

Second only to the beach...

The Gold Coast City Council library service

A comprehensive survey has found that the Gold Coast's beaches and libraries are its most popular community assets.

More than 2000 residents were surveyed last year as part of Council's research to assist in developing a housing policy and other forward planning issues. Topics covered included housing, neighbourhood identity and amenity, access to community facilities and frequency of use of Council-provided community facilities.

The survey found that the most frequently-used community facilities were the beaches, and particularly patrolled beaches which were used by twenty per cent of respondents at least once a week.

One third of those surveyed used Council libraries at least once a month. Other well-utilised assets include sporting facilities, parks and gardens, rubbish tips and the Gold Coast Arts Centre.

It found that the vast majority of residents were satisfied with the amenities in their neighbourhood and with access to community facilities, such as libraries, parks, playgrounds and swimming pools. But the survey also identifies areas where Council could improve facilities and access.

Gold Coast City Library Service membership has soared twenty per cent in the past year. Council's Health and Cultural Services Committee chairperson, councillor Jan Grew, said library membership now stood at

more than 185 000 people. These members made almost nine million transactions this year, representing a five per cent increase in transactions from the previous year.

Councillor Grew said the Gold Coast Library Service had been recognised earlier this year for setting a record for the number of visits — 3.8 million last financial year, which outstripped any other city or region in Queensland for the same period.

Councillor Grew said the libraries' growth could be largely attributed to its large, varied and exciting range of services, facilities, activities and materials. She urged non-members to visit their local library to experience why Gold Coast residents are rushing to join. ■

In brief...

Gold Coast City Council Library Service

- The library service is made up of fourteen branch libraries, two mobile libraries, a local studies library, and technical services.
- The service has a ninety-five permanent staff.
- 6891 children attended regular activities in libraries across the city.
- There are almost 500 community-based displays across the city.
- The library service hosted 47 933 hours of public access to personal computers — a thirteen per cent increase in usage in spite of aging applications and downtime due to aging hardware.
- Branch Libraries offer open for a combined total of 654 hours per week.

Local studies

The photograph collection can now be accessed via CD-ROM. This collection will form part of library website early next year.

Mobile libraries:

- Now visit 68 locations across the city.
- Mobile 1 is open 43.15 hours per fortnight (an increase of 1.30 hours per fortnight)
- Mobile 2 is open 42.15 hours per fortnight (an increase of 7.30 hours per fortnight)

Housebound service

The Library service provides material to 287 housebound



Gold Coast City Council mobile library

patrons. Our staff select material for these patrons, volunteers deliver these items and have time to stay for that chat. Two of the services volunteers were nominated for the 'Local Heros' segment on Channel 7. It was a great reward and recognition for their contribution to the community, and for the library in the promotion of the service.

New initiatives

- Patrons can now choose to be contacted by e-mail or phone when their requests are ready to collect.
- The library service is considering locating internet kiosks in the library. Patrons would then have access to chat rooms and e-mail facilities for a small fee without having to book a specific time. ■