



WELCOME

Welcome to the latest issue of *In the Libraries*! It's been another jam-packed few months for libraries across New South Wales. There are some fantastic new library spaces, with extensions, refurbishments and new mobiles out on the road. School holidays and Youth Week saw some great activities for young people and, as always, libraries continued to provide interesting and engaging programs and services for their communities.

In the Libraries is published quarterly and welcomes submissions from public libraries across NSW. Please [submit your articles here](#) (maximum of 150 words) and don't forget to include a photo.

Note: *In the Libraries* is a companion to [Public Library Services eNews](#), which features short articles about the work of Public Library Services at the State Library.

LIBRARY SPACES

From little things, big things grow at Wingham



Our library at Wingham has grown from a modest 104 square metres into a spacious library of 500 square metres, thanks to a State Library infrastructure grant.

The grant funded the installation of a small passenger lift, making the upper floor of the 1907 heritage building a fully accessible meeting and events space. The room has been fitted out with Zoom Room technology, collaboration furniture and wireless connectivity. The new facility was showcased at the recent Sydney Writers' Festival Live & Local streaming event. This was the first time MidCoast Libraries had been able to host the SWF at Wingham.

Space for collections has also nearly doubled with a ground floor extension to the existing library. The new shelving layout invites browsing and showcases retail style stock display, while new relaxation furniture can be found in quiet reading nooks.

The grand reveal was held on Saturday 4 March, which coincided with the 60th birthday of Wingham Library.

Image: *The reopening of Wingham Library, attended by Mayor Claire Pontin and community members.*

Lisa Greenwood, MidCoast Libraries

Wollondilly Library launches new community lounge



Almost 750 people braved the bad weather in Picton on Saturday 29 April to attend the launch celebration of Wollondilly Library's freshly renovated and extended top floor. Over 100 people of all ages designed their own library bags and more than 50 kids contributed to the interactive art mural. A highlight was the author talk by Wollondilly Woman of the Year, Marjo Hallowell, and the Welcome to Country by Aunty Glenda Chalker.

[The Gail Dunn Community Lounge](#), a new space made possible by a Public Library Infrastructure Grant, includes a meeting room that community members can book, as well as large tables and nooks to study and work in. This beautiful new community space is named after Gail Dunn, the Library's Team Leader who served the Wollondilly community for 20 years and sadly passed away in 2021.

Image: Visitors designing their own library bags during the celebration.

Amy McCann, Wollondilly Library



Port Stephens Mobile Library refurbishment

The [Port Stephens Mobile Library](#) recently underwent a refurbishment, made possible thanks to a Public Library Infrastructure Grant from the State Library of NSW. A mobile library in the form of a semitrailer is becoming quite rare and we were keen to give our truck a more vibrant look and feel, along with extending the lifespan of the vehicle.

We engaged two local street artists, Jordan Lucky and Dan Bianco, to create an original artwork for the exterior of the trailer. The feedback on the exterior has been overwhelmingly positive. We aspired to provide a fresher, brighter and more welcoming interior for our customers. To do so, joinery, carpet, lighting and computer equipment were all replaced, and safety components improved.

Customers have been very excited to experience the new artwork and the improved interior comfort.



Lake Macquarie welcomes first library museum

The Hunter Region welcomed its first library museum with the opening of Lake Macquarie's [Sugar Valley Library Museum, kirantakamyari](#) in April, replacing the former Edgeworth Library.

The word kirantakamyari means 'north creek' in Awabakal and refers to the traditional name of the Cameron Park area. Kirantakamyari is also the cultural name for the new facility, a feature that is afforded to all of Lake Macquarie's cultural facilities.

The new state-of-the-art facility features an immersive and engaging exhibition space alongside a contemporary library filled with multimedia technology and multi-use spaces.

The venue offers visitors a glimpse into the rich history of West Wallsend and its surrounds, highlighting the area's compelling history. The exhibition on display includes objects, immersive experiences and a virtual reality simulation of an underground coal mine.

Image: *New exterior artwork, Port Stephens Mobile Library.*

Image: *Sugar Valley Library Museum.*

Gillian Wilson, Lake Mac Libraries

Kris Abbott, Port Stephens Library

Buzz in the Burwood Hub



Burwood Library's reactivation of the Hub has created a buzz in the community with a range of exciting creative programs.

STEAM has been a central focus of our programs for children 3–5 years, juniors 5–8 years, kids 8–12 years, and seniors 55+ years. Kubo, spheros, merge cubes and coding have unlocked creativity and curiosity. *Playtime for Grownups* has populated the library with artists sharing participatory activities and storytime for adults. *Plant Doctors* spotlights plant experts sharing their knowledge with local

plant enthusiasts and participants can trade plant cuttings. *Midnight Hours* supports HSC students offering after-hours study space, tutoring services and mock-exams.

The Burwood Bubble Tea Walking Tour has been putting feet on the pavement. Using a customised map, the tour highlights six bubble tea shops, to showcase and celebrate the unique milk tea culture in Burwood.

More exciting activities will follow with the [Burwood Arts Prize 2023](#), a new walking tour and a creative libraries forum.

Image: *Alan Chan, visiting plant doctor, sharing knowledge on house plants and terrariums*

Ailsa Liu, Burwood Library



Launching library unplugged at Campbelltown

During the Ingleburn Alive Festival, Campbelltown City Library officially launched Library Unplugged, our brightly coloured fully electric vehicle. It caught the eye of many, and staff had a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate and chat about the various collections, events and services we offer. Robotic items from our Discovery Collection, and colouring-in with the QuiverVision App proved very popular.

Funded by a Public Library infrastructure Grant, and powered by a new Renault Kangoo, Library Unplugged will initially be



Tura Marrang Library Courtyard upgrade

Bega Valley Shire Library is celebrating the completion of the courtyard upgrade at Tura Marrang Library. Funding received from the State Library of NSW Public Library infrastructure Grants program has enabled this project, providing an attractive and functional new area for library patrons looking to work, relax or play.

The upgrade took 10 months to complete and includes new plants in raised garden beds, a large feature tree which will eventually provide shade and green space, a wave shade structure, steel decorative panels, upgraded outdoor furniture and a

visiting a wide range of facilities, schools and events. This fully-electric van is a step in achieving Council's net-zero emissions target and is charged by power generated through solar panels on the roof of the H J Daley Library.

We are really excited to hit the road and be seen more in our community.

Image: *The launch of Library Unplugged.*

Wayne Monkley, Campbelltown City Library Service

Masterkidz STEM outdoor activity wall with soft-fall mats. This has already been a huge hit with the local children.

Feedback has been extremely positive and library staff are noticing an increase in people coming into the library to visit and use the courtyard space. Our thanks to the State Library of NSW for making the grant possible.

Image: *The revitalised Tura Marrang Library courtyard.*

Cat McLean, Bega Valley Shire Library

Extended hours access at Strathfield Library



In October 2022, Strathfield Library piloted [Extended Hours Access \(EHA\)](#) to the library, providing access for the community when the library would traditionally be shut including after hours, weekends and public holidays.

Strathfield Library is located in a residential area and the program was tailored to provide access for the community with consideration to the local residents. There is CCTV, duress alarms, first aid kits and rangers who patrol the library and lock up.

Extended Hours Access is available for use to those who join up as members. Scanning your library card generates a two-factor identification via SMS to a mobile device and enables entry to the library.

This Extended Hours Access pilot program has proven popular, with 47% of people signing up for access being new members. The program with further extended hours will commence from 1 July 2023.

Image: *Extended hour access entry scan.*

Pete Main, Strathfield Library

LITERARY EVENTS

One Book One Wagga celebrates 10 years!

19 May 2023 marked the tenth anniversary of [One Book One Wagga!](#) It has become Wagga's largest book club, where hundreds of locals read the same novel, and then gather for a gala dinner with the author. This year we were delighted to feature the 2023 Age Book of the Year winner *Limberlost* by Robbie Arnott. The evening was filled with delicious food, great company and an engrossing conversation where Robbie humbly shared stories about his writing and inspiration.

Over the last 10 years, Wagga City Library's One Book One Wagga has featured such writers as Alice Pung (*One Hundred Days* — shortlisted for the 2022 Miles Franklin Literary Award),



Michelle de Kretser (*The Life to Come* — Miles Franklin Literary Award 2018 winner), and Sofie Laguna (*The Eye of the Sheep* — Miles Franklin Literary Award 2015 winner). We are looking forward to what the next 10 years will bring!

Image: *Limberlost* author Robbie Arnott in conversation at the gala dinner.

Beth Harrison, Wagga Wagga City Library



In Your Neighbourhood with Sydney Writers' Festival at Inner West

Inner West Libraries once again teamed up with the Sydney Writers' Festival to bring Australia's most beloved celebration of literature to the Inner West. We hosted Will Kostakis who discussed his latest novel for young adults, *We Could Be Something*, and journalist Margaret Simons who discussed her book *Tanya Plibersek: On Her Own Terms*.

The events are part of the In Your Neighbourhood program at Sydney Writers' Festival which brings the premier literary festival to the suburbs. This partnership, which is now more than 10 years old, gives us the opportunity to reach to new audiences and showcase our public libraries.

Image: *Will Kostakis at Marrickville Pavillion.*

Claire MacReady, Inner West Libraries



A conversation about gender diversity at Albury

The Write Around the Murray festival and the Albury LibraryMuseum recently hosted five incredible authors and thinkers for a [conversation](#) about gender diversity. Editors Yves Rees and Sam Elkin chatted to authors Liz Duck-Chong, Jack Nicholls and Anastasia Le, inspiring audience members with readings from their new anthology, *Nothing to Hide*. The event finished with a Q&A which allowed LGBTQIA+ people and their allies to ask tough and personal questions in a safe space.

This event was thought provoking, entertaining and a testament to how public libraries can support our communities, particularly in rural and regional areas.

Image: *Nothing to Hide launch.*

Elise Fletcher, Albury LibraryMuseum

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Bland Shire Library annual author visit outstanding success

For more than 20 years, Bland Shire Library has engaged a children's author and/or illustrator for an annual five-day residency.

This year, Melbourne-based children's author and illustrator, Andrew Plant [toured the Bland Shire from 27–31 March](#). Andrew conducted 20 sessions over the five days, speaking to nearly 700 students from Kinder to Year 10 across nine schools.

Andrew was totally engaging, captivating his audiences with his energy, humour, and unmeasurable enthusiasm for storytelling. His passion for writing and illustrating children's



Image: Bland Shire Library staff with author/illustrator Andrew Plant.

books was demonstrated through his animated readings, interactive group discussions and drawing exercises.

The annual author visit, which the library budgets for each year, fosters a community learning culture. It encourages reading for fun, motivates reluctant and struggling readers, improves writing confidence and inspires students to be creative. Discussing writing and the creative process with an author also assists students to connect with the written word in entirely new ways.

Cathy Lange, Bland Shire Library

Learn out loud with Snowy Monaro Regional Library's Giggle and Bounce



Giggle and Bounce, the Snowy Monaro Regional Library's new literacy-through-song program for 0–5 year olds, has kicked off with a bang!

Meeting weekly at Cooma Library and Jindabyne Library, [Giggle and Bounce](#) provides the youngest members of our community with time to have fun, and aims to develop their pre-literacy skills critical to learning to read and write.

Ira Hendriks (Cooma Library) and Sarah Forsdyke (Jindabyne Library) created the 30-minute program, drawing inspiration from programs available in major city libraries. The program has become an opportunity for parents and carers to connect with their child, strengthen local networks, and become familiar with resources available at their local library.

Image: Sarah Forsdyke sings 'Row Your Boat' with the *Giggle and Bounce* group at Jindabyne Library.

Nicola Taylor, Snowy Monaro Regional Library

Parkes Shire Library's Library Ambassador Program



The Library Ambassador program started as a trial with one school in 2018. In 2022, all five local schools and the Home School Community in Parkes were involved. In 2023 the program was extended to the villages across the Parkes Shire and there are now 15 Library Ambassadors.

The Ambassador program develops a relationship between Parkes Shire Libraries and local school communities. The students develop skills in public speaking, communications and using the library. Ambassadors are responsible for sharing information to their school community about events, activities, competitions and exhibitions at Parkes Shire Libraries and the Marramarra Makerspace.

Registered Library members in year 5 can apply to be an Ambassador. Applicants need to explain why they believe they would be excellent Ambassadors. Successful students are presented with their Library Ambassador badges at an official ceremony. Each year several of the past Ambassadors have moved into leadership roles within their school in year 6.

Image: Parkes Shire Library's Peak Hill Branch Library Ambassadors are pictured with staff member Jodi.



A true celebration of youth at Whitlam Library

Youth Week at Whitlam Library was full of opportunities for young people to play and have fun, but perhaps most importantly, provided the opportunity to have their thoughts, views and life experiences heard.

The Human Rights Leadership Forum, co-presented by Human Rights Commissioner Lorraine Finlay, and human rights advocate and educator Hugh Kingsley, aimed to empower young people and acknowledge their contribution to society. The forum made use of The Human Rights Game, providing a fun and safe way to debate and discuss relevant human rights issues.

The forum provided the opportunity for students to engage directly with their local Department of Education representative, to share their views about human rights, while supported by the Whitlam Library's commitment to the growth and development of the cohort.

Image: Students from Fairvale High taking part in the Human Rights Leadership Forum.

Dianne Thai, Fairfield City Open Libraries



Youth Week Movie Night at Queanbeyan

Queanbeyan Library recently collaborated with Council's Community team and CDAT (Community Drug Action Team) to host a fun wellbeing night for Youth Week. Many local organisations came to engage with the youth



Youth Week at Sutherland Shire Libraries

Sutherland Shire Libraries rolled out the red carpet for teens for this year's Youth Week with a series of events to entertain, engage and educate. Teen sleuths gathered to solve a murder mystery, left their art skills at the door for a bad art workshop, and took over the library for a night of retro games, video gaming tournaments, pizza and slushies.

While many laughs (and snacks) were shared over the week, we also tackled more serious topics with our *Periods, Pain and Endometriosis* program. Conducted by the Pelvic Pain Foundation of Australia, the aim of the session was to empower girls, women and people assigned female at birth by teaching them how to recognise, identify and manage pelvic pain and shatter the stigma.

Offering teens something creative and a bit different led to great engagement. This was encouraging to see and effectively adds to libraries being inclusive spaces for young people.

Image: Teens exhibit their artworks from the Bad Art Workshop during Youth Week.

Siobhan Graham, Sutherland Shire Libraries



School holidays and Youth Week at Yass

What a busy month April was here in Yass Valley. Between the school holidays and Youth Week events, it was hard to tell which event happened when. Our community participated in events such as archery, how

through games and activities including Bernardos, Headspace, Grand Pacific Health and Southern Tablelands Arts. The library brought awareness to responsible drinking using the [Know Your Standards kit](#).

We topped the night off with a pizza dinner and watched Taryn Brumfitt's *Embrace Kids* documentary which helps children decode the ways that social media, celebrity culture, and the diet and fitness industries influence how we feel about our bodies.

Image: *Watching Embrace Kids at Youth Week Movie Night.*

Emma Ciechen, Queanbeyan-Palerang Libraries

to adult, arts and craft, rock climbing, movies (indoor and outdoor), beeswax wrap making, a retirement village visit and a visit from local author Jack Heath.

I can feel everyone wondering what's 'how to adult'? This included how to maintain your car, a session with a financial counsellor, a yoga session, a lesson on how to read a recipe, prepare a shopping list, set a table, and cook and serve a meal to family members, all in one day.

Image: *School holiday and Youth Week activities at Yass Valley Library.*

Erica Kearnes, Yass Valley Library

LIBRARY ACTIVITIES

Sensitive programs at The Hills Shire Library Service



The Hills Shire Library Service has introduced programs designed specifically to support neurodivergent children and their families.

Sensitive Storytime for children aged 0–5 is held weekly at Castle Hill Library, where children enjoy stories, music and dance. Staff use a felt board as a visual guide to show the different stages of the session, and social playtime to facilitate connections between families in the community.

Sensitive Library at Baulkham Hills Library is held weekly prior to opening, with phone ringers and lights lowered to enable families with neurodivergent needs to visit the library for a sensitive-friendly library experience.

April school holiday activities included a Sensitive Friendly Starr's Planetarium session and art therapy sessions. Both children and parents loved the inclusive programs with families looking forward to seeing what's on offer for the July school holidays.

Image: *Sensitive storytime felt board visual guide.*

Renea McLachlan, The Hills Shire Library Service

A taste of the Philippines at Baradine Library

Visitors to Baradine Library were treated to a presentation on Philippines culture and traditions by local Julie Nash. Originally from the Philippines, Julie delighted the audience with a story read in her native Filipino language and hosted a traditional food tasting.

This event, held during Harmony Week, was part of Macquarie Regional Library's Your Library campaign which celebrated the diversity of our communities and invited locals to share their culture and unique life experiences.



Image: Julie Nash, pictured sharing a traditional dress and other items with locals.

Sarah Tilbrook, Macquarie Regional Library

Local history documentary launch at Singleton Public Library



Singleton Public Library recently hosted the launch of the *Female Convicts of the Hunter Valley* documentary.

Seven female convicts meet at the homestead of one. A cuppa and some surface level natter progress to sharing stories of their time as household and country servants. Conditions were harsh, the hours long, the chores were heavy, tedious, and repetitive. This was the story of many, told by few.

The documentary was inspired by over 13 years of research completed by Maitland & Beyond Family History, Newcastle Family History Society, and Singleton Historical Society & Museum.

The event was attended by over 50 people, including the Singleton Mayor, and it was great to see such a tremendous turnout during what was a busy weekend of events in the region.

Image: Attendees at the *Female Convicts of the Hunter Valley* documentary launch.

Kate Robinson, Singleton Public Library

Wild picnics bring hundreds to East Maitland Library



East Maitland Library hosted a series of free community Wild Twilight Picnics, featuring family-friendly entertainment and a range of activities in collaboration with the community. The events combined entertainment with a dash of literacy and learning for a fun family night out.

Included were a llama-kissing booth and petting zoo from Sweet Valley Baby Animals, with ducks, goats, lambs and some creepy crawlies, for curious youngsters to play with and feed throughout the festivities.

The Environmental Team hosted green-themed events and tree plantings — educating children and families about sustainable living. Kids even made their own hanging herb gardens from old pipes.

A great atmosphere and live music were provided by The Quokkas. Everyone in the audience was bopping along to the Newcastle group's melodies, which were incredibly catchy and inclusive. And Auntie Michelle shared some beloved Dreamtime stories, with youngsters enjoying classics like *Why The Emu Can't Fly*.

Image: Picnic in the Park.



An exciting exhibition at Randwick City Library

We successfully launched our exciting exhibition [Tea Party in the Mayoral Garden](#) on Saturday 6 May. Artist Ruth Downes was joined by Library Manager Barbara Todes and Deputy Mayor Cr Rafaela Pandolfini, with an audience who enjoyed a garden-style tea party before a walk-through of the exhibition. The mixed-media artwork features 40 teacups and saucers with wit-tea names and unique personalities

Ruth's work was one of 30 finalists in the inaugural National Sculpture Prize at the National Gallery of Australia in 2001. It also won the People's Choice Award at the NGA and toured the United States and regional Australian galleries over the following decade. Now it's being revived at Lionel Bowen Library in Maroubra!

Image: Patrons enjoyed seeing the quirky display of teacups!

Abby Wilson, Randwick City Library



Biggest Musical Morning Tea at Ryde

On 8 May, Ryde Library hosted a [Biggest Musical Morning Tea](#) as part of our regular Musical Morning Program. A beautiful morning was had, with terrific tunes performed by The Guitar Shed, our performing group. The group was born out of the idea to gather together retired & semi-retired folk with a shared love of music to have fun and make friends. Open to all



Game on! City of Sydney launches a new tabletop games collection

A [new lending collection](#) of over 40 tabletop games has been launched by City of Sydney Libraries. The collection is based at Darling Square Library and includes popular titles like Brass: Birmingham, Mysterium, Sushi Go, Hive and Everdell. The collection aims to provide library members with engaging, social and non-screen based experiences.

There are family games and party games suitable for ages 8+. The strategy-based and thematic games have more complex rules and mature themes so are suited to older more advanced players. Each game comes with an audience age recommendation.

We look forward to hearing from our library members about their game playing experiences.

Image: Engaging entertainment that is not screen-based.

Kathryn Joss, City of Sydney Libraries



Anne Frank travelling exhibition opens at Blacktown City Libraries

Max Webber Library in Blacktown is hosting [The Story of Anne Frank](#) travelling exhibition from May to July. This exhibition tells Anne's story to a new generation and contains seven historical modules enabling visitors to identify with the personal story of Anne Frank.

levels of musical experience, the group plays pop classics from the 50s through to the 90s for the enjoyment of all.

Everyone enjoyed a cuppa with delicious morning tea, including classic scones with cream and jam, while collecting donations to support the Cancer Council. We counted up our donations and were very proud to have raised \$677. We thank the Ryde community for their generosity and community spirit in coming together for a great cause!

Image: *Ryde Library Biggest Musical Morning Tea.*

Suzanne Micallef, City of Ryde Libraries

Large-size photographs show Anne’s happy early childhood in Frankfurt, Germany, to her immigration to Amsterdam and then into hiding in the annex of Otto Frank’s office building on the Prinsengracht in Amsterdam, right in the heart of the city.

The exhibition also includes an original WWII yellow Star of David, which Dutch Jews were forced to wear, a film and a copy of Anne’s diary.

Image: *Anne Frank travelling exhibition at Blacktown City Libraries.*

Sharon Krise, Blacktown City Libraries



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