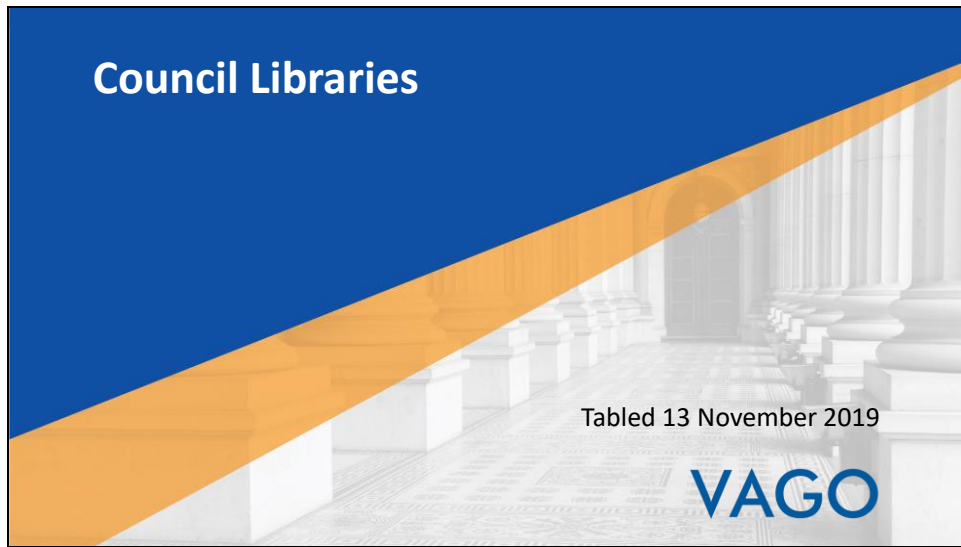


Slide 1



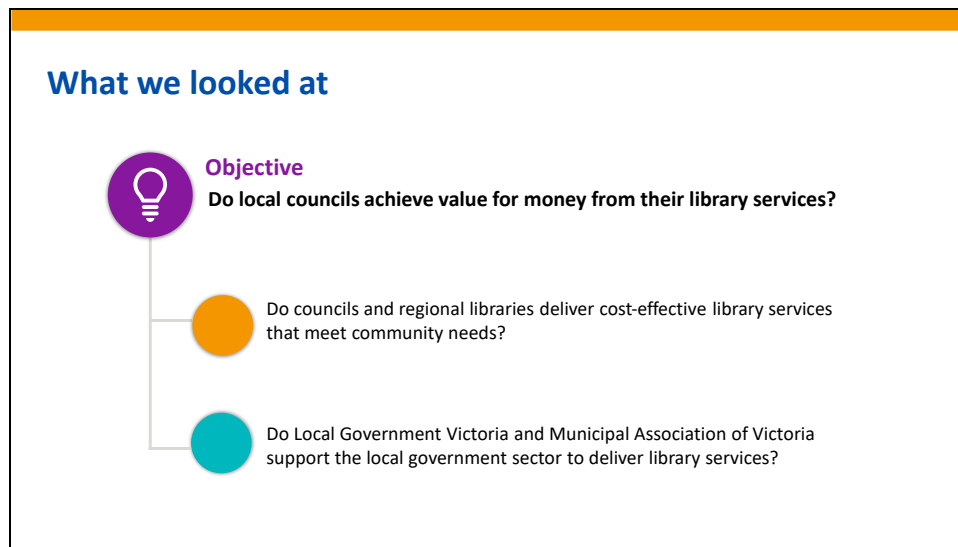
This presentation provides an overview of the Victorian Auditor-General's report *Council libraries*.



Council libraries are important social assets for local communities. Rate capping challenges councils to deliver library services that meet community needs in a financially sustainable way.



State entities, such as Local Government Victoria (LGV), which is part of the Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning or DELWP, and the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), have roles in delivering funding and statewide initiatives for libraries. Councils are responsible for delivering their own library services. They can deliver these services independently or by sharing with other councils through models such as regional library corporations.



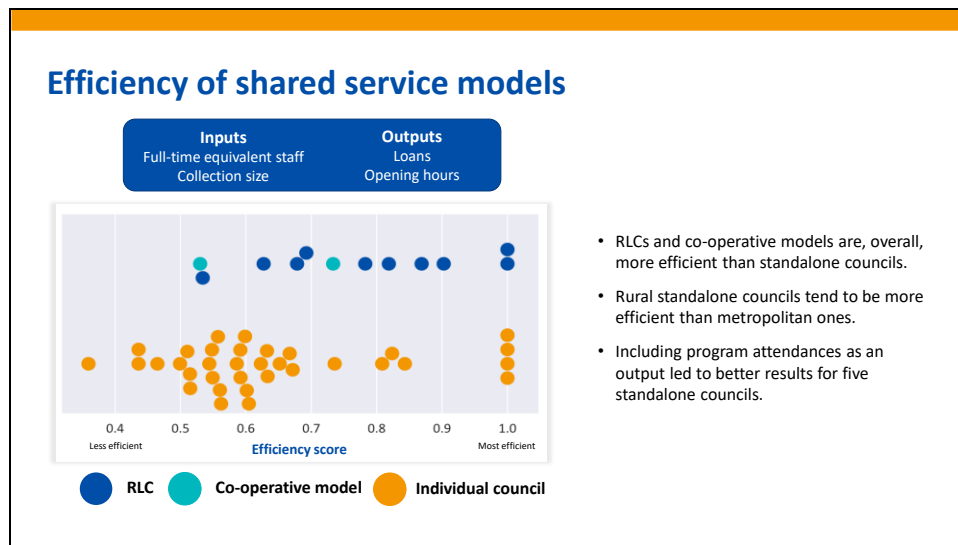
We looked at whether selected councils and a regional library corporation achieve value for money from their library services. We also examined state support to councils in delivering public library funding and leading statewide initiatives.



We looked at four councils – Alpine, Buloke, Boroondara, Mornington Peninsula and Eastern Regional Library Corporation. We also audited two state entities – LGV and MAV.



We found that not all audited councils deliver library services as effectively and efficiently as they can. This is because there are gaps in how they plan, monitor and review their library services. We also found a lack of planning for statewide initiatives to ensure that they deliver service efficiencies.



Overall, regional library corporations tend to be more efficient than standalone councils. This is because they have higher volumes of loans and longer opening hours to offset their financial investments.

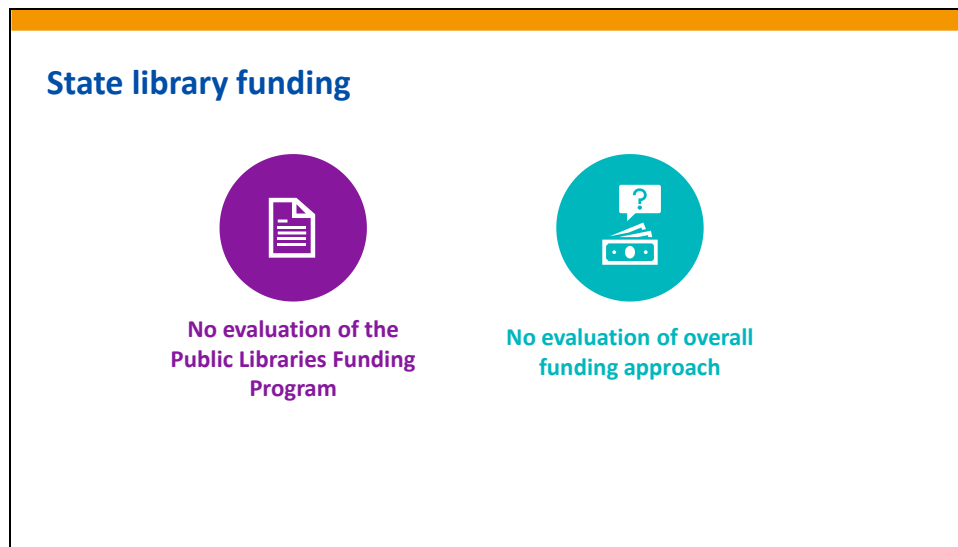
Rural standalone councils tend to be more efficient than metropolitan ones, indicating that they have found ways to deliver core library services to their communities with less financial investment. However, when we added program and event attendance as a factor in our analysis, it improved the performance of many standalone councils. This highlights the need to tailor services to community needs expectations, which vary across the state. Add note about how this highlights the need to tailoring services to the community



There are gaps in how councils plan, monitor and review their services. For example:


- All audited councils could improve the way cost information is recorded, used and reported
- Some councils could capture more detailed information about community expectations
- Some councils do not document service plans, set objectives or link their library services to broader council objectives






LGV has not evaluated the Public Libraries Funding Program, which makes up 89 per cent of its library funding to councils. It has also not evaluated its overall approach to funding to ensure it is the best way to support council libraries.


### Statewide initiatives



A statewide library management system was procured



Procurement took 22 months longer than planned



There is no plan for achieving cost benefits and efficiencies for statewide initiatives

Currently, 21 council libraries across the state have adopted the LMS.

Although LGV provided financial support to MAV to procure a new statewide library management system, it has not planned how or when it will achieve the cost-benefits and efficiencies of the new system.

In addition, MAV's procurement took 22 months longer than planned because of staff shortages. MAV also experienced difficulties in balancing conflicting views about the system across the council library sector.

To date, 21 of 47 council libraries in Victoria have adopted the LMS.

## Recommendations

**4 for councils and regional library corporations, including to:**


- Identify full costs of library services
- Ensure cost data is consistent and comparable
- Investigate ways to achieve cost efficiencies through other library service delivery models

**4 for the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, including to:**

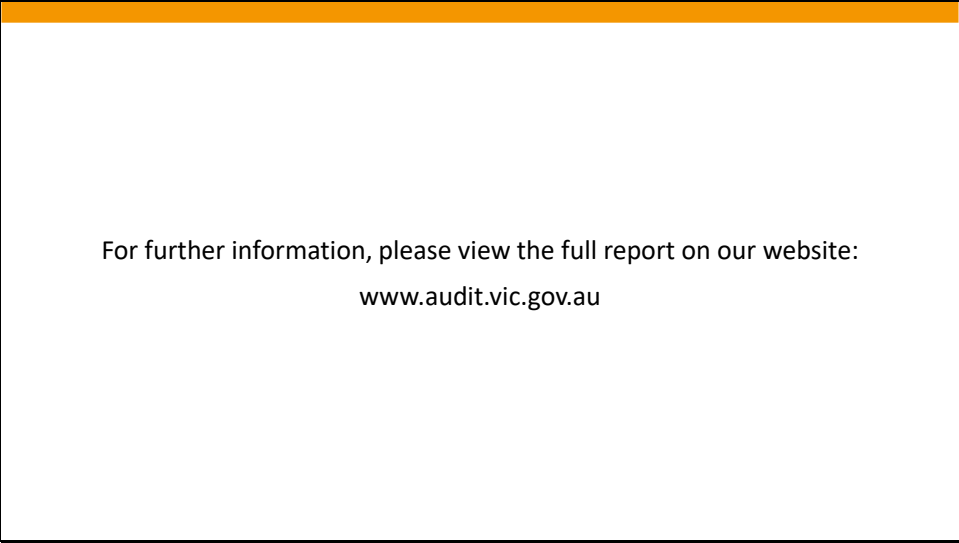
- Ensure that LGPRF indicators reflect the changing role of libraries
- Review funding allocation methods
- Develop and implement a plan to support shared service initiatives

**1 for the Municipal Association of Victoria:**

- Share lessons learned from its auspicings arrangements

 **Accepted all recommendations**

We made nine recommendations in total – four for councils and regional library corporations, four for the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and one for MAV. Audited agencies accepted all recommendations.



For further information, please view the full report on our website:  
[www.audit.vic.gov.au](http://www.audit.vic.gov.au)

*For further information, please see the full report of this audit on our website,  
[www.audit.vic.gov.au](http://www.audit.vic.gov.au).*