

CELEBRATING GREAT LIBRARY DESIGN

The inaugural Australian Library Design Awards were created to showcase the best in contemporary library interiors and exteriors in Australia and to celebrate the investment in libraries made by our nation's institutions, corporations, and local, state and territory governments. As HEATHER WELLARD reports, the winning and highly commended entries provide case studies in library design excellence for the 21st century.

The 33 nominations – of public, school, academic and special libraries – were judged by a panel of independent design professionals and library leaders.

(From top) Dandenong Library, John Phillips Library, Hanley Learning Centre, City of Perth Library, Geelong Library and Heritage centre



The panel assessed how well the designs met their objectives, the community response, value for money, size of the budget, new build versus refurbishment, innovation, quality of design, sense of place and how the structure fitted into its environment.

THE WINNERS ARE:

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

WINNER

City of Perth Library – Perth, WA

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Rockdale Library – Bayside Council, Rockdale, NSW

Sunshine Library – Brimbank Libraries, Sunshine, VIC

Mary Davies Library and Community Centre – City of Rockingham Library Service, Baldivis, WA

Geelong Library and Heritage Centre – Geelong Regional Library Corporation, Geelong, Vic

North Lakes Library – Moreton Bay Region Libraries, North Lakes, Qld

Success Public Library – City of Cockburn, Success, WA

Woollahra Library – Double Bay, NSW

SCHOOL LIBRARIES

WINNER

Hanly Learning Centre – St Joseph's Nudgee College, Boondall, Qld

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Potter Library – All Hallows' School, Brisbane, Qld

The Information Resource Centre – Carey Baptist Grammar School, Kew, Vic

The Learning Hub – St Andrew's Anglican College, Peregian Springs, Qld

Junior School Library – St Stephen's School, Duncraig, WA

Research Learning Centre, Brisbane Girls Grammar School, Brisbane, Qld

ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

WINNER

John Phillips Library – Western Sydney University, Penrith, NSW

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Reid Library – University of Western Australia, Crawley, WA

SPECIAL LIBRARIES

WINNER

Arup Library – Sydney, NSW

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Barwon Health Library – Geelong, Vic

ALIA Members also had the opportunity to vote for their five favourite library designs and more than 200 people participated. The top three designs chosen were Geelong Library and Heritage Centre, City of Perth Library and Bayside Council's Rockdale Library.

ALIA MEMBERS' CHOICE

WINNER

Geelong Library and Heritage Centre – Geelong Regional Library Corporation, Geelong, Vic

The panel of judges were:

- Janine Schmidt (Chair) is Trenholme Director of Libraries Emerita at McGill University in Montreal, Canada; Director, Mukurta Solutions, Brisbane, Australia, and a member of the IFLA Library Buildings and Equipment Section Standing Committee.
- Susan Ashcroft is currently the University Librarian at Murdoch University.
- Marisa Della Ca is Asia-Pacific Library & Research Manager at Ashurst, a leading global law firm.
- Philip Follent's architectural practice has won over 20 awards and open competitions.
- Anne Girolami is Head of Information Services at Mercy College, Coburg; Convenor of the ALIA Schools Group and Chair of the ALIA School Libraries Advisory Committee.
- Anne Kovachevich is an Associate in Arup's global Foresight + Research + Innovation team and leads Foresight + Innovation for the Australasia region.
- Karen Latimer currently chairs the UK Designing Libraries Advisory Board, is a member of the LIBER European Research Libraries Architecture Group and past Chair of the Standing Committee of the IFLA Library Buildings & Equipment Section.
- Kylie Legge is a founding director of Place Partners, a consultancy based in Sydney.
- Christine Mackenzie is the Executive Officer of Public Libraries Victoria Network and President-elect of IFLA.



(Above) Public Libraries Winner – City of Perth Library
(Right) Special Libraries Winner – Arup Library.

LIBRARY DESIGN

INCITE cannot profile all the winners but has chosen three libraries to highlight to ALIA Members – two winners and one library that features an innovative design but whose build was outside the timeframe required by the competition.

We spoke to Cheryl Parrott, Manager of City of Perth Library, which won the Public Libraries section; Patti Manolis, CEO of Geelong Regional Libraries, who manages the Geelong Library & Heritage Centre, which won the ALIA Members' Choice; and Natalie Brown, Library Services Coordinator, Greater Dandenong Libraries.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE REACTION OF LIBRARY USERS TO THE NEW LIBRARY?

Cheryl:

The new building has attracted many more visitors to the library.

Some feedback on the new library:

A seven-year-old boy, overheard as he explored the library, whispered in awe, 'Aw man ... this place is SICK!'

'Brilliant asset for our city. The young staff members we met there went out of their way to assist us, chat and guide us in getting to know all about how to get the most out of this wonderful resource. We will be regulars – thanks.'

Patti:

The Dome serves many functions: a place to meet, to read and study, to attend events and use new technologies. Each level is unique, with gathering places, reading spaces, the latest technology, spectacular collections, children's areas and function and meeting spaces. The integration of the Heritage Centre has exposed history enthusiasts to the rest of the library while providing excellent exposure of the heritage services to library members. The Heritage Centre experienced more visitors in the first seven months at the new centre than it had in the previous 10 years.

Here are some survey feedback comments:

'It's a beautiful building, and the fact our city planners chose it and created something so architecturally and culturally significant makes me feel proud of my city.'

'The city library is a clean, exciting, vibrant, welcoming place to be. Especially in the children's section. It's so wonderful to see children reading and being happy and stimulated in the library setting.'

Natalie:

The increased space made available for seating, study, technology and more public access computers has resulted in an increase in usage by students, young people who want to socialise, men in the 20–60 age

group, asylum seekers, newly-arrived migrants, families with young children and small businesses. The length of visit by users has also increased, as people are more likely to stay in the library to sit read, study, watch the big screen, use Wi-Fi or public access PCs and ask library staff for assistance. Families also spend more time in the library due to the larger children's area.

Some feedback:

'The helpful and well-informed staff are on hand to provide support to community members who wish to access one or more of the many services, including borrowing resources, the free computers or the internet, playing games with friends on the consoles or simply relaxing in a light and bright environment that has great views over the attractively landscaped forecourt and the Big Screen, which is a source of popular entertainment for the family.'

'I love how welcoming Dandenong Library is of different cultures. It is a true Safe Place.'

HOW MUCH HAS MEMBERSHIP AND THE NUMBER OF LIBRARY VISITORS INCREASED SINCE OPENING?

Cheryl:

Memberships have grown significantly. In the first nine months since the opening in March 2016, there were 13 853 new members who joined the library. That's an increase of over 440 per cent.

Patti:

In the first 12 months since opening, the new centre welcomed 488,850 visitors, representing more than three times the visitors welcomed in the old library it replaced, which welcomed 146,978 in its final 12 months. In the first year since the opening of the new Geelong Library & Heritage Centre, 8,266 new members have signed up. The old library would typically join up about 1,200 people each year.

Natalie:

The Dandenong Library experienced a significant increase in usage compared to the former library, which had around 430,000 visits each year. The number of visits in a year increased by more than 100 per cent, with 873,000 visits during the first year and an increase to 968,900 visits in the second year since opening. Most of the new members came from Dandenong itself, with overall library service membership jumping to more than 80,000 after hovering at 65,000 for a number of years.

HOW HAS THE NEW LIBRARY IMPROVED YOUR CITY?

Cheryl

After many years of being hidden away, the library has become a destination. It's being discovered by a new demographic. The new library is contributing to the activation of an area of the city that had been neglected



(Above) Hanley Library (Top Right) Geelong Library
(Right) John Phillips Library

for several decades. The new building has raised the profile of the library and given the city a community hub.

Patti:

At 12 months old, the Dome is already regarded as inspirational, innovative and iconic. Symbolic of the evolution of Geelong from a city founded on heavy industry to a centre for excellence, culture and learning, the Dome is designed to meet the expectations of 21st-century public library users. It's a vibrant gathering space for local residents, workers and visitors to enjoy and a tourist destination in the heart of Geelong's cultural precinct.

Natalie:

The Dandenong Library was part of a larger project that included the construction of a new civic centre and square with a large screen that plays community content, sporting events, news and information. The square and library work well together in creating a sense of place and are the anchor to a precinct that brings in over 3,000 people to central Dandenong daily. Cafés and retail stores were also part of the project. The catalyst for the project was the Revitalising Central Dandenong project. This was a partnership with Places Victoria, the state government and the City of Greater Dandenong. In 2006, the project was launched with \$290 million worth of projects to re-establish Dandenong as a key hub for the South East. 



WE DESIGN, MANUFACTURE
& DELIVER
LIBRARY, EDUCATION,
& LEARNING SPACES

Moreton Bay Regional Library, QLD



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