

**PUBLIC LIBRARIES AUSTRALIA WORKSHOP**  
**22 February 2002**  
**Adelaide, PLAIN Central Services**

**Minutes**

**Present:**

Lynne Makin (Viclink, CPLA) – chairperson

Glenys Aird (Alice Springs Town Council), Craig Anderson (Viclink), Lyn Barakat (MPLA), John Bijen (ALGA; 2.30–4.30 pm only), Kathleen Bresnahan (PLB - SLNSW), Shane Cathcart (PLAIN Central Services), David Clark (ACT Government), Cathy Doe (SLTAS), Graham Dudley (DOI Vic), Cr Beverley Giegerl (LGSA - NWS), Lea Giles-Peters (SLQ, CASL), Barbara Horn (Viclink), Robert Knight (CPLA), Bernice McSwain (WA LGLA), Carla Mellor (SLQ), Janice Nitschke (CLASA), Arto Rissanen (ACTLIS), Debra Rosenfeldt (SLV), Geoff Stempel (CLASA), Debbie Terelinck (WA LGA), David Toll (NLA), Katie Whitehead (ALGA), Chris Williams (SLNSW)

Barbara Rozmus (NLA) – executive support

**Apologies:**

Susan Feeney (LISWA), Suzanne Lollback (Alice Springs Town Council), Jenny Rayner (SLTAS), Jennie Renfree (NTLIS)

**1. Presentation *Public Libraries Australia - Creating the Future* by Lynne Makin and Robert Knight**

**1.1** The powerpoint presentation covered the following points:

- (a) background;
- (b) national public library agenda;
- (c) Australian Public Libraries Network project – background and outcomes;
- (d) recommendations from the final APLN report to CASL *APLN: the Will or the Last Testament?*, including the model, initial activities, and ongoing activities;
- (e) the purpose of today's workshop, process to be followed, expected outcomes;
- (f) next steps.

**2. Brainstorming session on the recommendations from the APLN Final Report**

**Recommendation 1 – Model**

**2.1** *Public Libraries Australia* was agreed to as the name of the proposed Australian public libraries network.

Moved: Craig Anderson Seconded: Carla Mellor

- 2.2** A number of organisations represented at the workshop pledged financial support to fund the first phase of the project (to create the seeding fund). This will have to be confirmed by all involved with their organisations but the indicative total was \$60,000-\$70,000.
- 2.3** ALGA offered in-kind support which will include housing of the future Public Libraries Australia secretariat (the exact arrangements are yet to be negotiated).
- 2.4** In addition, the National Library of Australia offered in-kind support by providing assistance in dealing with legal matters through its legal advisers.
- 2.5** The seeding fund is to be used for funding of a Project Manager position for 4-6 months. This appointment will be crucial in terms of taking the project forward. It was proposed that the expected outcomes include:
- (g)** development of a membership model proposal, including membership fee structure;
  - (h)** development of a membership program and strategy (ie defining the benefits for the members);
  - (i)** development of a lawful structure for Public Libraries Australia
  - (j)** clarification of partnerships with the stakeholders of Public Libraries Australia (eg ALGA, ALIA, CASL);
  - (k)** assessment of viability, and further development of, two out of four proposed projects.
- 2.6** It was agreed that the name of the committee leading the project in the initial stage will be *Interim Steering Committee*.
- Moved: Craig Anderson    Seconded: Beverley Giegerl
- 2.7** The membership of the Interim Steering Committee will be: Lea Giles-Peters, Chris Williams, David Toll, Lynne Makin, Robert Knight and Beverley Giegerl, plus an ALGA representative, subject to ALGA's agreement. It was agreed that the Interim Steering Committee was representative of all stakeholders, and at the same time the members were located conveniently close to each other in geographical terms.
- 2.8** It was agreed that the Interim Steering Committee will take responsibility for:
- (a)** the oversight of the next phase of the project (18-month plus);
  - (b)** arrangements regarding handling finances on behalf of Public Libraries Australia (this may involve inviting ALGA to become a Public Libraries Australia sponsoring body, developing a Memorandum of Understanding with ALGA re financial arrangements, and sending a letter inviting financial contribution from prospective members);
  - (c)** a recruitment process for the Project Manager's position (to include the decision on who will formally be the employer of the person);
  - (d)** developing a suitable governance model for Public Libraries Australia;
  - (e)** formally inviting ALIA to become a key partner in Public Libraries Australia and clarifying this relationship to the prospective members.
- 2.9** It was agreed that the Interim Steering Committee would evolve into a board of directors when Public Libraries Australia is formally established.
- 2.10** The following suggestions were made regarding the possible membership model:

- (a) it is important to ensure that Public Libraries Australia represents every public library in Australia;
- (b) individual public libraries may become members through their associations for the first 6 months, and then be required to join as fee-paying members;
- (c) free membership could be provided to all public libraries at the initial stage;
- (d) there should be membership categories for industry partners, peak bodies, individual libraries, individuals;
- (e) the financial circumstances of the prospective members should be taken into account, therefore a minimum and maximum membership fee level should be set in such a way as to enable all libraries and councils to become financial members;
- (f) membership fees could range from \$50 to \$5,000.

### **Recommendation 2 – Initial Activities**

- 2.11 The APLN website has been set up and maintained by the NLA (at <http://www.nla.gov.au/apln/>). It will be updated with the new name for the network.
- 2.12 A mailing list PLA-L has been set up on the NLA mailserver to facilitate communication between the members of this group.
- 2.13 The name *Public Libraries Australia* and the domain name for the website need to be registered. NLA undertook to organise this on behalf of the group.
- 2.14 The first report to CASL should include a clarification of the 18-month development period. Taking into account the preliminary period to allow setting up of the structure and systems, the 18-month period should start 1 July 2002.

### **Recommendation 3 – Ongoing Activities**

- 2.15 The Final APLN Report has been included on the APLN website. All members of this group are to promulgate the report and its outcomes to their constituencies.
- 2.16 A press release on the latest Public Libraries Australia developments will be drafted and widely distributed to relevant media outlets and members of this group for further distribution by them through their local networks.
- 2.17 The projects to be further investigated and developed by the Project Manager fall under two categories:
  - (a) projects to engage the Federal Government (eg using the [ABS eLEP](#) model for dissemination of government information);
  - (b) projects to engage grass roots stakeholders (eg bulk buying of library materials; BookStart type project; Australia wide branding of public libraries).

<p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. AGLA to be invited to provide representation on the Interim Steering Committee.</li> <li>2. The Interim Steering Committee to make appropriate arrangements for handling finances on behalf of Public Libraries Australia.</li> </ol>
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3. The members of this group to confirm the proposals of the financial support pledged at the workshop with their parent organisations once a letter of invitation to contribute financially is sent.
4. NLA to organise registration of the name *Public Libraries Australia* as a trademark and an Internet domain name.
5. Lynne Makin to write a report from this workshop to CASL meeting on 21-22 March.
6. Barbara Rozmus to prepare a press release and distribute it to ALGA (for further distribution through their State newsletters), to all members of this group (for further distribution through their local networks), to the Australian Library News and other suitable channels.
7. Beverley Giegerl to provide Barbara with a report she submitted to the LGA NSW Weekly Circular for distribution to other States LGA.
8. All members of this group to promulgate the Final APLN report and its outcomes to their constituencies.
9. Barbara Rozmus to revise the APLN website including the new name of the network.

### 3. Development of a framework for the Business Plan

- 3.1 Robert Knight presented to the participants a template for a Business Plan he has developed on the basis of the previous work of the APLN Interim Committee.
- 3.2 The Business Plan template was discussed by the participants in detail with the following outcomes:
  - (a) it was agreed that under the heading *What services does PLA offer?* (page 1) the following line is to be added as another dot point: "identify, evaluate and develop projects suitable for Public Libraries Australia";
  - (b) it was agreed that the 4<sup>th</sup> dot point under the same heading is to read: "lobby the national government for recognition and funding of *federally funded services delivered through* public libraries";
  - (c) a SWOT analysis was done by the participants resulting in a detailed listing of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (see Appendix 1);
  - (d) the Business Plan will cover development of a logo/branding proposal for Public Libraries Australia
  - (e) a mission statement was brainstormed and the following keywords were identified as useful for the final statement:  
*public libraries, advocacy, funding, community, partnership, sponsorship, power, community building, improve, national, Australia-wide*
- 3.3 Milestones for the next 6 months were discussed and agreed to as follows (in this order):
  - (a) organise a recruitment process for Project Manager;
  - (b) establish a governance model and legal structure for Public Libraries Australia;
  - (c) develop and formalise partnerships with ALGA and ALIA;
  - (d) finalise Business Plan;
  - (e) identify and assess viability of two out of four projects recommended by the workshop;
  - (f) raise \$100,000-150,000 towards sustainable Public Libraries Australia;
  - (g) raise awareness of Public Libraries Australia amongst the stakeholders.

**Action:**

10. Robert Knight to distribute to this group through the PLA-L mailing list the summary background information from the Business Plan template.

**4. Phone link-up for Lyn McIntosh**

**4.1** Lyn McIntosh, NTLIS, joined the meeting by a phone link-up at 3.35 pm. Lynne Makin briefed her on the progress of the workshop so far and the items of the agenda yet to be covered. Lyn was offered an opportunity of having input into the meeting. It was agreed that Glenys Aird will be a direct contact person for Lyn in relation to the workshop.

**5. IT Knowledge Management System proposal**

**5.1** John Bijen, ALGA, discussed possible synergies between some of the projects proposed for Public Libraries Australia and the ALGA *Status* project. The *Status* project will develop a technical infrastructure for information sharing between ALGA and councils. This will involve building a central database and web enabled access/search facility through which members can contribute information, which is then aggregated to a central repository. It was decided that this may be a important opportunity for developing a joint ALGA/ Public Libraries Australia project.

**Actions:**

11. Interim Steering Committee to decide on an appropriate follow up action for this item.

**6. Summary**

**6.1** Lynne Makin summarised the outcomes of the workshop, reviewing them against the framework proposed in the *Public Libraries Australia - Creating the Future* presentation from this morning. The participants agreed that the goal of the workshop was achieved.

**6.2** Lynne Makin thanked all the participants for their input, Shane Cathcart and PLAIN Central Services for providing the venue for the workshop, and Barbara Rozmus for providing the executive support for it.

**6.3** The participants expressed their appreciation to Lynne Makin for her work involved in facilitating the workshop.

**Appendix 1**

**SWOT Analysis of Public Libraries Australia in the next 6 months**

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 1,700+ outlets and mobile libraries</li> <li>➤ total national coverage</li> <li>➤ stakeholder commitment</li> <li>➤ money available</li> <li>➤ CASL support</li> <li>➤ represent all size libraries</li> <li>➤ good will in the community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ disparity (size, opening hours, staff, systems etc)</li> <li>➤ 3-tier government</li> <li>➤ voluntary membership</li> <li>➤ 600+ councils to coordinate</li> <li>➤ homogeneity (members mostly from government)</li> <li>➤ untried organisation (no market presence, no products)</li> <li>➤ history of 3 failed attempts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ build on councils' relationships</li> <li>➤ sponsorship</li> <li>➤ partnerships</li> <li>➤ focus on social capital</li> <li>➤ new organisation</li> <li>➤ federal and state governments want access to outlets</li> <li>➤ redefine relationships between libraries eg local/state/national</li> <li>➤ expand service provision</li> <li>➤ attract \$\$\$ for new services</li> <li>➤ national email / discussion list</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ lack of support</li> <li>➤ not enough money</li> <li>➤ hire a wrong person as Project Manager</li> <li>➤ ALIA not on board</li> <li>➤ ALGA not on board</li> <li>➤ time constrains to deliver</li> <li>➤ poor communication with members</li> </ul>