



A STRATEGY FOR OUR
LIBRARIES, MUSEUM
AND GALLERY -

2020-2023

LIBRARY

MUSEUM

GALLERY



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Coffs Harbour City Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet, the Gumbaynggirr people, who have cared for this land since time immemorial. We pay our respects to their elders, past, present and emerging, and commit ourselves to a future with reconciliation and renewal at its heart.

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“Supporting a culture of creativity is essential for New South Wales to succeed in a global innovation economy, but for culture to truly flourish it needs a home – places where it can be created, shared and enjoyed. Cultural infrastructure – theatres, galleries, museums, libraries, archives, community halls, cinemas, public art and outdoor events spaces – brings culture into our communities and makes it accessible for all of us.”

Don Harwin, NSW Arts Minister, 2019, Cultural Infrastructure Plan 2025+

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CATALYST FOR CULTURE

GIINAGAY!

The City of Coffs Harbour supports a library service comprising three branches; a regional art gallery, which has a national presence and reputation; and a regional museum.

Our Library, Museum and Gallery (LMG) cultural services are well used and well loved by the people who use, visit and care for them. The purpose of the *Library Museum Gallery (LMG) Strategy* is to position these services for the future, and to extend their offerings and value to all residents and visitors to the Coffs Harbour region.

People have told us that an ambitious, growing and diverse city like ours deserves first-rate cultural facilities and services.

The *LMG Strategy* ensures that our cultural services – libraries, regional gallery and regional museum – have a transition plan in place until the planned Cultural and Civic Space opens in 2022.

Our libraries, gallery and museum will continue to offer a range of services, exhibitions and programs over this time, as well as trialling new things.

The LMG Strategy supports 21st-century skills development for our staff, volunteers, and all members of our communities.

We welcome your feedback.



People have told us that an ambitious, growing and diverse city like ours deserves first-rate cultural facilities and services.



MUSEUM

M



GALLERY

G

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Coffs Harbour supports a library service comprising three branches: the Harry Bailey Memorial Library in Coffs Harbour; and smaller branch libraries in Woolgoolga and Toormina. It supports a regional art gallery, which has a national presence and reputation, and a regional museum.

In early 2016, Coffs Harbour City Council integrated three cultural services into one entity, Libraries Museum Gallery (LMG).

The purpose of the *LMG Strategy 2020-2023* is to position these services for the future, and to extend their offerings and value to all residents and visitors to the Coffs Harbour region.

SECTION ONE: CONTEXT

The LMG strategy addresses a world, region and city in transition.

Section One identifies four national trends that have particular relevance for the City's libraries, museum and gallery:

- digital disruption
- inter-generational opportunities
- smart cities and communities
- expanded participation in arts, culture and creativity, including domestic and international arts tourism.

Each trend presents challenges, uncertainties and regional possibilities.

New opportunities for learning, creativity, cultural tourism and regional growth are canvassed. Some of these possibilities are already highlighted in regional plans for the North and Mid-North Coast regions of NSW.

The North Coast Regional Plan 2036, for example, describes how the 'vibrant cosmopolitan hearts' represented by the four regional cities of Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie, Lismore and Tweed Heads will contribute to its success. Significant population growth, jobs, transport infrastructure, education and health facilities, community and cultural infrastructure, and digital connectivity are concentrated in these cities. The Regional Plan emphasises the important role culture plays in creating identity, opportunity and local character.

Coffs Harbour City Council has forward looking plans in relation to regional growth, economic, cultural and community development, tourism, infrastructure, digital technologies and innovation.

By 2036, the population is estimated to be 96,000. There are population growth hotspots designated for Woolgoolga, Bonville and Sawtell. Agriculture, manufacturing and the service industries are predicted to grow. The creative industries across the North and Mid-North Coasts are likely to expand, offering niche opportunities to creative start-up ventures both big and small.

Creative Coffs: Cultural Strategic Plan 2017-2022 (2017) argues that ongoing investment in arts, culture and the creative industries will seed new opportunities for creatives, communities, businesses and tourists. These forward-looking plans reinforce state and region-wide strategies. The City's cultural services are an integral part of regional and city future plans.

LMG cultural services support learning, creativity, culture and tourism by:

- supporting people in transition- into retirement, into contemporary work, from one industry to another
- providing access to technology, wifi, study and learning spaces
- offering lifelong learning opportunities and resources, skills, digital inclusion and support
- building partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, multicultural communities, arts and cultural organisations
- complementing educational institutions by providing authoritative information, knowledge and research skills; reading and literacy programs; history and heritage resources
- supporting lively civic spaces, active citizenship, cultural stimulation
- supporting artists, writers and the creative industries; complementing cultural and arts tourism initiatives
- supporting the liveability of the Coffs Harbour region by nurturing cultural diversity, community engagement, and equitable access to cultural experiences.

The LMG strategy addresses a world, region and city in transition

SECTION ONE

Context: world, region and city in transition. Four national trends:

1. Digital disruption;
2. Inter-generational opportunities;
3. Smart cities and communities;
4. Expanded participation in arts, culture and creativity, including domestic and international arts tourism.

SECTION TWO

Research: cultural research and community outcomes.

Strategic priorities.
Case studies.

SECTION THREE

Strategy: *LMG Strategy 2020-2023*.

Vision and mission statement.

Five action areas: invigorate, connect, learn, collect, remember.

SECTION TWO: RESEARCH

In developing the LMG Strategy, over 1,000 people participated in online surveys, workshops, interviews and meetings. There is a consensus view that the City of Coffs Harbour needs to expand its cultural facilities and services.

The City does not currently have enough spatial flexibility and scale across its cultural services. Its libraries are too small and have few meeting, study or break-out spaces; its regional gallery is too small and has restrictive registration and art handling spaces; the regional museum struggles with visibility, visitation, and object storage and conservation in its current location. There is a consistent view that LMG has an excellent and highly professional staff cohort. However, the ability to advance service improvement will require additional expertise and resourcing in a number of key areas.

The research shows majority support for the proposed Cultural and Civic Space Project. The Cultural and Civic Space is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to deliver an aspirational, multi-purpose cultural facility and meeting place in the heart of Coffs Harbour's CBD. The Cultural and Civic Space will help rectify a historic under-investment in library, museum and gallery services relative to the size of Coffs Harbour as an ambitious regional city.

A number of short case studies are also presented. They highlight the economic, social and cultural benefits various regional cities in NSW and Victoria have generated by investing in cultural infrastructure, precincts and people.

SECTION THREE: STRATEGY

Section Three outlines the *LMG Strategy 2020-2023*.

The Cultural and Civic Space Project provides the means by which LMG can realise its vision for the City and its people. The strategy ensures that attention given to the project does not obscure improvements needed across all three cultural services, now and over the next three years.

The strategy has five action areas: invigorate, connect, learn, collect and remember. These action areas are supported by a range of practical objectives. Importantly, the strategy focuses on the transitional planning needed to prepare for the opening of the Cultural and Civic Space in 2022.

The LMG cultural services are well used and well loved by the people who utilise, visit and care for them. People who live in the City of Coffs Harbour are ambitious for the future of their cultural services. In their view, these are essential services in contributing to a regional city that is multifaceted, inclusive, thoughtful, creative, vibrant, joyful and democratic.

LMG STRATEGY OVERVIEW

LMG 2020-2023

The Library Museum Gallery Strategy 2020-2023, in tandem with progress on the Cultural and Civic Space, offers a strategic framework that:

- builds on the foundations already established
- emphasises the importance of partnerships, linkages and networks
- provides a bridge to 2022, when new spaces and possibilities will be realised as part of the Cultural and Civic Space project
- invests in the people, programs and platforms needed to boost creative and cultural potential across the Coffs Harbour region.

The LMG strategy outlines a comprehensive and practical plan of action.

It is grouped around five focal areas: invigorate, connect, learn, collect and remember.

Each action area contains a number of objectives and accompanying actions. They have been arranged across a four-year timeframe in order to build momentum for sustainable and affordable change. A full set of strategy objectives can be found in Appendix Three.

VISION:

Our libraries, museum, and gallery inspire learning, sharing, creativity and inclusion, and are a cornerstone for our community's economic, social and cultural well-being.

MISSION:

We bring people together:

- by inspiring and supporting lifelong-learning, literacy, creativity and cultural expression;
- to find, share, and create knowledge;
- by recognising, preserving, and sharing our diverse histories and stories; and
- by providing welcoming public spaces accessible to all.

The LMG Strategy has five focal areas:

Invigorate

Welcoming spaces and places; engaging programs and exhibitions; a flourishing creative community and cultural economy.

How we will achieve this

- Design and build the Cultural & Civic Space.
- Review and update branch libraries.
- Design pop-up outreach library.
- New cultural partners; new cultural tourism initiatives.
- Invigorate vacant, forgotten spaces with cultural events.
- Improve access to LMG services through better signage, way finding and marketing.

Connect

Cultivating community resilience; mutually supportive partnerships; respecting Aboriginal knowledge, culture, and language; making a positive social and economic impact.

How we will achieve this

- Social impact focus for LMG services and events.
- Joint initiatives with Aboriginal organisations, artists and agencies.
- Strengthen volunteer cohort; support skills development.
- Work with cultural and learning partners to offer more programs and events.

Learn

Championing 21st century literacies – reading, digital, information, visual; discovering the identity of our diverse community.

How we will achieve this

- Support 21st century literacies- reading, digital, information, visual.
- Participate in state-wide reading, poetry, literacy and STEAM initiatives.
- Support research, lifelong learning, self-directed learning.
- Expand range of gallery and museum exhibitions, programs and workshops.
- Strengthen customer service philosophy, practice and skills base.

Collect

Building relevant information resources; prioritising youth interests, community languages, and Aboriginal histories, language, and publications; providing a safe home for museum and art collections.

How we will achieve this

- Expand and deepen library collections.
- Diversify community language and history collections.
- Develop relocation plans for all museum and art collections.
- Develop new cultural collections storage facilities.

Remember

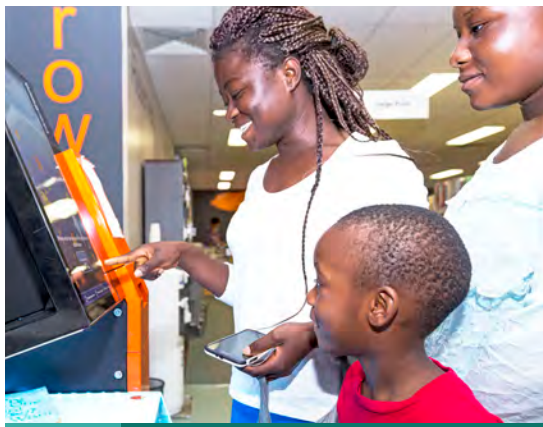
Preserving what is unique and irreplaceable; improving discovery platforms; supporting research.

How we will achieve this

- Implement digitisation project.
- Plan for and design new family history and local studies spaces
- Enable adequate curatorial research time and resources

LMG AT PRESENT

LIBRARY SERVICE	MUSEUM	GALLERY
<p>Three libraries:</p> <p>Coffs Harbour opening hours: Mon-Fri 9:30am – 6:00pm, Sat 9:30am – 2:00pm</p> <p>Toormina and Woolgoolga opening hours: Mon-Fri 9:30am- 5:00pm Sat 9.30am- 12:00pm</p> <p>Visitation (2018/19): 258,560</p>	<p>Location:</p> <p>Harbour Drive, Coffs Harbour</p> <p>Opening hours: Tues-Sat 10:00am – 4:00pm</p> <p>Visitation (2018/19): 3,523</p>	<p>Co-located:</p> <p>With the central library in Rigby House, Coffs Harbour</p> <p>Opening hours: Tues-Sat 10:00am – 4:00pm</p> <p>Visitation (2018/19): 12,548</p>
<p>Staffing: 15.89 (FTE)</p>	<p>Staff: 2.99 (FTE)</p>	<p>Staff: 2.93 (FTE)</p>
<p>Volunteers: 51</p>	<p>Volunteers: 38</p>	<p>Volunteers: 51</p>
<p>Collection highlights:</p> <p>eResources including e-magazines, streaming films, e-books and e-audio books</p> <p>Diversity of formats – books, audiobooks, large print, graphic novels, DVDs, CDs and magazines.</p> <p>Focus collections on sustainable living, digital business and legal information.</p> <p>Current size: 96,233 items</p>	<p>Collection highlights:</p> <p>South Solitary Island Lighthouse First order Optic</p> <p>“Flintstone” wagon, considered to be of State significance.</p> <p>Hardacre Star Taxi. The First motorised taxi in Coffs Harbour</p> <p>Bayldon Collection consisting of textiles and personal effects</p> <p>Korff Collection</p> <p>Sauerstein Collection objects provenanced to South Solitary Island and the lighthouse.</p> <p>Current size: 10,500 objects and 10,800 photographs</p>	<p>Collection highlights:</p> <p>Still Life works acquired through the EMSLA and then STILL award.</p> <p>The collection holds two works by colonial artist William Beulow Gould, a former convict, purchased by the Friends of the Gallery. There are also a small number of other historical works by artists such as Ernest Buckmaster and Judy Cassab</p> <p>The collection also holds works by Sam Leach, Ray Rixon, Peter O’Doherty and Ted Hillyer</p> <p>Current size: 347 artworks</p>
<p>Service highlights:</p> <p>Housebound delivery service, online, free membership, PCs for internet access and self-service facilities</p> <p>Registered members: 35,121 (2018/19)</p>	<p>Recent exhibition highlights:</p> <p>Tasma Theatre</p> <p>Bananas to Beautyzone</p> <p>Stories to Freedom</p>	<p>Recent exhibition highlights:</p> <p>Saltwater Freshwater exhibition</p> <p>New Year New Work</p> <p>STILL: National Still Life Award 2019</p>



LIBRARY SERVICE	MUSEUM	GALLERY
<p>Programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preschool literacy sessions Summer Reading Club iPads and digital literacy Author talks Book clubs Attendance (2018/19): 8,502 	<p>Programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary School program Museum tours Attendance (2018/19): 1,080 	<p>Programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Artist talks and workshops Curator tours STILL National Still Life Award Attendance (2018/19): 2,988
<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated staff and volunteers Local history services using both museum and library resources Large customer base Branch network to service the LGA Digital infrastructure maintained Picture Coffs Harbour 	<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated staff and volunteers Large collection focussed on photographic, maritime, domestic and textile collections and also containing several significant objects. Picture Coffs Harbour 	<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated staff and volunteers Friends of the Gallery Exhibitions – increasing diversity, community engagement and partnerships + STILL Joint programs with the library such as Saltwater Freshwater language and story sessions Success in obtaining donations to the collection
<p>Limitations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central library space 40% of recommended size One meeting room- Woolgoolga No mobile outreach library service, other than housebound deliveries Lowest per capita investment in the North Coast region and the lowest in the state Staffing levels below NSW State Library baseline recommended standards 	<p>Limitations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of visibility on Harbour Drive / isolated facility Poor collection storage over two inadequate sites Current size limitations and space constraints due to heritage building Limited staffing 	<p>Limitations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Size of gallery (too small) No studio/workshop spaces Single gallery space which means that the gallery closes for a week each time the exhibition changes Inadequate storage and exhibition preparation space No loading bay Lack of retail space Limited staffing

SECTION ONE





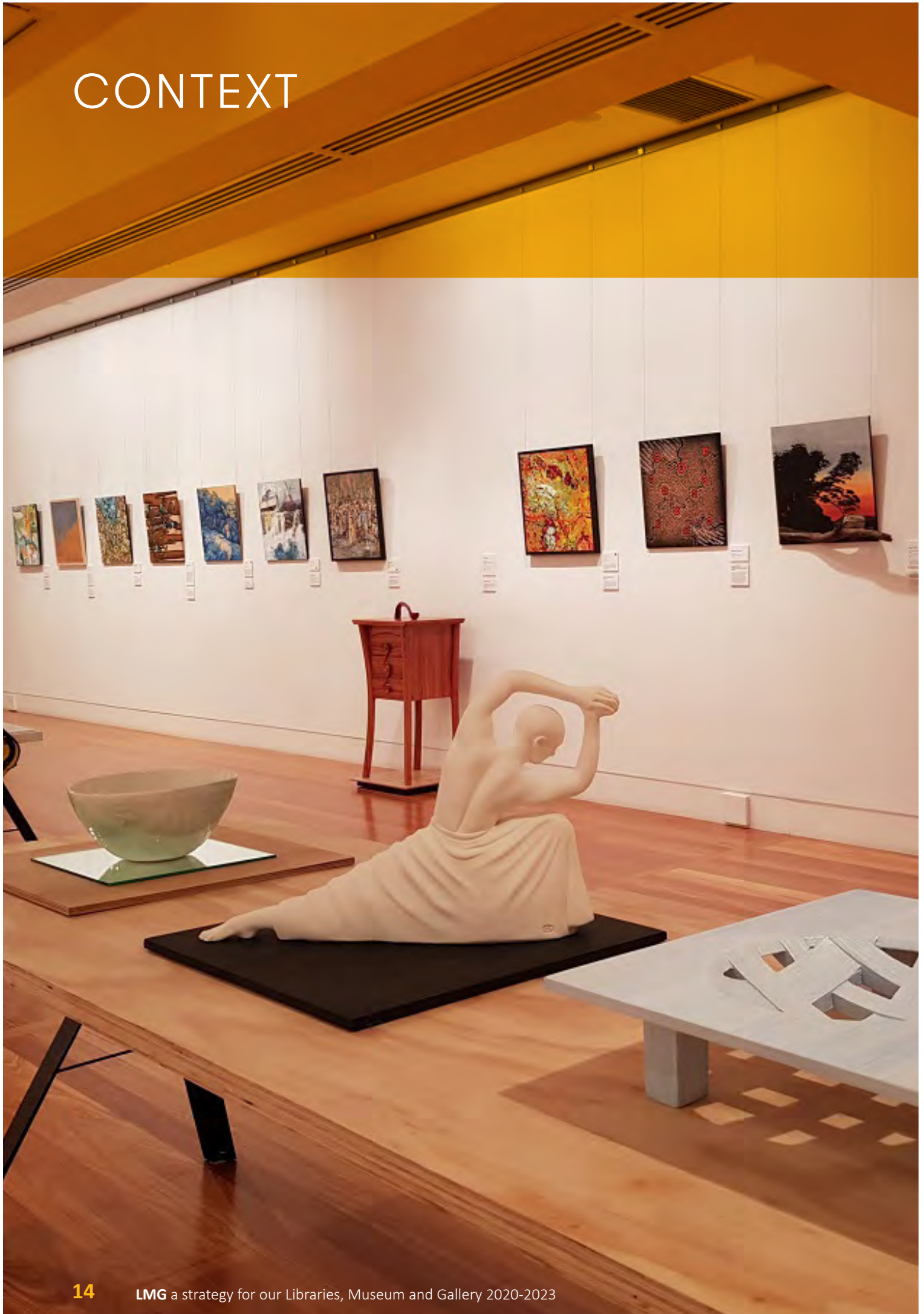
TEXT

Cultural Infrastructure

“Cultural infrastructure includes small community halls, amphitheatres, live music venues and public art and heritage buildings: the places where we come together to create, share, learn, store, practice, purchase, sell or experience culture; places where culture can be grand and formal as well as intimate, spontaneous and unassuming, part of everyday lives”.

Cultural Infrastructure Plan 2025+ (2019)

CONTEXT





By 2030 over 5 million people in the Australian workforce will be affected by digital disruption



Start-up sector is now the largest contributor to job creation in Australia



70% of start-ups are founded by 25-44 year-olds



Gen Z (born between 1995 and 2010) - expected to have 5 different careers and 17 different jobs



80% Older Australians feel younger than their actual age

WORLD IN TRANSITION

Regional economies are buffeted by international and national dynamics, policies and tensions.

While the future is difficult to predict, responses to and debate around the following tensions can be expected:

- energy, water, environmental protection and biodiversity
- population growth, ageing, housing, migration, transport and infrastructure
- work, education, digital disruption
- social cohesion and cultural enrichment.

These are complex issues. Their evolution will have effects across Australia and its regional economies.

A number of trends stand out:

- digital disruption and work
- inter-generational possibilities
- smart cities and communities
- culture counts

DIGITAL DISRUPTION AND WORK

It is estimated that 5.1 million or 46 per cent of the Australian workforce is at risk over the next 10-15 years due to digital disruption. The increasing sophistication of artificial intelligence, machine learning, new forms of automation, and the offshore delivery of numerous support services, pose challenges to national and regional economies, and individual livelihoods. The economic and social consequences of digital disruption will be far-reaching.

Rapid change yields dilemmas, possibilities and contradictions.

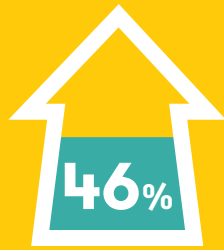
Research into Australia's entrepreneurship culture, for example, argues that around 40 per cent of university graduates, across all disciplines, are seeking to create sustainable employment through start-up enterprises. Universities Australia (2017) estimates a significant proportion of these start-ups are occurring in regional areas.

Start-up founders are well educated; 84.4 per cent have a university qualification, and six per cent have vocational education qualifications. Many start-ups in regional areas are creative enterprises: digital arts, media, art fabrication, architecture, design, photography, fashion, decorative arts, craft, music, performing arts, literature, screen and visual arts. Startups, whether scientific, medical, technology-based or creative, are now the largest contributor to job creation in Australia. Seventy per cent of founders are between 25 and 44 years old.

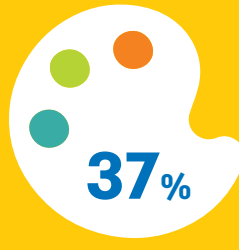
While digital disruption is displacing workers, industries and communities, it can also be an enabler; a medium through which new forms of enterprise, communication, play and learning can occur.



Over **8 million** international tourists visited Australia in 2017 and **3.5 million (43%)** engaged with the arts



Growth of arts tourists between 2013 and 2017



Arts growth rate for international tourist numbers



72% Australians over 15 participated in arts and culture events in 2017



Contribution of creative industries to the Australian economy

INTERGENERATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The CSIRO's *Our Future World global mega trends report (2012)* portrays the upside and downside of an ageing population. Adequate retirement savings, healthcare, aged care options and age discrimination represent serious challenges for ageing Australians. However, Australia's 'forever young' cohort are living and working longer; pursuing active lifestyles and intellectual stimulation; and are a source of experience, wisdom and mentorship.

Moreover, older people do not necessarily feel old. A national research project into ageing (*COTA 2018*) argues that 80 per cent of older Australians feel younger than their actual age. They are eager to remain active citizens and lifelong learners. Nevertheless, 46 per cent feel less valued by society; 29 per cent expect to keep working and never retire; and around 56 per cent of over 65-year-olds are living with at least one vulnerability indicator such as unemployment, low income, disability or poor nutrition.

Alongside the 'forever young' trend is the prediction that Generation Z, born between 1995 and 2010, will outstrip the population bubble represented by post World War Two baby boomers. Digital natives, well educated, likely to have up to five career changes and 17 different jobs during their lifetimes, this generation is predisposed to lifelong learning. They will also need to be resilient self-starters. The world of work they will inhabit requires technological fluency and adaptable digital skills. Importantly, when it comes to 'future-proofing' skills, it is a range of people-oriented skills that are increasingly seen as essential. Critical thinking, creativity, communication, media literacy, leadership and presentation skills are touted as an essential enterprise skills set across the service and creative industries.

While 60 per cent of young Australians undertake post school qualifications, half of Australia's 25-year-olds are either unemployed or under-employed. In NSW, 84,900 young people are struggling to find sufficient paid work.

SMART COMMUNITIES AND CITIES

Technologically enabled cities are achieving new levels of service responsiveness. The Internet of Things, artificial intelligence, augmented reality, robotics, drones, and embedded sensing devices in a plethora of material objects from road surfaces to garbage bins, collect and connect relevant data aimed at improving decision making and service responsiveness.

Smart platforms now deliver concrete results in the form of improved traffic management, emergency response times, driverless cars, air quality, and crime reduction.

Ideas linked to the 'smart city' have, however, often overemphasised the importance of hardware at the expense of people and 'smart' communities. The smart city or community is more than the NBN, technology platforms and digital infrastructure. Smart cities/communities enact what social economist Richard Florida describes as a vibrant combination of technology, tolerance and talent. Smart cities plan for and nurture connected communities.

These smart and connected communities need welcoming places, opportunities to socialise, lively neighbourhoods, and aesthetically enriched learning environments. Research indicates that these attributes are positively correlated with perceptions of liveability and 'loveability'.

It is loveability, researchers argue, that underlines attachment to place and people.

How people feel about a place, and how they interact, has a direct impact on its vibrancy and economic performance.

Why is this important? In times of uncertainty, social cohesion can become a critical marker of resilience and optimism. People gravitate towards cultural meaning, local stories and positive narratives about identity. In addition, local character and distinctiveness become attractors for new residents, tourists, visitors and business.



NSW home to **50%** of creative workforce, around **212,600** people, growing at rate of **3%** per annum



Direct value of arts, screen and culture to NSW (2016/7) and indirectly **\$7.7 billion**



Visitors to Australia's public libraries, or **9.5 million** per month



Return for every dollar spent on libraries



Of NSW community members think culture is important

This is where regional libraries, galleries and museums play a significant and vital role. They invite new social and creative possibilities by offering welcoming, free, knowledge-rich environments in which people gather and learn alongside other people who are both like and unlike them.

Trust is a key ingredient in building connected communities; and trust-generating, publicly-owned places like libraries, museums and galleries represent critical cultural infrastructure.

CULTURE COUNTS

Australians are participating in all forms of cultural life in unprecedented numbers.

The CSIRO (2012) estimates that in the period 2003/4 to 2009/10, weekly expenditure by Australians on art, entertainment and culture increased by 25 per cent, compared to a CPI index of 19 per cent across the same period. This trend towards the 'experience economy', that is, the seeking out of services and experiences over products, shows no sign of diminishing.

The Australia Council for the Arts (2017) estimates that in 2016 around 14 million, or 72 per cent, of Australians over the age of 15 attended an arts or cultural event. Around 98 per cent engaged in the arts in one form or another; 76 per cent read books in print or digital formats; 35 per cent attended a First Nations art or cultural event; and more Australians than ever before believe that the arts – visual, literary, performance, design – are critical to social cohesion, identity, mutual understanding and connection.

This is not just a large city phenomenon either, but equally spread across regional cities and towns.

In line with CSIRO predictions, around 50 per cent of adults surveyed by the Australia Council for the Arts are not just consuming creative arts but participating in creative life. There is dramatic growth in all forms of participative creativity.

People are joining choirs, classes and workshops in photography, digital arts, craft making, hip hop, poetry slams, heritage foods, recycled art, robotics, coding, music making and graffiti art. The boundaries between art appreciation and art making have become increasingly blurred.

In addition, the creative industries are estimated to contribute around \$47.4 billion (2016/7) to the Australian economy.

The NSW Department of Industry (2013/2018) asserts that creative industries in NSW employ more people than agriculture and mining combined. Moreover, NSW is home to nearly 50 per cent of Australia's creative workforce. In 2016, around 120,000 full-time arts and culture workers supported the state's cultural economy.

The direct economic value of arts, screen and culture to the NSW economy was estimated to be \$8.7 billion during 2016/7. Indirect value through flow-on linkages and ancillary services contributed another \$7.7 billion.

Cultural tourism in NSW has grown significantly over the last decade. International cultural tourism has grown by 50 per cent; cultural and heritage tourists (international and domestic) spent over \$12.1 billion in 2016.

Visiting museums and galleries is the most popular form of arts and cultural tourism. Museums and galleries are a readily accessible form of arts engagement for tourists. Three in every ten international visitors to Australia in 2017 visited a museum or gallery while they were here.

More international tourists engage with the arts than visit wineries or casinos, or attend organised sports events.

There is strong and growing potential for the arts to help drive regional tourism. International arts tourists are more likely to visit regional Australia than international tourists overall. Arts tourists are more likely to travel outside capital cities (42%) than overall tourists (34%).



North Coast Region
the most popular regional
visitor destination in NSW



76,000 new residents
will be concentrated in
the cities of Tweed Heads,
Lismore, Coffs Harbour
and Port Macquarie



\$15 billion

Invested in
the Pacific Highway;
upgrades to Ballina,
Coffs Harbour and
Port Macquarie Airports

Australians also love libraries.

Australia’s public libraries attracted over 114 million visits in 2016/7, or more than 9.5 million per month, and 13.2 million online visits. Library programs attracted over 6.1 million participants in the same period. The economic benefit of public libraries is estimated to be \$4.30 for every dollar invested, not to mention the broad social and cultural benefits generated by libraries across Australia.

The digital revolution has not eclipsed but complemented people’s need for places to gather, learn, create, and seek opportunities to contribute to one’s community. As indicated previously, studies have linked such places, spaces and opportunities to positive indicators and drivers of community resilience, cohesion and aliveness.

The concentration of regional investment and opportunity; higher levels of university and vocational education; housing affordability and healthy lifestyles; support for start-up enterprises, innovation and the creative industries; present positive opportunities for regional communities.

“There is a renewed appreciation for the physicality of books and the concrete nature of the library as a repository. Libraries globally are redefining themselves and finding a purpose that goes way beyond housing books. They are doing what the rest of society should be doing but isn’t.”

Susan Orlean, Interview by Caroline Baum,
Sydney Morning Herald, December 2018

* Sources: Context – World in Transition. Bibliography reference numbers: 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37, 39, 40, 42, 43, 46, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56

REGION IN TRANSITION

There is understandable rivalry between regional cities as they compete for a strategic advantage in attracting new residents, industry, funding, health and education services, tourism and attention.

The NSW Government’s North Coast Regional Plan 2036 (2017) describes the North Coast as the third most popular tourist destination in Australia, and the most popular in NSW. The strategy outlines interconnected objectives relating to:

- climate change, environmental protection and renewable energy;
- cross-regional economic growth, regional city development, agriculture, tourism and transport
- housing development, supply and affordability
- vibrant and engaged communities, protecting the North Coast’s heritage, and supporting Aboriginal communities and cultures.

Population predictions estimate that 76,000 new residents will live in the North Coast Region by 2036; two thirds of this growth will be concentrated in the region’s four cities – Tweed Heads, Lismore, Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie.

The City of Coffs Harbour’s current population of 76,879 (2019) is estimated to become 96,087 by 2036, an increase of around 30 per cent.

There are consistent predictions relating to age. People over 65 years of age currently comprise around 20 per cent of all North Coast residents. This is likely to rise to 31 per cent by 2036. Correspondingly, there is a predicted decline in residents aged between 19 and 64.



Connected communities

The North Coast Regional Plan 2036 stresses the importance of maintaining vibrant and engaged communities, and the sense of well being and belonging such communities can nurture.

It urges regional collaboration, and encourages connectivity and collaboration across the region generally, and between Councils in particular.

A focus on the knowledge and creative industries, culture and creativity, provide opportunities for collaboration across the Mid-North Coast.

Arts Mid North Coast estimates that there are approximately 11 million visitor nights spent in the region every year. Attracted to the Mid-North Coast's natural beauty and active lifestyle options, people also eat out, go to markets, use libraries, see exhibitions, and increasingly want to learn more about the region's Aboriginal and European settler histories.

Arts Mid-North Coast has developed fourteen Creative Coast Cultural Trails and has designated various towns, including Sawtell, as 'creative communities'.

Creative ageing programs and intergenerational learning opportunities feature strongly in its advocacy efforts.

The North Coast region has a diverse range of museums, galleries and libraries.

There are different arrangements in place in relation to regional library services. The Mid-North Coast Library Co-Operative is a joint arrangement between Port Macquarie-Hastings and Kempsey Councils. The Clarence Regional Library provides collection development, reference and catalogue services for libraries in the Bellingen and Clarence Valley local government areas. The Coffs Harbour City Council and Nambucca Shire have stand alone library services.

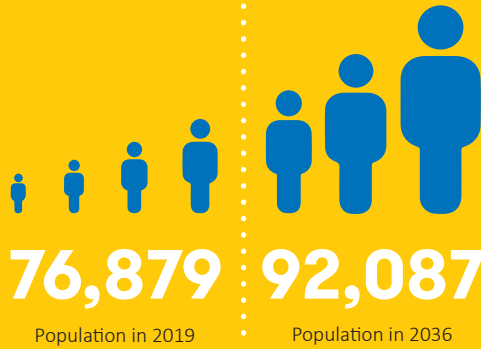
The City of Coffs Harbour is the second largest regional city in the Mid North Coast of NSW, the largest being Port Macquarie-Hastings. Yet, Coffs Harbour's Central Library is 40 per cent of the size recommended by the State Library of NSW; all three libraries have few meeting rooms or quiet study spaces; and the per capita investment in libraries is the lowest in the region (SLNSW 2017).

There are highly regarded regional art galleries throughout the region. Volunteer-assisted regional museums, as well as private galleries and specialist museums, can also be found in most Mid/North Coast cities and towns. Examples include: Glasshouse Regional Gallery at Port Macquarie; Manning Regional Art Gallery; Kempsey Museum; Bangalow Heritage House Museum; Grafton Regional Gallery; Lismore Regional Gallery and Regional Museum; Tweed Regional Gallery and Margaret Olley Art Centre; and the Tweed Regional Museum.

The Coffs Harbour Regional Gallery and Museum, while well regarded and professionally staffed, are still some of the smallest in the region.

In summary, the Mid/North Coast of NSW is well placed to capitalise on a number of distinct trends:

- cultural tourism in the most popular tourist destination in NSW (Destination NSW 2017)
- the strong and growing appetite for cultural experiences and modes of expression- art, history, heritage, craft, live music, performing arts, First Nations' art, music and cultural experiences
- the transformative potential of new technologies, NBN connectivity, the decentralisation of start-up enterprises, and the growth of creative industries
- population growth in the major centres, associated infrastructure and collaborative partnership possibilities.



REGIONAL CITY IN TRANSITION

The Coffs Harbour region is a dynamic area combining spectacular natural beauty with a growing education, light industrial, tourism, cultural, sporting, agricultural and services mixed economy. The region is ambitious, future-oriented and increasingly diverse. The Coffs Harbour Local Government Area spans the ancestral lands of the Gumbaynggirr Nation.

The Gumbaynggirr peoples draw on millennia old practices of cultivating and sharing the resources of what has always been a territory of extraordinary abundance and opportunity, prior to European settlement and since. The Gumbaynggirr peoples have been contemporary leaders in preserving, notating, teaching and distributing Gumbaynggirr dialects through dictionaries, classes, online interactive resources and dreaming stories.

Dynamic Gumbaynggirr arts and cultural experiences are highly valued by residents and tourists. The City of Coffs Harbour hosts the Saltwater Freshwater Arts Alliance, the Yarrawarra Arts and Cultural Centre, the National Aboriginal Design Agency, Bularri Muurlay Nyanggan Aboriginal Corporation, and the well regarded Muurrbay Aboriginal Language and Culture Co-operative is located close by at Nambucca Heads.

The region is rich in cultural diversity and creative production.

The region's festivals, like CurryFest and Harmony Day, proudly display a cultural diversity that has enriched the region. A love of live music, theatre, film, and the visual arts, permeates coastal and hinterland towns and villages.

Preserving this organic and locally grown culture, while encouraging greater visitation, will require a coordinated and strategic approach.

Population growth

In 2019, the population of the City of Coffs Harbour was estimated to be 76,879. By 2036, the population is forecast to grow by around 30 per cent, leading to a population of around 96,087. Over the last decade, Coffs Harbour has welcomed and settled refugees from Africa, the Middle East and South-East Asia, and had significant increases in residents born in India, New Zealand, the Netherlands and Germany. In fact, the period 2011- 2016 has seen the highest number of overseas born arrivals to the Coffs Harbour region than at any other point in its history.

Ethnic diversity is expected to grow over the next two decades. However, the 2016 census results show that the majority of Coffs Harbour residents are of Anglo-Celtic and European descent.

Coffs Harbour has around 3,650 residents identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, with all age groups expanding since the 2011 census.

In terms of age profiles, the region generally shadows the NSW average except in the category of 'empty nesters and retirees', which, at 14 per cent, is slightly higher than the average of 13.1 per cent.

Coffs Harbour and its immediate environs will benefit from population growth, investment in health, education and cultural services, an upgraded Pacific Highway, increased housing options, and an enhanced regional airport.

Coffs Harbour City Council has masterplans in place to accommodate growth in Coffs Harbour's CBD, and for anticipated growth in Woolgoolga and the Northern Beaches. The area around Bonville is also slated for increased housing density. Improvements to the Pacific Highway, including the forthcoming Coffs Harbour bypass, the regional airport, Coffs Harbour Education Campus, hospitals and health facilities, will support existing and new residents, and catalyse opportunities for tourism.

65+

By 2036,
31% region's
population will
be over 60

Visitor economy

In 2018, the Coffs Coast welcomed 94,500 international visitors, and 1.9 million domestic visitors. In terms of nights spent, this equates to 3.1 million domestic and over 840,000 international visitor nights.

The combined tourist spend was around \$547 million.

The Coffs Coast Strategic Tourism Plan 2020 (2016) outlines a strategy to increase these numbers across the two participating local government areas of Coffs Harbour and Bellingen. Destination marketing strategies for the Coffs Coast will differentiate the region by “sharing and presenting the region’s creativity, cultural diversity, authenticity, community values and lifestyles,” (2016).

Council’s *Economic Development Strategy (2017)* has identified three areas of strategic importance in the period up to 2022:

- the digital economy
- food manufacturing and agribusiness
- the visitor economy

It stresses the importance of place and precinct activation, especially in relation to youth and talent retention. Investing in cultural infrastructure has been identified as an important enabler of change and growth, as previous research (*Coffs Coast Tourism Plan 2020*) identified negative visitor perceptions of Coffs Harbour’s ageing infrastructure.

A learning city

Coffs Harbour City Council has been named Australia’s Most Innovative Regional Council at the inaugural WAVE awards in August 2018. Council has displayed leadership in establishing the conditions in which innovative technologies, enterprises and knowledge sharing can flourish. Council’s 6 Degrees initiative has helped support a more vibrant entrepreneurial ecology.

A smart, innovative city also needs to be a creative, learning-oriented city.

The Council’s cultural and learning infrastructure has a critical role to play in fostering an economically and socially sustainable, participative and creative Coffs Harbour region. A place that supports prosperity and opportunity for everyone. This requires ongoing investment in the City’s cultural infrastructure, such as the Cultural and Civic Space, branch libraries, and talented cultural services staff. A combination of good forward planning, capital investment, skilled staff and imaginative programming will yield positive dividends for the City of Coffs Harbour.

Investment in NSW public libraries 2017-8

	POPULATION	OPERATING EXPENDITURE (\$)	PER CAPITA (\$)
Clarence Valley	51,211	1,972,710	38.52
Coffs Harbour	73,892	1,878,429	25.42
Kempsey	29,892	902,222	30.23
Port Macquarie-Hastings	78,967	2,565,837	32.49
Richmond Valley	23,426	802,138	34.24
Tweed	94,011	3,085,267	32.82

Source: State Library of NSW

A FUTURE FOR EVERYONE

The current Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA index) of socio-economic disadvantage places Coffs Harbour LGA around the middle of the scale, signifying pockets of disadvantage. The towns of Toormina, Lowanna/Ulong and Woolgoolga have been identified as areas where socio-economic disadvantage is further compounded by the cost of digital connectivity, lack of public transport options, and limited access to cultural and learning experiences.

As growth and population density increase, attention is needed to support the economic, social and cultural needs of coastal and hinterland towns and hamlets across the LGA.

CULTURE

“‘Culture’ is defined as the production, distribution and participation in creativity by the New South Wales community and visitors, and the reflection and expression of its customs, traditions, heritage and social character. It includes the visual arts, crafts, media arts, performing arts (music, dance, theatre, physical theatre), heritage, museums, archives, libraries, publishing, sound recording, film, audio visual, television, radio and digital arts. It also includes creativity in the public realm, such as the design of the built environment and public spaces.”

Cultural Infrastructure Plan 2025+ (2019)

* Sources: Context – Region/City in Transition. Bibliography reference numbers: 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 34, 38, 41, 45

THE VALUE OF CULTURE

Coffs Harbour City Council has well-researched strategies in place to support social inclusion and community development; economic growth; tourism; digital infrastructure and innovation; population density and housing hot spots; and environmental sustainability. Combined with broader state and regional initiatives, these strategic directions offer an optimistic future.

Council also has a critical role in stimulating and supporting cultural vitality across the Coffs Harbour region.

Creative Coffs: Cultural Strategic Plan 2017-2022 (2017) links cultural vitality with social and economic benefits. It argues that ongoing investment in arts, culture and the creative industries will seed new opportunities for creatives, communities, businesses and tourists.

The following section describes the cultural research undertaken to develop *LMG Strategy 2020-2023*. It also presents a number of case studies demonstrating the tangible benefits of cultural services and precincts to a number of regional cities throughout Australia.

SECTION TWO

LMG

SECTION TWO: RESEARCH

INTRODUCTION

In early 2016, Coffs Harbour City Council integrated its three cultural services into one entity, Libraries Museum Gallery (LMG).

Three key documents were produced in the early days of the LMG structure:

- Creative Coffs Cultural Strategic Plan 2017-2022
- Coffs Harbour City Centre Masterplan 2031 (2013)
- Draft Coffs Harbour Regional Museum Strategy 2018-2021

By late 2017, it was evident that forward-looking strategic plans for the library service and regional gallery were required. The prospect of building a new Cultural and Civic Space in Gordon Street had also gathered momentum. The new facility would include a large, multifaceted central library and a regional art gallery commensurate with the size and ambition of the Coffs Harbour region.

New possibilities for the regional museum were also canvassed. The Regional Museum, located in Harbour Drive, is constrained by its size and distance from the CBD. Including the regional museum into planning for the Cultural and Civic Space made sense, which also meant revisiting the museum strategy.

Drawing on Coffs Harbour City Council's suite of planning documents, insights from previous community research, and discussions associated with the Cultural and Civic Space project, the LMG strategy and planning process began.

The intention was to create, for the first time, a strategic umbrella for all three cultural services-libraries, museum and gallery.

This section :

- presents the outcomes of research undertaken as part of LMG strategy development
- provides relevant case studies of libraries, galleries and museums that are delivering significant returns to the communities of which they are a part
- summarises the ways in which the City's libraries, museum and gallery already deliver community benefits
- demonstrates how the strategy will improve, extend and consolidate these benefits over the four-year strategy timeline.

RESEARCH PATTERNS

Research conducted as part of Creative Coffs Cultural Strategic Plan (2017), consultation around the Cultural and Civic Space (2018), and the Library Museum Gallery (LMG) strategy (2019) show a consistent pattern of results across all research modes.

Residents and stakeholders have:

- optimism about the future of the Coffs Harbour Region
- consistent views that social cohesion and inclusion will benefit from more places, spaces and opportunities for people to interact
- a desire to contribute to the community and its natural environment
- a perception that LMG services, while valued, are struggling to meet community expectations and are at risk of falling behind the cultural offerings in other regional cities.



People attended workshops, meetings and interviews



People participated in surveys

'Let's go forward with gusto and colour, and include absolutely everyone.'

LMG Consultation Workshops (2018)

COMMUNITY RESEARCH

Research methodology for *LMG 2020-2023* involved a combination of social and cultural research methods. As the *Creative Coffs Cultural Strategic Plan (2017)* outlines, cultural experiences and perceptions of cultural benefit are often subjective. It is when these cultural experiences are aggregated across whole communities that concrete outcomes can be observed. Outcomes frequently mentioned when it comes to the benefits of cultural services include stimulating creative expression; enhancing aesthetic appreciation; generating new ideas and knowledge; celebrating cultural diversity and difference; and connecting people to a shared heritage.

Cultural research invites feelings, metaphors, associations, narrative comments, and speculative thinking in relation to people's cultural experiences and hopes for the future. Combined with an analysis of quantifiable data and trends, cultural research methods assist in mapping the needs and aspirations of communities.

Between December 2017 and August 2018, cultural research methods have included meetings, workshops, surveys, and observations of what people do in and say about LMG services. The consultation process has involved:

- Library, museum and art gallery (LMG) staff
- Councillors, General Manager and Executive Team
- Specialist Council staff- community planning, economic development, tourism, human resources, information technology, finance
- Library, gallery and museum volunteers
- Library, gallery and museum users
- Friends of Coffs Harbour Regional Gallery
- Muurrbay Aboriginal Language & Culture Cooperative
- Saltwater Freshwater Arts Alliance
- Southern Cross University
- Arts Mid North Coast
- State Library of NSW
- Regional Conservatorium of Music
- Jetty Memorial Theatre
- North Coast TAFE
- REC Ya Shorts Youth Film Festival
- Screenwave
- Coffs Harbour Writers' Group
- Woolgoolga Art Gallery
- Sawtell Cinema
- Coffs Coast Creative Industries Network
- Local artists, performers, creatives

In addition, two online surveys, made available between February 2018 and April 2018, attracted 500 responses in relation to the City's library service, and 179 in relation to the regional gallery. Consultation regarding the regional museum had already been completed (2017).

Survey respondents had a lot to say about what they value and need from their library service and regional gallery.



People value general collections, locations, self service and library catalogue/website



Agree that the libraries are welcoming; staff have useful skills & knowledge



Respondents have created something in Coffs Harbour's libraries: writing, craft, artwork, design



Four things could be improved: more study & meeting spaces; size & feel of libraries; opening hours.

LIBRARY

500 respondents

How often?

Weekly visitation: **30%**

Fortnightly: **30%**

Where?

HBM Library: **64%**

Woolgoolga: **20%**

Toormina: **15%**

Library service:

Respondents value four things when it comes to the library service: books, magazines, general collections (76%); library locations (81%); self service facilities (80%); and library catalogue and website (72%).

In addition, a majority of respondents agree that their libraries are welcoming places (90%); library staff members are welcoming and have useful skills and knowledge (88%); and being in a library has helped 202 respondents create something – writing, craft, artwork, design.

Satisfaction in Coffs Harbour libraries is lower in relation to the following four things: the availability of quiet, study spaces (22%); meeting rooms (19%); look, feel and size of libraries (25%); and current opening hours (20%).

Regional Gallery

There is a majority view that Coffs Harbour Regional Gallery is too small. This was the most frequent comment in the narrative sections of the survey. The gallery's size and absence of studio and workshop spaces have a restricting effect on exhibition scale and diversity, as well as opportunities to provide programs to more people.

Nevertheless, respondents were very positive about the quality of exhibitions presented and believe gallery staff and volunteers are doing a great job within these constraints.

Recent exhibitions have held interest and attention for 82 per cent of respondents; they are thought provoking for 79 per cent of respondents; the gallery is a pleasing space in which to spend time (74%); being in the gallery helps people feel more creative and alive (72%); and 81 per cent find gallery staff and volunteers to be welcoming and knowledgeable. Apart from the size of the gallery, there are two aspects that attracted less support. Respondents want more of the community's diversity included in exhibition curation and display (58%); they would also like to see more programs for more age groups (57%).

Workshops

Workshops and interviews were conducted with a range of stakeholders: library, museum and gallery volunteers; library, gallery and museum users/visitors (all ages); cultural leaders and representatives from cultural groups and organisations. Interactive workshops provided an opportunity to discuss and debate future pathways for LMG services.

A total of 35 workshops were conducted with LMG staff, volunteers, cultural stakeholders, LMG users and visitors, and internal Council stakeholders.

Similar design methods were used in each of the 35 workshops. This enabled comparative information to be compiled and provided an opportunity to discuss and debate future options for LMG services.

Around 200 people attended these workshops over a period of six months.

While there was some variation in specific details, there was a remarkable consensus in what people perceived LMG should stop, start and keep doing in order to fulfil its role in supporting a vibrant cultural life and economy across the Coffs Harbour Region. Analysis of these various outputs can be grouped into three categories:

- what people think should be kept, developed, and improved on
- where people think the LMG service can expand, experiment, or start doing new things
- how LMG can use the transition to the new Cultural and Civic Space to consolidate existing platforms, programs and capabilities.

* Sources: Research – Stakeholder and Community Research. Bibliography reference numbers: 5, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 27, 30, 44, 48, 49, 50, 53

GALLERY

179 respondents

95% have been to gallery

5% have never been

Go to every exhibition: 28%

Go monthly: 32%

Few times pa: 45%

91% come by car



People value exhibition quality & diversity; it's a pleasing space; makes people feel more creative



People value gallery staff & volunteers, they are welcoming & knowledgeable



Majority view that the gallery is too small. People would like more programs and even greater exhibition diversity

IMPROVE, EXPERIMENT, CONSOLIDATE: TOP PRIORITIES FOR CULTURAL STAKEHOLDERS

Keep & Improve

- Engaging exhibitions & programs
- Library, galley and museum spaces
- Supporting reading, digital skills, information and visual literacies.
- Digitisation project.
- Sense of shared ownership.
- Education/learning programs- all services.
- Welcoming, friendly library.
- Kind & caring staff and volunteers.
- Meeting regional industry benchmarks for libraries, museums and galleries.

Expand & Experiment

- Sense of forward movement/ vision for Coffs Harbour Region.
- Cultural & Civic Space Project
- Flexible, creative, multi-purpose cultural and learning spaces.
- Study and learning spaces.
- Collecting & exhibiting Aboriginal art.
- Diverse library collections and resources.
- Outreach through art making, classes, programs- disability, aged care, Aboriginal communities, refugee communities.
- More exhibition-related programs.
- New curatorial research opportunities with museum and gallery collections.
- Art cart for kids/school programs.
- Stream events, workshops and content using new platforms.
- Local history collection drive across multiple formats- oral, visual, documentary, objects.
- Pop-up outreach library.
- Marketing, partnerships, cross promotion.
- A conviction that culture makes a difference to people's lives.

Consolidate

- Volunteer support.
- Library membership.
- Customer service skills training- staff & volunteers.
- Digital skills.
- Best practice museum and art gallery procedures and processes.
- Partnerships and networks: Friends of Coffs Harbour Regional Gallery, Local History, Southern Cross University, TAFE, Writers' Groups, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups and organisations, festivals, performing arts groups.

Cultural and Civic Space Project

“An adventurous, futuristic but flexible building.”

“As safe and comfortable as a second home. It will make me proud.”

LMG Future Options Survey (2018)

Gallery

“Great staff, intelligent innovative and appropriate exhibitions only hindered by the restrictions of the spaces.”

LMG Future Options Survey (2018)

Cultural and Civic Space Project

The planned Cultural and Civic Space project in Coffs Harbour has a confirmed scope and, at the time of writing, moved to the detailed design phase.

There was strong support – in surveys and workshops – for the Cultural and Civic Space.

The proposed design will include library, museum and gallery spaces interwoven throughout the multi-level building. There will be meeting rooms, studio spaces, audio visual and digital labs, art making spaces, a cafe, council staff offices, and customer services.

Survey questions (in library and gallery surveys) relating to the Cultural and Civic Space attracted 485 specific comments. Out of 485 responses, some of which provided detailed ideas and suggestions, only 19 were negative. That is, only 19 respondents opposed the idea of the Cultural and Civic Space.

The quality, range and imagination evident in people's responses to the Cultural and Civic Space – in surveys and workshops – was inspiring.

People want something beautiful and inclusive, without being overwhelming or too generic.

They want it to be a welcoming community facility that has something for everyone.

They want good architecture, something that can capture the future aspirations of the Coffs Harbour region; something light, airy, comfortable.

They want flexible spaces or zones that allow for quiet study and contemplation, as well as a hubbub of activity and options.

They want the Aboriginal culture, multi-cultural diversity, and art of the region to be showcased and celebrated.

They have numerous suggestions about which libraries, galleries or museums Coffs Harbour should be emulating.

Most of all, they want something to be proud of.

Counterpoint

A small number of survey respondents perceived libraries to be redundant and irrelevant in the digital age, a 'thing of the past'.

A small number of survey respondents also perceive the art gallery to be irrelevant and serving a narrow audience.

However, cross tabulation of these comments against actual library or gallery visitation reveals that few of these respondents had been to a Coffs Harbour branch library or the Regional Art Gallery.

Regular library users and art gallery visitors/supporters have numerous suggestions about how the services can improve, grow and better serve their communities. Likewise, with the regional museum. Workshop participants have consistent views about what the museum could and should be doing differently, and ideas about maintaining its profile into the future. But suggestions, ideas and minor irritations do not equate with perceptions of irrelevance.

In fact, the more people use, visit, depend on, support and engage with the City's libraries, gallery and museum, the more appreciative they become.

Cultural services are not perceived as a 'luxury'. Coffs Harbour's residents, visitors and cultural stakeholders see them as essential services; as important as any other service Council provides.

The strategic challenge for LMG is to extend the breadth of library, gallery and museum offerings to more and more people. Ultimately, every City of Coffs Harbour resident and visitor, across all age groups, should have a reason to use and enjoy the City's libraries, gallery and museum.

Cultural & Civic Space

“Funky, cosy, full of art.”

LMG Future Options Survey (2018)

Library

“The very best thing I get for my rates.”

LMG Future Options Survey (2018)



Strategic drivers

The *LMG Strategy 2020-2023* charts a course between a period of intense change within the LMG portfolio and the planned Cultural and Civic Space, with a co-located library, gallery and museum spaces, being available from 2022. The Cultural and Civic Space will radically expand possibilities for all three LMG services, and thereby for all residents, visitors and creative industries.

This strategy has three primary drivers:

- 1. improving** aspects of LMG service design and delivery to accommodate changing community expectations and regional growth prospects;
- 2. experimenting** with new service platforms and programs during the transition to the new Cultural and Civic Space; and
- 3. consolidating** gains made through the blended service model adopted in 2016; building a cohesive and skilled, staff, volunteer and contractor cohort; and advancing initiatives underway to enhance access to museum, library and art collections.

Cultural & Civic Space

“Wow, let’s go iconic!”

LMG Future Options Survey (2018)

The three drivers will:

Improve:

Knowledge sharing between libraries, museum and gallery; better design and flexibility in the two branch libraries at Woolgoolga and Toormina; evaluation of current library locations in line with future growth projections; and various behind-the-scenes improvements to processes, systems and skills.

Experiment:

Leading up to the opening of the Cultural and Civic Space, the strategy includes a number of low-risk, low-cost field experiments in service and program delivery. These include developing a business case for a pop-up outreach library to provide greater flexibility in the delivery of services and programs to more people across the region.

Art and museum projects and programs will be presented in new places. Engaging a broader audience for LMG programs through different partnership possibilities. Trialing new ways to measure the impact and value of LMG services.

Consolidate:

The committed cohort of volunteers that support LMG services, and without whom the museum and gallery could not function, will be supported by better skills development and volunteer coordination. The Council has obtained a grant from the NSW Regional Cultural Fund to enable the digitisation, hosting and integrated discovery of museum, gallery and library local heritage and art collections. This project helps consolidate work done to date on digitising museum, library and art collections and will create a solid platform for researchers, students, local and family historians, artists, designers, curators, and the wider community to access cultural history and stories.

These three drivers underpin the architecture for a four-year plan of action revolving around five focal areas:

- **invigorate**
- **connect**
- **learn**
- **collect**
- **remember**

The following section presents the LMG Strategy in more detail.

TIMELINES



Council rejects a proposal for a Free Public Library due to costs	Council rejects a proposal for a public library, some books held at the School of Arts	CWA begins collecting data and relics related to the area's history	Coffs Harbour & District Historical Society is founded	Council defers the proposal to open a public library	Council again defers the proposal to open a public library	Council adopts The Library Act	First Coffs Harbour Library opens in Vernon Street as part of the Civic Centre	First Woolgoolga Library opens (Shared space in a Barber Shop, operated by the CWA)	Site chosen by Council for historical museum next to Cavanbah Hall
									Library deposit station opened in First Avenue, Sawtell

1944 1948 1952 1955 1956 1960 1963 1964 1965 1970

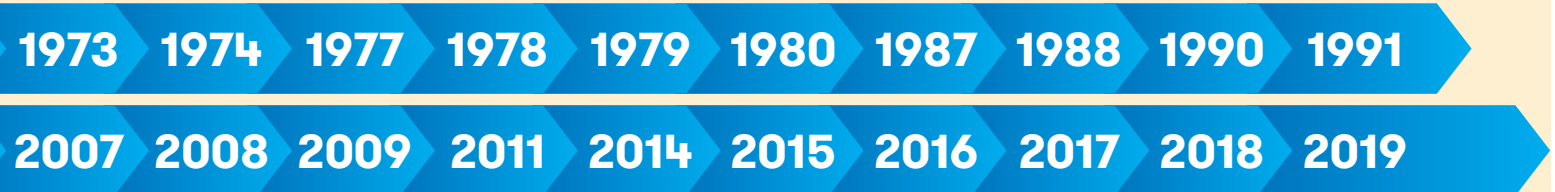
1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2005

Computerised Library Management System fully operational, including circulation function and public access catalogue	Coffs Harbour Gallery Society is formed; Council acquires works from art competition associated with 'Carnivale'; Council also presented with traditional water carrying basket by the Gumbaynggirr people	Museum flooded and temporarily closed	Museum reopens	Minorie Drive Library opens	Free internet available for customers, including internet classes	Library catalogue available on the World Wide Web	Coffs Harbour Regional Gallery opens	Gallery space extended (doubling in size)	Coffs Harbour Historical Society winds up, collection handed to CHCC
Library now at the "Cell Block" adjacent to the Neighbourhood Centre in Boundary Street		Public Internet service introduced (coin operated machines); Library flooded (20% of stock lost)		Weekly storytime starts (all branches)		Ganderton Street Library opens	Hardacre Star Car (the City's first taxi) is acquired		
		Toormina Library opens in the Toormina Gardens Shopping Centre					Library opens in Rigby House		
							Operation Art held at Toormina Library		



KEY	ALL LIBRARIES	
Coffs Harbour Library	Toormina Library	Woolgoolga Library
GALLERY	MUSEUM	LMG

Harry Bailey Memorial Library opens in Castle Street	Coffs Harbour Art Purchase exhibition, some artworks purchased by Council	Coffs Harbour Art Purchase exhibition	Volunteer run children's activities started	Bookmobile replaces volunteer staffed deposit stations in outlying areas, including Sawtell and Woolgoolga	Coffs Harbour District Historical Society museum at 189B Harbour Drive opens	Council withdraws from Clarence Regional Library Service to establish Coffs Harbour Library Service	Voice of Time oral history project (based at the museum)	Thursday opening hours extended to 5.30pm	Library catalogue and membership database automated
			Home delivery service commences			Woolgoolga Library opens in Boundary Street in a mud brick building			



1973	1974	1977	1978	1979	1980	1987	1988	1990	1991
2007	2008	2009	2011	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
First still life award held (EMSLA)	Picture Coffs Harbour commenced (a joint digitisation project between the museum and library)	The CBD and the museum flood, museum closed, collection relocated to Isles Drive, not open to the public	Friends of the Gallery established	Museum reopens at 215A Harbour Drive in the 1908 Police Station & Courthouse heritage building	Archibald exhibition	Council decides on Gordon Street as the location for a new gallery and central library	STILL: National Still Life Award launched	Council decides to include the Museum in the planned Cultural & Civic Space on Gordon Street	Council decision on 11 July, 2019 to proceed with the Cultural & Civic Space project following completion of schematic design
Museum reopens under Council operation after refurbishment	Picture Coffs Harbour commenced (a joint digitisation project between the museum and library)	Book Club Service Launched		Central library renamed the Harry Bailey Memorial Library	Radio Frequency Identification technology introduced, including self-service kiosks and book security at all branches	Library Museum Gallery (LMG) intergated team structure established as part of Council organisational change program (T2S)			



CASE STUDIES

“Culture adds colour and nourishment to the community.”

LMG Consultation Workshops (2018)

LIBRARIES

Contemporary libraries are more than repositories for books. Globally and nationally, contemporary public libraries are at the heart of civic life. There is significant investment in the renewal of library buildings and functions by city and regional councils across Australia.

Today's new and revamped libraries:

- provide meeting rooms for a limitless range of learning, business and cultural needs
- provide access to digital technologies, equipment and skills, especially for those who may struggle to gain access otherwise
- support lifelong learning and educational outcomes through targeted programs, collections and outreach services
- provide attractive, free, welcoming spaces in which people can meet, sit, read, learn, use wifi, play music, make things, exchange ideas, attend lectures and classes, study, and, in some cases, experience art making and performance
- and, of course, they still provide free access to valued and relevant books, newspapers, magazines, music and film in either physical or digital formats.

Multipurpose spaces are the secret to the success of contemporary libraries. New libraries from Helsinki to Christchurch, from Sydney's Green Square to Shellharbour, are providing flexible spaces in which citizens and visitors can do almost anything they desire. There are exhibition and performance spaces; studio and maker spaces; interwoven history and heritage artefacts and digital resources; the latest in digital equipment and training, often combining science and art in the one experimental space; cafés and lounges; magazines and newspapers; and meditative, quiet nooks and study spaces in which people can rest, learn and concentrate.

Libraries promote community interaction and democratic cultural exchange. They support employment outcomes, provide spaces for creatives to create, support literacy and the literary arts, and collect and interpret unique local histories. The return on investment from a contemporary library service is estimated to be around \$4.30 for every dollar spent.

ART GALLERIES AND MUSEUMS

The attractive buildings, spaces and precincts of contemporary Australian museums and galleries enable tailored educational activities and opportunities to engage with contemporary thinking and ideas. These buildings, spaces, precincts and programs have created new kinds of immersive and interactive visitor experiences.

New techniques, technologies and curatorial approaches have extended cultural possibilities for diverse communities. Advances in digitisation techniques have assisted gallery and museum professionals to reinterpret and present visual and heritage collections to new local and global audiences.

Importantly, galleries and museums help fine-tune visual literacy. In an era of signs, logos and image-based culture, visual processing is the primary medium in which the brain makes sense of information overload. Learning to see and interrogate what one sees is now a critical 21st century skill.

Art and heritage exhibitions, and related educational programs, help raise interest in and discussion about what kind of society and culture we've had, want and need. They help us express complex feelings and ideas in non-verbal ways. They also often help us, collectively, to experience something challenging in a safe environment from which we can walk away.

Libraries, museums and art galleries offer informal learning environments well suited to the social learning needs of people regardless of age and background.

The following examples show how libraries, galleries and museums can work together to support cultural vitality, tourism, lifelong learning and creative expression.



LISMORE CREATIVE PLAYGROUND

Lismore Regional Gallery is the fifth oldest regional gallery in New South Wales supporting the Lismore, Byron Bay, Bangalow, Nimbin, Lennox Head, Casino and Kyogle communities.

In 2017, a \$6 million redevelopment project transformed the old Lismore High School site into a central cultural hub for the city. It connects the existing C-Block building and major landscaping works to create a town 'piazza' linking the Gallery with the Northern Rivers Conservatorium and the Lismore Library.

The Gallery now has climate control, proper gallery lighting, a loading dock, café/bookshop and dedicated workshop, event and Artist in Residence spaces. In all, the building covers 1,400 square meters, including over 400 square metres of exhibition galleries. Arts Northern Rivers, the local Regional Arts Board, is co-located in the building.

Called Lismore Quad, the cultural precinct retrofitted a car park into a greenspace that connects Lismore Regional Gallery, Lismore City Library, the Northern Rivers Conservatorium and the Social Futures Clubhouse. The activation of the Quad, as Lismore's creative playground, involved a strategic partnership between Southern Cross University and Lismore City Council.

Lismore City Council (2018) has a population of 43,134.

In 2017, a \$6 million redevelopment project transformed the old Lismore High School site into a central cultural hub for the city.



GEELONG LIBRARY AND HERITAGE CENTRE

Geelong Library and Heritage Centre is an award winning building, and a centrepiece of the Geelong Regional Library Corporation. Opened in 2015, and costing over \$40 million, visitation and usage have increased by a massive 320 per cent. The library shares an art gallery space and programming with the adjacent Geelong Art Gallery. It generates income through its in-demand venues. It successfully anchors a revived cultural precinct that includes a dynamic theatre, literature, visual arts and creative entrepreneurial ecosystem.

In 2016/17, Geelong Regional Libraries attracted nearly two million visits to library branches and mobile libraries. A lifelong learning and cultural programming calendar offered 6,255 separate programs and attracted 150,000 participants.

The outstanding success of the Geelong Library and Heritage Centre has seen a new branch library at Leopold in 2018, and three more branch libraries coming on line before 2022.

Libraries Work!: The socio-economic value of public libraries to Victorians (2018) asserts that Victorian public libraries deliver \$4.30 return for every dollar invested. The report argues that there is a positive relationship between the amount of library funding available and visitation. In other words, the better designed and resourced a library service is, the higher the visitation and benefits to library users. Geelong Regional Library Service is rated the best in Victoria.

City of Greater Geelong population is 190,000; region serviced by Geelong Regional Library Corporation is 290,000. (2017)

A lifelong learning and cultural programming calendar offered 6,255 separate programs and attracted 150,000 participants.



ALBURY CITY LIBRARY, MUSEUM AND GALLERY

Having already embarked on an integrated library and museum building, collection and merged service model, the city of Albury added the acclaimed Murray Art Museum Albury (MAMA) in 2015, proudly declaring it to be ‘brazen, beautiful, controversial, loud’.

The success of the award-winning Albury LibraryMuseum has clearly emboldened the City to see culture as worthy of investment, attention and imagination.

Prior to MAMA, the gallery was not up to standard, Karyn Ford, MAMA’s Gallery Director explains. Changes were driven by the community, who overwhelmingly supported the \$10.5 million redevelopment. The region’s artists also see MAMA as a creative centre for networking and creative collaboration.

Now, 27 per cent of MAMA’s budget is self generated revenue. “From a sustainability perspective, we have a fantastic gallery store, restaurant lease, and education sector engagement,” Ford says. (Arts Hub 2018). The combination of flexible gallery spaces, self-curated and touring exhibitions, and a diverse workshop and event annual calendar, has seen visitation numbers soar. In 2017/8, 136,000 visitors came to MAMA, compared to annual visitation of 25,000- 30,000 prior to 2015.

Opened in 2007, the Albury LibraryMuseum is a community hub bringing together state-of-the-art technology, reading and research facilities, a diverse exhibition schedule, a dynamic program of events, and a focus on the region’s heritage. Open seven days, it averages 4,000 visitors each week. Albury City has a branch library located at Lavington, which also contains exhibition, meeting, research, and co-located citizen services spaces.

The museum collection contains over 20,000 objects and includes pieces of national and international significance. The converged library and museum model has been an outstanding success. In addition, Albury LibraryMuseum staff have become research leaders and advocates for the benefits of converged cultural services (Clement, 2018).

Albury City population is 52,723 (2018)

Changes were driven by the community, who overwhelmingly supported the \$10.5 million redevelopment.



BENDIGO LIBRARY, GALLERY AND MUSEUM

The Bendigo Art Gallery is one of the most successful regional galleries in Australia. Hosting internationally acclaimed exhibitions and events, the gallery is a magnet for arts tourists, domestic and international. Its sister gallery, the Post Office Gallery, reinterprets and displays exhibitions and artefacts from Bendigo's rich and dynamic social history. Co-located with tourism and visitor information services in a grand 19th century building, the Post Office Gallery reinforces the importance of heritage and culture to the city's identity.

Bendigo Art Gallery not only exports its curated exhibitions to other parts of Australia, it has a track record of partnerships with some of the world's biggest museums and galleries.

The White Wedding Dress in 2011, from the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, drew an at-the-time record-breaking 76,000 visitors.

In 2012, this figure was surpassed with *Grace Kelly: Style Icon*, also from the V & A, which attracted 228,000 viewers and was estimated to have earned \$17 million in benefits for the Bendigo region.

In 2014, Bendigo Art Gallery partnered with the British Museum to present *The Body Beautiful in Ancient Greece*. In 2016, a collaboration with Twentieth Century Fox bought the Hollywood icon Marilyn Monroe to Bendigo. The exhibition attracted 140,000 gallery visitors and contributed around \$13.2 million to the local economy.

Bendigo Library, part of the Goldfields Library Corporation, is situated in a new, purpose-built centre in the heart of town. It contains a large collection, the latest multi media and audio visual equipment, a cafe, research centre, regional archives, and volunteer resource centre. The library is estimated to deliver \$27.4 million in benefits to the Greater Bendigo community and economy. Membership is over 40,000. There are around 1,144,000 visits per year.

The library now offers around 2,000 programs a year, with 33 per cent of the community attending.

Library CEO Mark Hands sums up the library's success:

"No other institution offers the same personal help, equal and free access to information, social engagement, and sense of safety and belonging." (D'Agostino, 2018).

Bendigo is located 152 kilometres north of Melbourne.

City of Bendigo population is 92,379.

The White Wedding Dress in 2011, from the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, drew an at-the-time record-breaking 76,000 visitors.

SECTION THREE



LMMG STRATEGY 2020-2023

A young girl with brown hair is smiling and looking slightly to her right. She is wearing a white paper cone hat decorated with two blue pom-poms and a gold pom-pom. She is wearing a light blue floral tank top and a matching skirt. She is sitting on a red and white striped chair. The background is a colorful, patterned fabric wall with wooden poles and blue pom-poms. A green vertical bar is on the left side of the image.

STRATEGY

2023

LMG STRATEGY 2020-2023

The City of Coffs Harbour’s libraries, regional art gallery and regional museum represent vital cultural, social and learning infrastructure.

They are essential players in a broader cultural ecology and economy.

The Mid-North Coast cultural economy is increasingly diverse, digitally enabled and dynamic.

It encompasses all kinds of creative enterprises: art making, cultural tourism, digital entrepreneurship, education, performing and literary arts, festivals, markets, and allied public services.

A thriving cultural economy brings tangible benefits to individuals, families, tourists and businesses. It draws on an emerging creative ecology involving numerous connections, opportunities, talents, resources, histories and places that fuel imagination, collaboration and shared knowledge networks.

The research is clear: when regional governments understand the importance of cultural vitality to all aspects of social and economic life, and have strategies in place to support their cultural services – libraries, galleries, museums – they can play a constructive role in a flourishing cultural and visitor economy.

HISTORIC MOMENT

Coffs Harbour City Council supports culture.

As the timeline on pages 30/31 depicts, when the need arose and the community support was evident, the City of Coffs Harbour has acted. It built or improved its libraries. It established a regional art gallery, collected artworks and supported local artists. It built a regional museum to collect and preserve its unique local histories, and found a new home for the museum after two devastating floods.

The City’s libraries, art gallery and museum do not currently meet contemporary expectations and benchmarks relating to size, flexibility, the availability of meeting rooms, diversity of collections, and public programs.

Within current constraints, LMG services are doing an excellent job.

“Our libraries provide a necessary service for the community: a social glue that is vastly under-utilised and appreciated.”

“I would like to see the gallery and museum engage with technology more – fusions of science and art; technology and art; local history and digital art.”

LMG Future Options Survey (2018)



LMG 2020-2023

LMG 2020-2023

The Library Museum Gallery Strategy 2020-2023, in tandem with progress on the Cultural and Civic Space, offers a strategic framework that:

- builds on the foundations already established
- emphasises the importance of partnerships, linkages and networks
- provides a bridge to 2022, when new spaces and possibilities will be realised as part of Cultural and Civic Space project
- invests in the people, programs and platforms needed to boost creative and cultural potential across the Coffs Harbour region.

The LMG strategy outlines a comprehensive and practical plan of action.

It is grouped around five focal areas: invigorate, connect, learn, collect and remember.

Each action area contains a number of objectives and accompanying actions. They have been arranged across a four-year timeframe in order to build momentum for sustainable and affordable change. A full set of strategy objectives can be found in Appendix Three.

VISION:

Our libraries, museum, and gallery inspire learning, sharing, creativity and inclusion, and are a cornerstone for our community's economic, social and cultural well-being.

MISSION:

We bring people together:

- by inspiring and supporting lifelong-learning, literacy, creativity and cultural expression;
- to find, share, and create knowledge;
- by recognising, preserving, and sharing our diverse histories and stories; and
- by providing welcoming public spaces accessible to all.

The LMG Strategy is supported by five focal areas:

invigorate

Welcoming spaces and places; engaging programs and exhibitions; a flourishing creative community and cultural economy.

connect

Cultivating community resilience; mutually supportive partnerships; respecting Aboriginal knowledge, culture, and language; making a positive social and economic impact.

learn

Championing 21st century literacies – reading, digital, information, visual; discovering the identity of our diverse community.

collect

Building relevant information resources; prioritising youth interests, community languages, and Aboriginal histories, language, and publications; providing a safe home for museum and art collections.

remember

Preserving what is unique and irreplaceable; improving discovery platforms; supporting research.



INVIGORATE

A new Cultural and Civic Space in the heart of Coffs Harbour presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to offer cultural amenity to every citizen. Combining a contemporary library, expanded art gallery, integrated museum, numerous gathering and meeting spaces, a multimedia and recording studio, art making and production spaces, a cafe, landscaped gardens, and a range of citizen services, the centre will invigorate the city centre and have a ripple effect across the entire Coffs Harbour Region.

Animating local neighbourhoods through the provision of welcoming public spaces and places, engaging programs and exhibitions, extends beyond the city centre of Coffs Harbour. Consequently, thought has been given to other nodes of settlement and gathering; places where existing cultural infrastructure already exists, like the Toormina and Woolgoolga branch libraries; and places where the reimagining or repurposing of community halls, laneways, parks and arcades can invigorate everyday communal spaces.

The successful activation of the Jetty Foreshores with public artworks, landscaping, and the provision of attractive amenities, demonstrates the value of a thoughtful invigoration of public places. Some forgotten or under-utilised places will benefit from this kind of attention.

Invigorate contributes to a sense of destination, complementing cultural tourism initiatives already underway. Invigorated places, spaces, programs and offerings can help catalyse a creative economy, supporting the reach and sustainability of creative businesses and practitioners.

Invigorate relates to people, too. Becoming and remaining a healthy and engaged senior, having access to high quality cultural experiences, and remaining current in terms of digital access and participation, are all features of an invigorated, learning-oriented community.

The objectives grouped under this focal area are designed to help elevate the City of Coffs Harbour into a cultural leader; an attractor and retainer of creative talent across all age groups and demographics.

In order to achieve this, attention has been given to:

- designing a multi-faceted Cultural and Civic Space in Coffs Harbour, a vibrant civic heart
- stimulating the creative economy through targeted programs, places and partnerships
- introducing a new generation mobile outreach library
- expanding audience involvement in and appreciation of the City's libraries, gallery and museum services, exhibitions and programs.

INVIGORATE

1: VIBRANT PLACES

Libraries Museum Gallery staff will contribute ideas and expertise to the Civic and Cultural Space throughout the design and build process.

Spatial reviews of the existing central library, gallery and museum aim to improve flexibility while new facilities are being built.

A new pop-up outreach library service will be scoped and costed.

Research will begin into:

- the opportunities for new or re-designed library/cultural spaces in population hot spots
- library best practice in providing digital creative and recording studios and versatile maker spaces
- the suitability of arcades, laneways, vacant shopfronts and community halls to host temporary exhibitions, workshops and pop-up outreach library services.

2: REGIONAL CITY; NATIONAL PROFILE

Regional cities can and do achieve nationally and internationally successful profiles. Coffs Harbour's regional gallery hosts the annual STILL: National Still Life Award, which attracts entries from across Australia. Innovative exhibition curation and public programs have built new audiences and partnerships. New Year, New Work (2019) invited businesses to sponsor and support local art-making. Education programs and workshops enable residents of all ages to participate in visual culture and local history events. The Cultural and Civic Space will catapult these initiatives to a new level. Over the next four years, LMG will:

- continue to expand exhibition range and profile, including a landmark exhibition to coincide with the launch of the Cultural and Civic Space in 2022
- undertake audience development and research
- expand partnerships with Aboriginal, multicultural, rural, senior, youth, disability access and LGBTQI audiences
- improve and expand the promotion of exhibitions, festivals, workshops and events.



3: FLOURISHING CREATIVE ECONOMY

A vibrant creative economy will foster productive relationships and networks. It will encourage and support the creative practitioners of today and tomorrow. The region's creative, service and tourism industries can benefit from the targeted support provided by the City's LMG services.

Free, affordable and accessible meeting spaces can generate new networks, business opportunities and creative possibilities. LMG resources, collections and learning programs complement broader educational offerings and opportunities.

The Council's investment in library, museum and gallery infrastructure and services is a critical component. LMG will:

- use the four-year transition period to research the benefits of creative studio and flexible learning spaces; the information needs of local micro-businesses; and partnerships with suitable retail services in existing or new LMG spaces
- support the creative arts and design curricula of secondary, vocational and tertiary education providers.

4: SUPPORTING CULTURAL TOURISM

Arts and cultural tourism is growing, particularly in regional Australia. Visiting museums and galleries is the most popular form of arts tourism. International and domestic cultural tourists seek local, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and experiences; stay longer; spend more on ancillary services like dining and retail; and use social media to broadcast their travels to wide networks.

The unique history and contemporary cultures of the Coffs Harbour region are valued by locals and visitors.

LMG will support cultural tourism by:

- curating and exhibiting new perspectives on the history, culture and creative life of the Coffs Harbour region
- cultivating important partnerships in the delivery of shared cultural tourism experiences: internal and external tourism agencies and providers; Arts Mid North Coast; and neighbouring councils
- using the pop-up outreach library as a platform to promote cultural tourism across the region.



"The award also celebrates the objects that we surround ourselves with and the spaces that we create; the objects that hold meaning for us, and the symbolism that they carry. Artists can take that in many directions."

Cath Fogarty, Cultural Development, Gallery and History Services Coordinator, Coffs Harbour City Council



CONNECT

Thriving, resilient communities need welcoming civic places.

Libraries, museums and galleries are often the most inclusive, dynamic civic spaces within their respective communities. They help build community resilience through the shared stewardship of public space, publicly owned collections, and shared activities in safe and trusted places.

Civic space is more than the physical buildings in which services are housed; the notion of 'civic' encompasses the programs, festivals and events in which diverse communities can experiment with new forms of learning, enterprise, play and creative expression.

Libraries, galleries and museums support a range of social connections and outcomes. They provide meeting places, free wifi, access to newspapers, magazines, books, computers, audio visual resources, and local history materials. Through workshops, events, and various forms of partnership they actively support reading, literacy, English language skills, arts and cultural events, community languages and family history research.

The objectives grouped under this focal area are designed to develop LMG programs that enable community connections and interactions, and experiment with new forms of partnership that will take the library, gallery and museum beyond their physical boundaries and into the community.

In order to achieve this, attention has been given to:

- supporting the City's social impact programs with specific programs, resources and meeting spaces
- continuing to consult with and work alongside Aboriginal artists, organisations and communities
- building a skilled, diverse and cohesive volunteer cohort
- partnering with a range of educational, social and cultural organisations to deliver mutually beneficial programs and opportunities to residents and visitors.

CONNECT

1: RESILIENT PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

Library, gallery and museum will, in their different ways, help foster innovative, inclusive and sharing communities. Where possible, collaboration across the three services will be pursued.

They will:

- jointly develop social impact and community development initiatives based on an annual priority areas such as social isolation, creative and healthy ageing, mental health and digital inclusion
- use the transition period to be more outgoing; promoting library, gallery and museum services at local festivals, events, community gathering places, and to local businesses.

2: ABORIGINAL CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE AND LANGUAGE

Through art, music, dance, language and custodianship of country, the world's oldest continuous First Nations culture is a source of knowledge, strength and pride to Aboriginal and many non-Aboriginal peoples across Australia. LMG supports the creative and cultural expression of local Gumbaynggirr communities and organisations.

LMG will:

- continue to build cultural partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, organisations and communities.
- collect and preserve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories, historical documents and publications in consultation with Gumbaynggirr organisations and community groups (see collect action area).

3: MUTUALLY SUPPORTIVE PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

Beneficial partnerships will shape our cultural identity and future. Our volunteers, for example, are critical to providing and extending LMG services. Coffs Harbour's Gallery and Museum could not function without dedicated volunteers. New forms of partnership will help communities stay connected through the delivery of social, educational and cultural programs, events and workshops.

Over the next four years, LMG will:

- further develop and promote volunteer partnership options, and continue to recruit skilled and dedicated volunteers
- continue to support existing partnerships with the Friends of Coffs Harbour Regional Gallery and the Coffs Harbour District Family History Society
- identify new forms of partnership with businesses, cultural groups, education providers and internal Council stakeholders
- pursue a range of new revenue and sponsorship opportunities.



LEARN

Lifelong learning is positively correlated with brain health, creative ageing, employability, language dexterity, adaptability, and critical thinking.

These outcomes are beneficial to individuals, families and whole communities. Learning and literacy expand the range of choices available. They are fundamental to a just, fair and democratic society.

Libraries, galleries and museums welcome and pioneer hybrid forms of learning. They weave digital and analogue information and artefacts into new forms of knowledge. They welcome, equally, quiet and animated uses and users. They embody a truly public, community owned ethos that generates economic, social and cultural benefits to the City of which they are a vital part.

The objectives grouped under this focal area are designed to support multiple modes of learning, for all ages and across all communities. They will engender confidence and skill in 21st century literacies – reading, digital, information and visual.

A responsive service philosophy and skilled team will be needed to fully realise the strategy's lifelong learning aspirations.

In order to achieve this, the LMG Strategy focuses on:

- encouraging residents to learn about, use and enjoy the resources, equipment, classes and exhibitions made available through libraries, museum and gallery
- supporting statewide initiatives in science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM)
- promoting opportunities for interdisciplinary knowledge exchange and creative collaboration
- working with educational providers and independent researchers to build the networks and platforms needed to position the Coffs Harbour region as a place of research excellence, in all aspects of the visual and creative arts, local history and heritage.

LEARN

1: THRIVING IN A CONTEMPORARY WORLD

An innovative city also needs to be a creative, learning-oriented city. LMG will stimulate reading, learning, curiosity, ideas, creativity, enterprise and innovation through its services, collections, exhibitions and programs.

Community members and groups currently underserved by library, gallery and museum services will find new reasons to use, visit and learn something in Council's libraries, gallery and museum. Twenty-first century literacies will be nurtured.

The top four:

reading: supporting state and nation wide reading, poetry and literacy programs. Providing the library resources expected of a 21st century library in physical and digital formats. Supporting literacy and early reading programs; freelance writers, researchers, writers' groups and festivals.

digital: increasing access to digital literacy classes, workshops, equipment and e-collections. Staying current and offering access to and workshops in emerging digital platforms, especially in the digital arts. Supporting cross-disciplinary STEAM programs

information: providing reference services and training in research and information navigation skills; supporting self-directed learning; helping residents access online resources

visual: providing a diverse range of gallery and museum exhibitions and programs; supporting local artists; continuing to build visual resources and platforms needed to position the region as a centre of research excellence, especially in the visual and digital arts.

2: CUSTOMER CENTRIC SERVICE PHILOSOPHY

The three-year transition to the Cultural and Civic Space provides opportunities to experiment, trial new services and programs, and work with communities to shape a responsive LMG service philosophy. There will be a lot of behind-the-scenes activity as LMG staff plan for the move while still offering library, gallery and museum services across multiple sites. The last year of the strategy- 2022 - enables the LMG team to consolidate service provision and prepare for a new era.

These actions will be prioritised:

- reviewing opening hours
- improving accessibility, physical and online, to library resources and services
- implementing an online rostering system across LMG
- using surveys, workshops, pop-up outreach library, and LMG events to monitor community needs and expectations as services evolve and change.

LEARN

3: A DYNAMIC TEAM

Coffs Harbour City Council has already transformed the way it delivers cultural services to its various communities. The blended LMG model is ambitious and unconventional. Greater collaboration and new ways of working have ensued. More transformation is required to respond to the challenges and possibilities posed by regional, national and local change. The transition to 2022 offers a unique window in which to refine the LMG model, review and develop essential skills sets, and implement a transformative transition plan.

Priority will be given to:

- developing a transition plan that includes workforce planning, technology planning, marketing, organisation structure and resourcing needs
- training and skills development, including digital skills
- building a skilled, dedicated volunteer cohort
- scoping and implementing an Aboriginal cadetship program aimed at professional development qualifications in one of the LMG career streams (library, gallery or museum studies)
- the right mix of marketing and promotions expertise; research and reference skills; and education and public programs specialists.





COLLECT

Collecting relates to the books, magazines, newspapers, audio visual material, online data bases, and e-books that comprise a contemporary library collection. Local history archives and artefacts, artworks, public art, and various objects comprise museum and art gallery collections. Different kinds of storage, management and codification are needed for these different forms of collecting. Moving these collections into the Cultural and Civic Space, and a new collections storage facility, will require detailed forward planning and specialist expertise, especially in the case of the museum collections which are currently distributed over two sites.

Expanding library collections in line with the standards expected of a major regional library service, will also be prioritised.

The objectives grouped under this focal area are designed to support collection building in a number of targeted areas, and preserve collections through better storage plans and facilities.

In order to achieve this, priority has been given to:

- building more diverse collections with and for children and youth, the needs of linguistically and culturally diverse communities, and Aboriginal publications, community languages and local histories
- building a specialist focus on historical and contemporary art, design and visual knowledge.

COLLECT

1: COLLECTING FOR EVERYONE

Australian library, gallery and museum associations, state and national organisations have excellent benchmarks available to support local governments in how best to collect, conserve and promote collections relative to their population size. Where resources allow, LMG will meet or exceed these various benchmarks by:

- building more diverse collections with and for children and youth, culturally and linguistically diverse collections and resources, and Aboriginal history, stories, languages and publications
- a special collecting focus on historical and contemporary art, design and visual knowledge will benefit researchers, students, artists, architects and designers
- develop and expand library collections to align with industry standards in order to meet the needs of a growing community.

2: A SAFE HOME

Work will begin on relocation and storage plans for art and museum collections in preparation for the move to the central Cultural and Civic Space. Library collections will also need relocation plans in place.



REMEMBER

Libraries and museums are keepers of our collective memories – relating to both past and present. They help us find and tell our stories. These stories are complex and often contested. Nevertheless, they are ours, and they are unique and irreplaceable.

Advances in the digitisation of local newspapers, publications, artefacts, art and photography collections, and family historical records have radically improved their discoverability. In 2018, the City of Coffs Harbour obtained a grant from the NSW Regional Cultural Fund for a major digitisation project. The two-year project enables the digitisation, hosting and integrated discovery of museum, gallery and library local heritage and arts collections, while also inviting public participation in building and sharing knowledge of all forms of cultural heritage and arts.

The objectives grouped under this focal area are designed to support collective memory building, the reinterpretation of those memories, and new forms of display.

In order to achieve this, attention has been given to:

- implementing the digitisation project
- collaborating with historical/family history groups on programs and events etc.
- supporting historical and curatorial research
- experimenting with and evaluating local studies spaces within existing libraries.

REMEMBER

1: LEGACY FOR THE FUTURE

The opportunity to further digitise local history and art and heritage objects, archives and newspapers will deliver substantial benefits to researchers, businesses, family history enthusiasts, artists, curators, architects and students.

Improving the discoverability of these resources through better platforms and digital applications will be implemented.

2: UNIQUE AND IRREPLACEABLE

LMG will focus on interpreting local histories and knowledge through original exhibition design and associated educational programs.

Building diverse memory collections by working with local communities and organisations to source artefacts, stories, photographs and art works will continue.

The three-year transition will enable LMG to trial local study spaces in branch libraries in preparation for a new dedicated space in the Central Library.

OUR TARGETS FOR 2023

New Cultural & Civic Space
opens in 2022:

new galleries, exhibitions,
contemporary library spaces
and collections, classes,
maker space, digital creative
and recording studio, family
and local history space...
and more

Art Gallery Exhibitions:

100% increase in exhibitions
across three galleries

1 permanent exhibition,
5 shows per year

Museum:

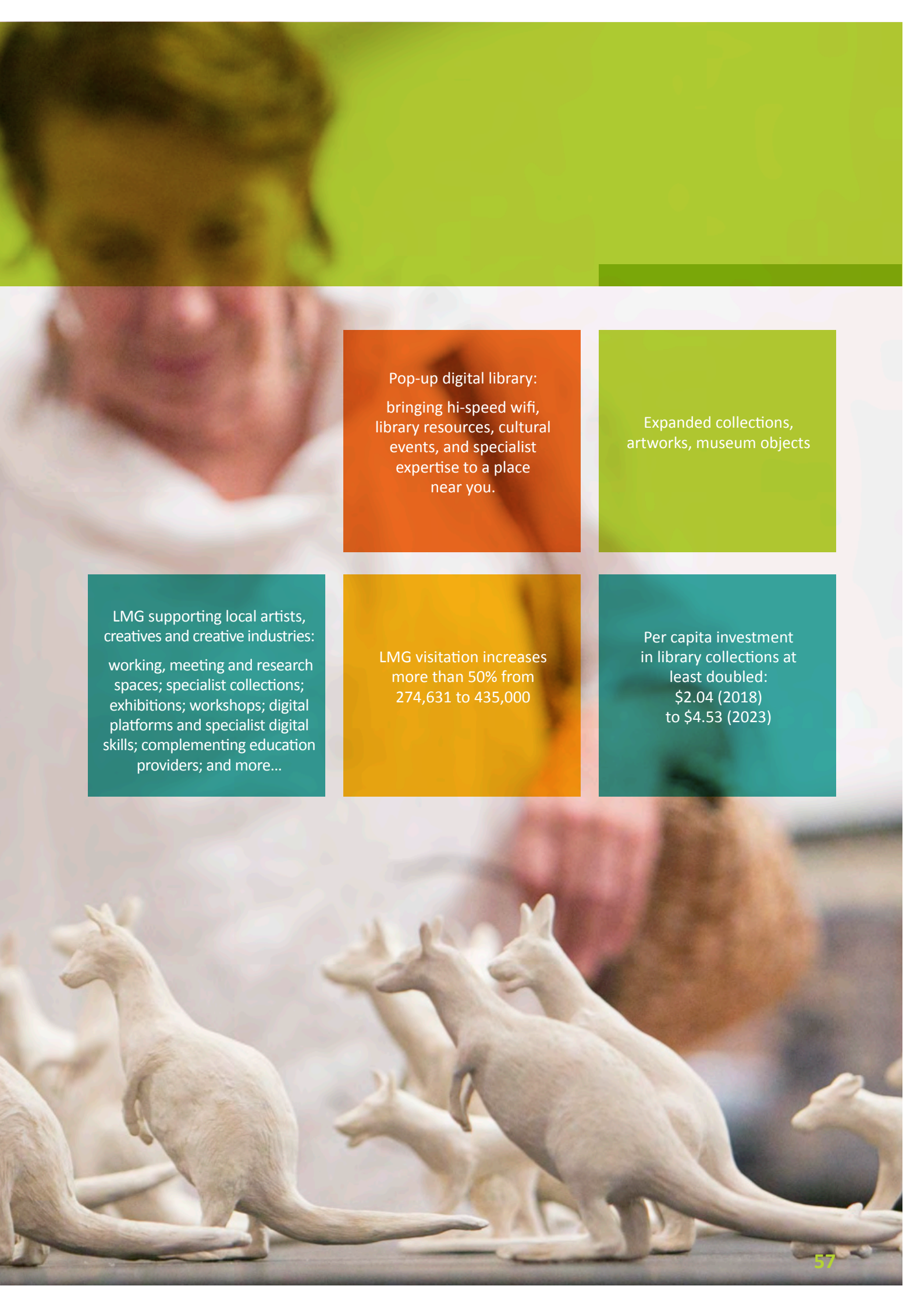
100% increase in exhibitions
across two galleries

Participation in learning
& cultural programs
increase: from 12,570
to 47,500

Library circulation,
including e-resources
more than doubled
(345,000 to 800,000)

Library membership:

50% increase
by end of 2023



Pop-up digital library:
bringing hi-speed wifi,
library resources, cultural
events, and specialist
expertise to a place
near you.

Expanded collections,
artworks, museum objects

LMG supporting local artists,
creatives and creative industries:
working, meeting and research
spaces; specialist collections;
exhibitions; workshops; digital
platforms and specialist digital
skills; complementing education
providers; and more...

LMG visitation increases
more than 50% from
274,631 to 435,000

Per capita investment
in library collections at
least doubled:
\$2.04 (2018)
to \$4.53 (2023)





NEXT STEPS

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

The City of Coffs Harbour Library, Museum and Gallery Strategy presents a forward-looking set of objectives and actions that will position the LMG service for the future.

These objectives and actions are mutually reinforcing, in the sense that making progress in one area makes it easier to achieve actions in another.

Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting (IPR) system will provide six-monthly updates on how the strategy is progressing. A full evaluation will take place in 2023.

The LMG strategy will be successful if more people throughout the Coffs Harbour region find reasons to use and enjoy the spaces, resources, opportunities and programs our libraries, museum and gallery provide.

“The arts and creativity provide immense public value. They make our individual lives better and build stronger, more cohesive communities. They contribute to our health and wellbeing, as well as our education, advancement and innovation. They help us express and understand who we are. They shape how we are seen and understood by others, and our international reputation.”

Australia Council for the Arts (2017)

APPENDICES

TRY FOR THE KINGDOM IF I CAN



AT I WAS BORN A THOUSAND YEARS AGO



KN YOUR GOD THAT I'M NOT AWARE



APPENDIX



DICES

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2. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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.

Creative Industries

The creative industries are innovation led, knowledge intensive and potentially exportable businesses that cover a range of creative practices across all art forms.

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.

DIAP

Disability Inclusion Action Plans.

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.

LMG

The integrated service model for Libraries, Museum, Gallery.

Mid-North Coast region

The Local Government Areas of Coffs Harbour, Bellingen, Nambucca, Kempsey, Port Macquarie-Hastings and MidCoast.

North Coast region

The Local Government Areas of Tweed, Byron, Ballina, Lismore, Kyogle, Richmond Valley, Clarence Valley, Coffs Harbour, Bellingen, Nambucca, Kempsey and Port Macquarie-Hastings.

Partner

An individual, group, organisation or business with whom Coffs Harbour City Council can work to deliver a 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.

STEAM

Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics.

STEM

Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics.

Volunteer

Volunteers support our gallery, museum and library services and programs in numerous ways from exhibition support, customer service, library-related tasks, and assistance with education programs.

SPYDUS

Coffs Harbour City Council's library management system.



3. LMG STRATEGY OBJECTIVES

FOCAL AREA ONE: INVIGORATE

VIBRANT PLACES

Objective 1:1

The City will come alive with gathering, meeting, exhibiting and learning spaces

Outcomes

Vibrant, functional and flexible Cultural & Civic Space opens in 2022. New exhibition, learning, study, and local history spaces and services. New creative production spaces for music, art, media and literary production and learning.

Record numbers of users, visitors and program participants.

REGIONAL CITY; NATIONAL PROFILE

Objective 1:2

Library Museum and Gallery spaces will stimulate opportunities for learning and sharing.

Outcomes

Audience development and retention across LMG services. Increased profile and reputation of STILL: National Still Life Award. Increased public programs; higher participation.

FLOURISHING CREATIVE ECONOMY

Objective 1:3

The Council's investment in library, gallery and museum infrastructure and services will enable a vibrant creative economy

Outcomes

Focussed collections, programs and services for creative businesses, students and researchers.

SUPPORTING CULTURAL TOURISM

Objective 1:4

The unique history and contemporary cultures of the Coffs Coast will be rediscovered by locals and visitors

Outcomes

Cultural tourism and regional arts initiatives enhanced and supported by LMG services, programs, exhibitions and mobile library outreach options.

Integrated and increased marketing and promotion.



FOCAL AREA TWO: CONNECT

RESILIENT PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

Objective 2:1

Library, gallery and museum will, in their different ways, incubate innovative, inclusive and sharing communities

Outcomes

Successful delivery and promotion of LMG social impact programs based on an annual focal area. For example, social isolation, creative and healthy ageing, mental health, and digital inclusion.

ABORIGINAL CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE AND LANGUAGE

Objective 2.2

Aboriginal artists and communities will be encouraged to lead new projects in partnership with library, gallery and museum services

Outcomes

Co-designed Indigenous exhibitions; support for local Aboriginal artists/creatives; cultural tourism opportunities. Joint grant applications; successful project partnerships.

MUTUALLY SUPPORTIVE PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

Objective 2.3

Beneficial partnerships will shape our cultural identity and future

Outcomes

New volunteer opportunities. Better fit between skills/ aspirations and available roles.
New sponsorship opportunities and partnerships.



3. LMG STRATEGY OBJECTIVES CONTINUED

FOCAL AREA THREE: LEARN

A LEARNING COMMUNITY

Objective 3:1

Lifelong learning will be supported

Outcomes

Lifelong learning stimulated and supported via LMG resources, programs in physical and digital formats. Increased partnerships; expanded cultural programs, events and workshops. Increased attendance.

THRIVING IN A CONTEMPORARY WORLD

Objective 3.2

Twenty-first century literacies will be nurtured

Outcomes

Increased participation in programs, services and resources that support 21st century literacies – reading, digital, information and visual.

CUSTOMER CENTRIC SERVICE PHILOSOPHY

Objective 3:3

The learning, research, enterprise and leisure needs of our communities will underpin decision-making and service design

Outcomes

Positive feedback about the welcoming, inclusive and diverse services and opportunities offered by LMG. Expanded opening hours; efficient rosters; responsive customer service experience.

A DYNAMIC TEAM

Objective 3.4

A responsive, resilient and creative library, museum and gallery (LMG) team will bring the strategy alive

Outcomes

Transition plan 2020-2022 successfully realised. New capabilities – digital, volunteer coordination, service promotion and educational programming – delivering tangible benefits to more people across all demographics.



FOCAL AREA FOUR: COLLECT

COLLECTING FOR EVERYONE

Objective 4.1

A coordinated collection focus will build depth and diversity

Outcomes

Well managed library, art and museum collections. Enhanced collection focus on young people, multicultural and visual arts collections. Improved collections relating to Aboriginal culture and history.

A SAFE HOME

Objective 4.2

Conservation and storage of art and museum collections will be prioritised

Outcomes

Museum and Art collections relocation plan enables secure movement to new storage and exhibition locations without damage or loss. New offsite storage facility meets specifications and functional requirements.



3. LMG STRATEGY OBJECTIVES

CONTINUED

FOCAL AREA FIVE: REMEMBER

LEGACY FOR THE FUTURE

Objective 5.1

Our museum, local history and art collections will enable new projects, research and stories to be conceived and shared

Outcomes

Digitisation project delivers improved discoverability of local information and heritage; improved collection management systems and related processes and systems.

UNIQUE AND IRREPLACEABLE

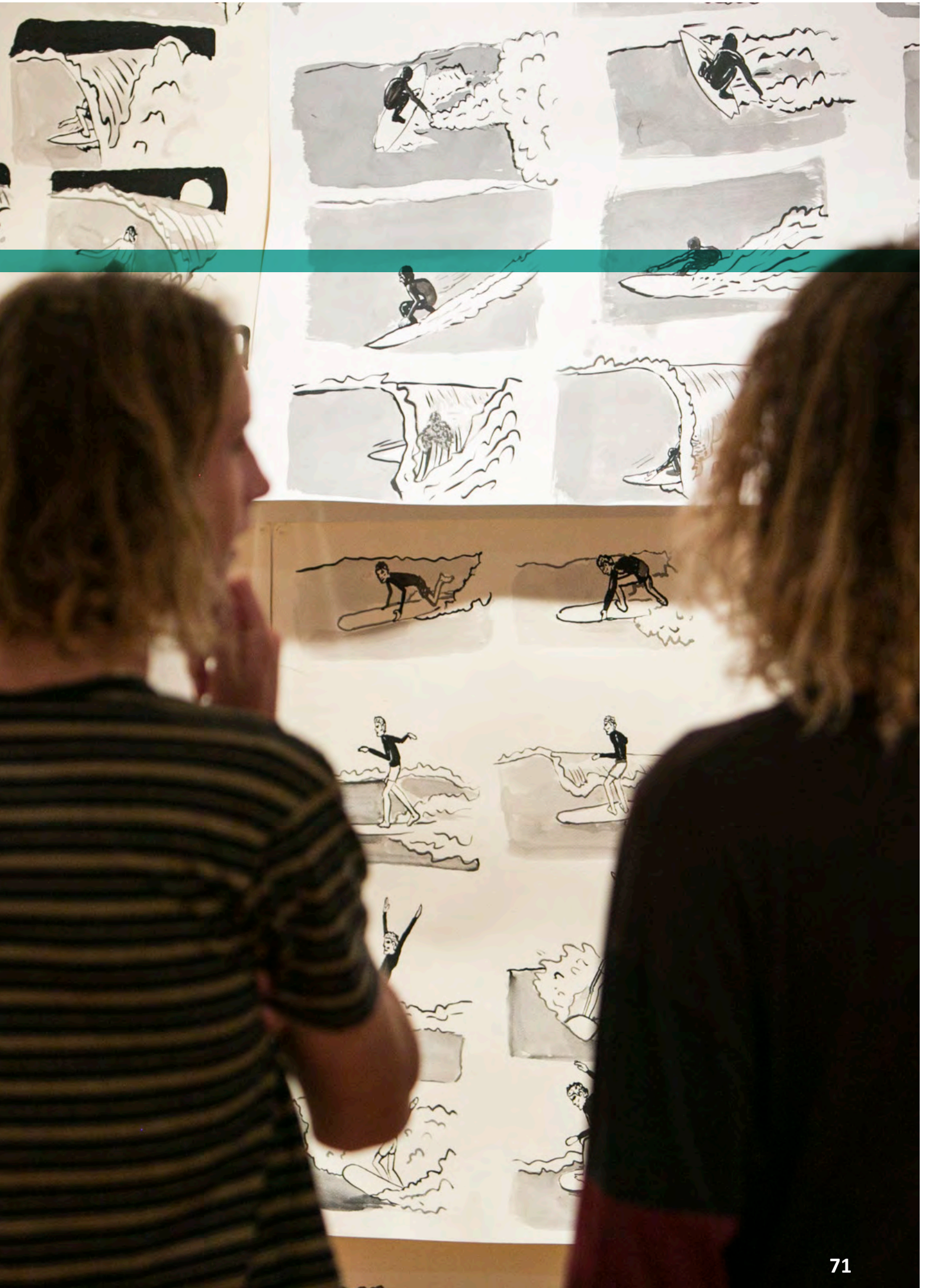
Objective 5.2

New ways to access, interpret and exhibit the diverse cultural and artistic heritage of the Coffs Coast will be explored.

Outcomes

High quality curated exhibitions and programs utilising material from our own collections and research attracts consistent positive feedback and increased visitation. Access to local studies improved via trial of local studies spaces in branch libraries.





4. LMG TARGETS FOR 2023

PRESENT				FUTURE		
Area	Performance 2018/19			LMG Strategy targets 2023		
COLLECTIONS:	ITEMS	DOLLARS	PER CAPITA	ITEMS	DOLLARS	PER CAPITA
Gallery	347			640		
Museum	21,300			7,100		
Library	96,233	\$156,777	\$2.04	110,000	\$362,000	\$4.53
Programs:	# of events	Attendance		# of events	Attendance	
Gallery	57	2,988		228	10,600	
Museum	29	1,080		116	3,740	
Library	253	8,502		400	33,160	
Services:	Number			Target		
Gallery- Exhibitions	7			17		
Museum- Exhibitions	4			6		
Library Circulation:	Loans			Loans		
Coffs	195,152			609,000		
Toormina	69,463			80,000		
Woolgoolga	55,935			66,000		
eLoans	24,869			45,000		
Total Library Circulation	345,419			800,000		
Staff:	FTE			FTE		
Gallery	2.93			3.13		
Museum	2.99			3.19		
Library	15.85			17.19		
LMG Staff Total	21.77			23.51		
Visitation:	Target			Target		
Gallery	12,612			50,000		
Museum	3,523			10,000		
Libraries:						
Coffs	162,067			264,000		
Toormina	48,149			55,000		
Woolgoolga	48,344			56,000		
Libraries Total	258,560			375,000		
LMG Overall Total	274,461			435,000		





LIBRARY

MUSEUM

GALLERY

Coffs Harbour City Council

Corner of Coff and Castle Streets

Coffs Harbour NSW 2450

Phone: 02 6648 4000

Email: coffs.council@chcc.nsw.gov.au