

STRATEGIC PLAN

2021-2024

Dubbo Regional Council
Narromine Shire Council
Warrumbungle Shire Council

"Libraries are more than just stores of books and knowledge. They are the cornerstone of neighbourhoods and communities"

Tanner Colby

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Acknowledgement of Country

MRL acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country in our region and their continuing connection to land, culture, and community. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.

Sustainable Development Goals

The Library supports the global United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, a collection of 17 independent but interconnected goals designed as a call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity.



The Library Strategic Plan 2021-2024 acknowledges the following documents:

- Community Strategic Plans (MRL member Councils)
- United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
- State Library of NSW Strategic Plan 2019-2023
- IFLA Trends Report 2019
- State Library of NSW Compliance Report (2019)
- Library user-non user survey (2019)
- Library Staff Planning Workshop 2020
- Dubbo Regional Council Cultural Plan 2020-2025
- Dubbo Regional Council Disability Inclusion Action Plan
- Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA)
- A Framework for Australian Public Libraries (ALIA: APLA)
- NSW Cultural Infrastructure Plan 2025+



Public Libraries Framework

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	PUBLIC LIBRARIES			INDIVIDUAL and COMMUNITY OUTCOMES
	SERVICE MANAGEMENT	SERVICE OFFERING	SERVICE DELIVERY	
<p>Public libraries work actively with their communities to provide services that are responsive to service needs and build individual and community capacity</p> <p>Engage community in shaping library services</p> <p>Reflect community needs and aspirations</p> <p>Ensure universal access to library services</p> <p>Champion the community's unique cultural identity</p> <p>Create and nurture partnerships that build community and individual resilience and capacity</p>	<p>Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic decision-making Strategic planning Advocacy <p>Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy and planning Human resources management Financial and asset management Technology management Public relations and promotions Monitoring and evaluation 	<p>Content/Collections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General and specialist Local studies, heritage, culture Digital <p>Information and reference services</p> <p>Programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Literacy Learning Creative, cultural Digital literacy <p>Technology access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Computers Internet and wifi <p>Place (physical and digital)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read and relax Study and work Meet and connect Collaborate and create <p>Targeted services (e.g.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children and youth Older people and seniors Cultural groups Indigenous 	<p>Service points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Branches (incl. opening hours) Mobile libraries Website and online services Outreach services <p>Staffing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staffing levels Skills, qualifications <p>Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operating Capital Sustainability <p>Partnership and collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Government Education and business Library sector Volunteers <p>Customer service</p>	<p>Effective library programs and services help individuals to increase their knowledge and skills and communities to be more inclusive, productive and creative</p> <p>Literacy and lifelong learning</p> <p>Digital inclusion</p> <p>Personal development and wellbeing</p> <p>Economic and workforce development</p> <p>Stronger and more creative communities</p> <p>Informed and connected citizens</p>

Source: Standards and Guidelines for Australian Public Libraries, 2020

Vision and Mission Statement

Vision

To engage and empower people and communities

Mission

Provide contemporary library and information services that support learning, cultural and social needs



Our Commitment



ENGAGE

Connect and engage with our community in social, recreational, creative and learning experiences.

We will:

- Provide welcoming and inviting spaces
- Form partnerships with relevant stakeholders
- Ensure our customers have a positive experience
- Provide and promote services to all members of the community
- Explore opportunities to increase community participation
- Acknowledge and support the cultural diversity of our communities



EMPOWER

Empower people to enrich their lives and participate fully in the community.

We will:

- Support lifelong learning and discovery
- Provide information and resources that meet our communities' needs and preferences
- Deliver programs that develop and support literacies
- Provide opportunities for people to enhance their participation in the community
- Support local economies and employment



INNOVATE

Embrace innovative practices and technologies to improve library services continually.

We will:

- Nurture a culture of continuous improvement
- Optimise existing and emerging technologies
- Provide new and inspiring user experiences
- Proactively respond to trends in public libraries
- Build staff capacity to develop, implement and evaluate new ideas and services

Regional Overview

Macquarie Regional Library (MRL) is a consortium of three local government areas, Dubbo Regional Council, Warrumbungle Shire Council and Narromine Shire Council, providing library and information services to residents and visitors. Under a Library Service Agreement, Dubbo Regional Council is the delegated Executive Council.

Member Councils make an annual contribution based on an agreed funding formula. Additionally, a State Government annual library subsidy is paid to each Council and transferred to MRL for library service operations. Each member Council is responsible for building and maintaining the libraries and service points in their Local Government Area.

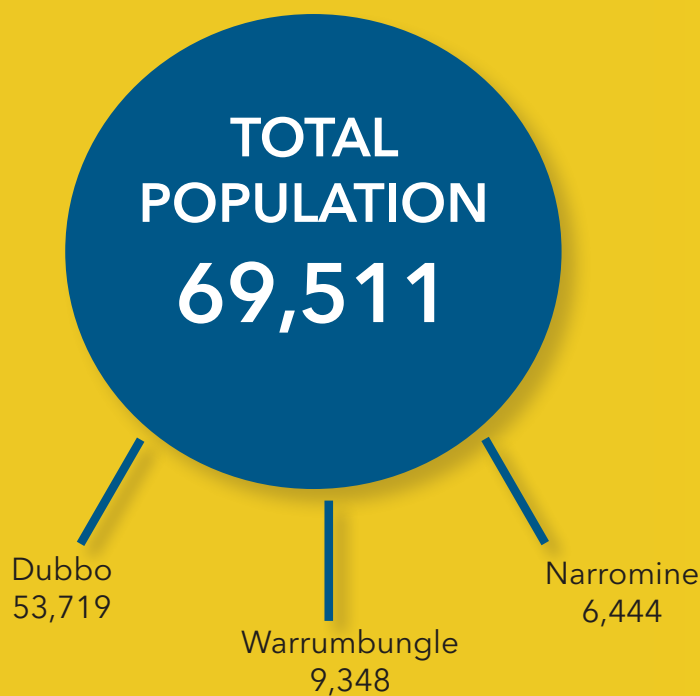
The Library serves a population of 69,511 (ABS, 2021) across 25,180 square kilometres. The Library is well positioned to cater for people's needs at all ages and life stages, providing a wide range of programs and services for a diverse clientele spread across a wide geographical area.



Figure 1: Macquarie Regional Library Service Area

Source: www.olg.nsw.gov.au/programs-and-initiatives/joint-organisations/

Regional Demographics



AGE GROUPS

0-4 years	6.84%
5-9 years	7.21%
10-19 years	12.28%
20-29 years	12.11%
30-39 years	11.59%
40-49 years	12.11%
50-59 years	13.44%
60-69 years	12.04%
70-79 years	7.82%
80-89 years	3.80%
90-99 years	0.73%
100 & over	0.04%

Residents who speak languages other than English at home



2,798 - 4.02% of total population

Residents with internet access at home



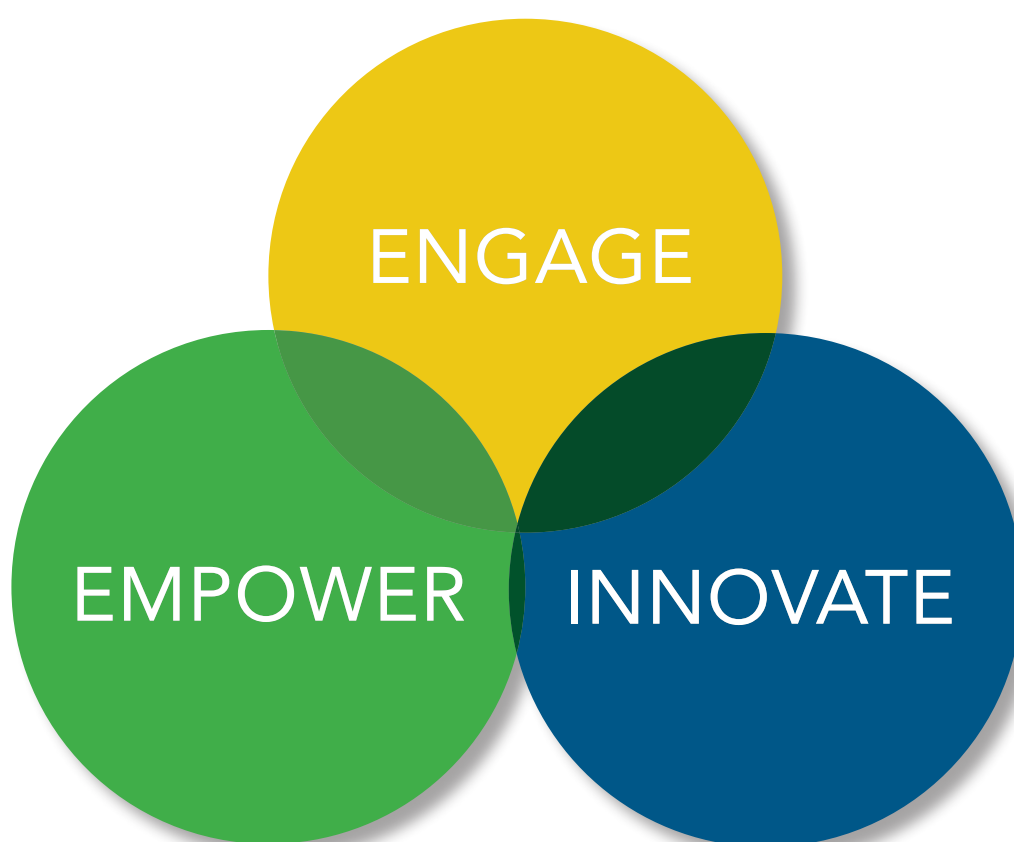
51,539 - 74.14% of total population

Strategic Outlook

The Library is highly valued and integral to the lives of individuals and communities. This plan aims to support and enrich communities' well-being and aspirations. Three strategic priorities emerged following consultation with the community and staff across the region to identify future service delivery needs. The Library's priorities reflect the demand for innovative library spaces, services and programs. The member Councils' Community Strategic Plans coupled with industry best-practice and legislative requirements underpin these priorities.

The plan drives capacity building at regional and local levels, supported by member Councils' leadership and commitment to service delivery excellence.

Influenced by technological, social, and demographic changes, our libraries will continue to evolve to meet community needs and expectations.



TRENDS

- Flexible library spaces
- Social cohesion and inclusion
- Community demand for personal experiences and services
- Increase in demand for digital resources
- Co-location and integration of libraries with community, Council, and commercial facilities
- Rapid change and development of new technologies
- Increasing need for digital literacy in the community
- Focus on sustainability in the delivery of library services
- Evolving roles of library staff

INFLUENCES

- Need for high visibility and accessibility
- Financial capacity of state and local government funding models
- Pressure for value-added services and income generation
- Demographic changes within the populations of member Councils
- Changes in community demand and expectation
- Introduction of new technologies

OPPORTUNITIES

- Strategic joint partnership and sponsorship opportunities to provide services, programs and facilities
- New library buildings and spaces
- A destination library
- Embrace retail and business strategies
- Increase role of libraries as community hubs
- Harnessing innovative technology
- Support educational needs in the community
- Customer enhanced technologies to effectively deliver services and information access
- Partnership opportunities within the Public Library Network
- Grow the Library Service region



"Public libraries are key to democratic development, learning, and literacy. They empower diverse populations and provide spaces and access to knowledge to support people's development."

Marie Ostergard (Public Libraries 2030)

Operational Overview

The way MRL is governed and managed has a significant impact on capacity to efficiently and effectively achieve community-focused goals.

This relationship requires capabilities, capacity and attributes, which include:

- Leadership, strategic planning and advocacy
- Policy development
- Management of human resources, finance, facilities, capital assets and technology
- Marketing and promotion
- Monitoring and evaluation

Measuring Our Performance

Customer Service Excellence

95% of customers view their library as satisfactory

High quality staff training & development program

Visits to the Library per capita**

Resources and Collections

Physical and online resources budget fully expended*

Increase in the use of online resources*

Percentage of the physical collection purchased within the last five years**

Use of the Library website*

Community Engagement & Participation

Library members as a percentage of the population**

Increase target & diversity group programs*

Social media engagement*

Customer satisfaction with programs and events

Operating Performance

Library expenditure per capita**

Library materials expenditure per capita**

* Baseline MRL 2018-2019 performance

** Standards and Guidelines for NSW Public Libraries 2020



50 Years of Macquarie Regional Library 1970 - 2020

Macquarie Regional Library has expanded in the past 50 years from serving a population of approximately 28,700 with two branch libraries in 1970, to catering for nearly 70,000 in 2020, with ten branches and service points, in three local government areas.

Established by the councils of the City of Dubbo and the Shires of Talbragar and Wellington in an agreement signed on 24 October 1969, Macquarie Regional Library commenced operation on 1 January 1970, with branch libraries in Dubbo and Wellington.

On 1 January 1975, the Municipality Council of Narromine and the Shire of Timbrellongie joined, with libraries in Narromine and Trangie. On 1 January 1987, the Shire of Coonabarabran also joined, with libraries in Coonabarabran, Baradine, and Binnaway. Following the amalgamation of Coonabarabran Shire Council and Coolah Shire Council to form Warrumbungle Shire Council, the library service area expanded on 1 July 2005 to include libraries at Coolah, Dunedoo, and Mendooran.

Macquarie Regional Library has embraced technological and demographic changes over the past 50 years to ensure its role and services remain significant for current and future generations. Over time, catalogue cards and date due stamps have been replaced with online computer catalogues and loan systems. Collections have expanded beyond traditional books, magazines, and newspapers to include CDs, DVDs and a wide range of digital resources, including eBooks, eAudiobooks, eFilms, eMagazines, eNewspapers, and online databases, accessible 24/7.



Library Assistant Anne Soper (Barwick) and Mrs. Dorothy Miller, a Library Link volunteer, at Dubbo Branch Library in 1984

During 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic changed the way people interacted with library services. New services flourished with a range of customised offerings providing access to library services and resources from home. New services included: online Storytime and Maker Monday sessions, online author talks, Book Express, and PressReader and NewsBank subscriptions with access to thousands of online magazines and newspapers.