



Bendigo Regional Archives Centre

Annual Service Report

July 2015 – June 2016

A screenshot of the Bendigo Regional Archives Centre website homepage. The page has a dark blue header with the logo on the left and navigation buttons on the right. Below the header is a horizontal menu with categories like Home, About Us, Visit Us, Collections, Family & Local History, Guides & FAQs, What's On, and Digital Records. The main content area features a large image of several old, worn "CITY COUNCIL MINUTE BOOK" covers with handwritten dates. Below this are four featured articles: "W.C. Vahland Exhibit", "Historic Rates Index", "Local Networks", and "Ancestor Name Search". Each article has a small image and a brief description. At the bottom, there is a footer with copyright information and a "Listen" button.

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Bendigo Regional Archives Centre (BRAC)

Our Vision

Collecting and sharing our history

Our Mission

The Bendigo Regional Archives Centre will:

- Preserve our community's records in their place of origin
- Provide access to our community's records and encourage their use
- Strengthen our work through partnerships and relationships

Context

Bendigo Regional Archives Centre (BRAC) was established on 24 October 2007 under the Associations Incorporations Act 1981 (Vic) through a partnership between Public Record Office Victoria (PROV), City of Greater Bendigo (CoGB) and the Goldfields Library Corporation (GLC) to provide a combined regional archives service for the Goldfields Region.

Our facility was approved under Section 14(1) of the Public Records Act 1973 as a Place of Deposit (POD) for the better preservation, management and utilisation of public records as specified by the Keeper of Public Records.

BRAC was made possible through a \$1.3 million grant from the State Government Regional Infrastructure Development Fund. This has enabled the building of an onsite repository and public access point within the Bendigo Library, Hargreaves Street, and an off-site archival storage facility at Nolan Street in North Bendigo.

Finances

BRAC does not hold separate financial records. All financial dealings are undertaken by the City of Greater Bendigo.

Message from the Chair



This year has seen a number of pleasing developments.

The new website continued to be popular with over 500 visitors per month. The use of records also continued to grow, with the most popular records continuing to be rate books.

The transfers of records from government agencies into our collection continued this year with records transferred from the Goornong Cemetery Trust.

It was a busy year for events and activities with a diverse range of activities reaching new audiences. These have been well promoted through various social media channels.

There have been some changes to our management and advisory committees throughout the year as we said farewell to Committee of Management members Alison McNulty and Marg Allan who were replaced by Philippa O'Halloran and Kerryn Ellis. Marg was a strong supporter of BRAC and contributed five years on the Committee of Management. I would like to thank both past and current members of the Committee of Management for their contributions throughout the year.

The Advisory Committee farewelled Kevin De Vries and Rita Hull, and I would like to thank them for their willingness to contribute their time. Rita Hull was a member of the original taskforce that promoted the need for historical record storage in Bendigo, and has been a staunch supporter since BRAC's origin and continued as a regular user of BRAC resources. Kevin De Vries was also a keen supporter of BRAC and valued for his business and marketing knowledge. A process is underway to select new members. I would also like to thank all the Advisory Committee members for their support and their willingness to share their knowledge and contribute to our ongoing development.

Finally, on behalf of the Committee of Management our thanks go to the Operations Committee for continuing to implement our strategic goals, and also to our staff who deliver an excellent service to our clients and stakeholders. In particular we thank Claire McLeod who has moved to another area of Goldfields Libraries. Claire has made significant contributions through her work on development of the website, and with her work both in the reading room and behind the scenes and we wish her well in her new role.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Justine Heazlewood'.

Justine Heazlewood

BRAC Strategic Plan Deliverables 2015 - 2016

6.1 Preserve our community's records in their place of origin				
Initiative	Deliverable	Performance Measure	Status	
1 Transfer Program (Government Records) A program to manage government transfers will continue to ensure that approved government records within the BRAC Catchment Area are accessioned within the BRAC repositories..	Transfer Program (Government Records) established	Program is fully established and operational	Completed	
		Transfers of public records from agencies are scheduled.	Completed	
		Transfers of records to BRAC are accessioned and completed to agreed schedule.	Completed	
1.2 Acquisition Program (Community Records) A program to manage the acquisition of community records will be established to ensure that community records within the BRAC Catchment Area are accessioned within the BRAC repositories.	Community Collections Framework completed and approved.	Framework of documents (Register, policies, procedures, forms) is completed and approved by BRAC Committee of Management.	In progress	
		Framework is implemented and service operationalised	Carried over to 2016-2017	
1.3 Repository Compliance Program Work will continue to ensure that BRAC Repositories comply with PROV Storage Standards in regards to both physical and built requirements and documentation.	Hargreaves Street site complies with PROV standards for storage of permanent value records	Compliance issues are addressed and documentation supplied	Completed	
		Inspection and assessment of BRAC repository against PROS 11/01 Storage Specification 2 is undertaken, as scheduled by GLC.	Completed	
		Actions are taken to ensure compliance continues to be met, as issues arise	Completed	
	Nolan Street site continues to comply with PROV standards for storage of permanent value records	Actions are taken to ensure compliance continues to be met, as issues arise	Completed	
1.4 Undertake digitisation activities Undertake digitisation activities to digitise parts of the BRAC collection on a project basis as resources and/or funding allow.	Digitising developed	policy developed and approved by COM	Carried over to 2016 - 2017	

Government Record Transfers 2015-2016

Goornong Cemetery Trust records were transferred to BRAC in June 2016.

There are three series, all created by Goornong Cemetery Trust

VPRS 18261/P1 Goornong Cemetery Trust Minute Books (1881-1994)

VPRS 18262/P1 Goornong Cemetery Interment Books (1884-1988)

VPRS 18284/P1 Index to 18262 Goornong Cemetery Interment Books (1884-2014)

6.2 Provide access to our community's records and encourage their use

Initiative	Deliverable	Performance Measure	Status
2.1 Provide BRAC services Undertake the day to day activities and operations of the BRAC as determined by the agreed service model.	Manage and provide day to day direction to BRAC staff	Management undertaken to satisfaction of CoM	Completed
	Undertake day to day activities	Activities undertaken to satisfaction of CoM	Completed
2.2 Online Access and Engagement BRAC will enhance its online presence to better engage with researchers, clients and the public by exploring opportunities to utilise new technologies and online platforms.	BRAC online access and services reviewed and plan for improvements developed	Review BRAC online access and services and submit plan to CoM for approval.	Completed
		Implement service improvements in accordance with the plan.	Not commenced
2.3 BRAC Archival Control System Select and implement an archival control system that will enable management of the BRAC collection, ordering of records and searching of records.	Appropriate archival control system and Researched selected	Report to Committee of Management on suitable systems with recommendations. <i>SPYDUS Archive Module selected.</i>	Completed
2.5 Staff Learning and Development Program PROV and GLC will include BRAC staff in relevant staff training programs to increase staff skills through ongoing participation in projects and formal and informal training.	Develop staff training program based on PROV and GLC planned staff training	Staff training delivered <i>Materials handling</i>	Ongoing

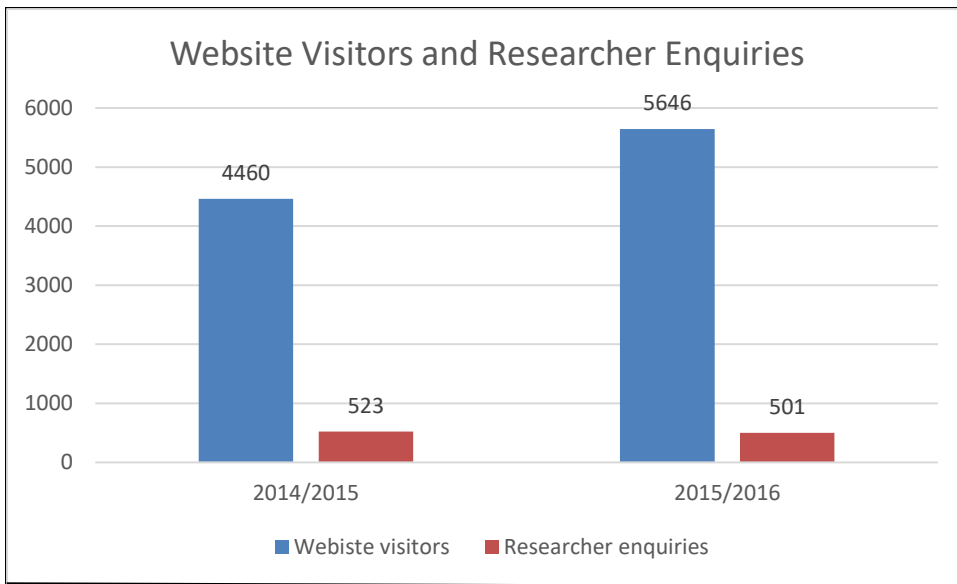
Online Access and Engagement

The BRAC website has evolved to become a busy and active online space. It serves as an effective gateway for the general public to discover BRAC and engage with our services.

Web visitor numbers show consistent access by the public with an average of 450 to 500 views per month. 73% of visitors to the website are first time users.

The World War I (1914-1918) kit continues to be well used with positive feedback received from local Secondary teachers who have used the kit in their History classes. Monthly web hits on this kit have been steady.

Online Usage	2014/15	2015/16
Website Visitors	4460	5646
Researcher Enquiries	523	501

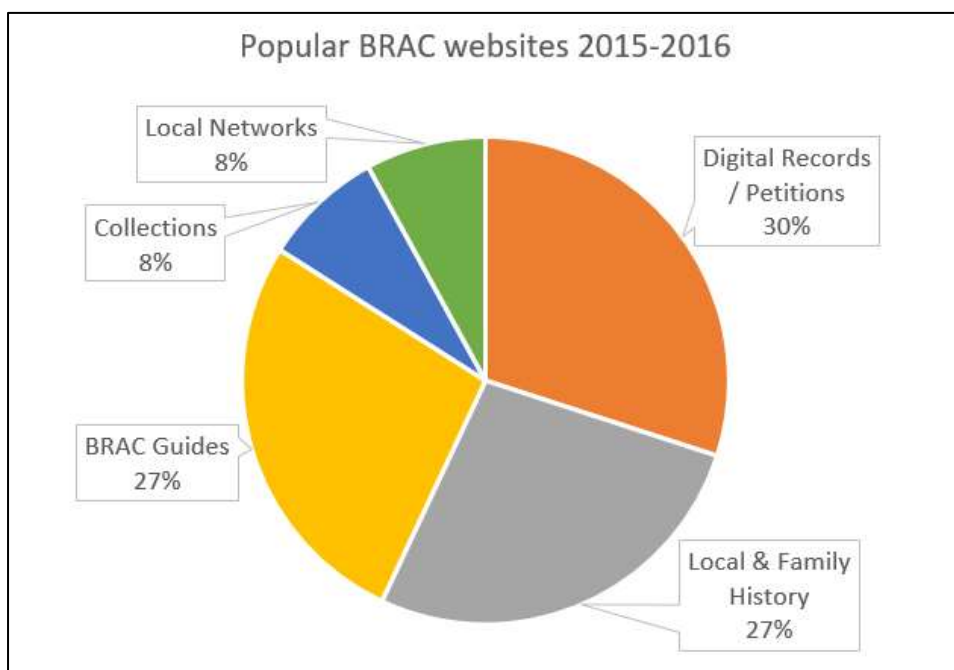


The Website continues to attract high traffic and can also account for the drop in enquiries as more answers to requested information can be found online.

5,646 individuals accessed the website for the year July 2015 – June 2016. This is a 27% increase on the previous year. (Google analytics information).

The digital records continue to be the most popular feature of the website. These comprise 30% of unique page views of digital records in the year from July 2015 to June 2016.

The graph below shows the percentage of unique page views there have been in more popular sections.

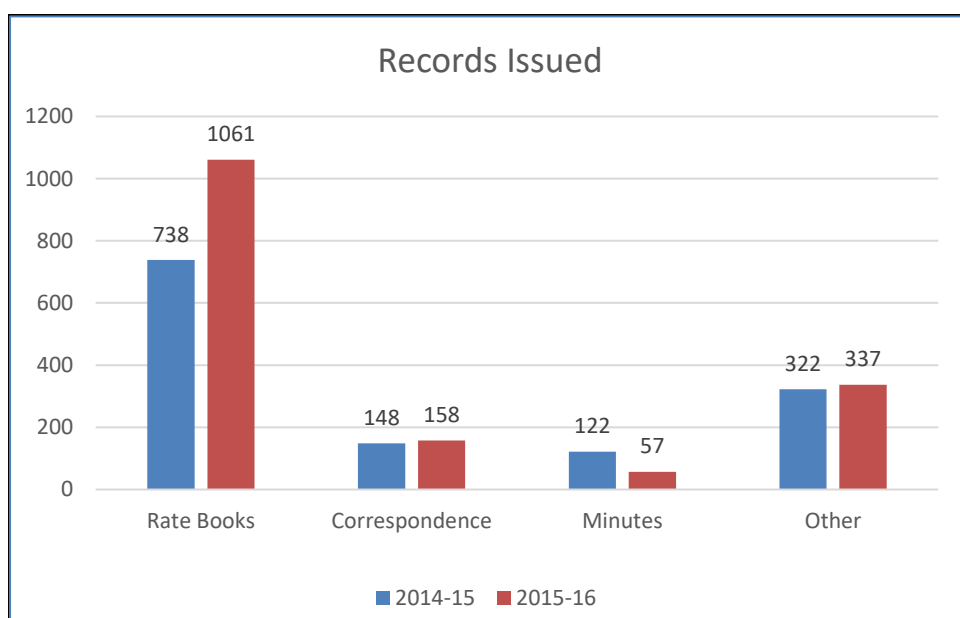


Records usage

As a follow-up to the WW1 kit a Year 9 History class from Bendigo South East College visited BRAC in September 2015. Students were shown the variety of records available at BRAC and had a look inside the repository. Visits like this school group build awareness and understanding of the historic value of Local Government and Court records amongst the next generation of researchers and genealogists.

Records Issued	2014-15	2015-16
Rate Books	738	1061
Correspondence	148	158
Minutes	122	57
Other	322	337
Total	1,330	1,613

1,613 records were issued this year, a 21% increase over last year and double our target total.



Rate books continue to be the most used records held in BRAC. Other records including Court registers, maps and plans, council reports and building registers have all added to the increase in records retrieved throughout the year.

Researching at BRAC

BRAC records continued to be used for wide-ranging research purposes.

Following house and property ownership is still the most frequent use of rate books in the BRAC collection. Finding who built a particular house or building is not always a successful search but researchers can often find the significant years that building occurred and who it was for. Local, State, Interstate and International researchers enjoy the opportunity to follow family land ownership back to the 1860s.

Heritage Advisors and Consultants worked through a variety of registers, rate books, Council minutes and correspondence to prepare City of Greater Bendigo's White Hills/North Bendigo Heritage Study and to confirm the existence of a tip along the Back Creek, off Mundy Street.

A Cemeteries Trust volunteer used Bendigo Minutes, Bendigo Committee Minutes, Bendigo Letter books and Bendigo Staff Salary volumes, to corroborate articles in the Bendigo Advertiser about "improper" activities by

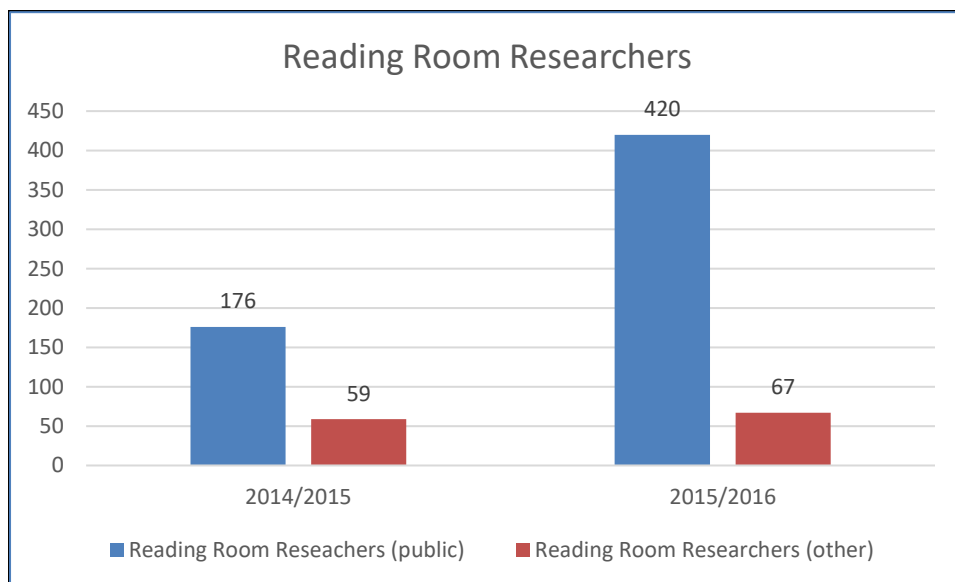
the sexton at Bendigo Cemetery in the 1860s and 1870s. The Staff salary books, in particular, have yielded previously unknown information about sextons and cemetery workers creating ongoing research.

The history of the former South Garden Gully Hall and Tennis courts was unearthed through Bendigo Council 20th Century correspondence, Council meeting minutes and various other Committee minutes.

Sandhurst/Bendigo Inwards Correspondence, Bendigo Council Staff Salary volumes, Bendigo Council Committee Minutes, and Shire of Huntly Dog Register and Pound volumes along with 19th Century petitions assisted the Curator for the Post Office Gallery in preparation for the Exhibition *Menagerie: Animals in Bendigo's history* to be held later in 2016.

Significant anniversaries often inspire publications with the Borough of Raywood Rate books and Minutes used to prepare a booklet to mark the 150th anniversary of that Borough being established.

Reading Room Researchers	2014/15	2015/16
Reading Room Researchers (public)	176	420
Reading Room researchers (other)	59	67
Total	235	487



The year saw researcher visits double although some of this increase is due to the reclassification, from July 2015, of two indexing projects being undertaken by local Genealogy groups. Bendigo Rate books and Court records are being completed as researcher long term indexing projects not BRAC volunteer projects.

6.3 Strengthen our work through partnerships and relationships

Initiative	Deliverable	Performance Measure	Status
3.1 Volunteer Management The volunteer program for BRAC will be established.	Volunteer projects strategy	Develop volunteer projects strategy that includes the criteria that will be used to assess whether a project is suitable for volunteers (nature of work, funding required, resources required to manage)	Carried over
3.2 Support the BRAC Advisory Committee	Advisory Committee meetings held	Meetings are scheduled	Completed
		Meeting papers are provided	Completed
	Strong relationship between CoM and Advisory Committee	CoM member attends Advisory Committee meetings	Completed
		CoM provides input into all matters brought to Advisory Committee	Completed
3.3 Marketing and Communications Plan A communications and marketing plan will be developed to ensure clients, stakeholders and the broader community are kept informed of significant changes.	Marketing and Communications Plan finalised	Marketing and Communications Plan developed and approved by Committee of Management.	In Progress
		Implement Plan – each partner and BRAC staff will be responsible for implementation of different aspects of the Plan	Carried over
3.4 Public Programs BRAC will develop and establish a program of public outreach that connects with the community and promotes the collection.	Annual program developed and programs delivered	Annual Program Plan developed	Completed
		Annual Plan delivered	Completed

Volunteer Projects

The Petitions of the People

This ongoing project has reached another significant stage with the completion of the transcription of names from all 628 petitions contained within the Bendigo/Sandhurst Council Inwards Correspondence, (1856-1899).

The names on the final petition were transcribed on 30 July 2015 by devoted volunteers Norma Cowling and Eileen Gorman. Norma is in her late 80's and has been working on transcription projects for more than 30 years.

A further 11 Petitions with 3,263 names were added to the BRAC website in 2015 bringing the total to 14,240 searchable names taken from 284 Petitions.

Sandie Morris has continued to give many hours of her time each week to ensure the accuracy of transcriptions and data entry. Sandie's great enthusiasm and knowledge is valued, appreciated and often shared.

In connection with the Petitions' project, volunteer Helen Lunt is continuing to index the Sandhurst/Bendigo Council Inwards Correspondence (1856-1899) collection. Helen has reached 1889 with more than 10,000 pieces of correspondence registered.

BRAC Advisory Committee

The BRAC Advisory Committee meets twice a year, in May and November. Discussions over the last 12 months focussed on Community Collections and on developing a Promotion and Marketing strategy for BRAC.

Advisory Committee member Bruce Smith shared his expertise in locating Business, Union and Sporting Association records for family history research with a small but enthusiastic audience during National Family History Month 2015.

All Committee members are thanked sincerely for their constructive, insightful and enthusiastic contributions to the continuing development of BRAC. We farewelled two original committee members, Rita Hull representing genealogists and local researchers, and Kevin de Vries representing the local business community and thank them particularly for their support.

BRAC records on show

W.C. Vahland Exhibition, Bendigo Library Exhibition cases

From May to July 2016, BRAC staff curated an exhibition showcasing original reports and letters penned by W.C.Vahland, the city's most prominent Architect, to the former City of Sandhurst Council. Vahland's relationship with the Council, his family life and devotion to Freemasonry was represented in written works, photographs and artefacts.

BRAC thanks the Bendigo Art Gallery for the loan of the hand-crafted sewing table William made for his wife, Jane which had been donated by Vahland's descendants.



Vahland's home, family and interests depicted in this exhibit case.

Representations of Faith in the Archives

Amongst the Petitions in the Sandhurst/Bendigo Council Inwards Correspondence collection are two in particular that focus on local religious issues and contain strong moral language in the petition's prayer. Their subjects, *A Call for Sunday to be observed as a day of rest* and *A Call for the abolition of horse racing*, were of high importance to local people at the time the petitions were created.

The anti-horse racing petition is physically the largest of all the petitions in the BRAC collection. Containing 3,564 signatures, from both men and women, this petition tells a story of local people objecting very strongly about the "moral pestilence" of horse racing and its accompanying vices.

The petitions featured in a presentation at the La Trobe University Bendigo's Workshop entitled "Faith in Mining History" held in February 2016.

Publicising the Collection

National Family History Month in August 2015 and the National Trust's Heritage Festival held throughout May 2016 were our peak months for events and activities.

Both months incorporated tours, talks and workshops showcasing the BRAC records most relevant to family historians and the more unusual or historically significant records available.

BRAC Reading Room was open for the first combined Bendigo Library Heritage Discovery Day on Saturday 14 May 2016. This gave researchers the opportunity to talk to BRAC staff, Bendigo Library reference staff Genealogy Group representatives and the City of Greater Bendigo Heritage Planner. Participants travelled from as far afield as Adelaide, Geelong and Philip Island to attend.

The BRAC collection, events and activities continue to feature in a regular article for the Bendigo Historical Society's Newsletter *Marunari*, social media posts by Bendigo Library, The Post Office Gallery, and the Public Record Office Victoria.

Networking with promotions staff at the Goldfields Library Corporation, Public Record Office Victoria, Bendigo Visitor Information Centre and the Bendigo Art Gallery has led to extra social media and website publicity for BRAC events and records.

BRAC continues to contribute to varied exhibitions staged at the Post Office Gallery, Bendigo.

E-newsletter

Bric-a-BRAC e-newsletter was published in August 2015, November 2015, February 2016 and May 2016. Subscribers are regularly added to the subscription list bringing the total to 60. Past issues can be found on the BRAC website.

Public Programs 2015 - 2016

Date	Organisation and Activity	Attendance	Event Description
12/08/2015	Tour of BRAC	4	Family History Month event
13/08/2015	Tour of BRAC	2	Family History Month event
19/08/2015	Workshop 'Ancestors in the Archives'	6	Family History Month event
20/08/2015	Vahland Talk	20	Family History Month event
10/09/2015	Bendigo South East College History class for talk/tour	24	Class excursion
18/02/2016	Mining Faith workshop	70	
05-07/2016	Vahland Exhibition	150	Showcased BRAC records/curated the exhibition/researched timeline handout
10/05/2016	Tour of BRAC	5	National Trust Heritage Festival
11/05/2016	Tour of BRAC	6	National Trust Heritage Festival
12/05/2016	'W.C Vahland in the Archives' Presentation	14	National Trust Heritage Festival
12/05/2016	'Writing to the Council' Presentation	4	National Trust Heritage Festival
12/05/2016	Petitions online workshop	4	National Trust Heritage Festival
14/05/2016	BRAC open on a Saturday	12	National Trust Heritage Festival
TOTAL		251	Attended events at BRAC

Measures and Outputs 2015-2016

Activity	Measure	Target	% diff
<i>Quantity</i>			
Reading Room researchers (public)	420	350	+ 20%
Reading Room researchers (other)	67	50	+17%
Total Access	487	400	+22%
<i>Quality</i>			
Visitors to website	5646	500	+1029%
Enquiries	501	240	+108%
Records issued	1613	800	+102%
Public education, training and outreach programs delivered	13	5	+160%
<i>Timeliness</i>			
Quarterly report on transfers/acquisitions underway and completed published 2 weeks after end quarter	Completed		

BRAC Committees

Committee of Management

The Committee of Management, established under Schedule 5 of the Associations Incorporation Act 1981 (Vic), is responsible for overseeing the budget and implementing the Corporate Plan.

The Committee of Management is represented by members of the three establishing bodies.

Committee of Management Members 2015 – 2016

Justine Heazlewood, Director and Keeper of Public Records, PROV (Chair)
 Alison McNulty, Acting Assistant Director, Access Services, PROV (to Oct 2015)
 Philippa O'Halloran, Assistant Director, Access Services, PROV (from Oct 2015)
 Marg Allan, Director, Organisational Support, City of Greater Bendigo (Treasurer to July 2015)
 Kerryn Ellis, Director, Organisational Support, City of Greater Bendigo (Treasurer from Oct 2015)
 Cr Rod Fyffe, Councillor, CoGB
 Chris Kelly, Chief Executive Officer, Goldfields Library Corporation
 Vivien Newton, Senior Librarian, GLC (Secretary and Public Officer)

BRAC Advisory Committee

Dr. Charles Fahey, La Trobe University, Bendigo (Chair)
 Mr. Kevin de Vries, Bendigo Business representative (to Nov.2015)
 Mrs. Alleyne Hockley, Castlemaine Historical Society Inc.
 Ms. Rita Hull, Bendigo Family History Group (to Nov. 2015)
 Ms. Clare Needham, Curator, City History and Collections, Bendigo Art Gallery
 Ms. Nicole Pretty, Manager Bendigo Visitor Information Centre
 Mr. Bruce Smith, Archives Research Consultancy
 Mr. David Wright, Local Government Record Keeping, Public Administration

Operations Committee

Tracey Manallack, Manager, Community Archives, PROV
 Lauren Bourke, Coordinator, Community Archives, PROV
 Dr Dannielle Orr, Heritage Planner, CoGB
 Michael Smyth, Manager, Information Management, CoGB
 Vivien Newton, Senior Librarian, GLC