

Sensitive: NSW Government

99th Meeting - Public Libraries Consultative Committee MINUTES	
DATE	Wednesday 13 December 2023
TIME	1:30-3:00pm
LOCATION	Jean Garling Room, SLNSW
CHAIR	Kay Delahunt (Library Council of NSW), online
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) Elysa Dennis (Liverpool Library) Ruth Neave (Liverpool Plains Shire Council) Cr Nick Katris Cr Romola Hollywood (President NSWPLA, Blue Mountains City Council) Adele Casey (NSWPLA) Jane Robertson (LGNSW) Dr Caroline Butler-Bowdon (State Librarian)
APOLOGIES	Nil
MINUTES	Philippa Scarf
ITEM 1: PRELIMINARY MATTERS	
1.1 Welcome and apologies The Chair opened the meeting and introduced the new State Librarian Dr Caroline Butler-Bowdon.	
1.2 Introduction to the new State Librarian Dr Caroline Butler-Bowdon spoke of her first month as State Librarian and her immediate involvement with public libraries commencing with the Switch Conference, a Library Council visit to the new Coffs Harbour Library and other north coast libraries, and attendance at the opening of the new Forster Library with The Hon George Souris, President of Library Council. She thanked the Committee for their ongoing commitment.	
ITEM 2: MINUTES, BUSINESS ARISING	
2.1 Minutes of the previous meeting The previous minutes of the 98 th meeting of the PLCC held on 28 June 2023 were approved.	
2.1.1 Business arising Public library funding progress <ul style="list-style-type: none">• most councils have received their 2023/24 subsidies, with two councils yet to complete their applications• the assessment of the Public Library infrastructure grants is underway. The Library Council Grants Committee will meet in late February, and it was noted that more than 40 applications had been received this year.	

Joint workshop on book challenges/Freedom to read

- ALIA, the State Library and public library managers conducted a very successful workshop at the Library in August.
- ALIA has supporting documentation available on their website for public library staff.
- Cameron sent a document entitled *Freedom to read and collect* to public library managers. This document provided an overview of the regulatory framework for NSW public libraries and outlined the recommended procedure for responding to a book challenge.
- The Committee discussed the best way to provide this information to general managers and it was suggested that the State Librarian email general managers in the new year with the information.

Action: State Librarian to email all general managers of local councils a copy of *Freedom to read and collect*.

ITEM 3: MEETING BUSINESS

3.1 Regional library agreements

At present there are 49 councils party to some form of regional agreement with neighbouring councils under s12 of the *Library Act*. There are about a dozen more with less formal agreements, where councils cooperate on some aspects of library services.

Cameron Morley briefed the Committee on the plan to review and update the regional library agreement templates (which had been developed by the NSW Crown Solicitor in 2008, revised 2010). Following this revision, the State Library will advise councils of the updated templates to ensure that future agreements include key clauses.

It was noted that:

- the need for the review was precipitated by a recent dispute between councils involved in a regional library arrangement,
- the Library Council of NSW had appointed an arbitrator to settle the dispute in accordance with s12(5) of the *Library Act 1939*,
- the councils in this particular regional library had not used the existing template agreement, and
- the dispute highlighted the importance of agreements clearly defining the roles of the executive council, member councils and the library committee, as well as a method for asset distribution when agreements conclude.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee noted the State Library's intention to update the regional library agreement templates, and to provide advice to councils about best practice agreements.

3.2 Library Regulation Remaking

Cameron briefed the Committee on the staged repeal and remaking of the *Library Regulation*.

BACKGROUND

NSW Regulations are automatically repealed every 5 years under the *Subordinate Legislation Act 1989*. Regulations that have ongoing utility are remade after a review process prescribed under this Act. This ensures that Regulations are reviewed regularly and remain current.

The Library Regulation has a range of functions, notably:

- Enabling the Library Council to make rules for the regulation and use of the State Library (Part 2 Division 1),
- Enabling local councils to make rules for the regulation and use of local libraries (Part 2 Division 2),
- Setting out rules for public conduct in both the State Library and local libraries, and associated penalties (Part 3),
- prescribing the per capita subsidy for local libraries and the means to determine populations of local councils for the payment of the per capita subsidy (Part 4).

The Library Regulation 2018 was due for repeal or remaking on 1 September 2023, however this was postponed until 2024.

Note that a Regulation pertaining to the State Library has been in place continuously since at least 1874, and a public library regulation has been in place continuously since 1940. The combination of the Regulations pertaining to the State Library and Local libraries into one instrument occurred in 1976.

Recent Reviews

The Regulation has been regularly reviewed and updated, with minimal change occurring between 2005, 2010 and 2018. Note that the staged repeal process due in 2015 was postponed 3 times at the request of the previous Department, hence the 8-year gap between the last two regulations.

The prescribed amount for subsidy was amended on 28 June 2019 to include the public library funding increases.

Previous versions of the Regulation were more prescriptive around rules and conduct. The State Library considers that the current wording is much better because it simply says that the Library Council and local councils may make rules for the regulation of their libraries, and specifies some types of behaviour that are either prohibited (e.g. excessive noise, hiding books) or may only be done if authorised by the library (e.g. eating or drinking, photography, managing umbrellas).

Consultation

A consultation paper was prepared for the State Library Executive and NSW public libraries.

The State Library Executive considered the Regulation on 29 August 2023 and agreed to recommend that the Regulation is to be remade without change.

NSW public libraries and the Public Libraries Consultative Committee were asked to provide feedback by 13 October 2023. No material changes were suggested.

The Library Council considered the matter at its meeting of 29 October 2023.

Next steps

On 3 November 2023 the Minister for the Arts the Hon John Graham MLC approved the Library Council's recommendation that the regulation is to be remade in 2024 without changes.

The Parliamentary Counsel's Office was advised of this prior to the due date of 1 December 2023. It is expected that a draft Library Regulation 2024 will be made available in mid-2024 and come into force on 1 September 2024.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee noted the briefing.

3.3 Public library operational expenditure analysis

To provide a progress report on the analysis of public library expenditure over recent years.

BACKGROUND

Earlier in 2023 the Library Council of NSW suggested that it would be useful to have a “dashboard” representation of public library performance data.

At the June meeting of the PLCC Andrea Curr, Consultant, Public Library Services, presented the benchmarking tool that has been developed to show the relative performance of libraries against the standards and their peers within cohorts.

Further to this, Linda Papas, Senior Finance Business Partner in the Library’s Finance team has been working on a 4-year comparison of public library operational expenditure by council. Part of this analysis is to show whether the State Government funding increases have resulted in material increases to public library expenditure.

Linda presented her findings to the Committee.

It is proposed that the data will be presented to the Library Council in February 2024, inclusive of 2022/23 financial data.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee noted the spreadsheet tool.

3.4 Assessment and compliance visits

Cameron provided the Committee with an update on the assessment and compliance program for 2024.

BACKGROUND

At the June meeting the Committee considered a paper outlining the performance of libraries against the standards and within cohorts arranged by population. It was noted that:

- The State Library will focus on the libraries in the bottom quartile 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.

The State Library foreshadowed its intention to prioritise these libraries for the assessment and compliance visit program.

The assessment and compliance visits are more in-depth than a general visit, and a report is provided to the library or council after the visit highlighting strengths, development areas and opportunities.

The State Library team has completed an assessment and compliance visit to almost every council over the past 7 years (with a break imposed by COVID-19).

The State Library will write to the general managers of the councils in the bottom quartile outlining the visit program, and the intention to organise mutually convenient visit dates over the next 2 years.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee noted the briefing.

3.5 NSW.net six-monthly report

Joyce Azzopardi and Ross Balharrie provided the six-month progress report to the Committee. From July to December 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 East Maitland, Rutherford, Thornton, Forster, Tea Gardens (x2). Contracts were renewed for Carrathool, Kurri Kurri, Cobar, Howlong, Mulwala, Bingara, Warialda, Denman, Muswellbrook and Singleton. A new 25-75Mbps/50-10Mbps wireless internet service was installed in Stroud. The installation of a basic NBN service is required for Dorrigo's temporary library site during the extension works in their current library.

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 2023/2024 NSW.net budget were made to cater for increased costs for internet connectivity.

A NBN EE 100Mbps internet service was installed in the new Gilgandra library and another installation is in progress for Warrawong Library.

A NBN EE 250Mbps service was installed in the new library at Queanbeyan-Palerang.

Two (2) Gigabit fibre services were installed in Maitland and Lachlan libraries.

Firewall upgrades

Firewall upgrades were completed for the Berrigan libraries (x4). Upgrade proposals were provided to 15 libraries.

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.

NSA2700 firewall replacements have been completed for Port Macquarie (x2), Bega (x2), Cabonne, Macquarie Regional (x7), Lachlan, Katoomba, Crookwell, Kempsey (x3), Richmond Valley (x3), Boorowa, Bombala, Brewarrina, Carrathool, Hay and Port Stephens (x2). The remaining sites, Moree, Lightning Ridge and Singleton replacements will be completed by February 2024.

Wireless Management System (WMS)

Additional Ruckus Wireless Access Point (WAPs) was installed in Umina library. An outdoor WAP was installed for the new Gilgandra library.

Testing for the new version of WMS software has been completed. Annual WMS maintenance works will be scheduled for January. The rollout of the new version of WMS software will follow once these works are complete.

Renewed annual Radiator, WMS Maintenance and WMS hotspot controller maintenance.

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 54,231,171 total logins and 6,037,097 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 2023/24 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 resources (July 2023 – Oct 2023) are: 17,138 individual sessions, 40,665 searches, and 18,988 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 maximum 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.

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, 27,175 titles (22,717 ebooks & 4450 Audio books).

Between July 2023 and October 2023 there were 55,197 loans and 28,106 reservations. For the previous financial year (July 2022 – June 2023) there were 100,631 loans and 48,240 reservations.

indyreads Winter Book Club

The inaugural indyreads Winter Book Club commenced on the 1 August and concluded with an author talk on 7 September 2023. The book selected was the novel, *The Other Side of Her* by the Ned Kelly Award nominee Author, B.M. Carroll. This gripping crime thriller is set in the New South Wales Hunter Region.

An unlimited simultaneous user license was negotiated for the book and the title had over 400 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 5% increase in indyreads members.

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.

RECOMMENDATION:

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

ITEM 4: OTHER BUSINESS**4.1 Microfilm transition**

The State Library makes a microfilm copy of all newspapers published in New South Wales. There is currently only one supplier of the microfilm and Kodak has announced it is ceasing to manufacture the microfilm. The State Library is looking at different digital replacements as well as reviewing the content currently copied by the Library.

4.2 Trove update

Adele Casey, Executive Officer, NSWPLA provided an update on Trove. A town hall meeting was held for public libraries in partnership with ALIA. The ongoing funding of Trove continues to be of concern and any further increases for public libraries will result in further withdrawals by public libraries.

Action: Adele and Romola suggested the NSWPLA could run another survey of public library usage of Trove and provide an update to the State Library.

4.3 Workshop on AI

Kay Delahunt discussed the development of a workshop for public libraries around AI in libraries. In 2008 the State Library developed and delivered the Learning 2.0 program for public library staff and Kay referenced the success of this training format as a starting point. ALIA is also interested in this area for professional development.

The meeting closed at 3pm. The joint meeting with Library Council commenced at 3:15pm.

NEXT MEETING

DATE	26 June 2024
TIME	2:00pm - 3:30pm
LOCATION	State Library of NSW