

MACH II

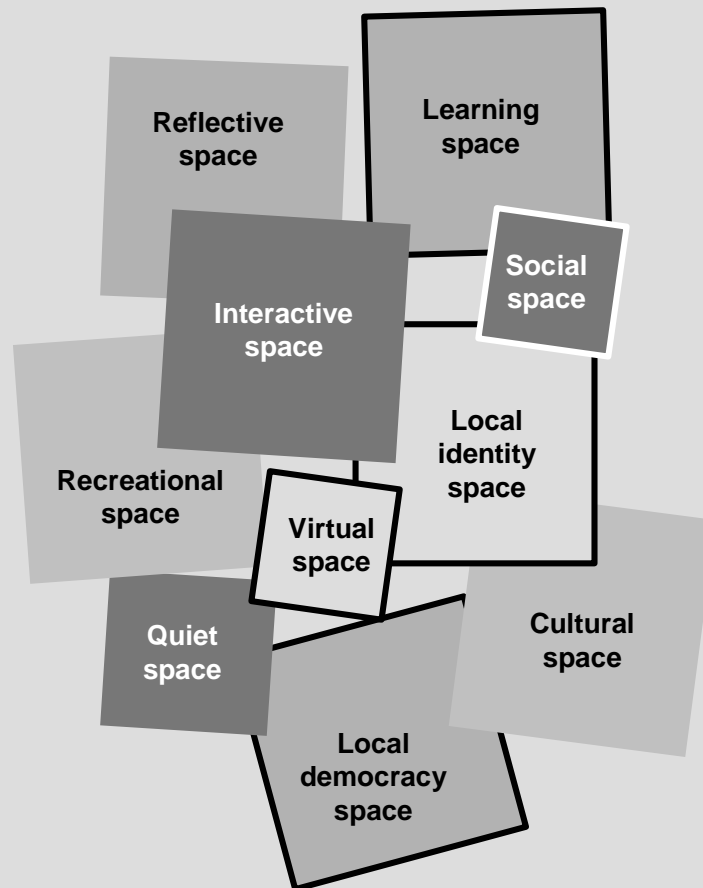


CONSULTING

# CITY OF BOROONDARA

## *City of Boroondara Library Service Future Directions Project – 2004/14*

### *The library of the future ...*



*... The community's space  
- A mirror on City & Council*

**FINAL PROJECT REPORT  
JUNE 2004**



## Table of Contents

... what's in this report

<b>CHAPTER:</b>	<b>PAGE:</b>
<b>Introduction &amp; Executive Summary</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.0 Strategic and Corporate Context</b>	<b>9</b>
1.1 Local Library Services – Current Service Profile	
1.2 Strategic/ Corporate Environment	
1.3 Project Approach and Methodology	
1.4 Key Project Assumptions and Premises	
<b>2.0 Library Services - Provision and Future Demand</b>	<b>16</b>
2.1 Libraries – A Neo-Universal Local Government Service	
2.2 Extensive and Growing Service Demand	
2.3 Diverse User Profile and Social Isolation	
2.4 Diversity of Uses – Broader Perspective	
2.5 Community Satisfaction	
2.6 Internet and Computer Use	
2.7 Library Demand Trends – Impacts for Boroondara	
<b>3.0 Library Stakeholder Consultations – Key Themes</b>	<b>23</b>
3.1 Introduction to Staff and Community Workshops	
3.2 Staff Strategy Workshops – Key Themes	
3.3 Community Focus Groups	
<b>4.0 A Strategic Agenda for Library Services</b>	<b>29</b>
4.1 Council's Broader Strategic Vision – Strengthening Community Libraries and Community Engagement	
4.2 Integrating Core Council/ Library Functions	
4.3 Multi-Faceted Service Locations and Camberwell Precinct	
4.4 Technology – Short/ Medium Term Priorities	
4.5 Strengthening Community Participation in Libraries	
4.6 Change Management and Talent Management Priorities	
4.7 Researching/ Predicting Community Use Trends	
4.8 Preparing Now for the Future – Planning Horizons	
4.9 Building Staff/ Community Commitment	
<b>5.0 The City of Boroondara Library Service 2014</b>	<b>39</b>
5.1 Strategic Drivers for Framework	
5.2 Proposed Strategic Framework/ Service Profile	
5.3 How We Will Get There – Recommendations, Priorities, Action Program	
<b>APPENDICES: END NOTES</b>	<b>46</b>



# ***City of Boroondara Library Service Future Directions Project 2004 Introduction & Executive Summary***

*... towards a forward  
looking strategic  
development  
framework for library  
services.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Boroondara City Council is committed to achieve a long term strategic vision for the City based on principles of strong and democratic local governance, effective community partnerships and well planned and integrated services tailored to projected community needs.

Council has commissioned Mach II Consulting to investigate and report on emerging strategic challenges and to facilitate the development of a 10-year vision and strategic planning framework for Council's library services.

This project is a priority **Council Plan 2003/06** initiative undertaken by the Governance and Community Relations Directorate (Director, Trish Smith) - following review of strategic priorities at a Councillor workshop on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2003.

Project management was led by a steering committee comprising Council's Library Management Team - Anne Holmes (Manager), Cathy Mulcahy, Louise Pitcher, Sue Gray and Sue Sargeant. Consulting work was conducted by Michael Tierney and Mark McKenzie McHarg (Mach II Consulting).

The main project aim is to develop a policy framework and agreed strategic direction for library services in the City of Boroondara - with a focus both on current challenges and a longer-term vision. Specific objectives include to:

- Consult with the community, staff, and key stakeholders regarding current priorities, future opportunities and preferred directions.
- Explore a range of issues affecting the delivery of library/Council services to library users - including technology requirements.
- Explore the roles of library services in community engagement and community building (including virtual or online library services) – and in supporting, pursuing and complementing other Council responsibilities, functions, and services.

The draft project report reflects outcomes of consultations with staff, community representatives and other key stakeholders. Following consideration by Council, this draft strategy document will be available for public comment and for consideration in the 2004/05 Council budget development process.

Four key strategic issues highlighted in the project brief provided the basis for preliminary research, analysis and stakeholder consultations, namely:

1. The library service of the future - premises, principles, roles and service profile.
2. Future roles of libraries in community engagement and community leadership – and in promoting effective and responsive local government.
3. Adapting to the challenges of technology - preferences, challenges and responses.
4. Preparing effectively for the future – planning priorities, projects and partnerships (short-term/medium term).



## PROJECT APPROACH/ METHODOLOGY

This current library services future directions project for the City of Boroondara differs from other reviews conducted over the past decade in that it is driven primarily by Council and community priorities, i.e. as opposed to corporate responses to State legislation relating to compulsory competitive testing and best value reviews.

Mach II Consulting is a generalist management consultancy, not specialists in the library services field, and our approach to this project reflects a business-oriented strategic planning and management perspective.

Our approach was to conduct a tightly focused consulting/ strategy development process, not a comprehensive review or community-wide research project. We sought to identify emerging strategic issues, challenges, and opportunities pertinent to future development of library services in a specific City of Boroondara context. The project methodology incorporated desk research and analysis and:

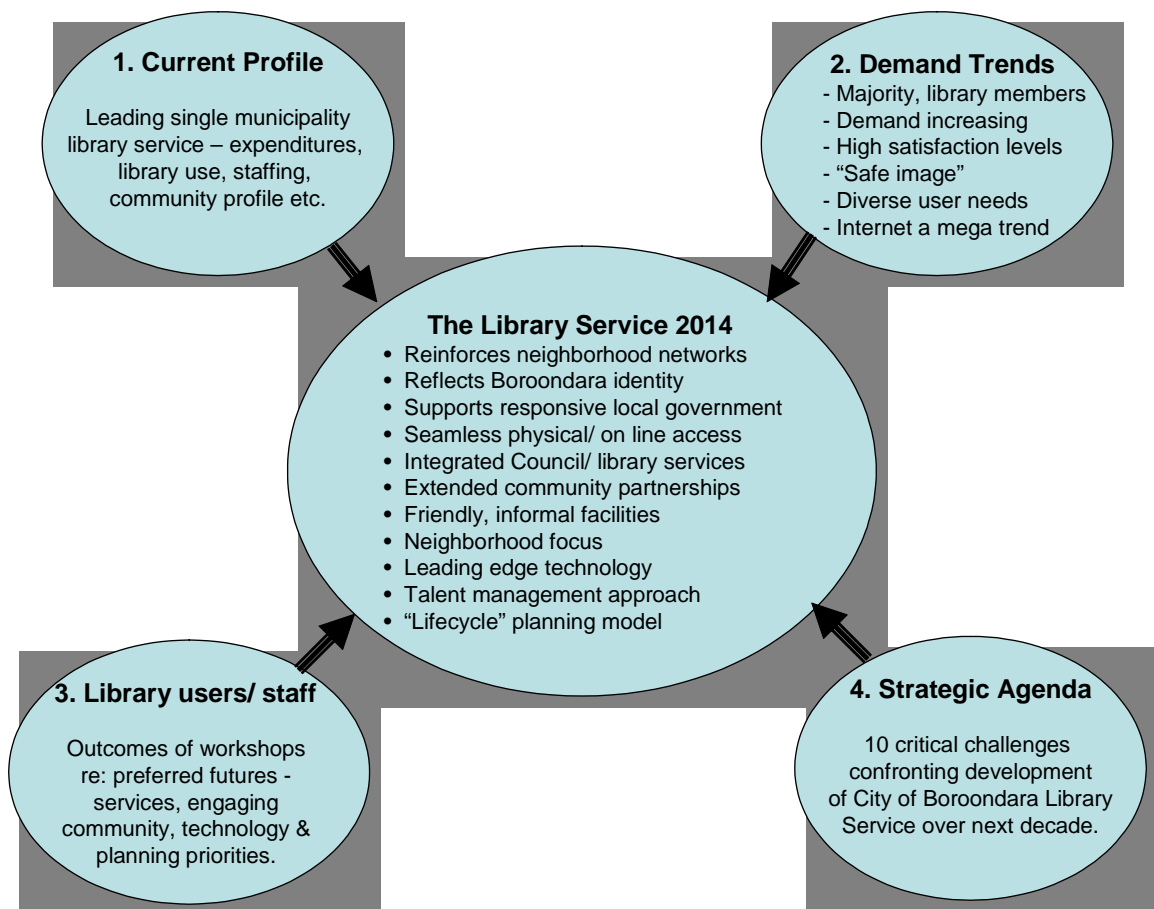
- A round of individual visits/interviews with Library Management Team members including on-site visits to the 5 library branches in mid-November, 2003.
- Discussions with a range of key organisational contacts (including managers in related departments) to scope project issues and to gather information.
- Discussions with a number of Councillors including the Community Development Policy Committee.
- Four half-day consultation sessions attended by a total of 61 library staff at four different library locations on Tuesday/Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup>/25<sup>th</sup> November 2003.
- Five community focus group sessions on library futures involving a total of 40 library users & non-users and key community stakeholders at various community locations on Monday/Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> February 2004.
- Regular planning sessions with the project steering committee, including a one-day strategic workshop on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2004.

The strategic framework outlined in this report comprises five key elements, each dealing with a key phase of the consultancy process:

1. Analysis of the *current service profile of City of Boroondara Library Service*, key stages in its development, the corporate and strategic environment, and our project approach and premises.
2. Analysis of broader national and state *trends relating to library service provision, service demand*, library user characteristics, satisfaction, and computer/ Internet use – and their potential impacts for the city Boroondara.
3. Identification of key themes and *outcomes of consultations with library staff and community representatives* regarding strategic priorities and preferred futures for the library service.
4. A proposed *strategic agenda for development of local library services* over the next decade - comprising 10 critical strategic challenges identified by the consultants based on our project research and analysis.
5. A *10-year strategic framework for development of City of Boroondara Library Service* incorporating responses by Councillors, senior managers, and Library Management Team. Key strategic drivers in developing this framework are highlighted in the following diagram:



## STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR CITY OF BOROONDARA LIBRARY SERVICE – KEY DRIVERS



### STRATEGIC DRIVER 1: CURRENT LIBRARY SERVICE PROFILE

In quantitative terms, the City of Boroondara Library Service is the *largest municipality-based library service in Victoria* (e.g. expenditures, visits, loans, range of programs, staffing etc). It also has an outstanding reputation for providing quality public library services and a range of leading edge library programs.

The community and library sector both look to Boroondara City Council for leadership in public debates concerning appropriate future strategic directions for public libraries and their relationships with emerging strategic directions for the local government sector as a whole (e.g. democratic local governance, community partnerships, well planned and integrated services/ functions).

The City of Boroondara is strongly committed to a policy position of *fully integrating library roles and services with core local government goals, functions and services*.

For these reasons, Council has chosen to adopt a *local government-based library management, service delivery and accountability structure* in preference to a regional (or multi-municipality) library service corporation model.

Critical features of City of Boroondara Library Service, impacting on its future strategic development include:

1. Strategic direction provided by *Council's integrated planning framework* outlined in the **Council Plan 2003/06** (and specifically *Objective 4.9 Library Services*).
2. *Extensive demand/ use profile* – in 2002/03, 100,167 registered borrowers had used the library service at least once in the preceding three years. 51,648 of these had borrowed at least one item during 2002/03 (equivalent to 32% of residents). That year, there were also 1.15 million library visits (equal to 7.2 visits per resident) and 2.3 million loans (averaging 45 items per borrower).
3. *Diverse, strategically located library services* – with five major branches in key local activity centres at Ashburton, Balwyn, Camberwell, Hawthorn and Kew and an extensively-used virtual (or online) library service.
4. *A major financial commitment by Council* – in 2002/03 estimated total revenue/ expenditures were \$5.19 million, of which Council contributed 79.3% from its own revenues and the Victorian Government 14.8% (including library development grant and special purpose funding). “Other income” including fines and user charges accounted for 5.8% of total revenues. (The average proportion of total library services revenues met by all Victorian Councils is 69.1% - and 17.1% through the Victorian Government’s library development grant).
5. *Staff/ volunteer/ management profile* – The service employs 71.2 EFT and operates the largest volunteer program for any general public library in Victoria. 95 volunteers are involved in delivering home library services for an average 244 home-bound frail aged and disabled persons and 50 community care facilities each month.
6. *Innovative matrix management structure* - The Library Management Team is responsible for overall direction within a management model that combines both area-based and function-based responsibilities. Individual managers are responsible both for management of specific branches and for a functional responsibility across all branches (e.g. adult/ youth collections, cataloguing, systems administration).
7. *An environment of change/ uncertainty* – The library service and its staff have experienced considerable change pressures over the past decade including: merger of three separate library services in 1994; contracting under an “in-house” service contract in 1996; re-integration within Council administration in 2000; an Best Value review process in 2001/02.

## **STRATEGIC DRIVER 2: TRENDS IN PROVISION AND DEMAND FOR LIBRARY SERVICES**

Public library services enjoy high levels of community participation, service use and support. A review of recent census reports, satisfaction surveys and library user data highlights the following key national and state level trends:

1. *Libraries are “neo-universal” services* (i.e. similar to schools/ hospitals), widely available, and strongly identified with local government sector. Across Australia, there are 505 regional and local government library organisations with 1,510 library outlets.
2. *Public demand for library services is both extensive and growing*. In a 2002 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) survey, 42% of the Australian adult population had visited a library in the preceding 12 months (compared to 37% in the 1998 survey).



3. *A wide variety of population segments use libraries extensively.* Recent observation-based research suggests that two groups dominate in day-to-day use of library facilities - i.e. young people (i.e. school aged) and the elderly. There is evidence that libraries are also extensively used by socially marginalised groups and people with physical, psychiatric and intellectual disabilities.
4. *Library users draw on libraries for a variety of purposes and needs, not simply borrowing books.* One recent national user survey showed only 38% of users attend libraries solely for the purpose of borrowing books. (45% borrowed books and used at least one other facility, 17% did not borrow books at all).
5. *Community/ library user satisfaction rates for library services are consistently high* in recent national, state and local surveys. However, satisfaction ratings may reflect a somewhat dated image of libraries and library staff – which needs to be addressed in marketing and communications programs for local library services.
6. *Rapid community expansion in computer/ Internet use* will change future expectations of library services in accessing information and communications technology. A majority of households now have computer and internet access at home – while low income and socially disadvantaged groups are extensive users of public access terminals at local libraries.
7. National census and library user survey data provides an indication of broader societal trends, but *local research is needed into patterns of actual library use (and non-use)* within the City of Boroondara. In particular, better data (supported by observational research) is needed on the nature and extent of library use by key target groups such as older persons, school-aged children, people with a disability and socially disadvantaged groups.
8. Further locally-based market *research is also required into non-user segments* with a view to broadening the appeal of library services to local residents. These research and knowledge issues are identified as priorities in the proposed action program.
9. Recent census data relating to Boroondara suggests there will be *above-average demand for library services by key user groups* – especially older persons, people with university degrees and professional qualifications, people with higher socioeconomic status, and computer/ Internet users.

### **STRATEGIC DRIVER 3: COMMUNITY/ STAFF CONSULTATIONS – PREFERRED DIRECTIONS**

Overall, we conducted 9 focus group sessions – 4 with library staff and 5 with the community. Our consulting methodology focused on clarifying views of the "community in contact" (i.e. library users, key stakeholders, supporters) rather than the "community at-large" (i.e. residents generally, non-users).

Research into broader community attitudes was beyond the scope of this project – and will be required to improve Council's understanding of ongoing community preferences/ needs for library services.

Major outcomes of the consultation process are summarised in Chapter 3 of the report. Common themes across the staff/ community workshops regarding "preferred futures" for local library services included:

- Strong/ continued endorsement of current services, local facilities and staff.
- Need for "real engagement" of Council, community, and staff in planning preferred futures.

- Strategically located multifaceted library facilities – as continuing and essential core of future library service provision.
- Libraries as “windows on community” – reflecting/ reinforcing distinctive local identity, history, traditions and support networks.
- Libraries as “Council service centres” – providing integrated information/ service desks and access to Council services.
- Libraries as a critical vehicle for realising Council’s broader strategic vision of achieving democratic local governance, improving community responsiveness, and improving overall integration of Council functions and services.
- Critical role for libraries in community capacity building/ reducing social isolation.
- Specific measures to improve appeal/ services – especially to older persons, teenagers, and NESB communities.
- Extension of community partnerships into joint projects with community agencies – e.g. literacy, adult education, accessing community resources, support for families and children.
- Development of a more welcoming, flexible physical environment – encouraging greater social interaction.
- Core values – free library, community engagement, users as “citizens”.
- Libraries as “social centres/ community hubs” supporting social development, neighborhood identity.
- Need for wide ranging technology strategy/ solutions – and short/ medium term improvements to public access terminals.
- Effective balance of technology/ online services without compromising traditional library roles – i.e. access to books, learning, study and reflection.
- Libraries as “technology gateways”/ “information brokers” esp. for disadvantaged groups.
- Continuing need for investment in staff attraction, development and retention.
- Need for improved marketing/ promotion of library services – especially to non-users and “time poor”.
- Long-term “life cycle” approach to planning and priority setting – i.e. programs which reflect improved local research and user data.

#### **STRATEGIC DRIVER 4: 10 STRATEGIC CHALLENGES ARISING FROM PROJECT RESEARCH**

Arising from our project research and consultation, the consultants have highlighted key strategic challenges in Chapter 4 which will impact on the form and shape of the Boroondara library service of the future.

The following should not be seen as a definitive summary of issues and directions identified by a range of stakeholders, but as a selective “shortlist” of ten main game strategic directions over the next 1-3 years which we see as critical to achieving a “preferred future” for the service:

## 10 KEY STRATEGIC CHALLENGES

1. Strengthening linkages between library services and Council's broader strategic priorities relating to community responsiveness and capacity building.
2. An expanded role for libraries in promoting community leadership, local neighbourhood networks and active community partnerships.
3. Progressively improving integration of library services and other core Council functions and services - especially areas of responsibility within the restructured Governance and Community Relations Directorate.
4. Planning and design treatments to achieve accessible, flexible, welcoming library buildings including review of options to improve visibility, access and impact of library services in the Camberwell central activities precinct - in conjunction with Civic Assets and Services Review, Camberwell Junction Structure Plan and community development options under consideration in the Camberwell Railway Station Urban Design Framework.
5. Effective short-term/ medium term strategies addressing technology issues - in partnership with Council's IT Department.
6. Strengthening community use and involvement through improved marketing (including a focus on addressing perspectives and priorities of current low library use segments, "time poor", and people with access difficulties).
7. A strategic change management process reinforcing agreed strategic directions – including leading edge talent management strategies for library staff development in partnership with the Learning and Development Department.
8. Improved medium to longer term planning of library functions and services - based on a research program to explore local trends in library use/ expectations in partnership with Council's Community Planning Unit.
9. Preparing now for the future - developing short, medium, and long term priorities and business plans to achieve preferred strategic directions.
10. Building community and staff support for preferred directions - through ongoing consultation and involvement in implementation.

### STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK AND ACTION PROGRAM FOR CITY OF BOROONDARA LIBRARY SERVICE

The strategic framework highlighted in the following diagram will guide the City of Boroondara Library Service over the next decade – and will be dynamically aligned to Council policies and to Council's vision, values, mission and goals as reflected in the Four-Year ***City of Boroondara Council Plan***.

It will comprise core strategic goals, objectives and a service planning model to guide planning and priority setting for library development, incorporating many of the critical features arising from project research, as outlined in the following diagram.

## CITY OF BOROONDARA LIBRARY SERVICE PROPOSED STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK AND DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

### Service Profile

- Seamless physical/ online access – all services
- 5 neighborhood-based libraries.
- Extended library hours/ availability.
- Enhanced/ specialist role for Camberwell precinct.
- Leading virtual library – improved user interface.
- Quality, up-to-date collections – all media.
- Friendly, informal, welcoming look/ feel.
- Attractive, well maintained and used meeting areas.
- Internal design to encourage social interaction.
- Reading areas, café, sofas etc.
- External design to improve access – layout/ parking.
- Innovative service modes – e.g. “drive in library”.

### Technology

- All resources available physically/ electronically – according to user preferences.
- Modern, well maintained public access terminals.
- Focus on “information gateway/ brokerage” roles.
- Effective and user-friendly self service systems.
- Separate computer, reading and interaction areas.
- Maximum use of technology to free staff for interaction/ support for library users.
- Staff trained and skilled to assist library users to effectively access online resources.
- Long range technology improvement plan in place.
- Technology-based solutions re: access for persons with a disability, NESB background, processing payments, & accessing Council information/ services.

### Community Engagement

- Libraries as “community places” - celebrating local identity, history, networks etc.
- Integrated service desks providing range of core Council information/ services.
- Committed to community capacity building goals
- Vibrant community partnerships – joint projects with community agencies/ centres, local businesses.
- Expanded programs for school age children – special collections, special areas, study support etc.
- Expanded programs for aged/ disabled persons – home library, excursions, “in library” programs.
- Programs/ projects - languages other than English, social isolation, disadvantaged groups etc.

### Preparing for the Future

- *Library Future Directions Strategy* aligned to Council policies and 3-year *Council Plans*.
- *Strategic directions incorporated in annual business plans/ budgets (short-term) and 3-year (medium term) planning frameworks.*
- *“Life cycle”/ “whole of community” planning model.*
- *Ongoing local library user research program.*
- *Marketing strategy to increase community awareness and participation in libraries.*
- *Change management strategy incorporating leading edge attraction, development and retention program for staff.*

This report also incorporates proposed recommendations and action program in support of the library future directions strategy arising from the project report and consultations with staff and community representatives, the Library Management Team, Councillors and Executive Management Group. (See Chapter 5.3 *How We Will Get There – Action Program*).

Specific projects, service initiatives and budget impacts will be incorporated in annual library management business plans and budget proposals.

Michael Tierney  
Mark McKenzie McHarg  
Mach II Consulting  
May 2004



# 1. **Library Services – Strategic and Corporate Context**

*... the service profile, strategic environment, project approach and key premises.*

In quantitative terms, the City of Boroondara Library Service is the largest single-municipality library service in Victoria (e.g. expenditures, visits, loans, range of programs, staffing). It also has an outstanding reputation for providing quality public library services and a range of leading edge library programs.

The community and library sector therefore both look to Boroondara City Council to play a leading role in public debates concerning appropriate future strategic directions for public libraries and their relationships with other core local government roles and functions. This current project is itself an expression of Council's commitment to play a leadership role in determining those directions in partnership with the community and other significant stakeholders.

## 1.1 City of Boroondara Library Service – Current Service Profile

The City of Boroondara is a diverse and vibrant city in Melbourne's inner eastern metropolitan area. It has over 157,000 residents and thousands travel to the City to work and study. Boroondara has 50 shopping centres, more trees than any other metropolitan municipality and 210 parks.

Council's strategic directions for the city are outlined in the *Council Plan 2003/06* which was developed through extensive community consultation. The Council Plan outlines a strategic framework of vision, mission and goals for the City as follows:

### **Vision**

*Our City will foster:*

1. *Communities that respect differences, engage and communicate effectively, and value supportive relationships.*
2. *Communities that are both caring and enterprising, sharing a lifestyle rich in choice.*
3. *A safe and attractive city that looks after its built and natural assets, now and for future generations.*
4. *An evolving city, proud of its diverse culture and committed to environmental, social and economic sustainability - a city in which to live, learn and work.*
5. *A local government that engages with its community to provide leadership and responsive representation.*

Council's mission is to pursue social, environmental and economic well-being goals for the City in five key areas:

1. Leading our Community
2. Protecting our Environment
3. Maintaining our City
4. Caring for our Community
5. Enhancing our Service



*Council Plan Objective 4.9* relates to *Library Services*, i.e. to:

*Provide innovative and proactive library services which respond to the community's diverse and changing leisure, learning and information needs.*

Public libraries perform a wide range and diversity of functions and services, which can be difficult to capture adequately in a standardised list. For example, the Australian Bureau of Statistics in ***Australia Now: Year Book Australia 2004*** describes the main activities of libraries as:

*“... The acquisition, collection, organisation, preservation and loan of library materials such as books, magazines, manuscripts, musical scores, maps and prints”.<sup>1</sup>*

The City of Boroondara is strongly committed to fully integrating library roles and services with core local government goals, functions and services. For these reasons, Council has chosen to adopt a local government-based library management, service delivery and accountability structure in preference to a regional (or multi-municipality) library service model.

Major services provided to the Boroondara community as listed in ***the Best Value Boroondara Library Services Review 2002*** include:

- Lending services based on a regularly updated collection of over 0.5 million items.
- Information services - and access to information and communications technology and resources.
- Local and family history services and programs.
- Home library service - for the housebound and for residents of community care facilities.
- Children's and youth services and programs – including specialised collections, recreation and study areas, story times, class visits, and other special programs and activities.
- Adult services and programs, including reading areas, magazines and periodicals, specialist collections and special programs/ activities.
- Other services: including collections and resources for languages other than English, Internet access, photocopiers, meeting rooms, word processing, community notice boards, public telephones, study rooms, public toilets.<sup>2</sup>

Libraries are Boroondara's most extensively used community facilities. In 2002/03, 100,167 registered borrowers had used the library service at least once in the preceding three years. 51,648 of these had borrowed at least one item during 2002/03 (equivalent to 32% of residents). That year, there were also 1.15 million library visits (equal to 7.2 visits per resident) and 2.3 million loans (averaging 45 items per borrower).

The City of Boroondara Library Service operates from 5 strategically located facilities offering a diverse range of library services at Ashburton, Balwyn, Camberwell, Hawthorn and Kew which are open a total of 242 hours per week – as well as a virtual (i.e. online) library service. An integrated library IT system links all branch libraries via the Spydus platform and Council's computer network.

The following table compares key demand and use indicators in 2002/03 for City of Boroondara Library Service and other local government and regional library services selected for benchmarking purposes under Council's Best Value Program – including numbers of members, library visits annually, loans issued, number of members who borrowed an item in the preceding twelve months, number of borrowers relative to resident population, and number of public access computer terminals.

**CITY OF BOROONDARA LIBRARY SERVICE  
LIBRARY DEMAND/ USE DATA – SELECTED BENCHMARK INDICATORS**

Library Service	Pop'n ('000)	Members ('000)	Visits ('000)	Loans ('000)	Borrowers 2002/03 ('000)	Borrowers as % res. pop'n	Pub access PC's
Boroondara	158.1	100.3	1,151.3	2,302.9	51.7	32.7%	72
Stonnington	90.5	49.7	669.9	1,102.8	29.0	32.0%	39
Glen Eira	123.4	109.2	639.0	1,113.7	30.4	24.6%	22
Yarra-Melb	123.4	67.3	1,050.70	1,448.5	31.3	25.4%	37
Moreland	136.5	77.3	851.0	1,714.7	42.6	31.2%	28
Darebin	127.9	75.2	763.4	1,542.3	35.2	27.5%	43
Monash	162.9	135.6	1,082.30	1,898.3	45.1	27.7%	50
Average	131.8	87.8	886.8	1,589.0	37.9	28.8%	41.6

**Source:** *Annual Survey of Victorian Public Libraries 2002/03 (Preliminary)*, Department for Victorian Communities, April 2004.<sup>3</sup>

Libraries represent a major financial commitment. In 2002/03 estimated total revenue/ expenditures were \$5.19 million, of which Council contributed 79.3% from its own revenues and the Victorian Government 14.8% (including library development grant and special purpose funding). "Other income" including fines and user charges accounted for 5.8% of total revenues.

The average proportion of total library services revenues met by all Victorian Councils is 69.1% - and 17.1% through the Victorian Government's library development grant.

Since the mid-1970's the State's share of recurrent funding to public libraries has declined from approximately 50% to less than 20% - which has acted a significant constraint on service levels and quality across the network.

Boroondara City Council strongly endorses the outcomes of the *State-wide Library Summit* convened jointly by the Municipal Association of Victoria and VicLink on 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2004 which call for a restoration of State-based funding to 50% of total recurrent costs, a strengthened role for local government in overall policy determination, and a review of governance models for regional library corporations to provide for increased local government ownership of policy development.<sup>4</sup>

The City of Boroondara Library Service employs 71.2 EFT staff and also operates the largest volunteer program for any general public library in Victoria. 95 volunteers are involved in delivering home library services for an average 244 home-bound frail aged and disabled persons and 50 community care facilities each month.

Day-to-day management is provided by the Library Management Team comprising the Manager Library Services (Anne Holmes) and four Branch/functional managers – Hawthorn (Cathy Mulcahy), Kew (Louise Pitcher), Balwyn (Sue Gray) and Ashburton/Camberwell (Sue Sargeant).

The following table contrasts revenue sources, per capita expenditures, and EFT staff for the City of Boroondara Library Service and other local government and regional library services selected for benchmarking purposes under Councils Best Value Program.

**CITY OF BOROONDARA LIBRARY SERVICE  
SELECTED REVENUE, EXPENDITURE, STAFF BENCHMARK INDICATORS**

Library Service	Total Exp (\$'000)	Council (\$'000)	Percent (%)	State Grant (LGD) (\$'000)	Percent (%)	Total lib. exp. per capita (\$)	EFT Staff
Boroondara	5,187.1	4,114.7	79.3	744.5	14.4	32.81	71.2
Stonnington	2,700.1	2,118.5	78.4	438.4	16.2	23.42	37.5
Glen Eira	3,025.2	2,253.6	74.5	585.0	19.3	18.26	37.5
Yarra-Melb	5,887.3	4,858.9	82.5	614.6	10.4	37.94	56.5
Moreland	3,916.2	3,087.7	78.8	649.6	16.6	22.63	48.0
Darebin	3,225.7	2,436.1	75.5	610.4	18.9	19.05	47.2
Monash	3,810.1	2,829.0	74.3	765.2	20.1	17.37	47.7
Average	\$3,964.5	\$3,099.8	78.2%	\$629.7	15.9%	\$30.08	49.4

**Source:** *Annual Survey of Victorian Public Libraries 2002/03 (Preliminary)*, Department for Victorian Communities, April 2004.

Under an innovative matrix management structure, Branch managers also each have responsibility for a major operational area for all libraries:

- Balwyn – adult services, collections and programs, home library services, languages other than English (LOTE);
- Kew – information and communications technology and systems administration;
- Ashburton/ Camberwell - children's/ youth library services;
- Hawthorn – processing and cataloguing books/ materials and other resources.

Branch managers work a weekly shift at the front/reference desk to ensure they are in regular touch with changing user expectations and critical operational issues.

Core support functions such as purchasing, cataloguing, and processing of books and materials are performed in-house rather than through central agencies following cost-benefit analysis.

## 1.2 Strategic Environment – Uncertainty, Change, New Directions

The corporate environment for the City of Boroondara Library Service (as for most local government functions) over the past decade can be characterised as one of rapid change, uncertainty, dislocation, and bedding down major organisational transformations.

The City of Boroondara Library Service was established as an amalgamated library service in 1994/1995. Previously, Camberwell, Hawthorn and Kew had all operated as "stand-alone" municipal library services.

As in many municipalities following Council mergers, library services were early candidates for external tender because of the scale of expenditures involved and their perceived suitability for bundling as a discrete, separate service area.

The 1996 *Boroondara Library Future Directions Project* established a policy and business framework for library services - which were subsequently reconfigured as an "in-house" service contract in line with compulsory competitive tendering (CCT) legislative provisions.

In June 2000 the "in-house" service agreement expired, with Council resolving to return the service to Council department-based operation.

In 2001/02 library services were again reviewed in line with *Local Government (Best Value) Act 1999* principles. The review was undertaken with the support of a community panel.

In April 2003, Council adopted a revised policy in relation to provision of library services and implemented recommendations of the Best Value panel, particularly highlighting two key themes:

- *Improving service culture and community access* – with a focus on providing "cutting edge", flexible and accessible service for library users in a diverse community.
- *Caring for our staff and the community* – with a focus on valuing staff and community by improving and streamlining internal processes.

The Best Value plan for library services also identified a series of short-to-medium term priorities, actions and projects to support these goals.

In February 2004, a restructure of Council's administrative organisation grouped libraries with a number of other key Council functions and departments - including Council support, customer services, governance, legal services and local laws.

## 1.3 Project Approach and Methodology

This current library services future directions project differs from other reviews conducted over the past decade in that it is driven primarily by Council and community priorities, i.e. as opposed to State legislation relating to compulsory competitive testing and best value reviews.

Mach II Consulting's approach to this project was a tightly focused consulting/strategy development process - as opposed to a wide ranging review or extensive research project. We seek to identify issues, challenges, and opportunities pertinent to the development of library services in a specific City of Boroondara context.

The project therefore has an upfront focus on developing “*strategy*” – which we see as a dynamic function of identifying and giving direction to an organisation (or key service area) in ways which assist in developing its core priorities, programs and actions. This perspective embraces short-term, medium-term, as well as longer-term goals and commitments.

Our perspective of the “*future*” is similarly dynamic – and reflects an iterative (or dynamic) learning process. We see Council, library services managers and staff, and other key community/ organisational stakeholders as the major players in defining a unique shared vision and in framing the choices which will actually determine future patterns of library service provision in this municipality.

Through research and consultation we seek to crystallise “*preferred futures*” which reflect broad areas of agreement among key stakeholders about goals, directions and priorities in a Boroondara context.

Our approach differs from formal planning or scenario-building models which seek to predict alternative visions of the future based on analysis of social, technological and/or economic trends - and then frame choices largely as responses to those predictions. We have, however, researched broader trends in demand for library services and commented on their implications for Boroondara.

Our consulting methodology focused on clarifying views of the “community in contact” (i.e. library users, key stakeholders, supporters) rather than the “community at-large” (i.e. residents generally, non-users). Broader community research was beyond the scope of this project – although we do address ongoing research priorities in the concluding section.

In the strategy section we outline an agenda of key challenges – which respond to key issues raised in consultation. We identify what we see as critical strategic issues/ choices in a necessarily selective fashion. This project report does not attempt to provide a comprehensive analysis of all issues raised in wide ranging discussions in staff and community focus groups.

The strategic framework and action program outlined in Part B similarly focuses on realistic, feasible, achievable and forward looking strategies, programs and actions which will substantially support preferred directions over the next one-to-three years as well as in the longer term (i.e. ten years).

#### **1.4 Key Assumptions and Premises Guiding this Project**

The following premises guided our consultations, research and analysis for this report:

1. We see the future development of library services in Boroondara in the broader context of Council’s long-term strategic commitment to redefine local government roles - including democratic local governance, strengthened community responsiveness, and, improved integration of core Council functions and services.

While Council is still defining its preferred approach, its commitment to these themes is clear cut and will overlay future development of all Council functions and services – including library services.

2. Council is clearly committed to further developing the City of Boroondara Library Service as a leading municipal library service – with a dynamic role in supporting effective citizen involvement and responsive and integrated local services. The current Council has not canvassed any options which would involve reductions in current levels of support, funding or services.
3. The role of library services in promoting "community capacity building"/building "social capital" is now recognised as a major policy challenge - and therefore a critical issue for all public libraries over the next decade.

The City of Boroondara Library Service faces a major challenge to give effective operational expression to goals of building effective municipality-wide partnerships and stimulating diverse local neighbourhood networks in terms which make sense in a distinctive local community context.

4. Similarly senior managers across the organisation consistently support the goal of improving the integration between library services and other core Council roles and functions. While the project was underway, a major organisational restructure was initiated to strengthen the integration of library services with other core Council roles including Council support, customer services, and local laws.
5. Library managers and staff also strongly support the objective of improved integration of all Council services. We believe that, to build on this commitment, the implementation strategy must incorporate an effective change management process which fully engages library staff. Library staff must be regularly and effectively involved in the development of the strategy and its implementation.
6. Future library service development also needs a strengthened focus on talent management - increasingly recognised as a major source of corporate success and performance in public administration.

Boroondara library staff have an impressive range of qualifications, capabilities and skills. HR challenges involve both maximising the value of these assets and dealing effectively with issues of narrow career paths, specialisation, long tenure, and gender balance in a predominantly female workforce.

An effective organisational response to future challenges must incorporate a strategy for attraction, development and retention of an effective talent pool of highly motivated, flexible, multi-skilled and responsive staff.

## 2. **Provision and Future Demand for Library Services**

*... national and local trends in demand, use, and technology and implications for Boroondara libraries.*

The public library system in Australia has a long and distinguished history – and local government based and regional library services in particular enjoy high levels of community participation, service use and support. A review of recent census reports, satisfaction surveys and library user data highlights the following key national and state level trends:

1. Libraries are a “neo-universal” service (i.e. similar to schools and hospitals) in their wide availability, acceptance and rates of community use - and are strongly identified with the local government sector.
2. Public demand for library services is both extensive and growing. In 2002, 42% of the Australian adult population had visited a library in the preceding 12 months.
3. A wide variety of population segments use libraries extensively. Recent observation-based research highlights that two groups dominate in day to day use of library facilities - i.e. young people (i.e. school aged) and the elderly. They are also extensively used by socially marginalised groups and people with physical, psychiatric and intellectual disabilities.
4. Library users similarly draw on libraries for a range of purposes and needs, not simply borrowing books. For example, one recent user survey showed only 38% of users attend libraries solely for the purpose of borrowing books.
5. Community and library user satisfaction rates with library services are consistently high in all recent national, state and local surveys. However, satisfaction ratings may reflect a somewhat dated image of libraries and library staff.
6. Rapid community changes in computer and Internet use will significantly impact on future expectations of library services - especially in providing access to information and communications technology.
7. Specific impacts of these broader societal and technological trends on actual patterns of library use (and non-use) within Boroondara will be difficult to gauge. A local research program will be required to monitor actual use by key target groups (e.g. school-age children, older persons, people with a disability and socially disadvantaged groups).
8. Similarly, future marketing and communication strategies will need to incorporate surveys of current non-users (e.g. “time poor”, young adults, people with library access issues) to identify factors which will potentially broaden the awareness, appeal, and use of library services by the community.
9. Recent census and national survey data relating to Boroondara, however, suggests there will be above-average demand for library services by key user groups – older persons, people with university degrees and professional qualifications, people with higher socioeconomic status, and computer/ Internet users.

## 2.1 Libraries – A Neo-Universal Local Government Service

Nationally, there is an extensive network of public and specialist libraries which in June 2000 comprised:

- 505 local government and regional library organisations – with 1,510 library outlets;
- 8 national and state/territory library organisations;
- 41 university library systems (231 locations) and 100 TAFE Institute systems (over 1,000 campuses);
- 9,596 school-based libraries; and
- 1,125 libraries attached to hospitals, art galleries, private companies, government departments and so on.<sup>5</sup>

Local and regional public libraries operated and largely financed by local government are the core of the system. During June 2000 there were 9,592 employees in Australian local government libraries – and 4,493 volunteers (who worked on average 6.8 hours each per month). Total revenues were \$478 million in 1999/2000 – of which government funding accounted for 95%.<sup>6</sup>

In Victoria, there are 42 local government-aided library services – 16 regional services covering 53 municipalities and 26 single-municipality services employing a total of 1,479.5 EFT staff.

In 2001/02 combined revenues for Victorian local government libraries were \$120.1 million – the State Government contributing \$26.1 million in grants (21.8%) and local government \$82.9 million (69.0%). “Other income” including fees, fines and charges totalled \$6.9 million (5.8%). Other revenue sources totalling \$4.2 million (3.4%) included sale of service to other libraries, surpluses and reserves.<sup>7</sup>

## 2.2 Extensive and Growing Service Demand

Current and future demand for library services needs to be understood within the context of broader social trends. Australians are a nation of readers. According to a major national survey conducted by AC Nielsen for the Australia Council in 2001 more people read for pleasure most days of the week (78%) than played computer games (14%), used the Internet (35%) or went to movie (1%).

20% of those surveyed who had read in the past week had borrowed from a library - compared to 29% who had purchased their books new, and 51% from other sources.

57% of those surveyed were library members. Library members were asked how frequently they used library services. 39% were regular borrowers (at least once per month), and 23% borrowed every 2-6 months. Interestingly membership did not necessarily equate with regular borrowing - 29% of members attended less than every 6 months, while 7% never borrowed.<sup>8</sup>

A recent (2002) Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) survey shows that 6.1 million people (42% of the Australian adult population) attended libraries in the preceding 12 months. Two-fifths of these had attended at least 10 times in the previous year.

Attendance rates at libraries also increased by 5 points from 37% to 42% over five years between the 1999 and 2002 surveys – highlighting an apparent resurgence in public interest in libraries.<sup>9</sup>

In terms of formal memberships, few organisations approach public library services. 2.5 million Victorians are registered library service members - about 50.9 percent of the population.<sup>10</sup>

The *Top Line National Library Survey* undertaken by Quantum Market Research for Libraries Victoria (June 2003) shows that libraries easily outperformed all other major membership-based organisations. 59% of families surveyed had a current library membership card. Next were motoring clubs (42%), sports clubs (37%), the RSL (17%), and religious bodies (13%).

The survey also highlighted that libraries were very frequently used. 31% of those surveyed had visited a library in the past month – compared to post offices (78%), newsagents (72%) and fast food outlets (42%). More respondents had used libraries than had visited a video hire store (29%), pub (20%) or cinema (19%).

### Library Visits in Context<sup>11</sup>

Organisation	% Monthly - National
Post Office	78
Newsagent	72
Fast Food	42
Library	31
Video Hire	29
Pub	20
Cinema	19
Department Store	15
Health Food Store	11

Source: Quantum Research – *Libraries Top-line Report*, June 2003

### 2.3 A Highly Diverse User Profile – Challenging Social Isolation

The 2002 ABS survey referred to above highlights significant variations in the population groups who rely extensively on library services. The highest library attendance rates were recorded for adults who:

- were females (50%) compared to males (35%);
- were born overseas in non-English speaking countries (49%);
- were unemployed (60%) or working part-time (54%);
- had graduate diplomas or certificates (64%), bachelor degrees (60%), or postgraduate degrees (59%).

High rates of use by unemployed persons and persons born in non-English speaking countries highlight the importance of public libraries in linking these population segments to critical employment networks and public sector resources.

An important study led by Eva Cox, University of Technology Sydney (UTS), based on observational research in ten New South Wales libraries, found two user groups predominated - namely older/ retired people and young (school-aged) children.

Younger people see libraries as an important venue for study - but also for social contacts, meeting friends and flirting "in a safe, but unchaperoned environment". Older people saw their visits to libraries as an important social outing, providing important social interaction and human contact, in addition to access to library resources.

The study also noted that socially marginalised groups were often present in library buildings including unemployed persons, the homeless, mentally or physically disabled persons - reinforcing the view that libraries are "for everybody". The researchers concluded that:

*"It seems that libraries are seen as safe places in which those on the fringes of society can ease themselves into a fuller participation within society".<sup>12</sup>*

Current library data collected by State Governments for benchmarking purposes largely focus on operational issues (e.g. member numbers, visits, loans, collections) and consistently under-represent actual use of library services by these groups.

## 2.4 A Variety of Library Uses – Need for a Broader Perspective

The needs of library users are highly diverse and therefore require that libraries provide an equally diverse service mix. The Quantum research survey highlights that modern libraries are "more than just books". Some 38% of users borrowed books only; 45% borrowed books and used at least one other facility; whilst 17% did not borrow books at all. Major library uses included:

- Borrow books (83%)
- Information for hobby (24%)
- Borrow videos (24%)
- Information for study (20%)
- Borrow CD's/ tapes (19%)
- Use Internet (12%)
- Childrens outing (12%)
- Read magazines (10%)
- Information for work (8%)
- Local information (7%)
- Read newspapers (7%)
- Borrow DVD's (3%)
- Toy library (3%)
- Attend course (2%)
- Borrow video games (1%)
- Others (4%)

The survey also found there is a strong and clear correlation between the number of uses to which a library is put and the frequency of visitation. Thus high frequency of visits and expanded use of multiple library resources go hand-in-hand.

## 2.5 Community Satisfaction: Libraries as the “Gold Standard”

Community satisfaction surveys have consistently shown high ratings for library services. For example in the Quantum Research national survey overall satisfaction with public libraries was very high with 33 percent of users "very satisfied" and a total satisfied of 86 percent. The researchers concluded:

*"In the context of other public services, Public Libraries rank with Australia Post and Pharmacies as the "gold standard". There is also a gathering body of evidence which suggests that this reflects a growing distinction in the public's mind between those services which are seen to have retained their old-fashioned, and human touch (good) and those that have discarded these values in favour of soulless ideologies of de-regulation, privatisation and market forces".*

## 2.6 Internet and Computer Use & the “Information Poor”

Patterns of rapid uptake of new technology by the community at large are a dominant social trend and will significantly impact on the library service of the future. While the majority of Australians are now computer and Internet users, libraries will have a continuing and important social role in supporting people who do not have access to these facilities at their homes or businesses.

An ABS review of 2001 Census found that use of information technology fluctuates widely across age groups. For example those aged 10-19 years had the highest rate of Internet use (60%). Internet use declined gradually for those aged 20-49 years, and declined sharply for those aged 50 and over. Only 6% of those aged 65 years plus had used the Internet in the preceding week.

Household income and education levels are strongly related to use of computers and Internet. Of those aged over 15 years who had no formal qualifications, 35.6% had used the computer at home and 33.1% used the Internet. In contrast, of those with a bachelors degree or higher, 63% used a computer at home and 66% used the Internet.<sup>13</sup>

More recent ABS data shows a rapid acceleration in computer and Internet use in Australian households. 58% of Australian adults in the 2002 survey used a computer at home in the past week compared to 31% in 1998. In addition, some 46% of households had accessed the Internet in the past month compared to 16% in 1998, i.e. threefold increase in four years.

The most common location for use of Internet by adults was at home (43%) – use at libraries was only 6% although this figure would certainly have been significantly higher had statistics for children been included.<sup>14</sup>

Data relating to computer/ Internet use in public libraries also under represents the significance of these services for low income earners and socio-economically disadvantaged groups. Recently the Centre for Community Networking Research (CCNR) at Monash University released the results of a survey of computer users in 25 public library services across Victoria (2465 responses).

The report projects that future demand for public access Internet terminals in libraries will rise exponentially. The chief reasons cited by respondents for using the public access terminals were that the public library was the only source of access to the Internet (60%); and price considerations (52%).

E-mail is the single most common activity undertaken – other significant uses include online banking, job-related research and academic research. The researchers concluded:

*“... Internet access in public libraries in Victoria is a very popular service, with a high satisfaction rate. The service seems to be providing a service to those who need it most: 54 percent of respondents are low income earners. The underlying “safety net” rationale for the provision of public access to the Internet and libraries seems to be working in practice”.<sup>15</sup>*

Virtual and online library services will also play a vital role in the future in strengthening access to library services for people with physical disabilities and issues with mobility.

The City of Boroondara’s *Disability Access Policy* provides a policy framework that commits library services to providing and progressively enhancing services and resources to all members of the community without discrimination.

## 2.7 Key Library Demand Trends - Impacts for Boroondara

Broader social/ technological trends highlight potential impacts for local library services users. However, further more fine-grained local research (using observation and survey-based methods) will be needed to establish actual patterns of use (and non-use) of Boroondara libraries.

The population and user trend data as highlighted in this section, however, does have a number of clear planning implications for library services in Boroondara as follows:

1. *Continuing Overall Growth in Demand.* The City of Boroondara matches or exceeds national trends in terms of library membership rates (equivalent to 63.2% of residents), annual borrowings (equivalent to one-third of residents), and visits (1.17 million per annum). With estimated national library visitation rates increasing by over 13% over four years between 1998 and 2002, the City of Boroondara can project continued strong growth in demand into the future for local library services.
2. *Key Demand Segments – Younger Persons/ Older Persons.* The NSW research highlights that two groups predominate in use of library services – school age children and older, retired persons. Demand from these user segments will continue to be high in Boroondara.

Despite an overall aging of the population, school age children aged 5–17 years will continue to be a numerically significant local target group. Victorian Government projections (based on 1996 Census data) are that their proportion of Boroondara’s population will decline from 15.9% in 2001 to 15.5% in 2011 – with an actual small **increase** in numbers from 25,304 to 25,825.

The proportion of the population aged 60 years plus in Boroondara is projected to increase from 18.6% (29,490 persons) to 20.4% (34,052) over 2001-2011 – i.e. more than a 15% increase in numbers.<sup>16</sup>

High average income households and persons with university level qualifications will continue to significantly exceed averages for the Melbourne Statistical Division – and these segments figure prominently in demand for library services.

3. *Community Satisfaction Levels.* A customer satisfaction survey undertaken for the Boroondara Library Future Directions Project in 1996 recorded very high satisfaction levels.

The most recent City of Boroondara Library Service User Survey (June 1999) showed that 88% of those who visited the library got what they wanted from their visit and that 91% of all reference enquiries were satisfied. The following highlights some areas that users rated as “good”, “very good” or excellent:

- Service of reference staff (98%)
- Home library staff/ volunteers (97%)
- Activity/ event attended (93%)
- Lending service provided by staff (92%)
- Range and quality of library materials (92%)
- Meeting facilities (91%)
- Facilities (89%)
- Information technology (83%)<sup>17</sup>

Boroondara is also participating in a major online user satisfaction/ use survey across Victoria this year as part of the “Libraries Building Communities” research project on behalf of the Library Board of Victoria - including participating initial pilot survey of 6 municipalities in September/ October 2003.

These results (when available) will highlight key service planning issues – and need to be complemented by broader community and survey research which addresses the perspectives on non-users of library services.

4. *Computer/ Internet Use.* Boroondara is overall a highly computer literate community – consistent with high average income and education levels. In the 2001 Census, for example, 57% of Boroondara residents had used a computer at home and 56% the Internet in the preceding week (compared to national averages of 43% and 38% respectively).

The high take up rate of new technology in Boroondara will inevitably translate into high community expectations in terms of online delivery of key library services.

5. *Addressing the “Information Divide”.* With 72 terminals, Boroondara has the largest public access computer program for any single local government library service in Victoria. In late 2003, introduction of broad banding further improved the capacity and speed of Boroondara’s public access and online library services. However, continued improvements will be required to keep pace with rapidly accelerating community expectations in these areas.

In particular, user research highlights that public access computer/ Internet terminals will continue to be a vital strategy for reducing social isolation and providing an essential bridge to the information society for low income households, the unemployed and other socially disadvantaged groups.

Other critical access strategies include strong up-to-date collections and online resources (such as the Victorian Open Road Program) in languages other than English and a range of physical design treatments and specialised resources for people with a disability (e.g. large print collections, talking books, audiovisual aids, sophisticated use of online technology).

### **3. Library and Community Stakeholder Consultations – Key Themes**

*... staff and community views about preferred futures for library services.*

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The primary input for identifying current and future strategic directions, challenges and priorities for library services in Boroondara was a series of four staff workshops and five community focus groups.

An early project priority was to canvass emerging strategic challenges from the viewpoint of library services staff. On November 25<sup>th</sup>/ 26<sup>th</sup> 2003, consultants Michael Tierney and Mark McKenzie McHarg facilitated a series of four strategy workshops with staff at different library venues. The sessions were chaired by a representative of the project steering group and were very well-attended (61 staff in total), as follows:

Tues 25<sup>th</sup> November - Hawthorn (13 staff) and Ashburton (16)

Wed 26<sup>th</sup> November – Balwyn (16) and Kew (16)

Typically, the three-hour workshops involved a combination of plenary and small group discussions. The level of engagement, participation and creative input by library staff was exceptional. A report summarising key themes, challenges and requirements from the perspective of library services staff was completed in December 2003 and has been circulated to staff

In February 2004 five focus group sessions were conducted with library users and community representatives nominated by the Library Management Team – including representatives of various Council community advisory committees, academic institutions, schools and community organisations. The objective was to explore emerging challenges from the perspective of “informed” community stakeholders. Sessions were typically two hours in duration and were facilitated by consultant Michael Tierney on the following dates:

Mon 9<sup>th</sup> February – Camberwell (11 participants), Ashburton (7), and Kew (3)

Tues 10<sup>th</sup> February – Balwyn (8 participants) and Hawthorn (11)

The community focus groups were also very lively with a high level of discussion and informed input. A number of participants also forwarded written submissions and information, which was of considerable assistance to the research.

The following provides a brief summary of key themes identified at the workshops which highlights major messages, but does not fully do justice to the range and depth of ideas and suggestions which emerged during very broad ranging discussions.

*A copy of the report of staff consultations and the summary of the community focus group sessions are available on request from City of Boroondara Library Services management unit (Tel: 03-92784673).*

### 3.2 Staff Strategy Workshops – Major Themes

Major themes highlighted by staff in the November 2003 workshops included:

1. *Consultation, reporting and "real engagement" of staff.* Essential requirements include regular project status reports, input into proposed strategic directions, transparency of reporting and decision making processes, and effective involvement in implementation.
2. *Long term vision – but with a real world focus.* Critical to propose strategic directions that resonate with "real world" and current issues (especially in Boroondara community), and to reinforce what library services currently do well. The future vision (i.e. the dream) must have a resource strategy (especially \$) attached, i.e. reality based and also reflecting current challenges.
3. *Effectively engaging the community and Council.* The project was seen as a major opportunity to reinforce the profile/reputation of the City of Boroondara Library Service. Objectives should include improving image of libraries, updating and testing community perceptions, and reviewing current marketing strategies and action plans. The community, Council and key organisational stakeholders must get listened to as well in the consultation process (and that they also receive answers to their preferred positions).
4. *Operating model based on multi-faceted library facilities.* Library services in Boroondara should continue to be delivered through a least four multi-functional facilities as at present – and provide a much wider range of library (and other) services – with an upgraded specialist role for Camberwell library. Strong support for exploring partnerships and joint service options to deliver other compatible Council and community services and information via library networks.
5. *Service profile.* The concept of a "free library service" is a continuing core service principle and essential to ensuring equity of access for all patrons, especially disadvantaged sections of the community. Books, loans, and providing access to a range of information and education resources should still be core functions. These core roles need be complemented by significant upgrading of access, operating hours and available services/ service types.
6. *Welcoming physical environment/ style.* Library buildings and facilities need to become more welcoming and responsive to library users (including families and teenagers) and their lifestyles - in a more informal and casual environment. Some illustrative comments included:
  - *Community room. Couches/welcoming/cosy environment. Tea and coffee. Open. Entertaining.*
  - *An information centre re: local community resources. Why? Population is changing all the time. People see library is a refuge. Mental illness increasing. Isolating effect of technology.*
  - *Cafes/ multi-use basis. Enticing/attractive collection - multipurpose surroundings.*
  - *Taking cues from retailers to display collections to best advantage ("what's new" versus "what's old"). Display areas should not be used for storage of outdated collections.*
7. *Service philosophy/ image.* Libraries are, and should continue to be, "business like" rather than "like a business". Services should be provided to library users as "community members", "citizens" and "patrons" rather than as business "customers". However, this principle requires libraries in the future to pursue

- strategies to continually reinforce current high community support levels and to improve responsiveness to users.
8. *Community roles - responding to community change.* The library of the future will need to achieve a dynamic balance of social roles (supporting communities) vs. professional roles/imperatives. This requires a stronger focus on providing information to and about the community, and feedback on community issues. It will also require adopting a "whole of community" life cycle based strategic service planning model incorporating regularly updated demographic analyses and more sophisticated service use data.
  9. *Community engagement - leadership or partnership?* At all sessions the term "leadership" was interpreted in a community building context. Some feel the term implies a directive role for libraries (rather than a partnership of organisations pursuing similar objectives). Most participants preferred the concept of "community engagement" i.e. a dynamic equal partnership between a range of community groups and agencies with library services as a key player.
  10. *Libraries as a "community hub".* A broader concept of "community partnerships" is implied in an expanded role for libraries of the future in supporting community development. Illustrative comments included:
    - *Need to apply the broadest possible definition of "community", i.e. beyond "library users" and current user groups.*
    - *Assist Council to bring community together (shared responsibility) showing flexibility, insight, sense of worth.*
    - *Promote sense of "belonging", community togetherness, and non-threatening community space.*
  11. *Strengthened partnerships - Council and community.* A sustained marketing/promotional campaign is needed to promote greater awareness of library services both within the community and Council departments. Various options were proposed to develop stronger collaborative partnerships and joint programs with schools, community groups, neighbourhood houses and Council departments.
  12. *Future strategy must have a technology strategy.* Issues of technology pervaded discussions of all topics, recognising that this will continue to be a central arena for debate over the next decade around community expectations, library service and staff development. Several dimensions of technology were highlighted, including:
    - Need to extend staff training to help users access systems/ information;
    - Improved efficiency in operations and services;
    - Potential of improvements in online/ self-service technologies to free-up professional time to concentrate on other roles/services;
    - Responding to community preferences for IT/ Web-based services; and
    - Addressing needs of technology "have-nots".
  13. A sustained long term strategy is needed to develop staff/skills/resources to anticipate and meet the community's technology demands. The strategy will need to incorporate technology plans to ensure quality of hardware and software.
  14. *Limits of technology – need for balance.* There was a clear view that technology should be "servant, not master". Participants stressed the need to maintain an appropriate balance between community roles/information services and technology aspects.
  15. *Libraries as "technology gateways".* Libraries of the future need to achieve a proactive balance between meeting the needs of both high-end and other users



of technology. Participants saw a key role for libraries in championing improved equity in the knowledge economy/society, especially on behalf of the “technology poor” and “information have-nots” (e.g. young people, socioeconomically disadvantaged, unemployed).

16. Address “*here and now*” technology gaps as an urgent priority. Workshops highlighted that current hardware, software, systems and support services in libraries is an area of considerable library user and staff dissatisfaction. The following were often cited as ongoing areas of concern: outmoded equipment; “out of order signs”; limitations of self-service systems; excessive staff time devoted to user complaints about equipment breakdowns.
17. These issues reinforce the need to develop a strategic approach to achieving agreed standards around public access technology, online systems and support, equipment, servicing and maintenance (in conjunction with Council’s IT Department).

### 3.3 Community Focus Groups – Major Themes

Many of the themes highlighted by staff also featured prominently in the five community focus groups in February 2004. Some of the major themes highlighted by community representatives included:

1. *Strong endorsement of current library services/ facilities.* Overall there was strong support for local library services, preserving free library traditions, values and expertise. Some illustrative comments were:
  - *The library service does an excellent job at present – well resourced, friendly and informed staff.*
  - *Need for library services to pitch their standards at a high level, as the community is well educated and is committed to literacy goals.*
  - *I am in awe of the library service – don’t get away from great librarians/love of books.*
2. *Freestanding multipurpose libraries must remain central.* Expansion of virtual library and online service options will not result in a reduction in community needs for all well resourced neighbourhood based library services. There was strong support for continuation and extension of the existing service model based on five strategically-located library buildings throughout the municipality. Participants in the Camberwell session strongly endorsed continuation of library service from its current site in the old Camberwell Town Hall building. However, there was general acknowledgement of the physical limitations of the current building/space to provide a range of library activities and services comparable to the other four libraries.
3. *Libraries as a “window on the community”.* Library services can support community development by playing an expanded role in reflecting local identity, and celebrating distinctive community characteristics. Key areas for emphasis include: substantial local history sections; displays of local arts, crafts and events; and professional support for local and family research.
4. *Libraries as “social centres/community hubs”.* Recreation and social interaction need to be given greater emphasis as core roles in addition to reading and learning. Specific areas should be set aside for reading magazines/newspapers, coffee/ café facilities, social interaction, flexible meeting spaces. Meeting rooms in libraries are seen as a critical asset for a range of social and educational activities. Libraries could play a key role in welcoming new residents, e.g. through providing “starter kits” regarding Council services and community

- resources. A critical short-term priority to improve community access is a review of parking restrictions (e.g. one hour limits) which limits use of library buildings.
5. *Libraries as “Council service centres”*. The concept of libraries evolving as strategically located multi-service/ information centres on behalf of Council was strongly endorsed at all sessions. Most envisaged an extension of the library service desk so that people could access Council services via the library – e.g. accessing Council information; payment of rates, fees and other financial transactions; accessing planning, building, and environmental management and community services. The current Council service desk in the Kew Library was seen as a useful initiative, but most participants believed library services and Council services should be moving towards greater integration.
  6. *Key role for libraries in addressing social isolation*. There is strong support for libraries playing an enhanced role in community strategies to support socio-economically disadvantaged persons, reduce impacts of social isolation and to support people who lack the private means to effectively access online resources. This is seen as a logical extension of current library roles in promoting improved literacy, reading, learning, access to information and personal development. (This theme has been taken up as a core goal by Foundation Boroondara – and the possibility of a joint pilot project to review the role of library services in reducing social isolation merits further investigation).
  7. *Improving appeal of libraries to young people*. Some participants were concerned that interest in libraries (and reading) for children drops off in the teenage years. Specific strategies are needed to encourage greater access/ opportunities for social interaction by teenagers, i.e. challenging images of libraries as “uncool”. Suggestions included: regular renewal of children’s and youth collections; greater availability of tapes, CDs and DVD collections; expanded school holiday/reading programs; home work support groups.
  8. *Support for older persons*. The current volunteer-based home library service for frail aged persons and people with a disability is strongly endorsed as a major strength, and the concept should be expanded further. The option of organising regular library visits to libraries by nursing home and community care residents was canvassed in some workshops.
  9. *Extending “community partnerships” concept*. Libraries, community centres and neighbourhood houses are seen as pursuing similar goals and initiatives in many areas – adult literacy, adult education, accessing information about community resources, support for families and children, and supporting personal development and career opportunities. Several current joint initiatives (e.g. career counselling sessions at Hawthorn library) need to be documented - to provide a foundation for extending partnership models. Most workshops endorsed an ongoing forum involving community agencies, educational bodies and library services to develop and extend the partnership concept in Boroondara.
  10. *Libraries as “gateways to the information age”*. The “information broker” role will expand in future, providing enhanced community access to online information services and resources. Staff and other resources will be needed to assist people in accessing and utilising computer-based networks. Libraries can provide critical resources online (e.g. specialist scientific and professional periodical series) whose costs would otherwise be prohibitive for people with limited means.
  11. *Need for a balanced approach to technology*. Books, reading and access to library resources will still be the core of the library of the future. Enhanced computer/ online access, while important, must not become dominant at the expense of these roles. A strategic approach is needed to effectively manage potential conflicts between traditional library roles and entertainment/ recreation/ information demands via information technology.

For example many users still prefer to access hardcopy sources of information such as interstate white pages and reference books to computer-based versions – and these preferences must also be catered for.

12. *A more strategic approach to information and communication technology.* Standards of information and community technology require particular attention. There was some dissatisfaction with public access to current computer and Internet facilities, e.g. long waiting periods during peak hours, outdated user interface for e-mail/Internet connections, frequent equipment breakdowns, and variations in staff availability/expertise to assist with computer-related issues. There was a strong view that current issues needed resolution in order to move forward - and that the library service generally needed an effective planning approach in the face of rapidly accelerating community expectations around technology.
13. *Need for a staff attraction, development and retention strategy.* Overall there was strong recognition and support for the calibre and professionalism of library service staff. However, an expansion of community partnerships and technology support roles are seen as requiring new skills and new approaches to professional development. Reward and recognition/learning and development programs need to be put in place to support the development of required skills.
14. *Marketing and promotion of library services – innovative strategies.* There was a strong view that increased promotion of library services should be undertaken to further increase participation levels. The focus should be on the 47% of non-member residents to increase their awareness of what libraries can offer. Innovative approaches are needed to improve library access and ease-of-use for “time poor” population segments e.g. professional/ working people with work/life balance issues. Suggestions included further extension of library opening hours; upgraded online/virtual library service; library outlets in shopping centres (e.g. Camberwell precinct); “drive-in” loans/ returns windows.
15. *Need for improved research/understanding of emerging user needs.* All sessions noted the need for improved data about community use (and non-use) of library facilities. In particular, existing data sources are seen as relating more to operational effectiveness/efficiency (e.g. members, visits, loans) than to core social interaction goals (e.g. monitoring interactions within libraries, meeting participation, user/staff interactions). Better research is needed to highlight barriers/opportunities in improving community access to library services (e.g. focusing on non-users).

## 4. **Strategic Agenda for Library Services 2014**

*... ten critical challenges for library service development over the next decade.*

Arising from our project research and consultation, this chapter seeks to distil key messages by highlighting 10 key strategic challenges which will impact on the form and shape of the City of Boroondara Library Service of the future.

The following should not be seen as a definitive summary of issues and directions identified by a range of stakeholders, but as a selective “shortlist” of ten main game strategic directions over the next 1-3 years which we see as critical to achieving a “preferred future” for the service:

1. Strengthening linkages between library services and Council's broader strategic priorities relating to community responsiveness and capacity building.
2. An expanded role for libraries in promoting community leadership, local neighbourhood networks and active community partnerships.
3. Progressively improving integration of library services and other core Council functions and services - especially areas of responsibility within the restructured Governance and Community Relations Directorate.
4. Planning and design treatments to achieve accessible, flexible, welcoming library buildings including review of options to improve visibility, access and impact of library services in the Camberwell central activities precinct - in conjunction with Civic Assets and Services Review, Camberwell Junction Structure Plan and community development options under consideration in the Camberwell Railway Station Urban Design Framework.
5. Effective short-term/ medium term strategies addressing technology issues - in partnership with Council's IT Department).
6. Strengthening community use and involvement through improved marketing (including a focus on addressing perspectives and priorities of current low library use segments, “time poor”, and people with access difficulties).
7. A strategic change management process reinforcing agreed strategic directions – including leading edge talent management strategies for library staff development in partnership with the Learning and Development Department.
8. Improved medium to longer term planning of library functions and services - based on a research program to explore local trends in library use/ expectations in partnership with Council's Community Planning Unit.
9. Preparing now for the future - developing short, medium, and long term priorities and business plans to achieve preferred strategic directions.
10. Building community and staff support for preferred directions - through ongoing consultation and involvement in implementation.

#### 4.1 Council's Broader Strategic Priorities – Community Capacity Building

The future roles of library services in community engagement/ leadership clearly form part of a broader Council strategic agenda. Councillors and senior officers have highlighted Council's commitment to evolving a broader strategic vision - embracing democratic local governance and community responsiveness - which in future will underpin all Council functions, programs and services.

This policy discussion is occurring within the context of a broader public policy debate around local government roles in "community capacity building". The current Victorian Government has sponsored a number of joint initiatives with Councils to explore and develop this concept further including: the Community Capacity Building Initiative (CCBI); the Neighbourhood Renewal Program; and 10 local community building demonstration projects.

In a recent discussion paper for Local Government Victoria, Professor Mark Considine, describes the key objectives of a collaborative approach to "community strengthening" in the following terms:

*"First it aims to build the "social capital" of local communities. This requires forms of leadership that include a variety of different people, better forms of connectedness (networks) between local stakeholders, citizens and organizations, and processes that allow local needs to be identified and local resources and assets mobilized.*

*Second, it aims to develop new forms of partnership or collaboration between different governmental, private and city agencies so that their efforts can be pooled at the local level."*<sup>18</sup>

The City of Boroondara has also supported critical community strengthening projects, including:

- Commissioning the Boroondara Community Research Project by Swinburne Institute for Social Research – with a significant report on attitudes towards community and citizenship in February 2002.<sup>19</sup>
- Supporting establishment of Foundation Boroondara – a community, business and government partnership to support and fund local community building initiatives.
- Re-launch and development of "Working at Boroondara" in October 2003 – outlining core values and principles to improve Council and staff responsiveness to community engagement and changing needs and expectations.

#### ***The Strategic Challenge for the City of Boroondara Library Service***

*The Working at Boroondara principles and Council Plan 2003/06 are important signposts, and Council is refining a preferred model of community engagement. There is a real opportunity for the City of Boroondara Library Service Future Directions Strategy to anticipate, and effectively respond to, Council's priorities in these areas.*

## 4.2 Community Engagement - Making "Social Capital" Concept Meaningful

How can we draw on emerging public policy debates and initiatives to revitalise the image of public libraries as leaders in community capacity building and to strengthen public support for this expanded role in the Boroondara community?

Councillors and senior managers in our discussions have clearly communicated that they expect the project will outline a forward-looking vision/ strategy around library service roles in promoting community networks, improved social interaction, and challenging social isolation. These aspirations were also strongly endorsed in staff and community workshops.

The "social capital" concept was popularised by the World Bank as a corrective to characterising "social well-being" simply in economic terms. Some may see the concept as "old wine in new bottles", i.e. a return to 1970's-style community development agendas.

However, a key difference is that public libraries are now increasingly portrayed as at the forefront in building robust community networks (e.g. Victorian Government "community capacity building" project and recent writings by Don Edgar, Eva Cox, Alan Bundy).<sup>20</sup>

In an address to the Municipal Association of Victoria's Library Summit in March 2004, Prue Digby (Executive Director, Local Government Victoria) highlighted the pivotal role of library services in building strong communities:

*"Public libraries are recognised as a cornerstone of a democratic society, because libraries provide free access to reading materials and information ... In communities with strong networks, the importance of the public library's role as a community meeting place, repository of local knowledge, facilitator of life long learning, and as a central focal point for community engagement is evident".<sup>21</sup>*

Libraries already contribute positively to developing the social infrastructure of local communities in a variety of ways including:

- developing literacy skills;
- providing resources to support personal development and learning across all age groups;
- reinforcing cultural diversity through providing collections and online resources in languages other than English;
- promoting local democratic principles and active citizenship;
- providing a gateway to government information, services and resources;
- supporting IT connectivity and skills development;
- providing opportunities for social contacts and social interactions;
- providing community meeting facilities which support a variety of adult education, recreation and arts/ cultural groups;
- reflecting local identity, supporting community research and local history, and building city pride; and
- developing links across community organisations through community liaison roles.

The current *Libraries Building Communities* project for the Library Board Victoria is currently documenting the various ways in which libraries contribute to community building. A project discussion paper by New Focus Research comments:

*"...libraries have the potential to build stronger communities whereby community members feel supported and valued, services are integrated and partnerships can develop across the sector and with other government agencies and departments. Libraries, in other words, have the potential to 'join up' communities and services."<sup>22</sup>*

Three proposals canvassed in workshops merit further exploration and development by Council:

- Redefining library community liaison roles in future in terms of "out-reach" (i.e. going out to communities) rather than "in-reach" (i.e. bringing communities in the libraries).
- Establishing an ongoing community forum hosted by Council to strengthen linkages between library services, major education facilities, and local knowledge based businesses, and community representatives.
- Further extending "community partnerships" concept around joint initiatives with community agencies and/or neighbourhood houses in promoting literacy, learning and development, adult education, and reducing social isolation.

### **The Strategic Challenge**

*As the leading single-municipality library service in Victoria, the library sector and broader community looks to Boroondara to develop leading edge initiatives supporting the objective of community capacity building.*

*A key strategic choice is whether to redefine "social capital" in terms that make sense to current library provision (i.e. gradual/ sequential change) - or to develop and promote new paradigms requiring radical transformation in library priorities, goals and interpretations of "core businesses."*

### **4.3 Improving Integration of Library and Council Services/ Functions**

Don Edgar's presentation at a Council retreat in April last year exploring themes from his book, *Patchwork Nation*, was a key trigger for this project. Dr Edgar highlighted the need for a fundamental change in local governments' thinking from "delivering services" to "resourcing communities" (especially at the neighbourhood level or "patch"). Key points included:

- Rapid change and complexity mean that "one size fits all" approaches will no longer work in an increasingly diverse community.
- Departmental "service silos" dominate thinking about needs and priorities, so no holistic view or coordinated action is possible under existing arrangements.
- Governance, at all levels, is too focused on "servicing", not "resourcing" or "capacity building".
- Administrative and organisational structures work against "whole-of-government" and "place management" approaches in diverse and complex neighbourhoods.
- There is a need to incorporate a major power shift in decision-making -- rebuilding democracy and civil society through cultivating effective local partnerships with a range of community leaders and organisations.<sup>23</sup>

At both staff and community workshops, the concept of multi-purpose library facilities as "a window on Council" was strongly supported - i.e. providing access to a range of Council services/resources in addition to library services reinforced by innovative information and communications technology.

The municipality's library services are characterised by attractive, well-resourced and well-located multi-functional centres and professional and experienced staff with well-developed customer relationship and communication skills.

With these resources the City of Boroondara Library Service has the potential "critical mass" to play significantly enhanced roles in building community identity, achieving effective engagement, and providing access to all wide range of Council services and resources.

The realisation of this potential requires a sustained strategic management focus on preferred directions, change management to achieve required changes in library service culture, commitment to staff development, appropriate financial resources, and effective technology support.

### ***The Strategic Challenge***

*The recent Council organisation restructure, including formation of the new Governance and Community Relations Directorate, presents a timely opportunity to promote improved integration of library services and other key Council departments/functions - especially customer service desks, Council and community support, communications, and local laws.*

*It is proposed that Council develops and implements specific options to improve integration of library services with other key Council operations especially "front desk functions" - and to reinforce ownership by other Council managers/staff of library services.*

#### **4.4 Strategic Service Locations/ Profile and Camberwell Library**

A modern, well-equipped library service operating from multiple well-designed facilities in neighbourhood locations is clearly the preferred standard both for the present and future. Participants at all community forums strongly endorsed a future model of library services provision based on five multi-faceted library buildings operating in key neighbourhood and activity centre locations - as at present.

There was also strong support for landscaping/building design treatments to enhance social interaction at library facilities – e.g. café type areas, lounges/sofas, enlarged areas for teenagers, enhanced displays of books/materials, more local history and arts and crafts displays. Parking access around library buildings are also in need of review. Collections should be readily updated for currency/interest and library spaces should be strategically used for interaction and display purposes – not cluttered by excessive shelving.

Representatives at the Camberwell focus group supported retention of the Camberwell library at its present Town Hall location (with significant expansion of community meeting rooms and other facilities).

Nevertheless, diminishing library use and service availability at the current Camberwell site suggests a clear need to improve visibility, access and use of library services within the central Camberwell principal activity precinct.

The consultants note with interest that Boroondara City Council has recently initiated a community-based working group to prepare an Urban Design Framework (UDF) in relation to State Government development proposals for Camberwell Railway Station. Proposals under consideration by the working group include a *community development option* - which could potentially embrace a variety of complementary community uses, e.g. a library, health services, community and learning centres.

Trends in library service provision and use also merit further consideration in Council's current strategic review of Council-owned assets and services and the review of the Camberwell Junction Structure Plan.

### **The Strategic Challenge**

*All library facilities need to be progressively reviewed over the next three to five years with a view to maximising objectives of social interaction and access as highlighted in staff and community consultations.*

*It is also proposed that future development of library services facilities at Camberwell (either at the current Town Hall Building or alternative sites) in 2004/05 be reviewed with a view to improving visibility, access and impact as a high priority - in conjunction with the Civic Assets Strategy, current review of Camberwell Junction Structure Plan, and community development options under consideration by the working group reviewing the Camberwell Railway Station Urban Design Framework..*

## **4.5 Technology – Need for a Short/Medium Term Strategic Response**

There were a range of staff/ community views about the future role of technology in improving access to information, efficiency in services and operations, and freeing up staff time for increased community support roles.

Comments regarding the future roles of technology were often ambivalent (e.g. concerns about computers/ online services crowding out other key roles in promoting social interaction, threat of libraries becoming "more technical/ less personal", isolating computer rooms from other library activities).

However most endorsed a view of libraries as "gateways to the information age" - providing access to a wide range of online/computer-based information services, for example:

- *"Libraries as 'community resources and information centre' = information broker for people with difficulty in accessing information".*
- *"Develop 'library without walls' concept - seamless connection between buildings and online resources".*
- *"Promote libraries as 'community gateways' to a whole range of services/ resources (and delivering a 'fair go' to economically/ socially disadvantaged)".*

The strategic development of information and communications technology over the next decade will require planned multifaceted approach which embraces:

- Balancing demands for improved technology with development of other core library roles - including books/literature, promoting improved social interaction, expressing local identity.
- Training/developing staff to help users to access library systems, information and resources.

- Improving efficiency in operations and services through use of innovative technology.
- Exploiting potential of technology to free up professional time to concentrate on direct service roles and increase contact with users (e.g. self-service systems, online loans and booking service).
- Effectively responding to growing community preferences for online and Internet based services – seamlessly integrated with other services.
- Ensuring effective support for disadvantaged groups and "technology have nots" - who are increasingly marginalised by an information based society.

The draft *Greater Dandenong Libraries 2015 Strategy* outlines a future vision of libraries as a seamless "community/ technology hub":

*"You need never physically enter the hub - all transactions can be electronic with deliveries electronically or by physical means depending on the product. Anyone seeking a book can be guaranteed to get access to it through the library whether it is in print or not ..."*<sup>24</sup>

However, library services throughout Australia confront major dilemmas in meeting the shortfall between their current IT resources/ systems and rapidly accelerating community user expectations.

For example, the Monash survey of public access Internet users in Victorian public libraries found that respondents found the service to be satisfactory overall, but there were significant areas of dissatisfaction: for example, slow connection speeds; too few terminals; problems with the booking service; and the need for improved staff training to support users in accessing technology.<sup>25</sup>

These issues reflect broader community trends in computer literacy and online access but equally apply to library facilities in the City of Boroondara. Significant breakthroughs are needed in current technology and support systems – to become a competitive strength rather than a source of frustration to library users and staff.

### ***The Strategic Challenge***

*A strategic approach is needed to defining information and communications technology development needs over the medium to longer term to achieve seamless integration of online (virtual) and physical library services.*

*A critical priority for Council is to define and develop a short to medium term technology strategy with articulated development priorities, standards and a business plan. Key issues are: maintenance/support of public access computers; telephone response systems; computer inquiry/booking service; "self service" systems.*

*The Library Management Team is working closely with the IT Department to identify, scope and address key technology requirements - supported by an implementation process, timetable and budget strategy.*

## **4.6 Strengthening Community Support/ Participation in Library Services**

There were often strong expressions of support for current library services at all community focus groups. Participants strongly endorsed the need for more research/marketing to increase community participation in library services and to promote library services to non-users, "time-poor" population segments, and younger people (e.g. develop a "cool" image).



Questions about the degree of “real” public support for public library services were frequently cited as a significant current challenge in stakeholder interviews, staff and community consultations.

It's difficult to explain why the contribution of library services is so open to debate - given their near-universal service profile and high community use and satisfaction levels. Nevertheless, making an ongoing business case for sustained community investment in public library (supported by appropriate performance measures) will continue to be a high priority.

While satisfaction levels are high, they may also reflect a somewhat static and dated image of libraries as "safe", "respectable", and "trustworthy". This image does not fully reflect the dynamic roles libraries can perform in promoting social interaction, reinforcing local identity, and challenging social isolation.

Boroondara's experience seems consistent with these broader research findings. No other Council-auspiced or community facility comes close to local library services in terms of participation and attendance numbers.

### ***The Strategic Challenge***

*The ongoing challenge for Council is to refine and implement sustained communication, marketing and service delivery strategies for library services to promote increased community awareness and participation in library services – including a focus on non-users (e.g. “time poor” market segments).*

*Marketing approaches should both re-affirm traditional strengths and demonstrate responsiveness to new community roles and challenges. In particular, library user surveys need to be complemented by specific market research targeting non-users as well – with a view to broadening awareness and participation levels.*

## **4.7. Change Management Strategy and Staff Development**

The transition from the library service of the present to the library service of the future will require sustained commitment by Councillors and senior managers, an effective change management process, and talent management strategies to ensure library staff acquire required knowledge, motivation and skills.

As noted previously, the calibre and professionalism of current Boroondara library staff are exceptional.

However, there are a range of management challenges to sustain high levels of performance in the future - and to address the needs of a workforce which is predominantly female, long-serving, and highly specialised (including managing divisions between professional librarians, library technicians, and other staff).

For example, the Viclink Professional Education Working Party recently developed a model *staffing profile of public libraries in the year 2010*, as follows:

- Older, more multi-culturally and linguistically diverse, multi-skilled staff, continued female domination but require increased male participation rates.
- People-focused, flexible in managing customers, enthusiastic in dealing with people, able to relate to engage with broad spectrum of people positively.

- Increase in the ratio of professional vs. para-professionals and other staff, as more administrative tasks are managed electronically and increasing self-service options are provided.
- Require highly developed strategic skills, as well as enhancing marketing and communication capabilities.
- Respond positively to change, identify and respond to opportunities, able to find solutions as well as problems.
- Focus on educating users to help themselves – so that staff can focus on added-value activities for the community.
- Seek more career opportunities within an outside the library organisation, often employed more than one organisation on part-time basis.
- Seek increased opportunities for professional and personal development.
- Differing views on the basis of future employment (e.g. full versus part-time).<sup>26</sup>

### **The Strategic Challenge**

*Forward-looking staff attraction, development and retention programs will be required to ensure library services have available a “talent pool” of motivated and performing staff capable of responding effectively and flexibly to emerging service challenges.*

*Key areas for attention include:*

- *Review of current recognition and reward policies for library services staff versus council staff in comparable roles.*
- *Sustained program to update professional qualifications and skills in priority areas - including computer literacy, interpersonal skills, communications and team building.*
- *Career enrichment opportunities including secondments/rotation to other areas of Council.*
- *Leadership development and succession planning initiatives.*
- *Joint initiatives in conjunction with Learning and Development Department to improve access by library services staff to Boroondara's "leading edge" corporate development, professional development and training programs.*

### **4.8 Researching/ Predicting Community Trends/ Analysing Library Use**

Both community and staff workshops highlighted the need for improved data about social, demographic and technological changes and their impact on the nature and extent of demand for library services. For example, Eva Cox's study of NSW libraries (2000) suggest two groups predominate in use of library services - older retired persons and young (school age) children.

Council's public libraries collect excellent data at present for benchmarking purposes, to set targets, and to improve operations (e.g. memberships, loans, requests, library visits, use of meeting areas). However, we have only a limited capacity to track what people are actually doing when they are in libraries (e.g. informal social interactions) - and rely extensively on indirect or anecdotal sources. For example, the Quantum Research survey showed that 17% of respondents who visited libraries did not borrow books.

The current *Libraries Building Communities* project surveyed library users in 16 library services (auspiced by the Library Board of Victoria) – and will significantly add to our understanding of the library users' perspectives on these issues. The Boroondara Library Service is participating in this study – and will analyse and report on general and local research findings when they become available.

The need for better data on alternative library uses will become more of an issue as library services are increasingly expected to embrace new "core goals" - e.g. "building social capital", "community engagement", "reducing social isolation".

### ***The Strategic Challenge***

*We have outlined some broader population and service user trend data in our report. However, an ongoing research program is needed to ascertain actual use patterns and trends in Boroondara to reinforce the objective of building stronger communities, improving community responsiveness, and reducing social isolation.*

*We suggest that a program of suitable research projects be undertaken by the Library Management Team in partnership with Council's Community Planning Unit.*

## **4.9 Preparing Now for the Future - Planning Time Horizons**

*How do we deal with the various strategic horizons required for an effective strategy - long-term (10 years), medium term (3-5 years), short-term (1-2 years)?*

The current project focuses on a 10-year timeframe, yet many of the issues identified in interviews and consultation sessions require "real-time" planning, implementation and budget responses. The *City of Greater Dandenong Libraries 2015 Strategy* adopts an interesting approach to this dilemma by succinctly outlining a number of descriptors of the ideal "library of the future" (i.e. a service/technology "hub"), proposed primary/secondary roles for libraries, and a notional forward action plan and budget strategy.

### ***The Strategic Challenge***

*An effective approach requires the development of a forward-looking strategic framework, identification of critical themes/priorities, and sustained commitment to incorporate strategic priorities in ongoing business planning, budget and staff development programs.*

## **4.10 Building Staff/Community Support and Commitment for Strategy.**

There has been considerable positive feedback from staff about the level of participation in staff workshops in November. However, the request for effective staff engagement at all stages of the project (including consultation, strategy development and implementation) was communicated very clearly by participants at all staff sessions - and some of the community sessions.

### ***The Strategic Challenge***

*Council needs to implement practical steps to effectively keep staff "within the loop" to ensure their ongoing participation and commitment to the process and in implementing outcomes. Equally, Council should ensure early public release of the project report for comment and input prior to finalising preferred strategic directions.*

## 5. **Library Services 2014 – Strategic Framework and Priorities**

... a strategic framework and action program to achieve preferred vision for library services in City of Boroondara.

This chapter outlines a strategic framework for the development of library services in the City of Boroondara over the next decade. It has been developed as a response to consultation, research and analysis in emerging strategic challenges and priorities undertaken for this project by Mach II Consulting.

The framework was developed initially at a full-day planning session involving Council's Library Management Team (Manager, Anne Holmes) on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2004 – and refined through subsequent discussions with Councillors and the Executive Management Group.

The proposed framework comprises three interrelated components:

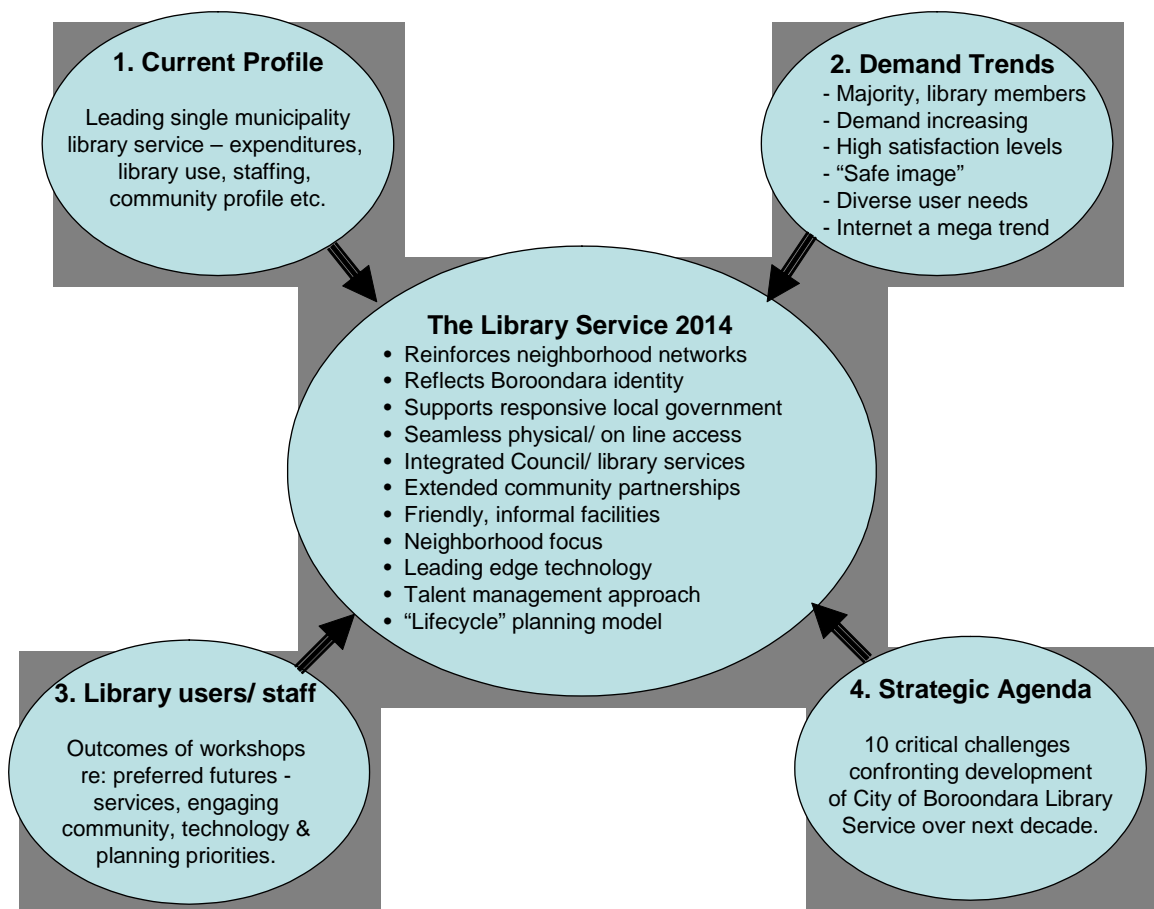
1. A summary of the *major strategic drivers* that will specifically impact on the future development of library services over the next decade which effectively respond to the community's distinctive character and emerging needs, including:
  - Current service profile and use patterns for City of Boroondara Library Service;
  - Broader social/ technological trends relating to future demand for library services;
  - Key themes regarding preferred futures identified in consultation sessions with library staff and community representatives; and
  - Proposed strategic agenda for development of library services, identified by consultants based on research for this project.
2. *Strategic profile of City of Boroondara Library Service 2014* outlining a preferred future, vision/ direction and major attributes in the dimensions of service profile, community partnerships, technology and planning for the future.
3. Proposals to *how we will get there* – including recommendations and priority project initiatives over next three years.

### 5.1 Major Strategic Drivers

This section provides a summary of major drivers which need to be taken into account in developing a strategic framework which is responsive to the distinctive culture, traditions and emerging needs of the City of Boroondara and its community.

The diagram on the following page, and capsule summaries of our main project research findings, highlight critical elements in developing an effective model - and their relationships.

## City of Boroondara Library Service 2014 – Critical Strategic Drivers



### Critical Strategic Drivers:

#### 1. Profile Current Boroondara Library Services

- Strategic direction - *Council Plan 2003/06*
- Vision, mission, goals, objectives
- Free-standing single municipality model
- Governance and Community Relations Division
- Library Management Team - matrix management structure
- 5 multipurpose libraries - Ashburton, Balwyn, Camberwell, Hawthorn, Kew.
- Open 242 hours per week
- Virtual (online) library service
- IT connectivity – Spydus platform/ Council IT Branch
- Operating revenues/expenditures \$5.19 million in 2002/03 (Council meets approx. 80%)
- 1.17 m visits/2.3 m loans pa
- 100,167 borrowers (equivalent to 63% residents)
- 32.3% of residents borrow at least once pa
- 71.2 EFT staff/ 95 volunteers (home library services)
- 0.5 million plus items in collection

## City of Boroondara Library Service 2014 – Strategic Drivers (Continued)

### 2. Current/ Future Demand – Broad Trends

- Nationally, 1,510 local government/ regional public library outlets – 6.1 m visits pa
- Nationally, 42% of adults used libraries in 2002 (37% in 1998)
- Victoria – local government lib exp \$120.1 m in 2001/02 (Councils meet 69%)
- 2.5 m Victorians are library members (50.9%)
- ABS Survey - major library users – females, NESB, tertiary qualifications, unemployed, p/t workers
- Observational research – older persons, school age children, disadvantaged groups
- Wide variety of library uses – 38% users borrow books only
- “Gold standard” community satisfaction ratings
- Massive growth in computer/ Internet use at home – majority of households
- Monash study – 54% of public access terminal users are low income earners
- Boroondara impacts – continued growth in demand – inc. younger/older persons, revisit community satisfaction data, high online access expectations, bridging “information divide”

### 3. Community/ Staff Consultations – Preferred Directions

- Strong endorsement of current services, local facilities and staff
- “Real engagement of Council, community, staff in preferred futures
- Strategically located multifaceted library facilities – as continuing core of service
- Libraries as “windows on community” – reflecting/ reinforcing distinctive local identity, history, traditions and support networks
- Libraries as “Council service centres” – integrated information/ service desks and access to Council services.
- Critical role for libraries in achieving Council’s broader strategic objectives: effective local democracy; community responsiveness; and, integrated functions and services.
- Critical role for libraries in community capacity building/ reducing social isolation
- Specific measures to improve appeal/ services to older persons, teenagers, and NESB communities
- Extend community partnerships into joint projects with community agencies – e.g. literacy, adult education, accessing community resources, support for families and children.
- More welcoming, flexible physical environment – encouraging greater social interaction
- Core values – free library, community engagement, users as “citizens”
- Libraries as “social centres/ community hubs” supporting social development, neighborhood identity
- Need for wide ranging technology strategy – and short/ medium term enhancements
- Effective balance of technology/ online services and traditional roles
- Libraries as “technology gateways”/ “information brokers” esp. for disadvantaged groups
- Continuing investment in staff attraction, development and retention
- Improved marketing/ promotion of library services – esp. to non-users and “time poor”
- Long-term “life cycle” approach to planning and priority setting – i.e. improved local research and user data

## City of Boroondara Library Service 2004 – Strategic Drivers (Continued)

### 4. Strategic Agenda for Boroondara Library Services – 10 Critical Challenges

1. Stronger linkages between library services and Council's broader strategic priorities relating to community capacity building.
2. An expanded role for libraries in community leadership and community partnerships.
3. Improving integration of library services and other core Council functions and services.
4. Flexible, welcoming library buildings with enhanced role for Camberwell precinct.
5. Effective short-term/ medium term strategies addressing technology issues.
6. Strengthening community support and involvement in libraries.
7. Change management and talent management strategies for library development.
8. Researching and predicting local trends in library use.
9. Preparing now for the future – planning horizons.
10. Building community and staff support for preferred directions.

## 5.2 Strategic Framework for City of Boroondara Library Service 2014

The strategic framework for City of Boroondara Library Service over the next decade will be dynamically aligned to Council policies and to Council's vision, values, mission and goals as reflected in the Four-Year **City of Boroondara Council Plan**. It comprises both a core strategic goal and a service planning model to guide planning and priority setting for library development.

### City of Boroondara Library Service 2014

#### Strategic Goal:

*Plan and develop library services which reflect Council's goals and aspirations for the City including democratic local governance, strengthened community responsiveness, and, improved integration of core Council functions and services to the community, including:*

- *Flexible responsive and innovative library services (including virtual library services);*
- *Commitment to improving community responsiveness, enhanced community partnerships, and building social capital;*
- *Leading edge technology to reinforce service quality, improved support for library users, and provide effective access to online information and resources; and a*
- *Planning and priority setting process for library services which reflects a whole-of-community life-cycle approach.*

The following diagram outlines a proposed strategic framework for City of Boroondara Library Service reflecting main outcomes of this project.



## CITY OF BOROONDARA LIBRARY SERVICE 2014 PROPOSED STRATEGIC AND PROGRAM FRAMEWORK

### Service Profile

- Seamless physical/ online access – all services
- 5 neighborhood-based libraries.
- Extended library hours/ availability.
- Enhanced/ specialist role for Camberwell precinct.
- Leading virtual library – improved user interface.
- Quality, up-to-date collections – all media.
- Friendly, informal, welcoming look/ feel.
- Attractive, well maintained and used meeting areas.
- Internal design to encourage social interaction.
- Reading areas, café, sofas etc.
- External design to improve access – layout/ parking.
- Innovative service modes – e.g. “drive in library”.

### Technology

- All resources available physically/ electronically – according to user preferences.
- Modern, well maintained public access terminals.
- Focus on “information gateway/ brokerage” roles.
- Effective and user-friendly self service systems.
- Separate computer, reading and interaction areas.
- Maximum use of technology to free staff for interaction/ support for library users.
- Staff trained and skilled to assist library users to effectively access online resources.
- Long range technology improvement plan in place.
- Technology-based solutions re: access for persons with a disability, NESB background, processing payments, & accessing Council information/ services.

### Community Engagement

- Libraries as “community places” - celebrating local identity, history, networks etc.
- Integrated service desks providing range of core Council information/ services.
- Committed to community capacity building goals
- Vibrant community partnerships – joint projects with community agencies/ centres, local businesses.
- Expanded programs for school age children – special collections, special areas, study support etc.
- Expanded programs for aged/ disabled persons – home library, excursions, “in library” programs.
- Programs/ projects - languages other than English, social isolation, disadvantaged groups etc.

### Preparing for the Future

- *Library Future Directions Strategy* aligned to Council policies and 3-year *Council Plans*.
- *Strategic directions incorporated in annual business plans/ budgets (short-term) and 3-year (medium term) planning frameworks.*
- *“Life cycle”/ “whole of community” planning model.*
- *Ongoing local library user research program.*
- *Marketing strategy to increase community awareness and participation in libraries.*
- *Change management strategy incorporating leading edge attraction, development and retention program for staff.*

### 5.3 How We Will Get There – Action Program

The following table summarises a list of medium-term (1-3 year) recommendations and actions in support of the library future directions strategy arising from the project report and consultations with staff and community representatives, the Library Management Team, Councillors and the Senior Management Group.

Specific projects, service initiatives and budget impacts will be incorporated in annual library management business plans and budget proposals.

**CITY OF BOROONDARA LIBRARY SERVICE**  
**FUTURE DIRECTIONS STRATEGY - KEY INITIATIVES & PROJECTS 2004-2014**

YEAR	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/14
1. Following Council consideration, make available for public comment and input the Library Future Directions Project Report	✓			
2. Council adopts updated Boroondara Library Services 2014 strategic framework, incorporating community views.	✓			
3. Review and update Future directions strategy annually – with effective community/ staff input.	✓	✓	✓	✓
4. Complete review of LOTE (languages other than English) services and resources, and implement recommendations.	✓	✓		
5. Complete review of library opening hours with view to increasing availability and access.	✓			
6. Review/upgrade capacity of virtual library to facilitate greater home accessibility, such as customer alerts, online registrations and online requests.		✓	✓	✓
7. Investigate the feasibility of 24 hour service desk to handle online/telephone information requests for library and Council services.			✓	
8. Implement enhancements for public access PCs, including broadband access and new options for centralized printers from public PCs incorporating swipe card technology using borrower cards.	✓	✓		
9. Develop joint projects between libraries and community agencies/ neighbourhood houses – to promote local identity, reduce social isolation, adult literacy, learning and development, and neighbourhood information and support networks	✓	✓	✓	✓
10. Host state-wide expert's forum on <i>libraries of the future and community capacity building</i> .		✓		
11. Conduct joint research program with Council's Community Planning Unit to research and develop performance measures around actual library use by residents.		✓		
12. Develop and implement library marketing program – incorporating survey of current non-users – to increase awareness and participation in local library services.		✓	✓	

**CITY OF BOROONDARA LIBRARY SERVICE**  
**KEY INITIATIVES & PROJECTS 2004-2014 (CONTINUED)**

YEAR	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/14
13. Review library service provision within Camberwell precinct to improve visibility, access and use - including exploration of innovative service strategies, complementary community and business uses, and improving access by “time poor”.		✓	✓	
14. Develop and implement strategy for using technology to provide improved access to Council services via libraries		✓	✓	
15. Plan for and Introduce integrated service desks (including online support) for library and Council information services in all library buildings within two years – including payments, booking council facilities, accessing council departments etc		✓	✓	
16. Extend professional development opportunities through rotation/exchange arrangements with other Council departments, other Councils and library services.	✓	✓	✓	✓
17. Progressively review all library facilities over the next three to five years to improve opportunities for social interaction and access as highlighted at staff and community consultation forms	✓	✓	✓	
18. Review and develop external library access strategy for all library buildings including external design treatments, spaces for social interaction, and parking restrictions.			✓	
19. Investigate the feasibility of introducing a drive-through service window at one branch for reservations, collections, returns, and other services/resources			✓	
20. Develop a staff profile and implement a talent management strategy focussing on skills required to deliver the preferred library of the future.			✓	
21. Investigate the feasibility of the introduction of at least one café type facility in or in close proximity to a library branch within three years				✓

## End Notes

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- <sup>2</sup> Boroondara City Council – *Best Value Boroondara: Service Plan*, 30 June 2002.
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- <sup>4</sup> Municipal Association of Victoria – *Outcomes of the Library Summit*, March 2004.
- <sup>5</sup> Senator John Cherry (Chair) – *Libraries in the online environment*, Report by the Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts References Committee, Commonwealth of Australia, October 2003 pp 3-4.
- <sup>6</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics – *Public Libraries - Australia*, AusStats: 8561.0, June 2001.
- <sup>7</sup> Department for Victorian Communities – *Annual Survey of Victorian Public Libraries 2001-2002*, Local Government and Regional Services Branch, 2003.
- <sup>8</sup> AC Nielsen – *A National Survey of Reading, Buying and Borrowing Books for Pleasure*, Conducted for Books Alive, Australia Council, 2002.
- <sup>9</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics – *Attendance at Selected Cultural Events, Australia 2002*, Cat: 4114.0, October 2003.
- <sup>10</sup> Department for Victorian Communities – *Annual Survey of Victorian Public Libraries 2001-2002*, as above.
- <sup>11</sup> Quantum Market Research – *Australia Scan: Libraries Top-line Report, June 2003*, Albert Park, Victoria.
- <sup>12</sup> Eva Cox et al – *“A Safe Place to Go”: Libraries and Social Capital*, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Technology Sydney (UTS), Sydney, June 2000.
- <sup>13</sup> Jane Primrose – *2001 Census: Population and Internet Use*, Population Census Evaluation, Census Paper No. 03/03, June 2003.
- <sup>14</sup> Senator John Cherry (Chair) – *Libraries in the online environment*, as above, pg 7.
- <sup>15</sup> Graeme Johanson and Gary Hardy - *Report on Provision of Internet Access in Public Libraries*, Centre for Community Networking Research, School of Information Management and Systems, Monash University, Summary of research appears in Australian Libraries Information Association (ALIA), *inCite* web-based newsletter, May 2003.
- <sup>16</sup> Department of Infrastructure – *Victoria in Future: The Victorian Government's Population Projections 1996-2021*, 2000.
- <sup>17</sup> Survey results cited in City of Boroondara *Library Future Directions 2003 – Project Brief* (September 2003).
- <sup>18</sup> Professor Mark Considine – *Community Strengthening and the Role of Local Government: A discussion paper*, Centre for Public Policy, for Local Government Victoria, Department for Victorian Communities, February, 2004.
- <sup>19</sup> Ilene Wolcott and Mike Salvaris – *Attitudes towards Community and Citizenship in Boroondara: Findings from the 1999 Benchmarks for Australian Citizen Survey*, Boroondara Community Research Project Stage 1, February 2002.
- <sup>20</sup> See Eva Cox above. Don Edgar – *The Patchwork Nation: re-thinking government – re-building community*, Harper Collins Publishers, Australia 2001. Dr Alan Bundy – *“Connections: values, lifelong learning and community partnerships”*, presentation to City of Hobson Bay, 27<sup>th</sup> August 2003.

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<sup>21</sup> Prue Digby (Executive Director Local Government Victoria, Department for Victorian Communities) – *Presentation to Municipal Association of Victoria Library Summit*, Melbourne Town Hall, 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2004.

<sup>22</sup> New Focus Research Pty Ltd – *Libraries Building Communities: Project Information Guide*, Prepared for State Library Victoria and VICLINK, June 2003.

<sup>23</sup> Dr Don Edgar – *“Boroondara and the Banyan Tree”*, City of Boroondara Planning Workshop, Aitken Hill, 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2003.

<sup>24</sup> City of Greater Dandenong – *“City of Greater Dandenong Libraries 2015”*, Draft Statement, February, 2004.

<sup>25</sup> Graeme Johanson and Gary Hardy - *Report on Provision of Internet Access in Public Libraries*, May 2003, as above.

<sup>26</sup> Viclink Professional Education Working Party – *“Libraries – Our Staffing Future”*, Report of Staffing Seminar (November 2003), January 2004.