



# Woollahra Libraries Annual Report

1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025

**Woollahra**  
Libraries







# Introduction

Welcome to the Woollahra Libraries 2024-2025 Annual Report.

What an incredible year it has been! As we reflect on 2024-2025, we're proud of the milestones we've reached and the ways we've connected with our community. This year marks the fourth of our five-year strategic plan, and we're excited about the progress we've made in bringing this vision to life.

A major highlight was the Watsons Bay Library Member Access Hours trial. By extending access by 19 hours a week beyond regular staffed hours, we've made it easier for our community to use the library when it suits them. This initiative has been a game-changer, particularly for those who need flexible access. It creates welcoming, accessible spaces for all, and supports our goal of enriching social cohesion.

Our Library of Things collection continues to grow, with exciting new resources such as colourblind glasses, video games for all ages, and Memory Boxes designed to support people living with dementia. These additions reflect our commitment to fostering lifelong learning, creativity, and discovery, ensuring that Woollahra Libraries remains an inclusive, innovative hub for everyone.

We also introduced a self-service vending machine at the Vaucluse Community Facility, bringing library resources closer to home. Together with the new self-checkout kiosks at all branches, these new ways to borrow are designed to make library services more convenient and user-friendly for our community.

Our loans, visits, and active members all saw significant growth. Children enjoyed a variety of creative

workshops, STEM challenges, and even animal encounters. Adults participated in author talks, wellness workshops, and vibrant community events like Sunset Sessions at Watsons Bay, which have become a highlight of our summer calendar. Teens engaged in after-school activities such as Physics Playground and arts workshops, with additional support provided for HSC students.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to making Woollahra Libraries a place where learning, connection, and creativity thrive. Thank you to everyone who has supported us this year: you make all of this possible.

Jody Rodas  
Manager, Woollahra Libraries

Photo: Staff wear Green and Gold to celebrate the 2024 Olympics  
Cover: Spark Truck Engagement at Rose Bay Bike Day

# Quick Statistics



28,487

Active library members



628,271

Library visits



168

Hours of opening per week



650,321

Library loans



223,840

eCollection loans



113,425

Information requests



19,063

People attended 1,180 events and programs



17

Online programs were viewed 582 times



6,770

Groups booked library spaces



17,799

Public computer bookings



95

People used the Home Library Service



87

Volunteers



222,511

Social Media reach



14,253

Newsletter subscribers



14

Book Clubs engaging 130 members



45,260

Number of new items added to library collections



9,496

Woollahra Libraries app users (used on 9,496 devices in July 2024 – June 2025)



263

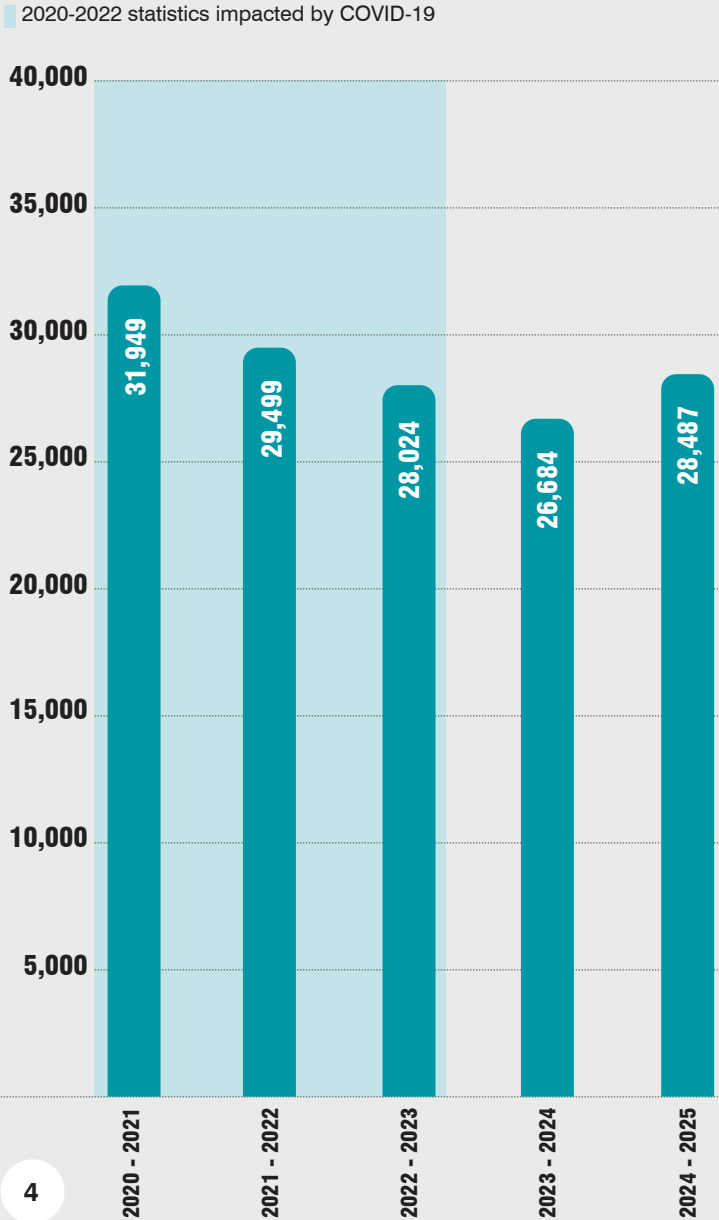
Registered members visited Watsons Bay library 372 times during additional hours

1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025

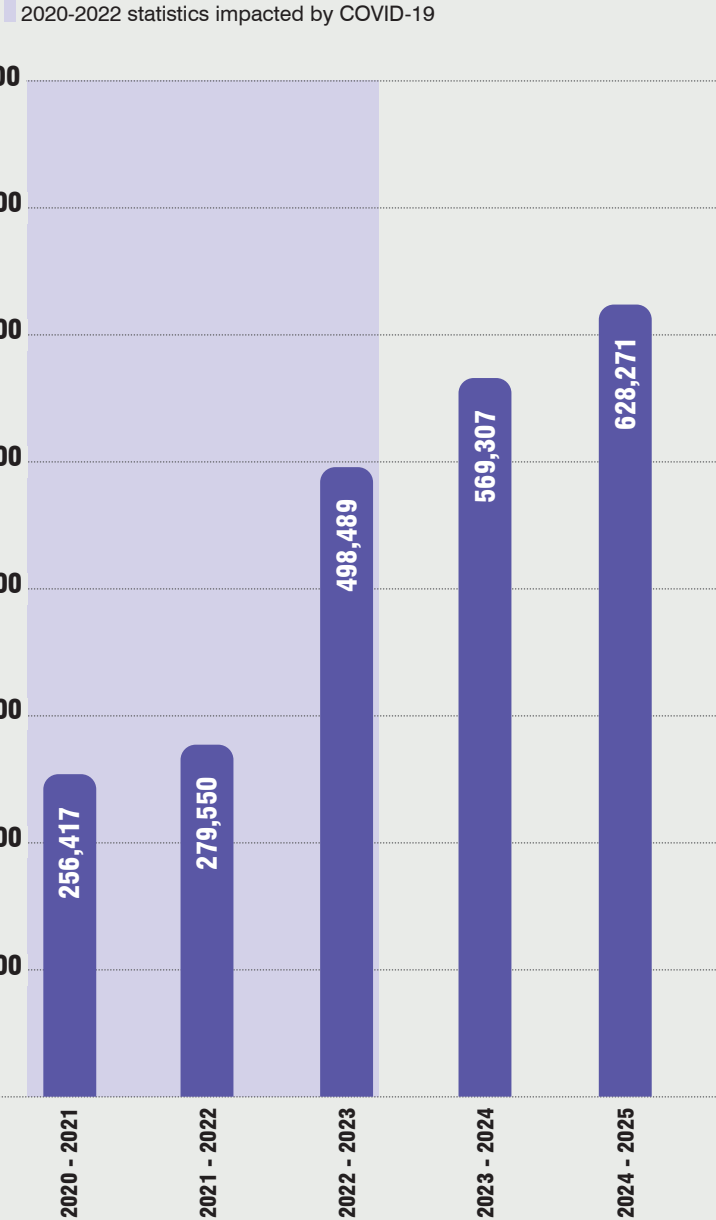
# Year-on-Year Changes

Please note 2020-2022 statistics impacted by COVID-19

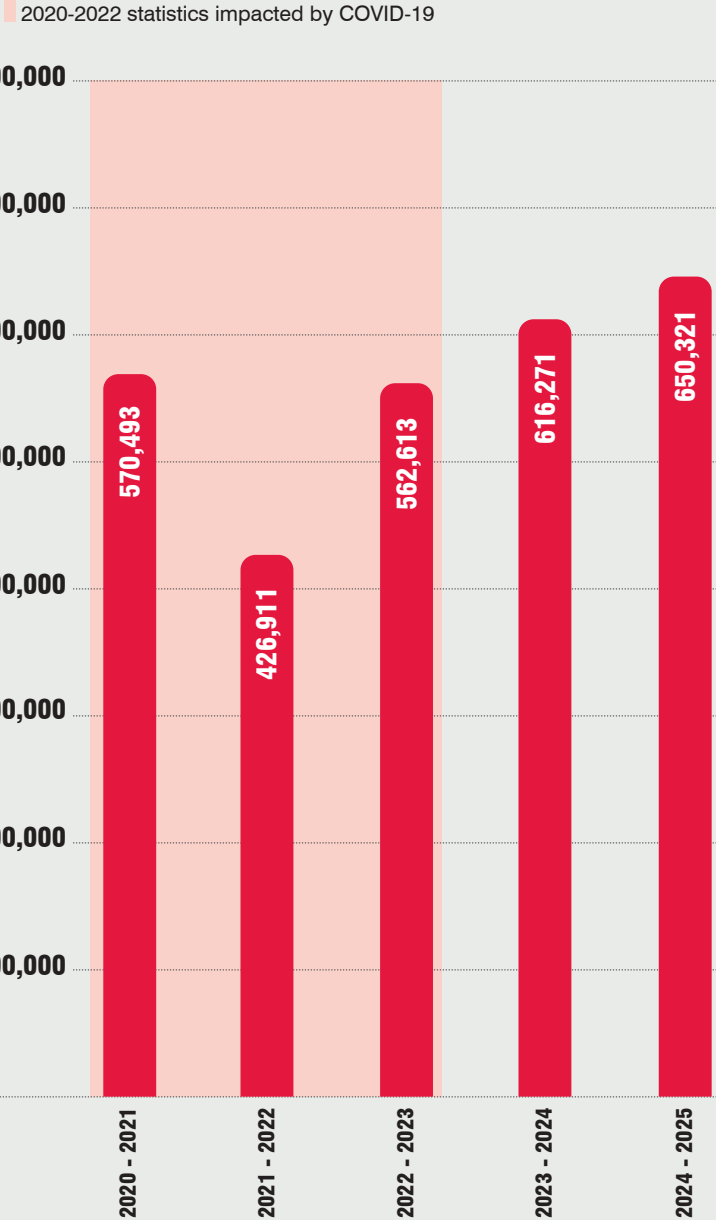
## Active Members



## Visitation



## Library Loans



## Attendance at Library Programs and events

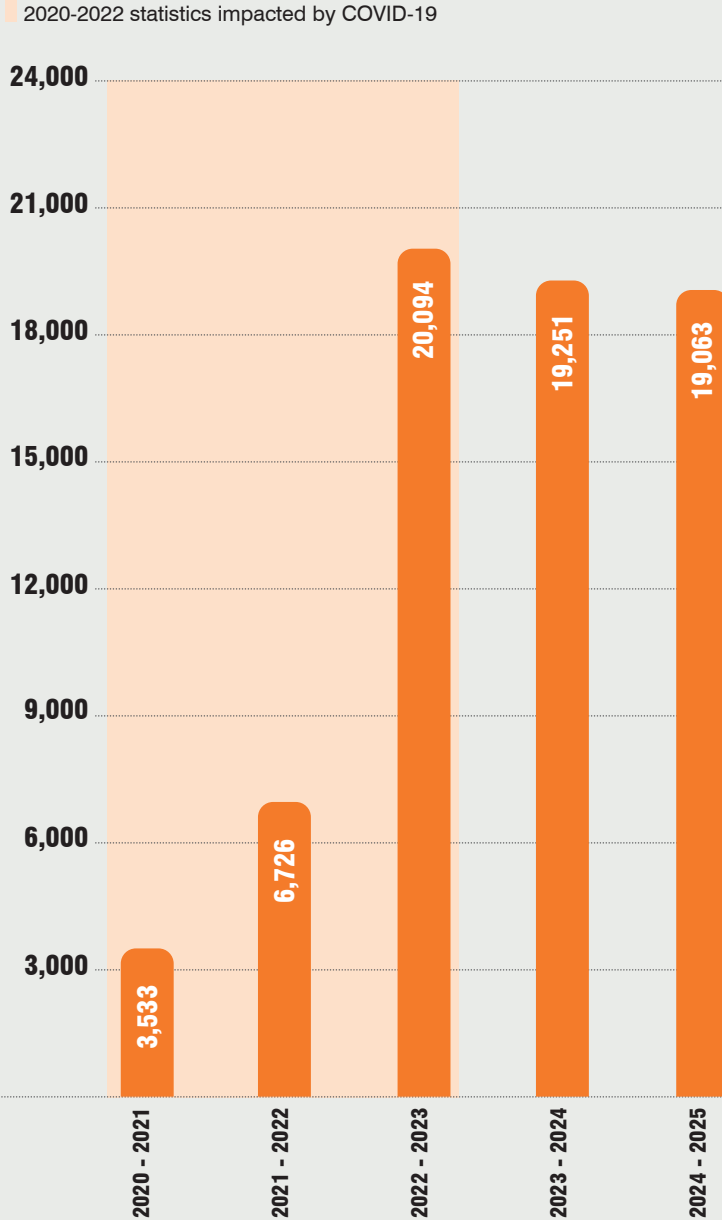


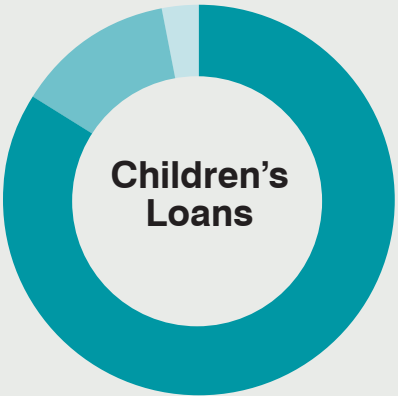
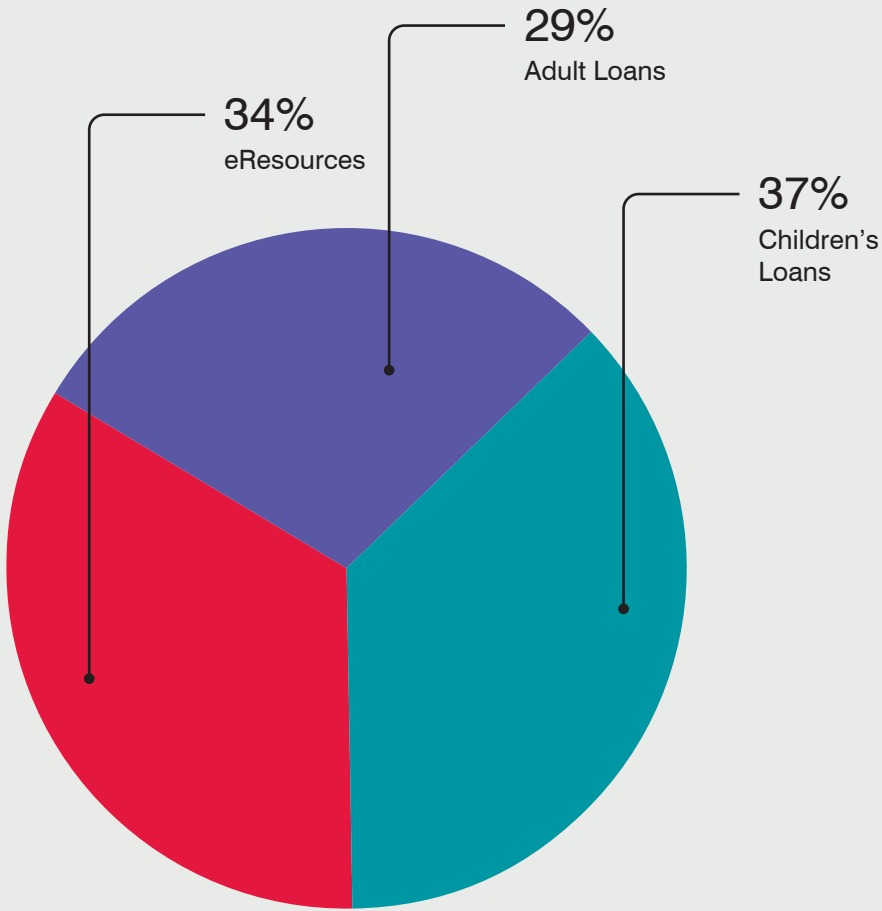




Photo: Watsons Bay Library Staff  
 dress as "Fancy Nancy" and "If  
 You Give a Mouse a Cookie" for  
 Book Week

# Library Loans Breakdown

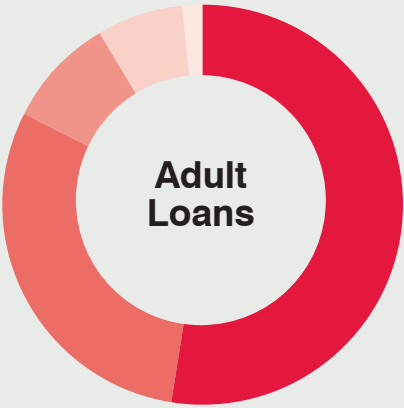
Woollahra Libraries recorded more than 650,000 loans in 2024–2025. Digital resources made up over a third of all borrowing, showing steady growth in eBooks, eAudiobooks, eMagazines and other online use. More than 45,000 new items were added to the shelves, keeping the collection current and varied. Children's titles made up the largest share of physical loans, adult borrowing covered fiction, non-fiction, magazines and the Library of Things, and the eCollection continued to provide flexible access for readers of all ages. These results reflect a balance between traditional and digital collections and our focus on meeting community needs.



84% Fiction  
 13% Non-fiction  
 3% Audio visual



36% eMagazines  
 26% eBooks  
 22% eAudiobooks  
 16% Other



53% Fiction  
 30% Non-fiction  
 9% Magazines  
 7% Audio visual  
 1% Library of things





# Events and Programs

Woollahra Libraries delivered a dynamic program of events in 2024–25, fostering creativity, learning and connection. Across 1,180 programs, we welcomed 19,063 participants of all ages.

Children’s programming remained central, with 700 events and 11,313 attendees. Early literacy sessions such as Book Babies, Rhyme Time and Story Time supported school readiness and inclusion. Themed events for Lunar New Year, NAIDOC Week, Reconciliation Week, Pride Month, Harmony Week and Grandparents Day promoted cultural awareness, while celebrations like National Simultaneous Story Time and Book Week highlighted Australian literature.

After-school programs including Mini Makers, Building Buddies and Code Club offered hands-on learning and play. During the school holidays, children enjoyed palaeontology digs, creative writing, magic shows and animal encounters with Taronga Zoo’s Zoomobile. National Science Week brought young minds face to face with working scientists at Speed Meet a Scientist.

Youth programs attracted 1,323 attendees across 102 events, balancing educational support and creative exploration. Afterschool clubs featured Dungeons & Dragons, drama workshops, Maths Club and the Young Adult Pride Book Club. Teens explored cricut cutting, crochet, VR gaming and immersive art. HSC students benefited from extended study hours, tutoring, pet therapy and mini massage sessions.

Adult programs welcomed 6,427 participants across 378 events. Tech-focused offerings such as Tech at Ascham, Tech Connect Express, Tech Savvy Seniors and 3D printing workshops built digital skills. Author talks with Candice Fox, Dinuka McKenzie, Petronella McGovern and James O’Loughlin offered literary insight, while creative writing groups, craft sessions and tai chi supported wellbeing. The Australian Poetry Slam and Sci Fight Science and Comedy Debate were standout cultural events. Local heritage was explored through walking tours, plaque unveilings and community talks in partnership with the Paddington Society, while business development sessions with the Sydney School of Entrepreneurship supported professional growth.

The Spark Truck brought story time and craft to Lyne Park during the school holidays. Library staff also delivered outreach at major community events, including NAIDOC Week at Cooper Park, the Vaucluse Community Facility Open Day, Rose Bay Bike Day, and the Woollahra Festival.

Photo (above): Tai Chi at Paddington Reservoir Gardens

Photo (right) Taronga Zookeeper presentation for NAIDOC Week



## All Programs 2024/2025

|              | Sessions     | Attendance    |
|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| Children     | 700          | 11,313        |
| Young Adult  | 102          | 1,323         |
| Adult        | 378          | 6,427         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>1,180</b> | <b>19,063</b> |

## Online Programs Recorded in 2024/2025

|              | Videos    | Views      |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Children     | -         | 51         |
| Young Adult  | 3         | 202        |
| Adult        | 14        | 329        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>17</b> | <b>582</b> |



# Library Highlights



## Technology Highlights

In 2024-25, Woollahra Libraries introduced new technology designed to enhance creativity, learning and digital access, helping our community connect in more exciting ways.

At Woollahra Library at Double Bay, we launched Hublets – six self-service Android tablets available for members to borrow and use within the library. Each device connects to Wi-Fi, is preloaded with essential library apps, and resets at the end of each session to protect privacy. These easy-to-use tablets offer members even more opportunities to explore digital resources during their visits.

We also trialed an interactive touch table at Woollahra Library at Double Bay, showcasing our digital collection including onsite-only databases such as Ancestry (Library Edition) and Find My Past. The pilot was so successful that additional screens were installed at Double Bay and the program expanded to Paddington Library. It's a great way for patrons to explore local history and discover new eResources in a fun, interactive way.

Our Library of Things collection grew with the addition of a Podcasting Kit, designed to support both beginner and seasoned podcasters. The kit, available with a room booking at Double Bay, includes a RODECaster Pro console, two microphones, headphones, and everything needed to record high-quality audio. Whether you're looking to start your first podcast or elevate your existing project, the kit provides everything you need.

Photo: Members can now borrow these Hublets to explore digital resources in the library.

Photo (left): Siblings work together to solve puzzles in our school holidays escape room.



## New Collections

This year, Woollahra Libraries continued to expand our collection with new, exciting resources designed to support both learning and accessibility for our community.

One of the most popular additions this year was our video game collection, featuring titles for PS4, PS5, and Nintendo Switch. Games are a fun way to explore storytelling and problem-solving. The Nintendo Switch collection has proven especially popular with younger members of the community, with strong demand and circulation.

We also added colour-blind glasses to our Library of Things collection, responding to the needs of our community. Around 8 percent of males and 0.5 percent of females in Australia experience some form of colour vision deficiency. The library offers two pairs of Enchroma glasses, Altavista and Grayson, suitable for indoor or low-light use. These models are designed for the two most common types of colour blindness, Protan and Deutan. The lenses work by filtering light to reduce red and green colour overlap, helping users see a broader range of colours.

Photo: Our new video game collection for PS4, PS5 and Nintendo Switch has been a hit with members of all ages.





# Collaboration with Paddington Society

This year, we partnered with The Paddington Society to deliver a popular series of talks celebrating the history and character of Paddington. The Society, founded in 1964, is dedicated to preserving the area’s unique heritage and sharing its stories with the wider community.

Paddington Library, located in the heritage-listed Town Hall and a fixture of the community for more than 130 years, was the perfect setting for these conversations. Each session explored a different aspect of the suburb’s past and present, and every event reached full capacity.

Guest speakers included Dr Paul Irish on Aboriginal Paddington, Bill Morrison on mapping the area, and Robert Griffin on the suburb’s iconic terraces.

The series drew strong interest from both Society and library members. As Esther Hayter, President of The Paddington Society, shared, “all are enthusiastic for more talks... there is definitely renewed interest in all things Paddington.”

With such a strong response, we look forward to future collaborations celebrating the people and places that shape our local area.

Photo: Dr Paul Irish captivated a full house at Paddington Library with his talk on Aboriginal Paddington, drawn from “Paddington: A History”.



# Reading Challenges: 1000 Books Before School and Beyond

In 2024–25, Woollahra Libraries invited readers of all ages to connect with books in fresh and rewarding ways. Across all reading challenges this year, participants logged a remarkable 11,649 books.

Our 1000 Books Before School program continues to build strong early literacy habits, with 165 children tracking their reading at home and during Story Time and Book Babies sessions. Each milestone was celebrated with a colourful patch and a library tote, encouraging children and their families to read, log and share. The summer holidays brought a sense of fun and adventure. 58 young readers engaged with the Join the Circus Reading Club for children and the Step Right Up Reading Extravaganza for teens. Participants shared their book reviews, completed themed activities and entered prize draws.

This year also marked the launch of Booked All Summer, Woollahra Libraries’ first dedicated reading challenge for adults. Designed to be inclusive and low-pressure, the program encouraged readers to explore themed prompts like “Read outside” or “Try an audiobook.” Members logged their progress, shared thoughtful reviews through the Beanstack app, and earned entries into a prize draw. The program returned in winter by popular demand, with 55 adults participating across both seasons.

**“The challenge was a prize within itself!”**  
**– Inaugural winner of the Booked All Summer Adult Reading Challenge**

From 10 February to 16 March, the Young Adult Pride Reading Challenge created a welcoming space for teens to explore LGBTQIA+ stories. Curated reading lists now live on our website, guiding anyone looking to discover diverse voices. Each of these programs shows how stories continue to bring people together, one page at a time.

Photo: Nicholas completed the 1000 Books Before School challenge with his mum Anne, borrowing every book from Woollahra Libraries since 2023.



# Teens After School: Learning, Leading, and Connecting

Woollahra Libraries continues to be a vibrant hub for young people aged 13 to 18, offering free after-school programs that spark curiosity, build skills and foster community. Led by our Library Community Engagement Officers, these term-time programs provide a safe and welcoming space for teens to learn, collaborate and grow.

At Woollahra Library at Double Bay, we launched several new clubs this year. Teen Physics Playground invited students to explore motion, energy, light and quantum theory through hands-on experiments and lively discussion. Our Maths Club, led by UNSW’s Dr Randell Heyman, made maths fun and practical, with topics like GPS, CT scans and magic squares. In partnership with Sydney Theatre Company, teens also explored identity and storytelling through drama and creative writing workshops.

At Paddington Library, the Intermediate Robotics Program, delivered with the Australian Academy of Robotics and STEM, guided students through an 8-week course in programming responsive robots, building both technical and teamwork skills.

Teens also took on leadership and volunteer roles. Through the Tech at Ascham program, high school students mentored women aged 55 and over in digital skills, bridging generations and building confidence. 15 students completed weekly volunteer shifts through the Duke of Edinburgh Award, assisting with shelving, event prep and our Building Buddies Lego club.

To support HSC students, the library extended opening hours during peak study times and offered drop-in tutoring, hand massages and calming visits from Paws Pet Therapy dogs.

Photo: Students took part in a creative workshop with Sydney Theatre Company, exploring storytelling through drama and writing.



# Book Week 2024 – Reading is Magic

Book Week 2024 began early with a magical scavenger hunt launched in July. Children were invited to search for rabbits, potions, spells and ingredients hidden throughout our libraries to enter a prize draw. We received over 200 entries, and three lucky participants each won a family pass to a local escape room.

During Book Week, we celebrated the Children’s Book Council of Australia Shortlisted Titles by sharing them during our regular Story Time sessions. Across our three branches, 86 children attended to enjoy these featured books.

To bring the celebration to more families, staff delivered special Story Times both in the libraries and through outreach visits to local early learning centres. Woollahra Library at Double Bay led the initiative, running five outreach sessions for 172 children from visiting centres, many from Woollahra Preschool. Watsons Bay Library followed with two sessions for 15 children, and Paddington Library hosted two for 12 children.

Book Week continues to be a highlight in our calendar, encouraging children to engage with storytelling in fun and imaginative ways, both in the library and beyond.

Photo: Librarians at Woollahra Library at Double Bay embraced the “Reading is Magic” theme for Book Week.





## Woollahra Council Plaque Scheme

The Woollahra Council Plaque Scheme continues to recognise the people and events that have shaped our local area, with community nominations driving the process. Each year, four plaques are selected for installation following review by the Woollahra Art and Culture Advisory Committee.

Plaques are placed in locations connected to the person or event, offering moments of reflection and a deeper connection to local history.

Between July 2024 and June 2025, new plaques were unveiled to honour Aboriginal leaders Thomas Thomara and Nanny Nellola; sculptor and educator Lyndon Dadswell, CMG; author and public intellectual Donald Horne, AO; and Dr Fanny Reading, MBE, a pioneering physician and founder of the National Council for Jewish Women of Australia. Each made a lasting contribution to the lives of others and helped shape the community of their time.

Their stories now sit among a growing collection of plaques across the municipality.

The next round will include the 50th plaque awarded since the scheme's launch in 2011. Nominations are welcomed year-round and can be submitted by any member of the public.

Photo: Professor Stephen Garton, Professor Julia Horne and Mayor Sarah Swan unveil the plaque to Donald Horne, AO.



## Woollahra Libraries Entry-Level Jobs Forum

In September 2024, Woollahra Libraries hosted our first ever Entry-Level Jobs Forum for library and information science (LIS) students. Designed to support those entering the profession, the event offered insights, encouragement and real-world advice for aspiring library workers.

Each year, around 800 people graduate from an Australian university or TAFE with LIS qualifications. For many, securing that first library job can be a challenge. Woollahra Libraries, as a leader in the public library sector, is proud to support new professionals through volunteer roles and student placements.

This forum brought those connections full circle, inviting former Woollahra Libraries volunteers who had successfully transitioned into entry-level jobs to return as guest speakers. They shared their experiences with honesty and humour, offering attendees a rare and relatable glimpse into the early stages of a library career.

More than 50 students attended, with some travelling from Campbelltown, Hornsby and the Blue Mountains. The event also featured representatives from Ignite, who spoke about job seeker support, and Woollahra's Library Customer Service Team Leader, who provided tips from an employer perspective.

**"The speakers were interesting, informative, encouraging, honest, funny – I took something valuable away from each one of them."**  
– Event attendee

This inspiring event affirmed Woollahra Libraries' commitment to supporting the next generation of library professionals.

Photo: Volunteer Supervisor Amy Georgiou shared career tips at our packed Entry-Level Jobs Forum for aspiring library professionals.



## Dementia Action Week and Memory Boxes

On Friday 20 September 2024, Woollahra Library at Double Bay hosted a morning tea to launch our new collection of five themed Memory Boxes and to raise awareness during Dementia Action Week.

Food writer Barbara Sweeney joined us to speak about the importance of sensory activities in creating connection. She explained how cooking and sharing food can unlock memories through taste, smell and conversation.

The morning was attended by local carers, aged care staff, and people living with dementia. Guests shared personal insights and practical ideas, explored herbs and plants from around the world, and enjoyed freshly baked scones with jam and cream.

Woollahra Libraries' Memory Boxes contain curated items designed to prompt memories, spark conversation and provide comfort. They can be used in both home and care settings, and are especially helpful for supporting a loved one who is adjusting to a new environment.

**"The memory box was very tactile and helped me talk to my husband about the work he used to do in the trades. I could see recognition when he held the tools."**  
– Library Member

Dementia awareness helps reduce stigma and misunderstanding, and encourages open conversations. By listening to lived experience, we learn how to better support individuals and carers in our community.

Photo: One of our Memory Boxes, filled with tactile items and mementos to support people living with dementia and their carers.



## Paddington AV Upgrade and After Hours Film Club

In 2024, Paddington Library received an audiovisual upgrade with the installation of a new screen, speakers and microphones, improving the experience for talks, presentations and events.

The screen is also used weekly in children's programs to encourage singing, movement and interaction through music and visuals.

To make the most of the new setup and highlight digital media platforms, Paddington Library launched a monthly After Hours Film Club in September 2024. Held from 6 pm to 9 pm on the last Thursday of each month, the screenings have quickly become a popular part of the events program.

The club features a rotating selection of films from the library's streaming collection, offering a relaxed and welcoming way for people to discover new titles. Each screening is followed by a discussion with a film journalist, which has become a highlight for regular attendees.

The Paddington After Hours Film Club reflects our focus on making the most of technology while building programs that bring people together through shared cultural experiences.

**"The Paddington Library After Hours Film Club is just fabulous. Erin's choice of movies each month is enjoyable, plus his knowledge and pleasant personality upon greeting us each month is lovely."**  
– A.E Reid, program attendee

Photo: New AV upgrades and a vibrant feature book wall have transformed Paddington Library into a more welcoming place for talks, programs and film club.





## Libero Innovation Award

Woollahra Libraries received the Libero Innovation Award in September 2024 for significant improvements to our stocktake process. Previously, stocktakes were time-consuming and labour-intensive, often prone to human error. In partnership with our library management system provider Libero, we introduced a new approach that dramatically increased efficiency and accuracy.

Regular stocktakes help ensure that our catalogue reflects the current status of our collection and item locations. This is essential for maintaining a responsive and reliable service for our members.

We introduced two portable stocktake stations that allowed up to 20 books to be scanned simultaneously. These devices connected in real time to our library management system, enabling thousands of items to be scanned per hour. Items previously marked as lost or missing were immediately updated and made available for loan.

Following the scanning process, we generated branch-specific reports of items not located during stocktake. This helped staff narrow their search and reduced the time spent trying to locate missing items.

In the past, stocktakes would take several additional weeks and required significant staff resources. The new process has streamlined operations and freed up staff time to focus on delivering high-quality service to our community.

Photo: Manager Jody Rodas and the Library Systems team celebrating the Libero Innovation Award.



## New Self-Checkout Kiosks

In September 2024, we upgraded our self-checkout kiosks at all three Woollahra Libraries branches. The new kiosks were designed with input from our staff to make borrowing quicker and easier.

As customers scan their items, the book covers appear instantly on screen, and based on what is borrowed, the kiosks offer tailored reading recommendations with images and blurbs. Receipts can either be printed or emailed.

The new kiosks connect with our print and payments system, allowing users to pay fees, release print jobs, and collect guest passes. If help is needed, a press of the help button sends an alert directly to a staff member's phone.

In addition to streamlining transactions, the kiosks also serve as a promotional tool, displaying messages about new collections, upcoming events, and other library services.

These kiosks are more than just efficient; they provide a user-friendly experience that has made library visits smoother and more engaging, combining technology with the personal support our visitors appreciate.

Photo: The new kiosks allow members to pay fees on the spot and get personalised reading suggestions.



## Local History Highlights

Woollahra Libraries continued to shine a light on our local history through a range of events and digital enhancements. We participated in national and state-wide celebrations including NSW History Week and the National Trust Heritage Festival, offering programs that explored both our cultural symbols and built environment.

In September 2024, we marked History Week with the theme 'Marking Time', set by the History Council of NSW. Author Richard White delivered a well-attended talk on the history of Australian symbols, and Local History staff led a guided walking tour through Double Bay, highlighting markers of the suburb's past. Due to strong interest, the tour was repeated in October.

Heritage took focus again in April and May 2025. Author Larisa Sarkadi presented A Shared Streetscape: The Birth of Apartment Living in Woollahra, a richly illustrated talk on interwar residential flat buildings. As part of the National Trust's Heritage Festival, the library partnered with Council's Heritage Planners to host Modernism, a talk by architectural historian Rebecca Hawcroft. Feedback indicated strong community interest in these topics.

Online, the Local History section of the library website was refreshed to improve navigation and searchability. Online exhibitions were consolidated into more engaging formats, and new connections were embedded between the website and the Digital Archive. Within the archive, hyperlinks now connect related subjects to support deeper exploration.

New digitised content was also added, including typed transcripts of historic Council minute books and building registers, improving access to some of the most requested local history resources.

Photo: Woollahra Then and Now showcased changes in local streetscapes, with our first online exhibition to feature sliding before-and-after image comparisons and an exhibition at Paddington Library.



## Watsons Bay Library: Extended Member Access

Our members asked for more convenient access to Watsons Bay Library, and we listened. In November 2024, we launched a six-month Member Access Hours trial, extending access by 19 hours each week beyond regular staffed times.

Library members aged 16 and over can register to enter the library using their membership number or barcode and PIN. During these hours, members can access free Wi-Fi, public computers, printing services and self-checkout kiosks. Children under 16 are also welcome when accompanied by a parent or carer.

To support the trial, we installed a secure entry system, upgraded lighting, improved self-service options and added new security features to ensure a safe and seamless experience.

**"[I] love the after hours access at Watsons Bay, and go at least once a week"**  
– Library Member

We also activated the space during the trial with Sunset Sessions and special children's events, taking full advantage of the stunning waterfront location to bring people together through books, creativity and connection.

The formal trial concluded in May 2025, and the results showed a 25 percent increase in visits to the library from May 2024. This initiative reflects our commitment to accessibility, flexibility and community needs. Thank you to everyone who registered and helped make the trial a success. We're excited to continue improving your library experience.

Photo: Member Access Hours give registered users 19 extra hours a week to enjoy the library outside regular staffed times.





## 2024 Woollahra Digital Literary Award

On 26 November 2024, Woollahra Library at Double Bay hosted a special ceremony to announce the winners of the 2024 Woollahra Digital Literary Award, a national prize recognising innovation and excellence in digital literature by Australian authors.

Selected from 25 shortlisted works, winners were celebrated across four categories: Fiction, Non-Fiction, Poetry and Digital Innovation. A public vote also determined the winner of the Readers' Choice Award. This year's total prize pool increased to \$9,500, thanks to one-off sponsorship from Bolinda/BorrowBox.

Now in its eighth year, the award was established by Woollahra Council in 2017 to spotlight exceptional works created and consumed in digital form. It continues to connect readers with bold, boundary-pushing storytelling published outside traditional print channels.

### 2024 Winners

- **Fiction:** *The Piano in the Tree* – Jo Havens (Thirteen Books)
- **Non-Fiction:** *Agent of the Year* – Lucy Van (Liminal Magazine)
- **Poetry:** *Galaga* – Cameron Colwell (Cordite Poetry Review).
- **Digital Innovation:** *The Songbird Speaks* – Alinta Krauth (The Digital Review)
- **Readers' Choice:** *Punctuation as Organised Violence* – Sara M. Saleh (Meanjin)

In 2024–2025, Woollahra Libraries recorded 223,840 digital loans, representing 34 percent of total lending. These figures continue to reflect the growing role of technology in how we read and discover stories.

Photo: 2024 Fiction Winner Jo Havens with Fiction Judge Claudine Tinellis.



## Vaucluse Library Vending Machine

In December 2024, Woollahra Libraries introduced a self-service vending machine at the Vaucluse Community Facility, expanding access to books in the local area.

The Vaucluse Library Vending Machine offers a curated selection of children's books, fiction and non-fiction, supporting families visiting the new Maternity, Child and Family Health Service and providing local residents with a convenient borrowing option close to home.

Library members can borrow items using their Woollahra Libraries membership card. Books are automatically checked out when removed and can be returned either to the machine or any Woollahra Libraries branch.

The machine is available on weekdays from 10 am to 4 pm, or whenever the building is open for community events and group activities. By offering flexible borrowing beyond traditional library spaces, this initiative reflects our commitment to increasing access to library services.

Whether picking up a bedtime story or discovering something new, the Vaucluse Library Vending Machine is making it easier for families and individuals to enjoy the benefits of their library membership in a convenient and welcoming community setting.

Photo: The Vaucluse Library Vending Machine lets members borrow books on-site at the Vaucluse Bowling Club and Community Facility.



## Sunset Sessions at Watsons Bay

Watsons Bay Library has become a go-to destination for summer evenings with our seasonal outdoor program, Sunset Sessions.

Each summer, we host a series of relaxed events on the lawn outside the library in December, January, and February, where guests gather under the warm evening light. Partnering with the neighbouring Baithouse Café, we serve canapés and wine, creating a welcoming, picnic-style atmosphere.

This year's program featured a memorable lineup. Author Chris Baker spoke about his book *Swimming Sydney*, a fitting choice given the library's view of the Watsons Bay ocean pool. The Summer Street Band brought energy and music to the grounds with a lively outdoor performance. A highlight of the season was summer reading recommendations with Ailsa Piper, where Ailsa and co-host Elizabeth Phillips shared their top book picks for beach reads and holiday gifting.

These events are always well attended and full of connection and conversation. One attendee shared, "I wait for this event all year," and even gathered a group of friends to join her.

This year's program also featured appearances by Charlotte Wood, Susan Wyndham, and Antonia Pesenti. The library stays open throughout, allowing people to flow between the event and the shelves, making the most of this warm-weather series.

**"Was a perfect night! The food was great, the music was perfect, the musicians were friendly and the venue was brilliant."**  
– Event Attendee

Photo: Ailsa Piper and Elizabeth Phillips shared summer reading favourites and holiday gift ideas at our December Sunset Session.



## Library Lover's Day

This year, we marked Library Lover's Day with a fun twist on speed dating:

"Speed Date a Librarian – strictly for book recommendations!"

Our team rotated through a lounge-style setup in Woollahra Library at Double Bay, complete with roses, pink tablecloths, and heart-shaped candy, ready to offer quickfire reading suggestions. Readers could also try their luck with a mystery pick from our popular Blind Date with a Book table, each one hand-selected and described by Corrine from our collections team.

On Level 2, a romantic book display kept things on theme, and our library love note mailbox filled up quickly with heartfelt messages from patrons. Some of our favourite quotes included:

**"It is full of great resources and free smiles"**  
**"I made a mate and the books are great"**  
**"It is FUN"**  
**"You rekindled my love of reading"**  
**"All the wonderful books and activities the library puts out"**  
**"It's full of smiles, books, light and greenery!"**

Library Lover's Day was a reminder of how much our community cherishes our spaces. We were smiling just as much as our visitors.

Photo: Library staff member Janet offered reading recommendations at our Library Lover's Day event, "Speed Date a Librarian".





## Celebrate Woollahra 2025

In 2025, the suburb of Woollahra took centre stage as the community marked a milestone year that matched its postcode. The Woollahra Festival, organised by the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association, was the highlight, running across the last weekend in March.

Woollahra Libraries proudly joined the celebration, bringing the Spark Truck to the Saturday event. Visitors enjoyed free book giveaways, including board books, picture books, and adult fiction and non-fiction. Library staff were on hand to share reading recommendations and talk about our programs.

On Sunday, our Local History team led three guided walking tours of Queen Street, a main street that developed in the 1850s and still reflects much of its nineteenth-century charm. During each one-hour tour, staff shared stories of the street's early residents and key events. A self-guided version of the walk was also created, available as a printed pamphlet and online download.

We also presented Woollahra Then and Now, a photographic exhibition comparing changes in local streetscapes and buildings from the 1980s to today. The exhibition ran at Paddington Library from March to June and was also available online.

Photo: We brought books, programs, free giveaways and plenty of reading inspiration to the Woollahra Festival with the Spark Truck, sparking conversations and connections.



## Woollahra Libraries Volunteer Program

In May 2025, Woollahra Libraries celebrated 10 years of its Volunteer Program. First established in 2015 to support the opening of the new Woollahra Library at Double Bay, the program has grown to become a cornerstone of our service across all three locations.

Volunteers have contributed generously to the life and energy of our libraries. Their work supports staff, strengthens programs, and enhances community connection. Since the program began, more than 500 people have offered their time and talents to Woollahra Libraries.

Volunteering reflects the values of inclusion, contribution, and shared purpose. Volunteers are warmly welcomed into the library community and play a vital role in delivering services that matter.

In 2024–2025, our volunteers contributed over 3,800 hours of service. Their roles span many areas, from shelving and maintaining collections to assisting with events, working on local history projects, and facilitating book clubs. They also support our Home Library Service, Justice of the Peace service, and Tech Connect program. In recognition of this impact, the Volunteer Program was named a finalist in the NSW Local Government Excellence Awards.

**“It is a pleasure to give back and meet people. I come from a management background, so I have always enjoyed working with people. Every [rhyme time] session is different and everyone is always so nice”.**

**– Ernie, Events and Programs volunteer**

Photo: As one of our longest-serving volunteers, Kay has spent nearly a decade supporting the library and delivering books to Home Library members with care and dedication



Photo: Drummer performing for the 2024 Woollahra Digital Literary Award ceremony smiles during setup



# Woollahra Libraries

## Double Bay

451 New South  
Head Road  
9391 7100

## Paddington

Town Hall  
247 Oxford Street  
9391 7988

## Watsons Bay

8 Marine Parade  
9391 7999

[woollahra.nsw.gov.au/library](http://woollahra.nsw.gov.au/library)

