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# CAMPBELLTOWN LIBRARY REDEVELOPMENT

## GENERAL PROJECT OUTLINE – DISCUSSION PAPER

### 1. Project Identification – What is the Campbelltown Library Redevelopment Project?

To redevelop the Campbelltown Library to reflect today's best practice standards for a modern public library. The new library will become a focal point for and contribute to the social health of our community by offering a free, open, accessible and safe place for the community to relax and reflect, inquire and learn and interact with others.

### 2. Project Background

The Campbelltown Public Library Service, which is part of the eastern regional library network known as SWAP, is currently delivered from three outlets namely:

- The Campbelltown Public Library Montacute Road Newton (opened 1985);
- The Athelstone Branch Library Gorge Road Athelstone (opened in 1980 and supplemented by a Toy Library opened in 2002.
- A Mobile Library Service, which has operated since 1976.

In 2004 Council initiated a Libraries and Community Facilities Feasibility Study to review the condition and viability of its major infrastructure.

The project that arises from that review aims to consolidate and update these ageing facilities into a modern and vibrant service that meets the needs of today's community focusing on lifelong learning and adult education.

*“Lifelong learning is a process through which individuals acquire knowledge, skills and values in a range of formal and informal settings, throughout life. It provides formal education, vocational training, and personal development. Lifelong learning enables informed citizens to make positive and rewarding contributions to sustain their environment, their community and the economy.”*  
(Lugg, 2000).

Lifelong learning contributes significant benefits to the Australian economy – providing individuals with appropriate skills, adaptability and therefore better access to employment. This in turn contributes to the economy through their labor and personal prosperity. A strategically trained workforce sustains the existing economic base and attracts new growth industries and regional investment. Communities that embrace a learning culture are more adaptive and resilient.

To the individual life long learning provides individual opportunities for the development of self knowledge, esteem and quality of life. To the community life long learning can foster family cohesion, social and emotional inclusion, building civic pride and community networks.

### 3. What are the features and goals of the Campbelltown Library Redevelopment Project?

In order to meet the diverse roles outlined in the *Project Identification* and optimise accessibility and use, the public library requires a high profile, adequately sized, visible building which should be attractive, user friendly, efficiently designed, flexible and functional

The State Library of NSW planning document *"People Places: A Guide for Public Library Buildings in New South Wales"* (2005) says:

*"By providing a public library building that is well designed and consistent with the trends identified in "People Places", the benefits will be significant. Our future public libraries must be buildings that:*

- *Provide a cultural hub and focal point for the community.*
- *Are functional and multipurpose accommodating a range of activities and uses.*
- *Enable access to the latest in technology in a user-friendly manner.*
- *Attract a wide range of users providing areas for relaxation, research, leisure and learning.*
- *Are effective and efficient in the delivery of services.*
- *Develop from a co-operative approach between all stakeholders to ensure that the changing needs of the community are met.*

*With good planning and the allocation of adequate resources, public libraries can and will provide value for money for the community. A sound initial investment will provide a library building that remains functional and viable for the future."*

### **Community trends to be considered when planning for a Library of the Future**

Public libraries bring people from a range of backgrounds together to meet, network and potentially develop relationships with other members of the community. This is called social capital and is one of the building blocks of a strong community. Research highlights that social networks have value and affect the productivity and health of individuals and groups (Robert Putnam (social commentator) 2000).

#### **Ageing population**

Already older residents are the major users of libraries and this trend is likely to grow as the number of older residents with significant leisure time increases. Access to specialist collections, adult education, activities targeting seniors, increasing computer usage and browsing areas for casual users will be necessary.

Access for older residents in retirement villages and housebound services will also need to be considered. Research indicates that as age increases so does the level of disability in our community. Access for people with a disability will therefore become an increasingly important issue and "Disability" legislation is having a significant impact on how services are designed and provided.

#### **Young people**

In newer public libraries young people are significant users, major consumers of information technology, and hold social attitudes that are often different from other groups in our community. The provision of meeting rooms, noisy areas, student research areas and facilities are some of the physical outcomes of this trend. Young people are interested and efficient in using new technology and have been quick to utilise the technology resources of libraries.

#### **Technology**

Computer technology is likely to be used primarily for reference and information rather than fictional works and "reading for pleasure".

Rather than public libraries getting smaller because of the increasing use of technology public libraries have been required to provide additional space for technology such as computer training rooms, large areas for public access catalogues, dedicated computerised work stations for staff, additional storage for audiovisuals and CD-ROMS and expanded access to general Internet and specialised database computers.

New technologies such as self-check loans, self-help desks, quick use computers, wireless technology, ports for laptops and wireless local area network access points together with specialist librarians to assist online users are all impacting on library design and layout.

### **Population diversity**

Given the long history of diversity of our multicultural community there would ideally be areas for browsing and reading multicultural resources; meeting room space for social contact with people of similar backgrounds and interests; and enquiry/information desks for those needing assistance.

Recognition and celebration of our Indigenous community is an increasingly important part of our work and the library could play an important role in the promotion of Aboriginal culture.

### **Location and site considerations and the central site v branch model**

Geoff Stempel Associate Director, Public Library Services, State Library of South Australia says:

*“Public Library Services is very clear that while it and the Libraries Board may give professional opinions or broad policy directives, the operational issues related to the running and sitting etc of public libraries is clearly the province of Councils each responding to the needs of their local communities.*

*Having said this, I am happy to make some observations, point to research and advise of trends in library development.*

*Brian Haratsis, principal consultant and owner of Macroplan (see <http://www.macroplan.com.au>) did some interesting research into customer behaviour in relation to libraries in Melbourne during the 1990's. His research indicated that small local branches, while valued by a relatively small group of members were very often bypassed by the serious library user / studier in favour of more distant but much better resourced larger libraries. This was a significant trend. And Brian, with a very heavy urban planning and financial headset was very clear that the best quality for the customer coupled with financial efficiency in its running, would advise that fewer, but larger and well resourced libraries were the best options for customers and councils.*

*The notion of libraries linking with other council facilities, services and information is a positive opportunity for libraries if the opportunity is well managed.*

*Unless there are compelling service delivery reasons for opening extra branches – e.g. a city divided in two by a freeway, or considerable distance to travel, or some such then adding branches to the Adelaide public library scene would need to be thought through very carefully, and communities would need to be fully briefed on the costs and benefits of doing this.*

*The latest movement re library branches was the opening of the Mawson Lakes Branch at Salisbury. This is entirely understandable as a whole new suburb was created, and it is separated from the rest of Salisbury by Parafield Airport and Main North Road.*

*Of course, changes in community demographics, transport options etc need to be constantly reassessed by councils as they are deciding how best to provide services to their*

*communities, and ultimately it is communities who express their will and fund most of the operations of their libraries.”*

The State Library of NSW planning document *"People Places: A Guide for Public Library Buildings in New South Wales"* (2005) states that:

*“An effective library site would satisfy all of the following criteria:*

- *Main street or shopping area location.*
- *Highly visible location.*
- *Street frontage and not hidden from the road by trees or another building.*
- *Access to adequate and secure parking particularly for people with limited mobility, staff and night-time users.*
- *Accessible for deliveries and mobile libraries and other vehicles.*
- *Site which will enable easy ground floor access.*
- *Close to and/or accessible from local schools and educational facilities.*
- *Potential for an outdoor area to be attached to the library.*
- *Safe and attractive pedestrian access, particularly for older residents, children and parents with prams.*
- *Walking distance from public transport.*
- *Site able to accommodate future expansion of the library if required.”*

In other words the site should be located on the principle of where people **go** in their daily activities rather than where they **live** to ensure accessibility and visibility and be within convenient proximity to the greatest number of potential customers. Location options can then be evaluated in terms of their suitability for the intended purpose in terms of size, site characteristics, parking availability, applicable zoning and development costs.

Across Australia over the past two decades there has been a consistent pattern of decline in both the use and number of smaller branch libraries and a correspondingly dramatic increase in the use and growth of larger libraries.

A number of studies have confirmed that a high majority of library users link library use with shopping and use of community facilities and, parallel to the decline of the suburban shopping strip in favour of major retail/activity centres, prefer to use larger and better resourced libraries located within these centres to the extent that they will travel past their local neighbourhood library to access them.

These studies suggest that:

- Libraries in prominent retail locations with high visibility and accessibility attract large numbers of users from a wide catchment area;
- Small neighbourhood libraries that are used almost exclusively by a relatively small number of local residents as a matter of convenience rather than necessarily satisfaction with the services provided tend to be sited in low profile locations and experience poor levels of usage.

Based on the Planning SA projected population of the City of Campbelltown to the year 2021 (50,781) and applying the *People Places: A Guide for Public Library Buildings in New South*

Wales" standard and including a coffee shop and community/learning spaces brings the required area to 2,656m<sup>2</sup>. Ideally this should be delivered from a central site

#### 4. Why is this infrastructure important?

The modern public library has been fairly described as the anchor of the community, and by Australian social commentator Hugh McKay as the 'new village green'."

*By providing a unique cradle to grave community connection and social capital role, a public library needs accessible, generous and attractive buildings containing different but connected spaces to;*

- Inform citizens,
- Break down boundaries and provide a level playing field,
- Offer sanctuary,
- Nourish creativity,
- Open kids' minds,
- Build communities and make families friendlier and,
- Preserve the past

#### 5. How does this project meet Federal, State and Local Government Priorities?

Educated and informed citizens create an essential foundation for creative, cohesive and connected communities – the building of library may be local for most purposes and outcomes however its capacity and reach for information sharing and knowledge can be **national** and indeed **global**. This project aims to achieve the following objectives that have been identified as national priorities including;

- Investing in education and skills,
- Encouraging creativity and enterprise in our young people,
- Fostering and harnessing of social networks,
- Enriching the community through volunteer groups and activities,
- Improving social equity and quality of life in our city and surrounding areas.
- Increasing productivity.
- Re-building confidence and self –esteem in disadvantaged people and people at risk
- Supporting regions through effective partnerships,
- Improving Aboriginal well-being,
- Improving social equity and quality of life in our cities and regions.

The project aligns with the Council's Strategic Plan as follows:

Goal 1 - Community Life - A cohesive and culturally diverse community enjoying a high quality of life, with access to a range of quality services and facilities.

Strategy 1.1.4 - Develop best practice library services and review linkages with other Council facilities, services and information.

The project aligns with the following State Government Strategic Plan Objectives:

### **Objective 2 - Improving Wellbeing**

South Australians should enjoy a good quality of life at every stage of life. Our children should be able to grow up in a safe environment, to acquire knowledge and be equipped to make the right choices. As we mature, we need to stay connected to the community and to the environment, even as our roles change and priorities shift. We need to be in charge of our lives and not unreasonably constrained in our options.

### **Objective 4 - Fostering Creativity and Innovation**

South Australia has a reputation for innovation in science and in the arts. We understand that our prosperity depends on the imagination, courage, talent and energy of our citizens. We want to reaffirm South Australia as a place that thrives on creativity, knowledge and imaginative thinking. This capacity to do things differently will determine whether we can achieve all our goals for the state's future.

### **Objective 6 - Expanding Opportunity**

Placing a value on knowledge is fundamental to securing a successful, cohesive and vibrant society. Literacy is crucial from the early years. Skills for living and working become vital in adult life. All South Australians must have the opportunity to reach their potential, and to continue to learn and develop throughout their lives. Giving a helping hand to those in need is a central tenet. An educated and inspired community, actively participating in the work, life and health of South Australia, is our best legacy for the future.

## **6. What are the current/future problems?**

22.9% of our residents are from non English speaking backgrounds. Our library of the future will need to include dedicated areas for browsing and reading multicultural resources; meeting room space for social contact with people of similar backgrounds and interests; and enquiry/information desks for those needing assistance

4.6% of our labour force is unemployed. Our new library will offer support opportunities for such people to have access to free technology for job hunting, research, resume training and preparation, skill development and education. Re-building their confidence and self – esteem will be an important outcome

The project will also address the following shortfalls in our existing facilities:

- Youth (8-18 yrs) – no service provision other than small collection of books. Needs homework assistance programs, inviting/funky spaces, links with schools and school visits, breakout zones, and staff with resources and skills to assist with career advice.
- Computers – currently have 11 PCs, when National Standards indicate we should have 30 (1 PC for every 1,500 population). Currently we do not have enough space for expansion, or ability to place cabling within the existing wall structure. Current space is crowded, with no ventilation, and is booked approx 95% of the time.
- Local History – currently locked in filing cabinets due to lack of secure space for displays and access. Need to develop links with Local Historical Society and facilitate class visits from local schools to educate them on their Local History, and be able to display historical artefacts in an appropriate conservation environment.

- Study bays – only have approx 6 bays, require at least 20
- Children (0 -12 yrs) – not enough space for activities, too crowded and hot, constantly booked out with a waiting list for double the numbers, no capacity for class groups, nowhere for parents to sit and wait or observe.
- Access to a café for refreshments - non-existent at present.
- Relaxed reading – currently have space for only one area of lounges, National Standard is for 20 such areas for 46,000 population Collections – aged and under quota (according to National Standards) by 30,000 items for a population of 46,000. No room for further additions.
- Staff workroom – crowded and with potential OHS & W issues. Not enough space for volunteers and storage.
- Inclusion of the Toy Library within the main library - currently located at Athelstone.
- Operations/circulation – main desk does not allow for customers to sit and conduct long reference interviews, or to make in-depth enquiries. Design does not facilitate good customer service with staff constantly having their backs to customers.
- Second-hand book storage – no room in existing library requirement books to be transferred to the Volunteer Centre for periodic sales.
- Infrastructure – problems with stormwater drainage, no flexibility for cabling with IT etc, and air-conditioning/heating is deteriorating.
- Programs – no space for guest speakers, information sessions, training, classes, or demonstrations etc. Current Reading Room is utilised for quiet study and the volunteer JP service – for this room to be fully utilised for other purposes then these services need to be moved every time, Constant community enquiries for computer training and the ability to run groups within the library space having to be refused.
- JPs – do not have any privacy and anyone nearby can hear these confidential conversations.

In the last 5 years 1983 people have migrated to our City from overseas. The project will provide areas for browsing and reading multicultural resources; meeting room space for social contact with people of similar backgrounds and interests; and enquiry/information desks for those needing assistance.

## **7. What are the impacts of these problems?**

If the problems referred to above are not addressed in the near future the residents of the City of Campbelltown will be disadvantaged in the following ways:

- Young people will not be encouraged to associate with the library as a place of life long learning.
- Opportunities to build social capital through the interaction of individuals and community groups will be compromised.
- The significance of the library as a cultural hub and focal point for the community will be lost.
- Reduced enhancement of community well being through relaxation, research, leisure and life long learning.

- Increased cost of providing the infrastructure the longer the project is delayed.

## **8. How did these problems come about?**

Local Government is increasingly providing more human services (social welfare services that create positive economic and social outcomes) to their communities in addition to the traditional property-based services (particularly roads and other 'hard' infrastructure). Local Government's capacity to fund infrastructure is constrained by its general revenue raising capacity – particularly as State Government grants are no longer available for Library capital projects. In real terms operational and material subsidies have not kept pace with costs. This, combined with the limitations council faces in increasing its own source revenue, has placed an increased focus on revenue from other sources to support local government projects.

In responding to the enormous pressures on local government, adequate sources of revenue are required to ensure it can fund, manage and sustain essential infrastructure based upon community need and expectations.

## **9. How might these problems be addressed?**

Local Government provides more services to the community in the areas of welfare, health, safety and community amenities than it has ever done in the past – which is a significant shift in infrastructure costs and expenditure.

There is a National priority to ensure life long learning and education for all Australians to increase greater social and economic outcomes – which, if left can result in greater economic pressures on the public purse.

This new library will address problems described above which currently inhibit the community's access to technology, materials and life long learning, meeting and relaxation spaces. Such facilities will enable our residents to make positive and rewarding contributions to sustain their environment, their community and the economy.

## **10. Given the situation what should be done first?**

The project is at the concept design stage. Community engagement will be followed by the preparation of detailed plans and specifications before calling for tenders for the construction of the new facility.