

## **Public Libraries Working Group Meeting 16**

**2:30pm Wednesday 15 December 2021**

**State Library of Western Australia – Board Room, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Perth Cultural Centre, Northbridge**

### **ATTENDEES**

<b>Nick Sloan</b>	<b>Chief Executive Officer, WA Local Government Association (Chair)</b>
<b>Susie Moir</b>	<b>Policy Manager Resilient Communities, WA Local Government Association</b>
<b>Margaret Allen</b>	<b>Chief Executive Officer &amp; State Librarian, State Library of WA</b>
<b>Jodie Holbrook</b>	<b>Director Local Government Policy &amp; Engagement, Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries</b>
<b>Jenny Archibald</b>	<b>Member, Library Board of Western Australia</b>
<b>Caroline Jones</b>	<b>Vice President, Public Libraries WA</b>
<b>John Dixon</b>	<b>Director Digital Transformation and Strategy, Office of Digital Government</b>
<b>Jude Thomas</b>	<b>Local Government Professionals (WA)</b>
<b>Rob Leicester</b>	<b>Manager Core Programs Industry and Economic Development, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development</b>
<b>Cr. Marie O’Dea</b>	<b>Elected Member, Shire of Plantagenet</b>
<b>Steve McQuade</b>	<b>Manager Public Libraries and Literacy, SLWA (Secretariat)</b>

### **APOLOGIES**

Nil.

## MINUTES

### 1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting, particularly Cr. Marie O’Dea who was attending her first PLWG meeting via Zoom.

### 2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

#### RESOLUTION:

The draft Minutes of the meeting of 28 October 2021 were endorsed unchanged.

### 3. Actions

#### 3.1 Review actions from previous meeting

##### 3.1.1 Seek representative from a Tier 2 Local Government

- Complete

##### 3.1.2 Inform members of PLWG when the State Local Government Partnership Agreement for the Provision of Public Library Services in Western Australia has been published on the State Library of WA website.

- Ongoing

##### 3.1.3 Status update to be provided on the Draft Local Level agreement.

- Ongoing. The agreement has been circulated with comments. The agreement will now be going to the State Solicitor’s Office for further advice and amendments.

##### 3.1.4 Circulate the What we heard report to the PLWG members once approved by cabinet

- Complete

##### 3.1.5 Set up a meeting with Alison Oliver to look at the feedback for the regulations and report back to PLWG.

- Steve McQuade confirmed that the meeting had been held.
- Margaret Allen provided a brief background for the Library Board Act and (Registered Public Libraries) Regulations. The regulations have not been updated since 1986 and are now superseded. A survey was held by PLWA to gauge stakeholder interest in amending them, though low regional membership to PLWA contributed to an over-representation of larger, metro voices. At the time there was no strong consensus as to how

to update the regulations. Amending the regulations has come out of the previous strategy as an unfinished item.

- Steve McQuade commented that there was no record of the make-up of respondents of the previous regulations feedback survey.
- Margaret Allen indicated that there needs to be further research and discussion with the sector to determine obstacles and how to shape the framework in the future.
- Nick Sloan asked if there is much interest in local government in amending the current regulations. Margaret Allen replied that amending regulations is usually fairly simple, and as long as there is demonstrated consultation with the sector that there should be no complications. It has not yet been raised with the Minister of Culture and the Arts' Office.
- Nick Sloan suggested WALGA and SLWA meet out of session to set up a framework for consultation, to be brought back to PLWG for review. PLWG will then determine whether there is a need and pathway for regulatory changes.
- Jude Thomas asked if the last strategy looked at revoking at Act. Margaret Allen clarified that it only looked at contemporising the Act.

**Action:**

- **WALGA and SLWA to set up a framework for further sector consultation, to then be brought back for review by PLWG.**

**3.1.6 Future Library Strategy - Out of session discussion with the PLWG local government members as to the contributions of the local government groups.**

Complete.

**3.1.7 Circulate a couple of proposed dates for the next meeting.**

Ongoing.

**4. Strategic Matters**

**4.1 Digital Strategy for the Western Australian Government 2021-2025**

- John Dixon provided context for the creation of the What We Heard Report. The report has come out of the *Digital Strategy for the Western Australian Government 2021-2025*. ODG undertook consultation around digital inclusion throughout 2020, involving support from SLWA, WACOSS and public sector

agencies (Department of Communities and Transport, DLGSC and DPIRD).

During consultation they received a large amount of engagement, with an overrepresentation of targeted community groups.

- ODG pitched their digital inclusion consultation around access and use. Identified issues included:
  - Connectivity and reliability.
  - Affordability.
  - Skills, including cybersecurity.
  - Design.
- Key conclusions included:
  - Digital inclusion is a basic need.
  - There is existing support for digital inclusion in the community that can be leveraged.
  - Government can only coordinate and lead, but community sector organisations are vital to implementation and feedback.
- ODG aim to build an initiatives program focused around small-scale, targeted pilots informed by the target communities and centred around the four identified key issues.
- Discussion as to the potential solutions proposed by ODG. Jenny Archibald asked how we can be sure that small scale pilot projects will be able to deliver on the digital inclusion goal. John Dixon answered that this will be achieved by working in equal partnership with the government and community sectors.
- Jenny Archibald asked if there was sufficient existing infrastructure to run the projects. John Dixon answered that there was in regards to space and people. Jenny Archibald clarified in terms of connectivity. John Dixon answered that this will vary according to community but that DPIRD are already putting in infrastructure to improve connectivity.
- Margaret Allen noted that short courses should not be delivered only through TAFE, as there are many areas with libraries and CRCs with no TAFE and many people prefer the person-to-person contact.
- John Dixon observed that there are difficulties with finding overarching solutions. Need the government sector to be involved but require consultation to not duplicate private sector services.
- Nick Sloan noted that PLWG will revisit the progress towards some of the proposed initiatives over the next 12 months.

## 4.2 Draft Public Library Strategy

- Nick Sloan and Steve McQuade provided background to the draft Public Library Strategy. The previous State-wide Strategy has now been largely implemented and PLWG has endorsed the creation of a new Strategy. This process has involved visioning workshops with library stakeholders and codesign workshops with the Public Library Strategy Working Group (PLSWG) and I&J Phillips. PLWSG have now prepared and circulated a draft Strategy, with the aim of completion before the end of the financial year.
- Margaret Allen noted that there were a few internal concerns for the draft Strategy, particularly that it was not outcome focussed or fitted for community consultation.
- Nick Sloan acknowledged the work that has been undertaken by the working group, particularly in a very tight timeframe. Nick Sloan recommended that PLWG provide feedback to PLSWG to instruct revisions on the draft Strategy. The revised draft Strategy can then be brought back either out of session, or at the first meeting of PLWG for next year.
- Steve McQuade noted that the consultant I&J Phillips is open to support the project further.
- Steve McQuade noted that the pillars of the draft Strategy had changed slightly throughout the drafting process, as some proved to be more engaging than others. Library-led learning was built into libraries supporting communities. A new pillar was also established- libraries strengthening communities: a strong system and a capable workforce- which may require further work to demonstrate benefit for community.
- Steve McQuade requested that feedback address what may be missing from the draft Strategy.
- Margaret Allen noted that PLSWG aim to produce the next version by the end of January, to go to public consultation in February and be sent for approval at the end of March.
- Jenny Archibald asked who is involved with the public consultation process. Susie Moir noted that it involved eight local governments and a range of their stakeholders.

### Action

- **PLWG members to provide feedback on the draft Public Libraries Strategy through Steve McQuade before the end of the year.**
- **Steve McQuade to circulate the revised draft Strategy among PLWG members either out of session, or at next PLWG meeting.**

## **5. Standing Items**

### **5.1 Tiered Model & Funding**

- Ongoing.

## **6. Other Business**

### **6.1 Transition of Chair**

- Steve McQuade noted that under the terms of reference the position of Chair is due to be rotated back to SLWA.
- PLWG agreed to keep the current arrangements for the first meeting of next year and then re-evaluate.

### **6.2 Consultation on CRCs**

- Rob Leicester thanked PLWG for the opportunity to present on the CRC program at October's PLWG meeting, and particularly thanked Caroline Jones and Jude Thomas for reaching out to their wider networks and assisting with the survey. The quantity and quality of the responses were very high and enabled DPIRD to receive the endorsement they needed in regards to the CRC contract.

## **7. Key messages to Stakeholders**

NA

## **8. Next Meeting date + meeting schedule**

- PLWG aim to set the next meeting for early February.
- Marie O'Dea requested that the meeting be set for before the State opening date.

## **Action**

- **Steve McQuade to circulate a couple of proposed dates.**

## **9. The meeting closed at 3:50 pm.**