



AGENDA

CULTURE AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

11 FEBRUARY 2025

MEMBERSHIP: Councillors J Black, L Butler, S Chowdhury, J Cowley, M Dickerson, R Ivey, K Richardson, A Ryan, P Toynton, P Wells and M Wright.

The meeting is scheduled to commence at 5:30 PM.

Page

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|----------------|--|-----------|
| CCC25/1 | LEAVE OF ABSENCE (ID25/67) | |
| | | |
| CCC25/2 | CONFLICTS OF INTEREST (ID25/68) In accordance with their Oath/Affirmation under the Act, and Council's Code of Conduct, Councillors must disclose the nature of any pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest which may arise during the meeting, and manage such interests accordingly. | |
| | | |
| CCC25/3 | FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF THE FOWLER STEAM ENGINE (ID24/2449) The Committee had before it the report dated 30 January 2025 from the Cultural Development Coordinator regarding Future Management of the Fowler Steam Engine. | 3 |
| | | |
| CCC25/4 | MACQUARIE REGIONAL LIBRARY OPERATIONAL REPORT JULY 2024 TO DECEMBER 2024 (ID25/22) The Committee had before it the report dated 13 January 2025 from the Manager Macquarie Regional Library regarding Macquarie Regional Library Operational Report July 2024 to December 2024. | 10 |

**CCC25/5 VICTORIA PARK AMENITIES - CONSULTANT RECOMMENDATION
(ID25/73)**

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The Committee had before it the report dated 21 January 2025 from the Manager Recreation and Open Spaces regarding Victoria Park Amenities - Consultant Recommendation.

CONFIDENTIAL

**CCC25/6 TENDER FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF TEAMSTERS PARK MULTI-
USE COURTS (ID25/94)**

The Committee had before it the report dated 25 January 2025 from the Manager Recreation and Open Spaces regarding Tender for the Construction of Teamsters Park Multi-use Courts.

In accordance with the provisions of Section 9 (2A) of the Local Government Act 1993 the Chief Executive Officer is of the opinion that consideration of this item is likely to take place when the meeting is closed to the public for the following reason: information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business (Section 10A(2)(c)).



DUBBO REGIONAL
COUNCIL

REPORT: Future Management of the Fowler Steam Engine

DIVISION: Community, Culture and Places
REPORT DATE: 30 January 2025
TRIM REFERENCE: ID24/2449

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

| | | |
|-------------------------------|--|---|
| Purpose | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Seek direction or decision. | |
| Issue | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Seek direction from Council on the forward management structure for the care of the Fowler Steam Engine. | |
| Reasoning | <ul style="list-style-type: none">There are three fundamental options available to Council for the future management of the machine; continue to operate as a functioning steam engine, cease operation and present as a museum piece or sell. | |
| Financial Implications | Budget Area | Fleet Management Services or Cultural Development dependent on the decision made. |
| | Funding Source | Operational |
| | Proposed Cost | TBA |
| | Ongoing Costs | TBA |
| Policy Implications | Policy Title | Nil |
| | Impact on Policy | Nil |
| Consultation | Community | Wellington Town Committee |

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The Towards 2040 Community Strategic Plan is a vision for the development of the region out to the year 2040. The Plan includes six principal themes and a number of objectives and strategies. This report is aligned to:

Theme: 5 Liveability

CSP Objective: 5.6 The diversity of our heritage, cultural services and facilities are maintained and promoted

Delivery Program Strategy: 5.6.3 Items of heritage significance are protected, conserved and adapted for re-use where appropriate

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council proceed with one of the following three options:
 - a. Manage the Fowler Steam Engine as a part of the Dubbo Regional Council Fleet and Depot Services Unit within the Infrastructure Division, or
 - b. Add the Fowler Steam Engine to the Dubbo Regional Council Heritage Collection to be managed by the Cultural Development Team within the Community, Culture and Places Division, or
 - c. Sell the Fowler Steam Engine.

Craig Arms
Director Community, Culture and Places

JM
Cultural Development
Coordinator

BACKGROUND

The 'John Fowler 7 nominal horsepower Steam Road Locomotive' known as the 'Fowler Steam Engine' (FSE) was purchased by the Macquarie Shire Council (which would become the Wellington Council) in 1912 to support the upgrading of roads in the shire. The locomotive is known to have worked on establishing more stable roads between Wellington and Yullundry, Stuart Town (and on to Orange) Molong, Yeoval and Arthurville as well as working at quarry sites in the region.

In 1922, Council sold the locomotive to Jacob Offner of "Grace Hill" and "Spring Vale", Wellington. The Offners used the locomotive to assist with wheat threshing, chaff cutting, pumping water and land clearing until better machinery became available. The locomotive was sold to a Mr McNamara from Molong in the 1950s. McNamara is believed to have made repairs to worn parts as required. In the 1980s it was purchased by Peter Strickland of Narromine.

In the 1990s the locomotive was offered for sale. Wellington Council purchased it by public auction on 28 November 1994. Since the mid-1990s the FSE was used locally at festivals, community events and shows. It was housed locally in Wellington and was serviced during this time by Jamie Gersbach of Gersbach Mechanical.

In 2011, the FSE was placed on the NSW State Heritage Register. As part of this listing its significance is described as:

"The John Fowler 7 nominal horsepower Steam Road Locomotive has State significance as an example of a defunct and now rare technology that played a vital role in the construction of rural roads in NSW, thereby contributing to the increasing accessibility of regional areas in NSW across the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The operational status and good physical integrity of the John Fowler Steam Road Locomotive provides a rare opportunity to demonstrate the power and scale of the machinery required for major rural road building activity in NSW."

The inclusion of the FSE on the Heritage Register is an indication of the object's importance to the wider story of NSW and the State's growth and advancement. It also means some restrictions around the treatment and management of the object including changes or replacement of significant components, and long-term storage outside the LGA. Exemptions have been previously sought and granted for limited material replacement, short term storage outside the LGA (loans to other Council areas).

With the amalgamation of Wellington Council and Dubbo City Council the FSE was transferred to the new Council as an asset and the object responsibility was allocated to the Regional Experiences Branch. This Branch manages the Western Plains Culture Centre, Old Dubbo Gaol, the Wellington Caves and Council's Cultural Development Team.

In 2024, Council commissioned a Conservation Assessment of the FSE by O'Sullivan Conservation to review its current condition and to provide a forward plan for its ongoing care and to maintain its condition.

In 2024, Council was advised that Gersbach Mechanical could no longer service the engine and it would need to be rehoused and a new program of servicing would need to be established.

There is significant interest in this object within the community of Wellington. The community expressed pride for the object and would like continued access to the object by the local community and future generations. Establishing a clear future management plan for the object is vital to ensure adequate funding and resourcing is allocated and the community has clarity on the future for the object.

The FSE is currently stored at the Wellington Council depot.

REPORT

The future management of the Fowler Steam Engine (FSE) can follow one of three options. These options are mutually exclusive and best practice for each option will exclude the alternative.

The options are:

1. To manage the object as a part of the Dubbo Regional Council Fleet and Depot Services unit within the Infrastructure Division or
2. To add the item to the Dubbo Regional Council Heritage Collection to be managed by the Cultural Development Team within the Community, Culture and Places Division.
3. Sell the object.

Option 1: Manage as a Fleet Asset

Management of the FSE as a fleet asset will provide for the object's continued functionality and ability to be used as an operational item. It will be serviced, maintained and operational. Due to the age and specificity of the object, additional training for the fleet management team will be required as well as the allocation of resourcing to support the objects care. This may impact service levels for other programs.

This prioritisation of operational functionality recognises that the Wellington community have expressed a desire to see the object used in community events and will best support the use of the object in the Wellington community for as long as possible. Any decisions on the use (Hire or Lend) of the item to other communities would be the responsibility of Fleet and Depot Services to approve and manage.

The ongoing use of the object as an operational object may over time compromise the historical integrity of the object and eventually the materials and skills to keep the object in use (or in use without significant alterations to the original object) will no longer be available to council.

Ongoing use of the asset will mean parts will need to be sourced and replaced or if no longer available, fabricated with modern materials. Overtime, the value and significance of the object as a heritage object may be compromised with these replacements.

Fleet and Depot Services will be responsible for identifying and reporting to Council if the item reaches operational end of life and the object should then be grounded. If the item is grounded permanently, it will be assessed for possible inclusion in the Heritage Collection at that time, conditional to the extent or number of changes made to the object over its operational life.

It is important to understand that the operation of the FSE is a time consuming and hazardous undertaking that will draw staff time and resources away from standard operations for a number of days around each usage event.

Option 2: Manage as a Heritage Object

Management of the FSE as an item of Historical Object will prioritise the long-term preservation of the object, its condition, and materiality to ensure it remains as close to its original form and condition as possible. The original acquisition of the object by Wellington Council acknowledged its historical significance to the development of the region and its rarity as one of the few remaining examples in Australia.

As a custodian of this heritage, Council bears a responsibility to preserve the FSE not only for today but also for the benefit of future generations. By safeguarding its physical integrity and historical context, ensures this unique artefact can continue to serve as a bridge between past and future. It remains core to the standards of Museum/Heritage collection management outlined by the “National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries” (2023).

Management of the object as a heritage item will prioritise its long-term preservation over any active use, placing clear conditions on its care and handling. As a heritage item, it is recommended that the object no longer be used or operated but instead managed according to best practice standards outlined by the Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material, ensuring long-term preservation remains the primary focus. Removing the object from active use not only mitigates the risk of physical damage but also significantly reduces liability for Council. This approach eliminates the potential for the object to sustain wear or damage during operation and removes the risk of injury or harm to members of the community, reinforcing the Council’s commitment to preserving the object responsibly while safeguarding public safety.

Due to the significance of the object to the community of Wellington and its desire for ongoing access to the object, the FSE will require the provision of a site for long term storage and public access within the community of Wellington. Ideally this would be a location where the object would be kept safe and in (as viable as possible) climate stable conditions, this location would also need to be accessible to the public to ensure the community have regular/reliable access to the item.

Option 3: Sale of the Object

The third option available to Council is to sell the item.

The sale of the item may be restricted by its inclusion in the NSW State Heritage Register. Advice was sought from NSW Heritage regarding the possible sale of the object and the requirements/restrictions for consideration. This advice has yet to be received.

The object is currently valued at \$213,620.14 for insurance coverage. The market rate for an item of this nature is unknown. If this is an option Council wishes to investigate further, an updated significance assessment and valuation of the object will be undertaken at an approximate cost of \$5,000.

Community Management of an Operational FSE

The suggestion has been made that Council could initiate an Expression of Interest (EOI) process to identify a community group or organisation in Wellington willing to manage the operation of the item on behalf of the community. While this could provide opportunities for use at community events and fairs, it significantly increases the risks to Council.

These risks may include potential liability for safety issues, challenges in ensuring proper oversight and maintenance and reputational risk if the group fails to meet community expectations or regulatory requirements. Additionally, the operation of a multi-tonne machine around crowds presents a heightened risk of accidents or injury to individuals in proximity, particularly if the machine is not operated by highly skilled and trained personnel. Any mechanical failure, operator error, or unforeseen circumstances could lead to serious incidents, for which the Council may ultimately bear responsibility. The insurance implications around this are unknown. This option is not recommended.

Consultation

- Fleet and Depot Services
- Wellington Town Committee
- Wellington Historical Society (Wellington Museum)
- Cultural Development Unit

Resourcing Implications

Manage as a Fleet Asset

- Fleet and Depot Services have confirmed that they have sufficient storage space and can safely store the object.
- Fleet and Depot Services have also identified the need for additional training for mechanical staff to develop the skills required for maintaining the engine. External contractors will be engaged to provide this training.
- The annual maintenance cost for the object is estimated at approximately \$10,000, covering compliance inspections and routine upkeep.
- Preparing the object for external loans or community hire is expected to cost around \$4,500 per event. This includes staff wages, floatage, fuel, and other expenses. Based on historical usage, the object is typically operated three times per year, resulting in an estimated annual cost of \$13,500 to support this level of activity.
- Long-term financial impacts for managing the object are difficult to predict. It may require no significant maintenance or repairs for many years, but unexpected major repairs or maintenance could also arise.

Manage as a Heritage Object

- Council has no identified funding for long term storage and exhibition, nor a suitable location within existing facilities.
- The ongoing financial impact includes an annual increase in the insurance premium, estimated at approximately \$1,000 per year.
- An infrastructure investment is required to provide adequate storage for the object. Existing infrastructure options in Wellington are limited and may require leasing, construction, or modifications to accommodate the object. Funding will need to be secured through grants, with potential co-funding from the Council.
- Increased funding will be necessary for conservation treatments to preserve the object's condition. Recommended treatments, as outlined in the O'Sullivan Conservation Treatment Plan (2024), are estimated to cost \$8,500.

Insurance

The object is currently insured under the Fleet and Depot Services insurance coverage. Insurance is currently arranged through Governance on a dollar value basis across the fleet. The insurance policy for the Steam Engine costs Council \$4,631 for the 2025/2026 year based on a value of \$213,620.14.

Dubbo Regional Council's insurance providers have advised that if the object were designated and managed as a heritage item (removing it from active use) it would be fully covered under the existing fine art insurance policy (with a minor increase in premium), resulting in direct savings for the Council. In addition, Council would receive a refund for the current insurance premium on a pro rata basis. Council's insurance providers also emphasised that from both an insurance and risk management standpoint, it is highly unusual for an item of this nature to remain in active use. In fact, such a practice is exceedingly rare in NSW.



REPORT: Macquarie Regional Library Operational Report July 2024 to December 2024

DIVISION: Community, Culture and Places
REPORT DATE: 13 January 2025
TRIM REFERENCE: ID25/22

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

| | | |
|-------------------------------|--|---|
| Purpose | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a six-monthly report on the regional library service performance and activities to Member Councils. | |
| Issue | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance and Activity Review | |
| Reasoning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> <i>Library Act 1939</i> Library Regulations 2018 NSW Standards and Guidelines for NSW public libraries | |
| Financial Implications | Budget Area | Community, Culture and Places – Library Services |
| | Funding Source | Dubbo Regional Council Warrumbungle Shire Council Narromine Shire Council NSW Government Subsidies and Grants Other Income (Fees and Charges) |
| | Annual Operating Income | \$3,936,733 |
| | Operating Expenditure Y-T-D | \$1,794,938 |
| Policy Implications | Policy Title | Macquarie Regional Library Strategic Plan |
| | Impact on Policy | Operational Plan 2024-2025 |
| Consultation | MRL Regional Library Service | Council Community Needs Survey 2021 Library Customer Survey 2021 MRL planning documents (publicly exhibited) |

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The Towards 2040 Community Strategic Plan is a vision for the development of the region out to the year 2040. The Plan includes six principle themes and a number of objectives and strategies. This report is aligned to:

Theme: 5 Liveability

CSP Objective: 5.3 The lifestyle and social needs of the community are supported

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Delivery Program Strategy: | 5.3.2 A variety of youth activities and entertainment is available |
| Theme: | 5 Liveability |
| CSP Objective: | 5.4 Our community has access to a full range of educational opportunities |
| Delivery Program Strategy: | 5.4.3 Access to a high standard of library services and facilities is available |
| Theme: | 5 Liveability |
| CSP Objective: | 5.4 Our community has access to a full range of educational opportunities |
| Delivery Program Strategy: | 5.4.1 Access to a variety of high quality education facilities, opportunities and choice is available |

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Macquarie Regional Library Performance Report for July 2024 to December 2024 be noted.
2. That Council nominates a Councillor to be its authorised representative on the NSW Public Libraries Association (NSWPLA) for the Macquarie Regional Library to attend meetings and other forums as required.

Craig Arms
Director Community, Culture and Places

KM
Manager Macquarie
Regional Library

BACKGROUND

The Macquarie Regional Library (MRL) performance report provides a six-monthly update on the library's delivery and operational plans, drawn from the member councils' community strategic plans and the MRL Delivery and Operational Plan (2024-2028). The report provides results for various indicators, including a financial snapshot, memberships, loans, visitations, and regional library service initiatives.

Given this is the first report of the new Council, a general overview of how the MRL model of Library Service Delivery operates is provided.

REPORT

MRL Improvement Plan 2024-2028

Dubbo Regional Council's Macquarie Regional Library (MRL) Improvement Plan activities continue on schedule. The plan outlines the timeframes for implementing a range of improvement actions. The Council's continuous improvement approach underpins these actions, providing cost efficiencies and balancing the library services and programs to support community needs.

NSW Public Libraries Association - Central West Zone

The NSW Public Libraries Association (NSWPLA) is the peak body for public libraries in New South Wales. Dubbo Regional Council, Warrumbungle Shire Council, and Narromine Shire Council are financial members of the NSWPLA. Through the MRL partnership, the councils are active members of the NSWPLA and benefits from membership, including information sharing, professional development, policy development, partnerships, grant applications, and advocacy at the state and federal government levels.

Membership of the NSWPLA is open to all councils in NSW who have adopted the *NSW Library Act 1939*. Each member of the Association is requested to advise the NSWPLA Executive of the names and addresses of two persons nominated to be its authorised representatives at meetings of the Association. One of a member council's two authorised representatives must be an elected councillor ("the councillor representative"), and the other is generally the library services manager. Councillor L Lambert is the current Narromine Shire Council authorised representative.

Freedom to Read

The *NSW Library Act 1939*, NSW Library Regulations, and guidelines, ensure freedom of access to information, a fundamental principle upheld by Council-run public libraries across the state. Libraries work diligently to curate diverse and comprehensive collections that reflect the varied needs and interests of the local communities.

Cyber Security and Library Technology

An audit was conducted by an external firm, Centium, in 2024, regarding cyber security. The audit highlighted the need for the regional library service information technology environment to adopt corporate standards, controls, and processes of Council to minimise

cyber security threats. The audit was presented to Council's Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC) and staff are now working towards addressing the recommendations.

This critical need led to a comprehensive plan to integrate MRL Information Technology Infrastructure and operations into the DRC Information Technology framework. As a result, the library's information technology (IT) infrastructure and operations are being transferred to Council Information Services to standardise corporate IT services.

Merging the MRL IT and DRC IT environments is an ongoing commitment. It includes a thorough review and transition of responsibility and management, where relevant, for existing support processes, network and system architecture, key applications, contracts, and equipment.

Library Management System Upgrade

The library management system (LMS) was upgraded in December 2024 to a fully cloud-optimised and automated LMS, featuring a modern, patron-focused discovery experience, mobile operation, analytics, and fully integrated staff modules.

The system provides an updated catalogue search experience, combining physical and digital items in a unified search result. The library's online catalogue (WebOpac) interface was rebuilt, with a new look and colour scheme, as well as improved access features and functionality for library users.

MRL Website Upgrade

The MRL Website Content Management System (CMS) was upgraded in July 2024. The upgrade addressed potential security and operational issues associated with running an older version with limited support and the ability to update features.

The upgrade ensures the library website is current and fully supported. The MRL website benefits from increased operational effectiveness and reduces security vulnerabilities. It is compatible with modern web browsers, optimising performance and providing the ability to update to new features as they are released.

Dubbo and Wellington Libraries' minor refurbishments

The Dubbo and Wellington library minor refurbishments are progressing with a successful grant of \$90,260.00 from the State Government under the Public Library Infrastructure Grant program in 2024.

The Dubbo and Wellington libraries will have improved collaborative and individual study spaces with improved seating for comfort, accessibility, and useability, new furnishings, relocation of some collections, and USB charging facilities. The project completion is scheduled for December 2025.

Winter Reading Challenge

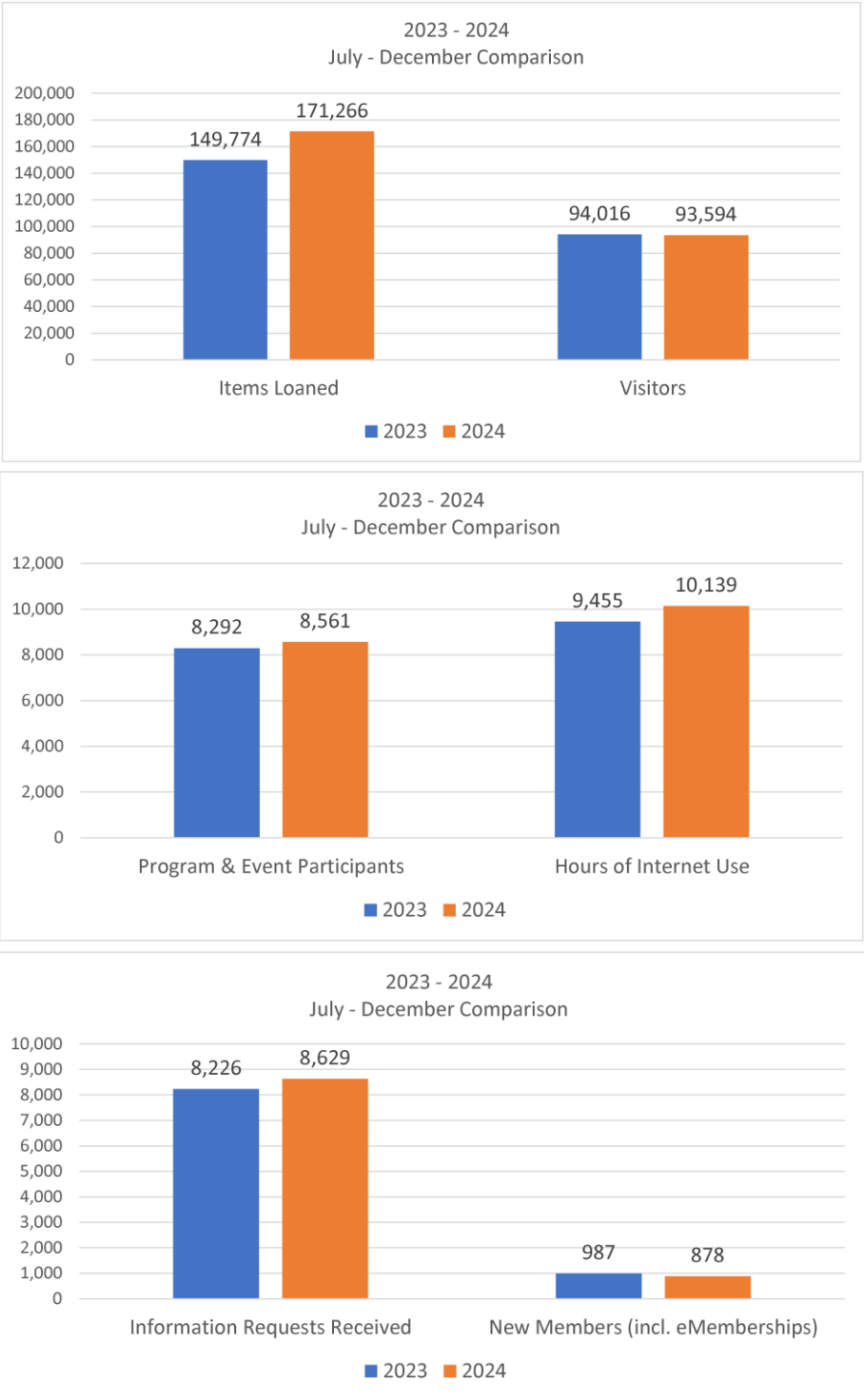
The all-ages Winter Reading Challenge continued in 2024, following a successful launch the previous year. The reading incentive program promotes literacy and reading for pleasure and attracts participants aged 6 months to 85 years. The Winter Reading Challenge utilised software allowing customers to log their reading from their devices. The program saw a 28%

increase in participants compared to the previous year. Two thousand nine hundred and sixty-six hours of reading were logged, a rise of 189% compared to the 2023 program.

Resource Collections

In December, new science kits were added to the collection. The kits are designed to provide an authentic scientific experience and include carefully researched and well-designed notes to help users get the maximum benefit. Topics include Virtual Reality, Magnetism, Circuits and Electricity, and Robotics.



















Statistical Comparisons – July to December 2023-2024



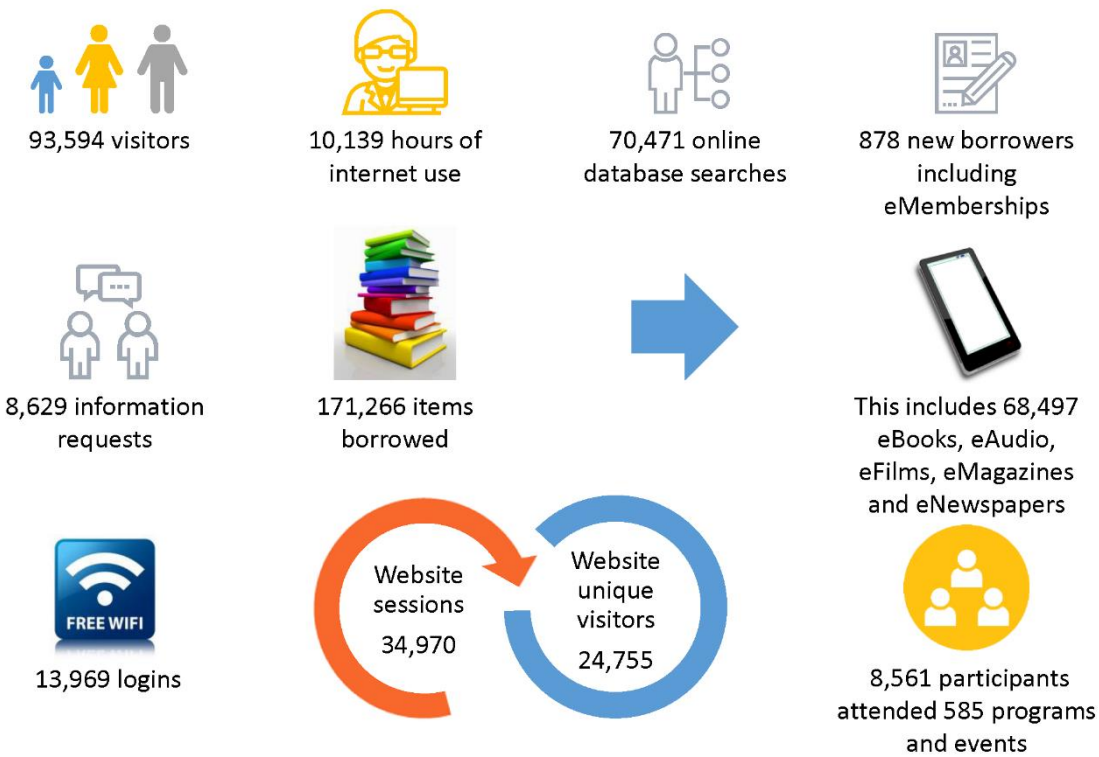
Back to Basics: Strengthening Core Library Services

From 2024/2025, Macquarie Regional Library's focus is improving customer service, reference and information services, and core library offerings. Between 2020 and 2023, the library's external focus was community outreach programs and events. A renewed emphasis on essential library services ensures the library does not duplicate programs, events, and activities offered by other council services, community groups and organisations. Significantly, this will assist the library service in retaining long-term sustainability and cost-effectiveness.

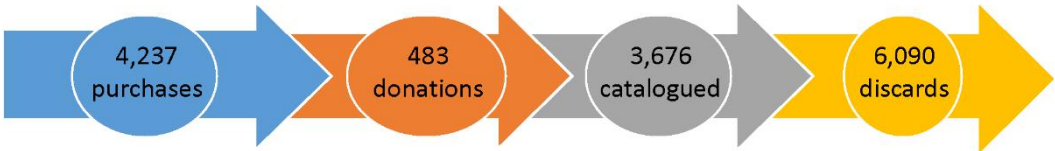
Macquarie Regional Library Operational Plan – July 2024 to December 2024

| Objective - Provide quality services to Macquarie Regional Library communities | | |
|--|----------------|---|
| Key Measures of Success <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 95% of customers view their library as satisfactory Percentage of registered users to the total population | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visits to the library per capita Number of transactions (loans and reference enquiries) Operating expense per transaction (loans and reference enquiries) |
| Legend:  Completed  On track  Delays  Not yet commenced  No progress | | |
| Action | Date | Status |
| Strategy | | |
| 1.1 Governance procedures for provision of professional and effective services are appropriate | | |
| 1.1.1.1 Review the Regional Service delivery model to ensure that the most appropriate level of service is delivered | September 2024 |  |
| 1.1.2.1 Produce an MRL Annual Report, including an audited statement of accounts | November 2024 |  |
| 1.2 Financial resources for provision of professional and effective services are sufficient | | |
| 1.2.1.1 Submit draft budget to MRL member councils | March 2025 |  |
| 1.2.1.2 Undertake quarterly budget review | Quarterly |  |
| 1.2.2.1 Review MRL Revenue Policy [Fees and Charges] | March 2025 |  |
| 1.2.3.1 Seek grant and subsidy opportunities to obtain full benefits for the Library Service | Ongoing |  |
| 1.3 Evaluation and planning for strategically managed services | | |
| 1.3.1.2 Develop MRL Annual Operational Plan | March 2025 |  |
| 1.3.1.3 Complete annual SLNSW Public Libraries Statistical Return | November 2024 |  |
| 1.4 Customers have access to a full range of high-quality programs and services | | |
| 1.4.1.1 Review the opening hours of all branches/service points | June 2025 |  |
| 1.4.1.2 Collate visitation and attendance at programs and events at each branch and service point | Monthly |  |
| 1.4.1.3 Review the provision of services, programs, collections, and technology, particularly for target and diversity groups | June 2025 |  |
| 1.4.1.4 Undertake biennial community user and non-user survey | February 2025 |  |
| 1.4.1.6 Compile quarterly reports on programs, services, collections, and technology | Quarterly |  |

MRL Loans, Membership and Visitation Statistics
July - December 2024



RESOURCES



102 posts
2,995 followers
6,024 engagements



100 posts
1,154 followers
543 engagements



REPORT: Victoria Park Amenities - Consultant Recommendation

DIVISION: Community, Culture and Places
REPORT DATE: 21 January 2025
TRIM REFERENCE: ID25/73

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

| | | |
|-------------------------------|--|---|
| Purpose | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Seek decision. | |
| Issue | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Finalise location and the style of the new public amenities for Victoria Park. | |
| Reasoning | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Council was successful in securing \$403,000 from the NSW Government for the renewal of the public amenities in Victoria Park.Construct new amenity block in accordance with the recommendation of the consultant, in accordance with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles. | |
| Financial Implications | Budget Area | Community Culture and Places / Recreation and Open Spaces |
| | Funding Source | NSW Government – Stronger Country Communities Fund R5 |
| | Proposed Cost | \$403,486 |
| | Ongoing Costs | \$14,300 p.a. (cleaning based on \$55 / clean x 5 x 52 weeks). \$3,000 p.a maintenance / vandalism |
| Policy Implications | Policy Title | No Policy exists |
| | Impact on Policy | N/A |

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The Towards 2040 Community Strategic Plan is a vision for the development of the region out to the year 2040. The Plan includes six principal themes and a number of objectives and strategies. This report is aligned to:

Theme: 5 Liveability

CSP Objective: 5.5 Our community has access to a diverse range of recreational opportunities

Delivery Program Strategy: 5.5.1 Passive and active open space is located to maximise access and use by the community

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council notes the recommendation from the consultant in relation to the preferred location of the new amenity block, being in front of the western facing wall of the Dubbo Aquatic Leisure Centre, on the premise of Safety by Design Principles.
2. That Council prepare and advertise for a minimum of 28 days an open tender for a new Victoria Park Amenity Block based on a modular style that has, as a minimum, the following attributes:
 - a. Fits generally within the allocated space of 14m x 4.3m.
 - b. That at least the same number of toilets are provided as the existing amenities.
 - c. The inclusion of a unisex parenting room, requesting both an adult and junior toilet,
 - d. Disabled accessible toilet,
 - e. Privacy screen,
 - f. Internal and an external wash basin facilities.
3. That a new compliant accessible pathway be constructed linking the Dubbo Aquatic Leisure Centre carpark, the new amenity block, and the playground, as funds allow.
4. That additional lighting in the area be installed, as funds allow.
5. That the new amenity block be constructed using materials that have an extended life cycle and low recurrent maintenance costs, reflective of the heritage of the site and, in an energy efficient manner to reduce operational costs.

Craig Arms
Director Community, Culture and Places

IM
Manager Recreation and
Open Spaces

BACKGROUND

| | |
|----------------|--|
| 15 August 2024 | VICTORIA PARK AMENITIES - RESULTS OF PUBLIC EXHIBITION |
| CCL24/211 | <i>That this item be deferred to the Ordinary Council Meeting on 24 October 2024 to allow for additional information to be prepared.</i> |

Council was successful in obtaining \$403,486 from the Stronger Country Communities Fund Round 5 (SCCFr5) for Council to complete a renewal of the outdated and non-compliant (Mobility and Access AS1428.1) Victoria Park amenities building. Works include demolition, relocating and construction of a modern, quality, safe and inviting amenities building that has disability facilities and other facilities as identified through community consultation. Under the funding agreement, relocation of services and access paths are included, if required, in the overall cost of the new amenities.

Three potential sites were identified:

1. To the north of the playground adjacent to the Dubbo Aquatic Leisure, facing west.
2. To the East of the playground, along the southern fence of the Dubbo Aquatic Leisure Centre
3. Existing location towards the eastern side of Victoria Park

A YourSay page was established, and the community asked to complete a short survey. The survey included questions around preferences to facilities within the new amenity block, whether cubicles exiting to the exterior is preferable over exiting into an internal space and how the facility would look within the Victoria Park space.

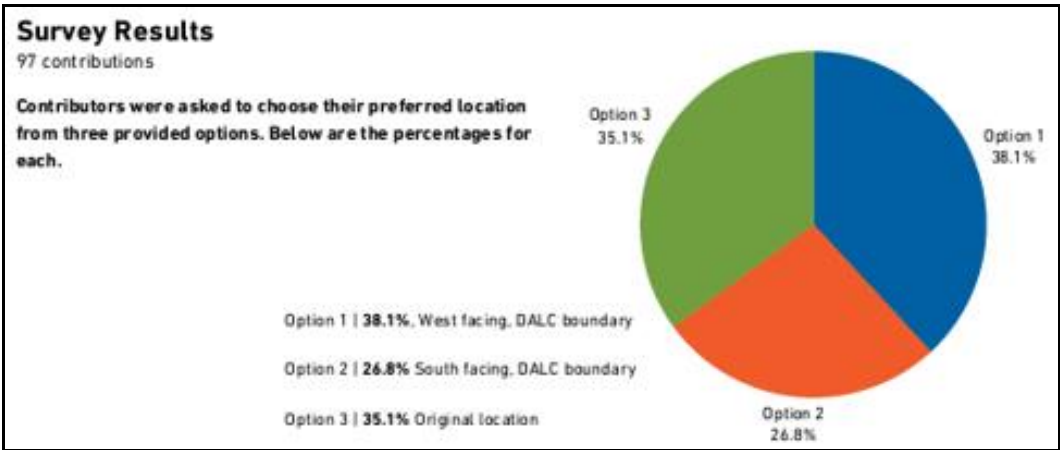


Figure 1. Results of community consultation (September 2024)

A report was prepared for the August Council meeting, however as the resulting community result was inconclusive, it was requested that further information be sought regarding the best location for the facility.

Dubbo Regional Council engaged a consultant to undertake an assessment of the proposed locations for the new amenity block at Victoria Park. The consultant is a crime prevention and community safety specialist with a focus on making and shaping safer towns and cities who has been working in the field for over twenty years.

REPORT

Dubbo Regional Council engaged a consultant to undertake a review of the proposed locations of the new amenity block at Victoria Park. The Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) assessment was extended to include the whole of Victoria Park. This was part of a broader review of all public amenities in the Dubbo Local Government Area. The relevant section of the report centring on Victoria Park has been included as an attachment.

The recommendations were:

RECOMMENDATION: Locate the new amenities block beside the aquatic leisure centre in line with CPTED principles relating to surveillance, visibility and accessibility with individual cubicles incorporating communal wash facilities either within each cubicle or outside in an open area with consideration given to natural light and ventilation.

RECOMMENDATION: Develop a lighting strategy for the park which is informed by the most used pedestrian routes after dark and which considers intended use of the different areas of the park at night.

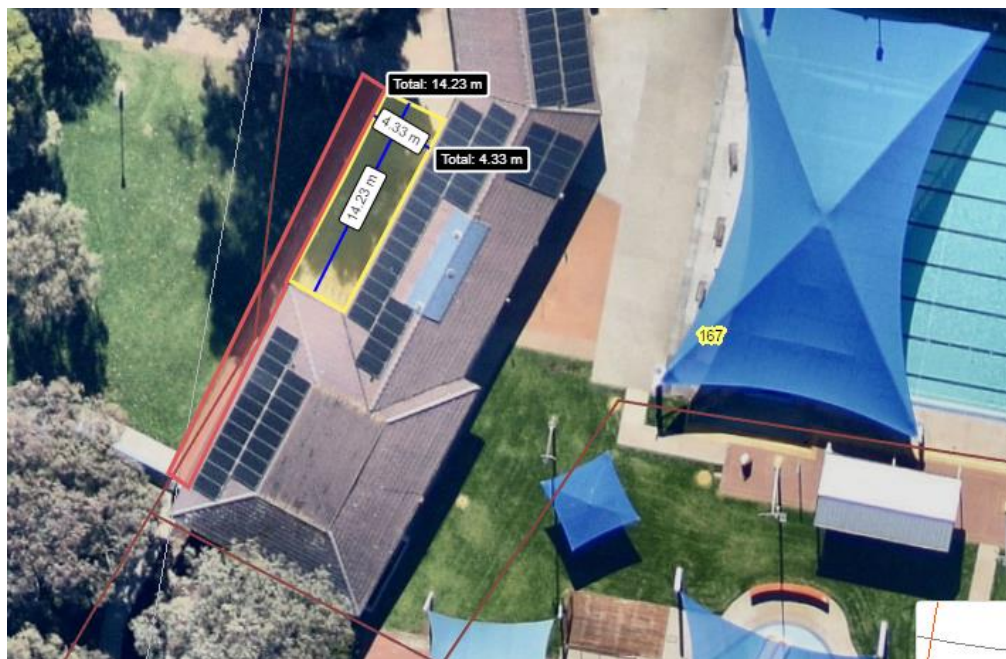


Figure 2. Recommended location showing dimensions and sewer line proximity.

Under the CTPED principles the recommended location was assessed as providing the best outcome in terms of accessibility to the public and had the highest level of visibility and surveillance. Lighting in the area can easily be enhanced due to existing park lighting in the immediate vicinity. Council is already currently investigating improvements to lighting within the park due to phasing out of the high-pressure Sodium (orange) lights.

As recommended, an outward facing amenity block with individual cubicles can be constructed. An indicative design is shown below. This design may change dependent on available modular options to fit within the identified space.

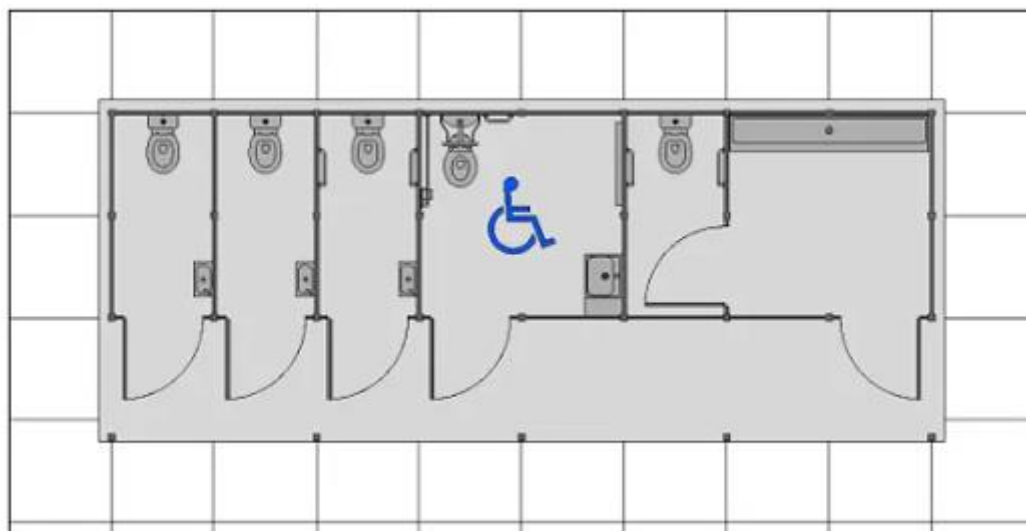


Figure 3. Indicative design showing outward facing cubicles, a disabled amenity space and urinal.

Resourcing Implications

| Total Financial Implications | Current year (\$) | Current year + 1 (\$) | Current year + 2 (\$) | Current year + 3 (\$) | Current year + 4 (\$) | Ongoing (\$) |
|--|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| a. Operating revenue | \$403,486 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| b. Operating expenses | 0 | -17,300 | -18,020 | -18,772 | -19,554 | -20,368 |
| c. Operating budget impact (a – b) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| d. Capital Expenditure | -\$403,486 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| e. Total net impact (c – d) | \$0 | -17,300 | -18,020 | -18,772 | -19,554 | -20,368 |
| Does the proposal require ongoing funding? | | Yes | | | | |
| What is the source of this funding? | | Rates | | | | |

Table 1. Ongoing Financial Implications

Notes:

- Operating expenses is based on the current cleaning schedule of 5 days/week and the most current rate of cleaning for a facility \$14,300 p.a.
- An allowance of \$3,000 p.a maintenance / vandalism has been allowed for.

Timeframe

| Key Date | Explanation |
|-------------------|--|
| 11 February 2025 | Report to Culture and Community Committee |
| 25 February 2025 | Report to Ordinary Meeting of Council |
| March 2025 | Select tender prepared and advertised on Vendor Panel. |
| April 2025 | Report to Culture and Community Committee to engage contractor |
| April – June 2025 | Construction of new amenity block |

APPENDICES:

- 1 [↓](#) John Maynard Consulting Victoria Park Amenities

Situational Assessment of Public Amenities in the Dubbo Regional Council (DRC) Area

Introduction

Our built environment is required to meet the needs of people at the most basic of levels. Public toilets or restrooms and bathrooms as they are also termed are indispensable for providing universal access to safe, accessible and inclusive public spaces. While convenience and comfort are important to all users, having access to facilities may make the difference between venturing out and staying at home particularly for pregnant women, children, older people and people with health conditions that require more consistent public toilet access.

Towns and cities increasingly face major challenges in striving for excellence when it comes to the delivery of high-quality facilities to meet growing demand. Public toilets, while providing us with convenience, also come with their own safety and security issues. Lack of maintenance and management can lead to poor image, loss of public confidence and satisfaction, vandalism and inappropriate use. Badly damaged public facilities look bad, cost money, reduce the quality of life for those it affects, and often frighten people vulnerable to crime.

Many public toilets were designed in a different era and because they do not meet contemporary needs many have closed. Facilities are often in inconvenient locations, need upgrading, are poorly designed, are closed for long periods or are simply not provided at all. This restricts urban policies fundamental to sustainable towns and cities such as encouraging walking and cycling, using public transport and lingering in our public squares and parks. The lack of facilities may limit the amount of time people spend in public areas, reducing the natural surveillance effect and undermining the vitality of public spaces.

Today more contemporary designs are increasingly employing the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design or CPTED ("septed") ensuring that they incorporate features where facilities are visible and readily identifiable, accessible, contain elements of ownership such as public art or historical references and are well managed and maintained. In high use areas where there are large numbers of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists more and more towns and cities are employing architects to design all manner of emerging and contemporary aesthetically pleasing facilities in many different styles, shapes, forms and treatments.

DRC's Towards 2040 Community Strategic Plan vision for the development of the region includes a theme which aims to provide infrastructure which meets the current and future needs of the community. The plan aims to maintain infrastructure and deliver services at the adopted service levels as agreed with the community including providing access to clean public amenities in parks. Consultations for the plan revealed that the safety and security of public amenities was a recurring theme for several demographic groups, including young people and women. Issues such as lighting, visibility of the building and proximity to carparks and other facilities were all factors which contributed to perceptions of safety. Future priorities indicated that

improved cleaning and safety were higher priorities than additional facilities, along with the need to upgrade older facilities.

With that in mind DRC commissioned this report to undertake a situational assessment of a designated number of the amenities distributed across the Local Government Area (LGA). The situational assessment revealed a wide variety of designs and settings each with their own unique context. Generally, these amenities are in attractive and well-maintained public areas reflecting the high standards employed by Council. Standards of care and the “look” and “feel” of public spaces can impact on people’s perceptions of safety and security but most if not all the amenities assessed in this report were in reasonable condition with little to no evidence of vandalism, graffiti or anti-social behaviour. This can mean that people are more likely to access the facilities on offer, maximising their use.

Perhaps unsurprisingly this assessment found that the design and locations of some of the identified amenities were historically linked to times when public toilets were commonly seen as simple, utilitarian buildings and thus were not always given strong consideration in terms of factors relating to access, light, ventilation, management and safety and security. This is a common finding in municipalities across the world. The public amenities in the Dubbo LGA generally consist of traditional standard designs, prefabricated or predesigned units based on a modular design or “off the shelf” units through to modern, contemporary facilities in areas of high activity.

This report outlines a situational assessment of each of the twenty-three designated sites as well as a few other identified sites which were assessed in passing. Each site has been assessed for factors relating to the situation of the amenities block, its local context in terms of surrounding land uses, general condition, accessibility, light, ventilation, maintenance and CPTED considerations in relation to safety and security. The report provides photographic images for each unit to provide site context and to illustrate some of the identified issues unique to the location and makes several recommendations to guide DRC on the way forward.

The task for DRC is to continue ensure that public areas and facilities are effectively planned, managed and serviced to deliver best value and to meet community expectations. As this report outlines DRC is well placed to uphold the quality standards it currently exemplifies to maximise the use of its facilities and to protect the safety of legitimate users.

Dubbo

Victoria Park

The city's large flagship park is centrally located and features a war memorial and avenue of trees, a children's playground, benches and bbqs, a family day care centre, an exercise / play area, skateboard facility and other heritage buildings relating to the botanical history of the site. It is centrally situated to several active land uses including a public swimming pool, sports fields, tennis courts, an old bowling club, Dubbo Council staff and chamber buildings and the Regional Theatre and Convention Centre.

The amenities block is an old brick building situated at the eastern end of the site close to an exercise area and sports field car park. The nearby playground was well frequented on the two occasions when the assessment was made during the late afternoon and at around 10pm on a separate weeknight. People accessing the amenities at this time were parents and their children and people walking their dogs. It was noted that in the limited time spent in the park on the two assessment occasions in hot conditions that most pedestrian activity in the park was at the eastern end where there is generally more shade.

The amenities are reasonably accessible, though not necessarily compliant with modern standards, via sealed paving which forms part of a network of good, wide and even pathways complementing large areas of well-maintained lawn interspersed with trees, shrubs and hedging. Sightlines throughout the park are generally very good while the tree canopies provide all important shade to maximise use of the space and to allow people to linger in comfort. The design features men's and women's facilities with entrances at opposite ends of the building. The block features large areas of blank walls which could lend themselves to graffiti although there was no evidence of this on both occasions. There were two doorways at the men's entrance which may create safety concerns as people enter and exit the facility from different directions. Entry is into a communal space which may also evoke safety and security concerns compared to more contemporary designs which provide individual cubicles. Given the costs of artificial lighting the lack of natural light and ventilation through the older style design is less than adequate.

Lighting in the park is of the older style orange sodium variety selected at the time because it can provide good visibility during thick fog. This form of lighting is gradually being phased out in favour of more sustainable LED white light sources. DRC is currently developing a lighting strategy for the park which should assess the more common pedestrian routes through and in the park after dark and which may include deliberately subdued areas offering no lighting in line with sustainability requirements. Given the scale of the park, it would arguably be costly and impractical to illuminate the entire space.

It is noted that DRC has secured \$403,486 from the NSW Government for the design and construction of a new amenities block and has sought community feedback on where they would like to see these facilities located within the park and what they should look like. As Council's website points out two new proposed locations,

alongside a third option of keeping the amenities where they are, have been proposed by Council staff based on considerations including location, access to current sewer and water, cost benefits and proximity to other areas of the park. The two other potential sites are to the north of the playground adjacent to the Dubbo Aquatic Leisure facing west and to the East of the playground, along the southern fence of the Dubbo Aquatic Leisure Centre. It is argued that all three sites have their merits in terms of accessibility, safety and visibility with the site beside the swimming pool providing the best location in terms of CPTED principles relating to surveillance, access and likely use given its proximity to both the street and parking areas and the children's playground. A modern contemporary design incorporating CPTED features such as good accessibility along a wide, even path incorporating individual cubicles with communal wash facilities either within each cubicle or in an open area directly outside with consideration given to natural light and ventilation, should in and of itself have the potential to attract more users into the park at this location.



The rear of the facility is a blank wall which may be susceptible to graffiti.



The facilities are accessible however the two doorways to the men's facility may create some ambiguity.



The existing site is in close proximity to both play / exercise areas.



The existing site is near to BBQ and picnic areas but the lack of shade here may make these spaces less well used.



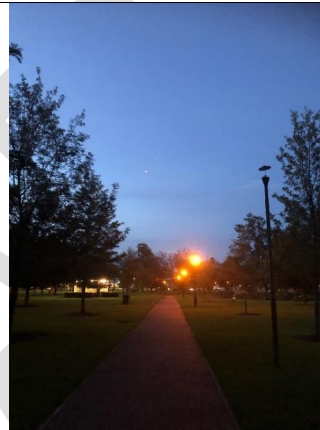
View to the amenities block from the eastern fitness / play area.



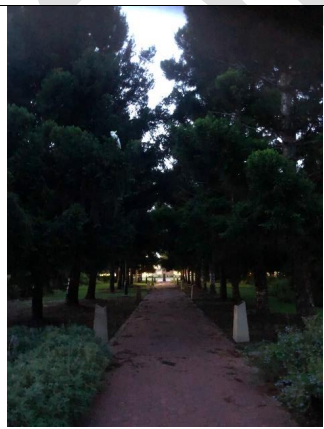
The facility is locked at night when it takes on a less inviting appearance.



Older style orange sodium lights illuminate the street running north-south to the rear of the site.



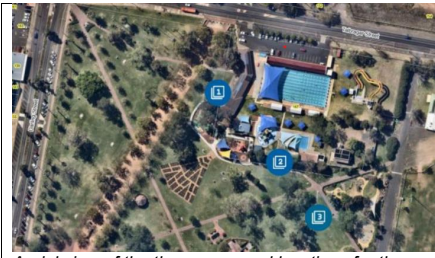
Not all lights were operational on the night of the assessment.



An avenue of trees running through Victoria Park.



The sports ground at the eastern end of the site has amenities which could be trialled to open alongside any preferred option for the new facility.



Aerial view of the three proposed locations for the new amenities block in Victoria Park all of which have their merits.



The recommended location for the new amenities block beside the public swimming pool.

RECOMMENDATION: Locate the new amenities block beside the aquatic leisure centre in line with CPTED principles relating to surveillance, visibility and accessibility with individual cubicles incorporating communal wash facilities either within each cubicle or outside in an open area with consideration given to natural light and ventilation.

RECOMMENDATION: Develop a lighting strategy for the park which is informed by the most used pedestrian routes after dark and which considers intended use of the different areas of the park at night.

[REDACTED]