

Town of Port Hedland

# Library Strategy 2021-2025



*enrich*



TOWN OF  
**PORT HEDLAND**  
**LIBRARIES**

A photograph of two women in a library. On the left, a young woman with long brown hair, wearing a red top and a dark vest, is smiling broadly. On the right, an older woman with short blonde hair and glasses, wearing a teal shirt and a dark patterned jacket, is also smiling and looking at a laptop. The background shows bookshelves filled with books. A large teal triangle is in the top right corner. The word 'explore' is written in a white, cursive font across the middle of the image.

*explore*

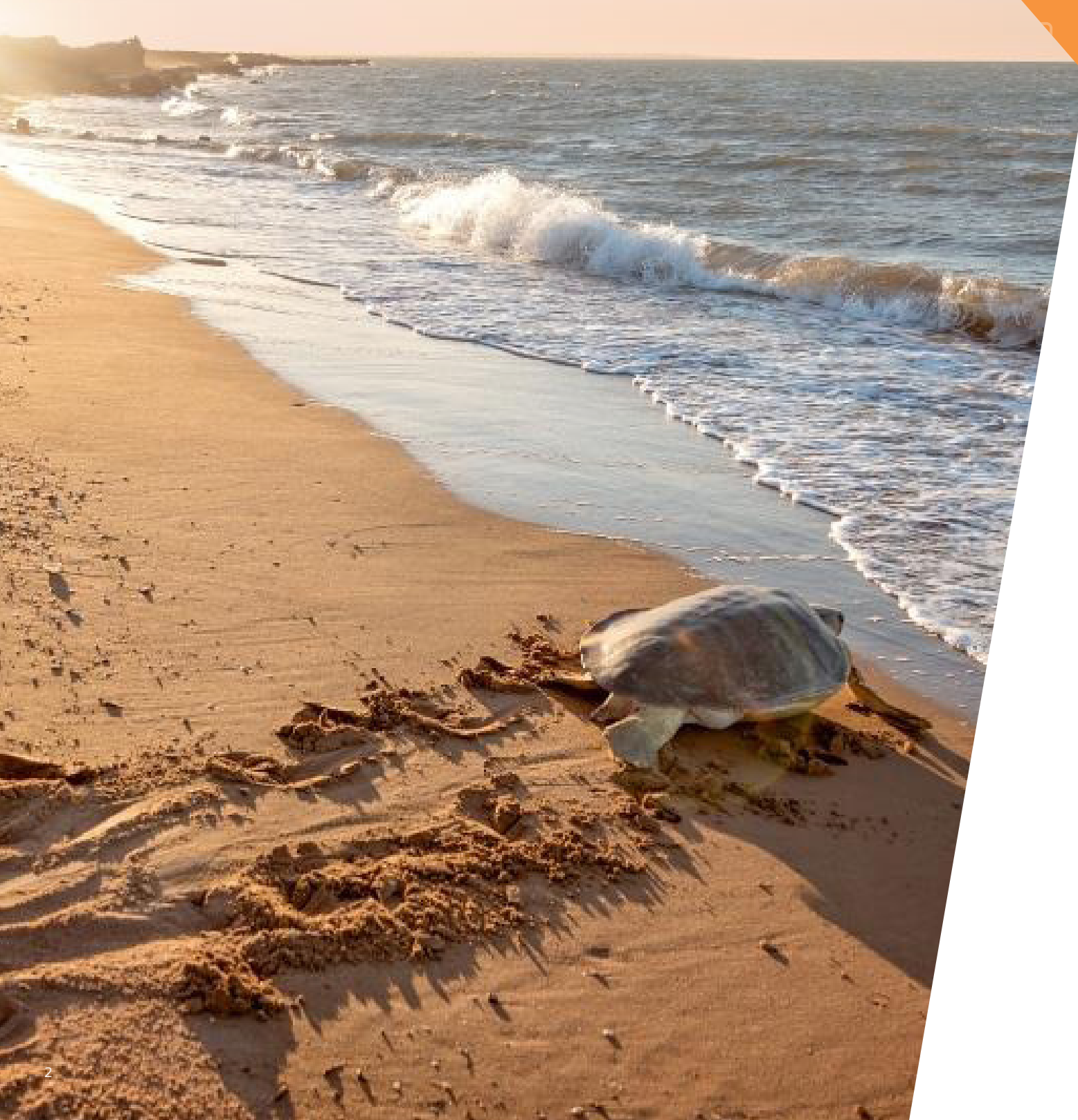
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## Acknowledgement of country

The Town of Port Hedland would like to acknowledge the Kariyarra, Ngarla, and Nyamal people as the Traditional Custodians of the Port Hedland lands. We recognise their strength and resilience and pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

We extend that respect to all Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people of the local community and recognise their rich cultures and their continuing connection to land and waters.



# Message from the Mayor

On behalf of Council, I am pleased to present the *Town of Port Hedland Library Strategy 2021-2025* to the community.

This Strategy serves as our blueprint for evolving and delivering the Town's Library services over the next five years and beyond, grounded in insights gathered during community consultation efforts. Council and the Town's leadership believe in delivering community services which reflect the sentiments and vision of community members.

The Town's Libraries are a highly valued community service, garnering satisfaction rates of over 90%. The physical sites in the Port Hedland Boulevard shopping centre and on Leake Street in South Hedland provide residents with a place to borrow a range of items, participate in family friendly activities such as Storytime and Baby Rhyme Time, access a range of services and interact with our friendly staff. The Libraries also offer members online services, including access to eBooks, eAudio and video streaming. The Covid-19 pandemic presented new opportunities to expand service delivery in Hedland, with the establishment of click and collect and homebound delivery services. At the core of our library services are the library staff who share their passion of libraries with the community, each and every day.

This Strategy takes into consideration the community's evolving expectations for library services. Libraries are not solely places where members borrow items: they also serve as hubs of social connection, learning, collaboration and entertainment. A child's first Storytime session can inspire a lifelong love of literacy; a resident accessing the local history collection may gain a newfound appreciation for their home town, and library computers may enable someone to learn essential online skills. We recognise that the Town's Libraries play an integral role in making Hedland a liveable community for all.

A strong theme uncovered during consultation was the need to upgrade the current South Hedland Library site, originally constructed in the 1980s. Although highly regarded for its service delivery and friendly environment, there is broad agreement that the current site is constrained and not fit-for-purpose by modern standards. New library spaces into the future will be defined by accessibility, modernity and meeting the diverse needs of a growing population in the heart of the Pilbara, WA.

This Strategy takes a holistic approach to the delivery of library services, recognising the need for dynamic programming which engages all ages. We will endeavour to establish responsive programming in partnership with other community organisations, innovatively promoted and showcased. The way people access information is changing, impacting how we market library services: a greater focus on promoting to the community will be a key part of delivering the objectives of this Strategy.

I'd like to thank everyone who contributed to the development of this Strategy, especially members who are passionate advocates for the future of library services here in Hedland. I look forward to Port Hedland Libraries continuing to provide spaces to enrich, escape, explore, educate, entertain and evolve.



**Peter Carter**  
Mayor of Port Hedland

# Introduction

Libraries all over the world are evolving to meet the changing needs of our changing society. Whether it be a library activity or event, assistance with computers and electronic devices, a welcoming and safe space to meet others, or a wide choice of reading materials for work and relaxation, the best libraries aim to reflect the requirements and expectations of the communities they serve.

The Port Hedland community is young with young families, mobile, represents many nationalities and includes a very high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who make up almost 17% of the total population. Nearly 37% of our population was born overseas, and 50% of us have a parent born abroad (*Strategic Community Plan*).

Compared with regional WA, Port Hedland has a higher proportion of children under 18 and a lower proportion of people aged 60 or older. (.id)

*This Library Strategy 2021-2025* has been informed by the Town of Port Hedland Community Plan, background research, community and staff consultation carried out by consultancy company *Libraries Alive! Pty Ltd*, and by national and international trends in libraries. It develops a way forward for a community hub focused on providing services, programming and resources that meet the needs of our community.

# Strategic Context



A young girl with a rainbow bow in her hair is smiling and painting at a table. She is wearing a white sleeveless top. In the background, there are bookshelves and other children. The word "entertain" is written in a white, cursive font across the middle of the image.

*entertain*



# Our library service

The Town of Port Hedland has had a public library in Port Hedland since the early 1960s. The South Hedland Library in Leake Street opened in the early 1980s as the South Hedland township grew. A new small shopfront library opened in Port Boulevard in May 2020.

**15,144\***   
Total population of the  
Town of Port Hedland

**743** 

Public computer  
use per month  
(with social distancing in place so  
less computers available)

 **2,947**  
Library members  
(19% of total population)

**32,952**   
Library loans 2020  
(figures based on Jul-Dec 2020 and averaged)

 **54,516**  
Library visits 2020  
(figures based on Jul-Dec  
2020 and averaged)

In addition to lending books, DVDs, CDs, eBooks, eAudio and eMagazines, we also provide:

- Speciality collections – local history, bilingual and foreign language materials
- Reference and information services
- Home library and inter-library loan services
- Children's and seniors' programs, school holiday activities and author talks
- Printing, scanning, photocopying and laminating
- Council payments and Smart Rider cards

\*Source: ([profile.id.com.au/port-hedland](https://profile.id.com.au/port-hedland))

# A 21st century library service – challenges and opportunities



The best way to make sure that library services are providing high value to the community is to compare it with the standards by which libraries measure their own performance and compare themselves with other libraries.

In December 2020 the Australian Library and Information Association in conjunction with the Australian Public Library Alliance published updated standards and guidelines for Australian public libraries (Australian Public Library Alliance - Australian Library and Information Association, 2020).

Along with customer satisfaction, membership, loans and visits are the most important indicators of the performance of a library services. This is how Port Hedland compares with the standards:

| Indicator             | Standard | Port Hedland | Variation |
|-----------------------|----------|--------------|-----------|
| Customer satisfaction | 90%      | 92%          | +2%       |
| Membership            | 30%      | 20%          | -10%      |
| Loans per capita pa   | 5        | 2.2          | -2.8      |
| Visits per capita pa  | 3.5      | 3.6          | +0.1      |

While the library service is meeting base level targets, it is clear that the South Hedland Library provides a very cramped environment for the community.

A high proportion of library visits are to use the computers, Wi-Fi and printers and do not result in books and other items being borrowed. There is minimal space to sit and read or relax in the library which is a disincentive for staying any longer than necessary.

However, there is scope for increasing membership and use of the collection and these issues are addressed in this Strategy.

While the library service is meeting base level targets, the challenges of the restricted space at South Hedland Library limits opportunities for expanding services and resources. At the same time it is much appreciated.



*evolve*





Libraries are no longer just about books, they are community hubs where a vast range of services and programs are offered. This should be reflected into the plans for a new library.

*Response from Town of Port Hedland Library survey*

# Listening and planning for the future

With more than 5,800 responses, the *Strategic Community Plan 2018-2028* was the result of the most extensive consultation process ever undertaken by the Town of Port Hedland. The document now guides progress towards a more family-focused town with people living in a safe, vibrant and cohesive community - a place we are all proud to call home.

The library service has its part to play in realising the vision to be Australia's leading Port Town embracing community, culture and environment. This *Library Strategy 2021-2025* is the result of listening to the community.

The *Library Strategy 2021-2025* is based on a comprehensive community consultation conducted in 2020. Interviews were held with library and Town staff, focus groups captured the views of school students and members of the community, and a public online and print survey provided the opportunity for anyone wishing to have their say. More than 600 comments were received.

You told us:

- You found the Port and South Hedland libraries' locations convenient, and their opening hours mainly suited your needs, however have suggestions for improvement
- That you appreciated the current service and the helpfulness of the library staff, but would like the South Hedland Library to be a more attractive destination and to offer more space for more books and activities as well as to sit and read
- That you placed a high value on staff assistance with computers and using the internet, but more computers were needed because some people would not have access without the library
- That the library's services needed to be promoted and more widely known, with social media the preferred way to find out what was going on
- That the unique local history collection deserved to be better known and more accessible.



# Strategic Directions

The four strategic directions arise directly from what you told us about the library service you want. They describe what we will do, how we will make it happen, and how we will measure our progress.

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1****Our libraries: a place to come together, to relax and to learn**

Today's library is a destination, a community hub where people come together to use the print and digital materials on offer, to study, to attend events such as storytime, craft workshops, or just to use welcoming safe spaces for their own purposes.

Reading improves the mind, nourishes the soul and underpins social and economic well-being. With a wide variety of materials on offer, library

programs encourage reading across all ages and abilities.

Trained professional staff can be trusted to guide people to reliable information and assist with navigating the digital world. Collections are up-to-date and backed up by the resources of other libraries in the state and in the nation. Every library is a gateway to every other library.

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2****Libraries for all**

Libraries have collections and services which reflect the characteristics of the diverse communities they serve; for all ages and cultures from baby rhyme time sessions to home-delivered audio books for seniors; for all people.

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3****Libraries for understanding our past and preparing for our future**

The Pilbara has a rich Aboriginal, pastoral and mining history, and the library, with its specialist staff, is the active collector and natural custodian of the region's memory.

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION 4****Libraries for tomorrow**

Libraries are places where people can seek information to help understand their lives, their place in an increasingly digital society and the sometimes surprising changes that are taking place around them. This can mean help with electronic devices, dealing with government agencies, connecting with others through the internet, or learning about safe online practices.





*educate*





# Strategic Direction 1

Our libraries: a place to come together, to relax and to learn

## Strategic Priority

Today's library is a destination, a community hub where people come together to use the print and digital materials on offer, to study, to attend events such as storytime, workshops, or just to use welcoming safe spaces for their own purposes.

Reading improves the mind, nourishes the soul and underpins social and economic wellbeing. With a wide variety of materials on offer, library programs encourage reading across all ages and abilities.

Trained professional staff can be trusted to guide people to reliable information and assist with navigating the digital world. Collections are up-to-date and backed up by the resources of other libraries in WA and in the nation. Every library is a gateway to every other library.

## Next Steps

- Plan and build a new library in a central location in South Hedland which is:
  - Designed with flexible, inclusive multi-functional spaces
  - Appropriately sized (at least 1,270m<sup>2</sup>), meeting Australian public library guidelines (State Library of NSW)
  - Dynamic, incorporating digital and creative spaces to support learning and discovery
  - Focused as a community hub and co-located with other complementary facilities
  - Supportive of our Aboriginal, culturally diverse, people with disability and evolving population
- Systematically work through the responses from the Library Strategy survey and focus groups and create an action plan to implement community wishes

## Markers of success

- A site is identified and a building plan initiated
- Library design recommendations are accepted and resourced
- Appropriate resourcing ensures services and resources are aligned with modern public libraries
- Community feedback on library services are actioned in the new space
- The space in the new South Hedland Library is increasingly adopted for a range of uses
- Increased library visits and memberships
- Improved benchmarking against Australian public library standards



# Strategic Direction 2

## Libraries for all

### Strategic Priority

Libraries have collections and services which reflect the characteristics of the diverse communities they serve; for all ages and cultures from baby rhyme time sessions to home-delivered audio books for seniors; for all people.

### Next Steps

- Continually review collections to ensure modern, engaging and appropriate for the community
- Organise responsive programming based on the outcomes of the community consultation and investigate partnering with other organisations within the Town to deliver social and cultural events and celebrations
- Seek innovative ways to promote and showcase library services to our community

### Markers of success

- Increased loans and visits (physical and digital), membership, library catalogue and website use, attendance at events and activities, and customer satisfaction
- Updated collection development plan ensuring a fresh up-to-date library collection as supported by library standards
- Programming reflects the cultural diversity of our community
- Development and implementation of a marketing plan
- Trained staff who understand the needs of our community



## Strategic Direction 3

Libraries for understanding our past and preparing for our future

### Strategic Priority

The Pilbara has a rich Aboriginal, pastoral and mining history, and the library, with its specialist staff, is the active collector and natural custodian of the region's memory.

### Next Steps

- Build and promote an accessible, dynamic local history collection and service – both physical and online
- Provide an inclusive, open and interactive space for local history which the community can visit and interact with through print materials, artefacts and digitised items
- Continue to build strong relationships with local stakeholders to strengthen the local history collection

### Markers of success

- Number of items digitised each year, increased local history use statistics, and increased library catalogue use statistics
- Development and implementation of a local history and cultural development plan



# Strategic Direction 4

## Libraries for tomorrow

### Strategic Priority

Libraries are places where people can seek information to help understand their lives, their place in an increasingly digital society and the sometimes surprising changes that are taking place around them. This can mean help with electronic devices, dealing with government agencies, connecting with others through the internet, or learning about safe online practices..

### Next Steps

- Provide a range of computer support and training to build digital literacy skills for all
- Improve the library website and online catalogue, creating additional content and adding new resources which are promoted to the community
- Build staff expertise in digital and eSmart skills to ensure the community is provided with the best support possible
- Actively investigate emerging technologies in libraries to share with the community
- Increase staff expertise in new and emerging technologies and equipment to ensure appropriate support continues to be provided
- Broaden Wi-Fi accessibility across the libraries removing time limits

### Markers of success

- Increased loans, library and online visitors, training attendees, public computer use, Wi-Fi use, and printing/copying/scanning statistics
- New technology is utilised successfully by the community
- Appropriately trained staff managing the library's systems and assistance to the community



# References

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