



# Hearing of Draft Budget Submissions MINUTES

MEETING OF THE GEELONG REGIONAL LIBRARY  
CORPORATION  
Thursday 15 June 2023  
Public Meeting

*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.*



## SECTION A - PROCEDURAL MATTERS

At 5.33 pm GRLC Chair, Mayor Liz Pattison opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The meeting was held in person and on-line and was open to the public. The meeting was also streamed and recorded.

### 1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

GRLC Chair, Mayor Liz Pattison acknowledged the Traditional Owners of this land and paid respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

### 2. ATTENDEES

		Attendance		
Name	Council	In person	Online	Apology
<b>BOARD MEMBERS</b>				
Cr Liz Pattison (Chair)	Surf Coast Shire, Mayor		x	
Cr Melissa Cadwell (Deputy Chair)	City of Greater Geelong	x		
Cr Ross Ebbels	Borough of Queenscliffe, Mayor			x
Cr Belinda Moloney	City of Greater Geelong	x		
Cr Marg White	Colac Otway Shire		x	
Cr Owen Sharkey	Golden Plains Shire	x		
<b>COUNCIL OFFICERS</b>				
Gail Gatt	General Manager, Community Life, Surf Coast Shire		x	
Gayatri Baskaran	Finance Coordinator, CoGG	x		
Ian Seuren	General Manager Development & Community Services, COS			x
Martin Gill	CEO, Borough of Queenscliffe			x
Steven Sagona	Director Community Services, Golden Plains Shire		x	
Tamzin McLennan	Manager Healthy Active Communities, COS		x	
Virginia Morris	Acting Manager, Community Support Surf Coast S.			x
Darren Schultz	Chief Financial Officer, CoGG		x	

		Attendance		
Name	Council	In person	Online	Apology
<b>GRLC OFFICERS</b>				
Vanessa Schernickau	Chief Executive Officer	x		
Jeff Cole	Chief Operating Officer		x	
Skye Wilson	Director, People, Culture and Strategic Engagement		x	
Pam Newton	Director Community Experience	x		
Sandra O'Brien	Executive Assistant to CEO		x	

### 3. INTERESTS, CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Nil

## SECTION B – REPORTS

### 1. GRLC Budget Submissions Hearing

At the meeting held on 18 May 2023, the Geelong Regional Library Corporation Board resolved to publicly exhibit the Draft Budget and Strategic Resource Plan 2023-24 to be advertised for public comment and submissions in accordance with sections 158 and 223 of the Local Government Act 1989 and section 94 of the Local Government Act 2020 and that submissions to be heard on 15 June 2023.

GRLC has received 143 submissions and the Chair thanked the library customers and community members who have taken the time to provide their feedback. The Board will consider each of the submissions that will inform the final budget that will be adopted on the 29 June. The Chair informed that the minutes will include all the redacted submissions plus the submissions made in person.

The minutes are to be published on the GRLC website and will be sent to everyone who made a submission, as well as to each of the CEOs of the member Councils to provide to Councillors for information.

The main themes to the submissions were:

- Concerns about library closures and reductions in hours
- Support for libraries and Geelong Regional Libraries and our staff
- 2023/24 draft budget related queries
- Some concerns around future funding and viability
- That libraries provide an essential service to the community: programming to support early literacy, digital inclusion and providing an essential service to the community to name a few
- That an adequately funded library service is essential to ensure healthy, vibrant communities – especially in these economically tough times where they are seen as providing warm and welcoming place for everyone.

We were copied into six submissions that were for the City of Greater Geelong.

#### **Eight submissions were presented:**

- Colin Bridges presented Karen Firth's submission as she was unable to attend. (Attachment 1)
- Mandy Bridges presented on behalf of Friends of Barwon Heads Community Library (Attachment 2)
- Dr Anne McMahon Spokesperson for Save Highton Library (Attachment 3)
- Kathleen Riches (Attachment 4)
- Dr Anne Whisken (Attachment 5)
- Emma Balkin ([click here](#))
- Lee Gladwell ([click here](#))
- Mandy Bridges ([click here](#))

**At 6.25pm the hearing of the submissions concluded**

The Chair thanked the submitters for taking the time to write their submissions and for their attendance. The Board will consider the thoughtful feedback as part of the process in adopting the Budget on 29 June 2023.

## 10. Other Business

Nil

## Next Meetings

**Thursday 29 June 2023 5.00pm**

Location: tbc.

**The meeting closed at 6.27pm.**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor Liz Pattison  
Chair

Date of Confirmation:        /        / 2023

Karen Firth  
GRLC budget submission - June 8, 2023

Barwon Heads Community library is a much-loved community resource for my family, we enjoy visiting Penny, learning, and reading. We also love to visit other libraries; they are like a second home to us and for many people. Our library improves our health and wellbeing and has had a positive impact on my life and my children's. It is a community hub that we can go to without having to buy a coffee or play sport.

The Barwon Heads Community Library is a particularly special place to us, it was built in a joint effort by the community and school council 43 years ago. A library in some form has existed in the community for over 80 years. Libraries are vital due to their significant role in promoting literacy, access to information, and community development and should be considered a basic essential service untouched by politics and funding cuts. Books and libraries should be for everyone every day. Our thriving co-located, low cost library yields value from every dollar spent, underscoring its importance.

As a sustainable community we value and protect our diversity and local distinctiveness. We want to meet our needs locally, especially when they benefit all of the community old and young and are located so that we can walk and ride and share and talk. The Unesco Public Library Manifesto gives expression to the belief in the public library as a living force for education, culture and information, and as an essential agent for fostering of peace and spiritual welfare. The manifesto emphasises that public library services should be relevant to local need and conditions.

Libraries should be shielded from drastic cuts due to their essential and wide-reaching impact. I advocate for stable and adequate funding for libraries, it is crucial to ensure their continued operation and ability to meet the needs of the communities they serve.

Libraries are an increasingly important heart of community. Essential in covid, and more so now due to health issues and cost of living pressures. They are free, warm and welcoming.

State funding is not keeping pace with CPI and there is no indexation for population growth I advocate for this to increase.

It has come to my attention that the Victorian State Government rate cap for the 2023-24 financial year is set at 3.5%. Both GRLC and the Member Councils have agreed upon a 2% increase in rates. However, I have observed that the City of Greater Geelong (CoGG) has implemented a rate increase of 5.8% for residents without passing on the additional 2.3% to GRLC.

I express my deep disappointment regarding the resignations of board members Cr Nelson and Cr Kontelj during such a crucial time. I anticipate the prompt election of new members to fill these positions.

As a major partner in the GRLC, the CoGG holds a significant responsibility. I question why the council is not acting as the business partner that I expect them to be. It is essential for the council to actively fulfill its role in supporting the GRLC and actively and fully participate in decision-making processes.

I kindly request confirmation that the draft budget has been revised to ensure the continued operation of libraries, including Barwon Heads. I will continue to seek the restoration of the necessary funding of \$762,000 for the Drysdale library from CoGG in the 2023/24 budget to avoid substantial service reductions.

I understand the financial constraints which are currently being faced by GRLC due to the shortfall in funding from the City of Greater Geelong and provide this feedback:

- I am opposed to the closure of libraries.
- I am opposed to any reduction in library hours at the weekend across all libraries. Weekend opening hours are crucial for those unable to access libraries during working hours.
- I am opposed to the reduction in service levels at the Heritage Centre.
- I support members of Chilwell library in their request that their library remain as a staffed model.

Through this process, diverse groups within community have come together, and it is worth acknowledging that this has generated significant positivity. It serves as a reminder of what we collectively value, cherish and hold dear.

I request to present this submission at the Special Meeting on Thursday 15 June 2023.

Thank-you for your consideration

Karen Firth



Friends of Barwon Heads Community Library Incorporated

GRLC budget submission - June 8, 2023

To the Chief Executive Officer via [info@grlc.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@grlc.vic.gov.au)

We would like to see Barwon Heads maintain a strong, vibrant, connected, community enriched by reading, empowered by learning, and inspired by information and ideas. More so now than ever, our local communities have a need for social connectedness. It is very important for libraries to be in the communities they serve, not to force communities to travel to them.

Our local library is a warm, welcoming, and safe space, fostering curiosity, contemplation, learning, and enjoyment. We believe that books and libraries should be accessible to everyone every day, promoting a community of lifelong learners. Friends of the Barwon Heads Community Library strongly supports adequate service funding for all GRLC operated libraries. We have collectively lobbied tirelessly to ensure that all residents across the municipality can access the high-quality library services for which the GRLC is known and loved.

On-going frequent service reviews are exhausting, especially for small communities. GRLC would ideally enter into longer-term CoGG funding agreements (e.g., 4 years) to better support longer term service planning. CPI increases and new library planning and funding could be negotiated and agreed to outside the core multi-year service funding agreement. CoGG should not commit funds to build new library facilities without first committing to a draft service model with GRLC. Benchmarking new facilities against like facilities/similar suburbs should be an achievable part of overall library planning.

To that end, we do not support the closure of smaller community libraries and the expectation for residents to access larger facilities by car. While specific services may be available at specialised libraries when needed, it is crucial to have diverse library facilities that cater to the diverse needs of our community, serving as key hubs of community connection, meeting, reading, and borrowing.

We will persist in advocating for the restoration of the required funding for the Drysdale library in the 2023/24 budget from CoGG, as mandated by the Library agreement. We hold significant concerns regarding CoGG's forthcoming actions when funding for the operational costs of the new Armstrong Creek Library becomes essential next year.



We express our deep disappointment regarding the resignations of board members Cr Nelson and Cr Kontelj during such a crucial time. We anticipate the prompt election of new members to fill these positions.

As a major partner in the GRLC, the CoGG holds a significant responsibility. We question why the council is not acting as the business partner the community expect them to be. It is essential for the council to actively fulfill its role in supporting the GRLC and actively and fully participate in decision-making processes.

Could you please confirm our understanding of events:

- A preliminary budget was presented and noted by GRLC Board directors which includes CoGG councillors in February 2023. This preliminary budget included operating costs for all CoGG libraries, including the new libraries, Boronggook Drysdale and Bial-a Armstrong Creek libraries.
- This was presented by GRLC's CEO to the CoGG Councillor Briefing in March.
- On the day preceding the GRLC Board meeting on April 27th, the City of Greater Geelong (CoGG) conducted a draft budget meeting. Subsequently, CoGG informed GRLC that the budget line, which encompassed crucial funds amounting to \$1.118 million for operating the two new Geelong libraries, namely the Boronggook Drysdale Library (opened in April 2023) and Bial-a Armstrong Creek Library (scheduled to open in 2024), had been removed.
- The agreed-upon funding required to run these libraries has always been provided in previous council budgets. CoGG is responsible for the design, planning, development and building of libraries. CoGG owns the buildings, GRLC delivers all library services.

Since the initial strategic briefing took place several months ago without any mention of proposed cuts from CoGG, we request confirmation on whether CoGG gave an indication prior to the notification received by GRLC on April 27th that they would remove funding for new libraries. Consequently, that this lack of communication provided no opportunity for meaningful engagement with GRLC's staff or community.

The CoGG's lack of consultation and collaboration as a major partner of GRLC has left us shocked and disappointed. Their actions have not only brought this issue to the public's attention but also necessitated our involvement in the budget process.

Our group will continue to strongly urge the council to fully embrace its role as a significant partner of GRLC and actively contribute to the continuous success and development of our library services.

Our recommendations are as follows:

1. Confirm the draft budget has been updated to reflect that libraries including Barwon Heads will remain open.
2. We urge that in the event of any future funding shortages, the Barwon Heads Community Library is not considered for closure. It is vital to safeguard the library's existence and ensure its continued operation as an essential resource for our community.

3. Seek the restoration of the required funding of \$762,000 for the Drysdale library from CoGG in the 2023/24 budget, as mandated by the Library agreement, to prevent significant service reductions that include cuts to hours and Heritage Centre services.
4. Engage with the Friends of Barwon Heads Community Library Reference Group on a quarterly basis, with additional meetings as required during a service review, ensuring community consultation and engagement.
5. Appoint a community representative on the Board and/or as a Board observer.

Friends of the Barwon Heads Community Library is committed to supporting an ongoing partnership between GRLC and Barwon Heads Primary School, promoting the use of our beloved community library space that fosters connection and well-being. This model is cost-effective and aligns with our community's needs.

We request a base level of service hours consistent with what we had prior to the recent funding cuts announcement. Our goal is to support the evolution of our library so that it remains responsive to the needs of our local community for years to come.

We request to present this submission at the Special Meeting on Thursday 15 June 2023.

Thank-you for your consideration.

Karen Firth, on behalf of  
Friends of the Barwon Heads Community Library Incorporated

TO:

Ms Venessa Schernickau  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Geelong Regional Library Corporation,  
51 Little Malop Street,  
Geelong VIC 3220.

09.06.2023

Dear Ms Schernickau

It is with deep concern that I write in response to the GRLC 2023/24 proposed draft budget published recently.

After many media reports and much public debate we understand that the proposed cuts to library services forecast in the budget are as a direct consequence of the unprecedented short fall in funding normally provided in the Council of Greater Geelong's budget proposal for the same period.

The detrimental 'knock on' effect of the Council funding cuts on local library services will be deeply and widely felt by the whole Geelong community, of all ages, needs and life situations.

I do not need to remind you, as CEO of this essential community service, the immediate and longer-term ramifications that will affect all strata of community from the youngest, to the most vulnerable in terms of needs, and to our senior citizens.

The proposed reduction of hours, caused by the proposed reduced funding, set the libraries against one another, in a type of 'hunger games' scenario, competing with each other to demonstrate who is the most worthy, or who has the loudest voices, or biggest crowds, or more media coverage, or 'flag ship' status, that will enable them to attract the most attention and funding to remain open and relevant.

This casts some communities, who are not so fortunate in any of these regards, into a lesser place, marginalised and vulnerable. The communities of Highton, West Geelong, Chilwell and Barwon Heads have faced this disaster before, and we stand in solidarity with all communities facing this disaster together. Losing their essential service hubs, the beating hearts of their community for these, and all communities is a disaster of no small measure.

The books are only part of the complete library story. The extra help and support provided by the knowledgably, experienced librarians for a list of activates is immeasurable. If the Council had to replace these services at their own front counters, they would have to employ many more staff and stay open longer hours themselves. Surely the Council must realise this. To replace these extra services to the community would put a great deal more strain on their own budget than funding existing library services appropriately.

A lesson the community has learned from their Covid experience, is that once services are reduced, temporarily removed, or cut completely, it is most unlikely they will be reinstated. Another example are the shuttered library Customer Service Centres counters, residents are no longer able to access.

This 'death by a thousand cuts' has been creeping slowly over the library services landscape for some time and the community is rightly determined that it has to stop here. These cuts are seen by many as the thin edge of the wedge, some feel the next step will be for Council to shut down GRLC altogether and turn all libraries into self-serve outlets, or user pay corporate entities. This is not the direction libraries should be heading.

Some residents are fortunate enough to be able to visit libraries but not all. If the weekend hours are reduced or cut altogether the victims will be the children, the young people, the students of Geelong.

Does the Council understand that to create this 'clever' and 'creative' Geelong they market to the world, the young people of Geelong need to have access to the libraries as a rule, not as an exception. The Council's short fall in appropriate funding will limit access to libraries for school aged children and students to holidays only. So where will they access knowledge, information, innovative ideas, necessary technologies, communication, research help, the list goes on. It is the children and the vulnerable students who will suffer the most. Will the Council ask their schools to open for free on a weekend to enable their students to access these things.

This move by the Council to refuse to fund libraries appropriately is incredibly short-sighted and destructive to the future viability of this region and its people.

We are grateful to your ongoing efforts to negotiate with the Council to at least keep the four identified libraries open, but we implore you to continue to negotiate further funding options with the Council to avoid any cuts to library operating hours, as individual residents and community groups continue to approach their respective Councillors pleading for their support to reverse this destructive and demoralising situation.

The community will not give in, or back down from this fight, we stand with you and GRLC to save our libraries and the unbelievably important services they offer to *all* of Geelong's communities.

Yours sincerely

Dr Anne McMahon  
Spokesperson for  
Save Highton Library  
member of Combined Regional Library Action Group

## GRLC Draft Budget Submission

To the GRLC Budget Review Panel

The astonishing release of the CoGG draft budget this year, left the GRLC with only 10 days to amend your own budget to accommodate the \$1.18 million not provided to operate the Drysdale and Armstrong creek libraries. Your amended and public draft budget works with the \$1.18Million funding deficit from the lack of funds of the CoGG being for the operation of Armstrong Creek and Drysdale Libraries. Acknowledging that deficit, you propose closing the Geelong West Library, the Highton Library and the Barwon Heads Library in addition to running Chilwell library unstaffed and closing all but the Geelong library on Saturday afternoons and weekends. How did you decide that those libraries were suitable for the closures?

What is the role of Councillors on the GRLC board. Do they attend as representatives of their constituencies? If so, how can the board justify a majority – or unanimous vote on the draft budget which proposed closures of 3 libraries?

Would the board be better served by Community representatives who do not have a conflicting interest in the allocation or otherwise of council funds?

What happened to the Agreement between the Council and the Corporation regarding funding in full the needs of the libraries as determined by the Corporation?

I submit that the GRLC must continue to appeal to the CoGG for full funding. It is well known that the GRLC operates on a best practice model with efficiencies built in. If such cuts are proposed by the council, it must be transparent, communicated in the usual process as per the Agreement and with the assistance of Councillors sitting on the GRLC board, negotiated and agreed that all library services operate with the intention being to achieve pre covid operating hours as a minimum.

Kathleen Riches

## **Response to GRLC Budget 2023 – 2024 Strategic Resource Plan 2023 – 2027. Draft May 2023**

**From Anne Whisken. Portarlington.**

I note the Plan's statements of the GRL's purpose, and the four pillars on which that plan is based, in my response to the Strategic Resource Plan 2023-2027 Draft of May 2023.

I interpret the plan in the simpler terminology of the core traditional purposes of a public library as a place and resource for the development of the reading literacy and information literacy which are essential for community development and cohesion in a healthy democracy. My response addresses the way the Geelong Regional Library Corporation Plan and its Four Pillars of demonstrable behaviours is experienced by us in the more remote parts of the library service, how the budget will impact our lives, and suggests ways that the GRLC might find more equitable budget measures to meet and negotiate the reduced funding from the City of Greater Geelong.

### ***Libraries as places for a particular service***

The core purpose of public libraries is to be places which provide a particular and essential service in democratic societies. That purpose is to enable community and individual engagement with quality recreational reading and authoritative information. To achieve that, libraries must be open and properly maintained and staffed. There are certain infrastructure needs that have to be met to enable that, including IT systems and hardware. When libraries consist of branches in a system such as that managed by GRLC, each of those branches must be seen as core and equal components in the system – each must provide optimal conditions, rather than some being of higher quality than others. In terms of the 2023 – 2024 GRLC Budget, that means:

- EXISTING BRANCHES must remain open with equivalent or improved pre-CoVid operating hours and staffing.
- NEW BRANCHES must open as planned, with accompanying planned hours of operating and staffing.

Similarly, use of the library must support the development of reading and information literacy rather than being a social get-together space, popular though that idea is. There are other places to drink coffee and talk, run by businesses that need the trade, and other places where toddlers can sing and dance such as local halls. Expensive events at the central branch are lovely when there is ample discretionary spending. But none of these are core library services and when budget choices have to be made, core business must rule.

### ***Libraries as resources***

To enable achievement of the goal of libraries as providers of good reading and information resources, collections should be very focused on quality fiction and non-fiction reading books and authoritative information sources – as opposed to ephemeral materials to support hobbies and fashionable trends. There need to be more careful choices about what is added (do we really need all those faddish and hobby journals?) and the physical condition expectations might need to be lowered to reduce replacement costs. In times of belt tightening, maybe we can't buy as many new items – and the affected communities might need to do fund-raising to support such expenditure. But if we ask them to do so, then the library needs to be transparently reducing its discretionary spending, as detailed below.

## EXPENDITURE REDUCTION

While it is difficult to isolate non-essential expenditure in the necessarily brief detail of the draft budget, there are obvious discretionary expenditure items which could be removed or reduced:

**Service Review:** \$50,000.

Remove. You can already do that with your staff and software using readily available systems of measurement and data collection and analysis.

**Consultants:** \$205,000.

Remove. It is assumed that there is sufficient expertise amongst existing staff - otherwise, why are they there? Ensure the Board membership involves people with library expertise and experience. Use the legal advice available to you as a Statutory Authority.

**Office Administration:** Reduce expenditure on

- eCollection subscriptions – keep fiction and non-fiction eBooks, but cancel any journals related to recreational activities as opposed to information sources such as *Choice*. Work on greater and more transparent links to the free resources of the State Library of Victoria and National Library of Australia. Your information literacy presentation, support and guidance to authoritative, free online sources is very poor, as is its presence in your online subscription platforms. This is an area where GRLC must improve. It does not require additional expenditure, rather a re-allocation of resource direction and staff time. When consulted on this issue, your staff response has been that it is assumed that people will use the online resources of the secondary and tertiary education institutions they attend. And what about all your many users who are not students or who attend government schools with increasingly inadequate libraries. We are those for whom a public library is meant to provide.
- printing – stop any coloured or glossy printing. You can't afford it.
- corporate advertising and marketing – delete entirely as the library is an essential service and doesn't need promoting via such means.
- events and programming costs – you can't afford these if they are at the expense of library branches and opening hours. Looking good must not be at the expense of basic services.

**Collections:**

- Alter allowances for physical conditions of books to reduce replacement costs – slightly tatty is OK.
- reduce expenditure on new books by \$200,000. This is a powerful point to bring to CoGG when discussing impacts of their funding cuts.

### ***Reduced Operating Hours***

Should there have to be reductions in operating hours even after the savings in expenditure suggested here, then for fairness choose to close one business day a week across the entire network, with different days for each branch including the central library - but excluding branches which are already opening part time. Use those savings to enable after hours and Saturday and Sunday operations across the network. No branch should be closed, no branch should lose after hours or weekend operating hours.

## INCOME

There are areas where additional income might be gained, including increasing the cost of hiring the central library's spaces.

## IN CONCLUSION

Geelong Regional Library Corporation needs to demonstrate a willingness to prune areas of non-core business as it negotiates with City of Greater Geelong over budget constraints. In all its responses and decision-making, the choice to sacrifice branches across its system by closure or hours of reduction is entirely unacceptable. Choose any other ways of expenditure reduction before closures, reduced hours or decreases in staffing, especially at those more remote branches which serve people with the most difficulty in accessing built library spaces.

As a resident of the northern Bellarine, a visit to the central library is an eye-watering, open mouthed time of increasing resentment – how come the people in the central area of the system get such favoured treatment when we on the edges can't even access a free daily paper in a library space? And now you choose regional branch closures and reductions as your first response to CoGG budget cuts – in themselves obviously unwise and unjust and to which I have already responded.

I reference Pearl S Buck and Tom Kenneally's statements about the way the vulnerable must punt on the rough justice of the powerful in saying that we smaller more remote communities find our library service to be pretty rough. And your budget reinforces the perception that GRLC has a centralised bias not suited to a service which would provide equal support to all in its region.



**Dr Anne Whisen. Library Consultant.**

*Informed Learning Participatory Action Research for Change Management in Schools and Libraries*

*I acknowledge that my family has lived for many generations on Wolgal, Gundanora, Yaitmathang and GunaiKurnai Country on land that was never ceded to us, and that I now live and work on Wadawurrung Country. I pay my respects to the custodians of Country, past, present, and emerging.*



GRLC Draft Budget Submissions 12 May until 9 June

Name	Submission
Karen Firth	Attachment 1
Karen Firth for Friends of Barwon Heads Community Library	Attachment 2
Dr Anne McMahon	Attachment 3
Kathleen Riches	Attachment 4
Anne Whisken	Attachment 5
Emma Balkin	<p>I wish to strongly object to the proposed changes to library operations, affecting several Geelong library branches, as detailed in the Geelong Regional Library Corporation Draft Budget 2023/2024.</p> <p>I have been a regular visitor and borrower from the Geelong West Library since the 1980s. Over the last few years, I have attended story time, worked at the desks, utilised the internet, borrowed magazines, books and DVDs, read community notices, read the newspaper, picked up brochures for upcoming library events, collected covid tests and dropped off batteries for recycling. I always eagerly anticipate my visits to the Geelong West library and have always found the atmosphere to be welcoming. I have also visited other branches on occasion due to their convenience and have found them to be perennially warm and hospitable. The advantages of having a local library close to my home means that I can chat to staff who can rectify any issues that I have with borrowing, pick up or drop off books while I am visiting the surrounding shopping precinct, catch up with friends and provide my children with a space to play and immerse themselves in the world of books. The area contains free and easily accessible parking, which cannot be said for the Geelong Library, were I forced to visit there to borrow and return books. As a working parent, I largely access the library outside of traditional business hours; either after 5.00pm or on a weekend. Reducing access for other people who work full time would unfairly impact their ability to access library books and other services. I am concerned that the failure to fill vacant positions will further impact on library opening hours, especially given the current staff shortages and absences due to illness and other reasons. Libraries have progressively had their hours cut over the last few years, and further reductions to hours would have an adverse impact on people from all walks of life, at a time where we are experiencing a cost-of-living crisis.I visit the library and borrow or return at least once a week. Every time that I visit, the library is busy and is being patronised by various age groups for different purposes. This library performs a vital community service, providing a place for members of the local community to visit which provides free services and comfortable facilities. At a time when many local residents are experiencing isolation in their own homes, and struggling to afford heating and lighting, the local library represents a warm and welcoming haven, where they can interact with others or spend time on their own. Many of these people, especially those who are elderly, would find it difficult and costly to visit other branches via public transport. Libraries are accessible to elderly people and their staff provide excellent support with digital literacy, providing these otherwise potentially marginalised people with company and tools to stay in touch online. These are vital services, which must be maintained for the benefit of our community.I am particularly concerned about the detrimental impact on weekend closures at the Corio library. The Norlane area is the most disadvantaged in the state, with surrounding suburbs also dealing with significant levels of disadvantage. There is a higher concentration of people living in poverty, being unemployed or underemployed or in family violence situations, as well as those from a culturally and linguistically diverse background. A local accessible library can help these people apply for jobs, increase their literacy levels, provide school and university students with access to the internet, as well as offer a safe and comfortable space for vulnerable people.Generations of children have had a love for reading nurtured through being read to at libraries, having the opportunity to choose books of their own interests and have been exposed to all sorts of wonderful ideas and possibilities well beyond their lived experience. At the same time, schools have simultaneously been dismantling libraries, reducing and splitting up with their own collections. If this is the alternative to being able to visit one’s local library in person regularly, then children’s exposure to literature and new ideas is likely to be restricted and diminished for many, especially disadvantaged children. Is this the kind of society that the Geelong Regional Library Corporation wants to create? School children need access to libraries outside of school hours when their parents are available to take them. I believe that it is not too late to respond to community outrage and cancel the proposed reduction in library hours and staffing.</p>

GRLC Draft Budget Submissions 12 May until 9 June

Name	Submission
Mrs Lee and Mr Ray Gladwell	<p>In Geelong, we are fortunate to have wonderful libraries and even more wonderful, welcoming, library staff, who constantly strive to provide us with great experiences. Council should not for a second consider closing or severely restricting library hours and staffing.</p> <p>International and domestic research clearly shows that people’s lives are enhanced by access to libraries, which provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>interactive play groups benefitting not only babies but also parents/carers;</li><li>safe study places for students, especially those from overcrowded, noisy and/or dysfunctional households;</li><li>free information sessions, online access, books, DVDs, CDs, e-reading and much more;</li><li>work experience for prospective librarians;</li><li>sanctuary for “at risk” women and children who are often referred by social workers as a place to make friends and have fun;</li><li>retreat for those who cannot afford to heat or cool their homes;</li></ul> <p>Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Why create an extra layer of expense by contracting out libraries?</li><li>What is the point of building/renovating libraries only to decrease access to them?</li><li>Why does Council build ridiculously expensive library architecture which leaves less in the kitty for services?</li><li>Are libraries in the firing line because they are staffed predominantly by females? Does Council think they are easy targets, unlikely to fight back?</li></ul> <p>Budget</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Why is Council literally “scrabbling behind the sofa cushions” hoping to find lost dollar coins?</li><li>Hundreds of millions have been funnelled into Kardinia Park which, only being used 14 times per year, is a bad investment. When the uber-wealthy AFL says “jump”, Council shouldn’t say “how high” but “NO”!</li><li>In the early 1990s \$6m [then a huge sum] was spent on the white elephant Bus Port which is wrongly positioned, ill thought-out and virtually unused.</li><li>Not learning from this disaster, Council now wants to build a gazillion dollar completely unnecessary conference centre.</li><li>To be \$10m in debt and want to add another \$3m++ for the conference centre is ludicrous.</li><li>To want to pay for this conference centre by slashing essential services is unconscionable.</li><li>Over the past 30 years, our population and rates income has increased dramatically and CoGG has retrenched hundreds of jobs, but is still unable to balance the budget. Why?</li></ul>

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Name	Submission
Mandy Bridges	<p>I wish to express my concern for the future of libraries within the Geelong region due to the current funding issues.</p> <p>I have no financial expertise and am therefore not in a place to comment on the figures contained in the Draft Budget.</p> <p>My submission is made with the firm belief that libraries are an essential service for the communities they serve. Their value is one which should place them beyond the rise and fall of economic times.</p> <p>It is also made with an understanding of the lack of adequate funding for libraries in the City of Greater Geelong 2023-2024 Draft Budget.</p> <p>While it is easier to assess the success or otherwise of a commercial business, libraries by their very nature are not in the same category. I have heard them spoken of in terms of the dollar value per dollar spent. What is missed in this valuation is the one which truly matters. That is the inherent and undeniable value they add to the wellbeing and lives of all who use them. This is an intangible but crucial value. One which is widely acknowledged.</p> <p>In the world in which we now live where many families lead uncertain lives, where financial constraints are ever present and where we are currently subjected to the fast pace of digital technology, I believe that we must value, preserve and protect our libraries. Libraries and their staff are more important than ever. Libraries provide a safe and welcoming place for all people. I feel privileged to be able to walk into a library in any city and just sit or explore all the offerings each space provides. Libraries provide one of the greatest free services to our communities. They enrich our lives and sense of wellbeing.</p> <p>I understand the financial constraints which are currently being faced by GRLC due to the shortfall in funding from the City of Greater Geelong and wish to comment on the points made under Budget Principles 2.4.</p> <p>1. I am opposed to the closure of any libraries in the Geelong region.</p> <p>2. I am opposed to any reduction in library hours at the weekend across all libraries except the Geelong region library as I see these weekend opening hours as crucial for those unable to access libraries during working hours.</p> <p>3. I am opposed to the reduction in service levels at the Heritage Centre. The Heritage Centre and its staff contain a crucial repository for our understanding of our past. This enables us to see our own lives in the context of earlier times and enables us to understand our history more fully. My research at the Heritage Centre and at other libraries has enabled me to gain an understanding of the lives of my ancestors and the times in which they lived. This knowledge has greatly enriched my life and has enabled me to document my family history for the benefit of future generations.</p> <p>4. I support members of Chilwell library in their request that their library remain as a staffed model.</p> <p>I live in the small community of Barwon Heads. Without doubt this community has provided me with the greatest sense of what community truly means. I have lived in a number of other places which did not offer the same feeling of well-being that I now experience.</p> <p>Our small Barwon Heads Community library is integral to this sense of community. Being able to walk to the library is a joy. Meeting my grandchildren there for Storytime when they were younger is a precious memory. Our library is sacrosanct to us. It has been distressing to again face the prospect of our library's closure.</p> <p>I wish to make the point that just because our library is small this in no way reflects its value to the community it serves. It is just as valuable to our community as the larger, newer libraries are to their communities. Penny, our librarian is greatly valued by our community.</p> <p>I urge all decision makers to see that our library is protected from this threat of closure again in the future and that its opening hours are maintained. Having to fight against our library's closure twice in 6 years has had a profound and detrimental effect on many in the community.</p> <p>Our library is unique. It came about as an initiative of the community. Members of the community perceived the need for a library in Barwon Heads and set about seeing that one was built. A library has been present in Barwon Heads since the early 1940's when a group of women formed a small Red Cross library.</p> <p>I urge you to continue in your dialogue with the Council to see that adequate ongoing funding for libraries is forthcoming from Council now and in the future.</p> <p>I will continue to do all that I can to influence the Council's decision-making process.</p> <p>Thank you for reading my submission.</p> <p>I also wish to thank you sincerely for all that you do daily to enrich the lives of the Geelong Community.</p>
	<p>Perhaps you could pass on my objection regarding the proposed library closures. Simply because millions has been spent on new libraries should not mean existing local ones need to suffer, particularly with the ever increasing population in greater geelong.</p> <p>I'm horrified at hearing of local library closures as these are vital places for communities. In particular the Geelong West branch which is the one I use, located conveniently in a busy shopping strip.</p> <p>The Pakington Street area in Geelong West is a bustling area, frequented by people from surrounding suburbs to do their shopping etc. closing this library might suit the Council but what about the people? It is very short sighted and wonder if this plan has anything to do with the changes to the retail precinct that are being mooted? Change is one thing but losing a valuable commodity such as the library is ridiculous.</p> <p>I mainly use the facility to collect books I've ordered on line and drop off books when doing my shopping when using my car. The staff are always so friendly and helpful and it's a busy place. Going into the city branch which is the nearest one is more than inconvenient, as lovely as the building is, parking is difficult. I don't go to Corio and only go into the city area when I have something I wish to do ie go to the gallery, botanical gardens or concert. There is nothing to draw me into the city area other than activities I choose to pursue.</p> <p>If I am taking the time to contact you as a rate payer and resident of a wonderful place to live then I'm sure my voice is one of many.</p>

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Name	Submission
	<p>I would like to know who is responsible for the decision regarding the proposal to close three Geelong libraries and to reduce library hours?</p> <p>No organisation seems to be taking responsibility, there is a lack of transparency. Who is responsible for funding new libraries without budgeting for the increased costs associated with this, at the expense of existing services? I look forward to hearing back from you to who I can address my objections to.</p>
	<p>I am a regular library user and value the library service hugely, mainly for my children. My children benefit from the early years programs and borrow regularly. I am grateful to be able to provide a range of literature to my children. We were very grateful for the books we received during covid lockdowns. You can see the excitement on my sons face when he received his book pack in the photo attached.</p> <p>Both my husband and I work. The hours of the local library allow me to pick up books outside my work commitments. Often I just dash in and pick up books that I have on hold. I imagine many working people appreciate this service. Having a library within walking distance to one’s home is a great benefit. Walking to the library was good of many levels, physical and mental health, reduced traffic and pollution. When I first became a mother, getting a baby in and out of the car was somewhat of an ordeal, and a trip of any distance would mess with sleeping times and could throw a day into disarray.</p> <p>My family is in a fortunate position where we are all literate, financially secure and able to navigate through systems well, and have personal transport. Whilst we find great value in our library I think there are less privilege families that would find even greater benefits than us. Where personal transport is a problem libraries need to be in walking distance. Shift workers need longer opening hours to access the benefits.</p> <p>I am very concerned that you are proposing to close several beaches and reduce opening hours. Local libraries are critical to communities and I hope that you can come up with a better solution. Our communities need more from our libraries right now, not less.</p>
	<p>I’m writing to express my amazement and disappointment in the decision to close three library branches without any public consultation. For what appears to be the sake of saving \$4 million. It seems incredibly short-sighted to me. I do understand rising costs are making things difficult, but why would you be opening 2 new branches in Drysdale and Armstrong creek if you can’t keep your existing facilities sustainable?</p> <p>I urge you to reconsider closing the libraries, particularly Geelong West, which I use regularly, and is always busy! There must be other ways to save costs, like reducing operating hours or days, pausing purchasing new collections, or accepting the Council’s offer to take some of the back end functions like payroll etc in house. Or you could consider how to make revenue by charging for some of the events at the library or even charging a small annual fee for library membership. At the very least, consult with the community, and make data driven decisions as opposed to knee-jerk reactions.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration.</p>
	<p>As a long time Geelong resident and big fan of libraries in general, and GRLC in particular, how do we best help you in the current stoush with CoGG?</p>
	<p>Hello please work with the Geelong City Council in every way possible to avoid closing your proposed Geelong West, Barwon Heads and Highton libraries. I frequent the Geelong West library and take my grand children to toddler time and it is always very busy and I was alarmed to hear plans by the GRLC to close it. Yes there appears to be budget cuts for your department but closing libraries is NOT the answer so please consider other options. Jan who runs Geelong West toddler time is one of a kind and wish there were more staff members like her. Good luck and fingers crossed you do not close these libraries as there will be many many families sadly impacted.</p>
	<p>I am absolutely livid at your organisation’s budget decision to close the Geelong West Library later this year. This will have a massive impact on the Geelong West community, including many small businesses in the area. This decision is an absolute travesty and there are no excuses that sufficiently justify it. I am not familiar with your organisation’s operating arrangements, but maintaining a basic service level for the community should be central to your responsibilities. Closures are the easy, simplistic option - and it is a shame you have gone down this path. It is also sad to hear that libraries are still being opened in new development communities, and this is effectively being enabled by closing libraries in other more established areas where these services have been sustainably provided for decades. I hope this is an oversight that can be genuinely looked at on merit, and an appropriate decision urgently made to ensure this great library continues to operate.</p>
	<p>This is an absolute disgrace you should be ashamed of the fact you are trying to close 3 local libraries frequented by schools and children, our tax dollars should be funding such public institutions that have been a foundation of our society and not taken away without any vote from the local community.. I have lost all faith in our government and hope you are happy with yourselves taking away the opportunity for a new generation of children to discover reading in some of the lower income areas of Geelong and focusing on Armstrong creek and Torquay.. you should be ashamed.</p>

## GRLC Draft Budget Submissions 12 May until 9 June

Name	Submission
	<p>I live in Barwon Heads and I oppose your decision to close our library. I don't understand the politics between you and the COGG but you must resolve this issue for benefit of the community and to ensure the libraries stay open. Libraries are not optional they are a necessity and vital. Please fix this.</p>
	<p>After reading the recent news about the planned reductions in services at libraries of the GRLC, we would like to express our disquiet. We have been regular users of libraries in the Geelong region for most of our lives and we have seen the contribution that public libraries have made. The population of the Geelong region is growing rapidly, so it would appear obvious that library services need to be increased, not reduced. Additionally, it should be clear that in future the people of Geelong, and Australia widely, will need to be better educated and informed.</p> <p>We are entering more fully into the 'information age', and libraries help with this just as much as the formal education system. Please share our message with your colleagues.</p>
	<p>I have been a patron of libraries all my life and a weekly patron of Geelong West Library since 1979. I borrow books &amp; DVDs not just for myself but also for my daughter &amp; grandchildren who live in rural Victoria. I have used the libraries resources on multiple occasions and would sorely miss having this wonderful resource with helpful &amp; friendly staff if closure happens. It is always busy with patrons and I really enjoy seeing mums &amp; bubs being entertained also. There are too many good things about free libraries to list here but to me, any library closure is a black mark against our culture and education. PLEASE DO NOT CLOSE OUR LOCA LIBRARIES!!!</p>
	<p>Given that Geelong, along with the Gold Coast have the greatest rate of expansion in Australia, it beggars belief that you would not allocate sufficient funding to keep all the libraries open. As a regular user of the HIGHTON LIBRARY I am furious that it has been mooted, once again, as a solution for the Council's fiscal mismanagement. Take quick look around Highton and it will be obvious to you how many extra rate payers you have in the area. There is no excuse for this lazy book-balancing exercise. To blame this decision on the Library Trust/Corporation, rather than the Council, as Trent Sullivan did on radio this morning, is disingenuous at best, dishonest at worst. He knows, and I know, it is about managing two extra libraries without Council allocating extra funds to do so. I believe these libraries were built because of population growth in those areas, so we have circled around to the extra rates collected in those areas, a small percentage of which should be helping with the running costs of the libraries.</p>
	<p>I am writing to express my disappointment at planned closures of local libraries. I have also written to COGG about this matter. From reading recent posts by COGG they are saying GRLC have been unable to reduce spending in order to keep libraries open. I have no way of knowing the truth of all the politics of the situation but wanted to add my voice in support of keeping all the local libraries open. They are so important for equitable access for local communities to learning, education, child development and even just as a warm place to be. This is particularly true for those struggling financially among us. Please take measures to reduce spending in house and or come to the table with COGG to sort this problem out.</p>
	<p>Hi, if it is true (as I have been informed) that it is your decision to close Geelong West Library (and also two others) then I ask you not to. I live with Complex PTSD. Disability Pension is my only source of income. I currently live alone without home internet. Geelong West is my closest library and I use it, not just for the internet, but to sit in a nice space and read. It is my community library. Please don't close it. The State Government has just defunded the mental health program I was enrolled in. Now I have to find another facility. I know I can go to Geelong Central, but I prefer it here.</p>
	<p>I was very disappointed to read the news that three library branches will be closed, including my local library branch in Geelong West. I do not support the current draft budget containing the library closures and would like to see a re-drafting of the budget eliminating these closures.</p>

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Name	Submission
	<p>I am a retired accountant and member of the Barwon Heads association. The Barwon Heads library support group have asked me to explain the 2023/24 budgets for the City of Greater Geelong (COGG ) and GRLC to their meeting tonight.I would appreciate your assistance in interpreting items associated with the funds paid by the COGG TO GRLC. The GRCL budget for 2023/24 shows Council income of \$14.536M while the COGG accounts on page 97 shows payments to GRLC of \$13.948m, a 2% increase on the 2022/23 and a difference of \$588K from your budget. I assume that if the COGG refuses to pay the amount shown in your overall budget that your estimated deficit will increase by at least \$588k.</p> <p>Q Do you agree with these figures ?</p> <p>Q What is the budget process between COGG and GRLC and how much negotiation has gone on between the two organisations?</p> <p>Q The \$588K is about half of the cost of of running the Drysdale and Armstrong creek libraries which is stated at \$1.118M for 2023/4 and \$1.8M the following full year for both libraries. It appears that you budgeted to carry half of the cost of the libraries out of operating surplus and reserves. Is this correct and if so you are also saying that you will still have to cut three libraries and the services in several other libraries even if you receive the \$588K?</p> <p>Q what is the COGG’s current position on the fees it pays to you? Is the City sticking with its budget position?</p> <p>We note the statements by both COGG and GRLC that high inflation is occurring at a time of significant expansion to the regions population. Taken together with State government restrictions these pressures are causing significant problems for all concerned. We also note your budget item for \$50K to review the business model under which you operate. I would be happy to discuss these issues by phone but would like a written response to specific figures quoted.</p>
	<p>I would like to express my deep disappointment about the proposed changes to Chilwell Library. While I appreciate that these are difficult economic times, cutting costs by ripping the heart out of community libraries is not the answer.</p> <p>One of the great lessons that we learnt through COVID is to value opportunities for human interaction within our community.</p> <p>I have visited the Chilwell Library regularly with my young children since we moved to the area. My kids have also loved visiting with their primary school. The Chilwell library visit is a right of passage for the Preps at CPS.</p> <p>The value in these visits is not in the books. It is the warm and friendly staff, who are always ready and willing to find a particular book, sing a sing, or play a game to support early literacy. I have observed these staff help the elderly navigate the computers, have a chat, call a taxi. Loneliness is an epidemic. I firmly believe many people are visiting the libraries because we crave these human interactions, which an online catalogue cannot replace. A staff-less library is a soul-less one. While I also support the plans for redevelopment of this historic and loved space, I am most distressed by the plans to de-staff the library. Please save our library, and most importantly it’s staff.</p>
	<p>I am dismayed to hear of the board’s decision to close the Geelong West Library. Since moving to the area, the library has been an integral part of the sense of community to the Geelong West suburb, and an essential service to the community. I cannot state strongly enough how important this library has been, especially since becoming a mother. At a time of isolation and caring for a newborn, the services of Baby Rhyme Time and the ability to have an indoor community area, that welcomes infants and small children has been essential in my own wellbeing as well as that of my child. The library has been a haven and a refuge while caring for a small child, during this time where one’s travel radius shrinks. I absolutely could not have utilised these services at the Geelong Library and Heritage Centre due to constraints of a city location and further travel requirements. At a time when leaving the house seems a challenge; packing a car, driving with a potentially crying infant, finding and paying for appropriate parking are all prohibitive barriers. Additionally, this is a time where local community is essential. During my time as a library member at Geelong West Library, I have seen the essential service this library provides to people in the area with information, technology, engagement and literacy including local schools, isolated community members, elderly community members, disenfranchised community members, parents, and children of the community. As a library member, Geelong West constituent, ratepayer, nurse and mother I object to the closing of the library.</p>
	<p>I was wondering if you could clarify what the \$50,000 for service model review will entail? Will the Barwon Heads library be needing to justify its presence again?I look forward to your response.</p>
	<p>I am writing to ask that the proposed library closures do not go ahead. I am a frequent user of the Highton library that offers a wonderful service to residents in the area. It is conveniently placed for parking and links well to visits to the adjacent shops (supermarket, Highton Clinic and Pharmacy). I am an older member of the public and visit Highton village and library routinely. Compared with larger libraries at Belmont, Waurnd Ponds which are more distant and less convenient, Highton offers a very personal service and local community aspect. Only last week I watched the librarian reading books to an enthusiastic group of younger Mums and preschool children. In the previous school holidays I took two primary school aged grandchildren to join in a special "illusion" workshop at Highton. It was great to have this opportunity nearby. I commend the Highton staff highly in their wonderful help to all users of the library. Please continue to support the Highton library.</p>

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Name	Submission
	<p>I am writing to express my utmost disappointment at the announcement of plans to close several local community libraries.</p> <p>My young family are a part of the local Barwon Heads community. The library makes up not only a big part of our community but also sits within our children’s school. It has been a consistent, valued and (for our children) essential part of our lives since moving into the area 11 years ago. It is understood that a lot of money has been put into two larger libraries in Drysdale and Armstrong Creek. This is great for people who live in those areas. Just because we live in a quieter, smaller area does not mean we should be denied such a valued community service that is accessible to all that live there. If our library is closed our children will no longer be able to ride their bikes or walk to their local library. Instead they will need to wait for parents to have transport them. It is also going to impact the elderly members of our area who use this is a place of connection. I do not believe this decision is at all smart or fair and should be reconsidered. Do not close a valued community asset!</p>
	<p>You cannot open one new library and expand another without extra funding. 2% is not extra funding. 2% is just barely the level of inflation, the yearly increase in electricity and gas. So your funding for the GRLC is inadequate. The Christmas tree, seen by no children as they are in bed before 9pm, costs \$1,000,000 I believe, to set up and maintain each year. It does very little for very few for not very long. That \$1,000,000 would go some way to paying to keep the existing libraries open, continuing to give pleasure and learning to many of all ages all through the year. Shame on you all for managing so ineptly the rates we pay that you are now unable to provide us with the services that Councils are meant to provide.</p>
	<p>I have said to others around me for many years, why don’t we pay a fee each year to use all the various services offered by our libraries, all library users to pay \$10 on their birthday to be collected after this date on their next visit to the library, this would space out the payment for families. User pays. The money collect at each library stays at each library.</p>
	<p>The closure of the Barwon Heads Library will have a huge negative impact on the school as well as a community at large, particularly disadvantaging those with limited mobility and transport and families with young children, as well as those of us that are able to access the library as part of school drop of and pick up routines. It is highly disappointing that there has not been any community consultation in the this process, and that the proposed savings to GRLC are so minimal in the overall scheme of the budget. I implore you to reconsider this decision.</p>
	<p>I would like to express concern over the proposed library closures in our region.</p> <p>Libraries are such a fundamental service that connects our communities. I go to a number of libraries in the region with my family and it is a wonderful and economical way to do activities together that promotes unity. I understand that times are tough and budgets need to be tightened, but we urge the City to find other ways to find savings without the need to close a beloved and essential service in our community. I am in a position where I can travel to other libraries, but other people in our community will find it challenging, particularly for those who can't drive or are unable to take public transport. Thank you for inviting feedback- we hope this decision will be reviewed.</p>
	<p>I would like to express my strong objection to the proposed closure of three Geelong Library branches, and also propose that the opening hours are varied to provide greater accessibility. I use the Geelong West library regularly, however my reading habits and library visits are currently limited as I work full time. I already find the restricted midweek opening hours difficult, so the only possible day to borrow is a Saturday morning. I suggest that the Library considers amending current opening hours to accommodate other patrons who work, and would appreciate at least one night a week of later opening. Every time I visit the Library, there is always a wide range of other users - some reading the papers or magazines, some choosing books, studying or meeting with a tutor or support person, and often families enjoying borrowing or other activities. It is dreadful to think that those people will no longer have access to this vital community resource. Closing community resources in this way is an appalling prospect and will significantly and negatively impact the lives of many residents. 'In terms of the Chilwell area (related to the proposed change to the Library service there), I have observed that many elderly residents are either unable to drive or find it too difficult to park in the area, so walk to local shopfronts, including the Library. Along the way they enjoy interactions with people, and possibly these are the only interactions they have on many days, so it is important that the Library continues to be staffed for this reason, as well as for the continuity of the library service itself.</p>
	<p>I am dismayed and extremely disappointed to learn of the current plan to close the Barwon Heads Library.</p> <p>This is an important and valued resource for the Barwon Heads Community. It seems particularly ironic that this is occurring at the very time when the City of Greater Geelong is 'celebrating' the new library facilities and buildings at Drysdale, Armstrong Creek and in the Borough of Queenscliffe.</p> <p>My City of Greater Geelong rates (which contribute to local libraries) have increased by more than \$700 this year, yet an important service is threatened with closure.</p> <p>I am aware that there is a library branch at Ocean Grove. That facility is difficult to access without a car, and parking options there are minimal anyway.</p> <p>Please advise me of alternative plans for library facilities that will be accessible for Barwon Heads ratepayers and residents</p>



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Name	Submission
	The staff @ Chilwell library have been a vital part of my life for the last 15 years - A tired mum with a newborn - advising good reads, Story time! A child loving reading & a teen addicted to books. Chilwell staff are awesome please keep them!
	I would like express my distress and disappointment at the proposed reduction in services and particularly the branch closures in the GRLC draft budget. I use Geelong West Library frequently (more than once a week) and see this branch as an integral part of community life in Geelong West. As a branch with huge patronage numbers the decision to propose closure seems short-sighted and has far reaching impacts. As the GRLC's own statement to the media points out, vital services offered by libraries are becoming more important due to rising living costs. Libraries offer safe and inclusive spaces for locals to gather. Please work with City of Greater Geelong to keep our libraries open for everyone who values them.
	I've been coming to Geelong West Library for 20 years - it is a 15 minute drive but it is the closest one to me. The staff are always kind and helpful, they are part of the community. It would be a tragedy for all the people who depend on this branch for so much.
	<p>I am writing this to implore you to reconsider and reverse the proposed closure of the Highton and other library branches of the GRLC as stated in the “GRLC BUDGET 2023-2024, STRATEGIC RESOURCE PLAN 2023-2027, DRAFT MAY 2023”.</p> <p>I was appalled to read that the closure of our local library in Highton and indeed other smaller libraries. The fairly recent reversal of the proposed closure of the Highton Library shows the strong local support for this facility. Has this been forgotten? The supporting reason for closure as put forward in your draft is to allow the funding and staffing of new Drysdale and Armstrong Creek Libraries in the growth corridor and I find it abhorrent that you would propose that newer residents are more deserving of services than long term residents. As the CoGG did support and fund the building of libraries in the new growth areas, they have acknowledged the need for these services and have by default acknowledged the need to fund them and have provided a very modest increase in funding. Whilst you have been set a serious challenge with the modest funding increase, you have not met your responsibility well by merely taking what would seem to be the easiest option, that of closures. The option to simply close the smaller library centres shows extremely poor judgement and short sightedness by your board. Other options do not seem to have not been put forward for consideration. These options include a reduced in hours or other services. If indeed the GRLC is so desperate that it cannot fully operate all the libraries, then a reduction of hours of all libraries would be a fairer option than complete closures. That way staff can be rotated and moved between libraries and costing split. Another option to complete closure of libraries being open for long periods for the perusal of books and other on-site services held at a particular site would be alternative collection locations to pick up and return books requested books via the online Hold system. I would strongly argue that the existing established suburbs have a higher proportion of older resident who would find it more difficult to travel addition distances than the obviously younger residents in the newer growth suburbs. Proposing additional travel distance for residents to visit their nearest library is both unreasonable and flies in the face of the CoGG and the GRLC responsibility to minimise the Carbon footprint of residents which inarguably will increase with additional travel distance. At present I can combine shopping with visits to the library so this, at present, has no additional Carbon footprint. The Geelong City Library and Heritage centre, while a beautiful building, is hardly an alternative to existing suburban libraries as parking near the city library is neither easy nor inexpensive. This seems apparent to me the City library seems underutilised as evident by the foot traffic I’ve observed in the City library. I use none of the sporting or indeed other facilities offered within the CoGG and while I don’t oppose the funding of them, I would strongly argue that I am deserving of my funding being used towards the only CoGG facility that I use, namely the Highton Library and have contacted the COGG councillors expressing my concerns. It is clear that were you to close of these libraries this would allow the assets to be sold and again I think this abhorrent.</p>



GRLC Draft Budget Submissions 12 May until 9 June

Name	Submission
	<p>I am appalled at the projected impact on services provided by the Geelong Regional Library Corporation (GRLC) as a result of the budget allocation by the City of Greater Geelong (COGG) to the GRLC.</p> <p>Both budgets appear to reflect a short-sightedness and do not necessarily consider the tacit services which libraries provide. Nor have the possible consequences of the proposed budget necessarily been extrapolated on the effect to wellbeing, mental health and safety of library users.</p> <p>There appears a blame game between COGG and GRLC as to who is responsible for the actions which GRLC proposes to take in subsequently implementing its own budget.</p> <p>While each organisation may be thinking only in terms of dollars in the short term, possible long term costs could impact other budget areas along with immeasurable cost to the wellbeing of library users.</p> <p>The following list (which is neither extensive or exhaustive) provides some examples of the services libraries may provide in addition to obvious ones such as access to books, research and recreational reading:</p> <p>Safe spaces for students whose families cannot afford out of school care.</p> <p>Safe spaces for persons attempting respite from domestic violence.</p> <p>Safe spaces for homeless people.</p> <p>A safe public space to take children when caregivers may be feeling ‘at risk’ in their potential behaviour when overwhelmed by their caring duties (children and family)</p> <p>Access to heating and internet – providing invaluable respite to individual domestic budgets as the cost of living rises.</p> <p>One of the other concerning aspects is the impact on the friendly helpful staff who work in the libraries. I cannot speak too highly of how staff have assisted, greeted and interacted with me. Subsequently I suggest it would impact greatly on the library’s reputation and the quality of the current provided service should there be a reduction in hours (or even, unbelievably, the implementation of staff- less libraries). This possibility arises as cutting staff hours may result in resignations if experienced and long serving staff leave to find other work which enables them to meet living commitments. Replacement staff may not be as experienced, of the same calibre or have the local knowledge of place and people which provides richness to the capacity of libraries.</p> <p>Additionally, cuts to services and hours often result in a lowering of staff morale and job satisfaction. This in turn may be inadvertently reflected in interactions with customers.</p> <p>How can the impact of a library staff members cheery welcome and helpful advice on a client’s temporal wellbeing be measured? I strongly suggest that the role library staff play in the wellbeing of clients not be underestimated, neither should it attempt to be quantified in dollar terms.</p> <p>Subsequently a cut to library services, which, again I stress, is not just about books and reading, may, in the long term result in extra expenditure being required in other budget areas, for example, health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Prevention is always better than cure. Let our libraries and the wonderful staff who work in them continue to provide a range of both overt and tacit services to the community. Fund them commensurate with the range of social, cultural and emotional capital they provide. Stop this nonsensical bickering!</p>
	<p>I am writing regarding the draft budget and the proposal to close 3 libraries in the Geelong region. I am very opposed to this proposal. Libraries are a vital community space. They provide the community with a safe, quiet and peaceful space to read, borrow books, study, use computers and connect with other members of their community. They are used by people of all ages and provide nothing but good things to their communities. I have loved visiting my local library in all the different towns I have lived in around Australia. My current local library is Barwon Heads where we and I have also visited many of the other libraries in the region. My children have grown up visiting our local library every week and I hope they continue to have access to this invaluable service. Keep the libraries open!</p>
	<p>I use the Highton Library at least 3 times a week. I walk to the venue from my home. It is welcoming environment for my friends and I as well as a great resource centre. It has always been a major part of my week to read the different newspapers available. I have read 100s of books from the library over the years.If I had to go to Belmont library it would be a major undertaking and one I would not do often. I think it is disgraceful to close a library so a new centre can operate elsewhere. It appears to be extremely poor planning and budgeting at our expense,I object to big impersonal libraries like the expensive white elephant in the city.</p>
	<p>I visit Highton library at least twice a week. I greatly value this local resource which is a reasonable walk from my home which enhances my fitness and wellbeing. I often meet friends at the library and as we say, you never have to be lonely, just drop into the library. As I age I plan to visit my Highbton library as it is so accessible and enhances the shopping centre. Everthing is within walking distance. I object very strongly to large inaccessible libraries and the closing of smaller libraries, especially as it appears to be due to poor planning budgeting.</p>

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Name	Submission
	<p>As a library lover I am angry at the proposed cuts to library services. As a resident of Portarlington I frequent the Drysdale library for several reasons, to met others to read the newspapers and to browse the collection, etc The new library is an asset for the people of the Bellarine. To be open on Sundays allows students, researchers and others to visit as they have free time. Many people work, and students from the Bellarine are being disadvantaged by not having a place to study. This leaves them at a disadvantage while others in the city have access to the main library seven days a week.</p> <p>The new library has to remain open on Sundays. If you must shave off hours this is my suggestion. You close two nights a week at 5pm. A saving of over 5 hours at penalty rates. Or, open late two mornings a week. This is not a cost saving but could be tweaked. I am a retired librarian who had to make some changes to the workplace. By closing two nights you will see benefits I. Library patronage over time, and create a stable work environment. Your decision could be challenged on discrimination grounds as the majority of the employees are females.</p>
Maureen O'Keefe Chair, Geelong West Neighbourhood House	<p>Please find attached a letter authorised by our Committee of Management outlining our concerns in relation to the proposed closure of the Geelong West Library.</p> <p>We appreciate you taking the time to consider our letter</p> <p>Kind regards</p> <p>Maureen O'Keefe</p> <p>Chair, Geelong West Neighbourhood House</p> <p>Dear Ms Schernickau</p> <p>The Geelong West Neighbourhood House (GWNH) wishes to express our deep concern about the proposed closure of the Geelong West Library.</p> <p>As near neighbours, with a shared vision to serve the local community, we have seen firsthand, the vital service the library plays in serving people of all ages, backgrounds and capabilities.</p> <p>Since our inception as a neighbourhood house, we have collaborated closely with the library. Around 10 years ago we seeded several book clubs that continue today and utilise the book club kits at the Geelong West Library. When we ran a local festival, WestFest , librarians participated by reading stories to children in the rotunda at West Park. We have also had librarians come and speak to our seniors’ program.</p> <p>Last year, GWNH hosted an Artist in Residence program which produced some wonderful artwork. When we were looking for a place to exhibit, the Geelong West Library was keen to support and hosted two exhibitions in the second half of year. The first called Buildings of Pako and the second The Growling Grass Frog.</p> <p>Currently they are hosting our third exhibition Balyang Sanctuary. The library provided a vital role in not only exhibiting local artists but in welcoming community members to come and view the works. The librarians have always been very accommodating and helpful. They have publicised our program and provided letters of support for grant applications.</p> <p>Recently, due to a renovation at the house, our craft group needed a temporary home and it was the Geelong West Library who again said, “yes we will help” and we were very grateful.</p> <p>For members of our committee, this library is our local. For the many who attend the house this library is a highly valued asset. There is no doubt in our minds that closure of the library will have a devastating impact on the community. No more local access to books, magazines and newspapers nor photocopying, printing and the internet. No more Storytime or a place to feel safe in the company of others.</p> <p>For some yes, they may go to the city, but for most access will be difficult and parking too expensive.</p> <p>We urge you to reconsider the decision to close the Geelong West Library</p> <p>Kind regards</p> <p>Maureen O’Keefe</p>
	<p>I wish to object strongly about the closure of Geelong West branch of the GRLC. It is most important it remains open for the community surrounding it and their access, which would be extremeley inconvenient for library patrons.</p> <p>The city branch is not an acceptable alternative for many reasons. (eg. Parking &amp; away from immediate shopping)</p>

## GRLC Draft Budget Submissions 12 May until 9 June

Name	Submission
	<p>I am writing to express my dismay and disappointment at your recent decision to close the Geelong West, Highton and Barwon Heads Libraries. Having lived in both the Hamlyn Heights and Highton areas I have used the first two libraries consistently as a general member of the public, a parent and a primary school teacher at Herne Hill P.S. Both libraries are an integral part of the communities they operate in and provide essential services for all age groups. They are also situated in areas where free parking is available unlike the central library in the city.</p> <p>Libraries support and enhance the growth of literacy skills for a wide range of people in the community. They provide a special place to help with mental health issues as they are calm and quiet and may be the only place where anyone can go, feel safe and spend some quality time reading newspapers, magazines and to have essential access to other services.</p> <p>I am so very shocked that you would consider closing any of these well used and precious facilities. Please rethink these decisions and listen to the many, many people who are so rightly opposed to these closures.</p>
	<p>Horried to hear of the proposed closures of the GRLC branches. Please email me your petition and I will print and gather signatures from the MFG students and staff. Is there a link where people can also register their objections? I can ask our Prin to put this out to the parent community? In solidarity.</p>
	<p>I write on behalf of my family to express my deep concern regarding the proposed closure of the Barwon Heads Library, a vital community resource in our town. When I informed my 9 year old daughter of the impending closure she screamed and cried. 'But why? So many people use it and love it?' And unfortunately I haven't been able to explain it. Except to tell her that so many people care, and that we have saved it before and we will save it again. The Barwon Heads Library holds a significant place in our community, serving as a hub for knowledge, creativity, and social engagement. It provides access to a huge range of books, periodicals, digital resources and programs that cater to people of all ages and backgrounds. The library has become an invaluable asset, contributing to the intellectual and cultural growth of the residents of Barwon Heads and the surrounding areas. Furthermore, at a time when increasing active transport and minimising carbon emissions it is critical that we have the ability to walk, ride and scoot to get our books. The library has been an integral part of our family life. For our child through Rhyme Time Sessions, picture books and now young adult series. For us accessing a huge range of books, magazines, using printers, and wifi when needed. Our excellent and passionate librarian Penny has been on hand to help and foster this passion for reading, which has now set our child up as an excellent student with exemplary literacy levels. Numerous studies show that exposure to reading materials from a young age is strongly correlated with higher literacy levels and have a positive impact on language development and vocabulary acquisition. For this we have the library to thank. While I understand that budget cuts may present challenging decisions, I believe it is crucial to recognise the immeasurable value the Barwon Heads Library brings to our community. I request that you continue to work with CoGG to keep all libraries open</p>
	<p>Email with submission attached was forwarded to info box. Letter too long to include and have forwarded it via email to Rebecca.</p> <p>To the Chief Executive and Councillors,</p> <p>I wish to make a submission against the closure of the Barwon Heads Library. I would appreciate it if this submission could be forwarded to all Councillors.</p> <p>Please see my Submission attached.</p>
	<p>I was shocked to read of the proposed cuts to the Geelong Regional Library Corporation (GRLC) services. My understanding is that this is a direct result of the City of Greater Geelong's financial quagmire and the consequent flow on reduction in funding to the GRLC. I also understand that the GRLC executive is able to choose where the service cuts will be made in their organisation. In this light, I would like to urge you in the strongest of terms, to reconsider the proposed closure of the Geelong West (Pakington Street) branch. This branch has been meeting the needs of the people of Geelong West and neighbouring suburbs since 1885 ( with a short closure in 1890/91). It has proven itself a vital part of the community for nearly 140 years, providing a dedicated space for its borrowers to enable them to enrich their lives in a safe and welcoming space. Geelong West library welcomes all comers whether they be there to learn, to inform or to escape the everyday. It provides opportunities for social connectedness with people of like mind, and opportunities to discuss, challenge and broaden people's lives. There is excellent access to Geelong West library with a large amount of free parking available and a bus stop at its door. Being nestled close to an extensive residential area, many of its borrowers simply walk there. I question if there is any other GRLC venue that has better access for its borrowers than Geelong West. This library venue is nestled within a popular shopping quarter enabling its borrowers to pair their library visit with other essential parts of their life, reducing the carbon footprint of many borrowers. The Geelong West children's space is a vibrant and fun space for children. There are always children in this space during any of my very regular library visits and story time at the library is always well attended. There are many schools in the Geelong West area and during after school visits to the library, there are school uniforms from at least 8 schools in evidence. I haven't singled out the staff at the Geelong West library as I know that staff at all GRLC venues are dedicated, informed and supportive, having attended at least 5 other GRLC venues over the years. But in finishing, I really do want to give the staff the plaudits that they deserve. In particular I would like to mention Covid. During this difficult time, these staff continued to come to work to support the borrowers, proving an essential lifeline to the many people who were stressed and in distress. I return then to my reason for writing. I would like to urge you in the strongest of terms, to reconsider the proposed closure of the Geelong West (Pakington Street) branch.</p>

GRLC Draft Budget Submissions 12 May until 9 June

Name	Submission
	<p>We are appalled at the GRLC draft budget that proposes the closures of Highton, Geelong West and Barwon Heads Libraries. We do not support the closure of these libraries. Our libraries are valuable spaces providing education, resources and community events,for work, leisure and family requirements. We note that the City of Greater Geelong's proposed budget for 2023-24 includes a total contribution towards libraries of over 13M, including a cash contribution to the GRLC of over 12M. We understand that Council's contribution represents a 240K increase on the last financial year. Given Council's contributions and noting the immense value our libraries have, we ask that the GRLC budget consider alternative cost-saving initiatives without any library closure. Keep libraries open!</p>
	<p>I would like to voice my objection to the local Barwon Heads Library proposed closure to the public. I am a local resident and am very upset at the thought of the library closure . I have been using the library for the last 10 years and I must say I would have been lost without it . Not only so I borrow books but I am a frequent user of the computers and printer.</p> <p>If the problem for the council is staffing wages, perhaps a team of local people could be trained to work in the library on a voluntary basis .</p> <p>Please do not cut the library use to the locals , it would be an irreplaceable service which is do necessary got a small town.</p>
	<p>I copied GRLC into an email I sent to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Geelong Council about funding cuts to the Corporation. My original email is below the response received from your office, Christine. I understand Council belatedly met with GRLC and has papered over the dismissive, astounding approach it took to GRLC and hence to public library services. Nonetheless, I have made a submission to Council on this matter via Council's online '2023-24 Council Budget Submissions Have Your Say.' I have attached a copy of my submission for your reference. Many thanks to GRLC for forthright action over this matter.</p>
	<p>I wish to object to any decrease in library services provided by the GRLC. Libraries provide essential community services. Opening hours should be extended. My local library Chilwell should be opened on Wednesdays. The planned upgrade/redevelopment should be commenced immediately.</p>
	<p>Thank you again very much for making the time to meet community members on Friday - what an enormous few days it has been!</p> <p>Below is my question ahead of COGG meeting tomorrow night.</p> <p>Just wanted to flag with you my current obsession which is that COGG really could be embracing the broad and deep network that GRLC has existing in the community, to connect with residents on the journey of self-conceptualisation of the booming population, including densification in existing urban areas. I have closely followed the North Pako UDF "consultation debacle" and I feel very strongly that the library being at the core of our community could have a fruitful partnership with COGG, if only the COGG had the vision to fund and enrich the service!</p> <p>10 years ago, we left Kensington Melbourne, so I have strong memories of how inner-city pockets transform over time and the more I think about it;- I really feel that the library plays a key role. Aspects like extended opening hours and more information programs would support the community through the future growing pains of densification, and tangibly helps the community to be supported and adjust to busier urban areas. It's so hypocritical that COGG would propose to add 4,500 residents in the new apartment towers on Gordon Avenue and 1,500 residents onto North Pakington Street - yet claim they cannot justify full library funding. Just my two cents worth! Hope this doesn't sound horrid to you (eg more frequent and closer interactions with COGG!!?).</p>
	<p>I am so saddened to hear of the pending closure of libraries in Geelong.</p> <p>I was wondering if there will be an opportunity to voice our concerns via a petition or letter to not close libraries as they fulfil an essential community need especially during these difficult cost of living times for us all</p>
	<p>Can you please provide details about the proposed changes to Kim barne thaliyu/Geelong Heritage Centre?</p>
	<p>Libraries offer many vulnerable individuals and groups a chance to partake in and complete daily, personal, professional, educational, financial, social, physical, mental thus holistic health and developmental life related goals, necessities and tasks etc. Not everybody has a computer, laptop etc. As for infants and children reading books, story, sensory and social events are paramount for their holistic development. Books do not come cheap. As for children's and adults' social health, social media is not ideal; and lbooks are not for all; particularly those without laptops, with certain neurological conditions etc. We as humans thus social animals rely on socialising in person for our optimum health and developmental rights. Please see to it council upholds its duties and past council's commitment to operate and keep our council libraries open with the possibility of more opening as Geelong, Bellarine, and The Surf Coast expand. Here's to prioritising our health and well-being thus keeping libraries open for all.</p>
	<p>I support the ongoing funding to the existing libraries in Geelong. They have been an integral part of the community for decades and provide important social, educational and community services. Their closure would leave a major hole in the Geelong community landscape.</p>

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Name	Submission
	<p>Libraries provide a social hub for the old and young and are a valued part of our community.</p> <p>Please do not kill off valued institutions for the sake of Microsoft and Apple.</p> <p>If you value what has taken thousands of years to evolve you could not possibly kill it off because of funding.</p> <p>Cut your waste instead and keep these valuable resources open for everyone.</p>
	<p>I have heard that the COGG is planning to cut its budget on our libraries.</p> <p>Our family children and grandchildren are long time users of the library.</p> <p>My grandchildren love going to the library on weekends.</p> <p>Please do not cut their budget.</p> <p>I believe this is a soft target for COGG . It affects mostly women and children.</p> <p>Do not go down this path. May I kindly suggest you try cutting back on men’s sporting grounds spending such as the AFL stadium in Geelong.</p>
	<p>Just adding my voice to the many who are dismayed at the proposal to reduce times and other cutbacks for Geelong City Libraries.Surely Council should have provided funding for the new libraries in their budget for their running costs, not used reduced services in current libraries to fund them. I call on Council to support the GRLC in their funding and management of library services for the region.</p>
	<p>The library was once an integral part of a community. As a young girl bullied at school and with a dysfunctional family, the library was my only source of solace.</p> <p>Here, I discovered sex education, vampire’s and witches, all things denied to me at home. At the library, I made intergenerational friends, I was privy to wonderful world, a rich plethora of people and expensive books, which otherwise, I would never have known. Today, the world has changed, and elders like myself might argue, not for the better.</p> <p>Children, no longer see themselves as poor, and places like the library struggle to compete with, Pokémon shoots, virtual reality gaming and person to person story telling.</p> <p>But here should be the challenge. Not to withdraw services, that families, the working wounded and lonely want to engage in. The challenge should be to move ahead and provide real, relevant and interesting concepts the community doesn’t even know it wants or needs. Libraries need to evolve with the rest of the art and literature spaces! You could not even buy a ticket for Rone’s Exhibition in Melbourne, it was a complete sellout. Why? Because people want something different, but familiar. Old but new. With the \$1000’s of dollars you pay your CEO’s and the rates you collect, from the multitude of house on top of house estates the council has condoned, which may yet prove to be the Slum areas of the future, full of disenfranchised teenagers... you owe it to your communities to think ahead. What do you offer the communities the COGG, has created moving forward and where are your creative minds? I for one, think books will be museum pieces one day. As big beautiful , real paper bound books will disappear. Then maybe people will realise, the treasures they have lost. Books and libraries should not be limited to those who can afford them. They should be accessible to all.The challenge as I see it, is how do you move into the future and value the past? I do not believe it is by closing our libraries for the paltry sum, which is equal to the price of an executive’s salary for one year. Our libraries do not attract the numbers on the weekend because they are not relevant as they are. Our Leopold library pales in comparison to Geelong. But most will not travel out of their superb to access the flash library, with poor parking on a regular basis. Our recreational spaces need more attractions not less.</p>
	<p>I was pleased to hear that the decision to close the BH library and the other smaller libraries in the Geelong region has been reversed. Whilst this is good news, I am concerned that there will be more threats to this essential service in the future. What measures will GRLC be taking to avoid this happening again?</p>
	<p>None of Geelong area libraries should be closed, perhaps reduce opening hours but don't close our regional libraries. The heart of regional areas as evidenced by th continuation of Chilwell Library indeed a heartblood of our Chilwell community. Recently a rather wealthy friend expressed every one has a computer. I had to gently remind her that many folk need to go into libraries to use a computer or internet. Libraries are an integral of all progressive communities. We need !ibraries in all communities even if it means reduced opening hours</p>
	<p>I am writing to urge a reconsideration of the draft budget for Geelong libraries. I live in Barwon heads where a full closure of our local library has been proposed. This is a terrible recommendation that will have a grave impact on our community. Libraries are among the most important, inclusive public spaces and community resources. We frequent the libraries in Barwon heads and ocean grove and it would be devastating to us to have limited access to these spaces.</p>
	<p>I am writing to support full funding &amp; operating hours of all of the Geelong Council operated libraries. I have found the threat to reduce operating hours &amp; the number of library centres very distressing as they are vital community hubs for everyone. It is offensive that this money grabbing idea was even considered reasonable by the caretakers of these services which are funded &amp; owned by the people of Geelong.</p> <p>I propose the council takes the money paid out to the third party company to operate the libraries, &amp; instead uses those funds to employ people at the council to manage the libraries instead. I bet there would be a huge amount left to put towards the needed running costs.</p>

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Name	Submission
	If you're asking us to comment on the COGG budget, you could perhaps send us your own proposed budget? And as annual budgets are typically unintelligible provide a more detailed breakdown proposed expenditure. It would hopefully all stack up and highlight shortfalls in funding.
	My wife and I live in Manifold Heights and are users of the libraries at Geelong West, Geelong, Belmont and Chilwell. We greatly value these libraries as a source of information, literary collection and as a community “entry point”. Libraries resonate and echo with talk, laughter and informed discussion. They represent our community and are a thick slice of community life. When politicians begin to believe that libraries are unnecessary (or perhaps a costly luxury) and deliberately choose to “starve” them into submission, then those people have lost all memory and appreciation of the libraries of their youth. If it is necessary to cut costs or look for efficiencies, may I suggest that the loss of one or two “floating Christmas Trees” could solve the problem.
	What Geelong libraries mean to me:-I moved here from Melbourne 5 1/2 years ago, and had already heard about Geelong’s new city centre library before I got here. It instantly became my happy place, and still is. I’ve been to four of the other libraries in Geelong, all wonderful places. I’ve taken grandkids for Story Time or to hang out on the “pooter” or dress up in fairy costumes. I love the ability to request a book and get a message saying it’s waiting for me. Even all four volumes of a series. What a treat! I love the talks at my closest library (Newcomb). COVID lockdowns were bearable because I still had access to books. I hope our libraries can be funded to stay open as much as library staff are able and willing to be there. I’m 76, and have never had such a fantastic library service in any of the places I’ve lived (including London). I hope you succeed in obtaining the funding you deserve, and can continue offering Geelong residents a service that we should all be proud of.
	What the Libraries mean to me is a quiet & Relaxing place to chill out to read some books. I can't afford buying books at the moment so I'll borrowed them from the Library. It helps with my Mental Health + Autism to read the books I love.
	<p>I am so disappointed that there is a proposal to reduce library opening times in Geelong. For many, a warm library is the only refuge they have to a quiet and diverse community experience on a weekend.</p> <p>The library in Geelong West is busy all week long, including on Saturdays. Myself and my three kids are at the library on a Saturday most weeks: we love it there. It's a very happy place for us, where the amazing librarians all know us by name and our reading preferences too. It has instilled a love of literacy in my kids, and continues to be a source of community and kinship for all of us. I see and hear this in the faces of the many other people who visit the library too. On the weekends we all collectively exhale within the library - we step away from the hustle and bustle as a community, which is so important. The library is a joyous, hopeful and inclusive place for so many of us. Please don't take this away from local communities on the weekend. We need to maintain this refuge now more than ever - for the young people and aging people, and everyone in between.</p>
	Public services such as libraries are essential for the health and well-being of the most vulnerable people in our communities. A reduction in funding and therefore staffing and operating hours of libraries in Greater Geelong would significantly impact communities which rely on these services for internet access, community engagement, education and safe space away from domestic violence. Libraries are a safe haven for so many. Please reconsider your draft budget
	Libraries are one of our most important learning centers and gathering places in our communities. Their importance to the welfare of people and their ability to learn and expand their knowledge cannot be underestimated. Libraries are places where people come to know themselves and their communities. Libraries need more funding not cutting their funding
	I'm an avid supporter of libraries and in particular libraries within COGG and Borough of Queenscliffe and wish to support this, but in all honesty, this process is far too difficult and time-consuming for most people to go through. Can I recommend that you set up a simple web page with a petition to capture support?
	I am 79 years of age and love my library. I visit both Geelong West and Corio libraries to borrow books ,photo copying abs to use computers. I love Corio library being open Saturday and Sunday afternoons as I can’t always get out to them through the week. Also why build new libraries if you have to cut the hours of others.
	Libraries must be allowed to operate . Maybe put out a call for volunteers
	Hello, blame Dans over spending and his generous offer to have the commonwealth games, forcing the council to somehow find funding. You can't have everything.
	Thank you - and I wish you all well at the library services in making the case, with our support.
	<p>hi, I just wish to say something about the new library in Drysdale.</p> <p>it's an abomination. it must have cost a mozza all these mosaics, and what for! it does not fit in with the local look, at all. then: there is no easy way to park a van, there is a lot of empty space to pick up an ordered book i had to get down on my knees! from now on i will only use the library at Ocean Grove.the new library at Drysdale strikes me as a good example of a white elephant. a lot of money wasted and now i have to listen to the abc telling me that in the Geelong area, libraries are broke and are threatening to close. i mean honestly!</p>
	Close Highton, Barwon Heads and Western Heights. Keep Geelong West. Done
	I couldn’t survive without the library!
	<p>I am 81 years of age, and reading books 📖 are a huge part of my life. So much so, that I can’t imagine how I would live with out being able to go to my local Library and select my quota of books to take home to enjoy.</p>



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Name	Submission
	The staff are very helpful & caring. They have story story time for all ages of children. I live in the area so I can walk down to library. KEEP HANDS OFF my library and stop cutting our library times.
	<p>I believe the land Highton library is on was gifted to the community. That should be honoured. It may be small but it is my community library and I can access what I need from it. I have also utilised Ocean Grove, Belmont and Waurrn Ponds libraries when it is convenient but that luxury will cease if I cannot drive. I've been a member for eight years and in that time my library has been twice threatened with closure due to insufficient financial support from COGG. I feel Highton community are part of a political funding ball game between COGG and GRLC. We're being held to ransome and the insecurity does not help Highton library users or GRLC employees. Threatening to close three operating libraries to help pay for and run Drysdale and Armstrong Creek libraries is not a fair, reasonable or logical solution to an inability to manage budget requirements. I know the decision to close Highton, Geelong West and Barwon Heads has been reversed but for how long. Our communities deserve libraries just as much as Drysdale and Armstrong Creek do. ALL libraries should be adequately funded by COGG. Libraries are warm, friendly, inclusive and democratic community spaces where I can connect with people and my community. I borrow items, use the internet and read newspapers. Library staff are friendly and helpful but their work and importance to the community is completely underappreciated by COGG and also by the GRLC management. Libraries provide mums and babies with social connection. Library storytime is a vital part of babies' first experience of the wonder of books, reading and stories. Early engagement with libraries and books leads to improved outcomes in education and a lifelong love of learning. Staff working in the children's programs often spend hours of their own time preparing displays and activities and buy art materials with their own money. Fund them better! For elderly and isolated people libraries are a safe and supportive space where staff provide assistance with kindness and patience. Remember the wisdom behind Andrew Carnegie's philanthropy to libraries. Fund libraries for the vital community, educational and societal resource they are.</p>
	<p>On behalf of my husband and myself we would like to express concern regarding the closure of some libraries in the Geelong area. We are frequent library users and enjoy visiting our local hub.</p> <p>Mostly I'm concerned for the people who may use their local library as a place to visit as it may be one of their rare places to communicate with other people, a local place they can easily get to as young and old, new to our country, disabled or homeless. Their mental health and learning greatly relies on a place of community such as libraries.</p> <p>I encourage you to consider the far reaching benefits of the library facilities before closing them. Many thanks for caring for our city, we've lived here all of our 70 years and it's still the best place to be.</p>
	<p>As a local resident and health care provider – I am deeply concerned about the impact that the closure of local libraries will have on the wellbeing of local residents. Many of my clients access their local library to connect with others, the internet and to seek reading material to maintain their cognitive function. The library is so much more than just a book storage facility. It's provides a safe place for marginalised communities, our teens seeking safe refuge and the elderly who may seek support to access the internet. Closing libraries is short sighted and will undoubtedly have a flow on impact, making any cost saving irrelevant. Please do not close these important resources.</p>
	<p>I believe the library should be funded as per normal over the last decade.</p> <p>If budget funds are cut to the library, it will detrimentally impact the strong community that centres around the Geelong Library. The West Geelong Community hall encompasses also that strong unique community. What I have observed on my frequent visits to the Geelong Library, is a community of young &amp; old alike! There are regular older people who go there to read the newspapers every day.</p> <p>They sit at the communal table &amp; inform one another of current events. There are people who plug in regularly to Wi Fi. There are people who go there to rest &amp; read. The library staff have a personal one to one acknowledgement of locals. Asking about their general welfare etc.. It may go under the guise of a Library, but it is very much the hub of the distinctive village feel that endures in the shopping strip. Co vid has impacted greatly on many people's social lives &amp; this is a further eroding of peoples sense of community. You cannot place a figure on the importance this centre has to the community. Particularly the very vulnerable parts of the community, that relies heavily on perhaps the only human transaction they may have in their daily lives! All too often the community suffers due to budgets, that have no human compassion.</p>
	<p>I wish to protest to the closing of libraries. As I'm elderly I rely on their service for many things. Photocopying, use of internet, social interaction, reading borrowed books as cannot afford to buy my own to mention just a FEW. I regard this as an essential service to the community young or old. COVID lockdown was detrimental to all mentally and closing libraries is akin to this. Please do not close our libraries we depend on them for our mental health to keep in touch with the world and especially community gatherings.</p>
	<p>I would like there to be NO reduction in funding for Geelong community Libraries (surf coast torquay library) so that libraries can remain open on weekends.</p>
	<p>I would like there to be NO reduction in funding for Geelong community Libraries (surf coast torquay library) so that libraries can remain open on weekends.</p>
	<p>I rely on the Bellarine/Surf Coast library van to bring items which I have ordered online &amp; if this service is discontinued my reading, listening &amp; watching entertainment would be severely curtailed. As a renter &amp; Aged Care Pensioner my finances are limited and they do not cover attending entertainment provided through other means.Reducing opening times at the Geelong library would not affect me personally however students and inner city dwellers who work full time might have a problem.</p>
	<p>Why are you cutting back on library budget and yet you have just announced that you are changing January 26 to support a small group of people and you are not even giving the RATE PAYERS the right to vote on the change the library serves all the community every day of the year.</p>

GRLC Draft Budget Submissions 12 May until 9 June

Name	Submission
	Libraries are essential Community Services and should be funded as well as possible! Everyone uses the services provided by libraries - old and young, students, parents and retired folk. It's imperative that the wonderful service provided by our library staff be supported and retained, not cut in ways that make it difficult for the population to use. Please acknowledge how significant our library services are.
	Re feedback for draft budget. What do libraries mean to me: * Places where valuable information and resources can be sourced and shared * Calm and relaxing spaces * Places that inspire creativity and knowledge in children * Safe family friendly spaces (adult and unsuitable resources are made discreet)
	Really! Only one day to reply!
	We are library users at Waurn Ponds and appreciate the Service but I have some questions about the bigger picture of the Service. 1. <del>B</del> there a masterplan for the number and distribution of branches in COGG as it seems there are too many branches competing for limited resources ? 2. <del>W</del> hy was it necessary to put so much resources into CBD library, a show piece which is not easily accessed from limited car parking? 3. <del>D</del> id feasibility planning precede the building of expensive libraries at Leopold, Drysdale, and Armstrong Creek to assess funds required to operate them and the likely allocation from COGG? 4. <del>I</del> t is disappointing to lose service hours in the suburbs but the CBD library is unscathed? 5. <del>I</del> is also disappointing that it seems that the biggest member of GRL (COGG) doesn’t seem to communicate with COGG until funds are cut? 6. <del>H</del> ow does GRL intend to service new suburbs as COGG continues to grow and most suburbs want a library? You are the library experts but it seems to me that the bigger libraries should be strategically placed to serve sub regions and that they be supported by fully accessible Waurn Ponds type smaller libraries requiring absolute minimum staff levels backed by technology. Commercial business seems to work on this model with few support staff employed at service points.
	Libraries are essential. The write up on the front of this card belies the current proposals by 'library based' administrators to gut the Geelong Library Service at Chilwell, GW, HIGH & BH. Very dissapointed.
	I wish to add my voice to the support for the wonderful service Geelong Library network provides to the wider Geelong community. I live in Ocean Grove, am a regular user of the library and would be affected by loss of service on Saturday afternoons and Sundays. I regard the library as an important part of my mental wellbeing. I rely on ready access to the world of literature to keep myself connected to the world and able to function in a positive way and to contribute to the world around me. I feel devastated that funds are being withdrawn from this public institution that does so much good in the world and provides a stable and consistent haven for the public.
	Why build new libraries when you say you do not have current budget to support existing libraries? Why close existing libraries on Saturday afternoons when you are keeping the city library open on Sundays? Not sure why you are holding \$4 million in cash reserves - explanation?
	We live in Belmont and love our local library. We take our grandchildren there when there are programs they enjoy. We also like to borrow books and magazines and appreciate the helpful staffs. We were dismayed to hear that there are proposed cuts to the library funding and that these will adversely affect services. While we understand that these are difficult times financially, we feel that the library is greatly undervalued resource and important to the cohesion of the community. Please reconsider cuts that will affect the services the library provides for the benefit of the citizens.
	I am a resident of Torquay and have lived here for the past 5 years. In that time I have been very impressed with the efficiency of being able to reserve books on line (from the 14 or so Regional Libraries)and then collect them from the Torquay Library, often within days. It has been mentioned that due to a reduced Budget that you may close some or all of the Regional Libraries on Saturday afternoons and Sundays. Whilst this does not greatly affect me as a retired person,I have often noticed when visiting Torquay Library the number of students and other Library members who use the Computer and Internet facilities and feel that weekend closures would greatly affect them. Not everyone is able to travel to Geelong to use that Library.Thank you for allowing us to have our say and thank you again for a marvellous and efficient service.




## GRLC Draft Budget Submissions 12 May until 9 June

Name	Submission
	The library services should not be cut - many people use the libraries on the weekends. Working parents use the libraries on the weekend taking their children, etc. This will have long term effects on our community.
	I have been a volunteer at the heritage centre since 2016 and have seen the amazing work the librarians perform for the public everyday I am there. There have been people from Melbourne an all parts of Victoria coming to the centre. It is a wonderful resource and the shortening of the hours has had people coming to the door and being dissatisfied that they cannot access this resource. Please don't hinder this wonderful centre by shortening the hours further.
	I am a local resident who believes that it is very important to keep the Geelong West library on Pakington St open. We belong to a largely populated area who needs a positive central place like the library for information, communication and a sense of belonging. We are a multicultural community who thrives on diversity and the library provides an important avenue for interaction of all cultures and ages.I present my submission to keep the Geelong West library open.
	Reducing funding for the libraries is reducing one of the only free services left within our community. A place that's sustainable, letting you borrow books, available to everyone and a great place to study as needed. As a teenager that didn't have money for books, I used to attend the library frequently. Now that I am a mother of young twins, I go to baby rhyme time often which is a great way to connect with the community and prevent social isolation. Please reconsider your budget cute to the libraries.
	No closures. Am a member of several libraries in Victoria and they are ESSENTIAL. Very saddened to hear this still is a issue.
	<p>Why libraries are so important to the community:  My family have used community libraries for 3 generations now - they continue to be an integral part of my life.  I moved to Geelong in 2001 &amp; have Chilwell Library as my community library.  I had my 2 children in 2002 &amp; 2003 &amp; the library for me was such an important part of our week. It was an outing for us - another lovely place to visit with my children . We would read books there, browse &amp; then take home a big bundle. The library staff were all so kind &amp; really paid attention to my children. They would let them help checkout the books &amp; took a genuine interest in them . One staff member even let us borrow her personal DVD 'S once as the library one had been damaged ( above &amp; beyond!). I had no immediate family in Geelong for the first 10 years so this lovely interaction at the library meant a lot to me &amp; the children.  My children have grown up &amp; moved interstate to study now - but I still visit the library frequently. I continue to order books online, an alert is texted to me when the books are ready for pickup &amp; I avidly read them nightly. It's a wonderful ritual. I love the real sense of community that our library has.  I would have saved thousands of dollars by using the library ( &amp; therefore saved trees!) &amp; am so grateful for their existence. I am known to take photos of books in book stores &amp; then come home &amp; order them with our library - they have all the up to date ones usually. I still enjoy reading the paper versions.  My mother (79 years old) uses her library too ( borrow box)- she orders audio books mostly &amp; enjoys listening to those whilst she sews / paints / cooks. They are a great source of company &amp; entertainment for her - whilst also keeping her brain active.  My Father (82)- still gets 6-7 novels from the library fortnightly. He is also a volunteer delivering books to the elderly at home &amp; discussing them.  I feel that the Community Libraries are such an integral part of our life through multiple generations. I would be lost without them &amp; am so thankful they exist.</p>
	<p>I love my visits to the Highton Library where the staff are so friendly and helpful. I go there mainly to pick up books I have ordered - what a great service this is!  Highton is my usual shopping centre where I have a post office box. Also I depend on the pharmacy, doctor and many excellent shops with the library so conveniently located. I hope the council is able to maintain opening hours and staffing levels to be able to service this large suburb.</p>

## GRLC Draft Budget Submissions 12 May until 9 June

Name	Submission
	<p>It has been reported that there is a significant budget shortfall of \$762,000 in the City of Greater Geelong's 2023/24 draft budget for library operation.</p> <p>I believe that these proposed cuts should be reconsidered so that existing services can be maintained at an acceptable level.</p> <p>I have been a user of these services for over fifty years. Prior to the creation of the Geelong Regional Library I was a member of both the Geelong Library. and also the Belmont Library when it was under the management of the former South Barwon Shire Council. I was for a time a reader representative on the South Barwon Library Committee. When the Geelong Regional Library service was established my membership has continued and I am impressed with the way delivery of these service has continually improved. On shifting residence from Belmont to Torquay, my wife and I make continual use of the library service provided at the Torquay Branch Library. In particular the service we most use is that whereby we can check the catalogue for a book or other material, reserve what we want, have it delivered to the Torquay Branch and then be able to return it there. This ability to access the total resources of all the branches is one of the outstanding features of the service. Each time I visit the library I an always impressed by the number of people who are there not just to borrow books, but who are studying, using the excellent computer service, reading newspapers, or just coming in out of the cold or heat to sit in quiet and comfort.</p> <p>When my aged mother was struggling with poor eyesight, I was regularly able to use the Belmont Branch on her behalf to find large print books and other materials that she could manage and enjoy. The staff were as always very helpful.I know that it can be argued that these services will still continue. However any significant reduction in the budget for library services must mean some changes that will subtract from the existing quality of those services.</p> <p>Budget cuts usually are never restored in the future Reduction in service hours, and possible staff cuts and branch closures therefore loom large.</p>
	<p>This library is fantastic, such a positive community space in pako st.</p> <p>I use the library frequently &amp; look forward to bringing my newborn when she is a bit older. I fell this library is important to retain as it has a lovely small feel compared to the big one in town.</p>
	<p>Keep the libraries open for as long as possible. They service a very broad community. Myself included as I have just moved from Melbourne to this great place and love it. From what I see young children frequent libraries the most they shall be the ones who lose out here and they are our future learners. Technology is already dumb us down find the funding so how be smart for the future generations of readers and learners</p>
	<p>I just wanted to provide a comment relating to the draft budget. The launch of the new Drysdale library was so exciting and it has been amazing to see such a big turn out of the community. I was very disappointed to hear hours are being restricted and libraries closing around Geelong. Our libraries provide more than just a place to go and read books, the are a place to connect as a community, especially for people that are most vulnerable, from new mums to children to elderly. We all benefit from the library and I am strongly opposed to making cuts to opening hours and closures of libraries. Perhaps as a community we can identify others way to recoup some funds.</p>
	<p>Proposed cuts to library hours. DO NOT continue to consider them! Libraries are a community service, the right of everyone to have access to a Library in their local neighbourhood during the day, especially at the weekend, cannot be under-valued or down-played. Please continue to support all GRLC Libraries with the level of funding they require.</p>
	<p>Along with my fellow library users, I was dismayed to learn that there is a significant shortfall of \$762,000 in the City of Greater Geelong’s 2023/24 draft budget for library operation and, by default, the Geelong Regional Library Corporation’s 2023/24 draft budget. Surely, COGG can find these extra funds to avoid service reduction at any of the nominated branch libraries all of which continue to prove their worth in terms of social capital.</p> <p>A recently retired librarian, I lost count of the number of customers who related to me the huge loss which they felt during those weeks when their local library was forced to close due to COVID lockdowns and the gratitude and emotion they felt when the doors opened again. In the current harsh economic environment, libraries continue to demonstrate how critical they are to community well-being and connectedness. COGG needs to contribute sufficient funds so that GRLC can continue to operate at the current service level whilst implementing its brilliant Library Plan 2021-2025 which I encourage all councillors to read.</p>
	<p>I am concerned that the Geelong City has plans to reduce the funding of libraries in our community.</p> <p>I live in Mount Duneed and am excited to watch our new library being built. I have participated in your surveys in regards to the use of libraries in the community.</p> <p>As a grandmother I have taken my grandson to the baby singing and rhyming sessions which we both enjoyed.</p> <p>My children when they were young were regular users of library resources. This has fostered a love of books and learning that they have passed on to their children, my grandchildren.</p> <p>I regularly use the library for downloading audio books to play at my leisure at home.</p> <p>I also use the library to research things that i am interested in for example, knitting and crochet patterns, painting techniques and other crafts.</p> <p>Please reconsider the budget cuts to our library service and look elsewhere for the \$</p>

## GRLC Draft Budget Submissions 12 May until 9 June

Name	Submission
	<p>I head a book club, and we were quite happy paying \$10 per bag for the books.</p> <p>I know our book club would be more than happy to pay \$20 per bag, per month.</p> <p>I think that would be reasonable, as we have membership ,per gratis.....</p> <p>Consider this, re the budget.</p>
	<p>I am a resident of Drysdale and I have to say that I love  the new library!</p> <p>However, it is difficult to comprehend the shortfall in the budget for our wonderful library service, particularly given the new facilities and upgrades recently provided, that are much appreciated by residents.</p> <p>I used to work in a public library service many years ago in the north of Melbourne, and, as I have also observed here, the library is much more than a place to study and borrow books from. It is a community centre which provides many things and many activities for people of all ages.</p> <p>It is also a haven for those who want some quiet time, somewhere free to spend time that is warm in winter and cool in summer, particularly for some homeless and disadvantaged residents. Reducing opening hours, particularly on weekends will affect these people, and restrict access for full time workers and students.</p> <p>I implore council to please reconsider their budget and be a caring council.</p>
	<p>I have been concerned to learn of the funding constraints in both the City of Greater Geelong budget and the Geelong Regional Library Corporation budget, and their suggested impact on the library service.</p> <p>Like many other residents and library users, I am disappointed that the opening hours of some of the library branches may be reduced, and the Heritage Centre may be affected, too.</p> <p>I am a volunteer with the Home Library Service, and I wonder whether volunteers could be utilized to assist and support the library service during this time. Whilst I am currently a retired minister of religion, I began my professional career as a librarian, working at the Caulfield – Malvern Regional Library Service in Melbourne. I last worked in libraries a long time ago, around 1980, when the library world was very different, but I’m sure that I still have skills which would make me suitable. Others, too, might be willing to offer their services as a volunteer.</p>
	<p>Geelong Libraries provide a wonderful addition to life in this part of the world.</p> <p>Libraries are a critical service for all age groups, particularly when we are grappling with, and unsure about A!. Libraries offer well resourced information in an area where this may not be the case in the close future. The new building in central Geelong is a spectacularly designed, and very well run service. The employees are always helpful and the atmosphere is comfortable and welcoming. it would be unthinkable to have this reduced in any way,, as well as being a scandal when so much has been expended on its planning and construction. My library in Torquay has wide support from families, toddler groups, schools and organisations and so many citizens who do not have the need to travel to Geelong. It always a pleasure be there. It is a local hub with activities for babies and toddlers, story time for school groups, space for scrabble players, digital outlets for a diverse group and tables for newspapers readers. The staff are always helpful and welcoming There is community expectation that the plans for a large arts development and expanded library on the site will come to fruition.</p>
	<p>I have read the Statement regarding local libraries, and recently signed a petition for local community members in Geelong West. These elderly ladies informed me that the library does in fact want to cut down staff and close libraries. I was horrified especially because I pay so much in rates, and today I realised that my last rate payment was paid twice. This was an error on my part and of course I called the offices to request a refund of \$900 for one of the payments. I was told that I would need to pay \$30 to get that back! I know that this has nothing to do with the library situation but I pay a lot in rates, I will now pay \$30 to get my money back. Is this a revenue raiser to assist with the councils financial sustainability? In regards to the library funding for 2023-2024 of 26,192 million, \$240,000 increase from 2022-2023, is this keeping up with inflation? According to my calculations it falls short by a significant amount. When you refer to the GRLC having options that they are not taking up, what are you referring to? I would love to know, as I am shocked that the GRLC would not take up options that are good for the well being of all their staff and the community. They have certainly fooled the two old ladies taking signatures at Geelong West who have taken the side of the poor GRLC and against the corporate decision making of the council. I would like some more information please, the statement is not sufficient</p>
	<p>I’d like to offer my views on Geelong Regional Library and their budgeting.</p> <p>Over Covid, the library was a lifeline to so many people, especially those who lived alone. Although there was no contact, the going out for a purpose was vital to well-being. This continues to be the case with people going to the library as part of their social life. Although my elderly mother doesn’t live in the Geelong area, she values the opportunity of going to the library on different days. She doesn’t always remember the day so having a library open each day is very important for her.I coordinate a book club through Geelong Regional Libraries. Although we pay \$10 a month now for this service, there has been little or no improvement in the organisation. Perhaps the uses of the budget allocation also needs reviewing.</p>

GRLC Draft Budget Submissions 12 May until 9 June

Name	Submission
	<p>You indicate in your FAQs that the cost of running the new Drysdale library is some \$760K and this is the budget shortfall you are claiming from the CoGG. My question: is this the total running cost? And if so, why haven't the funds previously allocated to the old Drysdale library been subtracted from it?</p>
	<p>I am VERY much against the budget cuts to the libraries in the GRLC group. I use the library all the time - not just the online Borrowbox loans, book club kits but also dropping in to 'scan' the shelves, have a friendly chat with the ever helpful staff and pick up my never ending book reserves. If the libraries are not open on Saturdays it will be a huge disservice to the libraries and the communities they service. In my past life as a Librarian , reducing services to the library has always been perceived as the 'easiest' means to make budget cuts. Please think again as the communities do have a voice and the CoGG has been terribly remiss? in not doing their proper cost estimations in planning and staffing.</p>
	<p>I have high regard for our librarians and the services they offer. Despite Council’s budgetary constraints, theses are basic services that contribute to our health and wellbeing and that enable our community to function effectively, and therefore they must not be reduced. CoGG has numerous policy documents extolling the virtues of developing an inclusive society where those who feel isolated or are suffering from mental health issues or feel disengaged because they are from diverse backgrounds and feel ‘different’ are encouraged to be part of a vibrant community which respects every single person. Our libraries provide such a haven. CoGG documents refer to the need to strengthen our community by being inclusive and providing opportunities for everyone to contribute and feel valued. These become mere weasel words when the proposed budget cuts to libraries will have the opposite effect and will disempower and devalue many people, so weakening the fabric of our society. It will involve the decimation of library staffing levels, which also means the loss of their skills, experience and knowledge while minimal numbers of demoralised staff remain. This is not acceptable. In relation to a proposal to cut services across the board, this whole sorry saga has greatly distressed our community members. Libraries provide an essential service that must be fully funded, including the new library in Drysdale. I have been to numerous meetings and rallies to save our libraries when in fact none of us should have to be spending our time and energy to ‘save’ our libraries. We love our libraries as they are a valuable and vital community resource. They are safe, inclusive spaces where people connect with each other. They provide a way to welcome our many new residents and familiarise them with the neighbourhood. They add to our cultural identity. People from all walks of life can borrow books and audio items, attend workshops, access services including the internet and listen to talks by authors. Children and students who frequent libraries can develop literacy and reading skills plus a love of learning – is this not something that our Clever and Creative City desires? Rather than having to go into Geelong city, elderly people and those with disabilities find it much easier to access their local libraries, and so these facilities must be retained and the opening times pre-Covid must be reinstated. When I go to Geelong West Library to read the newspapers, I often hear the librarians welcoming people, listening patiently to their trials and tribulations, referring them to other services, assisting them with technology and basically helping and encouraging them in a myriad of ways. They are akin to being social workers who are helping to support all, which in turn helps to build greater cohesion in our society. They do not deserve the shameful treatment and stress they have been receiving with all of these threats to the services they provide. In relation to a proposal to bring the operations of the Geelong Regional Library Corporation to be under the umbrella of CoGG and take libraries inhouse, this is not a sensible proposal given that the GRLC has been lauded as the best in the state. There is no need to meddle with an effective and efficient model. Is Council contravening the Agreement with other Member Councils and the community by not funding the operational costs of new libraries and thereby compromising the existing network and services? The GRLC cannot absorb the costs of running two large additional libraries at Drysdale and Armstrong Creek (with the opening of this library being postponed, I note, to now be included in the next budget) with basically the same amount of funding as they have been receiving, apart from a small increase to cover staff payment increases. The GRLC had been expecting and budgeting for its proposed operational money and so it seems to me that the only solution is for Council to pay the gap. I also query the ethics of CoGG alerting the GRLC of its intention to not fund the new library/libraries until the CoGG draft budget was put forward. Why was the GRLC not informed in a timely way and a respectful manner? Also, I query why Council says it funds 85% of the operational costs of the GRLC when in fact they fund just under 70%. Council is neglecting to include the \$2.5m provided by State Government plus the funds the libraries generate themselves through hall hire, special events etc. In so many areas Council is failing in its good governance responsibilities and the people of Geelong are the poorer for it. Council needs to stop muddying the waters, misrepresenting the truth and causing panic. We, the ratepayers, deserve better, and so do our amazing librarians.</p>

GRLC Draft Budget Submissions 12 May until 9 June

Name	Submission
Philip Bade President Barwon Heads Association	<p>As President of the Barwon Heads Association, (BHA) and as a local library member, I wish to object to the proposed actions of the City of Greater Geelong and the Geelong Regional Library Corporation.</p> <p>Following the decision of the City of Greater (CoGG) to cut funding to the Geelong Regional Library Corporation (GRLC) which forced the GRLC to make up the short fall in the 23/24 Budget, And then decided to close or reduce hours of 3 existing services, one being Barwon Heads Library.</p> <p>The Barwon Heads Library is one of the lowest cost library's to operate, and services the local community, but also the Barwon Heads Primary School. A model the GRLC should perhaps adopt for other communities. The CoGG Draft Budget amendment required That CoGG increase funding to GRLC in the 2023/24 budget year by an amount of \$762,000, which represents the amount to operate Boronggook Drysdale library for one year. That Biyal-a Armstrong Creek and Boronggook Drysdale Libraries are included in CoGG's Strategic Resource Plan (2025 – 2027) to ensure libraries continue to stay open. This includes funding for all Greater Geelong library services for 2024/25, including funding of \$1.804m for the full financial year for both Biyal-a Armstrong Creek and Boronggook Drysdale Libraries. The BHA calls on the GRIL to not operate the Drysdale Library and keep the Armstrong Creek Library closed until the proper funding of these facilities is provided. It is not right to close existing services which are well utilized and meeting local demands, especially when CoGG appear to be building large expensive buildings in Geelong, Drysdale and Armstrong Creek with no consideration as to the ongoing costs of running these facilities.</p>
	<p>I'm writing to express my concern over the proposed budget for local libraries and concerns over the weekend access (when it would work best) for most families/working people. The libraries are an essential part of every community and need to be funded to allow them to flourish along side the people who value learning, community, knowledge building and that very old fashioned habit of reading an actual paper book. My local library of Corio would no longer be available for a late night pick up on Wednesday night and reduced weekend hours would mean more juggling to access this resource. Please allocate more resources to the wonderful staff and facilities in all the libraries.</p>
	<p>I write to express my concerns about the poorly thought through reaction to close the Barwon Head library when it became apparent that there were insufficient funds allocated by the City of Greater Geelong to open and maintain the new library services. I understand the library will remain open but with fewer hours.</p> <p>I am a neighbour of the library and value its co-location with the school and its easy access for the community.</p> <p>We value the Barwon Heads library for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- because it is the Barwon Heads Library, situated in the Barwon Heads School</li><li>- the very helpful and well informed librarian</li><li>- the diverse range of books and materials including newspapers and magazines</li><li>- access to the internet</li><li>- the diverse range of books and ability to order and pick up from Barwon Heads</li><li>- the programs and opportunities to meet other local residents</li><li>- its accessibility, easy to use, tie the dog up, park the bike, drop off and pick up books on walks, nice to be there on a wet day.</li></ul> <p>How are the decisions made to build these standalone buildings as libraries. Why aren't the libraries integrated with other buildings? Why aren't the developers required to build libraries as part of their development plans? Has the GRLC influenced the scale and extravagant designs of the Drysdale and Armstrong Creek libraries.</p> <p>The Barwon Head Library is a true community library - a model that should be reflected elsewhere. As a ratepayer of Geelong I don't expect my rates to be used to build infrastructure that is not capable of revenue raising and requires significant funding for maintenance and operations. I expect the CoGG and GRLC to support local communities and encourage and maintain local community resources. There is little need to duplicate the Dome in Geelong, which is aging fast and will require significant maintenance with little to show for the outlay.</p> <p>The Barwon Heads library should remain open for its current hours (which aren't significant); there should be a plan to extend these not reduce them. The issue of libraries and library closures is a very passionate one and will not go away. It shouldn't be this stressful for us or you.</p>

GRLC Draft Budget Submissions 12 May until 9 June

Name	Submission
	<p>Barwon Heads Library is a much loved local library. We are small but mighty, supporting avid readers of all ages. Friends of the Barwon Heads Community Library supports adequate service funding for all GRLC operated libraries. We have collectively lobbied extremely hard to ensure all residents across the municipality can access the highly quality library services that GRLC is known and loved for. On-going frequent service reviews are exhausting, especially for small communities. GRLC would ideally enter into longer-term COGG funding agreements (perhaps 4 years, in line with new-ish state government council budget planning requirements) to better support longer term service planning. CPI increases and new library planning and funding could be negotiated and agreed to outside that core multi-year service funding agreement. COGG should not commit funds to build new library facilities without first committing to a draft service model with GRLC. Benchmarking new facilities against like facilities/similar suburbs should be an achievable part of overall library planning. As ratepayers, we do not support spending funds on new facilities to then have them sit idle without staff; a grotesque waste of resources, labour and funds.</p> <p>While we are obviously not Melbourne, when thinking about the long term need to maintain the Barwon Heads Community Library we can reference: Plan Melbourne 2017–2050 - the Victorian Government’s long-term planning strategy, guiding the way the city will grow and change to 2050. Plan Melbourne is supported by the principle of 20-minute neighbourhoods. The 20-minute neighbourhood is all about ‘living locally’ and enabling people to meet most of their daily needs within a 20-minute return walk from home. To that end, we do not support closing smaller libraries and making residents access larger facilities by car. Residents can access specific services at specialist libraries when they need to. (I personally enjoy visiting Belmont, Geelong West, Waurin Ponds and of course Geelong library from time to time.) However as key hubs of community connection - places to meet, read and borrow - a one-size-fits-all approach to larger ‘library hubs’ is not ideal. We need a diverse array of library facilities to meet our diverse community needs. Friends of the Barwon Heads Community Library is committed to supporting GRLC and Barwon Heads Primary School to navigate post pandemic library behaviour change. Maybe those opening hours will look different to now and we may experiment and try new things. But the base level hours of service should be consistent with what we have had prior to the announcement of the recent funding cuts. We aim to support the evolution of our library so it may continue to meet the needs of our local community for many years to come. Thanks for your consideration.</p>
	<p>Dear Geelong Regional Library Corporation,</p> <p>My name is Lola and I am 9 years old. I have been to the library almost every week since I was born (except when I’m away on holidays)!</p> <p>I LOVE my library. And Penny is great. I can’t scoot to Ocean Grove, it’s too far, but also I can’t scoot that far with a huge bag of books. I would write more but I want to read instead. Please keep all libraries open.</p>
	<p>Please note I have already made a submission, but a lot has been uncovered since then as we learned about what happened to get us to the new proposals.</p> <p>I am writing to submit my feedback and express my concerns (again) regarding the draft budget for the upcoming financial year.</p> <p>The Barwon Heads library and its staff &amp; services, including Penny, play a hugely important role in my and my family’s life. The library serves as a vital resource center, providing access to knowledge, education, and cultural enrichment. The services offered by the library are indispensable, fostering learning opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds.</p> <p>I am deeply concerned about the potential closures, reduced hours, and service limitations due to council cuts. These measures would have a detrimental impact on the accessibility and availability of library services for our community. It is crucial that the library remains open in Barwon Heads, as traveling to Ocean Grove or Armstrong Creek would pose significant challenges for many residents, especially those who rely on the library as a hub for educational and social activities. Not to mention environmental impacts.</p> <p>Furthermore, I urge you to maintain the current hours of operation at a minimum. Reducing library hours would limit the opportunities for individuals to access resources, attend programs, and engage with the diverse range of offerings provided by the library. These services contribute to the intellectual growth and well-being of our community.</p> <p>I also express my disappointment regarding the recent resignation of Cr Ron Nelson, and Cr Eddy Kontelj from the board. Holding council accountable for funding the libraries they built at Drysdale and Armstrong Creek is essential to ensuring the continuity and sustainability of our library system. I urge you to provide a platform for community voices in decision-making processes to ensure transparency, collaboration, and accountability. In conclusion, I implore you to carefully consider the concerns expressed in this submission and to prioritise the preservation and enhancement of our beloved Geelong Regional Libraries. I believe that with adequate support and funding, the library will continue to thrive, empowering individuals and strengthening our community. The Barwon Heads community is tired of taking up this fight for what we believe is a fundamental community resource. Please provide a commitment that we will not face closure again in the future. It isn’t fair.</p>

GRLC Draft Budget Submissions 12 May until 9 June

Name	Submission
	<p>I am writing to submit my feedback and express my concerns regarding the draft budget for the upcoming financial year.</p> <p>Barwon Heads Community Library is an essential service within the Barwon Heads community. It is a vibrant, warm and welcoming space enjoyed by people of all ages and together with our librarian, Penny, fosters community connection, learning and a love of literacy. My family utilises the library every week. We borrow books, meet friends, run our book club through the library, attend story time and I personally utilise the library for research and inspiration in my work as a writer. Closing existing libraries, reducing their hours and/or limiting their services are not effective solutions to a budget shortfall triggered by a new library (potentially two new libraries). I urge the GRLC to enter into clearer, longer-term CoGG funding agreements to better support longer term service planning and avoid future budget shortfalls.</p> <p>I am disappointed the community has been dragged into the public stoush between GRLC and CoGG in regards to this funding issue. I would support a community representative being appointed to the Board or as a Board observer to ensure the community is engaged more productively.</p> <p>On-going and frequent service reviews are exhausting and upsetting, especially for small communities. I have noticed local kids are feeling genuinely anxious about the future of their local library. I urge the GRLC to remove the Barwon Heads Community Library from future reviews for two reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. It operates under a unique, co-location model within the Barwon Heads Primary School and should not be compared to branch libraries throughout the network.</li><li>2. It has been reviewed multiple times and identified as aligning effectively and efficiently with the needs of our community.</li></ol> <p>The community is committed to working effectively with the GRLC but ongoing threats of closure and service reductions are not acceptable.</p> <p>I urge the GRLC to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Confirm the decision not to close the Barwon Heads Community Library or any other libraries.</li><li>2. Restore library hours and service levels by working effectively with CoGG and enter into a clearer, longer-term funding agreement to avoid future budget shortfalls.</li><li>3. Remove Barwon Heads Community Library from any upcoming service reviews.</li><li>4. Appoint a community representative to the Board and/or as a Board observer.</li></ol>
	<p>As a elderly member of the Geelong West community, my submission regarding the Geelong Regional Library Corporation Draft Buget is pretty simple:</p> <p>I am relieved to see the Geelong West branch will keep operating. (I have mobility issues)</p> <p>My thanks to the staff, who do a great job</p> <p>I trust tweaks to the system rather than major changes can be carried out in the future</p> <p>I believe in the old adage... "If it ain't broke, don't fix it!"</p> <p>I am not an accountant, but the budget seems to be consistent year to year without need for major changes.</p> <p>I may be wrong, but I am not aware of any volunteer activity in your library system. My daughter lives in Monroe County, Pennsylvania, USA with the county seat at Stroudsburg. Not too dissimilar to City of Greater Geelong in terms of area and population, it has 5 branches to the library. The business model they operate includes a large volunteer group which is made up of many retired people (mainly ex-educators) and interested people such as my daughter, an author and book lover. During my visits, often I have attended with her, helped with their activities and got to know some of that group. They share one passion, books.</p> <p>The library receives many donations of unwanted books, which are sorted, classified as saleable or waste, stored then resold at annual Kid's and Adult book sales. The volunteers also operate a small area inside the main library as a sale area for good condition saleable books. Valuable items they receive are often sold on eBay. They also arrange other fund raising, often activities in conjunction with arts and writer's groups. The net result is that over the years the volunteer group has been able to raise enough funds to start a Mobile Library as well as contribute many capital works in the main library and branches.</p> <p>In conclusion, perhaps some lateral thinking can be applied to the library system in Geelong, or old ideas re-evaluated.</p> <p>Never stop trying. I am happy to discuss any of the above. My best regards to everyone,</p>



## GRLC Draft Budget Submissions 12 May until 9 June

Name	Submission
	<p>I am writing to express my concerns regarding the proposed changes to the current operating model of the Geelong Regional Library service, specifically concerning our local community library at Barwon Heads.</p> <p>I fail to understand how our long term existing Barwon Heads community library should be impacted by the decisions to build two new libraries not in my community, not also withstanding the decision to close / reduce hours of other existing small community libraries in the Geelong area.</p> <p>I am requesting that our Barwon Heads Community Library remains open, that the existing hours that the library are maintained or extended further and that the staff and resources are supported and funded adequately. I'm additional I draw to your attention the submission I made to the Geelong City Council regarding the closure of our community Library as follows:</p> <p>Barwon Heads Community Library is an ESSENTIAL community service.</p> <p>I was first a community member but as my children have grown I am now also a member of our ever growing school community at Barwon Heads Primary.</p> <p>Since moving to Barwon Heads in 2015 the library has been a cornerstone in our daily lives.</p> <p>Our family have used the library over the years for weekly Toddler Time, weekend outings &amp; meeting many other local families, forging community connections &amp; encouraging our children's love of reading.</p> <p>We walk &amp; roll to our library. We ride to our library.</p> <p>Our daughter has a physical disability she uses a wheelchair &amp; walking aids. She is able to access her local library independently. The proposal to remove the community library seeks to exclude &amp; marginalise those within our community who don't have an easy ability to travel due to age (both young &amp; old), disability or access to transport (no vehicle/limited public transport).</p> <p>Support our growing community DO NOT CLOSE OUR LIBRARY.</p>
	<p>I'm horrified that there are plans to reduce the library's operating budget. Our local libraries provide a superb service and staff work incredibly hard. I've been a very frequent user of the libraries and even more so since I retired in 2010. I read at least 150 library books each year plus the newspapers and magazines plus attend library events. From my experience, my local library in Ocean Grove is always busy and is used by people of all ages and abilities. I could not afford to buy the books that I'm reading. Libraries contribute so much to people's well being and help us to keep our minds active, no matter our age. Libraries are also very inclusive and staff go out of their way to help people of all abilities.</p> <p>Libraries also build a sense of community. After living for 35 years in Breamlea, I moved last year to Ocean Grove. I've been so glad of the friendly service provided by staff. It's also been great to just walk from my house to the library and I visit the library at least 4 days per week. It would be great if the library hours were increased. Certainly don't decrease them!</p> <p>The local library plays a huge part in my life and the life of many other people. It helps to keep me mentally and physically active and keeps me connected to the community. Many of the books I borrow are about health, environmental concerns etc. Local libraries have become even more important during covid times. Like many other people I've chosen to live a less social life, to protect myself against covid.</p> <p>Please expand library services!</p>



GRLC Draft Budget Submissions 12 May until 9 June

Name	Submission
	<p>Libraries have been a hot topic of conversation for many of us since the release of the draft GRLC and COGG budget.</p> <p>The community has spoken loudly and clearly that Libraries are a fundamental community service and like healthcare the community feels this service should be adequately funded to maintain operating hours and service.</p> <p>As the community recalibrates post COVID not only should hours and service be maintained but consideration should be given to expanding those hours, increasing usage and strategically engaging more of our community to access this service.</p> <p>To be brief,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Cuts to Library funding and services are not in the interest of our community - we all know why. Please seek to restore the funding required to continue to run our libraries</li><li>2. Decreased usage post COVID shouldn't be an opportunity to cut services but consider revitalisation and increased utilisation</li><li>3. Budget efficiencies should be considered in other areas not direct service delivery.</li><li>4. I note there is \$50,000 in the budget for service reviews - it's important to review services and be accountable however this is not the first time our BH library has come under threat - we have worked tirelessly to ensure that our library is utilised - we have one of the highest rates of loans per visit in the network. We want to work with GRLC to ensure this is a thriving service not to be told it will close again. \$50,000 would cover running our library for a year.</li><li>5. We have fought to save our own library but also have fought to maintain library services for the whole of Geelong - recognising the value it has for the current community and future generations.</li><li>6. The Barwon Heads library is a cheaply run community co-located library that we will continue to fight for - however we don't want to have to do this repeatedly because we believe that this is a valuable essential service. We want to be actively engaged in dialogue about how the service can be improved, not cut. We don't want to be told we need to go elsewhere.This goes against principles of community connectedness and cohesion</li><li>7. Consideration should be given to how community consultation occurs relating to annual budget draft development. Specifically membership of the Board needs to be reviewed given the substandard events occurring this year. It's been a difficult, time consuming, disappointing and frustration time for many community members and workers in GRLC and COGG.</li></ol> <p>I would really like to see restoration of a constructive working relationship between COGG and GRLC into the future, as I 'm sure you would, to ensure this outstanding valued community resource is maintained and enhanced.</p>
	<p>It staggers me that in this day and age, we are being forced to fight for something as foundational as access to books. It also beggars belief that this fight only took place recently, yet here we are again. Please ensure the council funds the libraries adequately so that the whole community benefits. I am a parent of 3 daughters, and I will be turning my attention to their mental health more than ever before. I will be doing my best to keep them active and away from social media. I will be doing everything possible to keep them engaged in community and communication, but I would like to do this via the library, my local library. The library space provides unparalleled calm and quiet, it caters to young and old and the services it provides to communities is precious. There must be adequate funding allocated to these incredible spaces, ensuring they remain open and available to the public. We urge you to ensure that the opening hours don't change (happy for the hours to increase, but certainly not decrease!) and that you do everything possible to prevent this fight from eventuating again. Penny is incredible, as are all the BH library staff. Their knowledge, enthusiasm and care is amazing. I don't want to travel anywhere else to access library services, I want my local library to stay open, and continue to be a warm sanctuary for us all. The role of the Library and the services it offers is not just crucial for those people who access them, it's for everyone, because everyone knows someone who relies on the library. The knock-on effect of reduced library hours and services would be dire and it's up to the people in positions of power to keep this unique institution alive!</p>

GRLC Draft Budget Submissions 12 May until 9 June

Name	Submission
	<p>Again, the Barwon Heads community is stressed at the threats to its library services horribly similar to the 2017 proposed library closure. It seems little has been done by the CoGG/GRLC to quarantine what regional communities value; their libraries.</p> <p>As a ratepayer in Barwon Heads, I am astonished that funding cannot be found to keep a modest community library functioning at pre CoVid levels. I am astonished because Barwon Heads contributes some \$8 million in rates to the CoGG yet its library is targeted for service cutbacks. Ratepayers are rightly asking if the central Geelong library, the Drysdale library and the proposed Armstrong library are so significant in scale that they have placed a heavy impost on CoGG library budgets.</p> <p>It seems that there is a rob Peter to pay Paul approach to library budgets instead of an equity to all approach.</p> <p>The GRLC will have heard from many submitters in a heart-felt manner how much they value their libraries. This submission would concur.</p> <p>Ratepayers are generally not privy to the decision making regarding libraries but they do not expect their rates to be used extravagantly for other communities at the expense of their own.</p> <p>As a ratepayer my expectation is that the CoGG and GRLC to support local communities and encourage and maintain local community resources.</p>
	<p>The Barwon Heads Association Inc. (BHA) represents over 200 residents and ratepayers of Barwon Heads. The purposes of the BHA include “the promotion of art, culture, science and education”.</p> <p>The Barwon Heads Community Library has operated in various forms for some 80 years and in its present co-location at the primary school for 43 years. It was established by a small community that valued the access to and benefits of a library and operates under a very cost effective model in cooperation with the school. The model should be considered and adopted in other locations.</p> <p>The BHA strongly supports the Friends of the Barwon Heads Library Inc. in its support of and advocacy for the Barwon Heads Community Library in particular but also for the convenient access to local libraries for all in the large geographic area of the City of Greater Geelong. The immediate response to a perceived financial problem of closing smaller libraries is both disappointing and unacceptable. It fails to consider and recognize the community value of smaller facilities and although such immediate response has been withdrawn it is most concerning that this has been the second time in 6 years that closure of smaller libraries without any consultation was considered to be a desirable solution. Our community has supported and valued its library for many years and does not accept closure as an option.</p> <p>We acknowledge that GRLC must operate within the financial constraints of its arrangement with the City of Greater Geelong but we consider that the existing library network must be respected and supported. If the Council decides to build new library buildings for its expanding communities it must be required to commit to adequate funding of the operating costs of all existing and new libraries in the network. Closure of libraries that are supported by their local communities is not an acceptable outcome.</p> <p>The BHA also supports the services of the Geelong Heritage Centre as an important resource for all citizens and believes it must be available to the public at reasonable times.</p> <p>The BHA requests that library services be maintained at Barwon Heads and all other libraries at a level consistent with the existing levels of service.</p>
	<p>We love the Barwon Heads Library and all libraries and we want them to stay open for after school and on the weekend. Penny is awesome. That's all, thank-you.</p>
	<p>I am writing to express my concern for the reduced funding of library services. Libraries are an essential community service providing a home away from home for me and my family. Libraries provide social connection, free access to resources, help and support for vulnerable members of the community and supporting mental health and well-being for ALL community members.</p> <p>Our libraries are not to be closed, or unstaffed. Please work with Council to ensure appropriate funding for services and valued librarians.</p>

I would like to express my gratitude that Barwon Heads library will be kept open. I am however concerned that it has now twice been listed to close. While this library is close to Ocean Grove it is the convenience that is key to our family using this library service. We would not use the library on a regular basis if we had to travel to Ocean Grove, due to work commitments etc, especially now with reduced hours on weekends. I ask that the Barwon Heads Community library be looked at as the different model it is. Rather than being compared to branch style libraries. Being a shared service with the primary school. This reduces running costs of the library considerably. I have a family of 5 all avid readers which I would 100% credit to access to our local library. My daughter aged 9 was slow to take to reading however she is now old enough to ride to and from school herself and she loves to visit the library on Wednesday after school. She loves a chat with Penny about the books she has read and suggestions of new books. She has met other friends who also love to read, she now loves reading and is excited about getting new books every week. My sons are now at secondary school and often call in as they get off the school bus from Geelong and love to browse the shelves too. Thank you for your time and consideration of this very important service to our community

Submissions to CoGG	
	<p>I am staggered to learn that the Council of the City of Greater Geelong has decided to reduce funding to Geelong Regional Libraries Corporation (GRLC), without the GRLC having any prior warning from or discussion with Councillors or Council officers. The results of the funding cuts are deplorable. I have read the GRLC’s media release of 12 May 2023 which indicates that, in consequence of your Council’s decision the following will take place early in the coming FY:</p> <p>Three libraries will close – Barwon Heads, Geelong West and Highton</p> <p>Chilwell Library will transition to an unstaffed model</p> <p>Corio and Boronggook Drysdale libraries will close on Sundays</p> <p>Belmont, Boronggook Drysdale, Corio, Lara, Leopold, Ocean Grove and Waurin Ponds libraries will close earlier on Saturdays,</p> <p>Services will reduce at Kim Barne Thaliyu.</p> <p>That list represents a first order folly. Because it is such a false step I am registering my discontent with an audience wider than you and your fellow Council members. I am copying in the Minister for Local Government, the Member for Geelong, and the GRLC (the last to a general email address as I was unable to find the CEO’s address).</p> <p>I am not a resident of your Council area. Discount my views on that basis if you will. Let me state them nonetheless.</p> <p>I hold a membership card for Geelong Regional Libraries. Since 2019 I have used the libraries at Little Malop Street, Geelong West, Queenscliff and Torquay. I’ve done so because I have family who live in Geelong and Torquay, because I have friends who live in Geelong and Queenscliff, and because I have holidayed in Apollo Bay.</p> <p>Of particular importance to me is visiting Geelong West and Little Malop street libraries as a grandparent, following in the eager footsteps of a grandchild. That will not now be possible on the weekends when I visit. On a recent visit to Geelong West library I overheard a librarian take considerable time to explain carefully and cogently to a person my age, who had some difficulties in following process steps, how the library could assist them to use library resources. I made a point of dropping in again later to thank that librarian for their care and patience; unfortunately she had left and so I asked one of the other librarians to pass on my thanks.</p> <p>Perhaps you might drop in to the libraries yourselves and see what a fundamental difference to local lives each library and librarian makes. Not to mention the lives of visitors like me.</p> <p>If you want evidence rather than anecdote from the likes of me, it doesn’t take much to find sound, convincing data about the social and educational benefit of local libraries, and about ROI from library expenditure. I’ve attached a infographic from National and State Libraries Australasia (NSLA) that give a pretty grounded overview of what libraries are good at and good for.</p> <p>An independent analysis by SGS Economics and Planning found that public libraries in South Australia generate \$96 per capita per year in net community benefits (so \$253 million of annual benefits for residents in the state). The analysis reports that:</p> <p>After accounting for the indirect and induced local economic activities generated by these direct impacts, total economic activity generated by public libraries equated to \$114.5 million in Gross Regional Product.</p> <p>Make your own calculations for Geelong Region. South Australia’s widely dispersed regional libraries around the Adelaide hub employ 680 staff. GRLC libraries employ 200 staff in a widely dispersed network of regional libraries around the Geelong hub.</p> <p>As I see it, Council has made a huge blunder. I think you should reconsider</p>
	<p>Dear Councillors,</p> <p>I am happy to pay my rates, even at a premium rate, I am not happy to watch them being wasted on non-essential services. Can you explain to me why I should pay MORE rates for LESS services?</p> <p>There is no evidence that the Barwon Heads Community library is more expensive than other libraries. There is considerable economic benefit for the community in having a library. If you are planning to remove this benefit and putting the cost of travelling to the community, then you should also be planning on reducing the rates you charge to this community. Is this going to happen?</p> <p>My rates have increased by more than inflation in recent times.</p> <p>My drive to Geelong is now much longer because of all the extra population growth. This should be an economic boom to the City of Greater Geelong (CoGG).</p> <p>You now have more income in extra rate payers and more income in rates levied per rate payer, but through mismanagement you are cutting funds to essential services.</p> <p>If you need to fund extra services, it should come from the extra rates that you are generating. If new rate payers are not paying their share of rates, then you need to address this.</p> <p>GRLC is claiming that you are cutting their budget by 10%. This was announced by an employee of GRLC at a local meeting.</p> <p>It is intellectually lazy just to cut all services by the same amount to balance your budget, without any underlying analysis of cost benefits. No such analysis is being provided to the community.</p> <p>Why is Barwon Heads closing and not libraries that are closer to the City? CoGG has built a new library at Drysdale and Armstrong Creek and now wants to close the Barwon Heads library to help balance the budget. This does not seem logical. CoGG needs to look at making structural efficiency, not cutting essential services.</p> <p>CoGG is paying more and more staff over \$150-200K per annum to shuffle paper and produce reports in a centralised bureaucracy and cutting lower paid staff in the regions who provide extra services to fund them.</p> <p>As Councillors you are elected to stop these things happening.</p> <p>I will continue this debate until I am provided with detailed information on where your/our/my extra money is being diverted to.</p>

Submissions to CoGG

'Dear chief Executive Officer  
Kindly find my budget submission , sent inadvertently at 2.38pm this afternoon to an incorrect email address , as I mistranscribed grlc with incorrect gric. Kindly acknowledge receipt.  
The email was also sent to the Mayor and councillors your acting CEO and other Staff and GRLC which email has not bounced.  
Graham Hobbs  
From: Graham Hobbs  
Sent: Wednesday, 24 May 2023 2:28 PM  
To: info@gric.vic.gov.au  
Cc: Mayor & Councillors; mayoraloffice@geelongcity.vic.gov.au  
Subject: 20230524\_102843.PDF G Hobbs 2023-24 Budget and Library and Highton village issues and Geelong's future

Mayor Trent Sullivan, CGG Councillors, Acting CEO Kaarina Phyland, Gareth Smith and his deputy, Highton UDP officers and finance officers and Vanessa Schernickau CEO GRLC

Dear representatives of the existing and growing Geelong and region community,  
I attach scanned email to Ron Nelson 15 May 23, broadsheet "Keep the Libraries open", and my email early 22 May 23 , which was not addressed at last night's CGG council meeting.  
Historically , I was heavily involved as a community member in the 2017 campaign re the Highton (and other Chilwell and Barwon Heads libraries).  
I attended the Highton listening post from 9.15 -9.45 .invited all to attend our Highton community rally later at 10.00am last Sunday.

As to the proposed budget, the CGG is obliged to continue the high standard of library services, which are essential services for current and future residents and ratepayers and are anticipated as such , as shown by the very strong community concerns over the past 10 days.  
Unless libraries are recognised as centers of education and learning and assisting our community (like the old Mechanics Institutions established in the industrial revolution, or the Andersonian university), our societies will wither. We are in the information revolution and we must provide access for the young, elderly , mothers fathers and grandparents and those with partial or limited technical/ literacy skills, during appropriate times including weekends for most working parents, otherwise our society will become increasingly disengaged.  
The library staff provide a vital conduit and assist all strata of our society freely.  
My comments in my earlier emails stand and with increased volume of rates with new emerging suburbs, these rates should support their services (eg Armstrong Creek and Leopold libraries in the pipeline).

The longterm 10 plus year plan must be implemented swiftly, as the library crisis has been overlooked since 2017 and too many resources have been diverted into the new CGG offices and other sporting facilities.  
Mental stimulus and easily available information is just as important as physical activities and facilities. .  
If any cuts are needed to rectify budget shortfalls, , they should be across the broad range of services provided by CGG council.  
I understand that the Armstrong Creek library allocation will be deferred as the building will take another year before occupation. Rates of that area should cover that ongoing expense .  
Likewise the Leopold library could be supported .  
As infills of existing areas around the major shopping centers gather pace ( please only with reasonable "higher density " ( not like the 4 crammed, units proposed in Iona Ave near Highton village), more rates will become available ..  
I agree with Anne McMahon's suggestion that several community people with deep library knowledge should be co-opted in the working committee for budget allocations.

Hopefully you are inundated with thousands of these to support GRLC. I'm personally disgusted at the Acting CEO's actions aided & abetted by the "gang of 6" & sincerely hope there's a clean out of Councillors either by the Administrator (Pru Digby) or Geelong voters at the next Council elections. I also fully realise you have a horrible job in front of you unless CoGG amends the amount they fund you.

Submission to CoGG

The Council has an operating surplus of \$1.28 million & appears this has been achieved by targeting services such as G21 & GRLC. It is the latter that most affects me being an aged disabled pensioner myself who also acts as a volunteer for the GRLC's housebound programme.

How Council can expect GRLC to continue to operate within the financial constraints being imposed by it with a lesser funding of \$762,000 from the 2022-23 budget & offering the same service levels is beyond comprehension. It appears as if Council is saying "it's a GRLC problem how they do that" but expect them to operate with much less funding. Of course opening hours will be reduced, of course staff attrition will occur & perhaps even redundancies & thus services will be cut. And Council will say "that's GRLC's problem".

Submissions to CoGG	
	<p>TO: City of Greater Geelong</p> <p>SUBMITTERS:</p> <p>DATE25 May 2023</p> <p>REChildren and Libraries</p> <p>Libraries. Although we live in Upwey, we are regular visitors to our parents/grandparents in Grovedale and are members of GRLC. We are shocked that Council should even contemplate closing some libraries and severely restricting hours and staffing in others. Council must not ease debt by hitting society’s most vulnerable – children. Children benefit enormously from access to free libraries from their early days in babies’ groups to the end of their lives because learning to read and love books creates life-long readers. Teenagers are leaving school illiterate, which is not only a constant problem for them, the frustration so caused can lead to anti-social behaviour putting them on the wrong path in adulthood. Saving a few dollars by restricting access will result in more illiteracy, more people needing remedial treatment, more public money spent on re-training and financial support programs. Whether this money comes from Council, State or Federal budgets is immaterial, it is money that could be saved by early intervention i.e. libraries. CoGG – please reverse this disastrous decision and make savings elsewhere.</p>
	<p>I have sent you an email in support of the Libraries this morning and have just been chatting tot the Librarian and I realised I have misunderstood one aspect so have modified my letter accordingly.</p> <p>Thankyou</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Letter regarding COGG Council Budget and Strategic Planning for libraries future</p> <p>Re: Proposed Library Closures</p> <p>Dear Council,</p> <p>I would like to add my voice to the many locals who are dissatisfied with proposed Library closures and in particular the current suggestion to change Geelong West Chilwell to an unstaffed library that in the future. This would clearly be the death knell for the library.</p> <p>There is a rise of depression and serious mental health issues in our community and having to constantly fight to keep open one of the few free, warm, resource rich, local, public institutions in our community is absurd and distressing to all regular and casual users. Are the number of people using the facilities, including the regular computer users, those whose only friendly conversation for the day is a Library staff member, whose only outing for the day is to the Library, (the alternative for someone on their own being shopping which costs money in these increasingly expensive times) and who like to sit in a place which is stimulating and engaging, are they, not valued in our community?</p> <p>There was a wonderful proposal, and plans drawn up, to upgrade the Chilwell library and to value add it to the children’s park around the library as an improved community resource- is the money spent on that now a throw away?</p> <p>The argument that money must be spent on new libraries is poorly constructed.</p> <p>Yes it does, but why is this at the expense of current libraries. If libraries are valuable, budget for them. If not, don’t build new ones.</p> <p>We don’t close supermarkets in older suburbs because we are building new suburbs, because we know people all need to eat. Cultural resources are the same. Everyone needs access to them regardless of where they live. And having them nearby becomes more critical with disability, and age, or if you are at home with young pre-school children. The cost of keeping Chilwell library open, as well as Highton, and the other Libraries under constant pressure from the Council cannot be astronomical in terms of the Council budget overall and is just a mean grab at something that is an easy target.</p> <p>When I visit the library I see people from all walks of life and all ages there- a truly community place.</p> <p>Libraries are like breathing, you don’t realise how important they are until you are short of them. Don’t let this be your legacy from your time on the Council.</p> <p>Please help keep these valuable, community, local libraries open, by personally contributing to the voice to take these proposals off the agenda now and in the upcoming years.</p>