

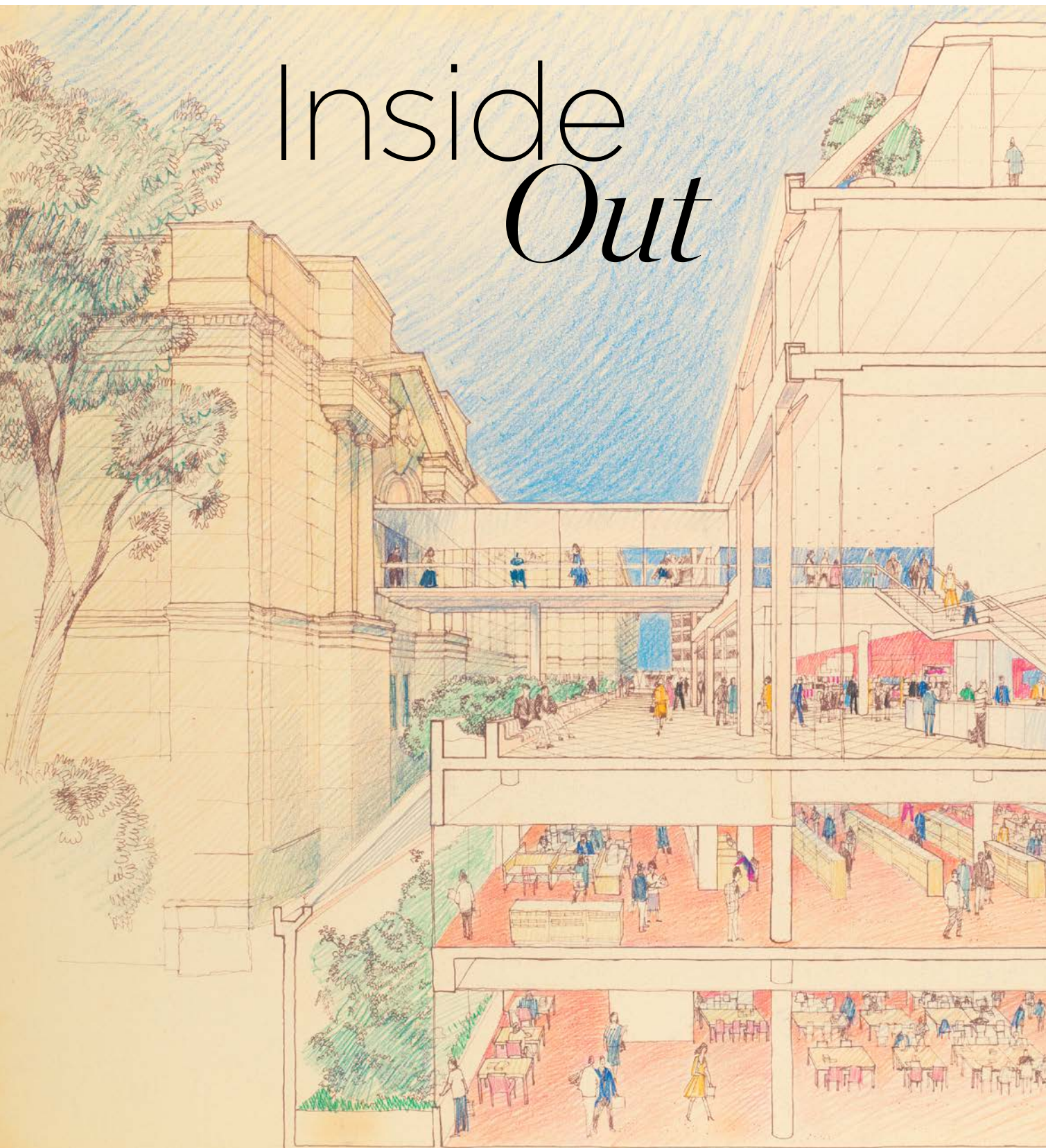
STRATEGIC PLAN

—
2019–2023



STATE LIBRARY®
NEW SOUTH WALES

Inside *Out*





SKETCHBOOK OF DRAWINGS OF MITCHELL LIBRARY READING ROOM, BY JOHN BOKOR, 2015, PXA 2124

The Library acknowledges the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, the traditional custodians of the land on which this library stands.

We pay respect to Aboriginal Elders both past and present, and extend that respect to other First Nations visitors.

We celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal cultures and languages across NSW.

FROM THE STATE LIBRARIAN

Modern institutions are expected to know what they stand for and where they are headed.

Of course this is impossible. Institutions cannot think, but those of us who work in them can and must. Modern managerialists tend to call this kind of thinking 'strategic'.

The concept of a strategy is ultimately a military one. It connotes some kind of plan or plans aimed at achieving difficult but desirable goals. The Spartan conquest of Athens, the Persian conquest of the Greek States, the Roman conquest of Gaul. (There are probably better, less controversial, examples but these are at least far enough away in time to make the point without causing unnecessary division.)

What we have tried to avoid at all cost in this new strategy for the Library is a bland and banal series of warm and self-congratulatory statements. After consultations with well over two hundred members of the Library staff, a remarkable consensus has emerged. It's a consensus with which I agree strongly.

The mission of the Library, the reason we work here, has been summarised in these terms:

The State Library of NSW collects and preserves materials and evidence relating to our place in the world and makes them accessible to everyone in New South Wales and beyond. The Library exists in order to support and encourage research, debate, conversation, inspiration, learning and enjoyment. We welcome all people and strive to serve them all equally well, whether they visit us in person on Macquarie Street, online, or through their local public library.

The consultation process has revealed that we agree on some specific areas where we need to improve. These areas form the strategic focus of this document, and might be organised like this:

1. We need to improve the experience of visitors and readers.
2. We need to expand our audiences both at Macquarie Street and beyond, with a special emphasis on people in Western Sydney and regional areas.
3. We need to improve our staff culture to the point where all people who work here are treated with respect, supported, and can take responsibility for what they do.

In short, our overarching strategic aim is to turn the Library inside out so that it fully faces and serves our community. This document sets out key initiatives only. Colleagues will inevitably have their own ideas about how we might best achieve these goals and are encouraged to develop them.

Support for public libraries in NSW is a core statutory obligation of the Library. A strategic review of the State Library's obligations in this area will form the subject of a separate document.

DR JOHN VALLANCE



THE STATE LIBRARIAN, SELF-PORTRAIT, 2019



WHAT ARE WE HERE TO DO?

The State Library of NSW exists in order to collect, preserve and support access to materials that enrich people's lives

GROUNDING PRIORITIES

The Library is grounded by the following priority areas, in which we will continue to deliver and improve as we embark on new strategic directions.

COLLECT

The Library collects the documentary heritage — in the broadest possible sense — of people and communities in the ever-changing state of New South Wales. Printed books are at the heart of the collection, but the Library goes beyond this. This involves acquiring the state's published material, government publications and selected unpublished material including pictures, maps, manuscripts and photographs. Equally, we collect a range of material to meet the needs of people throughout New South Wales, often in partnership with public libraries.

As an increasing proportion of original material and publications is in digital form, we are expanding our capacity to collect electronically. Our ability to collect websites, social media, digital publications, and unpublished born-digital formats is continually evolving.

We aim to collect the work of individuals and communities that are underrepresented in the collection. This includes the perspectives of Indigenous Australians. An additional emphasis is on people within culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

We collect material of contemporary relevance so that today's world is well-documented for future research and inquiry.

PRESERVE

We preserve the material in our collections to ensure its security and accessibility for future generations. This is achieved through best-practice storage and handling, digitisation, and conservation. As part of our commitment to preserve and protect collection material, we invest in the best possible conservation facilities.

Digital assets are stored sustainably with sufficient growth capacity. As much of our physical collection as possible is securely stored onsite. We aim to partner with other collecting institutions to find collaborative and efficient future storage strategies.

ACCESS

For the Library to achieve its mission — to support and encourage research, debate, conversation, inspiration, learning and enjoyment — people need to be aware of, and understand how they can access what we have to offer. Above all, we aim for our collections, services and programs to be readily accessible and used.

We provide access to our collections through arrangement and description, reading room services, digitisation, digital platforms, interlibrary and exhibition loans, fellowships and residencies. Exhibitions, learning services and public programs, featuring our collections and other content, are presented onsite and throughout the state.

We support access which informs culture, language and history revitalisation for Indigenous communities in New South Wales. We engage with multicultural communities to support access to materials that are representative of their lives and languages.

Access to Library spaces is provided for people to think, meet and work freely.



PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Public libraries form a major statutory focus for the Library under the terms of the *Library Act 1939*. We partner with public libraries to support and improve their services for the people of New South Wales. This includes the administration of government funding and providing advice relating to building design, collections, internet connectivity, community programs, and the development of standards and guidelines. We work with the public library network to share collections of community language material, electronic content, and materials in formats accessible to people with disability.

ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT

The Library's work is supported by recruitment processes and employment practices which ensure we have highly skilled staff who are supported by quality learning and development programs. We coordinate and work with our volunteers, who provide us with important assistance.

We ensure compliance with financial and legislative obligations, manage assets and risk, and structure budgets to ensure the best possible results from our allocated resources. Revenue is generated to support our work through internal activities such as retail, venue hire, and public programs. Our Foundation partners with benefactors, family foundations and corporate groups through a diversified and sustainable fundraising program.

The Library uses digital technologies to support and expand our services to readers and visitors. Our digital systems, practices, and skills are in constant development. We actively collaborate and experiment with new digital technologies to benefit our readers, visitors and staff.

Our physical and digital infrastructure is maintained to be safe, reliable and secure. New spaces and facilities are built in order to support projects and initiatives.

The Library's corporate records are organised, maintained and made accessible to staff to inform our work and decision-making.

We collaborate with external organisations and professional bodies to strengthen the broader role of libraries within society.



WHERE IS THE LIBRARY HEADED?

A library where you don't need to fit in to belong

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

As part of our overarching aim to turn the Library inside out, our strategic priorities are focused on the needs of the public. Rather than asking our readers and visitors to fit in by understanding how we work, we want to understand how they work, and realise our vision of becoming a library where you don't need to fit in to belong. This sense of belonging extends to our staff, who can take full ownership of their work and contribute freely.

PUT THE READER AND VISITOR FIRST

We aim to put readers and visitors at the centre of everything we do.

When people visit our Library or their public library, through blended onsite and online experiences, we want them to feel connected. They will experience positive first points of contact, and be guided towards what they are looking for, or towards offerings of which they are not yet aware.

Key initiatives:

- Establish a welcoming front-of-house presence with knowledgeable and friendly staff in open and inviting entrance spaces
- Improve the online search experience for our readers and visitors
- Make it easier to navigate the Library both physically and online
- Engage with our readers and visitors to find ways of improving our services
- Reduce barriers to entering Library spaces and increase seating capacity for readers
- Improve ways of connecting our services and programs with the interests of readers and visitors
- Make better use of the space outside the Library
- Improve the capacity of public libraries to meet community needs

Markers of success:

- Growth in onsite and online visitation
- Increased satisfaction with the visitor experience
- Increased visitor engagement
- Increased satisfaction with responsiveness to visitor feedback

EXPAND OUR AUDIENCES

We aim to reach new audiences.

The Library is increasingly well-connected with academics, family and local historians, learned societies, schools and universities. From this central foundation we aim to diversify our audiences and become a more responsive and relevant institution. Specifically, we aim to reach young audiences, culturally diverse audiences, Indigenous communities, and people who are not yet aware of what the Library can offer them.

Key initiatives:

- Develop our collection to be representative of the cultural diversity of communities in New South Wales
- Develop our exhibitions, publications, public programs, and specialist services for readers, to reach the widest possible audiences
- Create new spaces and services for children and young adults
- Ensure adequate acknowledgment of Traditional Owners
- Support digital platforms for Indigenous communities, public libraries and collecting organisations to manage and support access to their own collection material
- Work to make our collections discoverable on an increasingly wide range of platforms
- Partner with new patrons and donors to fund targeted initiatives in the Library
- Provide access to materials, exhibitions and public programs that serve the needs of people in New South Wales outside Sydney
- Enable Indigenous voices in collections, exhibitions and public programs



Markers of success:

- Continued growth of collecting in community languages and accessible formats in addition to collection development in traditional areas of strength
- Increased variety of public programs and exhibitions developed to attract expanded audiences
- Increased number of new donors, Library friends and readers
- Growth in visitation to dedicated spaces for children and young adults

STAFF CULTURE

We aim to work in an environment where all staff are free to express ideas and are connected by a common purpose.

Staff at the Library have an appetite to expand their knowledge, collaborate and take responsibility for what they do. We seek to foster a culture based on respect, support and responsibility, in which staff are comfortable to make their own contributions. We will increase our capacity to be a highly capable and self-sufficient workforce.

Key initiatives:

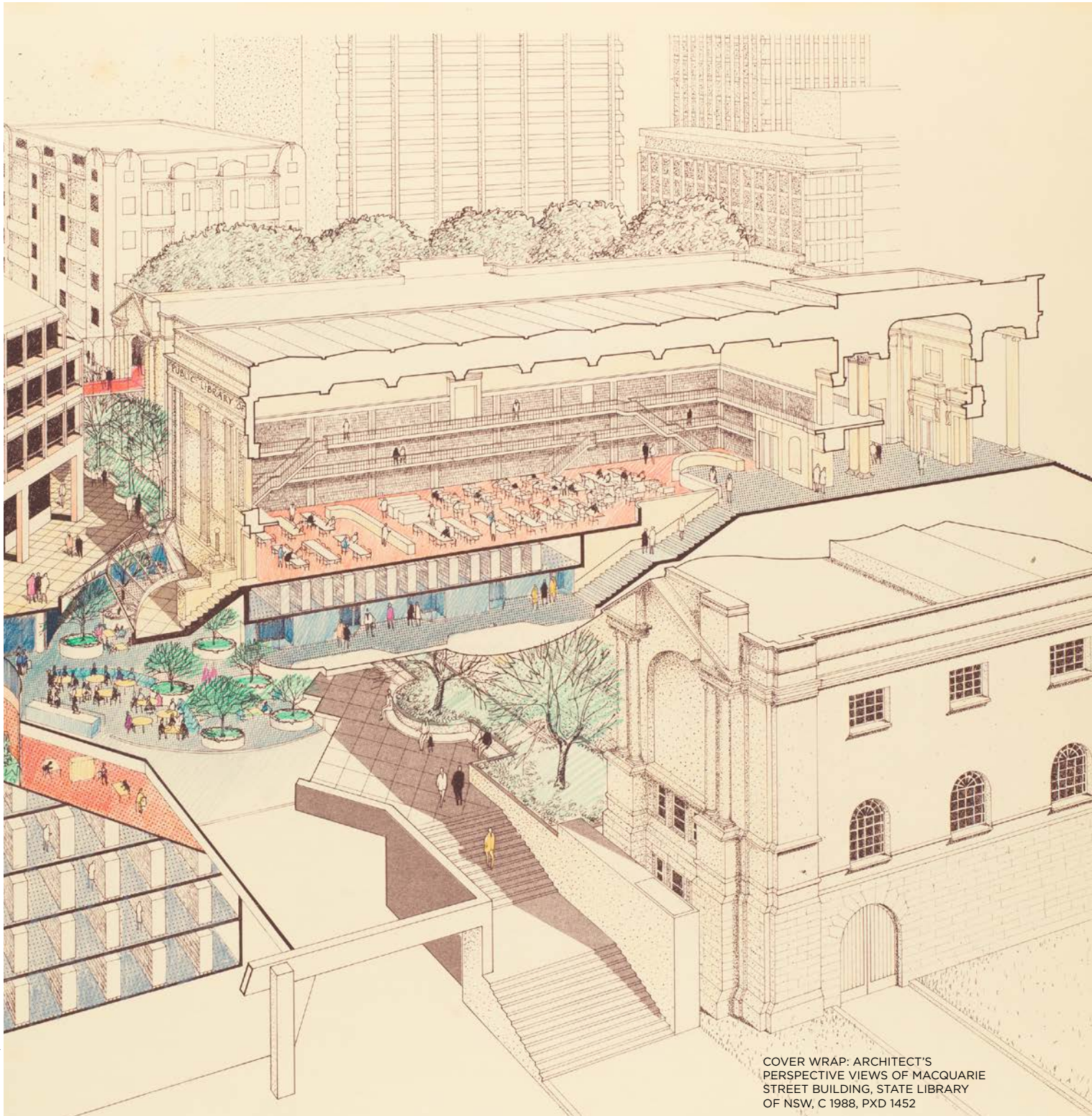
- Improve the Library's leadership and management capability
- Develop mechanisms through which staff can propose ideas to improve the ways we work and serve the public
- Foster genuine recognition of meaningful progress towards the Library's strategic priorities
- Cultivate a workplace based on mutual respect, good faith, and understanding of people's cultures and perspectives
- Invest in staff development and capacity to undertake projects in-house
- Improve avenues for collaboration and internal communication across the organisation at all levels
- Reduce administrative burden by simplifying processes and avoiding duplication

Markers of success:

- Increased staff engagement
- Increased staff confidence in management and leadership
- Improved communication and collaboration between divisions and branches

The preparation of this document has been overseen by Michael Carney, Nathan Bird, Rachel Imms and Olwen Pryke. It was approved, with minor amendments, by Library Council on 16 April 2019. It is anticipated that the document will be reviewed annually, with a major review in five years.

Macquarie Street Sydney NSW 2000
Telephone: (02) 9273 1414
Email: enquiries.library@sl.nsw.gov.au
www.sl.nsw.gov.au



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COVER WRAP: ARCHITECT'S
PERSPECTIVE VIEWS OF MACQUARIE
STREET BUILDING, STATE LIBRARY
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