



Public Libraries
Victoria

Library Board
of Victoria

Library Board of Victoria and
Public Libraries Victoria
Framework for collaborative action

2023 REVISION

Preface

This document is the sixth revision of the *Framework for collaborative action*, which was first published in 2004 and revised in 2006, 2011, 2014, 2017 and 2020. It is for all Victorian public library services and State Library Victoria, the operating agency of the Library Board of Victoria.

The Board, the State Library and public libraries have many things in common, particularly a shared commitment to delivering excellent information services to all Victorians. We have done much to advance our common aims by working together rather than separately (see Appendix 1). This revision of the *Framework for collaborative action* confirms our commitment to working together and outlines how we will proceed over the next three years. It was revised between February and May 2022 by representatives of Public Libraries Victoria, the Library Board of Victoria and State Library Victoria. All constituents will receive a copy, and it is available on the websites of State Library Victoria and Public Libraries Victoria. The Framework will be reviewed again in early 2025.



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1. Introduction

The *Framework for collaborative action* defines the way in which the Library Board of Victoria, through State Library Victoria, works with Victorian public libraries to deliver innovative library services to our communities.

The Board's Advisory Committee on Public Libraries comprises representatives of the Board, the State Library and Public Libraries Victoria. The Advisory Committee has created the Framework to support the State Library and Public Libraries Victoria in working together by:

- developing a shared vision for improving access to public library services
- specifying values and protocols to guide collaborative action and support cohesive, consistent and confident decision making
- identifying how goals will be achieved
- providing a clear definition of the roles and responsibilities of each party

The Framework is reviewed every three years to ensure that it continues to meet the Collaboration's requirements.

2. Purpose and scope

2.1 Vision

The State Library and Public Libraries Victoria work together to develop and deliver inclusive library services that enrich the lives of all Victorians.

2.2 Goals of the Collaboration

In determining its goals and priorities the Collaboration considers the priorities of the state government, the State Library, local governments and Public Libraries Victoria. Its goals are:

- readily accessible collections and services from every Victorian public library, for every Victorian
- an agile library workforce, continuously developing its skills and leadership to anticipate and meet changing community needs
- enhanced and innovative community engagement with libraries
- strong and effective advocacy and promotion for public libraries
- increased efficiency in library service delivery.

Building on the achievements of previous years, the Collaboration will focus on:

- initiatives in support of the State Library Victoria Strategic Plan 2022–2026
- initiatives in support of Public Libraries Victoria’s Strategic Plan 2023–2026
- initiatives informed by the Victorian public libraries 2030 strategic framework
- ensuring the best positioning of Victorian public libraries for a sustainable future.

3. Values

A common set of values and principles guides the activities and behaviour of the constituents to the Collaboration.

They have a shared belief in the importance of:

- communities that are informed, engaged, empowered and participative
- libraries as providers of vital social infrastructure supporting access to information, lifelong learning, and a sense of community connection and enjoyment.

They are committed to working effectively together by:

- putting community first
- being innovative
- behaving in a trusting and respectful manner
- communicating openly, clearly and in a timely manner
- being flexible and responsive.

4. Action plans

The Statewide Public Library Development Projects are the main focus of the Collaboration's actions. They run in triennial cycles and are funded by the Library Board of Victoria, through State Library Victoria.

Additionally, the State Library and Public Libraries Victoria will seek opportunities with other partners to develop and deliver projects that advance the Collaboration's vision.

Opportunities may be sought through:

- government funding programs
- philanthropic programs
- pooling of libraries' financial resources to deliver statewide initiatives that would otherwise be unaffordable to some library services
- pooling of libraries' in-kind resources to deliver community programs that could only happen on a statewide basis.

4.1 Statewide Public Library Development Projects

These projects complement strategic planning for libraries and support efficient management of shared resources.

The projects are agreed on a triennial basis and are funded by the Library Board of Victoria at approximately \$900,000 annually.

The following guidelines are used to determine the Statewide Public Library Development Projects.

The projects must support one or more of the goals of the *Framework for collaborative action* (see Section 2.2).

Additionally, the projects must:

- deliver statewide benefit to the Victorian community
- increase the capability of public libraries to deliver excellent services at local, regional and state levels
- increase interaction/partnering/ collaboration between public libraries, and among State Library Victoria, Public Libraries Victoria and the public library network
- complement the strategies of both State Library Victoria and Public Libraries Victoria
- stimulate innovative responses to the challenges and opportunities presented by the changing environment in which libraries operate.

Projects must:

- be delivered in a cooperative and collegial manner by State Library Victoria and Public Libraries Victoria
- achieve their agreed outcomes within the time frame of the funding.

The Library Board of Victoria's Advisory Committee on Public Libraries is responsible for monitoring the Statewide Public Library Development Projects. The Advisory Committee is also responsible for reporting to the Library Board of Victoria on the Projects as its Board representatives deem appropriate.

4.1.1 Process for determining Statewide Public Library Development Projects

The Advisory Committee on Public Libraries oversees the process to gain approval of a 3-year cycle of Statewide Public Library Development Projects. The Advisory Committee:

- agrees to the overall model and criteria for the projects and seeks approval of the Library Board of Victoria to proceed
- defines and implements the process for developing project proposals, which includes gathering project ideas from Public Libraries Victoria and from State Library Victoria; reviewing project ideas, and selecting ideas for development into full project proposals
- recommends Statewide Public Library Development Project proposals for the triennium to the Library Board of Victoria for approval.

4.1.2 2023–2026 Statewide Public Library Development Projects

The following initiatives are agreed for the period 1 July 2023–30 June 2026.

Libraries for Health and Wellbeing – the continuation of the body of work to

promote and develop the role of public libraries in supporting community health and wellbeing outcomes. Initiatives include the review and update of *Libraries for Health and Wellbeing: a strategic framework for Victorian public libraries towards 2024*; evaluation of the Libraries for Health and Wellbeing Innovation grants program; research into the loneliness epidemic and how public libraries can alleviate loneliness; staff training; and a community engagement program.

Libraries for Aboriginal People – an initiative committed to developing library staff capability and enhancing public library spaces, collections and programs to ensure they are safe, relevant and welcoming to Aboriginal people. There will be two main projects: building cultural competency, and developing an engagement roadmap that supports library services to engage Aboriginal peoples and organisations.

Libraries Future-ready – a suite of initiatives to ensure that the sector has the knowledge, skills and leadership capability required of 21st-century libraries. Two major projects will develop a value proposition for Victoria's public libraries that establishes a clear purpose and vision for the sector; and explore the increased community benefit that results from investment in new and renewed public library infrastructure. There will also be a small project to test the viability of establishing a network of StartSpaces in partnership with Victoria's public libraries and external funding bodies, as well as training to address identified skills gaps, events to showcase best practice, scholarships and awards, a mentoring program and a flagship leadership development program.

5. Roles, responsibilities and contributions

This section establishes what the various constituents bring to the Collaboration and what each is expected to contribute to achieving the shared goals.

5.1 Governance and coordination

The Advisory Committee on Public Libraries and the constituents its members represent are the 'owners' of the Framework.

The Advisory Committee members are the custodians of the *Framework for collaborative action*, and are responsible for promoting the Framework and its outcomes to the Library Board of Victoria.

State Library Victoria's Head of Library Sector Engagement is responsible for enacting the Framework's goals on a day-to-day basis.

In the event of a dispute arising among any parties to the Collaboration, it will be dealt with following the guidelines in Appendix 3.

5.2 The Advisory Committee on Public Libraries

The Advisory Committee on Public Libraries, the body responsible for directly linking the Library Board of Victoria with Victorian public libraries, was established in July 2003. The Advisory Committee consists of the following members:

- up to two members of the Board, in addition to the Chairperson of the Committee who shall also be a member of the Board
- the Chief Executive Officer of State Library Victoria and another member of the State Library's Leadership Team
- four representatives of Public Libraries Victoria, the peak body for Victorian public libraries, including the President and at least one other Executive member, and one other representative from country Victoria
- Public Libraries Victoria may nominate two substitute representatives. In the event of inability to attend by a Public Libraries Victoria representative on the Committee, a substitute may attend, speak and vote at the meeting in the person's place
- the Chief Executive Officer of Public Libraries Victoria is invited to attend Committee meetings as an Observer member of the Committee.

The Advisory Committee works on a representative model. Public Libraries Victoria and the Library Board of Victoria are responsible for communicating and consulting with their constituents about the Framework and for providing feedback to the Advisory Committee.

State Library Victoria assists the Advisory Committee representatives to consult with their constituents by providing a facilitator as and if required.

Terms of Reference define the Advisory Committee's objectives, functions and powers, structure, terms and conditions (see Appendix 2).

5.3 The Library Board of Victoria/State Library Victoria

The Library Board of Victoria exercises its responsibilities in relation to public libraries through State Library Victoria. These responsibilities are defined in the *Libraries Act 1988*:

- to oversee cooperation in programs with libraries and information organisations to promote access to library and information resources
- to exercise leadership and promote high standards in the provision of library and information services
- to provide advice and information to the Minister on any matter concerning libraries and information organisations.

The Library Sector Engagement Branch is the primary interface between the State Library and Public Libraries Victoria. It:

- communicates across the public library sector and its stakeholders
- coordinates industry knowledge, research and innovation
- develops and delivers projects that meet statewide public library sector needs
- supports strategy development.

5.4 Public Libraries Victoria

Public Libraries Victoria is the peak body for public libraries in Victoria, with representation through institutional membership from every public library in the state. The membership works as a progressive alliance to champion the value of public libraries and to make a positive difference in the communities that they serve.

As the peak body, Public Libraries Victoria advocates on behalf of the sector, builds the capacity of members through professional development, provides value through partnership arrangements and demonstrates good governance in its management. This work is underpinned by a set of values:

- We do what we say
- We love what we do
- We are courageous
- We pursue opportunity

These values are supported by well-defined guiding behaviours.

Public Libraries Victoria partners with the Library Board of Victoria to meet its responsibilities by:

- promoting access to library and information resources
- informing it on issues as appropriate
- providing advice to ensure there is sector-wide support for issues within its sphere of influence and that there is agreement on standards for provision of library and information services.

6. Evaluating the success of the Collaboration

The Advisory Committee on Public Libraries, on behalf of the Board, reviews the performance of the Collaboration annually in line with the budget process and as part of its review of itself. The success of the Collaboration is gauged by:

- the extent to which it can demonstrate progress made towards achieving its goals and the outcomes set out in its action plan
- the extent to which a positive working relationship, that reflects the shared values of the Collaboration's constituents, is maintained.

The *Framework for collaborative action* is reviewed triennially in line with the lifecycle of the Statewide Public Library Development Projects. Comments on the Framework are welcomed.

Appendix 1: Achievements of the Collaboration

A great deal has been achieved by the Collaboration through the 2005–2008, 2008–2011, 2011–2014, 2014–2017, 2017–2020 and 2020–2023 suites of Statewide Public Library Development Projects.

Selected achievements of the Statewide Public Library Development Projects include:

- strengthening the work of public libraries in supporting community health and wellbeing through development of *Libraries for health and wellbeing: A strategic framework for Victorian public libraries towards 2024* (2021)
- publication of a guide to working in partnership with health agencies; and seed funding for libraries to develop innovative community programs to promote health and wellbeing, delivered in partnership with other service providers
- Re-positioning public libraries as a 'must have' rather than a 'nice to have' in the eyes of funding decision-makers through the Libraries Change Lives advocacy campaign (2017–2020, 2020–2023)
- positioning public libraries and the State Library as important contributors to early years literacy and adult literacy through development of *Reading and literacy for all: A strategic framework for Victorian public libraries* (2016, 2019)
- lifting the standard of library-based early years literacy programs statewide through creation of quality indicators and evaluation measures, introducing statewide assessment of programs and implementation of a comprehensive professional development program (2014–2020)
- raising parental awareness of the importance of developing early years literacy skills in their children through a statewide roll-out of the 1000 Books Before School campaign (2016–2018) and the touring exhibition *Story Island: an adventure in pictures* (2016–2017)
- expanding the work of public libraries in supporting adult literacy through publication of a best practice guide, training in working in partnership with other service providers, and seed funding for delivery of new and innovative adult literacy programs in public libraries (2014–2019)
- strategic up-skilling of the public library workforce through a diverse program of conferences, seminars, workshops and online training targeting competencies identified as critical for 21st-century library services, including digital literacy, community engagement, design thinking, partnership development and collection management (2005–2022)

- examining future workforce requirements through the Workforce Sustainability and Leadership project and the *Victorian public libraries: our future our skills* research report (2014)
- developing the public library leadership of the future through the Shared Leadership Program, a scholarship program, leadership forums, and triennial planning summits for service managers (2005–2022)
- delivering landmark research supporting the strategic development of public library services and advocacy for public libraries, including *Libraries building communities* (2005, 2008), *Dollars, sense and public libraries* (2011), *Victorian public libraries 2030* (2013), *Creative communities: the cultural benefits of Victoria's public libraries* (2014) and *Libraries work!: the socio-economic value of public libraries to Victorians* (2018)
- creating the *Being the best we can* framework and toolkit for use by public library managers in assessing the performance of library services and identifying improvement programs (2011)
- undertaking the first ever statewide audits of Victoria's public library collections and public library buildings, providing managers with invaluable data for use in planning and advocating for services (2005–2008)
- Memory Victoria, a comprehensive strategy in support of the care, management and promotion of the local history collections held by Victoria's public library services (2005–2008)
- improving community access options to library heritage collections through digitisation of Victoria's earliest newspapers as well as newspapers covering the World War One period, now freely available and easily searchable to anyone, anywhere, anytime through the National Library's Trove portal (2011–2017)
- increasing engagement with public libraries and library collections through delivery of statewide community programs, including: *The independent type* panel exhibition about books and writing in Victoria (seen in 18 libraries); the *Writing the war* panel exhibition featuring the personal stories of Victorians during World War One (seen in 18 libraries); the High Road to Reading program of author events in public libraries across the state; 2012 National Year of Reading; and the Summer Read program (2008–2018).

Appendix 2: Advisory Committee on Public Libraries Terms of Reference

The Advisory Committee on Public Libraries operates according to the Library Board of Victoria standing committees policy, in addition to the terms set out below.

1. Purpose

To define the functions and powers of the Advisory Committee on Public Libraries in accordance with the Library Board of Victoria's policy on its standing committees.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all the activities of the Advisory Committee on Public Libraries as approved by the Library Board of Victoria.

3. Definitions

None.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

As defined in policy 2.04 Standing Committees of the Library Board of Victoria.

5. Policy Contents

5.1 Establishment

The Advisory Committee on Public Libraries is a standing committee of the Library Board of Victoria (the "Board") and established by the Board in accordance with the provisions of section 27 of the *Libraries Act 1988* (the "Act").

The establishment of the Advisory Committee on Public Libraries at the level of a Board advisory committee recognises:

1. the long-established and historical relationship between Victorian public libraries and the State Library of Victoria
2. a collaborative approach to assisting the Board to fulfill its role in relation to sections of the Act pertaining to 'oversee co-operation' (S18 ea) and to "exercise leadership and promote high standards" (S18 eb), and
3. the importance to the Board of sustaining and enhancing the ongoing relationship.

5.2 Objectives

The objective of the Advisory Committee on Public Libraries is to act as an advisory group and communication link between the Board and public librarians through their peak body, Public Libraries Victoria.

5.3 Functions

The functions of the Advisory Committee on Public Libraries are to:

- assist the Board to fulfill its role and responsibilities as outlined in the Act, with special reference to section 18(ea) and (eb) responsibilities
- assist the Board in the development of strategies which ensure all Victorians have access to the resources and services of the State Library Victoria through Victoria's public libraries

- provide advice to the Board about issues, policies and strategies that have a bearing on the provision of information services for all Victorians
- develop and recommend to the Board strategies aimed at improving coordination and collaboration between the State Library of Victoria and public librarians
- recommend to the Board a program of collaborative activities/projects which will enhance access to information resources and services for all Victorians, in line with the guidelines contained within the Library Board of Victoria and Public Libraries Victoria *Framework for collaborative action*, and
- assist the Board with the program's development, implementation and evaluation, including advice on the allocation of program funding, on-going monitoring of particular activities/projects and marketing and promotion of State Library Victoria and public library collaborative action.

5.4 Powers

The Committee can make recommendations to the Board. It has no decision-making power independent of the Board. The committee shall only make decisions within the authority conferred on it by the Board from time to time.

5.5 Membership

The Committee shall consist of the following members:

- up to two members of the Board, in addition to the Chairperson of the Committee who shall also be a member of the Board;
- the Chief Executive Officer of the State Library Victoria and another member of the Leadership Team;
- four representatives of Public Libraries Victoria, the peak body for Victorian public libraries, nominated by Public Libraries Victoria's Executive group and including the President and at least one other Executive member, and one other representative from country Victoria;
- Public Libraries Victoria may nominate two substitute representatives. In the event of inability to attend by a Public Library Victoria representative on the committee, a substitute may attend, speak and vote at the meeting in the person's place.

The Chief Executive Officer of Public Libraries Victoria has a standing invitation to attend Committee meetings as an observer.

5.6 Term of appointment

The term of appointment will be the same as set out in the Library Board of Victoria Standing Committees Policy, with the exceptions that the appointment shall usually be for a period of three years and that no member shall serve more than three consecutive terms in the same capacity.

5.7 Meeting frequency

The Committee will meet at least 3 times per year.

6. Related Documents

Libraries Act 1988

Library Board of Victoria Standing
Committees Policy

Library Board of Victoria and Public Libraries
Victoria Framework for collaborative action

Appendix 3: Dispute resolution

In the event of any dispute arising among parties in the Collaboration, it will be resolved:

- in accordance with the Framework's values of trust, open communication, and respect for the knowledge, expertise and points of view of all parties
- by focusing on the issues and on the best outcomes for the Collaboration rather than on individual interests
- by seeking a consensus solution.

Specific steps for dealing with disputation are:

- the matter should be raised first with the Chief Executive Officer of State Library Victoria and the President of Public Libraries Victoria, who will together endeavour to find a resolution
- the issue or difficulty should be made explicit at a meeting of the Advisory Committee on Public Libraries
- the matter may be referred to the President of the Library Board of Victoria through the Advisory Committee's Chair
- the Advisory Committee on Public Libraries may decide to avail itself of an external facilitator.



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