98th Meeting - Public Libraries Consultative Committee MINUTES

DATE	Wednesday 28 June 2023
TIME	2:00pm to 3:30pm
LOCATION	Jean Garling Room, State Library of NSW
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 of NSW) Jody Rodas (Woollahra Library) Elysa Dennis (Liverpool Library) Ruth Neave (Liverpool Plains Shire) Karen Rae (LGNSW) Cr Nick Katris (LGNSW) Cr Romola Hollywood (NSWPLA, Blue Mountains City Council) Adele Casey (NSWPLA) Dr John Vallance (State Librarian)
APOLOGIES	Nil
MINUTES	Philippa Scarf

ITEM 1: PRELIMINARY MATTERS

1.1 Welcome and Apologies

- The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed the new members.
- The new library representatives for PLCC are Elysa Dennis, Liverpool Library and Ruth Neave, Liverpool Plains Shire Council.

1.2 Notification of Other Business

Nil

ITEM 2: MINUTES, BUSINESS ARISING

2.1 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The previous minutes of the 97th Meeting of the PLCC held 14 December 2022 were approved.

2.1.1 Business arising

Nil

3.1 Draft Public Library Funding Strategy 2023/24

The Committee considered the proposed allocation of the 2023/24 Public Library Funding.

Funding Increase from 2023/24

Following a $60M increase over the 4 years to 2022/23, the public library grants and subsidies continue to increase annually as follows:

2023/24	$40,892,000
2024/25	$41,326,000
2025/26	$41,771,000
2026/27	$42,227,000

Recommended Allocations for 2023/24

The total funding available for the Public Library Funding Strategy in 2023/24 is $40,892,000. This is an increase of $424,000 over 2022/23.

The funding allocation model has been revised based on additional funding available and the release of the SEIFA 2021 data. The recommended allocations by component are outlined in the following table.

Component		2023/24
1	Subsidy - $2.85 per capita *Population served*: 8,153,643	$23,237,883
2	Subsidy Adjustment Funding *Allocations to councils in addition to $2.85 per capita (above)*	$7,901,617
1+2	**Sub-total – payments to councils**	**$31,139,499**
3	NSW.net	$2,200,000
4	Outback Letterbox Library	$200,000
5	Strategic Network Projects to be allocated: • $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	$1,102,500
7	Grant program	$6,000,000
	Total Public Library Grants and Subsidies	**$40,892,000**

ACTION:
The Committee endorsed the 2023/24 Public Library Funding Strategy for recommendation to the Library Council of NSW.

3.2 Public library trends, benchmarks and the State Library response

At the December meeting, Cameron Morley outlined the focus areas for the State Library's public library assessment and advisory services for 2023/24, with reference to library performance measures.

The State Library monitors the performance of public libraries through a range of activities including the collection of financial and statistical data, and the ongoing series of assessment and compliance visits. All councils provide detailed information on library expenditure as part of the annual application for the library subsidy. Councils also submit statistical and narrative information to the State Library which outlines their library's performance. This includes usage figures, collection information, opening hours, staffing, digital information, among a wide range of indicators. A selection of this financial and statistical data is published in the annual Public Library Statistics.

Andrea Curr, Consultant, Public Library Services, delivered a presentation to the Committee on the effects of COVID-19 pandemic on public libraries, recent NSW public library trends, library cohorts and recommended benchmarks.

Effects of COVID-19:
- Significant impact of COVID-19 pandemic across three reporting years of public library statistics including physical visits, programs, internet bookings.
- Over the period the decrease in membership and expenditure was not as significant, however funding of ecollections increased by 58%, total ebook and econtent collections increased by 111% and loans increased 80%.
- Research conducted by CSU on what library users missed most about their libraries during the pandemic were access to library collections and the ability to browse and borrow material.

Benchmarking:
- The Public Library Statistics provide the evidence base for the Living Learning Libraries standards. The standards help to assess the performance of libraries of different sizes relative to their peers (population cohorts).
- Standards for NSW public libraries recommended quality levels and best practice goals. Libraries that are below their cohort median for a given standard are encouraged to consider the median as a target to attain.

Improving library services
- The State Library will focus on the 25% of libraries who are underperforming across a number of standards including collection size, membership, expenditure on library materials and staffing.

- Libraries with buildings over 50 years of age will be supported to develop renewal plans for major infrastructure projects.

PLS Consultants have already used the approach to assist the City of Sydney Library and Central Coast Libraries with their strategic planning.

ACTION:
The Committee noted the briefing on public library trends, benchmarks and the State Library response.

3.3 NSW.net six monthly report

Joyce Azzopardi and Ross Balharrie provided a six-month progress to the Committee. From January to June 2023 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 Lismore (x2).

Fibre internet service upgrades
There has been an ongoing requirement by both metropolitan and regional libraries for faster internet services to meet user needs. Most 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. Adjustments to the 2022/2023 NSW.net budget were made to cater for increased costs for internet connectivity.

NBN EE 100mpbs services were installed in Castle Cove, Naremburn, Northbridge, Chatswood West, Urunga and Bellingen. NBN EE 200mbps services were installed in Artarmon, Grafton and Lismore.

A 100Mbps fibre service installation is in progress for the new library in Gilgandra and a NBN EE 200Mbps fibre service installation is in progress for a new library at Queanbeyan-Palerang.

A new 1 Gigabit fibre service was installed in Goulburn-Mulwaree Council.

The fit out of the Narrabri mobile library has been completed with all equipment and services installed.

The Hilltops new library installation was completed. A network upgrade proposal was provided to Queanbeyan-Palerang Library for the relocation of their existing library into a new premises.

Firewall upgrades
Firewall upgrades were completed for the Berrigan libraries (x4).

NSA2700 Firewall upgrades
Many NSW.net sites are running a SonicWall NSA2600 firewall. SonicWall has advised that this model is now at End of Life (EOL) which means that purchases can no longer be made for this model of firewall, support and any subscriptions.

NSW.net has commenced the upgrade of these units to the newer NSA2700 firewall. Replacements are in progress for Eurobodalla (x4), Warrawong, Dungog, Cessnock, Lithgow (x3), Armidale, Mid Western (x4), The Hills Shire, City of Sydney (x10), Georges River, Oberon, Blacktown (x4), Federation, Hilltops, Shoalhaven (x4) and Queanbeyan.

Wireless Management System (WMS)
Additional Ruckus Wireless Access Points (WAPs) were installed in Woy Woy, Crookwell and Springwood libraries.

A Wi-Fi capture portal was developed for Central Coast libraries.
Renewed annual SolarWinds, WMS software maintenance, Vendor Warranty and WMS Controller Maintenance. Currently testing a new version of the WMS software parallel to the existing service.

Wi-Fi hotspots have vastly increased internet access for the public in public libraries. Since 2011 and up to the end of April 2023 there have been 52,252,718 total logins and 5,752,022 total devices using WMS.

2. Online content
Statewide licensed databases
Since 2002, NSW.net has been negotiating and purchasing online databases for access by NSW public libraries and the communities they serve.

The selection of the statewide databases is made by the members of the NSW.net Content Working Group (CWG) in consultation with public libraries every financial year.

The statewide licensed database suite for 2022/23 consists of the following 20 products provided by GALE:
- National Geographic Virtual Library (all parts)
- Gale OneFile Australia and New Zealand
- Gale General OneFile
- Gale OneFile News
- Gale Health and Wellness Resource
- Gale Interactive: Science
- Gale Business: Insights
- Gale Literature: Literature Resource Centre
- Gale Literature: Books and Authors
- Gale in Context: Environmental Studies

- Gale in Context: Biography
- Gale in Context: Global Issues
- Gale in Context: Opposing Viewpoints
- Gale in Context: Science
- Gale in Context: World History
- Plus 5 Powerpack databases (customer's choice from a suite of 33 options)

The usage statistics for the current suite of eresources (July 2022 – May 2023) are: 51,205 individual sessions, 129,138 searches, and 56,876 full-text downloads.

The current suite is offered at a cost of $2,166.00 per library. Without the statewide license individual public library services would be looking at a cost of well over $30,000 for a similar suite of resources.

Over the past twelve months NSW.net has worked closely with Gale to develop a suite of marketing collateral, training resources and technical guides to ensure that NSW public libraries gain maximin benefit from the suite of resources. This has resulted in a monthly webinar series focusing on the subject coverage of each resource and their relevance to community information needs, as well as an online hub containing marketing, training and technical resources.

In April 2023 NSW.net surveyed NSW public library managers to gauge their satisfaction with the current Gale statewide database offering. The polling indicated an overall high degree of satisfaction with the current suite of databases and support services.

The CWG recommendation is to renew the current offering for 2023/24.

indyreads
The indyreads platform provides public libraries with free access to eBooks and eAudio.

The aim of indyreads is to ensure NSW public libraries can offer their users a diverse collection of quality Australian and international published works.

Content available on indyreads includes:
- Australian authors and independent publishers
- International independent publishers
- Classic fiction, including modern classics
- Library professional publications
- Award winners
- Simultaneous use titles for books clubs
- NSW local studies content
- Best examples of self-published material
- Collections in languages other than English: Chinese, French, German, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Spanish and Vietnamese.
- Material to learn English
- Untapped: Australian Literary Heritage Project collection

The collection currently contains, 25,233 titles (21,188 ebooks & 4029 Audio books).

Between July 2022 and May 2023 there were 96,443 loans and 42,806 reservations.

indyreads Summer Book Club
The second indyreads Summer Book Club commenced on the 1st of December and concluded with an author talk on 14th February 2023.

The book selected was the award-winning novel, *Every Version of You* by the Australian author, Grace Chan.

An unlimited simultaneous user license was negotiated for the book and the title had over 800 loans. 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.

The promotional campaign resulted in a 15% increase in indyreads members.

indyreads Local studies project
Public libraries with suitable digitised local studies content were invited to upload their collections onto the indyreads platform. First round Libraries include, Wollongong, Georges River, Central Coast, Newcastle, North Western, North Sydney and Macquarie Regional Library. Digital collections are in the process of being uploaded with approximately 100 titles available on the platform in May 2023.

Corrective Services NSW
Work continues on the rollout of the indyreads platform to Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW) inmates.

The Odilo APK (indyreads App) has been successfully tested by Corrective Services NSW. A memorandum of understanding between the Department of Communities and Justice, Corrective Services NSW and the State Library of New South Wales has been drafted.

Corrective Services is currently working through the necessary procurement workflow to engage the indyreads platform provider, Odilo, to develop a bespoke version of the indyreads App for the ODS tablets.

Consortia opt-in offers
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 2023/24 Consortia Opt-in offers were released in May 2023.

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

3.4 Trove fees
Trove collaborative services charges and LADD changes The National Library of Australia (NLA) has confirmed the increase in fees and charges for many public libraries in relation to Trove. The NLA received a funding increase in the May budget, however this funding increase will be used to improve infrastructure and there will be no change to the cost-neutral business model. The NSWPLA will undertake another survey of public libraries to ascertain how many have received a fee increase and how many have decided to withdraw from Trove. **ACTION:** The State Library and the NSWPLA will continue to work together on this issue.
3.5 Association Reports
Adele Casey briefed the Committee about NSWPLA activities.
ITEM 4: OTHER BUSINESS
Rainbow storytimes / collection development Cr Romola Hollywood noted public libraries are being challenged over collections and rainbow storytime events. The NSWPLA has prepared a statement to support library staff, promote inclusive communities and diverse collections. The *NSWPLA Respect for NSW Library Staff* is available on the NSWPLA website. The Committee agreed to work collaboratively on the responses for public libraries, including a general statement of principles to summarise the policy and legislative background. The NSWPLA and State Library agreed to approach ALIA with a view to conducting a workshop for public library managers in August. **ACTION:** The State Library and the NSWPLA will continue to work together on this issue.

NEXT MEETING	
DATE	Wednesday 13 December 2023
TIME	PLCC 1.30 – 3 pm / Joint meeting with the LC 3:00 PM – 3:45 PM
LOCATION	State Library of NSW