

BUNJIL PLACE LIBRARY INSPIRES A COMMUNITY

The new, light-filled library in Narre Warren in Melbourne's south-east inspires hundreds of new members to join.

Where can you enjoy live guitar performances, take part in workshops, play video games and read books? The new Bunjil Place Library in Melbourne's south-east, of course.

Victoria's newest public library is setting the standard for interactive and inviting spaces where the community can learn, discover and connect.

The stunning three-level library is part of the City of Casey's integrated public arts and entertainment precinct that sets a new benchmark in Australia. Expect to be blown away by the modern and light-filled space, which adopts leading-edge design principles and is home to a collection of approximately 50,000 items as well as free and fast public wi-fi.

The library is designed to inspire and engage all kinds of visitors, with its dedicated outdoor reading garden, amphitheatre, relaxed youth space and a zone for kids to be, well, kids.

During the Bunjil Place Opening Festival weekend in October last year, more than 16,000 people passed through the library doors.

Since then, the library has welcomed thousands of visitors each week, from regular library lovers to those discovering or rediscovering what a modern library has to offer, and staff report that hundreds of people have made the jump to sign up as members – 300 of those on the opening weekend!

It is expected that Bunjil Place Library will attract around 650,000 patrons in its first year – approximately double the numbers of visitors to the old Narre Warren Library that it replaced.

'We are absolutely delighted by the way visitors are responding to the new space, and the architects FJMT deserve full credit for designing a public library that makes

people feel good,' said Chris Buckingham, CEO of Casey Cardinia Libraries (CCL).

'Visitor numbers are important, but the quality of our engagement with the community is our first priority. We are actively encouraging increased membership and repeat visitation,' he said.

A great deal of planning went into the physical building at Bunjil Place, but Casey Cardinia Libraries has also invested heavily in staff development to ensure the new library is a success for staff and visitors.

Chris Buckingham said one important initiative was the development of CCL's groundbreaking Living Leadership Program – a personal development program available to all staff that encourages mindfulness, resilience and wellbeing.

He said the leadership team at CCL also made a conscious decision to increase staffing levels on the branch floor for peak periods to assist staff and optimise engagement with community, making it as easy as possible for people to join up as members.

'No doubt there have been moments when the team has been really challenged by the sheer number of people coming through the doors, but we are all still smiling. It's a privilege to be working in such a beautiful place and supporting a community that really appreciates their library,' Mr Buckingham said.

'Bunjil Place Library brings to life a vision for public libraries where learning is celebrated, knowledge is shared and the community becomes stronger.

'Contemporary public libraries have a vital role as meeting places, where people can gather safely and feel welcome. We will take lessons from the new state-of-the-art Bunjil Place Library and apply them in the other six libraries in our network.'

For more information about what's on, go to (bunjilplace.com.au) or (ccl.vic.gov.au). 

