

## Executive Summary

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Francois Matarosso from *Commedia* tells us that "*Libraries are perfectly positioned to swim with the tide: after all, they were established to produce social change.*" He cautions, however, that like all institutions library services are liable to lose flexibility as they age. He notes that management and administrative procedures, which were once no more than practical solutions to current problems, have a way of becoming fixed and surviving long after the original problem has changed.<sup>1</sup> The *Structural Reform of Public Libraries in Western Australia* takes place amidst a backdrop of considerable technological, social and economic change, nationally and internationally. The existing model of service delivery has been in place for over fifty years and it is clear that the operating environment for the delivery of public library services in Western Australia has changed considerably since the middle of the last century.

Western Australia's huge distances coupled with sparse rural populations, together with the increase in South West coastal urbanisation has driven the need for structural reform. The new millennium has seen a widening gap between the needs of larger libraries and their smaller country counterparts. Metropolitan and regional public libraries are expanding, staffed by professionals and operating independently whereas, in contrast, small rural libraries are generally still highly dependent on the professional guidance of the State Library and the regional librarians. There is a critical need to change the model of service provision to provide greater flexibility and meet the needs of a diverse range of local government areas in metropolitan and rural Western Australia. What may have suited Western Australian in the 1950s is no longer applicable in the face of changing demographics, trends in library service delivery and new technologies. The current service delivery model has some existing strengths and attributes that are the envy of other states, but there are many challenges and inherent weaknesses within the system. *Great states deserve great libraries.* A blueprint to position Western Australian public libraries for the future is now required.

The vision for public libraries in Western Australia is for "*a sustainable and responsive network of vibrant and connected well-resourced, free public libraries that are hubs of community life.*"<sup>2</sup> This report provides an outline of key outcomes and objectives for the delivery of public library services, in line with contemporary public library theory and community and cultural development policy. Relevant case studies are provided as exemplars under each of these outcome areas. Key stakeholders from within the State and local government sector in Western Australia have contributed to this report through participation in consultation, and written submissions, as well as the provision of relevant information and case studies for publication. Public libraries are great sharers of information, and the provision of national and international case studies is also acknowledged.

In *2020 Vision: Towards the Libraries of the Future*, Colin Mercer stated that libraries must position themselves strategically within massively expanding cultural and content industries and develop new emphases on client service in response to rapidly changing needs.<sup>3</sup> This structural review calls for a strategic rethinking of how public library services are delivered in Western Australia. The conceptual framework and the outcomes identified in this report are underpinned by the UNESCO Manifesto for the Public Library which states: "*The public library, the local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development of the individual and social groups. The public library (is) a living force for education, culture and information, and is an essential agent for the fostering of peace and spiritual welfare through the minds of men and women.*"<sup>4</sup>

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1 Matarasso, Francois Beyond Book Issues The Social Potential of Library projects. Lond; Commedia, 1998. p.1.

2 Framework Agreement between State and Local Government for the provision of Public Library Services in Western Australia. 2004. p.2.

3 Mercer, Colin 2020 Vision: Towards the Libraries of the Future. Libraries Working Group of the Cultural Ministers Council. 1996 p.iv.

4 The UNESCO Manifesto for the public library, prepared in conjunction with the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) <http://www.unesco.org/webworld/libraries/manifestos/libraman.html> accessed on 17 March 2004.

## Key Findings

Public libraries in Western Australia are conducted as a joint venture between the local government sector and the Library Board of Western Australia. The existing model is characterized by funding tied to resources, a centrally coordinated State-wide exchange system, centralised purchasing, processing and distribution of library resources, a State-wide online catalogue, and a centrally coordinated inter library loans system.<sup>5</sup> The model of public library services is designed to facilitate service delivery from 239 public libraries throughout Western Australia and to address the difficulties implicit in serving a population of over 2 million people in an area of 2.5 million square kilometres, which is equivalent to one third of the landmass of Australia. This model was formalised in the *Framework Agreement* (2004) between the State and Local Government for the Provision of Public Library Services in Western Australia.<sup>6</sup>

- **Our changing client base**

The population of Western Australia has increased and will experience further significant growth driven by the resources boom. Rural and remote libraries continue to experience barriers such as geographic isolation, distance to a capital city or regional centre, inadequate telecommunication and infrastructure, limited resources, and limited opening hours. The sheer size and distance and low population base of the areas is a major issue. This environment is exacerbated by the need for ongoing training of staff, cultural barriers such as Aboriginality, or literacy limited to languages other than English, and the fly in/fly out workforce, as well as seasonal fluctuations in the number of users and ages of users. Metropolitan libraries are also facing increased pressures with many facing unprecedented growth and huge lags in infrastructure, poor facilities, inadequate staff, increasing diversity in the population mix and high levels of expectation and demand.

- **The changing face of public libraries**

Globally, the world of information and communication is going through a period of exponential and accelerating change. The role of libraries is significantly changing, with a stronger focus emerging on playing a key role in lifelong learning and community development, as well as facilitating the creation of content and preserving and sharing the heritage and identity of communities. The needs for library service delivery have changed and there is an increasing desire for flexibility to meet some key challenges. As the Haratsis research has demonstrated, libraries need to position themselves for the impact of the baby boomers. Mobile telephony and changes in content containers has changed the whole concept of service delivery, particularly to younger people, and there are some critical social justice imperatives that must be addressed including services to Indigenous and emerging communities.

There is currently a high level of variance in levels of service delivery between larger libraries and their smaller counterparts, and a concern by many libraries that the "one size fits all" model is having a lowest common denominator effect. There is a need to recognise and respond to the different capacities and aspiration of libraries for their communities. Throughout consultation with public libraries and key stakeholders, the need for a more strategic and outcomes based model of service delivery was identified.

- **Strategic Outcomes Identified**

### **Strategic Outcome 1: Well-informed, literate and learning communities**

Libraries support formal and informal learning for life, and the development of a skilled, literate and well-informed community is central to the success of Western Australia into the future. There is a need for a more strategic approach to the development of literacy and learning through public libraries, and in particular for stronger partnerships at the State level to cascade co-operative action at the grass roots. There is an opportunity to emulate the very successful *Better Beginnings* program as a model for other target groups, including older persons, youth, persons from non-English speaking backgrounds and Indigenous communities. A deeper understanding of the return on investing in the

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<sup>5</sup> Framework Agreement. p.1.

<sup>6</sup> Framework Agreement. p.1.

very young and the economic and well-being outcomes that libraries provide in the development of a range of literacies and learning needs to be developed with decision makers. A stronger engagement with the e-learning agenda will also be required.

### **Strategic Outcome 2: Connected and resilient communities**

Public libraries help build communities and provide the connections that develop cohesion and inclusion, and break down isolation and the barriers for the disenfranchised or marginalized groups in our communities. They are safe, neutral and non-judgemental, and remain free and democratic spaces welcoming all. They are, indeed, the *Third Place*.

Many libraries are now seeing the impact of investing in diverse programs that facilitate connections within the community in increased visitation and use, as well as higher profiles within their communities. A more strategic and co-ordinated approach across government at all levels is required. Public libraries provide valuable real estate and are already embedded in community life. There is an opportunity now to progress critical community development outcomes State-wide through partnerships with other agencies. The library can provide a local anchor for a plethora of social justice and community well-being outcomes.

Providing appropriate library services for Indigenous communities is a critical issue in Western Australia. A more flexible and tailored model of delivery needs to be funded, and opportunities under the Bi-Lateral Agreement and cross Government partnerships need to be maximized. The opportunity to pilot Indigenous Knowledge Centres (IKCs) or other innovative forms of service delivery in Western Australia should also be progressed.

### **Strategic Outcome 3: Community memory**

There is also a need for a more collaborative and strategic approach to the collection, description, preservation and sharing of Western Australian history and heritage. This includes skills development in conservation and preservation and the application of standards, including digital standards.

There are also opportunities with new medias to facilitate content creation at the local level and to assist local families, communities and organisations to capture and share their stories, as well as ensure accessibility for future generations. Traditional methods of managing documentary heritage as well as emerging technologies to capture social history could be shared through workshops, seminars, and opportunities to showcase exemplary models. Strategies should also include opportunities for Indigenous communities to access relevant tools and skills.

### **Strategic Outcome 4: Accessible and relevant content**

It is clear that the state-wide collection is no longer meeting needs for all communities. The need to retain 1.25 items per capita is necessitating the retention of unwanted and obsolescent stock, impacting on storage costs, space availability and poor product presentation. There is an increasing desire for selection at the local level to meet needs, and a growing view that larger libraries would be better off out of the Exchange system. The quota system constrains selection and exchanges based on need, and there is a need for quality not quantity collection performance measures. New stock needs to get to library shelves more expediently and there is a serious need to emulate better practice in procurement of the State-wide collection, as well as local collections. Indigenous communities require culturally appropriate and relevant materials and content should be aligned with needs.

The Exchange model should also provide adequate flexibility to cater to the needs of diverse communities and quotas should be abolished and participating libraries encouraged to participate more actively in selection. Selection also needs to be based on good community needs analysis and library staff need to be supported in developing these skills. Collection maintenance should also be improved and unwanted and obsolescent stock should be disposed of expediently. There is also a need for increased accountability and greater flexibility at the local level through transfer of ownership of existing stock in larger libraries.

A stronger *just in time* rather than *just in case* philosophy needs to prevail across the State in relation to collections, and inter library lending processes need to be simplified as far as possible. Information about holdings of locally owned stock should be available on the State wide catalogue, with discretion at the local level as to what will be lent on request. It will also be critical to continue to facilitate access to online content through increased skills of staff, consortia purchase and better promotion of resources.

### **Strategic Outcome 5: Community Hubs**

Libraries are finding it increasingly difficult to secure funding with more strident internal competition for resources. There needs to be a minimum standard for infrastructure and some method of facilitating compliance. The opportunity to provide infrastructure funding for public libraries, similar to the *Living Libraries* program in Victoria or the *Library Development Grants* in NSW, should now be investigated. Such funding, although minor in terms of the local government outlay, could provide some additional incentive for local authorities to invest in library infrastructure as well as comply with established guidelines such as *People Places*.

There is also an opportunity to undertake a state-wide library building audit to identify the status of library infrastructure Statewide to better inform decision makers and identify the level of investment that is needed to bring libraries up to standard. Additionally, opportunities to continually share stories about emerging best practice in library places and spaces should be fostered. Showcasing models of excellence in building planning and design within Western Australia (and beyond) will also build pride and enhance visibility with decision makers. Opportunities for adaptive space, strategic co-location and partnerships as well as retail merchandising, themed collections and creative interior design need to be pursued. Support mechanisms are required to assist public libraries in the planning process, particularly in articulating community need and how it can be translated into built form.

### **Strategic Outcome 6: Skilled and innovative workforce**

The level of skill of our workforce is the moment of truth in the public library. There is a need to identify the new and emerging skills required and to work with learning providers to develop these skills. Advisory and support services and a range of specialist advice are still required from the State Library, especially for regional and rural libraries and these need to be delivered in the most cost efficient way. Greater clarity of the nature and scope of consultancy and support services from the State Library is now required, as well as clarification of the responsibilities of Regional librarians to staff in their region. Opportunities to share training opportunities at the local level should also be maximised.

Training for rural and remote communities continues to be an issue. Opportunities for online training packages and the use of teleconferencing need to be further pursued. Additionally, more efficient solutions need to be found for the site visits currently undertaken by State Library to smaller libraries to ensure the local authority receives the maximum benefit. Strategies to attract staff to small remote communities also need to be developed.

### **Strategic Outcome 7: Continuous improvement**

The complexity and time-consuming nature of many processes within the existing model precludes opportunities to focus time and energy on key strategic issues for library services. The existing model of ordering and procurement is not best practice and needs to be further refined. There is certainly consensus that materials need to be supplied shelf ready. This should now be expedited to maximise the benefits. Although there are differing views on the viability of supplier-assisted selection, it is important that the opportunity is further pursued. Local stock procurement should also be linked in with an efficient and timely co-operative procurement model. An analysis of existing materials movement and handling needs to be undertaken to develop more cost efficient logistics. Opportunities to explore common user contracts for purchasing stationery, equipment, services, and other resources could also be explored.

Work needs to be progressed to facilitate disposal of State owned items at the local level according to identified criteria. There is also the need to improve system capability and integration with the VDX system so that it is more user friendly and inter-library loans are less time consuming. A more strategic and co-operative approach to ICT overall is required. Legacy Library Management Systems are not delivering what the new environment requires and there is a high level of duplication of investment and resources, particularly in the metropolitan area. Opportunities for shared systems should be investigated. The benefits of Radio Frequency Identification Technology (RFID) have been demonstrated, and interim and longer-term solutions now need to be developed. There will also need to be a watching brief on new technologies, including adaptive technology.

It is important that meaningful measures are in place and that standards drive and maintain quality services. In the past, much of the data collected by public library staff has related to inputs and outputs, which provide workload indicators rather than measures linked to outcomes. Measures and standards need to be meaningful and go beyond stock per capita and stock replacement rates. Turnover of stock in different categories, the levels of literacy, and engagement levels with the community also need to be measured.

Once again, exposure to innovative practices will be important. There is also a need to invest in innovation and to recognise innovative practices.

### **Strategic Outcome 8: Strategic Partnerships**

The Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) needs to remain an influential and cohesive body as a key strategic partnership for public libraries in Western Australia. There are also opportunities for stronger collegiate action between public libraries. As noted, opportunities should be explored for the development of shared services such as Library Management Systems and for co-operative activity in built infrastructure and programming. There is also a need to work towards seamless services, including a state-wide library card, and stronger consistency in policy and service delivery.

The Regional model is an appropriate solution to support service delivery, but there is a need to provide a more flexible model tailored to the needs of individual regions and the libraries within those regions. Specifications for services need to be defined based on need, and agreements developed based on these. Regional libraries also need to be resourced adequately to deliver services specified effectively. Consideration could also be given to clustering communities of interest in the metropolitan areas such as growth councils or for clusters of neighbouring libraries to progress resource sharing opportunities.

Opportunities to partner with Telecentres needs more serious attention and some incentives for shared service delivery may provide a catalyst for action.

### **Strategic Outcome 9: Good Governance**

The current model of delivery was created in the early fifties and is no longer appropriate to the current environment. There is little point in making minor changes: significant and radical change is required to meet diverse needs and provide ongoing flexibility. It is clear that the "*one size fits all*" approach is not viable. A balance will need to be struck between the needs of larger libraries and the needs of very small libraries. The needs of local communities must be met in the most cost effective way and the economies and benefits of State-wide activity, including co-operative procurement, the State-wide database, inter library lending and other co-operative activity need to be retained.

Funding is a key issue for Western Australian public libraries. There are two key areas for attention: the quantum of funding and how it is distributed. There is an urgent need for additional funding that will be exacerbated after June 2008. Additionally, there are areas that need to be funded for specific outcomes. These include the development of appropriate services for Indigenous communities, opportunities to progress innovative options for service delivery, co-operative activity and seed funding for capital

development. A well-concerted and unified advocacy program will be required to increase funding allocations.

The model of funding that will provide the most flexibility for local government is the provision of a per capita grant such as that used in NSW and Victoria. Consideration may need to be given to the application of a disability formula to recognize disadvantage of distance and size and other factors. A sub-committee of the Joint Advisory Committee should also be established to determine the allocation of all funding provided from the State Government for public libraries and to monitor expenditure in relation to outcomes identified. (A similar committee in South Australia provides a useful model.)

A two-tiered model is required. Either population levels could determine this or local Government authorities could specify their preference for the service delivery model best suited to their needs, whether it be independent selection of stock (Tier 1) or participation in a co-operative for collections exchange (Tier 2), whereby material is exchanged between participants according to set criteria. Part of the agreement with Tier 1 libraries should be similar to that in South Australia, where those libraries that elect to take the cash, must spend money they allocate to resources through the central procurement system to maximise value for money.

An outcomes based business planning approach needs to underpin the model.

### **Strategic Outcome 10: Visible and Valued**

There is a need for an integrated State-wide marketing strategy that can be iterated at the local level and tailored to need. This will require some investment by the partners and should be targeted at the community and decision makers at all levels.

There is also a need for a stronger presence in the forums that will attract decision makers such as LGMA and WALGA conferences and forums, as well as participation in dialogues around key areas of interest, such as literacy and Indigenous issues. Linking in with other professional bodies related to learning, health and well-being, and service delivery into remote communities at a State and a national level is also important. Opportunities to showcase trends and innovations through presentations, study tours and site visits within the State and nationally should also be explored. There is a need to more widely disseminate the value of public libraries and the return for communities on the investment. Most importantly, there is a need to tell good stories about what libraries can do at the individual and community level. Politicians also need to get some kudos from the investment.

### **Conclusion**

There is a need for a sense of urgency in Western Australian public libraries. There is so much opportunity to deliver on outcomes that can significantly impact on the well-being of Western Australian communities, yet so many constraints. The energy and creativity that WALGA harnessed in its successful 2004 "*fractured fairy tale*" campaign (that succeeded in attracting an additional \$10 million over four years) needs to be rediscovered. There is a looming funding crisis for public libraries in the State that only immediate and collegiate action can combat. But it is not enough to seek additional resources. Internal cost efficiencies must be demonstrated. The community and their representatives need to know that they are getting best value for money. There is also a need to channel energies into things that really matter, such as building literacy, social justice, and strong communities. To do this there must be a re-invention of the Western Australian model for public library service delivery.

The key finding of this report is that a tinkering around the edges of the existing model of delivery is not the answer. There will need to be significant structural and cultural change.

## High Level Recommendations

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***It is recommended that:***

1. The Framework Agreement in 2008 be based on an outcomes based strategic planning model for Western Australian Public Libraries, with particular focus on lifelong learning, building communities, access to relevant content and libraries, collecting and preserving Western Australian memory, and positioning public libraries as community destinations and hubs;
2. The Framework Agreement in 2008 provide a focus on enabling outcomes for the delivery of services including an innovative and skilled workforce, continuous improvement, strong partnerships and good governance, including adequate financial and human resourcing;
3. A strategic and co-ordinated approach be undertaken to the development of well-informed, literate and learning communities and the building of connected and cohesive communities through public libraries, maximising opportunities for partnerships at the National, State and local level and leveraging off successful models such as Better Beginnings;
4. A needs based Indigenous Library Strategy be developed, providing opportunities to tailor collection and services at the local level and taking into consideration models such as Indigenous Knowledge Centres and other initiatives;
5. A State-wide strategy for the preservation and sharing of Western Australian Memory be developed, maximising opportunities to adapt new and emerging technologies to capture social history and to facilitate the generation of online content in communities;
6. A new funding and delivery model be developed based on:
  - a) Provision of a cash grant to local authorities based on per capita allocation within an agreed disability formula;
  - b) The opportunity for all local government authorities to identify the most strategic allocation of funding to meet their communities needs;
  - c) The provision of a two tiered system of service delivery, whereby larger libraries can elect to receive all funding directly (Tier 1); and provision of funding for smaller libraries who can elect to allocate a proportion of funding into a shared collection (Tier 2);
  - d) The transfer of ownership of existing stock to individual libraries in Tier 1; and the transfer of ownership to the collective of participating libraries (administered by the State) in Tier 2;
  - e) The requirement that all libraries submit a brief business plan (based on a standard template) identifying outcomes and strategies and measures at the local level, identifying best value for money for the funding provided;
  - f) Development of specifications and agreements at the local level identifying services that will be provided and the mutual obligations of the parties;
  - g) Additional specific grant funding for regional / co-operative activity, innovation and seed funding for buildings and technology;
  - h) Specific funding to develop tailored solutions for Indigenous communities;
  - i) A more flexible Exchange service providing the opportunity to tailor services to meet needs and including the discontinuation of category quotas;
  - j) The replacement of the standard of 1.25 items per capita with meaningful collection performance measures, such as turnover, age of collection and client satisfaction;
  - k) Deselection of the State-wide collection at both the local level and State level in accordance with identified criteria;
  - l) The addition of local holdings to the State-wide database and development of guidelines for access to locally owned stock (e.g. lending at owning libraries discretion);

- m) More effective support at the Regional level through the development of needs based specifications in the Regions tailored to local LGA needs, including communication processes with State Library;
  - n) The development of more cost-effective and responsive centralised procurement and materials movement systems, including full shelf ready supply of materials;
  - o) Seamless service delivery through development of a Statewide library card and greater consistency in policy and service delivery across LGAs;
  - p) A focus on continuous improvement in all areas of delivery;
7. A sub-committee of the Joint Advisory Committee be established to determine the most strategic distribution of funds for public libraries from the State Government and to monitor expenditure in relation to outcomes identified;
  8. More effective partnerships cross government and at the local level be developed, including partnerships with Indigenous and learning agencies, opportunities and incentives to place small libraries in remote communities in Telecentres and opportunities to partner across LGAs for the provision of new buildings, shared Library Management Systems and resource sharing, including skills and expertise;
  9. A State-wide Technology Strategy be developed, including opportunities to maximise technology for labour efficiencies (such as self-check technology) and that access to online content be improved through the identification of access gaps through a State-wide audit of ICT capabilities, and by increased upskilling of staff, and promotion of online databases;
  10. An audit of Western Australia's public library buildings be conducted using People Places and State-wide library building audits conducted in NSW and Victoria as guidelines;
  11. Opportunities for exposure to innovation in public building and design and the use of library spaces be maximised through showcasing successful models and recognizing innovation and excellence;
  12. Training and professional development be tailored to diverse needs through more flexible delivery options (including online options) and information sharing through forums and presentations;
  13. Strategies and incentives to attract and retain skilled staff in remote areas be identified; and
  14. An integrated State-wide marketing and branding strategy be developed and implemented.



## Summary of Needs and Strategies

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### **Outcome 1: Well-informed, Literate and Learning Communities**

#### ***Need for a more strategic approach to the development of literacy and learning communities***

- Develop a joint policy under the JAC on Literacy and Learning;
- Develop a strategy under the JAC for literacy and the development of learning communities;
- Work in partnership with key State and national agencies in the development and delivery of literacy and learning community strategies, including Adult and Community Education;
- Maximise e-learning and innovative delivery options; and
- Identify learning needs and delivery options for older persons.

#### ***Need for greater understanding of the economic and well-being impacts of literacy and learning development***

- Share learnings about the economic and well-being impacts of literacy and learning development within and outside the industry at the local and State level through forums, presentations, reports and submissions; and
- Conduct a series of workshops on learning and literacy in Western Australia, engaging key agencies and key speakers.

#### ***Need to extend the Better Beginnings model across a range of other target groups***

- Develop models based on *Better Beginnings* for traditional Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities (CALD) and emerging groups, Indigenous, older persons and youth; and
- Source opportunities for funding to support these programs.

### **Outcome 2: Connected and Resilient Communities**

#### ***Need for a more strategic approach to delivery of library services to Indigenous communities***

- Identify the needs for library services for Indigenous persons and communities using appropriate protocols and reference groups;
- Develop an *Indigenous Library Strategy*, based on needs;
- Investigate the IKC model in Queensland and initiatives in the Northern Territory and South Australia for relevance in Western Australia, and identify best fit service delivery models for diverse Indigenous communities;
- Develop working partnership with key providers and funders of Indigenous health and well-being outcomes, maximizing opportunities under the Bi-Lateral Agreement;
- Provide Indigenous liaison and support resources at the State Library to facilitate the delivery of the *Indigenous Library Strategy*;
- Revise protocols for dealing with Indigenous communities;

- Collect and share stories about successful programs conducted in Western Australia and beyond of effective public library services targeting Indigenous populations; and
- Pursue alternative opportunities for funding programs and outreach for Indigenous communities.

***Need for a more strategic and co-ordinated approach to community development outcomes in public libraries***

- Working in partnership with key agencies and peak bodies, investigate opportunities for a co-ordinated approach to delivering on community development outcomes at the local level and resourcing opportunities;
- Share stories of innovative practice in connecting and building communities through forums, websites and presentations within and outside the industry;
- Identify opportunities to partner at the local level in the planning and delivery of community development programs; and
- Advocate the role of the public library in developing social capital, and building connected and cohesive communities on an ongoing basis.

**Outcome 3: Community Memory Preserved and Shared**

***Need for a more collaborative and strategic approach to the collection, preservation and sharing of Western Australian history and heritage***

- Develop a State-wide strategy for the collection, preservation and sharing of Western Australian history and heritage; and
- Provide opportunities to transfer skills and knowledge relating to the collection, description, and preservation of documentary and social heritage in a digital environment.

***Need to adapt new and emerging technologies to capture social history***

- Facilitate understanding and skills development in the application of new technologies to collection and sharing of social history and heritage; and
- Facilitate access to tools and skills to use new medias in capturing, preserving and sharing social history.

**Outcome 4: Accessible and Relevant Content**

***Need for good understanding of the content needs of local communities***

- Develop skills at the local level in preparing community profiles and developing needs analysis through training, provision of templates and providing access to relevant ABS data.

***Need for content that meets local need***

- Increase opportunities for local selection through user friendly selection processes;
- Discontinue the 1.25 items per capita requirement;
- Develop quality indicators for collections such as turnover of stock, age of collections and client satisfaction;
- Provide training in the use of Library Management System data to determine usage trends for collections and relative and emerging demands;

- Ensure new material reaches library shelves before or at same time as the local bookshop through shelf ready contract management;
- Provide a two-tiered system providing opportunity for smaller local governments to participate in an exchange program and providing the choice for larger libraries as to whether they will participate or not;
- Provide choice at the local level as to formats and categories received on exchange; and
- Advocate for additional funding to support the stocking of new libraries.

***Need to manage collections effectively***

- Simplify the stocktake process at the State and local level;
- Promote increased accountability at the local level through transfer of ownership of existing stock to larger libraries not wishing to engage in the exchange program;
- Facilitate the culling of unwanted and obsolescent stock from the Statewide collection; and
- Provide support and training in the preservation and conservation of local collections

***Need for culturally appropriate and relevant content for Indigenous communities***

- Work with Indigenous communities to tailor collections to meet local need and source additional resources appropriate to Indigenous communities; and
- Prepare policy on treatment of culturally sensitive materials in Indigenous communities.

***Need for effective inter-lending system***

- Provide a user friendly Inter Library Loans system;
- Add local holdings to the State-wide database and develop guidelines for access to locally owned stock (e.g. loan at owning libraries discretion); and
- Identify efficiencies to ensure cost effective and timely supply of Inter Library Loans

***Need to maximise access to online content and alternative delivery mechanisms***

- Conduct an audit of ICT capabilities in Western Australian public libraries, and identify gaps and solutions, including shared services to address gaps;
- Facilitate access to online content through increased skills of library staff and promotion of online databases and web resources;
- Advocate for increased access to Broadband and explore cross-government means of increasing access;
- Identify and share stories about alternative delivery methods for content; and
- Facilitate the development of content at the State and the local level and provide access

## **Outcome 5: Community Destinations**

### ***Need to identify the status of public library buildings in Western Australia***

- Undertake a State-wide audit of public library buildings and identify the cost of bringing libraries up to standard under *People Places* guidelines.

### ***Need for seed funding to provide incentives for new and refurbished library buildings***

- Lobby for infrastructure funding for new and refurbished libraries.

### ***Need for greater exposure to innovation in public library buildings and design and use of spaces***

- Foster opportunities to showcase innovation in design and use of spaces through study tours, presentations, and access to relevant websites;
- Investigate options for Mobile Resource units where relevant; and
- Investigate opportunities for the development of IKCs or similar in selected Indigenous communities.

### ***Need for support in the planning and design of new libraries***

- Provide standard templates and tools to assist libraries planning new libraries;
- Provide support and advice for public libraries in planning and design of new libraries using the skills and experience of the library network;
- Introduce a planning and design award for new and refurbished libraries in Western Australia; and
- Identify opportunities to support compliance with standards through the funding program.

## **Outcome 6: Skilled and Innovative Staff**

### ***Need to deliver cost effective training and professional development to meet identified needs in the most cost effective manner***

- Identify training and professional development needs and develop needs analysis;
- Prepare and deliver training, and professional development tailored to diverse needs;
- Develop flexible delivery mechanisms for remote communities, including online and digital content;
- Provide input into course content for professional development with learning providers; and
- Evaluate training and professional development outcomes.

### ***Need to understand emerging trends, issues and impacts of on service delivery and skills requirements***

- Maintain watching brief on trends, and share information through forums, presentations and web sites.

### ***Need for more effective means of meeting with remote communities***

- Link into CEO forums such as LGMA and WALGA activities; and

- Identify means of maximizing value of site visits.

***Need for support and advisory services from State Library***

- Clarify scope of advisory services, including, what, how much, where and when services can be provided and to who.

***Need to attract and retain skilled staff in remote areas***

- Identify strategies and incentives to attract and retain skilled staff in remote areas

**Outcome 7: Continuous Improvement**

***Need for a more strategic approach to ICT***

- Develop a State-wide Library Technology Strategy; and
- Identify opportunities to maximise technology for labour efficiencies (RFID, hand held catalogues etc).

***Need for a more efficient procurement, distribution and materials movement model***

- Develop more user friendly selection tools;
- Implement full shelf ready supply from the supplier direct to the ordering library;
- Allow deselection at the local level in accordance with criteria;
- Analyse materials movement to identify most cost-efficient methods using logistics expertise; and
- Work towards an efficient co-operative procurement model to include the procurement of local stock.

***Need for meaningful standards and measure of performance***

- Develop revised standards in consultation with key stakeholders;
- Develop measures to monitor performance against identified outcomes; and
- Improve efficiency of collection of statistics.

***Need to foster and recognise innovative practice in Western Australia***

- Set up innovations awards to recognise innovative practices and service delivery; and
- Provide funding for innovation, particularly co-operative activity.

**Outcome 8: Strategic Partnerships**

***Need for a strong and influential Joint Advisory Committee***

- Renew *Framework Agreement* in 2008 based on a strategic vision for the future of public libraries.

***Need for more effective partnerships cross government and at the local level***

- Further develop existing partnerships with Indigenous and Learning agencies and explore opportunities for new partnerships at the State, regional and local level;
- Actively explore opportunities to place small libraries in remote communities in Telecentres where appropriate under mutually acceptable terms; and

- Provide funding incentives for the development of shared services with Telecentres.

***Need for more co-operative activity in delivery of capital projects, technology and resource sharing***

- Identify opportunities for shared services for Library Management Systems;
- Promote opportunities to partner across LGAs in the provision of new buildings; and
- Promote opportunities for increased resource sharing, including skills and expertise across LGAs.

***Need for seamless services***

- Work towards a Statewide library card; and
- Work towards greater consistency in policy and service delivery across LGAs.

***Need to support the Regional model***

- Identify needs at the local level for support and services from the Regional library;
- Develop specifications based on needs;
- Develop base performance criteria for Regional Libraries and their clients;
- Determine and provide adequate funding to support Regional libraries in delivery of services and provision of support; and
- Identify with each LGA the most cost effective mechanism and their preferences to maintain effective communication with the State Library and with Regional libraries.

**Outcome 9: Good Governance**

***Need to amend the Library Board of Western Australia Act 1951***

- Prepare submissions based on the need for revisions to the *Library Board of Western Australia Act 1951*, enabling a strategic focus and a modern vision for the public library sector; and
- Recommend appropriate composition of the Board in accordance with the vision for public libraries.

***Need for strong leadership at all levels***

- Continue to provide consortia purchasing and brokering for resources for Statewide benefit;
- Continue to provide a strong voice for public libraries through the JAC; and
- Engage in forums and debates within and outside the sector, locally, Statewide and nationally and across government to ensure public library values and aspirations and needs are articulated.

***Need for a new funding model for public libraries in Western Australia***

- Set up a sub-committee of the *Joint Advisory Committee* similar to the *Standing Committee* in South Australia to determine the most strategic distribution of funds for public libraries from the State Government and to provide greater voice and choice for local government;

- Develop a new draft funding formula based on:
  - Provision of a cash grant to local authorities based on per capita allocation within an agreed disability formula;
  - Tiered service delivery whereby: larger libraries are allocated the funding based on provision of an audited business plan identifying expenditure on strategic outcomes and provision of funding for smaller libraries into a shared collection;
  - Development of specifications and agreements at the local level identifying services that will be provided and the mutual obligations of the parties;
  - Additional specific grant funding for regional / co-operative activity, innovation and seed funding for buildings and technology;
  - Allocation to support the Regional model; and
  - Allocation to manage the model.
- Determine guidelines such as population for Tier 1 and Tier 2;
- Obtain financial and legal advice on the draft formula;
- Consult with key stakeholders in relation to the new funding formula; and
- Implement the formula in 2008.

***Need for significant additional funding and funding to deliver on specific outcomes***

**Outcome 10: Visible and Valued**

***Need for higher visibility and market penetration of libraries***

- Develop an integrated marketing strategy;
- Develop strategies and product that can be used at the State and the local level tailored to needs; and
- Maximise opportunities to acknowledge State and local government investment in libraries.

***Need to broaden the market appeal of libraries***

- Develop branding strategy using relevant expertise; and
- Identify opportunities to rejuvenate the library brand.

***Need to advocate value of the investment***

- Provide simple messages on return on investment that can be provided at the local and State level where opportunities arise; and
- Collect and share information and stories that demonstrate the economic and social value of investing in public libraries.