Victorian Public Libraries 2030
Strategic Framework

State Library of Victoria

Public Libraries Victoria Network

CHASING SUNRISES

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Foreword

What will a Victorian public library look like in 2030? Will Victorian society and community needs have changed dramatically? How can our public libraries continue to be transformative and significant to their communities?

These big questions have no easy answers, but are central to designing a road map for the future of Victorian public libraries, along with the directions and signposts to guide our way there.

The Victorian Public Libraries 2030 project is an opportunity to look beyond traditional two- or five-year planning cycles and to consider how we can best prepare our individual library services and, more broadly, the Victorian public library network for the future.

Key research projects completed by the sector in recent years provided the strong evidence base upon which we could build. In particular, the landmark 2005 *Libraries Building Communities* and 2011 *Dollars, Sense and Public Libraries* studies demonstrated the value of Victorian public libraries to the community as 'profoundly important cultural, economic and social institutions' and measured the value of Victorian public libraries to the community, proving they are 'an exemplary return on investment'. The Victorian Public Libraries 2030 project went one step further to strategically position the network to deliver this value into the future.

The process was rigorous, collaborative and dynamic and Steve Tighe from Chasing Sunrises did an exceptional job of leading our diverse and geographically dispersed network through the process. The full report is fascinating reading for anyone connected to libraries.

Sector participation was outstanding and the ideas contributed by staff of all levels moved the process beyond the confines of the library walls to a place where the future could be strategically considered. The outcome of the exercise has left us well positioned and prepared to meet future needs. It has not only built our strategic planning capacity, but has done so by harnessing a representative voice.

The strategic framework is a key outcome of this project and its five core objectives will guide us going forward. It is a fantastic planning tool for public libraries and their Councils to use as they develop longer-term plans for their communities. The objectives identified the importance of effectively telling and sharing the stories of the public library to more widely profile our value and relevance. This, in turn, will go some way to securing the much needed funding required to deliver future resources and services in line with community needs. Of course, a workforce of well-trained, experienced and valued public library staff will be at the heart of our success.

Whether Victoria's future has a creative or community focus – or a combination of both – this process has confirmed that our public libraries will continue to be a primary local source of information and 21st-century literacies and will have the flexibility and foresight to play an innovative and significant future role.

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Executive summary

Overview

What is a public library? In 2012? In 2030? The Victorian Public Libraries 2030 project commenced in 2012 and sought to answer these questions.

The purpose of the project was to develop a strategic framework for Victorian public libraries. In focusing on a longer term planning timeframe, this strategic framework should ensure public libraries' ongoing relevance to the future wants and needs of their communities.

The objectives of Victorian Public Libraries 2030 were to:

- assist Victorian public library managers and staff to identify global trends that may impact public library services into the future (2030)
- explore alternative futures, identify tipping points and devise strategic responses to perceived trends
- develop and extend the strategic-thinking capacity of the Victorian public library sector and ensure buy-in to the project process and outcomes
- collaboratively create a strategic framework for Victorian public libraries that is applicable to a wide range of public library services (metropolitan, regional, rural, single municipality, regional corporation), which can be used to guide their own strategic planning, and which is meaningful at a local and state level.

A large number of public library employees and stakeholders from across Victoria were involved in a collaborative five-stage process that included a series of interviews and four workshops:

1. Stage 1 involved interviews with stakeholders to ascertain their thoughts on the future of public libraries. These interviews offered an insight into key concerns about the future and provided a framework for further exploration.
2. Stage 2 involved workshops exploring how community attitudes, behaviours, wants and needs might be different in 2030. Participants identified the significant drivers of change that they felt could impact Victorian lifestyles over the next 20 years and then developed two scenarios to understand how these drivers might impact future social behaviours, wants and needs.
3. Stage 3 workshop participants considered how these scenarios might develop between 2012 and 2030, using a futures process called 'backcasting'. The two scenarios developed in Stage 2 workshops represent a snapshot of lifestyles in 2030; backcasting provided the missing detail, giving the scenarios a strategic function by outlining a timeframe for action.
4. Stage 4 workshop participants assessed the implications and opportunities that each scenario presents for public libraries in 2030. The analysis and insights from this workshop gave rise to two future strategic options – the Creative Library and the Community Library – which form the nucleus of this strategic framework.
5. Stage 5 was a workshop exploring the usefulness and usability of the draft strategic framework.

The purpose of the framework is to inform, influence and guide Victorian public libraries' future strategic direction, priorities and planning. It should underpin a cohesive approach to the future, ensuring that what public libraries do in the short term is consistent with where they are headed in the long term.

The intended users of this strategic framework are those decision makers with responsibility for ensuring the future prosperity of Victorian public libraries; these include public library managers and staff; public library peak and professional bodies; and local, state and federal government strategic planners.

A guide to how public libraries can use the strategic framework at community level is provided in Appendix A.

An outline of the Victorian Public Libraries 2030 process is included in Appendix B.

Key findings

Public libraries are the community's local source of communal information, content and literacies, and they can continue to play a significant role within their communities into the future. There are four key findings from the Victorian Public Libraries 2030 project.

1. **Victorian public libraries can prosper from the future emergence of five prominent social trends identified by the Victorian Public Libraries 2030 process: creativity, collaboration, brain health, dynamic learning and community connection.**

Two scenarios depicting future Victorian lifestyles were created as a way to explore how community attitudes, behaviours, wants and needs might be different in 2030. The Creative and Community scenarios identified the emergence of five prominent social trends that have significance for the evolution of Victorian public libraries. These trends provide a direction for future strategic planning and, importantly, they all play to the strengths of public libraries.

In the Creative scenario there is a fundamental shift in society's aspirations as the desire to consume declines and a creative culture emerges in its place. In this scenario more and more people are seeking to explore, develop and express their creativity. We also see a decline in individual and organisational competition, and a rising interest in collaboration, both on a personal and a professional basis.

In the Community scenario we see the combined effect of economic, social and technological change, as industries and social norms are disrupted and traditional gatekeepers lose their relevance. Rapidly changing social dynamics lead to sustained high unemployment, feelings of social displacement, and the desire to reconnect with the local community. In this scenario there is a need to continually acquire new knowledge and skills as people feel the impact of the transformation from a local, physical economy to a global, virtual one.

In both the Creative and Community scenarios we see the impact of an ageing population, in particular the rising incidence of dementia and a rising awareness of the importance of lifetime brain health.

Prominent future social trends				
Creative scenario			Community scenario	
Creativity The desire to unlock, express, develop and record creative interests	**Collaboration** The willingness to partner, cooperate and share with others	**Brain health** The need for lifelong mental engagement, stimulation and care	**Dynamic learning** The need to continually learn new knowledge and skills to participate fully in a rapidly changing environment	**Community connection** The desire for stable and trusted relationships with people and places of common interest

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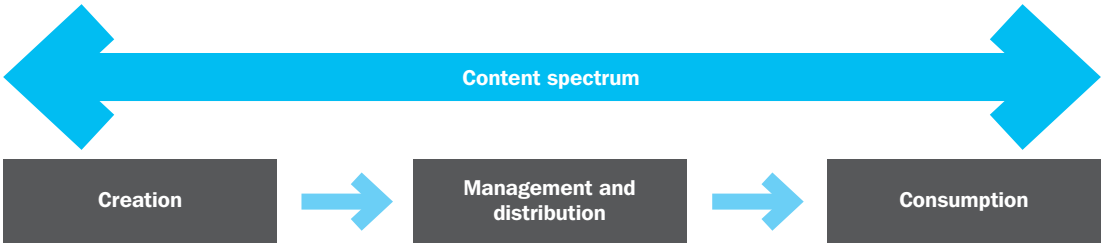
2. Victorian public libraries can successfully adapt to the emergence of these future trends by adopting a broad sense of purpose and identity.

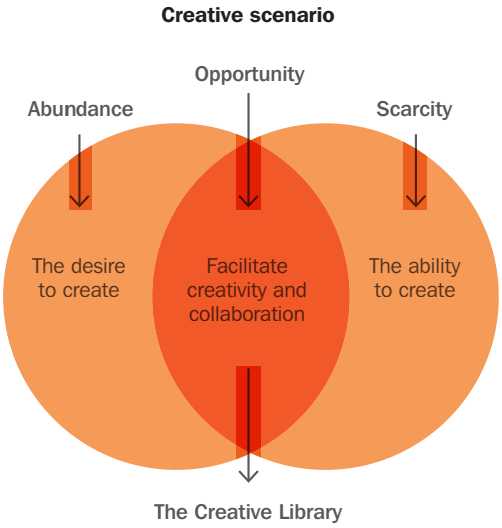
A broad sense of identity allows public libraries the flexibility to adapt and remain relevant to evolving societal wants and needs, while remaining true to their purpose and heritage.

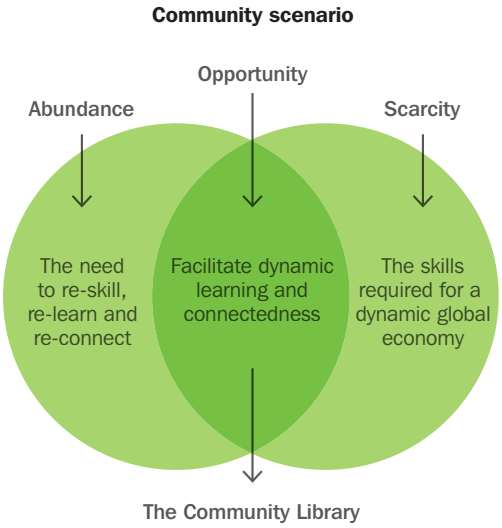
Future strategic options for public libraries were identified around the concept of content (the output of creativity) or, more particularly, the content spectrum (the range of activities associated with content). Opportunities for public libraries lie in continuing to broaden beyond their traditional content-management and distribution roles, in different directions along this spectrum.

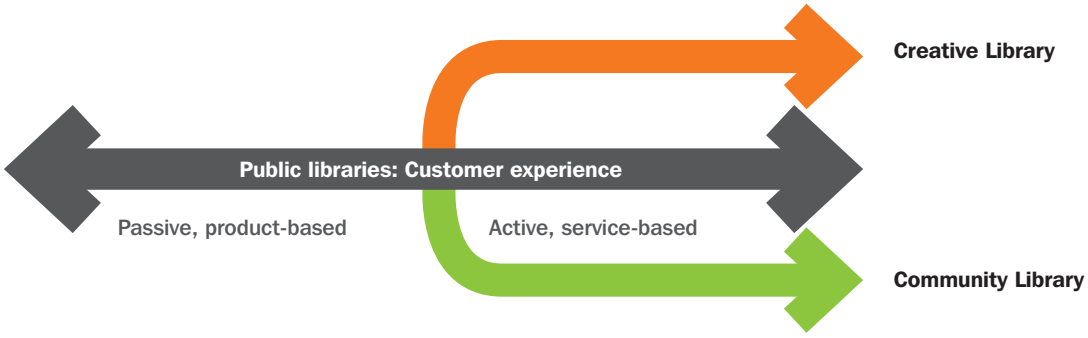
In the Creative scenario the rise of a creative culture moves the social need to the left of the content spectrum, towards creation. In this scenario increasing numbers of people seek the skills and resources to develop and express their creativity. Here the strategic option is for public libraries to evolve towards becoming the Creative Library.

In the Community scenario there is an increasing need for dynamic learning and community connection. The rising social needs in this scenario lie to the right of the content spectrum, towards consumption. Here the strategic option is for public libraries to become the Community Library, providing the classes, workshops and spaces that support 21st-century literacies and learning.









3. Victorian public libraries in 2030 are likely to feature elements of both the Creative Library and the Community Library.

In both the Creative and Community scenarios, the opportunity for public libraries is to continue the transition from passive, product-based environments to ones that deliver active, service-based experiences.

The Creative Library fulfils the prominent social need for a facilitator of creativity; it provides the facilities, programs and assistance that enable the community to unlock, develop, express, record and share their creative interests and output.

- The aspirational vision of the Creative Library is to become the community's central hub for creative development and expression.
- The mission of the Creative Library is to contribute to community wellbeing by facilitating creative development and expression in a collaborative environment.

The Community Library fulfils the prominent social need for dynamic learning by shifting its focus to the ways in which information and knowledge are consumed. In doing so, the Community Library offers learning programs to support 21st-century literacy, providing the classes, workshops and spaces to meet the community's dynamic learning and social connection needs.

- The aspirational vision of the Community Library is to become the community agora – the people's place.
- The mission of the Community Library is to support 21st-century literacies by facilitating dynamic learning and community connection.

The relevance of these strategic options to individual libraries will vary according to the local strength of emerging trends and the subsequent community wants and needs. Importantly, both strategic options can be pursued simultaneously, and are complementary to public libraries' traditional content-management and distribution roles.

4. Victorian public libraries can occupy relevant and prominent positions at the centre of their local communities in 2030.

Communal content and literacy will remain public libraries' core proposition in 2030, though the nature of these services will broaden significantly in line with changing community wants and needs. In 2030 public libraries will continue to provide communal access to physical and digital collections, but they will support this role with a hybrid of broader content and literacy functions.

To satisfy their communities' emerging creative needs, Creative libraries will provide the programs, facilities and assistance that enable the community to achieve their creative goals. These might include studios for rehearsing, recording and editing content; workshops to facilitate individual and group artistic development; and formal business spaces for collaborative telecommuting.

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To meet their communities' emerging dynamic learning needs, Community libraries will provide the programs, facilities and assistance that support 21st-century literacies. These services might include community learning programs, training and workshops; communal meeting spaces for forums and public lectures; and social spaces that provide for informal learning.

The potential for a broader mix of functions centred on the concepts of content and literacy presents an exciting opportunity for public libraries to continue to occupy a relevant and prominent position at the centre of their local communities.

Recommendations

1. Victorian public libraries adopt the strategic objectives outlined in this framework to guide their future strategic direction, priorities and planning.

Five strategic objectives were identified through the project. These objectives outline possible strategic responses that will enable public libraries to prosper in the context of the future social changes, challenges and opportunities identified in the Creative and Community scenarios. They are necessarily broad, directing focus to areas for prioritisation but leaving the execution (what to do, how to do it, when to do it) flexible to ensure local relevance. This approach ensures all objectives are robust; they are effective no matter which future scenario eventuates. This flexibility allows individual libraries to evolve simultaneously towards providing Creative and/or Community Library offerings depending on the strength of emerging community wants and needs.

Meeting community needs and wants in 2030	
Community wants and needs emerging from future social trends	**Opportunities for public libraries**
A drive to explore and develop creative interests	Become vibrant creativity hubs, facilitating communal creative development and expression
Opportunities to partner and share with others, both as individuals and as organisations	Become co-working hubs, bringing people and organisations together to collaborate creatively, socially and professionally
Lifelong mental engagement, stimulation and care	Become the community's brain gymnasium
Continuous acquisition of new knowledge and skills to participate fully in a rapidly changing environment	Provide community learning programs that support 21st-century literacies
Stable and trusted relationships with people and places of common interest	Become the community agora – a meeting place for people to gather, share and learn

Strategic objectives	
1. Storytelling	To generate internal and external belief and buy-in to a shared vision for the future role of Victorian public libraries
2. Revenue and funding	To develop a portfolio of revenue and funding streams that ensure the future prosperity of Victorian public libraries
3. Products, services and programs	To offer a suite of products, services and programs that meets the community's changing expectations and needs of a public library into the future • Creative Library – To offer a suite of products, services and programs that meets the community's expectations and needs for creative development, expression and collaboration • Community Library – To offer a suite of products, services and programs that meets the community's expectations and needs for dynamic learning and social connection
4. Facilities and resources	To incorporate a mix of flexible spaces that facilitate and support the range of public library products and services into the future • Creative Library – To incorporate a mix of flexible spaces that facilitate and support an environment of creativity and collaboration • Community Library – To incorporate a mix of flexible spaces that facilitate and support an environment of community learning and social connection
5. Staff	To develop a flexible and inclusive culture that attracts and retains people with the right skills and attitude to deliver public library products and services into the future

2. Victorian public libraries tell the story about their vision for the future

The scenarios featured in this strategic framework present positive opportunities for the future of Victorian public libraries. Likewise, the strategic options for public libraries, the Creative Library and the Community Library, represent exciting futures that are likely to surprise and challenge mainstream perceptions of public libraries. These visions provide an opportunity for public libraries to reframe their role in the eyes of the community and to ignite further interest in public libraries from all stakeholders.

3. Victorian public libraries develop a portfolio of revenue and funding streams

Both 2030 scenarios forecast challenging economic conditions ahead, with government receipts being squeezed and competition for funding increasing. Public libraries need to insure against this scenario. Developing a portfolio of revenue and funding sources spreads the financial support for public libraries and reduces the risk that comes with a reliance on government funding.

Developing different revenue streams may initially challenge the public's perception of public libraries as a 'social good'; however, applying fees to non-core additional services and programs is no different from charging for catering (many public libraries already do).

4. Victorian public libraries continue to phase in relevant service and program initiatives according to local community wants and needs

This strategic framework outlines the potential for public libraries to significantly broaden their roles by 2030. What the framework does not do is call for a sudden or immediate overhaul of current public library services. Social change is rarely sudden; the future tends to be a result of incremental transitions, so a series of innovation segues is required, rather than an abrupt overhaul. For Victorian public libraries this means introducing a series of innovation transitions over time that are relevant to their communities' changing information, content and literacy needs.

Executive summary

As the five prominent trends identified in this report emerge, public libraries can continue to seamlessly phase in new programs and services that not only align with these trends, but that are consistent with their purpose and heritage.

5. **Victorian public libraries undertake active scanning for signals that indicate the emergence of social trends with relevance to future library services and programs**

Public libraries need to be sensitive to signals that might enable movement, or indicate movement towards the development of the prominent social trends highlighted in either the Creative or Community scenario. Equally, there is a need to be sensitive to signals that might restrict development or indicate movement away from these trends. As signals pointing to the development of these prominent social trends begin to mount, public libraries can pull the trigger on their strategies and act with greater confidence. These signals are the triggers for future strategic action by Victorian public libraries.

Part I: Strategic reasoning

Drivers of change

Strategic reasoning is the underlying logic upon which the future visions for Victorian public libraries are founded. Since all strategies are future-oriented, sound strategic reasoning begins with identifying the significant drivers of future change – those forces that will shape movement in society over time.

Drivers of change don't occur in isolation, and so holistic scenarios are required in order to explore their interrelationships and potential impact. Accordingly, the Victorian Public Libraries 2030 project developed two scenarios to explore how the interaction of these drivers might impact future community attitudes, behaviours, wants and needs. These futures were called the Creative and Community scenarios.

The Creative and Community scenarios depict different social environments in which public libraries may have to operate, providing a hypothetical context for public libraries to consider their strategic options. However, Victorian lifestyles are likely to include elements of both scenarios, reflecting the influence of multiple drivers of change. The following table highlights the drivers of change considered to have the greatest potential to impact Victorian lifestyles over the next 20 years.

Primary drivers	
Emergence of post-materialistic values	A fundamental shift away from materialistic pursuits leads to a growing interest in lifestyle factors such as creativity, collaboration, diversity, personal time and experiences.
Increasing environmental awareness and activism	Rising social awareness of environmental issues and natural resources precipitates a shift in community attitudes and behaviours.
Continuing influence of technology	Technological advancements and improved access to technology continue to enable scientific breakthroughs and new social behaviours to emerge.
Growing economic challenges	Challenges are posed by the transformation from a material economy (making and selling products) to a service- and experience-oriented economy. Challenges are posed by the transformation to a virtual economy in a globally competitive, resource-constrained world.
Increasing irrelevance and distrust of traditional gatekeepers	Individual empowerment and growing transparency lead to the declining influence of traditional controllers of access.
Secondary drivers	
Persistence of materialistic values	Economic growth and efficiency continue to be prioritised, as ownership and accumulation of resources remain aspirational.
Globalisation of trade, news and information	Cultures blend as the traditional barriers of distance and national borders continue to be removed.
A growing, ageing population	Challenges are presented by a growing population that has an unprecedented proportion of people aged 60 and over.

Part I: Strategic reasoning

Creative scenario overview

In the Creative scenario creativity and collaboration become aspirational across the community. People seek to develop, express and share their creativity through writing, music, dance, multimedia, drawing, painting and theatre. In essence, the desire to create has emerged as a prominent social need in 2030.

In 2030 we see the emergence of post-materialistic values and a fundamental shift away from material consumption.

The drive for economic growth has been complemented with broader measures of social progress, including personal time and mental health. There is also a rising interest in collaboration, particularly with regard to consumption and creativity.

The Creative scenario describes lifestyles in 2030 that have been primarily shaped by the following driving forces:

- the emergence of post-materialistic values
- increasing environmental awareness and activism
- the continuing influence of technology.

Secondary drivers that are considered important for this scenario include:

- economic challenges posed by the transformation from a material economy (making and selling products) to a service- and experience-oriented economy
- globalisation of trade, news and information
- a growing, ageing population that is living longer with each generation.

In this scenario there have been several shifts in perception and behaviour that present significant opportunities for Victorian public libraries in 2030.

Shifts in community perception and behaviour: Creative scenario

	2013		2030
What do people aspire to?	Consumption	→	Creativity
How do people prefer to work?	Competition *What can you do for me?*	→	Collaboration *What can we learn from each other?*
How do people learn?	Formal, passive	→	Active, lifelong
What do people collect?	Possessions	→	Experiences
How do people use their time?	Busy-ness, multitasking, time saving	→	Personal time, single-tasking, time savouring
How do people think about their actions?	Short-term	→	Longer term
What is the attitude towards health?	Physical, remedy	→	Mental, brain, prevention

There are eight significant features of the Creative scenario:

1. Rise of a creative culture
- The rise of post-materialistic values sees people aspiring to develop, express and share creativity.
- A shift in focus from time-saving to time-savouring leads to greater emphasis on reclaiming personal time and pursuing personal interests.
- Storytelling and play become recognised as effective methods for learning, complementing and replacing the reliance on facts and figures in strategy development and planning for the future.

2. Increasing social collaboration
- A decline in the value placed upon individual ownership, with greater focus on access to goods and a greater openness to sharing, leads the development of a collaborative culture.
- A shift in the emphasis of networking from 'What can you do for me?' to the intellectually curious 'What can we learn from each other?' leads to a culture of co-creation and co-working.
- A culture of repurposing replaces the culture of disposal.

3. Challenging economic conditions
- Economic conditions are challenging as Victoria undergoes an economic transformation from a material economy (making and selling material products) to a more service- and experience-oriented economy.
- A shift in the consumer-spending mindset from a credit culture to a debit culture sees overall expenditure decline.
- Retail and the car industry become early visible victims of the change in consumer mindset, while hospitality, tourism, the arts, museums and creative industries boom.

4. Increasing philanthropy
- Philanthropy becomes more prominent as a result of a greater emphasis on community values, government incentives and a broader collaborative outlook.

5. Declining material want
- There is a fundamental decline in the aspirational value of material possessions.
- Measures of social progress broaden beyond GDP and become accepted by the mainstream population and politicians.
- Solutions to financial pressures are viewed through the prism of 'cost of lifestyle' as opposed to cost of living (that is, lifestyle wants are seen as the source of the problem).
- Environmental challenges are resolved through lifestyle adjustments; using less, as opposed to over-reliance on technology, is seen as the primary solution.

6. Telecommuting is mainstream
- Telecommuting booms as communal working spaces blossom across the state, leading to de-urbanisation.
- Population growth in regional Victoria outstrips that of Melbourne, as technology, lifestyle factors and the price of city housing combine to decentralise Victoria's population.

7. Rise in volunteering
- There is a decline in average working hours as job sharing, part-time and casual work boom. Volunteering increases significantly in profile, status and numbers.

8. Increasing awareness of lifelong brain health
- The ageing of the population leads to a rising incidence of dementia, increasing the awareness of lifetime brain health and increasing the interest in lifelong learning.

Community scenario overview

In the Community scenario 21st-century literacy emerges as a prominent social need in 2030. The dynamic nature of change demands a dynamic approach to learning. Being 21st-century literate requires people to remain in a perpetual state of learning, unlearning and relearning to ensure their knowledge and skills remain relevant.

In this scenario individual entrepreneurship, globalisation and technology combine to cause political and industry fragmentation. This disruption leads to sustained high unemployment and growing feelings of social displacement, as knowledge and skills that have served for years become redundant.

With growing distrust of traditional gatekeepers we see the rise of the local community, local connectedness, and increased interest in local issues. The growth in telecommuting leads to the development of dispersed business districts, as local governments place an emphasis on self-contained employment (the proportion of locals who work locally) and the community benefits that spring from this.

This Community scenario describes lifestyles in 2030 that have been primarily shaped by the following driving forces:

- economic challenges posed by the transformation to a virtual economy in a globally competitive, resource-constrained world
- increasing irrelevance and distrust of traditional gatekeepers
- the continuing influence of technology.

Secondary drivers that are considered important for this scenario include:

- persistence of materialistic values
- increasing social awareness and activism in response to growing environmental challenges
- a growing, ageing population that is living longer with each generation.

In this scenario there have been several shifts in perception and behaviour that present significant opportunities for Victorian public libraries in 2030.

Shifts in community perception and behaviour: Community scenario

	2013		2030
Who dominates industries?	Traditional/large organisations	→	Smaller entrepreneurs
Where do people work?	Central business districts	→	Dispersed business districts
How do people learn?	Formal, passive	→	Dynamic, lifelong
What is meant by literacy?	Reading, writing	→	Capacity to participate fully in a rapidly changing environment (21st century)
Who do people trust?	Traditional/large organisations	→	Local community

There are eight significant features of the Community scenario:

1. Economic contraction
- Economic challenges increase due to the combination of an ageing population, tightening fiscal reforms, the disruptive impact of technology and globalisation on traditional industries, and changing consumer behaviours.
- There is a sustained increase in unemployment as traditional skills become redundant and traditional industries are bypassed.

2. Decline of traditional gatekeepers
- Online retail and delivery services prosper, while large shopping centres, major retailers and traditional bricks-and-mortar shopfronts suffer.
- Large publishing firms collapse as self-publishing booms.
- National and state-based newspapers are no longer in print.
- Minor parties, single-issue parties and Independents have an increased presence in politics.
- Technology-enabled transparency proves the undoing of gatekeepers not considered socially responsible.

3. Continuous need to re-skill and relearn
- Dynamic social, technological and economic change demands a dynamic approach to learning.
- There is a social need for people to be 21st-century literate – to have the ability to learn, unlearn, and relearn new skills and knowledge.

4. Rise of suburban villages
- Melbourne remains an aspirational place to live and population growth continues to outpace regional Victoria.
- The focus on local community sees neighbourhoods redesigned with an emphasis on public spaces, green spaces, car-free zones, and walking and cycling tracks.
- Congestion taxes are introduced to reduce travelling times and combat pollution.

5. Social displacement
- The car industry is negatively impacted by economic downturn, the increase in telecommuting and declining retail traffic.
- Unemployment grows as traditional skills become redundant.
- The loss of personal privacy is accepted as the price of technology's omnipresence.
- Community banks play a far greater role in the financial affairs of Victorians as traditional big banks are spurned.
- People experience feelings of disillusionment and loss of agency – 'Where do I fit in?', 'Who can I trust?'

6. Telecommuting is mainstream
- The local government focus on self-contained employment leads to growth in telecommuting, and suburban working hubs prosper.

7. Rise of an entrepreneur culture
- Technology empowers individual entrepreneurship.
- There is rapid growth in small and online businesses.
- A person's mobile technology is considered their most important personal possession.

8. Increasing awareness of lifelong brain health
- The ageing of the population leads to a rising incidence of dementia, increasing the awareness of lifetime brain health and increasing the interest in lifelong learning.

Part I: Strategic reasoning

Comparing the Creative and Community scenarios

The following diagram illustrates the key similarities and differences in community perception and behaviour under the Creative and Community scenarios.

The features the Creative and Community scenarios have in common include an ageing population and the continuing influence of technology. It is considered inevitable that these two scenario drivers will have significant impact in the period 2013 to 2030. With an ageing population we see the rising incidence of dementia and a subsequent focus on brain health.

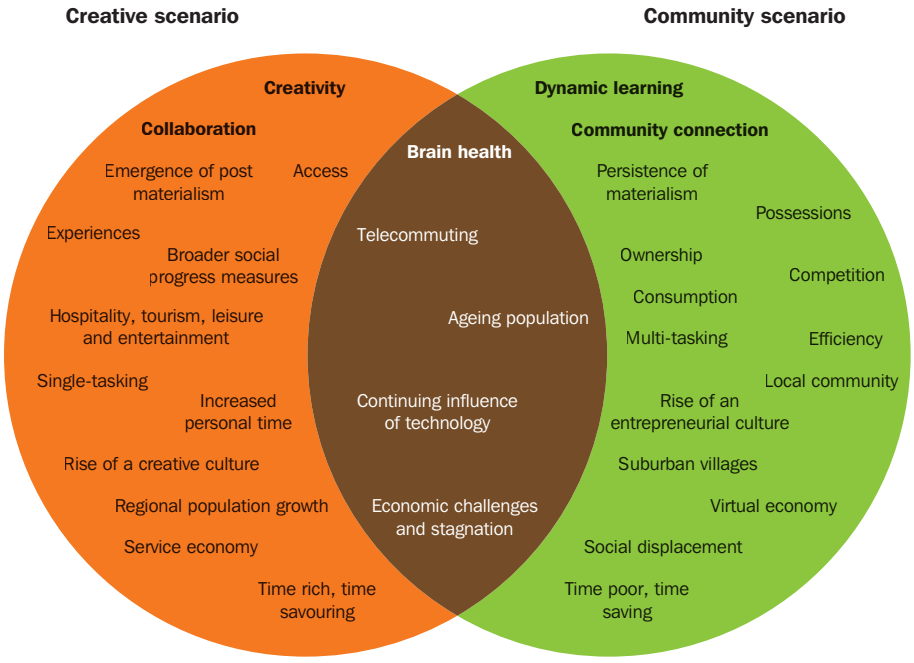
The continuing influence of technology leads to the rise of telecommuting in both futures.

Another significant driver that the two scenarios share is the economic challenges that feature in the future. This forecast squeeze on government receipts and the subsequent pressure on government funding and services holds strategic implications for the future of Victorian public libraries.

The Creative scenario is further explained in Appendix C.

The Community scenario is further explained in Appendix D.

Key features of the Creative and Community scenarios



Part II: Strategic directions

Key social trends in the Creative and Community scenarios				
Creative scenario			**Community scenario**	
Creativity The desire to unlock, express, develop and record creative interests	**Collaboration** The willingness to partner, cooperate and share with others	**Brain health** The need for lifelong mental engagement, stimulation and care	**Dynamic learning** The need to continually acquire new knowledge and skills to participate fully in a rapidly changing environment	**Community connection** The desire for stable and trusted relationships with people and places of common interest

Strategic options for public libraries

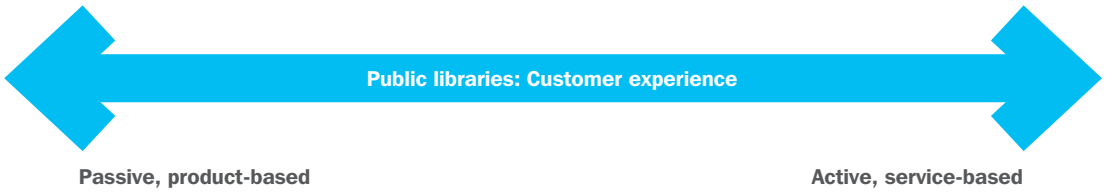
Across the Creative and Community scenarios are five social trends that have the greatest relevance to Victorian public libraries: creativity, collaboration, brain health, dynamic learning, and community connection.

These trends present exciting opportunities for public libraries to play more prominent roles within their communities in the future.

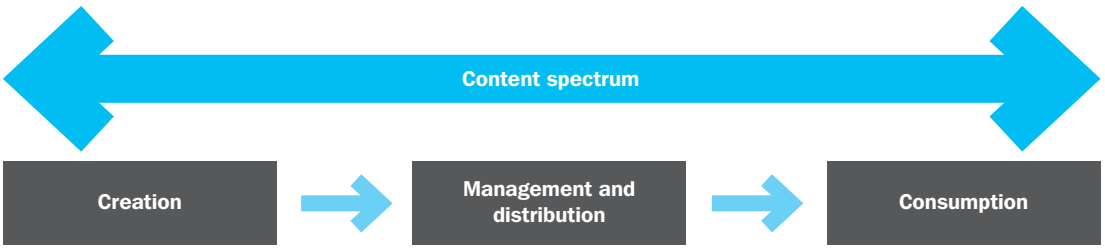
The key to the evolution of public libraries is for decision makers to adopt a broad sense of identity that enables them to attach relevance to the Creative and Community scenarios and their dominant themes. A broad sense of identity allows public libraries the flexibility to adapt and remain relevant to evolving societal wants and needs, while remaining true to their purpose and heritage. For example, a public library that assigns itself the purpose of providing universal access to information will lose relevance in a future where access to information is no longer a major social need. A public library that assigns itself the broader purpose of providing solutions to society's information needs is far better placed to adjust its offerings as these needs change over time.

In both the Creative and Community scenarios, the opportunity for public libraries is to continue the transition from passive, product-based environments to ones that deliver active, service-based experiences.

This transition in customer experience is no surprise. Many public libraries around the world are well advanced in this direction, and public libraries across Victoria are already at varying stages along the journey. But what type of active service experience could public libraries provide in the future? How far could they evolve? How might they get there?



Part II: Strategic directions



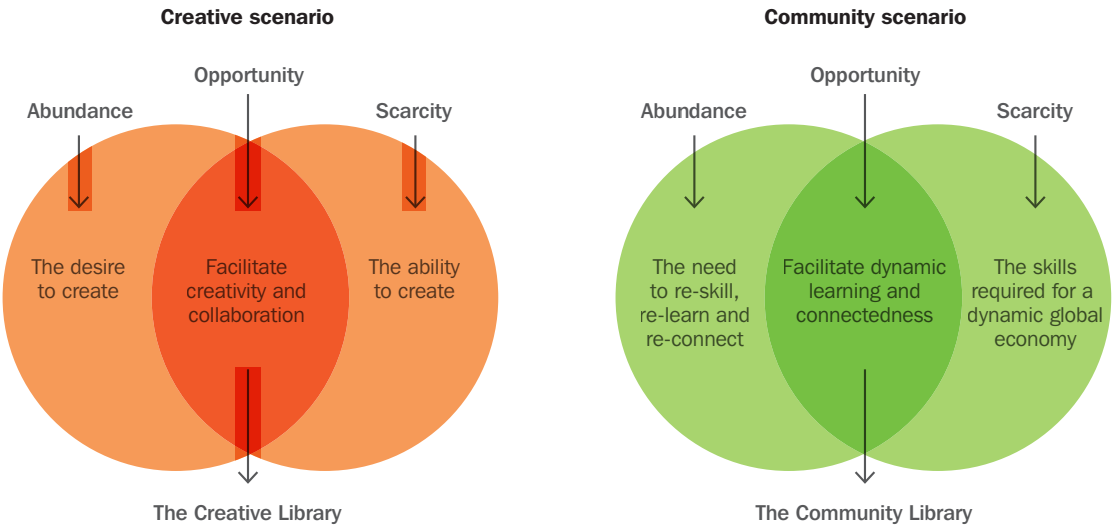
Future strategic options for public libraries have been identified around the concept of content (the output of creativity) or, more particularly, the content spectrum (the range of activities associated with content). The content spectrum diagram above shows, from left to right, the creation of content, the management and distribution of completed content, and the consumption of content by the end user.

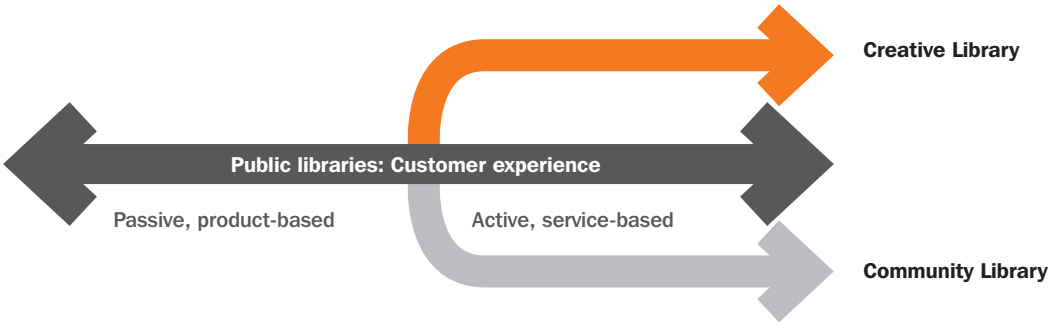
Public libraries have traditionally fulfilled their purpose of providing universal access to information via a content-management and distribution role. However, advances in technology, higher education levels, and increased personal wealth have reduced the social need for such a role. Future strategic options for public libraries lie in continuing to broaden their primary role in different directions along the content spectrum.

In the Creative scenario the rise of a creative culture moves the social need to the left of the content spectrum, towards creation. In this scenario more and more people seek the skills and resources to develop and express their creativity. Here, the strategic option for public libraries is to evolve towards becoming the Creative Library.

In the Community scenario there is an increasing need for dynamic learning and community connection. The rising social needs in this scenario lie to the right of the content spectrum, towards consumption. As opposed to the largely informal learning that public libraries currently facilitate, libraries in this scenario provide community learning programs. Here, the strategic option for public libraries is to evolve towards becoming the Community Library.

Creative Library and Community Library strategic options





The Creative Library

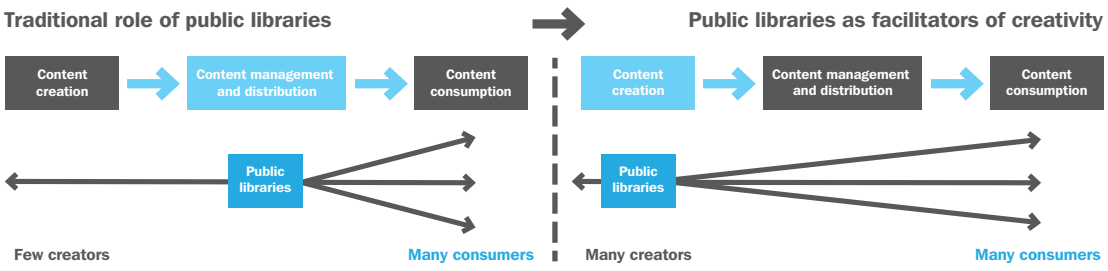
In 2030 public libraries have broadened their primary role to become facilitators of creative development and expression in a collaborative environment.

The Creative Library is founded on the prominent social needs for creativity, collaboration and brain health. This foundation enables public libraries to broaden their role towards helping the community achieve its creative goals.

- The aspirational vision of the Creative Library is to become the community's central hub for creative development and expression.
- The mission of the Creative Library is to contribute to community wellbeing by facilitating creative development and expression in a collaborative environment.

In fulfilling their role as the community's central hub for collaborative creativity, public libraries provide the products, services, programs, facilities and assistance that enable the community to unlock, express, develop, record and share its creative interests and output.

Libraries will continue to provide access to content (the completed creativity of others); the social need for this role will continue to decline, however, and public libraries will increasingly broaden their primary role to focus on facilitating content creation (creating content alone or with others).



Part II: Strategic directions

The Creative Library is a kaleidoscope

If the idea of musicians playing and recording in public libraries sounds extreme, it shouldn't. The robust and vibrant Creative Library of 2030 merely extends the atmosphere that public libraries currently create through their Baby Bounce and Storytime programs.

To small children a public library has always been a kaleidoscope of sound, colour, ideas and creativity. This is their norm. They know no different. To these children a public library has never been just about books. It has never been quiet. It has never been empty. It has never been closed.

The Creative public library captures and builds upon the experience that children already enjoy at public libraries in 2013. These children will be in their twenties in 2030, and can remain core public library users into the future.

Products, services and programs

The Creative public library contributes to community wellbeing by facilitating creative development and expression in a collaborative environment. In essence, a Creative public library in 2030 is:

- an active learning centre
- a community arts studio
- a brain gymnasium
- a collaborative work space.

The Creative Library offers a range of products and services that promote creative development, expression and collaboration, including:

- physical and digital collections
- workshops to facilitate individual and group artistic development, including music, pottery, storytelling, poetry, drawing, writing, painting, sketching, media and so on
- spaces for collaborative creativity
- studios for rehearsing, recording and editing content
- formal business spaces for collaborative telecommuting
- digital resources
- language and literacy programs for all age groups.

Facilities and resources

The Creative Library is an inspiring place that attracts users through a multitude of creative and learning spaces that provide opportunities for independent and collaborative learning. It is located centrally within the community, reflecting its position as the central hub for learning and creativity.

The buildings are large, open, flexible and spacious – chameleon venues that can seamlessly accommodate a range of customer needs and activities throughout the day. Facilities and resources offered by a Creative public library in 2030 include:

- recording studios
- multimedia-editing facilities
- creative and learning spaces (formal and informal)
- formal business areas for collaborative telecommuting
- meeting rooms
- videoconference facilities
- social spaces, community lounges, quiet areas
- independent spaces, collaborative spaces, teaching spaces
- digital resources – increased content in digital formats
- cafe and catering areas.

Telecommuting and the Creative Library

Telecommuting is considered to be a significant growth activity across both the Creative and Community scenarios. Advancements in technology, frustration with traffic congestion, lack of housing affordability, desire for more personal time, and encouraging government and business policies all combine to drive a change in commuting and workplace behaviour between 2013 and 2030.

The synergy with public libraries becomes obvious when we consider how the nature of work might evolve under the Creative scenario. In this scenario there exists a more collaborative culture with a greater willingness by individuals and corporations to work with others for mutual benefit.

Rather than the win–lose mentality ('What can you do for me?'), there exists a more collaborative win–win approach ('What can we learn from each other?'). It's this openness to collaborative learning that presents opportunities for public libraries to become co-working centres.

In leveraging their facilities as telecommuting hubs that promote shared learning, collaboration and co-working, public libraries further contribute to the sustainability and development of local communities by providing the catalyst for improved rates of employment self-containment (the proportion of locals who work locally).

What does telecommuting look like in a Creative Library?

In the Creative scenario, co-working centres are vibrant places where people and organisations mix to exchange ideas and collaborate on projects. These are not informal settings; they are designated areas facilitated by a library employee who works to create a culture that resembles that of the traditional single organisation. It's the emphasis on collaboration and socialising – with hot desks and deliberate skills-matching – that distinguishes the telecommuting hub in 2030 from the soulless office spaces that litter suburbs in 2013. The public library work space of 2030 is a living, breathing version of the networking site LinkedIn.

Staff

The Creative Library provides opportunities for people to make a meaningful contribution to the community as facilitators of creative development, expression and collaboration. Creative libraries attract skilled staff members who run a broad selection of creative and learning programs that build community capacity.

- They facilitate content sharing.
- They connect people.
- They teach new skills.
- They nurture untapped talent.
- They produce, record and edit creative content.
- They host business collaboration.

Creative Library staff includes educators, artists, community workers, mentors, recording and media experts, welfare officers, early development and literacy teachers, content navigators and managers. Volunteering is likely to play a major role in meeting staffing requirements in 2030 as well as providing opportunities to foster creativity. Library staff numbers will be greater due to the additional programs and services on offer, which will create a strong need for people management and coordination.

Revenue and funding

The fundamental challenge for the Creative Library is in finding ways to fund additional programs, staff and facilities in an environment where government revenue has been squeezed and there is intense competition for funding. For this reason the Creative Library has evolved from a free-service model to a not-for-profit model.

In the Creative scenario there are sustained economic challenges caused by the rise of post-materialistic values and the transition from a material economy (making and selling material products) to an experience economy, where services, tourism and hospitality prosper. Corresponding with this shift is a move from a credit culture to a debit culture; there is a decline in overall expenditure, which places strain on government GST receipts.

Part II: Strategic directions

If social change determines that a public library's core activities in 2013 have lost relevance by 2030, then libraries must provide additional services and programs to remain relevant to their communities. The move to a Creative Library in the years 2013 to 2030 sees the addition of many activities and resources that would be considered non-core in 2013: these might include recording studios, video-editing facilities, business hubs, meeting rooms, creative and learning spaces, and videoconference facilities.

To meet the challenge of providing new programs and facilities in a fiscally constrained future, public libraries are likely to require a portfolio of revenue and funding streams to ensure their future prosperity. Central to this portfolio of revenue streams is the opportunity for public libraries to evolve from a cost-free service model to a not-for-profit service model, charging a fee for additional services and programs. This strategic shift would see public libraries move to the right of the cost spectrum.

Under the not-for-profit service model, the traditional core services of a public library (which become non-core in 2030) remain free to the public. These services might include loans (physical and digital collections) and internet usage. Meanwhile the core services of 2030 (which are non-core in 2013) are subsidised, and attract a 'pay the gap' fee. These services might include personal tuition, use of business hub facilities and editing suites, or attendance at classes or workshops. The goal is for these programs and services to pay their way; it is critical that a revenue strategy is developed for new programs and activities as they are introduced.

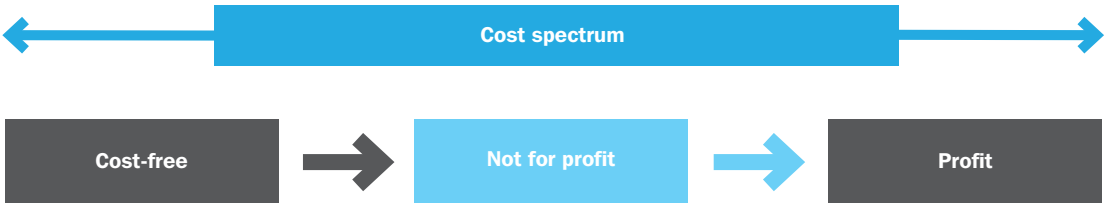
Public libraries can learn from the newspaper industry

Consumers shouldn't have had free news all the time – I think we've been asleep. It costs us a lot of money to put together good newspapers and good content. No news websites anywhere in the world are making large amounts of money.

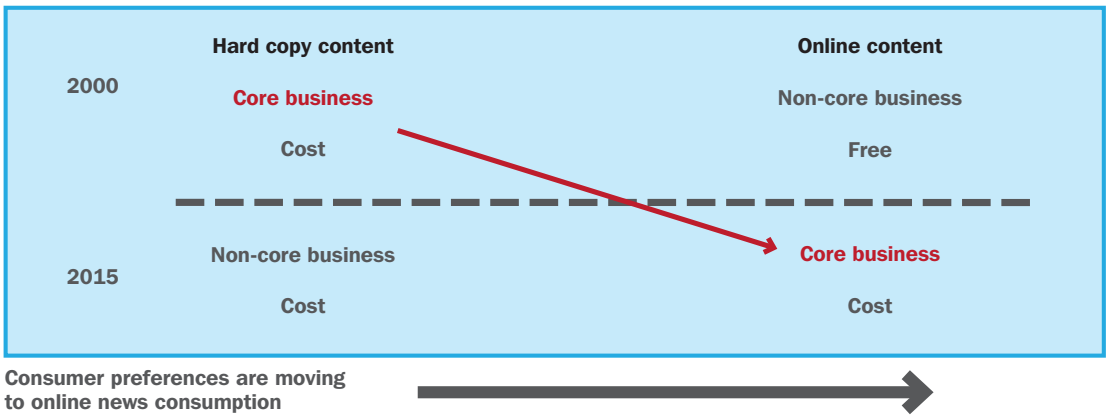
Rupert Murdoch, November 2009

There are parallels between public libraries and traditional newspapers: the core products of both are being disrupted by technology and changing community behaviours and expectations. The recent experience of the newspaper industry provides some insight into how public libraries might evolve their revenue and funding models into the future.

In the year 2000, the core business of newspaper publishers was in charging a fee for traditional hard-copy content. With the internet still in its relative infancy, online content was considered non-core, so media companies provided the same information on their websites free of charge. Publishers all around the world are trying to recover from this strategic error.



The strategic error of newspaper publishers



Even though online readership was small in 2000, this was the direction society and readership numbers were heading. In 2013 consumption of online content is mainstream, and consumers have become conditioned to receiving this content for free.

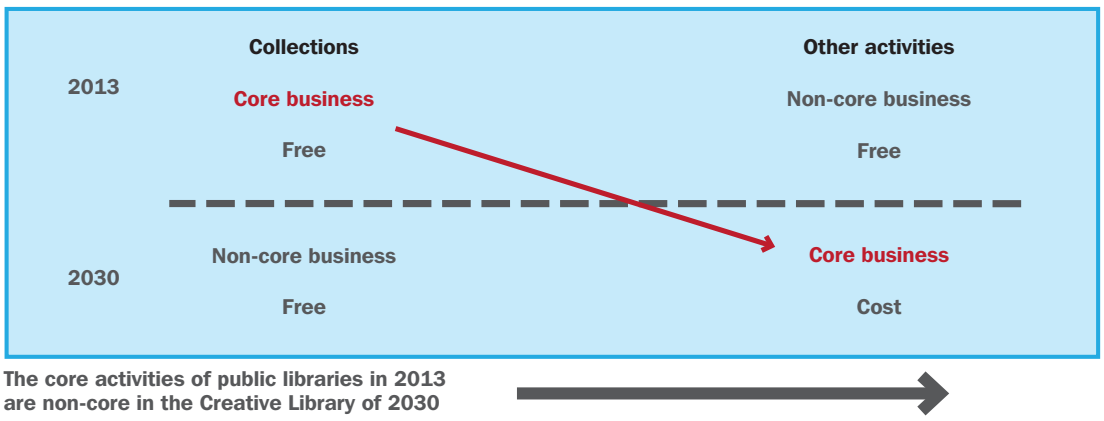
Today media companies face an enormous uphill task in trying to build a subscription-based model. Indeed, it appears that the horse has already bolted. The time for publishers to start charging for their future core business was in its embryonic stages – before they had an unhealthy reliance on its performance.

What could this mean for public libraries?

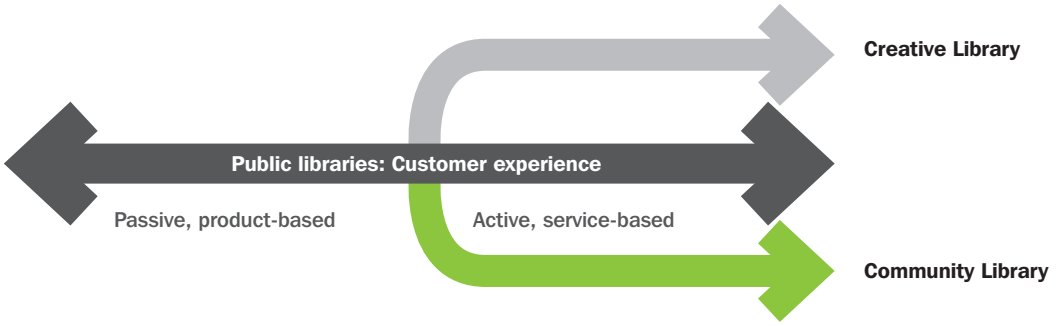
The learning for any organisation is that if you can foresee that your current non-core activities are likely to become core activities in the future, you have a one-off opportunity to charge for usage. Otherwise, providing this activity free of charge becomes the expected norm.

The core offerings of Creative libraries in 2030 comprise many currently non-core activities and facilities; public libraries have the opportunity to learn from the mistakes of newspaper publishers before the new offerings become mainstream, and develop revenue strategies for new programs and activities as they are introduced.

Public libraries can learn from newspaper publishers



Part II: Strategic directions



The Community Library

In 2030 public libraries have broadened their primary role to become community hubs for dynamic learning and social connection.

The Community Library is founded on the prominent social needs for dynamic learning, community connection and brain health. This foundation enables public libraries to broaden their role towards helping the community meet the challenges of the dynamic 21st century.

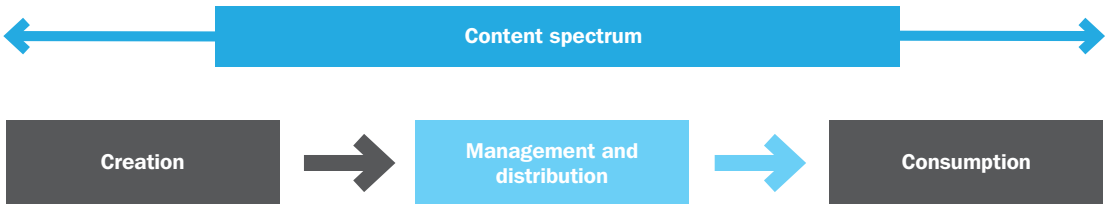
- The aspirational vision of the Community Library is to become the community agora – the people's place.
- The mission of the Community Library is to support 21st-century literacies by facilitating dynamic learning and community connection.

The Community Library supports its community to navigate the dynamic social, economic and technological environment of 2030 – an environment that has left many people with redundant skills and feelings of inadequacy ('Where do I fit in?').

The purpose of the Community Library is to build community capacity by delivering programs that support and develop 21st-century literacies. In doing so, the Community Library provides people with the knowledge, skills, confidence and ongoing support to participate fully in a rapidly changing environment.

The focus of the Community Library is on learning delivery – on the way information and knowledge is consumed. As such, the public library broadens from an informal learning delivery model to one that delivers community learning programs.

As the Community Library, public libraries provide an array of programs, forums, classes and workshops to meet local dynamic learning needs. In fulfilling their role as the central hub for community learning and social connection, public libraries provide the products, services, programs, facilities and assistance that enables the community to re-skill, re-learn and re-connect.



What does it mean to be literate in 2030?

Historically we have understood the word 'literacy' to mean the capacity to read or write. The definition has broadened, however, to encompass having knowledge of or competence in a particular field or activity: a person displaying proficiency in their use of technology, for example, is considered computer-literate. While public libraries have traditionally focused on improving a community's literacy as it was historically defined, it is the broader definition of literacy that informs the Community library's move towards delivering community education programs and workshops in the future.

The Community scenario suggests an emerging social epidemic of 21st-century illiteracy: the rapidly changing social, economic and technological environment ensures that, for many, the knowledge and skills that have served them for years become, or are fast becoming, redundant. As Victoria grinds from a local physical economy to participating in a global virtual economy, traditional gatekeepers, traditional industries and people with traditional skills and knowledge are all likely victims.

In this future, people without the 21st-century skills and knowledge necessary to cope in times of dynamic change are the new illiterates. These people are not necessarily uneducated; rather, they are people whose skills and knowledge have lost relevance.

A dynamic environment demands a dynamic approach to learning. The Community Library meets the social need for continuous learning, unlearning and re-learning by delivering an array of programs, classes and workshops designed to equip the community with the skills and knowledge to be competent participants in the 21st century.

Products, services and programs

The Community Library contributes to community wellbeing by facilitating dynamic learning and social connection.

In essence, a Community Library is:

- a community learning centre
- a gathering place
- a brain gymnasium
- a repository, documenter and disseminator of local knowledge
- a local business hub.

The Community Library is a learning village, offering a range of services and programs that promote dynamic and lifelong learning, and social connection, including:

- physical and digital collections
- literacy and learning programs
- community programs
- documenting, warehousing and disseminating local history, culture and knowledge
- business centres for local telecommuters
- digital resources
- information services
- outreach services.

Facilities and resources

Community library facilities and resources are a mix of flexible learning and social spaces that combine to create a 'learning village' feel. The range of facilities and resources offered include:

- Learning spaces, training spaces and workshop facilities – formal and informal spaces that allow for individual and group learning.
- Business services (including videoconference facilities) – providing social connection for telecommuters.
- Social spaces and lounges – providing a community 'living room' feel.
- Communal meeting spaces – for community forums, public lectures and information sessions.

- Physical collections – reduced in size to allow for greater learning and meeting spaces.
- Archive spaces – with a strong local history collection in print and digital formats.
- Cafe area/catering – providing a relaxed drawcard for locals to linger and interact.
- Digital resources – increased content in digital formats.

These facilities may be collocated with other local services to create a genuine community hub.

Staff

The Community Library provides opportunities for people to bring the community together.

Community library staff deliver learning programs and facilitate community connection. They include teachers, trainers, facilitators, community development workers, consultants, community welfare officers, early development and literacy teachers, content navigators and managers.

- They are knowledge navigators.
- They are teachers.
- They are brain trainers.
- They are interpreters.
- They are community connectors.

Community libraries will attract skilled staff who want to contribute to building community capacity. These people will run a broad selection of learning programs, workshops and training sessions. They will connect locals with similar passions and interests, bringing together people with complementary skills and needs.

Volunteering is likely to play a major role in meeting staffing requirements and facilitating learning opportunities in 2030. Volunteers who are qualified ex-professionals, with the ability to teach others in structured and informal settings, will be of particular importance. Library staff numbers will be greater due to the additional programs and services on offer, which will create a strong need for people management and coordination.

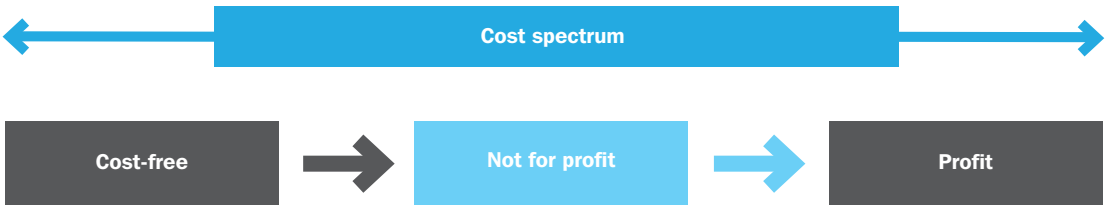
Revenue and funding

The fundamental challenge for the Community Library is in finding ways to fund additional programs, staff and facilities in an environment where government revenue has been squeezed and there is intense competition for funding. This necessitates a move from a free-service model to a not-for-profit model.

In the Community scenario there are sustained economic challenges caused by the transition from a local, physical economy to a global, virtual economy. There is continuous economic uncertainty and low or negative economic growth as traditional sectors lay off employees in response to changing consumer behaviour and poor sales. As a result unemployment rises and remains high for a sustained period of time, placing pressure on government receipts at a time when more and more people are retiring from the workforce.

If social change determines that a public library's core activities in 2013 have lost relevance by 2030, then libraries must provide additional services and programs to remain relevant to their communities. The move to a Community Library in the years 2013 to 2030 sees the addition of many activities and resources that would be considered non-core in 2013; these might include community learning programs, training, workshops, business hubs, meeting rooms, and videoconference facilities.

To meet the challenge of providing new programs and facilities in a fiscally constrained future, public libraries are likely to require a portfolio of revenue and funding streams to ensure their future prosperity. Central to this portfolio of revenue streams is the opportunity for public libraries to evolve from a cost-free service model to a not-for-profit service model, charging a fee for additional services and programs. This strategic shift would see public libraries move to the right of the cost spectrum.



Under the not-for-profit model, the traditional core services of a public library (which become non-core in 2030) remain free to the public. These services might include loans (physical and digital collections) and internet usage. Meanwhile the core services of 2030 (which are non-core in 2013) are subsidised, and attract a 'pay the gap' fee. These services might include attendance at classes or workshops, or the use of business hub facilities. The goal is for these programs and services to pay their way; it is critical that a revenue strategy is developed for new programs and activities as they are introduced.

Part III: Strategic objectives

Strategic framework

Strategic pathways outline the strategic responses necessary for public libraries to prosper in the context of the social changes and challenges anticipated through the Creative and Community scenarios. The following strategic objectives are necessarily broad, directing focus to areas for prioritisation but leaving the execution (what to do, how to do it, when to do it) flexible to ensure local relevance. This approach ensures that all objectives are robust; they are effective no matter which future scenario eventuates. This flexibility allows public libraries to evolve towards providing Creative and/or Community Library offerings simultaneously, depending on the strength of emerging community wants and needs.

The strategic objectives outlined over the following pages derive from the 2030 vision and mission statements for the Creative and Community libraries. In all, five strategic objectives have been identified in the following categories:
1. storytelling
2. revenue and funding
3. products, services and programs
4. facilities and resources
5. staff.

The relationships between these objectives determine a natural sequence in which they should be approached; for example, telling a compelling story about the future of public libraries is essential to securing the revenue and funding necessary for Victorian public libraries to achieve their future vision. Only with an appropriate level of income and funding can public libraries deliver the products, services, facilities and personnel required to bring their vision to life.

1: Storytelling

To generate internal and external belief and buy-in to a shared vision for the future role of Victorian public libraries

Why is this important?

Belief and buy-in to a future vision for public libraries is the foundation of strategic development for 2030; everything springs from this belief: external funding, internal willingness to change, and future community support and engagement. Public libraries need to engage their stakeholders with a compelling future vision that re-establishes and reasserts libraries' reason for being.

Key implications

- Public libraries need to give all levels of government reason to believe that they have a prosperous future.
- Public libraries need library staff and government to buy in to the future vision.
- Public libraries need to give the community a reason to engage or re-engage with their products, services and facilities.
- Public libraries need to reposition themselves in the minds of the broader community.

Actions to consider

- Develop a compelling story for the future.
- Nominate storytellers – advocates to take the public library vision forward.
- Tell and retell this compelling story to key public library stakeholders (internal and external).
- Conduct community storytelling – initiate a communications campaign to inform the public of the evolving role of public libraries.

2: Revenue and funding

To develop a portfolio of revenue and funding streams that ensures the future prosperity of Victorian public libraries

Why is this important?

Developing a portfolio of revenue and funding sources spreads the financial support for public libraries and reduces the risk that comes with a reliance on government funding. Both the Creative and Community scenarios forecast challenging economic conditions, with government receipts being squeezed and competition for funding increasing. Public libraries need to insure against this scenario. Developing different revenue streams is consistent with public libraries' current journey (library cafes operate within the 'pay the gap' model) and future vision (the brain gymnasium is a potential source of future funding).

Key implications

- Public libraries need to make a compelling and viable case for the future of public libraries.
- Public libraries need to challenge the public's perception of public libraries as a 'social good' (that is, that all activities within a public library should be free).
- Public libraries can take a leadership position on community health through their role as brain gymnasiums, championing the cause of lifelong learning and brain health.
- Public libraries must prove and promote a record of delivering community value (public engagement and public benefits).

Actions to consider

- Undertake a feasibility audit of requirements and cost projections for the public library of the future (products and services, facilities and resources, staffing needs).
- Communicate a compelling story about future scenarios, the future role and vision for public libraries, and stakeholder benefits that makes the case for, and secures, sufficient ongoing funding.
- Introduce a suite of self-funding services and programs that are consistent with the long-term vision of public libraries but are not considered by the public to be core library activities in 2013.
- Develop and promote a position as the community's brain gymnasium by offering a range of programs that support lifelong learning and brain health, mental engagement, social inclusion and collaboration.
- Position public libraries as a preferred beneficiary of public donations (financial and time).

3: Products, services and programs

To offer a suite of products, services and programs that meet the community's changing expectations and needs of a public library into the future

- Creative Library – To offer a suite of products, services and programs that meets the community's needs for creative development, expression and collaboration
- Community Library – To offer a suite of products, services and programs that meets the community's needs for dynamic learning and social connection

Why is this important?

As community wants and needs evolve and digital resources become more popular, public libraries in 2030 are likely to dedicate significantly less floor space to books. As a consequence, space within public libraries is likely to be occupied by a broader range of products and services that are of relevance to the community and external funding providers.

As the five significant trends (creativity, creation, brain health, dynamic learning and community connection) identified through the Victorian Public Libraries 2030 process emerge, public libraries can continue to integrate new offerings that meet the expectations, wants and needs associated with these trends.

Part III: Strategic objectives

Key implications

- The role of the public library will change significantly, challenging the public's perception of what a library is.
- Public libraries' role in literacy improvement will broaden to encompass 21st-century literacies.
- Less physical space will be dedicated to collections.
- A range of non-traditional public library products and services will be introduced.
- There will be an increased number and fluency of activities and staff in public libraries throughout the day.

Actions to consider

- Assess the relevant and practical implications of Victorian Public Libraries 2030 on a library-by-library basis.
- Incorporate relevant strategic framework components into local library planning – What can we do now?
- Undertake a feasibility audit on the future requirements for public libraries (facilities, staff, funding).
- Introduce a broader range of non-traditional products and services consistent with the long-term vision.
- Manage the community's expectations as the role of public libraries broadens and evolves.

4: Facilities and resources

To incorporate a mix of flexible spaces that facilitate and support the broadening range of public library products and services into the future

- Creative Library – To incorporate a mix of flexible spaces that facilitate and support an environment of creativity and collaboration
- Community Library – To incorporate a mix of flexible spaces that facilitate and support an environment of community learning and social connection

Why is this important?

The multipurpose, multifunction nature of the public library in 2030 demands a flexible venue design that facilitates and supports the delivery of multiple activities. As the range of activities within public libraries expands, library facilities and resources must be able to adapt to their changing usage and users.

Key implications

- Broadening the role of public libraries determines that many venues may need to be reconfigured; others may have to be rebuilt.
- The use of spaces in public libraries will change as less physical space is dedicated to collections.
- Public library spaces will need to be flexible, and there may be a need for multifunctional design.
- Larger venues may be necessary to cater for broader functionality.

Actions to consider

- Undertake an audit of existing library facilities and resources, identifying the gap between current facilities and resources and those that may be required in 2030.
- Reconfigure or rebuild public library facilities and resources as required by libraries' evolving future role and the introduction of a broader suite of products and services.

5: Staff

To develop a flexible and inclusive culture that attracts and retains people with the right skills and attitude to deliver public library products and services into the future

Why is this important?

As public libraries continue to broaden beyond their traditional offerings, there will be a greater requirement for staff with community development skills who can teach, facilitate, mentor and develop others.

These skills will be necessary to deliver the range of additional services offered by public libraries in 2030. In order to attract and retain suitable people with such skills, public libraries will require different employment attitudes and policies in the future.

Key implications

- Increasingly diverse people and skills are required, representing a movement away from traditional librarian roles.
- Broadening the role of public libraries will result in a changing workplace environment for current library staff.
- The number and fluency of staff working within libraries will increase.
- Volunteers will play a greater role in public libraries.
- Flexible employment policies will be required.
- A promotional strategy may be required to attract appropriate staff.

Actions to consider

- Identify future public library roles, staffing structures and skills.
- Identify existing skills gaps and training opportunities for current library staff.
- Develop training programs to address existing skills gaps and prepare staff for future roles.
- Review existing library employment policies.
- Develop future recruitment and staffing strategies (including for volunteers).
- Promote public libraries as an employment and/or volunteering option.
- Introduce new library roles, in line with the evolving role of public libraries and the broader products and services on offer.

Part IV: Strategic triggers

Strategic triggers are the social signals that inform public libraries on the timing of their future actions. As signals pointing to the development of prominent Creative and Community scenario trends begin to mount, public libraries can activate their strategies and actions with greater confidence.

Social signals for action

The Creative and Community scenarios developed during the Victorian Public Libraries 2030 process identified the emergence of five prominent social trends that have strategic significance for the future of public libraries: creativity, collaboration, brain health, dynamic learning and community connection.

Social signals for action are those indicators of change that are relevant to the development of these trends. In the Community scenario, for example, a rapidly changing social, economic and technological landscape drives the need for people to continuously re-skill and re-learn. It's this social need for dynamic learning that is the premise for offering learning programs in public libraries. Ongoing redundancies in industries being disrupted by technological change, and sustained unemployment growth, are both signals that might precede the social need for dynamic learning.

Public libraries need to be sensitive to signals that might enable movement, or indicate movement towards the development of these prominent social trends in either the Creative or Community scenario. Equally there is a need to be sensitive to signals that might restrict development, or indicate movement away from these trends. The act of purposefully looking for these signals is called environmental scanning.

Environmental scanning

When scanning for signals of change, it is not the timing that is relevant, nor the particular type of event. How the emerging social trends develop is not important. What is important is that public libraries are alert to the possibility of these trends developing, and have rehearsed their response.

During the Victorian Public Libraries 2030 project it was identified that Ron Barassi, as a high-profile sufferer of dementia, might become the public face of lifetime brain health in the years 2015 to 2020. What's important here is not the individual, Ron Barassi, nor the dates. Instead, the point is that a high-profile ambassador is one way in which the issue of brain health might grow in the public's consciousness. In the same way, Ita Buttrose being named Australian of the Year in 2013 could be significant for the future of public libraries. Ms Buttrose is the National President of Alzheimer's Australia and is a champion of mental health issues, including dementia.

It is essential that public libraries maintain a broad outlook for the following:

- perception-shaping events – events that shape society's perceptions from one belief to another (for example, severe weather and attitudes to climate change and consumption)
- behaviour-enabling events – events that enable relevant social behaviours to emerge (for example, development in infrastructure; technology; regulations)
- emerging behaviour signals – signals that indicate relevant social behaviours are emerging (for example, growth in the number of people telecommuting, rising participation in arts courses).

These perception- and behaviour-based events and signals are triggers for strategic action as Victorian public libraries evolve their offerings to meet future community wants and needs.

The following table provides examples of social signals for the emerging trends of creativity, collaboration and brain health as they relate to the Creative scenario. These signals could be important triggers for strategic responses by Victorian public libraries.

Examples of social signals for emerging Creative scenario trends

Prominent social trends	Perception-shaping events	Behaviour-enabling events	Emerging behaviour signals
Creativity Rise of a creative culture	• Creative and learning pursuits are proven to keep the brain healthy • Technology makes creativity mainstream (e.g. reality TV, YouTube)	• Governments establish creativity and innovation as a national priority • Increased funding for cultural and creative community centres	• Increased enrolment in Arts courses • Businesses introduce storytelling and play into strategic planning
Creativity Decline of material want	• Extreme weather events are linked to man-made climate change • Rising energy costs raise consciousness of consumption levels	• Governments increase landfill fees • Carbon tax introduced	• Per capita consumption decline impacts retail and car sectors • Increased willingness to work part-time, work flexible hours or job-share
Creativity Challenging economic conditions	• Broader social progress measures are introduced (e.g. Gross National Happiness) • Stress and mental health receive ongoing national attention	• Australians pay down credit debt and move towards a debit culture	• Sustained slowdown in economic performance • Increased immigration intake to fund aged services
Collaboration Increased social collaboration	• Increasing transparency provides insight into how things are made	• Collaborative consumption websites grow exponentially • Community co-working hubs proliferate	• Farmers' markets, craft markets and community gardens prosper • Large businesses agree to share industry data
Collaboration Rising prominence of philanthropy	• Death of a famous humanitarian prompts calls for greater giving • World Giving Index raises awareness of Australian donations	• Tax concessions introduced to encourage philanthropy	• Greater media exposure given to acts of philanthropy
Collaboration Volunteering participation rises	• Increased suicide awareness prompts calls for greater social connection	• Average work and commuting hours hold steady before declining • Governments introduce time taxes to reward and encourage volunteering	• Increased numbers of students volunteer in the Third World • Increased rate of volunteering throughout Victoria
Collaboration Telecommuting	• Study shows telecommuters are more efficient and happier employees • Traffic congestion continues to increase travel times to work	• National Broadband Network roll-out continues and is completed • Businesses offer telecommuting incentives to employees	• Telecommuting hubs emerge throughout suburban areas • Local governments set employment self-containment targets
Brain health Lifelong brain health	• Ita Buttrose named Australian of the Year, raising awareness of issues related to ageing • Dementia becomes a visible national epidemic	• National campaign encourages lifelong learning • Health insurers pay benefits for adult learning programs	• University of the Third Age, community colleges and learning centres register record attendance • Meditation grows in popularity as research proves link to brain health

Part IV: Strategic triggers

The following table provides examples of social signals for the emerging trends of dynamic learning, community connection and brain health as they relate to the Community scenario.

These signals could be important triggers for strategic responses by Victorian public libraries.

Examples of social signals for emerging Community scenario trends

Prominent social trends	Perception-shaping events	Behaviour-enabling events	Emerging behaviour signals
Dynamic learning Economic contraction	• Shopping malls begin to transition away from retail as stores close • Global pressures on sustainability constrain economic development	• European economic crisis remains unresolved • Energy and utility prices increase substantially	• Traditional industries (e.g. retail, manufacturing) contract significantly • Sustained slowdown in Australian and global economies
Dynamic learning Decline of traditional gatekeepers	• Technology-enabled transparency proves the undoing of gatekeepers not considered socially responsible	• Increased political presence of minor parties and single-issue parties	• Large publishing firms collapse as self-publishing booms
Dynamic learning Continuous need to re-skill and re-learn	• Increased demand for knowledge workers • Sustained growth in service industries	• Online learning options increase • Increased funding for community education facilities	• Sustained slowdown in economic performance
Dynamic learning Rise of an entrepreneur culture	• Distrust of traditional corporations diminishes their appeal • Leading journalist quits to focus on personal subscription website	• National Broadband Network roll-out enables online businesses to grow • Increased sophistication of websites, online services and delivery	• Decline of traditional industries (e.g. print, publishing) • Growth in number of start-ups and small business operators
Community connection Suburban villages	• Urban sprawl continues to place pressure on commuters • New estates emphasise personal time and community in marketing	• Local governments set employment self-containment targets • Congestion tax introduced to combat traffic delays	• Neighbourhoods redesigned with an emphasis on public spaces, green spaces, car-free zones, walking and cycling tracks
Community connection Social displacement	• Stress and mental health receive ongoing national attention	• Continued automation of manufacturing processes • Economic downturn causes decline in superannuation performance	• Sustained rise in unemployment • Increased union activity and strikes protesting forced lay-offs
Community connection Telecommuting	• Study shows telecommuters are more efficient and happier employees • Traffic congestion continues to increase travel times to work	• Economic downturn convinces corporates to close head offices • Businesses offer telecommuting incentives to employees	• Telecommuting hubs emerge throughout suburban areas • Local governments set employment self-containment targets
Brain health Lifelong brain health	• Ita Buttrose named Australian of the Year, raising awareness of issues relating to ageing • Dementia becomes a visible national epidemic	• National campaign encourages lifelong learning • Health insurers pay benefits for adult learning programs	• University of the Third Age, community colleges and learning centres register record attendance • Meditation grows in popularity as research proves link to brain health

Appendix A: Using this strategic framework

Interpreting this strategic framework

The Creative and Community scenarios outlined in this strategic framework represent extreme futures, because they are primarily shaped by a select few drivers. The reality of 2030 is that Victorian lifestyles are likely to include elements of both scenarios, reflecting the influence of multiple drivers of change. The real value of these scenarios lies in the learning they provide in terms of the broad directions that future community attitudes, behaviours, wants and needs might head.

The Creative and Community scenarios identified five prominent social trends in 2030 that present significant opportunities for the future of Victorian public libraries: creativity, collaboration, brain health, dynamic learning and community connection. These trends form the basis upon which future strategic options for Victorian public libraries have been founded; it's the development of these trends, rather than the complete scenarios themselves, that is important to the future of Victorian public libraries.

The Creative Library and Community Library strategic options explored in this framework represent extreme futures because they are formed in response to the Creative and Community scenarios. Their value lies in clarifying the broad directions in which public library services, facilities and staffing requirements could evolve over the next 20 years. As such, Victorian public libraries are likely to feature elements of both the Creative Library and the Community Library as they continue to evolve towards providing more active, service-based experiences. The specific relevance of these strategic options to individual libraries will vary according to local community wants and needs.

The strategic objectives outlined in the framework are robust – they can be effective no matter which future scenario develops. They allow the flexibility for individual public libraries to evolve simultaneously towards providing Creative and/or Community Library offerings depending on the strength of emerging community wants and needs.

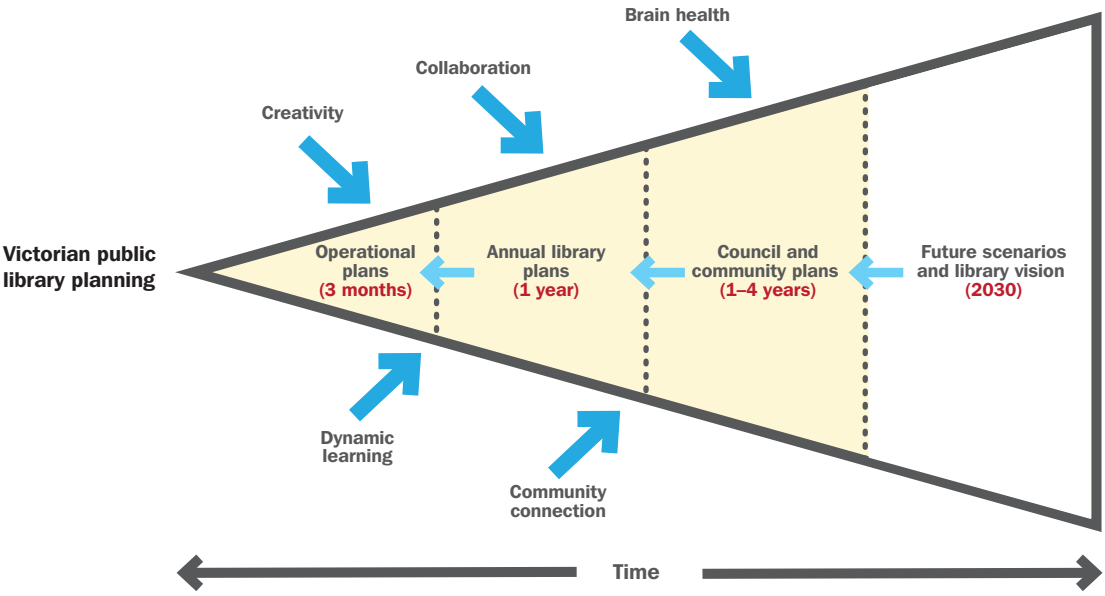
Public libraries need to be sensitive to signals that might enable or indicate movement towards the development of these social trends. Equally there is a need to be sensitive to signals that might restrict development or indicate movement away from these trends. These signals are the triggers for future strategic action by Victorian public libraries.

Applying this strategic framework

The purpose of this strategic framework is to inform, influence and guide the future strategic direction, priorities and planning for Victorian public libraries. It offers clear and powerful strategic directions for the future of Victorian public libraries and outlines the strategic objectives necessary for making this future a reality by 2030.

What the framework does not do is call for a sudden or immediate overhaul of current public library services. Social change is rarely sudden; the future tends to be a result of incremental transitions, so a series of innovation segues is required, rather than an abrupt overhaul. For Victorian public libraries this means introducing a series of innovation transitions over time that are relevant to their community's changing information, content and literacy needs. As the five prominent trends identified in this report emerge, public libraries can continue to seamlessly phase in new programs and services that not only align with these trends, but that are consistent with their purpose and heritage.

Appendix A: Using this strategic framework



This strategic framework offers a cohesive approach to the future, ensuring that what public libraries do in the short term is consistent with where they are headed in the long term (refer diagram above).

From a practical planning perspective, there are several steps to using this strategic framework effectively:

1. Acknowledge the strategic reasoning outlined in Part I and, in particular, the potential of the five prominent trends identified (creativity, collaboration, brain health, dynamic learning and community connection) to influence future community attitudes, behaviours, wants and needs.
2. Acknowledge the vast future potential for Victorian public libraries to respond positively and proactively to these trends.
3. Adopt the five strategic objectives outlined in Part III as the framework for identifying future priorities and associated actions at the local community level. An example of how the strategic objectives outlined in this framework might be used to guide public library planning appears later in this section. In this example, the objective for Revenue and funding has been fleshed out to show possible strategic priorities and actions for an individual public library.
4. Phase in new services, programs and resources as they become relevant to local community wants and needs.
5. Conduct ongoing environmental scanning for signals that indicate the emergence and strengthening of social trends that have relevance to the future role of Victorian public libraries.

EXAMPLE
Strategic objective: Revenue and funding
To develop a portfolio of revenue and funding streams that ensures the future prosperity of Victorian public libraries

Strategic priorities	Actions	Timeframe	Responsibility
To secure a sufficient level of ongoing funding to enable Victorian public libraries to transition to their future vision	Communicate a compelling story for the future that makes the case for and secures sufficient ongoing funding – future scenarios, future role and vision for public libraries, stakeholder benefits	Short term	
	Develop and promote a position as the community's brain gymnasium by offering a range of programs that support lifelong learning and brain health, mental engagement, social inclusion and collaboration	Medium term	
	Undertake a feasibility audit on the costings and requirements for the public library of the future – products and services, facilities and resources, staff	Medium term	
To develop a level of fiscal autonomy by moving from a cost-free service model to a pay-the-gap model for additional future services that are considered non-core in 2013	Introduce a suite of self-funding services and programs that is consistent with the long-term vision of public libraries but are not considered core library activities by the public in 2013	Medium term	
To receive a level of public donations that supports the continuing high standard of products, services and benefits delivered by Victorian public libraries	Position public libraries as a preferred beneficiary for public donations (financial and time)	Long term	

Appendix B: Victorian Public Libraries 2030 process

What is a public library? In 2012? In 2030? A large number of public library employees and stakeholders from across Victoria were involved in a collaborative five-stage process that included a series of interviews and four workshops.

Methodology

Stage 1: Stakeholder interviews
March and April 2012

Stakeholder interviews represented the orientation phase of the project. In all, 16 conversations were held across Victoria to:

- understand the mental models of key stakeholders and decision makers
- uncover the key concerns about the future, and narrow the focal questions for future exploration
- expose the biases, blind spots and invalid assumptions within stakeholders' perceptions of the future.

Stage 2: Scenario workshops
June 2012

The purpose of the scenario workshops was to explore the established and emerging community values, attitudes, behaviours, wants and needs that may be present in 2030. The Creative and Community scenarios that emerged from the workshops provide the basis for answers to the question: What is a public library in 2030?

Workshop participants identified the significant social trends they felt could impact Victorian lifestyles over the next 20 years, and then developed two future scenarios to understand how these trends could drive different social behaviours and needs in 2030. These scenarios are stories about the future social environments in which public libraries may have to operate. They provide a hypothetical context for public libraries to consider their future options; their purpose is to prepare public libraries for the future rather than accurately forecast the future.

Stage 3: Backcasting workshops
July 2012

In Stage 3 participants used a process called backcasting to explore how the Creative and Community scenarios might develop between 2012 and 2030. The two scenarios developed in Stage 2 represent a snapshot of Victorian lifestyles in 2030; backcasting is effectively the 'history' between the future and the present, filling in the detail of how the future could develop. Backcasting provides the scenarios with a strategic purpose by outlining a framework for future action.

Stage 4: Analysis workshops
August 2012

The purpose of Stage 4 was to assess the implications and opportunities that each scenario presents for public libraries in 2030. The key for any organisation assessing future implications and opportunities is to maintain a broad sense of identity that allows it to attach relevance to future social changes. It was with this philosophy that participants assessed the future impact of the Creative and Community scenarios on public libraries, particularly with regard to the following areas:

- revenue and funding
- products, services and programs
- facilities and resources
- staff

The analysis and insights from these workshops gave rise to the concepts of the Creative Library and the Community Library.

Stage 5: Strategic framework workshop
February 2013

A final workshop was held to discuss the usefulness and usability of the draft framework for public library strategic planning that was developed using the information generated in the earlier workshops.

Strategic design

The Creative Library

The following strategic design outlines the underlying thinking and process behind the concept of the Creative public library of 2030.

	Primary drivers			**Secondary drivers**		
Drivers of change	Emergence of post-materialistic values	Increasing environmental awareness and activism	Continuing influence of technology	Economic challenges posed by the transforma-tion from a material economy to a service and experience-oriented economy	Globalisation of trade, news and information	A growing, ageing population that is living longer with each generation
	↓					
	Creative scenario					
Future scenario	Rise of a creative culture	Increased social collaboration	Challenging economic conditions	Rising prominence of philanthropy		
Significant scenario features	Decline of material want	Telecommuting is mainstream	Volunteering participation rises	Increasing awareness of lifelong brain health		
	↓					
Prominent social trends	**Creativity** The desire to unlock, express, develop and record creative interests	**Collaboration** The willingness to partner, cooperate and share with others	**Brain health** The need for lifelong mental engagement, stimulation and care			
	↓					
Strategic option	**The Creative Library**					
Vision	To become the community's central hub for creative development and expression					
Mission	To contribute to community wellbeing by facilitating creative development and expression in a collaborative environment					
	↓					
Strategic objectives	1. To generate internal and external belief and buy-in to a shared vision for the future of Victorian public libraries	2. To develop a portfolio of revenue and funding streams that ensures the future prosperity of Victorian public libraries	3. To offer a suite of services and programs that meets the community's needs for creative development, expression and collaboration	4. To incorporate a mix of flexible spaces that facilitate and support an environment of creativity and collaboration	5. To develop a flexible and inclusive culture that attracts and retains people with the right skills and attitude to deliver public library products and services into the future	

Appendix B: Victorian Public Libraries 2030 process

The Community Library

The following strategic design outlines the underlying thinking and process behind the concept of the Community public library in 2030.

	Primary drivers		Secondary drivers			
Drivers of change	Economic challenges posed by the transforma-tion to a global, virtual economy	Increasing irrelevance and distrust of traditional gatekeepers	Continuing influence of technology	Persistence of material-istic values	Increasing social awareness and activism in response to growing environ-mental challenges	A growing, ageing population that is living longer with each generation
	↓					
	Community scenario					
Future scenario	Economic contraction	Decline of traditional gatekeepers	Continuous need to re-skill and re-learn	Rise of suburban villages		
Significant scenario features	Social displacement	Telecommuting is mainstream	Rise of an entrepreneur culture	Increasing awareness of lifelong brain health		
	↓					
Prominent social trends	**Dynamic learning** The need to continually acquire new knowledge and skills to participate fully in a rapidly changing environment		**Community connection** The desire for stable and trusted relationships with people and places of common interest		**Brain health** The need for lifelong mental engagement, stimulation and care	
	↓					
Strategic option	**The Community Library**					
Vision	To become the community agora – the people's place					
Mission	To support 21st-century literacy by facilitating dynamic learning and community connection					
	↓					
Strategic objectives	1. To generate internal and external belief and buy-in to a shared vision for the future of Victorian public libraries	2. To develop a portfolio of revenue and funding streams that ensures the future prosperity of Victorian public libraries	3. To offer a suite of services and programs that meets the community's needs for dynamic learning and social connection	4. To incorporate a mix of flexible spaces that facilitate and support an environment of community learning and social connection	5. To develop a flexible and inclusive culture that attracts and retains people with the right skills and attitude to deliver public library products and services into the future	

Participants

Stage 1

Strategic conversations with key Victorian public library stakeholders were held between 27 March and 13 April 2012. These conversations were predominantly conducted face-to-face, with distance dictating the need for several telephone conversations (as indicated below). Thank you to the following people:

- Adele Kenneally, Group Manager, Community Development, Glenelg Shire Council (telephone)
- Anna Cook, Manager, Community Access and Arts, East Gippsland Shire Library (telephone)
- Bruce Myers, Director, Community and Cultural Services, Swan Hill Council (telephone)
- Chris Kelly, Manager, Libraries and Learning, Brimbank Libraries
- Christine Mackenzie, Chief Executive Officer, Yarra Plenty Regional Library
- Colin Morrison, Director, Governance and Funding Programs, Local Government Victoria
- Debra Rosenfeldt, Director, Community, Learning and Public Library Partnerships, State Library of Victoria
- Geoff Carson, Manager, Libraries, Arts and Culture, Mornington Peninsula Library
- Geoff Rockrow, Chief Executive Officer, Whitehorse Manningham Regional Library Corporation
- Jenny Mustey, Library Services Manager, Campaspe Regional Library
- John Murrell, Chief Executive Officer, West Gippsland Regional Library Corporation and President, Public Libraries Victoria Network
- Kerry Thompson, Chief Executive Officer, Wyndham City Council (telephone)
- Patti Manolis, Chief Executive Officer and Regional Library Manager, Geelong Regional Library Corporation (telephone)
- Ray Davies, Manager, Economic Development and Tourism, Pyrenees Shire Council (telephone)
- Sally Jones, Manager, Darebin Libraries
- Suzanne Gately, Manager Libraries, Hobsons Bay Libraries

Melanie McCarten, Senior Program Manager, Public Libraries, State Library of Victoria, acted in the role of note taker for each conversation, except that with Jenny Mustey.

Stages 2, 3, 4 and 5

Each Library Service Manager/CEO could invite one other person to participate in the workshop stages of the project with a view to optimising the variety of experience and potential within the public library network. Thank you to the following workshop participants:

- Aileen Carter, Collection Service and Hawthorn Librarian, City of Boroondara Library Service
- Andrew Hiskens, Manager Learning Services, State Library of Victoria
- Anna Cook, Manager Community Access and Arts, East Gippsland Shire Library
- Anne Champness, Manager Community and Leisure Services, Southern Grampians Shire Council
- Anne-Maree Pfabe, Manager Community Information and Arts, Monash Public Library Service
- Barb Donelson, Manager Library Operations and IT, Kingston Information and Library Service
- Bruce Myers, Director of Community and Cultural Services, Swan Hill Regional Library Service
- Camille Cullinan, Manager Cultural Development and Libraries, Swan Hill Regional Library Service
- Carolyn Macvean, Chief Executive Officer, Goldfields Library Corporation
- Charles Gentner, Chief Executive Officer, Goulburn Valley Regional Library Corporation
- Charlotte Henry, Coordinator Library Services, Maribyrnong Library Service
- Chris Kelly, Manager, Libraries and Learning, Brimbank Libraries
- Christine Brooke, Chairperson, Goldfields Library Corporation
- Christine Mackenzie, Chief Executive Officer, Yarra Plenty Regional Library
- Clare Hargreaves, Manager Social Policy, Municipal Association of Victoria
- Colin Morrison, Director Governance and Funding Programs, Local Government Victoria

Appendix B: Victorian Public Libraries 2030 process

- Connee Maggio, Manager Library Customer Service, Kingston Information and Library Service
- Shar Balmes, Chairperson, Casey-Cardinia Library Corporation
- Dale Johnston, Lerderderg Library Coordinator, Bacchus Marsh, Moorabool Shire Council
- Damian Tyquin, Library Service Co-ordinator, Port Phillip Library Service
- Dan Harper, Manager Funding Programs, Local Government Victoria
- Debbie Skinner, Coordinator, Libraries, Latrobe City Council
- Debra Rosenfeldt, Director Community, Learning and Public Library Partnerships, State Library of Victoria
- Dennis Goldner, Library Board of Victoria
- Dianne Panjari, Library Coordinator, Stonnington Library and Information Service
- Donna Edwards, Acting Library Operations Coordinator, Hume Libraries
- Elisabeth Jackson, Executive Officer, Public Libraries Victoria Network
- Genimaree Panozzo, Manager Cultural Development, Moreland City Council
- Geoff Carson, Manager Libraries, Arts and Culture, Mornington Peninsula Library
- Hugh Rundle, Acting Information Management and Kew Librarian, City of Boroondara Library Service
- Jack Drajkopyl, Glen Eira Library and Information Service
- Jane Grace, Manager Community Engagement, Yarra Plenty Regional Library
- Jarrod Coyles, Systems Coordinator, Brimbank Libraries
- Jeanette Moore, Coordinator Library Services, Wellington Shire Library
- Jenny Fink, Coordinator Library Services, Ballarat City Council (Central Highlands Libraries)
- Jenny Mustey, Library Services Manager, Campaspe Regional Library
- Jenny Ruffy, Manager Cultural and Library Services, Yarra Libraries
- Jenny Wyllie, Chief Executive Officer, High Country Library Corporation
- John Murrell, Chief Executive Officer, West Gippsland Regional Library Corporation
- Joseph Cullen, Chief Executive Officer, Eastern Regional Libraries Corporation
- Joyce Dickson, Library Services Coordinator, Murrindindi Library Service
- Judy Bell, Acting Manager Culture and Library Services, Yarra Libraries
- Julie Kilpatrick, Tourism and Community Information Coordinator, Ararat Rural City Council
- Julie Kyriacou, Manager Community Information Services, Latrobe City Council
- Karen Ward-Smith, Executive Officer, Public Libraries Victoria Network
- Karyn Siegmann, Manager Libraries and Culture, Bayside Library Service
- Katrina Knox, Group Manager Community Services, Darebin City Council
- Kim Kearsey, Manager, Libraries and Learning, Frankston Library Service
- Kylie Pinkerton, Library Programs Coordinator, East Gippsland Shire Library
- Kylie Zanker, Chairperson, Wimmera Regional Library Corporation
- Leith Green, Library Marketing Coordinator, Frankston Library Service
- Leneve Jamieson, Manager Access and Information, State Library of Victoria
- Letizia Mondello, Collections and Marketing Coordinator, Moonee Valley Library Service
- Lorraine Seeger, Corporate Manager Customer Services, Eastern Regional Libraries Corporation
- Maresce Jones, Caroline Springs Library Coordinator, Melton Library and Information Service
- Mary Lalios, Chairperson, Yarra Plenty Regional Library
- Mary Rydberg, Manager Community Care, Greater Dandenong
- Matthew Kinleyside, Project Officer, Public Libraries, State Library of Victoria
- Michael Byrne, Manager Community Learning and Libraries, Maribyrnong Library Service
- Michael Scholtes, Manager Learning Communities, Melton Library and Information Service

- Natalie Brown, Library Services Coordinator, Greater Dandenong
- NatashaTsui-Po, Senior Team Leader Resources and Systems, Stonnington Library and Information Service
- Nerida Dye, Library Manager, Gannawarra Library Service
- Nerida Webster, Senior Communications Advisor, Local Government Victoria
- Norman Prueter, Library Service Coordinator, Pyrenees Shire Council
- Paula Clark, Chief Executive Officer, Wimmera Regional Library Corporation
- Paula Kelly, Library Services Coordinator, Melbourne Library Service
- Peter Carter, Chief Executive Officer, Casey-Cardinia Library Corporation
- Rhonda Rathjen, Library Services Manager, Wyndham Library Service
- Rod Fyffe, Municipal Association of Victoria
- Roslyn Cousins, Chief Executive Officer, Corangamite Regional Library Corporation
- Sally Both, Manager Corporate Services, Whitehorse Manningham Regional Library Corporation
- Sally Jones, Manager Darebin Libraries
- Sarah Stephens, Manager Library Services, Southern Grampians Shire Council
- Sue Kelly, Library Service Manager, Mildura Rural City Council Library Service
- Sue Wilson, Libraries Coordinator, Mitchell Shire Library and Information Service
- Susan Bentley, Library Manager, Glenelg Libraries
- Suzanne Gately, Manager Libraries, Hobsons Bay Libraries
- Suzie Bull, Rosebud Library Services Coordinator, Mornington Peninsula Library
- Tara Hossack, Libraries and Learning Services Manager, Ballarat City Council (Central Highlands Libraries)
- Terry Aquino, Coordinator Resources and Systems, Hume Libraries
- Tim Hose, Library Officer, Goulburn Valley Regional Library Corporation
- Tom Edwards, Library Systems Technology Coordinator, Wyndham Library Service
- Tony Iezzi, National Manager Library Services, Vision Australia Information Library Service
- Troy Watson, Manager Library and Learning, Moonee Valley Library Service
- Wendy Quihampton, Manager Public Libraries and Community Engagement, State Library of Victoria

Appendix C: Creative scenario timeline

2012: A day in the life of a suburban commuter

Warrigal Road, 18 kilometres east of Melbourne's CBD

Moving at a snail's pace past the Chadstone Shopping Centre on his way home to Burwood, Sam Collins had plenty of time to ponder what future might lie ahead for his generation's mega-monument to consumption. Recent retail news had been all doom and gloom as it seemed one retailer after another was either going to the wall or reporting poor profit results – all this despite the government's claims that the economy was enjoying growth figures the rest of the world would envy.

Sure, it was easy for Gerry Harvey to blame the sales downturn on the internet, and it was convenient for Frank Lowy to forecast that sales levels would soon return to normal, but Sam wasn't so sure. He detected a growing dissonance within himself and among his friends that represented a deeper shift in sentiment away from the materialistic lifestyle in which they had been raised and had then mindlessly adopted.

It wasn't just the cost of living that came with the pursuit of consumption; it was the cost of lifestyle. For one, he hardly ever saw his kids anymore – apart from weekends, when he seemed to spend his time sprinting them from one appointment to another. Work hours had steadily increased over the past 15 years as he made his way up the corporate ladder, an ascension that was necessary in order to pay for the $1.5 million home that guaranteed his teenagers automatic enrolment at the nearby exclusive private school. He and his colleagues often joked that the increase in work hours had a similar impact on them as slow-boiling water had on a frog: you don't notice the subtle increases until it's too late.

On top of all this, the commute home had increased by an average of 15 minutes in peak hour. Sam knew that if he didn't leave for work by 7 am his 30-minute journey could stretch beyond an hour. He preferred to stay at work until after 6.30 pm to avoid the peak afternoon rush. Of course, all of this meant that personal interests had to be foregone. In his twenties he played squash with a group of university friends twice a week; he now struggled to fit in one game a month. His playing partners were all in the same boat.

It seemed that life was passing Sam by – and fast! With each passing year it seemed he had less time to himself and was spending more time in congested traffic. And now the government was talking about Melbourne's population hitting 5 million people by the year 2030. How many more can they squeeze in, he wondered? He was sure that if he was granted access to a genie, the two things he would wish for would be more personal time and space.

As the sound of the horn from the car behind rudely interrupted his thoughts, indicating it was time to move forward another 30 metres, Sam Collins began to wonder how the National Broadband Network (NBN) might alter Victorian lifestyles in the future, and if it might hold any solutions to his own personal situation.

2015: A day in the life of a suburban family

Thornbury, 7 kilometres north of Melbourne's CBD

Browsing through the broad selection of second-hand clothes at her local Salvos store, Kelly Dolan smiles as she considers what her younger self might have thought of her recent shift in attitude towards shopping. She was once a self-confessed shopaholic who could max out her credit card with the best of them: Kelly could spend entire weekends at Northland shopping centre buying the latest brands for herself and her three children. For Kelly and her friends, shopping was more than a lifestyle; it was a sport, and they competed for the best bargains and designer fashions.

These days, when Kelly thinks of Northland she thinks of status from a bygone era, empty shopfronts and weekends lost. She now refers to herself as a reformed shopper, and has even taken up the Buy Nothing New challenge this month to prove her new credentials to family and friends.

Prior to this she led a family crusade to de-clutter their household, and was the driving force behind a successful neighbourhood garage sale. With the money they raised, the family enjoyed a weekend away in the Dandenongs.

Despite the fact that Kelly's wardrobe has been reduced by about 50 per cent, it's not as if she feels she has given up anything, or is going without. On the contrary, she now feels somehow lighter, almost liberated – and with far less stuff in it, her home feels like it has more space. She and her husband have even discussed moving into a smaller home.

Over the past three years her family has got its spending under control, and after paying off their credit card they have switched to a debit card, something Kelly could not have imagined in 2012. As well as the peace of mind that comes from being debt-free (apart from the mortgage, of course!), Kelly has been able to scale back her work hours slightly to fit in more 'me-time'. Previously, she and her husband Mike were always under pressure to increase their workload to meet the payments that came with their materialistic lifestyle. Now Kelly has reduced her part-time work from a seven-day fortnight to six days, giving her the opportunity to re-engage with her teenage interest in painting.

The extra time also allows her to devote energy to her successful blog, The Reformed Shopper (www.reformedshopper.com.au), which provides tips to readers on how they can reduce their consumption or repurpose the things they already own. The blog has proven quite popular, with readers excited about sharing their cathartic experiences of kicking the consumption habit.

Her website has also been set up to facilitate collaborative consumption in the local area, inspired by the earlier work of Rachel Botsman. Residents in Thornbury and surrounding suburbs simply list the products or services they are prepared to loan out, the dates and times these are available, and the fee for such a loan. Locals seeking such goods or services can then get online to see if the available resources match their needs.

The culture of sharing has risen rapidly over the past three years and there are now at least 100 similar online sharing sites across Victoria. Kelly's parents still shake their heads at the fact she was recently named Small Businessperson of the Month by the local council for her endeavours. To them the idea of promoting less consumption and more sharing is obscure, and she still clearly remembers them challenging her two years ago: 'Who would be interested in that?'

So how did she arrive at this point? Well, according to her blog:

> *While the idea of consuming less clearly has environmental benefits, to me this was not the driving force to becoming a reformed shopper. Instead it was the realisation that the satisfaction I once derived from shopping was no more. That I was simply continuing to consume because that's what I had been conditioned to do – that's what I had become.*
>
> *In fact, with the financial and time pressures that our lifestyle was putting on me, I realised that spending had largely overtaken my life. And for what? So my kids could have the latest and greatest? So I could show up my friends with the newest fashions?*
>
> *I concluded, like thousands of others, that surely there had to be more to life.*

Of course the emerging attitudes and behaviours of Kelly and thousands of others like her have collected victims along the way. Retail, particularly fashion (which showed the earliest signs of cracking in 2011 and 2012), was the first category to pay the price. The industry that had fed on society's insecurities by manipulating constant need for the latest fashions collapsed like a house of straw, as a different perception of consumption emerged in Melbourne's suburbs. The car industry has been another high-profile victim; consumers began holding onto their cars longer and car-sharing behaviour began to reach a critical mass. For the first time in its history the status symbol of the 20th century is showing real signs of losing its prominence within Victorian mindsets and lifestyles.

Appendix C: Creative scenario timeline

So what's next for Kelly and her family? Well, she is getting so much enjoyment and personal fulfilment from her website that she would love to devote more time to it. In fact she is seriously thinking about cutting back her work hours even further and starting up a new site on a topic that she feels could be the next frontier for Victorians – savouring time. (To be fair, it was actually her husband's idea, and they are thinking of creating and working on the website together.) She just doesn't know how to tell her parents!

2020: A day in the life of a rural telecommuter

Ballan, 78 kilometres northwest of Melbourne

David Blangiardo stills wakes at 6 am most days out of habit, even though he no longer needs to get up. Ten years of catching the 7 am train from Ballan station to the city each day has instilled in him an automatic alarm clock that has proven hard to turn off. These days David no longer makes the long commute into the city each day. The daily grind of greeting fellow sleep-deprived passengers at the station at 6.50 am each morning and then falling asleep with them on the journey home each night is behind him for good.

David still makes a weekly trip to the city when circumstances demand face-to-face meetings, but most days he makes the short commute to Ballarat, where he was an early convert to the city's inaugural co-working hub. Drained from the long days and tired of seeing his children only on weekends, he could instantly see the appeal and potential of a regional working hub – as could the Ballarat City Council. Previously, it was estimated that on any given weekday up to 1000 people left Ballarat to work in Melbourne. Even on conservative estimates, if each of these commuters spent $10 per day then at least $2.5 million was leaving the local community each year.

David has been in marketing at Cadbury-Schweppes for almost 15 years now. He and his wife Susie made the move to Ballan in 2010 when Melbourne houses were at their least affordable. Having grown up in Bendigo, Susie also felt the country would be a healthier place to raise a family. The only problem for David was the daily commute.

His company had frowned upon telecommuting until recently, when several factors conspired to alter its thinking:

1. A sustained downturn in the economy convinced many corporations to reduce overheads by closing down or reducing head-office space in Melbourne.
2. There was increasing acceptance of online transactions and online operating.
3. A so-called congestion tax was introduced as a way to alleviate Melbourne's traffic problem.
4. Melbourne University released a study showing telecommuters were more effective and more loyal employees.

What a bonus this policy shift has proven for David. Not only does he feel that he's become more effective at his job, he reasons that he has freed up at least ten extra hours of personal time each week. This time has allowed him to take up a midweek coaching position with his son's under-14 basketball team. The extra time spent within his community has also reminded him of how dependent Ballan is on volunteers to make things happen, and he has recently become an active member of the local fire brigade.

It's the opportunity to spend more time at home – particularly with his children – that's the best thing about telecommuting. Both his kids are now in high school and are starting to get serious about their studies. The advice he offers his children about career choices has always had two themes:

1. What do you enjoy doing?
2. What skills can't be replicated by technology?

Sophia, his eldest, is in Year 10 and is interested in environmental studies, a topic she's been keen on since the local primary school became involved with Stephanie Alexander's Kitchen Garden Project in 2009. For David, the real value of this project was not necessarily the nutritional advice that students picked up, but rather the understanding of natural systems and how they worked. Instead of coming home and talking

about fresh fruit and vegetables, Sophia preferred to talk of the role that snails and worms played in the garden. Sophia is also a committed vegetarian, and she never, ever buys food from the local supermarket. It always has to be purchased at Ballan's weekly farmers' market – a shopping ritual for the Blangiardo family. Each Sunday morning the family also helps out at the community garden, the produce of which is shared with the local in-home aged services.

David's other child, Marc, is in Year 8 at the local Steiner school, where the curriculum has a greater focus on play and creativity. At first David was a bit dubious about sending Marc to a non-traditional school, but from an early age Marc showed a real knack for creative thinking and it seemed this was the best education facility to develop his gifts. In any case, Steiner schools are increasing their influence on mainstream education, and he knows from his experience at Cadbury that more and more emphasis is being placed on creative thinking, storytelling and play in an attempt to improve organisational learning.

In fact, there seems to be a broader social movement towards the arts: foreign languages and musical instruments are becoming more common approaches to teaching creative thinking and learning. As a gift to the family last Christmas, David and his wife had invested in a grand piano and the kids now received weekly lessons.

Who knows, thought David. Maybe in the future he might learn a few tunes himself.

2025: A day in the life of a 'happy' Melbournian

Altona, 13 kilometres southwest of Melbourne's CBD

All this talk about happiness is enough to make you shake your head. Or at least that's what Sarah Hunt initially thought. From the time she was a young girl (many years ago now) Sarah was raised on the notion that hard work was the key to success. And if at first you failed, then you worked harder still. Now it seems that hard work is seen as part of the problem. Apparently the number of hours Victorians were working was making us all unhappy!

Sarah must admit that the first time she heard about the concept of a national 'happiness' measure she thought someone was having a lend of her. However, the idea has not only been heavily promoted by the Greens and Family First parties over the past couple of years, it has also gained credibility and support in the community. In fact, in 2016 the Alpine Shire, incorporating the town of Bright, was the first local government in Australia to officially introduce a biannual happiness and wellbeing measure for its residents. Since then the region has promoted itself as Australia's happiest, launching a tourism and marketing campaign around the concept of wellbeing.

Their timing was impeccable, coinciding as it did with Victorians' increasing focus on collecting experiences, as opposed to collecting possessions. Domestic tourism has boomed since 2015 on the back of short weekends away, as Victorians have cut back on their work hours. Likewise, supporting industries such as holiday accommodation, hospitality, and recreation have prospered. It seems people have liked what they've seen when they've ventured away to country Victoria; there have been significant recent population gains recorded in places like Mansfield, Echuca, Wodonga, Woodend, Bendigo, Lakes Entrance and Anglesea. The success of Alpine Shire's marketing campaign is evident in the copycat tactics of other local councils introducing a similar measure of their residents' happiness.

In fact, if Sarah was honest with herself, she would now admit that even she has been converted to the merits of a measure of social progress beyond mere economics. On reflection, she spent too much time in the past working for others, and not enough time on herself. This is something she is now rectifying, as much for her family as for herself.

Like tens of thousands of older Victorians, Sarah's dad has early-onset dementia, a condition that is reaching epidemic proportions in 2025. For Sarah and her family this development has been

Appendix C: Creative scenario timeline

heartbreaking – and at the same time it's been motivating, driving her to head the National Brain Awareness Week campaign in Altona for the past four years. This campaign has increased its profile each year within the community, just as it has on a national scale, attracting increasing public and government support.

For millions of Victorians the dementia epidemic has provided a first-hand glimpse into their own possible future. With average life expectancy closing in on 90, and genuine expectations for living beyond 100, lifelong brain health is at the forefront of the community's health concerns. It is to health in 2025 what obesity was in 2012. The impact of this concern has been double-edged, with plenty of winners and losers, including food additives and alcohol consumption on the debit side, and meditation, reading and interest in lifelong learning on the credit.

These days Sarah not only works a lot fewer hours than she did in her mad younger days, she also devotes a lot more time to her local community. At the moment she sits on a board deciding where to direct philanthropic funds for an upgrade to the local cultural and community centre. The role has given her a firsthand insight into the generosity and sharing nature of locals. Sarah still remembers the networking motto at her first big corporate job in the 1990s: 'What can you do for me?' How ridiculous and selfish that seems now. Within her current networks knowledge and funds are shared to facilitate a collaborative and co-creating culture – 'What can we learn from each other?' seems far more appropriate.

Sarah's work on the brain awareness campaign and on the community centre that provides her with the purpose she felt was missing from her successful corporate career. Rather than contributing to a company's profit, she now feels that she is investing in Altona's future. The community has always prided itself on its arts and culture but, without a doubt, interest in these pursuits has skyrocketed in recent years – and not just from your typical so-called arty types, either.

It now seems as if everyone has developed an interest in the arts, and whether it be writing, painting, singing, dancing or learning an instrument, local participation is at record numbers. So developing a community facility that helps as many people as possible to unlock the artist within fills Sarah with a great sense of satisfaction.

And that's enough to make her happy!

2030: A day in the life of a creative entrepreneur

Mallacoota, East Gippsland; 525 kilometres east of Melbourne

As the distant sound of the approaching plane becomes clearer, Archer Davis knows that he still has about 40 minutes before he was due to meet his colleagues at their community co-working space. He'd caught the 8.30 am flight from Merimbula to Melbourne often enough to know that it always passed over his hometown of Mallacoota between 9.15 am and 9.20 am, leaving him more than enough time to relax over a hot ginger tea at his favourite cafe, Tea 4 2, before focusing on the day ahead.

A city boy by birth, Archer, like tens of thousands of others in recent years, made the shift to regional Victoria – because he could. His family had always enjoyed their annual holidays at Mallacoota, and he clearly remembers his mad-keen fisherman father, proclaiming each summer that this was where he was going to retire. Yet as aspirational as this image might have been to his father's generation, to Archer it never made sense. Why would you wait until you retired to enjoy the lifestyle you want? Why let endless work hours, burgeoning debt and ever-present stress rule your life until you reach some arbitrary age? Surely the purpose of life was all about experiences, not possessions?

In Archer's mind it's the broad array of learning options, and in particular the focus on creativity, the arts and crafts, that make Mallacoota such a vibrant place to live – no longer are these pursuits the domain of uber-trendy North Fitzroy. As someone who has always been interested in literature, Archer takes part in a writing group every Wednesday evening. His partner, Lilla, is a member of the Mallacoota Potter's Society, which also meets weekly. The challenge for both

has been learning the skills to accompany their interests. Artistic activities don't come as naturally to them as they do to their eldest son, Kai, a gifted guitarist who teaches music at the community arts studio, Where Art Thou?

Where Art Thou? has enabled Mallacoota residents to pursue their interest in doing things, not viewing things. And what many locals want to do is create, says Kai. In fact, in the 18 months since he started as a community cultural development artist, Where Art Thou? has employed two additional arts mentors and the range of tutoring now extends across painting and sculpture to music, video and digital art.

Asked to describe Where Art Thou?, Kai settles for two words: possibilities and discovery. And it's true: walking through the studio you are confronted by an assortment of colour, sound and movement from 8am until 11pm most nights (later still on weekends). Kai says his clients range from an eight year old interested in classical guitar, to a 57 year old who hasn't given up on her dream of playing lead guitar. One of the other development artists is helping a great-grandmother to learn to paint. Last week the strategy director at Coastal Wind Farms commissioned Where Art Thou? to convert the company's five-year plan into a 15-minute video featuring a wide variety of arts. This is something all students will be invited to contribute to.

The studio has even teamed up with the language centre in Lakes Entrance to assist refugees with broken English to improve their literacy skills using their favourite music and artists. Says Kai:

> *I don't think it matters how old you are, or how inexperienced you are. No one is judged here. Some people know what they want to do, for others the process is more organic. It's just about having a go. Ultimately it's about helping others bring their feelings to the surface – and I'm finding that more and more people want to express themselves creatively.*
>
> *Some people want to share their output; others look to mash mediums and co-create with people of complementary skills. Some just want to do their own thing and go home.*
>
> *Regardless, I enjoy the nurturing side of my role. To me, life has never been about material things. This is fun.*

So, who or what can take credit for the revolution that's taken place within this once tiny hamlet that was previously one of the most isolated towns in Victoria? Well, depending on your perspective, the local council has to take some of the credit.

Prior to 2020 the population of Mallacoota had been stagnant for years, with the number of permanent residents hovering around 1000. Of course, over Easter and summer this number swelled to almost 10,000, which proved the untapped appeal of the place. But overall, the already old demographic profile was ageing as Mallacoota faced the fundamental challenge of all regional towns: How to become a vibrant community that retains its youth, while also attracting new residents?

Since 2020 the permanent population has escalated to almost 4000 and the decision by council to invest in a communal co-working facility, otherwise known as 'the hub', has been one of the catalysts for this growth. This building is now the centrepiece of the town's working community, acting as a magnet to prospective residents. It's to this building that Archer Davis makes his way several times a week in his role as an architect.

Archer worked for years with a large firm in Melbourne before leaving to establish his own home-based practise. He realised how much he missed the camaraderie that came with working with colleagues, which is why he enjoys working from the hub so much.

On any given day the hub is filled with people from all walks of the business and creative community – from self-employed accountants, graphic designers, innovators, writers and bloggers, to small business consultants, lawyers and marketers, and even people employed by larger firms based in Melbourne, and whose clients can be satisfied remotely.

Appendix C: Creative scenario timeline

Unlike the early edition office-warehouses that were scattered across Melbourne in the noughties, the Mallacoota co-working hub has soul. The open plan facility allows 24-hour access and features high standard videoconferencing services, meeting rooms, quiet working areas and a communal kitchen; it even schedules meditation and yoga classes each morning. The facility host coordinates activities to ensure attendees get a chance to meet each other and to learn where opportunities to collaborate might exist. Archer particularly likes Wine-down Friday, when the drinks come out at 4 pm and the building exudes a relaxed social feel.

One of the great purposes of the hub is to foster a culture of collaborative creation. To optimise this they introduced an online 'Seats 2 Meet' model, allowing people to reserve seats next to fellow workers with common or complementary interests and skills. This system enables people like Archer to plan their days ahead, knowing which co-workers will be attending the hub and at which times.

For Archer it's this eclectic mix of people, skills and perspectives that provides the real X-factor benefit from the hub. Over the past year he has collaborated on separate projects with an anthropology student and a musician, with both providing different angles on the future of design. The hub has taught Archer that superior learning can take place when multiple perspectives are harnessed, and that what is important is not someone's profession per se, but rather their perception.

Of course, no matter how vibrant the hub is, Archer doesn't spend every weekday there. In fact, he tries to work no more than four days each week, and he usually concludes his working day by 4 pm. It's this balance that allows him to spend more time with family, particularly his youngest child, Chloe, who is only two. He doesn't earn as much as he could, but he's hardly missing out – and perhaps if wealth was measured in personal time he would be one of the richest people in Victoria.

Archer feels richest when he's sharing in Chloe's journey of discovery. If only children's songs weren't so damn catchy. He's forever carrying them around in his head: *Hi, hello and how are you? How are you? How are you? Hi, hello and how are you? How are you today?*

Appendix D: Community scenario timeline

2012: A day in the life of a suburban commuter

Warrigal Road, 18 kilometres east of Melbourne's CBD

Moving at a snail's pace past the Chadstone Shopping Centre on his way home to Burwood, Sam Collins has plenty of time to ponder what future might lay ahead for his generation's mega-monument to consumption. Recent retail news has been all doom and gloom as it seems one retailer after another is either going to the wall or reporting poor profit results. And all this despite the government's positive claims about the economy enjoying growth figures the rest of the world would envy.

Historically successful retailers like Gerry Harvey might have been slow to catch on to the internet's potential, but they are now feeling the full brunt of its power. Even Sam, hardly an early adopter of technology, has recently purchased a new camera from the US over the internet, saving $175 in the process.

It isn't just retail which is being affected by change. There have been recent redundancies in the car industry, despite government bailout money, and only last month Fairfax and News Corp announced that they were cutting thousands of newspaper jobs and moving to online subscription models – surely the clearest sign yet that the death of print editions was imminent. This latest move made Sam wary – he loves reading a newspaper, and doesn't think he would get the same satisfaction from reading a computer or tablet.

What he does have to admit though, is that the accepted rules of operating are being rewritten by a new attitude that didn't just accept traditional authority or the so-called rules of society. Sam should know. He saw firsthand how technology had enabled the entrepreneurial instincts of his daughter Kate, who has been breeding turtles and selling them online via her website since she was 12.

The extent of his children's 'Who says?' attitude was laid out for Sam when his son Chris took part in the Occupy Melbourne protest of October 2011. Driving home after bailing his son out of police custody, Sam challenged Chris as to why he would protest against capitalism and profits. Chris explained that the protest was not against the rich per se, but rather against the system – a system that rewarded the 1 per cent.

Initially Sam didn't understand where his son was coming from, but the UK's Leveson Inquiry into phone hacking by the British press had changed his mind. Sam followed the inquiry intently, fascinated by the intrusion into private lives that was seemingly considered acceptable in the name of corporate profits. And as Sam watched he felt an anger build inside himself. Perhaps, he thought, his son was on to something.

As the sound of the horn from the car behind rudely interrupts his thoughts, indicating it is time to move his car forward another 30 metres, Sam Collins wonders how the growing irrelevance and distrust of traditional gatekeepers might play out in the future. (He also hopes his son has done his last bit of jail time in his bid to change the world.)

2015: A day in the life of an economic forecaster

BIS Shrapnel, Collins Street, Melbourne CBD

In all her years as an economist, Kylie Grattan has never seen an economic transformation like this before. She now has a sense of what it must have felt like during the industrial revolution, the last time traditional industries had been impacted by such large-scale changes. Except this time the world was witnessing a technology revolution – and as Australia grinds painfully from a physical economy to a virtual economy, many traditional industries that were unprepared for the shift continue to feel the pain.

Despite the continued success of the mining boom that cushions Australia's overall economic performance, Victoria's unemployment rate continues to grow, placing a strain on government receipts and funding for services. Retail and manufacturing industries feel the dual impact of technology and globalisation on consumer behaviour. What appeared as cracks in 2012 has opened up to full-scale holes in 2015, as one industry after another goes to the wall, like dominoes.

Appendix D: Community scenario timeline

First to be impacted by the growth in online transactions was the retail sector, which has been in an unprecedented slump since 2012. Over the past couple of years famous brands that had been part of the Melbourne landscape for decades – including Colorado, Billabong, David Jones and Myer – have either gone out of business or been forced to close many of their outlets. Not that this came as a surprise to Kylie, who had been an early adopter of online shopping since the internet became mainstream. These days, when she does visit a retailer she prefers those who optimise her sensory and emotional experiences in store, allowing her to move between physical and virtual aspects of retail engagement. These stores also offer expert advice, providing her with information that she wouldn't receive from a traditional shop assistant.

As a consumer, Kylie sees the benefit of this online revolution. The time when domestic retailers could pick and choose their discount periods has effectively passed, with most being forced to basically move into a 52-week sales mode, permanently promoting lower prices, at reduced margins, to move stock. This is all happening at a time when energy prices keep rising, further adding to operating expenses. As a result, thousands of staff have been laid off, store opening hours are being reduced to save on overheads, and operators have been offered more generous lease terms just to remain open.

Even this helping hand from operators like Westfield hasn't stopped the exodus of stores from their suburban mega-malls; in fact, you wouldn't be surprised to see a tumble-weed blow through Chadstone on some afternoons. This is virtually forcing management to look to tenancy options beyond traditional retail. With many businesses reducing their physical presence in the CBD, centre management is now exploring the option of opening a massive co-working space on its second floor to capture a share of the growing suburban telecommuting market. It has also begun looking at options to convert existing car-park space to residential housing.

Of course, while some industries are floundering, others, like delivery services, are booming. How ironic that Australia Post, a business whose primary function was to deliver mail, has actually benefitted from the internet as online purchasing created a whole new market space. Particularly innovative was Australia Post's decision to team up with international shopping services offering overseas brands to Australian consumers at discount prices.

The thought of a package waiting to be picked up from her personal locker always gives Kylie a spring in her step – not that she has too much time to think ahead. Outside of work she's currently completing her Masters in International Business, which she's studying online at the prestigious University of California, Berkley. The course requires her to attend a weekly tutorial via videoconference with her fellow classmates, and tonight she's responsible for facilitating the session.

And then there are her political aspirations. Kylie has always been community minded, and she was incensed by the lack of political action to fix the ageing infrastructure in her suburb of Croydon. With economic conditions becoming bleaker, government spending is increasingly coming under the microscope, and Kylie is seeking to capitalise on what she feels is a mood for change away from the major parties. She has decided to run as an Independent at the next state election, on a platform of local community. In particular, Kylie is committed to four issues:

1. Increasing the local rate of employment self-containment (proportion of locals who work locally) from its current 39 per cent to 70 per cent by 2030
2. Increasing local business and trade through the promotion of decentralised lifestyles
3. Increasing green spaces, car-free zones, and walking and cycling tracks
4. Reducing the average commute time to work by 50 per cent by 2030

As she prepares to leave work early in order to beat the congestion of rush hour, Kylie receives an email letting her know the pair of shoes she ordered from the UK last week have arrived. Perfect, she thinks to herself. They're just in time for her date on Saturday night with the guy she's just met on eHarmony.

2020: A day in the life of a suburban telecommuter

Dandenong, 30 km south-east of Melbourne's CBD

In a way it is sad really. They say the one constant in life is change, but the death of the print version of the *Herald Sun* newspaper feels somehow personal for Phil Chapman. He knew it was inevitable, and he'd felt largely ambivalent about the collapse of other Victorian institutions such as Ford, but he'd lived with newspapers all his life. As a child he'd reflexively reach for the sports section over breakfast as his dad caught up on the news. And as an adult, the paper had made his long train journey from Dandenong station to Flinders Street at least tolerable. Reading the newspaper had always been about 'me time', and it was his favourite time of the day.

Still, no matter how nostalgic it made him feel, it was only the medium that was changing, and it's not as if it hadn't been coming for a while – after all, the weekday edition hadn't been printed for several years and the sky didn't fall in then. Like millions of others, Phil had simply adjusted to the new world order by purchasing a tablet that enables him to receive his daily dose of news and gossip. These days he doesn't even read a particular newspaper online, preferring instead to keep up to date on the subjects that interest him via his personal news page that receives feeds from sources all around the world. Many of his favourite journalists no longer work for a media organisation, preferring instead to focus on building subscriptions to their personal blogging sites.

A self-confessed techno-laggard, Phil has surprised himself with how well he has taken to mobile technology over the past five years. Always an avid reader, and someone who can easily make his way through two books each month, Phil can't remember the last time he purchased a paper edition. Perhaps it was back in 2016 when his favourite author Peter Carey published his last book in print? Anyway, now he simply reads all books on his tablet. In fact, when he downsized his home two years ago he had his entire book collection converted electronically. As much as he loved his physical collection, they just didn't have the storage space now.

Walking past Dandenong train station on his way to a videoconference, Phil is again reminded of his past, although this time he feels anything but nostalgic. He smiles to himself as the announcement comes over that the next train will not be stopping at Dandenong and that commuters will have to wait a further 15 minutes for the 8.17 am service. Bloody public transport.

These days Phil rarely ventures to Melbourne, and certainly never for work. He feels fortunate that his company, a major food processor, has been an enthusiastic supporter of telecommuting. Mind you, its motives weren't necessarily altruistic; rather it was a result of falling sales and a shrinking bottom line that forced it to reduce overheads. Like many companies, they have learnt the hard way that technology is a double-edged sword; the downside for companies like his is the transparency technology brings to their operations, and the powerful public voice that social media has given to consumers. For a company whose children's products contained vast amounts of salt and sugar, this transparency was not a good thing!

It isn't that his company is solely driven by the bottom line. For one thing, they have been very positive about supporting the brain- and mental health of their employees. They recently initiated a concept called Boot Camp for Brains, where employees were invited to attend a series of online seminars to learn more about keeping their minds healthy and active. As someone in his late fifties, who was becoming increasingly conscious of the threat of Alzheimer's, Phil was one of the first to sign up.

Recent technology advancements and the spread of dementia throughout the community has really focused attention on mental care over the past few years – and lately media had begun to speculate that his generation would be the first to see average life expectancy exceed 100. With a possible 50 years or so left, Phil is determined to remain mentally alert and active. He even jokes that it was the first time he'd been to a gym in years, even if it was just a gym for brains.

Appendix D: Community scenario timeline

Already he'd been impressed by the emphasis these seminars placed on lifelong learning, and the need to constantly be exposed to new stimuli and new challenges. For Phil, this thinking sparked a curiosity that had been missing since childhood, and already he's begun to consider the multitude of future business opportunities that technology could open up if he learnt new skills.

Another important reason for Phil to remain mentally alert is the economic downturn of the past decade. His superannuation performance has been significantly impacted and what once looked like a comfortable dream of retirement at 60 has long since vanished. For Phil, like many others his age, his working life looks like extending to his late sixties and beyond. But even this is preferable to the unemployment or under-employment which has impacted so many of Phil's friends, victims of so-called economic downsizing. These friends face the uncertainty of the future, armed only with the skills of the past, and are undertaking retraining and online learning to prepare them for tomorrow.

Phil's parents have recently been forced to sell their home to finance their move into an aged care facility, but the waiting lists for the premium venues are so long that they have temporarily moved in with Phil and his family. There was just no way that he was going to let them move into some of the dilapidated facilities that had been shamed recently via a high-profile social media campaign.

And with that thought, Phil decides to hasten his step. Best not to keep the videoconference waiting if he's to remain in management's good books.

2025: A day in the life of an aged retiree

Williamstown, 8 kilometres southwest of Melbourne's CBD

Pamela Parsons is dismayed as she reads the email from her local council. 'More cuts to local services? How dare they!', she thinks to herself. As a long-term resident of Williamstown, Pamela can remember when her bins were collected each week, not once a fortnight as they are now. She could remember when her local street wasn't spotted with potholes. And she could remember when the local swimming pool was open seven days a week over summer, not just on days when the temperature reached 25 degrees.

Now to be told that her recycling bin would no longer be collected – that she would have to take her recyclables to a communal bin at the end of her street – well, this was just going too far. She understands that the environment is important, but she remains a sceptic of climate change, no matter how conclusive the science might claim to be. She's lived long enough to form an opinion that change is a constant and the weather moves in cycles, from droughts to floods, and from heating to cooling. Besides, like most people these days, she is more worried about the more-immediate problem of the unemployment rate and lack of economic growth than she is about the distant threat of climate change.

This latest move strikes her as just more penny-pinching by the council, rather than any altruistic bid to save the planet. As a renowned blogger and online campaigner on local issues, Pamela knows that the most effective way to get or stop action is a widespread social media campaign. As an ex- councillor herself, she's witnessed firsthand how effective these campaigns could be. And since being voted off council and retiring from her role as a community nurse, Pamela has plenty of time to devote to her web passion, Grey Matters.

She likes to think she is playing a community role in keeping council honest and her fellow citizens informed. Mind you, her website is nowhere near as aggressive as her friend Alan's, whose site Willy Whine exposed the recent rorting of council funds by two councillors, resulting in their resignation. The ageing population has produced a tsunami of older Australians who are active online, invigorated by the transparency and public voice that the internet and retirement has given them. In fact, Pamela feels so comfortable with the medium that she now posts a weekly vlog (video blog) to keep followers informed.

In a perverse way, council has contributed to the extra accountability that they now find themselves with, having offered internet, video production, and web design courses to the community over

the past decade. The take up of these courses, particularly among older members of the community, has been overwhelming, leading councillors to often joke that they had been very successful in arming their enemy. So the more Pamela thinks about it, the less chance she gives council of getting this latest proposal through.

As she is about to begin writing her response to council, she is interrupted by a knock at her door. She'd almost forgotten that it was Wednesday and her cleaner, Anouk, was due to arrive. Anouk, a migrant from Iraq, has been living in Australia for six years now, a beneficiary of the federal government's 2017 policy to increase the annual immigration intake to prop up Australia's tax base and support the ageing population.

Anouk has been cleaning Pamela's house for the past four years now, and the two have struck up a good friendship, overcoming the initial barrier of Anouk's broken English. Pamela had even encouraged her to attend a language and writing skills course at the local community centre, fast-tracking the development of Anouk's English skills to the point where she was now fluent.

Pamela was never one to imagine herself ever having a cleaner – she always thought it wasn't a good look. However, as she got older her perspective had changed, and her home, although only modest, was still too much for her to constantly clean. So she had a choice: move into an aged care facility or employ a cleaner. Being a strong-willed woman, she was never going to move out of her own home. Besides, the NBN has made in-home healthcare a reality, and according to her latest virtual check-up she is as healthy as someone half her age.

Pamela prides herself on her independence and on remaining active, and where possible she refuses to concede to ageing. She is now three years into a PhD at Open Universities Australia, preparing a thesis that challenges the relevance of Australia's three-tier government system. Although she lives alone she rarely feels lonely, fulfilling many of her social needs at the local community centre, which offers an array of courses and classes for people of all ages and skill levels – it just goes to show that sometimes council does get it right.

That reminds her, she better finish that email before they suspend the collection of her recycling bin.

Dear Mayor Robson

I am writing to express my dismay and disapproval at council's latest proposal to suspend the collection of household recycling bins …

2030: A day in the life of a video arts producer

Sandringham, 16 kilometres southeast of Melbourne's CBD

As Marius Smedts shuffles his way to check his daily brain-health reading, a throbbing hangover accompanies his usual pre-reading anxiousness. Once a big drinker, Marius takes pride in his brain-health reading and he has virtually abstained from alcohol in recent years. At least that was until last night, when some friends encouraged him to (reluctantly) kick on into the morning at the local tapas bar. Mind you, it was a special occasion – it wasn't every day that your company was nominated for an award at an international film festival.

Of course it wasn't always that way. In his early twenties Marius would literally have to be dragged home from a night out, determined to be the last man standing. But since the advent of personal brain scanning, which made brain health visible and measurable, his thinking and behaviour have changed markedly. Now brain deterioration isn't something that just happens to older people; it's something that accumulates over time.

Of course, a lot has changed since Marius was in his twenties. He was employed by Ford as a cadet sales forecaster straight out of university in 2005 and enjoyed 11 years with the car giant, working his way to more senior positions as the company's fortunes went in the other direction. He still

Appendix D: Community scenario timeline

remembers the sick feeling in his stomach when he was informed of his redundancy – yet it proved to be his greatest stroke of fortune.

He is still in his early thirties, so you didn't have to tell Marius that future opportunities were somewhat limited in the manufacturing economy. On the other hand, the virtual economy was booming, and this was where he knew his future lay. Taking the opportunity to start afresh, Marius decided to learn the art of video production, with a dream of establishing his own company in a field that was disrupting everything from business and education, to entertainment and the arts.

If nothing else, the economic challenges presented by the decline of manufacturing had taught Marius to take control of his own future, and not to put it in the hands of a large corporation or the government. And he knew that technology was the great enabler that could put him, and hundreds of thousands of others just like him, in the driver's seat. To this day, he still remembers being inspired by the words of his tutor: 'In this day and age you can do it yourself. Sometimes you have to create your own destiny.'

Today Marius finds himself as the director of one of Melbourne's leading independent video production companies. Mashable Productions specialises in the field of community arts, or amateur and semiprofessional video production, an industry that has emerged rapidly since its genesis in *Funniest Home Videos* and YouTube.

These days it seems everybody wants to produce better quality video footage, and the demand for venue and equipment hire, production advice and editing expertise has never been higher. From the suburban vlogger to the suburban musician or the suburban mum, people want to be heard, and they are no longer satisfied with amateur-looking output. The growth in personal, subscription-based media channels in particular has underpinned the demand for his services and the economic success of his company.

Mashable Productions is based out of the old Southland shopping centre, which was converted into a combination of aged care facilities, community parkland and co-working spaces about a decade ago. Marius would estimate that up to 50 per cent of people who once travelled to the CBD for work now telecommute from within ten or 15 minutes of their home. With more decentralised lifestyles, Sandringham is no longer dominated by the car, and there's increased emphasis on neighbourhood design, public spaces, green spaces, car-free zones, and walking and cycling tracks.

While telecommuting has cut down on the time spent in traffic, which was seriously getting out of hand in 2012, Marius thinks the real benefit has been the additional time that people now spend within their own communities. He feels this extra local time has contributed significantly to the vibrant community feel that has engulfed and (he feels) enriched Sandringham over the past decade. He still remembers when friends in trendy Yarraville mocked his decision to move to staid, established Sandringham in 2020. Now they marvel at his foresight. Like so many suburbs in Melbourne, Sandringham has developed into a distinct borough that bubbles with energy on any given night. It may not be Greenwich Village in New York, but Marius thinks it has a story worth telling.

And this is how he came to find himself hung-over this morning. Marius was so inspired by the transformation within the Sandringham community that he decided to produce a short film called *The power of localisation*. The film is a series of interviews with locals, capturing the backlash against traditional gatekeepers over the past 20 years, and documenting the positive outcomes of local living. Funded by Southern Community Bank, a big supporter of Mashable Productions from day one, the film went on to receive critical acclaim at several underground film festivals across Australia. However, it's this week's announcement of an award nomination at the upcoming Tropfest short film festival in New York that has the locals really excited. (That's why he didn't have to buy a drink last night!).