

VC: GR

14 March 2011

Dear Councillor/Sir/Madam

You are invited to attend an **LIBRARY COMMITTEE** of Ashfield Council, to be held at the Haberfield Library, 78 Dalhousie Street, Haberfield on **TUESDAY 22 MARCH 2011** at **6:30 PM** or at the conclusion of the Works and Infrastructure Committee.

Yours faithfully

VANESSA CHAN
General Manager

SEE ATTACHED AGENDA

LIBRARY COMMITTEE - 22 MARCH 2011

AGENDA

- 1. OPENING**
- 2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF LOCAL INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY**
- 3. APOLOGIES/REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE**
- 4. CONDOLENCE AND SYMPATHY MOTIONS**
- 5. MOMENT OF PRIVATE CONTEMPLATION**
- 6. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

Disclosures to be made by any Councillors who have a pecuniary / non-pecuniary interest in respect of matters that are before Council at this meeting.
(22/03/2011)

- 7. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF COUNCIL/COMMITTEES**

NIL

- 8. STAFF REPORTS**

8.1 KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES - NEXT 5 YEARS - LIBRARY SERVICES

- 9. GENERAL BUSINESS**

- 10. CLOSE**

ASHFIELD COUNCIL

LIBRARY COMMITTEE - 22 MARCH 2011

8 SUMMARY OF STAFF REPORTS

- 8.1 KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES - NEXT 5 YEARS - LIBRARY SERVICES. Ken Cullen - Acting Manager Library Services. Report submitted.
(14/03/11)

Library Services
h:\reports.bp\Committees\Reports\LC220311SR_1.doc

LC 8.1 Attached

RECOMMENDATION

- 1/2 That the information in this report be received and noted.
- 2/2 That the Committee determine any Motions for Council consideration in relation to the National General Assembly of Local Government.

Subject	KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES - NEXT 5 YEARS - LIBRARY SERVICES
File Ref	Library Services
Prepared by	Ken Cullen - Acting Manager Library Services
Reasons	To identify key future issues in the library services area and their likely impact.
Objective	For the committee to consider any implications of these trends and make recommendations to the upcoming National Local Government Conference.

Overview of Report

This report seeks to provide an overview of some current library services trends at National, State and Local level which have relevance to the community of Ashfield Municipality.

Background

What are some of the current broad policy issues in the Library Services field that are likely to impact on the Ashfield local government area?

Social Media

Social media is the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into interactive dialogue. Business/local councils also refer to social media as consumer-generated media. In the recent Middle Eastern revolutions, one activist quipped: “We use Facebook to schedule protests, Twitter to coordinate and YouTube to tell the world.”

These media are relatively inexpensive and accessible to enable anyone to publish or access information. They are more decentralised, less hierarchical and distinguished by multiple points of production and utility than industrial media (newspapers etc). They do not require specialised skills, and, in theory, anyone with access can operate the means of social media production.

Social media can be altered almost instantaneously by comments or editing. You can't completely control your message through social media but simply participate in the conversation in order to be able to influence it.

In the community media (eg library communications) we use a hybrid of industrial and social media some of which we are used to managing and controlling and others which are less controllable and which we are still learning how to manage.

Why this is a strategic issue:-

Australia has some of the highest social media usage statistics in the world. One in four people over age 65 are now part of a social networking site. The way that libraries handle social media is fundamental and tantamount to how they engage their communities and do their jobs; social media management is central to the current live debate about the very future of libraries.

Providing information access in all available media

The library world has aeons of history of putting readers, learners and borrowers in touch with hard copy information. It has a strong modern track record in utilising and exploiting audio-visual and other media. The new challenge is the provision of access to/via e-resources.

Why this is a strategic issue:-

We have experiments and trials ahead of us in learning how to become effective managers of e-information. Some of the currently available software does not provide user-friendly options; some products require a software download, for example, from a library homepage. Staff and users have inadequate training – we are still, in some areas, wedded to the old ways. Suppliers are still learning how best to supply and support, experimenting with formats and reader compatibility.

E-resource usage is and will continue to be massive and the library world (and local government generally) needs to position itself to move ahead of the trend – or at least keep up with it.

Comprehensive and effective community partnerships

Why this is a strategic issue:-

Local government and public library resources are limited and in some cases scarce (one US state legislature this year announced the cessation of government funding of its public libraries). With the advent of a new NSW state government, there will probably be changes to the local government political agenda and amalgamations may ultimately occur. There will be further impact on library resourcing. One successful means of optimising the use of resources is pooling for synergy – not just across libraries but across communities and within councils. Grants, sponsorships, voluntary efforts and more effective cross-directorate cooperation will need to be addressed in the resourcing discussions of the future.

Digitisation – preserving accessible history

Why this is a strategic issue:-

Converting stored information and historical items into digital format is, simply, the ‘no-brainer’ solution to provision of ongoing access, ready availability and space utilisation. But it is not an inexpensive process for cash-strapped local government libraries and could,

usefully, be addressed in conversations about Community Partnerships (above) and Shared Partnerships (below).

Shared partnerships to maximise resource utilisation

Why this is a strategic issue:-

The SSROC group of Councils have collaborated recently in a major library procurement outsourcing project aimed at more effective utilisation of resources, critical mass accessing of externally-available products and services and the synergisation of strengths variously present across councils. A (the) major outworking of the project to date (it is a project still in train) has been the learning and organisational growth made possible among all the participants merely by the active processes of contributing, working together and finding different and better ways of solving challenges. Apart from the fact that this is a rewarding way in which to work and get results, it may become one of the best (or even only) ways of achieving results in local government in future.

The National General Assembly of Local Government

The National General Assembly of Local Government is to be held between 19 and 22 June, 2011 in Canberra. The theme for this Assembly is Growing with our Community – Partnership, Place and Position.

The Australian Local Government Association is calling for motions under the three major themes: Partnership, Place and Position. To be eligible for inclusion in the National General Assembly business papers, motions must:

- Fall under one of the themes
- Be relevant to the work of local government nationally; and
- Complement or build on the policy objectives of state or territory associations.

The committee may wish to consider any relevant motions concerning Library Services which could be put to the Assembly. Are there **partnerships** between the Commonwealth Government and Ashfield Council which can be considered in the context of the provision of library services? Does living in the Inner West present particular issues regarding **Place** - for example, providing equitable access for its varied demographic make-up to historical and archival material? Can Ashfield Council **Position** itself with other Inner West Councils to assert greater influence on the Commonwealth Government – for example in the area of resourcing of library collections and services?

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications beyond existing budget allocations.

Other Staff Comments

N/A

Public Consultation

N/A

Conclusion

The Ashfield Municipality's popular and busy inhouse and outreach library services make it a community which can be impacted by directions and changes in the strategic issues outlined above. Council needs to be aware of these key issues and policy areas and their likely impact locally.

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments for this report

RECOMMENDATION

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- 2/2 That the Committee determine any Motions for Council consideration in relation to the National General Assembly of Local Government.**

NELLETTTE KETTLE
Director Corporate & Community Services