

## Sensitive: NSW Government

### 95th Meeting - Public Libraries Consultative Committee Joint meeting with the Library Council MINUTES

<b>DATE</b>	Tuesday 14 December 2021
<b>TIME</b>	3 pm to 4 pm
<b>LOCATION</b>	Jean Garling Room, State Library of NSW
<b>CHAIR</b>	Kay Delahunt (Library Council of NSW)
<b>EXECUTIVE OFFICER</b>	Cameron Morley (State Library)
<b>MEMBERS ATTENDING</b>	Dr Ursula Dubosarsky (Library Council of NSW) Suzie Gately (Newcastle Region Library) Cr Romola Hollywood (representing NSWPLA, Blue Mountains City Council) Pam Kelly (Warren Library – North West Regional Library) Jody Rodas (Waverley Library) Hon George Souris AM (Library Council of NSW) Damian Thomas (LGNSW) Dr John Vallance (State Librarian)
<b>LIBRARY COUNCIL IN ATTENDANCE</b>	Dr Christopher Allen Kathy Bail Robert Cameron AO Mark Tedeschi AM QC Victoria Weekes
<b>APOLOGIES</b>	Cr Lesley Furneaux-Cook (LGNSW, Burwood Council) Cr Dallas Tout (NSWPLA, Wagga Wagga City Council) Adele Casey (NSWPLA) Jane Garling (Library Council)
<b>MINUTES</b>	Philippa Scarf (State Library)
<b>ITEM 1: PRELIMINARY MATTERS</b>	
<b>1.1 Welcome and Apologies</b>	
The Chair opened the meeting with an acknowledgement of the Traditional Owners, the Gadigal. The Hon George Souris welcomed Kay Delahunt as the new chair of PLCC and Library Council member.	
<b>1.2 Notification of Other Business</b>	
Nil	
<b>ITEM 2: MINUTES, BUSINESS ARISING</b>	
<b>2.1 Minutes of the Previous Meeting</b>	
The previous minutes of the 94 <sup>th</sup> Meeting of the PLCC held were approved.	

### 2.1.1 Business arising

Nil

## ITEM 3: MEETING BUSINESS

### 3.1 NSW.net half yearly report

The report was read out of session.

#### Summary of Public Library Services activities

Cameron Morley provided an overview of the activities for the branch.

Public Library funding:

- The total funding for this year is a record \$38,618,000
- Public library subsidy distribution is being managed according to timetable.
- 34 applications had been received for Public Library Infrastructure Grants. The Grants Committee will convene on 23 February 2022.
- Funding will increase in 2022/23 with an increase in per capita funding to \$2.85
- The funding model will be reviewed out of session in preparation for the June 2022 PLCC meeting

COVID-19

- The pandemic continued to cause significant challenges to public libraries and communities across NSW.
- Click and collect services were not allowed under the public health orders during the lockdown period. The State Library applied for an exemption for click and collect services and this was granted in September.
- Public library feedback notes that visitors are returning gradually. It is anticipated that another milestone will be reached with restrictions easing further from 15 December.
- Public Library Services has been working closely with public libraries on a number of capital works, library design and planning projects.
- A visit to Wilcannia will be a priority for 2022 to meet with the community partners
- Library Council visits to public libraries will resume in 2022.

### 3.2 NSWPLA 2022 activities

Romola Holly provided an overview of the Association's activities.

- The NSWPLA strategic plan was reviewed and implemented
- The Renew our libraries campaign will continue in the lead up to the State election in 2023. All councils are members of the Association.
- The annual NSWPLA conference was held online in November.

In discussion both the Hon George Souris and John Vallance noted that public library funding beyond 2022/23 looks positive, and that the State Library is in regular contact with the Government. It was further noted that advocacy at a local level is important, and there is a need to highlight the transformative role the substantial increase in public library funding has delivered to libraries across NSW.

### 3.3 Report from library managers

For this item the 3 new library manager representatives presented introductions to their respective library services.

#### Pam Kelly, Manager, Regional Library Manager, North Western Library Service

North Western Library is a regional co-operative library service based in the central west region of

New South Wales and incorporates the local government areas of Bogan, Gilgandra, Coonamble and Warren.

The library service is a co-operative library association with the individual councils housing an equal share of the regional stock, the individual councils maintain autonomy over the day-to-day activities and management of their own libraries. The administration centre based in Warren purchases, catalogues and disperses regional library materials and provides a centre for co-operation and consultation.

The population of North Western Library was 13,578 at the last census report. North Western administration manages the library management system including loans between libraries. The collection is automatically rotated by specific collection or on request.

#### Staffing:

- Funded by North Western as a joint arrangement: regional librarian, library technician, cataloguer
- Funded by individual councils:
  - Warren – librarian, library technician, library officer
  - Gilgandra – librarian, library officers
  - Coonamble – library manager, library officer
  - Bogan – library manager, library officers

#### New Online Services:

Online programs using Beanstack, 1000 Books Before School, Summer Reading Challenge, ALIA Online Storytime

#### New Services:

Outreach and popup libraries - preschool and aged care services, care and deliver, holiday break youth program

#### Planning:

Gilgandra – new building  
Bogan – new staff structure  
Warren - new building frontage  
Coonamble – enhanced Indigenous services

#### Priorities:

Staff Training – Library and Information Certificate for library officers  
IT for library technician  
Workshops and author visits

#### Issues:

Staffing - accessing trained staff  
Transfer of skills from other sectors  
Training and traineeships for new staff  
Ongoing training – customer service, IT, collection management

#### **Jody Rodas, Manager, Library and Learning Futures, Waverley Library**

Waverley is a small but densely populated area on Bidjigal and Gadigal land, its 9 km<sup>2</sup> is home to 74,000 people. The Library service, a single site located in Bondi Junction, is much

loved and valued by the community. The population is highly educated with 40% holding a bachelor degree, with significantly higher incomes per household compared to other LGAs. It is a multicultural community with a large Russian and Jewish population however, 70% of residents only speak English at home.

The current library building was opened in 1999 and though well maintained, is starting to look its 22 years. Our community has high expectations and consistent feedback from community engagement highlights the need for a new buildings like our neighbours in Double Bay, Green Square, Darling Square and Marrickville. The Library is approximately 3500 sqm and open for 67 hours per week across 7 days. In a typical year there are over 500,000 visitors. In 2020 over 350,000 items were borrowed 2020.

With a team of 30 staff and a casual pool of 10, the Library provides the usual services - public access computers, printing, Wi-Fi, 3D printing, as well as study, meeting and venue spaces. This important community centre provides engaging and high quality services for students, families, community groups, business, professionals and seniors and the building is constantly under pressure. As real estate in Bondi Junction is unavailable and expensive whenever Council needs to carry out work on other buildings the Library is required to accommodate other teams – usually in public meeting spaces.

Since 2018 we have hosted the General Manager and the development assessment team, customer service call centre, rangers and currently the Seniors' Centre. Recently we have been advised that the Library will be housing the Mayor and GM offices plus the Communications team during a Chambers refit in 2022. In this environment it is becoming increasingly difficult to deliver our community programs in our fit for purpose spaces. There is also constant competition for library rooms for library programs with the venue hire team who are responsible for external hiring of council spaces and the team's need to meet budget targets.

Despite this, last year we delivered 430 face to face programs with 7000 attendees in a COVID-19 year and in addition we held 188 online activities with 3000 attendees. Our online programming during COVID-19 was so successful, that many of our online groups continue to operate. Our work was acknowledged by NSWPLA where we recently won the population cohort's award for Innovation in Outreach Services.

I am fortunate to have a team of incredibly talented and creative people who offer our community many opportunities to discover their artistic sides. Some of our most successful programs are collage@waverley and Sketchflash. These have been adapted to run either face to face or online. We have a shared outreach vehicle with Randwick and Woollahra libraries that we use to deliver outdoor programs. The purchase of the vehicle was made possible with State Library Public Infrastructure Grant funding.

We have a large printed book collection. The selection of fiction titles is outsourced but our non-fiction selection is completed by the staff. This is something we engage most of the team in. We are one of the few public libraries that have maintained an extensive stack collection. This is a deliberate decision to ensure that our collection retains a point of difference. We maintain a large collection of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century classics, some rare books and prize winners including Nib nominations. The Nib is Waverley Council's literature award which celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. The Award acknowledges works demonstrating excellence in research, high literary merit, readability and value to the community. In 2021, the total prize money was \$28,500.

The Library has invested greatly in its online collection in recent years using the increase in public library funding to launch Borrowbox during the last lockdown. The other important part of our collection is our local studies collection which contains many artefacts of national heritage significance. Recently we used our public library funding to engage a consultant to develop a local studies digitisation strategy. The work included:

- A comprehensive audit of Waverley's Local History Collection (physical and digital) that identifies priority items for digitisation
- Review of Local History Collection Development Guidelines
- Review of Draft Waverley Library Digitisation Specifications
- Develop Local History Digitisation action plan
- recommend a solution for storing and making accessible digitised material
- Recommend a system for capturing born digital local history content eg. from social media

This work will be a key focus in 2022.

In terms of key needs for similar sized libraries, I consulted with Woollahra and Blue Mountains libraries. The top four are:

1. The need to stretch budgets to cover the ongoing increase in demand for digital services that evolved during COVID-19
2. The difficulty in recruiting staff. We are often overwhelmed with applications for entry level library assistant roles but recruitment for librarians or team leaders with specialist skills result in only a handful of suitable applicants at best. The other staffing issue is with smaller teams there is less access to staff with the diverse skill set required.
3. The movement of business and government services into the digital sphere means we need to provide more support to those that lack digital literacy. A recent example is checking in people without smart phones or without access to their digital COVID-19 certificates. It has been especially hard to give this support during COVID-19 due to social distancing requirements.
4. Having enough space in our buildings to deliver all that we need to – even a new building like Woollahra is struggling. They are always full and have very little staff space.

#### **Suzie Gately, Manager Libraries & Learning, City of Newcastle**

City of Newcastle (CN) has a population of approximately 170,000. Projected population outlined in new CSP Newcastle 2040 shows significant increase in population from the eastern fringe (7k) through to the new CBD Newcastle West (14 k); through the central east-west spine to Broadmeadow which is to become the Sports and Entertainment precinct (indeterminate increase as yet); out to the outer western suburbs -Minmi, Fletcher (7k) which will experience more housing developments.

The population of the lower Hunter/Greater Newcastle area is 600,000.

CN is the lead agency in the region library agreement which was reviewed and modernised in 2021 in consultation with the State library, Port Stephens and Dungog – including an SLA. The Newcastle Region Library agreement will become the Hunter Regional Libraries creating opportunities for consortia purchasing/ revenue.

City of Newcastle libraries:

- 11 Library service points
- 9 standalone branches

- Local History
- the co-located award-winning Digital library (which won the LG Award for excellence in the June for projects over 1.5m). The Digital library harnesses new ways to engage through podcasting, pepper, and digital story telling as opposed to traditional community programs.
- Only 2 of the 9 are of adequate size for the range of uses that would be considered fit for purpose in the modern library context.
- Co-location is consistent with the Draft Infrastructure Strategy and Strategic Cost Benefit Analysis Report recommendations for eg. digital library, customer service centre and mobile chamber.
- 53 FTE is stable
- Post COVID -19 visitation and loans were tracking upwards prior to the recent lockdown against general industry trends.
- 404,000 visits
- 1.3 mill loans (68% e loans/streaming/ downloads, 62% physical)
- Currently 97,000 members representing 59% of population. This is as a result of the ground-breaking and industry leading "More for Members" campaign
- Diverse and engaging programs 930 activities in 8 program streams (aligned to CSP), over 54,000 attendance (online and F2F)
- over 50 community partners
- DigiLab opened with the support of a State Library Public Library Infrastructure grant, volunteers recruited, over 1500 from mid-April to June 30)

#### Funding comments

A tech development fund for libraries as well as general infrastructure amounts would be of great benefit to delineate between buildings v the future state.

I consulted with my CEO and Director:

- Great to see the challenge of renewing / maintaining library infrastructure which is predominantly aged and in need of significant funding is gradually being addressed.
- Typically, councils identify one or two flag ship libraries for renewal or construction (in growth corridors) and the remainder become run down and tired.
- The increase in the library subsidy is less than to the level of investment councils make in this type of community service. Would the library council, consider a review of this methodology as well.

We invite you to visit Newcastle and our award-winning space and the DigiLab.

The evolution of the traditional library will continue to be challenged by our communities for more multi-modal, 24/7 spaces with a digital focus. Hence our research from Oxford Economics on the positive BCR's that support this type of project development and our grant application.

Recognising the community benefit that can come from libraries and the multiple services they provide, a community infrastructure fund only for libraries by the NSW Govt on a matching dollar basis; would assist bring libraries closer to the top of the infrastructure needs spend within a Council's annual budget.

## Plans and priorities for 2022

1. Key goal is to deliver 20-year library infrastructure plan. Draft research paper outlines options, strategic cost benefit analysis report by Oxford Economics provides recommendations and aligns to CN draft Social Infrastructure Strategy to be considered by new council in 2022. Reports also cover changing framework of service models and CN projects to measuring outcomes and impact. Aim is to have an overarching vision for the 2040 CSP and a costed plan of new and renewal investment for CN to consider as part of the 4 year delivery plan.
2. Future Libraries Workforce Plan – changing face of libraries needs new framework, capabilities and skills, already undertaken 12 months of pre plan workshops to develop alignment to CX, change resilience, alignment to customer needs (persona, satisfaction Survey and CSP consultation).
3. Lambton Library Storybook Cottage and Openplus library pilot project operational in January (supported by LPG).
4. Implementation of the new lib management system (Innovative Interfaces Polaris Leap) first change in 30 years.
5. Significant work to be completed documenting and auditing the WMCC basement/stack to prepare for opportunities for joint climate-controlled storage facility (with Museum and Art Gallery into the future).

### 4.0 Meeting Close

The Chair and President thanked the PLCC members for their presentations.

NEXT MEETING	
DATE	Wednesday 29 June 2022
TIME	2-3.30pm
LOCATION	State Library of NSW