

2022

Adelaide Hills Council

engage.sa.gov.au

Draft Gumeracha Library Refurbishment



Community Engagement Outcomes

November 2022

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1 INTRODUCTION

This report presents the qualitative and quantitative feedback from the engagement with the community conducted from 15 August to 4 September 2022 regarding the draft concept plans for the Gumeracha Library Refurbishment.

This report will be made available to those who participated in the consultation and will be available on Council's Have Your Say Engagement Platform.

The consultation comprised an opportunity for the Community to provide feedback via hardcopy and online survey response as well as providing submissions by email, letter or phone contact. A copy of information provided on Councils Have Your Say Engagement Platform and feedback form is available in Appendix A.

26 Respondents provided their feedback on the draft concept plans via the online and hardcopy feedback forms. A further 8 participants provided a response via email or written response.

Verbatim comments received through the online and hardcopy feedback forms are provided in Appendix B. Written and email feedback is provided in Appendix C.

2 SUMMARY OF ENGAGEMENT

2.1 BACKGROUND

The planned upgrade to the Gumeracha Library and Service Centre is a key Council project for the 2022-23 financial year. The upgrade is aimed at making the space more welcoming and user-friendly including a refreshed service counter, updated shelving and furniture.

Draft concept plans (see Appendix A) were shared with the community from 15 August to 4 September 2022 and included:

- A revamped children's space as a key feature with cosy nooks, fun play areas and whimsical features to inspire and engage young minds
- A large reading and/or study table that can accommodate multiple uses – such as craft or cards and board games.
- Refreshed reading and sitting areas
- An updated service desk with accessible options
- New shelving for library items, including large 'book store' style wall shelves

2.2 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Community consultation was undertaken with the Community over 21 days from Monday 15 August to Sunday 4 September 2022.

Consultation was undertaken in accordance with Council's Public Consultation Policy.

2.3 ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

Our engagement approach aimed to collect and collate community feedback about:

- how people feel about the draft concept plans for the Gumeracha refurbishment
- whether it meets their needs and expectations; and to
- provide an opportunity to raise anything that might be missing.

Feedback could be provided via an online or hardcopy feedback form, email, mail or phone. An informal 'Drop-in' session was held on Monday 22 August from 10.30 - 11.30 to chat about the changes with Library staff.

2.4 DISTRIBUTION AND PROMOTION

The opportunity to provide feedback was promoted through a number of channels including:

- Advertisement in the local Gumeracha Grapevine print edition – 27 August 2022
- Direct emails to key stakeholder and community lists including specific library user groups and Have Your Say Engagement Platform registrants
- Posters, information sheet and hardcopy feedback forms available at the Gumeracha Library and Service centres

Email promotion statistics are presented below:

15 August 2022

EHQ Email to 216 Recipients

142 unique opens (62.6%)

18 unique click throughs

Emails also sent to (no stats available on open rates):

- Friends of the Gumeracha Library
- Gumeracha & District History Centre
- Gumeracha Town Hall Committee
- Gumeracha Kindergym
- Torrens Valley Children's Centre
- Gumeracha Primary School
- Gumeracha RSL
- Gumeracha Community Association
- Gumeracha Main Street Project

3 PARTICIPANTS

This section provides details about participation during the engagement period.

Participants are considered to be those who were aware of and informed about the consultation process and also chose to provide their feedback. The number of aware and informed people who chose not to provide feedback is presented within the table below:

Table 1 Aware, informed and engaged community

	Email	EHQ Platform
Aware	142	82
Informed	18	54
Engaged	Within EHQ Platform	11

3.1 PARTICIPATION RATE

The following table displays the level of engaged participation.

Table 1 Level of Participation

Activity	Number Participating
Online Feedback Form	10
Hardcopy Feedback Form	16
Written response – email and written letter	8
TOTAL CONSULTATION PARTICIPATION	34

4 FEEDBACK

All responses received during the consultation period were analysed (16 hardcopy feedback forms, 10 online feedback forms and 8 written responses). It is worth noting that some feedback responses were representative of a group rather than 1 person but it has been counted as 1 response.

4.1 OVERVIEW OF FEEDBACK

The feedback from the online/hardcopy feedback and written responses was mixed, with many positive responses to the proposed plans and some constructive feedback on furniture and fittings and the overall layout.

- The children's space had mixed feedback. There was lots of positive feedback, with many respondents feeling very enthusiastic about the proposed design, layout and size of the space. Conversely, some respondents thought the space was too big. There was a suggestion for some sensory toys to be included in the space.
- There were a range of views on the layout and general look and feel. Some thought it was fresh, practical and nicely designed while others were not impressed by the design and thought it too open-plan or 'stark'.
- Some concerns were expressed regarding particular furniture such as the large reading table which was shown with power points in the centre.
- Respondents expressed a desire for comfortable furniture and suggested amendments to make some items more accessible and inclusive.
- A number of respondents (6 out of 30) disliked the proposed reduction of computers from 4 to 2. Other respondents expressed that the proposed reduction is in line with current usage and that very often all of the computers are unused.
- A number of respondents (6 out of 30) thought the proposed plans included less space for shelving and the physical library collection.
- Key stakeholders of the Gumeracha complex expressed support for the proposed library entrance which is open to the foyer. Respondents stated this would be supported as long as access to toilet and kitchen amenities through the foyer space was not reduced.
- Most of those who provided specific feedback on the proposed counter were enthusiastic about the design, including the proposed green colour choice. One person was concerned it was too large and two people were concerned that it would be too small for volunteers to work adjacent to Library and Customer Service staff.
- A number of respondents (5 out of 30) made comments about the heritage items currently in the library and enquired or made suggestions about alternative locations.

Online and hardcopy feedback is provided verbatim in Appendix B.

The full written responses are available verbatim in Appendix C.

5 CONCLUSION

There was a range of sentiments expressed in the feedback, with many positive responses and some constructive criticism. This feedback has been incorporated into the final concept plans.

Key changes made in response to the feedback, include:

- A small reduction in the size of the Children's area
- Grouping lounge furniture and seating near the reading table
- Locating the youth collection together next to the Children's collection

In addition, feedback on the furniture and fittings will be taken into account – particularly around accessibility – when final selections are made. Staff will also look to select some appropriate sensory toys for the children's area.

There was some concerns in the feedback that library and customer service equipment will be removed from the space as they were not included in the draft plans. The Council documents kiosk, printing kiosk, library self-check and reservation shelf will remain in the library as important parts of our service delivery.

Staff are working with community groups on the relocation of heritage items to other spots within the Gumeracha complex, such as the foyer, Town Hall and History Centre.

APPENDIX A – Information Provided and Feedback Form



The poster features a colorful geometric pattern of triangles in shades of orange, red, and green at the top. The title 'Gumeracha Library Refurbishment' is written in large white letters. The Adelaide Hills Council logo is in the top right corner. The main text describes the planned upgrade to the Gumeracha Library and Service Centre, aimed at making the space more welcoming and user-friendly. It lists the draft plans being shared, including a revamped children's space, a large reading and/or study table, refreshed reading and sitting areas, an updated service desk, and new shelving. A note states that the images are illustrative only and will be refined through the detailed design stage. A call to action asks for feedback by Sunday 4 September, providing an email address and a phone number. An orange speech bubble contains information about a chat session on Monday 22 August. The bottom of the poster shows a row of books.

Gumeracha Library Refurbishment

Adelaide Hills COUNCIL

"Our planned upgrade to the Gumeracha Library and Service Centre is aimed at making the space more welcoming and user-friendly with a refreshed service counter, shelving and furniture."

The draft plans we are sharing with you include:

- a revamped children's space as a key feature with cosy nooks, fun play areas and whimsical features to inspire and engage young minds
- a large reading and/or study table that can accommodate multiple uses – such as craft or cards and board games.
- refreshed reading and sitting areas
- updated service desk with accessible options
- new shelving for library items, including large 'book store' style wall shelves

Images shown are illustrative only and will be refined through the detailed design stage.

Share your feedback with us by Sunday 4 September by sending an email to Jess via jcharlton@ahc.sa.gov.au or calling 8408 0479 ... 

Want to have a chat with us and hear more about the plans?

Pop in on Monday 22 August between 10.30am and 11.30am

Gumeracha Library Refurbishment

We'd love to know what you think.

Share your feedback by:

- Completing a feedback card and placing in box provided
- Sending an email via jcharlton@ahc.sa.gov.au
- Calling Jess via 8408 0479
- Using the online feedback hub - engage.ahc.sa.gov.au
- Chatting with us here on Monday 22 August 10.30am - 11.30am

All feedback must be provided by **Sunday 4 September**

Gumeracha Library Refurbishment

We'd love to know what you think.

Place your comments in the box provided

COMPUTER AREA



COUCH AREA



KIDS ZONE



GUMERACHA LIBRARY **PACT**
Concept Design

AERIAL VIEW: FLOOR PLAN



ENTRANCE



GUMERACHA LIBRARY
Concept Design

**PA
CT**

APPENDIX B – Verbatim comments from Feedback forms

What do you think of the draft Gumeracha Library Refurbishment?
Unnecessary, given that council rates have risen so much in recent years.
Not impressed with this design at all. Going from 4 computers to 2 is not acceptable. The 4 computers here now may not be always in use but there are many times when 3 or 4 are in use at the same time. The plan also shows that the bookshelves are going down from 6 to 4 so we are also apparently losing many of our books as well. The children's area takes up far too much floor space in what is already a small library. Personally I see no need to change anything; it is a complete waste of money.
Thank you for setting out Council's thoughts on the refurbishment of our Library at Gumeracha. Whilst we appreciate advice of your proposals we feel that as users of our Library over the past 30 years, the Library is more than adequate for the users of the four computer terminals which can sometimes be fully booked. Halving the computer terminals to only two will not suit the needs of the community. We now have adequate room to display CDs, DVDs and Books, further displays for magazines and reserved books and magazines. The new proposal appears to show that we will have less books etc on display. I feel whilst the proposed alterations are commendable they show a lot of unusable space and take away from the very usable setup currently in use. We currently attend the Library at least three times a week to reserve books and magazines and use the Library computers as the signal on our property is very poor and we rely on the computers at our Library. If you wish to contact me you are welcome to on ***** If Council wish to improve the amenities, not water in the mens and womens toilets would be much appreciated. The Library at the moment is excellent the way it is and the Librarians and volunteers are very helpful and worth their weight in gold..
I love the green panelling around the reception area. I also think the children's area looks great especially the tree and I look forward to bringing my daughter to this area. I also appreciate the touch of Aboriginal culture in the art on the stools.
Would be good to have some afternoon kids stuff available eg. storytime. For the parents who can't make morning sessions. Love the new design and all for the upgrade. Would also love to have more sessions like the other libraries in the Hills as it's a long drive from Kersbrook to Stirling etc. Having a sensory space for kids would be fantastic.
Like the kids area. Great if it is light and warm
Children's corner way too large and should be in position of current space. Hardly any children attend library. No security shown for library and foyer, Library should be closed after "trading". "Study/quiet" computer table too close to front counter. Should be in area already appointed. Front counter too small for Librarian and TVCC Volunteers to work.
I do Storytime at Gum. I need somewhere to sit and the children need seating and parents need seating. Plus somewhere to colour pictures. The toy section is a distraction. We need an action area for movement and dance. Hard surfaces are a danger. Spoke to Kate via phone to further understand feedback provided on the hard copy form. She added further comment: Loves the tree and would love to use that for storytime. Would want to make sure it was a comfortable sitting spot. The little houses against the wall are adorable and the little table in the larger one would be useful for colouring. The comment about toys being distracting was about the existing space. Some little baskets would be useful in the new space if we need to remove any toys during programs so they don't distract kids.

This is so beautiful I love the kids area
It looked nice and open but it also looked like there was very little shelving to put books on.
Overall it looks very grey, The green counter is nice but the rest is so bland, more like an office than a inspiring place of literature. The book selection needs to be bigger than it currently is, it's always hard to find a book without ordering it in.
Please with the proposed upgrades
I like the design and that the children's area is brightly coloured. It is great there is an area at the customer service desk for wheelchair accessibility. My only query is if there is the capacity for expanding the history center into the library or incorporating it in some way to make it more accessible to the public.
I think the plan sound good however I wish you would rotate the books on offer as I feel over the years the same books are there year in year out. The toy library when I was last in was severely lacking in choice, what was on offer was tired, dated and not very interesting. Having seen what other toy libraries offer, I think you need to provide a far greater choice for our youngest members.
1. There appears to be less shelving for books, DVDs etc 2. Is there a move to remove antique furniture items from library/foyer/passage to TVCC? 3. The foyer needs to be clear for events in the hall, ie. no reduction in access
1. Will the refurbishment include the volunteer area for JPs? If so, what will the area look like? 2. Is it possible to have a private area for JP services to provide a degree of privacy for customers as opposed to just being in the open space?
As a volunteer, the most common complaint is that there aren't enough books to choose from. More shelving needed. Reduce the size of the under-utilised play area.
Shelves/desk look hard and uninviting. Paint the walls bright colours, green/blue/orange Desk too large/counter area. Soft play area/children's area; kids are baby goats.
Too stark and white. Looks like a medical reception.
Table: Large enough for project work for clients researching history and other works. It needs to be just outside of the history centre door. Table: The pictures of proposed upgrade show i electric's charging facilities, which should be flat with the table surface to enable total table surface use for large projects. Kid's area: I accept that kids will be kids, but noise is distracting for clients and History Centre staff on phones etc. General Interest: There should be a dedicated private area for the JP and for rate payers conducting Council business which is not public knowledge.
As a visitor to your district, the Gumeracha Community Library is a fantastic centre. What is available is outstanding so what is working should be left as is.
1. Agree on a greater children's area 2. Disagree with research/computer area, would appreciate a quieter area/room 3. Disagree with spartan open plan 4. Unlocked access causes me some minor concerns
The 'solid' new wooden shelves are a 'backward' design feature - went out with the 'Ark'. Open steel shelves that are current give a more welcoming and open look. How many fixed computers - not all older people have laptops to bring to library. Must keep the same number of 'fixed' computers. Not very impressed by the design - desk area ok.

Plans are not ok. Computers are well used. Please do not reduce.

Upon first view of the concept plan, it looks clean and modern with hope that the upgraded areas will prove popular and well used in the future.

On closer inspection, whoever did this plan didn't properly place spaces with the actual measurements, ie. the proposed computer area [there is more outside wall, currently with a wall hanging on it - keep the hanging].

The childrens' area looks fabulous but is way out of proportion to current use, any future use and the rest of the library area. The statistics for story time would tell you this, gone are the days when the library was full of children coming for a range of activities. The best that happens these days beside storytime, is colouring in in the holidays. Other activities come via the community centre. The shelving is great, the tree is questionable [lots of safety issues for tots] and appears to tower over the space. Half the size still future proofs the area, and move it to the other side [where currently chairs are continually stored].

The computer area needs to keep all 4 computers, they are used and often. Move them to pods or set them on the adjacent wall.

The computer table, if, as it seems, it has connections for power, doesn't need to be as large, smaller maybe oval. All of this in the same area that the computers are in now.

Nonfiction on the shelving on the wall. Keep the big table, it is used all the time, and belongs to the community and the library. Move the miners couch back to the foyer, where it was comfortably used, it too is a community asset.

The proposed couch area is a joke, 2 chairs and a table with and a useless shelving unit, and cheap prints on the wall.

Put the comfortable furniture, chairs and coffee tables in the area at the entrance [where currently have the toy library, and a old couch]. This would be welcoming and comfortable, put the magazines there. People would use their devices there, as they do now in the foyer.

Currently this area is often a bomb site, full over oversize toys, awful shelving and has become a dumping group for parents to let their kids run amok. Find another home for this stuff.

It is a well-known fact that the council has a lot of good furniture warehoused that could be used instead of buying new and overpriced 'ikea' rubbish. In the current environment, sensible reuse is good given we the ratepayers pay substantial rates these days. It wouldn't detract from remodelling and moving things around.

There is also the fact, that is is possible to blend the heritage with the new, and still create a library people wish to continue to use. Planning for the future, includes keeping the patrons you have, not sending them down the road to ttg, [where the majority go] by providing services and collections that they want. Currently some people go to the library to read the hard copy of the newspaper, not everyone wants them online nor wants to. So by getting rid of the papers, is a turn off.

The entrance and the desk, all very bland. Those that work behind the desk are best equipped to comment. However if you are taking away the security for the sake of appearance, I sincerely hope that the Council's insurance policy is happy with this move, as it opens the area to damage and theft. As a ratepayer I am not happy with this aspect.

The back wall [history centre door] would benefit from painting 'pale eucalypt', a colour that improves the ambience, and would cover the marks left by the picture rail.

Have a photographic competition showcasing the torrens valley, its scenery and nature, to find examples for the walls, instead of crappy prints.

Also:

- keep the selfcheck machine (not obvious in plans)
- what happens to all the recycling bins in the library?

- How long will the library be closed for this upgrade?
- upgrade the photocopier so we can print directly from USB and devices

Jess, all the best. Where approp - copies to Sara, TVCC and History Centre. I don't expect detailed formal reply. I hope I have been supportive. All the best, [REDACTED]. P.s The first invitation to share in any formal way. Thanks.

Library Internal: individual members to respond. Openness to the Foyer - with existing unimpeded access to the Town Hall - Kitchen - toilets for the public and Hall hirers ets - full endorsement. Security and responsibility for the library equipment etc remaining with the Library, and our co-operation guaranteed. Sittin here today - the grey walls of the Library invites some art work - again in co-operation perhaps with the TVCC, when possible.

Foyer: established as a shared and social area - important to maintain - also providing for School Library group and group activity visits with suitable flexible Furniture, Kitchen hatch available for usage etc.. and some discussion cordially invited. A possible second counter, suggested to me, seems to erect another administration barrier the opposite effect of the "R" plan, and may seem to indicate a working division in staff service, administration, Instead of inter co-operation, a feature of the civi centre.

The large frame woven art (history of the township) donated for the Centenary of Australian Federation by the Local Spinners and Weavers is widely and tremendously admired at its present site. The Doorway to the passageway to Torrens Valley Rooms and Facilities needs inviting signage, and publicity enhancement.

Passageway - Civi centre township historical display area. It arose from being planned in the construction of the Civic Centre. It linked the "Stage" with the Dressing room / understage. We will ask for this to be restored for this purpose, at this time of consultations although strictly quite separate from the Library.

The Dressing Room - Understage. The Town Hall Committee received a \$6000 grant Arts SA and with volunteer local input the result was valued at \$24,000...serving as a preparation green room. The Community Hall-Room able to serve the purpose, this area is now serving for as necessary storage area.

The Torrens Valley Community Centre Building was built, funded by a Grant from the Federal Govt. "Regional Partnerships" obtained by the Town Hall Committee and the Adelaide Hills Council.. working together. This illustrates the long co-operation and resourceful relationship that the Committee has and continues with the Council and its facilities in this Gumeracha Civic Centre, and all to continue.

Separate page listing Gumeracha Township Heritage Items.

Library: Painting Pro Hart original; Table - glass top historic institute Lib. Origin 1862; Chairs - six (one missing at 2022) padded and suit above.

Foyer: Pictorial - Historic Time Line Scene - Cloth Woven 2001 Centenary Federation- Spinners Weavers Group; Miner's Couch - CWA Donations at dissolution presented at 2001.

Passageway: (stage to understage and TVCC extension 2003) Framed pictures Historic Scenes Gumeracha Township

Balcony Mezzanine: Randell Family Pictures - Historic Settler, founder of township. To History Centre and Hall, Family donation. Furniture - Table, Cupboard, chairs, CWA donation at dissolution. Books etc - heritage collection, historic and special items

RSL Room Feature Wsll - Township War Memorials: WW1, WW2, Primary School WW1 and Bench Tables - 12 Arm Chairs (mobile) [Donation - former District Council of Gumeracha].

Grounds: Centenary Flag Pole SA Centenary, SA 1936, Township 1939. [From Hall Frontage - currently 2022, by Oval Entrance safe keeping].

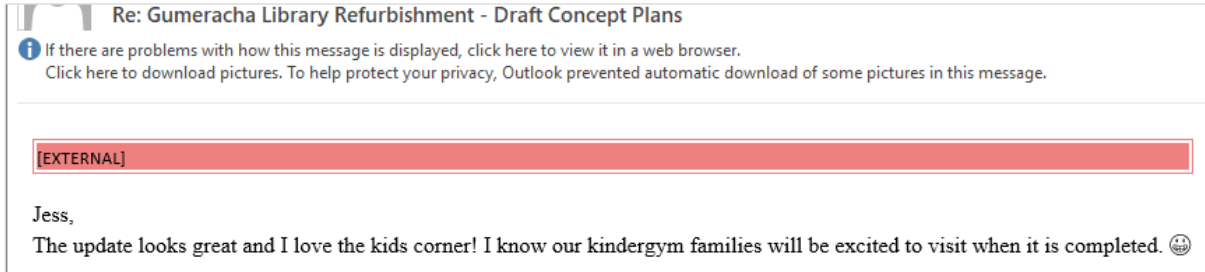
re library refurbishment: so long as foyer access as a shared area to town hall, kitchen, toilets etc with library legally responsible for its security not later passed onto hirers - there is no cause for

objection - indeed an attitude of progressive support - change is always in vogue- with cares about costs. discussion and negotiation needed re local township heritage items, in foyer, history photos in passageway downstairs, a shared foyer an ongoing township asset

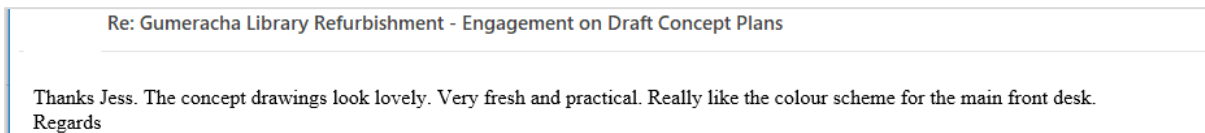
3/9/22. The only thing raised with me officially has been with computers (2). When installation occurs maybe Council able to expand later if necessary as less expensive to set up - if later needed. Occasionally all 4 comp. under use - but very often all unused. (?). [REDACTED]

APPENDIX C – WRITTEN / EMAIL FEEDBACK

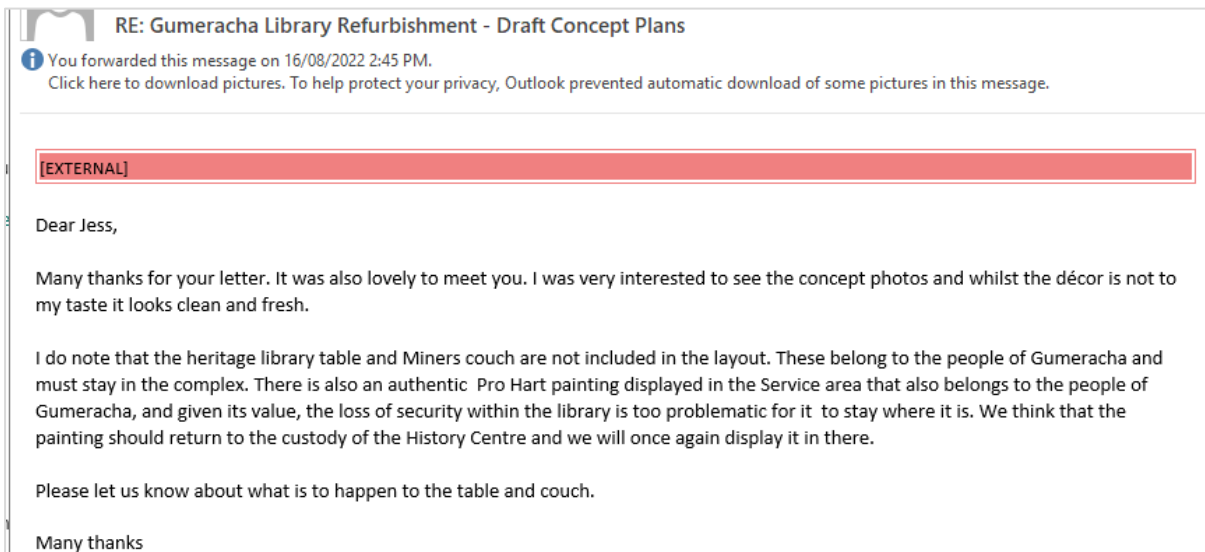
Email Feedback 1:



Email Feedback 2:



Email Feedback 3:



Email Feedback 4:

Feedback on draft plans for the Gumeracha Library Refurbishment

Transferred to Records Hub

 You forwarded this message on 24/11/2022 2:22 PM.

Hi [REDACTED]

I'm writing to provide some feedback on the draft plans for the Gumeracha Library Refurbishment...

I engaged [REDACTED] to undertake a desktop review of the draft plans.
[REDACTED] is an accredited access consultant, who uses a wheelchair)

[REDACTED] has provided us with the below comments, for your consideration. Please let me know if you would like further assistance, eg with design specifications etc.

Warm regards

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 1 September 2022 10:50 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Review request - Gumeracha Refurbishment Concept Plans
Importance: High

[EXTERNAL]

Hi [REDACTED]

In regards to the proposed refurbishment of the Gumeracha Library a make the following comments:

- In regards to the staff service desk, while there is a designated accessible counter proposed, I am concerned by the overall height of the counter. The height of the counter would be a 'barrier' for a person using a wheelchair or of short stature when trying to converse with a library staff member. Furthermore it does not consider the likelihood of a future staff member using a wheelchair or being of short stature. The accessibility of the counter should not be limited to the designated accessible counter 'around the corner' but should be integrated and apply to the whole counter.
- In regards to the desks and seats associated with the proposed 'study table', it would be recommended that one section of the table is height adjustable so as to cater for a person using a wheelchair who requires additional clear leg space.
- In regards to the proposed 'free' couch style seating, it is recommended that armrests be provided on the seats to assist elderly residents who may require additional support when getting up out of the seats.

I hope this assists in providing an accessible and inclusive library environment.

Regards,

Email Feedback 5:

 RE: Gumeracha Refurbishment Concept Plans

 You replied to this message on 7/09/2022 10:06 AM.

Hi Jess

I have only worked at Gumeracha twice recently (prior to that has been years) so a bit rusty on the set up. However just a few thoughts regarding plans. Hope I am on the right track as hard with dimensions etc from plans:

Open shelving behind Library desk appears quite high to reach top section, could it be dropped down and potentially have doors (can look untidy)

Normally 2 volunteers at TVCC but only allocation for 1 at sit down desk. What will happen to second volunteer. Public area at Gumeracha is wasted space. Could a desk be put on the back wall in communal space for volunteers, would see them on entry. That would give ability to have an extra council staff member use the sit down desk (if working on library collection/phones as needed) or could use if doing cases etc

Hoping decent amount of desk space – note that returns bin is under area where you would normally serve customers. At Woodside desk space very limited so would like to make sure that this is addressed at Gumeracha. Is there room for a trolley or similar close by for decanting books through returns.

Looks like reduced space for storing stationery/information (removal of compactus) given there is probably a lot at Gumeracha that could be removed should be OK but perhaps room for a storage cupboard in the back work room?

Note that no roller door to prohibit access into the library after hours. Not sure how this will work with security alarm or keeping people out when staff not working e.g. during kids programmes after hours - potentially could have them running through library, taking books, leaving mess etc

Like the kids area. Is that tree chair for adults to use for story time. If so wonder about the comfort of the point at front of chair. Might be better to have rounded edge.

Doesn't appear to be any seating for parents if kids sitting on floor. Sofa or some stackable chairs perhaps?

Some kindy type tables against the wall for craft/drawing/lego would be useful unless those round tables can accommodate a few kids at a time?

Like the look of the grey reading chairs but hope they aren't too low (hard to get out of) for elderly patrons

Looks like shelving reduced for library collection – are the kids books going to be in that area? Couldn't tell from the plan

Already heard a few grumblings from customers the other day when I was there regarding reducing public PC's. Not sure if they are the demographic to use laptops? Perhaps laptops with a keyboard and mouse as some are not user friendly for older customers

Like that the kids area is away from reading desk and staff area. Had kids session the other day and was extremely loud.

Email Feedback 6:

  RE: Gumeracha Refurbishment Concept Plans

Hi Jess,

I saw this one on Saturday shift. Looks great, love the kids and reception /office area a lot.

Well done, you!

Email Feedback 7:

RE: Gumeracha Refurbishment Concept Plans

 You replied to this message on 18/08/2022 4:37 PM.

Hi 

 and myself have had a good look at the refurbishment plans. Below are our thoughts. Would like to talk in person but just so you have them in writing.

Front desk

The more we think about it we would like to explore having a desk in the foyer space for the community centre. Yesterday we had a volunteer admin team meeting and independent of our thoughts, this was suggested by one of our volunteers and the whole admin team were keen on it. As mentioned the community centre has an identity crisis, so often feedback is that people don't know the centre is downstairs. If it's a possibility the back wall space would be ideal.

Multi use / children's space

We are keen to work with your team to activate this space. As you know we have volunteers that run story time and cards and games in the library already. With the right space programming can be further enhanced. With space in mind the size of the children's section might need reducing in terms of flexibility of the space.

I know we discussed it and it isn't in these plans, but a small kitchenette is crucial to this. As much as tea/coffee and food sounds like a minor detail, we know it is an important part of pretty much every program that runs in the community centre. Not having access to this in same space as the main activity space will really limit what groups want to be there. Of course this would mean shared responsibility for cleaning and maintenance of this space. We find that groups are good at tidying up after themselves, our volunteers tidy and we also help keep things tidy and stocked up.

Easily moveable lightweight furniture like downstairs is also important, as well fold up tables that have a place to be stored in the library.

Meeting room

At our admin team meeting, volunteers raised the number of queries they get for a confidential meeting space. There is also the JP Service which operates from the foyer, which isn't ideal given the information they are dealing with. I know we already raised this in our earlier conversation, but the comments from the team yesterday reinforced that there is a need in the community for this. We have the downstairs meeting room, but this is often hired out so not always available.

Security

The more we have thought about it, we don't see an issue with no security shutters. Something a bit more obvious than bollards like a concertina type screen might be worth considering though, mainly for when children are in the foyer from junior gym.

Computers

Two computers is fine. Our admin team reinforced the low usage and liked the option of having a laptop or two available if there was a need for more.

With the laptop table, we wondered if the power points flat on the table is an option. It would make the table more multi use. For example cards and games could even be played there if it didn't have a divider.

As you are after other CD team feedback, I have forwarded it to Josh for an access and inclusion perspective. Also we have encouraged the admin team to submit their individual feedback even though this gives you an overview.

Regards,  



Written Feedback 8:

Wed 31 Aug 2022

Dear Jess Charlton, Manager Library & Customer Services, Adelaide Hills Council

I am writing to you about the Gumeracha Library Refurbishment.

Unfortunately my comments are predominantly negative.

Most of the difficulties with the proposal really come down to two main points:

- The room is just too small to fit the intended, yet competing, uses
- It is yet another step in removing and diminishing the facilities and services used consistently by the local community in the northern portion of the Council area.

Counter Space

Alone within the AHC area, the Gumeracha Library depends upon volunteers for its operation. The 34 opening hours are made up of 18 hours of staff time and 16 hours of volunteers.

Now with a central access, on the right there is a counter and a computer only for AHC staff. On the left is the volunteer counter with their two computers. A good design with physical spacing between people. It works well with two volunteers co-operating. Volunteers are part of the community too.

You want to replace this with a continuous counter that has only one computer for one volunteer. It removes the 'social distancing' that exists between staff and volunteer(s). Indeed it puts the chairs close together making physical clashes much more likely.

Passage 2 is an egress to an emergency assembly area. You are extending a shelf for a pot-plant into it.

The recess created below the surface on the customer side is an excellent space for children to 'hide' in. The counter is 'just right' to cause head injury to children.

I am disappointed that the proposed design will reduce the opportunities for the volunteers.

Dedicated Children's space

The present Children's area has existed for more than 4 years. It is only used for a one hour session on Wednesday morning (just under 3% of the opening time) when someone visits to read to a group of about 5 or 6 children and sing nursery songs. Old McDonald Had A Farm is a particular and much repeated favourite, particularly as this area of the Council is predominately rural.

Pretending that it will get used if made bigger and made a dedicated space is just a fiction. Pretending that AHC will commit resources cannot be believed. This would go against the dogged determination by AHC to always diminish its provision of services in Gumeracha.

The proposal indicates an intention to move the Children's space to the diagonally opposite corner to make a Dedicated Children's space and increase its size.

Why relocate it anyway?

Why increase the floor area when after at least 4 years the existing arrangement only gets used for just under 3% of the time? It already is wasted space and a wasted opportunity

Your own recent AHC Libraries Strategy contains statements such as:

- "... and the reconfiguration of libraries as flexible community spaces."
- "... while providing services that are relevant ..."
- "Contemporary libraries offer their communities dynamic and flexible spaces ..."
- "Future library design and refurbishment needs to factor in a high degree of adaptability that can accommodate new and varied purposes and collection reorganisation."

Having a Dedicated Children's space that reserves a considerable amount of limited available floor space does not comply with the AHC Libraries Strategy that you yourself produced, indeed the proposed refurbishment directly renders important parts of the Strategy impossible to meet.

I made a visit to the Woodside Library. There the children's area is away from the adult part of the library and so study areas can exist. There is no permanent structure such as you desire for Gumeracha. There is a space with a low wooden table. Children were on the floor around that table.

The children's area at Woodside complies with the AHC Libraries Strategy. But you want a non-compliant arrangement at Gumeracha.

There is a 'pot of money' allocated to Gumeracha library. Spending it on something that already does not get used will use up valuable floor space so leaving insufficient space for what the community actually uses. Thus by no longer providing much needed facilities the community will just 'go away'.

Library and Customer Service Functionality

Currently there is a flat-screen provided to access the library catalogues and a second labelled as 'Documents Kiosk' to access AHC information. One of these has been removed in the new design.

Access to the information on the 'Documents Kiosk' is a statutory right. Removing this from Gumeracha imposes an extra 15 to 20 minutes travel time (each way) to Woodside.

Currently there is a Photocopier / Printer / Scanner in the library. Next to this there is a screen used by the public to release items for printing. Below this screen is a payment unit. Both the payment unit and the screen are essential for the public to use the Photocopier / Printer / Scanner. They will be removed.

In the intended design, the public will no longer be able to use the Photocopier / Printer / Scanner.

Currently there is a self-service unit for the public to check books and other items in and out.

In the intended design this self-service functionality has been removed so staff must perform this task. Volunteers are not permitted to do this.

Next to the self-service unit is shelving where the public can collect items that they have previously reserved. This is another component of the self-service aspect. This shelving has also been removed from the concept design. Instead of looking for themselves, staff or volunteers must do this task.

The self-service unit and the adjacent shelving seem to have been replaced with a pot plant, inconveniently positioned at a corner within an 'access flow path'.

The shelving for newspapers and periodicals has been removed from the intended design.

AHC has a statutory obligation to publish Public Notices in the local newspapers. Removing newspapers and access to Public Notices will result in a less informed and involved community.

The newspapers are read at the library by the local community then used by the local history group.

Sometimes the local newspapers take a different view on situations to AHC. Removing access to potentially contradictory views is censorship.

Of course from time to time the newspapers may view AHC favourably. Councillors may find this helpful, particularly in an election year (if they have represented the community well).

Computers in the Library

As a frequent user of the computers I have found the decisions made by AHC over the last six years to progressively remove computer facilities from Gumeracha library very concerning.

This proposed refurbishment is just another step along that path.

Some years ago there were a number of computers (I think four) in the library section and a room in the Torrens Valley Community Centre (TVCC) had six computers that had been donated to the Council and were used for Training Courses conducted by a local volunteer.

The public was forbidden from using those computers at other times and the room was kept locked.

Then with a change of staff, the community was permitted to use those computers at other times. In total there were ten computers available.

Then the staff decided that the computer room should become a Virtual Reality (VR) room and the computers were removed and two were added to the library area. It thus became impossible to provide the computer courses at Gumeracha.

That room now does not have any VR setup, but instead has some fold-up tables stored and a table and a few chairs.

The VR equipment seems to have been only used once when safety barriers were erected and the public were allowed to use it, but only after signing a waiver because of the potential danger from its use.

I think that the decision to remove those computers from TVCC and so make it impossible to continue established training courses was wrong.

Then the number of computers in the library was reduced to three along a bench on the wall to the workroom. Broken chairs that did not comply with OH&S regulations were provided.

Then those computers were moved to the present position and four are available. These are used regularly and often three are used at the same time. The space next to each computer has been reduced. It is no longer possible to have an A3 size piece of paper next to a computer.

During my visit to Woodside, I took measurements. At Woodside there is space for an A3 size piece of paper next to a computer, the desk space is 1.47m x 0.75m. At Gumeracha the space per computer is 1.20m x 0.60m. So the space per computer at Gumeracha is 65% of the space at Woodside.

In September 2021 a statewide change was made to the internet access available within libraries that stopped much internet access at Gumeracha. In September I reported the fault to staff at Gumeracha and was told that as it was a statewide change, all library computers had the problem.

Having visited Tea Tree Gully library and finding that their computers had no restriction while Gumeracha computers still had restricted access, I wrote to Andrew Aitken in October 2021.

It soon became clear that Woodside library and Stirling library had no restriction. Staff access at Gumeracha was not restricted.

It was just the Gumeracha public computer facilities that were being stopped from having proper internet access. I first noticed the restriction because Family Tree data sources could not be reached. But parts of the SA Attorney General website could not be accessed, likewise the Law Society and most local businesses could not be accessed.

It took six months until the Gumeracha public were again able to properly access the internet on the library computers.

It is impossible to believe that had the same problem been present at either Woodside or Stirling it would have been allowed to continue for six months.

Currently one of the four computers has had another fault uncorrected for two months.

With the existing physical arrangement, I have on multiple occasions been hit by the trolley used by the volunteers to return items to the stacks. The intention is to reduce the number of computers from four to two and hide them in a tiny space behind a shelving unit.

The intention is to put the photocopier/printer/scanner and two computers against the wall between the windows. This is a 3.5m space. The photocopier will need at least 1.5m. It is impossible to usefully position two computers within at most a 2m space.

The proposed Refurbishment has further reduced the computers to two in a tiny space and on a tiny table barely large enough for the equipment. It will be impossible to put any paperwork next to the computers.

At the Ordinary Council Meeting on Tue 23 Jan 2018, the ICT & IS Strategic Plan 2017-2020 (aka Information Communication Technology and Information Systems), was presented for 'Information'. Although this is now out of date by over 20 months, this is still the Strategic Plan on the AHC website.

Jessica Charlton – Coordinator Service Strategy and Innovation was part of the Engagement & Consultation in the preparation of this Plan.

The Summary to Council is relevant here:

[Technology enhances] the customer experience in meeting community expectations.

[AHC] also strives for greater access to services for our community.

[The ICT & IS Strategic Plan] also supports the delivery of the key technology based strategies ... to support community connectivity with the provision of internet services in townships.

And the ICT & IS Strategic Plan 2017-2020 has Goal 1 Access: "Council strives to provide access to systems that support high quality customer experiences.

There does not seem to be a footnote: "* Does not apply to Gumeracha", indeed Goal 1.4 is "We will endeavour to deliver a consistent user experience across all access options".

The same sentiment exists in the Strategic Plan 2020-24, A brighter future, Goal 2 – Our objectives, C1 A community that is for everyone – that is inclusive, welcoming and accessible, with C1.1 specifying libraries as "welcoming spaces". And Goal 5: O2 Our customers ... have an improved customer experience, and O2.4 ... improve performance and service delivery across all functions.

Reading / Study table

This is shown with eight chairs that are impossibly close together.

The position of the table does not satisfy the Access and Inclusion Plan 2020-2024 which incorporates state legislation and UN documents. Your proposal creates new access barriers.

The Process

On Tue 22 Mar 2022 you brought the Draft Libraries Strategy to Council when it was 'received and noted' and 'approved for public consultation'.

You returned to Council on Tue 24 May 2022 with the Final form of the Libraries Strategy. This was adopted to commence on 7 June 2022.

This is now on the AHC website dated May 2022.

The feedback was significantly approving of the Library Strategy.

A key finding was "Concerns that the physical collection would be overly reduced"

In your Library Strategy there is no recording of computer use. Other Councils record this metric.

The Libraries Strategy states that "Contemporary libraries offer their communities dynamic and flexible spaces" and has 'Objectives and priorities' that "meets the needs of the community" and "Our community has access to resources that support an informed and engaged community".

But only two months after your own Libraries Strategy was adopted you are proposing to make the space at Gumeracha be anything but dynamic and flexible.

The existing children's area is barely used, yet although frequently three of the four computers are in use you create a new and larger dedicated children's space and reduce the computers to two in a tiny space where at most one can be effectively used.

Your answer to me was that I should reserve the computer or bring a laptop was at best unresponsive to the needs of the community. I do not have a laptop.

Your approach directly contradicts your own Libraries Strategy.

I do not want to be in competition with the other regular library users just because of your desire to reduce the number of computers below the number needed to meet the current community needs.

That you should get your Libraries Strategy adopted to commence in June and then abandon it in August, indicates that it was just a 'box ticking exercise' and your own Libraries Strategy has no relevance to you just two months later.

At the Council meeting of Tue 25 June 2019 a Report by an external Consultant was received by Council. The Consultancy Firm was selected because they were "experienced in the library sector".

The report runs to almost 80 pages. In 10.2 Technology utilisation, (s)he states:

the demand for access to library PCs is likely to expand over coming years

Research and experience from public libraries around South Australia demonstrates that booking systems are not usually taken up by patrons who expect to access a PC on arrival (or shortly thereafter) in a public library.

As more people continue to supply and use their own devices in library spaces, it may be tempting to assume that a considerable reduction in PCs would equalise the equation. However, caution is urged in this space.

the need for numerous publicly available PCs is likely to continue.

However you are doing exactly the opposite of the advice from the experienced consultant.

Your Libraries Strategy informs us that "Recent State Government funding ... has been partly tied to the delivery of digital literacy support services and this is expected to continue".

Considering this aspect of funding, removing already well utilised computers is courageous.

Yours sincerely