

QUEENSLAND PUBLIC LIBRARIES ASSOCIATION
STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-2018

ABOUT QPLA

Queensland Public Libraries Association is the peak representative body for public libraries in Queensland. QPLA liaises with key stakeholders and decision makers on current issues; arranges training and networking opportunities for members; markets the role and value of public libraries and facilitates cooperative projects.

OUR VISION

Public libraries enriching Queensland communities.

PURPOSE

We are a statewide network of public libraries:

- Providing advocacy support and representation for our members at local, state and national level
- Creating opportunities to share information, ideas and best practice
- Delivering benefits of scale – achieving more together than we could do alone.

OVERARCHING OBJECTIVES

- Increased community and government awareness of the role and value of public libraries
- Proactive and innovative systems and processes
- Well-informed members of a strong network
- Responsive, accountable governance and a sustainable association.

OTHER STAKEHOLDERS IN QUEENSLAND PUBLIC LIBRARIES

- Member library services and councils
- Queensland library users and the wider community
- State Library of Queensland
- Local Government Association Queensland, including Local Buy
- State Government
- Other public library and local government associations.

OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

Queensland public libraries have experienced unprecedented change over recent years with Council amalgamations and deamalgamations and the pace of change continues. Councils are financially challenged and this is reflected in an even greater requirement for libraries to present a strong value proposition. While budgets are under pressure public libraries are more popular than ever before, with nearly two million registered library users in Queensland.

Public libraries operate within the context of The Next Horizon: Vision 2017 for Queensland public libraries; The Library Dividend, an assessment of the return on investment of Queensland public libraries; the ALIA National Standards and Guidelines for Public libraries; the Queensland Guidelines and Standards for Public Libraries; as well as the legislative and policy framework relevant to local government.

MISSION

With this background, QPLA's mission is to represent the interests of public libraries across the state:

- Promoting their role, value and relevance (advocacy)
- Facilitating information-sharing (collaboration)
- Providing professional development opportunities (professional development)
- Supporting innovation in response to the rapidly changing environment (innovation)

We work collaboratively with the State Library of Queensland and other library associations to advocate, innovate, and develop strategic partnerships with state and federal government, businesses, not-for-profits and other stakeholders.

Our association operates through an Executive Board and regional branch structure and is funded by institutional membership fees.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE 2014-2017 STRATEGIC PLAN

This plan was developed through an open forum workshop held at Broadbeach Library, Gold Coast, on 10 November 2013 and attended by 20 QPLA members. The plan was further refined by the Executive Board and the draft provided to members between December 2013 and February 2014 for feedback.

ISSUES

The opportunities and challenges discussed at the workshop included:

- The need to reinforce and strengthen our public library network, ensuring that QPLA membership covers the majority of the state's public libraries
- The need to reinforce, strengthen and articulate our relationship with the State Library of Queensland
- The need to support library staff and managers through ongoing change, especially in the area of new technologies
- The challenge of new service delivery models – for example, facilitating the delivery of programs rather than direct program delivery
- The challenge of tight budgets and increasing library usage
- The opportunity to work with other public library associations to represent, advocate and lobby on behalf of public libraries on matters of state and national significance
- The opportunity to leverage strategic partnerships with other bodies such as government at federal and state level, other areas of local government (education, cultural and community development), universities, businesses, community groups and other organisations
- The opportunity to promote to state and national audiences the innovation that occurs within Queensland public libraries.

Board members also noted further opportunities to be:

- Go Digital Queensland The Queensland Plan

ROLE

The workshop participants examined the association's role in terms of advocacy, collaboration, innovation, leadership, strategic partnerships and professional development. They also looked at the sustainability of QPLA as an organisation.

The following key focus areas were endorsed:

ADVOCACY

We are active participants in national and state-based advocacy programs led by the sector's peak national bodies ALIA and the Australian Public Library Alliance, and work with the State Library of Queensland through the Public Libraries Advisory Group and other working parties.. We support members in their advocacy with councils, providing evidence and resources for library managers. In these and other ways QPLA plays a vital role in advocacy for Queensland public libraries.

Objectives	Actions	Timeframe	Performance indicators
Increased community and government awareness of the role and value of public libraries.	Establish an Advocacy Working Group to identify topics that are relevant; gather evidence to support QPLA's position; develop tools and materials; plan and implement approved advocacy campaigns and recruit champions.	2014	Advocacy Working Group formed and meeting at least quarterly.
	Develop and implement an annual advocacy plan.	Annual	Plan developed, approved and implemented.
	Leverage the work carried out by other stakeholders to ensure active participation from, and maximum benefit for, public libraries in Queensland (past example, the National Year of Reading 2012).	Ongoing	Additions to the advocacy successes on QPLA website.
	Participate in the ALIA APLA initiative to identify new KPIs for public libraries, ensuring consideration is given to other significant indicators, such as community wellbeing indicators.		Participation in development of ALIA APLA initiative.

COLLABORATION

We provide a mechanism for collaboration between member libraries and for managing collaborative agreements with third parties.

Objectives	Actions	Timeframe	Performance indicators
Reinforce, strengthen and clearly articulate our relationship with State Library of Queensland.	Establish a formal MOU with the State Library of Queensland, clarifying and articulating the role of QPLA in relation to statewide projects, funding and decision-making.	2014	MOU in place.
Leverage strategic partnerships with other bodies.	Build and strengthen strategic partnerships with LGAQ, (including Local Buy), Education Queensland, Arts Queensland, ALIA, PLA and international peak bodies.	2014-2017	Partnerships explored and implemented where feasible.
	Consider the potential for other statewide partnerships, e.g. Local Government Managers' Association.	2014	A list of potential partners established and priorities assigned for progress.
	Encourage members to share their successful partnerships where these could be replicated in other parts of the state.	2014 – 2017	Successful partnerships section regularly updated on the QPLA website.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development is essential for library staff to keep their knowledge and skills up-to-date. QPLA runs a successful program of PD events and activities – the flagship being the QPLA conference.

Objectives	Actions	Timeframe	Performance indicators
Providing professional development opportunities.	Deliver a regular statewide conference and PD event.	Ongoing	QPLA conference/PD event takes place.
	Review the current biennial conference model and present motion to AGM for approval.	2014	Review completed and motion adopted at AGM.
	Establish a PD Working Group to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • investigate a decentralised model for training opportunities e.g. conference roadshow, online tools • act as a quality assurance filter and aggregator for training opportunities, providing a 'seal of approval' (added value for members and for successful training providers) • investigate staff exchange opportunities. 	2014 and ongoing	Working group established, opportunities explored and training details included on website

INNOVATION

Sharing and celebrating good ideas has been a significant strength of QPLA and this remains a focus for the association.

Objectives	Actions	Timeframe	Performance indicators
Sharing and celebrating good ideas.	Establish an Innovation Working Group to look at further ways of identifying, reporting on and sharing innovative new ideas and best practice.	2014	Working group established and operating.
	Continue to offer the Public Library Achievement Awards.	2014 - 17	Number of entries received for the awards.
	Promote the achievements of Queensland public libraries through the QPLA website, newsletter and other media i.e. Public Libraries Connect; ALIA etc.	2014 - 17	Website updated on a monthly basis; newsletter and other media carry regular innovation stories.
	Encourage sector research and development e.g. through Research grant.	2014 - 17	Targeted research undertaken.

SUSTAINABLE ASSOCIATION

QPLA is a successful association of long-standing which directly represents the majority of the state's independent public libraries and provides 100% access to all public libraries across Queensland, including through its relationships with other stakeholders.

Objectives	Actions	Timeframe	Performance indicators
Build capacity to deliver the activities described in this strategic plan.	Identify funding for paid administrative, executive, research and report writing support.	2014	Appropriate staffing resources are in place.
	Establish working groups as appropriate to support the operation of the association (e.g. advocacy, professional development, communication, funding etc).	2014 and ongoing	Working groups are established and operating as required.
	Identify potential alternative sources of income e.g. grants.	2014 and ongoing	Alternative funding sources explored
Promote membership of the association.	Identify advocacy and other successes that can be used to support the call for membership.	2014 and ongoing	Marketing Working Group is generating information on a regular basis for the website.
Maintain an effective organisational model.	Review QPLA governance framework.	2014	Review completed and framework adopted at AGM.