

Issue 38, September 2023

in the **libraries**

newsletter for NSW public libraries



WELCOME

Welcome to the latest issue of *In the Libraries*, where we once again showcase the great diversity of activities, programs and services provided by NSW public libraries. Highlights include celebrations and upgrades to library buildings, science in the library, and wonderful programs for young and old. A special congratulations to Woollahra Library, named as one of the seven libraries to visit worldwide.

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.

CELEBRATING LIBRARY BUILDINGS

Woollahra Library named one of 7 to visit worldwide



In late May of this year, Woollahra Library at Double Bay was named one of [7 incredible libraries to visit worldwide](#) in *Service95*, the culture and lifestyle newsletter started by Dua Lipa in 2022. It was the only library in Australia to make the list, alongside international greats like The Morgan Library in New York City and The British Library in London.

Woollahra Library at Double Bay's design took inspiration from the service's previous location in Blackburn Gardens — bringing the outside in. The listing attracted the attention of

ABC Radio Sydney's James Valentine who interviewed Library Manager Jody Rodas about the accolade. We're proud to make the list as an 'inclusive, collaborative community space designed as a garden within a library', and we're even more proud of the programs and services we offer every day.

Image: *Woollahra Library at Double Bay*

Kristiana Carden, Woollahra Libraries



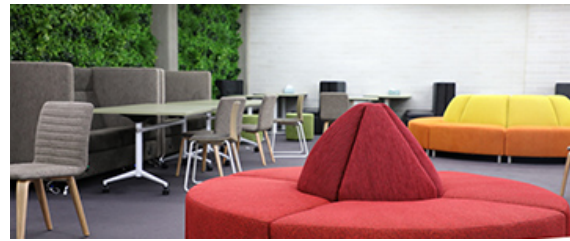
Dungog Shire Library upgrade

Dungog Library has recently undergone a major transformation, almost doubling in size. This is the most significant upgrade to the library in 40 years. The community now has access to dedicated study zones and cosy reading nooks, a brand new multi-purpose children's area that can be easily transformed into an event space with state of the art technology, and conference and meeting rooms. The new space provides a contemporary hub with a focus on creating comfortable, inviting spaces for the community to share and learn within.

The upgrade was funded by the NSW State Library infrastructure grant, an Australian Government Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program grant and Dungog Shire Council. The community response to the new upgrade has been overwhelmingly positive resulting in a significant boost to loans, visitations and new registrations.

Image: Official opening of Dungog Library

Amanda Field, Dungog Shire Library



Whitlam Library Cabramatta youth area

Thanks to a NSW State Library infrastructure grant, the Whitlam Library Cabramatta's youth area has received a makeover. The space now provides contemporary and flexible furniture to hold approximately 113 people spread out across 10 zones.

Thorough design consultation with local youth resulted in creating a more colourful, welcoming and dynamic zone, with study hubs and interactive and collaborative working spaces.

The youth area accommodates various programs, such as Youth Week forums and extended study hours for HSC students. It was vital to create a space that feels inviting and relaxed — the green wall enhances the calm environment with an alfresco vibe. At the same time, it is a space to keep up with technology — charging docks are built into the seating, there's a gaming area to sit back and relax and private reading quarters among the bookshelves.

Image: The updated youth area

Nastasija Koroneos, Fairfield City Open Libraries

Happy 20th birthday to Eagle Vale Library



The Eagle Vale Library team worked hard to organise lots of fun and engaging activities for Eagle Vale Library's 20th birthday. Held on Saturday 19 August, 400 people enjoyed making origami, launching Eagle Vale's Block Squad program, face painting, henna art, badge making, and buying from a book sale.

We held a special Book Week storytime, showcased our 3D printing, and the Mayor, Dr George Greiss, gave a speech before giving out delicious Halal birthday cake to everyone. It was so wonderful to have a great community turnout for this milestone. 'It was so well organised, the children and adults had a great time' said a local grandparent.

Image: Eagle Vale Library team past and present

Claire Oats, Campbelltown City Library

SCIENCE IN THE LIBRARY

Platypus Month at The Hills



Inspired by the discovery of platypuses in the Cattai Catchment area of Sydney's Hills district and August being Platypus Month, The Hills Shire Library Service partnered with The Hills Shire Council's Community Environment Centre and the Cattai Hills Environment Network (CHEN) to deliver two events to the local community.

The *Urban Plants: Platypus Discovery & Riverbank Restoration* workshop educated adults about this wonderful monotreme, its natural habitat and how locals can assist with

the survival of the platypus through waterway and bush regeneration initiatives.

The *Little Eco Warriors: Platypus Month* workshop brought together primary school aged children. They heard about 'Bluey' the platypus and watched a water bug activity where they discovered the importance of healthy waterways and what the platypus likes to eat.

The community loved learning about platypuses during Platypus Month and we are looking forward to watching platypuses thrive in our area.

Image: Children who attended the *Little Eco Warriors* workshop enjoyed learning all about platypuses and their habits

M O'Harae, The Hills Shire Library Service



Central Northern Regional Library launch STEM kits

In National Science Week, Central Northern Regional Library launched a STEM kit collection that is available for borrowing across the region. There are 180 kits (core kits for every branch and a selection of kits for rotation around the region).

The resources suit a wide range of ages and abilities, and all have educational outcomes. The kits include learnings in the areas of coding, electronics, physics, music, augmented reality and more.

There are electronic kits, pocket microscopes, augmented reality cubes, robots, music synthesisers, remote control paper planes etc. Each kit has an



Rhodes Science Fair returns to Canada Bay Libraries

The Rhodes Science Fair returned to City of Canada Bay Libraries on 12 August with over 480 ticketholders attending the free community event as part of National Science Week.

Attendees were treated to the Liquid Nitrogen Show and a range of drop-in activities, demonstrations and events presented by library staff, Australian Environmental Education, Fizzics Education and The Young Naturalist. This year the Fair also saw seniors from the library's Tech Shed program demonstrate robotics to families and interactive artificial intelligence

information sheet and a QR code leading to video workshops and information on how to use the kit. Additional workshops and more ideas on how borrowers can use the kits will be added over time.

Image: *STEM kits at Central Northern Regional Library*

Kay Delahunt, Central Northern Regional Library

activities, as well as the return of crowd favourite, Robot Storytime.

2023 was the second annual instalment of the Rhodes Science Fair and was supported by Inspiring Australia via the National Science Week Grant program.

Image: *Liquid Nitrogen Show (Photo by Denis Beaubois)*

Katelyn-Jane Dunn, City of Canada Bay Libraries

DIGITAL SKILLS



Intergenerational learning at Sutherland Shire Libraries

In April, Sutherland Shire Libraries partnered with the BeConnected Young Mentors program to provide an intergenerational learning opportunity aimed at increasing digital literacy. Duke of Edinburgh students were trained by library staff and paired one-on-one with older members of the community. Over six weeks, volunteers assisted them with skills, safety and confidence using digital technology. The student mentors developed skills in leadership, communication, problem-solving and emotional intelligence.

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Students said that it was extremely rewarding and they *felt comfortable instantly, like talking to my grandparents*. Older participants said they found their mentors helpful, patient and loved interaction with the younger generation. It was a great opportunity to build intergenerational connections within our community while providing digital skills to the older Australians. Everyone left with new abilities and big smiles on their faces. We've already started training our new group of mentors!

Image: *Student mentor assisting participant*



Digitising family history at Waverley Library

Waverley Library has launched a new service allowing borrowers to convert analogue media into digital formats.

The library's [Family History Digitisation Station](#) lets library members take VHS tapes, negatives, slides and photographs with treasured family memories, and turn them into digital files.

The service is completely free to use, and has proven extraordinarily popular since it launched a few weeks ago. Six introductory sessions for the station booked out instantly (even the waitlists booked out!), while borrowers have been making individual bookings to use the station in very large numbers and positive feedback has been overwhelming.

The digitisation station was extremely easy to establish — all that was required was a laptop, VHS player, video capture lead, a multi-purpose scanner, and some simple user guides. We highly recommend it as a service for all other libraries to adopt.

Image: *The digitisation station*

Christian Darby, Waverley Libraries

POP CULTURE



Little heroes, big adventures at Ryde

On Thursday 13 July, City of Ryde Libraries embraced everything pop culture at our annual Comic-Con Festival! Over 820 people stepped into character and came to Ryde Library for a day of superheroes, games, and activities. Batman and Wonder Woman launched the day with energetic dance performances that got all the little superheroes supercharged for the day.

The library was filled with VR games, personalised green screen experiences, a Jekca exhibition, crafts, 3D colouring-in, and face painting. The most popular activities of the day were the VR with everyone channelling their inner ninja, and the green screen room to dabble in the magic of special effects.

We loved seeing the library come to life with characters of all ages, from baby Batmans and Buzz Lightyears, through to our staff bringing some of the classics to life with Michelangelo, Luigi and Storm. A MARVELOUS day had by all.

Image: *Superheroes at Ryde*

Madeleine Ashton, City of Ryde Libraries



Lake Mac POP BAM Festival

Popular culture fans turned out in droves for our inaugural POP BAM Festival, with the sold-out event attracting an array of fans of all ages wearing spectacular costumes. The festival catered to enthusiasts of franchises like Star Wars, Harry Potter and Doctor Who, as well as those who love Lego, role-playing games and pop culture in general.

Featured events included swordcraft demonstrations, a lightsaber skills show, a cosplay panel covering everything from costume design to make-up, a pop culture trivia contest, Star Wars exhibition and a cosplay competition offering prizes for the best-dressed contestants. Princesses, Star Wars characters, and Ghostbusters roamed around the festival enthralling the children.

Library staff entertained hundreds of children with wizardry craft, and hosted trivia sessions which generated high attendance. The event raised Lake Macquarie's cultural profile, educating and inspiring visitors about popular culture while also encouraging repeat visitations to our libraries.

Image: *Lake Mac Libraries staff Heather and Kelly*

Gillian Wilson, Lake Mac Libraries

EVENTS, PROGRAMS AND FESTIVALS



Sowing the seeds of community engagement at Hawkesbury Library

During Library and Information Week 2023, Hawkesbury Library Service held a garden party at our Richmond Branch. It was a fun way to show off the programs and services we offer and to present our recently rejuvenated garden space to the community.

We held several activities throughout the day including a tea party, membership drive, giant chess, a pop-up book sale, and plant giveaways from our community nursery. Also on display was information from several community services, and a selection of historical photographs from our collection.

For staff, it was a novel way to interact with our community and for the community, it was a chance to learn about our service, and to chat and have a cuppa. An additional 500 extra visitors dropped into the library that day, and despite the clouds it was a great success. Richmond is truly the little branch that could!

Image: Giving away free native plants

Kate Galloway, Hawkesbury City Council Library



Seniors get active at Penrith City Library

Penrith City Libraries has expanded its program for seniors with its first-ever ongoing fitness program, the Active Ageing Group. The group meets once a week during the school term for gentle strengthening exercises, seniors' yoga, cardio and opportunities for socialisation, with current members looking forward to seeing the group grow.



Inaugural literary picnic at Port Stephens Library

In June Port Stephens Libraries held its inaugural literary picnic.

The three-day reading and writing festival boasted a fantastic program for all ages including author talks by crime novelist Janette Paul, aka Jaye Ford (*The Summer Place*) and Todd Alexander (*Over the Hill and up the Wall*).

Other great activities included a creative writing workshop for adults hosted by Paula Morrow and a children's creative writing workshop hosted by Kaz Delaney. The atmosphere at every event was one of enthusiasm and excitement, and there was no shortage of questions asked and ideas being discussed.

The feedback was positive all round — particularly from children and parents who are keen to participate in future literacy events.

Image: Todd Alexander with library team members

Kris Abbott, Port Stephens Library



McIver's Baths HERSTORY exhibition celebrates centenary in Maroubra

There's a brand-new exhibition at Lionel Bowen Library in Maroubra.

Randwick City Library is excited to showcase [McIver's Ladies Baths HERSTORY: While We Live, We Swim](#), a centenary celebration of the famous McIver's women-only baths

Penrith City Library recently hosted the Geri-Fit program, a 12-week program held in partnership with Curtin University, which provided seniors with an opportunity to get active and meet new people in a safe space. Its popularity has certainly proved that libraries can be seen as a less intimidating space for older members to exercise.

The Active Ageing Group forms a part of Penrith City Council's 5-year Library Services Strategy, which identified the opportunity to create and support accessible library programs such as fitness groups.

Image: Active Ageing Group at Penrith Library

Amanda Gitze, Penrith City Libraries



Witches, fairies and dragons at Gerringong

What an amazing night was had by all at the second annual Diagon Alley Twilight Magic Market at Gerringong Library on Friday 14 July.

Over 1000 witches and warlocks and magic-seekers came to a transformed Gerringong Library to purchase mystical wares, have their fortunes told, and to be delighted and beguiled by musicians, magicians and spooky dancers.

With over 20 market stalls (many stocked and run by local young people), atmospheric live music and free henna tattoos care of the magnificent team at SENTRAL youth services, food trucks, airbrush tattoos, a photobooth, fortune tellers, a magician, a dance troupe, cryptic games and fantastical prizes, the local community had an abundance of bewitching entertainment to enchant and delight!

The whole team at Kiama and Gerringong Libraries and SENTRAL were thrilled with

located in Sydney's picturesque eastern suburbs.

This spectacular exhibition showcases the untold stories of women who dedicated their lives to building a thriving community that has existed for 100 years. Through swimming classes, champion swimming teams, repeated vandalism at the clubhouse and constant fundraising to keep the baths open, these women (all volunteers) and their families have created a lasting tradition that will continue to serve the Randwick and Coogee communities for many years to come. The exhibition is on display until the end of September.

Image: New exhibition at Maroubra

Abby Wilson, Randwick City Library



A winter wonderland at Maitland Libraries

Maitland Libraries are flourishing, with enthralling programmes that encourage reading, writing, and creativity. In July, a joint mini-fest with CBCA Newcastle was held, including workshops and storytimes for children with local authors at all branches, concluding in a spectacular afternoon of creativity with award-winning illustrator Dub Leffler and the CBCA Newcastle illustrators.

The Maitland Aroma Festival's pop-up library stand delighted attendees with food-themed crafts, story sessions, and community interaction. The official CBCA Book Week programme in August boosted the excitement, incorporating shortlisted books into storytimes and Baby Book Clubs throughout the branches, as well as special sessions for school visits.

Acclaimed Wonnarua artist Saretta Fielding created artworks for two new library cards, which were launched at the end of Book Week in a special celebration at East Maitland Library with dance, bush tucker,

the turn out and are already planning on how to make next year's event even more extraordinary!

Image: *Which witch is which?*

Lauren Watkins, Gerringong Library

and storytimes. Members of the community were able to examine the artworks up close and grab a new card.

Image: *Saretta Fielding unveils her artworks*

Carol Edmonds, Maitland Libraries

PARENTS AND CHILDREN

Pregnancy, baby and beyond expo + ParentTV Launch at Singleton Public Library



In a first of its kind at Singleton Public Library, businesses and service providers in the pregnancy, baby and parenting space came together for a recent expo morning. These businesses and service providers were onsite to take enquiries and provide useful resources for all stages of the parenting journey.

The morning also provided an opportunity to launch the Library's exciting new digital resource, ParentTV. This resource offers hundreds of on-demand videos with over 40 ParentTV experts, including Maggie Dent, providing research-based advice on children, from infancy to the teenage years.

The aim of the morning was to create a community for mothers and families in Singleton and raise awareness of the support on offer in the region. With over 50 people in attendance the morning was a success and just the start of more programs in this space.

Image: *Stallholders space set up at Singleton Public Library*

Kate Robinson, Singleton Public Library

Board games nights at Eden Library



Eden Library's one-off Board Game and Pizza Night for Youth Week in April is now a very popular bi-monthly event for local high school students, thanks to the feedback from kids and their families. Fifteen-year-old Paddy (pictured) describes this regular event as *A growing harbour for an experience once lost.*

Games like Werewolf, Codenames, Deception and chess have been (almost) as popular as the pizza and popcorn. In between rounds, kids explore Virtual Reality and play digital air-hockey on the library's digital table.

Some participants have taken advantage of the extended opening hours to organise a library card and borrow books. We hope to continue growing this youth outreach program in the coming season.

Image: *Paddy's an ace at Deception at Eden Library's Board Games Night*

Linda Albertson, Bega Valley Shire Library



Football Fever at Lane Cove Library!

To celebrate the 2023 Football World Cup coming to Australia, author Kristin Darell and illustrator Serena Geddes came to Lane Cove Library to talk about their new books, the *Football Fever* series and *We are Matildas*, written and illustrated in partnership with Football Australia.

We had more than 110 children come visit them throughout the day, celebrating the Matildas and Socceroos, and even creating their own football playing characters!

Kristin and Serena took the kids through their processes for creating books and worked with the kids as a group to explore all the elements that go into creating a brand-new footballer from the author and illustrator perspectives.

Kids won football prizes for best dressed and could buy signed copies of the books on the day from our local independent bookseller.

Image: Our created footballer by Serena Geddes

Sara Mills, Lane Cove Library



School holidays on the road at Parkes

Parkes Shire Library staff have been enjoying travelling across rural communities to deliver school holiday activities.

School holiday activities are a popular fixture at Parkes Library and 2023 has presented staff with the opportunity to share these activities with children at branch libraries in the more remote villages of Tullamore, Trundle and Peak Hill. These villages have populations between 335 and 1,310 people.

In the April school holidays, children attended Tullamore Library to become Knights for a Day, learning about heraldry and creating their own shield. In July, children at Tullamore and Peak Hill Libraries learned about Pablo Picasso and Pro Hart and created works inspired by these artists. Parkes Library staff have been greatly encouraged by how well these programs have been received.

Image *Knights for a Day with their shield creations*

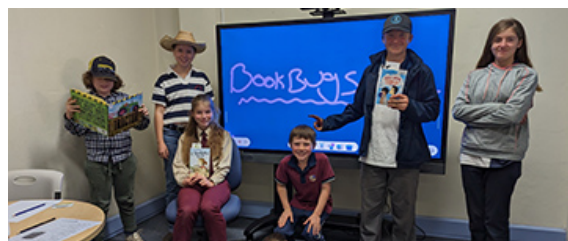
Emma Brown, Parkes Shire Library



Author shares reassuring message with Riverina readers

Regional farming communities hundreds of kilometres from the sea may not seem the obvious place to tour a book about boats, but Debra Tidball's *Anchored* was a big hit in the Riverina.

Reading has the power to take us to new and fascinating places, and that's exactly what happened when Sydney-based



Discovering the magic of reading with Book Bugs at Coonabarabran Library

We are thrilled to announce the success of our Book Bugs program at Coonabarabran, hosted by the Macquarie Regional Library.

Book Bugs is an initiative that brings together young like-minded book enthusiasts aged 8–18 to explore new titles, connect through vibrant discussions, and kindle the flames of literary excitement.

children's author Debra Tidball shared her harbourside story with our country kids. *Anchored* celebrates the connection between children and their loved ones, even when separated by distance. Debra shared her delightful picture book with hundreds of children in Gundagai, Henty, Culcairn, Jindera, Holbrook, Tumbarumba, Temora and Cootamundra over four days in August.

The children enjoyed an entertaining and interactive storytime session that featured the sounds of the harbour, games, performance poetry, stories, an inflatable boat and a fun illustration challenge. Debra's tour also attracted significant attention from local media.

Image: *Author Debra Tidball with staff at Culcairn Library*

Katrina Roe, Riverina Regional Library

Book Bugs offers a fortnightly after-school rendezvous where readers can indulge in the joy of browsing new books. It's more than just a program – it's a literary journey that fosters friendships and sparks inspiration.

To further enrich the attendees experience, we have introduced the State Library of NSW [Book Lovers Club](#) author talks as part of our sessions. It's an opportunity to delve deeper into the minds of authors, uncover their creative processes, and gain insights into the captivating stories behind the books.

Image: *Some of our book bugs*

Mohammad Istiaq Ahmed, Macquarie Regional Library



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