

# THINKING OUTSIDE THE SQUARE.

Unconventional but realistic  
models for future country public  
libraries

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- A study of *feasible* and *non-conventional* future directions for the uses and services provided by country public library services, based on previous domestic studies, and international examples in practice.

# Thinking Outside the Square: non-conventional but realistic models for future country public libraries.

## Executive Summary

*Through research of recent and ongoing studies into service delivery options for public libraries, a series of options were isolated which could be applied to Victorian country public libraries. Issues such as funding, ownership and partnerships were addressed to put the ideas presented in context, and the result is a feasible plan for the Swan Hill Regional Library for 2003-2008 and beyond which is not only likely to be adopted by Council, but will lead to the service thriving and increasing its relevance into the future.*

## Project In Detail

### What do I want to achieve?

- A model with sufficient long-term resources to provide a range of services to as broad a market as possible, utilizing partnerships, fee-based services, non-conventional activities, and flexibility.
- Explore all works/studies completed or in progress to prevent any duplication of research not deemed to require further work.
- Undertake on-site research into library services utilizing aspects of the final proposed model in the UK, including the effects of Best Value.

### Stage One:

**Research all recent and ongoing studies in the areas of service provision, to ensure basic services are maintained and developed.**

My key sources of information included various annual reports and studies-in-progress, in addition to contacts through interstate and overseas library associations.

Ms Adele Kenneally, CEO, Glenelg Regional Library Corporation, who is undertaking research regarding the management structures of Victorian Regional Corporations versus municipal services, has kindly provided other information. Ms Kenneally has been empowered by her Board to pursue the development of service agreements with member councils in order to dissolve their existing Corporation. As Swan Hill has undergone this procedure in most respects, a great deal of information-sharing has taken place.

I will also be maintaining strong links with Mr. Russ Elwin, CEO, Wimmera Regional Library Corporation regarding the results of an ongoing project into service delivery.

My intention was to have examined all of the major issues facing country public library services, then to compile a list of viable activities and/or services to progress to Stage Two. Examples of some or all of these programs, models or activities in practice in the United Kingdom would then form the basis of my study tour.

- **The issues and perceptions**

A detailed examination of recent studies into service delivery and sustainability of public library services in Victoria, and isolating aspects of recommendations that can be applied in practice.

Preliminary findings from *Taking services into the future: project on service delivery strategies for country libraries in Victoria* would indicate that “potential partnerships” are a viable option, but that these “have yet to be pursued in terms of operating efficiencies and maximizing local resources.”<sup>1</sup> Other recommendations which would benefit from further exploration, particularly of such programs in practice, are “opportunistic funding.”<sup>2</sup>

It is my opinion that relating experiences of partnerships from interstate do not assist with the establishment of these in country Victoria, as the passage of time has often obscured the original catalysts and political climate which may have led to the developments.

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<sup>1</sup> MacroPlan and Practico, 2000, *Taking services into the future, a project on service delivery strategies for country libraries in Victoria, a report for the Local Government Division of the Department of Infrastructure*, DOI, Melbourne, p.45.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*, p.50.

I am also researching issues discussed at the Library Odyssey conference held at Kalorama during March 2001; this was the true catalyst for this project, and also the first time in the seven years of my librarianship experiences that people have thought outside the square. It is also indicative of the survival mode that many public libraries have found themselves in, that with a minimum of 300 people visiting their services per day, or 40 per open hour, ideas such as those discussed at the conference haven't been explored to a greater extent.

A more proactive approach to *altering the perceptions* of stakeholders and the community was a crucial issue given plenty of discussion time.

The unfathomable but apparent perception by state governments that libraries are constantly seeking more and more money for 'their' services is evident in responses to approaches by library peak bodies. The perception of many library practitioners was that 'we' are regarded as 'whingers'. That the resources required for maintaining and improving *services* to taxpayers, which are derived from the taxes of voters seems to have escaped higher government levels. The absence of public library prominence in the Labor Party's "Knowledge Nation" document is once again evidence of this. ***(This sounds too political)***

There is an urgent need to change this perception to acknowledge the cycle of money from the community and back into the community.

An opportunity exists for local government to provide leadership and benefit from positive responses from the community through support and ownership of their libraries. By acknowledging that ratepayer contributions provide the bulk of services, utilizing fee-based services to off-set costs of non-core activities, and forming partnerships with their libraries, councils face a win-win situation.

My country colleagues in the Wimmera and Glenelg are undergoing detailed analyses of their respective services, one looking more at the management model in operation, the other ensuring long-term sustainability and service delivery. Both, however, have at considerable length looked at innovative ideas for service delivery and use of strategic partnerships. This information, coupled with my own research and examination of the Swan Hill situation, will enable a clearer path to be followed.

While the Regional versus Municipal issue is vital to the decision-making process, it is the leadership issue which can cloud future planning. Only now are some Victorian councils beginning to act on their instincts and drive their library services; dissolving corporations, formulating service agreements and playing a larger role in the leadership of libraries. This has been brought home by the response to the paper *Issues for Victorian Public Libraries in 2001* which was funded by the State Government.

At an early stage in my research, it became clear that some preliminary findings could be applied to the Swan Hill Regional Library. Extending these out to their logical conclusions has led to seeking several examples of what I would like to see in action in the course of my study tour.

### **Stage Two:**

**Research progressive rural library services in the United Kingdom to plan a study tour to examine the following aspects:**

### **What I was looking for... examples and ideas from home and abroad.**

#### **1. Additional non-conventional uses of the physical facilities,**

Much has been written about the 'little' things that libraries provide in their physical facilities; from storytime sessions to community meeting rooms and local history displays or collections. However, there are regions that remain unexplored with respect to non-conventional activities.

The focus of this section is to isolate some examples or possibilities and examine them in action both in Victoria and the UK.

One example of this issue is the possible assumption that any such activities should be conducive to the library; at Swan Hill Regional Library we experienced this in attempting to utilize additional space at the rear of the new building. Trying to find a suitable 'tenant' whose operation was conducive to ours has meant that over 18 months later, the space is still vacant. What is the definition of 'conducive', and are we setting too tight a constraint on our scope for such areas? In this case, a financial return was seen to be the driving force behind an external tenant.

With the \$12 million Public Library Infrastructure Program midway through its three year life, this multi-use factor must become more important.

Some examples are detailed in the next section, such as economic support and performing arts. While these relate directly to the physical scope of the library building, they are best explained as new services or activities outside the scope of traditional services provided by the library.

Community display space is another item which may be in short supply. In Swan Hill, there exists a vast amount of historical material and artifacts that belong to the community, either in the form of donations to Council from sister-city ties, or original items of the history of the town. These are distributed between Council Chambers, back rooms, the Town Hall and the Pioneer Settlement. I agree that some historical items belonging to a community should be used to some extent to provide some income for that community. Used in conjunction with tourist activities such as the Pioneer Settlement theme park, which is a popular tourist attraction - but is avoided by locals – this is appropriate. Items that are best made available for public display due to their historical significance perhaps should go in the location with the greatest exposure. Unless a township has a central display facility that is free and user-friendly to encourage locals to browse the collection, this location is the public library.

Although many towns have a separate dedicated art gallery, there is potential for sharing of facilities in the form of merging the two services (as explored by Glenelg), or utilizing a portion of the library for samples of current or upcoming exhibitions.

## ***2. Additional services or directions for library services,***

In addition to the storytime sessions, home library services and bulk loans, what other services or directions can libraries go whilst retaining their 'traditional values'? Once again, are we establishing our own guidelines, which restrict what we will do and not do as free or fee-based services for our communities? Are there skills or procedures within our libraries operations that can lead to greater sharing of resources or efficiencies with our governing bodies?

As an aside, what incentives could there be from these radical directions: what benefits do a library membership hold? What is the difference of being a member other than borrowing privileges? Is there a market or niche out there which, through non-conventional usages or services, could be attracted to not necessarily joining a library, but utilizing services offered, whether they be fee-based or free?

Once again, the focus here is to look at examples in action.

Several alternative service options described in brief in other studies but which I intend to explore on site are:

- Economic support
- Local history/information center
- Performing Arts
- Other Council Services

It can be seen at a glance that several of these areas are Council programs. This study shall examine the feasibility of absorption into the Library of some of these programs. This is an example of a strategic partnership within council, thereby making more effective use of finite resources to achieve the best result for the community.

### **Economic support**

*The Library's contribution to your community: a resource manual*, is an invaluable guide to start from. It discusses the uses of libraries as economic support to the community, thus integrating aspects of Council units such as Economic Development. In addition to the range of information resources which make the Library the logical port of call for research, the increasing amount of home-based businesses are a target group for such a service. A 1996 study showed that by 2000, there would have been as many as 40% of US households with at least one person operating a home business.<sup>3</sup> [[EXTRAPOLATE TO AUSTRALIA, ANY STATS?]]

The SHRCC operates a business information service via its Economic Development Unit (EDU), which also houses the Swan Hill Booking Office, and Visitor Information Centre. The EDU's main objectives are to assist existing businesses achieve their growth potential, alleviate business impediments, market development and investment opportunities and facilitate investment initiatives. A further objective involves the provision of a 'business information service'.

This service currently is not under a high demand; according to the EDU Manager, this is due most likely to the amount of information available via the Internet and through groups such as Small Business Victoria. The service offers referral to sources of advice rather than the raw information required by small business. The EDU Manager also mentioned his preference towards production of 'flow-charts' to assist people in their search for information.

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<sup>3</sup> IER Planning, Research and Management Services, et al, 1998. *The library's contribution to your community: a resource manual*. P. 53.

I would propose that the Library become that 'flow-chart'; we have the necessary resources and reference skills to do the work to set people on the correct path. By forming a partnership with the EDU, the Library could ensure interested parties were taken to a certain stage or level, then referred to the EDU for detailed follow-up and issues such as planning permits and regulations (once again, Council programs).

The EDU is also responsible for the Visitor Information Centre and Performing Arts Booking Office. With up to 300 visits per day, the library must rank as a potential partner in both attracting people to these services, and marketing.

*Example:* A potential model in brief could involve a division of responsibilities between the library and EDU. The EDU could concentrate on major events, marketing of the region outside the community, attracting major business development and investment, while the library provides the booking and tourist facilities, and aspects of the business information service.

**Impediments:** level of staff training and confidence in these areas, range of open hours, technical issues (easily resolved), effects on current EDU structure.

In the United States, a cooperative of 27 libraries has created entities called Economic Development Information Centres (EDIC). Based in Arizona, the EDIC network provides the following benefits:

***EDIC's in libraries throughout the state will:***

- expand access to current business information resources available to small business owners and community and economic development professionals, especially in smaller communities throughout the state.
- build partnerships among libraries, businesses, the community and economic development professionals and, as a result, improve services to the business community.
- make libraries a part of the "support system" for local economic development.
- provide an opportunity for library staff members to regularly communicate what is available to the business community and economic development professionals.
- provide a "Gateway" to the Internet, the world wide computer network and other electronic information services.
- lay the foundation for other innovative library services.
- expand the public's views of the library's role in the community.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Arizona State Library, Library Development Division, 1999. *Economic Development Information Centres website.*

## **Local Historical Information Centre**

Through discussions with the local education community, it seems that the largest 'gap' in our knowledge is local information, especially information of historical significance.

By raising the profile of local history, which is the only form of information not readily available via electronic means, opportunities exist beyond greater usage of resources. This area is not only crucial to the provision of a fuller picture of information for the communities served, but also to researchers from afar who make the journey to Swan Hill for such information. Just as preliminary discussions with local education centers have shown that this is the one area lacking for students, it therefore must impact on non-institutional researchers.

The task to make these collections more readily accessible is not a small one, as this part of Library services suffers from lack of resources more harshly than most sections. Reliant on project-based funding, local history collections are often goldmines waiting to be explored due to their limitations in format. While in Victoria, there is a move to address this, preliminary studies have shown that the task at hand to make all collections electronically accessible is a massive one, and best achieved at a local level.

*Victoria Visualised: the Victorian local history digitization study* conducted for the State Library of Victoria, provided a series of recommendations which could be implemented over a 3-5 year period, provided a commitment of funding was forthcoming.<sup>5</sup> Many of these recommendations, however, parallel issues raised in the Issues Paper for the Victorian Library Policy, and rely on State Government support and extensive partnerships.

Several of the more realistic recommendations put forward include:

- Recognition of the importance as an educational resource and seeking links with this sector as early as possible,<sup>6</sup>
- Public libraries should seek partnerships at the local level, including local government, education community groups, TAFE and local businesses,
- Development of a volunteer program to provide training, advice and support.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> State Library of Victoria, 2001. *Victoria Visualised: the Victorian local history digitization study*. Page 7.

<sup>6</sup> State Library of Victoria, 2001. *Victoria Visualised: the Victorian local history digitization study*. Page 5.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, Page 6.

The most encouraging aspect of the document is the acknowledgement of the fact that local history belongs locally, and should be driven by local needs. These local needs differ from library service to library service, depending on factors such as community group ownership and input to the collection, and the degree to which the collection is regarded as important.

Within most regions, several historical societies exist which each have their own priorities and goals, and can be protective of their valuable material. By becoming a focal point for activities such as reformatting, cataloguing and conservation, the public library can benefit by increasing its range of local resources without removing the individual groups' ownership of their collections.

Recently Swan Hill has experienced a significant number of researchers using our on-site resources and often this has involved weeklong accommodation and exposure to the town's features.

Surely this is an opportunity that may be capitalized on.

In my opinion, the ongoing problem of reformatting local history material to a medium whereby it can be remotely accessed is not likely to be resolved quickly. Even if it were, this would not necessarily mean that researchers would no longer visit the area to conduct research; restricting access to membership status would allow free or cheap access to this material and provide another incentive to join the library. The community who owns the information would thus retain free access, and this is another step towards Council developing a sense of leadership and community ownership.

### **Performing Arts**

With the move by the current State Government to address the building infrastructure issues in Victorian libraries, an opportunity exists for additional services that will enhance libraries in general.

As mentioned earlier, Swan Hill has a large un-used area at the rear, which has been much discussed, but not yet utilized for any worthwhile purpose. A user group is keen to utilize a portion for an interactive wildlife display, which would make sense and provide a useful tie-in with their resources and knowledge of that area. However, this would reduce the remaining area to a size not suitable for anything but office space, which is hardly regarded as productive community use.

The purchase of the building would also provide greater scope for development of the available space into a true community information facility. Funding exists within Arts Victoria, through the Regional Arts Infrastructure Fund for this kind of development.

### **Other Council Services**

Recent surveys have shown that a supportive local Council is vitally important.

As the major stakeholder or contributor, the Council has an opportunity to provide strong and effective leadership through their community's library service. A non-supportive council may result in poor resources, reduced hours of operation, and staff feeling insecure.

According to a study commissioned by the State Library of NSW, library staff felt that "not being associated with council in the eyes of patrons was a bonus", but that despite this, most patrons were changing their perceptions to become aware of council's place as the major stakeholder.<sup>8</sup> By absorbing some or many council services or programs (both for internal and external customers), libraries are in a unique position to enhance their place in the community.

It is a fact that ratepayer contributions make up the bulk of recurrent public library funding in Victoria. It is also a fact that as a service, public libraries are a direct conduit of that rate contribution back to the community. By increasing the amount or range of services provided to the broadest possible range of community groups and individuals, surely this is an example of Best Value in anyone's language. Topped-off with fee-based or value-added services used by a minority - and therefore not being subsidized by the majority - this can only be of benefit to Council.

Examples could involve Youth Services, particularly with the volume of younger people utilizing the Internet facilities of libraries, and council services referral or feedback for certain areas.

### **3. Successes or failures of these uses and/or directions,**

Having established examples of the above, and located examples in practice in Australia and the UK, a close look at how well they have fared is essential to determine long-term viability. The

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<sup>8</sup> Public Libraries Branch, SLNSW, 2000. *A safe place to go: libraries and social capital*. P.31.

level of success would be determined by the economic impact, any increased efficiencies and community response.

**4. *Perceptions of the rural communities towards their library services' new directions (through direct community consultation),***

In this age of increased community consultation, it is vital to ascertain the community's perceptions towards the more radical options: are they of true benefit, or do they exist behind the scenes for the majority and people are not even aware? As mentioned above, this will also assist in gauging the success of the activity or service.

The application of Best Value in the UK should provide information in this area which is easy to access.

**5. *Rationale behind these decisions (what was/were the catalysts),***

In most cases when a variation to the norm has taken place, there was a catalyst that required a reaction, or circumstances changed and the organization reacted accordingly. For the purposes of the project, I wish to familiarize myself with these as much as possible in the time available. This will greatly assist in assessing the viability of applying these decisions elsewhere; without an appraisal of the circumstances of a library service, there is a risk of inaccuracies.

**6. *Governing body support and/or leadership of these 'radical' options (how the processes were managed)***

My preliminary research is also intended to make contact with representatives from the individual libraries' major stakeholders or governing bodies. I will develop a series of questions designed to discover how the process was led, what issues arose during the implementation, the level or extent of the governing body support, and ongoing comments or tangible results as seen by this level.

I intend to use resources such as the Library Association's Public Library Division, plus other contacts I have already established contact with these resources to begin gathering information as soon as possible. A representative from Wales branch of the Library Association, in

attendance at a conference in Manchester in early July, will be reporting back on what he has found whilst undertaking some networking.

The intention is to plan the study tour to methodically visit each of the highlighted locations to make best usage of time (please see below).

**Stage Three:**

***Conduct a two-week study tour of the United Kingdom to examine the six (6) aspects above in the rural library services isolated in Stage Two.***

My intention was to conduct the study tour over a two-week period involving no less than four (4) library services. By allocating 2-3 days per location, this would have allowed for a hands-on approach to information gathering that included interviews, on-site tours and meetings with program prime movers, and direct community feedback. The eventual selection of the UK over the US meant that travel times and costs within the country would be less, and thus my study tour could be extended a further week within the proposed budget. The number of days at each service would also be governed by access to representatives of the major stakeholders or funding bodies, to ascertain not only 'both sides of the story', but any differing perceptions. As my Strategic Objective brief is to provide something that can be adopted by my Council, the opinions of both the communities and funding bodies are vital to my project, and hence I have concentrated on feedback from these stakeholders to ascertain success and performance levels.

Preliminary work has revealed that the UK offers much in the way of options to explore. The fact that the Best Value set of principles is in place can only assist my study; Swan Hill Regional Library is not scheduled to undertake the Best Value review until early 2003.

[[INCLUDE PROPOSED/FINAL ITINERARY AND REASON FOR EACH LOCATION – TABULAR FORMAT WHICH RELATES TO EACH OF THE ISSUES THROUGHOUT THE STUDY]]

**Stage Four:**

***Reporting to Council with recommendations, and provision of a full report on all findings.***

As the overall objective of this project is to provide recommendations for adoption by the Swan Hill Rural City Council, it is in my interest to ensure my reporting methods are as clear and

concise as possible. The report generated for the SHRCC will include all aspects but briefer detail of the various stages involved.

My final report to the Library Network Unit will be in the most appropriate format for publishing as an article, but also be provided in full comprehensive detail for fellow country library practitioners.

I shall also be including a preliminary draft of the recommendations 'action plan', a table of the actual timeline for implementation of ideas into this service.

### **Preliminary Findings** (for SHRL)

Recommendations to ensure sustainability and relevance (no order):

- Solidify ties with Council (including ISP – concerns with Vicnet and Libraries Online)
- Enhance profile of Local History through local education partnerships; develop strategic plan for LH resources
- Utilise SHRL for Council - community consultations
- Seek sponsorship for short-term projects and ongoing programs
- Purchase of the building
- Seek Arts Victoria funding under Regional Community Arts Facilities grants for performing arts center in rear for up to 50 people (up to \$50,000 on a dollar for dollar basis)
- Absorb aspects of EDU to Library operations (booking office, visitor information, business information center)
- Absorb aspects of Youth Services, or base Officer in library
- Raise profile of local history locally, to include in core services of library operation
- Establish criteria for involvement in statewide or national projects that may have doubtful long-term recurrent funding, or benefits that cannot be readily proven.
- Commercial services:
  - Research Package (30 minutes of trained staff time to search all resources available, provision of one floppy disk of download information or equivalent of printed material, reference interview for set fee – e.g. \$11.00; modeled on Vision). This would require a rostered staff member responsible for this task, to make sure undivided time available.
  - Book repairs or binding, \$7.70-11.00 depending on type or book and works required (set of charges for various tasks involved to set final fee, provide quotes),
  - Leather bound book restoration, referral to Melbourne-based business, we attach a handling fee once costs and postage covered, maybe 20% on top of cost?
  - Other

Diagram of a proposed model, adding what needs to be in place or supported to work.

<b>Library Services Now</b>	<b>Library Service Proposed</b>
Borrowing membership Loans of books in Adult and Children, fiction and non-fiction, many sub-categories and genres, magazines, videos, Music CD's, Large Print books, Cassette Books	Collection for loan will include CD books, DVD's. Membership will also entitle free access to Local History reformatted material
Mobile Library Service	To be maintained; upgraded with new trailer. Two-way satellite access when cheap option, will provide scope for Mobile Rural Transaction Centre
Children's Services, including Saturday Storytime, special	Weekly events in conjunction with Council After School and School Holiday Programs
Free Internet for information searching, with print and download facilities	To be maintained. Provision of fee-based research service for in-depth requests on short time frame (aimed at businesses or non-member researchers).
Email at pay-per-use	To be developed into an entity such as the SHRCC Visitor Centre Email Cafe
Reference Collection, including ABS, Vertical File	To be maintained and assessed to level of hard copy required
Local History collection, including hard copies of photographs and documents for browsing, Oral History collection, newspapers on microfilm. Maintained by volunteers with Library assistance.	Listed as core service of Library operations, with clear line items and isolation within annual budget. Development of Strategic Plan to ensure priority within operations and higher profile with Council. Encourage community groups to have indexed records of their collections included on the searchable database. Provided with assistance in grant funding for equipment and training to undertake this.
Archive for storage of local history donations	Develop into active work area for 'flow' of

	priority items to reformatting for greater access
Photocopier, coin-operated	To be maintained
Word processing/desktop publishing PC with print and download facilities	To be maintained, according to demand
Family Search CD-ROM access, printing facility	To be maintained.
Meeting Room, also for quiet study	Develop facility for community group usage and Council program usage for training.
Interlibrary Loan service, fee-based	To be maintained, costs re-assessed
Daily newspapers for browsing	To be maintained
Passive display space	Develop areas within Library for rotation of community historical assets, utilizing existing cabinets from Council buildings. Also use as promotion for Art Gallery exhibitions with samples on display in this display area.
Home Library Service, with volunteers	Develop to incorporate IT to ease operation and accuracy of service, greater staff input on monthly activities
Access to Genealogical and Historical Society for family history research	To be maintained
Internet access to Gulliver online full-text journal and magazine subscriptions with membership	Develop payment method to include schools paying share, or encourage as another membership privilege
Community group collections incorporated into main collection	Continue to develop
	Establish Performing Arts theatrette in rear area for 50-70 person audiences, and to be used as a training facility.
	Business Information Service established for small and home-based businesses; establish links with EDU for referral of cases at a prescribed stage.
	Establish Visitor/Tourist Information Centre Office in Library (large "i" sign at front)
	Absorb Council archives of historical significance to Library collection
	Library theatrette used for Council community

	consultations
	Provision of fee-based services for book repairs and detailed restoration

## Swan Hill Regional Library – Future Directions 2002-2006

Timing	Action	Benefits	Possible Impediments	Financial Implications and Support Required
2001-2	Establish community display areas and permanent rotating Council memorabilia displays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permanent location and high-exposure for community</li> <li>• Stimulate local history activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nil</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minor works required</li> <li>• Input from Cultural Services Group</li> </ul>
2002	Finalise Internet provision to provide best value for the service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service level agreement with provider</li> <li>• Factor in scope for change, if any</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pressure from Vicnet, etc</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening of Council link</li> </ul>
	Utilise Library for Council Best Value community consultations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High exposure, likely to generate more feedback than any other location or public meeting</li> <li>• Positive environment</li> <li>• Up to 300 visits per day</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nil</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council support</li> </ul>
	Develop local history strategic plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In conjunction with educational partnerships, develop this asset to benefit the community</li> <li>• Raise the LH profile by including as core service with line items in budget</li> <li>• Could be used as positive aspect for community consultations of Best Value</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time availability of volunteers for input</li> <li>• Isolation of financial line items for budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voluntary support</li> <li>• Council adoption of recommendations</li> </ul>
2003	Library undergoes Best Value process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through the Best Value process, the Library will</li> </ul>		

		have the opportunity to gain feedback on initiatives undertaken and planned		
2003-4	Council purchase of Campbell Street building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The full scope of opportunities for the facility will be possible with ownership by Council</li> <li>Fees and charges would be no longer 'dead' money</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Currently paying \$865 per week rent</li> <li>Same expenditure over 15 years would pay loan for purchase</li> </ul>
2004-	Seek funding to establish performing arts theatre at rear of Library.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New access point for performing arts in the area</li> <li>Income generation though after hours bookings</li> <li>Raise Library profile for events to be attracted to the area</li> </ul>		
2005	Absorption of several EDU activities to Library operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Movement of resources to better manage local activities in these areas, whilst retaining some booking and tourist facilities in the EDU</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visitor Information</li> <li>Booking Office</li> <li>Business Information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EDU would retain major events, attracting major business to the region, some booking facilities (due to range of open hours), specialist business information.</li> <li>Library would become Community Information Centre (CIC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>300 per day visiting, large numbers of tourists using email</li> <li>High exposure to promoted performing arts events</li> <li>Business information for</li> </ul>	

			local small and home-based business	
	Change name to "Swan Hill Rural City Council Library & Information Services", establish new strategic identity			
Other	General Ideas	Specific Details		
Other Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Links with local schools and TAFE</li> <li>• Develop the SHADLA</li> <li>• Explore greater use of sponsorships for special events or activities</li> <li>• 2-way satellite Internet access for Mobile Library thus providing a rural transaction centre and better service</li> <li>• MurrayLink consortium extended to local area</li> <li>• Extension of existing services: Home Library Service, Children's Activities,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local History reformatting</li> </ul>		
To be avoided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing IT presence beyond that necessary to</li> </ul>			

	<p>provide free and fee-based services – no training facility with numerous PC's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Commitment to state-wide initiatives which are open-ended or cannot produce evidence of savings or efficiencies</li><li>•</li></ul>			
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