



**Public  
Libraries  
SA**

### **Vision**

**Create a vibrant and sustainable network of South Australian Public Libraries who are at the forefront of innovation.**

### **Mission**

**Provide leadership and direction for the South Australian Network through aligning resources and providing an independent voice for Network members.**

## **President's Report March 2011**

Since the AGM four months ago much of the activity involving PLS, the network and Executive has been devoted to the one library management system, marketing, School Community Libraries and funding, levies, strategic partnerships with ALIA and other public library associations, National Year of Reading and shelf ready and digital audio content reviews. These activities and associated projects will place us well for the future, the development of our library network and services. However it also raises the question:

*"What will public libraries be like in 2030? In 20 years time physical books may become luxury items, mobile phones may hold 136,000 books, internet addiction could go global and libraries may offer courses in linear reading", said Sydney futurists Oliver Freeman and Richard Watson in 201064.*

At the PLSA Quarterly in March 2010 we welcomed our new members to a Public Library Network facing challenging times and many opportunities as we transform traditional libraries into new and powerful places for personal growth; and change from repositories of information into vibrant community centres. We reflected on the Memorandum of Agreement and achieving an outcome ensuring sustainability and innovation across our library network and in our libraries and communities continues.

As I have moved around the state with my Executive I have been fortunate to witness the many excellent examples of this growth and development within our network; great programmes, innovation, new and renovated libraries, community hubs, school community libraries developed (or still being developed) through partnerships.

As we move forward with key strategic projects it is timely to review research and strategic planning undertaken by other associations and networks, given we are moving into a total shared network of resources, people, ideas, skills enabled by the 1LMS and into an unchartered future.

International, National and local studies and reports reinforce the evolving role of libraries, raising an awareness of the challenges ahead, challenges exemplified by our UK colleagues "Save Our Libraries Day" held in February. We operate in an environment of rapid societal change and diversity, with changing expectations of our services and how we deliver them: the use of online media grows; our collection formats continue to evolve and meet the increasingly diverse needs of our community.

This raises the question of our future direction; what will the 1LMS enable us to achieve and how will it impact on our processes and services? How do we ensure the ongoing sustainability of our network, balance services and community expectations, content delivery and creation. Where will our libraries and the network be in 2016 and into the future? Sue McKerracher's article in the latest Incite "Will we need to save our libraries too?" asks "How do you develop a five year strategy for service delivery, infrastructure and investment when you can't predict what the world will be like in 2016". Coincidentally the next MOU will conclude in 2016 (2011-2016)

Our discussion around changes to our levies and the content within the levies reaffirms these changes in collection formats and online media and affords us the opportunity to embrace these changes and meet changing community needs.

Today we continue to reinvent ourselves, able to remain relevant to our communities needs through our effective library network and innovative public library services (PLS) - the lynchpin, nucleus and often the engine room.

Our biggest challenge is providing consistent and affordable services to a diverse range of needs. Public Libraries must be inclusive, welcoming and attractive to multiple audiences. They must support different needs and encourage customers in their lifelong learning journey”.

(Library 2010: Libraries for Life, Knowledge for Success, National Library Board Singapore, 2005)

The messages are very clear for Australia’s public library system. It needs to become increasingly innovative, nimble and more cost effective. New people with new ideas from diverse backgrounds will work in the system. New relationships and partnerships will be established. (McEntyre, Robert: Innovative, Nimble, Collaborative, Community Partnerships, June 2010)

A significant report and one worth noting: Within New South Wales public libraries have been witnessing significant growth in use in recent years, the State Library of New South Wales commissioned Oliver Freeman and Richard Watson to engage with library stakeholders and apply scenario planning to develop a framework that explored ways in which public libraries might respond to retain their relevance in a dynamic and changing world. This significant report *The Bookends Scenarios Report*

[http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/services/public\\_libraries/publications/docs/bookendsscenarios.pdf](http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/services/public_libraries/publications/docs/bookendsscenarios.pdf)

presents future scenarios for public libraries and there are important messages in the report and conclusions to be drawn. Some of these messages are listed:

**The Future:** Whatever scenario, by 2030 the Australian public library system will have dramatically changed. It will be a user centric community service with a collaborative technological culture of service provision.

**New Happenings:** *“The content creation and delivery revolution is a major challenge for the library profession to embrace”.*

**The Library Profession:** *“We are 20 years behind the times. We still live in a hierarchical command and control culture when the world is demanding collaboration and networked interaction. We are still talking about the things we talked about 10 years ago. We are insular. Our staff is very backroom oriented. Perhaps reinvention of the profession is what is really needed? What is our global role and relevance? Loving books is no longer enough. Attracting new talent is the key”.* Very challenging and indeed our Network does enable us to reinvent ourselves!

**Technologies:** *“The current generations of library management systems don’t cut the mustard; they need to be more like Google and Amazon”.* Around 60 per cent of Australians have a connection to the internet at home and three quarters of users access the internet daily. Will all libraries eventually become virtual?

**Relationships and Community Engagement:** *“Schools are important and we need to “outreach” to them, but it is surprising how little effort is made to link up with schools. At the same time schools seem reluctant to work with us”.* Libraries will develop as local community and networking hubs. Engagement with education and schools will be more important as we consider the implications to our School Community Libraries of the changes to staffing and funding and models of operation.

**Employment:** There is more casual work, more part-time work, more automation, more outsourcing and more re-hiring of retirees. There will be a shift from tight and formal hierarchies to looser and more fluid networks. Alliances will increase and job mobility will rise. Diversifying the mix of library staff is a “no brainer” (McEntyre, Robert: Innovative, Nimble, Collaborative, Community Partnerships, June 2010)

Our conference in September "Partnering for Success" also resonates with these scenarios: establishing partnerships, the evolving role of public libraries, engagement, changing expectations of community and change management. Reaffirming the role of the public library, it builds community connections, facilitates learning opportunities and provides access to informational, educational and recreational resources. (Yarra Plenty Regional Library Strategic Plan, 2008 – 12)

Key note speaker Nicky Parker head of Transformation, Manchester City Council, UK and President of the Society of Chief Librarians, is well credentialed to speak about change and recently spoke at the Edge Conference in the UK on the Future of Public Library Service Delivery. She said "These are challenging times for library services and the opportunity to hear about best practice library transformation from across the UK and USA. Innovation and new ways of working will be key in delivering library services in the future." Google Nicky Parker. <http://edge2010.wordpress.com/speakers/nicky-parker/>

It was interesting to read that the aim of the Edge Conference was very much in sync with ours:

- To make businesses and services edgier, smarter, more creative and cost effective in a world that is being transformed by digital and social technologies;
- To learn how libraries and information are delivering regeneration, eGovernment, learning and digital inclusion;
- To hear the latest ideas, share success stories, hear best practices and meet colleagues from across the country and around the world;
- To open a platform for discussion on the future of service delivery in libraries and information;
- To offer a platform for new innovations and technologies.

What a fortuitous time for Nicky to be presenting and for us to be able to participate in the PLSA conference as March 2011 heralds the beginning of a new era in the SA Public Library Network with the request for proposal "the provision of a Single Library Management System for SA Public Library Network" and the commencement of the procurement process: an innovative initiative which simply put, its benefits will include

- A single membership card which will allow access to all public libraries in the state and access to the state's complete collections from all public libraries
- A reduction in implementation costs and staff time needed to manage and support a local LMS system and in fact a modern LMS for many who do not have such a system
- Efficiencies from improved workflows and efficient practices.

The 1LMS will bring about many changes, challenges and opportunities within our libraries, the network and our services. It is vital that we prepare to manage this change and embrace this challenge. Processes are needed to support these changes, collaboration required to consider changes to methodology and policies. Within the 1LMS project the role of change management as a key driver is recognised both by staff and user groups.

### **Strategic Priorities**

**The PLSA Executive Action Plan** and strategy must support this change management process, provide opportunities and develop partnerships and ensure our priorities compliment this process focusing on it:

Development and Professional Development

Strategic Partnerships

Lobbying and Advocacy

Sustainable Organisation (includes communication)

Our initial Action Plan has been redefined to more accurately represent our new direction, support our strategies and offer us a starting point for discussion and planning. They are clear, concise and achievable drivers.

| <b>Lobbying and Advocacy</b>  | <b>Strategic Partnerships/ Collaboration</b>     | <b>Professional Development</b>   | <b>Sustainable Organisation</b>  |
|---|--|---|--|
| Develop a value proposition for public libraries and school community libraries | Develop a partnership/ Collaborative proposition | Support professional development initiatives  | Provide a framework for effective management and future direction of the Association |
| Promote the Association   | Develop library sector partnerships              | Contribute to Library & Information sector education discussion                     | Develop and maintain a consultative forum for members                                |
| Inform our communities and funders  | Develop related sector partnerships              | Support & nurture the development of recruitment and succession planning strategies | Develop a model for the future sustainability of the Association                     |

Actions supporting these strategies will be aligned to the Outcomes:

Objectives

Activities

Timeframe

Responsibility

Performance Indicator

Given we do not have another quarterly until the AGM November we will continue to develop the plan and communicate via email and the website. Following our April meeting I will report back and call for further comment.

Previously we have focused on the action plan developed in 2006 and one that we have continued to report on:

### **Goal 1 DEVELOPMENT**

Welcoming, succession planning, forward planning, program development, professional development, participation in decision making

1.1 Planning for the short and longer term future – welcoming environment for new network members

1.2 Professional Development – provide professional development opportunities for members

1.3 Forward Planning ( research and trends)- ensure input into executive decision making

### **Goal 2 PARTNERSHIPS**

**Grow partnerships, enhance longevity of projects and processes, effective management of relationships, building foundations**

2.1 Understanding our partners

2.2 Developing and strengthening outcomes from relationships with national, state, local and corporate partners (ALIA, LIB BOARD, PLS S/C, PLS etc)- Further develop partnering relationships with national, state, local and corporate partners including DECS, DFEEST, LGA

### **Goal 3 ADVOCACY**

**Enhance the profile of PLSA, present information to decision makers, lobbying for public libraries**

3.1 Enhancing the profile of PLSA with local, state and national decision makers - Actively engaging with the Libraries Board, PLS, PLS Standing committee, LGA

3.2 Advocacy for funding and value of PL

3.3 Fostering an understanding of the value of public libraries

### **Goal 4 COMMUNICATION**

**Information dissemination, promotion with SA & nationally, promotion of services, internal communication**

4.1 Strengthening internal and external dialogue

4.2 Promoting network services and achievements to the SA and National library networks, funders and the community

4.3 Providing opportunities to share successful work practices and learning across the network  
There is much synergy between these Goals developed in 2006 and the amended goals and actions. However the actions contained within the goals are more succinct and aligned to our present climate.

### **Year of Reading 2012**

It has been agreed by ALIA and supported by all State and Territory Associations and PLA that in 2012 there will be the National Year of Reading, linking together all the great things that are already happening around books, reading and literacy, and giving them an extra boost, with fun programs and activities taking place across the country. We'll be partnering with government, writers, schools, publishers, booksellers, employers, child care providers, health professionals and a whole host of other organisations that share our passion for reading – and while there will be plenty happening at a national level, we'd love you to run your own local events.

William McInnes will be our greatest advocate, accepting the role of Patron and it's an added bonus that his wife is talented film maker and children's book author/illustrator Sarah Watt. I recently spoke to Sue McKerracher who is playing a key role in delivering the Year of Reading and she has been invited to speak at the 2 day conference in September. Meanwhile please continue to review the progress on the Libraries SA website. What a great opportunity to showcase our libraries, promote the vital role that our libraries play in promoting and providing opportunities for reading and literature.

### **Levies**

You have previously received a paper on levies and it is attached again. Please take the time to read and be prepared for the panel at the quarterly.

### **Marketing**

Congratulations to the group on the great series of bookmarks that have been designed. Already my mind has moved to posters, banners and much more!

The group identified book marks as one of their objectives along with the Newspaper advertisement. Well done two great initiatives:

#### **Business objectives for marketing**

##### *Primary focus*

- Increase perceived relevance of libraries (not just seen as for 'some people')
- Increase usage of resources
- Increase visitation levels

##### *Secondary focus*

- Increase library membership levels across the public
- Increase perceived importance of libraries in the eyes of funders

This committee has actively gone about its business and developed strategies around these business objectives. It agrees that there is potential to increase visitations and knowledge about libraries and the place of libraries with non users, through influencing the media, staff development, programs and research. It is acknowledged that this is not a level playing field and some libraries are sophisticated in their marketing objectives and actions, however we are about engaging with all libraries and their staff across the network, acknowledging differences and capacity within the network.

I look forward to meeting you all at the Quarterly and if you are unable to attend I am happy to communicate with you via email or telephone, just give me a call.

Regards

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