

Hamilton Community Hub

A PLACE TO LEARN,
CONNECT AND GROW



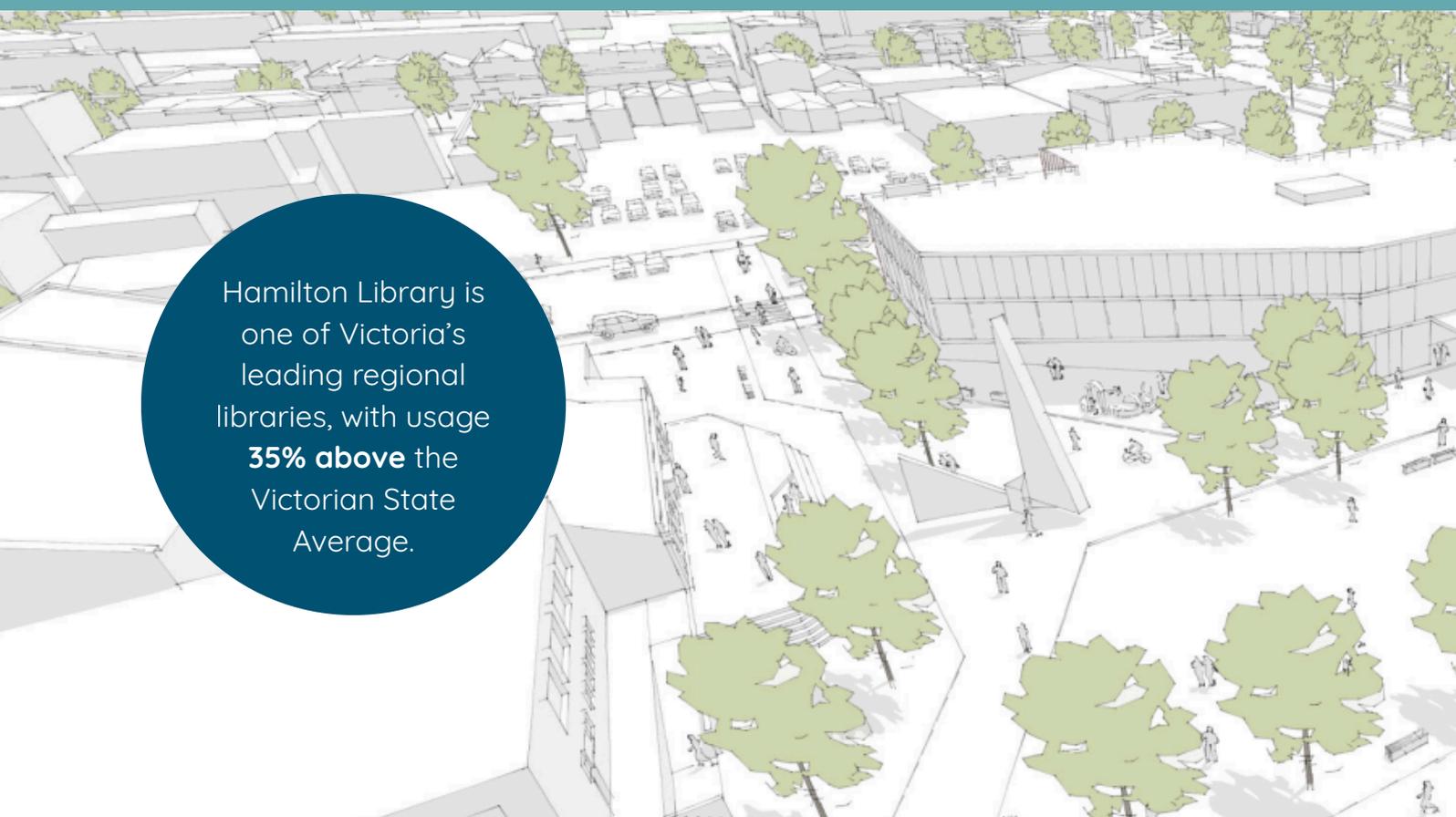
A Library, Community Hub, and Civic Square for our future

The new Hamilton Library, Community Hub and Civic Square will bring together learning, innovation and community life in one contemporary, welcoming precinct. The Community Hub is a **\$34 million**, two-storey, future-focused development, designed to become the town's centre for connection, collaboration and civic pride.

At its heart will be a new Hamilton Library with dedicated digital opportunities. The design will provide for a future-ready space not just to house books, but to spark ideas, build connections and nurture belonging.

While the current Library is one of Victoria's leading regional libraries, it no longer reflects the scale of community ambition or future needs, severely restricted in space and size. The new build will reimagine what a library can be: a vibrant civic living room for people to gather to learn, create, collaborate and importantly, feel connected.

Flexible, adaptable spaces will host programs, events and shared experiences, expanding access to education and digital technologies for youth to support future pathways.



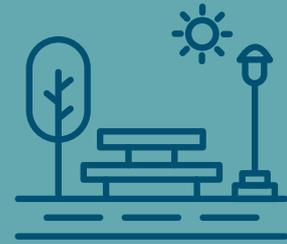
Hamilton Library is one of Victoria's leading regional libraries, with usage **35% above** the Victorian State Average.



New Library



Government Hub



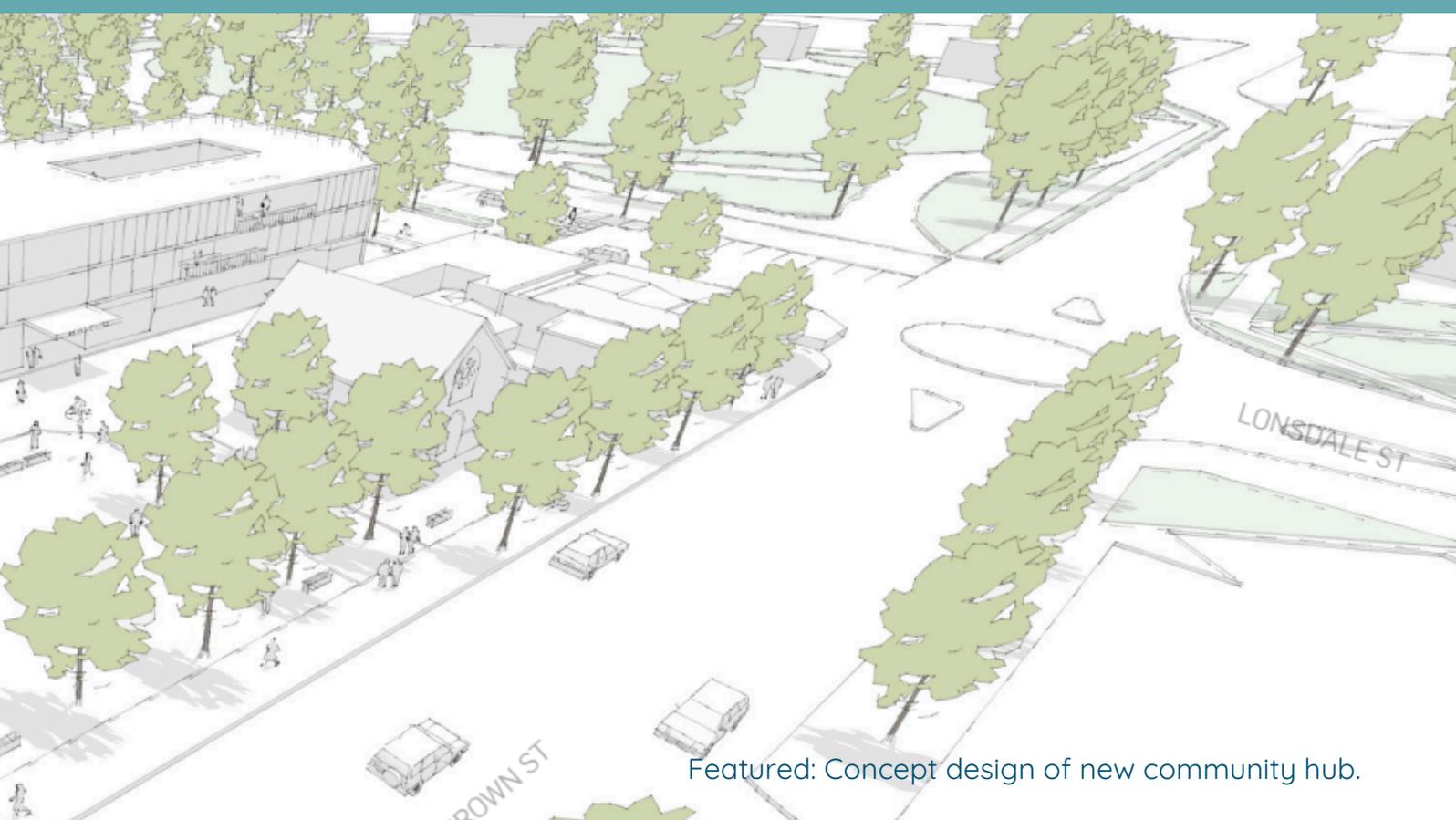
Civic Square

The Community Hub will provide office space for multiple government services, including Council offices and allied health. The building will offer adaptable spaces for programs and events, improving access to educational resources and digital technologies that support lifelong learning and future aspirations. It will bring together essential services in one location, including maternal and child health and aged care services.

The Hub will create a seamless, people-centred experience through a shared foyer and customer service area for Council and tenant government agencies. Flexible shared administration and meeting spaces will accommodate a range of room sizes to support different functional and work needs.

The Civic Square will become a central, open gathering place for community events and pop-up activations. Connecting to the New Hamilton Gallery sculpture garden, it will form the heart of the Hamilton CBD, creating a vibrant, welcoming space for the community and visitors.

By investing in a new Community Hub with a purpose-built library and civic square, we are investing in the long-term sustainability, wellbeing and prosperity of our region.



Featured: Concept design of new community hub.

Why a new Library?

The centrepiece of the Community Hub will be a purpose-built, state-of-the-art library and digital hub designed to serve the whole community. Built in the 1960s, Hamilton's current library is significantly undersized for the community it serves. NSW library standards indicate that a town of Hamilton's size should have a library of approximately **881 m²** — nearly double the existing **482 m²**. As the library serving the whole of the Southern Grampians region, the recommended standard increases to **1,125 m²**.

The gap between what is needed and what currently exists places constant pressure on staff, spaces and services. The result is a library that is stretched beyond capacity and unable to meet growing community demand for programs, events and support.

Demand for activities far outweighs supply with programs being fully booked within hours, creating disappointment for residents and leaving many without access to vital learning and connection opportunities. This pressure particularly impacts families and children who rely on free, accessible programs.

The absence of a dedicated program space means staff must regularly pack away books and move shelving, to run even the most essential activities. On any given day, the library is crowded and constrained, limiting how people can read, study, connect and participate. This affects the quality of the experience for users of all ages and highlights the urgent need for a purpose-built, future-ready facility.



Our Library currently has an average of **18.67** attendees per program versus the regional Victorian average of 5 per session.



Residents across the shire face deep and persistent economic and social challenges. These include youth disengagement from education and employment pathways, limited access to digital tools and skills, barriers to inclusion, and reduced access to essential regional services.

The community is working to strengthen social cohesion, support local business innovation, and grow cultural life — efforts that are constrained by current infrastructure and service gaps.

Our residents face a number of barriers:

- Only **15.4%** of residents hold a bachelor's degree or higher, compared with a Victorian average of **29.2%**.
- Median weekly income in Southern Grampians is **\$1,261**, well below the Victorian average of **\$1,759**.
- Reported family violence rates were **35% above the state average** in 2023/24 and rising.
- **21.2%** of households do not have an internet connection, limiting access to education, employment and services.
- **33.2%** of residents are aged over 60, compared with **22.4%** across Victoria.
- **34.1%** of people live alone, compared with a Victorian average of **25.9%**, increasing the risk of isolation and loneliness.

“I love my library because it is filled with love and appreciation for books. I love how I never know which book to get. It’s like an adventure!” - Rocco, Young Hamilton Library User



Why a Community Hub?

Council administration staff currently operate from two ageing office sites that no longer support contemporary work practices or the level of collaboration expected of a modern organisation. The Hub provides the opportunity to bring all Council staff together in a single, agile workplace designed for flexibility, teamwork and improved service delivery.

Co-locating Council with other government services in the Hub will create a more connected, efficient and community-focused environment. Shared workspaces, meeting rooms and customer-facing areas will enable staff to collaborate more easily, streamline processes and respond to community needs in a more coordinated way. This integrated model also strengthens relationships between agencies, supports joint planning and problem-solving, and creates a clear, accessible point of contact for residents seeking information or assistance.

By consolidating services provided by multiple agencies under one roof, the hub will enhance our communities overall experience, making it easier for people to access support, engage with and benefit from a more unified public service presence in the heart of Hamilton. The Hub will also enable Council to foster a more cohesive organisational culture, reduce duplication, and improve sustainability.

“It will be lovely when the Art Gallery and Melville Oval redevelopments are completed. Hopefully we will see them joined by a lovely outdoor space that incorporates greenery, sitting areas and outdoor artwork.” - Southern Grampians Resident

What about the Civic Square?

Beyond the building itself, the precinct improvements will deliver new parking areas, energy-efficient lighting and pedestrian-friendly footpaths. At the heart of the precinct is the civic square, a central public space that will connect key civic and cultural destinations including the New Hamilton Gallery, Hamilton Performing Arts Centre, CBD streets and laneways, and Melville Oval. Together, these elements will create a vibrant, walkable precinct that encourages people to explore, connect and participate in community life.

Hamilton's CBD currently has no dedicated green space or welcoming public area for community gathering, informal use or civic events. The civic square directly addresses this gap and activates a currently neglected area. It will provide a welcoming, accessible and flexible space for events, celebrations, exhibitions and everyday activity, offering residents, visitors and local businesses a much-needed focal point for community life and encourage private sector investment, right in the heart of the town.

As an architectural extension of the Hub, the civic square will express Hamilton's history and evolving identity, incorporating interpretive design elements and public storytelling that honour both the town's past and its future aspirations. The former Hamilton Uniting Church, integrated into the square's layout through cohesive landscaping and intentional sightlines, will continue to serve as a valued community facility and enrich the precinct's cultural narrative.



Sparking change

By delivering a new Community Hub with dedicated digital spaces and strong connectivity, Council will address gaps in broadband access, digital skills and the shortage of technology-enabled business and community places.

The facility will offer inclusive spaces where people can learn, connect, and build digital confidence, while also supporting local enterprise, workforce development, and innovation. Bringing Allied Health and Council services together in one centralised location will streamline service delivery for the community, foster lifelong learning, and strengthen regional partnerships.

1

Improve retention and attainment for young people in education and training.

+

2

Support business growth through enhanced digital access and meeting facilities.

+

3

Provide dedicated spaces to for lifelong learning, including supporting education providers such as Country Universities Centre (CUC)

+

4

Establish a multi-agency centre, providing integrated access to government and community health services.





Together, the Hub and the civic square will form Hamilton's civic heart, supporting creativity, learning and innovation through flexible indoor and outdoor spaces. This development will foster local pride, strengthen social cohesion and establish a vibrant, inclusive destination for events, exhibitions and everyday community life.

Funding support needed

The Hub concept and detailed design package was included as part of the funding secured through the Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program, with \$5 million granted in October 2024.

Council is now seeking funding to support the construction phase of the build. Council has dedicated **\$17 million** to the project with **another \$17 million needed** in government support to deliver the Hub for the Southern Grampians community.

“Great spot for a fenced off park area with seating, grassed area, gardens, playground and toilets. We lack this kind of area in the heart of the CBD. Somewhere to go and eat lunch for people passing through on the main thoroughfare.” - Southern Grampians Resident

You've heard from us... now hear from the experts



Maya Linnell

Bestselling author of eight rural romance novels (including four set in the Grampians district)

“I’ve been grateful for the opportunities the Hamilton Library has given me and my family over the years. The school holiday activities and children’s author visits were a big hit with my youngsters during school holidays, and we happily drove the 45-minute journey into town to attend these wonderful events. As an emerging author, I was also lucky to have the support of the local librarians, who warmly welcomed me and did a fantastic job promoting author talks. The staff are friendly, efficient and knowledgeable, the library itself is cosy but lovingly stocked with great books, and I’ve always felt welcome, both as a library user, a writing workshop attendee, and a guest speaker. In rural areas like Hamilton, community spaces like this are highly important. Libraries are a place to connect, relax, get online and of course, curl up with a good book. A newer, larger space would undoubtedly bring in more readers, boost networks within the district and bolster support for so many patrons, young and old.”



Fiona Lowe

Author of 39 novels currently published by Harper Collins Australia.

“I’m Fiona Lowe, a Geelong based author and keen library user. I write novels mostly set in rural Victoria and I visit many libraries each year. My first visit to Hamilton library was 2017, as Daughter of Mine was set in and around Hamilton. Since then, I have visited every second year because the Hamilton & district readers are an enthusiastic crowd and always have insightful questions about my latest release. The library staff are welcoming, do a great job of promoting the visit and there’s always a tasty lunch. These things may sound as if they would be a usual part of an author library visit, but believe me, they are not always replicated elsewhere. I love that the library offers so much to readers in the area, and meeting authors plays an important role; one I am honoured to be part of.”



Louise Le Nay

Actress and author

“Hamilton library is a world of activity. The number of people in an out through its doors is mind-boggling. I’m a writer. I’ve spent whole days there, and half-days, and sometimes I’ve ducked in for an hour, to sit at a bench and stare at my laptop. I’m there several times a week. While there, I’m aware of a hubbub from borrowers, writing groups, children’s groups, disability groups, craft groups. I’m tucked in a corner, when staff set up chairs for talks. When the JP is there to sign documents, there’s a steady stream through the door. Some people are there for the papers and the warmth during winter, the coolness in summer, some people are there for homework, some people are there to use computers and to learn about Hamilton. Where are the schools, the laundromats, the sports facilities? It’s the first-call place for new arrivals in town. Hamilton Library is important for all the above reasons, and it’s essential for the last. It’s welcoming and it’s egalitarian.”



And hear from our
community





Southern Grampians
SHIRE COUNCIL

Southern Grampians Shire Council acknowledges that our Shire is on the traditional lands of the Gunditjmara, Tjap Wurrung, Jardwadjali and Buandig people.

We recognise the important ongoing role that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have in our community and pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.