

Business case for the

Children's Library of Victoria

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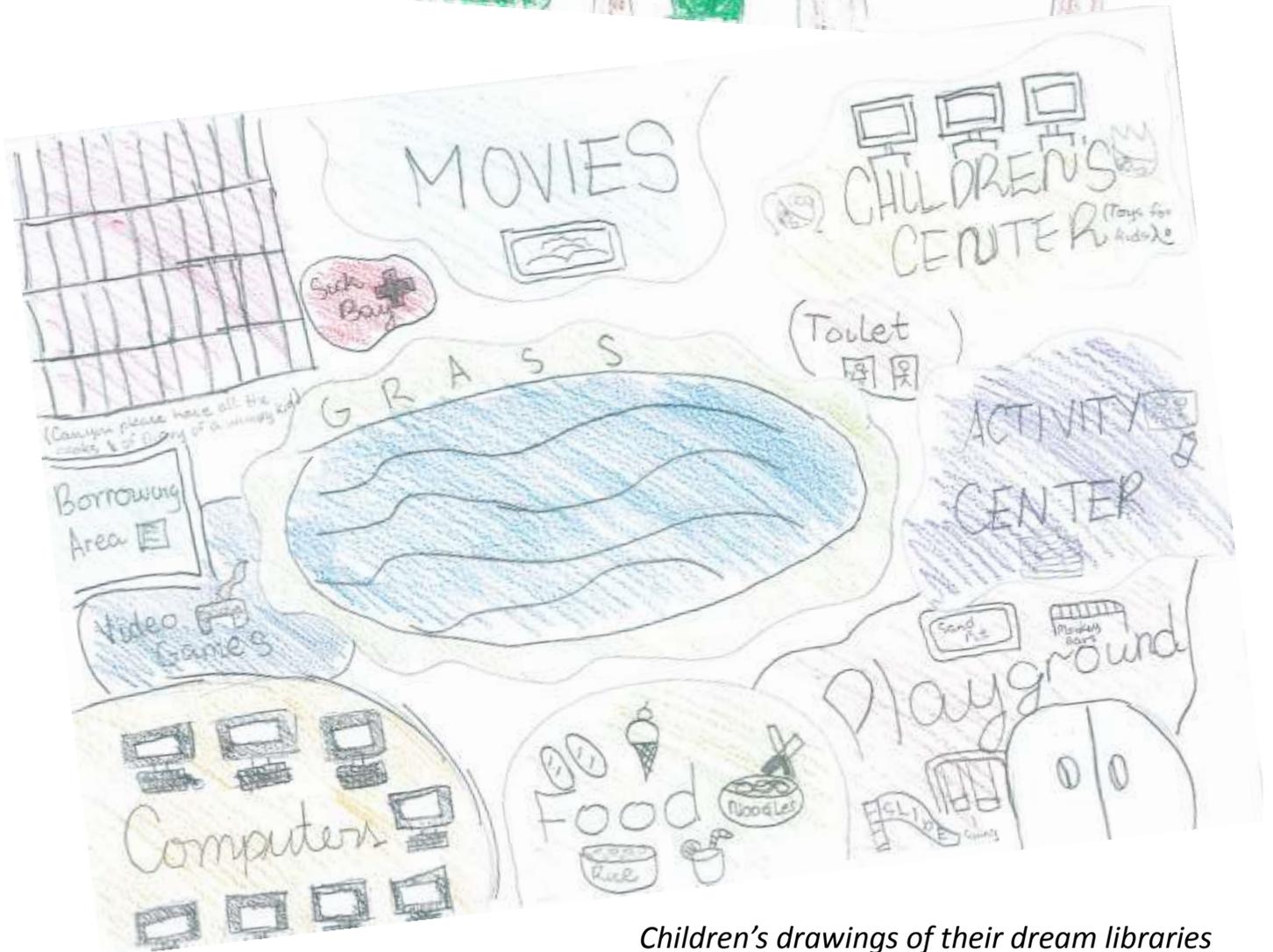
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Huy Nguyen
7 year old

I would like trees in my dream
Library



Children's drawings of their dream libraries

The recommendation of this business case is for a dedicated Children's Library to be established as a part of the State Library of Victoria, with a retrofit of branded children's spaces in Victorian public libraries.

1. Executive Summary

The following business case outlines the needs and benefits of establishing a dedicated Children's Library within Victoria which focuses on innovative spaces and programs specifically designed for 0-11 year olds. Best practice in the delivery of early year's services in International Children's Libraries has been explored to provide recommendations on raising Victorian Libraries to International standards and enhance existing services. An examination of current Victorian public library facilities and programs highlights the potential to dramatically extend services to the 0-11 year old age group.

The recommendation of this business case is for a dedicated Children's Library to be established as a part of the State Library of Victoria, with a retrofit of branded children's spaces in Victorian public libraries.



1.1. Purpose

International best practice in children's services and facilities, has seen the creation of fit-for-purpose spaces which cater for the differing developmental needs of the 0-11 age group. As we do not currently have a facility of this kind, Victoria and Australia are lagging behind international standards. The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework and the work of educational psychologists such as Jean Piaget, advocate that children's learning is significantly enhanced by addressing the different developmental needs of children. (Marsh, C., 2000, p20)

Recent data demonstrates a concerning trend, that approximately 16% of the Victorian population possess Level 1 literacy skills, with Level 3 literacy now considered the minimum standard required to meet the complex demands of everyday life (Brown, H., n.d. p1). Alarming, 46% of Australians aged 15-74 possess literacy skills of Levels 1 and Levels 2. (ABS(a), 2008. para.7) Lower literacy levels are linked to fewer employment opportunities, (Brown, H., n.d., p1) lower income (ABS, 2008. para.29), poorer health outcomes, social exclusion and an increase in the economic burden to the State.(ABS(b), 2012, para 7)

Examination of current Victorian Libraries' children's programs has highlighted a lack of continuity in services offered across the State and a duplication of resource production. As each library service currently trains their children's services staff locally, a large proportion of each council's budget is taken up training individuals.

Additionally, Tourism Victoria has identified the "State's critical need for a branded family based attraction," (Tourism Victoria(a), 2005, p16) the goal being to increase visitation to Melbourne.

...approximately 16% of the Victorian population possess Level 1 literacy skills, with Level 3 literacy now considered the minimum standard required to meet the complex demands of everyday life (Brown, H., n.d. p1).

1.2. Anticipated Outcomes

Literacy

A dedicated Children's Library will extend services to the 0-11 age group by providing age appropriate spaces and creative programs, reflecting specific learning and developmental needs. Such a facility will encourage a fun, interactive atmosphere, designed to fuel children's imaginations and instil a lifelong love of reading. The library will communicate to parents and the community the importance of reading and ensure future success in meeting the demands of everyday life. British studies support the idea, that children who frequent libraries on a regular basis, have higher literacy levels than those who rarely or never use a library. (Clark, C. & Hawkins, L., 2011, p6) In this way, by making the library a fun and engaging place for children, it would attract future generations to become library users and thereby augment the role of the public library in enhancing literacy. It can be expected that this will lead to higher literacy levels across Victoria, in the long term.

Best Practice

A dedicated Children's library, staffed by qualified Children's Librarians, early years specialists and education professionals, along with personnel with creative backgrounds, such as musicians and performing/visual artists, will model best practice in early years programming and service delivery. Furthermore, this facility will provide an avenue for professional development across Victoria and potentially Australia. This will lead to uniformity in services, reduce duplication of programs and resource production and ultimately result in cost savings.

Economic Benefits

A Children's Library will enhance Melbourne's profile as a preeminent cultural and entertainment location, which will be of economic benefit, by increasing tourism to the region. It will be a location that attracts families to the city, as well as a destination for schools and kindergartens. Local businesses will benefit from the increased traffic flow the facility will attract.

... children who frequent libraries on a regular basis, have higher literacy levels than those who rarely or never use a library.

(Clark, C. & Hawkins, L., 2011, p6)

Such impacts can be seen in the Bookmarks Children's Library in Dallas, Texas, USA, which attracts over 27 million visitors a year (O'Connor, M. & Kenny, B., 2008, para19) and the Stockholm Children's Library, which attracts 300,000 visitors per year (Rosenfeldt, D.(a), 2008, p16) in this way demonstrating the tourism pull a Children's Library can achieve.

1.3. Recommendation

Various Children's Libraries around the world have been examined in an effort to define best practice in the creation of

spaces for children and the development of services and programs specifically aimed at 0-11 year olds. Consideration has been given to what will work best within a Melbourne context. As a result of building age-specific spaces, a Children's Library will cater for different childhood developmental stages.



International approaches to this vision, have seen the creation of exciting, interactive spaces, which focus on encouraging the development of pre-literacy and early-literacy skills. (See Appendix 1 for detailed analysis of International Children's Libraries) .

A children's library for Victoria would be a collaborative venture, dependent upon the input and support of a range of partners.

Options considered include: the incorporation of a Children's Library as a part of the State Library of Victoria (SLV); the construction of a custom-built Children's Library to be located in either Docklands, Southbank or the Melbourne CBD, as a stand-alone attraction; and the retrofit of 'branded' children's spaces throughout public libraries in Melbourne and regional centres such as Bendigo, Ballarat and Geelong.

The preferred recommendation of this business case is for a Children's Library to be established as a part of the State Library of Victoria.

In addition to the above, the Business Case Analysis Team recommends that Victorian public libraries have a retrofit of branded children's spaces, which follow the model established by the Melbourne Children's Library. This will allow the application of best practice, as established by the Library, at a local level and ensure

access to services for children on a continuing basis. Options for branded spaces include pod-like structures, circular reading rooms or tactile walls. 'People, Places' (State Library of NSW(a), 2011) recommends the branding of libraries, to ensure that "services are recognised"(p78). In designing children's spaces, the 'museum model', which has the "potential for libraries to act as interpretive space and enhance the learning experience beyond traditional collections" is of most value.(State Library of NSW(a), 2011, p78)

1.4. Justification

The selection of the State Library of Victoria as the preferred location for a dedicated children's library is based on a number of factors that emerged during an interview with the State Library's Director, Community, Learning and Public Library Partnerships on 28 September 2012:

Audience: After decades of focussing its programs and services on adult and senior secondary school audiences, over the last three years the State Library has established services and programs for families and children, with outstanding success. These include weekly storytimes and baby bounce times, school holiday programs and the annual Children's Book Festival, in partnership with the Wheeler Centre. Young learners are considered a key audience for the State Library, and have been targeted for special consultation as part of the Library's current strategic planning process. (Rosenfeldt, D.(b), 2012)

Space: The State Library is centrally located in the heart of the city and near a major transport hub. The Library occupies an entire city block. As part of its current strategic planning there has been a review of space requirements and the need to establish a dedicated space for children. (Rosenfeldt, D.(b), 2012)

Collection: The State Library has traditionally collected Australian children's literature and has one of the most comprehensive collections in the country. In 2012 the State Library became trustee of the Dromkeen collection of Australian children's picture book art, one of the most significant collections of children's picture book art in the world.

Funding: The SLV has existing partnerships which provide funding and the networks to potentially gain additional funding.

Training: The State Library has a substantial track record in running training seminars for public library staff, including training in the children's services area through the Young Readers Program, which places it in a good position to establish best practice and 'become a flagship of children's library services in public libraries' (Rosenfeldt, D.(b), 2012)

Staffing: The State Library has the expertise in staff management to source and train staff from other sectors, such as education, the arts and information technology, in addition to their current staff that are qualified in children's services.

Partnerships: The State Library increasingly delivers its services through collaboration and partnerships and has well-established networks with Australian children's authors, illustrators and publishers, with philanthropic agencies and with Public Libraries Victoria Network.

In summary: The State Library of Victoria is committed to working with 'young learners' and current strategic planning indicates that it is likely to grow its offer in this area. The Library has many advantages – its central location, its unique collections of Australian children's literature and picture book art, its track record of success in onsite and online programming for children and young people and in running programs statewide – which together inspire confidence that it would be an ideal 'home' for Victoria's Children's Library. Recognising that the Children's Library would most likely be a collaboration, partnership or joint-venture of some kind, the State Library's track-record in this area suggests that it would be both able and comfortable with this mode of operation.

Should no action be taken, the potential flow-on effect would include: the continued decline in literacy levels state-wide, particularly among low socio-economic groups potentially leading to a high cost to the State Government; potential loss of tourist dollars and economic stimulation to the Melbourne CBD: continued lack of continuity in Children's services within public libraries with an escalation of costs in resource and programming production: and a widening of the gap between International and Victorian standards for Children's Libraries.

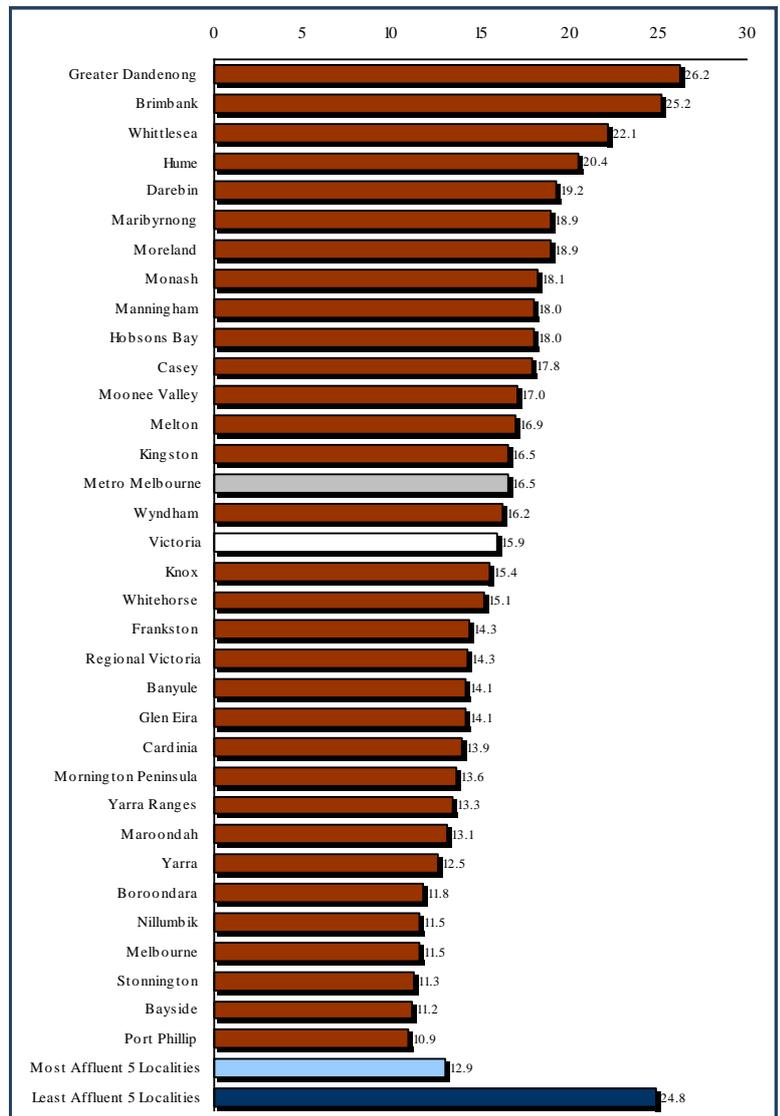
2. Current Situation

2.1. Situation Statement

State-wide studies demonstrate that approximately 16% of Victoria’s population currently possess level 1 literacy skills, with Level 3 literacy being considered the minimum level required to meet the complex demands of everyday life.

Disturbingly, over 24% of the population in low socioeconomic areas possess the lowest level of literacy.(Brown, H., n.d., p4)
(See graph)

Currently, Victoria does not have a Children’s Library focusing on the 0-11 age group. The majority of library facilities within public libraries, attempt to incorporate children’s areas into pre-existing spaces that are often expected to cater to children and their families, from birth into teen years. Present practice within Victorian public libraries, shows a lack of continuity in service delivery and duplication in resource production, as each Library Service develops the majority of their programs independently.



Literacy Level 1 within Victoria (Brown, H., n.d., p4)

Tourism Victoria’s ‘Concept Proposals for Tourism

Development in Victoria’ (2005, p16) highlights the State’s need for family branded attractions to draw interstate and international visitors, with such facilities to be “world class, branded or unique to Victoria”.(2005. p7) Additionally “over the 40

years to 2051, Victoria’s population is projected to increase by 3.2 million to 8.7 million. Over the same period, Melbourne’s population is expected to grow to 6.5 million”. (DPCD, 2012, p3) (see graph below) This is turn will lead to a greater demand for services offered and make an extension in service provision a necessity.

Index of household and population growth, Melbourne SD and regional Victoria, 2011-2031.



(DPCD, 2012, p3)

2.2. Impact

A Children's Library will impact Victorian public library services in the following way:

Best Practice: By establishing programs which model best practice in the provision of services for children and literacy development, the Library will provide an example for public libraries in Victoria to follow. Additionally, the Library will be able to host professional training workshops for public library staff, to increase their knowledge and skills, in the provision of children's programming and literacy advocacy.

Library Spaces: The incorporation of age specific spaces, which are relevant and responsive to children's different developmental needs, will lead to greater engagement with families. This in turn will raise the profile and use of public libraries and enhance the perception of libraries as fun, engaging and inviting environments.

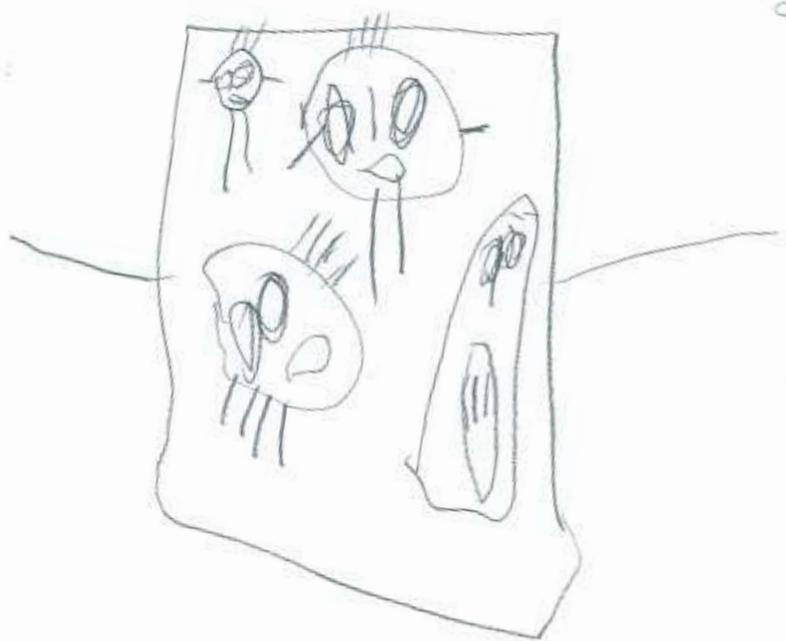
Program Delivery: Establishing best practice and uniforming programs will ensure continuity in service delivery across the State. Staff time spent on training and resource development will be redirected to increasing and enhancing programs offered to 0-11 years. A greater emphasis will be placed on collaboration with partner organisations, to develop innovative, cutting-edge programs.

Staff Roles: Staff with diverse skills will reinvigorate the library environment, as it transitions into the library of the future. Librarians, information technology specialists, visual and performing artists and education and early year's professionals, will collaborate to create an exciting, stimulating and imaginative environment.

Staff with diverse skills will reinvigorate the library environment, as it transitions into the library of the future.



Television
+ kids
computers



Children's drawings of their dream libraries

3. Project Overview

The Melbourne Children's Library project overview provides detail for how a Children's library will address the issues identified. The overview consists of a project description, goals and objectives, project performance criteria, project assumptions and risks and challenges.

3.1. Project Description

Based on International examples of Children's libraries, such as the Stockholm Children's Library and Imaginon, USA, the Melbourne Children's Library will be an inviting and stimulating space where children can experience stories coming to life. Within the Library, there will be a variety of spaces designed with the different developmental needs of children in mind and resources for new parents. As advocated by 'Libraries/Building/Communities', (2005) the Library design would "appeal to the community", both through aesthetics, such as the use of colour, by providing a friendly atmosphere and by being in a location which is "easily accessible".(p51) Additionally, in line with standards advocated in 'People, Places' (State Library NSW(b), 2012, p6) 70% of the floor space would be set aside for people and activities, with a performance area for story reading, drama and music and wet/dry area for arts and crafts.

Literacy

By creating age-appropriate, innovative spaces and age-responsive programs, and by choosing staff that bring knowledge, understanding and imagination, the Library will be a unique cultural experience, which encourages learning and literacy. As social inclusion is a guiding principle of public libraries, the Library will reach out to a broad cross-section of the community. Community groups with diverse needs, such as children with disabilities and with indigenous or non-English speaking backgrounds, would be offered specialised programming. The Library will open up access to learning and information, as well as artistic and cultural experiences, in an inclusive, welcoming environment.

The Library will play a major role in promoting pre-literacy and early-literacy skills, by developing programs which reflect current advances in early childhood education and through employing staff with diverse skills such as Education and the Arts. For example, the first 2 ½ years are crucial to language development with "language

skills [being] a foundation for the development of literacy skills”. (Hammer, Dr. C., 2011, p9) The Library will be in a key position to provide programs which enhance literacy, along with granting access to resources and information to assist new parents in learning the skills they need. Partnerships with schools, kindergartens, playgroups and organisations such as Maternal Child Health Service, will be encouraged.

The role of libraries in enhancing literacy skills has been established, with a British study finding that “Young people who are reading above the expected level for their age are twice as likely to be library users.”(Clark, C. & Hawkins, L., 2011, p6) Additionally, an increase in literacy will have a great impact socially, as “addressing literacy skills is a key first step in beginning to address and overcome other related factors that lock individuals into a cycle of disadvantage.”(Clark, C., et al, 2011, p1) Likewise, the Library will play a role in increasing technological proficiency, as Victoria becomes a “skilled and information literate community”, (SLV(a), 2005, p3) which is necessary to create a healthy, innovative, functional society. As a part of the Library’s delivery of digital literacy, it will provide opportunities for content creation, along with interactive on-line services that can be accessed from home or from regional areas.

Best Practice

The Library will employ qualified Children’s Librarians, along with professionals from other sectors, such as Education and Early Childhood, Visual and Performing Arts and Information Technology. In this way, the Library will be able to develop programs which set an example of best practice in the field of Children’s services and literacy development. Furthermore, the Library will act as a teaching body, hosting workshops for staff from public libraries in Victoria, ensuring continuity of services offered state-wide. The Library will bring Australian standards in Children’s libraries in-line with international standards and will become a leader in best practice, nationally and potentially, internationally.

Economic Benefits

The Library will provide economic stimulation to Melbourne and Victoria, by being a destination which draws families and educational groups to the city. Analysis of Australian and International libraries placed in retail precincts, shows that there are many benefits, not only in terms of greater spending at surrounding businesses, but a “potentially larger catchment for the library”.(Forsyth, E., 2006, p2) As the Library will be situated in close proximity to other attractions, restaurants and shops, it is reasonable to assume that these businesses will benefit from their relationship with

the Library. Moreover, the Library will provide employment for many Victorians, adding to the 4,430 jobs already created by the Library sector.(SLV(b), 2011, p13) Additionally, for every dollar spent on libraries, the community receives a return of \$3.56 in value.(SLV(b), 2011, p5)

Given that higher literacy (Level 3 and above) is linked to a “greater prospect of paid employment”,(Brown, H., n.d., p1) it is reasonable to envisage that the Library could lead to an improved economic climate for Victoria and a reduced burden to the state from unemployment. The Library also meets key objectives of The City of Melbourne, to become an intelligent and creative city, which fosters a love of learning at all stages of life. (City of Melbourne(a), 2008, Knowledge)



Copenhagen Main Library

3.2. Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives of the Children’s Library are detailed below:

Business Goal/Objective	Description
Increasing literacy levels, especially for at-risk groups (such as indigenous communities, Non-English Speaking Background and low socio-economic groups)	In consultation with early year specialists, establish best practice in children’s services, by establishing a model of programming that aids in the development of pre-linguistic and early-literacy skills. Provide age-appropriate programs and spaces which encourage children to learn literacy skills and information literacy through catering to different developmental needs.
Provide for the population growth of Melbourne and Victorian	The Library will provide an additional cultural facility in the City of Melbourne that will be a destination for families with children, kindergarten and school groups.
Provide a model for best practice,	The library will be a benchmark for children’s services, it will support public libraries with professional development, guidelines for children’s services staff, staff training and will create a more formal methodology of children’s services.
Change the profile of libraries	A Children’s library will change the perception of libraries and appeal to a new audience. Programs will be provided in fun, dynamic spaces where parents feel comfortable bringing their children to learn and engage. Parents will be catered for with materials for raising children and providing resources to explain the importance of child literacy
Life Changing Experience for young people	Children who do not live in a print rich environment require a significant event, such as a book gifting or a trip to a library, to instil a love of reading.(Clark, C. & De Zoysa, S., 2011, p6) The Library will be a destination for families to visit and will provide the opportunity for children to discover stories coming to life, potentially leading to higher literacy rates.

3.3. Project Performance

The performance measures that will be used to gauge the success of the project will be:

- The number of visits to the library with gathering of attendance, door statistics and feedback from the customers of the Children's Library
- Statistics showing economic growth in the area surrounding the Library
- Demonstrated improvement in and standardisation of children's services and programs in public libraries across the state
- Studies which identify an increase in literacy levels within Victoria, particularly in at-risk groups



Imaginon USA

3.4. Project Assumptions

- **Support of key stakeholders** – ongoing sponsorship and support from major stakeholders, such as City of Melbourne, Public Library Victoria Network, State Library of Victoria, Victorian Government, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and Arts Victoria, as well as partnerships with groups that will promote the Library, such as the Maternal Child Health Service.
- **Suitable location** – Finding a suitable location for the library which will be accessible by public transport (both metropolitan and regional), as well as parking spaces, bicycle and foot access.
- **Funding** – funding will be needed for a different purposes, including but not limited to: the design, building and fit-out of the Library at a new location or refurbishing an existing building; to hire appropriate staff with the different skills needed to make the library programs successful; for advertising and marketing the Library to attract families and educational groups; for programs and initiatives such as book kits for new parents.
- **Access to latest technology** – The library will require access to the latest types of communications and technology, targeted at different age groups, in order to be able to fulfil its learning objectives for the community.
- **Support for the library** – It is desirable to gain the support of schools, kindergartens and playgroups, both from within Melbourne and from regional areas.



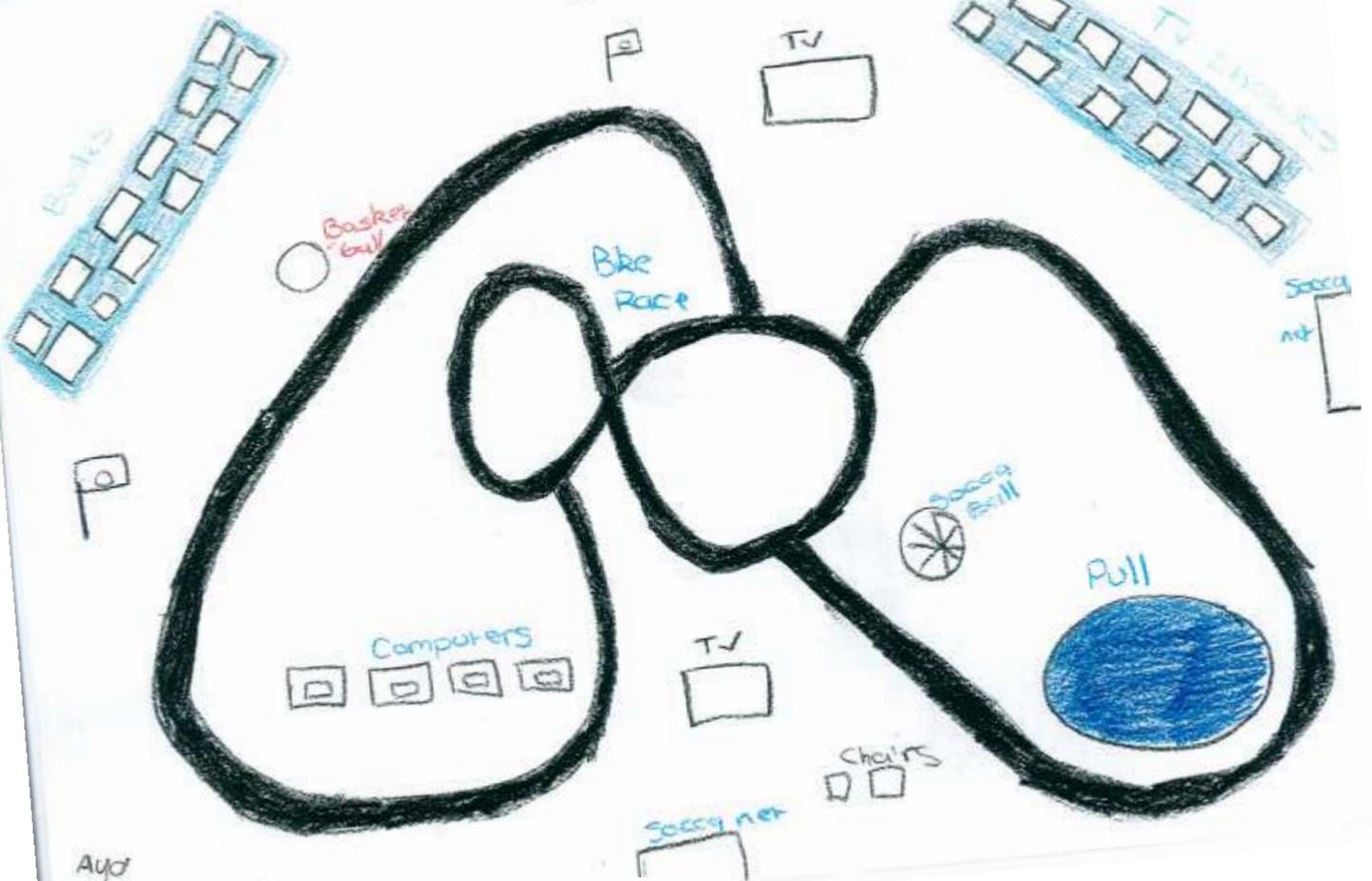
3.5. Project Risks and Challenges

- **Location:** finding a suitable location for the library is vital in its ability to attract visitors and provide easy access to people from all communities and socioeconomic backgrounds.
- **Initial Funding:** In order for this project to be launched, it will be necessary to gain the support of the Victorian Government, The City of Melbourne and other funding bodies.
- **Continued Funding:** ongoing funding will be required to provide the staff with the desired skills and to maintain or increase programming and services offered. Cuts to funding would threaten the continuation of any programs the Library offers.
- **Partnerships with Major Stakeholders:** The project must be embraced by all major stakeholders for it to be a success. It is also necessary that partnerships are maintained through service and satisfaction.



Bookmarks Library USA

Teenage Library



Aya
1

6 years and 11 months

- When I go to
- 1 the library, I play on th computer
 - 2 I play on ABC for kids.
 - 3 I like games.
 - 4 My cousin comes to the library.
 - 5 her name is ranyda
 - 6 I like to wath the computers besto



Children's drawings of their dream libraries

4. Strategic Alignment

The proposed Children's Library is in Strategic Alignment with the standards of many professional bodies within the Library sector, such as Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA), the State Library of Victoria (SLV) and the State Library of New South Wales.

People, Places (State Library NSW(b), 2012) advocates fit-for-purpose libraries, with separate areas for children of different ages will "increase the library's relevance and enjoyment for children [as] a school age child has vastly different needs to a toddler."(p97) Furthermore, ALIA recommends the use of Library buildings which are: "attractive, functional and accessible; [able to] stimulate interest; are designed for flexible use, efficiency in operation and sustainability; [and] accommodate collections, resources and programs which serve the identified needs of the community." (Quinn, S. & McCallum, I., 2011, p17)

Literacy

It has long been understood that Libraries have a role to play in promoting literacy and reading skills.(Quinn, S. & McCallum, I., 2011, p6) However, "contemporary library staff [now] understand that communication through words is preceded by many other forms involving all the senses - the need to touch, experience colour, light and sound, to play, draw, and recognise symbols without help."(State Library NSW(b), 2012, p98) By providing a fit-for-purpose building, with age-appropriate areas, and spaces for children to learn and explore, the Library will be in alignment with the traditional aim of promoting literacy and pre-literacy skills.

The Library will be a place where children can learn, explore and interact with others, in a safe and socially inclusive environment.

Through the use of different technologies, which allow for content creation and digital exploration, children will be able “to express ideas and make meaning using a range of media” .(DEER, 2009, p42) The Library will provide opportunities for connection, learning and communication, which is in strategic alignment with the Early Years Learning Framework set out in ‘Being, Belonging, Becoming’(DEER, 2009).

“The Framework conveys the highest expectations for all children’s learning from birth to five years [and] communicates these expectations through the following five Learning Outcomes:

Children have a strong sense of identity

Children are connected with and contribute to their world

Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

Children are confident and involved learners

Children are effective communicators”

(DEER, 2009, p8)

Best Practice

According to ALIA, modern libraries, should “actively promote and support programs for members of the community with identified literacy needs” (Quinn, S. & McCallum, I., 2011, p40) and provide services and programs which cater to the diverse needs of indigenous communities, (Quinn, S. & McCallum, I., 2011, p42) those who come from a non-English speaking background (Quinn, S. & McCallum, I., 2011, p43) and members of the community who have disabilities. (Quinn, S. & McCallum, I., 2011, p44) By creating a socially-inclusive environment and by offering specialised programs for these groups, the Library will be in strategic alignment with these aims.

The Library will support the aims of the National Year of Reading, to create a “Nation of Readers”(National Year of Reading, 2011, para 2) and will build on the success of programs, such as the National Reading Hour.

... communication through words is preceded by many other forms involving all the senses - the need to touch, experience colour, light and sound, to play, draw, and recognise symbols without help.

State Library NSW(b), 2012, p98)

Economic Benefits

According to both the 'City of Melbourne Planning Scheme' (City of Melbourne(b), 2012, p7) and 'the City of Melbourne Future Melbourne: a bold, inspirational and sustainable city'(City of Melbourne(a), 2008) the objective of Melbourne is to grow as a 'global city' and to be one of the most liveable and sustainable cities in the world.

Alignment can be seen with the following six objectives of the City of Melbourne:

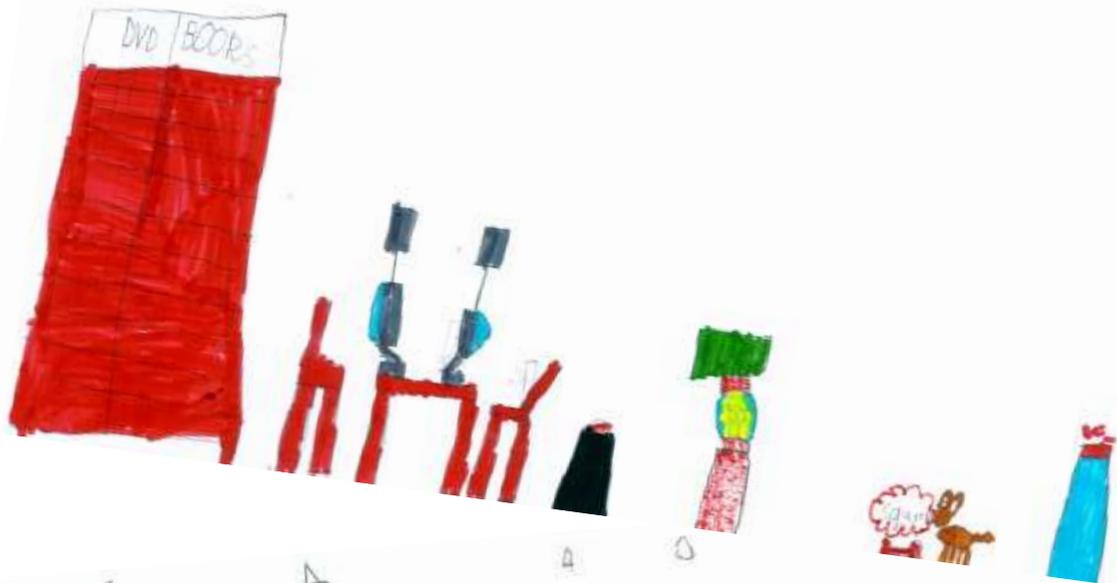
- A City for People: The children's library will encourage Melbourne's development as a city for people, by providing a cultural institution for families and children.
- A Creative City: The Library will encourage creativity and imagination in childhood, laying a foundation for adulthood.
- A Prosperous City: The Library will provide economic stimulation through the creation of new jobs and by attracting families and educational groups to the area.
- A City of Knowledge: The Library will encourage literacy skills and lifelong learning, an integral part of making Melbourne a City of Knowledge.
- An Eco-city: in line with new standards for eco-friendly construction, the Library will be designed to have a low-carbon footprint and will have access by foot, bicycle and public transport.
- A Connected City: The Library will provide for diverse segments of society within the City of Melbourne and will an area where people can become connected both with their own community and the different cultures which make up the population of Victoria.

(City of Melbourne(a), 2008, Vision)

Locating the Library within the Melbourne CBD is also aligned with ALIA's recommendation that public libraries be situated close to "gathering points, such as shopping centres, cultural centres or education precincts." (Quinn, S. & McCallum, I., 2011, p 17)

4.1. Funding Opportunities

- Dame Elisabeth Murdoch Foundation
- The Alannah and Madeline Foundation
- The Readings Foundation
- Support from Philanthropic Organisations
- Design of the Library, may be funded through a prize for emerging architects, resulting in a lower cost than that which would be required to hire an architect. Potentially this could be done in partnership with the Australian Architecture Association.
- The retrofit of branded children's spaces, throughout public libraries in Victoria, could be funded through a grant scheme provided by the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD).



Children's drawings of their dream libraries

5. Cost Benefit Analysis

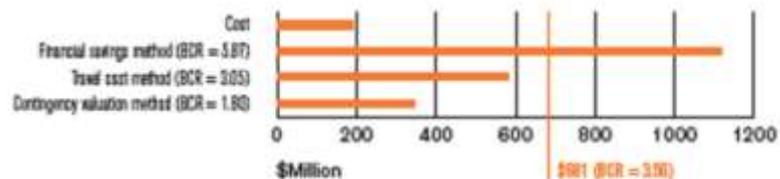
It is outside the scope of this project to give a thorough cost analysis of establishing a Children’s library within Melbourne. Costs that would need to be assessed include:

- Design of a fit-for-purpose Children’s Library
- Construction and fit-out of the Library
- Salaries for qualified staff
- Marketing
- Maintenance of building
- Utilities: electricity, heating and cooling, water
- Cleaning

‘The Building Audit of Victorian Public Libraries’,(2008) a document which provides an indication of the average costs associated with running a public library, advocates that “the concept of libraries as community hubs and learning centres should be promoted and facilitated” implying that the return to the community represents an excellent return on the investment.

Moreover, ‘Dollars, Sense and Libraries’(SLV(b), 2011, p5) reported that for every \$1 spent, Victorian public libraries contributed \$3.56 of value to their communities. (see chart below)

Victorian results: Cost benefit assessment



(SLV(b), 2011, p13)

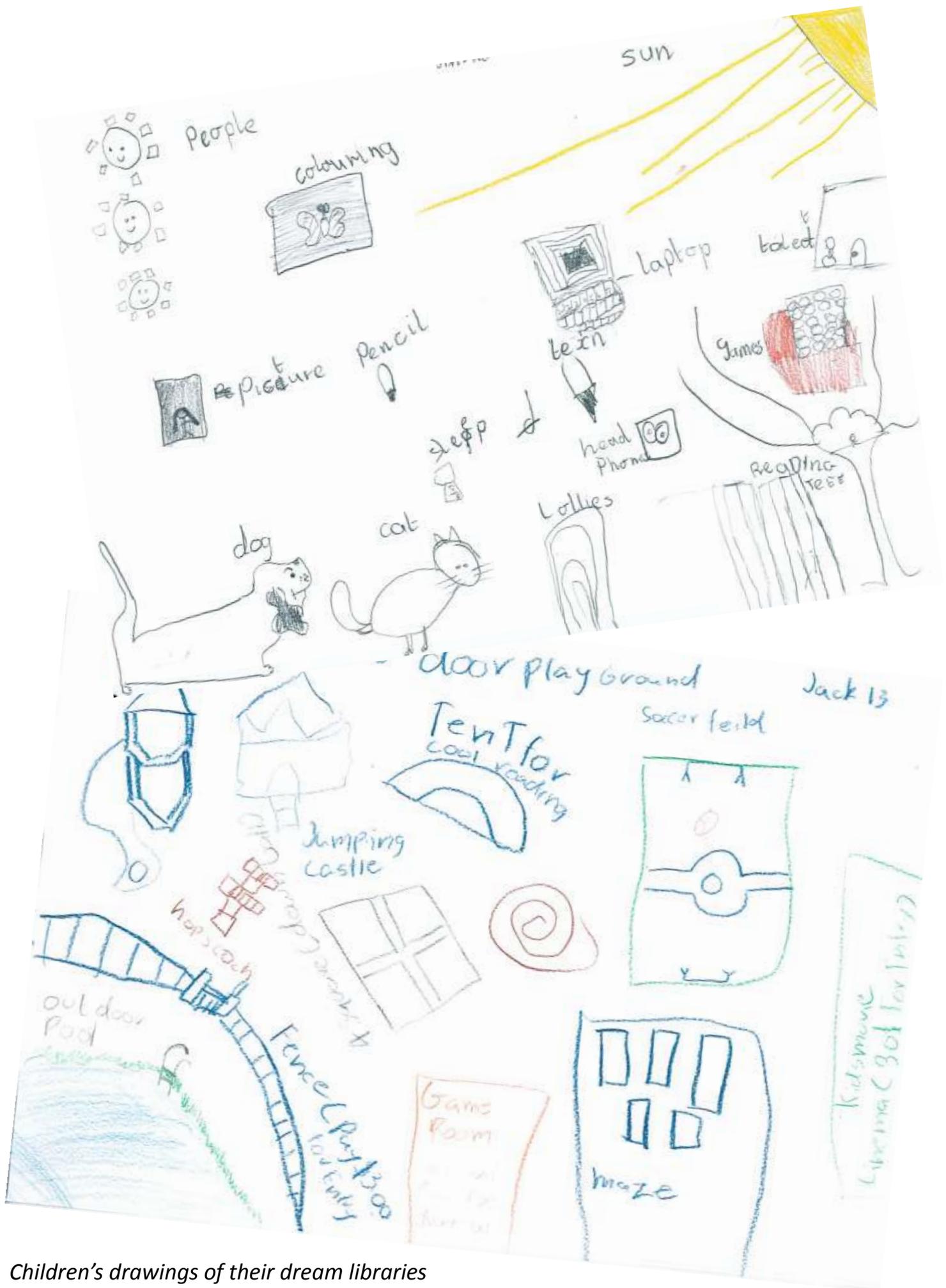
An Economic Impact Assessment performed as a part of the report identifies the following economic benefits generated by public libraries:

- Public libraries generate \$722 million in Victorian income.
- Public libraries contribute \$120 million to the Victorian Gross State Product.
- Public libraries support the full-time equivalent of 4,430 jobs.

This in addition to the “pivotal role” that libraries play in developing literacy skills (State Library of NSW, 2012, p97) and in providing services and resources for low socio-economic groups who may otherwise be disadvantaged. (DCMS, 2004, p6)



Stockholm Library 0-2 years room



Children's drawings of their dream libraries

6. Alternatives Analysis

Alternative 1: Stand-alone Library in Melbourne CBD for example, Flinders Street, Southbank or Docklands

Description: To build a Children’s Library in the heart of Melbourne, in line with the principles already discussed, such as age-appropriate, colourful, imaginative spaces which reflect the varied developmental needs of children at different ages. For the Library to become an Australian leader in best practice for Children’s services and to provide professional training for library staff who deliver children’s programs. To create a new cultural venue that will attract families and educational groups to Melbourne.

Benefits:

Location: Proximity to other cultural and recreational attractions, such as Federation Square, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Performing Arts Centre, Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne Aquarium, Melbourne Botanical Gardens, restaurants and retail precinct.

Transport: easy access from metropolitan and regional public transport

Economic Stimulation: potential flow-on of economic stimulation to surrounding businesses and attractions

Strategic Alignment: City of Melbourne Planning Scheme has highlighted Docklands and Southbank as “significant areas of urban renewal”.(City of Melbourne(b), 2012, p13)

The preferred alternative was chosen due to the existing venue, services, management, staff and funding it supplies. Likewise, the size of the SLV collection was deemed to be of great value, along with its existing role in hosting professional development seminars.

Alternative 2: Create ‘Branded’ Children’s Spaces which can be retrofitted into existing public libraries throughout Melbourne and regional Victoria

Description: Retrofit existing public libraries with branded children’s spaces, would be separated from Adult areas of the Library. These could be in the form of pod-like structures, tactile walls or round reading rooms. Following the principles already suggested for a standalone library, they would be colourful, imaginative, age-appropriate spaces which focus on the varied developmental needs of children of different ages.

Benefits:

Funding: this alternative is smaller in scale than a stand-alone library, which may make funding more easy to realise, particularly if Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) provided a grant to encourage councils to undertake the project. Furthermore, the retrofit of public libraries could roll out

over a series of months, distributing the cost over a period of time.

Proximity: this model allows for children in regional areas to have greater access to spaces which are designed with children in mind. Priority can be given to the fit out of public libraries with greater percentages of groups with a potential for low literacy rates.

The preferred alternative, of a Children's Library to be established within the State Library of Victoria will provide better opportunities for becoming a leader in best practice in Children's services and professional training. However, the retrofit of branded children's spaces within public library is considered to be of value as a supplement to a dedicated Children's Library in Melbourne.

The preferred alternative, of a Children's Library to be established within the State Library of Victoria will provide better opportunities for becoming a leader in best practice in Children's services and professional training.

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Appendix 1

International Children's Libraries & Best Practice

Bookmarks at North Park Centre - Dallas, Texas, USA



Bookmarks is an outlet of the Dallas (TX) Public Library which is uniquely for children ages 12 and under which is located in a shopping centre which attracts over 27 million visitors a year and is one of the top five shopping destinations in the USA. It's also located on all train and bus lines so it attracts people from everywhere. The nearly 2,000 square foot library has its own brand so that people don't confuse it as a normal library branch with a bright and open facade that is designed to engage shoppers and entice them to visit the library. Bookmarks also acts as a gateway as it exposes thousands of people to the public library for the first time, especially with regards to its services to children.

The feature of the library is a custom designed table that runs the length of the space which encourages hands-on participation and provides a variety of spaces in which children can read or become involved in art related activities. Besides its 5,000 item collection for children it also has a collection for parents and grandparents providing material on child development. Throughout the building there are child friendly Early Learning Stations where toddlers up to second graders can plug into which encourages exploration as well as Wi-Fi access for children to

tap into resources specifically suited for students such as EBSCO's KidsSearch.

Bookmarks runs special programs daily which caters to the different age groups such as Baby Bounce Basics for infants up to 24 months to Saturday smiles which is an interactive program aimed for students in grade 6.

Copenhagen Main Library

Copenhagen Main Library features a floor dedicated to children.

- A play area for younger children includes selection of toys, puzzles, digital games and dressing up clothes.
- Children can make all the noise they want and snacks can be consumed in the area.
- Everything is at child level so kids can explore independently.
- Wii games, PCs and ipads for children to play with.
- A range of interactive programs is offered.
- Sister branch in the service offers music for children from 18 months to 6 years of age in a Children's music lounge.



ImaginOn

The Joe and Joan Martin Centre, Charlotte, North Carolina, USA



102,000 square foot library that caters to children and teenagers which is a partnership between the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library and the Children's Theatre of Charlotte.

It's mission to bring stories to life through extraordinary experiences that challenge, inspire and excite young minds. ImaginOn is a launching pad for remarkable journeys and endless possibilities where young people learn in many ways, through all five senses.

The Sprangler Children's Library located on the first floor has resources for children from birth to 5th grade as well as special collections for parents, caregivers and teachers. It's staffed by staff members with expertise in early literacy, child development and children's and teen literature.

Some of the highlights of the library include:

- collection of picture books, fiction, folk and fairy tales
- A baby and toddler area where they can explore and discover
- Hands-on, engaging activities for all ages
- DVDs, CDs, audio books, and software for children
- early literacy and school age computer stations
- Homework resources
- Online interactive stories and games for children such as "StoryPlace"
- Book reviews and reading related activities such as "The BookHive"

The Children's Theatre of Charlotte offers classes for all ages, from preschoolers through high school students. Classes are taught by professional theatre artists with extensive experience as instructors,



performers, directors and playwrights – and always, the ability to inspire and motivate young people.

Stockholm Library

Stockholm Library is innovative in its design, with spaces which reflect different developmental needs and other feature which make this library a model of international best practice.

0-2 years room:

- Seating for adults,
- Parenting resources,
- Soft furnishings,
- Child-height fixtures
- Floor space for crawling children

2-7 years room:

- Tower-like play structure,
- Places to hide and explore,
- Signage with symbols rather than words.

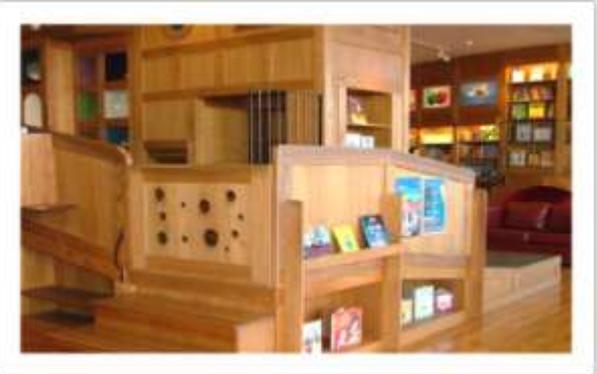
7-11 year room:

- Books sorted according to genre,
- Comfortable seating,
- Circular reading space

Other Features:

- Wet/Dry arts and craft area.
- Self check-out at child height.
- Creative Staff, including:
Singing, knitting, story-telling.
- Traffic signal on the outside of the building to show how full the library is.
- Based on what children want in a library.

“The Children’s Room is a 600sq m facility located in the heart of Stockholm, on the top floor of the



Kulturhuset (Culture House). Such is its popularity (300,000 visitors per year) that the library has had to install a traffic light in the window.” (Rosenfeldt, D., 2008, p16)

Leichhardt Library NSW

Leichhardt Library NSW has recently taken out a NSW Public Library Award for its Sensory Wall. The wall is designed for little hands with all levels of accessibility. Sensory and interactive experiences are necessary for all aspects of child development and learning and can help children develop an understanding of cause and effect, promote gross and fine motor skills, improve hand and eye co-ordination and help early learning skills.



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