

LIBRARIES ALIVE! PTY LTD

***TIMELINE 2016:
STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR
LIBRARY SERVICES –
STUDY & REPORT FOR
THE CITY OF ARMADALE***

**Final Report
August 2005**

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1. Recommendations

The two most significant issues Council's Library Service faces are space and customer choice. Space to house collections and host activities and provide connectivity to the digital world, and customer choice from a deeper, richer, and more rewarding selection of print and non-print items.

These recommendations support Council's intent to significantly upgrade library services over the next decade and acknowledge that resource allocation will need to be carefully planned and progressively implemented in conjunction with government agencies, private sector developers, and adjoining local government areas.

By 2016 it is expected that today's 26,000 registered customers will have grown to 42,500, the number of library visits will have increased from 250,000 per annum to 400,000 per annum, and that opening hours will need to extend by approximately 25%.

1. That Council continue planning towards a library service with 3700 square metres of floor space and 30 FTE staff positions serving a population of 85,000 by 2016.

2 (a) That Council endorse the Concept Plan's strategic development direction towards library-based community hubs in three locations, as follows:

Armadale – *Regional Centre Library* with Central Reference Library (supporting co-located education precinct) of 2200 m² by 2016 serving a population of 40,000 in the Armadale/Brookdale catchment. New premises required. Possible specialisation in library-based information technology.

Kelmscott – *District Centre Library* of 1000 m² by 2016 serving a population of 20,000 in the Kelmscott/Roleystone catchment. New or expanded premises required. Possible specialisation in services to children and young adults.

Westfield – *District Centre Library* of 2200 m² by 2016 serving a population of 25,000 in the Westfield/North Forrestdale/Seville Grove catchment. Expanded premises required. Possible specialisation in services to seniors.

2 (b) To encourage an emerging sense of community identity, Council consider changing the name and signage of the Westfield Library to the Seville Grove Library.

3. That in order to improve collection choices for library customers, Council:

remind the Library Board of WA that Council currently funds more than 85% of library service expenditure and encourage the Board to lift its very modest target of 1.25 items per capita to 1.5 items per capita by 2010, and thereafter to a per capita rate more closely comparable to the level of provision elsewhere in Australia, and

formally request the Library Board of WA to adopt the principle of replacing collections over a seven-year period, thereby depreciating them at a rate of 15% per annum.

4. That as soon as practicable Council provide the necessary resources to vary library opening hours as follows:

Armadale: open 9am to 8pm Monday to Friday
open 9am to 12 noon Saturday
open Saturday afternoon and Sunday on re-location

Kelmscott: open 9am to 6 pm Monday to Friday
open 9am to 12 noon Saturday

Westfield: open 9am to 6pm Monday to Friday
open 9am to 12 noon Saturday

5. That in order to lift the profile of the Library's digital services the current Web site be re-created and refreshed as an independent Web site distinct from the Council Web site, and the Library be authorised and supported to expedite the digitisation of local studies and heritage material.

6. That the computer systems used by the Library be fully supported for the hours of their scheduled availability.

7. That in conjunction with a renewed emphasis on digital services a technology update training plan be developed by the Library's senior staff group, funded by Council, and delivered to all staff.

8. That the Manager Libraries & Heritage develop a staged implementation plan to manage the timing and ensure achievement of the objectives embodied in these recommendations.

2. Introduction and purpose of this document

The best library services respond to the needs and aspirations of the communities they serve, providing spaces and places for recreation, information and life-long learning that bring people together and encourage social cohesion and economic development¹. Libraries enrich lives for those who use them, and for the children of those who do not.

Storytime at the local library might be the only break a new mum gets all day. Seeking assistance in selecting an audio or large print book might be one of very few significant personal interactions an isolated elderly widow has in her day. Searching the jobs vacant columns of the local newspaper then writing an application on the library's word processor and emailing it to a prospective employer might mean the difference between despair and hope for a young person or a person recently retrenched. Attending a foreign language class, or an author talk, or a writers' group, or an introductory course on the Internet, all provide opportunities for learning and social interaction, build community resilience, counter social fragmentation, and help to grow the local economic base.

Using the library as a place to complete homework before going home to noisy younger brothers and sisters can tip the balance between struggling and succeeding at school. Working through Web-based lessons, finding out about legal rights and responsibilities, searching for Census statistics, understanding the signs of alcohol and drug dependence or depression, or simply reading contemporary fiction for pleasure – libraries help with all this. Finding out about a new trip to take, garment to make, cake to bake, or even tablet to take, can wake the intellect and make the difference between engagement and the visual Valium so often proffered by TV. Be all you can be: read. Certainly. Libraries re-create lives.

Libraries also encourage economic, specifically retail, activity. Since most trips to libraries involve parallel, complementary activities – like shopping, eating, chauffeuring children or seniors, or visiting the doctor, spending money is usually involved.

And with their extended opening hours and distributed locations, libraries are great outlets for Council services.

¹ There is now a considerable literature on the economic value of public libraries. For example, a recent Florida study found that public libraries return \$6.54 for every \$1.00 invested, and the State Library of Victoria, earlier this year, asked customers to quantify the monetary value of services and resources (up to \$30/book loan and \$7 for a DVD loan). References relating to the value of library services appear in red in the List of Sources.

What sort of library service should Armadale have?

What sort does Armadale want?

This Final Report presents the main options. It builds on the earlier Interim Report and Draft Concept Plan's coverage of library service delivery options, background research, calculation of floor space requirements, statistical comparison with other WA urban fringe public libraries, customer feedback, and analysis of current and projected demographic profiles, and adds material on opening hours, staffing, performance measures and technology.

3. Scope of work

On 12 April 2005 Libraries Alive!, a specialist library consulting company, was appointed by the City of Armadale to undertake a *Strategic Directions for Library Services Study and Report*. The overall requirement was 'to develop a strategic direction framework for the Armadale Library Service for a ten (10) year period commencing 2005/06'.

Council's briefing document specified the following tasks:

- Analyse the library needs of the community
- Research key aspects of the current profile of the community, with emphasis on characteristics that may affect the demand for library facilities, i.e.
 - a description of the demographic, economic and social characteristics of the population, including disability issues within the region
 - an analysis of population trends
 - projections of population size and age structure
 - access to transport
 - IT availability in the home
- Identify current and likely future trends of public library services in WA, Australia and internationally
- Produce an Interim Report outlining the methodology used and a summary of data collected
- Formulate a Concept Plan for the future of the City of Armadale Library Service inclusive of recommendations on:
 - optimum number and size of branch libraries
 - location of branch libraries and possible integration with other services
 - options for mobile library service
 - opening hours
 - staffing levels
 - service requirements
 - IT requirements and online service provision.

With 31 July 2005 given as the completion date, work began immediately. From 18 to 20 April the principal consultant, Ian McCallum, travelled to Armadale to meet with the Project Management Group, Library staff and key stakeholders including Ray Tame, CEO of the City of Armadale, Carl Askew, Executive Director Community Services, City of Armadale, Ian Macrae, Executive Director Development Services, City of Armadale, John Ellis, Executive Director Armadale Redevelopment Authority (ARA) and (by phone and later in person) Marion Thompson from the Urban Planning company.

Accompanied by Patricia Walker, Manager Libraries & Heritage, Ian also visited all library branches and the sites of current and proposed development projects.

Substantial quantities of background documentation were collected on this trip, and these items were read (and listed below) as part of the familiarisation phase of the assignment.

Next, an Interim Report presenting preliminary findings² was produced and between 7th and 10th June its contents were discussed with Elected Members, Council Officials, Library staff and Marion Thompson (acting for the ARA). The Report received broad endorsement from all stakeholders and was generally considered to be a suitable basis for developing the Draft Concept Plan³.

The Draft Concept Plan was presented and discussed at a Council Workshop held on 14 July. Council confirmed the strategic directions outlined and instructed the consultant to proceed to this Final Report.

4. How much floor space will be needed in 2016?

Space is the first of two major issues (the other is choice: the quality of the Library's collection). Floor space is needed for library activity programmes, providing face-to-face customer service, housing collections and computers, hosting exhibitions, holding community meetings, and for supporting staff activities.

Building construction, lease/rental and maintenance costs are major expenditure and scheduling issues for all Local Government Authorities (LGAs) operating their own library services. So we look at space requirements, actual and projected, first.

At present:

Armadale:	407 m ²
Kelmscott:	500 m ²
Westfield:	625 m ² (including community room)

² Included as Appendix 1.

³ A summary is included as Appendix 3.

The 2001 Census reports a population of 50,108.⁴ Our planning horizon is ten years out – 2016, by which time the population of the City of Armadale is expected to grow to 85,250 with most of the increase coming from the three designated growth areas of Seville, Brookdale and North Forrestdale,⁵ plus higher density residential developments around Armadale and Kelmscott town centres.⁶

Using the most recent guidelines for calculating library floor space,⁷ we can answer two fundamental questions:

1. What floor space should the Library Service occupy today (for a population of 50,108)?
2. What floor space should the Library Service occupy in 2016 (for a projected population of 85,250)?

First, today. Here we assume a central library (Armadale) serving 20,000 people, and two branch libraries, Kelmscott and Westfield, each serving 15,000 people.

The guidelines recommend a gross floor area of 1314 m² for the central library, and 756 m² for each of the two branch libraries, making a total gross floor area of 2826 m². Gross floor area currently available is 1532 m², or 54% of the benchmark.

Next, tomorrow. Perth's fringe LGAs of Wanneroo (up 5.2%), Swan (up 3.0%) and Rockingham (up 3.2%) have experienced substantial population growth at a time when Armadale's population has been static (0%).⁸ This is about to change. Council's population estimates predict 85,250 people in Armadale in 2016. How will they be distributed across the LGA?

⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics. 505250210 *Armadale (C) Statistical Local Area*, November 2002.

⁵ City of Armadale. Development Services Directorate. *Community Facilities Planning and Population Estimates 2001–2021*, January 2005.

⁶ Armadale Redevelopment Authority. *Concept Plan 2004*.

⁷ State Library of NSW. *People Places: a guide for public library buildings in NSW*, Library Council of NSW, 2000.

⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics. *Regional Population Growth: Australia and New Zealand, 2002–03*. March 2004. Catalogue No. 3218.0. Pp.4, 41–3. Covers the period 1998–2003.

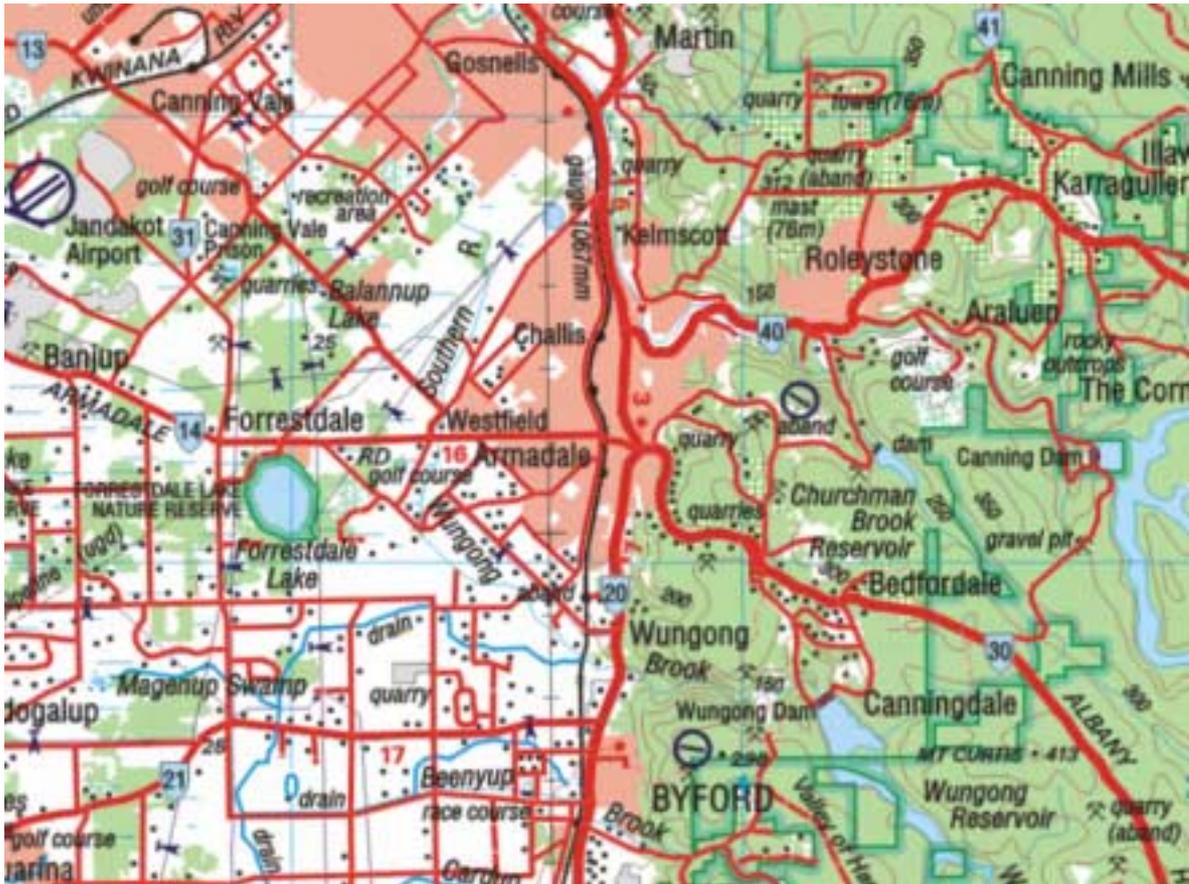


Figure 1. Map, centred on Armadale, shows approx 20 km north–south and 25 km east–west.

Source: *NATMAP Raster Premium. 1:250 000 scale topographic maps of Australia.* (Geoscience Australia, 2005 release DVD)

Population growth is more likely to take place north, south and west of Armadale, than to the east, i.e. in the areas co-ordinated by the ARA, and in the areas where Armadale Council is releasing new lots.

We therefore consider it reasonable to assume the current three service points will remain appropriately sited for three sectors:

1. In the south, the Armadale City Centre/Strategic Regional Centre, located in the ARA's proposed educational precinct adjacent to the railway station, with Brookdale in its catchment, covers approximately 40,000 people (plus an unknown number of commuters who travel to Armadale to work or school each day)
2. In the north and to the east of the Albany Highway, Kelmscott Library, located adjacent to the railway station also in the area controlled by the ARA, covers approximately 20,000 people, and
3. In the west, Westfield Library serves its current catchment, plus the developing North Forrestdale area, covering approximately 25,000 people.

What then are the space requirements for the 2016 library service?

Based on a projected population of 85,000, distributed in the proportions described above, the guidelines recommend a gross floor area of 2154 m² for Armadale Library, 1008 m² for Kelmscott Library, and 1170 m² for Westfield Library.

We can summarise these space calculations in a table:

Library	Today (actual)	Today (guidelines)	2016 (guidelines)
Armadale	407	1314	2154
Kelmscott	500	756	1008
Westfield	625	756	1170
TOTAL:	1532	2826	4332

Table 1. Library floor space, actual and recommended (m²)

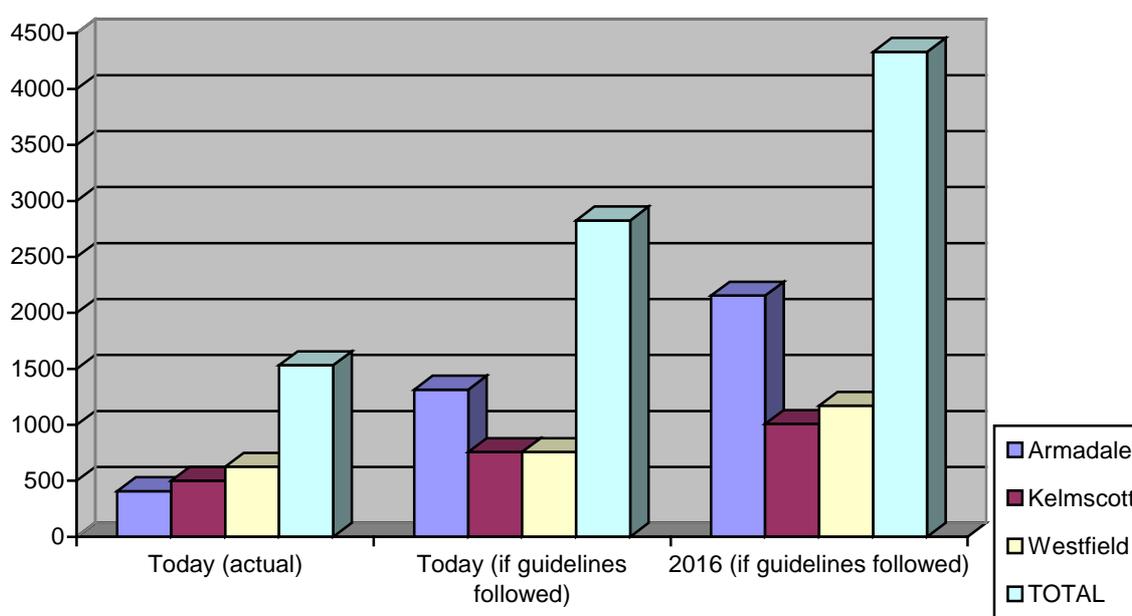


Figure 2. Library floor space, actual and recommended (m²)

We have observed above that actual floor space is 54% of recommended floor space. The difference between the actual floor space for 50,000 people and the recommended floor space for 85,000 people is 2800 m².

Assuming that the Westfield Library building can be refurbished and extended to 1170 m², and that new buildings compatible with the ARA's plans are constructed at Armadale (2154 m²) and Kelmscott (1008 m²) at a cost of approximately \$2,000 to \$3,000 per square metre for an additional 3707 square metres, then a capital outlay in the range \$7.4 to

\$11.1m (at today's prices) will be required to bring the provision of physical facilities up to the 2016 guidelines – **if Council incurs the building costs**. Obviously, development partners are highly desirable.

5. Comparisons with similar WA public libraries

In compiling its public library statistical bulletins, the State Library of WA uses the Australian Classification of Local Government⁹ to group similar LGAs. Armadale is classed as 'urban fringe medium' and grouped with Cockburn, Kalamunda, Mundaring, Rockingham and Wanneroo. Table 2 compares the different library services from the figures they reported to the State Library for the 2003/04 year¹⁰.

Please note that figures for library visits are comprehensively reported by Armadale and Cockburn City Councils, partially reported by Rockingham and Wanneroo City Councils, and not reported at all by Kalamunda and Mundaring Shire Councils. Fortunately, all Councils report library membership figures, and where we have both members and visits we have calculated the ratio between the two.

As a multiple of members, visits range between 3 and 12 times across all six LGAs, i.e. where we have figures for both members and visits, visits are in the range of 3 to 12 times the number of members. We have selected the multiple 8 (close to both mean and median), as a reasonable approximation for deriving visits from member numbers, where no visits figure has been reported. For example, Safety Bay with 13,427 members has not reported visits, so we have multiplied members by 8 to derive 107,416 visits. Because they were known independently, we have also included visits for Success Library in Cockburn even though it has yet to appear in the State Library statistics. For Yanchep and Clarkson in Wanneroo, neither members nor visits are available, so we have estimated 5,886 members (the average of the other three branches in the LGA) at each branch.

Items per capita is the number of items divided by the LGA population.

Turnover is the number of loans divided by the number of items.

Visits per capita is the number of visits divided by the LGA population.

⁹ The Australian Classification of Local Government (ACLG) categorises local governments according to population size and location. The first level of classification divides local governments into 'Urban' or 'Rural'. Urban local governments are further subdivided into 'capital city', 'metropolitan developed', 'regional town/city', or 'fringe'. Rural local governments are subdivided on the basis of 'significant growth' or 'remote'. The final subdivision is by population.

¹⁰ State Library of Western Australia. *Statistical Bulletin Comparison Tables for Financial Year 2003/2004*.

LGA	Pop	Exp per cap	% LGA outlays	% residents members	Items	Items per cap	Loans	Turnover	Visits	Visits per cap
Armadale CC	57,632	\$25.11	4.46	49	87,024	1.5	521,471	5.99	278,656	4.84
Cockburn CC	77,485	\$35.54	5.24	46	82,909	1.1	467,280	5.64	267,819	3.46
Kalamunda SC	51,109	\$23.24	5.28	54	133,394	2.6	423,041	3.17	225,304	4.41
Mundaring SC	37,066	\$16.24	2.65	38	65,236	1.8	291,275	4.46	115,656	3.12
Rockingham CC	79,889	\$18.07	n/a	59	178,152	2.2	543,789	3.05	376,539	4.71
Wanneroo CC	95,143	n/a	n/a	17	90,386	0.9	602,022	6.66	235,427	2.47

Table 2. Statistical comparison: urban fringe medium public libraries

What does this table tell us?

1. First of all, it says that relative to the other library services in the 'urban fringe medium' category, Armadale is performing quite well.
2. Although per capita expenditure is significantly lower (by \$10/head) than Cockburn, it is higher than all other (known) LGAs. By comparison the average per capita expenditure for all NSW public libraries is \$37.26, and for all Victorian public libraries \$26.84.
3. The number of items per capita is lower than three of the other five libraries, and lower than the average of 1.7. Nevertheless, it is higher than the Library Board of WA's 'standard' of 1.25.
4. The turnover figure (loans divided by items) is higher than the other LGAs – except for Wanneroo. This indicates that Armadale's customers are finding what they want – that the collection is relevant to their requirements. This is borne out by the questionnaire results analysed below.

5. The number of visits per capita is the highest of all LGAs, indicating that Armadale's libraries are seen as convenient, pleasant places to visit either for activities or use of collections and computers.
6. In summary, the table says that Armadale's library service is not broken, and that relative to its peers, already delivers a set of services appropriate as the basis for future planning.

6. Customer survey findings

What do Armadale’s customers think of their library service?

In May 2005 Library customers at each branch were encouraged to complete a short questionnaire (attached as Appendix 2), either in hard copy or as an electronic form on the Library’s Web site. The response was excellent – both in terms of numbers received and in expressed approval of the Library’s services.

The two key questions: ‘Do you usually get what you come for when you visit the library?’ and ‘Do the library staff treat you the way you want to be treated?’ produced the following results:

Branch	No of responses	Get what you came for YES #	Get what you came for YES %	Treated right YES #	Treated right YES %
Armadale	145	128	88	143	99
Kelmscott	190	176	93	188	99
Westfield	116	111	96	115	99

Table 3. Respondents’ satisfaction

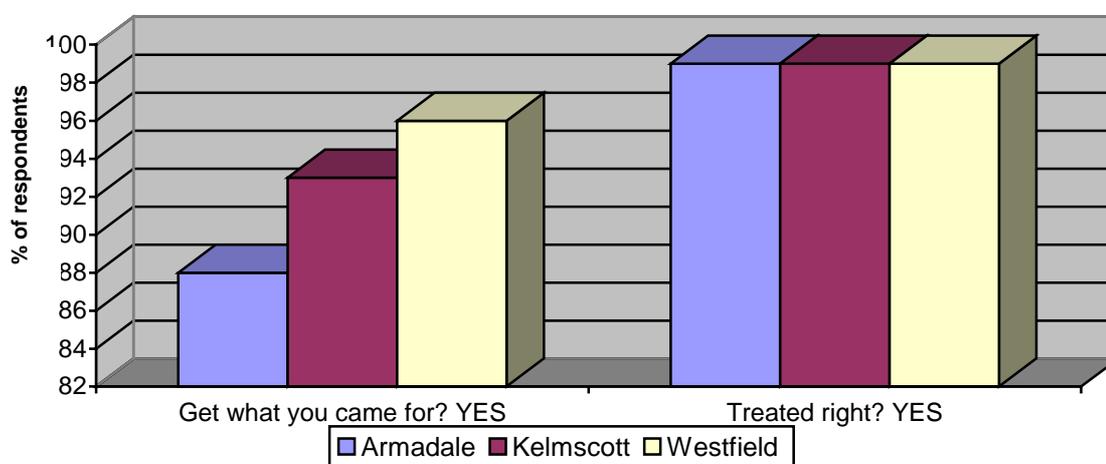


Figure 3. Respondents' satisfaction with library service

Comments

1. Armadale

Virtually all respondents (99%) visiting this branch felt that they were treated the way they wanted to be treated.

Of the people who did not get what they came for, most of them mentioned lack of choice in a dated collection, too few DVDs and large print items, and insufficient new books – especially latest releases.

2. Kelmscott

Only two people said they were not treated the way they wanted to be treated, one commenting that there were not enough staff, and that a self-checker was needed, and the other (proudly aged 80+), thought that tea and biscuits should be provided 'whilst perusing'!

Fourteen people did not get what they came for and mentioned lack of choice, dated collection, not enough new books, delays in ordering, and shortage of large print materials.

3. Westfield

With the exception of a single respondent who chose not to answer the question on the grounds that he/she used the library only for the reading group and the writing group, **all** of Westfield's customers said they were treated the way they wanted to be treated.

Five people did not get what they came for, and mentioned shortage of new books, limited collection choices – and no tea and coffee facilities.

Customers' written comments

Of the 18 questions on the questionnaire, all but two (on Internet access at home and age group) provided space for respondents to comment, and most did, providing valuable qualitative information. Making a written comment is a more time-consuming, considered activity than simply ticking a box, so we need to carefully consider the messages sent by the Library's customers.

Armadale

From the completed questionnaires collected at the Armadale Library we have broadly classified 189 written comments; most related to the collection and to current service levels. We have included unascribed quotations to illustrate the points made.

Customer satisfaction

38 out of 189 respondents (20%) expressed their appreciation and gratitude for the library service and for the library 'space'. Some comments were quite personal and indicated the social value¹¹ placed on the existence of the service:

¹¹ We have already noted the increasing number of public library studies focusing on economic value. These include the 2004 study by the State Library and

'Please never leave this beautiful location. I always feel privileged and uplifted visiting here.'

'Keep up the good work. Libraries are great – a real sanity saver, gives me access to materials I couldn't afford to buy.'

'There are many in the older age group who do not watch TV so much (rubbish programmes). Books are a necessary relaxation.'

Many people took the opportunity to express their thanks to library staff:

'Its always service with a smile and nothing is too much trouble for the staff.'

'Nice place to visit, helpful staff, go out of their way to help.'

'Coming to the library is a pleasurable experience!'

'Keep up the good work!'

'You are doing a splendid job. Thank you.'

'Fantastic service. Don't know what we'd do without it. Great for families with limited income to spend on entertainment!'

'I'm happy with this service.'

'I appreciate these facilities as they are.'

'I love your service, your library and I love the feel of the building. Many new libraries do not feel welcoming!'

'Thank you for being here.'

'All's fine!'

Customer choices and suggestions

Most suggestions for improvement centred on the collection:

More new books, latest releases, popular novels – 28 comments

Greater choice from a larger collection – 20 comments

'If I were a new user, then yes [in answer to the question Plenty of choice?], but I often leave with nothing to take home.'

'Have used library for 18 months since arriving from Victoria – now finding limited choice.'

Archives of Florida which showed a return of US\$6.54 for each \$1 invested in the library service (<http://dlis.dos.state.fl.us/bld/roi/index.cfm>) and a 2005 South Carolina research project which found a US\$4.48 return to the state's economy for each \$1 invested in public libraries (<http://www.libsci.sc.edu/SCEIS/home.htm>)

Collection dated or read out – 9 comments

'I have been a library user for over thirty years and during that time I have come across the same old books.'

'I like medical who-dunnits, and I think I have read your entire stock of them.'

More new videos, CDs, DVDs – 27 comments

More fiction by specified authors and genres – 5 comments

More specialised non-fiction including language materials – 14 comments

More large print – 11 comments

More audio books – 5 comments

In summary, 119 of the 189 comments (63%) related to collection shortcomings.

Of the remaining comments, difficulty in parking (18 mentions) headed the list, followed by the need for more space (8), and more staff (5).

Digital literacy may also be an issue for people who think the chance to learn computer skills has passed them by:

'I am embarrassed in not able to know anything about computers. The staff seem too busy to ask if you want to learn. There does not appear to be any classes for slow learning seniors.'

Kelmscott

Customer satisfaction

From the completed questionnaires collected at Kelmscott Library we looked at 245 written comments. As for Armadale, most people who commented mentioned helpful and friendly staff. Comments expressing appreciation for the service were also frequent – 35, or 14%

'I feel so privileged to have access to a library at all. Love them.'

'The staff deserve pay rises, they are easy to go up to and if they need to attend to others, they will still find time to come up and see if you found what you needed.'

'I have used Armadale Library Services since 1969 and have nothing but praise for all library staff I have met. Whoever engages library staff must be congratulated on their ability to select such suitable persons.'

'Provides a great centre of information for the community.'

'The Library Service as it stands is the most valuable gift of the local authority of all services it offers the public.'

Customer choices and suggestions

Once again, the collection took a battering.

Greater choice from a larger collection – 33 comments.

More new books, latest releases, popular novels – 31 comments.

‘It would be nice if the library could get in lots more new books.’

‘Council should provide more money to buy new books.’

‘Due to your budget restraints, poor choice of new books and long waiting times to borrow.’

More non-fiction including junior non-fiction and foreign language materials – 24 comments.

More new videos, CDs, DVDs – 21 comments

Collection dated and/or read out – 10 comments

More large print – 9 comments

More fiction – 6 comments

More audio books – 4 comments

In summary, 138 of the 245 comments (56%) related to collection shortcomings.

Kelmscott also had its own issues: 12% (29) of comments complained about the parking situation, and 11% (26) complained about lack of space and cramped layout inside the library.

‘I am a regular user for last 15–20 years. Would like to see library in a larger space with some meeting rooms for groups, have a small theatre, presentation area.’

‘It would be nice to have a purpose built library in the area with more space and privacy to have a quiet read.’

‘To make it clearer to find books. I spend 75% of my time doing this.’

Six people wanted a coffee shop, 6 people wanted a return chute or drive-through for returns, 4 people complained about fines, and one person suggested a self-checker to relieve queues at checkout.

Westfield

Customer satisfaction

From questionnaires collected at the Westfield Library we analysed 136 written comments. 36 or 26% either praised the library service or expressed gratitude for its existence. Once again, most people who took the trouble to provide comments, other than tick yes/no boxes, were complimentary about the library staff's attitude and helpfulness.

'What a wonderful service! I am most grateful.'

'I LOVE Westfield Library!!'

'Please pass on my congratulations to the staff for their friendly and helpful manner.'

'Keep up the good work – information, books, etc, are vital to the human mind and spirit!'

'Caters for information we wouldn't otherwise get.'

'I've used the library system for 39 years since my arrival in Australia and it is my favourite service.'

Customer choices and suggestions

As we found with comments collected at Armadale and Kelmscott, there are issues with the adequacy of the collection:

More new videos, CDs, DVDs – 18 comments

Greater choice from a larger collection – 16 comments

More new books/latest releases – 12 comments

Collection dated and/or readout – 10 comments

More large print – 7 comments

More adult fiction – 6 comments

More non-fiction – 5 comments

More audio books – 3 comments

Overall, 77 of the 136 comments (57%) related to improving the collection.

There were other issues as well, one of them unique to Westfield. Nine people commented on the inconvenience of Wednesday closing – and several seniors expressed their appreciation of Wednesday opening just for them! Three people wanted an after-hours return chute, 3 people

wanted more computers – especially for the period 3–5 pm when school students ‘swarm’, and 5 people thought a coffee shop would be a good idea.

‘Would love coffee shop.’

In answer to the questions on Internet access at home and use of the Library’s Web site:

‘I’m too scared because I don’t know about computers and Internet stuff.’

‘Would there, in the future, be classes for the computer illiterates?’

There is a digital literacy thread here which we shall keep in mind as the strategic plan evolves.

Further analysis

In this section we focus on a sub-set of the written comments – those remaining when we exclude the general comments on staff and overall service. We look at percentages rather than actual numbers in order to derive a relative ranking in importance by library.

Issue	Armadale % (n=151)	Kelmscott % (n=210)	Westfield % (n=100)
Concerning the collection			
Need more new books	19	15	12
Need greater collection choice	13	16	16
Collection dated/read out	6	5	10
Need more videos, CDs, DVDs	18	10	18
Need more non-fiction	9	11	5
Need more fiction	3	3	6
Need more large print	7	4	7
Need more audio books	3	2	3
Total for collection	78	66	77
Other issues			
Inadequate parking	12	14	
Need more space	5	12	
Need more staff	3	1	
Need after hours return	1	3	3
Would like coffee shop		3	5
Open on Wednesday			12
Need more computers			3

Table 4. Customers’ written comments by Library

Comments

Whilst there are several library-specific issues – parking at Armadale and Kelmscott, space at Kelmscott, opening on Wednesday at Westfield – comments on the Library's collections are common across all three libraries. Unfortunately, the resolution of this issue depends largely on the responsiveness of the State Library, and it may well be that their minimum standard of 1.25 items per capita and 12.5% per annum stock replacement rate¹² will fall well short of the developing expectations of Armadale's citizens through to 2016.

Nor it seems will customers' choices be broadened through increasing the velocity of stock circulation. The State Library's own review of the Exchange Program acknowledges that the 'pool' numbers only 30,000 items, and that the quality of available items and the efficiency of exchange procedures both need to be improved.¹³

Internet access from home

59% (82) of Armadale respondents, 61% (111) of Kelmscott respondents, and 40% (45) of Westfield respondents reported access to the Internet at home. This is a very interesting finding – especially the low figure for Westfield. In 2003 the WA State average for proportion of households with access to the Internet was 53%¹⁴ (up from 15% in 1998), and it seems the take-up rate is continuing to grow. In terms of strategic directions and equity of access, it is already clear that the Internet will be a major access channel – possibly *the* major access channel - to most library services. Training programmes may need to be run from the Westfield Library.

Who are the customers?

The table below sets out respondent age range by branch.

Branch	0–14	%	15–24	%	25–44	%	45–64	%	65+	%	Total
Armadale	2	1	9	7	32	23	44	32	51	37	138
Kelmscott	8	4	11	6	44	24	71	39	49	27	183
Westfield	1	1	3	3	24	21	30	26	55	49	113

Table 5. Branch demographics

¹² WA Local Government Association & WA Department of Culture and the Arts. *Framework Agreement between State and Local Government for the provision of Public Library Services in Western Australia*. December 2004. p. 5.

¹³ WA Department of Culture and the Arts. *Exchange Program Final Report & Change Implementation Plan*, November 2003. pp.1-2.

¹⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics. *Measures of a knowledge-based economy and society. Proportion of households with access to the Internet by type of household, state or territory and broad region*. March 2005.

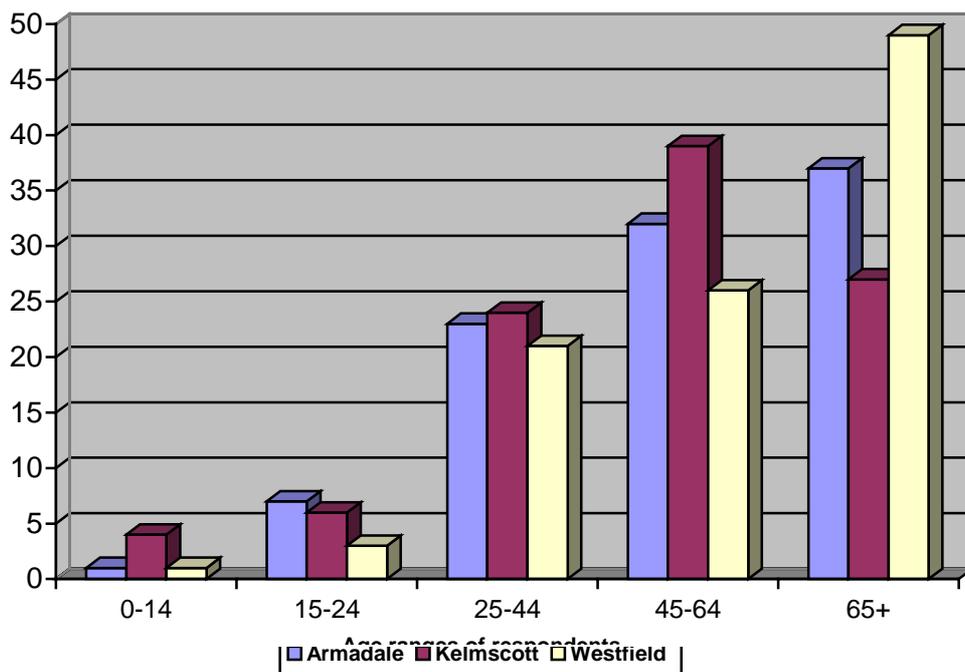


Figure 4. Age ranges of survey respondents

It is interesting to compare the ABS figures¹⁵ for the Armadale LGA for percentage of the population in each age group with the questionnaire responses (we have added the 15-24 and 25-44 categories to bring them in line with the ABS figures):

Age group	LGA %	Armadale %	Kelmscott %	Westfield %
0-14	23	1	4	1
15-44	42	30	30	24
45-64	25	32	39	26
65+	10	37	27	49

Table 6. LGA compared with Branch demographics

When we compare the ABS figures with the percentage of respondents in the table above, we find:

1. A significant under-representation in the 0-14 age group (which may be understandable given that only a minority of people in this category would possess the means or the parental permission to make an independent visit to the library)
2. Approximately 25% lower representation of 15-44 year olds when compared with the ABS percentages
3. Generally much higher representation of 45-64 years olds when compared to the ABS percentages

¹⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics. *National Regional Profile, Armadale (C) Selected Characteristics, 2005*. Catalogue No. 1379.0.55.001

4. Higher representation (3 to 5 times) of the 65+s than might be expected by the ABS percentages, and
5. Approximately 70% of the Library's clientele is aged 45 years and above.

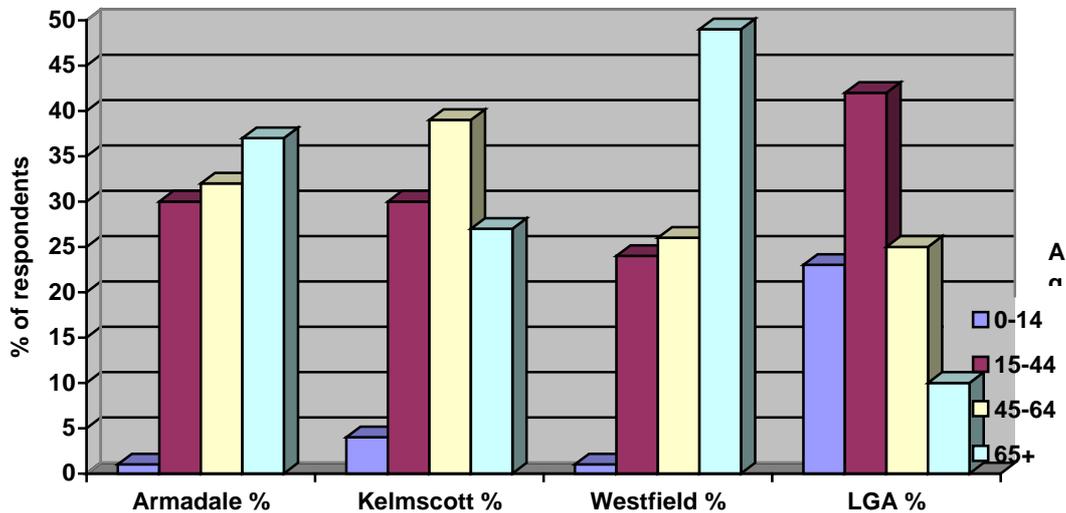


Figure 5. Population per cent by age range of branch survey respondents, and for Local Government Area

Clearly, there are service implications for reaching the very young and satisfying the elderly, and it may be that taking the library's services to the first group (for example to pre-schools and schools) may be more effective than expecting them to come to the library. Quantity of relevant materials will be a major consideration in services to the elderly.

It could also be said that the 45–64 year old age group seems to be well aware of the benefits of library use.

7. Age distribution and service implications

Relative to 1999, in 2003 the proportion of Armadale's population aged 14 years or younger had declined slightly from 24.2% to 22.7%, the proportion aged 15–44 years had declined from 44% to 41.8%, the proportion aged 45–64 had increased from 23.2% to 25.4%, and the proportion 65 years and over had increased from 8.7% to 10%.¹⁶ The table below shows the numbers and percentages next to our estimates for ten years hence.

¹⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics. *National Regional Profile, Armadale (C) Selected Characteristics, 2005*. Catalogue No. 1379.0.55.001

Age group	2003 no.	% comp 2003	2016 no.	2016 %	Increase 2003 – 16
0-14	11,869	22.7	17,000	20	5,131
15-44	21,839	41.8	35,700	42	13,861
45-64	13,273	25.4	22,100	26	8,827
65+	5,212	10	10,200	12	4,988
TOTAL:	52,193	100	85,000	100	32,807

Table 7. Armadale's current and projected population distribution

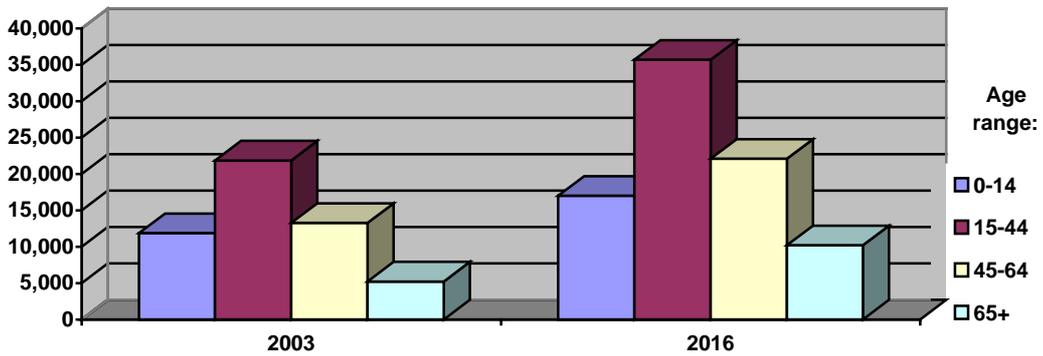


Figure 6. Age ranges of Armadale's current and projected population (population in '000s)

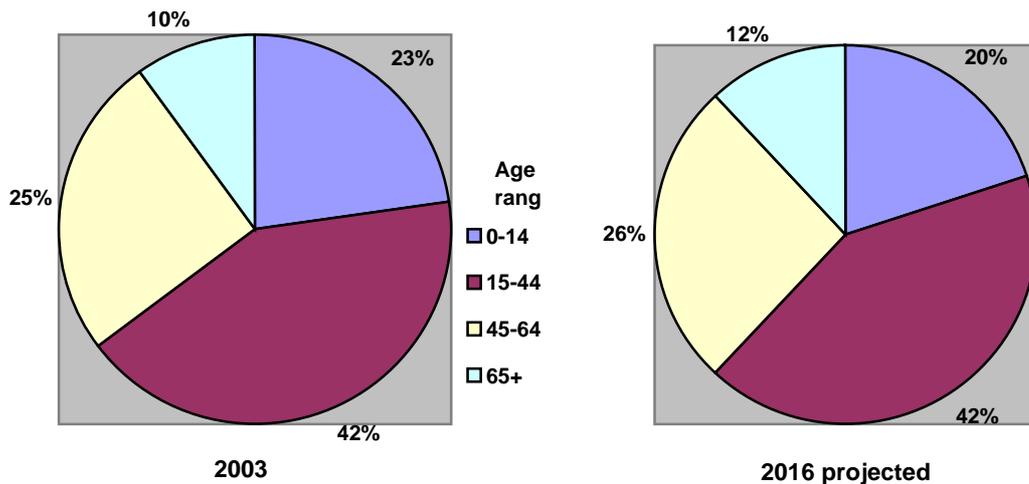


Figure 7. Age ranges of Armadale's current and projected population (population percentages)

Column six of Table 7 shows the increase in population in the period 2003 to 2016. Columns four and five are necessarily imprecise, but there are some broad trends and some specific influences that help with estimation:

1. Australia's population as a whole is ageing. In the Armadale LGA the median age has increased from 30 years in the 1991 Census to 35 years in 2003.¹⁷ We can reasonably expect this trend to continue.
2. Council has estimated that numbers in the growth areas of Seville (11,300), Brookdale (15,500) and North Forrestdale (16,800) will comprise approximately half the total residents of the LGA by 2016. We can expect that new families will come with new houses and the decline of the percentage in the 0–14 years age group may even slow. Retirees will also have a significant effect on the age composition of the new suburbs.
3. The largest age group, 15–44 years, is likely to lose people to the 45–64 age group but to gain from newcomers to Council and ARA development areas – possibly students in the proposed Armadale educational precinct. On balance, we expect that over the 10-year period the percentage contribution of this group will stay much the same.
4. The 45–64 age group is already steadily increasing, and we expect this trend to continue, causing some stabilisation in the percentage growth rate of the numerically largest age group, 15–44.
5. The 65+ age group will double in numbers, and increase as a percentage of total people by 2016. Our figure of a 12% demographic share by 2016 may prove to be conservative.

What are the implications for the delivery of library services in the City of Armadale in 2016 compared with 2005?

First of all, the library service will be much busier, and busyness adds to operational costs. Even if membership remains around 50% of the eligible population (most unlikely given a 'refurbished' service'), then today's 26,000 customers will have increased by more than 60% to 42,500 by 2016. This fact alone has major implications for customer expectations, staff training, staffing levels, use of technology, stock levels, collection mix, activity programs, opening hours, and car parking. There will also be increased pressures on Council and the State Library to provide a wide selection of up-to-date library materials.

Given the demographic background, we see the following responses being required:

¹⁷ Source: ABS 505250210 and 3218.0.

1. In the numerically larger 0–14 age group there will be a need for more picture books and more activity programs aimed at early childhood literacy. And since more Mums will be bringing more toddlers to story time, demand for specific parenting and general recreational material is likely to increase. These same Mums may also be interested in the Library's digital literacy programs.
2. The 15–44 age group will be more than twice as big as the 0–14 group – and a lot more sophisticated in their requirements. Many will live in households with time-poor multiple income earners who may prefer to connect with the library service through the Internet and have their reservations delivered by courier, and returned to drive-in drop off points. High expectations, flexible delivery channels, and increasing demand for expensive non-text materials – especially DVDs – will stretch the Library's current service model. This age group will also contain the students drawn to the area by the ARA's encouragement of a variety of educational outlets and products. Whilst it is reasonable to expect educational organisations to provide for the information needs of their customers, students will look to the library service for places to study quietly, work noisily on projects with their classmates, search for alternative sources of information outside school hours, generally use technology and almost certainly consume convenience food. These same students may also function as the Library's 'secret weapon' in encouraging adult parent non-users to register for membership.
3. The 45–64s, the second largest group, are likely to require recreational materials to escape from their busy lives, non-fiction to support their non-work interests, and information on work/lifestyle choices to help with decisions on quitting or remaining in the work force. By 2016 this group will be thoroughly computer literate and interested in all materials regardless of format.
4. The 65+s, although numerically the smallest group, will have the most disposable time to consume the Library's services. Audio books and large print will be important; many will have developed an interest in genealogy and local history; others will look to the Library for information to help them plan the great adventure they now have time to embark on. This group will make the most intensive use of the Library, and many of them, through disability, will want the Library to come to them.

Implications

1. The per unit cost of library materials will rise as an increasing proportion are supplied in loaned digital formats.
2. Expenditure on security (asset protection) and personal security for Library staff will rise.
3. The promotion of the City of Armadale as a regional centre and economic development hub will increase demand for business-related materials and staff reference expertise.

4. Increased library visits will generate increased retail activity in each library precinct.
5. A greater proportion of the library's budget will need to be allocated to technology provision: more helpful user interfaces; more local information available on the Web; more interactivity with Library staff; greater connectivity; in-library wireless networks; more headaches for security. The evolution of the mobile phone into a personal computing companion will have major implications for the way the Library communicates with its younger customers.
6. The Library is likely to become more 'embedded' in the community. Whilst Council and LISWA will be the main providers of staff, facilities and collections, partnerships with commercial and non-profit organisations enjoying a redeveloped Armadale will become common.
7. Widespread use of the Internet for finding information, coupled with increasing resource sharing between **all** libraries will lead directly to much heavier use of interlibrary loan and document delivery services.

8. Opening hours

Opening hours are notoriously difficult to get right, and it's very expensive in terms of salaries and operating costs to attempt to please all of the people all of the time. On the other hand, why have such a valuable community resource not open when people want to use it? The revolution in more flexible working hours, especially evident over the past decade, will no doubt continue with the mooted changes to Australia's industrial relations framework, and this development complicates the equation. Resolution is usually a compromise, and a willingness to experiment with opening hours can often fine-tune the balance between customer preferences and staff availability.

Armadale

83% of survey respondents were happy with the current opening hours. Eight people wanted the Library open longer on Saturdays, usually citing busy work weeks and busy Saturday mornings as the reason. Eight people wanted the Library to open at 9 am, usually so they could visit after dropping the kids at school. Five people said Sunday afternoon opening would suit them, and 3 people asked for later closing during the week.

Kelmscott

85% of Kelmscott's customers are happy as well. Nine respondents would like the Library to open earlier, 8 want Saturday afternoon opening, 7 were in favour of open all weekend, 2 plumped for Sunday afternoon opening, and 2 people suggested staying open longer during the week.

Compatibility with work hours and transport to and from work were the main reasons given.

Westfield

84% of Westfield customers are happy with their opening hours. This is somewhat surprising given current Wednesday closing, but only 12 people complained. Most wanted Wednesday opening, 4 wanted the Library open longer during the week, 2 wanted it to open earlier, 2 wanted Saturday and Sunday afternoon opening, and 1 person expressed a preference for open all weekend.

It seems that opening hours are more or less OK at the moment. The crunch will probably come later in the planning period when new and extended buildings and wider collection choice fuel demand for a broader spread of opening hours. This is an aspect of the Library's service that will require constant monitoring.

9. Staff suggestions and staffing

The Library opens its doors for 147 hours per week: 52.5 at Armadale; 52.5 at Kelmscott; and 42 at Westfield.¹⁸ And it manages this with just 20 staff members. Library staff are justifiably proud of the personal service they give their customers. They know what a kind word or smile can mean to a lonely senior or an harassed mum. The Customer Survey demonstrated the high regard customers have for Library staff. But the Library staff are very busy, and as a consequence they often feel pressured.

It was hardly surprising then to find that in staff focus groups lifting staffing levels was a topic warmly joined. In this section we present staff comments grouped into three broad areas.

Services

- More staff are needed to provide back-up for busy periods in day-to-day operations
- More professional staff are needed for development of services to children and families, working more closely with local schools, establishing partnerships with community organisations (eg. child health), supporting special interest groups, extending opening hours and expanding the activities programme
- In order to attract young people, the Library needs to employ more young people
- There needs to be a deeper pool of back-up and casual staff
- Casuals need more intensive training before being 'turned loose' on the desk

¹⁸ *Library and Heritage Services brochure, 2004?*

- Relief staff are often unavailable when needed (eg. students all doing exams)
- Need to extend homebound services
- Need to extend basic computer skills, Internet and email training programmes to include young mums, general public and seniors
- Don't need all three libraries open at night. Don't get the clientele
- Need to be more family friendly – open at 9 am so mums can visit after dropping the kids at school
- Could attract young adults with Foxtel Sports and Discovery Channel, and with music listening posts
- Procedure manual needs to be brought up to date
- Multiple copies of newspapers are needed to eliminate queues
- As the Regional Library, Armadale should specialise in reference and information services with a full-time reference librarian
- Westfield could specialise in services to seniors
- Kelmscott could be the young person's library
- Libraries have longer opening hours and a broader footprint than Council offices; they could be more heavily involved in the delivery of Council information and services.

Buildings and facilities

- More prominent signage needed inside and out
- Better furniture, new carpets
- After hours book returns
- Drive-through library for pick-up and return
- Library kiosk for commuters at the Armadale station
- Need more space to cater for the social needs of the community, eg. quiet spaces for study, area for people to relax, noisy areas for meetings and activities and for young people, meeting rooms for clubs and groups, display and exhibition space
- In-library coffee shops and book shops would delight patrons
- Collection needs to be security tagged and gates installed.

Information technology

- IT training needs to be more frequent and more comprehensive
- Library management system needs to be supported after hours and at weekends
- Library system response time is an issue at Kelmscott and Westfield
- More computers are needed to meet demand for word processing, email (especially for job applications), Library catalogue and Internet access
- Web site is in urgent need of an overhaul to give it an identity separate from but linked to Council's Web site and to provide more interactive services and more databases.

Staffing levels in future

Over the next decade, as more housing lots are released¹⁹, more people move into the LGA, and the library building and extension programme rolls out, the library's vital signs of loans and visits will easily double. Current staff numbers for current opening hours will need to increase from 20 to 30 FTE, adding more than \$550,000 a year (at current values) to the Library's salary outlays.

At projected usage growth rates over the next five years, and with the projected service mix, we estimate the Library will need the following additional personnel:

2006/7	Library Clerk (0.5), becoming full-time in 2008/9
2007/8	Librarian – Armadale Regional Centre
2008/9	Reference Librarian – Armadale Regional Centre – when Library re-locates to educational precinct. Funding to be discussed with educational agencies.
	Librarian – Kelmscott District Centre
2009/10	Librarian – Westfield (Seville Grove?) District Centre Library Technician, Publications & Marketing, current 0.5 position to become full-time.

Further out towards the 2016 planning horizon, one additional clerical staff member will be required for Kelmscott and Westfield, and possibly two at Armadale to cover for additional floor space and extended opening hours. An administrative officer will be needed to support additional workloads stemming from higher public usage, and a Library Technician will be needed at Armadale to manage the Library's IT assets.

10. Performance measures

The Library tracks and reports its activities to Council and to the State Library, but the statistics it keeps document output rather than record progress towards quantitative goals. The number of loans, the number of visits, and the proportion of the population who join the Library are the vital signs for monitoring performance and setting performance goals.

Within the context of this strategic plan we suggest that annual targets for these three variables be set for each branch library and branch managers made responsible for their establishment and achievement. This will allow the library service to regularly report to Council on the value provided to the community, and report to the State Library on the turnover rate for the asset they provide (most of the collection). Useful derivative measures can also be calculated, for example, the cost per visit (total expenditure divided by number of visits) and the cost per loan (total expenditure divided by number of loans).

¹⁹ Council's Development Services Directorate (April 2005) reports 100 lots released last year, 300 this year, and 500 planned for release next year.

The Library may also wish to return a 'productivity dividend' to Council by making gradual reductions in the costs of internal processes, for example, a 5% per annum reduction in the operating costs per item loaned, or per visit. If the Library is granted the collection and building resources it seeks, then usage will inevitably increase. If costs are contained, or kept at a level of increase lower than the rate of growth in usage, then the per unit costs of internal processes will fall.

It would also be useful for Library staff and stakeholders to know how the service is perceived by its customers. The May 2005 Customer Survey questionnaires distributed through the branches proved an excellent and easily collected source of qualitative feedback, and this practice should be continued, at least annually.

Given that the Library competes for funding with other Council services, and indirectly competes for book stock with other public libraries (the State Library cannot meet demand with its current business model), a short, sharp, snappy set of statistics can be extremely useful when it comes time to bid.

11. Technology

The Brief requires consideration of 'IT requirements and online service provision' and on 7th June a workshop was held with senior Library staff to further this end. It proved surprisingly straightforward to identify the major trends and issues in public library take-up rates for relevant technology:

1. Email and Web searching will continue as the number one and number two Internet applications, respectively. Whilst search engines are expected to become more sophisticated over the next decade – even to the point of presenting information in context rather than returning too many unqualified documents – email for personal contact, and for work, will remain the most-used Internet service. Word processing facilities will continue to be requested by residents without home computers.
2. More and more citizens will use the Web as their primary source for information discovery. As broadband becomes more widespread in the LGA and costs fall, its appeal will spread beyond the comfortably off to broader levels of the socioeconomic pyramid, and especially to young people. As more people use the Web, more uses of the Web can be expected (and as more uses emerge, so too will more users). Nevertheless, for a substantial minority the Library will continue to be a lifeline – the only affordable access point to information on jobs and services. Indeed many organisations such as retailers and government agencies will expect the Library to provide such access for those who cannot provide it for themselves.

3. In the decade ahead there is no doubt that people everywhere will make more intensive use of computer technology – provided they know how to use it. For the Library, this translates to spending more time with the public, teaching them to use computers, and working with other community agencies to establish basic levels of digital literacy. Library staff are emphatic in their views that already there is a substantial unmet demand for technology interpretation and general IT training, and that this demand is likely to continue, perhaps accelerate, over the planning period. Along with resolving the SLWA impasse on the flow of new materials, community proficiency in IT may be the biggest issue the library service faces.
4. The Library will continue to operate its own inventory management and online catalogue system which is likely to be more closely integrated with a revitalised Library-specific Web site. Technical support will need to be provided whenever systems are scheduled to be available, not just in business hours.
5. The Library will develop new channels for interacting with its customers. These will include Web forms, email, automated booking systems for facilities and activities, co-operatively constructed community databases, SMS and text messaging, support for MP3 format, and courier deliveries. New digital reference tools will include instant messaging and other electronic contact methods.
6. The Library will also become more hospitable to its customers using their own technology within the Library. Wireless networks offering connectivity for customers' laptops, USB ports for connecting portable storage devices, in-library music systems, and a more tolerant attitude towards mobile phone use, are all part of a digital hub in a public space.

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Appendix 1. Preliminary findings (from Interim Report June 2005)

1. Armadale's library service performs quite well relative to comparable WA libraries.
2. More than 92% of customers get what they come for; 99% consider they are treated in a satisfactory manner.
3. There is some evidence to suggest that customers have low expectations of the services a modern library can provide.
4. When people are asked to suggest improvements, most of their comments relate to broadening and deepening choices from the collection. Unfortunately the State Library appears to believe that it is doing all it reasonably can to get a sufficient quantity of new materials into WA public libraries.
5. Armadale's demographic profile suggests a requirement for services across all age ranges, with emphasis on the very young and the elderly.
6. 40–60% of customers have home access to the Internet – and can use the Library's service from where they live.
7. With the LGA population expected to grow from 50,000 in 2003 to 85,000 in 2016, the Library service will need an additional 3700 m² floor space.
8. Armadale Library, 407 m² today, will need 2154 m² by 2016.
9. Kelmscott Library, 500 m² today, will need 1008 m² by 2016.
10. Westfield Library, 625 m² today, will need 1170 m² by 2016.
11. For the projected distribution of Armadale's 85,000 people in 2016:
 - the three branch service delivery model, upgraded with additional floor area, is appropriate for the foreseeable future
 - Council should consider opening smaller shop-front and drive-through libraries as new suburbs (eg. Forrestdale) develop
 - the provision of mobile library services to the homebound could be extended, and
 - there appears to be clearly demonstrable need for a fourth branch library, nor an obvious location.
12. The accelerated development opportunities presented by the Armadale Redevelopment Authority are unique and highly valuable to Council.

Appendix 2. Customer questionnaire

CITY OF ARMADALE LIBRARY SERVICE

Your library service is planning for its future. Would you please take a minute to tell us what you think? Your views will be treated as confidential.

Which branch do you usually visit?

- Armadale Kelmscott Westfield

What do you normally use the library for?

Please comment:
.....
.....

Do you usually get what you come for when you visit the library?

- Yes No

Please comment:
.....
.....

Do the library staff treat you the way you want to be treated?

- Yes No

Please comment:
.....
.....

What does the library do that you like?

Please comment:
.....
.....

How could the library improve its service to you?

Please comment:
.....
.....

Do the library's opening hours suit you?

- Yes No

Please comment:
.....
.....

Do you normally visit the library by car?

Yes

No - please comment:
.....
.....

Do you have Internet access at home?

Yes

No

Do you use the library's website?

Yes

No

Please comment:
.....
.....

What do you think of the library's collection?

Up to date?

Yes

No

Please comment:
.....
.....

Plenty of choice?

Yes

No

Please comment:
.....
.....

Appropriate mix of fiction and non-fiction items?

Yes

No

Please comment:
.....
.....

Wide enough range of formats (large print, CD, DVD, audio books)?

Yes

No

Please comment:
.....
.....

Good reference collection?

Yes

No

Please comment:
.....
.....

Helpful databases?

Yes

No

Please comment:
.....
.....

Please indicate which age group you belong to:

- 0-14 15-24 25-44 45-64 65 +

Is there anything else you'd like us to know?

Please comment:

.....

.....

Thanks for helping us plan the future of the library service.
Please return this questionnaire to the collection box in your local library.



Appendix 3. Components of the Concept Plan

In sections 4–11 we analyse the library needs of the Armadale community. In this section we summarise the major components of the Concept Plan. Sections 2 and 3 provide background to the assignment.

1. Space

By 2016, when the population has grown to 85,000, the library service will need an additional 3700 square metres of floor space. New libraries will need to be built at Armadale and Kelmscott – most likely under the umbrella of the Armadale Redevelopment Authority, and the Westfield Library will need to be extended. Details in Section 4.

2. Collection

State Library supply of library materials falls short of community requirements. Unless the State Government can be persuaded to increase funding to provide adequate collection depth and breadth a new business model – possibly involving a decentralised approach, will need to be implemented. Details in Sections 5 and 6.

3. Services

The Library's customers have a 90% plus approval rate for the Library's services, but there is evidence to suggest that service expectations are low. The customer demographic, very young to very old, will not significantly vary over the planning period; the requirement for a full spectrum of library services will continue. Details in Sections 6 and 7.

4. Comparison with other library services

Armadale compares favourably with other WA 'urban fringe medium' library services, but unfavourably with the best library services elsewhere in Australia. Details in Section 5.

5. Opening hours

Current opening hours are generally acceptable to most customers. By 2016 community expectations and work/life patterns will require at least a 25% extension. Details in Section 8.

6. Staffing

At current staffing levels counter staff often feel pressured by the volume of work. As the Library expands its spaces and services, staff training and staff numbers will need to keep up with the growth. Details in Section 9.

7. Technology

Current technology provision lags behind community expectations for Internet, word processing and email access; the Library's Web site needs to be energised. Details in Sections 9 and 11.

8. Measuring progress

We suggest that in order to monitor progress towards the goals of the Concept Plan, annual targets be adopted for each branch for membership, visits and loans. Details in Section 10.