Insights Report

City of Monash Library Service

Focus groups, telephone discussions, and Council advisory committees

Prepared for the City of Monash

Final: 9 September 2021

DISCLAIMER

In accordance with standard professional practice, it is stated that Planning for Communities Pty Ltd is not responsible in any way whatsoever to any person or organisation other than the Monash City Council in respect of the information provided in this report, including any errors or omissions therein, arising through negligence or otherwise however caused.

The reproduction of this report for internal purposes by Monash City Council is automatically permitted.   However, for professional indemnity reasons, reproduction or distribution of the report or parts thereof for other purposes is prohibited unless prior permission has been specifically obtained in writing from Planning for Communities Pty Ltd.

The findings presented in this report are based on the sources indicated and on the best possible estimates.   As the study involves market forecasts which can be influenced by a number of unforeseen variables and as Planning for Communities Pty Ltd cannot in any way influence Council decisions, future events or management decisions affecting the operation of the facilities, programs and services which are recommended, no warranty can be given that the forecasts contained in the report will be achieved.

VERSION CONTROL

Version	Issued By	Date
Draft	Michelle Read – Planning for Communities	23 August 2021
Final	Michelle Read – Planning for Communities	9 September 2021

Contents   Page No.

Introduction

This Report outlines the findings from a series of in-depth discussions designed to identify issues and opportunities for increasing membership and use of the Monash Library Service. The discussions occurred through a series of focus groups, telephone discussions and discussions with 4 of Council's advisory groups or committees between 19 May and 19 August 2021.

While surveys can provide important insights about community needs, in depth discussions with community members provide rich and layered information which typically cannot be gathered through a survey. Combined the information gathered through discussions, along with findings from other consultation the Library Service and Council has undertaken, will help inform planning for Library Service programs, operations and facilities.

Focus Groups and Telephone Discussions

The original intention was to hold 6 online and in person focus groups with around 10 participants in each group. The timing of the sessions proved to be challenging as it coincided with Victoria moving into another lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This meant a number of people who were booked to attend the focus groups, chose not to attend. In response, an opportunity for a short telephone discussion was offered to people who had indicated they would like to participate in a focus group. Six people took up this offer, and in total 28 people participated in either a focus group or telephone discussion which included:

- Three in person focus groups with a total of 18 participants.
  - 24 May 2021 - Monash Youth Ambassadors Group (14 participants)
  - 26 May 2021 - General community members (4 participants)
- Two online focus groups with a total of 4 participants:
  - 19 May 2021 - Monash Community Ambassadors / Multicultural Advisory Group Members (3 participants)
  - 1 June 2021 - General community members (1 participant)
- Telephone discussions:
  - 29 May to 9 June 2021 – General community members (6 participants)

The purpose of the focus groups and telephone discussions was to have in depth conversations about how and why community members use (or do not use) the Library Service and understand how it may need to change or improve to better respond to the needs of the community. Specific aspects explored were:

- The connection people have to the Library Service
- What people value or love about the Library Service?
- If anything creates a barrier to using the Library Service?
- What would they like to change or improve about the Library Service?
- And what is their future vision for the Library Service?

PLANNING FOR COMMUNITIES   0424 239 850
E: info@planningforcommunities.com.au   W: www.planningforcommunities.com.au   ABN: 93 220 357 998

2

Advisory Groups or Committees

The discussions with the Advisory Groups or Committees had a dual purpose. The first was to share the findings from the focus groups and telephone discussions, and the second was to invite advisory group / committee members to share their thoughts, experiences, and ideas about the Library Service. Specific aspects explored were:

- What people value or love about the Library Service?
- If anything creates a barrier to using the Library Service?
- What would they like to change or improve about the Library Service?

Discussions were held with the following advisory groups or committees:

- LGBTQIA+ Advisory Group – 26 July 2021
- Positive Aging Reference Group – 5 August 2021
- Gender Equity Advisory Committee - 9 August 2021
- Disability Advisory Committee – 19 August, 2021

Structure of this Report

The following pages provide a summary of the information gathered and the feedback received from the engagement, along with key recommendations and priorities for the Library Service. The summary information has been grouped as follows:

Connection to the Library Service	How you or your family use the Library Service? How often do you use the Library Service? If you don't use the Library Service, why not?
Value about the Library Service	What do you like, love or value about the libraries in Monash? Why do you visit libraries in Monash?
Barriers to using the Library Service	Why don't you use the library service? Do you experience any barriers using the libraries in Monash?
Things to change or improve	What would you like to see changed or improved about the libraries in Monash? What would make the libraries more attractive for you to use?
Future Vision	What is your future vision for the Monash Library Service?

Detailed notes from each of the focus groups, telephone discussions, and advisory groups are provided as a separate attachment to this report.

PLANNING FOR COMMUNITIES   0424 239 850
E: info@planningforcommunities.com.au   W: www.planningforcommunities.com.au   ABN: 93 220 357 998

3

High Level Summary

The table below provides a high-level summary of the key messages gathered through the engagement. Its purpose is to provide an indication of issues or concepts raised consistently across the various questions posed through the discussions. It is intended to provide a broad overview only, with more detailed information outlined in the following sections.

Consistent Messages	Value & Love about the Library	Barriers to using the Library	Ideas for change or improvement	Future Vison
Wheelers Hill Library	X		X	
Collection	X		X	X
The library as a place to study	X	X	X	
Technology savvy		X	X	X
Staff	X	X	X	X
Programs and activities	X		X	X
It's a community hub, a place to come together, to meet, its safe	X		X	X
A place for learning, building and sharing knowledge	X		X	X
Services available – Wi-Fi, click and collect, fees and charges, opening hours	X	X	X	
Information about / visibility of the Library Service	X	X	X	
Accessibility of buildings / upgrading spaces and buildings		X	X	X
Contemporary approach including increased involvement by library users		X	X	X

PLANNING FOR COMMUNITIES   0424 239 850
E: info@planningforcommunities.com.au   **W:** www.planningforcommunities.com.au   **ABN:** 93 220 357 998

4

Connection to the Library Service

I am or my family is an existing user of the Library Service:

- Many have a long-term connection to libraries, whether in Monash or elsewhere.
- Existing users are often frequent users e.g. weekly, fortnightly or monthly.

Having young or primary school aged children is often a key driver for using / visiting the library:

- Older members of the community are also more likely to be frequent visitors / users of the library.
- For some people, visiting the library is something they do whenever they happen to be near one or passing by.

Community members typically use the library that is closest to where they live or where they shop or visit cafes and restaurants:

- If its close to home, often the library is within walking distance of home.

Engagement participants use a range of library branches and services:

- For those who visit libraries, the branches identified most often were Glen Waverley and Wheelers Hill, followed by Mount Waverley, Oakleigh, Clayton and Mulgrave.
- Many of the participants indicated they use the online services, particularly to search the catalogue and reserve collection items.
- Other ways participants use the library service are to attend children's storytime, to access information on the notice boards, to borrow collection items, to study, to research information, to access the Wi-Fi, to access newspapers and magazines, participate in online seminars, or to participate in social activities e.g. knitting group at Oakleigh Library.

What I Value or Love About the Library Service

It's really important to me:

- It provides a place for people come together, to meet and to spend time. It's a hive of activity.
- It's the only free, safe, warm / cool space young people can hang out indoors.
- It reminds me of my childhood.
- It's a community hub, located where it will be used and is easy to access.
- It's a safe environment, a safe place.
- There's nothing like holding a book.
- It's so important in meeting the diverse needs of our community.

PLANNING FOR COMMUNITIES   0424 239 850
E: info@planningforcommunities.com.au   W: www.planningforcommunities.com.au   ABN: 93 220 357 998

5

Collection:

- The range available, including the ebook collection and access to magazines and newspapers online.
- The children's collection at Wheelers Hill Library.

Spaces and location

- The mix of spaces available in libraries i.e. noisy and quiet spaces.
- Mulgrave Library is really good for children with sensory issues.
- I prefer to study at Oakleigh Library rather than Monash University Library because of the availability of space to study during the week during school hours, and the warmth of the library during winter.
- The location of the libraries – close to home, shops and transport.

Staff are friendly, welcoming and helpful:

- You can ask any question of a library staff member and they will help you to find the answer.

Wheelers Hill Library

- It is a great place to study because of the space available and it is quiet.
- The beautiful setting and the view from within the library to outside. The connection between the indoors and outdoors.
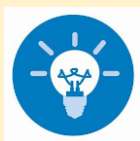
It provides a place for learning, for building and sharing knowledge:

- The free and equal access to information that libraries provide. Libraries are the only place many people have free access to knowledge and information.
- Having access to books and encouraging reading is so critical for the growth and development of children.

Services available

- I like that I can reserve books online and collect them from the library.
- The amount of books you can take out at a time.
- The free Wi-Fi.
- The communication about programs and activities being offered by the library.
- The home library service e.g. it has been so helpful and wonderful during COVID.
- Being able to drop off and pick up books from any of the library branches.

Communication and programs:

- Their communication, especially the Instagram page.
- The activities the library offers e.g. Wordfest and in the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ authors and speakers.
- Participation by the Library Service in other programs and activities Council delivers or supports e.g. Pride Night.

Why People do NOT Use / Barriers to Using the Library Service

Life circumstances:

- They have children who are teenagers or young adults so are no longer visiting the library with their children.

- We have a busy life, so have limited time to access the library.

- We access so much information online, we don't have the same need to access library services.

Does not support me to study effectively:

- There is not enough space available for studying.

- There is not enough quiet space for studying. There are a lot of shared spaces and not enough individual spaces for study.

- At peak times it's too noisy and not suitable for studying.

Other library services are more tech savvy:

- The Monash Library website is not as intuitive.

- It's easier to find books online through other sources.

- It's not clear whether a collection item is available in hard copy or as an ebook.

The fees charged for returning items late and getting a new library card:

- It's a punishment and is an embarrassing ordeal which means young people either do not borrow items or do not return them because they'll get in trouble for returning the item late.

Lack of accessibility:

- Wheelers Hill Library has poor public transport connections.

- The lack of access to car parking at Mount Waverley and Glen Waverley libraries.

- Parking and transport to libraries is always a concern for people with a disability.

The library needs to be more contemporary:

- The term library conjures up a picture of an old fashioned concept.

- The teenage / young adult collection is poor.

The Library Service is not visible enough

- People don't seem to know all the library has to offer.

- We have never seen any information available about what the library service offers.

- The Mount Waverley Library is not well signposted.

Access to programs and activities

- School holiday programs book out too quickly.

Ideas to Change or Improve the Library Service

Making the community more aware of what the Library Service has to offer:

- Place billboards in key locations throughout the community about what is coming up in the libraries.

- Have bulletin boards in the entry of the libraries to share information both about what is coming up I the library but also share information about activities and supports in the wider community.

- Showcasing Wheelers Hill Library and Art Gallery. It has so much to offer.

- Using the term learning as part of the way libraries are branded e.g. Hume Global Learning Centre.

- Have television screens in common areas flashing up information about new books in the collection, reviews of books by library members and upcoming programs.

- Make sure the community knows about the collection items available in different languages.

- Make the community more aware of the access to audible books, podcasts and movies through the Library Service.

- Make schools aware of Wordfest and other programs the Library Service offers.

- Use email to share information about library programs and activities.
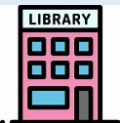
Upgrading library buildings and spaces including:

- Having a mix of spaces within the libraries, some for activation and talking, some for creative activities, and some for quiet study (perhaps small study rooms). More spaces to meet people, to sit and have conversation.

- Providing quiet spaces to allow for contemplation or prayer, to support people who identify as LGBTQIA+ and need a safe space, to support children and adults with sensory disabilities.

- Reducing the space for the collection and providing more space for people to interact, to study and to work.

- Libraries should be a community hub, including meeting and activity spaces, and be visually warm and inviting.

- Providing better connections between indoor and outdoor environments e.g. the corner of the Mount Waverley Library where the magazines are located 'it's a lovely place because I can see outside'.   Clayton library has lovely natural light.

- Developing cafes with each of the libraries, perhaps having them run by a social enterprise OR perhaps having coffee carts.

- Making Mount Waverley Library bigger and more inviting. It is currently old fashioned, dark and too small. BUT don't lose the community feel. Have more chairs and tables available.

- Making Glen Waverley Library bigger with more meeting space and car parking, places for children to sit, read, talk and participate in activities. It needs to be more child friendly not just for studying and young people.

- At Oakleigh Library, address the lack of accessibility to the auditorium, change the location of the reception / returns desk so staff do not have their backs to the remainder of the library, and make more study space available.

Enhancing the collection:

- Reducing the waiting times for new / popular books.

- To be able to borrow a movie electronically rather than via DVD e.g. streaming access.

- Providing more collection items available in different languages. Is there an opportunity to make collection items (books and videos) available in different languages that will more effectively support young people studying languages.

- Providing more traditional Chinese language books in the Chinese language collection. Most are simplified Chinese language.

- Improve the teenage / young adult collection.

- Take a more retail based (genre) approach to displaying the collection e.g. do regular features on particular locations or topics.

- Increasing the size of the audio book collection.

- More books in the children's collection about LGBTQIA+ and same sex parents.

- Increasing the LGBTQIA+ books available in the ebook collection, both fiction and books about identifying as LGBTQIA+.

- Changing the way the LGBTQIA+ books are categorized int eh collection, to make them easier to identify.

- Improving access to newspapers i.e. provide access to a wider range of newspapers online.

- Providing access to a language app through the Library Service.

- To have different items in the collection to support the community to be more sustainable and to provide equitable access. Ideas include:

  – Board games and puzzles

  – Gardening or building tools

  – Children's toys (perhaps in partnership with the Toy Library).

Training staff in new ways to interact with the community:

- Remove desks and have staff moving around the library interaction with the community.

- Have, a concierge function to welcome people into the libraries and provide information or directions if needed.

- Reduce the sense of staff watching / keeping an eye on library users, especially at Clayton Library.

- Have a consistent and friendly approach by all staff in the libraries with staff not having their back to the library.

Increasing use of the Wheelers Hill Library

- Increasing the events and / or programs to make more people aware of the Library and what it has to offer.

- Encouraging primary and secondary schools to visit.

Ideas for programs or initiatives

Children

- Offer different programs during school holidays e.g. night time reading sessions or night time movie sessions, perhaps involving or partnering with a charity.

- Encouraging children to read through the use of companion dogs e.g. Story Dogs.

- Scenes from a book made with lego.

- Scavenger hunts in the library.

- Conducting story time in other languages.

Young People

- Tutoring programs for older students.

- A seasonal study program, where more space is made available for students to study during peak times e.g. leading up to exams.

- RoboGals – computer programming for girls.

- Social gaming events.

Adults

- Poetry slams

- Board games café.

- Offer programs and activities to keep people's brains active as they age e.g. cryptic crosswords, scrabble, current affairs discussions, online language programs. Strengthen partnerships with U3A and neighbourhood houses around these types of programs.

- Providing more of the tech learning sessions for older adults. They book out too quickly.

- Offer Book Buzz more often e.g. quarterly or monthly.

- Guided walks from the Glen Waverley Library around the historic local sites.

- Regular presentations about different cultures with books, music, food, Rainbow authors etc

- Authors reading their work or talking about how they developed their work. Perhaps community members sharing their writing.

- Informal social groups e.g knitting, crocheting and painting.

- An online or virtual book club.

PLANNING FOR COMMUNITIES   0424 239 850
E: info@planningforcommunities.com.au   **W:** www.planningforcommunities.com.au   **ABN:** 93 220 357 998

10

General

- Have a notice board with recommendations of new books or the top 10 books borrowed, or library staff recommendations.

- Support collaboration between libraries and artists / creative people.

- Offer mentoring programs.

- Have pop up libraries, particularly around North Road where there are limited community facilities.

- Upcycling collection items when they are no longer needed by the Library Service, by working in partnership with groups who can distribute items to people experiencing disadvantage.

Ideas to encourage more involvement by library users / community members:

- Have a place or a way community members can make suggestions about books to purchase for the collection. Perhaps people from different cultures could help select collection items relevant to their culture.

- Could volunteers be used more in the libraries, to allow the skilled librarians to do more interesting programs and activities?

- Library users writing reviews of books in the collection and making them available online or in the libraries.

- Allowing library users to donate items to the collection. Perhaps specific items like board games and puzzles.

- Involve volunteers / people from different cultures across Monash to deliver creative activities that celebrate the many cultures of Monash.

Ideas for making the Library Service more technology savvy

- Make the catalogue easier and more intuitive to navigate and include more information about the collection.

- Could a simplified catalogue dashboard be developed for younger community members e.g. like Netflix has a kids profile.

- Simplify access to Borrowbox and simplify the process for downloading ebooks from Borrowbox to Kindle.

- Develop a more functional / user friendly library app.

- Could text messages be sent to people to remind them when their books are due to be returned.

- Provide access to Studiosity as a way of supporting students during COVID lockdowns.

Changes to service levels

- Increased opening hours on a Sunday to support young people studying.

- Opening the libraries from 9am on weekdays or at least having the phones answered from this time.

- Remove the fees for late returns and for getting a new library card.

- Remove the requirement for parents to sign to get a new card.

- Offer free drop off or pick up of books from your home 2 – 4 times a year.

- Improve the click and collect / reservations pick up service. Has been described as clunky.

- Having more information available about LGBTQIA+ communities and the supports available.

- Holding events during the evening to allow people who work during the day to attend.

Future Vision for the Library Service

- Libraries will be a central point for the community to meet, to gather, to connect.

- Libraries will be close to where people live, making them easy to access.

- We will hold onto the face to face contact we have in libraries with staff and the community.

- We will continue to be able to access knowledgeable library staff and our staff will interact more with library users.

- Libraries will continue to evolve and will retain physical collections.

- Libraries will remain a place of equity and lifelong learning.

- Libraries will share cutting edge technology with the whole community.

- Our library buildings will have a better connection between indoors and outdoors, and offer outdoor spaces.

- Libraries will offer more programs and events.

PLANNING FOR COMMUNITIES   0424 239 850
E: info@planningforcommunities.com.au   **W:** www.planningforcommunities.com.au   **ABN:** 93 220 357 998

12

Actions and Priorities

The findings from the consultation and engagement indicate there are a number of areas the Library Service can focus upon to reduce barriers and encourage increased access to and participation in the Library Service. Some of these are longer term actions which may require significant financial resources, while others are more attainable in the short to medium term, although they may still require additional resources.

The actions have been grouped into the following categories:

- Communication and information

- Programming opportunities

- Community involvement and partnering

- Technology

- Service levels

- Facilities.

Short term = within 12 months, **Medium term** = 1 – 2 years and **Longer term** = 3 years or longer.

Focus	Action	Priority
Communication and information	Examine the existing communication tools and strategies the Library Service uses, assessing how effective they are in engaging the Monash community, and identifying new or different communication tools that could be implemented to reach the Monash community more effectively. As part of this focus upon looking at ways to raise the profile of: • the Wheelers Hill Library • the collections available in different languages • audible books, podcasts, and movies • the programs and activities offered by the Library Service.	Short term

Focus	Action	Priority
Programming opportunities	Experiment and try new programs or initiatives to attract more of the community to use the Library Service e.g. • poetry slams • movies after dark during school holidays • computer programming • local authors sharing their works or their journey as a writer. The section in this report titled *Ideas to change or improve the Library Service* provides a range of ideas community members have identified.	Short term
	Expand the capacity of existing popular programs e.g. tech programs for older adults, school holiday programs for children.	Short term
	Deliver programs across a range of days, times and locations e.g. daytime and night time, all of the branch libraries.	Short term
Community involvement and partnering	Engage with specific groups and cohorts to help in the selection of items to enhance the collection e.g. • Young people to improve the teenage / young adult collection • People with vision impairment to assist with the audio collection • People from specific cultural backgrounds to assist with the selection of items in different languages • People who identify as LGBTQIA+ to assist with selecting items for both the children's and adults' collection.	Short term
	Consider initiatives such as: • Library users nominating their favourite book for the month and having a rolling top 10. • Encouraging library users to write their own review of collection items and display them in the library or online through the library website. • Providing a way the community can donate specialised items to the collection e.g. books in different languages. • Having a place or way community members can make suggestions about items to include in the collection. • Involve volunteers / people from diverse cultures across Monash to deliver activities in the libraries to celebrate the many cultures of Monash. • Delivering creative programs and initiatives in partnership with local artists.	Short to medium term
	Identify opportunities to work in partnership with groups who can distribute collection items no longer required to community members experiencing disadvantage.	Short to medium term

Focus	Action	Priority
Technology	Explore options for making it easier for community members to access eBook collection items.	Short term
	Improve the functionality of the Monash Library app, with a focus upon making it more user friendly.	Medium term
	Explore whether it is feasible to implement a text reminder system to remind library members when a collection item is due to be returned.	Medium term
	Improve the existing catalogue functionality, with a focus upon making it easier and more intuitive to navigate and whether a modified version could be developed for children.	Medium term
Service levels	Review opening hours of the branch libraries with a particular focus upon, whether branches should open earlier and have longer hours on weekends.	Short term
	Assess the library click and collection system to identify ways this could be streamlined and made more customer friendly.	Short term
Facilities	In planning for new of redeveloped library facilities in Monash ensure the following factors are considered: • The need for a mix of spaces, some of which support activation, talking and interaction and some of which supports quiet activity and contemplation e.g. study, prayer, people with sensory disabilities. • Reduce the emphasis upon space for the collection and prioritise space for people to interact, study, work and participate in programs and activities. • Look for opportunities to co-locate libraries with other complementary community spaces, activities and organisations. • Providing outdoor spaces as part of libraries and strong connections between indoor and outdoor spaces. • The design must ensure spaces are welcoming, are accessible and reduce intimidating barriers such as large circulation desks or staff having their backs to the library. • Whether there is opportunity to incorporate a café.	Medium to longer term
	Explore the opportunity for / need for pop up library branches in communities where access to the library or community facilities is more limited e.g. North Road in Oakleigh.	Medium term

PLANNING FOR COMMUNITIES   0424 239 850
E: info@planningforcommunities.com.au   W: www.planningforcommunities.com.au   ABN: 93 220 357 998

15

Attachment 1

- **Detailed Notes from Focus Groups and Telephone Discussions**

- **Detailed Notes from Discussions with Council Advisory Groups and Committee**

Notes Monash Library Focus Groups and Telephone Discussions

Community Ambassadors / Multicultural Advisory Group Members – 19 May 2021 (online, 3 participants)

Who	Connection to Library	Frequency of Use	Why Visit / What do You Like / love about the Library
Participant 1	Existing user, mostly by themselves. Mostly use Glen Waverley Library and visit by themselves. Visit to library usually occurs as part of visiting the Glen or restaurants in the area.	Twice a month	• It's close to where I like to shop and eat. • I like the physical collection available. • I like the magazines and newspapers available. • To read the information available on the notice board. • It's a bigger library and there is more space to move around (Glen Waverley). • It's a place people can come together, to meet and to spend time. It's really important. • Being amongst the books. The vibe, the opportunity to increase my knowledge.
Participant 2	Existing long-term user / lifetime connection. Mostly use Mount Waverley, but also use Clayton and Glen Waverley. Whenever I'm anywhere near the library, I will visit it e.g. when I get off the train after work.	Weekly now but when children were younger 3 – 4 times a week	• It's close to my home (Mount Waverly). • I like to visit on my way home from work. • I like to attend the online seminars. • It's a central place for the whole community. • I can reserve books and pick them up from the library.
Participant 3	Existing long-term user, usually with my children. Mostly use Glen Waverley, but also use Wheelers Hill occasionally. Visit to Visit to library usually occurs as part of visiting the Glen	Once a month but borrow a lot at each visit. More frequent visits in school holidays.	• It's close to my home (Glen Waverly) • My children are avid readers. We use reading as an incentive around screen time use. • Our local library is really important to us. • Really enjoy the outdoor space at the Wheelers Hill Library. • The joy we experienced when reserved books were delivered to our home during the COVID lockdown.

What to Change or Improve

Facilities, spaces and furniture	• Mount Waverley Library is very old fashioned, dark and not inviting. It's also too small.
	• Mount Waverley and Glen Waverley libraries need to be bigger. Wheelers Hill and Clayton are a good size.
	• More chairs and tables at Mount Waverley Library.
	• Have a mix of spaces within the libraries, some for activation and talking, some for creative activities, and some for quiet study (perhaps small study rooms), to concentrate or for contemplation. More spaces to meet people, to sit and have conversation.
	• It's important to have a mix of spaces and make sure quiet spaces are separate from noisy spaces.
	• Providing better connections between indoors and the outdoor environment. There are some examples where this is working well e.g. the corner of the Mount Waverley Library where the magazines are located 'it's a lovely place because I can see outside'. Clayton library has lovely natural light
	• Develop cafes with each of the libraries, perhaps having them run by a social enterprise as occurs at Camberwell Library.
Collection	• Would like to see the library keep old books rather than throw them away.
	• Ensure there is a balance between technology (e.g. ebooks) and the physical collection. Retaining connection to the physical collection is really important.
	• Would like to see more traditional Chinese language books in the Chinese language collection. Most are simplified Chinese language.
Staff	• Reduce / remove the sense that staff at Clayton library are watching library users all the time 'I don't dare make a noise.'
	• Staff are behind desks. I would like to see them walking around the library more, talking with people, providing them with help, rather than sitting behind a desk.
	• Training staff in new ways to interact with the community e.g. no desks and staff going to the community, a concierge function to welcome people into the libraries like Bunnings and the banks have.
Increasing use / Programs	• Wheelers Hill is a beautiful library but seems to be underutilized.
	• Increasing the events and / or programs offered at Wheelers Hill may help to make more people aware of the Library and what it has to offer.
	• Encouraging primary and secondary schools to visit Wheelers Hill library so students can see what it has to offer.
	• Offer different programs during school holidays e.g. night time reading sessions or night time movie sessions, perhaps involving or partnering with a charity.
	• Could we have a notice board with recommendations of new books or the top 10 books borrowed, or library staff recommendations.

In the future I hope to / expect to use the Library

Participant 1	As much as I do now and I would like to see: • The libraries having a better connection between indoor and outdoors, and offer outdoor spaces. • The libraries providing quiet study spaces.
Participant 2	As much as I do now and I want it to be: • A place for people to connect. • A place for people to accumulate human knowledge and participate in lifelong learning.
Participant 3	In the same way I do now, but: • With more interaction from staff. • With more events and programs being offered. • With a café at each of the libraries.

Youth Ambassadors – 24 May 2021 (in person, 14 participants)

What I like / love about the Libraries in Monash

Facilities, spaces and furniture	• Wheelers Hill offers great space and its really quiet. I love it because of this.
	• Love the table tennis at Glen Waverley library.
	• The spaces available to support study groups and quiet study.
	• The mix of spaces offered in the library i.e. quiet and noisy.
Collection	• The range of books available in the collection.
	• The amount of books you can take out at one time.
	• The e-book collection
Staff	• The staff are friendly and welcoming.
Atmosphere	• It is the only free, warm / cool space young people can hang out indoors.
	• The quiet atmosphere.
	• That it provides a safe place for young people.
	• It reminds me of my childhood.
Technology	• The free WiFi

What is a barrier to using the libraries in Monash / reasons I don't use the Monash libraries

Facilities and spaces	• The lack of space (especially larger tables) for studying.
	• There is a lot of shared space, would like to see more individual spaces e.g. carrells or quiet rooms.
	• Universities provide great study spaces, so the Monash libraries are competing with this.
Location	• Wheelers Hill Library is hard to get to by public transport and many people don't know about it
Collection	• It's easier to find books online through other sources.
	• The teenage / young adult collection is poor.

Technology	• Other library services are more tech savvy and connected. With the Monash libraries website, its not as effortless. • Find it is not clear whether a collection item is available in hard copy or ebook.
Fees	• The fees charged for returning items late and getting a new library card. It's a punishment and is an embarrassing ordeal which means young people either do not borrow items or do not return them because they'll get in trouble for returning the item late.
Noise	• At peak times, a lot of socialising is occurring amongst students and its too noisy to study.

What would make libraries more attractive for young people

Facilities, spaces and furniture	• Make spaces more inviting e.g more colourful, more sunlight and more open. • Have more comfortable spaces e.g. comfortable couches and beanbags. • Provide bookable spaces for small meetings, study, collaboration spaces. • Provide study carrells. • Provide security cameras to make people more comfortable leaving their items briefly while they go to the bathroom. • Manage spaces more effectively during peak times e.g. make sure quiet spaces stay as quiet spaces. • Space to support gaming activities.
Equipment	• Provide lockers at the libraries. • Provide noise cancelling headphones.
Collection	• Have a place or a way community members can make suggestions about books to purchase for the collection. • Increase the number of items in the Chinese language collection. • Improve the teenage / young adult collection.
Staff	• Librarians sharing information about new collection items or books to read.
Programs	• Tutoring programs for older students. • A seasonal study program, where more space is made available for students to study during peak times e.g. leading up to exams. • RoboGals – computer programming for girls. • Have a top ten new books in the collection, or a top ten borrowed books or top ten reviews of books. Could be by librarians or by library members. • Social gaming events.

	• Board games café.
Opening hours	• Would like to see longer opening hours on the weekend, especially on a Sunday. 2 – 5pm is very little help for young people studying.
	• Really important to look at the opening hours for the libraries located near train stations – Oakley, Glen Waverley, Mount Waverley, Clayton and Mulgrave.
Systems	• Remove the fees for late returns and for getting a new library card.
	• Remove the requirement for parents to sign to get a new card.
	• Offer free drop off or pick up of books from your home 2 – 4 times a year.
Technology	• Make the website more informative about the collection.

Community Members – 2pm, 26 May 2021 (in person, 2 participants)

Who	Connection to Library	Frequency of Use	Why Visit / What do You Like / love about the Library
Participant 1	Use Mount Waverley Library very regularly. Use Wheelers Hill Library sometimes.	Weekly	• It's walking distance from my home. This is really valuable to me and my family. • I have used it for 47 years, I have taken my children there and now I take my grandchildren there. • Always excellent service from the library staff. • The lovely connection between the indoors and outdoors at Wheelers Hill Library. • The access to newspapers and magazines through Press Reader.
Participant 2	Have been a past user of the library with my children when they were younger. Now I rarely use the library.	Not a current user	

Are there any barrier to using the libraries in Monash / reasons I don't use the Monash libraries

Facilities and spaces	• Lack of access to car parking at the Mount Waverley library. • The Mount Waverley library is not well signposted.
Other	• The term library conjures up a picture of an old-fashioned concept. • I don't read fiction, so have no interest / need to visit a library.

What to Change or Improve

Facilities, spaces and furniture	• Mount Waverley library is 'daggy.' It needs more space, and it needs to be more contemporary BUT mustn't lose the community feel. • Make more space available for people to interact, to study, to work and less space for the collection. • Provide more space for young people to study at Mount Waverley e.g. quiet spaces, collaborative spaces. • Why aren't the community centre rooms being made available for library programs in Mount Waverley.
Collection	• Have a games library. Collingwood library has one.

	• Maybe consider a costumes gallery / collection. • Get more showmanship happening about the collection. • Take a more retail based (genre) approach to displaying the collection e.g. do regular features on particular locations or topics. • Have recommendations e.g. I have read this, so what should I read next.
Increasing use / Programs	• Increasing the connection between libraries and schools to expose children and families to libraries. • Offer programs and activities to keep people's brains active as they age e.g. cryptic crosswords, scrabble and current affairs discussions. Strengthen partnerships with U3A around these types of programs. • We need to tell the community more about what the libraries have to offer. We need to sell the libraries to the community more e.g. • Could volunteers be used more in the libraries, to allow the skilled librarians to do more interesting programs and activities? • Showcasing Wheelers Hill Library and Art Gallery. It has so much to offer. • Develop a platform for collaboration between libraries and artists / creative people. • Offer mentoring programs.
Other	• Using the term learning as part of the way libraries are branded e.g. Hume Global Learning Centre.

Community Members – 6.30pm, 26 May 2021 (in person, 2 participants)

Who	Connection to Library	Frequency of Use
Participant 1	Lifelong user of libraries. Started off using Oakleigh Library but now predominantly use Glen Waverley. Volunteer as part of the Monash Home Library service.	Several times a week
Participant 2	Lifelong user of libraries. Used to take my children to the library very regularly when they were younger. Currently a big user of the online facilities and services. When visiting a library will tend to use Glen Waverley but now mostly use online services.	Weekly (online mostly)

What I value / love about the Libraries in Monash

Collection	• There's nothing like holding a book.
Location	• It's a community hub, located in places where it will be used and is easy to access.
Staff	• The staff are always really helpful.
Atmosphere	• It's a hive of activity. • It's a place to spend time with other people.
Technology	• The WiFi and technology
Other	• The free and equal access to information that libraries provide. Libraries are the only place many people have free access to knowledge and information. This is critical to retain. • The library is so important to the community. I want to make sure it is planned for and supported in the right way.

Are there any barrier to using the libraries in Monash / reasons I don't use the Monash libraries

Facilities and spaces	• The busyness of the library. • The lack of car parking at Glen Waverley
Availability of information	• People don't seem to know all the library has to offer.

What to Change or Improve

Facilities, spaces and furniture	• Balancing the need for space for people to meet, interact and study, and the need for space for the collection.
	• Glen Waverley Library to have more car parking and extra meeting space.
Increasing use / Programs	• Look at different ways to get information out to the community about all the library has to offer.

My future vision for the Library

Participant 1	• Glen Waverley Library
	– Will have more car parking and extra meeting space.
	– There will be places for children to sit and read, talk with their parents and be involved in children's activities.
	• Libraries will be a central point for the community to meet and to gather.
	• Libraries will be close to where people live, making them easy to access.
	• We will hold onto the face to face contact we have in libraries with staff and the community.
	• We will continue to be able to access knowledgeable library staff.
Participant 2	• Libraries need to continue evolving but they need to keep the human dimension and remain a knowledge bank. Physical collection items are essential to this.
	• Be cautious about introducing user pay initiatives into the library. Libraries should remain a place of equity.
	• Libraries are the place to share cutting edge technology with the whole community.

Community Members – Telephone Discussions 29 May – 9 June 2021 (6 participants)

Who	Connection to Library
Participant 1	• Usually use the Oakleigh Library because it is close to my home, but I haven't used it since the COVID pandemic began. • I primarily used the library to study.
Participant 2	• Usually use Wheelers Hill Library. I can walk to Mulgrave but prefer Wheelers Hill. I went to the Book Buzz event at Wheelers Hill and loved the space, so that's where I go to the library. • I usually visit the library to undertake research and also to loan items from the collection. Plus it's a great place to meet people. • I have previously worked as a librarian, so I am passionate about libraries.
Participant 3	• I haven't used the library much in the last 12 months because I have moved to using a Kindle. Prior to that, I would access the catalogue online, reserve books and collect them from the Oakleigh Library.
Participant 4	• My husband and I are frequent users of the Library. Particularly since COVID, we have tended to search up items on the catalogue, reserve them and collect them from the Oakleigh Library. • I mostly use Oakleigh Library but occasionally will use Wheelers Hill, Clayton or Glen Waverley. • I also sometimes attend storytime with my grandchildren and have previously been a part of a knitting group that meets at the Oakleigh Library. But since COVID, I have stopped doing this.
Participant 5	• Have previously used Glen Waverley and Mount Waverley Libraries, particularly when my children were younger. Now they are young adults, so I do not have as much need to use the library, plus COVID 19 has also reduced my use of the library. I love the Wheelers Hill Library. • My husband uses Ebooks extensively from the library.
Participant 6	• Both of my children are avid readers so we usually visit the library each week and we borrow lots of books. I used to read a lot but less so now. • We really look forward to visiting the library. The children love it and happily spend hours there. • We used to participate in children's storytime but now the children are in primary school. • We mostly use the Wheelers Hill Library because it is closest to where we live. Plus its close to the supermarket.

What I value / love about the Libraries in Monash

Staff	• You can ask any question of a library staff member and they will help you to find the answer. • At Wheelers Hill the staff are incredibly helpful and respectful.
Atmosphere	• Prefer to study at Oakleigh Library than the Monash University Library because of the atmosphere, the availability of space to study

	during the week during school hours, and the warmth of the Library during winter.
	• Really enjoyed seeing the children's activities taking place.
	• I really value that the library is a safe environment.
	• It provides opportunities to meet people in person.
	• It's a safe space.
Information	• Really appreciate the communication about programs and activities being offered by the library service.
Online Resources	• Online catalogue allows me to select books and collect them from a library that is close to me.
Collection	• The items I can access from the collection – crime fiction, political books and magazines.
	• Having access to books and encouraging reading is so critical for the growth and development of children. We need to hold onto the physical collection. Would hate to see the physical collection decline because of using technology.
	• The children's collection at Wheelers Hill is good.
Programs	• I love the opportunity children's storytime provides for children to interact with each other.
Social Interaction	• The knitting group was a great way of learning and helping others and having the opportunity to interact with people from different cultures.
	• The library is such an important place, providing somewhere to meet people and have social interaction.
Infrastructure	• Wheelers Hill Library is a lovely setting, especially with the views to outside. There is lots of space, especially in the children's area allowing the children to lounge and spread out while they find and read books. Plus it has the gallery and café.

What to Change or Improve

Increasing use / Programs	• Perhaps introduce a program encouraging children to read through the use of companion dogs. This is an initiative being used by an NGO in India to support and encourage children to read and to develop a lifelong love of reading. Note: In Australia there is a similar program called Story Dogs.
	• Could Book Buzz be offered more frequently e.g. once a quarter or perhaps monthly. Would love to hear from authors regularly talking about their books. Perhaps there could be a different topic each month.
	• Could regular guided walks be introduced which look at the historic sites around the Glen Waverley Library and wider area.
	• So many of the Monash community are from different cultural backgrounds. Perhaps this could be celebrated more by having regular talks or presentations about the different cultures in Monash incorporating books, food, music etc.
	• Have classes available or support informal social groups to meet around art and activities e.g. knitting, crocheting and painting.

	• Make the libraries more exciting / increase the energy of libraries. Make them a place people want to hang out not just study in or collect books from.
	– What about having scenes from a book made with lego. Perhaps a different one each week.
	– Have scavenger hunts in the library
	– Local authors giving presentations about their books or their journey as a writer.
	• The library is not doing anything out of the ordinary to engage the community. The library needs to remain relevant. People in the community lacks opportunity to connect with each other. The library could provide these opportunities through programs and informal opportunities for social connection e.g. social groups, craft groups etc.
	• An online or virtual book club.
Collection	• Reducing the waiting times for new / popular books. Sometimes there can be 20 people on a waiting list to access a book.
	• It would be great to be able to borrow a movie electronically rather than via DVD e.g. streaming access.
	• Would like to see the collection include other items e.g. board games, or puzzles, gardening tools or building tools. While I understand there may be some complexity with safety, losing pieces etc, I think it's a great opportunity for the library to play a role in encouraging sustainable purchasing and use of these items plus supporting people to have access to these items when they may not be able to afford them.
	• Could the library integrate with the Toy Library?
Technology	• The accessibility of the Ebooks can be challenging. It is not easy to download from Borrowbox to a Kindle. I would really like to see this process made simpler as I have stopped borrowing items from the library because the process is too complex.
	• Would like there to be more self check out facilities as there is often a queue to check out items (Wheelers Hill).
	• The online catalogue is not very intuitive or user friendly. It can be hard to look for items.
	• Is there any opportunity to have a separate catalogue dashboard for younger community members e.g. like Netflix has a kids profile, so children can look up appropriate collection items. Plus, a simplified way of them looking up items. Perhaps you could profile a book of the month through this.
Increased involvement of library users	• Could library users write reviews of books and make them available to all library users.
	• Would like to see library users be able to donate items to the collection. Perhaps specific items like board games and puzzles.
Communication / promotion of the library	• I don't hear much about what the library is doing e.g. programs, events, activities. It does not seem to have much of a presence in the community.
	• Make more information available about the library and what it has to offer.
	• Have television screens in common areas flashing up information about:

	– New books in the collection – Reviews of books by library members – Upcoming programs.
Access	• Access to car parking is difficult especially when the community halls (in Oakleigh) are being used. This is particularly challenging for people who need to use an accessible car space. My husband has a disability and needs access to one of these and sometimes he will give up and go home because it is too far for him to walk. • Would like to see the libraries be open from 9am. I believe that 10am is too late with many people needing access earlier in the day. Even if the branches are not open, it would be helpful if the phones could be answered. • Find picking up items through click and collect / reservations a bit clunky. Would like to see this improved.
Staffing	• Some of the staff at Oakleigh Library are excellent and some are terrible. It would be great to see a consistent and friendly approach by all staff. • Would like to see staff not having their back to library users. • Find that staff at Clayton are often talking with each other and ignoring library users.
Infrastructure	• Would like to see the reception / returns desk changed in Oakleigh. Staff have their backs to much of the library and so cannot see what is happening in the library and / or if people need help. • Access to the auditorium upstairs in the Oakleigh Library. It is not disability accessible. • Have pop up libraries. Facilities are so centralised in Oakleigh and there is such a scarcity in and around North Road, perhaps a pop up library could be trialled in the area. • The Mount Waverley and Glen Waverley libraries are dated and need upgrading. • Develop libraries as a community hub including meeting and activity spaces. • Buildings need to be visually warm and inviting and have space. • Need different and separate spaces to support collaboration, studying / working, children, etc.
Other	• Make a coffee cart available in the Oakleigh Library or perhaps in the wider Drummond Street precinct to support the park / playground, library and community halls. • We have used Glen Waverley Library but we do not find it as friendly as Wheelers Hill. Plus, the collection for children is poor. There are a lot of study facilities which support teenagers, but it doesn't work as a library for younger children.

Community Members – 1 June 2021 (online, 1 participant)

Who	Connection to Library	Frequency of Use
Participant 1	Has not used any of the Monash libraries nor the online services. When living in Adelaide, they regularly visited a library, but since moving to Melbourne 5 years ago, they have not used a library. Live close (in easy walking distance) to the Mulgrave Library but have never used it.	N/A

Reasons I don't use the Monash libraries

Reasons	• We have a busy life, so have limited time to access the library.
	• We access so much information online, we don't have the same need to access library services.
	• We have never seen any information available about what the library service offers.

What to Change or Improve

Communication	• Communicate information to the community more effectively about the library service and what it offers.
	• Does the library have an app? Community member indicated interest in helping to develop an app for the library service.
	• Make sure the community knows about collection items in different languages.
Collection	• Make more collection items available in different languages and celebrating different cultures, consistent with the cultural diversity of the Monash community.
	• Is there an opportunity to make collection items (books and videos) available in different languages that will more effectively support young people studying languages e.g. when my sone was studying year 12 Hindi, he was unable to access Hindi language books and our family sourced them from India.
	• The library service to speak with people from different cultures, to help select collection items in different languages. Some communities may be able / willing to donate items to the collection.
Increasing use / Programs	• Can storytime be run in other languages.
	• Can creative activities be offered that celebrate different cultures with volunteers / people from different cultures across Monash sharing their knowledge and skills.

Notes from discussions with Council Advisory Groups and Committees

LGBTQIA Advisory Group – 26 July 2021

What they love about the Library Service

- Loved seeing the library attend Pride Night and providing information and support – such an important presence.

- Love the inclusion of LGBTIQA+ authors and speakers in Wordfest.

- Love the range of IDAHOBIT events.

Ideas to Change or Improve the Library Service

- Would like to see more information available within the Libraries about LGBTQIA communities and supports. Libraries are easy to access and can be a first point of contact for a community member who wants to know more about identifying as an LGBTQIA person and where they can access support.

- Really value the audio books and would like to see more of them available in the collection.

- Really appreciate being able to access ebooks but finds Borrowbox challenging to access and navigate.

- Would like to see more LGBTQIA books available in the ebook collection. At the moment, it is very limited.

- Improve the way the LGBTIQA+ books and ebooks are categorised as at the moment I believe it's "gay, lesbian, LGBTIQ" and I always go to L first and think nothing is there"

- Would like to see more space available for studying at Oakleigh Library. It can often be very difficult to access space.

- Could a Queer room or spaces be provided in libraries to help in providing safe spaces for people who identify as LGBTQIA.

- Would love to see more events or podcasts occurring in the library e.g.

  – Authors reading their work or talking about how they developed their work

  – Featuring Rainbow authors and their works.

  – Allowing community members to share their writing

  – Poetry slams

- Having resources in the collection to support people to explore about identifying as LGBTQIA or wanting to understand more about LGBTQIA.

- Having more items in the children's collection about LGBTQIA, about same sex parents etc.

- Holding events during the evening to make it easier for people who work during the day to attend events.

- Would like to see some consideration about extending the opening hours of the libraries.

- Love that the library offers ebooks and podcasts but needs to be promoted more widely.

Positive Aging Advisory Group – 5 August 2021

What they love about the Library Service

- The Home library service is really valued by older members of the community.

- The genealogy group provided a great service to the community during the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020.

- It is a great place to access the internet and is a really important resource to retain.

Ideas to Change or Improve the Library Service

- Could test messages be sent to people to remind people when their loan items are due to be returned. This technology exists. Can it be applied to the Library Service?

- Accessing eBooks is complicated and needs to be made easier.

- Provide more opportunities for older members of the community to participate in the tech learning sessions offered by the Library Service.   Advisory Group members indicated they often find they are booked out and can be difficult to get a spot in.   They would like to see them offered in all of the branch libraries and more often.

- Could lessons about learning a new language be available online. Perhaps there is an opportunity to conduct these in partnership with the community and neighbourhood houses in Monash or with U3A.

- Would like to see an ongoing and regular program of talks offered through the libraries e.g. talks by authors, talks about specific issues or topics. Would like to see them offered across all of the branch libraries and during daytime and nighttime.

- Could the library service provide improved access to newspapers. Advisory Group members indicated they are able to access The Age online through the library, but not other newspapers. In addition, at times they experience difficulty logging in to access the newspapers.

Gender Equity Advisory Group – 9 August 2021

What they love or value about the Library Service

- It's a safe place.

- Friendly and helpful e.g. assisting with new novels to read.

- The availability of collections, the click and collect options during COVID.

- Their communication and especially their Instagram page (llama).

- Being able to drop off and pick up books from any of the library sites.

- Location of the libraries.

- Up to date communication.

Any barriers they experience using the Library Service

- Not as technological as other libraries. Rowville library has interactive games and encourages children/young people to go there.

- Car parking is difficult, especially at Glen Waverley.

- School holiday programs book out too quickly, need to expand the classes.

Ideas for improving the Library Service

- Didn't realise you could download audible books/podcasts/movies. More information / better communication is needed about this service.

- Communicate with the schools to let the students know about Wordfest and other programs the Library Service conducts.

- Open the libraries later at night to assist women/children escaping family violence.

- Coffee cart.

- Encourage officers to apply for grant so that we can achieve some of these initiatives.

Disability Advisory Group – 19 August 2021

What they love or value about the Library Service

- If books are big or tightly bound it is hard to hold the books, e-books have helped to overcome this issue.

- Individuals and groups all have such varied needs, and the library is so important in helping to meet the diversity of needs in our community.

- The home library service is highly valued and has been so helpful and wonderful during the pandemic. It works well and it is easy to ring up and extend the loan if you haven't finished reading your book.

- Mulgrave library is really good for kids with sensory issues.

- Libraries are no longer a place where you need to be quiet.

Any barriers they experience using the Library Service

- Safety is an issue at Mt Waverley library and can be difficult with children with a disability.

- Parking and transport to the libraries is always a concern, particularly for people with a disability.

Ideas for improving the Library Service

- Having quiet spaces within a library is important for people that need to have quiet time and low sensory rooms. This should be a key consideration when upgrading existing libraries or building new libraries in Monash.

- Can collection items be upcycled once they are no longer needed by the Library Services. Can the library collaborate with groups who can distribute books to disadvantaged members of the community.

- Language app subscriptions would be beneficial.

- A bulletin board would be helpful to see what is going on in the community.

- It would be good to get more information on what services are available at the library, perhaps through email communication which highlight key programs or activities coming up.

- With students not being able to access library services in person, some are now offering Studiosity. Is this something Monash Library Service would consider investing in?

- Oakleigh library is often not open on the weekends. Having longer opening hours or making it like a gym membership with 24/7 access would be valuable.

Other

- One of the Advisory Group members would like to take this consultation item to her meetings for direct participant feedback. This will occur over the next 3 weeks. Michelle to confirm with the Library team about the timelines for completing the Library consultation.

- Could someone from the Library Service attend a group for vision impaired people that runs at Mount Waverley Community Centre. This would provide an opportunity for Library staff to hear directly from vision impaired people about their needs.