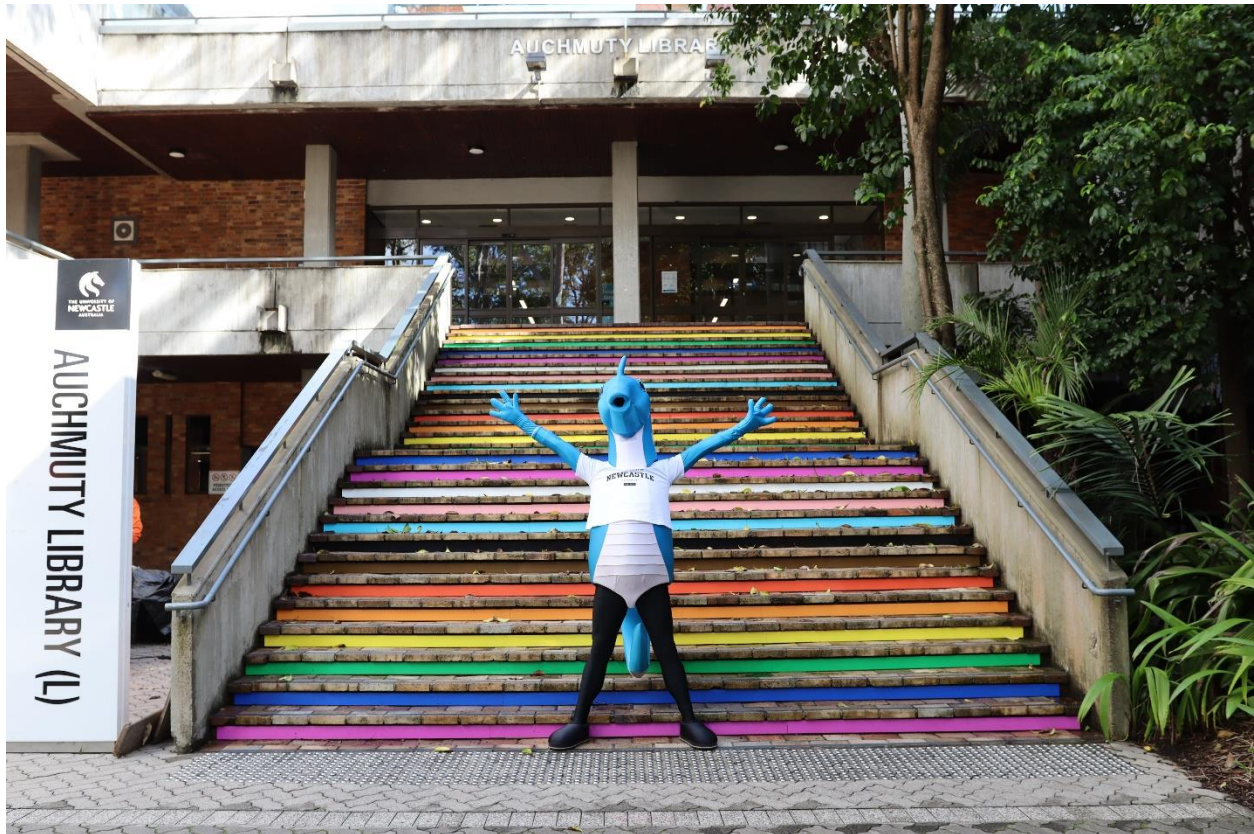


University Library Annual Report 2025:

Realising our 2020-2025 strategy



The University's mascot, Hunter, in front of the 'rainbow stairs', installed during this strategic period to signal the Library's commitment to equity and supporting all of the University community

The University of Newcastle acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands within our footprint areas: Awabakal, Darkinjung, Biripai, Worimi, Wonnarua, Gomeroi and Eora Nations. We pay respect to the wisdom of Elders past and present. We also acknowledge and pay respect to the other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations from which our students, staff and community are drawn.

From the University Librarian

I am pleased to present the 2025 University of Newcastle Library Annual Report. This year marks the completion of the Your Future Library 2020-25 Strategic Plan, an ambitious program that saw the library undergo transformation to meet the needs of a future focused University. The last five years saw a renewed focus on digital capability, technology uplift, research and teaching support, student engagement and wellbeing, and a revitalisation of our online and physical spaces. This delivered significant changes in how the library operated and provided services to support the University's vision and our students, staff, and community.

Key accomplishments included the transformation of our digital platforms, increased capability and support for Open Access Scholarship, refurbishment of our physical spaces, and our Students As Partners framework that reframed how students were involved in and supported by the library.

The library's digital environments are as significant as our physical environments at enabling high-quality research, teaching, and learning, and investment in a new Library Management System and Open Access Repository has driven vast improvements in the experience of our staff, students and community, and unlocked new capabilities for the library. Alongside the refurbishment of our study spaces in the Auchmuty Library into technology-enabled human-centered spaces, this has positioned the library at the heart of the student experience and as a key enabler for research and teaching excellence.

With a strong focus on user experience, this transformation provides a strong framework from which we can continue to evolve with the needs of the university and community over the coming years. Already we are seeing new capabilities being unlocked through considered integration of our platforms with enterprise systems, and a better student experience with the establishment of the Student Hub which brings together key student services into one location in Auchmuty Library.

Not all our achievements have been delivered in isolation. Through our sector partnerships we have been able to provide our researchers with access to 15 Read and Publish agreements that has seen the University's rate of publishing Open Access grow by 14% each year over the last five years, increasing the reach and impact of our research, and reducing the costs for doing so. Our membership of the CAUL Open Education Resources Collective has also enabled us to build our capability to support Open Education practices with four Open Textbooks published at the University in the last three years.

This approach to Open Education and Research exemplifies the library's commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion, and our mission to support access to education and knowledge for all.

The end of 2025 also saw the library undergo a significant structural change as we reviewed the challenges ahead and the alignment of our roles and capabilities to meet them. This change has seen an increase in roles and capability to support indigenous cultural knowledge and curriculum Indigenisation, open education and open research practices, collections management, and a new precinct on the Central Coast.

As we look forward to enabling the success of our students, staff and community into the future I want to acknowledge the commitment, support and engagement we have received from our partners and stakeholders, both inside the University and out, that has helped us along this journey and enabled us to continually provide responsive, and high-quality library services and spaces.

At the heart of the University

How the library serves our students and staff

These numbers demonstrate the impact of the library in supporting the needs of the University's stakeholders in 2025.

STUDY FACILITIES

824,000

Staff and student visits
Daily visitors peaked at **4,000+**
Computer terminals used **200 times** per day, during March

12,667

Study rooms
Reaching near 100% occupancy
10am - 4pm during semester.

4,700

Creative resources
1,200 students used Film & Podcast studios.
3,500 used the MakerSpaces.

DIGITAL RESOURCES

2.6 million+

Online platform visits
Library Website: 875k
Special Collections and interpretation: ~780k
Library Guides: 935k

3.6 million

Articles and books accessed
We have 1,430,750 electronic academic resources.
On average, each staff member and student accessed over 100 items from the digital collection

TEACHING & SUPPORT

34,000+

Enquiries assisted
On-the-spot help and signposting complex enquiries.

2,700

1:1 consultations

- Copyright: 1,088
- Student library skills: 772
- Researchers: 658
- Historical / archives: 200

4,700

Workshop attendees
290 workshops across

- IP / copyright
- Information literacy
- Library and research skills

COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

To improve discoverability and improve student-centred environments the physical collection was refreshed significantly, withdrawing **115,421 items** and **adding 257,493 eResources** to the library's collection.

LIFE READY GRADUATES

Provided professional development for **34 students** via internships, internal employment, and industry placements.

Key achievements 2025

The below achievements are some of the significant developments in 2025, and just part of the picture in terms of the impact of Library support for learning, teaching, research and engagement. Library services were delivered this year in parallel with a change process to adapt the organisational structure of the department to better suit the evolving needs of students, staff and community members. We finished the year in a stronger position to deliver on our role as a catalyst for learning, research, and innovation.

Enabling Digital Capabilities

The Library's **AI Tools Guide**, linked from all Canvas courses, was viewed over 26,000 times, providing guidance to students and staff on ethical, effective use of AI tools.

62 students took the **PREP 8500 digital skills course** in the nine months post-launch. It was developed by the Library and the Learning Design and Teaching Innovation team in response to common student support needs identified by student-facing Librarians.

Empowering Researchers

The Library participated in **negotiation of four significant agreements** with the world's largest publishers of scholarly journals. As part of a consortium of sector representatives across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, the University was able to secure terms that represent a substantial shift toward fair, sustainable and transparent access to research.

The Library supported the publication of **two Open Education Resources** as part of our continued drive towards increased open access authoring within our University, and the equity, reputation, autonomy, and financial benefits that brings. More than 500 users viewed *A Reference Guide for Field Epidemiologists*, created by the University's Field Epidemiology in Action team, in the first six weeks.

University academics are already seeing benefits from the **new research repository** launched in 2025. The streamlined platform reduces manual processing of scholarly outputs, shortening the time from completion to publication and improving discoverability of our University's research outputs.

Library programming supported University academics to connect with students and community members. For example, the Say Aahhhh: Health, Medicine and Everyday Care in Newcastle from 1945 to 2000 exhibition and accompanying talks featured research by Professor Catharine Coleborne, Dr Effie Karageorgos, and Associate Professor Elizabeth Roberts-Pedersen based on archives material from our collection.

The **NBN Television archive** is a significant archive for social and historical researchers, now including all NBN television news stories from 1983 to 2018. It was a finalist for a 2025 University Engagement Award recognising the strength of partnerships between the University, community volunteers, local industry, and students to create this accessible, high-quality video anthology of Newcastle's past.



The *Say Aahhhh!* Exhibition, produced in partnership with the University academics: one of the Library's collection engagement activities of 2025



The Book Station – the Central Coast campus required innovative delivery models to meet the needs of students at the newly expanded campus



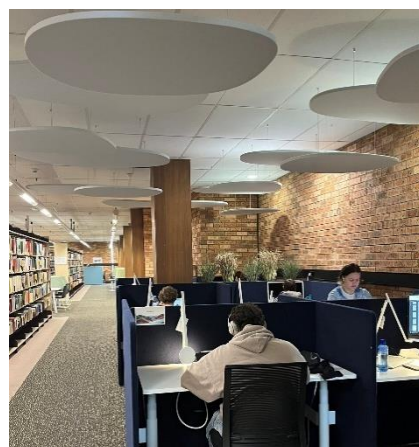
The Student Hub has created a centralised service point including Library support



Open Day: The Library supported student recruitment and other institutional activity throughout the year including philanthropy and international student support.



The Library opened a new MakerSpace in partnership with Gosford Regional Library as part of the University's expansion of education delivery on the Central Coast



A program of space improvements were implemented to provide study environments to suit a broader range of students. The physical collection was also refreshed, which in turn enabled spaces to be more accessible.

Reimagining our Places and Spaces

Partnering closely with IFS, library spaces at Callaghan campus were updated to provide **accessible study facilities to suit a broader diversity of student needs**.

Changes were made to service delivery and facilities at Ourimbah and Gosford to support the University's **new Central Coast campus and delivery model**.

The Callaghan Student Hub was established in Auchmuty Library this year to provide a **connected student support service**. The project team was a finalist in the University Excellence Awards for their speed in establishing effective partnerships.

Enhancing the Student Experience

The placement program in the Library is now in its eighth year and 10 students were supported to build their experience and skills in 2025, including 2 Career Ready Placements. 24 students were employed in the Library, both extending the peer-level support available to all students and providing valuable training and experience.

The **new course readings platform** has already brought benefits for educators, including built-in workflows to expedite the creation of reading lists and ensure copyright compliance, and seamless integration with Canvas. The user-friendly interface enables students to engage more effectively with their learning resources. Uptake has already been strong across the institution.

Student wellbeing and connection were supported by SSAF-funded activities throughout the year, including distributing 27,000 pieces of fruit and providing 18,000 hot drinks to students in library spaces at four campuses.

These changes were underpinned by a focus on **professional development and continuous improvement** using a user experience design methodology.

Library as Partner

Library staff **supported student wellbeing**, ensuring students feel supported, informed and confident navigating their learning journey. Upskilling included Accidental Counsellor training and an introduction to Australian Sign Language.

The Library hosted 470 visiting and future students through tours, **supporting the institution's recruitment activities**. We participated in events such as the Bequests Morning Tea, **supporting the institution's work to recognise and thank our philanthropic donors**; and Children's University, where children and their parents from schools and communities who are under-represented in higher education participation

University **community engagement and reputation-building support** included Dr Ann Hardy providing regional history expertise in an episode of *'Who Do You Think You Are?'* and the Library providing content featured in the University's 60 year celebrations.

We **partnered with Central Coast Council** to open a co-managed MakerSpace in the new Gosford Regional Library, supporting our students and the Central Coast community to engage in skills development and lifelong learning opportunities.

Celebrating *Your Future Library*

Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025

Our approach



Our Vision

Our students and staff will succeed in their chosen futures and make a lifelong connection to learning.



Our Mission

We will enable our community to flourish through people-centred environments and access to knowledge, expertise and opportunities.



Our Values In Action

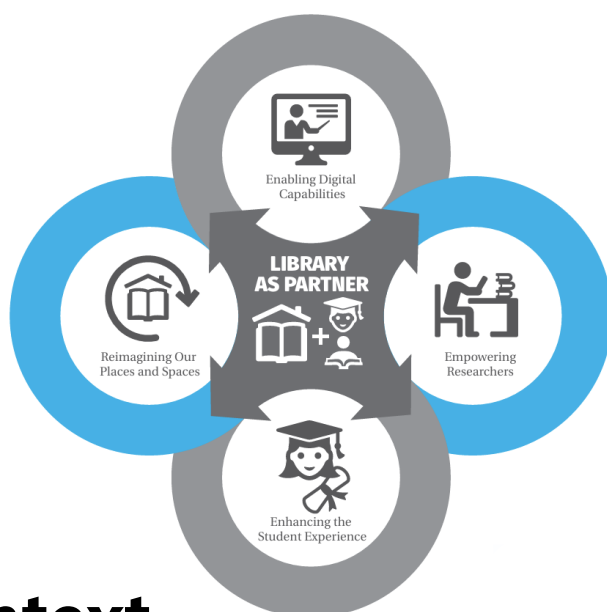
- Equity (access and success for all)
- Excellence (in all we do)
- Engagement (strong connections with our partners)
- Sustainability (environment, resources and finances).



Our Team Culture

Our work on team effectiveness and connectedness continues as we strive to build a culture of high performance, accountability and excellence.

Key themes for 2020-2025



Context

The *Your Future Library* strategic plan was developed in 2019 to align the Library around key areas of focus to support our stakeholders. It was the result of broad consultation of University stakeholders and a review of sector trends and influences.

The plan was published in parallel with *Looking Ahead*, the University's strategy for 2020-2025, just before the COVID-19 pandemic began. Other major changes during the period include the realignment of the Callaghan campus and the closure of the Hunter Building and Huxley Library in 2021, and changes to the University's Central Coast campus and operating model. The Higher Education sector continued to evolve, including continued centralisation of power of major scholarly publishers and legislative changes to Student Services and Amenities Fee funding allocation and casual employment. Within the University, there were various leadership changes during the life of the plan, and a concerted focus on operating cost reductions in 2024 and 2025.

Across the sector, there has been an expansion of Open Education and Open Access publishing. There has also been a drive for deepening commitments to Indigenous cultural knowledges, Indigenisation, decolonisation, and reconciliation. It has also been the time of exponential growth of artificial intelligence as both a disruptive force and a powerful enabler.

Successes

Over the past five years, the Library has undergone a significant transformation through the implementation of the *Your Future Library* plan. Guided by a culture of continuous improvement, this evolution has delivered tangible benefits for clients and strengthened internal operations through enhanced workflows and processes.

Reimagining our Places and Spaces

Goal 1: Re-imagine our existing library spaces to create an active learning environment; a place not just for study but for collaboration, for community building, for play and for experimentation.

Achievements

- **Study environments to meet broader needs:** program of improvements in all five reading rooms, Flowers room and AdTech at Callaghan, introduction of dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander spaces at Callaghan and Ourimbah, creation of low sensory study environments and collaborative bookable study spaces across Newcastle and Central Coast campuses.
- **Additional facilities:** delivery of library services from Gosford Hospital and creation of Auchmuty Library podcast and media rooms, carers and kids study space, upgraded roof terrace, multi-faith prayer and reflection space, and student kitchens.
- **Welcoming and inclusive architectural features:** addition of building art and rainbow stairs at Callaghan, Library signage at NUspace.
- **MakerSpaces** piloted and then launched at Central Coast and Newcastle campuses
- **User Experience research maturity** from limited to emergent to ensure spaces meet student needs

Goal 2: Deliver a seamless, virtual library experience that mirrors the level of service and support available in the physical library.

Achievements

- **Program of technical infrastructure improvements** (Systems Roadmap) including overhaul of catalogue management and search system (Alma/Primo Library Management System).
- **Digital resource access experience** upgraded through new reading list management system (Leganto) and University research repository (Open Research Newcastle).
- **Remote support expanded** through introduction of Library chat and deployment of enterprise service management system (ServiceNOW).
- **Refined access to key information** through redesign of core website pages following user experience review, including features to support neurodivergent students.
- **UX diary study** to understand the needs of online-only students.

Enabling Digital Capabilities

Goal 1: Accelerate capabilities to lead and deliver in the digital future

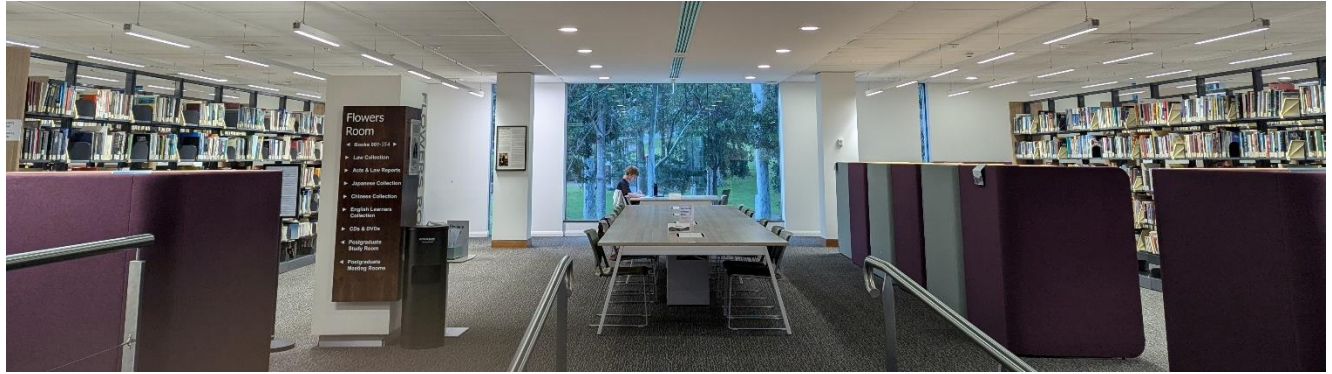
Achievements

- **Individual and group capability development**, including creating the self-paced PREP 8500 digital skills course, delivering '*How to Library*' workshops, and providing hundreds of 1-1 student consultations.
- **Creation of a digital skills self-assessment tool for students** aligned with the 2019 Digital Capabilities Framework. Framework reviewed and revised in 2024 to include AI literacy.
- **Institutional guidance** by creating and publishing the University's generative AI guide for students and staff

Goal 2: Develop and deliver a 'digital first' policy, providing seamless access to quality, curated digital content.

Achievements

- **Modernised digital infrastructure** with transition to new content platforms designed for digital content: Alma/Primo Library Management System and Open Research Newcastle research repository.
- **Foundational policies reworked**: Open Access Policy, Collection Development Policy Copyright Compliance Policy, Library Use Policy.
- **Digitisation of assets** including from the Hannan photographic archives, historical University PhD theses and University media photographs.
- **Seamless enhanced and expanded access** to high quality digital content delivered by collaborative negotiations with Council of Australasian Librarians (CAUL) and publishers, complemented by one-click access via Lean Library.
- **Curated collection highlights shared** across digital platforms and social media, including 18 professionally produced short films produced in partnership with Stories of our Town.

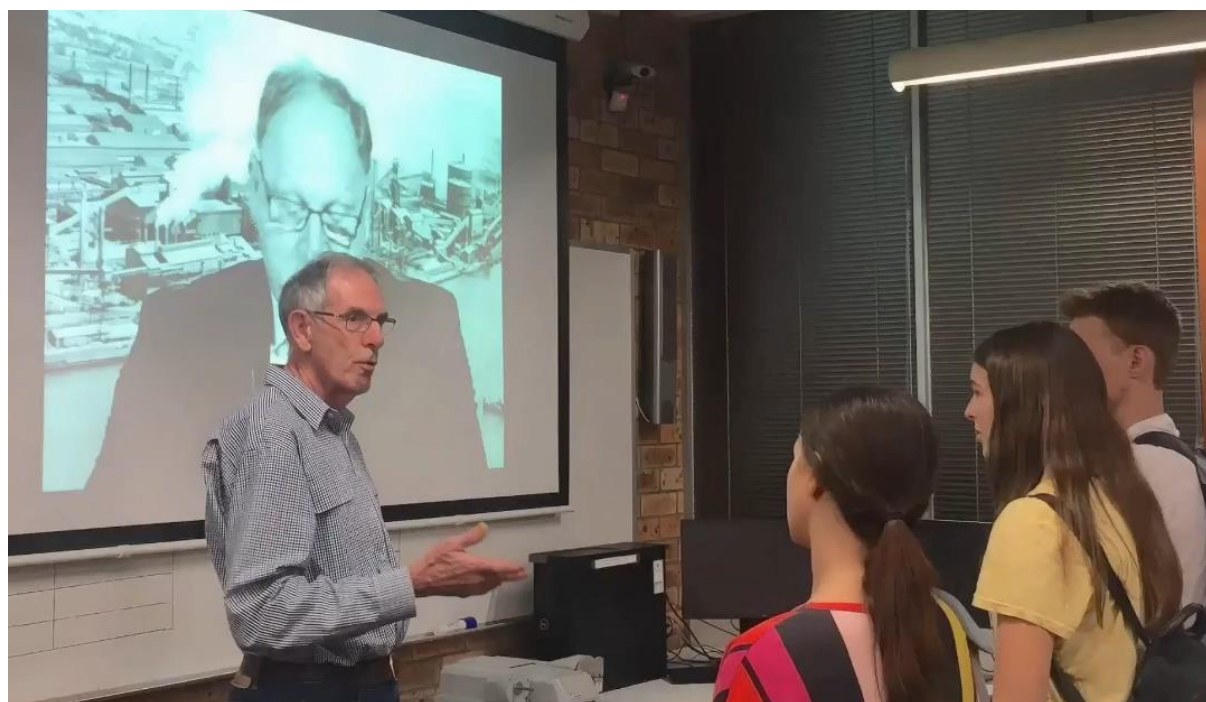


Extensive space development and improvement has been carried out in the Strategic Plan period. These have provided additional facilities for students, such as MakerSpaces and media rooms. They have also created spaces to meet more diverse study needs, including low sensory spaces, relaxation spaces and collaboration spaces.





Through the Students as Partners Framework, the Library offered valuable opportunities for students to develop their life-ready skills through employment, Career Ready Placements and internships. Students were placed at the centre of library delivery, and their needs and opinions consulted to contribute to decision making.



Enhancing the Student Experience

Goal 1: Partner with our students to co-create a range of opportunities to support employability and future life skills

Achievements

- **Delivery of a suite of student engagement initiatives** prompted by the creation of the Students as Partners Framework
- **Rewarding casual employment** delivering peer support across Newcastle and Central Coast campuses.
- **Skill-building Career Ready Placements** and internships delivered opportunities to students to experience galleries, libraries, archives and museums sector work and develop sector-relevant skills.

Goal 2: Develop personalised services that support learning, belonging and wellbeing.

- Expansion of **specialist librarian teams** to provide expertise, curated content, and delivery modes tailored to the needs of students, teaching staff and researchers.
- Developed an **Open Educational Resources publishing service for University educators**, providing cost-free, unrestricted learning content tailored specifically to our students and our curriculum
- **Transformation of service delivery** at Callaghan campus to provide integrated service model delivered from the Auchmuty Student Hub.
- Introduction of an on-campus **Librarian service at Sydney campus** to support library skills development and to connect students with resources and services
- **Highly valued program of SSAF-funded activities** to support learning, belonging and wellbeing from peer-supported study to free breakfasts.
- **Partnerships to amplify staff and student wellbeing** including joint event delivery with Student Wellbeing, UNSA, Health and Safety, EDI unit, and others.

Empowering Researchers

Goal 1: Strengthen our partnerships to enhance researchers' success in a complex and changing environment.

Achievements

- **Adaptive, tailored research support:** professional support services and delivery model adapted and iterated to suit changing needs of researchers, informed by Researcher Needs Survey data and feedback.
- Development and launch of the **Researcher Skills Toolkit**, a self-service online research lifecycle planning and skills development tool.
- Partnered with Research Services, Graduate Research, and Colleges to develop **targeted, timely, and holistic training and resources** for key stages in researcher lifecycle, including development of standardised **impact reports to support grant and promotion applications**.
- **Connected University and community researchers** through monthly Hunter Living Histories showcases
- **Improved transparency for industry engagement avenues** through the creation of the Industry Engagement Support Tool through consultation with key stakeholders across the University.

Goal 2: Provide leadership and advocacy in the creation of open, connected and impactful research.

Achievements

- Led development of the University's first mandated **Open Access Policy**, one of the first in the sector.
- **Elevated access to University research outputs** by introducing Open Research Newcastle platform, integrated into digital publishing ecosystem and researchers' digital footprint
- **Accelerated open access publication in high quality journals** through the negotiation of 15 transformative 'Read and Publish' agreements, providing more researchers with accessible, supported, avenues for open access publication.
- **Supported research impact of early and mid-career researchers** by instigating Article Processing Charge funding to reduce barriers to publish in high quality open access journals

Library as Partner

True to our goal of 'Library as Partner', during the life of the Strategic Plan the Library has formed effective relationships with partners across the breadth of the University.

