Learning Communities and Working Groups

Minutes of the meeting held Friday, 5 June 2015

10:30 – 12:30, Jean Garling Room, State Library of NSW

TRIM File No: 52555

1.	**Present:** Lucy Milne (Executive Director, PLE), Cameron Morley (Manager, Funding and Advisory Services), Philippa Scarf (PLS, minutes), Oriana Acevedo (PLS), Keryl Collard (CE Zone), John Bayliss (CW Zone), Chris Jones (NE Zone), Mark Norman (representing Karen Hansen, SE Zone), Robert Knight (SW Zone), Melanie Gurney (Sydney North Zone), Jennifer Alp (Sydney South Zone), Laurence McDonnell (Sydney West Zone). **Apologies:** Michelle Simon (Canterbury and NSW PLA committee)	
		ACTION
2.	**Background and Aims:** The working groups and learning communities of public library staff in NSW fulfil a key role within the Public Library Learning and Development Framework as endorsed by the Public Libraries Consultative Committee (PLCC) at their meeting of 17 March 2014. With the amalgamation of the two associations to form the NSW Public Libraries Association (NSWPLA), it is an ideal opportunity to review the existing groups and the needs of the NSW public library network to plan for the future. The State Library supports and facilitates the establishment and development of communities of interest and networks. This support includes advice to working groups, support and facilitation of seminars or meetings, specialist consultancy, venue provision, facilitation of vendor training for library staff, elist hosting and wiki/blog hosting. At their meeting on 22 September 2014 the PLCC noted the importance of NSW public library learning communities, and agreed that the State Library works with NSW public libraries and the NSWPLA to support the continuation and development of learning communities. In March 2015 the State Library wrote to Clr Graham Smith addressing this topic and it was agreed at the 23 March meeting of the PLCC that the State Library approach public library stakeholders to commence discussions. With the support of NSWPLA, the State Library convened this meeting to consider the most appropriate models for working groups and learning communities into the future.	Cameron Morley

	Those present agreed that this meeting was both timely and facilitated examination of the working groups potential composition, reporting structure, operational issues and strategic benefit to the public library network.	
3.	**Working Groups in the NSW public library network:** Cameron provided an overview of the composition and purpose of the current working groups and noted that the working groups contribute to the public library network through learning and development, delivery of state wide projects, creating operational tools (guidelines, best practice), opportunities for peer to peer networking and collaboration and innovation. There is no single model for the current working groups and there was acknowledgement that a one size fits all approach was not appropriate.

There was general discussion about some of the perceived issues and potential points of weakness of the current working groups, such as poor communication across the public library network, inconsistencies in reporting up to library managers and Zone meetings, the regional-metropolitan divide, the difficulties of non-Sydney metropolitan staff attending meetings and inconsistent strategic planning. There is currently no formal mechanism to recognise and celebrate successful outcomes.

It was agreed that composition, governance, reporting, strategic focus and communication were imperative for all working groups to be successful. | |
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| 4. | **State Library's involvement with working groups:** Cameron acknowledged the importance of the working groups to the State Library and outlined the Library's role to provide advice and specialist consultancy; support and facilitate seminars and meetings and vendor training; provide communication platforms via wikis/blogs and elist hosting; engage in developing state wide policies and strategies.

The State Library is prepared in principle to further develop and support a communication platform to ensure sustainable and robust systems. | Cameron Morley |
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| 5. | **Scoping next steps:** The group agreed this is a collaboration between the NSWPLA and the State Library. The group acknowledged the sensitivities involved with the assessment and review of the current working groups and noted the importance of communication with stakeholders. | |

		A discussion followed around the following points:	
		• the need to assess and rationalise working groups. It was agreed a one size fits all approach may not be suitable. Lucy Milne suggested consideration be given to the NSLA projects and communities of practice model. • resourcing of the groups • communication within the group and to the wider public library community • sponsorship of groups by a library manager, composition including the participation from regional and remote members • groups to have agreed outcomes, terms of reference, improved governance and reporting. The strategic goals and KPIs to be aligned with stakeholders (NSWPLA, State Library and the public library network). • all groups to have an online presence to enable access to outputs by the public library network. It was acknowledged that the online complexity of each group would be defined by the scope of each group. • procedures for the formal recognition of the success of the working groups There was unanimous agreement that stable communication platforms including web interface for blogs, wikis and elists and video and teleconferencing facilities are critical for the future success of the working groups. The State Library agreed to investigate provision of provide ICT support such as resources and tools, potential video and teleconferencing platforms. A draft communication plan will also be developed and circulated to the group for comment.	
6.		**Future needs:** As noted in the minutes of the PLCC meeting of 23 March 2015 the Committee noted the State Library and NSWPLA review the working groups in consultation. The Committee suggested that a leadership working group is investigated as part of the consultation. The group agreed the establishment of a leadership working group of Zone Secretaries would represent an effective collaboration model between the State Library and the NSWPLA. The Zone Secretaries also noted that this group would also provide a forum for communication and discussion between Zone Secretaries (library managers) that is not currently formalised and does not occur in any other forum.	

	The leadership working group will develop a plan for the state wide groups including composition, terms of reference, governance and reporting, KPIs and state wide strategic aims.	
7.	**Actions:** 1. Communication plan outlining future directions to be developed and delivered through the Zone meetings and working groups. 2. A proposal to establish a leadership working group comprised of Zone Secretaries be presented at the 20 July 2015 meeting of the PLCC for endorsement. 3. A meeting of the leadership working group to be convened to discuss constitution, role and reporting. At this meeting the leadership working group will develop a plan for state wide working groups.	
8.	**Next meeting:** To be confirmed.	