



“The Future Australian Public Library System: Direction and Action”
Comments on the Australian Public Libraries’ Draft Vision and Strategic Framework

Submitted by
Robert McEntyre
Executive Director
For
Public Libraries NSW Metropolitan Association (PLM)
www.plmnsw.org.au

Telephone: 02 9489 2310
Mobile: 0407 208 364
Email: robert@mcentyre.com.au

8 January 2010

1. Introduction

Public Libraries NSW Metropolitan Association (PLM) is very pleased to submit this paper commenting on the draft Vision and National Framework for the Australian Public Library System.

PLM represents and supports the interests of 43 Local Government Area (LGA) public libraries in the greater Sydney region of New South Wales. These 43 LGAs collectively represent 67% of the NSW population of 7 million and 20% of Australia’s population of 22 million.

In preparing this submission, input has been received from PLM Members, and reference has been made to the following publications:

1. *“The Bookends Scenarios. Alternative futures for the Public Library Network in NSW in 2030”*¹
2. *“Enriching communities: the value of public libraries in New South Wales”*².
3. *2007-08 Public Library Statistics (NSLA)*³
4. *“2006 Public libraries of New Zealand: A strategic framework 2006 to 2016”*⁴
5. *“Expanding Horizons: Positioning Queensland Public Libraries for the future 2008-2012”*⁵
6. *“Re-Imagining Library Services (NSLA)”*⁶.

¹ http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/services/public_libraries/index.html

² http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/services/public_libraries/publications/docs/enriching_communities.pdf

³ <http://www.nsla.org.au/publications/statistics/>

⁴ www.lianza.org.nz/library/files/store_011/StrategicFramework_2006.pdf

⁵ [http://www.slg.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/83932/SLQ - Expanding Horizons - 2008.pdf](http://www.slg.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/83932/SLQ_-_Expanding_Horizons_-_2008.pdf)

⁶ <http://www.nsla.org.au/projects/rls/>

2. Recommendations for the Strategic Direction Document

The Draft Vision and National Framework for the Australian Public Library System are found as Attachment 1 to this Submission.

Attachment 2 is PLM's February 2009 paper prepared for the *2009 Australian Public Libraries Summit*.

PLM recommends that for the *Strategic Direction Document* that will be produced from this review process:

1. Its **target audience** will be:
 - Relevant Federal and State/Territory Government portfolio politicians
 - Local Government Councillors (eg Mayors) Australia-wide
 - Key Government Department decision makers from all three levels of Government.
2. Is **concise**, is titled for example, "*The Future Australian Public Library System: Direction and Action*", and is written with minimal management jargon and library oriented terminology.
3. Includes comment on:
 - The **current status** of the Australian Public Library System eg using some pertinent, eye catching facts and trends taken from the most recent NSLA Public Library Public Library Statistics Report and from Economic Benefits studies such as "*Enriching communities: the value of public libraries in New South Wales*". This study, for example, found that public libraries contribute positively in terms of economic value, benefit and activity:
 - Economic value as measured by library users' willingness to pay averaged \$58.20 per annum, which valued public libraries state-wide at \$392 million.
 - Economic benefit, that is, the financial amount saved relative to the cost of purchasing materials, was found to average \$325 per annum among surveyed library users. This aligned closely with a more structured estimate of a state-wide benefit of \$1.216 billion, which equates to a benefit-cost ratio of 4.24 against the 2004-2005 investment of \$287 million.
 - **Key assumptions** about the future environment (eg to 2030) in which the System will be operating.

In this context, reference can be made to "*The Bookends Scenarios. Alternative futures for the Public Library Network in NSW in 2030*".

Whilst this report was developed in 2009 for the NSW Public Library Sector *per se*, it has broader application to the Australian Public Library System.

In articulating key assumptions, consideration can be given to:

- “*Critical certainties*”, that is, events that will occur and will impact on the System, for example:
 - Australia’s projected population growth
 - Australia’s ageing population
 - Increasing diversity in, accessibility to and utilisation of information and communication technologies.
- “*Critical uncertainties*” that is, events that may occur, and if they do occur, will impact on the System, for example:
 - Different ways of working in the Public Library System
 - The convergence and integration of Community and Public Library services
 - Local Government restructuring
 - Fees charged for services provided by Public Libraries.
- A **Vision/Purpose** for the future Australian Public Library System for the period to 2030, for example:

Vision 2030

“Australia’s Public Library System is an active service provider delivering on Government priorities, engaging Australia’s diverse communities, contributing to national learning and literacy development, and enhancing social and cultural wellbeing”

- “**What needs to be done**”, that is, the focus for the Australian Public Library System to be a sustainable and relevant system that continues to support Australian and State/Territory Government’s priorities and local communities’ social, economic and cultural needs. The current Australian Government’s priorities include:
 - Community partnerships
 - Social inclusion, fairness and equitable access
 - Support for working families
 - Health, safety and well-being
 - The digital economy
 - Life-long learning including information and technology literacy, children and youth services, and reader development.

PLM recommends that the “**strategic focus and associated defined goals**” for the next 20 years for the Australian Public System that should be included in the Strategic Direction document are:

- 1) Social inclusion: community and family engagement
- 2) Children, early learning and literacy
- 3) Youth and literacy
- 4) Ageing, health and well being
- 5) The digital economy and ICT literacy
- 6) Sustainable resourcing: both *people capabilities* and *funding* for :
 - New community services (eg public libraries) including infrastructure development
 - Enhancements to existing community (library) services and infrastructure, and
 - Recurrent operational expenditure for public library services.

- **“How it will be done”**, that is, key strategies, initiatives and programs that will enable the Strategic Direction and associated actions to be implemented, monitored, reviewed, evaluated and updated.

PLM recommends that this should include:

- **Leadership** from within the Community Services/Public Library Sector: a single, credible, national representative entity that promotes and supports the Australian Public Library System and which utilises the services of professional lobbyists as required.

Organisations including the National Library of Australia, NSLA, ALIA/PLA and FOLA, as well as State/Territory based Local Government and Public Library Associations, will all have input and relevant representation.

- **Developing and implementing a unique brand** for the Australian Public Library System.
- **Developing and implementing effective relationship management strategies and plans** with a range of relevant and clearly identified key stakeholders in the three levels of Government, the Business & Corporate sector and the Not-for-Profit sector.
- **Regular information updates and information sharing** that benefit the System both strategically and operationally eg international and national trends and developments in Community/Public Library strategy and practices.
- **New business model developments** which include local, state wide and national collaboration, standards and standardisation, centralisation, evidence based management and decision making, and shared programs and services.

4. **Clearly identifies** that the document has been prepared *“on behalf of current and future users of the Australian Public Library System”* by a range of stakeholders including the relevant, current Associations that represent and support the interests of Australia’s Public Library System.
5. **Input is assumed** from national Local Government organisations including the LGMA and ALGA, and state based Local Government organisations, given the current role of Local Government as the principal resource provider (both staff and funds) to the Australian Public Library System.

Robert McEntyre
8 January 2010.

Attachment 1

DEVELOPING A VISION AND NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

September 2009

Background

Discussions prior to and during the ALIA Public Libraries Summit, held at the National Library in Canberra on 16 July 2009, clearly demonstrated the desire among public library managers and practitioners for a national vision and framework for public libraries.

Friends of Libraries Australia made a powerful case for the need for a strategic framework in its paper *'Investing in Australia's future through its public library system – why, who, how'* published in January 2008, and in its 2009 Summit submission, Public Libraries Australia put forward a strong argument for a national public library service delivery model.

There is no doubt that individual library services and, indeed, branches, should develop the services that best suit their community. It is a fact that public library management and funding practices vary between states and territories.

Despite the resulting broad definition of a public library service, we all recognise the weakness in continuing to present public libraries as fragmented and incapable of speaking with one voice.

While funding may come from local and state or territory governments, public libraries must have a place at the Federal Government table. We have so much to contribute to government priorities – social inclusion, community partnerships, fairness and equitable access, support for working families, health, safety, well-being, life-long learning and the digital economy.

Objectives

The aim of a shared vision and national framework is to provide the Federal Government with proof that public libraries, although managed locally, are able to speak with one voice at a national level and can be invited to take a seat at the table.

We need to ensure that politicians and ministers at the highest level have a clear understanding of how public libraries currently contribute to government priorities, and provide a well-structured, considered and itemised proposal for investment in national programs, which will enable public libraries to increase their contribution to these government priority areas.

One of the workshop groups at the Summit said, 'The main aim of a national framework should be to reframe public libraries for the 21st century and put them higher on the public agenda.'

Process

ALIA has already begun work on the national framework and has produced a project plan to guide the process:

	Activity/output
August Research and planning	Project plan prepared (w/c 24/8/09) Review of Summit submissions, presentations and workshop papers
August – October Draft vision and strategy	Draft vision and strategy prepared, based on Summit submissions, presentations and workshops
October – December Consultation	Draft vision and strategy circulated for comment; PLA conference in Townsville (11/10/09); feedback used to refine content
January – April Mapping provision	Research and map existing provision around priority areas eg health and ageing, services for children
May – June Submission to government	Produce a proposed national framework and action plan for public libraries, signed by each of the state and territory public library services

This document represents stage two, the draft vision and strategy.

Considerations

The draft ideas which follow are based on discussions and feedback from the ALIA Public Libraries Summit 2009; papers submitted by the key Australian public library organisations in advance of the Summit, and public library vision and strategy work carried out in other parts of the world.

Vision

Our draft vision, for comment and further development:

'Australia's public libraries, united behind common goals and ambitions, sharing best practice, contributing to strong communities, valued by people and government, continuing to provide universal free access to information, knowledge and ideas, and confirming the importance of their role for future generations.'

The characteristics of public libraries we feel it is important to include:

United

Public libraries are connected in formal and informal ways, not only within states and territories, but also nationally. Although it may not be immediately obvious, public libraries are part a cohesive whole.

'United' represents our desire for a new level of interstate cooperation.

Common goals and ambitions

Not only are we connected, there is also a commonality of thought. We are all pulling in the same general direction. Our services may differ, but the desired outcomes are the same. Where one library may focus on after-school clubs and another on silver surfing, the desired goal of providing the community with life-long learning opportunities is shared.

'Common goals and ambitions' means agreement on a set of priority outcomes and the development of national programs that can be applied and shaped according to local need.

Sharing best practice

We don't duplicate effort. We communicate with each other and share our experiences, which makes us faster and more effective. And we don't only share best practice amongst ourselves. As early adopters of new technology, libraries are well-placed to lead the way for other government agencies.

Strong communities

Public libraries' role in social inclusion has been articulated, for example in the State Library of Victoria's *Libraries Building Communities* reports, and acknowledged by the Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion, Senator Ursula Stephens, at the ALIA Public Libraries Summit in 2009.

Valued by people

In order to be valued, public libraries must be delivering products and services appropriate to the communities they serve in a way that appeals to library users and is admired by non-users.

Valued by governments

Some politicians appreciate the opportunities within the public library service to further government agenda in many different ways, but most politicians have still to discover the potential for libraries in terms of social inclusion, e-government, literacy, health and so on. It is also important for them to realise that libraries not only contribute to their priorities, but also do so efficiently and effectively.

Suggested rewording:

Some politicians appreciate the opportunities within the public library service to further government agenda in many different ways, but most politicians have still to discover the potential for libraries to further contribute efficiently and effectively to their priorities in terms of social inclusion, e-government, literacy, health and so on.

Universal free access

This refers to the essential investment required not only in physical collections, but also in online databases and high speed broadband access to the internet.

Future generations

We need to manage change so that public libraries remain relevant and we continue to build a sustainable public library network, in terms of the infrastructure, funding, buildings, collections, equipment, staff and future leaders.

QUESTIONS

- Does this draft statement describe your vision for public libraries in Australia?
- If not, what would you omit or what else would you include?
- It is a lengthy statement. Is there an opportunity to shorten it?

National framework

1. Forum to enable the collaborative development of a national framework

ALIA is in the unique position of representing public library professionals in all states and territories and having a proven track record of developing and implementing activities across the entire public library network eg National Simultaneous Storytime. But this is not a task for one organisation operating alone. The development of a national framework needs to encompass the views and comments of all the associations involved with Australian public libraries.

QUESTIONS

- What form might this forum take?
- Who would be involved?
- How do you see it being created and managed?

2. Consensus on the priority areas for public libraries in relation to the political agenda

This process began with the call for submissions for the ALIA Public Library Summit. The subjects and content highlighted the areas to which public library organisations felt it was important to draw governments' attention.

The topics were:

- Social inclusion and community engagement
- Children, early learning and a literate Australia
- Encouraging the digital economy and digital citizenship
- Health and ageing

Presentations at the Summit focused on these topics and the afternoon workshops enable delegates to debate what should be included under each heading.

Social inclusion and community engagement	'Libraries could be a mechanism to provide the advantage to address the disadvantage in our society'
Children, early learning and a literate Australia	National Year of Reading based around a national, federally-funded books from birth program
Encouraging the digital economy and digital citizenship	Create a baseline understanding of what it means to be a digital citizen and use this to define a national public library standard
Health and ageing	Public libraries as channels for awareness campaigns; federal-funding for health databases; creating library spaces in which older people feel comfortable

Public libraries' contributions in these areas will be researched and documented, supporting the business case for federal funding of national programs.

In addition, the Summit delegates suggests research into how the demands on public libraries have changed as a result of other government departments sending clients their way; an audit of the current federal spending on federal projects delivered through public libraries, and the need for collaboration in order that public libraries can provide an adequate range of materials for users from CALD backgrounds.

QUESTIONS

- In identifying our top four or five priorities, have we chosen the right focus areas?
- What would you add/delete?

3. Agreement to an underlying set of guidelines and National Standards for public libraries

ALIA has already engaged Libraries Alive! to build on the work it has carried out for public libraries in NSW, to create standards and guidelines for public libraries across Australia.

A steering committee will be formed to guide this project.

4. Action plan supporting the delivery of national programs

This is our business case with which to go to the federal government to ask for funding to enable us to develop national programs, benefiting communities across Australia and providing a fairer and more equitable public library service for all this nation's citizens.

These may be public programs eg early literacy, or infrastructure programs eg a national investment in management training for future library leaders.

Attachment 2

AUSTRALIA'S 2009 INAUGURAL PUBLIC LIBRARIES SUMMIT

Creating the Future

The Strategic Direction and Sustainability of Australia's Public Library System

Submitted by
Robert McEntyre, Executive Director
Public Libraries NSW Metropolitan Association (PLM)
www.plmnsw.org.au

Level 7, LGSA House
Margaret Street
Sydney NSW 2000 Australia
Telephone: 02 9489 2310
Mobile: 0407 208 364
Email: robert@mcentyre.com.au

ABSTRACT

Australia's 1500+ public libraries receive around 100 million visits per year by 12 million Australians. The libraries are primarily funded by Local Government to \$750 million per annum, which consists of both capital investment and annual operating expenditure. There are varying financial contributions from State and Territory Governments.

The Australian public library system is under financial pressure. Some public libraries need to revitalise their infrastructure, programs and offerings. The 2008 *"Enriching communities: the value of public libraries in New South Wales"* report revealed the value of public libraries, including quantified economic value.

The development and implementation of a *Strategic Framework and Direction* for Australia's Public Library System is now critical.

1. Introduction

Public Libraries NSW Metropolitan Association (PLM) is very pleased to submit this paper to Australia's inaugural Public Libraries Summit.

PLM represents and supports the interests of 42 Local Government Area (LGA) public libraries in the greater Sydney region. These 42 LGAs collectively represent two thirds (~4.5 million) of NSW's population, and 20% of Australia's population.

The goals of this inaugural Summit include:

- Developing a stronger relationship with the Australian Government in achieving its agendas in a range of portfolios
- Engaging with all three levels of government in Australia to develop a framework that supports public libraries across Australia.

PLM strongly supports and encourages the engagement of all three levels government in the future Australian public library system, and the need to develop and implement a clearly articulated strategic direction for the system.

Key elements of this strategic direction should include a focus on:

- Collaborative and partnership arrangements with a range of stakeholders, including the three levels of government, that will benefit local communities in using and accessing the wide range of services available through Australia's public libraries, and
- Sustainable public library funding sources for (i) new infrastructure development, (ii) improvements to existing infrastructure, and (iii) recurrent operational funding.

2. The Broader Australian Public Library and Local Government Environment

Australia's 1500+ public libraries contribute to the social and economic fabric of their local communities. They provide valued *educational (lifelong learning), recreational, information access and cultural services* in safe, multipurpose community spaces.

With the recession in the USA now one year on, it is noted that:

- *"As people shy away from restaurants and department stores, more and more individuals are going to the public library. Not long ago, many believed that libraries had been destroyed by the Internet, but now money-minded patrons are flocking to the facilities to take advantage of free WiFi, computers, books and videos."*⁷
- *"While Canada is behind the United States in job losses, foreclosures and the full impact of the recession, North Americans have begun to turn to their public libraries to assist them through difficult economic times. Initial data shows spikes in library usage, particularly in the United States; the impact of use in Canada is just beginning to emerge."*⁸

Australia's 1500+ public libraries:

- Receive around 100 million visits per year (~5 visits *per capita*)⁹.
- Are used by 12 million Australians annually, over 50% of Australia's population of 21.6 million.
- Are funded to the extent of \$750 million per annum¹⁰, which consists of both capital investment and annual operating expenditure.
- Are principally funded (~85%) by Local Government, with the remaining funding provided by the State and Territory governments.

There are approximately 600 Local Government Areas (LGAs) across Australia, which expend just under \$20 billion pa, or 2% of GDP, and employ around 150,000 staff. The investment in public libraries by Local Government equates to 3% of their total expenditure and ~7,500 to 8,000 staff.

In 2006, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) reported¹¹ on the sustainability of Australia's Local Government. PwC estimated that approximately 10% to 30% of Australia's councils had sustainability issues, and that between 25% and 40% of councils in the states (eg NSW) analysed could be unsustainable.

The 2005-06 independent inquiry into the *Financial Sustainability of NSW Local Government*¹² undertaken by Professor Percy Allen found that 25% of NSW councils were financially unsustainable, a further 50% of councils were at risk, and only around 25% were in a strong position.

NSW, with 6.9 million people or 32% of Australia's population, has 152 LGAs. Ninety three percent (93%) of the just under \$300 million annual investment into NSW's public libraries is currently provided by Local Government in NSW.

The NSW Government contributes \$23.5 million annually to the state's public library system, the lowest *per capita* investment by any State or Territory Government into public libraries.

⁷ <http://www.businessinsider.com/2009/1/recession-helps-public-libraries-make-comeback>

⁸ <http://www.library.ns.ca/node/1340>

⁹ [http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4172.0Feature+Article42008+\(First+Edition\)#PARALINK8](http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4172.0Feature+Article42008+(First+Edition)#PARALINK8)

¹⁰ <http://www.nsla.org.au/publications/statistics/>

¹¹ <http://www.alga.asn.au/policy/finance/pwcreport/>

¹² <http://www.lgsa.org.au/www/html/262-local-government-inquiry.asp>

Ray Pincombe, President of *Local Government Managers Australia* (LGMA), was recently quoted in the February 2009 edition of *GovernmentNews*¹³:

- *“Significant work needs to be done in relation to infrastructure planning in order to facilitate long-term financial management plans for local government. The challenges of 2009 are endless, and question marks hang over local government’s capacity to delivery on the long-term infrastructure needs of its communities....*

...Our challenge is to build the capacity of local government and entrench the industry as a critical part of the partnership with state and federal government in building Australian communities, especially in these difficult times.”

Geoff Lake, President of the *Australian Local Government Association* (ALGA), in the same magazine, was quoted as saying:

- *“...Focussing on the practical advantages of a system where local government expanded from its traditional roles of roads, rates and rubbish into areas such as libraries, aged care and youth centres.....these days councils are spending at least 50% of their budgets on people services.”*

The Australian Government is not a traditional funder *per se* of Australia’s public libraries.

The “*Broadband for Seniors*” initiative¹⁴, funded by the Australian Government (the Family and Community Services portfolio), will witness the roll-out of 2,000 internet kiosks for seniors. Australia’s public libraries have the opportunity to be part of this initiative. An NEC Australia consortium was awarded the contract in late 2008 to manage the rollout process.

The *Broadband for Seniors* forms part of the Australian Government’s *Making Ends Meet - Plan for Older Australians, People with Disabilities and Carers*, and commits \$15 million over three years (2009-11) to create these 2,000 senior internet kiosks.

Thirty percent (30%) of Australia’s population is 50 years of age or older (2006 ABS Census¹⁵).

3. Enriching communities: the value of public libraries in New South Wales

In 2008, the Library Council of New South Wales released the report “*Enriching communities: the value of public libraries in New South Wales*”¹⁶.

The NSW Public Library Network Research Committee, on behalf of the Library Council of NSW, commissioned research that measured *the economic, social, cultural and environmental value* of public libraries. The research explored the ways in which New South Wales public libraries sustain the community in social, cultural and environmental terms.

The study found that public libraries contribute positively in terms of economic value, benefit and activity. The key findings from the study are presented below.

¹³ www.governmentnews.com.au

¹⁴ www.necseniors.net.au

¹⁵ http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/census+data?opendocument?utm_id=LN

¹⁶ http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/services/public_libraries/publications/docs/enriching_communities.pdf

- Library users visit for an average of 35 minutes, view the library more as a cost-saver than a time-saver, and are attracted mainly by the fixed collections, the availability of professional support and the friendly atmosphere.
- The top five outcomes from public library use were:
 1. Enhanced quality of life
 2. Enhanced enjoyment from hobbies
 3. Ability to obtain information not available elsewhere
 4. Facilitation of lifelong learning, and
 5. Support for children's education.
- The top five contributions to the community were:
 1. A safe and pleasant place to visit
 2. Supporting educational facilities
 3. Facilitating lifelong learning
 4. Encouraging responsible social behaviour; and
 5. Ensuring access to the Internet for all.
- Public libraries principal contribution to community culture is through their lending, reference and local history collections. There is an appreciative audience for cultural activities such as local art displays and talks by visiting authors.
- Economic value as measured by library users' willingness to pay averaged \$58.20 per annum, which valued public libraries statewide at \$392 million.
- Economic benefit, that is, the financial amount saved relative to the cost of purchasing materials, was found to average \$325 per annum among surveyed library users. This aligned closely with a more structured estimate of a statewide benefit of \$1.216 billion, which equates to a benefit-cost ratio of 4.24 against the 2004-2005 investment of \$287 million.

Thus, for each dollar expended on public libraries, \$4.24 of economic benefit is generated.
- Economic activity measures the contribution of public libraries to the economy in real terms and was estimated at \$810.2 million.

Thus, for each dollar expended on public libraries, \$2.82 of real economic activity is generated.

4. NSW Public Libraries' supporting Government Programs, Initiatives and Services

NSW public libraries contribute to Australia and NSW government programs, initiatives and services. NSW public libraries are very effective avenues for the achievement of several goals in the NSW State Plan. This has occurred without any additional financial support.

In recent years, NSW public libraries have been involved with a range of Australian and State Government programs, initiatives and services that have included:

- Early reading and literacy programs including the NSW Premier's Reading Challenge
- Practice driver knowledge tests for the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority, utilising the libraries' computers
- The engagement of young people in Community Homework Help Centres and Reading Clubs
- Cross-cultural and inter-faith activities
- Access to both Australian and NSW State Government department information via *e-government*.

5. The Strategic Direction of the Australian Public Library System

The Australian public library system is under pressure. Some public libraries will need to revitalise their facilities, collections, electronic infrastructure, social networking technologies and tools, and programs.

They will not achieve this alone. They will need to achieve this in partnerships and through collaborative activity.

The development and implementation of a *Strategic Framework and Direction* for Australia's Public Library System is both critical and essential at this time. It will identify key elements which will include:

- Collaborative and partnership arrangements with a range of stakeholders, including the three levels of government that will benefit local communities in using and accessing a wide range of services available through Australia's public libraries.

Opportunities exist for strong collaboration and partnering between NSW public libraries, for example, and departments and agencies in the Australian and NSW Governments such as:

- Australian Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
- Australian Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
- NSW Department Premier and Cabinet
- NSW Roads and Traffic Authority
- NSW Department of Education and Training
- NSW Department of Health
- NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care.

Other key stakeholders that will be critical for collaborative arrangements and partnerships with public libraries include community groups and library industry vendors.

- Identification and evaluation of sustainable funding sources for (i) new infrastructure development, (ii) improvements to existing infrastructure, and (iii) recurrent operational funding.

New Zealand (2006 *Public libraries of New Zealand: A strategic framework 2006 to 2016*¹⁷) and the UK (2003 *Framework for the Future: libraries, learning and information in the next decade*¹⁸) both have developed strategic frameworks that address the growth, development, value and sustainability of their public libraries.

Australia now needs to do the same, to ensure a strategic, coordinated approach to the sustainability of a very well utilised and valuable public library system.

Robert McEntyre
Executive Director
27 February 2009.

¹⁷ www.lianza.org.nz/library/files/store_011/StrategicFramework_2006.pdf

¹⁸ www.mla.gov.uk/programmes/framework