

# Strategic Library Services Plan

## 2017/18 – 2021/22

FOR A NEW GENERATION OF LIBRARY SERVICE



## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Our public libraries make a vital contribution to the social, cultural, learning and economic development of our community through the provision of information, access to technology, opportunities to develop new skills and knowledge, reading and literacy activities and welcoming community spaces that connect people with each other and with the City. The City's four libraries – Clarkson, Girrawheen, Wanneroo and Yanchep/Two Rocks – are in greater demand than ever welcoming almost 500,000 visitors annually. They are our most highly patronised community facilities with consistently high satisfaction ratings. As vital as our libraries are, the challenges facing them are complex and varied and to ensure their sustainability long-term, we need to review and plan our facilities and services to guarantee value for the resources invested in them.

Over the past year, the City has undertaken research, analysis, benchmarking and community consultation to review how well our library services and facilities meet the needs of our community as well as identifying the key drivers for change. Planning for the future has been conducted in the context of the City's growth, social and economic environments, research of best practice approaches to public library services nationally and internationally and relevant policy frameworks at a local, state and federal government level.

This Plan comprises four strategic objectives that will focus our efforts to enrich lives and strengthen communities through providing opportunities to learn, discover, create and connect. Underpinning these objectives is our commitment to a community-led service through integrated community hubs where we will collaborate with the community and other Units in the City to offer relevant services, foster connections and showcase local culture, ideas and skills. As well, we will continuously review our services and evaluate our performance to ensure we are delivering an efficient and relevant service that adds value for our community. This new plan reaffirms a commitment to our vital role as providers of information, reading, literacy and learning opportunities while building on our work to provide dynamic and integrated physical and virtual platforms to connect and create in an increasingly digital world. It is intended to inform, influence and drive the future direction, priorities and planning of the City's library service to ensure that what we do in the short term is consistent with where we want to be in the longer term.

## **2. OUR LIBRARY SERVICE IN CONTEXT**

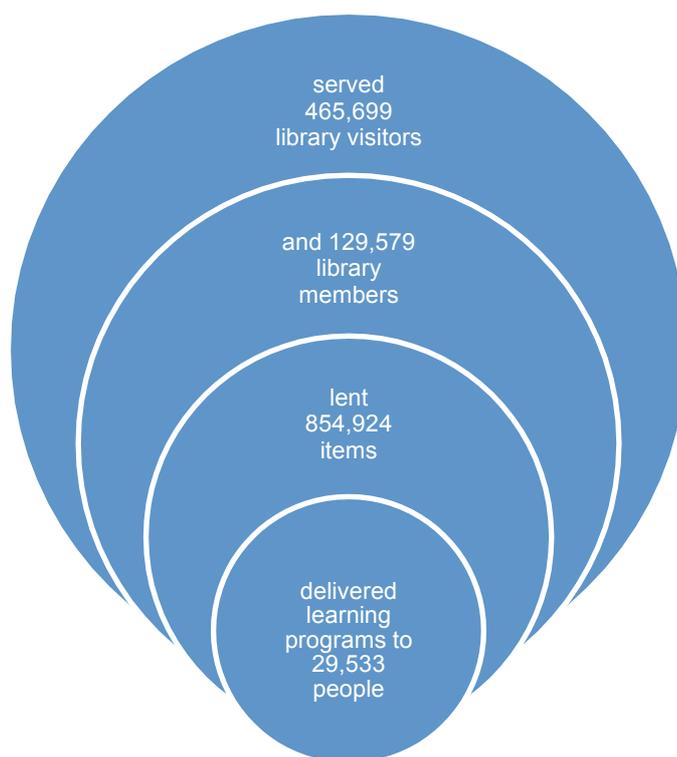
### **2.1 A Snapshot**

Public libraries serve their communities in ways that respond to local aspirations and priorities. In the City of Wanneroo, our population is both growing and changing with its current population of 198,000 predicted to double over the next 25 years. Our population is young and culturally diverse with 33% of residents aged under 20 and 30,000 children, or 15% of the population, aged eight and under. The population is also continuing to age with a growing number of residents aged 60 and over. Forty percent of Wanneroo's population was born overseas and 18% of residents speak a language other than English at home. Unsurprisingly, this diversity means that demand for services to cater for all the needs of our community is ever increasing.

The City's four libraries – Clarkson, Girrawheen, Wanneroo and Yanchep/Two Rocks – provide the community's most widely used educational, cultural and social facilities with almost half a million visits each year. In addition, a dedicated website that provides 24/7 access to library information, ebooks and data bases, received almost 130,000 individual visits in 2015/16, a 62% increase on the previous year. In 2015/16, the libraries had almost 96,000 members, lent over 800,000 physical items and 40,000 ebooks and magazines, and had over 35,000 customers attend literacy and learning programs.

The libraries' digital collections are growing in popularity and number and diversity, while physical collections are being less well used and getting smaller. Visits to libraries continue to grow along with increasing demand for public wi-fi, electronic resources, assistance in using mobile devices and literacy and learning programs. It is evident that the City's growth together with social and economic change and the impact of ubiquitous and emerging technologies are having a significant impact of the way we plan and deliver our library services.

### In 2015/16 the City's libraries:



## 2.2 Legislation and Policy Framework

In Western Australia, local government is the lead provider and funder of public library services. The *Library Board of Western Australia Act 1951* and its regulations provide the governing legislation in which local governments operate public libraries in partnership with the State Government (represented by the Library Board of Western Australia). Local government provides library infrastructure, including buildings and technology, staff, and operating costs while the Library Board, through the State Library of Western Australia, allocates funds for public library stock on a per capita basis.

In 2004, a *Framework Agreement for the Provision of Public Library Services in Western Australia*, comprising three documents – a Framework Agreement, a Funding Agreement and a Local Level Agreement with each local government – was agreed to by State and local government. Originally intended to apply until June 2014, this Agreement was extended until December 2016 by agreement of both parties, but has now lapsed. The Local Level Agreement was endorsed by the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) in 2011, however, it has never been formalised with local governments. The City of Wanneroo’s active agreement with the Library Board for the delivery of public library services is extremely dated, often reflecting the context of the 1960s, when it was signed.

In 2015, WALGA funded a comprehensive research project to develop a new vision for public library services in Western Australia.<sup>1</sup> This recognised the value of public libraries to communities through contributing to social inclusion, creativity, lifelong learning and literacy. It also acknowledged that emerging technologies, changes in media and the way it is consumed as well as social and cultural change will have a significant impact on future public library services and that, as the two tiers of government funding public library services, both state and local government need to consider what the public library offer of the future will look like and how this will be provided.

In July 2016, the Minister for Culture and the Arts established a Public Library Services Working Group (PLWG) tasked with planning a new structure for public library service provision in Western Australia. Amongst the priorities for action identified by the PLWG are much needed legislative reform and a new model for support of public libraries including funding. A discussion paper on the future of Western Australia’s public libraries, drawing on many of the recommendations of the WALGA project, is expected to be released for comment mid in 2017. This work will impact the future direction of all public libraries in Western Australia.

### **2.3 City of Wanneroo Strategic Priorities**

This Plan has been developed to align with the City of Wanneroo’s Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework the Australian Business Excellence Framework and the objectives and strategies contained in the Customer First Strategy 2016-2020. Serving our community is our core purpose and providing a successful integrated hub model relies on our ability to fulfil the four objectives contained in the City’s Customer First Strategy – Simplicity, Accessibility, Quality, Performance.

The Strategic Library Services Plan particularly supports outcomes and strategies from the *Society* pillar in 1.4 *Connected Communities*. This Plan also supports other City strategies and plans including the Early Childhood Strategy, Public Health Plan, Economic Development Strategy & Action Plan, Access and Inclusion Plan and Reconciliation Action Plan.

---

<sup>1</sup> Vision 2025 and Framework for Strategic Action, Perth. <http://walga.asn.au/getattachment/Policy-Advice-and-Advocacy/Community-Development/Arts-and-Culture/Public-Libraries/WALGA-Vision-2025.pdf.aspx?lang=en-AU>

### 3. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Four strategic objectives have been identified as the key drivers to achieving excellence in delivering sustainable library services for our community. These are:

- **Fostering Connected Communities**, working collaboratively through integrated hubs to improve access to information and resources, and expand access to City services for an active, engaged and connected community.
- **Stimulating Learning, Discovery and Creativity**, offering inspiring experiences in the heart of communities so that people are literate, skilled and confident life-long learners and empowered citizens.
- **Evolving Our Digital Environment**, to engage our customers with curated content, digital spaces and services anytime, anywhere.
- **Transitioning the Way We Work**, cultivating opportunities to integrate activities and overcome barriers to City services through innovative service and funding opportunities, empowering our staff and pursuing progressive partnerships and opportunities for collaboration to give us value for the dollars the City invests in its libraries.

### 4. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

#### 3.1 Fostering Connected Communities

Libraries provide an anchor in communities by bringing people together and connecting them with information and services. There is considerable scope to better position the City's libraries as integrated hubs where people come to access City and local services, meet one another and plan together.

Wanneroo has a young and culturally diverse population and nurturing culture and a local sense of place is fundamental to connectedness. While technology links people to the wider world, place-based connection remains important and our libraries are a key contributor to creating vibrant and active places, supporting people at every stage of life. Our libraries often provide the first connection with the City for new arrivals, visitors and those who are socially isolated as well as bringing together communities of interest, like-minded people who want to connect with others to learn and create.

The City's It's All About Play (IAAP) program provides an excellent example of this. In response to the Australian Early Development Census results showing that over 21% of the City's five year old children starting school are developmentally vulnerable, the City developed IAAP, an evidence informed program designed to build the capacity of parents to provide early learning experiences for their young children. Delivering the program through the City's libraries has made it sustainable through new partnerships and volunteerism. Volunteers are trained to facilitate the weekly sessions each averaging over 65 participants. The real success of the program is in the partnerships created, with professionals recognising that the library is providing an accessible, non-threatening space where parents who often do not access their services will come. Edith Cowan University's 'Pregnancy to Parenthood' clinic provides a psychologist and speech

therapist and child health nurses set up a 'drop in clinic' alongside IAAP at Wanneroo and Clarkson libraries.



*At IAAP today, a grandma and her grandson who spoke Taiwanese and little English came in looking tentative and isolated. I was able to welcome them but couldn't put them at ease and involve them in the activities. We found two other mums who spoke Chinese and after a few moments they were all happily engaged in conversation and the kids were all playing together. At the end of the session they all exchanged phone numbers and organised to meet up again at the next session. It was so lovely to see this connection being made and the inclusion of this family in our program.*  
Librarian, Clarkson Library

Through libraries, people can engage, learn, participate and be introduced to new ideas and technologies in a safe and supportive environment that builds neighbourhood connection.

In Wanneroo over the next five years, our libraries will embrace a community-led philosophy to involve communities in designing and delivering services in response to community needs and work purposefully with other units in the City as well as government and non-government agencies, businesses and individuals to leverage our libraries as community hubs that foster belonging and connection and add to the vibrancy of neighbourhoods.

### **3.2 Stimulating Learning, Discovery and Creativity**

In today's fast changing world, we need to continually update our skills and knowledge for both work and life. Learning is a continuous process of adapting, growing, self-development and re-skilling that continues throughout life. Internationally, libraries are focusing on repurposing themselves to be incubators of ideas, learning, creativity and skills that can be accessed by anyone in their community. New opportunities are created and developed through innovative library programs, collections and partnerships, providing resources to enable self-directed, experiential and content rich life-long learning.

There are barriers for many who want to access new learning opportunities. Some do not have the tools and resources to engage while others lack basic functional and digital literacy skills. More than 47% of Western Australians of working age do not have the

foundation literacy skills needed to meet the demands of everyday life<sup>2</sup>. The Australian Industry Group has identified that low foundation skills in the workplace is a significant issue for 93% of employers with flow on negative effects on productivity, safety, teamwork, completing complex documentation and reducing the benefits of training<sup>3</sup>.

At the 2011 census, 46.4% of the City's workforce had no qualifications with 15.2% having a bachelor's degree or higher compared with 38.7% and 23.4% respectively for the State as a whole. In a City growing as quickly as Wanneroo, we need to provide opportunities for community strengthening that meet the social, economic and digital demands shaping our community. Central to this is working collaboratively to provide learning experiences that link to individuals' aspirations, are participatory and self-directed, and offered in hubs where they live or work and provide the resources, connectivity and support they need to enhance their personal and professional lives.

Providing opportunities to empower people to become confident and motivated learners requires innovation and a willingness to redefine how we build partnerships with formal and informal learning agencies to share resources and create new pathways. Our libraries are well placed to do this, building on existing strengths and new approaches. Through access to engaging and flexible spaces, relevant and up-to-date collections, content and technology, purposeful partnerships and outreach, our libraries aim to provide our community with the experiences, skills, information and knowledge they need to cope with the demands of 21<sup>st</sup> century life and work.



*Mrs Wilson is 90 years of age and her family gave her a Samsung tablet for Christmas. Now she now has access to free eBooks from the library and is reading up to four books a week. We've helped her to download eBooks onto her tablet and Mrs Wilson is very excited with this new technology. Senior Library Officer, Books on Wheels*

### **3.3 Evolving our Digital Environment**

Twenty-first century public libraries play a pivotal role as digital hubs in the communities they serve. They offer a one-stop shop to experiment with and learn about new technologies as well as providing access to free, quality online content for users to access anywhere, anytime. In the City of Wanneroo, the take-up of on-line books and databases is high, which provides an opportunity to further develop the library website as

---

<sup>2</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (2014) programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies. Australia 2011-12. Canberra.

<sup>3</sup> Australian Industry Group (2013). Getting it right: foundation skills for the workforce. Sydney.

the City's 'fifth branch library'. Given our City's young, geographically spread population, an emphasis on developing our on-line content and spaces makes good sense.

The City's library service was the first in the state to achieve eSmart status, leading the way in equipping our community with the skills they need for safe and responsible use of on-line information and services. We continue to offer opportunities for all members of the community to develop their digital skills. Government and business services are increasingly being accessed on-line and there is a growing need for support to participate in e-government and e-commerce services, particularly for those without computers or internet access at home, older adults or those without good print, digital literacy or English language skills. Advocacy and establishing partnerships with key government departments and businesses such as banks to ensure sustainable support for the community in using e- services is a priority for the library service.

As the City offers more services on-line, there is likely to be an increased role for staff to play in supporting our customers to access these. The next five years will see the rollout of the National Broadband Network across Wanneroo and the development of technology-enabled service delivery in our libraries, both in our physical and virtual spaces. This will see our libraries become hubs of connectivity enabling collections, programs and services to be accessed anywhere, anytime.



*The library saved our lives! When we moved to Perth from Scandinavia a year ago, we had no internet connection or aerial access in our house and we were coming to the Clarkson Library every day for everything – using the internet, borrowing movies and communicating with our family using the library computers and wi-fi. I don't know what we would have done without the library. Customer, Clarkson*

### **3.4 Transition the Way we Work**

With a tight economic environment and the expectations of the community continuing to evolve, there is increased fiscal pressure on all services including libraries. Increasingly, this is leading to new ways of thinking about how we provide relevant and sustainable services now and in the future. Adopting an integrated hub model, as articulated in the Strategic Intent statement for the Cultural Development Unit has the potential to see our libraries at the heart of a new model for library and other City services that will provide our community with more comprehensive, cohesive, accessible and responsive services.

There is also a clear imperative to move our library services from a traditional transactional and direct service delivery model to one of advocacy, facilitation and partnership building and this, along with extending the provision of place-based services, are key drivers in our work. The State Government's *Delivering Community Services in*

*Partnership Policy*<sup>4</sup> provides opportunities for agencies to work more closely together and the City's library service is looking to extend existing partnerships with ECU Enactus to provide tech help activities for customers.

Holistic planning undertaken by the City as part of its integrated planning and reporting continues to establish community priorities linked to operational functions. Actively exploring opportunities to collaborate and partner with others will gain economies of scale and offer new prospects for delivering services that support innovation, learning and exchange of ideas. Potentially, work driven by the Public Libraries Working Group will lead to a more collaborative state-wide approach to library services and corresponding economies of scale. The City has an established history of playing a leadership role in this arena and will continue to play a role in this important work.

Process reviews are also being undertaken and we are actively seeking opportunities to work with other local governments and external providers to maximise efficiencies.

Technological improvements to the City's Library Service over the past two years have led to them being more efficient and community focused as staff have been freed up from the traditional transactional services of issuing and returning books. This provides opportunities to plan our future workforce and empower our staff to equip themselves with new skill sets for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.



A young customer enthusiastically embraces the new library self-check terminals to issue her own books.

Our libraries are well used by our community; however, it is also important that we demonstrate the return on investment they provide. Along with many other services, libraries are experiencing an increased need to measure and demonstrate their impact and in order for us to purposefully plan for the future, we need to better understand how effective we are in delivering our services, how relevant we are to the communities we serve and the way our outcomes positively impact on our community.

To this end, in 2016, the Australian Public Library Alliance and the Australian Library and Information Association launched new *Guidelines, Standards and Outcome Measures for Australian Public Libraries*. These reflect the role and expectations of contemporary public libraries and enable consistent reporting, evaluation and benchmarking for the planning, development, delivery and review of public library services. For the first time, a

---

<sup>4</sup> Government of Western Australia, *Delivering Community Services in Partnership Policy*, Perth, 2011. <https://www.dpc.wa.gov.au/Publications/EconomicAuditReport/Documents/Delivering%20Community%20Services%20in%20Partnership%20Policy.pdf>

set of standard outcome indicators has been included to enable reporting, evaluation and demonstration of the impact of libraries on people's lives<sup>5</sup>. The City of Wanneroo library service is one of six library services nationally to have been invited to participate in the pilot of a trial conducted by Culture Counts, a measurement platform developed to capture public feedback on the value and impact our libraries have on our customers and enable the value our community places on its library services to be benchmarked over time.

#### **4. MONITORING AND REPORTING**

The City's Cultural Development Unit has primary ownership of the implementation of this Strategic Library Services Plan and will work with internal and external stakeholders to deliver the objectives. Actions in the Cultural Development Service Unit Plan will reflect these objectives and will also align with the City's Corporate Business Plan and budgeting process.

Evidence based guidelines, standards and outcome measures developed for benchmarking and attainment of public libraries throughout Australia will be used to measure the success of our actions.<sup>6</sup> Progress of the Plan will be reported quarterly as part of the Service Unit's corporate reporting.

The Strategic Library Services Plan will be monitored and reviewed annually to ensure it aligns with any changes to the City's Strategic Community Plan and Corporate Business Plan and is responsive to movement in the social, economic and political environment to meet the needs of our community.

#### **5. CONCLUSION**

Over the coming five years, this strategic plan will position the City's library service to be responsive and successful in meeting the challenges of on-going fiscal constraints, advancements in technology and the changing needs of our increasingly diverse community. We aim to become widely recognised as leaders in providing efficient and innovative services through engaging with our community to experiment with new service models, exploring new partnerships, building staff expertise, using current and new technologies to improve the way we work and measuring the value and success of our services.



A new service model sees staff welcoming customers and assisting them find information and reading material using the latest technology.

<sup>5</sup> ALIA, 2016 Guidelines, Standards and Outcome Measures for Australian Public Libraries

<sup>6</sup> Guidelines, Standards and Outcome Measures for Australian Public Libraries, 2016

## 6. STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN 2017-2021

### Strategic Objective 1: Fostering Connected Communities

Working collaboratively through integrated hubs to improve access to information and resources, and expand access to City services for an active, engaged and connected community.

Key Action Required		Outcome	Indicative Timeframe
1.1	Prepare a long-term library facilities plan to guide the planning of future infrastructure and the refurbishment of current library facilities as integrated hubs in the communities they serve	The City provides sustainable facilities and services and offers our customers spaces that are animated and practical with flexible zones to accommodate a range of community needs and activities in the heart of the community they serve.	2017/18
1.2	Seek opportunities to purposefully collaborate with other City services to promote the adoption of an integrated community hub model to meet the needs of our community	The community has access to comprehensive, cohesive and responsive services in the place where they live	2017/18-2021/22
1.3	Establish a community-led service delivery model for our libraries that is responsive to and inclusive of our whole community in ways that respond to their unique and diverse needs	Community use of libraries as meeting places, where people connect with each other and the services they need, is encouraged and facilitated.	2017/18-2021/22

## Strategic Objective 2: Stimulating Learning, Discovery and Creativity

Offering inspiring experiences in the heart of communities so that people are literate, skilled and confident life-long learners and empowered citizens.

Key Action Required		Outcome	Indicative Timeframe
2.1	Finalise a learning framework to guide the City's learning offering and identify partnership opportunities.	A range of partnerships and collaborations are brokered to extend learning opportunities and meet the demand for self-directed, experiential and content rich life-long learning.	2017/18
2.2	Investigate the feasibility of the City of Wanneroo becoming a learning city to strengthen partnerships and foster life-long learning opportunities for the community.	City residents benefit from inclusive opportunities and a range of services that foster literacy, life-long learning and skill development. A range of partnerships and collaborations are brokered to extend opportunities and meet the demand for self-directed experiential and content rich life-long learning.	2019/20

## Strategic Objective 3: Evolving Our Digital Environment

Engaging our customers with curated content, digital spaces and services anytime, anywhere.

Key Action Required		Outcome	Indicative Timeframe
3.1	Prepare a digital development plan to progress our on-line library services and inform prioritising and budgeting for future technology requirements.	The libraries' on-line presence, including our website and electronic resources, is relevant and accessible.	2017/18
3.2	Explore and plan opportunities to work with other agencies to extend access to relevant on-line information and content	We partner with others to improve access to on-line services and content.	2017/18-2021/22
3.3	Investigate opportunities to incorporate new and emerging technologies into our services to make them more accessible and realise value for customers.	People are exposed to new materials, equipment and digital media so that they build their skills and knowledge.	2017/18-2021/22

#### Strategic Objective 4: Transition the Way We Work

Cultivating opportunities to integrate activities and overcome barriers to City services through innovative service and funding opportunities, empowering our staff and pursuing progressive partnerships and opportunities for collaboration to give us value for the dollars the City invests in its libraries.

Key Action Required		Outcome	Indicative Timeframe
4.1	Review library processes and services to improve their efficiency, effectiveness and relevance	Sustainable, effective and efficient library services are delivered to meet the diverse needs of our community.	2017/18-2021/22
4.2	Explore opportunities for collaboration and economies of scale with other agencies and businesses	Cross-sector collaboration is supported at a state, regional and local level to drive efficiencies in service delivery	2017/18-2021/22
4.3	Identify and showcase opportunities for innovative service delivery models.	Library services are delivered through innovative and collaborative models	2017/18-2021/22
4.4	Contribute to the City's Workforce Plan for staffing needs skills and competencies to maximise the potential for staff to deliver a range of City services to the community.	We have the right roles filled by knowledgeable and skilled staff to deliver relevant services.	2017/18-2018/19
4.5	Adopt Guidelines, Standards and Outcome Measures for Australian Public Libraries to evaluate our services using benchmarks, targets and performance indicators.	We have the data and evidence we need to support continuous improvement, service excellence and operational efficiency as well as demonstrating the value of library services to the community.	2017/18-2021/22





City of  
Wanneroo

Locked Bag 1, Wanneroo, WA 6946  
Telephone (08) 9405 5000 Fax (08) 9405 5499  
[library.wanneroo.wa.gov.au](http://library.wanneroo.wa.gov.au)

