



MINUTES

Meeting of Council

Held via Zoom

On

Monday 20 December 2021

The Agenda for the Meeting of Council, Monday 20 December 2021, forms part of these Minutes and is attached in full at the end of the Minutes.

These Minutes are considered draft until adopted and confirmed at the next Meeting of Council

The meeting commenced at 5:04 pm.

PRESENT:

<i>Cr S Laukens (Mayor)</i>	<i>Friberg Ward</i>
<i>Cr Y Allred</i>	<i>Baird Ward</i>
<i>Cr J Dwight</i>	<i>Chandler Ward</i>
<i>Cr M Timmers-Leitch</i>	<i>Collier Ward</i>
<i>Cr S Grasso</i>	<i>Dinsdale Ward</i>
<i>Cr M Baker</i>	<i>Dobson Ward</i>
<i>Cr L Cooper</i>	<i>Scott Ward</i>
<i>Cr D Pearce (arrived at 5:10pm)</i>	<i>Taylor Ward</i>
<i>Cr N Seymour (arrived at 5:17pm)</i>	<i>Tirhatuan Ward</i>
<i>Mr B Dobson</i>	<i>Chief Executive Officer</i>
<i>Mr G Thorne</i>	<i>Director – Infrastructure</i>
<i>Mr M Kelleher</i>	<i>Director - Strategy and Integrity</i>
<i>Ms T Scicluna</i>	<i>Director – Connected Communities</i>
<i>Ms I Kelly</i>	<i>Acting Director - City Centre</i>
<i>Mr P McQue</i>	<i>Manager, Governance</i>
<i>Mr A Dowling</i>	<i>Coordinator, Governance</i>

THE MEETING OPENED WITH A PRAYER, STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND A STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

“Knox City Council acknowledges we are on the traditional land of the Wurundjeri and Bunurong people and pay our respects to elders both past and present.”

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1 Apologies and Requests for Leave of Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Allred.

2 Declarations of Conflict of Interest

The Chief Executive Officer advised he had a Conflict of Interest in relation to Item 10.2- CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy as it pertains to Council's role in reviewing his performance, noting he had not been involved in the approval process of the report.

3 Confirmation of Minutes

The Chairperson, Councillor Laukens invited Councillors to raise any opposition to the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on Monday 22 November 2021. There being none, the Chairperson declared the Minutes be confirmed.

4 Presentations, Petitions and Memorials

Nil.

Councillor Pearce entered the meeting at 5:10pm during discussion on item 4.

5 Reports by Councillors

5.1.1 Councillor Pearce

- Noted a development application at 6 Gilda Court, Rowville, had been recently rejected by Council and Council's decision was upheld at VCAT.

5.1.2 Councillor Cooper

- Noted a number of complaints had been received regarding abandoned vehicles and that it was reassuring the community members concerned to learn of the actions Council had taken recently to improve the management abandoned vehicles.
- Acknowledged the prompt response by officers to address recent vandalism at Llewellyn Reserve, as well as work to remove leftover soil following works recently undertaken in the Reserve.

5.1.3 Councillor Grasso

Councillor Grasso reported attending the following meetings:

- Knox Multicultural Advisory Committee Meeting (included CFA Presentation on Fire Protection)
- Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance Meeting
- Knox Carols by Candlelight

Councillor Grasso also:

- Noted a number of issues had been raised with her regarding traffic and parking, bike paths, and neighbours pets, which were being followed up with officers.
- Wished the municipality a happy holiday period.

5.1.4 Councillor Timmers-Leitch

Councillor Timmers-Leitch reported attending the following meetings:

- Knox Factor Grand Final
- Wicked Musical at Wantirna College
- Knox Infolink Breakfast Program Visit
- Knox Recreation and Leisure Committee Meeting
- Coonara Community House Family Fun Day and Volunteering Expo
- Vic SES Knox Unit Official Opening
- Immerse Art Program Judging
- Lions Christmas Cake Gathering at Westfield Knox
- Collier Award at The Knox School, St Luke's Primary School, Regency Park Primary School, Templeton Primary School and Wantirna Primary School
- Environmental Volunteers End of Years Celebration

- Knox Youth Advisory Committee Meeting
- Wantirna South Junior Football Club Catch-Up
- Wantirna Farmers and Makers Market

Councillor Timmers-Leitch also:

- Noted her involvement in the judging of the Immerse Art Program, and the quality of the Immerse Arts program which was a leading program in public art.
- Highlighted the achievements of the Knox Infolink Breakfast Program Visit and the powerful impact it was having with community members
- Highlighted the amazing Christmas lights all over the in the municipality and wished the community a happy and safe Christmas.

Councillor Seymour entered the meeting at 5:17pm during discussion on item 5.

5.1.5 Councillor Seymour

Councillor Seymour reported attending the following meetings:

- Knox Citizenship Ceremony
- Knox Gender Equity Awards
- Knox Community Services Team Pop-up Event and Stall at Bunnings Scoresby
- Immerse Art Program at Stamford Park venue

Councillor Seymour also:

- Noted the return to in-person Citizenship Ceremonies and praised the Festivals and Events Team who managed the ceremony for the first time, and acknowledged and thanked the Executive Assistant to Chief Executive Officer for her sterling efforts coordinating Citizenship Ceremonies previously, over many years.
- Acknowledged the work of the Community Services Team for their pop-up events at Bunnings Scoresby, including a mental health session over breakfast, and a stall at Bunning's annual Christmas barbecue engaging with the community regarding mental health and domestic violence.
- Praised the community's ongoing commitment to social outreach, handing out hampers to needy families.
- Encouraged the local community to continue to wear masks where necessary in the fight against COVID-19.

5.1.6 Councillor Dwight

Councillor Dwight reported attending the following meetings:

- Focus Community Consultation programs online for Koolunga Native Reserve.
- Friends of Koolunga Reserve Annual General Meeting
- Meeting with The Basin CFA Chief and Volunteers.
- The Basin Triangle Masterplan Vision Workshop

- Food Is Free Program Annual General Meeting
- Knox Environmental Advisory Committee Meeting
- Knox Community Safety, Health and Wellbeing Advisory Committee Meeting
- Boronia Revitalisation Board Briefing
- Millers Homestead Community Group Reference Meeting
- Metropolitan Local Government Waste Forum
- Knox Citizenship Ceremony

Councillor Dwight also:

- Highlighted the high crime rate in Boronia, and expressed frustration at COVID affected businesses being targeted by vandalism and encouraged the community to report any crime they observe.
- Noted community consultation for Koolunga Native Reserve was underway, as was consultation on a number of other plans and strategies including traffic management in The Basin, The Basin Triangle Masterplan, Erica Ave Streetscape and the Green Area Rural Strategy (which had been extended to 23 December 2021).
- Noted the owners of 201 Ferndale Road, The Basin were seeking a permit to extract groundwater on the property for commercial / industrial use and encouraged residents and groups to submit their feedback to Southern Rural Water (www.srw.com.au) in response to the public notice published in the Star Mail, advising submissions close on 4 January 2022.
- Expressed condolences to the families and community members affected by the Jumping Castle tragedy in Devonport.

The Meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm during Item 5 due to technical issues and resumed at 7:33pm.

5.1.7 Councillor Laukens

Councillor Laukens reported attending the following meetings:

- CDF Grant Recipient Filming
- Filming of Mayoral Carols by Candlelight Message
- Boronia Revitalisation Board Meeting
- Community Conversations
- Knox Citizenship Ceremony
- MAV Representatives and CEO Forum
- Knox Little Athletics Opening Ceremony
- The Basin Food is Free Annual General Meeting
- Melbourne Boomers Meet and Greet with City of Melbourne Mayor Sally Capp
- Knox Community Safety, Health and Wellbeing Advisory Committee Meeting
- GSEM End of Year Board and Mayoral Launch
- Audit and Risk Committee Meeting
- Coonara Community House Volunteer Expo and Family Day
- VIC SES Knox Unit Official Opening

- Knox Council Australia Day Awards Committee Meeting
- Boronia Revitalisation Grant recipients Announcement
- Wally Tew Golf Facility Official Opening
- MAV 2021 Mayoral Program
- Environmental Volunteer's End of Year Celebration
- Eastern Regional Group of Councils Meeting and End of Year Celebration
- Bunnings Family Night- Community Wellbeing Stall
- Melbourne Boomers First Home Game
- Knox Diwali Fair- Indian Festival of Lights
- Knox Memorial Refurbishment of Memorial Photos
- PLEDGE Gender Equity Awards
- Eastern Transport Coalition Meeting
- Meeting With Nick Wakeling MP and Knox City Council CEO Bruce Dobson
- Meeting With Jackson Taylor MP and Knox City Council CEO Bruce Dobson
- Boronia Community Church of Christ- Monday Community Meal

Councillor Laukens also:

- Noted she had enjoyed opportunities to interact with the Knox Community.
- Acknowledged the contribution of volunteer and not for profit partnerships supporting community, particularly those supported by the Boronia Suburban Revitalization Grants and the Hot Meals Program delivering Christmas events and programs and invaluable support to the community.
- Noted the receipt of correspondence regarding 40 King Parade, Knoxfield expressing concern regarding a planning application.
- Echoed Cr Dwight and expressed condolences on behalf of Council to the Devonport community following the recent jumping castle tragedy.

5.1.8 Councillor Allred

Councillor Allred reported attending the following meetings:

- Knox Early Years Advisory Committee Meeting
- Knox Infolink Breakfast Program Visit
- Knox Environment Advisory Committee Meeting
- Explore Boronia Meeting
- Boronia Revitalisation Board Briefing
- Knox Council Australia Day Awards Committee Meeting
- Combined Knox Multicultural Advisory Committee Meeting and Knox Interfaith Network Meeting
- Miller's Homestead Community Reference Group Meeting
- Environmental Volunteers End of Year Celebrations
- Boronia Revitalisation Grants Recipients Announcement by Jackson Taylor MP
- Metropolitan Local Government Waste Forum
- Adaptive Libraries Meeting
- Knox Leisureworks Community Network Forum
- Knox Citizenship Ceremony

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Pearce

SECONDED: Councillor Cooper

That the following items:

- **Item 6.1- Report of Planning Applications Decided Under Delegation - 1 November 2021 to 30 November 2021**
- **Item 9.1- Minor Grants Program 2021-22 Monthly Report - 20 December 2021**
- **Item 9.3- Terms of Reference- Knox Youth Advisory Committee**
- **Item 9.4- Knox Basketball Inc - Knox basketball Stadium - Deed of Extension and Variation to the Lease**
- **Item 9.5- Melbourne Basketball Pty Ltd - Variation to Partnership Agreement - Melbourne Boomers**
- **Item 10.2- CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy**

be moved and resolved en bloc as per the officer's recommendations outlined in the agenda

CARRIED

6 City Strategy and Integrity Officers' Reports for consideration

6.1 Report of Planning Applications Decided Under Delegation - 1 November 2021 to 30 November 2021

SUMMARY: Manager, City Planning & Building, Paul Dickie

Details of planning applications considered under delegation are referred for information. It is recommended that the items be noted.

RECOMMENDATION

That the planning applications decided under delegation report (between 1 November 2021 to 30 November 2021) be noted.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Pearce

SECONDED: Councillor Cooper

That the planning applications decided under delegation report (between 1 November 2021 to 30 November 2021) be noted.

CARRIED

6.2 Draft Retail Activation Strategy

SUMMARY: Coordinator Economic Development, Jayde Hayes

The Retail Activation Strategy (RAS) is one of the initiatives of the Community and Business Support Package endorsed by Council in May 2020, developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The draft strategy has been informed by economic analysis, ethnographic research, data gathered directly from Knox business owners and a community survey. The draft strategy identifies 5 strengths related to Knox's activity and retail centres which will be used to form the brand identity. Additionally, the draft RAS recommends 5 place activation concepts: promotion, program ideas, pivotal ideas for long-term impacts, practical ideas for good housekeeping and protection ideas to future-proof Knox's local economy. Ideas have been generated under this framework and then have a 'Council Role' assigned to each.

Following the endorsement of the draft RAS a consultation and engagement process will be held in February 2022, seeking the participation of organisations operating in Knox's retail centres, along with opportunity for residents to provide feedback on the draft strategy.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Endorse the draft Retail Activation Strategy (Attachment 1), along with the accompanying summary document (Attachment 2) for public consultation, to commence in February 2022.
2. Authorise the Chief Executive Office (or such person the Chief Executive Officer selects) to approve minor editorial changes to the document prior to its release for public consultation.
3. Receive a report on the engagement and consultation findings at the conclusion of the process, along with the final Retail Activation Strategy.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Seymour

SECONDED: Councillor Baker

1. **Endorse the draft Retail Activation Strategy (Attachment 1), along with the accompanying summary document (Attachment 2) for public consultation, to commence in February 2022.**
2. **Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person the Chief Executive Officer selects) to approve minor editorial changes to the document prior to its release for public consultation.**
3. **Receive a report on the engagement and consultation findings at the conclusion of the consultation program, prior to considering the final Retail Activation Strategy.**

CARRIED

6.3 Complaints Policy

SUMMARY: Coordinator Governance, Andrew Dowling

The Local Government Act 2020 (LGA 2020) requires a Complaints Policy to be adopted by Council by 31 December 2021.

A Complaint Handling Policy and Procedure has been developed with reference to the best practice guidelines issued by the Victorian Ombudsman July 2021.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolve to endorse the Complaint Handling Policy and Procedure at Attachment 1 to the Officers' report.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Seymour

SECONDED: Councillor Grasso

That Council resolve to endorse the Complaint Handling Policy and Procedure at Attachment 1 to the Officers' report.

CARRIED

6.4 Procurement Policy Update 2021

SUMMARY: Strategic Procurement Principal, Georgina Christopher

An Interim Procurement Policy with minor adjustments to align to the new Local Government Act 2020 is presented for endorsement. An updated Procurement Policy will be presented in March 2022 for Council's consideration.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse the interim Procurement Policy 2021 as provided at Attachment 1 of the Officer Report.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Pearce

SECONDED: Councillor Dwight

That Council endorse the interim Procurement Policy 2021 as provided at Attachment 1 of the Officer Report.

CARRIED

7 Public Question Time

Following the completion of business relating to Item 6, City Strategy and Integrity, the business before the Council Meeting was deferred to consider questions submitted by the public.

Question Time commenced at 5:51pm

The following questions were raised with Council:

7.1.1 Question 1 – Lynette Hayhurst

As a local resident of The Basin I am deeply concerned about the potential sale of the approx.250 acres of land recently advertised for expressions of interest in The Age and The Herald Sun by The Salvation Army. My concern is the sale may end up being to developers or others that may choose to subdivide and put housing or other projects which would forever change this incredible jewel in the Eastern suburbs of open land. I will submit to the Knox City Council in a few days a petition which has been running for only 2 weeks and the overall result has been on the streets of The Basin that 95% or more have supported the land being kept as a green belt.

My question is:

Can the Knox City Council assure the community that this land will not be approved by Council for The Salvation Army if they decide to sell it to developers or any who would build and take away this green belt?

Does the Council know if there is an agreement which has prevented the Salvation Army from selling the land in the past to developers and if it exists do you know when it will expire?

The Director City Strategy and Integrity, Matt Kelleher, responded by stating that:

- Council is aware that an Expression of Interest process for the land at 1267 Mountain Highway Boronia and 11 and 49 Basin-Olinda Road, The Basin has been initiated, and a similar question was raised and addressed at the November Council Meeting.
- There are a number of safeguards that already exist in relation to this site regarding future development, including zoning, overlays and other planning controls in the Knox Planning Scheme. The land is entirely located outside the State Urban Growth Boundary, which limits the potential for more intense development. A change to the Urban Growth Boundary requires majority support of both houses of the Victorian Parliament.
- The development of this site as described in your question (more intense subdivision and housing) would require a full planning scheme amendment process to change the zoning. This cannot even be contemplated without a change to the Urban Growth Boundary. A planning scheme amendment requires the support of both Council and the Minister before it can proceed to community consultation. Both Council and the Minister also have subsequent review processes before an amendment is finally supported or abandoned.
- At this point in time, Council is not aware of the type of agreement that's been referenced in the question. As clear in the answer, there are already a number of significant safeguards that exist for the land.

- Council is developing a new strategy to further protect these areas, known as the Green Areas and Rural Strategy. Council is currently consulting the community on this draft strategy for how we protect our green and rural areas, including all land outside the Urban Growth Boundary. This is a great opportunity for anyone concerned about development outside of the Urban Growth Boundary to have their say, with Council just having recently extended consultation through to Thursday 23 December to ensure everyone can get their thoughts in. For more information about opportunities to have your say go to knox.vic.gov.au/haveyoursay

7.1.2 Question 2 - Darren Wallace

1. Does Council have any jurisdiction over an application to Southern rural water for a permit to extract 11 million litres of bore water from the headwaters of Dobson Creek?
2. Is a permit required by Council or others, to sink a bore at the above property (as opposed to a permit to extract water), and does Council have any knowledge of any bores being installed in recent years?

The Mayor noted Mr Wallace had submitted 3 questions, however a maximum of two questions were permissible under the Governance Rules.

The Director City Strategy and Integrity, Matt Kelleher, responded by stating that:

- Council does not have jurisdiction over such an application, Southern Rural Water is the responsible authority to consider the application. Council can make a submission by 4th January 2022, as can community members or other organisations.
- Regarding planning permit requirements, In short from the information that Council has available, it isn't clear if there would be any permit triggers. The SLO4 & ESO2 apply to the site along with the BMO so there may be permit triggers dependent on the location/specifics of the works. (For example, if works are close to a watercourse).
- The other aspect is understanding the purpose of the use of it and whether the use and associated works trigger permits. From the information that Council has viewed, Council has not been able to determine if it does or does not trigger a permit. We can only presume that the applicants may be determining if they can secure rights to the water – prior to engaging with Council about planning permits for the physical works.

It was noted that Mr Wallace's additional question would be responded to in writing.

7.1.3 Question 3 - Graham Crichton

Regarding the proposed building at 3 The Avenue Ferntree Gully, has Council received a response from the applicant addressing community and Council's concerns about the proposed height of the building, and if so, has the height been reduced? Also, have the issues of visual bulk, site coverage and setbacks been addressed to the satisfaction of Council? Is the Council concerned that this residential proposed structure is next door to a busy working fire station?

The Director City Strategy and Integrity, Matt Kelleher, responded by stating that:

- Having reviewed the application material, there appears to have been no additional information provided to Council, which is an application being handled by the Victorian Government as part of the Big Housing Build and not Council. Therefore there is no update able to be provided at this point in time.
- Regarding the proximity of the fire station, there are no obvious impediments to developing land in close proximity, while the applicant and Homes Victoria as the assessor will need to consider any amenity impacts of the fire station or its specific operational needs as part of the assessment

It was noted that Mr Kelleher's response to two of Mr Crichton's questions effectively responded to all three questions.

Question Time Concluded at 5:59pm.

8 Infrastructure Officers' Reports for consideration

8.1 Contract 2860 - VARMS Relocation Construction

SUMMARY: Project Manager, Major Initiatives Unit – Pam Kunst

This report considers and recommends the appointment of a tenderer for the construction of the new Victorian Association of Radio Model Soaring (VARMS) clubhouse at Rowville Recreation Reserve, Stud Road Rowville.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Accepts the tender submitted by Jardon Group for the lump sum price of \$1,384,829.00 ex GST (\$1,523,311.90 incl. GST) for Contract 2860 - VARMS Relocation Construction;
2. Allocates a contingency for this project as set out in the confidential Attachment 1, and authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person the Chief Executive Officer selects) to expend this contingency at their discretion;
3. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person the Chief Executive Officer selects) to execute contract documentation of Contract No. 2860 – VARMS Relocation Construction to give effect to Council's decision; and
4. Advises all tenderers accordingly.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Pearce

SECONDED: Councillor Cooper

That Council:

1. Accepts the tender submitted by Jardon Group for the lump sum price of \$1,384,829.00 ex GST (\$1,523,311.90 incl. GST) for Contract 2860 - VARMS Relocation Construction;
2. Allocates a contingency for this project as set out in the confidential Attachment 1, and authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person the Chief Executive Officer selects) to expend this contingency at their discretion;
3. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person the Chief Executive Officer selects) to execute contract documentation of Contract No. 2860 – VARMS Relocation Construction to give effect to Council's decision; and
4. Advises all tenderers accordingly.

CARRIED

8.2 Contract 2927 - Fairpark Reserve Multi Purpose Community Facility Construction

SUMMARY: Project Manager, Major Initiatives Unit – Pam Kunst

This report considers and recommends the appointment of a tenderer for the construction of Council's Multi Purpose Community Facility at Fairpark Reserve, Ferntree Gully, including upgrade works to the existing U3A building and reserve car parks.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Accepts the tender submitted CA Property Group for the lump sum price of \$7,801,115.00 ex GST (\$8,581,226.50 incl. GST) for Contract 2927 – Fairpark Reserve Multi Purpose Community Facility Construction;
2. Allocates a contingency for this project as set out in the confidential Attachment 1, and authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person the Chief Executive Officer selects) to expend this contingency at their discretion;
3. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person the Chief Executive Officer selects) to execute contract documentation of 2927 – Fairpark Reserve Multi Purpose Community Facility Construction to give effect to Council's decision; and
4. Advises all tenderers accordingly.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Timmers-Leitch

SECONDED: Councillor Dwight

That Council:

1. Accepts the tender submitted CA Property Group for the lump sum price of \$7,801,115.00 ex GST (\$8,581,226.50 incl. GST) for Contract 2927 – Fairpark Reserve Multi Purpose Community Facility Construction;
2. Allocates a contingency for this project as set out in the confidential Attachment 1, and authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person the Chief Executive Officer selects) to expend this contingency at their discretion;
3. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person the Chief Executive Officer selects) to execute contract documentation of 2927 – Fairpark Reserve Multi Purpose Community Facility Construction to give effect to Council's decision; and
4. Advises all tenderers accordingly.

CARRIED

9 Connected Communities Officers' Reports for consideration

9.1 Minor Grants Program 2021-22 Monthly Report - 20 December 2021

SUMMARY: Coordinator Community Partnerships, Saskia Weerheim

This report summarises the grant applications recommended for approval in December 2021 for the 2021-22 Minor Grants Program. All applications have been assessed against the criteria set out in the Minor Grants Program Policy.

Applications under the Minor Grants Policy are limited to a maximum of \$3,000 within the current financial year.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Approve nine applications for a total of \$19,377.10 as detailed below:

Applicant Name	Project Title	Amount Requested	Amount Recommended
Bayswater Junior Football Club	iPads for coaches	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00
Birch Street Children and Family Centre	Creating Engaging Environments to Support Learning and Community Connections	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00
Uniting Church Ferntree Gully	Community BBQ For Rooming House Residents in Ferntree Gully	\$900.00	\$900.00
The Basin Cricket Club	Cricket equipment and air purifier	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00
Templeton Cricket Club	Portable Shade Marquee	\$1,943.10	\$1,943.10
Boronia Bowls Club	Spring Mounted Rink Numbers	\$2,134.00	\$2,134.00
Hindi Niketan Inc.	Australia Day/India Republic Day Celebrations in Knox	\$2,500.00	\$2,300.00
RDA Knox – Riding for the Disabled Knox Branch	Light up the Arena Project	\$3,000.00	\$2,000.00
Southern Cross Kids Camp	January 2022 camp bus trip	\$1,100.00	\$1,100.00
Total		\$20,577.10	\$19,377.10

2. Note that the following application for a grant of \$213.90 has been approved under delegation in accordance with Cl.6.3 of the Minor Grants Program Policy:

Applicant Name	Project Title	Amount Requested	Amount Recommended
Wantirna Tennis Club Inc	Replacement water filter for hot water dispenser	\$213.90	\$213.90

3. Note that inclusive of the above recommended grants, totalling \$19,591.00, a total of \$110,823.30 has been awarded to date under the 2021-22 Minor Grants Program supporting 51 community-based organisations and their programs.

RESOLUTION**MOVED: Councillor Pearce****SECONDED: Councillor Cooper****That Council:**

- 1. Approve nine applications for a total of \$19,377.10 as detailed below:**

Applicant Name	Project Title	Amount Requested	Amount Recommended
Bayswater Junior Football Club	iPads for coaches	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00
Birch Street Children and Family Centre	Creating Engaging Environments to Support Learning and Community Connections	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00
Uniting Church Ferntree Gully	Community BBQ For Rooming House Residents in Ferntree Gully	\$900.00	\$900.00
The Basin Cricket Club	Cricket equipment and air purifier	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00
Templeton Cricket Club	Portable Shade Marquee	\$1,943.10	\$1,943.10
Boronia Bowls Club	Spring Mounted Rink Numbers	\$2,134.00	\$2,134.00
Hindi Niketan Inc.	Australia Day/India Republic Day Celebrations in Knox	\$2,500.00	\$2,300.00
RDA Knox – Riding for the Disabled Knox Branch	Light up the Arena Project	\$3,000.00	\$2,000.00
Southern Cross Kids Camp	January 2022 camp bus trip	\$1,100.00	\$1,100.00
Total		\$20,577.10	\$19,377.10

- 2. Note that the following application for a grant of \$213.90 has been approved under delegation in accordance with Cl.6.3 of the Minor Grants Program Policy:**

Applicant Name	Project Title	Amount Requested	Amount Recommended
Wantirna Tennis Club Inc	Replacement water filter for hot water dispenser	\$213.90	\$213.90

- 3. Note that inclusive of the above recommended grants, totalling \$19,591.00, a total of \$110,823.30 has been awarded to date under the 2021-22 Minor Grants Program supporting 51 community-based organisations and their programs.**

CARRIED

9.2 Eastern Regional Libraries Corporation - Annual Report 2020-2021

SUMMARY: Manager Community Wellbeing, Petrina Dodds Buckley

Public libraries receive over 30 million visitors annually, and more than one-third of Victorians participate in a library program every year (State Library Victoria and Public Libraries Victoria 2021). Libraries support mental health by reducing social isolation and connecting communities, support culture and creativity and provide increased opportunity for literacy and English language activities for all cohorts of the community.

The Eastern Regional Libraries Corporation (ERLC) delivers library services to the Knox community on Council's behalf. This report presents the ERLC Annual Report 2020-21 and provides the Council with an overview of the key highlights and initiatives undertaken through Libraries during 2020-2021.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council note the key statistics and highlights of the services delivered to the Knox community by Council's Libraries during 2020-2021 (refer to Attachment 1).

The Mayor noted that the Annual Report included in the agenda for this item was not the correct version and that a revised version had been circulated to Councillors ahead of the meeting with:

- 1. Updated photos of the Knox Board Councillors on page 7*
- 2. Updated population data on page 43; and*
- 3. Updated labelling of Knox and Maroondah on the Eastern Region Map at page 43*

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Timmers-Leitch

SECONDED: Councillor Seymour

That Council note the key statistics and highlights of the services delivered to the Knox community by Council's Libraries during 2020-2021 (refer to Attachment A to the Minutes).

CARRIED

9.3 Terms of Reference - Knox Youth Advisory Committee

SUMMARY: Team Leader Youth Participation and Counselling, Katie Scott

This report presents the Terms of Reference for the Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) for approval by Council.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopts the Terms of Reference for the Youth Advisory Committee as set out in Attachment 1.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Pearce

SECONDED: Councillor Cooper

That Council adopts the Terms of Reference for the Youth Advisory Committee as set out in Attachment 1.

CARRIED

9.4 Knox Basketball Inc - Knox Basketball Stadium - Deed of Extension and Variation to the Lease

SUMMARY: Acting Leisure Contracts Officer, David Grubisich

This report recommends the execution of the Lease (Deed of Extension) for the Knox Basketball Stadium, located at 7 Park Crescent, Boronia, contained within the area of land known as Boronia Park. It seeks approval to authorise the Chief Executive Officer to sign and seal the Deed with Knox Basketball Incorporated (KBI).

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Approve the extension of Lease (Deed of Extension) between Knox City Council (Lessor) and Knox Basketball Inc. (Lessee) for the Knox Basketball Stadium facility located at 7 Park Crescent, Boronia, on the land contained in Certificate of Title Volume 5011 Folio 135, within the area of land known as Boronia Park. The lease will be executed via a “Deed of Extension”, to Knox Basketball Incorporated in accordance with the terms listed in this report, for a period of up to two years.
2. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such a person as the Chief Executive Officer selects) to finalise, sign and seal all documentation pertaining to leasing of the facility to Knox Basketball Inc.
3. Advise KBI accordingly

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Pearce

SECONDED: Councillor Cooper

That Council:

1. Approve the extension of Lease (Deed of Extension) between Knox City Council (Lessor) and Knox Basketball Inc. (Lessee) for the Knox Basketball Stadium facility located at 7 Park Crescent, Boronia, on the land contained in Certificate of Title Volume 5011 Folio 135, within the area of land known as Boronia Park. The lease will be executed via a “Deed of Extension”, to Knox Basketball Incorporated in accordance with the terms listed in this report, for a period of up to two years.
2. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such a person as the Chief Executive Officer selects) to finalise, sign and seal all documentation pertaining to leasing of the facility to Knox Basketball Inc.
3. Advise KBI accordingly

CARRIED

9.5 Melbourne Basketball Pty Ltd - Variation to Partnership Agreement - Melbourne Boomers

SUMMARY: Club Development Project Officer, Dayna Nicholas

This report presents a request by the Deakin Melbourne Boomers (DMB) for Council to vary the current partnership agreement up to June 2023 between DMB and Council, due to the impact of the State Basketball Centre Expansion Project and the effect of COVID-19 restrictions on their operations.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Approve a variation to the Partnership Agreement between Knox City Council and the Deakin Melbourne Boomers for the period 2021-2022, and 2022-2023 due to the impact of the State Basketball Centre Expansion project and the effect of COVID-19 restrictions.
2. Approve that the annual partnership fee be amended to \$129,000 (plus GST) for the period 2021-2022, and \$145,000 (plus GST) for 2022-2023.
3. Note that the annual partnership fee may be amended further in 2022 – 2023 subject to the fulfilment of the community engagement program hours.
4. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such a person as the Chief Executive Officer selects) to formalise and sign the documentation.
5. Advise the Deakin Melbourne Boomers of Council's decision.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Pearce

SECONDED: Councillor Cooper

That Council:

1. **Approve a variation to the Partnership Agreement between Knox City Council and the Deakin Melbourne Boomers for the period 2021-2022, and 2022-2023 due to the impact of the State Basketball Centre Expansion project and the effect of COVID-19 restrictions.**
2. **Approve that the annual partnership fee be amended to \$129,000 (plus GST) for the period 2021-2022, and \$145,000 (plus GST) for 2022-2023.**
3. **Note that the annual partnership fee may be amended further in 2022 – 2023 subject to the fulfilment of the community engagement program hours.**
4. **Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such a person as the Chief Executive Officer selects) to formalise and sign the documentation.**
5. **Advise the Deakin Melbourne Boomers of Council's decision.**

CARRIED

10 Office of the CEO Reports for consideration

10.1 Vacant Land / Derelict Property - Response to Notice of Motion

SUMMARY: Chief Financial Officer, Navec Lorkin

This report responds to Notice of Motion No. 123 - Differential Rates (Vacant and Derelict Land) adopted by Council at its 26 July 2021 Council meeting. Creation of a separate rating differential for vacant land and derelict properties is possible and could be considered as part of the 2022/23 Budget process.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolve to receive and note the Officers' report in relation to Notice of Motion No. 123 - Differential Rates (Vacant and Derelict Land).

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Timmers-Leitch

SECONDED: Councillor Grasso

That Council resolve to receive and note the Officers' report in relation to Notice of Motion No. 123 - Differential Rates (Vacant and Derelict Land).

CARRIED

10.2 CEO Employment & Remuneration Policy

SUMMARY: Principal People & Culture Partnerships, John Rashed

The Chief Executive Officer Employment & Remuneration Policy, accompanied with the updated Chief Executive Officer Employment & Remuneration Committee Terms of Reference have been developed in accordance with section 45 (1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* and it is a lawful requirement for the policy to be in place by 1 January 2022. The Policy is formed to ensure adherence to all matters pertaining to the employment and remuneration of the role of Chief Executive Officer at Knox City Council.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolve to:

1. Adopt the CEO Employment & Remuneration Policy (Attachment 1).
2. Adopt the amended CEO Employment & Remuneration Committee Terms of Reference as set out in Attachment 2, subject to the acceptance of tracked changes.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Pearce

SECONDED: Councillor Cooper

That Council resolve to:

1. Adopt the CEO Employment & Remuneration Policy (Attachment 1).
2. Adopt the amended CEO Employment & Remuneration Committee Terms of Reference as set out in Attachment 2, subject to the acceptance of tracked changes.

CARRIED

11 City Centre Reports for Consideration

Nil.

12 Notices of Motion

Nil.

13 Supplementary Items

Nil.

14 Urgent Business

Nil.

15 Questions Without Notice

Nil.

16 Confidential Items

PROCEDURAL MOTION

CLOSURE OF MEETING

MOVED: Councillor Cooper

SECONDED: Councillor Timmers-Leitch

That Council resolve to close the meeting to the public in accordance with Section 66(2)(a) of the Local Government Act 2020 to consider:

Item 16.1 - Knox Leisureworks COVID-19 Pandemic Relief Update as it relates to private commercial information, that if released, would unreasonably expose Belgravia Leisure to disadvantage because it would release financial information about the business that is not generally available to their competitors.

Item 16.2 - 58-60 Station Street, Bayswater Site as it relates to:

- Council business information, that will prejudice Council's position when tendering for services, and when negotiation the price for contract if prematurely released; and
- Land use planning information likely property sale that might encourage or enable speculation in land values if prematurely released.

CARRIED

THE MEETING WAS CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC AT 6:29pm

16.1 Knox Leisureworks COVID-19 Pandemic Relief Update

This item was resolved in camera.

16.2 58-60 Station Street, Bayswater Site

This item was resolved in camera, inclusive of the following resolutions:

That Council:

1. Note that the initial policy assessment on property known as 58-60 Station Street, Bayswater, identified as Lot 17 on LP 3188 is not required to be retained, and consequently resolve to;
 - a. Commence the statutory process under Section 114 of the Local Government Act 2020;
 - ...
4. Pursuant to S125 of the Local Government Act 2020 resolve that part 1 and part 1 (a) of the resolution be made publicly available.

CARRIED

MEETING CLOSED AT 6:33pm

Minutes of Meeting confirmed at the
Meeting of Council
held on Monday, 31 January 2022

.....
Chairperson

The Agenda for this meeting is attached in full at the end of the Minutes



Eastern Regional Libraries Corporation



ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21





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Message from the Chair

Cr David Eastham



As I write this, Victorians are again in lockdown. Many of the communities that the Eastern Regional Libraries Corporation (ERLC) serves will have experienced over 200 days in lockdown since the COVID-19 pandemic started.

It has been tough. Each and every one of us has dealt with it in our own way.

When I think of what our libraries provide for the community, I have some sadness about how much these places of social connection, study, reflection, learning and so much more have been impacted by these lockdowns. But I am also inspired. I am inspired by what I have seen our staff deliver in these trying times, and the leadership shown by our CEO, Joseph Cullen.

I am inspired by the innovative ways our staff continue to deliver services – not just to regular users of the libraries, but also going above and beyond to ensure that people in the hard-to-reach demographics and towns had access to these services.

I am inspired by the work done by our staff – thinking outside the box, and doing so much more than expected. A great example

of this is when our staff were asked to think about how ERLC could help people who were sleeping rough. Between lockdowns, our staff organised a ‘farm gate’ style market where books that were no longer going to be stored at the libraries were bundled up and made available to the community to purchase. Not only did these books get recycled and find homes where they would be read and cherished, but the proceeds also supported the national charity Backpack Bed for Homeless. This is just one example of how ERLC is so much more than a library. It’s a part of the community.

It has been an honour to be Chair, and on behalf of the Board, I want to say a massive thank you to our staff who have continued to do outstanding work in significantly trying times.

“Montrose put together an amazing pack for my 4 & 6 year olds. I rang when we were leaving the park and 15 minutes later the books were sitting waiting for us! The librarian asked their ages and tailored the selection to them perfectly. Such a great range of books and lots of activity sheets to keep them busy! The kids have been reading and colouring all afternoon. What a great service!”

- Library member

Message from the CEO

Joseph Cullen

This has been another tumultuous year for Eastern Regional Libraries Corporation (ERLC), our staff and our community. In last year's report, I reflected on the famous opening words of *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens: 'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times...' I closed my message last year optimistic that we were approaching 'the spring of hope'. Sadly, that was not the case, and I am writing this year's message during Melbourne's sixth lockdown due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

It is not possible to overstate how difficult this year has been. Most of us chose to work in a library in the first place because we love working with people, so the ongoing lockdowns have been extremely hard. Not only have we been separated from our family, friends and colleagues, but we have also missed out on the connections with the community that are the reason we do the work we do.

However, 2020-21 has shown us the remarkable determination, creativity and perseverance of our staff. 'Resilience' may have become a buzzword during this pandemic, but nowhere has it been demonstrated more clearly than in the work that our staff have done this year to continue to provide services and engage with our members and the communities we work in. Our doors may have been closed, but our work has never stopped.



Despite the difficulties, we managed to strengthen our existing relationships and forge new ones. When our branches reopened in November 2020, it became clear that, despite the easing of restrictions, many people were still reluctant to visit their local library. The Reconnect festival was devised as a deliberate strategy to encourage existing members to come back to the library and to attract new members. In record time, we put together a month-long festival in May 2021 that brought all our branches together and also reached out to areas of the community that haven't traditionally engaged with their local library.

Reconnect was a resounding success. The hard work of our staff at all our branches, along with the enthusiastic collaboration of special guests and our partnerships with local businesses, resulted in a brilliant festival that exceeded all expectations. We signed up more than twice as many new members as expected, based on visitor numbers, and visitors borrowed 16% more than during the same period in previous years.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also thrown into sharp relief the importance of libraries as community hubs and sources of reliable information and support. Our connections with the community allow us to reach out to people and help them in all aspects of their

lives, and our connections with each other make the work we do possible. The importance of the work that libraries do was acknowledged by the Victorian Government through its investment of \$45.8 million in public libraries. The announcement was made by the Hon Shaun Leane, Minister for Local Government, at an ERLC event on 14 December 2020. Mr Leane said, 'Thousands of Victorians have joined libraries during the coronavirus pandemic and libraries have displayed ingenuity, resilience and commitment to their communities through their work. This record level of funding ensures libraries have the resources they need to keep up the amazing work they've been doing. Libraries really do change lives and they are about so much more than books.'

This year we engaged with our community more than ever through social media and online events. We also introduced hundreds of our younger members to the joy of getting a parcel in the mail when we sent out activity packs to keep them entertained during the school holidays. We delighted many members with surprise inclusions in the boxes of books we delivered to their homes, introducing them to new authors and genres. We also launched our new website and app, and our new FlexiVan hit the road to bring library services to community members who can't access our branches.

On the infrastructure front, ERLC has been participating in the planning for the new Croydon Library as part of Maroondah City Council's Croydon Community Wellbeing Precinct, and Yarra Ranges Council's redevelopment of the Belgrave Library. To ensure a continuity of service (albeit limited) for the community we established the Belgrave Express with the assistance and support of Yarra Ranges Council. This is a temporary, small community library, in the fantastic Belgrave Community Hub.

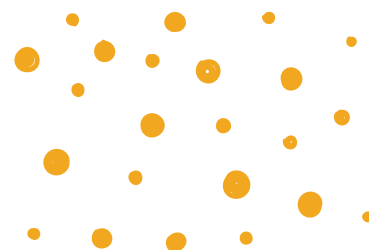
I am immensely proud of all our staff and the work that they have done in such difficult and challenging circumstances. I won't tempt fate by predicting that 2021-22 will be easier, but I am confident that everything that has been put in place this year will continue to serve our members and the community well, even when the pandemic eases and life returns to a 'new normal'.

To draw on a more contemporary literary source, in her 2019 work *The Library Book*, Susan explores the importance of public libraries and discusses the crucial role that they play in every stage of our lives, from storytime for children to services for people living in aged care. Orleans says, 'The library is a gathering pool of narratives and of the people who come to find them.'

In this annual report, we bring you some of those narratives and uncover some of the connections that have been made within our library community this year.

"I am writing to thank whoever was responsible for the decision to send books and arrange pickups at the libraries over the lockdown period. I can see the cost was probably considerable. The budget this year may be blown but the value to the community has been priceless for this extraordinary service."

- Library member



Your Library Board



Cr Yvonne Allred
Knox City Council



Cr Tasa Damante
- Deputy Chair -
Maroondah City Council



Cr Len Cox
Yarra Ranges Council



Cr Marcia Timmers-Leitch
Knox City Council



Cr Kylie Spears
Maroondah City Council



Cr David Eastham
- Chair -
Yarra Ranges Council



2020-21 highlights



9%
increase in
digital loans

9,324
boxes posted
to housebound
members




\$1,795,000
invested in library materials
(books, DVDs, games)


2,000,000
physical loans – an amazing
figure given that our
members could not borrow
for themselves during
COVID lockdowns


8,014
likes and 8,892
followers makes
Facebook our social
media no.1 outlet




267,368
unique visits
to our website

8 out of 10

for our staff in an independent survey in the key areas of courtesy, helpfulness, knowledge, reference and information services



17,400
new members



2,000
people attended our Reconnect festival



175,138

items were on loan at one point - an amazing 52% of our collection - when we asked our members not to return them until the Stage 4 lockdown restrictions were lifted



112
Reconnect festival events



82,506
monthly subscribers to our eNewsletter



2,242
activity packs sent to school children



\$98k
spent on additional courier services to provide Click for Home Delivery during the COVID 19 lockdowns

Connecting with our community



Reconnect Festival ambassador Brian Nankervis

We connected with our community through our Reconnect festival, in-person and online events, and services like Click for Home Delivery, Call + Collect, and our new FlexiVan.

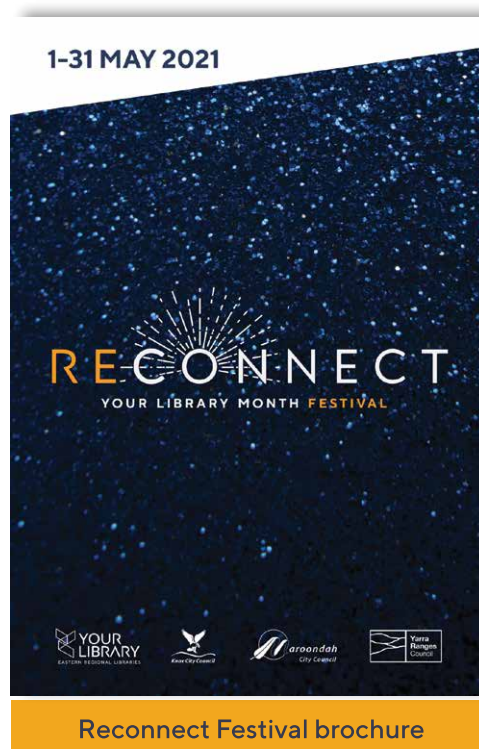
RECONNECT FESTIVAL

When our library branches reopened in November 2020, after months of lockdown, it was clear that people were still reluctant to visit their local library. Visitor numbers and loans were down on previous years, and we were looking at a slow recovery to pre-pandemic levels. Rather than accept this, ERLC decided to actively work to bring our members back and encourage more people to join.

We decided to hold a month-long festival during the Australian Library and Information Association's (ALIA) annual Library and Information Week in May 2021. We created an exciting program of 132 events, headlined by festival ambassador Brian Nankervis, and called it Reconnect. Each week in May was given a theme – community, literacy, time

and space, and sustainability – and events were tailored to those ideas. We also added a festival-within-a-festival, Writing the Rainbow, led by Sandra Pankhurst.

Reconnect had noticeably clear objectives. We wanted to re-engage a wide range of community members with the library, demonstrate how the library helps to deliver value to the community, and launch new long-term initiatives and new ways that members could use the library and services. Alongside the event program, we created weekly themed displays in every branch, partnerships with small businesses to encourage community members to buy from local retailers, and a lottery for new members to encourage people to join up. We also launched a range of branded library merchandise and a new paid library home delivery service.



Reconnect Festival brochure



Dolly Diamond's Rainbow Storytime

Community week highlights

- 24 events
- 438 attendees

Reconnect was launched on 27 April 2021 by festival ambassador **Brian Nankervis**. A delighted crowd, including Maroondah Mayor, Councillor Kylie Spears, enjoyed Brian's boisterous and cheeky attitude as he spoke about the value of public libraries.

To celebrate community spirit, 12 volunteers from Ferntree Gully's monthly Knitting And Crochet For Charity group yarn-bombed the library – the colourful cotton covered every collection for the whole week.

Yarra Junction ran a week-long seed and seedling swap for 64 gardening enthusiasts from around the region.

The bright and raucous **Dolly Diamond** presented a fierce and fabulous storytime as part of the Writing the Rainbow Festival in Croydon. Twenty-nine children and parents enjoyed Dolly's rendition of 'The Hips on the Drag Queen Go Swish, Swish, Swish!' and a reading of her favourite books, including *My unicorn farts glitter!*

At Belgrave, **Bruce Watson** enthralled 23 people with the tale of a 1903 wax cylinder recordings of Tasmanian Fanny Cochrane Smith, among the earliest Australian sound recordings and the only recordings of the Tasmanian Language. Bruce told a fascinating

and moving story of genocide, reconciliation, technology and the power of song.

Sarah bravely launched a recurring games night at Healesville for kids aged 5+ that featured PlayStations, Nintendo Switches, PCs – even the odd board game! Thirty-five children tested and borrowed a range of games offered by the library, chatted about which games they loved to play, and shared tips and tricks.



Kids get crafty at Knox Library

In Knox, Chelsea trialed a series of after-school events, which attracted 18 children and parents who made paper chain people, collages and drawings to decorate the library walls.

Bayswater hosted Paul from **Wantirna Lions Club**, who held a drop-in session to explain how the Lions Club can make a difference and give people a sense of belonging.

During the lockdowns last winter, I changed my lifestyle completely. Living alone, retired and no longer able to interact with the Healesville U3A (University of the Third Age) activities, I became a better cook, took time to experiment with recipes and enthusiastically attacked The Age's crossword each day, even David Astle's nightmare on a Friday. My local library was marvellous, with terrific support, deliveries, pick-ups, etc. Each day I played several "brain games" on my iPad. I believe I became more intelligent with all the challenges. Here we are again, but I am much more prepared for the fight ahead.

- The Age, Letter to the editor 3 June 2021



Sandra Pankhurst at her book signing

Literacy week highlights

- 29 events
- 492 attendees

At Realm, Kay from ERLC showed 9 people how to recycle some of the library’s well-loved books by turning them into beautiful works of art! The response was so positive that Kay plans to offer more sessions at libraries around the region. **Jay Tseng** and his father, **Wayne**, returned to Realm to offer another enlightening course on traditional Chinese calligraphy. A dedicated group of 9 attendees penned delicate Chinese characters.

Knox hosted a spicy cooking demonstration, led by the equally spicy Tracey! Fifteen people learned how to make a delicious tikka masala. Many attendees said it completely changed their mind on curries, and one person went directly to the shops to buy the ingredients for herself!

With the second lockdown, the move back to the postage service was fairly simple – which was just as well, as demand for our postal service went through the roof! Knox received over 400 requests for postal delivery in the week after lockdown.
- Knox Library



Sandra Pankhurst, the subject of Sarah Krasnostein’s hit 2017 biography *The Trauma Cleaner*, visited Lilydale to tell her raw and affecting life story. Sandra captivated 63 audience members. Attendees also enjoyed refreshments from Point of View Cafe as they chatted with Sandra, who also signed copies of Krasnostein’s book. ERLC is deeply saddened by the death of Sandra Pankhurst in July 2021.

Two local authors joined us this week. **Bob Menzies** launched his latest novel, *Benito’s Gold*, to 15 people at Yarra Junction. **Leah Swann** visited Croydon to talk about her debut novel, *Sheerwater*, to an audience of 32.

To raise awareness of Montrose Library, we set up a stall at the monthly **Montrose Community Market** and sold well-loved copies of library materials. More than 100 people visited the library space, most for their first time! We also raised more than \$200 for the local CFA.

Rowville was filled with the pleasing sounds of soft jazz thanks to local performers **Spellbound**. Around 45 people enjoyed an early afternoon of easy listening.

Time and space week highlights

- 35 events
- 671 attendees

Every branch enthusiastically participated in the 2021 National Simultaneous Storytime, featuring **Philip Bunting’s** *Give Me Some Space!* More than 260 children and parents listened to space-themed books and rhymes and took part in ‘blast-off’ craft. At Montrose, **Councillor Johanna Skelton** gave a delightful reading. This year, as an extra treat, visitors to our Facebook page saw NASA astronaut **Dr Shannon Walker** reading the text from the International Space Station. We also had readings by our Children’s Services team and festival ambassador **Brian Nankervis**. Some branches even made rocket-themed photo booths for library visitors.



Cr Johanna Skelton reads *Give me some space*

The Knox and Lilydale & District Historical Societies offered 2 walking tours of the old Lilydale and Ferntree Gully cemeteries. In Lilydale the focus was pioneering women who made a difference, including the famed Dame Nellie Melba. Thirty-nine passionate locals participated.

Historical fiction author **Heather Morris** visited Rowville, and fascinated a full house of 30 attendees with tales of her writing and research. Heather also dropped hints about her next work, *Three Sisters*. Sales and signing were provided by **Dymocks Eastland**.

Well-known local businessperson **Geoff Earney** discussed his recent book about the development of Mooroolbark. Geoff brought and presented several historical documents and a large aerial map of the area to an audience of 10 enthralled people.

Our Family History team presented 3 talks to help people begin their family history journey. Overall, 24 budding genealogists learned how to use Ancestry Online, access Trove newspaper records, and direct and record their research.

Forging a new and exciting partnership, ERLC and enthusiastic, experienced volunteers from the **Mount Burnett Observatory** offered a night of introductory stargazing for families. After a space-themed storytime at the Monbulk Community Reading Room, more than 60 children and their parents and carers walked to the Monbulk Rangers

At the end of autumn, Mooroolbark participated in the Outer Eastern Permaculture Swap. We also used the occasion to promote our Seed Library. One visitor commented that she had been feeling a bit down that morning, but seeing the fresh produce and plants and chatting with library staff had lifted her spirits and she could face the day with a smile on her face.

- Mooroolbark Library

Soccer Club pitch where a group of amateur astronomers was waiting. Despite the chilly weather, a perfectly clear night sky provided excellent viewing conditions and attendees viewed and learned about the moon and some bright constellations.



Stargazers at Monbulk Rangers Soccer Club

“Thank you! The books that you have provided for everyone have kept us unbored (if that is a word). Thank you for all your hard work in these times as we hope for the best for this to all end. You have chosen the risk to go to work to send books to those who are dying of boredom. We will never forget your hard work in helping all those around the community. Victoria has been in a very rough time lately and the things that have kept us occupied are books. Their wonder of taking us anywhere during the pandemic is amazing. Thank you for your hard work.”

- Library member (Realm Library)

During the past 12 months, a member has been going through some significant health issues. I've assisted her with library matters a few times and on one occasion I helped her to print admission forms for her specialist as she was too upset. After several months, the good news is she is out of the hospital and recovering. The other day she took the time to bring me some beautiful flowers. It truly made my day.
- Montrose Library

Sustainability week highlights

- 24 events
- 522 attendees

In the spirit of sustainability, two experimental swaps were organised: a children's toy and book swap at Ferntree Gully and an adult clothing swap at Rowville. Both branches sourced donations from the community throughout the Reconnect festival before hosting big all-day swap meets in the final week. Green-minded community members were encouraged to give what they could and take what they needed. Ferntree Gully had around 150 people, leaving only a few toys to be donated on, and Rowville had around 30 attendees.



Children's toy swap at Ferntree Gully

To promote self-sufficiency, skill-building and sustainable practices, a range of workshops were offered at Belgrave and Boronia. We taught 62 people skills to make sauerkraut, vegan cheese, nature wands, bags and even recycled musical instruments!

A series of gardening talks were offered around the region to encourage sustainable gardening and build a greener community. Fifty-three people took part to 'grow' their green thumbs. Unfortunately, some gardening events scheduled in the last days of May were cancelled due to the lockdown.



Craig Reucassel talked sustainability via Zoom

Craig Reucassel's presentation on sustainability and minimising waste at home, 'Sustainability and You', was held over Zoom. Craig - from the ABC TV's *The Chaser* and *War on Waste*, delivered a call to arms on how to build a sustainable community. Representatives from our Member Councils' waste and sustainability teams joined Craig in answering questions about the services and support they offer. More than 80 people viewed the live session and we made the recording available for a week afterwards. This turned out to be a wise move, as many people were frantically preparing for Melbourne's fourth lockdown during the live broadcast. The recording was viewed more than 470 times.

Outcomes

Despite a sudden lockdown on Friday 28 May 2020, we successfully held 112 events, attended by 2,123 people. An additional 6 events were held online and attracted 1,817 views. Visitor numbers increased and many people connected with the library and the festival on social media. We joined up more than twice the number of new members than expected (based on visitor numbers) and visitors borrowed 16% more than the same period in previous years. Reconnect broadened our reach beyond our traditional membership base, and drove a surge in library usage that we hope and expect will continue well into the next financial year.

PIVOTING THROUGHOUT THE PANDEMIC

In July 2020, during Melbourne's second lockdown, our **Click for Home Delivery** service was reintroduced. This was the only loan option for physical items. We were able to send much-needed boxes of books to library members who could no longer come into our branches. As a bonus, we were able to return a toy dog that had been left behind at the Healesville branch during the brief open period between lockdowns. Evan hitched a ride with our courier to be reunited with his incredibly grateful family.

I just received my parcel of books I had on hold. As there was space in the box, I asked the team at Healesville to choose me some extra reading material and they did an AMAZING job! Every item looks like an absolute gem.

- Library member

During the first lockdown in early 2020, two large boxes of jigsaw puzzles were donated for the community room. When the second lockdown came, we put the boxes outside the library for people to take. Many families were overjoyed to have an extra activity to do at home. We received several appreciative cards and notes. It was a lovely example of community spirit during a stressful time!
- Yarra Junction Library

FLEXIVAN UPGRADE

Our new FlexiVan hit the road in January! The van has new, smaller but heavy-duty crates that can double as display shelves. The removable shelf space will make it easier and safer for our staff to load crates in and out of the van, and the lower shelf height will reduce potential OH&S incidents. There is a dedicated drawer space for bags and a specially designed space for tables and chairs. There is also space for a gazebo to take to festivals.

One of its first duties was to deliver services to aged care facilities in the Yarra Ranges, which restarted in February 2021. At the start of Term 2, 2021, the literacy program was restarted with visits to the kindergartens, playgroups and primary schools that missed out in 2020. We also took it to the **Ecotopia Earth Festival** in Wesburn, where we demonstrated that the library model of sharing resources is sustainability in action.

“Emma and I took the FlexiVan to the Ecotopia Festival. Emma presented ‘The Enormous Watermelon’ to the delight of the young children in the audience. Afterwards, the MC wove a spoken story about his own experience as a borrower who was guilty of racking up overdue fines and how he was afraid of showing his face in the library because of the shame he felt about it. He told us of his shock, relief, ecstasy and joy when he found out from us that morning that overdue fines were a thing of the past. It was a witty, entertaining, informative and touchingly spontaneous spiel promoting us and our services.”

- Sharni, Healesville Library



Sharni and Emma with the new FlexiVan

FUNDRAISING FOR OUR SES

On 13 March 2021, the Yarra Junction Library team and the **Yarra Valley SES** held a successful giant book sale. We welcomed a visit from Yarra Ranges Councillor **Jim Child**. The book sale and donations raised \$1,280 for the Yarra Valley SES. Over 300 patrons came through the library and we gained many new members.



Cr Jim Childs was a welcome guest at Yarra Junction's SES fundraiser

CALL + COLLECT SERVICE INTRODUCED

When Victoria introduced the circuit-breaker lockdown in February 2021, we tweaked our Call + Collect service to make it more responsive to a short timeframe. Members could phone their local library if they had holds waiting or wanted our staff to select for them. The Call + Collect model was very efficient, as most packages were collected at the agreed time. Some members indicated they would rather wait until the libraries were open, but as the lockdowns extended, they took up the service. By Melbourne's fourth lockdown, we were able to quickly swing into action again and, despite the bleak and wintry weather, many books were borrowed. At Ferntree Gully, our staff decorated the windows with messages of warmth and positivity. The Belgrave branch had only just moved to its temporary location, but our staff were still able to get a collection service underway.

I just want to send a huge thanks to all of you at Rowville Library and a special thanks to Michelle. My kids have had a really hard time with this lockdown. The delivery was such a huge highlight for them... it was so thoughtful, the personal message, all the beautiful pictures you sent and a great range of books. I can't thank you all enough.

This has really lifted the kids' spirits.

- Library member



Jasmin outside Ferntree Gully Library

Connecting with children and young people



Sharon presenting a fun online storytime session

We connected with children and young people through online and in-person storytimes, innovative holiday programs and old-school activity packs that arrived in the mail.

STORYTIME

At the start of the pandemic, ALIA struck an agreement with the Australian Society of Authors and the Australian Publishers Association to suspend the copyright restrictions on secondary broadcasts of published material and allow libraries to keep their storytime videos available for members of the community to view in their own time from the library's platform. This service was extremely popular as it allowed families to view storytime whenever they wanted.

Disappointingly, in September 2020, with the pandemic under control in most states, the publishers decided that live streaming was the only acceptable transmission of their copyrighted works and prohibited the recordings from being stored for later viewing. However, the ERLC team persevered and produced a live stream storytime each

day and very soon there was light on the horizon. ALIA developed a new agreement with Australian publishers that, for a small fee, libraries could record and keep their storytimes for 6 months if they read from a set list of books. ERLC signed up immediately and our talented children's staff began planning sessions using the new booklist.

In the meantime, Victoria's easing restrictions enabled us to prepare for face-to-face storytime to coincide with the start of the 2021 school year. Excitement was high, anticipation was great and once again children, parents and library staff were able to share their love of books, words, rhymes and visits to their library.



Michelle captains the ERL Dewey 520!

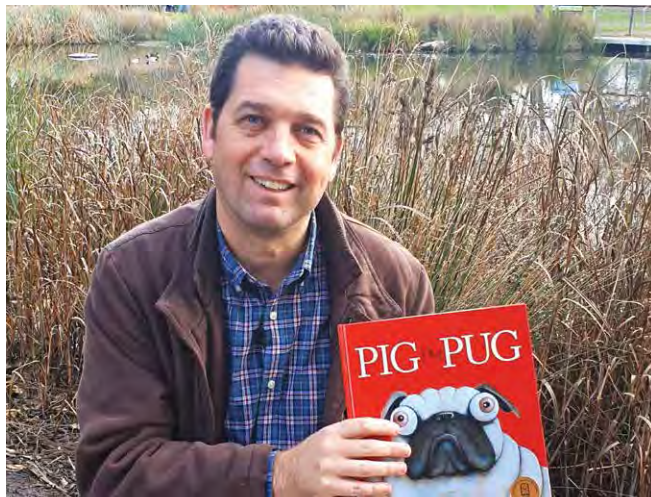
"A year ago, none of us could have predicted that the routine of gathering together to share stories, songs and crafts in the library would become unavailable to us. When we returned, it was a joyous celebration. There was so much emotion in the room. For some, it was their first time socialising with peers at the library, and for others it was the return of a much-loved ritual. One father said, 'Seeing my daughter's face light up as she enjoyed her first storytime in over a year warmed my heart so much.'" - Michelle, Ferntree Gully

I just enjoyed the most wonderful first 'real life' storytime since March last year. I didn't realise how much I'd missed real storytimes until this morning. It was absolutely wonderful to have little faces looking up at me and listening to me and smiling and joining in with actions... rather than a phone camera!

- Michelle, Rowville

Guest storytellers

Developing a suite of online storytimes allowed us to invite some special guest storytellers, including the **Hon Kim Wells**, member for Rowville; the **Hon Nick Wakeling**, member for Ferntree Gully; and the **Hon Shaun Leane**, member for Eastern Metropolitan Region and Minister for Local Government, to record and share some of their favourite children's books.



The Hon Nick Wakeling presents online storytime

In celebration of National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day, **Ricky Baldwin** read *Bundjil Creation Story* to our Facebook audience. When storytime returned to face-to-face, the **Hon Jackson Taylor** entertained some of his smallest constituents with an energetic reading of *Dig, dump, roll* at Bayswater.

I was very excited for our first session this morning, as was Storytime Ted! Approximately one-third of the attendees were new to storytime. Everyone was very accommodating with the new format, and happy to just have storytime back. - Sarah, Realm



Sarah captivates at Mini & Me Storytime

Mini & Me storytime promotion at Eastland

A vacant travel agency became a storytelling wonderland for a few weeks to promote Eastland's Mini & Me Children's Reward program. The shelves that previously held glossy travel brochures made a perfect display for picture books. Realm Children's Librarian, Sarah Werner, got into the 'mini' theme with a storytime focusing on mini beasts. Some visitors admitted they had never been to the Realm library, but were now inspired to visit.

"Awesome! My kids will be so excited. This is the highlight of our week!"

- Library member

ONLINE, TAKE-HOME & IN-PERSON SCHOOL HOLIDAY PROGRAMS

We ran our first digital school holiday program in the July 2020 school holidays. The programming included filmed events on Facebook and live activities through Zoom. There was an environment-themed activity with the Knox Community Gardens and a backyard scavenger hunt with our own staff member Jasminder and her dog Foxy, filmed in her own garden.

The Facebook videos received hundreds of views and many people expressed gratitude for providing children with something to do in what turned out to be an extended holiday.

By September 2020, at the end of Term 3, we had craft and science activities recorded on Facebook and the Lego Quest challenge established on Zoom. Rounding out the program were some of our regular storytimes. One advantage of the online program is that the videos can be viewed long after the event has finished.



Kids (and parents) enjoyed holiday activities

In January 2021, we were able to introduce drop-in activities to our school holiday program. Our team devised several themed walks that encouraged children to get into their garden or local park and put their findings and observations together in a fun way. Children could collect an activity pack from any library and complete it at home. Hundreds of activity packs were taken from the libraries over the 2-week program. We also partnered with outside providers to extend the range of activities we could offer online.

The April 2021 holidays saw a plethora of bunnies, large, small and suspiciously human-shaped, hopping into the libraries, distributing eggs and causing mayhem. With craft off the table, and singing still on hold, the opportunity to get into a onesie or PJs and be a bit silly at storytime was very hard to resist!



Sarah & Cr Kylie Spears hop into the April holidays

At the end of Term 2, 2021, we optimistically planned a program that was fully face-to-face, partly based on a steady stream of requests to provide something for children that wasn't on a screen. The theme was the Olympic Games and, much like the real event, it was a nervous wait to see if restrictions would allow the program to go ahead. Capacity limits changed on the last day of term and every branch had a flood of children creating, exploring, borrowing and participating in a range of activities.

"My son loved it and wants to do it again! It was a great opportunity for him to step past feeling shy and speak up in a group setting."
- Library member

Activity packs

As the pandemic continued, we introduced activity packs for children to use at home. Our children's librarians selected age-appropriate activities that could be sent through the post. We had no idea such a simple offering would be so popular! After promoting the packs on social media in July 2020, we received over 500 requests within 24 hours! Staff worked

It was great to get out to the preschools and have several of the children recognise me from storytimes. One little boy was so excited, he started telling everybody all about the library. He did such a thorough job I really didn't have too much more to add! - Belgrave Library

feverishly to meet the demand and eventually got the workload under control. It seems that children still love to receive mail delivered the old-fashioned way!

“Thank you very much for the activity packs. They were so happy and excited to get them in the mail. You are all doing such a wonderful job during these tough times! Many thanks!” - Library member

“My 3 year old was so excited to get mail from her local library. Thank you to all involved.” - Library member



Emily won the Kids on Tour competition

Kids on tour

The **National Gallery of Victoria** Kids on Tour program usually provides materials for organisations to run art-making sessions that tie in with the gallery’s current exhibitions. This year the children collected their activity booklets from the library and completed their artwork at home.

I heard happy giggling in the picture book area and went to investigate. A mother was reading to her young baby in the pram. The baby was full of smiles and giggles. The mother told me that her baby wasn't like this at home, that they came to the library because her baby loves books. They come and read in the library nearly every day. Apparently, books and reading also calm her baby when she is not well! What an endorsement! - Boronia Library

The initial supply of 30 booklets was quickly snapped up at our 3 registered locations – Knox, Lilydale and Realm – but we were able to provide photocopies to another 120 interested participants. We encouraged the children to bring or send photos of their artwork back to the library.



Sharon takes charge at Station Two

Amazing Race

Lilydale Library was the second stop on Yarra Ranges Council’s Amazing Race Lilydale school holiday event. Over 80 participants searched the library for clues to spell out the words STEAM IS FUN.



Angus and Jasminder with a friendly Ozobot

This was our first in-person event in nearly 10 months but everything ran smoothly. All successful participants were presented with a bookmark – delivered in a socially distanced way by one of the Ozobots!

Healthy Rivers

The team from **Swinburne Science** delivered some interactive environmental science via Zoom in 2 sessions focused on our local waterways: Dandenong Creek and the Yarra River. Both events were booked out.

"I liked the event because of all the information I learned. Making a Creek was wonderful (but you have to admit, it was a bit disgusting looking by the end!) I think the whole thing was great! Thank you so much for organising it! :)"

- Library member



Ageism in the frame at Realm

CHILDREN TACKLE AGEISM

Maroondah Council has joined with Boroondara, Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Monash, Whitehorse and Yarra Ranges to undertake a joint campaign to raise awareness about ageism, challenge the stereotypes of what it is to be older and encourage people to speak up and take action.

The campaign, called **Tackling Ageism Together: EveryAGE Counts** in Melbourne's east, is coordinated and supported by the Inner East Primary Care Partnership, with support from the Victorian Government. It will run until October 2021. In partnership with the library, young people who live in Maroondah can record their feelings for a

A colleague from my first days working in libraries reached out to let me know his grandchildren had discovered me on Facebook, performing one of our many recorded storytime sessions. It was hard to believe that 35 years ago we were working together at what was then Box Hill-Doncaster Regional Library. Now his grandsons tune in every week to watch me on storytime. Seeing their faces light up on the videos he sent me made me realise, yet again, what an extremely important service we offer. To be a part of these little boys' lives during this time, and to be able to share stories, songs and rhymes with them and other families is a privilege.

- Administration

special older person through the EngAGE Short Story competition. The project is aimed at tackling ageism nationally by shifting social norms and positively influencing the way Australians think about ageing and older people.

MY GENDER FUTURE

PLEDGE (People Linking to Embrace and Develop Gender Equality) is a partnership of Knox-based organisations. PLEDGE's poster competition for secondary and tertiary students produced 24 thought-provoking works promoting the concept of gender equity. The posters were judged for their creativity, originality, functionality and conceptualisation of gender equity. After judging, the posters were hung from the rafters of the Ferntree Gully Library where their messages of harmony and acceptance swayed gently overhead.



My Gender Future poster display

Connecting with adults



We connected with our adult members through activities including author talks, reading groups, support for aspiring writers, as well as practical help with job searches.



Tracey cooked up a storm on Facebook

WHAT'S FOR TEA? WITH TRACEY

Boronia staff member Tracey is well known for her 'Social Seniors' morning tea, which runs every Friday. Deprived of her weekly interaction with the community, she launched a 6-part cooking series using the kitchen in the community room as her workshop and her colleagues as willing tasters. Although presented with a great deal of humour, the recipes that Tracey chooses are economical and use ingredients likely to be in the pantry.

COMFORT READS

We brought back our Comfort Reads promotion in July 2020 as the second lockdown snapped in and the weather turned chilly. Reading can be an anchor in uncertain times. As Laura, a staff member at Ferntree Gully, said in her first post: 'When you can't just walk past a library or bookstore without

going in, you are always carrying a book with you in your bag, and the best weekends are those spent with some new books.' It seems others agree, and we had to share these wise words from crime-writing superstar Ann Cleeves on the therapeutic value of reading: 'Stories have always been healing. Reading about people who have been through experiences like ours and have come through the other end gives us hope. If we're drowning in our own chaotic thoughts, stepping inside someone else's head, just for a while, can offer a kind of freedom.'



Laura found comfort in books

NANOWRIMO

Stories need to be written as well as read and November 2020 was **National Novel Writing Month**. The Melbourne **NaNoWriMo** team approached ERLC to hold writing workshops over Zoom to replace the face-to-face sessions they had previously held at the Knox library. The event spread over 2 months – October for plotting and November for writing. The sessions started slowly, but quickly built to capacity.

“NaNoWriMo is more important than ever, especially for Melbournites under lockdown; that creative outlet and the support of the online novelling community, not to mention the support of one’s local librarians, is going to be sorely needed in times to come.”

- NaNoWriMo organiser

LIBRARY LOVERS

This year, **ALIA’s Library Lover’s Day** coincided with Valentine’s Day. Competing with roses, chocolates and champagne is a big ask, but we approached it in the spirit of eco-friendliness and waste minimisation. Pre-loved library books that had been stockpiling through 2020 were gift-wrapped and given away with a tantalising descriptive handle. Until the February 2021 circuit-breaker lockdown, they were flying out the door.

CHOOSING A CREATIVE LIFE

To celebrate **International Women’s Day**, we hosted three subjects of **Jamie Saxe’s** documentary film *Senior Women in the Arts*. Jamie received a grant from Yarra Ranges Council to record the artistic journey of 4 women who have made a home in the Hills. Musician **Dindy Vaughan**, writer and editor **Maria Miller** and ceramicist **Lee Goller** joined Jamie in the Belgrave Library while the audience viewed their stories and asked questions via Zoom. The energy and determination of the subjects perfectly captured the spirit of International Women’s Day.

JOB SEARCH

ERLC participated in the Employment Information for Jobseekers webinar series to highlight the job-finding tools hosted by the library. ERLC’s subscription to **MyCareerMatch** allows members to research areas of work they find interesting and access lists of keywords they can use to describe their unique strengths in a job application. Almost 100 people attended the sessions and 41% found it extremely useful.

I went to the library to report I had lost a book. The librarian told me where I should look to find it. I tried to keep the scepticism from my face and went to look where she had suggested. The book was exactly where she said it would be, under the front seat of my car. This was incredible, astounding, even fantastical, so I reported it to the authorities. I told the police officer that it gave me the willies, that it felt sort of unholy. With a concerned look on his face, he said, ‘What if it’s the opposite? What if you actually experienced something holy?’ That made me feel a little better and I have always liked Croydon Library, so that is why I recommend it. Just watch out for the duck poo. - Google review

KNOX PRIDE

As part of the **Engaging our older LGBTI community** project run by Knox Council’s Active Ageing and Disability, the library was donated 20 new titles supplied by specialist bookshop **Hares & Hyenas**. Council produced bookmarks to raise awareness of the breadth and depth of material in the library collection that may be of interest to older LGBTI residents. Library staff certainly enjoyed ‘getting their rainbow on’ to display the new titles.



Knox’s colourful Pride display

A member contacted us to say, 'To the wonderful ladies at Bayswater Library, thank you so much for making my 96-year-old mother-in-law so much happier during COVID-19. She can no longer see well, so she has been able to imagine different places and experiences by listening to the audiobooks you chose for her.'
- Bayswater Library

AUTHOR TALKS

Sue Ingleton

Our first author to present over Zoom, **Sue Ingleton** was a vibrant and entertaining presenter. Her book *Making Trouble: Tongued with Fire* is the extraordinary story of two young women who left their conventional nineteenth-century lives behind in England and started up Melbourne's first ladies-only gymnasium. Sue's experience as an actor and stand-up comedian made the book come to life when she read a hilarious but heart-breaking passage playing all the characters. Combined with the tale of the book's long and circuitous road to publication, it made for a very entertaining afternoon.

Mark Brandi

Mark Brandi, the author of *Wimmera* and *The Rip*, was to have been the first speaker for 2020 in the long-running Books and Bites series at Croydon. Mark was keen to participate online and we were able to host him via Zoom in October. Mark shared stories of his writing journey and we were able to see him in his writing space along with his canine writing companion (who contributed the occasional snore). Sue Pitt, the Croydon branch manager, even got Mark to reveal details of his next book.

"Enjoyable and engaging experience. [Mark Brandi] was personable and open in sharing his personal and writing/publishing journey, encouraging budding authors to stick with it, think outside the box and not give up after rejection. The host was warm and friendly and asked good questions. While meetings in person are more personal, Zoom makes them more accessible for many. Thank you very much." - Library member



Karen Turner

The author of 3 published romance novels set in wartime England, Karen Turner was a self-published author who found a publisher overseas. From her home in Castlemaine, she shared her writing journey and the pros and cons of doing it yourself versus being picked up by a commercial publisher. Appearing at the end of the NaNoWriMo program, Karen was an encouraging voice for all aspiring authors.

Heather Morris

The ever-popular Heather Morris discussed her new book *Three Sisters* to a capacity crowd at the Rowville library during the Reconnect festival. Her new book builds on the stories she uncovered in *The Tattooist of Auschwitz* and *Cilka's Journey* and is conveyed with Heather's trademark sensitivity and insight.

Two patrons who joined our Bookchat had never met before but obviously enjoyed each other's company tremendously. They had a great conversation and they discovered they had lived around the corner from each other for 30 years. We saw them heading out for coffee together after the session, still talking. - Lilydale Library

Jayneen Sanders

Anglicare Victoria, EDVOS and Educate2Empower launched their new co-production, *Hope: a book to help children build resilience and assist those recovering from and/or living in family violence situations*, to a small crowd at Realm and over 300 people watching online. Author Jayneen Sanders discussed how the book was created to fill a gap in the market for resources that can be used with young children who find themselves in situations that don't fit into the world depicted in most picture books. Too often, children blame themselves for violence in their homes and take on the burden of shame and guilt. *Hope* reassures children that family violence is never their fault and that there is also hope that things might change.



Jayneen Sanders (centre) with Steph & Sarah

“A patron who had left their glasses at home asked me to ‘be their eyes’ while looking for some books to read. They realised from my name badge that I had selected books for them during the first lockdown. They said that they would never have chosen the books I sent, but they really liked them, and were looking for more by the same authors. It was extremely rewarding to get such positive feedback, and the feeling I had helped to widen someone’s reading horizons was wonderful.” – Staff member, Lilydale



“On the first day of opening after lockdown, we were visited by Len Rowson (pictured above) who at 101 is possibly our oldest borrower. Len couldn’t wait to get his hands on some new reading material.”
– Ferntree Gully Library

Janet was a favourite member of mine and she always sought me out for a little chat. In all my years working in libraries, her passing has affected me the most. She was a weekly visitor and a regular at many of our talks and workshops. Her daughter said, ‘Mum loved her visits to the library, the book recommendations you gave her and recipe swaps. She always spoke highly of the staff at Rowville, and she could have visited a closer library, but she chose yours and I am sure that is definitely due to the interactions she had with you and other staff members. I appreciate all the help you would have given to her with her computer use and providing her with a friendly face to have a chat.

– Rowville Library staff member

Collections

LENDING PATTERNS

In a 'normal month', the number of items checked out from our branches is roughly the same as the number checked in – one item goes out and one item comes back. In July and August 2020, due to COVID restrictions, members were asked to hold on to items they had checked out and not to return them until the Stage 4 restrictions were lifted. This meant that, at one point, 175,138 items were on loan – an amazing 52% of the collection.

New material continued to be supplied by our vendors. As soon as these items arrived they were requested by our members via the extremely popular **Click for Home Delivery** service. We also posted out book club sets to over 500 members, encouraging them to stay connected and continue to hold their meetings via Zoom.

Our members continued to embrace the resources in the digital library and July–August 2020 saw a 35% increase in digital loans compared to the same period in 2019. The most popular digital items continue to be eBooks and eAudiobooks.



Lean times for the library's shelves



LOTE ONLINE FOR KIDS

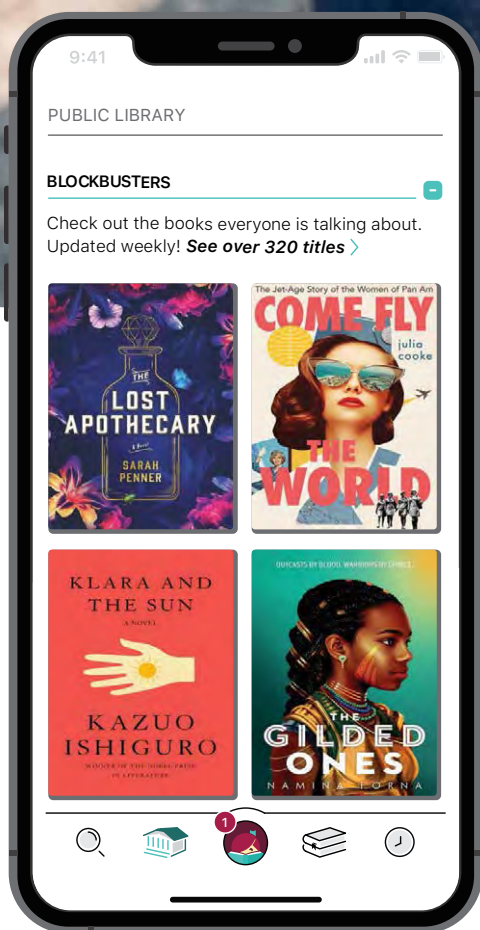
A brand new resource, **LOTE Online for kids**, was introduced to our growing eResources collection in January. LOTE Online for kids allows children to read or listen to books in languages other than English. With over 600 titles in 25+ languages, this collection offers a great way for children to learn another language or reconnect with their heritage. It is a valuable resource for everyone, but particularly our CALD communities.



MORE DIGITAL CONTENT ON LIBBY

The content available on the **Libby app** that ERLC members currently use to access digital titles has expanded following a corporate takeover. More than 2,000 exclusive titles purchased by ERLC have been supplemented by the popular **Zinio eMagazines**, meaning there is even more content for members to explore and discover on Libby.

Borrow ebooks, audiobooks, magazines & more.



Libby.

The library reading app



Creative technologies

NEW COMPUTERS

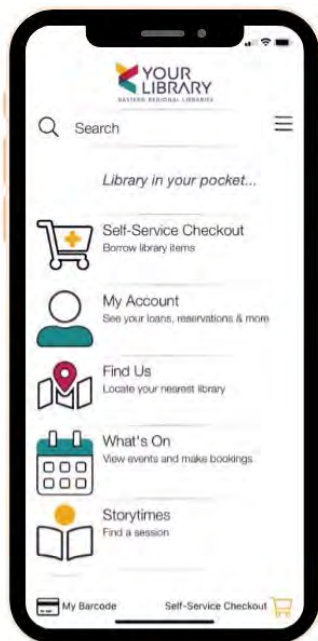
New computers, monitors and laptops were installed throughout our library branches and reading rooms. Most of the public and staff workstations were replaced and team leader workstations were replaced with laptops to allow our staff to work remotely. These new computers will deliver a better user experience for our members and our staff.

WEBSITE AND APP

On 25 November 2020, we unveiled the new Your Library branding and launched our new website and app.



Download the new Your Library app to manage your account from any device!



The website is action-oriented and focuses on common tasks and information requests. It now includes the much-loved library events and programs, making it easier for people to discover them. Bringing all the library resources and information into a searchable and easily discoverable website while maintaining a modern look was a challenging process and we will continue to monitor and improve the site.

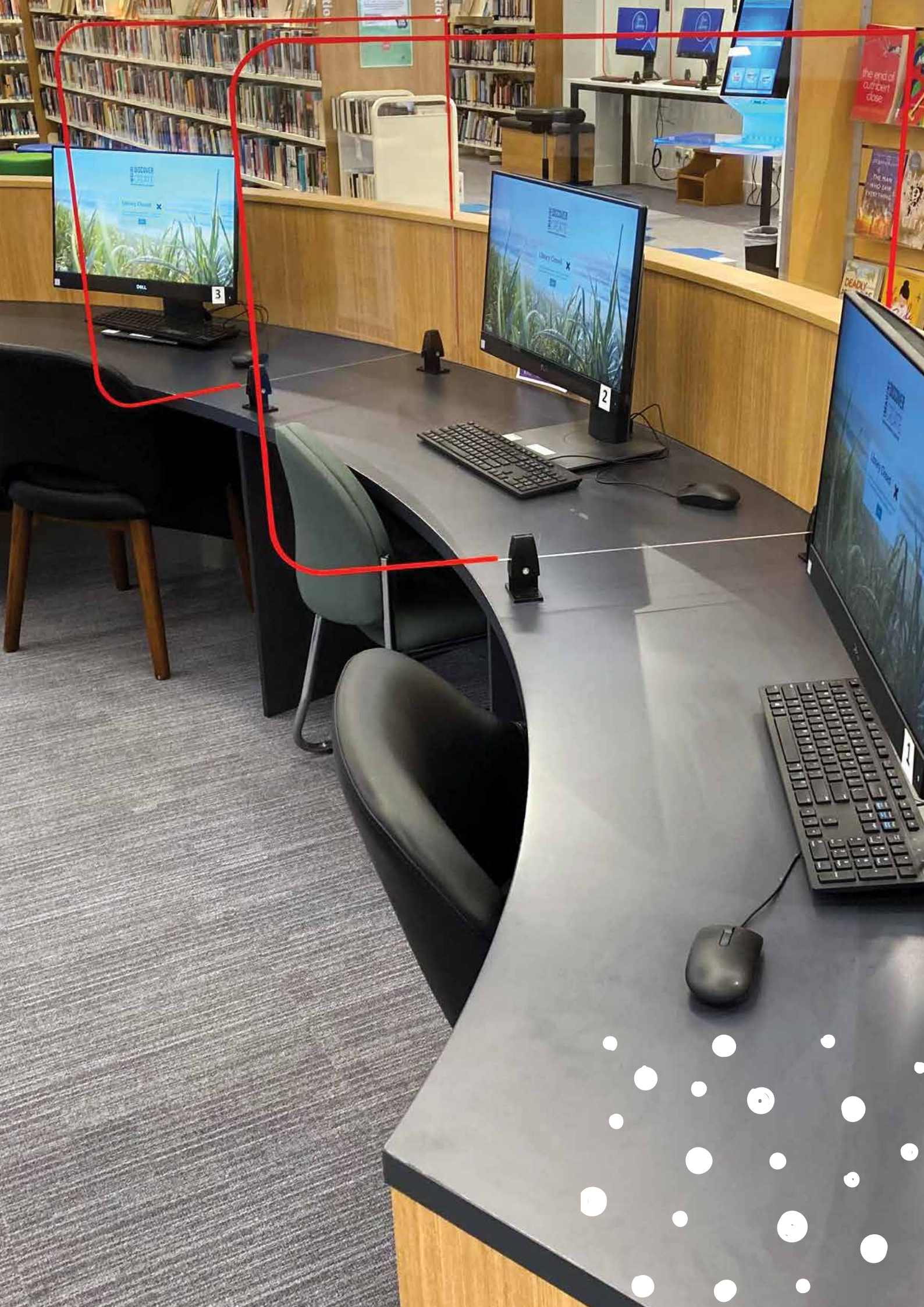
Our mobile app has a similar theme and is available on both iOS and Android platforms. In addition to the usual features, the Your Library app allows members to check out library items using their mobile devices, eliminating the need to queue for self-check stations or ask for assistance from our staff. This was also a safe and hygienic way to check out items during the COVID-19 pandemic.

LIBRARY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

After a long and strenuous project, ERLC went live with our new Library Management System on 25 November 2020. All the required membership, collection and transaction data were successfully migrated across to the new cloud-based system.

The new management system will integrate with many modern solutions to provide a seamless experience for the community and our staff, and includes features such as purchase suggestions, notifications and online payments. The system is easy for our staff to work with. Built by international software firm Civica and hosted locally in a Melbourne datacentre, the management system has high-quality security features to keep our membership data safe and secure.

As part of the implementation of this new system, ERLC contracted Civica and local solution provider Yellowfin to provide a dynamic reporting and business intelligence solution. This allows us to run, export and create prebuilt and custom reports. Our vision is to create a single data warehouse, so we can analyse and present meaningful reports across the service.



Marketing & promotions



Later in 2020, as people were able to venture further from their homes, we maintained a slow but steady increase of followers across our platforms.

2020-21 *Growth*

Facebook

8,014 likes (+ 1,056 on 2019-20)
and 8,892 followers
(+ 1,154 on 2019-20)



Instagram

2,319 followers
(+ 356 on 2019-20)



Twitter

1,529 followers
(+20 on 2019-20)



eNewsletter

82,506 monthly subscribers



Website

267,368 unique visits;
77% of visitors were new



SOCIAL MEDIA

In July 2020, our talented staff created fabulous video content, along with the always popular daily Storytime Live sessions. Some highlights were:

- **Library Lockdown:** a fun look at what goes on behind-the-scenes with the Rowville staff
- **What's for Tea with Tracey:** budget-minded recipes everyone can make
- **Cooking for Kids with Sharni:** simple and delicious recipes for our younger viewers
- **Bookchat with Ajne:** a look at some great reads available at the library.

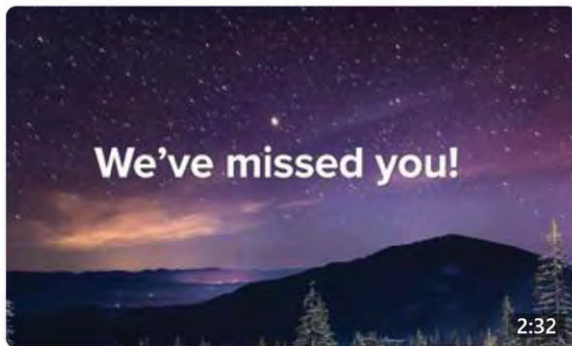
When Stage 4 restrictions were put in place in early August 2020, the focus changed to marketing our excellent digital resources and sharing some of the great activities and events hosted in our community.

FACEBOOK LIVE

While in-library events could not happen, we continued to schedule a variety of pre-recorded videos for broadcast on Facebook Live, all of which were well received.

Children's Book Week: We posted videos and photos featuring a staff member's recommendation every day.

We've Missed You: This Libraries Change Lives project featured comments from members telling us what they missed about the library during the lockdown.



We've missed you!
50 weeks ago · 767 views
👍❤️👤 You and 48 others

What's for Tea with Tracey: This popular weekly series continued to deliver budget-friendly recipes in Tracey's down-to-earth style.

Cooking for Kids with Sharni: Sharni brought an international flavour to her cooking show this season and introduced the children to Indigenous, Chinese and Italian flavours.

Boredom busters: These fun craft sessions were hosted by our children's librarians.

A Very Merry Book Chat: Viewers joined Ajne and Maria from Ferntree Gully Library for a Christmas-themed book chat.

Christmas Advent Competition: A daily book giveaway was held in December, and members answered a question about the library for a chance to win a book.



A Very Merry Book Chat with Ajne & Maria
41 weeks ago · 318 views
👍❤️👤 You and 20 others

FACEBOOK HIGHLIGHTS

Eastern Regional Libraries
Published by Karla Kuong [👤] · 31 December 2020

Very exciting news for libraries! 🎉🎉🎉
Looking forward to bringing you an even better library experience in 2021.
Knox City Council Maroondah City Council Yarra Ranges Council...
See more

Don Andrews [👤] · 29 December 2020
Libraries are about so much more than books. They're community spaces. A place to learn and connect. And this year especially, they became essential support n...
See more

2,696 People reached 367 Engagements Boost Unavailable

👍👤 May Dai, Carmen Wilks and 131 others 7 Comments · 3 shares

Eastern Regional Libraries
Published by Karla Kuong [👤] · 9 November 2020

It's been lovely seeing all your friendly faces today after so long!
Len Rowson, 101 years young, visited Ferntree Gully Library on our first day of opening to select some new books to read. Happy reading, Len! 📖

👍 Get more likes, comments and shares
When you boost this post, you'll show it to more people.

3,309 People reached 336 Engagements Boost Post

👍👤 Melissa Bilsbott, Robyn Smith and 247 others 1 Comment · 3 shares

Eastern Regional Libraries
Published by Angus Cooke [👤] · 4 November 2020

UPDATE: 20 people (including children over 12 months) at any one time in the library
OUR LIBRARIES ARE REOPENING SOON! See more

👍 Get more likes, comments and shares
When you boost this post, you'll show it to more people.

16,236 People reached 1,428 Engagements Boost Post

👍👤 Lauren Armstrong, Alina Rose and 317 others 31 Comments · 57 shares

Eastern Regional Libraries
Published by Karla Kuong [👤] · 25 January

STORYTIME at your library starts soon!
We are very excited to announce that Storytimes will return from Monday 1 February** We can't wait to see you!
Check out session times below... See more

👍 Get more likes, comments and shares
When you boost this post, you'll show it to more people.

8,290 People reached 1,212 Engagements Boost Post

👍👤 Ingrid Post, Lucy Browne and 79 others 12 Comments · 16 shares

INSTAGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

An important part of the Reconnect festival was promoting the library to people who were not already members. Prize packs were compiled with the help of generous local businesses and one winner was selected from each location.

There were 2,046 new memberships during May 2021 – 777 more than in May 2019. This is a significant increase. Although overall visitor numbers are still down, those people who do come to the library are more engaged with the services, resulting in more loans and more new memberships per visit than before COVID.



A father and son take home Bayswater's prize



Ferntree Gully's lucky lottery winner

We joined up twice as many new members as we might have expected based on visitor numbers alone. Members borrowed 16% more than in the same period in previous years.

Indicator	May 2021	May 2019
Percentage of library visits resulting in new memberships	2.13%	0.79%
Loans per library visit	2.09	1.93



TRIVIAL
GRIEVANCES

BRIDIE JABOUR

On the
contradictions,
myths and misery
of your 30s

2020–21 statistics

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, we had great support from our staff, our Board and our Member Councils as we continued these new ways of doing business. Our Member Councils supported us to deliver the Click + Collect and Click for Home Delivery.



Rose prepares Croydon's Click + Collect orders

As the statistics shows, 2020–21 was a very challenging year for our library service. Our normal library services suffered considerably throughout the year. All our key indicators of memberships, visits, loans, PC sessions and WiFi sessions were considerably down. However, loans of our digital items (eBooks, eAudiobooks, eMagazines and streaming videos) increased from 699,921 in 2019–20 to 771,971 in 2020–21 – an extra 72,000

checkouts. This is a great outcome and it builds on our previous record year of 2018–19 when eLoans increased by over 100,000. In addition, to have over 2,000,000 loans when our visits were down by 700,000 is a remarkable achievement. This is due to the great work of our staff and our members as they adapted to Click + Collect and Click for Home Delivery, again and again.

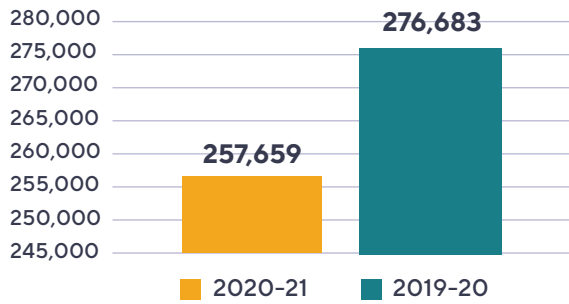
We continued our online storytimes, craft activities and author talks. These were so successful that they will continue to form part of our future service delivery strategies.



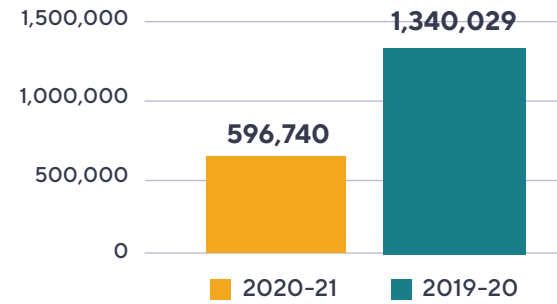
Jingjing presenting Chinese Storytime online

Although 2020–21 provided challenges, our innovative library services helped reduce the drop in numbers we would otherwise have experienced and allowed us to continue to provide a valuable service to our communities.

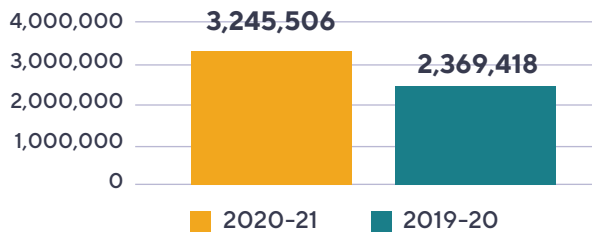
Members



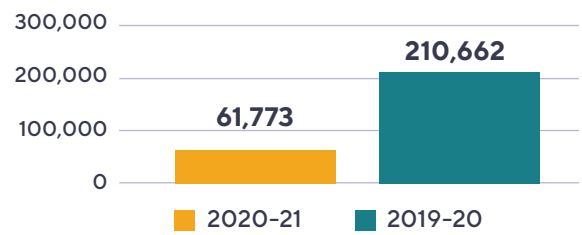
Visits



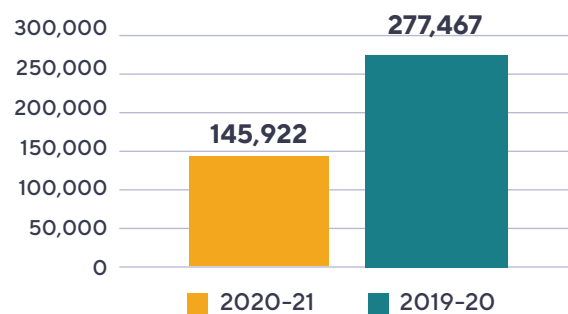
Loans



PC sessions



WiFi sessions



	Members		Visits	
	2019-20	2020-21	2019-20	2020-21
Bayswater	8,696	8,433	64,793	29,683
Boronia	14,074	12,759	61,371	33,145
Ferntree Gully	11,601	10,782	66,140	29,309
Knox	39,706	35,312	202,334	78,797
Knox Outreach	1,164	986	2,878	-
Rowville	25,364	22,841	124,998	54,811
eLibrary loans	-	-	-	-
Admin	189	347	-	-
Knox total	100,794	91,460	522,514	225,745
Croydon	35,463	31,929	179,245	84,008
Realm	59,679	59,890	284,179	111,698
eLibrary loans	-	-	-	-
Admin	179	350	-	-
Maroondah total	95,321	92,169	463,424	195,70
Belgrave	16,512	15,277	69,053	34,720
Flexi Van	2,851	2,412	2,607	-
Healesville	8,562	7,919	55,092	26,482
Lilydale	19,519	17,578	70,999	35,580
Monbulk	777	720	4,744	-
Montrose	4,866	4,571	24,535	12,813
Mooroolbark	13,208	12,307	70,572	33,699
Mount Evelyn	2,341	2,031	6,004	-
Yarra Glen	93	145	1,306	-
Yarra Junction	11,689	10,789	49,179	31,995
eLibrary loans	-	-	-	-
Admin	151	281	-	-
Yarra Ranges total	80,568	74,030	354,091	175,289
Regional total	276,683	257,659	1,340,029	596,740

Loans		PC sessions		WiFi sessions	
2019-20	2020-21	2019-20	2020-21	2019-20	2020-21
92,867	69,012	9,089	2,970	11,861	8,732
155,586	102,715	11,737	3,543	8,851	5,327
146,783	101,575	9,885	2,268	7,532	4,339
366,136	227,829	34,541	10,340	31,616	14,823
8,725	-	-	-	-	-
213,492	137,936	22,034	7,013	31,775	16,670
270,981	296,788	-	-	-	-
2,003	1,652	-	-	-	-
1,256,573	937,507	87,286	26,134	91,635	49,891
462,031	282,411	27,628	8,604	23,189	10,561
325,762	169,748	47,939	11,804	85,537	37,644
217,039	245,172	-	-	-	-
1,792	1,230	-	-	-	-
1,006,324	698,561	75,567	20,408	108,726	48,205
152,105	104,038	8,926	2,764	20,533	13,253
12,017	2,939	-	-	-	-
77,810	50,977	8,031	2,194	7,643	4,383
144,598	91,113	11,364	3,167	13,561	7,677
19,984	9,053	-	-	-	-
44,186	38,189	1,294	387	6,178	5,029
156,617	104,324	8,738	3,557	11,027	6,809
26,589	9,073	1,640	425	6,463	4,297
5,544	2,469	-	-	-	-
129,691	89,871	7,816	2,737	11,701	6,378
211,900	230,011	-	-	-	-
1,567	1,291	-	-	-	-
982,608	733,348	47,809	15,231	77,106	47,826
3,245,506	2,369,418	210,662	61,773	277,467	145,922

Employees

Library staff are highly competent and have diverse skill sets, qualifications and experience that include library services, communications, information technology, event management, teaching and more. We are committed to the continuous professional development of our staff. ERLC actively engages with the community and is proactive in responding to feedback and implementing improvements to customer service. Building positive relationships with members is important and our staff continue to collaborate with local schools, businesses and associations to expand ERLC libraries to the wider community.

As staff are a key resource on which ERLC's reputation is based, we strive to attract, develop and retain the highest quality of community-focused and professional staff.

During 2020–21, our staffing strategies focused on supporting ERLC's pursuit of excellence and building the capacity of our staff at all levels to show leadership, adapt to change and build a culture of community inclusion.

The challenges of 2020–21 continued to have a huge impact on the way we worked and looked after our staff and library community. The COVID-19 pandemic meant we continued to encourage and support flexible working practices to quickly adapt

to the restrictions of the pandemic. Our staff had to learn to prioritise work, change service delivery models and look after both their own and our community's health and safety.

We introduced COVID Safe Sites Plans for all service point locations and kept our staff informed with up-to-date resources and health advice.

A COVID-19 supported leave policy was launched to ensure our staff were financially supported to stay at home or get tested if they were unwell. A Disclosure of the Coronavirus Testing Guideline was developed at the request of our staff to manage the risks associated with the pandemic while respecting their right to privacy. Additional support was offered through our Employee Assistance Program provider, Relationship Matters.

ERLC continues to strive to create a workplace that prizes inclusivity, respect, fairness and dignity

EMPLOYEE MATTERS

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 public health measures on our library operations, our new Enterprise Agreement discussions were put on hold during 2020–21.

ERLC continued to operate under the expired Enterprise Agreement No. 9 conditions of employment (in accordance with the requirements of the *Fair Work Act*). Without prejudice to our ongoing negotiations concerning our new Enterprise Agreement, ERLC authorised an increase in salaries and allowances of 1.75% from Monday 6 July 2020.

EMPLOYEE SNAPSHOT

Employees	2019-20	2020-21
Number of staff members (including CE)	110	114
EFT (Including CE)	86.4	83
Gender		
Female	93 (84.5%)	95 (83.4%)
Male	17 (15.5%)	19 (16.6%)
Average length of employment (years)	13.46	13.49
Longest length of employment (years)	43	44
Average age (years)	47.47	46.83
Average retirement age (years)	62	61.5
Age of oldest staff member (years)	71	72
Age of youngest staff member (years)	20	20
Age 40 to 75	76	74
Age 20 to 39	34	40

YEARS OF SERVICE RECOGNITION

Congratulations to the following staff for their service over many years.

Years of service	Staff members
35 years	Karen Hemmings (Boronia) Rose Gray (Croydon)
15 years	Linda Dalziel (Rowville) Ajne Graham (Ferntree Gully) Michelle Tomazin (Rowville) Anita Crew (Croydon) Joseph Cullen (Admin)
10 years	Marguerite England (casual) Amy Abikhair (Knox)



Linda & Michelle with their service awards

STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

Type	Title	No. of staff completed
General	Library management system – Spydus	all
	Digital health literacy	16
	Public Libraries Evaluation Network – Events Evaluation	1
HR	ASU delegation training	2
	New staff induction/training	8
	Managers/team leaders refresher	2
	Health and wellbeing framework	3
Children’s Services	Ways to play	6
	Gender equity and body safety storytime training	6
	Promoting gender equity in the early years	3
	Understanding communication differences and anxiety in young children on the autism spectrum	6
	Innovative and adaptive practices in Children’s and Youth Services in a post-COVID environment	8
Promotional	Libraries Change Lives advocacy	6
OH&S	Manual handling	68
	Health & Safety Representative refresher	10
	Health & Safety Representative WorkSafe/ASU online training units – mental health in the workplace	5
	Fire warden	3

VISION SUPER SEMINARS – RETIREMENT PLANNING

Luke Smith, ERLC’s VISION Client Partnership Manager, presented 2 seminars on planning for retirement and 33 of our staff attended. The feedback indicated that the information presented was of great interest and highly appreciated by those who attended.

“Getting a greater understanding on how better to manage your super and retirement is not impossible – you just have to plan to succeed!” – Seminar attendee

CORONAVIRUS ACTIONS AND PROCEDURES

ERLC updated our COVID safe plans regularly throughout 2020–21 as the situation and restrictions changed. Staff and members were kept informed about the relevant procedures and requirements, such as the wearing of face masks, occupancy limits in each of the branches and maximum duration of visits.



Sharon takes on the COVID-19 Marshall role

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

ERLC continues to commit to our safety management policies and is accountable for ensuring a safe, supportive, protective and healthy work environment. This is achieved to the highest standards by ensuring that health and safety management is a key priority in all areas of planning, implementation, measurement and review within our workplaces.

Actions taken and procedures developed in 2020–21 included:

- Branch emergency evacuation procedures and fire drills were undertaken: January 2021

- Workplace inspections: completed February 2021
- Kitchen audits (all branches): replacement items purchased February 2021
- Updated and renewed all OH&S promotional posters
- Updated and renewed all COVID-19 promotional posters.

The pandemic team's activities included:

- Mental health and wellbeing guidelines distributed
- Helpful tips provided by our EAP provider
- Staff encouraged to take leave and regular breaks from the workplace
- OH&S representatives were encouraged to research and present ideas on work practices
- Face mask refresher training undertaken
- HSR attended WorkSafe/ASU online training units on mental health in the workplace.

Our commitment to the management of Work Cover and Injury prevention remains unchanged. ERLC continues to work with Beyond Pain, occupational and physiotherapists who specialise in the management of soft tissue injury and manual handling techniques in the workplace. One work cover injury was managed this year concerning soft tissue injury.

INCREASING RESILIENCE

ERLC participated in a statewide Public Library Staff Training Unit in February 2021 and 64 of our staff attended. The Resilience Project was designed specifically for public library staff. The library customer service environment can be complex, and every interaction is unique. Library staff are in constant dialogue with their communities. Trying to manage positive engagements all day, every day can be particularly challenging. Resilience is an important skill to master.

The Resilience Project included:

- understanding and adapting to change
- managing customer interactions with empathy and skill in a changing environment
- debriefing after difficult interactions
- resilience and wellbeing techniques for work.

A 90-minute resilience booster information session with Beck Henshall (via Zoom) was also made available to all our staff in August 2020. It covered the following topics:

- acknowledging our workplace and team achievements
- identifying symptoms of anxiety and catastrophic thinking
- developing techniques to reduce anxiety
- creating a self-care routine
- applying resilience activities throughout the day.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

As part of our commitment to supporting our staff, ERLC provides staff with an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). From 4 January 2021, our EAP provider is Relationship Matters.

Relationship Matters is a not-for-profit organisation with highly trained professional counsellors who are there to help our staff deal with any issues that are impacting them at work, whether they originate at work or in their personal lives. Relationship Matters has many years of experience in providing counselling to help staff experiencing pressure, stress and anxiety. Their counsellors can also help our staff with career development and interview techniques.

OTHER STAFF MATTERS

Working with Children Checks	4 new; 15 renewed
Police checks for volunteers and staff	None completed as outreach staff were not visiting in the community and volunteers were not delivering to home service clients during the pandemic.

STAFF EVENTS

Christmas 2020

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, we were unable to hold our regional Christmas staff gathering in 2020.

To celebrate and give recognition to our staff for all their extraordinary work and commitment in 2020, we gifted our staff with 4 hours of Christmas Cheer.

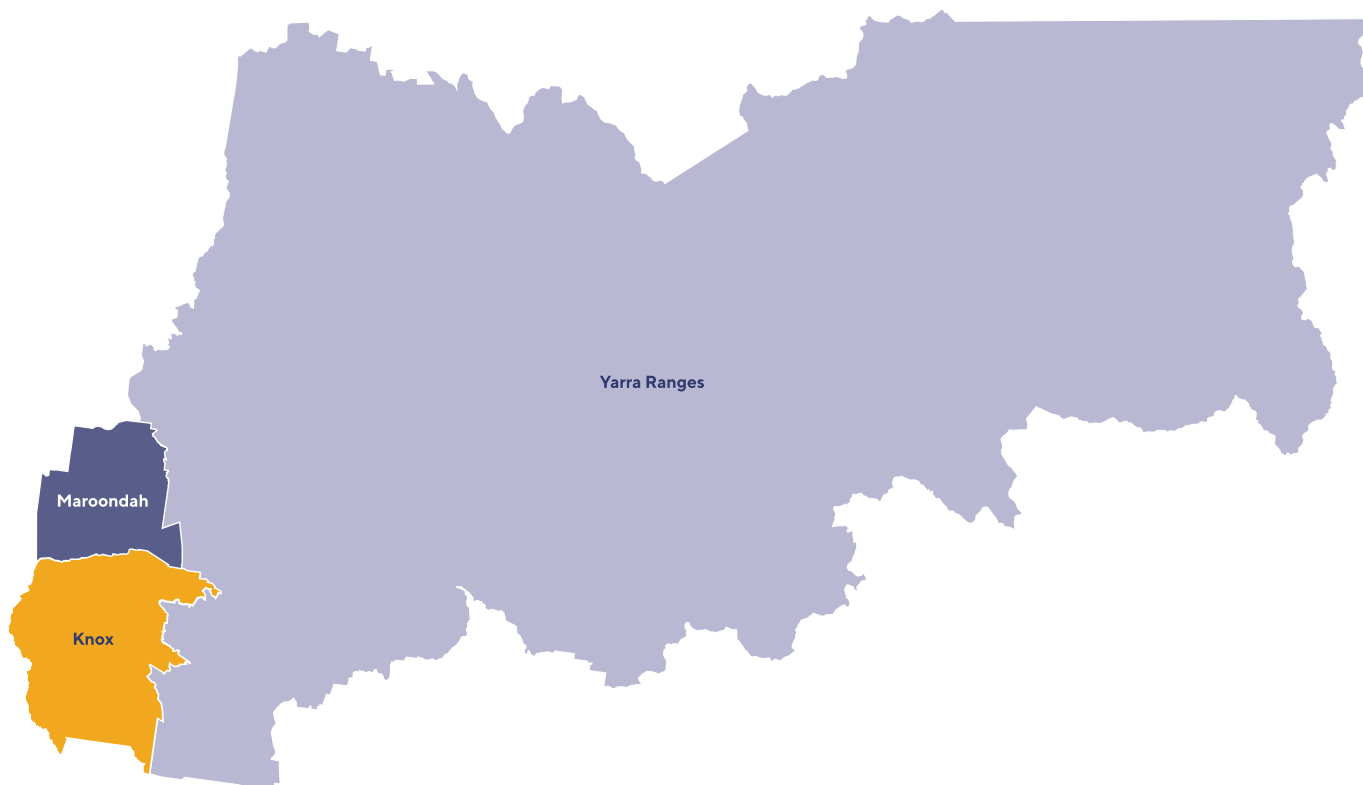
Many teams chose to dress up and celebrate at their branch.



Yarra Junction & Boronia staff dress up for Christmas

Governance

Eastern Regional Libraries Corporation (ERLC) provides library services to Knox City Council, Maroondah City Council and Yarra Ranges Council. Together, the 3 municipalities cover a large geographic area in the outer metropolitan area of Melbourne. They have a diverse range of communities and a combined population of 444,503.



Municipality	Population	Area
Knox	165,147	113.8 km ²
Maroondah	119,401	61.4 km ²
Yarra Ranges	159,955	2,500 km ²

Eastern Regional Libraries Corporation was established in 1996 by the Member Councils in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989*, section 196. The Board governs the Corporation in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Local Government Act, the Regional Library Agreement and other adopted policies and procedures.

The Board is made up of 2 nominated Councillors from each of the Member Councils. The day-to-day management of the Corporation is the responsibility of the Chief Executive, supported by his Corporate Management Team.

BOARD MEETINGS

The Board met 4 times during 2020–21 and with the assistance of its Corporate Management Team will meet all of its statutory deadlines.

Board meetings and attendances in 2020–21

Councillor	Council	Maximum possible number of meetings to attend	Number of meetings attended
Cr Allred	Knox	2	2
Cr Timmers-Leitch	Knox	2	2
Cr Mortimore	Knox	2	2
Cr Lockwood	Knox	2	2
Cr Damante	Maroondah	4	4
Cr Spears	Maroondah	4	4
Cr Cox	Yarra Ranges	4	4
Cr Eastham	Yarra Ranges	2	2
Cr Cliff	Yarra Ranges	2	2

Board membership changes

Knox

- Crs Allred & Timmers-Leitch joined the Board
- Crs Mortimore and Lockwood left the Board

Maroondah

- No change

Yarra Ranges

- Cr Eastham joined the Board
- Cr Cliff left the Board

Strategic planning framework

In accordance with the Local Government Act 1989, the Board must approve a Library Plan within 6 months after each general election or by the next 30 June, whichever is later.

The Corporation has developed a 4-year Your Library Plan 2021–2025, a 6-year Strategic Resource Plan and a Long-Term Financial Strategy. The Board develops these plans using the following resources:

- identifying community needs and aspirations identified through a biennial survey
- ad hoc community feedback via 'Your Comments Count'
- advice from our officers on broader library services and infrastructure trends
- reviews undertaken by our Member Councils in relation to their library services and infrastructure.

Action plans

A 4-year Action Plan based on the Your Library Plan will be agreed upon with each Member Council when they have adopted their Council and Health and Wellbeing Plans in October 2021. These plans will provide individual Council-focused outputs and outcomes during the 4 years of the Your Library Plan.

BOARD ACHIEVEMENTS

The Board has achieved the following:

Quarterly meetings:

- August 2020
- September 2020
- February 2021
- May 2021

Reports adopted:

- 2019–20 Annual Financial Report
- Annual Report 2020
- 2020–21 Budget Report
- Your Library Plan 2021–2025

Policies and strategies adopted:

- Additional library membership rules during a pandemic

Tenders awarded:

- Computer hardware
- Shelf-ready library materials and cataloguing services
- New phone system
- Courier contract

BIENNIAL SURVEY

Respondents who had recently used one of our branch libraries were asked to think about the performance of their branch in providing these services using a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 represented 'Very poor' and 10 represented 'Excellent'. Mean scores were calculated for each service, removing the 'Don't know' responses.

The survey results show that our staff continue to deliver highly regarded and rated services to our members. Over the last 7 years, our staff have been rated over 8 out of 10 in the key areas of courtesy, helpfulness, knowledge, reference and information services.

Metric	2019	2017	2016	2015	2014
Staff courtesy and helpfulness	8.65	7.37	8.55	8.61	8.53
Staff knowledge	8.51	8.28	8.54	8.61	8.38
Reference and information services	8.1	8.09	8.18	8.2	8.19

People who had visited a named public library branch within the last 12 months were asked to rate their satisfaction with the overall service provided. This was elicited using a 10-point scale similar to what was used for Importance, but with the options from 1 'Not at All Satisfied' to 10 'Very Satisfied'.

Our rating is 8.6, above the 8.4 score previously recorded, with 85% of respondents rating satisfaction with the overall service provided at a score of 8 or higher.

LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Protected disclosures

The *Protected Disclosure Act 2012* facilitates the disclosure of corrupt or improper conduct. It also protects people who disclose this information. ERLC is committed to the aims and objectives of the Protected Disclosure Act. ERLC recognises the value of transparency and accountability in our administrative and management practices and supports the making of disclosures that reveal corrupt conduct, conduct involving a substantial mismanagement of public resources, or conduct involving a substantial risk to public health and safety or the environment.

ERLC has not received any disclosures directly nor has it received any referrals from the Ombudsman or IBAC (the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission) for the year to date.

Freedom of information

Access by way of inspection, or by a copy of a document, is available from the Corporation's offices at 1350 Ferntree Gully Road, Scoresby, VIC 3179. The Corporation also provides copies by mail. Requests for access to documents should be directed to the Freedom of Information Officer at the above address. ERLC did not receive any FOI requests for 2020–21.

Information privacy

The *Information Privacy Act 2000* and *Health Records Act 2001* are designed to protect the private information of individuals. ERLC has a Privacy Policy available through its library branches and website. ERLC received one complaint for the year, which was fully resolved informally.

Gender equity

ERLC has been advised by the Commission for Gender Equality that it does not fall within the scope of the *Gender Equality Act 2020*. We will still pursue the objectives of the Gender Equality Act, but we do not have to formally report on our outcomes to the State Government. We will report on our actions and outcomes on gender equality through our Quarterly Reports and Annual Report to the Board.

Child safe standards

All ERLC staff have Working with Children Checks and have received training in the Child Safe Standards. ERLC has not had to respond to, or report, any allegations of child abuse during the year.

Equal opportunity

ERLC is committed to the principles of equal opportunity and we believe that our staff, volunteers, members and suppliers are entitled to merit-based processes and an environment free of harassment and bullying. All our staff have an entitlement to access employment, promotion, training and benefits based on their skills, qualifications, abilities and work performance. We reinforce our commitment to the principles of equal opportunity through our staff induction program, Code of Conduct and regular team meetings.

Charter of Human Rights

The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities (the Charter) sets out the basic rights, freedoms and responsibilities of all people in Victoria. It is about the relationship between the government and the people it serves.

The Charter requires people delivering services on behalf of the government, such as ERLC, to act consistently with the human rights in the Charter.

Twenty fundamental human rights are protected in the Charter. In certain circumstances, some rights may be limited. However, this must be necessary and reasonable, and there must be clear reasons for the decision.

In accordance with the Charter, ERLC protects human rights by acting in ways that are compatible with human rights and take relevant human rights into account when making decisions, providing services or developing its strategies and plans.

Financial Report

SUMMARY

The continued focus of delivering highly rated services cost-effectively means ERLC is in a strong financial position to continue its library services on behalf of its Member Councils.

ERLC is capable of meeting all its liabilities, statutory or otherwise, including all short-term and long-term staff benefits and any call for unfunded superannuation liability as a result of the performance of the Defined Benefits Scheme.

In addition, ERLC can now fund its longer-term investment in IT and Radio Frequency Identification equipment without relying on leasing. This will mean first-class IT infrastructure and services for the communities that ERLC services on behalf of its Member Councils.

2020-21 surplus – \$0.4 million

The financial report shows a surplus of \$400,000.

This outcome, which is better than budget, is mainly due to:

- staff costs being within \$8,000 of budget
- materials and services being \$305,000 under budget because of the impact of COVID-19.

The overall result is due to the ongoing work to contain costs within the contributions provided by our Member Councils. The contributions from our Member Councils in 2020-21 increased by 2%, in line with rate capping.

Other areas of expenditure are constantly under review and savings are constantly being sought and gained in the area of library systems and technology.

ERLC will continue to review all its expenditure to ensure the best value outcomes for its Member Councils.

The 2020-21 surplus allows the Corporation to provide a distribution of its accumulated surplus.

Accumulated surplus as at 30 June 2021 – \$10.2 million

The Corporation rightly has a risk-averse policy on investments that precludes investments other than term deposits. However, as with our Member Councils, our investments returns have been showing a steady decline over the last 12 to 18 months.

Based on these poor returns, the Chief Executive believed that the Corporation's accumulated surplus would be better utilised in funding new or improved libraries. The distribution of the Corporation's accumulated surplus would provide a better overall return for our communities.

Based on the Chief Executive's advice, the Board resolved that each Member Council would receive a distribution of \$2 million in the financial year 2021-22.

The timing of the distribution is to coincide with the substantially increased State Government's Living Libraries Grant funding levels over the next 2 years. The increased fund allows Councils to seek up to \$1 million in matching funding for a project, or \$1.5 million in the case of Yarra Ranges.

The distributions would be made to our Member Councils on the basis that they are held in an asset reserve fund, the nature and purpose of which is major capital expenditure to acquire, refurbish or redevelop library premises either as standalone premises or as part of community hubs.

Balance sheet

The balance sheet is in a healthy position, with current assets (\$10.6 million) greater than current liabilities (\$2.9 million). This means that ERLC is in a position to meet all its liabilities, statutory or otherwise, including all short-term and long-term staff benefits, which stand at \$2.1 million.

Current assets include cash and cash equivalents of \$5.8 million and financial assets of \$4.6 million. Financial assets are short-term and longer-term deposits with financial institutions.

An example of the use of the distribution would be the development of the new library as part of the Croydon Community Wellbeing Hub.

Equity

The Member Councils' equity has increased by \$400,000 which is the surplus achieved by ERLC for the year ended 30 June 2021.

Cash flow

Cash flows from operating activities (\$14.4 million) were sufficient to meet payments (\$11.5 million) and capital expenditure on library materials (\$2.3 million) during the year. Cash (\$10.4 million) remains healthy at 30 June 2021.

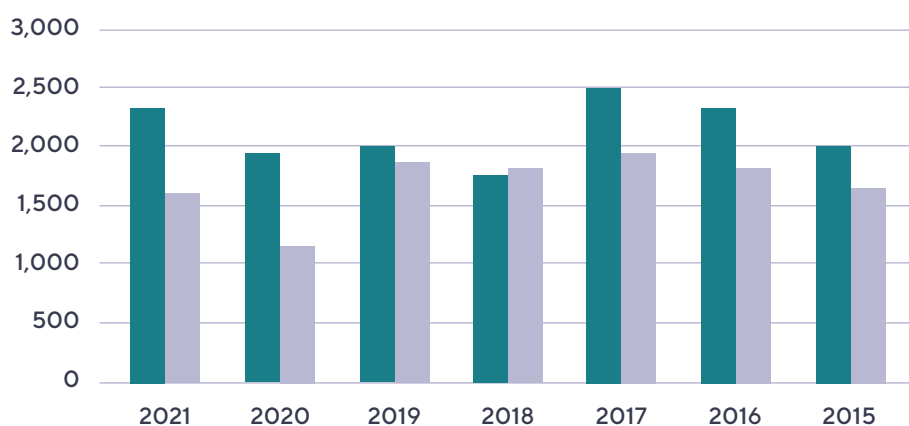
Capital expenditure vs depreciation

ERLC maintained its investment in assets (\$2.3 million) above the write-off for depreciation (\$1.7 million).

Capital expenditure

Item	\$
Furniture and equipment (mainly book sorters)	\$556,000
Library materials (books, DVDs, games):	\$1,795,000

Capital expenditure vs depreciation (\$'000)



INCOME

Total income of \$13.3 million for the year ended 30 June 2021 is made up as follows:

Sources of income, 2016–2021

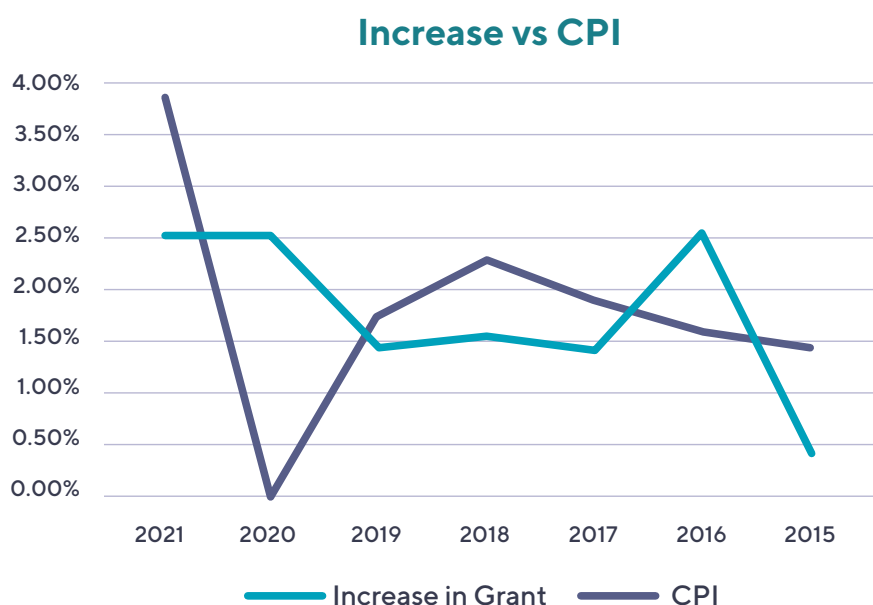
Income source	Year ended 30 June 2021 \$'000	Year ended 30 June 2020 \$'000	Year ended 30 June 2019 \$'000	Year ended 30 June 2018 \$'000	Year ended 30 June 2017 \$'000	Year ended 30 June 2016 \$'000
Grants – State Government	2,886	2,801	2,748	2,692	2,652	2,618
Contributions – Member Councils	10,372	10,555	10,398	10,171	9,975	10,018
User charges, fees and fines	50	215	302	356	423	426
Other income	59	132	292	244	240	287
Total	13,367	13,703	13,740	13,463	13,290	13,349

Grants – State Government

The State Government contributes only 22% to our highly valued community service (Figure 2). In the 1970s, the State Government for a period contributed 50% of the cost of running public library services – now 22%. Member Councils continue to bear the substantive costs (78%) associated with running a highly regarded public library service.

Our Public Library Grant increase for 2020–21 was 2.5%. This represents a reduction in real dollar terms of the level of support from the State Government compared to CPI at 3.8% for 2020–21 (Figure 1).

Figure 1:
Increase in grant income vs CPI, 2015–2021



Contributions – Member Councils

Our Member Councils directly contribute 78% of the total cost of running ERLC in 2020–21 (Figure 1). These contributions were slightly down on 2019–20, because of a rebate provided from ERLC due to the impact of COVID-19 on our services.

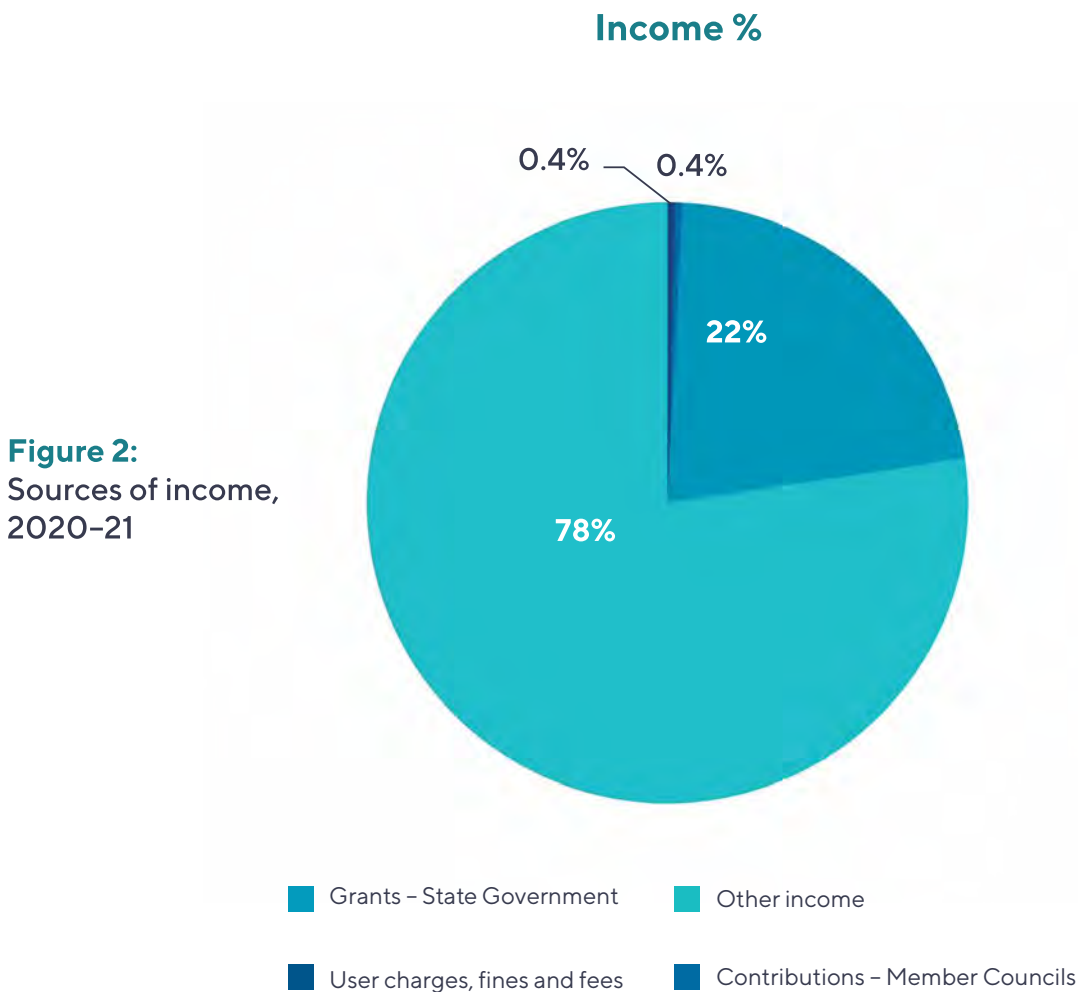
Member Council contributions in our Annual Financial Report do not take into account the indirect costs borne by our Councils (e.g. cost of leasing, building maintenance).

User charges, fees and fines

ERLC generated 0.4% of its income through user charges, mainly because of the impact of COVID-19 - no income from extension activities and printing/photocopying - and the withdrawal of fines as a Board policy decision to encourage readership (Figure 2). The impact was in the order of \$165,000.

Other income – term deposit investments

ERLC generated another 0.4% of its income through investment income on term deposits (Figure 2). The reduction in interest income of \$73,000 was because interest rates on deposits remained low throughout 2020–21.



EXPENSES

The overall result for expenses is mainly due to the ongoing work to contain costs within the contributions provided by our Member Councils. Member Council contributions for 2020–21 increased by 2%, in line with rate capping.

Total expenses of \$12.9 million are made up as follows:

Expenses, 2016 –2021	Year ended 30 June 2021 \$'000	Year ended 30 June 2020 \$'000	Year ended 30 June 2019 \$'000	Year ended 30 June 2018 \$'000	Year ended 30 June 2017 \$'000	Year ended 30 June 2016 \$'000
Employee costs	8,927	8,986	8,670	7,997	8,080	8,354
Materials and services	1,969	2,083	1,876	1,946	1,904	1,750
Depreciation	1,624	1,197	1,869	1,813	1,938	1,798
Amortisation – right of use assets	125	303				
Net loss on disposal of assets	260	222	477	108	324	357
Finance costs – leases	5	10				
Other expenses	33	32	349	386	386	487
Total expenses	12,943	12,833	13,740	13,463	13,290	13,349

Employee costs – \$8.9 million

Employee costs remain the highest expense factor for the Corporation, making up 68% of total expenses (Figure 3). The overall increase in staff member costs is mainly due to the annual percentage increase (1.75%) in respect of salaries due to Enterprise Agreement obligations. Despite this, in 2020–21 staff member costs were kept to within \$8,000 of the budget.

Materials and services - \$1.9 million

The following expenses are the largest individual areas of materials and services.

Item	\$'000
Courier	307
Communications - internet access for libraries	142
Software - library management system, Office 365, cyber security	209
Computer - equipment maintenance	190
Accounting service	105
Payroll services	61

The largest expenditure over budget for the year ended 30 June 2021 was in courier services. The budget was overspent by \$98 thousand because of providing deliveries to the home via a courier service (Click for Home Delivery) during the COVID-19 lockdowns. The over-expenditure was offset by savings in areas such as events and postage.

Depreciation \$1.6 million & amortisation \$125 thousand

Depreciation is an accounting method of allocating the cost of a tangible or physical asset over its useful life or life expectancy. Depreciation represents how much of an asset's value has been used up.

The following are the largest individual areas of depreciation and amortisation:

Item	\$'000
Furniture and equipment (mainly book sorters)	287
Library materials (books, DVDs, games)	1,330

Net loss on disposal of assets \$260 thousand

The proceeds received on the asset sale are compared to the asset’s book value to determine if a gain or loss on disposal has been realised. If the proceeds are less than book value, a loss on disposal has been realised. The loss is reported on the income statement and the loss reduces income.

The net loss in the accounts refers to the disposal of withdrawn stock for recycling that is no longer suitable for lending, but still has a written down value (purchased for \$20, but now only worth \$5 because of lending over 3 years) on the Corporations asset register. For example, a book withdrawn from stock from recycling has no monetary value to the Corporation, but it may have a written down value of \$5 on our asset register. The write down of this asset is a loss of \$5.

Other expenses \$33 thousand

Other expenses are mainly audit fees of \$8 thousand and office rental outgoings of \$21 thousand.

Other expenses have reduced significantly from 2018-19 (\$349 thousand) because from 2020-21, ERLC no longer leases its IT assets (\$200 thousand) and our administration office lease (\$142 thousand) is now treated as an asset and depreciated.

Expenses

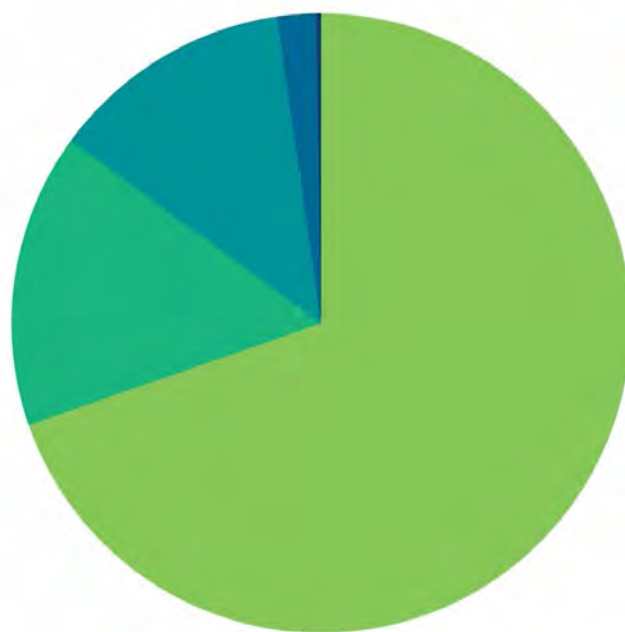
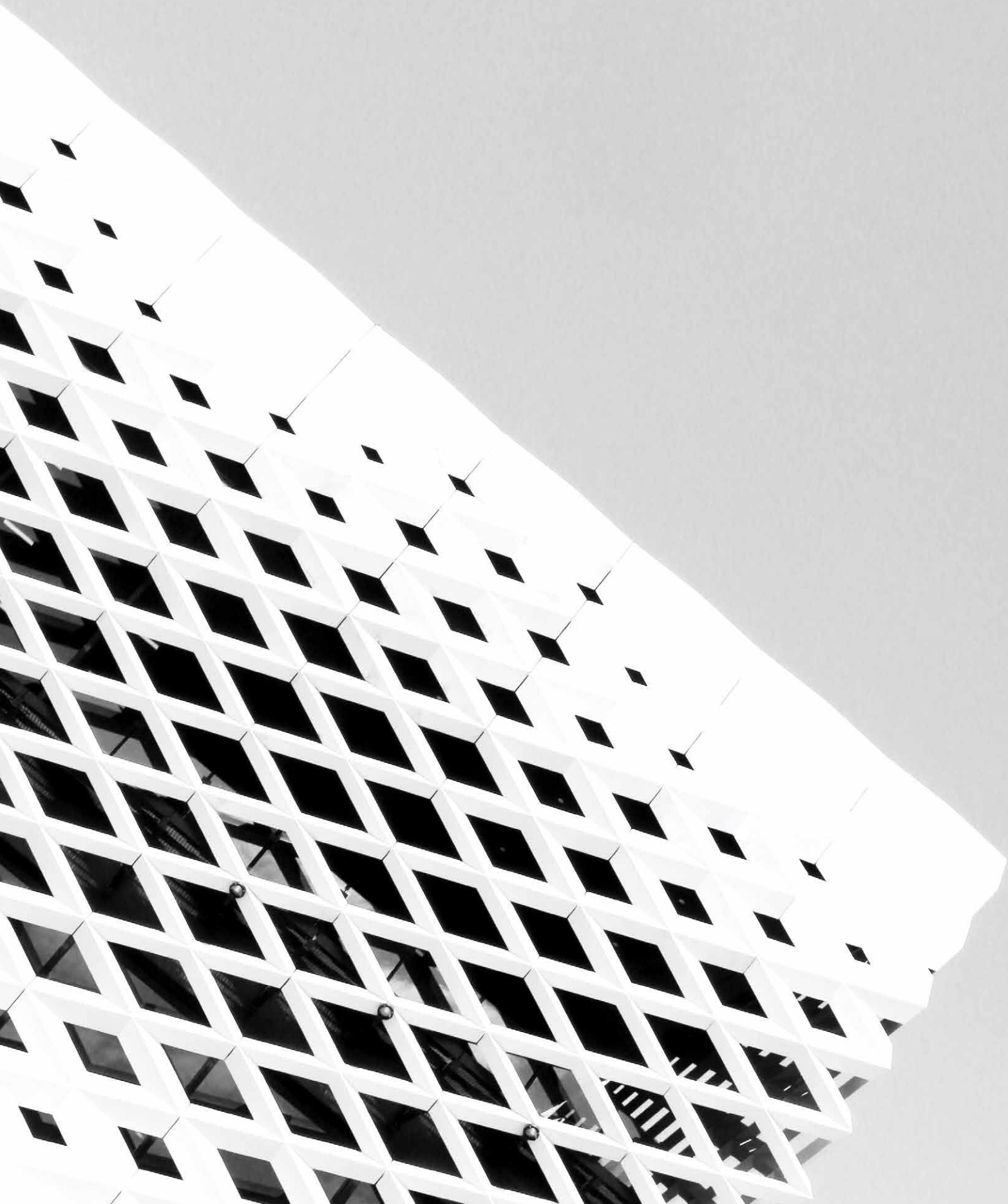


Figure 3:
Sources of expenses,
2020-21

- Employee costs
- Materials and services
- Depreciation
- Amortisation - right of use assets
- Net loss on disposal of assets
- Finance costs - leases
- Other expenses

Financial Statements



FINANCIAL REPORT

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EASTERN REGIONAL LIBRARIES CORPORATION

Certification of the Financial Statements

In my opinion the accompanying financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989*, the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014*, Australian Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements.

JOSEPH P CULLEN

PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTING OFFICER



DATED AT SCORESBY ON THIS 2nd DAY OF SEPTEMBER 2021

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly the financial transactions of the Eastern Regional Libraries Corporation (ERLC) for the year ended 30 June 2021 and the financial position of the ERLC as at that date.

As at the date of signing, we are not aware of any circumstance which would render any particulars in the financial statements to be misleading or inaccurate.

We have been authorised by the Board of the Corporation and by the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014* to certify the financial statements in their final form.

CR DAVID EASTHAM

CHAIR
ERLC BOARD MEMBER



CR TASA DAMANTE

DEPUTY CHAIR
ERLC BOARD MEMBER



JOSEPH P CULLEN

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



DATED AT SCORESBY ON THIS 2nd DAY OF SEPTEMBER 2021

Independent Auditor's Report

To the Board of Eastern Regional Libraries Corporation

Opinion	<p>I have audited the financial report of Eastern Regional Libraries Corporation (the corporation) which comprises the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • balance sheet as at 30 June 2021 • comprehensive income statement for the year then ended • statement of changes in equity for the year then ended • statement of cash flows for the year then ended • notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies • certification of the financial statements. <p>In my opinion the financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the corporation as at 30 June 2021 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of part 6 of the <i>Local Government Act 1989</i> and applicable Australian Accounting Standards.</p>
Basis for Opinion	<p>I have conducted my audit in accordance with the <i>Audit Act 1994</i> which incorporates the Australian Auditing Standards. I further describe my responsibilities under that Act and those standards in the <i>Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report</i> section of my report.</p> <p>My independence is established by the <i>Constitution Act 1975</i>. My staff and I are independent of the corporation in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 <i>Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants</i> (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Victoria. My staff and I have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.</p> <p>I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.</p>
Board's responsibilities for the financial report	<p>The Board of the corporation is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and the <i>Local Government Act 1989</i>, and for such internal control as the Board determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.</p> <p>In preparing the financial report, the Board is responsible for assessing the corporation's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless it is inappropriate to do so.</p>

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial report

As required by the *Audit Act 1994*, my responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on the audit. My objectives for the audit are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the corporation's internal control
- evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Board
- conclude on the appropriateness of the Board's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the corporation's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the corporation to cease to continue as a going concern.
- evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with the Board regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

MELBOURNE
16 September 2021



Sanchu Chummar

as delegate for the Auditor-General of Victoria

EASTERN REGIONAL LIBRARIES CORPORATION
Comprehensive Income Statement
For the year ended 30 June 2021

	Note	2021 \$'000s	2020 \$'000s
Income			
Grants - operating	2.1(a)	2,886	2,801
Contributions - monetary	6.2(a)	10,373	10,555
Other income	2.3	59	132
User charges, fees and fines		<u>51</u>	<u>215</u>
Total income		<u>13,369</u>	<u>13,703</u>
Expenses			
Employee costs	3.1(a)	(8,927)	(8,986)
Materials and services	3.2	(1,970)	(2,083)
Depreciation	3.3, 5.1	(1,624)	(1,197)
Net loss on disposal of plant, furniture, equipment and library materials	2.2	(260)	(222)
Amortisation - right of use assets	3.5	(121)	(303)
Other expenses	3.7	(33)	(32)
Amortisation - intangible assets	3.4	(4)	-
Finance costs - leases	3.6	<u>(5)</u>	<u>(10)</u>
Total expenses		<u>(12,944)</u>	<u>(12,833)</u>
Surplus for the year		<u>425</u>	<u>870</u>
Total comprehensive result		<u>425</u>	<u>870</u>

The above comprehensive income statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

EASTERN REGIONAL LIBRARIES CORPORATION
Balance Sheet
As at 30 June 2021

	Note	2021 \$'000s	2020 \$'000s
Assets			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	4.1(a)	5,867	6,384
Trade and other receivables	4.1(c)	22	279
Other financial assets	4.1(b)	4,600	3,750
Other assets	4.2(a)	186	140
Total current assets		<u>10,675</u>	<u>10,553</u>
Non-current assets			
Trade and other receivables	4.1(c)	8	8
Plant, furniture, equipment and library materials	5.1	6,099	5,645
Intangible assets	4.2(b)	34	-
Right-of-use assets	4.5	176	300
Total non-current assets		<u>6,317</u>	<u>5,953</u>
Total Assets		<u>16,992</u>	<u>16,506</u>
Liabilities			
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	4.3(a)	752	423
Unearned income	4.3(b)	4	24
Provisions	4.4(a)	2,062	2,191
Lease liabilities	4.5	117	129
Total current liabilities		<u>2,935</u>	<u>2,767</u>
Non-current liabilities			
Provisions	4.4(a)	41	43
Lease liabilities	4.5	69	174
Total non-current liabilities		<u>110</u>	<u>217</u>
Total Liabilities		<u>3,045</u>	<u>2,984</u>
Net Assets		<u>13,947</u>	<u>13,522</u>
Equity			
Members' equity based on initial contributions	4.6	3,689	3,689
Accumulated surplus		10,258	9,833
Total Equity		<u>13,947</u>	<u>13,522</u>

The above balance sheet should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

EASTERN REGIONAL LIBRARIES CORPORATION
Statement of Changes in Equity
For the year ended 30 June 2021

	Total \$'000s	Accumulated Surplus \$'000s	Members' Equity \$'000s
2021			
Balance at beginning of the financial year	13,522	9,833	3,689
Surplus for the year	<u>425</u>	<u>425</u>	<u>-</u>
Balance at end of the financial year	<u>13,947</u>	<u>10,258</u>	<u>3,689</u>
2020			
Balance at beginning of the financial year	12,652	8,963	3,689
Surplus for the year	<u>870</u>	<u>870</u>	<u>-</u>
Balance at end of the financial year	<u>13,522</u>	<u>9,833</u>	<u>3,689</u>

The above statement of changes in equity should be read with the accompanying notes.

EASTERN REGIONAL LIBRARIES CORPORATION
Statement of Cash Flows
For the year ended 30 June 2021

	Note	2021 Inflows/ (Outflows) \$'000s	2020 Inflows/ (Outflows) \$'000s
Cash flows from operating activities			
Receipts			
Grants - operating		2,867	2,826
Contributions - monetary		11,410	11,611
User charges, fees and fines		56	231
Interest received		56	165
Other receipts		23	25
		14,412	14,858
Payments			
Employee costs		(9,016)	(8,952)
Materials and services		(2,244)	(2,702)
Net GST payment		(277)	(1,086)
Other payments		(44)	(4)
Short-term, low value and variable lease payments		-	(23)
		(11,581)	(12,767)
Net cash provided by operating activities	8.1	2,831	2,091
Cash flows from investing activities			
Proceeds from sale of plant and equipment		12	-
Payments for plant, furniture, equipment and library materials		(2,388)	(1,981)
Proceeds from disposal of financial assets		3,750	7,150
Purchase of financial assets		(4,600)	(3,750)
		(3,226)	1,419
Net cash used in investing activities		(3,226)	1,419
Cash flows from financing activities			
Interest paid - lease liability		(5)	(10)
Repayment of lease liabilities		(117)	(300)
		(122)	(310)
Net cash used in financing activities		(122)	(310)
Net Increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		(517)	3,200
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of financial year		6,384	3,184
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	4.1(a)	5,867	6,384

The above statement of cash flows should be read with the accompanying notes.

EASTERN REGIONAL LIBRARIES CORPORATION

Notes to and part of forming the Financial Report For the year ended 30 June 2021

Overview

Introduction

The Eastern Regional Libraries Corporation (ERLC) was established by an Order of the Governor in Council on the 14th of June 1996 and is a body corporate. The Corporation's main office is located at 1350 Ferntree Gully Road, Scoresby, Victoria, 3179.

The purpose of the Corporation is to:

- provide resources and programs aimed at meeting the information, recreation, educational and cultural needs of the diverse communities of Knox, Maroondah and Yarra Ranges in an equitable, effective, efficient, responsive and forward looking manner in accordance with the values and objectives of the Library Plan;
- provide or ensure the provision of, subject to any conditions attached to any State government library subsidies and grants to the Regional Library or the Councils, a regional library service for Councils' municipal districts as determined by the Board; and
- make Local Laws relating to the Regional Library; perform any other functions which are conferred on the Regional Library under this Agreement or the Act, including defining overall policy objectives, developing strategic policy, letting tenders for the provision of services, monitoring contracts under which services are provided, and approving a corporate plan and an annual service plan.

Statement of compliance

These financial statements are a general purpose financial report that consists of a Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Changes in Equity, Statement of Cash Flows and Notes accompanying these financial statements. The general purpose financial report complies with Australian Accounting Standards, other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB), the *Local Government Act 1989* and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014*.

Significant accounting policies

(a) Basis of accounting

The accrual basis of accounting has been used in the preparation of these financial statements, whereby assets, liabilities, equity, income and expenses are recognised in the reporting period to which they relate, regardless of when cash is received or paid.

Judgements, estimates and assumptions are required to be made about the carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated judgements are based on professional judgement derived from historical experience and various other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised and also in future periods that are affected by the revision. Judgements and assumptions made by management in the application of AAS's that have significant effects on the financial statements and estimates relate to:

- the determination of depreciation on plant, furniture, equipment and library materials (refer to Note 5.1)
- the determination of employee provisions (refer to Note 4.4 (a))
- the determination of whether performance obligations are sufficiently specific so as to determine whether an arrangement is within the scope of AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers or AASB 1058 Income of Not-for-Profit Entities (refer to Note 2)
- the determination, in accordance with AASB 16 Leases, of the lease term, the estimation of the discount rate when not implicit in the lease and whether an arrangement is in substance short-term or low value (refer to Note 4.6)
- whether or not AASB 1059 Service Concession Arrangements: Grantors is applicable (refer to Note 9)

Unless otherwise stated, all accounting policies are consistent with those applied in the prior year. Where appropriate, comparative figures have been amended to accord with current presentation, and disclosure has been made of any material changes to comparatives.

(b) Impact of COVID-19

On 16 March 2020 a state of emergency was declared in Victoria due to the global pandemic COVID-19 virus, known as coronavirus. A state of disaster was subsequently declared on 2 August 2020. While the impacts of the pandemic have abated somewhat through the 2020-21 year, ERLC has noted the following significant impacts on its financial operations:

Library closure periods

In response to significant decrease in demand / government directive amidst the COVID-19 outbreak, the library branches have undergone closure periods during the financial year and continued to operate in the following manner:

- Click for Home Delivery is a free postal service that allows the community to keep on borrowing. \$64K in postage and courier costs were incurred to facilitate this program.
- The reduced foot traffic into library branches, has reduced user fees including print and copy charges and meeting room hire fees by \$107K.
- ERLC stopped conducting in-house events and moved to online webinars, and events for the community to participate in at no charge. This has reduced extension activity income by \$55K.

Community assistance

ERLC made the decision to stop issuing fines for overdue items, to reduce financial barriers to library access. Members were only billed for lost, damaged or stolen items. This resulted in a decrease in ERLC's fines and charges revenue of \$33K.

EASTERN REGIONAL LIBRARIES CORPORATION

Notes to and part of forming the Financial Report For the year ended 30 June 2021

Note 1 Performance against budget

The budget comparison notes compare ERLC's financial plan, expressed through its annual budget, with actual performance. The *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014* requires explanation of any material variances. ERLC has adopted a materiality threshold of the lower of 10% or \$150,000 where further explanation is warranted. Explanations have not been provided for variations below the materiality threshold unless the variance is considered material because of its nature.

The budget figures detailed below are those adopted by ERLC on 21 May 2020. The budget was based on assumptions that were relevant at the time of adoption of the budget. ERLC sets guidelines and parameters for income and expense targets in this budget in order to meet ERLC's planning and financial performance targets for both the short and long-term.

These notes are prepared to meet the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1989* and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014*.

1.1 Income and Expenditure	Budget 2021 \$'000s	Actual 2021 \$'000s	Variance 2021 \$'000s	Variance %	Ref
Income					
Grants - operating	2,805	2,886	81	3%	
Contributions - monetary	10,335	10,373	38	0%	
User charges, fees and fines	247	51	(196)	-79%	1
Other income	220	59	(161)	-73%	2
Total income	13,607	13,369	(238)	-	
Expenses					
Employee costs	(8,919)	(8,927)	(8)	0%	
Materials and services	(2,274)	(1,970)	304	-13%	3
Depreciation and amortisation	(1,884)	(1,624)	260	-14%	4
Net loss on disposal of plant, furniture, equipment and library materials	(300)	(260)	40	-13%	5
Amortisation - Right of use assets	-	(121)	(121)	100%	6
Other expenses	(222)	(33)	189	-85%	7
Amortisation - intangible assets	-	(4)	(4)	100%	8
Finance costs - Leases	-	(5)	(5)	100%	9
Total expenses	(13,599)	(12,944)	655	-	
Surplus for the year	8	425	417	52	

(i) Explanation of material variations

Variance Ref	Item	Explanation
1	User charges, fees and fines	The closures and reduced operating capacity of the Corporation during the COVID-19 pandemic, has reduced the amount of user fees received including print and copy charges and extension activities. To support the community, fines on overdue books have also been removed.
2	Other income	Reduced interest rates during the 2020-21 financial year resulted in lower investment income. Due to the global economic conditions and the uncertainty of library branches remaining open during the COVID-19 restrictions, a reduced number of investments were made for cash flow purposes.
3	Materials and services	Functions, catering & entertainment were \$57K lower than anticipated due to the changing COVID-19 restrictions. Staff training & education was \$23K lower than budgeted, as many courses switched to more economical online methods in 2020-21.
4	Depreciation	The amortisation of right of use assets was budgeted under Depreciation but was allocated to Amortisation - Right of use assets.
5	Net (gain)/loss on disposal of plant, furniture, equipment and library materials	A lower number of library materials was disposed of than originally anticipated when preparing the 2020-21 budget.
6	Amortisation - Right of use assets	The amortisation of Right of use assets was budgeted under Depreciation but was allocated to Amortisation - Right of use assets.
7	Other expenses	Lease expenses paid for the office premises and IT equipment were budgeted under Other expenses but were allocated to the right of use asset lease liability per AASB 16.
8	Amortisation - intangible assets	The amortisation of Intangible assets was budgeted under Depreciation but was allocated to Amortisation - Intangible assets.
9	Finance costs - Leases	Lease finance costs related to the office premises and IT equipment were budgeted under Other expenses but were allocated to Finance costs per AASB 16.

EASTERN REGIONAL LIBRARIES CORPORATION
Notes to and part of forming the Financial Report
For the year ended 30 June 2021

	2021 \$'000s	2020 \$'000s
Note 2 Funding for the delivery of our services		
2.1 Funding from other levels of government		
Grants were received in respect of the following:		
Summary of grants		
State funded grants	2,865	2,796
Commonwealth funded grants	21	5
Total grants received	2,886	2,801
(a) Operating Grants		
Recurrent - State Government		
Public Libraries Grant Program	2,804	2,737
Premiers' Reading Challenge	58	58
Total recurrent operating grants	2,862	2,795
Non-Recurrent - Commonwealth Government		
Be Connected Grant	21	5
Non-Recurrent - State Government		
Children's Week	-	1
Writing the Rainbow	3	
Total non-recurrent operating grants	24	6
Total operating grants	2,886	2,801
(b) Unspent grants received on condition that they be spent in a specific manner		
Balance at start of year	24	-
Received during the financial year and remained unspent at balance date	4	24
Received in prior years and spent during the financial year	(24)	-
Balance at year end	4	24

Grant income is recognised at the point in time when ERLC satisfies its performance obligations as specified in the underlying agreement.

2.2 Net (loss) on disposal of plant, furniture, equipment and library materials

Proceeds of sale	11	-
Written down value of assets disposed	(271)	(222)
Total (loss) on disposal of plant, furniture, equipment and library materials	(260)	(222)

The profit or loss on sale of an asset is determined when control of the asset has passed to the buyer.

2.3 Other income

Interest	38	106
Other	21	26
Total other income	59	132

Interest is recognised as it is earned.

Other income is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable and is recognised when ERLC gains control over the right to receive the income.

	2021 \$'000s	2020 \$'000s
Note 3 The cost of delivering services		
3.1 (a) Employee costs		
Wages and salaries	7,521	7,343
Annual leave	544	668
Superannuation	634	705
Long service leave	158	199
Fringe benefits tax	20	23
WorkCover	50	48
Total employee costs	<u>8,927</u>	<u>8,986</u>
3.1 (b) Superannuation		
ERLC made contributions to the following funds:		
Defined benefit fund		
Employer contributions to Local Authorities Superannuation Fund (Vision Super)	129	172
Employer contributions - other funds	-	-
	<u>129</u>	<u>172</u>
Employer contributions payable at reporting date	-	-
Accumulation funds		
Employer contributions to Local Authorities Superannuation Fund (Vision Super)	463	498
Employer contributions - other funds	56	44
	<u>519</u>	<u>542</u>
Employer contributions payable at reporting date	40	38

Refer to Note 8.2 for further information relating to ERLC's superannuation obligations.

EASTERN REGIONAL LIBRARIES CORPORATION
Notes to and part of forming the Financial Report
For the year ended 30 June 2021

	2021 \$'000s	2020 \$'000s
3.2 Materials and services		
Office administration	650	688
Information technology	491	421
Library consumables	457	615
Contract payments	166	136
Insurance	97	95
Repairs and maintenance	81	104
Consultants	16	12
Utilities	12	12
Total material and services	<u>1,970</u>	<u>2,083</u>
3.3 Depreciation		
Library materials	1,330	1,026
Furniture and equipment	287	162
Plant	7	9
Total depreciation	<u>1,624</u>	<u>1,197</u>
Refer to note 5.1 for a more detailed breakdown of depreciation and amortisation charges and accounting policy.		
3.4 Amortisation - Intangible assets		
Software	<u>4</u>	<u>-</u>
Total Amortisation - Right of use assets	<u>4</u>	<u>-</u>
3.5 Amortisation - Right of use assets		
Property	115	113
Information Technology	22	190
Adjustments prior year right-of-use assets due to re-measurement	<u>(16)</u>	<u>-</u>
Total Amortisation - Right of use assets	<u>121</u>	<u>303</u>
3.6 Finance Costs - Leases		
Interest - Lease Liabilities	<u>5</u>	<u>10</u>
Total finance costs	<u>5</u>	<u>10</u>
3.7 Other expenses		
Lease outgoing	24	16
Short-term leases	-	7
Auditors' remuneration - VAGO - audit of the financial statements	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>
Total other expenses	<u>33</u>	<u>32</u>

	2021 \$'000s	2020 \$'000s
Note 4 Our financial position		
4.1 Financial assets		
(a) Cash and cash equivalents		
Cash at bank	5,867	6,383
Cash on hand	-	1
Total cash and cash equivalents	<u>5,867</u>	<u>6,384</u>
ERLC's cash and cash equivalents are not subject to any external restrictions that limit amounts available for discretionary use.		
(b) Other financial assets		
Term deposits	<u>4,600</u>	<u>3,750</u>
Total other financial assets	<u>4,600</u>	<u>3,750</u>
Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits at call, and other highly liquid investments with original maturities of 90 days or less, net of outstanding bank overdrafts (if applicable).		
Financial assets including investments such as term deposits are held to maturity and measured at amortised cost.		
(c) Trade and other receivables		
Current		
<i>Statutory receivables</i>		
Net GST receivable	-	259
<i>Non statutory receivables</i>		
Trade payables credit notes	19	-
Accrued interest	<u>3</u>	<u>20</u>
Total current trade and other receivables	<u>22</u>	<u>279</u>
Non-Current		
<i>Non statutory receivables</i>		
Security deposit	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>
Total non-current trade and other receivables	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>
Total trade and other receivables	<u>30</u>	<u>287</u>

Short term receivables are carried at invoice amount. A provision for doubtful debts is recognised when there is objective evidence that an impairment has occurred. Long term receivables are carried at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method.

No provision has been made for doubtful debts.

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	2021	2020
	\$'000s	\$'000s
4.2(a) Non-financial assets		
Other assets		
Prepayments	186	140
Total other assets	186	140
(b) Intangible assets		
Corporate software	34	-
Total intangible assets	34	-
	Corporate	
	Software	
	\$'000s	
Gross carrying amount		
Balance at 30 June 2020	-	
Other Additions	37	
Balance at 30 June 2021	37	
Accumulated amortisation and impairment		
Balance at 30 June 2020	-	
Amortisation expense	(3)	
Balance at 30 June 2021	(3)	
Net book value at 30 June 2020	-	
Net book value at 30 June 2021	34	
<p>Intangible assets with finite lives are amortised as an expense on a systematic basis over the asset's useful life. Amortisation is generally calculated on a straight line basis, at a rate that allocates the asset value, less any estimated residual value over its estimated useful life. Estimates of the remaining useful lives and amortisation method are reviewed at least annually, and adjustments made where appropriate.</p>		
4.3(a) Payables		
Trade and other payables		
Net GST payable	98	-
Salaries accruals	206	161
Accrued expenses	139	77
Trade payables	309	185
Total trade and other payables	752	423
(b) Unearned income		
Grants received in advance - operating	4	24
Total unearned income	4	24

4.4 Provisions

	Annual Leave \$'000s	Long Service Leave \$'000s	Total \$'000s
2021			
Balance at beginning of the financial year	805	1,430	2,234
Additional provisions	(29)	(22)	(51)
Amounts used	(51)	(70)	(121)
Change in the discounted amount arising because of time and the effect of any change in the discount rate	<u>15</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>41</u>
Balance at the end of the financial year	<u>740</u>	<u>1,364</u>	<u>2,103</u>
2020			
Balance at beginning of the financial year	794	1,425	2,219
Additional provisions	87	202	289
Amounts used	(62)	(204)	(267)
Change in the discounted amount arising because of time and the effect of any change in the discount rate	<u>(14)</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>(7)</u>
Balance at the end of the financial year	<u>805</u>	<u>1,430</u>	<u>2,234</u>

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	2021 \$'000s	2020 \$'000s
(a) Employee provisions		
Current provisions expected to be wholly settled within 12 months		
Annual leave	325	355
Long service leave	138	195
	<u>463</u>	<u>550</u>
Current provisions expected to be wholly settled after 12 months		
Annual leave	414	450
Long service leave	1,185	1,191
	<u>1,599</u>	<u>1,641</u>
Total current employee provisions	<u>2,062</u>	<u>2,191</u>
Non-current		
Long service leave	41	43
Total non-current employee provisions	<u>41</u>	<u>43</u>
Aggregate carrying amount of employee provisions:		
Current	2,062	2,191
Non-current	41	43
Total aggregate carrying amount of employee provisions	<u>2,103</u>	<u>2,234</u>

The calculation of employee costs and benefits includes all relevant on-costs and are calculated as follows at reporting date.

Wages and salaries and annual leave

Liabilities for wages and salaries, including non-monetary benefits, annual leave and accumulated sick leave expected to be wholly settled within 12 months of the reporting date are recognised in the provision for employee benefits in respect of employee services up to the reporting date, classified as current liabilities and measured at their nominal values.

Liabilities that are not expected to be wholly settled within 12 months of the reporting date are recognised in the provision for employee benefits as current liabilities, measured at the present value of the amounts expected to be paid when the liabilities are settled using the remuneration rate expected to apply at the time of settlement.

Long service leave

Liability for long service leave (LSL) is recognised in the provision for employee benefits. LSL is measured at present value. Unconditional LSL is disclosed as a current liability. Conditional LSL that has been accrued, where an employee is yet to reach a qualifying term of employment, is disclosed as a non-current liability.

	2021	2020
Key Assumptions - AL		
- Weighted average discount rate	0.03%	0.14%
- Weighted average index rate	2.41%	2.00%
Key Assumptions - LSL		
- Weighted average discount rate - current	0.93%	0.49%
- Weighted average discount rate - non-current	0.48%	0.36%
- Weighted average index rate - current	2.06%	2.00%
- Weighted average index rate - non-current	2.29%	2.00%

4.5 Leases

At inception of a contract, all entities would assess whether a contract is, or contains, a lease. A contract is, or contains, a lease if the contract conveys the right to control the use of an identified asset for a period of time in exchange for consideration. To identify whether a contract conveys the right to control the use of an identified asset, it is necessary to assess whether:

- The contract involves the use of an identified asset;
- The customer has the right to obtain substantially all of the economic benefits from use of the asset throughout the period of use; and
- The customer has the right to direct the use of the asset.

This policy is applied to contracts entered into, or changed, on or after 1 July 2019.

As a lessee, ERLC recognises a right-of-use asset and a lease liability at the lease commencement date. The right-of-use asset is initially measured at cost which comprises the initial amount of the lease liability adjusted for:

- Any lease payments made at or before the commencement date less any lease incentives received; plus
- Any initial direct costs incurred; and
- An estimate of costs to dismantle and remove the underlying asset or to restore the underlying asset or the site on which it is located.

The right-of-use asset is subsequently depreciated using the straight-line method from the commencement date to the earlier of the end of the useful life of the right-of-use asset or the end of the lease term. The estimated useful lives of right-of-use assets are determined on the same basis as those of property, plant and equipment. In addition, the right-of-use asset is periodically reduced by impairment losses, if any, and adjusted for certain measurements of the lease liability.

The lease liability is initially measured at the present value of the lease payments that are not paid at the commencement date, discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease or, if that rate cannot be readily determined, an appropriate incremental borrowing rate. Generally, ERLC uses an appropriate incremental borrowing rate as the discount rate.

Lease payments included in the measurement of the lease liability comprise the following:

- Fixed payments
- Variable lease payments that depend on an index or a rate, initially measured using the index or rate as at the commencement date;
- Amounts expected to be payable under a residual value guarantee; and
- The exercise price under a purchase option that ERLC is reasonably certain to exercise, lease payments in an optional renewal period if ERLC is reasonably certain to exercise an extension option, and penalties for early termination of a lease unless ERLC is reasonably certain not to terminate early.

When the lease liability is remeasured in this way, a corresponding adjustment is made to the carrying amount of the right-of-use asset, or is recorded in profit or loss if the carrying amount of the right-of-use asset has been reduced to zero.

ERLC has elected to apply the temporary option available under AASB 16 Leases which allows not-for-profit entities to not measure right-of-use assets at initial recognition at fair value in respect of leases that have significantly below-market terms.

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Right-of-use assets	IT		Total \$'000
	Property \$'000	Equipment \$'000	
Balance at 1 July 2019	397	206	603
Additions	-	-	-
Amortisation charge	(113)	(190)	(303)
Balance at 30 June 2020	284	16	300
Balance at 1 July 2020	284	16	300
Adjustments to prior year due to re-measurement of lease liability	(16)	6	(10)
Additions	-	-	-
Adjustments to right-of-use assets due to re-measurement of lease liability	23	-	23
Amortisation charge	(115)	(22)	(137)
Balance at 30 June 2021	176	-	176

Lease liabilities	2021 \$'000	2020 \$'000
Maturity analysis - contractual undiscounted cash flows		
Less than one year	119	133
One to five years	70	182
More than five years	-	-
Total undiscounted lease liabilities as at 30 June	189	315
Lease liabilities included in Balance Sheet at 30 June:		
Current	117	129
Non-current	69	174
Total lease liabilities	186	303

Short-term and low value leases

ERLC has elected not to recognise right-of-use assets and lease liabilities for short-term leases of machinery that have a lease term of 12 months or less and leases of low-value assets (individual assets worth less than existing capitalisation thresholds for a like asset up to a maximum of AUD\$10,000), including IT equipment. ERLC recognises the lease payments associated with these leases as an expense on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

Expenses relating to:	2021 \$'000	2020 \$'000
Short-term leases	-	7
Leases of low value assets	-	-
Total	-	-
Variable lease payments (not included in measurement of lease liabilities)	-	-

ERLC does not currently have any non-cancellable lease commitments which are short-term or low value leases.

	2021 \$'000s	2020 \$'000s
4.6 Members' equity (ownership interest)		
The Net Assets of the joint venture:	<u>3,689</u>	<u>3,689</u>
The percentage equity share of making up this joint venture is as follows:	%	%
Yarra Ranges Shire Council	38.72	38.72
Knox City Council	36.39	36.39
Maroondah City Council	<u>24.89</u>	<u>24.89</u>
	<u>100.00</u>	<u>100.00</u>

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Note 5 Assets we manage

5.1 Plant, furniture, equipment and library materials

Summary of plant, furniture, equipment and library materials

	Written Down Value 30 June 2020 \$'000s	Additions \$'000s	Depreciation \$'000s	Disposal \$'000s	Written Down Value 30 June 2021 \$'000s
2021					
Library materials	4,834	1,795	(1,330)	(257)	5,042
Furniture and equipment	745	556	(287)	-	1,014
Plant	66	-	(9)	(14)	43
	5,645	2,351	(1,626)	(271)	6,099

	Written Down Value 30 June 2019 \$'000s	Additions \$'000s	Depreciation \$'000s	Disposal \$'000s	Written Down Value 30 June 2020 \$'000s
2020					
Library materials	4,284	1,799	(1,026)	(223)	4,834
Furniture and equipment	728	179	(162)	-	745
Plant	75	-	(9)	-	66
	5,087	1,978	(1,197)	(223)	5,645

Asset recognition thresholds and depreciation periods	Depreciation Period	Threshold Limit \$'000s
Plant, furniture and equipment		
Furniture and equipment	3-10 years	2,000
Plant	6-10 years	2,000
Library materials		
Paperbacks	3 years	-
Audio cassettes	3 years	-
eBooks	3 years	-
Audio books	4 years	-
Games	4 years	-
CD rom	4 years	-
Videos and DVDs	6 years	-
Library books and other hardbacks	8 years	-
Adult and junior reference	10 years	-

Library books and other assets withdrawn from circulation and consequently disposed are written back against accumulated depreciation and cost based on an average cost of books.

Assets contributed by Member Councils on formation of ERLC were valued at fair value being the value assigned to the assets by those Councils.

2021
\$'000s

Detailed Breakdown of plant, furniture, equipment and library materials

Plant

At cost 1 July 2020	90
Accumulated depreciation at 1 July 2020	(24)
	66

Movements in cost

Acquisition of assets at cost	-
Cost of assets disposed	(21)
	(21)

Movements in accumulated depreciation

Depreciation and amortisation	(9)
Accumulated depreciation of disposals	7
	(2)

At cost 30 June 2021	69
Accumulated depreciation at 30 June 2021	(26)

Written down value of plant	43
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	\$'000s
Detailed Breakdown of plant, furniture, equipment and library materials (Continued)	
<u>Furniture and equipment</u>	
At cost 1 July 2020	2,169
Accumulated depreciation at 1 July 2020	(1,424)
	745
Movements in cost	
Acquisition of assets at cost	556
Cost of assets disposed	-
	556
Movements in accumulated depreciation	
Depreciation and amortisation	(287)
Accumulated depreciation of disposals	-
	(287)
At cost 30 June 2021	2,725
Accumulated depreciation at 30 June 2021	(1,711)
	1,014
Written down value of furniture and equipment	
	1,014
<u>Library materials</u>	
At cost 1 July 2020	11,131
Accumulated depreciation at 1 July 2020	(6,297)
	4,834
Movements in cost	
Acquisition of assets at cost	1,795
Cost of assets disposed	(705)
	1,090
Movements in accumulated depreciation	
Depreciation and amortisation	(1,330)
Accumulated depreciation of disposals	448
	(882)
At cost 30 June 2021	12,221
Accumulated depreciation at 30 June 2021	(7,179)
	5,042
Written down value of library materials	
	5,042
Total written down value of plant, furniture, equipment, library materials and right of use assets	
	6,099

Acquisition

The purchase method of accounting is used for all acquisitions of assets, being the fair value of assets provided as consideration at the date of acquisition plus any incidental costs attributable to the acquisition.

In accordance with ERLC's policy, the threshold limits have applied when recognising assets within an applicable asset class and unless otherwise stated are consistent with the prior year.

Depreciation and amortisation

All plant, furniture, equipment, library materials and intangible assets having limited useful lives are systematically depreciated over their useful life to ERLC in a manner that reflects consumption of the service potential embodied in those assets. Estimates of remaining useful lives and residual values are made on a regular basis with major asset classes reassessed annually. Depreciation rates and methods are reviewed annually.

Where assets have separate identifiable components that are subject to regular replacement, these components are assigned distinct useful lives and residual values and a separate depreciation rate is determined for each component.

Straight line depreciation is charged based on the residual useful life as determined each year.

Depreciation periods used are consistent with the prior year unless otherwise stated.

Repairs and maintenance

Where the repair relates to the replacement to a component of an asset and the cost exceeds the capitalisation threshold the cost is capitalised and depreciated. The carrying value of the replaced asset is expensed.

Note 6 People and relationships

6.1 ERLC and key management remuneration

(a) Key Management Personnel

Details of persons holding the position of Councillor or other members of key management personnel at any time during the year are:

Councillors

Councillor Yvonne Allred (commenced 30th November 2020)	Knox City Council
Councillor Marcia Timmers-Leitch (commenced 30th November 2020)	Knox City Council
Councillor Peter Lockwood (resigned 30th November 2020)	Knox City Council
Councillor John Mortimore (resigned 30th November 2020)	Knox City Council
Councillor Tasa Damante	Maroondah City Council
Councillor Kylie Spears	Maroondah City Council
Councillor David Eastham (commenced 30th November 2020)	Yarra Ranges Shire Council
Councillor Len Cox	Yarra Ranges Shire Council
Councillor Noel Cliff (resigned 30th November 2020)	Yarra Ranges Shire Council

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	2021	2020
	No.	No.
Total Number of Councillors	9	6
Chief Executive Officer and other Key Management Personnel	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Total Key Management Personnel	<u>10</u>	<u>7</u>

Board Members are Councillors of Member Councils and receive no remuneration from ERLC for their services.

	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000
(b) Remuneration of Key Management Personnel		
Total remuneration of key management personnel was as follows:		
Short-term benefits	213	213
Long-term benefits	-	-
Post employment benefits	-	-
Termination benefits	-	-
Total	<u>213</u>	<u>213</u>

The numbers of key management personnel whose total remuneration from ERLC, fall within the following bands:

	2021	2020
	No.	No.
<\$209,999	-	-
\$210,000 - \$219,999	1	1
\$220,000 - \$229,999	-	-
	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>

(c) Senior Officer remuneration

A Senior Officer is an officer of ERLC, other than Key Management Personnel, who:

- a) has management responsibilities and reports directly to the Chief Executive; or
- b) whose total annual remuneration exceeds \$151,000 (\$151,000 in 2019-20)

The number of Senior Officers are shown below in their relevant income bands:

	2021	2020
	No.	No.
Income Range:		
< \$109,999	-	-
\$110,000 - \$119,999	-	1
\$120,000 - \$129,999	-	-
\$130,000 - \$139,999	-	1
\$140,000 - \$149,999	1	1
\$150,000 - \$159,999	2	-
	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>

	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000
Total Remuneration for the reporting year for Senior Officers included above, amounted to:	461	401

	2021 \$'000s	2020 \$'000s
6.2 Related party disclosure		
(a) Transactions with related parties		
(i) Contributions		
Monetary contributions		
Knox City Council	4,192	4,282
Yarra Ranges Shire Council	3,648	3,609
Maroondah City Council	2,533	2,664
Total monetary contributions	<u>10,373</u>	<u>10,555</u>

Contributions from the above three Councils are received in approximately equal quarterly instalments throughout the year. Contributions are received during the months of July, October, January and April.

Monetary and non monetary contributions are recognised as revenue when ERLC obtains control over the contributed asset.

(ii) Financial and payroll services

Financial and Payroll Services		
Accounting Services	105	80
Payroll Services	61	56
Total financial and payroll services	<u>166</u>	<u>136</u>

Financial and Payroll Services are provided by Knox City Council to ERLC in accordance with the current Service Agreement.

(b) Outstanding balances with related parties

There are no reportable balances outstanding at the end of the reporting period in relation to transactions with related parties.

(c) Loans to/from related parties

No loans have been made, guaranteed or secured by ERLC to a related party during the reporting year.

(d) Commitments to/from related parties

No transactions other than the Council contributions, remuneration payments or the reimbursement of approved expenses were entered into by ERLC with related parties during the

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Note 7 Managing uncertainties

7.1 Contingent assets and liabilities

Contingent assets and contingent liabilities are not recognised in the Balance Sheet, but are disclosed and if quantifiable, are measured at nominal value. Contingent assets and liabilities are presented inclusive of GST receivable or payable, respectively.

Defined benefit superannuation scheme

ERLC has obligations under a defined benefit superannuation scheme that may result in the need to make additional contributions to the scheme, matters relating to this potential obligation are outlined in Note 8.2. As a result of the volatility in financial markets the likelihood of making such contributions in future periods exists. At this point in time it is not known if additional contributions will be required, their timing or potential amount.

Contingent liabilities arising from public liability

ERLC is occasionally met with claims and demands allegedly arising from incidents that occur on premises used by the ERLC. The ERLC carries \$600 million of public liability insurance and has an excess of \$2,500 per claim on this policy. Therefore, the maximum liability of the ERLC in any single claim is the extent of the excess. The primary insurer is MAV insurance. There are no claims that ERLC is aware of which would fall outside the terms of the ERLC's policy.

ERLC is not aware of other contingent liabilities or contingent assets as at 30 June 2021.

7.2 Change in accounting standards

Certain new Australian Accounting Standards and interpretations have been published that are not mandatory for the 30 June 2021 reporting period. ERLC assesses the impact of these new standards. As at 30 June 2021 there were no new accounting standards or interpretations issued by the AASB which are applicable for the year ending 30 June 2022 that are expected to impact ERLC.

7.3 Financial instruments

(a) Objectives and policies

ERLC's principal financial instruments comprise cash assets, term deposits, receivables (excluding statutory receivables), and payables (excluding statutory payables). Details of the significant accounting policies and methods adopted, including the criteria for recognition, the basis of measurement and the basis on which income and expenses are recognised, in respect of each class of financial asset, financial liability and equity instrument is disclosed in Note 1 of the financial statements. Risk management is carried out by senior management under policies approved by ERLC. These policies include identification and analysis of the risk exposure to ERLC and appropriate procedures, controls and risk minimisation.

(b) Market risk

Market risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of ERLC financial instruments will fluctuate because of changes in market prices. ERLC's exposure to market risk is primarily through interest rate risk with only insignificant exposure to other price risks and no exposure to foreign currency risk.

Interest rate risk

Interest rate risk refers to the risk that the value of a financial instrument or cash flows associated with the instrument will fluctuate due to changes in market interest rates. ERLC does not hold any interest bearing financial instruments that are measured at fair value, and therefore has no exposure to fair value interest rate risk. Cash flow interest rate risk is the risk that the future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market interest rates. ERLC has minimal exposure to cash flow interest rate risk through its cash and deposits that are at a floating rate.

Investment of surplus funds is made with approved financial institutions under the Local Government Act 1989. ERLC manages interest rate risk by adopting an investment policy that ensures:

- diversification of investment product;
- monitoring of return on investment; and
- benchmarking of returns and comparison with budget.

Investment maturities will be scheduled to coincide with projected cash flow needs, to provide for interest rate variations, and to minimise interest rate risk.

There has been no significant change in ERLC's exposure, or its objectives, policies and processes for managing interest rate risk or the methods used to measure this risk from the previous reporting period.

Interest rate movements have not been sufficiently significant during the year to have an impact on ERLC's year end result.

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(c) Credit risk

Credit risk is the risk that a contracting entity will not complete its obligations under a financial instrument and cause ERLC to make a financial loss. ERLC have exposure to credit risk on some financial assets included in the Balance Sheet. To help manage this risk, ERLC:

- only invest surplus funds with financial institutions which have a recognised credit rating specified in its investment policy.

There are no material financial assets which are individually determined to be impaired.

The maximum exposure to credit risk at the reporting date to recognised financial assets is the carrying amount as disclosed in the Balance Sheet and notes to the financial statements. ERLC does not hold any collateral.

(d) Liquidity risk

Liquidity risk includes the risk that, as a result of ERLC's operational liquidity requirements it will not have sufficient funds to settle a transaction when required or will be forced to sell a financial asset at below value or may be unable to settle or recover a financial asset. To help reduce these risks, ERLC:

- follows an investment policy which specifies the need to meet ERLC's daily cash flow requirements;
- has readily accessible standby facilities and other funding arrangements in place;
- has a liquidity portfolio structure that requires surplus funds to be invested within various bands of liquid instruments; and
- monitors budget to actual performance on a regular basis.

ERLC's maximum exposure to liquidity risk is the carrying amounts of financial liabilities as disclosed in the face of the Balance Sheet, and is deemed insignificant based on prior periods' data and current assessment of risk.

There has been no significant change in ERLC's exposure, or its objectives, policies and processes for managing liquidity risk or the methods used to measure this risk from the previous reporting period.

Unless otherwise stated, the carrying amounts of financial instruments reflect their fair value.

(e) Sensitivity disclosure analysis

Taking into account past performance, future expectations, economic forecasts, and management's knowledge and experience of the financial markets, ERLC believes the following movements are 'reasonably possible' over the next 12 months:

- a parallel shift of +1% and -1% in market interest rates (AUD) from a rate of 0.21% which is ERLC's weighted average interest rate for investments for the financial year.

These movements will not have a material impact on the valuation of ERLC's financial assets and liabilities, nor will they have a material impact on the results of ERLC's operations.

7.4 Fair value measurement

Fair value hierarchy

ERLC does not have any financial assets that are measured at fair value subsequent to initial recognition.

Impairment of assets

At each reporting date, ERLC reviews the carrying value of its assets to determine whether there is any indication that these assets have been impaired. If such an indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs of disposal and value in use, is compared to the assets carrying value. Any excess of the assets carrying value over its recoverable amount is expensed to the Comprehensive Income Statement.

7.5 Events occurring after balance date

In response to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, The State of Victoria has continued to enforce changing restrictions in July and August 2021 for Victoria. The Department of Health and Human Services have advised restrictions will continue to be reviewed and updated as required in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The ERLC Management and Board do not anticipate any material impacts to the business in response to COVID-19 in 2021-22. 98.70% of ERLC's budgeted revenue is guaranteed from both Member Council contributions and State Government funding. Revenue received from User Charges, Fees and Fines has an immaterial impact on ERLC's gross income.

The emergency response and ongoing delivery of essential services to support community health and wellbeing is being prioritised. The State Government now allows for Click or Call and Collect Services to continue during lockdown, accordingly there are no plans to resume postal delivery services in the near future. ERLC will continue to assess its response in line with the State Government's guidance over 2021-22. ERLC will endeavour to continue delivery of weekly online events such as Story Time into the foreseeable future, as these have proven to be a great success even outside of lockdowns. Initiatives such as these, will continue to keep the community connected through the library. This is not expected to increase costs materially in 2021-22.

This is a non-adjusting event for the ERLC annual Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2021.

	2021 \$'000s	2020 \$'000s
Note 8 Other matters		
8.1 Reconciliation of cash flows from operating activities to surplus		
Surplus for the year	425	870
Items not involving cash		
Depreciation/amortisation	1,749	1,500
Loss on disposal of plant and equipment	260	222
Finance costs - leases	5	-
Change in assets and liabilities:		
Increase/(decrease) in employee provisions	(128)	15
Increase/(decrease) in trade and other payables	309	(91)
Increase/(decrease) in accrued interest	17	(59)
(Increase)/decrease in prepayments	(46)	(107)
(Increase)/decrease in trade and other receivables	240	(259)
Net cash provided by operating activities	<u>2,831</u>	<u>2,091</u>

EASTERN REGIONAL LIBRARIES CORPORATION

Notes to and part of forming the Financial Report For the year ended 30 June 2021

8.2 Superannuation

ERLC makes all of its employer superannuation contributions in respect of its employees to the Local Authorities Superannuation Fund (the Fund). This Fund has two categories of membership, accumulation and defined benefit, each of which is funded differently. Obligations for contributions to the Fund are recognised as an expense in Comprehensive Operating Statement when they are made or due.

Accumulation

ERLC makes both employer and employee contributions to The Fund's accumulation category, Vision MySuper/Vision Super Saver, on a progressive basis. Employer contributions are normally based on a fixed percentage of employee earnings (for the year ended 30 June 2021, this was 9.5% as required under Superannuation Guarantee (SG) legislation).

Defined Benefit

ERLC does not use defined benefit accounting for its defined benefit obligations under the Fund's Defined Benefit category. This is because the Fund's Defined Benefit category is a pooled multi-employer sponsored plan.

There is no proportional split of the defined benefit liabilities, assets or costs between the participating employers as the defined benefit obligation is a floating obligation between the participating employers and the only time that the aggregate obligation is allocated to specific employers is when a call is made. As a result, the level of participation of ERLC in the Fund cannot be measured as a percentage compared with other participating employers. Therefore, the Fund Actuary is unable to allocate benefit liabilities, assets and costs between employers for the purposes of AASB 119 *Employee Benefits*.

Funding Arrangements

ERLC makes employer contributions to the Defined Benefit category of the Fund at rates determined by the Trustee on the advice of the Fund Actuary.

A triennial actuarial review for the Defined Benefit category as at 30 June 2020 was conducted and completed by the due date of 31 December 2020. The vested benefit index (VBI) of the Defined Benefit category of which ERLC is a contributing employer was 104.6%. The financial assumptions used to calculate the VBI were:

- Net investment returns 5.6% pa
- Salary information 2.5% pa for two years and 2.75% pa thereafter
- Price inflation (CPI) 2.0% pa

As at 30 June 2021, an interim actuarial investigation is underway as the Fund provides lifetime pensions in the Defined Benefit category.

Vision Super has advised that the estimated VBI at quarter ended 30 June 2021 was 109.7%.

The VBI is used as the primary funding indicator. Because the VBI was above 100%, the 30 June 2020 actuarial investigation determined the Defined Benefit category was in a satisfactory financial position and that no change was necessary to the Defined Benefit category's funding arrangements from prior years.

Employer contributions

Regular contributions

On the basis of the results of the 2020 triennial actuarial investigation conducted by the Fund Actuary, ERLC makes employer contributions to the Fund's Defined Benefit category at rates determined by the Fund's Trustee. For the year ended 30 June 2021, this rate was 9.5% of members' salaries (9.5% in 2019/2020). This rate is expected to increase in line with any increases in the SG contribution rate and was reviewed as part of the 30 June 2020 triennial valuation.

In addition, ERLC reimburses the Fund to cover the excess of the benefits paid as a consequence of retrenchment above the funded resignation or retirement benefit.

Funding calls

If the Defined Benefit category is in an unsatisfactory financial position at an actuarial investigation or the Defined Benefit category's VBI is below its shortfall limit at any time other than the date of the actuarial investigation, the Defined Benefit category has a shortfall for the purposes of SPS 160 and the Fund is required to put a plan in place so that the shortfall is fully funded within three years of the shortfall occurring. The Fund monitors its VBI on a quarterly basis and the Fund has set its shortfall limit at 97%.

In the event that the Fund Actuary determines that there is a shortfall based on the above requirement, the Fund's participating employers (including ERLC) are required to make an employer contribution to cover the shortfall.

Using the agreed methodology, the shortfall amount is apportioned between the participating employers based on the pre-1 July 1993 and post-30 June 1993 service liabilities of the Fund's Defined Benefit category, together with the employer's payroll at 30 June 1993 and at the date the shortfall has been calculated.

Due to the nature of the contractual obligations between the participating employers and the Fund, and that the Fund includes lifetime pensioners and their reversionary beneficiaries, it is unlikely that the Fund will be wound up.

If there is a surplus in the Fund, the surplus cannot be returned to the participating employers.

In the event that a participating employer is wound-up, the defined benefit obligations of that employer will be transferred to that employer's successor.

The 2020 triennial actuarial investigation surplus amounts

An actuarial investigation is conducted annually for the Defined Benefit category of which ERLC is a contributing employer. Generally, a full actuarial investigation is conducted every three years and interim actuarial investigations are conducted for each intervening year. A full investigation was conducted as at 30 June 2020.

The Fund's actuarial investigations identified the following for the Defined Benefit category of which ERLC is a contributing employer:

	2020 (Triennial) \$m	2019 (Interim) \$m
- A VBI Surplus	100.0	151.3
- A total service liability surplus	200.0	233.4
- A discounted accrued benefits surplus	217.8	256.7

The VBI surplus means that the market value of the fund's assets supporting the defined benefit obligations exceed the vested benefits that the defined benefit members would have been entitled to if they had all exited on 30 June 2020.

EASTERN REGIONAL LIBRARIES CORPORATION
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For the year ended 30 June 2021

The total service liability surplus means that the current value of the assets in the Fund’s Defined Benefit category plus expected future contributions exceeds the value of expected future benefits and expenses as at 30 June 2020.

The discounted accrued benefit surplus means that the current value of the assets in the Fund’s Defined Benefit category exceeds the value of benefits payable in the future but accrued in respect of service to 30 June 2020.

ERLC was notified of the 30 June 2020 VBI during August 2020 (2019: August 2019).

The 2021 interim actuarial investigation

An interim actuarial investigation is being conducted for the Fund’s position as at 30 June 2021 as the Fund provides lifetime pensions in the Defined Benefit category. It is anticipated that this actuarial investigation will be completed by October 2021.

Superannuation contributions

Contributions by ERLC (excluding any unfunded liability payments) to the above superannuation plans for the financial year ended 30 June 2021 are detailed below:

Scheme	Type of Scheme	Rate	2021 \$,000	2020 \$,000
Vision super	Defined benefit	9.50%	129	172
Vision super	Accumulation fund	9.50%	463	498
Other funds	Accumulation fund	9.50%	56	44

There were \$Nil contributions outstanding and \$Nil loans issued from or to the above schemes as at 30 June 2021.

The expected contributions to be paid to the Defined Benefit category of Vision Super for the year ending 30 June 2022 is \$0.11 million.

Note 9 Change in accounting policy

AASB 1059 Service Concession Arrangements: Grantors (AASB 1059) (applies 2020/21 for LG Sector)

ERLC has adopted AASB 1059 *Service Concession Arrangements: Grantors* , from 1 July 2020. This has not resulted in changes in accounting policies and adjustments to the amounts recognised in the financial statements.

AASB 2018-7 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards - Definition of Material (applies 2020/21 for LG Sector)

ERLC has adopted AASB 2018-7 *Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards - Definition of Material* , from 1 July 2020. This has not resulted in changes in accounting policies and adjustments to the amounts recognised in the financial statements.

AASB 2019-1 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards - References to the Conceptual Framework (applies 2020/21 for LG Sector)

ERLC has adopted AASB 2019-1 *Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards - References to the Conceptual Framework* from 1 July 2020. This has not resulted in changes in accounting policies and adjustments to the amounts recognised in the financial statements.

It is not expected that these standards will have any significant impact on ERLC.

Visit us

KNOX LIBRARIES

Bayswater Library
Shop 26
Mountain High Shopp Cntr
7-13 High Street, Bayswater

Boronia Library
Park Crescent, Boronia

Ferntree Gully Library
1010 Burwood Hwy,
Ferntree Gully

Knox Library
Knox City Shopp Cntr
425 Burwood Highway
Wantirna South

Rowville Library
Stud Park Shopp Cntr
Stud Road, Rowville

MAROONDAH LIBRARIES

Croydon Library
5 Civic Square,
Croydon

Realm
Ringwood Town Square
179 Maroondah Hwy
Ringwood

YARRA RANGES LIBRARIES

Belgrave Library
Reynolds Lane, Belgrave

Healesville Library
110 River Street, Healesville

Lilydale Library
Building LA,
Box Hill Institute,
Lilydale Lakeside Campus
Jarlo Drive, Lilydale

Montrose Library
935 Mount Dandenong
Tourist Road, Montrose

Mooroolbark Library
7 Station Street
Mooroolbark

Yarra Junction Library
1A Hoddle Street,
Yarra Junction

COMMUNITY READING ROOMS

Mt Evelyn Reading Room
50 Wray Crescent
Mount Evelyn

Monbulk Reading Room
Monbulk Living and
Learning Centre
21 Main Road, Monbulk

Yarra Glen Reading Room
45 Bell Street
Yarra Glen

Contact us

Administration
1350 Ferntree Gully Road
Scoresby 3179

Call
1300 737 277

Visit
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