

CONNECTED LIBRARIES

Ignite your imagination

AGENDA

Board Meeting

Wednesday 23 October 2024

4.00pm

Online – Microsoft Teams

1. **Present**
2. **Apologies**
3. **Acknowledgement of the Traditional Owners**
4. **Declaration of Conflicts of Interest**
5. **Confirmation of the Minutes of the Casey-Cardinia Library Corporation, trading as Connected Libraries (CL) Board Meeting held on Wednesday 28 August 2024.**

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6. Strategies/Plans	
CL39/2024 Annual Report 2023-2024 including Financials	3
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STRATEGIES/PLANS

CL39/2024 ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024 INCLUDING FINANCIALS - AUDIT REPORT

Report prepared by Beth Luppino and Emily Ramaswamy

Purpose

To present the audit report on Connected Libraries 2023-2024 year-end financial statements.

CL Library Plan reference – 4.6

Discussion

At the August meeting, the Board approved ‘in principle’ the Annual Report 2023-2024 including financials, pending the completion of the external audit process.

VAGO have now issued a draft report on the Year-end financials.

Representatives from VAGO are in attendance at this meeting to summarise the audit process and respond to questions from the Board.

Income Statement

During the 2023-2024 financial year, Connected Libraries delivered a surplus of \$0.67 million, a result \$0.3 million better than budgeted. Variations to agreements with Council on the management of Innovation Projects funding, higher than anticipated investment interest rates and staffing vacancies were responsible for much of the additional surplus. Employment costs continue to be the largest consumption of resources, with \$6.48 million incurred in 2024, representing over 70% of total expenses.

Balance Sheet

The balance sheet is in a healthy position with current assets (\$3.39 million) greater than current liabilities (\$1.98 million), with a Working Capital Ratio of 1.72. This means that Connected Libraries is in a position to meet all its liabilities, statutory or otherwise, including all short and long-term employee benefits, which stand at \$1.35 million. Current assets include cash of \$3.14 million.

Audit Report

The draft Audit Report is attached.

There were four adjusted audit differences (detailed on page 14 of the report).

1. At note 3.3 - Depreciation and amortisation the table contained a formatting error where the 2023 figures for Books and Materials/Motor vehicles were on incorrect lines. This is now corrected.
2. At note 6.1b - Addition of remuneration disclosure of Independent Board Members.
3. At note 6.1c - Remuneration of other senior staff there was a change required to the definition section to update the remuneration figure – changed from \$160,000 to \$170,000, reflecting 2024 annual threshold increase.
4. At note 4.1 – Prepayments was reclassified to an independent line in the within the Balance Sheet current assets.

The following items need to be completed before the final report is issued:

Item	Action required	Responsibility
Draft financial report	Review latest draft financial report	Audit
Quality control review of the audit file	Finalise review of audit testing including review by Engagement Leader and Signing Officer.	Audit
Subsequent events update	Provide details of significant transactions and events up to date of signing. Audit will assess for any impact on the financial report	Management and audit
Financial report	To be signed on adoption of the accounts by the Board	Management
Management representation letter	To be signed on same date as the certification of the financial report	Management

Conclusion

VAGO have completed the audit review on year-end financials for Connected Libraries. There were no dollar differences identified or required to be made in the Financial Statements. Connected Libraries finished the year in a favourable position with a surplus of \$0.67 million, a result \$0.3 million better than budgeted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. That the Board notes the draft audit report on the Connected Libraries year-end financial statements.**

Casey-Cardinia Library Corporation

Closing Report

For the financial year ended 30 June 2024

To be Presented to the Board on 23 October 2024

Background

I enclose for your information the closing report for the year ended 30 June 2024. The closing report provides a summary of results of our audit of the Casey-Cardinia Library Corporation. This report will be discussed at the Board meeting on 23 October 2024.

Acknowledgement

I also take this opportunity to thank your executive team and staff for the time they made available to us during our audit.

Yours sincerely

Lee Blashki
Manager, Financial Audit

Melbourne
18 October 2024

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Introduction

Purpose of the closing report

- Our closing report summarises the results of our audit and communicates significant findings from the final audit phase.
- Please read this document in conjunction with our Audit Strategy Memorandum 24 April 2024.

Scope and purpose of the audit

- The *Audit Act 1994* requires the Auditor-General to form an opinion on your financial report and provide a copy of the audit reports to you.
- A copy of the audit reports are also provided to the Minister for Local Government

The Auditor-General

The Auditor-General is:

- an independent officer of the Victorian Parliament
- appointed under legislation to examine on behalf of parliament and taxpayers, the management of resources within the public sector
- not subject to the control or direction of either parliament or the government.



Audit completion status

We have substantially completed our audit of the financial report. We performed our audit in accordance with the *Audit Act 1994* and the terms of our engagement letter. We can provide reasonable assurance that:

- financial report presents fairly, in all material respects in accordance with applicable Australian Accounting Standards, and the financial reporting requirements of the *under the Local Government Act 1989* (as per the transitional provisions for the *Local Government Act 2020*).

Expected audit opinion

Based on our audit, we expect to conclude that the financial report is presented fairly.

We expect to issue an unmodified audit opinion.

Outstanding audit matters

We can conclude and issue our audit opinions when we finalise our audit process. Outstanding audit matters include:

- complete internal audit quality review of the audit file
- receipt of signed financial report and signed management representation letter
- completion of the review of subsequent events.

Appendix A provides a detailed list of all outstanding audit matters.

Areas of audit focus

Our audit focused on the financial report balances / disclosures / areas that we rated as higher risk for material misstatement in your financial report.

Our procedures enabled us to conclude, with reasonable assurance, whether the risks resulted in a material misstatement. The outcome of our procedures is summarised in this section.

Risk of material misstatement	Our audit response	Results of our key procedures
<p>1. Outsourced accounting function (payroll and purchasing)</p> <p>Outsourced purchasing and payroll functions require that there are appropriate management oversight and monitoring of the third-party provider's activities.</p> <p>There is a risk that purchases, salary expenditure and employee entitlement liabilities may not be complete and accurate.</p> <p>Material errors may occur due to ineffective of insufficient monitoring or preventative controls at the library.</p>	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → reviewed the effectiveness of monitoring controls over the accuracy and completeness of the purchasing and payroll processing undertaken by Casey City Council on behalf of the library → performed an analytical review and substantiate any variances → performed cut-off testing. 	<p>Satisfactory.</p> <p>Based on the audit procedures that have been performed, we are satisfied with the completeness and accuracy of the information produced by Casey City Council.</p> <p>We are not aware of any control deficiencies during review of the purchasing and payroll processing undertaken by Casey City Council.</p>

Audit findings—financial report

Materiality assessment

Misstatements are considered material if they could individually or collectively influence economic decisions of users of the financial report. Users could be influenced by either the amount (quantity) or the nature (quality) of the matter.

We have updated the materiality levels indicated in our audit strategy memorandum.

Final overall materiality for the financial report has been set at 5% of 2023/24 total expenses \$454,760.

In our view:

- total uncorrected errors above this amount for particular statements, account balances or disclosures would mislead the users of the financial report.
 - risk that there may be material error the financial report increases with the level of accumulated uncorrected error below this threshold.
-

Adjusted audit differences

Our audit procedures identified adjusted audit differences.

Our audit procedures identified the following:

- amendment to 2022/23 comparatives to align to prior year certified financial statements per Note 3.3
- amendment of wording within the remuneration disclosures to align to model accounts.
- Inclusion of independent board members into key management personnel remuneration disclosures.
- Reclassification of prepayment balances out of trade and other receivables.

Appendix B presents the adjusted audit differences.

Unadjusted immaterial differences

Our audit procedures did not identify any unadjusted differences

Control environment

The Australian Auditing Standards require us to write to those charged with governance about any significant deficiencies we identified during the audit.

As part of our audit process, we consider, but do not assess or provide an opinion on, the effectiveness of your internal control framework. If we identify any significant weaknesses in internal control during our audit, we communicate them to you in our management letters.

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Other audit findings

Fraud, irregularities, or regulatory non-compliance

When performing our risk assessments and conducting our audit procedures, we consider the risk of material misstatement in the financial report that may be due to fraud. We are not responsible for preventing or detecting fraud.

Our audit procedures did not identify any specific financial report areas of fraud risk or regulatory non-compliance

Waste, probity & financial prudence

Our procedures are not specifically designed to detect matters of waste, probity, and financial prudence but we may detect these matters.

Our audit procedures did not identify any material issues concerning waste, probity, or lack of financial prudence.

Accounting policies

Your entity's material accounting policies, material transactions and/or events that occurred during the financial year are in accordance with the Australian accounting standards.

Disagreements with management

No issues noted.

Difficulties encountered in performing the audit

No issues noted.

Reports to Parliament

Results of the 2023-24 Audits Local Government

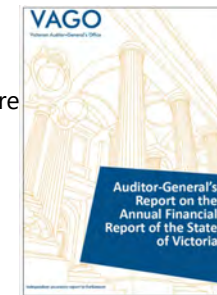
Casey-Cardinia Library Corporation will be included in the *Results of the 2023-24 Audits: Local Government Report*. We aim to table this report by the end of November 2024. The report will analyse the financial performance and position, and sustainability risks of each sector. The report also informs Parliament about the strengths and weaknesses in the control environments at entities within the sector and make recommendations to improve them as appropriate.

We will release an interactive dashboard to accompany the Parliamentary report. This will enable users to visualise:

- sector results over the last five years
- trends and composition analyses for specific entities
- compare results between entities over time.

Auditor-General's Report on the Annual Financial Report of the State of Victoria: 2023-24

Each year, the Auditor-General presents the Annual Financial Report of the State of Victoria to the Victorian Parliament. The report analyses and provides commentary on key aspects of the financial performance and position of the state. In line with the Act, and where appropriate, it provides information and recommendations for more effective and efficient management of public resources. We must table this report on or before 24 November 2024.



New and emerging developments



Financial reporting updates

Please refer to VAGO's financial reporting alerts on [our website](#) covering the latest significant accounting developments and guidance for public sector entities.

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VAGO links and resources



VAGO's website

VAGO's role

Annual work plan

Strategic plan

Our reports

Audits in progress

Privacy policy

Financial reporting alerts

APPENDIX A

Outstanding audit matters

The following items are outstanding at the date of this report and need to be resolved before we can issue our audit report.

Item	Action required	Responsibility
Quality control review of the audit file	Finalise review of audit testing including review by Engagement Leader and Signing Officer.	Audit
Subsequent events update	Provide details of significant transactions and events up to date of signing. Audit will assess for any impact on the financial report	Management and audit
Financial report	To be signed on adoption of the accounts by the Board	Management
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After we issue our audit report, we are required to undertake the following procedures. We will report any issues we find to your accountable officer for appropriate remedial action.

Item	Our procedure
Annual report	<p>We will review your annual report to confirm that it includes the correct version of the signed financial report and auditor's report. We will also check that all information in the annual report is materially consistent with the financial report.</p> <p>We request your provision to us of an electronic copy of the printers' proof of the annual report.</p>
Website publication of annual report	<p>We will review your annual report on your website to confirm that it includes the correct version of the signed financial report and auditor's report.</p> <p>We request your notification to us when you publish your annual report on your website.</p>

APPENDIX B

Adjusted audit differences

Adjusted dollar differences

Financial report component(s)	Adjusted \$	Basis for the adjustment
There are no adjusted audit differences that have been identified and communicated to management. This will be updated in the final Closing Report should any errors be identified from our internal quality control review.		

Adjusted differences of disclosures in your financial report

Financial report disclosure	Adjustment	Basis for the adjustment
Note 3.3 - Depreciation and amortisation		
Books and materials	Amend to \$991,746	Incorrect disclosure of 2022-23 balances for books and materials and motor vehicles. Adjustment to reflect 2022-23 balances as per signed financial statements.
Motor vehicles	Amend to \$6,309	
Note 6.1c	-	Update of wording per disclosure to reflect remuneration above 170,000 would be disclosed rather than 160,000.
Remuneration of other senior staff		
Prepayments	FY24: 184,059 FY23: 45,239	Reclassification of prepayment balances out of trade and other receivables.
Note 6.1b		Inclusion of Independent Board Members remuneration into short-term benefits at Note 6.1b.
Key management remuneration	20,000	
Note 6.1b	\$0-9,999	Amendment of remuneration bands to reflect the inclusion of Independent Board Members.
Key management remuneration	\$10,000-\$19,999	

APPENDIX C

Final management letter

We provide a draft version of the final management letter as a separate attachment.

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APPENDIX D

Management representation letter

As part of gathering audit evidence, we obtain formal management representations about your entity's financial report. We look at the completeness, preparation, and presentation of the information in the report.

We do not rely solely on the management representations, except when they are the only evidence reasonably available.

A draft version of the management representation letter is provided as a separate attachment.

When forming our audit opinion, we did not rely solely on management representations.

DRAFT

Annual Report

2023-2024



**CONNECTED
LIBRARIES**

Ignite your imagination

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Foreword



The past year has been one of both innovation and consolidation for Connected Libraries. We began with a new internal staffing structure in place, a new trading name and brand identity, and the addition of two new Non-Executive Independent Board members to oversee the governance of the library service. The new service structure focuses on programs and services for children and young people, digital literacy, partnerships, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) services and the provision of services beyond the four walls of our fixed branches.

In September, we conducted a community survey which revealed that the Casey community was eager to see more services delivered in southern areas of Casey. With the provision of additional grant funding from Casey, Connected Libraries acquired a mobile library van, library lockers for holds collection at three community centre locations, and the fit-out for a library lounge at the Cranbourne West Community Hub. It has been gratifying to see the way these new services have been received by our community – attendance at the library lounge has been strong and the library lockers booked to capacity at times.

80% of survey respondents said borrowing library materials is a key reason they value the library. The next most popular services are programs and events, digital literacy support, eResources and getting trusted advice from one of our friendly team. 100% of respondents think library services should be easily available to all Casey residents.

We have actively grown our membership base this year, knowing that everybody can benefit from free library services, and that people feel better when a part of our library community. Benefits are evidenced in a recent study commissioned by [Public Libraries Victoria](#). As at 30 June 2024, Connected Libraries had over 90,000 current members.

We continue to provide safe, supportive spaces to learn and thrive; a workforce trained to understand and support social inclusion; free access to reading materials, information, physical and digital resources; increasing the range of Information Communication Technology (ICT) resources, and lendable digital devices; and providing services beyond our fixed locations.

In September, the library team discussed collective organisational values and how these support us to meet our members' needs. We identified values that resonate now and will carry us forward into the future: Creativity; Humour; Connection; Enrichment; Teamwork and Kindness. With these values in mind, please enjoy this report as a showcase of library services in the City of Casey across the past year.



Penny Holloway
Chairperson



Beth Luppino
CEO

Our Vision

Inspiring spaces where everyone is free to discover possibilities.

Our Mission

To encourage lifelong learning, increase literacy and build strong, resilient communities across the Casey region.

Our Approach

We

- Put people first
- Pay it forward
- Follow up and reciprocate good deeds
- Help each other grow
- Share our stories and learn from each other
- Encourage authentic and courageous conversations
- Take quick little steps
- Give new things a go
- Choose momentum over perfection
- Encourage each other to take calculated risks
- Build confidence and resilience by working to our strengths
- Embrace the opportunity to learn when things don't go as planned
- Share ideas freely
- Acknowledge our partners
- Celebrate success

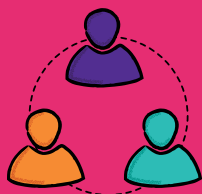


Acknowledgement of Country

Connected Libraries acknowledges the Bunurong and Boonwurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation as the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which we operate. We pay our respects to their elders past and present, and acknowledge the rich culture of story, literacy and knowledge throughout this region.

We want the libraries throughout this region to be places where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples feel safe and welcome. We work to ensure that our library collections and programs reflect the richness of First Nations histories and the ongoing resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. Libraries play an important role in connecting communities, supporting lifelong learning, and promoting a sense of belonging. Through these channels we work together to advance our Reconciliation journey.

Our Values and Guiding Behaviours



Connection

We create spaces where people feel that they belong
We find ways to share our common humanity, interests and passions
We strive to be fully present and intentional in our interactions with others



Creativity

We love learning and trying new things
We challenge the status quo if we believe a better way is possible
We support different ideas and allow others to give things a go



Enrichment

We look for ways to empower others to learn and participate
We strive to provide experiences that enhance the quality of a person's day and life
We provide opportunities for people to explore what is possible



Humour

Humour helps us to connect with each other
We like to laugh, bringing smiles to other people
We use humour to break down barriers and create a positive experience for everyone



Kindness

We are mindful of people's feelings
We are kind and compassionate and look for the best in others
We are accountable for our own behaviour and appreciate the differences in others



Teamwork

When we all contribute we excel
We play to each other's strengths
We can achieve our goals together

The Board

City of Casey



**Miguel
Belmar**

Administrator



**Steve
Coldham**

Director Community
Life



**Keri
New**

Manager City and
Asset Planning

Independent Board members



**Penny
Holloway**

Chairperson



**Helen
Partridge**

Alternate delegate - City of Casey - Noelene Duff (Administrator)

The Executive Team



**Beth
Luppino**

Chief Executive
Officer



**Koula
Kalaitzoglou**

General Manager,
Customer Experience
(from 15 April 2024)



**Emily
Ramaswamy**

General Manager,
Finance and
Digital Operations



**Janine
Galvin**

General Manager,
Organisational
Development

Our Community



Connected Libraries operates in the traditional lands of the Bunurong, Boonwurrung peoples. First nations people from many different places live in the Casey Region. The Casey region lies within the boundary of the Mayone Bulluk Bunurong/Boonwurrung.

Our region continues to experience rapid population growth with significant residential development occurring in Clyde and Cranbourne. City of Casey was ranked the eighth LGA in Australia for the largest population growth in 2022-2023, being one of only three Victorian LGA's included in the national top ten.

The latest Australian Bureau of Statistics report shows Casey's population has increased to 392,110 across the region's 409 square kilometers. ([Regional Population Growth, Australia - 3218.0 ABS, Revised Mar 2024](#)). Our population is estimated to exceed 562,249 by 2041.

Our community is diverse. More than 42 percent of residents were born overseas, with more than 40 percent of the region's population speaking another language at home. Key languages other than English include Punjabi, Sinhalese, Hazaraghi, Mandarin, Persian/Dari, Hindi, Tamil, Filipino/Tagalog, Malayalam and Arabic.

Casey region has more couples-with-children households (45%) and single-parent households (11%) than the Melbourne average. Nearly 57% of residents are families with children.

Compared with other OECD countries, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) reports that Australians are struggling to achieve a work-life balance ranking in the bottom third of the OECD countries. ([Australia's Welfare 2017, AIHW, Oct 2017](#)). Despite satisfactory job performance and earnings, Australians spent less time on leisure and personal care than those in other OECD countries. ([How's life in Australia? OECD, 2020](#)).

The City of Casey has the second highest pokies expenditure of Victorian Local Government Areas. There are thirteen venues with Pokies across Casey, with a total of 913 Electronic Gaming Machines (EGM's). ([Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, 2024](#)). More than \$159 million dollars was spent on the Pokies in the Casey region in 2022-2023, the second highest pokies expenditure in Victoria.

Our community faces challenges with income, education, employment, occupation and housing. Casey ranks 43rd in Victoria for socio-economic disadvantage (IRSD). ([Population and Housing: Socio Economic Indexes for Areas \(SEIFA\), Australia - 2033.0.55.001 ABS, Released Apr 2023](#)). Mortgage and rental stress are common in the region.

Casey region had the highest recorded number of family violence incidents in Victoria's 79 LGA's. The region has experienced increases in family violence levels in recent years, up 2.6 percent compared to the previous year. ([Crime Statistics Agency, Family incidents, Mar 2024](#)). In addition, the number of criminal incidents across Casey increased over 13 percent compared to the previous year.

Time is a precious resource in our community. More than 94 percent of residents (15 years+) are employed, with 61 percent driving a car as their method of transport to and from work. Almost 67 percent of working people from Casey live in the area but work outside the area.



Library Plan

2021-2025



We have completed the third year of our four year strategic plan. We are committed to providing a contemporary and progressive library service that brings community together, cultivates creativity and encourages learning, social connection and well-being. The plan covers four strategic areas that help us to achieve our goals.

Strategic Area 1:

A Place to Gather and Learn

Create safe, welcoming spaces that provide free access to information, knowledge and resources.

“I love an opportunity to take my kids to a place that gets them excited about books and reading. The staff have also always been friendly and welcoming.”

Strategic Area 2:

Partnership and innovation to achieve shared goals

Strengthen partnerships and encourage innovation to broaden and deepen our impact.

“I appreciate how friendly and helpful staff are and accommodating. We borrow a lot of books as a homeschool family, and have really benefited from all the resources.”

Strategic Area 3:

Facilitate community connection and wellbeing

Contribute to thriving, healthy and inclusive communities.

“It is a place to go to get away from your troubles for just a little while. Sometimes all you need is a smile and a good book!! I am 92 years next month and the help is essential.”

Strategic Area 4:

Organisational excellence

Strengthen our capacity to lead adapt and innovate to meet changing community needs.

“I love the opportunities to discover books, events, authors etc that I may not have otherwise, and the inclusivity- seeing a broad range of community members at home there.”

2023-2024 Events Calendar

Casey Winter Festival

June – July

NAIDOC Week

Sun, 2 July 2023 – Sun, 9 July 2023
For Our Elders

Library and Information Week

31 July – 6 August 2023
Where's the Source?

Homelessness Week

7 – 13 August 2023

National Science Week

12 - 23 August 2023 – Innovation:
Powering Future Industries

CBCA Book Week 2023

19 - 25 August 2023 – Read, Grow, Inspire

Adult Learners' Week

18 - 24 September 2023

Ageing Positively and Seniors' Month

October 2023

16 Days of Activism - Orange the World

25 November - 10 December 2023

Christmas/ End of Year celebrations

December 2023

Big Summer Read

1 December 2023 - 31 January 2024

Casey Midsumma Picnic

18 February 2024

Library Lovers' Day

14 February 2024

International Women's Day

8 March 2024

Harmony Week

20 - 26 March 2024

IDAHOBIT – International Day Against LGBTQIA+ Discrimination

17 May 2024

National Simultaneous Storytime

22 May 2024 – Bowerbird Blues

Reconciliation Week

27 May – 3 June 2024 Now More Than Ever

Refugee Week

16 - 22 June 2024 - Finding Freedom



Our Performance

2023 -2024

Visits

1,556,955

physical visits – 741,005
& virtual visits – 815,950

Average per week
– 29,941

Loans

2,058,926

physical loans 1,254,778
and eLoans 804,148



91,155 members

at June 30

eNewsletters

over 84,600

subscribers

Programs

2,125 youth sessions with

54,958

attendees

1,171 adult sessions with

12,176

attendees

Total items
digital

28,930

(eAudio and eBooks)

and physical

236,660*

* includes magazines title issues.

Internet bookings

50,856



Wi-Fi sessions

83,123



Website

443,692

visits

2,273

biligual picture
books



جامعہ
ਭਾਈਚਾਰਾ

LOTE items

8,526

in Chinese, Hindi,
Panjabi, Persian and
Sinhalese

Service Innovation in Growing Suburbs

City of Casey's fastest growing suburbs are in the southern districts of the municipality, and they are not currently serviced by a fixed branch library nearby. Additional funding provided by Casey this year enabled us to create more opportunities to service these growing communities.

The first project was to purchase and set up library lockers in three locations for members to pick up Holds (reserved items) and easily return items 24/7; they are located at Cranbourne West Community Hub, Manna Gum Family and Community Centre, and the Orana Community Place.



A new Library Lounge (small branch) was opened at the beautiful Cranbourne West Community Hub; this space operates like a small library branch offering new collections for loan, programs, public internet access and expert staff support. The Lounge was opened on 22 January 2024. The services were celebrated with a community launch on 17 February. The opening weeks have reinforced the desire for library services in this locality. There were 1,000 visitors to the space, and 450 items borrowed leading up to launch day.

“My partner and I love it here! Thank you for having one so close. We would love if it was open weekends so we could come here more often when we're not at work. Thanks
- Cranbourne West, library user

The third project was a branded Library Van for delivering Home Library Services and external visits to aged care, childcare, kindergartens and special events. All these initiatives help provide access to library services for those who cannot visit an existing branch. We have been delighted with the success of each initiative so far.

“Library staff members Elysia and Makaila visited the new Clyde Creek Primary School this month. Communities in Casey South are a particular focus for Connected Libraries, we were pleased to visit this school, which only opened in 2022. Clyde Creek has 85 prep students spread across 5 classes. The children learned about our libraries and enjoyed Elysia reading a story with them. Each child was sent home with a library bag and membership form to bring back to their local branch.
- Library Outreach Team Leader

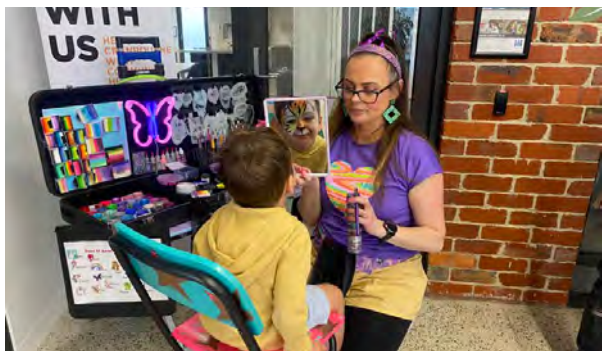




Family Fun Day

Connected Libraries celebrated the official opening of the new Cranbourne West Library Lounge at the Cranbourne West Community Hub on Saturday 17 February. It was a huge turnout with around 1,100 people coming through the doors of the Hub and Library space.

'The Great Gizmo' show in the Hall was a hit amongst the children, and other activities on the day included a giant bubble performer, oversized games, storytime, animal petting zoo, art and the ever-popular facepainting! Over 550 sausages were consumed by local families who are so happy to have a library branch available to them- many within walking distance.



The library lounge was officially opened with a ribbon cutting ceremony by our CEO Beth Luppino and Mr Miguel Belmar from the City of Casey. Library and Hub staff were on hand throughout the day to chat with the local community, demonstrate the use of the 24/7 access library lockers and welcome new library members.

Services for Babies, kids and teens



Fostering a love of Reading

Our regular children and youth programs promoted literacy and lifelong learning throughout school terms, and as part of school holiday programs. Programs included storytime, toddler time, baby rhyme time, STEAM club, code club, Lego club and book ninjas.

Blokes and Bubs Rhyme Time

Blokes and Bubs is a 35-minute baby and parent song, reading and rhyme session designed to celebrate male care giver participation in their child's growth and development.

Male care giver involvement in the early years of a child's development can build confidence for carer and child, reject gender stereotypes and foster a love of play, reading and communication. It equips fathers and male caregivers with tools to entertain, engage and play with their child as they develop as well as to meet other carers and share experiences.

“Thank you, I don't get to come during the day because I work.”
- Zarah's Dad

“Can we do this more often it's a lot of fun!”
- Flynn's Dad



Auslan Storytimes

Expression Australia helped us to deliver storytimes with the assistance of Auslan Interpreters to raise awareness of Deaf Communities and to enable parents and young children to experience signing. Auslan has not been part of library core programming in the past, however the Connected Libraries team enjoyed learning from the experts and are keen to deliver more accessible programs and events in the future. The Auslan Storytimes were a positive education opportunity for library staff and all participants.

The Gruffalo

The Gruffalo returned to the Bunjil Place Library in person (Tim the Librarian in disguise) for a reading of 'The Gruffalos Child' by Julia Donaldson. This coincided with the live production of the same name on at the Bunjil Place theatre. Pairing the childhood classic book with a holiday program and the theatre production was a fantastic opportunity to foster a love of reading in the youngest members of our community. Every copy of the Gruffalo books in the library were on loan or on hold after the event.

Big Summer Read

This statewide annual event attracted lots of attention this year. Our young readers in Casey read 19,866 books alone, and there were 1,454 entries in the prize draw – one of the strongest results in the state.

225 children and parents joined us at Bunjil Place Library for the Big Summer Read Wrap Party. Ben Woods, the illustrator of the Real Pigeons graphic novels, held a drawing workshop for attendees and we also enjoyed making some crafts based on the most popular books read in Casey this year- which were 'Where is the Green Sheep' and 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar.'



Our branch winners received a \$50 book voucher, and the grand prize winner won a Nintendo Switch.

Big Summer Read is supported by the Victorian Government, sponsored by Bolinda Publishing and BorrowBox, and delivered in partnership with the School Library Association of Victoria.

National Simultaneous Storytime

Over 470 children and their carers celebrated National Simultaneous Storytime (NSS) across Connected Libraries on Wednesday 22 May. This year's chosen book was 'Bowerbird Blues' by Aura Parker. This story inspires imagination, courage and self-confidence as well as a love, curiosity and passion for nature. NSS promotes reading and literacy, and each year many libraries, schools, preschools, childcare centres, bookshops and homes participate across Australia.

Bunjil Place Library hosted children from local primary schools and kindergartens in the blue amphitheatre decorated with a giant bower. After reading the book, Reptile Encounters discussed native Australian birds, marsupials and reptiles.

Doveton Library took 'Bowerbird Blues' to Myuna Farm, a lovely setting for the story and provided kids and their carers the opportunity to explore nature and animals. Sophie from Myuna Farm shared some of the animals who live there as part of the storytime.



Hampton Park Library welcomed local Victoria Police to read the story - Leading Senior Constable Brett Owen and Officer Greg. Students from the Noble Park English Language School and parents and children from the local community enjoyed the book then an interactive session about the role of police in supporting the community.

*“The event was a great success, it was great to see the engagement and interest the class had towards the officers. The excitement of the kids when they were able to tour the police van and push the siren button was amazing. A regular parent who visits the library for baby time praised Officer Brett on his reading and being able to keep her 9-month-old interested in the story.
- Keshia, Children and Youth Team*

Book Week

Bunjil Place Library celebrated Book Week with local author Andrea Rowe. Her new book 'Sunday Skating' inspired us to run a Sunday Skating event of our own. Andrea brought iced vovo's, a long-board, roller skates and lots of props to delight the audience. To compliment Andrea's storytelling we had a visit from Jess, the Princess on Skates. She performed skating tricks to music in the Bunjil Place Foyer, and the children had a great time scooting around the plaza, with bubbles blowing and music blaring.

Book Week was celebrated across the service with costumes, special events and programs. This calendar event is a highlight every August at Connected Libraries.



Kids Trivia

Bunjil Place Library held a kids trivia competition to celebrate Roald Dahl's world of stories. Nearly everyone who attended had read all his books and the kids easily mastered using Kahoot! Online trivia app. We had four rounds of five questions and mini games in between such as Twit beard decorating and Witch spell brewing. Dahl's stories continue to capture the imagination of young readers, and provided plenty of hilarious content for this lively and competitive young group.

Casey Young Writers' Festival

This year's Young Writers' Festival featured three workshops run by talented and varied authors Gabriel Bergmoser, George Ivanoff and Jasmine Cenci. This event was developed and funded in partnership with the City of Casey. Participating young people were aged between 10 and 14 years, and given the success of this year's events, we are looking forward to collaborating further with Council to deepen teenage engagement in library programs.



Science Technology Engineering Arts and Mathematics (STEAM)

STEAM Lab

STEAM Lab ran weekly during the school terms at Cranbourne Library. The sessions were hands on, encouraging children to learn by 'doing', rather than lots of talking and theory. Activities included simple animation using zoetropes, paper planes, and slime. As the year rolled on, many ideas for activities stemmed from suggestions the 'regulars' made themselves. STEAM skills continue to be a core aspect of curriculum at primary and secondary school, and also embedded into library programming.



Lego - a Family Challenge

Lego has always been fun for kids, but in 2024 things started to change. Lots of interested parents participated in Friday afternoon Lego Club at Bunjil Place Library. The school holidays also gave parents a chance to create Lego masterpieces with their kids. Families and friends teamed up to make some incredible creations. Lego building with family develops collective problem-solving skills, collaborative behaviours and reminds adults of the joy that play can bring.

Science Week

Bunjil Place Library hosted the student team from Monash University 'High Powered Rocketry'. Coordinator Jade Rayner spoke about the team's latest mission/competition in the USA. The students designed all stages of the rocket build, and even engineered the hull and engine components. They worked on the aerodynamics of the rocket and were able to explain this process to an audience that included children as young as 9 years old. The team brought their rocket 'Valkirie' along to show the crowd.

Endeavour Hills Library celebrated all things science and technology by adding a little STEAM to their regular programs. The Monday Project cracked some codes, science puns and jokes and discussed innovations for the future (Jetpacks anyone?). The Lego Club tested the rules of gravity by constructing bridges tall and wide. The STEAM Club had some fun with Sphero Bolt robots. They navigated, raced, and programmed these balls of fun throughout their afternoon club time.

Dinovember

An annual celebration of STEAM thinking and a great chance to promote our most borrowed Junior Non-Fiction collection items (dinosaurs are literally the most frequently borrowed books in the collection!), Dinovember celebrated all things Jurassic in November.

The Melbourne Museum in a Van brought fossils and artifacts from the dinosaur exhibits to the library and let the kids touch and feel them. They spoke about the museum's exhibition, Dinosaurs in Australia. For many families, visiting the Melbourne Museum is a rare event, and so seeing the fossils at the library was a welcome opportunity.

Using air-dry clay, kids were able to come and make their own dinosaur bone fossils. Matching up prebaked fossils to images of dinosaurs helped them to visualise what the bones would look like before they got to design their own.

We saw a huge group of over 100 people attend our Dinovember storytime in the park at Wilson's Botanic Park. The session included songs, rhymes and books about fossils.



Art and Craft

Book Nook Crafting

The book nook is a small diorama that you can set on your bookshelf between your books. They can create a window into another world, just like the books they sit beside. The children had the opportunity to work with lots of natural materials – sticks, stones, wood chips. Combined with crafting materials like plastic plants, miniature toy animals and cellophane to create a jungle or woodland grove.



Eco Art

21 inspiring artists joined in for some very messy fun! Encouraging the children to take inspiration from the beauty of nature and explore the colours, shapes and textures of all the diverse range of plants brought into the library. They really enjoyed being creative and were amazed they were allowed to be free to complete their creations with paint and leaves in the library amongst the books. Many of the adults who supervised also joined in the fun.



I just thought I would share this little story as I wrap up children's programs for the year with this lovely reflection on the value of the work we do with families. This morning when I responded to a knock on the staff door at Doveton Library, I was met by Henry and Mayra, 2 regulars to Toddler Time programs over the years, with their Dad Ben. Henry was very excited to present me with a bouquet of flowers he'd made with Dad from lego and photo collage.

It was very touching to receive and humbling reminder of the enduring connection we can build with families through our children's programs. It was beautiful to read that the library is a comfortable second home for the children. I can still remember Henry coming with Mum Sasha as a 3 month old baby, followed by Myra a few years later.

The photo collage they gave me is a beautiful memory of the fun we have had over the years. We had a full group of families fill out the space and join in for the final Toddler's Time at Doveton Library this morning. It was wonderful to have so many join in with singing and a joyful finale to the program for the year.

- Jenny, Children and Youth Team



Fun and Games

Families enjoyed gaming together on our Nintendo switch at the Mario Kart Tournament in January. The tournament was a little challenging for some younger participants who had not played; however Mario Kart has some easy settings which can be switched on to make the experience more enjoyable for beginners. We had 24 players who battled it out through several rounds until our first-place winner was triumphant!



Friday night games and Dungeons and Dragons

Libraries have board games available for playing at any time, but this year there was a regular cohort gathering at Bunjil Place Library each week and throughout the school holidays. Wyrmspan, Melbourne Monopoly, Ticket to Ride: Ghost Train, Uno, and Dungeons and Dragons (D&D) are some of our most popular games.

Friday Night Games averaged more than twenty players, with regular groups returning most weeks. One parent ran an extremely popular weekly D&D group all year! Friday Night Games was praised by attendees for providing an opportunity for people to find others with shared interests and make friends. One of our young players has since started his own D&D group at school and now takes turns running our regular Friday group.



Amazing Race Challenge with Casey 360 Bus, Leisure Centre, Reclink and Library

21 young adventurers braved the weather for an Amazing Race Challenge around the Endeavour Hills Precinct. Children had a blast adventuring to the Endeavour Hills Leisure Centre, playing Mario Kart with the Casey 360 Bus as well playing spike ball with Reclink .





Cranbourne West Secondary College Athlete Visit

Our Library Outreach Team worked with Cranbourne West Secondary College to bring Olympic Athlete Brooke Buschkuel to Year 7 students. The library team used the opportunity to promote the new library lounge at Cranbourne West Community Hub, and all the library services available to students. The students listened carefully throughout the session, and many have since visited the Hub and library space.

Dandy-Con

Connected Libraries staff had a stall at Dandy-Con in April. We promoted our pop-culture programs, particularly Manga Club, D&D Adventures, and Friday Night Games. We made free badges and handed out Imagine FX magazines. The stall featured a display of manga pictures, drawn by library officer Jason, as well as a sample of our available board games. Dandy Con was a great opportunity to connect with the Greater Dandenong Libraries team and our neighbouring residents from Greater Dandenong (many of whom also use our library services). We were also able to connect with community groups and businesses that we plan to work with in the future.



Disco and Karaoke Fun

Bunjil Place Library held a Silent Disco where grandmothers, grandchildren, toddlers, teens and dancers of all ages boogied along in the meeting room with the crew from Party Higher! The event was a sea of headphones (to hear the music), disco lighting and glow sticks. The dancing crowd played games throughout the event – musical statues, limbo and of course the conga.

“Thank you for helping my daughter celebrate her birthday this was so much fun, Gran even had a dance!

- Antoinette - Silent Disco participant

The fun continued when our leading Children and Youth Librarian Tim worked his DJ Magic for a Karaoke party. Our meeting room transformed with a stage, microphone and backdrop. Kids put in their requests, and loved getting up, singing a tune and strutting their stuff.





Sensitive Santa

Our Sensitive Santa program offered children with Autism Spectrum Disorder or any neurodivergent or physical disability the experience of meeting Santa in a low sensory environment.

The experience was meaningful and positive for the children as well as their carers and siblings. Each session lasted 20-minutes, giving children the chance to get comfortable with Santa, to dance, talk and play. A photographer took both candid and portrait shots, which were transferred to a USB for the families to take home and print.

This program minimised risks of sensory overload by providing reduced queue times, low lighting and staff who have specialised skills and training. The simple Christmas set did not include flashing lights, tinsel or music. Santa's 'helpers' blew bubbles and encouraged children to play with sensory toys during the session and a gift was given to each child.

Given the success of this program in previous years, all sessions were quickly booked out. Participants ranged in age from 11 months up to 16 years, some sessions were a single child with their parents and others the session included up to three siblings and extended family. Prior to the sessions, each family was contacted to ensure that everyone knew what to expect, and staff were briefed on individual needs and preferences. Santa was a volunteer (and a much-loved previous staff member! Thank you, Chris) who grew out a real beard for the program.

“The whole staff and Santa was amazing. Welcomed us, did a quick rundown on what’s going to happen. Santa was so lovely, he managed to get my youngest son to warm up to him. Was a great experience altogether!

– Sensitive Santa participant

“The elves and Santa were fabulous. They were warm and friendly and made us feel very comfortable. Can’t thank you all enough. It was amazing!

– Sensitive Santa participant

“I absolutely love the calm and approachable atmosphere you guys create. It’s so special and fun for the kids who would often miss out on regular Santa visits due to them being too fast paced and overwhelming. I’m so excited that you were able to bring back this experience for this year, my girls were over the moon, especially because you have the “real Santa” in attendance! It’s such a highlight of their Christmas. Thank you!

– Sensitive Santa participant

This Year's Most Popular Junior Reads

Junior fiction



- 1 **Twenty thousand fleas under the sea**
by Dav Pilkey
- 2 **Diary of a Wimpy Kid 14: Wrecking Ball**
by Jeff Kinney
- 3 **156-Storey Treehouse**
by Andy Griffiths



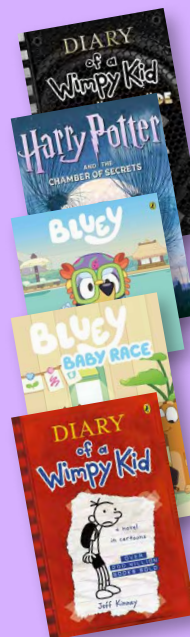
- 4 **Cheesy Weird! (Weirdo 19)**
by Anh Do
- 5 **Weirdomania! (Weirdo 13)**
by Anh Do

Junior fiction eAudio



- 1 **Diper Överlöde**
by Jeff Kinney
- 2 **Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince**
by J.K. Rowling
- 3 **Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets**
by J.K. Rowling
- 4 **Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire**
by J.K. Rowling
- 5 **Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone**
by J.K. Rowling

Junior fiction eBooks



- 1 **Diper Överlöde**
by Jeff Kinney
- 2 **Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets**
by J.K. Rowling
- 3 **Swim School**
by Bluey
- 4 **Baby Race**
by Bluey
- 5 **Diary of a Wimpy Kid**
by Jeff Kinney

Young adult fiction



- 1 **The Inheritance Games**
by Jennifer Lynn Barnes
- 2 **Throne of Glass**
by Sarah Maas
- 3 **Dragon Ball Super. 18**
by Akira Toriyama
- 4 **Asterix and the Falling Sky 33**
by Albert Uderzo
- 5 **Good Girl's Guide to Murder**
by Holly Jackson

Young adult fiction eBooks

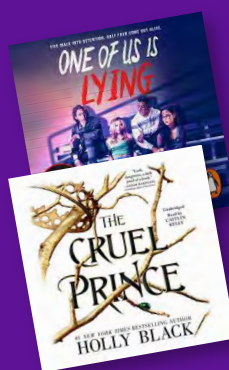


- 1 **Throne of Glass**
by Sarah J. Maas
- 2 **Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes**
by Suzanne Collins
- 3 **Stolen Heir**
by Holly Black
- 4 **One of us is Lying**
by Karen M. McManus
- 5 **Crown of Midnight**
by Sarah J. Maas

Young adult fiction eAudio



- 1 **Good Girl's Guide to Murder**
by Holly Jackson
- 2 **Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes**
by Suzanne Collins
- 3 **Powerless**
by Lauren Roberts



- 4 **One of us is Lying**
by Karen M. McManus
- 5 **Cruel Prince**
by Holly Black

Services for Adults



Author Visits

‘Authors in Conversation’ events featured a range of talented writers throughout the year, a selection of our events included:

Jelena Dokic

In Conversation with Jelena Dokic marked International Women’s Day 2024. She spoke about her two books, ‘Unbreakable’ and ‘Fearless,’ and told the audience about her life including her childhood, tennis career and the abuse she suffered at the hands of her father. She talked about her mental health challenges and recovery - it was a powerful and thought-provoking event.



Julie Goodwin

In late May we hosted MasterChef celebrity Julie Goodwin for an In Conversation event at Bunjil Place. Julie Goodwin was the inaugural MasterChef winner, and is now an author and regular columnist. In her newly released memoir Julie revisited her life journey exploring themes of mental health, family, fame and failure. Over 250 people attended the event where Julie discussed her latest book ‘Your Time Starts Now’. With her quick-witted humour and honesty Julie navigated the good and the difficult phases in her life and the lessons she has learned along the way.



Judy Nunn

One of Australia's most successful authors, Judy Nunn joined us in October to discuss her blockbuster novel 'Black Sheep'. 'Black Sheep' is a sweeping outback novel about a prosperous sheep-farming family and the enigmatic young man with a dark past they let into their lives. Judy is also a well-loved actor who featured for fifteen years on Australian tv soap Home and Away. In recent years Judy has grown a large following as an author of Australian historical fiction.

Kylie Orr and Jo Dixon

Australian authors Kylie Orr and Jo Dixon visited Bunjil Place Library in April to talk about their domestic suspense novels. Kylie Orr writes fiction stories of everyday people and their secret life behind closed doors. Jo Dixon writes stories with characters dealing with unsettling situations making fatal mistakes. We love their work and were excited to have them visit as part of our In Conversation series.

Tricia Stringer

Multiple award-winning Australian author Tricia Stringer joined us in October to talk about her latest novel 'Back on Track'. Tricia grew up on a farm and spent most of her life in rural communities, with many years in education as a teacher, a librarian and an IT coordinator. A well-loved voice of Australian storytelling, her books tackle themes of troubled relationships, ageism and love.

Rachael Johns

Library Lovers Day was marked with romance author Rachael Johns. Rachael has been a featured author at past events, and we welcomed her return this year with another brilliant novel 'The other Bridget'. The story is set in a library – and our very own team member Janine actually features as a character! Audience and presenters wore rabbit ears for the day in keeping with the theme of the book.



Local History



Local History events this year featured a Beginning Family History session to celebrate Family History month, an interactive session on using Ancestry & Find My Past, Searching Military Records Online and a 4-week series of Family History Skills seminars.

Local History Officer Kate also interviewed five historical fiction authors for the Book Matters Podcast. In these interviews, Kate discussed their books, with broader questions about local history and family history. As a special History Month edition of the podcast, there was an interview with Heather Arnold, President of Koo Wee Rup Historical Society and our former local history librarian, on her book 'Enchanted Beneath the Bluff'.

In October, Cranbourne Library exhibited items from the former Doveton North Technical School, currently held in our archive. The exhibition included images of the school, newspapers celebrating achievements and milestones in the school's history, sports team images, and the four sports house flags once used by the school.

Heritage Festival - Berwick Senior Citizens Centre

The Cardinia Heritage Festival was held in conjunction with neighbouring library service Myli-My Community Library, and the Local History Reference Group at the Berwick Senior Citizens Centre. Over 150 people attended the festival, officially opened by former local and

state politician Neil Lucas, JP - a dedicated local historian. The festival supported the local historical societies, groups and individuals who are committed to preserving and sharing the history of the City of Casey and Cardinia Shire. Attendees and stallholders enjoyed the opportunity to share stories, buy and sell local publications and make new connections.



Art and Craft

Pet Portrait Painting

Creative arts continued to be popular throughout the year. These introductory sessions allowed attendees to learn the basics of portrait painting their pets, and both sessions booked out quickly. The outcomes were quite amazing.

“Painting and art put me in a different place.

- Pet Portrait participant

IDAHOBIT Embroidery

This workshop with Miki from Mikimac stitches was run at Bunjil Place Library in acknowledgement of International Day Against LGBTQIA+ Discrimination. We invited members of the LGBTQIA+ community and their allies to create embroidered artworks. Miki is known for colourful, abstract contemporary embroidery.



Tiny Art Show

After the success of the inaugural Tiny Art Show in 2022, it was back for a second year. 10 prizes were on offer across our five library branches. In addition to the Public-Voted winner we introduced a Judges Choice award for each branch. The Judge's Choice was picked by Mary from the Berwick Artists Society.

There were 108 entries that included works that were painted, sketched, knitted and completed in other mediums. The works were inspiring and showed off the creative talent in our community.



Book Groups

This year Connected Libraries supported **37 community-lead** and **12 library-lead** book groups - this included our walking book group that met each month at Wilson Botanic Park.



Book groups allow people to connect with others, combat loneliness, expand their reading choices and more. Our in-branch groups held during weekdays attracted mainly retirees, while the evening groups included a wide range of ages and backgrounds. Firm friendships have formed in some of these groups, often between vulnerable people. One group has dinner or lunch together once every two months as well as the actual book focused meetings.

The Rainbow Book Group is for anyone interested in reading and discussing LGBTQIA+ themes and authors.

“It helps me broaden my perspective on the Queer community through stories told of experiences and times of history I haven’t lived myself...the book group pushes me outside my comfortable fantasy genre to connect to other points of view and lived experience through genres I would not normally gravitate towards. I have read some books that have really moved me and changed my view of the world.

- Rainbow Book Group participant

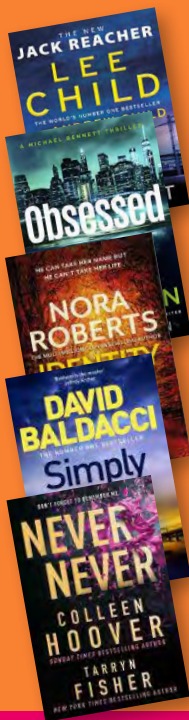
Ageing Positively

Connected Libraries offered programs in all library branches to celebrate seniors month including watercolour painting, brain training, accessing affordable housing, Zumba and mindful mandalas. Our community is becoming increasingly reliant on digital services and devices and many seniors seek out additional help in this area from their local library through tailored one on one courses or small groups.



This Year's Most Popular Adult Reads

Adult fiction



- 1 **Secret Jack Reacher, Book 28**
by Lee Child and Andrew Child
- 2 **Obsessed**
by James Patterson
- 3 **Identity**
by Nora Roberts
- 4 **Simply Lies**
by David Baldacci
- 5 **Never Never**
by Colleen Hoover and Tarryn Fisher

Adult non-fiction



- 1 **Spare**
by Prince Harry
- 2 **Atomic Habits**
by James Clear
- 3 **The Woman in Me**
by Britney Spears
- 4 **Did I Ever Tell You This?**
by Sam Neill
- 5 **The Barefoot Investor: the only money guide you'll ever need**
by Scot Pape

Adult fiction eAudio



- 1 **Homecoming**
by Kate Morton
- 2 **Apples Never Fall**
by Liane Moriarty
- 3 **Iron Flame**
by Rebecca Yarros



- 4 **Tattooist of Auschwitz**
by Heather Morris
- 5 **Soulmate**
by Sally Hepworth

Adult fiction eBooks



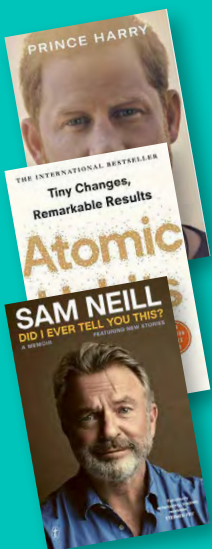
- 1 **Exiles**
by Jane Harper
- 2 **Apples Never Fall**
by Liane Moriarty
- 3 **The Perfect Marriage**
by Jeneva Rose
- 4 **Homecoming**
by Kate Morton
- 5 **Yellowface**
by Rebecca F Kuang

Adult non-fiction eAudio



- 1 **Spare**
by Prince Harry
- 2 **Atomic Habits**
by James Clear
- 3 **I'm Glad My Mom Died**
by Jennette McCurdy
- 4 **Love Stories**
by Trent Dalton
- 5 **Subtle Art of Not Giving a F*ck**
by Mark Manson

Adult non-fiction eBook



- 1 **Spare**
by Prince Harry
- 2 **Atomic Habits**
by James Clear
- 3 **Did I Ever Tell You This?**
by Sam Neill



- 4 **Investing With She's on the Money**
by Victoria Devine
- 5 **The Light We Carry**
by Michelle Obama

Digital Literacy and Learning



Digital Literacy for Seniors Project

Connected Libraries received grant funding from the Victorian Government through the Digital Literacy for Seniors Program to help older Victorians to develop their digital skills.

The over 55's digital literacy program assisted participants to build capacity and confidence to navigate and use digital devices (laptop, iPad, mobile phone), and to access online library services. We offered classes through community centers, retirement villages and social groups – both in and outside our library branches.

We delivered 30 programs (54 individual sessions) and reached 271 participants. We also established new relationships with community organisations and partners. Connected Libraries' laptops, tablets and iPads were available for participants to use at all sessions and laptops were made available for loan for people that didn't have their own at home.

Community organisations we collaborated with included:

- Southern Migrant Refugee Centre
- Sikh Men's Group
- Halcyon Berwick Over 55's Lifestyle Community
- Lifestyle Berwick Waters
- Coral Mews Retirement Village
- Brentwood Park Neighbourhood House.



*“Thank you for teaching everyone to use computers more effectively. You did a great job.
- SMRC Sikh Mens Group participant*

*“A month after the session, one participant shared that she has been teaching her friends about what she had learned. She has been explaining why it's so important to have different passwords for each account, and how they can use a password manager to manage them.
- Doveton Library Tech Time Café participant*

Building Digital Skills



Mobile Phone course at Berwick Neighbourhood Centre

The Digital Literacy team delivered a four-week Mobile Phones course through the Berwick Neighbourhood Centre (BNC). The sessions focused on developing attendees' confidence using their mobile phones, including navigating their devices, accessing myGov and downloading apps. These sessions were tailored to participant needs with each session addressing queries raised in previous sessions. Through word of mouth, demand for this program quickly increased. This strengthened our partnership with BNC and the Berwick community, where we do not have a fixed library location.

“We loved having the library visit, to provide additional computer classes to our students and we are looking forward to the other sessions placed this year. We enjoy our partnership with the Endeavour Hills Library and the various activities we collaborate with. The online program was very successful, and the participants learnt online safety and the feedback from the class was of a high standard and they enjoyed gaining new knowledge. Thank you to the Library for hosting the session.

– Cathy Froilond EHNC programs coordinator

Online Safety at Endeavour Hills Neighbourhood Centre

Endeavour Hills Library and the Endeavour Hills Neighbourhood Centre (EHNC) collaborated on a digital literacy program this year, utilising the dedicated computer room in the EHNC and the library's specialised staff. This course focused on online safety including passwords, device security, scams and digital data.

“It's great that these courses are offered to us novices in small groups and printed materials for us to refresh our skills.

– Program participant

“This course is very practical and provided down to earth examples.

– Program participant



Celebrating Diversity



Multilingual Storytimes

English and Sinhalese Storytime was a hit at Hampton Park Library. Staff members Chamani and Ann sang songs and stories in both languages including 'Peter Rabbit', 'I'm a Little Teapot', 'The Runaway Kite' and 'Brown Bear Brown Bear'.

Rasheed and Tim delivered storytime in English and Dari, they read the books 'Brown Bear Brown Bear' and 'Who's Nose is that?' in both languages. The library team taught colours in Dari and English using images. A parachute was used to play memory games, and craft activities helped to reinforce the Dari words shared in the session.



Southern Migrant Resource Centre partnership

One objective of Connected Libraries is to empower communities to better access social and wellbeing services. This year, working with the Southern Migrant Resource Centre (SMRC) allowed us to connect better with newly arrived Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) community members.

We cemented the partnership with SMRC with an agreement to incorporate library membership into established SMRC settlement services for newly arrived community. This has been a fantastic way for the growing number of migrants in Casey to establish links into free services.

One of our newest Endeavour Hills members - Walakulage asked lots of questions about the library, like what can she do in the library, what times are we open, is she allowed to study in the library. While talking, I asked if there was another language spoken at home, which she said Sinhalese, so I passed her one of our Sinhalese 'Welcome to Connected Libraries' brochure and her face lit up with a look of wonder, it was just beautiful. She was so excited to see a brochure in a language she knew and could read. So of course, that lead into another conversation our CL's Sinhalese collection which she thought was fantastic

- Wendy, Connected Libraries team member

Cultural Celebrations

Harmony Week

During Harmony Week, Chef Prasit from Oddie's Kitchen visited four library branches showcasing culinary dishes from different countries. A Henna hand painting artist at Endeavour Hills Library taught participants how to do their own hand tattoo. People in the class discussed the calming nature of this mindful activity. The artist also found the experience rewarding as they connected with members of the public.

“Excellent cooking demo and a delicious meal. Picked up some great tips and learned a new recipe. An excellent presenter, thank you!

- Harmony Week participant

“Great community activity, otherwise I won't come to the library. Activities encourage my family to visit.

- Harmony Week participant

Lunar New Year

City of Casey has many families in Casey who celebrate the Lunar New Year. Connected Libraries marked the occasion with 'A Little Chinese Adventure' who specialise in Mandarin/English Storytimes. Presenter, Jing Jing brought along props including a puppet to celebrate the year of the Dragon. The library was decorated with lanterns and included a lantern decorating workshop.

We had 36 families join us for the Tuesday evening event. Some of the families spoke Mandarin at home, but many were also learning Chinese at school and were excited to test their skills, chatting with each other and showing what they had learned.

Eid

Connected Libraries team member Seema delivered a special Storytime celebrating the cultural festival of Eid at Cranbourne Library. As part of the event, older children wrote a letter to a friend to celebrate Eid and decorated the envelope, while the younger children completed a colouring sheet. There were other activities across our branches, marking the festival and led by community, including henna hand painting, children's craft activities, and an exhibition of the Quran.



NAIDOC Week

Every year, the week beginning the first Sunday of July is NAIDOC week, celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, achievements and history. It's a time to learn about and appreciate the history and culture of First Nations peoples. Connected Libraries are situated on the land of the Bunurong and Boonwurrung peoples, who have cared for this land over many generations. As part of NAIDOC Week 2023 Parrdarrama Pangenna and Six Rivers artist N'dene Riley from Baluk Art Studio lead the painting of a community mural at Bunjil Place, Cranbourne, Doveton and Endeavour Hills Libraries. N'dene has worked with local galleries and schools on public art. Children learnt about N'Dene's story, and her art style. She comes from Palawa country and talked to the children about the importance of recognising the heritage of Aboriginal art – that each community has different styles and techniques, symbols and colours.



Reconciliation Action Plan

Connected Libraries affirmed our commitment to reconciliation in 2017 (then trading as Casey Cardinia Libraries) with the formation of a dedicated working group to begin to understand the ways we could impact, commit to and advance reconciliation within our sphere of influence. With the help of Reconciliation Australia, we developed our first Reconciliation Action Plan which achieved formal endorsement in 2022. We completed the articulated actions in the plan this year, and achieved the following key outcomes:

- Development and visual identification marking of library collections - we include contemporary works by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors, illustrators and poets in our evolving collections to reflect the ongoing dynamic cultures of First Peoples
- Delivery of programs to foster understanding and acknowledgement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures
- Development of employment pathways including planning and advertising a library traineeship for an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person
- Create employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by employing library staff, performers, artists, educators, Elders and through responsible procurement practices
- Fostering of partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, including delivering outreach services through Bush Playgroup at Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne, Doveton Gathering Place and VACCA family nights
- Participation and delivery of Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC events
- Renewal of RAP working group with commitment to ongoing reconciliation journey
- Deepen understanding of cultural learning needs within our library services team, and seek training opportunities to improve cultural knowledge and understanding

We strive to make the libraries in Casey places where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples feel safe and welcome. We are proud to have delivered on our first Reconciliation Action Plan.

Library on the Road



The City of Casey is rapidly growing. This year we invested more time and resources into taking libraries into community settings beyond our fixed branch locations. This has been a great opportunity to connect with new members and promote the benefits of our free services.

Casey Kids Carnival

Connected Libraries loves being part of Casey Kids Carnival. This year we delivered Storytime on the main stage to a large crowd. Despite challenging weather conditions, there were some great opportunities for connection, and a few 'wins' on the day:

- We discovered that community members were excited for our new pick-up holds lockers at Clyde
- We promoted our children's programs with some families unaware that we offer programming
- We assisted library members accessing their library app and our online resources
- We handed out 76 bags to children and families, which included the introduction brochure, fridge magnet and programs booklet.
- We scored a photo with Maya the winner of Casey's Young Woman of the Year and her family.
- The Casey Neighbourhood dog mascot (Damien) stopped by for a photo.

Federation University

Our team were onsite at Federation University twice in August. We had a table in the student lounge to promote the library service to students during FedFast week. Students were excited to hear about the dedicated study spaces available at Connected Libraries and the digital library platform. We also signed up a number of new members this month.



Storytimes at Wilson Botanic Park

Community members brought rugs and snacks, and enjoyed 45-minutes of stories, songs and rhymes on the first Thursday of each month with Connected Libraries staff. In Autumn, a session drew a crowd of 90 people for lots of Sloth stories that had everyone monkeying around. We value the ongoing support and commitment of the Wilson Botanic Park management team who promoted this on their social media page and helped us set up every month with their Friends of the Garden group.



Endeavour Hills Shopping Centre

Our regular holiday storytime that takes place at the Endeavour Hills Shopping Centre was a big hit this winter. We read and sang many silly books and songs with the kids who enjoyed the ridiculous rhymes and songs. We had come prepared with some funny hats and costumes that the kids were able to try on and wear throughout the session and one little boy even stuck a moustache on! They all left after the craft with some bubbles and big smiles on their faces. We had 16 children at the program who later came to the library with their voucher to collect a free book.

Casey Rainbow Picnic

The Casey Rainbow Picnic is an annual family-friendly event held every summer, celebrating the LGBTQIA+ community of Casey. Organised by the Casey Rainbow Community group in collaboration with Casey Council, it combines music, entertainment, drag performances, food trucks and community organisation stalls.

The library held a stall that included books from our Rainbow collection available for borrowing, library memberships, badge making with pride flags, pronouns or custom designs, and a storytime.



“The event had a lovely community vibe, and in our current climate that can often include protest and vitriol directed at the LGBTQIA+ community, it was fantastic to see the community being celebrated and uplifted.

- Casey Rainbow Picnic participant

Our Volunteers

Connected Libraries sincerely appreciates the contributions made by our volunteers and supporters. In 2023-2024 they helped:

- Provide prizes for reading programs and writing competitions
- Promote the value of libraries to their networks
- Deliver the Home Library Service to housebound community
- Assist and run informal programs for library users including hand crafting, English conversation classes and Code club.

Home Library Service Volunteers

Connected Libraries offers a Home Library Service (HLS) to members of our Casey community. It connects our library to members who would be otherwise restricted in accessing the library due to various factors - age, ill health/ disability, housebound, full-time carers or residents in a care facility.

We have 160 active Home Library recipients and made over 1,400 visits in 2023-2024 to recipients residing in their own homes and in Aged Care Centres. These visits were facilitated by a group of amazing volunteers and members of our Outreach team. We couldn't do it without these volunteers who give their time to help our members feel valued.

The team received a lovely card and box of chocolates from a Home Library recipient's family after her passing away, thanking Library staff for their service to their mother. Audrey was blind - a gentle loving person who Makaila would sit with and talk to her about the books she had chosen for her. She loved her mystery playaways! It's a reminder of the deep connection between the HLS staff and the recipients, and the difference we make in people's lives.

Sorry to miss you today
but I have to see my
other favourite lady!
Thanks for the books.
Yours,
Jen

*“You are very much appreciated;
all you do is so very helpful.*

- Pauline, HLS member

*“You have been so kind and
considerate with the service you
have provided to mum.
We really can't say thank you enough.*

- Iain, son of HLS member

Organisational Excellence



Our Values

Connected Libraries has been guided by our team values of Creativity, Love of Learning, Teamwork, Social Intelligence and Humour for the past 7 years. At the Staff Professional Development Day in November 2023, we revisited these values and associated guiding behaviours to ask ourselves: Are they still serving us well? Are there any we now see as embedded in our DNA and we no longer need to name them? Are there any that no longer apply? Are there other values/behaviours that could serve us better?

After robust discussion on the day, and throughout the weeks following, we agreed on a refreshed values list, to take Connected Libraries into the future. The updated values are Creativity, Connection, Enrichment, Humour, Kindness and Teamwork. This set of values underpins our daily work, but also helps us to attract like-minded people to come and work with us.



Our Team

at 30 June 2024

Employees	120
FTE	58
Full-time	25
Part-time	88
Casual	7



Connected Libraries new Enterprise Agreement 2024 was successfully lodged with the FairWork Commission on 27 March. There was a strong team of staff representatives involved in drafting the new terms, and the entire workforce voted on the new Agreement early this year. The new Agreement was ratified and effective from 17 May 2024 and expires on 23 November 2026.

Library Sector Representation

There is a strong state-wide network of professional groups for public libraries headed by the peak body Public Libraries Victoria (PLV). The Connected Libraries team represented our service on the following Special Interest Groups in 2023-2024:

- PLV Executive, and Managers group
- Reader Development
- Library Operations
- Multicultural Services
- Marketing and Advocacy
- Collections
- ICT
- Home Library/Outreach Services
- Children's and Youth Services

Our service was also represented on the following committees:

- Libraries Victoria (Shared Collections and services Consortium)

Being part of these groups has enabled Connected Libraries to share and understand models of best practice, and offer professional development opportunities for our workforce.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Connected Libraries supports the vision of City of Casey to create liveable, healthy and productive communities.

Globally, libraries are acknowledged as playing an important role in meeting the UN2030 Sustainable Goals (SDG) by providing access to lifelong learning, in particular libraries support the achievement of following SDGs.





Collections for enjoyment and learning

The library collections include a wide range of physical and electronic items, fiction and non-fiction books, magazines, newspapers and audio-visual materials.

The most popular physical collections this year were adult fiction, junior fiction, board books, begin-to-read level books and our Top Titles collection.

We know people love digital content, and our digital collections include almost 29,000 e-titles as well as streaming platforms, digital newspapers and other learning apps and databases.

Connected Libraries continue to lend laptops and personal computers to help people access information from home. Our 'library of things' expanded this year to include induction cooktops and energy-testing kits.

“The service provided by you and the library is terrific and much appreciated. As a pensioner I cannot afford books and I am well aware that my love of palaeontology and archaeology is not shared everyone.

- Pauline - library user who made a purchase request

“I have to say that Endeavour Hills Library would have to be the best library in Melbourne. I have always such excellent service and the array of books is amazing. I have found many new authors from the displays that staff put up.

- Bernadette - Endeavour Hills library user

Marketing and Promotions

Connected Libraries had great media coverage throughout the year, with many positive stories appearing in the local papers.

Libraries welcome colour

The Cranbourne West Library has received a boost of colour for the first time since its opening in 2019. The new lounge area is bright and cheerful, with a large window and a comfortable seating area. The library staff are excited to welcome the community back to the new lounge.

Sensitive Santa land

Children and Santa Claus are having fun at the library. The children are excited to see Santa and receive gifts. The library staff are also having a great time with the children.

Family fun day

A family fun day was held at the library. The children enjoyed the activities and the library staff were also having a great time.

Local history

Connected Libraries is bringing back the History Month Donation Drive campaign. The campaign is aimed at collecting historical items for the library's collection.

Instagram post: Welcome to Cranbourne West Library Lounge. A photo of the new lounge area with the text 'Welcome to Cranbourne West Library Lounge'.

MasterChef star at Bur

A MasterChef star is visiting the library. The children are excited to see the star and learn from them.

New library lockers at community centres

Connected Libraries and the City of Casey are launching 277 library lockers at community centres.

Race to the finish line

A race to the finish line event was held at the library. The children enjoyed the race and the library staff were also having a great time.

Instagram post: Welcome to Cranbourne West Library Lounge. A photo of the new lounge area with the text 'Welcome to Cranbourne West Library Lounge'.

Lounge a hit

A family fun day was held at the library. The children enjoyed the lounge and the library staff were also having a great time.

Meet Janine

A Meet Janine event was held at the library. The children enjoyed the event and the library staff were also having a great time.

A \$25,000 gift of laptops was donated to Connected Libraries. The laptops will be used to support the library's digital literacy programs.

From reader to leader - and Book Matters podcast star

A reader has become a leader and a Book Matters podcast star.

Bookworms rejoice: New library lounge, locker

Bookworms are rejoicing over the new library lounge and locker.

Instagram post: \$25,000 gift for laptops. A photo of the laptops with the text '\$25,000 gift for laptops'.

Bookworms rejoice: New library lounge, locker

Bookworms are rejoicing over the new library lounge and locker.

Bookworms rejoice: New library lounge, locker

Bookworms are rejoicing over the new library lounge and locker.

Instagram post: Bowerbird Blues to be read simultaneously. A photo of the children reading Bowerbird Blues with the text 'Bowerbird Blues to be read simultaneously'.

Bookworms rejoice: New library lounge, locker

Bookworms are rejoicing over the new library lounge and locker.

Bookworms rejoice: New library lounge, locker

Bookworms are rejoicing over the new library lounge and locker.

Instagram post: Bowerbird Blues to be read simultaneously. A photo of the children reading Bowerbird Blues with the text 'Bowerbird Blues to be read simultaneously'.

Bookworms rejoice: New library lounge, locker

Bookworms are rejoicing over the new library lounge and locker.

Bookworms rejoice: New library lounge, locker

Bookworms are rejoicing over the new library lounge and locker.

Our Community Says

Community Survey

Connected Libraries conducted a survey of our library users and members in September 2023. We received over 2,000 responses across two weeks.

80% of respondents value borrowing library materials, reinforcing that library collections remain fundamentally important to our service offering - we had over 741,000 physical loans processed in 2023-2024. The next most popular services are programs/events, digital literacy support, staff support/advice and eResources.

The predominant words used to describe how respondents feel when they enter their local library are relaxed, calm, welcome, peaceful, excited and supported.

Some constructive feedback was received relating to signage and feeling unable to find things - the Connected Libraries team will work on improvements to this in the coming year.

“ I love my local library. It is a place where I felt welcome since day one - I was an immigrant and this gave me a sense of belonging when everything felt foreign and different.

“ The library is truly a haven for me. I find it to be a safe and quiet environment where I'm able to focus on my academic and personal interests.

“ Feeling welcomed, accepted, included. Participation in programs and events allows us to feel all these positive and uplifting experiences.

“ Beautiful building, warm & comfortable, a little unsure where to find things.

“ Walking into my local library makes me feel connected to the area in which I live.

“ There are always familiar faces to meet and friendly staff who are always willing to help.

Places and spaces are important to our users - there are significant comments about the look and feel of buildings - they want to see renewal and find quiet spaces when they need them. There was also concern about over-crowded study spaces. Study space improvements are coming to Bunjil Place Library in 2024.



“ It makes me feel proud that the community is being invested in.

“ I love all the books, the spacious aisles and sitting areas, the peace of the place.

“ Very noisy and no one (staff or parents) teach children how to behave inside the library.

“ Unsure of where things are located and how to use the facilities.

“ Sometimes happy sometimes a bit lack lustre as libraries are not what they used to be and the community mecca they were due to technology.

“ All people deserve a safe space for meeting, learning and recreation It all starts at our local libraries.

Over 90% of users consider that library services contribute to their sense of wellbeing. Loneliness affects our community, and many respondents referenced the positive impact of visiting the library and reading:

“ Connected libraries allow people of all ages and backgrounds within the community and wider reaches to be able to access a range of learning, entertainment channels and events free of cost in a safe and thriving environment. These contributes a great deal to keeping the health and well-being of residents in the community.

“ The books are transformative, healing and helpful for my journey. I know if I ever feel lonely, I can visit the library and be around people.

“ It can decrease the feeling of loneliness somewhat. I have family and friends but I still feel lonely.

Funding Partners, Philanthropy and Donations



Connected Libraries is largely funded through contributions from City of Casey and the Victorian State Government. We also receive in kind and financial support from local businesses and community organisations.

Connected Libraries are grateful to partners who support our mission to encourage lifelong learning, increase literacy and health and wellbeing, and build strong, resilient communities across the Casey region.

Connected Libraries is endorsed by the Australian Tax Office as a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR). We welcome bequests, donations and sponsorships.

We are deeply thankful to those members of our community who have considered or committed a bequest to our library service to benefit the community.

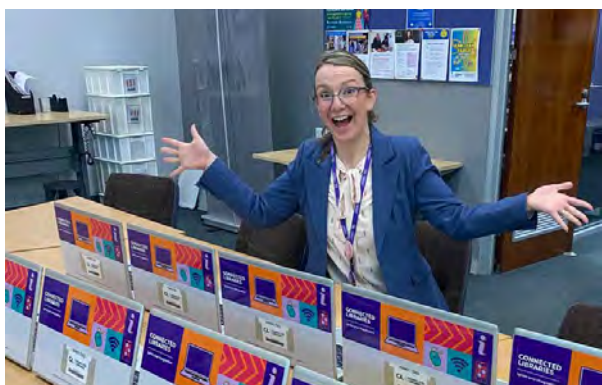
\$25,000 generously donated by locals to buy laptops for Connected Libraries Members

Local Casey residents and long-time library users, Robin and Arnis Dzedins generously donated \$25,000 to Connected Libraries to purchase laptops and Wi-Fi dongles so that Hampton Park users can borrow a laptop for free.

Laptops offer members of the Casey community access to technology at home, where this might not be possible otherwise. When family budgets are tight this is a wonderful and free resource.

“Donating to the library can be very rewarding. We have chosen to give back to the community through the library because we value the way it has enriched our own lives over many years. Our gift is a practical way to support our local library service to expand its social inclusion and access programs, especially to those who are learning English and starting to use computers.”

- Robin Dzedins





How we measured up

Connected Libraries used the following measures to track our performance in 2023-2024.

Measure	Actual 2021/2022	Actual 2022/2023	Projections 2023/2024*	Actual 2023/2024
Engagement				
Utilisation of Technology (Wi-Fi, Public PC user in branch)	100,188	146,257	150,000	130,993
Net Promoter Score (Community Survey)	76	N/A	65	65
Memberships**	74,210	77,341	94,000	91,155
Visits				
Visits – physical	351,484	654,600	795,599	741,005
Visits – virtual	939,118	914,916	795,000	815,950
Total visits	1,290,602	1,569,516	1,590,599	1,556,955
Program and events attendance	26,783	49,505	63,420	67,134
Collection				
Loans – physical	1,017,653	1,234,911	1,240,000	1,254,778
Loans – digital	772,269	783,053	709,000	804,148
Total loans (physical and digital)	1,789,922	2,017,964	1,949,000	2,058,926
Turnover rate – physical items	4.6	5.2	5.2	
Turnover rate – digital items	32.6	6.4	6.4	
Physical quality of library collection (age of collection - less than 5 years)	69.7%	76.0%	76.0%	69.6%
Cost of Delivery				
Cost of library service per capita	\$23.82	\$25.85	\$22.46	
Cost of library service per visit (total expenditure)	\$34.26	\$17.63	\$11.61	

* Revised projections from those presented in the Library Plan 2021 – 2025 (Updated April 2024).

For more detail:

- Local Government Reporting Framework measures go to [City of Casey](#) websites
- Key Performance Indicators can be sourced from the [Annual Survey of Public Libraries](#)
- Australian Library and Information Association ([ALIA Guidelines, Standards and Outcome Measures for Australian Public Libraries -2020](#))

Thank you, we are grateful



We are grateful for the partnership and support from so many other organisations this year. With their help we were able to enrich library programming and offer additional services to our community.

Aligned Leisure
AMES
Andrews Centre, Endeavour Hills
Anglicare – Parent zone (new)
Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA)
Australian Taxation Office (ATO)
Australia Post
Autumn Place Community Hub
Balla Balla Community Centre
Be Connected Grant funding
Berwick Artists Society
Berwick Country Women's Association (CWA)
Berwick Mechanics Institute
Berwick Neighbourhood Centre
Blind Bight Community House
Bolinda Publishing
Bunjil Place Precinct Partners
Casey Aboriginal Gathering Place
Casey North Information and Support Services
Casey 360 Bus
Casey Rainbow Community
Casey Central
Casey Tech
City of Casey
City of Casey (Best Start)
Community Information and Support Cranbourne Inc. (CISC)
Cranbourne & District Community Services Group (CDCSG)
Cranbourne West Community Hub
Dad's Matter
Dandenong and District Aborigines Co-Operative Limited (DDACL)

Doveton College
Doveton Eumemmerring Township Association
Doveton Neighbourhood Learning Centre
Dymocks
Endeavour Hills Town Square
Endeavour Hills Shopping Centre
Endeavour Hills Neighbourhood Centre
enliven Enhancing Social Health: Food from Home
Escabags
Expression Australia
Family Life
Federation University
Friends of Connected Libraries
Good Things Australia
Greater Dandenong Libraries
Hallam Friends of the Red Cross
Hampton Park Community Gardens
Hampton Park Community House
Hampton Park Fire Brigade
Hampton Park Secondary College
Justices of Peace Victoria
LINK Health and Community
Local History Societies
Local Maternal Child Health Centres, Childcare and Kindergartens and schools.
Manna Gum Community Centre
Men's Shed Junction Village
Myli – My Community Library
Monash Health
Myuna Farm

Narre Warren & District Family History Group Inc
Neighbourhood and Learning Centres across the Casey Region
Orana Community Place
Orange Door
Peninsula Community Legal Centre (PCLC)
Public Libraries Victoria
Readings Books
Reclink
Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, Cranbourne
St Vincent de Paul Society – Soup Van
Save the Children Australia
School Library Association of Victoria
Share the Dignity
Springvale Learning and Activity Centre (SLAC)
Star News
State Library of Victoria
South East Community Links
Southern Migrant and Refugee Centre (SMRC)
Transit Soup Kitchen and Food Support
U3A –Casey
Victoria Police
VACCA - Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency
Wellsprings for Women
Wilson Botanic Park, Berwick
Woolworths Dandenong South
Woolworths Hampton Park
Writers Victoria
YMCA



Annual Financial Report

Connected Libraries Annual Financial Report

For the year ended 30 June 2024

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Certification of the Financial Statements

In my opinion, the accompanying financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989* (as per the transitional provisions of the *Local Government Act 2020*), and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014*, the Australian Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements.

Mrs Emily Ramaswamy - CPA
General Manager, Finance & Digital Operations

DATE:

LOCATION:

In our opinion the accompanying financial statements present fairly the financial transactions of Casey-Cardinia Libraries (the Corporation) for the year ended 30 June 2024 and the financial position of the Corporation as at that date.

As at the date of signing, we are not aware of any circumstances that would render any particulars in the financial statements to be misleading or inaccurate.

We have been authorised by the Board of the Corporation and by the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulation 2014* to certify the financial statements in their final form.

Penny Holloway

Chairperson

DATE:

LOCATION:

Board Member

DATE:

LOCATION:

Beth Luppino,

Chief Executive Officer

DATE:

LOCATION:

Victorian Auditor-General's Office Report

[INSERT REPORT HERE]

Victorian Auditor-General's Office Report

[INSERT REPORT HERE]

Comprehensive Income Statement
For the year ended 30 June 2024

	Note	2024 \$	2023 \$
Income			
Contributions - monetary Member Councils	2.1	7,261,895	9,083,431
Contributions - monetary Government	2.2	2,177,256	2,441,949
Net gain (or loss) on disposal of equipment	2.3	300	(1,856)
Other income	2.4	329,682	205,708
Total income		9,769,133	11,729,232
Expenses			
Employee costs	3.1	6,481,439	9,013,510
Materials and services	3.2	1,101,727	931,517
Depreciation and amortisation	3.3	1,089,409	1,174,847
Other expenses	3.4	422,575	418,483
Total expenses		9,095,150	11,538,357
Surplus/(deficit) for the year		673,983	190,875
Total comprehensive result		673,983	190,875

The above comprehensive income statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Balance Sheet
As at 30 June 2024

	Note	2024 \$	2023 \$
Assets			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	4.1	641,677	313,493
Trade and other receivables	4.1	68,525	74,468
Other financial assets	4.1	2,500,000	2,500,000
Inventories		722	722
Prepayments		184,059	45,239
Total current assets		3,394,983	2,933,922
Non-current assets			
Plant and equipment	5.1	3,774,279	3,277,465
Total non-current assets		3,774,279	3,277,465
Total assets		7,169,262	6,211,387
Liabilities			
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	4.2	592,523	396,550
Unearned Income/Revenue	4.2	160,685	209,162
Provisions	4.3	1,224,987	1,116,247
Total current liabilities		1,978,195	1,721,959
Non-current liabilities			
Provisions	4.3	120,175	92,519
Total non-current liabilities		120,175	92,519
Total liabilities		2,098,370	1,814,478
Net assets		5,070,892	4,396,909
Equity			
Members contribution on formation		1,562,887	1,562,887
Accumulated surplus		3,508,005	2,834,022
Total Equity		5,070,892	4,396,909

The above Balance Sheet should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Statement of Changes in Equity
For the year ended 30 June 2024

2024	Note	Total \$	Accumulated Surplus \$	Member Contribution on Formation \$
Balance at beginning of the financial year		4,396,909	2,834,022	1,562,887
Surplus/(deficit) for the year		673,983	673,983	-
Balance at end of the financial year		5,070,892	3,508,005	1,562,887

2023	Note	Total \$	Accumulated Surplus \$	Member Contribution on Formation \$
Balance at beginning of the financial year		5,675,099	3,623,860	2,051,239
Withdrawal of Cardinia Shire Council		(1,469,065)	(980,713)	(488,352)
Surplus/(deficit) for the year		190,875	190,875	-
Balance at end of the financial year		4,396,909	2,834,022	1,562,887

The above Statement of Changes in Equity should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Statement of Cash Flows
For the year ended 30 June 2024

	2024	2023
Note	Inflows/ (Outflows) \$	Inflows/ (Outflows) \$
Cash flows from operating activities		
Council contributions	7,988,084	9,989,210
Government grants	2,177,756	2,655,646
Interest received	146,177	115,933
Overdue fines	96	130
Other Income	129,770	165,007
Employee costs	(6,262,825)	(10,433,699)
Library materials	(394,226)	(370,789)
IT and communications	(690,435)	(536,284)
Other payments	(582,042)	(867,349)
Net GST refund/(payment)	(598,278)	(887,714)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	1,914,077	(169,909)
Cash flows from investing activities		
Proceeds from sale of plant and equipment	330	3,541
Proceeds from / (payments for) investments	-	1,000,000
Payments for books, furniture, plant and equipment	5.1 (1,586,223)	(1,241,214)
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities	(1,585,893)	(237,673)
Cash flows from financing activities		
Payments received from Cardinia on withdrawal	-	266,913
Net cash provided by/(used in) financing activities	-	266,913
Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	328,184	(140,669)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	313,493	454,162
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	641,677	313,493

The above Statement of Cash Flows should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Statement of Capital Works
For the year ended 30 June 2024

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
Capital Expenditure		
Motor Vehicles	75,077	-
Furniture and equipment	342,078	173,421
Books and materials	1,169,068	1,067,793
Total Capital Works	1,586,223	1,241,214

The above Statement of Capital Works should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

OVERVIEW

Introduction

Casey-Cardinia Library Corporation (trading as Connected Libraries from 1st June 2023) was established under the provisions of Section 196 of the *Local Government Act 1989* by the Minister of Local Government on September 26, 1996. The Libraries' main office is located at 65 Berwick-Cranbourne Road, Cranbourne.

Statement of compliance

These financial statements are a general-purpose financial report that consists of a Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Changes in Equity, Statement of Cash Flows, Statement of Capital Works and Notes accompanying these financial statements. The general-purpose financial report complies with Australian Accounting Standards (AAS), other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board, the *Local Government Act 1989* (as per the transitional provisions of the *Local Government Act 2020*), and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014*.

Significant accounting policies

a. Basis of accounting

Accounting policies are selected and applied in a manner which ensures that the resulting financial information satisfies the concepts of relevance and reliability, thereby ensuring that the substance of the underlying transactions or other events is reported. Specific accounting policies applied are disclosed in sections where the related balance or financial statement matter is disclosed.

The accrual basis of accounting has been used in the preparation of these financial statements, whereby assets, liabilities, equity, income and expenses are recognised in the reporting period to which they relate, regardless of when cash is received or paid.

The financial statements are based on the historical cost convention unless a different measurement basis is specifically disclosed in the notes to the financial statements.

Judgements, estimates and assumptions are required to be made about the carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated judgements are based on professional judgement derived from historical experience and various other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis. The financial statements are in Australian dollars. The amounts presented in the financial statements have been rounded to the nearest thousand dollars unless otherwise specified. Minor discrepancies in tables between totals and the sum of components are due to rounding.

Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised and also in future periods that are affected by the revision. Judgements and assumptions made by management in the application of AAS's that have significant effects on the financial statements and estimates relate to:

- the determination of depreciation for plant and equipment (refer to Note 3.3)
- the determination of employee provisions (refer to Note 4.3)
- the determination of whether performance obligations are sufficiently specific so as to determine whether an arrangement is within the scope of AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers or AASB 1058 Income of Not-for-Profit Entities (refer to Note 2)
- the determination, in accordance with AASB 16 Leases, of the lease term, the estimation of the discount rate when not implicit in the lease and whether an arrangement is in substance short-term or low value (refer to Note 4.5)
- other areas requiring judgements.

Unless otherwise stated, all accounting policies are consistent with those applied in the prior year. Where appropriate, comparative figures have been amended to accord with current presentation, and disclosure has been made of any material changes to comparatives.

NOTE 1 Performance against budget

The performance against budget notes compare the Corporation's financial plan, expressed through its annual budget, with actual performance. The *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* requires explanation of any material variances. The Corporation has adopted a materiality threshold of the lower of 10 percent or \$50,000 where further explanation is warranted. Explanations have not been provided for variations below the materiality threshold unless the variance is considered to be material because of its nature.

The budget figures detailed below are those adopted by the Corporation's Board on 21 June 2023. The Budget was based on assumptions that were relevant at the time of adoption of the Budget. The Corporation sets guidelines and parameters for income and expense targets in this budget in order to meet the Corporations planning and financial performance targets for both the short and long-term. The Budget did not reflect any changes to equity resulting from asset revaluations, as their impacts were not considered predictable.

These notes are prepared to meet the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*.

1.1 Income and expenditure

	Budget 2024 \$	Actual 2024 \$	Variance 2024 \$	Variance 2024 %	Ref
Income					
Council grants & contributions	7,198,580	7,261,895	63,315	0.9%	1
Government grants & contributions	2,207,392	2,177,256	(30,136)	-1.4%	
Interest on investments	87,500	163,838	76,338	87.2%	2
Other income	110,015	166,144	56,129	51.0%	3
Total income	9,603,487	9,769,133	165,646	1.7%	
Expenses					
Employee costs	6,607,846	6,481,439	(126,407)	-1.9%	4
IT & communications	645,000	627,668	(17,332)	-2.7%	
Library materials	358,640	358,387	(253)	-0.1%	
Programs Promotions	102,960	115,672	12,712	12.3%	5
Administration	433,303	422,575	(10,728)	-2.5%	
Depreciation and amortisation	1,085,721	1,089,409	3,688	0.3%	
Total expenses	9,233,470	9,095,150	(138,320)	-1.5%	
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	370,017	673,983	303,966	82.1%	

Variance Ref	Item	Explanation
1	Council grants & contributions	New projects during the year that were originally planned to be partially paid through council directly, were instead paid by the Corporation and additional revenue received from City of Casey to offset.
2	Interest on Investments	Initially predicted drop in RBA cash rate did not eventuate, resulting in higher than expected revenue on term deposits secured.
3	Other Income	Connected Libraries received a \$25,000 (unbudgeted) donation that was used to fund additional Fixed Asset investment. Income received in advance in the prior year was carried forward due to delayed program delivery commencement.
4	Employee Costs	Employment costs were lower than budgeted to a position remaining vacant for most of the financial year.
5	Programs Promotions	Reallocation of a portion of new projects during the year. Savings in administration where the budget was originally allocated offset this overspend.

1.2 Capital works

	Budget 2024 \$	Actual 2024 \$	Variance 2024 \$	Variance 2024 %	Ref
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Capital Expenditure

Books and materials	1,146,373	1,169,068	22,695	2.0%	
Vehicles	152,000	75,077	(76,923)	-50.6%	1
Furniture and equipment	276,362	342,078	65,716	23.8%	2
Total Capital Expenditure	1,574,735	1,586,223	11,488	0.7%	

(i) Explanation of material variations

Variance Ref	Item	Explanation
1	Vehicles	Replacement of existing CL vehicle that was scheduled to occur in April 2024 was delayed due to stock availability. The new library outreach van was less costly up front, allowing more to be invested into the new Cranbourne West Library Lounge furniture and equipment within the approved Project Funding.
2	Furniture and equipment	\$44,000 relating new projects during the year that were originally planned to be partially paid through council directly, were instead paid by the Corporation and additional revenue received from City of Casey to offset. Unbudgeted donation received was expended on a set of Lendable Laptops that were not included in the Budget.

NOTE 2**Funding for the delivery of our services****2.1 Contributions**

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
Member Council Contributions:		
City of Casey	7,261,895	6,614,089
Cardinia Shire	-	963,740
City of Casey service review costs funding	-	666,976
Cardinia Shire withdrawal redundancies funding	-	838,626
Total contributions	7,261,895	9,083,431

Figures are stated exclusive of GST

Member Council Contributions are recognised on receipt, as there are no performance obligations associated with the contribution.

2.2 Funding from other levels of government

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
Grants were received in respect of the following:		
State funded grants	2,177,256	2,441,949
Total grants received	2,177,256	2,441,949

Figures are stated exclusive of GST

Before recognising funding from government grants as revenue the Corporation assesses whether there is a contract that is enforceable and has sufficiently specific performance obligations in accordance with AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers. When both these conditions are satisfied, the Corporation:

- identifies each performance obligation relating to revenue under the contract/agreement
- determines the transaction price
- recognises a contract liability for its obligations under the agreement
- recognises revenue as it satisfies its performance obligations, at the point in time or over time when services are rendered.

Where the contract is not enforceable and/or does not have sufficiently specific performance obligations, the Corporation applies AASB 1058 Income of Not-for-Profit Entities.

2.3 Net gain/(loss) on disposal of plant and equipment

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
Proceeds of sale	300	3,219
Written down value of assets disposed	-	(5,075)
Total net gain/(loss) on disposal plant and equipment	300	(1,856)

The profit or loss of an asset is determined when control of the asset has passed to the buyer.

2.4 Other income

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
Overdue fines	96	130
Membership cards	34	618
Photocopying	49,387	(72,003)
Meeting room hire	3,309	5,591
Lost books	9,465	11,217
Library programs	3,647	11,223
Sundry recoverable	99,906	125,645
Interest on term deposits	163,838	123,287
Total other income	329,682	205,708

Interest is recognised as it is earned.

Other income is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable and is recognised when the Corporation gains control over the right to receive the income.

During the withdrawal of Cardinia Shire Council, the Corporation saw a derecognition of \$121,022.96 of Printing & Photocopying revenue – representing the refundable balance of Credits available to patrons on 30th November 2022. Printing & Photocopying Credits are available for transfer to Myli , or refund by patrons.

NOTE 3**The cost of delivering services****3.1 Employee costs**

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
Wages and salaries	5,695,489	6,577,370
Travel allowance	9,857	12,532
WorkCover	56,098	54,194
Superannuation	587,027	736,649
Redundancy costs	-	1,505,602
Other	132,968	127,163
Total employee costs	6,481,439	9,013,510

(i) Superannuation

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
CL made contributions to the following funds:		
Defined benefit fund		
Employer contributions to Local Authorities Superannuation Fund (Vision Super)	3,592	31,901
	3,592	31,901
Accumulation funds		
Employer contributions to Local Authorities Superannuation Fund (Vision Super)	405,584	578,137
All Other Superannuation Funds (Choice of Super)	117,054	88,251
	522,638	666,388
Employer contributions payable at reporting date.	60,797	38,360

Refer to note 8.2 for further information relating to the Corporation's superannuation obligations.

3.2 Materials and services

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
IT & Communications	627,668	487,531
Library materials	358,387	337,081
Marketing and promotions	115,672	106,905
Total materials and services	1,101,727	931,517

3.3 Depreciation and amortisation

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
Books and materials	890,913	991,746
Furniture and equipment	185,385	176,792
Motor vehicles	13,111	6,309
Total depreciation and amortisation	1,089,409	1,174,847

Refer to note 5.1 for a more detailed breakdown of depreciation and amortisation changes and accounting policy.

3.4 Other expenses

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
Auditors' remuneration - VAGO - audit of the financial statements	34,000	14,560
Auditors' remuneration - RSM - Nov 30th 2022 audit of the special purpose financial statements		15,163
Freight - daily transfer of collection between library branches	79,588	96,393
Home Delivery Service	-	21
Photocopying, Printing & Stationary	31,534	51,998
Others	277,453	240,348
Total other expenses	422,575	418,483

NOTE 4**Our financial position****4.1 Financial assets**

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
Cash and cash equivalents		
Cash on hand	270	250
Cash at bank	276,858	177,274
Term deposits	364,549	135,969
Total cash and cash equivalents	641,677	313,493
Other financial assets		
Term deposits - current	2,500,000	2,500,000
Total other financial assets	2,500,000	2,500,000
Trade and other receivables		
Interest Receivable	34,405	16,744
Other Receivables	34,120	57,724
Total current trade and other receivables	68,525	74,468

Short term receivables are carried at invoiced amount. Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits at call, and other highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, net of outstanding bank overdrafts.

Other financial assets are valued at fair value, at balance date. Term deposits are measured at original cost. Any unrealised gains and losses on holdings at balance date are recognised as either a revenue or expense.

Other financial assets include term deposits and those with original maturity dates of three to 12 months are classified as current, whilst term deposits with maturity dates greater than 12 months are classified as non-current.

4.2 Payables and Unearned Income/Revenue**Trade and other payables**

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
Trade payables	210,493	56,246
Net GST payable	-	-
Accrued expenses	382,029	340,304
Total trade and other payables	592,523	396,550

Contract Liability

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
Grants received in advance - operating	3,148	73,357
Library patron print balances	157,537	135,805
Total unearned income/revenue	160,685	209,162

Unearned income/revenue are derecognised and recorded as revenue when promised goods and services are transferred to the customer.

4.3 Provisions

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
Current Provisions		
Current provisions expected to be wholly settled within 12 months		
Annual leave	390,456	365,712
Long service leave	93,647	77,161
	484,104	442,873
Current provisions expected to be wholly settled after 12 months		
Annual leave	114,167	156,989
Long service leave	626,716	516,385
	740,884	673,374
Total current employee provisions	1,224,987	1,116,247
Non-current		
Long service leave	120,175	92,519
Total non-current employee provisions	120,175	92,519
Aggregate carrying amount of employee provisions:		
Current	1,224,987	1,116,247
Non-current	120,175	92,519
Total aggregate carrying amount of employee provisions	1,345,162	1,208,766

The calculation of employee costs and benefits includes all relevant on-costs and are calculated as follows at reporting date.

Wages and salaries and annual leave

A liability for annual leave is recognised in the provision for employee benefits as a current liability because the Corporation does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement of the liability. Liabilities for annual leave are measured at:

- nominal value if the Corporation expects to wholly settle the liability within 12 months
- present value if the Corporation does not expect to wholly settle within 12 months.

Long service leave

Liability for long service leave (LSL) is recognised in the provision for employee benefits. Unconditional LSL is measured at nominal value if expected to be settled within 12 months or at present value if not expected to be settled within 12 months. Unconditional LSL is disclosed as a current liability. Conditional LSL that has been accrued, where an employee is yet to reach a qualifying term of employment, is disclosed as a non-current liability.

4.4 Financing arrangements

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
The Corporation has the following funding arrangements in place as at 30 June 2024		
Credit card facilities	15,000	10,000
Transaction negotiation authority	500,000	500,000
Total facilities	515,000	510,000
Used facilities		
Credit card facilities	6,363	8,192
Total Used facilities	6,363	8,192
Unused facilities		
Credit card facilities	8,637	1,808
Transaction negotiation authority	500,000	500,000
Total Unused facilities	508,637	501,808

NOTE 5**Assets we manage****5.1 Plant and equipment****Summary of plant and equipment**

	Carrying Value 30 June 2023	Additions	Depreciation	Disposal	Carrying Value 30 June 2024
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Motor Vehicles	22,047	75,077	(13,111)	-	84,013
Furniture and equipment	315,342	342,078	(185,385)	-	472,035
Books & Materials	2,940,077	1,169,068	(890,913)	-	3,218,232
	3,277,465	1,586,223	(1,089,409)	-	3,774,279

Asset recognition thresholds and depreciation periods

	Depreciation Period Years	Depreciation Rate %	Threshold Limit \$
Books & Materials	6 - 7	15%	Nil Limit
Motor Vehicles	6 - 7	15%	Nil Limit
Furniture & Equipment			
Furniture and Fittings	10	10%	500
Electrical Equipment	5	20%	500
Computer Equipment	3	33%	500
Mobile Devices	2	50%	500

Acquisition

The purchase method of accounting is used for all acquisitions of assets, being the fair value of assets provided as consideration at the date of acquisition plus any incidental costs attributable to the acquisition. Fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset (or paid to transfer a liability) in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date.

In accordance with the Corporation's policy, the threshold limits have applied when recognising assets within an applicable asset class and unless otherwise stated are consistent with the prior year.

Depreciation and amortisation

Plant and equipment and other assets having limited useful lives are systematically depreciated over their useful lives to the Corporation in a manner which reflects consumption of the service potential embodied in those assets. Estimates of remaining useful lives and residual values are made on a regular basis with major asset classes reassessed annually. Depreciation rates and methods are reviewed annually.

Where assets have separate identifiable components that are subject to regular replacement, these components are assigned distinct useful lives and residual values and a separate depreciation rate is determined for each component.

Straight line depreciation is charged based on the residual useful life as determined each year.

Depreciation periods used are listed above and are consistent with the prior year unless otherwise stated.

NOTE 6

People and relationships

6.1 Corporation and key management remuneration

(a) Key Management Personnel

Details of persons holding the position of Board Members or other members of key management personnel at any time during the year are:

Board Members

	2024 No.	2023 No.
City of Casey		
Miguel Belmar(Chairperson, from Nov 2021 to Nov 2022)	1	1
Steve Coldham	1	1
Noelene Duff*	1	1
Keri New	1	1
Cardinia Shire Council		
Cr Jeff Springfield (Chairperson, until Oct 2022)**	-	1
Angie Peresso (Cardinia Representative from Dec 2022 - Jul 2023, Chairperson from Feb 2023 until Jul 2023)**	1	1
Lili Rosic (until Nov 2022)**	-	1
Cr Jack Kowarzik (until Nov 2022, Chairperson from Nov 2022 until Dec 2022) **	-	1
Independent Board Members (from Jul 2023)		
Penny Holloway (Chairperson from Jul 2023)	1	-
Helen Partridge	1	-
Total Number of Councillors & Member Council Delegates	7	8
Chief Executive Officer and other Key Management Personnel		
Beth Luppino - Chief Executive Officer	1	1
Bec Mitchem - Acting GM, Customer Experience (from Oct 2021, until Nov 2022)	-	1
Janine Galvin - GM, Organisational Development	1	1
Daniel Lewis - GM, Digital Operations (until Mar 2023)	-	1
Emily Ramaswamy - GM, Finance & Digital Operations	1	1
Sue Brown - GM, Customer Experience & Strategy (from Jan 2023 until May 2023)	-	1
Koula Kalaitzoglou (from Apr 2024)	1	-
Total Key Management Personnel	4	6

* Alternate Delegate. ** Retired
GM (General Manager)

(b) Remuneration of Key Management Personnel

Board Members who are Councillors and Officers nominated by the Member Councils do not receive remuneration from Connected Libraries. Independent Board Members are remunerated by the Corporation.

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
Total remunerations of key management personnel was as follows:		
Short term benefits	569,118	733,337
Post employment benefits	60,403	71,320
Long-term benefits	16,455	18,333
Termination Benefits	-	172,313
Total	645,976	995,303

The number of Key Management Personnel whose total remuneration from the Corporation and any related entitled, fall within the following bands:

	2024	2023
	No.	No.
\$0 - \$9,999	1	-
\$10,000 - \$19,999	1	-
\$20,000 - \$29,999	1	-
\$70,000 - \$79,999	-	1
\$160,000 - \$169,999	-	2
\$170,000 - \$179,999	2	-
\$200,000 - \$209,999	-	1
\$220,000 - \$229,999	-	2
\$230,000 - \$239,999	1	-
Total	6	6

(c) Remuneration of other senior staff

Other senior staff are officers of Connected Libraries, other than Key Management Personnel, whose total remunerations exceeds \$170,000 and who report directly to a member of the KMP.

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
Total remunerations of Senior Officers was as follows:		
Short term benefits	-	215,666
Post employment benefits	-	22,083
Long-term benefits	-	5,392
Termination Benefits	-	318,265
Total	-	561,405

The number of Senior Officers are shown below in their relevant income bands:

	2024 No.	2023 No.
Income Range:		
\$240,000 - \$249,999	-	1
\$320,000 - \$329,999	-	1
	-	2

6.2 Related party disclosure

(a) Transactions with related parties

During the period the Corporation entered into the following transactions with related parties.

The Corporation purchases financial services, catering services and rents office space for the Library's Administration from the City of Casey and Cardinia Shire. The Corporation used the onsite catering services at Bunjil Place Library for events held on site during the year. Contributions are received from both Member Councils and separately disclosed in Note 2.1.

	2024 \$	2023 \$
Financial Services paid to City of Casey	30,800	36,859
Catering services paid to City of Casey	4,308	3,664
LinkedIn Learning Contribution Received from City of Casey	-	(15,000)
Building maintenance costs paid to Cardinia Shire Council	-	1,430
	35,108	26,953
Funding Allocation		
City of Casey	35,108	24,090
Cardinia Shire	-	2,863
	35,108	26,953

Figures above are stated inclusive of GST

(b) Outstanding balances with related parties

There were no outstanding with related parties that required disclosure during the 2023-24 or 2022-23 reporting years.

(c) Loans to/from related parties

No loans have been made, guaranteed, or secured by the Corporation to related parties during the 2023-24 or 2022-23 reporting years.

(d) Commitments to/from related parties

No commitments have been made, guaranteed or secured by the Corporation to related parties during the 2022-23 or 2021-22 reporting years.

NOTE 7

Managing uncertainties

7.1 Contingent assets and liabilities

(a) Contingent assets

There are no anticipated contingent assets.

(b) Contingent liabilities

Superannuation

The Corporation has obligations under a defined benefit superannuation scheme that may result in the need to make additional contributions to the scheme, matters relating to this potential obligation are outlined below. As a result of the volatility in financial markets the likelihood of making such contributions in future periods exists.

Future superannuation contributions

There were no contributions outstanding and no loans issued from or to any schemes as at 30 June 2024. The expected contributions to be paid to the Defined Benefit category of Vision Super for the year ending 30 June 2025 are \$9,183.36.

7.2 Change in accounting standards

As at 30 June 2024 there were no new accounting standards or interpretations issued by the AASB which are applicable for the year ending 30 June 2024 that are expected to impact the Corporation.

7.3 Financial instruments

(a) Objectives and policies

The Corporation's principal financial instruments comprise cash assets, term deposits, receivables (excluding statutory receivables), payables (excluding statutory payables) and bank borrowings. Details of the significant accounting policies and methods adopted, including the criteria for recognition, the basis of measurement and the basis on which income and expenses are recognised, in respect of each class of financial asset, financial liability and equity instrument is disclosed in the Notes of the financial statements. Risk management is carried out by senior management under policies approved by the Corporation. These policies include identification and analysis of the risk exposure to the Corporation and appropriate procedures, controls and risk minimisation.

(b) Market risk

Market risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of the Corporation financial instruments will fluctuate because of changes in market prices. The Corporation's exposure to market risk is primarily through interest rate risk with only insignificant exposure to other price risks and no exposure to foreign currency risk.

Interest rate risk

Interest rate risk refers to the risk that the value of a financial instrument or cash flows associated with the instrument will fluctuate due to changes in market interest rates. The Corporation does not hold any interest-bearing financial instruments that are measured at fair value, and therefore has no exposure to fair value interest rate risk. Cash flow interest rate risk is the risk that the future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market interest rates. The Corporation has minimal exposure to cash flow interest rate risk through its cash and deposits that are at floating rates.

Investment of surplus funds is made with approved financial institutions under the *Local Government Act 1989*. The Corporation manages interest rate risk by adopting an investment policy that ensures:

- Diversification of investment product;
- Monitoring of return on investment, and
- Benchmarking of returns and comparison with budget.

There has been no significant change in the Corporation's exposure, or its objectives, policies and processes for managing interest rate risk or the methods used to measure this risk from the previous reporting period.

Interest rate movements have not been sufficiently significant during the year to have a large impact on the Corporation's year-end result.

(c) Credit risk

Credit risk is the risk that a contracting entity will not complete its obligations under a financial instrument and cause the Corporation to make a financial loss. The Corporation have exposure to credit risk on some financial assets included in the balance sheet. To help manage this risk:

- the Corporation has a procurement policy to manage levels of authority, purchasing limits and contractual time-lines established credit controls for the entities we deal with;
- the Corporation may require collateral where appropriate; and
- the Corporation only invests surplus funds with financial institutions which have a recognised credit rating specified in the Corporation's investment policy.

Receivables consist of business and government sector customers. Credit risk associated with the corporation's financial assets is minimal.

There are no material financial assets which are individually determined to be impaired.

The maximum exposure to credit risk at the reporting date to recognised financial assets is the carrying amount, net of any provisions for impairment of those assets, as disclosed in the balance sheet and notes to the financial statements. Credit risk is not considered significant for the Corporation given the minimal dealings with counterparties giving rise to debts receivable.

(d) Liquidity risk

Liquidity risk includes the risk that, as a result of the Corporation's operational liquidity requirements it will not have sufficient funds to settle a transaction when required or will be forced to sell a financial asset at below value or may be unable to settle or recover a financial asset.

To help reduce these risks the Corporation:

- Has contractual funding agreements with the Member Councils;
- Has a liquidity portfolio structure that requires surplus funds to be invested within various bands of liquid instruments;
- Monitors budget to actual performance on a regular basis.

The Corporation's maximum exposure to liquidity risk is the carrying amounts of financial liabilities as disclosed on the face of the Balance Sheet.

There has been no significant change in the Corporation's exposure, or its objectives, policies and processes for managing liquidity risk or the methods used to measure this risk from the previous reporting period.

Unless otherwise stated, the carrying amounts of financial instruments reflect their fair value.

(e) Sensitivity disclosure analysis

Taking into account past performance, future expectations, economic forecasts, and management's knowledge and experience of the financial markets, the Corporation believes the following movements are 'reasonably possible' over the next 12 months:

- A parallel shift of + 2% and -2% in market interest rates (AUD) from year-end weighted average rates of 4.10%.

These movements will not have a material impact on the valuation of the Corporation's financial assets and liabilities, nor will they have a material impact on the results of the Corporation's operations.

7.4 Events occurring after balance date

Transition to a Beneficial Enterprise

On 20 August 2024, the City of Casey Council resolved to participate in the formation of, and become the founding member of, Connected Libraries Ltd, a not-for-profit Public Company Limited by Guarantee. The transition of the library services to this new structure is targeted for operational commencement on 1 July 2025. The Corporation will continue to provide library services under the current model and agreement until the transition to Connected Libraries Limited is complete and operations commence on the target date of 1 July 2025.

NOTE 8

Other matters

8.1 Reconciliation of cash flows from operating activities to surplus/(deficit)

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	673,983	190,875
Depreciation/amortisation	1,089,409	1,174,847
Profit/(loss) on disposal of plant and equipment	(300)	1,856
Non cash movement in lease liability	-	(4,670)
<i>Change in assets and liabilities:</i>		
(Increase)/decrease in receivables	(17,662)	(55,630)
(Increase)/decrease in prepayments	(138,819)	9,863
Increase/(decrease) in employee provisions	231,911	(1,407,473)
Increase/(decrease) in payables	124,032	(284,761)
Increase/(decrease) in Inventory purchased for sale	-	3,262
Increase/(decrease) in contract liability	(48,478)	201,923
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	1,914,077	(169,909)

8.2 Superannuation

The Corporation makes the majority of its employer superannuation contributions in respect of its employees to the Local Authorities Superannuation Fund (the Fund). This Fund has two categories of membership, accumulation and defined benefit, each of which is funded differently. Obligations for contributions to the Fund are recognised as an expense in the Comprehensive Income Statement when they are made or due.

Accumulation

The Fund's accumulation category, Vision MySuper/Vision Super Saver, receives both employer and employee contributions on a progressive basis. Employer contributions are normally based on a fixed percentage of employee earnings (for the year ended 30 June 2024, this was 11% as required under Superannuation Guarantee (SG) legislation (2023: 10.5%)).

Defined Benefit

The Corporation does not use defined benefit accounting for its defined benefit obligations under the Fund's Defined Benefit category. This is because the Fund's Defined Benefit category is a pooled multi-employer sponsored plan.

There is no proportional split of the defined benefit liabilities, assets or costs between the participating employers as the defined benefit obligation is a floating obligation between the participating employers and the only time that the aggregate obligation is allocated to specific employers is when a call is made. As a result, the level of participation of the Corporation in the Fund cannot be measured as a percentage compared with other participating employers. Therefore, the Fund Actuary is unable to allocate benefit liabilities, assets and costs between employers for the purposes of AASB 119.

Funding arrangements

The Corporation makes employer contributions to the Defined Benefit category of the Fund at rates determined by the Trustee on the advice of the Fund Actuary.

A triennial actuarial investigation for the Defined Benefit category as at 30 June 2023 was conducted and completed by 31 December 2023. The vested benefit index (VBI) of the Defined Benefit category as at 30 June 2023 was 104.1%. The Corporation was notified of the 30 June 2023 VBI during August 2023.

The financial assumptions used to calculate the 30 June 2023 VBI were:

Net investment returns	5.7% pa
Salary information	3.5% pa
Price inflation (CPI)	2.8% pa.

The VBI is used as the primary funding indicator. Because the VBI was above 100%, the 30 June 2023 actuarial investigation determined the Defined Benefit category was in a satisfactory financial position and that no change was necessary to the Defined Benefit category's funding arrangements from prior years.

Employer contributions

Regular contributions

On the basis of the results of the 2023 triennial actuarial investigation conducted by the Fund Actuary, the Corporation makes employer contributions to the Fund's Defined Benefit category at rates determined by the Fund's Trustee. For the year ended 30 June 2024, this rate was 11.0% of members' salaries (10.5% in 2022/23). This rate is expected to increase in line with any increases in the SG contribution rate and was reviewed as part of the 30 June 2023 triennial valuation.

In addition, the Corporation reimburses the Fund to cover the excess of the benefits paid as a consequence of retrenchment above the funded resignation or retirement benefit.

Funding calls

If the Defined Benefit category is in an unsatisfactory financial position at an actuarial investigation or the Defined Benefit category's VBI is below its shortfall limit at any time other than the date of the actuarial investigation, the Defined Benefit category has a shortfall for the purposes of SPS 160 and the Fund is required to put a plan in place so that the shortfall is fully funded within three years of the shortfall occurring. The Fund monitors its VBI on a quarterly basis and the Fund has set its shortfall limit at 98% from 26 July 2024 (previously 97%).

In the event that the Fund Actuary determines that there is a shortfall based on the above requirement, the Fund's participating employers (including the Corporation) are required to make an employer contribution to cover the shortfall.

Using the agreed methodology, the shortfall amount is apportioned between the participating employers based on the pre-1 July 1993 and post-30 June 1993 service liabilities of the Fund's Defined Benefit category, together with the employer's payroll at 30 June 1993 and at the date the shortfall has been calculated.

Due to the nature of the contractual obligations between the participating employers and the Fund, and that the Fund includes lifetime pensioners and their reversionary beneficiaries, it is unlikely that the Fund will be wound up.

If there is a surplus in the Fund, the surplus cannot be returned to the participating employers.

In the event that a participating employer is wound-up, the defined benefit obligations of that employer will be transferred to that employer's successor.

The 2023 triennial actuarial investigation surplus amounts

An actuarial investigation is conducted annually for the Defined Benefit category of which the Corporation is a contributing employer. Generally, a full actuarial investigation conducted every three years and interim actuarial investigations are conducted for each intervening year. A full investigation was conducted as at 30 June 2023.

The Fund's actuarial investigations identified the following for the Defined Benefit category of which the Corporation is a contributing employer:

	2023	2022
	\$m	\$m
A VBI Surplus	84.7	44.6
A total service liability surplus	123.6	105.8
a discounted accrued benefits surplus	141.9	111.9

The VBI surplus means that the market value of the fund's assets supporting the defined benefit obligations exceed the vested benefits that the defined benefit members would have been entitled to if they had all exited on 30 June 2023.

The total service liability surplus means that the current value of the assets in the Fund's Defined Benefit category plus expected future contributions exceeds the value of expected future benefits and expenses as at 30 June 2023.

The discounted accrued benefit surplus means that the current value of the assets in the Fund's Defined Benefit category exceeds the value of benefits payable in the future but accrued in respect of service to 30 June 2023.

The 2024 interim actuarial investigation

An interim actuarial investigation is being conducted for the Fund's position as at 30 June 2024. It is anticipated that this actuarial investigation will be completed by October 2024. The VBI of the Defined Benefit category was 105.4% as at 30 June 2024.

The financial assumptions for the purposes of this investigation are:

Net investment returns	5.6% pa
Salary information	3.5% pa
Price inflation (CPI)	2.7% pa.

Because the VBI was above 100%, the Defined Benefit category was in a satisfactory financial position at 30 June 2024 and it is expected that the actuarial investigation will recommend that no change will be necessary to the Defined Benefit category's funding arrangements from prior years.

The 2020 triennial investigation

The last triennial actuarial investigation conducted prior to 30 June 2023 was at 30 June 2020. This actuarial investigation was completed by 31 December 2020. The financial assumptions for the purposes of that investigation was:

	2023 Triennial Investigation	2020 Triennial Investigation
Net Investment Return	5.7% pa	5.6% pa
Salary Information	3.5% pa	2.5% pa for the first two years and 2.75% pa thereafter
Price Inflation	2.8% pa	2.0% pa

Superannuation contributions

Contributions by the Corporation (excluding any unfunded liability payments) to the above superannuation plans for the financial year ended 30 June 2024 are detailed below:

Scheme	Type of Scheme	Rate	2024 \$000	2023 \$000
Vision Super	Defined Benefits	10.0%	3.6	31.9
Vision Super	Accumulation	10.0%	405.6	616.5
All Other Superannuation Funds (Choice of Super)	Accumulation	10.0%	117.1	88.3

In addition to the above contributions, the Corporation has paid unfunded liability payments to Vision Super totalling \$0 paid during the 2023-24 year, (2022-23: \$0).

There were \$6,540.30 contributions outstanding and \$0 loans issued from or to the above schemes as at 30 June 2024.

The expected contributions to be paid to the Defined Benefit category of Vision Super for the year ending 30 June 2025 are \$9,183.36.

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OFFICERS REPORTS

CL40/2024 FINANCE

Report prepared by Emily Ramaswamy

Purpose

To provide the Board an update on Connected Libraries' financial performance as at 30 September 2024.

CL Library Plan reference – 4.5, 4.6

Discussion

Income Statement

Month Ended 30 September 2024

	Total Budget 2024-25	Budget YTD September 2024	Actual YTD September 2024	Variance	% Actual Vs Budget
Income					
Council Contributions	7,053,833	1,778,458	1,778,458	0	0.0%
Government Grants	2,175,404	2,132,541	2,132,541	0	0.0%
Interest on Investments	118,000	33,000	44,093	11,093	33.6%
Other Income	108,995	27,249	23,658	(3,591)	(13.2%)
Total Income	9,456,232	3,971,248	3,978,751	7,502	0.2%
Expenditure					
Employee Costs	6,895,239	1,843,405	1,795,359	48,046	2.6%
IT & Communications	570,000	142,808	133,404	9,404	6.6%
Library Materials	363,600	234,132	206,154	27,978	11.9%
Promotions & Marketing	112,900	25,053	34,502	(9,449)	(37.7%)
Administration	457,309	109,904	82,524	27,380	24.9%
Depreciation	1,070,521	256,137	256,137	0	0.0%
Total Expenditure	9,469,569	2,611,439	2,508,080	103,359	4.0%
Net Gain(loss) disposal of plant & equip	0	0	409	409	
Net result for the reporting period	(13,337)	1,359,809	1,471,080	111,270	8.2%

Income

Interest on Investments

Additional surplus from 2024 Financial Year has enabled an additional term deposit, resulting in higher than budgeted interest revenue for the quarter. Additional revenue produced during the year due to interest rate fluctuations and variances in the timing of State Government funding will offset any possible shortfalls in other revenue.

Other Income

Small shortfall during July attributed to Donations and Meeting Room Hire.

Expenditure

Employee Costs

Savings in Employee Costs relate to unfilled vacant positions during the last two months and movement in leave provision. Employee costs are expected to realign with budget over the next six months.

Library Materials

Variance in library materials spend is entirely timing related, expenditure will realign with budget by end of financial year.

Promotions & Marketing

Investment in stock of Library Bags occurred earlier in the year than originally planned. This is a timing only variance.

Administration

Current savings in administration are largely due to timing of consultant and legal fees relating to the transition to beneficial enterprise.

Capital Expenditure Month Ended 30 September 2024	Total Budget 2024-25	Budget YTD September 2024	Actual YTD September 2024	Variance	% Actual Vs Budget
Library Materials	1,089,680	426,159	402,758	23,400	5.5%
Motor Vehicles	60,800	0	0	0	0.0%
Furniture & Equipment	160,662	54,000	67,698	(13,698)	(25.4%)
Capital Exp. for the reporting period	1,311,142	480,159	470,456	9,702	2.0%

Capital Expenditure

Library Materials

Underspend in Library Materials is due to timing of suppliers and release dates of new titles. CL will continue to see small variances through the year.

Furniture & Equipment

Current overspend in equipment is timing related due to the invoicing of new library branch photocopiers. Agreement made with City of Casey in July will see Furniture & Equipment \$20,000 overspent at the end of the year.

Bank Reconciliation

A Bank Reconciliation is available on request.

FY2024 Audit

At the time of distribution of the Agenda, the Draft Audit Report has been received and Financial Report and Management Representation Letter were ready to be signed. Once signed and returned to VAGO, final Independent Auditor's Report will be issued and attached to the Financial Statements for submission to the Minister for Local Government.

Conclusion

Connected Libraries is managing the current environment with measured financial decisions and is in a sound financial position.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. That the Finance Report be noted.**

CL41/2024 ORGANISATIONAL RISK

Report prepared by Beth Luppino and Janine Galvin

Purpose

To provide the Board with a progress report on matters that impact Connected Libraries’ operations or strategic goals.

CL Library Plan reference –4.3, 4.6, 4.7

Discussion

In this report we provide the Board with information on relevant legislative, regulatory or policy requirements related to risk management including Workplace Health and Safety, and any other matters that may require monitoring or consideration.

Occupational Health and Safety (Library Plan reference 4.6)

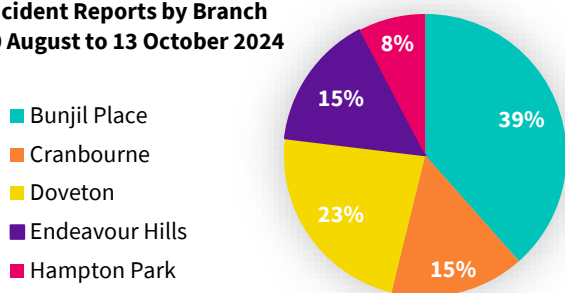
Inappropriate patron behaviour in our libraries continues to be the main area of risk, in particular around staff psychological and physical safety. This is not isolated to Connected Libraries. It is a common area of concern for libraries within Public Libraries Victoria (PLV). It was an area of discussion in a recent PLV Operations meeting where those attending shared ideas, systems, procedures and safety tips.

Endeavour Hills Library had a short lockdown due to a police incident outside our library. Once the person of interest was apprehended the branch re-opened. The situation did not enter our library.

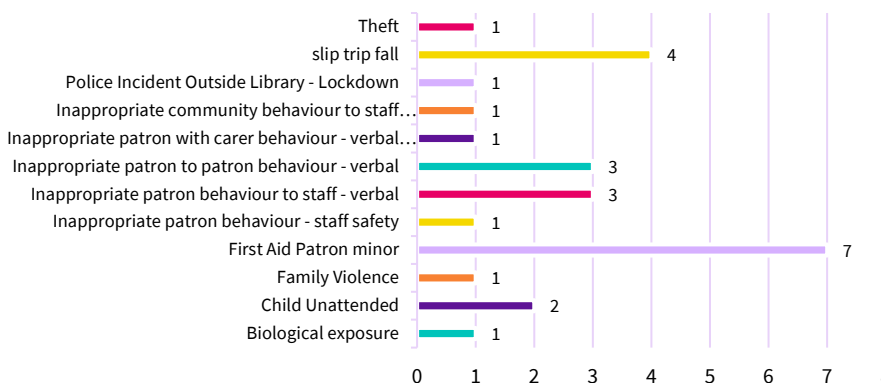
There were two incidents at Doveton Library that involved police attending.

1. An agitated community member entered our Doveton staff work area and refused to leave. Safety improvements have been made to the Doveton staff work area with the addition of a secure door with swipe card access and glazed viewing panel.
2. A female community member was in our library with their carer and became heightened and highly agitated. The carer was unable to settle their client. The female community member was verbally abusive and lashed out at a young person in the library. Police arrived and helped the carer return their client to their specialist Disability Accommodation Unit. Police also called the young person’s parents to alert them of the incident.

Incident Reports by Branch - 20 August to 13 October 2024



Incident Reports by Type -20 August to 13 October 2024



Legislation and Compliance (*Library Plan reference 4.6*)

Psychological Safety in the Workspace legislation

To date, the proposed Psychological Health Regulations have not been passed. It is understood that the Victorian Government is currently considering options for the development of the proposed Regulations, a Compliance Code and supporting guidance material. Estimated implementation is now 2025.

Fair Work (employment laws)

Connected Libraries have updated procedures and policies to include the new legal definition of a casual employee, and the Fair Work casual information statement is now distributed to casuals every six months. Right to Disconnect law changes came into place in August 2024. All comms and messaging to staff has been distributed, including signature signoffs and conversations with staff working from home.

Gender Equality

There is now a requirement for Connected Libraries to conduct Gender Equality Impact Assessments. It is all about applying a gender equality lens over the work that we do. We are in discussions with our program leads to implement this process within our risk assessments.

Child Safe Standards

There has been an update in the standards that now requires ALL volunteers that work for Connected Libraries to have a WWCC. We are working with our teams to ensure we get this implemented.

Conclusion

The Connected Libraries Executive Team continues to manage organisational risks through appropriate mitigation measures.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. That the Organisational Risk Report be noted.**

CL42/2024 OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Report prepared by Koula Kalaitzoglou and Melinda Rogers

Purpose

To provide the Board with a summary of CL’s performance.

CL Library Plan reference – 4.3, 4.4

Discussion

Connected Libraries reports to the Board on areas of performance including collections, visitation, digital engagement, memberships, marketing and social media engagement and events/programs.

Key Measure Outputs

Financial Year - 2024-2025

Measure	Target 2024/25	Quarter 1 (Jul – Sep)	2024-2025 YTD
Engagement			
Utilisation of Technology (Wi-Fi, Public PC user in branch)	156,297	34,349	34,349
Net Promoter Score (Community Survey)	65	64	64
Memberships*	98,000	95,010	95,010
Visits			
Visits – physical	829,000	206,640	206,640
Visits – virtual	829,000	184,711	184,711
Total visits	1,658,000	391,351	391,351
Program and events attendance	63,500	14,971	14,971
Collection			
Loans – physical	1,293,000	347,981	347,981
Loans – digital	739,000	167,183	167,183
Loans (total physical and digital)	1,971,270	515,164	515,164
Physical quality of library collection (age of collection - less than 5 years)	75.0%	70.0%	70.0%

*Membership on last day of the quarter
 Note: only includes one month of quarter 1 for 2024/25

Our performance one quarter in for 2024-2025 is looking positive and as expected, for three months, the first quarter measures are tracking between 21 and 33 percent of 2024-2025 targets.

Library Usage (Library Plan reference 4.3)

Community usage across our libraries continues to be strong. July and August were consistent with physical visits, with all branches across the region experiencing a drop in September. Hampton Park saw the largest decline in September from August of 16.7 percent, potentially linked to the timing of September school holidays and children and young people coming in after school. September included the term 3 school holidays and branch closures with the public holiday for grand final day. Year on year for the same period, July to September visit totals (physical and virtual) are up.

VISITS	May 2024	Jun 2024	Jul 2024	Aug 2024	Sep 2024	% Variation Aug/Sep
Cranbourne West-Lounge	1,992	1,712	2,196	1,911	1,721	-9.94%
Cranbourne	12,789	12,000	13,313	12,179	11,027	-9.46%
Doveton	4,928	3,762	5,013	4,641	4,387	-5.47%
Endeavour Hills	7,785	6,812	7,537	7,069	6,412	-9.29%
Hampton Park	9,883	8,120	8,772	9,533	7,943	-16.68%
Bunjil Place	36,979	30,170	33,792	35,148	34,046	-3.14%
Regional Total	74,356	62,576	70,623	70,481	65,536	-7.02%
Virtual Visits	72,469	68,643	75,907	71,509	68,654	-3.99%
TOTAL	146,825	131,219	146,530	141,990	134,190	-5.49%

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Virtual visits are steady, and are on trend with physical visitation, from a high performing 75,907 visits in July, there was a decline in August, and another drop almost 4 percent in September.

VIRTUAL VISITS	May 2024	Jun 2024	Jul 2024	Aug 2024	Sep 2024	% Variation Aug/Sep
Website	40,562	37,550	39,543	38,126	37,295	-2.18%
Enterprise	13,184	12,673	15,192	12,972	11,722	-9.64%
CL App	18,723	18,420	21,172	20,411	19,637	-3.79%
TOTAL	72,469	68,643	75,907	71,509	68,654	-3.99%

Memberships continue to grow month on month – 95,010 at the end of September, an increase of more than 3,800 members from the beginning of the financial year (91,155 at 30 June 2024). Membership data includes the removal of inactive memberships as part of regular database maintenance.

Physical loans are steady, following the same trend as physical visits, strong in July, dropping slightly in August, and another 6.7 percent in September.

The locker locations Cranbourne West and Manna Gum usage remains stable. Orana lockers experienced a drop in September, the Outreach Team continue to work on promoting this service to the local community.

eLoans continue to be strong, peaking with over 84,700 loans in August. September experienced a 3.3 percent drop from August, however the volume of eLoans is still substantial on previous months/years. We have only experienced eLoans over 80,000 on four occasions since July 2022, with three of these being the last three months.

LOANS	May 2024	Jun 2024	Jul 2024	Aug 2024	Sep 2024	% Variation Aug/Sep
Cranbourne West - Lounge	2,514	1,294	1,722	1,561	1,387	-11.15%
Regional Support	1,606	2,323	3,219	2,786	2,740	-1.65%
Cranbourne	31,484	31,370	34,716	31,728	30,322	-4.43%
Doveton	2,714	2,586	3,599	3,183	2,658	-16.49%
Endeavour Hills	13,854	13,343	15,337	13,554	11,924	-12.03%
Hampton Park	11,248	10,030	11,753	11,035	10,512	-4.74%
Bunjil Place	48,644	48,004	54,378	50,607	47,124	-6.88%
Cranbourne West - Locker	394	349	306	357	376	5.32%
Manna Gum Locker	255	246	337	275	258	-6.18%
Orana Locker	57	137	86	90	51	-43.33%
Locker Total	706	732	729	722	685	-5.12%
Regional Total	112,770	109,682	125,453	115,176	107,352	-6.79%
eLoans	71,429	76,684	82,392	84,791	81,942	-3.36%
TOTAL	184,199	186,366	207,845	199,967	189,294	-5.34%

Consistent performers in our eResources collection continue to be eAudiobooks, eBooks, eMagazines and Press Reader. Comics Plus was introduced into our eResource collection in late August, September was the first full month of usage.



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ELECTRONIC RESOURCES	May 2024	Jun 2024	Jul 2024	Aug 2024	Sep 2024	% Variation Aug/Sep
Age Library Edition	1,029	1,040	1,129	1,118	1,085	-2.95%
Bolinda eAudiobooks	6,617	6,923	7,197	7,231	7,014	-3.00%
Bolinda eBooks	4,351	4,359	5,026	4,700	4,519	-3.85%
Choice	293	403	355	330	333	0.91%
Comic Plus	-	-	-	115	240	108.70%
Kanopy	1170	1,335	1406	1,190	945	-20.59%
Libby eAudiobooks	2,226	2,528	3,132	3,270	3,206	-1.96%
Libby eBooks	1,112	1,403	2,058	2,030	1,768	-12.91%
Libby eMagazines	3,075	2,787	2,830	2,691	2,983	10.85%
Press Reader	51,121	55,371	58,903	61,829	59,616	-3.58%
Storybox Library	78	111	80	120	58	-51.67%
Tumblebooks	357	424	276	167	175	4.79%
TOTAL	71,429	76,684	82,392	84,791	81,942	-3.36%

Public internet PC bookings are steady yet have faced a small decline from July in August and September, on trend with visits.

Wi-Fi usage remained steady across July and August and saw a 3.9 percent drop in September. City of Casey updated their Wi-Fi provisioning services for Bunjil Place, the data results supplied monthly since May 2024 are a total for the precinct and not solely the library. An average figure has been used. Year on year for the same period PC internet bookings and Wi-Fi usage are on par.

INTERNET	May 2024	Jun 2024	Jul 2024	Aug 2024	Sep 2024	% Variation Aug/Sep
Cranbourne West - Lounge	19	15	30	31	35	12.90%
Cranbourne	1,152	864	981	1,099	777	-29.30%
Doveton	566	485	615	514	553	7.59%
Endeavour Hills	572	524	635	595	505	-15.13%
Hampton Park	897	799	992	941	865	-8.08%
Bunjil Place	1,387	1,428	1,701	1,099	1,283	16.74%
TOTAL	4,593	4,115	4,954	4,279	4,018	-6.10%

Wi-Fi	May 2024	Jun 2024	Jul 2024	Aug 2024	Sep 2024	% Variation Aug/Sep
Cranbourne West - Lounge	252	191	203	223	210	-5.83%
Cranbourne	2,035	1,552	1,675	1,889	1,762	-6.72%
Doveton	704	590	620	630	563	-10.63%
Endeavour Hills	1,274	1,089	1,156	1,158	1,052	-9.15%
Hampton Park	1,089	846	911	1,064	966	-9.21%
Bunjil Place	6,774	2,330	2,593	2,145	2,279	6.22%
TOTAL	12,128	6,598	7,158	7,109	6,832	-3.90%

Engagement Statistics

Digital engagement is strong across many platforms, including eNewsletters, social media, as well as the website. Our subscription numbers for our eDM increased by more than 1,000 from August to September. A number of community members who completed the September survey became new subscribers to our eDM.

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eDM/eNewsletters

Month	Recipients	Opens	Click through rate (number of people that opened then clicked a link)
May 2024	82,649	35,572	2.19%
Jun 2024	83,808	25,840	1.45%
Jul 2024	84,289	25,702	0.80%
Aug 2024	84,435	26,521	0.86%
Sep 2024	85,477	28,033	2.03%

Read Next Newsletter (EDM)

Month	Recipients	Opens	Click through rate (number of people that opened then clicked a link)
May 2024	833	341	2.76%
Jun 2024	835	383	4.19%
Jul 2024	821	371	2.92%
Aug 2024	837	362	2.99%
Sep 2024	835	315	1.32%

Social Media

	May 2024	Jun 2024	Jul 2024	Aug 2024	Sep 2024
Facebook	Followers: 9,244 Reach: 4,127	Followers: 9,253 Reach: 42,970*	Followers: 9,261 Reach: 7,068	Followers: 9,334 Reach: 18,996 **	Followers: 9,341 Reach: 7,082
Instagram	Followers: 2,003	Followers: 2,022	Followers: 2,051	Followers: 2,089	Followers: 1,468

*Note: Facebook had a significant reach in June is due to a paid Advertisement promoting library membership. 'Reach' reflects 2,753 from organic customer-driven impressions, and 40,634 from paid Advertisements.

**Note: Facebook had an increase in reach in August from July, there were two paid advertisements promoting the library's collection and programs. So 'reach' reflects 9,206 from organic customer driven impressions, and 10,758 from paid advertisements.

Programs and Events

The September school holiday program offered a variety of programs including Grandparents themed events, Storytime Ballet, Footy and even the regular Bilingual Storytimes. There was a program in partnership with City of Casey for Child Protection Week, entertainers including Paul Jamieson The Music Man, Eilo The Magician and Real Pigeon Live, STEAM activities like Lego building, robot cars and art and craft activities.

We took the Library on the Road to local communities that included a very successful holiday program at Botanic Ridge Family Centre, kinder visits at Tooradin and a holiday program at the Blind Bight Community Centre. Charlie Sillypants was a big success at the Manna Gum Community Centre.

We celebrated 10 years of Bush Playgroup at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Cranbourne. RGB staff acknowledged our partnership work on this program throughout those years. Dandenong and District Aborigines Co-operative Limited (DDACL) supplied a sausage sizzle lunch with families from the past ten years invited along to celebrate.

Early childhood and children continue to be a key target audience for our programs with Baby Rhyme Time, Storytime and Tinies Time being the most popular.

Target Audience	Jul 2024 - Attendance	Jul 2024 - Sessions	Aug 2024 - Attendance	Aug 2024 - Sessions	Sep 2024 - Attendance	Sep 2024 - Sessions
Early childhood	2,826	110	5,113	180	3,087	113
Children	2,092	94	2,367	99	1,768	83
Young Adult	70	10	115	7	88	9
Adults	578	96	845	126	549	84
Seniors	31	6	21	9	14	8
All ages (not specific)	322	15	173	11	435	13
TOTAL	5,919	331	8,634	432	5,941	310

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PLV has made some changes to reporting requirements in 2024-2025, and Connected Libraries have modified data collection categories in line with this. The outcome definition for 'group visits' is now 'Stronger and More Creative Communities' and not 'Literacy and Lifelong Learning'. We provide internal and external group programs to 'support expressions of culture, identity and community pride'.

Program Outcome	Jul 2024 – Attendance	Jul 2024 - Sessions	Aug 2024 – Attendance	Aug 2024 - Sessions	Sep 2024 – Attendance	Sep 2024 - Sessions
Digital inclusion	208	58	321	81	167	52
Economic and workforce development	-	-	1	1	0	0
Health and Wellbeing	1,481	69	526	50	906	57
Informed and connected citizens	12	3	17	3	99	6
Literacy and lifelong learning	3,172	151	4,784	199	3,291	147
Personal development *	104	10	93	5	48	4
Stronger and more creative communities	942	40	2,892	93	1,430	44
TOTAL	5,919	331	8,634	432	5,941	310

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. That the Operational Performance Report be noted.**

CL43/2024

LIBRARY PLAN – 2021-2025 – ACTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Report prepared by Beth Luppino and Koula Kalaitzoglou

Purpose

To provide the Board with key achievements from the Library Plan 2021-2025.

CL Library Plan reference –

1.1 Safe, welcoming and accessible physical and virtual spaces which support community to access knowledge and information,

2.1 Support council to make evidence-based decisions in library services,

3.4 Inform and engage community about our library services

Discussion

Building and Facilities Update

Building works

The minor capital works/furniture budget previously managed by City of Casey will be managed and expended by Connected Libraries this financial year. The funding will be used to renew furniture and fittings in our existing branches.

The State-funded Living Libraries Infrastructure project at Bunjil Place Library has been completed. The new 24m study desk which runs along the window on level 1 now offers an additional 22 study spaces. The installation did not impact community use as it was scheduled during the Staff Professional Development Day on Tuesday 10 September. There is an official launch of the space with local MP Belinda Wilson representing the Minister for Local Government scheduled for Thursday 5 December 11am. The project was funded by \$14,645 (ex GST) of grant funding and a council contribution of \$9,764 (ex GST).

The internal stairs at Bunjil Place library are scheduled for refurbishment. The work requires the library close to community and staff, works will take place from 30 December to 13 January. Works were scheduled over this first fortnight in January to minimise disruption to community. Ordinary programs do not run at this time of year, and generally we have found this to be quiet time in our branches. We are currently finalising returns and hold collection processes for community during this time.

Service points

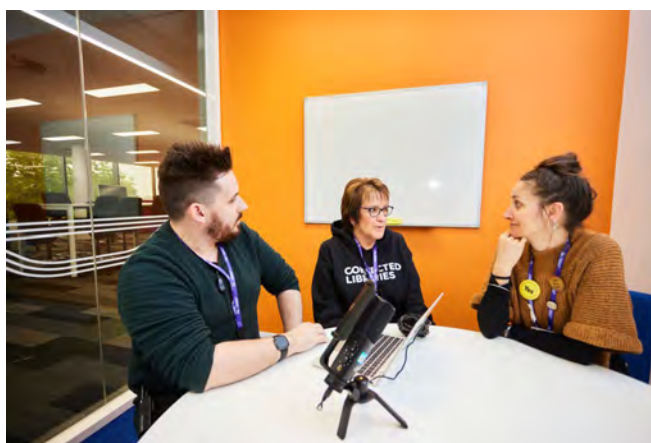
In line with the current Facilities Development Plan, Connected Libraries continues to support the City of Casey with plans to deliver library services in response to the growing population. The focus of exploration for possible new service points is in the southern areas of the municipality, where the growing community is currently under-served by fixed library branches. CL recently asked the community where they would like to see new library services in the future. A report on the community survey results will be presented to the Board at the November meeting.

Book Matters Podcast makes the Australian shortlist

Book Matters is a monthly podcast about books and the people who write them. Packed with reading recommendations, author interviews and insightful advice on finding books.

Just a few of the authors who have featured over time include Sally Hepworth, Monica McInerney, Rachael Johns, Judy Nunn, Heather Morris, Simon Rowell, Nicola Moriarty and Will Kostakis.

Book Matters has recently been named 4th most popular Australian Library Podcast (behind Vision Australia, National Library of Australia and Kiama Public Library), coming in ahead of the State Library of Western Australia. The ranking by Feedspot featured in a recent article naming the top 15 best Library Podcasts in Australia.



Book Matters hit the target of more than 100 downloads in one week in June, and has accumulated a total of 6,755 downloads across 78 episodes.

The podcast team are passionate and creative and include staff team members Janine, Sam, Kate, Lynda, Mitch and Julie.

Love Your Library in Your Language

Acknowledgment was received from Minister for Multicultural Affairs, the Hon. Ingrid Stitt, for Connected Libraries contribution to the 'Love Your Library in Your Language' statewide campaign. The campaign is a collaboration of Public Libraries Victoria, the PLV Multicultural Services and Programs Special Interest Groups, and CAVAL, the campaign sponsor.

The aim was to encourage library members from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD) to participate by writing a message of love to their local public library in their preferred language on a campaign postcard during Cultural Diversity and Harmony Weeks earlier this year.

The completed postcards were collected centrally by PLV and shared with the Victorian Minister for Multicultural Affairs to help raise the Minister's awareness of the importance of public libraries for Victoria's multicultural communities.

(Letter from Minister Stitt is attached).





Conclusion

Connected Libraries continues to deliver on actions from the Library Plan 2021-2025. The provision of quality spaces, and programs that encourage a love of reading and lifelong learning contribute to stronger communities throughout our region.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Library Plan 2021-2025 – Actions and Achievements Report be noted.



Ingrid Stitt MP

Minister for Mental Health
Minister for Ageing
Minister for Multicultural Affairs

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Suzie Cornelius
Doveton and CALD Team Leader
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Dear Suzie

Thank you for your letter sharing the Connected Libraries community postcards. I am delighted to hear about the success of the 'Love your Library in your Language' campaign.

Public libraries serve as vital spaces for many within our communities to learn, connect and nurture a sense of belonging. It is often libraries that play an integral role in ensuring our newly arrived communities have what they need to thrive within our state through English language learning, wellbeing activities and community events.

The work of Connected Libraries is particularly heartening as the City of Casey continues to be one of the fastest growing regions in Australia, with a remarkable diversity of cultures, languages, faiths, identities and histories.

I am pleased to see so many Victorians reflecting on the importance of their local library as part of the community postcards initiative, and I thank Connected Libraries for its unwavering commitment to supporting and connecting our multicultural and multifaith communities.

Thank you again for taking the time to write to me on this important matter.

Yours sincerely

Ingrid Stitt MP
Minister for Multicultural Affairs

13 / 10 / 24

GENERAL BUSINESS

CL44/2024 BENEFICIAL ENTERPRISE

Report prepared by Beth Luppino

Purpose

To provide the Board with an update of the upcoming steps to transition Connected Libraries to a compliant entity under the Local Government Act 2020.

CL Library Plan reference – 4.6, 4.7

Background

Casey Cardinia Library Corporation (trading as Connected Libraries) must be wound up by July 2030 in accordance with provisions of the Local Government Act 2020. Several steps are required by both Council and Connected Libraries to achieve this, and for Connected Libraries to transition to a new entity structure, referred to in the Act as a ‘beneficial enterprise’. This will enable the ongoing delivery of library services in the City of Casey on behalf of Council.

At the June 26 meeting, the Board agreed to endorse the Draft Constitution and Draft Agreement, and then forward both documents to Council. Both documents were approved at the August 20 Council meeting.

At the August 28 meeting the Library Board recommended that the CL Executive Team work with Council officers to progress the next steps in the formation of, and transition to, the new entity.

Discussion

Following the August meeting of the Board, further work has been completed to progress the transition. This relates to these key steps:

- **Council to appoint initial Directors and Council's personal representative(s) to represent Council as the member of the new entity** – all current Board members (except Miguel Belmar, retiring Board member) have now received information that outlines Key Obligations for Directors of the new entity Board. Current Board members have been asked to confirm with City of Casey their interest in being appointed to the new Board.
- **Registration of the new corporate entity as a company with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC)** – Casey Officers have received the required secretarial documents and are working to complete. Following confirmation of at least three Directors for the new entity, the registration process will be finalised.

The transition to the new entity will not impact the object, purpose or operations of our current Library Service, and will enable Connected Libraries and Council to comply with the Local Government Act 2020.

Connected Libraries will continue to provide library services under the current model and Regional Library Agreement until the transition to Connected Libraries Limited is complete and operations commence on the target date of 1 July 2025.

Conclusion

In accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2020, Casey Council sole member of Connected Libraries, will establish a new beneficial enterprise registered as Connected Libraries Limited – a not-for-profit Public Company Limited by Guarantee. The CL Executive Team work with Council officers to progress the next steps in the formation of, and transition to, the new entity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. That the Beneficial Enterprise report be noted.**

NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 20 November 2024 – online teams meeting