



# State and Local Government Agreement for the Provision of Public Library Services in Western Australia

September 2020



# Preface

Since the 1950s, the Library Board of Western Australia (Library Board) has delivered public library services through the State Library of Western Australia (SLWA) in partnership with Local Government. *The Library Board of Western Australia Act 1951* provides the governing legislation in which local governments operate public libraries in partnership with the State Government.

Until 2015, the provision of public library services in Western Australia was underpinned by a Framework Agreement between State and Local Government and in 2017 the Minister for Culture and the Arts released the *WA Public Libraries Strategy* to establish strategic priorities for public library service development in Western Australia. With the implementation of these priorities well advanced, both State and Local Government recognise the need for an overarching agreement to define the shared commitment to delivering a responsive and sustainable public library service for all Western Australians.

The *State and Local Government Agreement for the Provision of Public Library Services in Western Australia (Public Library Services Agreement)* references the *State Local Government Agreement (2017)* established to guide State and Local Government communication, consultation and governance.

This Public Library Services Agreement establishes the way in which State and Local Government will work together to deliver improved public library services to our community through the provision of:

- an agreed vision for driving the future direction of Western Australia's public library services;
- a collaborative approach for achieving real outcomes in delivering a relevant and sustainable public library service for all Western Australians;
- a statement of guiding principles to support communication, consistent decision making and collaborative action; and
- a definition of the roles and responsibilities of both State and Local Government.

*Cover images: Public Libraries from across the State, old and new (left to right, top to bottom): Northampton 1980, Dalwallinu 2011, Quinninup 2018, Yanchep-Two Rocks 1984, Merredin 1963, Balingup 2018, Katanning 2018, South Perth 2019, Kwinana 1956, Belmont 2021*

# Public Library Services Agreement – guiding a partnered approach to the provision of State and Local Government public library services

The State Government and the Local Government sector have a shared commitment to delivering responsive and sustainable public library services to all Western Australians, recognising that in a digital age and global knowledge economy, public libraries empower individuals and communities through access to information, technology, lifelong learning and cultural and leisure opportunities.

Western Australia's public libraries are community hubs, bringing people together and facilitating literacy, learning and 21st century skills so that they can grow, learn and succeed in school, life and work.

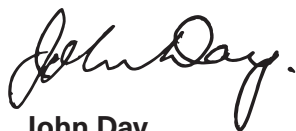
By working together to achieve our common aims, State and Local Government will be more effective in providing equitable and accessible public library services for Western Australians. With more than 14 million visitors to Western Australia's public libraries every year, it is important that State and Local Government continue to work together to enhance our public library service and use our resources effectively to maximise the return on investment that they provide. Working in collaboration we can deliver more agile and innovative public library services and programs that respond to the diverse needs of Western Australian communities and are sustainable into the future.




**Hon David Templeman MLA**  
Minister for Culture and the Arts



**Mayor Tracey Roberts**  
President of the Western Australian Local  
Government Association



**John Day**  
Chairman of the Library Board of  
Western Australia



**Jamie Parry**  
President of the Local Government  
Professionals Australia WA

1 September 2020

# Vision

Central to the partnership between State and Local Government is a shared vision for Western Australia's public library services providing:

*“a vibrant and sustainable 21st century public library network at the heart of the Western Australian community where people can connect, learn and grow”.* **Minister Templeman**

# Goals

The State and Local Governments will work in partnership to provide a State-wide public library network where:

- The development of public libraries as vibrant, inclusive community hubs that connect people with each other, with services and with their community, is cultivated and nurtured.
- Services respond to the needs of local communities and barriers to access are addressed.
- Western Australians are empowered to prosper in the digital age and global knowledge economy through equitable access to technology, lifelong learning and diverse cultural and leisure experiences.
- Service models, systems and processes continue to evolve to ensure they are efficient, effective and sustainable, achieving economies of scale and optimising investment through collaboration.
- The strategic priorities of State Government and Local Government are supported.
- Services are measured and evaluated to ensure they are effective, efficient and achieve positive outcomes and impacts for the community.



Top: Minister Wyatt, Premier McGowan, Minister Saffioti Bottom: John Day, Chairman Library Board of Western Australia, Mayor Tracey Roberts, President WA Local Government Association, Minister Templeman, Jamie Parry, President Local Government Professionals WA

# Principles

The following principles will guide the shared provision of public library services by State and Local Government in Western Australia.

## 1. Partnership

- There is a commitment to the partnership – a shared understanding that by working together, State and Local Government can provide the best possible public library service for all Western Australians.
- The partnership is conducted in a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation recognising the roles and responsibilities and financial contributions of both State and Local Government.

## 2. Communication

- There will be an open, transparent and timely approach to communication and decision making where both partners are accountable for their responsibilities and actions.

## 3. Consultation

- State and Local Government will undertake timely consultation regarding matters affecting the sector.
- Consultation timelines will be guided by the State Local Government Agreement.

## 4. Accountability

- Both parties accept accountability for their decisions and decision-making process.
- There is a commitment to good governance.

## 5. Service Delivery

- State and Local Government are committed to free, universal and equitable access to

relevant and contemporary public library services for all Western Australians, regardless of geographic location or individual circumstances.

- Access to information and ideas, free of censorship and the influence of sectional interests, will be unrestricted, within legal and regulatory obligations.
- There is a recognition that services will enable flexibility to respond to the diverse needs of Western Australian communities as well as the business requirements of State and Local Government.
- Services are planned, developed and delivered to be effective, efficient and sustainable.
- There is a focus on outcomes in establishing policy, strategy and service goals and objectives that respond to community needs and expectations.

## 6. Community Engagement

- Both spheres of government acknowledge the importance of appropriate community engagement to inform library services planning and delivery.

## 7. Reciprocity

- There is a commitment to building on the 70 year partnership demonstrating respect and consideration for the other sector as matters arise.



# Roles and Responsibilities

To realise the vision and achieve the goals in this Public Library Services Agreement, State and Local Government have specific roles and responsibilities as outlined below.

## **Both State and Local Government agree to:**

- Support a State-wide public library service that provides free access for all residents of Western Australia.
  - Provide core products and services free of charge as detailed in local agreements.
  - Operate with the expectation that State and all Local Governments will make a financial contribution to the provision of public library services.
  - Support the continuation of the partnership and maintain joint decision-making arrangements and accountability mechanisms through the Public Libraries Working Group and any mutually agreed successor.
  - Develop policies, plans, guidelines, performance and reporting standards to guide public libraries and to be adopted by both parties.
  - Ensure that the Library Board of Western Australia enters into an agreement with each Local Government that will uphold the principles of this Agreement.
- Recognise that the shared responsibilities for public library services are applicable regardless of any formal or informal arrangements between individual Local Governments and other government or non-government organisations for out-sourcing or collocation of public library services.
  - Work towards achieving benchmarks established in the Guidelines, Standards and Outcome Measures for Australian Public Libraries to support the on-going development of library services in Western Australia.

## **State Government agrees to:**

- Provide financial assistance to each Local Government that operates a public library in accordance with an agreed public library funding methodology and administer the allocation, reporting and acquittal processes for the funding.
- Work co-operatively with Local Government to support the ongoing development and enhancement of public library services to meet community needs.



*Reading to a Story Dog*

- Provide resources and services, including centralised purchasing and a State-wide online catalogue, to agreed standards.
- Provide strategic advice, consultancy and training on public library services, including additional support for regional and remote public library services, and give feedback to Local Government on library services as required.
- Coordinate collaborative State-wide and targeted initiatives and programs.
- Publicly acknowledge the support and financial contribution of Local Government in providing public library services.

#### **Local Government Agrees to:**

- Provide physical and technological infrastructure, staffing and meet operating costs, to agreed standards.
- Be accountable to the State Government for any financial assistance, including grants, provided by the State.
- Provide advice to ensure there is Local Government agreement with and support for changes to the delivery of public library services.
- Work co-operatively with the State Government to support the ongoing development and enhancement of public library services to meet community needs.
- Collaborate on State-wide initiatives and programs as specified in relevant

documentation that communicates the funding, obligations, outcomes, reporting and acquittal requirements of any initiative.

- Publicly acknowledge the support and financial contribution of the State Government in providing public library services.

#### **Governance/Management**

State and Local Government have established a Public Libraries Working Group (PLWG) to oversee the implementation of this Public Library Services Agreement. Membership of the PLWG includes representation from the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, Western Australian Local Government Association, Public Libraries WA, the Library Board of Western Australia and the State Library of Western Australia.

#### **Review and Modification Process**

This Public Library Services Agreement is to apply for a period of five (5) years from the date of signing and may be extended subject to the written consent of both parties.

A review of this Public Library Services Agreement will be initiated by the PLWG three (3) years after the date of signing and will report with recommendations to the Library Board of Western Australia and WALGA State Council.

This Public Library Services Agreement may only be modified during the life of the Agreement with the written consent of both parties.



Technology Help Innovations Lab, Mirrabooka Library

## **Dispute Resolution Process**

In relation to any matter that may be in dispute between the parties in relation to this Public Library Services Agreement:

- a. If a dispute or difference arises between the parties out of or in connection with this Public Library Services Agreement, either party may give the other a written notice specifying the dispute or difference.
- b. The dispute is to be resolved by the signatories to the Public Library Services Agreement working in good faith with a view to achieve mutually agreeable outcomes.
- c. If further resolution is required, parties are to engage an independent mediator with the cost to be shared between the parties.

## **Break Clause**

This Public Library Services Agreement may be terminated at any time by the mutual agreement of the Library Board of Western Australia, WALGA State Council, the Minister for Culture and the Arts and President of the Local Government Professionals Australia WA.

Prior to terminating this Public Library Services Agreement it is intended that, where possible and appropriate, the parties use mechanisms provided within this Agreement including, but not limited to, the Dispute Resolution clause to address and resolve any issues that may exist between the parties.

## **State Library of Western Australia**

25 Francis Street

Perth Cultural Centre

PERTH WA 6000

Phone: (08) 9427 3111

Country WA: 1800 198 107 (Western Australian country callers only)

Email: [info@slwa.wa.gov.au](mailto:info@slwa.wa.gov.au)

## **WA Local Government Association**

ONE70, LV1, 170 Railway Parade

WEST LEEDERVILLE, WA 6007

Phone: (08) 9213 2000

Email: [info@walga.asn.au](mailto:info@walga.asn.au)

## **Local Government Professionals WA**

Unit 21

168 Guildford Road

MAYLANDS WA 6051

Phone: (08) 9271 1136

Email: [admin@lgprofessionalswa.org.au](mailto:admin@lgprofessionalswa.org.au)