



FLINDERS SHIRE COUNCIL

Library and Youth Development Action Plan





ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

The Flinders Shire Council would like to acknowledge the Yirendali people as Traditional Owners and the oldest living culture of the land on which our Council operates, and pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.



Contents

Message from the Mayor.....	5
Our Plan.....	7
The Engagement Process.....	8
Bringing the Plan to Life.....	9
Community Aspirations.....	10
Library Services.....	11
Youth Services.....	14
Challenges and Opportunities.....	15
Strengths.....	16
Big Ideas.....	17
Library Services Action Plan.....	18
Outcome One.....	19
Outcome Two.....	20
Outcomes.....	21
Youth Services Action Plan.....	22
Outcome One.....	23
Outcome Two.....	24
Outcome Three.....	25
Outcome Four.....	26
Outcomes.....	27



A STRATEGIC OUTLOOK TO SUPPORT LIBRARY SERVICES AND YOUTH ACROSS THE SHIRE





Message from the Mayor

I am pleased to present to you the Library and Youth Services Action Plan for 2023 - 2028.

The importance of a vibrant and engaging Library in our community is evident, with the service playing a vital role in our community members lives and being held in strong regard. In the Flinders Shire, we are very proud to have fostered a Library space which offers an array of services to community members and visitors alike, providing a space for inclusion, learning and connection. This plan will guide our actions over the next five years, highlighting the importance of continuing to provide opportunities to connect and learn and remain relevant and responsive to community needs.

Throughout this plan we also discuss how and where we can more actively include and engage our youth demographic within our community. Flinders Shire residents agree that this is a priority area and Council are leading many projects in response to this including research and advocacy in the establishment of a Country University site, which will provide opportunity and training for young people to remain in the area while accessing education opportunities.

I thank all who have contributed to this plan throughout the engagement process and look forward to having a shared vision to work together as we move into the future.

Regards,

Kate Peddle, Mayor



ASPIRATIONS PRIORITIES VALUES





Our Plan

The Flinders Shire Council Library and Youth Development Action Plan (LYDAP) is based on the aspirations, priorities, and values of our community and sets out a straightforward way forward for Flinders Shire Council Library Service.

The LYDAP, is a shared community vision and has been developed by balancing what the community has asked for and what needs to be done. Flinders Shire Council has developed this plan through consultation with community via online, telephone, face-to-face community survey and forums. When the plan refers to 'we' and 'our' it refers to the collective Flinders Shire community, including Council, other levels of government, businesses, organisations, and residents.

Like a roadmap, the LYDAP serves to aid Council in implementation of its library and youth development projects and allocation of its budgets. The plan highlights what the current challenges and opportunities are, what will be done, who will be doing it and how these goals will be accomplished to directly support the overarching Council strategic and annual operating plans.

The purpose of this plan is to provide a strategic framework to take the Flinders Shire Council Library and Youth Services forward, guided by Council's strategic goals. Many of the initiatives in this plan are deliberately aspirational and some will require significant investment, extending beyond the life of this plan. All will require community support and participation if we are to realise our goals.

Objectives

The objectives of the Flinders Shire Council Library and Youth Development Action Plan over the next five years are:

- Maintain and develop library services that actively engage and serve our people to provide a space for learning, inclusion, and community.
- Increase opportunities for young people to become more engaged, active and innovative members of the community and outline who young people will be empowered to participate.
- Unlock opportunities for investment in Flinders Shire business and education offerings.

Measuring Progress

Our outcomes are listed in this plan under each theme heading and our progress will be measured and monitored through quarterly and annual reports.



The Engagement Process

Background

To inform the development of the LYDAP, Flinders Shire Council designed an engagement program in accordance with the internationally recognised best practice IAP2 framework for engagement and is based on the fundamental principles for engagement of social equity and justice.

Level of engagement.

Using the IAP2 Framework for Engagement, Flinders Shire Council engaged in three levels of engagement to connect with the community.

INFORMING

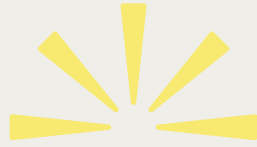
CONSULTING

INVOLVING

Residents across the Flinders Shire provided extensive insight and feedback during the engagement activities with close to 10% of the region's population directly or indirectly engaged over the program. Overall, the community valued having the opportunity to voice their opinions and be heard on other topics in addition to the themes discussed.

A key focus of the engagement plan was to ensure that activities were undertaken in Hughenden as well as the smaller towns, providing a sufficient geographic coverage to afford as many community members as possible with an opportunity to participate.





DRIVING THE COMMUNITY TOWARDS ITS DESIRED FUTURE.

Bringing the Plan to Life

Role of Council - Consultation, Delivery and Monitoring

Council has a key role in driving the community towards its desired future. Council has developed the Library and Youth Development Action Plan on behalf of the community and will continue to take a lead role in facilitating and advocating the plan's objectives.

Community engagement activities will continue during the five-year life of the plan to make sure our goals for the future meet the changing needs of our community. Council also has a role in delivering key strategies within the plan and will advocate on behalf of the community. Council will partner with other government agencies, nongovernment organisations and residents to deliver activities not solely resourced by Council.

This plan is supported by Flinders Shire Council key planning instruments:

- Operational Plan (2022 – 2023)
- Corporate Plan (2023 – 2028)



Community Aspirations

Our community's aspirations will not be achieved without sufficient resources – time, money, assets, and people – to carry them out. Council is committed to allocating resources to ensure the successful delivery of the strategies within the LYDAP, while ensuring the continuation of basic services in a fiscally responsible manner.

Role of residents and local organisations - Participation

Bringing the LYDAP to life requires working together. Our residents, community groups and local businesses have an ongoing role in providing input and actively participating in delivery of program and activities. Moreover, the community and local businesses should feel inspired and passionate about the plan to champion, run and develop plans to deliver on some of the key actions highlighted in this plan.

Role of other agencies - Partnership

Through the development of robust and strategic partnerships and sharing resources with other government and non-government agencies, our plans can be brought to life.

Council is committed to working with other levels of government and neighbouring local Councils to support objectives that reach beyond our local government area.





State and Regional Context

Flinders Shire Council Library and Youth Services Development Action Plan aligns with the State Library of Queensland Service Level Agreement with Local Councils and the Queensland Youth Strategy.

The three key building blocks of the Queensland Youth Strategy that Flinders Shire Council has considered in the development of this action plan are:

1. Building block 1 – Supporting our most vulnerable young people

Young people, irrespective of circumstances, gender, ethnicity, age, or religion, can actively participate and contribute to Queensland's global future.

2. Building block 3 – Healthy futures

Young people are healthy, active, strong and resilient, and have the capability to maintain their wellbeing in a rapidly changing world.

3. Building block 4 – Educating into employment

Young people have the knowledge and technical skills to successfully navigate current and future economic and technological pathways to employment.

Additionally, the Premier has identified key focus areas for that government agencies and Council are to consider in their overall planning process. The Flinders Shire Council will align with these priorities listed below:

- Good jobs - Good, secure jobs in our traditional and emerging industries.
- Better services - Deliver even better services right across Queensland.
- Great lifestyle - Protect and enhance our Queensland lifestyle as we grow.



Library Services

The vision for the Flinders Shire Library is to be A Library for all the community, at the heart of the Flinders Shire.

As the heart of cultural life in the Flinders Shire, the library plays a vital role as a community hub and secondary information centre. The library is responsible for delivering many of Council’s key community programs such as First Five Forever, Afternoon Library Club, School Holiday Programs. The library provides residents connection, it is the centre of reading, discovery and learning and works to strengthen community identity. With great distances between each town and village across the Shire, the library is a valuable resource for residents. Not only as a provider of books, internet access, information technology and local news but as a connection hub for the community.

Overall, the library is well utilised and valued within the community, however, main concerns expressed indicate the need for additional spacing to continue and improve current offerings.



Library Usage Statistics

For year period – 2022/23

DOOR TALLY

14,810

LOANS (HARD ITEMS)

3,688

LOAN RETURNS

8,131

TECH ASSISTANCE 88.5 HRS

BOOKABLE SPACES 406.5 HRS

HISTORY ENQUIRES 57

EVENTS 502

(Seniors Morning Tea, First 5 Forever Program, After School Program & School Holiday Programs)

NEW MEMBERSHIPS 64

LOANS 1691*

(Electronic – BorrowBox, Libby) calculated quarterly via SLQ as a regional library collective.

COMPUTER HOURS 68.45HRS

READING IN LIBRARY 76.75HRS



Challenges & Opportunities

Space

The greatest challenge for the Flinders Shire Library is the physical space. While the library makes effective use of the space available the site is extremely limited in terms of size and subsequently its ability to offer programs, learning and development opportunities, access to working spaces and even quiet reading spaces. Across the region, lack of required space was a common theme particularly as the community's needs grow and develop. The library's central hub status is imperative to maintain so that the library can continue fulfil the role of news provider, community connector and unofficial information centre. The library is utilised by many diverse groups of different ages and purposes with competing space needs and requirements. The Flinders Shire Library of the future needs to be a space where a growing community can be accommodated, learning, innovation and connection can be facilitated and business, education and creativity elevated.

Resourcing

As a vital community resource, demands on library staff are high with limited available resourcing to fulfill community needs. Our community has acknowledged the importance the library plays in lives of our residents and hope to see its continued development, improvement and sustainability. To meet these needs, we need to support library programs through increased resource allocation.



Strengths

The Flinders Shire Library boasts several strengths; however, it is the positive contribution it makes to the community that is the most valuable. Much respect is given to the library's staff and ability to help meet resident's and visitor needs. The library's online and physical resources are well regarded, and many community members see the library as an essential service for the region.



Big Ideas

Through extensive consultation with the Flinders Shire community, the reoccurring themes and ideas for library services included:

- Develop a plan for increasing library space or investing in a new location for the library to co-locate with the proposed country university centre.
- Ongoing investment in library resources, equipment and increase program delivery and staff support. Suggestions included the upgrade and additional supply of technology offerings and range of books. Additionally, the community expressed a desire for library services to be delivered in the smaller communities such as Prairie and Torrens Creek.
- Undergo a review of current events, engagements, and library services to align with current desire for new opportunities for diverse groups within the space available.
- Increase library communication to community about current events, resources, and plans via social media, e-newsletters, hard copy etc.
- Partner with community to develop outreach opportunities within the library space.
- Increased opportunity for towns to have access to mobile library services.



Youth Services

The Flinders Shire Council vision for youth is for the Flinders Shire to be a place where young people can thrive with support and opportunity for their future.

Youth, those aged between 15 and 24 years, make up a third of the total community of the Flinders Shire. From the 2021 national census data, youth make up 29.4% of the total population of Flinders Shire. On average, families in the area have two children and within the Flinders Shire there are 2.3 people per household.

Additionally, Flinders Shire has a higher number of indigenous residents than both the Queensland and Australian averages with 11.3% of the community identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, with the state and national averages at 4.6% and 3.2% respectively.

With growing percentages of young people across the region, growing up in the Flinders Shire should be exciting. The region should be a place where young people can see genuine prospects for their future and the development of this plan is just one way Flinders Shire Council is demonstrating its commitment to the future of the region through the next generation. Council wants to see young people thrive by providing opportunities for employment and social connection and ensuring young people have a voice on matters important to them. To develop this plan, Council engaged directly with young members of the community to get a clearer picture of what life is like for a young person living in the region, and what they would like to see.

This plan is the first of its kind for Flinders Shire Council and reflects the feedback collected through consultation.





Challenges and Opportunities

Housing

Existing housing is consumed by current residents and workers coming to the region, which creates gaps in supply and opportunity for investors to meet demand. An accommodation supply increase to align with town growth aspirations, is required to project future needs. Given the hope for youth to stay within the community, additional housing is needed to encourage youth to stay, train and live within the region long term.

Access to transport

One of the biggest concerns from the youth and indigenous community was the lack of transport options and access to transportation services. Having improved public transport for young people living in isolated locations across the region would improve connectivity and participation.

Youth crime

Our community has acknowledged a concern for the growing trend of youth crime. It is imperative to continue to recognise key opportunities for engagement with youth, particularly younger youth to enable a culture of safety and security especially amongst vulnerable groups. Working in conjunction with community groups and support services will provide key opportunities for connection, social inclusion and promote an overall ethos of community across the Flinders Shire.

Country University Centre

There is strong interest in establishing a Country University Centre to encourage youth finishing school to stay in the region with remote learning opportunities, or trade school opportunities locally as many young people are currently travelling to Townsville for extended periods of time to undertake further education and training.

Investment and innovation

Our community has identified the need for further investment and encouraging new businesses to start up in the region as the key for future sustainability and economic resilience. We need to encourage and incentivise a diversity of investment to promote economic growth in the development of new sectors, as well as the growth and expansion of existing businesses through Council's Economic Development Strategy.

By fostering a culture of innovation, being open to new ideas and promoting entrepreneurship we can promote ourselves as being "open for business." This is especially important to develop within the youth of the Flinders Shire to be a driving force for innovative ideas, incorporation of modern technologies and raise the profile of the area to be recognised for its innovation and business accomplishments. Local youth have shown themselves to be engaged and interested in the workforce and so an inspired generation with the right tools and resources can contribute to Flinders Shire's goals to be known for innovation and modernisation.

Large-scale infrastructure investments can be a catalyst for positive change, such as the Hughenden Irrigation Project Corporation (HIPC) and providing opportunities for youth, making it easier for youth to have access to potential traineeships and additional employment opportunities.



Strengths

Active and engaged young workforce

The youth of the Flinders Shire are an active part of the workforce with the engagement activity reporting anecdotally that most teenage youth in the area having part time jobs.





Big Ideas

Through extensive consultation with the Flinders Shire community, the reoccurring themes and ideas for youth included:

- Providing pathways for volunteer and learning opportunities – partnering with local businesses to offer internships and encouraging local business to promote career pathways.
- Upgrading community outdoor assets to more accessible, modern facilities (playgrounds, skate park, water bubblers, public toilets).
- Seek funding for the development of a Country University Centre and communicate updates.
- Partner with library and local businesses to introduce programs to engage Youth through learning, working and social opportunities such as digital music recording, gaming, social media.
- Improve access to transport through a community bus service for school-aged students
- Establish a Youth Council to ensure community youth has a voice within the region, offering an opportunity for young people to build leadership skills and engage with their community.



LIBRARY SERVICES ACTION PLAN

Our library services actively engage and serve our people to provide a space for learning, inclusion and community.





Outcome 1

What do we want?

State-of-the-art Library facility and services.

Partners

- QLD Government
- Community groups
- Young People
- Current Members/users of the library
- Education providers in Townsville
- TAFE QLD
- State Library QLD

How will we get there	Timeframe			
	Ongoing	Now	Next	Later
1.1 Develop a library masterplan with consideration given to relocating the library to create more space and opportunity for development of co-working spaces, study areas, quiet rooms, dedicated First Five and young people areas.				
1.2 Explore funding options for library redevelopment.				
1.3 Upgrade existing computers with more modern computer technology, internet capability, and printing capacity.				
1.4 Invest in additional resources beyond computers e.g., 3D printers, laser cutters, virtual reality goggles, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) equipment, catering facilities, digital signage.				
1.5 Build or maintain community partnerships with health care providers, childcare centres, local businesses and community groups and other Council departments to utilise the library space to host, oversee and create events and outreach opportunities for all ages at the library.				
1.6 Build and maintain partnership with education providers in Townsville and TAFE QLD to ensure adequate technology and resources are available to support local learners.				
1.7 Continue to provide training and investment in library staff to increase capacity and service levels through SLQ.				
1.8 Investigate volunteer opportunities to engage youth in the library and programming.				
1.9 Improved access to digital technologies and digital literacy programs delivered in partnership with State Library of Queensland (SLQ), community service providers, local and state businesses, and universities to provide resources and educational services.				
1.10 Further investigate robotics kits and loan programs with partners.				
1.11 Continue to provide open invitations to schools to engage with the library and visit the space.				
1.12 Investigate workshops and training opportunities on digital technology, digital storytelling, photography, coding, and others.				



Outcome 2

What do we want?

Actively engaged and well serviced community.

Partners

- Library staff
- Community groups
- Young People
- Current Members/users of the library

How will we get there	Timeframe			
	Ongoing	Now	Next	Later
2.1. Review current library programs and assess priorities in-line with community feedback and needs.		■		
2.2. Actively promote and highlight library achievements and activities via the Flinders Shire Council social media channels to increase engagement and awareness of library initiatives.		■		
2.3. Source funding to increase program delivery in both Hughenden and other townships through mobile library service to the towns and villages or establish library outpost/book swap location.			■	
2.4. Improve access to library for most vulnerable community members by keeping library membership free, well-resourced and accessible.	■			
2.5. Ensure that library technology that is easy to use, facilitates self-service and meets community needs.			■	
2.6. Develop yearly community survey to ascertain service delivery standards and sentiment within the community.		■		
2.7. Ensure library collections meet the learning, innovation and creativity needs of the community by continuing to seek feedback from community and respond to their needs.		■		
2.8. Initiate annual Stories of Flinders competition - across age groups and media from written stories, photos and digital stories to engage community and acquire new written and oral stories of the region.			■	
2.9. Partner with Community Services team to value add to community events and activities		■		



Outcomes

Strong Library presence within the community.

Measure	Source
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• % of residents satisfied with library services• Membership numbers• Borrowing numbers• Increased attendance in library• Revitalised library venue• Number of library programs available	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community survey• Library data

Improved library resources

Measure	Source
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• % of residence satisfied with library services• Delivery of added resources and facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community survey• Library data



YOUTH SERVICES ACTION PLAN

We have a flourishing youth community that sees the Flinders Shire as a place where they can thrive and positively contribute to the health and happiness of the shire.





Outcome 1

What do we want?

Robust youth community that is engaged within the wider Flinders Shire community.

Partners

- Flinders Shire Council
- Local schools
- Local businesses

How will we get there	Timeframe			
	Ongoing	Now	Next	Later
1.1 Explore different models for the establishment for a Youth Engagement Group to work with Council and provide advice to Councillors and Managers on the development and implementation of key youth targeted initiatives.				
1.2 Ongoing maintenance of outdoor community spaces to promote healthy recreational activities such as the basketball courts, the skate park and public toilets/water bottle refill stations.				
1.3 Ensure youth-focused events, programs and facilities are affordable and accessible outside of school hours.				
1.4 Advocate for establishment of community bus service for young people living in isolated locations across the shire.				
1.5 Promote Youth Justice resources, programs and services to help young people in the youth justice system or at risk of entering the system transition to success.				
1.6 Engage youth in planning of Council-run events to encourage participation and attendance by young people.				
1.7 Provide opportunities for intergenerational engagement and collaboration e.g., school aged children engaging with aged care clients.				
1.8 Provide additional events and programs aimed at young people such as Driving Expo, sporting competitions, Skatepark competition, information workshops, disco/dance parties, youth art show, music festivals or entertainment shows.				
1.9 Engage young people in the coordination and delivery of annual Youth Week celebrations and activities.				



Outcome 2

What do we want?

Skilled and work ready young people.

Partners

- Local schools
- Local businesses
- Training and development organisations (RTO's)

How will we get there	Timeframe			
	Ongoing	Now	Next	Later
2.1 Provide youth employment and volunteer programs with council departments and local businesses.				
2.2 Investigate opportunities to provide access to driver training opportunities and education on driver safety.				
2.3 Work with local schools to provide volunteer learning opportunities for students.				
2.4 Provide annual workshops/training for young people at the library on digital mediums, gaming, STEAM activities				



Outcome 3

What do we want?

Happy and healthy youth population.

Partners

- Local community groups
- QLD Government
- Local schools

How will we get there	Timeframe			
	Ongoing	Now	Next	Later
3.1 Involve young people in co-designing solutions to tackle emerging challenges to their health and wellbeing.				
3.2 Promotion and activation of council-owned sport and recreation facilities to encourage health and wellbeing.				
3.3 Build partnerships with health and wellbeing service providers to develop innovative strategies for young people that encourage healthy lifestyle.				
3.4 Partner with local groups to offer youth mentoring opportunities in both sports and culture, allowing youth to both be mentored and be a mentor for younger kids.				
3.5 Partner with health services to provide culturally appropriate and targeted communication to encourage youth participation in health-related initiatives e.g. No smoking, heart health, healthy weight, alcohol and drug use.				



Outcome 4

What do we want?

Established Country Universities Centre.

Partners

- QLD Government
- Federal Government

How will we get there	Timeframe			
	Ongoing	Now	Next	Later
4.1 Seek funding for the realisation of a Country University or training centre to encourage youth to undertake further study or trade education within the Flinders Shire				



Outcomes

Increased number of young people remain in the area.

Measure	Source
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Number of residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Australian Bureau of Statistics

A strong diverse economy with job opportunities for youth

Measure	Source
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Youth unemployment rate low	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Australian Bureau of StatisticsFlinders Shire Council

Increased youth participation with community engagement activities

Measure	Source
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Attendance survey demographics on events, community engagement programs and library usage/attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Individual engagement organisationsCouncil community survey

Reduction in youth crime

Measure	Source
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Crime rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Flinders Shire Police



FLINDERS SHIRE COUNCIL

Ph. (07) 4741 2900

flinders@flinders.qld.gov.au

Hughenden Office:

34 Gray Street, Hughenden QLD 4821

