

VICLINK MEETING

Held at 2.00pm on Tuesday October 9th 2001
Board Lounge, State Library of Victoria

MINUTES

Present:

Lynne Makin (UMRL), Elisabeth Jackson(Hume-Moonee Valley), John Binnion (Eastern), Julie Rae (Bayside), Karen Ward-Smith and Natalie Brown (Dandenong), Gay Sussex(Maribyrnong), Bruce Myers (Swan Hill), Anthea Taylor (Geelong), Alison Katona (Mornington), Graham Dudley and Helen Balcam (Local Govt. Division), Dale Cousens (UMRL), Peter Carter(Casey-Cardinia), Chris Payne (Mitchell), Jan Penney(Nth. Central Goldfields), Judy Peppard (Library Network Unit), Genimaree Panozzo (Moreland), Connee Maggio (Kingston), Peter Mansfield(Central Highlands), Nicole Wiseman (Library Network Unit), Brendan Fitzgerald (Vicnet), Michael Bertie (State Library), Katherine Field (Port Phillip), Gabrielle Blair (Brimbank), Frances Savage (Vicnet), Michael Byrne (Boroondara), Heather Phillips (Frankston), Ana Djordjevic (Library Network Unit).

Apologies:

John Murrell (West Gippsland), Suzanne Gately (Hobsons Bay), Susan Orr (Campaspe), Marj Morkham (Corangamite), Deidre Pellizzer (Port Phillip), Adele Kenneally (Gleneig), Barbara Horn (Yarra-Melbourne), Jenny Ruffy (Monash), Anne Holmes (Boroondara), Trish Smyth (Kingston), Stuart Hall (Vicnet), Neville Humphris (Moreland)

Opening and Welcome

Lynne Makin opened the meeting and welcomed those present. She extended congratulations to Peter Mansfield who has been appointed CEO of Geelong Regional Library.

1. Cheque Presentation

The State Government has made a grant of \$20,000 for Gulliver. The Minister's Advisor, Bernie Dean was to attend to present the cheque but was delayed.

2. Minutes of meeting held on 14th August at Vision Australia

Moved Alison Katona, Seconded Michael Byrne that the minutes of the last meeting be adopted.

3. Correspondence

This was tabled as follows:

Letter to Minister for the Arts regarding Library Policy

Letter to Director for Community Networking Research at Monash supporting proposal for research into public library Internet use

Letter from Gay Sussex regarding History of Public Libraries project.

Letter from Prue Digby and Fran Awcock regarding Library Policy

4. Treasurer's Report

This was tabled. Viclink has \$12,530.82 in the bank with subscription invoices to be sent out shortly.

5. State Library – Library Network Unit Report (Circulated)

No further discussion of this

6. Department of Infrastructure Report

Graham Dudley reported further on the Library Policy. The Reference Group met last week and commented on a new draft of the Policy. This was also discussed with the MAV. A new draft with the comments of these groups will be released in the week beginning 22nd October. This will be published on the website and also sent to all Councils, Regional Libraries and libraries. Comments will be accepted until 7 December and the final draft should be ready by late January.

Graham also announced that the quarterly grants should be paid in the next few days.

7. CPLG News

Chris Payne is the new Chair of CPLG.

A project manager – CT Management – has been appointed for the Mobile Library Signage Project.

8. Privacy Legislation – report from Peter Carter

Peter distributed some notes on this (attached to Minutes)

Michael Bertie reported that the State Library Information Records Manager has recently developed a new policy on this issue and he will arrange to send this to Viclink.

9. Legal opinion on Internet issues – John Binnion

This document was distributed to all present and will be sent to other library services.

10.COMMITTEE REPORTS

VICLINK Executive

Lynne reported on progress with the Australian Public Libraries Network and on a lunch with the Minister for Local Government and his advisor which had been attended by Executive Members and John Murrell. The discussions were positive and there is a possibility for regular meetings to be arranged to discuss funding and other issues.

Gulliver

Julie Rae spoke about:

Approaches from CASL to work in with Gulliver – to be discussed further
Need for a Memorandum of Understanding with Viclink – to be discussed by Executive
Possibility of a consortium purchase of anti-virus software
\$20,00 grant from State Govt. – need to decide how to spend it.

Reference Co operative

Still discussing ways of measuring enquiries accurately especially taking account of the greater complexity of enquires now received.
Also discussing the need for a marketing campaign focussing on the information resources and skills of staff in public libraries. Proposal to send a submission to the Statewide Marketing Committee

Collection Development

No report

Technology 2005

Due to meet on Oct. 10th

Children's Services

Holding a seminar on 19th October at Sunshine Library. Planning for end of year activities.

11. Speakers

Two speakers addressed the meeting on the subject of providing services for and promoting services to teenages

Agnes Newenhausen of the Australian Cente for Youth Literature spoke about her Young Australians Reading Project and its implications for public libraries. The project involved research on 10-18 year olds conducted in 1999. It found that while a majority of young people like to read and understand its importance, fewer than 20% saw libraries as a good place to satisfy their reading needs and only 9% thought the local public library could help. Some of Agnes' recommendations to turn this around are:

- Focus on the 60% of young people who are already keen readers
- Make it a priority that all public libraries have a position of Youth Services (ie young adult,) librarian
- Targetted collection development and programs
- Waiving of reservation fees and fines for teenagers
- Encouraging peer reviews and recommendations
- Working closely with local schools and booksellers
- Involvement of the library profession in literature awards

Genimaree Panozzo, Community Relations Librarian with Moreland City Libraries spoke about programs she saw while in Britain as a Ramsay/Reid Scholarship holder. 1999-2000 had been designated as National Year of Reading and received funding of 4 million pounds from the British Govt. as well as substantial commercial sponsorship. Most of this had been spent on local programs and Genimaree spoke particularly about Reader Development Training and about the Essex library which had employed a Reader in Residence who had a youth work background. There were several good ideas which have the capacity to be taken up by Statewide Projects.

12. OTHER BUSINESS

Lynne Makin is the Chair of the Interim Planning Committee for the Australian Public Libraries Network. This body includes public librarians, councillors and representatives of Australian Local Government Association.

13. NEXT MEETING

December 11 Christmas meeting at Mitchell

The meeting closed at 3.45pm

Presentation of Ramsay and Reid Scholarships

Patricia O'Donnell of the Libraries Board presented the Margery Ramsay Scholarship to Natalie Brown of City of Greater Dandenong and the Barrett Reid Scholarship to Bruce Myers of Swan Hill Library Service.

Paper tabled by Peter Carter at Viclink Meeting 9 October 2001

Privacy issues for public libraries:

Most Libraries have some form of policy, Local Laws or procedures governing access to their records – primarily membership records.

Both the Federal and State Governments have introduced legislation governing information privacy and access to data about individuals. The recent Federal Legislation is aimed at the private sector, while the Victorian legislation covers the public sector.

The Victorian State Government Information Privacy Act 2000 is intended to “establish a regime for the responsible collection and handling of personal information in the Victorian public sector.”

The Act uses a set of “Information Privacy Principles”, defined in a schedule attached to the Act. The Act essentially provides a framework for the administration and enforcement of these principles.

The Act is concerned with not only protecting individual privacy by governing the use of and access to personal information. It covers the correction of information held on an individual, and the rights of access to information about an individual by that individual. The Act also provides for the establishment of a Privacy Commissioner.

Libraries maintain a database of information about individual members. The information consists of the following primary areas:

- Personal details such as name, address, age, contact phone numbers, etc.
- Information about library material currently on loan or being accessed by that member
- Information about outstanding overdue items, fines or other charges incurred by that member
- In the case of housebound members, some information on previous borrowing habits and patterns. (This is not usually held on most members of individual library services) Some Library systems have the capability to list most recent users of a particular item.

It has been normal practice for public libraries to limit access to individual records. Access is usually only available to library staff carrying out their duties relating to circulation activities or the enforcement of the library regulations and conditions of use. Access is also made available to a third party (such as a debt collection agency) again for the purposes of enforcement of the library conditions of use.

What about requests for access to information or records about an individual?

Requests may arise from:

- Other members of the public
- Business and commercial organisations
- Private detective/lawyers and related businesses
- Police
- Councils and other local government bodies
- State and Federal government departments or bodies

Libraries have received request from the Police, Sheriff's Office or other similar law enforcement agencies for details of names and addresses of library members. I am aware of libraries (including Casey-Cardinia), which have been approached over the years by private individuals, commercial organisations, real-estate agents, private detective agencies and Federal Government departments for information about current members.

Casey-Cardinia currently has a policy that does not permit access to any records other than by court order or warrant.

As an exercise, I contacted the member Councils of our region. The situation appeared to be that they would release details of name and address to the Police if requested. It was not as clear-cut regarding the Sheriff's Office. The Councils did not have absolutely clear guidelines – they are being developed now. In the case of one Council, discretion seemed to be left to individual managers. Both Councils are now developing detailed responses to the Information Privacy Act requirements.

My understanding of the Information Privacy Act leads me to believe that personal information could be provided to a law enforcement agency, if the information was 'reasonably believed' to be necessary to prevent, investigate or prosecute a criminal act. A Library would appear to not be in breach of the Act if it provided this information. However, it is required to make a written note of this disclosure. As far as I can tell, the Act does not compel a public organisation to provide certain levels of information to for instance, a police officer or other body.

The section dealing with criminal activities also refers to "protection of the public revenue". Would this allow release of information to the Australian Taxation Office, CentreLink, etc?

What policies or Local Laws do Libraries currently have in place regarding the provision of personal details? Do these policies or Local Laws state under what circumstances that information will and won't be provided? Do any Libraries distinguish between providing names and address details as opposed to details of individuals borrowing habits? For example would a library provide the police with a name and address of a member, but not details of their current loans, etc? What about an approach from the police involving a missing child, or other urgent matter?