



Geelong Regional Library Corporation

BOARD MEETING AGENDA

Geelong Library and Heritage Centre
Boardroom and MS Teams



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- ATTACHMENT 2 DRAFT Board Minutes from 26 February 2026 (CONFIDENTIAL)



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)	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 Waitt	General Manager, Community Life, SCS
Anthony Basford	Executive Director City Life, CoGG
Ian Seuren	General Manager Development & Community Services, COS
Jane Grover	CEO, Borough of Queenscliffe
Lynnere Gray	Director, Community Planning & Growth, GPS
GRLC Officers	
David Semmens	Acting, Chief Executive Officer
Skye Wilson	Director, People, Culture and Strategic Engagement
Deanne Verity	Acting, Director, Community Experience
Daniyal Ali	Manager, Finance and Governance
Tanya Robertson	Executive Assistant
Guests	
Anoja Bandara	Acting Manager, Financial Audit, Victoria Auditor-General's Office

3. APOLOGIES

4. INTERESTS, CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND PECUNIARY INTERESTS

5. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES DATED 26 FEBRUARY 2026 (ATTACHMENT 1)

Recommendation:

That the draft minutes of the Board Meeting held 26 February 2026 be confirmed.

SECTION B – PRESENTATIONS

6. AUDIT STRATEGY MEMORANDUM 2025-2026 (CONFIDENTIAL)

Anoja Bandara | Acting Manager, Financial Audit Victorian Auditor-General's Office

Refer Attachment 1 - DRAFT Board Minutes from 26 February 2026 (CONFIDENTIAL)

SECTION C – REPORTS

7. DRAFT BUDGET 2026–2027 AND STRATEGIC RESOURCE PLAN 2027–2030 (CONFIDENTIAL)

David Semmens, Acting Chief Executive Officer

Purpose

Provide the Board with a draft budget for 2026-27 for discussion and approval to release on exhibition.

Recommendation

That:

- a) the Draft GRLC Budget 2026-27, incorporating any changes agreed at the Board meeting, be approved and advertised for public comments and submissions in accordance with sections 158 and 223 of the *Local Government Act 1989* and section 94 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.
- b) a Board meeting be held on 11 June 2026 for any public submissions to be heard.
- c) the Draft Budget will be presented for adoption by the Board at the meeting on 25 June 2026.
- d) the GRLC Acting CEO forward a copy of the Draft Budget 2026-27 to all Member Council CEOs.

8. GRLC GENDER EQUALITY PLAN – DRAFT (CONFIDENTIAL)

Skye Wilson, Director, P&C and Strategic Engagement

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with an update on the development, consultation and progression of GRLC's Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) 2026-2030, including key findings, priority focus areas and next steps toward submission.

Knowledge and connection for people and communities.

Recommendation

That the Draft Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) be endorsed by the Board.

9. LIBRARY COURIER SERVICE CONTRACT – TENDER AWARD (CONFIDENTIAL)

Deanne Verity, Acting Director Community Experience

Purpose

To award the Courier Service contract for GRLC to enable the transfer of items around the library network. The total estimated value of this contract over a two (2) year period exceeds the financial delegation of the CEO (up to \$300,000) and therefore requires Board approval.

Recommendation

Commercial In Confidence



10.TURNING THE PAGE – CORPORATE TRANSITION (CONFIDENTIAL)

David Semmens, Acting Chief Executive Officer

Purpose

To provide the Board with an update on progress following the Board workshop of 26 February, outline key transition activities underway, and identify forthcoming decision points required to support Councils' consideration of a commitment to a shared entity in mid-2026

Recommendation

That the Turning the Page – Corporate Transition report be noted.

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11. MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT – MARCH 2026 (CONFIDENTIAL)

David Semmens, Chief Executive Officer

Recommendation

That the MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT be noted.



12. CEO REPORT

David Semmens, Acting Chief Executive Officer

Purpose

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

Recommendation

That the CEO Report be noted.

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.

Events - Natasha Lester

In late March, we hosted a live author event at the Dome featuring New York Times bestselling and award-winning author Natasha Lester. Despite being scheduled the evening before Good Friday, we saw strong attendance, demonstrating our community's ongoing enthusiasm for her work.

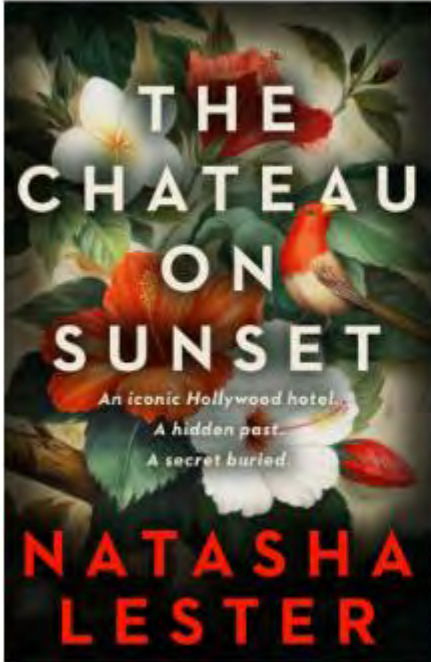
During the event, Natasha Lester was interviewed by Charlotte Guest, where she shared insights into her writing process and brought the story to life with compelling real-life anecdotes from the iconic Chateau Marmont in Hollywood, which inspired the novel.

Attendees were deeply engaged, and many expressed appreciation for the opportunity to hear from a bestselling author locally. One guest noted: "Natasha Lester couldn't have been nicer. I had a great time. I travelled 550 km from Mildura to attend and wasn't disappointed. Our local library rarely hosts bestselling authors."

The success of the event highlights the continued appeal of Natasha Lester's work and reflects the effectiveness of our promotion and community engagement efforts. We extend our thanks to everyone who contributed to making this event such a positive and memorable experience.



AUTHOR TALK



Colac

Colac Community Library's celebration of Holi festival was featured in the Colac Herald on Friday 6 March 2026. Below is the article and a beautiful picture of people who attended the storytime session.

<https://colac Herald.com.au> **NEWS** COLAC HERALD Friday, March 6, 2026 | 5

JOY: Varsha Garg's daughter Siya playing during the Holi Storytime. **FESTIVAL OF COLOURS:** Varsha Garg shared the story of Holi with storytime attendees including Sita Ghimire, her son Shan and mum Kubija Pokharel.

Colours, culture and community

BY ASHLEIGH WYSS

Toddlers visited Colac Community Library on Wednesday morning for a special storytime introducing them the vibrant Hindu festival of Holi.

Holi is a bright celebration of colours, celebrating joy, love and the triumph of good over evil that is typically celebrated by people playfully throwing coloured powders on one another.

Colac yoga teacher and therapist Varsha Garg said the event was a "celebration of joy".

"Holi festival is always so much fun in India, it doesn't matter which religion you come from," Varsha said. "It's beautiful and about friendship coming together."

In Hindu mythology, Holi is based on the legend of Holika and her nephew Prahlad, a worshipper of Vishnu. The festival also celebrates the love story between Radha and Krishna.

Born in Nepal, mum of three Sita Ghimire attended the story time with her seven-month-old son Shan and mother Kubija.

Sita said that in the absence of a strong Nepalese community in Colac, she looked forward to more events commemorating traditions she honoured before she moved to Australia 11 years ago.

Organised by Cultura Colac and the Colac Intercultural Committee, the session was the first-ever library Storytime commemorating Holi.

Varsha said she hoped to host many more and planned to cook some traditional, toddler-friendly variants of Indian foods to celebrate next year's storytime.



Community Feedback

Geelong Library & Heritage Centre 
51 Little Malop Street, Geelong VIC 3220

Store code: Library00



Chita Arifa Hazna

★★★★★ 6 weeks ago

Huge library, friendly librarians, lots of books and dvds to borrow. You can play chess and use the computer too. Kids space also available



Recent feedback from Geelong West customer, Kimberley

Kimberley writes:

"I again want to highlight the positive benefit that the Geelong West library brings to our local community in almost immeasurable and innumerable ways.

Today as just one example, it provided me with a safe, calm, tidy, comfortable, cool and quiet FREE space to read the newspaper and gain some much-needed equilibrium with the outside world. I ended up spending over 2 hours in the library noticing the wide-ranging patronage, visitors of all ages and abilities. I highlight particularly the care, consideration, commitment to service and respect, that staff provided to all and particularly the more vulnerable and less able members of the community.

From my quiet observations, nothing was too hard for staff when asked by customers and no one felt out of place.

The hero for today, is staff member 'Tim' who was able over an hour and half, to assist an elderly gentleman, with low vision, who depended on his iPad to access voice activated apps such as the radio. AI had overtaken his iPad operating system, but Tim was steadfast in working through the problem to find a solution to meet this customers daily living requirements.

When we (including me) as a community often berate and decry the services of governments including local governments and councils, the above is an example of when a local council, does get something consistently right. And, I can say that having been a patron of the Geelong West library for over 20 years through good and significantly bad times (e.g. floods). There remains a vital need for places such as Geelong West library. Hence, continue to fund, staff and resource our local libraries properly with some of my rate payer money and, I for one will remain eternally grateful."



Impact Stories from our network

Enhancing Community Wellbeing

"At today's "Chatty Cafe" program, I invited a lone woman sitting nearby if she would like to join us. Immediately, she accepted and began to cry, saying she was overwhelmed at the unexpected kindness and inclusion, presuming it was a closed group. Welcomed warmly by the group and new to the area, she settled into conversation with 5 other women of similar age and shared stories of travel. This highlighted the importance of Community connection." - 13/2/26

Encouraging Personal Curiosity

"Three young people under the age of five played together in the children's library, building their social skills over an hour and a half of play. One of the young people had a speech difficulty and was able nevertheless to engage positively at length during this time with his peers. This is an example of the unmeasurable contribution the library spaces make to early language and social development." 27/2/26

Encouraging Personal Curiosity

"Today's LEGO Club was a lovely one to watch/facilitate. Four different family groups merged in a really natural way, with the children collaborating and showing off their creations. It was fascinating to see the way they negotiated sharing pieces, and I think we're fortunate to be able to host events like this." - 7/3/26

Enhancing Community Wellbeing

Customers came in to collect their reserved C Pen (from Library of Things).

As I was checking everything was in the box, I got curious 'have you used one of these before? Is it for help with something specific?' They went on to tell me that their grandson had recently been diagnosed with dyslexia and was being severely bullied at school for having difficulty reading. He was refusing to attend school.

They thought it might be nice to have the pen at home and hoped that if he saw them using it, he might give it a go. He mentioned that another library colleague had instructed them to give it a whirl.

A full circle moment of the power of community and connection, and an incredible offering from our library services to the public, oh and some pretty amazing grandparents advocating for their grandson! - 23/1/26

Facilitating Lifelong Learning

A customer attended a junk journalling session at one of our libraries.

What is junk journalling? It is the creative practice of making handmade books from recycled, repurposed, or found materials, such as old books, envelopes, maps, and paper scraps to document memories, collage, or sketch.

They said "walking into the room for the first session with Luisa, I was honestly in awe. The space she created and the abundance of materials she so thoughtfully prepared felt like a junk journalling paradise. It immediately struck me that 1.5 hours was far too short, I could happily have stayed so much longer. There was something truly special about being in a room of like-minded people given the opportunity to create together.



Thank you for investing in creative community spaces like this, they truly make a difference." - 27/02/26

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.

Official Launch of the Birregurra Kiosk

In March the Minister for Local Government, Hon. Nick Staikos MP attended Birregurra to officially launch the Birregurra Library Kiosk. The introduction of a kiosk at this location stemmed from a review of our outreach services which considered new and different opportunities that might be able to meet the needs of communities in a better way. Our continuous improvement methodology focusses on 'Doing better things' as opposed to 'Doing things better', as it maintains our focus on trying to design a service that continues to always challenge the way we deliver on our purpose and Library Plan priorities.

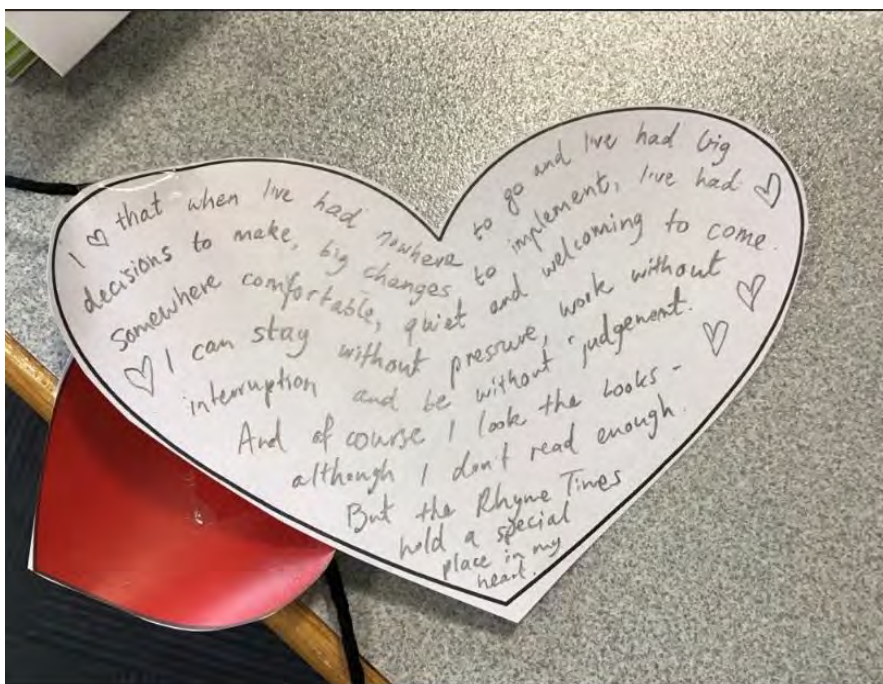
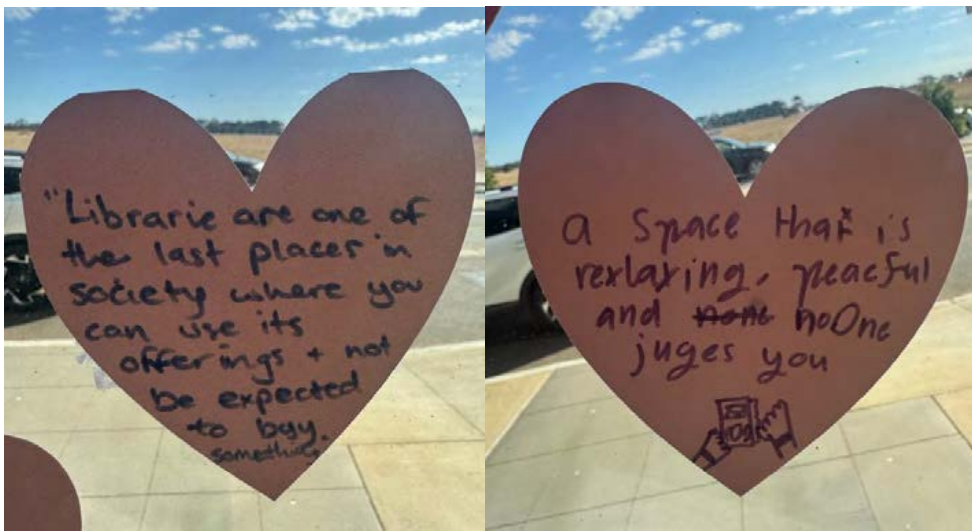




Enhancing Community Wellbeing – our libraries will continue to evolve as safe, welcoming and accessible public places where people from all walks of life connect with knowledge, ideas and each other. In doing so, we contribute to the health and wellbeing of both local and wider communities.

Library Lovers Day

Library Lovers' Day is celebrated internationally each year on 14 February. It is a day to honour libraries, librarians, and library lovers, and the valuable roles that libraries play in our lives. Community members were asked to nominate what they love about their library.





International Women's Day

A curation at Belmont consisting of a range of books based on inspirational women from all walks of life throughout history as well as a collection of titles from Women in Fiction 2025 longlist and female authors from the 2025 Booker Prize longlist. Generating lots of pausing, browsing, conversations and loans.



Cultural Diversity Week

Cultural Diversity week was the first of four 'Special Dates' that we will be celebrating this year. The team at Newcomb Library commenced with a giant puzzle that that community could contribute to:





Corio

Kicked things off with an action-packed Henna Hands session, run by our very own [Sukhpreet Kaur](#) and [Nooria Hussaini](#). I don't think they stopped henna-ing for almost two hours! The designs were absolutely beautiful.



Waurn Ponds

chose to create hand fans through their March Cricut workshop, as they appear across many cultures (both practical and decorative) and are often tied to storytelling and self-expression.

We also explored the history of the hand fan, including the idea of “fan language” (inspired by Lucy Worsley), where fans were once used to send subtle social signals... a fun layer that sparked curiosity and conversation.





Biyal-a Armstrong Creek

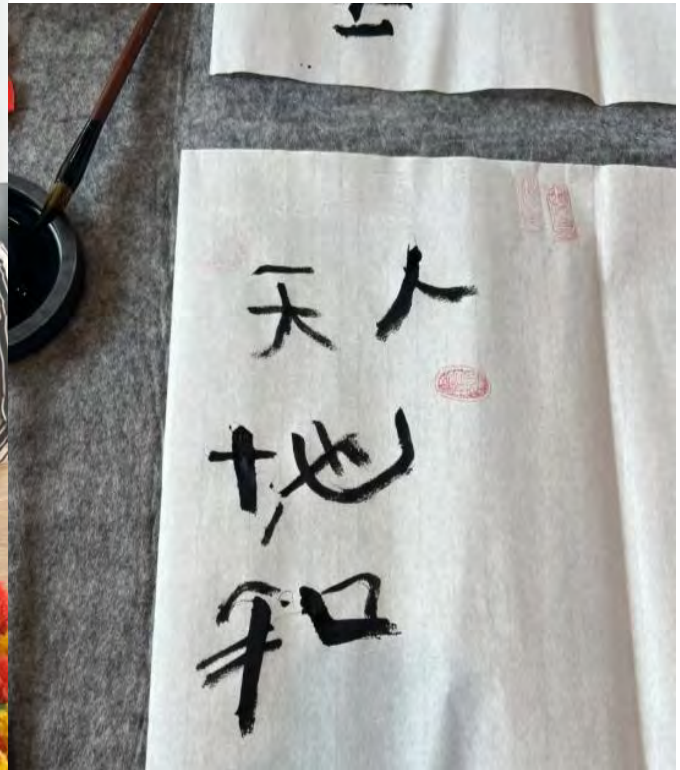
Biyal-a held an event “Culture Connects us All”. The event began with dance and musical performances:

Dance: Priyanka and her group, who have been using our library space to practise Indian dance, delivered a wonderful performance.

Karaoke: Diane showcased her talent by singing a Chinese song.

Acoustic guitar + singing: An Indonesian song :))

Priyanka also took the time to do some henna art, and Diane taught people how to write their names in Chinese calligraphy.





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.

Wayne's 40th year of service

In February we celebrated Wayne Gurrie's 40 years of service with the library service. Wayne was treated to an afternoon tea with his Belmont Library colleagues, who put on a special event, and jointly wrote and sung Wayne a song to celebrate. Thanks to Janelle and the Belmont team for putting together such a special event.



14. 2026 STAFF ENGAGEMENT SURVEY (CONFIDENTIAL)

Skye Wilson, Director, P&C and Strategic Engagement

Purpose

To present a high-level summary of the 2026 Engagement Survey results and provide assurance on organisational culture, key risks and priority actions.

Knowledge and connection for people and communities.

Recommendation

That the Board notes the 2026 Employee Engagement Survey results and the planned organisational response.

16. OTHER BUSINESS

Next meeting: **11 June 2026 5.30 – 7.30pm**

Online format - to hear budget submissions if required.

25 June 2026 5.30 – 7.30pm

Location: **GRLC Boardroom, Level 4**