



13.1 LIBRARY ACTION PLAN - DRAFT FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: TONY KEENAN, GENERAL MANAGER, COMMUNITY WELLBEING AND INCLUSION

PREPARED BY: GAYE STEWART, MANAGER COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To present the draft Library Action Plan and seek approval to commence a period of community consultation and engagement.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The development of a Library Action Plan (LAP) is one of the key outcomes of the Art and Soul (Creative and Prosperous City) Strategy which was adopted by Council in mid-2018:
 - 2.1.1 Develop a Library Action Plan that contributes to a creative ecosystem and responds to current and future community needs for programming, collections and emerging technology.
- 2.2 The Art and Soul Strategy also provides a broad framework for identifying and exploring options for increased collaboration, such as between the Library Action Plan, the Live Music Action Plan and the Game Action Plan, creating richer opportunities for improved community outcomes.
- 2.3 Background work for the development of the LAP was delivered across two main phases. Stage One involved a wide-ranging consultation and engagement exercise, involving both staff and the community to gather views and feedback about future opportunities for development of the library service. This was delivered by Quest Consulting.
- 2.4 A key focus of the engagement exercises was to provide an opportunity for people to describe what they liked and valued from the library service currently, as well as inviting feedback about what they would like to see from their libraries into the future.
- 2.5 The second phase built on these findings with the addition of targeted benchmarking of service data, along with review and analysis of local and international library trends to help identify best practice in service delivery.
- 2.6 I&J Management Services were engaged in September 2019 to deliver the work for this second stage of the Library Action Plan, including formulation of a draft plan for consideration by Council prior to inviting public comment across April/May 2020 and subsequent tabling for formal adoption through the regular Council meeting cycle.

3. RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 3.1 Authorises the draft Library Action Plan to be released for a period of community consultation following the endorsement of the draft plan.
- 3.2 Delegates authority to the Chief Executive Officer to make amendments to the document to correct any minor drafting errors that do not materially alter the intent



- 3.3 Notes that feedback from the consultation period will be presented alongside the final Library Action Plan in May/June 2021.

4. KEY POINTS/ISSUES

- 4.1 The development of an Action Plan to help inform the future direction of library services in Port Phillip occurs at a critical time. Public libraries both locally and internationally are experiencing a significant period of transition, endeavouring to develop services that respond appropriately to an increasingly complex mix of community needs and aspirations.
- 4.2 For libraries across Port Phillip, in an environment where social isolation and marginalisation are on the rise, it could be argued that library's role as both a social and cultural anchor, and a facilitator for learning and creativity is more critical than ever.
- 4.3 The current draft Plan has taken the feedback gathered from the community consultation, the subsequent work on service mapping and benchmarking, and considered Council's key challenges to set a direction for how we need to re-position Port Phillip libraries in response.
- 4.4 This includes thinking around places and spaces, library programs and activities, technology and learning, community connection and creative and economic drivers.
- 4.5 The Plan aims to articulate a network vision for the library service, while also acknowledging the individual character and unique qualities of our local branch libraries.
- 4.6 In so doing, the Action Plan provides a path to grow and develop Council library services for a vital and sustainable future with a clear focus around culture, creativity and connection.
- 4.7 The draft LAP has reflected what we heard from the community throughout the consultations, in particular commentary around:
- Beautiful spaces
 - Responsive programming
 - A contemporary collection
 - Engagement and connection
 - Future-oriented technology
- 4.8 The framework for the LAP directly references Council's strategic drivers, and includes actions structured around five main themes:
- Belong - Help people to participate in Port Phillip life, with a focus on disadvantaged individuals and groups
 - Connect - Connect people with each other, services and resources, and the world around them
 - Grow - Support people of all ages, backgrounds and circumstances to read, learn and enrich their lives
 - Create - Inspire people to be creative, turn their ideas into reality, and participate in a prosperous creative ecosystem



- Sustain - Respond to the needs and aspirations of our diverse and growing community

4.9 The final LAP will include measures for success, incorporating a mix of outputs and outcomes, such as visitation/utilisation, participation, collection performance and effectiveness, community value/benefit and return on investment.

4.10 The Plan will also address demand projections and consider future growth needs for the library service. This is likely to include assessment of service infrastructure requirements and consideration of new and/or improved library spaces to cater for population expansion and changes in community needs.

5. CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDERS

5.1 The consultation and engagement process for development of the draft Library Action Plan was conducted from May/June through to the end of October 2019.

5.2 Community and staff feedback was gathered through a variety of channels, including face-to-face conversations with groups and individuals, small group meetings and discussions, through to an online survey that was hosted across October 2019 that included targeted questions on service use and satisfaction levels, as well as open-ended questions inviting suggestions for future service development.

5.3 A summary outline of the audiences engaged with included:

- Library leadership team and general staff workshops
- Meeting with Cultural and Economic Development leadership team
- Five pop-up sessions in library branches, with nearly 200 participants providing direct feedback on service satisfaction and improvement opportunities
- Two meetings with Middle Park Library Action Group
- Meeting with the Friends of Emerald Hill Library group
- Meeting with Ratepayers of Port Phillip (ROPP)
- Meeting with the library's lightning readers group and teen book group
- Social media engagement through CoPP Youth Facebook page
- Meeting with CoPP Older Persons' Consultative Committee
- Discussion with CoPP multicultural officer
- Discussion with key officers around the Game Action Plan
- Discussion about input from indigenous residents

5.4 A progress update was also provided to the October 2019 meeting of the Art and Soul Advisory Committee.

6. LEGAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no significant legal issues associated with this topic. In the longer term there is some potential risk around community responses in relation to any proposed changes to library services.



- 6.2 It is suggested this risk will be (at least partly if not wholly) mitigated by clear messaging that any proposed changes are in direct response to internal and/or broader community input, and that the library will continue to remain open to ongoing feedback

7. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 7.1 Any significant financial implications from Library Action Plan recommendations will be referred to the annual budget and service planning process as appropriate.
- 7.2 Some provisional budget has already been allocated for the Action Plan via Art and Soul Strategy implementation.
- 7.3 There is also the potential for identification of short to medium term projects that may be referred to the enterprise portfolio for resourcing as appropriate.
- 7.4 The Library Action Plan will also seek to develop partnerships with creative industries and local businesses to help support their growth.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 8.1 There are no significant environmental impacts related to this topic, although the planning process may unearth opportunities for libraries to play a more active role in supporting community initiatives around environmental sustainability

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 9.1 As noted in the comment above around legal and risk implications, there is always the potential for some pockets of community concern or dissatisfaction about any proposed changes to service.
- 9.2 We will continue to provide avenues for community members and groups to give ongoing feedback about their response to any changes to libraries over the longer term.
- 9.3 It is likely that the Action Plan will also identify service development opportunities for libraries that will have social and/or cultural implications for Council to consider. This could include initiatives to support community health and well-being outcomes, increased opportunities for community participation and connectedness and to help reduce isolation and disadvantage.

10. ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICY

- 10.1 The Library Action Plan is directly aligned with Strategic Direction 5 of the Council Plan: We thrive by harnessing creativity. It also indirectly relates and contributes to achievement of Strategic Directions 1 and 4: We embrace difference and people belong; and We are growing and keeping our character.
- 10.2 The Library Action Plan is also a key action from the Art and Soul (Creative and Prosperous City) Strategy, a key Council policy that delivers on Strategic Outcome 5

11. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

11.1 TIMELINE

- 11.1.1 Subject to Council approval the community consultation and engagement period will commence immediately following endorsement of the draft Plan.
- 11.1.2 The draft Action Plan will be made available for public comment for one month



- 11.1.3 Following the consultation period, the Library Action Plan will be finalised and presented to Council for endorsement in May/June 2021.
- 11.1.4 Delivery of the Library Action Plan will subsequently commence, according to the timeline for each action outlined in the Plan.

11.2 COMMUNICATION

- 11.2.1 Opportunities to participate in the public consultation period will be made available to the community via:
- 11.2.2 Council online communication pathways such as Have Your Say and the library website
- 11.2.3 Both Council and library social media channels
- 11.2.4 Drop-in sessions at each library staff with opportunities for discussion with library leadership staff.
- 11.2.5 Surveys and opportunities to talk at neighbourhood engagement sessions across the municipality

12. OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT INTEREST

- 12.1 No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any direct or indirect interest in the matter.

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ATTACHMENTS 1. Library Action Plan - February 2021(3)