

15.2 Kiama Library Service Review

CSP Objective: Outcome 1.2: We love where we live; we have the services and facilities we need the natural beauty of our surroundings enhances our active and healthy lifestyle.

CSP Strategy: 1.2.1 Provide facilities that enable us to participate in social, cultural, recreational and sports activities, no matter our background, ability or age.

Delivery Program: 1.2.1.1 Make our libraries the hub of community activity and service. Manage Council's libraries, encompassing Family History Centre and the Gerringong Library and Museum to ensure programs meet community needs and the Public Library Standards.

Summary

This report provides an overview of the Library Service Review. This service review is part of the work that is being undertaken in accordance with the Performance Improvement Order. As outlined in previous reports and correspondence to Councillors and the community, staff with the support of external expert reviewers are working through several priority service reviews across the organisation.

The service reviews are being conducted to enable the KMC to take responsible and considered steps for financial sustainability. The review process enables Council to gain a full understanding of the current state of the operations, asset, staffing and resource allocations.

In accordance with Library operations best practice and as part of the requirement of the State Library, regular service reviews of library operations and services are conducted throughout NSW, based upon the Living Learning Libraries benchmarks 2021-2022.

Service reviews also are part of the requirements under the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework and legislated through the Local Government Act. Council needs to conduct service reviews on an annual cycle to ensure best practice and to review operations with current industry standards.

Whilst the Library was not listed as one of the operational priorities for service reviews, an opportunity was presented by the State Library to conduct a review of our library's services, facilities and operations in this financial year. This review was conducted free of charge by an independent consultant engaged by the State Library.

This report provides an overview of the findings of the review and outlines the next steps in the process.

Financial implication

The Service Review findings and recommendations have several financial impacts and opportunities. These impacts and opportunities will need to be explored further through the decision-making process. Further information on financial impacts will be provided to Council as options are developed.

Risk implication

Currently Council is meeting the industry benchmarks for library services. There remain risks around asset planning and maintenance for the library facilities and a need to develop a library strategy to ensure adequate planning occurs for future years. The library continues to be challenged by the budget constraints of both library operations and the organisation, given the focus of libraries as a community service and limited revenue raising opportunities to support delivery. Service reductions and possible changes to programming might occur if budget limitations continue, which may reduce ability to meet required benchmarks in the future.

Policy

Community Strategic Plan

Delivery Plan/ Program

Council resolution 28 February 2023.

Kiama Leisure Centre Strategy 2012.

Performance Improvement Order

Long Term Financial Plan

Consultation (internal)

During the course of the service review, consultation with internal staff was undertaken, including meetings, 1:1 interviews and written feedback. Industry benchmarking was also undertaken, including consultation with other councils.

Communication/Community engagement

Surveys and consultation are regularly undertaken with existing library users by library staff. It is expected that an annual survey will be released to library members in the next month to seek feedback about their experience of the library, facilities and programs.

Ongoing consultation will be required as budget constraints continue to be evident, reducing options to provide additional services or programs. There will also need to be further engagement with those who are not library members to understand why membership has not been established or if there are changes that could improve membership of the library.

Attachments

- 1 Kiama and Gerringong Libraries Service Review [↓](#)

Enclosures

Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Note the findings of the State Library Assessment Visit and Service review of the Kiama and Gerringong Library.
2. Develop a Library Strategy which supports and encourages increased membership and usage of the facilities.
3. Continue to explore revenue opportunities, including the hiring of spaces and mixed uses within the library facilities.

Service review process

The service review process was undertaken late last year by an independent consultant from the State Library. This involved interviews with staff, visits to each of the library facilities, review of data and statistics collected by the library services and comparison with industry benchmarks. The report and outcome of this review was received by Council on 11 March 2024.

Key findings

- The 2022-2023 data indicates that Kiama has 50.97% of the community who are library members.
- This is an increase of about 8% from the previous year. This is to be commended and is a very strong result in comparison with most NSW public libraries.
- At 7.76 FTE, staffing levels are slightly below the recommended baseline with a suggested minimum of 8 equivalent full-time staff for the population that Kiama and Gerringong libraries serve. With two libraries to staff it is likely that the staff numbers would need to reach enhanced level (8.8 EFT) or even exemplary level (10.40) as the formula for minimum number of staff does not include a calculation for more than one library.
- With the population served there should be staff members with special responsibilities for Information Technology/Library Systems (Major Duty) and Local Studies (Major Duty). Both roles are provided within the libraires team which is pleasing.
- Visits to the library are 2.48 per capita, this is above the median, however the median for the cohort is low.
- Expenditure on library materials per capita at \$9.00, items per capita at 2.69 and acquisitions per capita at 0.22 are all above the cohort medium, indicating that the library is investing appropriately in its collection.
- Having a circulation per capita of 5.16 indicates that members are active borrowers.
- In 2022/2023 Kiama Shire Council received \$122,961 in library subsidy payments. This is an increase from \$61,193 in the 2018/2019 funding.

- It is noted that Kiama Council has reduced their funding of the library by 5.58% during this time.
- The library website mentions that Kiama will accept donations for local studies. It is suggested that the *Local studies collection development policy* include a statement about collecting digital content and includes this in the statement on the website about donations.
- The programs already run by the library are popular, however it is helpful to look at this from another perspective. There are about 50% of the community who do not use the library and are not members, so it may be helpful to find out from these people the programs (as well as the collections and services) which may bring them into the libraries.

Conclusion

This report is submitted to provide an update on the Service Review and present the draft report for Councillors' consideration.



Michelle Hudson
 Manager Library and Cultural Hubs
 Kiama Municipal Council
 PO Box 75, Kiama NSW 2533

11 March 2024

Dear Michelle

Library assessment visit Kiama Municipal Council

I appreciate the opportunity to visit **Kiama Municipal Council** to meet with you and other staff. The State Library has prepared the attached report based on the visit, discussion, and analysis of your library's data with reference to statistics and *Living Learning Libraries* benchmarks¹. 2021-2022 data has been used as more recent data is not yet available statewide.

It is pleasing to hear that evening opening hours have returned at Kiama Library, noting that there had been a period post-pandemic where evening hours had been cut. It is encouraging to hear that from 2 January Kiama Library has been open until 7.00pm each Tuesday night. It is noted that Gerringong Library does not open on Mondays, however it is also noted that the library is open significantly more hours than the original plan of opening three days a week.

The 2022-2023 data indicates that Kiama has 50.97% of the community who are library members. This is an increase of about 8% from the previous year. This is to be commended and is a very strong result in comparison with most NSW public libraries. The library might consider running a membership campaign across the community to promote membership and use of the libraries for the almost 50% of people that are not members.

We note with interest that the library is seeking to work out how to reconnect with people who are in year two or three of not using the library. Through the library management system it is possible to analyse the location of members to see if there are parts of the Kiama Shire Council area which have less members. From current data the staff know that some members use both Kiama and Gerringong libraries. There is also some overlap in use between Shoalhaven and Kiama libraries.

At 7.76 FTE, staffing levels are slightly below the recommended baseline with a suggested minimum of 8 equivalent full-time staff for the population that Kiama and Gerringong libraries serve. With two libraries to staff it is likely that the staff numbers would need to reach

¹ *Living Learning Libraries* <https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/public-library-services/content/living-learning-libraries> [accessed 7 December 2023]

enhanced level (8.8 EFT) or even exemplary level (10.40) as the formula for minimum number of staff does not include a calculation for more than one library. With the population served there should be staff members with special responsibilities for

- Information Technology/Library Systems (Major Duty)
- Local Studies (Major Duty).

Kiama Library service has these roles staffed.

Visits to the library are 2.48 per capita, this is above the median, however the median for the cohort is low.

Expenditure on library materials per capita at \$9.00, items per capita at 2.69 and acquisitions per capita at 0.22 are all above the cohort medium, indicating that the library is investing appropriately in its collection. Having a circulation per capita of 5.16 indicates that members are active borrowers.

In 2022/2023 Kiama Shire Council received \$122,961 in library subsidy payments. This is an increase from \$61,193 in the 2018/2019 funding. It is noted that Kiama Shire Council has reduced their funding of the library by 5.58% during this time.

Please feel free to contact the State Library to discuss any aspects of the attached report.

Yours sincerely

Ellen Forsyth
Consultant, Public Library Services

Name of consultant/librarian visiting	Ellen Forsyth
Visit date	10 November 2023
Staff participating in discussion	Michelle Hudson Jessica Rippon Erin Tierney Carla James Corrine Pryde Lauren Watkins Staff talked with by telephone: Catherine Taylor Elizabeth Skorulis Jane Thompson
Libraries visited	Kiama and Gerringong

G1. Library management

To provide the community with a library service that is equitable, accessible, cost effective and efficient.

The library provides a range of collections, services and programs, and has qualified and skilled staff. The council is undertaking service reviews across all departments. The library is investing appropriately in the collection, and this is shown by the use the collection is receiving. Staffing levels are lower than recommended which impacts the availability of staff to undertake outreach to the almost 50% of the community who are not members. Library staff commented that people can be very local in their use of services, and this helps to highlight the importance of local outreach across the Kiama Council area especially to the smaller communities who may need additional encouragement to visit Kiama and Gerringong libraries.

G3 Library buildings

To provide a physical facility which will serve the identified needs of the community. The building should be attractive, designed for efficiency and sustainability, flexible and functional. To provide libraries that are convenient and accessible to the public.

Kiama Library



Photograph 1 Kiama Library

Kiama Library looks an engaging and welcoming space, although it is time to consider refreshing the space before it starts to look tired and worn. The wooden floor in part of the library and the coloured glass in the reading area are appealing features of the library design, although the many sections of glass make it harder to clean the windows. It is understood that this is an inevitable aspect of the design.

The library has a range of spaces which were used in different ways at the time of the visit. There was a book group meeting in the small meeting room in the library, there were people reading, browsing the shelves, using computers in the library, and small children with their parents or carers who were enjoying the children’s space.



Photograph 2 Tree shaded reading area at Kiama Library



Photograph 3 Kiama Library with display stands

The location banners, shown hanging from the ceiling in photograph 3, function well both for location information and adding colour to the library. The service desk is of the larger style, and more recent library buildings are likely to have smaller, pod style desks to facilitate roving services, and to make it less intimidating for people to approach. Part of the use of the current desk is as a display space for local studies information, and brochures. These items could be displayed on custom shelving with a smaller desk. The items which are on the shelving behind the current desk would need space allocated to them for storage if the service desk size was changed. This, in part, could be a visible storage solution so that people can easily see the 3D printers in operation.

The children’s space in the library is attractive and well used for programs and by families using the space. The library was observed to be a popular location for browsing, reading and extended use of the area.

There have been changes in how the Family History Centre is managed with the local studies librarian now running the centre. It is commendable that there are library staff present when the Family History Centre is open and the collection is being catalogued to the library management system.

Gerringong Library



Photograph 4 Gerringong Library

The new Gerringong Library is an attractive well used space. The windows with water views were well used at the time of the library visit. It is a colourful and welcoming space with a well displayed collection and a mix of seating styles. The floating wooden ceiling has an acoustic function, as well as referencing the pitched roof in the next door museum.

The meeting room is flexible being able to be an area with seating which extends into the rest of the library, or it can be closed so it can operate as a meeting room. This library is used as an escape room site a few times a year. This appears a significant workload for staff.



Photograph 5 Outdoor seating at Gerringong Library

This attractive outdoor area may need some shade so that it can be used for more days, as on sunny days in summer it would be little used because of the heat. Any shade provided would need to be in a way which did not impact the outlook from the library or from the seats in this space.

G6 Information and readers' advisory services

To offer information and readers' advisory services to all library customers. To ensure that these services provide customers with the information and/or reading materials that suit their requirements in an appropriate time frame. To offer education programs to support information and digital literacy, and effective use of library resources and facilities.

There were attractive displays in each of the libraries. For future displays in each of the libraries it is recommended that new titles from language collections from the State Library's collection are included. It will raise an awareness of collections available with a minimum time investment.



Photograph 6 Photograph 6 New book display at Carlingford Library

The State Library of NSW suggests including items in languages other than English in each display to be welcoming and to promote the availability of these collections to people who may not have been aware that they were looking for them. The research by Dr Jane Garner for *First language reading and the role of public libraries* highlights that it is an emotional and an important cultural experience to be able to read in your first language. As one of the people interviewed for the research stated:

Because it's my first language so I really – very relaxed when it come to the book, I know every word meaning, I know ever sentence's meaning, and I don't need to guess. I don't need to read the dictionary².

The library staff were planning on undertaking Gale database training in January. Kiama Library attracts school and university students. Staff inductions include specific training in library resources.

² Garner, Jane *First language reading and the role of public libraries* <https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/public-library-services/first-language-reading> February 2022 [accessed 7 December 2023]



Photograph 7 Book display with genre bundles available for loan from Kiama Library

Library staff produce book lists in print and online and provide genre bundles for loan. It is suggested that all the reading lists are checked for representation and inclusion, for example the *Cyberpunk* list only contains the names of male authors as does the classics list of *Fantasy and sci-fi*, while the *Epic sci-fi* list only includes a couple of women authors. It is suggested that some of the romance lists are updated to include non-binary and male authors.

The Anne Frank title listed on the *Historical classics* list is one of very few non-fiction titles on this list (*Walden* is possibly the only other one on the list) and should be moved to another location so that it is not accidentally thought to be fiction. For the *Literary classics* list it is suggested there is a warning of racism being present in some of the titles, an example of this would be *Gone with the wind*. The library could consider including a note that *some classics includes negative depictions and/or mistreatment of people or cultures. These stereotypes were wrong then and are wrong now. Rather than remove the content we want to acknowledge its harmful impact, learn from it and spark conversation to create a more inclusive future together*³. Note not all reading lists were checked.

G8 Library staffing

To ensure that the size and mix of library staff support a range of services and programs which meet the needs of the community.

Each public library must have paid qualified staff of one or more persons, including a suitably qualified library manager.

³ This is based on the text provided by Disney for older films like *Dumbo*, *Peter Pan* and *Jungle Book* <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-54566087> [accessed 18 December 2023]

At 7.76 FTE, staffing levels are slightly below the recommended baseline with a suggested minimum of 8 equivalent full-time staff for the population served by Kiama and Gerringong libraries. With there being two libraries to staff it is likely that the staff numbers would need to reach enhanced (8.8 EFT) or even exemplary (10.40 EFT) as the formula for minimum number of staff does not include a calculation for more than one library. With the population served there should be staff members with special responsibilities for

- Information Technology/Library Systems (Major Duty)
- Local Studies (Major Duty).

Kiama Library service has these roles staffed. The data for professional library staff includes librarians and library technicians by roles.

Like many other libraries there have been issues with staff being sick – the libraries were always able to be open, however this was done with very few staff at times. There has been a flow on effect from the pandemic with delayed annual and other leave for staff.

With the new library in Gerringong there has been a staff restructure with both libraries having branch supervisors to oversee the day to day running of each branch. The Cultural Development Officer reports to the Library Manager and will be providing programming at the library as well.

Assistance in using the Family History Centre is provided by library staff or people can book a research session with volunteers.

This use of volunteers is of concern to the State Library of NSW. The Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) *Statement on voluntary work in library and information services* says that the:

Use of volunteers in library and information services for specific purposes is acceptable but must never compromise the quality of service provision, nor replace paid employment in any way.³

The Library Council of NSW Guideline states:

volunteers are not used as a substitute for appropriately trained and paid library staff — their role is separate from the day to day operation of the library service, and their tasks should not include core library duties.⁴

The use of volunteers at the Family History Centre potentially replaces paid employment when they are assisting researchers with their enquiries. Other work undertaken by the volunteers appears to be in line with both the ALIA statement and the Library Council of NSW Guideline.

The services in the Family History Centre are in a time a transition as the local studies librarian runs the Family History Centre and is making changes to the ratio of work undertaken by staff and volunteers. The library manager is encouraging more staff to be involved in providing family history information. This is an excellent tactic for the library as it will increase the skills of the library staff and provide more staff who are able to assist people with their family history research.

Kiama Library is supportive of staff undertaking training. As it is a relatively small staff it is important that each person has someone else who knows about their job and an active training program ensures this happens.

G9 Collection development and management

To develop and manage a broad collection which meets the needs of the community, inspires intellectual curiosity and anticipates future need.

To provide information and reference resources, recreational reading, literacy development and education support materials. A public library collection should comprise a rich and diverse mix of content.

Access to library collections and the physical experience of interacting with them remains a fundamental role of public libraries. Recent research found that the main reason library members visit their local library (80%) is to browse and borrow collection items⁴. When libraries were closed to the public during the COVID-19 lockdown periods, the thing library members reported missing most was access to the library collection, and the ability to browse and borrow material⁵. It is important that libraries continue to fund and build collections for their communities.

Shoalhaven Library purchases much of the collection for Kiama Library. There are three meetings between staff about this each year. Kiama staff buy from their local bookshops for the fastbacks collection. DVDs are purchased by Kiama staff too. There is still strong interest from the community in DVDs. Some of the Kiama staff catalogue items. Cataloguing is seen as useful for staff skills both for adding the items and for assisting clients.

Kiama Library completed the adult fiction stock quality health check and has 61.6% of the titles on the list. The library holds about 60% of the titles by female and male authors, with lower holdings, of around 30% for titles by non-binary authors. Kiama Library held a higher percentage of titles by Australian First Nations people with 73.68% of the titles held and is to be commended for this. The holdings for culturally and linguistically diverse authors were around 60% so are close to mirroring the total percentage of titles held by Kiama from the list. The representation of LGBTQIA+ authors was lower with around 40% of the titles held. With 61.6% of the titles held, and most other categories being about 60% other than non-binary and LGBTQIA+ authors the library is showing solid work in representing a variety of perspectives in the adult fiction collection. It is suggested that the library look at non-binary authors and LGBTQIA+ authors.

The genres that the Kiama collection did not represent as effectively were Fantasy with 48% of the titles held, Horror with 45% of the titles held, Romance with 38.57% of the titles held and Science fiction with 28% of the titles held. These were the same four genres which other libraries struggled to provide representative collections for. There are webinars on these topics, available at *Adult fiction stock quality health check genre collection information*.⁶ These

⁴ NSW Department of Planning and Environment *Project report: Using behavioural insights to increase access to public libraries* <https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/using-behavioural-insights-to-increase-access-to-public-libraries.pdf> [accessed 7 December 2023]

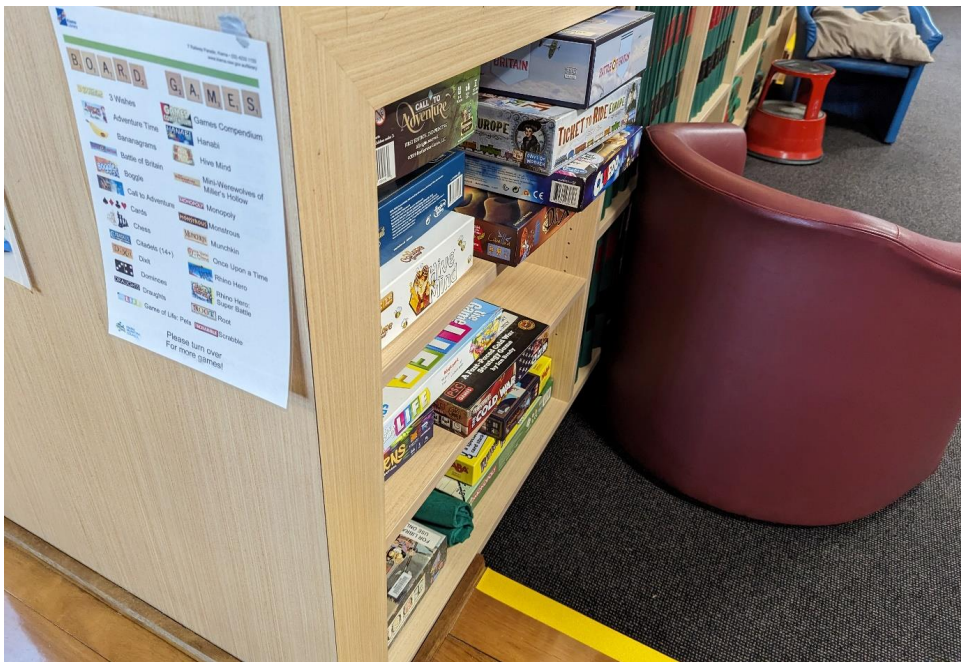
⁵ Charles Sturt University Libraries Research Group *The importance of the physical spaces of NSW public libraries: What users miss, and why.* [accessed 7 December 2023]

⁶ Adult fiction stock quality health check genre collection information https://wiki.libraries.nsw.gov.au/doku.php?id=adult_fiction_stock_quality_health_check_genre_collection_information [accessed 18 December 2023]

webinars were presented to address under representation in adult fiction in *Fantasy, Horror, Romance* and *Science fiction* in NSW public libraries and are excellent professional development for collections and readers' advisory training.

It is excellent news that that Family History Collection is being catalogued onto the library management system. This was recommended in the 2009 review of the Family History Centre. The library uses web-based Libero. Canto is used for local studies photographs and oral history recordings.

Book clubs kits available for loan. Book groups pay \$100 a year for membership. This money is used to purchase titles for the book groups. There are board games for use in the library too.



Photograph 8 Board games available for use in the library

G10. Local studies collections

To collect resources that document, illustrate and record the history and cultural heritage of the local area. To provide access to, preserve and maintain a collection that relates to the history and development of the local community.

The local studies collection receives donations by local authors as well as purchasing relevant local titles. Kiama is using Amplify to transcribe oral history recordings and participated in the recent preventative paper conservation training day.

The library is working with two local historical societies. This collaboration is working well for the library. As well as collection items in Kiama Library there is a temperature-controlled storage room underneath the library.



Photograph 9 Local studies collection at Kiama

The local studies librarian is aware of the lack of visibility of First Nations people in the local studies collection. Collecting in this area is a priority, and the local studies librarian is building relationships with First Nations people and groups.

Some of the items are uploaded to Canto by the Gerringong Historical Society. All their entries need to be approved by the local studies librarian.

The library has been undertaking the digitisation of many local records, and is to be commended for this work, including the digitisation of the council minute books for the councils which amalgamated to make up the current Kiama Shire Council area. The vertical files have been digitised for local viewing. This was undertaken by volunteers. The family history volunteers at Kiama are undertaking a range of tasks including indexing soldiers' names from the memorial wall.

Library staff are using their Scanpro microfilm reader to digitise their local newspaper from microfilm, for local access. The pages are merged in order and will be available (locally) via the catalogue.

Kiama was one of the many areas in NSW to lose a long running local newspaper when the *Kiama Independent* closed in 2020. *The bugle* and *Village whispers* are current local papers. All NSW publishers are required to deposit their publications with the State Library of NSW⁷. *The bugle* is received by the State Library of NSW under legal deposit. *Village whispers* should also be supplied on legal deposit but is yet to be provided by the publishers. State Library of NSW staff have followed up with the publisher with no success.

⁷ State Library of NSW, Legal deposit <https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/research-and-collections/building-our-collections/legal-deposit> [accessed 14 December 2023]

The Canto database used for the local studies collection would benefit from additional information on some catalogue records. The very brief records may be because no other information is available. At least there is the option to search by keyword on whatever information is in the catalogue. Some of the records only have a file name with no other information, for example Betty Chittick.mp3⁸. For oral history interviews it would be helpful to include at least brief information for example date of interview and the interviewee and interviewer. It may have not been included in this example record because this information is not known. An example of an oral history record to work towards can be seen in the catalogue for the National Library of Australia in *Lynne Moore interviewed by Kerreen Reiger in the Australian generations oral history project*⁹.



Photograph 10 Family history centre at Kiama

For all the local studies catalogue records it is important to have accurate copyright information. Not all the records on Canto appear to have copyright statements. For an example of an out of copyright statement used by the State Library of NSW see *Kiama*¹⁰. This clear acknowledgement that the photograph is out of copyright makes it much easier for people to read and understand their responsibilities.

For an example of an in-copyright statement please see *Aerial photographs of Gerringong, New South Wales, 18 April 2004* / by Daryl Jones¹¹. For in copyright items the State Library of NSW notes on item records under copying conditions:

Copyright status : In copyright - Life of creator plus 70 years
 Copyright holder : State Library of New South Wales
 Research & study copies allowed

⁸ Betty Chittick.mp3

<https://kiamalibrary.canto.com/v/KiamaHistory/library?keyword=oral%20history&gSortingForward=false&OrderProp=name&viewIndex=0&display=fitView&referenceTo=&from=fitView&filter=>

⁹⁹ *Lynne Moore interviewed by Kerreen Reiger in the Australian generations oral history project*

<https://catalogue.nla.gov.au/catalog/6290871> [accessed 12 December 2023]

¹⁰ Hazelwood, Rex *Kiama* <https://collection.sl.nsw.gov.au/record/nGmkbpyY>

¹¹ *Aerial photographs of Gerringong, New South Wales, 18 April 2004* / by Daryl Jones
<https://collection.sl.nsw.gov.au/record/16AjvPdn> [accessed 12 December 2023]

Approval for publication required

It is recommended for new items added to the collection, whether older or contemporary items, that a copyright statement is included in the catalogue record so that it is clear to people using the collection while looking at the catalogue record whether an item is in or out of copyright, or even if it is available with creative commons licensing. It is an unusual decision to watermark all the photographs on Canto, even those items which are out of copyright.

The library website mentions that Kiama will accept donations for local studies. It is suggested that the *Local studies collection development policy* include a statement about collecting digital content and includes this in the statement on the website about donations. There are frequent references in the *Local studies collection development policy* to digitising material however there is no clear statement about collecting digital content. To manage digital preservation, it is better to collect digital items closer to the time of their creation.

At the start of the *Local studies collection development policy* it states that:

The Kiama Library's Local Studies Collection collects, catalogues and preserves materials that relate to the local settlement and development of the area along with the family history of the local council area.

It is suggested that *and provides access to* is added after preserves. It may be assumed that this will happen, and at Kiama it obviously does happen, however, stating this will provide clarity. The following paragraph suggests a draft rewording, showing suggested changes with italics and strike through:

The Kiama Library's Local Studies Collection collects, catalogues, ~~and preserves and provides access to representative~~ materials that relate to ~~the local settlement and development of the~~ Kiama area along with the family history of the local council area.

It may be helpful to have statement about representative collecting about the area. This way it will help to include communities and perspectives who may not be very visible in the local studies collection. Removing a statement about collecting a history of settlement may be more welcoming for Aboriginal people.

While a different kind of library, the State Library of NSW has a collection development policy¹² and a separate listing of contemporary collecting priorities¹³. The collection development policy has the principles of:

- I. *The Library's collection exists for the benefit of the people of New South Wales, Australia and beyond.*
- II. *The collection covers a wide range of subjects and incorporates a plurality of voices and perspectives. It will continue to do so.*

¹² State Library of NSW collection development policy

https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/collection_development_policy.pdf [accessed 18 December 2023]

¹³ State Library of NSW contemporary collecting priorities <https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/research-and-collections/building-our-collections/what-we-collect/contemporary-collecting-priorities> [accessed 18 December 2023].

III. *The Library's collection has a particular focus on material which documents New South Wales and Australia: its people, their voices, communities, cultures, and environment.*

IV. *Collecting reflects the variety of formats which people have used to record experiences. Wherever possible and practical, the Library collects the format closest to the original on the understanding that this best represents the content and the intention of the creator. Examples of such formats include books, magazines, journals and newspapers, manuscripts, photographs, artworks, maps, objects, sheet music, ephemera, oral history and materials in digital form.*

The current contemporary collecting priorities at the State Library of NSW are:

- LGBTQI+
- Election and referendum ephemera
- Indigenous collecting including #BlackLivesMatter
- Bushfires in NSW
- COVID-19

These contemporary collecting priorities are to make sure the State Library of NSW is collecting in these areas. These priorities change every few years. Kiama Library could consider including contemporary collecting priorities to help increase the visibility of people and locations in the local studies collection.

The Kiama Library staff are photographing around the community. The local studies staff took photographs during the COVID-19 pandemic. They are not yet viewable on Canto. The library has some items from the Notebook project which was a pandemic documentation project. These are examples of representative collecting already being undertaken by the library.

The Kiama walking tour app has four local walks and continues to be updated. It includes a Charmian Clift walk with some of her stories read as part of it.

Some of the library events are recorded by Kiama Community Radio. Some of these, like the recent talk by Dr Tony Gilmore launching his book *An Aboriginal voice in housing* would be of interest for the local studies collection as well as the community radio station. The library podcasts could be considered for inclusion in the local studies collection as well. This way the library could manage digital preservation requirements.

The Cultural Development Officer is located at Kiama Library and is responsible for the Kiama Shire Council art collection. At present there is a spreadsheet with all the art and locations listed. It is planned to add these to a publicly searchable database.

G14. Services for culturally diverse communities

To meet the library needs of culturally and linguistically diverse communities (CALD)

The library relies on the Multicultural bulk loan service for items for their community. It is suggested that the library, as well as borrowing boxes of books in specific languages, borrow some display boxes of titles in a range of languages to use as part of each library display.

*Benchmarking NSW public library services to multicultural communities*¹⁴ could be helpful for the library to explore to know where the services are currently placed. Not every library has to aim for exemplary in each field, rather the aim is to improve the services. This might mean moving from entry level to improving, for example.

G15 Services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

To engage and consult with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities to ensure the library provides a welcoming and safe cultural space, services and collections, representative of their needs and aspirations.

The State Library's *Indigenous Spaces in Library Places: Building a Vibrant Public Library Network Inclusive of Indigenous Peoples and Communities*¹⁵ provides guidance on how libraries can enhance services dedicated to the local Indigenous population even if population figures are small.

Kiama Library could consider inviting staff from the Indigenous Engagement team at the State Library of NSW to provide a workshop for staff and community in undertaking family history research for Aboriginal people¹⁶. It is acknowledged there is local expertise in Aboriginal family history research at Kiama Library, however, sometimes it can help community connections to have Aboriginal library staff such as those in the Indigenous Engagement team provide this training.

¹⁴ *Benchmarking NSW public library services to multicultural communities* - these are useful for all libraries <https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/multicultural-library-service-benchmarks.pdf> [accessed 13 December 2023]

¹⁵ *Indigenous spaces in library places* <https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/public-library-services/services/indigenous-spaces-library-places> [accessed 7 December 2023]

¹⁶ Contact for this training is Damian Webb, Manager, Indigenous Engagement, Damien.Webb@sl.nsw.gov.au 02 9273 1484

G16. Services for people with disability

To facilitate and enable full and active participation and access to collections, services, programs, and work spaces by people with disability

The library is a dementia friendly location. They worked with an organisation from Wollongong to have an audit of the library buildings.



Photograph 11 Dementia resources at Kiama Library

As well as the dementia resources at Kiama Library, there are some at Gerringong Library too. There is another collection at a local aged care facility as well. The locks on the toilet doors were changes to assist people with dementia. The building audit will be updated over time. The library seeks to run dementia friendly programs.

G17. Services for young people

To provide access to materials and services which meet the identified needs of children and young people in the community.

For the purposes of this guideline and program delivery the following definitions are used:

- children (0–12 years)
- young adults (13–18 years)

The library provides preschool story time (3 – 5 year olds), toddler time (1 – 3 year olds) and baby rhyme time (0 – 12 months old) for their community. Note the ages for these programs are indicative. These three programs run in Kiama; Gerringong will be introducing baby rhyme time this year so both sets of programs will be available at both libraries. Preschool story time runs weekly, with toddler time and baby rhyme time running on alternate weeks. Bookings are required. Bookings open one session at a time after the previous session has finished. The staff at Kiama and Gerringong produce five themed story times a term each and swap the kits so that the preparation is shared.



Photograph 12 Children's area at Kiama

The library works with local organisations for story time information for example a local fire truck visited providing information about fire safety, surf life savers visited providing information on water safety and a council officer visited providing information about composting. The South East Zone children's group is active and meet two or three times a year with a focus on school holiday activities and book awards.

The library provides school holiday activities for children, these are generally run by library staff. This is usually two programs per library per week of school holidays. These run both at Kiama and Gerringong libraries.

There are some very large events which target young people (some of which are open to the wider community as well). This includes the escape rooms run by the library.

During the pandemic the staff looked at programs to combat youth suicide for example a ‘chalk your walk’ which was affirmations written on footpaths. There are staff ‘fortune tellers’ at youth events, care packs for HSC students with information and treats as well as youth band nights at the library.



Photograph 13 Seating for children at Gerringong Library

As well as literacy and pre-literacy sessions for children there is an adult literacy collection. The community college provides literacy training for adults.

G18. Services for older people

To ensure that older members of the community can access and use library collections, services and programs.

This is addressed under G 16 and G 19.

G19. Home library services

To provide access to library information and resources for those community members who are unable to physically access their local library for any reason.

The pandemic led to an increase in the number of people who are receiving home library services. In planning for people potentially moving onto home library services the library staff would like to start training people earlier in their use of technology so that there is more potential for ebooks and other uses of technology for home library services. This would mean that people have the skills they need before it becomes harder to learn new things. The community college underneath the library provides the equivalent of tech savvy training.

The current home library service has around 62 people who receive deliveries. While the number of people varies slightly it is always around the 60 people range. The work is managed

by a library staff member, with a couple of volunteers who deliver the items to the readers. Most of the people are on monthly deliveries of items. People in nursing homes receive new items fortnightly. All items are selected for individual readers. There are no bulk loans. The criteria for access to home delivery is not being able to get to the library. Some of the people receiving deliveries reserve their own items, and these are delivered to them.

There are home library service brochures. This service is not promoted on social media. Quite a few people receiving home library services were already library members, and changed their membership over when they became less mobile. When people join the service there is a readers' advisory interview to determine their reading preferences and interests.



Photograph 14 Home library services bundles ready for delivery

G5. Marketing and promotion

*To ensure that all members of the community are made aware of library services and programs.
To facilitate easy access to library facilities, services and programs for all members of the community.*

The library uses in-library promotion and email newsletters as well as Facebook and Instagram to highlight programs, staff, collections and services. The inclusion most weeks of #ThrowbackThursday on Instagram and Facebook are helpful ways to show local studies photographs, sometimes bringing together photographs of different eras. The profiles of staff are appealing and a helpful way to connect the community with their library staff. The Instagram account provides both promotions of events as well as the outcomes for some of them. Good to see the inclusion of promotions of specific titles (for example through #BookfaceFriday), book club kits and seasonal titles. Some of the library social media posts are shared by the council social media and the library shares some of the council posts too. Sometimes the library stories are picked up and shared by ABC Illawarra.

In the libraries there are fliers for events. The website and social media are used to promote events and programs.

The library has reciprocal members, often as part of summer visits. The library has a practice of holding onto the membership card for any reciprocal borrowers, returning the card when the items are returned. This decision would fit under local libraries setting rules.

G20. Programs

To provide the community with a range of activities related to library services and collections that enrich the lives of community members who choose to attend. A library program is an ongoing series or sequence of activities provided by library staff or library staff in partnership with other community or business organisations and usually related to a particular library service, library collection or population demographic. Library programs are usually delivered in library buildings but can be conducted in other community spaces, e.g. schools; senior citizen centres.

Kiama Library provides a wide range of programs for their community. Many of the programs provided for the community are because of partnerships, or approaches from the community. This includes the regular Death Café talks, and the knitters’ groups. As well as events in the libraries, library staff including the Library Manager provide talks for local organisations and events.

The library staff stated that programs book quickly for school holidays and they open the bookings close to the time of the events. The library sometimes repeats programs which have booked out quickly. The library finds that most people who book turn up for the programs. There is a small charge for school holiday programs and reminders are sent to people who have booked.



Photograph 15 Programs and events at Kiama Library

The library staff are involved in outreach for example working with local food trucks at youth outreach events, running storytime at childcare centres, and library promotion at farmers markets.

There are a small number of large-scale events which are run by library staff each year. A recent example of this is the Bridgerton High Tea at Gerringong Library, which as well as being an afternoon tea for 60 people was also a tabletop mystery game. These events require significant staff time for planning, preparing, rearranging the library and running. Some staff are so keen that some of the planning and preparation is undertaken out of work time. The escape rooms are also large-scale productions. The storage room at Gerringong is vital for the escape room props which can be large.



Photograph 16 Event promotions at Gerringong Library

There is an annual Diagon Alley event at Gerringong Library – the most recent one saw over 1000 people visit the library. This has broad age appeal and provides a space for young people to sell what they have made.

The library owns two 3D printers. They are mostly at Kiama; however, one can be at Gerringong from time to time. Some of the 3D printing is part of programs for example CAD, people can send files for their items to be printed, and the printers are used to print items for the escape rooms. Staff commented that people like seeing the 3D printers in use. 3D printers – programs and print on demand (for fee).

The library partners with the cultural development officer for some of their events.



Photograph 17 Novel writing months display and promotion of programs at Gerringong Library

The novel writing month promotion is used to highlight local South Coast authors with displays and programs. There were large displays in both Kiama and Gerringong. The Gerringong display can be seen in photograph 17.

While some programs are booked out, for others there is lower attendance. Library staff note that it is more often older people who are less visible at library programs.

The programs already run by the library are popular, however it is helpful to look at this from another perspective. There are about 50% of the community who do not use the library and are not members, so it may be helpful to find out from these people the programs (as well as the collections and services) which may bring them into the libraries. The challenge would be the staff time to implement new programs. The library staff appear to be at capacity with what they can do in terms of programs, already undertaking some preparation (voluntarily) in their own time. The programs being run are either suggested by staff based on their interests, the Bridgeton High Tea and annual Diagon Alley are an example of this, or by community partnerships, with the Death Café series an example of this.

The challenge is to obtain different perspectives on programs. It may help to look at who is not visible in the participants in the programs at the libraries. Is it First Nations people, people with disability, or people who are culturally and linguistically diverse? Perhaps it is more of an economic lack of visibility which is likely harder to ascertain. Kiama Council, from the 2021 Census, has a higher median weekly income (for personal, family and household) than both NSW and Australia as well as than for its neighbours Shoalhaven City Council, Shellharbour

Council, and Wingecaribee Shire Council. It may be that some programs need to go out, to help reach people who are not yet using the libraries. This would need to be done with an attitude of equity and exploration.

Follow up required	Follow up done
BIU report	https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/public-library-services/advice-and-best-practice/research-projects/using-behavioural-insights
CSU research reports	https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/public-library-services/research-projects