



DRAFT
Central Coast
Library Strategy

2026-2036

Central
Coast
Council



Index

Library@YourTime	An automated, self-access service which extends access to library facilities to inducted library members, even during unstaffed hours.
LGA	Local Government Area
SLNSW	State Library NSW
MakerSpace	A MakerSpace is a collaborative, creative learning environment equipped with tools and technology for people to design, build, and innovate, enabling users to work on projects in a supportive setting.
The Act	Library Act NSW 1939
Library Regulation	Library Regulation NSW 2018



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Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live, work and play. We pay our respects to Darkinjung country, and Elders past and present.

We recognise the continued connection to these lands and waterways and extend this acknowledgement to the homelands and stories of those who also call this place home.

We recognise our future leaders and the shared responsibility to care for and protect our place and people.





Mayors Message

Our community loves our libraries, and the new Gosford Regional Library has inspired even more people to explore library services.

Since opening, around 70,000 items have been loaned, more than 2,110 new members have signed up, and thousands of people have attended an event.

And the new MakerSpace, in collaboration with the University of Newcastle, demonstrates how our libraries are looking to the future, becoming innovative, connected community hubs that support critical thinking, experimentation and creativity.

This Strategy sets a clear direction for how Council will continue to deliver accessible and contemporary library services.

Over the next ten years, we'll focus on the key strategic areas of service excellence, lifelong learning, innovation, and equity, access and inclusion.

We'll support the evolving needs of our growing and diverse community, while recognising the enduring importance of libraries as trusted, safe and welcoming public spaces.

And we'll take a balanced approach that strengthens core library services while embracing innovation, flexible service delivery models and new ways for people to access resources, programs and spaces.

Thank you to everyone who provided feedback, ensuring our plans respond to local needs and aspirations.

I look forward to seeing our libraries continue to evolve across the Central Coast as we grow.

Lawrie McKinna
Mayor, Central Coast Council



Introduction

Public libraries are dynamic community hubs that bring people together for social and cultural experiences. Through inclusive programmes and services, they promote wellbeing, belonging, and strengthen community engagement.

Libraries play a vital role in enabling economic and social participation. They foster education and employment through literacy initiatives and support digital inclusion by offering training and access to technology.

As valued cultural institutions, libraries provide current, representative, and relevant resources such as books for recreation and information, films, music, history and more. They nurture creativity, celebrate inclusion, and enhance literacy through programs and collections.

Central Coast libraries serve as safe, welcoming spaces that cater to varied community needs. They draw people of all backgrounds and abilities into shared environments that are welcoming and accessible.

Legislative Context

The legislative framework for libraries in New South Wales establishes the foundation for delivering free, representative and high-quality library services to communities. It ensures councils operate within statutory obligations while promoting access to information, culture, and lifelong learning. Councils in NSW are governed by the Library Act (1939) and Library Regulation (2018). Adherence to the Act and Regulation is mandatory for funding eligibility and service continuity.

The *Access to information in NSW public libraries: Library Council Guideline* has been issued under s10(5) of the Act and is the foundation document for NSW public library collection development.

Library Act 1939 (NSW)	
Objective	Encourages local councils to provide free public libraries supported by State subsidies.
Core Provisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishes the Library Council of NSW to oversee policy, funding, and standards. Empowers councils to adopt the Act and access State funding. Defines governance requirements, including library committees and service agreements. Includes provisions for legal deposit libraries, preserving published material.
Strategic Implication	Councils must maintain compliance to secure funding and deliver services aligned with State priorities.
Library Regulation 2018	
Objective	Provides operational detail under the Library Act.
Core Provisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulates management and use of libraries, including borrower registration and user conduct. Specifies rules for fees, handling of materials, and conditions for subsidies. Reinforces councils' authority to set local rules for library use.
Strategic Implication	Ensures consistent standards and operational compliance across NSW libraries.



Strategic Context

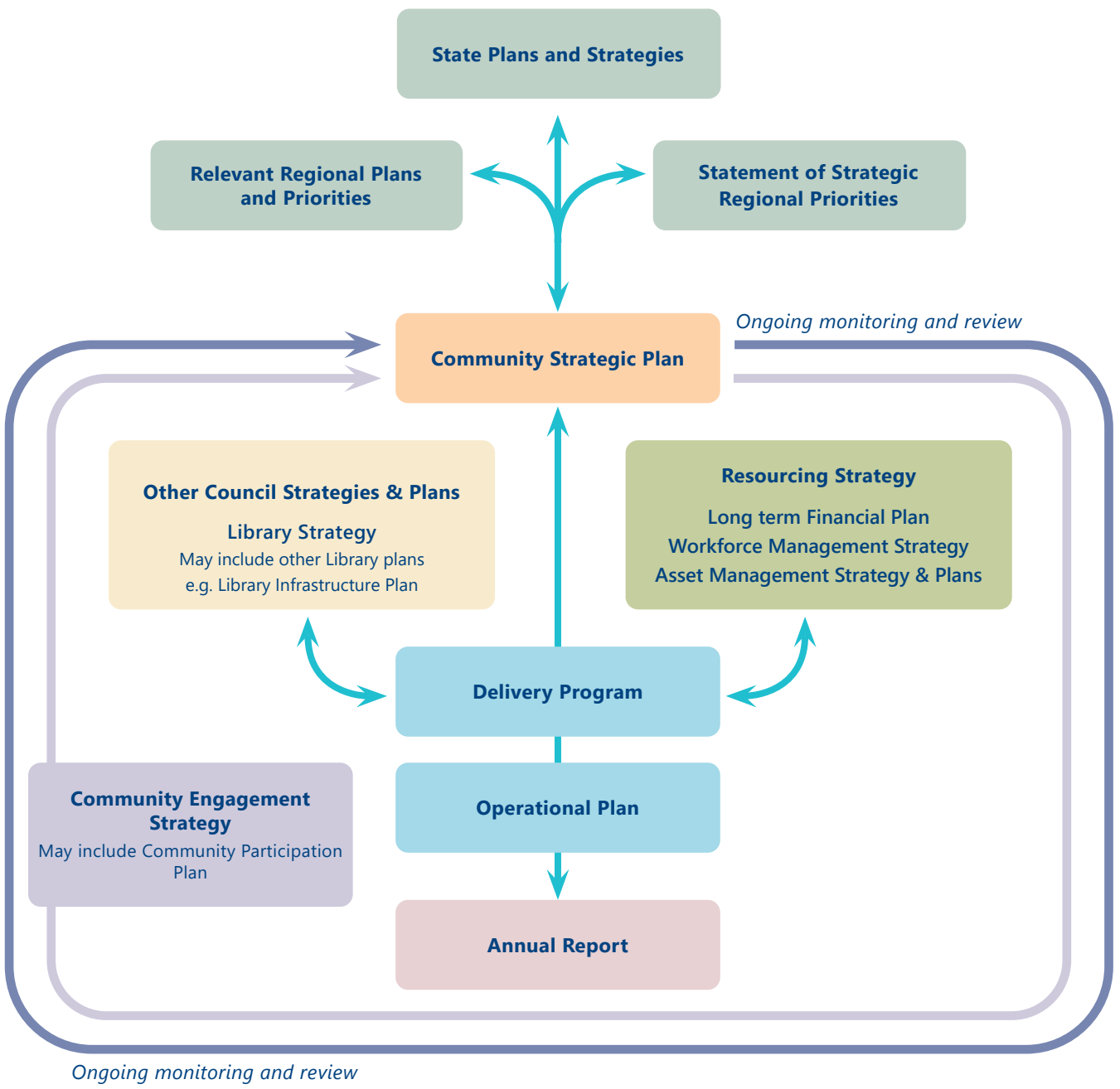
Engaging with our community is essential when we develop strategies, plans and policies. These documents are part of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework that all NSW Councils are required to follow under the Local Government Act 1993. This framework underpins how we plan at Council and is fundamentally based on community desires and aspirations for the future.

To ensure we're making meaningful progress towards the community's shared aspirations and priorities, we continuously monitor a broad range of measures across five key focus areas:

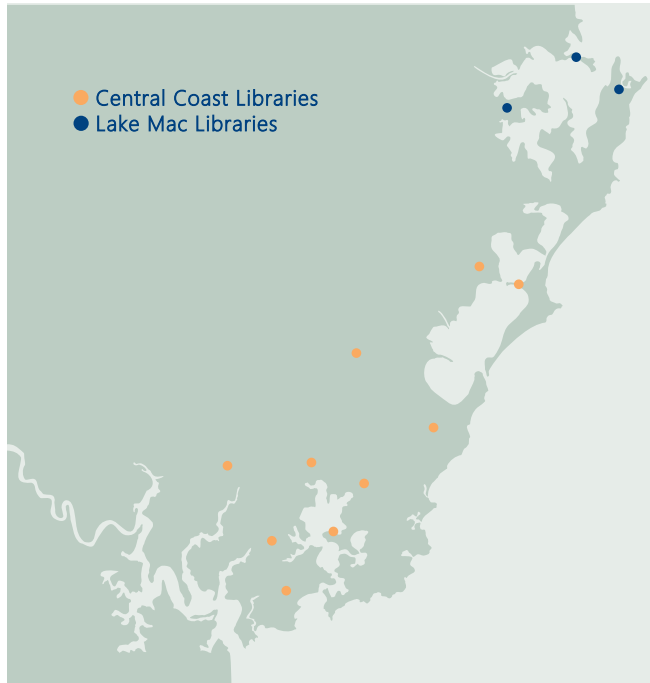
- **Our People**
- **Our Environment**
- **Our Place**
- **Our Economy**
- **Our Leadership**

An economic driver within the Community Strategic Plan is to increase the number of Library branch visitors, library loans, library members. The actions within the Library Strategy aim to facilitate this and will be measured through Delivery plan reporting.

A key action of the Library Strategy is the development of a Library Infrastructure plan which will be developed and informed by this strategy.



Central Coast Library Service Overview



Central Coast Libraries
Lake Mac Libraries

Central Coast proudly operates a network of 10 Libraries within a 1,681 square kilometre local government area (LGA), with a projected population of 415,050 by 2036.

That is a 23% increase in population, of approximately 80,000 people.

In addition to **10 library branches**, Central Coast Library Service has the below offerings that reach out to underserved areas or community members of the Central Coast:



2

Library Vans & 1 Mobile Library



32,000+

e-Books, e-Audio & e-Magazines.



250,000+

Physical resources



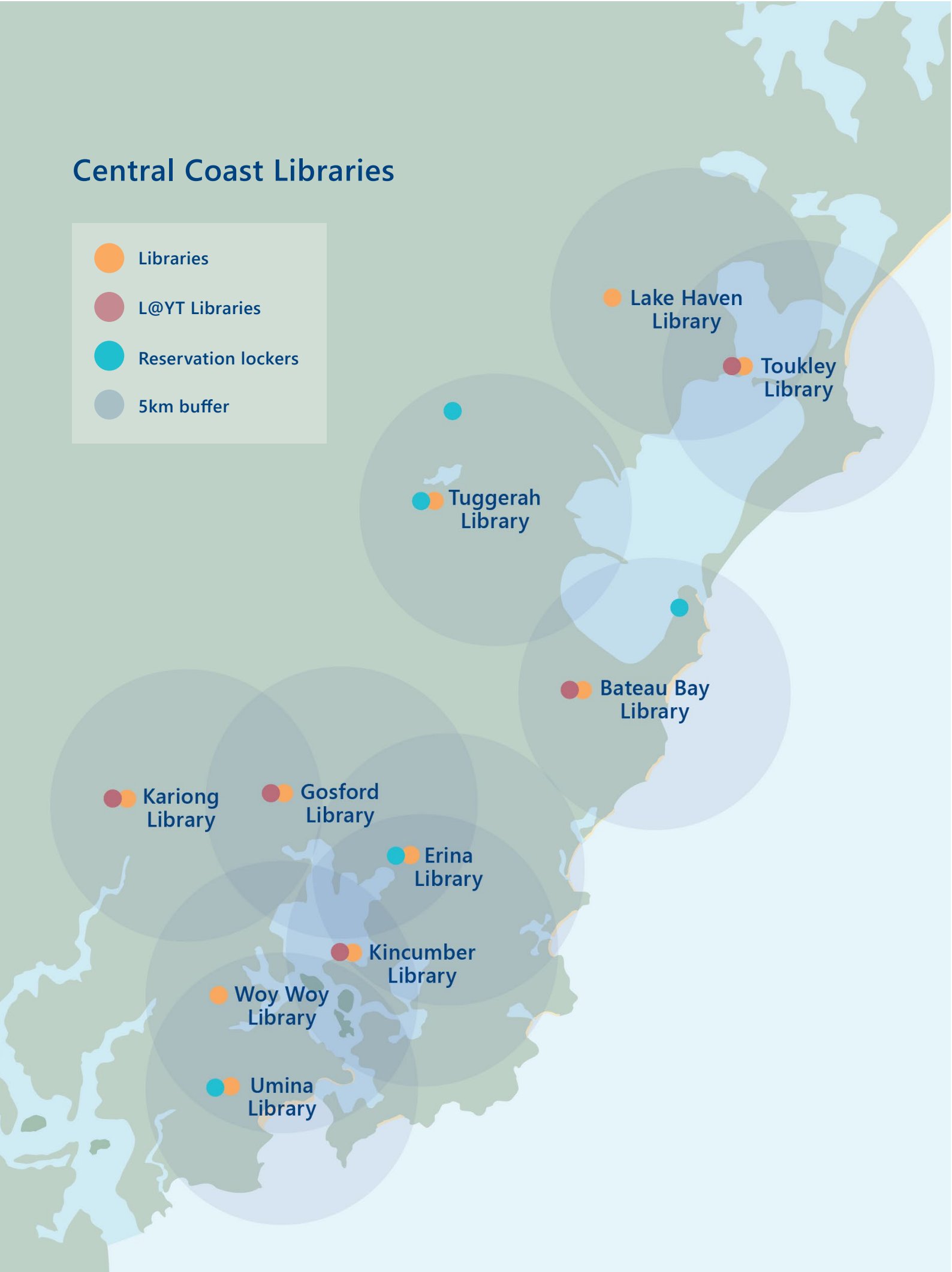
350+

Events programs

Facility	Description	Opening Hours
Gosford Regional Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Service Desk • MakerSpace • Bookable meeting rooms • Sound Studio • Multi Use Hall • Local History Room 	7 Days
Erina Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library Reservation Locker • Council Customer Service Desk 	7 Days
Woy Woy Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Customer Service Desk • Bookable meeting rooms • Spike Milligan Exhibition 	6 Days
Umina Beach Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library Reservation Locker 	5 Days
Kariong Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library @YourTime 	3 Days
Tuggerah Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library Reservation Locker • Bookable meeting rooms • Local History Collection 	6 Days
Lake Haven Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bookable meeting rooms • Council Customer Service Desk 	6 Days
Toukley Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bookable meeting rooms • Library @YourTime 	5 Days
Bateau Bay Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library @YourTime 	5 Days
Kincumber Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bookable meeting rooms • Library @YourTime 	5 Days

Reservation Lockers	<p>Reservation lockers are designed to provide a drop off and pick up service for all hours in satellite locations. Central Coast Libraries provide reservation lockers in the below locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Entrance: Marine Parade, The Entrance - Wyong Administration building: 2 Hely Street, Wyong - Tuggerah Library: Westfield Shopping Centre, 50 Wyong Rd, Tuggerah - Umina Library: West Street, Umina Beach - Erina Library: The Hive, Erina Fair, Terrigal Drive, Erina.
Outreach Services	<p>Central Coast Libraries Outreach Service operates across the network, delivering and supporting a suite of community programs, partnerships and events. Outreach services and program delivery are increasing in demand across national public library service delivery.</p>
Home Library Service	<p>This service is for members who are unable to visit their local library in person, either temporarily or permanently. Library Officers will develop a personal profile of what members (or their carers) would like to borrow based on their preferences. Library Officers will then deliver/pick up items at their home or care facility. Council also offers regular bulk deliveries to care facilities</p>
Mobile Library	<p>The Central Coast Mobile Library service visits selected community stops across the Central Coast to connect and engage communities unable to readily access branch libraries.</p> <p>A vehicle designed, equipped, and operated to extend and facilitate access to public library services to those people who do not have reasonably convenient access to a static public library. The Mobile Library provides some service access to the western and northern parts of the LGA, such as Kulnura (School), Peats Ridge (School), and Gwandalan in the north of the LGA (Community), as well as Mooney Mooney and Mangrove Hub. Other areas serviced by the mobile include communities such as Patonga, Pearl Beach, Wagstaffe, and various residential villages like Wamberal, Kincumber, and West Gosford.</p>
eServices	<p>Council has a range of digital resources and collections available for information and recreation. These include online research databases, and platforms providing eBooks, eAudiobooks, and eMagazines, plus comics, manga, TV, movies, and more.</p>

Central Coast Libraries



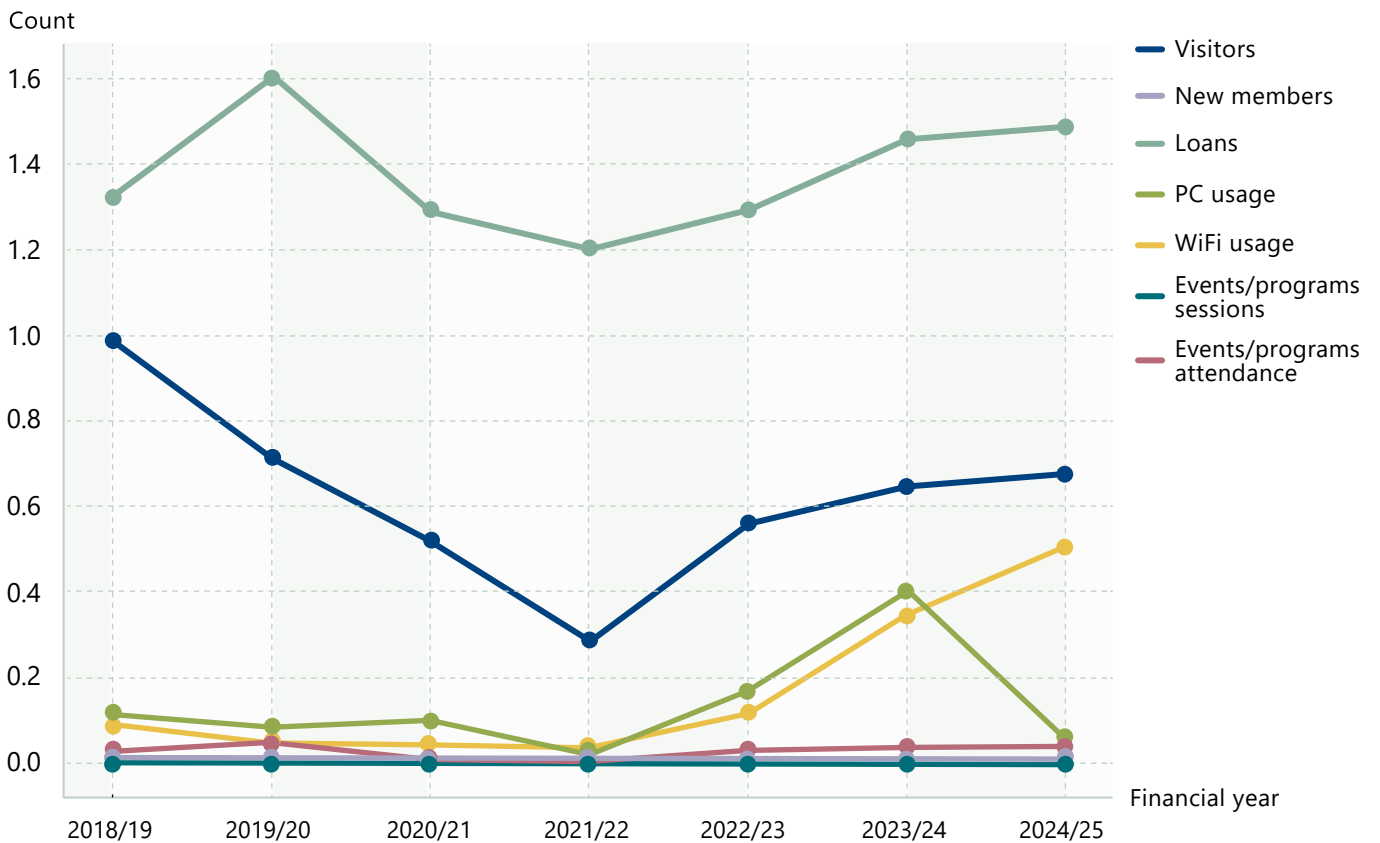
Trends

Central Coast Libraries continue to show strong post pandemic recovery across key engagement measures. Visitor numbers, which flattened during the COVID period, have climbed steadily since 2021/22, reaching **680,000** in 2024/25. New memberships rebounded sharply through 2022/23 and 2023/24, stabilising at a healthy **9,000–10,000**. Loans remain a standout metric, highly resilient, with a pre COVID peak in 2019/20 and renewed growth from 2022/23 onward.

Digital access indicators tell a similar story: PC and WiFi usage show a strong upward trend, with the late spike reflecting a change in data management processes, not a surge in demand. Events and program sessions have remained consistently stable, supporting ongoing community engagement.

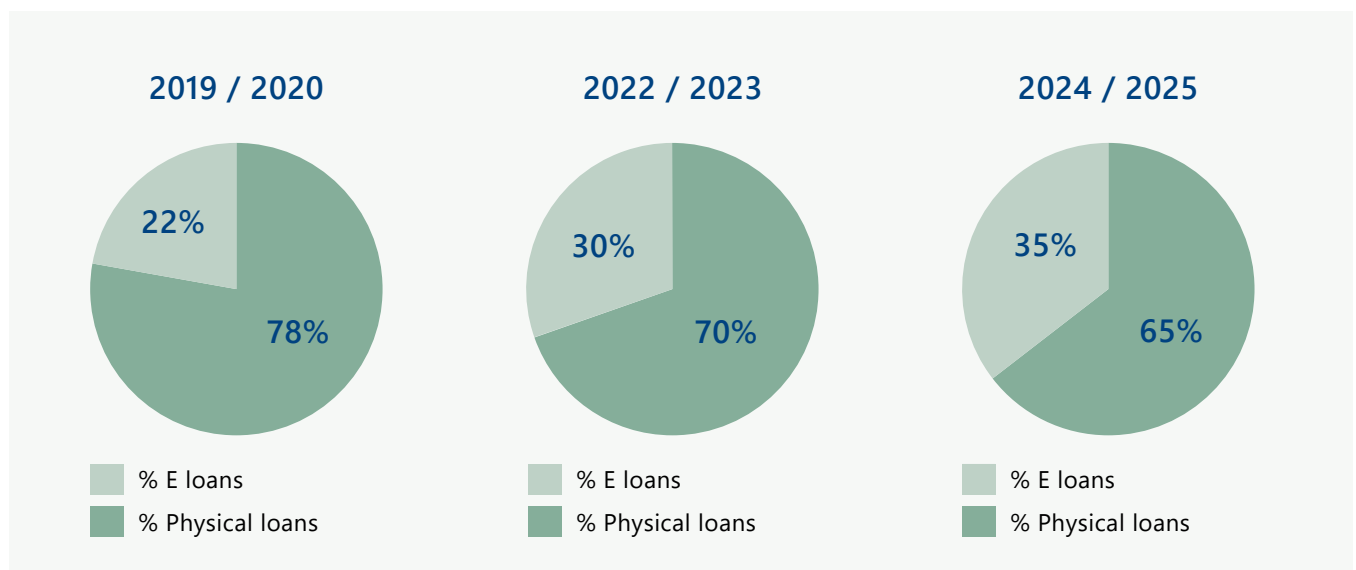
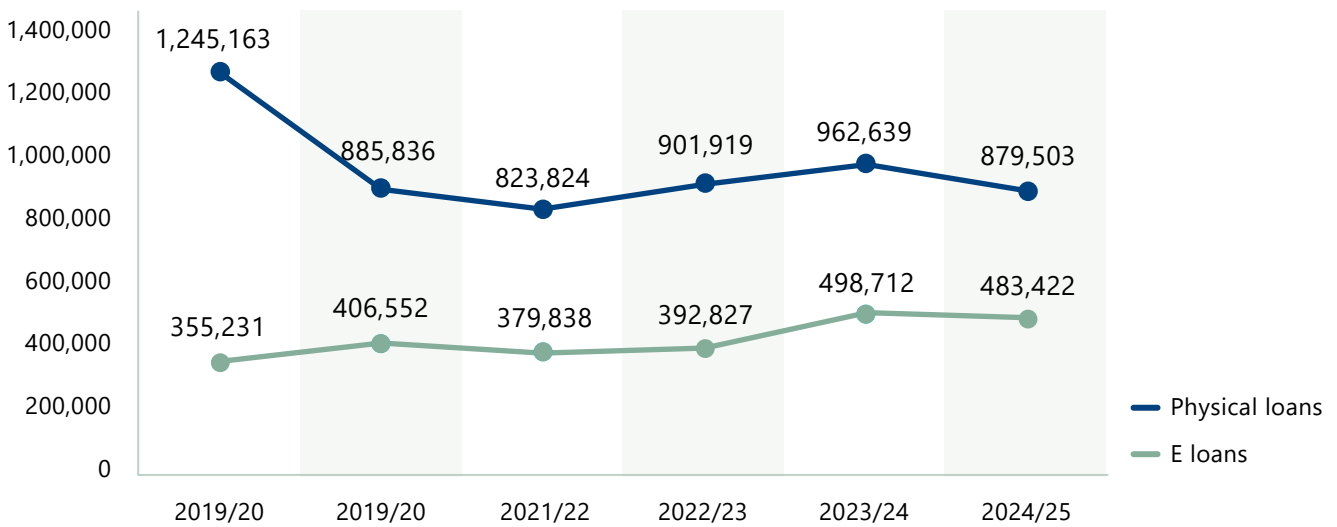
Branch level analysis highlights **Erina Library** as the system’s most frequented location, followed closely by **Gosford Regional Library**.

Central Coast Libraries - Trends by Year



Physical loans have declined from pre COVID highs but stabilised at a strong level, while e resource loans have shown steady long term growth, indicating a clear shift toward digital use without diminishing the continued importance of physical borrowing. This trend supports a balanced collection strategy that sustains robust physical holdings while expanding digital resources to meet evolving community preferences.

Physical vs eResource Loan Comparison



Stakeholder Engagement Snapshot

2828
Survey
Responses

Key
Internal
Stakeholders

Customer
Experience
Research

Community Survey Analysis

The 2023 Central Coast Libraries Community Survey identified the need to consider;

- Collection representation and expansion
- Indigenous authors, diverse viewpoints, broader range of topics
- Incorporation of technology lending and Library of Things collections
- Flexible spaces for extended hours and programming
- Accommodating evening and weekend hours for working individuals and students
- Adaptable spaces for diverse events, workshops, and activities across age groups
- Expansion of the Library@YourTime service to additional branches
- Designated quiet study and reading spaces
- Environmental comfort through ventilation, natural lighting, and temperature control
- Robust technological infrastructure for digital services and user-friendly online platforms
- Flexibility in design for future needs

Internal Stakeholder Analysis

Central Coast Library staff were consulted when developing this Strategy and the key themes and challenges identified included: the opportunity to improve the staffing model, the need for enhanced multicultural and indigenous services and the opportunity to strengthen the Library Service through strategic marketing.

Staff also highlighted customer needs such as study space, meeting rooms, updated technology, social activities, learning opportunities, and improved parking and amenities. Additionally, they have emphasised the importance of better understanding customer usage patterns, consistent branding and signage, and a service wide approach to programming.

Other suggested opportunities include developing more meaningful and formal partnerships and developing a Library of Things.

Purpose

The purpose of the Central Coast Library Strategy is to:

Provide direction for Council on the future management of the Central Coast Library Service.



Key Objectives

The primary aim of this strategy is to equip the Central Coast library Service to adapt to the evolving needs and demands of the Central Coast community. To achieve this, the plan focuses on key objectives that encompass various elements of service enhancement.

- 1.** Library Services provide access to information, literature and resources that meet the needs and expectations of the community;
- 2.** Effective promotion of the range of Library Services and branches to increase visitation and participation with Libraries;

To achieve the key objectives, this strategy outlines four focus areas identified through community feedback, service data and information provided by peak bodies and aligning services.

Strategy Focus Areas

The Central Coast Library Strategy encompasses four key focus areas that encompass various elements of service enhancement to guide Council on the delivery of Central Coast libraries into the future



1.

Service Excellence

Central Coast Library Service to develop a flexible and efficient workforce and a diverse range of library spaces providing high quality services that cater to local need.

1a. Optimised service delivery model:

- o Establish a hybrid model of fixed branches, library points of presence, mobile libraries, and digital access that enhances accessibility and reach.

1b. Library Infrastructure:

- o Undertake master planning through a Library Infrastructure Plan that reviews existing infrastructure and spread of service provision across the LGA to ensure equitable access to library services, particularly in underserved areas.
- o Ensure any new library infrastructure is located near transport, shopping centres, and/or community hubs.
- o Continue to implement Library@YourTime service for unstaffed access across the service.
- o Consider branches for expansion, consolidation or replacement to capitalise on efficiencies and encourage service engagement in a more modern context through infrastructure planning.
- o Incorporate flexible work, study and programming spaces in the Library Infrastructure Plan.

1c. Workforce Planning:

- o Continue to evolve and adapt the library workplace through structure and recruitment to deliver a contemporary library service¹.
- o Longer term, aim to establish base-line staffing requirements to maintain quality of library services, as per Living Learning Libraries².

1d. Customer Centric service;

- o Warm welcome at entry, proactive engagement and quality service and advice.
- o Provide training to staff that encourages customer service excellence, access and inclusion, and preparedness and resilience.

1 See separate document *Top 20 Public Library Jobs* for a list of contemporary roles.

2 Note: Central Coast Libraries' staffing levels are well below current standards. The NSW cohort median staffing level is 1 staff member per 3,113 head of population. CCL's current staffing level is 1 staff member per 5,239. State Library of New South Wales. (2020) Living Learning Libraries, Standard 7.



2.

Lifelong Learning

The Central Coast Library Service is dedicated to fostering lifelong learning by providing equitable access to resources and programmes that empower individuals and strengthen communities. We achieve this through:

2a. Collection and Resources:

- o Provide access to relevant resources, both digital and physical, to support the recreational and information needs of our community and enhance their learning and engagement.
- o Customise resources and programs for the unique requirements of their communities.

2b. Encourage Library Membership and Community engagement:

- o Develop a compelling membership proposition.
- o Improved Marketing and Communications.

2c. Social Activation & Programming:

- o Design programs with measurable outcomes adaptable to diverse localities.
- o Continue to promote social activation through inclusive community programs to enhance education, culture, and wellbeing.



3.

Innovation

The Central Coast Library Service champions innovation as a driver of creativity and economic growth. We provide inclusive, interactive spaces and programmes that empower individuals to explore, create, and thrive in a rapidly evolving world.

3a. Establish MakerSpaces equipped for learning, making and doing:

- o Recruit and/or train tech-savvy staff to manage MakerSpaces and offer guidance to users.
- o Develop interactive and inclusive places and spaces.
- o Design programs to support community wide access and development in technology.

3b. Economic Activation:

- o Strategically locate library services near commercial centres for economic activity.
- o Organise entrepreneurial development workshops and support services.
- o Actively engage and partner with institutions to foster collaboration and drive sustainable economic impact within our community.

4.

Equity, Access & Inclusion

The Central Coast Library Service is committed to creating equitable access for all by fostering an environment that welcomes diversity and removes barriers to participation. We ensure that every individual including people with disability, Aboriginal people, older people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) and LGBTIQ+ communities can engage with our resources, spaces, and programmes.

4a. Accessible Design and services:

- o Increase physical and digital accessibility standards (e.g, ramps, screen readers, large-print materials, multilingual resources).
- o Implement digital accessibility (e.g, accessible format of our information and compliance with current WCAG version for assistive technologies to translate)
- o Accessible and inclusive resources (eg. large-print materials, multilingual resources, sensory kits).
- o Provide adaptive technologies for users with disability eg. magnifiers, large screen, high vis keyboards

4b. Inclusive and representative collections:

- o Curate materials that reflect diverse cultures, languages, and perspectives.
- o Regularly review collections to ensure inclusivity and relevance.

4c. Community Engagement and Outreach:

- o Partner with local organisations to target and reach underrepresented groups.
- o Offer programmes tailored to different age groups, cultural backgrounds, and abilities (e.g., inclusive story times, cultural events, digital literacy workshops).
- o Co-design programs with different representative groups



5d. Promotion and raising awareness of our accessible & inclusive library services:

- o Use non traditional communication and promotional practices to target hard to reach groups
- o Provide information and messaging in accessible formats eg. Easy Read versions, Auslan interpretation, train staff in producing accessible PDF's and other documentation.

Our community



Disability

There are around **22,000** people on the Central Coast (about **6.4%** of us) who need help in their day-to-day lives due to disability



12.3%

A language other than English spoken at home



Top 3 Age Groups

6.5%

60-64 years

6.5%

55-59 years

6.4%

50-54 years



4.9%

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander population

Action Plan

Focus Area	Action	Indicative Timeframe	Objective
Service Excellence			
1a Optimised Service delivery model	i. Develop a hybrid library delivery model that includes fixed branches, library points of presence, mobile libraries, and digital access through Library Infrastructure Plan.	Short term	1
	ii. Expand Library@YourTime Initiative to additional locations (Eg Tuggerah, Gosford).	Short term	1
	iii. Extend Library@YourTime hours of operation.	Medium term	1
	iv. Review spread of branch opening hours through community consultation.	Short term	1, 2
1b Library Infrastructure	i. Develop a Library Infrastructure Plan that addresses the future state of Central Coast Libraries points of presence across the LGA in line with the individual needs of established and developing areas.	Short term	1
	ii. Continue to invest in the ongoing maintenance of current library infrastructure.	Ongoing	1
	iii. Identify underserved and developing areas in the development of Library Infrastructure Plan.	Short term	1
	iv. Identify Library Infrastructure that may require upgrades in Library Infrastructure Plan.	Short term	1
	v. Consideration of break out spaces, flexible study places in Infrastructure planning.	Short term	1
1c Workforce Planning	i. Review current staffing model to better reflect Living Learning Libraries and service sustainability.	Medium term	1
	ii. Encourage cross functional staffing model and flexible workforce.	Ongoing	1
	iii. Review Library Outreach and Library Technology and Support staffing to better manage and monitor diverse access points.	Long term	1
	iv. Assess resourcing impacts of implementing this strategy and identify options for building staff capacity to deliver actions.	Short term	1, 2
1d Customer Centric Service	i. Encourage customer service focus including warm welcome at entry, proactive engagement and quality service and advice	Short term	1
	ii. Provide ongoing staff training to build preparedness and resilience for managing critical incidents, including lockdowns, inappropriate behaviours, and vulnerable community needs.	Short term	1
	iii. Provide training to library staff on cultural sensitivity, inclusivity, and effective communication, to help create an environment where all visitors feel welcomed, respected, and valued.	Short term	1
	iv. Foster an environment of continuous learning among staff to adapt to evolving needs.	Short term	1, 2

NR: Not required.

Focus Area	Action	Indicative Timeframe	Objective
Lifelong Learning			
2a Collection and Resources.	i. Customise branch collections and programs for the unique requirements of their communities.	Ongoing	1, 2
	ii. Undertake a collection development survey to gain a more in depth understanding of specific collection needs and demands, including preferred formats, informed by a locally based program needs assessment.	Short term	1
	iii. Expand Local History Archive collection.	Ongoing	1
	iv. Digitise Local History Archives.	Long term	1
	v. Further utilise digital platforms to extend program reach and engage a wider audience.	Ongoing	1
	vi. Develop LOTE (Languages Other Than English) and CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) collections and resources to support cultural inclusivity.	Ongoing	1
	vii. Expand Library of Things across the Library Service.	Ongoing	1
2b Encourage Library Membership and Community Engagement	i. Develop a compelling membership proposition.	Ongoing	2
	ii. Develop a marketing plan, inclusive of consistent Library sub brand collateral.	Ongoing	2
	iii. Design and deliver a targeted membership campaign showcasing current and future benefits.	Short term	2
2c Social Activation and Programming	i. Deliver a diverse annual program catering to different age groups, interests, and backgrounds, to encourage diverse participation and interactions.	Ongoing	2
	ii. Forge partnerships with local organisations and community centres to create synergistic and co-hosted programs.	Ongoing	2
	iii. Collaborate with cultural institutions and artists to raise cultural awareness and provide creative outlets, for example, art installations and cultural performances in library.	Ongoing	2
	iv. Address holistic wellbeing, promoting mental, emotional, and physical health through wellness programs in partnership with local providers.	Ongoing	1, 2
	v. Establish annual programming that enhances community access and development in technology.	Ongoing	1
	vi. Host and promote joint events and initiatives to enhance community cohesion.	Ongoing	2
	vii. Further utilise digital platforms to extend program reach and engage a wider audience.	Ongoing	1, 2

Action Plan

Focus Area	Action	Indicative Timeframe	Objective
Innovation			
3a Community wide access to technology and creativity.	i. Continue to improve free access to Wi-Fi and public computers across the Library service.	Ongoing	1
	ii. Provide staff with training in the use of MakerSpace Equipment, Sound Studio and AV technology.	Ongoing	1
	iii. Enhance interactive technologies across the library service.	Medium term	1
	iv. Establish interactive digital archives in the Local History Room.	Medium term	1
3b Library Infrastructure	i. Strategically assess library service distance to commercial centres as part of Library Infrastructure Plan.	Short term	2
	ii. Include entrepreneurial development workshops and support services in annual programming.	Medium term	1
	iii. Actively engage and partner with institutions to foster collaboration and drive sustainable economic impact within our community.	Ongoing	1, 2
Equity, Access & Inclusion			
4a Accessible Design and services:	i. Provide staff training to engage effectively and appropriately with diverse communities.	Medium term	1, 2
	ii. Provide adaptive technologies for people living with disabilities.	Medium term	1
	iii. Consult relevant groups in the development of any facility designs or enhancements.	Ongoing	1, 2
	iv. Address any additional included in the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026-2030.	Ongoing	1
4b Diverse and representative collections:	i. Curate materials that reflect different age groups, cultural backgrounds and people with disability.	Ongoing	1
	ii. Annually review source collections to ensure relevance.	Short term	1
4c Community Engagement and Outreach	i. Offer programmes tailored to different age groups, cultural backgrounds, and abilities (e.g., inclusive story times, cultural events, digital literacy workshops, Auslan interpreted programs) in annual programming.	Short term	1
	ii. Identify and partner with local community organisations to reach underrepresented groups.	Ongoing	1, 2

NR: Not required.





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