New South Wales Public Libraries Learning and Development Framework

2022

Introduction

The Library Act 1939 describes the role of the Library Council of NSW to "promote, provide and maintain library services and information services for the people of New South Wales through the State Library and through co-operation with local libraries and other libraries and information agencies".

This Learning and Development Framework sets out how the State Library of New South Wales will support the professional development of the public library workforce in New South Wales.

This Framework considers changes in the library and information sector over the last decade and responds to the issues and opportunities identified in the Public Library Professional Development Audit conducted in 2013.

The Learning Context

There are several learning and development providers in the library sector. These include the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) as the professional body, universities, TAFE and private organisations.

Public libraries in NSW are operated and managed by local councils. Local councils provide training and development specific to local government such as training in human resources, customer service, budgeting, supervisory skills and financial management.

The State Library of NSW supports the development of public libraries across rural and metropolitan NSW with professional development programs and training programs specific to the library and information sector, and management and service provision in public libraries.

This support is provided in accordance with the Library Council of NSW's objects:[1]

- to promote, provide and maintain library services for the people of NSW through the State Library in cooperation with local libraries

- to advise local authorities on matter of policy and administration relating to library services

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[1] Library Act 1939, s4A

NSW Public Library Learning and Development Needs

The Public Library Professional Development Audit conducted in 2013 identified a range of issues and opportunities for learning and development across the NSW public library network.

Issues

- Professional development needs to provide practical support, skills and knowledge development, and inspiration and ideas.
- While State Library learning programs are highly valued across the network, **learning needs are diverse** and relevance of content is largely dependent on local contexts with local contexts affecting content needs and the ability to participate.
- The most significant factors affecting the ability of NSW public library staff to access training programs relate to **staffing and rostering requirements,** and **cost.**
- While having some flexibility within the program allows the State Library to leverage opportunities (e.g. visiting speakers) this can create **problems for planning at a local level**.
- There is a general need for support and training in **strategy and management** areas, and leadership, strategic planning, evaluation and community engagement continue to be areas where libraries would benefit from learning and development programs. The State Library needs to refine the learning and development program to best respond to this need.
- Skills gaps in emerging areas of library services such as **social media and ebooks** continue to be areas of concern across the NSW public library network. Further investigation is required to identify specific skills gaps which are likely to extend beyond ICT training to strategic planning around the use of technology in service provision.
- **Succession planning and the transfer of knowledge** to the next generation of library leaders is an urgent need for many public libraries across the State.
- The scope of State Library training programs is unclear to the public library network.
- The scope of training programs offered and **understanding of professional development needs in libraries varies significantly** across different local councils. The State Library plays a significant role in filling these gaps.

Opportunities

- Libraries have the **capacity to use both online and onsite** formats to access learning.
- Technology based training makes broader reach of programs across the State possible.
- Large regional centres have the capacity and facilities to host **regional based training.**
- There is **significant expertise across the State Library** that matches the identified learning needs of the public library network.
- **Mechanisms are in place for libraries to share** information and experiences, especially in areas relating to specialist library and information service provision.
- There are a **significant number of providers** and programs targeting the library and information sector.
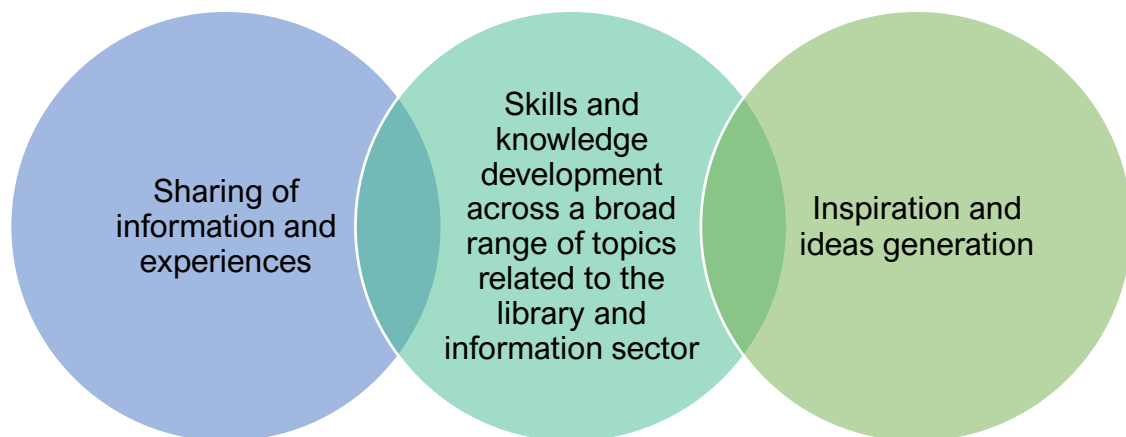
In addition, library closures and lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic have highlighted the need for training in new skills such as online program development and delivery.

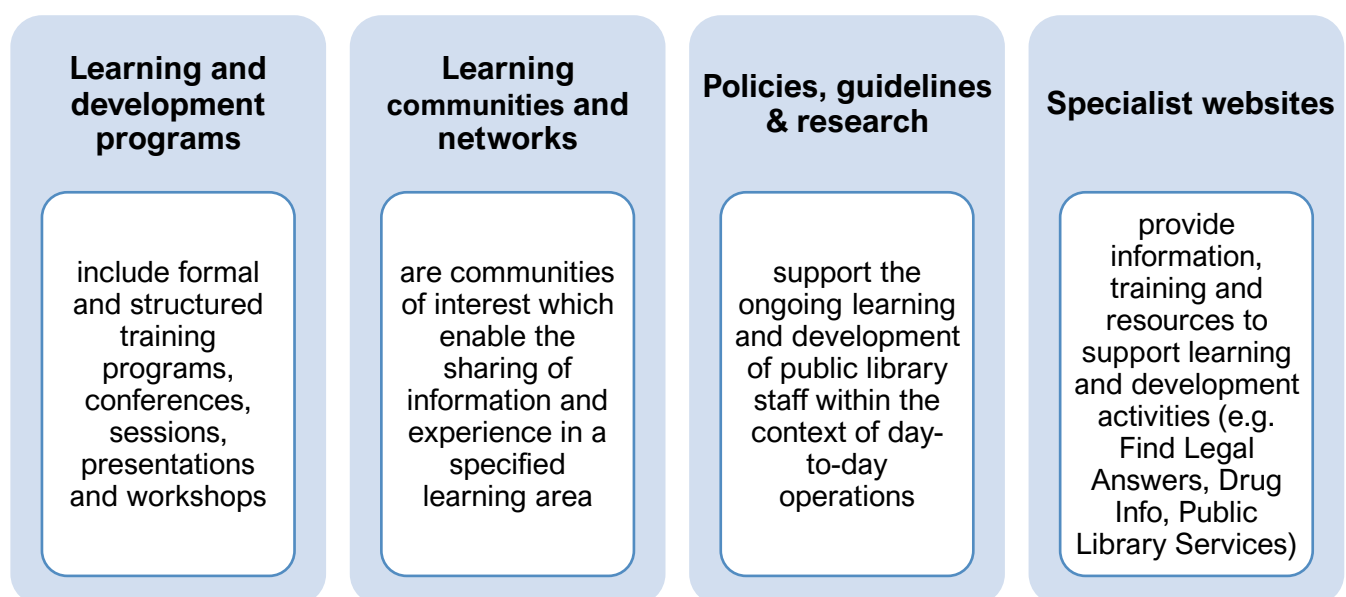# A Framework for Learning and Development for NSW Public Libraries

Outcome areas

The State Library's *Public Library Learning and Development Framework* identifies three outcome areas for the NSW Public Library network.

Sharing of information and experiences

Skills and knowledge development across a broad range of topics related to the library and information sector

Inspiration and ideas generation

Mechanisms

The Framework identifies four mechanisms to achieve the above learning and development outcomes.

Learning and development programs	Learning communities and networks	Policies, guidelines & research	Specialist websites
include formal and structured training programs, conferences, sessions, presentations and workshops	are communities of interest which enable the sharing of information and experience in a specified learning area	support the ongoing learning and development of public library staff within the context of day-to-day operations	provide information, training and resources to support learning and development activities (e.g. Find Legal Answers, Drug Info, Public Library Services)

Focus areas

The following areas have been identified as focus areas for the development of skills and knowledge for the public library network:

Leadership and management	Community engagement and promotion	Specialist library skills and knowledge
Information technology	Program development and management	Collection development and management

Key principles

- The State Library performs several roles within the learning and development framework including provider, coordinator, manager, funder, facilitator and publisher.

- Effective learning and development activities for NSW public library staff are evidence based, drawing on statewide research to inform training needs (e.g. training audit, collection health checks, assessment and compliance reviews, surveys and research projects).

- Professional development programs and training programs will be specific to the library and information sector and/or management and service provision in public libraries.

- Local councils will be responsible for providing training and development specific to local government such as training in human resources, customer service, budgeting and financial management.

- Online and face to face options will be offered where possible.

- Training will be delivered in both rural and metropolitan locations.

- An annual program will be published and promoted.

- The program will be flexible enough to accommodate opportunities which have not been included in the annual program, for example visiting international speakers.

Mechanisms

Learning and development programs

Learning programs include formal and structured training programs, conferences, seminars, presentations and workshops. Learning programs may be conducted online or face to face. Learning programs will address identified priority skill and knowledge gaps across the public library network, raise awareness of public library issues and opportunities and services, build an understanding of future library services and models, inspire service developments and service models. They are evidence based, drawing on state-wide research to inform training needs (e.g. collection health checks, surveys, research projects).

State Library role

The State Library:
- develops content for tailored NSW public library programs
- delivers content for tailored NSW public library programs
- develops, hosts and manages an online training portal for public library staff
- provides online services to support training initiatives and statewide access
- coordinates and supports access to a range of learning and development programs tailored to NSW public libraries
- facilitates, supports and promotes participation in a range of externally developed learning programs
- provides travel assistance for staff attending from regional and remote libraries
- funds participation in range of externally developed learning programs

Examples of current learning and development programs

- Support of RefEx online training
- FLA and DI workshop
- Uncover SL
- State Library hosted webinars for e.g. research findings, topic-based webinars
- Local studies workshops
- Rewarding reading

Evaluation

- # of programs developed
- # of programs delivered
- # events held
- # participants
- 85% rate the quality of the training as very good/excellent
- % regional / remote participation
- qualitative feedback
- gap analysis

Learning communities and networks

Communities and networks enable the sharing of information and experience in a specified learning area across the NSW public library network, the broader library network and other relevant networks.

Communities and networks involve a number of participants that share information and experiences on a specified learning area in an unstructured or structured forum. Communities and networks may be face to face or online and include working groups, meetings, elists, wikis, blogs. Many learning communities are working groups sponsored by NSW Public Libraries Association (NSWPLA).

State Library role

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, venue provision, elist hosting and wiki/blog hosting.
The State Library also participates in learning communities and networks.

Examples of current learning communities and networks

- Working groups
- elists
- Annual working group seminars
- Regular working group meetings
- Public library wiki
- In the libraries enews

Evaluation

- # events held
- # participants
- 85% rate the quality of the training as very good/excellent
- % regional / remote participation
- qualitative feedback
- % of open/click-through (enewsletters)
- # of subscribers (enewsletters)

Policy, guidelines and research

Polices, guidelines and research support the ongoing learning and development of public library staff within the context of day to day operations. Documented policies, procedures, guidelines, good practice case studies, standards and benchmarks support the development and management of public library services in NSW.

State Library role

The State Library works in consultation with the NSW public library network to develop and publish policies and guidelines. The State Library undertakes research both within and outside the public library network to identify good practice case studies, benchmarks and standards and policies and procedures.

The State Library will:
- provide expertise and content for policy and guidelines
- undertake research in consultation with the public library network, in cooperation with the Strategic Network Committee and PLCC
- manage and fund research
- publish research, policies, guidelines and case studies.

Examples of policies, guidelines and research

- Living Learning Libraries
- Statewide local studies strategy
- People Places
- Library Council Guidelines
- Multicultural benchmarks
- Indigenous spaces in library places toolkit
- Academic research projects

Evaluation

- Annual review of Living Learning Libraries
- Review schedule for policies and guidelines
- Evaluation report for research projects

Specialist websites

Specialist websites support the ongoing learning and development of public library staff within the context of day to day operations. These websites provide information, training and resources to support learning and development activities (e.g. Find Legal Answers, Drug Info, Public Library Services).

The Public Library Services website is a key communication channel between the Public Library Services branch and NSW public library staff. It provides access to key documentation about administrative functions such as funding, standards and guidelines and research reports. The subsite also provides public library staff with relevant information and resources to support them in delivering specialist services such as Drug Info and Find Legal Answers to their communities and with the development and improvement of their multicultural services and collections as well as reference and local studies collections.

The Public Library Services website also provides a gateway to information, services and campaigns of the State Library of NSW. For example, the Public Library Services branch partners with the Indigenous Engagement branch to deliver the *Indigenous Spaces in Library Places* strategy via the subsite.

The Find Legal Answers and Drug Info websites assist public library staff to provide legal and drug and alcohol information to their communities.

State Library role

The State Library works develops and maintains specialist websites to assist public library staff quickly find the tools, resources, and information they need to deliver and/or improve their library services. The State Library works with stakeholders to ensure that information is up to date.

State Library specialist websites

- Public Library Services website
- Find Legal Answers website
- Drug Info website

Evaluation

- # visitors
- # pageviews
- regular review of content
- information gap analysis

Appendix 1: Focus areas

Leadership and management

Local government provides a range of training opportunities for staff, including management training for senior staff (e.g. library managers) and generic customer service training etc. The management and leadership training prioritised in this strategy is focussed on the emerging leaders in library teams and focuses on library specific topics.

Key topic areas
- Leadership:
  - Being able to take a lead, making strategic decisions, leading a team or organisation in new directions
- Strategic planning:
  - Input to local government planning processes
  - Planning library spaces and services
- Change management:
  - Developing change management plans and supporting team members through change
- Evaluation:
  - Library performance statistics (including Bibliostat)
  - Using research and evaluation as an evidence base to improve services and programs
  - Using PL statistics to benchmark; developing meaningful KPIs
  - Defining performance measures and other evaluation methodologies
- Project management: planning, implementing and monitoring projects
- Partnership management:
  - Regional library agreements (Library Act section 12)
  - MOUs, contracts and agreements in libraries
  - Co-location and convergence of library spaces
  - Joint use services
  - Find Legal Answers, Drug Info service
- Library Act 1939 and Library Regulation
- Grants and funding

Community engagement and promotion

Key topic areas
- Marketing and promotion:
  - Developing marketing strategies, materials and activities to promote the library
- Advocacy:
  - Managing public relations and media contact
  - Lobbying and advocacy
  - Promotion of your library through meetings, data visualisation and presentations
- Digital engagement via social media:
  - Social media policies
  - Developing digital engagement strategies and campaigns
  - Emerging social media channels
  - Social media policies and risk management
  - Social media tools (including searching the domain and collecting social media content)
  - Analytics and evaluation
- Community consultation:
  - Developing and implementing tools and mechanisms to consult within the community
  - Designing library customer satisfaction surveys and online survey tools
  - Analysing results

Specialist library skills and knowledge

Key topic areas
- Cataloguing and metadata
- Client services – reader advisory
- Client services – reference and information services
    - Local studies
    - Statewide databases
- Client services – young people
- Client services – multicultural
- Client services – older people
- Client services – indigenous communities
    - ATSILRN protocols and cultural awareness
    - Indigenous Services @ SLNSW
- Client services – special needs
    - Adult literacy
    - Homeless people
    - People experiencing mental illness
    - People with disabilities
    - Home library service (ageing, disability, grief and loss)
- Legal information services
- Drug and alcohol information services
- Copyright
    - Library programming (e.g. licensing media use for storytime; copyright for children's book week)
    - Library service delivery (e.g. eResources, social media, publishing and broadcasting)
    - Creative Commons licences

Information technology

Key topic areas
- NSW.net services
    - eResources and database searching skills
- User experience and online service delivery
    - Accessibility, WCAG 3.0
    - Website design and improving user experience (UX) in online library spaces
    - Mobile technologies including apps
- Collection discovery
- Digitisation
    - Techniques, equipment and standards
    - Digitising collections: best practice, processes, copyright
    - Linked data
- Public technology support:
    - Technology training for public
    - Creating tutorials for accessing eResources
- Emerging technologies: awareness of new technologies, hardware, applications and software
    - Augmented reality
    - Mobile technology

Program development and management

Many aspects of program development are closely linked to awareness of the needs of key client groups (see Specialist Library Knowledge and Skills). The most effective programs are more than library hosted events – they also promote library membership and use of library materials and services.

Key topic areas
- Children's and youth programming
    - early literacy programs
    - Book Week, Summer Reading Club, National Simultaneous Storytime
    - Youth Week
- Adult programming (eg. author talks, late night library, Law Week, Seniors Festival, etc.)
- Pop up libraries and outreach services
- Mobile library services
- Volunteer management
    - Recruit and coordinate volunteers
    - Sharing good practice
- Maker movement, makerspaces and craftivism

Some library programming forms part of statewide initiatives with coordination via State Library of NSW
- Find Legal Answers (LIAC)
- Drug Info service
- Indyreads
- Tech Savvy Seniors
- Travelling exhibitions

Collection development and management

Key topic areas
- Collection management
    - Developing collection profiles
    - Suppliers and contract management
    - Collection health monitoring and de-selection
- Collection depreciation for council accounting purposes.
- eResource collection management, promotion and evaluation.
    - awareness of publishers, suppliers, acquisition models, platforms
    - formats
    - eReaders and devices
    - content licensing and legislation
- Local studies collection preservation and management
    - Collecting social media for heritage collections
    - Born digital collections
    - Digital object types and repositories
    - Managing digital repositories
    - Copyright, access and collection development policies
    - Standards, best practice, techniques and technology
- LIAC and Drug Info collection management and subject area advice
    - Find Legal Answers tool kit, Law Books for Libraries, pamphlet collection
    - Drug Info (alcohol and other drugs) collection
- Multicultural resources
- indyreads collection