

13th Meeting of the Strategic Network Committee

Minutes of the meeting of 21 May 2021

Date and time	Friday 21 May 2021, 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM
Location	Leeson Room Level 1 and Online via Teams
Chair	Cameron Morley (State Library)
Members in Attendance	Samantha Fenton (SE Zone) Melanie Gurney (Sydney North Zone) Vicki Edmunds (Sydney West Zone) Robert Knight (SW Zone) Alexander Mills (CE Zone) Heather Davis (Sydney South Zone)
State Library Staff in Attendance	Philippa Scarf, Ellen Forsyth, Andrea Curr, Mylee Joseph
Guests	n/a
Apologies	Kathryn Breward (NE Zone), Pam Kelly (CW Zone)
Minutes	Samantha Mantakoun

Minutes

Item 1: Preliminary Matters

1.1 Welcome and apologies

Item 2: Minutes, Business arising and action register

2.1 The Committee reviewed the minutes of the October 2020 meeting, noting that the review of the public library statistics survey had not yet commenced, partly due COVID-19 disruptions and partly due to a review of the National and State Libraries Association (NSLA) annual statistics, which will have implications for the state statistics. The review of the NSW statistics will now be scheduled for later in 2021, and will come to the next meeting.

Item 3: Priority business

3.1 Research Projects

Making Public Spaces Everyone's Business

The Public Spaces Division in the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment is working with the State Library of NSW and the Behavioural Insights Unit to conduct a research project with the outcome of increasing access to quality public space by removing the obstacles for the community to safely use and visit libraries.

The Behavioural Insights Unit have commenced the projects with public libraries and are assisting libraries to trial and measure a behavioural change such as optimising membership and satisfaction of libraries.

There are currently 2 projects:

Project 1: Increased visitation of current inactive members - January - May 2021 (in progress)

Participating libraries:

- Bega Valley Shire Library
- Northern Beaches Libraries
- City of Sydney Library

Project 2: Increased overall membership - commencing in June 2021

Participant libraries:

- Maitland City Library
- Mid-Western Regional Council Library Service
- Wagga Wagga City Library

Diverse Children's Picture Books

The State Library of NSW is working with academics from the University of NSW and the University of Sydney to explore diversity in children's picture books. The aim of the survey is to create reading lists based on picture book suggestions from library staff throughout NSW. Specifically, Australian picture books aimed at 0 to 6-year-olds that offer diverse reading experiences.

Recent research has shown that over the last 20 years, Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) Book of the Year shortlisted books in the 'Early Childhood' (0 to 6-yr-olds) category do not reflect the diversity in Australian society. They lack diversity in representing people from different ethnic/cultural and linguistic backgrounds; Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples; gender, sex and sexually diverse people; people living with disabilities; and people from regional or rural areas.

The State Library of NSW is asking library staff to explore their wider collections (including their personal collections) and to suggest Australian picture books (for 0 to 6-yr-olds) that explore diverse characters and issues. These suggestions will then be curated into reading lists and shared widely with libraries at local councils and schools.

The State Library of NSW has decided to purchase these 120 picture books for the project/researchers, and after the project is completed, these books will then be gifted to public libraries that are needing these books.

Research article:

I see you. Do you see me? Investigating the representation of diversity in prize winning Australian early childhood picture books

Authors Helen Caple and Ping Tian

The Australian Educational Researcher (2021)

ISSN 0311-6999

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-020-00423-7>

Charles Sturt University projects

The State Library has commenced working with CSU, which is currently the only NSW university that is offering an undergraduate course in library studies. Three projects have been scoped for commencement in June 2021.

Project Titles:

- *Understanding the needs of public library users in a COVID-changed Australia*
 - The objectives of the proposed project will be forward-looking. Rather than evaluating libraries' responses to the crisis, we will instead be examining how user needs and expectations have changed,

and how public libraries can best meet those needs. We will address these objectives by conducting qualitative research with library users to answer the following overarching research question:

- How do NSW public library users envisage future public library services and programmes in COVID-changed Australia?

In addressing this research question, we will seek to answer the following sub-questions:

- What changes in the needs and expectations of users have emerged as the result of pandemic?
 - How have the needs and expectations of First Nations public library users changed as a result of the pandemic?
 - Which existing public library services, programmes and resources are most important to users, and why?
 - What potential new or expanded public library services, programmes and resources would be most beneficial to users, and why?
- The project will produce valuable evidence to inform strategic planning relating to NSW public libraries, including:
 - 1) identifying potential new programmes and services that meet the new needs of users, including First Nations users;
 - 2) suggesting how new and existing technology can best be leveraged to serve communities; and,
 - 3) understanding what new skills and capabilities are essential among library staff. The work will also fit within the Value of Public Libraries programme of research being undertaken by the CSU Libraries

- *The role of first-language reading in the wellbeing of immigrant communities*

- Research Aims: To understand the role of 'first-language reading' in the wellbeing of non-English speaking immigrants

The research questions guiding this study include:

- What is the experience of first-language reading for immigrants from non-English speaking backgrounds?
 - From where are immigrant communities accessing reading in their first languages?
 - To what extent are immigrant communities aware of public library resources in their first languages?
 - What barriers exist that limit the use of first-language public library resources
- The research will inform the research partner of the role of first language reading in the wellbeing of immigrant communities. This knowledge can be used to guide the State Library of New South Wales in developing their services and collections and the means by which they organise and facilitate retrieval of these collections, designed to meet the needs of this community group. No specific language or cultural group will be sought to participate, thereby supporting a broad interpretation of results, rather than attributing results to one community only.

- *Embracing the cultural identity of burgeoning ethnic groups in regional public libraries: A pilot project with the Punjabi Indian Community in the Riverina*

- The proposed pilot project aims to promote and embrace one burgeoning ethnic group's cultural identity through Wagga Wagga City library services in the Riverina region, NSW. This equitable and culturally inclusive approach seeks to address the collection and services offered to Punjabi Indians by introducing a collection of resources and community activities to serve various age groups based on the study participants' input.

The SLNSW aims to transfer the newly introduced collection of resources (printed assets and AV/DVD resources which have been catalogued) to the Wagga Wagga City Library for ongoing use by the community.

The research questions guiding this study include:

- What programs and services (if any) do the local Punjabi community currently use in the Riverina Regional Library?
- What programs and services does the local Punjabi Community want from the Riverina Regional Library?
- What recommendations does the local Punjabi community have in relation to the local languages collection in the Riverina Library?

More information will be shared across the network as the projects develop.

3.2 PLS Website Review

Andrea Curr presented to the Committee outlining the review and restructure of the current State Library Public Library Services (PLS) website. A survey was previously sent to the network requesting feedback regarding how to improve the website to better suit the needs of the public library network. There were a total of 123 responses comprised of 92 public library staff, 29 State Library staff.

The guiding principle for the website restructure is to ensure that the PLS website is clear, concise and easy to navigate. This will be achieved by improving and upgrading the Information Architecture (IA), engaging the web team to improve templates, and developing a consistent style guide.

The strategic priorities:

- Put the reader and visitor first - designing the website around the user
- Improving the capacity of public libraries to meet community needs - enable visitors to the site to quickly find the tools, resources, and information they need to deliver and/or improve their library services.

After reviewing and analysing the survey findings, the following next steps include:

- 1) A content audit by analysing the existing content to decide what to keep and/or remove. (In Progress)
- 2) Grouping and labelling content in categories (this is needing to be further defined)
- 3) Define navigation and create a site map
- 4) Create a writing style guide and rework content

Action

- Prior to releasing the site, user testing to take place. The team plans to take this to zone meetings and other forums for further feedback regarding a prototype approach. Calls for an EOI to be sent out, with the objective of showing a diverse audience consisting of library staff from various libraries and different levels to determine whether the changes make sense and are consistent with the direction we are wanting to achieve.

3.3 Public Library Statistics

The 2019/20 Public Library Statistics have been made available online and physical copies have been posted out to libraries. This statistical year is unique and shows a marked departure from trends of previous years due to libraries being closed for 3 months of the year.

An issue has been posed regarding whether to set benchmarks based on this year, noting that the NSW Public Library Standards are based on the statistics.

The Committee discussed whether to adjust the standards based on this anomalous COVID-19 year. A few options were canvassed including:

- Leaving the standards at 2018/19 levels until there is clarity on trends
- Average the benchmarks between 2018/19 and 2019/20

- A rolling average across 3-5 years, meaning the standards will not bounce up and down in a reactionary way.
- Seasonally adjust the three months (2019/20), as trends were fairly normal pre-lockdown.

Feedback from the Committee highlighted that the standards and guidelines are well appreciated by libraries as these are used to compare statistics within their cohort. Therefore, there is a need to be careful with how the statistics and benchmarks are created, and that standards need to be meaningful.

Cameron Morley commented that this is a difficult decision because things are still fluid, notably, visits reduced again when there was a recent change to the Public Health Orders in Greater Sydney. Behaviours of readers and visitors appear to have changed considerably. Another example is that eBook loans have had an increase, and online programming has been popular although results have varied between libraries depending on how quickly they were able to change their offerings.

Robert Knight commented that there is possibly a variation between both city and regional libraries and also suggested that the number of people who receive the vaccinations could play a part on who and how many are visiting libraries.

Melanie Gurney commented that the Northern Beaches libraries have gone back to 90% normal, however has noticed that patrons are not necessarily remaining in the libraries for long periods, except for students.

Alexander Mills commented that they have invested more in digital, and there is no intent to go back to only having physical programs. If there is, it would be a hybrid. Dual modelling may be necessary with parallel standards.

Action

The State Library will take all the above into account, and prepare a brief for the PLCC, seek wider network feedback as appropriate, and bring recommendations back to the Committee in October.

3.4 Westlit proposal

Vicki Edmunds presented the Westlit proposal and provided some background of the working group. The group was initiated to encourage future directions for Western Sydney's literary culture, with the aim to support those who wanted to read and write stories related to Western Sydney.

WestLit Libraries (WLL) leads and encourages collaboration between Western Sydney Libraries to transform our respective communities through life-long learning, innovation, networking, resource sharing and access to literature related programs and events.

Vicki is proposing to share the work of the group statewide, and it was agreed that it would be appropriate to add the group's collateral to the Public Library Wiki as a starting point.

Item 4: Other Business

4.1 Zone highlights from the Zone Secretaries

Please refer to attachment for consolidated reports.

4.2 State Library Report

Cameron Morley informed the committee about:

- The infrastructure grants round: 27 applications with 25 projects being approved. This was a low amount of applications compared to most previous years which usually fall between 48 – 68 applications. Will be promoting the new grants once the new FY begins.
- Subsidies funding will go up 10c per capita for 2021/22, and for year 2022-23, funding will go up 20c per head.
- NSW.net is upgrading Wi-Fi hotspots, and many public libraries may have been contacted by Hitech Support to date (the contractor).
- Recent Library Council visits to councils/libraries include: Green Square and Darling Square, with Naranderra and Griffith scheduled for July. Also Ellen Forsyth visited the North Coast, Mylee Joseph visited Young, Boorowa and Harden, and Cameron Morley visited Newcastle.
- The State Library NSW will be having a new auditorium built and will have capacity to fit 350 people. A new bar will also be built on the rooftop.
- Library memberships appear to have dropped across public libraries. The planned membership campaign didn't quite take off last year due to COVID-19. A membership campaign is to be relaunched in the new FY, and the State Library will collaborate with the NSWPLA as this takes shape.
- Indyreads is going well, currently working with Corrective Services in NSW to have the platform launched in prisons.
- Extra funding has been granted to Tech Savvy Seniors from the Office for Aging for next FY.
- Extended congratulations to Vicki Edmunds being the new ALIA president

Next Meeting

Date	22 October 2021
Time	11:00AM - 1:00PM
Location	State Library and online

NSWPLA CENTRAL EAST ZONE

Report to Strategic Network Committee 21 May 2021

Regional Agreements changes across Hunter Libraries

- The Upper Hunter Shire Libraries Network has officially split into two Shire Library Services. The Upper Hunter Shire Libraries (Scone, Aberdeen, Cassilis, Merriwa and Murrurundi) and Muswellbrook Shire Libraries (Muswellbrook and Denman).
- Shared LMS and all digital collections has been ratified as a consortium with the Upper Hunter Shire Libraries, Muswellbrook Shire Libraries and Singleton Library.
- Newcastle Libraries, Port Stephens Library and Dungog Shire Library have commenced the review of the expired Regional Library Agreement.

Library Infrastructure Works

- Scone Library will be relocated as part of the Scone CBD revitalisations plan into the ground floor of Campbells Corner building main street. 730 square metres, double current library footprint. At planning stage.
- Lambton Library is closed for refurbishment and will open in June 2021 for the 150-year anniversary of the Lambton suburb.
- Wangi Wangi Library closed for refurbishment to become an expanded community hub. Adopting a higher self-service model. Much larger space.
- New Windale Community Hub announced - \$6million development. Aiming for breaking ground mid-2021.
- New Sugar Valley Library Museum announced – Aiming for mid-2022 – focus on local history and a very modern library space.
- Cessnock branch lift upgrade complete resulting in increased accessibility
- Kurri Community Centre and Library reopened after major roof works which has increased library usage
- Newcastle Libraries launched the Digitisation Lab (DigiLab) to secure the digital preservation of Newcastle Library Heritage Collection and create new opportunities for the Hunter region libraries, museums and aboriginal keeping places to preserv the regions story. \$80k State funding supported the purchase of a Cobra Semi-Robotic Scanner and \$120 local funding provided the Labs construction. Additional \$170,000 local funding has been secured to enhance the lab with a fully robotic mass digitisation robot.
- Newcastle West Digital Library had 25,000 people through the door in first 5 months with Covid Impact.
- Muswellbrook is establishing a library gallery space and calling for community artists exhibitions with a expression of interest process.
- Cessnock Library and Kurri Kurri Library have rolled out a solar panel system and are generating 80% of the library power from the panels.
- Maitland and Newcastle Libraries are both currently planning towards integrated community infrastructure for the next 20 years. Both Councils road maps are in drafted and pending concept plans.

Marketing & Engagement

- Newcastle Libraries Satisfaction survey undertaken – gathered longitudinal data and the future library infrastructure questions on co-location and sites. Achieved 94% satisfaction rating, remained mid 90% for the last 6 years. Key take away around greening our libraries, shared collections and co-located sites, improvement priorities the digital customer experience.
- Newcastle Libraries undertook a project to develop Customer Personae profiles to create a reference for user centred design.
- The Muswellbrook Shire Libraries and Cessnock Library have both refreshed their brands and rolled out new websites
- Newcastle Libraries have adopted a Net Promoter Score or NPS, as a marketing tool used to measure people's loyalty towards a company or a brand and their willingness to recommend the company or brand's products to other people. An average score is +32. Newcastle Libraries face to face service received a score of 61, an outstanding result, and an Online service score of 12 and identified area for improvement.

Partnerships

- Podcast Festival delivered with a focus on strengthening the Hunter podcaster ecosystem and leveraging the new oral storytelling medium of podcasting. Almost 400 participants at workshops across the week. More than 200 podcasters got involved. Developed on collaboration with Newcastle Podcast Station. Newcastle Libraries reconciliation week podcast 'Newcastle's First Storytellers' was publicly voted Podcast of the Year at the Podcast Awards.
- Building on the last 2 years collaboration, Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Maitland and Port Stephens Libraries are joining forces in a bid to refresh the Hunter region's poetry scene by offering a program of workshops and special events to both emerging and more experienced poets across the region. The 'Stand Up for Poetry' program, led by Newcastle Libraries, is designed to promote a deeper appreciation of written and spoken word poetry by encouraging poetic expression, written and performance skills development. The program will deliver skills development workshops and special events, as well as slam poetry town heats as part of the Australian Poetry Slam. Four poets, one representing each Local Government Area, will be selected to contribute towards program planning and evaluation, in order to encourage community input into the development of the poetry program. Each poet will receive a paid honorarium to contribute their ideas to develop the program.
- Singleton Library have partnered with the University of Newcastle and Arts & Cultural Specialists on a 'Living Laneways Activation' project starts next week in collaboration with Newcastle University. Exploring how creative consultation projects can enhance strategic planning with mediums like shadow-grams or community interactive murals with outreach into public spaces.

Acknowledgment

- Singleton Library were highly commended at the PLA Award for their work during Covid
- Congratulations to Keryl Collard who has joined the NSW Public Library Council, is the new chair of the Public Libraries Consultative Committee.

South Sydney Zone Report May 2021

PANDEMIC RECOVERY

City of Sydney

- Library Venues resumed hiring on 1 March after almost a year of suspended services due to Covid-19 restrictions. A high volume of enquiries were received during March, with 25% of these enquiries converting into bookings for library venues and steady hire in the following months.
- In May the City permanently abolished overdue fines for library users following a successful 4 year trial period. The permanent removal of overdue fines supports the City's Community Recovery Plan and other City strategies, supporting equitable access and participation and addressing inequality within the community.

Georges River

- **Library Fines Amnesty**

Georges River Libraries implemented a library fines amnesty from 3 May 2021 – 30 June 2021.

During this amnesty, library members will have the opportunity to clear unpaid fines with a \$1.00 donation. All donations collected as part of this amnesty will go to the [Indigenous Literacy Foundation](#), a national charity dedicated to lifting literacy levels in remote Indigenous communities.

Waverley

- The Library returned to 7 day per week operations with evening opening hours in February. Though still quieter than pre Covid, a slow return to normal activity is being observed. Face to face programming recommenced in March, with our creative craft programs and film and book discussion groups as popular as ever.

COLLECTIONS

City of Sydney

- In March over 3000 electronic magazines and over 1000 electronic comics were transferred from the RB Digital platform to the Libby (Overdrive) platform.

Randwick

- Bestseller collection has been rolled out to Margaret Martin and Malabar Libraries.
- Randwick Library's eNewsletter now has over 45K subscribers

Waverley

- Waverley has engaged International Conservation Services (ICS) to complete an audit of the Local History Collection and develop a digitisation strategy. Research and Initial workshops have been completed with a final report due in June.

PROGRAMS

City of Sydney

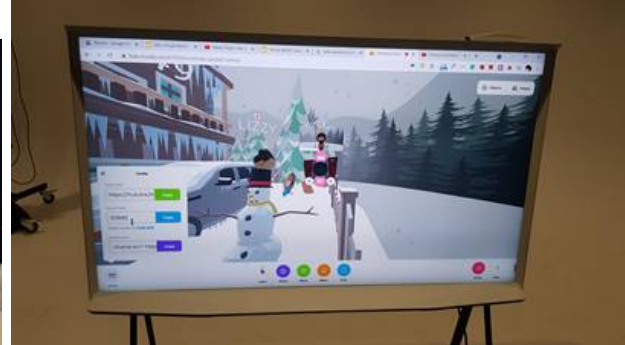
- Face to face Rhymetime and Storytime, including Bilingual and Mandarin sessions resumed at Green Square Library in March. Initially these programs took place outdoors in the amphitheatre as a Covid-19 safety measure. These programs are now on offer indoors at Darling Square, Glebe and Green Square libraries.
- The Lunchtime Talks series also returned as a hybrid event, streamed live and with an in person audience. The City's curator hosted Rediscovering Sydney: A bird's eye view. There were 18 in person attendees and 92 online.
- Makerspace programming at Darling Square saw the return of Maker and Creator, which has a booked out series until June 2021.
- On Saturday 15 May Darling Square hosted the hybrid "Picture This Wikipedia editathon" at Darling Square Library as well as via Zoom. Wikipedia editathons seek to increase the diversity of voices on Wikimedia by teaching editing skills to diverse audience groups. We had 12 in person participants and 12 online participants joining us. Two external Wikipedia editors cofacilitated with City Historians to guide participants in uploading images from the City archives to Wikipedia. All up 38 images were uploaded with 44 articles edited with just about every Lord Mayoral article now containing a photo.



Georges River

- Activating the Media Lab space for the Youth.

A VR workshop for ages 8+ was held in the Hurstville Library's Media Lab during April school holidays. The workshop was presented by Alex from the Australian Immersive Education Academy (AIEA). The children learnt how to make an avatar for a virtual world they created inviting classmates to interact with them in this virtual space. Later children put on VR goggles and entered the world of their avatars interacting in a 3D environment through movement of a hand-held device.



Randwick

- The library held 115 events online, in person and hybrid, with a combined audience of 1,523
- The first of the Spark in the Park outdoor events utilising the shared library outreach Spark Truck (Waverley, Woollahra, Randwick City) took place on the first Wednesday, it was a fully booked event with 50 attending.
- Exhibition by The Wednesday artists and their tutor, Teresa Castellanos, from the Coast Centre Inc. at Little Bay The exhibition featured art inspired by Randwick City's coastline but also included works that have been created at the coast.
- International Women's Art Prize 2021 exhibition featuring the winners and a selection of very best of the submissions to Council's women's only competition, which encourages the women of our community to showcase their creative talents.
- Australian Poetry Slam Heat held in April. Combined diverse audience of 104 with 16 performances delivered. A couple of outstanding results: 31% of the responders to the feedback survey were from CALD backgrounds. 33% were in the 18-30 age bracket
- Our Friday Movies at the Library Program also recommenced with a larger than usual audience of 12.
- History Talk delivered online with Dr Sue Rosen about the History of Anzac Parade. 22 watched live, as at end May there were 173 views of the [recorded event](#) available to watch via YouTube.
- We launched a Customer Service Quality and Benefits survey to our library members. The survey was open for four weeks 12 March - 12 April. We achieved 612 valid responses. We will use the results and findings to help us consider ways to maximise strengths and develop strategies to correct any apparent deficiencies in the library's performance as part of the foundation work for the 2021/2022 Marketing Plan.

Waverley

- Waverley has been delivering a very successful HSC program in recent months with sessions such as: *HSC: How to stop wasting your time studying*, *Ride the Wave HSC English* and *Ride the Wave HSC Physics* all booked to capacity.

- Established during the Covid lockdown last year, our online Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture Club continues to be successful. During these sessions participants discuss books, films and art by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and about history and culture, to promote ongoing celebration, learning and understanding of Australia's First Nations People. In March, as part of this program the Library hosted two wild edible foraging workshops in Bronte Gully where patrons discovered wild food and medicinal plants that are grown locally.

TECHNOLOGY

Georges River

- **Sound Booth now open at Hurstville Library Media Lab**

Hurstville's new digital-creation space now includes a dedicated Sound Booth for audio rehearsal and recording. The space opens this week as part of the Library's Media Lab project and comes equipped with a Roland 88-key upright digital piano and a selection of musical instruments and audio recording equipment.

Since opening in November, the Media Lab has quickly become a valued piece of creative and social infrastructure for the city, with the space being used for over 200 hours of recording already.

The Library Service are now leveraging interest in the space and forming new partnerships to support even more community use and to promote the entrepreneurialism and creativity of our residents.



Randwick

- FE Technologies RFID equipment has been commissioned at all three branch libraries and the old equipment recycled. Staff have been trained in the use of the new system. Staff have received a very positive feedback from the customers about the new equipment.
- The lending of library items through the library app has been soft launched, with staff assisting patrons to use the app to borrow items at all library locations. This provides patrons greater flexibility and empowerment in how they use and access the library and its materials. We have received positive feedback on the app.

Waverley

- In partnership with Monitor, Waverley has developed an auto unlocking mechanism for our study rooms. This allows our patrons to book study rooms online and once they arrive for their booking, simply tap their card on the door panel and have the door automatically unlocked. This has streamlined the process for both visitors and staff.

STAFFING

City of Sydney

- The Libraries and Learning workforce recruitment project was completed in March 2021. This included 5 external roles as well as extra hours being made available to permanent part time staff. The recruitment project saw 671 applications across all roles, including 551 for the Library Assistant role. Three internal candidates were successful as part of this recruitment.

Georges River

- **Georges river libraries to be featured in ALIA/TAFE NSW course**

Georges River Libraries will be featured in an ALIA/TAFE NSW course. The STEM in Libraries course will feature the Media Lab as an example of a library innovation case study. This is a good example, showcasing how the library is helping to position Council as an innovative organisation.

- **Georges River Libraries partners with 3Bridges Community to support their Inclusive Volunteer program**

Georges River Libraries has partnered with 3Bridges Community to support their Inclusive Volunteer program. This program supports people who have experienced a brain injury to help them get back into the workforce and feel comfortable interacting with people. Georges River Libraries is currently working with 3Bridges to host two volunteers in the near future at Clive James Library Kogarah and Hurstville Library. The following video that was partially filmed using our Media Lab facility which showcases the positive impact the Inclusive Volunteer program has on the volunteers: <https://youtu.be/WJUprKAPTj8>.

Waverley

- Covid-19 and the lockdown had a devastating impact on the Library team at Waverley with the majority of the team being placed on the Splinter Award and the Job retention allowance. This had a negative impact the morale on what was a high performing team. In response to this we have engaged Anson Consulting to deliver a team development program. This has included two whole team workshops, leadership team workshops where

the focus has been on rebuilding relationships, team culture, team cohesion and performance. The sessions have been centered on trust and utilised the Myers Briggs Type Indicator as the framework to increase the team's awareness of individual styles within the team to maximise effective communication.

INNOVATION

City of Sydney

- In April the Library team moved to an online rostering software, Find My Shift. This allows for library staff to be scheduled up to 6 months in advance and to access their shift information and availability via mobile.
- The new software coincided with the move to a 'Hubs' model to introduce greater flexibility across the library network. In this model, rather than being branch based, each staff member is a part of a Hub of three library branches that they may be scheduled to. The model provides opportunities for library staff to increase their skills and familiarity with multiple branches and communities across the City.

Georges River

- **LibraryGo**

Recognising a shift in user expectations towards increased convenience, personalisation and experience, the Library Service has partnered with Children's Services to deliver library materials to families enrolled at the Oatley West Early Learning centre. The new service titled LibraryGo, begins with a consultation with parents to establish their child's reading likes, dislikes and to identify specific child development areas that can be addressed with materials from the library's collections.

Since its inception in October 2020, LibraryGo has delivered over 4,000 library items to 57 children attending the centre. Over 15 letters of appreciation for the service have already been received, with parents recognising the value of library staff expertise in supporting their child's early learning experience. LibraryGo demonstrates effectively the ability of the library to enhance existing council services and the role our libraries can play as strategic partners for delivering community outcomes.

Northern Zone Report

General News

2 Libraries in the zone were grateful recipients of the NSW Public Library Infrastructure Grant to the sum of \$561,024 for the following projects:

1. Mosman Library – Creation Space Studio
2. Northern Beaches Library Service – ‘Move it and use it’ mobile shelving for 3 branches in order to open the library space for community activities and events.

Zone Library updates

City of Ryde Libraries:

- New Solus Library App has gone live and will be promoted in library and info week
- New brand for Ryde library with a new library logo which is also on their new library app comprising of 3 ‘R’s’ which represent the 3 wards of Council
- New name for the service from Ryde Library to City of Ryde Libraries
- Children’s zone is going through a mini makeover at North Ryde library.

Willoughby Library:

- New structure implemented following the restructure in the last financial year
- Visitations are up coming back from the COVID lockdown
- Hours remain slightly shorter not back to pre-COVID hours
- Reviewing a self-service lockers for two branches for reservations and afterhours access.

Lane Cove Library:

- Military talks recommenced with the RSL sub branch
- Music talks being conducted at the library
- Greenwich library printing capability now in line with the rest of the library service
- Service is now totally cashless
- Thinking of expanding the ‘Library to your door’ service.

Stanton Library:

- A lot of recruitment in process with a slight reshuffle of the structure
- Open full hours for the rest of the year however now closing at 8pm instead of 9pm
- Refurbishing ground floor layout and shelving in readiness for the new 2nd entry directly from the car park.

Northern Beaches Library Service:

- First phase of the 24hr library concept completed at Forestville library with an expansion of space
- All programs are back and fully subscribed with Children's Story Time proving to be a big hit with the new community
- Warringah Mall library undergoing a mini refurbishment with the removal of the large service desk and replacement with service pods
- Finalist in 4 categories of the LGNSW awards
- Creative Library space to be launched at Manly shortly
- Comprehensive Customer Experience program delivered to all staff
- Pilot role of Digital Librarian in progress.

Bega Valley Shire Library: Feb-May 2021

International Women's Day

Bega Valley hosted an evening of live storytelling by women for International Women's Day and NSW Women's Week. Ten south coast women told inspirational, intriguing or amusing stories to an audience of 140 while over 300 watched the livestream broadcast. Tickets sold out in less than 2 weeks. Curating and editing the stories was an interesting exercise for the library team, even with the help of a professional editor.

Seniors Festival: Never too late to make it

The 2020 Seniors Festival was cancelled due to the pandemic, however all the 2020 planning was put to use hosting a one-day event showcasing the opportunities in the Bega Valley for seniors to engage in a wide range of activities such as archery, genealogy, Japanese drumming, boatbuilding or hand crafts. Over 300 people attended the event with local community groups presenting stalls and Rotary ran the sausage sizzle. The library team coordinated the event as well as running a number of iPad classes.

New Poetry Workshops

Bermagui Library is hosting twice monthly poetry workshops run by local editor, poet and Doctor of English Dr Kai Jensen.

Trove harvesting

Our Systems and Collections Librarian has finally completed the set up for Trove harvesting, with most collections now available on Trove including our digitised photograph collection of the Wallaga Lake Koori community by photographer John Ford.

Training and Technology

The library team have been brushing up their STEM skills learning how to run Ozobot and Makey Makey programs as well learning the new Libero OPAC interface OMNIO. Two new self check were installed at Tura Library, replacing older items coming to the end of their life.

Staffing

Our new Aboriginal Library Services Trainee commenced in March.

One Book One Community 2021

The library is once again participating in the One Book One Community initiative for 2021 in collaboration with Anglicare, Candelo Books, Headspace, Social Justice Advocates and Rural Adversity Mental Health Program. The team has secured a number of grants to run the program. This year's book is *The Boy From The Mish* by local Yuin man Gary Lonesborough. The library is offering book club sets for loan, running book chats and is contributing to the big event with the author on 19 June.

Lapsed Member Intervention

Bega Valley is working with the State Library and the Behavioural Insight Unit of the Dept. Planning to develop an intervention to attract lapsed members back to the library. (More detailed is listed in the State Library report.) Our 'intervention', a postcard campaign, is due to be sent out in late May, with evaluation and analysis in August.

Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council (QPRC) South East Zone report

Programs and Events

- Storytime, Toddlertime and Baby Bounce attendance is growing, as we resume post COVID 19 activities.
- School holiday activities included movies at Queanbeyan and Braidwood Libraries and activities such as Storystones, telling a story using stones.
- The STEAM club meets monthly, focussing on fun, learning activities.
- Tech training was reintroduced in conjunction with Senior's Week. The Senior's movies are an increasingly popular event, usually fortnightly.
- Two local author events have been hosted, the first a book launch for What Would LaVonda Robinette Do? by Kirsten Maron; and the second a reading at Storytime by Rhian Williams of her book, Ten little figs.
- The Mobile Library continues to visit 10 communities over a 2 week cycle.

Other activities

- A new Library Strategy will be initiated in the coming months.
- New furniture is being purchased for the Queanbeyan Library refurbishment project.

Julie Parkhouse

Program Coordinator

12 May 2021

Upper Lachlan Shire Library Service

Services

- At Crookwell Library we are offering an additional two public computers for use.
- Upper Lachlan Shire Council renewed its SLA with Goulburn Mulwaree Council for a further three years. Goulburn Mulwaree Library will continue to provide library services such as acquisitions and cataloguing for us.

Opening hours

- Our libraries continue to operate with new operating hours to allow for extra cleaning. During weekdays our libraries open ½ an hour later.

Activities and Events

- Events/activities recommenced in March. We have new faces coming to Lego Club and Storytime.
- The Friends of Crookwell Library held a very successful book sale in April.
- The Crookwell Library held a very successful history of the Peruvian potato talk by Evelyn Quispe on Monday 19th April, followed by a boxed lunch sponsored the Crookwell Potato Festival and the Crookwell Friends of the Library.

Other items

- Recruitment will begin shortly to fill the vacant Saturday position at Gunning Library.
- Recruitment will begin shortly to fill the vacant Library Manager position. Michaela has resigned with her last day being Friday 28th May.

Michaela Olde

Library Manager

Yass Valley Library Service

Services

- Notification of changes to the Murrumbateman Library Service will be sent out to residents this week. The library service has been revamped in an effort to better meet the needs of the growing population in the Murrumbateman village

A number of factors has prompted the closure of the physical branch including COVID-19, structural issues of the building and low patronage numbers. The old building is unfortunately no longer fit for purpose and is not an environment consistent with the long term preservation of book collections.

As a result, Library staff have been busy brainstorming a number of more accessible options for the Murrumbateman community, including:

- the return of the Mobile Library in Spring (still off road due to COVID restrictions) this will include taking the Mobile Library to the Murrumbateman Village markets every second Saturday. As well as borrowing and returning books, patrons will also be able to access important Council information at this site when necessary.
- the introduction of a street library within the village which will consist of donated books, all in good condition, that have been repurposed for residents to read..

Opening hours

- Yass Valley Library Service is back to normal opening hours including Thursday nights and Saturday mornings.
- The reintroduction of the Mobile Library is still not possible due to the size of the van, which is not large enough to honour the 1.5 metre social distancing recommendation of NSW Health.

Children and Adult Programs

- All children's programs have been up and running since March/April including Storytime, Lego Club and school holidays.
- Yass Valley Library and Southern Tablelands Arts collaborated to present a badge making workshop during the Easter School holidays which was huge success.
- TechConnect program is up and running with over 30 patrons signed up and using the service. This is thanks to funding received through the Australian Government BeConnected program.
- Movie Mondays have been changed to Friday Flicks to avoid conflict with other programs.

Other items

- Yass Valley Library finally has RFID installed within the library. Only a small section of the collection is still to be transferred over to RFID tagging which Jake is working on.
- Once collection has been fully transformed we will look at undertaking some promotions on social media as well as within the library to help get patrons more comfortable using the kiosk.
- The new Civic Precinct planning is under way. Architects have been working with staff on the site layout which will include a new library/community hub.

Kimberly Hughes

Coordinator Yass Valley Library Services

Wollongong City Libraries

Report to SEZone meeting 14 May 2021

Local Studies

The Illawarra Mercury image project was expanded with 574 images catalogued this Jan-Mar quarter. Staff are still being rostered to rescue images from the 1960's that are affected by 'vinegar syndrome'. This work is progressing well with 194 negatives digitised (preserved) and prepared for cataloguing this quarter. 151 new records (monographs, manuscripts, images and indexed articles) were added to the Local Studies collection.

Illawarra Stories - 13 new online stories are ready and waiting to be added to the Illawarra Stories website. Six oral histories were fully transcribed on the Amplify platform and added to Illawarra Stories website.

In addition, 20 items were digitised and added to the catalogue for public access.

In conjunction with Wollongong Art Gallery a scanning day was held for the 'Snapped Street Photography project'. Seventeen photos from 12 community members were scanned as part of this project.

Programs/Events

In this quarter more programs resumed after the COVID19 shutdown, with most programs requiring to be booked using the Eventbrite online ticketing service.

The Library held a parenting talk to offer strategies in becoming more organised and less stressed to improve overall wellness. The presenter drew from their personal experience of being a parent and a former Executive Assistant and Project Manager to offer tips and tricks. The participants learned how to prioritise their "to do" lists and take control over day to day routines.

Children's author, Steven Herrick shared tips about how to plan a cycling trip around Europe - drawing a crowd of keen cyclists. This session tied into the announcement that the City of Wollongong had become a UCI Bike City. Slides, tips, and some funny stories provided useful information and prompted many questions from the enthusiastic audience.

SCARF Refugee Support resumed their after-school programs with the Homework Club finding volunteers and primary aged children very keenly returning.

Get Skilled computer training sessions have resumed, and all the one-on-one sessions have been booked out. Many customer questions have been about using apps, prompted by the need for the Service NSW app as well as many people trying to access updated Health information from NSW Government sites.

Fashion Flip and Club Sew and Sew started this year. Both sewing classes are a result of the positive feedback the Library received last year for the Learn to Sew workshops and sociable sewing classes. Geena Barjeel, a fashion designer who specialises in sustainable fashion, leads the group in repurposing an old clothing item into another useful item in Fashion Flip.

The Library's keen quilting staff member is harnessing enthusiasm in another class, showing the group how to do a quilt-as-you-go project. This group's members are mainly single people who do not want to sit at home every evening and like to socialise over a common interest.

As we move in and out of strict COVID19 restrictions, it was difficult to be certain that by May 2021, large crowds will be able to gather in Wollongong Library, The Town Hall and the Arts Precinct venues. Well, no they are not!

For this reason, Wollongong City Libraries will deliver a number of 'satellite' events, under the Comic Gong brand, rather than our regular large-scale event that attracts 10,000 - 12,000 people in the relatively confined spaces of the Library and Town Hall. These events will go ahead in May 2021, across a number of library locations. The events will be ticketed events so that we maintain attendee numbers as per each venue's COVID19 Safety Plan.

The Basic Computer Course which is in partnership with local organisation Empowered Multicultural Program grew in numbers with participants from the Red Cross Migrant program attending the classes. This program endeavours to provide educational support as well as basic computer skills for young and mature people within the community who mostly come from refugee and migrant backgrounds.

Salvation Army English Conversation Classes have resumed with fewer volunteer teachers and participant numbers. Most volunteers have decided to wait until the risk of COVID19 has been minimised by widespread immunisation. Previous participants have not returned to the area following their return to their home country at the outset of COVID19 pandemic. This includes the many university students who usually participate in the program, who have not yet returned to their studies.

A partnership arrangement with the Deaf Society was entered to provide an English course in Auslan. The 9-week course covered subjects taken from Certificate I in Access to Vocational Pathways, such as Use Digital Technology for basic workplace tasks; Write Basic Workplace Information; and Read and Respond to Basic Workplace Information.

The monthly Visually Impaired Knit, Stitch and Yarn group returned to Wollongong Library, though two of their participants were joining in through Zoom as they were still avoiding public places due to health concerns. The group welcomed the opportunity to meet up face to face, having conducted their meetings online over the past few months.

The International Day of People with a Disability was celebrated with a Gingerbread House decorating workshop. Members of the Deaf Community were assisted by an AUSLAN interpreter. Many had attended this event pre-COVID19 and had brought their friends along this year.

As part of the Aboriginal Artist in Residence series across the libraries, local artist Allison Day led a painting workshop. The participants discovered the meaning behind many of the symbols represented within many Aboriginal Artworks.

Mardi Gras was celebrated with a Queer Movie Festival held across multiple libraries and the Youth Centre - with movies ranging from favourites such as Priscilla Queen of the Desert, to Love Simon.

A family Rainbow Storytime welcomed a Drag King on a Saturday morning and drew an audience from Sydney to Bateman's Bay. While the numbers were not as high as the previous Rainbow Storytime sessions, it was noted that there was no negative social media commentary and no additional security measures were required. Verbal feedback on the day was very positive.

Collections

Online collections have continued to be prioritised, with increased budget being allocated to eBooks, eAudiobooks, and online streaming collections. Following the significant increase in customer demand for these collections during COVID19 closure and heightened restrictions, usage has continued at higher levels than previously, with loans and turnover now consistently maintaining a level 30-40% higher than pre-COVID levels. Additional content and extra copies of high-demand titles have continued to be purchased.

Customer purchase requests have continued at approx. 150-200 a month. Customers have continued placing Reserves in high numbers, and additional copies of highly Reserved titles continue to be acquired quickly in large quantities, proportional to demand.

Friends of Wollongong City Libraries

Due to COVID19, the Friends of Wollongong City Libraries cancelled all planned events January - March 2021. This has curtailed their ability to raise funds for Wollongong City Libraries. The Friends Executive meet in February to discuss resuming their fund-raising events from May 2021 (predominantly author talks/catering/lunches). Authors they have 'locked in' for the remainder of 2021 are Hugh McKay, Dr Norman Swan, Michael Robotham and Chris Hammer.

New libraries

Design work is progressing well for the Warrawong Library & Community Centre with architect firm FJMT. Council has approved a three-story integrated Library and Community Centre design, opening to a new 'town square' landscape garden and active play area.

Planning for the Helensburgh Library and Community Centre is a little delayed due to new bushfire zoning (locating a building too close to potential bush fire prone areas 😞) and Crown Land regulations. Further community consultation will take place to advise of the delays.

Workforce Planning

This project is coming to the 'pointy end'. Key messages from staff consultation has been that the current structure is top heavy; there is little opportunity to move between the seven libraries; there is too much 'centralisation' of services and staff at Wollongong library. The outcomes (so far) are: move from two to one library manager; move from 7 to 5 Coordinators; move from 12 Team Leader Librarians to 12 Service Leaders; any new customer service roles are likely to be Assistant roles without a library qualification being mandatory; introduce a PPT Saturday team at Wollongong library.

SHELLHARBOUR CITY LIBRARIES – Highlights, May 2021 – SE Zone

Shellharbour Must-Reads

The new 'Shellharbour Must Reads' collection was launched at City Library in March. The collection features multiple (usually 10) additional copies of trending library material, mainly fiction, but also trending non-fiction. There is also a separate display in the children's area for trending children's material – junior fiction and picture books (Bluey included!!).

The collection is branded separately as 'Shellharbour Must Reads', complete with promotional label on each copy. The Must Reads copies are additional to the regular stock with different borrowing conditions – that is, without the option for reservations and renewals. Reservations are filled from the regular copies. Both children's and adult collections have proven extremely popular, with all titles turning over multiple times already. At this stage it's looking like a very successful pilot, which we are planning to grow.

Youth Book Boxes

Twice a year, on a Saturday, Shellharbour City Libraries partners in the Civic Centre Markets – a fun market and activity day aimed at supporting craft and business enterprises of local young people. At the recent market day in April, a library initiative called 'youth book boxes' was launched. The book box is a decorative gift box featuring several YA and AV materials and some little mystery gift items. It was exciting to see local teenagers excitedly borrowing all of them on Day 1! Ten new YA book boxes are being promoted every second Friday and we will keep you posted with the outcomes...

Themed school holiday program & scavenger hunt

Shellharbour City Libraries has been working to a theme each school holidays. The Autumn School Holidays themed 'Messy Hands' had two highly successful elements amongst a range of activities. A 'Create and Play Day' was held on a Sunday at City Library – across the library foyer and Civic Square featuring multiple craft and activity stations hosted by the library and other partners. Hundreds of children and families attended making it not only a successful family day, but also a successful promotion of the library's Sunday hours.

Incorporating a scavenger hunt into each school holiday program has also proven extremely popular. A series of clues helps families explore different parts of the library and museum to complete their scavenger hunt. They then take their entry to a staff member to win a little prize. This has proven a great way to showcase what the library and museum has to offer.

Return to programming

Shellharbour City Libraries' return to programming in 2021 has seen a range of programs delivered to re-activate our libraries including our regular early literacy programs and adult programs, such as monthly nature talks, scrabble club and book clubs. Harmony Day storytime with Aunty Bev was well-attended and showcased the return of library programs by being held in the foyer. Our monthly Mini Explorers program and curriculum-based school visits are other ways we've been connecting young minds to our libraries & museum.

STEM programs including Steam Studio at City Library and Code-it-yourself Club and a mini-bots program at Warilla Library have engaged primary age students, while Baby Stem is our re-branded program for toddlers (18 mth-3yrs) using DUPLO® as the key learning tool.

Program bookings and attendance levels as a percentage of bookings have been strong, along with general library usage getting back to pre-COVID levels - and pleasing increases at our refurbished Oak Flats Library! We are continuing to support our online presence with Library At Home and were thrilled to be host library for Deborah Rodriguez in March for the NSW Libraries online author program.

Programs & Events**Adult**

- **Tech Savvy Seniors** sessions continue to be extremely popular with maximum attendance each week. Courses have been running since February and the secure of additional grant funding will see them continue until the end of June
- Online **NSWReads** event for Andrew Pippas book 'Luckys', weekly movie screenings & 'Book a Blind Date' book promotion during Library Lovers Month

Cross Generational

- Provided a stand at the 'Steampunk @ Altitude' Festival in Nimmitabel where staff dressed up, promoted Library resources, and organised craft sessions. Exhibition of locally sourced steampunk memorabilia on display at Cooma Library
- Hosted the 'Red & Yellow Cases' travelling exhibition from the National Gallery during March & April. Exhibited at both Libraries and travelled around the region on the Mobile. Fantastic opportunity for patrons to have access to intricate sculptures & artworks not usually on offer

Children and YA

- Regular **Preschool Storytimes** at Cooma each month and special storytimes for Harmony Week, Chinese New Year
- LEGO play returned during April school holidays along with movie screenings and Autumn crafts – nice to have the kids back!
- Continue to record online storytimes in accordance with the ALIA programme
- Mother Goose sessions recommenced in February
- Romps Playgroup and Storytime each Thursday at Bombala Library
- Mother's Day craft at Cooma Library Saturday 8th May

Other events

- Celebration anniversary morning tea in April for our 'Friends' who are a group that have been religiously covering our books every Tuesday for 30 years, and still have one original member!
- Huge and very popular Book Sale from March to May

Partnerships

- Working with Snowy Mountains Grammar School to have all students join up as members targeting years 11 & 12 first. Running programmes & sessions in-house and on the Mobile Library to demonstrate e-resources available for HSC studies and promote YA material
- Exhibition of children's artwork from Cooma North Public School during Harmony Week

Mobile Library

- New Mobile Library Operator commenced February and has been very successful in getting the schools to revisit after last year's shutdowns
- Increased hours of operation at Nimmitabel to enable more time for the school to visit

Staff

- Staff continue to attend training and webinars online via Zoom

Pam Veiss

Co-ordinator Library Services Snowy Monaro Regional Library

Our Reference: [9798#63]

Wollondilly Library South East Zone Report – May 2021

Wollondilly Library Strategy 2020-2026

The Wollondilly Library Strategy 2020-2026 and action plan was adopted by Council at the 20 April meeting. The strategy and plan will shape the library service leading up to the new Library and Learning hub that will be in the built final stage of the Wollondilly Community, Cultural & Cultural Precinct.

Programs and Events

We have commenced a partnership with the local CWA to run monthly craft mornings. The first morning was well received with attendees making poppy brooches for Anzac Day. This week attendees worked on chalk craft. It is pleasing that this program has attracted new residents who are looking to connect with others.

Two activities were run during the April school holidays. A visit from Featherdale Sydney Wildlife Park, proved very popular. Rose from Southern Tablelands Arts ran a badge making morning and attendees made badges for themselves and their family.

Due to potential flooding, the Harmony Day event ran a couple of weeks later. The Mayor gave his time to talk about his family origins from Pakistan and why he calls Wollondilly home. This event was held in the Library View Room but also live streamed via Facebook.

Wollondilly joined the festivities of the Sydney Writers' Festival by holding a wine and cheese night, live streaming the Kate Grenville event. We had a great turn up on the night and feedback was positive with attendees wanting more of these events.

All programs and events have been held with room capacities in mind as per the Public Health Order.

Membership

Our membership registrations have steadily increased each month this year and we hope our campaign to join new young members with the special edition Ursula Dubosarsky card will help this coming month.

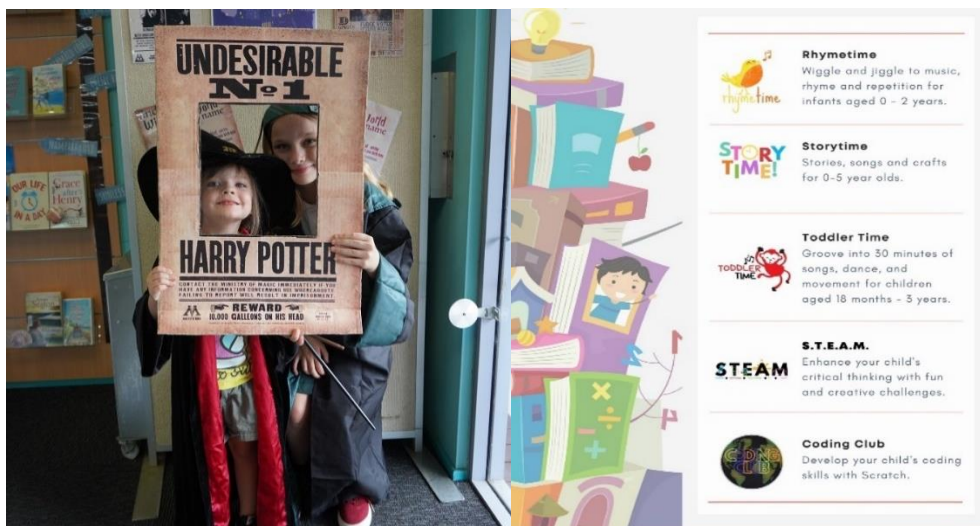
Shoalhaven Libraries Update

It has been a busy few months celebrating Library Lover's Day, Safer Internet Day, Harmony Day, International Women's Day, as well as participating in Share the Dignity month. Share the Dignity is an initiative helping those experiencing period poverty across Australia, and Nowra Library was a collection point for donations.

Over the past two years Shoalhaven Libraries has been busy obtaining 'eSmart Libraries' accreditation. By becoming a nationally accredited eSmart library, Shoalhaven Libraries has integrated cyber-safety into Shoalhaven Libraries' policies, agreements, staff development, organisational culture, training and day-to-day operations, demonstrating its commitment to cyber safety, digital literacy and well-being of Shoalhaven Libraries customers.

In February, with changes to the Public Health Rules, we were able to make some changes to operations and access to our libraries. The requirement to quarantine returned items was lifted, which meant from 1 February we moved from Stage 4 to Stage 5 Opening. Our libraries were able to open longer hours, with Nowra Library once again open until 7pm, and bookings and time limits for study spaces were no longer required. We were also excited to announce the resumption of our Children's Program and Adult Events.

Along with regular children's programming we have also held additional activities for the school holidays and special event days. The Harry Potter night, held at each main branch, was very popular and well-attended. Adult event offerings have been 'Movies @ Midday', technology classes and some Pathfinders Program talks, such as Art History Talks with Dr Karen Knight-Mudie, and a speech-language pathologist joining us to talk about Augmentative and Alternative Communication, with a hands-on experience of learning to communicate differently.



We held our annual bookmark design competition and Shoalhaven Libraries' members were invited to participate. This year's theme was to design a bookmark to celebrate everything you love about the Australian Summer, and for the first time, we held a separate adult competition so the whole family could join in the fun. Winners received a book voucher, and a selection of bookmarks were chosen and printed as a collectable set.

New Sanctuary Point Library update

Concept plans for the new Sanctuary Point District Library were out on public exhibition for community feedback for the month of April. There were also two community drop-in sessions

held on site, which provided an opportunity for community members to come and meet Council staff and members from the consultant team to discuss the concept plan, ask questions and provide their feedback.



The architects have also identified various opportunities for public art within the library design and these range from:

- Signage
- Furniture
- Landscaped mural wall
- Building shades (on Kerry Street frontage)

There was also a strong indication from the community members engaged that there was a desire to incorporate public art into the building, particularly art that was representative of the locational context and Aboriginal history of the area.



Libraries ACT update for NSW PLA South East Zone

May 2021

COVID-19

A range of COVID Safe measures remain in place at Libraries ACT and detailed information about the current status of services and COVID-19 measures is on the library website.

<https://www.library.act.gov.au/functions/whats-new/whats-new-items/advice-relating-to-novel-coronavirus/> nocache

Programs and events

In-person programs resumed from term 2, with numbers limited by room capacity, and bookings essential for all programs including story time and Giggle & Wiggle.

A series of sustainable and slow fashion workshops and demonstrations for adults is underway through a partnership with local creatives.

The library has resumed the Nourishing Little Minds program series in partnership with Nutrition Australia ACT. This offers healthy eating themed story times delivered by the library, and individually packed healthy snack activities delivered by a nutritionist.

The successful summer Story Walk concept has been extended to other opportunities, with Maura Pierlot's *The Trouble in Tune Town* featured at Gungahlin for the Gungahlin Festival and remained in place for the April school holidays. Tania McCartney's *Mamie* is currently at the National Arboretum Canberra, launched in Tree Week. We're grateful to our local authors for their support and enthusiasm for sharing stories in this way.

National Simultaneous Storytime celebrations include the screening of this year's featured story on the big screen in Civic Square. The Canberra Theatre Centre is facilitating this and providing a wet weather option in their foyer if required. Participants are encouraged to attend dressed in their warmest spacesuit!

General news

Redevelopment work at Woden Library is progressing well with improvements and new spaces visible already. We're looking forward to making new community spaces available later this year.

The library's membership campaign targeting families with children 0 – 5 years of age has continued to attract new members with more than 1300 new members in this age group registered since the campaign began.

For Harmony Day, Libraries ACT released several videos featuring staff speaking different languages, to highlight that everyone is welcome at the library, and to encourage library use by culturally and linguistically diverse communities. We're really pleased with how they showcase the diversity of our workforce ([video 1](#), [video 2](#), [video 3](#), [video 4](#)).

South West Zone Report – May 2021

- The South West Zone Digital Library consortium (SWZDL), now in its ninth year of operation, continues to achieve high circulation and turnover rates. The SWZDL offers over 323,000 residents in 23 council areas access to a large collection of eBooks, eAudiobooks and eMagazines. Zone libraries are currently considering content requirements and providers for the next 5-year period of the SWZDL Agreement (2022/23– 2026/27).
- The next South-West Zone meeting will be held on 27 May at the Riverina Regional Library Administration Centre, offering in person and Zoom attendance.
- Five South-West Zone councils received a total of \$667,402 funding under the 2020/21 Public Library Infrastructure Grants program. Greater Hume, Temora and Wagga Wagga councils will undertake library refurbishment projects, whilst Hay will implement RFID technology and Junee will upgrade library shelving.
- The next South-West Zone meeting will be held on 27 May at the Riverina Regional Library Administration Centre. Attendance will be a mix of in person and via Zoom.

Berrigan Shire Libraries

- Various COVID-19 shutdown learnings have been applied at Berrigan Shire Libraries since reopening in June 2020. These include inline storytime presentation skills, the expanded use of social media, and the use of Zoom to enhance communications between staff at branch libraries.
- A 'Macrame Workshop' was offered for teens and seniors during Youth and Seniors Week
- Holiday programs began again in 2021 with 'Making a Bird House'
- An International Women's Day 2021 Luncheon with author Kathy Mexted was held. Numbers were capped at 143 participants to meet Public Health Order restrictions
- 179 children and 32 adults enjoyed 'Give me some space!' by Philip Bunting as part of National Simultaneous Storytime activities. Staff at each branch offered different aspects of the same book, including taking advantage of the upload of astronaut Shannon Walker telling the story to a captivated audience via the library's "big TV".
- Local Author Jennifer Congdon will be launching her book at Berrigan Library on 17th June - 'Woodstock'. This book documents 100 years of the history of Jenny's organic farm, including the new business of 'Woodstock Flour'.

Leeton Shire Library

- Leeton Shire Library is in the middle of its second successful run of Little Bang Discovery Club. A "Room or Zoom" event was held in mid May using the Radicals author talk session, attracting 84 attendees – 4 in the room and 80 who joined by Zoom from the local Yanco Agriculture High School
- The Library will soon commence loans of board games and puzzles, and will be launching its grant funded STEM collection of kits before the end of the year.
- Authorisation has been received to use Youth Week grant funding later in the year to organize four Queenie Chan Room or Zoom sessions, and 5 tablets for loan within the library and use at programs to counter the issues with access to devices experienced by our lower socio-economic youth.

Riverina Regional Library (RRL)

- RRL joined the [James Bennett Sustainability Project](#) at the end of 2020 and has already sent over 5,000 discarded library items for recycling. The program guarantees the responsible disposal of weeded library books through donations to communities in need, recycling into new products by pulping (after laminate is removed), and marketing of saleable items to generate funds for book purchases by participating libraries or donation to the Indigenous Literacy Foundation.
- A long awaited website renewal project is nearing completion, with an updated website nearing completion. A soft launch is scheduled for early June.
- Wagga Wagga City Library is one of six NSW libraries participating in the Behavioural Insight Project currently being conducted by the Place, Design and Public Spaces unit of the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment. Wagga Wagga has selected *Project 2 - Increased Membership*.
- Bland Shire Council (Library) was announced the 2020 Winner of the NSW Public Library Association's Innovation in Outreach Services Award: Population under 10,000 for its annual author visit program.
- The Cootamundra Library volunteer program continues to expand, providing opportunities for community members with a wide range of skills and interests to make a contribution to their local library. Volunteer input ranges from development and presentation of library programs to technology training and support sessions.
- The new Batlow Library was officially opened on 12 February 2021. The building was constructed following the allocation of a million-dollar State Government Grant. The new library provides the community of Batlow with a relaxing community space, comfortable seating, free Wi-Fi, computer access, meeting rooms, kitchen facilities and dual access bathrooms. The Batlow Library provides additional community services including Medicare Easy Claim Centre, Centrelink Access Point and Community Noticeboard. Locals can also pay their rates and make bookings for local venues at the Library's counter.



Wentworth Shire Libraries

- A very successful Community Puppet Show was presented in Pooncarie. 'A Little Bit of Blue' was performed by Jenny Ellis of Little Wing Puppets, in conjunction with the West Darling Arts. Pooncarie, Palinyewah, Pomona and School of the Air students were in attendance. All schools are very remote and have no more than 30 students per entire school
- Our libraries have been offering ongoing tech support with community members, particularly through COVID when a lot of services have moved online. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive
- A "Teddy Bear Sleepover" was recently run at the Library. The bears went on an adventure into Space whilst the Li-bear-ians were sleeping.
- The Wentworth Historical Society (a volunteer local studies group that operate in the Library) is in the process of documenting servicemen from the district in a book. They are going through records all the way from WWI to the Boer War.

Around the Libraries:

**Blacktown
General Business**

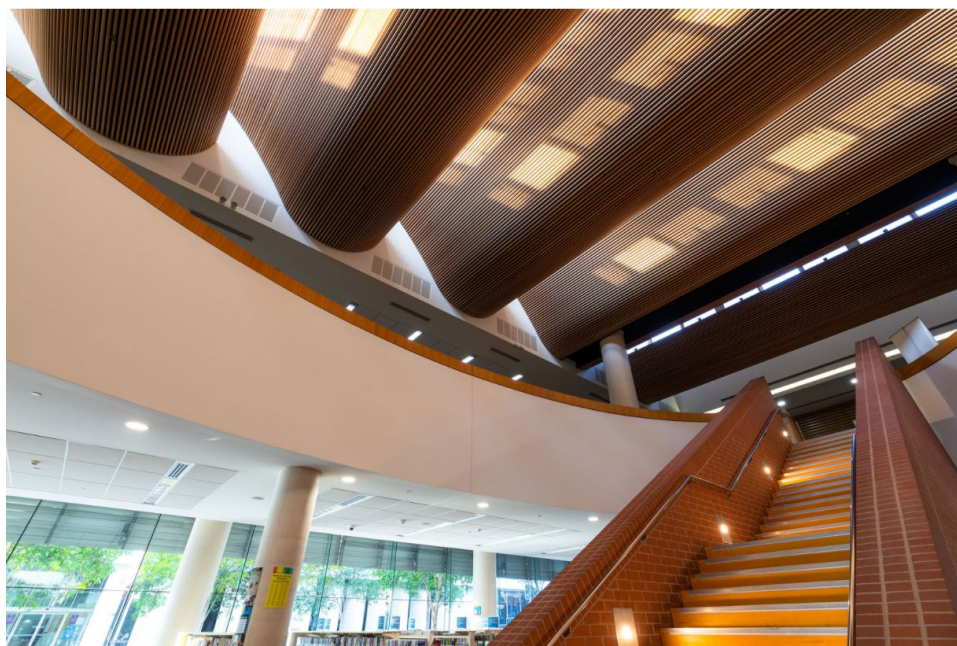
- Response from TAFE re changes to LT Diploma – from Matthew Griffiths (from Fairfield) ALIA Library Technicians representative.
- Grants – Blacktown successful with grant for moving collections and upgrading Max Webber Library. Regionals did well with grants from SLNSW again. Last year @16% of grants went to metro libraries, this year it was 22.5%, list attached.
- We were unsuccessful with getting Libraries and Community Centres restored to the Section 7.11 Essential Works List. Sue McKerracher put in a wonderful submission from ALIA. Cameron at State Library also put in submissions and thanks to Philip for getting in a submission from PLANSW.

The plan to support infrastructure in green areas is to lift the rate cap and provide low interest loans to councils. Last night's budget announced funding for roads and infrastructure - https://investment.infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure_investment/local-roads-community-infrastructure-program/ but don't think we would see a lot of funding for libraries out of this.

- Unclassified DVD's – Email from Sue mid-March – 'Hopefully good news. Just had a meeting with the First Assistant Secretary for the Content Branch of the Department of Communications. She has direct responsibility for the reforms to the Classification Act, Code and Guidelines and she is going to pick this one up for us.'

Blacktown report

We have had our ceiling replaced, looks beautiful.



- Work about to start on new circulation desk and Community Language Room.
- Received grant for new children's area.
- Humidity getting to 80 RH at one of our branches, accurate humidity monitors being installed as we are using cheap units that are hard to calibrate. (mould can start forming at 65 RH)
- ACU opened in Blacktown. ACU library launched 2 weeks ago, discussions on joint programs.

Blue Mountains

- Springwood Library was closed to the public on 1 March. A small “Library in the Loft” opened on Monday 15 March where customers will be able to borrow reserved items, return loans to our return bins, access wifi and public access computers, photocopying, printing and scanning, access to library staff for information help. This will largely be a select and collect service for library collection items, but a limited collection will be available for browsing. Springwood Library is being redeveloped with State Government City Deal funding.
- Part-time Library Branches reopened on Saturdays from 20 March.
- Blue Mountains Library have undertaken a large weeding project to reduce the size of the collection. We have partnered with our book suppliers, James Bennett, to responsibly dispose of unwanted items through their Sustainability Project. Books are collected by James Bennett and given a new life where possible, with an undertaking to responsibly dispose of unsuitable items
- Katoomba Library is making a display cabinet available for a Museum Advisory project with (Councils) City Planning section. The first display was installed in the glass cabinet at Katoomba Library on 25 March – “*Curiosities from Tarella*” by the Blue Mountains Historical Society.
- First face to face children’s programs since COVID, begin with Storytime and Babytime from 9 February. Programs are now only offered at 3 locations: Upper Mountains (at Katoomba Leura Community Centre), Mid Mountains (at Lawson Mechanics Institute) and Lower Mountains (at Blaxland Community Centre, Sharon Burrige Hall).
- Newspapers are due to return to the Libraries by the end of May.

Camden

- The Draft Camden Libraries Strategy 2021-2025 is located at the following links:
- On the Libraries site, it’s the first listed item under ‘News’ on the homepage:
<https://www.library.camden.nsw.gov.au/>
- And the direct URL to the News item is here: <https://www.library.camden.nsw.gov.au/news/camden-libraries-strategy/>

Campbelltown

- The Library has resumed programing and having some success with activities for 16-24 year age group.
- The Library has recently acquired a new Library Management System and the migration project is currently underway.
- Acoustic treatment has been installed at Ingleburn Library to improve the sound quality of the space. New rooms have been created opening up for group and quiet study.
- New computer tables have been installed at Glenquarie Library enabling the availability of 2 extra PC’s.
- HJ Daley is undergoing a refresh with the replacement of old study corrals and furniture to better utilize the space and make more group study available.
- The Creative Suite will open at HJ Daley Library in June and have a high powered PC with creative software and other technology available to encourage creativity in the community
- A new HJ Daley Weekend team is currently being recruited
- 2 Street Libraries have been installed on Queen Street as part of the street upgrades and Library and Information Week.
- Master planning for the new Civic Library has began
- Launch of the Sweatshop book “Racism: Stories on fear, hate and bigotry” occurred at the Sydney Writers Festival. This book features writing from students participating in the Campbelltown Youth Literacy Initiative.
- New rooms at Ingleburn Library:



Cumberland

Programs are essentially back with some adjustments and still maintaining the online offerings. Wentworthville Library and Community Centre is at the early stages of planning and community consultation. Cumberland stats are back to pre-covid in most cases, except PC usage where we have the special restrictions.

New library memberships and loans are higher now than pre-covid.

Library app has been launched (SirsiDynix).

Fairfield

New Library at Fairfield:



Hawkesbury

- In Term 2 the Hawkesbury Library was able to resume all of its programs for preschool aged children at its different sites. Singing has finally returned!
- From February commenced in person author talks and obviously following the COVID safe protocol and from February commenced a new partnership with Hawkesbury TAFE and is now running Business studies out of one of the meeting rooms. It has been an innovative way to reach a new audience and it also acknowledges the important role of Libraries in the local community.
- Continued to participate in the Sydney Writers Festival (SWF) but this year it was zoom participation only. The relationship with the BAD Sydney Crime festival will also be resuming and the first face to face talk will be held in June.
- Working on improved access to the Library, Gallery and Museum collections to the Integrated Library Management System (ILMS).

The Hills

- Programs are returning with numbers limited through bookings.

- We have our first in person author talk coming up in May with Nicola Moriarty
- Study seating is still limited observing the 1.5m social distancing guidelines
- Castle Hill re-opened in April following a nine week closure for the installation of a new lift, new carpet and new Customer Service area.

Penrith

- Working on an RFQ via Procurement Australia for a new library management system
- Re-establishing face to face program complemented by continuing some online programs. Some examples of this include:
 - Author, Will Davies, zoomed in to our live audience on Friday 23 April, just before ANZAC Day, to discuss his new non-fiction book 'Secret & Special' which investigates the untold story of the Z Special Unit in the Second World War. Our live audience will be treated to a special morning tea and enjoy a streamed author talk without the worry of technology.
 - Author, Anita Heiss, was our 'Watch at the Library', Sydney Writer's Festival event for 2021. Anita discussed her latest novel 'Bila Yarrudhanggalangdhuray (River of Dreams)' Wednesday 28 April at 6.30pm
 - For Seniors' Week we held an 'Introduction to Apps and E-Books' Talk on Tuesday 20 April and gave out free 'Brain Training Packs' to all our home library service clients. We also had a number of these packs ready to give out to our senior customers at all our branches. They included puzzles and activities to keep minds active. They proved to be very popular.
 - For our Children's programs we are continuing our Baby time and Story time live via weekly zoom sessions as well as a face to face story time at our Central branch on Wednesdays (bookings required).
- We have established a great partnership with the Joan Sutherland Centre which saw our Children's Team run a dress up Pyjama Party at The Joan which included our pop up library to help promote our library services and the David Walliams play "The Midnight Gang" which was showing at the Joan at the time. Our Children's Librarian, Lorinda, also performed story time at The Joan during the school holidays and read 'The Magic Beach' by Alison Lester when that the play of that book was also showing at the Joan during the April school holidays. Penrith library also ran a colouring in competition in conjunction with this event which was very well received.
- Penrith City Council turns 150 this year so our Research Team has been working very hard on putting together a series of physical displays of books and artefacts in our branches as well as made our digital collections of local publications, maps and photographs available to Council to help celebrate this milestone.



Lorinda, our Children's Librarian (wearing the mask), and some families at 'The Midnight Gang' PJ Party at The Joan Sutherland Centre



Library staff, Rosalie (left), and Lorinda (centre), with some of the audience from our 'Magic Beach' story time session at The Joan Sutherland Centre