



ALPINE
SHIRE COUNCIL

Library Services Plan 2026-2030



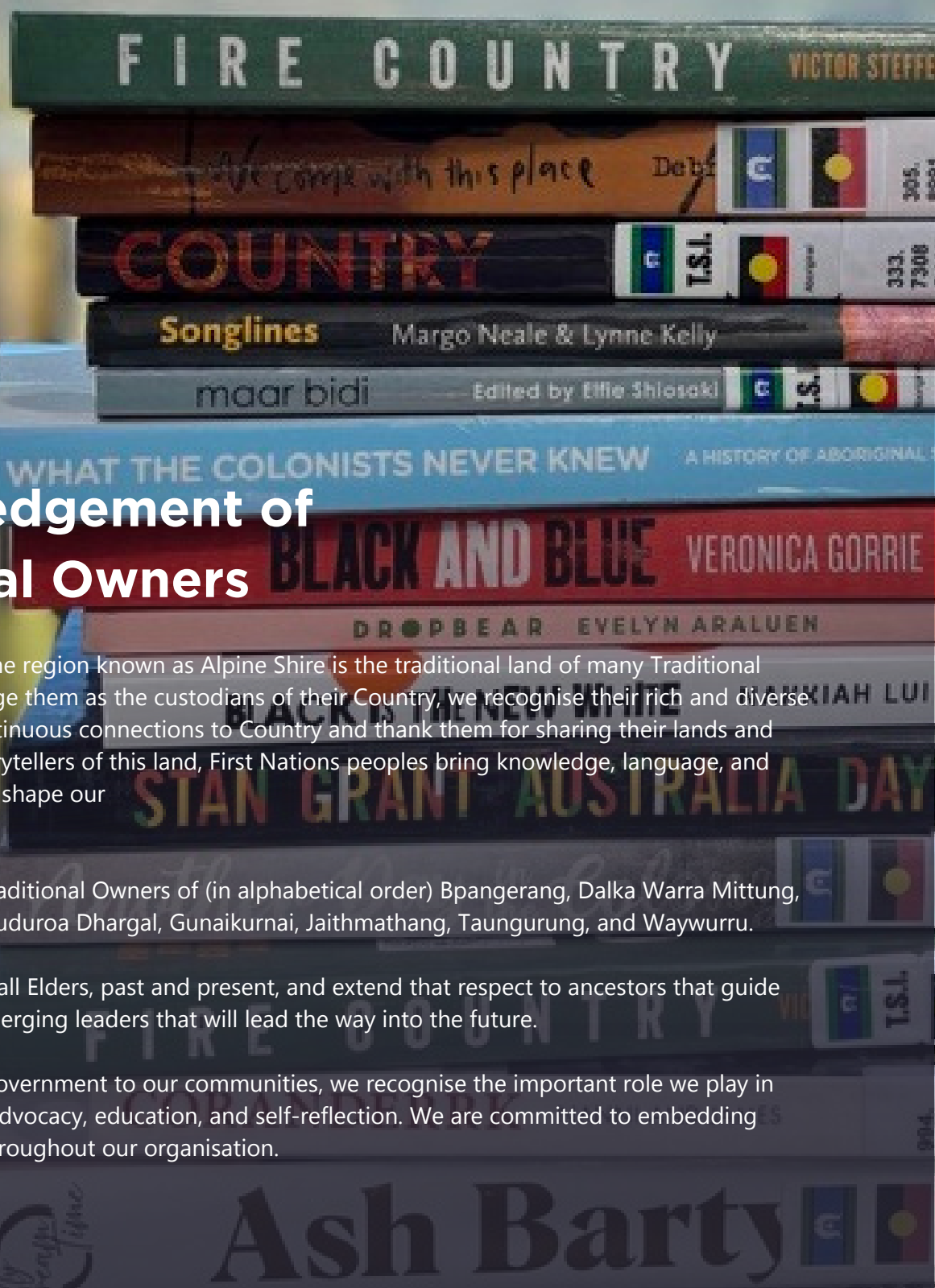
Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

We acknowledge that the region known as Alpine Shire is the traditional land of many Traditional Owners. We acknowledge them as the custodians of their Country, we recognise their rich and diverse cultural history and continuous connections to Country and thank them for sharing their lands and cultures. As the first storytellers of this land, First Nations peoples bring knowledge, language, and culture that continue to shape our communities.

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of (in alphabetical order) Bpangerang, Dalka Warra Mittung, Dhuduroa Waywurru, Duduroa Dhargal, Gunaikurnai, Jaithmathang, Taungurung, and Waywurru.

We pay our respects to all Elders, past and present, and extend that respect to ancestors that guide through history, and emerging leaders that will lead the way into the future.

As the closest level of government to our communities, we recognise the important role we play in reconciliation through advocacy, education, and self-reflection. We are committed to embedding reconciliation actions throughout our organisation.





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Summary

The Library Services Plan 2026–2030 (the Plan) sets a clear strategic direction for Alpine Shire Council’s (Council) delivery of library services for the coming four years.

It has been guided by community feedback; evidence-based research; industry standards, guidelines, and frameworks; and Council’s key strategic planning documents, including the Alpine Shire Community Vision and Council Plan 2025–29.

This Plan reflects the needs of our local communities in a rapidly changing world, focusing on strengthening digital inclusion, supporting lifelong learning, and fostering social connection.

Libraries play a vital role in meeting the recreational, educational, social, informational, and employment-related needs of community members. As the cost-of-living pressures increase, libraries remain as a free, welcoming, and inclusive third space available to all community members. Libraries support cultural and community development by providing access to resources that help build informed, connected, and caring communities.

Council delivers these essential services through three physical library branches (Alpine Libraries) located in Bright, Mount Beauty, and Myrtleford. These physical library branches are complemented by a suite of digital platforms accessible to all library members.

Alpine Libraries are a member of the High Country Library Network (HCLN), sharing a diverse and comprehensive library collection with our neighbouring councils: Rural City of Wangaratta, Benalla Rural City, and Mansfield Shire Council. This network supports Alpine Libraries to develop and maintain customer service standards comparable to the best in Australia, while developing and improving systems and service delivery in an economically sustainable manner.

Mission, Vision and Values

This Library Services Plan aligns with the Alpine Shire Community Vision and Council Plan 2025-29, and aims to support the implementation of its vision and three key objectives - Customer Focused Alpine; Sustainable and Resilient Alpine; and, Vibrant and Healthy Alpine

“Our Vision is for a strong and adaptable Alpine Shire that embraces change, supports new ideas, and leads with confidence. Through community connection, sustainable choices, and bold leadership, we create a thriving future for our people, places, and environment.”

At the heart of this Plan is a clear purpose: to provide knowledge and connection for the people and communities within the Alpine Shire. Public libraries are unique civic spaces — vibrant, inclusive hubs of creativity, learning, and belonging — open to everyone at every age and stage of life. The Library Plan 2026-2030 reaffirms this commitment and outlines how our library service will continue to evolve, adapt, and thrive in response to community needs and global change.

Our values of innovation, collaboration, accountability, respect and empowerment underpin the way we operate our libraries and how we serve and connect with our communities.

Public libraries are one of the last truly free third spaces in the world, a place away from home and work where people can connect, relax, and explore identity, community, and creativity.



Service Delivery

Our library service delivers a broad and evolving range of offerings designed to enrich learning, connection and wellbeing across the community.

Collections: Print and Digital

Our collections include both physical and digital resources of books, magazines, newspapers, audiobooks, series and movies offering something for every interest, age and learning style.

We continually review and refresh these materials to ensure they remain relevant, diverse and reflective of our community's needs.

If we do not currently have what our patrons want, we will do our best to obtain any requested items.

Programs and Events: Children, Teens, Adults and Seniors

We deliver a vibrant calendar of programs and events designed to inspire curiosity, creativity and connection across all life stages.

Our library programs foster early literacy development, adult learning, social connections and wellbeing.

Regular programs include Rhyme Time, Story Time, book clubs, and craft groups with additional special event author talks, school holiday activities and special interest workshops.

Outreach and Partnerships: Schools, Local Organisations, and Cultural and Community Groups

We welcome opportunities to partner with other organisations within our community and will explore possibilities to provide outreach services.

Technology Access: Computers and Assistive Technologies

We provide essential access to technology that supports digital participation, creativity and independence.

Public computers, Wi-Fi and printing services are available at all Alpine library branches.

Spaces: Study Areas and Meeting Rooms

Each of our libraries have meeting rooms available to the public for hire.

We also aim to provide space for study and work within our physically limited spaces.

While Myrtleford has two private study booths, currently Bright and Mount Beauty are restricted to open workspaces.

Any future refurbishments will aim to increase workspaces as far as is practicable.



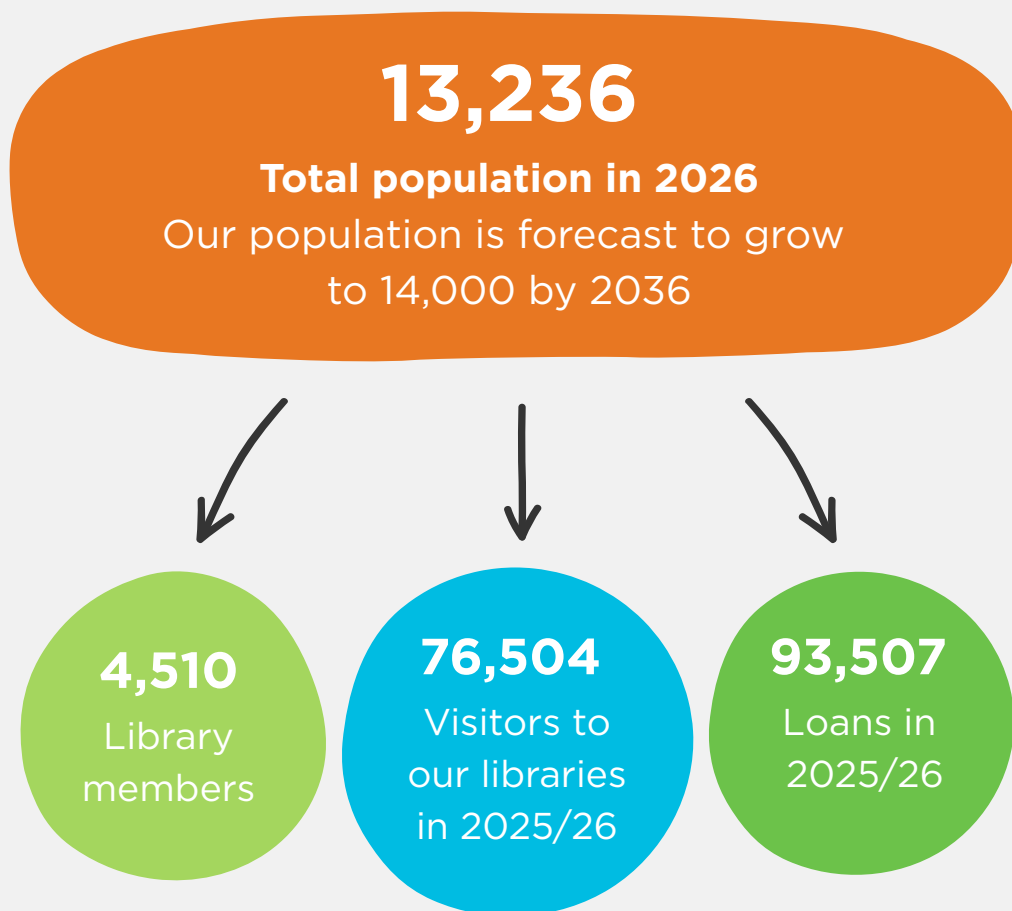
Community Snapshot, Engagement and Needs Assessment

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2026, Alpine Shire has a population of 13,236 people. Alpine Libraries currently have 4,510 library members, or approximately 33% of Alpine Shire residents.

In reality the number of users is higher as there are many families utilising a single membership, as well as community members who do not have a membership but utilise library facilities in-house.

In the 2025/26 financial year, across three library branches we welcomed 76,504 visitors.

A service being utilised by a third of the population must be considered vital, particularly when considered in the current global environment of increasing costs of living and growing social disconnection in an increasingly digital world.



LIFE CYCLES OF LIBRARY USERS

Libraries evolve alongside the people who use them.

As individuals move through different stages of life, their relationship with the library shifts - sometimes subtly, sometimes dramatically. A modern library member's journey often looks like this:

CHILDREN

This is where the spark begins. Libraries nurture early literacy and curiosity through vibrant, well-loved children's collections and interactive programs like Rhyme Time and Story Time.

These positive early experiences help build foundational reading skills and a sense of belonging in a shared community space.

YOUTH

As children grow into young people, the library becomes a hub for exploration and independence.

We support their learning with diverse collections, quiet study zones, and access to technology that helps them complete schoolwork, discover new interests, and connect with the wider world, something of particular importance in rural/remote areas.

PARENTS

Many adults rediscover the library when they become parents. They return to support their children's reading journeys but often find themselves rekindling their own love of books and learning.

The library becomes a shared family ritual - story times, borrowing sprees, and modelling a love of reading for the next generation.

ADULTS

Life gets busy - study, work, and competing priorities often mean library visits become less frequent.

To meet adults where they are, we offer flexible, convenient services: online resources, digital collections, click-and-collect borrowing, and welcoming spaces for remote work or focused study.

The library becomes a tool for lifelong learning, productivity, recreation and balance.

OLDER ADULTS

In later life, the library becomes a vital source of connection, enrichment, and support.

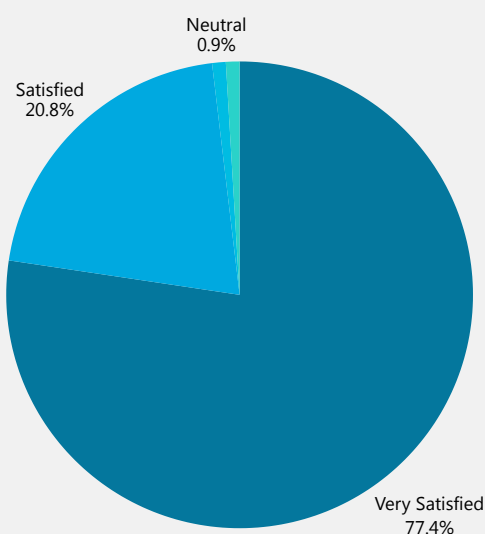
Whether through access to physical collections, help with technology, social events, or lifelong learning programs, libraries offer a welcoming space that encourages community engagement, curiosity, and wellbeing throughout retirement.

Library Services Survey

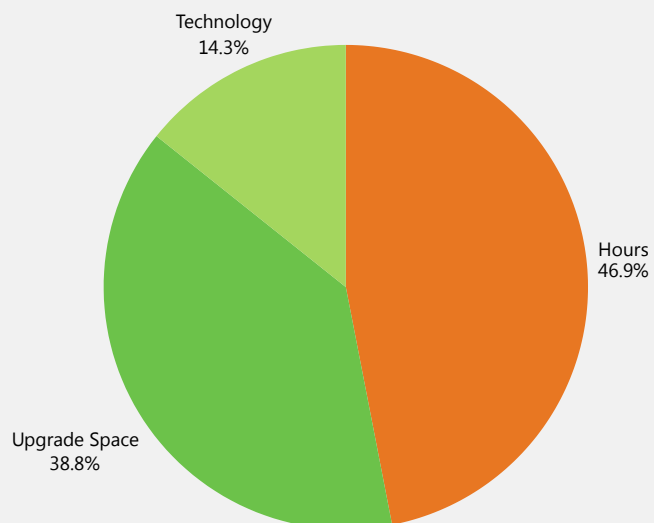
Commencing in December 2025 through until February 2026 Alpine Libraries sought community feedback through our Library Services Survey.

This was available online or in hard copy and received 106 responses, representing approximately 7% of our active users - this distinction highlights users who utilise their membership every month. Of these respondents, over 98% were satisfied or very satisfied with Alpine Libraries.

Patron Satisfaction



Patron Feedback



Through the feedback provided we have identified some clear themes and improvements our community members would like to see.

These themes and improvements include:

- Increased opening hours/more consistent opening hours across our three branches;
- More programs and events such as author talks, special interest events and groups;
- Upgrading some of our facilities including lighting, study spaces, climate control and general updating of furniture and facilities;
- Improved technology and printing; and,
- An increased collection – new titles, Languages other than English (LOTE) and a 'Library of Things' - a community collection that allows people to borrow useful items, equipment and tools, rather than books alone.

Alpine Libraries will endeavour to implement improvements as far as is practicable, taking into account Council's financial sustainability challenges and diverse service delivery.

Strategic Goals and Objectives

While this Plan has its own focused objectives specific to the delivery of library services across the Alpine Shire, these objectives ultimately align with the Council Plan objectives - Customer Focused Alpine, Sustainable and Resilient Alpine, and Vibrant and Healthy Alpine.



OBJECTIVE 1

Champion Curiosity

Our libraries will be places where people can learn about the world and about them, inspiring curiosity through welcoming spaces, diverse resources, and opportunities to explore new ideas.

Lifelong learning – Nurture lifelong learning by ensuring free and open access to books, resources and programs that inspire discovery and support learning at every stage of life.

Digital literacy – Provide hands-on technology support that helps our community build confidence, solve every day tech challenges and explore new tools with enthusiasm; empowering people to feel capable, connected and ready to embrace the possibilities of the digital world.

Empowering safety and responsibility online – Promote safe and responsible online behaviour by equipping our community with the awareness, skills and confidence to navigate digital spaces thoughtfully and protect their wellbeing.

Help navigation of mis- and dis-information –

Empower our community to confidently navigate mis- and dis-information by fostering critical thinking skills and guiding people toward reliable, accurate and trusted sources, helping them make sense of an increasingly complex media landscape filled with fake news and extreme viewpoints.



	KEY INITIATIVE	DELIVERY	DATE
Lifelong learning	Deliver varied programs of free workshops or talks (e.g. beginner gardening, local history, resume writing, language tasters, creative skills) led by library staff or local experts, ensuring accessible learning opportunities for children, adults and seniors throughout the year.	Internal and External	Ongoing
Digital literacy	Initiate regular digital literacy sessions to support community participation through skill building programs.	Internal and External	Ongoing
Help navigation of mis- and dis-information	Support staff to build their skills in identifying mis- and dis-information so they can in turn support the community.	Internal	Ongoing

OBJECTIVE 2

Elevate Customer Experience

We will elevate customer experiences by offering friendly, helpful service and providing diverse programs and collections that make every visit welcoming, engaging, and memorable.

Continue to grow and uniquely curate both our physical and digital collections – We will ensure our collections reflect the evolving interests, identities and needs of our community through curation of diverse, relevant and high-quality materials in both physical and digital formats, ensuring everyone can discover something meaningful, inspiring or unexpected.

Provide and support community programs within our libraries – We welcome opportunities to partner with community groups and will deliver a vibrant calendar of programs that spark learning, creativity and connection. By collaborating with local organisations,

cultural groups, educators and volunteers, we will strengthen our role as a community hub where people come together to share knowledge, celebrate local stories and build new skills.

Value personal service and connection, as well as privacy – We will prioritise warm, personalised interactions that make every visitor feel seen, supported and respected. At the same time, we will uphold strong privacy practices, ensuring that all library users can explore, learn and engage with confidence and trust.

Be a community connection to Council – We will serve as an accessible, friendly bridge between the community and Council services, helping people find information, complete Council transactions, navigate processes and feel more connected to local initiatives, opportunities and decision-making.

	KEY INITIATIVE	DELIVERY	DATE
Continue to grow and uniquely curate both our physical and digital collections	Continue to uphold collection that meets ALIA standards for age and collection size per capita.	Internal delivery via both Internal and External funding	Ongoing
Be a community connection to Council	Implement Alpine Shire Council Customer Charter within the library team while providing support and guidance on key Council services.	Internal	December 2026
Value personal service and connection, as well as privacy	Embed a culture of valuing privacy and upholding legislative requirements surrounding personal information.	Internal	Ongoing
	Explore opportunities for library outreach services.	Internal	December 2027

OBJECTIVE 3

Improve Facilities and Technology

We will enhance our facilities and technology to help our community participate meaningfully in modern life, investing in sustainable, future focused improvements that support personal and professional growth while ensuring our spaces remain welcoming, environmentally responsible, and financially resilient.

Enhance library facilities – We will explore opportunities to improve the physical spaces within our libraries to ensure they remain welcoming, flexible, and fit for contemporary community needs.

Digital access – Provide fit for purpose technology including WiFi, computers and printing equipment - we will maintain and upgrade essential digital infrastructure so every community member can reliably access the tools they need for work, study, creativity and connection. Our goal is to ensure that no one is excluded from digital participation due to lack of equipment or connectivity.

Embrace new technology – We will embrace new technology while supporting digital literacy for those experiencing economic, educational and social barriers to the online world. We will help bridge the digital divide and empower people to navigate the online world safely, independently and with curiosity.

	KEY INITIATIVE	DELIVERY	DATE
Enhance library facilities	Scope, design and deliver refurbishment of Bright Library (contingent on funding).	Internal and External	June 2030
Digital access	Maintain connection with Alpine Shire ICT team to ensure fit for purpose technology within libraries.	Internal	Ongoing
Embrace new technology	Support staff development in emerging technologies.	Internal and External	Ongoing



OBJECTIVE 4

Enhance Community Wellbeing

We will continue to evolve with our community needs, to be safe, welcoming and accessible public spaces where connection, ideas, knowledge and people are valued and respected.

In doing so we will support the wellbeing of individuals and the community as an entity.

Foster connection and belonging – We will create opportunities for people to come together, form relationships and feel part of a supportive community. Through inclusive programs, warm interactions and spaces designed for gathering, we will help reduce social isolation and build a sense of shared identity and mutual care.

Celebrate difference and diversity – We will champion the richness of our community by recognising, representing and celebrating diverse cultures, experiences, identities and perspectives. Our collections, programs and services will reflect this diversity, ensuring everyone feels seen, respected and welcomed.

Create spaces and places that are valued –

We will maintain and enhance our library environments, so they remain comfortable, accessible and inspiring places to spend time.

Climate resilience – be guided by healthy and sustainable practices – We will embed environmentally responsible practices into our operations, facilities and planning, recognising that our region experiences significant climate extremes, including storms, snow, heatwaves and bushfire risk. We will ensure our libraries remain safe, reliable and resilient spaces that can continue to support the community through changing environmental challenges.

Child Safe – a safe place for all – We will ensure our libraries are places where children and young people feel secure, respected and empowered; ensuring staff and volunteers are trained and confident in child-safe practices; and designing programs, policies and interactions that prioritise the rights, safety and wellbeing of children at all times. Our libraries will remain trusted places where families can participate with confidence, knowing that child safety is central to everything we do.





OBJECTIVE 4

Enhance Community Wellbeing cont.

	KEY INITIATIVE	DELIVERY	DATE
Create spaces and places that are valued	Undertake review of library opening hours	Internal	June 2027
Celebrate difference and diversity	Ensure programming and collections are diverse and reflective of all library users	Internal	Ongoing
Foster connection and belonging	Create and maintain welcoming spaces across all Alpine libraries	Internal	Ongoing
Child Safe	Ensure all staff are up to date and aware of Child Safe policies and regulations. All staff will hold valid Working With Children Checks	Internal	Ongoing

Human Rights Charter Compatibility

This policy has been assessed as being compatible with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 [Vic].

Gender Impact Assessment

The implications of this plan were assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Gender Equality Act 2020. The Gender Impact Assessment showed that the plan has the potential to deliver significant gender-equity benefits, particularly around inclusion, literacy, community connection, and safety.

However, without intentional design, it may also reinforce existing gender barriers around such areas as digital access, safety, and participation patterns currently being witnessed.

Supporting Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with all other relevant, Council policies and procedures, as well as relevant legislative requirements.

Related Legislation

- Local Government Act 1989 [Vic]
- Local Government Act 2020 [Vic]

Related Guidelines, Operational Directives or Policies

- Community Vision and Council Plan 2025-29
- Customer Charter
- Standards and Guidelines for
- ALIA Standards and Guidelines for Australian Public Libraries 2020





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