



Public Libraries Consultative Committee Minutes of the 83rd meeting

Date and time	Monday 13 March 2017, 12.00pm
Location	Garling room, Level 1 Macquarie building
Chair	Jan Richards AM (Library Council of NSW)
Members in Attendance	Michael Caulfield (Library Council of NSW) Philip Edney (NSWPLA) Cr Les Lambert (NSWPLA) Lucy Milne (State Library) Jan Richards AM (Library Council of NSW) The Hon. George Souris AM (Library Council of NSW) Adele Casey (NSWPLA) (via Blue Jeans) Cr Dallas Tout (NSWPLA) (via Blue Jeans)
State Library Staff in Attendance	Cameron Morley, A/Executive Director PLE Philippa Scarf, A/Manager PLS Kate O'Grady, Consultant PLS
Apologies	Cr Lesley Furneaux-Cook (LGNSW) Cr Romola Hollywood (NSWPLA) Margaret Kay (LGNSW) Robert Knight (NSWPLA)
Minutes	Susan Smith

Minutes

Item 1: Preliminary Matters

1.1 Welcome and apologies

- The Chair opened the meeting at 12.00pm and conducted an Acknowledgement of Country before she welcomed attendees.
- The Chair thanked Ms Scarf for setting up the Blue Jeans video conference so that Ms Casey and Cr Tout could participate.
- Apologies were moved by Cr Lambert for Cr Lesley Furneaux-Cook, Cr Romola Hollywood, Margaret Kay, and Robert Knight.

1.2 Notification of other business

- Nil notified.



Item 2: Minutes, Business arising and action register

2.1 Minutes of the 82nd meeting

- Mr Caulfield moved that the Minutes of the 82nd meeting held on 5 December 2016 be confirmed and accepted as a true record. Cr Lambert asked that 'NSW PLA' be added behind the names of Cr Hollywood and Cr Lambert. The minutes were approved with this correction.

2.2 Business Arising

- Nil

Item 3: Papers for DISCUSSION & NOTING

3.1 2017-18 Public Library Funding

- Ms Scarf talked to her paper and explained the components of the current payment allocated for public library funding. These calculations are based on ABS population statistics and the next ABS release date is end March 2017 – the actual payments will be calculated after that release.
- It was noted that the 2017-18 funding is ahead of schedule because the State Government released details of the funding package in the 2016-17 budget and Library Council has approved the funding model.
- Mr Morley confirmed that Councils which are due to amalgamate but have not yet amalgamated will receive their additional one-off payment the following financial year.
- Mr Morley clarified the definition of 'Far Western' in pt4, page 7 and advised that it took into account distance from major population conurbations. Mr Morley agreed to distribute a list of the included Councils under the Far Western definition.
- Mr Tout asked about how often the SEIFA index was prepared; Mr Morley advised every five years. However, the Council populations are updated with the annual ABS population release.
- Mr Souris AM commented that the public library funding model was in a good state this year although it had taken a lot of work to get to this point.

The Public Libraries Consultative Committee NOTED the public library funding model for 2017-18 paper.

3.2 Public Library Funding Needs Framing Document

- Mr Morley explained that the purpose of the paper was to develop a sustainable model for public funding.
- Mr Morley asked for most of the discussion to take place around this topic. He explained that the 2017-18 funding year is the last year of a four-year funding grant; there is a reasonable expectation that funding will reduce to previous funding levels without a new bid being accepted by government. This would see public library funding going backwards.
- It was observed that funding seems to be approved in four-year cycles so it is proposed that another four-year funding model be developed for Treasury's consideration. An increase beyond CPI will be difficult to achieve and we need to be specific about what project funding/capital grants are required.
- It was noted that on page 9, the local government funding for 2015-18 had not yet been provided however Mr Morley expected this would show an increase.
- There was discussion about the \$1.85 per capita subsidy and it was agreed that this marked a safety net amount. It was noted that this amount had not increased since 1997. However, it was not the only component of subsidy payments to councils, as extra funding has gone to address the disadvantages of smaller councils.

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- Mr Morley distributed a spreadsheet at the meeting. He used specific examples of various councils to illustrate how an increase to the \$1.85 would affect councils. These demonstrated that a per capita solution was inequitable to smaller councils; it was agreed that a per capita solution would not be a preferred solution.
- The second spreadsheet distributed at the meeting showed that a subsidy adjustment provided a more equitable funding allocation and would enable a more meaningful distribution to smaller councils. It was agreed that the committee supported this concept.
- Mr Souris AM recommended that our proposal to government should account for the subsidy re-allocations as a 'per capita total' not as 'per capita plus adjustments'. The committee also agreed that the subsidy components created an additional, unnecessary administrative burden in accounting for each separately. It was agreed that the components be used as an underlying, background document to support our bid.
- Mr Souris AM recommended keeping a base, safety net figure in our proposal. He suggested that the most compelling argument for Treasury would be based on inter-State comparisons on the total per capita figures. Mr Morley agreed to re-work the interstate comparisons and distribute out of session with the draft minutes.
- The Chair commented that she found the second spreadsheet with the breakdown at council level more useful.
- Mr Caulfield advised that the most important objective was to ensure that each council received more than the current \$1.85 per capita. The Chair recommended a change of nomenclature to indicate this was the base allocation.
- Mr Souris AM asked about the impact of the NBN Co on NSW.net. Mr Morley advised he expected it would have minimal impact as the connectivity subsidy provided is independent of what provider is used by each council; he indicated that the mix of funding could change, however the connectivity support payments would continue and there may be an increased need to assist with connection costs.
- Mr Caulfield pointed out that NSW.net had not had a funding increase since 2003-4 and that the current funding was now inadequate. The Chair recommended that our funding submission highlight that NSW.net enables libraries to subsume other government services/agencies, both State and Federal, particularly in those regional areas where the government agencies do not have any presence themselves.
- Mr Morley advised that it was reaching the point that all internet infrastructure in libraries required updating and although this cost was considerable, the above argument should be stressed to show the savings achieved overall is valid.
- The Outback Letterbox Library was discussed and it was decided that consideration would be given to this once a decision was made about the Far West region.
- Mr Morley recommended that we ask for a CPI increase each year for the Strategic Network Projects. In response to Ms Milne's query about asking for a CPI increase for the total \$28m per annum funding package, Mr Morley recommended that he prepare a paper that models variations for multiple funding bids; Cr Tout encouraged Mr Morley to include bids for example at \$30m, \$34m and \$40m. Mr Morley to distribute this paper out-of-session with comments back from PLCC members before the July meeting.
- The Chair requested that a total figure be given to Councils rather than in apportioned amounts and allow Councils to allocate the money themselves to reduce the reporting and administrative requirements.
- The Chair suggested that the State Library work with library managers to provide advice on advocating more effectively for project monies.
- Cr Tout asked about metrics on internet usage in libraries to government sites. The Chair responded that privacy issues preclude gathering figures, however, it might be possible to sample or include in surveys. Mr Morley commented that it might be possible to fund a study looking at government access via libraries. However, Mr Souris AM cautioned against this reminding the committee that the government

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has previously claimed it assisted libraries by driving clients to the libraries. Ms Scarf suggested that it might be possible to obtain more information from the Australian Digital Inclusion Index 2016 (Swinburne University of Technology and Telstra).

The Public Libraries Consultative Committee NOTED the Public Library Funding Needs Framing Document paper.

3.3 Public Library Grants Needs Analysis

- Ms O'Grady spoke to her paper.
- It was noted that 2017-18 is the final year of the Public Library Infrastructure Grants (PLIGs). In the ensuing discussion, there were requests to broaden the base to include innovation as well as infrastructure projects.
- Cr Lambert asked about the unsuccessful projects. Mr Caulfield as Chair of the Grants Committee, responded that some rejected projects were rejected because they did not meet the criteria of the PLIGs or were poorly prepared; others were rejected because they did not meet the test of 'core library business'. Ms Scarf added that the State Library's Assessment and Compliance visits were important in defining library needs and requirements.
- Mr Morley suggested that as we came to the end of the current PLIG program there is still a lot of need, however to secure additional government funding we will likely need to present a different case. Mr Souris AM commented that the capital component was unarguable however he cautioned against broadening the definitions in a way that might be interpreted as seeking funds for recurrent activities.
- The Chair advised she considered the current PLIGs failed to cover state-wide initiatives/projects and pilot programs (e.g. the marketing awards) and that as there was nowhere else to draw funding for this type of project from they were often overlooked. Mr Souris AM recommended using a new classification to bid for state-wide projects. Mr Morley suggested increasing the value of the strategic network projects (\$308,000) for these types of projects.
- The Chair indicated that the grants guidelines would need re-writing if new funding is secured for 2018-19 and Mr Morley agreed to undertake this.
- Mr Morley noted that PLIGs applications were lower last year – possibly due to the distraction of amalgamations and Fit for the Future. Ms Casey warned that this trend might continue this year as reduced staff levels would result in fewer staff being available to write grant applications.
- In response to a question from Ms Casey on the State Library providing assistance with grant applications, Mr Caulfield advised that this would be a conflict of interest/risk. The Chair suggested it was more appropriate to raise this issue at her Zone meeting and request peer support. The Chair mentioned the possibility of tapping into grants writing workshops conducted by the Arts Council and Australia Council.

The Public Libraries Consultative Committee NOTED the Public Library Grants Needs Analysis paper.



Item 4: Papers for NOTING

4.1 Indyreads

- The Chair noted that it was excellent news that this pilot program was going state-wide.
- There were no additional comments or questions raised.

The Public Libraries Consultative Committee NOTED the *Indyreads* paper.

4.2 Living Learning Libraries, 7th edition

- The Chair noted that reaching the 7th edition of Living Learning Libraries was a milestone.
- Mr Morley commented that he expected major changes in the state medians because of the amalgamations of councils – there would now be fewer councils, and more councils with a population base in excess of 150,000 people. This may create the need for a two-tier program when comparing libraries. Cr Lambert indicated that the definition on page 32 of a single central library would need to change.
- Mr Souris AM asked that the language on page 32 be changed – we need to focus the references in our narrative to 367 libraries to maximise our power with government. It was agreed that our figure should include mobile library branches (21) and deposit stations (48). Cr Tout asked for a table to be distributed showing the total number of locations where people take out books, DVD, eBooks, etc.

The Public Libraries Consultative Committee NOTED the *Living Learning Libraries, 7th edition* paper.

item 5: Other business

5.1 Other business

- The earlier meeting time for the meeting on 24 July 2017 was noted.
- Mr Morley advised that the Library Council would be visiting Port Macquarie on 25 September and asked PLCC members to consider having the September PLCC meeting in the morning in Port Macquarie. Mr Morley will send around potential timings to both Library Council members and PLCC members and ask that they indicate their availability for this visit. Cr Tout suggested that he could arrange to hold the PLA meeting in Port Macquarie too on the same day as PLCC.
- There being no further business the meeting closed at 1.45pm.

Proposed Future 2017 Meeting Dates:

Monday 24 July 2017: 11.00am to 1.00pm

Monday 25 September 2017: Port Macquarie, timing TBC

Tuesday 5 December 2017: 1pm-3pm, followed by Joint meeting with the Library Council from 3pm-4pm