“The Team in the heritage centre were amazing today when I went in with a request. Not only were the team there helpful and cheerful but they very clearly knew so much about all of the available resources and came up with a number of ideas about how to find the information I was looking for. Eventually I found what I needed in a resource that was created by the library staff, not just from some collection, but something the team had specifically created to make searching easier. Keep up the amazing work!.”

– Library customer (10 June 2026)



Heritage Service Plan

SERVICE AREAS:

1. Heritage research service

Purpose: Help customers feel safe, respected and empowered when they engage with heritage services, especially when the material or interaction may be emotionally significant.

2. Collection access

Purpose: Help customers understand what is in the collection and how they can access it without needing to be an expert.

3. Collection management

Purpose: ensure the collection reflects what matters most to the community and protect what's at risk of being lost.



Heritage Service Plan

OUR APPROACH – TRAUMA INFORMED & SUBJECT CENTRED

1. Heritage research service

Guiding policy: A heritage research service guided by trauma-informed principles. We will aim to offer choice, reduce delays and explain processes clearly. This will look like a consistent and customer-centred service by doing what we say we will do, being clear about boundaries and what is or is not possible. Wherever possible we will let a customer's preferences drive how they interact with our services.

2. Collection access

Guiding policy: Transparency about the contents and state of the collection and a commitment to providing access whenever possible.

3. Collection management

Guiding policy: While acknowledging archival debt, we will remain future-focused by prioritising items from underrepresented communities and ensuring these collections are preserved for future generations. This will contribute to a more balanced representation of a diverse range of stories and perspectives from the past.



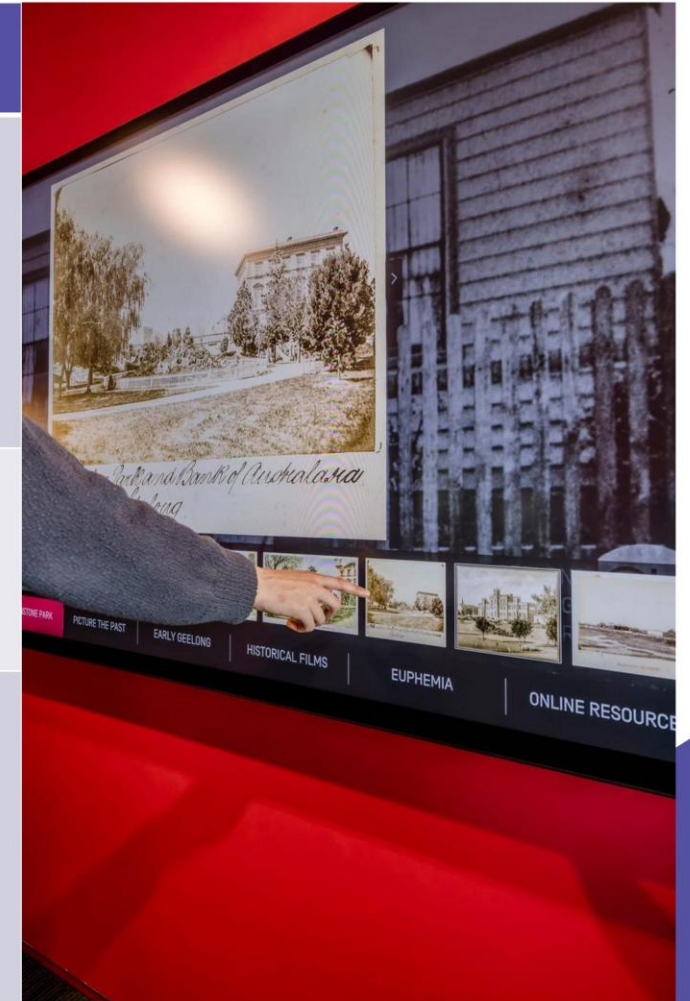
Heritage Service Plan – focus areas

Service area actions	Year One (2025-2026)	Year Two (2026-2027)	Year Three (2027-2028)	Year Four (2028-2029)
Heritage research service (15)	Trauma-informed service delivery & vicarious trauma risk management	Clear & transparent guidelines for customers on copyright & privacy	Customer journey mapping – collection access & research enquiries	Pilot online research support service
Collection access (22)	Reparative description of First Nations reference collection	Enhance access to Glastonbury records online & in person	Review collection access conditions (open, closed & restricted)	Create local government access points & research guides
Collection management (17)	Review collection ownership documentation & triage vinegar syndrome negatives	Record & prepare audio visual & Geelong Historical Society collections	Tertiary placement student projects – audio visual & Geelong Historical Society collections	Create Right of Reply & contributor opportunities for customers

Heritage research service

Year one highlights

- ✓ Heritage staff trained & confident in delivering a trauma-informed heritage service including offering customers choice about how they access our services through small group workshops & library drop ins.
- ✓ Heritage staff supported & equipped to manage their risk of vicarious trauma through rostering, self care strategies & opportunities for sharing.
- ✓ Customers provided with a warning about sensitive or distressing records with information & a link to support services so they can choose when to view records & have support if needed.

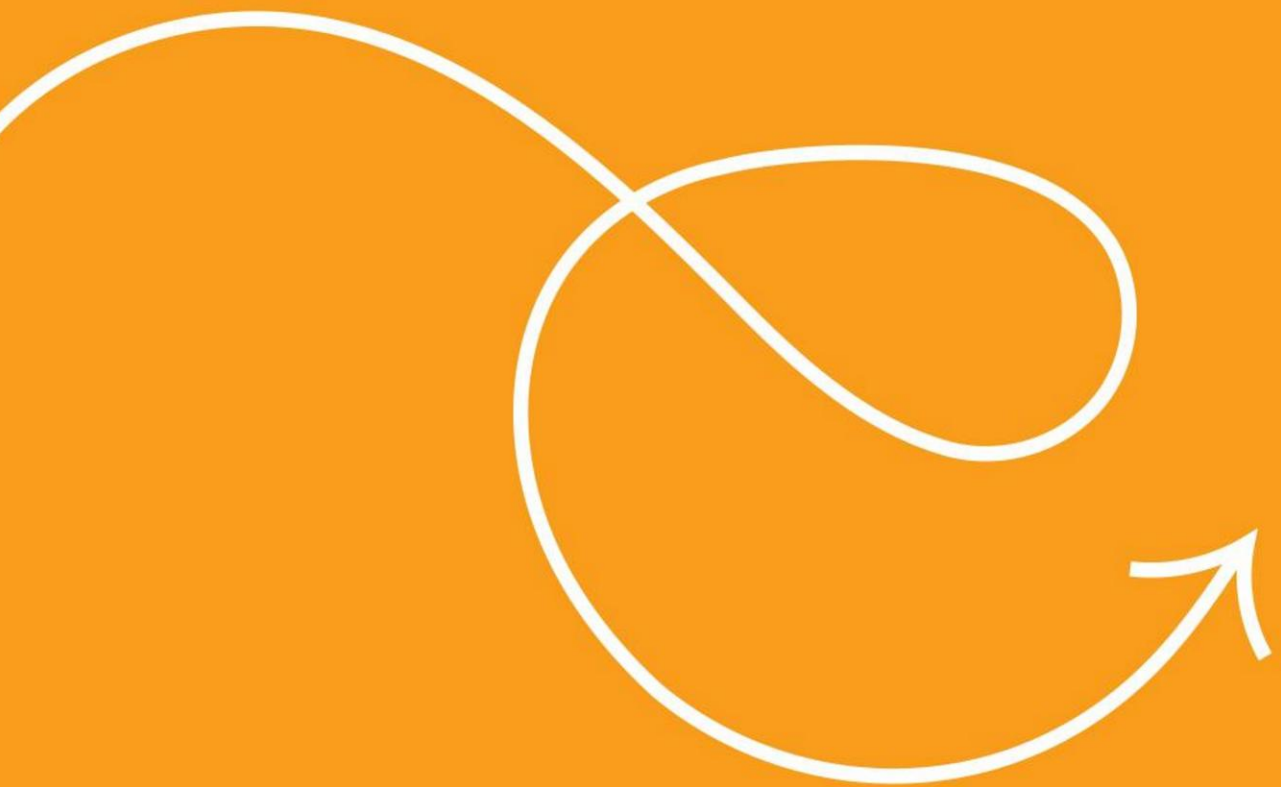


Collection access



Year one highlights

- ✓ Warnings for customers that items in our archive collection may be offensive or cause distress along with reparative description of the 135 First Nations items in the heritage reference collection so customers can safely search our library and heritage catalogues.
- ✓ 7,000+ heritage reference collection descriptions updated so customers can make an informed choice about the items they view.
- ✓ Partnerships with tertiary institutions enabled placement students to deliver priority collection projects, improving collection access while bringing contemporary knowledge and practice to the Library.
- ✓ Wadawurrung Traditional Owners spent an afternoon viewing cultural heritage items from the collection, fostering trust and transparency.
- ✓ By prioritising access to out-of-home care records, the names of 2,600 children who were admitted to Glastonbury Orphanage over 99 years ago have been added to the heritage catalogue enabling their descendants to undertake family research from the privacy of their home.



www.grlc.vic.gov.au

SECTION C – REPORTS

8. LIBRARY PLAN 2025–2029 YEAR 1 UPDATE

Deanne Verity, Acting, Director, Community Experience

Recommendation

That the Library Plan 2025–2029 Year 1 Update report be noted.

Purpose

To provide the Board with an evaluation report on work completed against the delivery of the GRLC Library Plan 2025-29, and to present the updated balanced scorecard results.

Background

The Library Plan 2025-29 was adopted by GRLC Board at its meeting 28 August 2025

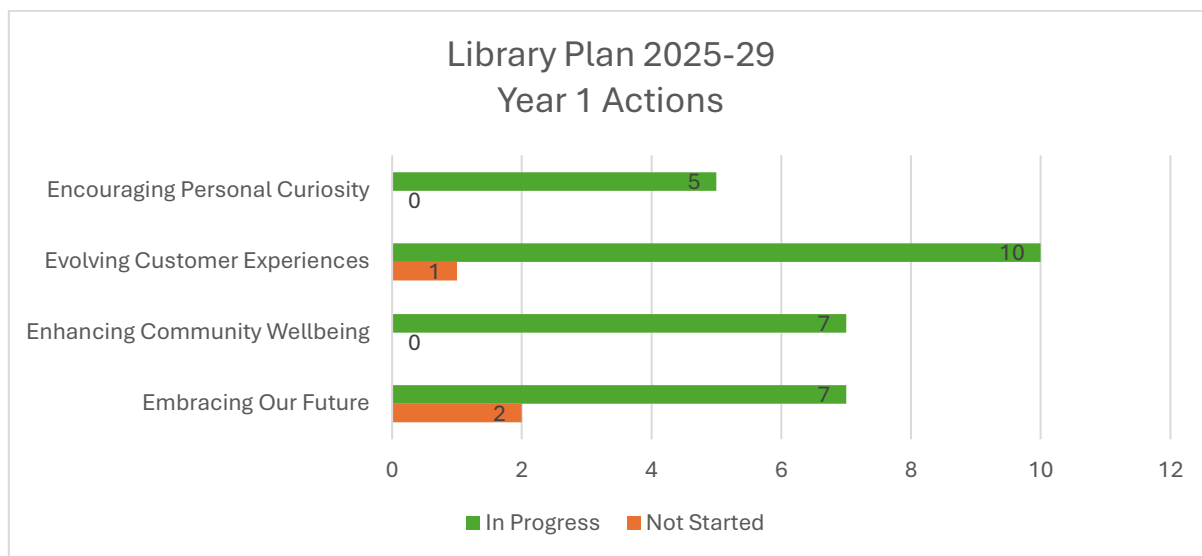
Key Information

Appendix 1 below contains a summary of the achievements against the Library Plan 2025–29. The 2025–26 financial year was the first year of implementation for the new plan, with activity focused on building momentum across the four priority areas, progressing actions scheduled for delivery during the year, and establishing the foundations for initiatives planned across the remainder of the four-year period.

Progress is considered in the context of the Plan's four-year delivery timeframe, recognising that actions are intentionally sequenced across the period. Good progress has been made during the first year of implementation, with 29 of the 32 actions (91%) in progress and only three actions yet to commence.

Key achievements during the year demonstrate early progress towards the Plan's aspirations, including strengthening digital access and literacy, preserving and improving access to local and First Nations heritage collections, enhancing community connection and inclusion, expanding service accessibility, and investing in workforce capability. These initiatives contribute to the Library Plan's vision of knowledge and connection for people and communities while responding to changing customer expectations and population needs.

The summary highlights notable achievements across each aspiration and identifies actions scheduled to commence during Year Two of implementation.



Appendix 2 contains the first Balanced Scorecard report established under the Library Plan 2025-29. The Balanced Scorecard was adopted as the Plan's primary performance monitoring framework and provides a headline view of organisational performance across the key dimensions of customer outcomes, internal processes, learning and growth, and financial sustainability. These measures have been selected to help assess how effectively GRLC is progressing towards the Plan's four priorities and aspirations, while continuing to respond to changing community needs.

To support longitudinal analysis, results dating back to 2021-22 have been included up to the 2025-26 baseline year results. Viewing these indicators over time will enable the Board to identify emerging trends, better understand the impact of initiatives delivered through the Library Plan, and monitor changes in customer engagement, collection performance, workforce engagement and organisational sustainability.

The first year results indicate generally stable performance across most measures. Customer visits and memberships have remained steady despite the temporary closure associated with the Chilwell redevelopment and softening borrowing activity at Biyal-a Armstrong Creek. Customer satisfaction has improved, staff engagement has increased, and overall participation levels remain strong. Areas requiring ongoing monitoring include loan activity and average program attendance, which have moderated during the reporting period.

APPENDIX 1 – LIBRARY PLAN YEAR 1 ACTION SUMMARY

ENCOURAGING PERSONAL CURIOSITY

Aspiration	Actions	Status	Highlight during 2025-26
Facilitate Life-long Learning – Literacy, Creativity, Heritage	1a; 1b; 1c; 1d; 1e	In Progress	The digitisation of 22,595 Geelong Advertiser negatives has preserved a significant visual record of the region's social and political history. Digitisation protects these fragile materials from deterioration and ensures future generations can continue to explore, learn from and connect with Geelong's stories.
Empowering Safety and Responsibility Online	1c; 1e	In Progress	GRLC strengthened community digital literacy and critical information skills through <i>The Matter of Facts</i> workshop, delivered in partnership with the ABC. Participants developed practical skills to identify, assess and fact-check misinformation and disinformation, complementing GRLC's new media literacy program.
Helping Individuals Navigate Mis- And Dis-information	1c; 1e	In Progress	GRLC hosted its fourth annual <i>Talk It Up</i> event, exploring the impact of misinformation and disinformation in the Geelong region and how communities can build resilience, support informed dialogue and strengthen critical thinking.

EVOLVING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES

Aspiration	Actions	Status	Highlight
Uplifting digital access and capability	2a; 2b; 2c; 2d; 2k	In Progress	The introduction of ePress magazines to BorrowBox in August 2025 expanded the integrated digital reading experience, enabling customers to access eBooks, audiobooks and magazines through a single platform.
Innovating our service experiences and quality	2a; 2b; 2d; 2e; 2f; 2g; 2h; 2i; 2j; 2k	In Progress	The new Birregurra Library Kiosk has significantly improved community access, moving from a limited mobile service to a more accessible, community-based model. Since opening in February 2026, the kiosk recorded 581 loans, 175 visits and 14 new members, demonstrating strong community uptake and improved access for children and families.
Enabling participation and productivity- work, study, collaborate	2c; 2d; 2e; 2f; 2g; 2h; 2i; 2j	In Progress	Ongoing partnership with Gordon Job Skills Centre, delivering career advice and support via in drop-in sessions across Corio, Biyal-a Armstrong Creek, and Boronggook Drysdale Libraries.
Actions commencing Year 2			
	2d	Investigate the use of generative AI to connect customers with high quality information.	

ENHANCING COMMUNITY WELLBEING

Aspiration	Actions	Status	Highlight
Fostering connection and belonging	3a; 3b; 3d; 3e; 3f; 3g	In Progress	GRLC secured funding through the ALIA and Department of Home Affairs partnership to deliver programs at Colac and Corio Libraries supporting connection, wellbeing and belonging among vulnerable and isolated community members. Participant feedback highlighted significant positive impacts, including one describing the experience as “life changing”.
Creating places and spaces that people value	3a; 3b; 3e; 3f; 3g	In Progress	GRLC partnered with Switchboard Victoria to deliver intergenerational creative and storytelling workshops across four library locations, supporting LGBTQIA+ community connection and visibility. Participants co-created a Pride banner celebrating the region's history, connections and aspirations for the future.
Celebrating difference and diversity	3a; 3b; 3e; 3f; 3g	In Progress	GRLC strengthened the accessibility, relevance and cultural responsiveness of its collections. The introduction of eMagazines through BorrowBox enables customers to access magazine content in additional languages, while updated collection profiles are guiding selections towards Australian publications and strengthening the representation of First Nations content.

EMBRACING OUR FUTURE

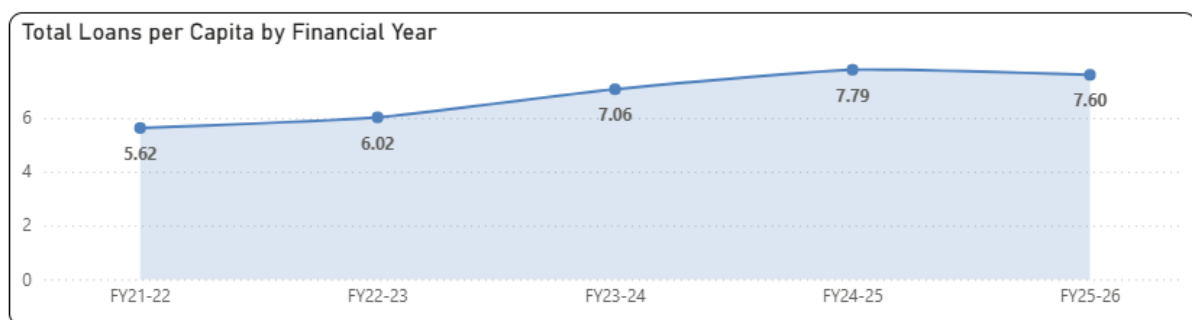
Aspiration	Actions	Status	Highlight
Adopting a new governance model	4a; 4b	In Progress	Finalisation of draft documents and key workshops undertaken to progress Council consideration of the proposed new governance model.
Strengthening our financial sustainability	4b	In Progress	Year one of the philanthropy strategy is being implemented following endorsement by the Board in 25/26, commencing with recruitment for a specialist role to support this space.
Empowering our people to be their best	4d; 4e; 4f; 4g; 4h; 4i	In Progress	Tertiary placement students contributed to the reparative description of 135 First Nations collection items, bringing records into alignment with the National Library of Australia's guidelines for respectful and culturally appropriate description. This work improved access to these important materials while providing students with practical experience in collections and information management.
Empowering our people to be their best	4d; 4e; 4f; 4g; 4h; 4i	In Progress	MARATE training was rolled out across GRLC to strengthen staff capability and confidence in managing challenging, aggressive or emotionally charged interactions. The training supports safer customer and staff interactions through practical skills in de-escalation, communication, boundary setting and self-management, contributing to staff wellbeing and a safer workplace.
Actions commencing year 2			
Strategically partnering for improved services	2c	Develop and implement a Partnership Plan that explores opportunities and formalises relationships with existing & new partners that share our values.	
Empowering our people to be their best	2e	Build and support a diverse workforce that reflects our diverse community, so we can best serve our community.	

APPENDIX 2 – 2025/26 BALANCED SCORECARD UPDATE

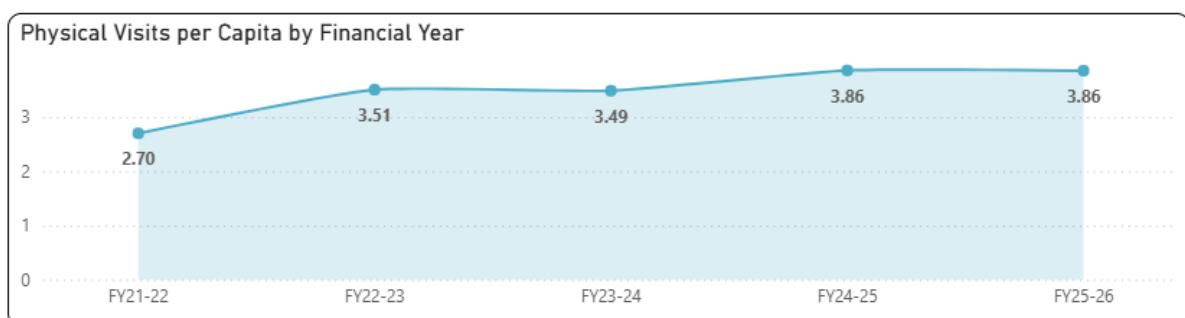
BALANCED SCORECARD

To ensure we stay on track, we monitor our progress through a Balanced Scorecard that reflects what matters most – our customers, our people, and our financial sustainability. We track and assess key metrics in these areas to ensure that we stay focused on our Priorities and advance towards our Aspirations. The Scorecard also enables us to understand at a headline level, trends on how we are responding to changing population needs, delivering value and positive experiences for our customers, supporting an engaged and effective workforce, strengthening our collections, and sustaining financial performance over time. These statistics are refreshed annually and should be viewed longitudinally, indicating areas where greater research, learning or effort may be required.

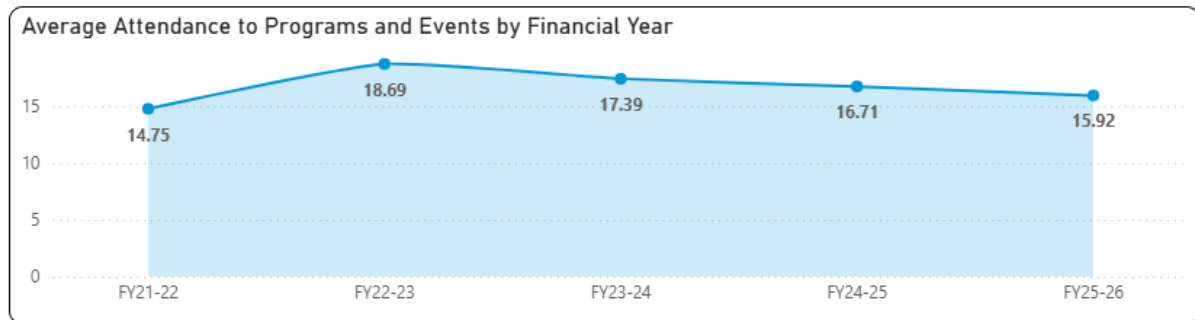
Customer Indicators



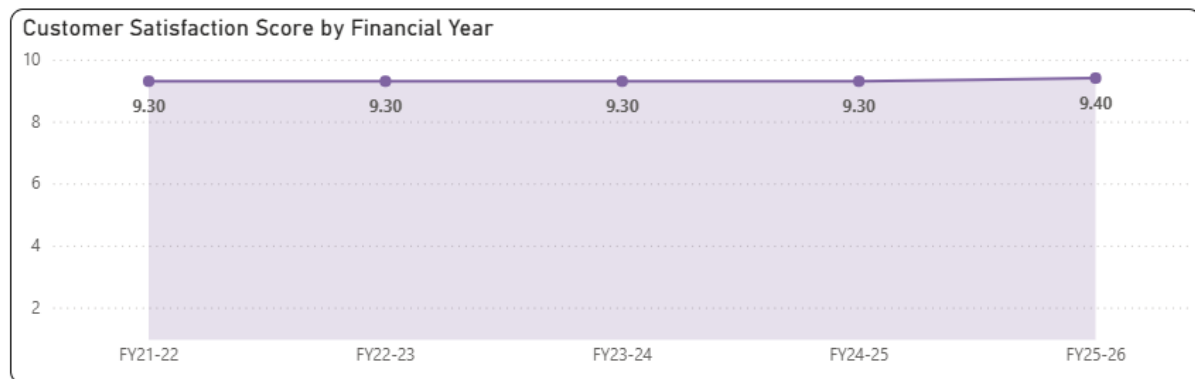
Loan metrics have reduced slightly given the softening of borrowing at Biyal-a Armstrong Creek, and the redevelopment of Chilwell Library.



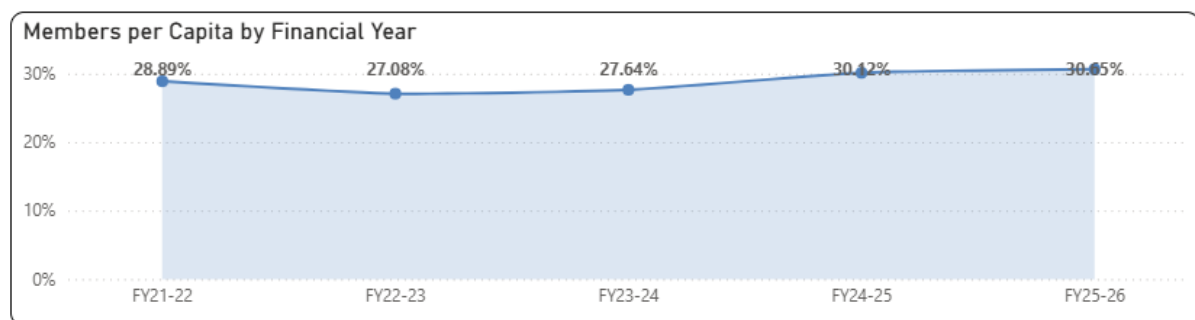
Visits have remained steady, despite one less library operating during the reporting period.



Overall average attendance to Library Programs and Events has decreased slightly. The focus of library programming has been to ensure quality of programs, not driven directly by targeting the highest participation activities.

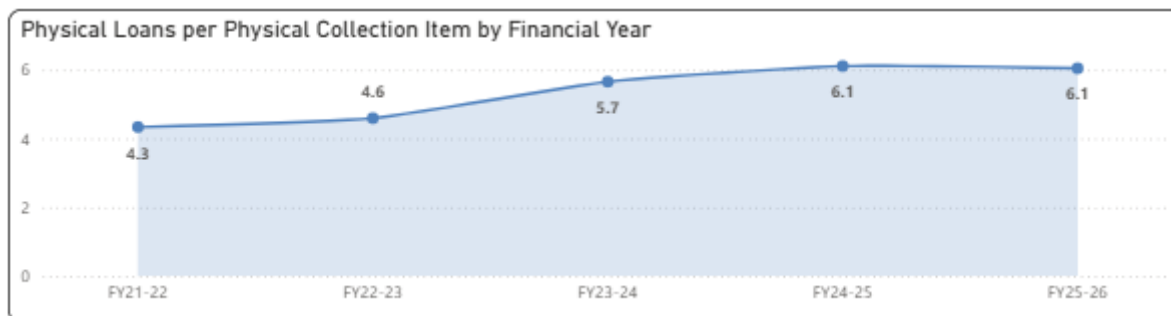


Customer satisfaction score for the reporting period increased by 0.1 following our Voice of Customer survey on Library Visits.



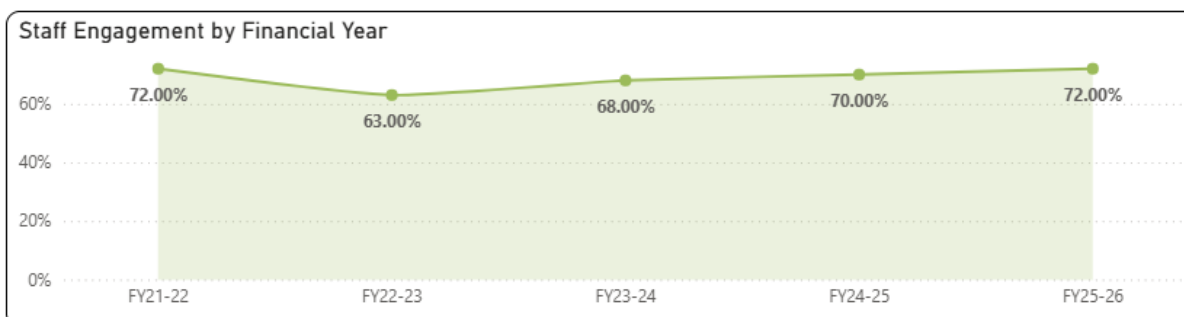
Total memberships per capita has remained steady for this reporting period, at approximately 30% of the population.

Internal Processes

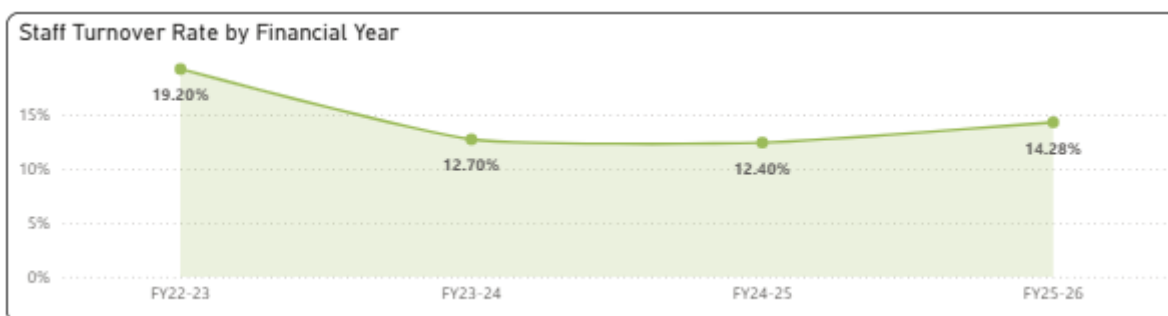


This metric tracks how hard our collection is working by how many times, on average, each item is borrowed. Our physical collection continues to deliver value, while collection management practices help ensure our resources are focused where they can have the greatest impact.

Learning and Growth

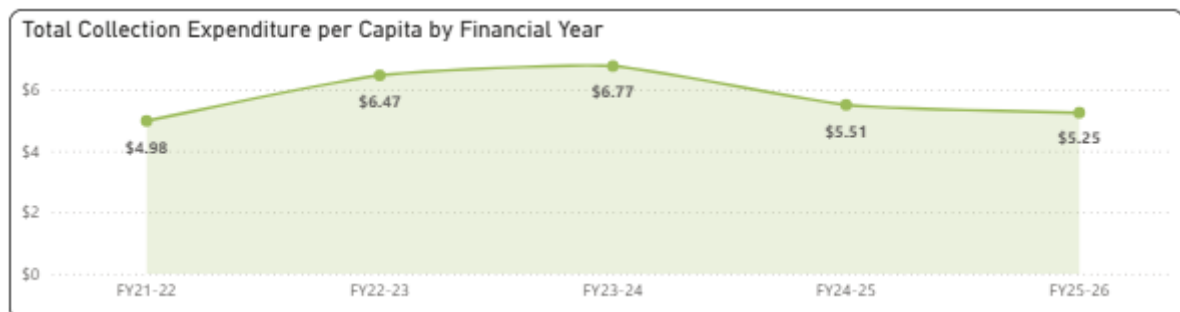


Our positive staff engagement score increased by 2% in 2025/2026 following our staff engagement survey conducted in January/February 2026.

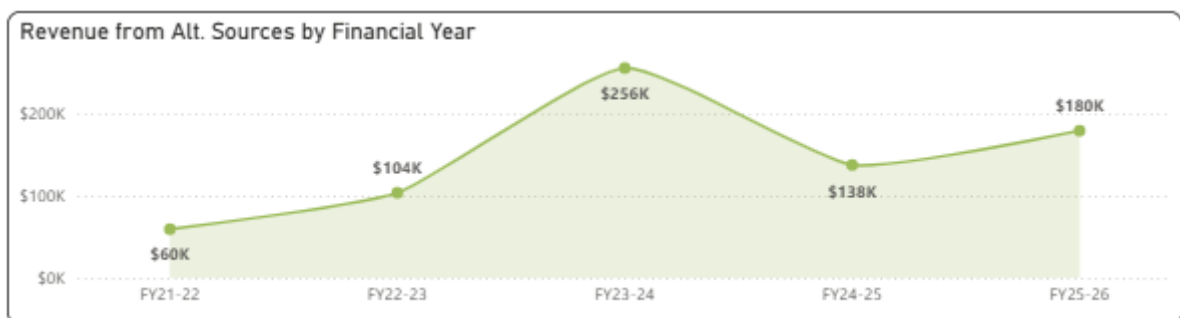


The increase in staff turnover reflects greater workforce movement, including retirements, vacancies, fixed-term contracts and movement between roles.

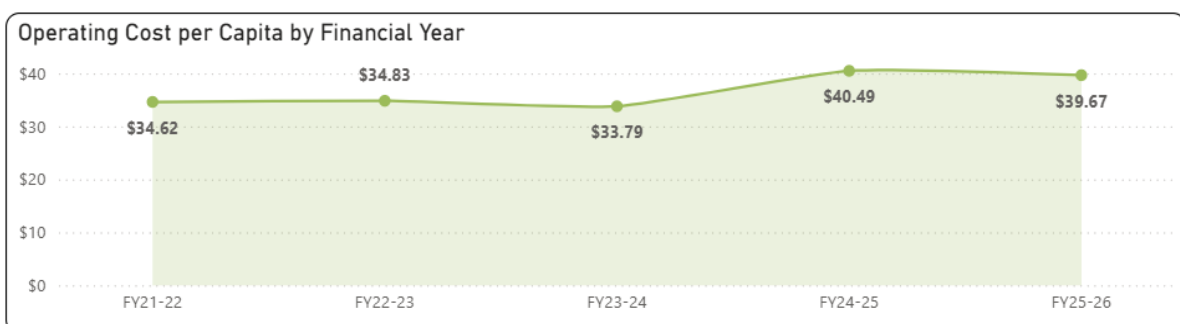
Financial



Despite continued population growth, our Collection budget has remained unchanged, reinforcing the importance of strategic collection management.



Revenue from alternative sources has continued to grow, with the introduction of online payments contributing to increased venue hire revenue and strengthening our broader income base.



Operating costs have remained relatively stable on a per capita basis over the period, despite population growth. When considered against cumulative inflation over the same period, this suggests operating costs may have declined in real terms.

9. TURNING THE PAGE – PROJECT UPDATE (CONFIDENTIAL)

David Semmens, Chief Executive Officer

Recommendation

That the Turning the Page report be noted.

10. ACTIVITY REPORT 2025-2026 FY (CONFIDENTIAL)

Deanne Verity, Acting Director Community Experience

Recommendation

That the Activity Report 2025-2026 report be noted.

11. HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING REPORT (CONFIDENTIAL)

Skye Wilson, Director, People, Culture and Strategic Engagement

Recommendation:

That the Health Safety and Wellbeing Report be noted.

12. CEO REPORT

David Semmens, Chief Executive Officer

Recommendation

That the CEO Report be noted.

Purpose

To provide information for noting on some key highlights, activities and projects. The CEO Report demonstrates how we deliver against our Purpose:

Knowledge and connection for people and communities.

This update is demonstrating how the priorities in the Library Plan 2025 – 29 are being delivered.

Library Plan 2025 – 29 Priorities

Encouraging Personal Curiosity - we will ensure our libraries continue to be places where people can safely and truthfully learn not only about the world, but themselves, leading to a more meaningful existence for everyone in our region.

Local Word – Local Writers Festival

Local Word Writers Festival is being delivered throughout August with workshops led by authors, publishers and industry experts to support the local creative industry.

Held at libraries across the region, workshops have been provided to support a range of experience levels, from those just starting out to writers developing a manuscript.

The festival concludes with our Local Authors Fair at Geelong Library & Heritage Centre where there will be more than 25 local writers and illustrators, the opportunity to browse books across a range of genres, and to discover your next favourite read.



LOCAL WORD WRITERS FESTIVAL



FREE EVENT

LOCAL AUTHORS FAIR

SATURDAY 29 AUGUST

12noon to 3:00pm
Geelong Library & Heritage Centre



WRITERS WORKSHOPS

SO YOU WANT TO GET PUBLISHED?

Stef Gemmill

Saturday 1 August, 9:30am-4:00pm
Geelong Library & Heritage Centre

CONTEMPORARY CHILDREN'S PUBLISHING

Emily Baulch

Sunday 2 August, 1:00pm-5:00pm
Corio Library

ADAPTING YOUR FICTION FOR THE SCREEN

Rachael Blackwood

Saturday 8 August, 9:30am-1:00pm
Biyal-a Armstrong Creek Library

ECOSYSTEMS IN CREATIVE WRITING

Kim Sargent-Wishart

Friday 14 August, 1:30pm-4:30pm
Queenscliff Library

WRITING REALISTIC ILLNESS AND INJURIES

Dr Tanya Scott

Saturday 15 August, 1:30pm-4:30pm
Torquay Library

CREATING NARRATIVES WITH POETRY

Brendan Ryan

Saturday 22 August, 10:30am-2:30pm
Bannockburn Library

CRAFTING SPECULATIVE FICTION

Rhett Davis

Sunday 23 August, 10:30am-4:30pm
Geelong Library & Heritage Centre



GRL

The write stuff for a top festival

The region's wordsmiths and book lovers will hear from authors, publishers and industry experts at the Local Word Writers Festival in August.

Hosted by Geelong Regional Libraries, the festival will feature a series of events at libraries throughout the region.

Eight hands-on workshops will offer opportunities for writers at all stages of their creative journey, whether they're just starting out or looking to deepen their craft.

The festival will conclude with the Local Authors Fair on August 29, when readers can meet more than 20 local writers and illustrators, browse books and discover new voices from across the region.

Festival workshops include So You Want to Get Published, Contemporary Children's Publishing, Adapting Your Fiction for the Screen, Ecosystems in Creative Writing, and Writing Realism in Crime.

The workshops will be led by authors, publishers and industry experts, including Stef Gemmill, Emily Baulch, Dr Tanya Scott and Rhett Davis.

"The Local Word Writers Festival is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate storytelling, creativity and connection across our

region," GRL acting chief executive David Semmens said. "This year's program gives readers and writers the opportunity to learn from

experienced authors and industry professionals, while also shining a spotlight on the incredible literary talent we have in our own

community through the Local Authors Fair." Workshops will be held at the Geelong Library and Heritage Centre, and libraries

in Corio, Armstrong Creek, Queenscliff, Torquay, Colac and Bannockburn. View the full program at grlc.vic.gov.au



Surf Coast author Tanya Scott will host a workshop at Geelong Regional Libraries' annual Local Word Writers Festival. Picture: Leslie Carvitto



GRLC sponsored two events at the annual WORDfest, to raise awareness of library book clubs and book club kits as well as other library services available for book lovers in the region. Both sponsored events were sold out with a combined audience of 290 people!

School Holiday Programs – Winter

Creativity, engineering and storytelling were displayed across our school holiday programs in the July across the entire library network. We had stylish and fluffy flocks of cardboard birds flying out of the library as well as a whole rainbow worth of Hot Air Balloons.





Evolving Customer Experience – we will augment our core programs, collections and services to meet evolving community needs in a digital age. We will support all our customers to participate meaningfully in modern life, both professionally and personally, so that they leave their library having their expectations exceeded and horizons expanded.

Saving Family Stories Launches at Corio Library

Saving Family Stories has expanded to Corio following such a successful launch at Belmont, Leopold, and Newcomb. This initiative provides the local community with free access to equipment and technical support for digitising older formats including negatives, slides, photographs, video, and film footage. The service helps preserve and share family memories, keeping personal and local histories can be enjoyed for generations to come.

Since launching in 2022, sponsorship from Kings Funerals has enabled Geelong Regional Libraries to deliver this valued service to the community. Below are some media articles supporting the partnership.



Corio Library coordinator Leslie Caelli, GRL's Skye Wilson and Vianna McGlead from Kings Funerals with Kodachrome slides ready for scanning.
(Ivan Kamp) 565753_06

Libraries saving memories and history

Geelong Regional Libraries (GRL) will expand its program preserving local social history to a fourth library this month.

Corio Library will join Belmont, Leopold and Newcomb libraries as a provider of GRL's Saving Family Stories service, which provides local community members free access to equipment and technical assistance to digitise and preserve their families' photographic, film and video material.

Media types including VHS tapes, DVDs, Super 8 and 8mm film, film negatives, slides, photographic prints and camcorder tapes can be digitised through the service, allowing important personal and social

histories to be archived and shared.

GRL acting chief executive David Semmens thanked service sponsor King Funerals for helping create a "lasting social impact".

"Our shared commitment and values mean we can support community wellbeing and enable our libraries to offer free services like Saving Family Stories," he said.

"Libraries remove barriers by providing free access to technology, learning opportunities and trusted spaces where anyone can participate, regardless of their background or experience.

"Our knowledgeable staff help build confidence with our community members

as they learn to use the Saving Family Stories resources to record memories that might otherwise be lost. We're delighted to extend this service to the Corio community.

General manager Beth King said Kings Funerals were "proud to support Geelong Regional Libraries in their efforts to digitise, share and preserve family memories to even more people".

"At Kings Funerals we have a long-standing role supporting families through life's significant moments and we understand how important memories are to families and generations," she said.

Visit grlc.vic.gov.au/learn/saving-family-stories for more information on the service.



Geelong Regional Libraries' acting CEO David Semmens, library co-ordinator Lesley Caelli and Kings Funerals' Beth King take a close look at what is on offer with new digitisation equipment at Corio library. Picture: Alan Barber

Zoe De Koning

Do you have old rolls of film sitting around that you never got developed?

Have you always wanted to transfer your photographs to your device?

Residents in Geelong's north will now have free access to equipment and technical support to digitise older formats including negatives, slides, photos, video and film footage.

The technology is

launching at Corio Library this week, expanding Geelong Regional Libraries' Saving Family Stories initiative with support from Kings Funerals.

The service, which first launched at Belmont Library in 2022, is also available at the Leopold and Newcomb libraries.

Saving Family Stories equipment has been used for more than 4374 hours, with libraries running 2411 sessions and 171 introductory

workshops to date. GRL acting chief executive David Semmens said the organisation was delighted to expand the service to Corio.

He said library staff could help community members "record memories that might otherwise be lost".

"Libraries remove barriers by providing free access to technology, learning opportunities and trusted spaces where anyone can participate, regardless of

their background or experience," he said.

Major sponsor Kings Funerals general manager Beth King said the company understood how important memories were to families.

"We're proud to support Geelong Regional Libraries in their efforts to digitise, share and preserve family memories to even more people," she said.

Find out more at grlc.vic.gov.au or speak with a team member at your local library

Seed Library featured in ABC News

Last month, a journalist from ABC Digital's Lifestyle news site reached out to request an interview about the GRLC's Seed Library for an article they were preparing on growing food in small spaces for home gardeners.

The article highlighted the health and wellbeing, sustainability and cost benefits of home gardening, along with tips for beginners to start small and avoid common mistakes.

Thanks to the Marketing team for organising this interview – it was a great opportunity to promote the Seed Library!

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-06-19/growing-food-in-small-spaces-without-a-backyard/106702328>



Impact Stories from our network

Uplifting digital access and capability

An elderly customer (88yrs) came into the library and shared that she is losing her sight and no longer can read print books. She was getting upset with frustration at her impairment and wanted to learn how to use Borrowbox. She began to cry as she didn't have her AppleID on her to download the app. She returned to the library yesterday afternoon and together we downloaded Borrowbox and the U library app on her phone and Ipad. She was heading off on holiday soon and desperately wanted to be able to listen to books. She was so grateful. 12/8/26

Encouraging Personal Curiosity

Belmont library recently hosted an Intergenerational Meet and Make: Badge Making program for children aged 5–8 and their grandparents or another special adult in their lives. The event was a wonderful success, with participants enjoying quality time together while designing and creating their own unique badges. The program brought together an impressive range of ages, from toddlers as young as two through to adults in their seventies. Grandparents, dads, siblings, and entire families joined in the fun, with even some teenagers (aged 15–18) enthusiastically participating alongside their younger brothers and sisters. It was fantastic to see so many generations connecting, creating, and sharing a memorable experience together. 30/06/26

Over the last couple of Thursdays I have noticed two young people come in and use the Activity Room, they are sitting at the smaller cluster of tables and they are doing puzzles together. They bring in their own puzzles and just sit together for a couple of hours and quietly do their puzzles. Which I think is very sweet. 16/7/26

Helping individuals navigate mis- & dis- information

Corio and Belmont libraries recently collaborated with the Combined Probus Club of Belmont South to co-facilitate a Scam Awareness session. More than 70 people attended, engaging with curiosity and sharing stories and insights into the ways in which scams affect their lives. Watching the audience gain confidence and capability in recognising and navigating online disinformation reinforces the valuable work libraries do in empowering our communities with knowledge and practical tips for online safety and digital participation. 15/07/26

Fostering Connection and Belonging

A customer who had attended the Embroidery on Photography craft sessions at Belmont Library two years ago returned to tell us that she has taken up the hobby so thoroughly that she now runs her own workshops on the art practice at a local community centre. She said that attending that session changed her life, and has enabled her to connect with her local community, and offer creative opportunities for others. She runs her sessions every year, and people bring non-perishable food donations to attend, which are then passed on to a local food support charity. 23/07/26



Enhancing Community Wellbeing – our libraries will continue to evolve as safe, welcoming and accessible public places where people from all walks of life connect with knowledge, ideas and each other. In doing so, we contribute to the health and wellbeing of both local and wider communities.

Chilwell Library

The City of Greater Geelong's redevelopment of Chilwell Library is close to completion, with the facility scheduled to be handed over to the City in August, and Geelong Regional Libraries bumping in throughout September setting the site up for its reopening.

The upgraded facility will include new bookable meetings spaces, out-of-hours access when the library is unstaffed, and a new and engaging interface with the local park.



Lift Replacement Update – GLHC

We're pleased to share that the City of Greater Geelong's replacement of lifts at Geelong Library and Heritage Centre is progressing. OTIS has been appointed to deliver the lift replacement project and is expected to commence daily on-site works from October, with construction continuing through to June 2027.

The smaller lift will be replaced first, with one lift remaining operational throughout the duration of the project. While some noise, dust and vibration are expected, measures will be implemented to minimise any disruption.

The project represents an important investment by the City of Greater Geelong and we look forward to its commencement and the improved experience it will deliver for customers visiting the Dome.



Intergenerational Story Time at Corio Library

On Tuesday 23 June we held our first-ever Intergenerational Story Time at Corio Library.

Julie Fryman worked their magic entertaining a group of children from a local kindergarten with stories and songs before our Special Guests from Coasthaven Baptcare Aged Care Community made a grand entrance through the hall side door, arms waving and bopping along to the group's singing.

The session was a lot of fun for everyone. They made connections to the featured story, A Life Encyclopedia – I am, I can, I do; and enjoyed sharing amazing things they have done in their lives.

The book was funded and produced by Barwon Community Legal and their Community Development Manager, Alex, joined us for the event.

After the children had left we chatted with residents from Baptcare over cups of tea and coffee. It was a great opportunity to try something different and find a new way to bring diverse groups together for a shared event.





Embracing our Future – our people will feel happy, supported, safe and proud to work for an organisation that has successfully adopted a new not-for-profit governance model, enhanced its financial security and built strategic partnerships connected with likeminded organisations.

Humanforce payroll, rostering and Human Resource Information System

In September we will launch our 'Humanforce' system, following the successful rollout of finance and procurement systems earlier in 2026. This phase will transition GRLC to independently managing its payroll system, which will be connected with our rostering and HR system.

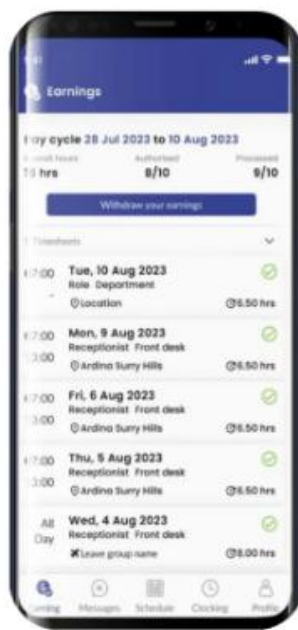
This transition supports the forthcoming governance model changes and will reduce duplication, streamline processes, and improve the employee experience.

The Humanforce and finance solutions will also deliver a more cost-effective operating model, with anticipated annual savings of approximately \$100,000 compared to the previous shared services arrangement.

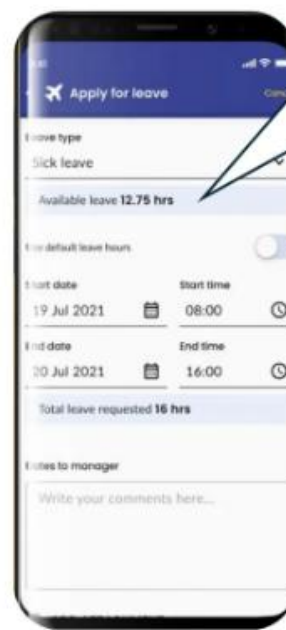
Manage your schedule on the go



Track your pay



Book your annual leave



No need to manually work out your leave balance to book your dream holiday. All done for you!

Mobile Application

Community and Customer Feedback

Below is a small sample of community and customer feedback over the last two months celebrated by the team.

A note dropped into the Ocean Grove returns chute:

It's an
amazing place
the library is the
best.

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK FORM

WHAT IS YOUR FEEDBACK?

The library is an invaluable community resource that is a sanctuary for young mums and kids, older people and everyone in between. The benefits to all are huge. My only criticism is the early closure on Saturday - even open to 3pm would be a great option.

LIBRARY Ocean Grove

DATE 24/6/26

LIBRARY WARRN RIVDS DATE 9/7/26

Just wanted to thank JENN and all the staff for helping me today. I used the CIRCUT machine for ages until I could get it right and it was terrific and all so helpful!

Lara Library
5 Walkers Rd, Lara VIC 3212, Australia

4.6 ★★★★★ 33 rev

All helpful staff 10 clear

Sort by
Most relevant Newest

Melissa Bell
Local Guide · 137 reviews · 215 photos
★★★★★ 6 days ago NEW
The staff are always friendly and polite

Hover to react



Geelong Library & Heritage
51 Little Malop St, Geelong VIC 3220

4.6 ★★★★★

★★★★★ 5 days ago NEW

Robert Eastwood
Local Guide · 14 reviews · 3 photos
★★★★★ 6 days ago NEW

Great building staffed by courteous librarians

Hover to react

Joshua
★★★★★ 6 days ago NEW

Josh Ekberg
Local Guide · 35 reviews · 11 photos
★★★★★ 2 weeks ago NEW

Easy sign up process. Lots of different options

Hover to react

Corio Library
11-15 Cox Rd, Norlane VIC 3214, Australia

4.5 ★★★★★ 75 reviews

All photocopy facilities 3 friendly 1 positive environment 6 +6

Sort by
Most relevant Newest Highest rating

Lolitha Ratnayake
Local Guide · 223 reviews · 25 photos
★★★★★ 2 days ago NEW
This place is amazing. Staff is helpful. Zoe was

Hover to react

Jo Jo
2 reviews
★★★★★ a month ago
Brilliant library. Amazing staff.

Hover to react

13. OTHER BUSINESS

Next Meeting	Thursday 17 September 2026 5:30-7:30pm (Online Only)
Location	Teams

14. ATTACHMENTS

DRAFT BOARD MINUTES FROM 25 JUNE 2026



Geelong Regional Library Corporation

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Thursday 25 June 2026, 5:30pm

Board Members & Officers only

Geelong Library and Heritage Centre Boardroom
& MS Teams





SECTION A - PROCEDURAL MATTERS

At **5.30pm** GRLC Chair, Cr Liz Pattison opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

The meeting was held both online and in-person at the Geelong Library & Heritage Centre.

1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Cr Pattison acknowledged the Traditional Owners of this land and paid respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

‘The Geelong Regional Library Corporation acknowledges the Wadawurrung People of the Kulin nation, and the Gulidjan and Gadubanud Peoples of the Maar nations as the Original Owners of the lands on which our library services operate. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge and celebrate First Nations Peoples of this land as the custodians of learning, literacy, knowledge and story.’

2. ATTENDEES

BOARD MEMBERS		ATTENDANCE		
Name	Council	In Person	Online	Apology
Cr Liz Pattison (Chair)	Surf Coast Shire	X		
Cr Elise Wilkinson (Deputy Chair)	City of Greater Geelong		X	
Cr Emma Sinclair	City of Greater Geelong			X
Cr Rowan D. Story AM RFD	City of Greater Geelong		X	
Cr Trent Sullivan	City of Greater Geelong	X		
Cr Mick McCrickard	Colac Otway Shire		X	
Mayor Owen Sharkey	Golden Plains Shire		X	
Cr Isabelle Tolhurst	Borough of Queenscliffe	X		
COUNCIL OFFICERS				
Damian Waight	General Manager Community Life, SCS		X	
Amie Higgs	Manager Community Participation, CoGG	X		
Ian Seuren	General Manager Development & Community Services, COS			X
Lynnere Gray	Director Corporate Services, GPS		X	
Abbey Tatterson	Manager Customer Experience, Borough of Queenscliffe		X	
Jane Grover	CEO Borough of Queenscliffe			X



GRLC OFFICERS				
David Semmens	Acting, Chief Executive Officer	X		
Skye Wilson	Director, People, Culture and Strategic Engagement		X	
Deanne Verity	Acting, Director, Community Experience	X		
Daniyal Ali	Manager, Finance & Governance	X		
Tanya Robertson	Executive Assistant		X	
GUESTS				
Angela Savage	CEO Public Libraries Victoria		X	

3. APOLOGIES

Cr. Emma Sinclair

4. INTERESTS, CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Nil Declared

5. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES DATED 30 APRIL 2026

Recommendation:

That the draft minutes of the Board Meeting held 30 April 2026 be confirmed.

Moved: Isabelle Tolhurst
Second: Mick McCrickard
Passed: Unanimously

SECTION B – PRESENTATIONS

6. PUBLIC LIBRARIES VICTORIA (CONFIDENTIAL)

Angela Savage, CEO Public Libraries Victoria



SECTION C – REPORTS

7. GRLC DRAFT BUDGET 2026-2027

David Semmens, Acting Chief Executive Officer

Recommendation:

That the Draft GRLC Budget 2026-2027 be adopted

Decision:

Moved: Isabelle Tolhurst
Second: Trent Sullivan
Passed: Unanimously

The CEO presented the final draft budget following public exhibition, noting one submission was received but no changes were made to the existing draft budget.

The report noted the budget remained consistent with what was presented in April, and staff were acknowledged for their work in preparing it. Clarifications were sought on the assumptions in the Strategic Resource Plan (including forecast member contributions linked to percentage increases). Savings in materials and contracts were also noted, driven by the transfer of payroll and finance services to be coordinated by GRLC.

The Board supported the budget, noting the positive framing, strong financial outcomes, and minimal community feedback. The budget was passed unanimously, with recognition that it also provides strong material for advocacy, including membership growth and regional engagement figures.

8. TURNING THE PAGE – CORPORATE TRANSITION (CONFIDENTIAL)

David Semmens, Acting Chief Executive Officer

For Noting:

Recommendation:

1. The Turning The Page report be noted.



9. MONTHLY FINANCE REPORT – MAY 2026 (CONFIDENTIAL)

David Semmens, Acting Chief Executive Officer

For Noting:

Recommendation:

That the Monthly Finance Report be noted.

10. CEO REPORT

David Semmens, Acting Chief Executive Officer

For Noting

Recommendation:

That the CEO Report be noted.

The report notes key highlights, activities, and projects demonstrating several key achievements. This includes events such as the success of National Simultaneous Storytime, which attracted strong local media coverage supporting our messaging about the importance of early years literacy, and the launch of another Voice of Customer survey, which received almost 2,000 responses and an overall satisfaction rating of 9.4/10. The survey results will inform future customer experience initiatives and contribute to Public Libraries Victoria reporting.

The Chair acknowledged the positive outcomes highlighted throughout the report and the value they demonstrate to the community. A brief discussion was also held regarding GRLC's participation in the Sydney Writers' Festival live-streaming program, with staff confirming it has been a successful initiative for several years, providing the community with access to high-quality author events.

11. ACTIVITY REPORT (CONFIDENTIAL)

Deanne Verity, Acting Director, Community Experience

For Noting

Recommendation:

That the Activity Report be noted.



12. HEALTH SAFETY & WELLBEING REPORT (CONFIDENTIAL)

Skye Wilson, Director, P&C and Strategic Engagement

For Noting

Recommendation:

That the HWS Report be noted.

13. OTHER BUSINESS

Meeting ended 6:43pm

Next Meeting: 27 August 2026 5:30-7:30pm

Location: GRLC Boardroom, Level 4 & Teams

Signed:

Cr Liz Pattison
Chair

Date of Confirmation: / / 2026