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## LATE REPORTS

Oberon Council Ordinary Meeting  
Tuesday 18 November 2014

Commencing at 5.30pm  
at the Council Chambers

<b>11.04</b>	<b>NSWPLA ANNUAL CONFERENCE MUDGEE 2015.....</b>	<b>2</b>
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**11.04 NSWPLA ANNUAL CONFERENCE MUDGEES 2015**

File No: Community Services/Library/NSW Libraries  
Author: Clr Kathy Sajowitz

**Summary**

Councillor Sajowitz attended the NSW Public Libraries Association Annual Conference and AGM held at Mudgee from 12 - 14 November.

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**Recommendation:**

That report item 11.04 is received as information.

That Oberon Council support the NSWPLA Day of Action

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**Comment**

**AGM** - This was the first meeting of the newly amalgamated Public Libraries NSW and Rural Libraries NSW. A new board was elected Clr Grahame Smith from Cessnock Council was elected President of the new Association and Clr Linda Gill from Great Lakes Council was elected Vice President Country.

High on the agenda is to take the association into the next phase of the campaign for improved funding from the NSW State Government. The campaign has gathered huge momentum over previous months with almost 70,000 signatures gathered for the petition. A day of action is planned for 5 December and supporting councils, communities and library clients are urged to participate in this day. I would request that Oberon demonstrate its support by making supplied literature available and displaying posters at the Library.

Attached is the association's response to a letter from Minister for the Arts (encompassing Libraries) the Hon Troy Grant published in the NSW media 30/9/14 in which he states that the NSW Government is providing adequate funding for the 370 libraries across the state. As demonstrated in the response - this is not the case.

**CONFERENCE** – This year's conference was hosted by Central West Zone of which Oberon is a part. Community Services Coordinator Kathy Beesley and I attended the two day event and I can confirm to you that Libraries are very much alive and well in NSW. A comprehensive selection of impressive speakers were presented showcasing the many great initiatives and programs being implemented in libraries around the state.

We were able, through the trade fair to source information on an E-Book platform due to be implemented in our own library during early 2015. The theme of the conference was wellbeing within the community and how the library has the potential to not only contribute to this but encourage social cohesion. The event was a great networking opportunity and inspired many ideas which can hopefully be implemented on some level to keep our own library vibrant and relevant.

Initiatives I particularly liked and are achievable in our own library:

- Loaning exercise equipment such as pedometers, ropes, weights and exercise DVDs' Libraries are not just about books but building social capital and engaging the disengaged
- Books on Prescription – “words that heal”
- Seed Library, the same way books are loaned, packets of seeds are loaned, planted and when harvested the seeds are returned to the library for re-lending. High impact low cost.
- Growing your Library - small raised garden beds at back of library where children can, during school holiday workshops “plant and learn” If you have a library and a garden you have everything you need.

I would hope that future consultation with library staff will bring some of the wonderful inspiration gained during this conference to practical fruition at Oberon library.

The NSW Public Libraries Association (NSWPLA) strongly refutes the content of the Letter to the Editor (30/9/14) from the Hon. Troy Grant MP (Minister for the Arts) which implies that the NSW Government is providing adequate financial support for the 370 libraries across the state.

The following figures provide an accurate representation of State funding and support to public libraries since 1980:

- Section 10 of the NSW Library Act 1939 specifies a number of services that “local libraries” must provide in order to be eligible for State Government funding. Whilst the exact number of NSW libraries that historically received 50% funding from the State Government may be debatable, this percentage was probably around 5 times higher on average than it currently is. Regardless of this early funding history, the fact remains that the State Government is currently contributing less than 7% of the total operating cost of libraries across the state to fulfil the requirements of its own library legislation.
- In 1980, the State Government contributed **\$1.67 per capita** (or 23.6% of total funding) to NSW libraries, whilst Local Government contributed **\$5.43 per capita** (or the remaining 76.4% of total funding).
- In 2012-13 the State Government contributed **\$3.63 per capita** (or 7.15% of total funding) to NSW libraries, whilst Local Government contributed **\$47.23 per capita** (or the remaining 92.85% of total funding). This means that in the 33 years between 1980 and 2013, State Government contributions increased 2.2 times whilst Local Government contributions increased 8.7 times.
- The current State Government funding model consists of three parts:
  - \$1.85 per capita (legislated);
  - Disability & Geographic Adjustment Fund (DGA), which is calculated on a combination of per capita funding and the application of 5 disability index factors;
  - Fixed term funding programs, including the recently announced 4-year Public Library Infrastructure Grants program (which provides \$416,123 less in 2014-15 than the previous Library Development Grants program, which it replaced, did in 2005/06).
- The amounts of **\$1.85 per person** and **\$2.74 per person** quoted in the Minister’s Letter to the Editor refer to **two different aspects** of the funding model.
  - The **\$1.85** is the **legislated amount** that the State Government is required to provide for every person in NSW, and forms part of the total annual recurrent library funding for NSW Councils. This amount **has not increased** since it was introduced in 1997.
  - The **\$2.74** is the **average combined amount of recurrent funding per person** that is provided to NSW Councils in 2014-15. It includes \$1.85 in per capita funding and \$0.89 in DGA funding. **The amount of recurrent funding per person provided by the State Government to Local Government is 2 cents less than it was when the current Public Library Funding Strategy was implemented in 2005/06.**

The information above provides abundant and irrefutable evidence that the State Government’s commitment to the support of NSW public libraries has dwindled to what can only be described as an embarrassingly low level. In fact, the NSW State Government provides the lowest per capita contribution to public libraries of all states in Australia.