

The logo for Clarence Regional Library is a dark blue rectangle containing the text "Clarence" in a large, white, sans-serif font, with "Regional Library" in a smaller, white, sans-serif font directly below it.

Clarence
Regional Library

Strategic Plan

2012 - 2022

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SUMMARY ACTION PLAN 2012 -2022

ATTACHMENT 1 REVIEWED ACTION PLAN 2008 – 2012

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Section .1

*Libraries have a fundamental role to play in social inclusion*¹

Background

The aim of this document is to identify objectives and strategies that will enhance the long-term performance of the Clarence Regional Library Service, its member Council branches and overall regional network.

The strategic plan was developed through an extensive process of direct consultation with relevant Council Officers, research, a regional strategic planning workshop, and the results of a recent user and non-user library services survey² (hereafter called The Survey) and reference to the State Library of NSW 2006 Library Review, contemporary public library service guidelines/standards, activities, programs and collection scope.

In addition to the strategic plan, an operational plan will need to be developed that further outlines key actions and priorities.

Contemporary Public Libraries – An Overview

Public libraries are trusted, respected and valued by the community and are an essential part of the community's social infrastructure. Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) figures reveal that more Australians each year visit libraries than cinemas and that 60% of Australians use public libraries on a regular basis. However, libraries will only prosper in the long term if they adapt to their changing environment. They are not institutions that can be insulated from societal and economic changes. If libraries are to remain relevant to the society they serve, they need to adapt to environmental changes and the changing needs of their user groups and communities. This includes not only the changing expectations of users and funders but also the challenges resulting from the digital and information age. Through libraries, local government can contribute to social and economic outcomes such as improved education, social cohesion, social well-being and health.

Libraries are at the heart of developing healthy communities offering a dynamic range of resources and services to engage and inform people. They make a valuable contribution to a fair, socially cohesive and culturally vibrant society while supporting social, economic and cultural development. Libraries make a fundamental contribution to society by helping people to locate information. Libraries create better-informed communities by providing free access to information technology, delivering programs that promote lifelong learning and literacy in the community, and building connections between individuals and groups. As the information revolution changes people's expectations of services, libraries have become recognised 'community hubs' where people can meet and exchange ideas and information. Thus, it is critical that contemporary libraries are

¹ Chartered Institute of Library and Information professionals

² Clarence Regional Library: Survey of Users and Non-Users, Jetty Research, July 2012

responsive to change so they remain current and relevant to the communities they serve.

The role public libraries play in society is broad. Numerous studies have demonstrated the social and community benefits that public libraries help deliver to the community. In particular, a major piece of nationally applicable research published in Victoria – Libraries Building Communities³, February 2005, has highlighted four key areas of contribution by public libraries:

- They provide free public access to computers and information technology resources (helping to overcome the digital divide)
- By helping people locate and use information libraries help create better informed communities
- Libraries offer services and resources that help promote lifelong learning and literacy in the community, and
- They help build connections between individuals, groups and government
- Offer an effective vehicle to help address current social issues such as cultural and social isolation

Furthermore, public libraries play a key role in providing users with a gateway to a world of information resources. This can be through library resource-sharing activities (such as the inter-library loan network), or increasingly via access to online/Web resources delivered by powerful new tools able to package results yielded from a diverse range of sources. There is a shift in emphasis from custodian to knowledge navigator - with library staff's role expanded to include assisting the public to access information relevant to their individual needs

Service Trends

The role of public libraries has changed greatly over the last decade. Public libraries have at last been recognised for their important role in equitable access to information and the services required to enhance community cohesiveness and well being. A contemporary public library service is recognised as being more than just a place for accessing printed materials, having your reference enquiries answered or as a quiet place to read and/or study. A contemporary public library service is now offering:

- Increased choice/range of formats
- Provision and/or facilitation of educational and recreational programs
- Outreach services e.g. programs in pre-schools and nursing homes
- Provision of virtual library services e.g. online reference services; access to online databases; membership services such as loan renewal and reservations

³ Libraries Building Communities 2005
(http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/about/information/publications/policies_reports/plu_lbc.html)

- Provision of technology, including Internet access; access to online databases, access to software; wireless access etc
- Social networking via the internet (blogs, Wiki) e.g. local history; HSC resources; reading groups (book clubs) etc
- Partnership and collaboration with other community and Council agencies
- Market segmentation of services, collections, programs and activities e.g. targeted youth services
- Longer and/or more appropriate hours of operation including weekends and evenings
- Better designed library infrastructure often located with ancillary/complimentary services

Key Industry Issues

When developing future plans for the Clarence Regional Library Service it is important to acknowledge the major industry issues (national and state) currently impacting on the delivery of contemporary public library services: They are:

1. Workforce planning – the ability to attract and retain experienced and qualified staff, succession planning, competency development;
2. State Government funding – in particular the recommendations of the State Governments Parry Report and the recent findings and recommendations of the NSW Rural Regional Taskforce;
3. Increased demand for outreach, technology and virtual services; and
4. Library design – in particular the need to provide community meeting spaces, study space, technology.

All of the above have and will continue to have an impact on the adequate resourcing of public libraries in the region, their design, location, management and operations.

Clarence Regional Library Service

Key Stakeholders

As a public library service the Clarence Regional Library Service (CRL) has a mandate to provide a level of free service to everyone – as per the Library Act ⁴. CRL current stakeholders include but are not limited to members of the local community and a range of other organisations and individuals.

The Local Community including:

- Adults
- Young Adults

⁴ Library Act 1939 http://bar.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol_act/la193999/

- Children
- Multicultural users/groups
- Parents
- Older People
- Indigenous users/groups
- Students i.e. school, TAFE and University
- Special Needs Groups/Individuals e.g. people with disabilities, Institutional and Home Bound
- Special Interest Groups e.g. Family and Local History
- 'Life-long Learners'
- Visitors/Tourists
- Community/Library Volunteers
- Researchers
- Technology Users
- Commuters
- Friends of the Library
- Council staff
- Councillors
- Library Staff

Other stakeholders

- Regional Councils
- State Library of NSW (i.e. Public Library Services)
- Neighbouring library services e.g. Coffs Harbour
- Australian Public Library Network
- Professional Groups i.e. Public Libraries NSW; ALIA
- Suppliers e.g. Booksellers, Library Management System Vendor
- Library management System user Group

Stakeholders that will have a particular impact on the **future** use and provision of public library services in the region include:

- Government Agencies (Federal and State) e.g. RMS Centrelink employment agencies – increased online presence of agencies and their information presents challenges to local libraries (e.g. impact on staff time assisting customers; training requirements; bandwidth etc)
- Older People – An ageing population will present issues such as increased demand on home library service and the need for alternative formats e.g. talking books, Large Print; and the library's role in reducing social isolation
- Young Adults – in order to attract young adults the library needs to open to developing and facilitating more social networking opportunities e.g. gaming for younger teenagers, music, and Web 2.0 presence
- Local business – libraries will need to involve local businesses to ensure their support and advocacy. This may be as simple as having small business programs or developing partnerships opportunities with Cinemas and bookshops
- Online / remote access users/Technology Users - Library's will have to increasingly provide 24/7 access to accredited information resources and remote access to the library's membership services
- Volunteers – Policy needs to clearly delineate the roles of volunteers to ensure they do not become a replacement for paid staff thereby adding a level of vulnerability to library operations [see Attachment 2 ALIA Statement on Volunteers]

- Commuters – Library hours and collection formats will need to be adjusted/expanded
- Visitors/Tourists – The library plays an increasingly critical role in providing information to tourists and other visitors. There is also an increasing demand for visitor/tourist access to online services, wireless connectivity etc
- Community Support Groups e.g. Service Clubs, neighbourhood centres, community centres etc – The library needs to explore future partnerships to ensure that there is wider access and participation available to the community
- Council e.g. corporate information provision e.g. the library could provide a corporate library and information service
- Multicultural groups/individuals – Cultural diversification in regional and country areas is growing
- Sea and Tree Changers – Higher expectations based on 'city' public library experiences

Library Staff

- Workforce and succession planning will have a critical impact on CRL's ability to attract and keep quality staff.

Key Services and Activities

CRL like many library services provides a range of targeted services, activities and collections. Besides the delivery of core services such as adult, young adult and children's collections, the regional library service provides or facilitates *varying* levels of support and value-added services to their communities, including:

- Children's activities e.g. story time
- Computer training
- Technology services e.g. computers, printing, access to the Internet etc
- Access to databases (online and in the library)
- Home bound deliveries
- Collection distribution, sharing and transfer
- Online catalogue and members access e.g. reservations
- Meeting Space
- Display space
- Adult Education 'Life Long Learning'
- Book Groups
- Information/Reference Services
- Literacy
- Mobile library service
- Inter-library lending
- Courier services e.g. for items reserved across the network
- Author visits
- Study Space
- Exam supervision

Please note that the complete range of services listed above, are not all available from any one branch due to staffing, resourcing and space issues, but do appear in one form or another throughout the region.

When considering the future direction of CRL, the following will be of high importance:

- Wireless connectivity
- Delivery of more services online
- Access to electronic materials
- Audio / Visual formats e.g. DVD, Audio books (CD, mp3), Music
- Web 2.0
- Family History
- Study spaces and homework assistance/centres
- Access Hours
- Policy, procedure and guidelines (business rules)
- Exhibition /Display spaces – physical and electronic
- Targeted programming and activities for:
 - Young Adults
 - Children
 - Older people
 - Disadvantaged groups
 - General community
 - Students
- Community training opportunities
- Growth in collection scope and formats
- Local Studies
- Corporate library services to regional Councils
- Meeting spaces
- Resourcing e.g. budget

Resourcing

CRL is made up of two (2) Council areas: Clarence Valley and Bellingen. Each Council contributes to the regional library service for the purchase of materials. Acquisition, cataloguing and processing is done centrally at CRL Headquarters (Grafton)

In comparison to other NSW public libraries CRL has been inadequately resourced, especially in the following areas: ⁵

- Materials e.g. books etc
- Staffing levels ⁶
- Hours of operation
- Infrastructure – with the exception Bellingen Library all regional branches are below contemporary standards ⁷

Regional per capita expenditure varied by member Council but when compared to other regional and joint library services is the lowest in the state i.e. 22.84⁸
Clarence Valley \$16.59 Bellingen \$40.16

It is noted however, that a regional Council program of increased per capita expenditure has been in place for the last five (5) years i.e. an increase of 10%

⁵ Public Library Statistics 2010/11-Public Library Services in NSW, State Library of NSW p.74

⁶ Clarence Regional Library Review, State Library of NSW, April 2006

⁷ People Places – A Guide for Public Library Buildings in NSW, 2005

⁸ Expenditure Per Capita figure is derived by dividing total voted regional library expenditure by the total regional population - State Library Statistics 2010/11

per capita expenditure each year for the last five (5) years, to improve the quality, relevance and currency of collections. This increased spending combined with a stock weeding program will go a long way toward bringing collections up to meet contemporary NSW guidelines.

Key Challenges for the Delivery of Services in the Future

Public libraries like many other community based services face many challenges due to their resourcing levels and the ability of Councils to provide levels of funding required to meet contemporary service delivery standards, the perception by funding bodies that they are a cost rather than an investment and the impact of state and federal government cost shifting.

In this context the key challenges facing CRL include:

- Provision of adequate staffing and greater emphasis on workforce planning
- The development of medium to long term resourcing plans, which include funding of collections, services, infrastructure and staffing
- Development of regional communication protocols
- reliance on volunteers
- An ageing population and increasing social isolation
- The impact of sea and tree changers
- The impact of technology and changing community needs
- Impact of electronic formats and electronic delivery e.g. eBooks and eReaders, eAudio, eMagazines etc
- Delivery of multicultural services
- Facilitation and delivery of education and recreation programs
- Provision of accredited information and information sources
- Maintaining high levels of customer service and meeting customer expectations
- Relationships and partnerships with other community agencies e.g. schools, TAFE and Universities; Council Community Services; Government agencies e.g. Centrelink, RMS and employment agencies

SECTION .2

Review of Strategic Plan 2008 – 2018

Achievements

Objective 1.1 MAXIMISE COMMUNITY ACCESS TO LIBRARY SERVICES

- 2nd user survey conducted April 2012
- Ratings and Reviews, and Library Thing for Libraries added to Spydus as enhancements to improve readers advisory for borrowers
- SMS and email notification introduced in Spydus reduces postage costs.
- EbscoHost Integrated Search Box added to front of website to improve access to databases and library catalogue
- Computer Online Learning database subscription added to resources to assist community in usage of computer software and internet functionality.
- Mobile library routes expanded and monitored

- CRL website completely updated, linked to member councils
- facebook page introduced and updated daily
- online eNewsletter introduced
- junior, quarto and adult nonfiction progressively being integrated
- Wireless introduced to all branches, username and password required; staff provide on request.

Objective 1.2 WELL MANAGED, RELEVANT AND TIMELY AND UP-TO-DATE COLLECTIONS THAT MEET COMMUNITY NEEDS AND DEMANDS

- Review of Spydus data highlighting usage patterns
- Collection surveys conducted at libraries
- Floating collections expanded to include all fiction and audio material
- DVD collection introduced at Grafton and Bellingen libraries
- HSC Study Collection introduced at all libraries
- PIPs for Society and Culture added to Grafton and Bellingen libraries
- Expansion of Local Studies Collections at all libraries
- Successful Library Development Grant for money for Local Studies/Family History Strategic Plan development, and purchase of local papers on Microfilm.
- Reformed Volunteer family history and Local Studies group in South Grafton
- Bellingen has obtained 2nd hand microfilm reader for local papers on microfilm.
- Introduction of eAudio using Clipper Wavesound, enable 24/7 multiple downloads of eAudio titles to library members.
- A 400 item Pilot eBook collection catalogued and made available from May 2012
- Purchases made through Local Government Procurement to eliminate tender process and provides a 20% rebate on expenditure
- Outsourced part of the processing of all resources has speeded up availability to libraries
- Staffing restructure implemented based on needs for the future of library service

Objective 1.3 RELEVANT AND CONTEMPORARY TARGETED SERVICES, PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

- Branding of Regional Library undertaken at a very basic level utilising the logo from the CRL Website
- Promotional material for library activities and events are becoming standardised through the use of templates being shared
- Expansion of activities being delivered across all branches

Objective 1.4 OPTIMUM, RECOGNISED AND TRANSPARENT CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS AND PRACTICE

- Customer service charter in DRAFT format

Objective 1.5 ENGAGED AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY

- Customer reviews now available on OPAC
- Library Thing introduced January 2011
- Facebook introduced August 2011
- Planned book selection activities for library community in 2012
- 60 titles purchased for Book Clubs along with 10 titles donated by Great Lakes Library Service, titles identified though staff at branches and their local book clubs.

Objective 2.1 PROFESSIONAL AND SKILLED LIBRARY STAFF THAT MEET THE ONGOING NEEDS OF CRL AND EACH MEMBER COUNCIL SERVICE

- Training opportunities identified and staff have participated in a variety of activities
- Membership to ALIA and Public Libraries NSW continues
- Workshops and State Library interest groups and Zone meetings attended where possible
- Team meetings held regularly
- Staff wiki developed as a communication tool for library staff and headquarters staff

Objective 2.2 REGIONAL COMMUNICATIONS AND NETWORKING

- 6 Monthly full staff meetings introduced
- Face to face meetings linked to book buying days

Objective 2.3 RECOGNITION OF STAFF, TEAM AND BRANCH EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION

Objective 3.1 A LIBRARY SERVICE THAT MEETS CONTEMPORARY OPERATIONAL STANDARDS

- Policies completed include
 - o Circulation policy
 - o Internet policy
 - o Children's and youth policy
 - o Fines & Fee waiving policy
- Policies progressing include:
 - o Volunteer policy
- Introduction of volunteers at Regional Headquarters to assist with book covering, labelling and repairs
- New Library Agreement signed June 2012

Objective 4.1 RESPONSIBLE AND ACCOUNTABLE FINANCIAL/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- Annual budget developed in consultation with staff and committee
- Deductible Gift Recipient Status obtained from the Tax Office by Bellingen, CVC and Regional Service completed in 2011
- Insurance annually adjusted where appropriate
- Regional and CVC libraries restructured in 2012

Objective 4.2 SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE WORKPLACE

- DRAFT Disaster Management Plan created by consultant for the Local Studies Strategic Plan

Objective 4.3 SAFE ATTRACTIVE AND USEFUL LIBRARY FACILITIES

- New Grafton Library to incorporate Regional headquarters as well
- S.94 plans prepared to address library infrastructure in CVC

Outstanding items to be completed

Objective 1.1 MAXIMISE COMMUNITY ACCESS TO LIBRARY SERVICES

- Changes in opening hours at libraries to be implemented
- Review and adoption of new online resources is ongoing

- Website updating and maintenance is ongoing
- Successful grant application for RFID implementation
- Collection integration is ongoing and needs to be finalised
- Further develop Housebound services across the region

Objective 1.2 WELL MANAGED, RELEVANT AND TIMELY AND UP-TO-DATE COLLECTIONS THAT MEET COMMUNITY NEEDS AND DEMANDS

- Development of a collection profile for each library that is integrated into a regional profile
- Develop cataloguing standards
- Implement improved stock rotation
- Continue to improve purchasing and processing functions at Headquarters

Objective 1.3 RELEVANT AND CONTEMPORARY TARGETED SERVICES, PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

- Development of a comprehensive marketing and promotional plan
- Visible Regional Identity needs to be developed further
- Seek partnerships for event activities for extra funding

Objective 1.4 OPTIMUM, RECOGNISED AND TRANSPARENT CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS AND PRACTICE

- Complete the Customer Service Charter
- CRL team based Staff charter has not progressed
- Promotion to target groups needs to be initiated

Objective 1.5 ENGAGED AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY

- Consultation Plan needs to be developed for identified targeted groups
- Establish "Friends of Library" for each library
- Ongoing investigation into customer interaction with library service through various media
- Annual community book selection activities need to be initiated on an ongoing basis
- Further partnerships with community and other groups need to be explored and developed
- Commence a Book Club Service to community Book Clubs

Objective 2.1 PROFESSIONAL AND SKILLED LIBRARY STAFF THAT MEET THE ONGOING NEEDS OF CRL AND EACH MEMBER COUNCIL SERVICE

- Key actions need to continue

Objective 2.2 REGIONAL COMMUNICATIONS AND NETWORKING

- Regular staff team meetings and communications through email, phone and wiki to continue
- Collaborative meetings to continue on a regular basis

Objective 2.3 RECOGNITION OF STAFF, TEAM AND BRANCH EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION

- Regional "Celebrating Success" program not progressed

Objective 3.1 A LIBRARY SERVICE THAT MEETS CONTEMPORARY OPERATIONAL STANDARDS

- Ongoing development and review of policies
- Ongoing development of the use of volunteers across the regional service

Objective 4.1 RESPONSIBLE AND ACCOUNTABLE FINANCIAL/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- Key actions to continue

Objective 4.2 SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE WORKPLACE

- Complete staff working alone practices for SWMS
- Complete review of DRAFT Disaster management Plan

Objective 4.3 SAFE ATTRACTIVE NAD USEFUL LIBRARY FACILITIES

- Continue to identify library infrastructure needs for now and into the future

New Initiatives

User/ Nonuser survey for 2016

Integrate Reference into Nonfiction

Create separate Local Studies Collections at each Library

Identify how DVD collections are to be displayed

Monitor how technology trends impact on collection arrangement

Investigate wireless hotspots so there is no need for usernames and passwords

Implement Local Studies/Family History Strategy

Develop comprehensive digital collections eg) eAudio, eBooks, eMagazines

Increase databases ie) Subscribe to Ancestry.com

Identify aboriginal resources in varying formats

Investigate purchase of eReaders with loaded titles for lending trial

Investigate gaming technologies ie) software

Provide a range of technologies for clients to experience

Investigate the development of a Corporate Library Service

Develop a regional calendar of events for all libraries

Review Library Management System

Integration of CRL staff into new Grafton Library

***Community Library User / Non User Survey 2012
(comparisons with 2008 survey)***

From the Executive summary of 2012 User/Nonuser Survey:

The 2012 Clarence Regional Library random telephone survey was designed to build on the findings of a similar survey conducted in 2008. In particular, the survey of Clarence Valley and Bellingen Shire residents aged 15-plus aimed to measure usage patterns for local libraries, together with the attitudes and behaviours of both users and non-users of local library services.

Among the major findings:

1. In 2012 some 49 per cent of adult residents were classed as library users, i.e. visiting their local library at least once or twice a year. This was up marginally on the 44 per cent claiming to be users in 2008. Usage was higher in the Bellingen Shire than in the Clarence Valley (at 53 and 44 per cent

respectively), and among females (at 56 per cent, against 40 per cent of men). As one would expect, usage rose with highest education level attained.

2. As in 2008, the borrowing or reading of fiction and/or non-fiction remained the two major reasons that users visit their local library (at 68 and 62 per cent respectively). Other popular uses included research (26 per cent), using computers (19 per cent), and borrowing or reading newspaper or magazines (13 per cent).
3. Users remain strongly of the view that "staff are able to satisfy my needs" (with a mean of 4.61 on a 1-5 agreement scale), that "there are generally enough staff" (4.55), and that "the books are relevant to my needs" (3.90). There was less agreement that "the range of books is adequate" (3.60) or that "the collection of books is up-to-date" (3.53). All these mean scores were in line with 2008 data.
4. 78 per cent of library users felt that existing opening hours were adequate for their needs – the same proportion as in 2008.
5. As to what would make them visit their local library more often, users predictably called for more, more recent or a wider variety of books. Beyond this, users called for the library to better advertise its services and events, to become a hub for community information, and to assist with local studies or family research. Improved parking was also an issue across both LGA's. The community information and local studies issues had increased in demand from the 2008 survey while the "advertising of services" was a new item on the 2012 survey that 69% of respondents wanted to see more often.
6. 21 per cent of users claimed to use the library website, against 15 per cent in 2008. Around two thirds of website visitors used the online catalogue. Of non-website users, the main reasons offered were "no need" (i.e. "unsure what benefits it brings"), lack of familiarity with the website, and lack of knowledge on how to use it.
7. 31 per cent of library users also assisted someone else to use the library (down from 35 per cent in 2008). Of these, 73 per cent took children to their local library.
8. Existing library users appeared extremely satisfied with their local library, providing a mean satisfaction score of 4.15 on a 1-5 scale. (This compares with a mean of 4.11 in 2008.) Urban residents were more satisfied than their rural counterparts, and satisfaction rose broadly with age.
9. Among non-users, major reasons offered for their unwillingness to use library services included not reading much (35 per cent of non-users), preferring to buy rather than borrow books (33 per cent), and being "too busy" (25 per cent).
10. Like users, non-users were keen to see their local library assist with family history research, advertise its services and events more, and/or to become hubs for community information. More up-to-date books and/or a better range of books were also prominent requests, as was better parking.

Other findings include:

- Age profile is similar to 2008 with a skew to older residents.

- Gender split was more representative in the 2012 survey than 2008.
- Aboriginal representation was almost identical in the 2 surveys.
- More residents indicated a broadband internet access than in 2008.
- Population is better educated than in the 2008 survey.
- Additional questions were asked in the 2012 survey: "Libraries should support people in gaining (a) educational qualifications or (b) employment" were asked here for the first time: respondents were more positive towards the education qualifications than the employment, however they may have misunderstood this question.
- Ebooks were introduced to the 2012 survey and 48% of respondents indicated they would make them visit a library more often.

Staff input into 2012 - 2022 Strategic Plan

Staff were emailed copies of the Strategic Plan 2008-2018, Strategic Action Plan 2008-2018 progress report, Local Studies Strategic Plan and User/Nonuser Survey 2012 prior to a full staff meeting held on the 18th June 2012.

At this full staff meeting an overview was presented on the outcomes for the day, why we were there and what we were going to be doing. This was followed up with an update on the current Strategic Action Plan, looking at where we were at in terms of what we had achieved through the Strategic Action Plan.

The staff were then divided into 3 groups to review the Purpose, Vision and Strategic Focus of the Strategic plan. Each group then reported back to the full meeting and comments were made. Changes were made as appropriate.

A review of each strategy took place, staff were asked to consider what we needed to change or add. Within each strategy each objective, key actions, outcomes, comments, and progress to date were considered by staff.

These changes and additions were summarised and a general overview of what they were was discussed generally.

The updates to the Strategic Action Plan were then added and the DRAFT Strategic Action Plan for 2012-2022 was forwarded to all staff for comment and feedback. This feedback was then taken to the CRLC workshop to be held on the 20th July 2012.

CRLC input into 2012 - 2022 Strategic Plan

CRL committee members were emailed copies of the Strategic Action Plan 2012-2022, Strategic Action Plan 2008-2018 progress report June 2012, and User/Nonuser Survey 2012 prior to the workshop meeting on the 20th July in Coffs Harbour.

The CRL Committee was given a brief overview of what the staff had covered in their workshop on the Strategic Plan Action Plan. The Progress report for the 2008 - 2018 Strategic Action Plan was presented this was followed by going over the DRAFT Strategic Action Plan 2012 - 2022 by objective by objective, changes

were made to the working DRAFT document as they came up in the process of discussion.

The User/ Nonuser Survey 2012 and the Local Studies Strategic Plan were referenced and used to inform the discussion and direction of the proceedings.

The Strategic Plan 2008 contents page was presented to the committee as a discussion point. The discussion centred on what was to remain in the new Strategic Plan and what needed to be updated, taken out or added.

The staff feedback was covered as part of discussions and items were added where appropriate.

Profile of Library Service Statistics

NSW public library statistics have been gathered and reported by the State Library of NSW since 1973.

Data has been provided by member Councils of the CRL for the period July 2010 to June 2011 and provides a significant body of data to gauge the relative performance of all the public libraries across the State. A scale of 1 to 99 is used to rank performance against other public libraries where appropriate. The represents the total number of library services for 2010/11. In previous years there were 97. Many of the library services comprise regional library services or other joint operations making the total number of branches approximately 4 times the number of services.

State-wide Facts:

- The proportion of the population that hold a membership card has grown from 35% in 1980 to 46% in 2010/11.
- Many more access library resources without becoming members as they access reference collections, read newspapers and journals, use computers research local history or access the internet. The total number of visits was 35,823,822.
- Local government expenditure on public libraries has grown from \$27M in 1980 to \$314M in 2010/11. State Government expenditure grew from \$8M to \$24.5M as well as a further \$2M for the Country Library Fund. This represents a significant drop in the State's proportion of the total funding over that period of time which is also true for the 2010/11 financial year.

CRL Facts:

A selection of criteria has been used to provide an overview of the change in performance of the CRL over previous years and with reference to the NSW average across all public libraries. The data being reported addresses not only the collection, which is the core responsibility of the CRL Committee, but also staff comparisons that will be of interest to each member Council.

In summary, the data shows sound improvements across the CRL's collection development activities. It clearly demonstrates to the funding body that the CRL is in fact putting considerable effort into improvements, which is a key

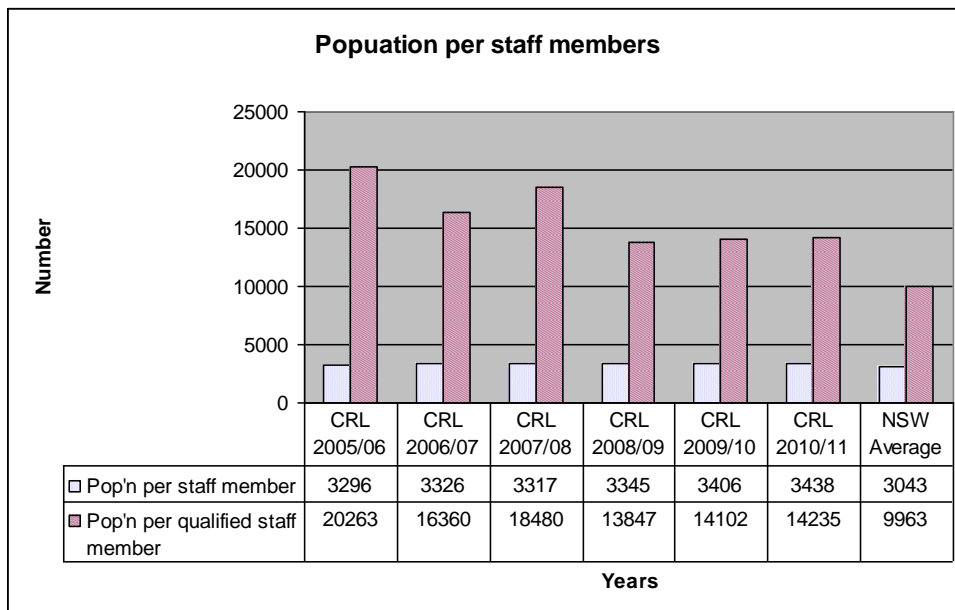
consideration when applications for grants are assessed. There is still considerable work involved in ensuring these improvements are maintained.

Staffing levels have remained static and therefore the data does not demonstrate improvement.

Population Comparisons:

The population served by the CRL is 16% larger than the NSW average. The population per staff member continues to increase, being 13% higher than the average (Graph 1). This means a greater potential workload for each staff member.

Graph 1

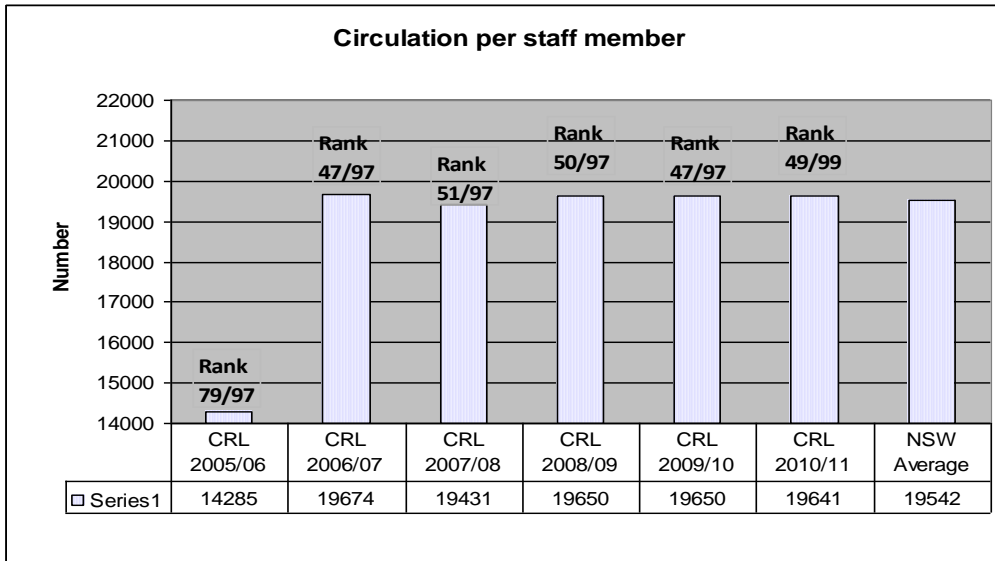


The population per qualified staff member is again on the increase and is 42% higher than the average (Graph 1). This places a potential workload on the small number of staff who have formal library qualifications far greater than what is experienced generally in public library services as evidenced in our relative ranking.

This information must be considered with respect to the actual amount of lending activity undertaken by staff. Graph 2 indicates that the current amount of lending activity undertaken by our staff is close to the average. The overall implication of this is that activities other than lending will be limited if comparable workloads are considered. Our libraries are indeed increasing their additional activities where they can and the community is enjoying those benefits.

The new Grafton Library however, is expected to result in considerably increased expectations of the community, increased membership and increased circulation.

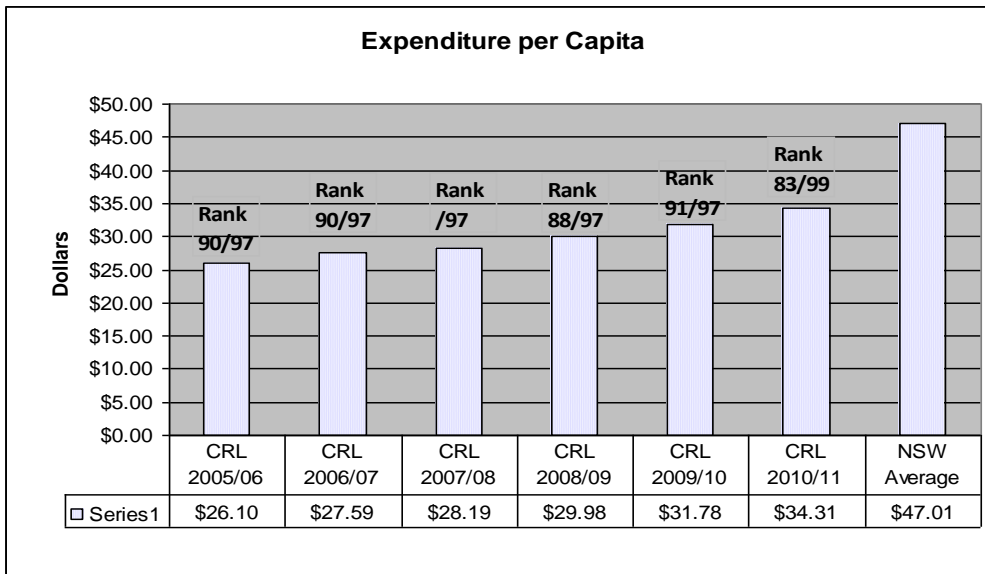
Graph 2



Total Expenditure on Library Services:

Our total expenditure on library services per capita has improved again, and while our ranking amongst public library services across the State has shown a sound improvement, we still remain 23% below the State average (Graph 3).

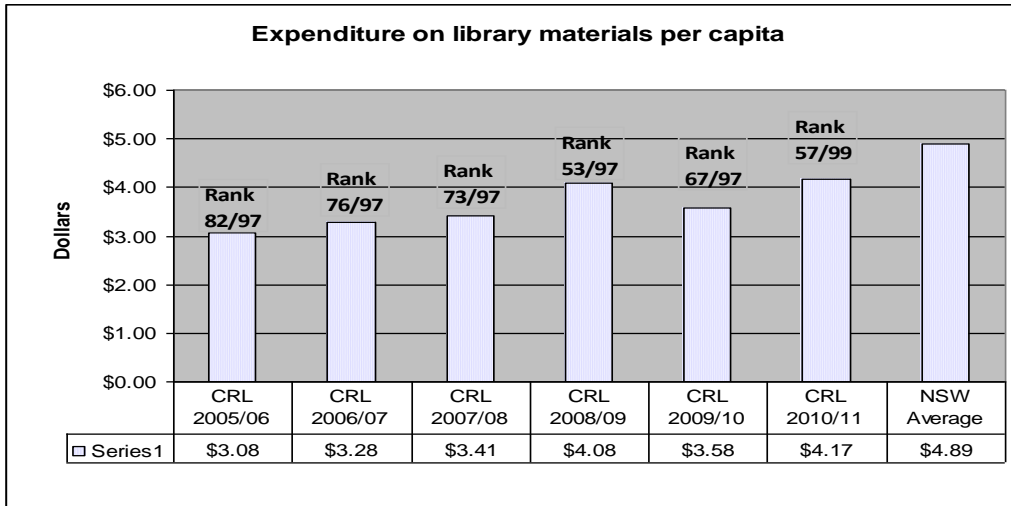
Graph 3



Expenditure on Library Materials:

Our expenditure on library materials per capita has resumed its trend to increasing each year, which has improved our rank across the State (Graph 4). This means we are now only 15% below the State average.

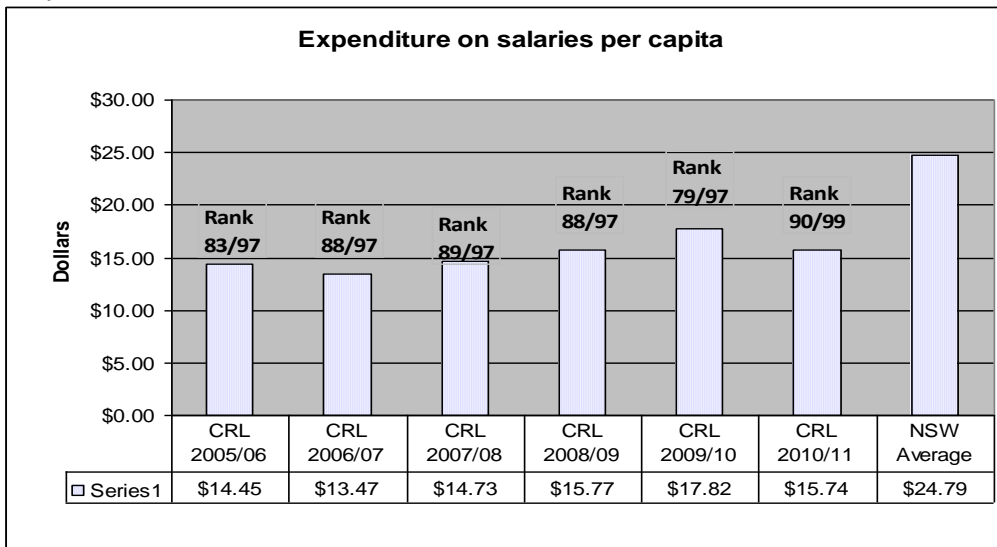
Graph 4



Expenditure on Salaries:

Our expenditure on salaries per capita has declined since the previous year indicating that we were 36% behind the state average and ranked more poorly (Graph 5). This may be partly due to the unfilled/backfilled positions in the Regional Library Head Quarters. If so, this trend will continue into the next year’s reporting. The following year is likely to see an improvement as all positions are filled.

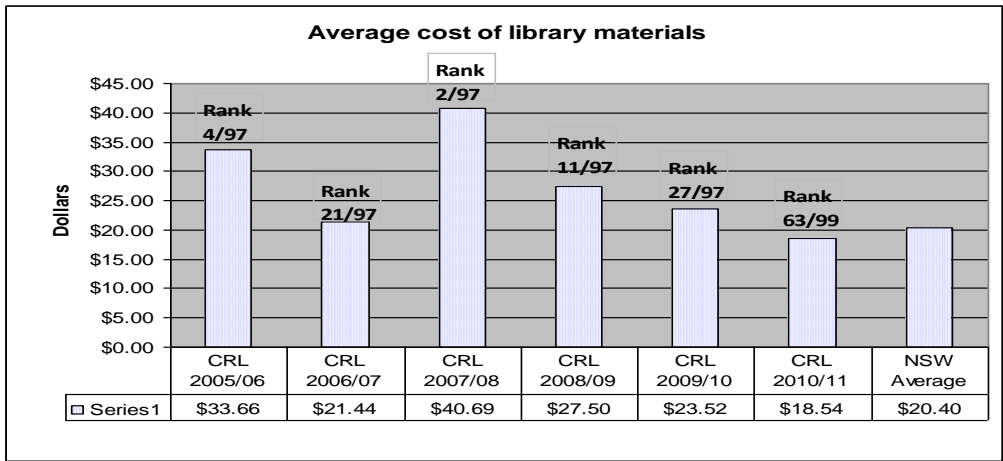
Graph 5



Cost of Library Materials:

The average cost of our library materials has continued to decrease, now just below the average. There has been success in sourcing lower cost versions of talking books and soft covered books. Increased purchasing of Junior Fiction as a result of Grant money will have brought the average material costs down as these titles tend to be lower priced than other materials purchased. The trend may change in the future with our ageing population and the increasing demand for large print which is generally more expensive.

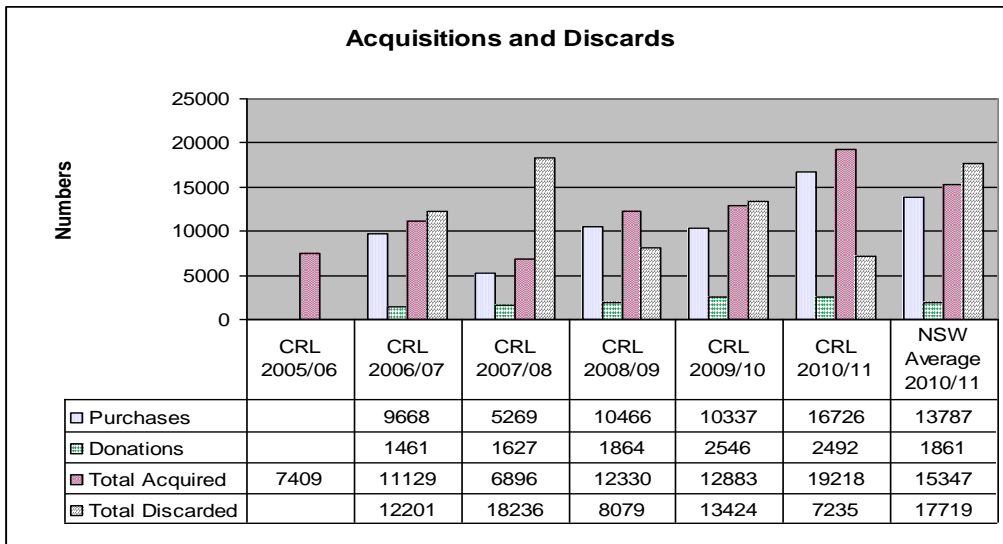
Graph 6



Acquisitions and Discards:

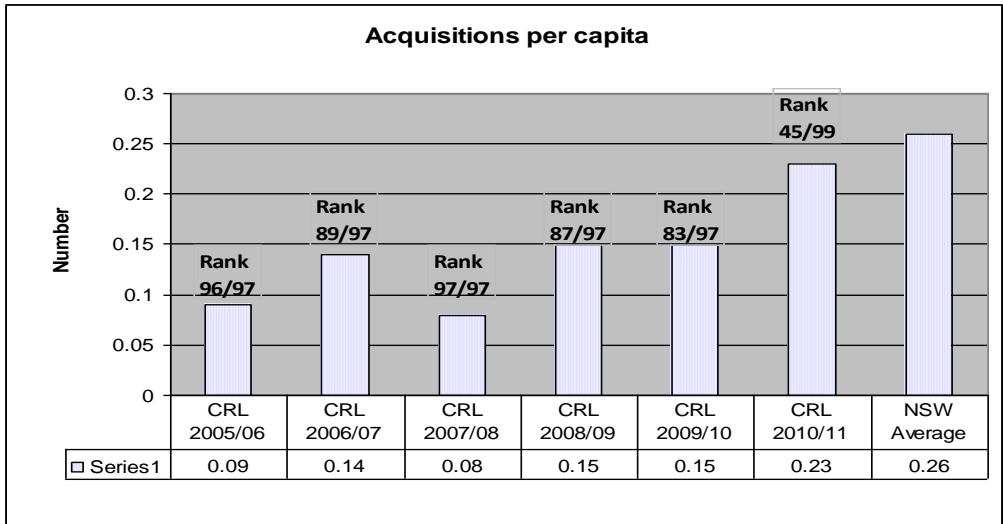
The total number of purchased items has jumped and was above the average (Graph 7). The number discarded has dropped considerably (resulting from regional staff vacancies) but is also a reflection of active weeding of old stock in previous years and the resultant overall improvement in the age of our collection. In the future we need to stabilise these figures

Graph 7



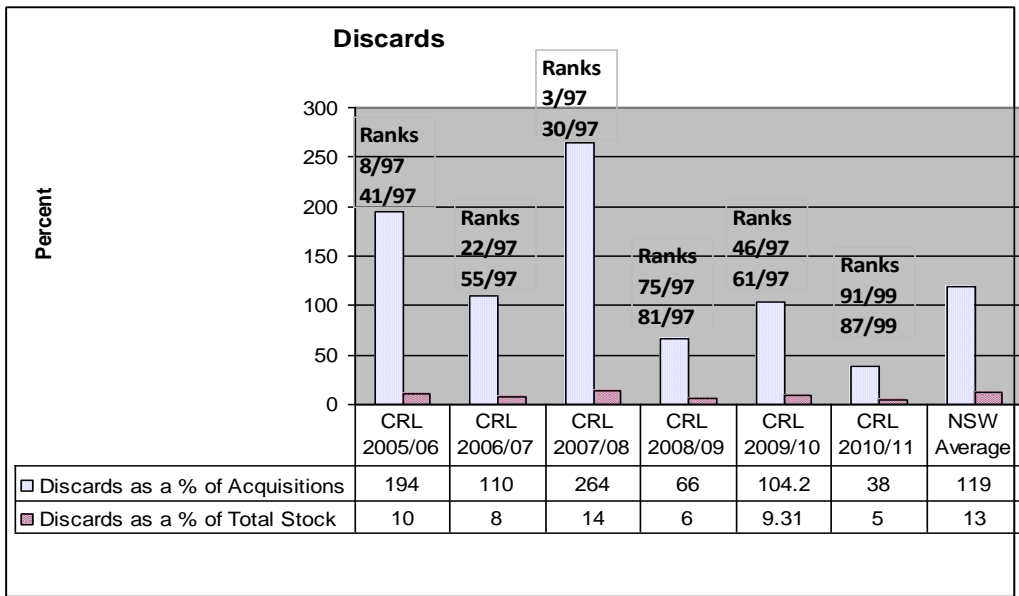
Our total acquisitions per capita improved considerably as reflected in our jump in ranking (Graph 8). Our acquisitions per capita are only 11% behind the State average.

Graph 8



Discarded stock represented 38% of our acquisitions which is considerably behind the state average, but demonstrates the effectiveness of previous efforts to reduce the very old portions of our stock (Graph 9). Again, these figures will need to be stabilised in the future.

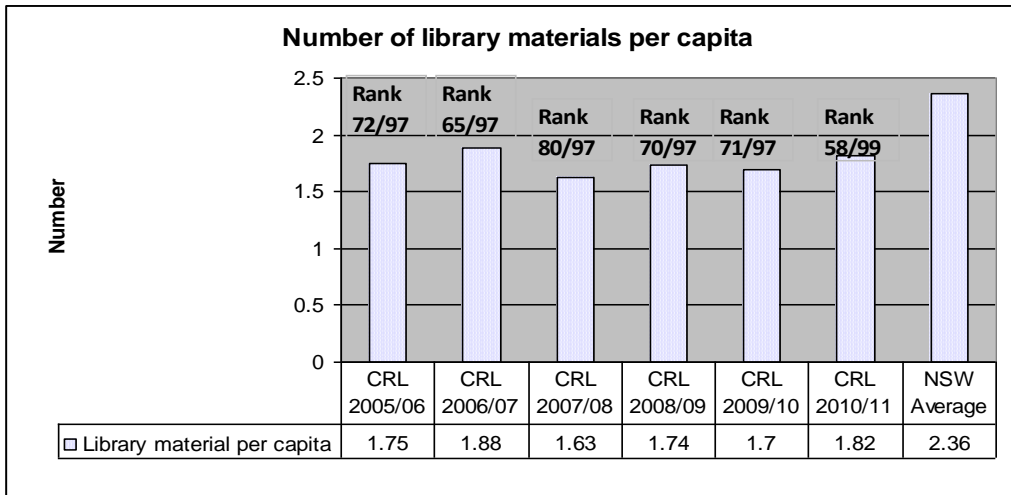
Graph 9



Library Materials:

The CRL’s library material per capita has also improved, resulting in a jump in our ranking (Graph 10). This means we have more items for individuals to access. However, we remain 23% below the average.

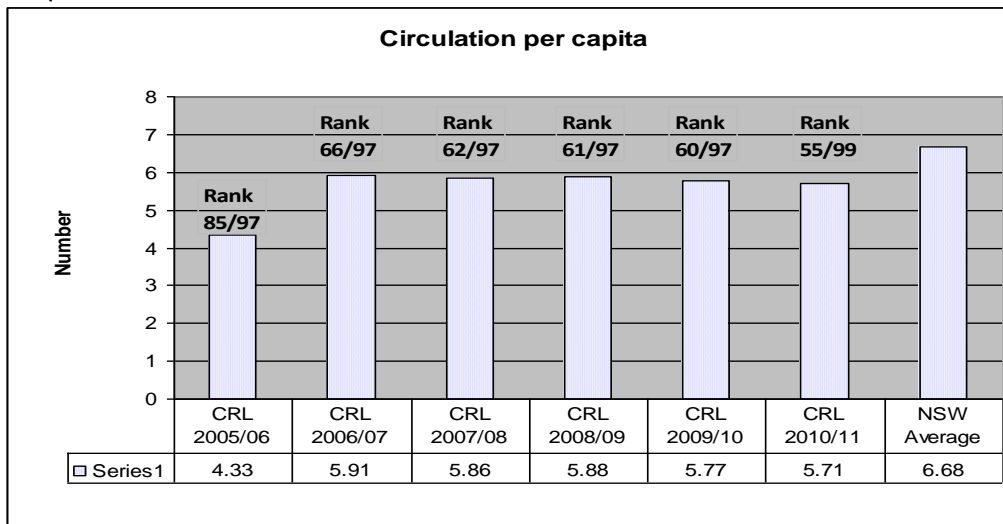
Graph 10



Circulation / Borrowing:

Our overall circulation (borrowing) of items per capita has fallen marginally (Graph 11) and remains 15% below the average. This means that our residents are not borrowing as many items compared to others.

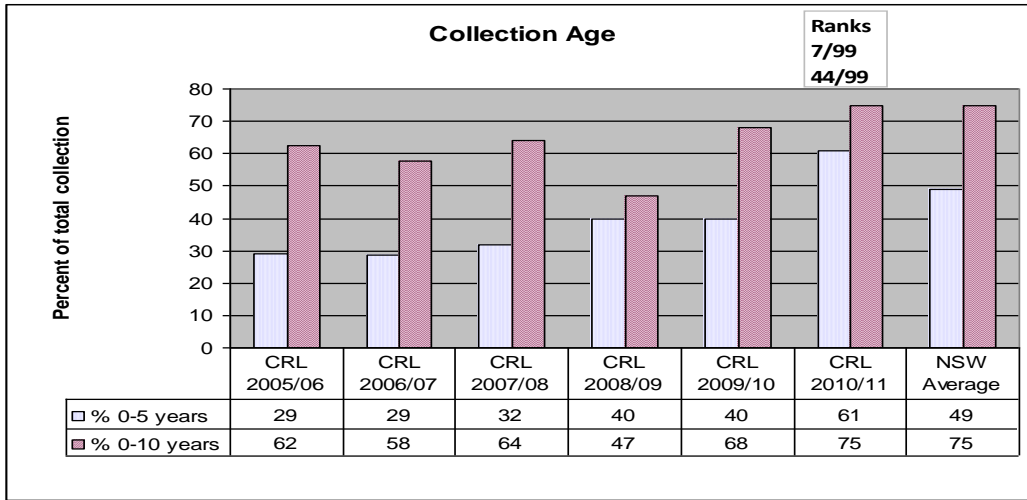
Graph 11



Collection Age:

The age of our collection has shown the collective improvement of the increased investment in our book stock, targeting weeding program of older stock and sourcing less expensive items (Graph 12). The proportion of stock in the 0-5 years age category has significantly improved and is above state average due to a more vigorous acquisition program. The proportion of the stock in the 1-10 years age category has also improved and matches the state-wide average. However, consistent efforts will be required if these improvements are to be maintained.

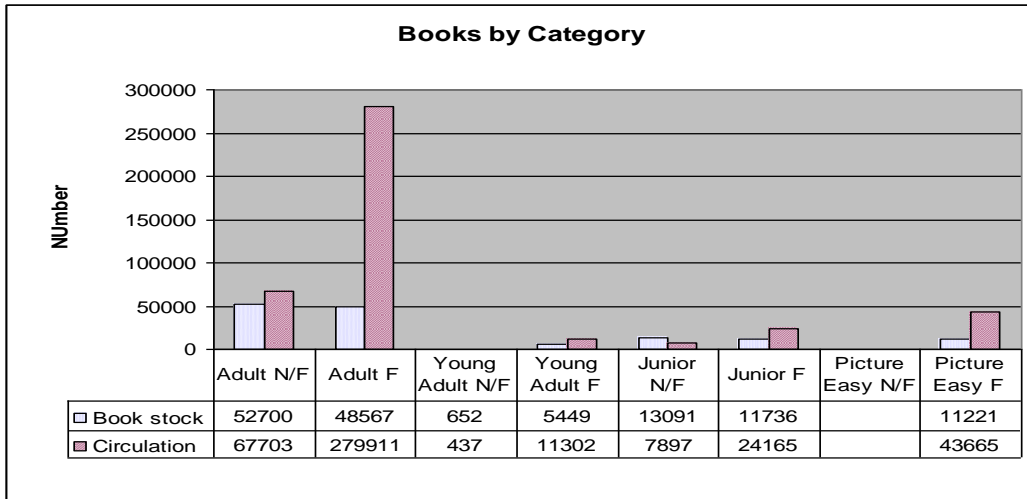
Graph 12



Book Categories:

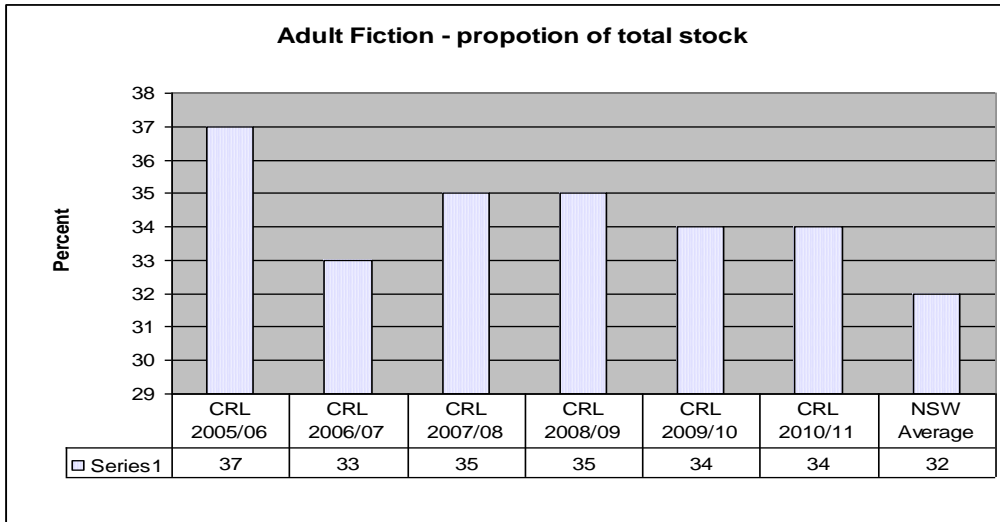
The adult collections are the largest portion of our book stock and have correspondingly high rates of circulation/borrowing (Graph 13). Adult Fiction items are in the highest demand.

Graph 13



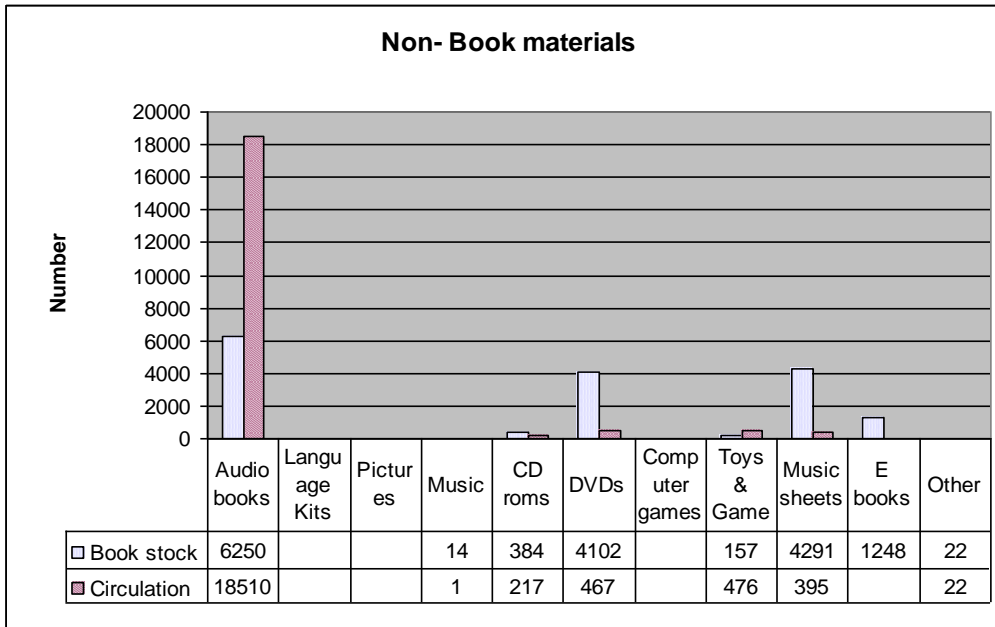
The proportion of our stock which is Adult Fiction is also much higher than the State average (Graph 14). While this probably reflects our local demand, it also provides a warning about managing other categories.

Graph 14



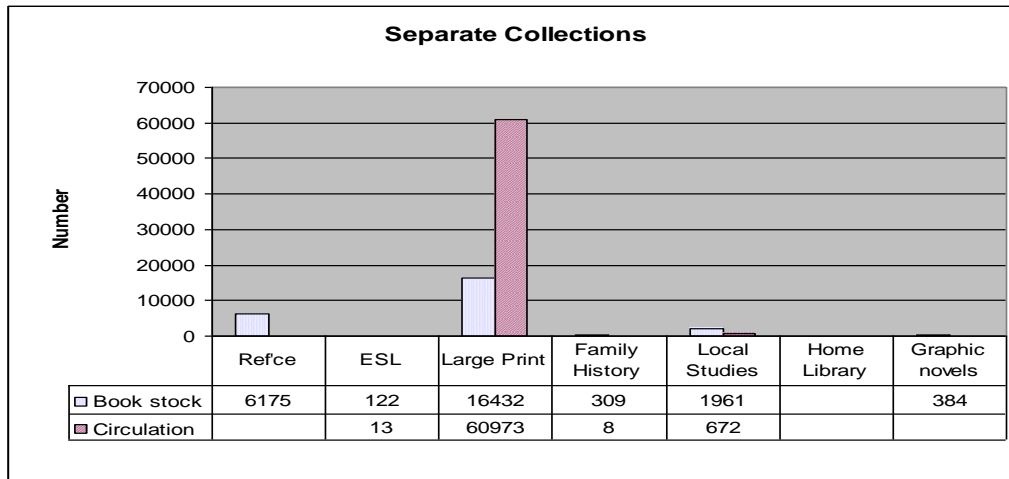
Graph 15 demonstrates the popularity of audio books.

Graph 15



Similarly Graph 16 demonstrates the popularity of the large print collection, anticipated to continue growing in the future.

Graph 16



Section .3

More Australians visit libraries every year than even the cinema. It is estimated that 60 per cent of Australians use public libraries on a regular basis—some 90 million visits per annum. They are our most visited and our most valuable public institution at a local level. (Latham 2003)

The objectives and strategies of the Regional Strategic Plan will generally be applicable to all member Council libraries. Specific Action Plans based on these objectives and strategies will need to be developed to reflect specific local variances taking into account community and staff needs and resourcing capabilities.

Our Strategic Directions 2012 - 2022

Our Purpose

The Clarence Regional Library Service aims to provide: a contemporary, welcoming, responsive and inclusive library service to the communities of Clarence Valley and Bellingen Shire; and services that are sustainable, equitable and accessible.

Our Vision

A recognised and valued provider of services, collections and programs that help build community cohesion and capacity and provide opportunities to connect to the community and the world

A regional library service that:

- Facilitates and provides targeted and relevant educational opportunities
- Helps connect the community with the past, the present and the future
- Is committed to the free flow of information and ideas to inform, inspire and feed the communities’ imaginations

- Is a trusted and valued source of information
- Is considered an investment in the well-being and success of the community – not a cost
- Focuses on social inclusion of individuals including target groups, and their needs and aspirations
- Builds and strengthens partnerships to enhance service delivery and engage the community
- Embraces technological trends and makes them available to the community

Our Strategic Focus

There are four (4) areas of strategic focus for the Regional Library Service that relate to its purpose and vision. They are:

Strategic Focus

1. Community Service delivery: collections, programs and activities, service delivery and charters, marketing, promotion, community information, community identified needs and access
2. Learning and Growth, staff professional development, skill and competency identification, staff recognition, celebrating success and team focus
3. Business Systems and Management, standards, policies, procedures, guidelines, communication and organisational structure
4. Resourcing, financial management and performance, asset management, staffing (human resources), building partnerships

Objectives and Strategies

1. Community Service Delivery:

Ensuring that we provide a friendly, welcoming, efficient, focused and valued service for our communities

Objective 1.1:

[Maximise community access to library services](#)

Strategies:

- 1.1.1 Conduct a user/non-user survey every 4 years
- 1.1.2 Review the spread of library opening hours to address community and professional development needs

- 1.1.3 Online access to services is reviewed for relevance in meeting the needs of current and future users
- 1.1.4 Mobile library services: Expand in CVC
- 1.1.5 Develop relevant and targeted outreach services
- 1.1.6 Increase community awareness of Library services
- 1.1.7 Support access to collection by improved inventory management
- 1.1.8 Improve access to collections by Collection arrangement
- 1.1.9 Implement wireless internet access

Objective 1.2:

Well managed, relevant and up-to-date collections that meet community needs and demands

Strategies:

- 1.2.1 Regional Collection Management Plan reviewed and updated
- 1.2.2 Implement a Local History & Family History Strategy (print and non-print resources)
- 1.2.3 Community collection needs survey
- 1.2.4 Develop comprehensive digital collection resources eg eBooks & eAudio books
- 1.2.5 Develop a DVD Collection
- 1.2.6 Increased databases
- 1.2.7 Process streamlining and restructure
- 1.2.8 Focus on expansion on Aboriginal resources
- 1.2.9 New technologies introduced
- 1.2.10 Develop a Corporate Library Service

Objective 1.3:

Relevant and contemporary targeted services, programs and activities

Strategies:

- 1.3.1 Comprehensive marketing / promotional plan.
- 1.3.2 Develop a visible Regional Library identity including signage
- 1.3.3 Facilitate relevant educational and recreational programs and activities wherever practicable.

Objective 1.4:

Optimum, recognised and transparent customer service standards and practice

Strategies:

- 1.4.1 Develop, document and promote a CRL library customer service charter

- a) Develop feedback mechanisms for charter e.g. customer feedback forms; key performance indicators

Objective 1.5:

An engaged and supportive community

Strategies:

- 1.5.1 Targeted public consultations re: services, collection and programs e.g. Youth, Children's, Adults, Older People etc
- 1.5.2 Establish 'Friends of Library' for each branch
- 1.5.3 Greater customer interaction, social networking and information access
- 1.5.4 Annual target group 'book selection' activities
- 1.5.5 MOU with community groups to enhance access to information e.g. visitor information in libraries; U3A activities; help from the historical groups; drug information, story time to playgroups
- 1.5.6 Pilot Library supported Book Clubs (including online Book Clubs)
- 1.5.7 Increasing volunteer base

2. Learning and Growth:

Ensuring we have the right mix of skills and expertise to deliver contemporary, sustainable and targeted services to be responsive to community needs now and into the future

Objective 2.1:

Professional, experienced and skilled library staff that meet the ongoing needs of CRL and each member Council service

Strategies:

- 2.1.1 Staff professional development plans.
- 2.1.2 Staff are well informed and engaged in emerging public library trends
- 2.1.3 Staff sharing of knowledge, expertise and experience
- 2.1.4 Work experience opportunities
 - a) Assess and document the skill/competency requirements of the library service – with annual review and evaluation
 - b) Conduct a skills gap analysis to inform the development of staff professional development plans and recruitment (core and desirable competencies / qualifications)
 - c) Develop a CRL staff-training plan that incorporates the needs of each member Council library service
 - d) Develop a positive learning environment for all staff by for example, provision of study leave, traineeships, flexible rostering, recognition of staff participation etc

Objective 2.2:

Regional communication and networking

Strategies:

2.2.1 Participative team based planning process

3. Business Systems and Management:

Ensuring that we have well informed, efficient and effective policies, procedures and guidelines; that we have the right communication protocols and organisational structure in place to work well individually and as a team; and that we represent best value to the community

Objective 3.1:

A library service that meets contemporary operational standards

Strategies:

- 3.1.1 Review and develop all library policy, procedures with reference to NSW library and ALIA standards
- 3.1.2 Review library service model and structure
- 3.1.3 Assess current infrastructure standards against contemporary New South Wales library standards
- 3.1.4 Review of Library Management System
- 3.1.5 Integration of CRL staff into new Grafton Library

4. Resources:

Ensuring that the library's services, programs, activities and staff are well resourced, sustainable and meet community expectations; and are seen to provide excellent return on investment by all stakeholders

Objective 4.1:

Responsible and accountable financial/resource management

Strategies:

- 4.1.1 Budget preparation is informed by the strategic plan
- 4.1.2 Annual Regional Library Budgeting Workshop to scope needs and set priorities to better inform each member Council's budgeting process
- 4.1.3 Increase the library's income
- 4.1.4 Library stock is appropriately insured
- 4.1.5 Evaluate staffing levels to ensure appropriate levels of service

Objective 4.2

A safe and accessible workplace

Strategies:

- 4.2.1 Review staff working alone practices in line with relevant OH& S and risk management standards
- 4.2.2 Develop and implement emergency and disaster preparedness and management plans

Objective 4.3

Safe, attractive and useful library facilities

Strategies:

- 4.3.1 Identify and prioritise library infrastructure needs for each branch now and into the future