

## **“IT’S BOOKED,” SAYS ROCKDALE CITY MAYOR SHANE O’BRIEN**

After 30 years, the wait for a new Rockdale library is finally over.

In his first term as Mayor for the City of Rockdale, Mayor Shane O’Brien cast the last vote, 7 to 6 at a City Council Meeting held on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2013, to secure the future construction of a new state of the art City Library. The winning vote met with cheers and applause from a packed Council Gallery of interested residents and onlookers.

Mayor Shane O’Brien said, “Education is the salvation and this state of the art facility will ensure that everyone has the opportunity to continue their education.”

When the new Council offices were built 30 years ago, the Rockdale Library was temporarily housed in the old Town Hall, where it has remained ever since.

Specialist consultants will now prepare the documentation to invite tenders for the design and construction of the new Rockdale library.

Commenting on the proposed two storey glass building Mayor O’Brien said, “The added bonus is that this new iconic building will in itself, set a benchmark for the rest of the Rockdale CBD”.

Members of the public did address the Councillors on the community benefits of the new library. Executive Director of the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) Ms Sue McKerracher said, “Rockdale City Library punches well above its weight. Nearly 600,000 people use it every year. But it is a dire facility”. Commenting on Rockdale Council’s Library Staff, she said, “I would like to congratulate the team who are making the best use of a cramped space. The fact that half a million people can still be encouraged through its doors is testament to their professionalism”.

There have been space constraints on the main library—but it is served by 5 branch libraries, which is a large number for a relatively small geographical space. The Arncliffe branch was recently renovated and renovations are planned for San Souci.

The benefits of the new library for the Rockdale LGA are enormous. The last 30 years have seen changes in migration, housing density, education, and technology. People have changed the way they live, work, learn and interact with communities.

The Rockdale LGA demographic has changed. It has growing migrant population and includes a larger than average group of families who don’t speak English at home.

Libraries are the heart of any community. By saying yes to a modern library Council is confirming its commitment to provide the opportunity for the entire community to enrich their lives and reach their aspirational dreams.

The new library will be a vibrant civic hub, combining learning, literacy, arts and culture in the heart of the Rockdale community.