

New South Wales Public Libraries Learning and Development Framework 2014



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NEW SOUTH WALES

Introduction

This Learning and Development Framework sets out how the State Library of New South Wales will support the professional development of the public library workforce in New South Wales over the next three years.

This Framework considers changes in the library and information sector over the last decade and responds to the issues and opportunities identified in the Public Library Professional Development Audit conducted in 2013.

It is intended that a 3 year strategy will be developed in consultation with key public library and State Library stakeholders. The Framework was endorsed by the Public Libraries Consultative Committee on 17 March 2014.

The Learning Context

There are a number of learning and development providers in the library sector. These include the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) as the professional body, universities, TAFE and private organisations.

Public libraries in NSW are operated and managed by local councils. Local councils provide training and development specific to local government such as training in human resources, customer service, budgeting, supervisory skills and financial management.

The State Library of NSW supports the development of public libraries across rural and metropolitan NSW with professional development programs and training programs specific to the library and information sector, and management and service provision in public libraries.

This support is provided in accordance with the Library Council of NSW's objects:¹

- to promote, provide and maintain library services for the people of NSW through the State Library in cooperation with local libraries
- to advise local authorities on matter of policy and administration relating to library services

¹ Library Act 1939, s4A

NSW Public Library Learning and Development Needs

The Public Library Professional Development Audit conducted in 2013 identified a range of issues and opportunities for learning and development across the NSW public library network.²

Issues

- Professional development needs to provide practical support, skills and knowledge development, and inspiration and ideas.
- While State Library learning programs are highly valued across the network, **learning needs are diverse** and relevance of content is largely dependent on local contexts with local contexts affecting content needs and the ability to participate.
- The most significant factors affecting the ability of NSW public library staff to access training programs relate to **staffing and rostering requirements**, and **cost**.
- While having some flexibility within the program allows the State Library to leverage opportunities (e.g. visiting speakers) this can create **problems for planning at a local level**.
- There is a general need for support and training in **strategy and management** areas, and leadership, strategic planning, evaluation and community engagement continue to be areas where libraries would benefit from learning and development programs. The State Library needs to refine the learning and development program to best respond to this need.
- Skills gaps in emerging areas of library services such as **social media and ebooks** continue to be areas of concern across the NSW public library network. Further investigation is required to identify specific skills gaps which are likely to extend beyond ICT training to strategic planning around the use of technology in service provision.
- **Succession planning and the transfer of knowledge** to the next generation of library leaders is an urgent need for many public libraries across the State.
- The scope of State Library training programs is unclear to the public library network.
- The scope of training programs offered and **understanding of professional development needs in libraries varies significantly** across different local councils. The State Library plays a significant role in filling these gaps.

Opportunities

- Libraries generally have the **capacity to use both online and onsite** formats to access learning.
- Technology based training makes broader reach of programs across the State possible.

² See *Public Library Training Needs Audit 2013* on page 12

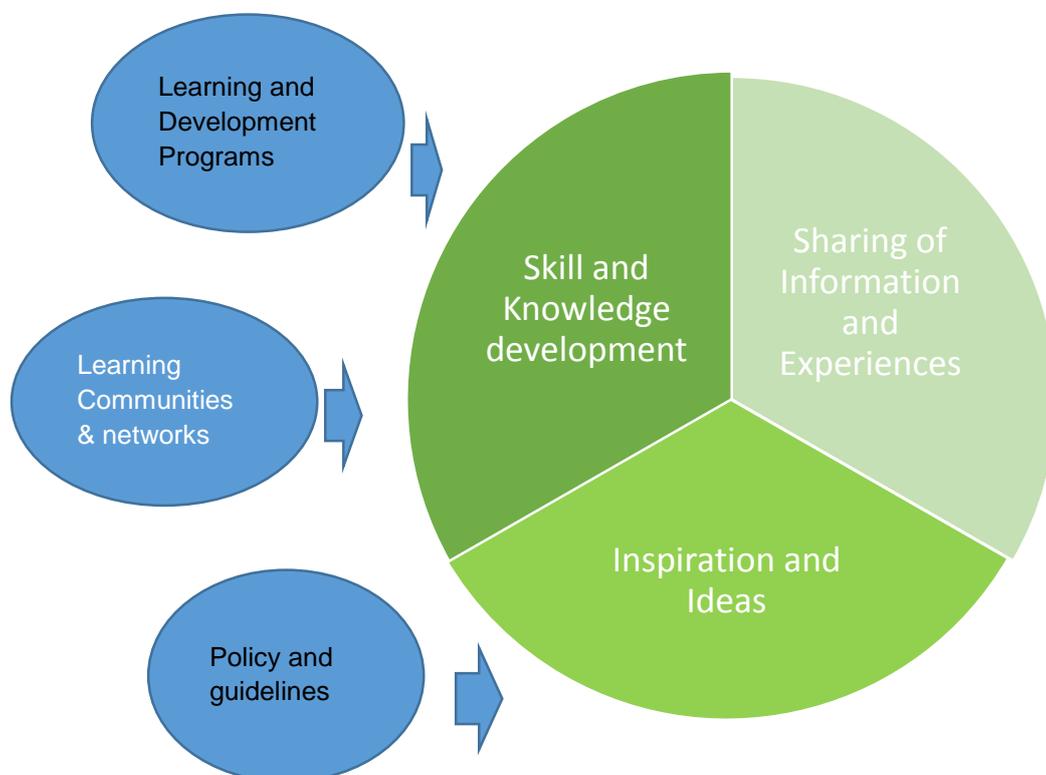
- Large regional centres have the capacity and facilities to host **regional based training**.
- There is **significant expertise across the State Library** that matches the identified learning needs of the public library network.
- **Mechanisms are in place for libraries to share** information and experiences, especially in areas relating to specialist library and information service provision.
- There are a **significant number of providers** and programs targeting the library and information sector.

A Framework for Learning and Development for NSW Public Libraries

The State Library's *Public Library Learning and Development Framework* identifies three outcome areas for the NSW Public Library network:

1. Skills and knowledge development across a broad range topics related to the library and information sector
2. Sharing of information and experiences
3. Inspiration and ideas generation

The Framework identifies three mechanisms to achieve the above learning and development outcomes- *learning and development programs, learning communities and networks* and *policies and guidelines*.



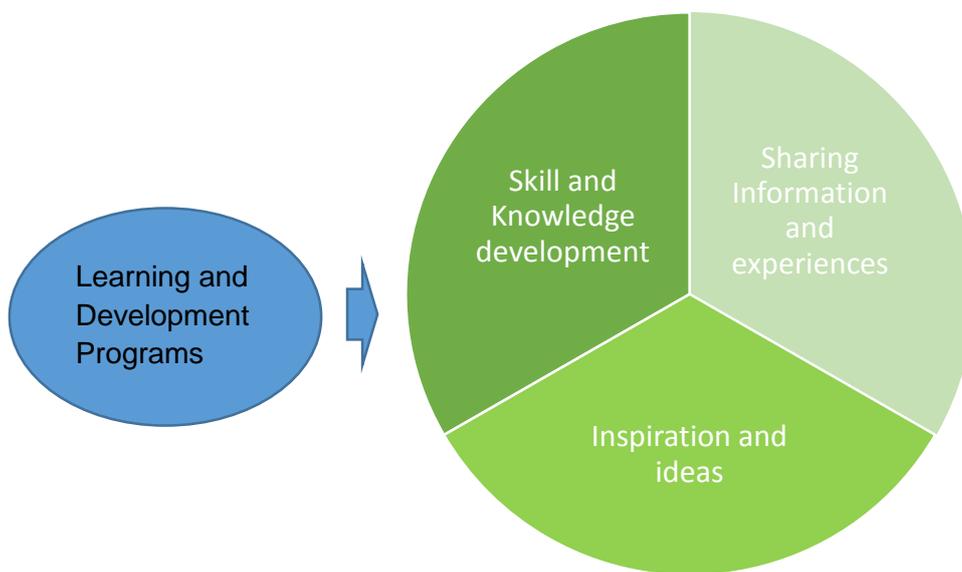
1. *Learning and Development programs* include formal and structured training programs, conferences, sessions, presentations and workshops.
2. *Learning communities and networks* are communities of interest which enable the sharing of information and experience in a specified learning area.
3. *Policies and guidelines* support the ongoing learning and development of public library staff within the context of day to day operations.

The details of each strategy are outlined below.

Key principles

- The State Library performs a number of roles within the learning and development framework including provider, coordinator, manager, funder, facilitator and publisher.
- Professional development programs and training programs will be specific to the library and information sector and/or management and service provision in public libraries.
- Local councils will be responsible for providing training and development specific to local government such as training in human resources, customer service, budgeting and financial management.
- Online and face to face options will be offered where possible.
- Training will be delivered in both rural and metropolitan locations.
- An annual program will be published and promoted.
- The program will be flexible enough to accommodate opportunities which have not been included in the annual program, for example visiting international speakers.

Learning and Development programs



Learning programs include formal and structured training programs, conferences, seminars, presentations and workshops. Learning programs may be conducted online or face to face. Learning programs will address identified priority skill and knowledge gaps across the public library network, raise awareness of public library issues and opportunities and services, build an understanding of future library services and models, inspire service developments and service models.

State Library role

The State Library:

- develops content for tailored NSW public library programs
- delivers content for tailored NSW public library programs
- coordinates and supports access to a range of learning and development programs tailored NSW public libraries
- facilitates, supports and promotes participation in a range of externally developed learning programs
- funds participation in range of externally developed learning programs

Identified learning priorities

- Leadership
- Strategy and planning
- Evaluation
- Information technology including social media, e-lending, new technologies and digitisation
- Program development

Example of current programs

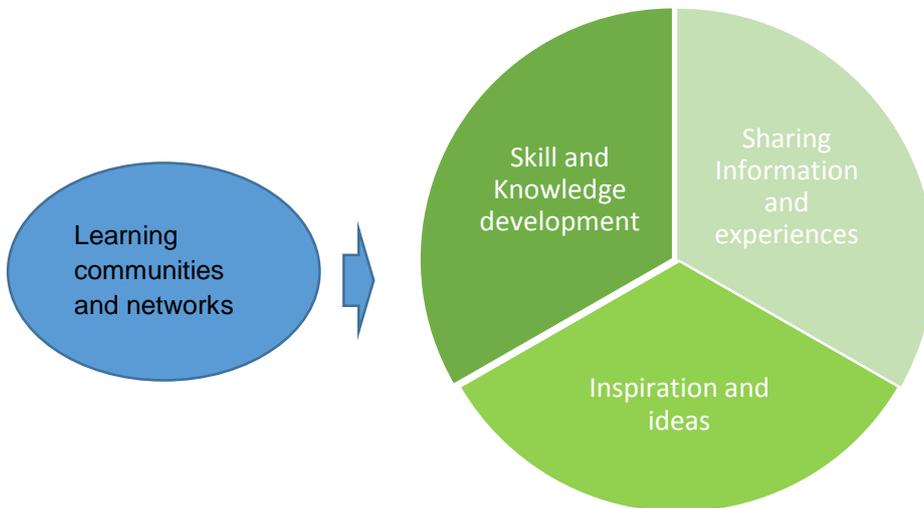
- Taking the Lead
- Develop, host and manage Refex online reference training
- NSW.net Technology seminar
- ELending Kit (eLK) learning program
- Rewarding reading
- RDA training

Evaluation

- Specific KPIs will be developed as part of the Strategy.

Learning Communities and Networks

Communities and networks enable the sharing of information and experience in a specified learning area across the NSW public library network, the broader library network and other relevant networks.



Communities and networks involve a number of participants that share information and experiences on a specified learning area in an unstructured or structured forum. Communities and networks may be face to face or online and include work groups, meetings, elists, wikis, blogs.

State Library role

The State library supports and facilitates the establishment and development of communities of interest and networks. This support includes advice to working groups, support and facilitation of seminars, venue provision, elist hosting and wiki/blog hosting.

The State Library also participates in learning communities and networks.

Identified learning areas

- Specialist library skills and knowledge including reference and information, readers advisory, children's, young adult, multicultural, literacy, legal and drug information, local studies
- Program development for specific target groups
- State Library services, collections and expertise

Examples of current Communities and networks

- Making Connections
- HSC forum
- Multicultural working group
- Local History working group
- Readers' Advisory working group

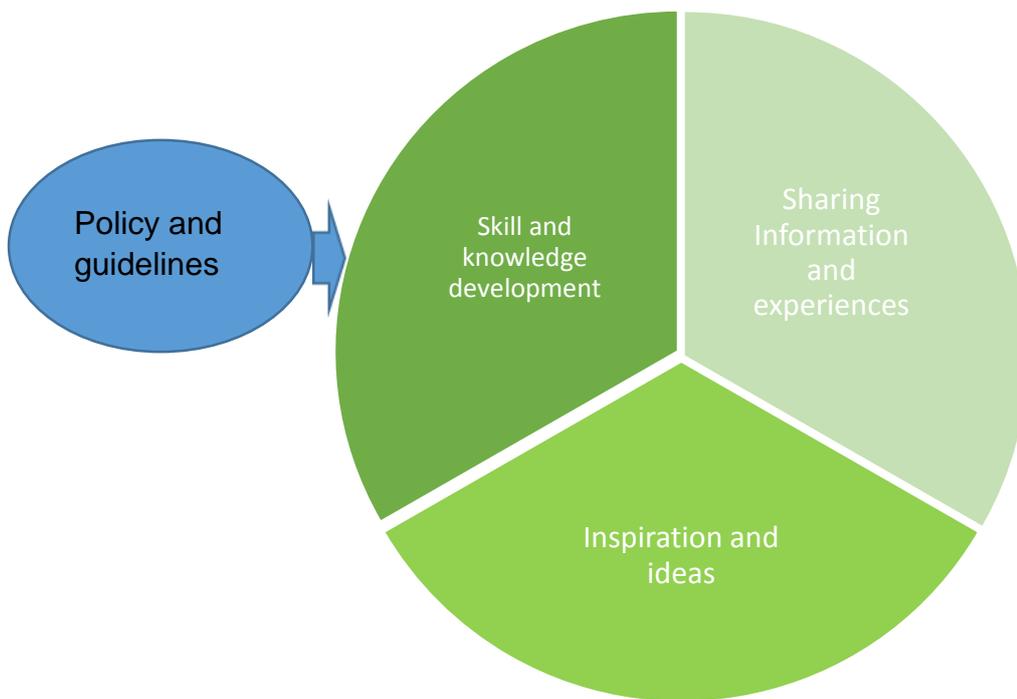
- Reference and Information Services working group
- Young people in NSW working group
- Older people working group
- Document delivery working group
- Literacy working group
- Marketing working group
- LIAC and druginfo forum

Evaluation

- Specific KPIs will be developed as part of the Strategy.

Policy and Guidelines

Policies and guidelines support the ongoing learning and development of public library staff within the context of day to day operations. Documented policies, procedures, guidelines, good practice case studies, standards and benchmarks to support the development and management of public library services in NSW.



Identified learning priorities

- Strategy planning and evaluation
- Service delivery models
- Local studies and digitisation
- Literacy framework

State Library role

The State Library works in consultation with the NSW public library network to develop and publish policies and guidelines. The State Library undertakes research both within and outside the public library network to identify good practice case studies, benchmarks and standards and policies and procedures.

The State Library will

- Provide expertise and content for policy and guidelines.
- Undertake research in consultation with the public library network, in cooperation with the Public Library Network Research Committee.

- Manage and fund research.
- Publish research, policies, guidelines and case studies

Examples of policies and guidelines

- Annual update of Living Learning Libraries
- Statewide local studies strategy
- Regional Library Management Models project
- Statewide Literacy Framework
- Digital Practice Guidelines
- Library Council Guidelines

Evaluation

- Specific KPIs will be developed as part of the Strategy.

Public Library Training Needs Audit 2013

Summary Report

Project Objectives

- Identify current and future gaps in key skills, knowledge and abilities across the NSW public library network
- Identify key training needs across the NSW public library network
- Prioritise training needs across the NSW public library network
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the current professional development program
- Assess the appropriateness of scheduling, logistics, management and funding allocation of the current professional development program

Methodology and response rate

Library managers across the NSW public library network were invited to complete an online survey with a range of questions on factors effecting participation, training format preferences, skill gaps and training priorities. Library managers were asked to comment on the training gaps and needs of their library staff.

There were 85 respondents to the survey from 75 of the 99 library services across metropolitan and country public libraries. Of the 85 responses approximately 41% were from metropolitan library managers and 59% from country public libraries, this is generally reflective of the public library network composition.

Survey Results

General observations

The learning and development needs of the NSW public library network are broad and diverse and often unique to the individual local council context. While issues around accessing training are more prevalent in libraries further away from Sydney and libraries with smaller staffing sizes, content needs are reasonably consistent across the entire network regardless of size or location.

A strong theme emerging throughout the survey responses was the need for learning and development in both leadership and management and strategy and planning. These themes were evident within the frequency of responses indicating skills gaps in these areas and the additional commentary provided. It is also likely that skills gaps in emerging areas of library services such as social media and ebooks extend beyond ICT training to strategic planning around the use of technology in service provision, however further investigation is required to verify this.

The need for learning and development, planning and management is not surprising given the significant need for succession planning and the need to transfer of knowledge to the next generation of library leaders. Some analysis of responses is provided below.

1. Value and satisfaction of State Library training

While NSW public library managers value SLNSW training there are some indications that the scope and range of programs offered are not meeting the needs of a significant portion of NSW public libraries. NSW public library managers rated the SLNSW training and professional development program highly with 92% of libraries rating the value of the SLNSW training and professional development at 4 or 5. (1 being the weakest and 5 being the strongest) However satisfaction with the range of content offered rated significantly lower with 44% of respondents rating their level of satisfaction at 3 or below.

Q2 On a scale of 1-5 (1 being weakest and 5 being strongest) rate how strongly you agree with the following statements-

Answered: 89 Skipped: 0



Recommendations

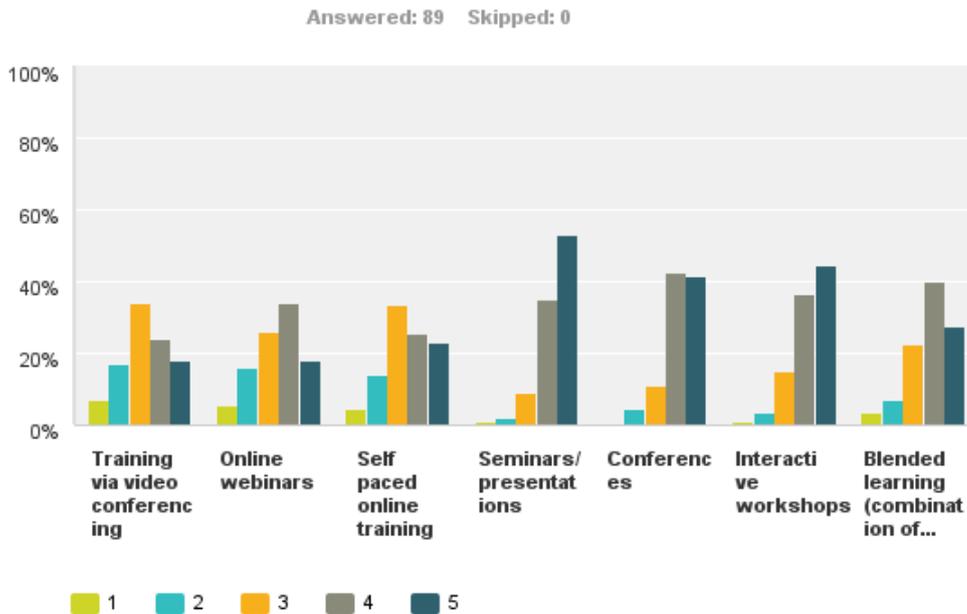
The State Library:

- Develop and publish a learning and development framework which supports the strategic professional development of the public library network
- Develop a three year learning and development strategy in consultation with the public library network

2. Preferences for training format

The majority of library managers indicated that their staff were reasonably comfortable with all formats of training. On a scale of 1-5 (1 being the least and 5 being the most) at least 75% of respondents indicated that comfort levels of between 3-5 for all formats of training.

Q5 Different types of training are better delivered in different formats, assuming the training was appropriate for the format, on a scale of 1-5 (1 being the least and 5 being the most) please indicate how comfortable you believe your staff would be participating in:



However libraries are clearly less comfortable with training using technology. A number of respondents indicated that the main issue was not technical capacity but the need for a 'cultural shift' to make time and commit to online training. It is noted that to date there has been limited online learning and development offered across the NSW public library network. It is likely that greater use and exposure to online training and videoconferencing would increase comfort levels with this format.

'Various online delivery options are probably good but require a commitment to spending time doing them without being distracted by the daily workflow. Sometimes it's easier just to go to Sydney.'

There also appear to be some logistical problems with technology based training. Respondents indicated a number of issues around undertaking technology based training such as videoconferencing and online training. These included access to videoconferencing facilities, IT infrastructure, level of staff IT skills and computer literacy. In addition, respondents indicated that staff were unlikely to find or set aside time to undertake self paced online learning. Self paced training online can be pushed aside as 'it can be done tomorrow', specific events must be attended once booked in. Levels of comfort were rated most highly for seminars and interactive workshops.

Recommendations

The State Library:

- Conduct an audit of capacity for online training and videoconferencing
- Ensure technical specification compatibility for videoconferencing are established
- Identify opportunities to develop training content for online and videoconference training
- Include online and videoconference training in the annual calendar of learning and development
- Investigate suppliers of relevant online training programs
- Where possible seminars and conferences hosted by the State Library are recorded and published on the State Library website

3. Participation

The most significant factors affecting the ability of NSW public library staff access training programs related to staffing and rostering requirements and cost. More than 50% of respondents rated rostering and staff time away from the library as major factors affecting their ability to participate in training. Staffing and rostering did not appear to be affected by the number of staff working within a library, rating as a major factor for approximately 50% of respondents across all staff sizes.

Issues around cost such as 'cost of backfilling, cost of travel, and cost of accommodation were also identified as major issues for approximately 30% of overall respondents. Correspondingly the availability of travel subsidy was more likely to be rated as a major factor for participation by libraries further way from Sydney.

The significance of staffing and rostering issues as well cost related issues were more likely to rate as a major issues in libraries which were further from Sydney or specifically more than 50km from Sydney. A number of respondents indicated that alternative locations in regional NSW for programs would be resolve this issue.

'We are a rural library & time away impacts on all aspects of our service. It would be great if some opportunities were available in larger rural cities and towns. With limited staffing levels and availability of casuals we cannot manage to send more than 2 but usually only one staff member'

However other respondents (from rural NSW) indicated that Sydney CBD rather than other Sydney suburbs was the most convenient location for travel.

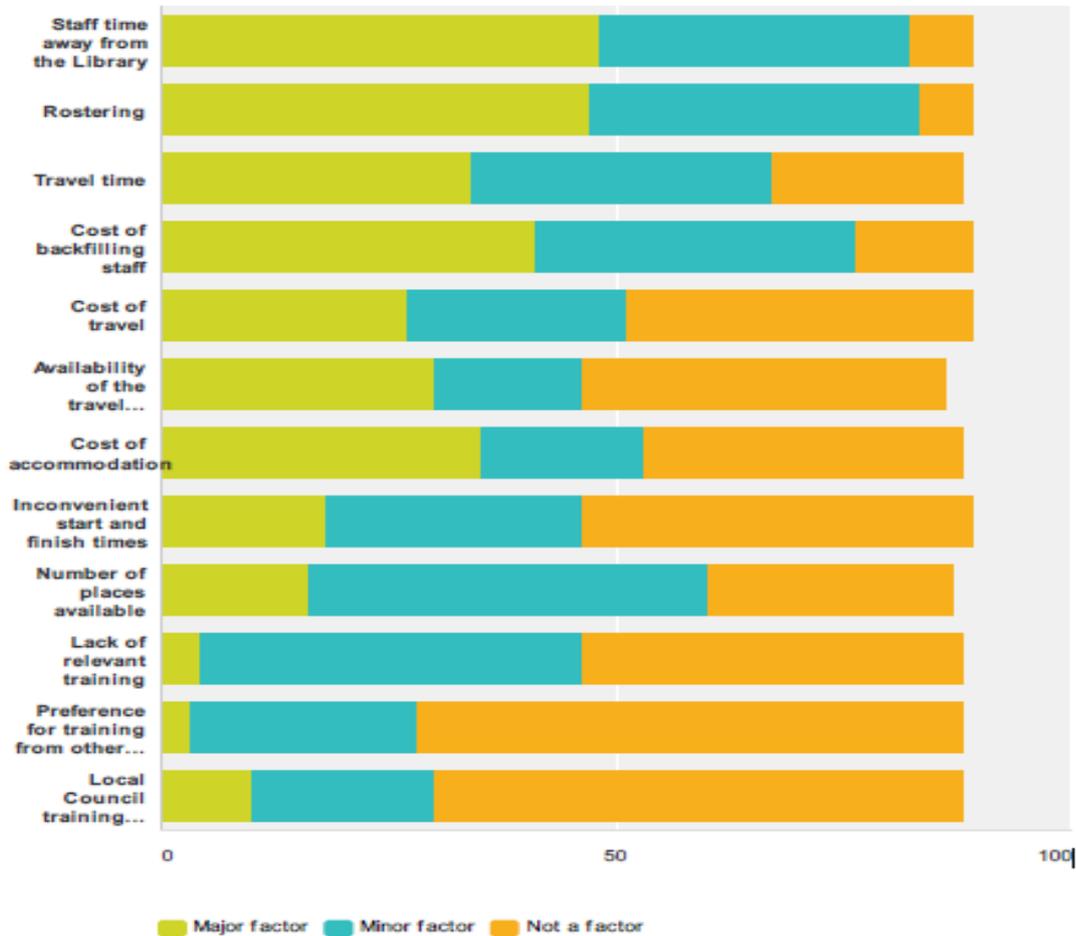
It is beneficial that training is held in the CBD not in the suburbs due to easy access from the airport.

Factors that are able to be directly affected by the State Library such as start and finish times, relevance of training and number of places available generally did not rate as factors or were minor factors which affected ability to participate.

A number of respondents indicated that more notice of programs and earlier promotion of programs was necessary for budgets and planning and that training less than 1 day in length was difficult to justify.

Q3 Please tick the box that best reflects how the following issues affect your ability to allow library staff to participate in training and professional development activities delivered through the State Library of NSW.

Answered: 89 Skipped: 0



Recommendations

The State Library:

- Develop and publish an annual calendar of learning and development
- Establish a register of regional training facilities
- Establish a register of metropolitan training facilities
- Identify regional training opportunities
- Review the travel subsidy

4. Skill and knowledge gaps

Summary of skill and knowledge gaps

Skills needs and gaps identified in the survey were broad and varied.

Areas where a high number of respondents (more than 70% of respondents) indicated a need to develop skills and knowledge were in the areas of leadership and management,

information technology and communication and promotion. Specific areas identified are indicated below:

A. Leadership and management

- Leadership: being able to take a lead, making strategic decisions, leading a team or organisation in new directions
- Strategic planning
- Change management
- Service and program evaluation
- Project management: planning, implementing and monitoring projects

B. Communication and promotion

- Fundraising: raising money, writing funding applications, securing sponsorship
- Marketing and promotion: developing marketing strategies, materials and activities to promote the library
- Advocacy: managing public relations, lobbying and advocacy, promotion of your library through meetings, presentations, media contact
- Community consultation: developing and implementing tools and mechanisms to consult within the community and analysing results

C. Specialist library skills and knowledge

D. Information technology

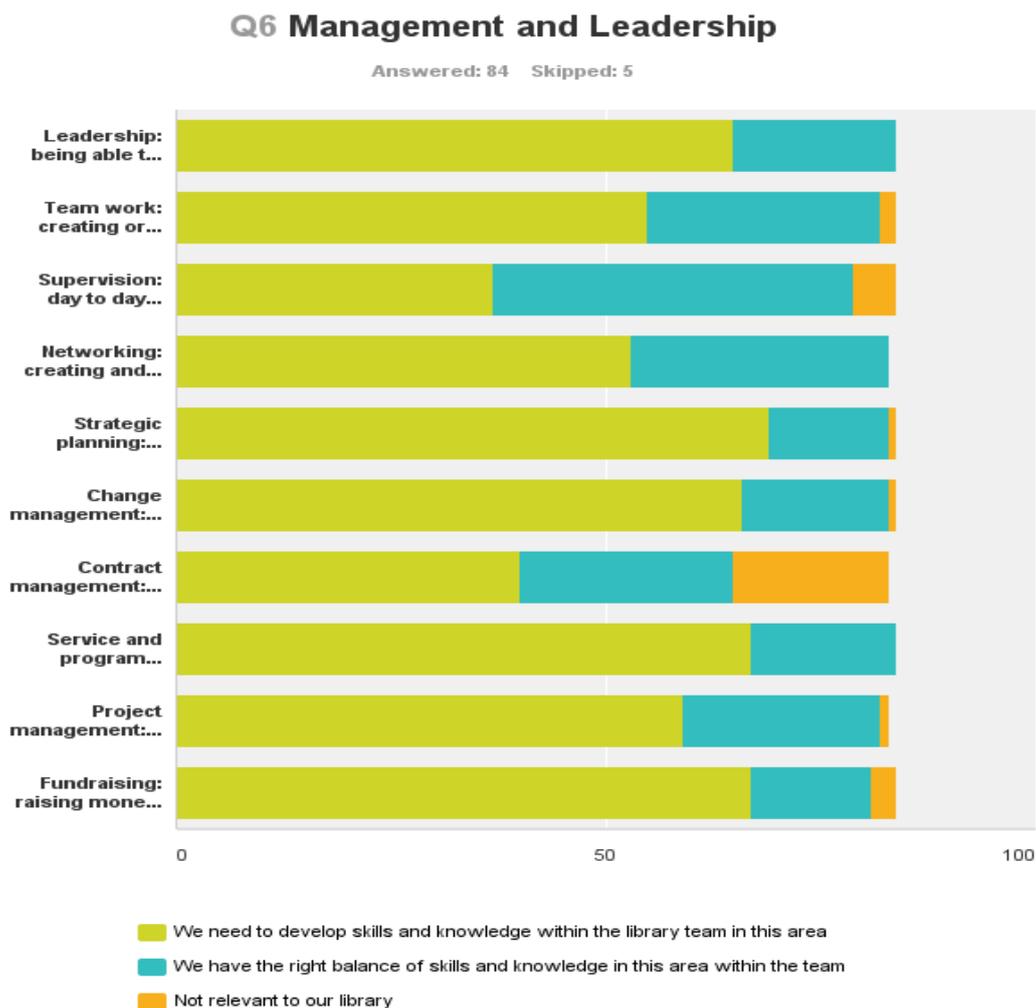
- Digitising collections: best practice, processes, copyright
- Social networking tools:
- New technologies: awareness of new technologies, hardware, applications and software, mobile devices
- eBooks: awareness of publishers, suppliers, acquisition models, platforms, formats, readers, licensing and legislation

E. Program development and management

F. Collection development and management

- eBooks awareness and issues
- Collection preservation and management

a) Management and Leadership



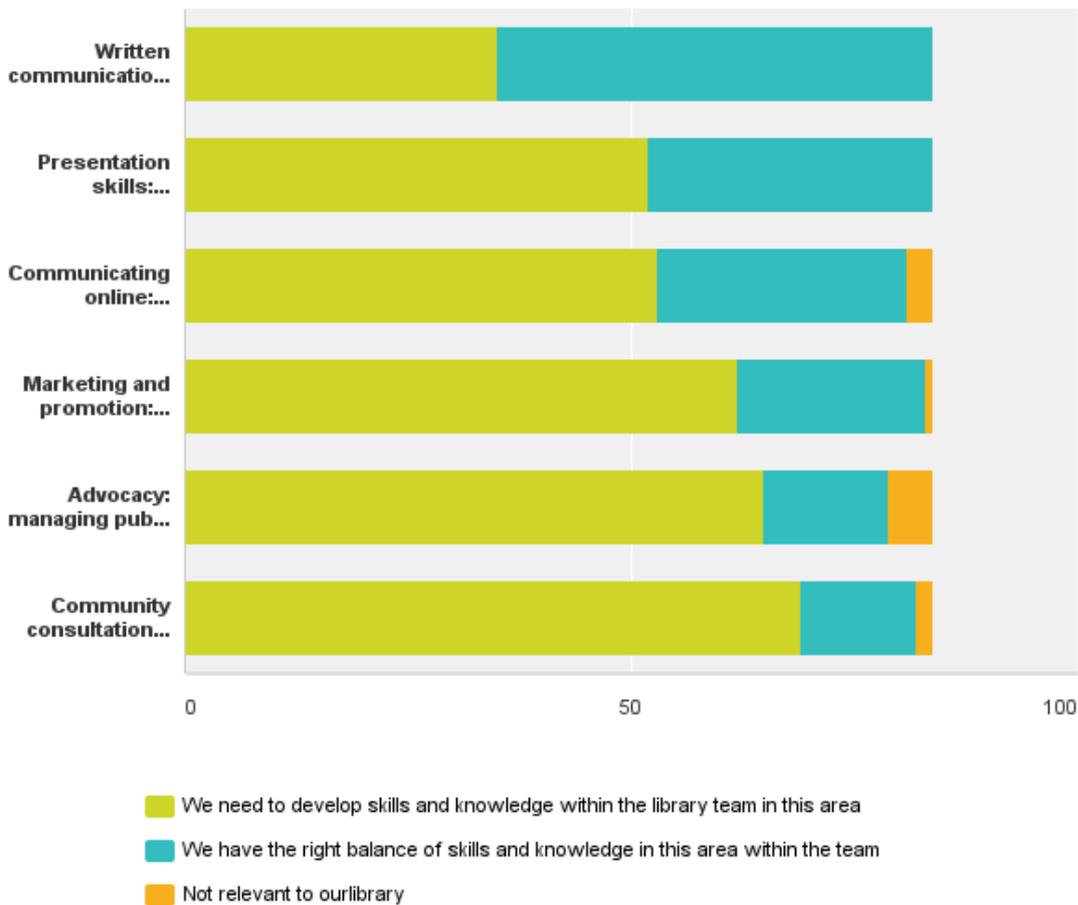
There appears to be a significant need for learning and development in the area of leadership and management across the NSW public library network with a large number of respondents indicating a need to develop skills in leadership and longer term planning for libraries. Areas where more than 70% of respondents indicated a need for the library to develop skills and experience included leadership, strategic planning, change management, evaluation, project management and fundraising. Less than 50% of libraries identified a need for operational management skills such as the day to day supervision of staff and contract management.

b) Communication and promotion

Most respondents identified a gap in strategic communication skills. Developing skills and knowledge in community consultation, advocacy and marketing and promotion were identified by more than 70% of respondents. The majority of managers appear to feel comfortable with traditional writing skills such as report and policy writing and 60% of respondent libraries indicated that they had the right mix of skills within the team for report and policy. However more than 75% of respondents indicated they needed to develop skills for communicating online and advocacy or managing public relations.

Q7 Communication and promotion

Answered: 84 Skipped: 5



c) Specialist Library skills and knowledge

The perception of gaps in specialist library skills were indicated less widely than most other skills area. The survey sought feedback on the need to develop skills in reference and information, readers advisory, library space design, local studies, home library services and literacy. More than half of the libraries indicated a need to develop skills and knowledge in readers advisory, literacy and local history.

While the gap in readers advisory and reference skills appears to be consistent across country and metropolitan libraries the survey revealed a much greater need for skills development in local history in country public libraries. Only 28% of metropolitan libraries identified a gap in local history skills whereas almost 70% of country libraries identified skills gaps in this area. Few libraries (27%) indicated a need for development in home library services. 14% of respondents indicated that building and space design was not relevant to their library which could indicate training in this area is only required at the point of need (ie refurbishment) rather than in planning for future services.

Q8 Specialist library skills and knowledge

Answered: 84 Skipped: 5

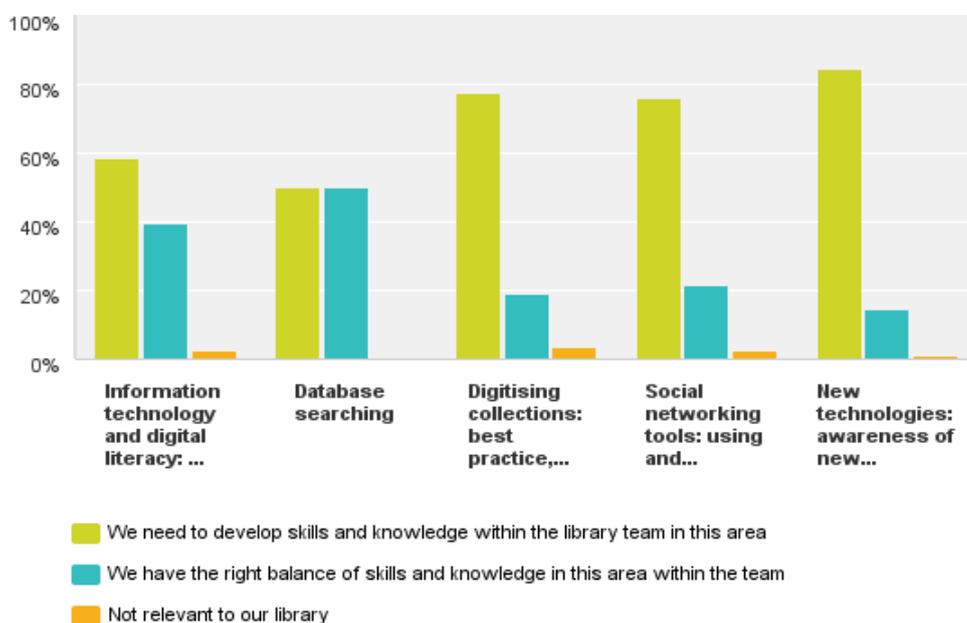


d) Information technology

There appears to be a widespread skills gap in technology with more almost 80% of overall respondents indicating a gap in the areas of digitising collections, social networking and new technologies. Interestingly smaller staff sizes and country libraries are more likely to perceive a gap in technology skills compared to metropolitan libraries and libraries with staffing of more than 10. While gaps in information technology and digital literacy and data base searching skills were less widely reported these skills gap are evident in more than 50% of libraries.

Q9 Information technology

Answered: 84 Skipped: 5



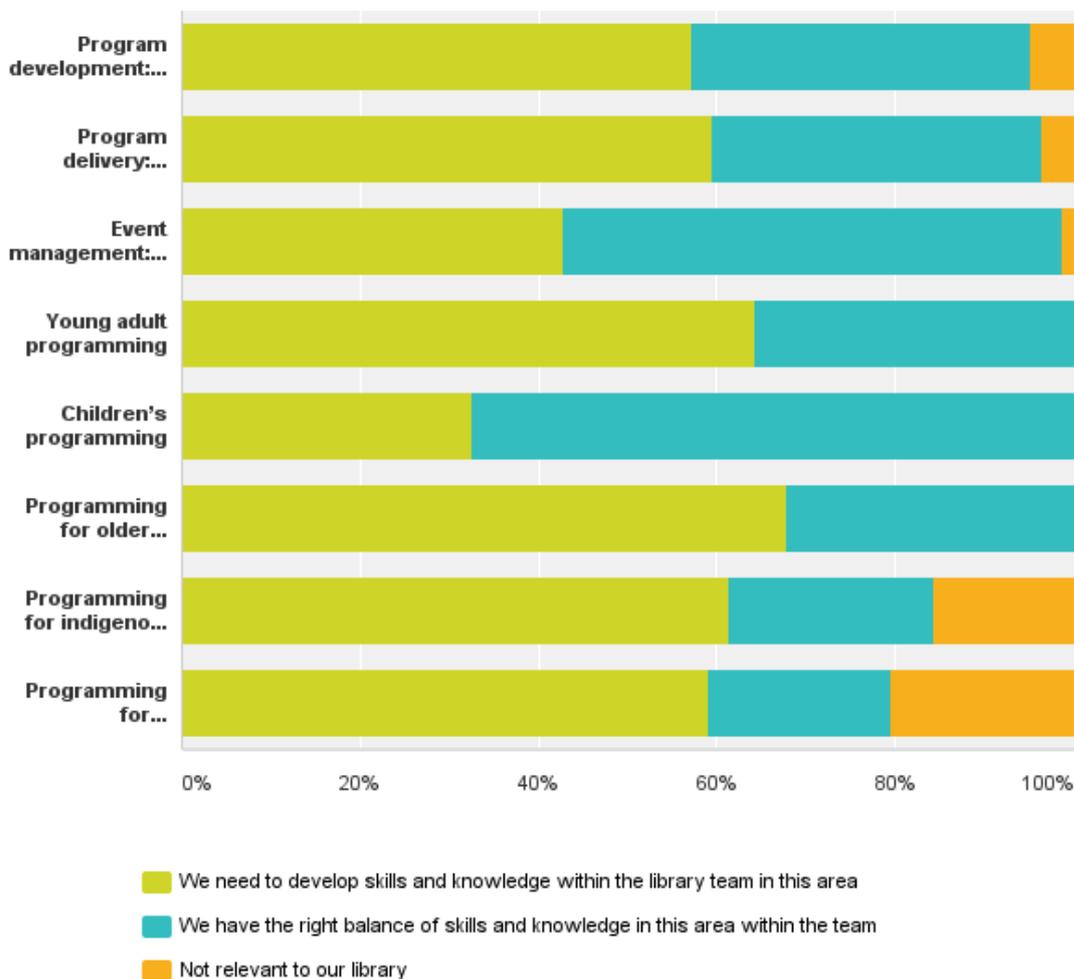
e) Program development and management

Programming for different groups in the community is a growing role for NSW public libraries. While libraries have traditionally offered children's programs such as story time and holiday programs, program offerings have now been extended to include programs for specific target groups and a growth in adult programming.

Most libraries indicated the right mix of skills for children's programming whereas library managers consistently indicated skill gaps in emerging program areas such as Indigenous and multicultural as well as programming for older people and young adults. Almost 60% of library managers across the network also indicated the need to develop general skills around program development and delivery. Interestingly a significant number of respondents indicated programming, specifically young adult programming within their top three priorities for training.

Q10 Program development and management

Answered: 84 Skipped: 5

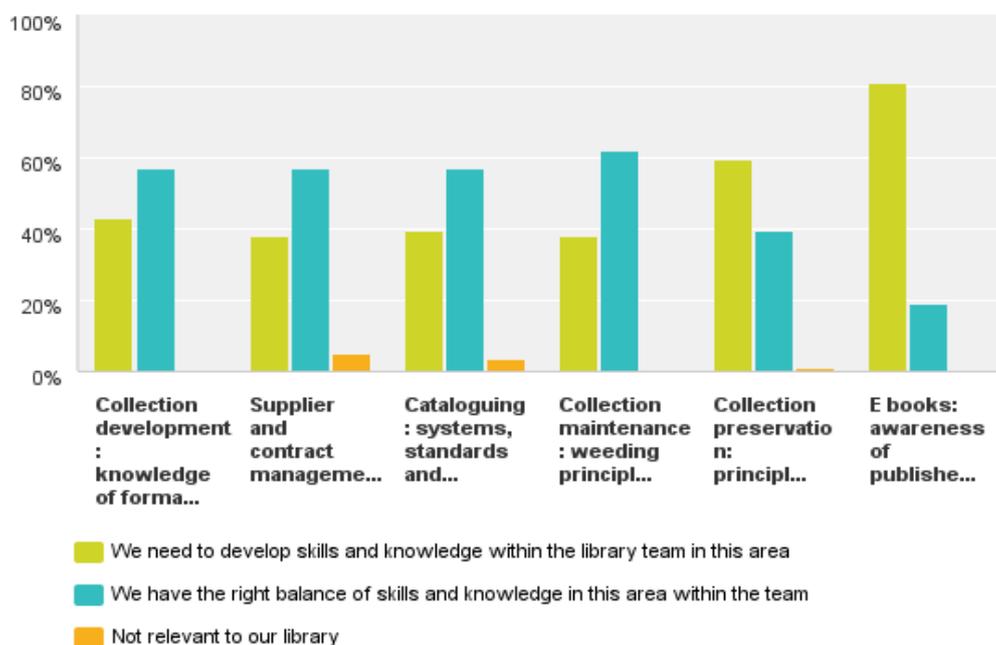


f) Collection development and management

Collection development and management represents a more traditional area of library roles and this is reflected in the survey results which indicate that the majority of library managers feel they have the right balance of skills and knowledge in their team in the areas of collection development and management. Notable exception to this are around awareness of issues surrounding Ebook collection management and collection preservation where more than 50% of respondents indicating the need to develop staff skills in these areas. These areas were also reflected within identified top 3 priorities with 'weeding; specifically identified as a collection management area requiring learning and development.

Q11 Collection development and management

Answered: 84 Skipped: 5



5. Priority training need areas

When asked to rate the top three priorities in training library managers provided a range of responses across all areas of training. However the following themes were most commonly identified as priority areas for training:

- New technologies, including awareness, service provision and strategic planning,
- Awareness of issues relating to providing access to E books including copyright and digital rights management
- Leadership and management
- Program development and management-all areas of programming were identified however programming for young people was strongly represented
- Strategic planning
- Collection preservation
- Local history and digitisation

Recommendations

The State Library:

- Develop a three year training strategy which is developed in further consultation with the public library network

- The three year training strategy is developed which includes learning and development strategies which respond to the identified priority areas.