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A Library in Transition

State Library Victoria's redevelopment

**Research Unit in
Public Cultures**

A Library in Transition:

State Library Victoria's redevelopment

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Acknowledgements

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Executive summary

In 2015, Australia's oldest public library, the State Library Victoria in Melbourne, announced an AU$88.1 million redevelopment of its spaces and services.

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This report, produced by researchers at the University of Melbourne in partnership with State Library Victoria, examines the redevelopment at its inception – after it has been imagined and planned, but before it has been implemented.

The research situates the State Library's redevelopment within the broader economic and cultural shifts shaping the public life of cities and citizens globally in a digital era. Drawing on interviews with professional staff and users of the State Library, as well as an online user survey, this report highlights how these broad shifts are impacting upon the Library and reshaping its public role.

There is a growing body of qualitative scholarly research documenting the views and experiences of professional library staff. But there is little similar research from the vantage of library users beyond the narrow 'satisfaction' rankings of market research. In this context, the user portraits and qualitative user responses documented here provide rare insights into how State Library Victoria – its spaces, collections, atmosphere, and technological affordances – forms part of people's lives, shaping their capacities and aspirations, and their perceptions of their city.

Interviews with State Library professional staff and users reveal that there is broad concurrence on the following aims of the redevelopment:

- strong space management to demarcate between quiet and noisy zones and improve wayfinding
- preserving traditional or existing aspects of the State Library: its unique ambience, heritage architecture, accessibility as a public space, and its role in connecting Victorians to the history of the state

But the stories and experiences of library users also add a contrasting perspective on the value of the library. They bring two important issues to the fore.

1. An expanded understanding of creative production

Professional staff frame the redevelopment as a transition from an institution based on storage and consumption to one focused on creativity. The redeveloped Library will support creativity by investing in enriched spaces and services for media production, and to support experimentation with new technologies, entrepreneurial activity, and innovation. While studies of other libraries reveal that these kinds of resources and services are used and valued, most State Library users from our sample did not use the library for these kinds of creative activities. Instead, their 'traditional' consumption of library collections, and their use of the space itself, supported a range of creative practices beyond the Library. From writing blogs, plays and stories, to preparing for an acting audition, to volunteering at a cultural institution, the creative practices of these users bound particular communities together or contributed to the social and cultural life of the city.

2. Libraries as spaces of disconnection

In their proactive adoption of digital technologies, libraries have become experts in the provision of digital literacy training, free WiFi and access to computers, online databases, and affordances for plugging in personal devices. Publics value these resources. However, our user sample consistently emphasised the State Library as a space where they could escape constant connectivity and instead concentrate, reflect, or relax.

In a media-saturated, distraction-filled culture, spaces of disconnection are just as important as spaces for perpetual connectivity. Libraries' enduring association with elevated places of learning, as well as more recent understandings of the library as a 'third place', makes them ideal institutions to satisfy this growing social need.

These two observations – that consumption of traditional materials is intimately connected to creative practices, and that people need dedicated spaces of disconnection – run counter to the powerful narratives driving much of the discourse, design, and development of public libraries today.

Libraries in a Digital Culture

Public libraries have always had to balance divergent interests and stakeholders.[1] Since the nineteenth century, they have played a role in educating populations and conscripting them into a modern public sphere. They have served a range of governmental policy agendas, from childhood literacy to bridging the digital divide. And they have contributed directly to local economies by establishing commercial and trade departments and supporting emerging industries.[2] Libraries have also been revered as civic landmarks, both symbols of community values of openness and universal access to knowledge and signposts of their city's credentials as modern, liberal-minded, and economically resilient.[3]

The rise of digital technologies in a networked digital culture has made the task of balancing these civic, governmental, economic, and community interests more complex. As historical centres of knowledge, libraries have proactively incorporated digital technologies into their institutional model, expanding access to their materials while also attracting new users and new forms of use through targeted and diversified programming. But this transformation has also exposed the library to new pressures. It has often stretched their resources to accommodate divergent and sometimes competing needs and agendas. What Shannon Mattern described as the 'third wave' of library development[4] that is presently unfolding can be understood in the context of two broad frames:

1. The digital economy

Digital technologies have transformed the role of knowledge, from scarce resource to a currency at the centre of economic development.[5] Libraries are directly implicated in the new ways knowledge is being generated, legitimated, archived, and distributed. They have positioned themselves as places that can support the translation of knowledge into new, productive forms. On the one hand, this has involved assuming an active role in reskilling people to take part in the digital economy through programs around digital literacy and bridging the digital divide. On the other, libraries are catering to a tech-savvy elite, establishing innovation and entrepreneurialist hubs to support start-ups and future industries.

2. The creative city

The economic transition of cities from manufacturing centres to service centres supporting the knowledge economy has expanded the role of culture and creativity in urban life. Urban policy agendas like the creative cities paradigm, creative industries policies, and culture-led urban development strategies have shifted the status of creativity from a marginal or elite practice, to a distinguishing feature of urban life.[6] Creativity is used to attract knowledge workers and enhance economic activity through urban vitality and lifestyle consumption.

Melbourne's status as a UNESCO City of Literature, and large-scale events like *White Night*, Knowledge Week and Melbourne Festival attest to the way creativity has become widely distributed throughout the city and implicated in civic branding. Libraries have aligned themselves with creative city and creative industry agendas. Increasingly, they promote themselves as places that support the creation of content – from film and music to 3D-printed artefacts and apps. They have invested in new technologies, spaces, and programs to stimulate new creative practices in a range of different fields, from running workshops in digital storytelling, to hosting makerspaces, fablabs and hackerspaces.[7]

It's my favourite city, apart from my home town. Melbourne has an artistic feeling compared to other cities. I like the National Gallery and I like [the] State Library and the other things the city offers, like the cultural diversity […]

- State Library user Carol, interviewed for this report

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1   See Mattern (2007) *The new downtown public library*. As she puts it, "The purely benevolent, noncommercial institution – an institution that served one function and served it well – never really existed" (p. 1).
2   See Bennett (1998) *Culture: A reformer's science*; Black & Pepper (2012) 'From civic place to digital space'; Jaeger et al (2012) 'The intersection of public policy and public access'.
3   See Dudley (ed.) (2012) *Public libraries and resilient cities*; Mattern (2014) 'Library as infrastructure'.
4   Mattern (2007).
5   See Castells (1996) *The information age*; Sassen (1991) *The global city*.
6   See Florida (2002) *The rise of the creative class*; Luckman (2018) 'Cultural policy and creative industries'; O'Connor (2016) *After the creative industries*.
7   Jochumsen et al (2017) 'Towards culture 3.0'.
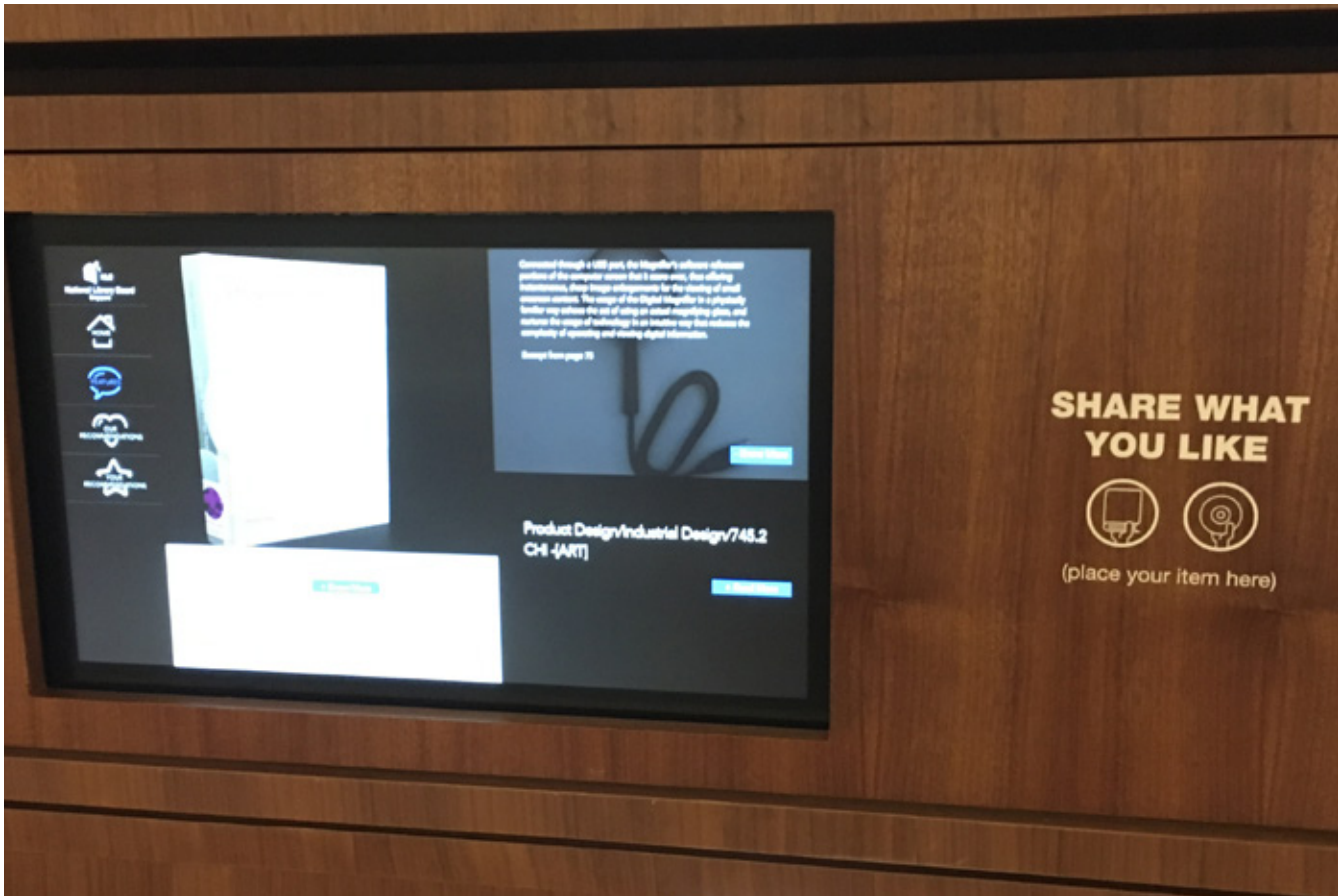
A kiosk at the library@orchard in Singapore

USERS IN A DIGITAL CULTURE

The two frames above help us better contextualise the kinds of changes we have seen in public libraries over the last two decades. In what follows, we outline four broad shifts that help us better understand how digitisation and networked technologies have *impacted upon users*, influencing how people participate in work, public culture and what they want and need from public institutions.

1. 'Digital disruption' and changing patterns of work

People are working in more flexible, mobile, and fragmented ways. Working lives are longer, often involving multiple, 'portfolio' careers, or involving multiple changes in career over the course of a working life. Policy initiatives promoting 'lifelong learning' and digital literacy speak to the way governments and institutions are attempting to prepare people for a more precarious, varied and unpredictable employment future.

2. Ubiquitous technology

There is increasing recognition of the inescapable nature of contemporary technologies. Ubiquitous computing in the form of screens, sensors, and location-aware networked devices are transforming our relationship to space, enabling more interactive and immediate forms of engagement on the one hand, and adding new forms of distraction and surveillance on the other.[8] Meanwhile, social media and email bring pressures of reciprocity and responsiveness into our domestic lives, further blurring the distinction between work and home.[9]

3. The 'rise of the user'

Digital technologies have made it cheaper and easier for people to produce their own creative content, and to share and distribute the material they produce. Often described as 'participatory culture' or the 'rise of the user', this blurring of the distinction between cultural producers and cultural consumers is shaping an expectation, particularly amongst younger people, that they can 'speak back' to dominant cultural narratives and have more agency in shaping their own micro-publics.[10]

4. A hybrid sense of place

Digital media is changing the way we relate to and develop a sense of place. For migrants both permanent and temporary, connected to each other and to their home country through social media and transnational media networks, their sense of place is comprised through fragments of physical and mediated places, produced by the immediacy of digital connection.[11] Place is experienced not as a stable, bounded physical presence, but as a hybrid, mediated composite, networked into other places.

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8 See McCullough (2013) *Ambient commons;* McQuire (2016) *Geomedia.*
9 Gregg (2011) *Work's intimacy.*
10 See Jenkins et al (2013) *Spreadable Media;* Wright (2013) *Towards a lexicon of usership.*
11 Martin & Rizvi (2014) 'Making Melbourne'.

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh

These technological and economic changes impacting libraries and library users have been accompanied by large-scale social changes. Increased social mobility and migration has created more diverse, multicultural cities. Libraries have had to address the needs of a more heterogeneous public culture, and tailor their programs and services to communities from a range of different language groups, age groups, socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. They have made these changes over a period of constrained funding for public institutions, a period in which libraries have had to both expand their service model and better account for the value and relevance of their services.

FOUR LIBRARY PARADIGMS

Historically, the library has been understood and valued in different ways. These different understandings have shaped its physical form and the kinds of services it offers. We can identify four different paradigms that have defined the library over the past century. Importantly, this is not a linear progression from one paradigm to the next, but a layered one. Older paradigms continue to operate and shape peoples' expectations of libraries today, albeit with changing significance.

1. An elevated place of culture

Historical studies of libraries have emphasised their civic importance as esteemed places of learning, symbols of democracy, and repositories of valuable cultural materials.[12] These associations stem from the Carnegie era libraries of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when library architecture favoured monumental, neoclassical design, intended to

communicate the library's status and civic value.[13] Although the function and design of public libraries has changed significantly through the expansion of digital technologies, many users continue to view them in this elevated light, reserving for them an attitude of reverence and respect.

2. A place for universal access

This paradigm emerges out of theories around the democratisation of culture prevalent in post-war European societies.[14] Democratising culture was understood to mean that governments had a responsibility to provide mass audiences access to the civilizing benefits of high culture otherwise inaccessible to them due to lack of education or income. As free and open to all, libraries have given people access to rare and scarce materials, literary, as well as popular cultural forms. Since the 1970s, libraries have responded to a range of social movements that expand the mandate to democratise

12 Black & Pepper (2012); Jochumsen (2017).
13 Mattern (2007)
14 See Matarasso & Landry (1999) *Balancing act.*

culture. These movements emphasise the rights of diverse communities to both consume and create culture. Multiculturalism, the women's movement, indigenous movements, socialist and activist movements, community arts, and the disability movement have all shaped how libraries think about programming, their collections, their design, and the technologies they provide to support the participation of diverse constituencies.

3. A 'third place'

This paradigm emerged during the late 1980s following widespread recognition of the importance of public spaces for civic and social life. Through the works of sociologists Ray Oldenberg and Jurgen Habermas,[15] libraries were considered, alongside other public spaces, as foundational sites of the public sphere, but also vital spaces of collective life where people could gather and pass the time in a relaxed, comfortable and convivial environment.

4. From repository to 'platform'

This paradigm, the most recent to emerge, captures the library's transition in the early twenty-first century to integrate digitisation and networked technologies into its broader role as a repository of information. It comes from recent library scholarship, particularly Shannon Mattern's work, describing contemporary libraries as 'infrastructural ecologies' – 'a network of integrated, mutually reinforcing, evolving *infrastructures*' encompassing the library's role supporting social, technical, and intellectual needs.[16]
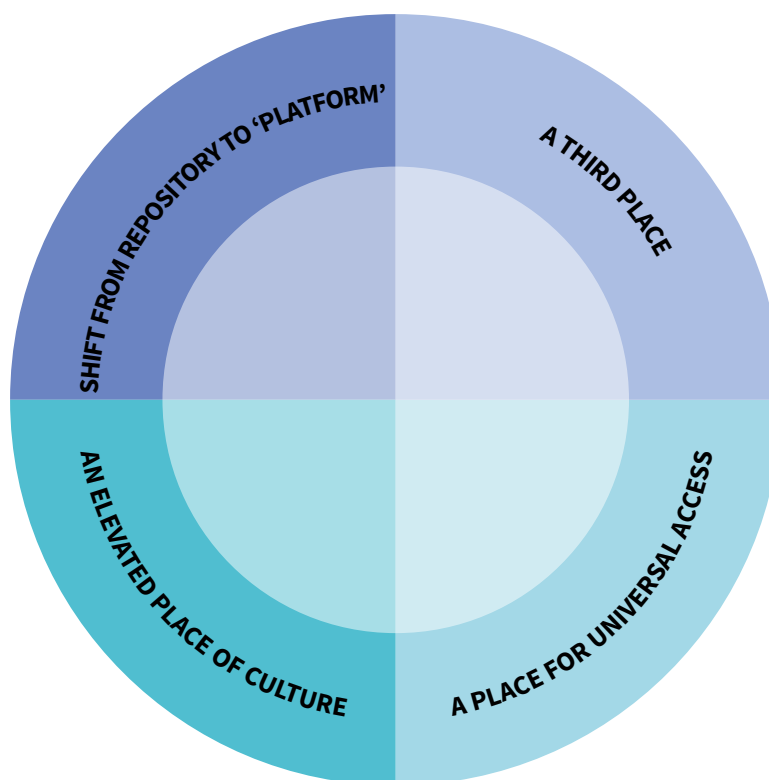
AN EXPANDED INSTITUTION

The public library of the twenty-first century is unique amongst other cultural institutions because of the way it has had to combine the multiple roles and associations articulated across these four paradigms. The newer functions of libraries – developing infrastructure for connectivity and remote access to their collections; providing users with the digital skills they need to navigate an online world; and providing enhanced spaces for the creation of content – have had to be brought into productive relation with the more traditional aspects of the library as meeting place, archive, and repository of public memory.

New library developments reflect both the library's expanded role, and its growing prominence and visibility in the public life of cities. Large-scale developments of the last decade, like Seattle Public Library and Dokk1 in Aarhus, have been celebrated architectural events, signalling the city's transition into an economically competitive digital future.[17]

Conscripted into programs around urban renewal and regeneration, the library is serving as a vital social 'heart' of public life, a 'third place', or 'living room in the city' where strangers can meet and gather, and feel a sense of comfort and sociality through informal, low-stakes forms of participation.[18]

It is clear, then, that contemporary, high-profile public library developments are far more than building projects. They are markers of civic identity and public value – as libraries have always been. And at this present moment, they also form part of larger narratives around urban transformation, geared towards global competitiveness and innovation on the one hand, and civic amenity, creativity, and liveability on the other.

FIGURE 1: Four Paradigms for Understanding the Library

SHIFT FROM REPOSITORY TO 'PLATFORM'

A THIRD PLACE

AN ELEVATED PLACE OF CULTURE

A PLACE FOR UNIVERSAL ACCESS

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15 Oldenberg (1989) *The great good place*; Habermas (1989) *The structural transformation of the public sphere.*
16 Mattern (2014).
17 See Mattern (2007).
18 See Aabø, & Audunson (2012) 'Use of library space and the library as place'; Audunson (2005) 'The public library as a meeting-place in a multicultural and digital context'; Worpole (2011) *Contemporary library architecture.*

Artists impression of State Library Victoria Redevelopment (Queen's Hall)

State Library Victoria's redevelopment

The sketch above outlines the broader context in which State Library Victoria is reimagining itself as an institution.

The library's *Vision 2020* redevelopment is an AU$88.1 million project that will *'ensure that the Library continues to evolve to meet the changing needs of our vibrant, diverse community, both in Melbourne and in regional Victoria, today and into the future.'*[19] Over four years, the library's physical spaces, provision of services, organisational structure, and the way it is experienced by users will be reimagined and reshaped. The redevelopment will open up more of the heritage building to the public, create enriched, hybrid spaces for users to experiment with new technologies, design purpose-built spaces to attract children and young people, and introduce coworking spaces for innovation and entrepreneurship.

Many aspects of the redevelopment echo the wider transformation of libraries internationally.

They take inspiration from broader trends in the way libraries, and other cultural institutions, are seeking to relate to their publics and the cities and regions they serve. The architects of the redevelopment, the Australian- and New Zealand-based firm Architectus and Danish-founded firm Schmidt Hammer Lassen (SHL), have looked to new libraries, like SHL's Dokk1, and to 'traditional' libraries like the New York City Library, as blueprints for the State Library's redevelopment. But they have been more strongly influenced by a broad and intensive process of consultation with the Library's users, and Library staff. The considered brief was developed by the State Library Board before awarding the contract. In this sense, State Library Victoria's *Vision 2020*, while resonant with international movements in library design, is equally a response to needs unique to this institution and to Melbourne as a city.

> "We understand that [this redevelopment is] a chapter in the library's history, and we want to give them the bones to be able to evolve as technology evolves, as programming evolves and people's needs evolve for the space. And it's that framework that they can now replicate."
>
> **Lucy Croft,**
> **Interior designer at Architectus, interviewed for this report**

19 See https://vision2020.slv.vic.gov.au/

Artists impression of State Library Victoria redevelopment (Kid's Quarter)

First opened in 1856, State Library Victoria is Australia's oldest public library, the most visited library in Australia, and the fourth most visited library in the world. The institution itself is not a single building, but 23 buildings, constructed over time, many with significant heritage value. According to State Library staff, this labyrinthine layout has made the Library sometimes 'daunting' and hard to navigate for some new visitors.[20] But it also affords the opportunity to differentiate the State Library's spaces, separating out collection areas, quiet study spaces, and 'buzzy' activity spaces for experimenting with new technologies, group work, and programming.

In contrast to the typically moderate, predictable increases in visitation levels experienced by most other state libraries across Australia, State Library Victoria's visitation levels are rapidly increasing. This is driven, in part, by a combination of increased residential occupancy in inner Melbourne, and the concentration of international students around the inner city.[21] In this dynamic environment, the State Library must play multiple roles: it is a state resource providing access to scarce and rare materials; a local library for the City of Melbourne community; a workspace for an increasingly casualised and fragmented workforce; and a touristic attraction for international and interstate visitors. At the same time, the State Library sees its redevelopment as an opportunity to contribute to shaping a broader cultural and economic landscape. It is aligning itself with the strategic direction of Melbourne's other cultural institutions and also fits into broader local and state government policy agendas, particularly Victoria's first 'creative industries' policy, supporting Victoria's 'education economy', and supporting the City of Melbourne's Knowledge City Strategy.[22]

A visit to the Library itself on any given day and visitor feedback provided to us by State Library staff reveals that this is a thriving and much-loved institution, but also one that is at the limits of its capacity. Change brings risk, and the State Library is acutely aware of the need to balance different and at times competing forms of use. The State Library's managers seek to implement its vision without alienating current users or compromising features that people love. The redevelopment team also recognise that the technological landscape and the community the State Library serves will change constantly over time, and the new design must have the flexibility to adapt to these evolving conditions.

Director of Library Services and Experience, Justine Hyde, distils the redevelopment as an attempt to *'reposition…the library in the public's imagination'.* She told us,

> *We're moving from being an institution that's focused on consumption, so information storage and consumption, to an organisation, an institution, that's more focused on creation than just consumption… and a bigger emphasis on engagement, a closer engagement with the people who use the library, and a more diverse audience using the library.*

20 Hyde et al (2016) 'Journey maps and customer hacks'.
21 See Fincher & Shaw (2011) 'Enacting separate social worlds'.
22 See City of Melbourne (2014) *A Knowledge City Strategy* and Creative Victoria (2016) *Creative State.*

Aims of this research

This project is a pilot study funded by a Melbourne Engagement Grant administered through the University of Melbourne.

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The qualitative research undertaken here presents a unique opportunity to capture an impression of State Library Victoria's 'reimagining' process before the redevelopment project unfolds. Our research has two main points of focus:

Documenting State Library Victoria's perception of the redevelopment from within

- How do staff and the architectural design team articulate the purpose of the redevelopment?

- What problems do they want it to solve, and what opportunities do they hope it will open up?

- How are ideals of creation, engagement, and diversity reflected in the new design?

Capturing a snapshot of how State Library users relate to the institutuion as it is now

- What are their patterns of use?

- What do they value about the State Library and their experience of it?

- How does their use of the State Library contribute to their personal aspirations, and participation in the wider culture?

Libraries themselves are keenly aware of the ways in which they contribute to public culture. Yet, according to a report commissioned by State Library Victoria, 'the cultural benefits they generate are rarely central to public policy discussion about cultural development'.[23] With this in mind, the purpose of exploring these questions is to capture:

Baseline data to track the evolution of the State Library's redevelopment over time

- Providing a point-of-departure to evaluate how staff ambitions for the State Library play out in the course of the redevelopment;

- Providing a 'big picture' overview of how the redevelopment's 'reimagining' of the State Library has impacted upon the composition, experience and perceptions of the user community over a longer time period.

Frameworks of value to express and classify the different ways in which the State Library and other public libraries contribute to public culture

- Providing expanded insights into Australian libraries' value beyond the existing measurement frameworks through which they are currently measured and evaluated (for example, local council and state government reporting models);

- Supplementing existing internal State Library research – such as user surveys and market research – with a rich and contextualised portrait of the Library's everyday users.

23 State Library Victoria (2014) *Creative Communities.*

Research Design

In a trilogy of major reports over the last fifteen years – *Libraries Building Communities* (2006); *Dollars, Sense and Public Libraries* (2011); and *Creative Communities* (2014) – State Library Victoria and Public Libraries Victoria Network have documented the broad social, economic and cultural value of public libraries to their communities and to the state of Victoria:

State Library Victoria has also commissioned more focused, market research on users – *Turning the Pages* and *Between the Lines* – based on a face-to-face intercept survey and online survey, respectively.[24] They provide important insights into the user's institutional experience: Who visits the Library and why? How do they spend their time there? How strongly do they value it?

Our research is more closely related to the scale and aims of this user-experience market research, albeit with fewer respondents, but more detailed, qualitative data. However, our research differs from market research in key ways. As one internal report notes, the intercept and user experience reports provide State Library Victoria managers with insights into their user base, identifies gaps in this base, and outlines opportunities to transition users up the scale from loose to strong investment in the institution:

The State Library of Victoria has a significant market to tap into. Strategies aimed at increasing repeat visitation, on raising awareness, and converting potential users are important pathways to audience growth.

Rather than aiming to expand or intensify the Library's user-base, our research uses qualitative methods to present rich 'portraits of use' which illustrate how State Library Victoria fits in with users' broader cultural lives and aspirations. This narrative approach aims to *understand how and why the institution is important to users* in a period of cultural and economic transition, and the wider public impacts of this use supports. In this sense, our research shares some of the aims of State Library Victoria's broader research into the Library's social and cultural value.

METHODS

Literature review

Analysis of academic and mainstream literature about libraries and their evolution over the past century, as well as policy documents and reports about State Library Victoria's strategic planning and user survey reports.

Professional interviews

Professional staff were interviewed from July to November 2017 about their ambitions and expectations for the redevelopment. These interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded based on key themes. Professional staff interviewed included key figures involved in the redevelopment:

- **Kate Torney**
  CEO of State Library Victoria
- **Justine Hyde**
  Director of Library Services and Experience
- **Stephen Sayers**
  Manager of Digital Experience
- **Sarah Slade**

Head of Digital Engagement & Collection Services
- **Lucy Croft and Ruth Wilson**
  architects from Architectus, who designed the redevelopment in partnership with Schmidt Hammer Lassen (who were not available for interview)

User interviews

Ten State Library Victoria users (7 women, 3 men, ranging from 20-60 years old). The in-depth interviews were open-ended and semi-structured using similar methods to the interviews above, aiming to understand how they used the Library and how this use contributed to their broader lives and ambitions. This qualitative ethnographic material was then used to develop an online survey instrument.

Survey

An online survey consisting of 20 questions was developed and distributed to respondents in March 2018. 224 responses were received with a 90% completion rate. Survey respondents were largely recruited from the Library website and newsletter.

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24 These reports are not publicly available, however we were given access to them for the purposes of this report.

Findings

Professional Staff

Understanding staff visions of the redevelopment and its challenges.

Our interviewees identified **space management** and **engagement with external institutions and new users (online and across Victoria)** as the overarching goals they hope the redevelopment will achieve. Importantly, though, staff consistently emphasised **maintaining the current values of the State Library** during its transition as a vital goal of the redevelopment as well.

Space management

The most significant issues identified by staff were space management and zoning. Through the redevelopment itself, this will involve opening up an additional 40% of the State Library's existing building space to the public, separating noisy and quiet zones, improving wayfinding through clear zoning of spaces, and catering to a range of different users through new spaces (Start Space entrepreneurship centre, the Ideas Quarter) or improving new ones (Children's Quarter, Create Quarter).

More broadly, State Library staff will use the redevelopment as an opportunity to rethink and recalibrate how its spaces are used. Currently, according to Sarah Slade, 'there are a lot of spaces [that serve] three or four purposes, and they can conflict with each other'. This involves creating more flexible seating and catering to the growing number of people visiting the State Library not just for research, but to work and study. As Justine Hyde says, 'the number of queries that are research or reference-related are going down […] and the questions around wayfinding and facilities and the building are going up.'

Engagement with the city and its institutions

As well as space management, staff identified the need to respond to its growing communities of use. For Kate Torney, this means 'looking at the events across the city and partnering with other organisations to make sure that we're celebrating a particular week', as well as recognising that 'we're not just a standalone beautiful institution that creates bespoke experiences, but that we are very much part of the city'.

Staff identified a shift in understanding the State Library's role in Melbourne's broader change and development, and seeking to partner with other organisations (government agencies, arts and cultural institutions, universities and schools) on programming and services. Hyde notes that, currently, 'we're getting approaches by stakeholders from all different types of sectors and for different reasons, but all at the same time. It's like the zeitgeist of the Library.'

Engagement with new users (in regional Victoria and online)

State Library staff were explicit that they intend to use the redevelopment to reach new users not only in Melbourne, but also in regional Victoria and online. The State Library plans to reach out to regional libraries through the 'E-town Hall' live streaming platform, sharing resources and training, and creating stronger integration of online and physical content.

Hyde notes that with 5,000 daily visitors to the physical space and 4.5 million online, there is an opportunity for 'deeper engagement' with the State Library's increasingly diverse and distributed communities of users. She says,

[T]he Library has been evolving, I guess, over the last decade or so from being a fairly elitist, impenetrable institution focused mainly on researchers and academics to being much more open and accessible and focusing on new audiences like children and families [...] So broadening out the audience and recognising that the demographics of Melbourne and Victoria are changing and responding to that change.

Maintaining the current values of the State Library

Staff identified the following traits that they consider central to the State Library's current value, and which they seek to maintain during its transition:

- it is **free and open to anybody**, from 'an author [to] a homeless person looking for a bit of respite' (Kate Torney)

- it is **a place for community and social interaction** with others, whether people use 'the device in their pocket' or talk to those around them (Stephen Sayers)

- it offers **a 'safe space' to seek information**, 'no matter who or where you are or what it is you're looking for' (Stephen Sayers)

- It can **'support an informed public'** (Torney), guiding people through technological change, and leading them to new knowledge and ideas

- It is **a public resource and repository** that offers 'access to collections' (Justine Hyde) and is devoted to 'protecting the history and the stories of the state' (Torney)

Users

Profiling State Library Victoria users and understanding the Library's role in their lives

Some names have been changed at the request of participants.

Anne is in her 60s and his studying to be a Medieval historian. She has been visiting the State Library since she was a child in the 1970s but become reinvested in the institution in the early 2000's after seeing the Medieval Imagination Exhibition. Since the exhibition, she joined the Friends of the Library program and visits regularly throughout the year to attend lectures, events and exhibitions. She uses the State Library's general collection, special collection and online resources for her academic research, putting particular emphasis on physical books. 'I do go and actually read the actual books'. She has also made use of their resources for family genealogical research. While Anne loves the atmosphere of the Domed Reading Room, she sometimes finds it too busy and so uses a small room set aside for Friends of the Library, either to study, or to take a break.

Sue is the partner of Anne and is also in her 60s. She is a retired high-school English teacher and maintains a keen interest in education and adolescent fiction in particular. She is on the State Library's 'teacher-directed' mailing list and like Anne, she visits the State Library throughout the year to attend lectures and exhibitions. She also uses it occasionally for her own 'private research' on French language and culture. This private research contributes to her wider cultural and social engagement. She is mentoring a young girl and is helping her research Debussy for a school French assignment. She also delivers the French part of a tour of the National Gallery of Victoria attended by school groups. She particularly enjoys using the State Library as a casual meeting place, or as a place to pass the time, sitting in the Forecourt or having a look at the dome or an exhibition. Both Sue and her partner Anne are active participants in a range of cultural institutions around Melbourne. They have begun to engage with other people attending these same cultural circuits, and enjoy these opportunities to socialise and make connections after a lecture or public event.

Brigid is in her 30s and has been visiting the State Library for the last three years. Her mother 'pushed' her to use it for her studies – she was doing a part-time degree, by distance education, while she continued to work full-time in a job requiring shift work. Brigid particularly values the State Library as a place for quiet, concentrated study, where she could study without the distractions of home and work. She would visit twice a week during her most intensive study periods. Since completing her degree, Brigid has begun to visit the Library occasionally for exhibitions and to make use of its collections. She always goes in there 'with a mission' and always approaches staff to help her with her enquiries. Brigid does not own a computer or have internet at home, although she does reluctantly use a smartphone. Until recently, she was studying part-time and would use her computer at work or her parents' house to print journal articles. She would then take them to the State Library and physically annotate them with a highlighter. She says, 'I'd do all my reading and I just felt like it was the best space to – I have nothing to distract me there.'

Paul is in his early 30s and is currently undertaking a PhD on representations of soccer in Australian literature. After an unwelcoming experience of the State Library in 2001 – a 'hostile interference by the staff members' while using microfilm – he has since reconnected with the institution to further his academic research and to pursue his interests as an amateur soccer historian. He uses the State Library to research old newspapers, magazines, match programs and yearbooks, tracking the match statistics and history of South Melbourne football club and the Albert Park precinct where they train. This amateur research is a way of contributing as a club member to South Melbourne Soccer club. Paul is an avid Twitter user, and also writes his own blog about the club's culture and history. His blog has built up 'a small cache of followers' over its ten years of publication and has gradually evolved from being basic writing practice to developing a distinctive literary quality. Passionate about libraries, Paul's State Library use forms part of a wider network of suburban, University and institutional libraries (like the MCG Library), which he uses to pursue his eclectic range of interests and hobbies.

Elizabeth is in her 50s and works in university administration. After returning to Melbourne about two years ago, she began studying part-time and now uses the State Library extensively, particularly in the evenings after work. It has become her primary space for research, mostly because of the wide range of materials it offers – on the shelves, in storage and online. But she also feels the heritage architecture offers a 'traditional study space' where she can concentrate and feel connected to an esteemed tradition of scholarship and creativity. Her view of the State Library is strongly influenced by memories of the university libraries in Cambridge and Oxford. She recognises that people use it for activities other than studying, but nevertheless, she regrets the amount of chatter, noise, the use of screens and social media that she sees pervading its spaces – even those reserved for 'quiet study'. Elizabeth is seeking to transition to an 'encore career' that is more creative and expressive. She has ambitions to do an MPhil and Ph.D., and also hopes to develop her many creative projects and interests. She has written short plays, mainly around social issues and historical events, has directed theatre, and is a member of a couple of writers' groups. Libraries, she says, 'are really important to me, because maybe one day I'll be in one.'

Arthur is a fervent West Ham United football club supporter. He visits the State Library weekly to document and archive material related to all aspects of the club and its activities. Since 1991, he has aimed to collect newspaper reports from every game played by the club. He uses the State Library's microfilm collection and since the late 2000s has begun accessing its digital archives. He also visits numerous other libraries across Melbourne – from the City of Melbourne to Manningham and Whitehorse in the city's northeast – and the National Library of Australia in Canberra, through its online archives. Arthur describes his first visit to the State Library as like entering an 'Aladdin's cave of newspapers'. He describes the advent of digital archives as a revelation for his hobby: 'when I saw it the first time around, [in] the early 2010s, my mind was blown away'. Arthur has an elaborate filing system for his archives, which now encompasses four full wall-sized shelves of files and multiple USB devices. Although his collection is comprehensive, apart from communicating with other West Ham fans online, he does not share or publish it. He describes his hobby as a 'purely personal thing' and 'a way of life for me'.

Martin is an Estonian actor and model in his late 20s who uses the Library to conduct research for his performances. He arrived in Melbourne in early 2017 to prepare for auditions to enter an acting school. He initially found the State Library simply by Googling 'library' when he was searching for copies of monologues he needed to study. He describes using the Rare Books section of the Library – which houses copies of the plays he reads – as invigorating and empowering: 'The atmosphere is nice because you have all these books. You have this really old feeling that's a feeling of knowledge, so it kind of motivates you'.

Martin is also writing his own works – a novel and some plays – for which he does research in the State Library as well as the nearby City Library. He has also been an active participant in cultural activities during his time in Melbourne, attending plays, art galleries, exhibitions, and a network for creatives.

Ping is a university graduate from China who used the State Library for her studies in Melbourne. She first heard about it before moving to Melbourne, through a website called CTrip which, along with sites like St. Paul's Cathedral and Flinders Street Station, lists it as one of Melbourne's must-see landmarks. Ping is active on social media, writing a food blog, but since completing her studies and beginning a job she seldom visits the State Library or works on her blog. Like Martin, she emphasises the unique atmosphere of the Library: it 'makes you calm down, not like the simple café […] when you are watching other people studying and then you will put down your

– put your phone away and then start to study or work'.

Carol is a Chinese graduate student who used the State Library while studying in Melbourne. She distinguishes the 'quiet' and 'historical' nature of the State Library from other spaces, like more modern libraries or cafés. She says of the domed reading room: 'the space helped me concentrate […] I like the dome and the atmosphere and the very old wooden table and the green lamp'. Like many students, she finds it difficult studying at home, 'so I prefer to go to a library. I feel more efficient when I'm in the library'. She also often turns off her devices and internet when she is in the State Library, saying that 'one reason why sometimes I prefer State Library is because the internet access there is not as good' as the university Wi-Fi, 'so that's actually an advantage for me […] if they totally take away the Wi-Fi I would like it better'. As a student, she also conducted tutorials in the State Library's ground floor

Information Centre for other students, a paid service she offers on community websites. She observed that this is a common practice on the ground floor, with other tutors operating 'like a small business' in the space with groups of 4 or 5 students to a table.

Karen is a current international student from China who uses the Library frequently for study because it is in a 'convenient' location and she likes its historical atmosphere, which she likens to 'Harry Potter magic world'. She moves around the Library fluidly and undertakes many different activities there, from focused study to writing a diary or journal to browsing the web or social media. She also visits numerous other libraries across the city, some in outer suburbs, mainly out of 'curiosity' despite their less 'convenient' location.

User Portrait Key Findings

Many of our respondents' comments overlapped with those of the professional staff interviewed in some obvious areas, particularly the need to preserve the State Library's current value while refining its space management and navigation. But they diverged in sometimes surprising ways. These primarily centred around the role of **creative production** and **technology use** in the State Library:

Creative Production

Most of the users in our sample could be considered 'traditional' library users: they are 'consumers' of the State Library's physical and online collections or use its spaces for study. These practices do not exemplify the shift to creative use that the redevelopment is hoping to stimulate and support. Nevertheless, for many in our sample, the State Library does contribute to a range of creative practices, many of these directly or indirectly shaped by digitisation and the rise of new technologies. While this creative activity does not occur in the space of the State Library itself, consuming the institution's 'traditional' materials supports the production of a range of creative practices – blogs, plays, academic essays, personal archives, journals, and academic research – that also contribute to other social and cultural objectives.

- Paul's South Melbourne Football Club blog binds a niche community group together, and also connects him personally to a larger literary culture.

- Sue's research supports her volunteer work at the NGV, her mentoring of a young student, and her post-career interest in adolescent education.

- The State Library's literary collection is inspiration for Elizabeth's play-writing and other creative projects. She's involved in a local creative community through a writing group and is putting on a play with a group of young actors.

- Ping's food blog had around 100 followers and built a social network in Melbourne through a shared interest in local restaurants and eateries.
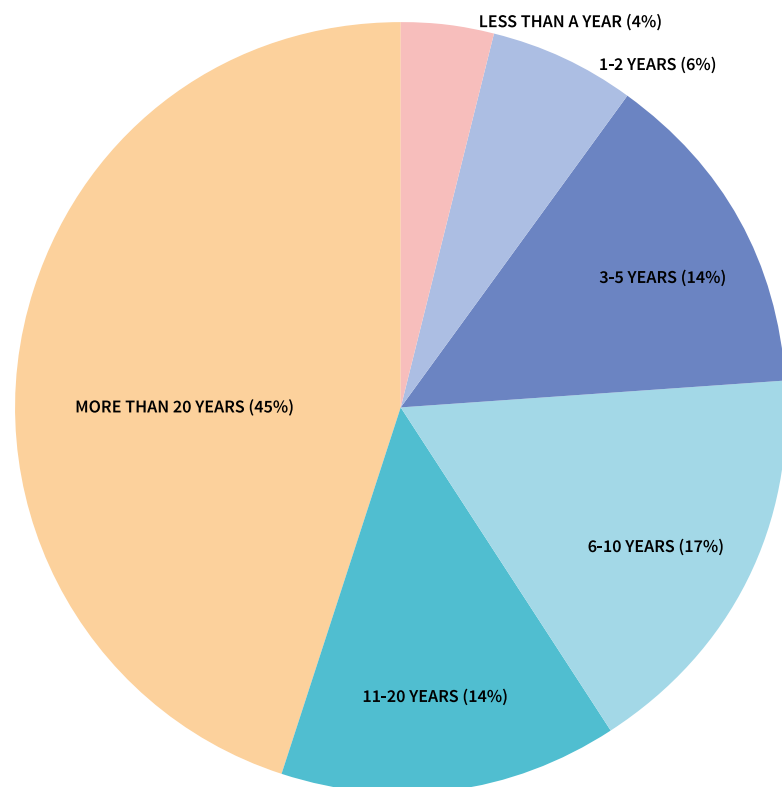
Well, I have a blog about South Melbourne which has been going for nearly 10 years now, so I've built up a small cache of followers. It's a very niche topic [...] it's all about the club and what's going on, the games, the culture, history. I try and throw in everything [...] and over time the writing itself has a sort of literary quality [...] and I want to see how that fits in with what other sort of literary attempts have been made with soccer in Australia. So I look at memoir as well, for instance.

Paul

I also write and direct theatre and stuff. So I've got a couple of writing projects that will be long-term [...] for me this is an opportunity to transition to something where I can actually explore and try things and learn and perhaps contribute in a different way. I think they call it an "encore career".

Elizabeth

FIGURE 2: How long survey respondents have been visiting State Library Victoria

LESS THAN A YEAR (4%)
1-2 YEARS (6%)
3-5 YEARS (14%)
6-10 YEARS (17%)
11-20 YEARS (14%)
MORE THAN 20 YEARS (45%)

Technology and disconnection

It is notable that new technologies and digital media are peripheral to many of the users in our sample. Most use the State Library to escape from the distractions of these technologies. Surrounded by lofty architecture and the gravitas of the book, they can concentrate and adopt a persona of scholarliness that might otherwise feel beyond them. This atmosphere is as important to supporting their creative and scholarly endeavours as the State Library's collections and materials. In this sense, the redevelopment's efforts to separate noisy and quiet zone, should be regarded, not as a separation of traditional and contemporary usage, the 'legacy' user, from the 'digital native'. Rather, quiet zones offer a vital service in a digital culture, providing spaces to counteract the psychological impacts of pervasive media, and the overwhelming impulse to connect and react.

- Carol describes the slower internet of the State Library (compared to her university) as an 'advantage', helping her get more work done.

- Martin finds 'a computer is just a distraction' and prefers to write his notes by hand.

- Brigid is in the minority in not having a computer or internet connection at home. Yet she echoes other users' preferences for disconnection from digital media while in the State Library.

I don't really use a lot of the internet [at the library], because I feel that that's a bit disruptive. So when I'm doing work or study I try to turn the internet off. That's also one reason why sometimes I prefer State Library, because the internet access there is not as good as the one [at my university]. So that's actually an advantage for me […] if they totally take away the Wi-Fi I would like it better.

Carol

I'm probably not like everybody else, when they have internet at home. I don't have that. I don't want to have it, which is funny because I'm in [an area with high-speed broadband]. It's just completely wasted on me. For my essays […] I would do all my research at work or at my parents' house, where they had the internet […] I would take all my journal articles to the library, and that's what I'd focus on. I'd have

my highlighter. I'd do all my reading and I just felt like it was the best space to have nothing to distract me there.

Brigid

Survey
A Different Demographic

The majority of users surveyed in the State Library's own internal research – *Turning the Pages* (Intercept Survey) and *Between the Lines* (online survey) – were aged 16-44 (87% and 53%). In contrast, the majority of our survey respondents were over 55 (53%), and most respondents have been using the State Library for over 20 years (43%). Less than 10% visited the State Library daily or weekly – the majority were infrequent visitors or with changing visitation habits.

Our respondents were also strongly weighted towards women – 72% were female. This contrasts with an even split for the State Library's Intercept Surveys. It was also evident from these statistics, and also from respondents' responses to the questions, that our survey captured very few parents our carers. When children were mentioned in the open responses, they were predominantly as grandchildren.

FIGURE 3: What detracts from survey respondents' experience of the State Library
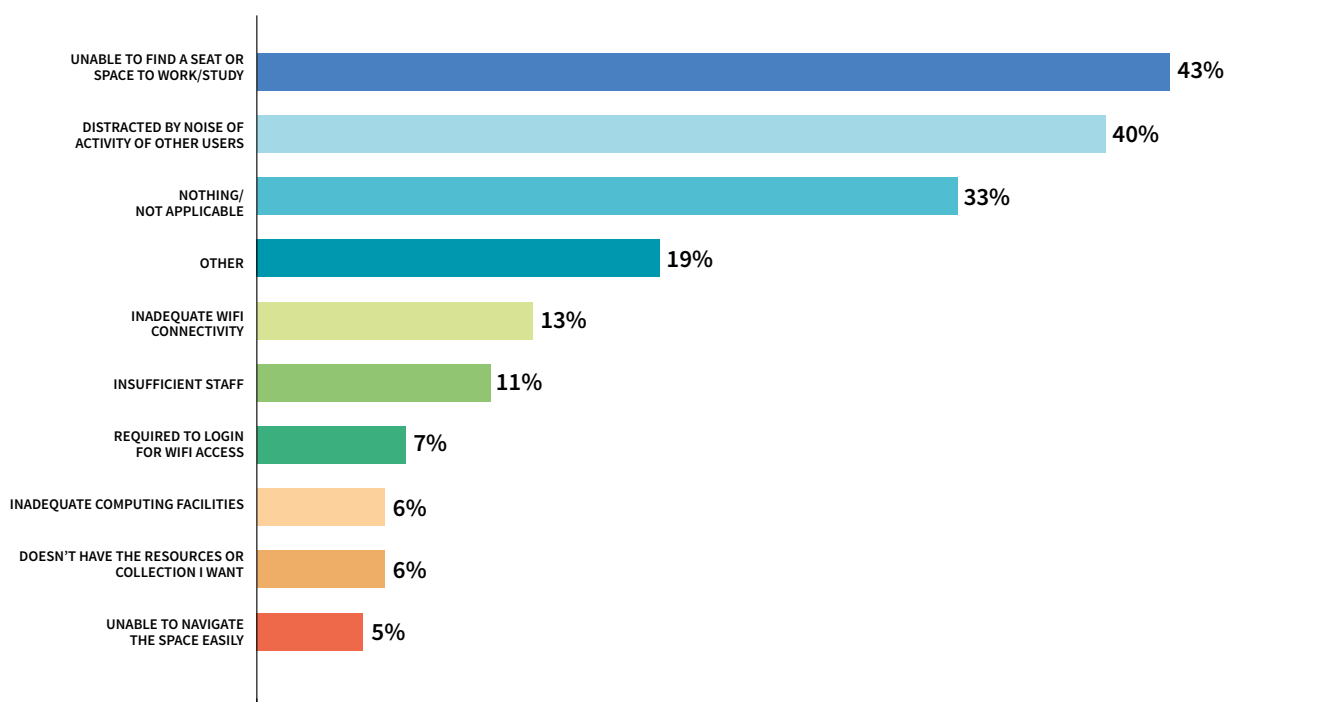
When asking visitors which spaces of the State Library they visited most, our results were similar to those of *Turning the Pages* with one significant difference. In the list of spaces that users could select in our survey we included the bookstore and Mr Tulk café where *Turning the Pages* did not. The bookstore and café were the second most-visited spaces chosen, with 45% of respondents selecting that option. This highlights the importance of these commercial spaces in the State Library and other libraries. One survey respondent mentioned 'co-location with Readings bookshop which I always visit, and Mr Tulk' as important to them.

Our respondents were more likely to be already actively engaged in and interested in the State Library. This is perhaps a result of the recruitment process – likely a large number of respondents were on the Friends of the Library mailing list. This accounts for the older demographic and long-term use of many respondents. As such, this survey is an insight into what this demographic of State Library users – long-term visitors with a strong attachment to it as an institution but who are not high-frequency visitors – value most.

Building on our interviews with users, this survey provides an insight into the stories and cultural lives of these users, telling us something about the impact of their regular and intermittent use. This was particularly evident in the open-ended question (see Understanding the State Library's Value below), which yielded a high number of often detailed, highly anecdotal responses about the very specific meaning and value the State Library had for them.

Need for Space Management

One of the strongest findings of our survey, unsurprisingly, was that participants' responses reaffirmed the need to separate quiet and noisy spaces – a key objective of the redevelopment, as identified in our interviews with professional staff.

We asked respondents 'what detracts from your library experience? Respondents were able to select multiple answers to this question.' 'Unable to find a seat or space for work/study' and 'distracted by noise or activity of other users' were each chosen by over 40% of respondents. Significantly, though, over 30% chose 'nothing/not applicable'. Less than
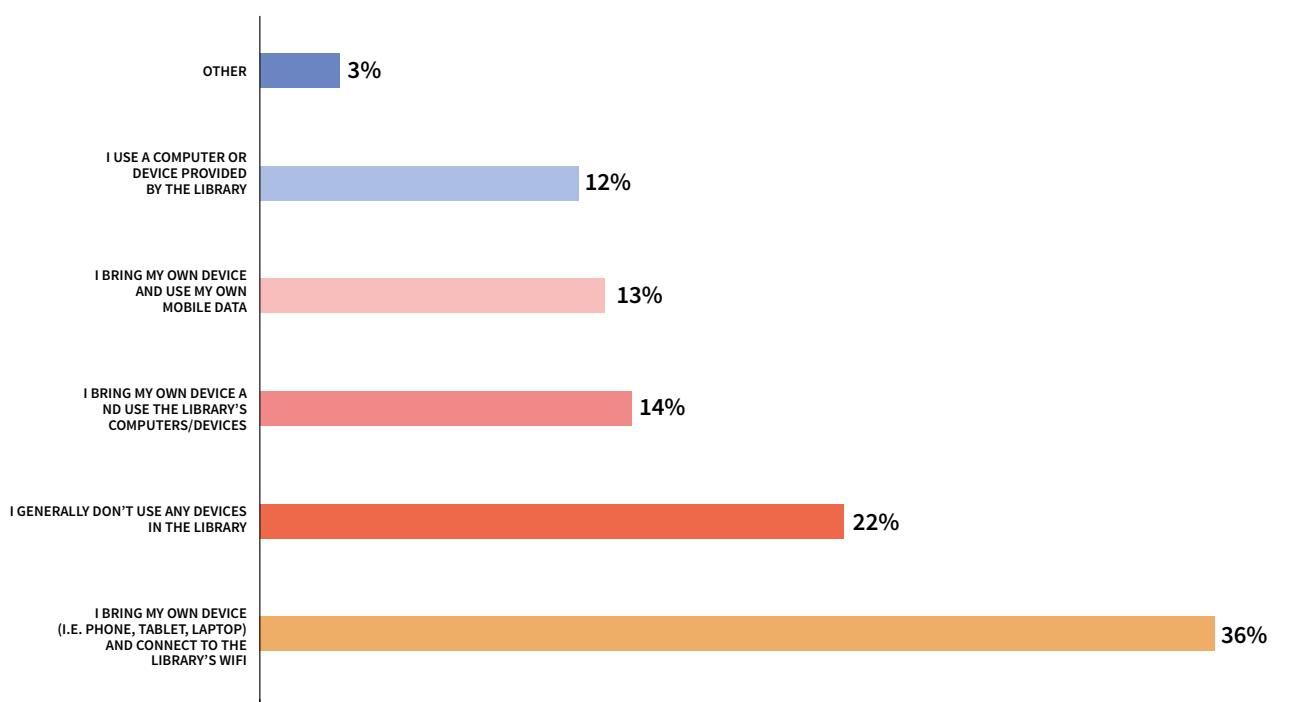
6% of respondents chose 'unable to navigate the space easily', confirming that zoning and wayfinding are less significant concerns than noise.

For those who chose 'other', rather than listing alternate responses their comments were particularly heated about noise and distraction:

Needs to be clearer delineation of quiet working/studying spaces and those for group work/socialising. It is becoming harder to work within the library because of this issue, meaning I'm less likely to visit.

Sometimes the people who I sit next to have poor behaviour and hygiene and I do not feel comfortable or safe. The SLV is a reference library. I love children, I love singing, but I really object to having to listen to a person singing to children while stationed at a microphone at least 5 metres from them. For one thing, that activity belongs in a local library, not a reference library.

FIGURE 4: How survey respondents use technology in the State Library

OTHER	3%
I USE A COMPUTER OR DEVICE PROVIDED BY THE LIBRARY	12%
I BRING MY OWN DEVICE AND USE MY OWN MOBILE DATA	13%
I BRING MY OWN DEVICE AND USE THE LIBRARY'S COMPUTERS/DEVICES	14%
I GENERALLY DON'T USE ANY DEVICES IN THE LIBRARY	22%
I BRING MY OWN DEVICE (I.E. PHONE, TABLET, LAPTOP) AND CONNECT TO THE LIBRARY'S WIFI	36%

However, as we discuss in the Understanding the State Library's Value section below, respondents to our open-ended question also viewed the State Library as a 'haven'. They often mentioned noise and sound in a positive way, praising the 'calm', 'peace' and 'quiet' that it offers. Of 17 mentions of noise and related terms in these open-ended responses, only two had negative connotations.

Technology in the Library

When asked 'how do you mostly use technology in the Library?', participants were asked to choose from a list that most closely resembled their technology use. Over 33% of participants stated that they brought their own devices and connected to the State Library's WiFi. Notably, the second highest response was 'I generally don't use any devices in the Library' (22%). This provides a counterpoint to the discourse around libraries as high-tech hubs for experimentation and innovation, although the demographic of respondents (older, less frequent visitors) would be a strong factor here.

As noted above, several of our interviewees – Carol, Martin, and Brigid – stated that they rarely or never used technologies in the State Library. Their observations, and the survey responses, suggest that a significant number of people visit the library not to use devices and connect to the internet, but precisely the opposite – to *get away from them*. They see the library as a place of respite and disconnection from networked life, and a space for concentration and reflection without the distraction of technologies.

Implementing 'device-free', and/or 'wi-fi free' spaces would run counter to much contemporary infrastructure planning, which centres on ubiquitous access and overcoming 'dead' spots. Yet these survey responses as well as our user portraits suggest that there is a strong opportunity for libraries to consider voluntary 'phone free' zones/ times — where users make a single conscious decision to disconnect for a period, so they don't have to manage interruptions on an *ad hoc* basis. This is supported by research on school libraries, which shows the difficulty for students to focus on their work

because they are commonly using networked devices as research tools, and are therefore constantly being interrupted by social media, instant messaging and email.[25]

Collections

In responses to our open-ended question, a relatively strong theme was the importance of physical books and collections, as opposed to digital resources. A content analysis of these responses revealed that mentions of the importance of resources predominantly used the terms 'collections' (19), 'resources' (11), and 'books' (10). By contrast, 'information', 'material', and 'database' received less than 5 mentions each.

When survey respondents mentioned books, it was often with an explicit emphasis on the importance of retaining their presence in the Library: 'I ADORE books', 'Books are also important', and 'I value being able to be amongst books and have the chance to discover ideas/facts/ images from other books.'

25 See Freitas (2016) 'Why students want Wi-Fi-free zones'.

FIGURE 5: Mapping the Library's Value Across the Four Paradigms
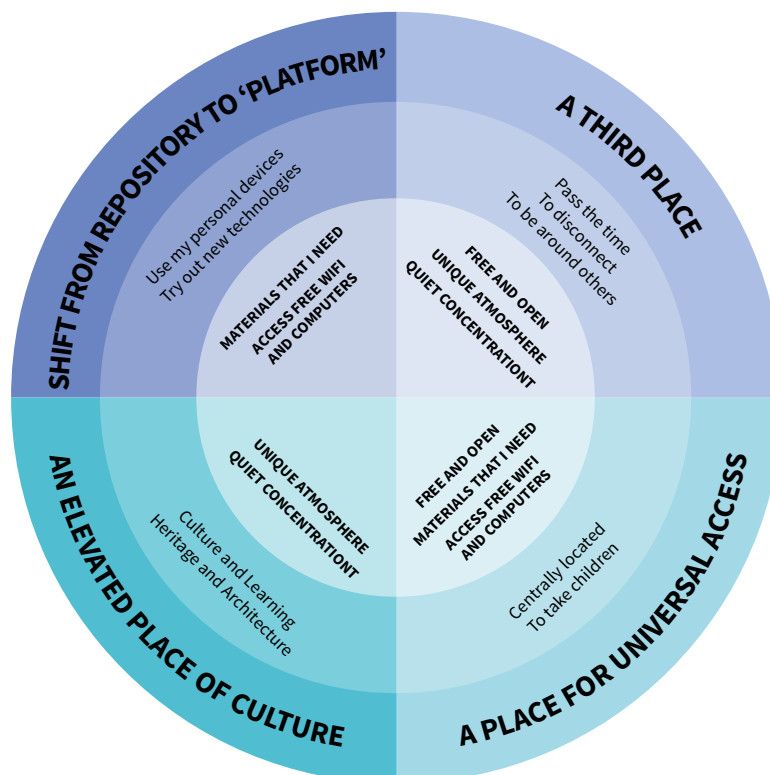
Understanding the State Library's Value

The survey asked respondents to complete the statement, 'I go to the State Library because it is a place…'. Respondents were able to choose from a list of pre-determined responses, selecting all that applied to them.

We classified these pre-determined responses according to the **four paradigms for understanding the library's value**, outlined in the **Libraries in a Digital Culture** section of this report. In Figure Figure 5 below, we explain how the multiple choice responses offered on the survey map onto the four historical paradigms for understanding the library's value.

The top three responses (above 50%) were '…for culture and learning', '…with materials that I need (e.g. books, heritage collections, microfilms, newspapers)' and '…that is free and open to everybody'. These were followed closely by traits relating to the State Library's ambiance and atmosphere: its 'unique atmosphere', 'heritage architecture', 'central location' and capacity for 'quiet concentration'.

This suggests that many of the State Library's traditional qualities – also highlighted by our interviews with professional staff – are at the forefront of users' minds. In contrast, activities identified by the Library as areas for growth and reinvigoration through its redevelopment – 'to try out new technologies' and 'to take children' – received very low response rates (less than 10% each). While this echoes the responses to our question about technology above, it also likely reflects the older demographic of less frequent visitors that made up the bulk of our survey respondents.

As a follow-up to this question, we asked respondents a deliberately open-ended question: to 'tell us why these aspects of the Library are important to you.' This yielded a total of 152 responses. Discounting 12 invalid responses, we analysed the remaining 147 responses for key recurring themes and sentiments.
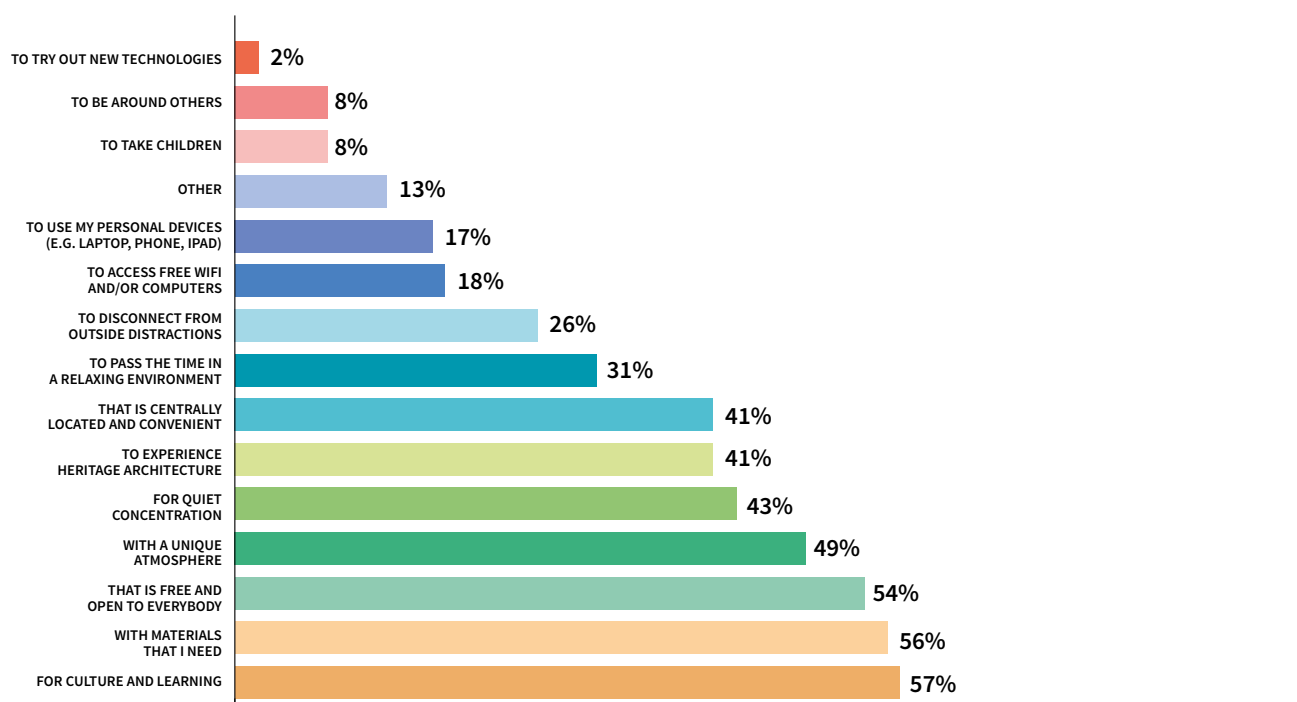
Based on this analysis, we identify 5 overarching themes. These themes capture the facets or features of the State Library that loom large in people's minds when they think of the its value and meaning for them. These features are as follows:

Access to free and unique materials

This encompasses access not only to the State Library's collections, but also access to the State Library as a space itself. Respondents emphasised the importance of the State Library as a repository of information and an institution that offers collections not available elsewhere. But they also underscored its importance as a free and open space to access these materials as well as experience what the State Library offers without a cost attached to it.

Everywhere costs money to visit so being from regional Victoria the State Library is a good place to read. I especially like attending curated tours where a library staff mmber [sic] explains exhibitions or collections or attending lectures or talks in the theatrette. I do these things whenever they fit in with my travel arrangements from country Victoria.

FIGURE 6: Why Survey Respondents Go to the State Library

TO TRY OUT NEW TECHNOLOGIES	2%
TO BE AROUND OTHERS	8%
TO TAKE CHILDREN	8%
OTHER	13%
TO USE MY PERSONAL DEVICES (E.G. LAPTOP, PHONE, IPAD)	17%
TO ACCESS FREE WIFI AND/OR COMPUTERS	18%
TO DISCONNECT FROM OUTSIDE DISTRACTIONS	26%
TO PASS THE TIME IN A RELAXING ENVIRONMENT	31%
THAT IS CENTRALLY LOCATED AND CONVENIENT	41%
TO EXPERIENCE HERITAGE ARCHITECTURE	41%
FOR QUIET CONCENTRATION	43%
WITH A UNIQUE ATMOSPHERE	49%
THAT IS FREE AND OPEN TO EVERYBODY	54%
WITH MATERIALS THAT I NEED	56%
FOR CULTURE AND LEARNING	57%

Aesthetic and atmosphere of the building

This refers to both the physical architecture of the State Library itself – its heritage architecture and unique design – and the atmosphere or ambience of its spaces. Comments referred to the impressive grandeur of the building as an important historical site and a place to show off to visitors and tourists. But they also referenced the unique atmosphere of the State Library and its immaterial features – the ability to be around others, feel comfortable and concentrate on research, and experience sociality, conviviality, and community. The State Library serves a dual role within this theme: as both a living room and a monument.

The SLV is a critical institution that shatters the loneliness of academic study and research through the provision of spaces and the community of Library users working within those spaces

A haven or sanctuary in the middle of the city

This theme more explicitly refers to the Library's location within the city of Melbourne itself, rather than the specific traits of the building. This is an important distinction to make, given State Library staff's emphasis on the redevelopment as a way to engage with new stakeholders and communities in the city. Respondents particularly emphasised the State Library as a transitional space (between work and the home) and its centrality in the city. They saw the State Library as a haven or 'oasis', a place to escape from the fast-paced life of the city for contemplation and learning.

[...] The fact that I can always go to look at a book, exhibition or even hang out if I am in the city waiting for people or for an event to start.

Self-transformation and self-development/growth

Respondents often highlighted the importance of the State Library as a place to visit and enrich and stimulate their intellectual capacities. For some, it is a site for creative inspiration, invigoration, and enlightenment. For others, it reinforced and supported their desire to seek out avenues for ongoing, lifelong learning and intellectual wellbeing, from early childhood to life beyond retirement. And for others still, it provided a sense of legitimation of their work, a feeling that their work was important and acknowledged. Simply being present in the State Library positively influenced their sense of self and value.

I am interested in many things and love opportunities to explore them, without needing to do formal study. It keeps my mind alive and awakens me to new interests as well as long standing ones.

FIGURE 7: Key Themes From the Survey Respondents' Open-ended Answers
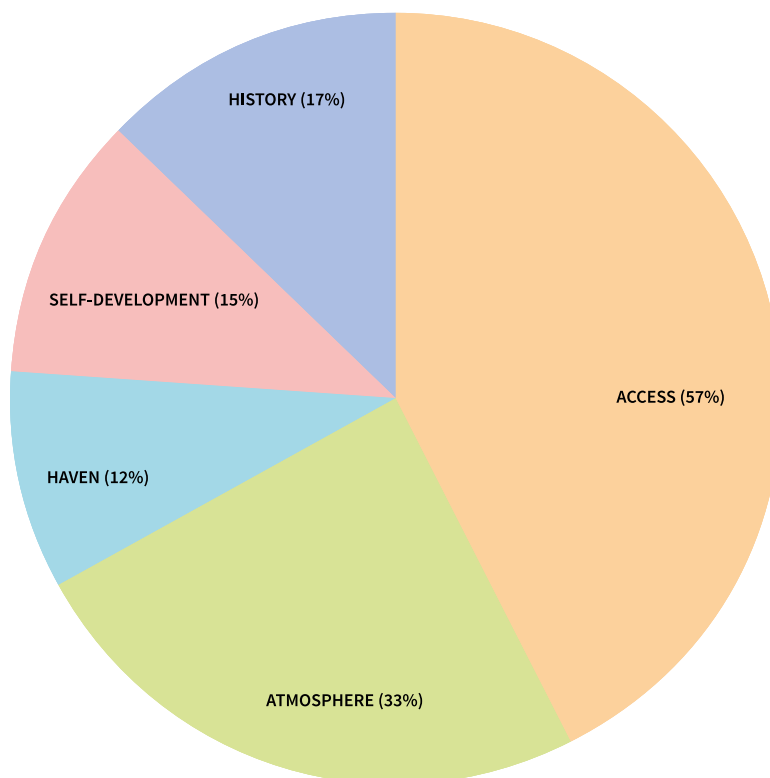
Personal and collective memory

Within this theme, respondents emphasised the State Library's role as an embodiment of important memories and 'imaginaries'. These fell into two broad categories: personal memory, and collective/ social memory. Personal memory relates to users' sense of having a familial continuity through the State Library's ongoing role in their lives and the lives of their relatives (both ancestors and descendants). They expressed this through reminiscence and nostalgia for moments in their life history. Collective memory, in contrast, refers to the State Library as a physical and symbolic site for historical continuity. It serves not just as a repository for archival information, but also a symbol for Melbourne and the state of Victoria's civic and social history.

I first went to the State Library in 1974 on a school excursion […] I have used the State Library on and off to study and research during my years at high school, and university. It has become a place where I have grown up and visit it whenever I have an opportunity to do so.

As Figure 7 below shows, the most common themes in participants' responses were 'access to free and unique materials' and 'aesthetic and atmosphere'. 'Haven or sanctuary', 'self-transformation', and 'personal and collective memory' occurred less frequently – less than 15% each – and were often mentioned alongside the other two, more common, themes. As such, there was considerable overlap between these themes, and participants often mentioned several in their responses.

Conclusion

While their role has expanded dramatically over the last two decades, the way libraries are administered and evaluated has not kept pace with this change.

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Narrow measurement frameworks and limited performance indicators exclude many of the expanded ways libraries shape public culture, and the varied ways they support peoples' capacity to participate in it.

The findings of this research from both professional State Library staff and users provide insight into these questions around participation and value. They identify:

- how the State Library contributes to the cultural practices and aspirations of its users, and to the wider life of the city and the state;

- the kinds of spaces, resources, institutional partnerships and institutional culture that will support a diverse user community and stimulate new kinds of use.

Understanding the institutional supports people need to participate both critically and creatively in public culture is essential for State Library Victoria. It aims, as one of the central ambitions of the redevelopment, to transition from being 'an institution, that's more focused on creation than just consumption' (Hyde 2017).

Building on the findings above, we identify three approaches for progressing this research in future studies:

A longitudinal study

Using similar methods to the current study (professional staff interviews; user interviews; an online survey) the research could track how perceptions and use of the State Library change as the redevelopment unfolds.

Drilling down

A more focused study could be developed to examine the roll-out and impacts of new State Library spaces and programs proposed by the redevelopment, such as its coworking space (StartSpace) and the ground-floor Information Centre.

Disconnection zones

Further research could be developed around the possibility of establishing disconnection zones in the State Library, based on a strong preference by users interviewed and surveyed to physically and metaphorically disconnect from networked technologies within its spaces.

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