

Mid-Coast Council
Civic Precinct Project, Forster

Forster Library
Community &
Visitors Centre

functional design brief

Record of Issue

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a executive summary

Brewster Hjorth Architects (BHA) were engaged by Mid-Coast Council (Council), to prepare a Functional Design Brief (Brief) for the new Forster Library, Community and Visitor Centre (Council Works) to be located on the Council owned site on the corner of Lake and West Streets Foster. The Brief has been prepared for the purpose of determining the functional requirements of the Library, Community and Visitor Centre. This document is intended to form Council's Brief to guide the development of community facilities on the subject site.

1. The Vision

The development of the new Forster Library, Community and Visitors Centre represents an opportunity for Council to:

- Create a fully activated, vibrant hub integrating community, residential and commercial uses in a mixed use development.
- Create a development which compliments and enhances the surrounding area, and the adjacent Wallis Lake Foreshore and Forster CBD.
- Create high quality community facilities providing information, training and recreation opportunities for both residents and visitors to the Region within a building of architectural merit, that is a destination in its own right.

The new facility will importantly provide the following identified community needs:

- A new contemporary library that is intended to be a "community living room" where people of all ages, abilities and interests come for relaxation and entertainment, to learn through promotion of life long learning, to experience history and culture, to play and create, to connect and communicate, to enhance lifestyles and broaden horizons.
- A new community facility that can provide spaces to hold a very diverse range of users, activities and programs. Activities may include social events, civic events, public meetings, education, leisure activities, fitness activities, performing arts, creative arts, children's activities, youth activities and seniors activities.
- A new visitor information centre which can enhance the visitor journey through the region, provide the opportunity to influence decision making and to provide destination experiences and events; either through new technologies or via face to face contact.

Mid-Coast Council has identified a site on the corner of Lake and West Streets Forster to locate to proposed new facilities.

The size of the site will allow a mixed use development combining Council's requirements with commercial/residential activities to create a dynamic integrated development, with active public spaces for the benefit of the local community and visitors to the region.

By co-locating a number of community facilities onto the one site has benefits for Council, in terms of sharing and efficiency of resources, economies of scale and more coordinated services delivery.

The Site represents a unique opportunity as it is a relatively large, vacant site, located within short walking distance of both the Forster Central Business District, and only one block away from the foreshore of the beautiful Wallis Lake. The Site is also in close proximity to Forster Main Beach.

Mid-Coast Council aims for the design of the new facility to reflect design excellence, innovations, flexibility and sustainability principles while embodying the spirit and aspirations of the community.

Council's vision for a Library, Community and Visitor Centre as one that:

1. Creates a community lounge - "a third place" for the community.
2. Is popular with residents and visitors, both young and old alike, as a place to not just visit but to spend time.
3. Is inviting both internally and externally.
4. Is a place that inspires creativity and is technology enabled.
5. Creates belonging and ownership for the community and Council staff.
6. Is welcoming, open and inclusive.
7. Is visually connected with and open to the surrounding town context.
8. Is accessible for the whole community.
9. Is safe for visitors, staff and users.
10. Enables collaboration and agility to change.
11. Demonstrates innovation and sustainability.
12. Actively contributes to the amenity and vitality of the precinct in which they are located, acting as a destination, a generator of activity and a focus for the community.
13. Is designed to be flexible and adaptable over time to meet the changes and growing needs of the LGA .
14. Promotes Council's leadership role in the community.
15. Creates a community hub - "a place for the Community."
16. Demonstrates excellence in design, planning, development, management and construction.

2. Key components of the Project

The Key Council provided facilities to be included in the project include:

- Hub library
- Community centre (including performance space)
- Visitor information centre
- Outdoor spaces (both hard and soft landscapes)
- Car parking
- Other related infrastructure including kerb and guttering

Many of the activities planned for the library, community and visitor information centres have major synergies and opportunities to complement each other and allow sharing of facilities. This will allow for an integrated community hub where the community and visitors of the Region are offered complementary services, programming and activities.

3. The opportunities presented for the new library:

- To create a library which feels as if it is 'owned' by the community and forms the community's living room.
- Opportunity to provide modern services to the community that can adapt and change easily over time.
- Welcoming and state-of-the-art facilities and a hub for the community within a new community precinct,
- A place for innovations and leading edge design.
- Integrated facility where staff provide a range of Library and Community and Visitor experiences.
- A vibrant centre for programming spaces for human social activities.
- An open, flexible, welcoming environment.
- A place that is supported by the latest technology for total flexibility.
- A library that still provides books for its community, but one that moves forward with new technological innovations, and electronically provides resources.
- A place that can be used by the community as casual drop in work space.

4. The Opportunities Presented for the new Community Centre

Create a place that complements and extends the library and provides the community and visitors to the region a diverse range of spaces to:

- Hold meetings.
- Provide spaces for social activities.
- Participate in cultural activities and events.
- Provides multi functional spaces for performances, and creative arts.
- Is connected to outdoor performance space.
- Provides spaces suitable to promote and encourage life long learning.
- Provides opportunity for gallery space that could be combined with Council's exhibition space.
- Incorporates informal flexible gallery spaces eg. for "artist of the month" programs.
- Is totally accessible for after hours use; independently of library hours.
- Forms a combined facility with the library and visitor centre (not a stand alone facility).
- Provides opportunities for hireable space to the community, supported by mobile enabling technology.
- Provides integrated catering facilities.

5. Council's Objectives for the site and the project

Council is committed to ensuring that Forster-Tuncurry and the wider Mid-Coast region continues to be a great place to live, work and invest.

Council's vision and objectives for the Site and Project are to:

- (a) deliver key community facilities and public infrastructure which meet Council's requirements and delivery timetable, specifically: Library, Visitor Information Centre, Flexible community space plus associated infrastructure such as car parking and landscaping;
- (b) deliver and activate public spaces for the benefit of the local community and visitors to the region;
- (c) encourage and facilitate the Developer to create and deliver a development which is attractive to the market, creates an environment which is a pleasure to both live in and visit and which compliments Council's facilities and infrastructure;

- (d) deliver the Project on a staged basis in accordance with Council's required timetable and otherwise meeting market demands;
- (e) deliver a Project of architectural merit, and utilise relevant environmentally sustainable designs which improve the appearance of the Site and compliments its surrounds;
- (f) generate sustainable local employment opportunities; and
- (g) deliver a Site which has strong connectivity and integration with the adjacent Forster CBD and water front of Wallis Lake.

6. Council's Objectives for Community facilities

Council's objectives for the project are to:

- Upon completion, create a vibrant community hub for the region, co locating community facilities around outdoor spaces integrated with individual functions.
- Upon completion, create a new regional hub capable of providing modern resources and technologies to all members of the community.
- Upon completion, creates a destination for both community and visitors to the region and a place where users come to experience in its own right.
- Upon completion, achieve reasonable sustainable design objectives that are identified and able to be met in the design process that target energy saving initiatives.
- Upon completion, is an exemplar on creating vibrant dynamic communities through mixed use development provided through private / government partnership.

7. Project Quality

The external design of the buildings must be of a high architectural quality, having an attractive, enduring aesthetic appeal and displaying attention to detail.

The interior design must:

1. Create a vibrant, active library community lounge space for all ages and groups.
2. Allow for maximum flexibility and multi-use of internal floor spaces.
3. Allow for security and after hours zoning of component facilities and sub-parts.
4. Maximise the use of natural light and minimise direct sunlight and glare into the internal work environment
5. Maximise access to external views.

6. Minimise the vertical and horizontal path of travel between various parts of the building.
7. Maximise the use of passive energy saving techniques.
8. Minimise energy consumption and optimise running costs.
9. Incorporate new technologies during the life of the building.

8. Fitout Requirements

The spaces shall demonstrate a high quality of design, be welcoming and attractive. All finishes shall be durable and low maintenance.

The Design Team shall prepare an itemized list of all furniture, fittings and equipment (FF&E) for each functional area specific to its function and usage.

9. Design principles

The Key Design Principles developed for the Library, Community and Visitor Centre are outlined as follows:

- Be a gateway, icon and address with architectural consistency
- Create civic presence - place that has 'soul'
- Create a community lounge - a "third place" for the community
- Is innovative and high tech
- Visually attractive and inspiring
- Flexible, adaptable, multipurpose, functional and able to easily change over time
- Represent a fun, vibrant and engaging place
- Have an informal casual feel, that reflects a community living space
- Provide a sense of place and form a community destination.
- Be transparent and allow internal activities to be seen from the street
- Be part of the community hub and a place for the Community
- Be inviting internally and externally
- Provide public open spaces and landscape that establish a memorable and activated community focus.
- Build on Council's sustainable aspirations to integrate appropriate sustainability principles to be developed and tested in the design process

10. Desired appearance

The appearance of the Library, Community and Visitor Centre needs to reflect the design principles and aspirations set by Council as identified in the brief.

1. The exterior of the building needs to provide a modern expression and reflect its roll as an important community facility, whilst reflecting the informal, vibrant community lounge.
2. A strong, generous and welcoming entry needs to be created, that is light filled, transparent and fully accessible.
3. The centre needs to encourage active community access and feel connected to the broader town centre
4. The library and community centres should be designed with high ceiling, voids, atriums and connections to external activity spaces and gardens.
5. The buildings should have large areas of clear glazing which encourages views to external public areas, roads and parks and allows interactions between users and the community visiting and accessing the community precinct.
6. The building should encourage activation of the public domain.
7. Provision of outdoor seating overlooking community gardens and external areas is desired.
8. The design should provide a strong roof form, and articulated facade to create a distinctive and memorable civic presence.
9. New construction needs to consider showcasing technology, as well as environmental initiatives that are able to be integrated in the design.
10. The facility needs to be provided with technology that allows for interactive displays for local events, environmental performance, or educational material.
11. Consideration needs to be given for the buildings and the public domain to integrate public art.
12. Entries, forecourt, community garden, cafe and market opportunity need to be considered in the design to create an active frontage to the streets, park and public plaza.

11. Civic Precinct Sustainability

The design will aim to create a sustainable environment, not only in terms of resource efficiency, safety, cost and flexibility; but just as importantly in terms of human experience and well-being.

The key aspirations for the project include creating an iconic building for occupants and the community.

Council would like the design to achieve sustainability above the minimum standards. The project is to consider good sustainable practice in design that can be delivered within Council is available project resources.

The Library, Community and Visitor Centre aims to implement sustainability where proven to be cost effective and reduce the long term cost of operating and maintaining the building.

The design should incorporate water sensitive urban design and establish council as leader in managing urban run off.

Consideration needs to be given to:

- Energy efficiency initiatives driving the design towards lower consumption for all community facilities.
- Water efficiency initiatives that will minimise the requirement for potable water.
- Reducing the carbon footprint of the development through use of materials that have low embodied energy.
- Reducing ongoing maintenance and operational costs for the project.

In addition, the development will create a space that attract the general public and provide a superior workplace environment for staff by creating

- A high level of thermal comfort
- Maximising daylight ingress creating a naturally lit space
- Maximising ventilation rates to reduce the build up of indoor pollutants.

b introduction

1. Background

Mid-Coast Council procured a site on the corners of Lake Street and West Street Forster. The site is located in the northern western corner of the township of Forster. This area has been associated with community facilities, the former School of Arts building being located on an adjacent site on West Street until recently demolished.

Following procurement of the site Council has determined that it would like to develop a portion of the site to:

- Create a community focus
- Relocate the Forster Library
- Establish a new multi purpose centre for the Great Lakes region of the Mid-Coast LGA.
- Relocate the Great Lakes Visitor Information Centre

This Functional Brief describes the proposed Council facilities intended to be developed on the site.

The co-location of the new Library and Community facilities in a single building will allow for the efficient delivery of these community services.

2. Federal Funding Deed

An important component of the project is a funding agreement that Mid-Coast Council has entered into with the Federal Government to partially fund the project.

This agreement requires that the project as a minimum includes the following mandatory elements:

- Public library with a minimum floor area of 2,000 sqm, to include new toilets and associated library offices, meeting rooms, staff rooms
- Construction and fitout of indoor and outdoor public performance space capable of accommodating at least 200 people
- Construction and fitout of Visitor Information Centre (which may be co-joined with library), of at least 100 sqm, including office space for at least 6 staff, managers office, store room, and shared display/ front office area with the library
- Flexible community meeting spaces with a minimum area of at least 45 sqm
- At least 100 sqm hard surface landscaping, 50 metres of walkways and 200 sqm community green spaces and gardens
- At least 20 sealed car parking and disabled parking spaces, kerb and guttering

This functional brief has been written to incorporate these minimum mandatory requirements.

3. The Civic Precinct

As part of Council's strategy to create a community facility that is an attraction in its own right where the community and visitors spend time undertaking activities, it is both important to create a setting in which the facilities sit and that setting needs to be an active part of the experience.

A series of outdoor spaces have been included within the project, with the objective of achieving this goal.

Visitors when arriving at the new facility should arrive at a civic external space with a mix of hard and soft landscaping which creates a civic forecourt announcing the building as an important public building as well as providing spaces for outside activities and gatherings.

It is intended that the following internal functions can open to external landscaped areas:

- The large Activity/ Performance space
- The Library children's activity area

It would also be preferable that activity rooms 3 and 4 open to external areas.

4. The New Library

The new Forster Library will be a hub library within Mid Coast Libraries and form a focus of library services to the Great Lakes region of the LGA.

The Library will be at least 2000m². However as the intent is to integrate the facilities together as a cohesive centre, the meeting rooms will be co-located with the Large Activity/ Performance space. Similarly support areas including amenities will be located in common spaces within the facility.

The intention is to provide a modern and connected library environment. The design principles of the Library are set out in Part 1 - Design of the Library, Community and Visitor Centre. The detailed briefing requirements of the new Hub Library are described in Part 2 - Detailed Needs.

5. The Community Centre

The community centre will consist of a number of activity rooms that have been sized to enable a diverse range of recreational and learning events.

An important function is that the large activity space (activity rooms 1 and 2) will be designed to allow for performance of small theatrical and musical events for audiences of up to 200 people. It is planned that these events can spill out onto the civic forecourt to establish the centre as a cultural and civic focus to the Great Lakes Region of Mid-Coast Council.

The Community Centre will integrate with the adjacent Library during the Library opening hours and will have secure access during times when the Library is closed.

The design principles of the Community Centre are set out in Part 1 - Design of the Library, Community and Visitor Centre. The detailed briefing requirements of the new Hub Library are described in Part 2 - Detailed Needs.

6. Visitor Information Centre

Tourism is a key driver of the Great Lakes Region of Mid-Coast Council LGA. The Visitor Centre forms a first stop for many visitors arriving in the region and it is here they source information about where to stay and what do during their visit to the region.

The Visitor Centre will include a visitor experience area where information and produce from the region can be sourced. It is envisaged that through new technologies visitors will be able to plan their itineraries with assistance from Centre Staff and either send to their portable devices or print out.

Council has decided that by relocating the Visitor Centre to the new facility this will reinforce their strategy of creating the building as a focal point and destination in its own right. The combined facilities allow the Visitor Centre to promote and run events within the Community Centre as well as visitors being able to access services of the Library.

The design principles of the Community Centre are set out in Part 1 - Design of the Library, Community and Visitor Centre. The detailed briefing requirements of the new Visitor centre are described in Part 2 - Detailed Needs.

7. Location

The location of the site is in the north west corner of the Forster Township which is adjacent to the entrance of Wallis Lake and not far from the bridge crossing connecting Forster with its sister township of Tuncurry.

The photo below shows the location of the site adjacent to the lakes entrance.



Figure 1: Aerial photo of the site and its context looking west towards Wallis Lake

8. The Site

The site is located on the corner of Lake Street and West Street and extends along West Street through to Middle Street.

Visible to the west of the site is a side channel of Wallis Lake entrance to the Ocean.

Lake Street is one of the main streets running east-west across the northern end of the township and is seen as a good address for the new facilities.

West Street runs parallel with the lake, and runs through to Middle Street which connects to residential streets to the south of the site.

One the western side of West Street is Forster Police Station and an open area the site of the previous School of arts and the existing Visitor Centre.



Figure 2: Aerial photo site plan showing extent of Council's site and adjoining Police Station and existing Visitor Information Centre



Figure 3: Aerial photo of the site viewed above the corner of Lake and West Streets from the north



Figure 4: Aerial photo of the site from the south

part one

design of the library
community and visitor centre



Figure 5: Activated forecourt of Ingleburn library and community centre



Figure 6: Training session at Rockhampton library and community centre

1.1 a community hub

1.1.1 Introduction

The contemporary library is the living room of the community. Co-location of the Library and Community Facilities as an integrated facility to create a community hub. The facilities should attract and support all members of the community.

The building should become a destination where residents and visitors to the region can come together to relax, learn or socialise. The intention is that users will not just visit the building but stay and engage in their desired activity.

A centralised facility that provides a single address for significant community amenities will prove a major attraction to residents and visitors.

1.1.2 The new form of community facilities

Facilities that support current community needs require the following:

- Centrally located with good access
- Co-location of the Library and other Council services
- Are designed to be adaptable and flexible with good storage facilities
- Are able to be set up for different users with a minimum of turnaround time.
- Are managed with efficient booking systems and high levels of maintenance and upkeep
- Provide modern support spaces including kitchens that facilitate re-heat and service catering
- Include smaller scale rooms for related services including meetings, training, youth activities, and social events
- Provide good quality audio and video infrastructure
- Create attractive, modern and colourful spaces that are durable and low-maintenance
- Are serviced to provide comfortable environments with high quality amenities

1.1.3 The new library

The Council Library is the most public of all building types. Everyone in the community is welcomed to this building and everyone should have their needs catered for in some way.

The library becomes a connection and meeting point for the community.

The library provides:

- Places to study and work collaboratively
- Place for older people to gather and read
- Strong child friendly spaces for the children's collection and storytelling
- Identifiable youth focussed areas
- Pervasive technology that supports digital access from fixed computer points and mobile devices
- Contemporary borrowing and book security systems like RFID that allow for high levels of self-checking in and out of borrowed material
- Staff that are freed from mundane tasks to be available to provide personal assistance to users to access information from any source
- Socialisation spaces that bring life and vitality to the library environment
- Good connection to meeting rooms and spaces that facilitates events such as author talks, reading and exhibitions



changing paradigms
social place



changing paradigms
distributed & roaming customer service



changing paradigms
diverse and range of reader areas

1.2 principles of library design

1.2.1 Changing library paradigm

The modern library has become in recent years the "third place" for the community. It is no longer just a repository or supermarket for books. It is much more. It has become an extension of the community living room providing a vibrant place for the community:

- to lounge, socialise and interact
- to learn and be educated
- customer focused on needs such as youth drop in place and seniors living room
- it manifests as a series of areas that combined to create a sense of place for the community
- that is highly enabled by IT and technology making it possible to view and borrow digital media, including "e" learning and collections via mobile devices
- A place where public exhibited Council documents can be viewed
- that is full of innovations, such as "Quick Fix" points, where the customer has quick access to latest picks, and releases, and can readily access areas of interest
- that is rich in digital downloadable collections
- that is rich in IT training, educational material, and access
- is a place where you can meet friends and just "hang out"
- that provides a rich diversity of spaces for all interests and ages
- creates a vibrant hub of activity being at the forefront of knowledge and material for the community's needs.

The design of the library needs to reflect these changing paradigms and provide innovations to educate, assist, entertain and capture the community's imagination. It needs to be highly flexible and adaptable to changing needs of the community.

1.2.2 Libraries of the 21st Century

Book centric moves to people centric

The traditional libraries have been places where lots of books are stored and limited space for people to use. The 'people' centric paradigms present the library with more space dedicated for people to sit, lounge, socialise and interact in, without being dominated by books.

Socialisation

Socialisation is a key factor in the new library design. The design needs to attract people in. It needs to be a fun, interactive and social place to be.

Individual Choice

The design of the library needs to provide multiple, flexible spaces for individuals choice, thus allowing a diversity of groups, programs and users to interact. Areas for both noisy and quiet activities need to be provided.

IT Centric

Innovations and 'IT' dominate the library of the future. To engage it's new customers, the library needs to provide readily accessible and mobile technology, provide resources such as 'eBooks' and "e magazines", and services via new evolving social media.

The design of the library needs to be highly flexible and adaptable to evolving technologies.

1.2.3 Customer service model

The library should focus on providing a distributed customer service model around the library to providing library users service where required rather than form behind a centralised counter. The retail model using a central counter as an information point from which service moves to where customer can best be serviced is envisaged.

Roaming points are also envisaged for library staff to provide service and assistance, utilising mobile devices throughout the library and connecting directly with the customer.

1.2.4 Collection management system

The collection management will be handled through an RFID system which allows fully automated borrowing and returns sorting.

1.2.5 Model for managing borrowing and returns

Books and other physical resources will be borrowed through a series of self checkout units, located at a central point within the library.

Similarly the library is proposing to use automated returns managed through the RFID system and automated sorting facility.

Increasingly digital collection borrowings will be managed through the library IT facilities allowing on line borrowing, as well as quick transfer of material to mobile technology.

1.2.6 Collection Organisation

The library collections will be displayed by genre, ie popular or special interest categories such as "Sport", "Travel", "Crime" as used in a retail bookshop environment.

Age-appropriate collections suitable for children or youth will be displayed separately as will popular formats such as DVDs and magazines.

1.2.7 Children's

The children's area needs to be designed for noisy activities, as well as good supervision by carers and parents. An external breakout area is to be provided for children activities, including craft and play. The design needs to cater for all ages and mobility, as well as parents and prams.

In modern library the children's area is identified with a strong identity fully integrated into the library. The spaces need to be provided with IT that can support the evolving changes and connectivity that the children have increasing access to. Families with young children enjoy creative, playful and inspiring spaces to come for a variety of activities, including story telling, art, craft and play.

1.2.8 Young Adult

The young adult areas of the library need to be designed with a strong youth identity, that is clearly different to the children's areas. It is to be designed as drop in youth space with soft lounges and chill out areas, without being dominated by collection.

It is to have IT hubs and learning study areas, with digital connectivity for the young adults increasing appetite for Internet and everything that is digital, and allow them to connect through social media.

1.2.9 Digital Resources

Digital resources should not be separated out as a special area. Digital resources should be integrated into a range of library areas and functions to allow:

- seamless movement of users from paper based to virtual resources
- different types of usage patterns, including leisure and study
- differentiate between users types and their patterns of usage
- allow fixed and mobile usage
- allow spaces where users can plug and use their own devices
- access to wifi

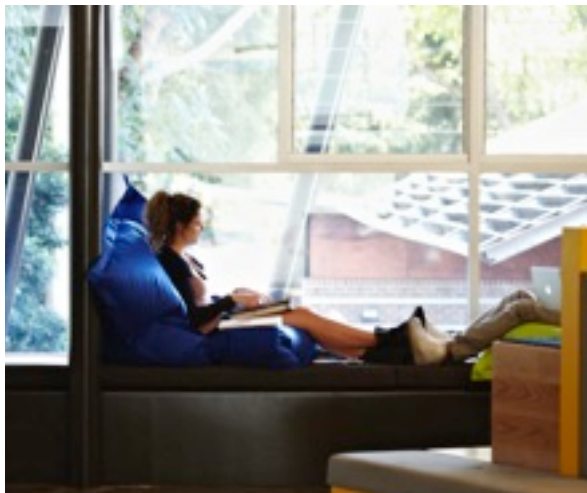
As new digital resources are coming on line, some of these will have physical components but many will be virtually stored. An important function of the library will be to promote to its users that these resources exist. Additionally in many cases the library will also need to provide facilities where librarians can train users how to access and use these resources.

The digital resources need to be provided as a mix of fixed and mobile usage points throughout the library. It is to be designed to allow borrowing of laptops and tablets, to be used anywhere in the library.

The library of the future will increasingly rely on ready at hand mobile technology. The Forster library needs to be designed and enabled for the increasing use of IT and be readily changeable and adaptable to new technologies.



changing paradigms
genre organisation of collection



changing paradigms
specific youth learning and lounge areas



changing paradigms
enabling technology



Figure 7: Retail overlay in children's area of Five Dock library integrated with book display



Figure 8: Environmental graphics create ambience of Five Dock library

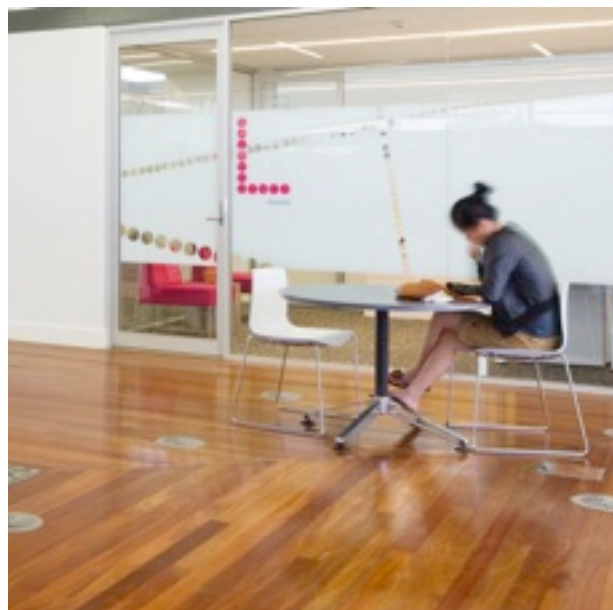


Figure 9: Environmental graphics to glazed partitions to back of house in Ingleburn library

1.2.10 Retail Overlay

Retail outlets have long understood that the atmosphere of their spaces. How stock is presented and the use of environmental graphics all go together to enhance the retail experience.

These same techniques are importantly being utilised in library design to shift the paradigm of libraries as repositories for books to active community facilities.

Techniques employed to create a library that is a community lounge or “third space” include:

- the creation of a diverse range of user spaces
- the use of comfortable, friendly and non institutional furniture

- use of feature book displays including face-out display within collections to make shelving more inviting.
- to encourage users to stay and read, relax or study within the library via the provision of different reading settings, recognising users feel comfortable in different ways.
- providing environmental graphics overlay to create a more active and engaging atmosphere

To achieve Council’s goals these techniques need to be incorporated into the new library.



Figure 10: Environmental graphics create ambience in Ingleburn library



Figure 11: Flexible activity rooms at Ingleburn library and community centre



Figure 12: Activity rooms break to external areas at Miller community centre



Figure 13: Activity rooms at Avalon community centre connect to adjacent park

1.3 principles of community centre design

1.3.1 Vision

These design objectives are as follows:

1. Create a hub for learning shared with the library.
2. Provide a suite of rooms for community meetings, activities, events and creative work.
3. Exhibition and performing space for cultural activities.

The vision for the community centre is one that creates a light, bright, vibrant flexible community space that is welcoming and accessible to the whole community.

1.3.2 Diverse range of functions

A successful Community Centre is an active busy facility. The design of this facility needs to include a range of spaces to allow for a diverse range of activities. Spaces should be able to adapt quickly through provision of operable walls and well placed and sized storage spaces.

The Community Centre will provide a series of spaces that allows the community to:

- Use the spaces for meetings, activities and events.
- Is flexible in allowing particular services and programs that target specific groups, such as young people, older people etc.
- Provides spaces for residents to hire for private functions.
- Creates a hub for "Mixed Learning".
- Provides a series of activity rooms with different identity, ambiance and flexible set up.
- Share resources and activities with the library.
- Provide activities with a particular focus on recreation, arts, cultural activity, learning or social support.
- Provide spaces for programs and services that assist individuals to achieve their potential including business and work program skills.

1.3.3 Flexibility

A successful Community Centre needs to be flexible and adaptable to suit different users needs. There are many techniques employed to achieve this goal, including:

- Providing operable walls to allow spaces to be divided or connected to suit a range of activities
- Provide good acoustic separation between rooms to allow noisy activities adjacent to rooms with a quiet activity
- Provision of lockable user storage in rooms to allow for quick set up and clean up between activities
- Provision of well placed furniture storage to allow furniture to be moved in and out of spaces for different uses
- Provision of suitable floor finishes, including timber floors with rubber cushioning to allow a variety of physical activities and impervious surfaces to allow for children's activities, and art and craft
- Provision of catering facilities including user kitchenette and a reheat "catering" kitchen
- Provision of supporting AV technologies

1.3.4 Socialisation

To encourage socialisation the space between activities should be designed to encourage interactions between users. The foyer will not only connect the library, visitor information and community centres together but will also form the space connecting each of the activity rooms. This space will be where users will:

- Meet before and after activities and events,
- Allow break out space for activities
- Connect activities in different rooms
- Provide space for displays and exhibitions
- Allow users to see what other activities are on offer
- Is a place where you can meet friends and just "hang out"

As such this space needs to be designed to include places where users can sit and socialise and allow for provision of refreshments either through a users kitchenette or "coffee cart". To support these goals the spaces need to be designed to be welcoming, comfortable and friendly, and allow for the flows of users moving through the building while also creating eddies where users feel comfortable to stop and catch up with others they meet.

1.4 Principles

visitor centre

1.4.1 Introduction

Tourism is a key driver of the Great Lakes Region of Mid-Coast Council LGA. Traditionally the Visitor Centre was the first stop for visitors arriving in the region and it is here they would source information about where to stay and what do during their visit.

However with changing technologies many visitors now seek this information via the internet. This has seen a change in how Council provides tourism services with virtual contact centre and destination marketing becoming equally as important as the traditional visitor centre.

1.4.2 Customer Experience Centre

It is planned that the public face of the Visitor Information Centre provides enhanced services to attract visitors, including:

- Touch screen itinerary development kiosks
- Interactive presentations
- Retailing of local produce and merchandise
- Children's events
- Food promotions

At this time there is rapid evolution on how customer experience is being provided, the use of mobile flexible displays, retailing and customer service components is envisaged.

The combined facilities allow the Visitor Centre to promote and run events within the Community Centre as well as visitors being able to access services of the Library.

1.4.3 Contact Centre and Destination Marketing

A large part of the role of the Visitor Centre is behind the scenes and consists of:

- A contact (call) centre
- Digital content and engagement centre
- Destination management centre to develop, plan and market tourism and events in the region.

These functions require flexible workspace and planning spaces with support areas including merchandising, brochure and event storage.

1.4.4 Retail Overlay

As with the library the incorporation of a retail design concepts including an overlay environmental graphics is vital to creating an atmosphere that will sell the region as a tourist destination.

Techniques employed to create a Visitor Information Centre that captures the imagination of visitors include:

- The use of super graphics and images that capture attractions, the natural environment of the region

- The use of interactive walls with inclusion of dynamic moving images
- The inclusion of tactile and sensory experiences that support the message
- The use of comfortable, friendly and non institutional furniture to provide areas to view and experience information
- The inclusion of merchandise of local produce supporting information on farm visits, events and activities
- The connection of Experience centre with external landscaped area which captures the essence of the local natural environment.

To achieve Council's goals for the Visitor Centre these techniques need to be incorporated into the design of the new facilities.

1.4.5 Signage

Visible bold external signage will be vital in the success of attracted and directing visitors to the Centre. The location and design of the external signage not only needs to highlight the presence of the facility but also the style of experience to be had.



Figure 14: An example of touch screen itinerary kiosk

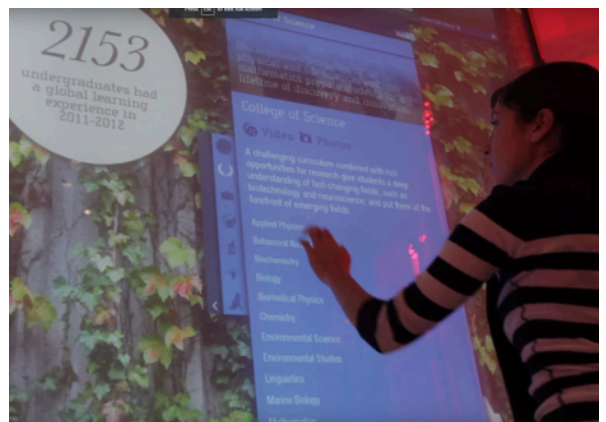


Figure 15: An example of interactive display wall



Figure 16: An example of local produce retailing and touch screen information kiosks



Figure 17: Landscaped forecourt to Cooroy library and digital hub centre



Figure 18: View across Ingleburn library

1.5 design principles

architecture and urban design

1.5.1 Project Quality

The design of the new library, community and visitor centre as an important community building must be a key priority of the project. The new building must be of a high architectural quality, having an attractive, enduring aesthetic appeal and displaying attention to detail.

Benchmark examples of Council community buildings that demonstrate the required project quality include:

- Ingleburn Library and Community Centre
- Cooroy Library and Digital Hub

These benchmark examples are not provided for replication but to define the ambience, quality and standard required for this project.

1.5.2 Architectural Expression

The architectural expression of the new facilities needs to reflect the role of the building a community hub and be a place that has 'soul'. The building should be designed to be transparent and legible allowing the internal activities to be seen from the street.

The design of the new Library, Community and Visitor Centre should reflect the following design principles:

1. The design must express its importance and openness to the community as a whole.
2. The exterior of the building needs to provide a modern expression and reflect its role as an important community facility, whilst reflecting the informal, vibrant community lounge.
3. A strong and welcoming entry needs to be created, that is light filled, transparent and fully accessible.
4. The centre needs to encourage active community access and feel connected to the broader town centre
5. The building should have a strong visual identity that can be recognised from the adjacent town centre. It should be memorable.
6. It should be an appealing, attractive and high quality building that contributes to civic pride and the character and identity of the place.
7. The design should be contemporary while reflecting the community.
8. It should be created from flexible and adaptable spaces that support the changing life of the community in to the future.
9. The design should include strong relationship between the inside and outside with connection to the natural environment.

1.5.3 Urban Design Principles

The Library, Community and Visitor Centre will need to include a strong street presence addressing either Lake Street or West Street.

It is intended that the facilities include a landscaped forecourt which is designed to encourage community activities and allow events in the large activity room to spill out into the public domain.

Important urban design principles that are critical to success of the project include:

1. The design should provide prominent street entry to a combined entry foyer that serves the Library, Community and Visitor Centres.
2. The use of the public forecourt as break out areas from the community halls and the library speciality areas, should be considered and adopted where appropriate.
3. Provide public open spaces and Landscape that establish a memorable and activated community focus
4. External and entry areas should be designed to provide places for visitors to sit and meet other users and enhance the facility as a destination.

1.5.4 Fitout Requirements

The spaces shall demonstrate a high quality of design, be welcoming and attractive and integrate all the functional elements together as a cohesive centre. It is important that the interior architecture creates a community lounge - a "third place" for the community and have an informal casual feel, that reflects this role.

The spaces need to be flexible, adaptable, multipurpose, functional and able to easily adapt and change over time.

All finishes shall be durable and low maintenance.

The interior design must:

1. Create a vibrant, active library community lounge space for all ages and groups.
2. Allow for security and after hours zoning of component facilities and sub-parts.
3. Maximise the use of natural light and minimise direct sunlight and glare into the internal work environment
4. Maximise access to external views.
5. Minimise the vertical and horizontal path of travel between various parts of the building.



Figure 19: Void and stair connect levels of Concord library

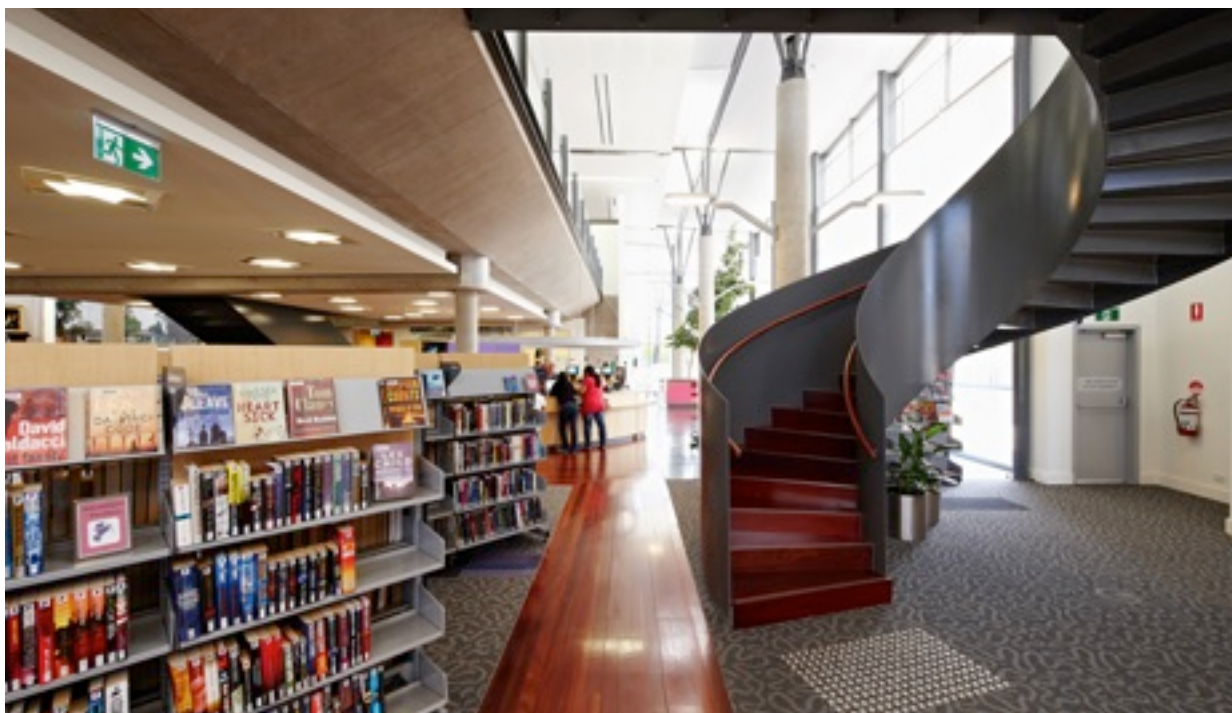


Figure 20: Void and stair connect levels of Ingleburn library

6. The library and community centres should be designed with high ceilings, voids, atriums and connections to external activity spaces and gardens.
7. The buildings should have large areas of clear glazing which encourage views to external public areas and parks and allows interactions between users and the community visiting and accessing the civic precinct.

1.5.5 Planning principles

A number of functional elements within the new Library, Community and Visitor Centre have specific operational requirements that must be considered in developing the design for the project. These include the following requirements:

- An on grade street address for main building entry
- A ground floor location for the whole or part of library
- A ground floor location for the visitor information centre
- A ground floor location for the community centre
- Ability for Activity Rooms 3 and 4 to open out onto a landscaped forecourt
- The library to have an on grade point for deliveries and dispatches with on site loading zone for delivery vehicle.
- The library to have an on site parking spot for a library vehicle with good access to community facilities
- The ability for the children's activity area of library to open onto a secure landscaped courtyard
- Where possible the potential for Activity Rooms 1 and 2 to open onto a secure landscaped courtyard

Council has a preference to locate the library over a single level however it is understood that to create an integrated development it may be required to locate the library over two levels. Where the library is over two levels the following should be incorporated into the design:

- The customer service and children's areas should be located on the ground floor
- The Library back of house, Study centre and Young Adult areas may be located on an upper level
- The Lending collection may be divided over two levels but consideration will need to be given further for the appropriate split

It is important that the upper levels feels that its is connected to the ground floor of the library and read as a mezzanine space, not a separate floor.

As such a two storey library will need significant void spaces that connect the two levels. As a guide approximately 60 percent of the library should be on the ground floor and 40 % on the upper level leaving approximately 20% of lower level as a double height space.

A generous open stair should be located in this area that connects the two levels. Additionally access to a lift dedicated to the Library must be provided to provide controlled accessible travel throughout the Library.

It is intended that the Library is integrated with the Community and Visitor Centre public spaces during operating hours. It is intended that the Community and Visitor Centre will operate beyond the hours of the Library. As such the Library will need to be secured independently to these facilities during these times.

It is important that at these times the Community and Visitor Centre visitors and staff do not feel they are in a centre that is half closed. Careful consideration must be given to the design of this secure interface. For example a timber sliding screen or glass folding wall would be more appropriate that a shop front roller shutter.

1.6 benchmark example

Ingleburn library and community centre



Figure 21: Public space between Ingleburn library and community centre



Figure 22: View across double height space of Ingleburn library



Figure 23: View across Ingleburn library showing upper mezzanine

1.7 benchmark example

Cooroy library and digital hub



Figure 24: Digital hub Cooroy library



Figure 25: View across Cooroy library



Figure 26: Aerial view of Cooroy library



Figure 27: View across children's area of Cooroy library

1.8 environmentally sustainable design

1.8.1 Environmental Performance

Mid-Coast Council has a commitment to promote environmental excellence in buildings, parks and streetscapes.

The brief requires the Design Team to incorporate both the energy efficiency requirements of section J outlined in the Building Code of Australia and the key sustainability principles noted below, into the development of the design of the new Library, Community and Visitor Centre.

Consideration must be given to reduce the ecological footprint, the selection of structural materials and finishes should be undertaken to maximise the use of ecologically sound materials, such as those from renewable and recycled sources and those with lower embodied energy.

The building should also be designed to improve health and wellbeing through the provisions of optimised thermal comfort, daylight and glare control, non toxic materials, fresh air and acoustic privacy.

Secondly, the building should reduce the amount of power consumed and can even contribute to energy production.

Council would also like to promote sustainability through education and information to reduce consumption, reduce waste, encourage re-use and encourage local awareness & preservation of the local environment.

Key Sustainability Principles

The following are issues to be incorporated into the design of the Library, Community and Visitor Centre:

1. To provide effective heating and cooling that meets the needs of patrons and staff in all areas of the facility
2. To provide individual air handling units to each functional area to allow zoned operation of air conditioning
3. Provision of effective fixed external sun shading to all windows.
4. Minimise carbon emissions through use of automated natural ventilation to activity rooms and override controls through BMS to AC system
5. Use of natural light to balance artificial light, whilst still complying with appropriate lighting levels and including automated controls to the facilities that manage lights when there is sufficient natural light
6. Minimise carbon emissions through use of motion detector lighting controls to all support spaces, amenities and Activity Rooms
7. Inclusion of LED lighting with time activated sensor controls
8. Provide metering and control systems to optimise operational performance
9. Reduce stormwater impact by collecting roof water for reuse in irrigation to landscaping and flushing of all toilets
10. Support localised manufacturing in construction, maintenance and operation
11. Incorporate materials which capture carbon: materials such as plantation timber and bamboo products
12. Incorporate green accredited materials: there are a range of materials accreditation organisations including GECA (See Green Building Council of Australia)
13. Incorporate low VOC products: (Volatile organic compounds commonly found in materials such as paints, polyurethanes, particle board, adhesives): reducing VOCs will provide a much healthier indoor environment
14. Reduce medium density fibreboard (MDF): due to noxious formaldehyde glues utilised in production and where utilised use E0 grade product.
15. Consider methods for designed facilities to reduce energy beyond code compliance
16. Reduce carbon emissions associated with vehicular transport by incorporating bike racks to promote low-carbon transport
17. Utilise water sensitive design requirements are integrated seamlessly into the overall design of green spaces and landscaping for the facility, which become a showcase for water sensitive urban design.