



# Checklist for new library buildings

You have the go-ahead to build a new library facility. Before the panic sets in, here is a check list to help you get started with the planning and to help steer your way through till opening day and beyond.

## What

- Find out how the library building relates to your long-term community plan.
- Check out Department Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience's [local government grants and subsidies](#).
- Read the [Standards and Guidelines for Queensland Public Libraries](#).
- Check out the mandatory requirements – factor in 10-year population growth; be aware of minimum floor space requirements – are you building a main library or a branch library?
- Check out State Library's [library building and design](#) pages on website.
- Gather as much information at the local level before proceeding further.
- Conduct a community survey – what are its needs? – How can they be met in the new library design?
- Consult widely across the community – Indigenous and multicultural groups/schools/rate payers/community groups. Conduct focus groups.
- Complete an audit of your community's facilities – what is missing? Can the new library building help fill the gaps?
- Plan for a meeting room/s with external after-hours access.
- Think of the library as the “Community's Living Room”, or the “Community Hub”.

## Where

- Where is the best place in town for the new library? Keep it central but keep in mind the parking requirements.
- Ensure easy access including disabled access.
- Is the library best positioned with another Council or community facility – e.g. Tourism office/Art Gallery/Museum/Heritage building/Rural Transaction Centre/Education centre/ Health centre/Post Office/Café, etc.

## How

- Conduct research into the latest ideas on library building design.
- Plan physical visits to newly built libraries – contact Regional Partnerships, State Library of Queensland for suggestions. This is critical to the success of your new library. Learn from the experience of others!
- Check out State Library of New South Wales' [library building and spaces](#) pages
- Develop a 'wish list' for the new library – identify the 'must haves' from the 'would likes'.
- Design for flexibility, rearrangement of internal spaces and expansion.
- What are the givens in the new design? e.g. adequate display space, adequate room for internet terminals, installation of self-checkout machines, reading areas, young people's spaces; community meeting rooms, staff meeting rooms and facilities.
- Consult extensively with the library manager and library staff – find out their needs.
- What works and doesn't work in the current premises?

- Discuss how the current design can be improved in the new building. Don't forget the library staff and the community have to work with the finished product!
- Choose your architects wisely – do they have previous library design experience or have you seen their recent designs?
- Include the interior design in the architect's brief – don't skimp on the 'interiors' essentials of shelving, layout, colours, natural lighting and signage.
- Investigate funky furniture and design concepts, especially in the young people's and children's areas.
- Don't forget the landscaping – include an outdoor reading/children's activities area.
- Allow the architects to take a holistic approach – you won't be disappointed!
- Do you need to relocate the current library while the new facility is built?
- Build in a contingency plan for temporary premises and allow for cost overruns - you never know when another Cyclone Larry is going to appear!

### **When**

- Plan for the opening day from the start – make it a real community celebration!
- Is the opening to be on a weekday or a weekend – what is the best time for your community to gather?
- Who will open your new facility? Ensure they are available well ahead of time.
- Don't forget to invite the whole community – schools, community groups, youth groups, retired citizens, etc.
- Invite the school and/or community band to play at the opening.
- What exhibitions, displays are required?
- Do you have a local history collection or local historian to draw on – don't forget the resources of State Library's *Queensland Memory Collections*.

### **Planning for the future**

- Plan for a refurbishment within 5 years – include it in the library's strategic plan.
- Keep in touch with new library developments.
- Always visit other libraries when the opportunity arises (especially when on holidays).

### **Most of all**

- Make the new facility a showpiece for your community – the building should be environmentally sustainable.
- Ensure the end result compliments its surroundings.
- Be adventurous and bold in the planning.
- Make the most of a once-in-your-working-lifetime opportunity to get it right for your community!

### **Contact**

- If you have any questions about library buildings, please contact Manager, Local Government Strategy, State Library of Queensland on (07) 3842 9976.