

CONSULTATION SPURS INNOVATION



In principle, it should be easy to design a beautiful new library provided you have the funding in place and support from your parent organisation. The reality is that, in a time of rapid change, it's very hard to create a new library that can respond to the service needs of a growing city population in the context of a digital future that will be highly valued and well used by its community. A library that can accommodate cutting edge technologies, spaces for community activities, and be a place to connect, create, learn, and be inspired.

We are at a time when the role of libraries and library staff are changing from being gatekeepers of information, to facilitators of opportunities. Libraries are changing from mainly transactional services to places of participation, co-creation, and Placemaking. How do we design for these changes, but still provide our traditional and much valued services?

We need to talk and listen to our communities. In the case of the Adelaide City Library Service, the starting point was the creation of a shared vision for the library service through consultation with community, stakeholders, staff, and Councillors. Working together to understand our community in terms of its composition, diversity, opportunities, vulnerabilities, and attitudes, we were able to develop together a shared vision for our future library service.

Having a shared library vision has enabled us to be brave and experiment with the community in our current library buildings: setting up an Innovation Lab where we can try things out together; facilitating a space where 3D printers, scanners, and pens are available; and working in partnership with community volunteers and partner organisations that have the specialist knowledge and passion for this technology. We've asked ourselves, what works for our community? Is it a FabLab, Innovation Lab, MakerSpace, Media Lab, Digital Hub? Is it both high tech and low tech studios? Where is the energy, the expertise, the excitement? What is the balance between vibrant and quiet havens?

Our Library Vision is unusual in that it is not one line. Perhaps longer than you might expect, it tells a shared story about what our community envisages for our library service. The vision describes a library service that helps people connect, learn, discover, and express themselves; that welcomes all ages and histories; is a leader in social, technological, and environmental

sustainability; is surprising and fun, and provides an iconic city destination.

The Library Vision was used to work with our architects, Hassell, to create the guiding principles that were used to develop the library design for our new City Library, due to open at the end of 2013 in the retail centre of the city, in Rundle Mall.

The following key ideas were then used to influence the design of the space:

- Connection – with people and opportunities
- Destination – place to be with an original identity
- Discovery – evolving, a centre of innovation
- Spaces – Flexible, inspirational, stimulating and a haven
- Placemaking – dynamic and supporting co-creation

Throughout the design process we did a constant pulse check against the guiding principles and Library Vision to ensure that the design remained true to the community's vision.



Proposed design layout

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