To Build or not to Build

THE STORY OF WHETHER TO BUILD A NEW LIBRARY OR TO REPURPOSE AN EXISTING COMMUNITY BUILDING
STANTHORPE LIBRARY, SOUTHERN DOWNS REGIONAL COUNCIL

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COMPLETE URBAN
To build new or repurpose?

- Council’s face this dilemma often
- How does Council make an informed decision?
- Are suitable existing facilities available?
- What are the hidden risks?
- Will it be cost effective and provide a better outcome?

These are the questions faced by Southern Downs Regional Council for their library at Stanthorpe.
The Southern Downs Regional Council was formed on 15 March 2008.

- Encompasses the areas previously occupied by Warwick and Stanthorpe Shire Councils.
- Located in the Darling Downs region of Queensland, along the state's boundary with New South Wales.
- Area of 7,120 km².
Stanthorpe

Stanthorpe is nationally recognised for its:

- Wineries
- Apples
- Strawberries
- Olives
- Figs
- Cherries
- Cheese Making
- Chocolate Factory
- Lavender Farms
Stanthorpe

At the last census, Stanthorpe had a population of about 5,500.

This figure can increase by 3000-5000 with seasonal workers.
The Brief

1. Provide extra floor area: 500-700m² in the current building or at an alternative siting
2. Provide an updated modern library space that meets State Library Standards and Guidelines
3. Perform as Community Hub and gathering space
4. Friendly, comfortable, safe, vibrant, interesting, exciting and welcoming
5. Aesthetically pleasing building compatible with its surroundings where people will want to return
6. Building with an easily identifiable entrance and a layout that is easy to navigate
7. Place where staff are strategically located, are easily accessible and have good surveillance
The study considered 3 sites:

- Stanthorpe Fitness Centre
- Stanthorpe Library and Art Gallery
- Stanthorpe Civic Centre
Location of Sites

WEEROONA PARK

CIVIC CENTRE
Stanthorpe Library and Art Gallery

- Stanthorpe Library opened at its current location in Weeroona Park in 1987
- Building is shared with the Stanthorpe Regional Art Gallery
- The current floor areas are:
  - Library – 421m²
  - Art Gallery – 356m²
Stanthorpe Civic Centre

- A number of buildings constructed and modified over the past 50 years. Areas available for a library are:

  - **Exhibition Space** – 234m²
  - **Area south of Civic Centre**
  - **Civic Centre Chambers and office (upper level)** – 160m²
  - **Supper room and kitchen** – 184m²
  - **Courtyard South (external space south of Auditorium)** – 241 m²
Stanthorpe Fitness Centre

• Several areas including carpark, clubrooms, aerobics room, first floor kitchen and lounge room.

• Limited benefits for use as a library due to:
  – Floor level changes
  – Fragmented spaces not able to be easily connected
  – Cost
  – Adverse impact on fitness centre

• On this basis, there was no further investigation on the Fitness Centre.
But we need 500-700 m² in one space!
The Task

Investigate:

Establishing a library in the available spaces in the Civic Centre including the Exhibition Space, the Supper Room/Supper Room courtyard, the Civic Centre Chambers, the Administration Building

or

Expanding the current building to accommodate a larger library and larger art gallery

or

Building a new library
Our Approach

23 OPTIONS!
Our Approach

Consultation with Council to reduce down to 4

23 OPTIONS!

4 OPTIONS
Our Approach

- Consultation with Council to reduce down to 4
- Community Consultation to reduce down to 1

23 OPTIONS! → 4 OPTIONS → ?
The Options

1c – Lock Street - A new single storey library incorporating the existing meeting rooms and supper room on Lock Street

2a – Marsh Street - A new two storey library incorporating the exhibition space between the Civic Centre and Administration building

3a – Marsh Street - A new build, single storey library on Marsh Street

4g – Weeroona Park - The expansion of the existing library and art gallery in Weeroona Park
1c: Civic Centre – Lock Street (Total area: 817m²)

Pros:
• Great exposure/outlook towards CBD
• Prominent street frontage
• Landmark location
• Building entry accessible from street level at east end
• On street parking close by

Cons:
• Split level site requires extensive ramp or lift
• Main building platform elevated from the street
• Full renovation of air conditioning and other services
2a: Civic Centre – Marsh St (Total area: 735m²)

Pros:
• Repurposes existing under-utilised area
• Combines Library and Council customer services
• Protected from external noise

Cons:
• Limited natural lighting
• Poor visibility from the street
• Requires extensive refurbishment of existing building
• 2 storey option requires a lift
3a: Civic Centre – Marsh St (Total area: 572m²)

**Pros:**
- Greater exposure to street frontage
- Efficient planning
- Adaptable interior
- Natural light from all sides
- Single storey option

**Cons:**
- Sloping site
- Occupies existing 1:20 access path
- Exposed to external noise
- Elevated building platform
4g: Weeroona Park – Expansion to Existing Library (Total area: 1357m² – art gallery & library)

**Pros:**
- Maintains symbiotic relationship between library and gallery
- Significant gains to the gallery floor area
- Single storey building – no lift

**Cons:**
- Small gain to the library floor area
## Summary of Costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>New Library Area (Total)</th>
<th>Approx. Cost</th>
<th>New Gallery Area (Total)</th>
<th>Consequential Costs</th>
<th>Approx. Total Cost</th>
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<td>1c</td>
<td>817 m²</td>
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Project Scope

- Project scope evolved as other opportunities emerged
- Has been a robust process that using expert knowledge and community collaboration
- Process considers the new and changing role of libraries in the community
- The project has investigated the potential of a number of existing facilities and weighed up pros and cons
- No decision has yet been made on to build or not to build
Community Consultation

- Council engaged in community consultation, with a meeting attended by approximately forty people, as well as Councillors, CEO and Council staff.

- Residents were invited to provide feedback either via written submissions or by completing the ‘Have your say’ survey online.

- Plans of the four options were included on the website and hard copies were available at all Council libraries and Community Contact offices.
Preliminary Community Consultation Results

- **Library to stay in existing building with or without art gallery (68.7%)**
- **Move library to another location (29%)**
- **No preference (2.2%)**

Bars represent:
- Option 1c: Move library to another location
- Option 2a: Move library to another location
- Option 3a: Move library to another location
- Option 4a: Library to stay in existing building with or without art gallery
Future of Stanthorpe Library

• Engaging with the community on Stanthorpe Library was about working towards the best possible outcome for Stanthorpe’s cultural spaces.

• The community consultation process presented the four possible future options for the library identified by the Stanthorpe Library Feasibility study, undertaken by Complete Urban.

• Southern Downs Mayor Tracy Dobie said the longevity of both facilities rests upon a need to expand, stating “The consultants have come up with some great options for the community to consider around how those facilities are used.”
Acknowledgements

We wish to acknowledge the support from the Mayor, Councillors and Chief Executive Officer and staff of Southern Downs Regional Council for having the foresight on behalf of the Community to see this project through.

Refer to Technical Paper published by IPWEAQ for further background.