

2025-2030

Campaspe Library Service Strategic Plan

"The library is the vehicle that brings the world to our town."



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"Campaspe libraries bring people together and enable them to access books, magazines and other publications or services that they otherwise would not have access to. They help to enrich the lives of everyone who walks in the door."

Note: A 2024 community survey asked library users what they most like about their library. Some of their responses are sprinkled throughout the Strategic Plan.



Acknowledgement of Country

The Shire of Campaspe is the traditional lands of the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Yorta Yorta Peoples.

We respect and acknowledge their unique Aboriginal cultural heritage and pay our respect to their ancestors, descendants and emerging leaders as the Traditional Owners of this Country.

We acknowledge their living culture and their unique role in the life of this region.

Message from the Mayor

Campaspe Library Service - Strategic Plan 2025-2030

Campaspe Library Service's Strategic Plan 2025-2030 is the library's first multi-year plan since 2009. It recognises:

- Campaspe Shire Council's future priorities, as outlined in the Council Plan 2021-2025 and allied planning documents
- the vital role of contemporary public libraries in supporting community literacy, inclusion and wellbeing
- emerging trends in provision of community-centred library services
- the current Campaspe library network – its strengths, opportunities and challenges
- the ever-changing make-up of the Campaspe community
- feedback from more than 550 library users and non-users who participated in a community survey and onsite consultation activities.

The *Strategic Plan 2025-2030* identifies four strategic goals for the next 5 years. The actions undertaken in pursuit of these goals will collectively contribute to a more accessible and vibrant library service, and a more capable and connected Campaspe community.

CAMPASPE LIBRARY SERVICE

My story, your story, our story

Vision: As the cultural hub of the community, Campaspe Library will enrich and enhance information and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors in accessible, safe and vibrant settings

STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2030

WELCOME to the next chapter in Campaspe's story

Goal 1: READ

Increase community literacy and learning outcomes through collections and programs that encourage reading, personal development and creativity

Goal 2: BELONG

Increase community connections by providing library activities and services which enhance social and digital inclusion, wellbeing and cultural engagement

Goal 3: ACCESS

Increase community access to the library through innovative service models and appealing library spaces

Goal 4: GROW

Increase community impact by reaching out to new audiences, partnering and building a sustainable library network

Shire Of Campaspe



Our place

The Shire of Campaspe sits directly north of Bendigo in the Loddon Mallee region, with the Murray River forming its northern boundary and the Campaspe River running through its heart. The municipality has a resident population of around 38,500, with one-third living in and around Echuca, one-third in smaller towns (including Kyabram, Rochester, Tongala and Rushworth), and one-third in rural areas. All parts of the Shire are experiencing population growth, as is the neighbouring township of Moama across the NSW border from Echuca.



Branches



Depots

Our community

Campaspe Shire had an estimated residential population of 38,299 in 2023, with the population forecast to grow by 14% to approximately 43,900 in 2036.¹ The Shire's demographic profile is in some ways similar to other regional and rural municipalities, and in other ways unique.

The Campaspe economy is driven by the agriculture sector, with strong contributions from manufacturing, health care and tourism – especially in Echuca where the iconic Murray River is one of Victoria's key tourism destinations.

The Shire's demographic profile is in some ways similar to other regional and rural municipalities, and in other ways unique.¹

The most significant features, in planning provision of future public library services across the Shire, are:

- we have a relatively older and ageing population
- we have lower levels of post-school education, although this is changing
- more children start school 'at risk' or 'vulnerable' in terms of language and cognitive skills
- many people live alone
- we have high and increasing needs for daily assistance with disabilities
- we have a relatively large and growing Aboriginal population
- we are mostly Australian born and speak English at home, though we are starting to see increasing cultural diversity
- we have lower household incomes
- we have higher levels of socio-economic disadvantage.

¹ Campaspe Shire Community Profile, profile.id, <https://profile.id.com.au/campaspe>

Campaspe Shire (ABS census 2021) ^{2 3}

| | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| 20.8% children aged under 18 years (C16 21.8%) | 6.9% young adults aged 18 to 24 years (RV 7.3%) | 17.7% retirees and elderly aged 70+ years (RV 15.7% / C16 16.2%) | 3.0% identify as Aboriginal (RV 2.0% / C16 2.4%) |
| 43.4% aged 15+ have post-school qualifications (RV 49.9% / C16 39.9%) | 27.7% single person households (C16 26.4%) | 7.6% born overseas (RV 12.4% / C16 6.8%) | 89.2% speak only English at home (RV 86.4% / C16 89.6%) |
| 23.6% children start school with 'at risk' language skills (Vic 17.4% / C15 20.6%) | 7.4% need help in their daily lives due to disability (RV 6.9% / C16 6.4%) | \$1,264 median household weekly income (Vic \$1,759) | 965 SEIFA score of socio-economic disadvantage (RV 985 / Vic 1,010) |

Note: Comparisons from the 2021 ABS census are with Campaspe in 2016 (C16), Regional Victoria (RV) or Victoria (Vic)

Implications for the provision of library services

Campaspe Shire's key demographic characteristics are particularly important in considering future demand for library services across the municipality because differences in age, life stage, literacy level and socio-economic status are known to result in relatively greater or lesser demand for each of the libraries' five core services. That is:



physical and digital content and collections



information and reference services



reading, literacy, wellbeing, cultural and creative programs



access to technology and support in developing digital literacy



places and spaces where people can relax, work, meet, learn, connect and create.

For example, young aspirational families look for children's collections and early years' programming while older populations typically have higher use of fiction collections and social engagement activities. Areas of relative advantage often have greater demands for adult fiction, digital collections and reading programs, with less demand for information services, technology access and literacy programs. Areas of relative disadvantage typically have lower average levels of recreational readership and higher levels of technology access, use of study and workspaces, and participation in literacy, learning and social programs.

² Campaspe Shire Council Community Profile, profile.id, <https://profile.id.com.au/campaspe>

³ Campaspe Community profile, Australian Early Development Census 2023, <https://www.aedc.gov.au/data-explorer/?id=181454>

| Campaspe population characteristic | | Impact on demand for library services |
|---|---|---|
| Older and ageing population | → | Bigger general reading collections (incl. large print) Demand for social inclusion, lifestyle and special interest programs for older people |
| Increasing numbers of older people needing assistance due to a disability | → | Increased demand for home library services and outreach programs |
| Above average and localised socio-economic disadvantage | → | Localised demand for access to the internet, books and study spaces |
| Variant levels of school readiness on language and cognitive skills | → | Demand for early years' literacy programs and children's collections (e.g. board books, picture books and early readers) |
| Moderate proportion of primary age children and young families | → | Moderate demand for children's reading material, after school activities and school holiday programs |
| Fewer people from a non-English speaking background | → | Lower demand for collections in languages other than English |
| Lower but increasing cultural diversity | → | Lower but increasing demand for programs and spaces which celebrate different cultures |



Campaspe Library Service

A community-focused library network

The Campaspe Library Service (Campaspe Libraries) is part of the Tourism, Arts and Culture and Libraries Department within the Communities Directorate of Campaspe Shire Council. Council provides the majority of library funding (approx. 70%) with annual contributions from Murray River Council and the Victorian Government.

Campaspe Libraries provides a responsive flexible service to the community by making available and promoting: appropriate educational, recreational and information resources; literacy, learning and lifestyle programs for people of all ages; and welcoming spaces where people can read, relax, study, work and meet. Library services can be accessed through onsite and online service points and outreach activities that take the library out to people across the region:

- **5 full-service library branches open for a total of 174 hours per week**
Echuca Library (which also hosts the library's regional support functions)
Kyabram, Rochester, Tongala and Rushworth Libraries (which are co-located with Council Customer Service Centres)
- **5 library depots open for 55 hours per week**
Colbinabbin, Girgarre, Gunbower, Lockington, Stanhope
- **eBooks, other eResources and online services available 24/7 via the library website⁴**
- **Full access to library collections and programs for Moama residents through an agreement with Murray River Council**
- **Outreach activities held in community locations (e.g. Books on Wheels, Words on Wheels)**
- **A 'pop-up' library at the Echuca V-line Railway Station**
- **A Home Delivery Service for homebound residents and vulnerable people at risk of social isolation.**

In 2023-24 Campaspe Libraries had an annual operating budget of \$1.5 million and employed 23 staff, equivalent to 11.3 full time employees. It provided the Campaspe community and visitors to the Shire free access to:

- **120,000 books, DVDs and other physical items, as well as 7,000 eBooks and eResources**
- **1,200 programmed activities focused on literacy and lifelong learning, personal development and wellbeing, and social and digital inclusion**
- **27 PCs and Wi-Fi in all library branches.**

A well-used library service

Campaspe residents and visitors are active library users. In 2023-24 Campaspe Libraries recorded:

- **9,500 library members, representing 21% of the Campaspe and Moama population**
- **120,000 visits to library branches and depots**
- **16,500 visits to the library website**
- **191,000 loans of physical and digital collection items**
- **18,000 attendances at scheduled library programs**
- **12,400 hours of library computer and Wi-Fi use.**

⁴ Campaspe Library, https://cprl.libsvic.ent.sirsidynix.net.au/client/en_AU/cprlnew

Industry benchmarking shows that Campaspe Libraries performs at or around the national APLA/ALIA standards and state averages for most measures of service provision and operation (e.g. expenditure, opening hours, membership, loans per capita). Participation in library programs is particularly strong with Campaspe Library performing 57% above the national standard and having the 7th highest level of program attendance among Victorian libraries.⁵

A 2024 survey of more than 500 library users recorded a customer satisfaction rating of 9.1 out of 10, with 58% of respondents rating Campaspe Libraries as 10 out of 10.

Ready to move forward

Campaspe Libraries' record of service and performance provides a solid foundation for the future. However, the libraries' current service context also highlights some challenges that must be addressed.

Firstly, the consequences of extended closure of Campaspe libraries during the COVID pandemic are still being felt, as they are across the national public library network nearly three years from the lifting of access restrictions. While there has been significant growth in downloads of eBooks and streaming services over the past few years, and program participation is nearing 2019 figures on the back of a concerted effort by Campaspe Libraries, the number of visits to Campaspe's libraries and overall borrowing is still 25-30% below pre-COVID levels. With the community shut out of access to Campaspe Libraries for more than 12 months people's habits and routines changed. As a result the library needs to reconnect with the community and, as necessary, adapt its service offering.

Secondly, Campaspe Libraries' physical collection is at least 30-40% oversize for a Shire population of 38,500 and neighbouring Moama. In part this reflects the need to transition the balance of the collection between physical and digital items as eBooks become more popular. It has also been influenced by historical collection management processes, maintenance of local collections over stock rotation between branches, and changes to the operation of Libraries Victoria's inter-library loan service. The time has now come for Campaspe Libraries to realign the physical collection to an appropriate level and free up library space for relaxation, study and meeting spaces.

Finally, COVID-related library closures saw an acceleration in the adoption of more flexible service models and partnerships across the library industry. Campaspe's long-standing establishment of library depots as local small-scale collection outlets and the service agreement with Murray River Council exemplify the innovative arrangements that are becoming part of standard practice in public libraries. The challenge is to keep these models receptive to the needs and interests of a widely dispersed and growing Campaspe community.



"I actually gave it an 11! They always know everything I ever want to know, provide activities I want to do and books I want to read."

Planning For The Future

In formulating this Strategic Plan Campaspe Libraries placed particular emphasis on positioning the plan, its goals and priority actions within our unique operating context. That is:

Campaspe Shire Council's future priorities, as outlined in the Council Plan 2021-2025 and allied planning documents emerging trends in provision of community-centred library services that support literacy, social and digital inclusion, personal wellbeing and stronger more creative communities.

Campaspe Shire Council's vision for the future

Campaspe Shire's Council Plan 2021-2025 describes a Community Vision for the future.

*Our places are vibrant and sustainable,
our people are strong and supportive.*

Campaspe Library Service's Strategic Plan 2025-2030 recognises the Community Vision, and as a place for social and cultural connection contributes to the Council Plan's strategic priorities, as well as the goals articulated in other key planning documents:

- Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan
- Creative Campaspe Arts and Culture Strategy 2021-2031
- Municipal Early Years Plan 2023-2025
- Access and Inclusion Strategy 2020-2026.

"In every way they are a safe, holistic community learning space."

Public libraries in a fast-changing world

A local gateway to knowledge

The APLA/ALIA Standards and Guidelines for Australian Public Libraries, through the IFLA-UNESCO Public Library Manifesto (1994, updated 2022), acknowledge the crucial role of public libraries in contemporary society.⁶

"The public library – the local gateway to knowledge – is an essential component of knowledge societies, providing universal access to information for all people and providing publicly accessible space for the production of knowledge, sharing and exchange of information and culture, and promotion of civic engagement.

Libraries are creators of community, proactively reaching out to new audiences and designing services that meet local needs and contribute to improving quality of life. The public has trust in their library, and in return, it is the ambition of the public library to proactively keep their community informed and aware.

The services of the public library are provided on the basis of equality of access for all, regardless of age, ethnicity, gender, religion, nationality, language, social status, and any other characteristic. Material must reflect current trends and the evolution of society, as well as the memory of human endeavour and imagination.

⁶ IFLA-UNESCO Public Library Manifesto, <https://www.ifla.org/public-library-manifesto/>.

Through these key missions – information, literacy, education, inclusivity, civic participation and culture – public libraries contribute to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the construction of more equitable, humane, and sustainable societies.”

In a dynamic environment

Campaspe Libraries operate in a complex and dynamic environment, where the services offered and the capacity to professionally and efficiently deliver those services is influenced by a diverse range of social, economic, environmental, technological and political factors.

- The Campaspe population is growing, ageing and becoming more culturally diverse.
- Libraries – through their resources, programs and places – can support a range of important community outcomes related to childhood and adult literacy, social inclusion, health and wellbeing, resilience and community capacity building.
- Free access to books, resources, Wi-Fi, activities and spaces (warm in winter, cool in summer) is a valuable buffer in times of cost-of-living pressures and economic stress.
- Increasing numbers of people in our communities are impacted by homelessness, mental health, addiction, discrimination and family violence.
- Exponential growth in the power and reach of technology, and the rise of artificial intelligence and robotics, create exciting new knowledge opportunities but threaten to widen the existing digital divide.
- Both rural and urban populations are at increased risk from more frequent and more severe weather events (e.g. bushfires, heat waves, drought, floods, torrential downpours).
- Local governments are being expected to take on greater service responsibilities in the face of diminishing revenue streams.

In planning ahead Campaspe Libraries will respond to the real and everyday impact of these challenges.

“My library encourages people who used to sit at home to come and play cards and Scrabble, read, use the computers – instead of sitting at home alone all day every day.”

Constantly adapting and evolving

Public libraries have long demonstrated a capacity to evolve in response to changing community needs, social trends and technological advancements. Campaspe's libraries today are not the same as they were 5, 10 or 20 years ago, and while the core service offering will remain much the same, in other ways our libraries will be different again by 2030.

Our libraries design and deliver five key services across all life stages, cultures, interests and circumstances:

- physical and digital content and collections, including general, specialist local studies, heritage and cultural collections
- information and reference services
- reading, literacy, learning, wellbeing, cultural and creative programs
- access to computers, the internet, printers and other essential technology
- places and spaces (both onsite and online) where people can relax, work, meet, learn, connect and create.⁷

7 APLA/ALIA Standards and Guidelines for Australian Public Libraries, 2020, <https://read.alia.org.au/apla-alia-standards-and-guidelines-australian-public-libraries-may-2021>.



"They contribute enormously, providing help and activities from babies right through to the senior citizens in our community. The children's programs in the holidays are great. It is much much more than a place from which to borrow books, DVDs, etc. We are so lucky ... the best in the state."

At the same time public libraries are adapting to increased community demand for libraries 'as place', a place beyond the realms of home and work which hosts the regular, voluntary, informal, and happily anticipated gatherings of individuals.⁸

A modern library:

- is a study or workspace that responds to off-siting of tertiary study, people engaging in 'work from library' where 'work from home' is not a viable option, and growth in microbusinesses
- balances reduced demand for fixed PCs with increased demand for seating (with charging points) where people can access Wi-Fi from their own device
- is a 'safe' referral point for non-judgmental access to social and human services (with some libraries hosting welfare providers within the library)
- is a repository for stories and a place for storytelling – including celebration of both local history and indigenous stories.

Unlike many other such places, public libraries have the distinction of being a casual, trusted, non-judgmental place where people from 0 to 100 can spend time without spending money and just be without obligation.

In addition, the way in which library services are being delivered to communities is changing in response to advances in technology and community expectations of when, where and how they access library collections and spaces. Examples of these new flexible service approaches include:

- increased demand for Home Delivery Services that deliver curated reading material to housebound residents (often through use of volunteers)
- 'Click and Collect' or a 'Book Concierge' for fast pick-up of reserved collection items
- book lockers outside libraries or in community activity centres where library members can collect holds or return books at a time that is convenient to them
- online programming and videocasting of popular library programs (e.g. Story Time)
- mobile vans that take library collections and activities to shopping centres, school fetes, kindergartens, sporting activities and cultural festivals
- open access libraries which allow registered library members secure out of hours access to library facilities (up to 24/7)
- transformation of library spaces to make them more inviting and engaging (e.g. reading nooks, soundproof study pods, Makerspaces, recording studios, performance stages, slides and tunnels).

⁸ The Great Good Place, Ray Oldenburg, 1991.

What Our Community Wants From Its Libraries

Every day hundreds of Campaspe residents visit their local library – onsite or online.

- Parents bring babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers to participate in early years literacy programs and borrow board and picture books for reading in the home.
- Primary school age children borrow early readers and attend after school and holiday programs.
- Teenagers study after school, use the Wi-Fi and borrow Young Adult fiction.
- Tertiary students find a quiet spot to study at a table, pod or booth.
- Readers attend book clubs, author talks and literary events.
- Researchers and history buffs access the Local History collections.
- Older readers fill their bag with another few weeks of reading material and chat to a librarian.
- People play cards, Mah Jong or Scrabble, knit and craft, or gather around a jigsaw puzzle.
- Tourists and people of all ages use the computers and Wi-Fi to access emails and cruise the internet, ask library staff for tech help, read daily newspapers and magazines, or just take a load off in a comfy chair, especially at Echuca Library which overlooks the mighty Murray River.

In planning for the future we asked these people and other community members what they wanted from their library service. The consultation process included a community survey that generated 505 responses from library users and non-users, and publicized drop-in sessions at each library branch where around 50 people took the opportunity to provide feedback on two main questions – What does the library mean to me and my community? and How could my library be improved?

What my library means to me and my community?

Community consultation demonstrated the high level of satisfaction with the services currently provided by Campaspe Libraries (average customer satisfaction score of 9.1 out of 10). The value of the libraries, to individuals and the community, is evidenced through:

- the friendly welcome and helpful service of library staff (who know all the regulars by name)
- an extensive collection of books and reading material
- activities that bring people together in a comfortable setting
- a quiet place for study or reflection, and a place to read aloud, sing, dance and laugh
- a sense of belonging, pride and ownership of their library.

"Libraries are an equalizer. Anyone can use them. Anyone can access their literary interest. Libraries share community information. We are extremely lucky to have such a wonderful facility with highly skilled and professional staff."

"I love Book Club the most as it forces me to try different genres than I usually stick to. It puts me in touch with other people socially, enabling me to form friendships that have continued outside the library. I love being surrounded by other people that love books."

"I wouldn't have moved to Rushworth unless it had a library."

"I love the surrounds, the fact that you can look at the reserve while studying. The staff are very friendly and helpful and there are a lot of varied activities available. You feel safe there, the toilets are the cleanest in Echuca, it's warm in winter and cool in summer ... all in all a very welcoming, safe place."

"I would be lost without our library. I live alone and use books to help fill in my time so I don't have to feel lonely."

"The people! There is nothing to be gained by having a magnificent library if you have all the wrong people employed. No such problem here. Echuca has the very best library staff!"

How my library could be improved?

Among the many compliments for Campaspe Libraries, the collections and staff, there were also suggestions for improvement. These included:

- extended opening hours – notably in evenings and on weekends (Echuca and Kyabram), Mondays (Rochester) and Saturday mornings/weekends (Rochester and Rushworth) for people who work and cannot access the library during standard working hours
- expanded and more responsive collections – with more access to new releases, inter-library loans and genres of interest (although different people want what they are interested in – for example, murder/mystery, young adult, self-help/psychology, children's picture books)
- more eBooks and streaming resources
- a café at Echuca Library, coffee machines at all libraries and a water fountain at Kyabram
- more programs and events for 30-60 year olds at convenient times
- more advertising of what's on for people who do not currently use the library
- placement of the Council Customer Service centres out of earshot of the library space to preserve confidentiality and minimise disruption (most notably at Kyabram).

"Library sessions should be extended to the online platform. Then when I am out of the location I can join remotely."

"Upgrade Kyabram library. It looks very neglected compared to other branches."

"More comfortable chairs or lounges placed in a quiet corner so you can read." (Kyabram)

"Transport to help bring vulnerable and isolated community members into the physical library space." (Echuca)

"Have a librarian present. Council staff, while pleasant, have their own work to do and most times are not free to assist." (Tongala)

What Our Community Wants From Its Libraries

Our Vision

As the cultural hub of our community, Campaspe Library will enrich and enhance information and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors in accessible, safe and vibrant settings.

My story, your story, our story

Strategic Goals and Priority Actions

STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2030

WELCOME to the next chapter in Campaspe's story

Goal 1: READ

Increase community literacy and learning outcomes through collections and programs that encourage reading, personal development and creativity

Goal 2: BELONG

Increase community connections by providing library activities and services which enhance social and digital inclusion, wellbeing and cultural engagement

Goal 3: ACCESS

Increase community access to the library through innovative service models and appealing library spaces

Goal 4: GROW

Increase community impact by reaching out to new audiences, partnering and building a sustainable library network

Drawing on the feedback received from consultation with library users and our community, and trends in provision of community-centred library services, Campaspe Library has identified four Strategic Goals for the next 5 years. These build on our strengths in collections and programming, maintain our commitment to service efficiency, and continue the ongoing process of reinvigorating library spaces that appeal to different user cohorts. They will also see the trial and adoption of more flexible service models that increase community access to library services.

Each of the four Strategic Goals is accompanied by a number of priority actions, most of which will begin to be addressed from 2025 and 2026. These actions will collectively contribute to a more accessible and vibrant library service, and a more capable and connected Campaspe community.

Where applicable, additional and more detailed actions will be documented each year in Campaspe Library Service's annual business plans.



Goal 1: READ

*"Free access to books
supports literacy
development for all."*

Goal 1: READ

Through the combination of free access to collections and complementary programming public libraries play a crucial role in community literacy.

- Research shows that reading at home during a child's first 5 years is a major determinant in language and cognitive development, which facilitate school readiness and contributes to long-term academic success. No family can afford, nor kindergarten has access to the number and range of board books, picture books and early readers required for a child to achieve the recommended target of reading 1,000 books before school.⁹ Only public libraries have the books and offer Story/Rhyme Time programs for children aged 0 to 5 years.
- Adult literacy and English language resources and conversation classes offered by libraries are valuable tools in assisting people (especially those from non-English speaking backgrounds) to develop literacy skills needed to fully function in contemporary workplaces and society.
- Reading for pleasure can promote better health and wellbeing, aids in building social connections and relationships, and is associated with factors that help increase the chances of social mobility. Libraries provide people with readers advisory services and access to a wide range of reading material, as well as book clubs and activities to stimulate the uptake of reading.

Libraries also contribute to personal development through reading and information resources, programs and spaces that facilitate formal and informal learning.

Since opening the Echuca Library in 1954, Campaspe Libraries has had a long tradition of supporting community access to reading material of many types and forms – fiction and non-fiction; adults, young adults and children's books; large print and audiobooks; magazines and newspapers; local history and special collections; and more recently eBooks and eAudiobooks. Young families play and stay at weekly Story Time sessions and author talks are well-attended informative and entertaining social events.

In the next 5 years Campaspe Libraries will build off this solid foundation by sharpening our focus on a collection to meet the evolving information needs and reading interests of our community, and maximising community engagement with our literacy and learning services.



⁹ Early literacy tips and tricks, <https://www.yprl.vic.gov.au/blogs/early-literacy-tips-and-tricks/>

Goal 1 - READ

Increase community literacy and learning outcomes through collections and programs that encourage reading, personal development and creativity

| | | |
|------|--|------------------------------------|
| 1.1. | Review and update the Collection Development Policy to ensure that the library collection is current, discoverable and reflects community interests and needs. [This will include assessment of processes for procurement, presentation, stock rotation, de-selection and budgeting of both physical and digital collections.] | Update 2025 Implement from 2025 |
| 1.2. | Reduce the size of the library collection so that it is consistent with the APLA/ALIA national public library standards (that is, from the current level of 3.3 collection items per capita to the industry benchmark of 1.6 items per capita, approx. 64,000 items). | By 2028 |
| 1.3. | Increase investment in and expand digital collection (e.g. Cloud Library) to accommodate ongoing growth in uptake of eBooks and eResources. | From 2025 |
| 1.4. | Enhance early years collections and programs to support language development and school readiness among young children across the Shire (with a primary focus on Rushworth and Tongala). | From 2025 |
| 1.5. | Continue to promote and facilitate adult reading for learning and pleasure through book clubs/ chats, author talks, New Release circles, conversation classes and other readers advisory activities. | From 2025 |
| 1.6. | Undertake staff development in readers advisory activities to support promotion and use of the physical and digital collections. | 2025 |





Goal 2: BELONG

"Strong commitment to social inclusion and equal access, decreasing loneliness and enabling reconnection with community."

Goal 2: BELONG

“Strong commitment to social inclusion and equal access, decreasing loneliness and enabling reconnection with community.”

Good health and wellbeing, and meaningful social connections enable us to live fulfilling lives as part of strong, flourishing communities. Strengthening the health and wellbeing of our communities is not just the responsibility of healthcare professionals and organisations. It is up to all individuals, organisations and communities. Victoria's communities and its people have proven themselves to be resilient, yet we continue to face significant health and wellbeing challenges, compounded by discrimination, disadvantage and barriers to accessing accurate health and wellbeing information and services.¹⁰

Over many years public libraries have shown that they can empower, support and connect people in our communities. Libraries are viewed by both people who use the library and those who don't as safe, trusted, accessible and welcoming of all. Libraries have caring committed staff, work in partnership with others, run programs that bring people together and build information skills and literacy, offer safe physical spaces and connect people to one another and to community providers.

The strongest theme emerging through the community consultation in development of Campaspe Libraries' Strategic Plan was a sense of belonging, pride and ownership of the library. Residents repeatedly expressed a deep sense of connection to the library and their community from being in an environment that is open, accepting, non-judgmental and deliberately sets out to provide people with opportunities to share spaces, stories, experiences and a cup of tea.

Campaspe Libraries has a proven record of high levels of participation in its library programs (57% above the APLA/ALIA benchmark in 2023-24). In the next 5 years Campaspe Libraries will continue our commitment to being a safe welcoming and connecting community space. But as population growth, social divisions and technological advances increase the risk of exclusion of groups within our community we know we must do more. Building on what we have already achieved we will strive to create inclusive environments where all Campaspe residents feel that they can belong. In the next 5 years Campaspe Libraries will continue our commitment to being a safe welcoming and connecting community space. But as population growth, social divisions and technological advances increase the risk of exclusion of groups within our community we know we must do more. Building on what we have already achieved we will strive to be an exemplar for all regional and rural libraries in fostering social and digital inclusion, building cultural connections and creating environments where all Campaspe residents can feel that they belong.



¹⁰ Libraries for Health and Wellbeing: A strategic framework for Victorian public libraries towards 2024, <https://www.plv.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/LFHAWB-vFIN2-print.pdf>.

Goal 2 - BELONG

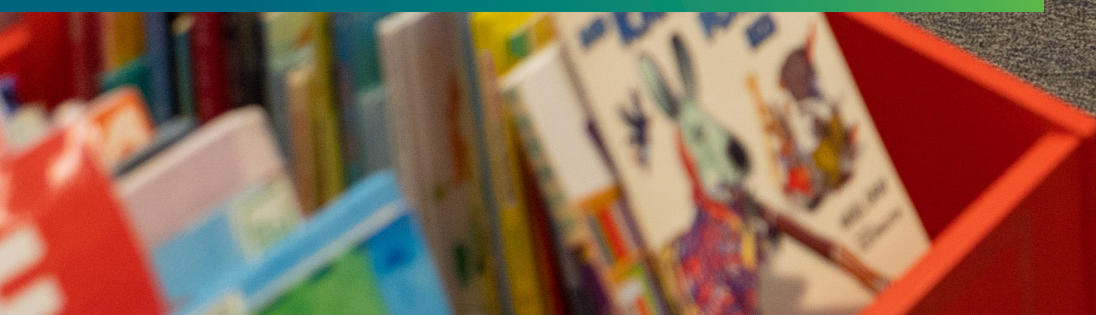
Increase community connections by providing library activities and services which enhance social and digital inclusion, wellbeing and cultural engagement

| | | |
|-------------|---|-----------|
| 2.1. | <p>Develop and deliver a comprehensive industry-leading program of library activities for older residents (60+ years) that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Facilitates lifelong learning, social and digital inclusion, and cultural enrichment b) Leverages the library service's knowledge and resources and the expertise of our Council and community partners c) Is an exemplar for regional and rural libraries in fostering a strong sense of community belonging. | From 2025 |
| 2.2 | <p>Increase the engagement of young people (aged 12 to 25 years) with library collections, programs and spaces (e.g. study clubs, writing and art competitions, gaming, evening and weekend activities) through active partnerships with local schools, Youth Services Network, TAFE and local learning and employment agencies.</p> | From 2025 |
| 2.3. | <p>Support digital inclusion across the Campaspe community by identifying funding opportunities to provide resources to provide digital literacy support.</p> | From 2025 |
| 2.4. | <p>Develop a case for and recruit a Social Worker to work across the library network and with partner organisations to strengthen community relationships and Council's wellbeing and social cohesion outcomes.</p> | From 2025 |
| 2.5. | <p>Work closely with Council's broader Communities Directorate and other community partners to celebrate Campaspe's past, current and emerging stories and local identity.</p> | From 2025 |
| 2.6. | <p>Support development and implementation of Council's Reconciliation Action Plan.</p> | From 2025 |



Goal 3: ACCESS

"Give me the door key in case I run out of books and they are closed."



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"Give me the door key in case I run out of books and they are closed."

Public libraries continue to evolve in response to changing community needs and expectations, advances in technology and opportunities to deliver more convenient and efficient library services to local communities. Thousands of eBooks can be downloaded to your own device and now represent 25-30% of all library borrowing. Library spaces accommodate both quiet study and active learning, and you don't need to 'Shush' in the video-gaming area. Makerspaces, podcasting and digital recording studios facilitate creative expression. Vending machines and lockers in prime community locations make it easier to collect the books you want when you want them. And most significantly, open libraries optimise use of previously under-utilised community facilities by providing safe and secure access to collections and facilities during unstaffed hours.

Library closures during the COVID pandemic highlighted the deep connection many people have with their local libraries, both as a source of resources and a place where they can be around and engage with other library users and staff. This experience accelerated the trial and deployment of new service models that seek (within available funding) to provide as many people as possible with access to library collections and services at a time and in a place that is convenient to them.

Campaspe Libraries already has a multi-dimensional service network, including branches, library depots, a Home Delivery Service, outreach activities and online access to eBooks and other eResources. In 2024 Rushworth opened a new purpose-built library, Rochester Library was upgraded and expanded following recent floods, and Echuca Library remains one of Victoria's most appealing and well-designed public libraries. But the community survey found that people wanted more access to their library, especially those who work and cannot access the library during current opening hours.

In the next 5 years Campaspe Libraries will, given forecast population growth and the dispersal of the population across the Shire, explore new ways to provide library facilities and service points that increase community access to library collections, programs and spaces. Our libraries will be more engaging, more flexible for community use and more appealing to new library users. There will be changes in when, where and how some people connect with the library – onsite, online or in the community – not that change is anything new as the libraries of today are already much different to the libraries of 10 years ago. Our aim will be to ensure that by 2030 every Campaspe resident who wants to can readily access the high-quality library services and spaces for which we are renowned.



| Goal 3 - ACCESS | | Increase community access to the library through innovative service models and appealing library spaces |
|-----------------|--|---|
| 3.1. | Transform the current layout of the Kyabram Library to create more inviting and engaging user zones (e.g. quiet study, children, youth, casual reading, meeting/activity room, local history). | 2025 |
| 3.2. | Develop a business case for replacement of the Kyabram Library by 2030 with the long-term vision of developing a contemporary library space within a vibrant purpose-built community hub. | From 2026 |
| 3.3. | Review viability of current model for Tongala Library and develop more efficient model for service delivery. | From 2026 |
| 3.4. | Review current operation of library depots and use of alternative service models at all locations to optimise service utilisation and efficiency. | July 2025 |
| 3.5. | Continue to explore and provide outreach opportunities for residents who are unable to independently access onsite library services. | From 2025 |
| 3.6. | Develop a business case for purchase of a small library van for use in outreach activities across the Shire. | 2026 |
| 3.7. | Review library service agreement with Murray River Council. | 2028 |



A group of young children are participating in an activity, wearing white lab coats and 3D glasses. One child in the foreground is wearing large headphones. They are holding colorful sticks, possibly for a science experiment or craft project. The background shows other children and adults, suggesting a library or classroom setting.

Goal 4: GROW

*"Our library is a place of safety,
relaxation, knowledge, and a place
you know you'll be welcomed."*

Goal 4: GROW

"Our library is a place of safety, relaxation, knowledge, and a place you know you'll be welcomed."

Public libraries have the capacity to change people's lives. For some this comes through support for literacy and lifelong learning, bridging the digital divide, or facilitating access to employment opportunities and work skills. For others the library is a place to belong and connect, a place that is socially and culturally inclusive, sanctuary, or an outlet for individual and community creativity.

It is estimated that as many as 40% of Victorians visit or use their local library in any year, which makes libraries one of the most well-attended civic or cultural institutions.¹¹ And the most common reason for people not using public libraries is not that they do not need them or can access reading material elsewhere, it is that people do not know what a modern library has to offer. The best way for the library to increase the positive impact it has on the community and Council's return on investment is to reach out to, inform and engage people whose last experience of a library might have been when they were at school.

Both Council and library surveys rate Campaspe Library very highly, with library users in 2024 giving it a 9.1 out of 10. This deep regard comes from the mix of friendly knowledgeable staff, relevant collections and programs, and appealing accessible spaces. The library is seen as a safe place that welcomes people from all walks of life and is a hub for community activities and connections. However, the pride and affection that Campaspe residents have for their library should not be taken for granted. It will only exist if the library remains relevant to community interests and needs.

In the next 5 years Campaspe Libraries will seek to increase library use in terms of visits, loans and program participation. It will continue to work closely with Council and community partners to identify and attract people who are not currently library users – especially families, young people and people moving into the Shire. It will also strive to provide a solid foundation for future provision of contemporary library services by building the strategic and operational capacity of our staff – especially in terms of community engagement, outreach, programming and collections management.



Goal 4 - GROW

Increase community impact by reaching out to new audiences, partnering and building a sustainable library network

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|------|---|-------------------------------------|
| 4.1. | Establish a Programs and Engagement position to develop and implement a Community Engagement Plan to ensure widespread community awareness and use of Campaspe Libraries. | Submit 2025 Implement from 2025 |
| 4.2. | Encourage and activate greater levels of library use across the entire network through deployment of successful programs/models used at Echuca Library, and advocacy of library 'champions' drawn from the current user base. | From 2025 |
| 4.3. | Continue Community Outreach Coordinator support for: i) social connections, health and wellbeing and disability support; ii) Books on Wheels, Words on Wheels; and iii) volunteer recruitment and support. | From 2025 |
| 4.4. | Strengthen and expand partnerships with Council, community and commercial organisations that broaden the library offering, reach and impact. | From 2025 |
| 4.5. | Develop and implement a library workforce Sustainability and Succession Plan. | Develop 2025 Implement from 2026 |

Implementation and Evaluation

The actions listed in this Plan are presented against four Strategic Goals. Where applicable, more detailed actions will be documented each year in Campaspe Library Service's annual business plans. Regular monitoring and evaluation will track progress toward achievement of the stated Goals.

Key performance indicators

- Library membership (as % of the Shire of Campaspe population and Moama population)
- Library visits per capita
- Loans per capita
- Program participation per capita
- Collection turnover (loans per borrowable item)
- Customer satisfaction rating
- % of library users who report impactful outcomes (in terms of literacy development, lifelong learning, personal development and wellbeing, social inclusion, digital inclusion, creative outlet, education and employment pathways, etc.)
- % of library users who report a high degree of pride in their library service (especially families, young people and older persons)
- Number of productive local partnerships with businesses, education or community organisations
- External and internal partner feedback and anecdotal evidence of impact on community outcomes (notably access and inclusion).



