



evaluation

of the northern territory library's
libraries & knowledge centres
northern territory library's response





Minister's Foreword

Elliot McAdam MLA
Minister for Local Government

As Minister for Local Government, with responsibility for the Northern Territory Library, I appreciate the key role of libraries in capacity building and strengthening our communities.

I would like to extend my thanks to the Evaluation Team for their evaluation of the Northern Territory Library's Libraries and Knowledge Centres Model.

I am reassured to see that the Evaluation Team confirm the work being done by the Northern Territory Library in the implementation of the Libraries and Knowledge Centres model is a cutting edge example of the Territory's ability to innovate in the field of service delivery and capacity building in remote Indigenous communities.

The Territory Government is committed to identifying opportunities for sustainable growth in communities.

Libraries are focal points in any community. They are the most visited cultural institutions in society, offering access to information, from books and magazines to the world-wide web through the use of digital tools. Libraries have made huge advances in recent years, offering an expanded array of services to their visitors.

Libraries and Knowledge Centres are taking these advances to the remote parts of the Territory, playing a fundamental role in supporting life long learning, enhancing cultural identity, and building communities.

ELLIOT McADAM

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Northern Territory Library's Response

Introduction

The Northern Territory Library (NTL) is grateful to Professor Martin Nakata and his team, for their dedication and thorough evaluation of the Libraries and Knowledge Centre (LKC) program and its application in the Northern Territory.

This document is NTL's response to the *Evaluation of the Northern Territory Library's Libraries and Knowledge Centres Model* (the Evaluation).

The Evaluation provides NTL with a credible foundation for the further growth and development of LKCs in the Territory and a solid basis upon which to formulate clear strategic direction for the delivery of library services in remote Indigenous communities. NTL can now proceed to identify the drivers for increasing awareness and usage of LKCs, progressing from the notion that LKCs are incidental and recreational to being strategic and essential to community development through the provision of literacy, life-long learning and information skills.

LKCs are well positioned to play a significant role in community development and capacity building. It is timely that NTL identifies its partners on this journey and invites them to be part of improving the lives of Indigenous Territorians through sustained and continued integrated services that support Territory communities.

Jo McGill
Director
Northern Territory Library

Summary Responses to Evaluation Recommendations

Recommendation 1

That NTL takes primary responsibility for the LKCs' networking plans with organisations and agencies delivering services to Indigenous communities, develops overall community objectives and goals in conjunction with regional development boards/authorities and local government bodies, and sets operational plans with LKC staff to achieve a productive balance in local knowledge development activities and general library services.

NTL will develop a formal communications strategy to address this recommendation. The communications strategy framework will:

- address both strategic and operational issues which could be identified and cross promoted;
- identify key contacts, i.e. Community Development Officers (CDOs), Regional Coordinators/Directors and Agencies;
- develop comprehensive operational plan in conjunction with key contacts;
- include a mechanism for future evaluation; and
- an implementation plan to ensure the strategy reaches key organisations and agencies.

While NTL recognises that it has a role to play in this issue, the approach to community networking activities will be primarily from an LKC perspective and will be limited by the amount of staff time and resources available to identify, develop and maintain links at the individual community level.

Recommendation 2

That NTL promotes the development of multipurpose, zoned venues for LKCs that can accommodate the growing knowledge and information services and activities, including public access to the Internet, that are critical to developing broader community goals related to building capacity in Indigenous communities.

It is important that NTL be consulted and given opportunities to participate in the planning of public library and joint-use library spaces. Requirements for library space are defined in Schedule 2 of the Public Library Agreement and potentially, in Joint-Use Agreements between Councils and Schools.

This recommendation links closely with Recommendation 12; however it can be applied at a local level.

NTL will develop a vision for library spaces, incorporating photos, examples and models of best practice. The vision would include adequate space for a range of different library activities, as well as workrooms and training/meeting rooms.

Recommendation 3

That NTL conducts an audit of the requisite skills for LKC management and services and identify criteria for high-level support for developing LKC activities.

That NTL sources education and training providers to develop and implement skills development programs specific to function of LKCs.

That NTL develops an overall LKC strategy:

- *for recruitment, training and employment that makes best use of all available avenues in the short term, including mentoring by skilled members of other organisations,*
- *that encourages interested members of the community in volunteering or work experience situations to broaden the skills base in various areas of activity in the short-term,*
- *to establish plain language procedure manuals for all activities,*
- *to develop contingency plans for changing staff/ or when staff leave.*

This recommendation has been given the highest priority by NTL.

NTL has made some progress with regard to the education and training of Community Library Officers (CLOs), for example: job descriptions for CLO and LKC Coordinators have been developed; external training packages and funding opportunities have been investigated; and a range of ongoing training and support is offered, both on-site, by phone and email, and through the annual Community Library Officers' Forum. NTL staff who provide training are currently completing, or have completed, a Certificate IV in Workplace Training.

Two major challenges are that firstly, NTL does not directly employ CLOs, but provides Councils with advice and support to assist with the recruitment, selection and ongoing training of local library staff. NTL's expertise lies in knowing what skills are required. Secondly, NTL lacks the capacity and resources to achieve each part of this recommendation in the short term.

NTL will develop a strategy to address these issues, or at least raise them with Councils and seek their support, along with that of the Indigenous Training Advisory Council.

Recommendation 4

That NTL establishes a collection development policy for LKCs which emphasises the development of the local knowledge collection, development of the general library collections of print, audio/visual materials, and the development of locally relevant lists of electronic resources. The policy should reflect the goal of LKC collections in all these areas to connect local priorities, interests and needs to external sources of information and knowledge of the wider world in order to promote engagement with knowledge and information useful to capacity building and well-being in the community.

NTL's Business Plan for the 2006/07 financial year includes a Review of Collections across the NT. This may raise expectations of the Library Resource Allocation (LRA) capacity; however the review will need to occur within existing parameters. NTL recognises that its role is to gather expertise on what constitutes good material and document it through policy for the benefit of all groups involved in the delivery of library services. This initiative links closely with recommendation 10(b), which recommends that a selection policy be developed for *Our Story* Database content.

Recommendation 5

That NTL investigates the development of an internal intellectual property management protocol to help govern decisions about accessing and reproducing copyright material and consider developing a policy specifically directed at intellectual property issues within the context of LKCs.

That NTL considers the development of plain-English and, if desired, translatable interpretations of copyright and how this relates to material relevant to the LKCs (i.e. photographs, sound-recordings, films, etc).

This recommendation has been given a high priority by NTL.

NTL recognises the urgent need for effective and appropriate protocols and guidelines. NTL staff have attended training in this area and have sought advice on issues related to intellectual property and copyright management.

NTL's strategy will include engagement with national experts and the Department of Justice to gain advice on intellectual property issues within the context of LKCs. Once advice has been provided, NTL will develop Intellectual Property Policy and Procedures for its collections and operations, and will provide guidance and support to Councils in line with the developed policy and procedures.

Recommendation 6

*That NTL clarifies ownership rights of the content in the *Our Story* database and develop guidelines for LKCs regarding the future addition of material into the *Our Story* database.*

This recommendation has been given a high priority by NTL.

On the basis of the policy and procedure development at Recommendation 5 (above), NTL will develop guidelines for CLOs on the adding of material to the respective *Our Story* databases.

Recommendation 7

*That NTL considers the future development of guidelines for the addition of other already established databases to the *Our Story* database.*

That NTL considers options, in particular broader community partnerships, for future negotiations around intellectual property management.

On the basis of Recommendations 5 and 6, NTL will seek advice from the Department of Justice and the Department of the Chief Minister to determine an appropriate approach to assist communities to manage their database content with respect to intellectual property.

Recommendation 8

That NTL considers risk management strategies and protocols for intellectual property and Indigenous cultural material and the future use of LKCs.

On the basis of Recommendations 5, 6 and 7, NTL will seek advice from the Department of Justice and the Department of the Chief Minister to determine an appropriate approach to assist communities to manage their database content with respect to risk management.

Recommendation 9

That NTL considers the extent that LKCs can be incorporated under the exceptions that currently exist for Libraries and Archives for the purposes of the Copyright Act.

On the basis of Recommendations 5, 6, 7 and 8, NTL will seek advice to determine an appropriate approach to assist communities to manage their database content pursuant to the *Copyright Act*.

Recommendation 10

- a. *That NTL considers the establishment of LKC advisory committees in each community whose membership include Elders from clans, council representatives, members of other relevant community organisations and agencies.*
 - b. *That NTL assists advisory committees to develop an archival selection policy to determine additions to Our Story databases.*
 - c. *That NTL considers processes to assist Advisory Committees in quests for repatriation of materials from archives and other collecting institutions.*
 - d. *That NTL encourages other stakeholders in community development to consider more effective networking of technology for communities in the long-term in the interest of economic efficiency as well as efficiency of services.*
 - e. *That NTL determines technical training priorities according to the tasks undertaken by CLOs, NTL staff, and Advisory Committees.*
 - f. *That NTL considers a long-term approach to software issues associated with storing and retrieving based on research input, and a consideration of common issues emerging in the national context.*
 - g. *That NTL encourages people recording IK to agree to provide copies of the IK in agreed digital formats with specified metadata (e.g., XML packages) that can easily be uploaded to the local database.*
-
- (a) NTL does seek to identify existing cultural groups within respective communities and, through the Council, involve them where possible in the LKC Program. However there are no existing mechanisms for NTL to appoint advisory committees. NTL would have difficulty applying resources to this recommendation and providing adequate support.
 - (b) NTL will develop a selection policy for *Our Story* databases that would incorporate archival material. This sub-recommendation links with

Recommendation 4 (above) and could be developed in conjunction with senior community members identified through the Council.

- (c) Repatriation is not a key role of NTL and any commitment would be restricted to limited NTL resources. NTL could provide advice on who would be best placed to assist in this role.
- (d) This sub-recommendation has strategic links with Recommendation 1 (above) and is an outcome that NTL would actively pursue. This recommendation does highlight infrastructure issues, particularly in remote communities.
- (e) Technical training for CLOs, NTL staff and Advisory Committee would be incorporated into Recommendation 3 outcome, i.e. the development of plain English training manuals, contingencies for changing staff etc.
- (f) NTL is an active participant in several projects looking at these issues. The level of involvement and resources committed to this would need to be balanced with the delivery of core library services.
- (g) The National Recording Project (of which NTL is a partner) is addressing this and will prove a valuable trial as to how this may best be achieved. NTL will provide templates/guidelines to assist with this and will provide value-adding of data for material which is accessible.

Recommendation 11

That NTL seeks expert advice to develop consistent and clear literacy strategies for LKCs in three primary areas: local knowledge documentation, information literacy for external information sources, and early literacy development.

This recommendation has been given a high priority by NTL.

NTL has identified key research and current practice and results have been documented. A range of programs and potential partnerships aimed at improving literacy outcomes have been identified, as have potential funding sources, as NTL does not have the capacity to resource all required programs.

NTL will develop a literacy strategy that can be implemented using a phased approach. Priority will be given initially to the two areas of early literacy development and local knowledge documentation.

Part of the strategy will include engagement with other agencies and experts in early childhood field to ensure the involvement and coordination of key agencies and community groups and to maximise literacy outcomes for families.

Recommendation 12

That NTL makes a concerted campaign to promote LKCs, at all levels of government, as an essential component to NT's overall regional development plans for capacity building initiatives in Indigenous communities, and seeks assistance from the NT government to develop options within COAG arrangements for a joint-initiative on the development of suitable multi-purpose venues.



This recommendation is linked to Recommendations 1 and 2.

NTL will develop strategies to promote LKCs at all levels of Government and will make concerted efforts to be more engaged with regional development planning within the Department.

Appendix 1

Executive Summary (Extract from Nakata Evaluation)

The Libraries and Knowledge Centres (LKC) concept, as a model for the delivery of relevant and sustainable information services in the Northern Territory, has the potential to be a key infrastructure element for the Northern Territory Government's plans for building capacities in the regions and better futures for all Territorians.

LKC services, when fully developed in line with the whole-of-government approach, will prove to be vital components of regional development strategies, business development, ongoing education and training needs, literacy and basic skills development, and information communication across the Territory.

For this to be realised, development of the LKC model must be:

- *in line with the NT's regional development agenda;*
- *linked at the highest level of the inter-agency coordination processes;*
- *articulated in the capacity building agenda;*
- *developed in multi-purpose venues; and*
- *connected with high-bandwidth information communication technologies.*

The evaluators of the model agree that the LKC concept is an innovative approach to engaging with changing community needs for knowledge and information, and that it could become a leading example for the ways such services can be delivered to Indigenous Australians. We strongly recommend that future development of LKCs be sustained within the NT Government's plans for joined-up services, administration agreements, and focused outcomes so that innovative services of this kind can be extended to all communities across the Territory.

Recommendations

The Evaluation makes 12 recommendations. Whilst these have been addressed by way of summary comments from NTL's perspective, they are listed below for ease of reference.

Recommendation 1

That NTL takes primary responsibility for the LKCs' networking plans with organisations and agencies delivering services to Indigenous communities, develops overall community objectives and goals in conjunction with regional development boards/authorities and local government bodies, and sets operational plans with LKC staff to achieve a productive balance in local knowledge development activities and general library services.

Recommendation 2

That NTL promotes the development of multipurpose, zoned venues for LKCs that can accommodate the growing knowledge and information services and activities, including public access to the Internet, that are critical to developing broader community goals related to building capacity in Indigenous communities.

Recommendation 3

That NTL conducts an audit of the requisite skills for LKC management and services and identify criteria for high-level support for developing LKC activities.

That NTL sources education and training providers to develop and implement skills development programs specific to function of LKCs.

That NTL develops an overall LKC strategy:

- *for recruitment, training and employment that makes best use of all available avenues in the short term, including mentoring by skilled members of other organisations,*
- *that encourages interested members of the community in volunteering or work experience situations to broaden the skills base in various areas of activity in the short-term,*
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Recommendation 5

That NTL investigates the development of an internal intellectual property management protocol to help govern decisions about accessing and reproducing copyright material and consider developing a policy specifically directed at intellectual property issues within the context of LKCs.

That NTL considers the development of plain-English and, if desired, translatable interpretations of copyright and how this relates to material relevant to the LKCs (i.e. photographs, sound-recordings, films, etc).

Recommendation 6

That NTL clarifies ownership rights of the content in the Our Story database and develop guidelines for LKCs regarding the future addition of material into the Our Story database.

Recommendation 7

That NTL considers the future development of guidelines for the addition of other already established databases to the Our Story database.

That NTL considers options, in particular broader community partnerships, for future negotiations around intellectual property management.

Recommendation 8

That NTL considers risk management strategies and protocols for intellectual property and Indigenous cultural material and the future use of LKCs.

Recommendation 9

That NTL considers the extent that LKCs can be incorporated under the exceptions that currently exist for Libraries and Archives for the purposes of the Copyright Act.

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- c. *That NTL considers processes to assist Advisory Committees in quests for repatriation of materials from archives and other collecting institutions.*
- d. *That NTL encourages other stakeholders in community development to consider more effective networking of technology for communities in the long-term in the interest of economic efficiency as well as efficiency of services.*
- e. *That NTL determines technical training priorities according to the tasks undertaken by CLOs, NTL staff, and Advisory Committees.*
- f. *That NTL considers a long-term approach to software issues associated with storing and retrieving based on research input, and a consideration of common issues emerging in the national context.*

- g. *That NTL encourages people recording IK to agree to provide copies of the IK in agreed digital formats with specified metadata (e.g., XML packages) that can easily be uploaded to the local database.*

Recommendation 11

That NTL seeks expert advice to develop consistent and clear literacy strategies for LKCs in three primary areas: local knowledge documentation, information literacy for external information sources, and early literacy development.

Recommendation 12

That NTL makes a concerted campaign to promote LKCs, at all levels of government, as an essential component to NT's overall regional development plans for capacity building initiatives in Indigenous communities, and seeks assistance from the NT government to develop options within COAG arrangements for a joint-initiative on the development of suitable multi-purpose venues.

Key Findings

The Evaluation contains several key findings and these were identified by the LKC Working Group. A summary of the Key Findings appears below, arranged under their respective section headings relative to the Evaluation.

1. General Issues

Perceptions of the LKCs

- *It is evident that the local Our Story database component of the model is providing excitement and stimulus for community visitation to the LKC and the interest shown by other agencies and organisations.*
- *The value of the local Our Story database is central to the LKC model and is fulfilling a real need and a meaningful engagement with traditional or community knowledge and information communication technologies (ICTs) in Wadeye and Angurugu.*
- *The implications of this for NTL are considerable as database activity engages with complex technology issues, complex issues of ownership/permissions, copyright, intellectual property, and issues of future use of content. NTL is politically and culturally correct to leave the issues associated with the database content in the hands and control of the community.*
- *All the Indigenous people and LKC staff interviewed believed that both access to external information and materials in English were very important and were needed in their community.*
- *The LKC model potentially provides a lot of scope for engagement with external knowledge and information services that builds connections between local needs and interests and the wider world beyond communities.*
- *NTL has work to do in raising perceptions, not just amongst community members, but amongst all stakeholders in community development, of the value of library services in engaging local interests and contributing to community information needs.*

Location of LKC Services

- *The physical presence of the LKC emerges as an important facet of the service.*
- *Visitation increases substantially when LKCs are effectively positioned at a central point in the community. The current poor physical state of the*

Angurugu facility sends important conscious and unconscious signals to clients about the health and effectiveness of the service.

- *The long-term goal should be to pursue collocation of services so that firstly, local and external knowledge sets are acknowledged as working together to contribute to the development of community capacities and broader community and Northern Territory goals, and secondly, so that LKCs' knowledge and information provision and access begins to be perceived as a central service relevant to organisations and agencies of the whole community.*
- *A more coordinated approach to planning for public information access, including Internet access would deliver better efficiencies in space, physical infrastructure and technology infrastructure, especially if this is the goal of the joined up service approach in remote communities. Appropriate and accessible space is fundamental to this goal.*
- *There is a benefit for the community and all stakeholders in community development in recognising that LKCs can play a pivotal role in centralising and thus delivering more efficiency in knowledge and information support and access. Another benefit is the ongoing nature of the support and training provided by NTL. This ensures developments are sustainable through annual funding.*
- *Library and information services require buildings appropriate to their intended functions and these functions should be seen as supporting a range of community activities and broader community goals, not just LKC activities. The intended functions of LKCs require the provision of multi-purpose venues that can accommodate a range of activities.*

Staff, Training and Skills

- *One of the key themes to emerge from the Evaluation is the challenge faced in providing sufficient, and sufficiently continuous, services in remote communities.*
- *It must be the case that the rising and falling levels of service and expectation are deeply discouraging to the community as a whole. Without the expectation that the library will reliably exist, it is difficult, probably impossible, to achieve the kinds of long-term benefits that accrue from consistent engagement with materials that promote literacy development in communities.*
- *Library attendance itself is a facet of cultural practice that requires long-term availability of the service to become established as an ongoing pattern. Once established, multiplier effects emerge, so that younger clients are engaged on the pattern of, and through the actions of, older patrons. Without an established and regular pattern of opportunity to access the LKC, it is difficult for clients to start building the LKC into their patterns of life.*

- *It is common for people to move on from communities and replacing staff can be difficult so local training becomes a critical factor in creating sustainable services, such as LKCs.*
- *The capacity of NTL to train more than one layer of staff capable of running the LKC services is critical. It is important to have well-trained staff in LKCs, capable of exercising discretion and judgement well in excess of minimal requirements for these positions. Creating these conditions is likely to remain a challenge for the program.*
- *The effort to train local staff must be a central concern for questions of sustainability.*
- *As the implementation phases are rolled out across the NT, the need for training programs for staff will grow and the need for additional staff is also likely to grow if services are to be successfully sustained.*

Collection Development

- *Collection development is an important part of library services. In LKCs it provides an area of challenge.*
- *It is a challenge to provide the currency and variety of material that would reward a library user who invested time and interest in using the service. Reference holdings at the two library sites shows a fairly low rate of currency.*
- *There is much that could be done by NTL to mediate external sources of electronic information so that local access to relevant information is easier and quicker. Identifying local interest and needs assists in providing better access, provides a basis for teaching information literacy skills, connects to local interest in using ICTs, builds confidence to explore other sources. Most importantly, it tunes NTL/LKC staff into local interests in ways that directs local collection development of external sources of information.*
- *In smaller, remote facilities the task of supplying both continuity (the ability to come back to a source) and variety (to encounter new sources) is much harder to achieve, but remains a necessity if a culture of library use is to be fostered and maintained.*

2. Intellectual Property Rights and Indigenous Knowledge

- *Whilst questions around intellectual property and Indigenous knowledge are diverse, the assessment primarily focused on the urgent practical issues involving copyright within the LKCs.*

- *One of the fundamental features contributing to the success of the LKCs is the underlying intention to make culturally significant material more accessible to Indigenous people, especially in regions that have historically been under-serviced in terms of libraries and library access. This presents certain challenges not just in logistics, for example providing sustainable services to regional and remote communities, but also in managing the differing kinds of rights that may vest with such material.*
- *It is significant that in the context of the LKCs, storage and delivery of copyright material through digital technology is providing an important mechanism for facilitating increased access by Indigenous people within their community. But this presents its own difficulties in relation to intellectual property. These difficulties have two separate but interrelated intellectual property components: one relates to the material itself, and the second concerns the digital delivery of that material through the compilation of databases to hold the material.*
- *One of the issues confronting NTL and the future of LKCs revolves around the issue of intellectual property management. As LKCs grow and develop and more material is added to the database through digitisation processes, it would be in the interests of both the NTL and the LKCs to have some kind of over-riding policies about intellectual property management.*
- *The creation of databases of Indigenous knowledge raises a set of intellectual property issues and concerns that have not been fully articulated or addressed either nationally or internationally.*
- *Many cultural/collecting institutions that manage material but do not own the copyright have developed risk management strategies in relation to intellectual property. In short these strategies are designed to address issues that may arise in relation to using copyright material where the copyright owner is deceased or cannot be located. The idea is to manage the risk where potential infringement may arise.*

3. Information Technologies (IT)

- *The information technology issues associated with LKCs are a critical factor in the provision of relevant, useful, and sustainable services within LKCs. Information and communication technologies determine the quality of provision and access to both electronic information sources (via the Internet and the NTL iPortal) and meaningful community engagement with the Our Story databases.*
- *Currently each community visited has numerous Telstra satellite Internet connections. It would be better to have fewer broadband satellite connections and a community intranet or local area network (LAN) connecting the computer systems and databases of the main stakeholders e.g., the LKC, School, Arts Centre, Health Care Centre, and Council etc. This approach may also reduce the number of servers required in the community. This is an issue that has implications for broader community/regional planning. Although it is an issue*

that is outside of LKCs' immediate concerns, it does have implications for community capacity building and creating efficiencies in the area of IT infrastructure.

- *It would be an advantage if Darwin-based NTL staff who are supporting LKCs have wide-ranging skills from IT (simple programming) to multimedia to management. It would also be helpful for establishing future directions if NTL staff were able to access information on the latest relevant technologies, for example, digital libraries, metadata standards, digital formats, Indigenous Knowledge Management systems, genealogy and mapping software, multi-lingual software etc.*
- *In the short-term, sustainability will require trade-offs between optimum functionality for management of Indigenous Knowledge systems (database features), useability from a staff and community perspective, and funding and human resource capacities of NTL and local government bodies.*

4. Literacy, Information Literacy and Lifelong Learning

- *Commitment to literacy, information literacy and lifelong learning is a core value but often-invisible function of the library profession around the world.*
- *Given the early stage of implementation of the LKCs visited, it is difficult to evaluate the contribution of LKCs to literacy development in communities. Although any engagement with text, media and technology could be said to support literacy development, it is not possible to comment on any effect or outcome beyond reporting the types of engagement currently occurring in LKCs visited. The focus is therefore on the potential within the LKC model to contribute to literacy development and to make some suggestions for future activity that ensures these activities are clearly articulated to the functions and capacities of LKCs, and to community information needs, as well as complementary to other community literacy activity, including in the formal education sector.*
- *There is a need to understand literacy, not as a singular construct but as multiliteracies. The concept of multiliteracies recognises that in the digital age knowledge is increasingly represented in multiple modes and that 'texts' are increasingly complex systems of meaning-making, where print sits alongside the visual, audio and spatial forms of representation.*
- *The Evaluation Team cautions against the tendency to view literacy simply as a set of technical skills that people acquire. Rather, they would encourage the conceptualisation of literacy as a set of social practices. Viewing literacy as a practice shifts the focus to what people do with literacy to the types of activities where literacies have a role, including those activities that are embedded in broader social and cultural priorities and goals of communities.*
- *This is particularly useful for NTL and LKCs because it encourages the development of an approach that begins with considering how LKCs, through*

their collections and services can support people (individuals, interest groups, organisations, agencies, and so forth) already involved in literacy practices designed to facilitate particular community goals. It also encourages LKCs to consider how to engage communities in literacy activities not currently practised in communities but which may contribute to the development of community capacities.

- *Information literacy is a key competency for independent use of information services, including those offered by LKCs. Due to changing technologies and the exponential growth of knowledge and information, the abilities needed to identify, find, and use information are continually expanding in line with the changing formats and technologies for knowledge and information production, storage and delivery.*
- *In the context of LKCs, multiple literacies, including information literacy, are fundamental for lifelong learning. “The capacity for and predisposition towards learning is largely determined during the early years of a person’s life. Accordingly attention must be paid to creating and encouraging those circumstances that are linked to the orientation towards learning...”¹.*
- *This provides support for NTL’s decision to engage in early childhood literacy development as a way of developing an early habit of engagement with LKC services and as a way of contributing to broader literacy goals. It points up the need for NTL to actively create the circumstances that will encourage engagement of all ages with all LKC services, including those where low levels of literacies prevent successful and satisfying engagements that will facilitate learning.*
- *This also suggests a role for LKCs to support the needs of those already oriented towards learning—those already engaged in formal or workplace learning or those motivated to investigate further education pathways.*
- *NTL has identified the early literacy area as a ‘gap’ that is not a focus of attention by educational agencies in communities and an area of early childhood literacy development to which they could make a contribution. Focused activity with this age group also encourages continued use of the library as children grow and develops parental skills and understanding of the oral-literate connection as well.*
- *Consistently working to expand resources that occur in relation to knowledge documentation or application of local knowledge in contemporary projects necessitates links with other organisations and outlines a process for LKC staff to follow up the needs of other community organisations and projects.*

¹ PC Candy, *Information literacy and lifelong learning*, white paper prepared for UNESCO, the US National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, and the National Forum on Information Literacy, for use at the Information Literacy Meeting of Experts, Prague, The Czech Republic, 2002.

- *Almost all the people who met with the evaluation team in the three communities visited commented on the difficulty Indigenous people have engaging with external information. Not knowing what information is relevant or available, or where it might be found and low levels of English literacy make engagement and thus interest in external information sources a particular challenge in remote communities.*
- *There is also scope for NTL through their LKCs to consider the development of a process to identify the external information needs of local organisations so that LKCs begin to be perceived as local institutions that facilitate access to all sorts of information and knowledge and to promote the perception that LKCs are an important community resource.*
- *Children's services are an important area because they encourage the development of literacy as a social practice, associating it with pleasure, leisure, and personal interests rather than the set curriculum and performance demands of formal schooling. Lap Sit and toddler sessions also necessarily involve parents and so develop parental skills and understanding about early reading behaviours.*
- *Early childhood activities are designed to encourage return visits and establish a culture of library engagement that can progress through childhood. Although arguments can be put that these literacy engagements are not part of traditional Indigenous societies, nevertheless they are important building blocks for preparing children for formal schooling. They do not need to replace traditional early learning activity but provide an additional layer that has important implications for future educational success.*
- *In some places, Lap Sit programs have provided a vehicle for other community or maternal education. Local councils in other places have used sessions to promote programs such as water use, recycling, pets, road safety etc. Links with other organisations could identify opportunities for other organisations to disseminate information to mothers with small children. The organisation of visits to LKCs by other organisations where women congregate for meals, nutrition, health or parenting advice could also be an excellent pathway where informal early literacy preparation is seen as one component of child development and preparation for lifelong learning, including formal learning in schools.*

5. The Fit With Broader Policy Goals

- *The relevance of public library service provision to community and individual needs and interests, their currency (i.e. how they are valued) in the community, and the utility of the LKC model to work effectively across different communities and in an inter-connected service context, and most importantly its sustainability as a service, all depend to some extent on how LKCs fit with the bigger policy goals that are being applied in these remote contexts.*

- *The Northern Territory Government has moved towards “a whole-of-government, whole-of-community regional planning approach to develop opportunities for sustainable growth in regions. Another important aspect of the NT Government’s agenda is partnerships. This complements the Federal Government’s COAG agenda for ‘joined-up’ services, and shared responsibility agreements (SRAs).*
- *The LKCs were clearly evidence of a commitment to provide social infrastructure and services but did not appear to be viewed as a key essential service that could be incorporated into regional plans to develop, and over time deliver, more focused or targeted ‘bridging’ services in the areas of knowledge, information, literacy and basic skills development, that could make a contribution to community building or strengthening capacities in communities. Although there were differences between communities, generally LKCs were a low priority compared to essential services, for example, housing, leaking taps, etc. Their role in the bigger plan was ‘incidental’ and ‘recreational’ rather than strategic.*
- *The immediately observable effect of this was that the community crisis in physical infrastructure restricted Councils’ ability to satisfactorily provide quality physical space for the activities that the LKCs want to develop and provide.*
- *Physical facilities are an important factor in the successful workings of LKCs, particularly as the nature of services provided by the model requires a multipurpose space that can house groups or individuals using the local knowledge databases, Internet and computer-based activities including group activities, the viewing of video/audio and multimedia materials, floor activities for small children—reading, educational play, and other children’s activities.*
- *In the long-term the development of a community culture of engagement with information services will be facilitated more effectively by as much central co-location of information services as possible. The ‘natural’ alignments between different projects, stakeholders, centres, agencies and institutions within the community were identified but these linkages and partnerships were not developing in a way that would better connect the efforts of those organisations working to similar ends or struggling with similar challenges. In all three sites, this stood out given the push to develop partnerships and joined up services and make best use of resources.*
- *The success of the LKC and the progressive stance on knowledge and information of the Council presents Wadeye as a best-case scenario. The Thamarrurr Regional Council recognised the knowledge and information gap at the interface of external and local knowledge systems namely, what Indigenous people need to know of external positions and what non-Indigenous outsiders need to know about Indigenous positions before there can be a productive engagement or dialogue between the two sets of understanding.*

- *There is a critical need for Regional Plans to clearly articulate the role that LKCs can play to develop community engagement with this information and contribute to community building and literacy development in those communities. There is room for NTL to articulate much more clearly at a higher planning level what sort of partnerships would assist community engagement with LKC activities to contribute to community building and literacy skills.*
- *Along with ICT infrastructure issues, all these challenges could be managed more effectively if NTL/LKCs were involved in policy and planning at higher levels in the governance chain. That is, if there is a partnership or linkage between schools and LKCs, then that should be articulated and facilitated at a higher planning level as well as on the ground and be less dependent on the interests and personalities of individuals on the ground.*
- *In view of the hard work being done in communities in difficult circumstances, it was disappointing to observe that the role that LKCs could play in community building was not more uniformly clear. The engagement with knowledge and information in communities and between local communities and external communities, by individuals of different age and interest groups, is fundamental to increasing Indigenous and community capacity.*
- *The sustainability of the types of public library provision that the LKC model offers is dependent on the effectiveness of current policy strategies to build community capacities and yet NTL expertise, in terms of how it can be utilised more effectively at local levels to contribute to these areas, is not part of that agenda at the planning level.*

Evaluation Background

Commissioned by Ms Jo McGill, Director Northern Territory Library, the Evaluation was to provide an external view of the LKC concept in its early developmental stage, provide a snapshot of the progress to date, and to gain some baseline information to guide its future advancement.

The Evaluation is a strategic process in the initial implementation phase to ensure clear articulation between the Northern Territory Library's policy objectives and the Northern Territory Government's plan for development and capacity building in the regions, in:

- developing communities through libraries;
- connecting people to information;
- preserving NT documentary and cultural heritage;
- helping people to learn; and
- developing services and service delivery partnerships to ensure the information needs of all individuals and institutions within the community can be met.

The research team collaborated to evaluate the early development of LKCs and to recommend items for further consideration and future development.

Methodology

In their evaluation of the LKC model, the research team employed a mixed-method to allow a purposely-broad approach. The Evaluation compared data gathered from visits to three LKCs, Wadeye, Angurugu and Galiwin'ku. The data was gained through interviews with a range of community people, staff and stakeholders, by undertaking a review of the NTL website and a range of associated information and documentation sources including materials provided by NTL.

The Evaluation is presented in a number of sections, beginning with issues that are general across all functions of the LKC and moving to more detailed analysis, within the focus areas of investigation of different members of the evaluation team. The Evaluation outlines the salient issues, followed by a list of recommendations. The sections are:

- General Issues
- Indigenous Knowledge & Intellectual Property
- Information and Communication Technologies
- Literacy and Lifelong Learning
- The Fit within the Community and with Broader Policy Goals
- Recommendations



Appendix 2 – Acknowledgements

The **Evaluation Research Team** was made up of an impressive assemblage and we would like to thank them for their professionalism, commitment to the project:

1. Professor N Martin Nakata - Jumbunna IHL, University of Technology Sydney
2. Ms Vicky Nakata - Jumbunna IHL, University of Technology Sydney
3. Dr Jane Anderson - Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
4. Mr Victor Hart - Oodgeroo Unit, Queensland University of Technology
5. Dr Jane Hunter - Distributed Systems Technology Centre, University of Queensland
6. Ms Sonia Smallacombe - School of Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Charles Darwin University
7. Ms Cate Richmond – Assistant Director, Libraries and Knowledge Centres, Northern Territory Library
8. Dr Brian Lloyd - Northern Territory Library
9. Ms Gibby Maynard - Northern Territory Library

The **LKC Working Group** was convened following receipt of the Evaluation. The group was responsible for reviewing the Evaluation, identifying the recommended outcomes and formulating an official response to the Evaluation. We would like to thank the group for their time and commitment in this process:

1. Ms Cate Richmond, Assistant Director Libraries and Knowledge Centres, NTL (Working Group Facilitator)
2. Ms Melissa Reiter, Manager Policy & Research, NTL (Working Group Facilitator/Editor, Official Response)
3. Ms Jo McGill, Director, NTL (Sponsor)
4. Mr David Murtagh, LKC Project Officer, NTL
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