

Ageing Community

Marketing Plan

2005

Great Lakes Library Service

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Marketing Plan, targets the library needs of the older people within the Great Lakes community. For the purposes of statistical analysis older people will be defined as being aged 65+ years, though some data will refer to those aged 60+. According to Australian Bureau of Statistics data in 2001 there were 8,000 people within the Great Lakes aged 65 and over, which represent 25.4% of the population. This has risen from 22% of the community in 1991. Great Lakes now has the highest median age in NSW (47 years).

In a broad sense the Great Lakes community is amongst the strongest users of library services in the State, with stock turnover, loans per capita and loans per staff member figures regularly being at levels that place Great Lakes in the top three library systems in NSW. There are good indications that this level of usage will continue into the future.

This level of usage translates strongly into the older community with 33% of library members aged 65+. Indeed, 80% of the aged community are library members (as compared to the Great Lakes average of 60% community membership).

Predictions for growth indicate this will continue well into the future with estimations that by 2026 the aged community will have reached 12,000, representing over 40% of Great Lakes residents.

This presents a picture of an older community that is expanding steadily and has very active library members.

In order to determine the needs of this community the library undertook the following:

- Consultation across a significant number of organisations serving older people;
- Analysis of customer satisfaction surveys;
- Analysis of the Library's Comments Board.

Feedback indicated that the Library had a good positive perception within the ageing community. It also generated a number of current and future needs. These generated the following objectives:

- To investigate staffing options for providing a Home Service from the library;
- Seeking to expand the talking books collection through a grant application;
- Regular promotion of the library across aged care organisations;
- Encouraging aged care organisations to utilise bulk lending options from the collection;
- Improve disability access equipment;
- Make provision for a more accessible layout in the planning for the future expansion of Forster Library.

In order to best promote the Marketing Plan objectives the library will continue to develop personal contacts with aged care facilities and provide them with the library's monthly newsletter.

The costs of implementing the entire programme identified in the Marketing Plan are:

- Housebound Librarian – in the order of \$45,000, at current salary levels, plus overheads. There is also a likely need for the purchase of a service vehicle associated with this;
- Expansion of the books-on-CD collection. This would be in the order of \$30,000 and grant funding will be sought to achieve this;
- Ongoing commitment in the order of \$70,000+ for materials catering for the aged community. There is a broader need to expand the library's bookstock funding by \$20,000 in the 2005/06 budget, followed by an annual increase of \$10,000;
- Upgrade disability equipment – expect this to be in the order of \$4,000-5,000. Seeking grant funding for this.

The implications for Council relate to the new position and ongoing and expanding provision for bookstock.

2. BACKGROUND

In order to better serve its community the library embarked, in 2002, on a series of marketing plans aimed at focusing successively on groups that had significant representation within the community. Since that time the following plans have been developed:

- Business Marketing Plan (2002)
- Youth Marketing Plan (2002)
- Indigenous Marketing Plan (2004)

Recognising that there is a high proportion of older people in the Great Lakes Library Service it was decided that the next marketing plan should be targeted at this group.

The purpose of this Plan is to develop an understanding of the needs of older residents (through statistical analysis and consultation) and to identify meaningful objectives to help meet these needs. Consideration will be given to the best means of conveying information to this key demographic and potential funding implications and opportunities will be discussed.

Definition of Older People

It is legitimate to define older people by specific age criteria and, indeed, this has been done with the statistical data. As much of the census material revolves around people aged 65 and over this has featured strongly in the report. However, it should not be presumed that the discussion is limited to this group, and the recommendations developed are likely to apply across a much wider age group.

Outline of the Great Lakes Library Service

The Great Lakes Library Service opened to the public in 1988. It is maintained by the Great Lakes Council and derives the bulk of its funding from this organization. Additional grant funding is also sought from other government bodies.

The service operates out of a central library in Forster and has a staffed branch at Tea Gardens as well as service points in Bulahdelah, Nahiack, North Arm Cove and Stroud. The Tea Gardens branch only commenced operations as a fully staffed service point in 2003 and its impact on data is yet to be fully appreciated.

The library also has a well-patronised Internet presence and is constantly expanding the services that it makes available over the online environment.

The central role of the library is to provide equitable access to information and leisure materials. To meet this requirement of equity, and to comply with the Library Act (1939), the bulk of the library services are offered free of charge to the public.

The general public has an increasingly high expectation of the material held by the service. In addition to the traditional book material, the library stocks DVDs, magazines, books-on-tape, books-on-CD, videos, large print, CD-ROMs and Playstation games. Free access to the Internet is also now an integral component of the service.

Professionals within the library provide expert advice on how to obtain information.

In recent years there has been a growth in the number of people using the library as a place of relaxation or to interact with others. There has also been a noticeable increase in community organizations that have used the library to promote events.

3. ACTIVITY ANALYSIS

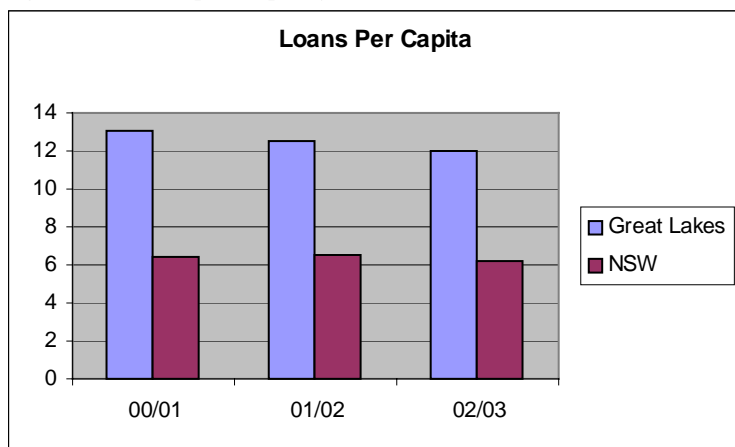
Patronage of the Library Service

On a per capita basis the Great Lakes Library Service is one of the most heavily used in NSW. The data below provides figures on library patronage over the past three years. It is evident that the library lends out items at rate more than twice the State median. This level of usage places the library as the most popular service in rural NSW and the third most popular in NSW. These statistics are compiled by the State Library of NSW¹.

Table 1: Loans per capita for both Great Lakes and NSW

	Loans per capita (Great Lakes)	Loans per capita (NSW)	Ranking in the State
2000/2001	13.03	6.37	4
2001/2002	12.51	6.51	5
2002/2003	12.05	6.26	5

Figure 1: Loans per capita for Great Lakes and NSW residents from 2000/2001 to 2002/2003



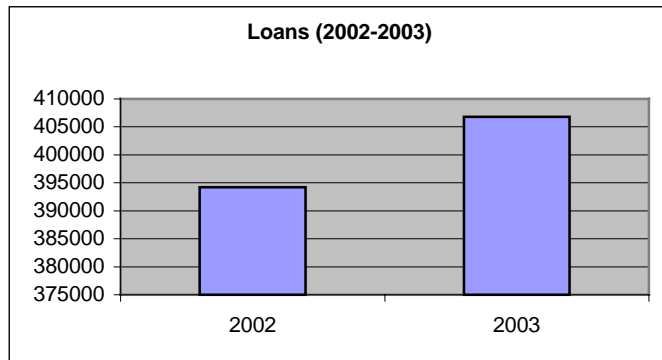
The high usage made of the library is reflected in the membership rate. 19,641 residents are registered library users, representing almost two thirds of the community. Each year Forster Library can expect 110,000 – 120,000 visitors. Since opening for service 15 years ago, there have been approximately 1.7 million visitors to this library service point.

Lending Rates

The major service the library provides is access to books, magazines, videos, books-on-tape, books-on-CD, playstation games and DVDs. Whilst this only provides a limited perspective on the quality of the library service it still remains an indicator of the health of the library service. Figure 3 provides a graph of the past 2 years loans. There is evidence of strong growth and it would appear that 2004 will follow this trend, with up to a 10% increase being feasible.

¹ State Library of New South Wales, *Public library statistics 2000/2001-2002/2003*, State Library of New South Wales, 2001-2003.

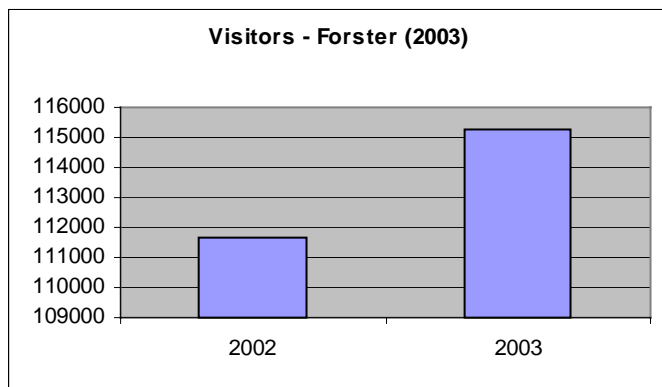
Figure 2: Annual loans for the Great Lakes Library Service



Visitor Numbers

Another indicator of the popularity of the library service is the number of visits it receives. Extensive data is currently only available for Forster Library and are provided in Figure 4. Again, what they reveal is strong patronage.

Figure 3: Annual visitor numbers to Forster Library



Visitor numbers fluctuate from year-to-year, though they are consistently between 110,000 and 120,000 per annum. There does appear to be a trend for people to borrow more items each, possibly indicating borrowing on behalf of other family members.

Visitor numbers are now being collected at Tea Gardens and early indications are that they should receive in excess of 20,000 visits per annum.

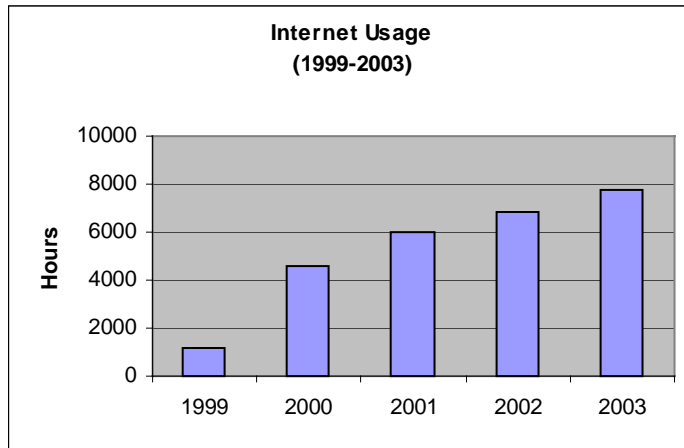
Membership

As at 1st July 2004 the library had 19,641 members. This represents in the order of 65% of the community. As Statewide figures are around 50% this is a healthy situation.

Internet Usage

As the world increasingly turns to the Internet as a source of information and a means of communication libraries have embarked on providing public access to the Internet. The patronage of this service has now become a mechanism for measuring the activity of the Great Lakes Library Service. Over the past five years the library has steadily increased its provision of free public access Internet. This has met with very strong support from the community. Since 1999 there has been a 580% increase in patronage of this service.

Figure4: Public Internet bookings from 1999 to 2003

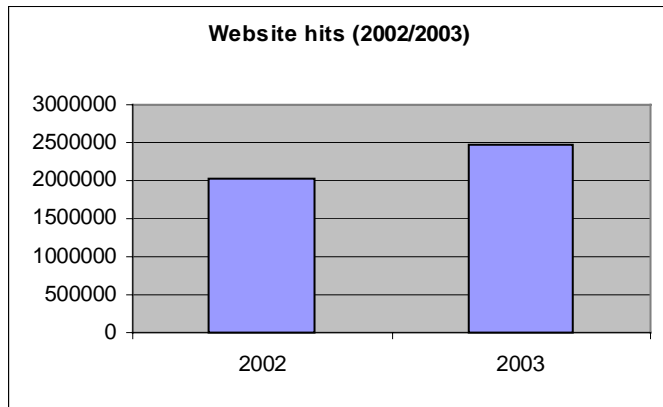


Note that in 2001 the Internet was introduced to the library's branch service points. Whilst this has had some impact it must be stressed that at this stage this represented only 10% of the usage. There is an indication usage may plateau in the next couple of years, though Tea Gardens library is likely to drive these figures somewhat higher.

Website Usage

In addition to providing Internet access the library has embraced the opportunities the Internet offers by establishing a website that caters for all of Council. The website includes information on the library and Council, links to useful websites, provides access to the library catalogue and will shortly allow online reference enquiries to be lodged. As this represents an extension of the library into the virtual world patronage of the site also becomes a meaningful indicator of the performance of the library. Figure 5 provides data on the number of hits the website has received over the past 2 years. Since 2001 (the first full year of data, the number of hits per annum has risen 124%, from 1.1 million to 2.5 million. It is expected that the number of hits in 2004 will reach 3 million.

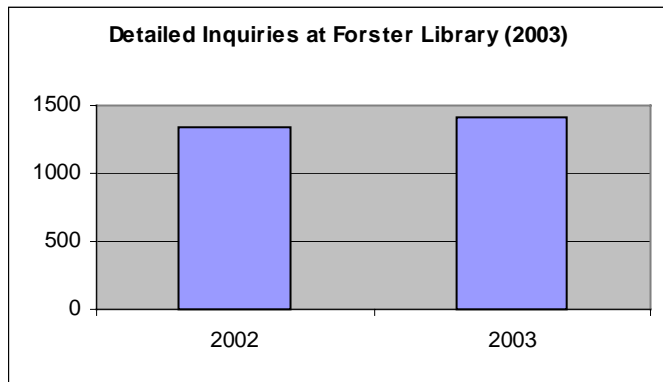
Figure 5: Number of hits on the Great Lakes Council Website



Information Enquiries

A key aspect of the library service is the provision of information. In 1999 the library established a reference service to assist the public. Since then there has been a steady increase in demand and the total number recorded in 2003 reached 2,113. Figure 6 provides the last two years of data, which shows a good growth rate of 6%. 2004 is shaping up along similar lines. Data is now being collected from Tea Gardens and they expected to field around 600 enquiries per annum.

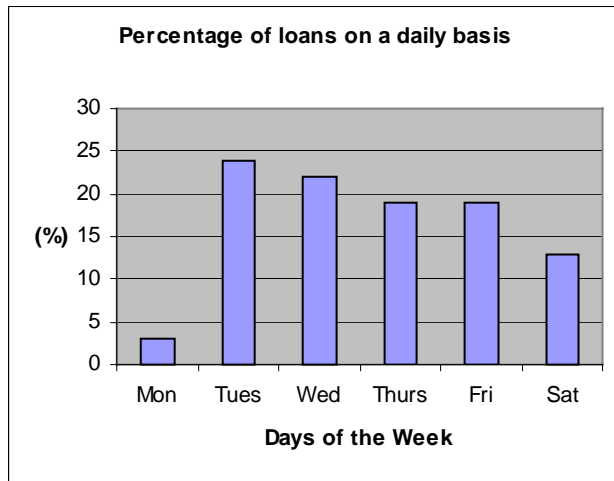
Figure 6: Information enquiries received at Forster Library.



Fluctuations in Demand

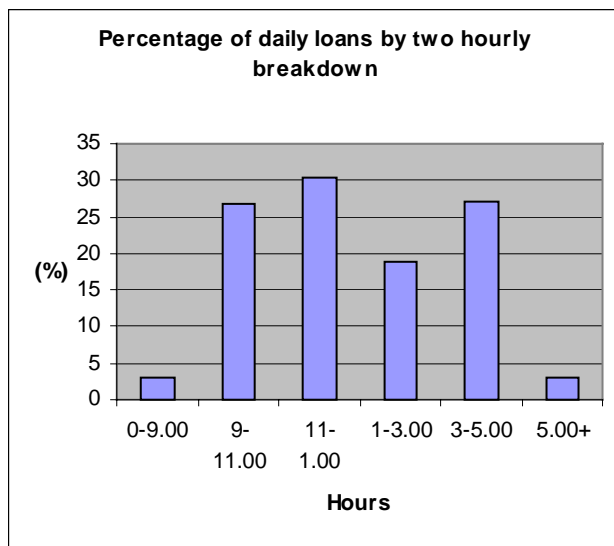
Underlying the general trend upwards are seasonal and daily fluctuations in usage. The library service is busiest on a Tuesday, which relates to the Forster Library being closed on a Monday. Figure 7 provides a profile of a normal week in the library service.

Figure 7: Percentage of loans on a daily basis



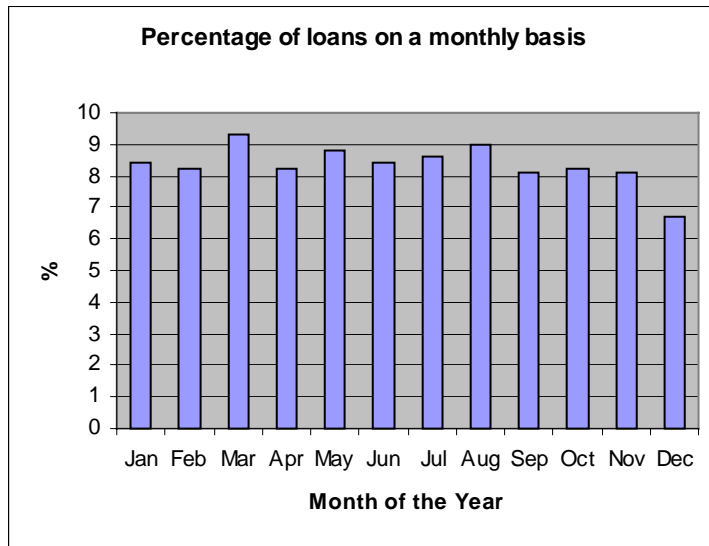
Loan rates also depend on the time of day. The library is busiest in the mornings, with a small increase in usage after three o'clock when school children visit (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: Stock movement throughout the day



Looking at the activity of the library from a seasonal basis it is evident that lending rates are reasonably constant throughout the year. There is evidence of a dip during December and a peak in March, but generally library patronage is strong all year (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Monthly variation in lending rates as a percentage of total loans.



General Trends in Patronage of the Great Lakes Library Service

All the indicators mentioned above show demand for the library service increasing. Table 3 provides estimates of future growth in these key areas.

Table 2: Growth trends in the library service

Indicator	2003 Figures	Expected Growth in 2004 (%)
Stock Issues	406,772	5-10
Visitor Numbers (Forster)	115,254	Static
Internet Usage	7,778	8-10
Website Hits	2,516,015	30
Information inquiries	2,113	5

These figures are largely based upon data obtained at the midpoint of 2004.

Issues: The rise in issues is associated with the quality of the service and collection and population growth within the region. Population growth in the region and the introduction of a new service at Tea Gardens will play a part. Furthermore, a range of customer-focussed improvements are expected to contribute to increased patronage. Available 2004 data indicates that a growth in loans of up to 10% is possible. There is potential for this growth to be limited by the quality of the collection if budgetary provision fails to meet community expectations.

Visitor Numbers: There does not appear to be any consistent growth in visitor numbers. Indeed the figures fluctuate from month to month. In May 2004 visitations dropped 9% at Forster (on the previous May), only to bounce back and increase 13% in June 2004 (on the previous June). In this environment the safest option is to presume a static level of patronage until trends can be better determined.

Internet Usage: Growth in this area remains strong, though there is expected to be a flattening out in demand. Provision has been made for growth in Tea Gardens however.

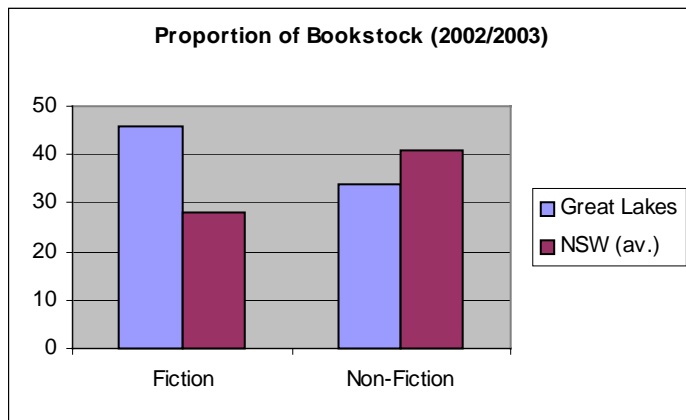
Website Hits: This is likely to be somewhat volatile and it would reasonable to expect a flattening out, though this has not been particularly evident to date. The figure of 20-30% is based upon past trends.

Information Inquiries: The library has been steadily fielding more inquiries and there is no reason to expect this trend to reverse.

Current Focus of the Collection

Great Lakes Local Government Area has the highest median age in NSW. It has long been seen as a retirement destination and people over the age 55 have both a high representation in the community and amongst library borrowers. Not surprisingly the library collection has shaped to meet these needs. Consequently, there has been an emphasis on fiction and leisure materials for adults. This focus has worked well and has resulted in the library service having one of the highest lending rates per capita in NSW. Figure 10 shows a breakdown of fiction versus non-fiction, as percentage for the adult book collection and draws a comparison with the NSW average representation.

Figure 10: Proportion of Bookstock

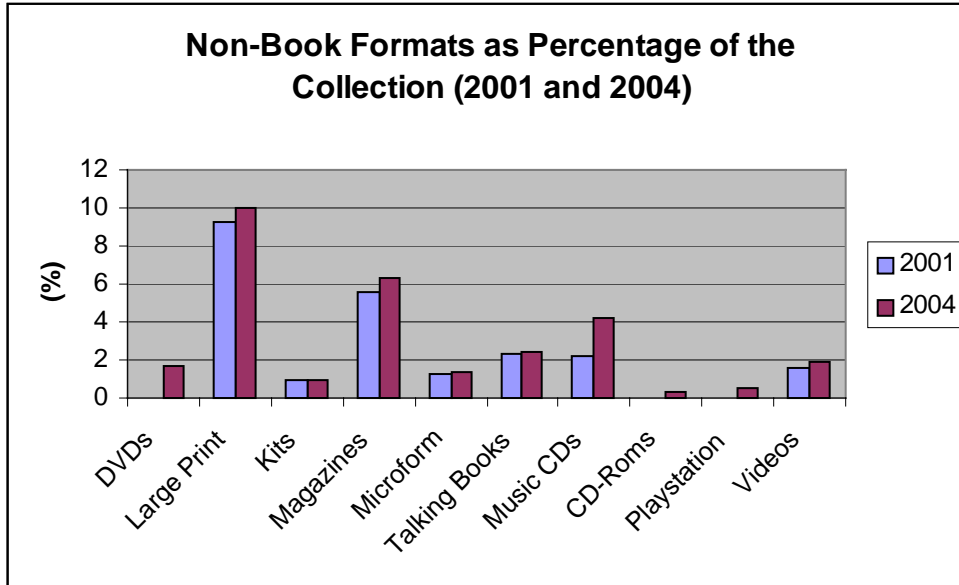


In addition to leisure material the library has a range of formats within its collection. In particular there is a strong presence of talking books and large print items. This reflects the need to cater for an aging population. Figure 11 shows a breakdown of formats for Great Lakes and provides a comparison between 2001 and 2004.

Overall, non-book material in 2004 represents 30% of the collection. This has grown significantly since 2001, when it represented 25% of the total material in the library. There has been an increase in representation of just about all non-book formats, though some, such as videos will wane as the DVD grows. Though not immediately obvious from the graph, the Large Print collection and talking books merit attention. Large print books now represent 10% of the collection, which is markedly more than the State

average of 7%. Similarly, the spoken word/talking book material represents 2.4% of the Great Lakes Library Service collection, as compared to the State average of 1.9%.

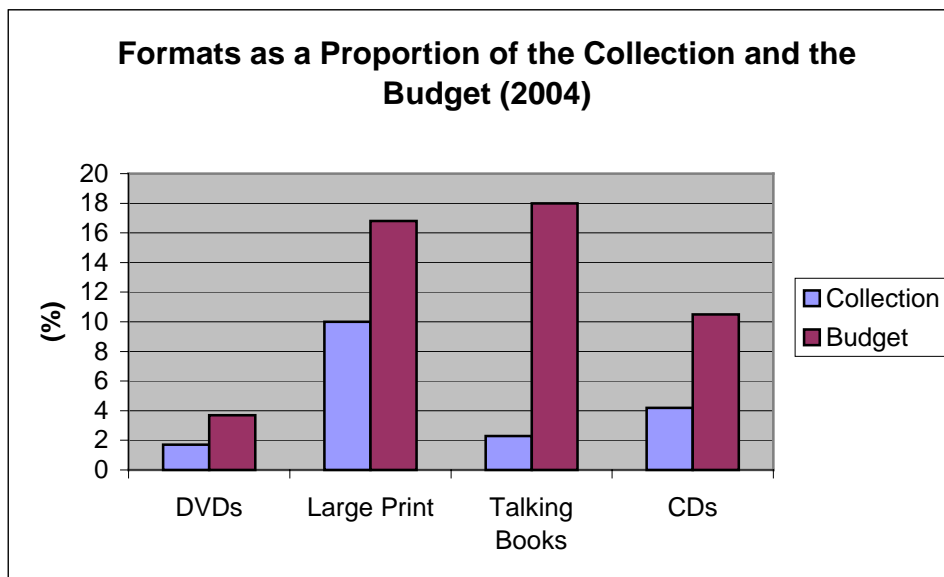
Figure 11: Breakdown of Non-Book Formats for the Great Lakes Library Service



This preference for large print and talking book material is not surprising considering the population. The challenge it represents relates to the cost of purchasing the items.

Figure 11 shows a comparison between the representation of certain formats in the collection as compared to the current impact they have on the budget.

Figure 12: Comparison Between Representation in the Collection and Impact on the Budget for Non-Book Formats



What is immediately apparent is the high cost that the non-book formats place on the collection. In the case of DVDs it is perhaps not surprising as this is a new collection and is going through a growth phase. The same cannot be said for the other formats. In particular, catering to the sight-impaired and/or older population through large print (10% of the collection but 17% of the budget) and talking books (2% of the collection, but 18% of the budget) has a major cost implication for the library.

4. MARKET TRENDS

Lack of Time for People to Visit the Library

In general working people appear to have less and less time to access services like the public library and this resulted in a growth of services that make for quick access to the collection (e.g. online catalogues, online reserves). This needs to be taken into consideration when developing new library services and enhancing/modifying existing ones.

This may not be directly relevant to older patrons who have left the workforce, but as a reasonable proportion of this group will be dependant on others providing transport the overall lack of time may indirectly affect older people by reducing the opportunities to be taken to the library.

Extensive Disposable Time for Retirees

In direct contrast to the above many retirees are rich with disposable time. Furthermore, people are living longer. This has direct implications for the library service. Patrons with plenty of time on their hands do need access to larger collections simply because they have more time to read.

Interest in Formats other Than Books

The explosion in differing entertainment formats (e.g. PCs, multichannel television, Playstation/PS-2/X-Box/Nintendo/Gameboy games, CDs) has made the entertainment industry increasingly competitive. There has been a similar growth in information being provided in a non-book format (e.g. DVDs). Patronage of non-book collections reflects interest in these formats. A snapshot of 2002 date reveals around 15% of loans being from non-print collections; by 2004 this had risen to 23%.

The non-print environment obviously has particular relevance to the older community as health issue can impact on factors such as eyesight. Clearly collections such as large print material, books-on-cassette and books-on-CD, as well as videos and DVDs, will have added appeal to this segment of the community, though this does come with cost implications (see Figure 12 above).

Internet

The Internet is one of the most successful services the library has implemented in recent years. Its great strength is that it is available for all.

In relation to the older community there is ample evidence that this is one of the segments showing a marked growth in the use of the Internet. This is a double-edged sword as there is also a need within the older community for training on using the Internet.

Increasingly the library is providing access to its services online and this may directly benefit older patrons that confront transport difficulties.

Desire for Comfort

There is a desire for the library to provide a place to interact socially or simply to provide comfort. This has seen the library purchase more furniture, develop an attractive interior to the Forster Library and install a drinks machine at the Forster Library. Patrons are even permitted to eat food in any of the libraries across Great Lakes.

There is a particular need for older patrons to have access to furniture that is both comfortable and easy to get out of.

One of the things the library does not provide that would help with patron comfort is a space that can be closed off e.g. a study room.

Disabled Access

Community expectations are of increasing disabled access to facilities, technology and the materials they hold. This has implications for the library in building design, collection material held and Internet and computer provision.

Patronage of the Library Service

Contrary to some predictions in the library literature the library service has not seen a decrease in patronage over recent years. At worst the library usage has remained constant, or, as is the case in the past 12 months has seen a steady increase. These predictions were based upon the increasingly competitive leisure market (e.g. videos, electronic games, Internet, pay television) and expected private use of online information.

It is likely that these forces have had some impact, but it has either been greatly exaggerated or offset by growth in demand in other sectors. In the latter case libraries have been very effective at adopting the modern technology and this has seen strong take-up of new collections (e.g. DVDs) and patronage of new services (e.g. the Internet). There is also a case to be made for people seeking assistance in finding information in what is an increasingly complex environment. Recent surveys also indicate that patrons are turning to the library as a place of comfort and relaxation².

² Source: Cox, Eva *A safe place to go: libraries and social capital*, State Library of New South Wales, 2000

5. OLDER PEOPLE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

Gaps in Provision of Information and Leisure Needs to the Older Community

Financial Gap

Staying abreast of the latest information is potentially costly. Whilst some information may be available over the net its authenticity and currency may be questioned. It is also necessary to have access to a PC and the Internet. Generally, current, accurate and objective information comes at a price. Similarly, magazines and other literature may provide useful (though often narrowly focused) information, but this also carries a cost. The library offers free (or very low cost) access to such information.

In addition, older people may face a genuine financial hurdle in obtaining leisure material in an environment that has seen traditional material (e.g. books) rise dramatically in price as well as the burgeoning range of formats material is now available in. The library can play an important role in providing access to this media.

Special note should be made of the cost burden of large print books, books-on-cassette and books-on-CD. These formats are particularly popular with older people and they are extremely expensive (especially the latter two formats – see Figure 12).

Technology Hurdle

The Internet is now a significant means of accessing information, for information or leisure purposes. This provides people with potential access to a wealth of information from their own home, but this does require access to technology (only 19% of the population has access to the Internet via work or home³). If such access is not readily available, a public forum, which offers free access can be an important service.

Geographic Gap

Areas in the Great Lakes region face geographic isolation. Pockets of population within the community may need to drive up to an hour to reach a major centre and the region itself is distant from Sydney. Data derived from the NSW Regional Profile 2004, indicates that around 12% of the local population live in areas defined as ‘outer regional’⁴.

There are branch libraries that can provide a service, but the size of these services points means only limited stock is available. This is particularly the case for Bulahdelah, Nabic, North Arm Cove and Stroud.

Skills Gap

Finding information in a world filled with so many alternative sources is challenging for the layperson. There is an important role to be played by offering access to experts skilled in locating information.

³ Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Census 2001: Great Lakes Statistical Local Area: Basic Community Profile*, 2002

⁴ Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *2004 Regional Profile*, 2004.

In relation to the above, an argument may be put forward that telecommunications are bridging these gaps. In reality reliable and adequate telecommunications are hard to come by in the country for an affordable rate. On top of that commercial information providers will levy an additional fee in order to make a profit.

There is a further skills challenge for older people in using the Internet. The older community is turning to the Internet in increasing numbers but they can lack the skill to utilize the technology. As an example of the demand for this service during 2003 the library sourced funding to conduct Internet training courses targeted at seniors. This was hugely popular and saw virtually all available places being booked.

Mobility Gap

One of the great challenges the older community has in relation to libraries is getting there in the first place. This mobility issue has seen many libraries across NSW appointing staff specifically to deliver materials to housebound patrons.

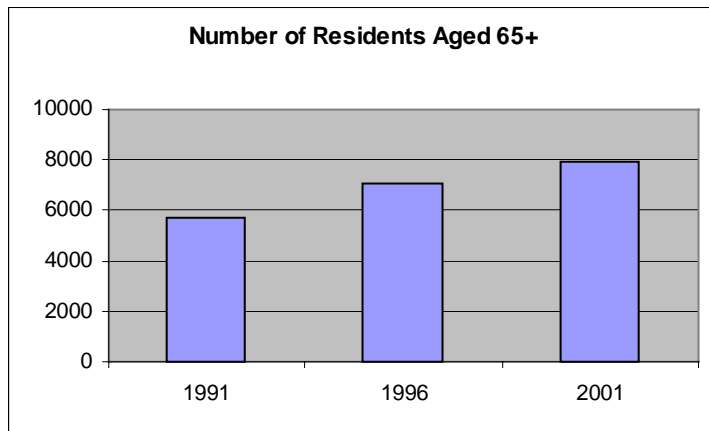
Ability Gap

The aging process can result in deteriorating eyesight and manual dexterity. Provision for this must be made in the library's future plans. In addition the layout of the library and the accessibility of the book collection must also be considered in this light.

Profile of Great Lakes Community and the Place of Older People Within It

The latest Census data reveals that Great Lakes has a population of 31,384, of which 15,451 are male and 15,933 are female⁵. Since 1996 the population has grown 9.7%.

Figure 13: Residents Aged 65+ in Great Lakes, from 1996-2001



From 1991 to 2001 the older population rose from 5,679 (21.8% of the population) to 7,971 (25.4% of the population). Recent estimates place the number of residents aged 65+ at 8,374 (25.5% of the population). Great Lakes has the highest median age, 47, in NSW.

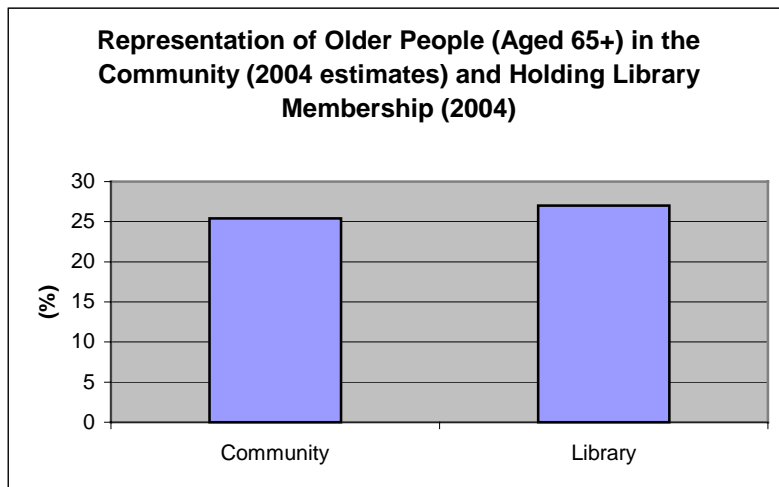
⁵ Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Census 2001: Great Lakes Statistical Local Area: Basic Community Profile*, 2002.

What became rapidly apparent in the consultation process (see Section 6) was the strong growth in hostel/nursing home care. All major care facilities are in the process of expanding, with further growth predicted within the next few years. It would seem that there will be close to a doubling of the number of residents at these locations within the next 3-5 years, with much of it occurring in the next twelve months.

Representation of Older People as Library Members

Features of the older community that have been discussed above lead to a prediction that they would be keen patrons of the library service, and the available data certainly supports this view. Figure 14 provides a comparison between representation of residents aged 65+ in the community with that of library membership. What is apparent is that older people hold membership with the Great Lakes Library Service at a rate above their presence in the community. The library clearly plays an important role in their lives.

Figure 14: Representation of Residents Aged 65+ in the Community as Compared with Library Membership



Around 25% of the community is aged 65+. Library membership data shows that 27% of patrons are aged 65 and over.

If a comparison is made between the population aged 65+ (8,374 residents) and those aged 65 and over who hold library membership (5309 residents) then it becomes apparent that approximately 63% of residents aged 65+ hold library membership. Comparing this with the membership for Great Lakes and the State in general for the year 2004 the level of role of the aged in the development of library services in the Great Lakes becomes apparent (see Figure 15).

Figure 15: Percentage of the Community That Holds Library Membership



Clearly, residents aged 65+ in the Great Lakes Region are active library users.

Other Features of Older Library Users

A survey conducted by the University of Technology, Sydney in 2000⁶ provides additional information on older library users. 255 people were surveyed (this amount being determined to be statistically significant), with 104 respondents indicating they were aged 60+. From the data the following facts emerged:

- 93% were retired;
- 82% used the library at least fortnightly (and 36% used it at least weekly);
- 73% used the library for recreational purposes, 21% for everyday enquiries, 16% for current affairs and 10% for research. (Note that this totals more than 100% because respondents could answer the question on usage multiple times).

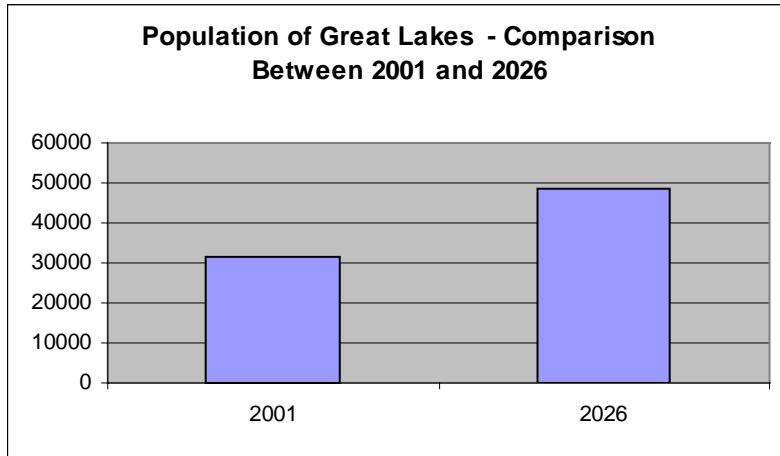
What this demonstrates is that older people tend to be very active library users, presumably because as they are retired they have ample time to use the service, and that they are heavy users of the fiction/leisure components of the collection.

Prediction for the Future Population of Older People

It is apparent (see Figure 13) that the representation of older people in the community has been steadily increasing, and all indications are that this trend will continue well into the future. The Hunter Valley Research Foundation (HVRF) has made predictions on the shape of the Great Lakes community for the year 2026. They estimate that the community will grow to 48,300 by that time (see Figure 16).

⁶ Source: University of Technology – Sydney, *Customer Satisfaction Survey*, State Library of New South Wales, 2000

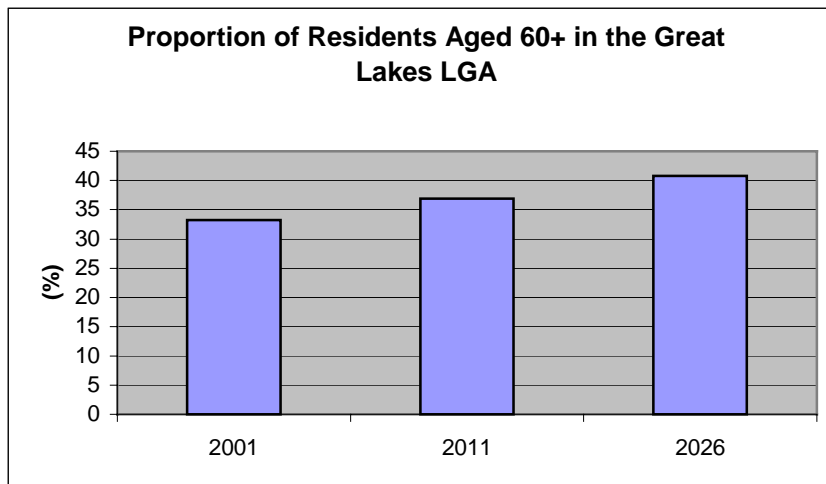
Figure 16: Estimated Resident Population of Great Lakes in 2001 Compared to 2026.



This is a growth of 55% over the 25-year period that, in itself, presents challenges. However, the implications for the library become even more significant when the age breakdown of this growth is taken into consideration.

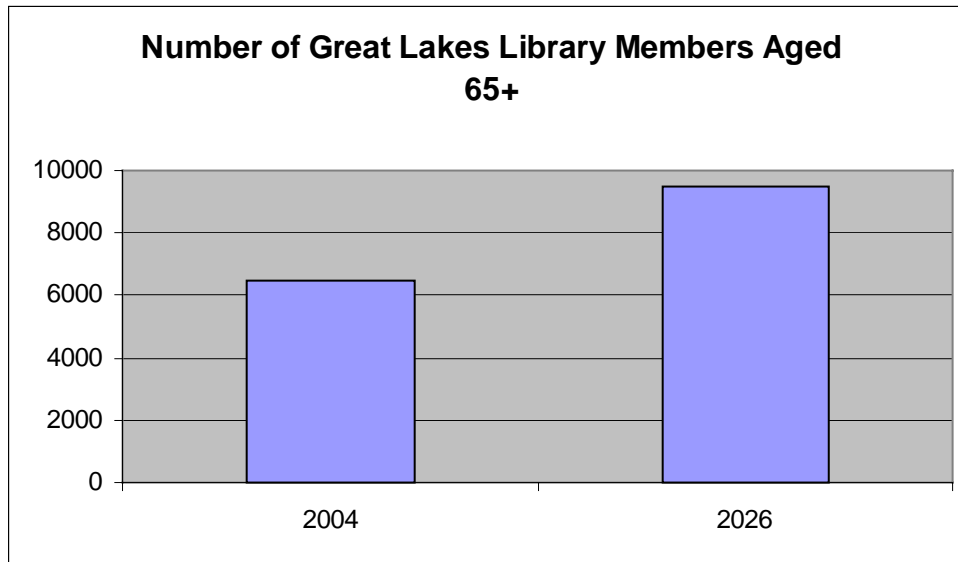
Figure 17 draws from data provided by the HVRF in their economic overview of the area.

Figure 17: Estimated Proportion of Residents Aged 60+ in the Great Lakes LGA for 2001, 2011 and 2026



Note that this data relates to residents aged 60 and over, so will naturally be higher than the proportion aged 65 and over. However, the trend remains valid. By 2026 the HVRS estimates that proportion of residents aged 60+ will have risen from 33% to over 40%. If similar growth trends occur in the 65+ age group and provision is made for overall population growth as well as take up of the library service then there will clearly be substantial demand placed on the public library. Figure 18 provides a comparison between the current number of library patrons aged 65+ and an estimate of that number for 2026.

Figure 18: Total Number of Library Patrons Aged 65+



What Figure 18 shows is that the estimated number of library patrons in the Great Lakes aged 65+ will rise from 5,309 in 2004 to 9,507 in 2026. This is an 80% increase in library members aged 65+.

It is true that these estimates presume that other factors within society remain the same and that always carries risk. However, the estimates are based upon current trends and have a strong statistical framework. Indeed, the fact that the proportion of residents aged 65+ holding membership has been growing at a rate of 1.7% per annum has been excluded from the data, so it is quite possible that these estimates are conservative.

Already the library is committing a substantial part of its budget towards media that suit the older population. In 2004 over 1/3 of the cost of materials purchased will be in the areas of large print and talking books (see Figure 12). If library membership of older people increases at the rate indicated above there will be major implications for the library's collection budget.

6. NEEDS ANALYSIS OF THE OLDER COMMUNITY

Consultation Process

To this point the Marketing Plan has focused on information available through statistical sources, such as library data and census information. It is now necessary to introduce feedback from the older community. To achieve this library staff consulted across the following groups and organisations:

Forster-Tuncurry and Regional Services

- Community Options (Forster-Tuncurry) - distributed
- Neighbour Aid (Forster-Tuncurry);
- Centre-based Respite – Denise - distributed
- Access Committee;
- HACC Service (Forster-Tuncurry);
- Community Transport;
- Helping Hands;
- Senior Citizens Association;
- Pryme Movers;
- Library branch coordinators;
- Golden Ponds;
- Forster-Tuncurry Legacy Village;
- GLAICA (Great Lakes Aged and Invalid Care Association);
- Kularoo Aged Care;
- Vision Support Group (Great Lakes Neighbour Aid);
- Beaumont Terrace.

Bulahdelah

- Great Lakes Nursing Home (Bulahdelah);
- Senior Day Care – Jean Lambourne.

Stroud

- HACC services;
- Stroud Community Lodge.

Tea Gardens/Hawks Nest

- HACC Services Coordinator (and Respite Care);
- Myall Lodge Aged Care Facility;
- Tea Gardens Grange.

In some cases library staff spoke to groups and in others to key individuals. Whilst the format was not rigorous input was sought on the following topics:

- Ability to physically access the library;
- Relevance of current library material to their needs;

- Layout and accessibility of the collection/material within the library;
- Their level of interest in family history resources and services;
- Their use of the Internet and any barriers they might encounter in accessing it (e.g. training);
- The relevance to them of online access to the library;
- Their own access to various forms of technology;
- Level of comfort within the library;
- Degree of interest in disability access equipment;
- Means of transport they would have to access the library;
- Best way of conveying information to them;
- If another support organisation – how they can integrate the library into their services, or vice versa.

A blank copy of the general question structure and a summary of responses are provided in Annexure A.

Other Sources of Input

University of Technology-Sydney Customer Satisfaction Survey

As indicated earlier, a survey was conducted in 2000 by the University of Technology – Sydney⁷ and it was possible to extract information on older library patrons. The data showed very high levels of satisfaction with the service (in excess of 90%). Some older patrons did express dissatisfaction with certain aspects of the service and these are provided below:

- Longer loan periods (8%);
- Longer opening hours (7%);
- Better study/reading areas (5%);
- Better video collection (5%).

No other category of concern attracted more than 3% of older respondents. Clearly, this indicates an overall high degree of satisfaction with current services.

Other Community Surveys

Surveys demonstrate the importance of the library in the community. Whilst these do not specifically relate to the aged considering their representation in the community it is highly likely that the results are indicative of their opinions. A survey conducted by Council in 1998 found 90% of residents rated the library of medium to very high importance⁸ and a survey conducted in 2000 found 98% of non-users rated the library as slightly to very important (76% of those survey rated the library as very important)⁹.

⁷ Source: University of Technology – Sydney, *Customer Satisfaction Survey*, State Library of New South Wales, 2000

⁸ Source: Great Lakes Council, *1998 Community Survey*, Great Lakes Council, 1999.

⁹ Source: Micromex Marketing Service, *Great Lakes Library: community telephone survey*, Micromex Marketing Services, 2001

Comments Board

In addition to this the library also seeks feedback through its Comments Board, which generates between 200 and 300 suggestion per annum. In general this can be broken down in to 50% stock purchasing suggestion, 40% service/layout suggestion and 10% praise. The flavour of suggestions indicates an overall satisfaction with the service but a community willing to offer advice as to how things can develop even further.

Perception of the Library by the Older Community

From the feedback, and from other broader mechanisms for community feedback it is possible to develop an overall perception of the library and its services and to identify a range of explicit and implicit needs.

Feedback from all sources indicates that older people have a very positive view of the library and its services. The general impression is that the library is seen to:

- Provide access to a quality collection;
- Offer excellent customer service;
- Be innovative and progressive in the areas of both collection development and customer service;
- Welcome feedback.

On top of this the high level of membership in the older community must provide some indication of satisfaction with the service.

In total then, the library appears to be perceived positively by the older community, though a number of suggestions have been made as to how the service can be improved.

Summary of Needs

The needs expressed by the groups and individuals consulted can be integrated and summarized as follows:

- Provision of a selection, delivery and collection service. Take-up for this is expected to be high.
- Patrons are generally happy with the structure of the current collection.
- Consideration should be given to access issues, both in the current facility and when the expanded Forster Library is planned.
- Transportation is an issue and there is scope for encouraging residents to access the service via community transport options.
- There is scope for the library to conduct events at aged care facilities.
- There is an opportunity to create greater awareness of library services and activities.
- There is scope for further Internet training courses.
- There is interest amongst the more mobile older people in using the Genealogy Service.

7. IMPLICATIONS AND AVAILABLE RESOURCES

Collection

The high proportion of aged people within the Great Lakes community has already had a significant impact on the shape of the library collection (see Figures 10-12). The library holds a high proportion of recreational reading material, which reflects the strong interest older people have in this type of content (see Section 5). Similarly, a substantial proportion of the budget is allocated to collections suited for people with lower vision skills e.g. large print, talking books.

Considering that the library already commits around 35% of its budget to purchase large print and talking books, which represent 12% of the collection, it is clear that whilst this is the area of the collection that older people will place great demand upon that there is little room to increase purchasing levels based upon the current budget.

The largest challenge in this area comes from books-on-CD. At present the library holds 295 books-on-CD. This is a small collection compared to the books-on-tape 1,140 and yet demand continues to grow for the books-on-CD. What is required is a targeted injection of funding into the books-on-CD collection.

Should an increased level of service be provided to older people in the nature of selection/delivery/retrieval (traditionally known as a Housebound Service) then there would almost certainly be a need to build the large print and talking book collections even further.

Staffing

At present it is challenging enough to provide current services to the community from the existing staff base. Any significant increase in workload would have to be matched by an increase in staff.

The development of a selection/delivery/retrieval service has obvious implications for staffing. Based on previous experiences at other public libraries it would be necessary to consider the employment of a full-time staff member to provide this service.

It is possible that the provision of events for older people at nursing homes/retirement villages could occur without the appointment of such a position, but even then the impact on staff would need to be analysed. At present a small group of volunteers and family members provide some delivery service to housebound residents, but this is very limited and not even widely promoted for fear of generating more interest than can be sustained.

Transportation

If the services to older people develop to such a point that delivery of material is feasible then mechanisms for transporting items will need to be considered. At present the library

has a station wagon that would prove reasonably effective in this area, however there are almost certainly going to be times when there is a conflict of need. For example, the vehicle is tied to the position of the Manager – Library Services. Should he be on annual leave this would present some very real delivery issues.

There is scope for strategic partnerships with other transportation service providers. This would most likely be in the area of bringing patrons to the library (e.g. Community Transport) rather than delivering items to individuals, however, all potential avenues should be investigated.

Accessibility of the Collection and Facilities

The consultation process identified concerns over the accessibility of the library. The following issues arose:

- The book collection shelving was both too high and too low;
- There was a need for electronic doors;
- Aisles can be too narrow;
- The disability access equipment is in a difficult location to reach by sight-impaired people;
- The flooring surface may not be ideal for wheelchairs;
- Tactile markers could be put in place to help vision-impaired patrons negotiate the library;
- Toilets do not meet the standards suitable for disabled access.

8. OBJECTIVES

From the above analysis it is possible to derive a range of meaningful objectives.

Objectives

1. That the library investigates possible staffing options for service provision to older people.

- a. That the library presents a case to Council for the creation of the position of a Home Services Librarian. This will occur by December 2005.
- b. That possible means of stock delivery continue to be investigated. To be done by December 2005.

2. To continue to develop the collection to meet the needs of older people.

- a. Apply for grant funding to significantly expand the books-on-CD collection. To be done by February 2005.
- b. Make provision in each library budget for funding support for the large print and talking book collections. This should be in the order of 40-50% of the total library bookstock budget. By February 2005, and each subsequent February.

3. Promote the library service to the aged community

- a. Distribute copies of the library newsletter to interested aged-care organisations. To be done by March 2005.
- b. Be guest speaker at a major Senior Citizens (Forster-Tuncurry) function. By April 2005.
- c. Tea Gardens library staff to be guest speaker at both the Myall Lodge and Tea Gardens Grange. To occur by April 2005.

4. Increase accessibility to the collection

- a. Present nursing homes, retirement villages etc. with the ability to bulk loan items. To be done by April 2005.

5. Improve provision of Disability Access Equipment

- a. Seek funding to upgrade the disability access equipment. To occur by May 2005.

6. Improve physical access to the library

- a. In planning the future Forster Library consideration will be given to more effective shelving heights, greater shelf spacing provision, the use of tactile indicators and more suitable location of Disability Access Equipment. To occur when detailed planning of the new building commences.

9. PLAN FOR MARKETING LIBRARY SERVICES TO OLDER PEOPLE

Positioning

Older people generally have a good awareness of the library service, so efforts in marketing the service to them rely less on knowledge and more on accessibility and adequate collection size. This can only be achieved through meeting the above objectives, with the creation of a Housebound Librarian's position being paramount.

Having said awareness is high amongst older people of the relevance of the library service to their needs the same cannot be said of aged care facilities. There needs to be a greater understanding amongst these facilities of the ways the library service can integrate with their organisations. Again, this should occur through the implementation of the Objectives identified above.

Marketing Information Systems

It is relatively meaningless to monitor the usage of collections targeted at older people as these already experience high levels of usage. However, it is quite feasible to assess demographic data to determine the representation of older people in the library community and compare this with actual community representation. This will be done in an ongoing fashion.

In relation to aged care organisations usage, through an institutional library membership can be monitored to see if there has been an uptake of services.

Distribution Channels

Distribution channels for older residents are much the same as for the community in general. However, as aged care institutions have a lower awareness of the service they will be posted or emailed the library's newsletter.

10. PROMOTION

Media Activities

There is no reason to think that traditional media channels would not be effective at reaching the older population, though more targeted approaches are likely to be more productive. The following avenues will be pursued:

Personal Contact: The library will continue to develop links with aged care facilities and aged care organisations where possible and appropriate. In the Tea Gardens area expect this to be done through staff there. Similar opportunities at other branch locations.

Press Releases: The library has strong links to the local radio and newspapers and where relevant these will be used to raise profile.

Posters and Fliers: Posters and fliers could be distributed at key locations e.g. retirement villages.

Newsletters: The library will promote itself to older residents through its own newsletter. Newsletters will be mailed out to key organisations.

11. FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS

Potential Expenses

Housebound Services Librarian: In the order of \$45,000 at current salary rates, plus overheads.

Delivery vehicle: Cost in the order of \$40,000, plus ongoing costs of approximately \$8,000 per annum.

Expansion of the Books-on-CD collection: Injection of around \$30,000 worth of stock.

Ongoing Commitment to large print and talking books: The library currently commits around \$70,000 per annum to the large print and talking books collection. This is placing significant pressure on the library's bookstock budget and provisions should be made to expand this collection overall by at least \$20,000 in the 2005/06 budget with further increments in the order of \$10,000 in following years.

Upgrading Disability Access Equipment: Cost in the order of \$4,000-5,000.

Potential Income

Grant Funding for Books on CD: Seeking \$30,000 from the Library Council of NSW for books-on-CD.

Donation of Disability Access Equipment: Currently seeking the donation of the Disability Access Equipment from the local Lions Club.

12. ANNEXURE A – QUESTIONNAIRE AND RESPONSES

A blank copy of questionnaire form used in the interview process with targeted organisations is provided below. It must be stressed that this was used only as a prompt in case potential areas of concern/need were overlooked in the process. The responses are summarized in the table following on from the questionnaire.

<u>Questionnaire</u>	
<u>Organisation:</u>	<u>Numbers Served:</u>
<u>Date:</u>	<u>Person(s) Consulted:</u>
What services do you and/or your clients currently use in the library?	

Are their difficulties for you or your clients in physically accessing the library?	

Is the current library material relevant to you and/or your clients?	

How do you/your clients find the library layout and accessibility of its material?	

What is your level of interest in family history resources and services?	

Do you and/or your clients need to/desire to use the Internet and are there any barriers you/they might encounter in accessing it (e.g. training)?	

How relevant is online access to the library to you and/or your clients?	

What sort of technology do you/your clients have access (e.g. DVD players, CD players)?	

Do you and/or your clients feel comfortable in the library?	

Do you and/or your clients need to use disability access equipment? If so, what sort?	

What means of transport do you and/or your clients have/need to get to the library?	

What is the best way of conveying information to you and/or your clients?	

If you are a support organisation how can the library integrate into your services?	

Comments	

Provider	Comments
<p><u>Neighbour Aid and HACC (Forster-Tuncurry)</u> Contact: Karen Burton</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients tend to be driven to library by volunteers, or volunteers pick up items for clients. • Scope for a Housebound delivery service.
<p><u>Kularoo Aged Care</u> 120 clients currently 158 clients in 12 months Contact: Marylou McGrath</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive comments on service • Layout of library, access to the Internet and means of transport to the library not an issue as service needs to come to clients. • Large print, talking books and DVD/videos most relevant. Not worried about format of talking books. Expect books-on-tape to be most relevant at present but also foresee move to books-on-CD. • A service that bought items to people would be very popular • Activities where library staff doing reading for group of residents on a regular (e.g. monthly) basis would be very well received • Send copy of newsletter
<p><u>Manning Valley & Area Community Transport</u> Contact: Lessley Thornton</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Material and layout fine for patrons • Patrons comfortable in the library • Opportunity to increase promotion of community transport run to the library on Wednesday afternoons
<p><u>Access Committee</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive comments about quality/friendliness of service • Excellent feedback on the collection • Need automatic doors • Need to review carpet surface for wheelchair maneuverability • Disability access equipment needs reviewing, particularly CCTV • Disability access equipment in a difficult location to access • Vision-impaired people frightened to use the library – need to be encouraged to ask for assistance from staff • Tactile indicators on the floor
<p><u>GLAICA House</u> 51 clients – 2 respite 80 by March 2005 120 eventually Contact: Neil McNally</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No current direct access of service • Very little mobility of clients • Interested in a bulk loan of material that individuals could borrow from • A service that bought items to people would be very popular • Small percentage that can read. • High need for talking books. Preference for tapes but moving into the books-on-CD environment. • No need to access genealogical service but they would be interested in someone interviewing patrons • Interested in material that could be used by the organisation (e.g. videos/DVDs for movie days). • Role for someone to read to groups of residents on a regular basis as a group activity. • Send copy of the newsletter
<p><u>Beaumont Terrace</u> 80 high care residents 130 mixed high and low care in 12 months 100 beds in mixed high and low at Southern Parkway by 2007 60 Community aged-care packages being sought Contact: Paul McDonald,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently do minimal collection of material for several patrons. • Current patrons immobile, though with expansion expect a number of more mobile residents. • Very interested in bulk loans for general usage. • A selection/delivery and retrieval process would be highly valued. • Interested in good mix of materials. • High interest in talking books. Books-on-tape current preference, but expect a move to books-on-CD. • Would also like to tap into the collection to use for organizational needs (e.g. showing videos to group sessions).

Chris Hibbert, Cushla Dormor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are potentially interested in some genealogy activities.
<u>Pryme Movers</u> Swimming class for seniors 2 individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very small representation. • Mobile group. • No real problem with the layout of the library. • Happy with the service. Do use large print. • One person interested in a three-week loan.
<u>Helping Hands</u> Provide short-term respite care Contact: Tina Crowther	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now aware of service. • Could offer suggestions for purchase for stock in the nursing/home care area.
<u>Lions Village</u> Managed by GLAICA 25 units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-care units. Mobile residents though a number comparatively infirm. • Could be a role for Community Transport.
<u>Forster-Tuncurry Legacy Village</u> 27 residents 400 home-based clients Contact: Kathy Jones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services 27 residents but has 400 private residents spread from Krambach to Nabiac and down the coast to Seal Rocks. • Clients range from mobile to housebound. • Some clients access Community transport, other get volunteers/friends to visit library and collect material. • Very high level of interest in a Housebound Service. • Clients likely to need large print and talking books. • Little interest in Internet resources. • Interested in setting up an organizational card. • Email newsletter. Distribute leaflets promoting service.
<u>Golden Ponds</u> 160 residents Contact: Megan (staff) Helen Baird (resident)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have their own library, which we support. • Very happy to interact more effectively with the library. • Mixed mobility. Some need housebound, some can visit. • See great relevance to Housebound Librarian. • Interested in Community Transport Options. • Need plenty of talking books and large print material. • Some interest in Family History – pass information to them. • Parking is a concern. • Best means of reaching residents is through their own newsletter.
<u>Vision Support Group</u> 11 individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services used (good usage levels, esp talking books): talking books, large print and disability access equipment • Difficulty with transport. Rely on family and friends to either take to library or pick up books • No real interest in genealogy but are interested in Internet services. Need assistance and training. • Not much interest in online library services at this point. • Main use of technology is tapes. Lesser degree CDs and DVDs. • Disability Access Equipment hard to get to. Should be located closer to the entrance of the library. • Do feel comfortable in the library. • Best way to reach through phone/large print newsletter. • Could use monthly meetings to tie in to library services. • Would greatly appreciate library staff member selecting items and even delivery of material. • Can access community bus to get to library.
<u>Senior Citizens (Forster-Tuncurry)</u> 200 members Contact: Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients not hugely mobile. Tend to use Community Transport. • Very high interest in a housebound service. • Interest in Disability access equipment. • Interest in Internet training.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expect many members to be interested in family history. • Would like to invite the library to be a guest speaker. • Also considering using the library collection for Senior Citizens functions.
<p><u>Great Lakes Nursing Home (Bulahdelah)</u> 38 high dependency, 10 low dependency Move to 44 high by December 2004. Contact: Kathy Freihart</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One resident is currently taken to the library. • Some community members select on behalf of residents. • Large print and talking books most relevant. • Interested in a selection, delivery and collection service for individual residents. • Also interested in bulk loans (e.g. DVDs, videos, music, communal books) for the organisation. • Interested in any form of entertainment (e.g. reading to residents).
<p><u>Senior Day Care (Bulahdelah)</u> 12 people, usually mobile Contact: Jean Lamborn</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library not so relevant to their patrons but does strongly believe that a selection, delivery and collection service for individuals would be very popular in Bulahdelah.
<p><u>Stroud Community Lodge</u> Contact: Judy Pereira 30 people – 24 permanent, 1 respite</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use reading resources, especially large print. Also talking books. • Use library staff as volunteers to deliver housebound material. Material sent over from Forster to supplement. Thrilled with the service. • Not really possible for patrons to visit the library. • Layout of the library not relevant. • Internet access and historical resources not relevant. • Would appreciate more large print books. • Would definitely support the creation of a housebound position/service.
<p><u>Stroud HACC Services</u> Contact: Belinda Lloyd</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients really don't use the library • Challenge of the step in to the library. Need to access library through the ramp. • Scope for training in using the Internet and some assistance in using mouse and Internet. • Content is relevant and have access to most forms of technology. • Use volunteer car drivers. • Would appreciate a housebound service to the clients' homes (perhaps a housebound service would be more realistic). Could act as couriers, depending on the circumstances.
<p><u>Neighbour Aid and Centre-Based Respite (Myall Dolhpins) – Hawks Nest/Tea Gardens</u> Contact: Linda Pine/Barb Gurr</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use books, large print and talking books. • Some are mobile, some need transport. • Satisfied with material and with accessibility of layout. • Little interest in genealogy or online service. Slight interest in Internet training. • Range of technology access – perhaps not many DVD players. • Indication of interest in home library service.
<p><u>Great Lakes Manning Community Options</u> Contact: Jo Newman</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use talking books, books, reference material, music • Many clients housebound. • Most clients happy with resources. • Some difficulty in moving around the library for wheelchair bound. • Low interest in genealogy or Internet. • Little expected use of online services. • Clients have a range of technologies (videos, CD players, DVDs). • Clients have no real access to the library – must come to them. • Like regular meeting to inform of changes in library service.
<p><u>Daisy Club – Great Lakes Centre-Based Respite Service</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have access to CD players and DVD players. • Most have carers who select material for them from the library or collect pre-selected material.

<p>Contact: Denise Thompson 14 people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have enjoyed previous tours of the library.
<p><u>Myall Lodge Aged Care</u> Contact: Margaret Durose 10 residents – high care 30 – in the development stage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Largely housebound. Needs services to come to them. • Can see a role for a housebound service. • Interested in material being delivered to them on a regular basis, both for clients and diversional therapist. • Would like to be visited to promote library service. Can use noticeboard to promote services and events. • Interested in volunteers reading to patrons.
<p><u>Tea Gardens Grange</u> Contact: Coralie Wilks 150 self care units, with close to 300 residents. 195 by end of 2005. 300 new homes in Tea Gardens Hermitage by 2006 Plans for Nursing home</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients bring themselves to the library. • Currently very happy with service and collection. • No need for a regular delivery service of material to the organisation. • Currently don't need housebound service, BUT expect that to change as the community ages. • Would like Tea Gardens Library staff to visit the Grange and promote the library's services and collection. • Can use notice board and in-house TV to communicate with residents.