Strathfield Library & Innovation Hub
Library Services Strategy 2023-2028
LEARN, ENGAGE, CREATE

STRATHFIELD
COUNCIL

Contents

As gateways to knowledge and culture, libraries play a fundamental role in society. The resources and services they offer create opportunities for learning, support literacy and education, and help shape the new ideas and perspectives that are central to a creative and innovative society.

Acknowledgement of Country

In the spirit of reconciliation Strathfield Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of the area and their connections to land, rivers and community. We pay our respects to their elders past, present and emerging.

Message from the Mayor
Karen Pensabene

Our community values education and learning and the importance of library services. The Library Strategy 2023-2028 outlines a vision for the community to 'Learn Engage and Create' and identifies future needs for library services in relation to the changing community diversity and population growth.

The Strathfield Library Services Strategy 2023-2028 contains 4 Goals we aim to deliver on:

1. Be a welcoming destination with flexible spaces
2. Have innovative and accessible services
3. Actively engage through programs and partnerships
4. Library team to be supported and developed as a skilled and cohesive team

These goals resonate with the Strathfield Council's Community Vision that "It's culturally diverse and socially cohesive community is proud of its heritage and residential character ... Strathfield is a place that embraces learning, culture, productivity and opportunity." Our strategy will be in place to guide our actions to meet the needs of the Strathfield community over the next five years.

Alongside the growth of digital and online resources, Strathfield Library remains a key facility in the community for social space. Although libraries continue to provide traditional services, the community expectation is for the modern library to be a community hub where people can socialise, access information and experience lifelong learning outside schools and tertiary institutions.

In an era of easy access to information our Library continues to provide what the Internet cannot and that is social connection. Bringing people together enables the Strathfield community to learn, engage and create in a welcoming environment with a professionally skilled library team.

I look forward to engaging with Councillors, staff and residents to ensure the delivery of the library strategy is effective in achieving quality services and programs and generating community pride within the Strathfield Local Government Area.

Strathfield Local Government Area

The Strathfield Local Government Area (LGA) is undergoing significant change. While characteristics of the various stages of the area's historic development are still evident in its built and natural environment, significant changes are occurring in the social character.

Social changes are happening due to increased population, changing age profiles, cultural diversity and urban environment bringing with it both challenges and opportunities for improved social, environmental and economic outcomes.

The Strathfield Local Government Area (LGA) is located in Sydney's Inner West about 10.5 kilometres from the City Centre and half way between Parramatta and the City. The Council is classified as a medium size Council.

Strathfield Council has a total area of approximately 13.9 square kilometres. The size of the LGA is variously reported. ABS uses 14 square kilometres, Office of Local Government reports the size as 13.9 square kilometres and Council documents often states 14.1 square kilometres.

Strathfield Council is bounded by Burwood Council at the east and north-east, City of Canada Bay at north, Canterbury-Bankstown Council at the south, Cumberland Council at west and City of Parramatta Council at north-west.

The Strathfield LGA includes the following suburbs:

- Part of Strathfield (postcode 2135)
- Strathfield South (2136)
- Homebush (2140)
- Homebush West (2140)
- Part of Belfield (2191)
- Part of Greenacre (2190)

Sydney Markets is located in the suburb of Homebush West but has its own postcode of 2129

STRATHFIELD COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHIC
Library services need to evolve and change in order to meet the needs of the community. Libraries are no longer just a place for books, and emerging technologies and use of space are important to the library service. The library of the future needs to provide a range of functions that continue to meet community need for information, social networking, learning and creativity.

Population: 45, 930

AGE GROUP	PERCENTAGE %
0-4	5.2%
5-11	6.9%
12-17	5.4%
18-24	12%
25-34	24.3%
35-49	19.7%
50-59	9.9%
60-69	8.3%
70-84	6.6%
85 and over	1.8%

Our Vision

The vision for Strathfield Library is to be a welcoming destination that provides a range of facilities, services and programs over the next four years to enable customers to learn, engage and create.

The vision for the library service is to provide opportunities for people to access information and resources to grow their knowledge and learning. Learning may be developed through programs, reading, research and online material to improve literacy, knowledge and technology skills.

Strathfield Library will be a partner for learning opportunities and will offer space for collaborative learning that enhances creativity. The library will also provide technology and information support to facilitate the development of new ideas, and from this the community gains in social capital.

24,515 registered borrowers[1]

65,428 physical items owned[1]

14,218 electronic items accessible[1]

8,387 (on average) visitors per month[2]

50,472 physical loans in 6 months[2]

173 events and activities held over 6 months[2]

Library Customer Feedback
What the Community Told Us

A library customer satisfaction survey was held in 2022 in partnership with University of South Australia.

WHAT OUR LIBRARY PATRONS TOLD US

Summary
- Respondents rated "Be well maintaines" and "Always have clean amenities" highest on expectations
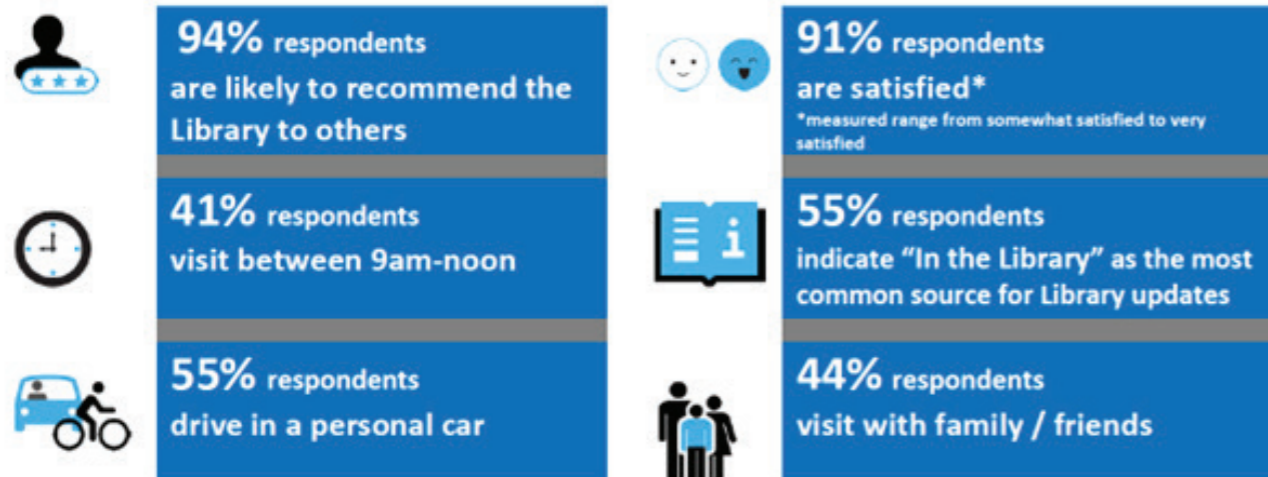- Respondents rated "Be well maintained" and "Always be clean" highest on performance

- Strathfield Council Library & Innovation Hub's best performing attributes compared to the CERM PI CSQ Benchmarks included "Have friendly staff" and "Have well-presented staff"
- Strathfield Council Library & Innovation Hub achieved an overall service quality dscore of **92%**

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

1%	0%	5%	4%	11%	42%	38%
Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat satisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied

- **91%** of all of respondents indicated they were somewhat to very satisfied with the Library's service overall.

- The mean **satsfication** for Strathfield Council Library and Innovation Hub is **6.0** (slightly above "Satisfied") out of a 7-point scale, which is lower than the CERM PI Libraries 2021 Benchmark (6.1)

- **94%** of all respondents indicated either "Maybe", "Likely" or "Very Likely" to **recommend** Strathfield Council Library and Innovation Hub to others.

- The mean **recommendation** for Strathfield Council Library and Innovation Hub is **6.3** (above "Likely") out of a 7-point scale, which is **higher** than the CERM PI Libraries 2021 Benchmark (6.1)

Top 3 Activities

Rank 1: Borrow Books 70% respondents

Rank 2: Borrow DVDs 21% respondents

Rank 3: Relax 15% respondents

KEY STATISTICS

94% respondents are likely to recommend the Library to others

41% respondents visit between 9am-noon

55% respondents drive in a personal car

91% respondents are satisfied*
*measured range from somewhat satisfied to very satisfied

55% respondents indicate "In the Library" as the most common source for Library updates

44% respondents visit with family / friends

" What your customers said*:

"I am very satisfied"

"I think the events are somewhat satisfactory - it is just about raising general awareness of these programs. I always find out about programs that I like, just to discover that it's too late"

"I think the technology is somewhat advanced. However, the computers are a bit slow, and tend to be a bit laggy. Please consider upgrading your computers. Also increase general awareness of the services that are available please"

Our Services

Strathfield Library provides both print and digital collections, spaces and community services and programs.

SPACES
The library provides a range of spaces including;
- Study Stadium
- Learning Lab
- Children's area
- Youth area
- Lounge area
- Ironbark Room
- Ironbark Gallery
- Jacaranda Room
- Local Studies Room
- Outdoor deck and seating areas

COLLECTION FOR ALL AGES
Print
- Fiction, non-fiction, graphic novels, magazines and newspapers
- Large Print books
- Materials in Chinese, Korean and Tamil and other languages provided by NSW State Library

Audio Visual
- Talking Books
- DVDs
- Music CDs

Digital
- E- books
- E-magazines
- E- audio books

Specialist
- Local studies resources
- Road to IELTS (English learning)
- Podcast Studio
- Virtual Reality (Games and education)
- Library Book Lockers (online ordering and click and collect service)
- Mobile Phone Chargers
- 3D printer
- Extended access hours to library facility
- UV Sanitiser as a Covid response for library returns

Online Access
- Library catalogue online, with access to physical, digitial and e-book collections
- Reserve and collect in library and via the library book lockers
- Public computers
- Docking stations for own device
- Free public WiFi

Printing
- Printing, photocopying and scanning facilities

Programs and Services
- Storytime sessions for young children
- School Holiday programs
- Reading Buddies literacy development for children aged 5-12 years
- Home Library service provides books and other materials to house bound residents and nursing home residents
- Book Club
- Craft and Cuppas' Group
- Technology and innovation programs
- Justice of the Peace services
- Services and programs in multicultural languages

Library Trends

Strathfield Council has reallocated staff efforts to enhance customer experience by introducing technology to reduce manual handling with RFID self checkers, improving access to library collection with the library book locker click and collect service and delivering a pilot project for extended hours facility access for library members.

When developing a library strategy, benchmarking with other public library services and identifying key issues and challenges for the future is essential in meeting the needs of the community and its changing demographic.

REDEFINING LIBRARY SPACES
Library services need to evolve and change in order to meet the needs of the community. Libraries are no longer just a place for books, and emerging technologies and use of space are important to the library service. The library of the future needs to provide a range of functions that continue to meet community need for information, social networking, learning and creativity.

Public libraries have a role in engaging the community and providing programs and services that bring people together with shared interests. Library spaces need to be flexible and provide interactive environments to meet the needs of all age groups.

Strathfield Council has sought to meet the needs of its community by upgrading the internal library space in 2020 with a $1.7 million budget to better activate the space and provide a new level of flexibility in services and programs. Later an external deck was added in 2022 for $200,000 to improve the amenity for library patrons.

PROGRAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS
Libraries still maintain a traditional role that is enhanced by programs and partnerships. Providing services out of hours is essential in a changing community, and this has been implemented through the book locker click and collect service and has been complimented with the extended hours access pilot.

Literacy remains an important role of public libraries and ensuring outreach programs that engage children in reading both outside and inside the library is paramount. Despite the growth of digital and online resources, the library is relevant as a social space and a provider of lifelong learning opportunities.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF A DIVERSE COMMUNITY
Library services and programs need to adapt and respond to the needs of a diverse community with information and programs provided in English as well as other languages. Serving the multicultural community needs can be achieved in developing partnerships with multicultural service providers and program development using demographic data as a planning tool.

Library collection also needs to be inclusive with library materials in a range of languages with priority given to the main ethnic languages in the community demographic.

INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY
The use of space for creative activities and technology has changed the way libraries provide services. Makerspace had its beginnings in about 2006 in response to peer to peer learning and the need for informal learning spaces. Fostering a culture of innovation and creativity is essential for future planning.

By providing informal learning spaces this enables the users to become the creators themselves and the library is then not providing the traditional role of knowledge creation. There can be interactive learning environments and technologies for content creations such as pod casting, virtual reality and innovative activities using 3D printing.

By providing greater public accessibility such as with extended hours access, the library spaces can be where users share their knowledge while creating and learning simultaneously. This demonstrates that the library can fulfil its role in the community as a social space that fosters creativity, innovation and the sharing of knowledge.

LIBRARIES AS URBAN PLACEMAKERS
Libraries become a place destination for visitors and this in turn provides an economic benefit to nearby shops and businesses. Libraries with inspirational design and architecture create a desirable community hub that engages the wider community and provides both economic and social benefit.

The library can be a place to provide leisure time, learning through programs and technology or browsing the collection. Ensuring hours of operation meet community needs and providing free and accessible parking enhance the opportunity for the library to be an urban placemaker.

Setting the Direction

Strathfield Library and Innovation Hub's future direction is influenced by external factors and Council's strategic plans and policies

EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

Library Legislation
- Library Act 1939 NSW

Association Library and Information Association (ALIA)
- Guidelines, standards and outcome measures for Australian Public Libraries (July 2016)

State Library NSW
- Strategic Plan 2019-2023
Put the reader and visitor first
We aim to put readers and visitors at the centre of everything to do.

Expand our audiences
We want to reach young audiences, culturally diverse audiences, and people who are not yet aware of what the Library can offer them.

Staff culture
We aim to foster a culture based on respect, support and responsibility, which staff are comfortable to make their own contributions.

Global Library Trends
- Redefining library spaces
- Programs and partnerships
- Libraries as urban placemakers
- Innovation and creativity

INTERNAL INFLUENCES

Strathfield 2035 Community Strategic Plan
- Connectivity
- Community Wellbeing
- Civic Pride and Place Management
- Liveable Neighbourhoods
- Responsible Leadership

Council Policies
- Code of Conduct
- Child Protection Policy
- Community Engagement Strategy
- Procurement Policy
- Work Health and Safety Policy

Library Policies
- Children and Young Persons in Library Policy
- Library User Conduct Policy
- Home Library Service Policy
- Library Public Access to Internet Policy
- Library Collection and Development Policy
- Library Copyright Notices Policy

Strathfield Library is the local centre of information, making all kinds of knowledge and information accessible to its members and visitors. The library seeks to be a community hub for innovation and shared learning whilst supporting the community with access to lifelong learning and literacy support for all ages.

The Strathfield Library Services Strategy 2023-2028 is the framework to guide delivery of quality library services and programs to meet the needs of a diverse community. The strategy has considered global trends, national and state frameworks, and local priorities and customer survey to guide future direction.

To achieve the vision of Learn, Engage and Create the focus of the service will be its people and the community. The development of the four goals to support the outcomes for Strathfield Library are;

GOAL 1: Strathfield Library is a welcoming destination with flexible spaces

Goal 2: Strathfield Library delivers innovative and accessible services

Goal 3: Strathfield Library will activate and engage through programs and partnerships

Goal 4: Strathfield Library will continue to support and develop a skilled and cohesive Library Services team
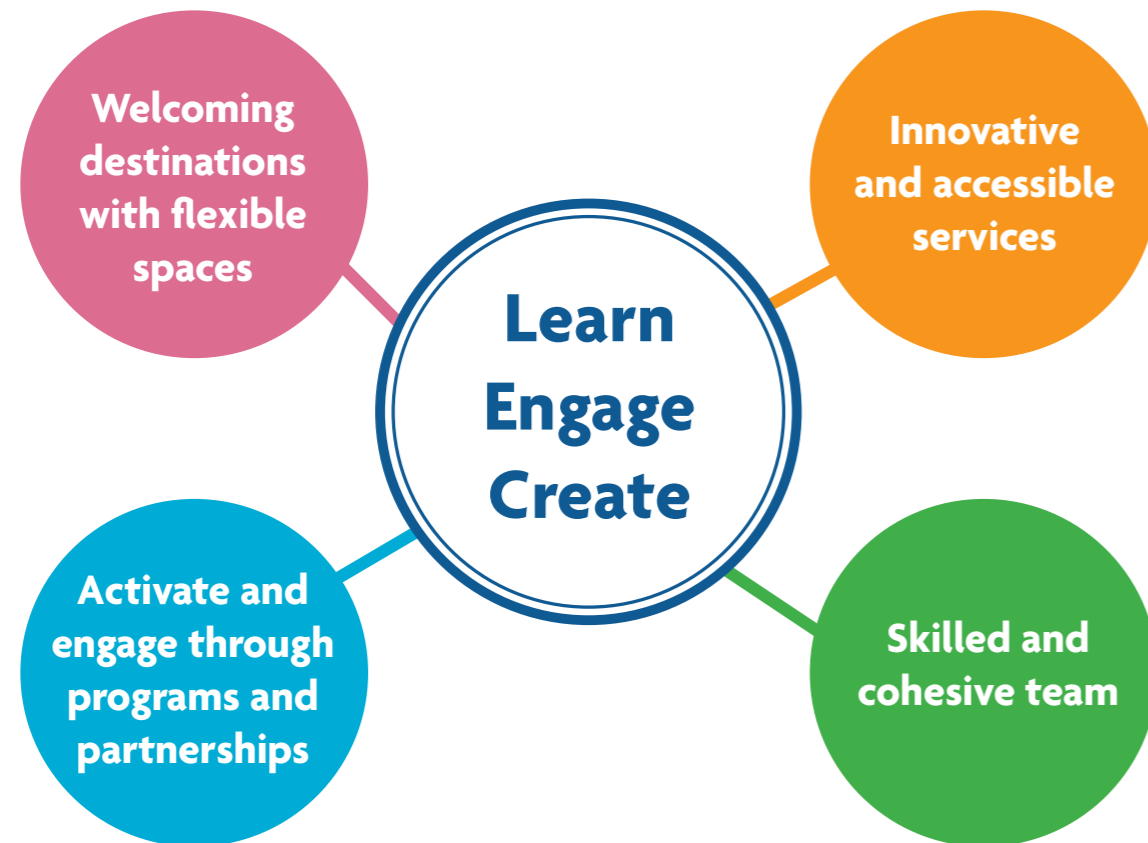
Goal 1
Welcoming destination with flexible spaces

COMMITMENT	ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME
Our library will be a welcoming Hub and provide a range of quality services, programs and events	1.1 Maintain and promote our library as as an attractive and welcoming destination with flexible, multi-use spaces	2028
Our library is more than books, with activities and services to engage the community	1.2 Ensure Strathfield Library is meeting the needs of its customers through engagement, effective feedback and long term infrastructure planning	2028
Our Library is comprised of flexible, multi-use spaces that provide an environment for learning and sharing knowledge	1.3 Engage with local educational institutions and community organisations to create connections and visitations	2024
Our library supports emerging artists and local history knowledge	1.4 Provide art and local history exhibitions in the gallery space within the library	2023
Our library is accessible to library patrons after hours	1.5 Provide and promote extended hours access to library patrons to enhance service flexibility	2024

Goal 2
Innovative and accessible services

COMMITMENT	ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME
Our systems and business processes enable our customers quality service experience	2.1 Develop a business improvement approach to service delivery to enhance customer experience	2026
Our library provides reliable high quality systems both in the library, on-line and with the book locker services	2.2 Create opportunity for customers to engage with new and innovative technology	2023
Our services are supported by technology, equipment, vehicles and spaces that create innovative activities and learning experiences	2.3 Enhance access to online services and the digital experience through effective engagement and marketing	2024

Welcoming destinations with flexible spaces

Innovative and accessible services

Learn Engage Create

Activate and engage through programs and partnerships

Skilled and cohesive team

Goal 3
Activate and engage through programs and partnerships

COMMITMENT	ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME
Our team is active within the local community with outreach programs, services and activities to attract new people to the library	3.1 Develop programs to encourage reading and literacy and learning opportunities	2024
Our library programs and services are inclusive to meet the needs of a multicultural community	3.2 Diversify programs to connect and engage with the multicultural community	2023
Public spaces are activated through children's storytime to enhance literacy outcomes in early childhood	3.3 Activate and promote library programs and services in the library and other community spaces	2025
Library visitations are increased due to effective service and program promotion	3.4 Develop a marketing plan to increase community awareness of library programs services and features	2024

Goal 4
Skilled and cohesive team

COMMITMENT	ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME
Our team provides excellent customer service enhanced by training and coaching	4.1 Develop a professional training program to support skills and knowledge growth across the team	2024
Our team strives to deliver quality outcomes in a culture of continuous quality improvement	4.2 Develop individual staff professional development plans to address skill needs in line with service delivery	2025
Our team provides a positive work culture which focuses on collegiality, accountability and team goals	4.3 Provide performance feedback and reviews to establish a positive values driven team culture	2025
Our team enhances service delivery through research, benchmarking and professional networking to enhance skills and service delivery	4.4 Develop and deliver programs that address the needs of a diverse community and meet the emerging technology trends of service delivery	2028
Strong and responsive leadership that supports team development and succession planning of emerging leaders and career opportunities	4.5 Provide mentoring and support to staff to professionally develop to effective skilled service managers	2025

IMPLEMENTATION

An annual operational plan will be developed, outlining the key programs, services and tasks to be undertaken to achieve the goals set out in this four year strategy.

Where additional resources are required, these will be sought through external funding opportunities, partnerships and Council's budget processes.

The delivery of this strategy is about the commitment of Strathfield Council and its library team and the support of partners.

EVALUATION

Ongoing quality improvement is the measure of success of this strategy. Evaluation will be achieved by benchmarking against key performance indicators, customer feedback, staff feedback, number of visitations and membership.

Reports on library outputs are made 6 monthly to Council's Community Strategic Plan – Delivery Program and annually to the State Library of NSW

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Number of library members
Library Membership as % of population
Number of physical items borrowed
Number of physical items returned
Number of items borrowed electronical-ly
Attendance at programs
Number of new programs developed
Number of users of WiFi
Customer Satisfaction Survey
Staff Feedback