



Libraries & Knowledge Hubs Strategy 2026-2030



Mildura Rural City Council

Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land which now comprises the Mildura Rural City municipality. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and celebrate and respect their continuing cultures and acknowledge the memories of their ancestors.





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Alternative Formats:

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From the Chief Executive Officer

Mildura Rural City Council Libraries are a trusted and highly valued community service, delivering far more than access to collections. Across our municipality, our libraries and outreach services provide welcoming places for learning, connection, culture and wellbeing, while helping residents build digital skills and access collections and technology.

This Strategy sets the direction for the next four years, ensuring our library network remains sustainable, relevant and equitable as community needs and expectations continue to evolve. It aligns with Council's Community Vision and Council Plan, and is informed by strong evidence, benchmarking and extensive engagement with users, non-users, stakeholders and staff.

Satisfaction remains consistently high, with more than 93% of respondents satisfied or very satisfied. At the same time, consultation highlighted opportunities to improve visibility, respond to demand for flexible access and opening hours, address space pressures, and reduce digital barriers - particularly for those most at risk of exclusion.

We will deliver this work in a responsible financial environment - prioritising what matters most, strengthening partnerships and continually improving how we operate so we can remain sustainable. Progress will be monitored through annual planning and quarterly reporting, using clear measures including visits (physical and virtual), loans, participation, satisfaction and cost effectiveness. I'm excited to share this Strategy with our community and partners. It's a plan we can all use together to help shape the future of our Libraries across our municipality.

Martin Hawson
Chief Executive Officer



Introduction

With rising social connection and mental health challenges in communities' libraries and knowledge hubs are uniquely positioned to provide collections, information services and safe spaces for social connection and inclusion.

The Belonging Matters – The Social Connection Report (Municipal Association of Victoria, 2026) highlights that public libraries are essential social infrastructure, providing safe, inclusive and stigma free spaces where people of all ages and backgrounds can gather, learn and connect. Libraries foster belonging by offering free programs such as storytimes, book clubs, craft groups, digital literacy sessions and community events that help reduce loneliness and strengthen social networks. They also support digital inclusion through free Wi-Fi, devices and technology help, act as trusted information hubs, and often provide soft entry points into local services. The report shows that libraries significantly contribute to mental wellbeing, with users reporting increased feelings of connection, safety and community engagement, underscoring their vital role in building healthier, more cohesive and resilient communities.

This aligns strongly with the Mildura Rural City Council Libraries vision *to create a sustainable, welcoming, and inclusive library service that evolves to meet community needs.*

The report's evidence reinforces that our Libraries are not just providers of books, but evolving community hubs that respond to local needs by fostering belonging, participation, learning and resilience – making them essential to a healthy, connected and future ready Mildura community.

This strategy provides the roadmap to turn that vision into practical action – ensuring our Libraries continue to enrich lives, strengthen community connection, and support a thriving, resilient region.

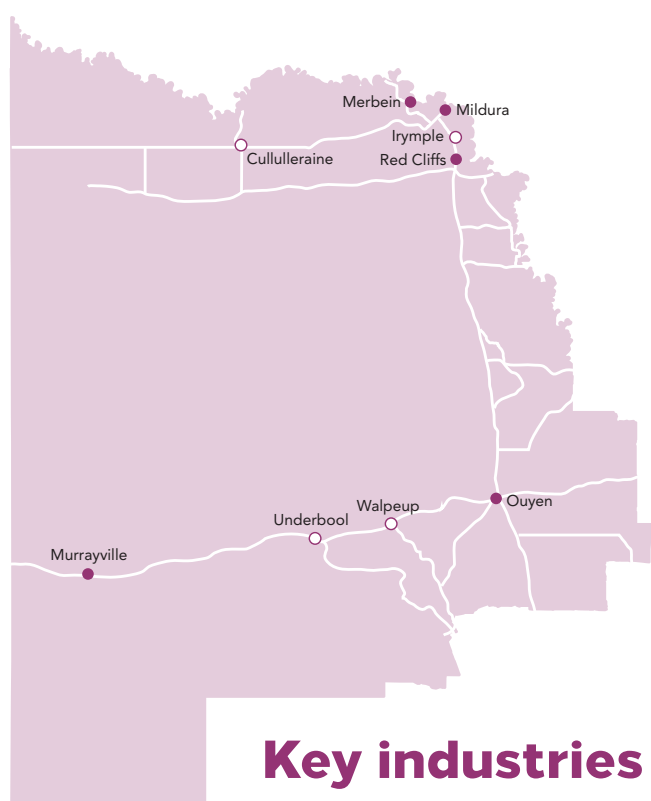
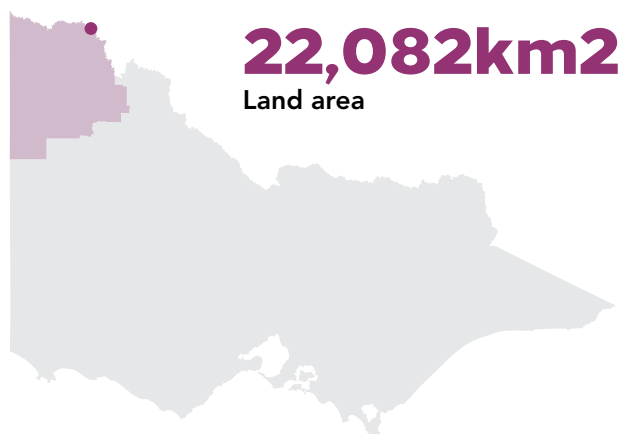
Our liveable people-friendly region

Located in north west Victoria, the Mildura Rural City Council area covers almost ten per cent of the State.

The region's landscape includes unique Mallee vegetation, broad acre grain properties, extensive horticultural farms and vibrant towns.

Mildura Rural City Council shares borders with New South Wales and South Australia, which makes it a strategically important regional service centre for three states.

The beautiful Murray River winds its way through much of the municipality and is a focal point for visitors and those who call the region home.

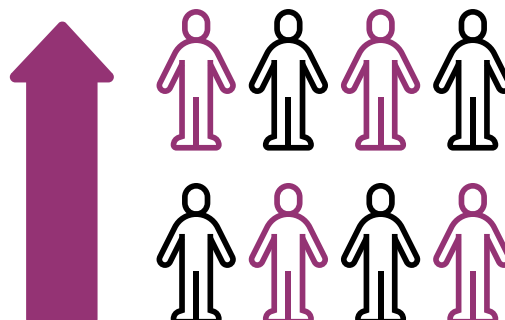


57,309

2021 estimated resident population

66,365

2046 projected resident population



Key industries

Dryland farming, irrigated horticulture (table grapes, wine grapes, dried grapes, citrus, vegetables and nuts), tourism, food and beverage manufacturing, transport and logistics, retail, health and community services.

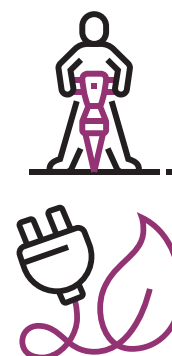
- Library
- Outreach

Our towns

Cabarita	Koorlong	Nichols Point
Cardross	Merbein	Ouyen
Colignan	Meringur	Red Cliffs
Cowangie	Mildura	Underbool
Cullulleraine	Murrayville	Walpeup
Irymple	Nangiloc	Werrimull

Emerging industries

Renewable energy, mineral sands mining, transport and logistics, advanced manufacturing and ag tech.



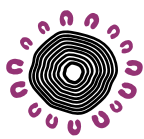


\$9.260 billion

Annual economic output

13.63%

Born overseas

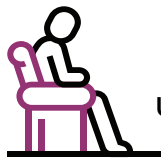


4.59%

Aboriginal or
Torres Strait
Islander

5,492

Businesses



1.87%

Unemployment rate

7.42%

Need assistance
with core
activities



25,016

Jobs

12.47%

Speak a language
other than English
at home





What is the role of Mildura Rural City Council Libraries?

Mildura Rural City Council Libraries provide essential face-to-face and online services that connect the community with information, resources, and learning opportunities. The service operates five libraries – Mildura, Red Cliffs, Merbein, Ouyen and Murrayville – along with a Library Agency at Irymple and a Rural Outreach Service to Cullulleraine, Underbool and Walpeup.

Libraries support lifelong learning, literacy, recreation, and personal development by offering access to collections, technology, programs, and welcoming public spaces. Community members visit libraries to read, study, work, access technology, participate in programs or events, seek support from staff in finding information, using resources and as a safe place.

Who is responsible for delivering library services?

Library services across the municipality are delivered by the Libraries & Knowledge Hubs Branch within Mildura Rural City Council's Healthy Communities Department.

The Branch collaborates closely with Public Libraries Victoria, other Australian library services, State Library Victoria and the National Library of Australia to ensure high-quality and contemporary library services.

The Libraries & Knowledge Hubs Branch

The Libraries & Knowledge Hubs Branch is committed to delivering **a sustainable, welcoming, and inclusive library service that evolves to meet community needs.**

Guided by our core values of Respect, Teamwork, Customer Satisfaction, Open Communication and Integrity, the Branch provides equitable access to knowledge, technology, and community connection across all library locations.

Our services encompass a broad and dynamic range of offerings, including:

- A diverse physical and digital collection
- Public computer and internet access
- Access to printing and scanning
- Programs including storytimes, school holiday and children's activities
- Tech hub sessions, social sessions for adults and author talks
- Meeting room access
- Book clubs
- Home library and rural outreach library services
- Reference support including local history and genealogy research
- Assistance to community groups
- Preservation of local heritage materials

Together, these services strengthen social connection, foster lifelong learning, and support the cultural and recreational aspirations of all community members.

Strategy scope and purpose

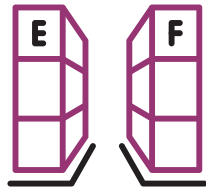
The Mildura Rural City Council's Libraries & Knowledge Hubs Strategy sets a clear, contemporary, and community-focused direction for the delivery of public library services over the life of the Strategy. It provides a framework for decision-making, investment, program design and partnerships, ensuring that library services remain responsive to evolving community needs and expectations.

Modern libraries are more than collections; they function as accessible community hubs supporting literacy, digital inclusion, lifelong learning, cultural participation, social connection and wellbeing. This Strategy outlines how the library service will continue to strengthen its role as a key contributor to community liveability, inclusion and resilience.

The Strategy aims to:

- Align library services with Council's broader strategic objectives
- Address identified community needs and service gaps
- Establish measurable outcomes for service performance and improvements
- Ensure services remain sustainable, relevant and equitable across the municipality.

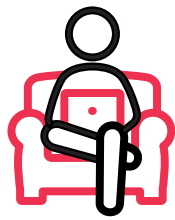
Our libraries at a glance



200,840
Physical Loans



50,653
Digital Loans



112,357
Visits



75,467
Virtual Visits



10,650
Library Members



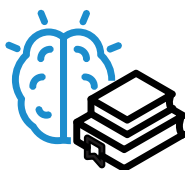
18.5% of the
Population are members



11,858
Computer Sessions



17,088
WiFi Sessions



1,081
Program Sessions



10,127
Program Participants

Data from 2024 - 2025 Annual Statistics

Looking forward

The actions in this Strategy will position our Libraries as a visible, inclusive and adaptive service that:

- Enhances community participation across all ages, cultures and locations
- Provides welcoming, flexible spaces for collaboration, creativity and quiet study
- Ensures equitable access to technology, digital skills and online resources
- Delivers dynamic programs and collections that reflect community identity and emerging needs
- Builds strong partnerships with community organisations, education providers and cultural groups
- Supports a skilled workforce committed to continuous improvement
- Contributes to Council's vision for liveability, social inclusion and wellbeing

Success will be evaluated by greater usage, better accessibility, stronger collaborations, and positive results in digital inclusion and community engagement.

Through this Strategy, libraries will continue to act as connectors – linking people to information, culture, services and one another – while supporting Council's long-term strategic objectives within our Libraries' vision:

To create a sustainable, welcoming, and inclusive library service that evolves to meet community needs.



Strategic context

The Mildura Rural City Council's Libraries & Knowledge Hubs Strategy is directly aligned with the Community Vision 2021-2040, which articulates the long-term aspirations of the municipality over 20 years.

Environment

We will sustain and enhance our natural environment and resources for current and future generations

Community

We will be a healthy, respectful and connected community

Place

We will be a place to live, belong and visit with infrastructure and development that enhances our lifestyle

Economy

We will have a thriving economy that harnesses our strengths and capitalises on opportunity

Leadership

We will have responsible, collaborative leadership that puts community wellbeing at the heart of decision-making



Our Libraries make a material contribution to the Community Vision by supporting social connection, access to knowledge, cultural participation, and digital inclusion through:

- Supporting a healthy, connected and inclusive community through welcoming public spaces, programs and services that encourage participation and lifelong learning.
- Strengthening place and belonging by providing accessible, trusted and locally embedded community hubs across the municipality.
- Contributing to economic participation and workforce readiness through digital access, skill development, and informal learning opportunities.
- Demonstrating responsible and collaborative leadership through equitable service provision, partnerships, and evidence-based decision making.





Our principles

Leadership - By providing clear direction through strategies and plans Council will achieve agreed outcomes for our community.

Customers - Council is here to provide services to the whole region, and therefore our community should have a say in what we do and how we do it.

Systems Thinking - Council recognises that achieving excellent outcomes for our community is done when all areas of the organisation work together effectively, and with other levels of government and the wider community.

People - By involving and developing people, Council enhances commitment, performance and working relationships to improve outcomes.

Continuous Improvement - To remain relevant and capable of producing excellent results that our organisation needs to learn and adapt.

Information & Knowledge - Council will make informed decisions, utilising and presenting all relevant data and information.

Variation - By addressing circumstances that cause processes to deliver inconsistent or unpredictable outcomes (variation), our community will receive the highest standard of service.

Corporate & Social Responsibility - Council will manage its operations to comply with law and ethical standards and to produce an overall positive impact on our community.

Sustainable Results - To deliver sustainable results Council must have a culture that promotes accountability.



Alignment with the Council Plan 2025-2029

The Libraries & Knowledge Hubs Strategy is a key supporting strategy of the Council Plan 2025-2029 and gives effect to Council's four-year strategic direction, particularly within the Community and Leadership pillars.

Within the Community strategic direction, We are a healthy community, the Council Plan 2025-2029 identifies the development and implementation of a new Libraries & Knowledge Hubs Strategy as a major initiative. Libraries contribute to several strategic outcomes in this direction:

Community

We are a healthy community

People are physically, mentally and emotionally well

- **People are safe**
- **We have diverse community and recreation services**
- **We have a vibrant arts and culture community**

Within the Leadership direction, the Strategy supports Council's commitment to being a high-performing organisation by embedding continuous improvement, service review, and outcome-based measurement in the planning and delivery of library services.

By aligning priorities, actions and measures with Council Plan outcomes, the Libraries & Knowledge Hubs Strategy ensures that library services contribute meaningfully to Council's broader objectives and reporting requirements.

Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework

The development and implementation of the Libraries & Knowledge Hubs Strategy is guided by Council's Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework, which establishes the relationship between long term community aspirations, medium term plans, and short-term actions and budgets.

Under the framework, the Libraries & Knowledge Hubs Strategy functions as an organisational strategy that connects with:

- The Community Vision
- The Council Plan
- Annual Plans, Budgets and performance reporting processes.

The framework ensures that:

- All strategies demonstrate a clear line of sight to the Community Vision
- Resource allocations are informed by strategic priorities
- Performance is monitored using consistent and outcome-focused measures
- Service delivery remains adaptive and accountable.

The Libraries & Knowledge Hubs Strategy will also be guided by Council's Workforce Plan, Financial Plan, Asset Plan and Annual Budget, ensuring that our Libraries are aligned, sustainable and delivered within organisational capacity.

Strategy development process

The Libraries & Knowledge Hubs Strategy 2026 – 2030 has been developed using a combination of historical performance data; contemporary benchmarking; community survey and consultation data; strategic analysis and organisational alignment; building on the foundations established in the previous Library Service Strategy 2020–2025.

It is important to note that the COVID-19 pandemic was ongoing when the previous Strategy began, which led to a significant decline in many library services and programs. However, during the 2020–2025 Strategy period, our libraries are gradually recovering to pre-COVID-19 levels.



Evidence and data sources

Key inputs to the development of this Strategy include:

- 2020-2025 Library Service Strategy: Service usage, satisfaction and consultation data

- Actions were 95% complete by 30 June 2025.

Two actions that required additional community input and investigation were:

- Conduct a review of hours of opening of all libraries
- Review Rural Outreach Library Service model

- Highlights of the 2020-2025 Library Service Strategy included:

- Redevelop and maintain the library website content to reflect current trends and improve user experience
- Redesign the Red Cliffs Library layout to improve the customer service space
- Investigate 24-hour access to libraries and collections
- Implement technology to facilitate meetings and communication opportunities for staff.
- Encourage diversity in our team by providing employment opportunities for members of our Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander and culturally diverse community through targeted employment
- Capturing and sharing our community memory by securing and preserving our stories, culture, heritage, and history
- Investigate augmented/virtual reality options
- Develop digital literacy programs
- Active participation and involvement with statewide/national projects

- 2024-25 Public Libraries Victoria benchmarking data, highlights service strengths (workforce capacity, collection quality and satisfaction) alongside opportunities for growth in visitation, participation and outreach across Mildura's large geographic area
- The Mildura Rural City Council's Libraries and Knowledge Hubs results map, which illustrates how Libraries outputs contribute to organisational and community outcomes within Council's results-based planning framework (pictured on next page)
- Reviewing the Community Engagement conducted as part of the Council Plan 2025-2029 for contemporary community needs and demographic data.

A Gender Impact Assessment was conducted on both the engagement strategy (2025) and the Libraries & Knowledge Hubs Strategy (2026) with the aim of ensuring that library services, spaces, programs and investments work fairly and effectively for all genders, and that no group is unintentionally disadvantaged. Under the Victorian Gender Equality Act 2020, councils are required to apply a GIA to all policies, programs and strategies that have a significant and direct impact on the public.

Libraries and Knowledge Hubs Results Map



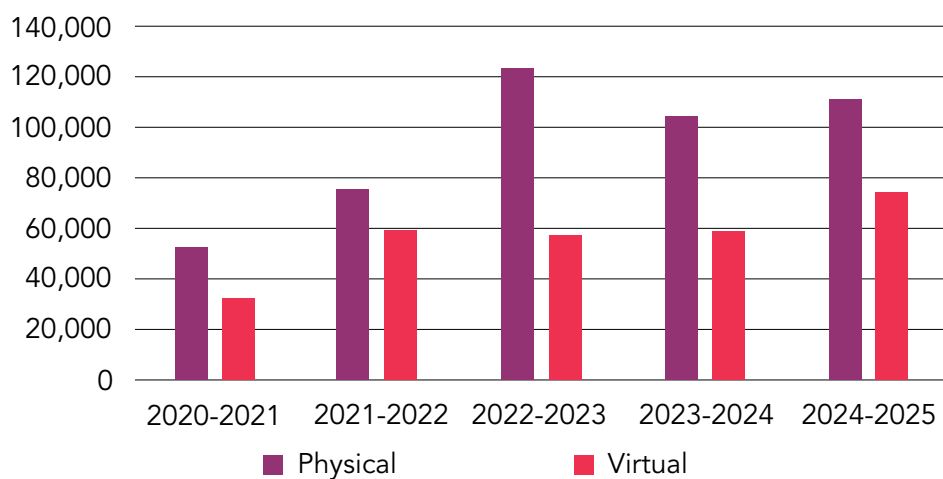
Community Engagement and Service Usage

Service usage and satisfaction is collected annually for Council Reporting, Public Libraries Victoria Annual Survey and State Government Victoria.

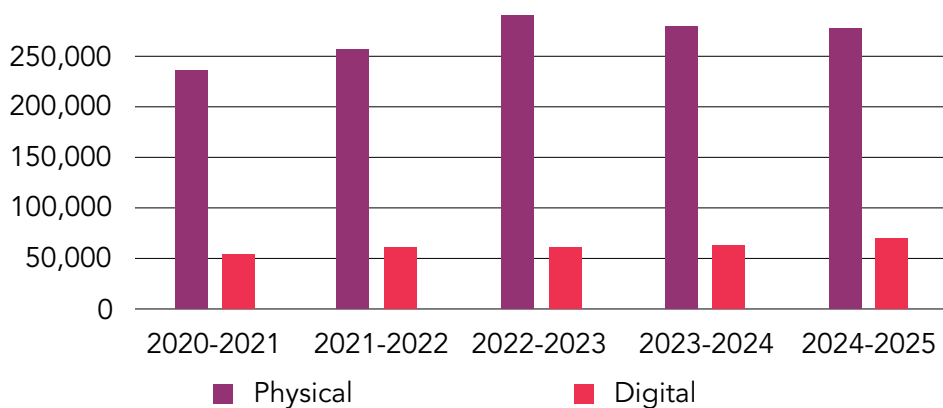
In the 2024–2025 financial year:

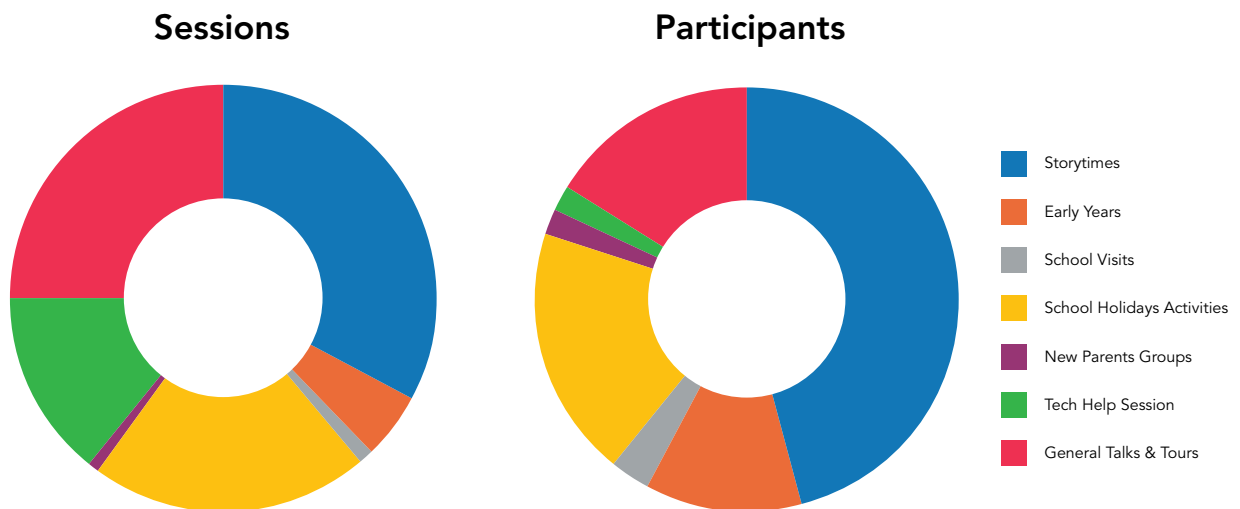
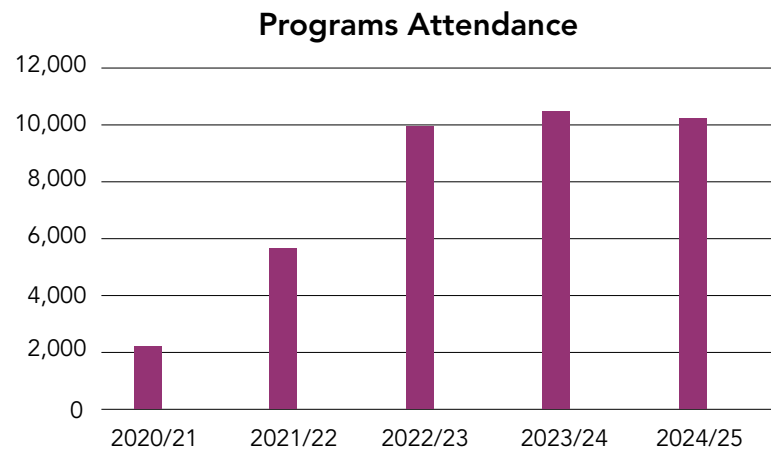
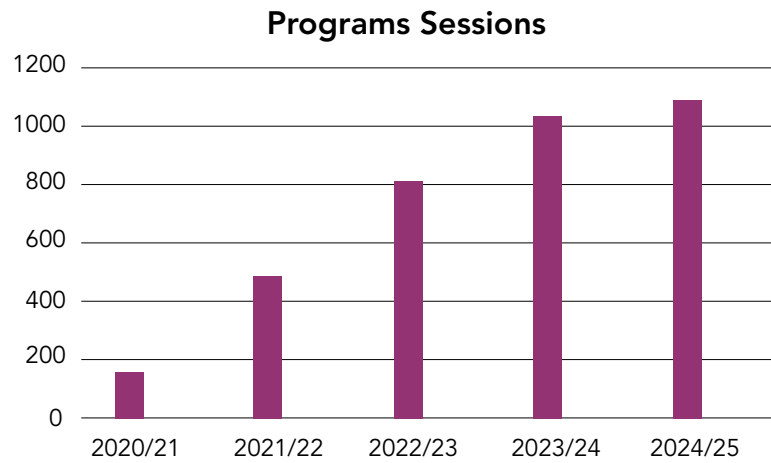
- 112,357 physical visits and 75,467 virtual visits were recorded
- 251,493 items were loaned
- 1,081 programs were delivered, attracting 10,127 participants

Library Visits



Library Loans







 **Mildura Library**
Mildura Rural City

Library





What did our community say?

Customer satisfaction remains strong, with over 93% of respondents in the 2025 Community Satisfaction Survey reporting they were satisfied or very satisfied with library services.

Feedback from users, non-users, stakeholders and staff highlighted several themes relevant to future planning, including:

- Demand for extended opening hours and flexible access
- Pressure on physical spaces, including the need for quiet study zones and technology-enabled areas
- Digital capability barriers for some community members
- Limited awareness of available programs and services
- A need for more culturally inclusive collections and partnerships particularly with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and culturally and linguistically diverse residents
- Growing expectations for libraries to support wellbeing, creativity and lifelong learning

Non-users also identified barriers such as lack of time, perceived lack of relevance and uncertainty about what libraries offer, pointing to the importance of increased visibility and service innovation.

Our numbers

 **467**
Survey responses

 **1513**
Comments

 **18**
Engagement sessions

Engagement and consultation

The development of the Libraries & Knowledge Hubs Strategy was informed by the following methods:

- Gender Impact Assessments resulted in the broadening of consultations to include more people in the community and stakeholders
- Community user and non-user surveys
- Stakeholder workshops
- Drop-in sessions at key towns
- Review of available data

Community User and Non-User Survey

A community user and non-user survey was undertaken during September to December 2025 to evaluate the Library Service, to rate access, facilities and service quality and to gather stakeholder feedback on future needs and service provision. Survey respondents totalled 467.

Paper based and online survey developed by the Libraries & Knowledge Hub Branch – collected data on customer satisfaction, use of services, programs and resources and demographics. It also collected information and data from people in the community who do not use Libraries and why they didn't use them.

Stakeholder Workshops

Several workshops were conducted from November 2025 – January 2026 with stakeholder groups following the completion of the survey phase of the project. Participants were provided with survey results and workshopped their thoughts and ideas on what's working well, what can be improved and what direction library services should take in the ensuing four-year period.

- Workshops conducted involved the following stakeholder groups: Mallee District Aboriginal Services Elders Group, Youth Council, Mildura Rural City Council Significant Cultural Events Committee, Local Historical and Genealogy Societies, U3A, Christie Centre and Intereach's Settlement Engagement and Transition Support Unit.
- Workshops also involved Libraries and Knowledge Hubs staff and Mildura Rural City Council staff from relevant areas such as Information Services, Community Care, Customer Service and Community Partnerships.

Data was compiled and analysed and has driven the development of the strategic goals, objectives, actions and measures in this document.

Community Drop-in Sessions

Drop-in sessions were held in Mildura, Red Cliffs, Merbein, Irymple, Ouyen, Cullulleraine, Murrayville, Underbool and Walpeup facilitated by Libraries & Knowledge Hubs staff. The sessions were between 2 – 6 hours in duration, with the majority scheduled to coincide with a community event or market.

The combined analysis of data sources confirmed the continuing importance of library services. It highlighted the need to adapt service models, to reflect emerging trends in community cohesion, usage patterns, digital engagement, and community expectations.

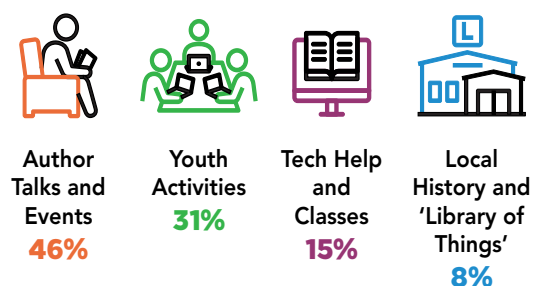


What you like most



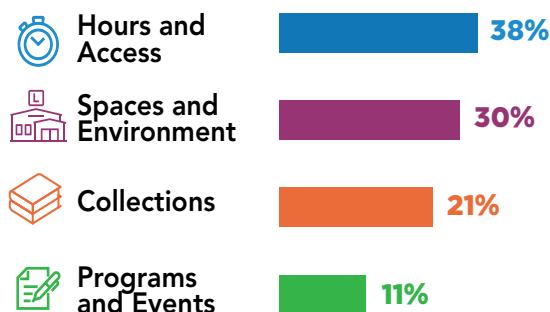
- Friendly Helpful Staff
- Welcoming and Peaceful spaces
- Great Book and Digital Collections

Other Services Wanted



- Guest Speakers and Youth Programs
- Technology Hub
- Expanded 'Library of Things'

What you'd improve



- Longer Opening Hours
- More Study and Quiet Areas
- Expanded Collections, particularly digital
- Better awareness of programs and services

Overall Insights



- Top Themes: Staff and collections
- Key Priorities: Hours, Programs, Study Spaces
- Digital and Tech Support Important
- Lack of awareness of services libraries provide



Organisational collaboration and alignment

The development of the Strategy has been informed by internal collaboration across Council, ensuring alignment with:

- Community Wellbeing initiatives
- Arts, Culture and Venues programs
- Early Years, Middle Years, Youth and Healthy Ageing priorities
- Customer Experience Framework
- Asset and Workforce planning considerations.

Overarching strategies and plans that informed this strategy

The Libraries & Knowledge Hubs Strategy has been informed by Council-wide strategies and plans including:

- Community Vision 2021-2040
- Council Plan 2025-2029
- Community Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029
- Mildura Rural City Council Library Strategy 2020-2025

By clearly positioning Libraries within Council's integrated planning hierarchy, this strategy ensures our libraries remain visible, aligned and accountable as a core community service.

Other Strategies, Plans and Documents that directly inform this Strategy include:

- Australian Library and Information Association: Free access to information statement [alia free access to information statement 2018 0.pdf](#)
- Australian Library and Information Association: Statement on public library services [statement on public library services.pdf](#)
- Belonging Matters: The Social Connection Report, 2026 Municipal Association of Victoria [MAV-Belonging-Matters-Full-Report-Feb-2026.pdf](#)
- United Nations Sustainable Development Goals [THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development](#)
- Victorian Gender Equality Act 2020 [Gender Equality Act 2020 | legislation.vic.gov.au](#)
- Victorian Public Libraries 2030 Strategic Framework [VPL-2030-strategic-framework.pdf](#)
- Digital access and service delivery in Mildura and surrounding towns 2026 (RMIT)
- Libraries Victoria Shared Service Agreement 2025 – 2026 (Confidential)
- Victorian Public Libraries Funding Program Agreement 2025 – 2026 (Confidential)

Governance

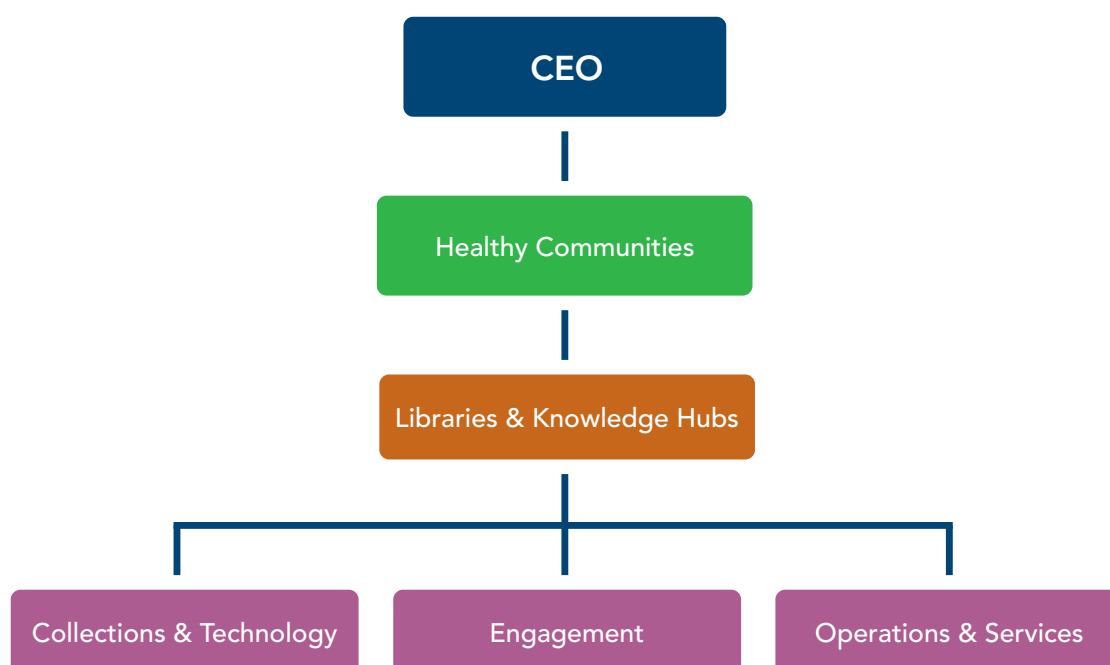
Governance and Consultation

The Project Control Group (PCG) oversaw and successfully managed every aspect of the Strategy's development and community engagement process:

- Sue Kelly, Manager Libraries & Knowledge Hubs
- Rose Connell, Library Team Leader Collections and Technology
- Matthew Kinleyside, Library Team Leader Engagement
- Steven Haby, Library Team Leader Operations & Services
- Amanda Boulton, Manager Community Care
- Michelle Thompson, Community Wellbeing Project Officer

Other contributions from subject experts:

- Mark Jenkins, General Manager Healthy Communities
- Toni Mottram, Gender Equality Officer
- Melissa Follett, Service Planning Advisor
- Zia Ibrahimi, Multicultural Liaison Officer
- Libraries & Knowledge Hubs staff provided insight and support during community consultations and workshops and feedback during the process.





Strategic Goals and Objectives

The seven priority areas from the 2020–2025 Library Service Strategy, have been retained as a focus for this Strategy:

Connecting with Community

Building the library's profile by promoting, marketing and creating awareness of library events programs and services

Places for All

Provision of welcoming, safe, and accessible libraries that meet the needs of the community

People and Culture

Develop, support and foster knowledgeable, empowered and skilled staff to deliver sustainable library services that meet and exceed community needs

Curating inspired collections

Promote literacy, learning and recreation by providing collections and resources that are diverse and relevant.

Discovering through Technology

Build digital equity within the Community

Engaging through Programs

Provide resources and programs that promote, engage and support learning, literacy and leisure for people of all ages within the community

Partnerships and Collaborations

Collaborate with the community to build relationships and partnerships to support delivery of events, programs and services and encourage social connectedness.



Implementation Plan

Connecting with Community

Building the libraries profile by promoting, marketing and creating awareness of library events programs and services.

We will continue to...

- Conduct annual customer satisfaction surveys to build on our understanding of the evolving needs of the community.
- Maintain our website and social media platforms to boost community engagement across our region.
- Engage in national and statewide library campaigns to promote resource sharing and increase community awareness of the value of public libraries and their contribution to socio-economic wellbeing.

What (The major initiatives we will implement)	Owner	When
Implement an awareness campaign to encourage increased library attendance and engagement	Library Team Leader Engagement	2026 - 2030
Develop a communication plan to ensure our diverse community are informed about library programs, events, and services.	Library Team Leader Engagement	2026 - 2030
Evaluate and create distinct library branding for greater community awareness.	Library Team Leader Engagement	2026 - 2028
Investigate offering opportunities to deliver a broader range of Customer Support Services, for example, taking rate payments and requests for Council services	Library Team Leader Operations & Services	2027 - 2029



Places for All

Provision of welcoming, safe, and accessible libraries that meet the needs of the community.

We will continue to...

- Monitor, and where needed, adapt to the effects of climate change on library facilities and to protect library collections.
- Create innovative displays in libraries to enhance customer experiences and to help drive engagement.
- Assess the effectiveness of the 24/7 access initiative at Murrayville Library to determine its overall success and whether the model can be adapted at our other locations.
- Investigate the provision of refreshments in Libraries for the comfort of customers.

What (The major initiatives we will implement)	Owner	When
Review our Rural Outreach Library Service to maximise usage and efficiency at Underbool, Walpeup and Cullulleraine.	Manager Libraries & Knowledge Hubs	2026 - 2028
Review library interiors and furnishings to create inclusive, welcoming and comfortable spaces.	Library Team Leader Operations & Services	2026 - 2030
Review the opening hours for Mildura, Red Cliffs and Merbein Libraries to increase community accessibility and ensure value for money.	Manager Libraries & Knowledge Hubs	2026 - 2028
Explore outdoor spaces for Red Cliffs and Murrayville Libraries to provide alternative program and engagement spaces.	Library Team Leader Operations & Services	2027 - 2028
Investigate 'after hours' access in libraries for greater community accessibility.	Manager Libraries & Knowledge Hubs	2027 - 2030
Evaluate the operations at the Irymple Library Agency at the end of lease agreement.	Manager Libraries & Knowledge Hubs	2026 - 2027
Investigate expanding Mildura Library footprint to facilitate local history and genealogy activities and create spaces for programs and events and an outdoor area.	Manager Libraries & Knowledge Hubs	2028 - 2030
Investigate providing additional quiet and meeting spaces in Libraries that are free and accessible such as Meeting rooms and Booths.	Library Team Leader Operations & Services	2027 - 2030



People and Culture

Develop, support and foster knowledgeable, empowered and skilled staff to deliver sustainable library services that meet and exceed community needs.

We will continue to...

- Encourage and support effective leadership training and mentoring in the Libraries & Knowledge Hubs Branch to develop future leaders and foster professional growth amongst staff.
- Encourage diversity in our team by supporting under-represented groups providing employment and volunteer opportunities.
- Review and update the Libraries & Knowledge Hubs succession plan to ensure continuity of services, staff development opportunities and optimise staff retention.
- Provide information for community and training for library staff to identify and respond appropriately to family violence and mental health concerns within the community.

What (The major initiatives we will implement)	Owner	When
Review and enhance library workforce training and development needs to ensure the development of skills to respond to changing community needs.	Library Team Leader Operations & Services	2026 - 2030
Investigate alternative rostering systems to enhance the efficient allocation of staff.	Library Team Leader Operations & Services	2027 - 2028
Review volunteering activities and roles to increase accessibility and support greater participation from our diverse community.	Library Team Leader Operations & Services	2026 - 2027
Conduct gender impact assessments (GIAs) on major library policies, programs and services to identify and respond to gendered and inclusion barriers.	Manager Libraries & Knowledge Hubs	2026 - 2030



Curating inspired collections

Promote literacy, learning and recreation by providing collections and resources that are diverse and relevant.

We will continue to...

- Digitise local newspapers and other publications onto TROVE in partnership with the National Library of Australia and preserve print editions for future generations.
- Aim to have 60% of the library collection published within the past five years to ensure the collection remains up to date.
- Expand our Library of Things collection with a focus on sustainability for the benefit of our community.
- Provide Seed Libraries for our community to engage in sustainability activities and contribute to the 'circular economy'.
- Assess and enhance library collections to effectively address the evolving needs of the community and identify gaps in subject interests or genres.
- Review and update the Collection Development Policy as required or when significant changes in collection needs are identified.
- Develop an annual procurement plan to identify appropriate suppliers and contracts to obtain value for money.
- Evaluate available online streaming services to ensure they meet the diverse interests of the entire community.
- Secure and preserve local stories, culture, and history to ensure current and future generations can access and appreciate our unique heritage.

What (The major initiatives we will implement)	Owner	When
Introduce an online process for community selection and purchase of new materials for the Library Collection.	Library Team Leader Collections & Technology	2026 – 2027
Preserve and maintain publishing history of the local area by requesting authors and publishers to make available a copy of their work for archival purposes.	Library Team Leader Collections & Technology	2026 – 2030



Discovering through Technology

Build digital equity within the Community.

We will continue to...

- Provide and expand individual 'Tech Help' sessions for those people in our community that need technology assistance.
- Provide ongoing Preservation Station sessions for those people wanting to save their family records such as home movies, photographic slides and other material.
- Provide access to free Wi-Fi and computers in our libraries for those who do not have access to the internet or devices such as PCs.

What (The major initiatives we will implement)	Owner	When
Implement and monitor the Libraries Online Bookshop.	Library Team Leader Collections & Technology	2026 – 2028
Examine the application of artificial intelligence in libraries to enhance support for staff and the community.	Library Team Leader Collections & Technology	2026 – 2030
Investigate the provision of Book Lockers at Mildura Sporting Precinct, Irymple Hub, Cullulleraine, Underbool and Walpeup.	Library Team Leader Collections & Technology	2026 - 2030
Investigate a return chute at Murrayville Library.	Library Team Leader Collections & Technology	2026 - 2027
In conjunction with Libraries Victoria, investigate and implement, a new Library Management System contract.	Library Team Leader Collections & Technology	2026 - 2027



Engaging through Programs

Provide resources and programs that promote, engage and support learning, literacy and leisure for people of all ages within the community

We will continue to...

- Offer a variety of diverse and inclusive library programs aimed at engaging the community.
- Create an annual schedule of programs to effectively allocate resources and offer diverse events and activities.
- Offer author talks and workshops designed to engage diverse members of our community.
- Provide Family and History sessions that are of value for those interested in local history and genealogical research.

What (The major initiatives we will implement)	Owner	When
Co-design programs and events with communities experiencing barriers, based on intersectionality, particularly gender and age.	Library Team Leader Engagement	2026 - 2030
Provide programs that create opportunities for community expression, including workshops for writing, illustration, and storytelling.	Library Team Leader Engagement	2026 - 2030
Investigate oral history workshops and platforms to preserve oral histories.	Library Team Leader Collections & Technology	2026 - 2030
Support and promote Council acknowledged Days of Significance across libraries to reflect community priorities.	Library Team Leader Engagement	2026 - 2030



Partnerships and Collaborations

Collaborate with the community to build relationships and partnerships to support delivery of events, programs and services and encourage social connectedness.

We will continue to...

- Work with local organisations to improve service access and delivery within our Libraries for our community.
- Work in partnership with the Christie Centre to deliver the Irymple Library Agency
- Develop partnership opportunities with other Council Branches to deliver programs and events in our Libraries.
- Communicate and cooperate with other public, school and special libraries in our region by organising joint events, sharing resources, and developing community programs to promote library services.

What (The major initiatives we will implement)	Owner	When
Collaborate with heritage and cultural organisations, businesses and individuals to preserve local historical collections.	Library Team Leader Collections & Technology	2026 – 2030
Partner with local First Nations Elders and community to identify priorities and co design culturally safe library spaces, collections and programs.	Library Team Leader Engagement	2026 – 2030
Work collaboratively with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities to identify priorities and design welcoming library spaces, collections and programs.	Library Team Leader Engagement	2026 – 2030

Monitoring and Evaluation of our Performance

Council undertakes regular reporting on Libraries through the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework and the Annual Survey of Victorian Public Libraries.

The Libraries & Knowledge Hubs Strategy will be delivered through its Annual Plan. Performance against the strategy is checked every three months and reported on through the Libraries & Knowledge Hubs Annual Branch Plan.

How we will measure our progress

Below are the indicators that will help us understand if we are making a difference in our community:

- Annual Survey of Victorian Public Libraries
- Library visits (physical and virtual)
- Library loans (physical and digital)
- Library program (number and attendees)
- Library Customer Satisfaction (Mildura Rural City Council Libraries Customer Survey)
- Library membership
- Local Government Performance Reporting Framework





Library

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76 Deakin Avenue, Mildura

Madden Avenue Service Centre
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Ouyen Service Centre
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