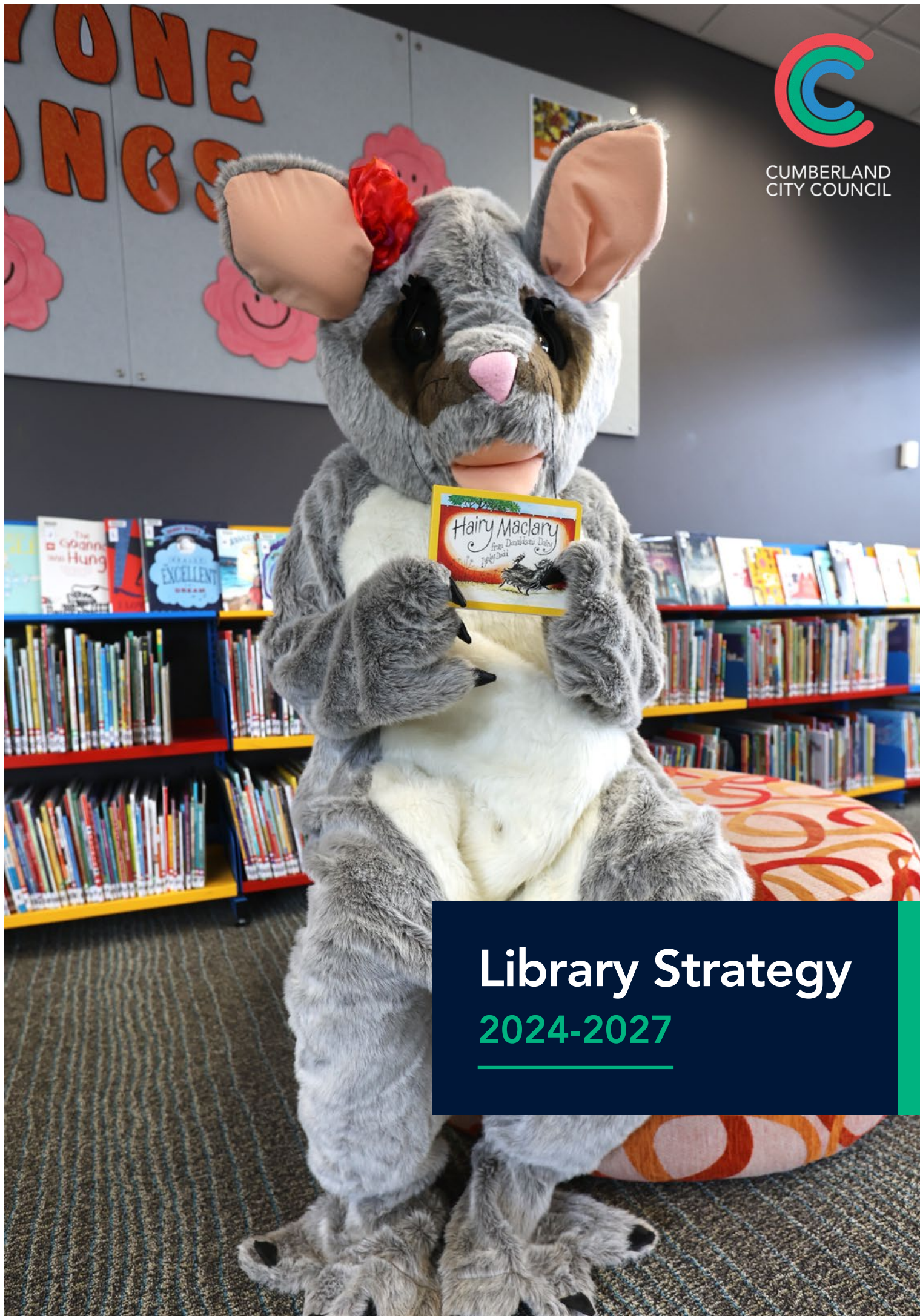




CUMBERLAND  
CITY COUNCIL



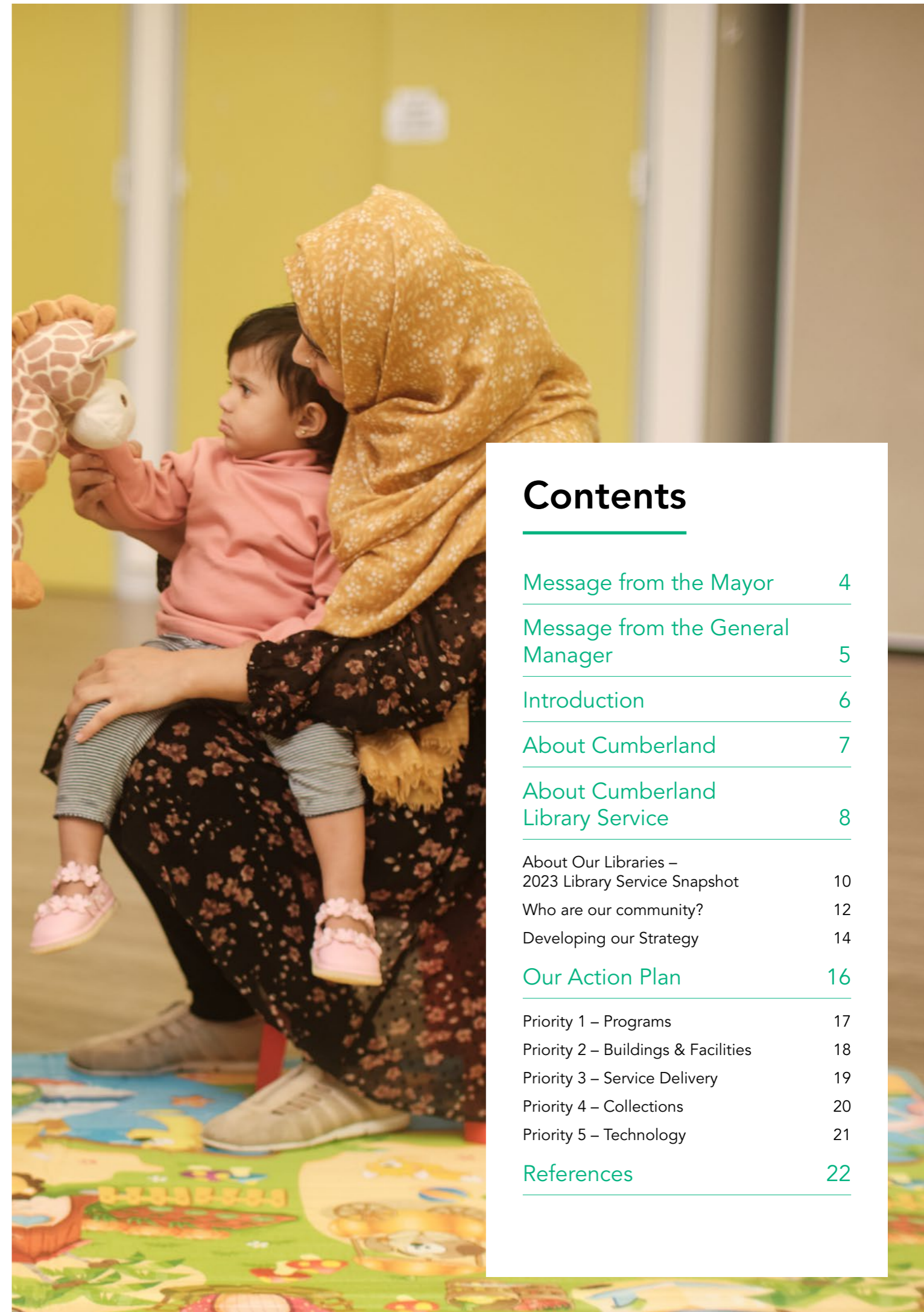
# Library Strategy

2024-2027



## Acknowledgement of Country

Cumberland City Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of this land, the Darug people, and pays respect to their elders past, present and future.



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*Cllr Lisa Lake*  
**Mayor**

## *Message from the Mayor*

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**O**n behalf of Cumberland Council, I am pleased to introduce the Library Strategy 2024-2027.

Libraries provide an essential service to our community and play a vital role in enhancing the lives of Cumberland residents. Public libraries play a fundamental role in ensuring that the community has free and equitable access to programs, collections and services that connect us.

This Strategy will guide the direction and delivery of our Library Services over the next three (3) years. This will include a review and enhancement of programs, services, collections and flexible library spaces, continuing to advance digital literacy and exploring opportunities for upgrading and incorporating new library buildings into Council’s wider plans.

From the previous strategy our achievements have included increasing free access to technology, the creation of flexible spaces for study and work, and additional social programs.

The development of this Strategy has given Council an opportunity to listen to the needs of our community and staff to provide a library service that meets their requirements for the future. This feedback has been pivotal in shaping the direction of our libraries.

I welcome any feedback you may have on the Library Strategy and thank you for supporting Council’s Library Services.

**Cllr Lisa Lake**  
Mayor, Cumberland Council



*Peter J. Fitzgerald*  
**General Manager**

## *Message from the General Manager*

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**I**am proud to introduce Cumberland City Council’s Library Strategy 2024-2027 which has been developed in collaboration with the Cumberland community.

We understand the value of our library services and aim to deliver programs and services that accommodate the needs of our community.

This strategy outlines a framework for an improved user experience and community engagement with a focus on expanding customer service to deliver quality library services.

I am excited by the changes taking place in all of Council’s libraries as they continue to evolve and respond to the changing needs of our community.

Our strong commitment to the provision of excellent library services is supported by Council’s Community Strategic Plan, available on Council’s website.

**Peter J. Fitzgerald**  
General Manager, Cumberland Council

# Introduction

The Library Strategy 2024-2027 outlines a vision for Cumberland to continue to provide sustainable, innovative, accessible and inclusive library services to the community.

## The Library Strategy 2024-2027 aims to:

Provide a framework for free access to library services, programs, and spaces that meet the needs for recreation, information, education, and connection to the Cumberland community.

Provide facilities and spaces that meet the current and future needs of the changing Cumberland community.

Provide relevant online services, innovative technology, and assistance that bridges the digital divide for our residents.

Ensure that services and collections are responsive to the diverse Cumberland community.

This Strategy will deliver on the objectives of the Cumberland Community Strategic Plan 2017 - 2027, to support an inclusive community which promotes diversity, community participation and promotes Council's community vision of *Welcome, Belong, Succeed*. This Strategy will complement related Council documents, strategies and plans:

- *Cumberland Community Facilities Strategy 2019 – 2029*
- *Cumberland Cultural Plan 2019 – 2029*
- *Cumberland Delivery Program 2022 - 2026*
- *Cumberland Operational Plan 2023 - 2024*

The Strategy will be implemented over a three-year period with progress tracked annually.

From community and staff engagement, legislative context and research, five focus areas emerged for the Strategy:

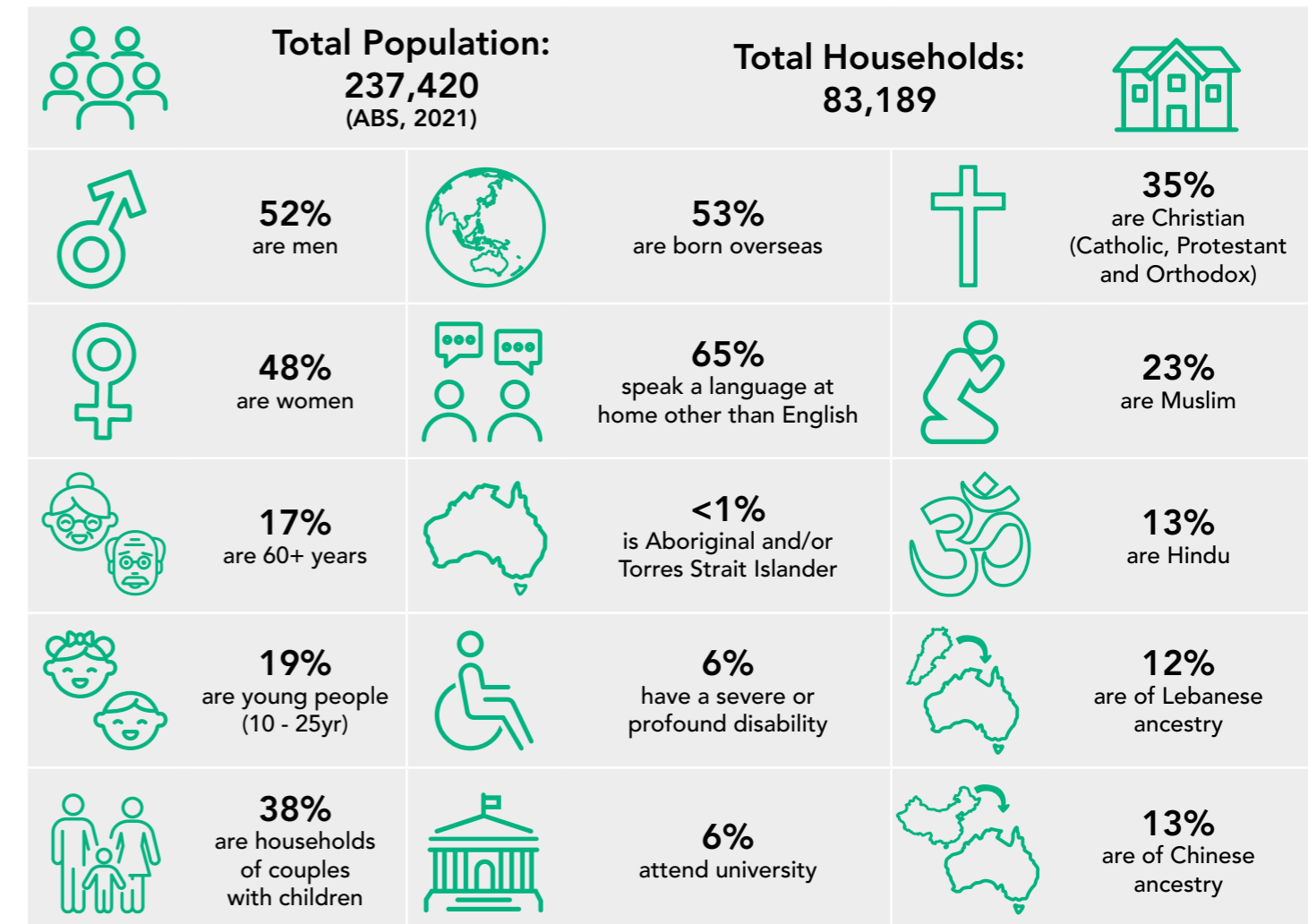
- 1 Programs
- 2 Buildings & Facilities
- 3 Service Delivery
- 4 Collections
- 5 Technology

# About Cumberland

Cumberland City Council has a population estimate of 237,420 (ABS, 2021) and is one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse local government areas in Australia.

Top Languages spoken in Cumberland*	
Arabic	14.1%
Mandarin	6.7%
Nepali	4.4%
Cantonese	4%
Tamil	3.3%
Turkish	2.9%

A snapshot of the Cumberland community is shown below.



Reference: All statistics from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021 Census of Population and Housing. Please note that all statistics have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

# About Cumberland Library Service



Members  
**189,147**  
March 2024



Annual Visitations  
**640,670**  
April 2023 - March 2024



Collection Size  
**243,837**  
March 2024



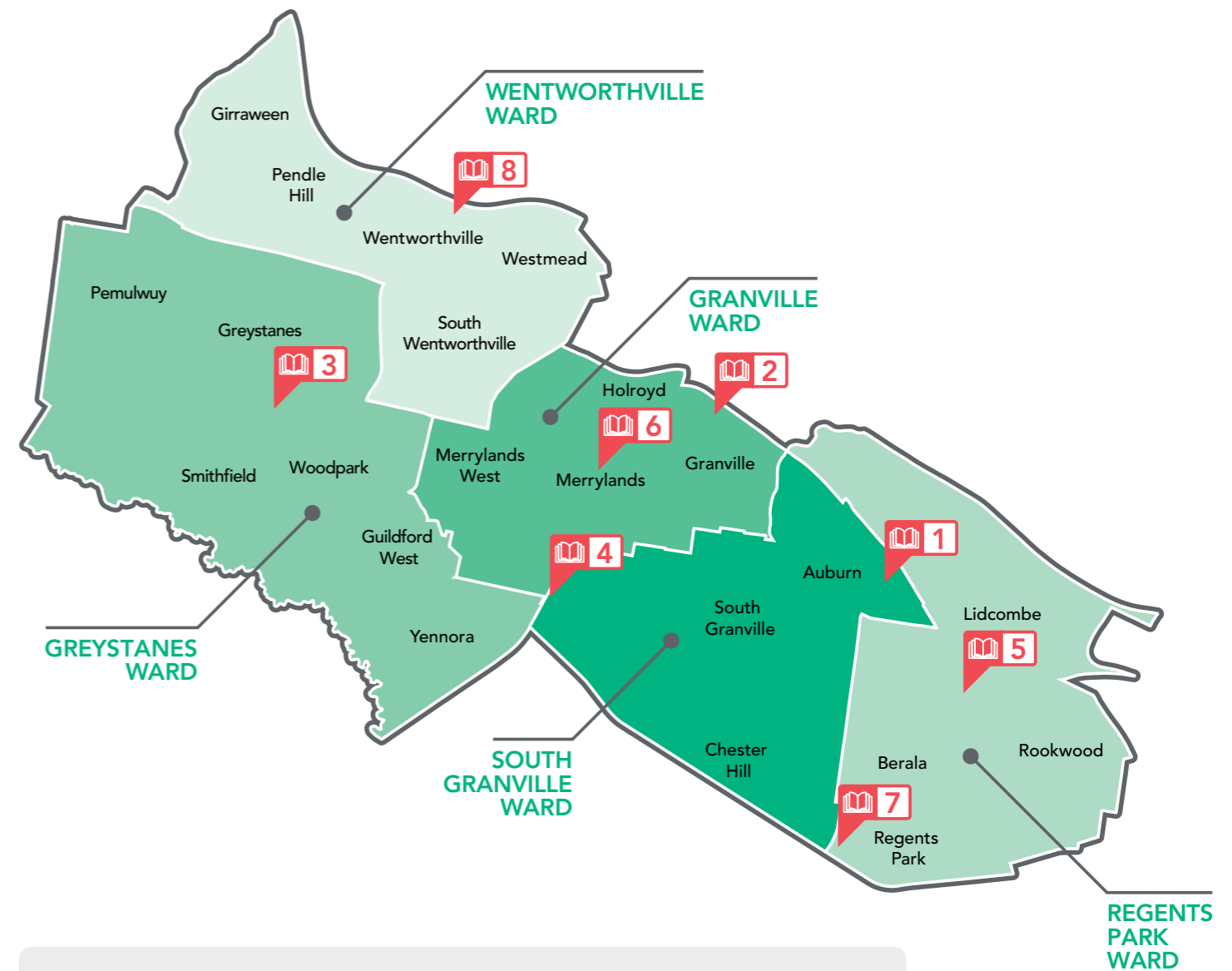
Items Loaned  
**468,229**  
April 2023 - March 2024



Use of Technology  
**172,576**  
April 2023 - March 2024

*“The only thing that you absolutely have to know, is the location of the library.”*




Albert Einstein






- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>1</b> <b>Auburn Library</b><br/>Civic Place, 1 Susan Street,<br/>Auburn NSW 2144</p> | <p><b>5</b> <b>Lidcombe Library</b><br/>3 Bridge Street,<br/>Lidcombe NSW 2141</p>                             |
| <p><b>2</b> <b>Granville Library</b><br/>1 Memorial Drive,<br/>Granville NSW 2142</p>      | <p><b>6</b> <b>Merrylands Library</b><br/>Corner of Miller and Newman Streets,<br/>Merrylands NSW 2160</p>     |
| <p><b>3</b> <b>Greystanes Library</b><br/>732 Merrylands Road,<br/>Greystanes NSW 2145</p> | <p><b>7</b> <b>Regents Park Library</b><br/>1 Amy Street,<br/>Regents Park NSW 2143</p>                        |
| <p><b>4</b> <b>Guildford Library</b><br/>Railway Terrace,<br/>Guildford NSW 2161</p>       | <p><b>8</b> <b>Wentworthville Library &amp; Toy Library</b><br/>2 Lane Street,<br/>Wentworthville NSW 2145</p> |

## About Our Libraries – 2023 Library Service Snapshot




### Auburn Library

-  Open 60 hours per week
-  Floor space 1,950 m<sup>2</sup>
-  Total 25% of visitors




### Lidcombe Library

-  Open 42.5 hours per week
-  Floor space 360 m<sup>2</sup>
-  Total 7% of visitors



### Granville Library

-  Open 47.5 hours per week
-  Floor space 718.3 m<sup>2</sup>
-  Total 18% of visitors




### Merrylands Library

-  Open 60 hours per week
-  Floor space 2,000 m<sup>2</sup>
-  Total 18% of visitors




### Greystanes Library

-  Open 42.5 hours per week
-  Floor space 179 m<sup>2</sup>
-  Total 4% of visitors




### Regents Park Library

-  Open 42.5 hours per week
-  Floor space 380 m<sup>2</sup>
-  Total 7% of visitors

### Guildford Library

-  Open 45 hours per week
-  Floor space 441 m<sup>2</sup>
-  Total 5% of visitors

### Wentworthville Library

-  Open 54.5 hours per week
-  Floor space 671 m<sup>2</sup>
-  Total 16% of visitors

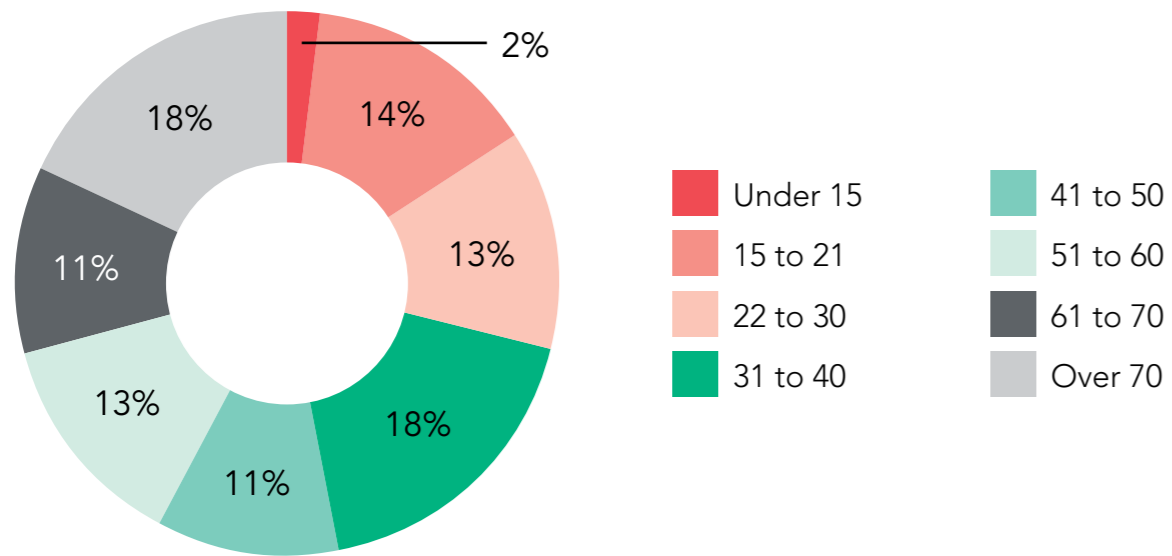
### Our libraries provide the following services:

- Physical and digital collections for people of all ages and interests.
- Information and Reference services.
- Community programming for all ages.
- Free access to computers with internet access and Wi-Fi services.
- Home Library Service for residents who can't visit the library due to health, age, or other incapacity.
- Toy Library membership provides a sustainable, economical, and community-driven service with access to a range of high-quality toys.

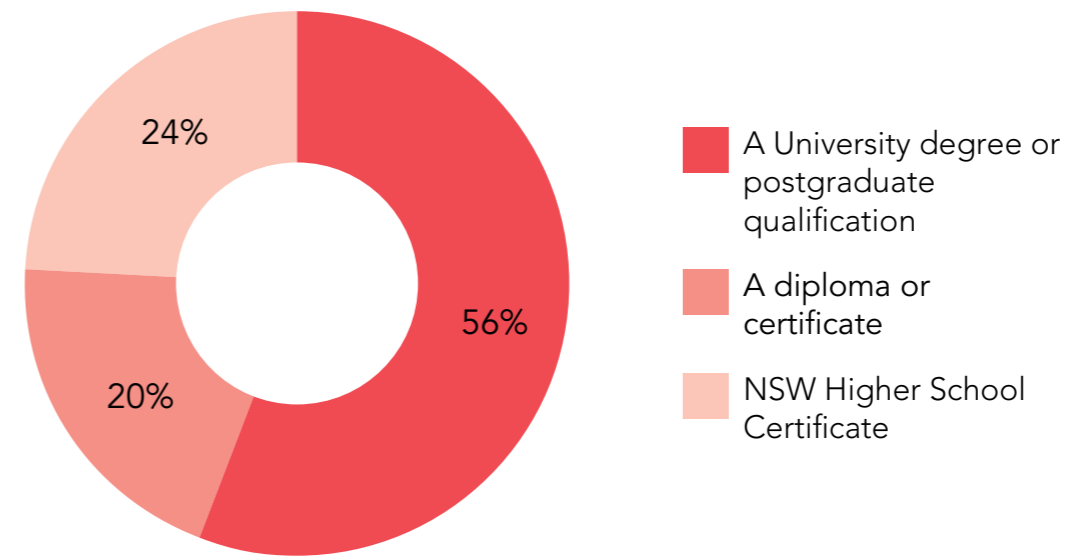


## Who are our community?

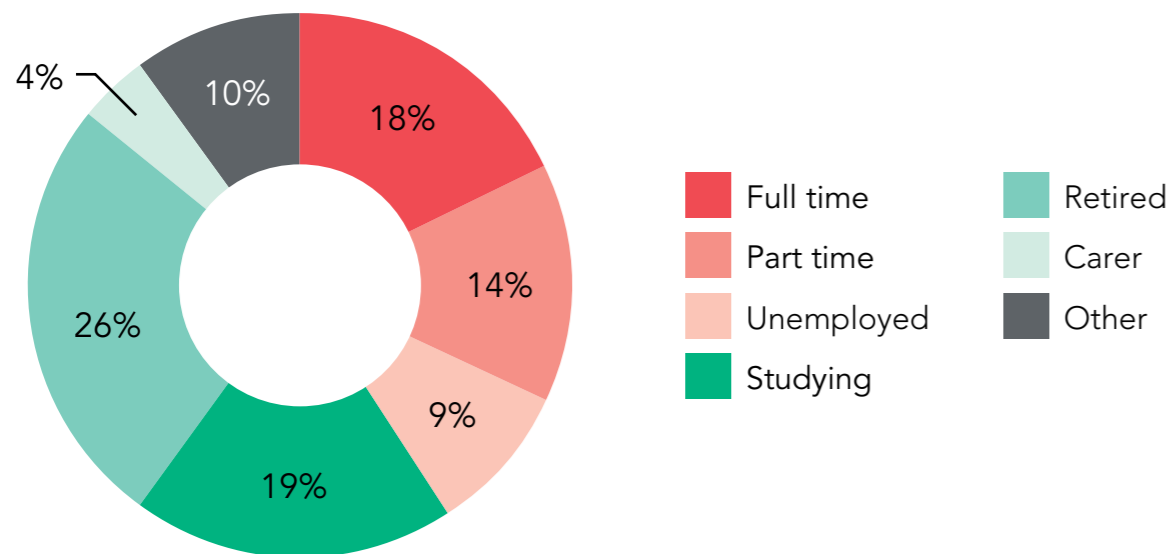
### Age of respondents in the customer survey



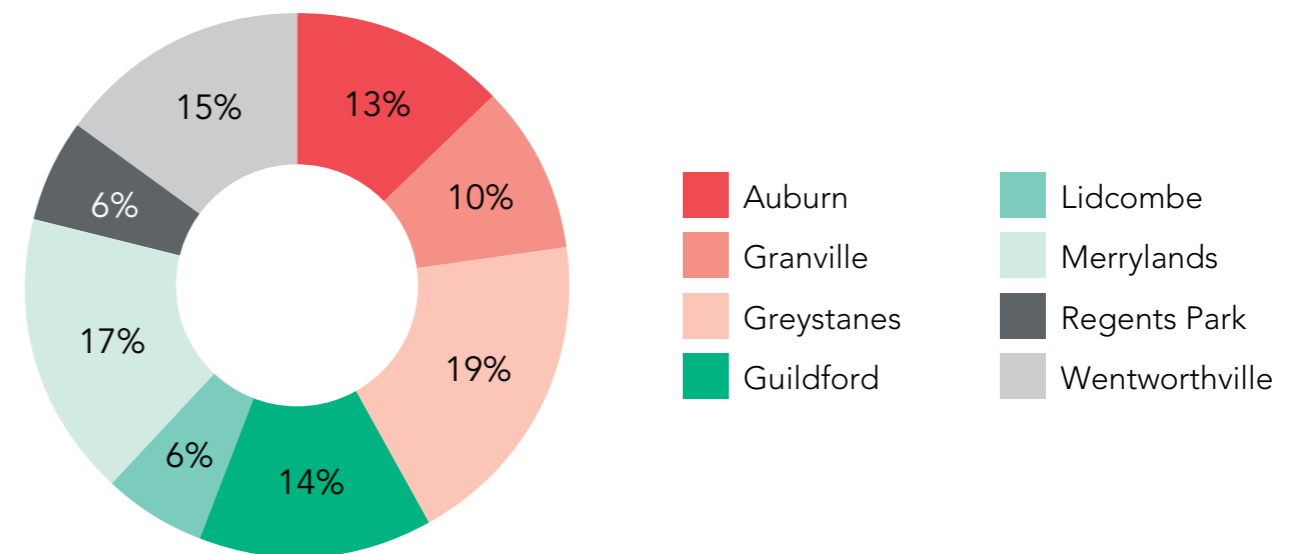
### Education Level



### Employment Status



### Which libraries did our respondents visit?





## Developing our Strategy

The Cumberland Library Strategy was developed by engaging with our community and staff during 2021-2022.

### Community Satisfaction Survey

A telephone survey was conducted by Jetty Research in July 2021, to examine the community's attitudes and perceptions of Council's current and future services and facilities. 601 customers participated and the survey showed that 73% of those surveyed were satisfied with the library services and facilities.

601 customers participated

### Customer Satisfaction Survey

An online Customer Satisfaction Survey was conducted in June 2021, to engage on current services and future ideas for the library collections, programs and spaces. This satisfaction survey was also used to compare the results from previous survey in 2018.

#### Questions that were asked of the community include:

- What would make the library and its services better?
- Are there service gaps in the libraries?
- What programs would you like to see or be involved with in the future?

The most frequent comments in each of the questions framed the Priority Areas of the Strategy and were representative of the previous strategies priorities. The actions within the Priority Areas reflect the comments from the community.

271 customers participated

#### Customer Feedback Comments:

- *"Library is a place where we can borrow books to read. Toys for kids to play, access computer services, printing and all. Sometimes these services are not available at home. So, library is a place where we can get all services."*
- *"Add programming for Senior meet and greet, English classes, Technological classes, gardening workshops, health and sport events, book club or any other activity to engage local community at Guildford."*
- *"Because they have access to resources such as books & study spaces so that people may work/study in a safe and quiet environment."*
- *"Author talks, arts & crafts for adults, card making, knitting. Maybe a social group for chats and coffee."*
- *"For my purposes, everything that is available suits me very well. Everyone is very helpful and go out of their way to be friendly and very helpful if needed."*
- *"Making the children's books more visual for the children to see and choose."*
- *"The library is a very good place to do many things, like printing, send email etc. In addition, it is a good area for kids to gain many things which help them to improve their skills."*

### Consultation with staff

An internal survey was conducted with staff that provided information on current and future ideas for the library services, programs, and spaces.

#### Questions that were asked of the staff include:

- Do you have any ideas for improvements or additions to programs?
- What collections are successful, not successful and any suggestions for new collections?
- What works, doesn't work and improvements in our facilities and spaces?
- What changes would you like to see in library services?
- How can we better serve the community?

18 staff consulted

### What you told us

- Innovative and engaging programs are required for our community in diverse themes and languages.
- Accessing programs can pose barriers, and a consistent strategy is required to ensure that programs are accessible.
- The community wants a safe space to connect in. This space does not necessarily need to be quiet but does need to be clean, vibrant and allow for the effective use of technology. The spaces are currently being used as study, work, and connection spaces.
- Reduced physical access to libraries has been an issue for the community. Library users are looking to reconnect, read, and enjoy being in safe, warm, and inviting spaces together.

### What have we achieved so far?

Cumberland Library Service has adapted over the last four (4) years in the implementation of the previous Library Strategy. Libraries have become a hub for the community that allows for multipurpose spaces to connect, learn and be entertained.

With reduced access to libraries during the pandemic, an online presence was built by our staff with programming, meetings, social media, direct email and phone calls to continue our connection with our customers.

Library Collections have been reviewed to reflect our new, emerging, and growing community. Processes and procedures have been developed to provide best practice customer service and management of collections.

The technology utilised in the libraries has been improved and public computer access has been updated to reflect the needs of the community. Our newest library in the Granville Centre was designed and built with best practice spaces and technology to ensure that the community has the services they need.

Library programming and activities have been face-to-face, online and targeted to our diverse and culturally linguistic community. Programs are part of continuous improvement to ensure that innovative programs are provided to ensure we meet ever changing community needs.

## Our Action Plan

The following strategies and actions have been developed to address the key areas identified as:

- 1 Programs
- 2 Buildings & Facilities
- 3 Service Delivery
- 4 Collections
- 5 Technology



## Priority 1 – Programs

Providing innovative and engaging programs for our community and ensuring that we highlight the importance of literacy and lifelong learning.

### Trends in Public Libraries

#### Online programming trends

During the pandemic, libraries collaborated across NSW to utilise Zoom and Microsoft Teams to reach communities and provide programming. These tools allowed libraries to keep a connection to the community and provide literacy and lifelong learning programs regardless of location.

#### Social media presence

Libraries are strengthening their social media presence to maximise promotion of library services and programs as well as community connection. Engaging with the community in a fun and energetic way allows libraries to maintain their relevance.

#### Partnerships

Libraries are developing partnerships with local community groups, health and social services to provide programming, information sessions and referrals to the community.

Strategy	Action	Priority
Provide quality programs that cater to community needs	• Continue to provide a coordinated annual schedule of Library programs and activities.	Y1
	• Return of regular face-to-face programming.	Y1
	• Review existing programs to ensure they are relevant, up-to-date, and meet the needs of our growing and diverse community.	Y1 - Y3
	• Design and deliver new library programs based on community needs, incorporating feedback on content and methods of delivery.	Y2
	• Create and implement programming for Toy Library to meet grant funding requirements.	Y1 - Y3

### Performance measurements

- Number of programs delivered
- Increased numbers in program attendance
- Increased number of diverse and inclusive programs
- High level of customer feedback

### Associated Implementation Plans

- *Library Programs Plan*
- *Toy Library Plan*



## Priority 2 – Buildings & Facilities

Providing safe, warm, and inviting spaces to our community. Ensuring that our spaces will grow and embrace study, working and connection.

### Building and Facility Trends in Public Libraries

#### Flexible and comfortable spaces

Libraries have become spaces for connections, working and studying in addition to holding collections. Libraries are trending towards adaptable and multipurpose spaces around the shelves that encourage collaboration, accommodate program groups, quiet study, and have useful technology and power connections.

Strategy	Action	Priority
Create flexible and inviting spaces	• Review library spaces to ensure they are comfortable, vibrant, relevant, and inviting.	Y1 - Y3
	• Review of study, meeting and working spaces to include more tables, chairs, and power where available.	Y2
	• Contribute to local planning of libraries and location for updated new services.	Y2 - Y3
	• Continue with the planning of Wentworthville Community Hub.	Y1 - Y3
	• Implement Library Vending Machine at Berala Community Centre.	Y1

#### Performance measurements

- High level of customer feedback
- Increased number of visitors to library

#### Associated Implementation Plans

- *Library Operations Plan*



## Priority 3 – Service Delivery

Provide a service that meets the needs of the current and future Cumberland community.

### Trends in Public Libraries

#### Improved customer experiences

Customers are looking for a personalised and immediate service from libraries. Customers have become more technology savvy sourcing different ways to find information and libraries need to cater for the requirements of customers to provide service.

Strategy	Action	Priority
Provide ongoing training for staff	• Expand and maintain staff knowledge of services, collections and technology through public library networking and attendance at State Library training and seminars.	Y1 - Y3
Provide customer focused services in Libraries	• Library Customer Satisfaction Survey to be conducted bi-annually for the purposes of fine-tuning practices and understanding customer perceptions and issues.	Y2
	• Analyse the Customer Satisfaction Survey results for understanding customer perceptions, issues and identifying opportunities for fine tuning.	Y3
	• Align Sunday opening times.	Y1
	• Collaborate, provide information and implement recommendations of the Library Advisory Committee.	Y1 - Y3

#### Performance measurements

- High level of customer feedback
- High level of completion of Customer Satisfaction Survey
- Staff taking on development opportunities to increase training and knowledge of library service provision

#### Associated Implementation Plans

- *Library Operations Plan*



## Priority 4 – Collections

Provide diverse collections for current and emerging communities.

### Trends in Public Libraries

#### Unique collections that meet the needs of the community

Public Libraries collect with their community in mind, based on current demographics that reflects their recreational, educational and information requirements. Collections need to be unique as the communities are to each library.

#### Online collections

Libraries have been consistently building online collections, with good results and usage. During the pandemic these collections became a way for the community to continue to utilise the library's collection when hard copy collections were unavailable. This online collection continues to grow and is highly sought after and used in public libraries.

Strategy	Action	Priority
Provide diverse and responsive collections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of community languages collected in libraries. Ensure the consideration of current, emerging, and future communities and use of demographics.</li> <li>Rotation of collections around the eight (8) libraries.</li> <li>Continue additions of diverse and inclusive titles, subjects and authors.</li> </ul>	Y1
Review collection practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of the purchasing and collection development policies to ensure the latest or emerging titles and authors are represented in our ordering processes.</li> <li>Consideration of different formats and languages where available and where there is demand.</li> <li>Allocate budgets to collections that are relevant to our community.</li> <li>Continue to work with local historical societies by providing assistance for enquiries and digitisation projects as required.</li> </ul>	Y1 - Y3

### Performance measurements

- High level of customer feedback
- Increased number of circulation and turnover of the collection

### Associated Implementation Plans

- Library Collection Development Statement*
- Toy Library Plan*



## Priority 5 – Technology

Providing innovative technology services and equitable access in Cumberland's Libraries.

### Trends in Public Libraries

#### Technology driven solutions

Libraries are lifelong learning and educational hubs that allow our community to access information and skills to live in an ever-digitised environment. Libraries provide new and innovative technologies for our community to use, try and learn.

Strategy	Action	Priority
Review technology spaces within the library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of the public computer space at Merrylands Library and implementation of a new technology plan.</li> <li>Be an integral partner in delivering the Smart Places Strategy and Action Plan.</li> </ul>	Y1 - Y3
Review technology equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the technology services and equipment provided in libraries to ensure the most up-to-date, relevant, user-friendly services are provided.</li> </ul>	Y2 - Y3

### Performance measurements

- High level of customer feedback
- Increased numbers of usage in Public Computer Centres

### Associated Implementation Plans

- Library Technology Plan*

## References

- The Bookends Scenarios: alternative futures for the Public Library Network in NSW in 2030, 2009 – State Library of NSW
- Census 2021 – Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Library Customer Satisfaction Survey 2021 Feedback
- Library Staff Satisfaction Survey 2022 Feedback
- Living Learning Libraries 7th edition 2020 – State Library of NSW
- People places: A guide for planning public library buildings, February 2022 – State Library of NSW





CUMBERLAND  
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