

Sensitive: NSW Government

96th Meeting - Public Libraries Consultative Committee MINUTES	
DATE	Wednesday 29 June 2022
TIME	2:00pm to 3:30pm
LOCATION	Leeson Room, SLNSW
CHAIR	Kay Delahunt (Library Council of NSW)
EXECUTIVE OFFICER	Cameron Morley (State Library)
MEMBERS ATTENDING	Hon George Souris AM (Library Council of NSW) Dr Ursula Dubosarsky (Library Council) Jody Rodas (Woollahra Library) Pam Kelly (Warren Library – North West Regional Library) Cr Nick Katris (LGNSW, Georges River Council) Adele Casey (NSWPLA) Elizabeth Robertson (LGNSW) Dr John Vallance (State Librarian)
APOLOGIES	Suzie Gately (Newcastle Region Library) Damian Thomas (LGNSW) Cr Dallas Tout (NSWPLA, Wagga Wagga City Council)
MINUTES	Philippa Scarf
ITEM 1: PRELIMINARY MATTERS	
1.1 Welcome and Apologies	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Chair opened the meeting and noted apologies.• Suzie Gately has resigned from Newcastle City Library and the PLCC. The State Library will be appointing a new library manager representative for the PLCC.	
1.2 Notification of Other Business	
Nil	
ITEM 2: MINUTES, BUSINESS ARISING	
2.1 Minutes of the Previous Meeting	
The previous minutes of the 95 th Meeting of the PLCC held 14 December 2021 were approved.	

2.1.1 Business arising

Nil

ITEM 3: MEETING BUSINESS

3.1 Draft Public Library Funding Strategy 2022/23

The Committee considered the proposed allocation of the 2022/23 Public Library Funding.

Recommended Allocations for 2022/23

The total funding available for the Public Library Funding Strategy in 2022/23 is \$40,468,000. This is an increase of \$1,850,000 over 2021/22. The per capita subsidy allocation increases by 20c to \$2.85.

The funding allocation model was approved by the Minister on 19 June 2019 for use over the 4 years of scheduled increases, adjusted as necessary according to population and funds available.

The recommended allocations by component for 2022/23 are outlined in the following table.

Component		2022/23
1	Subsidy - \$2.85 per capita <i>Population served: 8,185,892</i>	\$23,329,792
2	Subsidy Adjustment Funding <i>Allocations to councils in addition to \$2.85 per capita (above)</i>	\$7,547,000
1+2	Sub-total – payments to councils	\$30,876,792
3	NSW.net	\$2,091,208
4	Outback Letterbox Library	\$200,000
5	Strategic Network Projects to be allocated: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$20k to Interlibrary Loan Courier Service• \$100k to Statewide Projects, Research and Policy• \$60k to Professional Development• \$45k to Public Library Statistics software licences• \$25k collection support	\$250,000
6	State Library services to public libraries	\$1,050,000
7	Grant program	\$6,000,000
	Total Public Library Grants and Subsidies	\$40,468,000

ACTION:

The Committee endorses the 2022/23 Public Library Funding Strategy for recommendation to the Library Council of NSW.

3.2 NSW.net six monthly report

Joyce Azzopardi and Ross Balharrie provided a six month progress report to the Committee. From January to June 2022 the following services have been delivered:

1. Internet Connectivity

NBN upgrades

NBN service upgrades for councils and public libraries are continuing with the availability of NBN services. Basic grade NBN services were installed in Glebe, Kings Cross, and Walgett. The Pymont service is currently in progress.

Fibre internet service upgrades

There has been an ongoing requirement by both metropolitan and regional libraries for faster internet services to meet user needs. Some libraries are requesting the higher grade NBN EE services which offer excellent performance. The cost of these services is substantially more than the basic NBN services so consideration into increasing the NSW.net budget for high performance internet connectivity services is a future requirement.

NBN Fibre To The Premises (FTTP) premium internet services were installed in Tweed Heads and Murwillumbah (x2). NBN EE 50M & 100Mbps fibre services were installed in Bogan, Eastwood, Gladesville, North Ryde (x2) and West Ryde (x2). The installation of 50M fibre services are currently in progress at Eastwood and Gladesville and a 100Mbps service in Bogan Youth Centre.

The installation of a 1Gigabit fibre service has been completed in Blayney with another in progress for St Leonards Library.

Wagga Library is progressing with the installation of services for their mobile library. Awaiting the completion of the fitout of the Narrabri mobile library before finalising the installation of equipment and services. Awaiting the go ahead from Gilgandra to commence the installation of equipment and services in their new library. Upon request, provided detailed information to City of Sydney of their existing internet and WMS services in their libraries.

Firewall upgrades

Firewall upgrades were completed for 7 libraries.

Following the successful testing of a new model of firewall, the NSA2700 to provide higher performance for sites with higher bandwidth internet services. So far these units have been installed in Goonellabah, Murwillumbah, Lennox Head, Kingscliff, Richmond Tweed, Byron Bay, Brunswick Heads, Alstonville, Ballina, Mullumbimby, Tweed Heads, Lismore, Dubbo, Vinegar Hill, Granville Multi Purpose Centre, Hornsby, Castle Hill, Port Macquarie, Wentworthville, Lidcombe, Eastwood, North Ryde, Gladesville, West Ryde,

Greystanes, Guildford, Merrylands, Regents Park and Auburn, a total of 29 libraries were upgraded.

The Reporting and monitoring software, Solarwinds licence was renewed for another 12 months. NSW.net vendor warranty and Radiator subscriptions were also renewed.

Wireless Management System (WMS)

A Ruckus Wireless Access Point (WAP) was installed in Quirindi library. A number of spare Wireless Management System (WMS) Controllers were purchased for swap out when replacement is required.

Hitech has completed WMS controller maintenance for all sites to ensure the system is up to date with the latest software. The WMS Annual Maintenance subscription has been renewed.

Wi-Fi hotspots have vastly increased internet access for the public in public libraries. Since 2011 and up to the end of October 2021, there have been 49,822,678 total logins and 5,297,581 total devices using WMS.

2. e-Resources

Statewide Licensed Databases

On the 1 July a new suite of statewide licensed databases was made available to the NSW public library network. These are the databases that are available to the public free of charge for all NSW public libraries.

The new suite covers a diverse range of subjects including, Australian news sources, business skills, contemporary issues, environment, geography, literature, science, and history. The 2021-22 statewide suite of licensed databases is comprised of the following databases:

- Gale General OneFile, the largest general-interest periodical resource offered by Gale, which contains over 9,000 full-text titles including, award-winning reference sets such as the Gale Encyclopedia of Science and the Full-text of the New York Times from 1985 to the present (updated daily), and The Economist from 1988 to the present, with no embargo.
- Gale General: OneFile News - full-text newspaper resource allows users to search articles instantly by title, headline, date, author, and many other fields. Gale OneFile: News provides access to more than 2,300 major world newspapers (493 Australian Newspapers), and includes thousands of images, radio and TV broadcasts and transcripts.
- Gale Health and Wellness Resource - Authoritative source for health information, updated daily.
- Gale Interactive Science - Authoritative, high-quality digital content paired with interactive 3D models with functionality including zooming in, rotating, and pulling them apart.
- Gale Business Plan Builder - A step-by-step online planning tool for starting, managing and optimising a business or non-profit, equipped with popular, proven business planning tools and templates.

- Gale Business Entrepreneurship - A comprehensive database that covers all aspects of starting and operating a business, including accounting, finance, human resources, management, marketing, tax, and more
- Gale Literature Resource Centre - offers the broadest and most representative range of authors and their works, including a large collection of full-text critical and literary analysis.
- Gale Literature: Books and Authors - A readers' advisory database for discovery of books by author, genre and topic.
- Gale in Context: Environmental Studies - Interdisciplinary study of sustainability and the environment, Gale in Context Environmental Studies provides authoritative reference content in the areas of the environment, energy and natural resources.
- Gale in Context: Biography - Contextual information on the world's most influential people. Over 650,000 biographical entries cover a range of historically significant figures and present-day newsmakers.
- Gale in Context: Global Issues - A database designed to support global awareness. Authoritative content empowers learners to critically analyze and understand the most important issues of the modern world.
- Gale in Context: Opposing View Points - Database designed to support science, social studies, current events, and language arts presents each side of important issues and empowers learners to develop information literacy and critical thinking skills.
- Gale in Context: Science - Database designed to support science, social studies, current events, and language arts presents each side of important issues and empowers learners to develop information literacy and critical thinking skills.
- Gale in Context: World History - Database designed to provide an overview of world history covering the most-studied events, cultures, civilizations, religions, people, and more.
- National Geographic Virtual Library - offers access to the complete archive of National Geographic magazine — every page of every issue — along with a cross-searchable collection of books, maps, images, and videos.
- PowerPacks - Libraries can also select 5 PowerPack databases from a collection 24 available subject specific resources

The usage statistics for the current suite of resources (July 2021 – June 2022) are: 310,253 individual sessions, 402,580 searches, and 75,393 full-text downloads. This represents a 50% increase in full-text downloads when compared to the previous Ebsco offering of 2020/21.

In April 2022 NSW.net surveyed NSW public library managers to gauge their satisfaction with the current Gale statewide database offering. The polling indicated a high degree of satisfaction with 18 of the 20 resources offered. The two-underperforming resources were Gale Business Plan Builder (GBP) and Gale Business Entrepreneurship (GBE). Based on the survey feedback the Content Working Group (CWG) undertook a review of alternative business resources and recommends removing GBP and GBE for Gale Business Insights, the latter containing significantly more information pertinent to Australia.

The CWG also reviewed a new title, Gale OneFile Australia and New Zealand. This database contains 400+ local and state newspapers, an array of contemporary and archival ABC content, and mainstream magazines and journals. NSW.net has negotiated for this resource to be included into the proposed 2022/23 statewide bundle.

indyreads

The indyreads platform enables public libraries to provide free access to eBooks and eAudio. The collection focus is on Australian and International Independent published material, emerging authors and classic and award-winning titles.

The collection continues to grow with over 21,000 eBook and Audio titles currently available. The LOTE collection includes 453 Chinese titles, 364 Italian, 390 Spanish titles, 261 French, 198 Romanian, 191 Russian, 190 Polish, 47 Vietnamese and 253 Portuguese titles. Since January 2022 there have been over 33,844 loans (72,837 loans since 1 July 2021).

NSWPLN staff can access a comprehensive suite of marketing resources, training resources, user guides and current project news via the SLNSW, PLS, indyreads portal page.

indyreads Summer Book Club

The inaugural indyreads Summer Book Club commenced on the 1 December 2021 and concluded with an author talk on 2 February 2022.

The book selected was the award-winning novel, *The Grandest Bookshop in the World* by the Australian Author, Amelia Mellor. An unlimited simultaneous user license was negotiated for the book. Social media campaign collateral, a media release and bookmarks were distributed to the NSWPLN.

A survey of participating libraries indicated that the initiative was well received, with a consensus that an adult fiction title would be desirable for the next edition.

indyreads® Untapped the Australian Literary Heritage Project Collection

On the 6 December 2021 the Untapped collection was uploaded onto the indyreads platform. The Untapped collection contains over 160 culturally significant Australian titles that were previously out of print. These works include local and national histories, biographies and memoirs, beloved children's titles – and even winners of glittering literary prizes such as the Miles Franklin Literary Award. The titles have been purchased under an unlimited simultaneous user license making them ideal for book clubs. To learn more about the Untapped project: <https://untapped.org.au/>, to view the collection, go to: <https://untapped.org.au/collection/>. 600 loans have been recorded for this collection.

Content Working Group

The Content Working Group (CWG) reviewed Bibliotheca CloudLibrary and based on the evaluation the product was added to the Consortia Opt-in Offer scheme. The Consortia

Opt-in Offer Scheme provides NSW public libraries with discounted pricing for over 100 eContent products that have been evaluated by the CWG. The 2022/23 Consortia Opt-in offers were released in May 2022.

ACTION:

The Committee noted the progress of the NSW.net internet connectivity and eResources services.

3.3 Public Library Statistic and Benchmarks

Cameron briefed the Committee on NSW public library statistical trends, noting the intention to focus on membership and collection development for the next cycle of assessment and compliance visits.

BACKGROUND

The State Library collects library usage and financial data from all NSW council public libraries annually, in support of the Library Council’s duty *to make careful inquiry into the administration and management of local libraries provided by local authorities that have adopted the Library Act 1939* (s5 of the Act).

The Public Library Statistics for 2020/21 have recently been compiled and published. COVID-19 Library usage figures for 2020/21 were significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Onsite services for most of the 2020/21 year were restricted due to COVID-19 Safety Plans, and many branches were closed to the public for extended periods. When library buildings were allowed to open, restrictions on visitor numbers, PC usage, reduced opening hours and a ban on programs and events resulted in lower than usual figures for many services. Libraries quickly adapted over the period and implemented enhanced online services which were enthusiastically taken up by local communities. Other low-contact services such as "click and collect" and home delivery provided hard copy materials to readers.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	% change over 3 years
Physical visits to public libraries	34 million	25.8 million	17.1 million	49.7% decrease
Internet bookings in public libraries (including Wi-Fi)	10 million	8 million	4.4 million	56% decrease
Number of programs/events held	95,600	73,000	43,700	54.3% decrease
Attendees at programs/events	1.9 million	1.5 million	684,000	64% decrease
Loans of collection items	40.3 million	34.8 million	35.1 million	13% decrease
Expenditure on collections	\$37.353 million	\$36.878 million	\$33.365 million	10.7% decrease
Total Stock (items)	12,571,433	12,170,828	12,476,892	Less than 1% decrease

eBook loans	1.5 million	2 million	2.3 million	53.3% increase
Expenditure on licensed access to electronic resources - ebook & downloadable audio books	\$2.27 million	\$2.69 million	\$3.14 million	38.3% increase
Total ebooks, digital music, eaudio & ejournals in collections	0.874 million	1.023 million	1.498 million	71.4% increase
Data sources: 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21 NSW public library statistics				

NSW public library standards and library cohorts

The annual statistics are used to define standards for public library performance measures, using medians and quartiles derived from the data. Libraries are arranged into one of four population-based cohorts to enable comparison between libraries of similar size, as well as comparison with statewide figures.

The cohorts are defined as follows:

- rural small population up to 20,000
- urban small population 20,001 to 50,000
- urban medium population 50,001 to 150,000
- urban large population 150,001 and above

The *rural* and *urban* terms are based on Department of Local Government definitions and do not necessarily mean that a council is in a metropolitan or country area, the population is the determining factor for placement in a cohort.

5 year trend for membership and collections

A spreadsheet was provided to illustrate the changes in the cohort median for each of the collection standards over the past 5 years. At this stage it is not recommended that the standards are changed to reflect the COVID-affected medians because the figures related to library visitation are much lower than in a normal year, and this influences the results. 2021/22 will also be affected by library closures and restrictions.

The five year trend with the membership and collection measures has however raised some concern, and the State Library proposes to put a greater focus on collection analysis when visiting libraries for assessment and compliance activities over the next cycle of library visits.

Observations

The trend in each cohort is somewhat smoother than when libraries are looked at individually, because the range in each cohort is relatively large. The figures for some individual libraries are particularly concerning, while others are exemplary with very strong figures.

Low membership is of concern for quite a few libraries. There is one rural library with less than 10% membership, and there are a number of libraries in each cohort with less than

30% membership. Conversely the top quartile of libraries has membership of 60% or above, with the statewide median being just under 40%.

The PLS team observes that there are many libraries that do not have collections large enough for their population catchments. There are various reasons for this, including councils that are not buying enough items per annum, while others have over-zealously weeded collections (or both). This is resulting in reduced collection sizes and a smaller range of items being available to the public over time.

Some libraries are purchasing at the median level but have started from a low base so will not be able to attain above-median results over time without allocating more funds to collections.

Some libraries appear to be reducing their collections to attain more space for people and activities in library buildings. This type of space is of course very important, but there needs to be adequate space for collection storage, browsing and display. In most cases the library should be extended to meet the needs of larger populations, rather than reducing collections. Reducing the size and range of collections will ultimately compromise the quality of the library.

Another observation is that many collections are too small on a per capita basis. The recommended standard is at least 1.5 items per capita for libraries serving over 100,000 people, and at least 2 items per capita for libraries serving under 100,000 people. Smaller population libraries generally need more items per capita in order to have an appropriate range of items and genres, so between 3 and 4 items per capita is appropriate for libraries serving very low populations.

There are some libraries in NSW with less than one item per capita, which is a significant concern. The NSW median is 1.82 items per capita, and quite a few libraries have more than 4 items per capita. In general a larger, older lending collection will not perform as well in turnover (loans per capita per annum) as a medium sized newer lending collection, so a balance between size and age is necessary.

The State Library will work with public libraries to identify and share good practice, and offer advice to libraries that appear to be facing challenges with membership and collection management.

ACTION:

The Committee noted the NSW public library statistical trends, including the intention for the State Library to focus on membership and collection development for the next cycle of assessment and compliance visits.

3.4 Association Reports

Adele Casey briefed the Committee about NSWPLA activities, including:

- NSWPLA Switch Conference update. Exhibition space is sold out, and more than 60 delegates have committed.

- Cath Knowles Scholarship will now provide two bursaries to the attend Switch Conference.
- Professional development activities have included workshops with ADC, Trove and Be Proud at your library that had over 90 attendees.

Jody Rodas, Woollahra Library:

- Attendance at programs and visitation by students has increased significantly.
- Staff shortages are affecting library services.

Clr Nick Katris, Bayside Council:

- New Indigenous collection and Pride collection at Hurstville Library

ITEM 4: OTHER BUSINESS

4.1 Trove collaborative services charges and LADD changes

The National Library of Australia (NLA) has increased fees and charges relating to Trove with little notification to NSW public libraries. In addition to Trove fees and charges increasing, the LADD is at end-of-life and within three years it will no longer be operational. The NLA is exploring alternatives for LADD, however there has been no success to date. Dr John Vallance and Clr Dallas Tout have written to the NLA regarding these two issues.

Cameron Morley and Adele Casey have contacted Trove to discuss options including freezing charges for 12 months, considering hardship applications, and the possibility of entering into a consortia agreement. NSW public libraries have given permission for the NSWPLA to act on their behalf to discuss potential consortia arrangements.

Members of the Committee agreed the Trove database was an important national resource and increased costs would result in many public libraries no longer contributing their holdings and therefore diminishing the integrity of the database over time.

ACTION:

The State Library and the NSWPLA will continue to work together on this issue.

4.2 Review of Children's Policy Guidelines

Philippa Scarf noted that with the commencement of the Child Safe Standards all councils were reviewing their children's policies. The Standards provide a framework for organisations to create and maintain environments that support children and young people to feel safe. The Standards are principle-based and focused on outcomes, not prescriptive compliance. In light of these changes, the State Library will review the Children's Policy Guidelines.

Elizabeth Robertson, LGNSW noted she is working with councils and the Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) as part of a working group. The OCG has a number of training materials available on their website. LGNSW has over 400 contacts on the elist and meetings are held each month. Currently much of the work involves council HR and legal teams but in the future this will include libraries.

ACTION:

The State Library will work with NSW public libraries to review the Children's Policy Guidelines.

NEXT MEETING

DATE	Wednesday 14 December 2022
TIME	3:00 PM – 4:00 PM
LOCATION	State Library of NSW