Libraries as public spaces
- physical to digital
- communicating the new normal

Civica Roadshow   UTS Sydney 21 February 2018

Mark Norman
Wollongong City Libraries
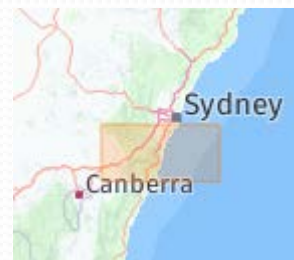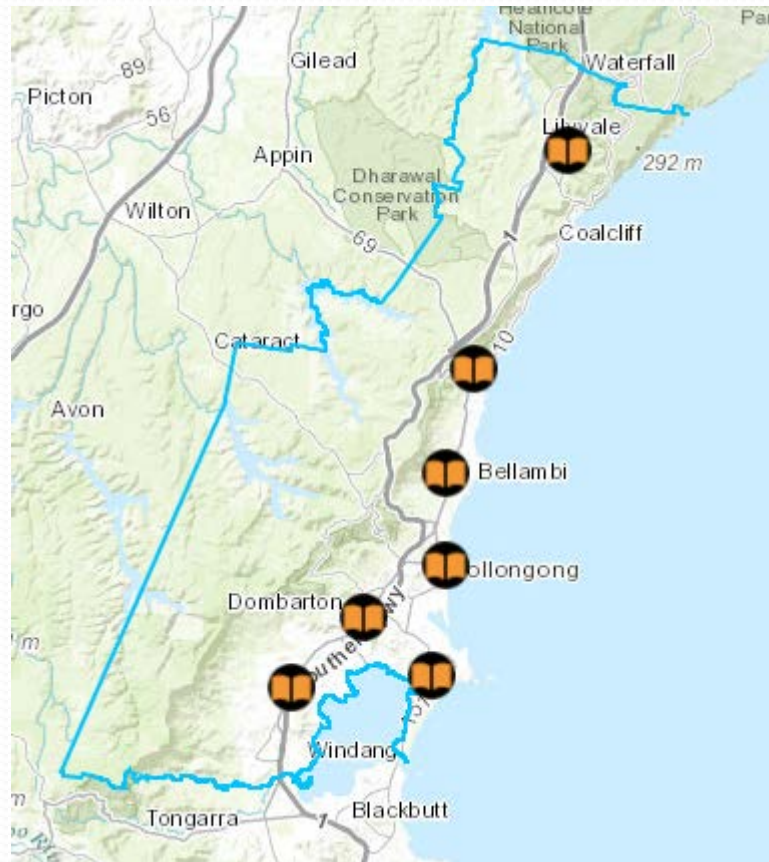
Wollongong NSW - Local Government Area

Wollongong is the 4th largest city in New South Wales after Sydney, Newcastle and the Central Coast; and the 10th largest city in Australia.
Estimated population for 2016 is 211,201.
The community is served by Wollongong's seven libraries, from north to south - Helensburgh, Thirroul, Corrimal, Wollongong, Warrawong, Unanderra, Dapto.

Why engage and collaborate with our community?

We know what they want.

Why engage and collaborate with our community?

We know what they want.

Don't we?

"As someone who has spent a fair amount of time analysing business disruption, I think it's pretty clear that libraries are eventually going to fade away."

Marc Bodnick, 2012, https://www.forbes.com/sites/quora/2012/10/02/will-public-libraries-become-extinct/#4b0a0c93693c

"I really don't see how a world can exist where tons of bookstores close (a trend that we're in the midst of) while libraries generally stay open."

Marc Bodnick, 2012, https://www.forbes.com/sites/quora/2012/10/02/will-public-libraries-become-extinct/#4b0a0c93693c

Over the next 5 years, what does our community want from their libraries?

* 690 people engaged through face-to-face activities - community events, visits to schools, within libraries, citizenship ceremonies, community circles, co-design workshops
* 430 people viewed the project page online
* 200 formal submissions received via paper feedback forms, online forms and open submissions

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES AND PARTICIPATION RESULTS

engagement activities and participation results

- **434** total number of users who viewed project page
- **8** staff community circle
- **30** staff/community co-design workshop
- **30** Viva La Gong
- **162** Spring into Corrimal
- **90** 3 primary schools
- **696** total number of people engaged
- **8** neighbourhood forum community circle
- **93** Dapto Street Fair
- **205** feedback forms, online & open submissions
- **48** Central Library brainstorming boards
- **13** Youth Centre community circle

"Engaging the community and internal stakeholders to understand what their current and future library needs are is the starting point for then considering how these needs might be met through library services and facilities."

Hunting, S.A., Ryan, R. & Dowler, B. 2015. Collaborative library service delivery: A guide to regional library management models in NSW. Centre for Local Government, University of Technology Sydney.

Collaboration

"It's a great idea

Collaboration

"It's a great idea as long as it doesn't violate my personal work schedule or on my sense of control and authority"

Ellen Lupton, 2009, http://elupton.com/2009/10/why-collaborate/

So what happens when you engage your community?

➢ *they go beyond books …*
➢ *they imagine their ideal library of the future…*
➢ *they co-write their library's next chapter*

Your library, your place

VISION
We will engage with our community to inspire reading, lifelong learning, creativity and inclusion.

PURPOSE
We will provide access to services that meet the changing needs of our community.

GOAL 1 : Your libraries are your place
- Anywhere, anytime, for anyone
- Offer inspiring physical and virtual spaces and collections at the heart of your community
- Services, programs and events are provided by knowledgeable, customer-focussed and innovative staff
- Enable your libraries to best serve your local community

GOAL 2 : Your libraries inspire creativity and innovation
- Contribute to Wollongong's cultural life
- Provide resources, technology and facilities that enable creative exploration

GOAL 3 : Your libraries encourage community well-being, inclusion and cohesion
- Promote the positive connection between libraries, customers and well-being
- Develop inclusive programs, services and collections that engage and celebrate our diverse community

GOAL 4 : Your libraries collect and share local stories
- Collect and curate the history of the Illawarra, its people, stories and heritage
- Connect the community with their local heritage
- Create local stories in partnership with the community

GOAL 5 : Your libraries are a gateway for lifelong learning
- Develop and deliver programs that meet the multiple literacy needs of diverse audiences
- Provide technology to support staff and customers to create successful learning opportunities

What did the community tell us?

They want:

- ❖ *Physical library materials and digital resources*

- ❖ *Staff assistance with research, study, learning*

- ❖ *Online tutoring and learning services*

- ❖ *Technology training*

What did the community tell us?

They want:

❖ *Free access to technology - PCs, tablets, 3D printers, WiFi, copiers*

❖ *Study rooms, zoned areas, arts and craft*

❖ *Activities for all ages - children, teens, older - music, movies, trivia, dating*

What did the community tell us?

They want:

- ❖ *More evening and weekend hours; 24/7 swipe access*

- ❖ *'Relaxing' the rules for homeless people*
- ❖ *A sense of community - all ages interacting together*

What did the community tell us?

They want:

- ❖ *Cafes, more parking, creche*

- ❖ *Council Customer Services in the libraries*

- ❖ *Art exhibitions, special one-off events*

- ❖ *More libraries closer to their location*

What did the community tell us?

They want:

❖ *Physical library materials and digital resources*

Quick wins:

❖ *Enable customer selection (DDA - Demand Driven Acquisitions)*

What did the community tell us?

They want:

❖ *More libraries closer to where they live*

Quick wins:

❖ *The Libraries Everywhere Project*

The Libraries Everywhere Project aims to locate Book Boxes (Little Free Libraries) in indoor and outdoor high pedestrian traffic areas to provide free access to reading materials to the community.

Books are sourced from discarded library stock. The community contributes to these collections as they use them through their own book exchanges.

A total of nine Book Boxes have been installed across the city.

What did the community tell us?

They want:

❖ *Special one-off events*

Quick wins:

❖ *The Book to Baton concert*

What did the community tell us?

They want:

> ❖ *Special one-off events*

A not so quick win:

> ❖ *Build on the success of the annual Comic Gong Festival*

What did the community tell us?

They want:

❖ *Technology training*

A not so quick win:

❖ *Build 'The Lab' – a training space for collaborative technology training, programs and events*

"The library today is still a trusted institution, but the public is coming to us with different expectations. Clinging to an outdated reference mission has left many libraries struggling to meet these new expectations."

Brian Kennery, 2015, https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/libraries/article/68019-for-future-reference.html

"… objections to removing print reference collections … and using the newly freed public space to build a cooperative learning commons, for instance, tend to devolve into hysterics about the potentiality of libraries becoming 'no better than a Starbucks'."

Heather B Terrell, 2015, https://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ital/article/viewFile/9098/8203

"As budgets decline and libraries look to use their space in new and creative ways, physical reference collections are obvious targets for heavy weeding."

Anna M, 2013, M, https://cdstacked.blogspot.com.au/2013/01/tips-for-weeding-your-reference.html

The Reference Collection was reduced from 27,800 items to 12,800 … and we're still weeding.

The 1st floor of the Library is no longer called the 'Reference Floor' and the ground floor is no longer called the 'Lending Library'.

The Reference Collection was reduced from 27,800 items to 12,800 … and we're still weeding.

The 1st floor of the Library is no longer called the 'Reference Floor' and the ground floor is no longer called the 'Lending Library'.

Staff can now work on either floor.

"**Transformational change is undoubtedly the most difficult to undertake. It requires not just a change in the status quo, but the development of a new framework that may bear no resemblance to anything the stakeholders have seen or experienced in the past.**"

Susan Jurow, 2014, https://www.clir.org/pubs/reports/pub85/change.html

Our aim – create a flexible environment that will provide opportunities to gather, to learn and bridge the digital divide, to socialise and build against isolation
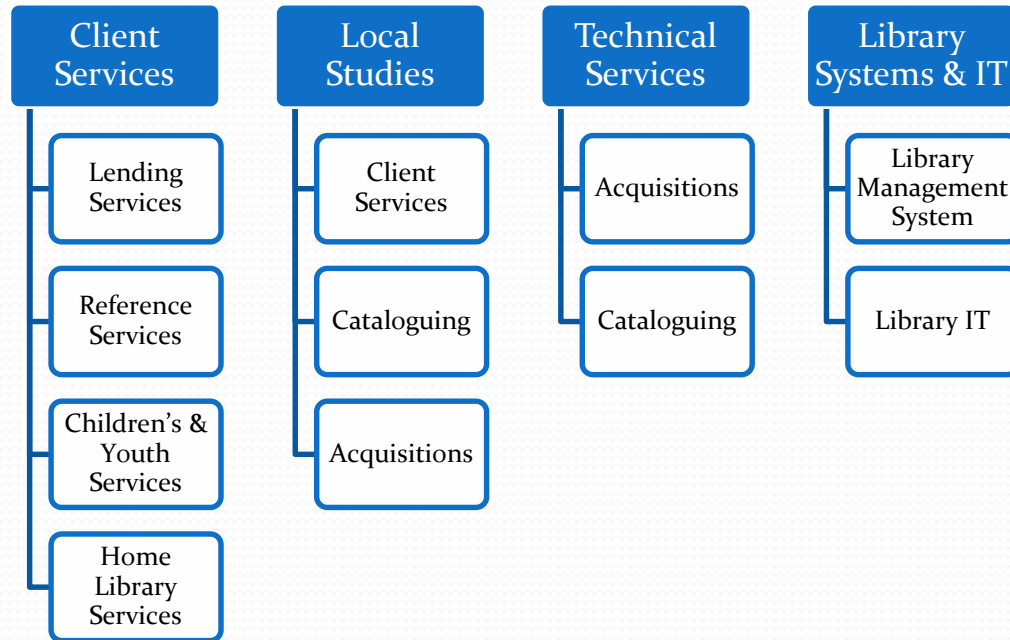
'The Lab' – what we dreamed

What we have…

What happened in Wollongong's libraries last FY?

- Over 88,900 library members +7.69%

- Over790,000 physical visits +1.8%
- Over 635,500 eVisits +1.09%

- Over 1,258,400 physical loans -0.87%
- Over 172,600 eLoans +10.27%

- Over 96,600 WiFi logins +16.16%
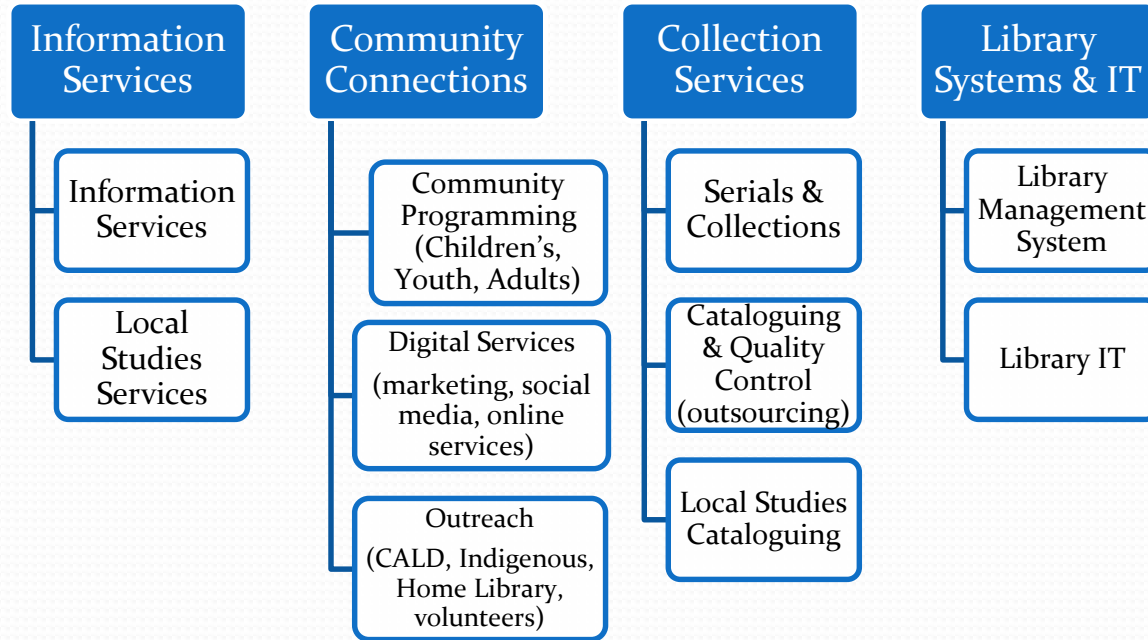- Over 107,430 hours of PC bookings +1.54%

What happened in Wollongong's libraries last FY?

- Over 220 IT training sessions +2.72%
- Over 840 attendees +15.84%

- Over 2,000 events/programs delivered +12.59%
- Over 58,700 attendees +46.14%

- Over 27,900 social media likes +167.30%

- Over 126,700 reference questions answered -13.55%

How do we deliver services – we restructured from this:

Client Services
- Lending Services
- Reference Services
- Children's & Youth Services
- Home Library Services

Local Studies
- Client Services
- Cataloguing
- Acquisitions

Technical Services
- Acquisitions
- Cataluguing

Library Systems & IT
- Library Management System
- Library IT

How do we deliver services – we restructured to this:

Information Services
- Information Services
- Local Studies Services

Community Connections
- Community Programming (Children's, Youth, Adults)
- Digital Services (marketing, social media, online services)
- Outreach (CALD, Indigenous, Home Library, volunteers)

Collection Services
- Serials & Collections
- Cataloguing & Quality Control (outsourcing)
- Local Studies Cataloguing

Library Systems & IT
- Library Management System
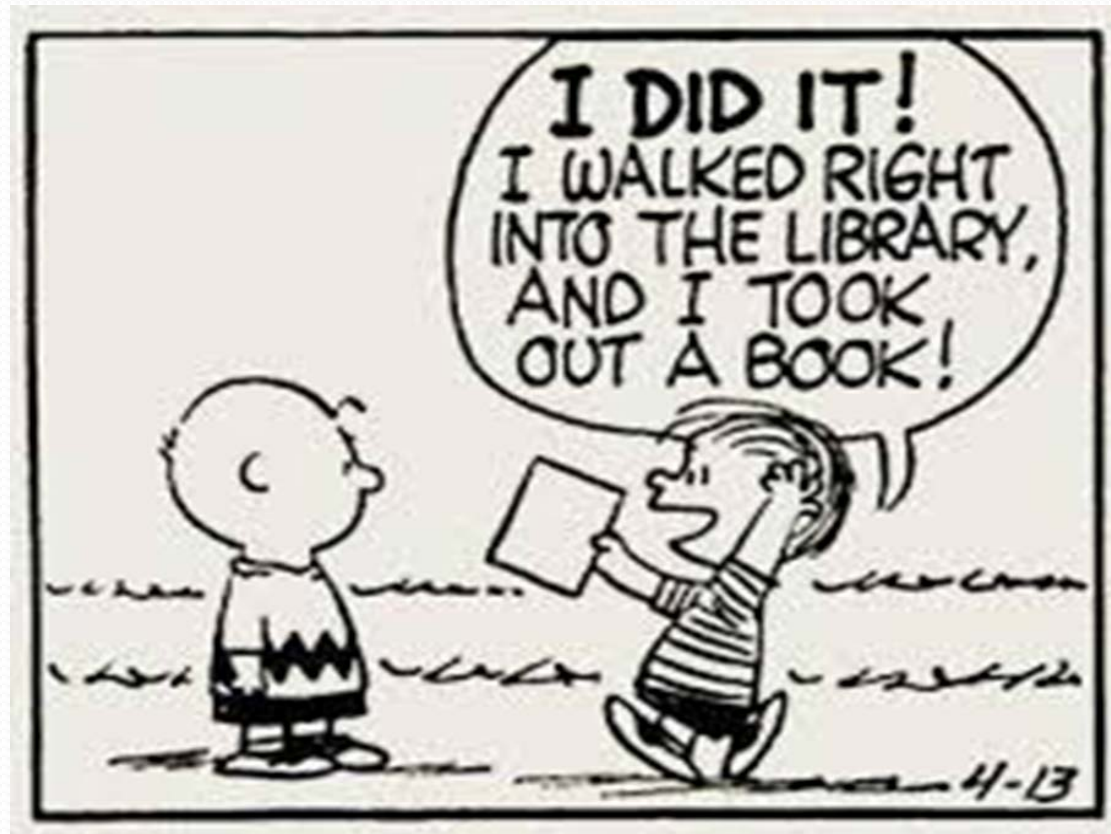- Library IT

Steve Jobs to *Business Week*:
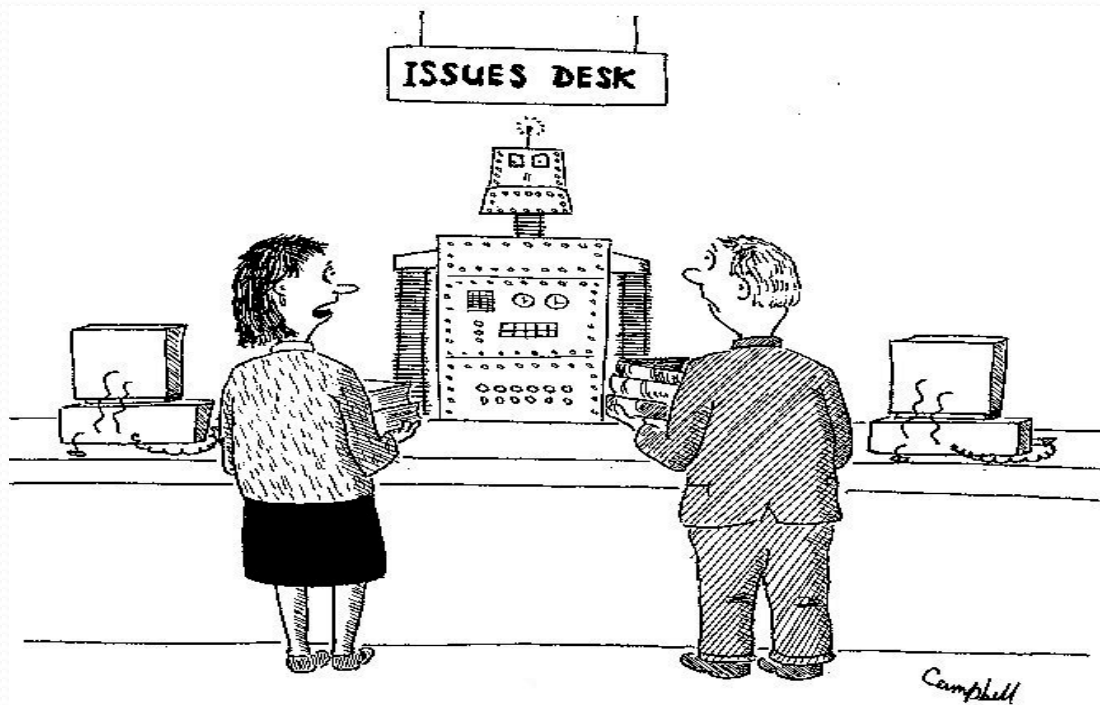**"A lot of times, people don't know what they want until you show it to them."**

Chunka Mai, 2011, https://www.forbes.com/sites/chunkamui/2011/10/17/five-dangerous-lessons-to-learn-from-steve-jobs/#5a4c054d3a95

Top takeaways:
* the community want to be involved in planning library services
* the community want more than books
* the community want to participate in learning and recreational programs
* despite libraries being early adopters of change and new technologies, there are still some sacred cows that raise tensions when change is planned - consult, consult, consult

"Personally I think they went a step too far in making the library electronic"