

# History of the City Library

151 Abbott Street, Cairns



The former Cairns City Council Chamber and surrounding gardens have been recognised for their historic importance by the Cairns Regional Council, the Australian Heritage Commission, and the Queensland Heritage Council.

An original Chamber that had served the Council since 1886 was replaced on this site by a new building that was officially opened on 11 August 1930. This 1930s building was designed by A.J.H. Taylor, whose work blended elements of classic Greek and colonial Queensland architecture. Extensive alterations were made during the 1960s and again in the 1970s.



Foundation stone ceremony at the new city council chambers in Cairns, 1929.

In the late 1990s the building was re-designed and modified with every effort made to retain the ambience of the 1930s chamber. It reopened as the new City Library in 1999.

The historic central chamber with its distinctive cedar timber panelling has been retained as the Information and Reference Room. The original high plaster ceilings, paired cedar doors and lead-light windows have been restored. Also of historic and architectural interest are the original strong room door, the Lake Street portico, and the Ionic columns.

The large Moreton Bay fig trees, planted in 1907, remain as a feature of the gardens. Another special feature of the gardens is the Literary Trail, a display of public artworks completed in 1999 by local artists, inspired by the literary works of authors who have resided in the Cairns Region.



The building, which consists of a total area of 2010 square metres, was refurbished in 2011. In keeping with the heritage theme, new carpet was laid and internal walls were painted. Timber panels were also added to the ends of the shelving in the Reference Room. In 2013 additional refurbishment took place with the installation of new internal signage, and new panels on the ends of the shelving. Furniture upgrading was undertaken in mid-2014.

The library is very popular with both residents and visitors. It houses over 38,000 items, including a Reference collection, a Regional Resources collection and a Genealogy collection.

During 2016/17, over 330,000 people visited the City Library, borrowed over 250,000 items and placed over 30,000 reservations. The Cairns City Library is a free WiFi hotspot.

The City Library is staffed by the Branch Librarian, 6 Library Assistants, and a Client Services Librarian.

We hope you enjoy the ambience of this historical building and gardens.

Monday - Friday 9.00am - 6.00pm

Saturday & Sunday 9.00am - noon

151 Abbott Street, Cairns, 4870

Phone: 4044 3720 [www.cairns.qld.gov.au/library](http://www.cairns.qld.gov.au/library)

