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Access All Areas

Bathurst Library Strategic Plan 2019-2024

Bathurst Regional Council acknowledges the Wiradjuri people who are the traditional custodians of the land and pays respect to Elders both past and present. The Bathurst region was inhabited by the Wiradjuri people over 40,000 years ago.

The Wiradjuri people are the people of the three rivers – the Wambool (Macquarie), the Calare (Lachlan) and the Murrumbidgee. The Bathurst Wiradjuri were the most easterly grouping of the Wiradjuri nation. The Wiradjuri nation's totem is the goanna, the local Bathurst Wiradjuri totem is the possum.

Today there are many clans/nations who have relocated here and actively contribute to the economic, social, cultural and political life of the region.

Bathurst Regional Council values the diversity or our local community and supports reconciliation by working consistently in partnership with its local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, always ensuring that the process is based on respect, trust and a spirit of openness.

Acknowledgement of Country

Our library offers a wealth of opportunities. It provides a space to learn and connect. It fosters the love of reading and lifelong learning. It also provides access to technology and help on how to use it. The library programs are varied and well attended.

Through the process of developing the Bathurst Library Strategic Plan, one thing became apparent: our community values the library services we currently have and is keen to offer ideas for the future to make our library even better.

This strategic plan is a reflection of those ideas, it will help shape the direction of the library for years to come and ensure it continues to play a key role in our community and meet the diverse needs of our library users now and into the future.

Cr R W Bourke
Mayor of Bathurst

BATHURST
REGIONAL
COUNCIL

Mayor's Message

Public libraries in Australia are evolving. Technological advancement and the way people are using libraries has led public libraries such as Bathurst Library to diversify their service delivery. Library spaces are transforming and becoming more flexible and activity-oriented. Digital technologies are radically transforming how library services are delivered. Collections are accessible in physical form and online. The library catalogue and website have become a virtual library branch open 24/7. Library staff are adapting to support new forms of literacy in the new digital culture. Books, reading and literacy remain central to the Bathurst Library services. Providing community connection, free access to technology, lifelong opportunities for learning, and a safe community lounge room are also essential to the library's direction.

The Bathurst Library Strategic Plan 2019-2024 was developed to help us navigate these changing times.

The Library Strategic Plan 2019-2024 aims to:

• Establish where we are now and define where we want to be
• Identify priorities and guide the library's activities 2019-2024
• Ensure the library's activities support Council direction
• Provide us with a marketing document to support grant funding opportunities

The Library Strategic Plan 2019-2024 is informed by:

• A review of Council policies and plans
• An analysis of the Bathurst demographics
• A review of our current services
• A review of current trends in public library services
• Consultation and Engagement: NSW State Library review, Community Surveys, Staff Planning Workshop, Councillors Working Party

Introduction

Sustainable Development Goals

1 NO POVERTY
2 ZERO HUNGER
3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
4 QUALITY EDUCATION
5 GENDER EQUALITY
6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION
7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY
8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION
13 CLIMATE ACTION
14 LIFE BELOW WATER
15 LIFE ON LAND
16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS
17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

Bathurst Library as a member of the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) works towards the UN endorsed Sustainable Development Goals. These are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

Bathurst Library is contributing to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by ensuring that:

• there is free public access to information in print and online;
• there is free public access to computers;
• there is support for early literacy and lifelong learning, and
• items of cultural heritage are accessible today and are preserved for future generations.

We also provide:

• information and training in new skills needed for education and employment;
• public access to health and wellness information that helps individuals and families stay healthy;
• safe, welcoming and inclusive spaces for meetings, study, group activities and personal relaxation, and
• high speed internet connectivity.

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Libraries:
Thinking Global, Acting Local

The Bathurst Library Strategic Plan 2019-2024 is informed by various Bathurst Regional Council plans, including the Reconciliation Action Plan 2015 – 2017, the 2019-2023 Delivery Plan, Annual Operating Plan 2019/2020, and the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017 – 2021.

In particular, the Bathurst Library Strategic Plan 2019-2024 reflects the priorities and strategies of the Bathurst 2040 Community Strategic Plan and the Bathurst Region: Cultural Vision 2036.

Bathurst 2040 Community Strategic Plan

The following six key objectives established in the Bathurst 2040 Community Strategic Plan are reflected in the Bathurst Library Strategic Plan 2019-2024:

1. Our Sense of place and identity
2. A smart and vibrant economy
3. Environmental stewardship
4. Enabling sustainable growth
5. Community health, safety and well-being
6. Community leadership and collaboration

Cultural Vision 2036

Bathurst Region: a Cultural Vision 2036 – premier inland centre of culture and creativity

Bathurst Regional Council's 20 Year Cultural Vision, the result of extensive community consultation, aims to build the Bathurst region's reputation as a premier inland centre of culture and creativity.

The Vision capitalises on the strength of Bathurst's cultural institutions, including the library, performing arts centre, art gallery and museums, and develops new policies for public art as well as cultural festivals and events.

The three strategies in the Vision are incorporated in the Bathurst Library Strategic Plan 2019-2024:

Strategy 1: Creative Places: A Place of Culture and Creativity

Strategy 2: Creative Programs: Telling Bathurst Region Stories

Strategy 3: Creative People: Developing a Creative Milieu

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Bathurst Vision

The Bathurst Regional Council (BRC) area is located in the Central Tablelands of New South Wales, approximately 200 kilometres west of Sydney. The BRC area borders the Mid-Western Regional Council area in the north, Lithgow City and the Oberon Council area in the east, Upper Lachlan Shire in the south, and Cowra Shire, Blayney Shire and the Cabonne Council area in the west.

Based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 Census data, from 2011 to 2016, BRC area's population increased by 2,771 people (7.2%). This represents an average annual population change of 1.4% per year over the period. Our population estimate for 2019 is 44,182. The population is projected to grow to 49,285 by 2029.

Analysis of the service age groups of BRC area in 2016 compared to Regional NSW shows there was a higher proportion of people in the younger age groups (0 to 17 years) and a lower proportion of people in the older age groups (60+ years).

We have an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of 5.4% of the total population, which is above the 2.9% for NSW and 2.8% for Australia and is growing. 9% of us are born overseas and 4% speak a language other than English at home. 25% of households are lone occupancy. 16% of the population have university qualifications and 24% trade qualifications.

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Our Community

During the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Mechanic Institutes and School of Arts - precursors to Public Libraries - were established in Australia.

In Bathurst in 1826, a "meeting of gentlemen" resolved to create The Bathurst Literary Society for the "purpose of procuring a library" (Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser, Wednesday 5 April 1826, p.3). This led to the opening of the Bathurst School of Arts and Mechanics Institute in the mid-1850s.

In 1939, all NSW councils adopted the Library Act and provided a public library service which deliver free membership and access to the library collections.

The public library exists to provide materials which communicate ideas, experience and information. Public libraries in NSW have continued to evolve as physical and virtual spaces with diverse collections and are notable for their sophisticated and responsive services which are provided to communities across the state.

In 1956, the Bathurst School of Arts became Bathurst City Library, officially opening on 12 December. Bathurst Library moved to its current site in 1990 and was officially opened on 8 December. In 2018, Bathurst Library underwent a major refurbishment aiming to bring the library in line with contemporary design practice and technology developments. After closing for 6 weeks, the library reopened on 29 January 2018.

Bathurst Library currently attracts around 140,000 visits each year. Visitations to the library website are increasing. Approximately 250,000 physical and electronic items were borrowed in 2018-2019. The mobile library van visits villages and schools in the Bathurst region: Hill End, Rockley, Sofala, Trunkey Creek and Wattle Flat. Over 100 clients are catered for by the Home Library Service which offers a free home delivery of library materials to eligible members (medical certificate required) in private homes, nursing homes, day care centres and retirement villages in the Bathurst area. The use of the library public PCs with free internet connectivity is constant and access to the free Wi-Fi is growing.

Our Library

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Public library service is a national necessity.

Their essential purpose is the supply of literature and information necessary to the progress and prosperity of the community as a whole.

Research is essential to commerce and industry.

Without libraries, the citizen has no check on indoctrination and propaganda.

Libraries Advisory Committee, NSW 1939

Bathurst Library also provides:

- Access to books in languages other than English
- After School Club
- Baby Rhyme Time
- Children's Reading Program
- Help finding information
- Legal Information
- Local and Family History resources
- School Holiday activities

- Access to printers, photocopiers and scanners
- Author Talks
- Book Week celebration
- Code Club
- Information talks (ie. history, legal information)
- Lego Club
- Preschool Story Time
- Technology assistance

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Our Library

A review of the library's current services against State and National standards indicates that Bathurst Library is well used and supported by the community. Our staff are busy and our collections are well used. Attendance at the Bathurst Library's popular children's programs is growing.

In August 2018, NSW State Library staff visited and evaluated Bathurst Library and delivered an Assessment and Compliance report in October 2018. Findings of the report indicated that:

our strengths are

• The 2018 library refurbishment created a welcoming, bright space
• The collections are well displayed
• The library is well used
• We provide a good range of programs and services

and our opportunities are to

• Implement community driven collection acquisition
• Increase collection size
• Broaden the scope of programs
• Partner with local groups
• Increase Local History content, including information about the Wiradjuri
• Increase our mobile outreach
• Provide services to the local Aboriginal community
• Plan for population growth
• Increase staffing to drive these opportunities

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Our Library

Bathurst Regional Council Community Satisfaction Survey - October 2018

In the latest BRC Community Satisfaction Survey carried out in October 2018, Bathurst Library was rated as high in importance and in satisfaction. Bathurst Library reached the top of the category of Proud Place, Great Lifestyle with a Very High satisfaction level.

Bathurst Library Survey - May/June 2019

As part of the Library Strategic Plan consultation and engagement process, a survey of library users and non-users was conducted in May and June 2019. 282 responses were received. 88% of respondents who used the library in the last 12 months were Highly Satisfied or Satisfied with the Library Services and Facility.

What people do in the library

Predominantly, people indicated that they came to the library to borrow or read books, newspapers and magazines. They also come to research and study, use the computers and associated technology, use the online library and access the free Wi-Fi. People who attended programs were coming to our Adult talks and children's story time and school holiday activities. People who came to borrow library items favoured Novels, Information Books and DVDs. 94.1% of respondents are Highly Satisfied/Satisfied with the material they borrow.

Community suggestions

A large proportion of qualitative responses were received. This indicates that the community values the library and is keen to contribute to its future direction. The recurring themes in comments are that people want more books (print and electronic), with more variety. They would like ideas on what to read next. They like our programs and would like to see more for the 30-50 year age group. They would like us to open earlier. They appreciate the work that library staff do.

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Community Satisfaction

As a result of the research and engagement process five Strategic Priorities have been identified. These are: Community Connections, Welcoming Spaces, Evolving Digital Environment, Dynamic Collections and Learning Culture.

The five Strategic Priorities aim to build a sense of belonging and grow the capacities of the community the library serves. They intend to advance Bathurst Library as a platform for community learning and development. They respond to community feedback and reflect current trends for the delivery of public library services.

Strategic Priorities
Community Connections

To promote the library as a community hub and build strong connections and partnerships that encourage participation in the library and its services.

Key Initiatives

• Promote and showcase Bathurst Library beyond its physical and online presence to ensure our community is aware of library services and can access these on an equal basis.

• Maintain and create partnerships with other Council departments, local organisations and neighbouring Councils

• Partner with Community Groups to deliver social and cultural programs, events and celebrations

Markers of Success

• Growth in in-library visitations

• Increased membership base

• Increased participation in library programs and services

• Increased satisfaction with library services and programs

• Growth in engagement and collaboration with educational institutions, community centres and other Council departments

• Library participation in inter-agency forums

• Growth in programs, events and celebrations delivered in partnership with Community groups

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Five Strategic Priorities for the Library Service

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Strategic Priorities
Welcoming Spaces

To offer a welcoming, flexible and functional environment that caters for all lifestyles, diverse uses and needs.

Key Initiatives

- Improve the access to the library space and ensure the library space is clean and comfortable
- Review the library layout to achieve ease of access and adapt to community usage
- Develop library facilities to meet the changing and ongoing needs of the community
- Encourage the community to see the library as their community lounge room
- Maximise our Mobile Library Service

Markers of Success

- The library space is clean, accessible and welcoming
- The Library space is regularly reviewed
- A review on the Mobile Library service and associated depots is undertaken and reported

Five Strategic Priorities for the Library Service

Strategic Priorities

Evolving Digital Environment

To provide the community with access to up-to-date technology, internet connectivity and access to informed online content.

Key Initiatives

- Use technologies effectively to provide innovative services to customers and to support library operations efficiently
- Build digital equity within the community through the provision of activities that facilitate skill development
- Build the library website and online catalogue as effective information portals

Markers of Success

- Growth in use of library PCs and Wi-Fi
- Growth in online visitations
- New technology is included in budget forecast
- New technologies are researched, evaluated and implemented
- Provision of technology assistance
- Provision of technology related programs and activities
- Development of a Technology Management Plan
- Library Management System is upgraded regularly

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Five Strategic Priorities for the Library Service

Libraries store the energy that fuels the imagination. They open up windows to the world and inspire us to explore and achieve and contribute to improving our quality of life. Libraries change lives for the better.

– Sidney Sheldon (author)

Strategic Priorities
Dynamic Collections

To develop and promote dynamic collections in print and online that respond to community needs.

Key Initiatives

• Increase community participation in Library collection activities

• Ensure our collections are fresh and current

• Make our collections discoverable

• Provide an avenue for local content creation

• Curate and promote a dynamic Local History collection and service, physical and online

• Digitise and provide online access to Local History material

Markers of Success

• Increased circulation of library material

• Increased community satisfaction with collections

• Age of the collections meets current library standards

• Provision of pathways to the collections and improved access to popular titles

• Collection content and usage is assessed regularly

• Increase in locally created content

• Growth in Local History content, print and online

• Digitised Local History material is available online

• Regular review of the Collection Development Policy

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Five Strategic Priorities for the Library Service

Plan delivery

To deliver on the "Key Initiatives", annual actions will be developed and included in Council's Annual Operating Plan. Reporting on these actions will occur monthly and will be included in the Monthly Ordinary Business Paper review of the Delivery and Operation Plan.

Strategic Priorities

Learning Culture

To create opportunities for lifelong learning and discovery.

Key Initiatives

- Provide a range of programs that assists our community to achieve its full potential.
- Maintain and improve access to information and life-long learning
- Build staff capabilities to ensure our staff are knowledgeable and have the necessary skills
- Invest in staff development
- Expand staff to population ratio as funding permits

Markers of Success

- Increased variety of public programs
- Early literacy programs are well attended
- Adult programs are well attended
- Increased staff attendance at training, NSW library network and other appropriate industry forums
- Increased professional skills
- Investigate funding options to increase staff hours

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Five Strategic Priorities for the Library Service

A library in the middle of a community is a cross between an emergency exit, a life-raft and a festival. They are cathedrals of the mind; hospitals of the soul; theme parks of the imagination. On a cold rainy island, they are the only sheltered public spaces where you are not a consumer, but a citizen instead.

– Caitlin Moran (author)

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