

Warrnambool learning and library hub

Community engagement report



The Victorian Government is partnering with Warrnambool City Council and South West TAFE to deliver the \$20.25 million Warrnambool Learning and Library Hub. The new space will provide iconic, fit for purpose, accessible, technologically advanced learning and library facilities for both the community and South West TAFE staff and students.

The Victorian Government, Warrnambool City Council and South West TAFE recognise the importance of delivering a state-of-the-art learning and library hub for the people of Warrnambool.

This exciting new community space will bring together TAFE and library facilities in a new and refurbished building on the South West TAFE campus where TAFE students, community and visitors are able to come together and enjoy all the current library facilities in new, larger, modern and accessible spaces.

Planning for the joint-use learning and library hub is underway, and we invited the Warrnambool community to share their vision, ideas and opinions to feed into the designs for the new facility.

About the engagement

We engaged with local residents and community members, library members, TAFE students and staff from 6 February to 6 March 2020, via an online survey.

In particular, we wanted to know how the community would like to use the new learning and library hub, what makes a library special and the most important elements that should be considered in the design, as well as how the community would access the hub,

This report provides a summary of what we heard from your community during this engagement.

Engagement snapshot

226

online survey responses



53%

respondents are current Warrnambool library users



40%

respondents are between 41 and 60 years old



73%

respondents live in Warrnambool



What we heard

Your vision for the new Learning and Library Hub

We asked the community to share their big ideas for this exciting new development and a number of key themes emerged. It is clear that there is desire for a learning and library hub that:

- provides **distinct and different spaces**, including quiet places to meet and study, comfortable seating, a dedicated children's area and a café
- is **accessible** for all
- has an **environmentally sustainable** design
- is filled with **natural light**, providing a **warm and welcoming atmosphere**
- provides the **latest technological facilities** and a **diverse book collection**
- exhibits interesting works by **local artists**
- provides **free short term parking** for visitors.

Clever building design that brings in natural light without being vulnerable to outdoor temperature extremes... interesting indoor spaces.

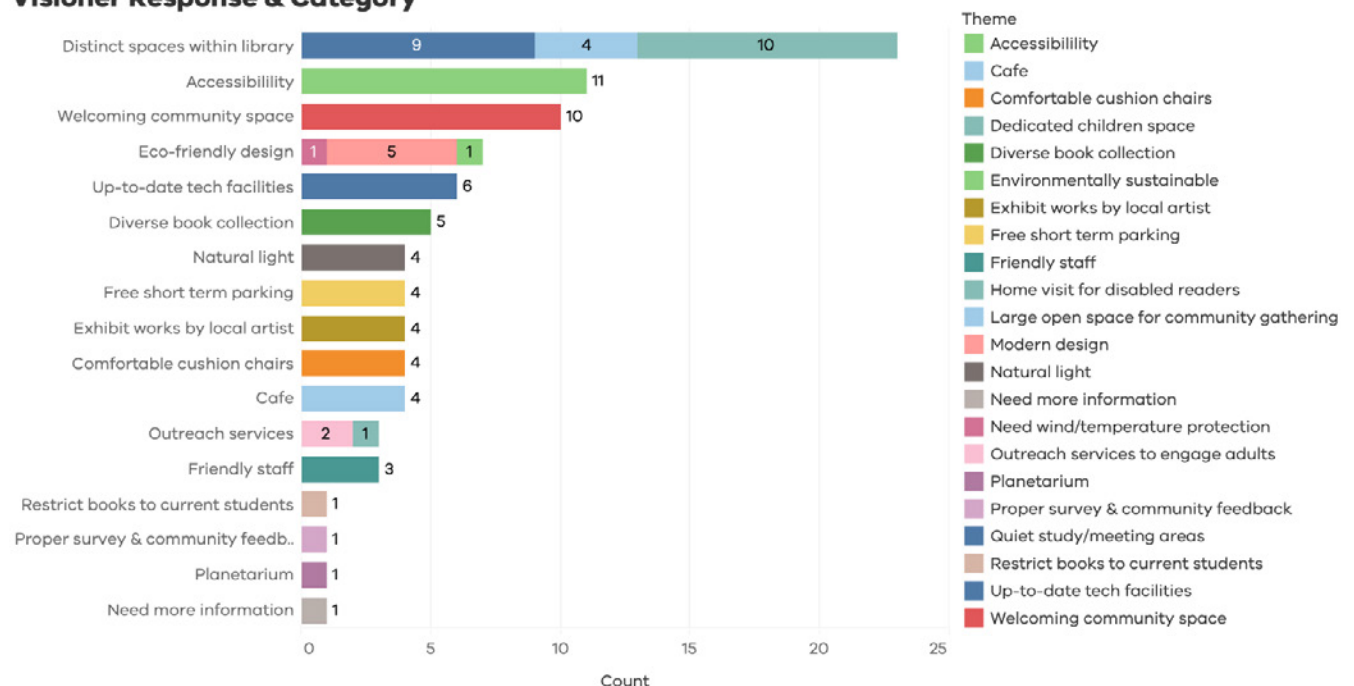
As an elderly user with walking difficulties and a walking frame need easy access. No stairs and low ramps. Shuttle buggy in car park?

A unique iconic building celebrating Warrnambool as a community. A warm, welcoming and relaxing space with ocean views.

Beautiful artworks on entrance.

Visoners Survey

Visoner Response & Category



About the new Learning and Library Hub

Spaces in the new learning and library hub

The community feel that the new building should provide a range of **distinct spaces for different activities**, including **quiet, comfortable places** for reading and work, a **dedicated children's area** and a **large community meeting space**. We heard that it is important for the hub to cater for both **low key, individual activities** and those that are more **open and collaborative** in nature.

Library users and community members would like to see **cosy spots for reading and relaxing**, as well as a **space of children**. There were suggestions to provide both **indoor and outdoor areas** in which children can learn, explore and play, as well as a **designated space for young adults and teenagers**. South West TAFE students were interested in both **independent study areas** and **places for groups** to work together.

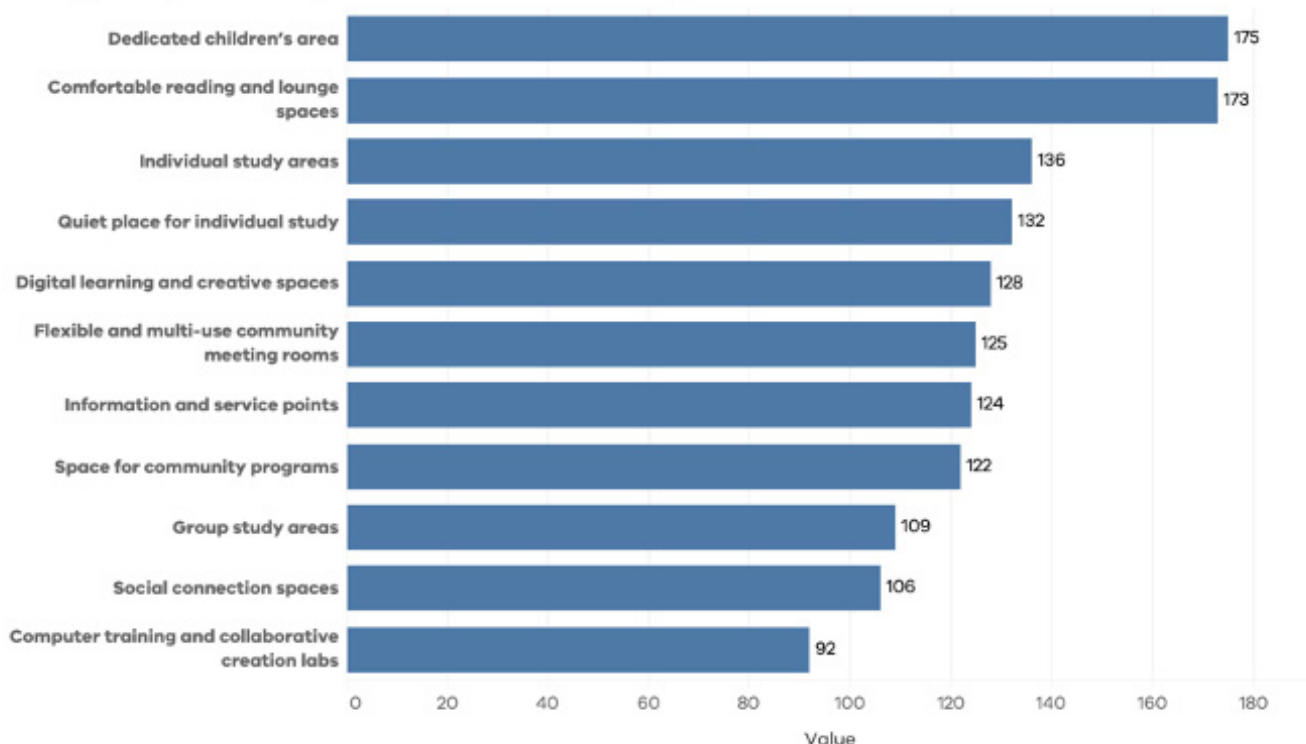
Independent/Private study booths as well as areas for group work/classes. Privacy/personal space is important, as is open/cooperative areas.

Indoor/outdoor undercover children's play area that inspires their imagination using natural materials and incorporating nature based play.

Flexible space that can be converted to a larger facility for community and education events. The CBD lacks any large gathering space.

Young Adult/Teenage area separate from Children and Adult where they can read, play games and make noise but not disturb other patrons.

What types of spaces would you like to see in the new building?



What makes a library special

There are common themes that make a library an enjoyable place to visit and spend time. For this question, respondents were asked to think about a library that they have visited that has stuck in their memory or they have visited often, and reflect on what makes that library special.

We heard that **natural light** and **large windows** both help to create a **warm and welcoming atmosphere**, which is something that is important to the community. Consistent with the previous question, respondents feel that good libraries are those that provide a **range of different places**, including **dedicated areas for play, reading and study, comfortable spots** for lounging, and **inviting spaces** to meet and connect.

It is clear there is a desire for the building architecture to have a **modern feel**, with **open, accessible spaces** and **high quality technological facilities**. A **diverse book collection, friendly staff** and **nearby amenities** were also highlighted as important.

“Free wi-fi & computer hubs.”

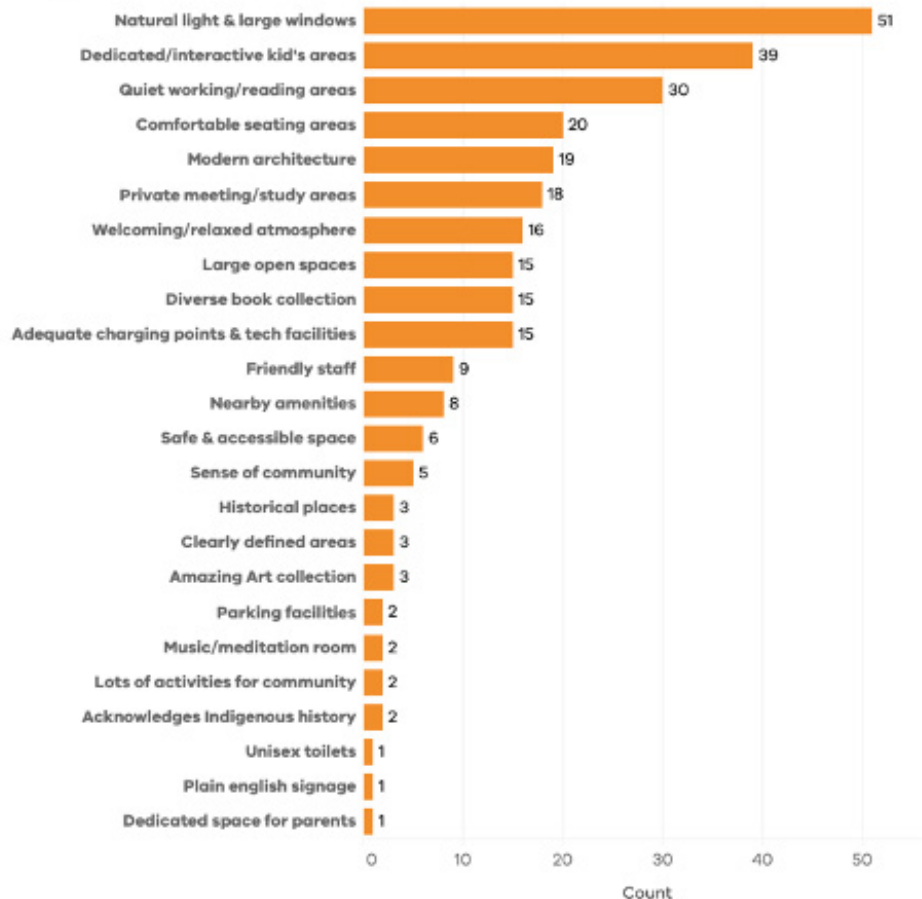
A library is a vital part of any community. Respondents shared which libraries they visit and enjoy, with the most common responses being:

- Mount Gambier Public Library
- Geelong Library and Heritage Centre
- State Library Victoria
- Portland Library
- Library at The Dock (Docklands Library)
- Albury Library Museum.

“Accessible, friendly, modern and a good book collection.”

“A warm and inviting community space that encourages connection.”

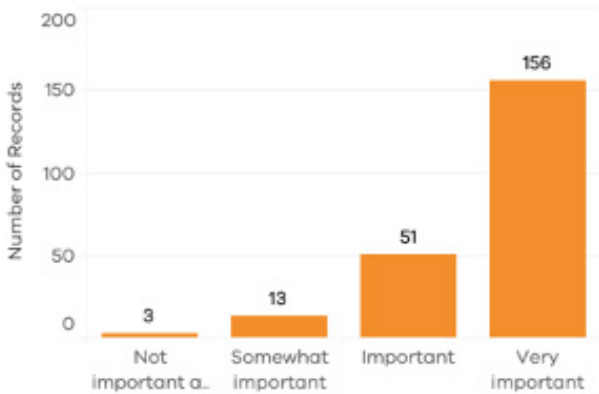
Is there a library you have visited that has stuck in your memory or that you often visited? Please describe what made that library special. Consider how the light, sound and materials came together to create a pleasant atmosphere.



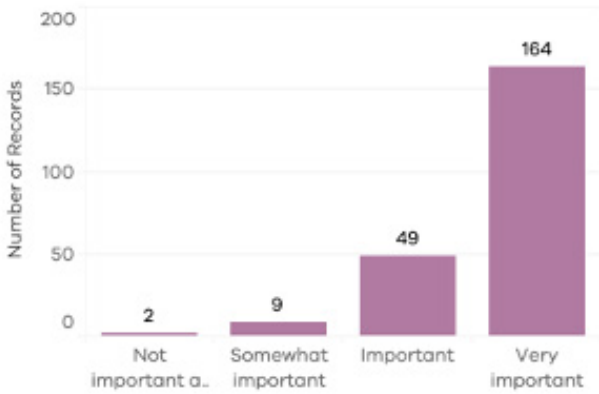
Most important design elements for the new hub's facilities

When thinking about the new learning and library hub's facilities, respondents were asked to rate a range of design elements based on factors that are important to them. The below results show the distribution of importance responses for each element. We heard that it is very important for the facilities to be **smart, energy efficient and environmentally friendly** and **easily accessible for all**, as well as provide **improved opportunities to access education**. Alongside these design elements, there is also interest in the design of the new facilities **celebrating indigenous culture and heritage**.

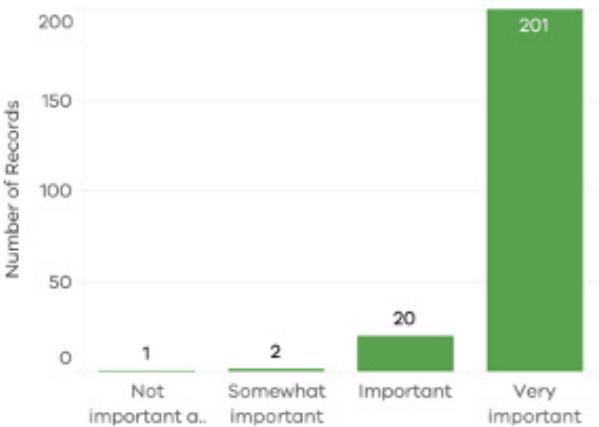
Encourages improved opportunities to access education



Is smart, energy efficient and environmentally friendly



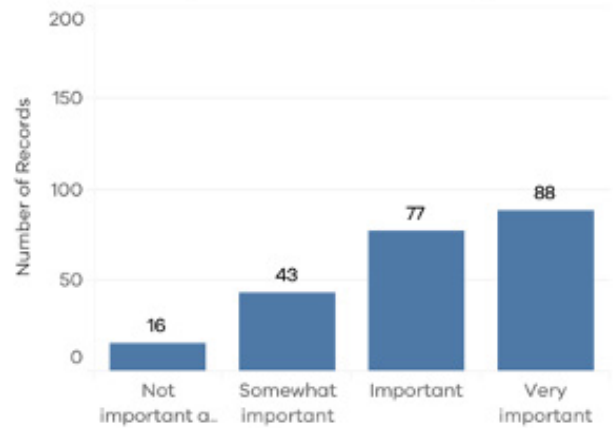
Is easily accessible for all



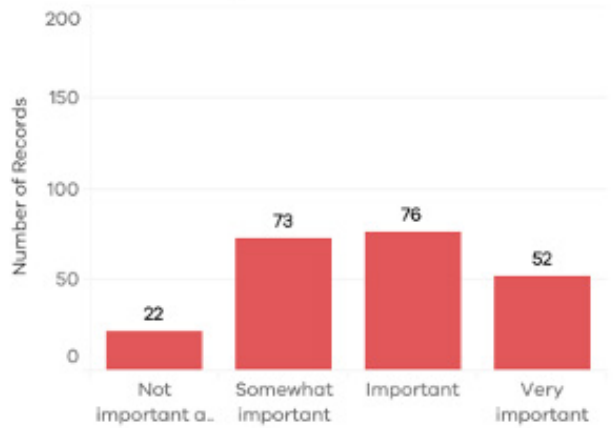
“ Be environmentally sustainable.

“ Have a dedicated story/dream time area that not only has a range of indigenous books, but also has a mural backdrop with comfy places to sit.

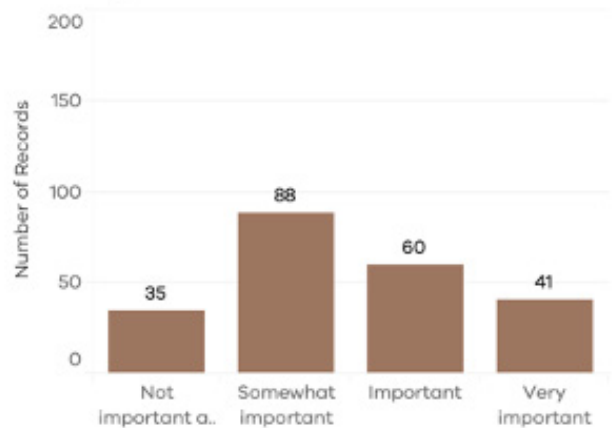
Celebrates Indigenous culture and heritage



Promotes the history of Warrnambool



To be unique and identifiable to Warrnambool



Most important function of a learning and library facility

For this question, respondents were asked to rank the functions of a learning and library facility in order of preference. The below results indicate the average ranking position across all survey respondents, with the highest scored preference, on average, being the most preferred. The four functions deemed most important by the community received similar rankings, which suggests they are all highly valued. The top four functions were:

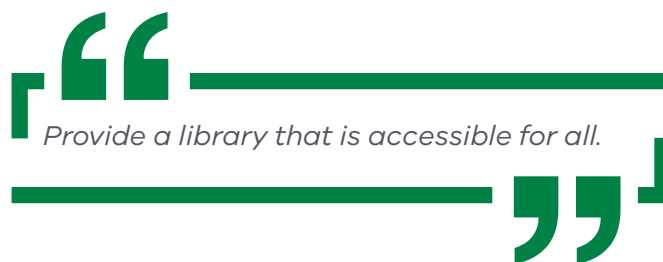
1. Providing access to **reading and learning**
2. Containing **well-resourced library collections**
3. Delivering a **safe and neutral space** for everyone
4. Providing access to otherwise **unaffordable reading materials / technology**.

Similarly, the second group of learning and library facility functions also received comparable rankings which suggests that, while the community does not consider them as important as the first group, each function is equally valued.

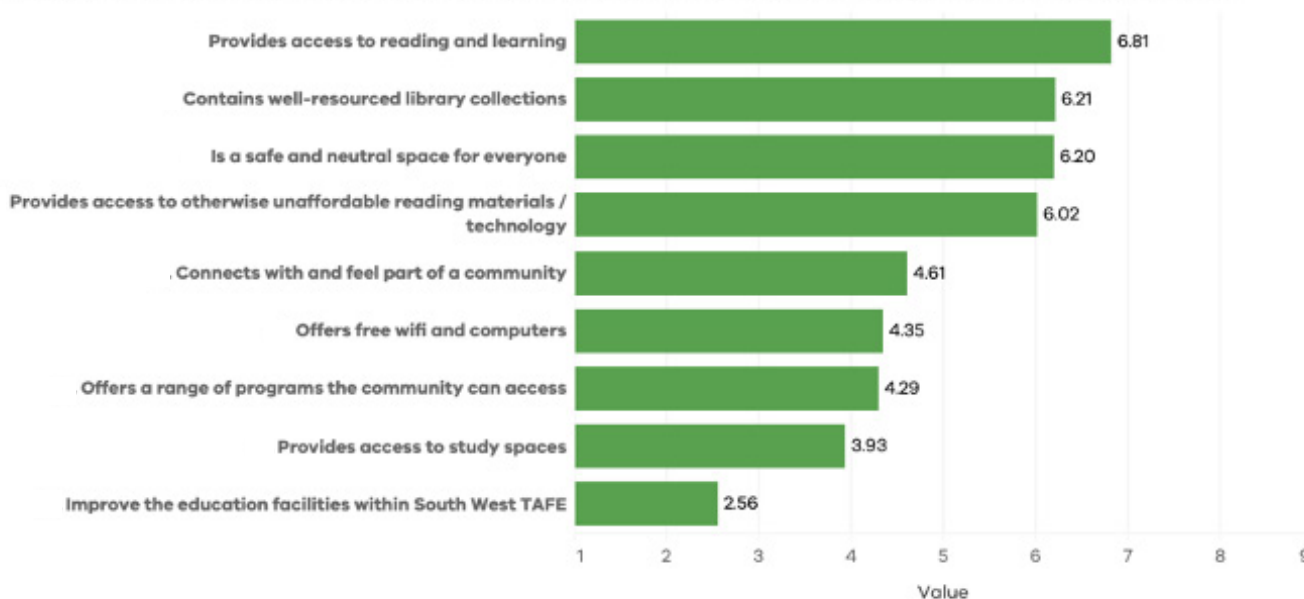
These functions were:

1. Connecting with and **feeling part of a community**
2. Offering **free Wi-Fi and computers**
3. Offering a **range of programs** the community can access
4. Providing **access to study spaces**.

While preferences were mostly consistent across all respondents, both South West TAFE staff and students value **access to Wi-Fi, computers and study spaces** more highly than other survey respondents.



What do you believe is the most important function of a learning and library facility? List in order of preference

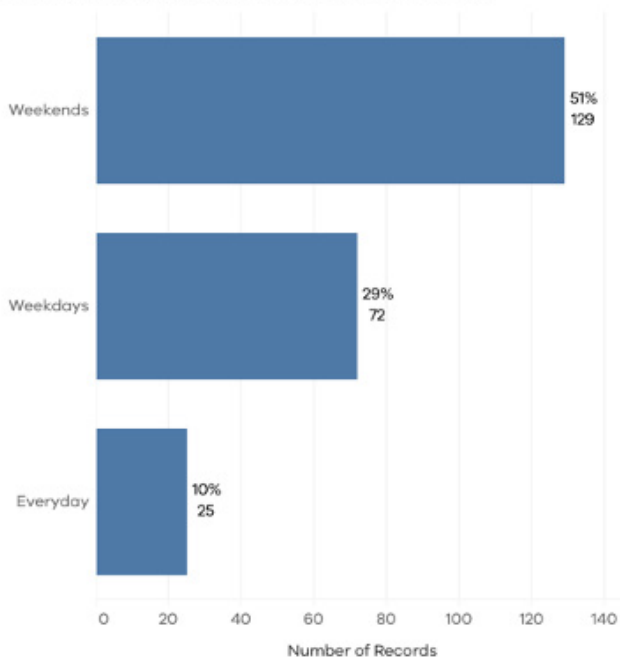


Accessing the new Learning and Library Hub

Preferred day/s and time to visit

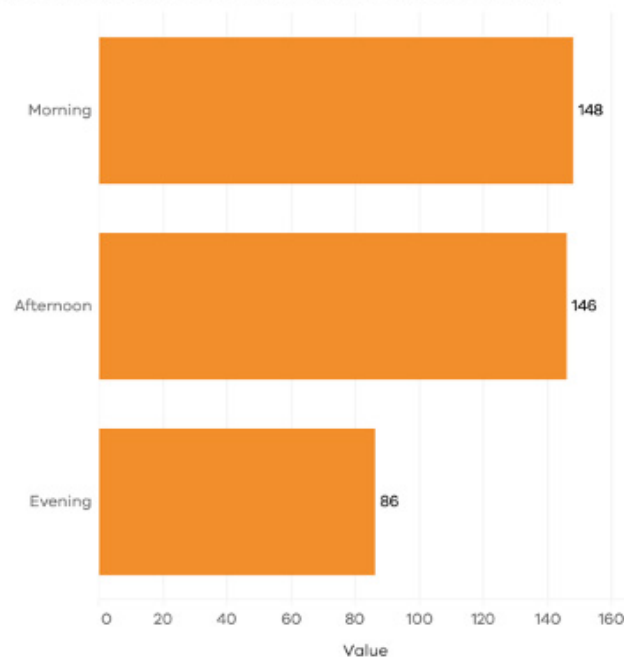
The community are most likely to visit the new hub on **Saturdays and Sundays**, with over 50% of survey respondents selecting weekends as their preferred days to visit.

What day/s would you most likely visit the library?



Regarding what time of the day they would like to visit, the community were evenly split in their responses, with both the **morning** and **afternoon** favoured by many. A smaller proportion of respondents would like to use the facilities in the **evening**.

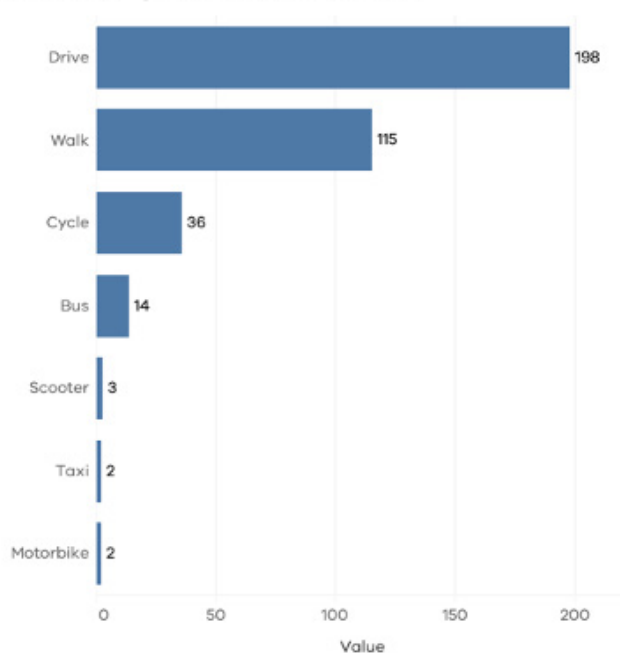
What time/s of the day would you like to visit the library?



Travelling to/from the hub

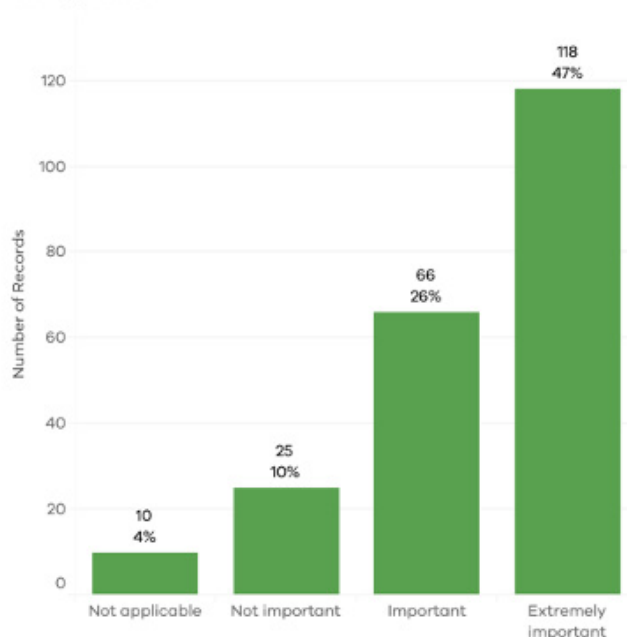
A significant majority of survey respondents would **drive** to the new learning and library hub, with **walking** the second most common means of transportation. A smaller number of respondents indicated they would **cycle** or take the **bus**.

How would you travel to the hub?



For the respondents who would drive to the facilities at least some of the time, 47% indicated that the provision of **short term parking** at the new hub is extremely important. The community also highlighted that they would typically only visit the library for **one hour or less**, which supports this strong desire for short term parking.

If you travel by car, how important is short term parking when visiting the hub?

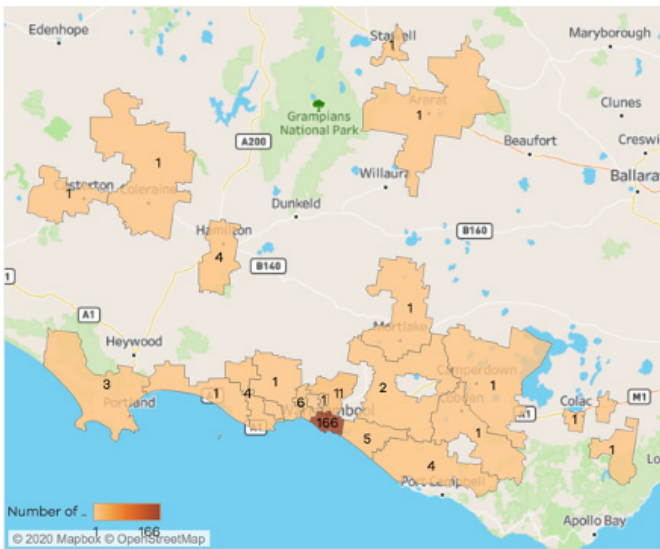


About the participants

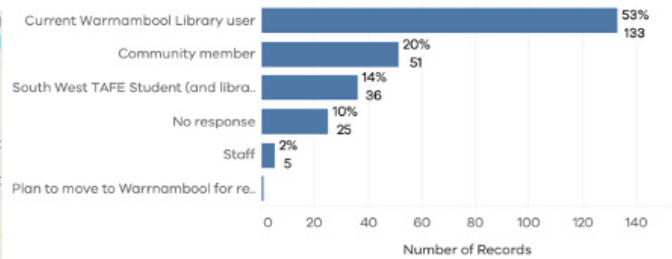
Demographics

The community was well represented in the online survey, with a variety of different users from a range of age groups taking the time to share their thoughts. The majority of the online survey respondents **live in Warrnambool**, and over half are **current Warrnambool Library users**. Other respondents were **community members, South West TAFE students and staff**. Most age groups were represented in the results, with the most respondents falling into the **31 – 60 year old category**.

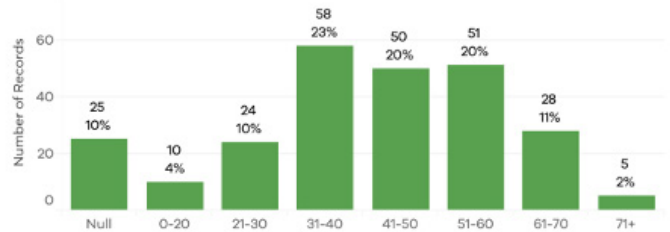
Postcode



Are you a:



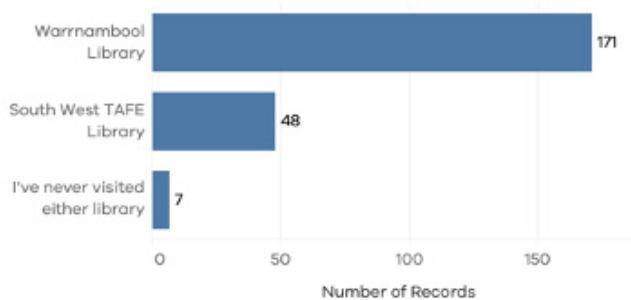
What's your age group?



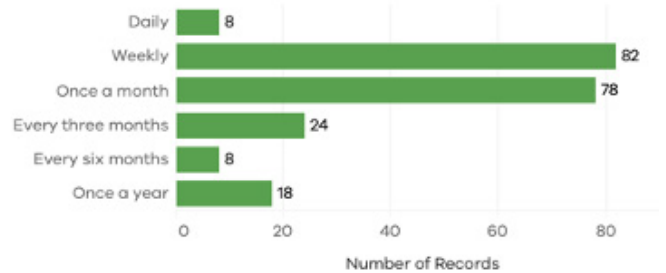
Library visits

75% of online survey respondents visit, or have visited, the **Warrnambool Library** and a smaller proportion (21%) use the **South West TAFE Library**. The community tend to visit these libraries on a **weekly or monthly basis**, and, on average, stay for an **hour or less**.

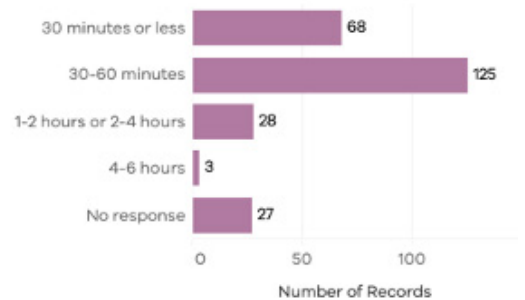
Which libraries have you visited or do you visit?



If you have visited either of these libraries, how often do you visit them?



When you do visit a library, how much time do you spend there?



Next steps

We wish to thank the Warrnambool community for taking the time to share your thoughts and suggestions. Your feedback will help inform the design of the new Warrnambool Learning and Library Hub. To find out more, or ask questions, contact the Warrnambool Learning and Library Hub project team on 1300 648 911 (South West TAFE) or 5559 4800 (Warrnambool City Council).