



Cr Win Gaffney, Mayor of Lane Cove
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The Hon. George Souris, MP
Minister for Tourism, Major Events
Hospitality and Racing and the Arts
Level 30 Governor Macquarie Tower
1 Farrer Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

3 May 2011

Dear Minister

I am writing to you in my capacity as the President of the NSW Metropolitan Public Libraries Association (NSW MPLA). The NSW MPLA is the peak body representing the interests of public libraries in the greater Sydney region. This region comprises 43 local government areas serving 67% of the State's population.

The members recently nominated a review of public Library funding, partnerships between State and Local Government, recognition of the role of public libraries, co-ordination of statewide programs (including the Inter Library Loan van delivery service), marketing public libraries, developing a digital strategy for public libraries and Library education and training as their most immediate concerns.

NSW MPLA members welcome the review of library funding proposed before the election by Anthony Roberts, then Shadow Minister for Volunteering and the Arts. Funding of public libraries decreased under the last government despite the increasing demands being placed on public libraries for a whole range of services, including those services and initiatives provided by the State Government. My members believe that the State funding of public libraries needs to be addressed as a matter of priority. Furthermore, it is critical that if public libraries are to continue to provide high quality services to their communities that the growing imbalance between State and local government funding is addressed. The funding of public libraries represents great value for the State Government. The 2008 *Enriching communities: The value of public libraries in New South Wales* report found that NSW public libraries generate at least \$4.24 of economic value for each dollar expended, and \$2.82 of economic activity for each dollar expended.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss some of the opportunities for State and local government partnerships that could be a

feature of a new funding arrangement. Public libraries are an ideal service point for State Government services. In fact, public libraries can be the State Government's local link for the delivery of a whole range of State Government services. These partnership opportunities would deliver a range of benefits to people throughout NSW and would be mutually beneficial to both the State Government and local councils. This is an opportunity for the State Government to be associated with a network of public libraries that are highly used and valued by every local community in NSW.

By way of example only some partnership opportunities include:

- Partnership with the NSW Department of Education and Training for the delivery of a state-wide online tutoring program for school students, as well as a range of other educational initiatives
- Partnership with the Department of Premier and Cabinet for support of the Premier's Reading Challenge
- Partnership with the Road and Traffic Authority for the provision of safe-driving kiosks in public libraries providing access to the Driver Knowledge Test for the State's young people
- A general partnership with the State Government that recognises the broader role that public libraries play in delivering State Government services and gives public libraries the autonomy to provide services that meet the diverse needs of their individual communities

Each of these partnerships would provide opportunities for a State campaign to market the new services together with local launches featuring the relevant minister. These partnership opportunities provide the State Government with the opportunity to be recognised as a high profile partner in delivery of a range of highly used services needed by people across NSW.

These partnerships could form part of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework for Local Government, under the Local Government Act 1993. This provides a framework for accountability and reporting back to the State Government on program outcomes resulting from partnership funding for public libraries. In terms of planning and delivery it would also be beneficial to have a funding program that allocates funding over several years. Libraries would identify in their business plans targets relating to State initiatives and report back.

I look forward to your reply and the opportunity to work with you to devise a new funding framework that delivers benefits to both the State Government and to local councils.

Yours sincerely



Clr Win Gaffney, Mayor of Lane Cove

President, NSW Metropolitan Public Libraries Association