



Geelong Regional Library Corporation

BOARD MEETING AGENDA

Thursday 4 December 2025, 5.30pm

Geelong Library and Heritage Centre
Boardroom and MS Teams



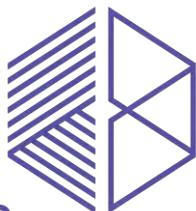


TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION A - PROCEDURAL MATTERS **Page No.**

1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY	3
2. ATTENDEES	4
3. APOLOGIES	4
4. INTERESTS, CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND PECUNIARY INTERESTS	4
5. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES DATED 2 OCTOBER 2025 (ATTACHMENT 1)	4

SECTION B - PRESENTATIONS

N/A

SECTION C - REPORTS

Item	Report	Page No.
1	Chair Election (Confidential)	
2	Instrument of Delegation (Confidential)	
3	Turning the Page – Government Transition (Confidential)	7
4	Project Optimus (Confidential)	8
5	Monthly Finance Report (Confidential)	9
6	Digital Strategy Update	10
7	Collections Strategy Update	15
8	Communications and Marketing Update	21
9	Access and Inclusion Annual Update (Confidential)	29
10	Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report (Confidential)	30
11	Activity Report (Confidential)	31
12	CEO Update	32
13	Board Overview and Agenda 2026	49



ATTACHMENTS

1 - MINUTES OF GRLC CONFIDENTIAL BOARD MEETING 2 OCTOBER 2025

2 - 2 OCTOBER BOARD MEETING SNAPSHOT

SECTION A - PROCEDURAL MATTERS

1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY
2. ATTENDEES



BOARD MEMBERS

Cr Liz Pattison (Chair)	• Surf Coast Shire
Cr Elise Wilkinson (Deputy Chair)	• City of Greater Geelong
Cr Emma Sinclair	• City of Greater Geelong
Cr Rowan D. Story AM RFD	• City of Greater Geelong
Cr Trent Sullivan	• City of Greater Geelong
Cr Mick McCrickard	• Colac Otway Shire
Mayor Owen Sharkey	• Golden Plains Shire
Cr Isabelle Tolhurst	• Borough of Queenscliffe

COUNCIL OFFICERS

Damian Waight	• General Manager Community Life, SCS
Amie Higgs	• Manager Community Participation, CoGG
Anthony Basford	• Executive Director, City Life, CoGG
Gayatri Baskaran	• Finance Coordinator, CoGG
Ian Seuren	• General Manager, Development Community Services COS
Lynnere Gray	• Directory Corporate Service, GPS

GRLC OFFICERS

Vanessa Schernickau	• Chief Executive Officer
Skye Wilson	• Director, People, Culture and Strategic Engagement
David Semmens	• Director, Community Experience
Robbie Collins	• Director, Digital and Finance
Vanessa Rechichi	• Executive Assistant

3. APOLOGIES *Cr Trent Sullivan, Damian Waight*

4. INTERESTS, CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND PECUNIARY INTERESTS

5. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES DATES

Recommendation:

That the draft minutes of the Board Meeting held 2 October 2025 be confirmed.



CHAIR ELECTION (CONFIDENTIAL)

Vanessa Schernickau, Chief Executive Officer

Recommendation

Please refer to Section Three of GRLC Governance Rules (Meetings & Procedures)

[GRLC Rules meeting Procedures](#)



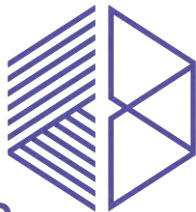
Section C - Reports

REVISED INSTRUMENT OF DELEGATION (CONFIDENTIAL)

Robbie Cullen – Director Digital and Finance

Recommendation

The Board approve the revised Instrument of Delegation.



TURNING THE PAGE – GOVERNANCE TRANSITION (CONFIDENTIAL)

David Semmens – Director Community Experience

Recommendation

That the Turning the Page report be noted.

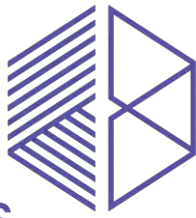


PROJECT OPTIMUS – Finance and Human Capital Management Systems (CONFIDENTIAL)

Robbie Cullen – Director, Digital and Finance

Recommendation

That the Project Optimus Update report be noted.

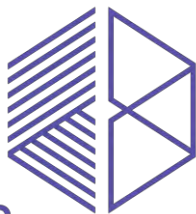


MONTHLY FINANCE REPORT (CONFIDENTIAL)

Robbie Cullen, Director, Digital and Finance

Recommendation

That the Monthly Report be report be noted.



DIGITAL STRATEGY UPDATE

Robbie Cullen – Director Digital and Finance

Recommendation

That the Digital Strategy Update be noted.

Purpose

Knowledge and connection for people and communities.

To provide the Board with a progress report on the delivery of the Digital Strategy 2023-2027, summarising the first two years of the four-year strategy.

Background

The Digital Strategy 2023-2027:

- Was prepared following a thorough assessment of the internal and external digital environment by the GRLC team in conjunction with a specialist consultant
- Outlines our approach to digital transformation and uplift across our organisation
- Identifies key actions that provide benefit to one or more of the following: our customers, our people, our specialist digital capability.

The Digital Strategy reflected the values of the Connecting and Thriving Library Plan 2021 – 25, particularly in relation to Digital Leadership and Digital Equity. The Digital Strategy priorities have been reviewed to ensure they are relevant and integrate with the recently adopted Library Plan 2025-29.

We support a fleet of over 1,000 devices utilised by our staff and customers including:

- Laptop and desktop computers
- Tablets
- Telephony equipment
- Gaming consoles such as Nintendo Switch, virtual reality headsets, and Xboxes
- Makerspace equipment such as 3D printers, laser cutters, and Cricut die-cutting machines
- Thermal people counting devices
- Meeting room multimedia conferencing equipment
- Multifunction devices such as printers
- Networking equipment.



Our public devices are heavily utilised; in the last 12 months we have delivered:

- 88,000 public PC sessions
- 208,000 public Wi-Fi sessions
- 3,000 loans of iPad devices
- 4,500 loans of gaming console controller, for use in library
- 570,000 pages printed and photocopied

The digital team also oversee the usage and commercial relationships with over 30 software providers.

Key Information

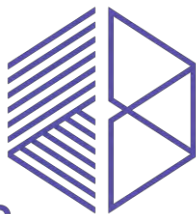
Over the first two years of the strategy:

- 24 Actions were completed
- 14 Actions are in progress
- 12 Actions are upcoming (for completion in years 3 and 4)

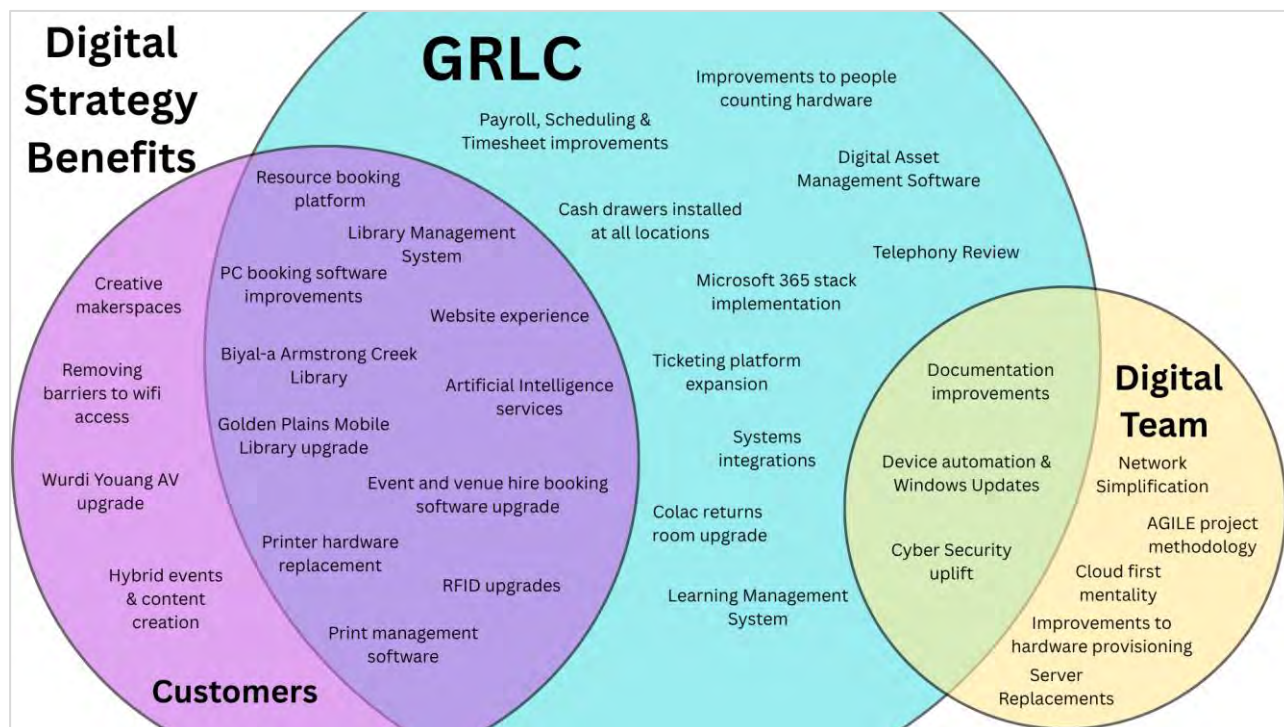
It is anticipated that all actions will be completed over the life of the strategy.

The Digital Strategy has now reached its midpoint, prompting an important reflection on its ongoing relevance amidst the evolving digital landscape. There has, for example, been an accelerated adoption of new artificial intelligence technologies, but despite this shift, the core principles and objectives of the Strategy remain relevant and continue to align with organisational priorities.

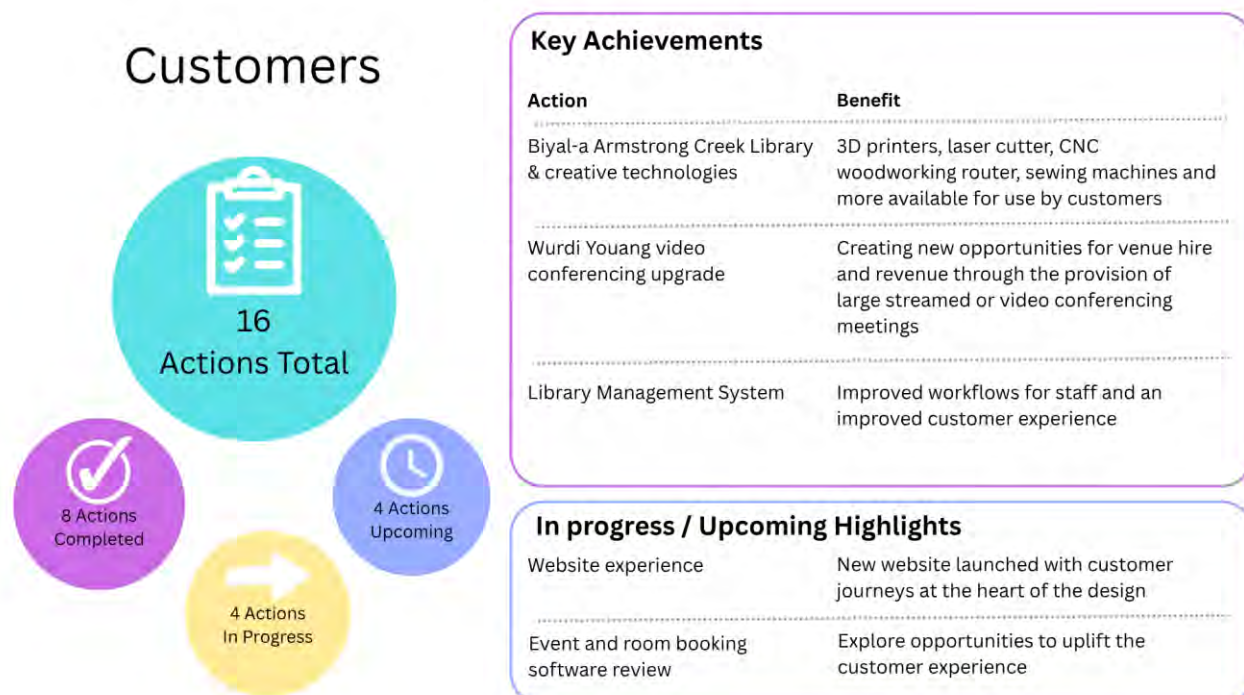
In response to these changes, several new projects have been introduced over the course of implementation. This adaptive approach aligns with the original intent of the Digital Strategy, ensuring its continued effectiveness as new digital trends and tools emerge.



Some of the key projects are summarised in the Digital Strategy Benefits diagram which highlights that many of the projects intersect in how they benefit the organisation and customer experience:



The key achievements and upcoming highlights for each of these groups are summarised below:





GRLC



Key Achievements

Action	Benefits
Microsoft 365 Office suite	Ease of use, improved collaboration and standardisation of security
Expanding ticketing platform to include additional functions: Digital, Collections, Statistics, Mobile Libraries and People & Culture	Improved employee experience and organisational efficiency with over 5,800 tickets resolved in past 12 months
Cyber Security Strategy Developed by specialist	Reduced risk of financial, operational and reputational damage

In progress / Upcoming Highlights

Support rollout of integrated payroll/roster/HRIS system	Improved employee experience across HR and payroll systems
SharePoint document management	Enabling collaboration and standardisation of security practices for data retention and access

Digital Team

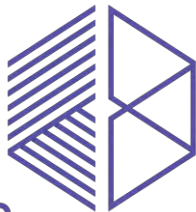


Key Achievements

Action	Benefits
Network Simplification	Reduction in overheads, improved network speeds and bandwidth and reduced network congestion
Agile transformation	Encourage a more nimble and adaptive approach to customer and employee needs based on regular feedback loops
Cloud-first mentality	Ensuring the security and reliability of customer services is at the heart of all decisions regarding new platforms

In progress / Upcoming Highlights

Device Management Automation	Central automated control and management of device upgrades & software maintenance
Server replacements	Improving the core systems GRLC relies on for system redundancy, backups and networking.



Risk Implications

Cyber, Data Governance and AI risk is a risk theme in the GRLC Major Risk Register. A Cyber Security Workplan, an action in the Digital Strategy has been developed alongside a number of actions reflected in the existing controls and upcoming mitigations documented in the Major Risk Register.

Hours from an ongoing vacancy were reallocated in this year's budget to the appointment of a Cyber Security Officer to further support the implementation of the Cyber Security Workplan. These planned mitigations will reduce the likelihood and consequence associated with Cyber Security risk.

Communications

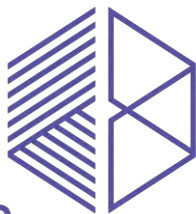
Our all staff updates continue to inform and educate about emerging technologies and cyber threats, alongside our mandatory training and professional development.

Next Steps

The In Progress and Upcoming actions (summarised in Key Information) will be delivered across the remaining two years of the strategy.

Officer Direct or Indirect Interest

There is no direct or indirect interest.



COLLECTIONS STRATEGY UPDATE

Robbie Cullen, Director Digital and Finance

Recommendation

That the Collections Strategy Update be noted.

Purpose

To provide the Board with a progress report on the delivery of the Collections Strategy 2023-2027, summarising the first two years of the four-year strategy.

Background

The GRLC Collections Strategy 2023-2027 was adopted by the GRLC board at its meeting on the 24 February 2024.

Underpinned by the vision *to provide a diverse, inclusive, accessible and dynamic collection that reflects the needs and interests of our communities*, the Collections Strategy:

- Outlines the approach for GRLC to provide high quality collections and resources to our communities
- Assesses the internal and external environment as of August 2023
- Identifies priorities and actions under four key pillars- Community, Resource Provision, Systems and Our People.

Key Information

An Action Plan was developed to deliver the objectives of the strategy. The summary of progress against the Action Plan, includes the driving goal of each pillar and what success in achieving this goal looks like.

Across the four pillars, at the end of year two of the strategy:

- **21** Actions have been completed
- **7** Actions are In Progress
- **9** Actions are Upcoming (for completion in years 3 and 4)

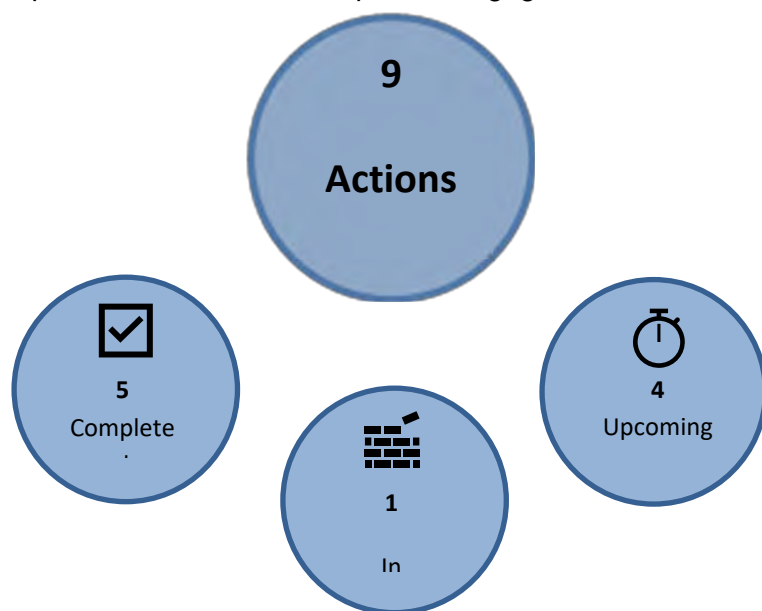
The priorities and aspirations have been reviewed to ensure they are relevant and integrate with the recently adopted Library Plan 2025-29, particularly in reference to our diverse communities, digital access and hard-to-reach communities.



Community

Collections that proactively address community need in a timely way

Community experience is enhanced, reflected in positive feedback and improved engagement



Key Achievements

- Detailed community analysis led to effective Opening Day Collection design for Bial-a Armstrong Creek, it is the most borrowed collection in the GRLC network
- Successful introduction of Read Now offering to multiple locations; curated selections specific to community interests
- Voice of Customer Survey – Placing a Reservation. High level of customer satisfaction (9.2/10) and engagement (1449 responses)
- Increased customer engagement with library collections through eNews

Upcoming Priorities

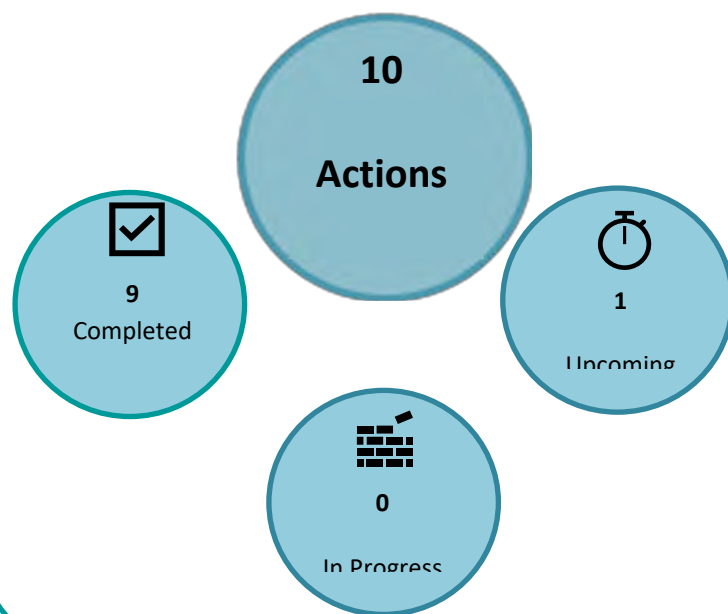
- Increasing awareness of Dyslexia font collection to relevant organisations and customers
- Increasing awareness of LOT items that support reader engagement



Resource Provision

Deliver a high quality, relevant, best value and better used collection

Physical collections are well-utilised and meet the needs of the community, reflected in increased loans and membership with reduced wait times
eResources meet the demand of a growing community, reflected in increased number of users



Key Achievements

- Profiles rewritten to ensure resources selected by vendors are meeting community need. Dead on Arrival stock (items with 0 loans) have reduced significantly, from 7.4% to 4.2%; well below industry benchmark of 8-10%. This reduction has saved around \$35,000 stock from being underutilised.
- Non-book formats evaluated. DVDs retained due to their high usage (9% of Collection all loans), magazines and newspapers decreased to more closely meet demonstrated demand.
- Increased attention to Graphic Novels (GNs) across all age levels, reflective of market and customer demand; Junior GN loans up 45%, Young Adult GN up 15%, Adult GN up 52%
- Increased access to eCollections within allocated budget
 - Onboarding of uLibrary - increased collection
 - BorrowBox eMagazines – increased visibility and ease of access

Upcoming Priorities

- Evaluate Library of Things Policy, selection guidelines, community awareness and collection usage



Systems

Ensuring systems support most effective procurement

Budget allocation provides best value to the community by ensuring expenditure is provided to formats and collections that the community need



Key Achievements

- Updated Collections Policy (2025-2027) approved June 2025
- Collection transfers using Collection HQ have assisted in delivering items to locations where data demonstrates it is needed
 - In the last year, 14,403 items transferred generating 43,818 circulations with a monetary value of \$245,562
- Magazine subscription tracking added to Spydus, enhanced visibility to identify missing issues.
- Improved internal communications- job ticket platform and Microsoft 365 tools, an average 200 tickets a month.

Upcoming Priorities

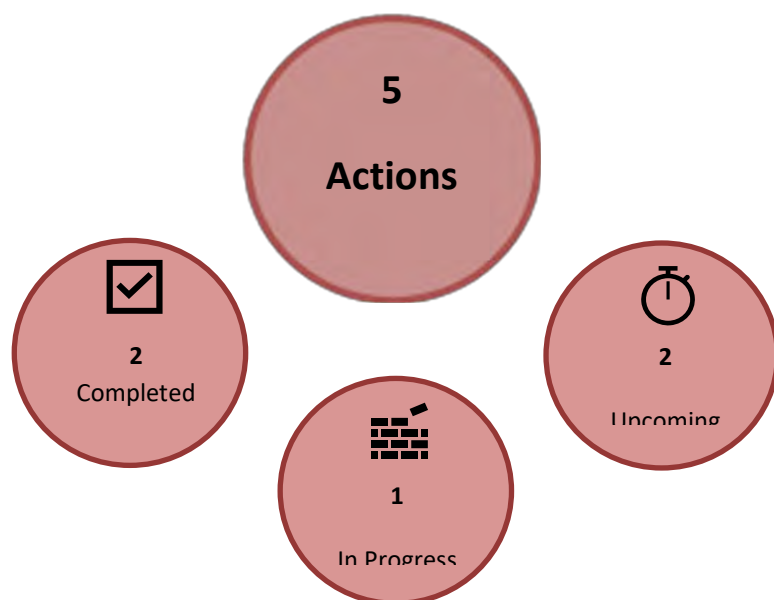
- Library Management System continuous improvement- effective metadata, exploring enhancements for customer experience
- Formalised KPI's for vendors to track efficacy of selections
- Improved financial tracking and transparency (Project Optimus)



Our People

Collections team to excel as a high functioning team with strong liason relationships throughout GRLC

Library staff are passionate, engaged and knowledgeable in providing high quality collection services



Key Achievements

- Improved invoicing and financial tracking with staff training and onboarding to existing systems
- Increased opportunities for Collections staff to liaise with internal customers through meetings and projects
- Impact 2025 Leadership program; LMS Coordinator participating, Collections Managers supporting program as mentors

Upcoming Priorities

- Providing opportunities for GRLC staff to engage with readers advisory and reference training
- Formalising stock display approaches through staff training and best practice guidelines
- Finalising team design review



Risk Implications

There are two risk themes in the GRLC Major Risk Register that particularly relate to the Collections Strategy:

- Asset and Collection Management
- Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility

The Collections Policy and Collections Strategy are both listed as key controls in the Major Risk Register. The actions discussed in this report will further mitigate these risks.

Communications

N/A

Next Steps

An annual update will be provided to the Board for years 3 and 4 of the Strategy.

Officer Direct or Indirect Interest

There is no direct or indirect interest.



COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING UPDATE

Skye Wilson, Director People, Culture and Strategic Engagement

Recommendation

That the Communications & Marketing update report be noted.

Purpose

To update the Board on key activities, progress and impacts across Communications, Marketing and Fundraising for Q4 2025.

Strategic Overview

This quarter has seen substantial progress across GRLC's communications, marketing and fundraising functions, with a strong focus on strengthening digital engagement, improving customer accessibility, and broadening community reach. Significant milestones include the near completion of the website redesign, the successful implementation of the Digital Asset Management System, strong performance across social media and eNews channels, and the advancement of key recruitment processes that will support GRLC's strategic priorities in 2026.

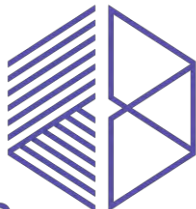
These initiatives directly support the Library Plan by enhancing visibility of GRLC's programs and services, increasing community connection, improving accessibility and cultural safety, and positioning the organisation for sustained audience growth and diversified funding.

Key Achievements and Progress

1. Digital Transformation & Accessibility

Website Redevelopment

- Front-end design for the new website is near completion, with the back-end technical integration (catalogue, events, booking systems) well underway.
- Content contributed from across the organisation is now undergoing editorial review.
- Design refinements have ensured compliance with WCAG 2.0 accessibility standards.
- Internal user testing begins in December, with public launch scheduled for late January/early February.
- The new site will deliver improved accessibility, clearer navigation, and a significantly enhanced user experience.



Digital Asset Management System (DAM)

- The DAM is fully live and in use by the Communications team, with organisation-wide training underway.
- The system improves efficiency by centralising images, logos, design assets, and templates, saving dozens of staff hours weekly.
- Built-in consent tracking strengthens child safety and reduces reputational and privacy risk.

2. Organisational Culture & Customer Experience

Signage Review Across All Libraries

- An organisation-wide review of all library signage is underway to improve accessibility and cultural safety.
- Key focus areas include visual contrast, font size, reduced visual clutter (supporting neurodiverse and CALD customers), durability, and design cohesion.
- New black-and-white modular opening-hours signage has now been installed in nine libraries, providing a more accessible and future-proofed solution.



- Low-cost options for replacing outdated or damaged signage are being explored using in-house technologies including laser cutters and Cricut smart printers.

3. Organisational Culture & Customer Experience

eNews Performance

Insights from user experience testing have informed a shift from monthly to concise fortnightly editions.



- Open rates: approx. 46% (well above industry benchmarks for Not for Profits and Arts organisations) of email recipients open the eNews.
- Click-through rates: consistently 3%+.
- Changes have generated:
 - 20% increase in total opens
 - 70% increase in clicks per month.
- Heritage photographs and the six curated Collection items consistently rank among the highest-engaged content.

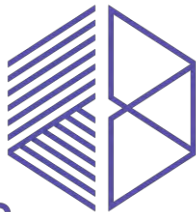
Social Media Highlights



A data-driven approach has modestly reduced posting frequency while significantly increasing engagement.

- Heritage “Throwback Thursday” posts continue to be the strongest performers, generating substantial community comment and increased visitation to kim barne thaliyu.
- Sharing content into local community Facebook groups has broadened reach and community participation.
- Examples of high-performing posts (Sept–Nov):
 - Skate park heritage photo: 46,074 views, 193 reactions
 - Library shelver job ad: 85,055 views, 1,019 link clicks
 - Geelong Library roof cleaning: 26,340 views, 215 reactions
- Instagram collaborations with partners (e.g., Geelong Gallery) have successfully connected GRLC with new audiences.

Top Facebook posts Sept – Nov

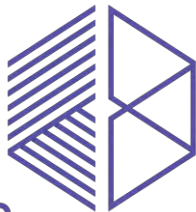
The top 3 were all heritage! But the below shows different ways the community engages, the entry level shelving positions post was shared and saved widely, and the quirky news story of the Geelong Library being cleaned struck a chord. Sharing more stories from the library and feedback in addition to promoting programs and events has seen increased engagement.





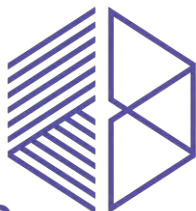
<p>Skate park – (Throwback Thursday)</p>	<p>Geelong Regional Libraries Published by GRLC Staff · 30 October at 7:00 PM · 🌐</p> <p>Over the summer of 1979/1980, kids were eagerly awaiting the first skatepark for the region.</p> <p>Enjoy these amazing images from our Corio Shire collection focusing on construction stages of the Corio Bowls skatepark - including some snaps of local skaters who evidently couldn't even wait for the concrete to finish pouring before testing it out!</p> <p>🖼️ Image 1 – Trying out the intermediate bowl 'Ramp' while landscaping is being completed, March 1980 🖼️ Image 2 – Intermediate bowl 'Ramp' mid-construction, February 1980 🖼️ Image 3 – Setting up formwork to pour concrete for 'Ramp' intermediate bowl, February 1980 🖼️ Image 4 – Formwork for expert bowl, February 1980 🖼️ Image 5 – Layout drawing of Corio Bowls skate park facilities, 20 November 1979</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 46,074 views - 193 likes/reactions - 47 comments
<p>Library shelver – (Roles for library shelvers)</p>	<p>Geelong Regional Libraries Published by Hootsuite · 22 October at 6:45 PM · 🌐</p> <p>📢 We're Hiring! 📢</p> <p>Love books? Join the team as a Casual Library Shelver! Help keep our collections neat, shelve and display materials, and be part of a friendly, inclusive team.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🌟 Great for high school students (15+ and in Years 10–11) 🌟 Teamwork, attention to detail, and a positive attitude required <p>Apply now and be part of making our libraries welcoming for everyone 🤗</p> <p>🔗 For full details & to apply: https://grlc.bamboohr.com/careers/110</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 85,055 views - 1,019 link clicks - 132 likes/reactions - 33 shares - 35 saves


Top Instagram posts Sept – Nov

GRLC Confidential Board Agenda – 4 December 2025



<p>Archibald giveaway post</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3689 views - 125 likes - 131 comments - 14 shares
<p>Grand Final – (Cat photos!)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2939 views - 133 likes - 8 comments - 31 shares



Roof cleaning	 <p>geelonglibraries A few brave cleaners were hanging out on the Geelong Library roof this week - literally! They were giving our beautiful Dome a good polish so it can keep shining bright in the Geelong skyline. Shoutout if you spotted our abseiling cleaners hanging out on the roof! Big thanks to @cityofgreatergeelong for helping keep our Dome sparkling. #GeelongRegionalLibraries #GeelongLibrary #SpringCleaning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4049 views - 138 likes - 3 comments
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4. Campaigns & Promotion

January Membership Campaign

- A membership drive will run in January, aiming for a 5% increase in new sign-ups at each library.
- The campaign leverages strong January visitation trends and will be delivered across traditional and digital channels.
- Low-cost incentives, partnerships with councils and community groups, and visually striking graphics will be used to reach non-library-follower audiences.
- Results will be reported to the Board in 2026.

5. Recruitment

- Recruitment for the new Fundraising & Partnerships Coordinator attracted a strong field with the successful candidate onboarded in November. They will report to the Manager Communications and Marketing, which has also recently been advertised to fill a 12 month parental leave vacancy.
- These roles will provide critical capacity to support expanded organisational communications in 2026 and implement the Philanthropic Fundraising Plan that was presented to the Board earlier in the year.



Risk Implications

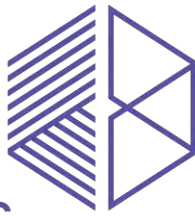
No significant risks have been identified. Reputational and privacy risks continue to be mitigated through strengthened digital systems (e.g., DAM consent tracking), evidence-based audience engagement, and proactive communications planning.

Next Steps

- Finalise internal testing and launch of the new website.
- Complete DAM rollout and embed organisational usage standards.
- Implement signage updates across priority libraries.
- Deliver the January Membership Campaign and evaluate impact.
- Onboard the Fundraising & Partnerships Coordinator and commence priority philanthropic activity, as identified in the strategy.
- Continue targeted social media and eNews refinements to broaden engagement across diverse community groups.

Officer Direct or Indirect Interest

No officer involved in the preparation of this report has a direct or indirect interest in the matter.



ACCESS AND INCLUSION ANNUAL UPDATE

Skye Wilson, Director People, Culture & Community Engagement

Recommendation

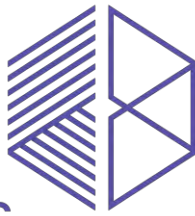
That the Access and Inclusion Annual update be noted.

HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING REPORT

David Semmens, Director Community Engagement

Recommendation

That the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report be noted.



ACTIVITY REPORT DECEMBER (CONFIDENTIAL)

David Semmens Director Community Experience

Recommendation

That the Activity Report be noted.



CEO REPORT

Vanessa Schernickau, Chief Executive Officer

Recommendation

That the CEO Report be noted.

Purpose

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

Knowledge and connection for people and communities.

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

Library Plan 2025 – 29 Priorities

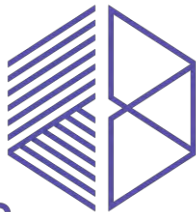
Encouraging Personal Curiosity - we will ensure our libraries continue to be places where people can safely and truthfully learn not only about the world, but themselves, leading to a more meaningful existence for everyone in our region.

Partnership Events

New and existing partnerships continue to add variety to our major programs calendar and bring new audiences and membership to our libraries.

During October and November alone, this included:

- Honouring the Past - Creating the Future, in partnership with Geelong & Region National Trust
- Creative Conversations - Archibald Prize 2025, in partnership with Geelong Gallery
- The Australian Dream with Tim Ross, in partnership with COGG's ROAM festival and Modernista Show
- Melissa Leong – *Guts*, in partnership event with Queenscliff Literary Festival
- Geelong Sustainability - *Sustainability in your home*, in partnership with Geelong Sustainability
- Writeability Workshop with Alex Creece, in partnership with Writers Victoria
- Talk It Up: Misinformation in partnership with MAV



Talk it Up

Our annual forum where community have the opportunity to hear from regional leaders on global topics that impact us locally. The discussion focussed on mis and disinformation, generated conversations and insights about the importance of curiosity and creating opportunities to hear different perspectives from our own. This responds to our Library Plan aspiration *helping individuals navigate mis and disinformation*.

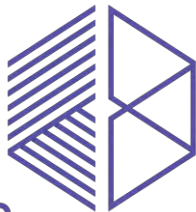


Fostering Community Cohesion through Libraries

We were successful in applying to be part of the Australian Libraries and Information Association (ALIA) and Department of Home Affairs partnership to deliver programming that builds stronger and more cohesive communities.

[The Community Cohesion project](#) spans 115 public libraries and 10 university libraries Australia-wide and is a strong recognition of the role that libraries play in creating social connection and community resilience in people's everyday lives.

We were awarded two \$9,900 grants for the project, being delivered at Corio and Colac libraries from September 2025 to April 2026.



Program aims to build a shared understanding of the importance of cohesive communities, grow and strengthen connections and relationships, and lay the groundwork to encourage togetherness in times of stress.

An important part of the project is collecting evaluation data that will increase understanding of how libraries can continue to strengthen this role and the most effective programming initiatives.

Programs delivered to date include Let's Talk Scams, Embroidery Basics, Chatty Café, Garden Chat, and a youth Dungeons and Dragons program in partnership with Q-Hub. Coming up in early 2026 we will be rolling out two new programs: Introduction to AI, and a three-part Finding Facts Online series, as well as expanding Bad Art Night to Corio and an Active Citizenship program.

The participant feedback data has been heartwarming. All respondents have said that the sessions made them 'feel more connected to their community'. Feedback on why the program made them feel more connected includes:

Yes, because I met so many new people at the sessions!! Life changing honestly, because I have trouble connecting and finding friends.

To get out of the house and talk to like-minded people. As a carer for my elderly parent, it has been great for my mental health.'

I like trying new things and learning new skills and meeting new people.

I got to meet other people and share similar experiences.

I love the library and always come here to connect.

Yoorrook Official Public Record

The Yoorrook Justice Commission was the first formal truth-telling process into historical and ongoing injustices experienced by First Nations peoples in Victoria. This report involves the creation of an Official Public Record (OPR) to share First Nation Peoples testimonies and stories, that the State Library Victoria formally hosts as caretaker in trust.

Local Member and Parliamentary Secretary for First Peoples Christine Couzens has presented 3 bound copies of the OPR to Geelong Libraries, one of which is held as part of the Heritage Centre collection.

The OPR is also available on line at www.yoorrook.org.au



Community Impact

Local Stories and feedback received:

Geelong Library and Heritage Centre

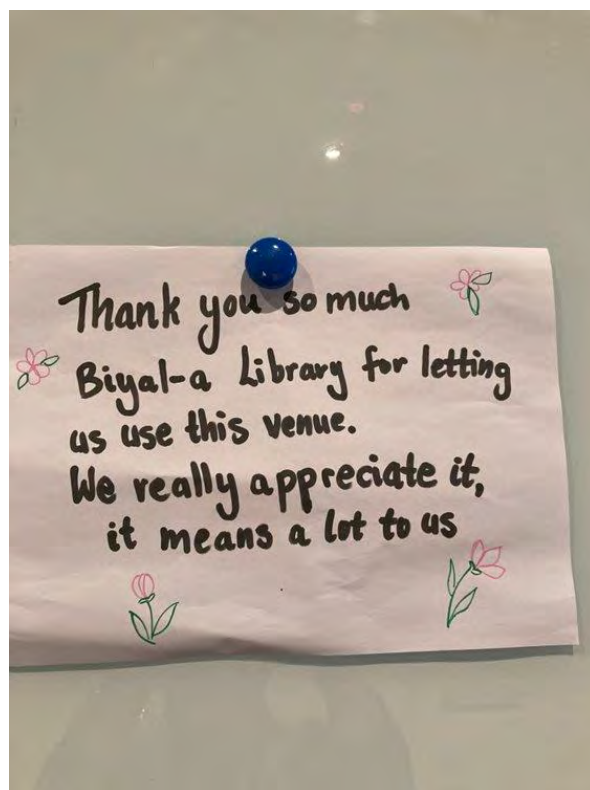
I am 57 this October, a widow. I have a three-month-old child. I found the library on level one to be a safe space. I use the computer and internet there and enjoy the companionship of a group. It has been better than therapy. Thank you. It is a very valuable resource, and we are lucky to have it here.

Ocean Grove Library

Visitor numbers have increased on the same time last year and the staff are not seeing this translate to more 'busyness'. On consideration, they report that a lot more people are using the library independently. Princh, the printing software, for example, enables customers to be a lot more independent whilst applying transferable digital skills.

Biyal-a Library

Regular customer Tom with his carer, and his koala plushie Stretch, visit every Thursday evening to look at pottery books, and has shown us his pottery, which is AMAZING! His day was made, when he once found a pottery book that had a vase with a koala painted on it; his worlds collided! They've loved their weekly visits, it's easy to see how much they love this library and how the team has made him feel a sense of belonging in the space.





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



Geelong Regional Libraries

16h · ⚙️



Intergenerational Storytime at Ocean Grove Library was such a joy! Over 30 little ones and 10 residents from Seaview Manor came together for a special morning of stories, songs, and smiles 🧡

After the session, everyone enjoyed tea, biscuits, and reflections on the morning - a beautiful reminder of the connections stories can create across generations. 📖 ✨



Smith Family Job Seekers Expo at Newcomb Secondary College

Our Newcomb Library Childrens and Youth libraries participated in this job expo where 50 year 9 students rotated around 10 stations from different industries. Student questions included "What's the best part of your job?", "Do you need good mental health to work in a library?", "When you were in school, what did you think you wanted to do afterwards?", "Do you have to love reading?" One youth commented "That was surprisingly funny and fun, thanks!"

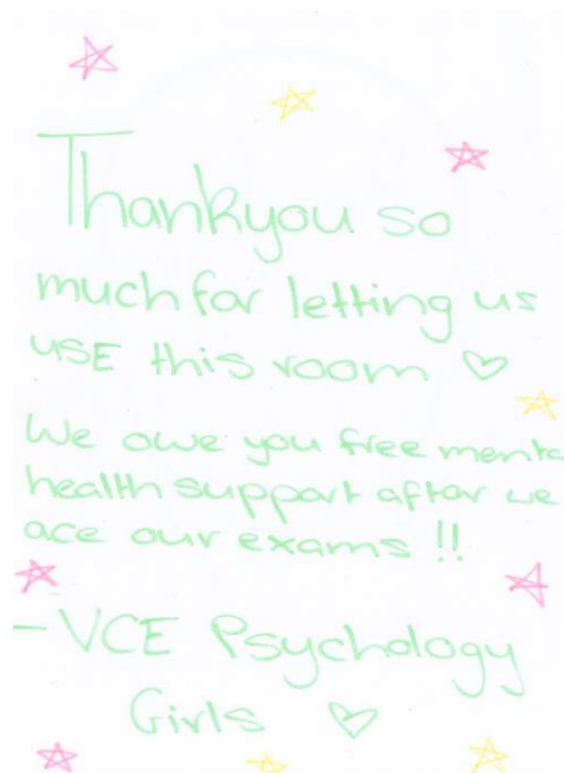


The Geelong Baby and Children's Market

The Belmont team welcomed hundreds of families to our stall, joining new members and handing out 80 Libraries are Cool bags with library fliers and a free book inside.



Enhancing Community Wellbeing – our libraries will continue to evolve as safe, welcoming and accessible public places where people from all walks of life connect with knowledge, ideas and each other, for the betterment of local and wider society.





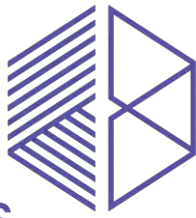
Chilwell Library

The team 'popped up' in Sladen Park as part of their continued engagement with the Chilwell community.



The Chilwell Library redevelopment is now in full swing. These recent photos show the demolition of the old building, with the project on track for completion by mid-2026.





The Geelong Library and Heritage Centre is ten years old

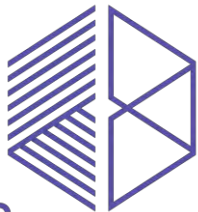
We marked the Geelong Library & Heritage Centre (GLHC) ten year anniversary on 21 November, and celebrated a decade of community connection, learning and creativity.

Since opening its doors in November 2015, GLHC has become one of the region's most valued public spaces. It has welcomed millions of people: families, students, book lovers, tourists; cementing its role as a cultural landmark and a community space where everyone is welcome.

The team came together and celebrated, over morning tea, their great work welcoming more than 3,170,000 visitors, joining more than 35,400 new library members and continuing to offer a safe and welcoming place for countless people to meet, work, play and study. This is in addition to the important work of the Heritage Centre and countless major events in Wurdi Youang, as well as the regular literacy programs and digital support.

An exhibition on the ground floor showcased the architectural significance of this building and other libraries in our network, with thanks to the City of Greater Geelong. Children's programs included birthday party hunts for clues across all the levels of the building, to be ticked off for a completed 'bingo card'.





Highton Library

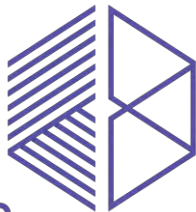
Synergy Strings performed for the enjoyment of customers at Highton Library



Boronggook Drysdale

Wheelchair Meets Wilderness. Clare Reilly, disability advocate and podcaster, shared stories from her record-making wheelchair ride along the Munda Biddi Trail.





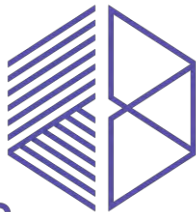
Biyala-a Armstrong Creek

A fun filled Diwali storytime, dance, henna and craft event was held, working with local Geelong author, Smita.

The English Conversation Café group performed dances, made rangoli (the decorative entrance) as well as running a 'henna your hands' table. The author made little bags filled with little diyas (terracotta oil lamps) and stickers so that they could decorate and paint for the craft activity. A few played the traditional Carrom board game while others were entertained and met new friends. It was really lovely seeing everyone join in, especially for the dance session!

- 42 registered 20 adults, 22 children, but around 50 attended.
- 90% were local (Armstrong Creek or Mount Duneed) other 10% from Geelong and Torquay.
- 33% first time visiting Biyal-a Armstrong Creek Library, compared with 60% last year, even though most live in Armstrong Creek.
- 23% were there to learn more about Diwali, whereas the remainder 77% traditionally celebrate every year.

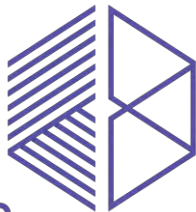




The Explorative Music Workshop was part of a push to build more awareness and increase usage of the Media Room. A music production workshop with Big Racket Studios allowed participants to explore different electronic music equipment followed by an individual recording session in the Media Room.

A couple of the young attendees said that they would like to come back to start their own podcasts.





Wauru Ponds

The Write Stuff Book Launch went off with a bang yesterday - the conclusion to the annual after school drop in creative writing program. All ten authors wrote and delivered a speech and there was much excitement when they saw their finished book!



Lara

Grade 5 and 6 students currently learning AUSLAN at Lara Primary School visited to learn how the library is accessible and inclusive. They learned about our Access and Inclusion plan and a range of tools from our collection and Library of Things including our C-Pens. They came prepared and the 45 students worked together to measure the front door, space between the gates and the aisle widths.

They were pleased to see how accessible Lara library and our organisation is.





Ocean Grove

Thank you to the facilities team at the City of Greater Geelong for their quick response to the water damage at Ocean Grove due to the rain event on 2 November. The library was closed for a couple of day whilst the carpet was dried out.

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

Geelong: A Shared Future Forum

The CEO attended this high-level forum held by the City of Greater Geelong to create a unified vision for the city's next 25 years, focusing on managing population growth while preserving unique qualities.

VCET | 2025 Nyaal Banyul Networking Event

The CEO attended this end of year networking opportunity at the Wharf Shed.

The Central Geelong Combined Collaboration meeting.

This cross-government and industry group was established from the Central Geelong Revitalisation Forum, held earlier this year. The CEO attended this meeting.

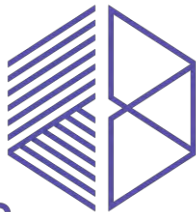
Recalled Sand Products Response

On 12 November, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) issued a media release recalling children's sand products that may contain asbestos.

In response, libraries have audited their children's products and have taken steps to safely secure the products in airtight packaging, following the advised safety protocols. No sand was in use or required specialist clean up.

We are now following advice from the ACCC in conjunction with WorkSafe to wrap the already airtight sand in builders plastic in preparation for transporting to disposal sites that accept asbestos.

Whilst the advice states that there is a very low risk to human health, we continue to take all precautions and follow the advice of authorities to ensure safe disposal and the safety of our staff and patrons.



ACCC advice: <https://www.accc.gov.au/media-release/customers-warned-of-recalled-children%E2%80%99s-sand-due-to-asbestos-risks>

Safe Disposal information: <https://www.productsafety.gov.au/about-us/product-safety-news/news/safe-disposal-and-health-information-for-consumers-with-recalled-sand-products>

Annual All Staff Day

Our people came together to celebrate our contribution to the region and mark important milestones including years of service. We listened to a panel of community leaders consider the impact of social isolation and loneliness on regional services and what else libraries can do to enable connections and access to service and programs. We also learned about Treaty from the Barwon South representative of the First People's Assembly, Sheree Lowe.



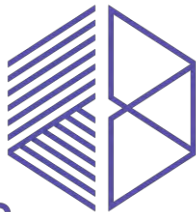


Conversation Café Group from Biyal-a Armstrong Creek performing 'We Are the World'



Volunteer Afternoon Tea

This annual event was held at Waurin Ponds Library to celebrate International Volunteers Day and thank our volunteers who contribute to our Home Library and Heritage Services.



BOARD OVERVIEW AND AGENDA 2026

Vanessa Schernickau, Chief Executive Officer

Recommendation

That the Board Overview and Agenda 2026 be approved.

Proposed Board Schedule 2026

FEBRUARY

Legislative:

- Preliminary Budget 2026/27
- Turning the Page – Alternative Enterprise Business Model

Standing Reports:

- CEO Update
- Monthly Financial
- Health, Safety & Wellbeing
- Activity Report

Cyclical Strategic Reports:

- Strategic Risk Report (bi-annual)
- P&C Report (bi-annual)

Ad Hoc Strategic Reports:

- GEAP (tbc) – for noting
- Courier Tender report (tbc) – for decision

APRIL

Legislative:

- Adopt Draft Budget 2026/27
- Turning the Page

Standing Reports:

- CEO Update
- Monthly Financial
- Health, Safety & Wellbeing
- Activity Report

Cyclical Strategic Reports:

- Access & Inclusion Plan (annual)
- Major Events (annual)

Ad Hoc Strategic Reports:

- Asset Management Framework (tbc) – for noting

JUNE

Legislative:

- Review public comments/Adopt Budget 2026/27
- Turning the Page

Standing Reports:

- CEO Update
- Monthly Financial
- Health, Safety & Wellbeing
- Activity Report

Cyclical Strategic Reports:

- Heritage Services Strategy (annual)

Ad Hoc Strategic Reports:

- TBC

AUGUST

Legislative:

- Preliminary annual activity 2025/26 report
- Turning the Page

Standing Reports:

- CEO Update
- Health, Safety & Wellbeing

Cyclical Strategic Reports:

- Library Plan 2025 – 2029 One Year update (annual)
- Strategic Risk Report (bi-annual)

Ad Hoc Strategic Reports:

SEPTEMBER (online meeting)

Legislative:

- Adopt Annual Report 2025/26
- Turning the Page

Standing Reports:

- CEO Update

Cyclical Strategic Reports:

- P&C Report (bi-annual)

NOVEMBER

Legislative:

- Turning the Page
- Chair Election

Standing Reports:

- CEO Update
- Monthly Financial
- Health, Safety & Wellbeing
- Activity Report

Strategy Reports:

- Digital Strategy
- Communication and Marketing
- Collections Strategy

Proposed Board Dates 2026

Proposed Board Dates for 2026

****GRLC Board Workshop 1-4pm – Thursday 26 February 2026 (Placeholder in the diary)***

1. Thu 26 Feb 5.30 – 7.30pm
2. Thu 30 April 5.30 – 7.30pm
3. Thu 25 June 5.30 – 7.30pm (Adopt Budget 2026/27)
4. Thu 27 Aug 5.30 – 7.30pm
5. Thu 17 Sep 5.30 – 7.30pm (online adoption of the Annual Report)
6. Thu 26 Nov 5.30 – 7.30pm

Victorian School Holidays 2026

3 April - 19 April

27 June - 12 July

19 Sep – 4 Oct



MINUTES

MEETING OF THE GEELONG REGIONAL LIBRARY CORPORATION

Thursday 1 May 2025
Board Members and Officers only

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 5.39pm GRLC Chair, Cr Liz Pattison (Mayor) opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

The meeting was held in person and via MS Teams. It was closed to the public and opened and closed in camera.

1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

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

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

2. ATTENDEES

		Attendance		
Name	Council	In person	Online	Apology
BOARD MEMBERS				
Cr Isabelle Tolhurst	Borough of Queenscliffe (BoQ)	X		
Cr Elise Wilkinson	City of Greater Geelong (CoGG)	X		
Cr Emma Sinclair	City of Greater Geelong (CoGG)	X		
Cr Rowan D. Story AM RFD	City of Greater Geelong (CoGG)	X		
Cr Trent Sullivan	City of Greater Geelong (CoGG)			X
Cr Mick McCrickard	Colac Otway Shire (COS)			X
Cr Owen Sharkey	Golden Plains Shire (GPS)	X		
Cr Liz Pattison (Chair)	Surf Coast Shire (SCS)	X		
Cr Chrissy De Deudg	Colac Otway Shire (CoS) delegate		X	
COUNCIL OFFICERS				
Damien Waight	General Manager, Community Life, SCS	X		
Amie Higgs	Manager Community Participation, CoGG			X
Anthony Basford	Executive Directory City Life, CoGG	X		
Gayatri Baskaran	Finance Coordinator, CoGG			X
Ian Seuren	General Manager Development & Community Services, COS			X
Martin Gill	CEO, BoQ		X	
Jo Wilson	Director Community Planning & Growth, GPS	X		
GRLC OFFICERS				
Vanessa Schernickau	Chief Executive Officer	X		
David Semmens	Director, Community Experience	X		
Skye Wilson	Director, P&C and Strategic Engagement	X	X	
Robbie Cullens	Director, Digital and Finance	X		
Vanessa Rechichi	Executive Assistant		X	
GUEST				
Lee Blashki	VAGO		x	

3. **APOLOGIES**

Ian Seuren, Cr Trent Sullivan, Cr Mick McCrickard, Amie Higgs and Gayatri Baskaran

The Chair welcomed Cr Chrissy De Deugd from Colac Otway Shire and Less Blashki from VAGO to the meeting.

4. **INTERESTS, CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

Nil

5. **CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES DATED 27 FEBRUARY 2025 (ATTACHMENT 1)**

Recommendation:

That the draft minutes of the Board Meeting held on 27 February 2025 be confirmed.

Moved: Cr Owen Sharkey
Second: Cr Isabelle Tolhurst
Passed: unanimously

SECTION B – PRESENTATIONS

**GRLC Draft Audit Strategy Memorandum
Lee Blashki, VAGO**

SECTION C – REPORTS

1. **CEO REPORT**

Vanessa Schernickau, Chief Executive Officer

Recommendation

That the CEO Report be noted.

The Turning the Page Executive Steering Committee is reviewing the draft constitution with the draft library agreement to be presented for comment at the next meeting in May. Councillor briefings for each member Council will be scheduled for later in the year.

Director of Community Experience gave an update on Biyal-a Armstrong Creek Out of Hours access.

There are 10-20 people testing the out of hours access from 8am – 10am then from 6pm – 8pm during the pilot. A couple of surveys have been conducted with this pilot group to understand how it is working from the customer's perspective, and operationally in terms of opening the library, controlling that space and making sure the space is used appropriately.

The pilot has been successful. A broader media release has encouraged other people to come forward and we now have 38 members signed up.

We are capping numbers to 100 although we don't think that we would have 100 people there at one time. It is proving to be popular with young families who need to come in earlier than 10am and for those who wanting quieter space to work and study. The evenings are popular also.

We will continue to keep the Board updated

The finance and HR payroll committee is in discussion with the Council to ensure that the budget for the year is set at a level that is appropriate for the services provided. The committee will continue to monitor the budget and report back to the Board.

2. DRAFT GRLC BUDGET FY26

Robbie Cullen, Director Digital and Finance

Recommendation:

That the GRLC Preliminary Budget FY26 be endorsed.

Mover: Isabell Tolhurst

Second: Cr Emma Sinclair

Approved unanimously

Cr Rowan Story left the meeting and Damian Waight – 6.30pm

3. MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT

Robbie Cullen, Director Digital and Finance

Recommendation:

That the Monthly Financial Report be noted

4. ACTIVITY REPORT (CONFIDENTIAL)

David Semmens, Director Community Experience Recommendation:

That the Activity Report be noted.

. ACCESS & INCLUSION PLAN (CONFIDENTIAL)

Skye Wilson, Director People, Culture and Strategic Engagement

Recommendation:

That the Access and Inclusion Plan be noted.

6. HEALTH SAFETY AND WELLBEING REPORT - OCT (CONFIDENTIAL)

David, Director People, Culture & Strategic Engagement

Recommendation:

That the Health Safety and Wellbeing Report be noted.

Other Business:

Next Meeting:

Thursday 12 June, 5.30pm – special budget meeting TBC

Signed:



Chair Cr i atti on

Date of Confirmation: / / 2025



Geelong Regional Library Corporation

BOARD MEETING SNAPSHOT

Items of Interest - Thursday 2 October

GRLC Draft Annual Report 202-2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The CEO acknowledged the hard work of the finance and communications and marketing teams in preparing this report. It showcases the pride of the library teams in their achievements over the past year and provides the opportunity to formally thank our people for their service to our communities.
GRLC Catering Procurement and Kitchen Purchase Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The new catering model for the Geelong Library and Heritage Centre will provide flexible, diverse and value-driven options for those hiring our meeting rooms and holding events at Wurdi Youang on the top floor of our Library. Following a rigorous procurement process, the new options will be available from February 2026.
Risk Management Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The risk management framework now reflects the completion of the risk register review and the implementation of a risk dashboard report.