

A CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS LEADING TO THE FORMATION OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES NEW SOUTH WALES

For the past seven years, the two public library associations have been attempting to negotiate the creation of a single association to represent all public libraries in the State.

The latest round of negotiations commenced almost two years ago when Public Libraries NSW – Country prepared a proposal for an amalgamated association. See [linked file](#) Proposal For Amalgamated Library Association For New South Wales

Following the circulation of this proposal, Cr Graham Smith and Cr Les Lambert met with Cr Win Gaffney at the Sydney Masonic Centre on the Sunday afternoon prior to the 2009 SWITCH Conference.

From this meeting an agreed model between the two executives was circulated for consideration by the two associations. See [linked file](#) Negotiated Proposal for an Amalgamated Library Association

On April 13 2010, the combined executives of the two associations met at the State Library to consider proposals to take the matter forward.

The result of this meeting was to include a statement of objectives, and to adopt a much reduced executive structure in line with the recommendations from Public Libraries NSW-Metropolitan. This structure was once again circulated.

Representatives of the two associations met following the June 2010 meeting of the Public Libraries Consultative Committee, when further changes to the executive structure were requested by PLNSW-M representatives. These were conceded by the PLNSW-C representatives in the interest of trying to achieve unification. See [linked file](#) Revised Proposal for an Amalgamated Library Association.

This model was circulated once again, with both Associations agreeing to seek a response from the next scheduled meetings of the two organisations.

The 2010 AGM of PLNSW-C considered the revised proposal and agreed to the following resolution:

If there is no agreement at the August 2010 meeting

1. That a new association be established known as Public Libraries NSW
2. That all councils in NSW be invited to join this association as the peak body representing, supporting and enhancing a sustainable Public Library sector which enriches the whole NSW community.
3. That the model for the operation of the new association follow the model outlined in Motion #1 of this Annual General Meeting save for changes to the Office Bearers of the proposed new association, the day to day operation of the association and the annual conference.

Cr Smith emailed Cr Gaffney during August 2010, referring to the negotiations in the following terms:

Our AGM authorised further discussions on the one association but has drawn a line on proposed structure, instructing our executive that the last proposal circulated is as far as we are authorised to

proceed on that matter. The delegates were of the opinion that PLC had generously compromised on many important issues, and that this was the limit of their flexibility. I hope that we can meet on August 30, prior to the afternoon meeting of PLCC with Library Council to have those discussions, after your quarterly meeting has considered the matter.

The August 30 meeting did not take place as PLNSW-M had not yet considered the revised model.

No further communication on the matter was received until October 2010 when a proposal was received from PLNSW-M seeking further amendments to the model. See [linked file](#) PLM Draft – A Future One Association for the NSW Public Library Network 29 September 2010.

Cr Smith undertook an extensive direct consultation with PLNSW-C Zones during October and November, where further concessions were unanimously rejected.

Accordingly in December 2010 Cr Smith formally notified Cr Gaffney of PLNSW-C's response to the latest proposal and withdrawal from negotiations. The text of that letter can be read [here](#) One Association Response 6 Dec 2010.

In accordance with the AGM resolution, a Special General Meeting of PLNSW-C was convened on March 4 to consider constitutional changes which would open membership to councils and libraries statewide and rename the association Public Libraries NSW. This resolution was carried unanimously.

Throughout this process PLNSW-C has attempted to advance the interests of libraries statewide, and to bring its history of effective collaboration, support for professional development and successful lobbying to bear for the whole network.

The recent launch of the Kath Knowles Young Leaders Award is testimony to the commitment to the future of the profession.

The recent policy promises by both the Labor Party and the Coalition are a direct response to the lobbying campaign mounted by the Association over the last two years [see these documents [here](#)].

The Association did not wish to take the final course outlined, but was not prepared to lose the effective structure and culture which has served the network so well for the last twenty two years. The Association now offers this successful model to all councils and libraries as an opportunity to further develop an effective representative body which will prosecute the case for public libraries with an incoming government.

Councillors and library managers who wish to clarify any of the issues surrounding this process are invited to contact Cr Graham Smith Chairman of PLNSW-C prior to March 27 or Cr Les Lambert, Acting Chairman of PLNSW-C between March 27 and May 18.