

Woollahra
Libraries

Woollahra Libraries Annual Report

1 July 2019 -
30 June 2020

woollahra.nsw.gov.au/library





📷 Mayor Councillor Susan Wynne with poets and student performers at the 2020 Poets' Picnic.

Introduction

Welcome to the Woollahra Libraries 2019-2020 Annual Report.

It's been both an interesting and challenging 12 months with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Woollahra Libraries. Since closure on 16 March 2020, Woollahra Libraries quickly pivoted and redesigned services and programs to be available online and shifted funds from the purchase of physical books to the eCollection to support increased demand. Staff also made wellness calls to the Library's VIP members and those aged 70+. From 1 June 2020, the Library reopened with a 'Select and Collect' service and recommenced the Home Library Service. It has been a wonderful experience welcoming customers back into the Library, all while operating within NSW Health guidelines.

As would be expected, most statistics and graphs don't show the anticipated upward trends due to the Library closure and impact of COVID-19. The use of the Library's eCollection has however increased by 86% over the lockdown period. Our innovations and achievements are noteworthy and demonstrate agility, resourcefulness and leadership.

We would love your feedback or recommendations to keep improving Woollahra Libraries. Keep in touch through the Library's eNewsletter or Facebook page.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Vicki Munro
Manager Woollahra Libraries

Quick Statistics

1 July 2019 –
30 June 2020



29,908

Active library members



515,728

Library visits



567,766

Library loans



92,568

eCollection loans



95,589

Information requests



11,977

People attended 664 events and programs



3,499

Groups booked library spaces



35,594

Public computer bookings



113

People used the Home Library Service



84

Volunteers

Impact of COVID-19



2,950

Wellness calls to customers



32,418

Use of eCollection
86% increase



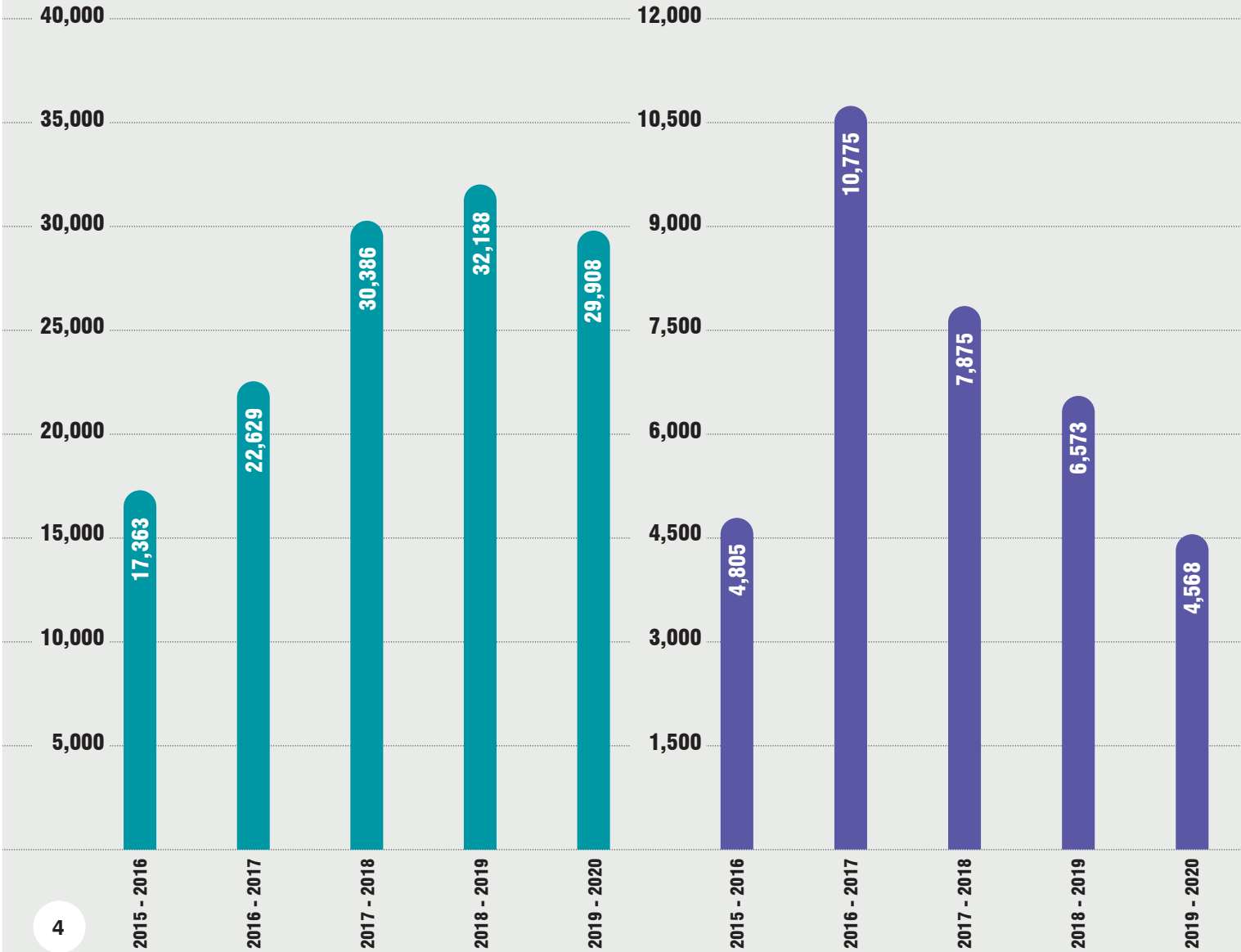
25,011

Online Library webpage views
218% increase

Statistical Comparisons

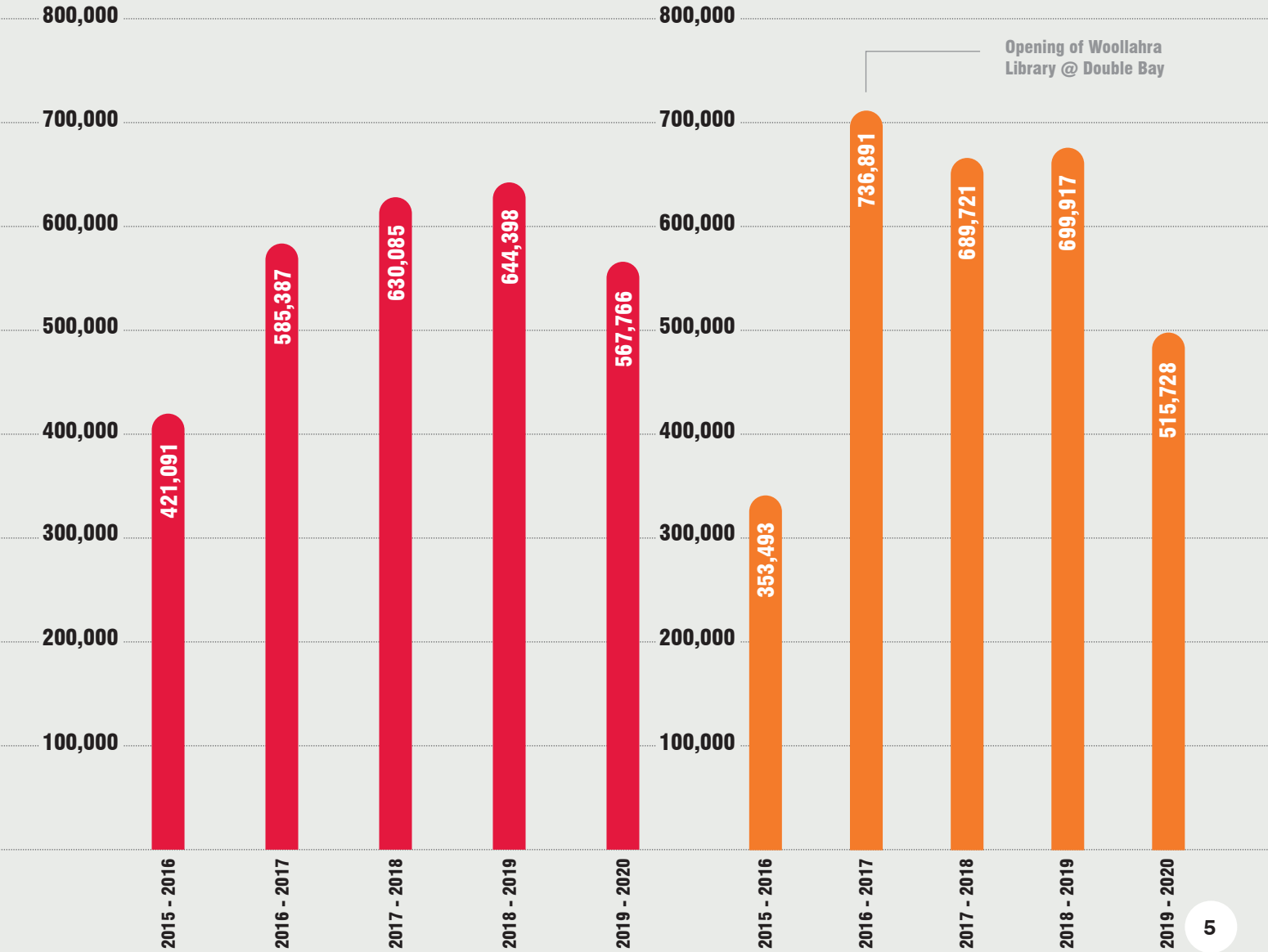
Active Members

New Members



Loans

Visitation



Information & Customer Service Enquiries

Attendance at Library Events & Programs





Feature green wall at Woollahra Library at Double Bay includes book return chutes and children's portholes.



What makes Woollahra Libraries Unique?

Connecting people and ideas

Woollahra Libraries is more than just books and has transformed libraries into community hubs where you can meet new people, attend events and programs, work or study in a stimulating space and learn new things. Each of the three Libraries has a unique design and character, which reflect and meet the needs of the Woollahra community.

Woollahra Library at Double Bay has a slippery slide to entertain children, a Quick Browse, Fast Reads and Fast Flix section upon entry where people can conveniently peruse the latest or on demand titles in the collection, a feature green wall and hanging vines.

Paddington Library emphasises artistic elements to keep aesthetically in step with the precinct that is renowned for art galleries and fashion. Pop Up Posters Paddington is a visual arts program exhibiting artworks in the library by local artists on a three month rotation.



📷 Watsons Bay Library community lounge space.

Watsons Bay Library is cherished for its tranquil ambience and uninterrupted water views. It is based on a 'community lounge' space which makes people feel relaxed and at home. This Library is working towards becoming a recognised Dementia Friendly venue as part of Woollahra Council's commitment to making public spaces more accessible.

Woollahra Libraries has built a reputation for delivering exceptional customer service and creating a welcoming environment. Using a concierge style service, staff rove the Library floor to assist customers on the spot, wherever they are, using iPads, 'one stop' service computers and self-checkout kiosks.

📷 Live music entertainment at Paddington Library.

📷 All Woollahra Libraries staff are certified as Dementia Friends.



Library staff are highly competent and have diverse skill sets, qualifications and experience. These include Library Services, Communications, Information Technology, Event Management, Teaching and more. We are committed to continuous professional development and have all completed Dementia Friendly training. Library staff actively engage with the community and are proactive in responding to feedback and implementing improvements to customer service. Building positive relationships with members is important and staff continue to collaborate with local schools, businesses and associations to expand Woollahra Libraries to the wider community.

Woollahra Libraries has a VIP program that rewards the most loyal group of library customers, who have been continuous active members for over 15 years. Currently there are 1,149 VIP members. Benefits include a special VIP library card, Book Fair vouchers, half price reservation fees and a complimentary ticket to a Writers & Readers event each year.

Other points that make us unique include the annual Poets' Picnic, now in its 31st year, and national Digital Literary Award that supports innovation in literature and publishing, encouraging writers to produce work in a digital medium.

Woollahra Libraries also co-owns a SPARK van with Waverley and Randwick Libraries. This new mobile van is designed for outreach activities in the local community and is equipped with a range of technology to showcase library services.



📷 The Digital Literary Award Winners Announcement – Michaela Kalowski interviewing judges Stephen Pham, Pip Smith and Sam Twyford-Moore.

Library Innovations



Mayor Councillor Susan Wynne with author John Williamson Noble at Children's Story Time at Watsons Bay Library.

Library pivots to respond to the impact of COVID-19

On 16 March 2020, Woollahra Libraries closed its three Libraries due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While closed, the Libraries remained relevant to the local community by undertaking the following initiatives:

While working from home, Library staff telephoned 2,950 Library customers to see how they were coping, provide information about the Library, and let them know of relevant support in the community. Staff called 1,149 VIP customers (those who have been members of the Library for more than 15 years) and over 1,800 customers aged 70+.

The reception from the community was overwhelmingly positive with the majority of the customers expressing their appreciation for the calls.

A big, big thank you for calling and reaching out. It helps knowing that the Library is there and available to help.

– Rosemarie

As a result of this positive and appreciative feedback, the Community Services Division will continue to coordinate community connection through a new Woollahra Friendship program.

During the Library shutdown, many customers who had previously only borrowed print material discovered the eCollection for the first time. To assist these customers, staff created instructional videos for all Library eCollection platforms. These videos have received over 500 views since being made live on the Library webpage. Staff also talked members through the process over the phone.

From April to June 2020, 32,418 items were borrowed from the eCollection. This represents an 86% increase compared to the same period in 2019.

First I would like to thank you for your service. I am caught overseas at the moment as I was visiting my daughter and have to say your eBooks have been my lifesaver. I am extremely impressed with the wide range of books available and have had the great delight of discovering new writers.

– Jan

The Library adapted a number of key events and programs



📷 Story Time goes online.

to digital formats, creating an online experience that Library customers could access from home.

Using Zoom, Woollahra Libraries successfully ran a number of live online events including author talks, virtual work hubs, a Woollahra School of Philosophy panel discussion, Tech Bites, writing workshops and HSC study sessions. A Digital Escape Room was also created.

Positive feedback was received from attendees. Where appropriate, sessions were recorded and are available on Council's website for viewing.

The online platform worked perfectly. So pleased to be able to access these events online, whether the library is open or not.

– Erin

Digital Story Time and Rhyme Time sessions were recorded and uploaded to the Library webpages. These have proven successful with close to 650 views across 10 Story Times, and 193 views of the 5 Rhyme Time sessions.

A 'School Holiday Fun – Home Edition' activity booklet was also produced for the April holidays and downloaded over 60 times.

From April to June 2020, the Kids Space webpages which are part of the Online Library section of the website were viewed more than 2,000 times. Total views for the Online Library webpages were 25,011 which is an increase of 218% compared to the previous year.



Library staff at Woollahra Library at Double Bay ready for 'Select and Collect'.



e-Connect Zoom session.

Phased Reopening

From 1 June 2020 all three Libraries opened with a 'Select and Collect' service, operating from 10am to 4pm Monday to Sunday at Double Bay and Paddington Libraries, and Monday to Friday at Watsons Bay Library. Up to 10 items could be reserved at no cost and picked up at the customer's preferred library. 11,754 items were borrowed during June.

The Library recommenced the Home Library Service with contactless delivery to the 42 members living in their own homes. Members were delighted with their deliveries:

It was not only lovely to have books again but the selection was very thoughtful.

– Ella

From Monday 15 June 2020 the Library introduced bookings for public access computers at each library. The bookings were available on the hour for 45 minutes. In the first two weeks there were 160 computer bookings across the three Libraries.

All fines associated with Library material due back between 16 March and 12 July 2020 were waived.

e-Connect

The e-Connect project was a partnership between Woollahra Libraries and Holdsworth Community, which aimed to combat social isolation of vulnerable members of the Woollahra community during COVID-19. Holdsworth Community recruited 17 volunteers to be matched with community members, and supported them with technology to connect with family and friends while living under lockdown restrictions.

The role of Woollahra Libraries was to create and deliver the IT training for the Holdsworth volunteers. This training was designed by a group of Woollahra Libraries staff who created Trainer and Learner Guides. Six sessions were held and focused on Zoom, email, device navigation and internet security.

Two Library volunteer IT assistants, Jax and Rosemary, gave their time to this project. They used the Trainer Guides to run structured sessions with the support of Library staff. The training was designed to teach the Holdsworth volunteers how to break down the technology into deliverable content for a community member with no technical knowledge.

It was great to be able to utilise my IT knowledge and training skills in a way that will have a positive impact on members of the community who otherwise would remain isolated in these difficult COVID-19 times.

– Rosemary



📷 Promotional photo for new books in the Library collection.

Book Connect

As a trial over Summer, Woollahra Libraries introduced a Book Connect service where customers could request book recommendations from Library staff based on their reading preferences. The Book Connect service was an effective way to promote the Library collection, increase customer satisfaction, and improve staff readers' advisory skills.

Thanks so much - don't think I would have found these on my own so I really appreciate the recommendations and have borrowed two of them today. What a fantastic service.

– Rae

Book Connect was reintroduced as part of the Library's Phase 1 Reopening to complement the 'Select and Collect' service from 1 June 2020. 117 requests were answered in the four weeks to 30 June 2020. Due to the success of the service, Book Connect will continue on a permanent basis.



📷 Artist Laura Jade fitting the Brainlight headset on a participant.

The Big Anxiety Festival

The Library and Cultural Development teams, in partnership with The Big Anxiety Festival, supported a community project examining views of home and belonging among seniors. A series of workshops were held to create an interactive visual display of words and emotions around ageing.

The 'It Feels Like Home' visual display, produced by Warren Armstrong, was showcased across the Woollahra Libraries network in November 2019. It was accompanied by an interactive experience with artist Laura Jade's *Brainlight* that explored how technology can aesthetically interface with the mind. A headset detected live neural activity from the participant's brain, translating it into a vivid and dynamic light display within the brain sculpture.

Dr Gail Kenning (UNSW Ageing Futures Institute) and Laura Jade discussed emotions, the brain and healthy ageing with all participants. This resulted in an academic paper called *Woollahra Emotion Visualisation Experience - Understanding the needs of older people. It feels like home!*

In the lead up to The Big Anxiety Festival, a Games for Emotional and Mental Health (GEMH) lab was hosted at Woollahra Library at Double Bay in October 2019. Players of all ages could experience virtual reality using their breath to navigate through different games and seeing how deep breathing promotes relaxation.

Library Highlights



📷 Sunday Story Time at Paddington Library with special guest storyteller, drag queen Joyce Maynge.



📷 Paddington Library public access computers and service point.

Paddington Library Opens Permanently on Sundays

A 12 month trial of Sunday opening at Paddington Library was held during 2019 and saw a significant increase in library visitation. Community consultation of local residents and strong visitation on Sundays demonstrated a need for Paddington Library to remain open on Sundays permanently.

Woollahra Libraries manages Paddington Library through an agreement with the City of Sydney. Funding for the Library is shared on a 60% (Woollahra) to 40% (City of Sydney) basis, which is reflective of Library membership.

Sunday openings became permanent from 5 January 2020 with operating hours of 10am to 4pm.

Paddington Library has a fantastic collection of books and digital resources and a fabulous kids' space for little ones to explore. I encourage you to head down on a Sunday, enjoy the new opening hours and take the opportunity to say hi to our wonderful staff - they'd love to see you!

– Mayor Councillor Susan Wynne



📷 Library volunteers at the End of Year Celebration 2019.

Volunteer Program

In September 2019, a satisfaction survey was distributed to 96 volunteers of the Woollahra Libraries Volunteer Program to collate their thoughts and feelings on their overall voluntary experience. A total of 67 responses were submitted, and the program achieved an overall rating of 4.7/5.

The main reasons for joining the program included wanting to meet a community need and contribute to a valuable service; jobseekers and graduates wanting to gain practical experience; school students completing their voluntary service component of the Duke of Edinburgh Award and retirees wanting to use their expertise, feel useful and to keep busy.

100% of the respondents agreed that they understood the expectations of them as a volunteer, agreed that staff were approachable and willing to explain tasks, and agreed the Library provided appropriate training and guidance to complete allocated tasks.

95% agreed that they felt like part of a team. All respondents answered yes to the volunteer program meeting their expectations (and exceeding them).

Suggestions to improve the program included providing more opportunities to learn new skills, offer a wider range of tasks, tour all library properties during induction and involve Duke of Edinburgh students in more events and programs.



Library staff with the SPARK Van at the Creative Spark event at the Drill Hall, Rushcutters Bay.



Active Spark attendees playing Lawn Bowls at Vaucluse Bowling Club.

Find Your Spark

Woollahra Libraries provides tailored programs to cater to seniors in the local community. These include a number of technology assistance and training sessions such as Tech Savvy Seniors, Tech at Ascham, Get Online Week and Be Connected. Our Tea Topics program is held across the Library network on a monthly basis. Presenters speak on a topic of interest to the community that is aimed at an audience of 55+ years but everyone is welcome to attend.

In February, Council's Community Services Division hosted a range of events targeted at seniors in the Woollahra community as part of the NSW Seniors Festival. Three core events were around the theme of 'Find Your Spark'.

The Creative Spark event coordinated by Community Services included dance, drumming and weaving. The Active Spark event, planned by the Library team, offered lawn bowls, croquet and tai chi. The Green Spark event, organised by the Environment and Sustainability team, included a tour of the Cooper Park Community Garden, a talk by a garden designer & horticulturalist and included a plant giveaway. 130 seniors participated across these three events with much positive feedback.

The new Library Spark van was present at all three events. It was set up with a collection of relevant books, reading lists, digital apps and the mobile 3D printer. Staff engaged with event attendees and promoted the great variety of Woollahra Libraries events, programs and services.

It has been a pleasure and privilege to attend the course. I will certainly be recommending it. The girls have been an absolute delight. They have given me many new useful tools. They certainly know many short cuts! It has been fun learning from them and with them.

I wish them all the very best in their studies, their volunteering and personal development. My special thanks to those that I interacted with...Each had different strengths and interests which made it all the more fun for me.

– Agnes (Tech at Ascham)



Family of Jeffery Freeman along with Mayor Councillor Susan Wynne, nominator Ron Goold and Councillor Anthony Marano, unveiling the plaque.



The restored Offenhauser race car with owner Rod Bowen, Rob Sibson and other fans.

Jeffery Freeman Plaque Unveiling

The Woollahra Council Plaque Scheme honours exceptional people or events associated with the Local Government Area that have made a significant impact on life in the area or Australia as a nation. The Plaque Scheme is driven by community suggestion.

On 6 March 2020 a plaque was unveiled through the Woollahra Plaque Scheme to honour Jeffery Freeman, Australian Speedcar champion. The plaque was installed outside Freeman's former home at 186 Glenmore Road Paddington and unveiled by Mayor Councillor Susan Wynne, assisted by the nominator Ron Goold and Chair of the Plaques committee Councillor Anthony Marano.

Many people from the Australian Speedcar fraternity attended to honour Jeff's memory and convey their respect for his achievements. Sports journalist Dennis Newlyn shared these sentiments in his speech. Sportscar enthusiast Rod Bowen added to the atmosphere by providing Jeff's restored car for display, while other followers dressed in his colours and parked a decorated ute kerbside, showcasing on its tray an array of memorabilia brought by family, friends and fans.

This was the best-attended plaque unveiling to date with approximately 80 attendees.

It was a very special day and let me say on behalf of the Vintage Speedcar Association, NSW a big thank you to Woollahra Council for putting on such a memorable event with catering to match. Well done to all.

– Keith Nicholls of the Vintage Speedcar Association NSW

The plaque for Jeffery Freeman was one of six to be unveiled during 2019 – 2020. Other recipients of plaques included Shay Docking (Artist), James Francis (Frank) Hurley (Antarctic adventurer and photographer), Jessie, Lady Street (Feminist), Montague Alfred (Monty) Noble (Australian Test Cricket Captain) and Captain William Dumaesq (Soldier and civil engineer 1793-1868). Due to COVID-19 the last three plaque unveilings have been postponed until 2021.

The Woollahra Plaque Scheme webpages attracted over 550 visits. If you have a suggestion for a plaque nomination please visit our website. The closing date for community plaque nominations is 30 April each year.



📷 2020 Woollahra Digital Literary Award Winners – Peter Polites, Amanda Tink, Omar Sakr and Mez Breeze.

2020 Woollahra Digital Literary Award

Now in its fourth year, the Woollahra Digital Literary Award continues to grow in reputation, with a 57% increase in entries. 132 submissions were received this year with all categories of Fiction, Non-Fiction and Poetry achieving growth in entry numbers.

Judges Stephen Pham, Sam Twyford-Moore and Pip Smith returned to review the entries and select a shortlist of 20 works from which the winners were announced. A total of \$7,000 was awarded across the three categories.

The winners were:

Fiction: Peter Polites, *The Final Boys*

Non-Fiction: Amanda Tink, *A History of Reading: Alan Marshall and Helen Keller*

Poetry: Omar Sakr, *Where I Am Not*

To encourage community engagement in the Woollahra Digital Literary Award, a Readers' Choice Award was introduced this year. This new initiative allowed the public to vote for their favourite shortlisted work and 388 votes were received. Mez Breeze won for her work *Perpetual Nomads*, receiving a small cash prize of \$250.

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the Awards night held on Thursday 28 May became an online event. This provided an opportunity for greater involvement from the public with over 140 people viewing the winners announcement. Michaela Kalowski presented the event with Mayor Councillor Susan Wynne announcing the four winners.

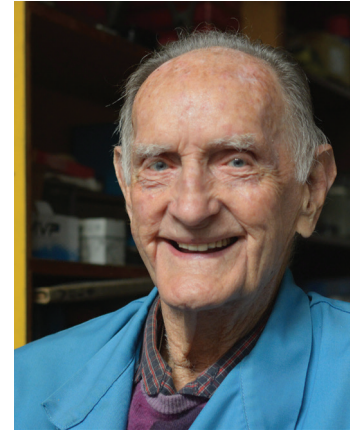
I would like to thank Woollahra Council and everyone involved in the hard work of planning, organising and judging all of the categories but particularly the Non-Fiction. There is little and dwindling support for long form writing in Australia and so it is wonderful to have it supported in this way.

– Amanda Tink, Non-Fiction winner

Woollahra Libraries continues to build a reputation as a library that supports writers, both established and emerging. Over the past 12 months, a number of programs were delivered to encourage and grow our writing community.

The Library's existing writing workshops have proved popular, with participants expressing an interest in attending similar events in the future. This led to a new initiative introduced in mid-2019 as part of National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo). Monthly writing workshops were held in the lead up to November 2019. These workshops guided writers through the themes of starting a novel, character development, structure and plot, the editing process and common challenges facing writers. Throughout November, each of the Libraries provided a 'Come Write In' space. This brought authors together to pursue their novel-writing goals and share knowledge with one another.

Other Library events that supported local writers included monthly Author Talks, quarterly Writers & Readers program and quarterly Culture Culture activities. The community heard from a range of different authors, writers and journalists who spoke about topics such as newly released books, slam poetry and reading recommendations.



📷 Frank McGovern OAM, John Wright, Morris Zamel and Phil O'Sullivan.

World War 2 Remembered

To mark the 75th anniversary of Australia entering the Second World War, Woollahra Libraries commissioned a series of four oral histories with servicemen who took part in the war and who had a connection to the Woollahra area. The interviews explored the lives and memories of Frank McGovern OAM, a seaman gunner and prisoner of war, John Wright, RAAF Repair and Salvage unit, Morris Zamel, commando coach and Phil O'Sullivan, machine gun mechanic. This project complemented a similar project completed in 2017, commemorating the 100th anniversary of World War 1. The World War 2 commemoration project was made possible through a grant from the Office of Veteran Affairs, together with funding from Woollahra Council.

The involvement of the community in the project was a rewarding experience. The four servicemen felt valued in being asked to participate in the project, and although 75 years had passed since the end of World War 2, their contribution to the war effort was not forgotten. These stories, both of soldiers at war and the families left behind, will ensure that the legacy of our forebears will live on.

World War 2 Remembered webpages include a photo gallery, stories from Woollahra and personal recounts from local residents. This project will continue until Armistice Day on 11 November 2020. If you would like to contribute, please contact the Local History team at localhistory@woollahra.nsw.gov.au or visit the Local History webpage.

The rich and varied history of Woollahra continues to be a significant source of interest for residents and others in the wider community. In September 2019 as part of History Week, Local History staff delivered a 'Landscape and Memory of Darling Point' walk and 'Maps and Mansions' talk, both of which were well attended. Guest speakers participated in the regular Discover Your Local History program providing expert perspectives on an interesting range of historical topics. The Library also hosted hands-on workshops to introduce researchers to frequently used Local History resources.

Local History staff continued to add to the Digital Archive collection which contains records such as photographs, newspaper indexes, subdivision files and Council Minutes. This is an invaluable resource for those researching the built environment, family history and the history and development of the local area. The Library welcomes donations that relate to the history of the local community.



📷 indyreads app on a tablet device.



📷 Interactive floor display in the children's area of Woollahra Library at Double Bay.

New Online Content

Woollahra Libraries continued to expand the digital collection covering eBooks, eAudiobooks, eMagazines, and introduced an online video streaming service.

In April 2020, the Library launched indyreads, a new platform offering access to over 10,000 eBooks and eAudiobooks with a focus on Australian and independent publishers. Content for this platform is supplied and curated by the State Library of NSW. Between April and June 2020 there were 345 indyreads loans.

Beamafilm is a new video streaming platform offering simultaneous access to over 1,000 movies including award winners, independent features, documentaries, classic movies and Australian favourites. Since its launch in December 2019 there have been 2,587 film and documentary streams through this service.

Woollahra Libraries has also expanded the RB Digital platform to include a selection of simultaneous use titles. This service presents a great option for Book Clubs and customers looking for new and popular content that is available to download straight away, with no waiting lists.

During the Library's temporary closure, staff created instructional video guides for all eCollection platforms. These videos were viewed over 500 times.

I am thrilled with the eMagazines – they have opened up a whole new world for me.

– Patricia

New Technology Provision

This year has seen customers at Paddington and Watsons Bay Libraries able to access the latest iMac computers, as offered by Woollahra Library at Double Bay. The introduction of these computers gives customers equitable access to modern creative technology across the Library network.

The NSW State Library Local Priority Grant has allowed for the introduction of EFTPOS payments in Watsons Bay Library, so staff no longer need to handle cash.

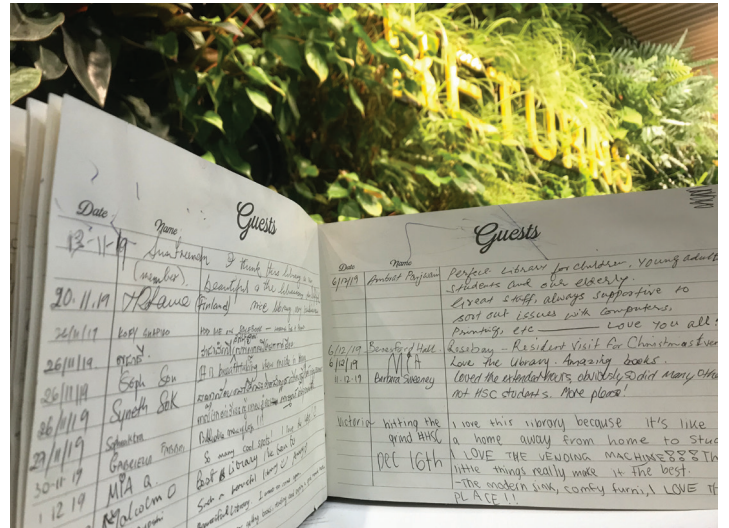
New assistive technology Reader Pens are now available for customers to borrow at each library. The device reads printed text aloud, which is particularly useful to customers with dyslexia, low vision, limited literacy, or who experience difficulty with reading.

A new laser projector was installed at Woollahra Library at Double Bay, resulting in a dramatic improvement in image quality of the popular children's interactive floor display.

Following a survey of library customers, and after reviewing software on the Public Access Computers, the Library will be introducing Adobe Creative Cloud and 3D Computer aided design and modelling software on Windows computers.



📍 Library Customer Service Coordinator, Corinna Pierce, at the pop up consultation for Sunday Opening at Paddington Library.



📍 Guest book at Woollahra Library at Double Bay filled with customer feedback.

Community Engagement

Woollahra Libraries values the community's feedback on services, programs and the collection. The Library actively seeks input to ensure that it is meeting community expectations and anticipating demand.

The Library's community engagement includes:

- Monthly Library eNewsletters as a means of keeping customers up to date on Library initiatives and upcoming events and programs. There are over 12,000 subscribers to this eNewsletter.
- Monthly Spotlight eNewsletters that focus on new releases from 15 different genres within the collection. These eNewsletters promote new material received by Woollahra Libraries and link to their catalogue records to allow for easy reservation.
- The Woollahra Libraries Facebook page has 2,330 followers and will soon be joined by an Instagram account.
- A guest book at each Library provides an opportunity for customers to offer immediate feedback. Woollahra Library at Double Bay displays a whiteboard and marker asking for suggestions for improvement.
- An 'Ask the Library' service via the website allows customers to complete an online form which Library staff respond to in a timely manner. Approximately 1,900 requests are received each year. This service also covers 'Suggestion for Purchase' for new material not currently held in the Library's collection.
- A biannual survey of all current Library members to provide direction on the Library's collection, services and programs. The next survey will provide input into a new Library Strategic plan.
- A number of pop up consultations held across the year on a range of library topics.
- Online surveys for each event. Participants are able to comment on the speaker(s), event time, duration, topic, promotional channels and offer other suggestions for future programs.

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

