

State Library of Victoria - Public Libraries Unit

Report for Viclink meeting, 14 October 2003

1. State Library of Victoria – update

1.1 New Advisory Committee on Public Libraries

The first meeting of the Library Board of Victoria's new Advisory Committee on Public Libraries was held on 9 October at the State Library. Attendees were: Lynne Makin and Barb Horn (Viclink); Chris Payne and Adele Keneally (CPLG); Rod Fyffe (MAV); Vicki Williamson, Chair, and Greg Hywood (Library Board of Victoria); Anne-Marie Schwirtlich, Michael Bertie, Brendan Fitzgerald, Debra Rosenfeldt and Beata Wacek (State Library). The Agenda reflected the introductory nature of the meeting, with the main business being a discussion of the Terms of Reference, an overview of progress on each of the Statewide Public Library Development Projects, and discussion about the proposal for an LBV/SLV/Public Library Network Statewide Strategy. It was agreed that it might be more appropriate to refer to this project as a Framework for Collaborative Action. A workshop for the Committee was scheduled for 5 November to develop the detailed brief for this project.

1.2 State Librarian visits to public libraries

Over the last several months, as part of her commitment to developing the relationship between public libraries and the State Library, Anne-Marie Schwirtlich has visited several library services including Yarra-Melbourne, Upper Murray, Eastern Regional, Kingston, Geelong and Goldfields. She is very keen to get to know public library managers. Whenever possible she will gladly accept invitations to meet you on your home ground and, if she has another engagement near a library service, she will endeavour to make time to visit the library.

1.3 Appointment of VICNET General Manager (Acting)

Tony Haeusler, VICNET's Business Manager has been appointed Acting General Manager until March 2004.

2. Public Libraries Unit - Update

2.1 Public Libraries Unit – Statement of purpose

This following statement of purpose for the PLU was developed on Friday the 8th of August at the PLU planning day that had both the presidents of VICLINK and CPLG in attendance as well as the Director Information Manager representing the LBV. Ian Phillips from I & J Management facilitated the session.

"Public Libraries Unit enhances the effectiveness of public libraries for Victorian communities through co-operative activities. The Unit is actively involved in:

1. communication across the public library sector and its stakeholders
2. co-ordinating industry knowledge, research and innovation
3. interpreting, articulating and addressing aggregate needs
4. facilitating strategy development."

2.2 New staff member for the Public Libraries Unit

Wendy Quihampton has joined the Public Libraries Unit as a Project Officer. Wendy's initial and main responsibility will be management of the Statewide Training Project. Wendy has most recently been Acting Manager at Brimbank Library Service. We are delighted to have her on the team. Nicole Lowndes, who has so ably managed the Training Project over the last twelve months, has elected to work part-time in order to pursue further study.

2.3 PLU visits to Public Library Staff meetings

The staff of the Public Libraries Unit will be available to attend public library service staff meetings to update branch and service staff on the work of the PLU. A letter with more details will be sent to CEOs and Managers shortly.

3. Public Libraries Unit - Projects and Activities Progress Report

3.1 Statewide Public Library Development Projects 2003/2004 –

▪ Middle Years Information Literacy Partnership Program

A project officer (0.5) is being recruited to develop the information literacy toolkit for public libraries that is central to this project. The project officer will also work with a pilot group of six public library services to develop information literacy programs in partnership with other community agencies including schools and youth groups. The appointment is expected by the end of October.

▪ Libraries Building Communities (LBC)

The majority of the data collection activities that form the core research component of LBC have been completed over the last four months by research company New Focus. These include:

- 24 focus groups with library users, non-users and staff across nine services;
- in-depth face-to-face and telephone interviews with a representative sample of approximately fifty key individuals in the community;
- a random telephone survey with a sample of 400 people.

Additionally, an online survey is being piloted in six libraries from 6 October, with statewide rollout scheduled for early November. This survey will gather core demographic data (to complement existing ABS data) as well as canvass feedback on social capital issues such as service usage and perceived value. It should be noted that \$165,000 was allocated for the research, which did not include the online survey. A request for an additional \$60,000 for this survey was approved by the Library Board of Victoria, when it became apparent that public libraries did not collect in a consistent manner the basic demographic data required.

Documentation flowing from the research so far includes:

- a Project Information Guide;
- a draft guide for libraries on how to conduct social capital audits;
- draft reports on the data collected from the focus groups, interviews with key individuals and the telephone survey.

A strategic report containing recommendations for libraries and a document showcasing examples of leading public library service delivery will also be produced. Diana Wells Design has been engaged to develop a graphic look for the project, which will be used on all reports and other materials produced.

The presentation on the project by New Focus at the 14 October Viclink meeting will be followed by a number of more in-depth sessions to communicate and workshop the findings of the research.

▪ The SWIFT Initiative Phase II – Endorsement and Funding Approval Processes

Following the development of the SWIFT business case by PricewaterhouseCoopers, CPR has been engaged to communicate the recommendations to all libraries, Councils and relevant State and Federal Government representatives, with the aim of achieving universal commitment to the project and funding for 2004/05. A strategy containing key messages and a schedule of meetings with key contacts (Ministers; Advisors; bureaucrats) to take place over October/November has been developed. At this stage a workshop has been held with public libraries (30 September) that have expressed an interest in being involved in the pilot program and discussions with the Municipal Association of Victoria have

taken place (8 October). A meeting was held with senior bureaucrats in the Office of Local Government on 13 October.

▪ **Statewide Training**

A training needs analysis was conducted prior to scheduling training for 2003/04. Subsequently, courses are being offered in both rural and metropolitan locations in the areas of,

- marketing,
- management,
- customer service,
- Reference and specialist library skills (including searching Gulliver databases).

In-house training in visual merchandising has been organised for 38 library services. Eighteen senior public library staff attended a three-day residential workshop in Leadership for Managers during September. The procedures for accessing the IT skills training grants have been streamlined and for the first time the Training Project is utilising the Wizard Computer Training whole-of-government contract to offer training to public libraries at significantly reduced rates. Applications have been sought for the prestigious Aurora Leadership Institute and, once again, the Training Project, will fund a number of places.

▪ **Statewide Marketing Project**

The two key elements to this project in 2003/04:

- rollout of the **@yourlibrary** promotional campaign and
- Development of a Statewide Marketing Plan for Victoria's public libraries.

The focus in the first part of the year is on the **@yourlibrary** campaign, which will be launched in January with 'Holiday Fun'. The Marketing Bank has been contracted to work with public libraries on the rollout of the campaign. This company has worked with a diverse range of clients in both the public and private sectors, including the City of Melbourne and the CAE on the marketing strategy for the New City Library. The Marketing Bank will liaise closely with each library service via a project champion nominated by the library. As an introduction four workshops around the state will be conducted for the project champions in the last week of October. The Marketing Bank's presentation to the 14 October Viclink meeting is intended to give library service managers a clear understanding of the project and build on the support as identified at Glen Erin. The Marketing Bank is also working with the State Library's Communications and Marketing Division on a coordinated approach to media.

▪ **Writers on the Road**

A key component of *Writers on the Road* in 2003/04 is a formal review of the program. Murray Consulting and Training (MCT), in association with Arts and Recreation Training Victoria, commenced this work on 9 October. MCT reviewed the VISioN Reference Service in 2002. The review will assess the project's performance since its inception (March 2001) in relation to,

- its stated objectives and State Government objectives,
- ascertaining the views of all key stakeholders towards its continuance,
- alternative models of literary programming for public libraries, ; and,
- alternative realistic funding sources

The review will make recommendations for the program for the next three years.

3.2 Victoria's Virtual Library (www.libraries.vic.gov.au)

The new Gulliver draft interface has gone live and has a number of features apart from access to the Online databases including a live link to search picture Australia, Individual Library catalogues and their council websites. Feed back at this point has been minimal although it is becoming increasingly important that the issue of secure remote authentication be addressed. A subcommittee comprising

Adele Keneally and Darren Ryan from Gulliver and Andrew, Brendan and Frances from VICNET will be looking into alternative solutions to the pattern matching solution.

One particular feature that needs to be highlighted is the news section of the Infonet <http://www.libraries.vic.gov.au/cgi-bin/infonet/newsfeeds.cgi>. This provides current contents to online professional journals and industry newsletters.

MMV funded a print run of posters and new bookmarks to further promote the site. These have been distributed to all libraries and Victorian Members of Parliament and more are available from the PLU.

Site Statistical results are at <http://libraries.vic.gov.au/LOGS/webalizer/>. In summary the hits for each month from June 2000 to February 2003 are as follows below

Table 1 – Hits on Victoria’s Virtual Library since launch– Raw Data*

Month	VVL hits			
	2000	2001	2002	2003
January		143,601	192,285	768,164
February		170,014	203,634	836,926
March		198,500	245,347	1,083,752
April		178,375	261,650	923,944
May		205,086	263,412	1,186,002
June	62,851	176,641	200,431	876,328
July	80,570	198,481	243,931	1,019,282
August	102,944	230,480	270,577	
September	137,633	204,060	241,195	
October	113,655	203,489	248,609	
November	130,024	192,009	238,883	
December	101,438	156,593	369,095	
Total	729,115	2,259,330	2,979,049	6,694,398
				12,661,892

*Please note that since the redesign of the Virtual Library, the page has attracted more "hits". This is due to the fact that it is a dynamic site, and more scripting has added to the number of hits. The number of visits is a far more reliable way of measuring traffic on the site.

Table 2 – User Sessions on VVL since September 2001 – Monthly Usage

Month	2001	2002	2003
January		7,952	11,195
February		8,501	11,211
March		9,572	13,241
April		10,036	12,241
May		10,646	14,678
June		8,505	12,253
July		9,861	12,253
August		11,078	
September	7,637	10,079	
October	7,336	10,281	
November	7,732	9,718	
December	6,795	8,521	
Total	29,500	114,750	87,072
			231,322

3.3 Statewide Network Infrastructure Project (SNIP)

The third round of funding (\$260k) for improving data links for Victorian Public Library branches will shortly be announced. This will again be a competitive grant process. This year the criteria has been extended to include broadband data connections and upgrades for branches other than wireless (atmospheric will still be the preferred option.) This Project also has \$26,000 to support the upgrading and replacement of public access printers in metropolitan library services.

3.4 Tomorrow @ your Library Seminar – September the 12th

Approximately 80 public library staff attended the second of the *@your library* industry seminars. This free seminar was held at the State Library of Victoria on Friday the 12th of September. This seminar explored the issues and implications in the development of web content infrastructure in Victoria's public libraries, with an eye to future collaboration trends. *The @your Library* seminar series will continue into next year with 4-5 separate days dedicated to specific themes determined in conjunction with Viclink.

3.5 Rural Libraries Online

This project is in the final stages with works to be completed at Wellington, Mitchell and Glenelg. The Commonwealth has granted an extension to complete this work and the final audit stage. The Federal Minister for Science will officially launch the Wellington Shire Wireless network on the 21st of October at Maffra.

3.6 Margery C Ramsay and Barrett Reid Scholarships

The presentation of this year's scholarships will be in the State Library's Boardroom Lounge on 14 October at 5pm.

Brendan Fitzgerald
Manager Public Libraries Unit