

West Gippsland Regional Library Corporation transition

At its meeting yesterday, South Gippsland Shire Council endorsed a decision that will support the change of West Gippsland Regional Library Corporation to a not-for-profit organisation – a change prompted by the new *Local Government Act 2020*.

Currently, West Gippsland Regional Library Corporation (WGRLC) is a partnership between South Gippsland Shire, Bass Coast Shire and Baw Baw Shire Council's allowing for the pooling of resources and resulting in immense benefits for the residents of all three Shires.

West Gippsland Regional Library Corporation is recognized as industry leaders in the library sector across Victoria and delivers innovative services to the residents of the three shires it services. One of these is providing 24/7 access to the community. Foster was the first library in Victoria to provide this service and Mirboo North will be the second with 24/7 access slated to begin from the end of this year. Poowong is also set to start providing anytime access by the end of this financial year, likely making it the third library in Victoria to do so. A remarkable achievement for a small library corporation.

Under the latest *Local Government Act*, library corporations are mandated to decide on their future within 10 years.

Users of the library will continue to experience all that they love about the service, including the services that it has adapted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as online video programs across a range of areas like mental health to support the community.

WGRLC hopes that there will be a number of benefits made possible by the move to a not-for-profit organisation including increased flexibility, increased resources and the ability to provide a greater range of service.

Part of the transition to a not-for-profit organisation include a name change to Myli – My Community Library. This was a necessary step to promote the delivery of library services beyond the existing West Gippsland region. However, the existing logo will remain.

South Gippsland Shire Council's decision to transition to the not-for-profit model only takes effect once all three Council's adopt the same resolution. Bass Coast Shire Council also made their decision this week, whilst Baw Baw Shire Council is set to consider the proposal next week.

Quote attributable to South Gippsland Shire Council Chair Administrator, Julie Eisenbise:

“We are excited to support West Gippsland Regional Library Corporation in their efforts to transfer to a not-for-profit organisation. We have had a magnificent partnership with them during our term and have been lucky enough to support them in the implementation of 24/7 libraries across our region. We are eager to work with them in this new capacity moving forward.”

“We understand that it is important to our community that the quality of services currently provided by West Gippsland Regional Library Corporation is not lost, but rather built upon with new, innovative ideas that can be fully explored with their reclassification as a not-for-profit organisation.”

“Like other business, West Gippsland Regional Library Corporation has had to change the way they provide services. A clear example of this is the increase in online borrowing of books and videos. This will set them in good stead for the future.”

“As the change begins, Council will support the WGRLC in laying the foundation for the next stage in its evolution to a not-for-profit organisation. Council will also continue supporting the upgrade of buildings, like what is occurring with the Korumburra Hub where a new, modern library will form part of the development.”

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