



Wollongong City Council

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# Discover, learn and connect Wollongong City Libraries Strategy 2024 - 2028





*Image: Artwork by Claire Harding,  
Acknowledgment of Country Art Competition 2022*

## Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our city is built, Dharawal Country. We recognise and appreciate their deep connection to this land, waters and the greater community. We pay respect to Elders past, present and those emerging and extend our respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who call this city home. We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the first people to live in the area. We respect their living cultures and recognise the positive contribution their voices, traditions and histories make to the city.

For more information on **Wollongong City Council's Reconciliation Action Plan**, visit [www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/about/aboriginal-culture-and-communities/council-programs-and-support](http://www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/about/aboriginal-culture-and-communities/council-programs-and-support)





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## Libraries are for everyone

**Our libraries have come a long way from their humble beginnings in 1946, a time when smart phones, computer and the internet was the stuff of science fiction and not the reality of day-to-day life.**

Over the past 74 years, Wollongong City Libraries have evolved from being a place to borrow books, to be a community hub. These days library members don't even have to set foot in a library to take advantage of our services, because with a smartphone, computer or tablet, you can access news, entertainment, books and learning resources 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Libraries are a safe and inclusive space and a place for learning, accessing resources and social connection. They play an important role in closing gaps in access to information, promoting literacy, fostering social inclusion and cohesion and preserving our local history.

Our vision for Wollongong is to be a city where *From the mountains to the sea, we value and protect our natural environment and will be leaders in building an educated, creative, sustainable and connected community.* Our libraries are a cornerstone in delivering on that vision for our community.

Nowhere is this more clearly demonstrated than in Warrawong where, over the next few years, we'll deliver the new Southern Suburbs Community Centre and Library. This major, multi-million-dollar project for Council represents a significant investment and boost to services in the southern suburbs. It will ultimately see a state-of-the-art facility that meets the needs for residents in our southern suburbs now, and into the future.

We also continue to work towards delivering a new facility for the residents of Helensburgh and surrounding suburbs.

**Discover, learn and connect - The Wollongong City Libraries Strategy 2024 - 2028** reflects the next phase of Wollongong City Libraries. It has been created with input from our community and customers and is designed to reflect their expectations and aspirations. I would like to acknowledge the work done by the libraries team, and everyone who contributed to the development of this plan.

Our goal is to create a truly world-class library service for our community, while contributing to the delivery of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. I'm confident that this strategy will continue to guide us in that direction as we meet new challenges, and explore new ideas brought to us by our diverse and growing community. Whoever you are, whatever your circumstances, libraries really are for everyone.

Wollongong City Lord Mayor Councillor  
**Gordon Bradbery AM**



# Executive Summary

**Discover, learn and connect - The Wollongong City Libraries Strategy 2024 - 2028** outlines our shared vision for a world class library service in the Wollongong LGA.

In developing this strategy, we considered important demographic information about Wollongong and how our city continues to grow. We also listened to what the community told us about what libraries mean to them, and what they want from the service in the future.

A draft of this strategy was shared with our community in 2023, with over 200 people responding to our call for feedback. Most were supportive, describing the plan as easy to understand, wide reaching, aspirational, practical and supportive of everyone's needs.

Some people requested small word changes in the proposed vision, purpose and goals, whilst others requested themes of inclusion and accessibility be referenced.

This important feedback has been incorporated into the final strategy and will help guide Wollongong City Libraries as we evolve to meet the changing needs of our community.





## About Wollongong City Libraries

**Wollongong City Libraries consists of seven libraries located across the Local Government Area, with libraries in Corrimal, Dapto, Helensburgh, Thirroul, Unanderra, Warrawong and Wollongong.**

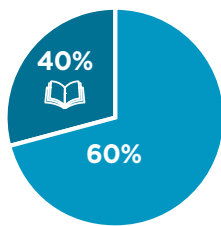
The first Wollongong Free Public Library was opened by Mr John J. Cahill, State Minister for Local Government (and future NSW Premier) on 29 June 1946. By the mid-1950s, there were four branches of the Greater Wollongong Public Library in Balgownie, Bulli, Dapto and Port Kembla. Throughout the following decades, the service has continued to be widely regarded as one of the finest regional library services in Australia.



# Snapshot



**216,290**  
The population of  
Wollongong LGA



**40%** of the population  
of the Wollongong LGA,  
or 87,889 people are  
active Library Members  
(32.4% national average)



**7 Locations**



**124 staff**  
81 permanent and  
43 casual team  
members



**65 Volunteers**



**407,283**  
Physical library  
collection items  
(books, DVDs etc.)



**997,178**  
Physical item loans  
in 2022/2023



**316,924**  
Digital item loans  
in 2022/2023



**6,040**  
Wollongong City Libraries  
App users



**199**  
Home Library  
Service customers



**2,784**  
Programs delivered in  
2022/2023



**51,894**  
Total program attendees  
in 2022/2023

Sources:  
iD Profile / ABS / 2022  
Australia Public Libraries statistical report 2021 - 22 - National and State Libraries Australasia  
Spydus Library Management System / 2022  
SOLUS app / 2022  
WCL program reporting

*All statistics current at December 2022, unless noted otherwise*









## Vision, Purpose and Goals

### Vision

We are the heart of our community where everyone can discover, learn, and connect.

### Purpose

We empower people through lifelong learning, resources, information, and experiences.

### Goals

#### *Our libraries will...*

Goal 1 | Engage and connect with our community

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Goal 2 | Inspire our community to learn, share and celebrate

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Goal 3 | Develop customer-driven, dynamic, and sustainable collections

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Goal 4 | Create welcoming, vibrant, and inclusive places and spaces

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# Key actions and measurements

## Library Strategy Actions 2024 - 2028

### Goal 1 | Engage and connect with our community

Action		Measurement
1.1 Extend Wollongong City Libraries' (WCL) engagement with the community	1.1.1	Deliver one pop up library annually
	1.1.2	Deliver one new outreach experience annually
	1.1.3	Library membership increased by 5% annually
	1.1.4	Deliver one community-based program with a new partner non-government organisation annually





Action		Measurement
1.2 Enhance focus on customer experience	1.2.1	Annual satisfaction rating greater than 80% for major library events
	1.2.2	Annual satisfaction rating greater than 80% for regular programming, including children, young people and school holiday activities
	1.2.3	Annual customer service satisfaction rating greater than 80%
	1.2.4	Wollongong City Libraries score greater than 3.75/5 in the Wollongong City Council Biennial Community Satisfaction Survey

Action		Measurement
1.3 Maximise membership, visitation and participation in WCL	1.3.1	Increase library visitation by 5% annually
	1.3.2	Increase number of physical loans 5% annually
	1.3.3	Increase number of digital loans 5% annually
	1.3.4	Increase website traffic by 3% annually
	1.3.5	Increase library app usage by 3% annually

Action		Measurement
1.4 Cultivate a learning culture across the library workforce	1.4.1	Greater than 80% of all Library staff to achieve competency in Library Technical Skills
	1.4.2	Greater than 80% of all Library staff to participate in one Professional Development activity annually
	1.4.3	Greater than 80% satisfaction rating by staff for the biennial Staff Development Day
	1.4.4	Greater than 80% of all Library Staff to complete Council training when scheduled
Action		Measurement
1.5 Provide opportunities for our community to learn and connect by volunteering	1.5.1	Increase number of volunteers by 3% annually
	1.5.2	Increase total number of contributed hours from volunteers by 3% annually
	1.5.3	Greater than 80% satisfaction rating on annual volunteer survey
	1.5.4	Increase the number of volunteers with five years' service and above



## Goal 2 | Inspire our community to learn, share and celebrate

Action		Measurement
2.1 Create and deliver programs, events, and activities to enrich and empower our community	2.1.1	Annual satisfaction rating greater than 80% for major library events
	2.1.2	Annual satisfaction rating greater than 80% for regular programming, including children, young people and school holiday activities
	2.1.3	60% of programs, events, and activities are evaluated annually
	2.1.4	Eight programs, events, and/or activities co-designed with community partners, are co-delivered annually
	2.1.5	100% of staff delivering specialised programs and events to achieve competency in biannual upskilling and training

Action		Measurement
2.2 Establish Wollongong as a Learning City	2.2.1	Develop and deliver a lifelong learning strategy for Wollongong City Council by 2024
	2.2.2	Gain accreditation from UNESCO as a Learning City in 2025/26

Action		Measurement
2.3 Ensure that diversity and inclusion are at the core of all programs, events, and activities	2.3.1	Partnerships with diverse and inclusive community organisations to increase by 2%, annually
	2.3.2	Eight programs, events, and/or activities co-designed with community partners, are co-delivered annually
	2.3.3	60% of programs, events, and activities are evaluated annually

Action		Measurement
2.4 Share and celebrate the culture and history of First Nations people	2.4.1	Partnerships with First Nations community groups to increase by 2% annually
	2.4.2	Four programs, events, and/or activities that share and celebrate First Nations communities' culture and/or history, co-designed and co-delivered
	2.4.3	Content and visibility of First Nations communities on promotional material and our libraries website to increase by 5% annually
	2.4.4	First Nations communities' content in our library's collections to increase by 5% annually, subject to publication
Action		Measurement
2.5 Share and celebrate the culture and history of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities	2.5.1	Partnerships with CALD community groups to increase by 2% annually
	2.5.2	Four programs, events, and/or activities that share and celebrate CALD communities' culture and/or history, co-designed and co-delivered
	2.5.3	Content and visibility of CALD communities on promotional material and our libraries website to increase by 5% annually
	2.5.4	CALD communities' content in our library's collections to increase by 5% annually, subject to publication



Action		Measurement
2.6 Share and celebrate people in the LGBTQIA+ community	2.6.1	Partnerships with community groups working with people in the LGBTQIA+ community to increase by 2% annually
	2.6.2	Four programs, events, and/or activities that share and celebrate people in the LGBTQIA+ community, co-designed and co-delivered
	2.6.3	Content and visibility of people in the LGBTQIA+ community on promotional material and our libraries website to increase by 5% annually
	2.6.4	Content representing people in the LGBTQIA+ community in our library's collections to increase by 5% annually, subject to publication
Action		Measurement
2.7 Empower, champion and celebrate people with disability	2.7.1	Partnerships with Disability community groups to increase by 2% annually
	2.7.2	Four programs, events, and/or activities that share and celebrate Disability groups, co-designed and co-delivered
	2.7.3	Content and visibility of people with disabilities on promotional material and our libraries website to increase by 5% annually
	2.7.4	Inclusive and accessible content in our library's collections to increase by 5% annually, subject to publication

### Goal 3 | Develop customer-driven, dynamic, and sustainable collections

Action		Measurement
3.1 Build dynamic, customer-driven collections	3.1.1	85% of customer recommended titles are acquired
	3.1.2	85% of customer "Suggestion for Purchase" are processed within four weeks
	3.1.3	Increase number of physical loans 5% annually
	3.1.4	Increase number of digital loans 5% annually

Action		Measurement
3.2 Maintain the openness, accessibility, and inclusiveness of our collection	3.2.1	Catalogue usage increases by 5% annually
	3.2.2	Increase library app usage by 3% annually
	3.2.3	1,750 items digitised annually
	3.2.4	25,000 titles catalogued annually
	3.2.5	85% of new titles are on the shelves within seven working days from delivery
	3.2.6	Content related to First Nations, CALD, and LGBTQIA+ communities to increase by 5% annually in our library's collections, subject to publication
	3.2.7	Inclusive and accessible content in our library's collections to increase by 5% annually, subject to publication



Action	Measurement	
3.3 Our collections are financially and environmentally sustainable	3.3.1	Turnover of stock is greater than 3.0 annually
	3.3.2	100% of library materials budget is expended annually
	3.3.3	Implement resource recycling, end of life disposal and purchasing decisions by 2026, in line with Wollongong City Council's <b>Sustainable Wollongong 2030 Strategy</b>
Action	Measurement	
3.4 Preserve and promote the Local Studies Collection	3.4.1	1,000 items added to the collection annually from donations and other sources
	3.4.2	Digitise 500 local studies items annually
	3.4.3	Digitise and/or catalogue 1,250 items for the <b>Illawarra Mercury Image Collection Project</b> annually
	3.4.4	Capture 10 local stories annually
	3.4.5	Four Local Studies events programs, and/or activities are held annually

## Goal 4 | Create welcoming, vibrant, and inclusive places and spaces

Action		Measurement
4.1 Develop modern, inviting, and accessible spaces	4.1.1	Increase library visitation by 5% annually
	4.1.2	Greater than 85% of customers express satisfaction with library spaces
Action		Measurement
4.2 Plan and make sustainable choices for our spaces and resources	4.2.1	50% of craft materials sourced for Wollongong City Libraries are made from recycled materials
	4.2.2	80% of events are plastic free
	4.2.3	80% of items purchased for library spaces are sourced from local suppliers
	4.2.4	Four engagements with social procurement
	4.2.5	Implement resource recycling, end of life disposal and purchasing decisions in line with Wollongong City Council's <b>Sustainable Wollongong 2030 Strategy</b>



Action		Measurement
4.3 Provide spaces that are safe and enhance wellbeing	4.3.1	Zero incidents of injury to members of the public annually
	4.3.2	All libraries identified as <i>cool centres</i> by 2028, in line with Wollongong City Council's <b>Urban Heating Strategy</b>
	4.3.3	Greater than 85% customer satisfaction relating to library spaces measured annually
	4.3.4	Greater than 80% of library staff to achieve competency in creating welcoming spaces for people with diverse backgrounds
Action		Measurement
4.4 Plan and deliver library infrastructure that meets the needs of the community	4.4.1	Deliver afterhours access at Helensburgh Library in 2025
	4.4.2	Greater than 80% customer satisfaction for those who use the library after hours self-access
	4.4.3	Deliver Southern Suburbs Community Centre and Library in 2026-2027
	4.4.4	Continue planning for Helensburgh Community Centre and Library
	4.4.5	Deliver a refurbishment at Dapto Library in 2026-2027



## Our Wollongong Our Future

From the mountains to the sea, we value and protect our natural environment and will be leaders in building an educated, creative, sustainable and connected community.

We value and protect our environment

We have an innovative and sustainable economy

Wollongong is a creative, vibrant city

**We are a connected and engaged community**

We have a healthy community in a liveable city

We have affordable and accessible transport



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