

Questions and Answers about being on the Public Libraries of South Australia Executive Committee.

When does PLSA Exec meet?

A meeting is held on the first Tuesday of the month from 12pm until 3pm. Occasionally there are meetings called in-between these times when it is necessary for larger projects to be discussed in detail. A good example of this was a three-hour meeting to discuss the "One Library Management System, One library card", "PLSA Executive strategic planning process: PLSA Executive Committee Action Plan was also held out of the meeting timetable and it would be anticipated that following the AGM there will be further development of the Strategic Plan, Marketing Plan, MOA paper development, Web Page development, 2 Day Conference, Future Planning for the Public Library Network, Libraries Board Guidelines, Information Packs, etc

What is the time commitment upon joining the committee?

Apart from attending the monthly three-hour meetings, as a representative of the PLSA Executive, you are also expected to join other committees or working parties to progress further projects within the PLSA Executive Committee Action Plan for the benefit of the network as a whole. The PLSA Executive Committee Action Plan has a number of significant Network drivers and outcomes and responsibility (ownership) will be divested on members of the Executive to progress the actions and report monthly to the executive on the progress.

Depending on the committee or group, this may add another five to six hours a month where you are required to attend meetings. Attached to this, is additional time to read documents prior to meetings, and to report back via written form in the first instance and then report to the executive on a monthly basis. In total it may result in being 10-15 hours a month (or more), depending on how much you get involved. It would be anticipated that over the next two years given the number of crucial projects that will be developed and then undertaken there will be an expectation that considerable energy and commitment will be required by members to ensure that the projects are timely and beneficial to the network.

Given the pressures on the network and the projects it would be expected that members would be well researched and familiar with current library development and philosophy.

You may also like to note that this doesn't include driving times. Depending on your location, this may also contribute to your time commitment.

In addition to meetings there are also a couple of full-day trips organised each year to visit other public libraries across the state. These are important to attend to ensure that you have an understanding of the issues faced across a variety of public libraries. There may also be meetings with strategic partners and associations outside of regular meeting times.

What is the amount of e-mail traffic I can expect?

Again, this depends upon your role in the committee and your involvement level. You should also be communicating with your communication group via e-mail on a regular basis, and answering any questions they have of you. As the minutes are available on the website, these are not sent out via e-mail. Therefore it is important to follow up with your communication group if they have any questions, and remind them to contact you if they have any suggestions or wanted additional information.

Where does the committee meet?

The committee during the last year met at Public Library Services. However there has been informal discussion with some individuals about holding meetings at specific libraries, to ensure that all members of the committee are aware of the range of strengths that exist amongst the entire network. This also enables the committee to “get out and visit” libraries that they may not necessarily have time to visit.

Is there any formal type of induction into the roles and responsibility of the group?

There is an overview provided by the President about the role of the committee at the first meeting you attend. You will also be provided with a large amount of documentation to read, so that you are aware of the business of the PLSA Executive. You can always approach other members of the committee if you have any questions.

Are there any other expectations?

The formal expectations outlined in the document provided by the President. There is also the expectation that you will represent the Executive by being involved and participating on any committee and groups you become involved.

You are also expected to remain in contact with your communication group – but accept and understand that they are not always going to respond due to time constraints and other commitments.

While you work for a specific Council, being on the committee means that you need to represent all public libraries – not just your own. It is also good to be aware of nationwide initiatives that affect public libraries.

You may feel that you have to know everything – you don't, so don't panic. Other people are always there for you to ask questions. Research and discussion are the best answers.

Is there anything I should read before I nominate?

Public Libraries of South Australia Executive Committee Action Plan: this is the document that is providing the direction of projects for the Executive. If you are on the committee – these are the goals that you will be working towards in achieving.

Public Libraries and PLS Project outline

Memorandum Of Understanding

Current Literature on the One Card One Library

Review documentation of the Future: Planning of the Public Library Network

Strategic Plans of Interstate Public Library Associations: providing a good overview of Public Libraries across Australia and NZ,

Should I check with my manager before I nominate?

Yes! It is important that your manager is aware of your involvement on the committee and supportive of your involvement given the time commitment both within working hours and in your own time.

Involvement enables you to have a wider understanding of what is being investigated and developed for the Public Library network within SA. While your involvement enables you to communicate about the different projects occurring on a statewide level, it also enables you to broaden your connections with people from other public libraries and the staff at Public Library Services.

Involvement is important, not only for your own professional development, but more importantly it also enables you to become involved and contribute to the South Australian Public Library community.

