

Eastern Regional Libraries 2019/20 ANNUAL REPORT



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One borrower was moved to verse:

*"To my rescue you came in my hour of need
For what would I do with no book to read?
The boxes you packed were received with delight
Great choices you made for me in my plight
Grateful thanks to all for the trouble you took
In keeping me sane by the power of a book!"*

CHAIR & CEO's REPORT

At the very beginning of "A Tale of Two Cities", Charles Dickens writes:

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times".

Certainly this was the case in regard to the impact of the pandemic on our usual library services to our communities.

Before the pandemic arrived we believed we were on track for increases in almost all service areas. As you will read later in the Annual Report, our usual services suffered considerably from April to June 2020. Apart from Memberships (**up by 21,000**), all our other key indicators were considerably down.

One of the shining lights for 2019/20 was our loans of our digital items (eBooks, eAudiobooks, eMagazines and streaming videos) that increased from 597,467 to 699,921 – more than **100,000 extra checkouts**.

Despite the pandemic challenges, we saw the "best of times" from our Board, Member Councils and our employees as we created a new paradigm for doing business.

The Board helped our communities by removing fines for late returns. ERLC's board with the support of its Member Councils resolved to remove all children's fines from 1 March 2020 and all fines from 1 July 2020. The imposition of overdue fines tends to discourage members (particularly families) from using the library and in some circumstances not to return the borrowed items. Reports show the removal of fines, particularly for children, has seen increased use of services and items returned.

Our Member Councils supported us staying at work to deliver "Click and Collect" and then "Click for Home Delivery". Following up on its very successful "Click and Collect" book service that was available under earlier less stringent restrictions, ERLC introduced a "Click for Home Delivery" service. ERLC members can go online or phone, and reserve specific books or ask a library staff member to either make a selection on their behalf, or supplement their specific reservations. Our fantastic employees took to the new service delivery models with gusto and facilitated over **18,000 loans** through "Click and Collect", and 'posted' over **52,000 items** and **540 Activity Packs** through "Click for Home Delivery".

ERL also ventured into online storytimes, craft activities and author talks. Even though there were quite a few technical glitches including the sound cutting out and the camera falling sideways during the first "live" storytime, the response was amazing! Over 600 people watched the live stream and since then the video has had over **10K views**. These sessions have been so successful they will form part of our future service delivery.

The Board awarded two significant tenders during 2019/20.

Working in partnership with Yarra Plenty Regional Library Service, Eastern Regional Libraries (ERL) went to the market seeking a library management system (LMS). The Board awarded the tender to CIVICA for its Spydus LMS. One of the major advantages of the new LMS is that it provides the opportunity for future partnerships with the other member councils of the Eastern Region Group of Councils, who all also use Spydus.

DELL was awarded the tender for the supply of new PCs for staff and public, and laptops for key staff. Because of its strong financial position, the PCs and laptops have been purchased outright rather than leased. This means ERL can be more flexible when the time for renewal approaches.

ERL has been a successful participant in a new initiative introduced by James Bennett our main book supplier. The concept sees James Bennett buying back some of our deleted stock and then either on-selling that stock in order to provide ERL with a credit to purchase more material, or to donate that material, or make a financial contribution to other organisations. This initiative has resulted in a financial contribution being made on ERL's behalf to the Indigenous Literacy Foundation.

The Corporate Management Team working with the Knox Finance Team have carefully managed the Corporation's finances and assets. This will keep the Corporation in good stead as we face the ongoing challenges of running a successful library service for our communities.

Under the stewardship of the CEO, the Corporate Management Team and the Board, ERL weathered the pandemic storm, and overall 2019/20 has been another successful year for our library service.

So while the latter part of the year provided new challenges, to slightly misquote Dickens;
"it will be (was) the spring of hope".

By staying "safe" and "distancing", hopefully we will see the *"best of times"* for our communities and our library services in the latter part of 2020.



Cr John Mortimore
Knox City Council
CHAIR



Joseph Cullen
Eastern Regional Libraries
CEO

EASTERN REGIONAL LIBRARIES

Snapshot

Member Councils

Eastern Regional Libraries Corporation provides library services to Knox City Council, Maroondah City Council and Yarra Ranges Council.

Together the three municipalities cover a large geographic area in the outer metropolitan area of Melbourne. There is a diverse range of communities with a combined population of 440,136, as follows:

Municipality	Population	Area
Knox	162,116	113.8 km ²
Maroondah	118,558	61.4 km ²
Yarra Ranges	159,462	2,500 km ²

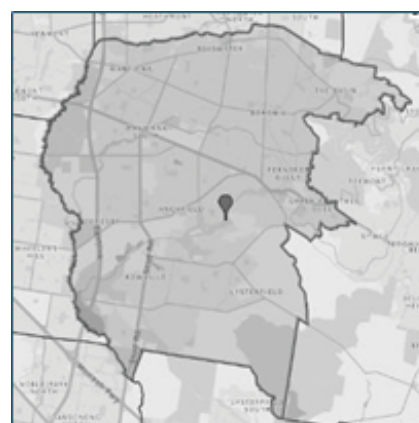
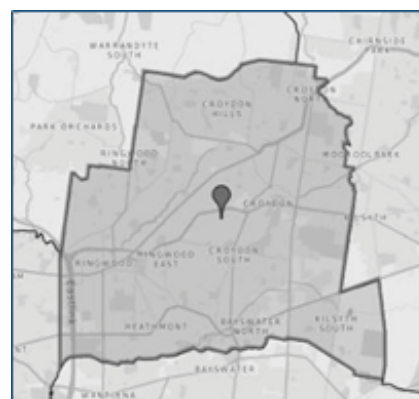
Governance

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 1989, the Regional Library Agreement and other adopted policies and procedures.

The Board is made up of two 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.



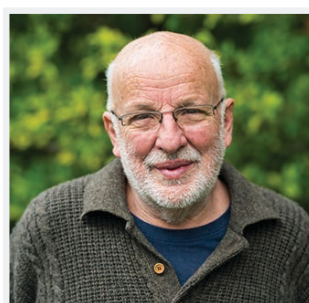
OUR BOARD



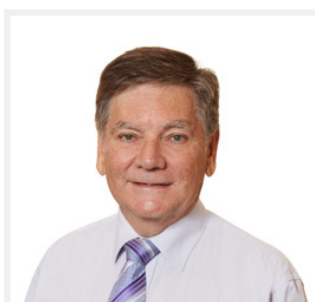
Cr John Mortimore
Knox City Council
Chair



Cr Tasa Damante
Maroondah City Council



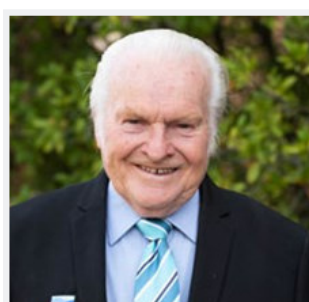
Cr Noel Cliff
Yarra Ranges Council
Deputy Chair



Cr Peter Lockwood
Knox City Council



Cr Kylie Spears
Maroondah City Council



Cr Len Cox
Yarra Ranges Council

Board Membership Changes

Knox	No change
Maroondah	No change
Yarra Ranges	No change

Board Meetings

The Board will meet four times during 2019/20 and with the assistance of its Corporate Management Team will meet all of its statutory deadlines. The number of meetings and attendances are as follows:

Councillor	Council	Maximum possible number of meetings to attend 2019/20	Number of meetings attended YTD
Cr Lockwood	Knox	4	3
Cr Mortimore	Knox	4	3
Cr Damante	Maroondah	4	2
Cr Spears	Maroondah	4	4
Cr Cliff	Yarra Ranges	4	3
Cr Cox	Yarra Ranges	4	3

Corporation Achievements

Regional Library Agreement & Statutory Requirements (Local Government Act 1989)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All quarterly meetings (includes Corporate and Financial reports) held • Annual Report 2018/19 • Election of Chair and Deputy Chair 2020
Policies & Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long Term Financial Strategy • Budget 2020/21
Board Accomplishments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VAGO Audit : Council Libraries • Gambling Harm Forum • Removal of fines for late returns • Library Management System Tender • Public & staff PCs & laptops

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 “Excellent”. Mean scores were calculated for each service, removing the “Don’t know” responses.

As we can see from our survey results, our staff continue to deliver highly regarded and rated services to our members. Our staff over the last five years has 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	8.37	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 recorded in the previous survey, with 85% of respondents rating satisfaction with the overall service provided at a score of 8 or higher.

BOARD ACCOMPLISHMENTS

VAGO's Audit Report 'Council Libraries' [Nov 2019]

The Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) examined whether councils and Regional Library Corporations deliver services efficiently and effectively. ERL was chosen to participate.

Some of the key findings were as follows.

Generally:

1. sharing services makes libraries more efficient, enabling them to deliver more services to the community with fewer resources. VAGO data analysis shows that, overall, RLCs (e.g. ERL) and co-operative models deliver core library services more efficiently than most standalone council libraries.

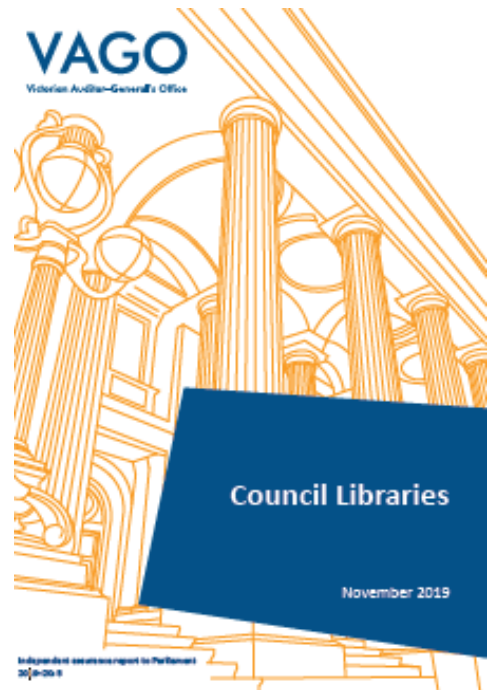
2. the key perceived benefit of shared library services—whether as an RLC or a cooperative model—is that their greater economy of scale allows for more efficient services.

In particular, the Audit found that ERLC:

1. scored a Data Envelopment Analysis efficiency of 1, the highest score available.
2. is proactive in the way it plans its library services, which means ERLC is better placed to meet changing community expectations.
3. documents service plans and links them with overall council objectives.
4. has a comprehensive approach to community consultation.
5. monitors more effectively and regularly because its internal reporting processes encourage it.
6. has a proactive and systematic approach to finding efficiencies, which includes research and consultation with vendors and external service providers, and analysis of performance using available data.

Gambling Harm Forum

Maroondah Council and ERLC co-hosted an information morning at Karralyka to address the community impact of harmful gambling. A large audience attended from a wide range of backgrounds including professionals, family members affected by gambling harm and those dedicated to reducing the prominence of gambling in Victoria.



Significant Tenders

The Board awarded two significant tenders during 2019/20.

Library Management System

Working in partnership with Yarra Plenty Regional Library Service, Eastern Regional Libraries (ERLC) went to the market seeking a library management system (LMS).

After a considerable tender process involving many hours of assessment, both library services opted for the Spydus LMS provide by CIVICA. CIVICA are an international LMS supplier with its head office based in Melbourne.

The new LMS allows more functionality and integration via APIs with other third party best-of-breed software. Another advantage is that it also provides the opportunity for future partnerships with the member councils of the Eastern Region Group of Councils. Both Monash Council and Whitehorse Manningham Regional Library Service use Spydus for their LMS.



PCs and Laptops – Staff and Public

The rollout of the new DELL PCs for staff and public, and laptops for key staff is nearing the completion. Because the PCs and laptops have been purchased outright means ERLC can be more flexible when the time for renewal approaches.

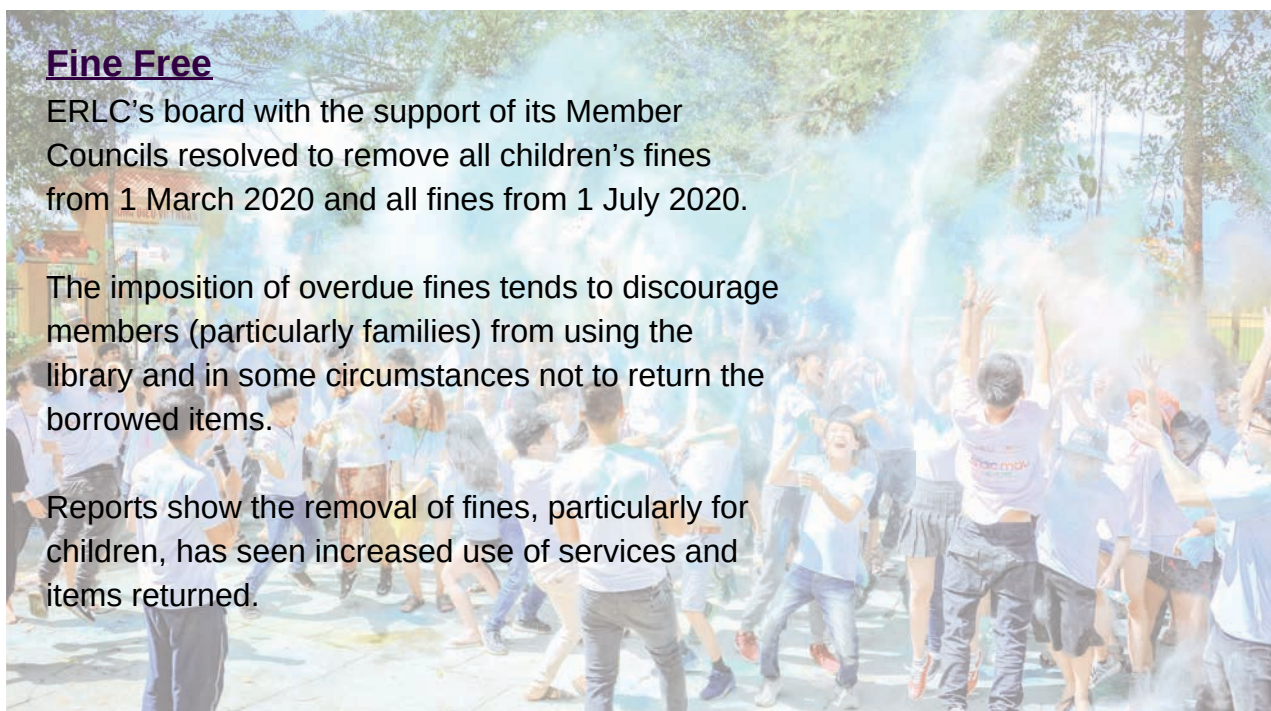
For example, the staff PCs receive less constant use and depletion than the public PCs, which means ERLC may be able to use the staff PCs for an extra year.

Fine Free

ERLC's board with the support of its Member Councils resolved to remove all children's fines from 1 March 2020 and all fines from 1 July 2020.

The imposition of overdue fines tends to discourage members (particularly families) from using the library and in some circumstances not to return the borrowed items.

Reports show the removal of fines, particularly for children, has seen increased use of services and items returned.



LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Protected Disclosure Act 2012

The Protected Disclosure Act 2012 (the Act) facilitates the disclosure of corrupt or improper conduct. It also provides protection to people who disclose this information. Eastern Regional Libraries Corporation (ERLC) is committed to the aims and objectives of the Act.

ERLC recognises the value of transparency and accountability in its 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.

Disclosures during 2019/20

The Corporation did not receive any disclosures directly nor has it received any referrals from the Ombudsman or IBAC.

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.

Requests during 2019/20

The Corporation did not receive any FOI requests for the year.

Information Privacy Act

The Information Privacy Act and Health Records Act 2001 are designed to protect the private information of individuals. The Corporation has a Privacy Policy available through its library branches and website.

Complaints during 2019/20

The Corporation did not receive any complaints for 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 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.

Children & Youth- pre pandemic

This was a year in two parts: from July to March regular programming saw just over 75,000 visits to storytimes, school holiday programs, after school activities and special events aimed at children and their families. We held 40 storytime sessions during the week, plus Chinese language storytimes at Bayswater, Knox, Rowville and Realm each fortnight; Auslan storytime at Croydon once a month and Saturday morning storytimes at the Croydon, Knox, Lilydale, Realm and Rowville libraries.

After March we were able to offer storytime via Facebook and post the videos to our website and YouTube channel. A special agreement between the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA), the Australian Booksellers Association (ABA), the Australian Publishers Association (APA) and the Australian Society of Authors (ASA) allowed the recording and transmission of copyright material for library storytimes during COVID-19. This policy is temporary and will remain in force whilst COVID-19 remains as a WHO-declared pandemic.

Highlights of the year prior to shutdown include:

Rainbow Family Storytimes - Realm

Part of the *Writing the Rainbow Festival* held in September was Rainbow Family storytime presented by guest storytellers – performance poet Jax Jacki Brown and cabaret and comedy performer Dolly Diamond.

The children loved the selection of books which reflected the reader's interests – disability for Jax, dressing up for Dolly.

Some families came specifically for these storytimes, others were the regular attendees. Both Jax and Dolly were ably assisted by Realm Youth Services Librarian Sarah Werner.



Realm Youth Services Librarian
Sarah Werner



Sarah Werner with Jax Jacki Brown



Dolly Diamond

Reading is My Superpower Book Week 2019

Childrens' Book Week was celebrated at all libraries in August, but some places had visits from very special storytellers.

It is not easy to manage tricky nursery rhymes, complicated dance routines and the art of reading and smiling at the same time, but The Hon James Merlino (at Belgrave), Fireman Rob (at Croydon), Major Glenn (at Mooroolbark), The Hon. Nick Wakeling (at Ferntree Gully) and Constables David and Kate (at Rowville) were all up to the challenge.



The Hon James Merlino with Christine Nugent



Major Glenn



Storytime fun at Bayswater Library

“ We got some wonderful feedback about how much the families enjoyed storytime at Croydon. One family travelled from Seville East just to see Firefighter Rob (pictured right), and a local Croydon childcare centre brought in about 10 children for the session as well.

It was also wonderful to see several Dads present too. Luckily, we have quite a lot more space in the new Kids Area; we would never have had enough room in the old one. This was the largest group we have had to date at storytime.

Janet, Youth Services Librarian, Croydon



Fireman Rob

Hairy Maclary and Friends Lynley Dodd at Yarra Ranges Museum

When Yarra Ranges Museum invited author Lynley Dodd to launch the *Hairy Maclary and Friends* exhibition and sign some books, they did not expect the crowds of children who flooded the Lilydale Athenaeum Theatre to meet their hero. Luckily Youth Services Librarian Rowanne Grinstead had been roped in to 'read a few books' to waiting children. Over a marathon six hour session Rowanne read favourite stories from Lynley's extensive back catalogue of titles under the eye (and ear) of their creator.

“ I have to say the highlight of September, and also the biggest event of my career as a children's librarian was the honour of getting to meet and work with the very gracious Dame Lynley Dodd. Having the author of the books sitting right next to you while you read her books out loud, and we all know how tricky the words in her books are, was no easy feat. At first I had a quiet panic, but once the nerves settled, I enjoyed every moment. I will cherish the memory forever. - Rowanne ”



Rowanne Grinstead and Dame Lynley Dodd at the Yarra Ranges Museum



Rowanne reading to the children

Children's Week, Knox Libraries

S - Science

T - Technology

E - Engineering

A - Arts

M - Mathematics

ERL successfully applied for a Department of Education Children's Week grant to run activities around the five components of STEAM. Each day saw a different activity built into storytime at one of the five Knox libraries. Children enjoyed a range of hands-on experimental activities at Rowville including flying different objects in the wind tunnel and making kinetic sand from regular sand and condensed milk.



Colourful fun at Rowville



Collaborating at Knox Library



Getting creative at Ferntree Gully

The week continued with an exploration of technology and apps for little people at Knox, building and constructing with giant blocks at Bayswater, painting with dyes made from household ingredients at Ferntree Gully and making numbers from playdough at Boronia.



Hands on at Boronia

Stories Beyond Stereotypes

Continuing the gender equity work started by the Beyond Sparkles and Superheroes project in 2018, Stories Beyond Stereotypes is a collection of chapter books suitable for upper-primary school students which challenge gender stereotypes and encourage individuality. The booklist was a collaborative venture between:

- ERLC
- City of Maroondah, Community Safety
- City of Knox, Family & Children's Services
- Yarra Ranges Council - Health Promotion
- Eastern Domestic Violence Service
- Women's Health East
- Inspiro
- each



Cr Marcia Timmers-Leitch, Deputy Mayor of Knox with award winners Mark Glazebrook and Sarah Hopkins

This project was awarded a Knox PLEDGE Gender Equity award in 2019. Sarah Hopkins (ERL) received the award on behalf of the partnership (right in picture).

After the COVID-19 shutdown, this group re-convened and organised some digital storytimes featuring books from the Beyond Sparkles and Superheroes picture book list.



Children & Youth-pandemic times

Since March 16 all children's programming has been delivered online. It has been a steep learning curve for staff as they adjusted to creating the storytime experience without any interaction or participation from the children in attendance. Filming, lighting, recording and editing have all been learned on the fly as we committed to providing one storytime session every day using the familiar storytelling staff from the branches.

Digital Storytimes - the first steps

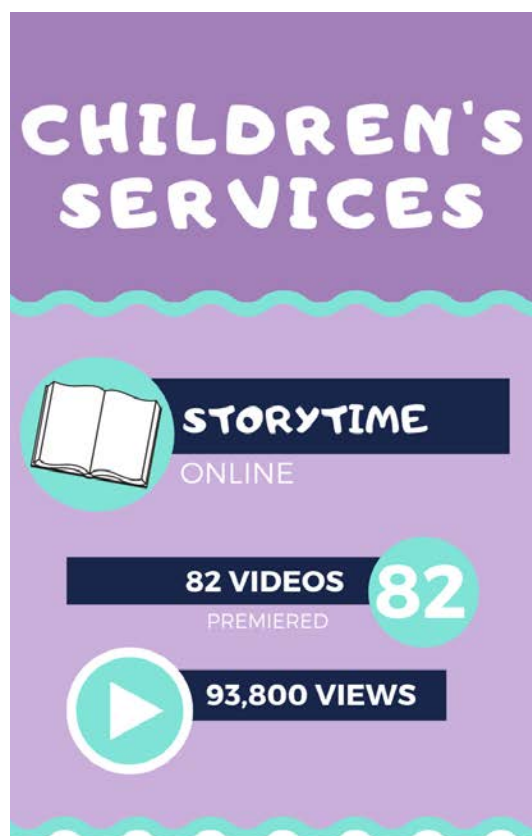
We recorded our first online storytime on Tuesday 24 March featuring Youth Services Coordinator Sue Wootton and her trusty sidekick Rusty Arnold. Even though there were quite a few technical glitches including the sound cutting out and the camera falling sideways, the response was amazing! Over 600 people watched the live stream and since then the video has had over 10K views.

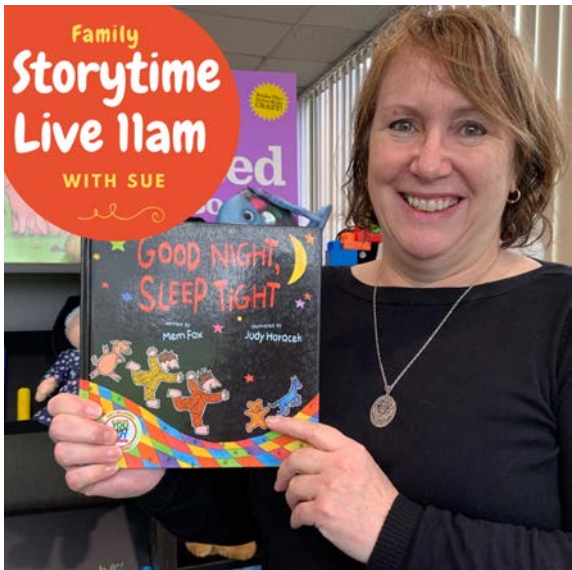
We achieved a spread of children's librarians across the region and reserved a place for guest storytellers each week. A number of Councillors, Board members, Council staff and local politicians have presented storytime as well as some authors reading their own work.

A steady flow of comments at each session has told us that storytime regulars were happy to still get a storytime experience. Parents are happy their children are entertained for half an hour and some older children have enjoyed re-visiting library storytimes while they are home from school or on extended holidays.

*This is our favourite part of the morning
Thank you so much. I look forward to this everyday!
We have missed our storytime. Great to be 'here'.
Love having you in our lounge room.
Sarah yelled: Mum, hit pause.*

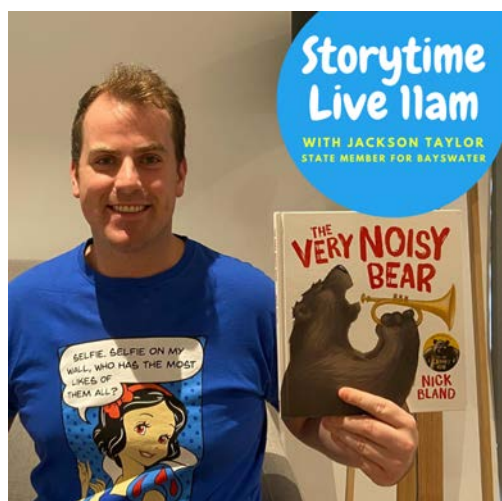
I said: It's live!





In addition to library storytimes, we have had the following special presenters:

- Cr Nicole Seymour, Mayor of Knox
- Cr Kylie Spears, Maroondah Council
- Cr Tasa Damante, Maroondah Council
- Greg Box, Manager Arts, Culture & Heritage, Yarra Ranges Council
- Jackson Taylor, Member for Bayswater



ADULTS : EVENTS & ACTIVITIES :

Writing the Rainbow – Realm

During the final two weeks of September, we ran our first ever program aimed at the LGBTIQ+ community. With a Pride grant secured from the Department of Premier and Cabinet, we put together a series of events designed to celebrate LGBTIQ+ writers and readers. The headline speaker was Benjamin Law who edited the recently launched *Growing up Queer in Australia*.

There were also panel discussions on the place of queer literature in Australian published history and the challenge of writing one's own queer experience.



Benjamin Law

Speakers from the *Speculative writing, fearless storytelling* panel (pictured bottom right):

Quinn Eades
Justine Hyde
Marlee Jane Ward
Angela Meyer

Feedback from the festival has been overwhelmingly positive with many requests to repeat it next year and spread it further around the region.



Realm Branch Manager Liam Blandon with Opening night speaker Nevo Zizin, author of *Finding Nevo*



Speakers from the *Speculative Writing, Fearless Storytelling* panel.

Partnerships

Girls Night In - Box Hill Institute

A fundraiser for the Cancer Council was held in the Lilydale Library and the Aunty Dot Auditorium. Participants gathered in the library for a quiet meditation workshop before meeting in the foyer for bubbly, belly dancing and delicious finger food. This was followed by a movie screening of *The Hustle*. There were also some great door prizes donated by local traders. It was a fun evening with lots of laughter and a great atmosphere.



Staff celebrate *Girls Night In*



Belly dancers

Immerse - Knox Arts and Culture

As part of Immerse 2019 the Knox, Bayswater and Ferntree Gully libraries were venues for *Immerse: art in Unexpected places*.

Leah Philpott - artist talk at Knox library

Jessica Harris - drawing workshop at Bayswater Library

Cath Clover and Bronwyn Ward - artist talk about their work on the windows at Ferntree Gully library

Sonia Zymantas - flag making workshop at Bayswater library



Customer service officer Sarah with Artist Sonia Zymantas and one of her flags.



Caro Facelli's beautiful botanical paintings brightened the shelves of Bayswater Library

Partnerships

Gambling Harm Forum: What does gambling harm look like in our communities?

Maroondah Council and ERLC co-hosted an information morning at Karralyka to address the community impact of harmful gambling. Tim Costello from the Alliance for Gambling Reform addressed an audience from a wide range of backgrounds including professionals, family members affected by gambling harm and those dedicated to reducing the prominence of gambling in Victoria.

Other speakers were Kate Sommerville, a former planner with local government who has lived experience of problem gambling and a panel of counsellors and venue workers from each.



Joseph Cullen, ERL's CEO, welcomed the audience



Tim Costello, a passionate advocate for reducing gambling opportunities

“Great speakers, informative and interesting stories. Also it was a great turnout, probably indicative of people's interest in this topic.”



AUTHOR TALKS

Mark Brandi - Lilydale

A cold winter's day in Lilydale made for a cosy afternoon in the library with Mark Brandi, prize-winning author of *Wimmera* and *The Rip*. He is a great speaker and it was a very enjoyable afternoon. Nina from Verso Books in Healesville was on hand to sell books and assist. Thanks Nina!



Mark Brandi signing books



John Marsden, Crs Damante, Spears and Macdonald with Sue Wootton

John Marsden - Croydon

Croydon hosted author John Marsden for a fantastic and engaging talk centred around his new book, *The art of growing up*. There were about 90 adults present including Crs Kylie Spears, Paul Macdonald and Tasa Damante and Maroondah manager Dale Muir. The audience really enjoyed John's ideas and philosophies on how we need to build resilience and appropriate social skills in our children. He spent almost an hour, after his nearly hour long talk, signing books for his eager audience and taking time to speak with every single person.

Several people arrived with their tatty but well loved older editions of "Tomorrow when the war began" and credited the book for their love of reading.



John Marsden

Rachel Lane – Knox

Rachel Lane is a financial consultant who specialises in aged care. She is about to publish a new book with Noel Whittaker called *Downsizing Made Simple*. Rachel spoke to over 100 people at the Knox Community Arts Centre about the importance of planning ahead for old age. A number of local service providers attended and a panel made up of representatives from State and Federal Departments of Health, a GP specialising in gerontology, the Victorian Senior of the Year and a representative from Home Instead Senior Care completed the presentation.



Rachel Lane



Vikki Petraitis Author talk online

Vikki Petraitis was originally scheduled to speak at Ferntree Gully library in May and was happy to switch to Zoom and present our first digital author talk. Vikki writes about true crime and her latest book is *Cops, Drugs, Lawyer X and Me* about the Nicola Gobbo scandal.

The event attracted 35 participants and we received some enthusiastic response to the online format.

“It was fabulous! I would have liked to see the author have more time for questions. One hour is not really enough, depending on the book.

Loved the session! Thanks so much for organising! And loved that it was on Zoom - didn't have to dress up, drive and park. Brilliant!

”

NEW SERVICES

March 23 saw the end of 'life as we know it' and the start of a swag of new services. Books were borrowed through "Click and Collect" and later through the "Click for Home Delivery" service. Hundreds of events planned for the Autumn program were cancelled.

We became experts on address verification, postal procedures and box construction.

The libraries became 'post offices', 'quiet' recording studios and warehousing facilities as staff managed to juggle holds, loans, deliveries and programming.

The libraries opened briefly from June 15 (Knox and Maroondah) and June 22 (Yarra Ranges) after being outfitted with perspex screens, contactless scanning devices, new conditions of entry and an increased cleaning schedule.

Three weeks later all libraries closed as Victoria reverted to Stage 3 restrictions, causing the greatest single day of loans in ERL's history - an amazing **22,028 loans!**

Click for Home Delivery service was reintroduced and the boxes began to mount up again...



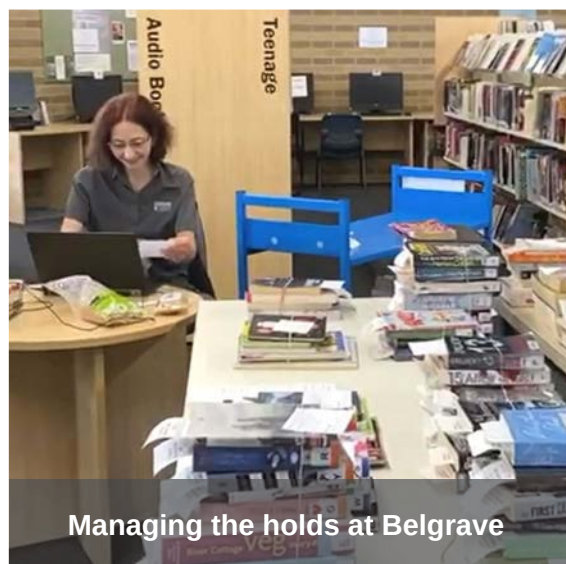
Scenes from the new normal...



Some people go to a lot of trouble to return their books!



Boxes waiting for Australia Post labels



Managing the holds at Belgrave



Preparing to film a storytime



Queues out the door on the last day of opening at Croydon



Sorting the boxes by postcode for collection by courier at Lilydale

Feedback

We received many messages of support and gratitude for the services offered during the close with very few complaints. People showed their appreciation by dropping off flowers, chocolates and at Mooroolbark, a box of vegetables.

One Boronia borrower was moved to verse:

“

To my rescue you came in my hour of need
For what would I do with no book to read?
The boxes you packed were received with delight
Great choices you made for me in my plight
Grateful thanks to all for the trouble you took
In keeping me sane by the power of a book!

Hello, I'd just like to say how impressed I've been with the service provided by the Belgrave library staff over the past couple of months.: firstly, the book delivery service; secondly, the click and collect service, both of which I took advantage of. They've really looked after us regulars beautifully. I could hardly be more impressed. So, I'd like to say thank you to the Belgrave staff, but also to the decision makers who made it possible for the library service to continue despite the very difficult circumstances.

I just wanted to say what a great resource I've found the Eastern Library has been during lockdown and what great service the Croydon Branch has provided. I'm not a great reader, but when I got a treadmill at the beginning of lockdown so I could exercise, I discovered Libby and have now read more books while "walking" in lockdown that I've read in probably 20 years before. My wife's choice has been audiobooks for her "walking" and has enjoyed them greatly. In addition, with my mother-in-law not able to visit the library as she routinely has, I've been able to arrange home delivery of her favourite large print Mills & Boon - just an incredible service which has eliminated one of the many worry factors during lockdown. I just wanted to say thanks.

I had library book delivered recently. The staff at my local library chose my books. I was skeptical they would choose anything I would like. Thank you thank you!! I have a four year old and Lockdown is hard. Having a good book to go to bed with is wonderful, and I'm up to book three and am loving the choices! I want to thank whoever spent the time to find me these books, I couldn't have chosen better. ”



BRANCH NEWS & REDEVELOPMENTS

Rowville Library

Rowville celebrated its 30th birthday in August. Along with music organised by the Chinese Friendship Group, who have held their meetings at the library for many years, there was plenty of cake and a children's colouring competition of a picture of the library tower. As part of the celebrations a new outdoor space was unveiled.

A courtyard adjacent to the library which has sat unused and unloved for the past 30 years, was given a facelift and officially opened to the public.

Our thanks to Stud Park Shopping Centre management for making this possible.



Cutting the Ribbon: Cr Jake Keogh (Mayor of Knox), Cr Kylie Spears (ERL Board Chair), Cr Peter Lockwood (ERL Board Member) and the Hon Kim Wells MP



Traditional Chinese musicians at Rowville's birthday celebrations

New returns machines

Lilydale, Mooroolbark and Rowville Libraries

ERL were fortunate for the opportunity to purchase some reconditioned Tecevo sorting machines. The Lilydale sorter was able to drop into the existing returns room without need for further alteration. At Mooroolbark the machine sits behind the service desk and a new external return chute has been installed. At Rowville the returns machine is accessible from outside and inside the library. The service desk has been relocated to the front of the library making the staff more visible and allowing them to survey the whole library more easily.



Rowville's new sorter

Living Libraries Grants Knox and Belgrave

We were thrilled to receive two Living Libraries grants to assist the redevelopment of the Knox and Belgrave libraries. The Minister for Local Government the Hon. Adem Somyurek announced the 13 grants that were awarded to Victorian libraries. The Minister was assisted by Mr Jackson Taylor MP and thanked by the Mayor of Knox, Cr Nicole Seymour. Afterwards both members of Parliament read from *Pig the Elf* to a group of young children.



Knox CEO, Mr Tony Doyle welcoming guests to the grant announcement



Realm's Sarah Werner hosting storytime

Realm Library

At Realm the furniture has been rearranged to allow storytimes to be held on the ground floor. This means that we no longer have to take bookings for storytimes. The change has been very well received by the families as the new location is larger, brighter and cooler.

All the public access PCs are now located on Level 2 and the shelving rearranged to allow better lines of sight for staff working at the information desk. Overall the library feels lighter and more spacious and the feedback from the public has been overwhelmingly positive.

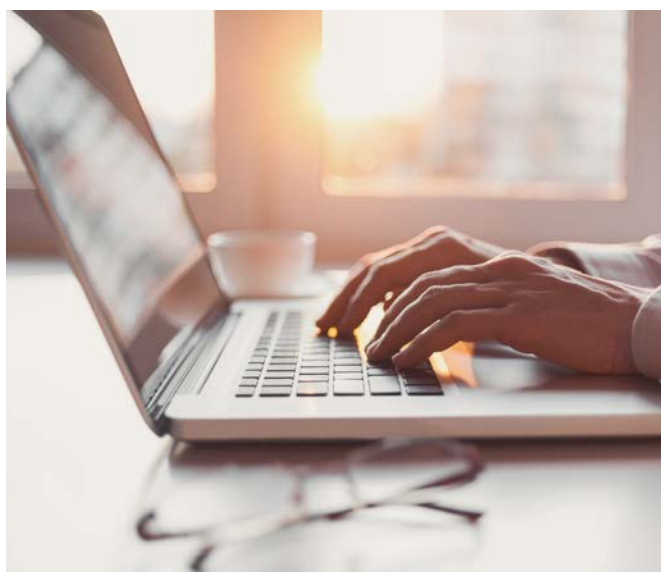
Knox Library

At Knox the books have been reconfigured to fit onto less shelves which has allowed more casual seating space in the middle of the library and more face out display to promote the collection. The new layout makes the branch more open and inviting, encourages visitors to browse and provides some much needed extra seating.

IT & CREATIVE TECHNOLOGY

Cloud Infrastructure

All ERL web-services including the main website migrated to Amazon Web Services (AWS)-Sydney data centre at the end of December 2019. ERL can now deliver a much improved digital experience for our community. The new web services can automatically scale the performance up or down based on the demand. This platform will deliver unparalleled reliability and redundancy options to keep the services running with a 99.9% up-time guarantee.



Print Anywhere, Anytime

If you are running a small business, studying, or just want to print something occasionally, why purchase and maintain a printer costing money, taking up space and impacting the environment? ERL members can now print from anywhere, anytime using the library Web Print service launched in January 2020. Members will be able to print directly from their internet enabled phone, tablet, laptop or PC and collect the print job from any of our library locations (during opening hours) within 24 hours of submitting. Standard ERL print/copy charges will apply.

Microsoft Teams

We launched Microsoft Teams for all ERL employees to better communicate and collaborate during these challenging times.

Microsoft Teams have enabled us to share files easily, make calls, video conference, group chats and more. This is another step towards making our workforce more agile and responsive.



Cashless Transactions

Following the advice on delivering contact-less services during Covid-19, ERL introduced a cashless environment. Inherent risk of handling cash, complete removal of library fines, inefficiencies and the convenience of paying for services online were the main factors in this decision.

Members can pay for services and items online or at branches using credit or debit cards.

ERL Self-Checkout App



The new Self-Checkout App was launched in both Apple iOS and Android platforms to provide a much needed contactless library item checkout option for the community during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The App allows members to checkout ERL library items securely using their own smartphone and manage their renewals & holds, all within the one App.

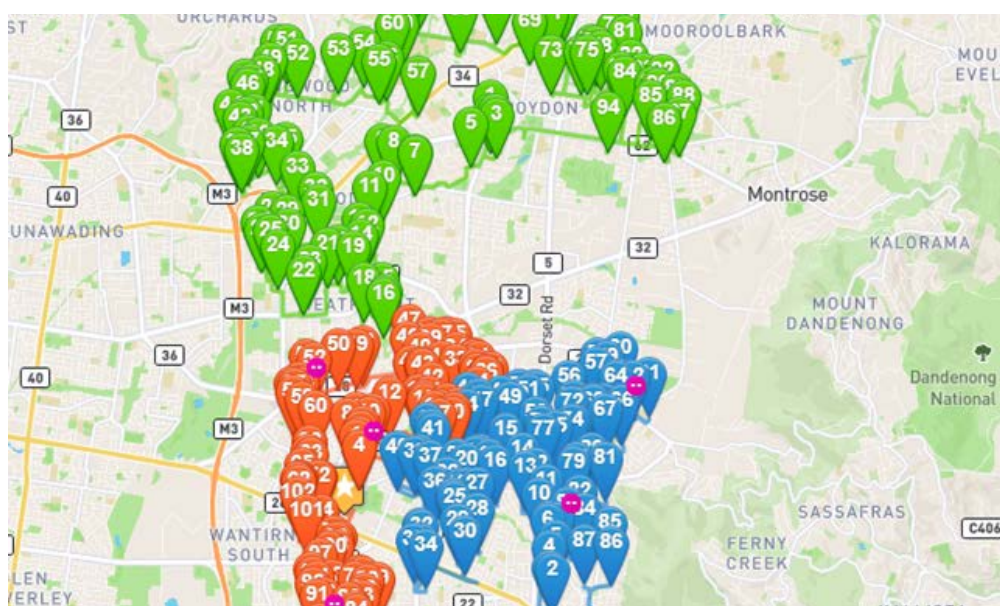
Already over 8,000+ items have been checked out using the App while the libraries were open.

Click for Home Delivery

ERL continually looked for opportunities to improve the delivery times for Click for Home Delivery service and find cost savings to stretch the services further.

By utilising modern technology and partnering with local courier services, we managed to deliver the items quickly and at a reduced cost. Modern delivery route optimisation platform - OptimoRoute - was used to map the deliveries and reduced the cost from \$6.20 per delivery to \$3.80.

Below you can see the mapping for 288 deliveries in 1 day!



Collections

Digital Platforms

Libby – 2 millionth loan!

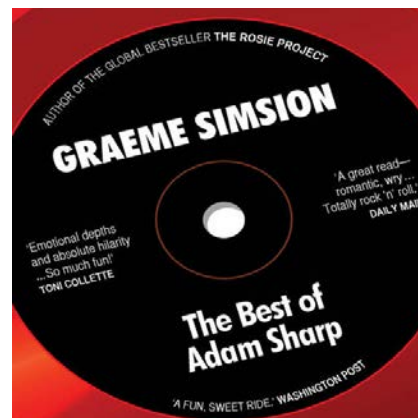
In January we saw the [2 millionth loan](#) of an ERL eBook in the Libby app provided by OverDrive.

ERL subscribed to the platform in June 2011 - the first title being borrowed was the “Love and Punishment” eBook written by the Australian author Wendy Harmer.

The 2 millionth loan was also written by an Australian – Graeme Simsion’s “The Best of Adam Sharp” and was borrowed by one of our Ferntree Gully members.

The popularity of the Digital Library continues to grow year on year – in the last calendar year alone almost 500,000 items were borrowed from OverDrive alone.

Our members appreciate how easy and convenient it is to borrow digital items via the Libby app.



Physical collection

Board Games Collection

Eastern Regional Libraries has been providing the space and the board games to several Gaming Groups across a couple of our libraries – Realm, Belgrave and Boronia. These groups have grown out of the interest generated by our successful participation in International Games Day over the past couple of years. Given the success of these groups the next logical step was to provide borrowing copies of the board games that they have been using and as of November 2019 this is what we have done.

At the moment there are over 100 Board Games available for loan by our members which can be borrowed for the usual 3 week loan period. These board games are not the Scrabble and Monopoly sets of the past. They are extremely sophisticated games that require a great amount of literacy, logical thinking, social interaction and a sense of fun.

James Bennett – Book Buy Back scheme

ERL has been a successful participant in a new initiative introduced by James Bennett our main book supplier. The concept sees James Bennett buying back some of our deleted stock and then either on-selling that stock in order to provide us with a credit to purchase more material or to donate that material to deserving communities in Australia or abroad.

So far over 3,000 books have been selected, deleted and couriered to James Bennett resulting in monetary donations being made on ERL's behalf to the Indigenous Literacy Foundation. We will continue to fine tune the practicalities of selecting, deleting and moving this 'dead' stock as well as monitoring the material that is sent back to James Bennett.



COVID19 and the Digital Library

Community take up of eResources continues to be strong especially during the pandemic. In the three months to June we had 1,424 members sign up to use OverDrive (our main eBook/eAudiobook platform), 375 members sign up for RBdigital Magazines (our collection of over 300 eMagazine titles) and 569 register to use BorrowBox (who supply mainly Australian eAudiobook titles).

The Digital Library recorded 206,891 loans in comparison to the 150,571 loans made during the same period last year - a **37% increase**. One of the strongest performers was the Kanopy platform which gives our members access to high quality documentaries, feature films and educational resources. In Q4 2019 the number of Kanopy resources streamed was 6,217. When compared to Q4 2020 this number had risen to 14,486 - an **133% increase**.

Members have enjoyed being able to access Ancestry from home rather than having to come to the library to use the genealogy resource. We have seen a **191% increase** in the number of searches conducted on the database and a 91% increase in the number of records that have been downloaded. It would seem that many of our members have been utilising the time in lockdown to research their family histories.



Checkout Figures for 2019/2020

Up until the end of March, ERL was on track to once again record over 3 million loans of our physical items (books, DVDs, magazines and audio books). However, the pandemic put paid to that occurring.

We recorded **2,553,597 loans** of physical items for the year which is 508,726 less than the previous year - but still an amazing number!

Loans of our digital items (eBooks, eAudiobooks, eMagazines and streaming videos) increased from 597,467 to 699,921 – **more than 100,000 extra checkouts**.

Of all the figures recorded for this challenging year, the most impressive are those that reflect how our very dedicated and flexible staff managed to pivot, on an almost weekly basis, from one delivery method to another.

At the end of March we were able to offer 10 days of a 'Click & Collect' service which saw **5,555 items** packed up in recyclable bags and loaned from our foyers.

Then we pivoted to providing a contactless 'Click for Home Delivery' service for 55 days which resulted in over **52,000 items** being selected, packed and posted to our members.

At the beginning of June we were once again able to offer the 'Click & Collect' service and in a period of 14 days we provided **12,949 items**.

It is very obvious that the service that our members most appreciate is being able to come into our branches and make their own selections. This was borne out by the last two weeks in June when we were able to open our branches on a restricted basis and saw **51,981 items** being taken home by our very happy members, including a record number of loans on our last day of opening (**22,028**).



MARKETING & PROMOTIONS

Social Media

This year our social media game was stronger than ever. When the Covid-19 restrictions were introduced, our members flocked to our social media platforms (Facebook in particular), to get their library fix. Storytime Live, Boredom Busters, Cooking for Kids and various other activities were enthusiastically received, resulting in almost 5,000 additional followers in the last quarter of the financial year. Our followers viewed 284.2k minutes of video (up 2,780%), highlighting the demand for engaging and relatable content.



Facebook

6,957 likes (+ 4,196 on PY) **7,690 followers** (+ 4,920 on PY)
Average reach 3,062 (+ 2,612 on PY)



Instagram

1,963 followers (+ 575 on PY)
Average reach 326 per post (- 174 on PY)



Twitter

1,503 followers (+ 43 on PY)
Average 7,000 monthly impressions



eNewsletter

Our eNewsletter is delivered to 89,420 subscribers monthly.



Website

992,447 unique visits
41% of visitors were new



What's On Brochure

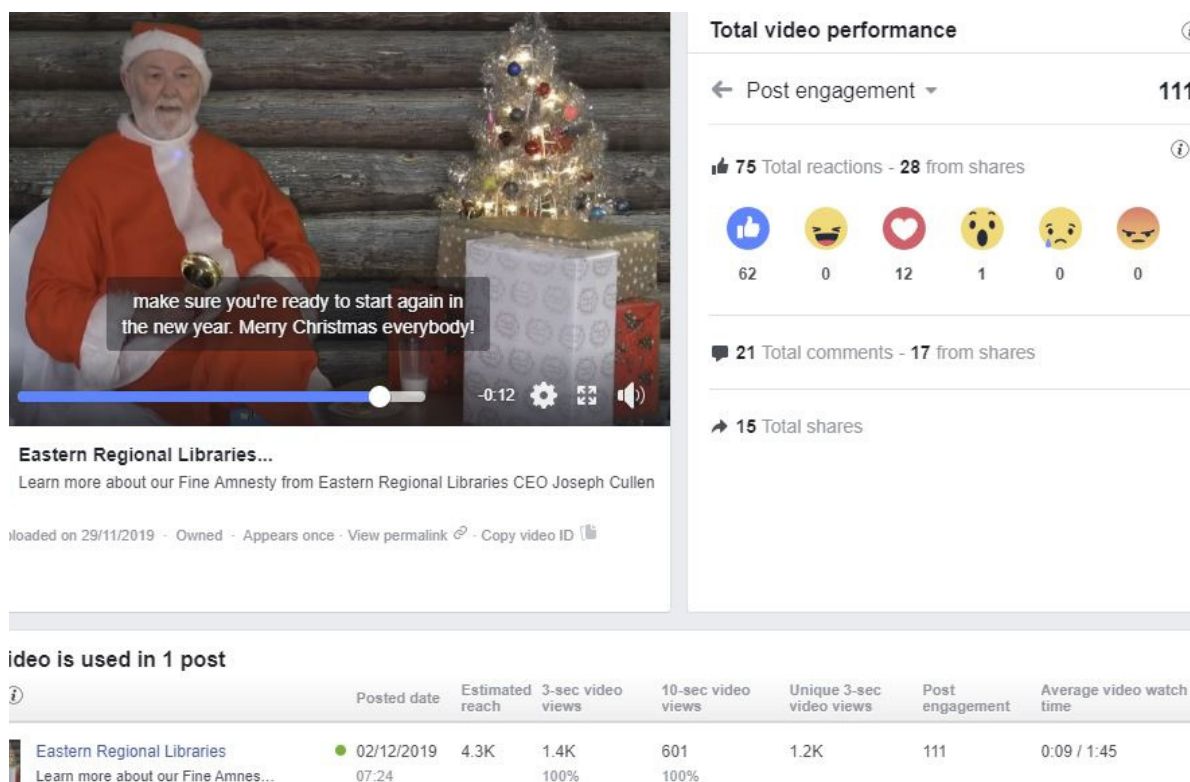
Our Spring + Autumn seasonal brochures enjoyed a print run of 9,000 copies of each issue.

Facebook Highlights

Fines Amnesty

In December, Joseph (our CEO) in the role of Library Santa, announced a very well received fines amnesty.

The post had a total of 1.4k views, with 4.3k people reached overall.



The Twenty Books of Christmas

We also ran a very popular competition in partnership with James Bennett, called “The Twenty Books of Christmas”.

Staff members were photographed with their favourite books of 2019 for the first 20 days of the month. A book was given away to one lucky facebook commenter each day.

The level of engagement and interaction was great to see! On average, 20 followers entered each day. Our members love to see familiar faces AND they like to win prizes!.



Tracey from Boronia Library



Eastern Regional Libraries is 😊 feeling excited.

Published by Karla Kucing [?] · 24 March at 15:30 · 🌐

Thank you to everyone who tuned in to our first Storytime Live session with Sue & Rusty. It was wonderful to hear from you all during the session! 😊

Get ready for another Storytime Live tomorrow at 11am with Rowville Library's sensational storyteller, Michelle. She'll share some wonderful stories and songs to keep you smiling at home. See you all then!!

If you follow our page, you should receive a notification to let you know when we're live 😊.



Storytime Live

On the back of a very successful first Storytime Live session with Sue Wootton, this post announced that further sessions were in the works, much to the delight of our followers. The post received a total reach of 53.6k (an ERL record!) with 4.3k post clicks, and 2.1k reactions.

1,077 Like	265 On post	812 On shares
168 Love	52 On post	116 On shares
1 Haha	1 On post	0 On shares
5 Wow	0 On post	5 On shares
1 Angry	0 On post	1 On shares
203 Comments	203 On Post	0 On Shares
265 Shares	265 On Post	0 On Shares

Activity Packs

In May, the launch of Activity Packs during lockdown was great news for frustrated kids and parents, reaching 8.3k, with 605 engagements and 39 shares.



**540 Activity Packs were issued
up to 30 June 2020**



Eastern Regional Libraries

22 May · 🌐

Would your kids like to try something new? They can get crafty with our home-delivered activity packs!

They are full of popular colouring activities, word searches and educational fun, and can be tailored to your child's interests. There are packs for all ages including toddlers, preschoolers, early primary and primary aged children.

Each child is entitled to one activity pack per month.

Find more information and a request form here: <https://www.yourlibrary.com.au/activity-pack/>



8,341
People reached

605
Engagements

Boost post

66

61 comments 39 shares



Knox & Maroondah Libraries Reopening

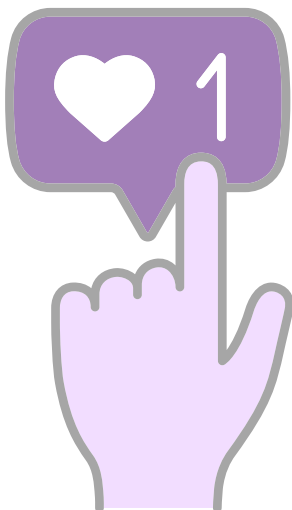
In June, the news of our (short-lived) reopening after Covid-19 restrictions were eased was joyfully received by our members, with 247 reactions on the image of this creative display submitted by the staff at Ferntree Library.



Instagram Highlights

Cool chooks read books!

This December post featuring a Bayswater Library patron with her wonderful handcrafted library bag warmed the hearts of our followers with 70 likes.



Croydon Teddys

This beautifully staged image taken just after the March lockdown, helped cheer our patrons when collecting their reservations during our Click + Collect initiative. The post earned 78 likes.



Knox & Maroondah Libraries reopen

News of the reopening in June was well received by our instagram followers with 42 likes.



In print

News Corp advertising

In March and April, ERL ran a series of quarter page ads in the Knox, Maroondah and Lilydale - Yarra Valley Leader, each promoting services still available to our members during closure. The ads were targeted at members who would not generally connect with us via online platforms.

All libraries are closed until Tuesday, 14 April 2020, due to the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19). During these unsettled times, we will do our best to provide services for the community.

Your Library is here for you!

Our reservations service will remain available to you.

Call 1300 737 277 or your nearest branch and our team will assist you in making a reservation.

You can also explore the wide range of digital resources available online, 24/7. Visit bit.ly/Library247 to find out more!

If you are not a library member and would like to join, please visit our website yourlibrary.com.au or call us on 1300 737 277. We are happy to assist!

Logos: IMAGINE DISCOVER CREATE, Knox City Council, Maroondah City Council, Yarra Ranges Council

While your library is closed, we can continue to offer you so much to enjoy from the comfort of your home!

Discover your Digital Library

Visit bit.ly/Library247 to explore the wide range of entertaining and educational digital resources:

- eBooks • eMagazines • digital newspapers
- movie streaming • eAudiobooks
- online research & learning • digital storytimes
- health and wellness • children's educational platforms, and so much more!

Prefer to read a physical book? Visit our website yourlibrary.com.au, or call us on 1300 737 277 and our friendly team will assist you in making a reservation.

Not a library member yet? We can help! Please visit our website yourlibrary.com.au or call us on 1300 737 277. We are happy to assist!

Logos: IMAGINE DISCOVER CREATE, Knox City Council, Maroondah City Council, Yarra Ranges Council

If your child is missing their regular storytime at the library...

Tune into Storytime LIVE!

Jump onto our facebook page facebook.com/easternregional every weekday for all the fun of storytime in the comfort of your home. Enjoy stories, songs, rhymes and more!

Like and follow our page to be notified of the next live storytime session, and keep up to date with all the fabulous activities we will be presenting for adults and children in coming weeks.

You can also visit yourlibrary.com.au/storytimes to view some of the great previous live sessions and discover so much more while you're there!

Would you like to become a library member? We can help! Please visit our website yourlibrary.com.au or call us on 1300 737 277. We are happy to assist.

Logos: IMAGINE DISCOVER CREATE, Knox City Council, Maroondah City Council, Yarra Ranges Council

Resource Guide

The Click + Collect and Click for Home Delivery services were a great opportunity to promote our vast range of digital goodies to members who perhaps had not explored our online collection or resources. A total of 6,000 copies of the Resource Guide were printed and placed into every Click + Collect bag or home delivery parcel. A digital version was also published online via the issuu.com website.



Enjoy these great digital resources while your library is closed!

EASTERN REGIONAL LIBRARIES

RESOURCE GUIDE

Icons: headphones, books, eye, graduation cap, teddy bear, magnifying glass

Logos: IMAGINE DISCOVER CREATE, Knox City Council, Maroondah City Council, Yarra Ranges Council

Libraries Change Lives

We missed you!

When our libraries briefly reopened in June, we asked our members to complete a postcard to let us know what they missed most about the library. This initiative was part of the ongoing Libraries Change Lives campaign. Here are some of the highlights:



“

I have missed being able to come and choose books in a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Thank you to all the cheerful and pleasant library staff for sending books and for fielding the anxious phone calls when the deliveries were slow. - Susan

”

“

To still be able to borrow books during this pandemic has been such a blessing - my extra time (from not driving to work) has been spent reading. So nice to 'escape' the pandemic in a book. - Michelle

”

“

The library is so important to our home. I have 3 children (9, 11 + 13) who eat books and we just missed the library so much - cannot believe it is not an essential service. We were so grateful to be able to pick books up and have them posted. AMAZING SERVICE – THANK YOU! - Mairead

”

“

The only thing I have missed about the library is the smiling faces of the staff. The library has brought their wonderful service to me over the past few months during the COVID-19 shutdown. When I have most needed a book to read, the library has made sure it happened by sending books by parcel post. THANK YOU HEALESVILLE LIBRARY!

It's been a wonderful service - Michel

”

“

I've missed browsing through the shelves, I've missed the simple act of visiting the library and though I've missed your perpetual helpfulness I've been incredibly appreciative of your ways of maintaining our access to physical books. Thank you all for the service you keep providing 😊

- Linda

”

Libraries Change Lives

“

I've missed the steam activities and the books and enjoying reading. Each book fills me with hope that everything will go back to the way it was! - Emma

“

I have missed coming in to browse books I have used the library for all my reading needs. Through the website I have reserved books and the wonderful staff at the Knox branch have ensured I received them by post. I was never without a book to read. Thank you so much. - Karen

“

Throughout the past few months of COVID-19 closures, my daughter and I missed the library the most! We are so grateful for the staff of the Ferntree Gully library and for all of their hard work and organisation which allowed us to continue borrowing books throughout this challenging time. Being able to collect books and having them delivered to our houses made a huge difference! We were so excited to get some new books to read and spent many hours reading independently and as a family. Thank you so much for making this challenging time easier! Being at home in lockdown was a great reminder of the value of a good book. - Kelli

”

“

My kids and I have been missing the social interactions that are an important part of our routine very much, including storytimes, holiday activities/events and book folding etc... the most we miss is all our friends, we love to enjoy the library with: regularly and often make new friends there too. We have had many click + collect, awesome box of goodies in the past and kids activity pack I recent times. Also waves through window as we walk past. Storytime online (live) craft activities online. - Samantha

“

I missed all the books we got, and I'm hoping everything goes back to normal soon, so I can get more books. Every time we got a package, I got SO excited that we had new reading material. The Library Rocks! - Ben

”

“

Visiting the Ferntree Gully library was one of my "top 5" of things I missed during Covid "lockdown". I love the locality and missed the smell of gums and of course the books! - Jennie

”

“

Story Time!! - with my Grandchildren. LOVED getting books posted out to me!! Thank you so much!! - Anne

”

EMPLOYEE OPERATIONS REPORT

All branches have set specific goals for their staff teams aimed at branch presentation, customer service, promotion of services and programs and marketing their collections.

ERL continues to be fortunate in having dedicated and highly trained personnel. ERL has continued to foster and nurture this dedication through providing a safe and productive work environment, ongoing training and up-to-date relevant resources. Retention is not considered as an issue for ERL. Attracting new staff has never been seen as a difficulty, but once staff have been successfully recruited it is usually for a long period.

ERL encourages employees to strive to continually improve their customer service skills. ERL employees are well trained, both as library and information professionals. Ongoing training seeks to continually improve ERL's standards of service delivery. Effective systems and policies are in place to support these standards.

The ongoing-challenge now facing ERL is its ageing workforce and the new workplace technologies. To ensure continuous growth training will become more of an issue in the future. Technology is thought to be the most critical; customer service is an on-going training need; and management and supervision training is needed for higher levels of Band 5 and above.

ERL continues to work in partnership with State Library Victoria, VECI and other trainer providers to develop staff attraction programs and provide relevant training programs.

Employee Snapshot

Employees	2019/2020
Number (including CE)	126
Years of Employment Average	14.30
Longest Years of Employment	43 years
Average Age	53.20
Average Retirement Age	63 years

Recognition of Service

In December of each year, Recognition of Service awards are presented to employees who have reached a service milestone during the past calendar year, their service is recognised with the presentation of a gift voucher.

Years	No
35 years	1
30 years	4
25 years	2
20 Years	3
15 Years	5
10 Years	1

Employee Changes

Resignations 2 FT 6 PT Customer Service Officers 1 Casual	Appointments Corporate Manager Business & Technology Team Leader Healesville Team Leader Ferntree Gully Knox Mobile Driver (PT) 2 Seniors & Literacy Drivers (PT)	48/52 3 50/52 1
Regional Work Cover 1 TAC 0 Supported Non-Work Related 1	Study Leave 1 Master of Business 1 Bachelor Business 2 Bachelor Information Management	Maternity Leave 0

New Library Opening Hours

A review of library opening hours in July 2019 provided the opportunity to achieve enhanced opening hours, within current budget parameters, while minimising any impact on our library users. Our new library opening hours commenced from Monday 4 September 2019. Across the board ERL gained an additional 18 hours a week in public access hours, our bigger branches Knox, Croydon and Rowville joined Realm Library offering 10 am-5pm operational hours on both Saturday and Sundays.

Our thanks to our staff and to the Rostering Team who have supported 69 staff roster changes to ensure the continuing balance of branch EFT and specialty skills needed.

	Previous Hrs pw	New Hrs pw
Bayswater	42	48
Boronia	48	48
Ferntree Gully	53	48
Knox	65	69
Rowville	57.5	59
	265.5	272
Realm	69	69
Croydon	65	69
	134	138
Lilydale	59	59
Belgrave	43	48
Mooroolbark	43	48
Yarra Junction	42	47
Healesville	45	45
Montrose	39	42
	271	289



Children's Services Officer Michelle Kemp at Bayswater Library

Other Employee Matters

- Working with Children Checks – 18 staff updated
- Police Checks – 9 staff, 12 volunteers
- Courier Contract re-signed with 2/1 renewal with Australia Post/Star Track.
- Annual Leave Loading paid December 2019
- Regional Staff Christmas Function – 84 staff attended

After a 31-year career at ERL
we said farewell to Judy from
Belgrave & Ferntree Gully
Libraries



Staff farewell Judy at Belgrave Library

Employee Fundraising

Bush fire Appeal

From the fine amnesty in December, ERLC members were very generous with their voluntary contributions and, along with all the food, \$898.05 was raised. All funds raised were donated to the Victorian Bush Fire Appeal.

The Little Book Room

Retiring staff member Helen (YSL at Knox) requested a donation be made to support the bushfire crisis in lieu of a gift / flowers / farewell function.

\$1,200 was donated to "The Little Book Room", including the proceeds of the Knox Children's Book Sale, to support the purchase of new books for children affected by the bushfire emergency. Ninety-five books were purchased with our donation.



Free Choice Dress Days

Thanks to the generous support of employees, Free Choice Dress Days collected over \$1,606.00 for charities in 2019-2020.

Policies Reviewed

General

- Gold Card Holders
- Sharps Policy and Procedure
- Lost Property
- Saturday and Sunday Guidelines
- Meals/Breaks/Smoking Policy
- Work Experience Guidelines
- Which Email Address

Rostering

- Saturday And Sunday Roster Protocols
- Dynamic Duration – Applying for leave
- Email/Kronos Access – How to procedure reviewed
- How to apply manage change your leave applications



OH&S

Health and Safety

Health and Safety continued to provide a wide range of injury prevention, injury management and specialist safety and health services. A wide range of health and safety courses were offered and training was provided through an online training module.

Branches continued to submit half yearly Workplace Inspection Reports which have resulted in an upgrade of equipment and continual assessment and changes in work practices.

Health and Safety representatives (HSR)

ERL Management continues to work with its HSR re their initiative of identifying new and change work practices to prevent injuries and promote health and well-being for all employees.

Of particular note this year the HSR's have worked to establish "open communication with employees", encouraging employees to use their branch meeting as a forum to discuss work practices and encourage team support in all aspects of manual handling.

To further support employees during the COVID period representatives from the HSR group joined with the Consultative Committee to form the Pandemic Group.

External Rehab provider

ERL continues to work with an external Rehab provider and trainer from Beyond Pain.

Other OH&S Matters

- Mental Health and Well-being guidelines distributed
- Helpful Tips – provided by our Employee Assistance Program
- Distributed safe work practice posters
- Updated Workplace OH&S Posters
- Guideline update on Incident Reports – Language
- New WorkSafe Compliance Code Books purchased
- Branch Anti-fatigue matting replaced
- Electrical tagging testing – completed December 2019
- Kitchen Audits: all branches – replacement items purchased December 2019
- Branch Emergency Evacuation procedures and Fire drills undertaken

OH&S Policies Reviewed

- Emergency Evacuation and Contingency Plan
- Weather – Fire Ready Guidelines
- Weather - Services on Knox Mobile and
- Yarra Ranges Flexi – Total Fire Bans, Fire Danger Rating and Extreme Weather Days



Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

ERL provides access to a confidential Employee Assistance Program (EAP) through Converge International (professional counselling and careers management service). The EAP is designed to support employees resolve any work-related or personal issues.

Access was primarily for work issues and no particular hot spots were noted.

Most employees accessing the service did so for personal issues, relationship problems and stress – this is in contrast to the previous year where a greater proportion of the referrals were resume development and interview skills arising from change processes.

In October 2019 ERL reviewed and re-signed with Converge International (Resolutions) for another 12 months.



Work Cover and Injury Prevention

Vision

to provide secure and productive workplaces

Mission

to work in partnership with employees to achieve safer and more productive workplaces, effective recovery, return to work and support for injured workers

Commitment

Our commitment to the management of Work Cover and Injury prevention remains unchanged. ERL has continued to work with Beyond Pain, a group of occupational and physiotherapist who specialize in the management of soft tissue injury and manual handling techniques in the workplace.

One work cover injury was managed this year in relation to soft tissue injury.



Workcover, Accident & Injury Summary

Regional Work Cover Summary	Regional Accident Summary	Regional Incidents Summary
1 Soft tissue injury	37 Accidents ranging from fingers caught in doors to slipping.	47 The main incidents continue to range from internet rage, viewing pornography, drug usage and overdoses, and drunkenness. Refused Admission – 6 months 4 in relation to inappropriate web access 1 in relation to behavioural issues Warning Letter issued 3 in relation to inappropriate web access 1 in relation to behavioural issues

Power Interruptions and General Closures

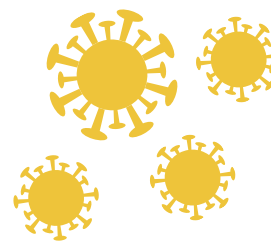
Reason	Location	Loss of Opening Hours
Flood Damage	Boronia, Admin & Yarra Junction	62 hours
Technology Installation	Lilydale & Mooroolbark	32 hours
Power/AUSNET	Lilydale, Croydon, Belgrave, Yarra Junction, Rowville	72 hours
Fire Bans and other weather events	Knox Mobile and Yarra Ranges Flexi Service	48 hours
Building works	Realm	134 hours

Coronavirus

Employee and community "Health and Well-being "

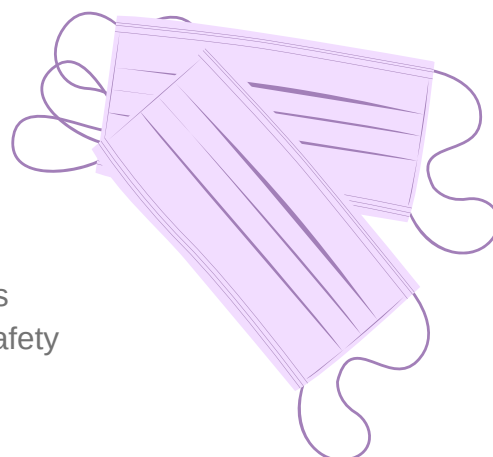
To our Staff:

“I can assure you that we will act promptly and decisively on any recommendations received from governments or their departments, and the Chief Health Officer.” - CEO



ERL is concentrating on the health and well-being of our staff and how it can best manage services and stay connected to its communities. The following (amongst others) are the actions taken and the procedures developed.

- All employees allocated to a home branch
- Branch Manager & Team Leader Guidelines issued
- Roster Support Guidelines – How to manage in the event of a branch closure
- New Workplace Inspection – focusing on cleaning/materials supplies/ management of library materials
- New daily Branch Rosters – task variety
- Gloves/Hand sanitizer/ wipes/sprays
- New workplace work practices – Social Distancing
- Question and Answers – How to wear a facemask
- Temperature Screening
- Permitted Worker Permit
- Disclosure of Coronavirus Testing
- Managing Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus cases
- Working from Home – Guidelines and Home Office Safety
- 2020 Branch Services Communication Plan
- 2020 Business Continuity Plan
- COVID Safety Plan
- COVID Safety Plan – Couriers Services



Communications and Support

- Formed the Pandemic Team: Consultative Committee Members and 4 Health & Safety Reps
- Daily phone chat - each library daily
- Online meeting weekly with Managers/Team Leaders
- Morning briefings at each library
- Fortnightly Staff Bulletin(s)
- 24 Central hotline managed 7 days
- Leave & Coronavirus Leave: Supporting Staff through situations, including family support, aged parents and schooling from home
- New poster collections updated with simple messaging to staff to remind them of safe work practices

Staff Development & Training

ERL recognizes the importance of encouraging and supporting employees in professional development activities that are related to their employment.

Shaping the Year Ahead

Twenty-one managers and team leaders attended our training day on Wednesday, 10 July 2019.

Session 1:

Presenter: Jenny Carmuciano

Shaping the Year Ahead

- The big picture – Our Libraries Team
- Where are we at and where are we heading?
- Success; opportunities; challenges
- What does our role look like?
- How do we review our roles and responsibilities?
- Aligning & Connecting



**To all the Belgrave Staff,
thank you for all your help
and support.**

From a happy customer

Session 2:

Our story – what is working / not working

(Based on ERL's 6,010 events and 103,988 attendees for 2018/19)

- Time to talk
- Collaborative programming
- Best use of our technology
- Directory of Speakers
- On-line resources
- New invoicing
- Power of timely targeted advertising/marketing and using the right language to promote events

Staff Training

Training Unit Type	Title	No. of staff completed
Customer Service	Customer Service Fundamentals	138
Customer Service	Dealing with Difficult Situations	138
OH&S	Manual Handling in the Workplace	112
New Photocopier roll out	"How to use and trouble shoot"	108
Online Resources Quiz	In-house training unit – challenging staff's awareness to our services and products	74
Customer Service	Working with Upset Customers	60
Manual Handling when working with Sorting Machines	Realm, Croydon, Knox, Lilydale & Mooroolbark	38
HR	VISION Super Sessions	27
OH&S	Volunteer Home Library Service Refresher	20
Managers and Team Leaders	Leadership Fundamentals	19
Workflows and Policies	All Casual Staff and Staff under 10	18
Youth Services and Children's Officers	Noah's Ark Provide disability services for children) conducted the training	14
OH&S	First Aid Level 1	14
OH&S	Health and Safety Representatives	14
Opening the Book	State Library Victoria	10
Kronos Refresher	Effective Rostering Practices	10
New Casual Customer Service Officer training	Induction training program	10
Customer Service Refresher training	New Casual Staff completed six weeks after induction program	10
Managers / Area Coordinators (Admin)	Management Fundamentals and Communication	5
Customer Service	Strategies for Managing Difficult Customers	5
Dealing with Difficult Customer	Mt Evelyn Community Reading Room	4
Youth Services	Let's Read (Early Literacy)	3
Healesville & FTG Team Leaders	Induction training program covering both formal learning sessions and rostered shifts in branches	2
Youth Services	Autism Spectrum, Literacy and Programming	2
OH&S	Medium Rigid Synchromesh Truck	1

FACTS & FIGURES

Behind the Stats

As we said at the start: *"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times"*.

Certainly, this was the case in regard to the impact of the pandemic on our normal library services. As you will see from the graph below and the information on the following pages our normal library services suffered considerably from April to June 2020. Apart from Memberships (up by **21,000**), all our other key indicators of Visits, Loans, Information Queries, PC Sessions and WiFi Sessions were considerably down. However, behind these reduced numbers we should note that loans of our digital items (eBooks, eAudiobooks, eMagazines and streaming videos) increased from 597,467 (18/19) to 699,921 – more than **100,000 extra checkouts**.

Despite the pandemic challenges, we saw the "best of times" from our Board, Member Councils and our employees as we created a new paradigm for doing business.

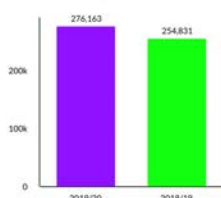
The Board helped our communities by removing fines for late returns. Our Member Councils supported us staying at work to deliver 'Click and Collect' and then 'Click for Home Delivery'. Our fantastic employees took to the new service delivery models with gusto and facilitated over **18,000 loans** through "Click and Collect", and 'posted' over **52,000 items** and **540 Activity Packs** through "Click for Home Delivery".

We ventured into online storytimes, craft activities and author talks. These have been so successful they will form part of our future service delivery strategies.

So while the latter part of the year provided new challenges, our new services restored some of the drop in numbers we would otherwise have experienced if we had not delivered new library services for our communities.

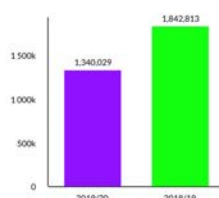
Memberships

Memberships have increased by 8% (21,332).



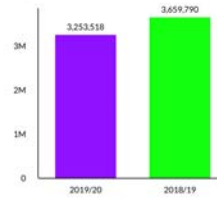
Visits

Total visits have decreased by -27% (-502,784).



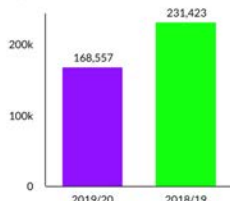
Loans

Loans have decreased by -11% (-406,272).



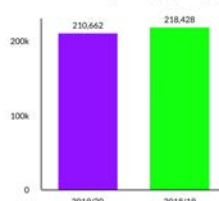
Queries

Queries have decreased by -27% (-62,865).



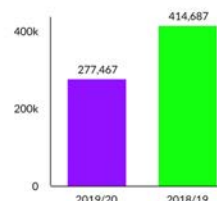
PC Sessions

Public PC sessions have decreased by -4% (-7,766).



WiFi Sessions

WiFi usage has decreased by -33% (-137,220).



FACTS & FIGURES

	Members		Visits		Loans	
	2019/20	2018/19	2019/20	2018/19	2019/20	2018/19
Bayswater	8,696	7,682	64,793	81,192	92,867	99,781
Boronia	14,074	13,186	61,371	83,356	155,586	189,284
Ferntree Gully	11,601	10,841	66,140	102,822	146,783	173,024
Knox	39,706	37,156	202,334	257,728	366,136	442,646
Knox Outreach	1,164	1,145	2,878	4,612	8,725	13,103
Rowville	25,364	23,469	124,998	187,658	213,492	252,252
eLibrary Loans					270,981	233,712
Admin Loans					5,062	
Knox Total	100,605	93,479	522,514	717,368	1,259,632	1,403,802

Croydon	35,463	33,038	179,245	212,833	462,031	532,964
Realm	59,679	53,399	284,179	408,749	325,762	405,276
eLibrary Loans					217,039	187,403
Admin Loans					4,054	
Maroondah Total	95,142	86,437	463,424	621,582	1,008,886	1,125,643

Belgrave	16,512	15,324	69,053	104,638	152,105	185,155
Flexi Vehicle	2,851	3,008	2,607	4,721	12,017	20,577
Healesville	8,562	7,912	55,092	75,151	77,810	96,391
Lilydale	19,519	18,056	70,999	93,914	144,598	174,195
Monbulk	777	664	4,744	5,936	19,984	22,699
Montrose	4,866	4,550	24,535	35,138	44,186	57,433
Mooroolbark	13,208	12,186	70,572	96,733	156,617	190,258
Mount Evelyn	2,341	2,315	6,004	9,183	26,589	36,222
Yarra Glen	93	67	1,306	1,985	5,544	7,357
Yarra Junction	11,689	10,833	49,179	76,465	129,691	151,872
eLibrary Loans					211,900	188,186
Admin Loans					3,958	
Yarra Ranges Total	80,417	74,915	354,091	503,863	985,000	1,130,345

FACTS & FIGURES

	Info. queries		Internet PC sessions		WiFi Sessions	
	2019/20	2018/19	2019/20	2018/19	2019/20	2018/19
Bayswater	10,698	10,081	9,089	9,676	11,861	20,238
Boronia	10,268	12,510	11,737	13,190	8,851	12,215
Ferntree Gully	7,609	11,604	9,885	10,697	7,532	12,494
Knox	29,295	45,211	34,541	33,108	31,616	42,921
Knox Outreach	448	922				
Rowville	8,281	12,149	22,034	23,715	31,775	43,120
Knox Total	66,598	92,477	87,286	90,386	91,635	130,988

Croydon	27,666	36,677	27,628	27,002	23,189	32,775
Realm	26,442	38,394	47,939	51,397	85,537	143,820
Maroondah Total	54,108	75,072	75,567	78,399	108,726	176,595

Belgrave	7,861	11,768	8,926	9,121	20,533	26,733
Flexi Vehicle	155	417				
Healesville	5,522	7,606	8,031	8,444	7,643	11,010
Lilydale	9,222	15,296	11,364	11,040	13,561	16,904
Montrose	5,684	4,304	1,294	1,560	6,178	8,526
Mooroolbark	8,050	10,058	8,738	9,144	11,027	16,595
Mount Evelyn			1,640	1,637	6,463	9,427
Yarra Junction	11,357	14,426	7,816	8,697	11,701	17,909
Yarra Ranges Total	47,851	63,875	47,809	49,643	77,106	107,104

Visit us

Maroondah Libraries

Croydon Library

Civic Square

Croydon, 3136

Realm Library

Ringwood Town Square

179 Maroondah Hwy

Ringwood, 3134

Knox Libraries

Bayswater Library

Shop 26, Ground Floor

Mountain High Shopping Centre

7-13 High Street

Bayswater, 3153

Boronia Library

Park Crescent

Boronia, 3155

Ferntree Gully Library

1010 Burwood Hwy

Ferntree Gully, 3156

Knox Library

Westfield Knox

425 Burwood Hwy

Wantirna South, 3152

Rowville Library

Stud Park Shopping Centre

Stud Road

Rowville, 3178

Knox Outreach Vehicle

Yarra Ranges Libraries

Belgrave Library

Reynolds Lane

Belgrave, 3160

Healesville Library

110 River Street

Healesville, 3777

Lilydale Library

Building LA, Box Hill Institute,

Lilydale Lakeside Campus

Jarlo Drive

Lilydale

Montrose Library

935 Mount Dandenong

Tourist Road

Montrose, 3765

Mooroolbark Library

7 Station Street

Mooroolbark, 3138

Mt Evelyn Community Reading

Room (The Station House)

50 Wray Crescent

Mt Evelyn, 3796

Yarra Junction Library

Hoddle Street

Yarra Junction, 3797

Monbulk Community Reading

Room

Monbulk Living & Learning

Centre

21 Main Rd

Monbulk, 3793

Yarra Glen Memorial Hall

Community Reading Room

45 Bell St

Yarra Glen, 3775

Yarra Ranges Outreach

Vehicles



Contact us

Administration

1350 Ferntree Gully Rd

Scoresby, 3179

Call

1300 737 277

Visit

yourlibrary.com.au