

Public Library NEWS

Summer 2017-18
Volume 23 No 2

Library Buildings and Spaces



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Public Library News is produced by Public Library Services, State Library of NSW, Macquarie St Sydney NSW 2000

www.sl.nsw.gov.au/plnews

Public Library News is distributed free to NSW public libraries. There are two issues per year in June and December.

ISSN 1323-6822 (Print)
ISSN 2205-0671 (Online)

Edited by Edwina Duffy and Cathy Hammer
Design and layout by Dominic Hon
Printed by Lindsay Yates & Partners Pty Ltd on Spicers Monza Satin Recycled 300 gsm (cover) and 130 gsm (text)
E&D-5060-12/2017

**Next issue deadline:
30 March 2018**

Submit articles online at:
[plnsw.wufoo.com/forms/
public-library-news/](http://plnsw.wufoo.com/forms/public-library-news/)

Front cover image: Woollahra Library at Double Bay (photo by Rodrigo Vargas) (see story on page 6)
Back cover image: 250 square metre library plan, developed by ffmt studios for the State Library of NSW's modular libraries project (see story on page 2)

Introduction



You might have noticed the buzz around new library buildings, renovations and refurbishments in recent years. Since its introduction in 2014-15, the NSW Public Library Infrastructure Grants program has supported 54 library building projects in NSW alone. What is driving this building boom?

More people are visiting and using public libraries. The NSW Public Library Statistics 2015-16 show that since 2000, physical visits to public libraries in NSW have grown by over 20 per cent to 34.8 million visits per annum. Loans of books and other materials, internet usage (including wi-fi) and attendance at events and programs have all increased.

As well as increased usage, there have been significant changes in the way people use library spaces.

Libraries are busy community spaces where people access collections, work, learn, socialise, make and share. The provision of facilities and services in addition to rich collections such as meeting rooms, study spaces, free wi-fi, access to technology and a wide range of programs and events are now expected at libraries. Library spaces must also be sustainable, accessible and safe.

Ultimately, public library building projects are determined by local government. The overall trend in library building and refurbishment is part of a bigger picture of councils addressing the urban planning

Public Library Infrastructure Grant Projects

The State Government has provided an additional \$15 million over the four years from 2014-15 to support public library building and IT improvement projects.

The grants are provided through the State Library of NSW, and so far there have been 54 library building projects funded across NSW. The State Library is working with many of these councils on design, layout and service advice. See page 2 for a full list of public library infrastructure grants.

2017-18 is the final year of this program, with \$4 million available.

and 'placemaking' needs of their communities through civic buildings and projects. Major library building projects can be used to 'activate' areas in a community: a new library can revitalise a tired shopping precinct or former industrial area, or activate a community where there previously wasn't one (the new Shellharbour City and Oran Park Town libraries currently under construction are good examples of this).

The increased number of new library buildings and refurbishments has not happened overnight, as major renovations and infrastructure projects can take a very long time to come to fruition — the new Rockdale Library took 32 years to realise, just as an example.

Visitors stream through the doors on opening day at Bankstown Library and Knowledge Centre in 2014

Year of grant	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Council	Project	Grant amount	
Albury	Albury LibraryMuseum	\$86,000	
Bathurst	Bathurst Library	\$200,000	
Broken Hill	Charles Rasp Memorial Library	\$200,000	
Cabonne	Molong Public Library	\$200,000	
Camden	Oran Park Library	\$200,000	
Canterbury	Campsie Library	\$190,266	
Canterbury-Bankstown	Riverwood Library	\$200,000	
Central Coast	Woy Woy Library	\$188,429	
Cessnock	Cessnock Library	\$200,000	
Cobar	Cobar Library	\$114,681	
Coffs Harbour	Woolgoolga Library	\$52,945	
Coonamble	Coonamble Library	\$74,031	
	Coonamble Library	\$31,200	
Dubbo	Dubbo Library	\$200,000	
Eurobodalla	Moruya Library	\$200,000	
	Narooma Library	\$55,000	
Fairfield	Cabramatta Library	\$200,000	
	Cabramatta Library	\$200,000	
Gilgandra	Gilgandra Library	\$78,677	
Griffith	Griffith City Library	\$200,000	
	Griffith City Library	\$150,000	
Gundagai	Gundagai Library	\$84,000	
Hawkesbury	Windsor Library	\$129,285	
Hay Shire	Hay Library	\$150,000	
Hurstville	Hurstville Library	\$200,000	
Inner West	Marrickville Library	\$200,000	
Kiama	Gerrigong Library	\$200,000	

Council	Project	Grant amount
Kogarah	Kogarah Library	\$136,425
Lachlan	Lake Cargelligo Library	\$16,000
	Condobolin Library	\$200,000
Lake Macquarie	Speers Point Library	\$200,000
Leeton	Leeton Library	\$15,220
Lithgow	Lithgow Library	\$118,027
MidCoast	Gloucester Library	\$172,658
Mid-Western Regional	Gulgong Library	\$35,000
	Kandos Library	\$40,000
Moree	Moree Library	\$200,000
Newcastle	Newcastle City Library	\$200,000
Oberon	Oberon Library	\$120,290
Port Macquarie-Hastings	Port Macquarie Library	\$195,915
Port Stephens	Tomaree Library	\$89,350
Richmond Valley	Evans Head Library	\$34,615
	Casino Library	\$177,230
Shellharbour	Warilla Library	\$200,000
	Oak Flats Library	\$200,000
Singleton	Singleton Library	\$77,480
Tweed	Tweed Heads Library	\$200,000
Upper Hunter	Merriwa Library	\$70,000
Wagga Wagga	Riverina Regional Library Headquarters	\$100,000
Warren Shire	Warren Library	\$90,553
Warringah	Dee Why Library	\$200,000
Warrumbungle	Dunedoo Library	\$199,397
Wentworth	Buronga Library	\$150,500
Wollondilly	Picton Library	\$200,000

Resources

All public libraries in NSW are different, they come in different shapes, sizes and locations. The State Library of NSW provides a range of resources to support all libraries in planning refurbishments, renovations and new library buildings.



People Places

People Places contains practical advice and tools to assist in the planning of public library buildings to meet the needs of your community. www.sl.nsw.gov.au/public-library-services/people-places-tools



Modular libraries project

The State Library recently worked with architects from fjmt studio to develop a series of library plan templates to help councils more easily design and build small-scale public libraries. The plans consist of a series of templates, or modules that can 'mix-and-match' to create usable library spaces.

The modules, ranging in size from 190 to 1000 m², can also be used to extend existing library spaces, for example to include additional seating areas or a meeting room. Prefabricated options based on the modular designs, such as a 'pod' library are also being investigated by fjmt.

www.sl.nsw.gov.au/public-library-services/modular-libraries-project

Library Spaces: Bringing People Together seminar

On 19 October 2017 the State Library was pleased to host Morten Schmidt from award-winning Danish architectural firm Schmidt Hammer Lassen (SHL). Morten was in Australia working on the redevelopment of the State Library of Victoria, before heading off to New Zealand

to the SHL-designed Christchurch Central Library, which is currently being built.

The State Library took the opportunity to put together a full program around Morten's visit, which included Annie Hensley from fjmt studio, who spoke about the modular libraries project, and libraries who have recently completed, or even just started, building projects and refurbishments. Here are some key points from the libraries' presentations:

- Get staff involved – include them on the journey to your new building and service model.
- When moving into a new building there are lots of unknowns. Be flexible – if something doesn't work, change it.
- Working with developers can be challenging. Be prepared to make quick decisions, but expect delays and be willing to compromise.
- Despite the best planning, surprises will always surprise you.

All presentations were recorded via Bluejeans. Details on how to access the presentations can be found on the PLS blog. www.sl.nsw.gov.au/blogs/library-spaces-bringing-people-together

Modules from the modular library project can be used as templates in the design of small-scale libraries.

Collaboration and inspiration

A new library at Rockdale

presented at **LIBRARY SPACES** seminar

When the doors of the new Rockdale Library opened on 30 July 2016, the response from the community was overwhelming. There was a real energy in the air as our community embraced the new service and beautifully designed library with astonishment. The 2200 m² library, designed by CK Design International, has large open spaces and natural light streams in through the glass facades. The design, which was worked on in collaboration with the community, library staff and other key stakeholders, enables our community to explore our collection, discover our local history and play with our interactive technology.

By 2012, it was very clear that a new library was essential. The old Rockdale Library had been ‘temporarily’ housed in the heritage-listed town hall since 1982 and did not meet industry standards. The political will finally reached its peak in 2013. Council voted in favour of building a new library, which would integrate with the town hall and co-locate the Council Customer Service Centre. A new library and Customer Service Centre would be a one-stop shop for residents and there were hopes that it would revitalise the ageing town centre of Rockdale.

We developed the initial design brief by running a series of workshops with staff representatives from the library and Customer Service Centre. At each workshop we discussed staff aspirations and operational



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opportunities to improve processes and create a better customer experience. We also ran workshops with the library committee, a group representing various community interests including seniors, young adults, parents and business owners, agreeing on key decisions such as the transition from more dynamic spaces on lower floors, to more quiet and contemplative spaces on the upper floors. An overall aspiration was to be a beacon of light and ‘attract the moths’ – the passers-by.



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Library staff were also involved in the building of the library. The Manager Libraries & Customer Service and Coordinator Library Services were members of the Project Control Group and met with builders every two weeks to monitor progress of the build. Staff worked closely with CK Design on the selection of materials, colours, and the interior layout of the library. No decision was made on the library without the approval of library staff. It was a very collaborative process

and the end product is a usable and beautifully designed space.

The design intent was to create a dynamic and surprising community space, that celebrates a local identity and relates to its history, familiar places and materials. Images of local maps, and of urban and natural landmarks adorn many walls and light fittings. A palette of grey tiled floors and pebble-like carpets with red elements resemble the very urban environment of Rockdale, while softer beiges and greens reflect the natural environment

of parks and beaches in the area.

Iconic trees from a local seaside forest inspired the ‘children’s forest’, with shelving sculpted into tree shapes and merging cosy reading nooks and book displays.

Since the library opened there has been an average of 1500 visitors each day. This is almost a tripling of visitor numbers compared to our old library. The biggest surprise was the number of high school students who flocked to the library from the first day. At times, there was standing room only – all the

tables were full, students were sitting on the floor and using the space in ways we never anticipated. The popularity of the space for high school students has demonstrated the importance of a public library in their lives, as it is one of the only community spaces where they can go to and feel safe. Youth spaces are disappearing and our library has become a welcoming and necessary space for them.

Sharing an entrance with Customer Service means that we are now attracting very different customers to the library. This has increased our profile within the community and the Council, and has had positive outcomes for library services. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many of the businesses in the Rockdale town centre, mostly cafes, restaurants and mixed businesses, have noticed an increase in traffic in the area, thus increasing their customer base.

Rockdale Library is a great example of how public libraries can activate spaces.

—
PAULA PFOEFFER
Coordinator - Library Services
Bayside Council

—
CECILIA KUGLER
Director
CK Design International

01 Rockdale Library's main entrance (photo by Stefan Trajkovski)

02 Local studies centre (photo by Stefan Trajkovski)

03 The children's forest comes alive on opening day

04 The children's forest, inspired by a local seaside forest (photo by Stefan Trajkovski)

New building, new service model

at Woollahra Libraries

presented at **LIBRARY SPACES** seminar

In 2016 Woollahra Library at Double Bay moved from a 468 m² library in an old house to a brand-new, purpose-built library covering 2234 m² over three levels. It was anticipated that the visitation and circulation would more than double and so to cater for these increases we introduced a new service model. More self-service technologies and different work processes would mean that staff worked smarter rather than harder to cope with the new demands.

Self-service technology

The rollout of RFID technology had taken place previously; so now self-check kiosks were upgraded to include EFTPOS facilities. We introduced online payments and online membership, installed an automated returns unit, and introduced a self-booking system for PCs, meeting rooms and events.

New service model: roving services

Our new library was built without traditional desks — instead a roving service was introduced. Staff carry iPads and there is an Info Point on each floor with a staff PC and a buzzer, specifically created to enable customers to get staff attention. The Info Points provide an informal spot where staff stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our customers to assist



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with the more complicated queries that cannot be completed on the iPad. The iPads are carried in a satchel that can be worn over the shoulder or around the waist. Staff use the iPads to refer to the library management system, access the internet, assist with readers' advisory queries and receive alerts from the Info Point buzzer. The iPads can also function as a phone using Skype for Business with headsets. To ensure that roving staff are identifiable, all staff wear a uniform of black, white

or grey clothing, a name badge, a bright lanyard and carry an iPad.

Staff reception

Staff received the new philosophy positively and have played a major part in its success. They realised the need for the self-service model with the increased size and busyness of the new library and saw the potential for offering improved customer service. A procedure was written for staff with the aim of answering all the questions



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and concerns they had on how to successfully work in this new roving environment. Following are some excerpts from the procedure:

- **Why are we roving?** Roving offers us the opportunity to engage with those who may be reluctant to seek staff out or approach us at the Info Point. It allows us to give our customers the confidence to help themselves, following our self-service philosophy.



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- **How do I rove?** If there are two staff on the floor, communicate with each other; one could rove whilst the other shelves. If you are the only staff member on the floor; rove then shelves. Be approachable. It's good to keep busy, but don't be so engrossed in a task that someone won't want to interrupt you to ask a question.

- **Who do I approach?** Most of us are sensitive about invading a customer's private space. Here are some tips for who to approach: Look for eye contact. If people give you eye contact they may like some attention. If they avoid eye contact they probably don't want to be interrupted. Identify certain situations and locations where customers need and welcome attention, such as parents in the Junior Non-fiction area or people at the self-check machines.

Roving service success

Staff are present on the floor when and where customers need them. The roving method enables us to provide a more welcoming and proactive service. We have found that it allows us to promote events better, and sell library services and the collection. It also provides opportunities to engage with those who may be reluctant to seek staff out or approach us at the Info Point. The introduction of the new model, combining the roving service with the new self-service technologies, has meant increased operational efficiencies, improved customer service and an empowered local community who, with our assistance, are becoming more familiar with navigating this new library world.

CORINNA PIERCE
Library Customer Service Team Leader
Woollahra Libraries

Note:
Presented by Vicki Munro, Manager, Woollahra Libraries at the Library Spaces seminar

City Library

The heart of Shellharbour

presented at **LIBRARY SPACES** seminar



Shellharbour City Libraries' current building project is the completion of a new City Library in the heart of Shellharbour – an additional library that will become the central library for Shellharbour and its fast-growing community of just over 70,000 people.

The new 2000 m² library is co-located in Shellharbour's new Civic Centre along with Council's Administration Centre, the City Museum, an auditorium and a cafe – all set in generous landscaped outdoor areas that form a significant extension to the indoor community spaces.

An interesting feature of Shellharbour is that historically it has developed from the outside in. In terms of the local libraries, this has resulted in the city having four libraries in suburbs around the edge of the local government area, but no library in the centre. There has been sustained residential development in the centre over the past 25 years as well as a huge shopping complex that contains most of Shellharbour's retail and service outlets.

Shellharbour's Libraries & Museum Strategy 2024 has addressed the inadequacy of the current museum and library buildings. It acknowledges that the buildings are tired and no longer offer the kinds of spaces the community wants and deserves. The strategy was strongly grounded in community consultation with face-to-face and online engagement with hundreds of local people. What the community told us is not all that surprising, but it gives strong community ownership to the future development of Shellharbour City Libraries.

In summary, the community asked for their libraries and museum to be:

- accessible and inclusive
- flexible, modern, welcoming spaces
- relevant and responsive
- innovative

and to provide engagement and interaction through:

- programs and learning
- access to new technology.

and immediately adjacent to the library, will offer an alternate space for larger programs with the flexibility to be divided into two spaces.

The co-location of the library and museum provides collaborative opportunities. The museum includes a heritage room which will contain the combined resources of the museum, the library's local studies and family history collections as well as resources from the local Tongarra Heritage Society with whom Council has signed

includes a delightful verandah which will provide additional seating options or an ambient space for day or evening functions. The cafe which sits between the library and museum will open out onto the civic square. The civic square is a further 2000 m² of paved outdoor space featuring public art installations. As well, a park area sits below the library offering open green space for passive recreation or outdoor events.

In 2018 you are all invited to visit the new Shellharbour City Library to admire the captivating architecture and sustainable design and to hear how we have managed the challenges of a new library building, a new RFID system, new collection genres, a new staff structure, a new customer service approach and new library users all at the same time!

By then we'll be progressing our strategy with the refurbishment of our Oak Flats Library and preparing for the building of the new Warilla Library while planning for our new Shell Cove Library and looking ahead to the Albion Park Library expansion ...

We hope to welcome you to Shellharbour City Libraries soon!

MARGIE KIRKNESS
Manager Libraries and Museum
Shellharbour City Libraries

... historically [Shellharbour] has developed from the outside in ... this has resulted in the city having four libraries in suburbs around the edge of the local government area, but no library in the centre.

This has resulted in a strategy with an unashamedly strong focus on buildings and spaces, but which also acknowledges the importance of engaging with the community where they are – via technology with our 'digital branch' as well as through community outreach initiatives such as pop-up libraries or innovative programming and partnerships.

Shellharbour's new City Library is due for completion at the end of 2017. As well as collection areas and abundant seating, City Library features three meeting rooms that will be used for a diverse range of learning and programming. The 350-seat auditorium within the Civic Centre,

a memorandum of understanding (MOU). The MOU provides for permanent loan of the Society's resources, which will then be made more accessible within the centre and via the library catalogue.

The collaborative approach extends to staffing, with the Museum Curator sharing the new Libraries and Museum staff to support museum service delivery. Importantly, a diverse range of new programs and partnerships are being explored within the Shellharbour region to engage the community with the library.

Significant indoor-outdoor spaces will allow expanded opportunities for the community to engage. The library

An artist's impression of the new Shellharbour City Library

Lithgow Library refurbishment

presented at **LIBRARY SPACES** seminar

Community feedback has been overwhelmingly positive in response to the recent refurbishment of Lithgow Library. Thanks to a Public Library Infrastructure Grant of \$118,000, and contributions from Lithgow City Council, the library has new carpet, a self-checking station, new furnishings, a bright and functional children's area, and a new Customer Service Desk.

From the outset, all staff collaborated in the project, an approach that supported and strengthened our library team. Our aim was to enhance our library spaces, redesign our shelving layout, introduce new technologies and showcase our collections, while making the most of our budget and existing furnishings. Engagement with our local community was a key aspect of the project, which helped us to prioritise creating new seating spaces and comfortable reading nooks.

Moving away from our 'warehouse shelving' layout to incorporate a more creative use of the shelving to delineate collections and reading spaces, and refreshing and revitalising our children's area were key elements in the project. Early in the process, it was clear that while we knew which elements we wanted, we did not have a clear image of what the final design would look like, down to details such as the colour and patterning for new carpet. Although we did not budget for a design consultant in our grant application, we found money from the



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library's budget, and brought in Carol Bagaric, a retail visual merchandise expert who had worked on the Lithgow Visitor Information Centre. This was by far one of the best decisions we made. Carol provided expert advice, reviewed and revised based on our feedback, and worked with us to create an overall plan that worked.

Our biggest challenge was the removal of the old centrally placed Circulation Desk, and replacing it with a new Customer Service Desk. Although the current trend is for 'deskless' libraries, we have installed quite a large desk. This was because all our book processing is done at this

desk, and we also use it to process all our bulk loan large print and audio books. The key functional change is that our staff no longer work with their backs to the customers, which often occurred with the old u-shaped desk. The new straight desk is a clear and welcoming entry point to the library, which enables customers and staff to interact in a friendly and efficient space.

The carpet was the most expensive element of the project. The original quote had only included basic removal of the old carpet. Removing



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the old glued-to-the-concrete carpet was a more extensive and expensive job, which came in well over budget. Additional funds for this had to be found from other library projects. A colourful palette of carpet squares was chosen, and used in creative ways to enhance the new shelving layout and delineate seating and event spaces. There was nervousness in choosing such bold bright colours, but once everything was back in place, it looked great. Our customers love the carpet, and it is one of the elements of the project that works exactly as we'd hoped.



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The library closed for two weeks for the carpet laying and shelving redesign, which involved moving every book in the library's lending collection. A Grand Reopening celebration, with speeches, entertainment and tours attracted over 100 people and was featured in social media, print and on our regional television station. Several big events were held to follow on from the reopening, including an International Women's Day lunch, Home Library Service Morning Tea, Seniors Week events, and a photographic exhibition – which saw hundreds of people coming through the doors and enjoying the new library layout. We provided a Comment Book to capture reactions to the refurbishment, such as this

one: 'Very stylish, I love the new renovations – great work, fabulous staff!' – which is representative of the fabulous feedback and support from our community.

TERRY O'KEEFE
Library Coordinator
Lithgow Library Learning Centre

01 Lithgow Library's warehouse-style shelving, prior to refurbishment ...

02 ... and the bright new carpet and shelving layout after its refurbishment

03 Lithgow Library children's area before the refurbishment ...

04 ... and after: the staff desks and shelving were replaced with 'arena' space for children's sessions and plenty of seating

Albury Retro Lane Cafe & Youth Space

presented at **LIBRARY SPACES** seminar

In 2007 the Albury LibraryMuseum opened as an integrated cultural community space. The LibraryMuseum is a striking facility in a central cultural square in Albury. When built, a cafe was planned for the rear of the LibraryMuseum, opening onto Albury's Cultural Precinct, however for a range of reasons this didn't eventuate.

In 2014 the Council-managed Youth Cafe ceased operation due to the Albury Art Gallery redevelopment. The cafe provided a safe, central venue for young people to visit, access information and undertake recreational and cultural activities. After an assessment process a Council decision was made to co-locate the cafe with the LibraryMuseum, integrated with the youth library space. While there was general support for the plan, young people had some reservations, including perceptions that links to the LibraryMuseum may impact on identity as youth space and a feeling that the library did not have a youth feel. This project was an opportunity to address these perceptions head-on.



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The LibraryMuseum, while being a very well-visited facility, had a lower number of youth visitors and library members compared to catchment population figures. The closure of the previous youth space provided an opportunity to attract more young people to the LibraryMuseum. The Youth Team became part of the wider Cultural Services team and a range of youth activities, including the very popular Friday night gigs, were offered in the space. A community engagement strategy, led by a Youth Management Committee, was implemented to ensure that young people felt involved and had a sense of ownership over

the new development, its products, programs and services. An architect was appointed to develop designs for the 250 m² cafe and youth space with the following key objectives:

- provide a central place to meet the information, social and recreational needs of young people in Albury
- break down barriers for young people in visiting and accessing the resources and services of the LibraryMuseum
- enhance accessibility to the LibraryMuseum and incorporate the LibraryMuseum and associated youth space as part of a vibrant cultural precinct.

01 Albury LibraryMuseum technology area for young people

Retro Lane Cafe & Youth Space ... although primarily a youth space, it has become an inter-generational environment.

Throughout the design and construction process young people continued to have direct involvement in technology choices, youth collection choices, interior design and program development, including an internal street art mural. Youth Space design elements include:

- provision of a chill-out space for young people to socialise and access free wi-fi
- technology area including iPads, VR technology, PlayStation and Mac computer
- young adult collection area and an RFID self-checkout station
- exhibition area
- formal workshop space for structured activity programs for young people including arts and performance activities, HSC study sessions, homework help and school holiday

02 Retro Lane Cafe
03 Young adult collection



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- programs (a bookable space for other LibraryMuseum or community programs when not in use)
- cafe – an important element in attracting young people to the space.

The cafe offers reasonably priced, fresh, simple food with a 15 per cent discount for young people. Retro Lane opened in November 2016, with celebrations attended by 1500 people, including young people, families and general community members. This was an excellent opportunity for young people and all stakeholders to celebrate the opening of their space. Retro Lane Cafe & Youth Space has been operating for

10 months and, although primarily a youth space, it has become an inter-generational environment. Young people are using the new Retro Lane Youth Space and they are also visiting the LibraryMuseum with a 12 per cent increase in visitor numbers. The services and programs currently being offered through Retro Lane are a starting point which has worked well in meeting initial aims and objectives. The Youth Programs Officer and libraries staff will continue to consult with young people and service providers to build on this start.

CARINA CLEMENT
Team Leader Libraries and Museum
Albury LibraryMuseum

Public Library of the Year Awards

presented at **LIBRARY SPACES** seminar

The Public Library of the Year Awards were established in 2014, with the inaugural awards presented at the IFLA World Library and Information Congress (WLIC) in Lyon. The first prize of US\$5000 in that year went to an Australian public library – Craigieburn Public Library in Melbourne. Australian libraries have been finalists in successive years: Library at the Dock, Melbourne in 2015, and Geelong Library and Heritage Centre and Success Public Library, WA in 2016.

To enter the awards the library must be 'new'; it must have been completed in the two-year period before the closing date and must have been built from scratch, or occupy premises that have not previously been used as a library.

Entrants must address six criteria, all of which are given equal weighting:

- interaction with surroundings and local culture
- architectural quality
- flexibility
- sustainability
- learning space
- digitisation.



Narok Library in Kenya was a finalist of the Public Library of the Year Awards, showing interaction with surroundings and local culture is just as important as the architectural quality of the building (photo courtesy of Model Programme for Public Libraries)



While some of the entries (and winners) have been for architecturally superb metropolitan libraries, modest suburban and regional libraries have also featured significantly in the winner's circle. What is important to the judging panel is the way in which the library addresses the selection criteria. One of the most inspiring entries was from Narok Library in rural Kenya where the library worked closely with the Ministry of Agriculture to give technical advice on livestock farming. The building had been designed to allow the nomadic Maasai herdsmen to use the space while their cows and goats were safely corralled outside.

Martin Brøchner-Mortensen (Systematic) and Jan Richards AM (IFLA Public Libraries Standing Committee) agree on the terms for the Public Library of the Year Awards, with fellow IFLA members Leikny Indergaard and Jakob Guillois Laerkes

sponsor, Danish company Systematic, began discussions with the IFLA Public Libraries Standing Committee about the future. I have represented the IFLA Public Libraries Standing Committee on the jury (comprising members of the library and architectural community) for this period as the awards have developed. At the 2017 IFLA WLIC in Wrocław it was agreed that we would work in partnership with other relevant IFLA Sections to ensure the future of these awards. We are currently finessing the detail and will re-launch the awards in early 2018.

When they are announced, I encourage you to consider entering your library. The prize is not to be sneezed at (still US\$5000) but more than that the kudos that is attached to these awards is huge! The amount of press that Craigieburn received in 2014 was phenomenal. And remember that you don't have to be big to win. I look forward to seeing a colleague from NSW in the winner's circle at IFLA in Kuala Lumpur next year!

JAN RICHARDS AM
Chair, IFLA Public Libraries Standing Committee

The awards were originally administered by the Danish Agency for Culture and Palaces (DAC), but in 2017 they withdrew and the principal

ALIA Australian Library Design Awards

The ALIA Australian Library Design Awards were established to showcase the best in contemporary library interiors and exteriors in Australia, and to celebrate the investment in libraries made by our nation's institutions, corporations and governments. The inaugural

awards were presented in June 2017, with Rockdale Library and Woollahra Library Double Bay being highly commended in the public library category. You can view the 2017 shortlisted and winning designs at: www.alia.org.au/awards/library-design-awards-2017

Accessibility and public library buildings

presented at LIBRARY SPACES seminar

All NSW councils have had a renewed focus on disability inclusion in 2017, as they were required to prepare a disability inclusion action plan by 1 July under the Disability Inclusion Regulation 2014. This action plan can stand alone or be part of council's integrated planning process.

The NSW Disability Inclusion Plan identifies four key focus areas, nominated by people with disability as being of primary importance in creating an inclusive community. These are:

- developing positive community attitudes and behaviours
- creating liveable communities
- supporting access to meaningful employment
- improving access to services through better systems and processes.

Why is it important?

As the World Health Organisation points out, 'Disability is not just a health problem. It is a complex phenomenon, reflecting the interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which he or she lives.' Accessibility improvements benefit everybody, not just those with disability. By designing spaces and facilities for someone with a permanent disability (eg an amputee), someone with a situational limitation



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(eg a broken arm) and someone with a temporary limitation (eg carrying a small child) can also benefit.

One particular aspect to consider for your community, 'Research indicates that as age increases so does the level of disability in our community.

Access for people with a disability will become an increasingly important issue ... Designing libraries to meet the needs of our growing older population will be a major challenge in the future.' (*People Places*, 2013 p33)

Library standards and guidelines

There are several library standards and guidelines that can be used to guide you in making your library spaces more accessible.

Guideline 16 in *Living Learning Libraries* refers specifically to Services for People with Disability and the objective to 'provide barrier-free access to library services and resources for people with disability'.

IFLA also publishes the 'Access to libraries for persons with disabilities - Checklist': www.ifla.org/publications/ifla-professional-reports-89

The most specific advice for buildings is found in *People Places* where there is a section on Access and Approach.

Consider an audit of your own library spaces using the main points from *People Places*.

Access and approach

Do you have steps or a ramp, is your building designed in accordance with the building codes and standards for ramps, door widths, door furniture, aisle widths (can someone using a wheel chair comfortably fit and turn around), are there people in your community who use mobility scooters to visit the library, do you have accessible lifts and toilets?



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- **Entry:** The front door should be easy to find and easy to open for all users; electronic sliding doors are preferable.

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- **Car parking:** Provide specially marked car parking spaces for people with disabilities close to the entry and in compliance with standards.

- **Mobility:** Aisle widths and corridors must accommodate wheelchairs, prams, motorised scooters, etc (see Australian Standard 1428.1); wheelchair users require a minimum of 1.5 m to turn comfortably.

- **Bathroom amenities:** Public toilets are an essential item in public libraries, but how do you make your facilities accessible if you're retro-fitting an old library? At Warren and Bogan Shires they have successfully renovated their old facilities to create a single accessible toilet for all clients to use.

PUBLIC TOILET
DISABLED FRIENDLY

Getting the word out

If you have accessible facilities at your library, how easy is it for a person planning their trip to find that information? Do you have it on your website and in the advertising for your library events?

—
MYLEE JOSEPH
Consultant Public Library Services
State Library of NSW

01 Accessible service desk at Surry Hills Library

02 The car park at Wellington Library provides accessible parking with easy access into the library

03 Bogan Shire Library in Nyngan has renovated old bathroom facilities to provide one accessible toilet for all clients to use

Creating spaces in Coonamble

Coonamble Shire, in north-west NSW, is 165 km from the nearest large centre of Dubbo and some 700 km from Sydney. It covers an area of almost 10,000 km² with a population of 4030, ranking in the top decile for social and economic disadvantage.

With loss of public space in Coonamble, such as the closure of the Senior Citizens Centre and Youth Centre buildings, the library has increasingly become the social hub of the community. With the closure of Vacation Care/After School Care services there are no safe and welcoming public spaces available, and so the Coonamble Shire Library has found itself filling a void that covers a large slice of our population. With increased use, the library was becoming cramped and un navigable for prams, walking frames and wheelchairs and the inflexibility of the available spaces was restricting growth in community use. This was evident in the need to curb numbers at events due to lack of open space in the building.

Before its recent refurbishment, Coonamble Library was furnished with fixed shelving and heavy, fixed furniture, which was unable to be moved or relocated to provide reconfiguration options. The purchase of modern mobile shelving, thanks to a Public Library Infrastructure Grant from the State Library, has provided a wider range of configurations to suit the needs of the library and our community. By providing flexibility in

the configuration of the public space, the library can maximise its use as a community gathering space. This is the only public space in Coonamble available for free community activities and the multipurpose nature of both the building and the new mobile shelves has ensured that the library can play a whole of community role in the building of social capital.

Since the refurbishment we have increased the patronage of young people for holiday programs and activities. During craft, storytime and movie nights the space is now more than adequate and our numbers no longer have to be restricted. Individuals and community groups have been using the space in increasing numbers. We now have a conversation

With the closure of [key] services there are no safe and welcoming public spaces available, and so the Coonamble Shire Library has found itself filling a void that covers a large slice of our population.



New mobile shelving at Coonamble Library enables more flexible use of the space for community activities

area that is used during the day by older students for study or vocational needs; and somewhere safe and comfortable where mothers are able to breastfeed, meet with other mums, chat and socialise while their children play with our toys, read books or use the kid's touch screen computers. In the afternoons when school is out, the same area can be reconfigured as a chill zone where kids can connect for social networking, school activities or assignments and take advantage of the

free wi-fi — the only free access to the internet and information technology in our community.

The library also has a strong association with the local Indigenous community, assisted through the Library Connection program which promotes engagement between disenfranchised Indigenous residents and the library. This engagement will continue to grow with the capacity to modify the work space to suit the needs of the community.

The mobility of our new shelving and furniture has ensured that the Coonamble Shire Library can keep offering a safe and relevant environment to our community for many years to come.

—
RAQUEL PICKERING
Librarian
Coonamble Shire Library



Craft activities at Coonamble Library - with the closure of many buildings and services for local community groups, the library has become an essential community hub

Casino Library redesign

Casino and the surrounding district encompasses a population of approximately 11,000 and offers limited entertainment and recreational opportunities and inadequate public transport. A quality library service thus plays an important role and is essential for the community.

The Casino Library, built in 1978, looked tired, dated and clinical. The shelving was overcrowded and uninviting, and the library lacked the appropriate furniture and spaces to accommodate customers in a warm and welcoming environment. In 2011 the library had been extended and renovated to provide some much-needed space, however the main part of the library remained unchanged.

Richmond Valley Council submitted a successful 2015–16 Public Library Infrastructure Grant application for the redesign of Casino Library. Quantum Libraries were the successful tender and came up with a great plan to redesign and refurbish the Casino Library.

In March 2017, the library was transformed from a typical 1970s design to a modern library with modern furniture, new shelving, a new circulation desk and more flexible floor space. The library now had the ‘wow’ factor! The new circulation desk, dominated by two photos which are distinctly of Casino, is very functional as both the circulation and information sections are adjustable. Two weeks after the refurbishment, the library



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also went live with RFID. This was also funded by a 2015–16 Public Library Infrastructure Grant.

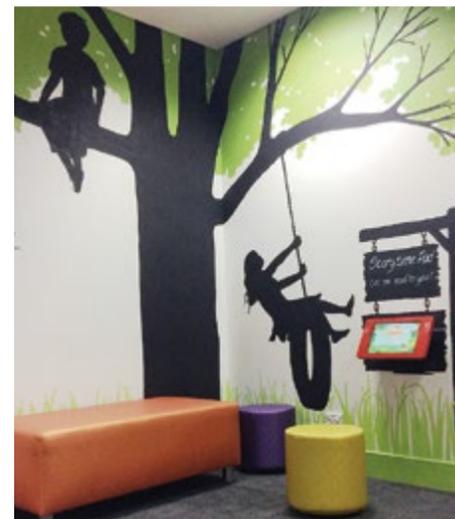
The Casino Library is experiencing considerable growth in patronage and the new look ensures customers have a satisfying library experience. There are now informal relaxed reading areas and great comfortable furniture to take advantage of the free wi-fi service. There are private areas for tutoring or conducting small meetings. The new shelving provides for flexible

promotion of specific collections and better access to the collection.

The refurbishment has allowed the library to tackle one of its main goals – to ease social isolation by providing a modern library with a welcoming atmosphere. Since the redesign the library is busier with more people spending time in the library. There are now customers in the library from opening to closing time.

GARY ELLEM
Regional Library Manager
Richmond-Upper Clarence Regional Library

Refresh, revive and reinvigorate



Hawkesbury Library Service has been working towards a reinvigoration of the Windsor Central Library for just over two years now. The current library was purpose-built in 2005 and as we celebrated our 10th anniversary in June 2015, we also reviewed whether the ten-year-old design had kept pace with rapidly changing community needs.

Initial reviews recognised the need to move away from the traditional collection-based model towards a people-focused one. We knew we had a great space to work with and great ideas we wanted to try out, but on a tight budget we needed to find clever ways to reuse and reshape existing materials to make the real difference we were after. Our enormous service desks, which hid our busily working staff, needed to be replaced with accessible and approachable service points; and efficient, but supermarket-like, aisles needed to be transformed into welcoming, relaxed, multifunctional spaces.

Our first big challenge was to free up space. A library-wide weeding process saw book stock reduced by an average of 14 per cent. This allowed shelving to be reduced and remaining shelving, much of it retrofitted with castors, to be rearranged into more casual layouts, creating more comfortable, relaxed spaces as we had hoped.

A complete overhaul of passive readers' advisory in the adult fiction collections, with intuitive and graphic labelling, professionally designed genre bookmarks and a program of staff-recommendation shelf-talkers, meant our newly weeded and refreshed fiction collection was more accessible than ever. For non-fiction collections, ‘rooms’ were created for our most popular subjects and clear, easy-to-read subject signage introduced throughout. A new compact reference area, complete with a custom-designed newspaper reading table and more visible LIAC and Drug Info collections, was incorporated into the revamped non-fiction zone.

Our children's area received a fun makeover with the creation of a life-size tree in the middle of the space, beautiful murals painted on the walls, a wall-mounted story pod, bright new furniture and a fun, maze-like shelving layout. Our previous central block of catalogues was dispersed, with some units incorporated into the main shelving areas for easier access. Customised units were installed to turn structural pillars into new catalogue stands while other pillars were turned into new display and storage spaces.

One of our biggest changes was to remove a wall between the after-hours

chute and locker areas and remodel these into a single space to facilitate the creation of a returns room. This allowed the remaining desk functions to be combined into a single, compact, approachable service point – to act as a support to roving customer service, via a new Windows surface tablet, and for self-service loans. Our hidden staff were finally out and about with the customers!

To facilitate the open service model, cash registers were phased out and all transactions were shifted to the Monitor print management system. Throughout the library, an injection of colour was achieved by reupholstering our existing lounge chairs with bright new fabrics. These really ‘pop’ against our new darker carpeting, completed just this month. The bits and pieces of our protracted makeover have finally been transformed into one colour-coordinated whole, making the whole library seem fresh and new. We still have new internal signage to finalise, with staff working hard to find innovative and affordable signage solutions that will make navigating the new space simple for our customers.

Of course, compromises had to be made and some ideas couldn't be implemented with the available funds. We hope to incorporate some of our favourite ideas, such as large-scale graphics, at a later date. In the meantime, we have created a fresh, truly flexible space that we hope our customers will enjoy for the next decade and beyond.

ROBYN MENZIES
Acting Library Coordinator
Hawkesbury Library Service

01 The new-look Casino Library was officially opened by Robert Mustow, Richmond Valley Council Mayor; Chris Gulaptis, Member for Clarence and Cameron Morley, State Library of NSW

02 Casino Library before its refurbishment – a tired, dated and clinical space

Hawkesbury Library's new children's area

Future-proofing your library

Lessons from Ryde Library

Over the last decade there has been a resurgence in new and refurbished public library building spaces in New South Wales. Exciting and innovative spaces have been created that are attracting new library users and changing the range of services and activities that can be provided. Having created these spaces, the challenge now is to maintain them over the long-term to meet community expectations. The refurbishment of Gladesville Library branch in 2016 completed Ryde Library Service's five-year program of extensive upgrades of all its five branches. The success of the program in revitalising our spaces and maintaining relevance is reflected in library usage statistics.

During the process of revitalising our libraries, we learned a number lessons about how to successfully upgrade and future-proof a library service:

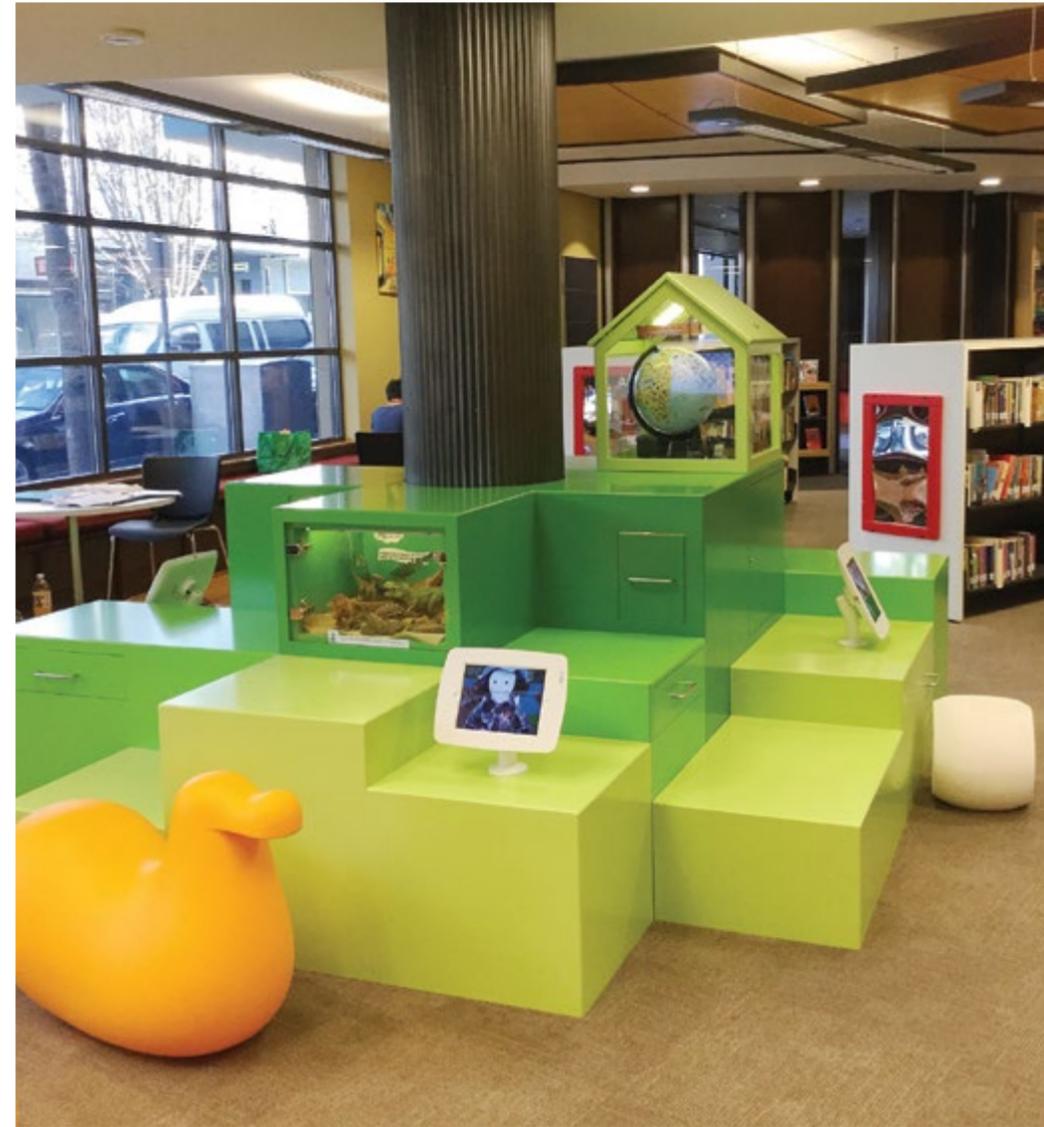
- have a vision
- encourage innovative ideas
- start early
- involve all stakeholders
- have a long-term plan
- understand your Council's asset management program
- employ the best you can afford
- attention to detail
- have new programs ready to go from day one
- tell everyone about it.

Forward planning

City of Ryde has an asset management and development system through which the library can nominate and bid for a range of refurbishment projects over a 10-year period. This system allows for amendments and additions to these bids on an annual basis ensuring that they remain targeted and relevant to future developments. The library bases its bids on a rotating cycle of three levels of refurbishment project, 'total refits', 'major refurb' and 'touch ups', with different cycles applied to different size branches.

These projects generally cover such things as carpet and furniture replacement, desk reconstruction and the modifying and construction of new spaces within the building.

The library also includes asset management data in its bids from the Council Building & Maintenance section which identifies works such as CCTV, lighting and air-conditioning upgrades. In this way major works are coordinated, reducing library down-times and ensuring works are carried out at appropriate times throughout the life of the space.



Project management

The council provides a project manager for each refurbishment project. They are responsible for managing council reporting systems, conducting appropriate procurement procedures and supervising council staff and external contractors.

A library staff member is appointed as a business manager to liaise with other staff and the project manager to ensure that the project achieves its goals to the standard required. Each project employs a designer/architect to translate the library's vision into an achievable and integrated design.

This person is selected based on their understanding and experience of public library design, and will prepare detailed plans, identify suitable finishes and suppliers, and provide innovative design suggestions.

Staff involvement & innovation

Local branch and other library staff are directly involved in preparing the vision statement for projects and attending regular meetings with the project manager, designer/architect and contractor well before the project start date. This improves staff buy-in for proposed changes and broadens the pool of innovative ideas for consideration. The Library Management Team keeps a close eye on developments in library design here and overseas through library journals, newsletters, seminars and online forums. Visits to new libraries are carried out regularly by a range of staff. A reopening celebration is also a great way to get staff buy-in and maximise the value of your investment — make it as big as you can, and promote it well. The reopening will get new people through the door so have innovative activities and programs ready to go to keep them coming back.

—
KEN KLIPPEL
Senior Coordinator - Library Operations
Ryde Library Service

A fresh look at West Ryde Library

Carnes Hill one year on



Carnes Hill Library

When building a new library, census data can only provide a part picture of your customers.

Liverpool City Library's Carnes Hill Library celebrated its first birthday on 30 July 2017, with drop-in drumming, yoga, live art, craft, storytime and even a visit from Batman himself. The feedback from customers over the first year is about enjoying the building, utilising every nook and cranny of space, being eager for readers' advisory and collections, and learning through programs.

The library shares the building with the Council Community Centre and cafe. The building itself spreads across two levels and is a light-filled box with strong diagonal lines. The ground floor features CALD collections, DVDs, magazines, newspapers, computers, printing, quiet study space and reading areas. The central stairs and lift connect customers to the lower ground floor which has the usual library collections: fiction and non-fiction for junior, youth and adult readers as well as Aboriginal and ESL collections and an abundance of graphic novels.

The library is well equipped with technology, featuring a total of 28 public computers, monitor auto-loaders, children's iPads, three bibliotheca self-service units, auto-sorter returns, a ceiling-mounted projector on each floor and TVs in the study rooms so users can connect their laptops. Accessible ceilings and floors means power can be anywhere and

everywhere and can change when we need it to. The vast range of technology available to our customers means that all staff have become accustomed to problem solving and offer more than just 'turning it off and on again'.

Carnes Hill customers are from diverse demographics, but user trends are evident throughout the week. Mornings usually bring parents, little ones and seniors; then throughout the day, and into the evening, it is standing room only with university and high school students. Use of the lower ground floor, with overflow to the ground floor at the busiest times, is preferred by young people. The library has become a study and wi-fi refuge, with group study being the norm and the study rooms constantly booked out. The CALD collections featured on the ground floor are Arabic, Hindi, Spanish and Tagalog; the most frequently used being Spanish and Hindi with DVDs proving popular.

When building a new library, census data can only provide a part picture of your customers. One year on, Carnes Hill has a good picture of its customers and their needs – while this will evolve, we can now celebrate their uniqueness and reflect this back through what we can offer. The morning parents and strollers on coffee dates have told us we need to multiply our children's literacy programs. With the eventual

aim of providing something almost every day of the week, Friday storytime has begun and Thursday evenings will launch the Reading Hour. Youth programs are slowly starting to creep in with the sold-out children's programs. We are excited to offer ModFab's Minecraft 3D-printing workshop and are developing a partnership with a local tutor to deliver an intensive HSC English and Maths program in the new year. The use of the CALD and ESL collections highlights the need for a Conversation Cafe, which is beginning in late 2017 and will be volunteer-run. The growing seniors craft and book club groups with their keen interest in what's on in the library, has meant we will be taking part in Seniors Festival 2018. Carnes Hill staff members always have an ear out for suggestions and ideas and it is exciting to be able to try new things.

One year on and the building is holding up. However, you do start to see a few lifted carpet squares here and there, with the interplay of how things are used versus what they were designed for. Programming needs to be a priority and we can foresee a few changes over the next couple of years: more study space, more room for programs, more technology. Liverpool City Library will be embarking on another huge build over the coming years and while we acknowledge it is near on impossible to get it perfect on the first go, we will continue to adapt and evolve with our community.

JESSICA BRUCE
Carnes Hill Branch Librarian
Liverpool City Library

Be SEEN@Swansea

Lake Macquarie City Council launched a new pop-up cultural exhibition space, SEEN@Swansea on 7 September 2017. The vision for SEEN (or South East Exhibition Network space) is to offer a high-quality exhibition space for creatives, which will raise awareness and participation in the arts in Lake Macquarie. SEEN@Swansea is located in the Swansea Centre, a multipurpose community building that houses Lake Mac Libraries Swansea Branch, Neighbourhood Centre, Youth Drop in Centre, Lake Mac Tourism Visitor Information Centre and meeting room spaces.

In late 2016, the Council's Cultural Services team reallocated existing operational funds to refit the mezzanine space as a temporary exhibition gallery to activate the space and to meet the growing demand for quality creative spaces in the city's south-east. This demand was identified through a major community consultation process initiated to provide direction for the city's first Arts, Heritage and Cultural Plan.

Through consultation sessions, interviews and an online survey, the community repeatedly requested a need for creative spaces in which to exhibit, perform and create. The community also expressed a need to raise awareness of the region's rich pre- and post-contact history and historical organisations, and to provide a visitor destination experience.



SEEN@Swansea addresses this need and has been extremely popular with community and visitors, and offers another outreach program for the Lake Mac Libraries team.

The space is co-managed between the tourism, art gallery and library teams. Curated exhibitions, programming and operations are discussed through the SEEN@Swansea Project Group with the volunteer program managed through the library team. As the space is open seven days a week, volunteers take care of the exhibitions, with the Visitor Information Centre and library staff also assisting with the day-to-day operations. Exhibitions are installed with assistance from the art gallery team and offer professional development opportunities for library

staff to learn museum and exhibition installation. Programs, tours, activities and educational kits are co-developed within the library and gallery teams. This will be further refined and the governance of the space will provide further opportunities for interested staff to learn more about curation, exhibition installation, collection development, cataloguing and registration, history programming and volunteer management.

Lake Macquarie City Council recently received \$32,500 through Building Better Communities funding to develop this space further and provide a strategic approach to developing cultural tourism opportunities. The grant will also allow Lake Mac Libraries to develop activities and professional development opportunities within the heritage, social history and museum practice areas.

The inaugural exhibition, *Lake Macquarie: Living Cultures*, is a Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery initiative featuring a bark canoe and photographs by the local Aboriginal community; images and objects from local historical societies; and photographs from Lake Mac Community History Library – which together convey a broader picture of Lake Macquarie.

JACQUI HEMSLEY
Manager - Cultural Services
Lake Mac Libraries

SEEN@Swansea pop-up exhibition space

At the centre of community

Revitalisation for Springwood Library



/01

An average day at Blue Mountains Library's revitalised Springwood branch sees nearly 400 people come through the doors. The customer service counter is bright, expansive, uncluttered and has ideal workflows for staff. Customers can gather, read and browse in fresh and inviting spaces and the library is now integrated into a brand-new building that has opened up fresh possibilities for all services involved.

Completed in 2015, Springwood Library was part of a process of local revitalisation driven by Blue Mountains City Council's exciting project to overhaul the ageing Springwood Civic Centre building, which stood across a narrow access road from the library. The project entailed demolishing the old theatre and access road and creating a state-of-the-art building incorporating the library, a 436-seat theatre with bar and box office facilities, an art gallery, meeting rooms, community facilities and council customer service desk plus additional onsite parking.

The main challenge for the library in this process was how best to spend



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the modest funds of under \$100,000, so that when the library re-opened, the community would be presented with a significantly upgraded facility worthy of the shiny new building. Certain aspects were a given – the internal toilet facilities and entrance had to go and a new Council Customer Service Area would be co-located with the library.

Although it had gone through various makeovers, the original building dated back to the 1970s and, particularly with the advent of new technologies, the customer service area was small, cluttered and outdated, with the exposed brick walls no longer either modern or attractive. It was decided to maximise the additional space created by the build to expand the customer service area and to completely refresh the interiors by painting over the brickwork, as well as installing modern shelving. This clever, angled shelving has allowed for the creation of more innovative spaces and 'rooms' within the library, especially in the children's area, a refurbished and larger family history section and young adult lounge. An added bonus is the large amount of

display space for library promotions and events and added storage for damaged items, withdrawals and other clutter.

The co-location of the theatre, meeting rooms and community services, as well as the existing art gallery, means that the library now sits at the centre of an amazing community. The building, known locally as The Hub, draws people in for a myriad of reasons even if only just to sit and enjoy the vibrant feeling of the space and of being in the heart of the community.

THERESA LOCK
Reference and Marketing Librarian
Blue Mountains Library

01 Springwood Library's customer service counter before the revitalisation ...

02 ... and after



/01

What do your library walls say?

Walls That Talk is an exciting place activation initiative bringing the outside of Maitland Library to life by displaying art, photography or sociohistorical images in a series of eye-catching installations. The installations are highly visible and unique, consisting of images three metres high, fixed to the curved facade of Maitland Library. Installations have celebrated iconic people and places in Maitland, community diversity, Australian children's literature and an exploration of heroes from the world of comics. Walls That Talk has rejuvenated this building, maximising its street presence and allowing engagement with aspects of community and culture beyond the confines of a museum or gallery. This place activation strategy was a contributing factor in a 5.88 per cent increase in visits to Maitland Library across 2015–16.

REBECCA COWIE
Programmes Librarian
Maitland City Library



/02

Dapto Library goes solar

Dapto District Library is located on the top floor of Dapto Ribbonwood Centre, a large multipurpose community centre. Being one of Wollongong City Council's highest energy-consuming sites, it was an obvious choice to install solar panels.

The project took 18 months from plan to completion, with onsite labour being executed over three months. After strengthening the existing roof to support additional weight, 338 solar panels were lifted onto the roof via a large crane during library opening hours, creating great interest from our patrons. The building's annual electricity consumption is expected to reduce by approximately 20 per cent. The project forms part of council's Carbon Abatement project, which includes lighting upgrades, water heating upgrades and the installation of solar systems across key council buildings. These works will help council to significantly reduce its energy use and emissions profile. Library staff maximised the benefits of this project by displaying books related to sustainability for patrons to browse and borrow.

JAN NOBLE
Branch Libraries and Community Facilities Manager
Wollongong City Libraries



/03

Lessons learnt from the Lismore flood

On Friday 30 March 2017, days of heavy rainfall in the wake of ex-tropical cyclone Debbie led to major floods on the NSW far north coast. The city of Lismore was one of the main affected areas.

On Thursday afternoon, staff, family members and Lismore Toy Library representatives moved equipment, toys, furniture, craft materials and books from the ground floor to the first and second floors of Lismore Library. The home delivery service, returns areas, Lismore Let's Read program and all craft program supplies were housed on the ground floor with a large area for patrons to sit and use their devices. The water peaked at the top of the doors on the ground floor.

On Sunday morning, staff, former staff and their families and volunteers were back in the building to begin the clean-up. Brooms, mops, buckets and cleaning solution, and lots of hands had the ground floor clean that day.

Everyone worked as a team, in high spirits, to get the library open as soon as possible. Unfortunately, the flood smell took longer to leave. Humidifiers ran 24-hours a day for weeks to dry the walls and to clear the smell. The library walls are thick and had absorbed water, and this water had to dry out before repainting could commence.

Contractors were required to repair or replace equipment. Electricians had to replace every power point and communication port for both phones and PCs (just a hint, make sure the electrician renumbers each outlet with its number). The lift had been locked on the second floor, but the wire ropes and some electrical switches went under water. The lift remained out of order until 22 June.

Lismore Library's free wi-fi was still in operation for patrons to use around the library building and on Monday 3 April the Mobile Library was stationed at the library to provide free access to PCs.

The library reopened on 10 April, however with the library's collection housed on the first and second floors with 42 stairs to climb, the out-of-action lift presented some challenges. To assist those unable to use the stairs, a small collection was moved to the ground floor while the lift was not operating.

We learnt some key lessons — make everything easy to move. We rearranged the storage areas for services and stock. On the ground floor we now have shelving on wheels, the home delivery service and returns areas. New library stock is now processed on the ground floor. Furniture, tables and chairs are now lightweight and easy to move. The Toy Library's new shelving is on wheels and does not need to be unpacked. All cupboards and filing cabinets are sitting in bases with wheels, made by council staff. We can now wheel everything straight into the lift!

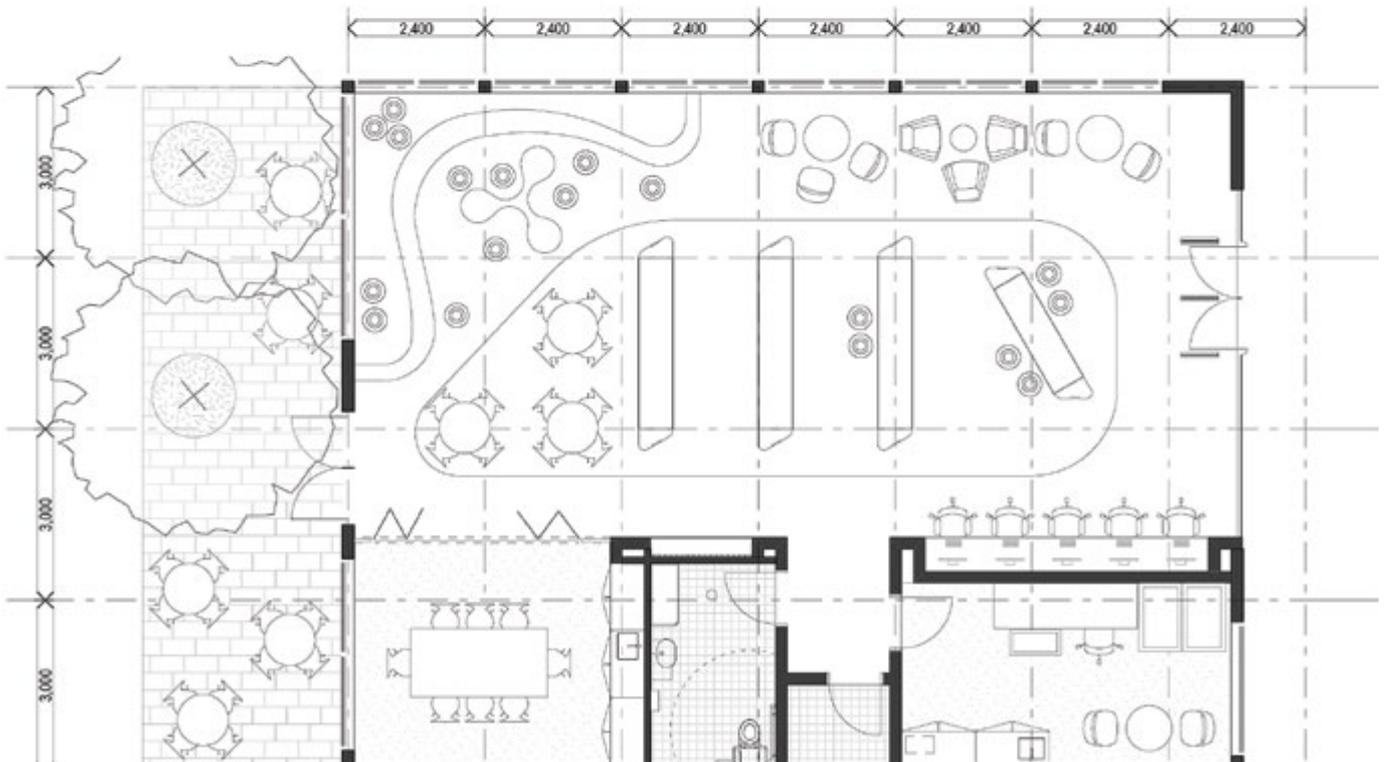
What was the greatest concern from patrons? When was the large reading table going to be back in use for reading newspapers ... For next time — remember to leave this table accessible!

LUCY KINSLEY
Lismore Area Librarian
Lismore City Library

01 Maitland Library has used eye-catching photographic installations to bring the library to life

02 Solar panels on the roof of Dapto Library, which are projected to reduce the building's annual energy consumption by 20 per cent

03 Lismore City Library under water on 31 March 2017



Keep in touch with Public Library Services at

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