



ROB THOMAS
PRESIDENT
LIBRARY COUNCIL OF NSW

The year in brief: Library Council of NSW – President’s message

This year has been another wonderful year for the State Library of NSW. We continued to see increasing community awareness of the valuable role the State Library and the public library network play in delivering a wide range of services to the people of NSW. Libraries are the core of so many communities, as evidenced by 47% of NSW residents having a library card.

As you will read throughout this report, the range of activities continues to expand over and above traditional library services, including community learning services, free internet, multicultural publications, access to legal and health information and facilities for young and old.

Before detailing our activities for last year, I do want to record, on behalf of Library Council, our sincere thanks and appreciation to our former State Librarian, Regina Sutton, who played such a pivotal role in our development over the last four years. Most of the successes that are focused on in this review were initiated under her leadership.

Looking to the future, I am delighted to announce the commencement of the new State Librarian and Chief Executive, Dr Alex Byrne, who started with us in September. Alex is well placed to lead the State Library into its next exciting chapter. Alex has had a distinguished career in university libraries. He brings an in-depth understanding of digital technologies and a special interest in Indigenous peoples and knowledge. We look forward to working with Alex as we continue to build on the Library’s international standing as a leading research library and to increase access to our services and collections across the NSW community.

Our executive team need a very special thanks as they have led the Library so capably in the transition period to Alex’s commencement. The expertise and passion of our staff for the Library’s activities is evident in every aspect of its operation. I particularly want to acknowledge the contribution of Noelle Nelson who was our acting State Librarian and Chief Executive for much of this year.

We plan this year to do additional work in advocating a nationally funded program to

preserve and digitise the history of our nation. Digitisation is such a powerful tool. Imagine students reading first hand the diaries of Cook, Banks, our explorers, our interactions with Indigenous Australians, the papers of Lawson and Paterson or the diaries of the ANZACs in World War I. We bring history alive and at the same time preserve the founding documents of this country that must slowly disintegrate through time. It is a salutary reminder that despite our superb efforts on digitisation, less than 3% of this Library’s extraordinary collection has been digitised.

Finally, in conjunction with the drive to make NSW an even more attractive destination, the various cultural institutions have committed to work more closely together to maximise visitation and seek improved access for the residents of NSW to our wonderful range of treasures and activities. This is a very exciting development.

TAL & DAI-ICHI LIFE COLLECTION

This year is marked by the landmark acquisition of an extraordinarily rare collection of 741 natural history drawings and watercolours from the First Fleet period – the Mitchell Library’s most significant acquisition of early colonial material since the 1930s. The State Library sincerely thanks TAL (formerly Tower Australia) and its parent, Dai-ichi Life of Japan, for this wonderful act of generosity towards supporting the acquisition for the benefit of the people of Australia, which will be known as the TAL Dai-ichi Life Collection. This joint venture reflects a strong commitment and important cultural link between Australia and Japan. The Foundation has been a critical part of the funding partnership, having committed \$1 million over the next year to further support the acquisition. Particular thanks go to the Premier, Mr Barry O’Farrell, the NSW Government and the Hon. George Souris MP, Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing, and Minister for the Arts, who has been outstanding in his support for the acquisition.

LIBRARY ACT 1939 AMENDED

It is a time of vital development for libraries generally, with the first Bill passed by the incoming NSW State Government on 30 May amending the *Library Act 1939* to give local councils more flexibility in managing library services.

In the debate before the Bill was passed, 33 Members of Parliament spoke about how much they appreciated their local libraries. Many offered outstanding praise for the State Library — our collection, our services to students, researchers and lifelong learners, and our support for the public library network. Minister Souris stated in conclusion: ‘This Government understands the importance of public libraries in our communities’. We are excited about this public affirmation of the role of the public library network.

eRECORDS FUNDING SECURED

We are also making excellent progress on our project to convert the card catalogue to facilitate online access to the Library’s historical collection. This year \$12.9 million funding was secured to complete the eRecords Project in 2013. The project team surpassed its target by 34% this year, creating 348,646 electronic catalogue records for the Library’s maps, manuscripts, pictures, heritage books and reference titles.

REGIONAL PRESENCE CONTINUES

Touring exhibitions and displays presented in partnership with NSW public libraries reached deep into regional NSW, including *The Governor: Lachlan Macquarie 1810 to 1821*, *Australian Cookbooks*, *ONE hundred* and *Carved Trees: Aboriginal Cultures of Western NSW*. Twenty-four regional lectures were delivered, supporting the Library’s commitment to showcasing its travelling collections.

Library Council believes it critical that we undertake more such regional exhibitions and currently we are endeavouring to raise funds to tour our outstanding Henry Lawson collection.

TRANSFORMING THE LIBRARY

This year \$3.65 million was committed by NSW Government to transform the Library’s Macquarie Street building to create a welcoming and accessible Library and a contemporary 21st century cultural destination for NSW residents and visitors.

The Glasshouse Learning Space, officially opened in May 2011 by Minister Souris, is an initiative of the Library’s Community Learning Service and will fulfill the Library’s goal of expanding access for the people of NSW to the Library’s collections and expertise through the design, development and delivery of high-quality learning programs for K-12 students and teachers, lifelong learners and children and families.

eRESOURCES USAGE INCREASE

This year registered a 49% increase in eResources use, with 268 content-rich datasets now available to registered users. Eighty per cent of these are accessible to Library users at any time at their place of choice — onsite or wherever they secure an internet connection.

FOUNDATION ACHIEVEMENTS

This past year has been a memorable year of achievement for the Foundation. We have delivered on our revitalisation plan, started two years ago, to expand the activities and reach of the Foundation. As a result, we have been able to provide substantially increased funds to carry out an impressive range of activities which deliver on the key strategies of the Library.

I am delighted to announce the conclusion of 10 long-term Discover Collections online partnerships valued at around \$2 million. For their extraordinary generosity, we would especially like to thank the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation, Arrowfield Stud, Moran Health Care Group, Peter and Ellie Hunt, Geoffrey and Rachel O’Conor, Allens Arthur Robinson Lawyers, Henry Davis York Lawyers, Clayton Utz, Gilbert and Tobin Lawyers, Woodhead International, Design Inc, St Barbara Ltd and Accor Resorts.

This year saw the conclusion of two niche digitisation projects which have enabled our unique collections to be accessed online, namely the internationally renowned Holtermann photographic collection of 3500 glass plate negatives and the Sir William Dixson map collection, comprising 1100 magnificent maps. We also celebrate the announcement of the three-year Rediscovering Indigenous Languages project with our valued partner Rio Tinto, and important Discover Collection projects, Australian Agricultural and Rural Life, courtesy of the Vincent Fairfax Foundation, Australian Jewish Community and its Culture, sponsored by the Australia-Israel Chamber of Commerce, and May Gibbs.

We can never overlook the scholarship and research activity side of the Library so befitting one of the world's great research libraries. The National Biography Prize and Blake Dawson Prize for Business Literature were very well supported and we continue to develop our Fellowship Program. Thanks to an anonymous and generous benefaction, the inaugural Australian Religious History Fellowship was offered in 2010. This \$20,000 fellowship adds an important new dimension to the Library's Fellowship program.

I am delighted to announce that Peter Crossing has agreed to lead the Foundation this year. Peter has enormous enthusiasm for the Foundation and the Library and under his guidance I am sure the positive momentum will be maintained. Peter is actively involved in our 'blockbuster' John Lewin exhibition in 2012 that will also tour to the National Library.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

On behalf of Council, I sincerely thank Regina, Noelle, their Executive teams and all our staff for their passion and commitment to the Library in delivering client-focused library and information services for the community of NSW. We must also thank our extraordinary volunteers, Friends and other supporters who contribute so much.

Council was saddened to note the passing of one of our volunteers, Ray King. Ray loved the Library and gave his time generously to helping us in many ways. His family has continued that tradition by donating items of their family history, the Governor and Mrs King portraits, which will be a lasting legacy to Ray and a wonderful addition to our collection.

Library Council members give so much of their time to advancing the Library and library services across NSW, including sitting on one or more of the standing committees that carry out the detailed work of Council. I would like to sincerely thank all Council members and committee chairs for their commitment and contribution to Council, the State Library and public libraries throughout NSW and their advocacy of the value of libraries in this State.



DR ALEX BYRNE
NSW STATE LIBRARIAN
AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

From the State Librarian and Chief Executive

The State Library of NSW is one of the world's great libraries, renowned for its extraordinary collection relating to the discovery and exploration of Australia and the Pacific. Through its unique holdings, its wide-ranging services for students, researchers and lifelong learners, and its support for public libraries, the Library is central to the cultural life and economy of the State.

This is an exciting time to be joining the State Library, and I am delighted and honoured to have the opportunity to lead the Library and its wonderful staff.

I begin by paying tribute to my predecessor, Regina Sutton. As you will see in this report, Regina has overseen a significant period of innovation. The Library has begun a period of renewal, which has seen client access improve dramatically.

The landmark eRecords project secured government funding to create online records of many thousands of collection items. The results of this project are already being demonstrated in increased client demand to use and digitise a broad range of collection items.

The Library's outreach has expanded to bring new audiences to our reading rooms, events and exhibitions, and take the Library's collections out to regional NSW. And after an inspiring year of Mitchell Library centenary celebrations, our Macquarie Street premises have begun a process of transformation that will deliver a contemporary, community-centred space for 21st century library users.

I look forward to building on these achievements, and those of earlier great Australian librarians such as WH Ifould and John Metcalfe, to maintain and grow the Library's international standing as a leading research library as well as to extend its reach throughout the communities of NSW.

We will do this within the strong framework of the Library's five-year strategy, launched in 2009, which is aligned with the priorities of our strong partnership in National and State Libraries Australasia (NSLA). Underpinned by four strategic priorities — Client-focused Library, Employer of Choice, Sustainability

and Revenue Growth — the strategy aims to expand the value of our collections and services, while increasing access for all NSW citizens, in the present and the future.

In 2010–11 the Library exceeded its targets against several goals aligned to its priorities.

CLIENT-FOCUSED LIBRARY

Major steps towards improving our Client-focused Library began in 2010–11 with the plan for a renovation of the Macquarie Street building, encompassing the State Reference Library and foyer areas. The contract was awarded for the first stage of the refurbishment, which will transform the State Reference Library to expand our capacity to cater for all clients with dedicated study rooms and more computers.

The plan, devised in consultation with staff and clients, also offers informal spaces where people can talk to friends and explore their interests via express internet. Specifications are being developed for the second stage to renovate the Macquarie Street foyer, with a new bookshop, cafe and enhanced 'theatre-style' auditorium.

The makeover of our physical spaces is matched by improvements in technology to enhance client access to the Library collections. Clients can now request the Library's material online, with the capacity to make requests before a visit to the Library so that material is ready on arrival.

Our range of online materials continues to grow with a 49% increase in eResources — 80% of eResources can be accessed from the client's place of choice. For clients onsite, the wireless network was enhanced with perpetual passwords issued.

The key amendments to the *Library Act 1939* (NSW), passed on 30 May 2010, were supported by the Library to give councils greater flexibility in managing regional library services. The year saw the Library take its collection to regional NSW with 24 lectures delivered across the State, 10 of these in partnership with Westpac and supported by local public libraries.

Our community learning program drew double the participants of the previous year, with tailored visits and curriculum-focused programs enjoyed by 5762 participants. Four new learning programs were attended by 3289 students from 84 schools.

Exhibitions drew large and diverse audiences this year: 141,355 visitors attended, a 35% increase on the 2009–10 total. The Library presented nine exhibitions in its galleries. Four showcased treasures from the Library's collection, such as manuscripts and relics to mark 200 years since the governorship of Lachlan Macquarie. *Kahlil Gibran: The Prophet, the Artist, the Man* from Lebanon was among five guest exhibitions.

Current and future clients were assured access to a treasure of Australian settlement when the NSW Government and TAL & Dai-Ichi Life helped the Library secure its most significant First Fleet-related acquisition since the 1930s. The magnificent TAL and Dai-Ichi Life collection comprised 741 natural history illustrations.

EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

The State Library is committed to ensuring the organisation is an Employer of Choice in NSW. Eighty-five per cent of staff completed an annual performance development review and the same number completed mid-year reviews. The Library launched a staff lecture series and more than 200 staff attended lectures by inhouse experts – on topics ranging from the First Fleet journals to subdivision plans – with the aim of broadening staff knowledge about unpublished collections.

Staff from across the Library collaborated on programs for public library staff and lifelong learners, using expert staff knowledge to present courses on topics such as social networking, preserving photographs and using legal resources. Twelve media spokespeople promoted exhibitions, travelling displays, guest exhibitions, major events, collections, acquisitions and significant donations. Four staff completed a media interview workshop which enabled them to share their knowledge.

The Library has a well-established staff recognition program, and this year gave eight Excellence in Action Awards to recognise staff actions that enrich the Library environment. To support a healthy workplace environment and encourage staff to adopt a healthy lifestyle, a Staff Wellbeing Committee was established.

REVENUE GROWTH

Two remarkable achievements in 2010–11 were the creation of approximately 350,000 eRecords and over 30,000 digital images of collection material, exceeding targets by 34% and 29% respectively.

The large number of new eRecords contributed to increased client demand for digital copies of collection material, with 3803 digital files delivered to external clients. The 34% increase in demand over 2009–10 generated \$164,049 in additional revenue.

The Library advanced its own digitisation program, completing the project to digitise 3500 wet plate negatives from the incredible Holtermann collection, which documents life on the Australian goldfields in exquisite detail. Significant preservation and digitisation work on the Library's collections was supported by \$601,000 raised by the Foundation for sponsorship and partnerships (up from \$526,000 in 2009–10). Donations reached \$2.5 million, well exceeding the annual target of \$500,000.

The Glasshouse Learning Space is a dynamic education centre equipped with the latest learning resources and technology. Opened by George Souris MP, Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing, and Minister for the Arts, the Glasshouse opening attracted broad media coverage.

The Library hosted the inaugural 'Mashup at the Mitchell' event as part of the NSLA Libraryhack competition where teams applied their creativity to the Library's collection, creating new 'apps' – online applications – using information and photographs from our catalogues and website.

**OUR OVERALL ASSESSMENT
OF PROGRESS ON EACH OF
THE LIBRARY'S STRATEGIC
PRIORITIES FOR 2010-11:**

CLIENT-FOCUSED
LIBRARY
 good/on track

EMPLOYER
OF CHOICE
 good/on track

REVENUE GROWTH
 good/on track

SUSTAINABILITY
 good/on track

SUSTAINABILITY

The Library's online capacity will be greatly improved as a result of the allocation of \$12.9 million to complete the eRecords project by June 2013. To advance this project, a wireless network was installed in the Macquarie stacks, enhancing access to the collections for staff and increasing productivity.

The Library's NSW.net service continues to improve internet access for public library clients with 70 upgrades of 70 new and existing internet services, 48 new wireless hotspots and 1387 service calls logged and resolved.

An online presence for State Library exhibitions and an iPhone app introduced for the *Kahlil Gibran* exhibition attracted a high number of new visitors to the Library's website. These visitors could also use the new 'zoom' facility on our online stories, Discover Collections, to view collection images in fine detail. Mobile devices and social media channels were increasingly used to access the Library's website.

In a strong effort to sustain staffing resources, 95% of budgeted Library-wide training courses were delivered.

A new service model was introduced for multicultural bulk loans to improve efficiency in purchasing multicultural material for public libraries. Collection security has been improved through computerised tracking of the circulation of rare books throughout the Library.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I commend the dedication of State Library staff, the Library Council of NSW, the Foundation, and our clients and supporters, who are responsible for the impressive achievements presented in this report. In particular, I must thank the Directors for continuing to drive the development of the Library during the period before I took up the position of State Librarian. Noelle Nelson, Director of Library Services, deserves special mention for acting in the position so effectively and positively over an extended period. It is wonderful to work with such committed colleagues and supporters.

We will continue to embrace new technologies and look at innovative ways to connect the people of NSW and beyond with our premier cultural collection. I am also looking forward to working closely with the dynamic public library network to help strengthen public libraries and their connections with the community. Together we will work to make libraries a vibrant force for the future of NSW.