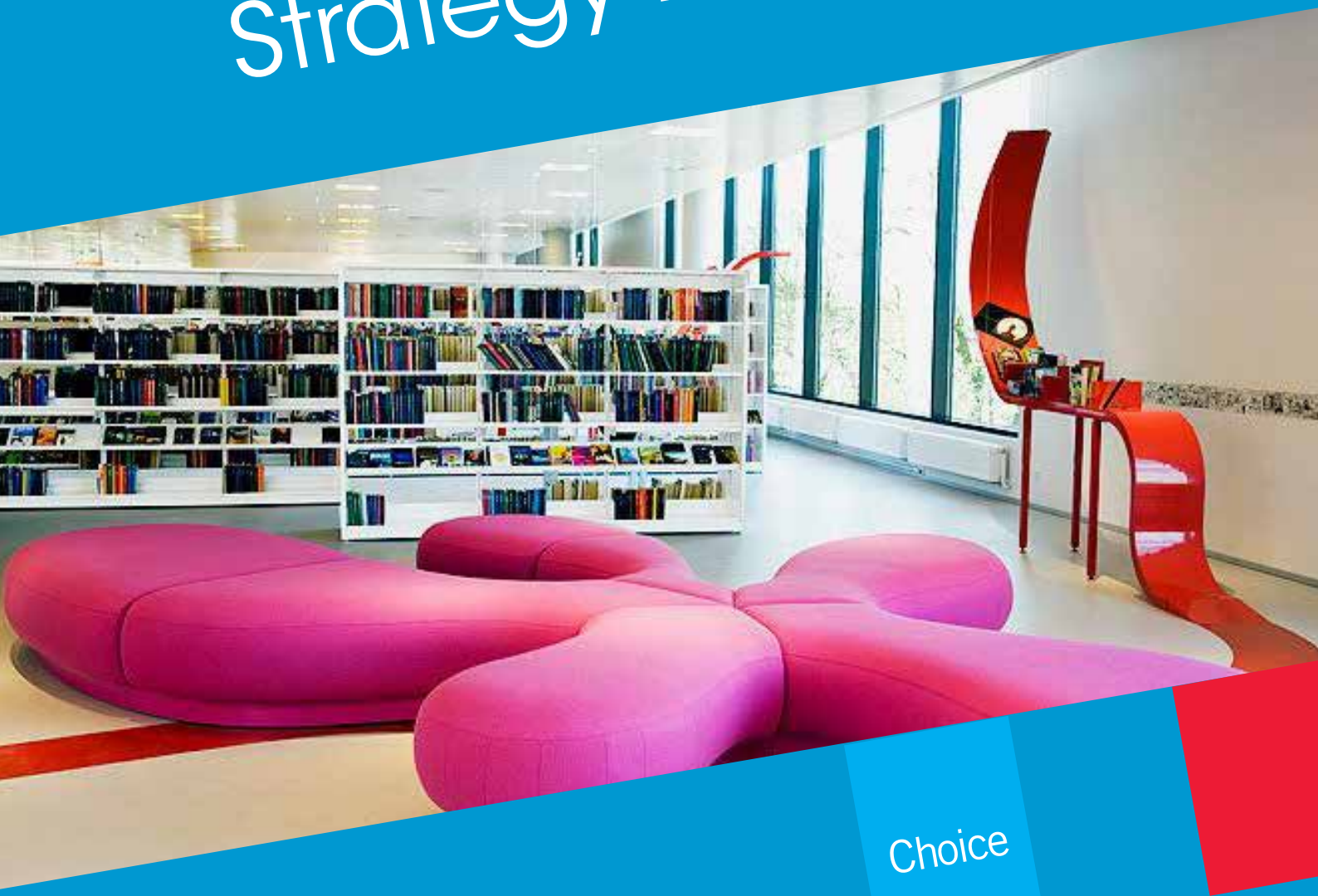
Shellharbour CITY LIBRARIES

Libraries & Museum Strategy 2024



Choice

Connect

Lifestyle

Shellharbour CITY COUNCIL

Message from the Mayor

I have always placed great value in public libraries. I believe they are an important resource for the community, providing access to information, books of all sorts, music, computers and ideas. It is for this reason that I am very pleased to present Shellharbour City Libraries and Museum Strategy 2024.

I believe libraries are essential for every community and are an important foundation of our democracy. This strategy is a key document for the community and enables our library and museum services to be active hubs for knowledge, creativity and innovation that connect communities.

Shellharbour City Libraries and Museum Strategy 2024, is informed by the opportunities available to public libraries in the digital age and has been shaped by an extensive community consultation process.

Staff and community participated in focus groups, workshops, one-on-one conversations and 332 responses were received through our online surveys. The community voiced strong demand and support for Shellharbour libraries and the move of Tongarra Museum to the City Hub.

Importantly, we listened to what the community told us. Our libraries now more than ever need to be flexible, relevant and responsive to meet the needs of our diverse and dynamic community. The result is a series of strategies that will serve the residents of our city over the next 10 years and beyond.

Council is committed to ensuring everyone in our community has access to libraries and has opportunities to connect, explore and discover a world of learning through our libraries and museum. This strategy will ensure our libraries and museum remain relevant and of value to all residents.

I would like to thank all those who participated and contributed valuable input and would encourage all residents to join your local library!

Marianne Saliba

Cr Marianne Saliba
Mayor Shellharbour City

Introduction

Shellharbour City Libraries & Museum Strategy 2024 has been developed to provide a direction on the future of our Libraries, ensuring they are flexible, responsive and meet the needs of our dynamic and diverse community. It has strong emphasis on not only the new City Library, but also on the development of our branch libraries. The Strategy is designed to guide Council's planning and investment for libraries and the museum over the next ten years.

The strategy builds on our past achievements and new trends in libraries. It has been developed using information provided by the community during consultation, demographic analysis and research into best practice models. The strategy reflects what our libraries need to be in the age of e-readers and broadband.
Contemporary libraries provide:

- **spaces and places and ways for people to interact and meet**
- **platforms to collaborate, create and generate ideas and digital content**
- **engagement with customers through online library services, library apps and social media**
- **emerging technology and ways for people to learn how to use it**

Our libraries are closely associated with books, reading and literacy. This will remain important for all our libraries. Additionally libraries have evolved into spaces and places that offer more. People gather and communicate, learn and discover, connect and play in both physical and virtual spaces. Our libraries will exist physically in actual locations and also exist virtually. The strategy will position our libraries and museum to continue to be in both spaces, changing with the community.

Our central library incorporating museum and heritage services will support the four branch libraries. It will be a hub and spoke model of libraries, whereby the City Library and Museum will support the branches by providing centralised services including:

- **collection management and promotions**
- **programs and activities development**
- **heritage, family and local history services**
- **home library and special needs services**
- **cutting edge technology**

A snapshot - where we are now

There has been no new library building in Shellharbour City since 1986 when the population of the City was 43,872.

Library	Built	Size	Challenges of current locations
Warilla	1968	795m2	• not purpose built as library • inappropriately located away from the main destination points of the suburb • not co-located with other community services or facilities such as retail centre • limited pedestrian traffic and visibility • inadequate external signage
Shellharbour	1961 and moved to remodelled Baby Health Centre in 1996	65m2	• not purpose built as library • can accommodate only up to eight customers • accommodates inadequate collection • cannot accommodate wheelchairs, prams etc • no space for reading or activities
Albion Park	1986 and extended in 1994	465m2	• set back from street and not easily seen • signage inadequate not easily seen from street or footpath • separated by front carpark and street from shopping precinct • library entrance too far from the carpark and not easily seen
Oak Flats	1976	405m2	• uninviting exterior • inaccessible doorway • inaccessible central sunken area • inflexible smaller rooms and second doorway/ porch
Tongarra Museum	1987	100m2	• research collections separated from library local history collections • only 60m2 exhibition space • no space for learning activities • insufficient and unsatisfactory storage • no space for conservatorial work

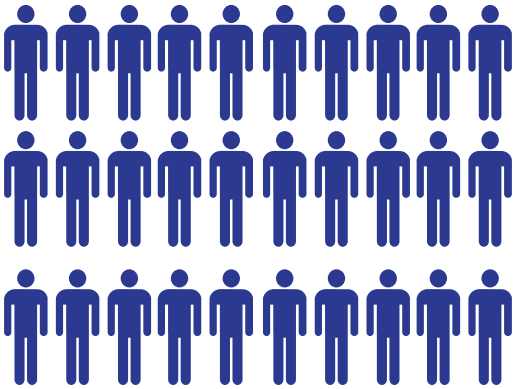
The existing libraries were designed for the purpose of book storage, a small “children’s corner” for story-times and a service desk for loans to be manually issued and returned. Collections were developed on a “just in case” basis, wherein libraries stored as many resources as possible, just in case they were ever needed.

At the 2011 census the population was 63,605. Demographics and community needs have changed dramatically since our libraries and museum were built, while leaps in technology have impacted on all our lives, changing the way we work, play, think, discover and create. Library collections now reflect a “just in time” philosophy, wherein many resources are not stored physically but made available as and when required.

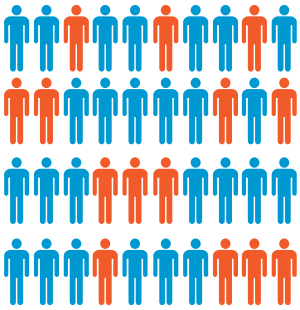
Our collections, programs and services have struggled to keep pace with community expectation, and are limited by our aged and cramped buildings and by low budgets.

A snapshot - where we are now

63,605 Shellharbour's total population *(ABS, 2011)*



Of which **35%**



are Library Users

Which is below the NSW State average of

44%

and below the National average of

45%

174,625
Total visitors 2012/2013

358,712
Total loans 2012/2013

Public internet use

wWw.

2008/2009:
16,983 hours

2012/2013:
25,007 hours

In 2012/2013 we had

2.6 visits per capita

53% of NSW State average

50% of National average

In 2012/2013 we had

5.4 loans per capita

83% of NSW State average

65% of National average

In 2012/2013 we had a budget of

$ per capita

Shellharbour Libraries $28.08

State average $45.19

National average $36.00

Ranking Shellharbour 96 out of 99 in the state

Smaller budgets lead to...

- **Fewer open hours**
- **Fewer staff**
- **Less technology, maintenance and collection development**

What the community said about its libraries:

To provide libraries that are relevant to the community, Council undertook a series of broad consultations, demographic analysis and research into best practice libraries.

Questions posed to our community were:

Q1. How can we make our libraries the best? What could that include? What would that look like?

Q2. Should we have a community driven space?
Should our libraries be places of learning, play and creating or should they be something else?

Q3. Where (location) and when (hours) should we have them?

Q4. One day my library will…

The following provides a summary of what our community said as part of this process:

The community said that the things they like best about the libraries were:

- that they were close and convenient with easy access
- friendly, helpful staff and good service
- friendly, community environment at the libraries and it's a good place for children
- quiet relaxing atmosphere
- membership is free
- wide selection of books and services and they can find everything they need
- free computer use and internet access.

What the community said they like the least were:

- limited opening hours and no return chutes
- collection too small
- library buildings too small or too old
- lack of space was a major limitation in some libraries
- no place for study or research
- no meeting rooms or spaces to learn activities

The community told us that their ideal library would be:

- flexible, modern and welcoming spaces
- local, accessible and co-located with other facilities
- a space to learn, create and attend programs for children through to adults
- free Wifi and computer access
- meeting rooms, study rooms and quiet areas for reading, research and study
- longer opening hours and return chutes
- more books and resources, available in a variety of formats
- training in new technology and access to emerging technology
- dedicated children's and youth spaces
- online and through apps 'Shellharbour libraries on the go'
- interactive spaces, community art and displays

Where we need to be:

Our key strategies 2013 - 2024

In response to what our community told us, our demographic analysis and research into best practice in libraries and museums three main strategic themes have emerged.

Strategy 1: The community feels connected

- Build communities around reading and learning
- Preserve, share and celebrate our heritage and community memory
- Actively seek new partnerships and collaboration
- Reach out and engage our community where they are

Strategy 2: Provide choice for the community

- Provide relevant and responsive collections
- Provide a choice of inclusive and accessible libraries
- Deliver a digital branch

Strategy 3: The community can access clever technology

- Maximise technology
- Provide opportunities to learn about emerging technologies

What does this mean for our libraries?

Libraries as community living rooms…

We will develop an action plan to deliver these strategies.

We must ensure our city library and branch libraries are well positioned and designed. There is a need to review floor plans and current locations to improve flexibility and form an effective hub for connecting the community and individual participation.

Our libraries will incorporate:

- **Movable furniture and shelving**
- **Meeting space or study space equipped with technology**
- **Wifi hotspots and charging points**
- **Roving customer service**
- **Community art and community display areas with tracking, and space for digital installations**
- **User friendly signage and promotional material**
- **Concept of 'living rooms' that provide a variety of spaces for individuals to collaborate and feel comfortable**
- **Quality retail style display layout featuring high turnover popular materials at the front and in other high traffic areas throughout the library to attract customers and create demand.**
- **Floating collections that will move between each library to provide different choices to communities**
- **Lifelong learning programs and activities**
- **Environmental design and leadership**

2016

City Library and Museum

The City Library will be a purpose built central library as part of the City Hub project on the corner of College and Cygnet Avenues. It will be accessible, highly visible and the location will accommodate a wide range of community and cultural functions.

Shellharbour's Tongarra Museum was established in 1988 and is currently located at Albion Park. The Museum has outgrown this building and has little space for exhibition development, public program development and conservation.

Tongarra Museum will re-locate to the City Hub and co-locate with the new City Library in a purpose built one stop heritage shop which will include both museum and local studies resources and facilities. The staff, resources and exhibitions of the Tongarra Museum will be relocated to the City Library.

The City Museum will become the focal point for Shellharbour's history and heritage and the centre for the city's collective community memory.

Warilla Library will remain as a branch library, and the central library services, staff and resources will be relocated to the City Library.

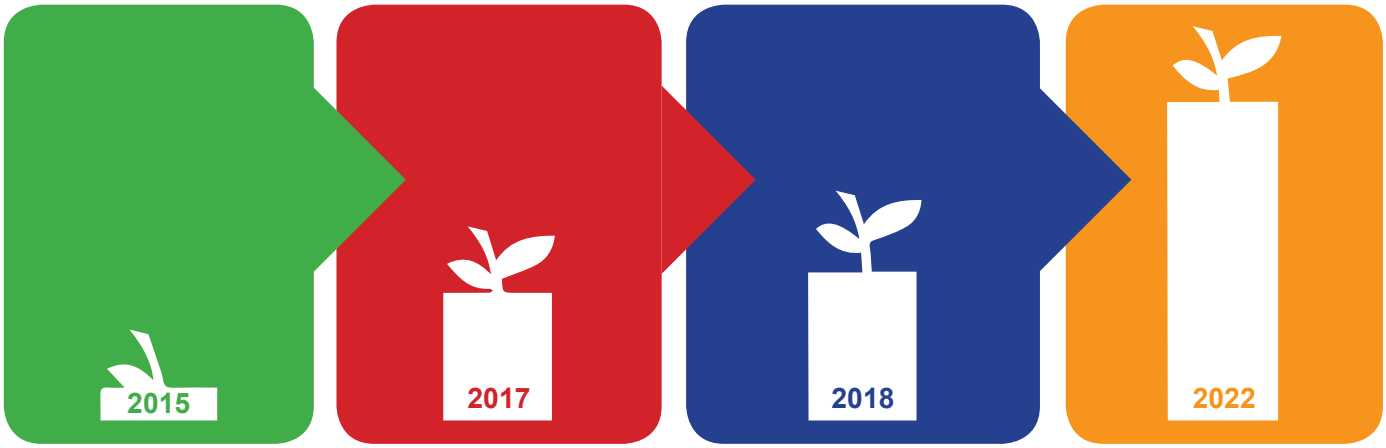
Digital Library

Our digital services will be available 24/7. The community will be able to download eBooks, eMagazines, eAudiobooks and eMusic, as well as access authoritative information from a varied range of databases for all ages and education levels. Our various social media platforms will provide a digital space to find out what's on at the libraries, to attend virtual events and to interact with staff and with each other. Library and Museum apps will enable remote and mobile access to libraries and museum services.

A city library means better branches

What does this mean for our branches?

The City Library is integral to the success of revitalising the branch libraries and maximising the investment that is made in them.The community, Councillors and staff have strongly expressed the view that branch libraries will remain an essential part of the community. Extensive community engagement and best practice has provided guidance into the preparation of recommendations for each branch library. Indicative time frames have been identified for the renewal of our branch libraries.



Oak Flats Library

Oak Flats Library will be retained at its current location and accessibility and layout will be improved.

Oak Flats Library is a well located, highly visible, busy village library that plays an important role in activating the main street. The library will receive basic refurbishments including a new service counter and altered entrance to meet accessibility standards. Interior flexibility will be improved to help future-proof the library and provide spaces for activities, programs and technology.

Warilla Library

Warilla Library will be redeveloped on the current site or in close proximity to current location.

The current Warilla Library was not purpose built as a library and has a number of constraints. Extensive modifications and remodelling would be required if this building were retained. Community consultation indicated a preference for the current precinct, which is a convenient and accessible location. However, there is a need to move the library to have higher visibility and street frontage. The renewal of Warilla Library is dependent on the redevelopment of the site.

Shellharbour Library

Shellharbour Village Library will be relocated to The Waterfront, Shell Cove, co-located with other community facilities and visitors centre. The library's home library service will be expanded to provide for the Village's ageing residents' needs.

Shellharbour Village Library was built as a baby health centre in 1961 before being internally redesigned as a library in 1996. At 65m2, it is only 34% of the minimum recommended size of 190m2 for any branch library and about 12% of the 580m2 recommended for the projected population of the catchment in 2018. The relocation to Shell Cove is dependent on The Waterfront town centre development.

Albion Park Library

Albion Park Library will be extended at its current location and a library at Calderwood will not be supported.

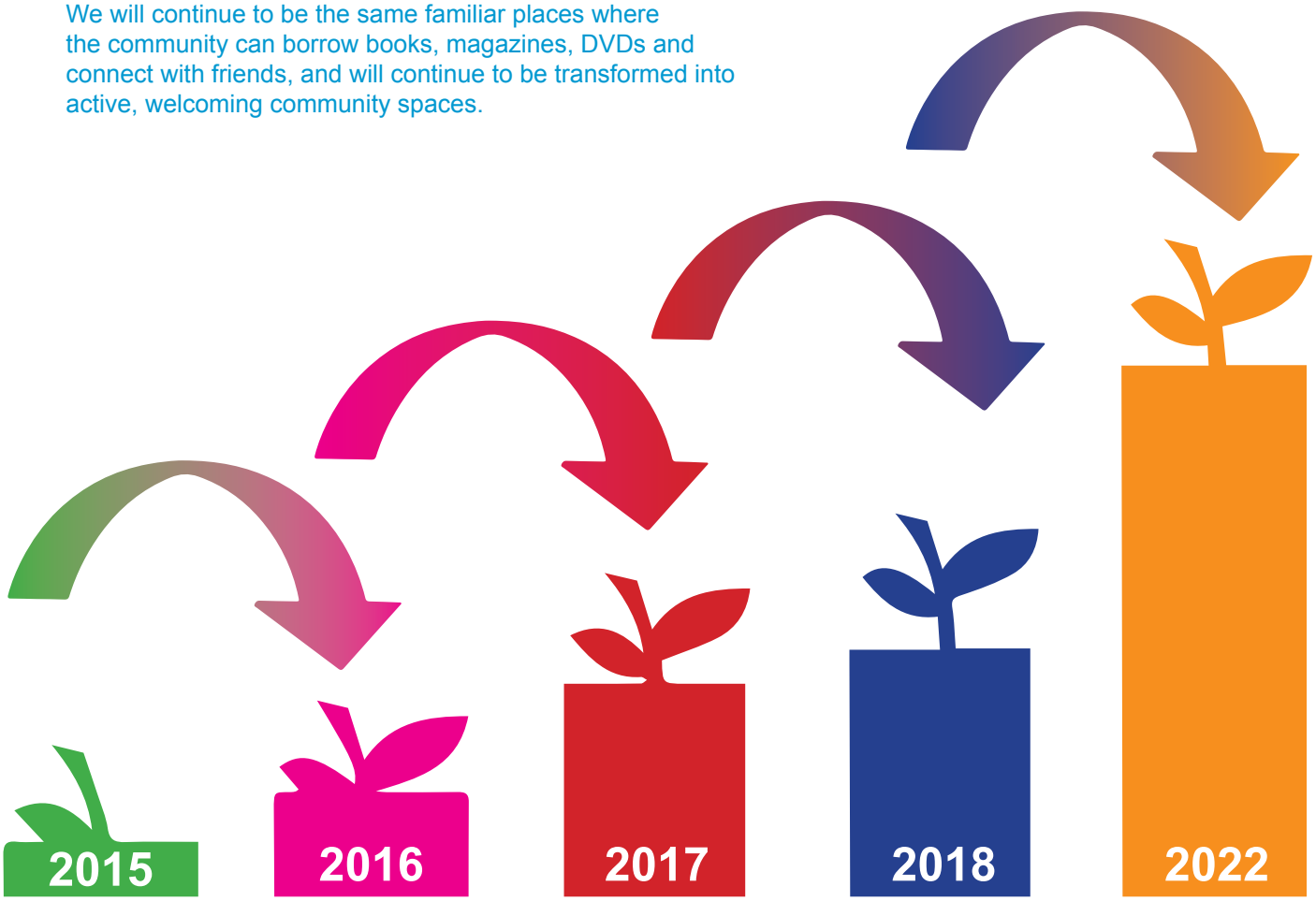
Albion Park Library is well located close to other community facilities and the local shopping centre, making it convenient for residents. The library will be refurbished and extended to meet the growing needs of the community and to provide technology and creative spaces. The extension will be part of the master planning of the entire precinct to provide shared benefits with the other community buildings and improve functionality of services operating in this location. As part of the extensions the entrance of the library will moved near the car park to improve access and visibility.

Conclusion

We're living in an exciting time for libraries and the communities they serve. All over the world libraries continue to evolve, becoming active community hubs for lifelong learning, connecting with others, and accessing resources and technology. Here in Shellharbour, the planned City Library and Museum, together with our network of local branches and ever expanding technological options, will enable us to evolve into this new and necessary role. This strategy will position Shellharbour City Libraries and Museum to open a world of possibilities for our community.

The Future

We will continue to be the same familiar places where the community can borrow books, magazines, DVDs and connect with friends, and will continue to be transformed into active, welcoming community spaces.



Oak Flats Library

Current location
Floor leveled
Flexible and accessible
Comfort
Activities
How-to classes
Technology
Recreation
Interest groups
School outreach
Arts and crafts

City Library & Museum

Iconic
Comfort
Community space
Wide range of technology
Multimedia
Meeting rooms
Exhibitions
Heritage
Family history
Programs
Activities
Maker spaces

Warilla Library

Rebuilt
Current site or nearby
High visibility
Technology hub
Wifi
Community life-long learning
Literacy
Meeting space
Comfortable space and furniture

Shellharbour Library

Rebuilt
Spacious
Recreation
Programs
Events
Community learning
Technology
Training
Children's space
Youth space
Co-located with community centre

Albion Park Library

Extended
Refurbished
Comfort
Technology
Creative spaces
Genre shelving
Partnerships
Children's space
Youth culture
Multimedia

Shellharbour CITY LIBRARIES

connect • choice • lifestyle

Connect with us

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