

A meeting of the Richmond Tweed Regional Library will be held at the Lismore City Council Chambers, and Online on Wednesday, 28 February 2024, 12:30pm

Attachments Excluded From Agenda

Sarah Sullivan
Executive officer – RTRL

23 February 2024



Attachments

Reports and/or Recommendations

7.1 Business Managers Report

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Richmond Tweed Regional Library
Connect. Discover. Escape.

Richmond Tweed Regional Library
Ballina Area
Quarterly Service Level Agreement
Progress Report
2nd Quarter
October to December 2023



Richmond Tweed Regional Library acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we work

Ballina Area

Quarter: 2nd Quarter | October to December 2023

Prepared by: Ballina Area Librarian, Taryn Kelly

INTRODUCTION

The following service level agreement (SLA) report details quarterly progress for the Ballina Area Libraries. The report is presented in two parts; Part 1: Service Level Agreement Target Performance, which details progress against quarterly reportable SLA targets; and Part 2: Additional Commentary, which provides an account of library activities for the quarter based on the key themes defined in the RTRL Strategic Plan, along with commentary for Support Services and Mobile Library activities. Progress against all SLA targets will be reported in the RTRL Annual Report.

To realise RTRL strategic outcomes, SLAs define targets to be achieved in relation to the six RTRL cost drivers:

- Branch
- Mobile Library
- Library Resources
- Computer Systems
- Support Services
- Member Council

Quarterly progress against these targets is provided in this report.

RTRL Strategic Plan



The primary strategic outcomes RTRL works toward are:

- We champion and support literacy and the joy of reading
- We continue to extend the reach of our library services into the community
- We provide accessible engaging spaces at the heart of the community
- We support and provide inclusive collections, programs and services that inspire learning and creating
- We support and encourage active participation in the digital world
- Our staff are engaged, knowledgeable, responsive, and friendly
- We provide anywhere, anytime access through the virtual library

The Strategic Plan is focussed around six key themes in which RTRL delivers services to the community:

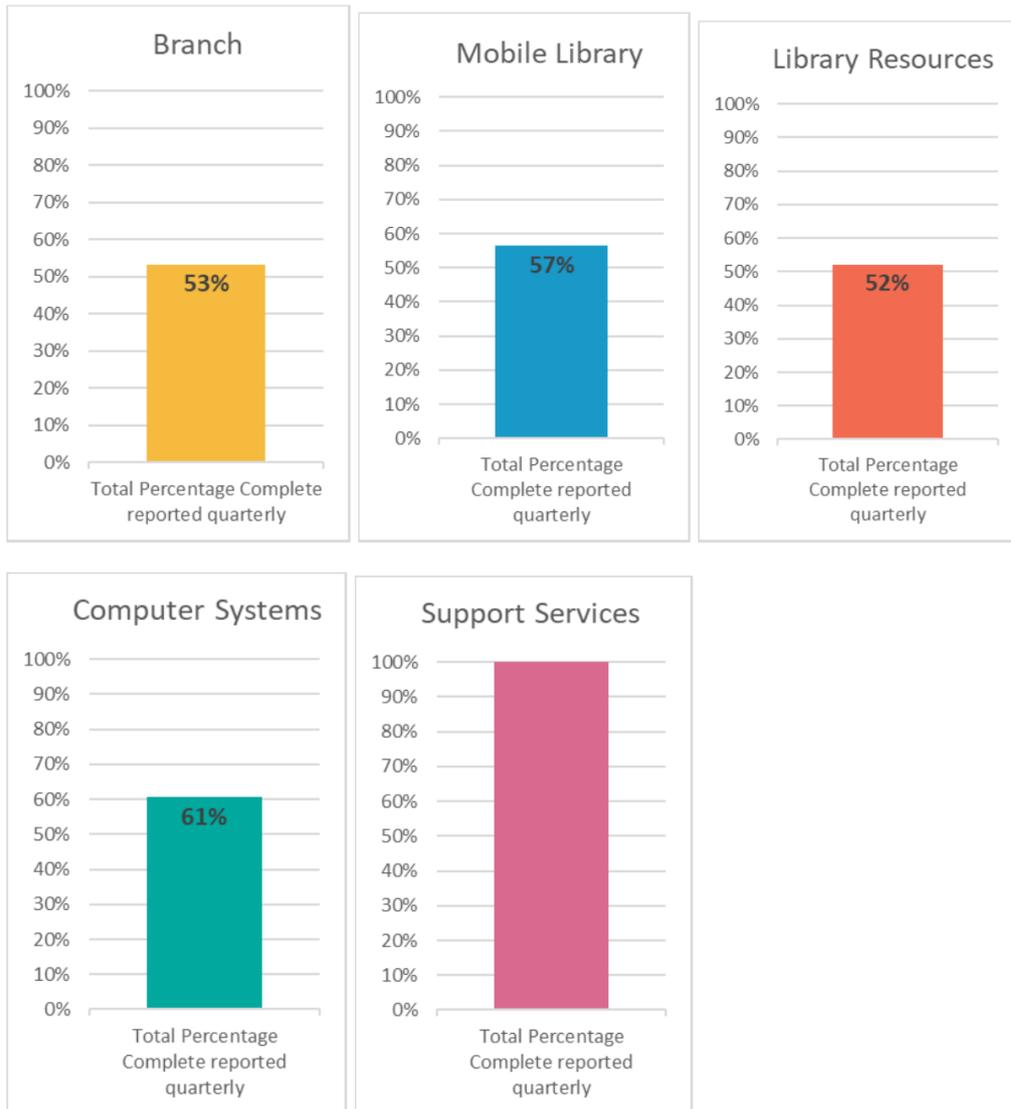
- Collections
- Community Participation
- Learning & Creating
- Spaces
- Library Team
- Sustainability

PART 1:

Service Level Agreement Target Performance

Target Performance Dashboard

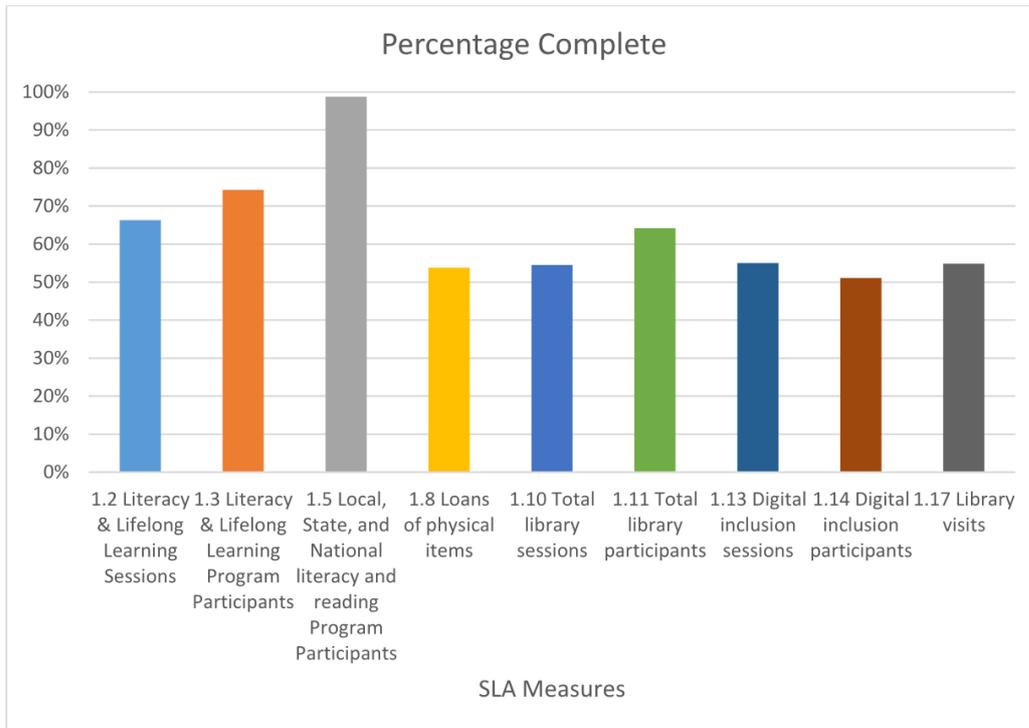
The following dashboard graphs provide a snapshot of overall progress toward targets for the whole year. Detailed breakdowns and commentary for each graph is provided in the following pages in the Detailed Commentary section.



Detailed Commentary

The following graphs and commentary provide detail for progress against targets for each individual measure. Target reporting is cumulative over a year. This report is for the second quarter, therefore targets can be expected to be around 50% of the total annual target. Any large positive or negative variations will be highlighted and discussed.

Branch

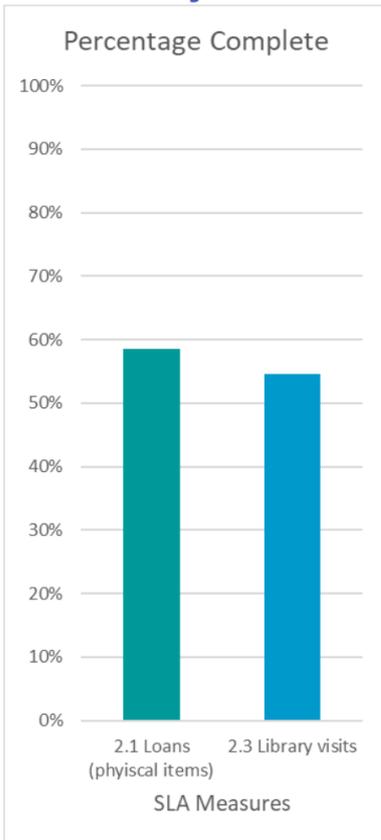


SLA targets are positive at the end of the 2nd Quarter.

1.2 and 1.3 Literacy & Lifelong Learning statistics are above target due to increased engagement with Adult Literacy One-on-One support provided at Ballina, Toddler Time at Ballina, World Nursery Rhyme Week and Pop-Up Story Time at Lennox, preschool outreach visits at Ballina and Alstonville, and a library orientation for TAFE ESL students at Ballina. This has also positively impacted 1.11 (Total library participants).

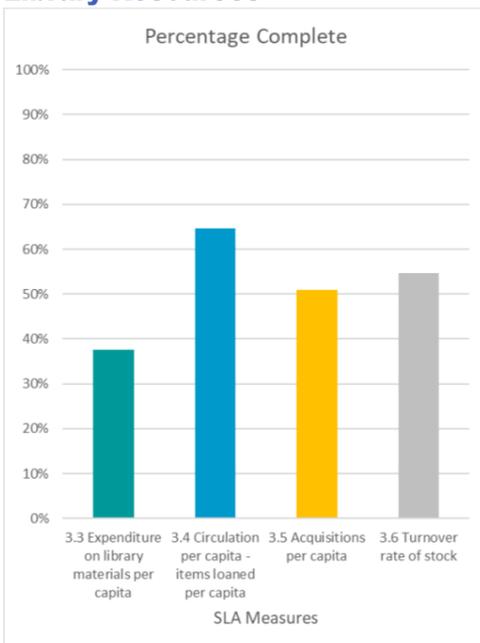
1.5 Local, State and National literacy and reading program participant numbers are significantly above target. This is because the majority of these programs fall in the first two quarters.

Mobile Library



SLA targets are positive at the end of the 2nd Quarter.

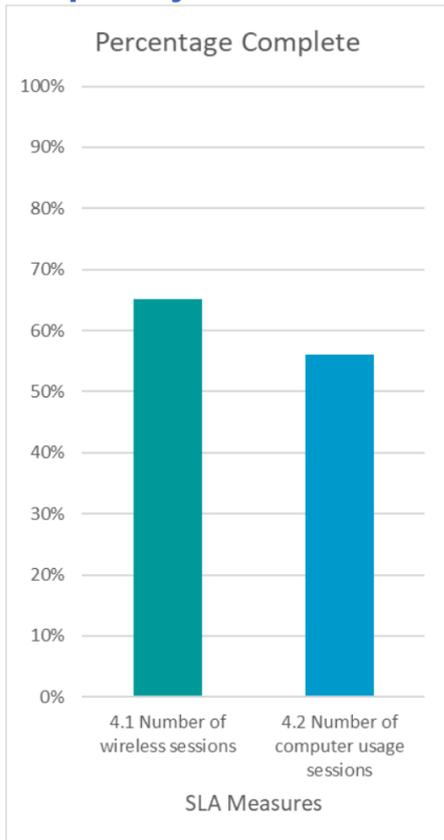
Library Resources



SLA targets are positive at the end of the 2nd Quarter.

3.3 Expenditure on library materials appears to be below target, due to significant delays in the Finance department's processing of invoices. Actual expenditure is estimated to be 52%.

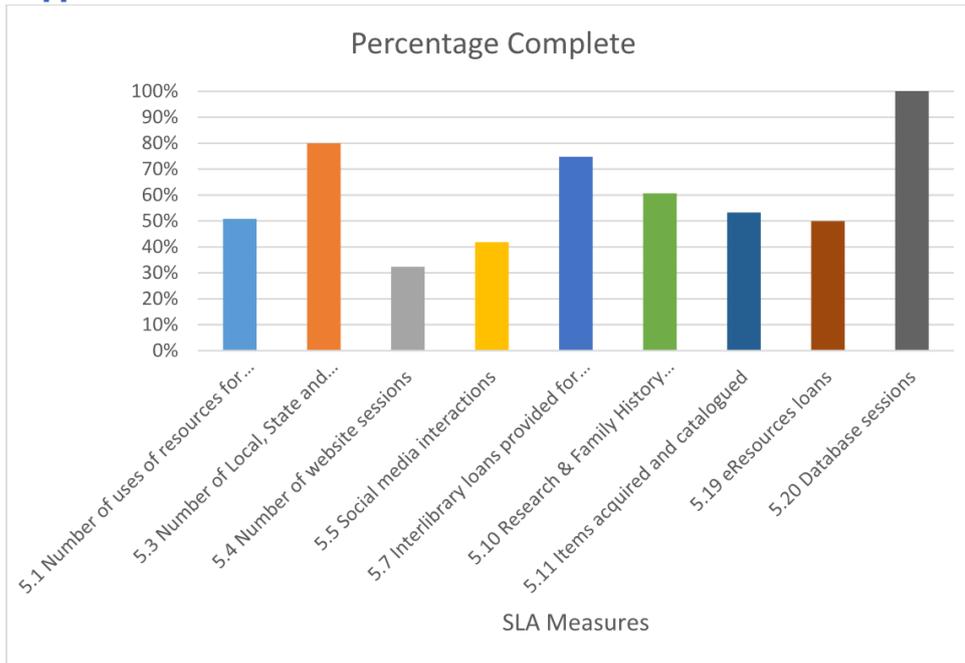
Computer Systems



SLA targets are positive at the end of the 2nd Quarter.

4.1 Number of wireless sessions is above target. A possible reason for the increased usage is the extended opening hours at Lennox Head, where HSC students and children on school holidays have been taking advantage of the lunchtime Library access.

Support Services



SLA targets are primarily positive at the end of the 2nd Quarter.

5.3 Local, State and National literacy campaigns, events, and programs supported with marketing, promotion and resources are significantly above target. This is because most of these programs fall in the first two quarters.

5.4 Website usage sessions remain lower than anticipated this quarter. This could be due to the continued increase in face-to-face service access rather than online. This target may need to be reconsidered for the 2024/25 SLA

5.20 Database sessions target needs to be revised in next year’s SLA. Currently the target is set at 25,000. The target should be increased to around 250,000 based on the current trajectory.

Part 2: Additional Commentary

The following provides an account of activities undertaken at the Ballina Area Libraries in the quarter. Commentary is provided based on the six key strategic plan themes, along with Support Services and the Mobile Library.

Collections

Throughout this quarter Staff at Ballina Library steadily worked through lists from CollectionHQ to remove dead stock from the shelves. The Area Librarian assessed stock for replacement, discard, booksale or transfer to the Stack collection. This has resulted in better access to the collection for library members, and assists in making future purchasing decisions. Alstonville and Lennox Head branches also utilised CollectionHQ lists to remove grubby stock.

Alstonville staff created some extra space for the Adult Fiction collection by transferring the audiobooks from a display stand onto regular shelving. The audiobooks at Ballina were also condensed allowing the Quick Reads collection to be shelved in a more prominent position facing the front entry.

The addition of items donated during the flood appeal has now significantly decreased, with the large majority of donations being used to stock the booksales at all branches, and at the Ballina Visitor Information Centre. The funds raised from the booksales are used to buy program supplies and host events and activities.

Community Participation

The three Library craft groups, Sew Can I at Ballina, Get Crafty at Alstonville and Makerspace Textiles at Lennox Head had a busy and creative end to the year. Meeting weekly, group members produced 28 hats for Ballina Bosom Buddies (a breast cancer support group), 100 knitted poppies for Remembrance Day displays, 29 Trauma Teddies for the Red Cross, and an array of clothing, hats, toys, dolls and Christmas stockings for the Women Up North women's refuge. The community organisations expressed gratitude for the amazing support our Crafters have given during the year.

To celebrate NSW Grandparents' Day on 29 October, all children attending Story Time at the three libraries were asked to invite their Grandparents and Grand-friends along for a fun morning of games, stories, craft and snacks. The Lennox Head group also had an exciting excursion to the Rural Fire Service for a Fire Safety Story Time. Visitors to the libraries for special preschool Story Time sessions included Fox Street Preschool, Alstonville Early Learning, and Possum Place Preschool.

The RTRL 50th anniversary in November was marked with a lovely afternoon tea at Alstonville Library. In attendance were Ballina Shire Councillor Simon Chate, RTRL Executive Officer Sarah Sullivan, and many long-term library members and supporters. Guests were entertained by the children from Possum Place Preschool who sang Happy Birthday to RTRL.

Community members and Library staff were given the opportunity to attend LivingWorks safeTALK training in November at Ballina Library. The training aimed to develop suicide prevention skills by equipping participants to be more alert to someone thinking of suicide and better able to connect them with further help. The session was fully booked and found to be valuable by all in attendance.

Ballina Library's Social Circle was once again popular with our seniors. Guest speakers from the community during the second quarter were Mayor Sharon Cadwallader, Ballina Shire Council, a representative of the Red Cross who spoke about emergency preparedness, the Naval and Maritime Museum, Alice Woods from WikiMedia, Bundjalung Elder Lyn Roberts, and the Alstonville Plateau Historical Society.

The Area Librarian was invited to speak at the November meeting of the Ballina Waters Probus Club. Members were very interested in learning about the public library services, programs and events offered in Ballina Shire, particularly the Home Library delivery service and the audiobook players available for loan to members with vision impairment.

The Duck Creek Wailers ukulele group ended their musical year with a Christmas-inspired jam session. The group meets bimonthly at Alstonville Library and is guaranteed to bring a smile to everyone's faces and even get a few feet tapping and hands clapping.

Learning & Creating

This quarter saw the launch of the highly-anticipated Lego Clubs across all branches; the Ballina Brickies, Lennox Lego Legends and the Alstonville Lego Club were formed with funding support from National Backyard Cricket, The LBW Trust and Friends of Libraries Australia. The Lego Clubs met fortnightly and completed challenges such as Lego City, Water, Space, Treehouses, Wind-powered Vehicles, and Free Build. Lego Club, besides being a lot of fun, has shown to develop teamwork, social skills, communication and language skills, problem solving, mathematics, spatial awareness, creativity, experimentation, physical development, self-confidence, patience, focus and concentration. It is also a great anxiety and stress reliever. Children and Library staff alike are eagerly awaiting the return of Lego Club in 2024.

All branches offered drop-in tech help sessions during Get Online Week in October, assisting people to take part in the annual Aussie Bird Count. This program was funded by Good Things Foundation and aims to close the digital divide. NBNco also presented information sessions at our libraries during Scams Awareness week in November. In conjunction with our weekly Tech Savvy Seniors program (supported by Telstra) that runs throughout the year, these digital inclusion sessions are vital for the community. The wonderful feedback we get from seniors who attend our tech help programs shows that they provide opportunities to build confidence with using computers and mobile devices at a pace suitable for the individual and in a friendly environment that is free of judgement.

Lennox Head hosted a music, movement and sensory play session by Bop It Tots for World Nursery Rhyme Week in November. Nursery rhymes play an important role in early childhood development and education, teaching vocabulary, language, literacy, numeracy, social, physical and emotional skills. 28 babies and toddlers attended and along with their carers and Library staff, had enormous fun.

The 2023 schedule of StoryBoard Junior Masterclasses at Ballina Library came to a close in November. The Masterclasses, presented by author Samantha Turnbull in conjunction with Byron Writers Festival, allowed young writers to develop and hone their writing skills through exploring diverse forms and genres. It is hoped that the program will return in the second half of 2024.

During this quarter Ballina Library hosted two author talks that were very well attended. Shauna Bostock, a Bundjalung local, spoke about her book *Reaching Through Time: Finding my Family's Stories*. This highly interesting account details the journey to uncover her family history, with stories of dispossession and frontier violence; life on reserves under the harsh regime of the Aborigines Protection Board; a cricket match with Bradman; activism and arts in Redfern; and a surprising reconciliation. Fleur McDonald, best-selling author of Australian fiction visited Ballina to share her new novel *Voices in the Dark*. It is billed as a powerful and poignant rural family story and has proven popular with library members.

Library staff created some stunning displays in second quarter that generated lots of interest in our collections and events. All branches displayed a photo slideshow in addition to other memorabilia for the RTRL 50th anniversary in November. Lennox Head also presented displays on travel and travel writing, superheroes and birthdays, whilst Australian birds were the focus of displays in Ballina and Alstonville during the Aussie Bird Count. Remembrance Day was also marked with displays in all branches.

All our regular programs, including Scrabble Club, Chess Club, numerous Book Clubs, Baby Time, Toddler Time, Story Time, Makers Gonna Make, and Adult Literacy One-on-One concluded for the year in early December. Staff then changed focus to Christmas activities, which included DIY Christmas cards and baubles, Sand Art, a Scavenger Hunt, and some dazzling displays. The Summer Reading Challenge also kicked off on 1 December and is due to finish on 24 January.

Library Team

Richmond Tweed Regional Library
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In the second quarter staff had in-person training opportunities for Armed Robbery, Cash Handling Awareness and Violent Incidents training, the safeTALK suicide prevention workshop, and Mental Health First Aid. Online training offered by the State Library of NSW included Romance and Sci-Fi Genres (undertaken by the Lennox Head Branch Technician) and Indyreads (completed by the Alstonville Branch Technician). Ballina Shire Councillor Simon Chate represented the RTRL Committee at the NSWPLA Switch Conference held in Penrith during November.

Expressions of Interest for the Lennox Head Branch Technician were received for a temporary vacancy during this quarter. The role was shared by two part-time Library Assistants from Ballina Area and Tweed Area who enthusiastically took on the professional development challenge.

Ballina Area was represented by the Area Librarian and the Alstonville Branch Technician at the RTRL 50th anniversary luncheon held at Ballina RSL Club on 12 November. This was a wonderful celebration of one of the largest regional library services in New South Wales, and was an acknowledgement of all the staff who have been part of RTRL over the past 50 years. Congratulations to the event team who put so much effort into the fabulously successful day.

The Area Librarian was part of the interview panel for Acquisitions Assistant at RTRL Support Services in December, as well as representing Ballina Area at a farewell morning tea for Lucy Kinsley who is retiring after 40 years with RTRL. As part of the Management Tea, the Area Librarian visited the beautiful newly-refurbished Kingscliff branch to assist with reshelving the collection.

Annual skills assessments were completed this quarter for all eligible staff, and the end of another successful year full of challenges and achievements was celebrated with a Christmas party at Cherry Street Sports Club in Ballina.

Sustainability

In conjunction with Ballina Shire Council staff, a submission for Public Library Infrastructure grant funding of \$198,375.54 was submitted in October. The submission, titled 'Ballina Library Boost: creating a welcoming and versatile community place,' paves the way for refurbishment and a redesign of the floor space. A bright, modern and flexible space will improve access to the collection and increase opportunities for programs, therefore boosting library visitation, member numbers, and patron loyalty. The grant announcement is anticipated in March 2024.

Byron Bay Branch kindly hosted several Monitor introductory sessions for Ballina Area staff ahead of the planned installation of this new print management system in 2024. Monitor was purchased with the State Library's Local Priority funding. The Area Librarian attended webinars for the planned Library Management System upgrade from Spydus 10.9.1 to 11 (February), the introduction of SpydusBI (to replace CollectionHQ in 2024), the introduction of the elementTIME online timesheet application, and Lismore City Council's General Ledger restructure.

Spaces

During November, Ballina Council held a briefing for RTRL staff on the Alstonville Cultural Centre upgrades. A submission for \$5.7 million Growing Regions Program funding for this redevelopment was prepared in December.

Ballina Library had swipe-card security access installed during this quarter, and also received some wooden picture book display boxes from Murwillumbah Library to provide extra space for the junior nonfiction collection. Purchases from Local Priority funding in this quarter included a puppet collection for use in Story Time at all branches, new floor mats and cushions for Alstonville, new chairs for Lennox Head, and a height-adjustable desk for the Ballina Library workroom.

Mobile Library

Star-Link has now arrived onboard the Mobile Library. It has improved Internet connectivity to the extent that we will be able to offer free Wi-Fi as well as public PC Internet access in time.

In addition to the usual library programs run during this quarter, November was International Games Month which saw both young and old enjoying board or static games.

The Mobile Library continues to support two Ballina Shire community hub villages in Wardell and Wollongbar. Its commitment to catering to the individual and community alike ensures inclusivity

within our communities. The Mobile Library's impact reaches beyond simply a distribution of literature. It acts as a gathering place where connections are made, ideas are shared, and curiosity is researched. It is a people place. With its reputation as a loved and highly valued community asset, more communities want to access its services!

The Mobile Library was well represented at RTRL 50th anniversary Celebrations, held at the Ballina RSL in November, by both past and present Mobile Library operators.

Overall, this invaluable community treasure promotes literacy, enriches lives, and epitomizes the significance of libraries in fostering a strong sense of community and camaraderie.

Support Services

It was a busy quarter for promoting library services and celebrating important events with our communities. Promotional support and material was provided for Indyreads Summer Book Club, and author talks such as Judy Nunn and Fleur McDonald, as well as keeping the community updated with a monthly online newsletter that is sent to approximately 41,000 subscribers.

RTRL celebrated the 50th anniversary of the signing of the first agreement between member councils for the shared delivery of public library services in November. Celebrations and events were held across the region.

Support Services staff assisted branch staff to deliver the Get Online Week program. The focus of the week was to invite the community to build digital skills and confidence by participating in the Aussie Bird Count. The event is supported by the Good Things Foundation with small grants of \$1,000 awarded to eleven of our 13 sites to support the delivery of the program through covering staff costs and participation incentive prizes such as bird books and a Samsung tablet.

The Summer Reading Challenge kicked off on the first of December. This is aimed at encouraging young people aged up to 18 to continue reading and build strong reading and library habits over the extended summer school break. Each Area is offering a Samsung Tablet as an incentive to participate and promote the online library. The Challenge runs from December 1, 2023, through to January 24, 2024.

This quarter was a time of change for staffing arrangements for the Support Services team with three staff on extended leave as they transition to retirement, one staff member on leave without pay to explore opportunities and build skills, and two staff resigning. This has created challenges as staff transitioning to retirement and on leave without pay cannot be permanently recruited until their positions are finalised. In some cases, this has created slower response times and less capacity to progress projects. The remaining team members and temporary staff are managing exceptionally well under the circumstances, and it is a testament to the team's effectiveness and efficiency.

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Byron Area
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2nd Quarter
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Byron Area

Quarter: 2nd Quarter | October to December 2023

Prepared by: Byron Area Librarian, Stacey Shepherd

INTRODUCTION

The following service level agreement (SLA) report details quarterly progress for the Byron Area Libraries. The report is presented in two parts; Part 1: Service Level Agreement Target Performance, which details progress against quarterly reportable SLA targets; and Part 2: Additional Commentary, which provides an account of library activities for the quarter based on the key themes defined in the RTRL Strategic Plan, along with commentary for Support Services and Mobile Library activities. Progress against all SLA targets will be reported in the RTRL Annual Report.

To realise RTRL strategic outcomes, SLAs define targets to be achieved in relation to the six RTRL cost drivers:

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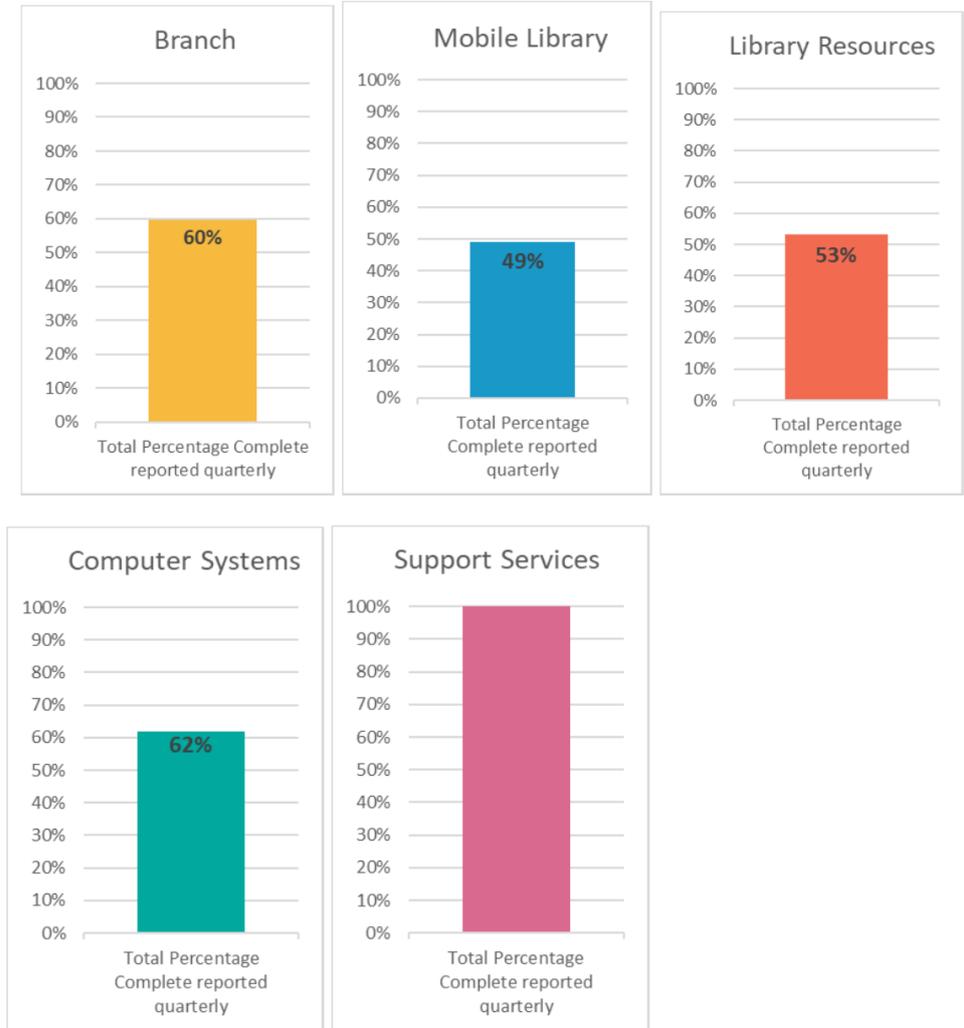
- Collections
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- Spaces
- Library Team
- Sustainability

PART 1:

Service Level Agreement Target Performance

Target Performance Dashboard

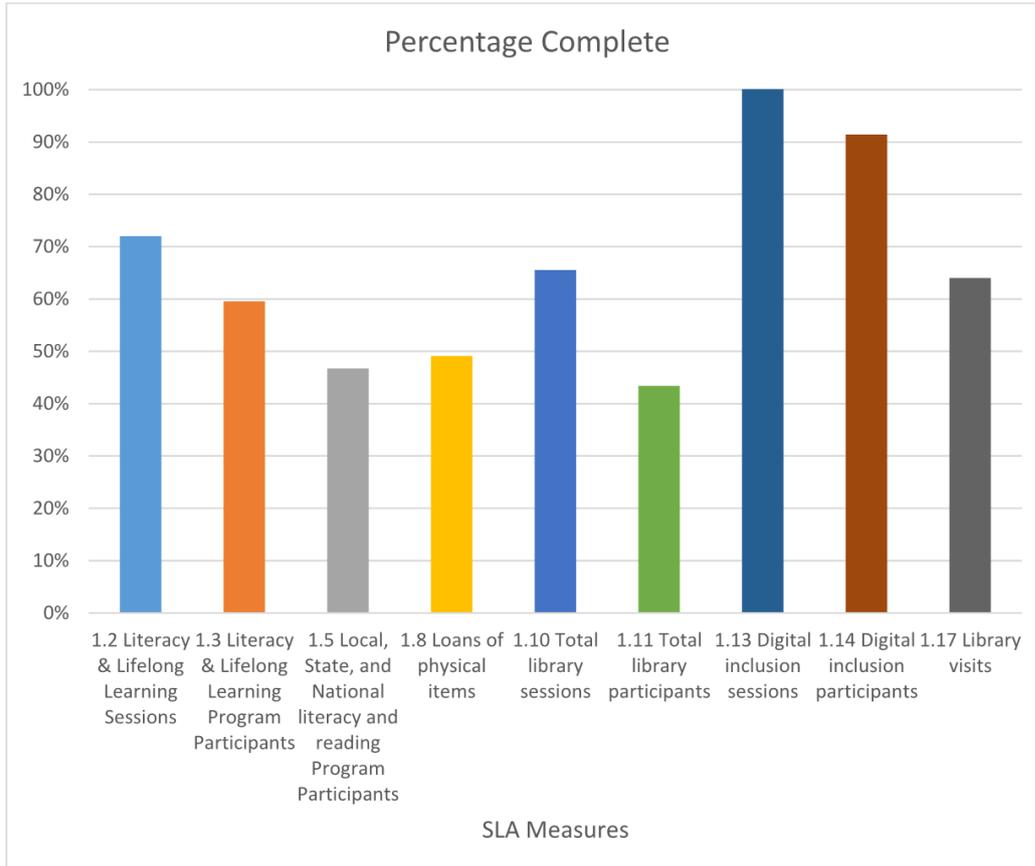
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Branch



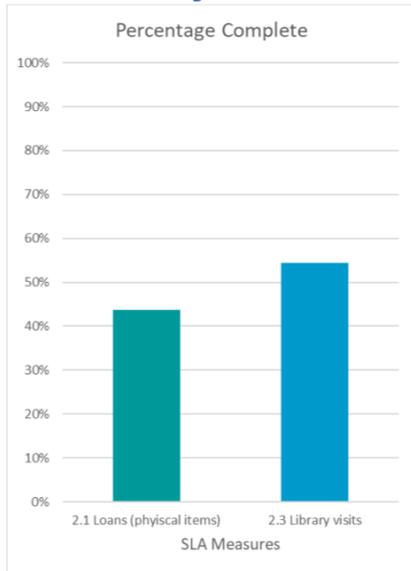
Branch SLA targets are varied at the end of the second quarter.

1.2 Literacy and Lifelong Learning sessions have a positive variation, this is due to the significant impact that Children’s Book Week has early in the financial year.

1.13 Digital inclusion sessions are exceeding target due to our grant funded 1:1 support program being scheduled early in the financial year. Additionally, Byron Area was successful with grant funding to provide a digital literacy program for children which has continued to be available this quarter.

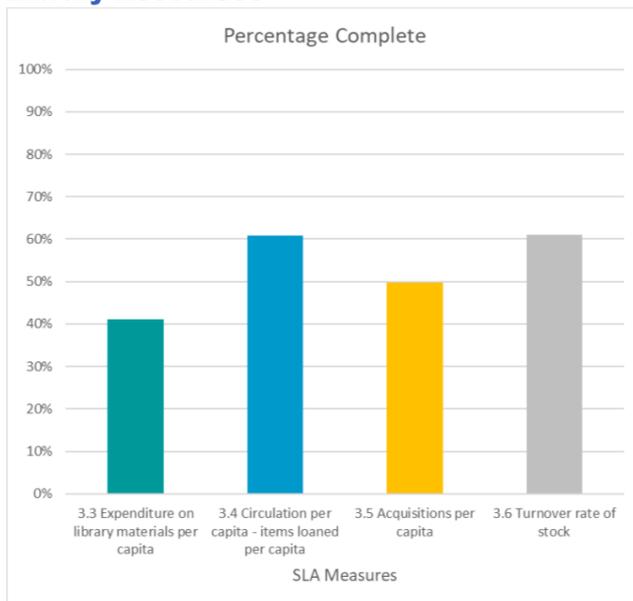
1.14 The grant funding mentioned previously has supported extra digital inclusion provisions across a wide range of ages. This has supported a positive variation in digital inclusion participants.

Mobile Library



2.1 Mobile Library loans reflect a 13.48% decrease compared with the same quarter in the previous financial year. While 2.3 was slightly higher than KPI's.

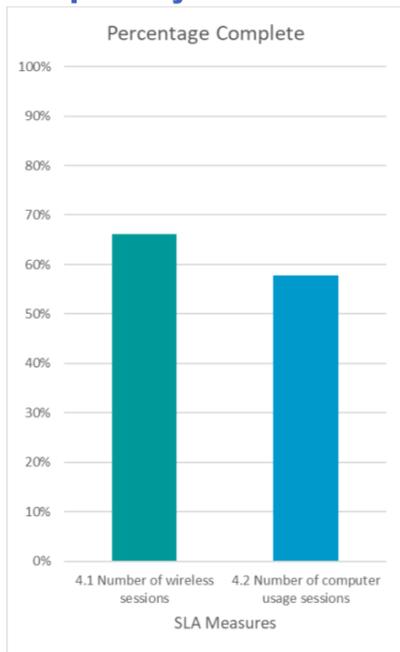
Library Resources



Library Resources SLA targets are tracking positively at the end of the second quarter.

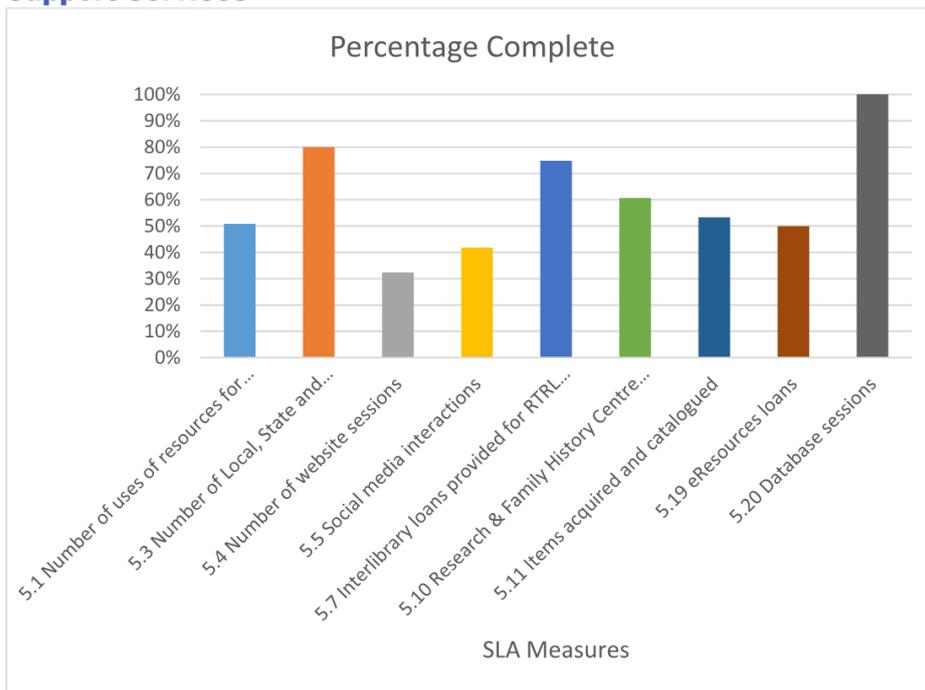
3.3 Expenditure on library materials per capita is showing a minor negative variation this is due to the capture including the resources that are expended but not confirmed (pre order) items.

Computer Systems



Computer SLA targets are tracking/exceeding targets.

Support Services



SLA targets at the end of this quarter are primarily positive.

5.3 Target higher for the quarter due to the majority of programs occurring in this quarter.

5.4 Website usage sessions remain lower than anticipated this quarter. This could be due to the continued increase in face-to-face service access rather than online. This target may need to be reconsidered for the 24/25 SLA

5.20 Database sessions target needs to be revised in next year's SLA. Currently the target is set at 25,000. The target should be increased to around 250,000 based on the current trajectory.

Part 2: Additional Commentary

The following provides an account of activities undertaken at the Ballina Area Libraries in the quarter. Commentary is provided based on the six key strategic plan themes, along with Support Services and the Mobile Library.

Collections

Overall, loans have increased by 5.5% compared to same quarter in the previous financial year. The collection has had a moderate increase in size by 3%. A budget adjustment of \$8,600 brought forward to the current financial year resource budget took place this quarter. Branch profile statistics 2022/23 have been evaluated to make decisions on allocation of this amount. Adult non-fiction is the largest collection in Byron Area, making up 24.97% of the stock and 15.91% of our area loans. Post COVID-19 lockdowns ANF loans are now trending upwards.

43.35% of the Byron Area ANF collection is less than 5 years old, although this meets the National target (40-45% purchased within the past 5 years APLA/ALIA standards and guidelines for Australian Public Libraries). Essentially, an allocation to ANF fund lines would enhance the work towards a higher percentage of this collection as recently purchased. Effectively supporting the current increase in loans and ANF collection turnover. ANF has a high purchase cost compared to other collection materials. Further to this, previous financial year budget adjustments have supported a replenishment of LPF, JF, JNF and YF. Subsequently, LPF and JF now have standing orders supporting purchasing.

Collection HQ evidence-based data reflects an aging travel collection consisting of outdated information, consequently, an outcome of the previous COVID-19 travel limitations and tourism industry shifts. Additionally, issue trend reports define an increase in borrowing from this collection since October 2022. As a result, a Standing Order (S/O) has been placed with James Bennett Library Supplier. The S/O is a full plan, Lonely Planet Country, and Regional Guides, distributing to Byron Bay (40%), Mullumbimby (30%) and Brunswick Heads (30%). The S/O will support efficient purchasing of current information and support information, discovery and loans within the Adult Non-Fiction collection. The strategy will be evaluated each financial year to track expenditure, number of titles and loans as relevant to our demographical requirements.

Community Participation

Friends of the Libraries Byron Shire (FOL) financially supported the purchasing of the new, Brunswick Heads circulation desk. The official unveiling of the desk was held Thursday, 14 December with members of FOL in attendance along with family of the late Margaret Thurecht (donation via bequest). The morning tea was funded by the FOL and accompanied by speeches from Margaret's daughter, FOL, the Branch Supervisor and Byron Area Librarian.

The Byron Area Librarian attends monthly Friends of the Library meetings to provide the Librarian's report. Updates on partnered programs are provided and proposals to support the library are discussed. This quarter FOL consider engagement of FOL members to support expansion of the Home Library Service to Mullumbimby and Brunswick Heads. Also, a sponsorship for a new community junior book club was proposed along with ideas to fund future technology provisions at both Brunswick Heads and Mullumbimby Libraries. Both the Byron Area Librarian and former Regional Manager Lucy Kinsley attended the FOL Christmas lunch at Bangalow Heritage House.

The community exhibitions spaces held works from local community groups, artists, and individuals. This quarter local artist Sam Sosnowski exhibited a series of works for 3 months. An in-conversation event was held in conjunction with the community display by the artist and attended by 32 people. The event highlights the importance of flexible library spaces and the contribution as a community entity to social and economic opportunity. Library visits are up by 19.23% this quarter.

Learning & Creating

An NBNco community engagement representative toured the libraries this quarter. The sessions provided slideshow and discussions regarding internet, connectivity issues and wi-fi optimization,

along with scams awareness and individual network troubleshooting. The sessions support a community rebuilding from floods and highlight provisions for facilitating local services in our libraries. Other digital inclusion programs for the public included participation in *Get Online Week (GOW)*. Talks from Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) were streamed in the branches along with displays and advocacy to join the 2023 Aussie Bird Count using an app in conjunction to GOW.

Home Library Service made an average of 14 deliveries per month in the Byron Bay Area to members of the community who cannot attend the physical service due to age, illness, or disability. Mullumbimby Library supported 1 Housebound community resident each month. The Byron Area Librarian is currently investigating the expansion of the Home Library Service to both Mullumbimby and Brunswick Heads central areas as we strive to extend the reach of our library service into the community.

The branches facilitated a school holiday program during October school holidays. A LEGO program in partnership with 'Clicking Bricks' provided a professional LEGO museum space along with a freestyle building room. A children's band showcased music and dance, there was also jelly printing, origami and stop motion animation, a digital inclusion program for kids.

Library Team

Richmond Tweed Regional Library (RTRL) celebrated 50 years of service from the month of November. Photos and memorabilia were displayed of the libraries and communities, with a staff and Friends of The Libraries function held at the Ballina RSL on Sunday, 12 November 2022.

Branch Supervisors attended an annual planning meeting with the Byron Area Librarian in October. The agenda focused on program and service aims in conjunction with the Service Level Agreement. Evaluations on current digital service programs were presented and documented to support future decisions along with collection management decisions related to Standing Orders. Subsequently, in early December branches held quarterly planning meetings with branch staff for the purpose of mapping out planning and implementation ideas, and responsibilities over the next three months. Staff used the Community Engagement Programming Calendar as a basis for planning.

The Byron Area Librarian attended training for the new Spydus BI reporting module. The module supports automated reports in the daily harvesting of data and aims to support Area Librarians through efficient/current data compilation. This replaces Collection HQ tools currently used.

Six staff completed training on application design specific to page layout and social media. The session supported marketing and design responsibilities for library professionals. Presented by Niche Academy, basic concepts on formatting and image editing were sought.

One staff member is working under flexible working conditions for 12 months. This has provided a short-term opportunity for a 10-month part-time contract. The successful applicant is a casual staff member who has just completed a certificate in Library and Information Services and will participate in training opportunities specific to library programs and services.

Sustainability

Ongoing Book Sales were present, with the Byron Branch holding a larger sale during the school holidays to raise funds for programs and activities. Items donated from 1-2-3 Read 2 me campaign were added to the Mullumbimby and Brunswick Heads branches at the discretion of the Branch Technicians. Brunswick Heads Library launched a Seed Library. The program is supported by a small community grant, received from the Learning for a Better World Trust. The grant opportunity funded through the National Backyard Cricket Association is an opportunity to support a sustainable community during rises in the cost of living, while establishing social connections. This is a borrow, grow, return community initiative and Shara Boulevard Community Gardens have joined the partnership.

Spaces

Brunswick Heads Library closed from Tuesday, 17 October – Wednesday, 25 October for the works and installation of a new circulation desk and display shelving. The works included two new modular service desks to support customer service provisions as well as custom designed shelving to support staff processes. The project included new carpet tiles in the area, a new purpose fit trolley and ergonomic chair to support a flexible frontline/administrative space for both staff and customers. External concrete at the front and eastern side of Brunswick Heads Library was pressure cleaned

and the branch was installed with a new security duress button at the front counter. The entry way into Mullumbimby Library was updated to remove the mats. Works were carried out to ensure level flooring after an incident occurred where a member of the community tripped. Mullumbimby Library also had their carpets cleaned during the December holiday closure and both Mullumbimby and Brunswick Heads branches had data and electrical points installed for the installation of new stand-alone Monitor Kiosks to complement the existing print management system. The air conditioning unit at Byron Library has been working at half capacity this Summer, as reported by Northern Air. The issue will hopefully be resolved when a new part is installed.

Mobile Library

Bangalow and Suffolk Park continue to be growth areas. With the Mobile Library's ability to bring the joy of reading and literacy directly to the smaller Byron communities, the Mobile Library is cherished by its patrons and the wider community. More than just a distribution of literature, it acts as a meeting place. The Oct-Dec Quarterlies are consistent and show that this highly valued community asset is well patronized and loved.

Overall, this invaluable tool promotes literacy, enriches lives and epitomizes the significance of Libraries in fostering a powerful sense of community.

Not discounting the many children's programs, November was International Games Month. The fun that was had, both children and older folk, caused an extension to continue through December. Some of these stats were not captured because the fun was held outside the Mobile Library in a shade tent unsupervised.

Star-Link has arrived on the Mobile Library. After some teething issues, we have a first-class connectivity to the internet. The Mobile library will now work towards providing Free Wi-Fi and public PC access.

The Mobile Library was well represented at RTRL 50th anniversary Celebrations, held at the Ballina RSL in November, by both past and present Mobile Library operators

Support Services

It was a busy quarter for promoting library services and celebrating important events with our communities. Promotional support and material was provided for Indyreads Summer Book Club, author talks such as Judy Nunn and Fleur McDonald, as well as keeping the community update with a monthly online newsletter that is sent to approximately 41,000 subscribers.

RTRL celebrated the 50th anniversary of the signing of the first agreement between member councils for the shared delivery of public library services in November. Celebrations and events were held across the region.

Support Services staff assisted branch staff to deliver the Get Online Week program. The focus of the week was to invite the community to build digital skills and confidence by participating in the Aussie Bird Count. The event is supported by the Good Things Foundation with small grants of \$1,000 awarded to eleven of our 13 sites to support the delivery of the program through covering staff costs and participation incentive prizes such as bird books and a Samsung tablet.

The Summer Reading Challenge kicked off on the first of December. Aimed at encouraging young people aged up to age 18 to continue reading and build strong reading and library habits of the extended summer school break. Each Area is offering a Samsung Tablet as an incentive to participate and promote the online library. The Challenge runs from December 1 2023 through January 24, 2024.

This quarter was a time of change for staffing arrangements for the Support Services team with three staff on extended leave as they transition to retirement, one staff member on leave without pay to explore opportunities and build skills, two staff resigned. This has created staffing challenges as staff transitioning to retirement and leave without pay cannot be permanently recruited until their positions are finalized. In some cases this has created slower response times and less capacity to progress projects. The remaining team members, and temporary staff are managing exceptionally well under the circumstances and it is a testament to the team effectiveness and efficiency.

Richmond Tweed Regional Library
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Richmond Tweed Regional Library
Lismore Area
Quarterly Service Level Agreement
Progress Report
2nd Quarter
October to December 2023



Richmond Tweed Regional Library acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we work

Lismore Area

Quarter: 2nd Quarter | October to December 2023

Prepared by: Lismore Area Librarian, Michael Lewis

INTRODUCTION

The following service level agreement (SLA) report details quarterly progress for the Lismore Area Libraries. The report is presented in two parts; Part 1: Service Level Agreement Target Performance, which details progress against quarterly reportable SLA targets; and Part 2: Additional Commentary, which provides an account of library activities for the quarter based on the key themes defined in the RTRL Strategic Plan, along with commentary for Support Services and Mobile Library activities. Progress against all SLA targets will be reported in the RTRL Annual Report.

To realise RTRL strategic outcomes, SLAs define targets to be achieved in relation to the six RTRL cost drivers:

- Branch
- Mobile Library
- Library Resources
- Computer Systems
- Support Services
- Member Council

Quarterly progress against these targets is provided in this report.

RTRL Strategic Plan



The primary strategic outcomes RTRL works toward are:

- We champion and support literacy and the joy of reading
- We continue to extend the reach of our library services into the community
- We provide accessible engaging spaces at the heart of the community
- We support and provide inclusive collections, programs and services that inspire learning and creating
- We support and encourage active participation in the digital world
- Our staff are engaged, knowledgeable, responsive, and friendly
- We provide anywhere, anytime access through the virtual library

The Strategic Plan is focussed around six key themes in which RTRL delivers services to the community:

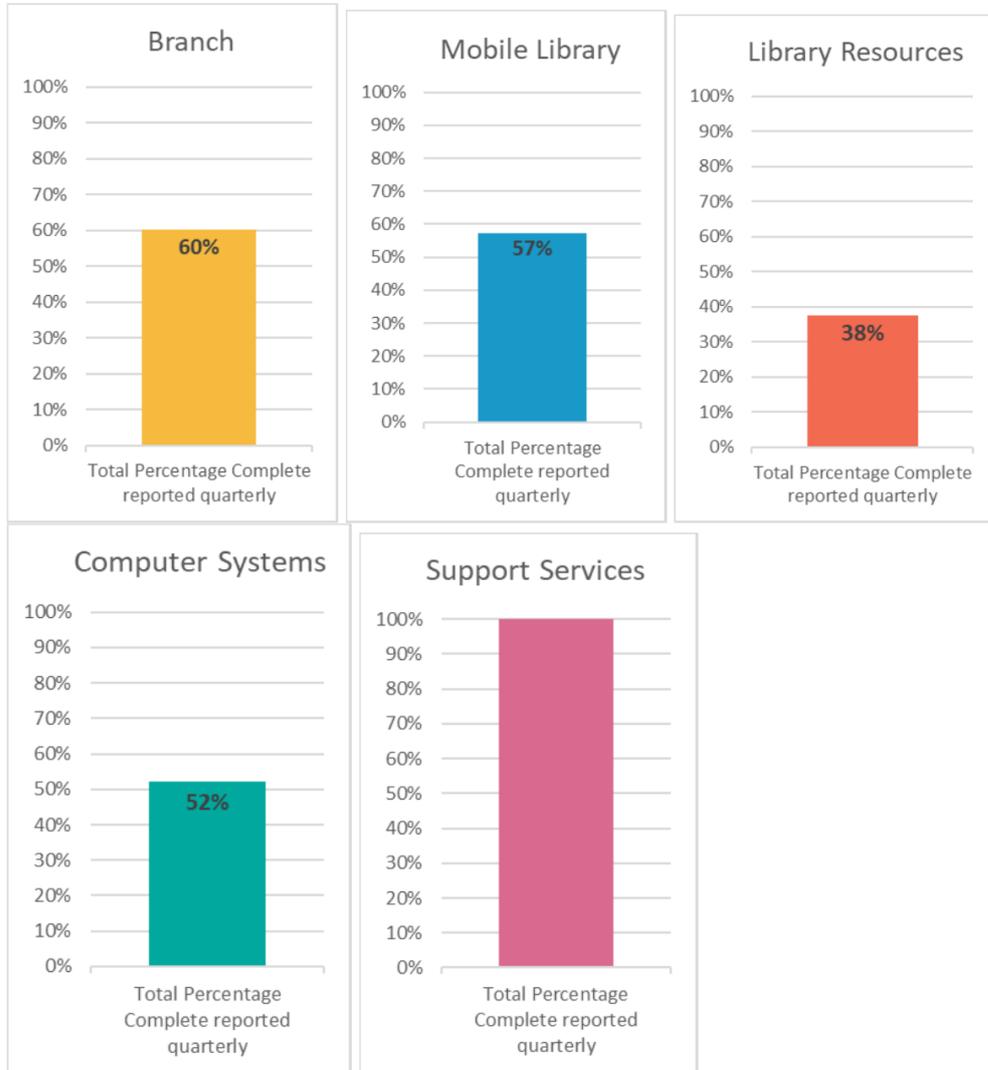
- Collections
- Community Participation
- Learning & Creating
- Spaces
- Library Team
- Sustainability

PART 1:

Service Level Agreement Target Performance

Target Performance Dashboard

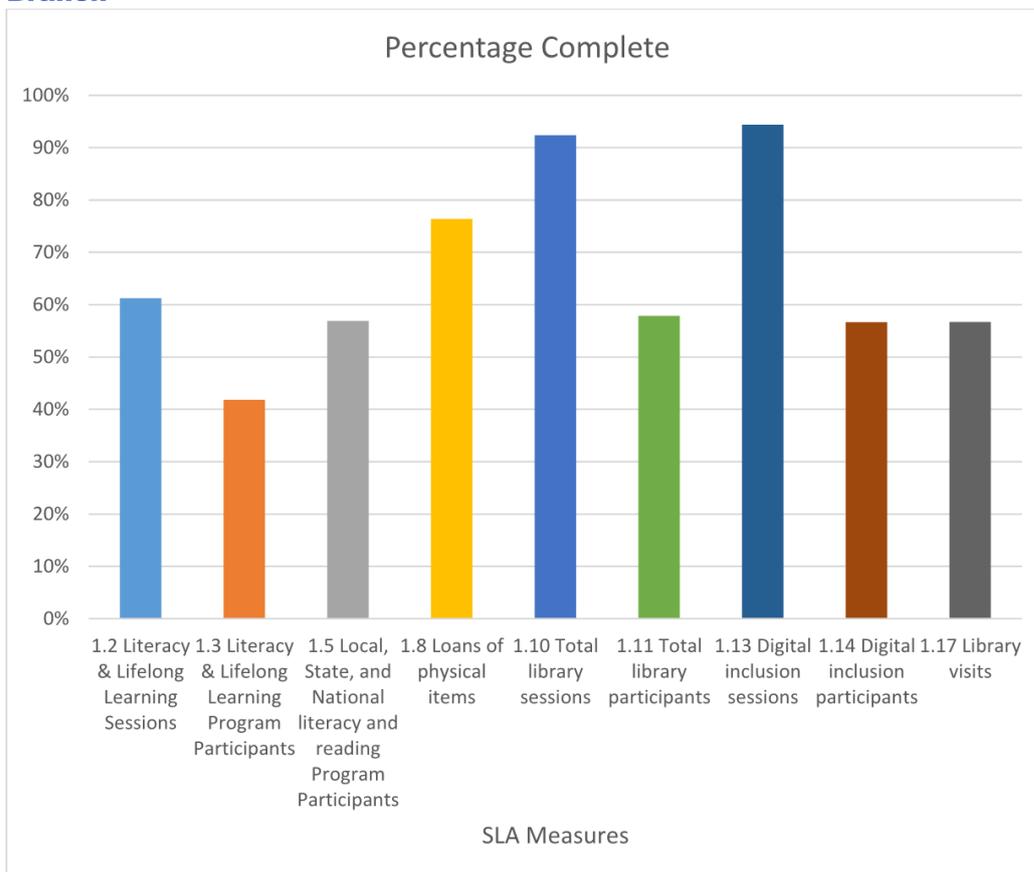
The following dashboard graphs provide a snapshot of overall progress toward targets for the whole year. Detailed breakdowns and commentary for each graph is provided in the following pages in the Detailed Commentary section.



Detailed Commentary

The following graphs and commentary provide detail for progress against targets for each individual measure. Target reporting is cumulative over a year. This report is for the second quarter, therefore targets can be expected to be around 50% of the total annual target. Any large positive or negative variations will be highlighted and discussed.

Branch

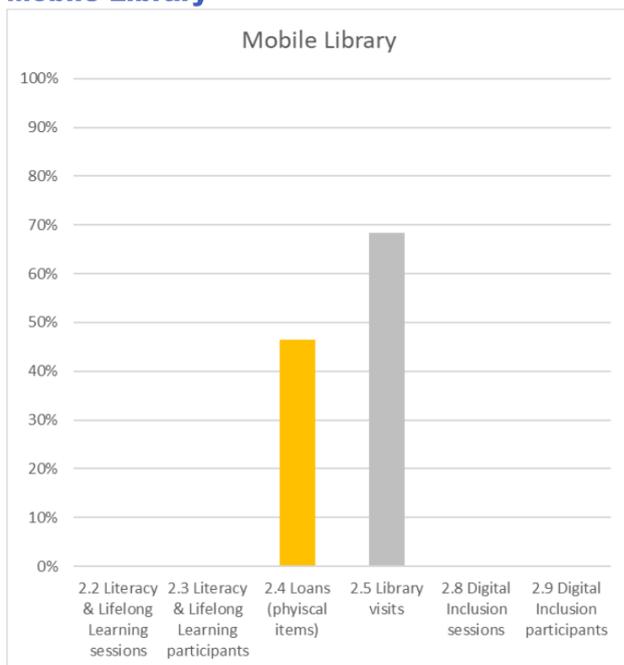


1.2 and 1.3 Session stats are higher than participant stats have some discrepancy. This is due to a high number of attendees not making it to one-on-one tech lessons. A process is being implemented to reduce this impact.

1.17 Library visits do not include the Children’s Library, due to a now resolved issue with the door counter software at the site. Visitation for this period was 2,889 people.

1.8 Loans measurements show excellent growth.

Mobile Library

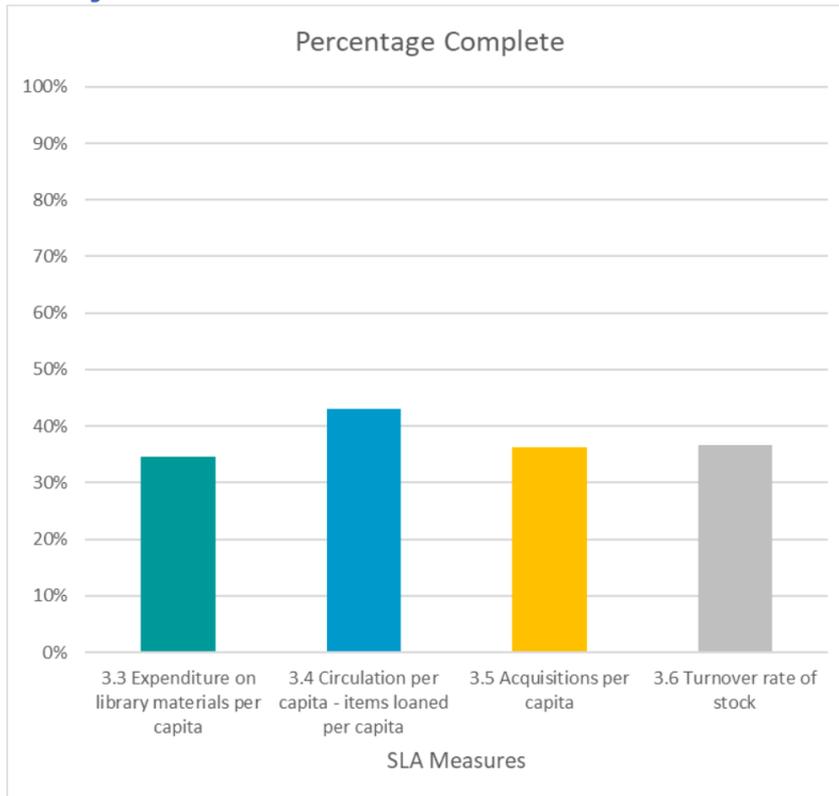


The Mobile Library is a beloved and highly valued community asset, known for its steady results and more importantly, its community-oriented approach. With its ability to bring the joy of reading and learning directly to the communities its services, the Mobile Library is cherished by both young and old alike.

Stocking for the vastly different communities remains a challenge, with such a small collection. But acting as more than just a distribution of literature. The Mobile Library, like the static libraries, are gathering places for lifelong connections, shared interests / curiosities and or quiet escape areas.

The Mobile Library consistent results through the Oct-Dec Quarter show that this loved community tool is catering to both the individuals and the wide community.

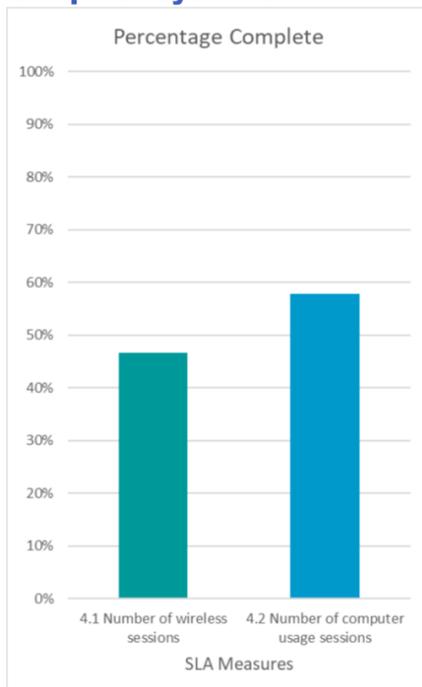
Library Resources



Library resources are performing better than previous quarter. Purchasing of new stock has offset in the reduction in donations being added to the library collection.

Purchasing is also being reduced in anticipation of expanding the collection for the reopening of the main Lismore Library branch.

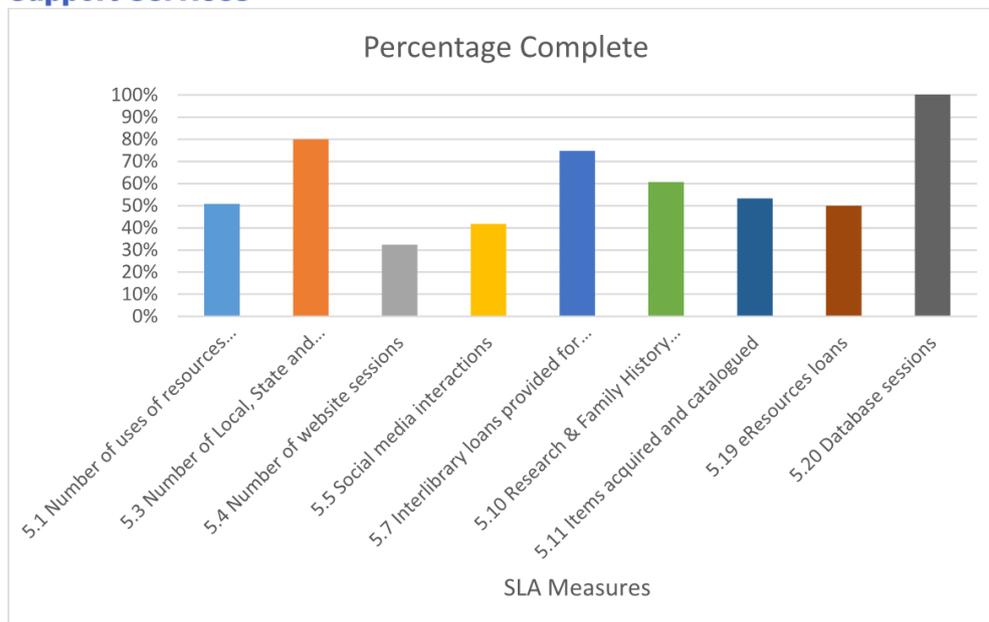
Computer Systems



4.2 Computer system's outcomes are in line with targets.

4.1 Wireless sessions have grown due to more seating and study spaces at Lismore Pop-Up Library.

Support Services



SLA targets at the end of this quarter are primarily positive.

5.3 Target higher for the quarter due to the majority of programs occurring in this quarter.

5.4 Website usage sessions remain lower than anticipated this quarter. This could be due to the continued increase in face-to-face service access rather than online. This target may need to be reconsidered for the 24/25 SLA

5.20 Database sessions target needs to be revised in next year's SLA. Currently the target is set at 25,000. The target should be increased to around 250,000 based on the current trajectory.

Part 2: Additional Commentary

The following provides an account of activities undertaken at the Ballina Area Libraries in the quarter. Commentary is provided based on the six key strategic plan themes, along with Support Services and the Mobile Library.

Collections

The dyslexia friendly collection at the Children's Library has received positive feedback and increased use. In response, the library has doubled its collection of dyslexia font, and decodable readers to meet demand.

The Children's Library curated a new collection of picture book titles that support Social and Emotional Learning. These titles support emotional and social development, including social behaviours, emotional regulation, and awareness, developing healthy identities and relationships.

The Lismore Pop-Up Library expanded its collections further after the children's section was removed.

Community Participation

Lismore Library with the Mobile Library attended the Lismore Show. Staff and the Mobile Library participated in the parade, and had displays of free books for the Lismore community, and the Mobile Library was on display for showgoers to see. The library with the support of 123 Read2Me gave away 49 boxes of children's books. This is over 1,000 books moving into Lismore families.

Goonellabah Library partnered with BeConnected and Bird Life Australia to deliver sessions on digital literacy and engaged seniors to participate in the Aussie Bird Count via its app, and the new skills they received at the training.

The Lismore StoryWalk visited The Channon School, with both the primary and preschool in attendance with a special visit by the author and illustrator of the story. The walk was on display on the school grounds for two weeks. The StoryWalk has been very popular, and staff are considering a roadshow approach for 2024.

The Red Inc Choir singing choir visited the Lismore Social Circle to celebrate Christmas, with carol singing and games.

The Lismore Library attended the Lismore Delights and Merry markets end of year events. The library held a stall with free children's books, and volunteers on hand to wrap the books as gifts. The library also provided a public storytelling experience with local author Leanne Logan, and hosted activities and games for children to play.

Learning & Creating

Lismore Library partnered with Lismore District Financial Counselling Service to deliver a small series of financial literacy sessions. The attendance to these events was small, which has resulted in the library and counselling service working towards online financial literacy videos, and additional information in the library branch to support community members undergoing financial hardship.

Lismore Children's Library delivered a number of events celebrating Christmas. The library also partnered with Lismore Central Shopping Centre to host a local Santa Claus at the early childhood programs. These events were very well received, with members commenting on the library being a fun engaging space.

Library Team

The Lismore team started online timesheets this quarter and participated in training with people and culture. The Lismore team was the first part of the RTRL roll out, and the transition has been successful. This approach to timesheets has greatly reduced the time spent on timesheet practices, and the elementTIME platform provides staff and supervisors with quick access to leave and shift information.

Sustainability

Elementtime online timesheets introduced to the Lismore team this quarter. Lismore Library was successful in obtaining \$3,500 for events in the NSW Seniors Festival and Youth Week in 2024.

Spaces

Lismore Children's Library received new shelving this quarter. This shelving has enabled staff to expand the collection, and also provide greater spaces for families to read and play.

Goonellabah Library received replacement shelving from Murwillumbah Library who recently refurbished, as well as additional tables and chairs. The updated shelving has been well received at Goonellabah, with many members noting the fresh, modern look, and available room to move around the library itself. The addition of new tables and chairs has increased the number of study spaces too.

Lismore Library received its replacement circulation desk this quarter. The desk has been well received by the community and staff, with many members commenting that the desk has improved their visit experience, and staff feel more confident with the service they are providing.

The Lismore Community book swap was expanded this quarter from the shelving at the Children's Library. Lismore Central Shopping Centre continue to provide the library with positive feedback on the number of traffic the book swap brings to the center.

Mobile Library

Star-Link has arrived on the Mobile Library! After a period of go-stop-go issues, our internet is proving to be first class. We will now move forward with free wi-fi for our patrons and stalling public PC.

Together with the Mobile Libraries children services being well patronized, November saw international games month. The games saw all ages of folk playing the different board or static games available. It was such a success we extended the fun through December.

The Mobile Library was well represented at RTRL 50th anniversary Celebrations, held at the Ballina RSL in November, by both past and present Mobile Library operators.

Support Services

It was a busy quarter for promoting library services and celebrating important events with our communities. Promotional support and material was provided for Indyreads Summer Book Club, author talks such as Judy Nunn and Fleur McDonald, as well as keeping the community update with a monthly online newsletter that is sent to approximately 41,000 subscribers.

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Tweed Area
Quarterly Service Level Agreement
Progress Report
2nd Quarter
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Tweed Area

Quarter: 2nd Quarter | October to December 2023

Prepared by: Tweed Area Librarian, Karen Joc

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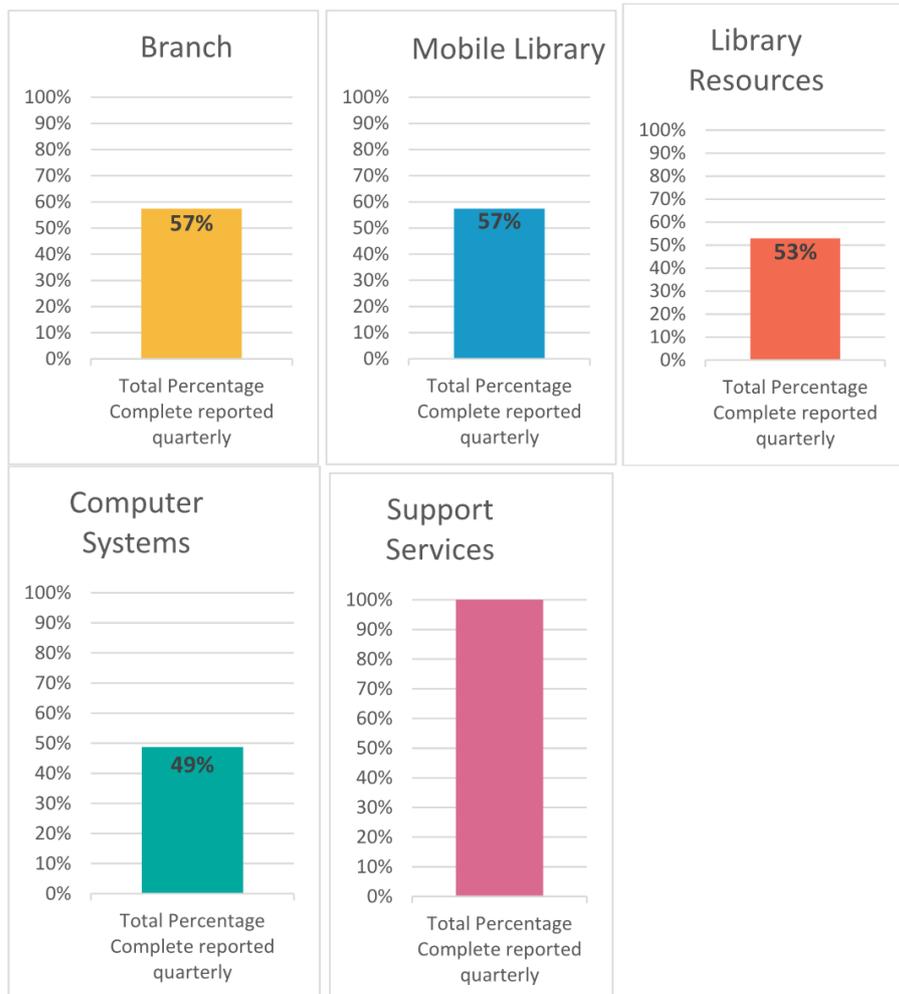
- Collections
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- Spaces
- Library Team
- Sustainability

PART 1:

Service Level Agreement Target Performance

Target Performance Dashboard

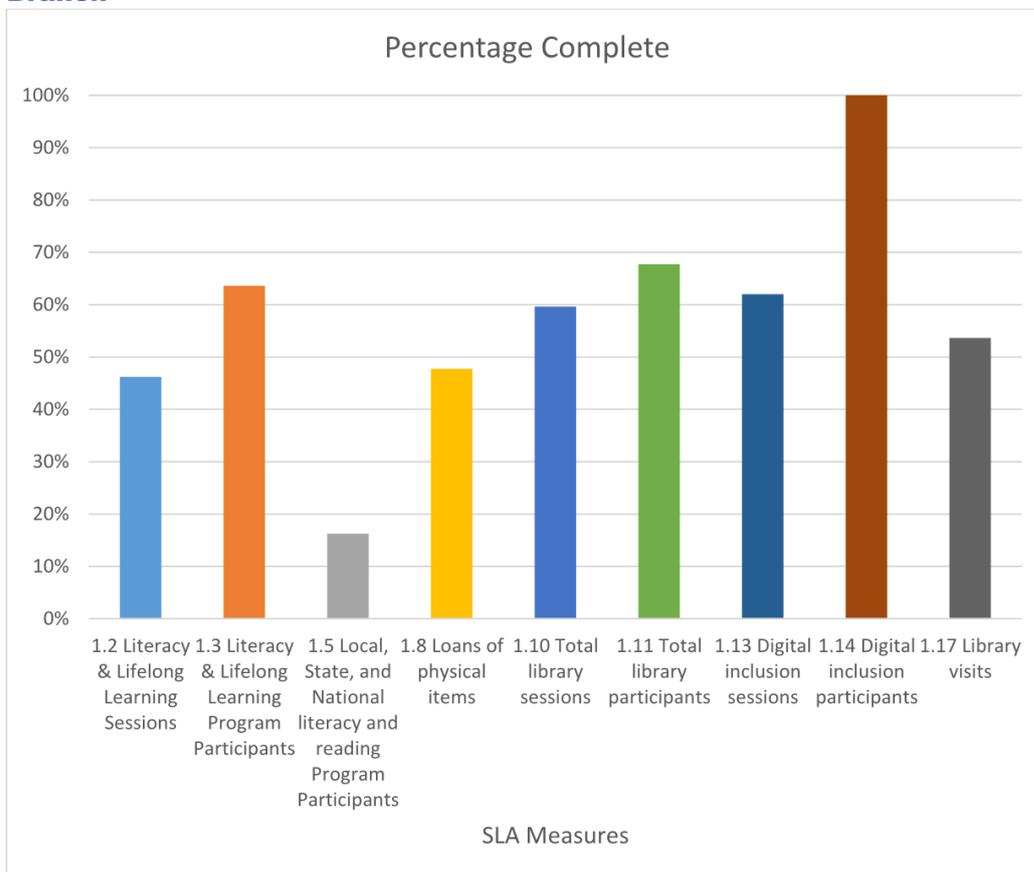
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Branch



1.2 and 1.3 Literacy and Lifelong learning sessions are above target for this quarter which is excellent despite the 8-week closure of Kingscliff library this quarter.

1.5 Some Local, State and Nation literacy and reading Program Participants statistics were not collected in time for the report, showing a negative variation. These will be input in the next quarterly report.

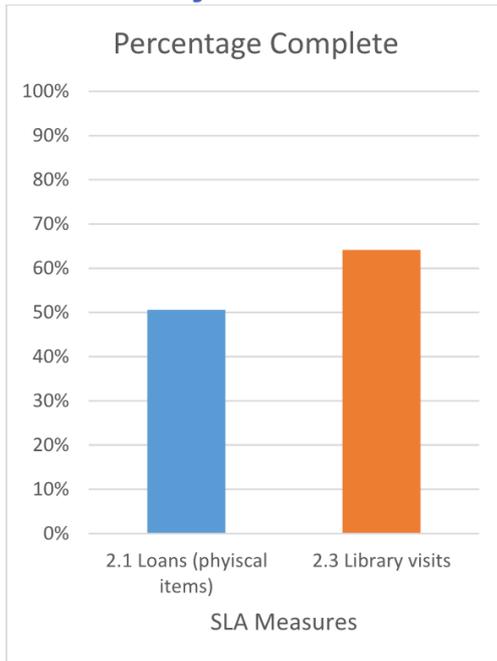
1.8 Despite the closure of Kingscliff library on 6th November, loans are still on target for this quarter which is wonderful to see. We believe this is due to all the displays the staff have been doing throughout the last three months.

1.10 and 1.11 Both well above target for this quarter, which is also great, we believe this is due to a wider range of programs being offered during our school holidays which better catered to our communities' different interests, and needs. We have also added to our regular programming at Murwillumbah with a chess club for school aged students and have introduced 4D Storytime at Tweed Heads library.

1.14 Participation in Digital inclusion sessions are also above target, this is due to Tweed Heads Library starting their “be connected, building digital program” which takes place every Thursday. This program has recently started at Murwillumbah library and will be starting at Kingscliff library in February 2024.

1.17 Library visits are also meeting target this quarter.

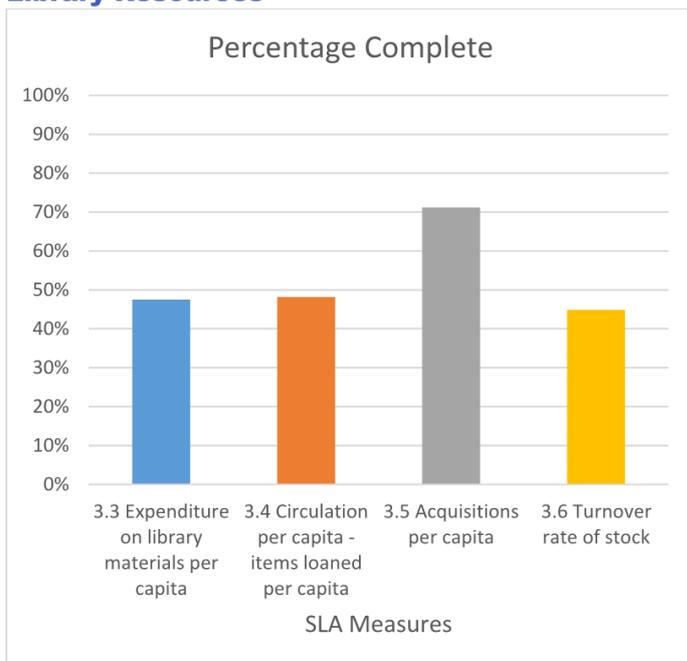
Mobile Library



The Mobile Library fosters a sense of community togetherness that encourages access to, as close as possible, the services and resources that the folks in our static Libraries can access. Our children's programs are always a hit, November Games month – saw all ages playing board and static games throughout Nov and carried over to the end of Dec.

The Mobile Library consistent results through the Oct – Dec Quarter, show that this beloved and highly valued community asset is well patronized and hitting the mark. Its commitment to cater to both individuals and the wider community, sometimes incredibly challenging due to the vast difference in the areas social / affluent differences and the small collection, ensures inclusivity with its patrons. Overall, this community tool promotes literacy, enriches lives outside the reach of static libraries and is cherished.

Library Resources



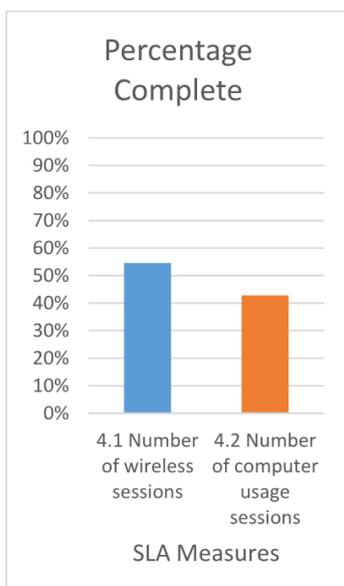
All SLA targets are meeting expectations at the end of the 2nd Quarter.

3.3 Expenditure of library resources per capita is just below target across the Tweed Area as we are not buying everything through an external supplier but locally within the Tweed Area and those resources do not show in Spydus. By buying locally, we can have the books for our customers at the same time as big stores like Big W.

3.5 Aquisitions per capita if above target and reflects those items procured locally.

3.6 Our turnover of stock for this quarter is slightly below target, which is expected due to the 8-week closure of Kingscliff library with all items being unavailable for customers to request due to being in storage off site.

Computer Systems



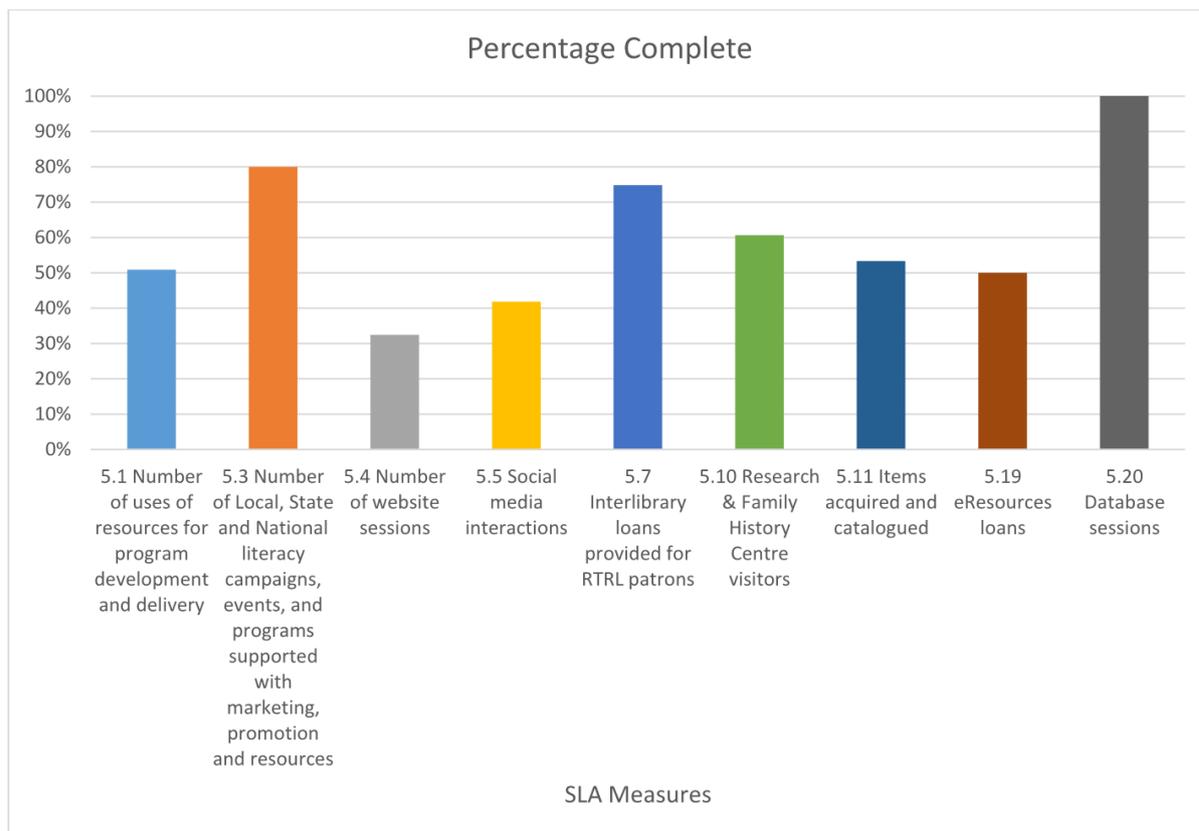
SLA targets are primarily positive at the end of the 2nd Quarter.

The Tweed Area did not experience as many outages this quarter with both our print management system/PC reservations system.

4.1 Wireless sessions are above target for this quarter, which is excellent as Kingscliff was closed for 8 weeks during this quarter, and at Tweed Heads Library we have change our Wi-Fi hours to same as our business hours to reduce attendance of rough sleepers.

4.2 PC Usage is slightly under target this quarter, however, many of our customers now bring their own devices. Closures at Murwillumbah due to the refurbishment project have also contributed to this result.

Support Services



SLA targets at the end of this quarter are primarily positive.

5.3 Target higher for the quarter due to the majority of programs occurring in this quarter.

5.4 Website usage sessions remain lower than anticipated this quarter. This could be due to the continued increase in face-to-face service access rather than online. This target may need to be reconsidered for the 24/25 SLA

5.20 Database sessions target needs to be revised in next year’s SLA. Currently the target is set at 25,000. The target should be increased to around 250,000 based on the current trajectory.

Part 2: Additional Commentary

Collections

With the success of the Manga/Graphic novel collection at Tweed Heads library, we will be introducing this collection to the newly refurbished Kingscliff Library which is reopening in January 2024. This collection will focus on the top 10 Manga series as well as some series that have been made into tv series. This collection will be housed in a separate area like the collection at Tweed Heads Library.

Whilst Kingscliff library was closed for refurbishment, all items have been returned to Tweed Head's library and then transferred to the storage facility at Tweed Head which is currently holding all of Kingscliff Library.

Tweed Heads Library did a complete back shelving of its fiction collection, so the collection was more evenly spread out and more suitable for customers browsing.

New Reservations Shelving was installed at Murwillumbah library and so was a new Mobile Magazine stand as part of the refurbishment project.

Community Participation

Across the three locations there were 46 Baby time sessions with 734 attendees and 57 Story Times programs with 632 attendees. The Discovery Room at Tweed Heads continued to be popular with 10 sessions taking place this quarter with 178 participants; so too was Yoga/Chair Yoga (18 sessions, 226 participants), Chess club 12 session with 117 participants, Crafty Mondays 11 sessions with 119 and Canasta, 86 participants.

Kingscliff library held 5 Crafternoons with 53 participants, while Murwillumbah held 6 craft sessions with 45 participants. The children's book club at Kingscliff met 3 times and had 12 attendees, Murwillumbah adults book club met 3 times and had 19 participants whilst the adult book club at Murwillumbah had 15 participants. The JP service was provided to 227 customers.

Murwillumbah Library introduced a new chess club for over 8's. This program has been well received so far hosting 6 sessions with 70 attendees.

In October, Tweed Heads Library introduced a new program called 4D Storytime which focuses on the 7 senses sight, smell, hearing, taste, touch, vestibular and proprioception, this program has been well received by the community attracting up to 66 participants per session.

Displays this quarter across the Tweed Area libraries included: October reading challenge - read a fantasy; November reading challenge - read a book with a blue cover; *Dec challenge - read a book set in summer; *classics; *TikTok; *Fleur McDonald books; Christmas; award winners, JF Spring display, Halloween, Book to the Future, Retro Reads, Deer me, it's Christmas!, and Judy Nunn.

Our local artists in residence for this quarter were Jenny Unwin, featuring abstracts and landscapes, Murwillumbah Potters and a local history of Murwillumbah digital images display.

Murwillumbah library also partnered with Friends of the Pound with a display featuring their services and resources for the community.

Home Library services were provided to 140 members and 3 institutions on 3 occasions this quarter. In December, all Home Library Service Customers received a holiday pack containing a bookmark, chocolate, and an activities book to keep them busy during the holiday period.

Our Summer Reading Challenge started in December this is an annual program to encourage reading over the summer holidays and library participation. Passive activities include Harry Potter Scavenger Hunt; word puzzles; reading.

Kingscliff Library has established a new partnership with Smiley Tots preschool hosting 1 visit this quarter with 15 attendees.

Story dogs' program at Kingscliff continues to be popular offering 10 sessions with 28 children attending.

Tweed Heads Library was a Pilot Library for an Aged Care Reform hub and provided help and support to seniors about the new aged care reforms in collaboration with the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care and ALIA (Australian Library and Information Association).

Blooms Hearing continues to hire the Quiet Room at Murwillumbah library fortnightly.

Learning & Creating

The school holiday activities were all well attended with 447 participants. Murwillumbah library hosted Bluey Storytime, Bop it Tots, Santa. Tweed Heads Library Hosted Bop it Tots Santa and Chris Harvey; Christmas Craft, Decorate your own library bay and pop-up star craft. Kingscliff Library also held chocolate bingo, Sand Art, and Megumi Japanese Art.

Murwillumbah Library hosted a Beeswax wrap workshop partnering with TSC and Newaste 25 attendees.

Murwillumbah Library also hosted 8 sessions for the U3A writers' group with 108 attendees.

Murwillumbah Library hosted 3 Procreate app classes with 24 participants, procreate is a raster graphics editor app for digital painting.

Murwillumbah Library hosted author Fleur McDonald in Conversation with Christine Betts about her book *Voices in the Dark* 30 attendees.

Julia Hancock is a well-known community member and founder of Uki Garden Club hosted an event at Murwillumbah Library with 25 attendees.

Tweed Heads Library hosted author Judy Nunn talking about her book *The Black Sheep* with 150 attendees.

Tweed Heads Library hosted author Rachael Johns talking about her book *Talk to the Heart* 43 attendees.

Kingscliff Library Hosted A Grandparents Story Time and Morning Tea with 8 Participants.

Get Online Week was celebrated at all three branches from 16-22 October 2023 with a focus on learning something new.

Library Team

A Library Assistant from the Tweed Area was successful in an EOI for the temporary vacancy of Branch Technician at Lennox Head library while the current incumbent was on leave.

In November, Kim Jaggars celebrated 20 years of Services with RTRL.

Richmond Tweed Regional Library (RTRL) celebrated 50 years of service from the month of November. Photos and memorabilia were displayed of the libraries and communities, with a staff and Friends of The Libraries function held at the Ballina RSL on Sunday, 12 November 2022.

The Tweed Area Librarian was invited to present her experience as a Librarian to the ALIA (Australian Library and Information Association) Mentorship Scheme in November.

Kingscliff Branch Technician attended a Romance Genre Webinar in October held by the State Library of NSW. Area Librarian continues to be a member of LCC Consultative Committee and attended 4 meetings via Teams. Two staff members from the Tweed Area attended Violence in the Workplace training at GSAC. While another two staff members attended Mental Health First Aide Training provided by LCC in November.

In October Tweed Heads Library Hosted Masters of Librarianship (Teacher Librarian) Charles Sturt University Student for two weeks.

In November Tweed Heads Library hosted several work placements for students from St Joseph's College and Lindisfarne.

In November Murwillumbah Library hosted two work placements for students from Lindisfarne and the Pacific Coast.

Sustainability

Richmond Tweed Regional Library
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A new large start TVs was installed in the Quiet room purchased as part of the SLNSW Public Library Infrastructure Grant. An additional mobile TV was purchased to support programs and digital display through our Backyard Cricket Grant for Murwillumbah Library.

The seed library continues to be popular with our community, there were 4098 loans this quarter.

In-house branch book sales continue at Tweed Heads and Murwillumbah libraries. Items donated from 1-2-3 Read 2 me campaign were added to the Kingscliff and Tweed Heads branches at the discretion of the Area Librarian and Branch Technicians.

Some of the shelving which was dismantled during the back shelving project at Tweed Heads library will be used in the Kingscliff Library Refurbishment project.

Spaces

The last quarter has been a hive of activity in the Tweed Branches with the completion of the Murwillumbah refurbishment project and new roof and the commencement of the Kingscliff Library refurbishment Project in the first week of November 2023.

Murwillumbah Library refurbishment focused on a new Children's Area including modern furniture and well-lit shelving, variety of seating options, booth tables. A new Quiet / Study space featuring modern furniture and various seating options as well as a large TV. The space is flexible to suit individual and group study as well as large events. Murwillumbah Foyer/new customer service desk, a new ergonomic customer service desk which meets accessibility standards was installed at Murwillumbah library; new hybrid flooring was installed in the foyer, old book case was removed and walls were painted and new A3 snap frames wall mounted in foyer for library promotions; new carpet installed in front desk area; The Express public PCs were relocated, to create more space for the 60-minute public PCs.

The TSC and APEX 50-year time capsules were removed from the Murwillumbah Library to an offsite location. Excavated area refilled and carpet replaced.

Kingscliff Library was closed for refurbishment – this project has been funded by the SLNSW Public Library Infrastructure Grant and involved knocking out all of the walls, installing a new customer services desk, a new children's area, a 4 person pod (meeting room) and some mobile shelving, the project is currently on time and on budget and we expect Kingscliff Library to reopen on Monday 8th January, 2024.

Mobile Library

Star-Link has arrived on the Mobile Library. After some go-stop-go issues, our internet is proving to be first class. We will now move forward with providing free Wi-Fi for our patrons and installing public use PC's.

Continues to meet the ever-growing KPI's in the Tweed area, with the love affair with the Mobile Library not showing any signs of abating. There are days where the Mobile Library's loan issues are only a few lower than the Tweed Library, which is massive, considering the service is provided with only two staff.

The Mobile Library was well represented at RTRL 50th anniversary Celebrations, held at the Ballina RSL in November, by both past and present Mobile Library operators.

It is in demand; Our list keeps growing, of places that ask for a Mobile Library visit.

Support Services

It was a busy quarter for promoting library services and celebrating notable events with our communities. Promotional support and material was provided for Indyreads Summer Book Club, author talks such as Judy Nunn and Fleur McDonald, as well as keeping the community update with a monthly online newsletter that is sent to approximately 41,000 subscribers.

RTRL celebrated the 50th anniversary of the signing of the first agreement between member councils for the shared delivery of public library services in November. Celebrations and events were held across the region.

Support Services staff assisted branch staff to deliver the Get Online Week program. The focus of the week was to invite the community to build digital skills and confidence by participating in the Aussie Bird Count. The event is supported by the Good Things Foundation with small grants of \$1,000 awarded to eleven of our 13 sites to support the delivery of the program through covering staff costs and participation incentive prizes such as bird books and a Samsung tablet.

The Summer Reading Challenge kicked off on the first of December. Aimed at encouraging young people aged up to 18 to continue reading and build strong reading and library habits of the extended summer school break. Each Area is offering a Samsung Tablet as an incentive to participate and promote the online library. The Challenge runs from December 1, 2023, through January 24, 2024.

This quarter was a time of change for staffing arrangements for the Support Services team with three staff on extended leave as they transition to retirement, one staff member on leave without pay to explore opportunities and build skills, two staff resigned. This has created staffing challenges as staff transitioning to retirement and leave without pay cannot be permanently recruited until their positions are finalized. In some cases, this has created slower response times and less capacity to progress projects. The remaining team members and temporary staff are managing exceptionally well under the circumstances, and it is a testament to the team's effectiveness and efficiency.