

Great Lakes Library Service

Strategy

2006

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1. Executive Summary

The library strategy plays a central role in providing a direction for the library service. The first strategy was developed in 1996 and then updated in 2002. It is appropriate to review the document once more. The strategy concentrates on the higher level strategic issues with operational matters identified through a series of marketing plans that underpin the strategy.

To date the following Plans have been developed:

- Business
- Young people
- Indigenous people
- Ageing community
- Males

Other segments that Marketing Plans could be developed for are:

- Children
- Community organisations
- Council
- Employees and Employers
- Family historians
- Families
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- People with disabilities
- People with literacy problems
- Women

Ultimately, actions derived from the identification of operational matters will be encapsulated in the annual Management Plan for the Library. It should be noted that the 2006 Strategy also presents a wide range of strategic objectives that can be incorporated in the Management Plan.

Statistics within this Strategy show that the Library is a heavily used community resource. Particular mention is made of the high level of patronage made by older residents. Attention is also drawn to female library users and the potential impact of visitors.

The Strategy recognises the changing role of the public library and identifies the following as broad roles the library plays in the community:

- Equitable provision of information;
- Assistance in finding information;
- To be a conduit for government information;
- To play a part in meeting the leisure needs of the community;
- To support the education system at least until the secondary level;
- To provide support for lifelong learning; and
- To be a safe place for social interaction.

It also identifies trends occurring in the Library environment. The major areas of change/opportunity are:

- Internet
 - There will be a growing demand for access to PCs, along with the human resources to maintain them;
 - Increased access to online resources and services;
 - Ongoing need to develop and maintain web-based resources; and
 - Demand for Internet training.
- Format
 - Demand for traditional resources will remain strong but demand will continue to grow for new formats
 - Space will be needed for these range of formats
- Social Interaction and Inclusion
 - The need to provide adequate relaxation and socialisation space (e.g. comfortable chairs, coffee shop) as well as quiet space
 - Provision of meeting rooms
 - Disabled access, wider aisles and appropriate shelf heights needs consideration; and
 - There will be a growing demand for a home Library service;
- Customer Expectation
 - Demand will continue for the provision of online services; and
 - Circulation and reference services should be tailored to meet user needs, including opportunities for customer/staff interaction.
- Competition
 - Commitment of staff time to promotion of services; and
 - The development of programs to attract patrons to the Library
- Technology and Telecommunications
 - Consider self-check and RFID technology in any new library design.
- Desire to be Informed
 - The need to continue providing a structure for genealogical services and to provide a genealogy room in any expanded library facilities at Forster.
- The Ageing of the Community
 - The need for a healthy collection budget just to address the regular wear-and-tear of items;
 - The need to provide a Home Library service
- Children and Youth
 - The need to appoint a Children's and Youth Services Librarian to conduct programs and outreach.

The Strategy also identifies the place of the Library in the wider government context and identifies funding relationships as well as areas where lobbying could be undertaken. It is pertinent to note that there is currently no direct Federal funding towards public libraries.

Community relationships are also identified within the Strategy with particular emphasis placed on the important of the Friends of the Great Lakes Library Service (FOGLLS) and volunteers. There is also the scope for the Library to develop relationships with other community organisations. This could result in sponsorship arrangements. Reference is made to the relationship between the Library and Council, with a suggestion that this could be further developed.

Having determined that a series of marketing plans are essential for a thorough understanding of community needs, sufficient information is already available on the needs of the residents of Great Lakes to establish a set of basic standards. The strategy identifies 5 key areas where standards need to be constantly monitored:

- Library collection;
- Service levels;
- Facilities;
- Opening hours and
- Technology.

It makes a series of recommendations in relation to the achievement of these standards. Emphasis is placed on the need to address staffing and bookstock levels as well as expand opening hours. Developments in the area of facilities and technology are positive, but need to be maintained.

2. Introduction

In 1996 the Great Lakes Library Service developed its first Library Strategy¹. This document provided a framework for the Library to shape its service to the existing and future needs of users. The Library Strategy (1996) played a key role in the development of the Library service in the early years but it was more in the nature of an operational document. Consequently, when the Strategy was reviewed in 2002 a much greater strategic focus was developed. Four years later it is appropriate to review the document. In keeping with an open-minded approach the entire Strategy has been overhauled to bring it into line with changes that have occurred in the library environment.

The strategy draws from a range of documents and surveys produced by the Library service over the past 6 years. In particular, it references the *Library Survey (1995)*², the revised *Library Policy (2000)*³, a Statewide customer satisfaction survey⁴ conducted in 2000 and a non-user survey⁵, conducted jointly with Greater Taree Library in 2001. Use will also be made of suggestions received from the public through the Library's Suggestions Box.

¹ Braybrook, Andrew, *Great Lakes Library Strategy: September 1996*, Great Lakes Council, 1996.

² Braybrook, Andrew, *Library Survey*, Great Lakes Council, 1996

³ Great Lakes Council, *Policy Register*, 2000.

⁴ Department of Information Studies, University of Technology, Sydney, *NSW public libraries survey of library user satisfaction: Executive summary*, Metropolitan Public Libraries Association of NSW, 2000.

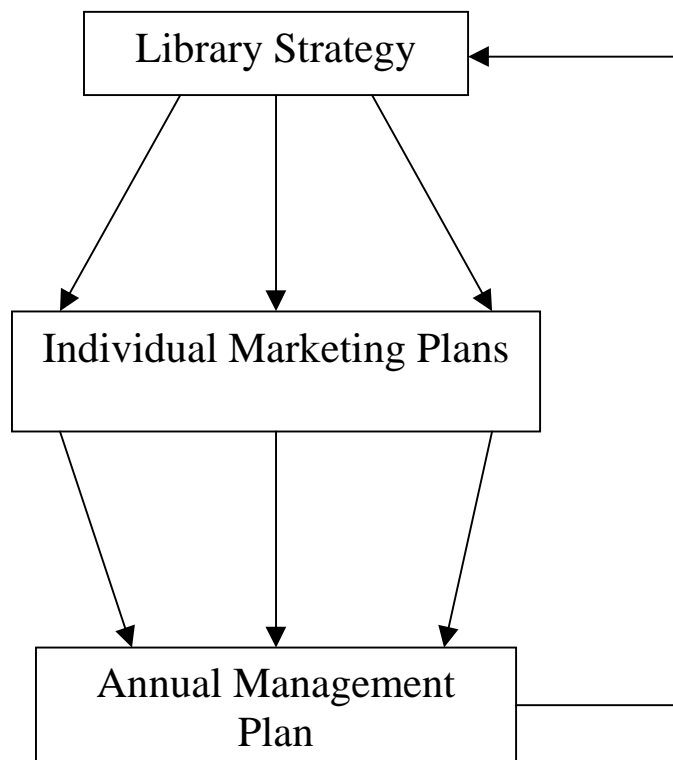
⁵ Micromex Marketing Services, *Great Lakes Library: community telephone survey*, 2001.

3. Structure and Scope of the Strategy and Underpinning Documents

The Library Strategy provides an overarching view of the role of the Library within its community. It incorporates the relationship of the Library with Great Lakes Council as well as the role it should play in the external environment that influences the Library. The strategy also indicates the basic level of resources necessary for the Library to operate effectively. In addition this document will make some attempt to predict future trends in information provision and leisure activities and how these might impact on the Library service.

Underpinning the Library Strategy is a series of marketing plans that are focused on key segments within the community. These plans interpret the Strategy and can provide an operational focus. The outcomes of these plans will then be captured in the annual management plan, which, in turn will feed back into the strategy. This will result in a process that, whilst being lengthy to implement, can be dealt with in smaller steps and will produce a more effective process for developing the Library service. The strategy will identify the key segments that are to be addressed through individual marketing plans.

The intended structure for the process is shown in the flow chart below.



4. Demographics of Great Lakes

4.1 Community Profile

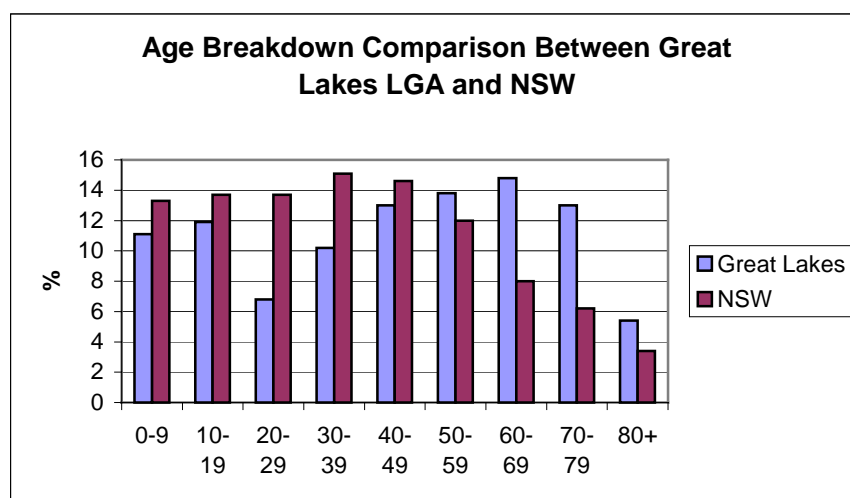
The Great Lakes LGA is a growth region with the population increasing at an annual rate of 2.1%⁶. Such growth must be taken into consideration in planning the Library strategy for the next 5 years.

The demographics of the area reveal a high proportion of the aged within the community. This area has the highest median age, 47, in NSW⁷, with 25.4% of the population aged 65 years and over⁸. Both these figures have risen since the last Library Survey and both are well above the State average of 35 years for the median age and 13.1% for the median proportion of people aged 65 years and over.

Though clearly there is strong representation of the aged in the community there is also a notable proportion of younger residents. Great Lakes LGA has 17.8% of its residents aged 14 and under. Whilst this is lower than the State average of 20.7% the difference is not as marked as with the over 65 years category.

Figure 1 shows a complete breakdown of the ages and compares it with the State average. From this it is evident that the high presence of aged in the community comes at the cost of a much lower representation in the 20-40 year age range.

Figure 1: Age Breakdown Comparison Between Great Lakes LGA and NSW, Based on the 2001 Census



Generally speaking, there is a low representation of people with a non-English speaking background in the Great Lakes area. According to the most recent census data, only 2.1% of the population speak a language other than English at home⁹.

⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Regional statistics: New South Wales 2004*, ABS Cat. No. 1362.1, 2004

⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Census of population and housing: selected social and housing characteristics for statistical local areas - New South Wales and Jervis Bay: 2001*, ABS Cat. No. 2015.1, 2002

⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Regional statistics: New South Wales: 2004*, ABS Cat. No. 1362.1, 2004

⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Great Lakes: Basic Community Profile 2001*, ABS Cat. No. 2001.0, 2002

According to the 2001 census the median weekly income for Great Lakes is \$270, significantly below the State average of \$386¹⁰. The low level of disposable income relates to both pensioners and the high retiree population that have invested earnings into property purchases.

Consideration should also be given to the high numbers of visitors to the region, particularly during the summer holiday period. The visitors not only impact on lending stock but also place a significant demand on the Internet resources.

4.2 Library Member Profile

The Great Lakes Library Service is one of the most heavily patronised in NSW. Across the entire library service, as at 1 September 2005, 19,871 residents are members representing around 60% of the population. The breakdown of this membership by library service point, in order of size is given in Table 2.

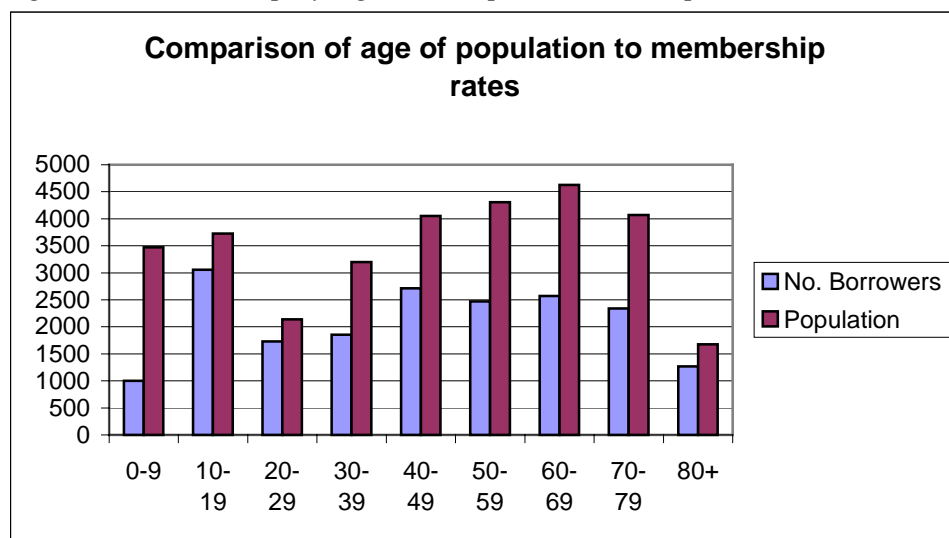
Table 2: Total Membership of Library Service Points in the Great Lakes Library Service

	Forster	Tea Gardens	Nabiac	Stroud	Bulahdelah	North Arm Cove
Borrowers	15,703	2,218	613	586	543	205

80% of Library members use the Forster Library, 11% are registered with Tea Gardens and the remaining four service points hold 9% of membership between them. During 2004 the Library lent 449,000 items.

Figure 2 provides an age breakdown of Library membership and compares it with the representation in the community.

Figure 2: Membership by Age as Compared to the Representation in the Community



¹⁰ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Census of population and housing: selected social and housing characteristics for statistical local areas - New South Wales and Jervis Bay: 2001*, ABS Cat. No. 2015.1, 2002.

Figures 3 and 4 show this age breakdown for males and females.

Figure 3: Age Breakdown of Male Library Members as Compared to the Wider Community

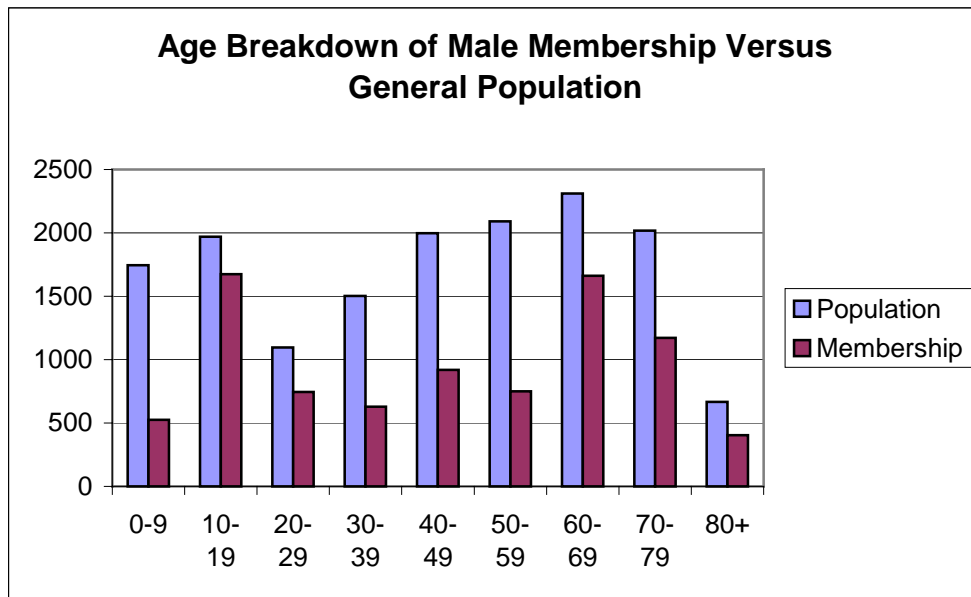
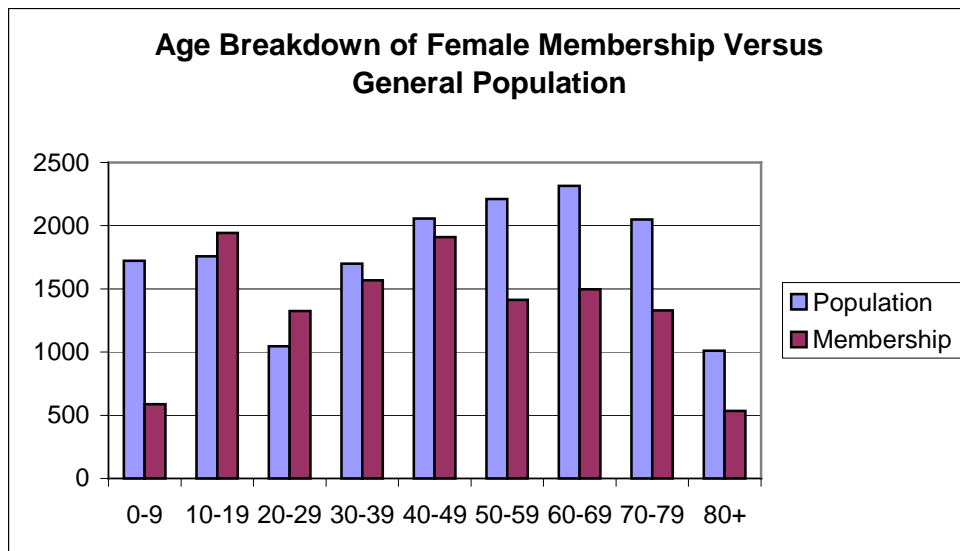


Figure 4: Age Breakdown of Female Library Members as Compared to the Wider Community



It is worth noting that members remain on the Library database up to five years after they last used their card. This explains why the above graph indicates there are more female members registered with the Library than are in the general population. The 10-29 years age range is one where there is a significant amount of movement into and out of the area and the lag between a person leaving the area and disappearing off the database accounts for the aberration. Having said this the general trends within the data remain valid and clearly show much higher membership levels for females.

4.3 Library Usage

115,000 people visited the Forster Library and a further 22,600 used the Tea Gardens Library during 2004 (these are the only two library facilities with people counters).

Circulation per staff member: Staff at the Great Lakes Library Service issued 40,351 items each in 2002/03. This compares with a State median of 19,967 issues per staff member¹¹.

Stock lending rate: The stock at Great Lakes Library Service is lent out 7.21 times per annum, the highest in NSW, and over twice the State median of 3.35¹².

Circulation per capita: Residents of Great Lakes borrow 12.05 per capita each year, a rate that leads rural NSW and is almost twice the State median¹³.

Items per capita: Great Lakes Library Service currently holds 1.77 items per capita. This is below the industry standard of 2 items per capita, and well below the State median of 2.34¹⁴.

¹¹ State Library of NSW, *Public library statistics 2002/2003*, 2004, p.73

¹² *Ibid*, p.68.

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 67.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 61

5. The Changing Role of Public Libraries in the Community

5.1 Information

There is much discussion in the literature on the role of the public library in the community and it is apparent that whilst expectation of traditional services remain strong that there is also a growing new place for the library at the heart of its community.

Certainly the demand for information remains valid. In its visionary document *Framework for the Future* the U.K. government recognised the importance of this:

*Knowledge, skills and information are becoming more important to our lives economically, socially and as citizens. Libraries have a central role to play in ensuring everyone has access to the resources, information and knowledge they need – particularly those groups in society who will otherwise be disadvantaged...*¹⁵

This statement contains a number of key elements. First, there is the need for a library to have access to as much information as possible. Second, there should be equity of access to this information. Finally, there is a need for libraries to have the skills to assist in locating relevant data in what is fast becoming a world overloaded with information.

The statement also identifies the economic worth of such information, which should not be underestimated. Along these lines there is certainly an important place for public libraries as a mechanism for disseminating government information, as was identified in the *Libraries Building Communities* publication produced by the State Library of Victoria:

*Public libraries should be the first thing thought of when there is a need to disseminate government information*¹⁶.

The traditional role of providing equitable access to information appears to be as important as ever. The general healthiness of public library loans certainly tends to support this. The challenge in this area is to have the financial resources to meet this demand both in the breadth of information and the format it is sought in.

5.2 Leisure

This aspect of the public libraries is often overlooked in the literature as the emphasis focuses more on access to information or the growing role of social inclusion, but it remains a vital component of the public library service. Indeed, the search for leisure

¹⁵ Department of Culture, Media and Sport, *Framework for the Future: Libraries, Learning and Information in the Next Decade*, DCMS, 2004, p.6

¹⁶ State Library of Victoria, *Libraries Building Communities*, State Library of Victoria, 2004 p.47

material may well be the central role of a public library particularly as the community ages and individuals have more disposable time.

5.3 Lifelong Learning

According to Alan Bundy the public library network is “*by far the largest educational and cultural provider in Australia*¹⁷”. The frustration associated with this fact is that so few organisations outside of public libraries realise the important educative role that is played by the library. In the first instance public libraries do provide an important adjunct to the school system, as was highlighted in *Libraries Building Communities*:

*Public libraries should connect better with the school system – they should be the second point of learning.*¹⁸

As well as playing a part in the early formal education process public libraries are increasingly finding themselves caught up in the growth of lifelong learning. This philosophy recognises that people continue to learn and want to learn throughout their lives. This has seen a blossoming of interest in non-fiction material that is accessible to the layperson. The ageing population has played a part in this with retired people seeking to further enrich their lives through increased understanding of the world around them.

5.4 The Village Green and Social Capital

Perhaps the most interesting development in the role of the public library has been the emergence of the “Village Green”, as espoused by Hugh Mackay¹⁹. This sees public libraries as important locations that enable people to interact socially.

*Libraries are our best chance to create a ‘centre of community spirit and activity’ which is important for healthy and activities.*²⁰

To this role of social interaction Eva Cox adds the important feature that libraries are seen as:

*... ‘safe’ spaces that is where the risks of contact with strangers might be reduced.*²¹

Mackay takes this importance of libraries in this area so seriously that he states that:

*If communities thrive on conversation and contact, then libraries will be failing in their responsibility to their communities if they don't provide facilities for this contact to happen.*²²

¹⁷ Bundy, Alan, *The Modern Public Library: the Very Best Investment Your Community Can Make*, <http://www.foia.org.au/pdfs/modernpubliclibrary.pdf>, 2005

¹⁸ State Library of Victoria, *Libraries Building Communities*, State Library of Victoria, 2004 p.47

¹⁹ Mackay, Hugh, *Australia at a Turning Point*, <http://www.foia.org.au/news/papers/hughmackay.htm> 2002

²⁰ State Library of Victoria, *Libraries Building Communities*, State Library of Victoria, 2004 p.45

²¹ Cox, Eva, *A Safe Place to Go*, State Library of New South Wales, 2000 p.5

5.5 Tying the Threads Together

It is apparent that the Library is perceived to fulfil a number of roles within the community. Whilst it is not possible to be all things to all people the Library should meet, at some level, the following objectives:

- Equitable provision of information;
- Assistance in finding information;
- To be a conduit for government information;
- To play a part in meeting the leisure needs of the community;
- To support the education system at least until the secondary level;
- To provide support for lifelong learning; and
- To be a safe place for social interaction.

²² Mackay, Hugh, *Australia at a Turning Point*, <http://www.foia.org.au/news/papers/hughmackay.htm>
2002

6. The Library's Place in Council

The Great Lakes Library Service sits within the Corporate and Community Services Division of Council and the Manager Library Services reports directly to the Director of this Division. Council's vision is to be:

A leader in the provision of infrastructure and services which sustain and enhance the natural environment and achieve a quality lifestyle for residents and visitors

Its Mission is:

Providing governance which is:

Effective

Efficient

Socially Just

Transparent

Visionary

In the context of Community Services the Council has the corporate objective:

To manage a range of quality infrastructure and services which enhance community wellbeing.

In this environment and bearing in mind the expectations and needs of the community the Library's mission is:

The Library will endeavour to meet the community's need for information, education, culture, leisure and social interaction through the provision of an efficient and adequately resourced network of library services.

7. Trends in Library Service Provision

Changes in the way information is accessible, developments in technology and an expanding public expectation of service provision have all had a major impact on the library environment, and are likely to continue to do so. This section looks at these factors in some detail.

7.1 *The Internet*

The Internet has had a huge influence over how libraries access information and deliver their services. It has become such an integral part of the world of information provision that there is a public expectation that libraries will provide Internet access. In light of the role public libraries have to provide equitable access to information such provision of Internet services is expected to be free of charge.

The Internet also offers the opportunity to deliver services online. This extends to areas such as online reservations and online requests.

The Internet presents libraries with the opportunity to tap into online databases, though this usually comes at a significant cost, unless consortia arrangements are available. Currently the Council subscribes to the NSW.net arrangement which provides both subsidised access to the Internet and free membership of major online databases. This association is central to the quality of online provision of resources.

In addition to online databases the Internet presents access to a wealth of resources, though these are not necessarily laid out in the most accessible fashion. Public libraries now frequently develop their own websites that contain links to online resources collated by subject. There is even the option for libraries to “catalogue” online resources.

As well as the provision of online services the Great Lakes Library Service has the opportunity to place information of items it holds on the Libraries Australia database. The rationale for this is that it makes a positive contribution towards the Australian inter-library lending network. To date the Great Lakes Library Service has not placed holdings on this database, though it has made good use of Libraries Australia to locate items. The Library is now in a position to make such a contribution, and should do so in the overall interest of libraries in Australia.

There is one further challenge associated with the Internet. Many individuals still do not have the skills to navigate the world wide web. Consequently library staff need to have the skills to retrieve relevant information and there is even the opportunity to provide members of the public with training in this area.

The implications for the Library service are:

- An increased public demand for PCs providing free access to the Internet, along with the staff time to maintain the equipment;
- Commitment of staff time towards online provision of services;
- Provision of access to online databases, probably through a consortia arrangement;

- Retain ongoing membership to NSW.net;
- Placing item holdings on the Libraries Australia database;
- Management of online data through a library website, with the possibility of cataloguing websites; and
- Ongoing demand Internet training.

These trends must be monitored and incorporated in staffing and technology plans for the library.

7.2 *Format*

Information and leisure materials now come in a wide range of formats, ranging from the traditional book to DVDs and online data. Along with the growth in interest for new formats, the traditional medium seems to be remaining as popular as ever.

The rate with which new formats emerge in the market and then sometimes rapidly disappear presents its own challenges as well. For example e-books were to be the wave of the future but they have become marginalised. Does this mean they will always remain so?

On top of this, for various reasons, library users cling tenaciously to older formats. Though DVDs have arrived many people still require videos. The same applies for books-on-CD and books-on-tape. The need to maintain older formats whilst purchasing new ones has obvious budget implications.

The implications for the Library are:

- Demand for the traditional format of the book will remain strong;
- Demand for new formats will also be high;
- There will be a need to maintain collections in a range of formats;
- Each time a new format emerges the Library will need a considerable injection of funding to establish a collection of this medium (e.g. as was done with DVDs and Graphic Novels); and
- Space will need to be provided for all these formats.

7.3 *Social Interaction and Inclusion*

As indicated in section 5 above, there is an increasing expectation that libraries should be fulfilling the role as a safe place for social interaction. This also carries with it the implication that the Library should be accessible to all. In order to reach all interested members of the community the Library needs to provide disabled access and consider a home library service. The geographically isolated also need to be taken into account. People currently have access to six Library service points in Bulahdelah, Forster, Nahiack, North Arm Cove, Stroud and Tea Gardens. The suitability and efficiency of this arrangement to meet the needs of the public should be regularly reviewed.

The implications for the Library are:

- The need to provide adequate relaxation and socialisation space (e.g. comfortable chairs, coffee shop);

- Provision of quiet space within the library;
- Provision of meeting room facilities;
- Disabled access and suitably wide aisles;
- Consideration should be given to shelving height;
- The provision of a home Library service; and
- Review of mechanisms to meet the Library needs of the geographically isolated.

7.4 *Customer expectations*

Customer expectations seem to be constantly high in the current environment. Though this is pleasing in one aspect and satisfying to know how much staff are appreciated it has implications both on staffing numbers and how the service is provided.

Customers certainly expect faster and easier access to information and services. The online environment does present opportunities here, as do developments in library technology.

Whilst fast service does have its proponents feedback from Library users is that many like the human interaction involved with visiting the library and borrowing books. This creates the challenge of providing rapid access without conflicting with positive customer/staff interactions.

Improvements in how cataloguing processes may shorten the time in which stock is processed but the costs associated with this may be prohibitive.

The implications for the Library are:

- Library users will not want to wait for extended periods of time for service;
- Demand will continue for the provision of online services;
- There is the possibility for the provision of a Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) arrangement that pre-emptively informs members of new stock that might interest them; and
- Circulation and reference services and their physical location should be tailored to meet user needs, including opportunities for customer/staff interaction as well as rapid service.

7.5 *Competition*

Potential library users often have limited available time but a wide range of choices in the entertainment provision market. Also, libraries are changing so constantly (and members of the community are likely to have a dated view of the role of a Library) that potential users may be unaware of how relevant the library is to their needs. In the current climate public libraries need to be effective and timely in marketing their services.

The implications for the Library are:

- Commitment of staff time to promotion of services;
- The development of programs to attract patrons to the Library; and

- The encouragement of support groups such as the Friends of the Great Lakes Library Service (FOGLLS).

7.6 Technology and Telecommunications

Technology has had a major impact on library services and there is every reason to consider it will do so in an ongoing fashion. In order to meet customer expectations for rapid service there is now self-issue equipment as Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology on the market. The Library should consider this in the development of its Library services.

As telecommunications advance there are potential opportunities for branches to more readily access online data.

The implications for the Library are:

- Consider self-check and RFID technology in any new library design. There are substantial cost implications in implementing new technologies.

7.7 Desire to be Informed

There is a general desire within the community to be more informed. Some of this may have to do with the amount of disposable time retirees now have. Consequently, people are seeking to increase their overall knowledge. Non-fiction now outsells fiction in Australia and the library has seen a growth in non-fiction titles published for the layperson. It is interesting to note that a survey of male Library users conducted in 2005 showed good interest in an expanded non-fiction collection.

In this context of being informed there is also good interest in genealogical services. The Library provides a genealogical collection, with volunteers rostered on to give assistance to members of the public. Demand for the service has been such that the number of hours rostered on for volunteers has grown substantially in the past three years. One of the challenges is to provide the space and technology to meet the needs of the collection. This service is coordinated by the Reference and Information Services Librarian.

The implication for the Library are:

- Expected strong demand for non-fiction titles;
- The need to continue providing a structure for genealogical services; and
- Consideration must be given to a genealogy room in any expanded library facilities at Forster.

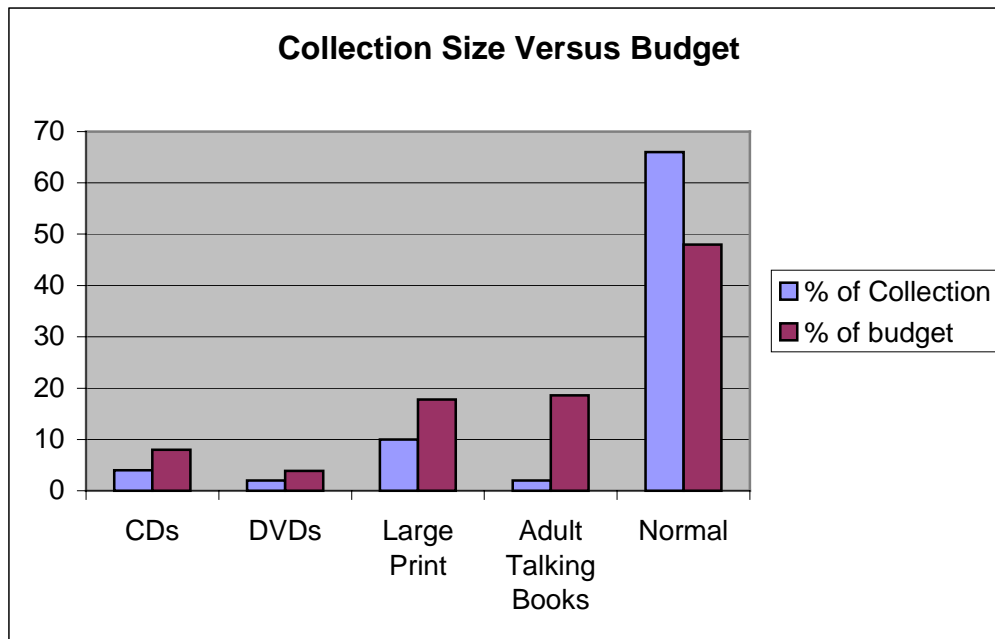
7.8 The Aging of the Community

The Great Lakes community, like the rest of Australia, is growing older. In 1996 the median for the Great Lakes LGA was 44 and 24.8% of the population was aged 65+ years. By 2001 the median age had risen to 47 and 25.4% of the population was aged 65+ years.

This trend has significant implications for the Library service. Older residents are well represented in the Library membership. Furthermore, they are active borrowers.

Amongst the general population 45% of Library members use their card at least once a year. In the 60-80 year age range the figure climbs to 55%. This indicates that older residents use the Library more regularly, which in turn places more wear and tear on bookstock. In addition, it is necessary to purchase more large print stock. Large print material represents 10% of the stock in the Great Lakes Library service as compared to 5% of collection in NSW. This comes at a price, with large print material consuming 18% of the overall collection budget.

Figure 5: Size of Various Collections in the Great Lakes Library Service as Compared to Budget Commitment



In addition to collection pressures the ageing community brings other demands. In particular there is a growing need for a service tailored specific for the aged. Such Home Library services are common to a number of library systems in NSW. Great Lakes Library Service currently offers a very limited service but the time is fast approaching when further staffing and stock will need to be put into this area. One further consideration regarding the aged is the expressed need for training in using the Internet. Whenever the Great Lakes Library Service has offered Internet training classes the elderly have jumped at the opportunity. Such training should be considered in the context of Library service provision. The Great Lakes Library Service has provided such training in the past, in some instances courtesy of grant funding. Further Library development should factor in a capacity for an Internet-based training environment.

The implication for the Library are:

- The need for a healthy collection budget just to address the regular wear-and-tear of items;
- The need to provide a Home Library service; and
- The provision of Internet-based training classes and the facilities to conduct these.

7.9 Children and Youth

At the other end of the age spectrum are children and youth. The census in 2001 identified that there were 7,197 residents aged 19 years and under. This represented 23% of the entire population. There is a tendency in the broader community to take the view that Great Lakes is purely an aged population. This is clearly not the case. The data in Figures 2 to 4 above shows that there is reasonable library membership amongst this age group, though borrowings of much of the children's and youth literature and the junior non-fiction collection remain very low as Table 3 indicates.

Table 3: On Loan Rate of Library Material at Forster Library as of December 2005

Collection	% On Loan
Junior Non-Fiction	4.5
Junior Fiction	18.8
Young Adult Fiction	17.9
Overall Collection	27.5

It would appear children and youth are under-utilising the collection. It is probable that they are not seeing the Library as a major provider of their leisure and information needs.

It is common for public libraries to provide activities related to youth and children. This is carried out by a designed Youth and Children's Services Librarian. As the Great Lakes Library Service does not have such a position only limited activities are provided. These take the form of pre-school storytime, sporadic events and occasionally school holiday programs. Nothing is currently being done for youth. Should a more extensive and coordinated program be provided attendance at events would rise and it could be expected that there would be a growth in loans of youth and children's collections.

In relation to the branch Library service points only Tea Gardens provides a children's program. This is because the other service points are run by volunteers and it is not feasible to coordinate a program through them. A designated position would provide extended opportunities in this regard.

Another key element in encouraging Library usage by children and youth is to promote the service more widely in a targeted fashion. Again, this requires the human resources to do so.

The implication for the Library are:

- The need to appoint a Children's and Youth Services Librarian to conduct programs and outreach.

8. The External Environment

8.1 The Role of Government in the Provision of Library Services

Local Government

Local government is the key funding body of the Great Lakes Library Service. It currently provides \$760,600, which represents 89% of the 2005/2006 Library budget. In NSW, the local government authority has responsibility for all aspects of service provision and infrastructure, a fact that is encapsulated in the Great Lakes Library Service Policy²³.

In addition to this, Local Government is the body with the most influence over the direction of the Library service. Whilst this, in large part, relates to the level of funding support, the Great Lakes Council also acts as a conduit for community expectations.

Section 94: Section 94 is a mechanism by which Council can levy developers for the impact a development has on the community. Since 2000 the Great Lakes Library Service has had a Section 94 Plan in place for bookstock and one specifically for the upgrading of the Forster Library. The Plans have achieved the following:

- **Bookstock** – generates around \$25,000 per annum
- **Forster Building** – generated \$318,000 since its inception

These plans are a vital source of income for the Library and need to be regularly monitored and updated if and when necessary.

As the facilities for library provision are reviewed the Section 94 Plans should be updated to correlate with these changes.

State Government

State government provides a proportion of the funding towards the running of the Library. This comes in the form of a per capita subsidy (at a little over \$2 per capita) and grant funding. The current total subsidy is in the order of \$73,000. Great Lakes Library Service has also been particularly successful with Development Grant funding applications to the Library Council of NSW. Since 1999/2000 the Library has been involved with nine successful grant applications (two of these were joint applications) for a total amount of funding of \$310,586. This averages out to almost \$52,000 per annum, with the median value being \$27,210. Efforts must be maintained in the pursuit of these grants as this represents a major source of funding.

In addition to these Development Grants the Library also receives Special Purpose funding that does not require an application. In 2004/05 the Library received in the order of \$18,000.

²³ Great Lakes Council, *Policy Register*, 2005, p. 5.450.

Based on the above data it is reasonable to estimate that, pending successful grant applications, funding from the State government will be around \$118,000. Even if grant applications are unsuccessful funds of around \$91,000 can be expected.

On top of these forms of financial support the State Government also subsidises the NSW.net program which provides very low cost access to the Internet for all of Council.

The State government, through the Library Act, also provides direction to Council, in relation to a range of issues, particularly in the area of free access to services. Should Great Lakes Council elect to operate outside the Library Act, it would forgo any funding support from the State government.

What is evident from an analysis of public library support across the nation is that the NSW State government provides the lowest level of per capita funding in Australia. In 2000 the State Government committed 0.039% of its expenditure on public libraries, which represented around 7% of total expenditure on public libraries in NSW. The next lowest funded public library network was Victoria, which contributed 0.112% of its expenditure. This disparity merits attention.

Another aspect worthy of mention is that neither the State government nor the Federal Government have really taken the opportunity to use the public library infrastructure as a means of distributing information. Such usage should be encouraged.

Federal Government

The Federal government provides no direct input in to public libraries, either in the form of funding or direction. There is no direct link between the Federal government and the library in relation to funding, nor is the local library network seen as relevant to the Commonwealth. This is particularly disappointing and there is scope for public libraries to lobby the Federal government to provide funding for their services and to look to the public library as the most effective conduit into the local community in relation to information dissemination.

8.2 The Role of the Library in Influencing Higher Levels of Government

State Government

The very low contribution made by the NSW State Government towards public library services has come under serious scrutiny in recent years. The Country Public Libraries Association (CPLA), the Metropolitan Public Library Association (MPLA), the Local Government and Shire Association (LGSA) and the State Library of NSW have endeavoured to jointly gain additional funding, but this has had limited success. In particular it would seem that the existence of a separate CPLA and MPLA has not helped the cause in the funding debate.

The Great Lakes Council should show its support at every opportunity for this approach towards higher contributions towards the public library network. In light of the challenges so far and in view of the potential benefits the Council should also support moves towards the merging of the MPLA and CPLA into one organisation.

Federal Government

As was discussed above the relationship between the library and Federal Government is limited. Public libraries, in general, are well aware that this is not a desirable situation. In recent years a nation-wide organisation known as Public Libraries Australia (PLA) has emerged and is seeking to represent the needs of public libraries across Australia. This organisation is still in its early days but it holds much promise and is the logical medium for lobbying Federal Government. Again, the Great Lakes Library Service should hold membership with the PLA and the Great Lakes Council should support the PLA in its efforts.

8.3 Other Organisations and Networks

It is increasingly difficult to find the resources to run important Library programs and to be obtain funding to improve services and facilities. Recognising this, the Great Lakes Library Service has sought funding from non-traditional sources. The Library has obtained grant funding from the Department of Aging Disability and Home Care (DADHC) for disability access equipment and to run Internet training courses for seniors and also from the NSW Ministry of the Arts and Regional Arts Board to install indigenous art and a mosaic at Forster Library. These grants have totalled over \$67,000.

8.4 Summary of External Funding

As indicated above the Library has been successful at obtaining funding outside of the Local Government sphere. This funding has been essential to the provision of services. The total amount of grant funding obtained since 1999/2000 is given in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Total Funding from Sources Outside the Great Lakes Council Budget since 1999/2000

Source	Amount
Library Council Grant Applications	\$310,586
Special Purposes grants*	\$72,000
Per Capita*	\$408,000
Section 94 – Bookstock*	\$90,000
Section 94 – Library Building	\$318,000
Other Grants	\$67,000
Total	\$1,265,586

* Estimate based on the past two years

Of the above data \$785,500 was obtained only through extensive efforts from the library staff.

9. Community Relationships

9.1 *Promotion of Community Services and Events*

Increasingly, organisations recognise the Library as a vital hub within the community. With this recognition comes a desire for the library to act as a distribution point for information on events or services that these organisations promote. This represents an important contribution the Library makes towards community well-being.

Recognising this, it is important for the Library to provide adequate space and opportunity for these promotions to occur. The added benefit of undertaking this is that it will assist in raising community awareness of the services the Library offers.

9.2 *Partnerships*

There is an opportunity for the Library to enter into partnerships that extend the service and provide the necessary resources to support such an extension. In the past this has not been familiar ground for public libraries but as the public expectation of the quality of services increases, and in light of a very tight Library budget, it is becoming a necessity to explore potentially beneficial arrangements. These partnerships can take the form of an enhancement of service or financial support for existing services.

Enhancement of Services

The public library system provides a well-established network within the community, yet this is largely overlooked by many organisations that could take full advantage of this entrée into the community. Even local government does not appear to be fully aware of the excellent opportunities the Library system provides to distribute information or set up displays, so it is not surprising that higher levels of government and other organisations have not yet recognised the benefits the public library offers.

As has been mentioned above, there is an opportunity to promote the Library as an avenue for information distribution for State and Federal government. This should be pursued through the channels now being developed, rather than in an *ad hoc* fashion. The benefit of doing this is that it will provide residents with greater access to information and may also provide access to additional funding.

In addition to government departments, community organisations may wish to enter into an arrangement with the Library in regard to service provision. This is likely to be more limited due to the financial challenges generally faced by these organisations, but the Library and Council should remain open to such possibilities. The designation of an outreach position in the Library structure would greatly enhance the capability of the Library to assist these organisations.

There is also the scope for Council to share services and facilities with the Library. It is quite conceivable for the Library service points to co-locate with other Council services. The potential for this merits further investigation.

Donations and Sponsorship

The Great Lakes community has a high level of awareness of the important role the Library plays within it. Consequently, there is an opportunity for the Library to seek funding for the provision of its existing services. This is already happening in a limited fashion in Great Lakes. The Forster-Tuncurry RSL donates \$1,000 towards the Library service each year, and the Cape Hawke Community Private Hospital also donates \$500 a year. The Friends of the Great Lakes Library Service (FOGLLS) have commenced making sizable donations. There is scope to extend this even further into the community, though this should be done in a structured fashion. It is possible that an arrangement with the FOGLLS may be the best avenue for this.

9.3 The Friends of the Great Lakes Library Service (FOGLLS)

The FOGLLS merit special mention. They are an organisation whose purpose is to support the Library and literary endeavours within the Great Lakes region. To this end they have been remarkably successful. They have held numerous literary events, helped with Library activities, promoted the importance of the Library in the community and donated funds and gifts to the Library. There is even scope for the Friends to establish a collection fund for the future development of Library services. It is extremely important this organisation continues to be nurtured as the best interests of the Library and the community will be served through the actions of the FOGLLS.

9.4 Volunteerism

There is a high incidence of volunteerism in the Great Lakes community. This has resulted in the Library currently relying on over 80 volunteers to provide its service. Without volunteers Library service points at Bulahdelah, Nabic, North Arm Cove and Stroud would be forced to close and much of the work occurring at Forster Library would be either left undone, or take place at a much slower rate. This is particularly the case in the area of Genealogical Services. Council owes a debt of gratitude to those people for freely giving of their time. The Library holds regular events for volunteers to express thanks for their efforts.

What must be understood, however, in relation to volunteers is that the expectations made of them are totally different to those of staff. There is also a need to dedicate considerable time and effort on the part of paid staff to provide support to the volunteers. The Library has developed guidelines relating to the role of volunteers which represents a useful starting point. Council does not have an overarching approach to volunteers and it is recommended that this be developed. The current Library procedures relating to volunteers could then be adapted to fit into this larger framework.

Council must also be aware that a high level of reliance on volunteers exposes the Library service to the risk of a sudden loss of service should volunteers withdraw their support. An example of this is the likelihood that opening hours at the Bulahdelah Library service point will have to be cut due to a lack of volunteers.

There are number of arms of Council that uses volunteers but there does not seem to be an overarching structure for dealing with volunteers. Council should consider developing such a structure.

One final point of note, the Library Council of NSW does not accept grant applications for library sites that do not have paid staff. Consequently grants cannot be made for Bulahdelah, Nahiack, North Arm Cove or Stroud. This is another ground for considering co-location of services where Council already employs someone to carry out a service.

9.5 Great Lakes Council

Reference has been made to the place of the Library in Council but more attention needs to be given to the working relationship between the Council and the Library, particularly in relation to corporate information. At present there is no effective database of resources held across Council and nor is there an awareness of the information resources (hard copy or online) that each section may hold. For example, there is the opportunity for Council to audit the holdings of key information resources and make their location known to relevant interested parties. Resources such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics data also needs review. A number of such statistical resources are spread throughout Council as is the expertise to use them. More effort could be made to develop a Council-wide approach to these resources.

Council may also be unaware of the wide range of resources, including online databases, such as Standards Australia, that the Library provides access to.

Efforts should be made to review the information Council holds and determine if there are ways of improving awareness of these resources and also if there are any efficiencies that can be made. There is an option to develop a Great Lakes Council Improvement Program (GLIP) team to investigate this.

10. Marketing Plans

10.1 Specific Marketing Plans

As was discussed in Section 3 of the document, underpinning the Library Strategy are a series of marketing plans. These plans are aimed at key segments of the Great Lakes community and enable the Library to develop its services to meet the existing and future needs of its constituents. Plans that have already been undertaken are:

- Business;
- Young people;
- Indigenous people;
- Ageing community; and
- Males

In addition to these formal Marketing Plan work has also commenced on the provision of library services to the geographically isolated.

The outcomes from these Marketing Plans have fed into the Library's Management Plan and have also provided feedback into the development of this Strategy.

Other segments that a Marketing Plan could be developed for are:

- Children;
- Community organisations;
- Council;
- Employees and Employers;
- Family historians;
- Families;
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- People with disabilities;
- People with literacy problems; and
- Women

It must be stressed that the above list is not meant to be prescriptive. It provides a guideline and other segments of the community may be linked into the Marketing Plan structure if it is opportune and relevant to do so.

It is expected that there will be many individuals that fit into more than one grouping. This is not a concern as it is the needs of the collective that are being sought, and these will differ as a result of the context.

10.2 Promotion of the Library Service

An integral aspect of the marketing plan process is that there is adequate and targeted promotion of the Library and the services offered. Whilst the various plans will refine the promotional techniques used there is an ongoing need to ensure that the community is informed of the collections, services and activities available through the Library network.

11. Basic Standards

The Great Lakes Library Service has a good track record of developing a profile of its community's needs. The Library has used demographics, library usage data and direct consultation in this process. The following is a list of relevant source data:

- Customer Satisfaction Survey (1996)²⁴ and (2000)²⁵;
- Non-User Survey (2001)²⁶;
- Marketing Plan for Business²⁷ (incorporated a user survey);
- Marketing Plan for Youth²⁸ (involved a focus group);
- Indigenous Marketing Plan²⁹ (involved a focus group);
- Marketing Plan for the Ageing Community³⁰ (involved direct consultation);
- Marketing Plan for Males³¹ (involved an in-house survey);
- State Library comparative data;
- ABS information;
- In-house library usage data; and
- Feedback from the Comments/Suggestion Board.

These rich and extensive sources of information make it possible to identify basic needs within the community that should be met. These needs can be condensed into the following categories.

11.1 *The Library Collection*

The size and depth of the collection is one of the two areas of need most often identified by the public. Since suggestions have been received in 2001, 473 have related to stock purchases. This represents 45% of all suggestions. It is interesting to note that the trend towards making suggestions has been increasing and in 2004, 55% of comments received related to the need for more stock. The requests are varied and reveal a desire for all aspects of the Library collection to be expanded. Such requests have been expressed at all service points. The satisfaction survey conducted in 2000, whilst generally praiseworthy of the service, showed a particular public desire to see the non-print (e.g. videos, CD and books-on-tape) collections significantly enhanced.

An analysis of the existing collection quickly reveals why there is such a level of public concern over the collection size. Since 1998 the Library material held has dropped from 1.92 items per capita³² to 1.77 items per capita³³. The 1.77 items per

²⁴ Braybrook, Andrew, *Library Survey*, Great Lakes Council, 1996.

²⁵ State Library of NSW, *Customer Satisfaction Survey*, 2000.

²⁶ Micromex Marketing Services, *Great Lakes Library: community telephone survey*, 2001.

²⁷ Jones, Chris, *Business Marketing Plan*, Great Lakes Council, 2002

²⁸ Jones, Chris, *Youth Marketing Plan*, Great Lakes Council, 2002

²⁹ Jones, Chris, *Indigenous Marketing Plan*, Great Lakes Council, 2004

³⁰ Jones, Chris, *Ageing Community Marketing Plan*, Great Lakes Council, 2005

³¹ Jones, Chris, *Marketing Plan for Males*, Great Lakes Council, 2005

³² State Library of New South Wales, *Public Library Statistics 1998/99*, State Library of New South Wales, 2000 p.57

³³ State Library of New South Wales, *Public Library Statistics 2002/03*, State Library of New South Wales, 2004 p.61

capita compares to a State median of 2.23 items per capita. The recommended long-term average holding is at least 2 items per capita³⁴.

Up until the 2003/04 budget Council had made a financial commitment to improve the collection but the budget allocation was frozen in the 2004/05 budget and reduced in the 2005/06 budget. This represents a very real challenge for the Library. The Library's collection is the most heavily borrowed in NSW, being lent out a rate twice the State median. This means Library stock is wearing out twice as quickly.

From every perspective, the size of the Library collection at Great Lakes is well below adequate levels. With 2004 and 2005 representing the highest lending years on record, it is realistic to say that the collection will be heading towards dangerously low levels if action is not taken to address the matter in the budget process.

The Library has been creative in sourcing additional grant funding to supplement the collection. Since 2000/2001 the Library has secured an additional \$75,000 in grant funding for stock as well as directing discretionary grant funds to the collection to establish such resources as the Graphic Novels collection. Furthermore, through the development of a Section 94 Plan for bookstock an estimated \$90,000 has been collected for stock. In total this represents \$165,000 worth of funding put towards bookstock in the past five years. This equates to around 25% of the budget towards bookstock over this period. This is an outstanding achievement and both the Section 94 Plan and grant funding needs to be pursued, but, the fact that the Library is reliant on such funding sources indicates how vulnerable the collection is. Efforts must be made to bring collection funding up to adequate levels. Ultimate holdings in the order of 2 items per capita should be sought.

In order to manage this increasingly limited resource the Library developed a Collection Development Policy in 1999, which was then updated in 2002 in 2005³⁵. It is appropriate that this document is regularly reviewed taking into account feedback from such sources as the marketing plans. In 2005 a Reference Strategy³⁶ was also developed for that particular aspect of the collection.

The emergence of online data is discussed in Section 11.5 below.

11.2 Service levels

Public concern over the level of staffing within the Library has also been expressed. Whilst feedback on the performance of staff has been universally high there has been a regular flow of suggestions that identify the lack of time that staff have to carry out their jobs. This lack of staff time to assist with basic circulation and reference enquiries is of significant concern.

Nor does the impact on service levels of having the staff with the highest workloads in NSW end here. It takes long to process items so they are ready for lending, which has an obvious flow-on effect to the public.

³⁴ Great Lakes Council, *Policy Register*, 2005, p. 5.460.

³⁵ Jones, Chris, *Collection Development Strategy: 2005*, Great Lakes Council, 2005.

³⁶ Matchett, Jean, *Reference Services Strategic Plan 2005-2010*, Great Lakes Council, 2005.

The growth in the presence of technology within the Library has also placed a significant burden on staff. In 1996 the Library service had 12 PCs and no website. Now there are 46 PCs across the system. Maintenance of PCs and associated equipment has placed a large burden on the existing staff, who are still required to carry out normal library duties as well. In addition to this, public use of the Internet has placed an additional load on circulation desk staff.

On top of all of this, there is a range of services standard to most libraries that the Great Lakes Library Service simply cannot offer. The lack of a Children's Services staff member has resulted in a significant reduction of activities for this vital section of the community. At the other end of the spectrum, our high proportion of elderly residents would normally result in a home library service. Unfortunately, this is not possible due to staffing levels.

It must be stressed that all the comparative statistics available confirm the low staffing levels at Great Lakes Library. As has been mentioned previously, the staff at the Library have amongst the highest workloads in NSW and issue stock at over twice the State average. Whilst this highlights the wonderful work the staff do, it also reveals a service that is chronically understaffed. As more and more expectations are placed on staff by the public in regard to both services (e.g. Internet) and level of service, and as loans remain high, the situation can only worsen.

At some point consideration should be given to an indigenous employee working in the Library. This need not be a full-time position but some presence would further foster relationships between the Library and the indigenous community. The Library has participated in the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) in the past and will continue to do so when suitable.

Options to streamline staffing will continually be considered and where appropriate and feasible duty statements and the staffing structure will be reviewed to better meet community needs.

It is appropriate at this point to raise the matter of volunteers. Volunteers are currently essential to the present level of service that is provided by the Library, to the extent that service points would have to be closed if the volunteers disappeared from the system. The actions of these people are laudable, but it must be clearly understood that the expectations of volunteers are totally different from staff. Volunteers have the right to decline a task, to have a major say in working hours and generally have less expectations placed on them than on employees. Consequently, the service levels, training and experience of volunteers are likely to be lower than that of employees. For this reason the range of activities asked of volunteers is particularly limited, especially in the areas of customer service. Furthermore, the vast number of volunteers within the system generate a significant management workload. Any attempts to address the understaffing issues through additional volunteers would not be sustainable and would impact on customer service levels.

11.3 Facilities

As the population within Great Lakes grows, so does the need for more floorspace in the library to meet the increasing needs of the community. Council has recognised this and constructed a much-needed new library in Tea Gardens. This building was funded through Section 94, a grant from the Library Council of NSW and a loan drawn by Council. The building should meet the needs of the Hawks Nest/Tea Gardens community for at least 10 years.

Pressure is also being exerted upon the Library building at Forster-Tuncurry. Built 17 years ago the facility is now stretched to capacity. Again, Council has recognised the need to address this issue and has developed a Section 94 Plan to extend the present Library building. This Plan will see the library extensions occurring in the next 7 years, with funds being collected over a fifteen-year period. This situation is currently being reviewed with the possibility of the Plan being overhauled and expanded to the year 2041. This expanded Plan would make provision for substantially more floorspace and potentially alternative sites for Library services in Forster-Tuncurry. There would also be co-location opportunities. It is important that the program for the construction of the extensions remains largely on track as demand for the Library continues to grow.

The other four remaining library service points (Bulahdelah, Nahiack, North Arm Cove and Stroud) are all run by volunteers and none comply with the minimum floorspace of 139 m² recommended by the Library Council of NSW. As a result of this no grants can be applied for in relation to these facilities. It is recommended that co-location opportunities be investigated that may both increase floorspace and resulted in paid staff being associated with the sites. In relation to Bulahdelah co-location with the Visitor Information Centre merits investigation. Co-location options are also possible at Stroud and should be assessed. At present there are no viable co-location opportunities for Nahiack.

At present Council owns all the Library facilities except the building that houses the North Arm Cove branch. Of recent times the current arrangement for the housing of the North Arm Cove Library has presented some difficulties and it is appropriate that Council investigate alternative options for this service point.

11.4 Opening Hours

The customer satisfaction survey conducted in 2000 found generally very high levels of satisfaction with the service. It was evident, however, that there was dissatisfaction with the opening hours of the Library. This dissatisfaction was also voiced in a survey conducted in 1995³⁷. A survey of male library users also found that longer opening hours would be of benefit to them. All these findings have been backed up by a steady stream of suggestions that the Library needs to be open longer hours.

In relation to the rest of the State, the opening hours of the Great Lakes Library Service are quite limited. In total, Forster Central Library is open for 34 per week. Such a figure is one of the lowest in the state and falls well below the rural median of 42 hours for central Library services. The narrow spread of opening hours appears

³⁷ Braybrook, Andrew, *Library Survey 1995*, Great Lakes Council, 1995.

even more severe when compared to systems of similar turnover. Great Lakes Library Service has the 10th highest turnover in all of country New South Wales, but ranks 39th out of 48 for rural central library opening hours. Comparing lending of stock with opening hours, rural libraries throughout the state provide 3 times the opening hours per loan than does Great Lakes.

Council has been made aware of the need for extended opening hours (Library Committee meeting Tuesday 7 December, 1999 *Minute No. 1* and Library Committee meeting Tuesday 1 February, 2000 *Minute No. 11*) but, at this stage, Council has not adopted the recommendation to open the Forster Library on a Sunday afternoon.

The Tea Gardens Library is currently open 26.5 hours per week. This is adequate at this point in time, but the situation should be reviewed as the population grows. There is scope to survey the Tea Gardens/Hawks Nest community to determine if the current opening hours are suitable.

As the population grows within the region increasing pressure will mount to extend the opening hours. Consequently it is appropriate to review these hours regularly.

11.5 Technology and the Online Environment

The increasing role technology plays in the provision of library services cannot be understated. Since 1995 the number of PCs in the Library has trebled, the telecommunication needs of the Library have become increasingly sophisticated and the Internet and website maintenance have now become an integral part of the service. This has required a substantial commitment in both staff time and resources to achieve.

In the 2001/2002 budget cycle Council did commit significant funding to upgrade both the Library technology and telecommunication links between the Service Points. It continued this approach in the 2004/05 budget cycle. It is important that this approach is maintained, though there are options to pursue leasing rather than outright purchase of equipment.

Coupled with the issue of provision of technology is the trend towards information of a timely nature being provided through online databases. At present the Great Lakes Library Service is part of the NSW.net program and this appears to be meeting the community needs for access to online databases. As part of NSW.net the library is provided with free access to a range of databases that would otherwise attract a substantial subscription fee. Specific databases vary from year to year but the overall content is excellent. As long as the scheme remains in place Great Lakes Council should continue membership. The Library should, however, always remain aware of the online needs of the community and be prepared to fund access to online databases that fall outside of the scope of NSW.net.

12. Strategic Objectives

No.	Objective
1	The Great Lakes Library Service Strategy 2006 is presented to Council for adoption.
2	Continue membership to NSW.net and remain abreast of other affordable option to online databases.
3	The Library continues to develop the provision of online services.
4	Place Library holdings on the Libraries Australia database.
5	Seek cost-effective means of providing Internet training. This is particularly relevant to older residents.
6	Remain aware of the potential for cataloguing of online material.
7	Relaxation space (e.g. comfortable seating, coffee shops), meeting rooms, quiet space and adequate access to material will be taken into consideration when designing new library facilities
8	Create a Home Library Services position and support this with adequate resources.
9	Mechanisms are put in place to assist the geographically isolated. Developing a Home Library Service could play a major part in achieving this.
10	Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) is considered for development.
11	Methods for decreasing the time to process stock are investigated in an ongoing fashion.
12	Public satisfaction with the speed of customer service remains high.
13	The Library seeks to promote itself and conduct programs to attract customers. Such a role could be incorporated into an Outreach position in the Library.
14	The Library continues to actively support the Friends of the Great Lakes Library Service (FOGLLS).
15	Self-check and RFID technology is considered in any new library design. This is particularly relevant to the Forster-Tuncurry Library service.
16	Continue to provide staff support for the Family History Advisory Group and make budgetary provision for stock in this area.
17	Make provision for a separate Genealogy Room in any expanded Library facilities at Forster.
18	Seek funds from whatever sources necessary to maintain an adequate level of stock.
19	Create a Children's, Youth and Outreach position.
20	Section 94 Plans relating to the Library Service are updated as changes to Library facilities are made.
21	The Library continues to maintain its high standard of grant applications to the Library Council of NSW, and such grants are applied for at every available and relevant opportunity.
22	The Library, on behalf of Council, supports Public Libraries Australia (PLA) and any other valid industry bodies in their lobbying of the various levels of government.
23	The Library, on behalf of Council, supports and encourages the State Library of NSW and the Library Council of NSW in its endeavours to improve conditions for public libraries.
24	The Library, on behalf of Council, supports the unified approach of the Country Public Libraries Association (CPLA), of which Great Lakes Council is a member, the Metropolitan Public Library Association (MPLA), the State Library of NSW and

	the Local Government and Shires Association (LGSA) in their efforts to secure enhanced funding from the NSW State government.
25	The Library is actively promoted as a system for information distribution and information gathering within Great Lakes Council. Current Library access to databases should be more widely promoted within Council. This could involve the development of a GLIP team.
26	The Library encourages government departments and organisations to access the resources available at the library.
27	The development of the Library facilities and website make provision for the increasing interest in using the library as a venue for distribution of information on community services and events.
28	Community organisations are encouraged to consider mutually beneficial partnerships. The existence of an Outreach position in the Library would be central to the success of this.
29	Sponsorship arrangements continue to be developed
30	The Library service continues to nurture and support the Friends of the Great Lakes Library Service (FOGLLS). Particular encouragement should be given towards the establishment of a Library fund. An Outreach position in the Library would provide further support to FOGLLS.
31	Pursue opportunities for an indigenous employee (either part-time or full-time) when they arise.
32	Council is encouraged to develop an overarching approach to volunteers. The Library would then adapt its procedures in relation to volunteers to fit into this Council-wide structure.
33	A range of Great Lakes Library Service marketing plans is developed to address the needs of all the key groups within the Great Lakes community.
34	Council is regularly informed of the Library collection needs of the residents of Great Lakes. Ideally, the overall collection level should be targeted towards a minimum of two items per capita.
35	The collection development strategy is revisited every three years and updated based on the information derived from the marketing plans.
36	That Council is regularly informed of the service levels in the Great Lakes Library Service and the impact that existing staffing levels have on customer service. Where feasible staffing restructuring is undertaken to better align the service with community needs.
37	The progress towards the enhancement of the Library facilities in the Forster-Tuncurry library catchment be maintained and incorporated into the Section 94 structure and in Council's forward planning. This may result in an expanded Section 94 Plan.
38	Co-location options with the Tourist Office and the Bulahdelah Library Service Point are investigated.
39	Co-location options for Stroud Library Service Point are investigated.
40	Council identifies the best facilities for the long-term development of Library services at North Arm Cove.
41	Council is regularly informed of the needs of the Great Lakes residents regarding opening hours of the Library service.
42	The Technology Plan for the Library adopted by Council in the 2004/2005 budget cycle is maintained in an ongoing fashion, in order to ensure the ongoing provision of Library services. Options in relation to leasing should also be investigated.

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