

10th Meeting of the Strategic Network Committee

Minutes of the meeting of 25 October 2019

Date and time	Friday 25 October 2019, 11:00AM to 1:00PM
Location	Garling Room, State Library of NSW
Chair	Cameron Morley (State Library)
Members in Attendance	Michelle Maunder (CW Zone) Keryl Collard (CE Zone) Jo Carmody (NE Zone) Mark Norman (SE Zone) Melanie Gurney (Sydney North Zone) Jody Rodas (Sydney South Zone) Vicki Edmunds (Sydney West Zone) Robert Knight (SW Zone)
State Library Staff in Attendance	Mylee Joseph, Philippa Scarf, Catherine Bryant, Kathleen Alexander
Apologies	Ellen Forsyth, Kate O'Grady
Minutes	Samantha Mantakoun

Minutes

Item 1: Preliminary Matters

- 1.1** Welcome and apologies – Jody Rodas attended in place of Debbie Best.

Item 2: Minutes, Business arising and action register

- 2.1** The Minutes of the Strategic Network Committee held on Friday 3 May 2019, which had been circulated, were adopted.
- 2.2** Business Arising

Item 3: Priority business

3.1 Updated Public Library Standards and Guidelines cohorts

Mylee Joseph presented the updated cohort data from the 2017/18 NSW Public Library Statistics for Living Learning Libraries:

- Randwick Libraries and Georges River Libraries have moved up to the Urban Large cohort.
- For the rural councils benchmarking compares populations from 1-20,000. It was suggested a more granular split of 0-10,000 and 10,001-20,000 may be more useful for benchmarking these councils and libraries. Many of these councils are members of regional library services.
- Each cohort has had some changes in the medians and top of the cohort measures. These will be available shortly, following the gathering of the rural regional library cohort data directly from the individual library services.

- There is a downward trend in loans in some cohorts however the participation rates as indicated by the percentage of a population that are library members in some cases is as low as 25% or lower.
- It was generally agreed that visits continue to rise but membership is declining. See 2017/18 NSW public library statistics <https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/public-library-services/advice-and-best-practice/public-library-statistics> .

Action

- Mylee to share the 2017/18 cohort information and information to be added to the SL website at <https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/public-library-services/content/living-learning-libraries>
- Mylee to create a table regarding membership trends over recent years. Mylee to circulate these after the meeting and keep cohorts in the table. The focus is to look at the libraries doing well.
- Libraries to start thinking from a marketing perspective and see what incentives people might need to increase in visits. Look at different marketing strategies to drive traffic in libraries and use this to argue for more space.
- The State Librarian, John Vallance will bring a suggestion to the December PLCC meeting for a campaign to increase library membership. The timing of the membership campaign is forecasted for Autumn 2020. It was noted that the messaging will need to be compatible with what libraries are currently doing, so a consultation phase will precede this opt-in campaign.

3.2 Bibliostat overview & promotion ideas

Mylee Joseph demonstrated the Bibliostat Connect site and showed the committee how to utilise public library statistics.

Bibliostat has been used by libraries to collect public library statistics from NSW libraries since 2003/04. There was a break in collecting FY 2014/15 and FY 2015/16 while an alternate tool was used (Conduit). Not all data for these years could be imported into Bibliostat. Bibliostat includes the historical data for councils that have subsequently been merged (amalgamated).

<http://collect.btol.com> Used by libraries to enter their public library statistics each year with their unique login.

<https://collectconnect.baker-taylor.com/login.aspx>

- Used to extract and analyse data sets and text responses to answers
- Libraries can access it using their unique Bibliostat login and password for benchmarking.

Action

It was agreed that State Library team members will demonstrate and encourage use of Bibliostat at zone meetings and other appropriate forums

3.3 NSW public library career campaign

Cameron Morley presented the 2019 Public Library Job Vacancies ranging from May 2019 to present.

The number of job vacancies was noted, and it was agreed that further research into whether positions were easy to fill would be undertaken.

Discussion indicated that perhaps the growth in demand for library services has not been reflected in the growth of potential library workers. The State Library will investigate this further with ALIA and library education providers.

A possible campaign highlighting the availability of jobs and public libraries as a viable career will be investigated.

The Committee also discussed what an equivalent qualification may be, noting that staff with other qualifications may be an opportunity for libraries, especially if there are pathways for them to qualify as a librarian while working at a library. Social worker type roles and events management are two areas that were seen as being highly relevant.

It was noted that library assistant positions regularly attract extremely high numbers of applicants, however librarian positions do not, possibly because there are not enough qualified people out there.

The committee had also made comments regarding the librarian profession as not being seen as highly valued with regards to the salary grades and program.

The need for leadership and management capabilities for library manager roles was also discussed.

Decision

- State Library to follow up with the contact person for each library job listing. Determine whether there was any difficulty in filling in the positions and the number of applicants received for the listings.
- Working with ALIA around the promotion of library qualifications as it is currently an ageing workforce with lots of industry growth especially with larger libraries being built.

3.4 eGovernment services and public libraries

Melanie Gurney introduced the discussion.

The Committee noted that access to eGovernment services is accepted as a key function of libraries, and there is a need to embrace the shift, and upskill library staff to support the different types of people using the library.

Guidelines on the extent of the help that is appropriate were considered necessary, bit for staff and also so the public have clarity.

The Committee agreed that the cost shifting argument which has been prevalent in previous years is no longer likely to be as valid, because the public expect libraries to have internet available and staff who are capable of helping them find information. Awareness of privacy needs to be raised, and the amount of support the community requires could be researched, such as the need for JPs, passport help, NDIS, Centrelink etc.

The State Library ran a research program in 2005 which looked at eGovernment demand in libraries. It was agreed that an updated version of the survey could be run to assist with the guidelines, and to produce an up to date set of data that can be used when talking to governments about eGovernment services and the appropriate role of public libraries.

Decision

- State Library to scope an eGovernment research activity, with reference to the 2005 study. A draft proposal will be circulated to the Committee for comment out of session.

3.5 Public libraries and homeless people / mental illness

As libraries are shifting into more community centre type spaces, there has been a greater need of upskilling library staff in dealing with homeless people, difficult customers, and those with mental health issues. There was also discussion around making the library space more dementia friendly especially given the ageing population.

Jo Carmody noted that the training provided for RTRL staff has had a focus on de-escalation of situations and staff resilience, similar to that of council rangers, where a range of incidents that had happened in the past were used as training examples.

There were also discussions of amenities infrastructure such as the inclusion of public showers to cater for homeless people as well as providing end-of-trip facilities for library clients who are cyclists.

Decision

- The RTRL training and other resources will be assessed for sharing more widely with the network.

3.6 Indyreads Training package

Kathleen Alexander and Catherine Bryant attended and provided the Committee with an overview of the indyreads training package, which had been piloted the previous week.

The face-to-face training workshop is being offered to all libraries when they come on to the platform throughout 2020. The training is hands-on and uses iPads with the indyreads app. The training has been trialled by Lane Cove, Mosman and North Sydney libraries. Training has been booked for Randwick, Woollahra, Wollongong and nearby libraries, Georges River, Burwood and Ryde.

Item 4: Other Business

4.1 Reports from the Zone Secretaries (including key issues)

Zone representatives discussed highlights from their zones.

4.2 State Library Report

Cameron Morley briefed the committee on updates regarding the interlibrary loan courier service and travel subsidies.

The State Library has decided to transition from Toll Australia to Australia Post for courier and delivery service and this includes the interlibrary loan service. The changes will take effect in February 2020.

State Library is also in the process of reviewing the travel subsidy policy. It was noted that not many libraries are taking advantage of the subsidy and that within the past year 2018-19, only \$7,000 was spent.

There are plans to increase this budget to \$14,000 and publicise this to the libraries. This is to encourage and target libraries who do not usually visit, to apply and to participate in professional development.

The travelling subsidy covers both metro and country libraries.

Next Meeting – May 2020

Date	
Time	11:00AM - 1:00PM followed by lunch
Location	Garling Room, State Library of NSW, Macquarie St, Sydney