



## Council Strategy

# Albany Public Library Strategic Plan

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## Version Control

Version	Date	Status	Distribution	Comment
01	15/12/09	Adopted	Internal/External	OCM 15/12/09 Item No. 14.12.4
02	24/06/10	Revised	Internal/External	Formatting only.

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## 1.0 Executive Summary

This strategic plan has been developed by the Albany Public Library (APL) as a documented management tool over the next four years. It has been designed to be both dynamic (for planning, implementation and review) and practical (supporting the growth and further development of service provision and revenue raising).

The APL provides a resource and information service which is unique within the City of Albany. This service is managed as a partnership between the City of Albany and the State Library of Western Australia (SLWA). Focussed on providing equity of access to library and information services which support and enhance quality of life for all members of the community, we promote a positive environment dedicated to the empowerment of community members in their search to meet personal, social, recreational, occupational and educational goals. This focus on 'life-long' learning underpins the ability of an individual and the community to achieve their potential and contribute meaningfully to society.

As a gateway to the world of information, the APL provides access to a wide range of material for loan and reference including print, audio-visual and electronic formats. We also offer a range of special programs, services, activities and events to patrons and the general community. The APL houses the unique Albany Historical Collection which stores the collected history of Albany since settlement.

The APL operates from its main street location at 221 York Street, Albany and a Wellstead Public Library branch, situated in the Wellstead township. The APL is also the Regional Library for the Great Southern and provides additional support and services to the 15 local Shire libraries in our region.

## 2.0 Strategic Context

The APL acknowledges and reflects the values outlined and implicit in the City of Albany's 'Albany Insight – Beyond 2020' Corporate Plan.

### **The Library is dedicated to supporting:**

- a connected, informed and resilient community
- community participation and involvement
- affordable and accessible services that meet community expectations
- quality of life for all Albany residents.

### **Specifically:**

**Goal 1:** Lifestyle and Environment - focus on catering for young adults and valuing, celebrating and supporting cultural and artistic communities.

**Goal 2:** Economic Development – focus on our unique cultural heritage and supporting learning opportunities/vocational development

**Goal 3:** City Centre – focus on being a vibrant cultural hub that is family-friendly

**Goal 4:** Governance - focus on delivering excellent community services that meet the needs and interests of our diverse communities.

Across all aspects of Library service provision our core values of openness, honesty, accountability, equity of access and social justice are inherent.

### **3.0 Vision**

To be a Library committed to:

- providing an indispensable and highly valued cultural destination - a physical and virtual 'community hub'.
- supporting access to resources for information, learning, self-development, enterprise and recreation.
- creating a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment dedicated to enabling the development of 'life-long' learning skills.
- collecting and preserving our social and documentary heritage for current and future generations.

### **4.0 Mission**

The Albany Public Library's mission over the next three years is to enrich the lives of the local community by:

- delivering a high-level of responsiveness to changing community needs, achieving greater than a 70% satisfaction rating with Library services as specified in the COA Community Scorecard survey.
- maintaining 85-90% community membership of our Library.
- achieving 3 more Library outreach programs by 2012.
- providing an innovative gateway to information and resources via IT and systems integration - increasing APL website hits and usage by 25% by 2010.

### **5.0 Strategic Focus Areas**

#### **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES:**

The library service provided by the Albany Public Library focuses on delivery within the context of promoting and developing information literacy across the community. We cater for a population ranging in age from newborns to 100+, providing resource and service support for personal use, educational and community programs.

#### **Our key objectives are:**

1. Provide high-quality customer service sustained by reliable and accessible systems and system support.
2. Secure adequate funding to maintain optimal service provision.
3. Market APL services and successes to raise public perception and perceived value (employing strategies and targeting opportunities which increase general interest in, and community awareness of, the services we provide).
4. Engage in collaborative partnerships, programs, events and outreach projects to foster community cohesion and involvement.

### **Strategies identified to meet these objectives include:**

- Provision of systems and system supports which enable flexible and reliable access to our range of products and services.
- Active commitment to staff training and on-going professional development in all aspects of system and service provision and quality assurance.
- Focus on ensuring value for money to the community by providing sufficient quality resources and services, which are readily and easily accessible, whilst maintaining peak operational efficiency.
- Raise and maintain community awareness and value of Library services, resources and programs through active promotion in-house, via the media, events and collaborative programs with local business and community groups/organisations.
- Actively encourage community feedback and involvement through both physical and virtual means – programs and sites.

### **Systems and systems support provision**

All aspects of Library service provision are impacted by new and developing technologies. Stock-item information is held in on-line catalogues which must vigilantly be kept current and accurate. Access to these catalogues can be in-house or off-site, necessitating a broad range of access points and the provision of support to maximise the ease of use to members and non-members with vastly varying levels of experience and confidence. Likewise, all aspects of circulation control and inter-library lending rely on top-quality software systems, regular updates, flexible systems management and reliable support. In addition, large numbers of members and non-members rely on the Library to provide free access to reference and research facilities as well as fee-payable access to other on-line services.

The Albany Public Library prioritises systems support, both software/ IT specific and personal, very highly. Updates are applied regularly, faults identified and rectified and evolving developments closely monitored for possible inclusion and improvement to service. Equipment is maintained to the highest level and off-site access is under constant review. Digitisation of older records is currently a primary concern – in particular the digitisation of the Albany History Collection. Special collections of this sort represent extremely high value to locals and are of great interest and use to researchers world-wide.

### **Staff development**

Staff development is an integral part of quality service provision. The ever-changing nature of Library services and the way these services can be accessed requires that all staff are equipped with the range of skills and tools to manage existing and developing processes, applications and operations. Changes occur daily, general and specific tasks are not limited to individuals and multi-skilling is an expectation. Specialised 'workroom' tasks are complex and require additional levels of training which include attendance to financial and legal requirements.

The Albany Public Library has developed a comprehensive induction and review process for all staff which includes a 'Skills Audit' checklist, provision of an experienced team mentor and general/workroom supervision, support and training. The value of regular and on-going customer service training is also acknowledged and actively facilitated, as are the benefits of lateral training and professional development opportunities focussing on service-specific and general service enhancement and best practice. Communication is key. All Library staff attend fortnightly staff meetings and issues which arise during the interim are discussed within teams and via e-mail.

## **Value for money**

The Albany Public Library currently boasts a membership of 26,000 local members out of a population of approximately 33,000. Membership is only maintained at levels like this where service provision is deemed to be of very high quality, resources meet the needs and reflect the changing demands of the population and equipment/facilities are aligned and fully operational. Since 2002 the cost per Library member has only increased by \$3.58. The cost per capita has increased by \$7.90 – modest rises, given general increases attributable to increases in the cost of living and operational expenses. During this time, the number of library transactions performed by staff members has increased, as has the range of services and programs available.

Community Scorecard results reflect the high-quality customer service provided by staff at the APL across the board. From the patron's face-to-face experience at the circulation counter through to all related aspects of service provision, our staff work within established frameworks to provide consistent and responsive standards. Collection management is a major focus, with librarians constantly evaluating and cross-referencing stock usage and community requirements. Resourcing priorities are developed according to existing stock bases and financial constraints. Programs to support early literacy, community development and life-long learning skills are integrated into general service provision, while additional out-reach and promotional programs are funded by grants.

Equipment required to support peak operational efficiency for both public and staff use is maintained at optimal levels through an on-going program of maintenance, replacement and budget forecasting.

## **Community awareness and value of Library services**

To ensure sustainability and continued value, it is vital that the community is aware of, recognises the need for and makes use of, Library services, resources and programs. The Library is a unique local resource - offering something for everyone, from newborns to 100 years+ to share, take away or enjoy in-house – all at no cost (provided conditions of borrowing are met). Changes to service provision, opening hours and/or resources must be widely advertised through a variety of media to ensure maximum coverage and minimum disruption. It is also valuable to have processes in place to collect quantitative feedback on customer satisfaction to ensure community needs are being met and respond to changes in demand and technology. Typically, Library demand increases during times of economic downturn.

To foster, develop and raise the profile of the Library and the services we provide we employ active promotion in-house (recent upgrades include the addition of an LCD screen in our foyer area and a smaller one at the Circulation counter), via the media (regular radio appearances on local and community radio stations, newspaper reports and events coverage), community, literary and special events and collaborative programs with local business and community groups and organisations. The APL has an 'Events' list where members are contacted directly via e-mail and informed of upcoming library-related events and send out regular updates to all members regarding improvements and/or alterations to service provision. To increase awareness and demand for our resources we employ several marketing techniques such as the 'new arrivals' display and niche collections.

## **Community feedback and involvement**

Traditionally an area not comprehensively targeted, yet one which has significant implications in terms of the usefulness and intrinsic value of the Library collection and services provided. This is an area ripe for development at a time when rapid changes in information and communications technology allow for novel and faster-response methods of information collection and sharing. The focus on community involvement is another area where past structures can be re-evaluated and whole new networks established, leading to on-going sympathetic partnerships and increasing the Library's genuine worth to the community. For the Library to be considered a true 'community hub' it must be acknowledged to provide a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment not only physically but also in essence.

To encourage and collect regular and quantifiable feedback on performance, services and areas of emerging interest and/or concern, new procedures need to be established to supplement those already in existence (COA 'Community Scorecard Survey'). Meanwhile, those already in existence need to be reviewed and refined so as to ensure they capture all relevant aspects of service provision and community support. APL on-line forums and interactive sites which promote reading, information literacy and our services need to be established, monitored and managed. Bringing the general community into the physical space of the Library should be fostered through a range of activities such as exhibits, information sharing workshops, presentations, literary events and on-going community-programs. Outreach programs and collaborative partnerships (such as the Better Beginnings and Finding My Place programs) should be maintained and additional opportunities identified, further developed and promoted.

## 6.0 Key Action Plan

### 1. Provide high-quality customer service sustained by reliable and accessible systems and system support.

1.1	In-house staff training, induction and skills audits
Timeframe	Current, on-going
Resources	Time
Officer	Team - mentor, supervisor
References	

#### Strategic Gap Analysis

Current performance meets expectations however time limitations due to increases in workload/staff reduction could compromise existing standards.

1.2	External training and professional development
Timeframe	Current, on-going
Resources	\$6000 (09/10 draft budget)
Officer	Library Officers, Youth Services & Adult Services Librarian, Local History Co-ordinator, On-line Services Co-ordinator, Special Projects Officer
References	

#### Strategic Gap Analysis

Current performance meets expectations however budget restraints may compromise full achievement of this objective.

1.3	Equipment and system software – maintenance & development
Timeframe	Current, on-going
Resources	\$20,000 (09/10 draft budget)
Officer	On-line services Co-ordinator, Manager
References	

#### Strategic Gap Analysis

Current performance meets existing needs. Focus on more pro-active integration of technology as part of general promotion and service provision will require further development in this area.

1.4	Digitisation
Timeframe	2012
Resources	Time, grants funding.
Officer	Local History Co-ordinator, On-line Services Co-ordinator, Special Projects Officer, Library Officers, Volunteers
References	AHC Operational Framework 2008

## Strategic Gap Analysis

Current performance does not meet expectations with vast quantities of AHC material requiring indexing prior to digitisation. On-line databases need reviewing and redevelopment with particular focus on emerging technologies, optimal accessibility and potential revenue capture.

### 2. Secure adequate funding to maintain optimal service provision

<b>2.1 Supply compelling quantitative data for COA budget</b>	
Timeframe	Current, on-going
Resources	Time, KPI & Scorecard information, administration
Officer	Manager
References	KPI and City Scorecard documents – past and future

## Strategic Gap Analysis

Current performance meets expectations however in an increasingly competitive arena of City service provision, where Council seeks to meet increasing demands with limited finances, the relevance and impact of the Library service to the community must be readily demonstrable.

<b>2.2 Seek alternative funding opportunities</b>	
Timeframe	Current, on-going
Resources	Other funding bodies – government & non-government
Officer	Special Projects Officer, Manager
References	

## Strategic Gap Analysis

Current performance is developing. A spreadsheet of grants and grant-providers is currently under construction, highlighting the nature and parameters of funding offered. Future projects and specialised equipment/expertise requirements are cross-referenced against this spreadsheet to maximise potential cost-savings and service improvements.

<b>2.3 Create a Business/Marketing Plan</b>	
Timeframe	2010
Resources	
Officer	Manager
References	

## Strategic Gap Analysis

Current performance does not meet expectations. Although traditionally not revenue-focussed, there is a need for the APL to create and sustain greater revenue income. A fresh, new Business Plan needs to be developed, which moves away from passive income management from fees & charges to the development of a pro-active document which captures as many revenue-raising opportunities as practicable.

<b>2.4 Increase APL revenue by 50% by 2012</b>	
Timeframe	2010-2012
Resources	University agreements, History postcards/books, History enquiries, pay e-mail
Officer	Manager, On-line Services Co-ordinator, Special Projects Officer

<b>2.4</b>	<b>Increase APL revenue by 50% by 2012</b>
Timeframe	2010-2012
References	UWA Agreement (currently under negotiation) Curtin Billing Structure (in development), fees & charges document

### Strategic Gap Analysis

Current performance does not meet revised expectations. In the 7 years since the APL has participated in the provision of this joint-use service with the UWA Albany campus, student numbers and resources have increased annually. It is expected that by 2009/10 the initial capital contribution from UWA will be exhausted and for the first time, actual revenue will be made from this arrangement.

In addition, there will be a stronger focus on methodically marketing the products and services of the AHC and capitalising on this unique collection.

### 3. Market APL services and successes to raise public perception and perceived value (employing strategies and targeting opportunities which increase general interest in, and community awareness of, the services we provide).

<b>3.1</b>	<b>Community events at least once a month</b>
Timeframe	Current, on-going
Resources	Area, chairs, specific equipment for presentations/ exhibitions/ workshops, time, presenters (availability)
Officer	Youth Services & Adult Services Librarian, Manager, Library Officers
References	

### Strategic Gap Analysis

Current performance has been impacted by recent staff loss impacting on level of program provision. A new, less demanding program is being developed. Meanwhile, highly successful regular in-house programs (including Rhyme-time, Story-time, Finding My Place and Children's Book Week) continue unaffected and are performing well.

<b>3.2</b>	<b>Media coverage – monthly (radio/newspaper)</b>
Timeframe	Current, on-going
Resources	Local radio stations and newspapers
Officer	Manager
References	

### Strategic Gap Analysis

Current performance meets expectations but requires continuous investment of time and material for broadcast of worth and community interest. This relies on the Library's capacity to continue the provision of services, events and programs which form the basis of media promotion.

<b>3.3</b>	<b>AHC enquiry service - upgrade</b>
Timeframe	2012
Resources	Albany History Collection (housed within the APL), Libraries Australia, websites
Officer	Local History Co-ordinator, On-line Services Co-ordinator, Special Projects Officer, Manager
References	AHC Operational Framework 2008

## Strategic Gap Analysis

Current performance does not meet expectations. Formalisation and digitisation of this collection is a priority in order to make the information accessible on-line and thus, increase speed of retrieval and revenue-raising potential. Marketing the extensive range of material available and refining the equipment with which to access it has the potential to markedly improve the cost-effectiveness of this unique Library collection and input significant funds.

### 4. Community engagement through collaborative partnerships, programs, events and out-reach projects.

4.1 Website upgrade & interactive forum development	
Timeframe	May 2010
Resources	
Officer	On-line Services Co-ordinator, Youth Services & Adult Services Librarian, Local History Co-ordinator, Special Projects Officer
References	

## Strategic Gap Analysis

Current performance does not meet expectations. This is an area which has been neglected due, in part, to IT specific barriers. It is now a priority area for extending the Library's influence outside its physical boundaries, collecting quantitative information and encouraging general community interaction and feedback through the provision of reader's forums, Library surveys and events notification.

4.2 Out-reach programs & community liaison	
Timeframe	Current, on-going
Resources	Community partners/sponsors/facilitators, time.
Officer	Youth Services & Adult Services Librarian, Local History Co-ordinator, Special Projects Officer
References	

## Strategic Gap Analysis

Current performance meets expectations however there is room for further development. The greater the degree of networking and partnership with community organisations, schools and other government departments, the more responsive and aware the APL is of needs and gaps in service provision. Fostering strong liaisons which have demonstrable mutual benefit required time and consistency.

## **7.0 Performance Measurement**

### **1. Provide high-quality customer service sustained by reliable and accessible systems and system support.**

- Monitor the results of staff training and professional development and cross-reference against community survey responses and performance reviews - ongoing
- Re-evaluate systems needs and support suitability – ongoing
- Complete AHC digitisation project – 2012

### **2. Secure adequate funding to maintain optimal service provision**

- Monitor and evaluate and respond to KPI's (as per COA document) - annual
- Achieve additional funding from external sources – ongoing
- Increase APL revenue by 50% - 2012

### **3. Market APL services and successes to raise public perception and perceived value (employing strategies and targeting opportunities which increase general interest in, and community awareness of, the services we provide).**

- Review Community Events Program attendances- monthly
- Evaluate and modify Community events program as required - annually
- Maintain a regular commitment to media appearances - ongoing
- Increase AHC enquiry usage and revenue – 2012

### **4. Community engagement through collaborative partnerships, programs, events and out-reach projects.**

- Monitor existing programs, re-evaluate as necessary - ongoing
- Monitor APL website and internet hits - ongoing
- Increase APL website and usage by 25% - 2010
- Achieve 3 more Library outreach programs - 2012

## **8.0 Review**

Manager – Library Services to review on or before 31/12/2012

## **9.0 Associated Documents**

- The City of Albany's 'Albany Insight – Beyond 2020' Corporate Plan
- The Albany Public Library Business Plan (under development)