

Libraries, Arts and Culture Position Statement

Policy Principles

This Position Statement relates to the following Policy Principles of LGNSW:

- (2) Local government promotes local and regional economic development and employment growth.*
- (3) Local government is best placed to plan for, deliver and manage essential local infrastructure.*
- (7) Local government services embody the principles of:*
 - a. Equity – fair distribution of resources*
 - b. Rights – equality for all people*
 - c. Access – to services essential to quality of life*
 - d. Participation – of all people in their community*
 - e. Recognition – of the unique place of Aboriginal people in NSW and the right of Aboriginal people to be involved in all decisions affecting Aboriginal communities.*

Background

Local government provides art galleries, museums, libraries and cultural services which are vital in enabling communities to participate in artistic and cultural expression. The right to equitable access to basic information is a cornerstone of democratic society. Councils provide more than 490 free public library services in NSW, including central, branch and mobile libraries in NSW. NSW government expenditure as a proportion of total expenditure on local government libraries decreased from 23.6% to 7.8% between 1980 and 2016. New South Wales has the lowest level of state government contributions as a proportion of total library expenditure in Australia.¹

Our Position

LGNSW calls on State and Commonwealth governments to:

- Redress the significant decrease in the State Government expenditure as a proportion of total expenditure on public libraries that has occurred since the 1980s.
- Increase total State government public library grants and subsidies from \$28.8m in 2017-18 to \$50m by 2021-22.
- Ensure councils receive a fair share of funding from and access to government arts and culture programs.
- Recognise the challenges for small, regional and remote councils and prioritise them for arts and cultural funding relative to the large State Cultural Institutions.

Date endorsed: October 2017

Date reviewed:

¹ Source: Australian Public Library Statistical Report 2012-13, compiled by Regional Access and Public Libraries, State Library of Queensland.