Executive Summary

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. [1] 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 What may have suited Western Australian in the 1950s is no longer applicable in the face of changing demographics, trends in library service delivery and new technologies.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 pubic 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."* [2] 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. [3] 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.*[4]

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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.[5] 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.[6]

- *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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5 Framework Agreement. p.1.
6 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

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

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:

  o Provision of a cash grant to local authorities based on per capita allocation within an agreed disability formula;

  o 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;

  o Development of specifications and agreements at the local level identifying services that will be provided and the mutual obligations of the parties;

  o Additional specific grant funding for regional / co-operative activity, innovation and seed funding for buildings and technology;

  o Allocation to support the Regional model; and

  o 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.

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1. Strategic Context

1.1 Geographical Context

Western Australia has a population of approximately 2 million[7] dispersed over an area of 2.5 million square kilometres and covers five climatic zones. The size of the State and high levels of isolation certainly present particular challenges in the delivery of services to the some 500,000 persons living outside the metropolitan area in regional, remote and rural communities. In Western Australia 70% of local authorities have a population of less than 6,000.[8] Predictably, although the populations are small, the local authority areas are large. Outside of the metropolitan area the median size of local authorities is 2,750 sq kms.

1.2 Demographic Context

1.2.1 Population Trends and Projections

As at 2005, the population of Western Australia was estimated to be 2,010,113 persons[9]. Between 1995 and 2005, Western Australia experienced an average annual growth rate of 4.5% which was in line with Perth SD (4.6%) and Regional WA (4.4%). **Table 1.1** illustrates the population recorded for Regional by DLGRD Regions; and **Table 1.2** illustrates the population for Western Australia, Perth SD and Regional WA.

Table 1.1: Population DLGRD Regions, 2005

	Gascoyne	Goldfields-Esperance	Great Southern	Kimberley	Mid West	Peel	Pilbara	South West	Wheatbelt
Pop 2005	9,854	53,661	53,738	35,748	50,071	91,853	39,282	140,846	70,132
% of State Total	0.50%	2.70%	2.70%	1.80%	2.50%	4.60%	2.00%	7.00%	3.50%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics - Estimated Resident Population (2005)

Table 1.2: Population, Regional Western Australia, Perth and WA, 2005

	Regional Western Australia	Perth	WA
Pop 2005	545,185	1,464,928	2,010,113
% of State Total	27.10%	72.90%	100.%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics - Estimated Resident Population (2005)

1.2.2 Population projections and demographic trends

Western Australia is experiencing a rapid population growth that is driven by the resources boom and associated economic prosperity. There will be significant changes to population growth rates and demographic mixes and hence demand for local government services in the future. The *"Systemic Sustainability Study Socio-cultural Viability Report to the Western Australian Local Government"* notes that most local governments will face substantial changes in their populations and so will need to be responsive to community needs in the future. It is predicted that Greater Perth's population will continue to grow but the overall rate of growth is expected to fall. Growth along the coast will continue and focused mostly around the urban areas of Perth, Bunbury, Busselton, Margaret River, Augusta, Denmark, Albany and Geraldton. The majority of the wheatbelt and pastoral areas will experience population decline or little to no growth. The report suggests that an increase in broad acre farming and economies of scale in the agricultural sector will decrease the viability of rural communities.

Declining fertility rates and increasing survival rates and the ageing of the population will see a huge shift from a youth to aged dominated community. It is also noted that households will contain fewer people although the physical size of the household overall

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7 http://www.dlgrd.wa.gov.au/Publications/Docs/EstimatedResidentPopulation1995-2005.xls.
8 Collection Development Policy for Public Libraries. State Library of Western Australia 1992. p.1.
9 Australian Bureau of Statistics - Estimated Resident Population (2005).

is increasing.[10] Statistical projections indicate that Western Australia is expecting a large increase in the number of overseas migrants arriving by 2031 The effect of net overseas migration (including the resulting births and deaths of migrants) on the population between 1996 and 2031 is estimated to be 709,000 persons, 2.8 times the natural increase contribution of 252,000 persons from the 1996 WA resident population.[11]

1.3 Underpinning Planning and Policy Documents

Better Planning: Better Services. A Strategic Planning Framework for the WA Public Sector

Better Planning: Better Services sets out the Government's Vision for Western Australia and its strategic outcomes for State Government agencies. It is based on an integrative approach.[12] The goals are to enhance the quality of life and well-being of all people throughout Western Australia; to develop a strong economy that delivers more jobs, more opportunities and greater wealth to Western Australians by creating the conditions required for investment and growth; to ensure that regional Western Australia is strong and vibrant; and to govern for all Western Australians in an open, effective and efficient manner that also ensures a sustainable future.

Strategic outcomes identified in *Better Planning: Better Services* are relevant to this study. These include: a world class education system and lifelong learning opportunities for all, new jobs and employment growth, children's futures supported; enhanced well-being of the vulnerable within our community; enhancing the quality of life as people age; and making positive difference to the lives of people with disabilities, their families and carers. Additionally, addressing social and economic disadvantage, particularly for Indigenous Australians, and facilitating a culturally rich and intellectually stimulated society were identified as outcomes. Underpinning this must be a responsiveness to the needs of diverse populations, particularly through planning in partnership for a sustainable future; efficient Government sectors that provide value for money; and a strong emphasis on effective Information Communications and Technology to provide better services to the community.

Cultural Signposts

The function of public libraries within the broader landscape of community cultural development has been highlighted in recent State and Commonwealth arts policy.[13] *Cultural Signposts* details the State Government's direction for arts and culture in regional Western Australia, acknowledging the potential role that the Statewide network of public libraries could play in community cultural development across regional Western Australia.

The Policy is informed by other key framework documents including: *Our Creative Community; A Fair Go for Regional WA; State Strategic Plan; Focus on the Future: The Western Australian State Sustainability Strategy*; and *A Regional Development Policy for Western Australia.[14]*

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10 The Systemic Sustainability Study Socio-cultural Viability: Report to the Western Australian Local Government Association Independent Governance Panel. Burow Jorgensen and Associates. June 2006 p.3-4.

11 WAMA Position Paper – Public Library Resources p.3. Framework Agreement between State and Local Government for the delivery of public library services in Western Australia. 2004.

12 Better Planning: Better Services: A Strategic Planning Framework for the WA Public Sector. Department of the Premier and Cabinet, 2003. pp.7-12.

13 Cultural Signposts, Directions for Arts and Culture in Regional Western Australia. Department of Culture and the Arts, 2003.

14 Our Creative Community: Rebuilding the Arts (2001), Australian Labor Party, Perth: Western Australia.; A Fair Go for Regional WA (2001), Australian Labor Party, Perth: Western Australia.; State Strategic Plan; Draft (2002), Government's Strategic Management Council and coordinated by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Perth: Western Australia Focus on the Future: The Western Australian State Sustainability Strategy; Consultation Draft (2002), Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Perth: Western Australia A Regional Development Policy for Western Australia: Draft (2002), Department of Local Government and Regional Development, Perth: Western Australia.

New initiatives identified for public libraries in *Cultural Signposts* include:

- The investigation of new models for delivering library and information services to Indigenous communities;
- Work with local governments to foster libraries' electronic capabilities;
- Support the State Library to develop navigation systems to facilitate access to Western Australian and on-line content;
- Investigate opportunities for greater sharing of resources with education and TAFE networks;
- Utilising the State Library to promote Statewide access to the Internet, and computer access to CD Interactive material;
- Investigate ways to better resource the digitisation and preparation of multimedia packages to improve access to State Collections;
- Promote Internet training opportunities through arts and cultural networks; and
- Promote local libraries as places where the community can improve their information literacy skills.

SLWA Strategic Directions 2006-2008

The mission of the State Library of Western Australia is: *"To enrich the lives of Western Australians by: enabling access to resources for information, learning, enterprise and recreation; and collecting and preserving our social and documentary heritage for current and future generations."*

The strategic focus and key outcomes are aligned to the following specific government goals and priority areas outlined in "*Better Planning: Better Services*."

- *Services:* Libraries are essential social and educational infrastructure by providing support for life long learning (both formal and informal);
- *Jobs and the Economy:* By providing information to businesses to assist their development and growth and supporting life long learning;
- *Lifestyle:* By an increased emphasis on our cultural role through public programs, exhibitions and public debate;
- *Regions:* By providing resources and support for the 153 public libraries within the regions and web access to our own resources and services; and
- *Public Sector Improvement:* By working in partnership in cross agency initiatives and with local government.[15]

1.4 Consultation Summary

1.4.1 Trends impacting on public library service delivery

Consultation with key stakeholders in Western Australia identified several drivers for change in the delivery of library services. The rapid pace of technological change and the advent of mobile telephony and downloadable data, allied with higher client expectations (particularly in relation to the desire for instant gratification and immediacy of response) were seen as key drivers. The shift to an online environment was seen as one of the most significant trends with many government departments now providing access to information and transactions in an online format only. An increasing number of people are working and accessing services remotely.

The digitisation of collections and the amazing growth of search engines and the increase in unmediated access was highlighted. While Australians readily embrace technology there are vast gaps in access between rich and poor and country and city. It was generally perceived that there is, and will still be, a digital divide, with access to Broadband patchy in the regions and inequities in access across the board. Concerns were expressed in relation to the increase in access to unauthorised content such as Wikipedia, and the need for information validation. Certainly, the variety and diversity of format and content providers has been one of the greatest shifts for libraries. There is increasing pressure on staff to upskill in relation to technology and to be aware of

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15 SLWA Strategic Directions 2006-2008. pp1-6.

emerging trends. Increased redundancy of technology and software is also impacting on library resources.

Several groups identified the paradox that readership is increasing at a time when the assumption was for decreased use of text based material and increased online access. Another shift identified was the changing use of libraries. Lending is still a predominant use but there is an increasing use of the library for other purposes and some users come in to use the Internet only. There has also been a decline in the use of traditional materials for young people. It was seen that there has been a shift in engagement with the written text and the authority of the text as the prime medium was changing for the younger age group.

The changing face of libraries was also discussed. Many libraries have made a transition from a repository based passive centre to an outwardly focused community hub, providing a range of activities and services, including programming, cultural activities and the provision of social spaces such as community lounge rooms and coffee shops. Marketing and branding of services has also become a higher priority. Joint service delivery, the co-location with other services such as retail, and the use of libraries for the delivery of other Council services was also noted. The need for changing skills sets for library staff was highlighted. It was also seen that there was now more serious competition for libraries within Councils in seeking funding for infrastructure provision.

The impacts of an ageing population and the differing needs of the baby boomers were identified. There was a view that traditional services for older persons may not suit this emerging energetic and highly demanding cohort. The need to facilitate connection within the community was seen as critical for all age groups, but in particular for older persons and persons living alone. It was seen that libraries could facilitate the movement back to the herd instinct. Other demographic phenomena such as sea change and tree change and the emergence of the grey nomads were also noted. Similarly, the changing patterns of work and leisure, changing work patterns in rural and mining communities and the transient workforce were discussed. Non-traditional migration patterns are emerging, particularly black and white Africans (with many in the wheat belt). Certainly, the mix in the population has changed with the resources boom. Changes in population were seen to be variable, with pockets of huge growth, some static, and some declining. The increase in the "time poor" was also impacting on access and service delivery choices, particularly online services. Additionally, the wealth gap is increasing with significant impacts on equity. The significant evolution in household make-up and what constitutes the family was also noted, as well as the increase in the number of single parent families and double income families.

Another significant shift was that of libraries facilitating community engagement and development and participating more actively in the development of learning communities. Certainly, there has been a movement away from a repository to a community focus, with libraries increasingly facilitating social cohesion and building community capacity and learning opportunities. Increasing numbers of libraries are facilitating engagement of interest groups such as book clubs. The increased interest in the collection, preservation and sharing of local history was identified, and there is increased demand for family history resources.

The production of content at the local level and the emerging role of libraries as a place where content production can be facilitated was also identified as a trend and an opportunity. It was seen that the library had an emerging role in the facilitation, generation, and display of local content and participation in cultural expression. It is no longer a one-way delivery: clients are participating in delivery in participative ways such as *Picture Australia*. The whole interactive environment has changed with Web 2.0 and Library 2.0.[16] It was seen that Library Management Systems were not keeping up with the pace of change and were very limited.

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16 Web 2.0 is a term applied to the transition of the World Wide Web from a collection of websites to a fully fledged computing platform serving web applications and end users. Ultimately, Web 2.0 services are expected to replace desktop computing applications for many purposes. Library 2.0 is the response to open access, open source and open content. Stephen Abrams. Presentation. SirsiDynix, 2006.

Sustainability issues for local government were also discussed as well as the need to ensure that operations were efficient. There has been a pronounced shift to outsourcing of back of house operations and the development of partnerships with suppliers. There will be increasing expectations by State and local government for increased efficiency and value for money.

Most groups highlighted the increased focus on learning and the development of a range of literacies, including technical literacy. Libraries are increasingly recognised as adding to social capital in communities and as economic development catalysts particularly in relation to lifelong learning and skills to work initiatives. Rapid changes in the job market and work related technologies necessitate increased training (or retraining). The promotion of early childhood development and *"literacy for whole of life"* was also identified as a trend.

Overall, it was seen that there is a need for a stronger client focused vision, to be able to harness technology and the opportunities that the online environment offer, and to continually reskill and monitor emerging trends. Flexibility in service delivery was seen as critical and there needs to be greater capacity to engage at the local level and participate in the building of strong and resilient communities. There was also a general view that there is a need for greater accountability at both the State and local level, and that there is a critical need for change to meet the increased pressures on library services, as well as to exploit the opportunities arising, to better add value to the community.

1.4.2 The role of the public library into the future

Common themes were reflected in the consultations. It was seen that the library had a key role in:

- Facilitating access to social justice, information and overcoming the digital divide;
- Building communities and contributing to the development of social capital and community engagement;
- Facilitating lifelong learning, a range of literacies, and in particular early childhood literacy, as well as being a learning advocate;
- Provision of learning and recreation spaces;
- Facilitating better outcomes for communities and democratic processes through the display and provision of topical information (e.g. environmental issues);
- Development of creative capital, and facilitation of content production;
- Working in partnership with other agencies and internal partners, providing conduits for a wider range of information;
- Partnering with other education providers – shared facilities and content and seamless delivery of services;
- Celebrating cultural diversity and breaking down barriers;
- Providing spaces that are non-judgemental and inclusive;
- Collecting, preserving and sharing the history and heritage of our communities;
- Providing access to recreational reading – reading for pleasure;
- Promoting the identity and core values of a community;
- Providing services and collections targeted to meet local needs; and
- Champion for freedom to information and equity of access.

1.4.3 Challenges for public library services in Western Australia

Consultation with key stakeholders in this and in previous consultations identified some key challenges for the delivery of public library services in Western Australia. Many of these related to demographic changes such as population growth, and the degree of diversity of demographic changes. A key issue was seen to be the financial capacity of both State and local government and the amplified need to provide good value for money. Within the library context, changes in the purchasing power of funding allocations and the paucity of funding, particularly in light of the insufficiency of $6.5 million across the State to meet needs, were identified as critical issues. The availability of and access to adequate telecommunications infrastructure within some WA communities and growth in expectations of a technologically sophisticated community as well as the rate of development of new technologies and impacts on training needs were highlighted. Libraries will be increasingly challenged positioning themselves in a user driven and pull

environment, in the new world of vertical search engines, personalized gateways and 50 million blogs, where creators are increasingly taking control of their product.

The high variability in service delivery was identified as an issue. There is a high level of innovation in many libraries, but it is not evenly spread. Libraries also have somewhat of an image problem. Stereotypes within the industry, local government and the community, of traditional libraries and librarians limit opportunities, visibility and perceptions of value. The ageing of the library workforce in itself is also as issue, as is the need for relevant education and training.

Whilst common issues were identified, there were some challenges for specific groups. For example, some rural communities are experiencing declining communities, whereas others are faced with unprecedented growth with high transient populations, and some with new communities with limited English speaking skills. Issues facing small communities all over the country were raised including the loss of youth to the regions and the cities, the struggle to get skilled staff and professional services, and the cost of geographic isolation. The paucity of infrastructure, including communications and buildings is a large issue for many small communities. The need to provide creative and expedient solutions for ICT and communications was raised. The high level of diversity between various regions and rural communities was also noted.

Consultation confirmed that not enough is being done for Indigenous communities, and that there a need for more appropriate models of delivery, with content and services tailored to local needs.

Metropolitan communities also differ significantly, ranging from very small inner metropolitan communities to medium to large and high growth councils. The need for appropriate buildings and spaces and quality collections to deliver quality services as well as seamless delivery across LGAs was noted. Providing a quality collection and managing within the constraints of the 1.25 items per capita and the exchange system were highlighted as challenges. Larger councils stressed the need for greater accountability and independence, although smaller councils identified the need to refresh stock as required.

1.4.4 Opportunities for public library services in Western Australia

Consultation identified several strengths within the existing system. The value of the State-wide database supporting inter-library lending was highlighted as a capability that many other states were now aspiring to. Similarly, the economies of scale in bulk purchasing and processing and the level of co-operation State-wide were highly valued. The model of regional networks was also seen as important, albeit requiring additional resourcing. Participants stressed the need to retain a support system for smaller libraries and, most importantly the ability to refresh stock. The brand recognition of libraries was also seen as a strength.

Structural reform of public libraries provides some significant opportunities. Consultation generally supported the view that to achieve the vision for public libraries there will need to be some significant changes, and in particular, a greater degree of flexibility, increased efficiency, and the capacity to innovate and adapt services more expediently. There was some diversity of opinion in relation to what needed to be changed, however, there was general agreement that the following opportunities should be pursued:

- Opportunity to progress the concept of the learning community at the State and the local level:
  - o Using *Better Beginnings* as a model, and extend to other target groups;
  - o Focus on development of a range of literacies;
  - o A more informed and literate community;
  - o Facilitate reading for pleasure;
  - o Elevated debate and engagement and forums to engage.

- Opportunity to further build capacity in local communities through programming and community engagement strategies:

- o Community and capacity development, provision of community hubs, building of social capital, and building of community connections;
- o Provide better delivery of library services to Indigenous communities maximizing opportunities with the Bi-lateral Agreement on Indigenous Affairs and working in partnership with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA) and their commitment to Indigenous outcomes;
- o Support marginalized groups, culturally and linguistically diverse communities (CALD) and emerging communities.

- Opportunities to better support the development of local identity and the preservation and sharing of heritage and to facilitate content production in many forms;

- Opportunities to improve access to knowledge, skills and information of library staff, through accessible training, information transfer and exposure to new trends and ideas;

- Opportunity for a more efficient procurement and distribution model for State and local collections, including shelf ready supply, as well as other opportunities for procurement such as technology:
    - o Delivery in a cost efficient manner and better value for money;
    - o Efficient procurement model – shelf ready;
    - o Disposal at the local level based on criteria;
    - o Flexibility in allocation of resources;
    - o Cost efficient distribution;
    - o Far greater efficiency in the circulation of stock;
    - o Decision making about resource allocation at the local level where desired. Based on needs (procurement, rotation, size of collection, disposal (what, how much, where);
    - o Resources that meet needs; quality as opposed to quantity;
    - o Tackle the electronic agenda more vigorously and provide the flexibility to move funds into electronic media as required;
    - o Selection at the local level;
    - o Flexibility re stock size;
    - o Customer centric;
    - o Community profiles based on good data;
    - o Maximise centralised procurement and local selection;
    - o Shift from process focus to strategic focus.

- Opportunity for more meaningful measures (e.g. turnover, customer satisfaction, age of stock, % of new acquisitions etc):
    - o Quality indicators rather than quantity measures;
    - o Consistent service delivery.

- Opportunities for building on existing partnerships and developing new ones with other Government and non-Government agencies:
    - o Partnership with Telecentres, and TAFE in remote/regional areas;
    - o Partnerships for joint library management systems;
    - o Partnerships for infrastructure with neighbouring Councils;
    - o Seamless services;
    - o One State Wide Library card in the future.

- Opportunity to explore the potential of new technologies to facilitate the development of innovative library services:
    - o Robust infrastructure including real broadband to whole State;
    - o Working towards State-wide membership card;
    - o Co-operative approaches to Library Management Systems;
    - o Creative solutions such as Supernet in Canada;
    - o Strategic innovation and incubation;
    - o Tailored solutions to meet needs – e.g. books by post, consumer choice;
    - o Technology maximised to enable efficient delivery;
    - o High-level awareness of current trends and adaptation of new technology initiatives and ways of working.

- Opportunity to create dynamic places and spaces, physical and virtual as destination points and community hubs:
  - Retail merchandising and themed spaces;
  - Community lounge rooms;
  - Access facilitated (physical and virtual).

- Opportunity for greater flexibility in the delivery model, moving away from the "one size fits all" and recognising and responding to diversity within a framework of equitable access:
  - Provide tiered system of service delivery to meet diverse needs;
  - Improve regionalisation to provide flexibility agreements to suit diverse needs, better training and development solutions, and to build on synergies across regions and deliver programs more effectively into remote communities;
  - Simplicity and transparency;
  - Less paternalistic model – adapted to local conditions;

- Opportunity for increased resourcing for public libraries and the provision of funding to support innovation, new infrastructure and regionalisation and other co-operative activities; and

- Opportunity for State-wide marketing and recognisable branding (State-wide, allowing for local variation) and better advocacy to lift the profile and visibility of public libraries at the State and local level:
  - Libraries highly visible and valued;
  - Effective marketing and promotion State-wide and local;
  - Public Libraries have a high profile at all levels of government and in community;
  - Recognition of contribution and value;
  - Contemporary profile and perceptions;
  - Attitudinal change driven;
  - Recognition of role libraries play – creative, social and economic;
  - Support from decision makers at all levels;
  - Identifiable brand for libraries;
  - Libraries politically positioned.

Discussion was wide ranging during consultations and other opportunities were identified, with a diversity of responses, generally aligned to size and location of libraries. The expressed desire for access to local library stock for lending by other libraries was resisted by some larger libraries who had made some considerable investment in their local stock. It was generally agreed that at the very least local stock should be displayed on the State-wide catalogue, but it would be at the discretion of each library to determine which items could be lent. It was noted that other states manage this process well with guidelines in place as to what should not be sought on inter-library loan. (popular materials for example). The question of transfer of ownership of stock was also fraught. There was a strong view from some larger metropolitan libraries that accountability should be transferred to the local level. Other responses ranged from uncertainty to rejection of this concept.

There was considerable discussion around the Exchange service and the need for improvements. Issues raised included the desire of some libraries to no longer be constrained by a rigid system that was not meeting their changing needs, and the needs of smaller metropolitan libraries and regional and rural libraries for an effective and efficient system to refresh stock. The inevitability of a tiered system to cater to widely differing needs was flagged in several consultations.

1.4.5 Strategic outcomes for Public Library Services in Western Australia

The need for an outcomes based model for service delivery was highlighted in all consultations. The desired strategic outcomes of an effective public library service delivery model were identified over the consultation as:

- Well-informed, literate and learning communities;

- Connected and resilient communities;
- Community memory preserved and shared;
- Accessible and relevant content; and
- Community Hubs and Destinations.

These outcomes would be enabled by:

- Skilled and innovative workforce;
- Continuous improvement;
- Strategic Partnerships;
- Good Governance: and
- Public Libraries Visible and Valued.

This Report has been structured around these outcomes and highlights the needs and some opportunities to meet these outcomes. Relevant case studies and stories from communities within Western Australia, Australia and New Zealand have been used to demonstrate how these outcomes have been met in different communities. The selection is by no means meant to be exhaustive and it is acknowledged that many communities within Western Australia have been providing innovative solutions to meet these outcomes.

2. Well Informed, Literate and Learning Communities

A Learning Community *is one that creates formal and non-formal lifelong learning opportunities for individuals and groups to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will enable sustainable economic development and build social inclusion and cohesion."*[17] It is clear that investment in formal education and non-formal learning has been proven to be the best means of combating poverty, increasing overall health, and eliminating social exclusion. All sections of the community benefit from building a learning community. Individuals gain from enriched quality of life, new interests, and personal fulfillment as well as maintaining their employability as lifelong learners in a context of rapid change in jobs. Employers also gain from building a learning culture in the workplace which feeds continuous improvement and adapting to changing conditions. Overall, it has been found that communities are regenerated and revitalised and become more cohesive and more interesting places to live in.

Lifelong learning includes acquiring and updating all kinds of abilities, interests, knowledge and qualifications, from the pre-school years to post-retirement. Libraries play a key role in facilitating self-motivated learning which is central to the creation of a lifelong learning culture.

One of the key roles, which public libraries are undertaking, is responsibility for improving the information literacy of the community. Additionally, access to off the shelf on line learning product has facilitated self-paced and group learning, for a range of areas including business and computing skills, English as a second language and basic learning modules. Certainly, the growth in e-learning provides significant opportunities.

Technology and communications advances now provide new mediums and vehicles for learning content, and delivery. Public libraries are well placed as community access points for the Internet and can assist in skills development in this area. Through provision of reading for pleasure and informal learning programs they also develop understandings, literacy skills and knowledge.

Information and digital literacy is a vital component of the knowledge society. Increasingly, public libraries are undertaking the role of developing digital literacy in their communities and the demand for these services can only continue to grow. Public libraries provide access points to local and global information, with staff skilled in information navigation. They support the information needs of learners young and old, business, community and agencies through the provision and facilitation of access to content in a wide variety of formats. They are in turn supported by the State Library's State-wide reference service, and the *AskNow* service, a collaborative online reference service staffed by librarians from the National Library of Australia and State Libraries. Access to the *PictureAustralia* also provides access to a significant online pictorial collection.

There is a trend towards the development of learning centres and libraries are taking on hybrid roles as learning co-ordinators and facilitators. These can range from the mere provision of technology and Internet access, to sophisticated learning centres, brokering the delivery of learning on a wide range of subjects. These facilities support both the independent learner, self-paced learning and group learning, formal and informal. Technology literacy is basic to digital literacy. There is generally a strong focus on information literacy training and there are several innovative examples of engaging community skills in developing competencies. The use of seniors computing clubs and volunteers within the community is also increasing. There is expected to be an increase in demand for formal and informal learning as the proportion of the aged population increases. Programs and facilities for learning will become increasingly important.

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17 Learning-based Community Development: Lessons learned for British Columbia. Ron Faris Ph. D. and Wayne Peterson July 12, 2000 (http://members.shaw.ca/rfaris/docs/lbcd.PDF).

Libraries also play a key role is supporting participation in community life and democracy as a fundamental right. Acting as community nodes they can disseminate and gather community information and act as a marketplace for ideas. They can also provide a forum for conversations that add to the understanding of the community and assist community members make informed decisions. Providing access points to governments, they can connect people with information and resources necessary for strengthening citizenship.

2.1 Developing Literacy Skills

Learning starts in infancy, long before formal education begins and continues throughout life. James Heckman, who was the Nobel Laureate in Economic Sciences 2000 provides a compelling argument for investing in early childhood development and literacy: He writes: *"The real question is how to use the available funds wisely. The best evidence supports the policy prescription: Invest in the Very Young".[18]* Heckman advocates early exposure to storytelling and the need for programs for the very young and argues for a re-allocation of budgets recognizing that this investment can reduce other social costs throughout the human life cycle. "*The later in life we attempt to repair early deficits, the costlier the remediation becomes.*"[19] According to Heckman, investment in social policies that intervene in the early years have very high rates of return while social policies that intervene at later stages in the life cycle have low economic returns.

By supporting early childhood development libraries contribute to the economic and social well being of communities. There needs to be a greater appreciation of what the investment at this level brings as a return longer-term.

Similarly, research by *Comedia* in the United Kingdom has identified the major, and potentially life-changing, contribution that library outreach work is making in supporting basic literacy, homework among older children and computer skills. These projects are observed to have a marked impact on participants' self-confidence and aspirations: *"The self-motivated learning which libraries promote is central to the creation of a lifelong learning culture in which people expect and want to learn throughout their lifetime."*[20]

The public library also plays a key role in developing literacy for persons from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. With in-migration related to a prosperous economy and resettlement programs, Western Australia has seen an influx of migrants from a range of backgrounds, including Horn of Africa refugees. The neutrality of the public library space and opportunity to access English as a Second Language material and community languages are invaluable. These opportunities can be life-changing for many people. This following anecdote from Jerramungup, WA in the *Inspiring Stories* collection exemplifies this:

'A Library is much more than a repository of books. Last Year in Jerramungup I had the opportunity to assist an Afghanistan refugee to learn English. The small Jerramungup Public Library offered Hashim a mechanism of learning English. He was 180 kilometres from the nearest Educational Institution without a vehicle or a drivers licence."[21]

2.2 Exemplars of National and State Programs

Books for Babies Program - New Zealand

There are several excellent initiatives nationally and internationally of public library programs aimed at very early childhood development. For example, the *Books for Babies* program in New Zealand has been adapted by large and small New Zealand libraries to meet their particular circumstances. Christchurch for example has a major preschool component which involves monthly visits to 65 preschool groups citywide, as well as to

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18 James Heckman," Invest in the Very Young". The Ounce of Prevention Fund and the Irving B. Harris Graduate School of Public Policy Studies. University of Chicago. 2006.
19 Heckmann p.3
20 Libraries Building Communities: the vital contribution of Victoria's public libraries – A research report for the Libraries Board of Victoria and the Victorian Public Library Network. State Library of Victoria 2005. p.20.
21 Letter for Jerramungup, WA in the Inspiring Stories collection.

parent groups, and since 1990 a *Books for Babies* program has targeted every newborn baby in Christchurch.[22] A travelling roadshow also visits one school each week of the term with an interactive program of stories and storytelling. Many other communities Australia wide, such as Caboolture in Queensland have also initiated similar programs such as Bookstart, based on the UK Bookstart model. [23]

Better Beginnings Program - Western Australia

Better Beginnings is an early intervention family literacy program that targets children aged 0–3 years. From July 2005, the State Library, in partnership with the Rio Tinto WA Future Fund and WA Local Governments, began a four-year roll-out of the program to extend *Better Beginnings* State-wide. *Better Beginnings* had reached almost 45,000 families as at December 2006, and over 70 local governments will take part in *Better Beginnings* in 2006/07 including 50 regional and remote communities including Halls Creek, Coolgardie, Karratha, Albany, Bunbury, Collie, Merredin and Kondinin along with 22 communities throughout the metropolitan area.

The program was designed using a strong collaborative approach capitalising on the shared goals of health and library professionals in reaching and communicating with families of young children. Through *Better Beginnings*, the State Library partners with public libraries to provide a framework for early literacy activities that support families, and strengthen local community involvement in early literacy by a commitment to joined up services. In November 2006, it won the 2006 Premier's award for excellence in public sector management in the better services (large organisations) category.

The child health nurse in Carnarvon commented: *"The Better Beginnings kit gave me the opportunity to 'break the ice' with some of the more tentative mothers and I could tell immediately that their feelings changed to feel more comfortable with the idea of a home visit from the Child Health Nurse. The kit gave me the opportunity to discuss the importance of early literacy with the mums and dads, and the joys of spending time with their babies reading to them, even from such an early age."[24]*

Better Beginnings, Carnavon, WA

The *Better Beginnings* program has been evaluated against the initial objectives and has demonstrated its success in promoting to parents the importance of reading to babies and the important role of public libraries in supporting early literacy in their communities.[25] The need for programs such as *Better Beginnings* has also been informed and supported by the research results of literacy levels within Australia.[26] For example, Mirrabooka, a northern suburb of Perth, has 3000 children aged 0-6, with over 35 per cent identified as vulnerable in the domains of social wellbeing, language and cognitive skills, and communication and general knowledge. [27]

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22 Bill Nagelkerke Children's and Young Adults' Services Coordinator Christchurch City Libraries Christchurch New Zealand in "The history and development of services to children and young adults in New Zealand. What are the needs? What does the future hold?" Learning futures: public libraries for the new generation in Australia and New Zealand, Adelaide, 9 March-10 March 2007: Conference proceedings

23 Building sustainable community partnerships through Bookstart programs. Bettina Nissen Caboolture Shire Libraries and Maureen O'Shea Noosa Library Queensland.

24 Sue North, State Library of Western Australia, May 2007.

25 Annual Report . LISWA 2005/6. p.6.

26 Evaluation of Better Beginnings: from Birth to Toddler. Lucia Ravi State Library of WA Better Beginnings Team

27 Better Beginnings: Getting books into Mirrabooka, Western Australia Margaret Robson Kett State Library of Western Australia. Learning Futures: Public libraries for the new generation in Australia and New Zealand, Adelaide, 9 March-10 March 2007 : Conference proceedings. p22-24.

One Book Program – Western Australia

Several states and capital cities have initiated *One Book* programs, with the intent of focusing attention on reading and the book as a creative form. *One Book* is a Perth International Arts Festival project, which invites people throughout WA to celebrate the written word by reading, sharing and discussing one book. There are many fun ways to participate from giant book clubs to late night comedy. Read the book, meet the author, join in special *One Book* events, listen to radio discussions, and most importantly enjoy a wonderful story. As part of the *One Book* program in 2007, all Western Australians were encouraged to read and discuss Markus Zusak's internationally celebrated novel *The Book Thief*. In 2006, Carrie Tiffany's book, *Everyman's Rules for Scientific Living* was featured, and was promoted through a series of events held at public libraries in metropolitan and country areas including creative writing workshops, storytelling sessions (with musical accompaniment) and meet-the author sessions with Carrie Tiffany.[28]

The Big Book Club – South Australia

At the end of 2002, a group of like-minded individuals met to discuss how reading and literature could be promoted in South Australia. The outcome, *The Big Book Club*, was launched in April 2003. Not an earth shattering new concept – book clubs had existed for years. But there are elements that make *The Big Book Club* unique. Firstly, the sheer scale of the project. The *'club'* is open to everyone! Secondly, the author of each month's selected book visits South Australia and travels to various regional areas to meet their readers. The *'club'* brings people together. *The Big Book Club* has now coordinated over 300 author events, including high school and tertiary visits, and travelled over 21,000kms around South Australia. Thirdly, The Big Book Club has developed strong business and community partnerships with the media, public libraries, publishers and booksellers in both states.

The Big Book Club won the Australian Business and Arts Foundation Australia Council Media Arts Award (2003) and was SA State winner of the Prime Minister's Community and Business Partnership (2005).

2.3 Inspiring Stories

Learning Focus - City of Mandurah, WA

Mandurah is one of a number of active and innovative communities embracing the concept of lifelong learning. There is an appreciation that local government has an important role in creating a sustainable community and that a community that values learning and that is fully engaged and involved has the potential to be safer, more prosperous, fairer and a better place to live.

Some of the key success factors for the Mandurah Learning Community have been identified as having an effective orientation to policy and funding; an expansive vision; projects that meet various stakeholders needs; passion and commitment of key people; and managing effectively across sectors. The Libraries and Learning Coordinator at Mandurah is a member of the Executive of the Australian Learning Communities Network (ALCN), a national group with 40 institutional members. The Mandurah Council has a clear understanding of the value of an investment in a learning community.

There is a focus on community-based courses that can enhance a sense of community and develop the individual. Mandurah has actively developed the increasingly strong links between schools, TAFE, U3A

Learning Tai Chi, City of Mandurah, WA

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28 Annual Report . LISWA 2005/6. p.7.

MALA and universities and their communities. The library recognises that with demographic changes there are great opportunities to engage older and retired people as well as using and developing their skills.

Small business workshops, *Better Beginnings, Finding My Place* with Year 10 students, and the Beacon *"No Dole"* project are a few of several initiatives undertaken. The Libraries and Learning Co-ordinator has also been working with the Peel Education Campus, ACE, Challenger TAFE, and Murdoch University, and the Council is now planning for the new Falcon eLibrary and Community Centre which will facilitate learning and innovation.

Learning to use a Digital Camera, City of Mandurah, WA

Parent Baby Workshops – City Of Joondalup, WA

The Parent and Baby Workshops at the City of Joondalup Libraries were initiated after discussion with the WA Deaf Society about running some sessions in the libraries on Baby Signing. Workshops were provided monthly and rotated between the four libraries.

Parent Baby Workshops – City Of Joondalup, WA

After these first sessions, more topics were introduced such as baby safety and baby literacy. Topics such as sleep, and nutrition, baby massage, "Make your own picture book", and "Baby Play" were also introduced Workshops generally run for an hour followed by morning tea. Parents are encouraged to bring their babies and a limit of 15 adults per topic has allowed the sessions to be more interactive and personal and to facilitate learning about other resources available to both parent and baby. Baby toys are provided to distract restless babies and there are parenting facilities at each venue for nappy changing etc.

Literacy Links – City of Stirling, WA

Literacy Links is a project funded by The Smith Family's C4C (Communities for Children) initiative, jointly contributing to the development of literacy in the City of Stirling and City of Wanneroo suburbs of Balga, Mirrabooka, Westminster, Girrawheen and Koondoola. Managed by Playgroup

WA the project has made gains in various areas:

- Developing training programmes for local Playgroup and Daycare Centre

Read and Grow – City of Stirling, WA

staff and parents, emphasizing reading;

- Emphasising the importance of promotion of literacy, and helping them to develop the skills to teach children basic literacy and reading skills;
- The beginnings of a 'pre-loved' books scheme designed to distribute used books to various medical centres, Daycare Centres and Playgroups in the area allowing them to develop reading corners;
- Distribution of the *Let's Read* DVD's and parent information through the development of the '*18 month bag'*,

Literacy Links, City of Stirling, WA

an extension of the *Better Beginnings* bag handed out by the local Child Health Nurses; and

- Training of various staff in libraries, child health centres and other agencies working with children in order to promote reading and literacy in the wider community.

Working under the umbrella of *Better Beginnings*, *Literacy Links* is leading the way in the promotion of literacy in a region greatly in need of support. Branch Librarians from both the Girrawheen and Mirrabooka Libraries are involved in the project via Reference Group meetings and support the project as distribution points for the 18 month bag and the pre-loved books scheme.

Science Week at the Library - Fremantle City Library, WA

Fremantle City Library received a $2000 grant from the Department of Education Science and Training to run a large and diverse range of activities for Science Week 2006. The programme was put together as a lifelong learning initiative with the aim of assimilating science and scientific issues at a grass roots level for all ages. It included presentations, hands on activities and displays. Scitech and CSIRO installed interactive displays which demonstrated everyday science at work. Fremantle PEAC Students demonstrated fantastic pre-programmed dancing robots to visiting Primary and High School classes and Academic Extension students from Willetton Senior

Science Week Activities, Fremantle City Library, WA

High School demonstrated their working solar car, in the town square. Real life forensic science was presented by Lynne Milne at a morning Brain Break session in the library. An evening event *"Water Wise to Water Wealthy"* was put together to stimulate people and enlarge their capacity for understanding the scientific applications of environmentally sustainable ideas for creating a water-wealthy Australia. Four experts from the area of water efficiency planning and sustainability presented scientific summaries of Perth's current water sustainability issues along with ideas and innovations for improving the situation.

Approximately 500 people attended the week's events which were held in and around the library. Attendees to the displays and events covered all age ranges, including babies, grandparents and staff from other Council departments who were seen enjoying the Scitech hands-on activities. City of Fremantle staff were also involved in Science Week through the Brain Break Science Week Quiz *"Who's a smartie?"* The first correct entry handed in by a staff member or a team won Science Week prizes. The library caters for a culturally and economically diverse population. 10,500 people visited the library during Science Week, with only 2365 of them borrowing items, an indication of the pull the

library has as a meeting place and a source of learning and leisure beyond the traditional print and electronic resources offered.

Finding My Way - Belmont City Library, WA

An innovative partnership has been developed between the Department of Education and Training and the Belmont City Library in Western Australia, highlighting the importance of lifelong learning particularly for at risk youth. Twenty-two public libraries, in association with their local high schools, delivered programs in the first term in 2005. Programs conducted showed that participants were retained in either education training or employment, with the highest numbers opting to stay in school and complete Year 12.

Finding My Way participants, Belmont City Library, WA

The '*Finding My place*' program is a series of workshops that gives students a chance to explore apprenticeships and traineeships in many different occupations, as well as careers in art, music, fashion and fitness. Hosted by public libraries, the program also features motivational presentations by prominent authors, sporting identities and community leaders. Students are also made aware of the consequences of drug and alcohol, and the benefits of adopting a healthy lifestyle. The Program works on providing positive futures for young people through courses, motivational speakers, mentoring and support. The program has been acclaimed as a great success with measurable outcomes demonstrating that early intervention with young people can dramatically change their lives. There is a mutual commitment to assist disadvantaged youth by helping them find a place in a learning environment (whether school, industry, private provider or TAFE). More than 100 '*Finding My place*' programs have been run since 2003, at about 40 libraries across Perth. Surveys showed almost 100 per cent of young people who took part in the workshops remained in school.

Renewed funding in 2007 from the Department of Education and Training will mean another 300 young people would be able to take part in the program, at a cost of almost $90,000 to the State Government. The program will consists of 10 workshops, which last for two to three hours, and this funding will ensure the program can be run in another 22 libraries, including 12 in regional parts of the State.

Learning Lounges - Brisbane City Library, Qld

Brisbane City Library has over the past four years been developing the concept of the learning lounge. The strategy progresses the Brisbane City social planning agenda and its focus on developing lifelong learning for its community. This was based on an understanding that residents and businesses need to develop IT skills to use and benefit from the opportunities offered by the e-world. It was seen that a smart and creative city needs to foster a culture of innovation and learning for life. Brisbane City Council recognized its role in providing access to facilities and content that enable people to learn to use technology.

Brisbane City Library Learning Lounge

It was seen that bridging the *Digital*

Divide isn't only about providing access to computers: it is also about having valid and reliable information and having the skills to locate and apply the information.

The pilot learning lounge is at the Garden City Library, which is in the Garden City Shopping Centre. While the learning lounge is primarily an online learning facility, the Council has recognized that most people learn using a range of channels and methods. The library underpins online learning with a range of videos and print material from its collection. It also supports and builds partnerships with local community mentors who can provide one to one training and maximize its existing facilities such as study rooms, meeting rooms and reading lounges to provide a very flexible and effective learning environment. Learning resources include access to an extensive range of popular computer tutorials through Monash LearningFast. This includes ICT Skills Benchmark and TeachMe interactive learning tools, as well as access to the Internet, Microsoft Office, Word Perfect Office, FrontPage, Dream Weaver and Adobe Photoshop. Sixteen online full-text databases are also available covering a broad range of topics including health, science and literature.

Encouraging the community to 'read more' - Moreland City Libraries, Vic

The Moreland Reading Project (MRP) was awarded the 2000 Australian Libraries and Information Association (ALIA) Award for Innovation in Public Libraries. It is of relevance in the creative approach to fostering a reading community through innovative programming. These include talks, demonstrations and workshops on many topics as well as book launches in English and other languages, walks around Moreland landmarks, theatre performances and colourful cultural activities.

Specific examples of programming activities include:

- A demonstration in the Brunswick Library by the local bocce club;
- A BookStart Kit distributed to every newborn baby in Moreland in co-operation with the Maternal and Child Health Centres;
- A walking tour of the Fawkner Cemetery;
- A local bonsai expert speaking about bonsai gardening;
- A talk by a nurse from Glenroy on her time spent in East Timor as an aid worker;
- An annual concert in the library featuring a range of Moreland based bands;
- Regular talks to new parents groups and rhyme time sessions for babies under 18 months;
- A dance and music demonstration by the local Singhalese community;
- A panel of residents from varied cultural backgrounds and ages speaking about their lives and experiences of first coming to Australia;
- Book groups for primary aged children, youth and adults, bibliotherapies, reader-to-reader book review systems, and reading writing competitions with themes such as "Books that changed my life";
- Speakers are drawn from the Moreland community and an annual *"Made in Moreland"* theme showcasing individuals in the community.

The Hume Global Learning Village – Hume, Vic

The Hume Global Learning Village (HGLV) provides an integrated approach to learning driven by the Council's vision for a learning community. The Learning Centre is a computer, Internet and training centre with state of the art multimedia equipment, an e-play and Internet café, training facilities, exhibition space and community training and meeting rooms.

It also includes Broadmeadow's first public library. As the Global Village grew out of Hume's Social Justice Charter, the Village looks for programs that

Hume Global Learning Centre, Hume, Victoria

assist with the Social Charter and specific groups are targeted.

One very successful program was the *"Employability for Life"* program which was developed in partnership with Ford aimed at Indigenous young people. 24 of the 28 that started the course completed and the majority ended up with jobs. The Learning strategy is City Wide and focuses on key social justice and economic well-being outcomes for the City of Hume.

2.4 Needs and Strategies – Well-informed, Literate and Learning Communities

There is a need for a strategic approach to the development of literacy and learning through public libraries in Western Australia. There needs to be much stronger partnerships at the State level to cascade co-operative action at various levels. There also needs to be stronger links to what is happening at the national and international level, and the opportunity to partner with other libraries nationally meeting similar client group needs. Consultation identified a wealth of opportunity and posed some questions, such as: *"Shouldn't we be providing online tutoring services as well as more homework help services in partnership with public and school libraries?"*[29] There is a growing appreciation of the key role that public libraries play in facilitating learning outcomes in communities.

At the decision maker level there needs to be a stronger appreciation of the return on investing in the very young and the opportunities that libraries provide in the development of a range of literacies. There is an opportunity to extend very successful models such as *Better Beginnings* across a range of target groups, particularly, traditional CALD and emerging communities, Indigenous, older persons and youth. There is also a need to appreciate the economic development outcomes that libraries can drive through increased technology literacies, skills to work support and facilitation of formal and informal learning, as evidenced in the Hume City Council in Victoria.

Libraries will need to engage more strongly with the e-learning agenda and explore opportunities for delivery in a range of contexts. The impacts of the Baby Boomers and the ageing of the population also needs to be factored into library delivery more strategically.

Once again, sharing stories and examples of innovative programming encourages, informs and inspires others.

Table 2.1: Needs and Strategies – Well-informed, Literate and Learning Communities

Needs	Opportunities
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 • 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 • Conduct a workshop 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 CALD and emerging groups, Indigenous, older persons and youth • Source opportunities for funding to support these programs

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29 Consultation with public libraries. February – April 2007.

3. Connected and Resilient Communities

Community and capacity building is based on harnessing the strengths and assets within communities and building on these strengths to develop healthy, co-operative and sustainable communities. It also includes the development of competencies to strengthen communities and individual capabilities. The *Libraries Building Communities* (LBC) project in Victoria was the first comprehensive study of the contributions that public libraries make to their communities. Specifically, the study identifies and documents how public libraries in Victoria build their communities, what the potential barriers to this process might be, and how they can be overcome.[30] The research is underpinned by an understanding that social capital is the glue that holds the community together. Social capital provides a mechanism for strengthening communities.[31]

Libraries are neutral, safe and inclusive spaces, open to all. They act as community hubs providing opportunities for connection, inclusion, and community engagement: the building blocks of a strong and resilient society. Libraries also provide a wide range of programs attracting people from all walks of life. Research by Eva Cox found that public libraries play an important role in promoting social inclusion and giving isolated people greater connection to their community.[32] Certainly, libraries contribute to the well-being of their communities by facilitating connections and linking people from all backgrounds with opportunities to engage in community and creative activity.

There has been an increased focus on the role of the public library in community development. *Cultural Signposts* acknowledges this key role: "*the State's public libraries are building blocks for enhancing our quality of life.*" Regardless of location, each community will have unique needs driven by diversity. There will be varying levels of literacy, health, mobility, disadvantage, English speaking skills, capacity to pay, community connectivity, and social exclusion and isolation across the State and within communities. Community development is very much about connecting, and libraries are increasingly providing the conduits.[33]

3.1 Inspiring Stories

Highland Gathering – City of Armadale, WA

The City of Armadale holds a number of cultural festivals each year. The City's three libraries support the festivals by displays in the library and by holding special events linked to the festival. Typical of these special events is the Scottish Storytime that was held in conjunction with the annual Highland Gathering.

The following promotional flier for the library event, held two days prior to the festival, encouraged active participation: *Armadale Library is getting into the spirit of this year's Highland Gathering with a ye olde Scottish Storytelling at the library. Preceding the storytelling will be some spirited bagpipe playing – to get everyone in the mood! Bagpiper Alister Wilson will pipe such tunes as Scotland the Brave and Waltzing Matilda on the grass outside the Library. He'll be wearing*

Highland Gathering – City of Armadale, WA

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30 LBC Report 1: Setting the scene p.7.
31 LBC Report 1: Setting the scene p.10.
32 A Safe Place To Go, Eva Cox. 2000.
33 Tranter provides an excellent overview of the role community facilities play in community development. Tranter, A. 'More Than Just a Space: The Role of Facilities in Adding Community Value' Keynote presentation to the Conference on Community and Leisure Facilities, Melbourne, 15-16 August 2005

a full kilt in the tartan of the Ancient Hunting Stewart and will even take requests – on the condition they are playable on the bagpipes! And if the mood takes, he will play some reels and jigs to get everyone kicking up their heels! After the stories, we'll be serving Scottish shortbread and tea – sorry, no haggis!

Children and adults enjoyed the storytelling and the reels and jigs resulted in spontaneous dancing from the children.

Music at the library – City of Mandurah, WA

As part of National Youth Week, Mandurah Library received a grant for $1000 in 2006 to run three music workshops for young people. Teenagers are not always the easiest people in the community to attract to the library, but with careful planning of programs it can be done. As well as learning more about playing music those attending learnt how to record their music onto a CD.

In 2007 another three workshops were held for young people: car design, fashion design and music.

Music at the Library, City of Mandurah, WA

Social Connections Facilitation - City of Melville, WA

As part of its business plan, the City of Melville Library Services has undertaken to *'Provide opportunities that connect and strengthen the community'.* Events and programs that offer combined life-long learning /new social connection making opportunities for people within the local community are created regularly, often in partnership with a local community group, educational organization, business or individual. The libraries also provide support to individuals wishing to establish new interest groups within the community by giving them access to promotional opportunities through the Libraries. Examples are:

- *Ideas Place Melville* is a very active community connection making group with numerous sub-interest and activity groups;
- *Melville Computer Club* which has a membership of around 200 people, with several sub-interest groups evolved within it;
- *Knitting in the Library* groups.

The library partners with community, educational and business organizations and provides speaker and workshop programs provided in partnership with various organisations enabling people within the community to meet each other around an ongoing interest. Examples are:

- *Free the Writer Within* workshop series presented in association with Melville Writers;
- *Community Connections Through Life-Long Learning* – a series of workshops on varied topics presented in partnership with Challenger TAFE Centre for Adult Education Heathcote Campus;
- *Stepping Up to the New Technologies* workshop series presented in partnership with Challenger TAFE Centre for Adult Education Heathcote Campus;
- *Authors For All Seasons* guest author events presented in partnership with Dymocks Garden City Superstore.

Opportunities for new social connection making provided by the Libraries include:

- *Library Book Clubs* – 11 in number – all branches provide book clubs which are inclusive of large print readers;

- *Various one-off opportunities* for bringing individuals together over a series of events, such as the summer-long *One Book* reading program organized by UWA Perth International Arts Festival.

Knitting Circle – City of Mandurah, WA

Mandurah Library hosts a *'knitting circle'.* Older people enjoy the opportunity to meet in a comfortable place once a week, have a *'yarn'* and do some knitting. They have worked on blankets and rugs for people in local nursing homes. Library staff provide tea and biscuits for the knitters.

This photo shows the work of a very creative group of knitters who have been involved in the 2007 Mandurah 'Stretch' Arts Festival. Over ten weeks and using the festival colours of yellow and green they knitted a huge array of food, including teapots, fruit, sandwiches, cups of coffee and cakes.

The work was displayed at the Arts Centre during the festival

Knitting Circle, City of Mandurah, WA

Assistive Technology Centre – Coolbellup Library, City of Cockburn, WA

The City of Cockburn has a significant population of frail aged and disabled people and many of these people live within the catchment for the Coolbellup Library. In order to assist these members of the community, Coolbellup Library provides a range of assistive technologies, selected for their ability to aid disabled people with the practicalities of gathering information and accessing recreational material.

A recent addition to the Assistive Technology Centre is the Kurzweil Omni 1000 which provides a text to speech scanning service. The Kurzweil uses a scanner, optical character recognition software and speech synthesizer, to reproduce printed text as spoken words in one step. The Coolbellup Library also provides a ClearView auto-focus desktop video magnifier to further assist people with poor vision. The magnifier enables people to read, write and view photographs at a magnification level to suit their needs.

Xoom Text Extra is available on the library's public Internet, Word Processing and Library Catalogue computers. Xoom Text Extra magnifies text to up to 16 times and assists people with vision difficulties to access computer based services.

Intellikeys have also been installed to provide large-scale keyboards for people with limited hand movement and /or sight difficulties. A Trackball Mouse, which is much easier to use for people with limited hand movement or coordination difficulties can also be attached to all PCs in the library.

Community Connections, Brisbane City, Qld

Brisbane City Council in 2004 signed off on an exciting new delivery model. The outcome is about the library playing a broader role for Council in the community to deliver on Council's social planning outcomes. The aims were:

- Community cohesion;
- Better community relations;
- Creative reinvigoration of public suburban infrastructure;
- The development of high quality and popular suburban public places; and
- Responsive facilities development program for libraries as community hubs.
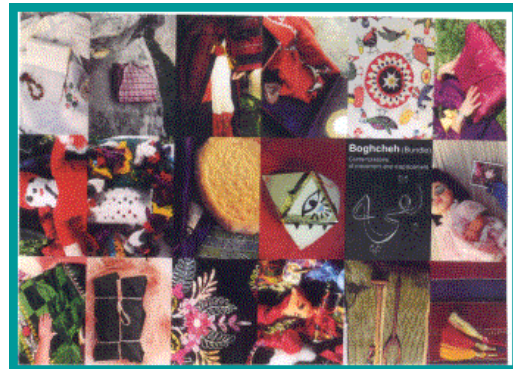
Libraries were recognised by Council as key enablers for community cohesion and a strategy has been built around this understanding. Council saw the library as a place that does not have an agenda, where there is neutrality, no stigma and everyone is welcome. It was seen that libraries also have a much stronger profile than any other community space and would provide the best leverage.

The Brisbane City Library has now structured their entire planning process around key outcomes which includes community connectivity. Strategies are included in the Library Business Plan to facilitate people coming together for a range of reasons (and not just in library or physical spaces). The premise is that there is a greater synergy and better outcomes through this coming together of community development providers and that much more can be gained through this strategy than through their single or "silo" model of service delivery. The fundamental premise was a focus on the positive rather than deficits of a community.

The strategy is to further position the library as a centre for engagement, community learning, creativity, and information, and target areas that have particular community challenges or opportunities. It is also intended to identify community learners, and opportunities for engagement around shared interests (choir, gardens, dancing, walking, renovating, ageing and lifestyle.) Strategic programming has been developed around key outcomes sought for the community, including community cohesion. Partnerships underpin the success of all of the programming undertaken. One example was the programme entitled "Growing Brisbane." This program was completed in partnership with the Brisbane Botanic Garden, and included talks and presentations by well-known gardening show hosts, experts in various fields, displays, visits to community gardens, floral arrangement demonstrations, floral embroidery exhibitions, film screenings, organic gardening workshops, environmental forums and sessions on Indigenous bush tucker.

Multicultural Arts Program – Fairfield City Council, NSW

Several programs at Fairfield City Council demonstrate community engagement through the arts. For example, a Vietnamese artist captured the experiences of people of diverse backgrounds and cultures through different mediums from story telling to shoe-making. The borrowing, altering and making of shoes was used by the artist to make comment on cultural diversity.

"Boghcheh" was a project funded by the Australia Council for the Arts and NSW Ministry for the Arts, supported by the Australian Museum, Fairfield City

Boghcheh (Bundle), Fairfield City, NSW

Council, University of Western Sydney, Auburn Community Development Network and Fairfield Immigrant Women's Health Service. The word "*Boghcheh*" (bundle) is used in many regions in the Near, Middle and Far East. Boghcheh has been associated with migration and movement from one place to another, when only a few possessions can be carried in a small parcel. Through the *Boghcheh* project women from diverse cultural backgrounds living in Fairfield, came together to share their personal and ancestral bundles and created a collective bundle in the form of a multimedia artwork. The work found a home in the Fairfield Branch Library after being exhibited interstate.

Community Anchor - Auckland City Library, New Zealand

Auckland City Libraries have embedded within their Planning Model a key role entitled *"The Community Anchor."* The keywords for this role are: *People, Place, and Participati*on. The *Community Anchor* supports people feeling they belong to and are in touch with their local community. It is a meeting place and focal point for community participation, relaxation, fun and engagement. The community anchor is a neutral environment that crosses over gender, age, ethnic, cultural, and economic boundaries. It encourages recognition and celebration of diversity.

The *Community Anchor* is seen as non-judgmental and is trusted for its acceptance of diversity. It is a landmark in the community, providing a sense of place. The *Community Anchor* is accessible for everyone, accepting of diversity, and treats all with respect and without judgement.

Planning Model, Auckland City Council, New Zealand

Loud @ the Library - Maitland City Library, NSW

Loud @ the Library is a new programme introduced by Maitland City Library to showcase local talent and provide young musicians and performers with a venue. It also provides the Library with an opportunity to connect with teens. The concept of a series of concerts featuring young local musicians grew out of concert hosted by Maitland City Library during Children's Book Week in 2005. The theme that year was 'Reading rocks' so inviting a young rock band to perform in the library was a good way of capitalising on the theme, as well as attracting teens to the library. It provides the opportunity for young performers to play in front of a live audience. It is certainly a great way to involve young people in library activities, provide a venue for local musicians, improve the library's public profile and generally enrich the cultural life of the local community.

Loud@the library. Maitland City Library, NSW

A similar program has also been initiated at Yarra Plenty Library Service.[34]

Caloundra City Library, Queensland – Wheels within Wheels

Caloundra City Library has a staff member responsible for the development of Indigenous services and programs. Through the 2001/03 Library Innovation Program *"Wheels within Wheels"* the library examined the role libraries play in acting as an interface to social change in communities. This involved working with local Indigenous people to provide *Deadly Day*, a day of Indigenous celebration, featuring performances by a local young Indigenous dance troupe, workshops in Indigenous arts, emu egg carving, and didgeridoo playing. Information and displays were hosted by Indigenous health services, education services and support was offered through the University of the Sunshine Coast. The library Indigenous collection was also developed with the assistance of Indigenous people through a mini Expo of Indigenous publications in conjunction with *Deadly Day.*

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34 "Live and Loud at the Library" Wendy Costigan. Yarra Plenty Library Service. Incite. Vol.28. Issue 6. June 2007. p.15.

Other programs have included an Indigenous family history day in the park, the creation of a major artwork created by local Indigenous artists as an entrance statement of Caloundra Central Library, and presentation of computer literacy programs for Indigenous people in collaboration with local Indigenous groups and families. Development of appropriate family literacy programs, with Indigenous input and tutors, is also underway in collaboration with a local primary schools Indigenous groups.

Indigenous Knowledge Centres - State Library of Queensland

The State Library of Queensland's Indigenous Library Services Strategy was adopted in June 2002. Central to this strategy is the provision of Indigenous Knowledge Centres (IKC's), which are now established throughout the Cape York, the Torres Strait and in Cherbourg in southeast Queensland.[35] The State Library of Queensland provides support in the form of establishment costs, project development and training and networking support for administrators.

The IKC model enables each community to shape its Centre to meet particular knowledge needs. The IKCs operate as a partnership between the Queensland Government and the local Community Council and offer free community wide access to the resources of a traditional public library. In addition, the IKC provides further capacity building opportunities by embracing cultural revitalisation and economic development roles. The extent to which these supplementary roles are developed is strongly guided by each community and seeks to align with the strategic priorities of the respective communities. After school and homework programs for children and young people have become an important component of daily activities at many IKCs. The continued use of the music based literacy karaoke program *"I Can Sing, I can Read"* is enhancing children's ability to read and sing within their communities. The State Library of Queensland recognises Information and Communications Technology (ICT) capacity at each IKC as a critical success factor and as underpinning the *Taking IT On* project which will provide basic IT training and support to IKC communities.[36] The model is presented graphically as follows[37]:
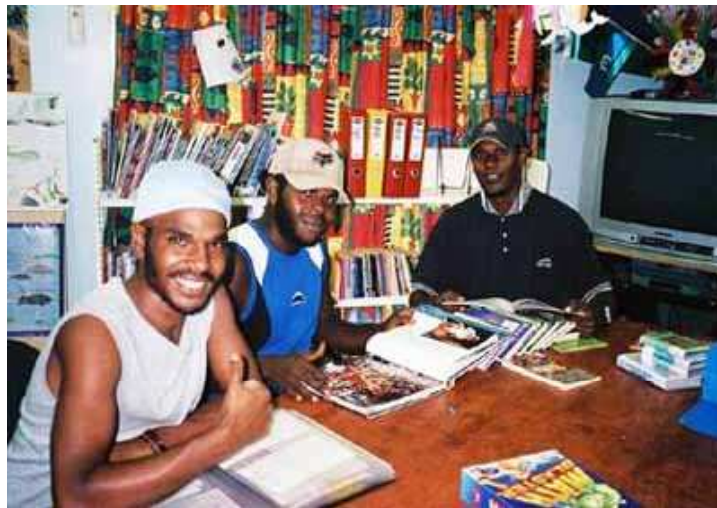
IKC Administrators, Queensland

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35 Taylor, S. Indigenous Knowledge Centres: The Queensland Experience. State Library of Queensland, 2006
36 Library Board of Queensland 2005-2006 Annual Report.
37 Reproduced with permission from SLQ.

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE CENTRE

BASIC LIBRARY
Social Role & Meeting Information Needs

- Books
- Multimedia
- Computers
- Learning Resources
- Homework Centre
- Children's and youth programs
- Research and reference
- Literacy tools and programs

Outgoing Knowledge

Incoming Knowledge

CAPACITY BUILDING
Options for Knowledge Centre enhancement

Cultural Revitalisation Role

- Meeting place
- Museum
- Keeping Place
- Family History
- Working with community to build tools to develop knowledge revitalisation
- Using IT as an enabler – web page development etc

Economic Development & Well-being

- Employment and training information, and programs
- Computer training
- BRISQ outreach
- Well-being content and programs
- Access to online learning content
- Business hub

The model has resulted in some significant successes with some communities recording significant levels of active membership. IKCs are established in close consultation with the community. When a community decides to proceed, the State Library of Queensland uses community development processes to engage the council and community to work with them to develop plans for their IKC. Local staff are recruited at this stage, so that they are involved in the entire planning and establishment process. Communities often give their IKC a local language name to reflect their aspirations for the IKC. For instance, the Wujal Wujal community has called their IKC the Binal Mungka Bayen Knowledge Centre. Sixty-eight percent of the community are using the centre, and a literacy and numeracy program has commenced. This program is targeted at early school leavers, who are using their centre to develop their adult skills and reengage with education.[38]

To ensure sustainability of the IKCs, the State Library of Queensland has partnered with Tropical North Queensland TAFE, the Queensland State Department of Employment and Training, and the Commonwealth ABSTUDY program to fund professional training for Indigenous IKC administrators. The model has also provided opportunities for greater interaction amongst families through the provision of safe, accessible and attractive space. Children in particular are supported, with homework help, technology resources,

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38 Taylor, S. *Indigenous Knowledge Centres: The Queensland Experience.* State Library of Queensland, 2006. p.2.

access to cultural history and culturally relevant resources, activities and entertainment. For older generations the model provides the opportunity to pass on the traditions and cultural stories as well as access to essential services. An elder of an Indigenous community served by an IKC in Queensland noted: *"Indigenous Knowledge Centres are breathing places…they keep our culture strong for our children…look after our traditions, songs, language, stories and artwork…bring back the things that guide us today for the future…combining a meeting place for traditional business with modern library services."[39]*

Wadeye Knowledge Centre – NT

In June 2004, the Northern Territory Library (NTL) implemented a new *Libraries and Knowledge Centres* model in eight communities in the Top End. There are 22 community libraries, most of which are located in Indigenous communities across the Top End, with several in the southern region.

The Wadeye LKC is located in the rural transaction centre along with other community services. The room is small but the facility is very well used and the Council is currently considering options to extend it. The Community Library staff are involved in a range of cultural activities in the community, including research through the local language centre and management of the local radio broadcasting service.

Women from Wadeye Library and Knowledge Centre working on the *Our Story* database

Software developed specifically for Pitjantjatjara communities in Central Australia provides a database which has a simple, user-friendly interface and a proven record of successful implementation and use by Indigenous people. An important feature of the database is the ability to restrict access to individual items to cater for cultural sensitivities. NTL has negotiated a Territory-wide *Our Story*. Each community is encouraged to choose a local name for their database, for example in Wadeye the database is known as Murrinh Nekinigme. In all cases, the community owns the content in the database and data is stored according to rules set by community leaders.

Prior to commencing the LKC project Wadeye already had a significant amount of digitised material including songs, videos and photographs. The sheer number of digitised files however, made it difficult to manage the items and it was not possible to easily retrieve specific images or recordings. In the six months since *Our Story* was installed, more than 8500 items have been added to the database. A group of elders is working with LKC staff to determine access levels for each item. Groups such as elders and school children are providing content to enrich items in the database and to make them searchable and accessible. These sessions are usually facilitated by local library staff member with assistance from community people.[40]

3.2 Needs and Strategies – Connected and Resilient Communities

The lack of a strategic focus for the delivery of services and programs for Indigenous communities is a critical concern. There is a need to review and update strategy at both the State and the local level in both the urban and rural context. Assumptions that isolated communities will travel distances to access library services in local towns are fundamentally flawed. A more flexible and tailored model of delivery is required. The NASLA policy notes that *"Traditional library and information management systems and*

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39 Richard Gundhawuy speaking about Queensland's IKCs in Taylor, S. Indigenous Knowledge Centres: The Queensland Experience. State Library of Queensland, 2006.
40 Cate Richmond, Libraries and Knowledge Centres in the Northern Territory in Public Library Services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in NSW. State Library of NSW. 2006. p.8.

practices will need to adapt, if they are to be meaningful to Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders."[41] This is certainly the case in Western Australia.

There is already a close working relationship with the WA Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA) and the University Indigenous Studies units, evidenced by the *Building Solid Families* and *Bringing Them Home* projects. Further opportunity for collaborative action exists with the Bilateral Agreement on Indigenous Affairs.[42] The Agreement seeks to set out strategic approaches for joint, collaborative, flexible and innovative action by the Governments in partnership with Indigenous people and communities. It also sets out to provide a mechanism for the Governments to work co-operatively on service planning delivery and investment in Indigenous communities. The priorities are congruent with the key outcomes identified for libraries: early childhood intervention including early educational outcomes as well as building employment opportunities and skills development. The opportunity to pilot IKCs in Western Australia should also be progressed.[43] The State Library recognises that, to respond adequately to the unique circumstances of Indigenous people and to achieve equitable outcomes, it is essential that the delivery of library services is flexible and that resourcing is appropriate.

State and local authorities have the opportunity to further develop programs supporting literacy and learning for individuals at every stage of their life, and *Better Beginnings* now serves as a successful model. Targeted strategies are particularly needed to support those who may be disenfranchised or have special needs.[44] 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. However, resource constraints for many smaller libraries and lack of experience in running programs can be a stumbling block. The opportunity to share stories about innovative programs would be beneficial as well as the ability to drive some community development outcomes State-wide through partnerships with other agencies. Opportunities also exist for neighbouring local government areas to work more collaboratively on common social issues, particularly in the metropolitan area. The library can provide local anchors for a plethora of social justice and community well-being outcomes.

Overall, there needs to be a stronger appreciation of the role that the library currently plays in building social capital.

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41 NASLA National Policy Framework Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Library Services and Collections. P1.
42 Bilateral Agreement on Indigenous Affairs between the Commonwealth of Australia and the State of Western Australia 2006-2010.
43 LISWA Annual Report 2005/6 p.46.
44 LISWA Annual Report 2005/6 p.46.

Table 3.3: Needs and Strategies - Connected and Resilient Communities

Needs	Opportunities
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. • 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 • Advocate the role of the public library in developing social capital, and building connected and cohesive communities on an ongoing basis

4. Community Memory

Public libraries play a key role in collecting and preserving the social and documentary heritage of Western Australia for current and future generations, and sharing the memory of their communities. Quite often they work closely with members of their community and local historical societies, family history groups and museums. History and heritage is usually paper and photographic, but may be in sound and image format. The content also varies significantly. Digitisation has made local treasures available globally and is a key strategy in enabling wider access to resources. The ability to locate, describe and preserve items is also fundamental.

As the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) research confirms, we are seeing increasingly quality content finding its way to the open web, facilitated by self-publishing tools.[45] OCLC also note that the major trends are not just technological: they are social, and are profoundly changing how content is created, collected, used, shared and preserved. It is also significant that the most critical changes are taking place outside the arena of traditional information management. Social publishing, or open content, such as wikis and blogs are arenas of content production that public libraries have not engaged in extensively to date.[46]

All this presents some real opportunities for public libraries. Creating digital content and facilitating content creation at the local level is an increasing role for libraries and one that is under explored in most library strategies. Libraries can work with local communities to create and share content which is relevant at both the local and the global level. The greatest opportunity exists in the domain of harvesting local content. The phenomena of individuals and communities creating content is increasing and libraries can play a guiding role in supporting the creation of local content and facilitating its access. The library can then further develops its status as the focal point and source of local information and facilitator of global access to that content. Public libraries have an opportunity to strengthen community and community identity through tapping into local and social history. They will, however, need to have the tools and training to facilitate and harvest some of this content, as well as enable local communities to create content and make it accessible.

At the same time that local content is being developed at an exponential rate, there is a significant amount disappearing. Public libraries have a responsibility to local communities that should now be facilitated by an investment in knowledge, skills and enabling tools.

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[45] 2004 Information Format Trends: Content, not Containers. OCLC 2004. The OCLC report noted in the U.S. 23 million fewer new print books were sold in 2003 than in 2002 and that according to a Book Industry Study Group report there is continued trend of increasing production and declining demand.

[46] Eric Wainright reminds us that 28% of Internet users are members of Myspace. Eric Wainright. Presentation to State Library of Queensland Senior Executive, Feb 2007.

4.1 Inspiring Stories
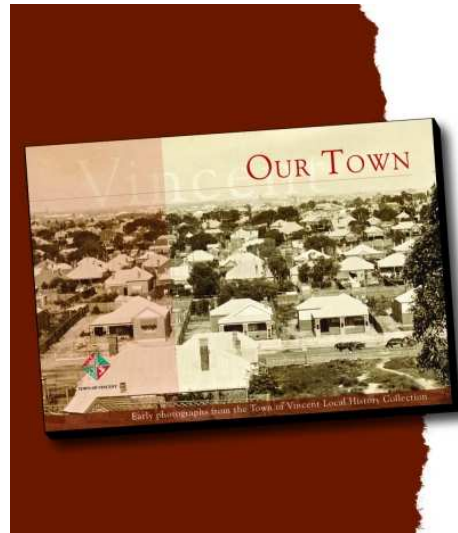
Local History Awards – Town of Vincent, WA

The Town of Vincent Local History Collection began in 2000 with the appointment of a part-time Local History Librarian. The community were encouraged to become involved and contribute the history that was hidden in their memories and in their homes. This was done through an oral history programme, with public launches and exhibitions at the completion of each topic and Local History Awards in the library.

The Local History Awards began in 2001. The Awards have categories for written research, encouraging topics such as the history of a house or a local business, and personal memoirs.

To maintain a visual presence within the community there is a category for

Our Town Publication, Town of Vincent WA

photographs, and the library has introduced purely Local History Photographic Awards in alternate years.

The photographic awards have a local real estate agent as a sponsor, who presents beautiful plaques featuring the winning photograph to each winner. Cash prizes in all categories are provided.

The Local History Centre has taken 50 photographs from the collection and produced a book '*Our Town*' which was launched on 2 May 2007. This book features a photograph on one page with a caption on the opposite page accompanied by extracts from interviews which relate in some way to the photograph. There are over 60 contributors to the book from past and present residents, and it has been very well received by the community.

Local Studies Publishing Program – Geraldton, WA

The Geraldton Regional Library Local Studies department publishing programme began in 2001 with the publication of *Geraldton: 150 years, 150 lives*. This first title comprised a historical mosaic made up of the lives of one hundred and fifty representatives from among the thousands who have lived here. *Geraldton: A Photographic History* followed in 2004, and features a selection of unique photographs, with a particular emphasis on the early years.

At present, the library is finalising the first of a series of twelve booklets covering various aspects of the heritage of the Mid West region. The aim of this project is to draw together fragments of information on popular topics and to publish them in a form more accessible to the public. The publishing program is supported financially by the City of Geraldton, grants, and local sponsorship. Funds raised through book sales are committed to the City of Geraldton
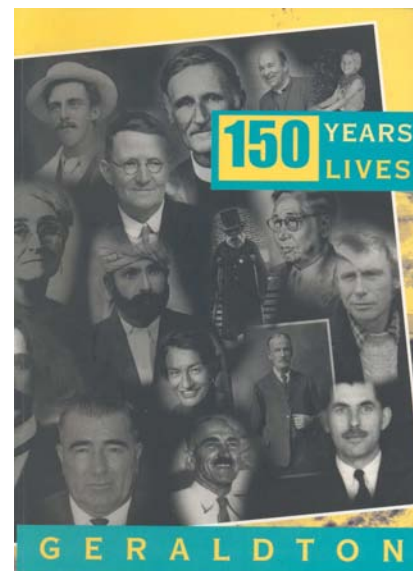
Geraldton: 150 Years, 150 Lives, Geraldton, WA

publishing fund for future projects. The expertise for publishing projects is provided by Library staff members, research contractors and members of the community.

Community consultation plays an important part in each publication. For example, a community based advisory committee steered *Geraldton: 150 years, 150 lives*. The public were invited to submit the names of Geraldtonians that they thought worthy of inclusion. The list was honed by the aid of vigorous debate between the committee and the researchers. All decisions were guided by the project's scope; a collection of biographies covering all the aspects of Geraldton's community, representing the multitude of ethnic origins and highlighting the many fields of endeavour that have shaped Geraldton over one and a half centuries.

The publishing programme of the Geraldton Regional Library serves a dual purpose: to collect and preserve local history while also promoting the history of the area to the local and broader community.

Stories from the Suburbs, Oral History Project – City of Joondalup, WA

Local History staff at Joondalup have worked with volunteers to record the history of the City's 22 suburbs. The very successful *"Stories from the Suburbs"* project involved the production of oral history recordings of people's memories of their experiences living through the development of their suburbs. These were combined with published material to produce books and displays. As well as

Collecting and sharing local history, City of Joondalup, WA

sharing memories of their experiences, many people donated historical photographs and other material to the Local Studies collection, further enriching and preserving the community memory.

The project was completed in three stages over four years, commencing in 2000 with each stage having a public celebration and launch for staff and volunteers. The recorded interviews are held at the Joondalup Library, the books available in each of the four libraries and displays have circulated in the libraries, local shopping centres and schools. Displays are regularly taken by staff to local community and seniors groups and staff give presentations on the history of the local area.

This project has been instrumental in engendering a sense of community for people who view the books and displays and also for those who were involved in the project.

Heritage Festival – Fremantle City Library

The annual Fremantle Heritage Festival celebrates the City's colourful past. For one week in May, Fremantle comes alive with music, events, activities and awards that showcase the City's diverse kaleidoscope of cultural, recreational, environmental and built heritage.

As part of the Festival the Fremantle City Library's Local History Collection runs a number of heritage workshops. These are run with the co-operation of professional historians, WA Genealogical Society, State Library of WA, the Fremantle History Society, the Fremantle Society and members of the

Heritage Workshops – Fremantle City Library, WA

community. Workshops have focused on areas of increasing community interest, with topics such as Researching the History of your House, where participants can uncover historical details about their property through information sources such as Rate Books, old sewerage maps and Post Office Directories. Another very popular topic is Caring for Family Papers, where a professional conservator discusses techniques for the long-term preservation of family treasures such as letters, dairies and photographs. These events are free and very quickly become fully booked.

The library also is part of the Local History Awards, presented during Heritage Week, to recognise the contribution of history to the understanding of the diverse social and cultural heritage of Fremantle and East Fremantle. Entries include published and unpublished works and sometimes interesting formats, such as two quilts completed by local school children in 2007. Local History Librarians are involved in the organisation of the Awards and judging of entries, with all entries becoming permanent additions to the Local History collection.

Heritage at Albany – City of Albany, WA

The City of Albany has a proactive approach to the collection, preservation and sharing of its rich and diverse culture. Voiceprints is an oral history project which combines recorded voice, pictures, moving images and original music in a digital (DVD) format. The results are short (3-5 minute) vignettes of life and stories of Albany of the early 20th. Century.

There is also an ongoing project to collect material on the local Aboriginal people, and in particular, to chart family trees. The collection has uncovered materials from researchers like Daisy Bates, Gerhardt Laves and Carl von Brandenstein. It aims to bring members of the local Noongar community closer to the library.

The Albany Historical Society Archives (AHS) have been combined into the existing Local Studies Collection to form a comprehensive Albany History Collection, with one catalogue and one point of access. Great cooperation has been achieved with the AHS which has expanded to joint projects like the weekly History Mysteries photo identification column in one local newspaper. Additionally, the Rotary Club of Albany Port has sponsored the Albany Oral History Project for many years which has resulted in over 50 interviews and over 200 hours of memories being recorded. The Club employs a professional interviewer and the library co-ordinates the processing, transcription and maintenance of the collection. The library also conducts short guided heritage walks in conjunction with the *Stay on Your Feet* campaign each September.

Marrickville War Memorial Project – Marrickville City, NSW

The Marrickville War Memorial honors over 400 men from Marrickville who died in World War One. The Winged Victory figure on top of the memorial is the largest sculpture on a memorial in Australia. Originally erected in 1919, it was dismantled in 1962 and re-erected in 1989, through the efforts of the then Local Studies librarian.

Interest in the sculpture led to a high level of interest in the names inscribed on the base of the memorial.

Most significantly, the names represent a microcosm of Marrickville society in the early

Marrickville War Memorial, Marrickville, NSW.

years of the century and provide insights about the rich migrant history in the area. Each of the 400 names on the memorial was individually researched through the database of the Australian War Graves Commission and the Australian War Memorial. Over 40% were born overseas and the majority of the remainder were first and second generation Australians from a variety of countries, including Italy, Germany and Syria.

The research revealed that 60 men died in the same battle, 15 on the same day, with one family losing all three sons. Their stories are part of the fabric of Marrickville's history today. The project is ongoing and the battles and the battalions will now be researched. The effect of the deaths of these 60 men in the area is also being researched.

The objective of the project was to emphasise the "living history" aspect of the memorial. The research also substantiates the view that Marrickville has, since European settlement, always been culturally diverse. This project has highlighted the diversity of Australian society, and the sacrifices that many made in the first half of the last century. Projects such as these help communities to understand themselves and are immensely valuable in capturing our migrant history.

Capturing ethnic social history - Warringah Library, NSW

Warringah Library recognised that they lacked resources on ethnic social history, which led to a strategy to develop programs and resources celebrating and preserving the stories of the diverse communities in the area. With the help of the local studies library they have been documenting the Italian presence in the area. The Italian community had identified a strong connection with the Frenchs Forest cemetery and a heritage advisor was engaged to do a heritage study of the cemetery. Consultation with the community was invaluable: it built connections, identified additional resources in the community and revealed valuable stories to share. Most importantly, strong connections have now been established between community members and library staff.

4.2 Needs and Strategies – Community Memory Preserved and Shared

There is a need for a collaborative and strategic approach to Western Australian memory. This includes skills development in conservation and preservation and the application of standards, including digital standards. The State Library could play a stronger role as an advocate for the care of documentary heritage in the community, through leadership in the areas of preventive conservation, how to preserve and care for photographs, documents, books, ephemera, and all library and archive materials held in libraries and Indigenous communities.

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. Overall, there is a need for a greater understanding and capacity in relation to the role of public libraries as

content creators and facilitators. The library could play a key role in developing these skills and grow understanding of ways to collect, describe, store and share social history through these new medias.

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.

Table 4.1: Needs and Strategies – Community Memory Preserved and Shared

Needs	Opportunities
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 • 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 • Facilitate access to tools and skills to use new medias in capturing, preserving and sharing social history

5. Accessible and Relevant Content

Public libraries have witnessed an increasing demand for broader collections to meet the needs of various groups, including collections for persons with a visual or other disability, materials in languages other than English; and resources to support the development of literacy in communities. In seeking to remain relevant to local communities public libraries have also integrated physical collections with some digital content and have expanded into new mediums. Collection development has certainly been impacted by changing demography and expectations, and changes in media.

5.1 Content Relevant to Local Needs

Library staff need the skills to develop specifications and profiles for their collections that can be adapted as needs change. They also need to use the information they have effectively, including demographic profiles, utilisation data, turnover, age of stock, and user satisfaction with collections. Some support and guidance may be required in assisting libraries to develop needs analysis and collection specifications based on sound information. Local libraries also need to play a stronger role in providing collections relevant to their communities.

Collections need to earn their way and quality, not quantity, needs to be the driver. Recent research in Victoria *(The Strategic Assets Audit)* confirms the expectation that demand for collection items diminishes as items age and obsolescence progressively increases as items age.[47]

Liddle notes in the *Audit* that it is important to *"resist the temptation to retain old materials in order to fill shelves"* and highlights the application of the widely adopted *"just in time"* approach to inventory management, which led to considerable productivity improvement in the manufacturing sector*: "By exposing shortfalls in the supply systems rather than holding excess "just in case" stocks to cover the shortfalls. The same principle can be applied to public libraries."*[48]

Mapoon IKC opening day, Mapoon, Qld
Photograph courtesy of Courier Mail

Consultation identified growing concerns from larger libraries about the amount of dead stock that needed to be retained in order to meet the criteria of 1.25 items per capita. Concern was also expressed by some growth councils that due to the lag in facilities that stock quantities due to their library could not be accommodated and were not received or were sitting idle in closed repositories.

Getting the product mix right, particularly in a changing environment and for diverse audiences is also a challenge. A significant finding from the *Audit* in Victoria was the apparent over–representation of non-fiction holdings State-wide in relation to usage. Holdings were 73% higher than fiction holdings, yet fiction generated higher circulation and returned a considerably better turnover rate of 5.6 compared to 3.0 for non-fiction. Some reconsideration of the level of investment in non-fiction or the level of holdings for

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47 Strategic Asset Audit of Victorian Public Libraries. J.L Management Services, 2006. p.6; 57-58. Liddle notes the experiences of the United Kingdom's public libraries where the key message was that if collections are allowed to deteriorate, there will be a corresponding and significant deterioration in the use of public libraries.
48 Strategic Asset Audit of Victorian Public Libraries J.L management Services May 2006 p.62.

non-fiction through de-acquisition based on usage was suggested in the *Audit.* Similarly, Liddle notes the high turnover for pre-school early readers and the opportunity to expand this collection given its critical function in early childhood development. [49]

These lessons are relevant to the Western Australian context. Consultation with public library staff reflected similar concerns and the need to provide collections that better reflect user demand at the local level was stressed. The key finding is that there needs to be some re-evaluation of the structuring of collections overall in response to user needs and format trends. The performance of a library collection is generally measured by the circulation or the turnover of the stock. **Table 5.1** gives the total stock (including SLWA stock and local stock) and the number of issues of that stock for Adult Non-Fiction, Adult Fiction and Junior. The figures show that turnover has been declining in all categories since 1998-99.

Table 5.1 Performance of Public Library Stock

	Stock				Issues				Turnover			
	ANF	AF	J	Total	ANF	AF	J	Total	ANF	AF	J	Total
1997-98	856,922	1,079,276	826,749	2,762,947	4,053,373	6,090,195	3,887,044	14,030,612	4.7	5.6	4.7	5.1
1998-99	1,167,421	823,948	853,032	2,844,401	4,091,753	6,181,349	3,933,657	14,206,759	3.5	7.5	4.6	5.0
1999-00	1,258,357	863,574	896,922	3,018,853	4,268,328	6,425,087	3,987,056	14,680,471	3.4	7.4	4.4	4.9
2000-01	1,226,760	884,805	897,965	3,009,530	3,927,581	6,152,650	3,802,539	13,882,770	3.2	7.0	4.2	4.6
2001-02	1,280,753	890,307	918,700	3,089,760	3,922,269	5,996,158	3,822,573	13,741,000	3.1	6.7	4.2	4.4
2002-03	1,310,792	918,460	948,185	3,177,437	3,714,523	5,622,607	3,704,691	13,041,821	2.8	6.1	3.9	4.1
2003-04	1,385,908	1,000,982	1,012,484	3,399,374	3,814,795	6,158,234	3,839,183	13,812,212	2.8	6.2	3.8	4.1
2004-05	1,395,919	1,031,749	1,050,176	3,477,844	3,697,583	6,015,013	3,835,632	13,548,228	2.6	5.8	3.7	3.9
2005-06	1,378,575	1,044,286	1,021,617	3,444,478	3,103,769	5,209,694	3,355,615	11,669,078	2.3	5.0	3.3	3.4

Source: SLWA

Figure 5.1 Performance of Public Library Stock
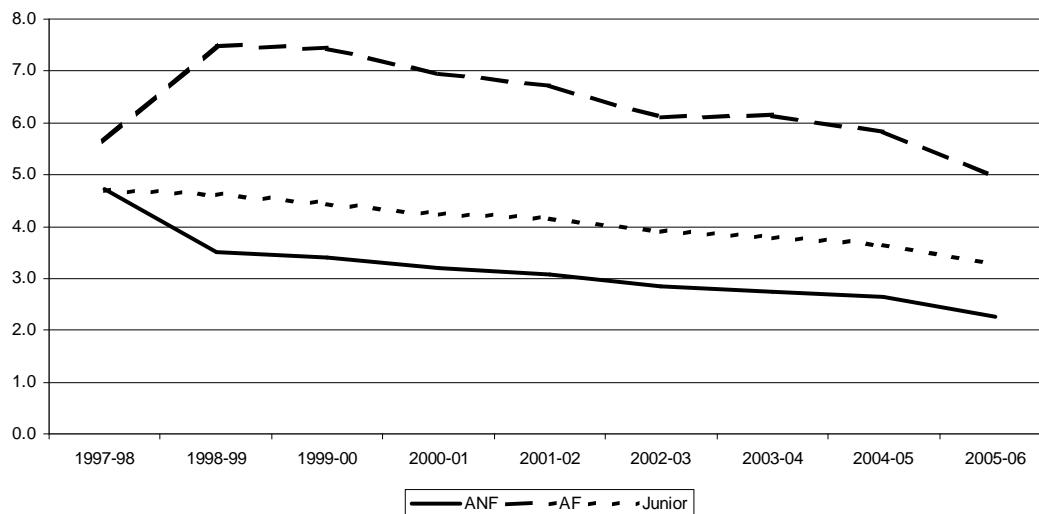
Note: 2005-06 data may not be accurate due to timing
Source: SLWA

In particular, there is a need to ensure that the investment made in collections for primarily Indigenous communities is best value. There is a need for sustainable and

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49 Strategic Asset Audit of Victorian Public Libraries J.L Management Services May 2006 p136.

culturally appropriate service delivery to remote Indigenous communities and the current collection mix is not relevant to needs. There needs to be flexibility in relation to the media and content provided and this may differ between communities.

5.2 The State-wide Collection in Western Australia

The State-wide collection, driven by the problems of size and distance and the low population of many communities in rural and regional Western Australia, is based on the premise that small and large communities can access collections to meet community needs regardless of location or size. [50] The resources are supplied at a minimum rate of 1.25 items per capita and the smallest collection in any library has been set at a minimum of 1025 items which usually exceeds the 1.25 items per capita ratio. In addition, allocations are made to library service points, rather than to Local Governments, in recognition of the size of Local Governments in rural areas, the low population densities and the distances between townships. Additional allocations over and above the 1.25 items per capita are made to Regional Libraries to bring their base stock size up to 11,500 items, and allocations are also made to address seasonal or tourism related demand or population influx, including Perth CBD.

There has been a great deal of rhetoric about the State-wide collection and the need to preserve the value and the integrity of the collection. This needs to be put in some perspective. It is clear that utilisation rates for non-fiction are falling, ratios of stock bear little relationship with utilisation, there is a high level of obsolescence, and there is generally a low level of satisfaction and concern that the collection is not meeting needs. *"No-one has really defined the concept of a state-wide balanced collection – trends have changed – look at the on-line environment, use of non-fiction is declining nationally."*[51]

The quotas for categories has been a source of dissatisfaction for some time. Libraries have been required to select according to a quota of 36% ANF, 31% AF and 33% Junior. If the base premise is that relevant content needs to be accessible by local communities, the prescriptive nature of quotas prevents the tailoring of collections to the needs of local communities. The catch cry in consultations with key stakeholders was that *"One size does not fit all",* and it is clear that better solutions need to be put in place to address the increasingly diversified need. A working party under the *Resources Reference Group* to identify a more flexible system that will allow libraries to select to meet local needs recommended that Local Government be provided with an allocation of funds based on per capita.[52]

5.2.1 Exchange service

The State-wide collection is based on the need to refresh collections in smaller libraries. This entails the circulation of stock through an exchange system in prescribed amounts and categories and access to the total collection through the State-wide catalogue and the inter library Loan System. Although the model may have suited circumstances in the 1950s, it is clear that changes are now required. The intent at the outset was to provide a fresh supply of resources and update the stock, provide a system for the removal of items in need of repair or rebinding, provide for the replacement of worn out resources and those no longer required in the library, and to replace stock which has been read out.

The frequency and size of exchanges of material is based on the size of the library. The minimum exchange size is 145 volumes provided on a bi-monthly basis to libraries with stocks of less than 3,500 volumes. The exchange size for larger libraries is based on an annual turnover of up to 25% of the stock of the library. Exchanges are selected on a monthly, fortnightly or weekly basis depending on the size and location of the library.

All metropolitan and regional public library staff select their own exchanges of stock. Country Library Officers are encouraged to select their own exchanges whenever

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50 *Collection Development Policy for Public Libraries.* State Library of Western Australia 1992 p.1.
51 Consultation with key stakeholders. February –April 2007.
52 *Report for the Working Party on Order Quota Options* p.2.

possible. However, the majority of exchanges for country libraries are selected by State Library staff, with assistance from Regional Librarians.

Previous investigation has noted that the needs of smaller libraries may require a more regular or fixed system of exchanges.[53] Currently, the intended purpose of exchange quotas being applied within the exchange system is to regulate the total stock in each library and to control the ratio of items in each category (adult fiction, non-fiction and junior materials). It was noted by the Working Party that *"the costs involved and the rigidity imposed by the system does not necessarily provide for the most optimum circulation of resources nor enable flexible and responsive supply to public libraries."* It was suggested that public libraries be required to return only an agreed number of used resources for exchange with an equivalent number of items.

Problems have also emerged over the years with inequities in allocations, recognised in the 2004 paper by the State Library: *Ensuring a Level Playing Field: the Repatriation of items from Local Governments Over the 1.25 Items per Capita Ratio.*[54]

In the course of discussions leading up to the development of the initial *Framework Agreement*, which was signed off on in December 2004, it was generally agreed that there was a need to retain an exchange system, but there needed to be a more flexible system. Certainly, the cost of exchanging stock must be a consideration. Preliminary analysis through a survey of selected libraries suggests that the State-wide cost of exchanging stock could be as high as $2.4 million per annum, taking into consideration all of the labour inputs in the process.[55]

5.2.2 Maintenance of Stock Levels

The Local Government authority has responsibility for stock while it is in the custody of the public library. Lost or damaged stock must be reported and paid for to maintain an accurate audit trail and the integrity of the State–wide database. The L55 process and the process for discard of stock is cumbersome. Consultation identified a preference by some libraries for ownership of stock to reside with the local authority and for discards and replacement to be at the discretion of the local authority. Certainly, regardless of the issue of ownership of stock, libraries at the local level, with appropriate guidelines should be able to dispose of obsolete stock. The labour costs across the State are also considerable. The total cost of the write off of lost and damaged stock across the State is estimated to be $2.2 million per annum.[56]

Consultation also identified some frustration with the time required to conduct stocktakes, which would be a base expectation of a State-wide collection to maintain accurate records of the location of stock throughout Western Australia. If an integrated search and lending system is to operate effectively, it is necessary to ensure the integrity of the database. Less cumbersome means of conducting stocktakes, however, will need to be identified.

5.2.3 Centralised Collections

Centralised collections provide specialised collections and collection management. Items from these collections are provided on request to public libraries to meet local community needs. Loan collections are provided in addition to basic stock and are exchanged on a regular basis as required.[57] Adult public library stock is also retained in the Core Stack Collection and includes last copies of titles of significance or potential interlibrary loan value. The Special Needs collection provides material to meet the needs of adults and children who are unable to easily access conventional printed materials. Items are selected from the Special Needs Collection to meet highly individual or intermittent needs and are lent to public libraries on request.[58] Regional Library collections are also

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53 Report for the Working Party on Order Quota Options p.2.
54 Ensuring a Level Playing Field PLS, 2004.
55 Survey conducted by AECgroup with selected libraries. March – May 2007.
56 Survey conducted by AECgroup with selected libraries. March – May 2007.
57 State Library Collection Development Policy p.38.
58 State Library Collection Development Policy p.39.

provided, including reference works, music scores, and local newspapers, sometimes in microform.

Whilst these collections were not raised as an issue in consultations it is important to recognise that there needs to be ongoing review of the relevance and merit of retaining items in these collections and building these collections, particularly with the availability of new formats to meet needs.

5.3 Document Delivery

Western Australia has a State-wide database of the State-wide collection which facilitates access to information about holdings across the State. A Statewide interlibrary loan service is co-ordinated by the State Library. Virtual Document Exchange (VDX) replaced Document Delivery Online (DDO) in March 2006 as the system used by the State Library to manage this process. The system allows library staff to track requests for their clients and to monitor the progress of these requests. Consultation identified some dissatisfaction with the VDX system, many participants noting that it was not user friendly and that it had increased time spent at the local level in the inter-library loan process. Systems need to be further refined to provide user friendly access and less time consuming processes. The cost of inter-library loans and document delivery across the State is estimated to cost $6 million dollars.[59]

All public libraries also have access to the *Libraries Australia* service with the State Library subscription, incorporating additional features including advanced searching, alerts, personalisation (providing remote access for their users) and records for cataloguing.

The advent of increasing electronic access to sourcing databases and the predominance of search engines such as Google is also changing behaviours and expectations. Libraries will increasingly need to facilitate self-help strategies to access content and enable delivery in the format of choice and at the point of choice, whether it be the desktop or to the client's door. Services will also need to be expedited to meet expectations in an increasingly *"want it now"* society and libraries will need efficient user friendly systems to lend and receive stock.[60]

Consultation identified the advantages of having local content included on the State-wide database. It was generally agreed that lending local stock would be at the owning libraries discretion, particularly in relation to popular stock, and that, with guidelines in place, the opportunity to fully access resources Statewide would outweigh any disadvantages.

5.4 Online Access to Content

There has also been considerable growth in publishing on personal web sites and blogs and, as noted by OCLC in its analysis of information formats, *"there's a transformation underway in the world of content and its deployment"*.[61] The transformation within the music industry alone is a salutary lesson. There is an increasing trend for MP3s, iPods and similar devices being used for more than just music. Digital audio books are on the increase as well as methods of streaming content as required. There is also a

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59 Survey conducted by AECgroup with selected libraries. March – May 2007.

60 There is good overview of relevant issues in Interlibrary Lending for Western Australia: Discussion paper by Alison Sutherland. State Library of Western Australia, November 2006.

61 Information Format Trends: Content, not Containers. OCLC 2004. OCLC estimated in 2004 that there would be an increase in daily activity on Blogs from 2.7 million to 86 million over a five year period. p.2; 9.

new arena of information technology opening up for libraries in the transition of the web into Web 2.0. Ultimately, the format of the content becomes less important than its ability to be delivered via a low-cost, convenient channel.[62]

This provides both a challenge and an opportunity for content producers and their clients, including libraries, and raises some critical questions for public libraries in terms of how they position themselves in relation to their product mix and offer, especially for younger people. For example, there is increasing use of subscription and license services for downloadable content for audio and video, and, in particular, music.

OCLC also highlight the slow uptake by libraries of online resources and the fact that global awareness and usage of library accessed on-line databases has been low. Both electronic and published documents will be vital to the needs of people seeking information from both within and outside of Western Australia. It is clear that all libraries need to revisit the way in which they provide that information and market their resources. People with access to the Internet are used to having information at their fingertips and can be quite sophisticated in their information seeking, many readily able to navigate full-text databases and access online information on a range of topics.

Twenty-eight local governments in Western Australia access the Australian and New Zealand Reference Centre online database as part of a consortium arrangement. Over sixty public libraries in the State have access to the database through this arrangement. People in WA also have State-wide access to *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online* in a partnership with public libraries. In addition, a subscription for *Health and Wellness Resource Center* enables any member of a public library access to these databases from their local library or from their own home.[63]

It is the joint position of State and local government that the provision of the infrastructure to provide free public access to the Internet is essential in every public library. At the local level, this provision is the responsibility of local government. In some cases, this can be prohibitive. Support mechanisms are required to assist small communities staying online. This may include a review of the local delivery and partnering at the local level in Telecentres.

The ongoing issue, however, for many rural and regional libraries, and in some cases metropolitan libraries is access to adequate bandwidth for the delivery of online content. Access to the Internet cannot be assumed. Difficulty with access and effectiveness of telecommunications can severely hamper the ability to communicate, overcome isolation and keep up with new ways of disseminating information. The Office of E-Government, is working towards some whole of government solutions that will include libraries in regional areas.[64] Creative solutions such as Supernet in Canada need to be further explored.

5.5 Needs and Strategies – Accessible and Relevant Content

There is increasing dissatisfaction in Western Australia, primarily among larger urban libraries, but also reflected in consultations with smaller libraries, that the State-wide collection is not meeting local needs. 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 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. Clearly, advocacy for increased funding is also required.

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62 2004 Information Format Trends: Content, not Containers. OCLC 2004, p3.
63 SLWA Annual Report 2005/6, p.25.
64 Cultural Signposts, Directions for Arts and Culture in Regional Western Australia. Department of Culture and the Arts, 2003, p.48.

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. The procurement model will also need to be best practice to maintain satisfaction among participants. This needs to be supported by full shelf ready supply, a movement towards effective supplier assisted processes for selection, and improved materials movement.

Greater choice at the local level is required in relation to exchanges, including the choice not to engage in the exchange process. Collection maintenance also needs to be improved and unwanted and obsolescent stock should be disposed of. There is also a need for increased accountability and greater flexibility at the local level through transfer of ownership of stock in larger libraries.

Skills at the local level in developing community profiles and developing needs analysis for content will also need to be developed. This could be supported by State-wide templates and access to ABS data. Similarly, staff need skills in analyzing utilisation data to understand how well their collections are working and changes in demand.

Indigenous communities require culturally appropriate and relevant materials and there needs to be a higher level of support for local communities in the preservation and conservation of their local treasures. Youth and Indigenous populations also have a higher preference for oral and visual forms and formats need to meet client group needs.

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.

Most importantly, it is critical to continue to facilitate access to online content through increased skills of staff, and better promotion of resources. The opportunity to develop content at the local level and to investigate alternative means of delivering content should also be further explored.

Table 5.1: Needs and Strategies – Accessible and Relevant Content

Needs	Opportunities
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 stack, age of collections and client satisfaction. • Provide training in the use of Library Management Systems • 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 • 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 • Provide support and training in the preservation and conservation of local collections
Need for culturally appropriate and relevant content for	• Work with Indigenous communities to tailor collections to meet local need and source additional resources appropriate to Indigenous

Needs	Opportunities
Indigenous communities	communities • Prepare policy on treatment of culturally sensitive materials in Indigenous communities
Need for effective inter-lending system	• Provide a user friendly ILL 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) • 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 • Facilitate the development of content at the State and the local level and provide access

6. Community Hubs and Destinations

The concept of the public library as the *"third place"*[65] has gained increased prominence with the development of new and innovative library spaces facilitating interaction, comfort and a sense of community ownership. There are many examples of dynamic new and refurbished libraries in Western Australia, New Zealand, and in other states in Australia. The libraries that are attracting attention are those that have moved away from a single minded repository focus to flexible places and spaces that attract people to enjoy the library in new ways, whether it be to access library and other agency services, enjoy sight and sound, browse collections, study or research, attend a program or just relax and catch up with friends over a coffee. As can be seen from the experience of the *Ideas Stores* in the United Kingdom, the way a library is conceived, designed, located, branded and presented can have significant impacts on communities.

Successful libraries are now in the business of providing positive enriching experiences. Design of spaces is increasingly focused on the multiplicity of functions that have emerged for public libraries and is informed by preferences for how people like to engage with each other and with collections. New media and technology has had a huge impact on how spaces are articulated and how messages are provided in libraries. Retail merchandising is increasingly used to present product attractively. Many libraries, such as the new Brisbane Square Library, are also using the principles of sustainable design. Multipurpose facilities are becoming more evident with public libraries increasingly providing an extended range of services including council and other agency services. Constrained budgets have also led to increased resource sharing of space, technology, staff and collections and examples of joint use, shared facilities, and collocated libraries can be found throughout Western Australia.

Certainly, experience has shown that the provision of dynamic, accessible and vibrant library spaces that are designed around the needs and behaviours of users and potential users are attracting significantly increased levels of utilisation. With the increased emphasis on community engagement, libraries are emerging as community living rooms, and several libraries have explored this concept psychologically in the use of colour, furniture, lighting and a welcoming ambience to provide social and learning spaces. *"Increasingly the libraries of the new millennium are no longer simply repositories for books but serve as a civic gathering place and stimulus for neighbourhood and community revival. Public libraries are being designed as part of larger public spaces making the library space more open to opportunities for sociability."*[66]

6.1 Guidelines for Public Library Buildings

People Places: a guide for library buildings in New South Wales[67] has been adopted by Western Australia. It describes a complete methodology for local authorities planning new or extended library facilities and draws upon recent case studies of public library planning in Australia in reformulating guidelines for public library buildings.

The guide is a result of extensive community consultation and collaborative planning containing guidelines for public space needed to meet community needs as well as practical advice on assessing these needs. The needs assessment planning method utilises four tools based firmly on an understanding of community needs: identified needs, normative needs, comparative needs and benchmark based needs.

People Places provides guidance on a range of 'key design factors' with prominence given to spacing requirements. Special emphasis is on people and how people perceive and use buildings, how accessible the buildings are for people of varying mobility and the impact of safety and security issues. In addition to these factors, the design and

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65 Coined by Ray Oldenburg for places at the heart of a community. Oldenburg, Ray. The great good place. N.Y; Marlowe, 1999.
66 Better Public Libraries, London: Commission for the Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and Resources (MLA), 2003.
67 www.slnsw.gov.au/plb/policies/build/guide.pdf.

planning of furniture and shelving must consider and respect user needs and characteristics.

The planning process in *People Places* begins with consultation with communities in the context of major societal trends and results in designs and plans that reflect community needs and desires. Reference is also given to spacing requirements for people with a disability and the elderly people. Issues addressed include proper clearances, lift and stair design, furniture and equipment selection and floor space designed to cater for this group of users. The needs of young adults, children and significant cultural groups are also assessed under these guidelines when planning or designing a new library.

6.2 Inspiring Stories

The Bookshop Experience and Creative Spaces – Joondalup, WA

Joondalup Library is one among several innovative libraries, who have adapted bookshop concepts in the arrangement of collections and library space to provide more interactive, colourful and relevant destinations.

External consultants conducted a review of the City of Joondalup Library Services in 2003. One of their findings was that the majority of library patrons preferred the non-fiction and fiction collections in genre order similar to the format used in bookshops. This was supported by feedback from patron consultations, focus groups and daily requests to staff over many years. John Stanley's *"Retail Development Report",* for Joondalup Libraries, in March 2004 encouraged the

Creative spaces, City of Joondalup Library, WA

future layouts of Woodvale, Whitford, Duncraig and Joondalup Libraries to embrace the future and progressive *"Bookshop"* layout.

The collection has a breakdown of 10 fiction and 33 non-fiction subject categories. Symbols were chosen to represent the collections and stickers printed to categorize each item. The second component of the project involved the physical layout and makeover of each of the libraries, creating specific areas like a *"men's shed",* reading nooks and living rooms for patrons to linger and enjoy the experience of their library.

New branding, floorplans for patrons, better signage, and bright and comfortable furniture have also been provided. Going from beige to balloons, 1970's brown to oceanic blue, welcoming friendly dragons and fantasy trees, Joondalup's four libraries are now alive with colour, laughter and a sense of fun.

Clarkson Library Café and Library Services – Wanneroo, WA

Clarkson Library is one of the few public libraries in Perth which incorporate a café in its library facility. It has proven to be a popular addition to the library's extended services and is likely to a model Wanneroo Libraries will repeat in other new developments in coming years.

The café space at the Clarkson library was built into the design of the building from the outset. The area is a leased space and is currently operated as the "Full Monty Café", a private business. The Café adjoins the library but also has its own entrance. Café users may be seated within the library foyer area, within the café space or in the adjoining al fresco area. The Café has proven to be popular with library customers and currently is open from approximately 8.30 am to mid-afternoon Monday to Saturday.

There have been some valuable lessons learned from incorporating a tenancy into the premises.

- The need to factor Café business into library opening and closing times;
- The need to consider public toilets, entrance, egress and security when incorporating the café into the design;
- The need to build a strong communication strategy with the Café staff re library closures and other issues (e.g. building evacuations/security; pest control.
- Responsibilities and obligations are best spelled out clearly in lease agreement; and
- Use of library floor space within café are needs to be negotiated so that café staff are not obstructed.

Clarkson Library Cafe, City of Wanneroo, WA

- **Botany Library, Manukau City, New Zealand**

Manukau City's Botany Library has many features that make it a standout innovation. Sited within a busy shopping centre complex, between a large bookselling retailer and a multiplex cinema, the library has made the most of retail design and fitout. The collection is tailored to fit the community, around the theme of food, fun and film.

Leveraging off the value library patronage adds to mall foot traffic, the library has secured very competitive rent arrangements. Library hours mirror the mall's extended opening hours, including most public holidays, which meet the natural expectations of shoppers. Service enhancements, through the smart use of RFID (radio frequency identification) technology and rethinking customer service priorities have resulted in the staff focus moving from traditional back room tasks to a retail model of floor walking and a proactive approach to customer care. Botany has the most customer foot traffic of all the Manukau libraries and is open the longest hours.

Botany Library, Manukau, New Zealand

Adaptive space - The Parklands Library, Christchurch, NZ

A useful model using innovative methods to adapt space can be found in the new Parklands library: a 500 sq m library building located alongside the retail community. Given the space constraint and the diverse need in the community, a creative way of accommodating the needs of different ages groups was identified. This was to provide flexible and creative use of space to ensure the best use of all of the resources.

Books, furniture and computers are displayed and grouped to meet the needs of different groups of customers at different times of the day and week. Several times a week the focus is on pre

Parklands Library, Christchurch City Library, New Zealand

school children. The environment changes by pulling down colourful screens, exchanging adult chairs for beanbags, cushions and little chairs, altering the lighting, and turning round the shelves and pulling out the picture book bins.

Story reading, rhyme, music and movement will be part of the experience. After school the space is transformed into study zone with the staff focusing expressly on helping with information retrieval using all available resources. Using colourful wall blinds, headphones, video wall, beanbags and laptop computers the space will be transformed once again. Parklands Library is a dynamic environment designed to meet the diverse needs of the Parklands community.

Brisbane Square Library - Brisbane, Qld

The Brisbane Square Library brings together world best practice in innovative and environmentally sustainable design. Service delivery has been designed to accord with the diverse needs of the clientele. Opened in November 2006, the dynamic public space integrates Council Customer services and Library services in a way that *"makes sense to the customer."*

For example, the ground floor is dedicated to fast turnaround transactions or *"grab it and go".* Holds that clients have placed online are available on open access for collection and can be checked out by the client from the 6 shelf check units available on the ground floor. All loans are channeled through the self-check units with a deliberate strategy in place of minimizing the size of desks and complemented by an education program for clients in how to use the self check equipment. The proportion of self-check loans has now reached 80% using traditional barcodes.

Brisbane Square Library, Qld

All payments and enquiries that can be transacted easily are also conducted from the ground floor, such as rates, traffic fines, library overdues and the provision of information relating to Council services, including transport information. Kiosks are also

provided for quick Council transactions and a concierge is also provided on the ground floor to facilitate way-finding.

The second floor of the facility incorporates space for more complex Council Customer Service enquiries and provides extensive access to technology including wireless, children's facilities and a learning lounge. *The Zoo* provides a space aimed at bringing young men into the library with a focus on gaming and access to sport and music plasma screens. Print on demand newspapers are provided, and state of the art technology has been installed in the meeting rooms throughout the building.

6.3 Needs and Strategies – Community Destinations

The most significant issue identified in consultation was the difficulty funding new infrastructure, or adapting existing buildings to meet changing client needs and expectations for access to technology and increased social space. Libraries are finding it increasingly difficult to secure funding with more strident internal competition for resources. Local government will continue to have responsibility for infrastructure, including buildings, telecommunications, and the technological infrastructure essential to deliver public library services and it is recognised that infrastructure will vary according to community needs and financial capability.

There needs to be a minimum standard of infrastructure and some method of facilitating compliance. Certainly, *People Places* will serve Western Australia well as a guideline for public library buildings. 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 standards.

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 provide adequate standards for built infrastructure.

Additionally, opportunities to continually share stories about emerging best practice in library places and spaces should be fostered. Once again, this can be done through forums, presentations, and websites showcasing innovation and new and refurbished buildings. There is nothing like seeing the finished product. Study tours of new buildings and creative adaptation of spaces can provide library staff and decision makers with new perspectives and ideas. Showcasing models of excellence in building planning and design within Western Australia will also build pride and enhance visibility with decision makers. Opportunities for adaptive space, strategic co-location and partnerships as well as retail merchandising and creative interior design using imagery as part of the library branding need to be pursued.

Support mechanisms are required to assist public libraries in the planning process, particularly in articulating community need and how it needs to be translated into built form. The development of tools and templates for this purpose would be useful. The aggregate experience of the library network could also be tapped into in supporting newcomers to the planning and design of buildings.

Creative solutions need to be applied. It is clear that the existing model of service delivery is not meeting the needs of Indigenous communities. As noted in the consultations: "*There is an expectation that people will travel – Indigenous people will not travel – services need to be locally based.*"[68] Successful models in other states, such as the Indigenous Knowledge Centres in Queensland need to be piloted in Western Australia. It would be timely to purse opportunities to partner across Government under the Bilateral Agreement and link in with pilots underway.

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68 Interview Gus Tampalini – Bidyadanga Community Services Centre. Development and Training Officer. Consultation with Public Libraries. February – April 2007.

Table 6.1: Needs and Strategies – Community Destinations

Needs	Opportunities
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 • 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 • Identify opportunities to support compliance with standards through the funding program

7. Skilled and Innovative Staff

The pace of technological change has been exponential and we can only assume that communication systems and technologies will further evolve and demand for global information will continue to grow. Our client base is also changing with the *Baby Boomers* and the predominance of *Generation Y* as confident players in an online world. Both groups will bring new expectations for service delivery from public libraries.

Public libraries will need to have good scanning mechanisms to continually redefine their offer in the information society. They will need good intelligence to better understand the emerging environment of changing expectations and to position themselves through embracing new technologies, tapping into the content of their communities and developing creative physical and virtual spaces that become an experience and a destination. Libraries must have the capacity to respond flexibly to existing and emerging trends. To do this we must better understand what our potential futures are, looking both within and outside our own industry.

Certainly the OCLC Report[69] has confirmed the way that *Google* has changed the way information consumers interact with content. A common thread in the consultations was the recognition that a better understanding of new technologies and innovation is required, and in particular, how they can be harnessed to facilitate access to content. The need to understand our changing role as enablers and facilitators of content in participatory environments was also highlighted. Keeping abreast of the trends and maintaining an awareness of what is happening internationally in areas that may impact on libraries, and particularly on library collections and access to content, was seen as fundamental. The changing face of libraries, and the emergence of the *"community librarian"* concept, has meant that staff, new and long term, need training in programming and community development as well as the more traditional areas of stock management, technology and customer service. There is a need for virtual and physical forums for exploring issues, trends and new technologies in different industries, as well as the facilitation and development of centres of excellence that could showcase innovation widely. Opportunities for coaching and mentoring also need to be further explored. The opportunity to expose staff to new ideas and to foster innovation could be explored through the provision of study tour awards.

The capacity of our workforce to assist the community with ICT, navigate new mediums of content, deliver customer focused services and develop innovative and efficient services requires investment. There is a need for ongoing training and skills development to ensure staff have the capability to deliver to expectations. Dagmar Schmidmaier has identified the need to address issues relating to the education of library professionals nationally, and advocates for an ALIA national Education for Information and Librarianship Conference in 2008.[70] We need to ensure that the skills and knowledge of new recruits matches need when they are on the floor of the library. Certainly, a stronger interface with tertiary providers is required. Additionally, we need more efficient means of ongoing upskilling, particularly in rural and remote areas. For example, creative approaches to training staff have been used at the Yarra Plenty Regional Library Service (YRPLS) in Victoria, where an online learning program, devised by the Public Library of Charlotte Mecklenburg County has been used by YPRLS to take staff through Web 2.0 technology training.[71]

The State Library plays an important role in developing skills and understandings. The training courses for professional development should continue as well as specific courses, such as the writing grants proposal workshop and developing reference skills and forums similar to the Friends forum delivered by Alan Bundy. Some examination of where the skills gaps are in public libraries needs to be undertaken in order to identify and meet the training needs more effectively. Overall, there needs to be a stronger focus on skills development. The total cost of training and development across the State is estimated to

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69 Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources. A Report to the OCLC membership. www.oclc.org/reports/ (accessed 20/4/06).
70 Incite Vol. 27 Dec 2006 p.4.
71 Christine McKenzie Skilling staff for Library 2. Incite. December 2006 Vol. 27. p.7.
Refer http:/plcmcl2-things.blogspot.com/.

be only $454,995.[72] With a more strategic focus State-wide and less concentration on processes supporting repositories, more time should be made available for value-add activities such as staff training.

7.1 Inspiring Stories

Building staff skills to assist older patrons – City of Mandurah, WA

Many library patrons need assistance in using library computers and navigating the search engines and databases. Staff need to be able to explain how to find books on the library catalogue as well as information on the Internet to a diverse audience.   This requires ongoing skills development and up to date knowledge of trends in information delivery. Increasingly business will be transacted in an interactive online environment and community members will require base computing skills to pay bills, seek employment and access information.

**Staff training an older patron to use the catalogue,
City of Mandurah, WA**

7.2 Needs and Strategies – Skilled and Innovative Staff

Training for rural and remote communities continues to be an issue. The survey undertaken as part of the *Regionalisation Review 2000-2002,* identified several issues, including the need to enhance the understanding of CEOs of the need to support training, the costs in getting staff to training and the need for more support at the Regional level to facilitate training.[73] Opportunities for online training packages and the use of teleconferencing need to be further pursued. Technology and information navigation are the key training needs, although there is increasing interest in community engagement and programming skills.

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.

Advisory and support services and a range of specialist advice are still required from the State Library, especially for regional and rural libraries and particularly in the areas of Indigenous services, cultural awareness, preservation, and emerging industry trends. There are certainly cost efficiencies in common templates and standardized approached to generic issues. Greater clarity of the nature and scope of consultancy and support

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72 Survey conducted by AECgroup with selected libraries. March – May 2007.
73 Review of Regionalisation 2000-2002. Attachment 2. Position Paper: Regionalisation.

services from the State Library is now required, as well as clarification of the responsibilities of Regional librarians to staff in their region. It is recognised that local government has a shared role in the skilling of the workforce. Training provided by Local Government will complement the services provided by the State Library and ensure that staff employed are provided with opportunities for training and development. Opportunities to share training opportunities at the local level should also be maximised.

Table 7.1: Needs and Strategies– Skilled and Innovative Staff

Needs	Opportunities
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 • 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 • 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

8. Continuous Improvement

The State-wide model of library service delivery in Western Australia in many ways was ahead of its time, and many other states in Australia are now looking to emulate elements such as centralised purchasing, common standards and some areas of distributed services. The UK review of the supply chain in libraries certainly confirmed the efficiency of centralised procurement and common processing standards.[74]

Consultation identified some specific strengths of the existing model that should be retained. The value of the State-wide database supporting inter-library lending was highlighted as a capability that many other states were now aspiring to. Similarly, the economies of scale in bulk purchasing and processing and the level of co-operation State-wide were highly valued. Participants also stressed the need to retain a support system for smaller libraries and, most importantly, the ability to refresh stock.

However, in some ways Western Australia has been hampered by its paradigm of success. As the futurist Joel Barker asserts, perceptions of success can often inhibit opportunities to evolve and adapt to a changing environment. Rhetoric around the value of the State-wide collection has failed to acknowledge that the processes and systems set in place some fifty years ago are no longer appropriate to deliver services effectively to a diverse population group. Whilst acknowledging that Western Australia has many things to be proud of in the State-wide system, there was strong view that there is a need for some significant change.

8.1 Fostering Innovation

"The future of libraries is being shaped today by emerging technology that is transforming the way information is created and disseminated. The mantra will be: 'Everything, everywhere, when I want it, the way I want it.'"[75] Content is becoming less format-dependent and consumers are not tied to traditional distribution channels for access. Delivery mechanisms in all areas of business enterprise are adapting to this ongoing evolution and there will be increasing demand for the delivery of services and information in innovative ways. Clients increasingly require tailored solutions according to their choice. Technology, such as Radio Frequency Identification Technology (RFID) needs to be maximised to enable efficient delivery and there needs to be a high level awareness of current trends and adaptation of new technology initiatives and ways of working.

8.2 Inspiring Stories

The LINCS Community Information Database – City of Cockburn, WA

The City of Cockburn introduced LINCS in 2005. It provides information on clubs, groups and organisations relevant to the needs of the residents of Cockburn. Many of the organisations will be located outside Cockburn. It replaced the Inmagic database that the library had used for community information since 1998.

The major attraction of LINCS was that it was a system specifically designed for the needs of libraries, local governments and community based information providers.
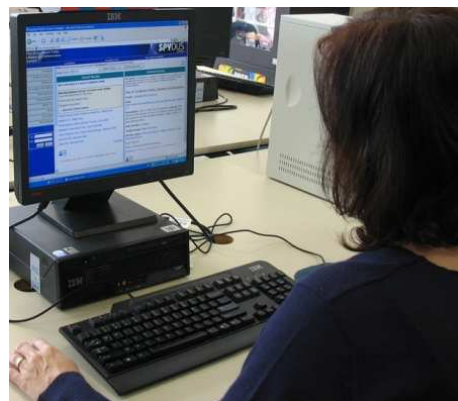
LINCS Community Information Database, City of Cockburn, WA

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74 Public Libraries: Efficiency and Stock Supply Chain Review Executive Summary. Department for Culture, Media and Sport Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, 2005.
75 Content, Not Containers OCLC 2004 p.7.

The advantages of LINCS are:

- Its ability to allow organisations to work as a group to maintain a single shared database of services. Cockburn Libraries undertakes responsibility for its own records, as do other WA Councils that form part of LINCS, but it can also have viewing access to all of the records of the group;

- There are many inbuilt controls ensuring the accuracy of the information. There are standards for style and keywords and errors on postcodes will be picked up;

- The searching is Yahoo based so people familiar with the Internet should easily be able to search on LINCS;

- The LINCS database is readily accessible via the library's OPACs and via the Internet through the library's website: http://library.cockburn.wa.gov.au. There is also a link on Council's website;

- Geographical proximity searching. Records are listed with the ones closest to the area from which one is searching listed first. If one searches from within Cockburn, organisations within Cockburn will be listed first;

- Records have links to related topics and where available the organisation's website and email address;

- For most records Street Directory style maps pop up so one can see how to get to an organisation;

RFID Technology - Baulkham Hills Library, NSW

It is clear that there is a trend towards Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology which, given its minimal error rate and ease of use, allows patrons to process their own loans and releases staff from circulation transactions to more value adding activities at the customer interface.

Excellent examples of this can be seen in Singapore (100% self-check) Richmond Library, Vancouver (80% self–check) and Baulkham Hills Shire Library, NSW which has been most successful with some 97% of transactions now completed by self-check.

Self-check stations at Castle Hill Library, NSW

**User Pays Home Delivery Service -
Bayside Library Service (Vic) and Manly Library Service (NSW)**

Bayside Library offers a user pays home delivery system. Items are requested via the library's website and the home delivery option is selected. Requests are checked daily by staff and a council courier delivers the items for a cost of $5.50 to the customer. Manly Library received a grant from the State Library of NSW to carry out a survey to determine the feasibility of offering a user pays home delivery service to residents. The project targeted non-users and a home delivery pilot program was implemented. As the service is in its infancy stage and has not been heavily promoted it is not as yet heavily utilised. The survey indicated that there was a viable market for such a service.

Fingertip Library - Christchurch City, NZ

Christchurch Public Library set up the Library's equivalent of a call centre. This was called the *"The Fingertip Library"* – your library at your fingertips. People can access services, including having reference questions answered, by phoning, email or faxing. This is the basis for the virtual library delivering services to the customer where they were – at home, at work, or at school.   A recent report from the Fingertip Library highlighted the fact that 90% of the reference questions they received could be answered predominantly from electronic resources, including the Internet, which raises all sorts of questions about the type of questions being asked, implications for the walk-in service in relation to reference queries.

Library Rail Express - Caboolture Shire, Qld

Caboolture Shire Library initiated the Library Express, which provides a library service stop at the Caboolture Railway Station from 5.30am – 8am once a week. A mobile loans and display counter which can be folded away into a carry bag is used. The counter is purpose built and looks very professional. The counter can be folded up and carried by a shoulder strap and can display about 400 items which are changed weekly. (There are 14,000 items in the collection; all paperback and they don't offer magazines, as it would interfere with the newsagent on the station.) This has been a roaring success and customers recorded a high satisfaction rate. There have been 80 new members in a few months and staff are doing about 100 issues a stop. They aim for a two-minute transaction and new members are required to fax back registration details. The stop is also used quite heavily as a return point for materials from other libraries. The system is currently off line but there is a wireless card in the laptop to facilitate an online connection in the future.

Caboolture Shire Council have partnered with Queensland Rail, who provide power and space and will in the future pay for a cover for the site. The trolley is located before the ticket counter, so commuters have to walk past it.

The next development is to look at a collection for young adults as a high number of students use the train. This model can be translated into any high pedestrian area and serves as an excellent vehicle for marketing.

(The June 2007 edition of *Incite* also features stories on a custom fitted electric book-cart on Manly Wharf for ferry commuters and the *Wheelbarrow Library* at the City of Port Philip Library Service, which provides a giveaway of discarded library books at the beach.)[76]

8.3 Needs and Strategies – 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 *Strategic Asset Audit of Victorian Public Libraries* found that the average cost to procure a new item, from selection to shelf, was $11.28, although libraries such as Yarra Plenty Regional Library Service had achieved a unit cost of $7.06 using supplier aided procurement.[77]   The total cost of selecting, ordering, acquiring and processing Western Australian public library stock is conservatively estimated to be $12.04 per item.[78]

The existing model of procurement is not best practice. The Brisbane City Library, the Christchurch Library in New Zealand, and the Yarra Plenty Library Service in Victoria have demonstrated the efficiencies that supplier assisted and shelf-ready models can provide. Brisbane City has now been operating under this model for five years and have recently been audited by A. T. Kearney, who classified their procurement model as world's best practice.

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76 Incite. Vol. 28 Issue 6. June 2007. pp23; 27.
77 Strategic Asset Audit of Victorian Public Libraries. J.L management Services. May 2006 p.71.
78 Survey conducted by AECgroup with selected libraries. March – May 2007.

Opportunities to be able to deliver material direct from the supplier to the requesting branch also need to be explored, to reduce double-handling and delays in supply. Suppliers also need performance clauses in their contracts identifying delivery specifications. Brisbane, for example, though such a specification, is able to secure bestsellers on the shelf at the library before they reach the local bookstores.

Whilst there have been improvements in the ability of local libraries to select stock, the process is still cumbersome and time consuming. Holding and order status information needs to be easily accessible. The process of web-select ordering needs to be further refined in partnership with suppliers.

There is certainly consensus that materials need to be supplied shelf ready, which will free many State Library staff up for more value add activities to support public libraries. 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, perhaps in a pilot partnership with Brisbane City Library to identify how it may be applied in Western Australia. Opportunities to explore common user contracts for purchasing stationery, equipment, services, and other resources could also be explored. Additionally, there is a need to maximize efficiencies at the local level. Local stock procurement should be linked in with an efficient co-operative procurement model.

Work also needs to be progressed to facilitate disposal of state owned items at the local level according to identified criteria. Staff at the customer interface are well qualified to make informed and sensible decisions on what items have outlived their usefulness either by virtue of their age, content or physical condition. 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.

Overall, there is a need for a more strategic and co-operative approach to ICT. 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, particularly in metropolitan areas should be investigated. A State-wide strategy should be developed and opportunities for co-operative acquisition and management of library systems at the State and local level should be pursued. The benefits of RFID have been demonstrated in many libraries, and delays in setting standards for tags have impeded implementation in Western Australia. Models such as the Brisbane City Library and the City of Swan, where barcodes are used as the interim self-check technology could be pursued to release labour into higher value activities with clients. There will also need to be a watching brief on new technologies, including adaptive technology.

An analysis of existing materials movement and handling needs to be undertaken to identify the most cost efficient logistics to minimize time that material is unavailable while travelling or in boxes waiting to be unpacked. As noted in the consultation: "*A lot of time is spent shuffling items around the State, rather than having stock on shelves.*"[79] The need to maximise the value of the asset is paramount and such an exercise needs to take into account the labour and other costs of these processes.

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. Parties under the current *Framework Agreement* recognize two service standards for the provision of public library resources and their maintenance through replacement. These are: a minimum standard of base stock provision of 1.25 items per capita; and a replacement rate equal to 12.5% per annum based on the known average shelf life of stock in the various categories and formats provided.

As noted in the consultation: "*Although it is stated in the Framework Agreement as a 'standard', it is in fact meaningless, the way it is currently managed. Stock that should be withdrawn from collections is in fact retained, in order to achieve the 1.25 items per capita. We have hundreds of items, waiting to be sent back to the State Library. The quota limits what we can send back, and so the ratio of stock to population is artificially*

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79 Consultation with public libraries. February - April 2007.

boosted. The other artificial way that stock figures are manipulated is that libraries are instructed to purchase items with a predetermined average price. Using this approach to collection development, the stock ratio of 1.25 items per capita is also artificially maintained."[80]

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. NASL standards and guidelines need to be considered in this approach. There are also opportunities to improve the way that statistics are collected.

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

Table 8.1:Needs and Strategies – Continuous Improvement

Needs	Opportunities
Need for a more strategic approach to ICT	• Develop a State-wide Library Technology Strategy • 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 • 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 • 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 • Provide funding for innovation, particularly co-operative activity

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[80] Consultation with public libraries. February - April 2007.

9. Strategic Partnerships

Geographic dislocation, huge distances, a low population base, and the desire to deliver services equitably into smaller and remote communities, has been the catalyst for several strategic partnerships across Western Australia.

9.1 Framework Agreement

The *Framework Agreement between the State and Local Government for the Provision of Public Library Services in Western Australia* was signed in December 2004 and is in place until June 2008.[81] Under the *Framework Agreement*, a *Joint Advisory Committee* (JAC) is tasked with the implementation of the agreed outcomes of the *Agreement* and to develop strategic directions and forward plans for public library services. The JAC plays a key role in initiating and enhancing consultation and participation by local government in order to ensure informed decision-making and to strengthen the State/local government public library partnership. The JAC's key responsibilities include policy development, development of standards and review of performance, forward planning and strategic directions and advice relating to the *Framework Agreement*. Members are committed to an ethos of collaboration through partnerships, inter-government co-operation, joint planning and review, and the sharing of resources.[82] Since its inception the JAC has been working on the implementation and operation of the *Framework Agreement,* which allocates a number of priority areas for discussion, development and resolution during the life of the *Agreement*. A number of issues have emerged during discussion over the period, ranging from high level, strategic and structural considerations for the future of the Western Australian public library network, to operational issues concerned with providing appropriate levels of library services and managing the existing relationship between State and local government.

The shared vision for the public library network is articulated in the *Framework Agreement*:

> "*Central to the partnership between State and Local Government is a shared vision for Western Australia's Public Library Service as a sustainable and responsive network of vibrant and connected well-resourced, free public libraries that are hubs of community life. Our public libraries are seen as primary points of access for an extensive and diverse range of current information, meeting the business, recreational, cultural and life-long learning needs of members of the community, no matter their economic or social status, cultural or language background, level of ability or geographic location."*[83]

The *Framework Agreement* provides the foundation for the Library Board of Western Australia and each local government to sign an individual, local level agreement based on the template, with the addition, where appropriate, of additional specific arrangements required for the delivery of public library services to particular Western Australian communities.

This Structural Reform review will lay the foundation for the next *Framework Agreement* in 2008.

9.2 Regionalisation

Regionalisation seeks to improve library service delivery outside of the metropolitan area to public library users in country areas through tapping into the skills of professional staff, leveraging off initiatives and activity at the regional library, and maximising opportunities for regional co-operation to minimise the effects of isolation. The Library

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81 Framework Agreement between State and Local Government for the provision of Public Library Services in Western Australia. 2004.
82 Principles identified at the JAC Meeting, Monday 28th November 2006 working from the basis of the Shared Vision as described in the Framework Agreement.
83 Framework Agreement between State and Local Government for the provision of Public Library Services in Western Australia. 2004.

Board provides a subsidy and additional resources to eleven rural regions to enable the librarian at the Regional centre to take on the responsibilities of providing support to the smaller libraries within the region. This can include support for travel costs for meetings in Perth, visits for exchange stock and field visits.

As noted in the consultation: "*There is a need to look at the cost effectiveness of the model. The problem with the field visits is that problems raised are mostly operationally focused. $200,000 per annum is spent on regional subsidies based on a formula developed in 1995 to cover travel costs and to partly subsidise a staff member to deal with regional issues. But it does not reflect reality. Airfares have gone up significantly. Would prefer to allow local governments to put forward proposals for what they want to do – could be combination of visits and programs.*"[84]

The review of regionalisation prior to the formulation of the last *Framework Agreement* confirmed the concept of regionalisation and the 11 regions identified. [85] This was further validated in consultation with regional and country library staff. The need to focus on outcomes for regions and for flexibility in the delivery of those outcomes was highlighted, given the diversity of regions. The need for adequate funding for regional libraries to effectively deliver training, support and consultancy services was also raised in consultation, particularly given the increased complexity of technology for service delivery.

Consideration may need to be given to increased flexibility in how regional subsidies are prescribed to ensure diverse needs are met. Increases in travelling costs have put increasing strain on already limited resources. Additionally, there is a need for greater flexibility where professional staff are employed in smaller libraries in a region and opportunities to make best use of these professional skills needs to be pursued. The need for tailored agreements between regional libraries and libraries in the region was also raised.

Figure 9.1 illustrates the geographical areas for regions as described by the Library Board of the State Library of Western Australia.[86]

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84 Consultation with key stakeholders. February – April 2007.
85 Review of Regionalisation 2000-2002. Attachment 2. Position Paper Regionalisation
86 The Library Board has defined 11 regions as well as the Perth area. Library regions are generally in accordance with the nine regions defined by the Department of Local Government and Regional Development. (DLGRD).

Figure 9.1: Regional Map of Western Australia – Library Regions and number of Libraries in Regions
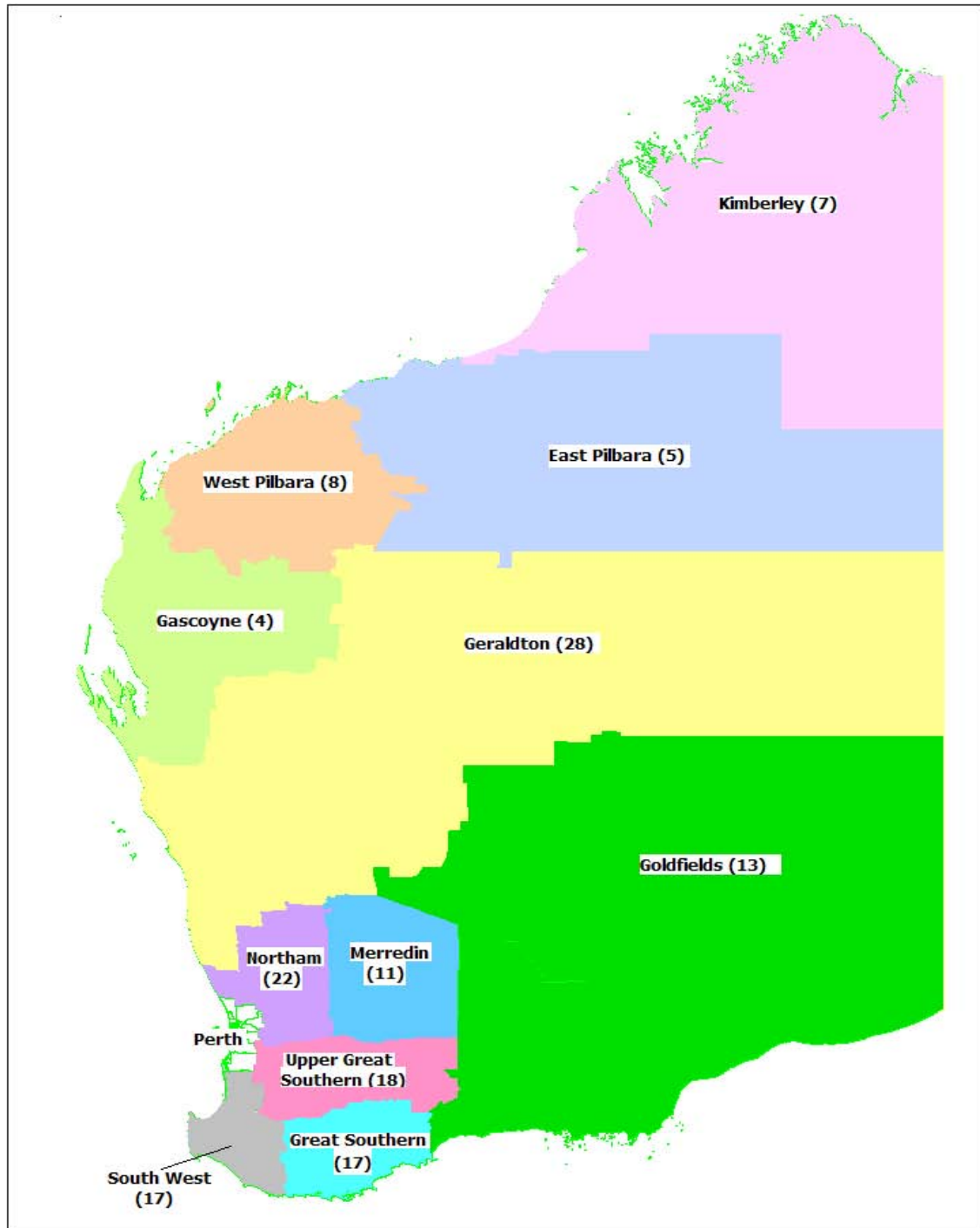
Source: AEC*group*

9.3 Partnership Opportunities

9.3.1 Joined up Government

"Joined-up government" is the term used to describe collaboration between agencies to deliver on mutual outcomes. This can include the delivery of shared services, the use of common space and resources, including staff and technology. *Joined up government* in many cases can provide *joined up solutions.*

There is an appreciation generally that agencies in smaller communities need to work together more effectively. The Government of Western Australia Office *of eGovernment* has noted the opportunity for greater collaboration in its strategy for telecommunications.[87]

In 2000 the Department of Local Government and Regional Development. (DLGRD) established the *Regional Co-location Scheme* (RCS). The aim of the RCS is to *"assist regional communities with funding to build or renovate appropriate facilities for the co-location of Government and community services."* This scheme complemented the existing DLGRD Telecentre program. A discussion paper *"Concept Brief for an integrated Information, Service Delivery and Capacity Building Solution for Regional and Rural WA"* proposes a service delivery solution based on a cross-agency, co-located, co-operative and integrated environment for regional and rural communities. There are currently 113 Telecentres serving towns of less than 5,000 people, 69 learning centres, 29 in large country towns and 40 in metropolitan areas. It is noted in the paper that 25% of Telecentres are now co-located with libraries. The proposed model looks to capitalise on existing cross-jurisdictional information, programs and services and transactions which are delivered at single access points.[88]

Sustainability will increasingly become a focus of attention. The days of silo activities are no longer feasible and there is an opportunity for libraries to link in more effectively with Telecentres and other agencies. Stumbling blocks around fee for service and the enterprise philosophy of Telecentres need to be negotiated to provide better outcomes for local communities. The synergies are obvious with many Telecentres now offering community development and lifelong learning programs. The State Library, the Department of Local Government and Regional Development (DLGRD), and the Telecentre Support Branch (TSB) are committed to the concepts of joint provision and integration of Telecentre library facilities. This is further supported by the *Framework Agreement* which supports opportunities to build partnerships. A draft agreement has been developed to facilitate partnerships at the local level between Telecentres and Shires for the provision of partnered services, and opportunities should now be progressed.

There is also the opportunity for the development of stronger partnerships at the State and peak level in the areas of education and training, health and well-being, literacy and learning, and community and cultural development. These connections also need to be translated into real partnered activity at the grass roots level.

9.3.2 Shared service delivery

Shared service delivery is increasing, as evidenced by services such as AskNow. There are opportunities for collective action to acquire and manage Library Management Systems. John Binion notes the numerous examples of collaborative management systems and or portal software by groups of libraries. For example, *Shorelink* in Sydney comprises the libraries of the five lower North Shore Councils of Lane Cove, Manly, Mosman, North Sydney (Stanton) and Willoughby; and the WYLD Cat in the state of Wyoming in the United States is a library management system collaborative venture

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87 Connected Government: The Strategy for Telecommunications in the Western Australia Public Sector 2005-2015. Government of Western Australia 2005. p.8.
88 Concept Brief for an Integrated Information, Service Delivery and Capacity Building Solution for Regional and Rural WA. June 2006 (Draft) Department of Premier and Cabinet and Department of Local Government and Regional Development. p.20.

between Wyoming's twenty three public library systems, seven community college libraries, some high school and special libraries and the Wyoming State Library. Recently, in New Zealand, a library consortium called CONZULSys was started. It currently consists of four of the eight university libraries who have joined together to purchase a single Information and Resource Access Management System.

The Victorian *SWIFT* consortium sharing a Library Management System is also of interest. Thirteen public library services are currently involved and it is estimated that within a couple of year almost half of the network will be in this consortium.[89] John Binnion notes: *"Reflecting back to the 1960s and 70s, when computers were first introduced to various operations in Victorian public libraries, no one library could afford to purchase its own computer system. Initially libraries purchased services from bureaus, and later some shared systems. That all changed in the late 1970s when the prices of systems dropped markedly and became affordable for individual libraries. Today with the overall costs of ICT for individual libraries, the matter of affordability has come almost full circle. It is a case of back to the future."* [90]

Similarly, opportunities exist to partner across LGAs in the provision of built spaces. Capital cost for the provision of new infrastructure is becoming increasingly prohibitive and metropolitan councils could well consider opportunities into the future for co-operative ventures for new libraries. This could also involve some resource sharing, including staff and technology. Victoria provides the most successful examples of collective library models in metropolitan areas.

9.4 Inspiring Stories

Collaboration for mutual benefit – City of Albany and surrounding libraries, WA

There are several good examples of strategic partnerships and collaboration across the State. For example, joint use library service and facilities are provided at Albany Public Library for the University of Western Australia (UWA), Albany Centre undergraduate students. Major building extension and refurbishment completed in January 2003 were jointly funded by UWA and the City of Albany. In the region, Young's Library Depot and Online Services facility was co-located in a small rural general store and run under contract to the store. Wellstead Resource Centre is a new multi purpose community resource centre serving small isolated rural community 100km from Albany City centre. Facilities and services include Library, Telecentre, Local History and Heritage group, visitor information, community room, visiting consulting rooms, and the landcare office.

A 21st Century Concept of a Joint Use Library Service - Ellenbrook Community Library Service, City of Swan, WA

In March 2007, the new Ellenbrook Community Library opened its doors to the students of the Ellenbrook Secondary College and the local community. This joint use library is the second in the City of Swan and the Department of Education and Training. The vision for the new library service at Ellenbrook was to:

- Promote self-service - offering more direct interaction between staff and clients;
- Encourage life-long learning;
- Provide access to Council staff (e.g. Place Manager);
- Access for community groups (meeting rooms); and
- Sharing of services and facilities with Department of Education and Training.

The traditional large control desk has been replaced by two small customer service pods with no obvious physical barriers or staff specific spaces. Staff are encouraged to walk the floor and approach clients to offer assistance rather than waiting for the client to come to them. The lack of the control desk also assists with the promotion of self-service. Requests and reservations are accessible on open shelves and a separate returns area allows for a quick turnaround if required. Loan transactions on the self-check facilities are exceeding expectations as both staff and clients are embracing the concept.

89 Interview with Debra Rosenthal, State Library of Victoria March 2007.
90 SWIFT – The Future Library System for Victoria's Communities. John Binnion and David A Cochrane. 2006.

The library has separate spaces for school classes, quiet reading, children's activities and a youth space. There is also a room with 10 PCs which has been designed with lifelong learning in mind. It can be used for facilitated training courses, library-based activities, community meetings or seminars with guest speakers. There are another 32 PCs throughout the library, 24 of which are currently dedicated to school use. The future intent is that all PCs will be available to the public after school hours and will offer a full range of electronic services: Microsoft Office, email and the Internet. It is interesting to note that male youths are the main users of the PCs, accessing game sites.

The library opens seven days a week for a total of 55.5 hours. An automated book drop is also available for returns after hours. Space has been provided for a café and this has the potential for direct access to the library. Adjacent to the library is a joint-use Performing Arts Centre which may allow some opportunity for involvement in cultural events

Ellenbrook Community Resource Centre, WA

and programming. The building also includes some community based City of Swan Offices and meeting rooms which are available for public use.

Library and Telecentre Partnership – Shire of Williams, WA

A successful model for a Library and Telecentre partnership can be found in the Shire of Williams. Williams is a small rural community with a total population of 1040 and an estimated 400 living in the townsite. The Shire covers 2,295 km² and includes the localities of Quindanning, Tarwonga, Dardadine, Boraning, Culbin and Congelin. *The Community Resource Centre* is a combined library, crèche, Telecentre, customer service centre, Library, and office space providing access to a range of Government services, including the Agricultural Department. Medicare claims and Centrelink access is also available from the *Centre.* Training workshops are provided to the community by *Centre* staff, and the meeting room is well-used by the community. The local newspaper is also put together in the *Centre.*

Telecentre and Library: Community Resource Centre. Williams, WA

The Council was quite visionary in their decision to fund the *Centre*. The Council built and owns the *Centre,* and attracted funding including Regional Co-location funding for the project. Staff are multiskilled in the *Centre,* whereby *Centre* staff manage the core library service, lending and reshelving and helping users on the Internet, and Shire staff provide 1.5 days per week to undertake Inter library loan and exchange activities, as well as other tasks. Shire staff are also cross-trained in all Telecentre activities, thus releasing

Centre staff to run workshops as required. As the Co-ordinator of the Centre notes: *"The Centre works very successfully: Telecentres and libraries go hand in hand."[91]*

Sharing our Stories – Kunumurra Community Library, WA

Kununurra Community Library has established itself as the cultural hub of the community, as a place where people gather. The library is a joint-use agreement between Kununurra District High School and the Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley.

The story as told by Anne Devenish, who was the School Community Librarian at Kununurra, could not be expressed better*: " As a librarian in the Kimberley, I recognised the advantages of having access to the school and the community to work towards providing opportunities to bring Indigenous and non-Indigenous people together in a shared environment where they positively interact with each other. It became very obvious at this time the only Indigenous people using the library were students who visited the library as part of the school curriculum. It was widely known in Kununurra that Indigenous people saw the library solely as a "white man's library". So this was my specific challenge I had given myself – how do I create a place where Aboriginal people feel welcome?"[92]*

Using *Living in Harmony* grant funding, an initiative offered by the Commonwealth Department of the Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA), a *"Sharing Our Stories"* project was initiated, which was a fantastic opportunity for the library to bring Indigenous and non-Indigenous people together in a shared environment where they positively interact with each other.

Contemporary life stories were told in the library by positive local Indigenous role models with different experiences. Audiences included, years kindergarten to year 3 from both schools in Kununurra, Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people and adults. Stories were oral, written, music and dancing. Each storyteller was profiled before their monthly session and author posters were produced for use in the classroom and for displays in the library. In addition a *Living in Harmony* storytelling day was held and storytellers were showcased, while the community enjoyed refreshments of damper and barramundi cooked on campfires at the back of the library. 400 children and adults gathered at the library for this event.

In particular students who attended *Sharing Our Stories* from the ELAN group (English Language and Numeracy), who are largely Indigenous, had the following outcomes:

- Increased confidence in using the library;
- The program was a springboard for further reading and writing activities in the classroom;
- Improved literacy levels;
- Oral presentation (storytelling) encourages listening and learning;
- Language use – code switching between standard Australian English and Aboriginal English;
- Recognition of familiar people from the Aboriginal Community in the library; and
- Stories told inspired the writing and illustrating of a book called *"The Magic Boomerang"* by the ELAN children which was awarded *"Book of the Year"* 2004 for the library's *Make Your Storybook* competition.

Kimberley library staff had major roles in the project - videotaping all the storytelling sessions, assisting with the preparation of the art and craft activities, and displaying work produced. On the *Living in Harmony Day* 400 children visited the library.

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91 Interview with Debbie Kemp. Shire of Williams Community Resource Centre, June 8th, 2007.
92 Anne Devenish. Creating our Place in the Community: Creating Our Place through Stories
WALGLA Eighth Bi-annual Conference 2005: Creating our Place in the Community: Creating Our Place through Stories.

Successful outcomes from *Sharing our Stories* project included:

- Building on the profile of the library as a place in Kununurra where everyone is welcome and a place where stories are shared and enjoyed;
- Aboriginal adults joining the library and borrowing books regularly;
- Valuable links between the schools, library and wider community both Indigenous and non-Indigenous.
- The breaking down of attitudes, in both children and adults, that were previously based on generalisations of a cultural group leading, in many cases, to strong racial prejudice;
- Increased confidence by adults and children to interact with another culture;
- Increased awareness of Indigenous culture delivered by enthusiastic and generous Storytellers who have become positive role models in the community.

Anne Devenish noted that: ""*Sharing Our Stories" gave us the opportunity to embrace the Indigenous community. As a result we now have Aboriginal families including the adults using the library regularly. This is a fantastic outcome and one on which to build on and strengthen our ties with Indigenous people. We have facilitated links between teachers, classrooms and students with Indigenous storytellers. We have helped change attitudes of non-Indigenous adults. We have truly created our place in the community through stories."*

The Hume Global Learning Village – Hume, Vic

The Hume Global Learning Village (HGLV) provides an excellent example of the development of learning partnerships. HGLV is a partnership engaging learning providers and facilitators in the City of Hume in Victoria. It is the catalyst, leader, facilitator and driver of the Hume City Council's vision for Hume as a learning community. The partnership is aimed at empowering people to embrace learning as a way of life in homes, community settings, educational institutions and the businesses of Hume.

Supported by the Hume City Council, the Village comprises approximately 300 members: actively interested individuals, educators, businesses and industries and community and interest groups. It involves key business leaders and core groups (such as the Police) in the community. Partnering to meet the needs of emerging communities has been a key focus.

Community partnerships, Hume City Council, Vic.

9.5 Needs and Strategies – Strategic Partnerships

The JAC needs to remain an influential and cohesive body as a key strategic partnership for public libraries in Western Australia. Roles and responsibilities of respective partners will need to be further clarified.

There are also opportunities for stronger collegiate action between public libraries. 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 across the vast spaces of the State. However, there is an opportunity 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 effectively deliver services specified. 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 need more serious attention and some incentives for shared service delivery may provide a catalyst for action.

Table 9.1:Needs and Strategies – Strategic Partnerships

Needs	Opportunities
Need for a strong and influential Joint Advisory Committee	• Renew *FrameworkAgreement* 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 • 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 • Promote opportunities for increased resource sharing, including skills and expertise across LGAs
Need for seamless services	• Work towards a Statewide library card • 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 • Identify with each LGA the most cost effective mechanism and their preferences to maintain effective communication with the State Library and with Regional libraries

10. Good Governance

10.1 Legislation

The State Library of Western Australia operates under the *Library Board of Western Australia Act 1951*. The Act was enacted in 1951 to establish a free public library system in Western Australia. It established the Library Board of Western Australia as a statutory body with management responsibility to oversee this process. The first public library opened in York in 1954 and fifty-three years later there are now 239 registered public libraries throughout the State. While the Act has served well, it requires a revision to reflect the current environment under which the Library Board, State Library of Western Australia, and Local Government operate for the provision of library services.

The Department of Culture and the Arts is currently proposing a package of amendments to cultural institution legislation designed to modernise governance arrangements. One of the Acts under review is the *Library Board of Western Australia Act 1951.* Consultation with the State Library of Western Australia indicates that proposed changes to the Act fall into three broad areas:

- **Library Board and Governance**

The Board structure and responsibilities currently reflect a 1950's approach to governance and the status of the Western Australian public library network at that time. Emphasis in the review will be on meeting modern corporate governance requirements and will also consider the size and level of representation on the Library Board.

- **Relationship with Local Government and responsibilities of the Library Board in relation to public libraries**

The current Act reflects the era in which it was developed and since 1951 Western Australia's public library network has evolved to become a mature, yet diverse operation. Emphasis in the review will be on the role of the Board in the operation of public libraries against the context of 21st century local government and library practice, and the *Framework Agreement* between the Library Board and Local Government.

- **Legal Deposit**

Western Australia is currently the only Australian jurisdiction without Legal Deposit legislation following the repealing of two different acts in recent years. The review proposes to re-introduce Legal Deposit requirements for Western Australian publications including printed material, sound, film and electronic publications.[93]

The revision of the legislation also provides the opportunity to elevate the level of decision making at the Board level to a more strategic level, and potentially change the composition of the Board to maximise opportunities to work across portfolios. Stakeholder input will now be sought across the State in relation to proposed changes.

10.2 The State Library of Western Australia

The State Library of Western Australia is the operational name of the organisation established under the terms of the *Act.* It is responsible to the Library Board of Western Australia through the Chief Executive Officer / State Librarian, who is the Executive Officer of the Board. Since July 1997, the State Library has also been a service delivery agency within the Culture and the Arts Portfolio.

The mission of the State Library of Western Australia is to enrich the lives of Western Australians by enabling access to resources for information, learning, enterprise and recreation and collecting and preserving social and documentary heritage for current and future generations.

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93 Text provided by State Library of Western Australia June 2007.

The State Library recently identified new strategic directions representing a significant shift in focus for the State Library recognizing that the State Library is more than simply the physical confines of the Alexander Library Building, and that it is *"an integral part of the network of public libraries spread throughout Western Australia with our services and resources also forming part of that network."*94

10.3 The Need for Strategic Review

A forum and workshops on the *Future of Libraries* was held in October 2005 to explore best practice in service delivery and to stimulate thinking on future roles of public libraries. Based on the outcomes of these consultations the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) resolved to initiate work on the structural reform of Western Australian public library services to provide the basis of a new *Framework Agreement* between State and Local Government beyond July 2008. It was intended that structural reform would include the basis on which funding is allocated, ownership of the stock and models of service delivery for metropolitan and regional areas to determine the most efficient and effective model for delivering library services to the community of Western Australia.

In general, the local government provides strategic direction for its local library and information services and provides buildings; staff; operational budgets; local computing services; and serials and recorded music collections. The State Government provides overall strategic direction to public library services through the Library Board of Western Australia, and provides: shelf ready resources for public libraries; access to the State-wide collection; a centralised cataloguing, document delivery and exchange system; and specific consultancy services. It also strengthens the information and reference services available at the local public library with the expertise and more extensive collections based in the Alexander Library Building.

10.4 Relevant Elements of Other State Models

Variations between states, levels and methods of funding, demographics and geography make comparisons of the delivery models less than useful. There is no exact corollary to the situation in Western Australia, although there are similarities within various systems. Of greater value for the purposes of this Report is an examination of elements of interest in determining an appropriate model for Western Australia.

10.4.1 Selection and ordering

There are some similarities between the Western Australian model for selection and distribution of resources. The South Australia's Public Library Service provides a centralised service providing selection, acquisition, cataloguing, special collections, computer, and distribution services to South Australia's Public Libraries. The computer system links the State's 139 Council, School-Community and Joint-Use libraries to one another and to the central agency. Selection profiles are customised and consolidated and selection data is provided from a range of sources to facilitate electronic selection. PLAIN has the added capacity to provide images and video clips with selection lists. Catalogue records are uploaded into local library management systems. The user friendliness of the selection facility has been highlighted.

Other states, such as NSW, and Victoria, and the Independent library services in Queensland have generally had less than efficient procurement models in place, with a slow take-up of shelf ready and lack of co-operative purchasing. There has been a flurry of recent activity in these states on both fronts. The State Library of Queensland has been working very hard to improve systems and processes relating to procurement and is working towards a full shelf ready model.

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94 Annual Report LISWA 2005/6. p.8.

10.4.2 Stock exchange

A two- tiered model operates in Queensland, whereby Independent libraries select and purchase their own stock and Country Libraries (CLS) participate in an exchange service of Country Library Service stock, where specific items according to a profile are loaned and returned at scheduled times in batches. The exchange system is not prescriptive and does not use quotas or require libraries to maintain a standard for items per capita. Need generally dictates the size and shape of collections. Although there have been efforts to build regional activity it has generally been unsuccessful and the small libraries have been very reliant on centralized activities.

Similar issues are faced in Queensland with the number of small remote libraries in areas of low population and a high proportion of Indigenous residents, particularly in the Cape York Peninsula. Small libraries need continual exchange and a review of public library services undertaken in 2005 identified the need to retain an exchange service and to attempt to develop regional clusters along the Western Australian model. The need for a two-tiered system was also re-inforced, given the growth in coastal councils and the huge growth in south-east Queensland.

10.4.3 Allocation of funding

Queensland is more like Western Australia than the other states. It has vast distances, small pockets of rural isolated population, strong local government, growing clusters of urban population along the coast, high growth in conjunction with the resources boom and comparatively high levels of Indigenous population.

The State Library of Queensland provides a two-tiered model for the delivery of services. Independent libraries (over 10,000 population) receive their per capita allocation funding as a per capita grant based on a formula that takes account of relative disability factors. Prior to the last agreement, funding was tied to resources with a similar division of responsibility between state and local government to the Western Australian model. Review of the funding formula has now provided the flexibility for Independent libraries to spend up to 30% of the grant on areas other than collections with the provision that each library provides a brief outcomes based business plan under the terms of the funding agreement. Independent libraries are now investigating opportunities for collective purchasing of shelf ready materials, but have not enjoyed the benefit of collective procurement to date.

Country Library Services in Queensland participate in a centralised service similar to the existing Western Australian model, whereby funds are provided to Public Library Services for the selection, acquisition and distribution of materials. The model was found in the review of services in 2006 to be very cumbersome and not cost efficient. There were long delays in getting new material onto shelves, poor materials movement logistics and all processing was done centrally at Public Library Services. Process improvements have seen the introduction of shelf ready supply and further opportunities to reduce materials handling centrally are being explored. The change from a process to a more strategic focus has allowed a concentration on outcomes that have delivered more at the local level, including Indigenous services, capturing Queensland's memory and early childhood literacy. Innovation Grant funding was also provided in Queensland, which is now focused more on supporting co-operative activity and State-wide projects that benefit the broader industry.

Other states provide greater flexibility in the allocation of funding. South Australia funding is provided in two parts: an operating grant per capita; and a materials grant per capita which is provided to PLAIN and allocated per capita. Public libraries can also apply for a small % of the vote for emergency local purchases, such as local history ($20,000 to $25,000). Funding is also provided to run the PLAIN system. One very interesting aspect of the South Australian model is the existence of the *Standing Committee* which is enshrined in the 5 year *Memorandum of Understanding* between State and local government. This *Standing Committee* ensures a voice for local government and provides written advice to the Library Board of SA as to how money provided from the State Government is divided up to be spent. Although the grant funding from the State

Government does not include funding for innovation projects, the Board has funds invested and has the ability to provide funding for innovative projects or to provide seed funding for projects.

NSW funding is based on a per capita allocation and is not tied to resources. Libraries elect to spend this as required. Library Development Grants up to $200,000 can also be applied for to fund co-operative and innovative initiatives as well as buildings, new collections and technology purchases. A small subsidy for special projects ($5000) is also available. Funding for infrastructure is competitive, but the allocation has provided the incentive for investments in infrastructure at the local level and has fostered innovation and co-operative activity.

In Victoria, State Government recurrent funding for public libraries is in the form of a per capita contribution to each municipality, or its representative. In addition, the State Government offers a range of competitive grant programs to library services, such as Innovation grants program; *Living Libraries* grants program, as well as occasional 'bonuses' such as the three-year Book Bonanza. Unlike other states where the funding comes through the Board or Council, the Funding Programs Unit within Local Government Victoria in the Department for Victorian Communities manages the State Government's core funding programs for public library services. The Unit is also responsible for funding programs for public libraries including the *Living Libraries Public Libraries Infrastructure Grants Program* 2000-2003, funded by a $12m grant from the Community Support Fund.

The grants in Victoria are tied to a funding agreement, and like NSW are not tied to library materials. The State Library's role in relation to public libraries is very different to the other states. The State Library is an Arts Agency, governed by the Library Board of Victoria.   Under the Libraries Act 1988 the Board has responsibilities in relation to providing leadership, promoting high standards, and overseeing co-operation in programs with libraries to promote access to information and resources. It allocates about $1m per annum to statewide initiatives that support the development of the public library network (The Statewide Public Library Development Projects).[95]

10.5 Leadership

The level of attention paid to operational activities limits the time and energies that can be expended on progressing strategic imperatives. There is a need to elevate the vision of what needs to be achieved and to provide some sense of urgency. Public libraries in Western Australia are very much at the crossroads, and the next five years will be critical in terms of how they position themselves. There needs to be strong advocacy at all levels of government for additional resources and a higher profile overall is required for public libraries in the State with decision makers. Through the JAC partnership there needs to be a strong and united voice to progress the shared vision for public libraries in the State. In particular, urgent attention will be required to address the shortfalls in funding when the funding goes back to $6.5m in June 2008. This is clearly not enough to sustain collections and services.

The State Library's role as consortia broker and leader on behalf of public libraries needs to be extended.

10.6 Needs and Strategies – Good Governance

10.6.1 An appropriate model

The current model of delivery was created in the early fifties when the greatest challenge was to deliver library services into Local Governments that had no service, especially in rural areas. The model is no longer appropriate to the current environment, and needs a major overhaul to provide more flexible and adaptable delivery. 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, and, as the Queensland experience has shown, the tension between a desire to

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95 Interview with Debra Rosenthal. State Library of Victoria. February 2007.

retain a paternal model and the need for independence will ultimately lead to a split between large and smaller libraries if a more appropriate model cannot be negotiated.

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.

The quantity standard of 1.25 items of stock per capita and the 12.5% replacement rate is currently working against many libraries and should be discontinued. Quality measures such as turnover of stock, age of collections, and client satisfaction levels should be developed as part of the review of performance measures and standards.

Alan Bundy notes that *"public libraries need to be better funded to meet their widening roles at the heart of their communities and the increasing demand on them as unique multidimensional "cradle to grave" services available to all"*[96]

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.

The Library Board of Western Australia, under the terms of its original Act, may *"subsidise a registered public library conducted by a participating body to the extent of one pound for each pound expended by the participating body"*.[97] The form that the subsidy should take was not specified. Certainly the pound for pound subsidy has long disappeared as it has in other states of Australia, and the form of subsidy provision has now been specified since the Library Board chose to provide the State Government subsidy to local authorities in the form of resources, centralised processing, consultancy, and other professional services including Inter-Library Loans, Reference and Information Services, the State Music Library, the State Film and Video Library and the State Archives.[98]

Through the *Framework Agreement 2004,* the State Government committed to maintaining a minimum base level of annual capital funding for the public library service of $6.5 million. In May 2004 the State Government announced that an additional $10.3 million would be provided over the following four years to increase library resources in public libraries in Western Australia. At the end of June 2008, the funding will revert to the original figure. [99]

Calculations on the shortfall in funding based on an update of the ABS report identify an urgent need for additional funding. Additionally, it is clear that the single focus on investment in collections has hampered the development of libraries in Western Australia and there are several other 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 should be given to the application of a disability formula to recognize disadvantage of distance and size and other factors. (The funding formula for the allocation of funds in Queensland would provide a useful model in this instance.) This would replace allocations for seasonal demand and the Perth CBD allocation.

Additional specific funding is also required for the regional / co-operative activity, innovation and seed funding for buildings and technology.

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96 Bundy, A Community critical: Australian public Libraries Serving Seniors. Melb, FOLA, 2005 www.fola.org.au p.1.
97 Collection Development Policy for Public Libraries . State Library of Western Australia 1992 p.2.
98 The State Library of Western Australia Collection Development Policy notes that it is not policy to provide the following resources to public libraries: updating services, journals, newspapers, computer software, and music.
99 Framework Agreement p.5.

Funding also needs to be provided to support the regional model. Regional libraries and libraries within their region could submit applications for funding to deliver on specific outcomes in their area, which could include (but not be limited to) staff or community training, the development of various literacies, community development, information services and tailored Indigenous services. These needs would vary between regions. Alternately, the existing model for funding Regional Libraries could be applied. Regardless, the quantum will need to be increased.

Local Government authorities would be required to 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 would be similar to that in South Australia where those libraries that elect to take the cash, must spend their money through a co-operative procurement system to maximise value for money.

To ensure that local government derives the best value from the funds allocated for the delivery of public library services, consideration should be given to the setting up of a sub-committee under the *Joint Advisory Committee* to determine the allocation of funding that is provided from the State Government for public libraries overall. Allocations need to be determined based on strategic outcomes. The sub committee would also oversee performance on these allocations through appropriate processes and measures. This will ensure greater transparency of the use of the funding allocation and provide a greater voice for local government.

Table 9.1: Needs and Strategies – Good Governance

Needs	Opportunities
Need to amend the Library Board of Western Australia Act	• 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 • 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 • 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: o Provision of a cash grant to local authorities based on per capita allocation within an agreed disability formula o 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 o Development of specifications and agreements at the local level identifying services that will be provided and the mutual obligations of the parties o Additional specific grant funding for regional / co-operative activity, innovation and seed funding for buildings and technology o Allocation to support the Regional model o 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 • Implement the formula in 2008
Need for significant additional funding and funding to deliver on specific outcomes	• Develop submission based on needs and outcomes, funding gaps and comparative data • Identify and advocate for funding from Commonwealth and other sources

11. Visible and Valued

Joel Barker talks about the paradigm effect and how it stops us from seeing our own future. This effect notes that the very success of an organisation can sometimes lead to its decline when complacency, an inflated sense of importance and a myopia in terms of what is happening in the outside world sets in.[100] Libraries can certainly boast a strong brand, and positive satisfaction rates from existing users. They rarely cause waves politically and are generally "good news" generators. They are, however, generally off the political radar. Our own paradigm of success can be a constraint. Competition for dollars, for visibility and relevance in the daily lives of the increasingly busy people of Western Australia is, and will continue to be, a real challenge. Market research has shown that whilst the value of libraries is rated very highly for persons over the age of 55 there is a lower level of satisfaction in the 25–35 year bracket, with a lower perception of the relevance of the library to everyday life.[101] Internal thinking and reliance on traditional markets is a risk. In any business shoring up future markets, testing the brand (and refreshing it where necessary) are vital ingredients of success. There is also need for effective marketing and a need to ensure that the investment is adequate to bring a strong return.

Consultation highlighted the need for a concerted effort to lift the profile of libraries with decision makers at all levels of government. In general, public libraries in Western Australia do not have the same profile and visibility in local government that other states in Australia enjoy. There are, of course, notable exceptions such as Mandurah and Armadale, where the library has been identified as a key plank in delivering on social and learning outcomes. This has been due in part to the focus on operational thinking and some insularity of CEOs and Councillors from emerging trends in libraries and opportunities. Cities such as Hume City in Victoria, and Brisbane City in Queensland have been able to position the library as central to delivery on a range of social justice and economic development outcomes. New Zealand is also well ahead of the game and is reaping the benefit of higher visibility and perceptions of value in the increased investment in libraries and the subsequent increase in utilisation and satisfaction from the community.

Example of imagery and branding used in new libraries such as the Castle Hill Library, NSW

As noted by OCLC, brand rejuvenation is also required. *When prompted, information consumers see libraries' role in the community as a place to learn, as a place to read, as a place to make information freely available, as a place to support literacy, as a place to provide research support, as a place to provide free computer/ Internet access and more. These library services are relevant and differentiated. Libraries will continue to share an*

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100 http://www.joelbarker.com/nspeeches.php.
101 Survey conducted by AECgroup with selected libraries. March – May 2007.

expanding infosphere with an increasing number of content producers, providers and consumers. Information consumers will continue to self-serve from a growing information smorgasbord. The challenge for libraries is to clearly define and market their relevant place in that infosphere—their services and collections both physical and virtual. It is time to rejuvenate the "Library" brand.[102]

The return on investment in public libraries needs to be better understood. It is estimated that this is between $2.50 and $7.00 for every dollar invested. As Bundy notes: *"No other public investment demonstrably returns a higher dividend."*[103] Getting adequate investment is the critical issue for Western Australian libraries. There will need to be concerted and strategic advocacy at all levels and champions at the grass roots level (such as Friends groups) and in the political and public realm locally and State-wide need to be engaged.

11.1 Needs and Strategies – 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.

Overall, there is a need for a greater sense of urgency.

Table 11.1:Needs and Strategies – Visible and Valued

Needs	Opportunities
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 • 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 • 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 • Collect and share information and stories that demonstrate the economic and social value of investing in public libraries

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102 Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources: A Report to the OCLC Membership, Dublin, Ohio, OCLC, 2005.

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