

**MINUTES for the GENERAL MEETING of
FRIENDS OF THE BENALLA LIBRARY INC. (FOBL)
held at 9:45am at the Benalla Library
on Tuesday 21st July 2026**

1. Apologies: Phyllis Doxey, Lynn Gibson, Christine Glynn, Amber Gold, Priscilla Shanks, Robyn Maclean, Marilyn Bourke and Elspeth Maconachie.

2. Present: Charles Jensen, Kay Johnson, Ramey Hengen, Bev Thornell, Andi Stevenson, Kay Blore, Corrie Witlox, Geraldine McCorkell, Heather Rogers and Deb Saunders

3. Minutes of the previous meeting held on May 19th 2026

Received: Geraldine McCorkell **Seconded:** Andi Stevenson **Passed**

Business Arising:

- Purchases made – appear in the Treasurer's Report today
- Follow up progress on the return chute – Geraldine has contacted the CEO to ascertain the progress. On Ashleigh's advice, Elyse from Facilities was waiting to initiate the installation once the new financial year budgets were established. Geraldine will follow this up.
- Writing competition update – carried over to General Business

4. Correspondence:

In:

- Email from CAV– as a not-for-profit charity we do not need to report to CAV this year
- Response from Australian Christian College – staff very enthusiastic to support the Writing Competition.
- Elspeth Maconachie – offer for shelving for the window display.
- Michael Winkler – an invitation to come attend his book chat with Wayne Marshall at 2pm on Monday July 27th.

Out:

- Sent posters and entry forms to schools, library and adult writing groups for the Writing Competition.

Moved that correspondence be accepted:

Accepted: Geraldine McCorkell **Seconded:** Heather Rogers **Passed**

REPORTS:

1. Treasurer's Report 28/4/26 to 30/6/26

28/4/26 Opening balance	\$ 17,635.05
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INCOME

Books	\$ 4,463.20	
Membership	58.00	
Donations	<u>50.00</u>	4,571.20

EXPENDITURE

SHOP

Hides - rent	\$ 1,200.00	
Hides - electricity	57.97	
BRCC - rates	<u>359.00</u>	\$ 1,616.97

Library support			
Ben. Newsagency- papers	\$ 286.00		
Laminator	1,940.24		
Yoto players	5,285.73		
Careers day- vouchers	50.00		
Water filter	49.50		
Good reading magazine	<u>129.95</u>	7,741.42	
Other			
Benalla printing- membership cards and writing comp posters		<u>91.00</u>	<u>9,449.39</u>
Closing balance 30/6/26			\$ 12,756.86
Term deposits			
503 maturing 11/4/27	\$12,056.29		
808 maturing 8/8/26	<u>14,630.00</u>		<u>\$ 26,686.29</u>
TOTAL FUNDS			\$ 39,443.15

Moved: Corrie Witlox Seconded: Kay Blore Passed

2. Membership Report:

61 General Members

39 Life Members

TOTAL: 100 Members

3. Library Coordinator's Report

HIGHLIGHTS SINCE LAST MEETING (MAY):

As many are aware, I applied for and was successful in receiving Ashley's coordinator position while she is on parental leave. Her daughter, Saana, was born on 30 June 2026, and I am under the impression that they are at home doing well.

Since May we have had several events with the Reconciliation Week event and the Pride Month author talk attracting being very well attended with over 30 people in attendance for each event. Seeing as it can sometimes be a struggle to get more than 10 audience members at some author talks, our events data suggests that our community is happy to support events with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation, PRIDE representation, science, crime, and historical romance.

As coordinator, I have begun compiling reports with the most recently submitted reports being the local government reporting and I have included some of the noteworthy stats from the Q4 report. My immediate horizon involves more reports, providing guidance on my replacement, and the upcoming PLV conference, which I would highly recommend sending a representative to.

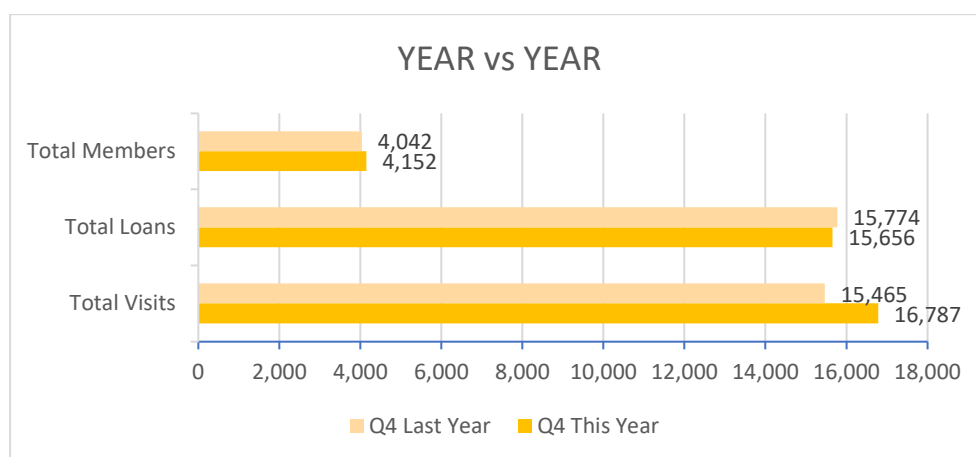


Figure 2. Grouped bar chart showing Q4 (June 2025) in light orange and Q4 (June 2026) in dark orange. Q4 2026 shows a much stronger attendance record with fewer borrows. Data from the Libraries Victoria Monthly Reports along with Benalla Library daily statistics.

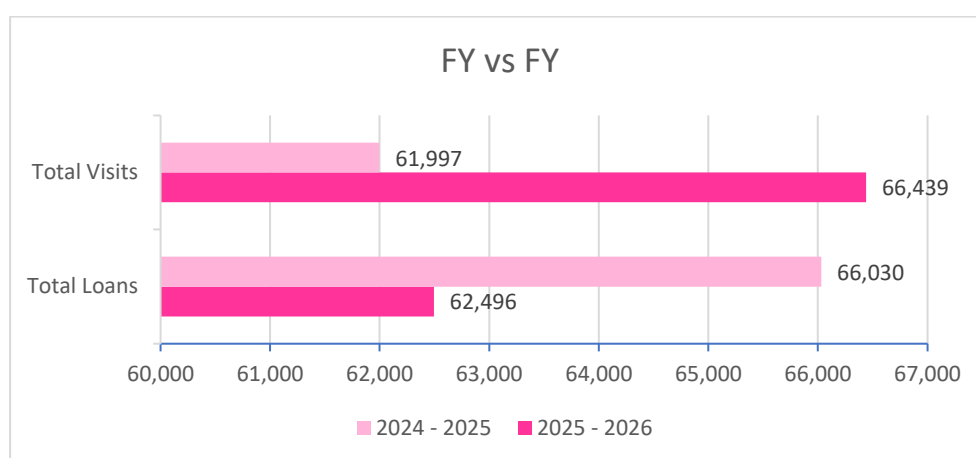


Figure 3. Grouped bar chart showing the 2025-2026 in light pink and 2025-2026 in dark pink. There were significantly more visits in 2025-2026 and significantly more loans in 2024-2025. Data from the Libraries Victoria Monthly Reports along with Benalla Library daily statistics.

ITEMS THAT WOULD ASSIST STAFF/PATRONS

- Education Events for all ages

Looking at events of all ages to support our community. Ashley found these opportunities which she is hopeful and excited to bring to Benalla (in order of desirability to Library):

Refugee Week (JUNE 2027) – Refugee Council Ambassador Talk - \$1650 (possibly plus travel)

We have long wanted to hold official events for Refugee Week, but our budget has never allowed it. Refugee Week events would help destigmatize refugees within the North East and help build empathy through their personal stories. The ambassador will tell their story of war, detention, and loss; as well as hope and their love for their new life in Australia.

<https://stories.refugeecouncil.org.au/ambassadors/>

Interactive Baby Performance (approx. MARCH 2027) – What's In The Woods (Backbone Theatre for Babies) - \$2200

This fee includes multiple sessions of sensory play and puppetry for 0 – 3 year olds. These sessions would tie in well with our Early Years programs, while also attracting new faces to our programs (and hopefully hook them forever).

Museums Victoria (JANUARY 2027) – Robots and Coding Traveling Program - \$352

Museums Victoria has brought some fantastic school holiday programs to us over the last few years, Ocean Wonders and Dinosaurs, and their next travelling program involves robotics and computers. These programs are aimed at primary aged children and have been popular in the past.

- **Program including Speech Pathologist for young families – \$193.99 per hour = \$290.98 per session**

Contacted – organizing a time.

- **FYI Upcoming Possible Support Request – Story Walk by the lake**

For many years Ashley has been chatting to organisations and groups about the benefits for the whole community of linking the library and the lake walk through a “Story Walk”. Story Walks combine physical activity and literacy by placing broken up picture books pages along a walking path. Story Walks promote early childhood development by boosting physical health, increasing outdoor time, encouraging a love for reading, and fostering family bonding through shared exploration and storytelling. This project will be very expensive, so support is required from multiple organisations. We have recently requested support from Benalla Council’s Social Inclusion Action Group (SIAG), and have received preliminary support for \$5000 leaving an approximate \$18,000 gap in funding. The project includes 20 Story Walk signs (UV resistant, weatherproof, scratch resistant, steel) + their freight and customs costs, an introductory steel sign (locally made) explaining Story Walks with a map and the legal information, a steel conclusion sign (locally made) encouraging continued reading at Benalla Library, the graphics on the signs by a professional graphic designer (hopefully in a Benalla Lake theme with fish, rakali, platypus, echidnas, wallabies, and birdlife... and of course, the library in the background), and the installation of these signs. The proposed location is on the walking track out the back of the library heading towards the caravan parking next to Jaycee Island. An option discussed with SIAG would be to model our event after Wangaratta’s story walk.

- **Prizes for Council Careers Day - \$50 - Complete**

- **A2 Laminator - \$1909.04 – Complete**

- **Yoto Order - \$5285.73 – Complete**

4. Bookshop Report:

Welcome to our new volunteer Charles. The bookshop is going well.

In regards the window display shelving, we are looking to design a shelf with a low backing so that the individual stands are not required as part of the display. A group will meet with a woodworker to discuss options. Kay Blore will coordinate this meeting.

Reports accepted:

Moved: Geraldine McCorkell

Seconded: Charles Jensen

PASSED

GENERAL BUSINESS:

1. Writing Competition Update

The final email has been sent to schools and adult writing groups reminding them that the competition closes at 5pm on July 31st. Geraldine and Deb will sort the entries and prepare them for the judges on August 1st. On August 3rd the entries will be distributed to judges at 10.30am in the Pat Claridge Room at the Library. The entries for each section will be judged separately by two judges and then they will meet to make the final recommendations for the top six entries by the next meeting on Monday 17th August at 10.30am in the Pat Claridge Room at the Library. The top six entries will then be

scanned for AI content before the finalists are decided. Winning entrants will be contacted by Friday 21st August. The presentations will take place at 5pm on Wednesday 26th August. All are welcome to attend.
Corrie will prepare the cash prizes for the Competition.

2. **PLV** – After discussion it was agreed that our main role as Friends of the Library is to support library staff and provide resources for the library. We base our decisions on the recommendation of our library coordinator and staff. We thank Ramey for the invitation to attend the PLV Conference but we do not consider it our role / responsibility to attend.
3. At the next meeting we will discuss whether or not we will use Social Media for the RedB4 Bookshop.
4. **Benalla Community Expo**
Expressions of interest are now open. Organised by Tomorrow Today and the Benalla Social Inclusion Action Group, the Expo will be held on Sunday 11th October from 10am – 2pm at the Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre. Register interest by 13th September.

Next Meeting: Tuesday 15th September – General Meeting