



MINUTES

MEETING OF THE GEELONG REGIONAL LIBRARY CORPORATION

Thursday 27 February 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 5.33pm 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.

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The Chair welcomed Jo Wilson, Director Community Planning & Growth Golden Plains. Thank you Lynne Gray for her contribution.

2. ATTENDEES

		Attendance		
Name	Council	In person	Online	Apology
BOARD MEMBERS				
Cr Isabelle Tolhurst	Borough of Queenscliffe (BoQ)	X		
Cr Elise Wilkison	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		
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	
Robbie Cullens	Director, Digital and Finance	X		
Vanessa Rechichi	Executive Assistant	X		
GUEST				
Ian J Phillips	I&J Management Services		x	

3. APOLOGIES

Cr Rowan Story, Cr Trent Sullivan, Amie Higgs

4. INTERESTS, CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Nil

5. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES DATED 19 DECEMBER 2024 (ATTACHMENT 1)

Recommendation:

That the draft minutes of the Board Meeting held on 19 December 2024 be confirmed.

Moved: Cr Isabelle Tolhurst
Second: Cr Emma Sinclair
Passed: unanimously

For noting, the 19 December minutes to be amended: *Cr Rowan Story as attended in person.*

SECTION B – PRESENTATIONS

LGV Benchmarking Presentation Ian Phillips, I & J Management Services

Benchmarking Update Financial Year 2023/24 for Geelong Regional Libraries presented by Ian Phillips.

Ian informed the Board in 2013 he was engaged to collect annual statistical data for all Victorian libraries on behalf of Local Government Victoria and provides benchmarking analysis as part of this. He also provides this data for individual library services as requested.

This independent analysis found that overall GRLC was the number one ranked public library in Victoria, across a range of key of measures. GRLC has ranked number one for ten years.

The focus of the presentation:

- To provide information on how well GRLC performed in 2023/24
- Where does GRLC sit relative to other libraries?
- What changed?
- What lies ahead?



Conclusion:

- GRLC is a very good library service because it is best overall.
- GRLC know scale delivers efficiencies and you take it
- GLRC know customer experience is critical
- Good capital investment = good facilities = customer appeal
- Good funding = good staffing = good customer service
- Good customer experience = repeat use = maximum value to the community = maximum return on investment
- Library of things is growing across public libraries, it's not just books
- Social and digital inclusion – keep investing and working in this space.

The CEO confirmed that these statistics are taken into consideration for planning and budget, our staffing and EFT in understanding how efficient we are. The review that was conducted Craig Kenny in 2023 used this data, it's an indicator re. efficiency that we are still delivering good service.

It helps understand where we sit, comparatively to the rest of the state and where we are falling behind. For example, our e-collections is falling behind and our teams use this data to inform their planning and resourcing.

The Chair thanked Ian for his insights and presentation.

ACTION: Benchmarking Update slides to be distributed to the Board.

SECTION C – REPORTS

1. CEO REPORT

Vanessa Schernickau, Chief Executive Officer

Recommendation

That the CEO Report be noted.

The CEO report is important to show the qualitative data in how we add value to our communities. ULibrary – new platform to increase access to eBooks. 100 members can read the same book at the same time.

The CEO provided an update on the Geelong Library and Heritage Centre flood, acknowledging the great work of the CoGG team who did a great job responding during the holiday period. We held a morning tea for the reopening of Heritage Services on 4 February and invited the CoGG Facilities team to say thank you for their support.



The customer survey that will inform our new Library Plan is about to go live. We are required to adopt a library plan under the Local Government Act. When a new entity is formed, the new Board may decide to do another plan.

The Board raised the question about funding and if there is an opportunity for additional advocacy as we prepare the budget.

The Board may decide to meet with the Minister or local members. The Board may also send correspondence to their local member or the Minister.

2. **GRLC PRELIMINARY BUDGET FY26 (CONFIDENTIAL)**

Robbie Cullen, Director Digital and Finance

Recommendation:

That the GRLC Preliminary Budget FY26 Report be noted.

3. **MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT (CONFIDENTIAL)**

Robbie Cullen, Director Digital and Finance

Recommendation:

That the Monthly Financial Report be noted

4. **TURNING THE PAGE (CONFIDENTIAL)**

Vanessa Schernickau, Chief Executive Officer

Recommendation:

That the Turning the Page report be noted.

5. **ACTIVITY REPORT**

David Semmens, Director Community Experience

Recommendation:

That the Activity Report be noted.

The Activity report was taken as read.

Allowing for Biyal-a Armstrong Creek library opening in August, total loans are still up overall. In summary:

- Corio – impacted by the redevelopment of the Norlane Aquatic and Recreation Centre and closure of the car park.



- Drysdale usage has balanced out, after its first busy year. The Ocean Grove community that travelled to visit the new library is returning to their local library with their numbers returning to the previous year level.
- Torquay visitation and loans has gone up since the opening of Biyal-a Armstrong Creek.
- eCollections – ULibrary is popular and in the library of things, thermal cameras that help identify hot and cold spots in housing to help with insulation have a long waiting list.
- Geelong Library and Heritage Centre, continues to be a popular destination, including for school groups.
- We continue to work with Council officers to plan our outreach services and better understand how communities access the mobile library services and how we plan for future service provision to smaller communities.

6. **RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE (CONFIDENTIAL)**

Robbie Cullen, Director Digital and Finance

Recommendation:

That the Risk Management Update be noted.

7. **P&C REPORT (CONFIDENTIAL)**

Skye Wilson, Director People and Culture

Recommendation:

That the P&C Report be noted.

8. **HEALTH SAFETY AND WELLBEING REPORT - OCT (CONFIDENTIAL)**

David, Director People, Culture & Strategic Engagement

Recommendation:

That the Health Safety and Wellbeing Report be noted.

The report was noted as read.

Other Business:

Due to the public holiday on Friday 25 April, the next Board meeting is rescheduled to 1 May commencing with a Board Workshop to be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 7.43pm.

Next Meeting:



Thursday 1 May, 5.30pm Geelong Library and Heritage Centre.

Signed: *Liz Pattison*
Cr Liz Pattison
Chair

Date of Confirmation: 17/ 06 / 2025