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Workforce Sustainability and Leadership:
Survey, Analysis and Planning for Victorian public libraries

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Background to the study

This study comprised Stages 2 and 3 of the *Workforce Sustainability and Leadership* research project for the State Library of Victoria, in partnership with the Victorian public library network and under the auspices of the Library Board of Victoria. The research undertaken for these stages of the project was designed to complement the initial *Scoping Study* conducted in 2006 (see Appendix C). Stage 2 investigated:

- current skill level of the Victoria public library workforce;
- current training levels and training needs;
- recruitment and retention issues;
- development opportunities.

Stage 3 of the project involved developing recommendations for strategies aimed at increasing sustainability and leadership in the Victorian public library workforce over the next 15 years. This research involved conducting both qualitative and quantitative research across Victorian public libraries between September and December 2007. The report discusses the findings from the research in the context of a tight national labour market that has undergone significant changes. These changes have affected both labour supply and labour demand, and influenced the development and deployment of skill at the workplace level.

The changing funding and operational context

The tightening of public sector budgets brought about by the introduction of economic rationalism from the 1980s onwards has had a significant affect on staffing and workforce development. At the workplace level, staffing cuts across the sector have increased work intensification. The same level of service is expected, despite a drop in the number of employees available. In the library and information field, in particular, technological changes have had a big impact on the type of services provided, the way tasks are done and the expectations of service users. Staff need training on a continuing basis to cater for this. This is at a time when staffing levels have been effectively reduced, so accommodating training time is more difficult. Library users now expect services to be available over a wider span of hours in line with longer shop trading hours, so library staff need to have greater flexibility in terms of hours and days worked. In the broader economy, a massive growth in service related industries has increased opportunities for white collar workers and also the competition for their services.

Public library context

Victorian public libraries exist within the local government structure and are managed either by single councils or by corporations acting on behalf of multiple councils. The bulk of the funding for public libraries in Victoria is provided by local councils. The State Government provides annual funding based on population. This has declined in real terms over the years and now accounts for 20–30% of public library funding. There is a high degree of variation in the levels of funding allocated by individual

councils – ranging from $47.03 to $11.13 per capita, and this obviously impacts on workforce development.

The changing labour market context

In the labour market, there have been substantial changes in labour supply. In recent years, the workforce has become much more diversified and the composition has changed significantly. The participation rates of women have increased, older people are remaining in the workforce for longer, younger people are entering full-time employment later, and the number of people holding educational qualifications is rising, as is the level of education of the workforce. The traditional notion of a 'job for life' has also changed, to be replaced by increasing mobility between jobs and between employers. In a tight labour market, workers have increasing discretion over where to deploy their skills or whether to learn new skills that may be in demand.

These labour market changes have contributed to a broadening of responsibilities at management levels, particularly as management structures have been flattened due to staff reductions. In the public sector, managerial responsibilities are increasingly extending beyond administrative and operational roles. They are expected to develop and implement strategic initiatives to manage the changing nature of labour supply and demand. Increasingly these initiatives include workforce profiles and staffing systems that serve to maximise the deployment of all available labour. Coinciding with this is the need to continually improve performance while enhancing the capacity of workplaces to meet diverse challenges. However, improving performance through skill development in this operational context is difficult and getting harder.

Understanding changing skill requirements

Broader labour market changes have combined to redefine and broaden the concept of workplace skill as notions of behaviours, attitudes and values increasingly became associated with the term 'generic' skills. Emerging from the debates about the nature of skill, Mounier (2001) has developed a simple and useful typology that categorises skills as they are conceived and defined in the workplace. In making sense of changing skill requirements, his conceptualisation of skill can be summarised as involving:

1. cognitive skills – foundation or general skills obtained on the basis of general citizenship (e.g. literacy, numeracy, general educational competence);
2. technical skills – those associated with the purchase of labour on the open market to perform particular tasks (e.g. ability to operate machinery/ technology, recognised trade or professional skills);
3. behavioural skills – personal skills associated with labour's ability to deal with interpersonal relationships and to perform in the context of particular authority relations on the job (e.g. communication, empathy, reliability, punctuality).

As the deployment of labour has been reconfigured by reduced staffing levels, behavioural skills and cognitive skills have grown in importance as employers require workers to increasingly take responsibility for anticipating and satisfying customer and client needs. In addition, however, technological advances have also meant that many sectors also require higher levels of technical skills.

Within this evolving labour market, the interests and needs of employers and workers often fail to coincide. While jobs have been designed around particular combinations of skills, in a tight labour market employees have much greater discretion with regard to the positions they seek and the type of work they choose to undertake. The library industry, in particular the public library network, has been described by both the local and international library communities as being in a state of crisis with regard to staffing and retention issues. At the higher skilled level and in the specialised roles, anecdotal evidence highlights problems with attracting suitably qualified staff while at the lower skilled level, the workforce problems are associated with inappropriate and outdated skills (van Wanrooy 2006). The findings from this study confirmed these staffing issues.

Findings from the fieldwork

The main report provides extensive analysis of the current skills, training and staffing issues in Victorian public libraries. Below is a summary of these findings as they relate to current skill levels, future requirements and potential or actual gaps in the staffing profile. These findings are based on results from two surveys. One administered with all employees, and the other administered with all senior and whole-of-service managers.

The need for differentiated strategies by position

The empirical research conducted for this study revealed significant and impending problems with workforce sustainability in Victorian public libraries. Across all positions, staffing shortages are primarily attributed to inadequate funding but there are other factors contributing to specific staffing problems. The precise nature of these reported problems varies by position and skill level but is often related to a lack of appropriate cognitive, technical and behavioural skills rather than an issue of inadequate labour supply. In particular, at the lower skilled levels all three types of skill seem to be an issue. Managers report that skill shortages in library officer positions is because 'current staff are not suitable for the roles expected of them', while skill shortages among library technicians are apparently due to the fact that 'current staff are not adequately skilled'.

In general, problems associated with positions of higher level skill or responsibility within the service are seen as a result of constrained labour supply. Managers report under-staffing in many of these functions. After funding, attracting suitable applicants to librarian positions is seen as the most significant factor contributing to skill shortages in these positions. Managers also anticipate substantial difficulties in being able to recruit staff in the future, with particular concern around being unable to recruit to general librarian positions, to specialist roles in operations, collections, children and youth services, multicultural services, as well as outreach and community liaison roles.

Overall, the findings highlight the need to develop different strategies for addressing ongoing and future staffing needs.

Staffing problems set to worsen: An impending exodus?

The broad impression given by the employees' with regard to their intention to remain in the public library sector is primarily related to factors associated with an ageing workforce. The findings show that only approximately one in ten employees (13%) intend to leave the public library service before they retire, with a further 38% undecided. Nevertheless, the age of the workforce means that in practice there will be at least a 64% turnover in the workforce within the next ten years: with one-third of employees (34%) intending to leave within the next five years and a further one-third (30%) intending to leave in five to ten years. A similar pattern emerged for both managers and new graduates with regard to the intentions to leave. New graduates, however, are more likely to be unsure of whether or not they intend to stay within the public library service until they retire.

Role clarification

There is little differentiation in the reported frequency of functions or tasks performed or the job roles performed across the three employee positions (library officer, library technician or librarian). With regard to job roles, librarians are more likely than library technicians, and much more likely than library officers, to provide information services or management and supervision as a core part of their position. Of the 16 major functions that were included in the survey, only four functions provide any measurable differences in the frequency with which the associated tasks are performed by officers, technicians and librarians. The functions that increase in frequency with increasing position levels are collection management and acquisitions (e.g. 62% of librarians 'often' or 'always' take part in collection management tasks, compared to 40% of library technicians and 26% of library officers). The functions that increase in frequency as level of skill declines include checking books and materials in and out, and shelving books (e.g. 46% of librarians shelve books frequently compared to 69% of technicians and 82% of library officers).

Employment band does not provide any greater clarification with regard to core roles performed by band 3 through to band 5. Workers employed under band 6, however, are more likely to be engaged in roles related to supervision, branch services, marketing and promotions and multi-cultural services. With regard to employment band and functions performed, band 6 employees are less likely than the other bands to be involved in front-of-house activities, and more likely to be undertaking tasks related to strategic planning, collection management, outreach work, developing new technologies, and promoting services. Core functions that distinguish the activities of those employed under other bands are similar to those discussed with regard to position (i.e. shelving books, collection management and checking books in and out).

The survey did not attempt to measure perceived level of responsibility or expected capacity to achieve outcomes across different functions or different job roles. It is possible, and indeed highly likely, that the seeming lack of differentiation between job roles and functions may actually be clarified by these factors. Nevertheless, employees' capacity to accurately self-assess their own performance or to compare their own performance with that of their colleagues is, in general, limited. Managers in Victorian public libraries confirm this view through express concerns that shortages in the lower skill levels in the organisation are due to inadequate skills or incumbents not being suitable for the roles expected of them.

The capability/position mismatch

Employees were asked to indicate the key functions or tasks that they would like to do more often. These results highlight the potential mismatch between the tasks employees 'want' to be doing and managers' perceptions of their key problems with current staffing. For example, managers report particular concerns over finding suitably qualified staff who can provide services for children and yet only 15% of all employees want to increase the extent to which they are involved in providing this service. Furthermore, the employees most likely to want to undertake more duties in this service area are in library officer positions (research in the qualitative stage indicates this role should be performed by librarians). The other potential discordance between the tasks employees want to be doing and the tasks they are needed to do emerges with the service areas that public libraries are increasingly outsourcing. Half of all technicians and library officers want to be doing more work related to acquisition and cataloguing of materials and thus appear to be unaware that the availability of these positions will be declining for Victorian public library employees. At the higher skilled level, the findings are more positive, with approximately half of all librarians wanting to do more work related to strategic planning and collection management and over a third wanting to do more online service delivery, outreach work, training development, and delivery and service promotion.

Career progression: Considerable interest, limited opportunities and even less support

In total, more than half of all employees want to progress from their current position and approximately one in five librarians will be seeking promotion within the next two years with a further one in five seeking promotion in between two and five years. The mechanisms for facilitating the promotional process and ensuring effective succession planning, however, are evidently not in place, at least not in a formal sense. Less than half of all employees (46%) report that their 'supervisor is supporting [their] career development'; only 19% state their 'supervisor is helping [them] prepare for a higher level role'; and, even fewer (13%) are being assisted to 'change roles' at their current level.

As has been discussed, 60% of employees intend to leave the public library service within the next ten years. The factors that would most induce nearly two-thirds all employees to stay in the public library service is 'more pay' (61%), followed by 'professional development' (45%), 'better work/life balance' (41%) and 'better career opportunities' (40%). However, a total of 18% of the workforce state that they are currently 'actively looking for work' outside of Victorian public libraries in either the public or private sector. Importantly, while higher pay is the most significant inducement to stay among those actively seeking work elsewhere (69%), the second most important factor is 'better career development opportunities' (64%).

Recommendations

Following is a brief summary of the recommendations that are discussed in detail in the full report:

1. Workforce Development Team

To implement the actions recommended and follow up the issues raised in this report, a Workforce Development Team should be established. This should be auspiced by Viclink and include representatives of the following:

- Each band level of public library staff.
- The Australian Services Union.
- The Australian Library and Information Association.
- The Municipal Association of Victoria.
- Library educators.

2. National initiatives to be promoted

2.1 At each position level, conduct a global job analysis to define key core skills related to the technical, behavioural and cognitive competencies required. The work done by the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) in this regard should be taken into account.

2.2 Develop specific strategies for attracting librarians to public libraries.

2.3 Develop a national campaign to promote public libraries as a career option.

2.4 Identify skills outside the traditional Library and Information Sector which are useful for public libraries (e.g. social work, teaching, information technology skills, retailing) and develop a strategy to attract people with these skills to public library work.
To complement this initiative, libraries need to establish a strategy to bridge skill and knowledge gaps between existing experience and the current and future requirements of the library sector.

2.5 Investigate the possibility of Government-funded traineeships for library officers to enable them to acquire formal qualifications while working in libraries.

2.6 Investigate the potential for portable long service leave between different types of employers across the Library and Information Sector (e.g. Local Government, State Government, Universities).

2.7 Continue work with higher education institutions to maintain and further develop links between public libraries and universities.

3. Standardisation and revision of Position Descriptions

3.1 Using the key core skills analysis referred to above, develop new broad position descriptions that outline the skill structures relevant to each position to ensure that equivalently banded staff have similar responsibilities in different libraries. Consult and communicate with relevant stakeholders, including staff, unions and employee representative groups on:
- the new position descriptions,
- skill structures,
- role expectations,
- career paths,
- the declining areas of employment due to outsourcing strategies and technological changes, and
- areas where employment opportunities are expected to increase.

3.2 Ensure new broad position descriptions for managers/supervisors incorporate active involvement in career development, performance management and succession planning of staff.

3.3 Clarify levels of responsibility and accountability across different position levels through the new skill structure.

3.4 Examine the need for revised banding of library staff to ensure their skills are recognised, taking into account technology and other changes that have impacted on the skills required, and ensure they have parity with other local government staff.

3.5 Use new descriptions in recruiting new staff members.

3.6 Develop a template to support skills audits of library staff to identify gaps.

4. Performance management

4.1 Investigate performance management systems and develop a tailored system for public libraries that incorporates staff development which is compatible with council performance management systems. Consult with staff, relevant unions and/or employee representative groups on performance management systems.

4.2 Examine skill requirements to enable managers to implement a performance management system. Provide training for library managers in performance management and succession planning.

4.3 Survey library managers on an annual basis to determine skill gaps they have found during the performance management process to identify potential future skill gaps and link this data collection to the mentoring program (*see below*).

4.4 Use the performance management system to identify potential future leaders.

4.5 In order to retain new graduates, public libraries need to ensure performance management systems recognise their skills and qualifications and support their career development.

5. Succession planning and career development

5.1 Develop a formal mentoring program that offers networks of support across the library service. Encourage library managers to identify potential leaders through the performance management process and nominate them for mentoring.

5.2 Examine potential secondment opportunities with other public sector agencies, particularly among senior staff members.

5.3 Nominate or seek/encourage expressions of interest from staff to participate in organisation-wide or sector-wide projects (e.g. Statewide Public Library Development Projects) as development and networking opportunities.

5.4 Develop and communicate potential career path options and opportunities to staff.

5.5 Promote existing study support programs offered by local government.

Background

The State Library of Victoria, in partnership with the Victorian public library network and under the auspices of the Library Board of Victoria, contracted the Workplace Research Centre to conduct Stages 2 and 3 of the *Workforce Sustainability and Leadership* research project. The *Workforce Sustainability and Leadership* project is a three-stage research program designed to identify key issues surrounding the recruitment and retention of qualified public library staff and the development of leadership positions.

Stage 1 of the project was conducted to establish the context of the intended subsequent phases of the project and to highlight key areas for further clarification and quantification. The findings from Stage 1 were reported in April 2006 – *Workforce Sustainability and Leadership; Scoping Research* (hereafter referred to as the *Scoping Study*). Stages 2 and 3 of the project were intended to build on the findings from the scoping project. The aim of Stage 2 was to analyse the current skills, training and staffing of Victorian public libraries. The aim of Stage 3 was to develop strategic approaches and recommendations for addressing the research findings surrounding the ongoing sustainability of the Victorian public library workforce.

In brief, the key issues identified during Stage 1 of the project were the:

- need to define and articulate the role of public libraries and librarians;
- need to develop potential for building networks between librarians, and between librarians and external organisations to facilitate training and career development;
- need to attract and/or develop managers who can instigate workplace change;
- difficulties experienced by managers in attracting and developing quality people to work in public libraries;
- lack of a clear and communicated vision of the future of public libraries; and
- need to develop funding models that support workplace change.

With regard to the conduct of the intended Stage 2 of the project (*Survey and Analysis)*, the report from Stage 1 recommended that the following issues be quantified:

- current skill level of the Victoria public library workforce;
- current training levels and training needs;
- recruitment and retention issues; and
- development opportunities.

The primary objective of Stage 2 was to inform the identification of initiatives for Stage 3. At the completion of Stage 2, the findings and potential strategies for addressing the issues raised by the research were discussed with the Workforce Survey Analysis and Planning Workgroup. Stage 3 of the project involved working closely with the Workgroup to develop recommendations and detailed strategies

aimed at increasing sustainability and leadership in the Victorian public library workforce over the next fifteen years.

Report structure and methodological summary

This report is based on the empirical findings of qualitative and quantitative research conducted across Victorian public libraries between September and December 2007. Initial findings from this research were presented to the Workforce Survey Analysis and Planning Workgroup in February 2008, and the outcomes from this discussion have been incorporated into this report.

This report is structured into four chapters. The first chapter provides an introduction from existing literature on the broader labour market issues in Australia. Particular attention has been paid to the labour supply and labour demand factors that are contributing to national skill shortages. Specific issues relevant to the public library sector are highlighted. Chapter two reports on the findings from the qualitative field work. This includes outcomes from an initial meeting with the Workgroup and the findings from two focus groups. The focus groups were conducted in November 2007 and included a group that comprised new graduates and a group that comprised library service managers (Appendices A and B provides more detail on the scope and methodology of the qualitative and quantitative phases of the study). The third chapter presents an extensive analysis of the current skills, training and staffing issues as identified from the findings of two surveys conducted across the Victorian public library sector workforce. The first survey was administered to all employees of Victorian public libraries and the second survey was administered to all senior and whole-of-service managers. Chapter four discusses the strategic approaches and recommendations that were developed to address the issues identified in chapters one to three. In particular, this chapter provides recommendations for addressing the recruitment and retention of qualified staff, the development of staff for leadership positions, and for the identification of ongoing development and training needs to address potential future skills gaps.

1. Introduction

Economic rationalism – labour supply and demand

Public libraries in Australia, as in the rest of the developed world, are undergoing profound change. Since the late 1980s, the public sector management environment has been driven by the economic rationalist imperatives of operational efficiencies and productivity gains (Pusey 1991). Government agencies that have traditionally played a vital role in the provision of services have increasingly withdrawn funding from direct provision and redirected financial support toward the provision of outsourced services through private and not-for-profit external agencies. This shift toward market and quasi-market models has had flow-on effects to those services that are still retained within a traditional Government funding model. The providers of public and welfare related services have had funding arrangements increasingly tightened and are being forced to restructure their workforces according to principles of productivity and efficiency.

Operating under economic rationalist conditions has significant implications for labour demand. Employers have to increasingly cut costs to meet reduced funding budgets or increased service and production targets. With labour costs typically the largest single outlay for most employers, staffing strategies that employ fewer and/or less skilled workers are increasingly being adopted. Following staff cuts, or skill reductions, the remaining workers are expected to maintain and, in some instances even increase, levels of production or service provision. Leaner staffing profiles, work intensification and the advent, in the 1980s of multi-skilling, have weakened occupational coherence as jobs have been enlarged through the assignment of extra duties and responsibilities. In addition, growing demands and changing consumer expectations with regard to access to goods and services have led to changes in operating hours. Changes in operating hours have had flow-on effects to both the hours of work and the forms of employment as employers have sought greater flexibility in their workforces. For example, the services sector is now characterised by hours of operation outside the traditional Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm routine and by forms of employment that are dominated by part-time and casual workers.

Labour supply, however, has also changed significantly as employees have altered their expectations and aspirations at work and adapted to demand-driven flexibility in hours of work and forms of employment. Since the mid-1980s, Australians of all ages have been increasingly participating in formal education and training (McMillan & Marks 2003). As a result, the traditional transition that saw young people move out of formal education into a full-time, 'job for life' in the workforce has shifted to one of adults of all ages moving in and out of education and training throughout their life course (Schmid 2002). At the same time, while employers are reporting increases in the provision of workplace training, employer provided training is dominated by unstructured on-the-job training that involves workers being shown or explained what to do (ABS 2001; Cully 2005; Hampson 2004; Watson et al. 2003). As formal workplace provided training has declined, employers' financial contribution to training has decreased in real terms. It is fair to say, however, that employers' ability

to provide formal workplace training has been undermined by funding constraints and the cutting of staffing levels to a minimum (Watson et al. 2003). In a number of government funded sectors, tight control of expenditure has reduced the capacity of workplaces to release staff from standard work flows to attend formal training (Buchanan & Hall 2003; Dawkins, et al. 1999). Nevertheless, with the increased importance of education and training, employees are either funding their own ongoing development or actively seeking alternative opportunities that broaden their skill-base and experience (McMillan & Marks 2003).

Aside from the changes that have occurred with the traditional transition between education and training and the workforce, labour supply is also marked by other changes to the transitions that workers make throughout their working lives. In recent years, the workforce has become much more diversified and the composition has changed significantly. Greater importance of educational attainment has meant more younger people are participating longer in full-time education and thus, are entering the full-time workforce at a later age (McMillan & Marks 2003; Wooden 2002). The average retirement age has decreased but some older workers are now staying on in the workforce beyond the traditional retirement age or entering into part-time work so as to ease their transition out of the workforce. The growth of part-time and casual work and the decline in a lot of blue-collar work has meant that a lot of men have increasingly moved out of, or been forced out of, full-time employment (Watson et al. 2003). The participation rate of women has increased and, with this, growing numbers of mothers with young children are returning to the workforce (Baird 2004; Charlesworth, Campbell & Probert 2002).

In addition, expectations around work and career have changed. Workers, particularly younger workers, no longer expect or even desire the traditional 'job for life' with a single employer. Related to expectations of life-long learning and continuous career development, workers are much more mobile within the labour market than ever before. Management rhetoric now abounds with concepts such as the 'portfolio worker' (Handy 1989) and the 'protean' career (Hall 1996). All of which have arisen out of the increased tendency for workers to move between organisations, changing jobs for learning and development opportunities, and career advancement.

Training, skills and career progression

With reduced formal training and increased labour mobility, appropriately skilling the workplace has become an issue of the deployment of labour to maximise productivity efficiencies rather than the development of labour for future needs (Burgess & Watts 1999; Hall, Buchanan & Considine 2002; Hall & Lansbury 2006). Funding constraints and/or the drive for increased profit margins has seen the removal of middle management and supervisory jobs in many sectors of the labour market. The elimination of many of these middle management positions has removed, or dramatically limited, the career paths for many workers. In sectors where formal career paths do still exist and there are internal labour markets that offer vertical or hierarchical developmental opportunities, resource constraints have still limited the number of management positions available. The positions that are available in many sectors, particularly the public sector, are often overloaded with responsibilities and poorly renumerated relative to similar management positions in other sectors, making

them less attractive and, therefore, often difficult to fill appropriately (Buchanan & Hall 2003).

In this environment, the responsibilities of senior public servants, such as senior library managers, have extended beyond administrative and operational roles. Increasingly, senior managers are expected to be involved in the development and management of strategic initiatives for managing the changing nature of labour supply and demand. Improving performance and enhancing the capacity of workplaces to meet increasingly diverse challenges is now paramount (Hawthorne 2004). In the library and information services (LIS) sector, an ageing and increasingly diverse workforce, rapid and continuous technological innovation, and the changing needs and demographics of local communities are just some of these challenges. Rapid growth in the services sector since the early 1990s has also meant increased competition for both high and lower skilled workers. The higher skilled end of the labour market is also affected by the growing knowledge economy and increasing demand for information specialists in different sectors (e.g. the field of law).

Since the 1980s, ideas of what constitutes workplace skills have been changing. Whereas previously the notion of skill was generally confined to concepts related to technical competence, during the 1990s this notion of skill was broadened. Workplace skill began to encompass ideas about behaviours, attitudes and values as employers developed increasingly high expectations that potential employees would have 'work-ready' or 'generic' skills (Allen Consulting Group 1999; Buchanan & Hall 2003; Kearns 2001). Emerging from the varied debates about the nature of skill has been a simple but useful typology that categorises skills as they are conceived and defined in the workplace. Mounier's (2001) conceptualisation of skill can be summarised as involving:

1. cognitive skills – foundation or general skills obtained on the basis of general citizenship (e.g. literacy, numeracy, general educational competence);
2. technical skills – those associated with the purchase of labour on the open market to perform particular tasks (e.g. the ability to operate machinery/ technology, recognised trade qualifications or professional skills);
3. behavioural skills – personal skills associated with labour's ability to deal with interpersonal relationships and to perform in the context of particular authority relations on the job (e.g. communication, empathy, reliability, punctuality).

As the deployment of labour has been reconfigured by reduced staffing levels, behavioural skills and cognitive skills have grown in importance. For example, in an economy that is highly dependent on the services sector, employers require the cognitive and behavioural skills that enable workers to take increasingly responsibility for anticipating and satisfying customer and client needs. In addition, technological advances have meant that many sectors now require higher levels of technical skills (Buchanan & Hall 2003; Hall & Lansbury 2006; NCVER 2002).

The dynamics of the labour supply and demand factors discussed so far are illustrated in Figure 1. These dynamics have led to gaps between the jobs being offered by employers and the occupational aspirations of workers. While employers are primarily interested in ensuring particular jobs, tasks and/or services are performed,

workers often have other interests. A national study of factors contributing to worker satisfaction showed that two main issues were of particular importance to workers: 1. interesting and satisfying work; and 2. good relationships with co-workers (Considine & Callus 2004). The former of these factors, in particular, includes a preference for work that extends employees and enables them to build new skills (Buchanan et al. 2001). With national skill shortages, however, employees have greater discretion over the types of work they will or won't perform. This is particularly so among higher skilled workers whose skill-sets provide them with greater marketability and who are in a stronger position to bargain for specific conditions and terms of employment. There are yet other workers who seek fulfilment beyond the workforce and prefer to undertake paid work which requires a limited level of engagement. Regardless of the particular issue or combination of supply and demand issues, however, it is not surprising that employers' and workers' interests and needs often fail to coincide (Buchanan & Hall 2003).

Figure 1: Model of the changing nature of work and skills
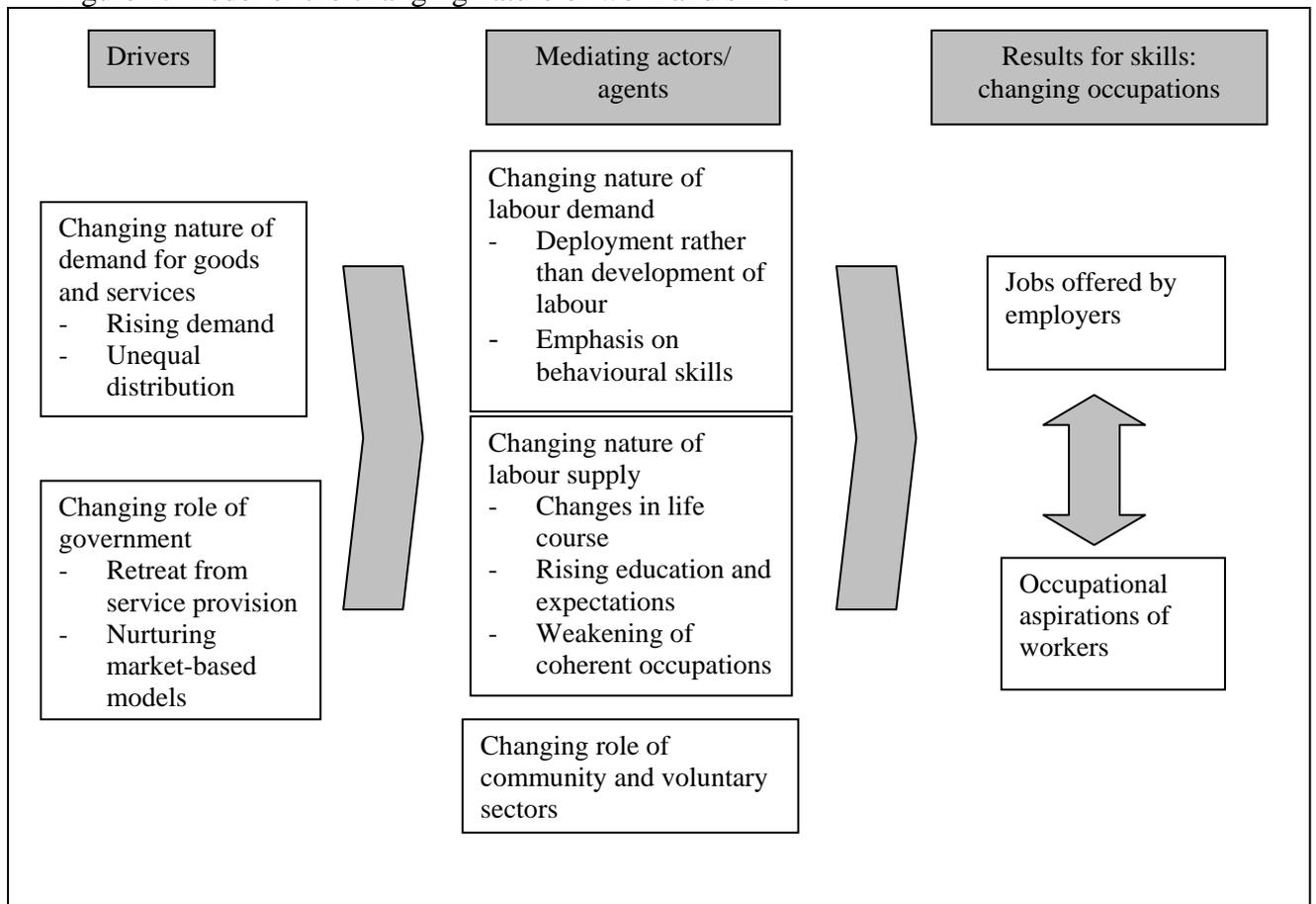
Source: Buchanan & Hall (2003)

Skill shortages – comparing the library, education and health sectors

The library industry, in particular the public library network, has been described by both the local and international library communities as being in a state of crisis with regard to staffing and retention issues (St. Lifer 2000; Teece 2002). Across Australia, a range of professions and occupations face potential skill shortages due to the ageing

population, with the subsequent increasing proportion of the labour market approaching retirement age. Adding to the difficulties created by impending skill shortages is a tight labour market in which the national unemployment rate has been declining over the past twenty years and has been under 5% since June 2006 (ABS 2006, 2007). As competition for labour increases, wages and conditions offered by employers, and issues of job design and role clarity become increasingly important in attracting and retaining suitable workers.

In a tight labour market, workers have increasing discretion over where to deploy their skills or whether to learn new skills that may be in demand. A recent study in the health sector showed that a widely reported 'shortage' of registered nurses was actually reluctance among qualified and experienced nurses to work within the current operating environment of the state public health system. In contrast, many qualified and registered nurses are taking up positions that offer better wages and/or conditions either within the health sector or in other industries (Buchanan & Considine 2002).

Similar issues have contributed to teacher shortages in the education sector. However, in addition to issues of wages and conditions, the teaching profession has also faced a significant decline in its standing as a profession. Subsequently, the industry has faced increasing difficulties in attracting students to enrol in degree courses in education (Abbott-Chapman et al. 1991). There are numerous reasons associated with the decline in the teaching profession's standing and a discussion of these factors goes beyond the scope of this current report. Nevertheless, since the 1980s, the increased access to women and the availability of other more attractive and better remunerated professions has substantially influenced the nature and extent of young people, and women in particular, taking up study in these fields.

The situation in the health and education sectors appears to have strong similarities to that of the library and information services (LIS) sector. Each sector is faced with a female dominated ageing workforce that is finding it difficult to attract and retain suitably qualified professionals. In 2002 and 2004, Teece raised the issue of a seriously ageing LIS workforce and the need for effective succession planning to prevent an impending 'crisis in labour supply'. Similarly, Ingles and his colleagues (2005) highlighted the interactive effects that recruitment, retention, training, and an ageing workforce would have on workforce sustainability. In particular, the Ingles report emphasised that funding constraints had led to cuts in middle management positions and that this flattening of organisational structures had limited career progression opportunities.

Qualitative findings from the research conducted during the *Scoping Study* of this current research program provided support for the Ingles report. Stakeholders, from the higher education library information sector, who were interviewed for the scoping study, perceived that, relative to other industries, there were limited entry-level vacancies for graduates in public libraries. However, the scoping report also highlighted that managers perceived significant skill shortages in specific areas of the Victorian public library workforce, particularly in children's and youth's services. In addition, managers in regional areas and in urban areas that are socially and/or economically disadvantaged reported general problems recruiting staff across all areas of the workforce (van Wanrooy 2006).

2. Qualitative findings

Two focus groups were held in November 2007. One focus group comprised new graduates from courses ranging from the Diploma level through to the Masters degree level. All but one of these participants were working in Victorian public libraries. The second focus group comprised Library Service Managers from Victorian public libraries. In developing questions for discussion in these focus groups, consideration was given to the detailed qualitative work undertaken in the first stage of the project, *Scoping Study* (van Wanrooy 2006).

The results from these focus groups are discussed in this chapter (see Appendix B1 for the question protocols used for these focus groups).

New graduates

New graduates were asked a series of questions related to their reasons for choosing library information services as a field of study and/or a career choice and their experiences in working in Victorian public libraries.

Working in public libraries

The findings from the focus group of new graduates revealed a wide range of experiences that had led to a career choice in public libraries. The qualifications completed by the participants were predominantly in library and information studies or information management, and participants were mainly employed in generalist technician or librarian roles. Nevertheless, a couple of the participants had majored in information technology or completed post-graduate diplomas in this field and were subsequently employed in related roles. A number of the mature-aged graduates had changed careers from the child-care sector, and one of the younger graduates had commenced study in the education field but chose to begin a career in the public library sector instead.

The public library sector was a career choice for a variety of reasons but commonly cited reasons included:

- the appeal of being a 'gate-keeper' of knowledge and 'social capital';
- a desire to provide 'information in a digital and technological age';
- the 'broad range of people you get to work with in a public library';
- the 'community aspect of the job' and the feeling of 'building relationships with local communities'.

Interestingly, one respondent with a role in information technology management cited 'access to expensive high end databases' as the reason why they were attracted to a career in a public library service.

The reality of work in a public library, however, differed from their expectations while studying for a number of participants. The extent to which 'customer service' was a core component of the work came as a surprise to some, as did the diversity of

people from local communities who used the public libraries. As one participant articulated:

> *The [university] course didn't prepare you for the fact that public libraries are public drop-in centres ... you deal with a cross section of people you've never been exposed to before ...*

All university participants who had had similar experiences concurred that better preparation during study was required to enable new entrants to deal with these 'very real hands-on situations'.

In contrast, however, the TAFE graduates felt better prepared for these kinds of 'hands-on' interactions. As one TAFE graduate explained during these discussions:

> *We did get a lot of preparation for this ... how to work in a team to manage situations like [the one reported above] ... We did really useful subjects like Customer Services and Conflict Resolution ... [these subjects] were really useful for dealing with people who are annoyed when the computer crashes.*

Courses and subject units – university versus TAFE

With regard to the information provided and expectations of a career in a public library, a clear distinction emerged between the TAFE and university graduates.

University

The university graduates reported being less aware of career options in public libraries and had taken fewer courses directly related to public libraries. Contributing to the lower awareness of public library careers, however, were reports from some participants of an 'anti-public library' attitude among university lecturers. One respondent encapsulated this sentiment which was voiced from a number of participants:

> *... [the lecturers] were pushing the private sector ... saying that public libraries were quite limited ... [and that] ... 'wouldn't you rather work at the cutting edge than in public libraries?'*

There was one participant, however, whose experiences directly conflicted with this sentiment. Their experience was:

> *[I] didn't pick up the anti-public vibe at all but ... did get the impression that public [libraries] were anti-[specific university institution].*

The nature of these conflicting reports suggests that different lecturers or different universities convey varying opinions of public libraries. Regardless of possible explanations, it highlights the power and influence that lecturers have over student perceptions of potential sectors in which to work.

With regard to the actual content of courses and nature of teaching, many participants felt that some of the lecturers in the library units 'were 10 years behind' and one participant in particular felt that:

> *... the skills I found valuable were just given in the general Arts degree I did.*

The perceived skills gained in library related units, however, were possibly related to the small number of students enrolled in different elective subjects. The participant who felt the Arts degree had been more valuable had been in one elective unit that 'had only three students in it for the entire semester' and had been in other units that had both 'under-graduates and post-graduates doing the same subject' to maintain the viability of the unit. Still other participants reported that the core subject of Cataloguing 'tried to cram too much in', and was typified by an educational approach that encouraged students to '... only learn what you needed to know to pass the subject'. Other units that were mentioned as being of limited use or applicability to work in public libraries included:

- Document management.
- Library of Congress.

There were elective university subjects that were obviously perceived by participants as being valuable to their careers in public libraries. Units mentioned included:

- Reference enquiries.
- Recreational learning for young people.
- Digital divide.

TAFE

For many of the participants who were TAFE graduates, the key issue prior to and during their studies was being 'terrified of technology'. Many of them were concerned about entering the labour force with limited cognitive skills in being able to operate computers and other technology, or with limited technical skills in being able to operate specific computer programs. These graduates found general technology an immediate challenge upon entering the workforce. Nevertheless, all of these respondents clearly had the capacity to develop these skills and had adapted and embraced these aspects of their working lives through on-the-job training and exposure to these challenges.

Unlike the participants who were university graduates, the TAFE graduates reported much closer ties with libraries from the moment they began their course:

> *TAFE is completely different [to university]. Right from the beginning we were told to start applying for jobs right now ... and we were told that uni graduates come to [TAFE] because they can't get jobs.*

The hands-on approach and practical nature of the subjects undertaken in TAFE were appreciated, and these participants felt the teaching environment was very supportive. As has already been reported, the extent to which the subjects offered in TAFE prepared students for the reality of working in a public library was highly regarded by participants. One participant, who had a vast range of qualifications from different institutions including both TAFE and university, confirmed the report of the value of the TAFE course:

> *I have an undergraduate degree in literature, then I did a library technician course ... then a Graduate Diploma in Information Management. I've just finished a Masters by correspondence. Out of all of them, the technician course prepared me most for work.*

The literature on higher education widely reports the value of TAFE in facilitating returns to the workforce for women in particular, and this was also confirmed by reports from participants:

> *At the end of this year, I'll complete my librarian technician course and it will be six years to complete [sic] … the course has built my confidence and now I think 'should I study a degree?' But this will be hard. At the moment I'm very happy and being able to share what I've learnt with local Chinese community [sic] and working to develop the collection. I'm helping migrants get jobs and encouraging Chinese people to come to the library.*

This sentiment seemed to reflect another distinction between the TAFE graduate participants and the university graduate participants with regard to career progression.

Career progression

The differences observed during the focus groups in career progression aspirations of university graduates compared to TAFE graduates, however, needs to be considered with respect to a number of factors. The TAFE graduate participants were generally older than the university graduates so were more likely to consider themselves to be in mid- or even late-career stages, and the TAFE graduates were less interested in promotion.

University

Nearly all the university graduates had aspirations for significant career advancement into management positions or at least into more challenging work. The timing of these expectations differed somewhat but there was general concern about the availability of suitable vacancies at higher levels for them to move into. As one participant explained:

> *It's hard at the moment. I'm very happy where I am now but also conscious of the ceiling and how quickly I will hit it. My employer is trying to keep me entertained and challenged but what happens after I get a branch manager position? There's nowhere for me to go. That's why I want to move into an academic library. There are more opportunities. But I'll see how long it takes to make branch manager.*

From another, there were similar concerns:

> *There's no room to progress or change so I won't stay in public libraries. I want to see what it will be like in a specialist library. I want to be given more to do. My current job is too customer service based and I was trained to be behind the scenes – to do developmental work. There's too much front-of-house for me. Public libraries are Maeve Binchy and nothing else.*

Yet another participant, concerned about career progression, saw that councils played a role in limiting potential careers:

> *Some councils are more progressive than others. Ours is more conservative and it pulls people back from making any changes. I get the feeling that I'm waiting for people to retire before I can go anywhere [with my career]. Anything related to HR, I have to go to the council about. A lot of councils treat libraries as if they*

are just like any other service. We've just got no budget to create [career] opportunities.

There was, however, evidence of informal career progression arrangements that at least some were happy with:

I feel like I'm waiting for someone to retire too but I'm lucky because my manager, who is retiring, is a good mentor ... really inclusive with new ideas and sets the tone for change.

TAFE

The TAFE participants were much more relaxed about their careers. Although one or two were contemplating career progression and/or further study, it was not a high priority for any of them. Indeed, some had no desire to progress any further at all despite significant years of service remaining.

I only have 10 or 15 years left in the workforce and have no ambition at all. If I was asked to shift – say to cataloguing – I'd think about it but I don't want to be a manager. I like being on the floor. I'm not the sort of person to go looking for change.

Another participant was outwardly reluctant for career progression opportunities that were being offered.

I've probably got 15 or 20 years left and my workplace has the next three years mapped out for me but I don't want to go there; particularly for the rest of my working life.

One of the concerns among the TAFE graduates, however, was the tension caused by the progression of younger university graduates. This was confirmed by some university graduates who had felt some resentment from older colleagues who had longer tenure. A TAFE graduate explained:

Most of my colleagues are quite old, they're over 40, but when young people become branch managers, the older workers feel threatened. We may not use all the knowledge learnt at TAFE but it gives us a good background that [younger people] don't appreciate. As young people become branch managers, more will retire. Us older people won't adjust to younger bosses. My [young] branch manager doesn't have the experience or the people skills, particularly for dealing with difficult customers.

This topic sparked a lot of discussion regarding perceived age differences. As one younger university graduate explained:

There is a big age difference with dealing with change. I am 'Mr Change', that's what I have to do. Anything I do, someone complains about; the older colleagues or customers – they don't understand [technology] and you can't explain it to them, or at least they don't want to have it explained. Young people understand.

Yet another participant with university qualifications felt quite strongly about the need for higher level qualifications in professional and managerial roles.

There's a dumbing down of the profession if non-librarians get promoted … We have a woman who was a technician and worked up to be a branch manager. She had a lot of experience but no degree … The [HR] director needs to be aware of the level that staff are at and ongoing development needs to be encouraged and given appropriately.

Role clarity

Coming out of the issue of career progression was a very apparent lack of role clarity. This lack of clarity was perceived by participants, regardless of qualification level, as one of the most significant challenges facing public libraries. It was widely reported among participants that band level and/or employment position had little to do with actual tasks expected of people. Confirming reports from the initial *Scoping Study* of a greater deployment of library technicians across different functions to minimise labour costs, many participants reported a broad expansion of the roles of bands 3 and 4. Coinciding with this was perceived inequities between tasks expected of some compared to others:

I am doing tasks at [a higher banding] and [am] doing more than the new [university] graduate who has just started. I don't know what the HR Director expects of me but I just keep doing it regardless of the level I am at.

At the other end of the spectrum, the lack of role clarity appears to be contributing to staff retention problems:

There is almost no distinction between who does what. We had a librarian who didn't last three months because she was expected to do CSO and technician work.

The other concern raised by the issue of role clarity was the extent to which the work was being done to a satisfactory level. From a university graduate there was this concern:

Technicians feel like they're under-utilised but I get suspicious when technicians are doing cataloguing. If they're not doing it right, it ends up being a complete waste of time.

A minority, however, had a different view altogether and didn't see a lack of role clarity as concerning. For a few of the university graduates, experience and capability were far more important than job titles or qualifications. It is noteworthy, however, that these participants did not come from traditional library service backgrounds or qualifications:

People are too attached to job titles. I learnt more in my Arts and IT degrees and the things I learnt were more relevant than the stuff I learnt in the library units. If you've got child care experience that should be enough to get a library job in child services – they're supposedly crying out for people in that area …

The latter point, however, may not be at odds with earlier concerns about role clarity. Specifically, it highlights the feeling that the allocation of functions and/or the criteria determining minimum qualifications for position qualifications should take into consideration the full range of skills and experience employees have and the level at which they are expected to perform.

Library Service Managers

In the focus group conducted with Library Service Managers, questions were asked that related to the major challenges they were currently facing in the workplace and challenges specific to issues of staffing. Specifically, managers were asked to discuss issues related to current skill shortages.

Challenges

Skill shortages

Recruiting and skill shortages emerged as the most concerning issue for the participants of the Library Service Manager focus group. The problems were perceived to be related to both shortages of the broad skills required and shortages in specific specialist areas. However, it was in the higher skilled roles that concerns were concentrated most. While there was recognition that some library services, in particular those in regional or disadvantaged urban areas, may find it difficult to attract staff in lower level positions (below band 5), this was generally not the experience of the participants in the manager's focus group. Indeed, if anything, it was reported there was often an over-supply of applicants at the lower levels, with one manager reporting 160 applications for a single library officer position.

With regard to the specialist areas that required higher level skills, however, there was particular concern among all participants with filling positions in the following specialised fields:

- Information technology.
- Multicultural services.
- Children's services.
- Branch managers.

With regard to the broader skill shortages, there was particular concern among all participants in attracting people with skills and aptitude in:

- Community development.
- Customer service.

The reported issue of lack of skills in customer service confirmed the findings from the *Scoping Study* of the increasing need for the essential skills related to this core function. The unwillingness, however, of incumbents to engage in customer service related tasks and activities, particularly among librarians, was concerning.

Specifically, it was perceived to be clearly related to a lack of accurate information provided to students enrolling in tertiary courses in this area and a misunderstanding about the roles and requirements of the profession:

> *A lot of people enrolled to do librarianship are not suited to the profession. They have no understanding that it is about customer service.*

From another manager came this similar explanation:

> *You get the shy library monitor from school who has the completely wrong perception of what the role entails. They think it's about reading books. Or you get the librarians who resent the front desk work and complain that they spend too much time on the desk and no time doing 'real work'. What do they expect the 'real work' is?!*

There was general recognition among participants that backgrounds or some experience in the retail industry was good preparation for positions in a public library because of their focus on customer service. Other backgrounds, however, were also seen as having skills that were readily transferable to the public library sector. In particular, social workers, teachers and information technology professionals were seen as capable of successfully transitioning into public libraries.

In support of the accounts given by the new graduates, the Library Service Managers also reported that a key challenge was the extent to which schools and universities directed students towards private sector careers. At the university level, this was seen to be particularly apparent in Library Information Services schools and departments being increasingly affiliated with Business Schools.

Perceptions of public libraries

One of the other key arguments made in the manager's focus group was that public libraries were perceived as being quiet, perhaps dull, places to work that weren't at the 'cutting edge'. There was concern that this perception contributed significantly to an aversion from young people to consider it as an industry of choice. In this regard, the lifestyle benefits of working in public libraries were regarded as not being well known. In particular, the availability of flexi-time, job sharing and weekend work for parents was seen as being advantageous, especially to those with carer responsibilities.

In similar regard, there was a perception that opportunities to engage people from outside the profession and industry were being missed because of poor marketing. There is an increasing awareness that skill shortages could be filled from outside the sector. Some managers were actively recruiting with this strategy in mind:

> *Now I go for IT people instead of library people. I provide development for IT people to get the skills suitable for the library. I've given up trying to recruit librarians.*

Public sector management

The managers reported that skill shortage issues were not just about trying to attract new people into the profession or to recruit people with the right skills. As with other public sector agencies, participants reported that many managers were faced with a major problem of staff turnover being *too low*. In this regard, significant problems are created by employees who are 'waiting to retire' and who are reluctant to retrain or to adapt to changing work environments and new technology. As one manager explained:

We [the public library service] have a major problem with institutionalised staff. There are people who have worked for public libraries for decades and never worked anywhere else. You can't do anything with these people except wait 'til they retire.

Despite a disciplining process, it was explained that with these staff, performance management is extremely difficult because of reluctance from local councils to engage in appropriate forms of personnel management:

Councils do not have the will to help us get rid of poor performers. They don't want the industrial stress, so say 'just put up with it; they'll retire soon'.

The role that councils play in the day-to-day management of public libraries was extremely influential in the capacities of Library Service Managers to operate effectively. It was reported that the HR function in councils varied enormously between local councils. The differing capacities of local councils and the HR functions, in particular, are pertinent with regard to recruitment:

The recruitment process can take two months. That's two months from the applications coming in and an appointment being made for the job. There are police checks, medical checks are mandatory, working with children checks. The council has bred problems with recruitment. They take so long the preferred candidate usually takes up a position somewhere else.

Recruitment and retention difficulties can be exacerbated by different pay scales across library services. Each council will have its own Enterprise Bargaining Agreement resulting in pay differentials that can be as large as $10,000 per annum for a librarian position.

As with other public sector agencies, public libraries are faced with significant budget cuts that have meant that service provision has had to be reduced or cut back. In public libraries, it is more often that services are offered at reduced levels. In this regard, the reduction was reported to be related to the provision of service through less experienced staff. While in some cases, this is due to difficulties recruiting at the appropriate level, in others it is due to the need to restructure to reduce the salary budget or to employ greater numbers of people at lower band levels.

Library managers are forced to develop skills in creativity. We're expert at juggling staff so we don't have to cut back services ... You'll appoint someone without the skills needed - fill it as a development opportunity.

Summing up the qualitative findings

The qualitative findings and the issues identified in the initial *Scoping Study* report highlighted a number of issues that required empirical quantification. From these focus groups and other discussions with the Workgroup, two survey instruments were developed and administered. The following section provides an analysis of these findings.

3. Quantitative findings

The quantitative phase of the project involved the development and administration of two separate self-report surveys. The surveys were developed through information provided during the qualitative phase of the project and in consultation with the Workgroup. In addition, the surveys were designed to gather information that would complement, rather than replicate, the findings from Hallam's national survey of the library information service workforce (2007).

The first survey was conducted electronically and was administered to senior and whole-of-service managers. The second survey was conducted electronically and was also supplied in hard-copy form and was administered to all other library staff. Both surveys took approximately 20–30 minutes to complete and were administered in December 2007. A combined response rate of 18% was achieved (see Appendix B for greater detail on the methodology. See Appendix B2 and B3 for copies of these surveys).

The following chapter provides an extensive analysis of the data from these surveys and reports separately on the findings of the employee survey and the manager survey. The analysis has been conducted to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of all respondents. As such, findings are not reported in instances where fewer than 30 people have responded to particular questions.

Demographics of Victorian public library managers and employees

Table 3.1, below, provides a demographic break down of employees and managers.

The survey sample consists, for managers, of a majority (52%) of section managers, followed by library service managers (35%), with a small proportion of branch managers (13%).

For employees, 42% of respondents are librarians, 35% are library officers, and 14% are library technicians. Only a small number of employees identify themselves as IT specialists (3%), while 5% identify themselves as managers, coordinators, supervisors or team leaders. Due to the small sample size of the last two categories, they have been excluded from analysis where employee position is used as a variable.

The majority of managers are employed in bands 6 or 7 (53%) while nearly one-third (28%) identify themselves as senior officers. A small number identify themselves as being in band 8 (9%) or bands 3, 4, and 5 (10%). In analysing manager's responses, bands 3 to 6 are grouped together, as are bands 7 and 8. For employees, one-third (34%) stated they are in band 5, one-quarter (24%) in band 4 and one-fifth (21%) in band 3. Very few employees identify themselves as in being in either band 2 or band 7 (1% and 3% respectively). The band 2 respondents have been grouped with the band 3 respondents for analysis, and the band 7 respondents are grouped with band 6.

Table 3.1: Distribution of managers and employees by position and band

	%	count
Manager position		
Branch manager	13	9
Section manager	52	37
Library service manager	35	25
Employee position		
Library officer	35	142
Library technician	14	58
Librarian	42	171
IT specialist	3	12
Manager or other	5	22
Manager band		
Band 3	1	1
Band 4	5	4
Band 5	4	3
Band 6	26	20
Band 7	25	19
Band 8	9	7
Senior officer	28	21
Employee band		
Band 3	21	87
Band 4	24	96
Band 5	34	137
Band 6	17	67
Band 7	3	10

Population: Victorian library managers and employees

Table 3.2, below, displays the employment status of Victorian public library staff. While the majority (95%) of managers are employed on a full-time basis, only half of employees are employed full-time, with a further third (36%) employed part-time, and 8% employed casually. When managers and employees are combined, just less than two-thirds (63%) of staff are employed on a full-time basis, 31% part-time and 6% are casual. This is in keeping with Hallam's (2007) findings in the commissioned *neXus* report prepared for the State Library of Victoria.

Table 3.2: Employment status by manager/employee

	%	count
Manager employment status		
Full-time	95	72
Part-time	5	4
Employee employment status		
Full-time	56	225
Part-time	36	146
Casual	8	33

Population: Victorian library managers and employees

Inner metropolitan, outer metropolitan and country/rural libraries are roughly equally represented in the responses provided. As seen in Table 3.3, staff from single council services make up approximately 60%, leaving 40% of the sample from regional corporations.

Table 3.3: Selected characteristics of library by manager/employee

	Manager		Employee	
	%	*count*	*%*	*count*
Location				
Inner metro	36	27	36	144
Outer metro	29	22	35	140
Country/rural	36	27	30	121
Library type				
Regional corporation	42	32	39	156
Single council service	58	44	62	249
Size				
Less than 20 staff	7	5	11	45
20 to 29 staff	4	3	5	21
30 to 49 staff	26	20	22	90
50 or more staff	61	46	55	221
Don't know/not sure	3	2	7	28

Population: Victorian library managers and employees

The survey validates findings from previous studies (e.g. Hallam 2007) that show the Victorian public library service is characterised by an ageing female workforce (Table 3.4). Both managers and employees are predominantly female (83% and 87% respectively). More than half the managers and employees were aged over 45, though this was higher for managers (70% compared to 54%).

Managers and employees are generally well educated, with most managers (91%) holding a tertiary qualification, and more than half (61%) of the employees surveyed also holding tertiary qualifications. Over one-third (36%) of managers and one-fifth (20%) of employees hold postgraduate degrees. Nearly one-quarter (23%) of employees hold a TAFE certificate or below, compared to 5% of managers, but these managers mostly indicated they were library officers in bands 4 and below (65%).

Table 3.4: Selected personal characteristics by manager/employee

	Manager		Employee	
	%	*count*	*%*	*count*
Age				
15 to 24	0	0	3	13
25 to 34	9	7	19	77
35 to 44	21	16	24	99
45 to 54	57	43	37	148
55 to 65	13	10	17	69
Sex				
Female	83	63	87	350
Male	17	13	13	53
Highest level of education				
Below VCE	0	0	4	17
VCE or equivalent	5	4	11	43
TAFE certificate	0	0	8	32
TAFE diploma or Adv dip	4	3	17	68
Undergraduate degree	29	22	18	72
Graduate certificate or diploma	25	19	23	93
Postgraduate degree	36	27	20	80

Population: Victorian library managers and employees

Due to the survey's small response rate, there may be inaccuracies in the data. Yet the demographics presented in this chapter remain fairly consistent with data reported in Hallam's (2006; 2007) *neXus* study. Any inconsistencies are most likely due to the sample size of both studies and response bias even though the distribution patterns are very similar.

Perceived priorities in public libraries

Managers and employees were asked to indicate the issues they considered to be the most important priorities for public libraries in Victoria. Survey respondents were asked to rank their top five priorities. The survey encouraged employees and managers to distinguish between priorities for 'every Victorian public library' and the priorities for their 'own library service', where appropriate.

Management perception

Managers considered the three dominant priorities for 'every Victorian public library' to be the same as the three dominant priorities for their 'own library service'. Table 3.5, below, provides detail on the issues managers rank as one of their top five priorities across both of these organisational levels. Two-thirds of all manager respondents rank 'meeting the local community's needs with regard to the provision of knowledge and resources' as the top priority for 'every Victorian public library' and their 'own library service' (66% and 68% respectively). Over half rank 'providing excellent customer service' and 'improving the skills of staff in new and growing areas of technology' as a top priority (53% for every public library and 61% for their own library for 'customer service' and 52% and 61% respectively for 'staff skills in technology'). More than one-third feel that 'improving technology access for the public' is a top priority (37% for every library and 41% for their own library).

Many managers also think it was important for their own libraries to be embedded in their local community through 'improving links between local community groups and public libraries' (39%), 'improving local collections' (36%) and 'strengthening local communities' (32%). Further, managers see a range of issues as more important for 'every' library, including their own. These issues include 'succession planning', 'resource sharing', and 'high minimum service delivery'. It is apparent, however, that managers prioritise the immediate needs of the library service over personnel issues such as 'succession planning' or the 'development of mentoring programs', with very few managers ranking these issues as their first priority or even one of their top five priorities.

While some of the top priorities indicated by managers are consistent with the premises of the *Content and Access in Victorian public libraries: A Strategic Blueprint 2006–2010* (Lunn 2006) report, the findings from this current study suggest a disconnect between the longer-term *Ministerial Advisory Council on Public Libraries Vision* (2007) and the immediate priorities at the organisational and local level. The vision of 'seamless service and access for users' (Lunn 2006) that would be enabled through 'introducing a smart-card' was seen by managers as a relatively low priority at the organisational level, as reflected in 'every Victorian public library'

(15% think this should be a top priority) and at the local level (7% think this should be a top priority). Resource sharing is also a key part of the *MAC Vision* but again only 7% think this is a priority in their own library and 22% think it is important for Victorian libraries overall.

Table 3.5: Managers' priorities for Victorian public libraries and their own library

Priority	Percentage in top five priorities	
	Every library %	My library %
Meeting local needs	66	68
Customer service	53	61
Improving staff skills in new technology	52	61
Improving IT access	37	41
Links with local community	21	39
Improving local collections	26	36
Strengthening local communities	34	32
Links with other local govt	23	30
Broadening local services	18	26
Developing a strong ICT network	27	22
Supporting local communities	19	22
Succession planning	22	13
Reducing duplication	18	12
Customer access	16	9
Resource sharing	22	7
Introducing a smart card	15	7
High minimum service delivery levels	21	4
Formal mentoring program	4	4

Population: Victorian library managers only

Employee perception

Employees share a similar view to that expressed by managers regarding the priorities for all Victorian public libraries, and their own library (Table 3.6). 'Meeting local needs' and 'customer service' are rated as the highest priorities by employees for both their library, and for 'every' library. Two-thirds of employees see 'local needs' and 'customer service' as one of the top five priorities for both their 'own' library and for 'every' library service. Like managers, nearly half of employees see 'improving staff skills in new technology' as one of the top five priorities, which is closely followed by nearly half rating 'improving IT access' as one of the top five priorities.

Like managers, employees also see the need for libraries to be embedded in local communities. Employees also generally do not see 'succession planning' or 'mentoring' as important. Employees differ, however, from managers in rating customer access and resource sharing as priorities for every library. Just over one-third (34%) of employees, compared to 16% of managers rate 'customer access' as one of the top five priorities for Victorian public libraries. Similarly, nearly one-third (32%) of employees rate 'resource sharing' as one of the top five priorities for Victorian public libraries, compared to 22% of managers.

Table 3.6: Employees' priorities for Victorian public libraries and their own library

Priority	Percentage in top five priorities	
	Every library %	My library %
Meeting local needs	68	68
Customer service	67	67
Staff skills in ICT	50	53
Improving IT access	45	50
Improving local collections	27	38
Links with local community	31	36
Supporting local communities	22	24
Strengthening local communities	19	23
Customer access	34	19
Broadening local services	19	19
Resource sharing	32	17
Developing a strong ICT network	19	16
Introducing a smart card	12	8
High minimum service delivery levels	10	7
Links with other local govt	9	12
Succession planning	6	6
Reducing duplication	6	4
Formal mentoring program	5	5

Population: Victorian library employees only

Future priorities

With an ageing workforce, it is evident that Victorian libraries are in need of succession planning, which would be strengthened through a formal mentoring system. Yet neither employees nor managers see this as a main priority, instead prioritising the immediate needs and demands of the library service over personnel issues. The staffing of a library service that is able to meet local needs and provide a world standard service has, however, been identified as needing immediate attention (Ingles et al. 2005; Whitmell 2002). For succession planning to be successful in the library service, it needs to be prioritised by all participants in the workforce.

This relative lack of concern over personnel and staffing may be due to employees and managers being unaware of labour market shortages. Alternatively, they may be aware that, as individual services they have problems with shortages but unaware that skill shortages are spread across the sector, and indeed the labour market. Findings from the qualitative research also highlighted the fact that managers cope, when faced with specific staff or skill shortages, through a variety of personnel management strategies. In addition, it is possible that with staffing cuts and increased workloads, immediate priorities related to the provision of service, understandably, take precedence over long-term personnel plans and programs.

Job tasks and roles

Before beginning this section, it should be noted that there is often ambiguity in job roles and in the past 20 years or so, there has been a general broadening of tasks performed across different position levels across the labour market. Managers and more senior employees may see a job role as overarching and encompassing a

number of different tasks. Lower level employees may define a job role as one or more specific tasks. Tasks can also be done at different levels. For example, in the library and information services sector tasks such as 'cataloguing' and 'information services' can encompass a large range of skill requirements and the competence at which these tasks are performed can differ across position levels. Therefore, when this section is read, it should be kept in mind that responses are as much about perception of job roles, positions and tasks, as it is about the actual roles themselves.

Skill gaps according to management

A valuable source of information regarding particular skill gaps comes from the views of library service managers and other managers in charge of human resources. Managers who are currently involved in recruiting staff were asked to give their opinions on current staffing imbalances in Victorian libraries and the reasons for them (Table 3.7). Approximately two-thirds (63%) indicate they have issues with under or over staffing in their library service. In general, staffing levels for more highly skilled roles and more specialist roles are perceived by managers to be the most under staffed. Managers are most likely to report that librarians (70%), children's services staff (59%), and virtual/online services staff (67%) are 'under-staffed' or 'significantly under-staffed'. Managers are least likely to report that library service managers (9%), branch managers (15%) and operations/coordinators (28%) are 'under-staffed' or 'significantly under-staffed'. Multicultural services is an area generally considered to need more attention and staffing in Victorian public library services, yet it appears that multicultural services do not exist in nearly one-quarter of libraries, with one-quarter (27%) of managers choosing 'not applicable' when asked about staffing levels for this role. This may reflect the demography of particular areas. As Table 3.7 shows, few managers see over-staffing as an issue in any role.

Table 3.7: Managers' views on staffing levels of job roles, employment positions and specialist areas

Job role/employment position/specialist area	Significantly under staffed %	Under staffed %	Adequate staffing %	Over staffed %	NA %
Library officers	7	39	48	7	-
Library technicians	-	45	49	6	-
Librarians	22	48	26	4	-
Operations/coordinators	4	24	63	7	2
Collections	4	34	55	6	-
Children services	19	40	38	2	-
Multicultural services	4	42	27	-	27
Marketing/promotions	17	28	53	2	-
Outreach/community liaison	15	41	41	-	2
Virtual/online services	15	52	33	-	-
ICT specialists	17	43	38	2	-
Branch managers	4	11	78	4	2
Library service managers	2	7	87	2	2
Mobile operators	-	13	36	-	51

Population: Victorian library managers only

Managers were also asked to give their opinions on the main reason for staffing imbalances in the various roles. Managers only gave reasons where they had already indicated there was an imbalance in that role. Consequently the cell counts reported are very small – between 19 and 34 – and should be considered indicative only. As Table 3.8 makes clear, managers perceive 'inadequate funding' to be the main cause of under-staffing across most roles in Victorian libraries. A majority of managers see 'inadequate funding' as the primary factor contributing to the under-staffing of library officers (65%), library technicians (52%) and librarians (56%). Nevertheless, managers appear to make distinctions between factors that lead to shortages in library officers, library technicians and librarians.

After inadequate funding, the next most common reason cited for shortages among library officers is that 'current staff are not suitable for the roles expected of them' (22%), whereas for library technicians, shortages are due to 'current staff are inadequately skilled' (22%). These differences suggest that almost one-quarter of managers feel that incumbent library officers do not have the capacity to learn the skills needed for the roles. In contrast, they feel that library technicians have the capacity to develop required skills but have not had sufficient training or opportunity to learn these skills. The type of skills required may range from lacking appropriate behavioural skills that enable employees to adequately deal with customer services enquiries, to lacking appropriate cognitive skills related to being able to properly utilise technology or understand procedures. In addition, there may be a lack of appropriate technical skills needed to efficiently use specific technology-based programs.

After funding issues, managers indicate that shortages of librarians are related to issues of being able to 'attract suitable candidates' to apply for the positions (26%). Overall, the results across each position are consistent with the view that separate strategies are needed to address shortages in the three different occupations. Table 3.8 also shows that difficulty attracting applicants is a common reason for shortages among children's services roles (19%) as well. While a range of strategies may help to overcome staff shortages, the message from managers is that increases to funding are a necessary prerequisite.

Table 3.8: Most significant reason for current staffing problems by role

Employment position/specialist area	Inadequate funding %	Attracting suitable applicants %	Recruiting suitable applicants %	Current staff inadequately skilled %	Current staff not suitable for roles %	count
Library officers	65	4	4	4	22	23
Library technicians	52	13	4	22	9	23
Librarians	56	26	12	-	6	34
Operations/coordinators	62	5	14	5	14	21
Collections	61	4	9	9	17	23
Children's services	58	19	6	10	6	31
Multicultural services	79	5	5	11	-	19
Marketing/promotions	87	4	9	-	-	23
Outreach/community liaison	86	7	-	4	4	28
Virtual/online services	69	3	-	19	9	32
ICT specialists	68	6	6	19	-	31
Branch managers	31	8	23	8	31	15
Library service managers	56	11	22	-	11	9
Mobile operators	29	57	14	-	-	7

Population: Victorian library managers only

Job roles and tasks

The job roles of employees, the frequency that employees perform tasks, and their preferred frequency of performing tasks are all important in understanding staff needs and development. The purpose of this section is also to highlight potential skill gaps that might arise in Victorian public libraries. The data is analysed by position, job role and employment band. It has been necessary to combine band 7 with band 6 respondents due to the small numbers of respondents in band 7. A number of employees identified themselves as managers, supervisors, coordinators or team leaders, and it is not possible to identify whether they are library officers, technicians or librarians. As such, they have been excluded from the analysis of position, though are included in the analysis of employment bands.

Library officers, library technicians and librarians

As only 12 respondents identified themselves as IT specialists, this group is not included in this analysis. However, it is evident that IT specialists see their roles as very specific, are happy for this to continue, and do not appear to want to move into new job roles or to pick up different tasks.

Many of the tasks employees see themselves as being responsible for overlap between positions. Although, as has been discussed, this is not to say that employees in different positions are necessarily performing the same role or conducting the relevant tasks at the same level. Rather employees *perceive* themselves to be performing the similar functions at different position levels. For example, while 36% of librarians state they conduct 'reader/adult services', 32% of library technicians and 19% of library officers also say they conduct tasks related to this service (Table 3.9). While this overlap in job roles and tasks emerged across a number of different areas, there is likely to be a hierarchy of increased levels of responsibility and accountability as well as capacity to perform tasks at different levels.

Over half (56%) of all librarians describe themselves as being involved in the 'information, reference, advice and local history' area, and one-third describe their role as including 'collections, periodicals, cataloguing and bibliographic' services and also 'branch services, circulations, and memberships' (36%, 35% and 35% respectively). Library technicians appear to be involved mainly in three areas: 'branch services, circulations and memberships'; 'information reference, advice and local history'; and 'reader/adult services' (46%, 40% and 32% respectively). Library officers primarily describe their roles as being in the 'branch services, circulations and memberships' area, with two-thirds (65%) using this description.

Table 3.9: Job roles and responsibilities by employment position

Responsibility	Library officer %	Library technician %	Librarian %	Total %	count
Acquisitions	13	12*	16	14	52
Branch services, circulations, and memberships	65	46	35	48	172
Children/youth and school visits	22	12	19	19	69
Collections, periodicals, cataloguing, and bibliographic	18	23*	35	27	96
Information, reference, advice, and local history	25	40	56	42	152
Marketing/promotions	14	12*	17	15	55
Multicultural	2*	4*	11	6	23
Operations	16	11*	10	12	44
Outreach/community/home library	18	19	16	17	63
Mobile library and interlibrary loans	10	11*	3*	7	24
Reader/adult	19	32	36	29	106
Supervisor/manager	8*	14	29	19	68
Systems/ICT	6*	11	6	7	24
Training	6*	12	15	11	40
Virtual/online	5*	4*	17	11	38
Count	**134**	**57**	**171**	**362**	
Column %	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	

Population: Victorian library employees only
*Cell counts are <10, therefore estimates are not considered reliable

Employment band

As would be expected, employees in higher bands are more likely to state that they have a broader range of roles and responsibilities than those in lower bands (Table 3.10). There is also a strong hierarchical pattern associated with banding and the roles performed. For example, 'branch services, circulations and memberships' are most likely to be done by employees in band 3 (73%), followed by band 4 (48%) followed by band 5 (33%), with slightly more undertaking the role in band 6 (44%). This trend is reversed, however, for tasks related to 'collections, periodical, cataloguing and bibliographic' services, 'multicultural' services, 'supervising/managing', 'virtual/online' services and 'training' with higher level bands more likely to perform these roles than lower level bands.

Table 3.10: Job roles and responsibilities by employment band

Responsibility	Band 3 %	Band 4 %	Band 5 %	Band 6 %	Total %	count
Acquisitions	7*	14	18	17	15	58
Branch services, circulations, and memberships	73	48	33	44	47	185
Children/youth and school visits	21	19	20	13	19	74
Collections, periodicals, cataloguing, and bibliographic	18	22	29	35	26	104
Information, reference, advice, ,and local history	23	40	53	36	41	162
Marketing/promotions	7	18	13	30	17	65
Multicultural	4*	4 *	5*	18	7	27
Operations	14	14	7*	22	13	52
Outreach/community/home library	10	27	15	25	18	72
Mobile library and interlibrary loans	4	15	4*	3*	6	25
Reader/adult	18	27	34	31	28	112
Supervisor/manager	1*	15	22	52	22	86
Systems/ICT	2*	13	8	14	9	36
Training	5*	11	15	25	13	53
Virtual/online	4*	5*	15	30	13	51
Count	**84**	**94**	**135**	**77**	**395**	
Column %	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	

Population: Victorian library employees only

*Cell counts are <10, therefore estimates are not considered reliable

Current frequency of task performance

Library officers, library technicians and librarians

Regardless of position, customer service tasks appear to be common to all library staff. Table 3.11 shows that providing general support is often done by the majority of employees regardless of their position: 88% of library officers, 91% of library technicians, and 85% of librarians do this task 'often' or 'most of the time'. Another task common to all employees is providing 'customer service by phone': 87% of library officers, 88% of library technicians, and 83% of librarians do this task 'often' or 'most of the time'.

Basic tasks are most often performed by library officers. A large majority (91%) of library officers often spend their time 'checking out or in books', compared to 85% of library technicians, and 67% of librarians. Another task which is most often done by library officers is 'shelving books' – 82% 'often' or 'always' do this task, followed by 69% of library technicians, and 46% of librarians.

More complicated tasks are more often performed by library technicians and librarians. Undertaking 'reference enquiries' is common for both these groups (81% and 83% respectively), while only 61% of library officers do this often. 'Cataloguing material' and 'providing internal ICT (information, communication and technology)' support are more often performed by library technicians than officers or librarians.

Librarians are often engaged in more strategic and managerial tasks. Librarians are more likely to state that they 'often' or 'most of the time' perform the tasks of 'managing inappropriate behaviour from the public' (42%), 'collection management' (62%), 'acquisitions' (27%), 'strategic planning' (19%), 'outreach work' (25%), and 'promoting services' (44%) than either library officers or library technicians.

Table 3.11: Performs task 'often' or 'most of the time' by employment position

Task	Library officer %	Library technician %	Librarian %	Total %	count
Check out/in books/materials	91	85	67	79	291
Undertake reference enquiries	60	81	83	74	274
Conduct services for children	18	16*	15	16	60
Provide general support	88	91	85	87	322
Manage inappropriate behaviour from public	26	29	42	34	125
Provide customer service – phone	87	88	83	85	315
Shelve books	82	69	46	63	233
Collection management	26	40	62	45	165
Catalogue materials/technical services	18	24	13	17	61
Acquisitions	12	19	27	20	74
Strategic planning	1*	3*	19	10	35
Outreach work	6*	21	25	17	63
Promote services	30	36	44	38	139
ICT support – internal	16	29	16	18	67
Develop/deliver online services	6*	19	20	14	53
Develop skills in new technologies	20	24	30	25	94
Count	**141**	**58**	**171**	**370**	
Column %	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	

Population: Victorian library employees only
*Cell counts are <10, therefore estimates are not considered reliable

Employment band

The relationship between band of employment and frequency of task performed is even stronger than the relationship between position of employment and task performed (Table 3.12). It is evident that tasks are often hierarchical, with employees in lower bands 'checking out/in books and other materials', 'shelving books' and 'providing customer service by phone' more frequently than employees in higher bands. Conversely, consistent with the patterns by employment position, some tasks are more likely to be undertaken often by employees in higher bands. 'Collection management', 'strategic planning', 'outreach work', 'promoting services', 'developing and delivering online services', and 'developing skills in new technologies' are all more likely to be often undertaken by employees in higher bands.

Table 3.12: Performs task 'often' or 'most of the time' by employment band

Task	Band 3 %	Band 4 %	Band 5 %	Band 6 %	Total %	count
Check out/in books/materials	96	85	70	52	76	304
Undertake reference enquiries	60	75	82	64	72	288
Conduct services for children	17	17	20	7	16	64
Provide general support	88	92	86	82	86	347
Manage inappropriate behaviour from public	32	22	40	42	34	136
Provide customer service – phone	92	87	87	71	84	339
Shelve books	84	73	52	33	60	243
Collection management	18	38	58	66	46	183
Catalogue materials/technical services	14	22	18	9*	16	66
Acquisitions	7*	16	27	25	19	78
Strategic planning	0	1*	10	43	12	49
Outreach work	3*	15	22	34	18	73
Promote services	27	37	35	56	38	152
ICT support – internal	10	32	19	21	20	82
Develop/deliver online services	5*	14	21	29	17	67
Develop skills in new technologies	21	27	25	47	28	114
Count	**88**	**96**	**136**	**77**	**402**	
Column %	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	

Population: Victorian library employees only
*Cell counts are <10, therefore estimates are not considered reliable

Preferred frequency of task performance

So far, we have not seen anything that is too surprising. There is an obvious trend in the data that librarians and employees in higher bands are most likely to be undertaking strategic management, and development roles and tasks. Library officers, technicians and those in lower bands are undertaking more front-end roles which most likely include dealing with customers and managing the day-to-day workings of the libraries. However, information that will be of greater benefit to future workforce planning is that related to understanding the preferred frequency of performing tasks. This section will give a detailed analysis of preferred frequency of task performance by employment position and band.

There are only a small number of tasks that employees clearly don't enjoy doing or already spend considerable time doing so, therefore, very few employees indicate that they would like to do these tasks more frequently. These have been excluded from the analysis as the numbers who responded are too small to be meaningful. They include: 'checking out/in books and materials', 'managing inappropriate behaviour from the public', 'providing more customer service by phone' and 'shelving books'.

Table 3.13, below, gives an initial breakdown of employees who state that they currently 'do not', 'very occasionally', or 'sometimes' perform a task but who also state that they would prefer to 'do more' of that particular task. As well as the exclusions stated above, it also does not include 'providing general support'. As we saw earlier, the majority of employees state that they perform this task 'often' or 'most of the time'. As such, it does not fall into the category of 'does not do often, but would like to do more'. We will see later that most people would like to perform this task more often, regardless of how often they currently do it.

Table 3.13: Does not perform task often and would like to more

Task	%
Develop skills in new technologies	51
Acquisitions	39
Outreach work	34
Deliver training programs	34
Develop formal training programs	34
Strategic planning	31
Collection management	30
Promote services	29
Develop/deliver online services	29
Catalogue materials/technical services	27
ICT support – internal	13
Conduct services for children	13
Undertake reference enquiries	13

Population: Victorian library employees only

What appears to be particularly important to library employees is 'developing skills in new technologies'. Following this are tasks which are currently mostly undertaken by librarians, and those in the upper bands. That is, 'acquisitions' 'outreach work', and delivering and developing training. The next section will provide a further breakdown of the groups that are particularly keen to perform each task more often.

Library officers, library technicians and librarians

Library officers and librarians are most likely to want to 'develop skills in new technologies', with two-thirds of both groups of employees stating they would prefer to do this more (67% and 66% respectively) (Table 3.14). Fewer library technicians (57%) state they would like to 'develop skills in new technologies'. Approximately one-third of all librarians, technicians and officers would like to 'develop…' *and* 'deliver…' more '…training programs'. 'Outreach work' is another task that, regardless of position, around 40% of employees would like to do more often.

It appears that library officers would like more responsibility in their roles. Around half would like to do more 'acquisitions' (50%), 'collection management' (44%), and 'promoting services to the community' (47%). Library officers are also more likely than technicians and librarians to want to conduct services for children (24% compared to 16% and 7% respectively); 'provide general support' (24% compared to 18% and 19% respectively); and 'provide internal ICT support' (23% compared to 10% and 13%, respectively).

Just over half (51%) of the technicians surveyed would like to do more 'cataloguing and other technical services', compared to 41% of officers and 23% of librarians. Librarians are most keen to engage in more 'strategic planning' (48% compared to 37% of technicians and 13% of officers).

Table 3.14: Would prefer to perform task more, by employment position

Task	Library officer %	Library technician %	Librarian %	Total %	count
Undertake reference enquiries	44	29	31	35	112
Conduct services for children	24	16	7	15	47
Develop formal training programs	29	31	34	32	101
Deliver training programs	32	33	35	33	106
Provide general support	24	18	19	21	66
Collection management	49	43	45	46	146
Catalogue materials/technical services	41	51	23	34	108
Acquisitions	50	49	36	44	138
Strategic planning	13	37	48	33	105
Outreach work	40	41	38	39	124
Promote services	47	49	41	45	141
ICT support – internal	23	10	13	16	51
Develop/deliver online services	32	18	38	33	104
Develop skills in new technologies	44	29	31	35	207
Count	**119**	**49**	**149**	**317**	
Column %	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	

Population: Victorian library employees only

Employment band

The relationship between band of employment and frequency of task performed is strongly related to the tasks that are currently being performed. Very few employees stated that they often 'developed…' or 'delivered training programs', yet it is evident that regardless the employment band, there is a desire to do so (Table 3.15). 'Collection management' is performed primarily by those in band 6, followed by those in band 5. This would explain why there is not as strong a preference to do more collection management by employees in band 6 compared to employees in other bands.

Similar to the findings discussed in the previous section, employees in band 3, as well as band 4, are keen to do more work with 'collections', including 'cataloguing' and 'acquisitions'. Band 6 employees are most keen to do more strategic work including 'outreach work', 'promoting services', 'developing and delivering online services' and 'strategic planning'.

Table 3.15: Would prefer to perform task more, by employment band

Task	Band 3 %	Band 4 %	Band 5 %	Band 6 %	Total %	count
Undertake reference enquiries	49	32	28	26	33	114
Conduct services for children	27	13	8	11	14	49
Develop formal training programs	30	32	38	27	32	110
Deliver training programs	36	27	42	27	34	116
Provide general support	24	22	15	16	19	66
Collection management	44	51	50	39	47	160
Catalogue materials/technical services	44	46	27	18	33	113
Acquisitions	51	53	42	26	43	148
Strategic planning	13	30	47	45	35	119
Outreach work	39	40	39	40	39	134
Promote services	39	49	43	48	44	152
ICT support – internal	19	24	13	11	17*	57
Develop/deliver online services	30	31	35	40	33	114
Develop skills in new technology	71	67	62	66	66	225
Count	**78**	**78**	**120**	**62**	**343**	
Column %	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	

Population: Victorian library employees only

The findings of this chapter are not as straight forward as they might appear. It must be remembered that while library officers are keen for more responsibility, nearly one-fifth of responding managers expressed the perception that current library officers are 'not suitable for their roles'. It would not be expected that this means they are more advanced than their current roles allow them; it is more likely that it is perceived by managers that they do not meet the requirements of their role. This is the primary contradiction that has surfaced in the findings of this survey – manager's perceptions of the capability and capacity of employees and employee perceptions of their own capabilities are often not aligned. This could be indicative of a lack of an appropriate performance feedback process, as we shall see in the later section that more closely examines survey responses to issues of performance management.

A useful strategy to remedy this poor alignment between employee capabilities and the workplace skill requirements would be to devise appropriate strategies for developing the skills of library officers (usually classified at band 3 level) so that they can undertake more complex work. This should be concentrated in areas of perceived skill shortages such as multicultural, children and youth services. The possibility of library officers participating in government-funded traineeships to assist them to improve their skills and obtain formal qualifications should be investigated. The availability and use of local government study support programs should be promoted. The training of those on lower bands may cause difficulties initially in terms of time constraints and skill deployment at the workplace level. However, in the long term, it will allow for employees in bands 4 and 5 to undertake training to progress towards doing higher level work such as collection management and strategic planning, and other tasks that will develop closer links between the library and local councils and communities. In turn, this would allow employees in the higher bands to focus on the broader issues for the library, such as outreach programs, promoting services to the community and developing and delivering online services, and to work towards their

own up-skilling and progression towards management positions. This general approach of developing a strong internal labour market, to up-skilling the entire workforce is a strategy currently being trialled across numerous industry sectors to address both short-term and long-term skills gaps.

Graduates

It is important in today's economic climate that Victorian public libraries continue to recruit and retain qualified employees. In today's tight labour market, research shows that if employers don't give employees the opportunities to develop themselves, employees will seek career and professional development opportunities elsewhere. This is particularly true for qualified employees – precisely the employees that Victorian public libraries seek to retain. This section looks at the current and preferred frequencies of tasks performed by graduates with a view to understanding the job requirements that may retain these employees.

For the purposes of these analyses, graduates are considered to be any employee with a qualification at the level of TAFE diploma or above, who have been in the Victorian public library service for five years or less. This category, though not capturing the traditional notion of early career graduates, captures qualified employees who are new to Victorian pubic libraries. Hallam's (2006) report defines graduates as persons who have received a qualification in the previous five years, therefore the data presented in this report should not be considered as directly comparable with data in the *neXus* report. The two reports measure two different concepts.

Table 3.16, below, contrasts tasks graduates say they undertake 'often' or 'most of the time', with those that they would prefer to do it 'more often'. What is most evident in the table is that graduates are often performing somewhat menial tasks and would prefer to be doing more complex work. While 88% of graduates are 'checking out and in books or other materials', none would prefer to be doing more of this (although 60% say they would like to do the 'same amount', while 40% say they would like to do it 'less' or 'never'). A very small proportion of graduates are undertaking 'acquisitions', 'strategic planning', 'outreach work' or 'developing/delivering online services', though around half would like to do more of this.

Table 3.16: Frequency and preferred frequency of task for graduates

Task	Currently does task 'often' or 'most of the time'		Would prefer to do task 'more often'	
	%	count	%	count
Check out/in books/materials	88	71	0	0
Undertake reference enquiries	68	55	63	46
Conduct services for children	14	11	18	13
Develop formal training programs	91	74	40	29
Deliver training programs	33	27	42	31
Provide general support	89	72	19	14
Provide customer service – phone	67	54	8	6
Collection management	32	26	55	40
Catalogue materials/technical services	16	13	40	29
Acquisitions	7	6	56	41
Strategic planning	7	6	47	34
Outreach work	7	6	38	28
Promote services	36	29	47	34
ICT support – internal	16	13	23	17
Develop/deliver online services	12	10	52	38
Develop skills in new technology	26	21	80	58
Total	**100**	**81**	**100**	**73**

Population: Victorian library graduate employees only

Recruitment and retention issues

Recruitment difficulties

Managers involved in recruitment were asked which roles they thought would be most difficult to fill in the next five to ten years. Out of the 76 respondents to the manager's survey, only two-thirds were involved in recruitment, therefore, the results should be treated as indicative only. Overall, as Table 3.17 shows, managers indicate that most employment positions and roles in specialist areas will be difficult to fill. Managers are expecting that librarians will be the most difficult position to fill (89% report 'difficult' or 'very difficult'). Specialist positions in 'operations', 'collections', 'children' and 'multicultural' services are also expected to be difficult to fill. Managers are least worried about filling library officer positions (83% expect it will 'not be difficult' to fill), followed by library technicians (52% expect it will 'not be difficult' to fill). These results suggest that it will be particularly important for public libraries to implement strategies that develop a strong internal labour market so as to cultivate existing skills from within the service to fill higher level and specialist area vacancies as they emerge.

Table 3.17: Manager's perceptions of recruitment difficulties by job role

	Difficulty filling positions in the next 5–10 years		
Position	**Not difficult %**	**Difficult %**	**Very difficult %**
Librarian	11	52	37
Operations/coordinators	13	55	33
Children's services	18	53	29
ICT specialists	26	45	29
Mobile operators	32	41	27
Multicultural services	9	67	24
Branch managers	24	53	22
Collections	17	64	19
Library service managers	31	50	19
Virtual/online services	23	60	18
Outreach/community liaison	15	78	7
Marketing/promotions	44	49	7
Library technicians	52	43	5
Library officers	83	17	-

Population: Victorian library managers only

Intentions to remain in the public library service

Approximately half of the employees' surveyed (49%) state they intend to remain in Victorian public libraries until retirement (Table 3.18). A further 38% say they 'do not know' if they will stay in the service until retirement, while 13% say they have no intention of remaining until retirement. Only 17% of those who will remain until retirement intend to retire within the next five years. However, 87% of employees who state that they will not stay until retirement intend to leave within five years.

Table 3.18: Number of years employees expect to stay in the public library service, by whether they will stay until retirement

	Will stay until retirement				
Number of years will work in Victorian public libraries	**Yes %**	**No %**	**Do not know %**	**Total %**	***count***
Less than 1 year	2*	20	3*	5	18
1 to less than 2 years	2*	17*	3*	4	17
2 to less than 5 years	13	50	31	25	100
5 to less than 10 years	30	9*	39	30	122
10 to less than 15 years	24	4*	12	17	68
15 years or more	30	0*	13	20	78
Total Count	**196**	**54**	**152**	**403**	
Total %	**49**	**13***	**38**	**100**	

Population: Victorian library employees only

*Cell counts are <10, therefore estimates are not considered reliable

Our findings related to expectations for remaining in the library service cannot be directly compared with the results from the Hallam (2007) study. Hallam measured intention to stay in 'current workplace' and found that half (51%) of Victorian public library respondents intended to continue in their '*current workplace*' for five years. Data collected in the current survey measured intention to stay in '*Victorian public library service*' and indicates that only one-third (34%) intend to leave the service within five years. As employees and managers tend to move between workplaces

within the Victorian public library service, it is likely that employees and managers will remain in the 'service' for longer than they will remain in their 'current workplace'.

Table 3.19: Number of years managers expect to stay in the public library service

Number of years will work in Victorian public libraries	%	count
Less than 1 year	1.3*	1
1 to less than 2 years	5.3*	4
2 to less than 5 years	25.0	19
5 to less than 10 years	36.8	28
10 to less than 15 years	22.4	17
15 years or more	9.2*	7
Total count	**76**	
Total %	**100**	

Population: Victorian library managers only

In general, the majority (60%) of library employees see themselves leaving the service within the next ten years (Table 3.20). Library technicians are most likely to see themselves remaining in the library service until retirement (59%), followed by librarians (49%) and library officers (45%).

Table 3.20: Number of years expected to stay in library service, by position

Number of years will work in Victorian public libraries	Library officers %	Library technicians %	Librarians %	Total %	count
Less than 2 years[#]	8	5*	10	4	30
2 to less than 5 years	26	21	24	24	89
5 to less than 10 years	30	36	31	32	116
10 to less than 15 years	14	19	19	17	63
15 years or more	22	19	16	19	70
Total %	**38**	**16**	**46**	**100**	**368**

Population: Victorian library employees only
[#] Categories 'Less than 1 year' and ' 1 to 2 years' have been combined because of small cell sizes
*Cell counts are <10, therefore estimates are not considered reliable

The older an employee is, the more likely they see themselves remaining until their retirement. Part-time employees are also most likely to see themselves remaining until retirement (55%) but almost half of all full-time employees (46%) think they will stay until retirement. In contrast, only one-third (36%) of casual employees think they will stay in Victorian public libraries until retirement.

Table 3.21 presents the relationship between number of years expected to stay tenure and intentions to leave Victorian libraries. The longer an employee has been in their current position, the more likely it is they will stay with Victorian public libraries until retirement. This relationship is stronger for those who have been in the Victoria public library service for the same period, but who have changed positions. This may indicate that there is a tendency for people to feel they are in 'safe' positions – that is, the longer they have worked in a position, the more likely they see themselves staying until retirement.

Table 3.21: Number of years will stay in library service, by tenure in current position, for those who expect to stay until retirement

Number of years will work in Victorian public libraries	Tenure in library service %	Tenure in current position %
Less than 1 year	37	35
1 to less than 2 years	37	34
2 to less than 5 years	30	38
5 to less than 10 years	45	60
10 to less than 20 years	58	72
20 years or more	80	88

Population: Victorian library employees only

Intentions to leave the public library service

Only a small minority of employees are actively looking for positions outside of Victorian public libraries (Table 3.22). Employees who are actively looking for other jobs are slightly more likely to be looking for a 'more senior position in the public sector' (13%), than either in the 'private sector' (9%) or a position 'outside of public libraries' (10%) altogether. However, between 20% and 24% 'neither agrees nor disagrees' to the three statements indicating that they may be considering external positions but aren't actively looking at the moment.

Table 3.22: Employee's intentions to leave the library service

	Disagree %	Neither agree nor disagree %	Agree %
Actively looking for more senior position in the public sector	63	24	13
Actively looking for more senior position in the private sector	70	21	9
Actively looking for any position outside of public libraries	71	20	10

Population: Victorian library employees only

A marked difference exists between employees' and managers' intentions to leave the Victorian public library service and the type of work they are seeking (Table 3.23). While only a small proportion of both managers and employees 'agree' they are actively looking for positions either in the 'private sector', or 'outside of public libraries', in general, one-fifth (21%) of managers state they are actively looking for 'more senior positions in the public sector'.

Table 3.23: Manager's intentions to leave the library service

	Disagree %	Neither agree nor disagree %	Agree %
Actively looking for more senior position in the public sector	54	25	21
Actively looking for more senior position in the private sector	73	20	7
Actively looking for any position outside of public libraries	76	19	6

Population: Victorian library managers only

Retaining staff

As over half of the library employees surveyed indicated that they intend to leave public library service within the next ten years, it is important to look at the factors that may motivate them to remain in the library service. This can be used to guide future workplace policy and as a starting point for developing and implementing strategies that may be used as incentives to retain workers – particularly those who are in positions where there are current or perceived future shortages. Before looking at employees, the intentions and motivations of managers will be discussed – this is important in understanding where possible management gaps might occur, and whether there is employee motivation to move into these positions in the future.

What motivates managers and employees to remain in the public library service?

Managers and employees appear to have similar attitudes towards remaining in the Victorian public library service (Tables 3.24 and 3.25). Nearly half of all managers indicate that they want to progress in their current position (by stating they 'disagree' that they 'have no desire to progress further from their current position'), while just over two-thirds (39%) are planning to undertake training to further their career in public libraries.

Table 3.24: Career advancement plans of managers

	Disagree %	Neither agree nor disagree %	Agree %
I have no desire to progress further from my current position	52	19	29
I plan to undertake training to further my career in public libraries	35	28	39

Population: Victorian library managers only

Due to the small number of managers in the sample, it is not meaningful to report the findings by position, band, or employment status, as has been done in the following section on employees. However, the following table (Table 3.25) compares motivations for remaining in the service for managers and employees.

Again, managers and employees have similar motivations to remain in the public library system. However, managers are slightly less likely to cite more 'challenging work' (30% compared to 35%) and slightly more likely to cite 'professional development' (51% compared to 45%) and 'less hours' (17% compared to 13%) compared to employees. Managers are far more likely to cite 'better work/life balance' (54% compared to 41%), and no managers state that 'more hours' would be a motivation for them to remain in Victorian public libraries. This indicates that managers, in line with managers in most fields, are feeling overworked.

Table 3.25: Motivation to remain in Victorian libraries by managers and employees

Will stay for…	Managers %	Employees %
Nothing	7*	9
More pay	62	61
Better career opportunities	37	40
More challenging work	30	35
Professional development	51	45
Less workplace change	3*	7
More workplace change	11*	12
Financial support for further education	26	25
Study leave	18	20
Better work/life balance	54	41
More hours	0*	10
Less hours	17	13
Total – count	**138**	**357**

Population: Victorian library managers and employees

*Cell counts are <10, therefore estimates are not considered reliable

Employees were asked about their career plans, and it was found that the majority of employees appear to desire career progression (only 31% state they 'have no desire to progress from their current position') and 43% of employees state they would be willing to 'undertake training to further their career in public libraries' (Table 3.26). This desire for career progression is further evidenced in their motivations to remain in their jobs. Nearly half (46%) of employees will consider staying for 'professional development', 40% are willing to stay for 'better career opportunities' and 36% are willing to stay for more 'challenging work'. Victorian public library employees also appear to want a 'better work/life balance', with 42% saying that they would consider staying if a better balance was achievable. However, the greatest incentive for employees to remain in the public library service is 'more pay', with 61% citing it as a motivation (Table 3.27).

Table 3.26: Career advancement plans of employees

	Disagree %	Neither agree nor disagree %	Agree %
I have no desire to progress further from my current position	50	19	31
I plan to undertake training to further my career in public libraries	32	25	43

Population: Victorian library employees only

Workplace change appears to have little bearing on whether staff will stay, with 7% citing 'less change' as a motivation, and 12% citing 'more change' as a motivation for staying. Access to better study arrangements is another area which is a motivation for some employees, but is not as strong a motivation for staying as career and professional development opportunities. 'Financial support for further education', and 'study leave', are both cited by more library officers than library technicians and librarians as motivations to stay in the library service. This is most likely due to the

lower levels of educational attainment among library officers, but also suggests a desire to undertake formal training if employer support is provided.

However, it is librarians that managers are most concerned about recruiting and retaining in the future, so what will motivate them to remain in the library service? As well as the motivations mentioned earlier, including 'more pay' (60%), 'professional development' (47%), 'better career opportunities' (39%), and 'more challenging work' (34%), librarians are also most likely to be motivated by working 'fewer hours' (20%) and a 'better work/life balance' (46%) (Table 3.27). Librarians are possibly feeling the pressures of excessive workloads, so it is this issue that must be dealt with in future workplace development strategies.

Table 3.27: Motivation to remain in Victorian public libraries by position

Will stay for…	Library officer %	Library technician %	Librarian %	Total %
Nothing	11	6*	8	9
More pay	59	67	60	61
Better career opportunities	41	42	40	40
More challenging work	34	42	34	35
Professional development	41	47	47	45
Less workplace change	7	13*	6	7
More workplace change	12	15*	11*	12
Financial support for further education	33	26	19	25
Study leave	28	24	12	20
Better work/life balance	36	35	46	41
More hours	17	4*	7	10
Less hours	8	7*	20	13
Total - count	**138**	**55**	**164**	**357**

Population: Victorian library employees only

*Cell counts are <10, therefore estimates are not considered reliable

Women and men appear to have similar motivations for staying in public library service, with the overall gender patterns much the same. However, there are some areas where they differ. While access to improved study arrangements appears to be important for both, men are more likely to stay if offered 'study leave' (26% of men compared to 20% of women), while women are more likely to stay if offered 'financial support for further study' (27% of women compared to 16% of men). This indicates that in order to retain staff, different approaches may be needed for men and women. Other areas that indicate different priorities are that men are more likely to stay for 'more pay' and 'professional development', while women are more inclined to want 'more challenging work'.

As has become somewhat of a norm in today's work culture, and was indicated in Hallam's work (2006; 2007), full-time workers are more likely to prefer to work 'fewer hours', and part-time and casual workers are more likely to prefer 'more hours' (Table 3.28). Nearly one-fifth (19%) of full-time workers state that they will stay in the library service for 'less hours', however, 29% of casual workers, and 16% of part-timers will stay for 'more hours', compared to 3% of full-timers. This indicates that paying more attention to distributing workloads evenly may help to retain workers.

Full-timers are also highly motivated by 'better career opportunities' compared to part-timers and casual employees (43% compared to 36% and 26% respectively), while just below half of all employees, regardless of employment status, are motivated by 'professional development'. Part-timers are most likely to be motivated to stay by 'more challenging work' (41%), followed by full-time employees (35%), while only a small proportion of casual employees are motivated by 'more challenging work'.

Table 3.28: Motivation to remain in Victorian public libraries by employment status

Will stay for…	Full-time %	Part-time %	Casual %
Nothing	8	11	7*
More pay	63	61	55
Better career opportunities	43	36	26*
More challenging work	35	41	16*
Professional development	48	42	45
Less workplace change	5	9	7*
More workplace change	11	11	13*
Financial support for further education	27	24	26*
Study leave	20	20	26*
Better work/life balance	48	34	36
More hours	3*	16	29*
Less hours	19	6*	3*
Total Count	**225**	**146**	**33**

Population: Victorian library employees only

*Cell counts are <10, therefore estimates are not considered reliable

Employees in bands 3 and 4 are most likely to stay for 'more pay' (Table 3.29). Those in lower bands are also motivated by 'study leave' and 'financial support for further study' and are more likely than those in higher bands to stay for 'more hours'. On the other hand, employees in higher bands are more likely to stay for 'fewer hours'. This is most likely attributed, however, to forms of employment than skill level with the higher bands being dominated by full-time employees, while the majority of part-time and casual employees are employed in lower bands.

Table 3.29: Motivation to remain in Victorian public libraries by employment band

Will stay for…	Band 3 %	Band 4 %	Band 5 %	Band 6 %
Nothing	9*	8*	9	9*
More pay	64	66	58	59
Better career opportunities	40	46	43	28
More challenging work	34	47	32	28
Professional development	42	46	50	42
Less workplace change	6*	8*	7*	4*
More workplace change	9	18	11	9*
Financial support for further education	36	25	21	24
Study leave	30	23	16	13
Better work/life balance	38	37	41	57
More hours	21	10*	8	0*
Less hours	10*	4*	17	20
Total Count	**87**	**91**	**132**	**385**

Population: Victorian library employees only

*Cell counts are <10, therefore estimates are not considered reliable

As the public library service continues to have an ageing and retiring workforce, it is important to understand the factors that may motivate young people to remain in the workforce. Younger people are more likely than any other age group to stay for career development reasons. 'Better career opportunities' are cited by 62% of 16 to 24 year olds, 60% of 25 to 34 year olds, 44% of 35 to 44 year olds, 35% of 45 to 54 year olds and 19% of those aged 55 and older. 'Financial support for further study', 'study leave' and 'better work/life balance' are also stronger motivations for younger people than older people. Older employees are more likely to cite 'less hours' (22% of persons aged 55 and older) as a motivation to stay. These findings suggest that younger workers are keen to begin their careers and work their way up the ladder and are more likely to remain if the working environment is conducive to meeting these needs. Older workers are more likely to want to decrease the intensity of their work as they look to retirement and are more likely to stay in jobs that perhaps allow them to gradually transition of out full-time work. However, as older workers are more experienced, generally in higher bands, and have more knowledge, it may be that they feel a pressure to remain doing the hours they are currently doing. Similarly, younger workers may not be given the responsibility they are seeking as management does not see them as, and indeed, they may well not be, suitably experienced. A similar trend occurs for graduates.

Earlier in this chapter (Table 3.16), we examined the tasks graduates are currently doing, compared to the tasks those they would prefer to be doing more often. It was apparent that graduates would prefer more complex and strategic work. If Victorian public libraries want to retain graduates, better career pathways and strategies for them need to be developed, as graduates are more likely than non-graduates to want 'better career opportunities' (51% compared to 35%), 'professional development' (50% compared to 45%) and 'more challenging work' (39% compared to 35%). Despite their already relatively high levels of education, nearly one-third of graduates want 'financial support for further education' (32% compared to 24% for non-graduates) and one-quarter want 'study leave' (25% compared to 19% for non-

graduates) (Table 3.30). Graduates are also more likely to want to work 'more hours', and are less likely to want 'better work/life balance' than non-graduate employees.

Table 3.30: Motivation to remain in Victorian public libraries by graduate status

Will stay for…	Non-graduates %	Graduates %	Total %
Nothing	10	4*	8
More pay	61	64	62
Better career opportunities	37	51	40
More challenging work	35	39	36
Professional development	45	50	46
Less workplace change	7	4*	7
More workplace change	11	15	12
Financial support for further education	24	32	26
Study leave	19	26	21
Better work/life balance	43	36	42
More hours	8	19	10
Less hours	13	9*	13
Total count	**314**	**78**	**392**

Population: Victorian library graduate employees only

*Cell counts are <10, therefore estimates are not considered reliable

Manager attitudes towards, and perceptions of, career development

Most managers are willing to take on 'additional tasks at their current level, if asked' (82%), while just under two-thirds (65%) are prepared to take on 'different tasks at a higher level', and more than half would actually '*like* to take on different tasks at their current level'. This indicates that mangers are willing to alter their current work allocation, but are not as willing to change their specific employment positions. It might be supposed that the managers who are not willing to take on different tasks at their current or a higher level (which may lead to training experiences, further knowledge, and career progression) may be those who are close to retirement or have no desire to progress in their career. However, when these data were examined more closely , those managers who state that they never intend to seek promotion are just as likely to say they would want to take on different tasks, as those who wouldn't. The findings suggest that it is those managers who are feeling overworked in their role who are likely to not want to take on additional tasks; at least not without some commensurate reduction of tasks in other areas.

Table 3.31: Career development plans of managers

	Disagree %	Neither agree nor disagree %	Agree %
I would take on additional tasks at my current level if asked	10	8	82
I would like to take on different tasks at my current level	20	23	58
I would like to take on different tasks at a higher level	16	20	65

Population: Victorian library managers only

Employee attitudes towards, and perceptions of, career development

Hallam's (2006) study found that nearly half (47%) of Victorian public library staff are interested in moving to a position in the library service that has more responsibility. Our findings corroborate this, with 45% of employees surveyed stating they would be motivated to stay in the public library service by further 'professional development' and a further 40% would stay with 'better career opportunities' (Table 3.32). The importance of these findings is that library employees are certainly interested in career progression, and if public libraries are willing to offer this, they will find it easier to retain the staff they already have. Table 3.32 provides a summary of general attitudes of Victorian public library employees towards taking on additional tasks. It is evident that employees are very eager to take on more responsibility. It is also apparent that employees want to undertake a variety of tasks, with a significant majority (82%) willing to 'take on different tasks at their current level'. While 79% are willing to 'take on higher level tasks if paid' and well over half (61%) are 'willing to take on higher level tasks' without additional pay. This indicates an obvious desire for varied work and increased responsibility.

Table 3.32: Career development plans of employees

	Disagree %	Neither agree nor disagree %	Agree %
I would take on additional tasks at my current level if asked	11	19	70
I would like to take on different tasks at my current level	11	7	82
I would like to take on different tasks at a higher level	16	22	61
I would take on higher level tasks if paid to	9	12	79

Population: Victorian library employees only

Which staff are looking to be promoted?

One-quarter of employees in band 3 will be looking to be promoted within the next two years, compared to 16% in band 4, 22% in band 5 and 20% in band 6 (Table 3.33). This highlights once more that employees in the lowest band are looking for increased responsibility and career advancement in Victorian public libraries. However, employees in band 4 are least likely to look for career advancement, with 60% stating they will 'never seek promotion' – providing support for the findings from the qualitative component of this current study that highlighted different career aspirations between TAFE and university graduates.

Just over half (53%) of employees in band 6 will 'never seek promotion', while 21% envision themselves doing so within the next two years, and 17% seeking promotion in between two and five years. This indicates that management positions should not be difficult to fill, if succession planning and mentoring is properly implemented.

Table 3.33: Will be looking for a higher level position by band, graduate and position

| | Number of years before intend to seek promotion | | | |
	Never %	Less than 2 %	2 to less than 5 %	More than 5 %
Band				
Bands 2 and 3	43	25	22	10*
Band 4	60	16	17	7*
Band 5	44	22	24	10
Bands 6 and 7	53	21	17	9*
Graduate				
Non-graduate	55	17	19	9
Graduate	27	36	27	10*
Total	50	21	20	9
Position				
Library officer	53	20	20	8
Library technician	60	16*	19*	5*
Librarian	45	22	22	11
Total %	**50**	**20**	**21**	**9**

Population: Victorian library employees only

*Cell counts are <10, therefore estimates are not considered reliable

Perceptions of supervision and performance management

An important part of any organisation is the relationship between workers and their supervisors, whether the workers are employees or managers. This section looks at questions that are asked of both groups in relation to supervision.

Supervisor support

In the previous section, we saw that most employees are keen to develop their careers. Table 3.34 shows that just less than half (46%) of the employees surveyed state that supervisors are supporting their career development, less than one-fifth are preparing them for higher level roles (19%) or preparing them to change roles at their current level (13%).

Table 3.34: Employees' perceptions of the supervisory support they receive

	Disagree %	Neither agree nor disagree %	Agree %
My supervisor is preparing me for a higher level role	46	35	19
My supervisor is helping me to change roles at my current level	51	36	13
My supervisor is supporting my career development	24	30	46

Population: Victorian library employees only

Table 3.35 indicates that while the supervisors of managers are likely to support their career development (51% state that they do), supervisors are less likely to have a hands on role preparing managers for higher level roles or changing roles at the

current level, with 50% of managers disagreeing that this assistance is occurring. These findings are similar to the employee findings, suggesting that there is not an intrinsic workplace culture of having hands on supervisory support within the Victorian public libraries.

Table 3.35: Managers' perceptions of the supervisory support they receive

	Disagree %	Neither agree nor disagree %	Agree %
My supervisor is preparing me for a higher level role	50	32	18
My supervisor is helping me to change roles at my current level	50	30	21
My supervisor is supporting my career development	25	24	51

Population: Victorian library managers only

Performance management

Performance management should be an integral component to personnel management in any organisation. Good performance needs to be recognised and encouraged, and poor performance needs to be appropriately dealt with. When this does not occur, even the best organisation can develop negative systemic problems among staff. Employees may become resentful that their good work is not recognised, and poor performance may become the norm if other employees see that one worker can 'get away with' particular behaviours. Failure to appropriately manage poor performance also leads to low morale and can affect productivity if it is ignored for a length of time. This section compares the perceptions of employees and managers on matters related to performance management. These analyses highlight any disparities that may be occurring in the workplace level. Managers are often the ones who are responsible for managing poor performance and for improving performance in general. However, the capacity of individual managers to carry out these tasks effectively often differs widely. With these potential differences, clarifying whether the perceptions of managers and employees are in concordance can highlight any underlying problems with performance management at the workplace level.

Overall, it appears that there is a general consensus that good performance is recognised but that poor performance is not managed appropriately (Table 3.36). The majority of both employees and managers (75% and 80% respectively) believe that 'supervisors recognise good performance'. Only 4% of managers disagree with this statement but 12% employees disagreed. Further, most employees and managers (68% and 75% respectively) feel their 'supervisors give [them] constructive feedback'. However, nearly one-quarter of both employees and managers disagree that they 'receive regular feedback'. Regardless of how good feedback is, the performance management literature indicates that feedback needs to be given on a regular basis. Where Victorian public libraries appear to fall short is in managing poor performance. Less than half (47%) of all managers and just over one-third (36%) of employees 'agree' that 'poor performance is appropriately managed'. This disparity shows that employees are less satisfied with the management of poor performers, suggesting that managers may not be managing poor performing staff as well as they think they are.

Table 3.36: Perceptions of performance management

	Disagree		Agree	
	Employee %	Manager %	Employee %	Manager %
Supervisors recognise good performance	12	4	75	80
Poor performance is appropriately managed	40	32	36	47
My supervisor gives me constructive feedback	15	10	68	75
My supervisor gives regular feedback	26	24	50	60
Other supervisors give constructive feedback	23	16	50	69

Population: Victorian library managers and employees

4. Recommendations

4.1 Workforce Development Team

In order to implement the changes that have been recommended, it is considered desirable to convene a Workforce Development Team that includes representatives from various banding levels in Victorian public libraries, the Australian Services Union, the Australian Library and Information Association, the Municipal Association of Victoria, and library educators. The role of this team will be to drive workforce development initiatives. A primary purpose of the Workforce Development Team will be to elevate the status of public libraries within local councils and the community (including potential employees). Further, the Workforce Development Team should be auspiced by Viclink, the peak body for Victorian public libraries, and led by a project officer who is able to drive the change. The officer should be appointed from a current management position, and will liaise between the various stakeholders and the team.

It is expected that strong networks of support for the Workforce Development Team will be sought, including support from local councils and boards. Without this support for the Workforce Development Team, decisions may be undermined by groups with conflicting interests. If support exists on all levels, however, it is expected that the implementation of later recommendations will be facilitated.

4.2 National initiatives to be promoted

One of the biggest issues identified in the quantitative analysis is a lack of role clarification between various employment positions and bands. This is best remedied by conducting job analyses that result in the development of a document that outlines broad position descriptions, including the skills relevant to each position. It is expected that this will reintroduce some occupational coherence among different positions. To further clarity the expectations of each employment position, the descriptions should include the technical, behavioural and cognitive competencies expected in each role. Consultation with relevant unions and/or employee representative groups on the new descriptions must be undertaken to achieve consensus on the clarified role expectations.

The literature review undertaken in the first half of this report validated reflections by management, in both the qualitative and quantitative phases of the field work, that recruitment and retention strategies need to be particular to positions. While recruitment was not seen as an issue for library officers or technicians, it was cited as a reason for possible future shortages in librarians. In order to combat this, strategies are needed for attracting librarians to public libraries.

The suggested strategy to attract librarians includes:

- Developing a campaign to promote public libraries as a career option (with consideration given to a national campaign that takes advantage of economies of scale).

- Using the new skill structure to develop strategies for considering and attracting potential professional applicants from outside traditional Library and Information Sector fields (i.e. social workers, teachers, information technology specialists, retail managers).
- Continuing to work with higher education institutions to maintain and further develop links between public libraries and universities.

Unlike librarians, library technicians and library officers are not as difficult to attract, however, according to a significant minority of managers, library officers are not suitable for the roles they are expected to perform and library technicians are not suitably skilled. This clearly poses a current problem but also highlights the potential that current skills gaps at these positions will only increase if recruitment strategies and performance management practices are not significantly improved. To complement the initiatives aimed at attracting and retaining librarians, libraries need to establish strategies that bridge the gaps in the knowledge and skill set of current staff with the requirements for the future. One such strategy is to develop recruitment and selection techniques using the new position descriptions to shortlist extensive numbers of applicants and appoint appropriate staff at the officer and technician levels. In addition, the cadetship model for attracting applicants into lower level positions who are then trained into internal career paths should also be investigated. It is possible that government traineeships may be available to encourage library officers to improve their skills and obtain formal qualifications utilising on-the-job training techniques.

It is also recommended that the potential for the implementation of portable long service leave across the Library and Information Sector is examined to encourage mobility between public libraries and other libraries, such as academic and specialist libraries.

4.3 Standardisation and revision of position descriptions

Another issue highlighted by the study's findings is the mismatch between employees' desire to undertake further tasks and duties, and management's perception of employee capabilities. This is further complicated by employee misunderstandings of tasks: lower level employees may not see all that a task entails, and believe they are capable of doing higher level tasks commonly carried out by more senior employees. As outlined above, it is recommended that this is rectified by communicating and consulting with staff on the job descriptions created for each position and level, with a particular emphasis on the skills (technical, behavioural and cognitive) that are required for each task. Further, levels of responsibility and accountability across different position levels through the new skill structure should also be clarified.

It was evident from the research findings that when asked what tasks they would prefer to do more of, employees often state a number of tasks that are increasingly being outsourced, including acquisitions and cataloguing. As outsourcing of these areas increases, these areas of employment will decline in the public library service and this should be made clear to existing and potential staff. On the other hand, technological changes such as radio frequency identification (RFID) have the potential to decrease the routine circulation duties in libraries. The net result of these

changes is to increase the skills demanded of library staff in other areas, particularly in the area of customer service.

The new agreed position descriptions should be used in the recruitment of new staff, and also in the performance management and development process of existing staff. It is not being suggested that the role descriptions or expectations of existing staff should be drastically changed, however, they should be reviewed to ensure position descriptions are a true reflection of the tasks required. Rather staff should be made aware of what is expected of them, and have access to broad position descriptions – both theirs and others – that will make clear the organisational expectations of the workforce that will meet the challenges of the future.

It is recommended that broad position descriptions of managers/supervisors incorporate statements regarding active involvement in career development, performance management and succession planning of staff. We have seen through the findings of this study how important these three elements are in workforce planning. As these activities are primarily the domain of supervisors and management, it is crucial to include this in the role descriptions of future managers and supervisors, and to provide training for incumbents who may be willing to undertake these duties.

It the interests of preserving external relativities, it is recommended that in discussion with the relevant unions, the banding of staff working in public libraries should be assessed against other occupations in local government. Technological changes and changing community expectations have resulted in increased skill levels required for library work and this may not be reflected in the banding and, therefore, salaries of the staff.

4.4 Performance management

Effective performance management requires successfully dealing with underperforming staff and poor performance, as well as ensuring staff who are performing well have their efforts recognised and rewarded. Regardless of performance level, however, all employees need to be adequately developed and/or performance managed if the current and future requirements of the organisation are to adequately be met. It is highly recommended that different performance management systems are investigated and that a tailored system for public libraries, that incorporates staff development, is developed and implemented. The performance management system should have clear and transparent processes for staff progression.

No performance management system can work without the support of managers and employees. To facilitate this, it is recommended that the development of an adequate performance management system be underpinned by consultation with employees, managers and supervisors. It should also be informed by consultation with relevant unions and/or employee representative groups with expertise in either performance management systems, or staff development. Further, managing performance is a skill in its own right – managers and supervisors should not be expected to step into this role without assistance. Therefore, training programs in performance management should be undertaken by all existing managers who are undertaking these duties. For managers and supervisors new to public libraries, the skill of managing performance should be considered an integral part of the job role – and as such should be a requirement of attaining the position.

Once a performance management system is implemented in Victorian public libraries, it can be used for developing methods and procedures for collecting more extensive data on the current workforce profile and for identifying potential future skill gaps. It is important that any data collection process of this kind ensures that employees cannot be identified as individuals. The data collection could also be used for tracking the changing skill profile of the workforce, taking into consideration development needs and turnover rates, as well as emerging skill gaps in the library system. In particular, this system could be used to identify the characteristics associated with potential leaders and to use this profiling to recruit internal applicants for future management positions.

Once the performance management system has been established, the process should be communicated to all new staff and potential employees, particularly those who may be recruited from graduate pools. This will offer the opportunity for Victorian public libraries to advertise that systems are in place to ensure career progression is managed. In addition, the advent of a performance management system will ensure that all existing and future staff understand that the promotion system is clear and transparent. The appropriate recognition of skills, and career progression and promotion based on merit will avoid the existing concerns identified in this study of young graduates being recruited too readily into branch management positions while also providing motivation for graduates to remain in the public library service.

4.5 Succession planning and career development

Complementing the performance management process, should be a formal mentoring program that offers networks of support across the library service. Mentoring can be used to both encourage the advancement of potential leaders (who may have been identified through the performance management system), or to improve underperforming employees.

Part of a performance management system is actively helping those who wish to further their careers. A number of strategies exist to assist those who wish to do so. Firstly, initiatives to develop sector-wide projects (like the Statewide Public Library Development Projects) could be used as vertical and horizontal skill development and networking opportunities for groups of staff who express interest in the particular activities. The activities could be any number of key issues, such as rationalising collections, reducing sector-wide duplication, mentoring, community liaison strategies, capacity building, or the identification of core organisational knowledge. An organisational-wide project could also be convened for implementing the strategies and recommendations of this report. Involving employees of different levels in the process allows not only for a varied perspective across any of the issues to be addressed, but also encourages interactions and communication between colleagues at different levels – a process that also encourages skill development and highlights potential career paths to participants in lower level positions.

Another initiative that is widely in use in the federal public sector is secondment opportunities with other public sector agencies, particularly among senior staff members but also for potential working group members. This not only develops the skills of the staff involved, but reinforces the relationship between agencies and strengthens arguments for remuneration parity between agencies. A process of seeking expressions of interest from existing staff could provide a mechanism for

convening both working parties and secondment opportunities. However, appropriate consideration needs to be given to the staffing implications that working parties, in particular, may have at the local level, especially with regard to funding such groups.

A further strategy to combat the mismatch between staff expectations and expected management outcomes is to develop vertical and horizontal internal labour markets that clearly outline possible career paths. These should incorporate skill structures and make clear potential pathways to staff. However, the requirements and expectations of staff performance in order to navigate these pathways should also be made clear. Where qualifications are expected in order to continue on a particular path, this should be stated, both in the development of the strategy visually, and in any performance management and development discussions between employees and supervisors. Support for related study programs needs to be provided both in terms of funding and in terms of adequate staffing to cover required absences from work.

This report has outlined numerous recommendations that need to be considered to address the current and future workforce development requirements of Victorian public libraries. Like many sectors, particularly those in the service sector, public libraries will be increasingly facing staffing and skill shortages if attempts aren't made to adequately invest time and resources in workforce development. Workforce development must be seen as a process that requires the continuous involvement of the workforces if sustainability for the future is to be attained.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Project requirements as stipulated in the Request for Proposal

The required outcomes of Stages 2 and 3 are to:

1. Understand and quantify current skill levels and needs of the Victorian public library workforce.
2. Assess the level of awareness and understanding of succession planning among the public library workforce.
3. Identify the future requirements of Victorian public libraries, their potential services and how they could be delivered, exploring how libraries and their staff will interact with their community through a range of data gathering methods (e.g. survey, focus groups, interviews with library staff and managers).
4. Analyse research and review existing strategic documentation to predict likely skill needs and identify gaps against current workforce.
5. Assess the appeal of information management as a field/career choice, and Victorian public libraries as a workplace specifically, to students and new graduates.
6. Develop and articulate strategies for reducing or preventing future skill gaps including aligning further education courses with the needs of the Victorian public libraries.
7. Provide a written report, in a publishable format detailing:
   a. Analysis of current skills in Victorian public libraries.
   b. Identification of current and future skills needs for Victoria public libraries.
   c. The future requirements of Victorian public libraries, their potential services and how they could be delivered, and how libraries and their staff will interact with their community.
   d. Identification of strategic initiatives to address workforce issues within the Victorian public library workforce in relation to sustainability and leadership development.
   e. Identification of factors influencing study choices in the library field, and appeal of public libraries for new graduates.
   f. Strategic initiatives to engage educational institutions to deliver courses in Victoria, and to work with the Victorian public library network and State Library of Victoria to align courses to needs of the Victorian public library sector.

Appendix B: Methodology

The project used a multi-method, two pronged approach to examine current skill levels and future skill requirements. The initial approach conceptualised in the planning and proposal stage of the project was to include the conduct of two surveys:

1. Survey of all current staff – examining existing skills and skills needed.
2. Survey and/or focus groups of students and new graduates – examining the factors influencing information management as a study and career choice and any potential changes needed to the existing curriculum.

Following initial meetings with the Workforce Survey Analysis and Planning Workgroup (here after referred to as the Workgroup) the qualitative phase was altered to include two focus groups:

- One comprising new graduates to examine the factors influencing information management as a study and career choice and the nature of their experiences on the job.
- The second comprising library service managers to examine the challenges related to workforce development.

A secondary aim from both of these focus groups was to derive survey questions from which to quantify the issues identified.

Field work

Qualitative phase

In November 2007, two focus groups were held at the State Library of Victoria. The first focus group comprised five library service managers. The second focus group comprised nine new graduates from courses ranging from Diplomas through to Masters Degree level (see Appendix B1 for focus group protocols). Participants for the focus group were recruited by State Library of Victoria Project Manager.

Following the conduct of the focus groups, the quantitative phase was altered to include:

1. Survey of all current staff – examining existing skills, current tasks and development areas.
2. Survey of all managers – examining existing skills shortages and areas of perceived growth.

This key reason for this change in methodology was that it would allow us to examine the gap between the perceived skills of the workforce with the future skill requirements as perceived by managers.

Quantitative phase

The quantitative phase involved the development and administration of two separate self-report surveys. The questions for each of the surveys were developed from information gained through the focus groups and in consultation with the Workgroup.

In developing each of the surveys, consideration was given to the earlier work by Hallam (2007) and the results from this national survey.

In the *Scoping Project*, conducted as phase 1 of the Workforce Sustainability and Leadership Project, there were 2,644 staff members across 255 branches in the public library system (van Wanrooy 2006). Across the branches, there are 45 library service managers/CEOs and a number of operational managers who are also involved in the personnel management of employees. For the purposes of administering this survey, library service managers identified those personnel in operational management roles who could appropriately respond to the survey for senior managers.

Workforce Survey for Victorian Public Library Staff
The staff survey was administered in two formats in early December 2007.

As not all staff members have access to a dedicated computer, the first administration was conducted via the State Library Project Manager to library service and operations managers. These managers were emailed a hard copy of the survey with an accompanying letter from the Manager, Public Libraries asking them to print the surveys and provide them to staff within their service who didn't have dedicated computer access. A reply paid address was provided so respondents could return the surveys without paying for postage to the Workplace Research Centre.

The second administration process involved the State Library's Manager, Public Libraries emailing a variety of Victorian public library listservs the hyperlink to the electronic online survey tool and an accompanying letter explaining the purpose of the study (see Appendix B2 for the hard-copy version of this survey).

Senior Manager and Whole of Service Manager Survey
The manager's survey was only administered electronically through an online tool. In early December 2007, managers were emailed by the State Library's Manager, Public Libraries. The email contained a hyperlink to the survey and instructions on how to complete the survey online. An accompanying letter asked that the survey be completed by 14 December (see Appendix B3 for a hard-copy version of this survey).

Overall administration and response rate
All respondents were asked to complete the survey by 14 December 2008. Reminders were sent out by the State Library Project Manager on 10 and 13 December asking respondents to complete the survey by the closing date. The surveys took approximately 20 to 30 minutes to complete.

A total of 407 people responded to the employee survey and 76 people responded to the senior manager survey. The exact number of senior managers in the Victorian public libraries is not known. Therefore, a single response rate was calculated combining responses across both surveys and taking into consideration the total workforce. In this regard, the overall response rate for both surveys was 18% . While a higher response rate is desirable when developing policy recommendations, the response rate to this research study was higher than earlier comparable studies. Hallam (2007) conducted a national online survey of the Australian Library

Information Services sector and achieved a response rate of 8% nationally[2] and 9% for Victorian public libraries[3].

Detailed demographic information regarding the composition of the Victorian public library workforce was not available. As such we were unable to conduct analysis of non-respondents to determine the effects of response bias. However, a comparison of the demographic characteristics of the sample achieved in this study with the sample Hallam achieved showed a similar composition of respondents across both studies. In addition, the findings from this study were verified and validated against the experiences and detailed knowledge of workforce planning issues through a workshop with the senior personnel in the project's Workgroup and the WRC research team.

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[2] Hallam (2007) reports 2,353 responses to her survey and quotes ABS statistics to report that the Australian LIS workforce is 28,000 employees.

[3] The response rate for Victoria public libraries for Hallam's study is calculated dividing the number of responses she achieved from this sub-population ($n = 230$) by the total workforce for Victorian public libraries as quoted by van Wanrooy ($n = 2,644$; 2007).

Appendix B1: Focus group questions

New Grads

1. What attracted you to working in the library and information management field? What attracted you to working in Victorian public libraries?

2. Why did you choose to do the course you did (degree – professional qualification/technician, etc.)?

3. Why did you choose the institution you did your course at?
>   Location
>   Cost
>   Online/off-campus

4. Thinking about the subjects you studied, what were the most valuable aspects of the course for your current job?
>   Skills
>   Content

5. Are there skills you learned during the course that you don't use at work? What are they?

6. What, if any, skills or content do you need on the job that wasn't covered adequately in your course?

7. Do you think there is a career path for you in Victorian public libraries?

8. What is your career goal? Where do you see yourself in X years?

9. What major challenges do you think your workplace currently faces?

10. Are there specific issues regarding staffing that you see as challenging?

11. Would you recommend Victorian public libraries as a place to work to new graduates? Why/why not?

Managers

1. What are the major challenges you face in your workplace at the moment?

2. What are the major challenges specific to staffing?

3. I'd like us now to discuss skills with regard to each broad level of staff and their current level of skill. Starting with:
> Officers
> Technicians
> Librarians
> Supervisors

    3.1 What skills do they currently have?
    3.2 How do you define or determine adequacy?
    3.3 What skills are they lacking?
    3.4 Are you confident that they can learn the skills they need?
> What support would be needed?

4. Now considering applicants and new recruits to each of these broad staffing levels.
> Officers
> Technicians
> Librarians
> Supervisors

    4.1 Do they have the skills you're looking for?
    4.2 When advertising, are you getting a good number of quality applicants?

5. Considering now your peers, do you think they have the skills necessary for the job? Prompt – leadership and mentoring skills.

Time permitting – below are a number of other issues that could be covered.

Below is a list of competencies that have been identified in the international literature as being essential for public library staff

    a.   What is the most important set of competencies you currently need at your workplace?

    b.   What will be the most important in the future?

    c.   What set do you think requires the most development given current skill base?

    d.   Are there any that you are comfortable that most, if not all, of your staff have?

Competencies

ICT
Computer literacy
Electronic communication
Adapting to new technology

Change
Adaptability to change
Willingness to learn new skills
Demonstrating flexibility

Organisational
Planning and managing work
Managing time and setting priorities
Meeting deadlines
Getting the job done

Problem solving
Analytical skills
Creative skills
Applying cognitive abilities
Committing to action

Teamwork
Interpersonal skills
Working effectively with others
Encouraging teamwork

Self management
Self motivation
Initiative
Managing one's own learning
Ethical behaviour

Corporate
Client orientation
Marketing and promotion
Working within the system
Using organisational know-how
Environmental sensitivity

Communication
Listening
Speaking
Reading & comprehension
Writing

Below is a list of areas of specialisation. Do you have difficulties in getting staff appropriately skilled for any of these areas?

1. Learning and implementing new technology
     a. Remote access
     b. Databases
     c. Scanning
     d. Audio and visual
     e. Self publishing tools
     f. Web
     g. Storage devices
     h. Preserving and digitising local content
2. Managing collections
     a. turnover analysis
     b. usage patterns
3. Analysing community needs (related to managing collections)
4. Create and facilitate local content (related to managing collections)
5. Procurement (improving collaborative purchasing)
6. Improving service delivery
7. Resource discovery and retrieval (given growth in self publishing and web)
8. Access and equity for specific materials for:
     a. Aged
     b. Children
     c. CALD & LOTE
     d. People with visual and/or auditory impairment
9. Advocacy opportunities
10. Promoting service availability

Appendix B2: 2007 Workforce Survey for Victorian public library staff

2007 Workforce Survey for Victorian public library staff

Welcome to the 2007 Workforce Survey for Victorian public library staff, being conducted as part of the Statewide Public Library Development Projects, auspiced by the Library Board of Victoria and the Victorian public library network.

The survey is part of the Workforce Survey, Analysis and Planning Project. Its aim is to collect robust data on the current and expected staff profile of Victorian public libraries. The Workplace Research Centre has been asked to design and conduct the survey to identify current and expected skills, training and staffing issues for Victorian public libraries. Your answers will feed into the development of strategies for future workforce planning and development.

Once the results are collated and analysed, a presentation will be given to the Workforce Survey, Analysis and Planning Workgroup and Viclink, with a summary report made available to all Victorian public library staff. We will keep you informed of our progress.

Your answers to this survey are strictly confidential. *You are not asked to give your name. While we ask you to provide certain background information, this is for the purposes of analysis only.* The survey should take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

I encourage you to participate and to give us your opinions.

Thank you.

Gillian Considine
Senior Research Analyst
Workplace Research Centre

When you have completed the questionnaire, seal it in an envelope and mail it to:
Gillian Considine
Workplace Research Centre, H10
Reply Paid 61217
The University of Sydney NSW 2006

PART 1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION –

This section asks you to answer a range of questions about yourself. In particular, it asks you about your work history in Victorian public libraries, career plans, qualifications, and about your gender and age.

Your answers will be aggregated with the information we collect from everyone else. No individual will be able to be identified in any analysis or reports.

We will use this information to understand some of the broader issues around current skill levels and any skill development needs in Victorian public libraries.

YOUR WORK HISTORY IN VICTORIAN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

[unless otherwise instructed, please tick one box only]

1.1. Thinking of all the public libraries you may have worked in, how long have you been working in public libraries in Victoria?

1) ☐ Less than 1 year
2) ☐ 1 to less than 2 years
3) ☐ 2 to less than 5 years
4) ☐ 5 to less than 10 years
5) ☐ 10 to less than 20 years
6) ☐ 20 years or more

1.2a. What type of library do you currently work in?

1) ☐ Regional corporation
2) ☐ Single council library service

1.2b. Is your library service in an/a?

1) ☐ Inner metropolitan area
2) ☐ Outer metropolitan area
3) ☐ Country/rural area

1.2c. Where is your library service located geographically?

1) ☐ Melbourne CBD
2) ☐ Eastern suburbs
3) ☐ Western suburbs
4) ☐ Southern suburbs
5) ☐ Northern suburbs
6) ☐ Regional city
7) ☐ Rural/country

1.3. How long have you been working in your current library service?

1) ☐ Less than 1 year
2) ☐ 1 to less than 2 years
3) ☐ 2 to less than 5 years
4) ☐ 5 to less than 10 years
5) ☐ 10 to less than 20 years
6) ☐ 20 years or more

1.4. Including yourself, how many individual staff work in the library service where you work?

1) ☐ Less than 20
2) ☐ 20 to 29
3) ☐ 30 to 49
4) ☐ 50 or more
5) ☐ Don't know/not sure

1.5a. What title best describes your current position?

1) ☐ Library officer
2) ☐ Library technician
3) ☐ Librarian
4) ☐ IT specialist
5) ☐ Other _____
(please describe)

Please continue…1

YOUR WORK HISTORY continued…

[unless otherwise instructed, please tick one box only]

1.5b. What key word/s describe/s your current role?
       (tick as many as applicable)

1) ☐ Accountant/finance
2) ☐ Acquisitions
3) ☐ Branch services
4) ☐ Children's/youth
5) ☐ Collections
6) ☐ HR
7) ☐ Information/reference
8) ☐ Marketing/promotions
9) ☐ Multicultural
10) ☐ Operations
11) ☐ Outreach/community liaison
12) ☐ Mobile library
13) ☐ Reader/adult services
14) ☐ Supervisor/manager
15) ☐ Systems/ICT
16) ☐ Training
17) ☐ Virtual/online services
18) ☐ Other _____
               (please specify)

1.5c. What band are you currently employed under?

1) ☐ Band 2
2) ☐ Band 3
3) ☐ Band 4
4) ☐ Band 5
5) ☐ Band 6
6) ☐ Band 7
7) ☐ Other _____
               (please specify)

1.6. How long have you been working in your current position?

1) ☐ Less than 1 year
2) ☐ 1 to less than 2 years
3) ☐ 2 to less than 5 years
4) ☐ 5 to less than 10 years
5) ☐ 10 to less than 20 years
6) ☐ 20 years or more

1.7. On what basis are you currently employed?

1) ☐ Full-time (permanent, contract or temporary)
2) ☐ Part-time (permanent, contract or temporary)
3) ☐ Casual

CAREER PLANS

[unless otherwise instructed, please tick one box only]

1.8. When, if at all, do you think you'll be seeking a higher level position (promotion) within Victorian public libraries?

1) ☐ Never
2) ☐ Less than 2 years
3) ☐ 2 to less than 5 years
4) ☐ 5 to less than 10 years
5) ☐ 10 or more

1.9. Are you planning to work in Victorian public libraries until you retire?

1) ☐ Yes
2) ☐ No
3) ☐ Don't know/not sure

1.10. How many more years do you think you will be working in Victorian public libraries?

1) ☐ Less than 1 year
2) ☐ 1 year to less than 2 years
3) ☐ 2 to less than 5 years
4) ☐ 5 to less than 10 years
5) ☐ 10 to less than 15 years
6) ☐ 15 years or more

CAREER PLANS continued…

1.11. What, if anything, would encourage you to stay in Victorian public libraries?
[tick as many as applicable]

1) ☐ Nothing
2) ☐ More pay
3) ☐ Better career path opportunities
4) ☐ The opportunity to do more challenging work
5) ☐ Professional development
6) ☐ Less change in the workplace
7) ☐ More change in the workplace

8) ☐ Financial support for further education
9) ☐ Study leave
10) ☐ Better work/life balance
11) ☐ More hours
12) ☐ Less hours
13) ☐ Other _____
(please specify)

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

[please tick one box only]

1.12. What is the highest educational qualification you have completed?

1) ☐ Did not complete high school (VCE or equivalent)
2) ☐ Completed high school (VCE or equivalent)
3) ☐ TAFE certificate
4) ☐ TAFE diploma, advanced diploma
5) ☐ Undergraduate degree
6) ☐ TAFE graduate certificate, graduate diploma
7) ☐ Postgraduate degree

1.13. Are you, or do you intend to study for any other formal qualification in the next **2 years**?

1) ☐ Not intending to study in the next 2 years
2) ☐ High school (VCE or equivalent)
3) ☐ TAFE certificate
4) ☐ TAFE diploma or advanced diploma
5) ☐ Undergraduate degree
6) ☐ Graduate certificate or graduate diploma
7) ☐ Postgraduate degree

GENDER AND AGE

1.14. Are you?

1) ☐ Female
2) ☐ Male

1.15. What is your age?

1) ☐ 16 to 24 years
2) ☐ 25 to 34 years
3) ☐ 35 to 44 years
4) ☐ 45 to 54 years
5) ☐ 55 to 64 years
5) ☐ 65 or older

PART 2 YOUR OPINIONS

VISION FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN VICTORIA

This section contains a number of statements related to the current and future priorities for *every public library* in Victoria **and** for the ***public library service in which you work.***

While you may consider all statements to be relevant or important please choose the 5 which you consider to be the **most important** priorities over the next 5 years.

Rank from 1 to 5, the areas of priority you think are most important. **Write the number 1** against the issue you think should be the **most important priority**, the number 2 against the issue of second most importance and so on until you have ranked 5 issues for every public library in Victoria. Then use the same ranking scale to indicate the order of priorities of the 5 issues you feel are most important for the public library service in which you work.

Individual library services may have progressed differently on various issues of priority. Therefore, the priorities you consider important for your library service now **may** be different from the issues you think should be a priority for every Victorian public library.

2.1	***In order of most important, the key priority areas should be…***	**Every Victorian public library**	**My public library service**
1	Ensuring all public, school and tertiary libraries in Victoria can be accessed by all customers		
2	Introducing a "smart" card		
3	Promoting resource and information sharing between libraries		
4	Meeting the local community's needs with regard to the provision of knowledge and resources		
5	Improving technology access for the public		
6	Reducing areas of duplication across the public library network		
7	Improving local collections		
8	Developing a strong Information Communication Technology network		
9	Improving the skills of staff in new and growing areas of technology		
10	Providing excellent customer service		
11	Broadening the provision of local services available to customers		
12	Working with other local government departments to develop high quality minimum service delivery levels		
13	Improving links between public libraries and other local government departments		
14	Improving links between local community groups and public libraries		
15	Strengthening local communities		
16	Supporting local communities		
17	Succession planning		
18	Establishing a formal mentoring program		
19	Other _____(please describe)		

Performance in the workplace:

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. To answer, circle the number that most closely corresponds to your level of agreement.

The scale:

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know/Not applicable
1	2	3	4	5	9

1	Good performance is recognised by my supervisor	1	2	3	4	5	9
2	Poor performance is appropriately managed at my workplace	1	2	3	4	5	9
3	My supervisor gives me **constructive** feedback about my performance	1	2	3	4	5	9
4	My supervisor gives me **regular** feedback about my performance	1	2	3	4	5	9
5	Staff in this library service adapt well to change	1	2	3	4	5	9
6	My peers in this library service are open to change	1	2	3	4	5	9
7	My supervisor is open to change	1	2	3	4	5	9
8	My branch manager is open to change	1	2	3	4	5	9
9	My library service manager/CEO is open to change	1	2	3	4	5	9
10	Changes in how things are done would be an improvement	1	2	3	4	5	9
11	There is little need for change here; the workplace works well as it is	1	2	3	4	5	9
14	To be a successful branch manager at least 10 years of working in a public library service is needed	1	2	3	4	5	9
15	There is successful succession planning in my library service	1	2	3	4	5	9
16	There is a formal mentoring program in my library service	1	2	3	4	5	9

Career plans

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know/Not applicable
1	2	3	4	5	9

1	I have no desire to progress further from my current position	1	2	3	4	5	9
2	I would **like to** take on different tasks at the level I'm on	1	2	3	4	5	9
3	I would take on additional tasks at my level if asked	1	2	3	4	5	9
4	I would **like to** take on different tasks at a higher level than I'm on	1	2	3	4	5	9
5	I would take on additional tasks at a higher level if paid to	1	2	3	4	5	9
6	I plan to undertake training to further my career in public libraries	1	2	3	4	5	9
7	I have established a **formal** relationship with a mentor	1	2	3	4	5	9
8	I have established an **informal** relationship with a mentor	1	2	3	4	5	9
9	My supervisor is helping me to prepare for a higher level role	1	2	3	4	5	9
10	My supervisor is working with me so I can change roles	1	2	3	4	5	9
11	My supervisor is supporting my career development	1	2	3	4	5	9
12	I am actively looking for a **more senior** position in **the public sector**	1	2	3	4	5	9
13	I am actively looking for a **more senior** position in the **private sector**	1	2	3	4	5	9
14	I am actively looking for **any** position **outside** of public libraries	1	2	3	4	5	9

PART 3 CURRENT AND PREFERRED TASKS

This section asks you to estimate the amount of time you currently spend on a range of tasks. It also asks you to indicate whether you would prefer to spend more or less time on each task or for that time to remain unchanged.

To answer, circle the number that most closely corresponds to how often, if at all, you <u>currently</u> do the task and how often, if at all, you would <u>prefer</u> to do the task

The scale for CURRENT FREQUENCY of task

Scale	Category	Meaning
0	Don't do this	I never do this or do this only a few times a year
1	Very occasionally	I do this more than a few times a year but not as often as once a month
2	Sometimes	I do this at least once a month but not every week
3	Often	I do this every week maybe twice a week
4	Most of the time	I do this almost every day if not every day

The scale for how frequently you would PREFER to do the task if you had a choice:
(please answer all these questions even if you are not currently do the task)

Scale	Category	Meaning
0	Never	I never want to do this **OR** would rather not do it now
1	Less	I do this task **AND** would like to do this less of it
2	Same	I do this task **AND** the time I spend on it is about right
3	More	I want to do this task **OR** would like to do more of it

	3.1 CURRENT FREQUENCY					TASK	3.2 PREFERRED FREQUENCY			
	Don't do this	Very occas	Some times	Often	Most of time		Never	Less often	Same	More often
a	0	1	2	3	4	Check out/in books or other materials	0	1	2	3
b	0	1	2	3	4	Undertake reference enquiries	0	1	2	3
c	0	1	2	3	4	Conduct *Story time* or other specific children's services	0	1	2	3
d	0	1	2	3	4	Develop formal training programs for the public	0	1	2	3
e	0	1	2	3	4	Deliver training programs to the public	0	1	2	3
f	0	1	2	3	4	Provide general support to library users	0	1	2	3
g	0	1	2	3	4	Manage inappropriate behaviour from public	0	1	2	3
h	0	1	2	3	4	Provide customer service over the phone	0	1	2	3
i	0	1	2	3	4	Shelve books	0	1	2	3
j	0	1	2	3	4	Collection management	0	1	2	3
k	0	1	2	3	4	Catalogue materials/technical services	0	1	2	3
l	0	1	2	3	4	Acquisitions	0	1	2	3
m	0	1	2	3	4	Strategic planning	0	1	2	3
n	0	1	2	3	4	Outreach/work with community groups	0	1	2	3
o	0	1	2	3	4	Promote services to the community	0	1	2	3
p	0	1	2	3	4	ICT support services (for internal users)	0	1	2	3
q	0	1	2	3	4	Develop and deliver online services (e.g. Gulliver, web sites, etc.)	0	1	2	3
r	0	1	2	3	4	Develop skills in new technology	0	1	2	3

**Thank you for completing the survey.
Your input and cooperation is appreciated.**

Appendix B3: 2007 Senior and Whole of Service Manager Workforce Survey for Victorian public libraries

2007 Senior and Whole of Service Manager
Workforce Survey for Victorian public libraries

Welcome to the 2007 Senior and Whole of Service Manager Workforce Survey for Victorian public libraries, being conducted as part of the Statewide Public Library Development Projects, auspiced by the Library Board of Victoria and the Victorian public library network.

This survey is part of the Workforce Survey, Analysis and Planning Project. Its aim is to collect robust data on the current and expected staff profile of Victorian public libraries. The Workplace Research Centre has been asked to design and conduct the survey to identify current and expected skills, training and staffing issues for Victorian public libraries. Your responses will feed into the development of strategies for future workforce planning and development.

Once the results are collated and analysed, a presentation will be given to the Workforce Survey, Analysis and Planning Workgroup and Viclink, with a summary report distributed to all library service managers/CEOs and made available to all Victorian public library staff. We will keep you informed of our progress.

Your responses to this questionnaire are strictly confidential. *You are not asked to give your name. While we ask you to provide certain background information, this is for the purposes of analysis only.* The survey should take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

I encourage you to participate and to give us your opinions.

Thank you.

Gillian Considine
Senior Research Analyst
Workplace Research Centre

PART 1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This section asks you to answer a range of questions about yourself. In particular, it asks you about your work history in Victorian public libraries, career plans, qualifications, and about your gender and age.

Your answers will be aggregated with the information we collect from everyone else. No individual will be able to be identified in any analysis or reports.

We will use this information to understand some of the broader issues around current skill levels and skill development needs in Victorian public libraries.

WORK HISTORY IN VICTORIAN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

1. Thinking of **all** the public libraries you may have worked in, how long have you been working in **public libraries in Victoria**?

1) Less than 1 year
2) 1 to less than 2 years
3) 2 to less than 5 years
4) 5 to less than 10 years
5) 10 to less than 20 years
6) 20 years or more

2.a What type of library do you **currently** work in?

1) Regional corporation
2) Single council library service

2.b Is your library service situated in an/a?

1) Inner metropolitan area
2) Outer metropolitan area
3) Country/rural area

2.c Where is your library service located geographically?

1) Eastern suburbs
2) Western suburbs
3) Southern suburbs
4) Northern suburbs
5) Regional city
6) Rural/country

3. How long have you been working in your current library service?

1) Less than 1 year
2) 1 to less than 2 years
3) 2 to less than 5 years
4) 5 to less than 10 years
5) 10 to less than 20 years
6) 20 years or more

4. Including yourself, how many individual staff work in the library service where you work?

1) less than 20
2) 20 to 29
3) 30 to 49
4) 50 or more
5) don't know/not sure

5 a. What title best describes your current position?

1) Branch manager
2) Section manager for whole service (e.g. branch operations, collections, IT, marketing, etc.)
3) Library services manager/CEO

5 b. What key words describe your current role? *(tick as many as applicable)*

1) Accountant/finance
2) Acquisitions
3) Branch services
4) Childrens/youth
5) Collections
6) HR
7) Information/reference
8) Marketing/promotions
9) Multicultural
10) Operations
11) Outreach/community liaison/mobile library
12) Reader/adult services
13) Supervisor/manager
14) Systems/ICT
15) Training
16) Virtual/online services
17) Other _____(please specify)

5c. What band are you currently employed under?

1) Band 3
2) Band 4
3) Band 5
4) Band 6
5) Band 7
6) Band 8
7) Senior Officer
8) Other _____(please specify)

6. How long have you been working in your current position?

1) Less than 1 year
2) 1 to less than 2 years
3) 2 to less than 5 years
4) 5 to less than 10 years
5) 10 to less than 20 years
6) 20 years or more

7. On what basis are you currently employed?

1) full-time (permanent, contract or temporary)
2) part-time (permanent, contract or temporary)
3) casual

CAREER PLANS

8. When, if at all, do you think you'll be seeking a higher level position (promotion) within Victorian public libraries?

1) Never
2) Less than 2 years
3) 2 to less than 5 years
4) 5 to less than 10 years
5) 10 or more

9. Are you planning to work in Victorian public libraries until you retire?

1) Yes
2) No
3) Don't know/not sure

10. How much longer do you think you will be working in Victorian public libraries?

1) Less than 1 year
2) 1 year to less than 2 years
3) 2 to less than 5 years
4) 5 to less than 10 years
5) 10 to less than 15 years
6) 15 years or more

11. What, if anything, would encourage you to stay in Victorian public libraries? *(tick as many as applicable)*

1) Nothing
2) More pay
3) Better career path opportunities
4) The opportunity to do more challenging work
5) Professional development
6) Less change in the workplace
7) More change in the workplace
8) Financial support for further education
9) Study leave
10) Better work/life balance
11) More hours
12) Less hours
13) Other _____ (please specify)

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

12. What is the highest educational qualification you have completed?

1) Did not complete high school (VCE or equivalent)
2) Completed high school (VCE or equivalent)
3) TAFE certificate
4) TAFE diploma or advanced diploma
5) Undergraduate degree
6) Graduate certificate or graduate diploma
7) Postgraduate degree

13. Are you, or do you intend to study for any other formal qualification in the next 2 years?

1) High school (VCE or equivalent)
2) TAFE certificate
3) TAFE diploma or advanced diploma
4) Undergraduate degree
5) Graduate certificate or graduate diploma
6) Postgraduate degree
7) Not intending to study in the next 2 years

GENDER AND AGE

1. Are you?

1) Female
2) Male

2. What is your age?

1) 16 to 24 years
2) 25 to 34 years
3) 35 to 44 years
4) 45 to 54 years
5) 55 to 64 years
5) 65 or older

PART 2   YOUR OPINIONS

Vision for public libraries in Victoria

This section contains a number of statements related to the current and future priorities for *every public library* in Victoria **and** for the *public library service in which you work.*

While you may consider all statements to be relevant or important please choose the 5 which you consider to be the **most important** priorities over the next 5 years.

Rank from 1 to 5, the areas of priority you think are most important. **Write the number 1** against the issue you think should be the **most important priority**, the number 2 against the issue of second most importance and so on until you have ranked 5 issues for every public library in Victoria. Then use the same ranking scale to indicate the order of priorities of the 5 issues you feel are most important for the public library service in which you work.

Individual library services may have progressed differently on various issues of priority. Therefore, the priorities you consider important for your library service **may** be different from the issues you think should be a priority for every Victorian public library.

2.1	*In order of most important, the key priority areas should be…*	Every Victorian public library	My public library service
1	Ensuring all public, school and tertiary libraries in Victoria can be accessed by all customers		
2	Introducing a "smart" card		
3	Promoting resource and information sharing between libraries		
4	Meeting the local community's needs with regard to the provision of knowledge and resources		
5	Improving technology access for the public		
6	Reducing areas of duplication across the public library network		
7	Improving local collections		
8	Developing a strong Information Communication Technology network		
9	Improving the skills of staff in new and growing areas of technology		
10	Providing excellent customer service		
11	Broadening the provision of local services available to customers		
12	Working with local government to develop high quality minimum service delivery levels		
13	Improving links between public libraries and other local government departments		
14	Improving links between local community groups and public libraries		
15	Strengthening local communities		
16	Supporting local communities		
17	Succession planning		
18	Establishing a formal mentoring program		
19	Other _____(please describe)		

2.2 Performance in the workplace.

The following questions ask you about performance management in the workplace. Some of the items ask you about the extent to which **you** get feedback about your performance. Other items ask you about the extent to which **staff in general** get feedback about performance and how change is viewed in your current library service.

The scale:

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know/Not applicable
1	2	3	4	5	9

1	Good performance is recognised by my supervisor	1 2 3 4 5 9
2	Poor performance is appropriately managed in my workplace	1 2 3 4 5 9
3	*My supervisor* gives me *constructive* feedback about my performance	1 2 3 4 5 9
4	*My supervisor* gives me *regular* feedback about my performance	1 2 3 4 5 9
5	Supervisors in this library service give constructive feedback to staff about their performance	1 2 3 4 5 9
6	Supervisors give regular feedback to staff about their performance	1 2 3 4 5 9
7	Staff in this library service adapt well to change	1 2 3 4 5 9
8	My peers in this library service are open to change	1 2 3 4 5 9
9	My supervisor is open to change	1 2 3 4 5 9
11	My library services manager/CEO is open to change	1 2 3 4 5 9
12	Changes in how things are done would be an improvement	1 2 3 4 5 9
13	There is little need for change here; the workplace works well as it is	1 2 3 4 5 9
14	To be a successful branch manager at least 10 years of working in a public library service is needed	1 2 3 4 5 9
15	There is successful succession planning in my library service	1 2 3 4 5 9
16	There is a formal mentoring program in my library service	1 2 3 4 5 9

2.3 Career plans

The scale:

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know/Not applicable
1	2	3	4	5	9

1	I have no desire to progress further from my current position	1 2 3 4 5 9
2	I would take on additional tasks at my current level if asked	1 2 3 4 5 9
3	I would like to take on different tasks at my current level	1 2 3 4 5 9
4	I would like to take on different tasks at a higher level	1 2 3 4 5 9
5	I plan to undertake training to further my career in public libraries	1 2 3 4 5 9
6	I have established a *formal* relationship with a mentor	1 2 3 4 5 9
7	I have established an *informal* relationship with a mentor	1 2 3 4 5 9
8	My supervisor is working with me so I can change roles at my current level	1 2 3 4 5 9
9	My supervisor is helping me to prepare for a higher level role	1 2 3 4 5 9
10	My supervisor is supporting my career development	1 2 3 4 5 9
11	I am actively looking for a *more senior* position in *the public sector*	1 2 3 4 5 9
12	I am actively looking for a more senior position in the *private sector*	1 2 3 4 5 9
13	I am actively looking for *any* position *outside* of public libraries	1 2 3 4 5 9

PART 3 CURRENT AND REQUIRED RESOURCES

The following questions are only relevant if you are directly involved in recruiting staff.

3.1 Are you currently involved in recruiting staff?

1) No (program to skip to "Thank you for your input…")
2) Yes

3.2 Thinking about all of the positions conducted in your library service do you currently have any issues of either under or over staffing?

1) No (program to skip to question 3.5)
2) Yes, there is an issue with under and/or over staffing issues

3.3 The following questions ask you to indicate the adequacy of **current** staffing levels in your library service.

Current Staffing				
Significantly under staffed	**Under staffed**	**Adequate staffing**	**Over staffed**	**Not applicable**
1	2	3	4	0

		Current Staffing				
	Position	Sig. under	Under	Adequate	Over	NA
a	Library officers	1	2	3	4	0
b	Library technicians	1	2	3	4	0
c	Librarians	1	2	3	4	0
d	Operations/coordinators	1	2	3	4	0
e	Collections	1	2	3	4	0
f	Children Services	1	2	3	4	0
g	Multicultural Services	1	2	3	4	0
h	Marketing/Promotions	1	2	3	4	0
i	Outreach/Community liaison	1	2	3	4	0
j	Virtual/Online Services	1	2	3	4	0
k	ICT specialists	1	2	3	4	0
l	Branch Managers	1	2	3	4	0
m	Library service managers/CEOs	1	2	3	4	0
n	Mobile operators	1	2	3	4	0

3.4 For the positions where you do have **current** problems with staffing there may be more than one issue contributing to this problem **BUT** from the lists below, please indicate the factor which you think is **most significant** in contributing to this problem.

Don't have adequate funding to fill this role	Can't **attract** suitable applicants	Can't **recruit** suitable applicants	Current staff are not adequately skilled	Current staff are not suitable for the roles now expected of them	Don't know	Not applicable
1	2	3	4	5	9	0

	Positions	CURRENT STAFFING PROBLEMS						
		Inadeq funding	Can't attract	Can't recruit	Staff skills	Staff roles	Don't know	NA
a	Library officers	1	2	3	4	5	9	0
b	Library technicians	1	2	3	4	5	9	0
c	Librarians	1	2	3	4	5	9	0
d	Operations/coordinators	1	2	3	4	5	9	0
e	Collections	1	2	3	4	5	9	0
f	Children Services	1	2	3	4	5	9	0
g	Multicultural Services	1	2	3	4	5	9	0
h	Marketing/Promotions	1	2	3	4	5	9	0
i	Outreach/Community liaison	1	2	3	4	5	9	0
j	Virtual/Online Services	1	2	3	4	5	9	0
k	ICT specialists	1	2	3	4	5	9	0
l	Branch Managers	1	2	3	4	5	9	0
m	Library service managers/CEOs	1	2	3	4	5	9	0
n	Mobile operators	1	2	3	4	5	9	0

3.5 How difficult do you think it will be to fill the following positions in the **next 5 to 10 years**?

Not difficult at all	Difficult	Very difficult	Don't know	Not applicable
1	2	3	9	0

	Positions	Not difficult	Difficult	Very difficult	Don't know	NA
1	Library officers	1	2	3	9	0
2	Library technicians	1	2	3	9	0
3	Librarians	1	2	3	9	0
4	Operations/coordinators	1	2	3	9	0
5	Collections	1	2	3	9	0
6	Children Services	1	2	3	9	0
7	Multicultural Services	1	2	3	9	0
8	Marketing/Promotions	1	2	3	9	0
9	Outreach/Community liaison	1	2	3	9	0
10	Virtual/Online Services	1	2	3	9	0
11	ICT specialists	1	2	3	9	0
12	Branch Managers	1	2	3	9	0
13	Library Service Managers/CEOs	1	2	3	9	0
14	Mobile operators	1	2	3	9	0

3.6. This section asks you to estimate the amount of staffing resources you currently have to **conduct tasks required** and the amount of resources you anticipate will be needed in the **next 5 to 10 years**.

Using the **current resourcing scale** below, indicate on the left hand side of the table, how adequately you are currently resourced to complete these tasks in your library service.

Using the **future resourcing scale** below, indicate on the right hand side of the table, the task areas you think will grow and decline with regard to staffing over the next **5 to 10 years** by indicating whether you think you will need more, the same, or less staff to conduct these specific tasks in the future.

The scale for…

CURRENT RESOURCING		FUTURE RESOURCING	
Scale	**Category**	**Scale**	**Category**
0	Don't do this	0	Won't need resources for this
1	Significantly under resourced	1	Will need fewer staff than currently to do this
2	Under resourced	2	Will need the same amount of staffing
3	Adequate resources	3	Will need slightly more staffing
4	Over resourced	4	Will need significantly more staffing

	CURRENT RESOURCING						**FUTURE RESOURCING**				
	Do not do this	Sig. under	Under	Adeq	Over	**TASKS**	Will not need this	Fewer staff	Same staff	Few more staff	Lot more staff
a	0	1	2	3	4	Check out/in books or other materials	0	1	2	3	4
b	0	1	2	3	4	Undertake reference enquiries	0	1	2	3	4
c	0	1	2	3	4	Conduct *Story time* or other specific children's services	0	1	2	3	4
d	0	1	2	3	4	Develop formal training programs for the public	0	1	2	3	4
e	0	1	2	3	4	Deliver training programs to the public	0	1	2	3	4
f	0	1	2	3	4	Provide general support to library users	0	1	2	3	4
g	0	1	2	3	4	Manage inappropriate behaviour from public	0	1	2	3	4
h	0	1	2	3	4	Provide customer service over the phone	0	1	2	3	4
i	0	1	2	3	4	Shelve books	0	1	2	3	4
j	0	1	2	3	4	Collection management	0	1	2	3	4
k	0	1	2	3	4	Catalogue materials/technical services	0	1	2	3	4
l	0	1	2	3	4	Acquisitions	0	1	2	3	4
m	0	1	2	3	4	Strategic planning	0	1	2	3	4
n	0	1	2	3	4	Outreach/work with community groups	0	1	2	3	4
o	0	1	2	3	4	Promote services to the community	0	1	2	3	4
p	0	1	2	3	4	ICT support services (for internal users)	0	1	2	3	4
q	0	1	2	3	4	Develop and deliver online services (e.g. Gulliver, web sites, etc.)	0	1	2	3	4
r	0	1	2	3	4	Learn new technology	0	1	2	3	4
s	0	1	2	3	4	General management/supervision	0	1	2	3	4

You have now completed the questionnaire
THANK YOU FOR YOUR INPUT AND COOPERATION

Appendix C: Scoping research report (Stage 1)

Workplace Research Centre

Workforce Sustainability and Leadership

Scoping Research

contents

Executive Summary

The State Library of Victoria, in partnership with the Victorian public library network, contracted the Workplace Research Centre (formerly acirrt) to conduct a scoping exercise regarding the sustainability of the public library workforce. The purpose of the research is to identify the key issues surrounding the recruitment and retention of qualified public library staff, and the development for leadership positions. The planned research phase following the scoping exercise is a survey and analysis of current training and staffing and the identification of future needs. The scoping exercise is a necessary first step in establishing the context of the quantitative research and systematically identifying all the issues to be quantified.

The key issues identified by the research are as follows:
- A need to define and articulate the role of public libraries and librarians— The first step in planning for the future and assessing what will be required from the future workforce, is to determine the model of public libraries. That is, what will be their function, what services will they deliver and how will they do it. Part of this will be determining the function of librarians. In the absence of a clear model librarians have developed into a complex hybrid of information manager and social capital service deliverer. The research highlights a need to explore and understand the balance between the two roles in order to determine training and educations needs for public librarians.
- There is scope for building better networks—there is potential for Victorian public librarians to build stronger networks with each other as well as external organisations. Stronger networks between public libraries will enable more efficient approaches to training and development, and holistic succession planning. Practical implementation of this would be: formal statewide secondment and mentoring programs, and establishing a central body to co-ordinate relationships and opportunities such as statewide training.
- Developing managers who can instigate workplace change—the success of future workforce planning will rely on managers to lead and execute this change. Managers are also responsible for the future direction of public libraries, the role they play within the community and communicating this vision to the Local Council or Library Board. Managers could benefit from more information about, and support in, fulfilling this role.
- Attracting and developing the right people—research participants reported difficulties in attracting 'quality' people to work in public libraries, as well as limited opportunities for development of current library staff. A clear vision will assist in determining the type of people that need to be recruited to public libraries, and subsequently, how this can be done. The research also identified development opportunities that could be implemented in the immediate future as well as changes that will require more consideration, consultation and planning. Immediate opportunities include: developing guidelines and procedures for secondment opportunities, and creating centralised database for mentoring and secondment

opportunities. A longer-term opportunity is the possible development of a public library graduate or cadetship program.

- Developing funding models for workplace change—there were varying views as to how important funding levels were in being able to conduct succession planning. Library managers felt that faced many operational restrictions due to limited funding. Some stakeholders argued that good managers and strong leadership was essential for effective succession planning, rather than funding.

The scoping research has identified some key areas for future research. At a minimum, quantitative research is required to quantify current skills and training levels and needs, as well as to identify future needs and gaps. It will be particularly important to identify recruitment and retention issues that may be present for particular libraries, for example, those in particular locations. Further research could also assist in identifying potential development opportunities for staff, the potential for a state-wide approach, and the acceptance of different training models for library staff.

There are two main options for developing a model for public library service delivery. One option is for policy-makers and stakeholders to develop a model and clearly articulate this model to the workforce. The other option is a more consultative approach. A survey of the workforce could elicit possible models of service delivery, as well as what the workforce believe the community wants from public libraries.

The report discusses the issues relating to creating a sustainable workforce for Victorian public libraries and concludes with some more detailed recommendations for further research.

Background and Methodology

As Australia's population ages the labour market will be faced with a decreasing supply of skilled workers. The challenge faced by employers and policy-makers will be to find ways to encourage greater participation in the labour market as well as provide incentives and opportunities for labour to increase their training and development. Libraries are more likely to feel the weight of this challenge due to their older workforce and the continuing technological evolution confronting libraries and the services they provide.

The Victorian public library network in partnership with the State Library of Victoria has begun to address the issue by commencing a series of research projects that will explore and quantify the issues related to the sustainability of the Victorian public library workforce.

There are 44 public library services in Victoria serving a population of 5.187 million. Library services comprise single Council public library services and public library corporations. The corporation libraries service multiple Councils and are overseen by a library board. The State Government's Department for Victorian Communities provides approximately 25 per cent of recurrent funding to Victorian public libraries, with the majority of funding provided by Local Government. There are 2,644 people working in public libraries in Victoria. This amounts to 1,504.7 equivalent full-time staff, 526.4 of these staff are qualified librarians. The library qualification can be obtained by completing graduate or post-graduate studies. Qualified librarians are generally employed from the Band 5 level. Library Technicians require a Diploma qualification and are employed at the Band 4 level. The positions above a librarian are generally Branch Manager and Library Manager, though there may be other specialist librarian positions. The banding for these positions can vary across libraries. The following table provides a brief description of the responsibilities at each of the library staff levels from the Victorian *Local Authorities Award 2001*.

Position	Accountability and extent of authority	Qualifications and Experience
Band 4	Essentially doing jobs and are often the providers of information to clients and/or information and support to more senior employees.	Completed a TAFE certiciate course or equivalent.
Band 5	May supervise resources, other employees or groups of employees and/or provide advice to or regulate clients and/or give support to more senior employees.	Completion of a degree or diploma course with little or no relevant work experience.
Band 6	The prime responsibility is for resource management, the freedom to act is governed by clear objectives and/or budgets with a regular reporting mechanism to ensure adherence to goals and objectives. The effect of decisions and actions taken at this level is usually limited to the quality or cost of the programs and projects being managed.	The skills and knowledge needed for entry to this Band are beyond those normally acquired through tertiary education alone.
Band 7	The prime responsibility is for resource management, the freedom to act is governed by	The skills and knowledge needed for entry to this Band are beyond

	clear objectives and/or budgets with a regular reporting mechanism to ensure adherence to goals and objectives. Decisions and actions taken at this level may have a significant effect on the programs or projects being managed or on the public perception of the wider organisation.	those normally acquired through tertiary education alone. These positions require the ability to gain co-operation and assistance from clients, members of the public and other employees.
Band 8	(As Above). Decisions and actions taken in this Band may have a substantial effect on the operational unit being managed or on the public perception of the wider organisation.	Typically, the necessary skills and knowledge would be gained through further formal qualifications in the field of expertise or in management, or through at least four years of experience in another specialised field.

The issues that are considered to require attention in particular are leadership succession issues, ongoing opportunities for professional development, the difficulty in attracting appropriate candidates to training and to public libraries, and the provision of the relevant training in tertiary courses aimed at producing qualified staff for public libraries.

The Workplace Research Centre (formerly acirrt) at The University of Sydney was contracted by the State Library of Victoria to undertake the Stage 1 *Scoping Exercise* on the *Workforce Sustainability and Leadership* project. The purpose of this stage of the research is to identify key issues surrounding the recruitment and retention of qualified public library staff, and the development for leadership positions. The outcomes of this stage will inform the methodology to be utilised in Stage 2 of the project: *Survey and Analysis*.

The research methodology consisted of eight in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, one focus group with public library managers, one focus group with public library employees of the Band 5 to Band 6 level, and a brief overview of relevant literature that was identified in the interviews and meetings with the Workforce Survey Analysis and Planning Workgroup.

The in-depth interviews were conducted with stakeholders from a range of educational institutions, various positions within the public library system, and key interest groups from Victoria and other states in Australia. Several interviews were conducted prior and subsequent to the focus groups being held with public library staff. This enabled the researcher to gain an understanding of the public library context from stakeholders prior to speaking to staff and enabled the researcher to validate the information that was collected in the focus groups.

The two focus groups were held in Melbourne at the State Library of Victoria. Focus groups were recruited by the State Library project manager, in consultation with the project workgroup. Participants recruited to the focus groups came from both country and metropolitan locations. Recruitment was also based on achieving participants who were from libraries with both high and low levels of staff turnover. The purpose of this

was to learn about libraries that have a range of experiences in recruitment and retention of staff. A total of 10 staff attended the library managers' focus group and 5 staff attended the library employees' focus group.

In scoping exercises such as this one, a qualitative research design is the most appropriate. Qualitative methods enable the researchers to identify and explore all the issues relating to the issue or research questions at hand. Qualitative research, such as that used for this project, does not allow the reporting of statistics or representative data. However, such a phase in the research is important in understanding the scope of issues to be measured in the intended quantitative phase of the research to be completed subsequently.

Review of the Relevant Literature

The ageing workforce and possible responses to this challenge in the form of succession planning has captured the attention of researchers and human resources practitioners in Australia and overseas. However, many human resource practitioners and researchers are attempting to come to grips with the situation and many responses are still in the early stages of development. This section details some research that has been undertaken on the issue both in Australia and overseas.

A comprehensive study was undertaken by the '8Rs research team' from Canadian Library Human Resources to examine the issues surrounding the ageing and retirement of library staff (Ingles et. al., 2005). They identified the issues of recruitment, retention, education and training, and quality of work as interrelated to the ageing and retirement of the workforce. The primary research method was two web surveys across all types of libraries: one of the individual staff (both librarians and library technicians) and an institutional survey of individual libraries. The study highlights the benefits of conducting a large quantitative survey to be able to understand the issues in implementing effective succession planning. Canadian libraries are facing similar issues to those of the Victorian public library workforce. One issue in particular has been the relatively stagnant careers of middle-level librarians due to older librarians remaining in their management positions until retirement:

> "A parallel concern with that regarding a potential human resource shortage is the perceived need to rejuvenate mid-level staff who, because of downsizing and hierarchical flattening, have not been provided with the opportunity to prepare themselves to fill the roles that will arise from retirements" (Ingles, 2005:1).

Like Victorian public libraries, staff turnover is not a problem for most libraries. Consequently, recruitment strategies should be aimed at people who have the ability to change and grow with the organisation and opportunities for change and development need to be available to current staff. Some Canadian libraries have implemented job enrichment schemes such as job enlargement, quality circles and participative management which were found to have beneficial impacts on job satisfaction and productivity. However, problem-solving teams were more common

with much less incidence of job sharing and job rotation programs. The survey revealed an interest among staff to participate in decision-making (Ingles, 2005:7). Mentorship programs are not only good for the mentored person's career development, but also for skills transfer from more experienced staff.

> "Grooming efforts for leadership management should be taking place at all levels of the library organisation, including new entrants (both professionals and paraprofessionals)" (Ingles, 2005:97).

Canadian libraries reported insufficient resources for training librarians and paraprofessional staff, particularly in the area of management and leadership. Management and leadership training is particularly needed when considering imminent organisational needs for staff with these skills. A consistent finding from the research was that Canadian librarians are increasingly required to take on managerial, business and leadership roles. "The possession of managerial skills and leadership potential are two of the most important and difficult to fulfil competencies" (Ingles, 2005:9). And it is the replacement of leadership skills that is more of a problem than replacing general skills and knowledge. The survey found a promising level of interest in these types of positions among all levels of staff. Worryingly, 42 per cent of librarians did not consider their capacity to manage a service or department to be important, even though 60 per cent were performing managerial functions; even fewer considering supervisory ability important. There was an interest in gaining these abilities among the more recent librarian entrants (Ingles, 2005:185). In Canada, new librarians have the opportunity to move into management positions early in their careers. Further research needs to identify whether this is the case for the Victorian public library workforce and what is the level of take-up of these opportunities and reasons for this.

The research found that satisfaction with the librarian education varied depending on library sector, with dissatisfaction relatively high among Canadian public libraries, indicating a gap between what the education provides and public libraries' needs. This is similar to the findings from the Scoping Exercise that librarianship degrees did not include a core component on public libraries and it was felt this was necessary due to the differentiation in public library service and the social capital ideology that belies the service. Even though libraries do not feel they have input into the library university education it was recommended that educators and library managers work together to build opportunities that can provide practical experience for students.

> "A coalition of libraries, library associations and library schools must act to promote both a current view and a vision for the profession – one that expresses the potential of librarianship as a career of choice and is attractive enough to capture students of high quality and commitment to the practice of a dynamic and changing profession" (Ingles, 2005:174).

This research examined paraprofessionals (i.e. library technicians) and professionals (i.e. qualified librarians). This proved to be beneficial as it identified some interest among paraprofessionals in gaining their librarianship qualifications but also barriers

in doing so. Recruiting staff at the technician level and allowing them to gain qualifications and move upwards is another source of librarian recruitment.

Like Victorian public libraries, reports of budget and size constraints were common among Canadian libraries. The recommended response to this issue was greater sharing or resources among libraries:

> "Constraints of budget and size will always exist. Therefore, libraries should also look to sharing of staffing resources through consortia and other local arrangements where two or more libraries might realise benefits and share costs. Sharing of resources has been the hallmark of the library profession for many years; the thinking needs to extend to the sharing of human resources – whether one webmaster for a college/university library partnership, one children's literature specialist for two regional library systems, or one training officer for a consortium of libraries" (Ingles, 2005:175).

Studies that have been conducted locally, albeit smaller in scale, include research by the workforce planning team in the Northern Territory (Chmielewski, 2002:166). It seems the issues are not that dissimilar to those being faced by Victorian public libraries. However, Northern Territory public libraries face greater issues in terms of a small pool of local personnel and isolation from other librarian labour markets. But the solutions to the recruitment issues are similar such as 'growing our own' approach to staff development, targeted professional development and providing more incentives to school leavers to choose librarianship as a career. It was felt that Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) could be used more to organise and promote training opportunities (Chmielewski, 2002:167). It was also suggested that the occupational boundaries between library technicians and librarians could be loosened to enable job progression. However, the Canadian study revealed that this can cause tensions when library technicians are expected to do more but for the same pay (Ingles, 2005:195). There needs to be some scope for on-the-job training to be recognised in occupational and pay structures, in addition to formal qualifications. One way of doing this is to have competency-based job definitions rather than qualification based definitions, as is discussed in the following section. It was also suggested that recruitment be extended to people with other types of degrees such as marketing, business and IT.

Influencing the skills, performance and development of current staff is an important component of workforce planning. One approach to this is to focus on a competency-based management system that "provides a process whereby competencies needed to achieve organisational success are clearly defined. The system is behaviourally anchored so that both managers and employees can see what is expected of them" (Bryant & Poustie, 2001:3). This could be one way of initiating cultural change at the workplace and sending a message to staff that managerial functions and adaptation to change are an employment requirement. It can also act as a blueprint for the needs of the library workforce as it moves forward. As demonstrated in the previous section, the current Victorian Local Authorities Award uses broad descriptions of accountability and authority, and qualifications and experience, and does not detail

competencies and is not public library-specific. Once the skills and behaviours needed from the future library workforce have been quantified in Stage 2 of the Workforce Sustainability project, it may be useful to translate this into structured competencies for each band. Some of the competencies identified by Bryan & Poustie (2003:12) were also identified as required librarian behaviours in this stage of the research—such as, customer service excellence, innovation, flexibility and leadership. Identifying competencies was also an important recommendation from the '8Rs' research:

> "Institutions need to carefully plan how they will restructure their staffing complements as retirements occur. The first step is to define needed competencies and determine what mix of staff will meet the present and (insofar as possible) future needs of the organisation. However, we can say overall that the ability for staff to adapt flexibly to change will clearly be a necessary competency throughout Canadian libraries" (Ingles, 2005:193).

Vicki Whitmell (2002) considers succession planning as the prime strategy for being able to replace the large numbers of librarians who are expected to leave the workforce in the near future. Effective succession planning needs to extend beyond the organisational level and be approached on a broader basis. Whitnell (2005:148-9) lists a number of broad strategies for succession planning such as management training, job rotation and secondments, the development of a database of individuals seeking advancement, mentoring programs, increased communication and leadership from management. The challenges in implementing such strategies include relatively low salary levels, insufficient funding and a lack of middle managers. In 2004, Whitmell & Associates (2004) produced a paper for the Australian Technology Network that clarified some broad guidelines for succession planning such as recognising abilities and not only qualifications, encouraging professional development and changing recruitment practices. They do not provide pragmatic details in how to go about implementing such changes. Specifically, they do not acknowledge the significant organisational and cultural change, the substantial levels of management support and leadership, and the funding required in implementing such changes. The paper was written for a broad audience that incorporates all Australian libraries in a variety of environments. Thus it does not address some of the issues that are especially acute for public libraries. Nevertheless, the ideas can feed into general directions forward. The challenge remains however, for Victorian public libraries to turn the 'good idea' of succession planning into good practice.

The review of literature confirmed the need to be able to quantitatively understand the recruitment, retention and in particular supply and demand issues that are being faced by Victorian State Libraries. Once the specific issues are clearly understood we can then return to the literature to examine strategic directions that have been assisted by libraries overseas and assess the extent to which these strategies may be adopted and applied to Victorian public libraries.

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The Public Library Context

The public library workforce is employed under a complex set of circumstances that impact on the ability to recruit, retain and develop workers as well as plan for the future. The complex circumstances include the impact of growing technologies; evolving purpose and functions; funding arrangements and relationships with Local Councils and Boards; and a diverse and changing customer base. It is important to first establish the context under which public libraries are operating so that we can clearly identify and understand the opportunities and challenges in planning for the future workforce.

The librarian workforce is particularly susceptible to the challenge of the ageing population with over half of employed librarians in Australia over the age of 45 years.[1] Stakeholders from education institutions reported that students in librarianship courses also tend to be older. The workforce is also predominately female—84 per cent of librarians in Australia are women.[2] Therefore employees are more likely to carry the bulk of childcare responsibilities within the household. This creates a demand for more flexible working arrangements.

Libraries exist within the local government structure. As mentioned in the background, they are either managed by single councils or by corporations acting on behalf of multiple councils. The majority of recurrent funding is received by Local Government Associations. Therefore, funding and budget capacity is primarily determined by councils. Library managers reported varying relationships with their councils and corporation boards and felt that this relationship as well as councillors' and CEOs' perceptions of what libraries do and their contribution to the community also influenced the amount of funding they received. Managers commented that this environment is often changing which requires them to continually adapt to the perceptions and demands of the board and council. Most research participants reported that funding was often a constraint on libraries' operations. Some library managers felt that their council(s) did not value the library service.

> "Our hardest challenge at the moment is our councils and trying to say this is what really needs to happen in libraries and the Board … not listening to the advice of the senior managers and specialists" (Library Manager).

In the case of Council libraries, staff are included in the council's industrial arrangements. This is usually an enterprise agreement which is based on an Award. Corporation libraries tend to have an enterprise agreement at the corporation level, outside any contributing Council agreements or are employed under the Award. Participants in the research generally felt that public librarians are underpaid. There were reports of discrepancies between other local government staff and library staff. For example, customer service staff in some local government positions are paid at one or two bands higher than library customer service staff. It was also felt that librarians, who require a tertiary education are

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[1] Teece, P. (2005) "Genuine choice can boost participation rates", *Workwatch* from the ALIA website http://www.alia.org.au/publishing/incite/2005/07/workwatch.html, accessed 16 February 2006.
[2] ibid.

undervalued and underpaid, particularly when compared to other professions, such as engineers, who are also employed by local government.

There was no evidence of strong union representation for employees, apart from the general union representation for local government employees. The Australian Library and Information Association is a professional organisation that represents all library employees, not specifically public library employees, and membership to the organisation among public library employees was reported to be low due to costly membership fees.

There are basically four types of libraries that a person can work for if they choose to work as a librarian:

- Special
- Academic
- Public
- Schools

Public libraries differ from other types of libraries in that they service the general public, i.e. all ages, backgrounds, and language and learning abilities. In other libraries the client base is likely to be more narrow, for example, children in school libraries or academics and students in academic libraries. This has the advantage of making the job varied but possibly more challenging. Public librarians who participated in the research reported sometimes having to serve challenging or aggressive customers, and public libraries in certain locations were renowned to be more demanding to work in due to the customer base. One stakeholder observed an increase in aggressive behaviour and commented that public libraries are 'safe havens' for people with low grade mental disabilities due to a decrease in support services.

Qualified librarians not only have the choice to work in different type of libraries but they can also work in organisations that require their information management skills, such as law firms and financial institutions. This means that skilled librarians have a range of employment (and remuneration) possibilities and have scope to be selective when choosing their workplace. The labour market for librarians is more diverse compared to other public service occupations such as teachers, nurses, and doctors. In these occupations the public service is the biggest labour market and with limited employment choices there is an acceptance among most graduates that they have to "do time" in the less desirable areas before they achieve a placement somewhere they prefer. Qualified librarians, however, can opt out of the less desirable public library positions and have a range of other employment opportunities to choose from. This makes recruitment in, for example, low socio-economic areas more difficult for public library managers.

Another aspect that makes recruitment to public libraries more challenging is the image that libraries and librarians have in the broader community. The image can be stereotypical and can present a limited view of what libraries are and what librarians do. It was commented by some research participants that librarians have a quiet, reserved and almost reclusive image, and it is generally not perceived to be a customer service occupation. However, the nature of the job is often constant contact with the public. The other perception that appears to characterise the library's image is the physical building and the physical objects within it. However, with the rise of technology and the internet, libraries are becoming more 'virtual'. More and more reliance is being placed on librarian's

IT skills and there is a growing need for IT experts in public libraries. Nevertheless, stakeholders observed that people with these skills are not being attracted to the profession, partly because libraries are not considered to be hi-tech institutions. Several participants made the comment that libraries are not good at promoting themselves and letting the community know what libraries and librarians do. This is a particularly important challenge as libraries face a significant opportunity for their function to evolve along with the technical revolution. The technological and image issues are intertwined; as one stakeholder put it, the challenge for public libraries is to move beyond the public perception that they are more than a place where books are checked out and communicate their varied functions to the wider community.

The internet is having a significant impact on what services libraries provide and how they provide them. Due to the internet the library will have more services to provide and more people who are going to use them. Additionally, community has access to much larger quantities of information through the internet, which means the library's task of validating and managing this information is also rapidly growing. However, many aspects are yet to be comprehended. One stakeholder summed up the challenge facing libraries as:

> "Society and information technology and the combination of all those type of things are impacting service development and service delivery. And do the current staff have the skill set that is required to take libraries into the future?" (Stakeholder)

Although most library managers were mindful of the workforce issues these weren't the only challenges they were facing. Some library managers reported significant issues with the condition of their buildings as well as the amount of building space.

> "Keeping abreast of technology also comes back to a funding issue and adequacy of buildings and training staff" (Library Manager).

Other managers reported difficulties in dealing with their council and getting adequate recognition of the contribution they are making to the community. Thus public libraries have a range of changing conditions and challenges that require a response in order to plan for the future and develop the workforce. The following sections discuss some of the specific issues relating to recruitment, retention and development of public library employees.

Education

Supply and demand

The research gained the perspectives of educational institutions and those people responsible for attracting and employing library staff. These perspectives differed on the level of supply and demand for qualified librarians in public libraries. Library managers reported being unable to recruit suitably qualified people. However, educators reported limited availability of entry-level librarian positions for graduates.

The education stakeholders perceived opportunities in Victorian public libraries for graduates to be limited. There appears to be sufficient employment opportunities for information management graduates and public libraries do not play a main role. A program convenor of an undergraduate course had recently obtained feedback from a number of industry people. The feedback she received from public libraries is that they don't have entry level vacancies, that is, Band 5 positions. Instead they need managers or library assistants. A stakeholder reported an increase in library technician students and there appears to be a healthy demand for them. He felt that employers were realising that technicians have the essential library skills with the bonus of being cheaper to employ.

All program convenors reported work placements as a component of their librarianship or information management courses. Public libraries are involved but there are also many other organisations where students can gain work experience. Work placements are a good opportunity for students to be exposed to public libraries.

Student awareness and interest in public libraries appears to be relatively low, especially as other organisations' need for information managers increases. Also, program convenors reported students entering into information management degrees due to the focus on IT, with little awareness of the opportunities in libraries. A course convenor believes that students have mixed perceptions of what a librarian is and what their job involves:

> "Some people are quite realistic, they understand what a librarian's job is about and they want to meet people and are interested in books. There are other people who have an unrealistic expectation. There are quite a number who come with issues and think they'll have a quiet job to the back of a cupboard somewhere filing books. … This is a customer service job [where they are] working in teams [and] communicating".

Managers reported receiving no interest from advertisements that specifically requested that graduates apply. However there were few accounts of being unable to fill Band 5 positions. A manager of a country library commented that they have not had many opportunities to employ graduates; she does not know whether this is due to lack of interest, awareness or opportunity. The managers believe that graduates tend to be very selective about which public libraries they wish to work at. One manager reported receiving an overwhelming number of applications for a position while others are lucky to get a few. This demonstrates that labour supply varies significantly across libraries and, in response, different recruiting models may be required

Library managers and staff were generally positive about the contribution graduates can make to the workplace. Getting 'new blood' into the workplace is a positive aspect and graduates were often considered to be enthusiastic and willing to take on or develop new ideas. However, a library manager reported that she often had to push the branch librarians to be receptive to their graduate's new ideas and enthusiasm: "I think they are a bit threatened, especially you know when it's 50-something year old women". One manager had recognised the potential in a graduate so she advocated on his behalf so that he could take on special projects.

> "I think with the young graduates if we are going to attract them we also need to be training them and need to be developing them and we need to be encouraging them" (Library Manager).

Taking students on through work placements and part-time work was considered very effective in gaining the interest of potential graduates who could be employed on a full-time basis once qualified. A library manager believes that one way of overcoming the lack of awareness of public libraries among students may be to employ them on the weekends:

> "It would mean we have to spend a long time training them up so they can work on the desk. But it would also give them that exposure. And it's quite good money for a student to come out and work on the weekends" (Library Manager).

Another manager has a similar program already in place with another university. She employs students at a Band 4D level with the agreement that they move to a Band 5A once they graduate. Sometimes she has been unable to place them into full-time permanent employment but their next employers are very grateful for the training they have received. The advantage of taking on students part-time is that it is an opportunity to educate and train them in public libraries which supplements, but does not overlap with, what they are learning at university.

Library education

The education stakeholders in the research came from both universities and technical colleges. There are a variety of qualifications that a student can obtain to work in libraries. A diploma in library education qualifies a person for a library technician position. There are a variety of options for those wishing to be a qualified librarian. Historically, undergraduate students could enter into degrees in librarianship. However, undergraduate courses for qualified librarians now tend to be in information management more broadly and are accredited by ALIA (the following discussion provides an example). Post-graduates have the choice of a graduate diploma or masters degree in librarianship or information management.

Managers criticised current university courses for taking the focus away from libraries, and in particular public libraries. A program convenor described the transformation of a traditional librarianship degree into an information management and business degree. There was pressure from the University for the librarianship program to close and the places to be moved to another area. In the end it was agreed that the program would undergo 'renewal'. The convenor feels that the course was targeted because it was a small program:

> "Institutions are big places and small programs become prey to the politics and it's really hard to sustain small programs and small industries, I think, in the kind of dog-eat-dog conditions we have in education".

The program was transformed to a Bachelor of Information Knowledge management in an attempt to make it broader in its appeal, "we stopped talking about libraries to some extent". The change was in response to the recent trend of employment opportunities for librarians or 'information managers' growing and diversifying. The change is thought to have impacted on students' knowledge and awareness of public libraries. The convenor reported that there a few students who clearly want to work in public libraries and have taken up part-time positions in libraries. However, among a large majority of students there doesn't seem to be a high level of awareness of or interest in public libraries as an employment prospect. The convenor reported a successful strategy for engaging students has been for enthusiastic spokespeople from public libraries to talk to the students about employment opportunities.

One stakeholder thought it was very important to ensure that library courses around Australia remain diverse and based in different disciplines. She believes that information management is and should be approached as a multi-disciplinary area.

Although some library courses have been cancelled at other universities, the education stakeholders were positive about the future of their programs and either reported stable or increasing attendance. The Planning Workgroup raised the declining number of librarianship courses over the years as a potential issue. However, educational stakeholders did not mention an inability to meet demand for courses. The profile of students in information management and library courses are relatively older, i.e. a significant number are 45 and over; and they are mainly women. Among the students, particularly those in library technician courses, are mothers who are returning to the workforce. The job appeals to them because they have exposure to libraries through their children and consider the working conditions appropriate. A course convenor noted that the mean age of their students is 35 years, but the undergraduate courses tend to attract younger students. The fact that many of the librarianship courses are available through distance education appears to have prevented access issues. Distance education is popular among older, employed and regional students.

There was concern among library managers that university courses were not training students in line with what public libraries need. Most library managers who were involved in the research believed that the courses taught at university no longer mentioned public libraries which led to a lack of awareness of public libraries as a potential career among students. One manager said she found the state-wide training program (as detailed on p.19) useful in supplementing graduate's university education.

> "Because they're not doing anything about public libraries they don't understand the whole social construct around public libraries, and what our role is, and the community, and it's not just the information stuff it's the social capital side of it as well. So they don't learn any of it" (Library Manager).

The education stakeholders commented on the weak links they have with public libraries and, in particular, the lack of a clear message of what they want from their graduates, in terms of skills and qualities to develop. They were eager to build stronger links with libraries.

Recruiting and Attracting Staff

There were mixed experiences in recruiting and attracting public library staff among research participants. Some managers reported an abundance of applications for positions while others reported receiving very few applications, often of poor quality. There appeared to be an accepted view that attracting staff was more of an issue for libraries in particular areas, such as areas with a low socio-economic status. One library manager said that attracting staff was problematic because of the location of the library combined with the award wages that were being paid to staff. There were also more reports of difficulties filling vacancies at the higher levels (e.g. Bands 6 and 7). Managers reported that the quality of job applications were low, with many applications not addressing the selection criteria.

The inability to recruit in particular areas is demonstrated in the following exchange that occurred in the employee focus group; an employee who is currently acting in a branch manager position recounted the recent experience of her library trying to hire someone:

> "We have a management position at one of our branches that we are hiring at the moment. That's our largest branch and probably a very difficult branch to run. We actually had problems with not many people applying the first time. We had to reapply for another set period. I think the first time we had 5 applications" (Library employee #1).

> "Which Library was that?" (Library employee #2).

> "<Library name>" (Library employee #1).

> "Oh that's why I didn't apply for it! I was wondering why I didn't apply for it! That's why, <library name> yeah" (Library employee #2).

> "I worked at <library name> for a couple of years and now when I go back to it and do shifts there I'm thinking how did I deal with this? You sort of forget. Well <Council name> are the most multicultural council in Victoria and it is very difficult patronage wise" (Library employee #1).

Both staff and managers considered remuneration to be a significant barrier in being able to attract quality staff. Some staff felt that the remuneration did not adequately reflect the skills and tertiary qualifications required to be a librarian.

The nature of the job

In looking at how to attract future staff it is useful to examine what has attracted current librarians to the public libraries. Overall, the library employees that participated in the research were positive about the type of work they do. They enjoy the variety and helping people. However, some employees commented that the constant dealings with the public could sometimes become "too much". One employee specifically requested to job share her position because she knew that the customer demands on a full-time basis would be

overwhelming. There was a level of dissatisfaction with the working conditions—the pay levels and the opportunities to gain more responsibility and earn more.

> "I like the variety and the fact that in my job there is so much outreach into the community. Libraries just aren't a building anymore. There's so many other services that you are taking out to people who never came in before" (Library employee).

There were a range of experiences in terms of why the employees became librarians in the first place. One person wanted to leave another occupation and chose librarianship because she could study by distance, the working conditions are flexible, and the education could be covered by HECS. Employees were very positive about the flexible working conditions and this seemed to play an important role in some of their decisions to work or stay in public libraries.

Skill shortages

Library managers agreed that children's and youth services librarians are the most critical skill need. In looking toward the future, one stakeholder noted that, particularly in larger organisations, librarians will need diverse skills and that they shouldn't be expected to have the same skill sets. But it was felt that IT skills will probably need to underpin any librarian's skill set.

Customer service was considered to be an increasingly important skill for library staff. It was agreed that customer service is an essential aspect of being a librarian but particularly necessary for public librarians as they are dealing with the whole 'gamut' of society, and thus there needs to be a particular focus on this skill. One library manager was contracting a consultant to provide conflict resolution training due to the issues they were having with their customers.

One stakeholder argued that the focus in libraries was not on customer service, where it should be, and that there are many librarians who do not like working with people all the time. To address this she felt that:

> "We need to promote people from in customer service instead of people from administration, which is behind the scenes. We should be promoting people who are out the front. So our most expensive people should be out the front not our cheapest. So that's a huge change".

A stakeholder from an education institution believes that all library managers (not just public libraries) are not fully aware of the potential skills shortages in the next 10 years. She predicts that there will be high competition among employers for skilled labour, and they will be competing in terms of remuneration, image and career prospects. It was also raised that the people teaching students librarianship are also suffering from critical shortages. One stakeholder said that the number of tertiary educators in information management had dropped 50 per cent in the last ten years and there is no evidence of people entering the profession. It was argued that there is little incentive to become a lecturer in the area, particularly when often a PhD qualification is required. Several education stakeholders noted how Government policy is impacting on niche courses such

as information management, "all the higher education reforms are impacting dramatically on niche areas of education. … Libraries are a minority area still".

Stakeholders considered that recruiting staff with qualifications and experience may have to be rethought in the future. For example, one manager considered that in response to the shortage of children's and youth services librarians they may have to consider hiring a person with "some sort of degree in children's services or youth services and then skill them up in terms of librarianship skills. It's really heading that way". However, library managers generally believed that recruitment based on personality and not skills can only occur for staff at lower levels such as front line staff. "Then the next level up it's personality as well but you need the qualification".

Recruiting library staff based on personal attributes and not on qualifications may also be a way of addressing the lack of diversity in the Victorian public library workforce. The fact that the workforce consists primarily of middle-aged, female and middle-class women was considered to be an issue in servicing the broader community.

> "Maybe we choose the right person and then try to entice them into getting a qualification. Maybe we need to look at having apprenticeship style arrangements with staff. They're all the issues I think we are faced with".

The suggestion of apprenticeships was raised on several occasions throughout the research. Librarianship is considered to be like a trade in that a lot of on-the-job training is essential. There were reports of many students undertaking their librarianship studies while working part-time at the library—similar to a formal apprenticeship program.

The attributes managers and stakeholders said they wanted in library staff included:
- intelligent and energetic;
- good customer service and communication skills;
- the ability to think laterally and strategically;
- respect the role of the library in the community and to maintain relationships in the community, i.e. community involvement; and
- ability to swiftly adapt to new technologies and to translate these to the community.

Image
Most research participants believed that public libraries suffer from an image problem which, in part, was contributing to an inability to recruit quality people to public libraries. Managers and stakeholders felt that the need for dynamic and energetic staff who are willing to take on leadership roles is not being met due to the perception that librarians take on a more reclusive role.

> "It's not very prestigious to work in public libraries. And it wasn't when I went through [uni] and that was nearly 30 years ago" (Library Manager).

One library manager felt that salaries weren't the problem but rather the image of public libraries, as academic libraries have similar salaries and she understood them to have fewer problems recruiting. Upon further exploration it was discovered that there is a more expansive career path for academic librarians with the opportunity to earn higher salaries.

On the other hand, a library employee argued that the issues of image and salaries were related:

> "I don't think we get paid enough. In comparison to some other professions I don't think our profession is regarded as a profession that much really. … I know that ALIA has been trying to lift the image of the profession but I think you're up against so many years of the stereotype that even now with the internet and everything we do in libraries – we're still books and magazines and telling children stories" (Library employee).

There appears to be a lack of awareness in the general community that qualifications are needed to become a librarian. Managers reported members of the public wanting to apply for a librarian position because they like reading books. A stakeholder argued this is because libraries present a 'seamless' service that is fronted by the library assistant at the front desk, so very few people understand what librarians do behind the scenes.

> "That's one of our issues though, that the whole profession of librarianship somehow lacks some credibility" (Library manager).

Retaining and Developing Staff

Retention was generally not considered an issue for public libraries. Attracting staff was considered to be difficult, but once staff have been successfully recruited it is usually for a long period. In fact, managers were more likely to report retaining staff in the same position for too long as an issue. If a person stays in the same job for 10 or 15 years it is likely that they have been performing the job in the same way for all that time. This is also a consequence of the ageing population in that ageing managers and co-ordinators are staying in their jobs for long periods until they retire. Retaining staff for too long in the same position may create a stagnate workplace and if they leave when they retire there will be significant gaps to fill.

> "They've got the skills and knowledge but quite often they are still stuck in the 80s pre-amalgamation or they like things the way they were. They can see what's going on around them but they're in their own comfort zone and it scares the hell out of them to step outside that" (Library Manager).

Whilst it was acknowledged that problems with stagnation could be overcome with adequate training opportunities, not all staff are amenable to ongoing skill development.

> "That's definitely true for some but there are also on the other hand, some staff that as long as you've got say, a good training program and things like that to motivate and enthuse staff, that you can actually bring them along. But yeah I agree we've got some who will never be brought along but there's also those who have been there for over 20 years who are fantastic" (Library Manager).

It was agreed that a certain amount of turnover is good for the workplace. Managers discussed strategies they use in dealing with long term staff who remain in the same positions. They considered staff stagnancy to be an issue because it can breed complacency, prevent new ideas and better work practices being developed, and block opportunities for other staff who wish to rotate to different positions within the library.

It was commented by a library manager that the culture within public libraries had changed significantly in the last 10 years or so, and in response she was in the process of producing a staff development program. She felt that previously staff were not allowed to make decisions but now there is much greater autonomy and staff are expected to make such decisions confidently. Not only has the work environment changed but the types of work public librarians do have also changed. Some employees said they enjoyed the research aspect of the job, while the managers observed that research isn't required as much anymore. Generally, customers either have good information literacy skills and know how to conduct internet searches, or they have poor literacy skills and require language teaching. One manager noted:

> "The librarians say to me 'I just feel like a retailer'. I say well actually that's what you are now, you are now essentially a marketer because we've got one of the lowest index and deferred reference enquiry rate across the states" (Library Manager).

A library manager of several western suburbs branches reported high turnover in one particular branch. She did not understand what was leading to the high turnover as a branch in a similar area had low turnover. She reported some staffing issues and staff leaving for positions both inside and outside the library network. The exit interviews revealed the two main reasons of personality clashes among staff and the problems with the community. This example appears to illustrate the importance of staff support and coherence in being able to deal with issues relating to the 'tough' customer base.

Training

The Library Board of Victoria has $1.3m for special Development Projects. From 1997 to 2005 the State-wide Training Project was in place. This program allocated $300,000 per year to provide subsidised training to public library staff across Victoria. The training focussed on leadership and development of the network. The training was not intended to be on-going but rather act as an impetus for public libraries to develop and sustain their own training program. Public libraries have been given a small amount of further funding to cover administration costs of the current program for this financial year only. Therefore, state-wide training is now offered on a user pay basis. Many courses that have been offered have been cancelled due to lack of interest which is thought to be due to cost.

Library managers and staff spoke very positively about the State-wide Training Program. The aspects that were seen very beneficial were:
- the ability to meet and network with people from other libraries – it is valuable to hear of other experiences as well as of opportunities in other libraries;
- the training topics which were tailored to public library staff specifically; and
- the cost – subsidised training enabled them to participate in training that is otherwise considered to be unaffordable.

Some Council libraries are able to take advantage of training provided by their council which covers topics such as OH&S, customer service and leadership. Computer based training is also provided at some libraries. But employees said it was expected that this training be completed in their own time.

The cost and availability of training is more of an issue for country libraries where they normally have to travel to the city to receive training and therefore face more costs for accommodation and travel. It is also not economically efficient to hold tailored training in country areas as staff numbers do no warrant it. Country libraries often work as part of corporation libraries and therefore do not have access to council training. Larger libraries are able to keep training costs down by sending a few staff members on a training course and then requiring them to come back and train the remaining staff members. This also provides an excellent development opportunity for those who are sent on the training. One manager was looking into the prospect of sending these same staff members to country libraries to also conduct the training there. She commented that they need to support one another because the infrastructure is not sufficient.

> "Technology is a big thing – it's keeping up to date. We're fortunate we've got a training room so we can send a couple of information staff to a training session and then they come and train the other staff" (Library Manager).

Library managers predicted that training will become more of an issue in the future as skill needs are unlikely to be met. In terms of the specific training needs, technology is thought to be the most critical; customer service is an ongoing training need; and management and supervision training is needed for the higher levels of Band 5 and above. The middle managers course which was originally part of State-wide training program was considered very useful and something that should be available on a more on-going basis.

Continuous training was considered important and managers were unsure how they could support continuous library-specific training for their staff from their budgets. Managers said they now tend to look for more informal training opportunities. For example, if there is a vacancy (due to sick leave or maternity leave) managers will use this to move someone who has potential into the position. These types of opportunities are sometimes identified in performance reviews.

Although budgets were tight, employees felt fairly comfortable that if there was training that they wanted to go to that was relevant to their role and reasonably priced then they would be able to attend. One library employee wanted training in cataloguing but there were no courses available through the Statewide Training project:

> "There seems to be a lot of training on presentation and marketing and all that sort of stuff. Some of us aren't interested in that. … I'd like to see more encouragement of people going back to uni doing masters and actually being helped to do that. I don't think that's encouraged enough. Particularly in business, like before I said I wasn't really interested in budgets but it's because I haven't really thought of going off and doing accounting. But it's sort of geared to what you are already doing or in management or something like that. I think if you want to get to management level it would be nice to do some study before you actually got there instead of falling upwards and kind of hoping you can do it" (Library employee).

Other employees employed in Council libraries reported good study leave policies in their workplaces. It is unclear whether such policies improve the recruitment or retention of staff, but it could be explored by further quantitative research.

Developing staff

Managers reported that staff are generally open to being developed and employees reported a willingness to learn new things. However, there were perceived to be very limited opportunities for development due to the lack of staff movement between positions. The lack of development opportunities is a particular issue in an environment where there is also pressure to gain new skills and experience, especially in the changing IT environment.

It was generally believed that there are opportunities for staff development and reward that could be exploited further such as increasing autonomy, providing grants, new projects, committee work, cross-departmental initiatives and opportunities for innovation. Staff development opportunities tended to be within the library rather than across libraries state-wide. One library has a compulsory Band 6 rotation program where every 2 or 3

years the Band 6 staff member has to move into a different position. Another library has a policy where Band 5 staff have to move to a different branch on a yearly basis.

Formal secondment or mentoring policies currently do not exist for Victorian public libraries. There were a few reports of secondments occurring between libraries. Secondments were usually one-off opportunities used to fill a vacancy that did not need, or was unable, to be filled on a permanent basis. One library manager had a problem with the union in that they were telling staff that if they go on a secondment they should be getting extra money for petrol.

A stakeholder gave the example of a secondment program that occurs in another Australian city between university libraries, the State Library and the city council library. The secondments of 6 or 12 months were reported to be very beneficial because, "it kicks people out of their general comfort zone and they see how these other organisations work. … [It has] very positive outcomes down the line because they are learning to work in different ways".

Employees were positive about more secondment and mentoring opportunities being available. The employees said they would like the opportunity to work at the State Library for several months. However, one employee recounted weighing up the possibility of moving to another library to gain more experience but he already feels that he is not paid enough and therefore did not think the extra travel time and petrol costs would be worth it. One stakeholder questioned the motivation for staff to take on development opportunities when there are a lack of direct rewards in doing so:

> "Where we talk about skills – there is a pretty widespread feeling that what's the point of doing continuing professional development because they don't get recognised. There's no differentiation between the proactive people who go out and gain new skills and those who just plod do what they've done for the last 30 years. They are paid the same basically" (Stakeholder).

Career Paths

There was agreement among managers and staff that there was a career path in the public library system, albeit some considered it a relatively short path. However, managers had mixed opinions about whether staff could move along this path at an acceptable pace. Among the small group of staff there was agreement that a bottleneck existed above Band 5. One employee commented that the branch managers seemed to "have been cemented in for the past 10 years". It was argued that this bottleneck is partly the result of women no longer leaving the workforce completely to have children. The following quotes illustrate the perspectives of library employees and stakeholders:

> "It's not a particularly huge industry. If you come in as a Band 5 there's some 6s, a few 7s and then you are a manager. Well in a very small industry that's not a huge career path in my mind" (Library Manager).

> "I am a team leader. There's three co-ordinator positions above me and then the manager. So there's only four people above me and they're in it for their career – where do I move to? … I am keen to move up and I'd be happy to stay [in the

library]. I like where I am but it may come down to if I want to progress either work-wise or financially, where can I go? It might not be that I can keep going up and I might have to move out of libraries" (Library employee).

"There's many people out there who are qualified or want to get into it or want to move from somewhere else but everyone is just pushing against each other for position" (Library employee).

"We're a hierarchical organisation. So I think it's difficult for people to move within the organisation. The baby boomers are staying there or you know it's clogged up with people who won't leave. I think that for individuals within the organisation they might find it frustrating. … I think that there's not enough communication – as an individual you don't know what is happening in the big wide world of the public library network. I think managers are not communicating well to their staff" (Stakeholder).

An employee gave the example of two young colleagues she works with who have been working for libraries since they were students, who are at Band 5 and are unlikely to progress until someone "leaves, dies, or retires":

"There needs to be some sort of training or variety to keep them interested and where they are otherwise, they are young and dynamic, they are just going to go off and do something else because they want more money for what they are doing".

Due to the scarcity of higher level positions in some libraries, librarians have to be prepared to relocate to attain career opportunities. It appears that most librarians live in the same area as their work, and are unwilling to move for their career. This limits the number of opportunities open to country staff, in particular, if they are unable to relocate. It was argued by a few managers that employees had to broaden their scope beyond public libraries if they wanted to progress their career.

The way libraries are structured organisationally appears to promote stagnancy. Within the organisation this occurs due to the limited number of positions on the career ladder and the number of increments to progress along within the Bands. There is also stagnancy across libraries, as some libraries service large geographical areas so that if a librarian wants to take up an opportunity at another public library they have to travel long distances.

It was generally agreed that it would be more rewarding for staff and would enhance development opportunities if new middle management positions were created to bridge the gap between managers and librarians. In larger libraries there are slightly more opportunities such as team coordinators, branch managers or development coordinators. An employee described the situation and the need for a response in the following way:

"You've got librarians who all get to a certain banding and then it stops. And then you've got to wait ten to fifteen years before you can move up again. There has to be something done in the middle there. Now whether that is a change in variety or the ability to take some sort of management or whether it's looking at the sort of

roles that we have in libraries and changing them, splitting them up, doing something because that's where people are getting frustrated. And because of the way the world works we can leave and we can take a new career. That's not an unusual thing and as librarians we certainly have lots of skills that can be applied to any other sort of job. So if they don't want to lose people at that point then there needs to be something done".

One employee said that library management were considering a 'plus' level to be added to each band that would be for staff members who took on a project in addition to their other responsibilities. However, he did not think this would be implemented due to budget concerns.

Developing managers and leaders

According to one stakeholder, inspirational leaders are "people at the top who are wanting to take their organisation to places they haven't yet been and inspire their workforce to want to travel that journey with them".

Many managers discussed strategies they have for identifying and developing potential leaders among their staff. They described potential leaders as someone who has energy and enthusiasm. Exposing potential leaders to new opportunities and experiences at work was considered the best way of informally developing them, such as taking them to specialty meetings so they can network, and giving them special projects and temporary positions when staff members are on leave. It was generally felt that there are untapped opportunities within public libraries to create leadership positions at the Band 5 to Band 7 level.

Some library managers commented that although staff were interested in being developed, many did not want to progress to the managerial ranks, "I think they see a lot of the hassles". They admitted that their role as managers is very different to being a librarian, "we are not librarians as such anymore. [The staff] see that and think 'oh I don't want to be fighting with the board'. That's not what they want to do". A library manager recounted a staff member who had acted in a managerial position and afterwards said,

> " 'I don't want to do it. I don't want to do those reports. I don't want to do the budget. I just want to do what I want to do'. And she's absolutely fantastic and she has been in that role for 20 odd years. She's always evolving and developing so I don't have any issues but she's not at all interested. They went into libraries because of that and don't want to do the rest".

This view was verified by library employees. They felt that being a librarian and being a library manager were two very different jobs that required different skills. The participants believed they were skilled librarians but did not feel they had the right experience or qualifications to manage a library, in particular, to manage budgets, write reports, and liaise and negotiate with councils or boards. There was a perception that it was a large leap between being a librarian and being a manager, and no stepping stones between the positions were provided. One library employee described some of the unappealing aspects of being a library manager:

"Dealing with staff. Dealing with the rosters. And budgets – that's a side of it. I didn't go through business I did an Arts degree. I'm not that way inclined I suppose".

Further, some sections of the workforce are librarians because of the nature of work and the flexibility, something that is not perceived to be present at the manager level. As one stakeholder put it:

"We employ a lot of middle aged women – I'm one of those. But they are, you know, they've got families and they like the hours and it is not a hugely stressful job. You know it suits certain types of personalities who are quite happy to come to work and go home and not pursue the career path".

Therefore, the librarians felt it was a significant decision to go into management ranks and some did not feel inclined to take these steps but felt that further professional development and experience should be rewarded somehow. The employees felt that there needed to be ways of recognising and rewarding librarians especially as there are not many opportunities to progress within their library and because the classification structure is relatively limited. As one librarian pointed out "I'm at the top of my band now and I've been a librarian for 5 years".

Leadership opportunities really depend on whether the manager works to provide them and makes them available to staff. Developing and nurturing leaders is a responsibility that rests primarily with managers because leadership and management are not taught in the usual library university courses:

"It is a matter of gaining the confidence that you do have those abilities. If you do a beginning qualification in librarianship, it's not going to give you leadership. … You're not getting that hands-on skill development. So I guess it comes back on to the employer – how do they nurture leaders?" (Stakeholder).

One public library stakeholder is concerned that there aren't good management skills among the current managers. She hears managers complain about staff and what they are or aren't doing but she believes the problem is that the managers keep allowing staff to continue with the behaviour:

"They're not managing that person in a proactive way to stop them behaving in this manner. So they just complain about. It worries me that they aren't using their management skills to deal with that. … I just don't think my colleagues know how to deal with it".

She argues that part of the problem is that managers are promoted to their position because they are good librarians or have been there for a long time, not because of their people management skills.

Succession Planning

Policy-makers and higher level stakeholders within the Victorian public library system are attuned to the concept of succession planning and believe there is a need for it. There is general awareness of what succession planning is among library managers and some reported implementing it on a very informal or ad hoc basis. Awareness of succession planning among employees is limited. They had heard about it through their managers or other channels but not in any great detail. The following are some quotes that illustrate the research participants' understanding of succession planning:

> "[Succession planning is] having a vision for the future and knowing where the board and your supervisors see the future of your organisation, where you would like your staff to be and that they are customer focussed, and that we do work together and work towards the overall plan to build and grow" (Library Manager).

> "It's planning for the future so there is someone to replace us" (Library Manager).

> "As a manager, you have to make sure your business won't fall to bits as people retire" (Stakeholder).

> "I understand that we need to look at who is coming up and give them the skills to ensure that they'll be able to take up the positions of those who leave" (Stakeholder).

> "[It's about] corporate knowledge and loss of corporate knowledge" (Library employee).

Succession planning involves assessing future requirements and demands of the public library service and workforce; understanding what skills will be required; knowing what current resources are available and the current gaps in needs; and projecting future skill and resource gaps and how they can be filled. Due to the challenges discussed previously such as attracting young staff and the tendency for older and long-term staff to remain in the same positions, library managers saw the need for succession planning.

Research participants were asked to comment on what they considered to be the important elements of succession planning. Documentation was considered key in retaining corporate knowledge, that is, documenting processes, procedures, plans and strategic directions. It was noted by a stakeholder that succession planning needs to be consultative as one objective of succession planning is to create an engaging workplace. He argued that succession planning needs to establish "what people need, what they can contribute and what you're doing flexibly to accommodate that. It's got to work for the organisation but it also has to work for the workforce".

Stakeholders and managers had differing opinions about how to approach the development of staff. Some believed that 'talent' should be identified and targeted for special development initiatives, while others argued that it should not be a process of singling out staff members. The disadvantages of singling out certain people for

development are that it can lead to low motivation of the remaining workers and be a risky investment if the singled out staff decide to leave the organisation. Some people suggested a more inclusive approach of creating talent pools of interested and involved staff using shadowing, rotation and project work:

> "So it's about how do you nurture the right people without injuring those who are not going to go that route" (Stakeholder).

Managers have generally not undertaken succession planning in a formalised way but they could nominate several informal activities that they are undertaking that contribute to the development of their workforce for the future such as employing and developing graduates; giving staff opportunities to act in positions; encouraging staff to attain the appropriate qualifications; and low-key staff mentoring. One stakeholder argued that succession planning was happening in a very ad-hoc way, that is, when a manager saw an opportunity or when they felt they had time to do it. One manager commented that she now saw the need as staff members had been taking extended periods of leave. In response she has been building up small teams of staff that could cover for each other.

Smaller libraries have the advantage in that they have to be multi-skilled to fulfil most roles in the library. It was acknowledged different approaches will be required for small and large libraries, and that smaller libraries may face more challenges due to limited staff and resources. Larger libraries have more scope to plan and further develop the workforce and smaller libraries would benefit from building partnerships with these libraries.

There was support among employees and managers for mentoring across library organisations, with the aim of developing staff as well as information-sharing. They felt this would be useful,

> "…particularly in sharing ideas and keeping the communication between rural and metropolitan libraries as well. I think we have a lot to offer each other so you could possibly set up mentoring programs within organisations as well particularly for someone looking in to going into management" (Library employee).

An employee suggested that new staff be given a 'training buddy' whom they could go to for help whenever an issue arises. Another employee felt that there needed to a more flexible approach to librarian's work with opportunities to move around the organisation, do different things, learn and train more.

> "It's kind of encouraged that we all have at least one other person that knows how to do your job. It does enable people to swap and change a bit and that is encouraged and I think it stops us from getting too set in our ways" (Library employee).

A more formal way of implementing succession planning is to incorporate it into performance appraisals that occur every six months. A few managers reported doing this.

Managers and some stakeholders argued that there needs to be recognition that there is both financial cost and effort that goes into workforce planning and management. One

manager commented that they are too busy addressing current issues such as decreases in circulation and attendance, to be able to plan for the future. It is only once issues like this have been dealt with that they can start implementing a vision for the future. The barriers to succession planning that managers spoke of were generally the day-to-day operations they were facing in running their libraries, rather than anything specific. Barriers to succession planning that were mentioned included funding, the lack of a clearly communicated organisational direction, internal relationships, a stagnant workforce and a lack of time. A stakeholder considered a barrier in succession planning to be a lack of awareness of what it is and how to carry it out:

> "I think we need training in how to do it more effectively to benefit the organisation and the individual" (Stakeholder).

A vision for public libraries

To be able to effectively plan for a future Victorian public library workforce requires a strategic plan of the services that Victorian public libraries will be delivering and how this will be done. This is an important and evolving aspect due to the continual advances of technology and information provision on the internet. Thus from a higher policy level, succession planning for libraries will be very complex. As one stakeholder noted, a significant hurdle is "the need to plan and think through all the issues because there are just so many variables in it". Stakeholders noted that the barriers to successful succession planning are the ability to think strategically, a lack of time, recognition of the need for planning among all stakeholders, a dearth of proactive responses, and limited Human Resources planning. Stakeholders agreed that a 'vision' was an important element of effective succession planning. The following outlines some of these visions.

> "[Libraries] are going to go more electronic. It's going to have more special databases. People are going to access them from more wireless remote and mobile work stations. … So there's going to be another layer or different layers of technology than what they actually do. That's fairly clear that's going to happen. There's another strand where I don't know what's going to happen here. Libraries collate, systematise and validate knowledge. That is still very necessary in the academic process. But it's not really clear how the internet and the publicly available search databases – how they are going to interact with libraries" (Stakeholder).

One stakeholder conceded that the vision she has for public library staff is quite demanding. It involves:
- excellent customer service;
- high level of professional data communication skills that are appropriate for the local community;
- staff who are enthusiastic about the role of libraries in the community;
- energy;
- openness to new ideas;
- a capacity to be multi-skilled;
- team work; and
- good social justice principals – access and equity; empathy with people from a range of backgrounds.

It was argued that the key facilitator of this vision is library management:

> "I think we should have vibrant, active, excited people who are enthusiastic about the opportunity of what we can be doing with our customers, with our councils, with our stakeholders, with our community organisations. You know, constantly looking at what we are doing and how we can do it better. Constantly wanting to improve the services we offer instead of being introspective, reflective, being out there and even wild ideas and different ways of doing things and experimenting with those. That's what I would like to see. Passion" (Stakeholder).

In considering the future of public libraries, stakeholders mentioned the positive aspects of undertaking succession plans. For example, it presents an opportunity to rethink libraries and the way things have been done in the past. Several stakeholders mentioned that libraries have an advantage when it comes to succession planning as managing and sharing information, technology, and strong communication networks are already a part of their job. The challenges that libraries face were also seen as opportunities for libraries to become more proactive and more relevant to society's increasing technological needs. It is also an opportunity to begin building sustainable partnerships with other organisations and with the broader community.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The aim of the research was to identify the scope of the issues that need to be addressed if a more sustainable Victorian public library workforce is to be developed. The research has identified the key issues and the following discusses some recommendations for steps forward as well as areas for further research.

Building better networks

A key facilitator in meeting the future challenges of providing public library services in Victoria will be the development of strong and strategic partnerships both within and beyond the Victorian public library system. Partnerships are vital for information-sharing and working together to do things more efficiently. There is potential for Victorian public libraries to build stronger partnerships with:

- each other;
- education institutions and the education department;
- other industries facing similar issues such as teachers and community services; and
- interest groups – a stakeholder gave the example of libraries developing a history portal in collaboration with the genealogy society.

Stronger networks between public libraries across the state could facilitate more formal mentoring programs, secondments, training programs, upgrading of IT and other library systems, and general knowledge sharing. Succession planning will be more effective if it is approached on a state-wide level rather than each library individually. Approaching issues cooperatively rather than on an individual basis will enable the pooling of knowledge and resources. Partnerships across public libraries may be assisted by having a central body to facilitate networks and linkages. Such a body could achieve this by administering mentoring, secondment and training programs, as well as developing and overseeing succession planning strategies.

Defining the role of public libraries

There is a need for a clear future direction for Victorian public libraries to be communicated effectively to the entire workforce. Groups of higher level stakeholders have begun to examine the future direction of public libraries in Victoria. Public libraries will need to clearly define the size, shape and model of service delivery. A clear direction can form the basis of succession planning so that library managers and the workforce can start working towards it.

Managers' and employees' understanding of succession planning was limited in that it was perceived to be about the ability to replace current staff and skills. In fact, a key to succession planning is to anticipate future skill needs, especially in an evolving environment such as public libraries.

The role of managers in workplace change

Library managers are directly responsible for the future planning of their libraries, in terms of the services they deliver, the funding that is obtained from local government and the development of their workforce. Many of the changes that need to occur to ensure

workforce sustainability as well as sustainability of public libraries more generally will need to be instigated by library managers with direction from higher level policy-makers and stakeholders. One public library stakeholder argued that the workforce is reactive rather than proactive, and that library managers are primarily responsible for this approach.

> "We tend to react to the situation around us and [we are] not trying to think about or anticipate the wants and needs of our community. We tend to wait for them to tell us. And then they tell us out of frustration" (Stakeholder).

To change this approach to servicing the community, a cultural shift will need to occur. There was also a sense that a key in the future direction of libraries will greatly depend on current library leaders to advocate the importance of libraries in communities as well as enact a vision that takes account of our increasingly technological society.

Attracting and developing the right people

Victorian public libraries face a variety of challenges in recruiting and developing a workforce that is suitable for its needs. There are steps that can be taken in the immediate future, while other needed changes will require more consideration, consultation and planning.

Developing and promoting formal mentoring and secondment policies is a strategy that could be implemented in the immediate future. Such policies would assist with staff development, which is limited due to immobile staff. In addition, it would assist with establishing stronger networks and partnerships among public libraries within Victoria—an issue previously mentioned. Employees and managers responded positively toward the suggestion of mentoring and secondment systems. Secondments are currently occurring on an informal basis but if guidelines and procedures were developed that clarified issues such as remuneration and returning to previous employment, it is likely that more opportunities would occur. It would also be beneficial to have a centralised mentoring and secondment database where opportunities could be identified and sought.

Similarly, the practice of employing students part-time with the possibility they are hired on a full-time basis once qualified is a successful strategy that is not currently used by all libraries. Information about effective strategies such as this one need to be shared more widely among all public library managers in Victoria.

There appeared to be some hesitation among several managers in recruiting information management graduates into Band 5 positions, particularly when they had no experience in public libraries. Some managers reported doing so with positive results. There was also concern among current librarians that they lack the business skills to be managers. However, the Bachelor of Business and Information Technology at RMIT seems appropriate to library manager positions as it combines business with information management. There may be opportunities here to take these graduates and carefully accelerate them through the public library system.

Recruiting unqualified people with the right attributes and then training them is a strategy that needs more consideration and discussion among public library managers and

stakeholders. Managers appeared to be somewhat closed to this idea thus guidelines on how to go about such a practice, as well as the potential benefits, may be required. The approach to recruitment and the focus on particular skills and experience may also need to be reconsidered. At the lower levels there is an increasing focus on customer service and dealing with people from a variety of backgrounds. Selection criteria could be more oriented towards these skills, with applicants required to have customer service experience such as in retail or hospitality.

It appears that some librarians have been promoted to management positions without the adequate training. A few library managers seemed beleaguered by the demands of managing libraries, but more specifically dealing with Councils or Library Boards. Libraries would benefit from managers receiving more assistance or training with management responsibilities such as advocating for their library, presenting a business case and arguing for the community need and benefit, as well as negotiation skills.

There is a clear need for a state-wide co-ordinated and subsidised training program that provides training specific to public libraries. In current budgetary conditions, managers involved in the research felt that they would not be able to provide for all future research needs.

Another strategy that would require more planning and funding is a graduate program. Such programs are popular in other State and Government Departments. Library managers reported that there is a Victorian Local Government Graduate Program called GOGRAD that is not used by public libraries due to the restrictive cost. A public library graduate program could involve rotations to different libraries ending in a permanent placement in a library (this could be in a library that is having trouble recruiting), providing both on-the-job and supplementary training. A graduate program could be an effective way of recruiting graduates with non-library qualifications and selecting individuals to be accelerated into leadership positions. However, a graduate program would require funding and resources for general administration, processing applications and selecting graduates, and providing supplementary training for graduates.

The structure of library staff has not altered in many years despite the fact that the public library service has changed and continues to change significantly. Services need to be provided for those with poor literacy but those who have literacy skills are likely to also have high levels of information and computer literacy. Additionally, stakeholders and managers argued that there was less of need for traditional librarian tasks such as cataloguing. It appears that the library service has become more focussed on customer service. To reflect this change of focus and enable the delivery of a more appropriate service, workplace structures and classifications could be reconsidered. Strategies to consider could be a reduction in the focus on qualifications and increase in the focus on customer service skills, higher remuneration for customer service positions, more customer service training, focussing on customer service skills when recruiting new staff, and broad-banding and extending current classifications. There was a strong perception that the development of more middle management positions would provide a better career path and therefore limit the extent to which experienced librarians are leaving public libraries for different careers. Again, an essential aspect of this process would be to define

what libraries will look like in the future and what the subsequent staff needs will be; rather than trying to fit the future vision in with the current structures.

Flexible work arrangements are a practice that currently exists in the Victorian public library system that appears to be attracting staff. However, no-one within the Victorian public library system mentioned this as a succession planning strategy. Some employees said that the option of flexible working arrangements is an aspect that attracted them to public libraries. While one library manager said she was burdened by the number of her staff that were taking maternity leave, flexible work arrangements can create needed opportunities for staff to rotate or for secondments for staff from other libraries. Continuing to provide flexible work arrangements and conditions such as maternity leave will ensure that libraries will continue to attract people to the profession and to public libraries. Part-time work is popular among retirees and it is a way of maintaining corporate memory. One employee said that job-sharing was not encouraged at his workplace because it was seen to be too difficult to manage. However, addressing work arrangements flexibly and creatively can also provide further development opportunities for staff.

The role of funding

It was argued by library managers that they are limited in what they can do in developing the workforce and leadership positions, and planning for the future due to budget constraints and restrictions imposed by their councils and boards. It was the view of a few stakeholders that the role of library management is to continually advocate the worth of libraries and prove to councils and boards the contribution they make by using performance indicators and other documentation. There appears to be a lack of understanding among some parts of library management about how to argue for more funding and a higher priority, and what strategies work. One stakeholder interviewed revealed several successful strategies that have led to a 60 per cent increase in funding in 3 years. Thus, more information sharing among managers about effective strategies and what is required in the management role is needed. This could assist managers to secure additional funds that could be put towards staff training and development. One stakeholder described the current situation in the following way:

> "Money is changeable and depending on how good you are and how you communicate with the funders [sic] you can change that. And this highlights the passiveness of the library community. That they are saying 'I can't do that because my funders [sic] won't let me or I won't be able to get funding for that'. How have they tried? … You talk to the board and you tell them what's going on and you involve them in what's happening and you don't hide anything from them and you instil confidence and you show them change and you show them that when you do make a change what the benefit is. I did a major change program in the first 12 months and the loans increased by 70,000. You know, there's an immediate response to that. So they can see some value out of that. You've got to constantly keep giving them the message. … You remind them the intention of what you are trying to achieve" (Stakeholder).

One stakeholder also argued that funding was not the key to effective workforce planning:

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"Yeah funding is an issue to us, give us a bigger piece of the pie but are we going to solve all the problems we talked about? No. We are still going to have passive people, managers who can't manage effectively, people employing the wrong people and people saying we still don't have enough money. I don't see funding as the issue. I see people as the issue. I see us as managers we are at fault and we need to change" (Stakeholder).

Further research and next steps

To be able to plan for the future workforce, expectations of the workforce and the type of services they will be delivering needs to be established. Public libraries are facing a great deal of change both technologically and in terms of their role in an increasingly diverse community. In developing effective succession plans, these aspects need to be clearly defined:

- Future role of public libraries – in terms of the services they aim to deliver and how these will be delivered.
- Future needs of local community – in terms of the services expected to be demanded in the future and what is currently being demanded.
- Current skill profile of the workforce, projected skill profile of the workforce and future skill needs – this will enable an assessment of likely skill gaps in the future. To be able to determine future skill needs the previous two points need to be established

For the first two aspects, research could assist to understand what the workforce believes the future of libraries will be and also to gather their understanding of what their clients will demand in the future, but it will also require a strong vision from public library leaders and policy-makers.

Thorough quantitative research could establish the last point. Also, understanding current skill needs would be a useful tool in succession planning. Future skill needs could be determined by asking managers their predictions, or more accurately, model future gaps by examining the current workforce in terms of age, predicted retirement/workforce exit age, current skills, mobility, etc. This would involve a skill profile of the workforce that outlines skills and specialities, and training that is currently occurring. Skill shortages have arisen in education institutions and the public library system because, to date, workforce planning does not occur and there are no processes for identifying skill shortages. Workforce planning would benefit from a systematic way of tracking on-going vacancies and skill shortages, or conducting a one-off audit of on-going vacancies and advertised jobs more generally.

A survey of the public library workforce could examine in greater detail the recruitment and development issues raised by this research, as well as responses to possible succession planning strategies. For example, a survey could provide representative data on:

- Employees who want training and development:
    - o Who they are – demographics, classification, and location.
    - o Training and development opportunities sought.
    - o Reasons for seeking training and development (i.e. not feeling challenged, want to progress further within public libraries, want to progress further outside of public libraries).

- Staff's perceptions of and attitudes toward a career path and leadership positions in public libraries:
  - Who wants to progress and who doesn't – demographics, classification, and location.
  - The type of opportunities wanted and perceived constraints.
  - Likely impacts of not having a career path or leadership opportunities.
- Managers' perceptions of using the apprenticeship model for libraries, recruiting staff with no qualifications, recruiting staff with non-library qualifications, establishing a cadetship program with universities and TAFEs, and establishing a graduate program.
- Staff working conditions and whether these impact on turnover and job satisfaction. For example, are council study leave provisions in particular libraries associated with greater satisfaction or higher retention levels?
- Opportunities for secondments and mentoring, exploring:
  - Managers' and employees' willingness to be involved in such opportunities.
  - Predicted opportunities created by maternity and other leave being taken.
- Managers' perceptions of what will enable them to implement succession planning.

This information could also be examined in relation to the occupational structures and working conditions that exist within each library. It was clear from the focus groups that the various levels of library staff were classified differently and also had varying salaries. The survey could examine how working conditions differ between libraries and whether this is related to particular recruitment or retention issues.

The research has identified three areas where attracting staff is difficult:
- new graduates;
- libraries in particular areas (thought to be low socio-economic status); and
- senior managers.

A survey could examine whether libraries have issues in recruiting particular groups and whether this can be associated with factors such as location or working conditions.

The employee focus group unintentionally had participants from the Band 5 and Band 6 level[3]. Therefore, the views of Band 4 Library Technicians were not examined in this research. Customer service staff were out of scope of the research brief. It may be useful to consider the perspectives of customer service staff in future research particularly if in the future customer service is to become more of a focus of library services. And in doing so, one possibility is to focus on the development and advancement of these staff.

Now that the key issues related to recruitment, retention and development of the Victorian Library Workforce have been highlighted, a more extensive literature review focussed on these specific issues would be beneficial. A more extensive literature review could explore other industries' approaches to recruitment and retention issues. For example, nurses and teachers are faced with similar issues and would make useful comparisons as they are

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[3] Half of the employee participants who agreed to participate were unable to attend on the day. Recruitment targeted employees from Band 4 to Band 6.

female-dominated public service professions. A review could also explore experiences in restructuring, reclassification, and pay equity in the same or comparative industries.