

The changing face of public libraries

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The City of Joondalup was identified in 1970 as the future heart of the North West Corridor of the Perth metropolitan area. In 1997, the City centre comprises four tertiary colleges catering to 25 000 students; a large commercial centre, business district and industrial area with a workforce expected to reach 40 000 people; residential accommodation for over 2500 people; a major hospital; and the centre of local government for the Wanneroo region.

The Joondalup Public Library was developed as part of a twenty-year plan for an integrated, efficient and harmonious civic and cultural complex that will ultimately comprise council administration, as well as a regional library, youth centre, museum, art gallery and performing arts venue. Stage one of the project involved the construction of a regional public library and expanded civic facilities.

When planning the library service consideration was given to the future direction of library services; a need to restructure the Libraries Department, now comprising eight branch libraries; a need to upgrade the library computer system; a need to develop the Local Studies Collection; and a need for expanded information systems.

The library is required to provide full public library services to a residential population of over 35 000 people; regional public library services to the City of Wanneroo Local Government Area, currently over 200 000 people; lending and information services to the City Centre workforce; centralised ad-

ministration and support services; access to current information services in line with community expectations; and a well-developed information and research service to Council.

The library is built over three levels with a total area of 3800 square metres. The basement level contains the reference and local studies sections, covering 950 square metres which incorporate:

- an extensive collection of monographs, journals, national and international newspapers, and Council's corporate collections;
- five dedicated Internet public access terminals, including one seventeen inch monitor with large type on screen for the vision impaired;
- access to a network of fourteen CD-ROM titles and OPACs;
- a group study room seating up to ten people;
- a discrete local studies area — monographs, maps, oral history interviews, videos, newspapers, photographs, journals and ephemeral material reflecting the history, culture and development of the City of Wanneroo;
- a sound proof booth for recording of interviews, or use of oral history material; and

- a climate controlled archive to house historic and fragile records.

The main lending floor of the library covers 2 0 0 0 square metres and houses over

60 000 books, journals, videos, cassettes and CD-ROMs. This floor was designed to emphasise customer service with the control desk including a reception station, loans and membership service-points, and enquiry terminals. Self serve loans are available for customers wishing to avoid queues or not requiring assistance.

Ten OPACs, including one large-print screen for the vision impaired are scattered across the lending floor, with access to children's CD-ROM titles, a small junior reference collection and an activity room provided within the children's section.

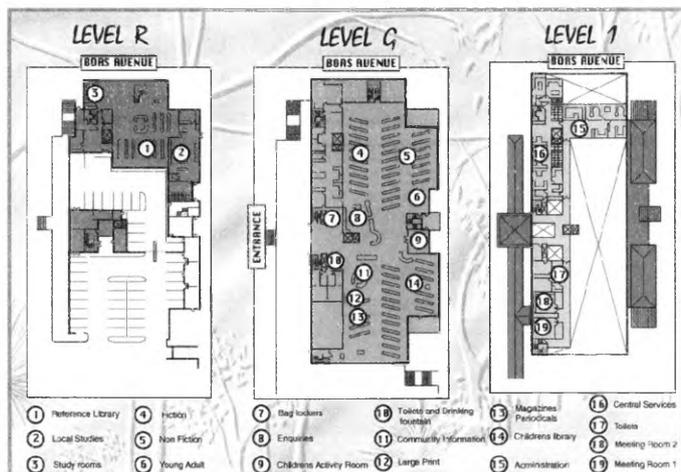
An upper mezzanine floor of approximately 800 square metres, contains a meeting room available for public hire. Administration and central services provide cataloguing, processing, graphics, financial and administrative services to all eight branch libraries.

The Joondalup Public Library is an example of the changing face of public libraries in Australia, providing a lending library for its service area, seven days a week opening, a regional library for the total Local Government Area population, centralised services for eight branch libraries and incorporating the latest in information technology as well as allowing for future developments. Customer service has been a primary focus in the planning of the building, with numerous features to assist access for people with disabilities included. Artworks have been included within the complex to symbolise the natural landscape of the region and integration within the planned Civic and Cultural Complex will be achieved.

The Library opened on Sunday 13 July to record crowds, with an estimated 10 000 people visiting in three hours, and almost 4 500 loans recorded on the first full day of operation. The immediate success of the library demonstrates the community need and appreciation for public library services. ■



The new Joondalup library



Floor plans for the new library