CL | CONNECTED LIBRARIES

AGENDA

Board Meeting
Wednesday 22 October 2025
4.30pm

Online Meeting via Teams

1.   **Present**

2.   **Apologies**

3.   **Acknowledgement of the Traditional Owners**

4.   **Declaration of Conflicts of Interest**

5.   **Confirmation of the Minutes of the Connected Libraries Limited Board Meeting held on Wednesday 27 August 2025.**

OFFICERS REPORTS

20/2025	FINANCE
Report prepared by Emily Ramaswamy	

Purpose

To provide the Board with an update on Connected Libraries' financial performance as at 30 September 2025.

Library Plan 2025-2029 reference – 4.5

Discussion

Income Statement
Month Ended 30 September 2025

	Total Budget 2025-26	Budget YTD September 2025	Actual YTD September 2025	Variance	% Actual Vs Budget
Income					
Council Contributions	7,286,048	1,816,362	1,816,362	0	0.0%
Government Grants	2,175,404	0	1,000	1,000	
Interest on Investments	130,000	8,125	6,454	(1,672)	(20.6%)
Other Income	109,058	33,088	34,663	1,575	4.8%
Total Income	**9,700,510**	**1,857,575**	**1,858,478**	**903**	**0.0%**
Expenditure					
Employee Costs	7,276,600	1,890,238	1,831,653	58,431	3.1%
IT & Communications	619,475	154,869	161,511	(6,642)	(4.3%)
Library Materials	367,000	228,538	232,075	(3,538)	(1.5%)
Promotions & Marketing	145,500	36,375	34,388	1,987	5.5%
Administration	448,100	112,025	97,819	14,206	12.7%
Depreciation	1,272,100	219,705	219,705	0	0.0%
Total Expenditure	**10,128,775**	**2,641,750**	**2,577,151**	**64,599**	**3.1%**
Net Gain(loss) disposal of plant & equip	0	0	(273)	(273)	
Net result for the reporting period	**(428,266)**	**(803,021)**	**(718,945)**	**65,229**	

<u>Income</u>

Council Contributions

Monthly contributions from City of Casey are processed on a scheduled basis. Small timing variances through the year may be expected, dependant on the timing of Bunjil Place furniture renewal and Clyde Township Library Lounge project delivery.

Interest on Investments

Interest revenue is slightly behind budget due to the timing of initial investments being placed.

Other Income

Other sources of income are on track for the year. The Reading Buddies program grant was not included in the revised budget, so there will be an expected revenue surplus during the year. This will be offset however by linked program delivery expenditure across all areas.

Expenditure

Employee Costs

Small underspend in the year-to-date employment costs that is timing related. This will fall in line with budget by end of FY2026, excluding the expected variance tied to the Reading Buddies program.

IT & Communications

Overspend in IT & Communications is due to the timing of license renewal invoices being paid and will line up with budget closer to the year.

Programs & Marketing

Underspend in Programs & Marketing costs is timing related and will be corrected in the coming months.

Administration

Underspend in administration costs is timing related and will be corrected in the coming months.

Depreciation

Monthly depreciation processed during the year is based on known assets purchased in the prior FY. End of year depreciation calculation processed in June reflects any variation in the planned Capital Expenditure throughout the year.

Capital Expenditure Month Ended 30 September 2025	Total Budget 2025-26	Budget YTD September 2025	Actual YTD September 2025	Variance	% Actual Vs Budget
Library Materials	1,121,100	434,276	485,781	(51,505)	(11.9%)
Motor Vehicles	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Furniture & Equipment	195,500	32,644	82,255	(49,611)	(152.0%)
Capital Exp. for the reporting period	**1,316,600**	**466,920**	**568,036**	**(101,116)**	**(21.7%)**

Capital Expenditure

Library Materials

Overspend in library materials is timing related, and will align with budget at the end of the year.

Furniture & Equipment

Overspend in this area is timing related, and will align with budget at the end of the year.

Bank Reconciliation

A bank reconciliation is available upon request.

Conclusion

Connected Libraries is managing the current environment with measured financial decisions. Connected Libraries is in a sound financial position.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **That the Finance Report be noted.**

21/2025   ORGANISATIONAL RISK

Report prepared by Beth Luppino and Janine Galvin

Purpose
To provide the Board with a progress report on matters that impact Connected Libraries' operations or strategic goals.

Library Plan 2025-2029 reference – 2.4, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5

Background
The Organisational Risk report provides the Board with information on relevant legislative, regulatory or policy requirements related to risk management including Workplace Health and Safety, and any other matters that may require monitoring or consideration.

Discussion
Occupational Health and Safety
Incident Reports
Connected Libraries has recently reviewed our Incident Reporting Framework and improved the presentation of reports to allow the Board to monitor incident trends over time.

Total incidents across the region have decreased slightly by 5.1 percent in the first quarter of 2025–2026 compared to the same period last year. However, Bunjil Place and Cranbourne Libraries experienced an increase in incidents. These were predominately linked to inappropriate patron behaviour, although Bunjil Place reported a higher than usual number of slip, trip or fall incidents on the stairs/amphitheatre. No major injuries were reported. Notably, incident numbers during September, which included the school holidays, were lower compared to previous months.

INCIDENTS	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	2025-2026 YTD	*2024-2025 YTD*	*% Variance YTD*
Cranbourne West - Lounge	0	0	0	0	**-**	*-*	*-*
Cranbourne	5	1	4	2	**7**	*3*	*133.33%*
Doveton	1	2	1	1	**4**	*6*	*-33.33%*
Endeavour Hills	1	1	2	0	**3**	*9*	*-66.67%*
Hampton Park	1	1	1	0	**2**	*5*	*-60.00%*
Bunjil Place	4	10	5	6	**21**	*15*	*40.00%*
Outreach	0	0	0	0	**-**	*1*	*-100.00%*
TOTAL	**12**	**15**	**13**	**9**	**37**	*39*	*-5.13%*

In addition to assessing the overall number of incidents across branches, we examined incident categories in more detail, focusing on near misses (no injuries) and incidents involving injury, and the types of incidents within each of these categories.

A total of 26 near miss incidents (no injuries) have been recorded to date in 2025–2026, compared with 29 in the corresponding period of the previous year. This modest reduction is encouraging. Near Miss (no injuries) incident types worth noting are:

- Child unattended/missing - there has been a spike in children unattended predominantly due to more accurate reporting and vigilance of our CL Customer Experience Team. Staff Training and acknowledgement of our Child Safety policies has been paramount in managing this process.

- Inappropriate patron to patron behaviour - there has slight increase lin inappropriate Patron to Patron behaviour and a significant drop in Inappropriate Patron Behaviour to Staff. Reinforcement of our Code of Conduct in our Libraries is helping staff to deal with poor behaviour in our library spaces. VLS team at Bunjil Place also assist staff to deal with incidents.

NEAR MISS INCIDENTS (no injuries)	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	2025-2026 YTD	2024-2025 YTD	% Variance YTD
Biological Chemical Exposure	0	0	0	0	2	-100.00%
Child unattended/missing	4	2	5	11	2	450.00%
Evacuation/lockdown	0	0	0	0	1	-100.00%
Inappropriate patron behaviour to staff	0	0	0	0	4	-100.00%
Inappropriate patron behaviour	1	4	0	5	7	-28.57%
Inappropriate patron behaviour with carer	0	0	0	0	2	-100.00%
Inappropriate patron to patron behaviour	3	2	0	5	3	66.67%
inappropriate use of technology	0	0	0	0	2	-100.00%
Other	0	1	1	2	1	100.00%
Slip, trip or fall	0	2	1	3	3	0.00%
Temperature/weather	0	0	0	0	1	-100.00%
Theft	0	0	0	0	1	-100.00%
TOTAL	**8**	**11**	**7**	**26**	**29**	**-10.34%**

Injury-related incidents have slightly increased, with 11 reported to date in 2025–2026 compared to 10 during the same timeframe last year. Incidents with injuries worth noting are:

- Slip, trip or fall – majority of these are at Bunjil Place with community members tripping or falling on the stairs/amphitheatre.

- Inappropriate patron behaviour - this relates to an incident where the patron came into our library space with a pre-existing injury.

- Inappropriate patron to patron behaviour between patrons caused a minor injury in this incident to one of the patrons.

- Manual Handling – lifting of speakers at Bunjil Place has been addressed with a more thorough procedure for future management plus also the introduction of the new speaker system at Bunjil Place.

INCIDENTS (with injuries)	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	2025-2026 YTD	2024-2025 YTD	% Variance YTD
Child Risk of Neglect (reportable) - *child protection*	0	1	0	1	0	
First Aid Major – Patron	0	0	0	0	2	-100.00%
First Aid Patron – Minor	2	0	1	3	7	-57.14%
Inappropriate patron behaviour to staff	0	0	1	1	0	
Inappropriate patron behaviour	1	0	0	1	0	
Inappropriate patron behaviour with carer	0	0	0	0	0	
Inappropriate patron to patron behaviour	1	0	0	1	0	
Manual Handling	1	0	0	1	0	
Slip, trip or fall	2	1	0	3	1	200.00%
TOTAL	**7**	**2**	**2**	**11**	**10**	**10.00%**

Psychological Health Compliance Code

WorkSafe Victoria has recently released the new *Psychological Health Compliance Code* (WorkSafe Victoria – Psychological health compliance code). Legislation is expected in December 2025. Connected Libraries anticipated this legislation quite some time ago and included Psychosocial risks in our risk management plan. We are confident in our strong understanding of the requirements for identifying psychological health risks at Connected Libraires. We are currently undertaking a comprehensive review of the Compliance Code to ensure we are well prepared.

Cyber

Connected Libraries continues to strengthen its cybersecurity capability to reduce the risk of data breaches and cyber-attacks. A managed Security Operations Centre (SOC) is being implemented through eSentire to provide continuous monitoring, early threat detection, and rapid incident response.

Supporting technology upgrades, including the move to Microsoft A5 licensing, adoption of Intune for unified device management, and transition to Windows 11, will enhance system protection, security automation, and compliance with current standards.

Regular NIST Cybersecurity Framework reviews will guide ongoing improvements and ensure alignment with best practice. Staff-focused initiatives, such as enhanced phishing awareness training and the upgraded Keeper Password Management platform, further strengthen defences against credential misuse and social engineering threats.

Collectively, these initiatives improve Connected Libraries' security maturity, reduce exposure to cyber risk, and support the continued protection of organisational systems, data, and stakeholder information.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **That the Organisational Risk Report be noted.**

22/2025	OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Report prepared by Melinda Rogers

Purpose
To provide the Board with a summary of CL's performance.

Library Plan 2025-2029 reference – 2.2, 2.6, 4.5

Discussion
Connected Libraries reports to the Board on areas of performance including collections, visitation, digital engagement, memberships, marketing and social media engagement and events/programs.

Financial Year - 2025-2026

Measure	Target 2025/26**	Quarter 1 (Jul – Sep)	2025-2026 YTD	2024-2025 YTD
Engagement				
Net Promoter Score (Community Survey)	65	-	-	65
Memberships*	108,500	98,805	98,805	92,251
Visits				
Visits – physical	870,000	222,025	222,025	206,640
Visits – virtual	937,500	229,289	229,289	216,070
Total visits	**1,807,500**	**451,314**	**451,314**	**422,710**
Program and events attendance	81,500	22,258	22,258	20,494
Collection				
Loans – physical	1,703,500	340,108	340,108	347,981
Loans – digital	831,000	311,973	311,973	249,125
Loans (total physical and digital)	**2,534,500**	**652,081**	**652,081**	**597,106**
Physical quality of library collection (age of collection - less than 5 years)	65.0%	71.2%	71.2%	70.2%

*Membership on last day of the quarter.
**Revised targets presented/updated to Board -June 2025

Our performance one quarter in for 2025-2026 is looking steady and as expected.

Library Usage *(Library Plan reference 4.3)*
Community usage across our libraries continues to be strong, with visitation levels holding steady. Compared to the same period last year, visits have increased, rising by 11.7 percent in September 2025 compared to September 2024. It is anticipated, based on previous annual trends, physical visitation across the branches will increase in coming months as students utilise our spaces for their studies.

VISITS	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	2025-2026 YTD	2024-2025 YTD*	% Variance YTD
Cranbourne West - Lounge	1,529	1,851	1,846	1,834	5,531	5,828	-5.10%
Cranbourne	11,561	13,658	12,947	12,308	38,913	36,519	6.56%
Doveton	4,095	5,361	4,467	4,509	14,337	14,041	2.11%
Endeavour Hills	6,909	7,999	7,666	7,496	23,161	21,018	10.20%
Hampton Park	8,194	8,737	8,889	8,903	26,529	26,248	1.07%
Bunjil Place	33,733	37,277	38,116	38,161	113,554	102,986	10.26%
Regional Total	**66,021**	**74,883**	**73,931**	**73,211**	**222,025**	**206,640**	**7.45%**
Virtual Visits	70,935	80,194	76,024	73,071	229,289	216,070	6.12%
TOTAL	**136,956**	**155,077**	**149,955**	**146,282**	**451,314**	**422,710**	**6.77%**

*Note – Cranbourne West – Lounge opened to community in January 2024, YTD stats are not comparable from 2024-2025 and 2023-2024.

Memberships continue to grow month on month – 98,805 at the end of September, increasing from 98,484 at end of August and 98,178 at the end of July 2025. Membership data includes the removal of inactive memberships as part of regular database maintenance.

Usage of the library's app and website remains consistently strong.

VIRTUAL VISITS	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	2025-2026 YTD	2024-2025 YTD*	% Variance YTD
Website	38,313	43,206	40,414	39,270	122,890	114,964	6.89%
Enterprise	11,586	13,710	12,784	11,539	38,033	39,886	-4.65%
CL App	21,036	23,278	22,826	22,262	68,366	61,220	11.67%
TOTAL	70,935	80,194	76,024	73,071	229,289	216,070	6.12%

Physical loans are steady, in line with physical visits trends.

The locker locations Cranbourne West, Manna Gum and Orana usage remains stable, Manna Gum had its largest loans uptake in September, as did Orana since the service started. Despite the rise in Orana Locker usage in September, user numbers stayed consistent with previous months.

eLoans continue to be popular, reaching over 110,000 in August, another new milestone, after the July milestone. Although there was a slight decline in September, we have now registered eLoans over 90,000 for nine consecutive months from January to September 2025.

LOANS	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	2025-2026 YTD	2024-2025 YTD*	% Variance YTD
Regional Support	1,906	1,709	1,793	1,856	5,358	4,670	14.73%
Cranbourne West - Lounge	2,733	3,325	2,738	2,939	9,002	8,745	2.94%
Cranbourne	29,839	34,611	33,993	33,023	101,627	96,766	5.02%
Doveton	2,208	2,573	2,412	2,551	7,536	9,440	-20.17%
Endeavour Hills	12,287	14,060	13,666	14,010	41,736	40,815	2.26%
Hampton Park	8,468	9,934	9,678	9,191	28,803	33,300	-13.50%
Bunjil Place	43,322	50,055	47,957	45,216	143,228	152,109	-5.84%
Cranbourne West Locker	408	420	383	356	1,159	1,039	11.55%
Manna Gum Locker	257	369	344	388	1,101	870	26.55%
Orana Locker	127	146	142	270	558	227	145.81%
Locker Total	792	935	869	1,014	2,818	2,136	31.93%
Regional Total	101,555	117,202	113,106	109,800	340,108	347,981	-2.26%
eLoans	98,220	103,719	110,224	98,030	311,973	249,125	25.23%
TOTAL	199,775	220,921	223,330	207,830	652,081	597,106	9.21%

*Note – Cranbourne West – Lounge opened to community in January 2024, Lockers at Cranbourne West, Manna Gum and Orana were operational from February 2024. YTD stats are not comparable from 2024-2025 and 2023-2024.

Consistent performers in our eResources collection continue to be eAudiobooks, eBooks, eMagazines, Kanopy and Press Reader.

Our Libby resources have been performing strongly. As noted previously, Libby have multi-user access format, so the one copy of something can be borrowed by multiple library members at the same time, whereas Bolinda is one copy one user.

Electronic Resources	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	2025-2026 YTD	2024-2025 YTD*	% Variance YTD
Age Library Edition	853	952	922	739	2,613	3,332	-21.58%
Bolinda eAudiobooks	6,100	6,811	6,414	6,209	19,434	21,442	-9.36%
Bolinda eBooks	3,948	4,354	4,225	4,017	12,596	14,245	-11.58%
Choice	369	339	322	320	981	1,018	-3.63%
Comic Plus	30	67	65	85	217	355	-38.87%
Kanopy	773	858	822	902	2,582	3,541	-27.08%
Libby eAudiobooks	4,820	5,851	5,422	5,514	16,787	9,608	74.72%
Libby eBooks	2,640	3,422	2,916	2,806	9,144	5,856	56.15%
Libby eMagazines	3,250	3,647	3,175	3,405	10,227	8,504	20.26%
Libby LOTE ebooks & eAudio	-	53	45	34	132	-	
Press Reader	75,136	77,010	85,591	73,681	236,282	180,348	31.01%
Storybox Library	87	64	102	120	286	258	10.85%
Tumblebooks	214	291	203	198	692	618	11.97%
TOTAL	98,220	103,719	110,224	98,030	311,973	249,125	25.23%

Public internet PC bookings and Wi-Fi usage continue to align with recent monthly visitation trends, maintaining steady levels year over year. Year-to-date (YTD), internet bookings have increased by over 10 percent. Interestingly, while Doveton Library recorded a 14 percent decline in Wi-Fi sessions YTD, it has experienced a nearly equivalent increase in internet PC bookings (15 percent).

INTERNET	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	2025-2026 YTD	*2024-2025 YTD**	*% Variance YTD*
Cranbourne West - Lounge	26	48	58	59	165	*96*	*71.88%*
Cranbourne	1,033	1,282	1,282	1,048	3,612	*2,857*	*26.43%*
Doveton	475	774	556	607	1,937	*1,682*	*15.16%*
Endeavour Hills	477	552	528	549	1,629	*1,735*	*-6.11%*
Hampton Park	796	1,025	958	1,066	3,049	*2,798*	*8.97%*
Bunjil Place	1,284	1,367	1,475	1,420	4,262	*4,083*	*4.38%*
TOTAL	**4,091**	**5,048**	**4,857**	**4,749**	**14,654**	*13,251*	**10.59%**

WI-FI	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	2025-2026 YTD	*2024-2025 YTD**	*% Variance YTD*
Cranbourne West - Lounge	217	197	202	145	544	*636*	*-14.47%*
Cranbourne	1,651	1,529	1,900	1,892	5,321	*5,326*	*-0.09%*
Doveton	507	544	537	477	1,558	*1,813*	*-14.07%*
Endeavour Hills	1,128	1,135	1,159	1,153	3,447	*3,366*	*2.41%*
Hampton Park	877	969	980	930	2,879	*2,941*	*-2.11%*
Bunjil Place	2,582	2,773	1,660	1,778	6,211	*7,016*	*-11.47%*
TOTAL	**6,962**	**7,147**	**6,438**	**6,375**	**19,960**	*21,098*	**-5.39%**

Engagement Statistics

Digital engagement is strong across many platforms, including eNewsletters, social media, as well as the website. Social media reach continues to be strong, thanks to the continued hard work and dedication of the team and the reels that have been posted. The most popular reel in recent months since the paid advert for the 'Join in July' campaign was the catchy reel 'You never who you'll meet at the library during Book Week' its reach alone has been over 2,700. (posted 21 August).

eDM/eNewsletters

Month	Recipients	Opens	Click through rate (number of people that opened then clicked a link)
Jun2 025	89,364	41,031	2.13%
Jul-2025	88,939	38,693	0.77%
Aug 2025	86,368	41,072	2.10%
Sep-2025	87,835	38,809	0.87%

Read Next Newsletter (EDM)

Month	Recipients	Opens	Click through rate (number of people that opened then clicked a link)
Jun2 025	844	401	4.62%
Jul-2025	853	414	4.10%
Aug 2025	852	415	3.05%
Sep-2025	848	418	2.48%

Social Media

	Jun 2025	Jul 2025	Aug 2025	Sep 2025
Facebook	Followers: 9,413 Reach: 26,150	Followers: 9,422 Reach: 31,474	Followers: 9,445 Reach: 12,765	Followers: 9,449 Reach: 7,546
Instagram	Followers: 2,310 Reach: 10,172	Followers: 2,325 Reach: 16,134	Followers: 2,339 Reach: 5,631	Followers: 2,348 Reach: 1,639

Programs and Events

Regular programs and events held outside the September school holiday period remain popular. Early childhood and children continue to be a key target audience for our programs with Toddler Time being the most popular closely followed by Baby Rhyme Time and Storytime. Groups visits whether it be into the library or staff visiting groups outside our library's walls have been growing, with a drop in September

expected with school holidays. Hampton Park Library generates the most group visits with regular visits to and from local childcare centres, kindergartens and schools.

A separate holiday program for Kids and Teens ran during September that included baby rhyme times, toddler time, storytime, art and craft activities, Lego, gaming whether it be FIFA or Board games, health and wellbeing activities including mindfulness, FunFit, and the ever-popular entertainers like Max the Magician: Football Themed Magic Show. Programs offered to adults included a selection of art and craft workshops, cooking demonstrations and various digital literacy classes for beginners to advance.

The Library Outreach team have been busy delivering programs in the community including over the September school holidays. The team have travelled to Botanic Ridge Family and Community Centre, Casey Central, Royal Botanic Gardens in Cranbourne, Clyde Township Family and Community Centre, Pearcedale Community Centre, Blind Bight Community Centre, Manna Gum Community Centre, Ramleigh Family and Community Centre, Orana Community Place and Eliston Family and Community Centre.

Target Audience	Jul 2025 - Attendance	Jul 2025 - Sessions	Aug-2025 - Attendance	Aug 2025 - Sessions	Sep 2025 - Attendance	Sep 2025 - Sessions
Early childhood	3,322	108	5,198	171	3,112	103
Children	2,556	88	1,814	84	1,550	75
Young Adult	246	16	240	17	140	13
Adults	567	87	1,172	124	960	111
Seniors	43	9	19	8	14	9
All ages (not specific)	399	12	432	17	474	11
TOTAL	**7,133**	**320**	**8,875**	**421**	**6,250**	**322**

Program Outcome	Jul 2025 - Attendance	Jul 2025 - Sessions	Aug-2025 - Attendance	Aug 2025 - Sessions	Sep 2025 - Attendance	Sep 2025 - Sessions
Digital inclusion	135	49	152	51	168	53
Economic and workforce development	-	-	-	0	-	0
Health and Wellbeing	1,420	58	563	41	1,149	58
Informed and connected citizens	22	9	623	39	563	35
Literacy and lifelong learning	4,012	162	4,806	198	3,125	128
Personal development *	256	12	146	10	63	8
Stronger and more creative communities	1,288	30	2,585	82	1,182	40
TOTAL	**7,133**	**320**	**8,875**	**421**	**6,250**	**322**

RECOMMENDATIONS

   1.   **That the Operational Performance Report be noted.**

23/2025   LIBRARY PLAN – 2025-2029 – ACTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Report prepared by Koula Kalaitzoglou

Purpose
To provide the Board with key achievements from the Library Plan 2025-2029, specifically the 2025-2026 Action Plan.

Library Plan 2025-2029 reference –4.5

Discussion
Strategic Outcome 2 – Stronger Connections

Core Priority 2.5 Partner with external organisations to deliver workshops and programs to support community education.

Action – Seek grant and sponsorship opportunities to support service deliver.

Reading Buddies Program
Connected Libraries has been successful in securing $77,950 in funding from Windermere, through the Communities for Children initiative, to support the delivery of the Reading Buddies program until 30 June 2026.

Communities for Children is a federally funded Australian Government initiative, delivered locally by Windermere, that supports community-based organisations to improve outcomes for children and families. The program focuses on building strong, resilient communities where children can thrive.

Reading Buddies pairs a trained project officer with identified primary school students who require additional literacy support. Through regular one-on-one reading sessions held in partnered schools, the program helps children build confidence, improve reading fluency, and develop a lifelong love of reading.

The funding will support the employment of a 0.8 FTE Project Officer, dedicated to coordinating the Reading Buddies program. The role will focus on delivery into partnered schools, reporting on project outcomes and strengthening relationships with primary schools in the Cranbourne and Clyde areas.

We are currently recruiting for the Reading Buddies Project Officer role with full delivery expected to commence in 2026. Participation and outcomes are to be monitored and reported through the grant partnership with Windermere.

Strategic Outcome 2 – Stronger Connections

Core Priority 2.1 Collaborate with Council, health, employment, legal and social services to address informational needs across the community.

Action – Partner with local organisations to provide in-branch support and connect community to services.

Community Legal Pop-Up Service
Connected Libraries continues to strengthen partnerships with local organisations to provide in-branch support and connect the community to vital services.

In partnership with South-East Monash Legal Service (SMLS), pop-up legal outreach sessions were recently delivered at Bunjil Place Library, offering free legal information and advice to community members. Over the course of several sessions, more than 21 individuals sought assistance on a range of matters including family law, employment law, wills and powers of attorney, and fraud. Participants were also referred to specialist programs such as Justice Q, and some received additional support from the organisation's social work team.

The sessions highlighted a growing community need—particularly among older residents—regarding the preparation and organisation of wills. In direct response, SMLS will host a Wills Clinic at Bunjil Place in December, focused on supporting community members with will preparation and related legal matters.

Building on the success of this partnership, bi-monthly pop-up sessions will continue in 2026, alternating between Bunjil Place Library and Cranbourne Library.

"We are excited about this initiative and hope it will address a critical gap in legal services for the community," said a representative from SMLS.

Core Priority 2.6 Reach out to non-users, promoting the benefits of library engagement to inspire broader community participation.

Action – Identify barriers to library participation through non-user surveys and community consultation.

Community Survey – Identifying Barriers to Library Participation

Connected Libraries is progressing work to identify barriers to library participation through both non-user surveys and broader community consultation.

A new community survey is being prepared using Culture Counts, which allows for the measurement of both participant feedback and the social impact of library services. The survey will include conditional logic, so that respondents who are current non-users of library services are presented with a different set of questions. This approach will enable the organisation to capture insights about potential barriers to engagement, service awareness, and unmet needs.

Responses from both existing users and non-users will provide a comprehensive understanding of community perspectives and inform future service planning. The survey will reach non-users through a geographic social media push.

The survey is scheduled to be distributed to the community at the end of October 2025. The results will support Connected Libraries in designing targeted programs and initiatives to improve accessibility, participation, and community reach, ensuring services are inclusive and responsive to local needs.

Strategic Outcome 4 – Outstanding People and Performance

Core Priority 4.1 Build an adaptable workforce to meet the changing needs of service delivery.

Action - Utilise insights from staff skills-audit, performance reviews and work planning to create training and development opportunities.

Staff Development Day
Connected Libraries held a Staff Development Day on Tuesday 9 September at the Narre Warren Bowls Club, bringing together team members from across the organisation to connect, learn, and celebrate the organisation's culture and achievements. Facilitated discussion and presentations supported professional growth, strengthened staff engagement, and reinforced Connected Libraries' commitment to a positive, inclusive, and high-performing workplace culture.

The work began with a Culture Survey Workshop facilitated by Mel Neil, which explored staff feedback from the recent Culture Survey. The session provided valuable insights into areas of strength and opportunities for continued cultural development, encouraging open discussion and shared understanding across the organisation.

The first afternoon session was delivered by Juli Stickler and Vicky Mudrinic from the City of Casey's Facilities Team who presented on Future Library Facilities, offering an in-depth look at upcoming developments, including the new Cranbourne Library.

This was followed by LGBTQI+ Ally Training delivered by Miranda Luck, the City of Casey's LGBTQIA+ Advisor, supporting Connected Libraries' ongoing commitment to inclusion and belonging.

The final presenter was Casey's LINK Worker Jorga Lazarus, who shared information on the supports and referral pathways available to assist community members experiencing vulnerability.

All sessions reflected current priorities identified through Library Plan, including culture, inclusion, community connection, and service innovation. Feedback collected on the day will help inform future professional development opportunities, speakers, and training themes to ensure continued alignment with both staff needs and organisational priorities.

The day concluded with the presentation of Values Awards, Value Champion Awards, and Years of Service recognitions, celebrating staff contributions and commitment to Connected Libraries and the City of Casey community.

"I found the LGBTQ+ session very interesting, and it prompted me to get a pronoun badge for my lanyard. It's so important to be visible for people who clearly are not. It was also great to hear an in-depth view of the forthcoming Cranbourne Library and the upcoming Library Lounges," shared one staff member.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **That the Library Plan 2025-2029 – Actions and Achievements Report be noted.**

IN-CAMERA

24/2025	**INCIDENT UPDATE**
Report prepared by Beth Luppino	

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GENERAL BUSINESS

25/2025	INTERNAL AUDIT
Report prepared by Beth Luppino	

Purpose

To provide the Board with an update on request for quotes for a four-year, outsourced Internal Audit plan.

Library Plan 2025-2029 reference – 4.5

Background and Discussion

At the August meeting, the Board resolved that cost estimates should be sought from an external provider to develop a four-year audit plan that includes one internal audit per year. Costs will then inform further Board discussion on options of CL Ltd governance moving forward.

The Executive are seeking scoped proposals and costings for options based on these focus areas:

- **Regulatory Compliance** - Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic), Freedom of Information obligations, Public Libraries Victoria standards, Local Government Act requirements (via Council), and ACNC reporting obligations

- **Ethical Compliance & Inclusion** - Including but not limited to disability access, CALD inclusion, gender equality & safety, First Nations inclusion

- **Risk Management** - Emergency Management, Workplace Health and Safety, Business Continuity Plan/Disaster Recovery information governance

- **Community Feedback & Effectiveness** - Program evaluation, grants/partnerships, surveys/complaints loop, KPI impacts

Internal Auditors Australia were not able to provide a quote.

Responses are now being sought from alternate service providers.

The Executive will report back on progress at the next Board meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **That the Board notes the Internal Audit update.**

NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 26 November 2025 – 4.00pm – Online Teams Meeting