

Far North District Council

Future Libraries

Far North District Libraries Strategy 2018-2028



This strategy has been developed by the Far North District Council staff based on work done by Sue Sutherland Consulting. The company was engaged to review Library Service Delivery, undertake a Local Government Act 2002, Section17A review, and provide a draft strategy for future services.

October 2017

Introduction

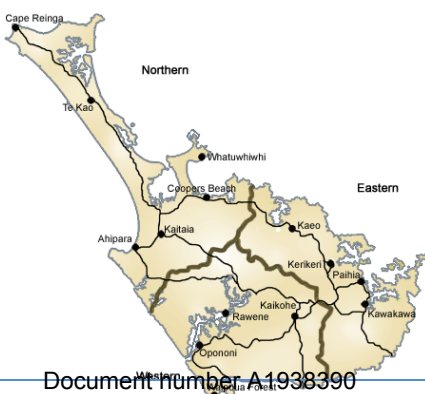
The way people access information, learn, read for pleasure, socialise and do business is changing rapidly. This is due to the introduction and uptake of new devices, apps and interactions made possible by the 'always on, always connected' internet. Far North District Libraries recognises the need to strike a balance between sustaining traditional services for its members and playing its role in staying relevant and providing opportunities from these technologically driven advancements to all in the community not just those who love and use libraries now.

The Council provides six libraries to serve the learning, literacy and recreational needs of the district. There is good community support both from those who use the libraries and, to a lesser extent, from the community at large. However, there remain many in the community for whom the library is inaccessible, does not deliver in a way that meets their needs or who have had little or no exposure to what opportunities our libraries can offer them.

This ten year strategy has been architected based on a comprehensive service review and assessment of the trends, challenges and opportunities that the Library can provide to individuals, families and the community. It strikes a balance between affordability and service provision, recognising that partnership, alliances and community engagement is the primary mechanism to make the objectives in the strategy achievable.

Our Community

The Far North is New Zealand's northern-most district stretching over 200km north to south and with a land area of 7324 square kilometres. The population at 60,789 (2015), and projected to grow to 62,228 by 2043, is spread across a largely rural district with only three towns having a population greater than 4000 and less than 5500.



Over 40%
of the

population identify as Māori and 50% of the district's population live in the most deprived national quintile category. The high deprivation is more concentrated in the north and west of the district than in the east.

The proportion of over 65yr olds is projected to increase in all communities and the proportion of 15–24yr olds, and 25-45yr olds continues to be lower than might be expected given the number of children born and/or living in the district. This age cohort is tending to relocate out of the district for work and education, and lifestyle choices not available in the Far North.

These demographic trends have led to a diverse community with different needs. Far North District Libraries can make a difference to these needs by:

- Contributing to higher levels of educational achievement and literacy – including digital literacy
- Providing opportunities for people's learning, leisure activities and employment
- Utilising the growing digital connectivity to mitigate the need to travel for library services
- Contributing to digital inclusion by making technologies and Wi-Fi available and supporting digital learning, literacy and identity.

Our plan

The *Future Libraries Strategy* outlines where we need to focus our energy and resources together in order to be successful. The plan identifies a number of priorities under three Strategy Focus areas for investment over a ten year period as well as actions that can be undertaken in the next two years. Together these will deliver a library service which is responsive to our community needs in a rapidly changing world.

The plan is consistent with the Council's 2017 Strategic Priorities and Community Outcomes which include:

- Better data and information
- Empowering communities
- Affordable core infrastructure
- Improved Council capabilities and performance

- Address affordability
- Liveable communities that are healthy, safe, connected and sustainable
- ‘Can do’ communities prepared for the unexpected
- Proud, vibrant communities
- Prosperous communities supported by a growing economy

A survey provided an opportunity for local residents to feed in their ideas for how libraries should respond to the changing environment and this has informed the development of the plan.

Vision 2018 - 2028

Far North District Libraries are places that services Communities, develop learning, literacy and identity and enables opportunities.

Our purpose is to provide resources, spaces, technologies and services that enable individuals to learn, be informed, develop personally and contribute to society.

*"... The nature of work is changing and so must we... school leavers should have a known learning centre (The library) ... that supports them to keep on recreating themselves so they can adapt to the changing nature of work."
- Respondent – Online survey*

Principles

Some underpinning principles have guided the development of the strategy. We will:

- Be responsive to local needs at the same time working as one district network
- Partner with others to deliver services and stay current with content and technology
- Have a strong focus on customer service, community engagement and enabling opportunities

Strategy areas

Our strategy has three key focus areas for development over the next ten years:

- **Servicing Communities;**
- **Learning Literacy and Identity and;**
- **Enabling Opportunities**

Our response indicates how we intend to deliver on these elements. Some we can do within the first two years, others will take time and investment to achieve. A work programme will be developed annually.

Servicing Communities

Public libraries offer unique value as civic spaces often acting as the hub of communities. The trend is to bring together libraries with other community, cultural or development activities that contribute to creating great places and building community connections and opportunities.

Libraries provide accessible and open places for meeting, learning and inspiration. Increasingly they will become places for creativity and participation where people come together to develop ideas and create new knowledge.

Currently there are remote Far North communities that are a considerable distance from the six main libraries and also suffer from internet connectivity or mobile coverage challenges. To connect to these communities, our strategy provides for a new mobile library service and a schedule to bring select resources to these communities.



Outcomes we want:

- Connecting Far North communities with a mobile service
- Create library zones and spaces that cater for differing needs
- Well maintained fit-for-purpose facilities

Our libraries need to cater for needs ranging from quiet places for study and reading to social spaces for meeting and working with others. Libraries are used to providing children's activity space but there is also a need for activity areas to run programmes for adults. Good design is essential so that differing needs can be accommodated without impinging on each other. The physical libraries in our district vary in their condition, size and suitability for modern service delivery.

Our response:

- Refurbish Kaikohe Library. In the longer term, work with local initiatives to determine the appropriate development plan

Learning, Literacy and Identity

Reading, literacy and increasingly digital literacy are fundamental skills without which life is more difficult and many doors are closed. Research has shown there is a strong link between reading for pleasure and educational achievement. Students who enjoy reading have consistently higher scores in reading, maths, logical problem solving and attitude (*Growing Independence report, 2006*). An OECD research report from 2002 reported that reading for enjoyment is more important to a child's educational success than their parents' socio-economic status.

Our strategy recognises the rich cultural and historical Identity that the Far North possesses. Libraries are a key resource to capture, maintain and promote that identity. We will provide the means and promote the benefits of Far North residents sharing their past and stories with us to build our collective identity.

Our response:

- Deliver district wide programmes for pre-schoolers that encourage language development and gets them ready for reading
- Run school holiday programmes
- Work with other literacy agencies to support reading for young people and adults who have reading difficulties
- Shape our collections so they are relevant to our different communities' needs

- Refresh Procter Library interior, repaint the exterior and alter fit-out to create better zones
- Work with the Hundertwasser Charitable Trust Centre to develop library options for Kawakawa
- Partner to supply a mobile library service for remote and underserved communities



Outcomes we want:

- Increased traditional and digital literacy
- Get children onto the literacy ladder early
- More people able to read and enjoy reading
- Great collections for reading, listening to and viewing
- Capture, maintain, present and promote the Far North's Identity
- Access to the stories of the past
- People telling and recording their own stories

The ability to read in one's own first language is also crucial. Encouraging more people to speak and read Te Reo means having more books and e-books in the language for both adults and children. For those who migrate to the Far North and who speak languages other than English or Māori having reading materials in their language is also important to their identity.

Our response:

- Increase our Te Reo collections
- Identify and work with new migrants to determine the need for other language materials

People want to know where they come from and how their community has developed. In the past the primary way for stories and history to be recorded was by writing or taking photographs. Today's medium is digital and the creation and recording of today's stories, which will become tomorrow's history, is important if we want to make sure our grandchildren have access to their history.

Our response:

- Partner with organisations that will allow us to capture, organise, present and promote our cultural and historical identity
- Extend our local history archive in the Procter Library to include oral and digital stories
- Digitise our unique material

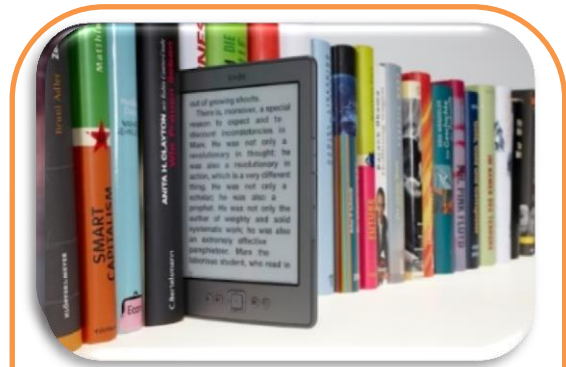
Enabling Opportunities

Personal computers and digital tools are already part of our libraries, providing access to the internet for learning, and living. Getting a qualification, applying for a job, running a business or inventing something and becoming an entrepreneur now happen online. New technologies are beginning to change the way we learn, earn and have fun. Virtual reality, artificial intelligence, augmented reality, 3D printers and robotics are just the latest emerging of devices that are changing the way people will experience and interact with the world. A trend in libraries is for Maker spaces or digital labs which provide opportunities for people to experience and learn how to use these technologies for innovation. For young people in particular, access to these tools can lead to employment and provide a sense of creativity, purpose and challenge to their recreation and development.

Our response:

- Investigate and seek sponsorship and partners to showcase different digital technologies and capabilities in our Library spaces

- Invest in staff training, specialisation and resources to ensure we can articulate and present the main trends and benefits of these new technologies without having to continually fund and support the rapidly changing technologies themselves.



Outcomes we want:

- Partnerships to showcase technologies
- Trained staff who understand the changing technologies and benefits
- Provide resources to get the most from the digital world for opportunity creation and realisation
- Improved job and development opportunities
- Fostering creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship

Having access to different devices and applications is only one aspect of being a digital citizen. Knowing how to use a device, which software or application you need, how to keep safe online, what sites and information you can trust, how to download eBooks and search for the right piece of information are skills that everyone needs if they are to get the best from the digital world. The 20/20 Trust has partnered with libraries to provide the Stepping Up programme and their recently published Digital Inclusion Manifesto (2017), which is supported by the Public libraries of New Zealand, outlines what is needed to ensure everyone has the tools and skills to participate.

Our response:

- Continue to provide one-on-one support and advice for individuals needing help to use library technologies and their own devices
- Use new technologies for improved service provision
- Work with partners in our communities to provide digital literacy programmes
- Work with other agencies to promote and provide access to digital services such as digital job centres, creative and digital skills such as coding and design

Making it easier for people to use library services independently gives users choice and frees up staff time for more value added services. Almost 40% of public libraries in New Zealand have moved to RFID technology for self-check for customers which also provide online methods of payment. This technology has benefits in the management of collections as well.

In our goal to maintain a one region libraries network focus, and recognising the rapidly changing face of user and library technologies, we will revisit the case for exploring a regional alliance libraries model in 2021 so that we can benefit from shared resources, services and purchasing power.

Following this review in 2021, which will include a technology component, decisions will be made regarding migrating to, and implementing newer technologies that may better serve Far North Library patrons and community members.

Until then, investment will be focussed on quality content, connecting communities to services and ensuring staff can better serve the public.

Success factors

To deliver on our vision and focus areas we will need:

- Increased staff capability
- Partnerships with others
- Sustainable services

Increased staff capability

Strong and focussed leadership is required if we are to achieve the changes needed to deliver on our ten year Strategy. The appointment of a District Librarian is a priority.

We will need to invest in training and specialisation of staff who are resilient, adaptable and have the digital skills not only to help others access content and services, but can articulate how it can be used to create opportunities.

Libraries are learning organisations and as such we aspire to have a learning culture that embraces a community engaged service model. We will provide opportunities for staff to upskill and expect that they will want to keep abreast of new things happening in the wider sector.

It is vital that our core library management system and other technologies keep up to date with the latest developments for discovery and management of our data. As part of the 2021 service and technology review we will assess the core library management system options. Our catalogue and content will be incrementally upgraded until the 2021 review.

Partnership with others

Some of our aspirations are ambitious and we will not achieve them working on our own. Leveraging others' expertise and tapping into existing community, government and 3rd party technology, learning, literacy and development programmes will be critical in delivering the library strategy whilst keeping costs down.

We want to involve local communities in the design and delivery of future services. We will explore the use of Focus Groups around a particular initiative at the outset of a project so that we can be sure it is really meeting community needs and not just what we think is needed.

Offering opportunities for community volunteers with expertise to support services and programmes extends what library staff are able to do but does require good coordination.

Of particular importance will be partnering with other literacy, learning and social services provides with similar goals for greater impact.

We will continue to take advantage of national and regional shared services, building on those we already have with Northland libraries and the National Library.

Sustainable services

Wise investment will be needed to deliver on this plan. In collaboration with other council officers we will develop annual work programmes against our ten year strategy with prioritised projects and budget allocations supported in the long term plans.

We will seek sponsorship and financial partners for select digital services that can deliver economic and employment benefits to individuals.

Part of sustainability is good stewardship and reporting. We will develop meaningful indicators that measure the success of our Strategy and report on progress quarterly.

Outcomes we want

- The library team has the capacity and capability to deliver
- Keeping current and creating opportunities through partnerships and programmes
- Accountability for implementation of the 10 year strategy

"There are a number of opportunities to partner up with community organisations to offer programmes: either a mentor partnership (partnering people wanting tech help with community/student volunteers) or through classes (such as community education)"
- Respondent – Online survey