

11th Meeting of the Strategic Network Committee

Minutes of the meeting of 1 May 2020

Date and time	Friday 1 May 2020, 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM
Location	Microsoft Teams Meeting
Chair	Cameron Morley (State Library)
Members in Attendance	Chris Jones (NE Zone) Robert Knight (SW Zone) Michelle Maunder (CW Zone) Keryl Collard (CE Zone) Rebecca Aukim (Sydney North Zone) Vicki Edmonds (Sydney West Zone) Debbie Best (Sydney South Zone)
State Library Staff in Attendance	Cameron Morley, Philippa Scarf, Ellen Forsyth, Andrea Curr, Kate O'Grady, Samantha Mantakoun
Apologies	John Vallance, State Librarian
Minutes	Samantha Mantakoun

Minutes

Item 1: Preliminary Matters

- 1.1** Welcome and apologies – John Vallance, State Librarian.

Item 2: Minutes, Business arising and action register

- 2.1** The Minutes of the Strategic Network Committee held on Friday 25 October 2019, which had been circulated, were accepted.

Item 3: Priority business

3.1 Update from the State Library's Public Library Services

- State Library NSW is closed to the public and majority of staff are working with home. Some staff occasionally coming in.
- Indyreads has been rolled out to more libraries, with an extra \$50k allocated to eBook collections. The Indyreads Q&A have proved to be popular with libraries attending the weekly online sessions.
- Still waiting on an update about public library infrastructure grants. The delay is caused by the resignation of the Minister for the Arts.
- Currently working on next year's public library funding and the per capita will go up to \$2.55 in 2020/21.

- Ongoing issues with the email lists due to a new provider. This has been resolved as the lists will now be managed in-house by the State Library.

3.2 Discussion of how libraries in each zone are working at present

Vicki Edmonds - (Sydney West Zone)

Most of the libraries in western Sydney had closed by the legislated time. Western Sydney libraries have been coming up with innovative ways to reach out to the community such as participating in online craft, online story time, and delivering home library services. A pop-up library has been established where curated books are being sent to customers, these do not need to be returned.

Book bins have been closed as a way of dealing with contamination. Library fines have been waived, and it is hoped anticipated that fines will be abolished moving forward.

Debbie Best – (Central/South)

The libraries had all closed at different times. Currently providing a variety of online services and materials. The current restrictions have inadvertently been a great promotion of the library service to Council and the executive as it has demonstrated how quickly and capable staff are at adapting and delivery services in new ways.

Libraries are participating in a home library service. There has also been a book stop/book sale that staff are delivering to people within vulnerable categories, as well as starting a click and collect service. Reservation fees are also being removed. Staff are taking this time to upskill and train. Libraries are also taking this opportunity to do stocktakes which may not have been done within the last 12 to 14 years. Some libraries are taking returns and others are not. The consensus is that staff are busier now than they have ever been. Currently plans are being put in place towards reopening.

Megan Jordan-Jones - (NSWPLA South East Zone)

Libraries are all closed. All programs have been moved online such as tech training, yoga, arts and crafts, and story time. Kiama libraries are offering click and collect services. Bega Valley Libraries staff are participating in meals on wheels and offering books to people they visit. Further resources are being allocated to purchase additional eResources such as Borrow Box. Currently plans are being put in place towards reopening.

Rebecca Aukim – (Sydney North Zone)

Majority of North Sydney staff were stood down and now there is a skeleton staff of 8, with the remainder on leave. Mosman library closed entirely. The splinter award had not come into effect when staff were stood down. The General Manager, North Sydney Council spoke to staff and all staff were placed on special leave.

No new services have been put in place, only maintaining current services online such as virtual story time.

Lane Cove library has continued to run and is doing their delivery service. Northern Beaches library home delivery has also been incredibly popular. It was noted that Ku-Ring-Gai was implementing “knock and drop” deliveries.

Keryl Collard – (CE Zone)

Staff were given notice where they were granted 4-week special leave, and after were to take annual leave at the end of the 4 weeks. Many of the staff chose to go on the special leave. There is a proportion of staff working on site, others were redeployed working at council and those redeployed taking leave.

The click and collect service has been greatly appreciated. Continuing connection with the communities. One library has had a weekly live afternoon chat with the community to keep connected. Initiatives such as these are considered a high priority for the CE Zone.

Purchasing eResources, completing stock takes, waiving fines and automatic renewals were also common. A library has also introduced a seed library which has already garnered 350 registrations. Newcastle libraries has had significant increase of 45% in the use of eResources.

Michelle Maunder – (CW Zone)

Staff have continued to work from home or within the library building. There have been a mix of services being offered such as home delivery and click and collect, there has been online craft sessions and online story telling. Libraries have taken this opportunity to complete stock takes, weeding of books, and have been purchasing additional eResources. An issue that smaller councils are facing is the lack of hand sanitisers and gloves to provide to staff to ensure the safe handling any items.

Chris Jones – (NE Zone)

As busy as ever and has the intention to maintain these online services after restrictions have been lifted. Covid-19 has allowed libraries to adapt in the online space. Libraries have ceased charging fines. Click and collect has been problematic as there have been challenges in delivering due to the size of the suburb/zone.

Robert Knight – (SW Zone)

Some libraries have been offering click and collect, click and deliver. Some staff have been working in libraries, others from home, and some staff have taken special leave. Libraries have adapted in different ways in delivering services and attracting different audiences. This is seen in online ebook clubs, and online story time. The Cootamundra branch has been collecting COVID-19 data and photos. Library website has been proven to be most important with the addition of more links and banners. Eresources loan have spiked which has prompted an additional \$20k on eResources. RRL has signed up to Indyreads, purchasing subscription to Newsbank using NSWPLA eResources fund.

3.3 Discussion of reopening preparations

Planning on what reopening looks like for libraries and what type of restrictions may need to be put into place for this to happen. Restrictions may include opening one day a week, limiting number of people per square metre with social distancing in place, additional cleaning and limited services. Permission for the reopening of libraries will come via the Premier and NSW Health but it will ultimately be up to councils to decide this operationally. The reopening of libraries will be different for each community.

There were discussions around libraries opening under certain conditions, for example focusing on certain community groups such as school children or older people. There were concerns that excluding groups may create a problem for frontline staff. An alternative suggestion was made that restrictions should be centred around services rather than targeted groups.

Examples of services included allowing people to access collections rather than sit in the library for an extended period of time. Self-service was emphasised such as self-check, self-service computers as well as access to Wi-Fi.

Prior to reopening it was stressed it would be preferable if the State Library provided guidelines and develop a reopening plan. These guidelines would assist in weighing up the needs of community and the needs of the staff.

Suggestions and examples included:

- Whether libraries need to incorporate perspex shields
- Whether staff should be wearing masks
- A reduction in library hours so deep cleansing can be undertaken
- The number of people who can visit (min and max number of people)
- Limiting access to collections such as newspapers.

All agreed it was important to have sufficient lead time to prepare staff, ideally 3- or 4-weeks' notice prior to reopening.

Action: Create toolkit with relevant links highlighting protective measures that can be taken.

