

Community Engagement Summary

Ballan Library and Community Hub

(Phase Two)

Engagement period:

May – August 2022



Introduction

A new library in Ballan has been on Council's advocacy list for several years and is a key priority for the Ballan community. On 27 January 2022 it was announced that Moorabool Shire Council had secured \$5 million in State Government funding to build a new Library and Community Hub at 127 Inglis Street, Ballan. This funding consists of \$3.5 million from the Growing Suburbs Fund and \$1.5 million from the Living Libraries Infrastructure Program. Council is also contributing \$2 million towards the \$7 million project.

In 2021 Moorabool Shire Council undertook phase one of community engagement to understand the usage patterns of existing Ballan Library patrons and their priorities for a new library.

Council commenced phase two of consultation in May 2022. The second phase of community engagement has provided detailed information to inform the design of the Ballan Library and Community Hub. The survey data and in-person engagement sessions have provided Council with a clear understanding of community aspirations for the building. This data will inform the development of concept designs for the Ballan Library and Community Hub.

Community Engagement (Phase Two) review

Council has now reviewed the data from phase two of the community engagement. This phase included a survey during May-June 2022, and opportunities for in-person engagement through Community Cafés.

Community Cafes

The community was invited to attend a community café session to hear more about the project, and to provide feedback and input.

Two sessions were held during June and July, with 16 attendees at events held in Ballan and Gordon. Council staff and the architect were on hand to hear what was important for the community to see in the new library.

Have Your Say survey

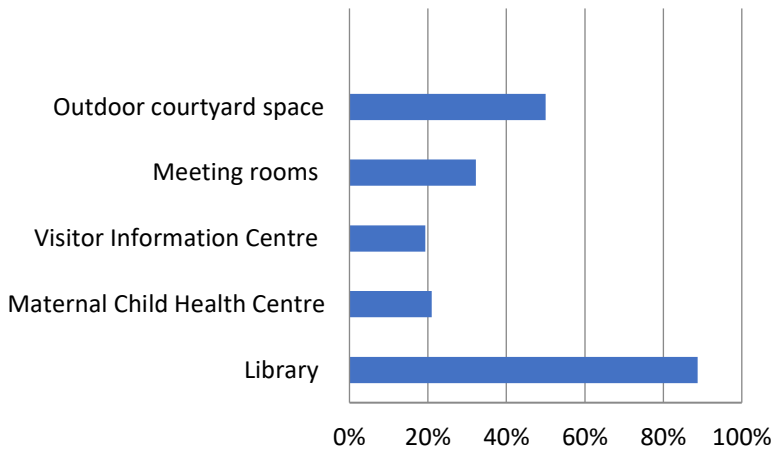
Council received 62 survey responses from community members during phase two of the Ballan Library and Community Hub engagement. The survey was open during May-June 2022.

The survey built upon feedback from the previous engagement, to ask specific questions about design and use of the building.

Of the 62 survey respondents, 24% had participated in the phase one survey, and 76% were contributing feedback for the first time. 23 survey respondents are current library members.

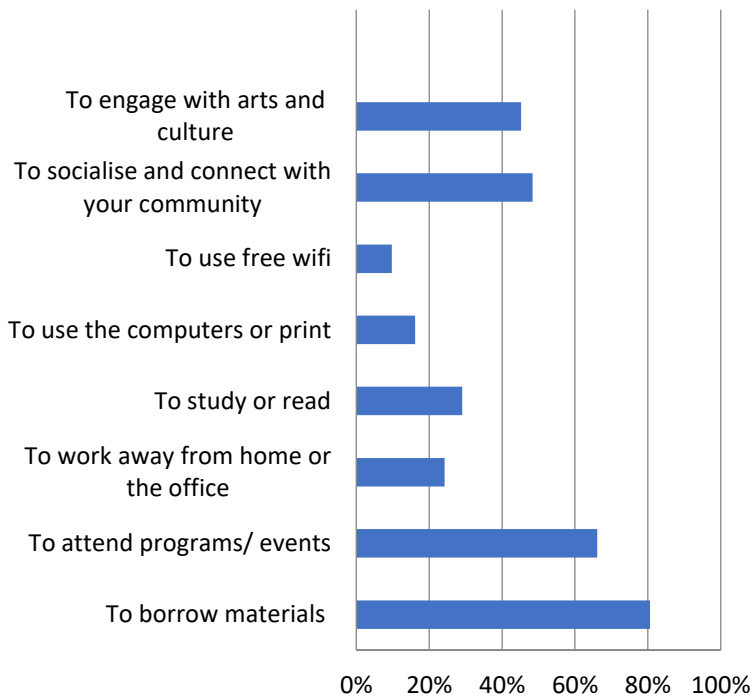
The following is a snapshot of how survey respondents felt they might use the facilities and services of the new Ballan Library and Community Hub.

Question: When visiting the Ballan Library and Community Hub, which services/facilities would you most likely use?



89% of those identified the library as the key service, with an outdoor courtyard space identified as the next highest result (50%) followed by meeting rooms (32%) and Maternal and Child Health (21%).

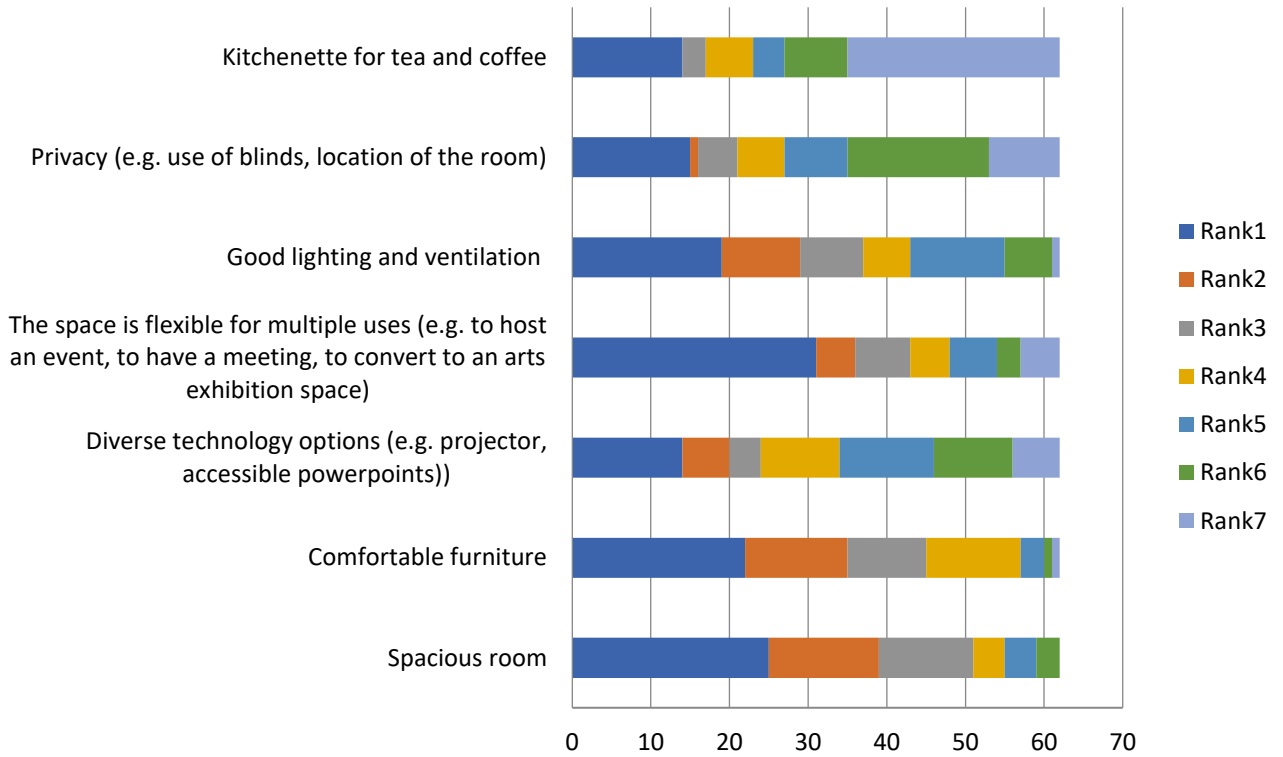
Question: What would your primary purpose be for visiting the Ballan Library?



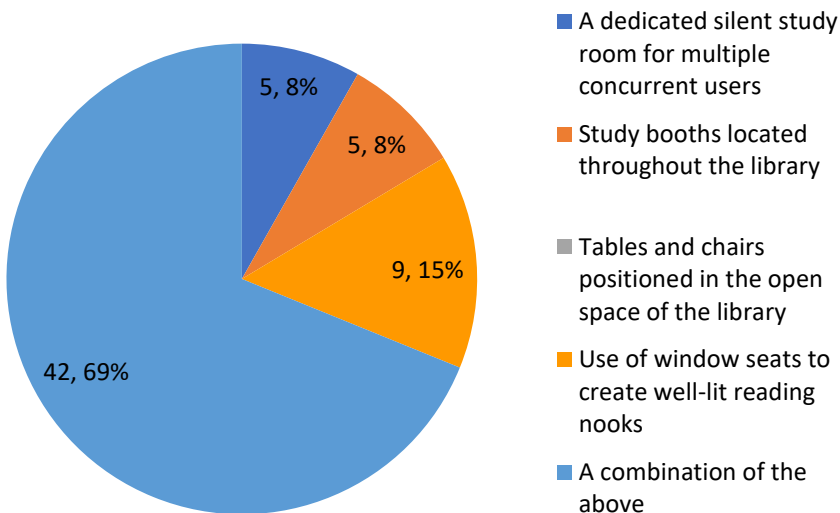
Borrowing library materials is of high importance for visiting the library, followed by attending programs/events, socialising and connecting with the community, and engaging with arts and culture.

Survey respondents were asked to rank the importance of meeting room features:

Flexibility of meeting room spaces for multiple uses was very important, along with a spacious room, comfortable furniture and good lighting and ventilation..

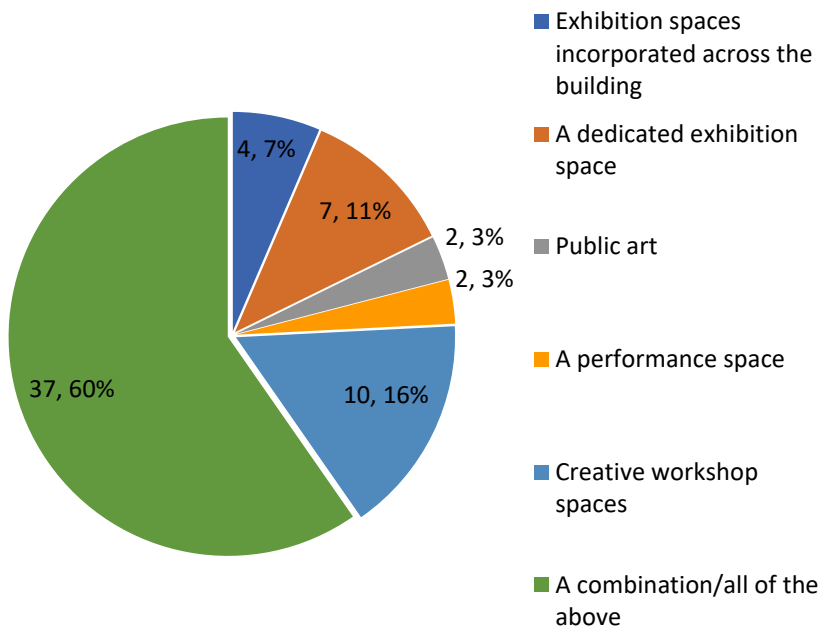


Question: When considering quiet working, studying or reading spaces, would you prefer:



A key theme for study and reading spaces is to have a variety of areas throughout the library as well as some silent areas.

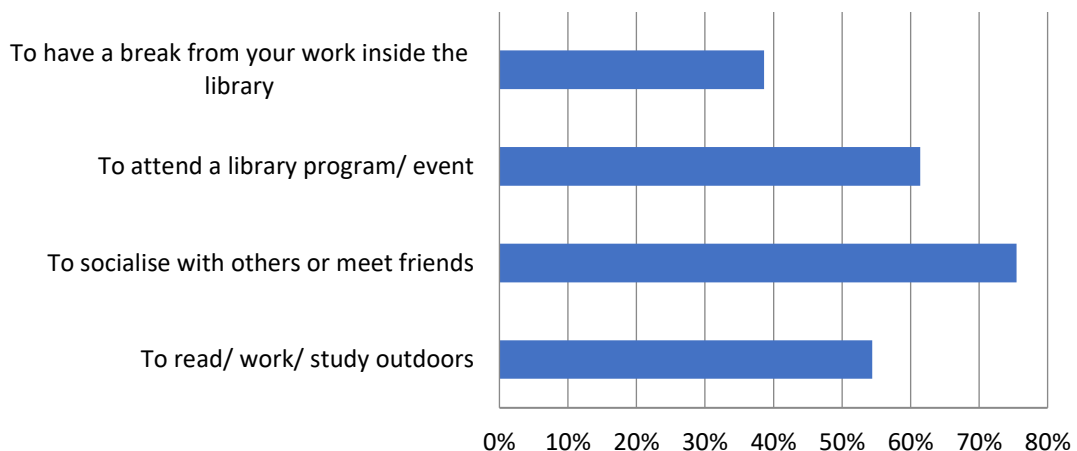
Question: What kind of creative spaces would you like to see at the Ballan Library and Community Hub?



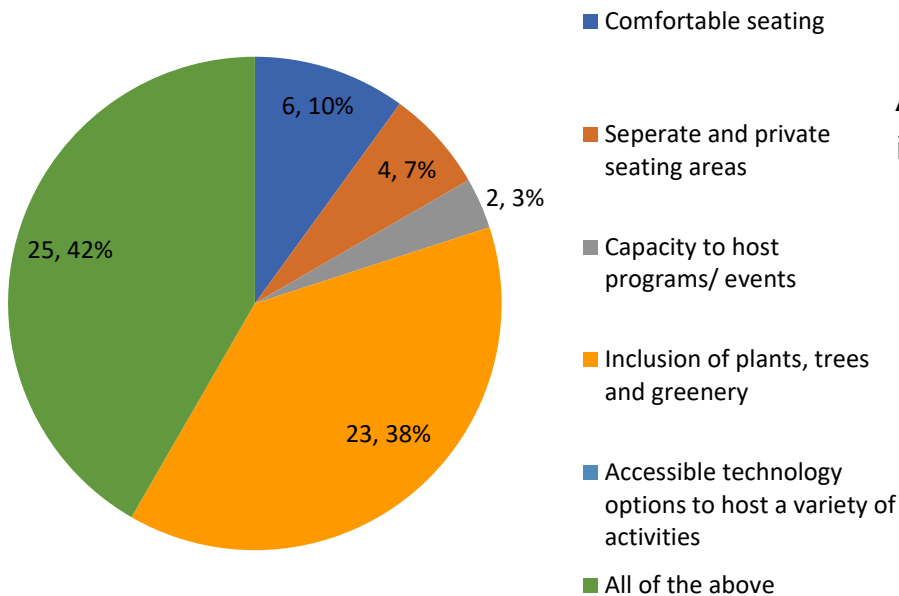
These responses demonstrate that there is a desire to see a variety of arts and cultural spaces as part of the Library and Community Hub.

Question: How might you use the outdoor courtyard space?

The responses from this question identify socialising as a key component of an outdoor space, followed by attending programs and events, and reading or studying outdoors. This range of uses will inform the design process of an outdoor space.



Question: Which of the following features in the outdoor courtyard space are most important to you



A majority of responses indicated the need for a mix of features in an outdoor space. Plants and trees were identified as a key feature.

Question: What kind of programs would you like to attend at the new library?

75% of responses expressed an interest in adult programs such as book clubs, author talks, craft groups and social gathering opportunities. 35% of responses showed interest in children's programs such as craft, coding and steam club, whilst 28% of responses were keen to see early years programs such as baby bounce, rhyme time and story time. This feedback will inform the range of programs to be delivered in the new library, and the design of spaces to accommodate these uses.

Summary of engagement themes

The following is a summary of data gathered from the open-ended questions in the survey, and from face-to-face engagement sessions in Ballan and Gordon. This will be considered as part of the design process.

Spaces

- A range of flexible meeting spaces
- Study and reading areas around the library
- Creative spaces for exhibitions/workshops
- Multipurpose spaces
- Work from home / business spaces
- Teenage and children's spaces
- Kitchenette accompanying meeting spaces
- Semi quiet spaces (soundproof rooms)
- Tables for groups, comfortable chairs
- Maker spaces
- Separation between children/study spaces
- Spaces for socialising and connecting
- Creating safe spaces
- Gallery space with exhibitions
- Breastfeeding and baby change facilities
- Play areas for children
- Performance/event space

Services, Programs and Operations

- Range of programs and events
- Arts and culture, exhibitions, craft groups
- Children's and early years programs
- Access to car parking
- Touch screen/interactive map for tourism
- Information Technology/future proof
- Video conferencing, Computers, printing, wi-fi
- Open daily
- Signage with English, Indigenous and braille
- Sustainability, wellbeing, art programs
- Recycling hub for batteries etc.
- Gaming and virtual reality

Design features

- Strong architectural design
- Connection to street front
- Welcoming and able to see inside
- Acknowledge local historical buildings
- Suitable seating spaces near windows
- Acoustics and noise reduction
- Large open windows
- Take advantage of northern natural light
- Light and airy
- Accessibility – suitable for all abilities and sensory experiences
- Use of natural materials, timber
- Returns chute prominent/close to parking
- Public art / honouring First Nations culture
- Sustainable disposal of demolished materials
- Room names honouring First Nations
- Incorporate the autumn leaves colours

Outdoor space

- Outdoor space to socialise/study/events
- Suitable Seating
- Large trees
- Options for public art display
- Native plants or community garden
- Flexible courtyard
- Potential for outdoor public art and temporary art/projections
- Consider child safety
- Small intimate space and event space
- Wi-fi access outside

Where to from here?

The purpose of activities to date has been to engage with the local Ballan and surrounding rural communities regarding the design, facilities, and services to be offered in the new Ballan Library and Community Hub. This engagement was both online and face-to-face with user groups and the general public.

The data collected through phase two of community engagement has provided a good understanding of the intended usage patterns and the needs of the community. The detailed information that has been received during this engagement will now be used to inform the design of the Ballan Library and Community Hub.

A project team in Council is working closely with the architect to ensure that the design of the Ballan Library and Community Hub reflects the aspirations of the local community and is responsive to feedback gained during the community engagement process.

There will be further opportunities for the Moorabool Shire community to influence the new Ballan Library and Community Hub as the project progresses.

Visit Council's 'Have Your Say' digital portal for future updates on this and other important community projects.

<https://haveyoursay.moorabool.vic.gov.au>

