Library Models in New South Wales

checklist

April 2008
State Library of New South Wales
checklist Contributors

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checklist currency

Issued: 7 April 2008
Last updated: 7 April 2008

Note: The checklist list is not exhaustive. If you have comments/ additions for the list please contact Public Library Services:

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Introduction


At the time this report was issued it was agreed that a checklist of some the matters that a local government authority would need to consider when reviewing the local library model would be of value.

The State Library of NSW, Public library Services division has consequently developed this checklist in association with Public Libraries NSW – Country. This checklist is intended to be a starting point and seeks to provide some guidance to researching different library models.

It is recommended that local government authorities considering a change to their library service model contact the State Library of NSW, Public Library Services (PLS). PLS will provide advice on the requirements of the Library Act 1939 and contact details of NSW Library Managers who can provide additional expert advice.

Note that the checklist list is not exhaustive. If you have comments/ additions for the list please contact Public Library Services on telephone (02) 9273 1527 or email: pls@sl.nsw.gov.au

Kathleen Bresnahan
Assistant State Librarian, Public Library Services
4 April 2008
checklist

Why do you want to change?

☐ Consider your motivation or rationale for changing – there are costs involved in changing your library service model and each model brings unique pros and cons.

☐ When is a regional library service too big? Consider the complexity of liaising with multiple councils.

☐ When is a library service too small to operate as a stand alone service? Will the service be financially viable and able to adequately serve the needs of the community?

What do you want to change to?

There are a number of library service models that you may wish to consider:

☐ a regional library service (section 12(1) of the Library Act - where local authorities agree that one local authority manages the provision of library services on their behalf)

☐ a cooperative library service under section 12(2) of the Library Act - where local authorities agree that certain functions are managed by one local authority on their behalf). Encompasses formal cooperative agreements and less formal agreements such as purchasing agreements.

☐ This may take the form of sharing library management systems (eg Shorelink), cooperative purchasing and processing (eg Port Macquarie and Kempsey), sharing staff expertise (eg Western Riverina Community Library), or aligning with other libraries in the network (eg. LADD)

☐ a cooperative – with other institutions, for example cooperation with TAFEs, universities, CTCs, RTCs, etc

☐ a stand alone service – one council, one library service

What is the local political environment?

☐ Is autonomy and retention of local identity a priority to you local authority?

☐ Is there strong regional support and cooperation across councils?
Consider existing and potential relationships between member councils
  - relativity of power between councils
  - managing the dynamics of the member councils
  - level of commitment and contribution of member councils

What will the financial implications be?
  - is it cost effective
  - how are the costs allocated
  - what is the funding formula for the region / cooperative
  - will a new model affect the library service’s ability to attract grant funds - is there an advantage in a regional or strategic partnership application
  - what is the status of reserve funds especially for replacement of mobile libraries, library management systems, etc
  - how will costs be redistributed if one or more members withdraw?
  - will there be economies of scale
  - what is the cost of joining
  - what is the cost of withdrawal
  - what opportunities are there for aggregation of services / costs
  - what is the level of commitment and contribution of member councils
  - what telecommunications infrastructure is required / available
  - are there advantages in joint purchase of library materials and technology

How will the library service be managed?
  - compliance with the Library Act 1939 & Library Regulation 2005
  - robustness of the library agreement including disputes resolution processes, entry and exit of parties, dissolution, etc
  - the role of the Executive/Administering Council when entering into a regional agreement under the Library Act 1939
  - the role of the Executive Officer in relation to a regional library service
reporting relationships between the Regional Library Manager and branch library managers, member councils, library committee and other library partners

formal communication framework

how will financial reporting be documented and communicated between member councils

lease agreements for infrastructure (eg buildings, fleet, photocopiers, ICT, etc)

ownership, maintenance, management and control of assets (buildings, fleet, photocopiers, ICT, etc)

relationship/communication between Library Manager and member councils/library committees/other partners

allocation of time to council relationships – v- operational requirements

service level agreements – including professional development of staff to deliver the services specified

library service planning – how will regional and branch library planning be undertaken

strategic development – will member libraries be able to undertake local initiatives

management and planning – centralised versus local

staffing – centralised versus local control

marketing and promotion of library and information services

cooperative projects

Consider the physical environment – geography & demography

population growth – increase or reduction anticipated in the next 10 years

what are the distances to be covered – courier costs for example / regular schedule of visits to branches/telecommunications costs, etc

do opening hours at headquarters facilitate access for clients visiting from outlying areas, for example to the reference collection
do ‘outlying’ residents come to your regional centre or go elsewhere for shopping/ services

What are the service and staffing implications?

access to specialists/ professional staff can overcome a lack of council experience and local capacity

employment opportunities

ability to attract qualified staff

professional development - the opportunity to provide training / mentoring / staff exchanges / career paths / professional networking

programs / events – number, type, capacity to deliver

centralised coordination for programs and resources, eg children’s activities

lowest common denominator may determine service levels

a service level agreement may set minimum service levels

employment opportunities

will there be increased collection access – regional collections may be larger, reference collections more in depth and stock rotation refreshes the collection

standards, performance measures, benchmarking

shared library management system and catalogue(s)

how will the unique local studies collections be managed in a regional / cooperative arrangement

is there a need for a client newsletter?

What are the infrastructure considerations?

level of control of facilities and services

level of control of staff – are they employed by the Administering/ Executive council or are they employed by the participating Councils

telecommunication infrastructure – cost/ availability
☐ standard of buildings

☐ library management system – capacity to maintain and upgrade

☐ IT support – within the library service and within the participating council(s)

☐ vehicles – library car/ van, Library Manager car, etc

☐ mobile libraries – standard, suitability, age, capacity, etc

☐ administrative support

☐ will there be a shared website if it is a regional or cooperative service

☐ responsibility for collection of statistics, development of performance measures, benchmarking, etc.

☐ is there a need for a staff newsletter, or other regular communication in regional/ cooperative services

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Additional sources of information
Table of contents [extract from Table of Contents]

Part A
Introduction
Classification and grouping of councils
Council profiles
Profile of council areas in alphabetical order
Data collection and analysis
Maps of NSW, Sydney and Inner Metro Local Government Areas

Part B
Rating
Average rate per assessment
  • residential
  • farmland
  • business
Outstanding rates & annual charges
Percentage movement in rates and annual charges revenue from previous year
Percentage movement in user charges and fees revenue from previous year

Financial
Sources of income from continuing operations
Total continuing operations income per capita
Dissection of expenses from continuing operations
Total expenses from continuing operations per capita
Current ratio (unrestricted)
Debt service ratio
Capital expenditure ratio

Corporate
Number of equivalent full time staff
  Compliance with statutory reporting deadlines
    • Annual report received by department
    • State of the environment report received by department
    • Financial report received by department
    • Access and equity statements
    • Social/community plans

Library services [From 2006/07 this information will appear in Public Library Statistics as detailed on the following pages.]
Library [operating] expenses per capita
Circulation per capita

Recreation and leisure services
Net recreation and leisure expenses per capita

Community services
Community services expenses per capita
Table of Contents

Summary Statistics 1989+

Table 1  Expenditure and Subsidy: By Councils
Table 1a Voted Expenditure, Subsidy and Special Purpose Grant
Table 1b Expenditure and Subsidy: By Councils - Summaries
Table 1c Expenditure and Subsidy: By Library Service

Table 2  Circulation
Table 2a Circulation Breakdown by Format
Table 2b Circulation: Books by Category
Table 2c Circulation of Non-Book Material
Table 2d Circulation of Separate Collections

Table 3  Total Stock as at …
Table 3a Total Bookstock as at June …
Table 3b Total of Non-Book Material as at June …
Table 3c Total serials as at June …
Table 3d Separate Collections as at June …
Table 3e Acquisitions and Discards

Table 4  Registered Borrowers at June …

Table 5  Service Points and Hours of Opening as at June …

Table 6  Full-time/Part-time Library Staff as at June …

Table 7  Regional and Joint Library Services

Table 8  Summary of Comparative Statistics

Table 9  Population

Table 10  Total Expenditure
Table 10a Expenditure Per Capita
Table 10b Expenditure on Salaries Per Capita
Table 10c Expenditure on Library Materials Per Capita

Table 11  Library Material as at June …
Table 11a Library Material Per Capita
Table 11b Average Cost of Library Material
Table 11c Age of Library Material

Table 12  Adult Fiction as at June …
Table 13  Adult Periodical Titles as at June …
From the 2006/07 issue the following additional information will be published in *Public Library Statistics*:

- Library Operating Expenses Per Capita – as part of Table 1a
- Expenditure on Library Material by Library Service – Table 1d
- Circulation by Council – Table 2e
- Non-Resident Members by Council – Table 4a
Taking services into the future: a manual for country library services
Department for Victorian Communities, Local Government and Regional Services Division, August 2003. 247 pages. Available at:


Scroll down to the Technology heading (note that the publication covers much more than technology).

- Part 1 is on Organisational Culture – Operational Analysis: pages 1-92
- Part 2, section 4 is on Financial analysis: pages 93-200
- Part 3 is the Attachments document, pages 201-247 which includes:
  1. Pro forma Chart of Accounts for Country Library Services
  2. Depots – Summary of Capital and Recurrent Costs
  3. Model Pro forma Service and Funding Agreement

Table of Contents

Section 1: Organisational Culture 7
1.1 Observations re Organisational Culture 8
1.2 Characteristics of Current Library Cultures 9
1.3 Building Blocks 11
  1.3.1 Cohesion
  1.3.2 Communication Networks
  1.3.3 Continuous Learning
  1.3.4 Customer Focus
  1.3.5 Goal clarity
  1.3.6 Initiative
  1.3.7 Leadership
  1.3.8 Performance Emphasis
  1.3.9 Recognition and Reward Systems
  1.3.10 Team Identification
  1.3.11 Working Relationships
1.4 Implementing & Maintaining Culture 22
  1.4.1 Define Core Values
  1.4.2 Assess Current Culture
  1.4.3 Identify Gaps and Develop Bridging Strategies
  1.4.4 Communicate Culture to Stakeholders
  1.4.5 Institutionalise and Internalise Culture
1.5 Design Questions and Choices 27
1.6 Summation of Key Points 29
1.7 Conclusion 31

Section 2: Benchmarking 33
2.1 General Observations re Benchmarking 34
2.2 Approaches to Benchmarking 35
2.3 Selecting Benchmarks 37
2.4 Proposed Benchmarks 39
2.5 Profiling Benchmarks 44
2.6 Subsequent Action 51
2.7 Summation of Key Points 53
2.8 Conclusion 55

Library Models in New South Wales checklist 13
Section 3: Operations Analysis

3.1 Core Analysis Areas
3.2 Collection Management
  3.2.1 Collection Turnover Report
  3.2.2 Obsolescence Report
  3.2.3 Procurement Effectiveness Report
  3.2.4 Ageing Analysis Report
3.3 Membership
  3.3.1 Member Details
  3.3.2 Base Level Analysis
  3.3.3 Segmentation by Key Membership Characteristics
  3.3.4 Penetration Reports
3.4 Circulation and Usage Patterns
  3.4.1 Base Measures
  3.4.2 Members Borrowing Profile
  3.4.3 Circulation Patterns
  3.4.4 Average Borrowing Levels
  3.4.5 Cross-Usage between Neighbouring Services
3.5 Mobile Libraries
3.6 Summation of Key Points
3.7 Conclusion

Section 4: Financial Management

4.1 Management v. Financial Accounting
4.2 Relationship to Management Practices
4.3 Responsibility Centres
4.4 Cost types
4.5 Chart of Accounts
4.6 Budgeting – Roles and Rules
  4.6.1 Budget Development – Static Branches
  4.6.2 Budget Development – Mobile Libraries
  4.6.3 Budget Development – Headquarters Operating Budget
  4.6.4 Capital Budgeting – Collection Materials
  4.6.5 Capital Budgeting – Other Assets
4.7 Budget Development
  4.7.1 Budget Development – Static Branches
  4.7.2 Budget Development – Mobile Libraries
  4.7.3 Budget Development – Headquarters Operating Budget
  4.7.4 Capital Budgeting – Collection Materials
  4.7.5 Capital Budgeting – Other Assets
4.8 Costs and Revenue Allocation
  4.8.1 Allocation of Headquarters Budget
  4.8.2 Mobile Library Allocation
  4.8.3 Capital Budgets Allocation
4.9 Budget Consolidation
4.10 Variance Analysis
  4.10.1 Types of Variance
  4.10.2 Use of Variance Analysis by Library Services
  4.10.3 Calculating Variances
4.11 Economic Evaluations using Discounted Cash Flow Analysis
4.12 Summation of Key Points
4.13 Conclusion

Section 5: Alternative Service Delivery Modes

5.1 Depots
5.2 Mobile Libraries
5.3 Library Agencies
5.4 Delivery Service
5.5 Housebound Services
5.6 Convergent Services
5.7 Customer Service Comparison of Alternatives
Library Specification Manual

t_docs/libraryspecificationmanual.pdf

Table of Contents

**PART ONE – PREPARATION FOR DEVELOPING SERVICE SPECIFICATION**

| LIBRARY SPECIFICATION DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES | 9 |
| POLICY CONTEXT | 10 |
| 3.1 Vision Statement | 10 |
| 3.2 Values | 10 |
| 3.3 Principles | 10 |
| 3.4 Goals | 11 |
| 3.5 Library Services Operating Context | 11 |

**PACKAGING OF LIBRARY SERVICES**

| 4.1 Operations | 13 |
| 4.1.1 Mechanical Task | 13 |
| 4.1.2 Customer Services | 15 |
| 4.1.3 Management Services | 16 |
| 4.1.4 Whole Library Service | 16 |
| 4.2 Assets – Property and Materials Management | 16 |
| 4.3 Commercial Services | 17 |
| 4.4 Specification Overview | 18 |

**PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

| 5.1 Performance Indicators | 20 |
| 5.2 Library Typology | 22 |
| 5.2.1 Candidate Outcomes | 23 |
| 5.2.2 Candidate Service Type | 23 |
| 5.3 Customer Surveys | 24 |

**TIMEFRAME FOR LIBRARY SPECIFICATION**

| 26 |

**PART TWO – THE SERVICE SPECIFICATION**

| OVERVIEW | 30 |
| 1.1 Services Required | 30 |
| 1.2 Aim of the Library Service | 30 |
| 1.3 Role of the Library Service | 31 |
| 1.4 Provision of a Quality Library Service | 32 |
| 1.5 Profile of the City of XXX | 33 |

**LIBRARY SERVICE**

<p>| 35 |
| 2.1 A Co-operative Approach | 35 |
| 2.2 Innovation and Service Development | 35 |
| 2.3 Library Service Monitoring | 35 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Provision of Information by the Provider</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 Provider Involvement in Library Service Planning</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 Provider Involvement in Broader Council Planning Processes</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7 Existing Service Agreements and Contracts</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SERVICE DELIVERY</strong></td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 General</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Management</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Assurance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statutory Requirements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract/Agreement Reporting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Service Outputs (Direct Customer/User)</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Points and Floor Areas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours of Opening</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Access Technology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport and Parking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Community Meeting Room/Facilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Restructuring of Library Services
Restructuring of Library Services Manual. State Library of NSW, August 1999, 45 pages – deals with change management. Available at:


Table of Contents

1. WHY CHANGE? 5
   1.1 Change drivers 5
   1.2 Effective strategies 6
   1.3 Characteristics of successful reorganisations 6

2. CHANGE MANAGEMENT - AN OVERVIEW 9
   2.1 What is change management? 9
   2.2 The change process 10
   2.3 Key elements of an effective change management system 12

3. THE ORGANISATION AND CHANGE 14
   3.1 Structure and accountability 14
   3.2 Change and organisational diagnosis 17
   3.3 Changing views of the organisation 21

4. KEY STEPS IN THE CHANGE PROCESS 25

5. CHANGE AND THE HUMAN FACTOR 34
   5.1 Change leadership 34

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Library Users Charter 37
Appendix 2: Service Quality Components 38
Appendix 3: Business Planning and Measurement Processes 39
Library Models in New South Wales at a Glance


Table of Contents

Background 1
  Context 1
  Research approach 1
  Library types 2

Summary of findings 3
  Popular Library Models 3
  The Status Quo 4
  Comparative Performance 5

Organisational Findings 6
  Standalone 6
  Regional 7
  Cooperative 8

Perceived Benefits 9
  Standalone 9
  Regional 10
  Cooperative 11

Perceived Concerns 12
  Standalone 12
  Regional 12
  Cooperative 13

Stakeholder Relationships 13

Decision making 16
  Standalone 16
  Regional 17
  Cooperative 17
  Cost versus quality 18

Change Drivers 18

Strengths and Weaknesses 20
  Standalone 21
  Regional 21
  Cooperative 22

The Ideal Model 22

Conclusion 23
Library Models in New South Wales


For contact details see http://www.cpla.asn.au/

Regionalisation in Victorian Public Libraries


Pages 15-16 include a list of advantages and disadvantages of regional libraries – note that in Victoria regional libraries are incorporated under the Victorian Local Government Act, sections 196 and 197.

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