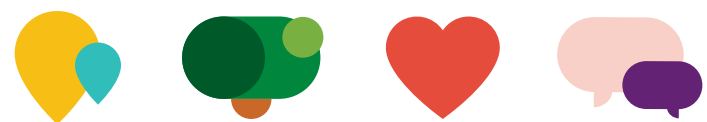




# Using behavioural insights to improve public library services

March 2022



# Acknowledgement of Country

Acknowledging the Traditional Custodian of the land on which we meet today, and we pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging, and extend that respect to any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples joining us today.

Kengal Aboriginal Place  
Wagga Wagga  
Credit: Destination NSW  
Artwork by Nikita Ridgeway.



# Agenda

## SPEAKERS

Cameron Morley

*Public Library Services Manager, State Library of NSW*

Dr Caroline Butler-Bowdon

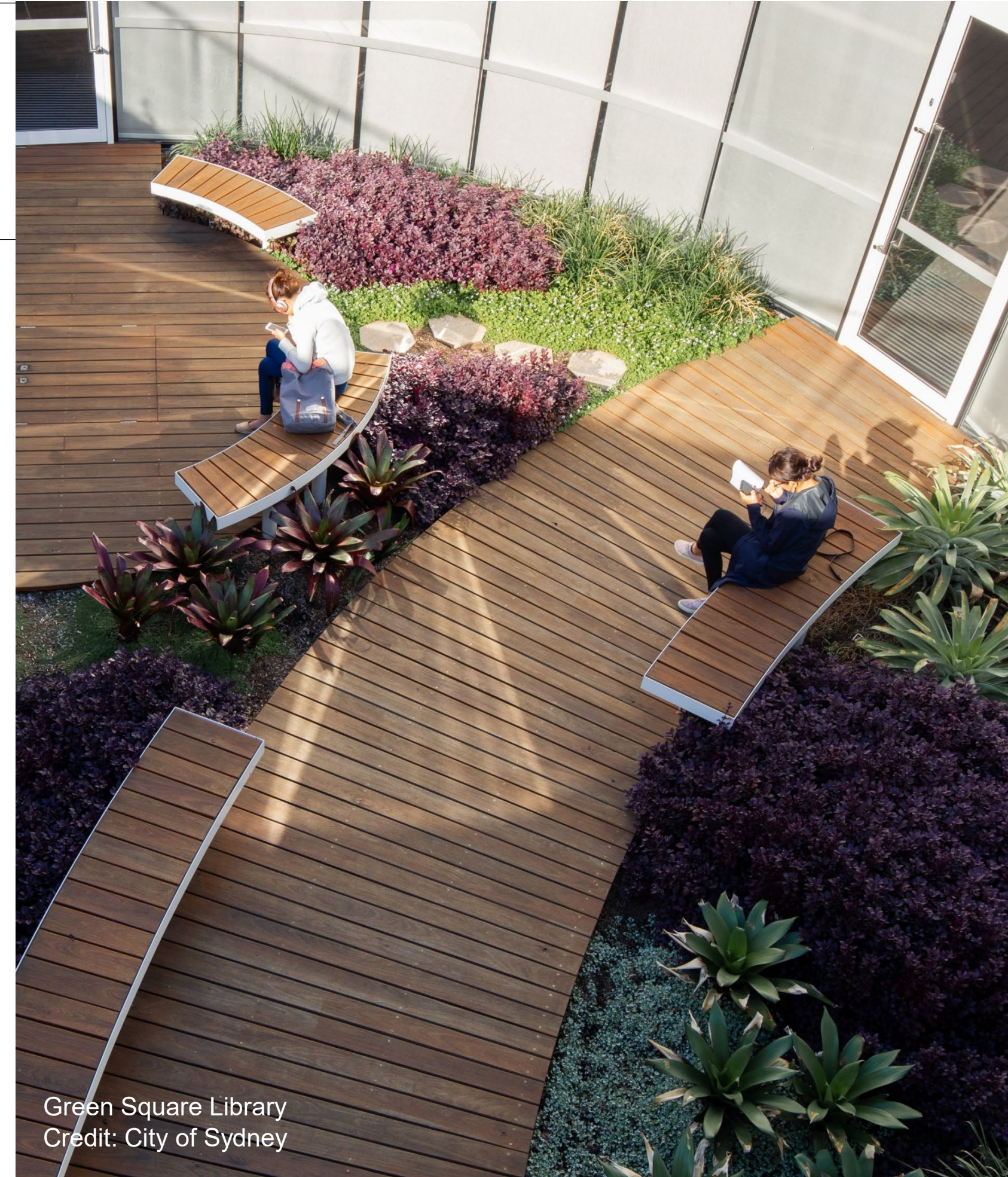
*Executive Director, Public Spaces, Department of Environment & Planning*

Fred Stuart

*Senior Behavioural Advisor, Behavioural Insights Unit, Department of Customer Service*

## Panel session and Q&A

- Michael Spikmans *Digital Services Manager, Northern Beaches Council*
- Michael Scutti *Team Leader Information - Literacy & Learning, Wagga Wagga City Council*
- Heather Davis *Manager Libraries and Learning, City of Sydney*
- Andrea Curr - *Consultant Public Library Services, State Library of NSW*

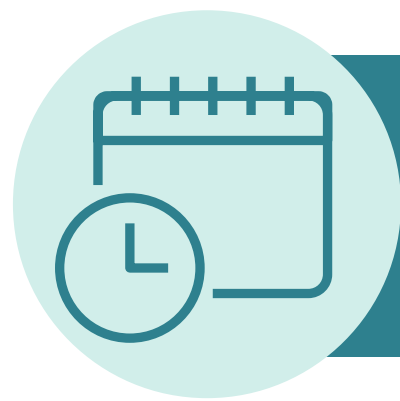


Green Square Library  
Credit: City of Sydney



# Survey Findings

Over 5,500 library members across 4 local government areas completed the surveys



**More books  
and programs**

The top items that would encourage people to visit their library more are:

- availability of books and events
- flexibility of opening times
- awareness of services and increased access to spaces



**Why? To browse  
and borrow**

The main reason selected by members to visit their local library (80%) is to browse and borrow collection items. Public libraries are also used as spaces for a person's individual activities



**70% visits every  
6 months**

More than 70% of members have visited their library – either in person or online – in the last 6 months. Most members visit their library at least once or twice per month.



# Public Libraries are Public Spaces

**Public libraries** are an essential part of our network of public spaces. Within their buildings, grounds and virtual spaces, public libraries provide places for everybody to gather, share ideas, engage in cultural experiences and learn.



Green Square Library  
Credit: City of Sydney

## What is public space?

Public spaces are all places publicly owned or of public use, accessible and enjoyable by all for free and without a profit motive. They include:



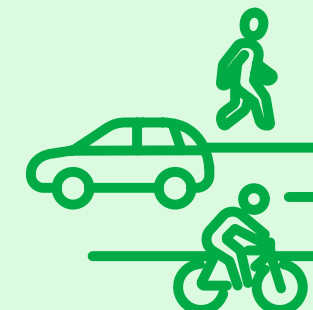
### Public open spaces

parks, gardens, playgrounds, public beaches, riverbanks and waterfronts, outdoor playing fields and courts, and bushland that is open for public access



### Public facilities

public libraries, museums, galleries, civic/community centres, showgrounds and indoor public sports facilities



### Streets

streets, avenues and boulevards; squares and plazas; pavements; passages and lanes, and bicycle paths

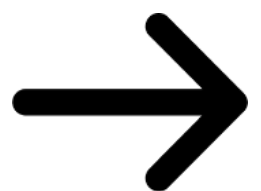
# Context + Drivers



## Program streams

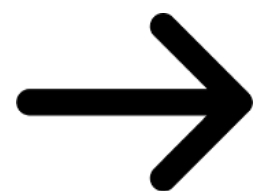
- Building an evidence base, +
- Demonstrate the positive change +
- Systems change and public investment +
- Collaboration and citizen engagement +

**MORE  
BETTER  
ACTIVATED**



## Experiment, thrive not just survive

- Ways to extend existing public space +
- Support for business to stimulate economy recovery +
- Renewed appreciation for public space, amplified by pandemic and bushfires +



## Looking to the Future

- Window to rethink streets and public spaces +
- Large scale, city and region-shaping, infrastructure and renewal projects +
- New ways of planning, delivering and managing public space +



# Innovative partnership

A jointly scoped project to optimise membership, visitation and satisfaction of selected NSW libraries to improve their social, cultural and place performance.



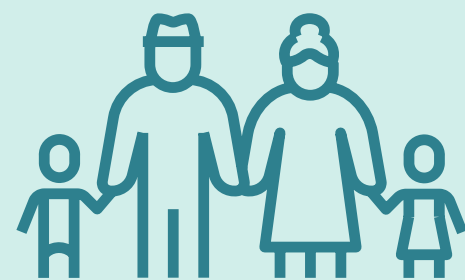
4

participating councils with



15

Libraries across NSW servicing



230k

members



Photo Credit: Northern Beaches Council



Photo Credit: Wagga Wagga City Council

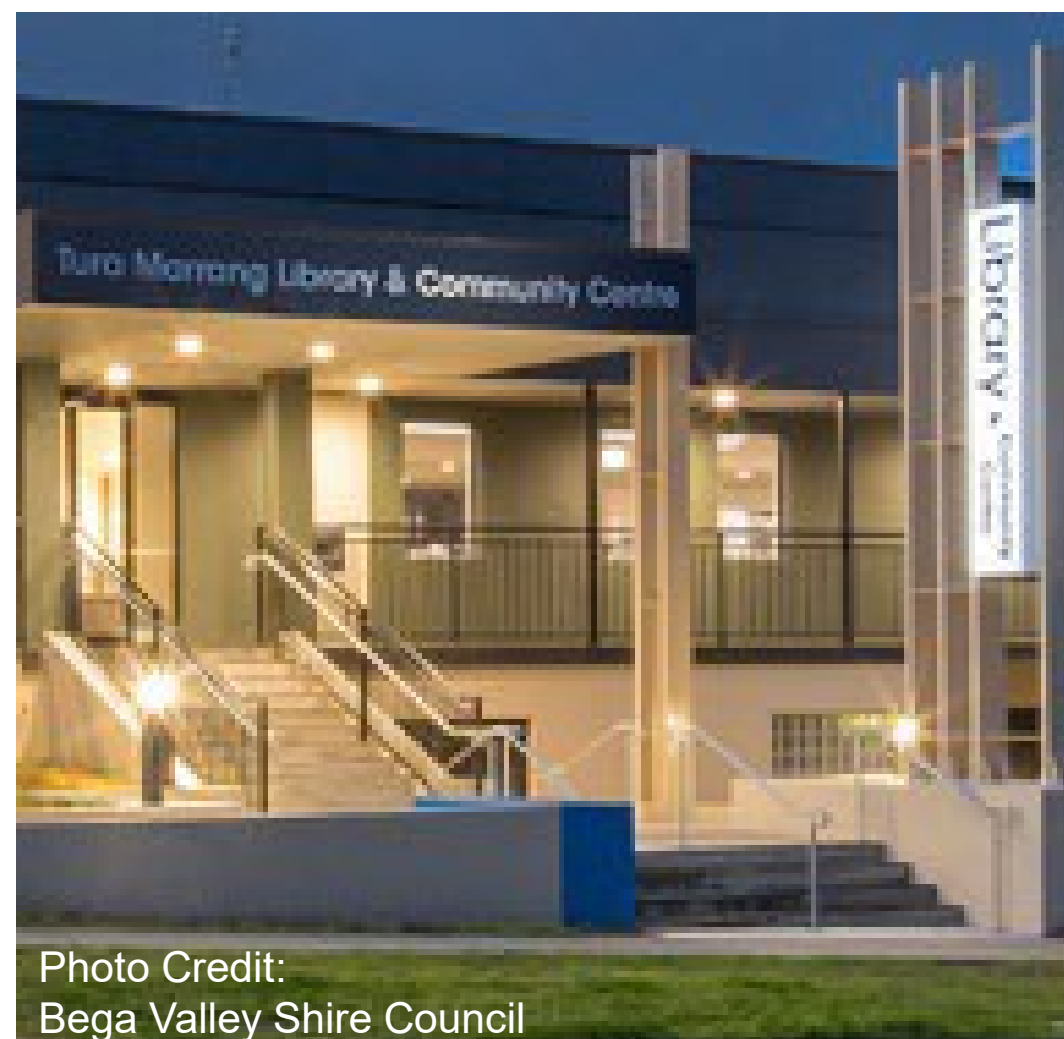


Photo Credit: Bega Valley Shire Council



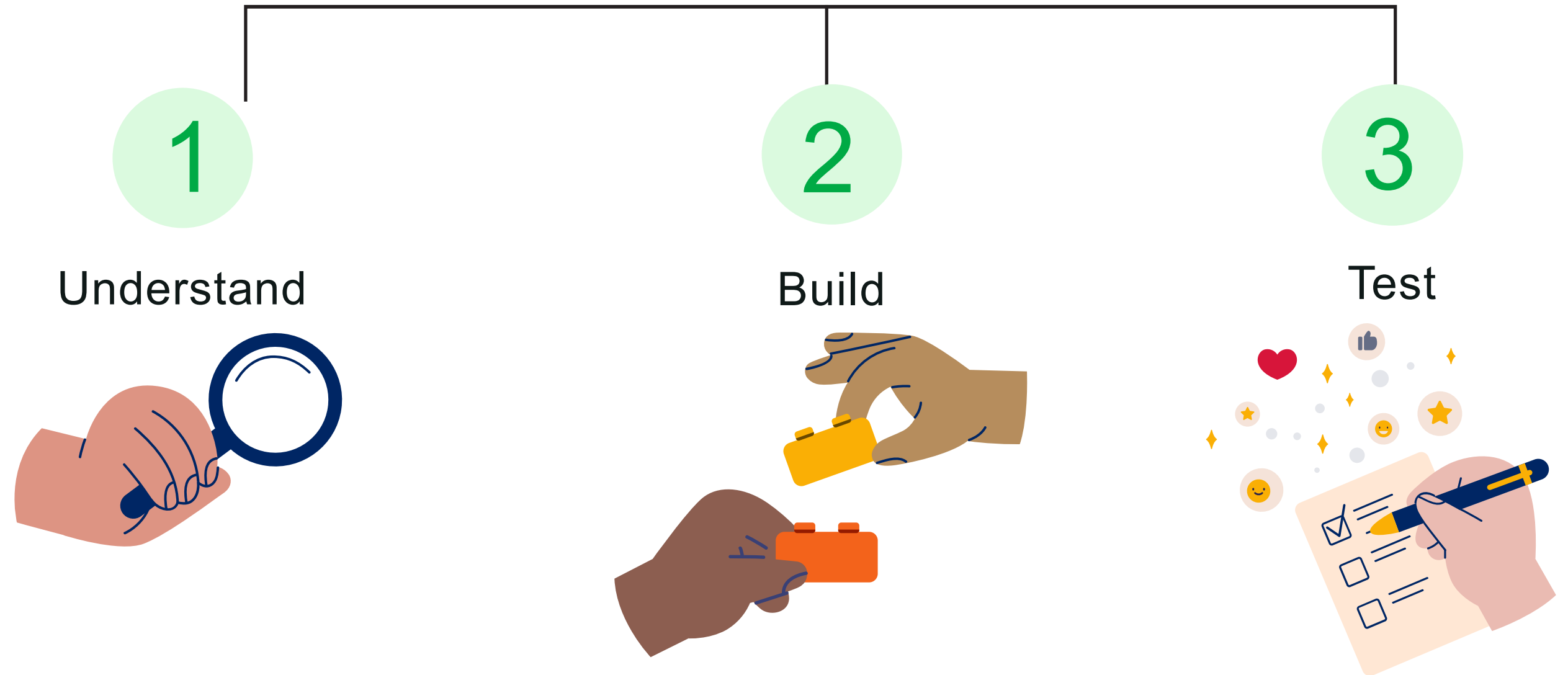
Photo Credit: City of Sydney



# A behavioural insight approach

The aim of a behavioural insight approach in public policy is to develop a realistic understanding of human behaviour to support people to make better choices for themselves.

The project adopted a 3-stage approach to achieving measurably better project outcomes: understand, build and test.





# Results and outcomes

Council	City of Sydney	Northern Beaches	Wagga Wagga City Council	Bega Valley
<b>Goal</b>	Increase click-throughs from monthly e-newsletter to the eBooks page	Increase visitation to Forestville Library and attract new members to the library service	Increase junior library memberships by targeting caregivers to create memberships for children in their care	Get 10% of targeted members to borrow one physical library item within 3 months of the intervention and re-engage lapsed members since bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic
<b>Intervention</b>	Newsletter (awareness of online resources and how to access them) in June, which ran for one month	Newsletter (refurbished library re-opening!) sent after refurbishment was completed in June and ran for one month	Newsletter (increase junior membership among children whose caregivers are already members), which ran for 2 weeks in September school holidays	Postcard (inviting people back to the library) sent as direct marketing communication in May and ran for two months
<b>Outcomes</b>	<p>Unique eBook page views increased by 124% during the 2 weeks from when the email was sent compared to the 2 weeks immediately prior.</p> <p>Clicks to external links on the eBooks page increased by 102%.</p>	<p>Visitations increased during the campaign period to just over 307.54 visits per day, which was 21% more than the comparable period average.</p> <p>There were 90 respondents to the 'Welcome Back' survey giving an average score of 8.82/10.</p>	There were 57 new junior memberships in the period which represented 30.4% of total new memberships. This was 15% to 20% higher than the proportion of new memberships in comparable periods.	There was no statistically significant change in behaviour. The COVID-19 Delta variant outbreak triggered public health orders and restrictions during the trial, impacting the success of the intervention.





## Q & A Panel

- **Michael Spikmans** - Digital Services Manager, Northern Beaches Council
- **Michael Scutti** - Team Leader Information, Literacy & Learning, Wagga Wagga City Council
- **Heather Davis** - Manager Libraries and Learning, City of Sydney
- **Andrea Curr** - Consultant Public Library Services, State Library of NSW



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# Resources

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Learn more about Greener Public Spaces on the [Department of Planning and Environment web page](#)



Check out the [Behavioural Insights Unit library of resources](#)



Talk to a consultant at the [State Library of NSW](#)