Kew Library Redevelopment Community Engagement Summary

October 2023

Library Services





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1 Executive Summary

This report summarises community feedback on a draft Vision and Design Brief for the redevelopment of the Kew Library. The draft Vision and Design Brief (draft Brief) was developed in 2023. It proposes key opportunities, uses and design principles for a future redeveloped Kew Library. The draft Brief also incorporated community feedback received during in an extensive community consultation process for this project in 2017.

Community engagement (consultation) on the draft Brief was conducted from 31 August to 29 September 2023. The intent of the consultation was to check-in with the community to determine if its needs, expectations and aspirations for Kew Library have shifted since the initial consultation in 2017, and to invite feedback on the vision for this facility (summarised in **Figure 1**).

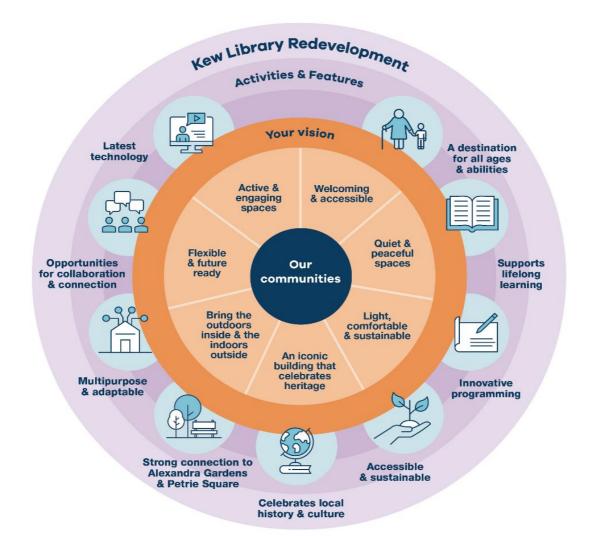


Figure 1. Kew Library redevelopment draft Vision summary



The consultation was hosted on the Engage Boroondara site and widely promoted through onsite posters, emails to library members, the Boroondara Bulletin, social media and letters to nearby households.

Feedback from 271 community members was collected via an online and hardcopy survey and across two face-to-face drop-in sessions.

Responses to the consultation survey demonstrate the community's aspirations for the library have changed little since 2017. Each of the feedback themes identified by the community in 2017 has been validated, with most participants agreeing or strongly agreeing these elements are important. These themes are listed in order of importance to respondents in 2023:

- 1. Quiet and peaceful spaces
- 2. Welcoming and accessible spaces
- 3. Good lighting and circulation
- 4. Sustainable and energy efficient
- 5. Active and social spaces
- 6. Outdoors inside and indoors outside
- 7. Interesting, contemporary and sympathetic design
- 8. Flexible spaces to accommodate a range of events.

A separate question invited people to consider a list of 10 features or to nominate other features / issues for consideration that they considered to be important for the project. The survey results show the feature most preferred by respondents is the provision of study and remote working spaces.

Additional feedback illustrates the community aspirations for the library in 2017 have been supported in 2023, with considerable emphasis given to:

- A range of flexible spaces able to accommodate different community needs (97 comments)
- The library showcasing outstanding architecture and design (59 comments)
- The library being accessible and inclusive (53 comments)
- Suitable spaces available for children and young people (41 comments).

Further consideration is required in relation to two existing artwork / civic memorabilia items attached to the existing building. The community expressed mixed views on retaining both the *Grip of time* artwork and the former *City of Kew's Coat of Arms*, with over 50% of respondents either not sure or uninterested in them being part of the redeveloped library.



2 Project Background

Kew Library is located near a vibrant and dynamic retail hub, a range of community services, educational facilities, as well as public transport and parking. Located between Alexandra Gardens and Petrie Square, the Kew Library is uniquely positioned to take advantage of these green spaces and to create a connection between indoor and outdoor areas.

In 2016, planning commenced for the redevelopment of Kew Library to create a contemporary library that acted as a community hub inspiring lifelong learning, wellbeing, collaboration and social connection. In 2017, the community was consulted extensively to capture its views and aspirations for a library that would meet the growing needs and expectations of library members of all ages, visitors, interested parties and the broader community. The 2017 consultation indicated the current building would be demolished, and a new facility erected, providing an opportunity for community members to be active participants in Council's development of the new Kew library.

A timeframe shared with the community in 2018 indicated redevelopment would commence in 2020, however, a subsequent decision was made to defer the redevelopment to 2022/2023.

A draft Vision and Design Brief (draft Brief) was developed in 2023 reflecting the 2017 community feedback themes, along with current and emerging trends across public libraries. The vision outlined in the draft Brief is for the Kew Library to build on its distinguished service history and be a "... a community hub - inspiring lifelong learning, wellbeing, collaboration and social connection" (page 36).

It is proposed that a redeveloped Kew Library will involve the demolition of the existing building and construction of a new building with a connection to the gardens. The draft Brief fulfils the following aims to:

- 1. Improve customer experiences with better layout and flow of the library floorplan.
- 2. Create spaces that support a hub of activity and a meeting place while maintaining quiet spaces for reading and study.
- 3. Create an engaging environment inside and out, utilising the library's unique location adjacent to the Alexandra Gardens and Petrie Square.
- 4. Offer a range of community activities, services and programs which meet community needs as they evolve over time.
- 5. Make use of flexible shelving and furniture layouts to enable versatile use of space.



3 Engagement Methodology

Consultation on the draft Brief was conducted from 31 August to 29 September 2023 with information provided on how the Kew Library vision would be delivered, and the redevelopment timelines published on Council's community engagement site:

engage.boroondara.vic.gov.au/kew-library-redevelopment

The consultation was widely promoted through a letterbox drop to nearby residents, emails to Boroondara's library members, the Boroondara Bulletin, emails to people registered to receive notifications of new consultations on the Engage Boroondara site, posters on-site at the library and social media. As a result, the consultation page on Engage Boroondara was visited by 1,490 people on 1,940 occasions throughout the consultation period.

Community members were invited to share their feedback on the draft Brief via a survey available online or in paper format available at each Boroondara Library (refer to **Appendix 1** for Survey questions). Community members were also invited to speak with Council officers at two drop-in sessions on 14 and 23 September 2023 at Kew Library.

Council officers also met a number of stakeholders including local schools and community groups.



4 Who participated?

4.1 Participation by engagement method

The majority of survey responses received were completed online by respondents, while the responses on the hardcopy surveys were entered into Engage Boroondara by Council Officers (refer **Table 1**).

Table 1: Participation by engagement method

Engagement method	No. of participants
Consultation survey (completed online)	209 (includes the 6 attendees at the drop- in sessions who each completed a survey)
Consultation survey (completed on paper)	62
Total	271

4.2 Connection to Kew Library

Survey respondents were asked to indicate their relationship with Kew Library and could choose multiple responses if appropriate (refer **Table 2**).

Table 2: Connection to the Kew Library

Connection	No. of responses	%
I am a member of Kew Library	184	69%
I live within walking distance	117	44%
I am a member of another Boroondara library	88	33%
I am a parent of school-aged children	59	22%
I am a student	21	8%



Connection	No. of responses	%
I am an employer or employee in the Kew business community	20	7%
Other	41	15%

Note: Multi-response question, total is all responses not participants (people).

4.3 Demographics

Demographic information of respondents indicated:

- A higher representation of women (66%) compared to men (25%) (**Table 3**)
- The highest participation was people aged 35 49 years (32%) (Table 4)
- A high proportion of people live locally in Kew (47%) (**Table 5**).

Table 3: Gender of participants

Gender	No.	%
Woman	180	66%
Man	69	26%
Other	3	1%
Prefer not to answer	19	7%
Total	271	100%

Source: All surveys



Table 4: Age of participants

Age Group	No.	%
12-17 years	3	1%
18-24 years	12	4%
25-34 years	22	8%
35-49 years	87	32%
50-59 years	46	17%
60-69 years	40	15%
70-84 years	33	12%
85+ years	5	2%
Prefer not to answer	23	9%
Total	271	100%

Source: All surveys

Table 5: Suburb of residence

Suburb	No.	%
Ashburton	1	0.5%
Balwyn	7	3%
Balwyn North	17	6%
Camberwell	10	3%
Canterbury	4	1%



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Suburb	No.	%
Deepdene	1	0.5%
Hawthorn	18	7%
Hawthorn East	6	2%
Kew	127	47%
Kew East	32	12%
Mont Albert	1	0.5%
Surrey Hills	2	1%
Prefer not to answer	32	12%
Other Suburbs	13	5%
Total	271	100%

Source: All surveys



5 Key Findings

The survey consisted of 5 parts:

- Check in on 2017 community consultation themes
- Important features for a redeveloped library
- Preference for retaining iconic artworks
- Additional suggestions and comments
- Demographics.

Key findings from the first 4 sections are reported below.

5.1 Check in on 2017 community consultation themes

Community members were asked to consider the set of aspirations for the Kew Library identified during the consultation undertaken in 2017. This was an opportunity for community members to reconsider these aspirations in a post-COVID environment. Each aspiration was the focus of a question asking people to indicate how strongly they agree or disagree with the importance of the aspiration.

Each question was optional to allow respondents to choose to give feedback on the aspirations of interest to them.

For example: Q.1 Before COVID-19, we asked what you would like to see in a new-look Kew Library. This survey builds on the themes that emerged from the community feedback. Please tell us how much you agree with each of the statements below.

1. It is important the library is welcoming and accessible.

Most participants agreed or strongly agreed that the aspirations identified in 2017 were still important. These aspirations were captured in the draft Brief and used to describe the Vision outlined in **Figure 1**. They are listed in order of importance to respondents in the 2023 consultation in **Table 6** below.

	Community aspirations, in order of perceived importance	% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing this is important in 2023
1	Quiet and peaceful spaces	97% (n=260 of 269 respondents)
2	Welcoming and accessible	95% (n=254 of 271 respondents)
3	Good lighting and circulation	94% (n=254 of 270 respondents)

Table 6: Community aspirations



4	Sustainable	90% (n=244 of 270 respondents)
5	Active and social spaces	88% (n=237 of 269 respondents)
6	Outdoors inside and indoors outside	80% (n=212 of 270 respondents)
7	Interesting, contemporary and sympathetic design	80% (n=212 of 270 respondents)
8	Flexible spaces to accommodate a range of events	58% (n=157 of 270 respondents)

5.2 Important features for a redeveloped library

In Question 9, respondents were provided with a list of 10 features and asked to indicate their preference for 5 of the 10 listed (see below for question and features). This question allowed participants to indicate what features they considered most important in a redeveloped library.

Q.9. The new-look Kew Library will offer a book collection and computers for community use. It can also offer other features. *Please circle five (5) features you would like to see:*

- Meeting rooms
- Programs and activity spaces
- Café
- Consulting rooms for community groups
- Kitchen facilities for warming up food, making a coffee
- Multipurpose spaces for large groups and/or individual study or work
- Programs in the gardens around the building
- Study and remote work spaces
- Art and exhibition spaces
- Places to learn, try something new and create
- Other (please specify)

The results from this question are ranked in **Table 7** below, with 'Study and remote workspaces' being the most popular feature, selected by 79% of respondents, followed by 'Programs and activity spaces', selected by 66% of respondents.



Rank	Additional features	# respondents who selected this feature in their top 5	% respondents who selected this feature in their top 5
1	Study and remote workspaces	212	79%
2	Programs and activity spaces	177	66%
3	Places to learn, try something new and create	160	60%
4	Multi-purpose spaces for large groups or individual study or work	132	49%
5	Café	122	46%
6	Meeting rooms	117	44%
7	Programs in the gardens around the building	109	41%
8	Art and exhibition spaces	109	41%
9	Consulting rooms for community groups	98	37%
10	Kitchen facilities for warming up food, making a coffee	63	24%
11	Other: (please specify)	14	5%

Table 7: Additional features ranked in order of preference.

Note: 268 people responded to this question

5.3 Preference for retaining iconic artwork and civic memorabilia

The Kew Library currently has four artworks and / or civic memorabilia items which are incorporated within the existing building fabric. Two of these items have been identified as having particular significance, with previous processes identifying them for incorporation into a future Kew Library redevelopment. These two items include the:



- Stained-glass window installed to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the Kew Municipality in 1985. The stained-glass window sits within the Library's eastern façade facing Civic Drive.
- World War 2 memorial and wall-relief sculpture located on the Cotham Roadside of the building. The memorial is of historical significance and is located on the north (Cotham Road) facing façade of the current Kew Library.

However, two other artworks and / or civic memorabilia items have not (at this stage), been included as part of a future Kew Library redevelopment. In light of this, the community was asked to provide feedback about the following two items:

- The *Grip of Time* sculpture (featuring a giant hand and walking stick) located on the north (Cotham Road) facing façade of the current Kew Library; and
- The *City of Kew Coat of Arms* sculptural relief located adjacent to the *Grip of Time* sculpture.

The survey asked whether it would like these two elements incorporated into the newly developed Library. Community members who chose to respond expressed mixed views on retaining the artworks as outlined in **Table 8** below.

Artworks/ civic memorabilia to retain in the new-look library	Yes %	No %	Unsure %
Grip of Time Note: 269 people responded to this question	47	26	27
Former City of Kew's Coat of Arms Note: 271 people responded to this question	38	26	36

Table 8: Artwork / civic memorabilia to be retained in the new look library

5.4 Additional suggestions or comments

Survey participants were invited to provide further ideas or suggestions in their own words for Council's consideration. The majority of suggestions and comments express further support for one or more of the Vision themes and are summarised in both **Table 9** below, with a more detailed breakdown documented in **Table 10**.

In particular, it was evident the community wanted the spaces in the redeveloped library to be flexible and versatile, with respondents articulating they want small rooms for study or activities, large rooms for meetings and activities, spaces for study and hybrid



working and spaces for classes and learning. These comments and suggestions were grouped together under the *"I want space for ..."* row in **Table 9** below.

Topics	Number of comments
A range of flexible spaces accommodating different community needs. (That is, <i>I want space for small room hire, large room hire, hybrid working, language classes etc</i>)	97
Outstanding architecture and design	59
Accessible and inclusive	53
Spaces for children and young people	41
View / access to the gardens and surrounds	30
The books are essential	27
Quiet and peaceful spaces	26
Art and culture representation	21
Environmentally sustainable	18
Technology for now and the future	16
Cost concerns	12

Table 9: Additional suggestions or comments in order of frequency

Note: 212 people responded to the free text questions (Q12. and Q13.)

The suggestions and comments from the respondents were grouped into 11 topics summarised in the table above with further details provided in **Table 10** below. These comments and grouped topics offer an additional level of depth to the community aspirations from 2017.

Table 10: Detailed comments used to generate the 11 summary topics

Topic (# of respondents who suggested this)	Summary of suggestions and comments
A range of flexible spaces accommodating different	 A community hub of shared activity More meeting rooms for the community A café for social activity Specific programming / activity requests



Topic (# of respondents who suggested this)	Summary of suggestions and comments
community needs (97)	 <u>Examples:</u> "As community hub and resource for lenders + students, general public, thank you!" "Strongly support small meeting rooms and spaces that can be booked by the community." "We would definitely make use of a cafe for coffee and sandwiches, items for kids like fruit cups and savory muffins would be ideal!" "Group times like chatty café"
Outstanding Architecture and Design (59)	 A building full of natural light Modern, contemporary design Recommendations for skilled architects Examples: "Lots of natural light and an airy feel please." "I'd love to see Kew Library redeveloped into a library that feels fresh, modern and the community can be proud of." "Hope Kew will be able to work with a great architect who is known to deliver beautiful buildings."
Accessible and inclusive (53)	 Creating accessible spaces for all demographics Parking considerations to support the whole community <u>Examples:</u> "Accessibility for people with mobility issues/disability." "Making sure that there is parking especially 30 min parking and short term as well as longer parking for patrons who want to quickly return a book or spend more time in the library."
Spaces for Children and Young People (41)	 Engaging space and activities for young children Ensuring the children's activities are separate from quiet spaces. <u>Examples:</u> "Regular reading/music/storytime for babies/toddlers/preschoolers."



Topic (# of respondents who suggested this)	Summary of suggestions and comments
	"Personally, would love a children's space with activities and resources that are a little separate so kids have opportunity to make noise, explore and not impact on other library visitors."
Views or Access to the Gardens and Surrounds (30)	 A design that incorporates the view of the gardens A design that opens to the gardens <u>Examples:</u> "Utilise the garden as well indoor outdoor."
	"I'm excited to see how the gardens can be incorporated into the space."
	"Furthermore, we suggest optimizing the views of the gardens."
The books are essential	 Offering books is still a key function of the library Requests for specific book collections, like science, art or history.
(27)	Examples: "Please always ensure the richness and diversity and depth of printed books…"
	"Please give consideration to retaining a sizeable print collection."
Quiet and Peaceful Spaces	Quiet and cozy reading spacesQuiet spaces for study and work.
(26)	Examples: "It would be nice to have secluded reading spaces or interesting places/furniture to read."
	"The library should be inviting a place to quietly study and read."
	"A welcoming place for teens to sit quietly and study or read"
Art and Cultural Features	 Connection with the local Wurundjeri Woi- wurrung people Suggestions of particular art.
(21)	Examples: "Information about indigenous history and culture specific to the area."



Topic (# of respondents who suggested this)	Summary of suggestions and comments
	"A memorial dedicated to women of significance from our local area. Alice Anderson comes to mind as the owner of the first all- female mechanic garage in Kew."
Environmentally Sustainable (18)	 An energy efficient design Appreciation for the current recycling facilities. Examples: "More than the look itself on a priority I would like to know that
	"More than the look itself as a priority I would like to know that the look is the result of the building being as sustainable as possible."
	"I like the current recycling facilities and would like something similar in new library."
Technology for now and the Future	 Requests for day-to-day technology Requests for technology to support our future.
(16)	Examples "In each study area/spaces there should be easy access to USB and sockets for charging computers, etc."
	"Embrace a proactive approach and thoughtfully strategize the allocation of spaces for future technological growth.
Concerns about project cost	 Satisfaction in current library (not wish to change) Advice to be efficient with costs.
(12)	"Is this just a waste of money in current environment - library currently serves us pretty well."
	"Keep the costs down."

Alignment with draft Vision and Design Brief and key themes

These topics also supported and reflected the emerging trends and issues documented in the draft Vision and Design Brief, including:

• The need for responsive community spaces recognises the need for hybrid working and places to connect with others through events and activities.



- Outstanding architecture and design, and environmentally sustainable both highlight the need for sustainability and the importance of incorporating learnings from a post COVID-19 environment into building design.
- Accessible and inclusive highlights the importance of creating spaces where individuals are welcomed. A place where community connection supports health and wellbeing (physical and mind) and presents opportunities to address emerging social trends of loneliness and social isolation.
- Spaces for children and young people, and quiet and peaceful spaces reinforce the importance of providing appropriate spaces to support lifelong learning for all ages (including young people, families and older people) and encouraging agile and healthy minds through activity and reading.
- View / access to the gardens and surrounds reinforces the importance of offering access to the natural environment, important for maintaining mental health and wellbeing by offering a sense of tranquillity and connection to nature.
- Keep the books, and technology for now and the future recognises that while public libraries are people centred it will be important to find the balance between the print collection footprint, technology and spaces for collaboration, study, reading and programs.
- **Concerns about cost** are noted in the draft Brief under the Cost design principle (on page 40) and notes the importance of delivery within Council's long term financial plan as well as life-cycle costs.



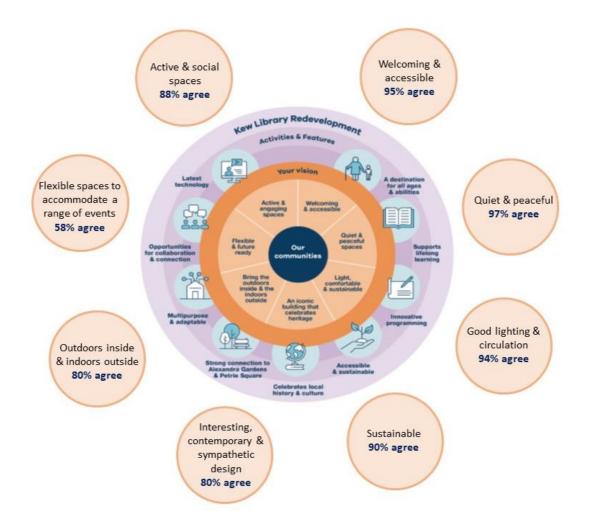
6 Summary and next steps

The 2023 community feedback on the Kew Library redevelopment project is highly consistent with community aspirations expressed in 2017.

These aspirations are reflected in the draft Vision and Design Brief, whose key themes have also received a high level of support in this recent consultation process. Community feedback and levels of support for each key draft Vision theme is summarised in **Figure 2** below.

As a result of this consultation, the draft Vision and Design Brief will be updated describing this community feedback received in 2023.

Figure 2. Kew Library redevelopment draft Vision and 2023 community feedback summary





7 Appendix

7.1 Survey Questions.

Have your say Kew Library Redevelopment consultation, 30 August to 29 September 2023



You can complete this survey online or below.

Share your feedback on what we should prioritise and anything else we should consider in the design concept before 5pm, Friday 29 September.

We ask for personal information, including your name, address, gender, and age. We collect this to ensure we hear from different groups in the community.

Before COVID-19, we asked what you would like to see in a new-look Kew Library. This survey builds on the themes that emerged from the community feedback. Please tell us how much you agree with each of the statements below.

1. It is important the library is welcoming and accessible.

- □ Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- □ Not sure
- □ Agree
- □ Strongly agree

2. It is important the library offers some active and social spaces for activities and meeting.

- □ Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Not sure
- □ Agree
- Strongly agree

3. It is important the library offers some quiet and peaceful spaces for reading, plus some quiet spaces for work or study.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Not sure
- □ Agree
- □ Strongly agree



4. It is important the library offers flexible spaces that can accommodate largescale events, activities and meetings of varying sizes.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Not sure
- □ Agree
- □ Strongly agree

5. It is important the building is well-lit and has good circulation space for moving around.

- □ Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Not sure
- □ Agree
- □ Strongly agree.

6. It is important the building is energy efficient and sustainable.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Not sure
- □ Agree
- □ Strongly agree

7. It is important the library brings 'the outdoors inside and the indoors outside', with views and direct access to the adjacent Alexandra Gardens and Petrie Square.

- □ Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- □ Not sure
- □ Agree
- □ Strongly agree

8. It is important the library's design is interesting and contemporary, and sympathetic to its surrounding environment and history.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Not sure
- □ Agree
- □ Strongly agree

9. The new-look Kew Library will offer a book collection and computers for community use. It can also offer other features. *Please circle five (5) features you would like to see.*



Meeting rooms	Programs and activity spaces
Cafe	Consulting rooms for community groups
Kitchen facilities for warming up food, making a coffee	Multipurpose spaces for large groups and/or for individual study or work
Programs in the gardens around the building	Study and remote workspaces
Places to learn, try something new and create	Art and exhibition spaces

Other: please specify

The library's war memorial sculpture and the stained-glass window will both be included in the new-look library. Please share your thoughts on the Kew coat of arms and 'grip of time' artwork which are part of the library today.

10. Would you like to see the former Kew Council's coat of arms in the new-look library?

- □ Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- □ Not sure
- □ Agree
- □ Strongly agree

11. Would you like to see the 'Grip of time' artwork as part of the new-look library?

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Not sure
- □ Agree
- □ Strongly agree



12. Is there anything else to consider when designing the new-look library?

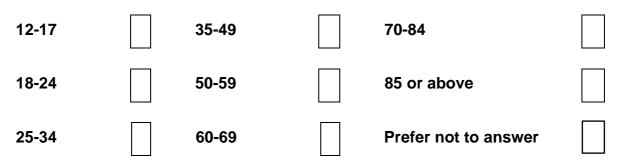
13. Feel free to share any other feedback on the vision for the Kew Library?

A little about you. We ask for this information to make sure we hear from different groups in the community.

14. What is your connection to the Kew Library? Tick all that apply.

- □ I am a member of Kew Library
- □ I am a member of another Boroondara Library
- □ I live within walking distance
- □ I am a parent of school aged children
- □ I am a student
- □ I am an employee/employer in the local Kew business community
- Other: _____

15. What is your age? Required, please select one





16. What is your gender? *Required, please select one*

Woman		Man	Prefer not to answer	
Prefer to self-c	lescribe		 	
17. What is yoເ	ur name?	Required	 	

18. What is your street address? Required (for example, 8 Inglesby Road)

19. Are you happy for Council to email you updates about this consultation and the Kew Library redevelopment? *Not required*

Yes and my email is: _

Please send your completed survey to Library Services Team, City of Boroondara, Private Bag 1, Camberwell VIC 3124 to arrive before 29 September 2023. Thank you for your submission.

• The information requested on this form is being collected by the City of Boroondara for the purpose of this community consultation. The information will be used solely by the City of Boroondara for that primary purpose or directly related purposes. No identifying information will be published. Respondents may apply to the City of Boroondara for access to and/or amendment of the information. Requests for access and/or correction should be made to the Privacy Officer, City of Boroondara, Private Bag 1, Camberwell, 3124. Tel: 9278 4444.