

**WIMMERA
REGIONAL LIBRARY
CORPORATION**

your local library



Library Plan

2022-2024

Helping to build better communities, the library is the place to be

Vision

Wimmera Libraries: your place to learn, share and create.

Mission

Proactively provide sustainable library services, programs and resources to our communities and people by understanding, engaging and responding through partnerships and collaboration that successfully shape our libraries to achieve excellent customer service.

Values

Equity: accessibility, respect and fairness

Diversity: valuing individual needs, experiences and differences

Integrity: discretion, confidentiality and accountability

Innovation: encouraging creativity, experimentation and the generation of ideas

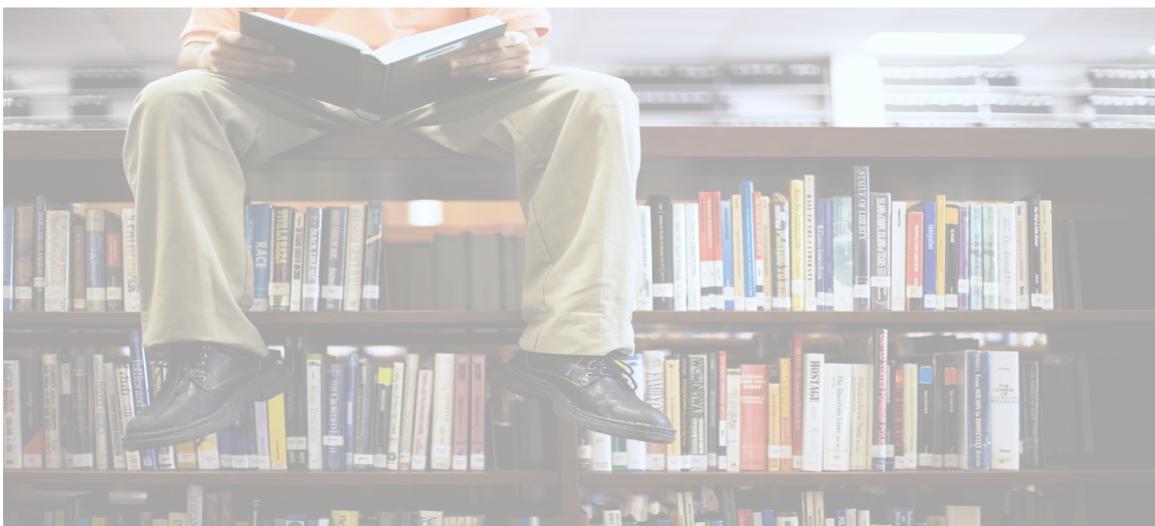
Lifelong Learning: empowerment through knowledge for all ages and walks of life

Collaboration: encourage co-operative relationships and partnerships with community organisations educational institutions, government bodies and other libraries

Service Orientation: provide excellent, responsive, community-focussed services

Our Goals

Wimmera Regional Library Corporation strives to embrace the diversity of all the people who make up each community within the 2 member Councils. Providing effective library services, programs and resources that empower staff and communities to learn and evolve. Attract and build relationships to understand and respond to the experiences of library users through innovative library spaces, supportive services and dynamic collections.



Our Child Safety Commitment

Wimmera Regional Library Corporation is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people.



I have been a library member for 68 years, so in early life it developed imagination and desire to travel and see the world. Living in remote areas for many years and educating our children via correspondence for their primary school years, we all greeted the mail truck with glee because each fortnight it brought books! For 38 years I was employed in a very high pressure job - library books taught me empathy, to handle large numbers of people, co-ordination, ideas, budgeting, organisation and calmness. In my later years I have learned reading will reduce likelihood of dementia and is an effective sleeping pill! Lastly reading has resulted in a large circle of friends. Reading at least 4 books a week, I would be distraught without a library!! – Edenhope female library user, Libraries Change Lives postcard

As a person on a low income, I go to the library every day to use the facilities. Without libraries I would have a poorer quality of life. Rural libraries are absolutely essential. Horsham library user, Libraries Change Lives postcard



For many people a library is a great place to meet and socialise while you learn. A great book is a friend you can visit again and again. Horsham library user, Libraries Change Lives postcard

WIMMERA LIBRARIES

Wimmera Libraries are excited to move into a new phase of library services to both Horsham Rural City Council and West Wimmera Shire Council. This Library Plan is the primary planning document for the delivery of library services and fulfils our obligations set out in the Local Government Act.

This Plan represents the new direction for Wimmera Libraries in meeting the changing expectations of our stakeholders to build better and more resilient communities. We will update this Plan on an annual basis for the next three years.

Horsham Rural City Council and West Wimmera Shire Council are 2 municipalities within the Wimmera region with Horsham being the primary service centre. Our libraries are in Horsham, Laharum, Natimuk, Edenhope, Kaniva, Goroke and Harrow. We support a diverse community of more than 23,000 people spread over an area of 13,375 square kilometres (2018 ABS).

Country libraries are an important and valuable source of so many types of information for isolated areas. We must have funding for these services in rural areas. – Male library user, Libraries Change Lives postcard

Horsham Library 2019-20



64,193 annual loans



53,797 visits per year



203 annual events and programs



2,828 attended per year

West Wimmera Libraries 2019-20



13,958 annual loans



11,241 visits per year



168 annual events and programs



2,303 attended per year

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Change

Wimmera Libraries have undergone massive changes to become who we are today, resilient and proactive libraries, that understand our communities and what makes them who they are. We are committed to facing further challenges and opportunities by using our strengths to ensure we have the best public library for the people who come and share their lives with us.

COVID-19

Throughout 2020-21, due to the COVID-19 pandemic Wimmera Libraries were either physically closed to patrons or operated under restrictions, but library staff stayed engaged with their community members. During this time, our website was redesigned to allow for easy navigation to online resources; staff continued to work from their workplace but implemented contactless click and collect services, as well as other non-contact services, and Collection budgets were redirected to increase e-resources. However, the digital divide, lack of digital literacy skills and slow internet speeds in the region are major barriers in transitioning from physical to online resources. Long-term COVID-19 restrictions is impacting on the community's confidence to re-enter our library spaces.

Budgets and Funding

To ensure our future success we appreciate ongoing commitment by Horsham Rural City Council and West Wimmera Shire Council, as well as the Victorian State Government. To supplement that support we are committed to seeking new partnerships with other public libraries, the Victorian State Library, local businesses and community groups that generate new revenue streams and create new opportunities of value adding to our business.

Staff

In a constantly changing world, we are aware that there is a requirement for versatile staff that are willing and able to adapt and navigate their way around technology and finding information. Our future depends on growing library professional skill sets that enable staff to meet ongoing changes. There is a need to develop strong capabilities that foster team creativity and innovation, as well as nurture ongoing partnerships and volunteers to facilitate programs. We have an opportunity to empower staff to further their ability to make clear and robust decisions.

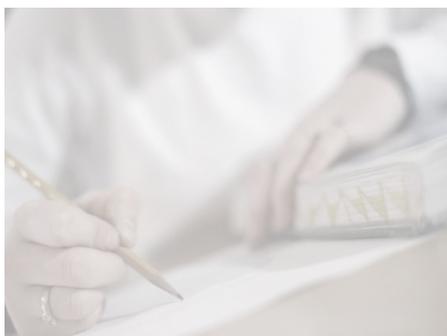
Resources

Our library collections are freely accessible that support the informational and recreational requirements of our community through print, digital and audio-visual media across a variety of platforms. We continue to support the Libraries Victoria Shared Services model to allow our communities free access to collections across Victoria. We continue to collect and preserve historical material for future generations.

Service Delivery

We have an opportunity to embrace branch specialisation and differentiation of library services that reflect the local community, rather than deliver the same library services, programs, events and collections at each branch. We need to look at delivering library services in multi-purpose places.

Local libraries are great about keeping us in touch with issues in the world at large. –
Horsham library user, Sydney Writers Festival Live & Local



OUR ASPIRATIONS

Wimmera Libraries understand it is vital that our values align with community wellbeing and our goals reflect community development and cohesion. Our aspirations are centred around creativity, knowledge and ideas that contribute to our community's cultural experiences.

To achieve this, we commit to the following aspirations –



Accessibility – enhancing community library experiences by ensuring our services and activities are accessible to all



Connections – enabling communities make, build and celebrate connections through our libraries



Relationships – developing collaboration and partnerships across the community to enhance our services and activities that reflect our goals and community needs



Growth – ensuring we grow and evolve that encompasses community diversity for long term sustainability

This Library Plan focuses on the outcomes we are aiming to achieve through our aspirations by being evidence-based instead of simply undertaking activities and services. To deliver these outcomes we will focus on –

- Being focused on our values that are directed by our goals
- Using evidence to inform our decisions
- Responding to evaluation and feedback that will underpin our decisions for change.

The following factors will influence and shape our strategic goals over the next four years –

- Aging and declining population in the regional areas
- Horsham's population growth rate is set to increase by 1.5%
- Community satisfaction with our libraries
- Buildings no longer fit for future purposes of library activities.

Key priorities will be implemented by –

- Creating partnerships with departments within member Councils to ensure our strategic goals align with council plans
- Working with our communities, education institutions and peak industry bodies so that we can adapt and grow to meet community and industry changes.

Because I enjoy the access to reading materials, without which my life would be the poorer. Reading provides relaxation and enjoyment in a busy life on the land – Edenhope/Harrow male library user, Libraries Change Lives postcard



MEASURING OUR SUCCESS

We will employ measurable outcomes to assess the impact of our actions for our patrons and community. The outcomes we will aim to inspire include -



Cultural – increase a desire by the community to participate in our libraries through activities that enrich creativity, diversity and allows imagination and curiosity



Belonging – create positive experiences that increases a shared sense of belonging that improves mental health wellbeing, social connectedness and recognition of feeling valued in a safe and secure place



Economic – support local economic wellbeing capacity of the community through professional, artistic and literacy enhancing skill development



Access – foster stronger community connections to increase lifelong learning through access to free resources



Organisational Performance – build an outstanding and innovative organisation

Our libraries are the life blood of our communities - bringing all ages together and catering to all. – Horsham female library user, Libraries Change Lives postcard

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

This Library Plan sets a clear direction for Wimmera Regional Library Corporation for the next four years through a focus on five strategic goals.



Goal 1 Cultural

Embrace our culture and heritage through engagement with our communities

- 1.1 We will engage with our communities to develop and review our services and programs
- 1.2 We will engage with authors, artists and entertainers to develop a calendar of events that reflect our diverse community's cultural expectations
- 1.3 Programs and activities to engage and inspire our community as well reflect community cultural needs
- 1.4 We will increase participation in, and access to, cultural experiences
- 1.5 Our cultural experiences will encourage active community engagement with our collections.

Measurable Outcomes

- Program and events attendance and number of programs and events
- Library satisfaction survey results used as a tool to inform us in developing programs and resources
- Our programs and events deliver enhanced learning and well-being outcomes for the community





Goal 2 Belonging

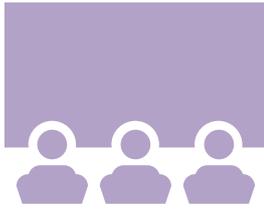
Promote health and wellbeing that enhances the liveability of the region

- 2.1 We will provide safe, welcoming and accessible spaces for all, and reduce barriers to access
- 2.2 We will bring people together to share cultural experiences that improves our community mental health wellbeing
- 2.3 We will develop strategies to ensure we connect with non-users of libraries using diverse methods of social connectedness
- 2.4 We will work proactively to engage the whole community with libraries, learning and creativity.

Measurable Outcomes

- Increased library visits and engagement by our communities
- People feel welcome and safe in our libraries
- Demonstrated connection with community groups, stakeholders and relevant interest groups
- Successful advocacy for renewal and refurbishment of existing libraries
- Connect with new library members and community groups through targeted outreach partnerships and programs





Goal 3 Economic

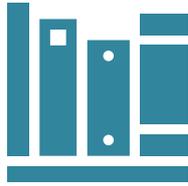
Support the development of a prosperous and diverse economy by increasing creativity, culture and events

- 3.1 We will build a culture of reading to engage all ages and abilities with books and writing
- 3.2 We will provide opportunities to enable community participation in literacy activities and experiences
- 3.3 We will support literacy development for the whole community that includes early years literacy programs to include adults who lack confidence in reading or are learning English as a second language
- 3.4 We will increase opportunities for the professional development of our community
- 3.5 We will work in partnerships to deliver collaborative services, and opportunities for community input.

Measurable Outcomes

- Our staff provide expertise when and where our community requires it
- Successfully adapt to the changing environment by delivering relevant services that our community want
- Our collection is current and well used
- Established volunteer programs that support literacy in our communities
- Representation on committees and working parties with member councils and other community agencies that support liveability, community health and wellbeing and social equity





Goal 4 Access

Enhance the social and economic environment by increasing literacy and learning

- 4.1 We will support digital inclusion through access to technology, staff expertise and learning programs
- 4.2 We will broaden opportunities for the community to access library collections and services beyond the library walls
- 4.3 We will plan and actively explore options for library spaces to meet the needs of our communities.

Measurable Outcomes

- New service delivery models are explored and developed
- Our community can access our collections from any location
- Increased utilisation of digital technology by staff, library patrons and community members
- Our collections reflect at least the key Victorian benchmarks for currency and usage





Goal 5 Organisational Performance

A high performance organisation with frameworks that enable sound decision making

5.1 We will create an environment that enables staff to embrace new opportunities

5.2 Wimmera Libraries values will underpin everything we do

5.3 We will ensure that statutory and funding requirements are complied with.

Measurable Outcomes

- Staff adopt new services and strategies that support best practice as well as embrace opportunities for growth
- Staff believe in the value of the services we provide to support the well-being of our communities
- This Library Plan is reviewed on an annual basis and will undergo a major renewal in 2023
- All corporate activities are governed by sound financial and business management principles
- New revenue streams established through partnerships, individual donors and corporate sponsors



Our Priority Actions

Collections

- Measure and evaluate the usage of the collections and respond to trends and issues
- Create Collections Asset Plan Strategic Framework to articulate the strategic direction of Wimmera Libraries collections from a service provision as well as a strategic asset maintenance perspective
- Review and update the Collection Development Policy to ensure the collection principles of selection, acquisition, evaluation, maintenance and deselection of resources in print, non-print and digital formats are met
- Develop a regional Literacy Strategy that responds to usage and impact of collections in programs that assist in literacy building capabilities of the community
- Create a Local History framework to ensure Wimmera Libraries continues to have a major role in capturing, sharing and preserving the Wimmera region's heritage
- Continue to encourage and promote the works of local writers through our collections and programs

Programs

- Develop an evaluation framework for all events and programs to ensure that they are in line with community needs and are economically responsible
- Evaluate core programs annually
- Review and update marketing, social media and communication strategies to ensure effective promotion of programs and services that use our resources
- Explore partnerships with community learning and formal educational entities
- Review library hours of opening to ensure maximum access to programs and services in line with community expectations
- Collaborate with member councils and other key organisations to deliver cultural programs
- Explore opportunities for promoting tourist attractions across the Wimmera region

Staff

- Deliver relevant training to staff to ensure they have the knowledge and skills to succeed in their roles
- Research and deliver customised online learning and induction content
- Explore opportunities for mentoring and coaching
- Explore opportunities to reward and recognise staff

Advocacy

- Create and deliver programs that promote our libraries to non-library users
- Continue participating in the Public Library Victoria (PLV) and the State Library Victoria advocacy projects to lobby State Government for increased funding for public libraries

Governance

- Review policies and procedures to ensure that they support good governance
- Deliver responsible financial management and business planning

Evaluation and Performance Indicators

This Library Plan will be developed to enable each Wimmera Library to better understand community interest, inform collection and program development and track outcomes.

Where possible Wimmera Regional Library's outputs and performance will be benchmarked against relevant organisations and industry outputs.



Key Evaluation Indicators

- Sustainable financial position
- Customer satisfaction surveys
- Staff surveys
- Annual Public Libraries Victoria statistics
- Local Government Performance Reporting Framework

Key Performance Indicators

- Development and delivery of this Library Plan and associated plans and policies
- Development of a positive culture that enables staff to be high performing
- Our communities are engaged with libraries and are consulted to inform our program planning
- Efficient and effective library services
- Sound financial and business management of Wimmera Libraries
- Full compliance with statutory and funding requirements

Key Measures

- Satisfied library and community members
- Annual budgets kept within 10% projections
- Attracted new investment for library services and programs
- Improved ratings from the Annual Survey of Public Libraries
- Improved Local Government Performance Reporting Framework indicators

Statewide Measures

Top 10 library performance indicators 2020-21		Victoria	WRLC	WRLC Target 2021-22	WRLC Target 2020-22
1.	Active library members	10.9%	7%	9%	13%
2.	Attendance at library programs per '000 capita	92	45	50	55
3.	Turnover rate – physical items	3.1	1.1	1.5	2.0
4.	Turnover rate – digital items	7.5	2.4	2.5	2.6
5.	Physical quality of library collection	65%	34%	40%	45%
6.	Library service funding per capita	\$37.61	\$42.43	\$42.00	\$41.50
7.	Cost of library service per visit	\$26.76	\$35.71	\$33.00	\$30.00
8.	Staff EFT per '000 capita	0.28	0.25	0.25	0.25
9.	Number of public access devices per '000 capita	0.50	1.18	1.2	1.2
10.	Customer satisfaction rating	8.26	8.85	9	9