



# Library Strategy 2019 – 2030

March 2020



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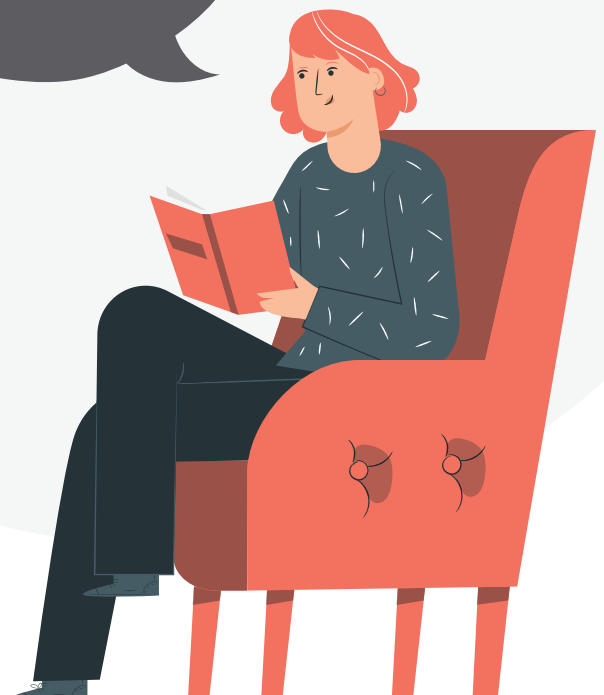
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ONCE UPON  
A TIME...

## Acknowledgments

Kingston Libraries would like to thank members of the Kingston Community Panel for their thoughts, suggestions and recommendations on how the libraries can best meet the community's future needs and aspirations.

Kingston Libraries also thank Christine Mackenzie, IFLA President-elect 2017-2019 (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) for her valuable insights into the changing role of 21st century libraries.



# Overview

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Kingston Libraries' Library Strategy 2030 establishes a platform for the future development and delivery of high quality contemporary library services to the people who live and work in the City of Kingston. The Strategy describes our vision for the libraries, our strategic priorities, and the principles which guide the way we engage the Kingston community in shaping their library service and experiences.

# Overview

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## Vision

Living breathing community destinations where the people of Kingston can read, connect, grow and just be.

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## Mission

- We professionally and efficiently deliver library services the Kingston community wants and needs.
  - We empower users to choose how and when they access library services, and a library experience that works for them.
  - We put the community and the customer first in every decision and every interaction.
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## Strategic priorities

Kingston Libraries aim to deliver expectational customer experiences.

In the next 10 years we will focus our energies on four strategic priorities:

1. 21st century buildings
2. Contemporary service models
3. Customer reach and activation
4. Community engagement and partnerships.

We will strive to offer library collections, programs and services that respond to the needs of our diverse communities. We will continue to build the capacity of our people to deliver high levels of customer service and satisfaction.

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## Values

(Kingston City Council)

- Dynamic
  - Community-centric
  - Future-orientated
  - Accountable
  - Expert
  - Celebrate
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## Guiding principles

(Libraries and Social Development Team)

1. Our community and our customers are the central point upon which our services turn. They are the reference point for all that we do.
2. With an inclusive approach, we open the doors of opportunity for all people to achieve their goals and participate meaningfully within their community.
3. The best outcomes are achieved when the community are our active partners in identifying the issues, designing the solutions, and implementing the actions.
4. Every voice in our team is valued, and we critically reflect on our services to continually do better.
5. We manage our resources wisely to achieve best value for our community and to support an environmentally sustainable Kingston.
6. Supportive relationships and strong partnerships are critical to our success.
7. We are dedicated to equal and free access to a shared foundation of information, open data, creative works and knowledge.
8. We are innovators. We push the boundaries so that our community has early access to new opportunities.
9. We value the history of our community and ensure it is preserved as a legacy for current and future generations.

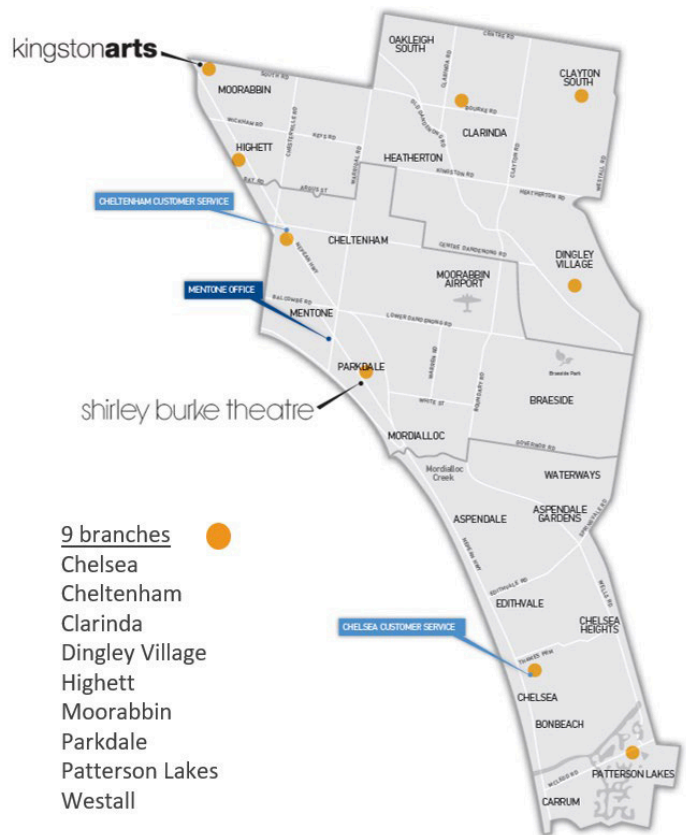
# Kingston Libraries

## Library services

Kingston Libraries are part of the Libraries and Social Development Team at Kingston City Council.

Council operates nine public library branches, with major sites at Chelsea, Cheltenham, Parkdale and Westall, and minor sites at Clarinda, Dingley Village, Highett, Moorabbin and Patterson Lakes. The new purpose-built library and community hub at Westall was opened in 2017. There was a significant redevelopment of the library at Dingley Village in 2019. The libraries at Highett, Parkdale, Cheltenham and Moorabbin are older and have not been upgraded or refreshed in the past 10 years.

The nine libraries are open for a total of 336 hours per week, including some branches with evening hours (until 8pm) and some with weekend openings (approx. 10–2 am on Saturdays, 2–5 pm Sundays). Library users also have 24/7 access to eResources via the [library website](#).

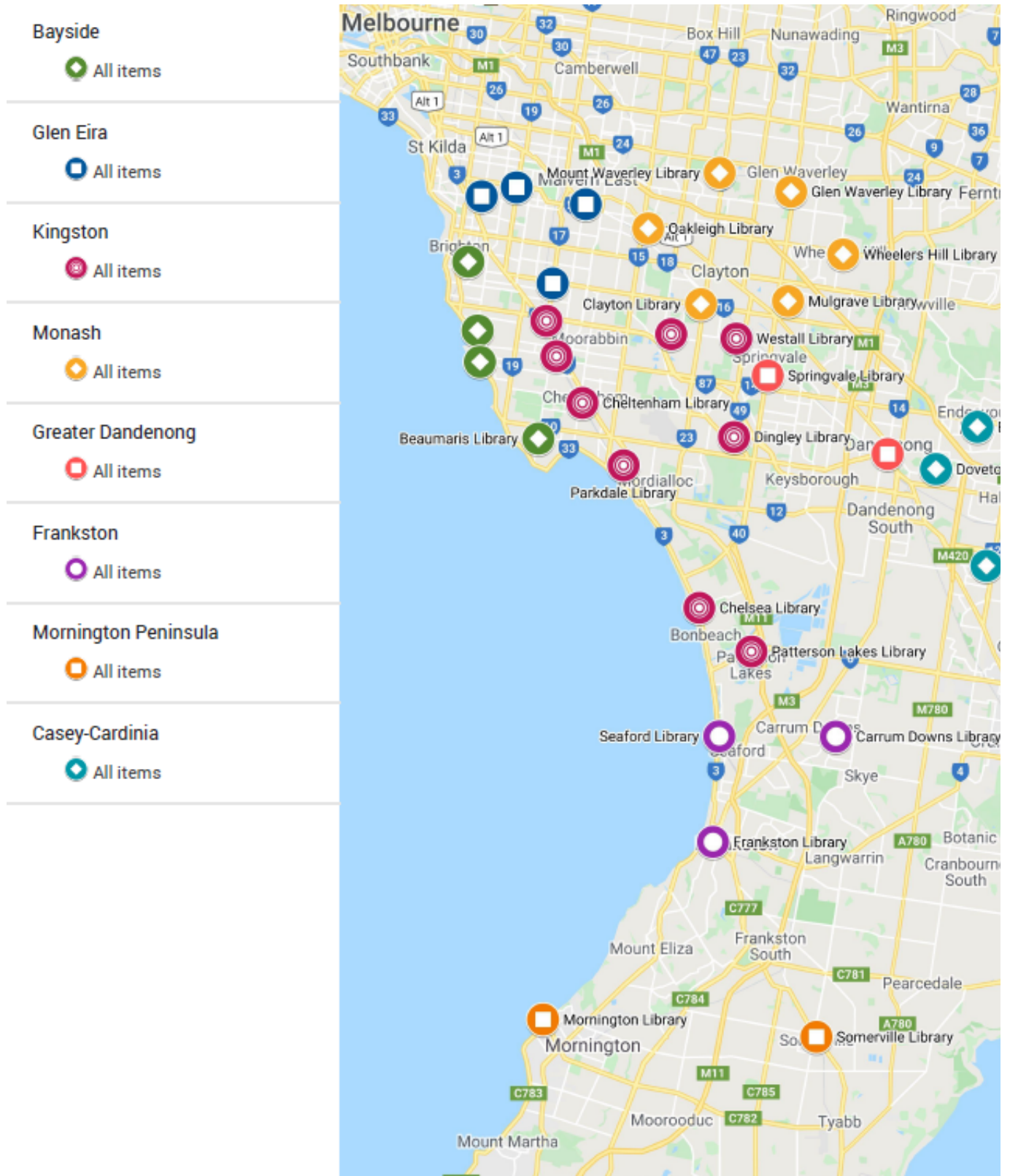


## Collectively, the libraries offer a full range of library services:

- A physical collection of 228,000 books, magazines and CDs/DVDs (including children's, young adult and general collections; collections in languages other than English; large print and audiobooks)
- Access to nearly 30,000 digital items (via Borrowbox, Cloud Library, Tumble Book, Story Box Library, RBDigital, Kanopy, etc.)
- Information and reference services
- Early years literacy programs for babies and pre-schoolers (e.g. Story Time, Tiny Tots), as well as after-school and school holiday programs for primary age children (e.g. Lego Club, Minecraft, Science Club, Games Club, Crafty Kids)
- Writing and poetry competitions for young adults
- Author talks and technology classes for adults and seniors
- A Home Library Service for the homebound and people in aged care facilities
- Public access computers, printers, copiers and scanners
- Free wifi
- Places to read, study, work and meet.

In 2017-18 Kingston Libraries had a total operating budget of \$6.2 million (approx. \$36 per resident). It employed permanent full-time/part-time and casual relief staff in its branches and operations centre, with the equivalent of 51.2 full-time staff.

# Libraries services around Kingston

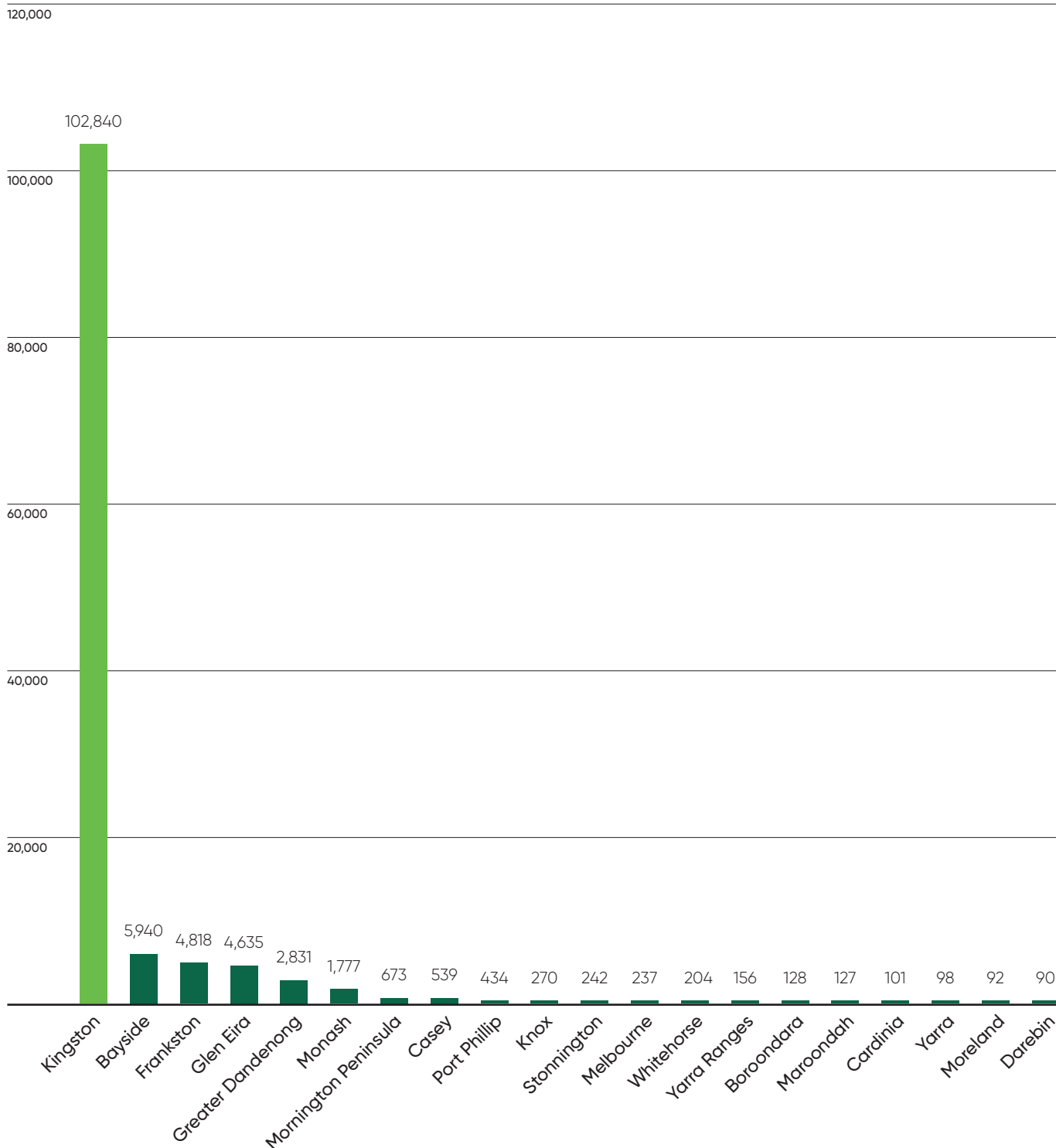


# Libraries services around Kingston

## Patrons from other LGA's using Kingston Libraries 2019

Following consultation with Kingston Council internal Leadership group and team leaders a research piece has been developed around the patron usage of Kingston City Council Libraries service from the neighboring council resident. Below is a graph and table on where the members of Kingston Libraries are residents in 2019.

### Number of Patrons by LGA 2019 (Top 20)



# Library Usage

## In 2017-18 Kingston Libraries:

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**29,600**

**Active borrowing members**

Representing approximately 18% of the local population

**650,000**

**Visitors welcomed**

62% at Cheltenham, Parkdale & Chelsea

**114,000**

**Visits to the library website**

**926,000**

**Loaned 850,000 physical and 76,000 digital items**

72% at Cheltenham, Parkdale & Chelsea

**115,000**

**Wi-Fi and library computer sessions hosted**

**49,000**


**Attendances at on/offsite library programs & activities**

96% in early years literacy & primary school programs

**65,000**

**Reference and technical inquiries responded to**





"It's a place to wander and wonder.  
It provides multiple and immediate choices  
as to your intellectual engagement.  
You witness others in the community  
having fun, little people, or pursuing their  
ambitions, student study, job searchers.  
It's the best place to take children to  
stimulate their interest in anything.

It's the one place to go to travel  
in time, and the world."

**Library user survey, 2019**

# Library Achievements

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Public libraries change lives by offering communities a place to learn, create and belong. No other institutions offer the same safe and inclusive public spaces with free and equal, life-changing access to art, ideas, education and social engagement. Every day, as a contemporary public library service, Kingston Libraries contribute to a range of individual and community outcomes:

- Literacy and lifelong learning
- Informed and connected citizenship
- Digital inclusion
- Personal development and wellbeing
- Stronger, more creative and culturally inclusive communities
- Economic and workforce development.

Library staff have also been working hard in the past 12 months as part of Council's 'Customer First' initiative to transform the way in which library services are delivered. With encouragement and authority to make practical changes that improve the customer experience, staff have initiated more than 70 projects (large and small) that have seen:

- Removal of reservation fees
- Upgraded wifi
- Introduction of Makerspaces
- Scan to email service
- Unrestricted access to BorrowBox
- Reconfigured layout (Cheltenham)
- Improved catalogue searches
- New collections signage in branches
- Introduction of recycle bins
- New library bags
- Secure lockers and external returns chute (Westall)
- Face-out shelving
- Height-adjustable chairs at computers.

<sup>1</sup> State Library of Victoria/Public Libraries Victoria, Libraries Change Lives, <https://librarieschangelives.org.au/>.

# The Kingston Community

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**The City of Kingston is bounded by the Cities of Bayside, Glen Eira, Monash, Greater Dandenong and Frankston. Kingston is a major employment centre, having one of the largest and most concentrated industrial sectors in Victoria. There are approximately 15,500 businesses with over 70,000 people employed throughout the City. Almost 30% of the community work locally and enjoy short commute times and an improved work-life balance.**

## Population profile

2016 ABS census data provides a profile of the people who currently live in the City of Kingston. It highlights shifts in the population over the past five years by age, household structure, cultural and language background, education, employment and income. It also highlights differences between Kingston and other local government areas (LGAs) in metropolitan Melbourne.

Population growth in the City of Kingston from 2011 to 2016 (+7.2%) was double the population growth experienced across the Melbourne metropolitan area (+3.6%). The City of Kingston's Council Plan 2017–2021 indicates that Kingston's residential population of around 157,000 is expected to grow to 187,000 by 2036. The forecast 18% population growth will be concentrated in Highett, Moorabbin, Mentone and Cheltenham.

Kingston is a culturally diverse city with residents from over 150 countries who speak more than 120 languages. About 30% of Kingston's population was born overseas, with 22% from non-English speaking backgrounds including Chinese, Greek, Italian and Indian. The proportion of residents who speak languages other than English is increasing (notably Mandarin, Hindi).

Compared with the metropolitan average, Kingston has a relatively older population. The proportion of residents aged under 34 years – including pre-schoolers, school-age children, tertiary students and the 'young workforce' – dropped slightly from 43% in 2011 to 42% in 2016, well below the 48% metropolitan average. In contrast, the Kingston population aged 60 years and over (which now includes much of the Baby Boomer generation) increased from 22% to 23% of the total, well above the 19% metropolitan average.

As is occurring across Melbourne, average education levels in Kingston are increasing as more people complete post-school qualifications, including vocational certificates, diplomas and university degrees. Despite this, unemployment levels have trended upward, as has the proportion of people in part-time work and the proportion of people looking for full- and part-time work.

**It is also noted that the Kingston population has:**

- A median age of 40 years, compared with 36 in Greater Melbourne
- 0.4% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin
- Lower than average levels of social and economic disadvantage (SEIFA Index)
- Above average incomes
- 13% of households with no home internet connection (fewer than the 19% in 2011, but above the 12% metropolitan average)
- 25% single person households
- An increasing number of people needing disability assistance (5% of the population), with this being 16% of people aged 75–79 years, 25% aged 80–84 and 43% of people aged 85 years or over.

# The Kingston Community

According to the latest data from the 2018 Australian Early Development Census<sup>2</sup>, one in nine children in the City of Kingston commences school 'at risk' or 'vulnerable' in reading, language and literacy skills (11%, vs the Victorian and national averages of 15%). The proportion of children 'at risk' or 'vulnerable' on the language and cognitive skills domain is greatest in Clayton South (24%), Carrum (18%) and

Patterson Lakes (17%), where up to one in five children start school not ready to read. Reading readiness at primary school has been shown to be a major determinant in a child's success at school and into post-school education and employment. It is also an area where public libraries can have a significant impact through early years' literacy programs such as Story Time and Tiny Tots.

## Implications for Kingston Libraries

The evolving profile of Kingston's population has direct implications for the likely demand for access to library services across the municipality.

Population characteristic	Impact on demand for library services
Increasing total population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Larger collections (physical and digital)</li> <li>• More general library programs</li> <li>• More reading, study and meeting spaces</li> </ul>
High and increasing number of Baby Boomer retirees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Larger collections (physical and digital)</li> <li>• More lifestyle and retirement programs</li> <li>• Potential pool of volunteers</li> </ul>
High proportion of seniors and elderly people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More home library services and outreach programs</li> </ul>
Pre-schoolers 'at risk' or 'vulnerable' on language and cognitive skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More Story Time programs in targeted locations</li> <li>• Larger children's collections</li> </ul>
Fewer tertiary students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fewer study spaces during the day/evening</li> </ul>
Increasing numbers of non-English language speakers (e.g. Mandarin, Hindi)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Larger LOTE collections</li> <li>• More programs in community languages</li> <li>• More English language programs</li> </ul>
People with lower home access to the internet (especially Chelsea, Carrum and Moorabbin)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More access to computers, Wi-Fi and 'connected workspaces'</li> <li>• More technology support programs</li> </ul>
More single person households	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More demand for social connectivity</li> </ul>
Older people needing access to assistance due to a disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More home library services</li> <li>• Accessible library spaces</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> Australian Early Development Census, 2018 results, <https://www.aedc.gov.au/>

"On a cold day I can sit and read whilst overlooking the small park. It allows me to get out of the house and spend enjoyable time at no cost, which is important since my income is limited and I live alone. I can be warm and comfortable and see other people whilst enjoying a book."

Library user survey, 2019

# A world that never stops

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*In a fast-paced world that never stops, population social, economic and technological changes are changing the way we live, work, study and relax. In planning for the future libraries must understand these changes, the implications and they opportunities they create for people who use, work in and benefit from public library services.*

## A dynamic population

- We have an ageing population, with post-war Baby Boomers leaving the workforce and entering retirement. They have high expectations and a strong desire to be actively connected with their world – embracing technology as an avenue to further learning that supports lifestyle, travel, employment and social engagement.
- The Baby Bonus Generation is sweeping through the school education system and into tertiary education and the workforce. Children and teenagers are born digital. They integrate technology seamlessly into the way they live, learn and connect because they know no other way.
- Overseas migration has overtaken natural increase as the principal driver of population growth.
- Migration driven by economic demands, humanitarian concerns, family relationships and the appeal of a higher quality of life is changing the ethnic mix in cities and regional centres. Many migrants arrive without the English language skills needed to fully engage with government, community and personal services.
- Mandarin is now the second-most common spoken language in Australia after English.
- Increased housing density and increased life expectancy lead to a similar outcome – increased demand for safe accessible public spaces. People living in smaller dwellings are looking for other places like cafes and libraries where they can spend social and recreational time. As people live longer there are likely to be more single person households and more people looking for opportunities and places to meet and connect to overcome social isolation.



# A world that never stops

## Life in a digital world

- Increased digital connectivity also leads to increased demand for public spaces. People who spend a large amount of time working, socialising or playing online also want access to active people places.
- The rise of smart phones, tablets and other internet-connected mobile devices means that wherever we are, whatever the time, we can and often expect to be able to link to others, access content and apps, conduct business, attend lectures and workshops in remote locations, and carry out a myriad of other activities that meet our needs.
- The internet, social media and new applications have created an explosion in the amount of information available to the public and the pace at which it can be shared. Some of this information is authoritative, but some is un-mediated, untested and 'fake news'. The general population is struggling to identify what information is credible. Skills in searching for, accessing, filtering and interpreting information are in increasing demand.
- Many services and information from Centrelink, Medicare, government agencies, healthcare providers, energy suppliers and other businesses is only accessible online – without regard for user access or ability.
- The nature of education is changing as a greater proportion of learning activities, both formal and informal, occur in a digital environment. Most university, vocational or school courses now have online components related to access, research, content, submission and/or assessment.
- The nature of work is changing too with demand for digital skills in almost every industry sector. Manufacturing and construction jobs used to only require manual skills, but now involve awareness and use of technology. Telecommuting creates a different work environment and school leavers face a future with 17 jobs and five careers<sup>3</sup>.
- Access to the new technologies is providing greater opportunities for individuals to co-create information and digital content.



<sup>3</sup> Job Mobility in Australia, The McCrindle Blog, 2014. <http://mccrindle.com.au/the-mccrindle-blog/job-mobility-in-australia>

# A world that never stops

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## Choosing a future

- People are making lifestyle choices about the balance between work and leisure. There are growing gaps between those who are 'time-rich, income-poor' and those who are 'income-rich, time-poor'. People in their 50s and 60s find themselves sandwiched between the need to care for their dependent children and the responsibility of caring for their older parents, and increasingly find themselves both 'income poor' and 'time poor'
- We are moving away from education as 'preparation for life and work' to learning as 'an integral part of life and work'. Lifelong learning is stimulating, enriching and empowering people, providing them with opportunities to learn and to apply this learning – whatever it may be – with confidence, creativity and enjoyment.
- Globalisation has seen greater movement of people, goods, capital and ideas around the world as physical and trade barriers are reduced and technology makes it easier for people to communicate and buy goods online. The borderless world provides opportunities for greater openness and mutual respect between diverse groups of people who currently neither know nor understand one another. It can also blur the unique characteristics that define and shape localities – leading to a quest for local identity and culture.





# 21st Century Libraries

## What's Changing, What's Not

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*“The public library, the local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development of the individual and social groups...”*

### The origins of public libraries

For thousands of years – since the Romans first made scrolls available to patrons of the baths – public libraries have encouraged universal access to books and information to improve learning and strengthen social cohesion. While ‘subscription’ libraries became popular during the 18th century, the push for truly public libraries gained force in the 19th century when the British Public Libraries Act 1850 gave local boroughs the power to raise taxation to establish free public libraries.

“MPs felt that public libraries would provide for self-improvement through books and reading for all classes, and that the greater levels of education attained would result in lower crime rates.”<sup>4</sup>

During the 20th century, public libraries became more widespread, expanding their role from book-lending organisations to community-centred open-access repositories of information.

“The public library, the local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development of the individual and social groups... The public library is the local centre of information, making all kinds of knowledge and information readily available to its users. Library services are provided on the basis of equality of access for all, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language or social status.”<sup>5</sup>

Throughout their history, and all around the world, public libraries have shared and continue to share five fundamental characteristics.

That is:

- They are supported by taxes (usually local)
- They are governed to serve the public interest
- They are open to all, and every community member can access the collection
- They are entirely voluntary in that no one is forced to use the services provided
- They provide basic services without charge.

<sup>4</sup> UK Hansard, 1850. As reported in [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public\\_library](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_library).

<sup>5</sup> IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto, 1994.

# 21st Century Libraries

## What's Changing, What's Not

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*In the early part of the 21st century, the next evolutionary phase of public libraries is occurring in response to major population and social changes, new workforce skill needs and rapid technological advancements. Libraries are responding to this dynamic environment by changing the way they work and keeping some things the way they always have been.*

### **Collections**

Collections are still the heart of the library. Access to information is the enduring value of libraries. Most people who visit libraries borrow books, and collections account for 15–20% of library expenditure.

What has changed is that librarians are no longer passive minders of a communal resource. Many libraries are genre-fying their collections, grouping them into subject areas and making them more like bookstores. Hard to reach high shelves are gone and books are better displayed face-out. Online discovery layer software sits on top of library circulation systems and socialises the catalogue, allowing for an Amazon-like experience, with readers able to add reviews and ratings and being offered suggestions for similar titles. Printed reference collections and encyclopedias are disappearing, replaced by digital titles that are much more accessible for borrowers and easier for publishers to update. Borrowing patterns are changing too. More people now browse the online catalogue, place holds and come in and pick up the items when they are available instead of taking home a big pile of books. Procurement of library materials has undertaken a huge change and it is now common for libraries to use standing orders and supplier-aided selection and receive their materials shelf-ready.

### **Programs**

Libraries have long provided programs for children, with Story Times, school holiday activities, after school programs and homework clubs to encourage reading, literacy and learning and complement formal education. Similarly, there have been author nights and talks on topical subjects for adults.

What has changed is a new emphasis on learning programs – for people of all ages. Baby Rhyme Times emphasise the need for parents and carers to start reading to their children as early as possible; pre-school Story Times are more popular than ever, and libraries offer all sorts of programs for children. Digital literacy classes are held for all ages, programs are run outside the library, library staff attend community events and provide outreach services. Volunteers enable libraries to provide additional services such as adult Story Times, iPad lessons at aged care facilities, English language conversation classes, reading dogs and chess clubs. Selection and delivery of library materials to those who cannot visit the library is also being done by volunteers.

# 21st Century Libraries

## What's Changing, What's Not

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### Spaces

Libraries are familiar places to many people in the community – comfortable, safe, inclusive places where all are welcome. Warm in winter and cool in summer, the local library is a place to meet and connect, or a place to be alone with others. Whatever their size, there never seems to be enough space for all the collections, activities and people.

Today, when libraries are built or renovated there is a big emphasis on flexibility. Shelving is on wheels so it can be moved to create space for events and performances. There is demand for quiet spaces to study and read. Comfortable chairs and sofas create a cosy ambience and provide spaces for small group discussions and talks. New creative spaces – makerspaces, fab labs, co-working spaces – are being added to encourage learning and stimulate economic development. Libraries are co-located with museums, art galleries, maternal health centres, community centres, swimming pools and local history societies. There are undefined spaces that users can configure themselves, with furniture that can be easily shifted around for different uses. Architectural features such as staircases double

as seating for performance spaces; exciting children's spaces encourage creativity and learning; and laptop bars allow people to use their own technology in the library. Some libraries offer secure 24/7 access, allowing people to use the space when no staff are present.

### Library staff

Library staff have always been rated highly by community members for their friendliness, helpfulness and customer service. Librarians are good at collaborating and sharing information with their customers.

What has changed is that there are new expectations on staff to deliver learning programs, conduct events and more actively promote reading and literacy. Libraries are employing people with skills in teaching, marketing and communications, information and communications technology, youth work, fundraising, grant writing and volunteer management. There is a blurring of roles within the library and a greater emphasis on teamwork and partnerships.



# 21st Century Libraries

## What's Changing, What's Not

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### **New service models, new users**

RFID and self-service have changed the way public libraries think about service delivery. When staff are freed from the circulation desk many opportunities arise and new programs and services can be offered that respond directly to community needs.

There is an increased emphasis on partnerships and collaboration with community organisations and governments. Programs such as Tech Savvy Seniors, Libraries after Dark and educating seniors about scams have been run in consultation with government departments and corporate sponsors. Libraries provide space for community groups (such as U3A) to run classes. Partnerships with local universities, schools, and organisations catering to people with special needs such as autism mean that the library can amplify and increase its reach into the community.

Libraries are going out to the community to offer programs and services to people who are not traditional library users. Library staff visit community centres to run Story Times and provide advice to new parents on the importance of reading to babies and young children. They attend assisted-living accommodation to provide technology training and attend fetes and festivals to promote the library.

### **Change drivers**

Technology will continue to be a big driver of change in libraries. Web 2.0 and the rise of social networking signalled a huge shift in library service provision. Technologies to watch now are artificial intelligence (AI), augmented and virtual reality (AR/VR), robotics, blockchain and open source. The semantic web and linked data promise to open new access points into library information.

Funding is always a driver for change – often because of diminishing budgets, but sometimes because investment in capital works and new or renovated library buildings becomes the impetus for examining processes and practices to ensure that they are still relevant. Yet there comes a point where inadequate resourcing causes systemic failure, as in the UK where nearly 500 public libraries have closed since 2011. The implications are real, with book loans to children since 2011 having fallen in Birmingham by 32%, in Newcastle by 35% and in Sheffield by 56%.

Globalisation of information impacts on local cultures, emphasising the need and desire for preservation and encouragement of local history and cultural heritage. It is estimated that 65% of effort required to achieve the United Nations' 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals will be local, according to Christopher Woodthorpe, Director of the United Nations Information Centre in Canberra.

User expectations are also changing. People now expect 24/7 access to services, and places and spaces that suit their individual and collective needs. Libraries are using user-centred design thinking to guide their engagement with the community in co-design of library services and spaces<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/dec/15/tories-libraries-social-mobility-conservative>

# 21st Century Libraries

## What's Changing, What's Not

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### Where are libraries heading?

The Victorian Public Libraries 2030 Strategic Framework explores the future of libraries via two scenarios. The Creative Scenario emphasises creativity, collaboration and brain health, where people will create content and seek skills and resources to develop and express their creativity. The Community Scenario emphasises dynamic learning and community connections. People will consume content and seek classes, workshops and spaces that support 21st century literacies and learning<sup>8</sup>.

*Collaboration and partnerships will be key to the development of library services into the future. Libraries will co-design their programs and services with their community.*

Libraries must be clear about their role and articulate this clearly to stakeholders and the community. And every librarian and library user needs to be an advocate to ensure that libraries have the resources they need to provide high-quality services to current and future generations.



<sup>7</sup> <http://designthinkingforlibraries.com/>

<sup>8</sup> [https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/1f8737\\_a5e5bc11791042e59250fb06595ae29f.pdf](https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/1f8737_a5e5bc11791042e59250fb06595ae29f.pdf)

# Placemaking

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Plan Melbourne reinforces under Outcome 5 that Melbourne is a city of inclusive, vibrant and healthy neighbourhoods. This outcome is supported through key Directions that provide for the creation of 20-minute neighborhoods and reinforce the critical need for integrated planning around social infrastructure. Increasingly for Kingston the 'interdependencies' between different land uses is growing as our land becomes scarcer and population and employment growth is changing building typologies in and around Activity Centres.

Kingston is also fortunate that significant investment is being made to facilitate substantial enhancements to transport infrastructure across the City through the Level Crossing Removal Works and the planned Suburban Rail Loop. The Suburban Rail Loop project transforms access for much of the Kingston community into the Monash University and Health Precinct and will in so doing, play a significant role in influencing land use planning decisions in Kingston particularly around Cheltenham where the project is envisaged to start.

These transformative infrastructure changes to the City dictate that a much greater focus needs to be placed on the expanded roles our Activity Centres and how the provision of integrated community services is a critical ingredient. Approaches such as that achieved in Central Dandenong where consideration has been given to the incorporation of library facilities within an activated community precinct demonstrates the role a place-based approach can play in determining future library-based investments.

The benefits of following both local and international trends of alignment library investments into Activity Centres include:

- the ability to link future library investment decisions into locations where existing Council planning policies very actively encourage the aggregation of mixed use development outcomes creating the ability to use land much more efficiently and 'cluster' land use activities together (eg. libraries with other Council services, community housing, education facilities or retail and service facilities)
- planning the investment into readily identifiable locations where individuals and families will be able to visit for multiple different purposes;
- transport infrastructure (trains, buses and cycling infrastructure) in Kingston is already channelled into Activity Centres broadening the range of transport choices available to people including older people and school students who are key users of library services.
- successful libraries will bring broader economic benefits as they will bring additional visitors into activity centres to support small businesses
- as housing in and around activity centres continues to diversify and increasingly apartment developments occur, libraries can become the 'meeting or break out places' for people living in apartments fostering social inclusion and greater community connectedness.

*Supported through its Planning Policies, Council can through future investment decision making around the placement / upgrading of libraries view these decisions as significant catalysts for its Activity Centre and Placemaking objectives.*

# Strategic Framework 2030

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*our vision for Kingston is public libraries that are well-resourced, well-used and living breathing community destinations where the people of Kingston can read, connect, grow and just be.*

## **Our vision and mission**

Our mission is to create and sustain those libraries – continually evolving and adapting to changes in our community, changes in technology and changes in the world in which we live. We are committed to being the best we can be.

- We professionally and efficiently deliver library services the Kingston community wants and needs.
- We empower users to choose how and when they access library services, and a library experience that works for them.
- We put the community and the customer first in every decision and every interaction.

## **Guiding principles**

Kingston City Council's Libraries and Social Development (LSD) Team sees a thriving and connected community, with equal opportunities for people to engage in lifelong learning and achieve personal success. Using an inclusive approach, the LSD Team connects the Kingston community with information, knowledge, resources, creativity and each other.

The way in which the LSD Team works to serve and support the community, works with one another, and is accountable to the community is guided by the following principles.

1. Our community and our customers are the central point upon which our services turn. They are the reference point for all that we do.
2. With an inclusive approach, we open the doors of opportunity for all people to achieve their goals and participate meaningfully within their community.
3. The best outcomes are achieved when the community are our active partners in identifying the issues, designing the solutions, and implementing the actions.
4. Every voice in our team is valued, and we critically reflect on our services to continually do better.
5. We manage our resources wisely to achieve best value for our community and to support an environmentally sustainable Kingston.
6. Supportive relationships and strong partnerships are critical to our success.
7. We are dedicated to equal and free access to a shared foundation of information, open data, creative works and knowledge.
8. We are innovators. We push the boundaries so that our community has early access to new opportunities.
9. We value the history of our community and ensure it is preserved as a legacy for current and future generations.

# Strategic Framework 2030

## Council values



Kingston Council strives for excellence in everything it does. It is a diverse, dynamic and contemporary organisation that puts people and places at the forefront of its decisions and actions.

Six key values underpin Council's Community Inspired Leadership framework. These values describe how Council works and how this work is focused on delivering exceptional service and benefit to the community. The values inform

the skills, aptitudes and knowledge that are necessary to successfully perform our roles. The framework is a strategic approach to developing employees which aligns with Council's vision and facilitates achievement of key outcomes. The values provide structure for performance planning and performance management, as well as supporting effective recruitment and selection, and informing the development of leadership and professional development programs.



# Strategic Framework 2030

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## Strategic priorities and key actions

**Library Strategy 2030** establishes a platform for the future development and delivery of high quality contemporary library services to the people who live and work in the City of Kingston. Our goal is to deliver great customer experiences. We will achieve this by focusing our energies on four strategic priorities.

We will strive to offer library collections, programs and services that respond to the needs of our diverse communities. We will continue to build the capacity of our people to deliver high levels of customer service and satisfaction.

## **KINGSTON LIBRARIES STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

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# Priority 1 – 21st Century Buildings

## Description

21st century libraries are places where people go to access, participate in and experience a diverse range of collections, resources, facilities, spaces, programs, and learning and cultural opportunities. Modern libraries:

- Are located in thriving activity centres that provide the community with easy access to multiple service and recreation options
- Are attractive, functional and accessible for all-abilities
- Are flexible to accommodate collections and activities which serve the different interests and needs of the community
- Stimulate interest in library services
- Provide community spaces that encourage people to come, connect and stay (e.g. gardens, cafes)
- Are energy efficient, support environmental initiatives and are a place of respite during extreme weather conditions.

Kingston Libraries' branch network comprises nine buildings of varying age, size, appeal and functionality.

## Key actions

### 1.1

Explore alternative service delivery approaches in Highett-Moorabbin that better meet the needs of the local community.

### 1.2

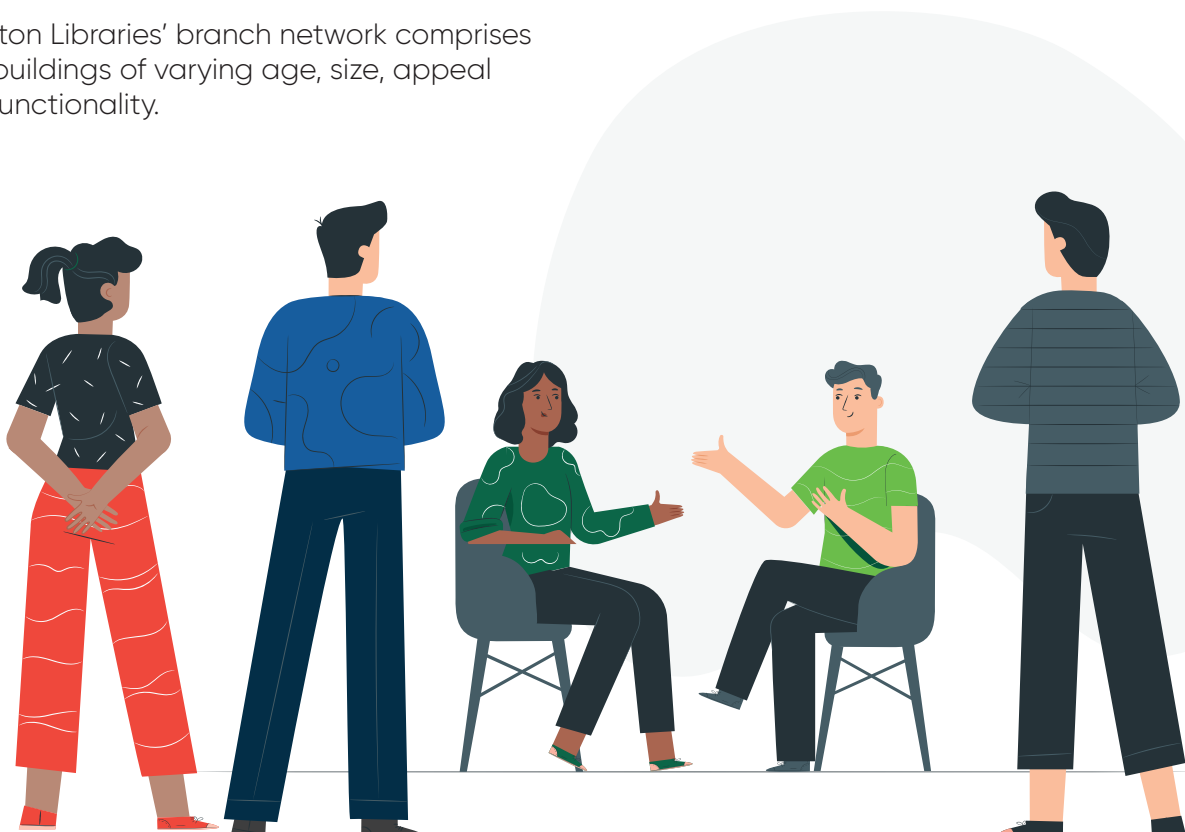
(As soon as possible) Redesign the layout of all library branches to reduce the amount of space dedicated to the circulation and reference desks and create additional space where people can read, study, work and meet.

### 1.3

Modernise and strengthen service provision around the three larger libraries at Parkdale, Cheltenham and Chelsea to align with contemporary public library standards and Council's precinct planning.

### 1.4

Consider how improved access to library services can be achieved for those who may not be in immediate proximity to a library.



# Priority 2 – Contemporary Service Models

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## Description

Kingston Libraries are shifting from a traditional to a contemporary library service model where customers are empowered to choose how and when they access library services, and a library experience that works for them. Library staff will be unshackled from low value transactional activities that necessitate them operating from 'behind the desk', so that they can meet the burgeoning community needs that require higher value interactions. They will spend more time with customers advising on book selection, responding to inquiries, assisting with digital technologies, planning and delivering programs and taking the library out into the community. New technologies and innovative outreach approaches will change the way people access and engage with their library.

## Key actions

### 2.1

Implement RFID and other current technologies to increase customer choice, streamline borrowing processes, more efficiently manage the collection, and free up staff time to focus on high benefit customer services.

### 2.2

Review functions, responsibilities and levels of branch staff to appropriately recognise and respond to changing customer expectations of service scope and level.

### 2.3

Upgrade the library website to enhance engagement and provide easier access to library catalogues, resources, programs and services.

### 2.4

Develop and maintain a Kingston Library app to enhance the customer experience.

### 2.5

Review all customer service processes to focus on empowering customers to shape their library experience.

### 2.6

Review the centralised phone number and online services to ensure the library has the most efficient mix of customer access options (including consideration of live chat and chatbot technology).

## Opportunities

- Take advantage of new LMS functionality to enhance customer engagement and collection management.
- Explore ways to leverage the diverse skills and interests of all staff to respond to user inquiries and offer new customer experiences.
- Explore ways for staff to experience working in other library services to expose them to different service models and stimulate further innovation and creativity.
- Continue to focus and deliver on Council's 'Customer First' initiative as a way of improving customer service and developing a strong customer-centred culture.

# Priority 3 – Customer Reach & Activation

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## Description

Public libraries have evolved beyond their traditional role of housing book collections to also offering vital community services, including: digital connectivity; support for early years, digital and English language literacy; and universal access to information and government services. Research shows that (on average) Victorian public libraries generate \$4.30 in benefit for every dollar invested, yet the return in Kingston is estimated at only \$3.20<sup>9</sup>. This is because use of the services provided by the library is not at the level observed in other libraries. Expanding engagement of current library users, increasing awareness of library services, and reaching out to new library users will increase community benefits in literacy and lifelong learning, digital inclusion, personal development and wellbeing, and a stronger, more creative and culturally inclusive community.

## Key actions

### 3.1

Develop and implement (with the support of Council's Communications Team) a creative and multi-dimensional marketing strategy to increase community and library user awareness of the full range of services offered by Kingston Libraries.

### 3.2

Explore how to more effectively leverage digital platforms and emerging technology (including social media, other software apps and products, AI capability, AR/VR, etc.) to engage users and non-users.

### 3.3

Expand community access to existing library programs and broaden the range of programs on offer – especially programs for adults and young people.

### 3.4

Review the distribution of library opening hours across the branch network to ensure that libraries are accessible to a greater number of people (including evening and weekend access).

### 3.5

Identify ways to increase service utilization and library borrowing through greater activation of current members, tailored marketing and engagement, and increased library membership.

### 3.6

Explore opportunities to expand the Home Library Service and other outreach activities that take the library to where the people are.

### 3.7

Continue to reshape the collection (both physical and digital) so that its content and quality responds to the reading and literacy interests of library users and the community.

### 3.8

Promote wider uptake of digital collections (e.g. eBooks, eMagazines, eAudiobooks, video streaming).

<sup>9</sup> SGS Economics, The Value of Public Libraries in Victoria, <https://www.sgsep.com.au/maps/2018/victoria-value-of-public-libraries/#>.

# Priority 4 – Community Engagement & Partnerships

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## Description

The scope, reach and provision of public library services is increased where there is deep understanding of and engagement with the community and service partnerships that leverage skills and resources. Partnerships and collaboration with Council and community-based organisations and the wider public library sector can raise awareness of and promote library services to targeted population cohorts, expand service offerings and service delivery options, and improve service reach, quality and efficiency. Kingston Libraries' strategic positioning, community engagement and partnership development are currently constrained by the absence of staff with the appropriate responsibility, authority and skills to fulfil these roles.

## Key actions

### 4.1

Build organizational capacity and allocate leadership responsibility to enable library services to deliver greater impact in the areas of:

- Community analysis and engagement
- Library programming
- Marketing
- Partnership development.

### 4.2

Actively strengthen strategic connections with Council Departments that support more efficient service provision and increase reach of library services into the community (e.g. children and youth services, family services, community development, business development, strategy, planning and infrastructure, information services).

### 4.3

Strengthen strategic partnerships with Neighbourhood Houses, Community Centres, kindergartens, schools, leisure centres, businesses, historical and cultural organisations, and community service providers to enhance the service offering and contribute to collective community strengthening efforts.

### 4.4

Regularly collect and analyse data on community characteristics, library use and customer satisfaction to understand service needs, preferences and performance.

### 4.5

Conduct regular and systematic library user and community engagement activities (including surveys) to:

- Understand customer use and experience of library services
- Measure customer satisfaction
- Gather suggestions on areas for improvement
- Identify opportunities to enhance library service offerings (e.g. collections and programs).