

## Our Organisational Values

- » We value Western Australia's unique and diverse stories
- » We believe knowledge has the power to transform lives and that information should be freely available to everyone
- » We keep the community at the heart of our decisions about collections, programs and services
- » We collaborate to benefit the community
- » We recognise that Western Australia is a large state with diverse needs

## We provide services that are valued by our community through:

### COLLECTIONS that tell the stories of Western Australia:

- Creating a collection of international significance about Western Australia
- Revealing Western Australia's rich history and stories
- Leading in collection, preservation and access

### CONNECTIONS that build a trusted knowledge and learning network for Western Australians:

- Leading library and archive services in Western Australia
- Inspiring creativity and curiosity through services, spaces and events
- Playing a vital role in literacy and learning at every stage of life

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2018–2022



*The State Library of Western Australia acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to land and culture.*

*We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.*

*The Library is honoured to be located on Whadjuk Country, the ancestral lands of the Noongar people.*

## Our key objectives are

### A State Library for everyone ...

- » Create services and events that engage and inspire communities and celebrate their diversity
- » Develop collections that reflect the interests and ambitions of Western Australians
- » Provide spaces that are dynamic, safe and inclusive with resources and connections to stimulate research, creativity and curiosity
- » Enhance our reputation as a pre-eminent and welcoming destination within the Perth Cultural Centre

### one that embraces digital transformation ...

- » Improve how the community discovers, uses and shares our collections
- » Build community skills to critically evaluate information in an unregulated online world
- » Expand our digital reach, capability, collections and services to the level of our capabilities with traditional collections

### and builds skills for the future.

- » Enable lifelong literacy and learning for all Western Australians
- » Develop our staff to be future focused, flexible and equally capable in traditional and digital environments
- » Reflect Western Australia's diverse communities in our services and staff

## Background

The State Library is a highly valued cultural institution for Western Australians. Serving the entire State, we enrich the lives of all Western Australians by treasuring their stories, building, preserving and sharing physical and digital collections for education and recreation, while reflecting the State's rich heritage, diversity and history.

The State Library of Western Australia and its role in providing library services to the Western Australian community was established under the provisions of the *Library Board of Western Australia Act 1951*. The Act also enables public library services to be delivered to Western Australian communities through a partnership with local governments. Additionally, the *Legal Deposit Act 2012* empowers the State Library to collect, preserve and make available Western Australian physical and digital publications to be kept in trust for future generations.

## Mission

### ***The State Library connects people and ideas.***

Ideas have always been at the core of libraries – initially contained within books and other publications, but also in films, music, archives and the spoken word. Libraries have connected people with ideas by creating collections and making them available.

In a digital world, information has never been more readily available – the sheer quantity of information available poses questions of capacity, authenticity and relevance.

The State Library facilitates access for everyone to quality, reliable and authoritative sources of information.

The State Library's vast and diverse collection is a rich source of information, knowledge and ideas with library staff skilled in connecting the information needs of the community with our collections.

## Organisational Values

Underpinning our organisational values is a recognition that across Western Australia, individuals, organisations and communities make important contributions to the State Library's heritage collections by recording and sharing their unique perspectives of life.

As the primary repository of Western Australia's published and private documented heritage, the State Library is entrusted to make the stories of Western Australian communities accessible to all, and to organise and preserve this knowledge for future generations. The needs of the community we serve are central to all that we do.

The State Library has a long and successful history in working with a wide range of partners across governments, industries and the not-for-profit sector, sharing knowledge, expertise and skills to develop, promote and implement new programs and services of benefit to the community.

We are a partner of choice, working with other libraries and government and non government organisations contributing to the State's economic, social and cultural growth, recording our collective history and having a measurable impact on peoples' lives.

Western Australia is geographically the largest state in Australia covering over 2.5 million square kilometres. The communities that span this vast State have diverse needs influenced by geographical and cultural factors and we recognise that there are a variety of ways for us to meet the needs of a community.



## The State Library has **COLLECTIONS** that tell the stories of Western Australia

The State Library is the pre-eminent source of information about Western Australia and its people. We will continue to develop a comprehensive collection of international significance in both physical and increasingly digital formats, one that generates pride in our community.

Whilst collecting and preserving for the future is a key focus, so too is making the collection available so the stories of Western Australia and its people can be shared and enjoyed now. Through enabling access to our collections, we support research, innovation, recreation and learning as well as the creation of new knowledge for the benefit of present and future generations.

We are leaders in the collection and very long term preservation of the documentary and social history of Western Australia. The State Library applies innovative practice and tools, shares expertise and resources, and continually advocates for the importance of our role in preserving our rich history and the stories of our community.

## The State Library has **CONNECTIONS** that build a trusted knowledge and learning network for Western Australians.

Our enabling legislation challenges us to be leaders in library services in Western Australia and we do this through continually evolving what we do. We champion libraries as respected drivers of social, educational and economic growth and promote our role in improving literacy and facilitating learning at every stage of life.

We acknowledge the vital role that the public library network plays in the community who highly value the services they provide. We recognise our legislative responsibilities and continue our commitment to partner with local government for

the successful delivery of sustainable and effective library service offerings to the wider community.

We will continually seek better ways for our clients to discover, share and use our collection and engage with knowledge and ideas. We use technology and expertise to support access and engagement with our collections, services and programs. We create trusted environments for individuals to come together to share information, ideas and experiences.

We will continue to provide open, personalised and customised multi-channel environments to access our services, spaces and events that will appeal to a range of interests and needs.

We believe that literacy is a foundation skill and that the ability to read and write underpins everything we do, every day. A literate community is strong and inclusive, where individuals and families are resilient, aspirational, socially engaged, informed, healthy and connected. Multiple literacies, including information and digital, are critical to successfully navigate and make sense of the world around us. We are committed to supporting and enhancing literacy attainment from birth, across a variety of mediums, for all Western Australians.

As technology continues to drive social and economic change, continuous learning is fundamental to economic and social success and cohesion. Learning for life is a deliberate action to improve knowledge, skills and competencies and can occur in both formal and informal settings. Libraries provide safe spaces where community members can come together to participate in individual or group learning. We will review our learning programs to ensure they reflect the needs of the community.



## Our aspirations for 2018–2022 are:

### A State Library for everyone ...

The State Library will continue to provide physical and online spaces where people can engage in cultural, educational, creative and recreational experiences. We will deliver a range of local and State-wide cultural and learning programs that actively engage people to help them feel connected to their community, stir curiosity and creativity, promote civic involvement and social cohesion. We recognise that not all parts of our community have equal economic, educational and social opportunities. By listening to our community, we will provide new and inclusive ways to discover, share and use our collections and create pathways to learning to build foundations for lifelong success.

We will review our collecting framework to ensure we adequately reflect the needs and voices of all Western Australians. Whilst the move to digital format for general information services continues, the State Library has large holdings of traditional materials; how we leverage these collections for the benefit of the community needs further consultation and analysis.

We will continue to provide safe library spaces – both intellectually and physically – for people to study, explore ideas, create and connect. We will repurpose and redesign our spaces within our resources so that we can continue to meet the diverse needs of the community from quiet study spaces to those that can support groups working together or can be flexibly repurposed for events.

The State Library is the most visited cultural institution in Western Australia and we will continue to work with our partners in the Perth Cultural Centre and beyond to deliver new ways for the community to engage with all the State Library has to offer.

### one that embraces digital transformation ...

We recognise that we need to make our collection easier to access, use and share in a world where there is a deluge of information sources. We will need to consider our processes and standards as well as our online presence.

Libraries have always played a role as digital innovators and have embraced technology as the basis for successful learning and the growth of knowledge in today's society. The State Library will promote the importance of information literacy and learning as fundamental to the well-being and quality of life of all Western Australians. We recognise that individuals in our community at every stage of life need multiple opportunities to foster digital competencies in an unregulated online world. We will offer programs and services that will expand abilities and improve and sustain learning amongst the community we serve.

To successfully achieve our plans, extend our reach and enrich the community in the digital world, we will improve our own capabilities, ensuring we are equally capable in both digital and traditional print environments.

We will continue the implementation of digital legal deposit as part of the National and State Libraries Australia initiative to increase the range of Western Australian digital content being collected and made accessible to the community. We will also improve our capabilities in digital preservation to ensure this material is preserved for the very long term. We will need to balance our work in traditional library materials with the increasing attention required on digital materials.

### and builds skills for the future.

The State Library will continue to be the institution of choice for lifelong and self-directed learning where Western Australians of all ages, and at all stages, can extend and enhance their education. We will support Western Australians to develop skills to use digital technologies and information effectively by providing access to current and emerging technology, training and expertise to promote digital literacy and inclusion.

Our focus on early childhood and family literacy will be strengthened through consultation and partnership with local governments, health, education and community groups. We will work closely with our literacy partners to strengthen the literacy capacity of the community as the foundation life skill.

To meet the evolving needs of our community and to support learning and literacy meaningfully in a digital age, we recognise that we ourselves must adapt. We will achieve this by fostering a culture of research, innovation and professional development within our workforce. We will upskill staff to be more confident and competent with digital library materials creating a workforce that is future focused, flexible and equally capable in traditional and digital environments.

Western Australia is now home to people originating from more than 190 countries, speaking around 240 languages and dialects and this requires greater diversity in staff roles and skills to manage information and knowledge from these diverse communities.



## Strategic Opportunities and Challenges ...

This Strategic Plan covers the period 2018–2022 and we recognise that there are both opportunities and challenges facing us over the next four years.

### Digital Environment

The transition of services to predominantly online is accelerating at all levels of government and in the private sector. The Australian Digital Inclusion Index considers the levels of affordability and access to the internet as well as the digital ability of citizens of each Australian state and territory to arrive at a digital inclusion score. The 2017 report<sup>1</sup> ranks Western Australia as slightly below the national average and ranked 5th of the 8 states and territories. The report shows there is still a significant digital divide in Western Australia together with a clear link between income, education and employment levels and digital inclusiveness. This poses a challenge to Western Australia's economic competitiveness, wellbeing and civic engagement. It also provides opportunity for libraries, including the State Library, to build skills and capacity in the community and to provide technology to reduce the impact of this divide.

A sustained exponential increase in digital information to be collected, preserved and maintained remains and continues to challenge our skills, technologies, policies and processes. Meeting the challenges of digital collecting are essential to ensure the Western Australian stories of the early 21st century are collected, preserved and made available.

Demand for new digital material continues to grow, together with a widely held perception that if something is not available on the internet it doesn't exist. The State Library still has hundreds of thousands of unique documents, films, books and more in our extensive collection that could be converted to digital format to enable State-wide access.

[1] <http://slwa.info/adii> Page 33

### Community Needs

In the online environment the source and authenticity of information is not always clear because of commercial and other interests shaping results from search engines and the rise of cause based experts who publish on the internet. Quality information is increasingly hidden behind commercial pay walls used to protect scholarly and press information and commercial interests. Navigating this environment requires good information literacy skills and libraries continue their long held role to provide access to quality information.

While the traditional library space with shelves of books and quiet study areas are still important, well used and appreciated by the community, as we develop new services and programs and encourage co-creation and innovation, spaces within the State Library building need to be flexible, adaptable and multi-use. Digital collections, incubation, co-creation and innovation require group working and collaboration spaces, with access to leading edge technologies. These flexible spaces, as well as sound and animation studios, laboratories and high quality exhibition spaces are all common place in state and national libraries globally.

### Cultural Infrastructure

The opening of the New Museum in 2020 will create renewed interest in the Perth Cultural Centre and all it has to offer with increased interest from tourists and the Western Australian community. We anticipate an increase in visits to the State Library and its building creating opportunities to engage new users in our services, programs and events. However, this renewed interest will create additional pressure on our existing well used physical facilities as well as our services, programs and events.

The financial environment will remain constrained for the foreseeable future requiring the State Library to continually review our offerings, improve our processes and innovate to meet changing community needs.



## Diversity and Social Justice

With more than 32 per cent of Western Australians born outside of Australia<sup>2</sup>, authentic voices and stories from our culturally diverse communities need to be identified, preserved and reflected in our collections.

There is growing community and academic interest in the State Library's collections that is driving the expansion of specific services. Demand for the State Library to participate in collaborative projects with universities and researchers continues, creating both opportunities for staff while challenging our traditional services and capabilities.

Consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples about the use and access to library collection materials that reflect their history, culture and perspectives needs to be expanded. Our established systems and methods of describing, maintaining and depicting material held in our collections are challenged by traditional knowledge systems. Connecting formal records with personal stories, oral memories and other collections through culturally safe practice is critical to support reconciliation and strengthen community.

## Our Staff

Along with the challenge to better represent the diverse Western Australia community in our collections and services, we recognise the importance of attracting and retaining a diverse workforce that reflects the community we serve. Creating an inclusive and diverse workplace will increase our understanding of the cultural aspects that make up the community we serve, create connections and inject diverse perspectives and experiences into our workplace. This will enhance our service delivery.

Our organisational skill base has been evolving to meet the opportunities and challenges provided by the digital environment, however our skills with the collection and preservation of physical library materials is still our main strength. A challenge remains to lift the digital skills of all State Library staff to be equal to those we currently have with traditional library collections. This will require rethinking of existing roles, the development of existing staff and engagement of staff with entirely new skills to deliver services, programs, events and to collect and preserve the emerging Western Australian stories.



[2] <http://slwa.info/abs2017>