

## 5. CENTRAL LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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Corporate Plan Output: 8.2.v: Central Library Development Plan	

The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee about changes to the Ground Floor of the Central City Library.

The changes are signalled in the current Annual Plan and are the result of a number of different drivers: improved customer service, health and safety issues, increased use, changes in processes and developments in technology. They are part of a three year development plan for the Central City Library focussed on improving services to customers.

Use of the Central City Library has grown significantly since the alterations to the building were completed over a two-year period in 1997. Foot traffic has increased by more than 30% in three years and materials borrowed from the library have increased by more than 20%. Seating space is at a premium and in some parts of the building room to move between areas is constrained. We are able to release approximately 700 square metres on level three by moving staff to the top floor. We have already begun the rearrangement of collections to spread the use of the building better through the three floors.

Improvements in customer service include changes to the circulation processes, with an increased emphasis on self-issue of materials. We are moving towards multi-purpose service points that will be both more effective for customers and a more efficient use of staff resources. Customers will no longer need to move between enquiries, issues and membership but will be able to do all their circulation business from one point. These multi-purpose customer desks will be located to the right of the entry doors, which will return to being both entry and exit. The entrance and exit to the library has proved problematic and on-going feedback from customers confirms that the exit to the building is difficult to locate.

Access to the western end of the ground floor is constrained by a workroom, which creates a bottleneck for traffic flow. This can be improved considerably by the removal of the wall and the resiting of the returns and shelving workroom back behind the firewall. Technology is now available which will enable automatic discharge of materials, giving the customer confidence that their item is discharged as soon as they put the item through the slot. These changes enable us to move all of the returns processes to the backroom.

Two health and safety issues have arisen in the Centre for the Child. Over the past six months we have had two accidents in the 'pit', whereby adults have fallen and been injured. The other issue relates to the open nature of the children's library and the ease with which young children in particular can wander off to the escalator or the doors. As a result we will fill in the pit and replace the story reading facility with a mini "theatre" in the current Margaret Mahy room. This room will have carpeted step seating so that there is good interaction between the librarian/story reader and audience. The children's library will also have a more defined entrance and exit to the north of the passenger lift. The customer services desks will be located on the south side of the passenger lift, thus providing a barrier between the Centre for the Child and the external doors.

Whilst we are undertaking the necessary structural changes the opportunity will be taken to give a lift to the internal appearance of the building through the strategic use of colour and contemporary materials. Limited resources during the extensions meant that there was very little opportunity to capitalise on the character of the building, as most of the funds went into the extension and the services to the building such as air conditioning and escalators. The architectural intention is to allow the structural elements to speak for themselves, opening the building up with vertical and horizontal views, enabling customers to find their way more easily around the building.

In summary the changes proposed on the ground floor are:

- Resite new multipurpose customer service desks to the area on the right of the current entry doors, adjacent to the Centre for the Child
- Remove the wall to the north of the escalator to open up the western end of the building
- Fill in the "pit" in the Centre for the Child and create a new story reading and activity area in the current Margaret Mahy room. Provide a more controlled entry/exit point into the Centre for the Child to improve child safety.
- Revert back to a single entry and exit point and improve the entrance lobby.
- Provide additional lounge and study seating areas

Architects Warren and Mahoney have been engaged to develop the necessary plans for the ground and other floors, and the project control group is being lead by Ian McKenzie of Professional and Planning Services.

Budget provision is within the 2000/01 annual plan.

**Chairman's**

**Recommendation:** That the information be received.