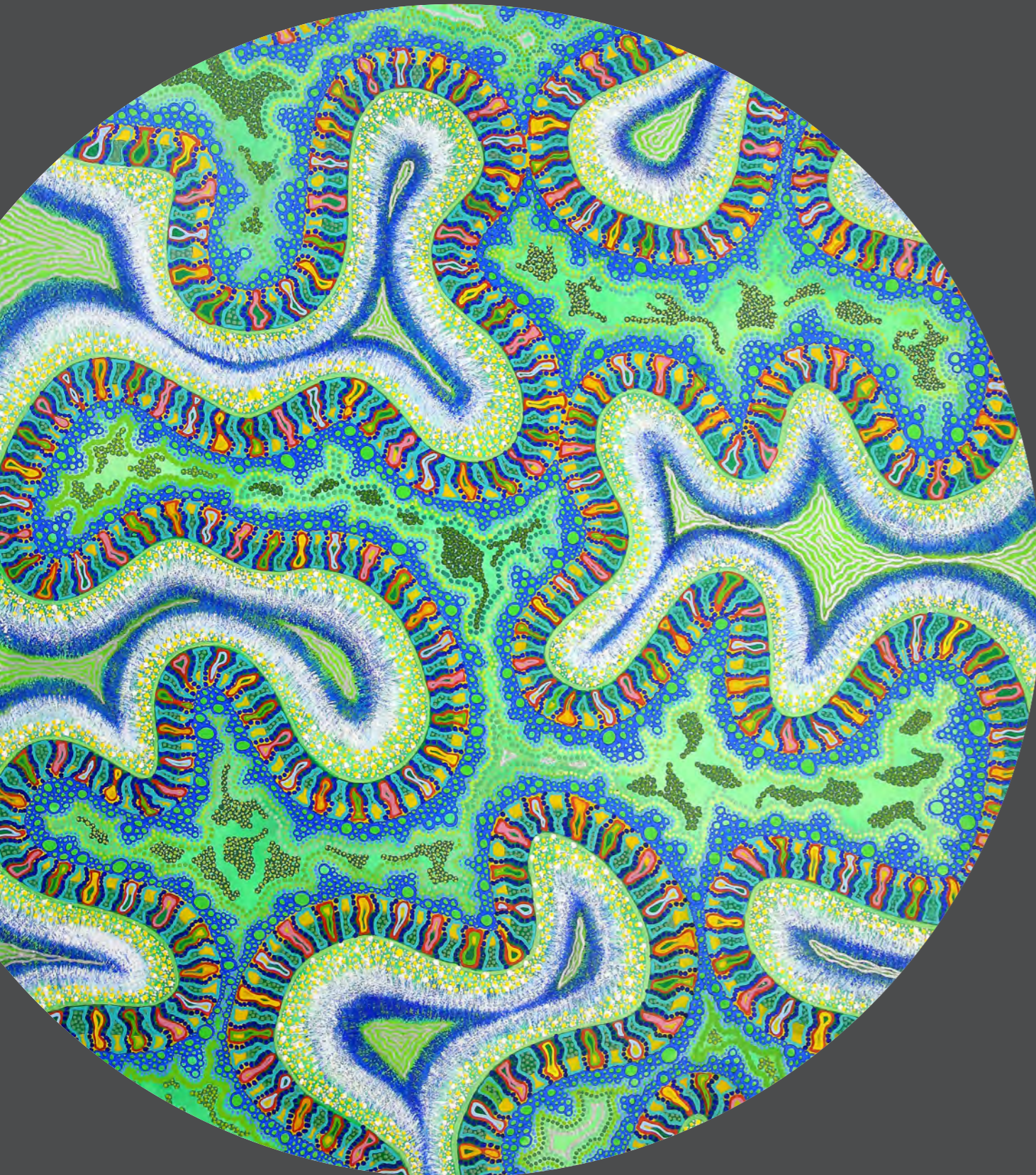


# Clarence Regional Library Strategy 2024-2034



## Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Bundjalung, Gumbaynggirr and Yaegl people as the Traditional Owners of the land on which we live and work. We honour the First Nations peoples culture and connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.



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*“Community cohesion. It brings people together from all sections of the community, and it’s a happy gathering space.”*

Bellingen Library

# SECTION 1



## Introduction

Clarence Regional Library is a partnership between two local government areas: Clarence Valley Council and Bellingen Shire Council.

Public libraries are located in key settlements along the Clarence, Bellinger and Kalang rivers and seaside towns: Grafton, Maclean, Iluka, Yamba, Bellingen, Dorrigo, Urunga. A mobile library augments access to library resources and programs across the Clarence Valley. Clarence Regional Library's well regarded physical and digital collections are shared across an extensive geographical area.

The overarching ethos of a regional partnership like Clarence Regional Library is to foster cooperation, collective decision making, regional collaboration and joint commitment to each other's success.

The task of strategic thinking is to ask questions; to acknowledge constraints; to problem solve; to prepare a map for the future, balancing ambition and pragmatism.

*"My library -  
accommodating,  
knowledgeable,  
patient, friendly  
and passionate."*

Urunga Library

*"A quiet  
place of inspiration,  
sanctuary and stories for  
me and my family to utilise  
free of charge. I will never  
buy another book!"*

Maclean Library

# Who are we?

The people of the Clarence Valley and Bellingen Shire are people of the rivers. The upper and lower Clarence River. The Bellinger, Kalang and Orara Rivers. Saltwater Freshwater ecologies have sustained the custodial and cultural stewardship of Country by Gumbayngirr, Bundjalung and Yaegl Peoples.

These mighty rivers run through the land and its intertwined histories.

Always bountiful, the rivers stretch like arteries across lush floodplains; tipping over mountain ranges; colliding with the sea.

Like many other parts of Australia, floods and bush fires have etched the landscape like tattoos. Rebirth and reuse occur in generational cycles.

A renewed focus on habitat protection, working alongside and learning from First Nations communities, balancing trade with conservation, are important strategic priorities for Bellingen Shire and Clarence Valley Councils.

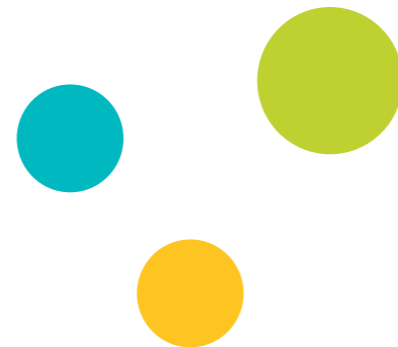
The landscape is changing; as is population density and demographics.

From sugar cane to macadamia farming; incorporating sustainable agriculture into traditional dairy and beef cattle farming; harvesting native forests to plantation timbers; while health, justice and education services continue to attract new people to regional cities and towns.

Like many regional areas in Australia, the demographic trend is older but also younger; the consequence of regional migration due to housing affordability, the normalisation of remote working, and the growth of service industries in larger bustling towns like Grafton and Bellingen. Smaller but still bustling coastal and river villages like Yamba, Maclean and Urunga have also seen population growth and a corresponding demand for learning and cultural experiences and services.

Arts and cultural production is flourishing, making a contribution to economies but also connecting communities, enhancing local distinctiveness, and providing more reasons to see the Clarence Valley and Bellingen Shire as attractive destinations. The strong presence and cultural stewardship of Gumbayngirr, Bundjalung and Yaegl Peoples extends understanding and active preservation of language, stories, heritage sites and landscape regeneration.

Due to the geographic scale of both local government areas, combined with large tracts of native forests affecting the availability of new housing stock, there is a restricted rate base (especially Bellingen). Bridges, roads, waterways, docks, also need ongoing maintenance; new infrastructure is required to support population growth hotspots. Council's recurrent funding for social and cultural services is stretched in multiple directions; reliance on grant funding opportunities is unlikely to weaken.



## Libraries are the glue

The next ten years will bring more disruption, particularly artificial intelligence (AI), climate change, the nature of work, an ageing population, housing affordability, learning and education.

Disruption leads to displacement **and** to new possibilities; always both.

Some regional trends are likely to accelerate: sea/tree population shifts; normalisation of remote working and small business inception; environmental changes and remediation efforts; changes to agricultural production; increase in health and education services; improved transport access, connecting regional centres to major cities; increase in AI, robotics and automated processes and services; demand for medium to higher density housing options; greater need for community connections and collective modes of productivity.

No matter what the scenario, there will be a continued need for libraries.

# Who are we?

CLARENCE VALLEY COUNCIL	BELLINGEN SHIRE COUNCIL
<b>Land area:</b> 10,441 sq km	<b>Land area:</b> 1,602 sq km
<b>Population 2023:</b> 54,662	<b>Population 2023:</b> 13,262
<b>Medium to high density housing:</b> 13.1%	<b>Medium to high density housing:</b> 7.3%
<b>First Nations:</b> 8.1%	<b>First Nations:</b> 4.3%
<b>Top industries 2023:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction</li> <li>• Health, Justice, Education and Social Services</li> <li>• Agriculture</li> <li>• Manufacturing</li> </ul>	<b>Top industries 2023:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction</li> <li>• Health and Social Services</li> <li>• Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing</li> <li>• Tourism</li> </ul>

CLARENCE VALLEY COUNCIL	BELLINGEN SHIRE COUNCIL
<b>Library Services:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grafton</li> <li>• Yamba</li> <li>• Maclean</li> <li>• Iluka</li> <li>• Mobile Library</li> <li>• Home Library Service</li> </ul>	<b>Library Services:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bellingen</li> <li>• Urunga</li> <li>• Dorrigo</li> </ul>
<b>Library members:</b> 43% population (2022/23) 129,934 visits in person	<b>Library members:</b> 55% population (2022/3) 83,993 visits in person
<b>Number of hours open:</b> 168	<b>Number of hours open:</b> 88.5
<b>Number of staff FTE:</b> 9.2	<b>Number of staff FTE:</b> 3.58
<b>Regional staff who service both councils:</b> 6.6	

# What do people say?

The people of the rivers, valleys, plateau and seas have spoken eloquently, passionately and pragmatically about their libraries; their needs, hopes and deep attachment to the practical, cultural and symbolic role libraries play in community life.

There are those for whom the library is necessary and vital. How do we reward their attachment and commitment?

There are those who haven't found a reason to visit or use their libraries...yet. We need to understand why, and what would entice people to return to libraries or discover them anew.

Importantly, what do libraries stand for in this complex historical moment, and what are they prepared to stand up for?

The community research has produced consistent findings.

Levels of satisfaction are contingent on location and accessibility. For example, more likely to be satisfied with library spaces and program offerings if living in proximity to larger libraries - Grafton and Bellingen. People are attached to but critical of perceived limitations - spaces, location, opening hours - in some smaller libraries. Yamba, Maclean, Urunga, Dorrigo and Iluka were mentioned, but for a range of different reasons. There are high levels of satisfaction with the Clarence Valley mobile library.

Lunchtime library closing hours - Yamba, Maclean, Dorrigo, Urunga - drew strong criticism. In fact, the practice of lunchtime closing is inconsistent with comparable regional library services across NSW.

Library programs and learning activities are considered excellent, but there are questions about equity of program delivery across the network.

There is strong support for greater accessibility to library resources/spaces, particularly the possibility of 24/7 access in some locations.

Visibility of physical libraries and awareness of learning programs and online resources continues to be an issue for many community members.

Questions, feedback and considerations have jostled for meaning in a big melting pot of ideas. Clear patterns and lines of enquiry have emerged. Ideas and suggestions for improvement have been tested and refined with various stakeholders; a scaffold for the future has emerged.

In essence, the proposed strategy seeks to extend equity of access to collections and learning programs; offer delightful and versatile library spaces and places; reimagine and expand essential learning programs and activities; deepen collections and the preservation of local memories and histories; foster a culture of inclusion, acceptance and care.



## WHAT DO PEOPLE SAY?

Survey 2023:  
**520** participants

Survey 2022:  
**727** participants

Interviews:  
**30**

Workshops:  
**4**



## What is a masterplan?

Planning ahead will position Clarence Regional Library to seize opportunities when they arise. A Masterplan is essentially a plan for change. Ageing libraries will struggle to meet the needs of growing communities and risk falling out of sync with community expectations of what a contemporary library can and should offer. This modest planning process will scope opportunities to extend library buildings into available adjacent spaces and/or relocate to a more central location. If funding becomes available over the ten year strategy timeline, we can swing into action quickly, saving time and money.

*A Masterplan  
is essentially a plan  
for change.*

LIBRARY



# Strategy in a nutshell

The Clarence Regional Library Strategy 2024-2034 combines sensible 'stretch' goals with sustainable and necessary 'reimagine' initiatives.

The four essential elements to any library service model – spaces, services, collections, people and culture – form the strategy spine. They provide direction and focus for what needs to be done. Three new lenses have emerged from the consultation process: stretch, reimagine and stand out. The three lenses bring imagination and creativity to the task of thinking about and planning for the future. More information about the spine and lenses can be found in the next section.

## Top five summary of strategic actions

### Spaces

- stretch ageing libraries into available adjacent spaces
- introduce mobile library for Bellingen Shire
- plan for and open new contemporary libraries in Yamba and Maclean
- 24/7 library kiosk and landing pad in at least one small Clarence Valley village
- ensure every library has noise-insulated meeting/study rooms.

### Services

- reimagine library opening hours; eliminate lunchtime closing
- along with new library kiosk and landing pad, explore feasibility of 24/7 library vending machines to supplement services in smaller libraries with restricted opening hours, like Iluka and Dorrigo
- expand locations and platforms for community learning and gathering programs like Storytime; Baby Bounce; Live n Loud; Toddler Time; Vintage Film Club; Author and Artist Talks
- expand literacy related programs to include media literacy.

### What is a mobile library?

A mobile library goes to the people. Clarence Valley's mobile library is a perfect example of a contemporary, agile van delivering books, resources, technology and programs to 12 villages across the local government area. The strategy recommends a separate mobile library for the Bellingen Shire.

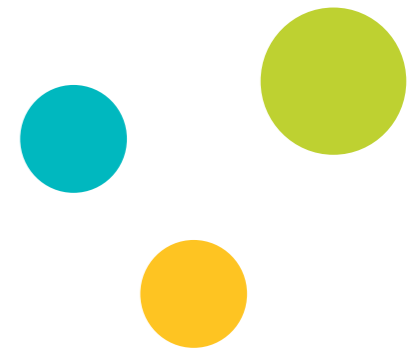


### Collections

- investigate specialist non fiction collections where local demand is strong for a particular subject area like visual art, architecture, food and performing arts
- create new position of Local Faces/Local Voices Coordinator focusing on a discreet project to capture local history in the making
- conduct collection needs assessment and deepen collection of fiction, non-fiction, digital devices, and access to new digital platforms
- work collaboratively with local museums and historical societies to discover, digitise and store local stories, memories and artefacts
- explore the concept of a Library of Useful Things.

### People and culture

- improve library signage, way finding, website and promotion of multifaceted services
- curate and deliver a biennial Festival of the Rivers, Valleys, and Sea
- promote and facilitate collaborative work spaces, supporting all kinds of study and work endeavours
- evolve reference and information support services; library staff skills; cohort of enthusiastic volunteers.



### What is a library kiosk or pod?

The ability to offer 24/7 library services in large suburban and regional locations has seen innovative examples of library kiosks or pods. Incorporating click and collect with high tech vending machines, well designed library pods also provide a landing pad for mobile library vans, free wifi and comfortable seating. Popular programs like Storytime and Tech Savvy Seniors complement what is essentially a 24/7 stripped back library in a convenient location. A good example is Ipswich Library's Karalee Library Pod.





# Our neighbours: New libraries in 2023

The two adjacent local government areas of Nambucca Valley Council and City of Coffs Harbour opened new libraries in 2023.

## Nambucca Heads Library

The Nambucca Heads Library extension successfully expands the library footprint, while integrating nature and inside-outside design elements into a vibrant, multi purpose contemporary local library. Nambucca Heads Library is an excellent example of 'stretch'; combining place activation, local distinctiveness and contemporary library design.

**Total cost:** around \$4 million

**Grant funding:** \$2.2 million

**Architects:** Vokes and Peters

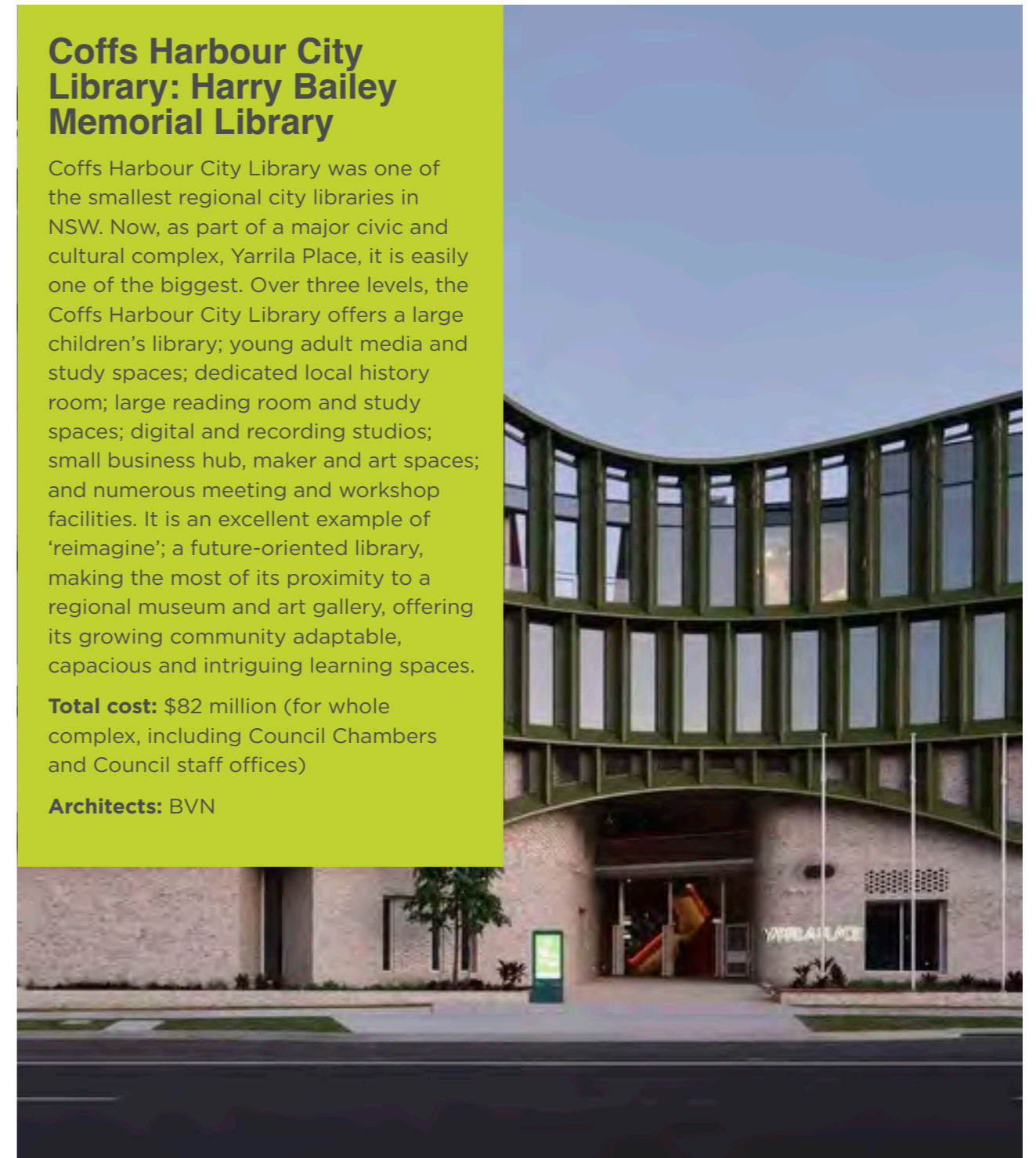


## Coffs Harbour City Library: Harry Bailey Memorial Library

Coffs Harbour City Library was one of the smallest regional city libraries in NSW. Now, as part of a major civic and cultural complex, Yarrila Place, it is easily one of the biggest. Over three levels, the Coffs Harbour City Library offers a large children's library; young adult media and study spaces; dedicated local history room; large reading room and study spaces; digital and recording studios; small business hub, maker and art spaces; and numerous meeting and workshop facilities. It is an excellent example of 'reimagine'; a future-oriented library, making the most of its proximity to a regional museum and art gallery, offering its growing community adaptable, capacious and intriguing learning spaces.

**Total cost:** \$82 million (for whole complex, including Council Chambers and Council staff offices)

**Architects:** BVN



# SECTION 2

## Clarence Regional Library 2024-2034: Objectives and actions

### Media literacy skills

Media literacy is an essential 21st century extension of generic literacy skills such as reading and writing. The proliferation of different types and sources of media information, along with the predominance of visual messaging, have heightened the need for media literacy education. Libraries have an important role to play as intermediaries for media literacy skills development. They are trusted sources of information, and adept at supporting critical inquiry and evaluation. Understanding the role of media in society and developing adequate inquiry and self expression skills are fundamental to participative democracies. Media literacy will be a critical offering over the next ten years.

#### Media literacy can be defined as the ability to:

- decode media messages (including the systems in which they exist)
- ask critical questions
- avoid manipulation
- engage in digital spaces safely and confidently.

For more information:  
[medialiteracynow.org](http://medialiteracynow.org)



# CRL Purpose and Vision

## Purpose

Welcoming, friendly and free, our libraries are a trusted window to the world. A platform for creativity, knowledge, learning, reading, and a safe place for community connection.

## Vision

A treasured place in the minds and hearts of our communities, CRL libraries support growth, learning, community resilience and inclusion by:

- standing up for free access to knowledge, ideas and information
- offering flexible, multipurpose spaces in which to meet, learn, rest and play
- preserving the past; shaping the future
- being a trusted partner for all kinds of learning and creative endeavours.

# Clarence Regional Library 2024-2034

Your libraries are a true treasure. In place or online, the world in all its complexity – of knowledge, contested ideas and multiple histories – is waiting.

A bastion of democracy, your library welcomes all and stands up for free access to knowledge and opportunity.

Work, play, learn and rest – there will always be something for you, your friends and family at the library.

Over the life of this strategy, your library will continue to do what libraries have always done – support learning, research, creativity and community enterprise; anticipating and adapting to emerging needs and possibilities.

You can expect to see more generous opening hours; pop-up access points; new library buildings; additions and extensions; more programs and partnerships; resources galore; questions, ideas and insights about life along our rivers and coastal towns.

A dynamic place, your library nurtures imagination, curiosity, fact finding and thinking. Become a member. Get involved. Tell us what you think and need. Help us plan for the future.

*“Perhaps  
a garden space:  
a green, sheltered  
outdoor area to sit  
and read. A cafe  
would be good.”*  
Dorrigo Library

## Spine and lenses

There are four essential elements to any library service model: spaces; services; collections; people and culture.

These service elements are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. The capacity to support living, working, learning and play relies on these service elements staying limber, like a spine; the stronger and more flexible they are, the better.

In essence, the spine represents what we are working with in order to change, evolve and/or transform throughout the life of the strategy. The work of doing this transformative work belongs to the lenses. In this case, three have emerged from the community consultation: stretch, reimagine and stand out.

The lenses bring imagination and creativity to the task, while acknowledging constraints, limitations and uncertainties. While pragmatism is needed, imagination is the glue. In fact, our problem solving will depend on it.

Like a pair of glasses, the lenses overlay the service model to ask new questions and suggest new possibilities.

**stretch:** extend what we already have

**reimagine:** what can we do differently or better?

**stand out:** seen by all, used by all



# 1: Stretch: extend what we already have

## sanctuary and gathering place

### Objective 1:1

Quiet and lively, for concentration and play, the library will accommodate multiple community needs. Stretching the spatial footprint beyond current boundaries will afford new opportunities for reading, thinking, learning and play.

Your library will:

- have noise-insulated study, meeting and workshop spaces
- library shelving will be on castors; therefore moveable and enabling adaptable spaces
- develop Masterplans for ageing libraries
- where possible, extend the library's physical footprint into adjacent and available open spaces
- continue to refurbish library spaces in line with available budgets and grant funding opportunities.

**stretch**

extend what we already have

*"The most important service that Council offers."*

Grafton Library

## community magnet

### Objective 1:2

The heart of all our towns and villages, fixed or mobile, the library is a magnet for civic life.

Your library will:

- continue to offer a diverse range of learning programs and activities for all ages
- continue to offer reliable and free WIFI across all library spaces and places – libraries and surrounds, mobile library, library pods/kiosks
- develop a feasibility plan and seek grant funding for a Bellingen Shire mobile library
- investigate free working and co-working spaces and business hubs in the two central libraries: Grafton and Bellingen.

## treasure trove

### Objective 1:3

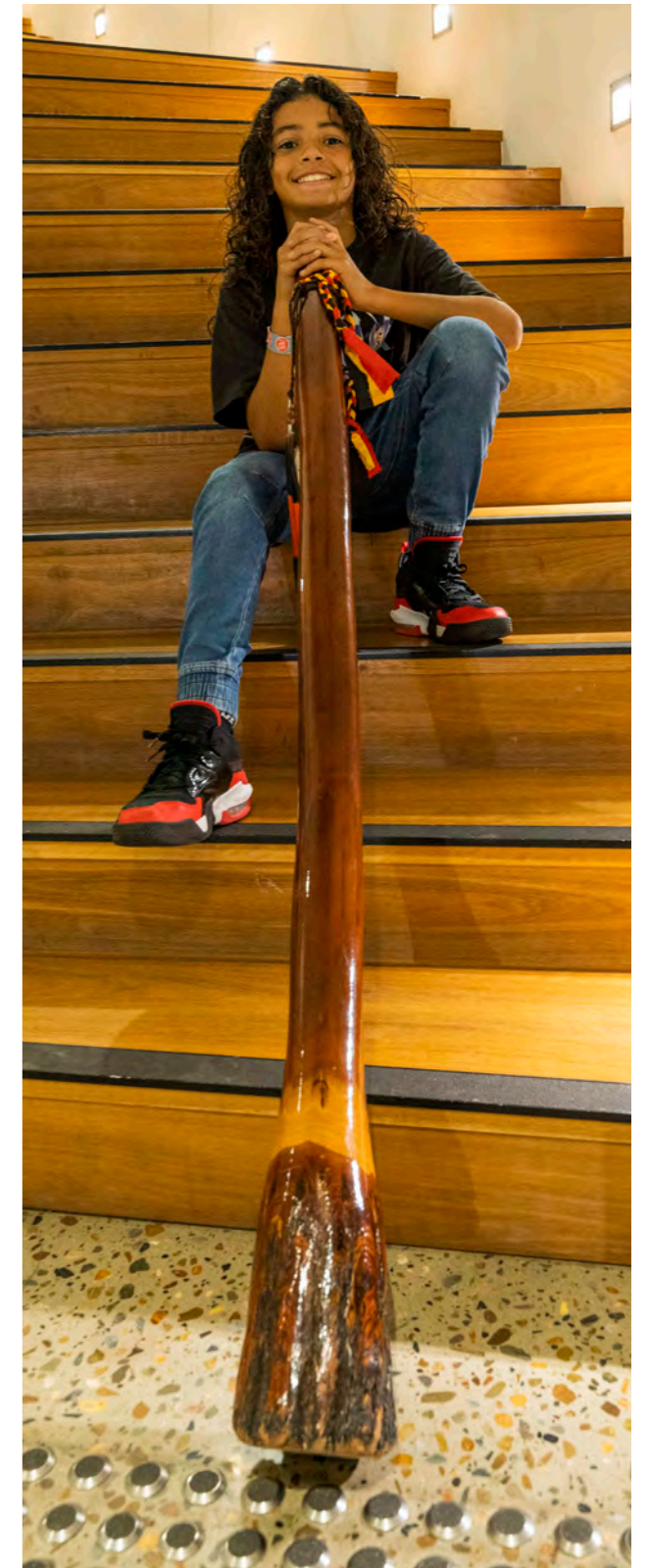
Books, magazines, games and digital devices – in place and online – will expand and deepen at the library.

Your library will:

- build on CRL collection strengths - fiction, non-fiction and diverse information resources
- continue to modernise technology platforms and access to digital devices/resources
- continue to improve the CRL App; the gateway to online resources and programs
- seek community input and local needs in relation to non-fiction specialist collections: art, design, architecture, sustainable agriculture
- conduct collection needs assessment
- further develop and promote culturally and linguistically diverse resources and collections
- prioritise the inclusion of First Nations histories, stories and publications
- further develop and promote collections that support children's and youth interests and needs.

*"Libraries are safe and enriching places, but they are not accessible if they are not open when people need them."*

Iluka Library



## 2: Reimagine: what can we do differently or better?

### comfortable, adaptable, open

#### Objective 2:1

Artists, writers, readers, craftspeople, students and travelling nomads will benefit from new, multipurpose libraries in key locations, as well as the sensitive reimagining of existing library spaces.

Your library will:

- apply an adaptable design ethos to new libraries
- improve accessibility and inside-outside permeability; celebrating nature and taking advantage of our temperate climate in new and extended libraries
- reimagine library opening hours; in particular, eliminate lunchtime closures and enable after hours access where possible
- introduce extended night time opening hours and associated events
- design, seek grant funding, and deliver a multi-service library kiosk and landing pad: trial in outlying location and evaluate after first 12 months
- investigate feasibility of library vending machines outside smaller library locations with reduced opening hours like Iluka and Dorrigo
- continue to improve and expand home library delivery
- investigate the feasibility of a Library of Useful Things to assist cost of living pressures: guided by community needs and available spaces.

### literacies, learning and life skills

#### Objective 2:2

The library stimulates and supports reading and learning; providing free access to digital, information, media and visual literacy programs and resources for all ages.

Your library will:

- continue quality literacy, information navigation and digital literacy programs and support
- expand locations for Storytime, Baby Bounce, Live n Loud, Toddler Time
- extend community learning and gathering programs: Kid's Book Club; Vintage Film Club; Book Clubs; Author and Artist Talks
- introduce new programs and opportunities based on ongoing community consultation – CosPlay, Game On
- use new library kiosk and mobile services to reach new audiences
- build on and expand the link with Clarence Correctional Centre, supporting literacy, reading and entertainment options for inmates and their visitors
- investigate video and/or live streaming possibilities for programs currently delivered in-house only
- research and develop suitable media literacy programs
- continue to support language learning - ensure adequate resources and access to suitable language learning resources.

### memories, stories and ideas

#### Objective 2:3

Our local stories and histories are precious and irreplaceable. The library is a local stories repository, a vehicle for digitisation and discovery, and an active collector of history in the making.

Your library will:

- find new pathways to publicise and display the Nola Mackey Collection
- grow and expand partnerships with local museums and historical societies
- appoint a Local Faces/Local Voices Project Coordinator to develop, promote and facilitate a participative co-curation of contemporary local histories
- develop a digitisation plan and seek grant funding
- work with Gumbayngirr, Bundjalung and Yaegl Elders and communities on joint history capture projects
- expand and promote Local Voices history collections: oral, video and photographic.

*"A new library for Maclean. We desperately need a meeting room, so we can have the same range of programs as the other Clarence libraries."*  
Maclean Library

*Soul of the town.*  
Dorrigo Library

**reimagine**

what can we  
do differently  
or better?

# 3: Stand Out: seen by all, used by all

## out and about

### Objective 3:1

Clarence Regional Library is a leader in digital equity, community outreach and democratic participation.

Your library will:

- build on CRL branding, marketing and promotional activities
- improve library signage and way finding; in-house and across neighbourhoods
- redevelop the library website to improve functionality and discoverability of resources and programs
- ensure cultural, community and education partnerships are maintained and further developed
- continue to support a cohort of enthusiastic volunteers
- position libraries as go-to places and creative partners across all locations and geographies.

## spirit of adventure

### Objective 3:2

Library spaces, people and programs encourage and generate a spirit of adventure in how to think, create and learn; alone or together.

Your library will:

- promote and facilitate collaborative work spaces for people in work, working remotely, looking for work, or creating new work: access to online meeting platforms; relevant equipment and high speed WIFI
- continue to market services and opportunities like IndyReads, StoryBox and Beamafilm, and any other services people may have forgotten about or never heard of before
- curate and deliver a biennial Festival of the Rivers, Valleys and Sea - weaving reading, learning, thinking and writing into a travelling festival along our interconnected rivers.

## behind the scenes

### Objective 3:3

In a world of relentless change and disruption, the library is an icon of reinvention. Our service philosophy continues to adapt to a changing landscape, both physical and social.

Your library will:

- review the library service model to ensure congruence with emerging needs and community expectations
- develop transition plans and associated skills development in preparation for new libraries, expanded libraries, and new delivery and digital platforms
- evolve our reference services - skills and modes of engagement
- ensure the library staffing cohort reflects demand, locations and additional services
- maintain advocacy initiatives with key regional stakeholders - arguing for the library as an essential community resource and service, and demonstrating the tangible benefits it delivers to all.

*Friendly, reliable  
and extremely  
helpful staff*  
Yamba Library

**stand out**

seen by all,  
used by all

*“Pop up  
libraries in every  
town, and people could  
borrow and return  
books in new ways,  
maybe drones?”*  
Grafton Library





*“Lower river  
Live N Loud,  
please!”  
Yamba Library*

*“Make our libraries  
feel alive, inviting and  
interactive. They need to  
make broad use on interactive  
technologies. It’s the medium  
people now use for work and  
communication.”  
Yamba Library*

*Free. Interesting.  
Fantastic. Important.  
Bellingham Library*



# Timeline

LENSES	2024 - 2026	2027 - 2029	2030 - 2032	2033 - 2034
<b>stretch</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Masterplans for ageing libraries</li> <li>Feasibility study + grant funding for Bellingen Shire mobile library</li> <li>Start collection needs assessment</li> <li>Improved library app</li> <li>Dorrigo Library extension opens</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grant funding for library extensions</li> <li>Implement Bellingen Shire mobile library</li> <li>Continue to expand collections; specialist non-fiction implemented</li> <li>Home library services expand, especially across Bellingen Shire</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coworking &amp; business hubs in central libraries</li> <li>Renew and replace mobile library</li> <li>Refurbishment plans in place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offer up-to-date digital devices, access to platforms, online resources, and training programs</li> <li>Join initiatives with galleries, museums and historical societies</li> </ul>
<b>reimagine</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Yamba Library opens</li> <li>Grant funding for pilot Library Kiosk</li> <li>Expand programs; build on partnerships</li> <li>Source funding and appoint Local Faces/Local Voices Project Officer</li> <li>Opening hours improved and expanded</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Maclean Library opens</li> <li>24/7 library vending services outside Iluka and Dorrigo Libraries</li> <li>Media literacy programs available</li> <li>Continue to build relationship with Clarence Correctional Centre</li> <li>Local histories digitisation plan available</li> <li>Evening opening hours implemented</li> <li>Local Voices expands across library network</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revitalised Iluka Library</li> <li>Vending services extended to new locations</li> <li>Library of Useful Things</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Library kiosk in Bellingen Shire</li> <li>Masterplans for current ageing libraries</li> <li>New exhibiting spaces and programs</li> </ul>
<b>stand out</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New CRL website</li> <li>Visible library signage</li> <li>Volunteer cohort expands</li> <li>Review service model</li> <li>Establish relevant service metrics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First year of biennial Festival of the Rivers, Valleys and Sea</li> <li>Service model changes implemented</li> <li>New staff positions to support increased demand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Biennial festival goes from strength to strength</li> <li>Continue advocacy based on increased library demand &amp; comprehensive metrics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate success of new spaces, services and collections</li> <li>Review library strategy &amp; plan for next ten years</li> </ul>



## Sources of grant funding

The primary source of additional library funding is the Public Library Infrastructure Grants offered by State Library NSW. Up to \$500,000 of grant funding is available every year to successful recipients. Another available source is Create NSW and its Cultural Spaces and Infrastructure Grants; the Australian Government's Regional Arts Fund, Growing Regions Program, and Building Better Regions Fund. Library program funding opportunities can be sourced from the Department of Communities and Justice NSW's seniors funding program; and Holiday Break Program Grants from the Department of Regional NSW.

The strategy recommends pursuing all grant funding opportunities to advance key strategic objectives over the ten year timeframe.

## Next Steps

Clarence Regional Library offers an essential service to Clarence Valley and Bellingen Shire communities. Demand for and use of our libraries will continue to grow over the next decade.

In our communities and elsewhere, we can expect to see increasing demand for 24/7 library access points.

Popular literacy and digital inclusion programs will find new audiences, and be extended to include 21st century media and information literacies.

Flexible, multipurpose library spaces and diverse collections will continue to enable individual and collective learning of all kinds.

There is a lot to do in the first phase of the Clarence Regional Library Strategy.

Actions include:

- complete the Dorrigo Library extension
- embark on the new Yamba Library and community precinct
- plan for a new Maclean Library and civic precinct
- reimagine opening hours and staffing needs
- develop masterplans for library 'stretch' objectives
- research and apply for a broad range of grant opportunities.

Some objectives and actions are mutually reinforcing. In other words, progress in one area will be a catalyst for action in relation to others.

Ultimately, every community member and visitor, regardless of age and location, will find a reason to use and enjoy our libraries.

This active citizenship and care for publicly owned resources will further contribute to community resilience and the cultural life of our region.

# APPENDICES



## Glossary of terms

### **24/7 (self service) Library**

24/7 use of library swipe card to access collection/spaces/click and collect items.

### **AI**

Artificial Intelligence

### **ATSI**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

### **CALD**

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse

### **Collection development**

Library collection development is the process of meeting the information needs of the people (a service population) in a timely and economical manner using information resources locally held, as well as from other organisations.

### **CRL**

Clarence Regional Library: Clarence Valley Council and Bellingen Shire Libraries.

### **Digital literacy**

The ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills.

### **Digitisation**

The conversion of text, pictures, or sound into a digital form that can be accessed by an electronic device, computer, tablet etc.

### **Festival of Rivers, Valleys and Sea**

Proposed title for biennial literature and story festival curated by CRL in partnership with other cultural organisations.

### **FTE**

Full-time equivalent

### **LIS**

Library Information System; sometimes called Library Management System (LMS)

### **Lifelong learning**

Providing formal and informal learning opportunities throughout people's lives in order to foster the knowledge and skills needed for work, pleasure and community participation.

### **LoT**

Library of (Useful) Things: non traditional library collections

### **Masterplan**

A detailed plan for change.

### **Media Literacy**

The ability to critically analyse stories presented in the mass media and to determine their accuracy or credibility.

### **Partner**

An individual, group, organisation or business with whom Clarence Regional Library can work to deliver a learning/cultural event or program that brings benefit to both parties.

### **Pop-up library outreach**

New generation mobile or ephemeral libraries, which can include refurbished shipping containers, modified caravans, architect-designed pods, motorcycles and bicycles, or the temporary occupation of vacant shopfronts.

### **Saltwater Freshwater**

A term used by the mid-north coast based Saltwater Freshwater Alliance to describe historical and contemporary artistic and cultural practices of Gumbaynggirr, Birpai and Dhungatti Peoples.

### **SLNSW**

State Library New South Wales

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# Online survey summary

A Clarence Regional Library Online Survey was conducted in 2023. There were 520 responses. This appendix summarises responses to the three questions the survey posed to community members. Summary comments have focused on repeated ideas, associations and sentiments.

Each comment is accompanied by the local library most often used by the survey respondent. This does not mean that the respondent lives in the nominated town or that this is the only library used throughout the CRL network.

## What our libraries mean to us...

**Question: Off the top of your head, what words come to mind when you think about your local library, or libraries in general?**

*Helpful, professional, well equipped, caring.*  
Bellinghen

*A wonderful service and free to all.*  
Bellinghen

*Quiet, peaceful, choices, variety, guidance.*  
Grafton

*A place to connect with past and future through old and new ways to choose from.*  
Grafton

*Serene, safe, resources, wonderful.*  
Grafton

*Equality.*  
Macleans

*Comfort, warmth, books, community.*  
Yamba

*Hub of the town.*  
Dorrigo

*Handy, helpful, functional, wide range online, but sometimes hard to know what to search for.*  
Urunga

*Book Mobile. Great service for outer villages.*  
Mobile

*Essential, truly community-based, free, accessible.*  
Iluka

*Quiet, peaceful, choices, variety, guidance.*  
Grafton

*Friendly, calm, relaxing, convenient.*  
Urunga

*Free. Interesting. Fantastic. Important.*  
Bellinghen

*A safe place for quiet life investigation.*  
Macleans

*Community cohesion. It brings together people from all sectors of the community and it’s a happy gathering space.*  
Bellinghen

*Books, cosy armchairs in snug nooks, quiet happiness, rustling pages.*  
Bellinghen

*2nd family, 2nd home, IT, DVDs.*  
Grafton

*Treasure trove of wonders.*  
Macleans

*Open, welcoming, inspiration, creativity, nourishing, abundance, intellect.*  
Bellinghen

*Social connection and information community hubs.*  
Grafton

*A place of opportunity for all regardless of race, social status, income, gender or ability.*  
Grafton

*Small! Creative in their use of the space and resources they have available. Evolving. Libraries in the area are open to change and trying new things, to their credit. Live N Loud is a great new initiative.*  
Yamba

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# Online survey summary

## Room for improvement...

**Question: Do you have any comments or suggestions about anything your library service could do differently or better to improve things for you, your family, business or community?**

*Computers are always out of order. The opening hours are too short and should be open every week day.*  
Maclean

*Please open every week day without closing for 1 hour lunch break and please open earlier.*  
Maclean

*More events outside work hours.*  
Grafton

*The space is much too small. I attend the library every week for story time with my children. We are often crammed in like sardines! The library staff have tried so hard to make more space but it just literally isn't there. There is also no private/quiet space to be able to go and work, read, study etc. the library is just one open space which is fine most of the time, but not somewhere you could go to study or other things like that.*  
Yamba

*I would like an area to set up my computer, a workspace. I love the online resources but nothing beats being with books.*  
Urunga

*It would be wonderful to have the library open into the night until 8:30 pm one night a week.*  
Maclean

*Increase its collection of English literature and Italian literature. Expand its art section.*  
Bellingen

*Bottom shelves are inaccessible to many aged readers. More large print books needed with the ageing Iluka population. This has always been a really communal centre in Iluka, but I don't feel the amenities are suitable for all this community.*  
Iluka

*Old, small, closed too often.*  
Maclean

*Open on a Monday. Otherwise everything is great.*  
Bellingen

*Need a meeting room, hold the bookclub in the library run by a librarian, Need a movie club More talks and authors.*  
Maclean

*more workshops or info sessions on thrifty and more sustainable living, more partnerships with community & local groups. A Repair Cafe would be great!*  
Grafton

*1. Employ younger people so there is a good range of ages within workers. 2. Down river libraries at Maclean & Yamba need to keep them open through the lunch hour as it is hard if you need to use those libraries and then have to leave because they shut for an hour.*  
Yamba

*Improve the Clarence Library App. Main website much better.*  
Urunga

*Community space - As someone who lives out of town, the library is a home away from home. Other than cafes and parks there's really not many places to unwind, sit down and read/study (especially when it's raining). It's also a great place for kids, and is a beautiful environment for young families (and people in general) to socialise and enjoy literature together.*  
Bellingen

---

# Online survey summary

## A future worth considering...

**Question: Thinking about the future always starts with possibilities. So, if the sky was the limit (anything was possible), what would your library service look like in the future? What would people be doing? What would you do that you can't do now? How would it feel?**

*Maybe the book mobile could be more mobile. Visit outer areas, like Gulmarrad more often.*  
Maclean

*24/7 access to the library with a password or tag to gain entry like Gyms have. More book launches, readers and writers festivals for kids, dyslectic support, companion dog in every library to assist people with anxiety Cafe bar to read on-site, meetings with writer's groups, and regular book clubs with podcasts available to members.*  
Bellingen

*A community library is for the old as well as the young, so make this valuable community asset brightly lit with happy imagery surrounding each and every user, with excellent staff intent on responding to each query as best as possible.*  
Yamba

*The library would be big & open & spacious with private study areas & spots that you can escape kid noise. There would be all the activities that happen at Grafton. We could borrow ipads and surfboards.*  
Yamba

*Flexible Hours: Consider expanding hours or offering more flexible timing to cater to a wider range of schedules, especially for those who work non-traditional hours.*  
Iluka

*If the sky was the limit, make the collection really amazing. Update the facilities with beautiful new lounge areas, study areas, latest technologies. It would be really lovely to include the outside area into the library, make it a beautiful garden where people could sit and read in the tranquil surrounds. Have more visiting authors discussing their works.*  
Bellingen

*I would love to see study rooms for group work and the option to work in an area that is completely quiet that provides the ability to make social media videos in private. More computers for use (that work), comfortable reading chairs and beanbags with blankets available on cold days, comfortable, ergonomic desk chairs, ability to hire headphones, cosy nooks with mood lighting for reading, a coffee machine and water station to fill byo cup with lid.*  
Maclean

*An inclusive space with locally sourced artworks and resources. A space where you can congregate to encourage young and old to read and create. A space where there are rooms and desks set up for private study and work when needed. A space surrounded by other community services that can collaborate on local community activities.*  
Yamba

*Large, open light and airy space with outdoor reading area with lots of plants. People would be reading, researching and accessing community information. There would be 'living history' sessions with locals about the history of the area and autobiographical talks. I would have more access if the library was open more hours. A larger, more modern open library would feel more welcoming. I love the current library staff. They are friendly and welcoming but work in 'old school' conditions.*  
Maclean

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# Online survey summary

*I would like a meeting room in Yamba when the new library opens at Treelands Drive. It would be great to have a book club area for adults and child groups as well as other library activities.*

Yamba

*Holographic learning room for workshops.*

Dorrigo

*After hours pick up from lockers accessed by your library card.*

Dorrigo

*I'm thinking we should have an ASD awareness day or event for those in our community who are on the Autism Spectrum both known by the public and unknown- a chance for them share experiences and provide some support for others who are struggling. Also there could be more books on ASD to help children, teenagers and adults through their challenges.*

Grafton

*Open 24/7 Regular workshops, trainings. Eg. Basic computer skills Eg. How to use databases like archive.org Eg. Public library ecosystem Eg. Data analysis Etc. Research librarian services. - eg. To ask for technical requests Including - tool library so people can fix their own things - crockery library - for community events - CAD software. - Tea room - free hot showers for homeless - Video conferencing in meeting rooms.*

Bellingen

*Diversify the types of items that can be borrowed Toy library, tool library, seed library, cookware library, clothing swap.*

Grafton

*Drive through Library. Order books on line and drive through to pick them up when notified they are ready. Drive through to return books too.*

Maclean

*Perhaps a garden space - a green sheltered outdoor area to sit and read with cafe facilities.*

Dorrigo

*A personal assistant could recommend your exact book to match your individual needs.*

Yamba

*Another meeting room in the library, a second toilet and a bench seat and table outside under cover to use the library internet when the library is closed.*

Bellingen

*More for men-crafts-techo- Don't leave us out plz (eg homemade walking stick?) Maybe permanent cafe cooking-easy recipes swap group, maybe share a biscuit/cake over a coffee.*

Grafton

*A bigger library with more space and meeting rooms eg bookclub meetings, children's book reading/playtime \* Nice nooks with comfortable lounge chairs to read \* Projection room/mini cinema to watch movies \* Lots of indoor plants to create a more natural environment \* New books promotions with the possibility of writers being present \* Facility to have rent free push bikes on loan.*

Yamba

*Free driver service for elderly to take them to the library then home again. Glass roof top areas to read and look at the sky.*

Grafton

*The future is a hybrid service delivery where the library sits within another service or building such as local museum/ shopping centre / community space. So access is broadened and more accessible to a broader customer base. The people visiting libraries will be enjoying quiet, social interactions, studying, learning in a variety of vocational and recreational workshops such as cooking, sewing, 3D printing, learning painting or other hands-on skills. The library could feel both warm, secure and a professional atmosphere, where all are welcome and valued, including Aboriginal People's.*

Maclean

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# Online survey summary

*I would like to be able to view the interior of the library and browse like I was physically there when I can't leave my house.*

Urunga

*If the sky was the limit, envisioning an ideal future for the Iluka library service involves both maintaining its core role as a place of knowledge and community while also expanding its services and capabilities in innovative ways: Unique Local Focus: Given Iluka's unique ecological and cultural position, the library would have a special section dedicated to local history, ecology, Indigenous culture and literature. Visiting the library would feel like entering a warm, welcoming space of limitless possibilities - a place where curiosity is kindled, learning is cherished, and community spirit is strengthened. It would be more than a repository of books - it would be a dynamic, responsive hub of resources tailored to the needs and interests of the Iluka community.*

Iluka

*Co-working space/spaces, atelier/studio for creative expression/classes. Music/dance evenings.Regular poetry/story telling meetings. With the insurmountable amount of streaming platform/services, would be great if public libraries has access to memberships that allowed library members to use the service without needing an individual membership.*

Bellingen

*I'd like a "talk to a librarian service" so anyone can engage with services on a personal level from anywhere. I'd like advice from the library on such issues as trusted information sources and how to pick what is Ali, conspiracy theory, and generally what is truth, to be promoted especially to the younger generation.*

Grafton

*Pop up libraries in every town, people would borrow and return books in new ways-maybe drones? wouldn't have to wait for reserved items for so long and would be even more accessible.*

Grafton

*Don't know whether a Mobile Library visits local aged care homes in the area, but I am thinking of the future. If my husband and I were to go into aged care, we'd be devastated if we didn't have access to books.*

Maclean

*Perspex pods for working / listening / reading Interactive VR space Cafe.*

Grafton

*A recording studio so people can record their stories and create audio story trails!*

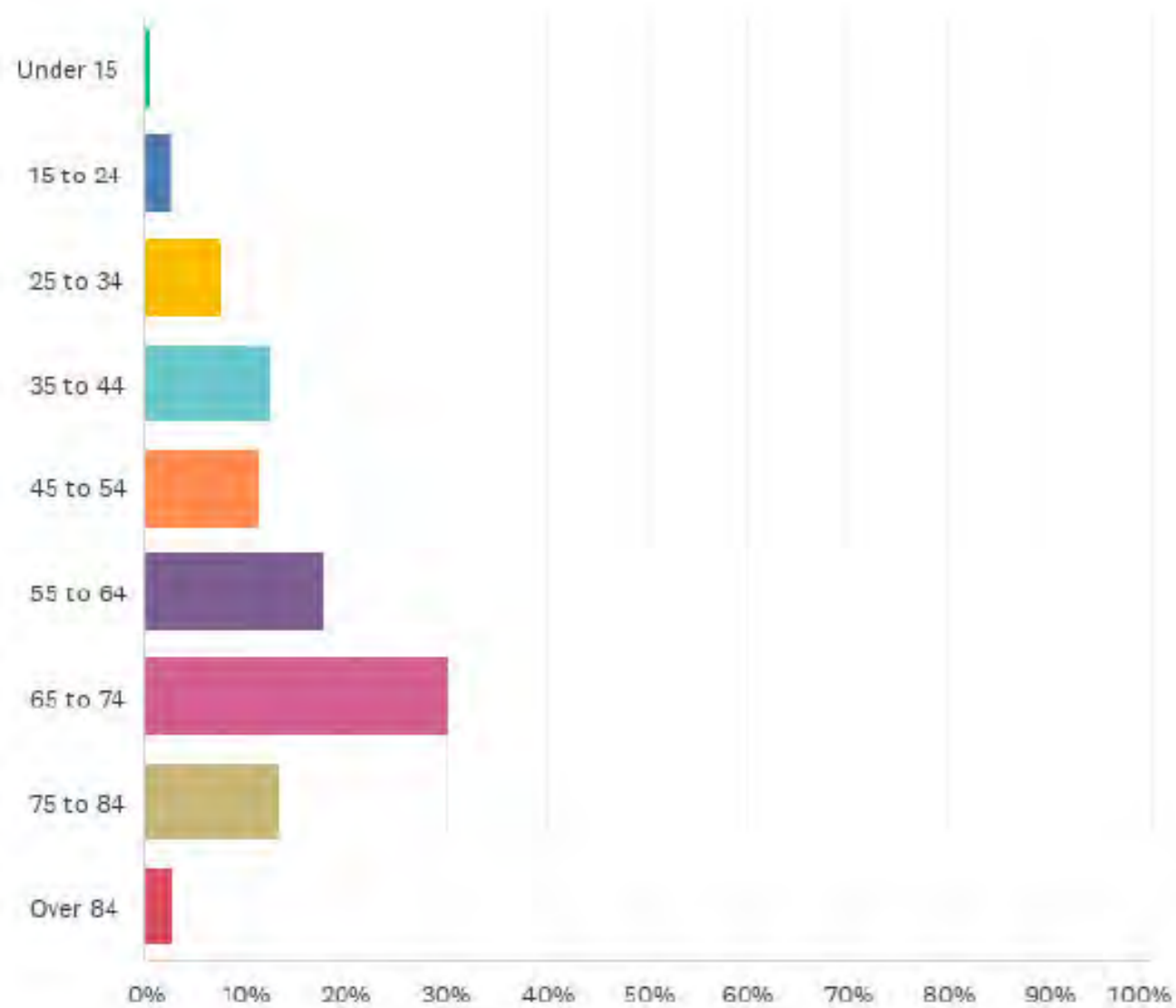
Grafton

*A new big library in Yamba - yay, it's happening! A Lower River Live N Loud would be great. It would feel... squishy?*

Yamba

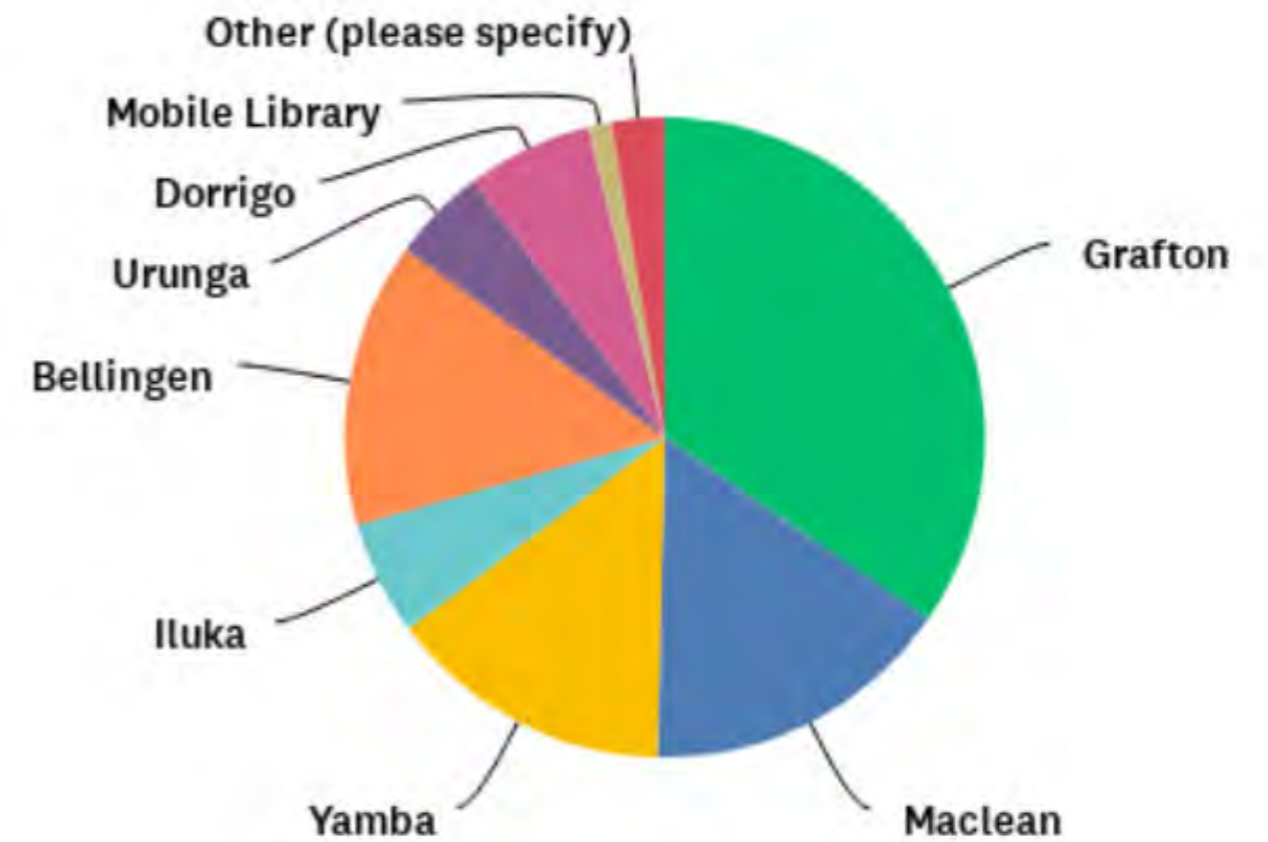
# Online survey summary

Question: What is your age?



# Online survey summary

Question: My local library is...



# Credits



BELLINGEN  
SHIRE COUNCIL



## CLARENCE REGIONAL LIBRARY

126-144 Pound Street  
Grafton NSW 2460  
www.crl.nsw.gov.au  
reglibn@crl.nsw.gov.au  
02 6641 0111

### Clarence Regional Libraries:

- Grafton
- Yamba
- Maclean
- Iluka
- Bellingen
- Urunga
- Dorrigo
- Mobile Library



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