

Proposal to Establish a Shared Service Provider

Victorian Government Shared Library Service Proposal

response from



14 May 2009

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Proposal to Establish a Shared Service Provider: Victorian Government Shared Library Service Proposal: A 'draft for consultation'* was released by the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) on 21 April 2009.

The Government's proposal presented in the draft for consultation provides a statement of the rationale and intended benefits, reproduced at Appendix A.

This alternate proposal addresses the rationale and intended benefits.

ViGLA is a cooperative association of Government Agency libraries. On behalf of its members it has prepared an alternative proposal for the development of a Victorian Government Shared Library Service that meets the rationale and benefits listed by the consultation proposal.

ViGLA is encouraged by the Government's commitment to enhancing access to library services through the proposed establishment of a Library Strategic Projects Unit (SPU) as a development and planning entity exploring the cost-benefits of a Whole of Government (WoG) library service. This recognition by the Government of the need to plan improved access to library services for Government employees is commendable.

However ViGLA believes that the work of the SPU needs to be completed prior to any changes to employment arrangements for Government library staff.

Making costly changes including moving libraries before: developing a fully costed model of a WoG library service; consulting with stakeholders and key users groups; and developing Service Level Agreements with Government departments and agencies exposes the Government to significant financial risk and the departments to the risk of service deterioration. The DTF model fails to take account of current multi-jurisdictional arrangements that embody whole of Government shared services in a much broader context than presented in the proposal.

ViGLA's alternative proposal, developed with input from its members, identifies the risks in the Government proposal and makes recommendations on a way to move forward the development of Victorian Government library services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

ViGLA in principle endorses the creation of a Whole of Government library service, but strongly recommends the following actions:

- 1. DTF establish the Library Strategic Projects Unit within the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) with the task of planning a WoG library service model.**
- 2. Government library staff remain as employees of their host departments pending the completion of the work of the Library Strategic Projects Unit (SPU).**
- 3. Potential co-location of libraries and collections be addressed as part of the SPU, enacted following identification of benefits and mitigation of risk.**
- 4. The establishment of the Library Operations Manager position be deferred until the outcome of the SPU projects are complete.**

INTRODUCTION

ViGLA, established in the late 1980's, is a cooperative association of Government Agency libraries that:

- encourages improved cooperation and coordination amongst members
- promotes participation in networking and cooperative purchasing activities to help achieve more effective and efficient use of resources
- provides a forum for the development of products and services for the mutual benefit of clients and staff

Membership comprises libraries and information services for Victorian State Government Departments, Agencies and Statutory Authorities. Appendix B provides a full list of current financial members of ViGLA Inc.

BACKGROUND

This document has been developed by ViGLA in response to the Victorian Government Shared Library Service Proposal: *Proposal to Establish a Shared Service Provider: Victorian Government Shared Library Service Proposal: A 'draft for consultation' proposal, 21 April 2009.*

The Government's proposal presented in the draft for consultation included:

- the establishment of a new shared Government library service within the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) to be staffed through Machinery of Government transfer of existing library staff;
- co-location of a number of nominated in scope libraries; and
- the creation of a Library Strategic Projects Unit for the development of key aspects of the future Whole of Government Library Service.

ViGLA is encouraged by the Government's commitment to enhancing access to library services through the proposed establishment of a Library Strategic Projects Unit (SPU). A recognition by the Government of the need to plan improved access to library services for Government employees is commendable. At the completion of this work ViGLA recommend that WoG library services are extended to all Government and Agency libraries.

ViGLA's response, based on extensive consultation with its members (the staff of Victorian Government libraries), and has been developed by the ViGLA executive with the assistance of Judy Peppard, Director Practico Pty Ltd, a library management consultancy which has had extensive experience working with the state Government and special libraries.

ViGLA, on behalf of its members, the Government Libraries of Victoria, provides an alternative proposal for the development of a Victorian Government Shared Library Service.

KEY ISSUES

This response presents ViGLA's concerns about the DTF proposal and highlights the risks which need to be considered and addressed in the development of WoG library services.

Specialised Services

(General benefit: A simplified and integrated library service across Government)

ViGLA challenges the assertion that 'a simplified...library service across Government' is a benefit. ViGLA's interpretation of this concept is one of degradation of specialised knowledge, research and information services, with corresponding negative impact on department and agency output. Efficient provision of information services requires tailored and specialised knowledge and information resources delivery for individual departments.

Financial Risks

(Rationale: Deliver year on year savings as part of the efficiency drive of Government)

(Rationale: Reduce the effort, delays and costs associated with machinery of Government changes)

(Benefits: Greater opportunities to share resources and knowledge in a more structured environment (for example through one library management system))

(Benefits: Greater efficiencies through economies of scale, increased purchasing power and centralised management (through a centre of excellence))

Interstate and overseas attempts to establish centralised government library service have been costly and largely unsuccessful. Not only have they failed to deliver an improved service for their user groups, the costs associated with disbanding previously amalgamated collections has led to reduced access and loss of budget and staffing in government libraries¹.

The proposal appears un-costed. ViGLA has requested detail regarding how financial benefits of \$2.2 million over 4 years are to be achieved, but no detail has been provided. Nor is there any detail as to how GSG will charge departments for library services. The proposal does not take into account the extent to which library services may be resourced outside of their annual budget allocation.

No contingencies have been put in place should the proposed co-locations be unwound in the future, as has happened previously. Likewise, the Victorian Government is now facing the costly prospect of re-establishing library services for DEECD, whose predecessor organisation closed both its corporate library, and a specific purpose resource collection.

Without access to a detailed cost benefit analysis of the proposed services, ViGLA is concerned that savings projections may not be achievable particularly in regard to journal subscriptions and database purchasing.

¹ EPA USA <http://www.allbusiness.com/government/government-bodies-offices/11585466-1.html>

Staffing

(Rationale: Enhance workforce productivity by providing improved information sharing, collaboration and mobility capabilities)

(Rationale: Free up employee resources for redirection with public facing services)

(Benefits: Greater opportunities for career progression and related opportunities for career progression and related opportunities such as higher duty assignments)

(Benefits: Improved equity and consistency in position descriptions and classifications across VPS library staff)

(Benefits: Greater opportunities to develop specific skills and expertise in areas of interest)

ViGLA is extremely concerned about the risks to the future of Government library and information services and their collections if the proposal to transfer all library staff to employment by DTF and co-location of nominated libraries goes ahead on 1 July 2009.

ViGLA is concerned about the lack of evidence to base the proposal's intended benefits. For example, there has been no client consultation (apart from high level stakeholder discussions) or data collection on client services (including those clients who have significant assets managed on their behalf by a corporate library).

It should be noted that the previous employment model whereby all operational departmental library staff were employed by the State Library of Victoria and out-posted to their constituent departments was disbanded. Library staff became employees of their respective departments placing them in a position to better service the information needs of their departments.

Transferring library staff before the planning has been completed and a service model is confirmed presents a risk to the library services provided by Government departments. While some library services are consistent across all departments, there is great variation in areas such as heritage, strategic research partners, publication purchasing, alerting services and public lending collections to name just a few. There are a range of services that could be considered 'library services' currently undertaken by business areas outside departmental libraries, particularly in the areas of knowledge management, literature search and information management support.

Continuity of service to Victorian public sector staff is at risk with the proposal to fill the SPU roles from within the current Government department libraries. There is no provision for backfill, nor for funds to cover additional staff if the internal recruitment to the SPU is wholly or partially successful. This would cause an immediate and significant drop in service levels to affected departments as well as impacting on the working conditions of remaining library staff.

The DTF proposal anticipates five new fixed-term positions in the SPU plus the Manager, Library Operations role. However, there are six staff (2.5 ongoing roles) that have not been captured in the DTF proposal. Furthermore, given that positions are to be filled at level, and that vacant positions will not transfer to DTF it is clear that there are fewer opportunities for career progression or related opportunities in the DTF proposal. It is ViGLA's position that staffing of the SPU has not been adequately addressed, and the new positions do not represent opportunities for career growth. The alternative staffing proposals provided by ViGLA represent a robust argument for achieving the anticipated career development benefits.

Likewise, the claim that there will be greater opportunities to develop specific skills and expertise is not supported by any evidence in the proposal document. Existing inequalities are likely to become more extensive and prolonged due to insufficient staffing numbers and levels. The collective WoG body of knowledge and expertise in library services will be eroded as crucial positions are unfilled. The net loss of ongoing FTE positions, including unstaffed vacancies, will not equip DTF to address the inequalities of service delivery across government.

The DTF proposal provides no detail, strategy or plan as to how the anticipated benefits of improved equity and consistency in position descriptions and classifications across VPS staff will be achieved. The DTF proposal will introduce immediate and significant inequities in co-located sites. For example, the DOJ library manager role is a VPS5 role with five direct reports. Under the DTF proposal, the 0.5 VPS6 CVRC manager co-locates (Level 25, 121 Exhibition Street) as a 1.0 FTE losing its four direct reports. The SRO VPS5 Library Manager also co-locates to level 25. That position has no direct reports. Clearly, the DTF proposal is flawed in this regard, as it states that an outcome of co-location workshops is to involve as little change to existing arrangements as possible.

Library Strategic Projects Unit

(Benefit: Ability to leverage combined library staff skills and knowledge in development of resources and services for users such as training packages and promotional materials)

The establishment of a Library Strategic Projects Unit (SPU) as a development and planning entity exploring the cost benefit of a WoG library service is welcome. However ViGLA believes that the work of the SPU needs to be completed prior to any changes to employment arrangements for Government library staff.

ViGLA recommends the establishment of a Library Strategic Projects Unit within the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) with the task of planning a WoG library service model including: exploration of integrated electronic service delivery; best practice face-to-face service delivery; research into the experience of other governments' amalgamation and consolidation of special library services; and co-location of staff and/or collections where demonstrated benefits result.

An extensive consultation/ needs analysis process is required to be undertaken with key user groups in Victorian Government agencies (via survey and focus groups) to determine their current and future library and information research requirements, as part of the work of SPU.

Also, ViGLA recommends a comprehensive analysis of current library services and data be undertaken by SPU.

The SPU should also develop a fully costed service model of all components of a shared library service including:

- analysis of the cost benefits of an integrated library management system versus a discovery model incorporating federated searching across Government library catalogues and other information repositories
- details of what the service will deliver
- establishment costs
- budgets
- service level agreements
- implementation timelines

Staffing and recruitment to the Library Service Projects Unit (SPU) has not been adequately addressed. The responsibilities of the project managers in the SPU vary in complexity yet the classification for the 4 positions are identical and all managers are expected to complete their projects within 12 to 18 months. A WoG library management system is far more complex than identification of subscription services.

The SPU appears to be significantly under-resourced to meet its objectives within the anticipated time frames. Strong consideration should be given to requiring the incumbent of the Manager Library Strategic Projects Unit role to hold post graduate qualifications in information management/knowledge management. A proposed staffing model for the SPU is attached as Appendix C.

While encouraging current Government library staff to apply for secondment to the SPU, the positions should also be advertised externally to attract the widest possible field for these important roles.

ViGLA recommends that the SPU be organisationally located within the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC). The rationale for this is that strategic information management, library management and service delivery are already embedded in the existing DPC structure whereby Arts Victoria oversees the State Library of Victoria (SLV) and the Public Records Office of Victoria (PROV).

The DTF proposal has identified potential synergies with the SLV and PROV. Locating the SPU within DPC, whilst retaining operational library staff in their constituent departments strengthens this relationship, without jeopardising government library operations as was experienced in the previous employment model.

It is ViGLA's position that the SPU should sit within DPC, but outside of Arts Victoria to ensure alignment with government strategy and policy development, rather than development of public library services. Such a structure would support DPC in implementing the strategic directions of Government without compromising the services specialist libraries provide to government. A logical fit would be to place the SPU within the Government & Corporate Group within DPC.

Existing cross-jurisdictional networks in place in ViGLA member libraries provide a parallel with DPC's role in managing relationships with other governments and partnering in government decision-making.

Service Levels

(Benefit: Greater clarity about library services and service levels through documentation in a formal service level agreement and catalogue of services)

(Benefit: Address the inequalities of service delivery across Government)

The proposal does not include an interim or draft Service Level Agreement (SLA) between DTF and Departments. No indication is given of how operating budgets will be determined or managed, what arrangements will be made for existing financial delegations, or how local human resource and accommodation issues will be managed. Departments will have to create new positions to manage Service Level Agreements with the Shared Service Provider to ensure their library services are being adequately met. As acknowledged by DTF staff at a briefing held 11 May 2009, SLAs will be tailored to individual departments and agencies due to the specialised nature of information and library services.

Decision making

(Not addressed in rationale or benefit)

The loss of decision making over budgets, staff and collections significantly undermines the ability of libraries to support departmental deliverables. This compromises the ability of libraries to adequately represent their department in situations of conflicting priorities.

Resource Sharing

(Benefit: Greater access to library resources from across Government, regardless of location)

ViGLA members participate in networking within the Government sector and with other special libraries e.g. health libraries, law libraries.

The proposal does not take into account the degree of inter-library co-operation, networks and reciprocal arrangements currently in place that are delivering ongoing cost savings across Departments (including arrangements with other Vic Govt libraries not in scope for this transitional phase; or non-Vic networks).

The modest investment in membership fees for such networks reap significant cost savings to the Government. Reciprocal borrowing arrangements, access to consortia purchasing, electronic facilities which provide instant access for the purposes of reference and inter-library loans removes the need to resource costly materials areas in-house. Implementation of a generic WoG library service as proposed is likely to render such arrangements invalid. Nor does it take account of multi-jurisdictional arrangements that embody whole of Government shared services in a much broader context than presented in the proposal.

Thus, the anticipated benefits of greater efficiencies through economies of scale, increased purchasing power and centralised management stated in the DTF proposal will be largely unmet as existing efficiencies and cost savings are eroded. Furthermore, opportunities to exploit existing consortia offerings will cease.

Knowledge Management and Intellectual Property

(Not addressed in rationale or benefit)

Without a full service delivery model, ViGLA is unable to ascertain the provisions DTF have made for ensuring continued delivery of knowledge management services. The value of government libraries is their subject collections and library staff with knowledge of their specialised subject area and an understanding of the research needs of staff in their department. The value of departmental libraries lies in the skills and knowledge base developed in-house to support departmental activities. A corporate pool of staff may not have the agility or knowledge base to effectively support departmental deliverables.

Infrastructure and Technology

(Benefit: Consistency in systems and processes across Government will assist staff transferring across departments or agencies)

Seamless access to the resources of Victorian Government Libraries for all Government employees is a good idea. Achieving this requires efficient systems.

Library Management Systems

The establishment of a whole of Government library management system (LMS) is a major undertaking and ViGLA is concerned that unless detailed specifications

and adequate funding for the system are provided the LMS will not have the full functionality of libraries' current customised systems. Given the variety of record structures it could take 10+ years to fully merge records from all the Government libraries. This does not include all resources held by the libraries that are not recorded in their current management systems. Without appropriate costings, planning and consultation with knowledge management specialists, the development of one LMS for Government libraries could become an exorbitant waste of money. A good federated search may be a better outcome as it will provide access to more resources for potentially less outlay.

Access to Electronic Resources

For a number of years ViGLA has developed some cooperative purchasing of electronic journal and database subscriptions on behalf of its members. ViGLA is encouraged by the proposal to assist in identifying and providing a range of full text online resources for Vic Gov staff, however, we are concerned about the cost of enterprise wide products and the need to provide cost effective subject specific resources. Therefore there is great opportunity to take advantage of existing wider consortia such as Electronic Resources Australia ERA [<http://era.nla.gov.au/>]. Managed by the National Library of Australia, ERA is focused on delivering content to libraries through selecting, through a tender process, products which are of interest to many libraries. The other opportunity is to use that model of selection and tender process for the SLSP.

Collection Co-location

(Benefit: Reduced floor space costs)

(Benefit: Increased ability to manage machinery of Government changes (collections will no longer be required to be split and relocated across Government))

ViGLA's position is that the DTF proposal has not given due consideration to co-location opportunities based on clustering of collections with subject synergies, like systems and pre-existing shared services that will also deliver the anticipated reduced floor space costs. There are various options for developing an alternate co-location strategy that maximises existing ICT infrastructure and organisational structures, such as clustering SRO with DPC/DTF, or DPCD with DOT. Other alternate options for co-location based on these principles may include clustering of DSE with DPI, or DSE with EPA. Developing a co-location model based on subject synergies positions these libraries to maintain service provision through further potential Machinery of Government changes.

These alternate strategies for meeting the stated benefits of the DTF proposal require that the location of library staff be determined by the relinquishing department. In some instances, the department may determine that it is desirable for library staff to remain in situ with the department they service, whilst the physical collection only is co-located. Co-locations that take advantage of existing ICT infrastructure make this a feasible alternative to the DTF proposal.

Co-location of collections without integration of systems and processes is not in the spirit of shared services. This element of the DTF proposal is contrary to the anticipated benefits of providing consistency in systems and processes across government to assist staff in transferring across departments or agencies. The DTF co-location proposal raises significant cross-Departmental service issues. It is difficult to quantify how co-location without integration will meet the anticipated benefit of providing greater access to resources independent of location.

No co-location of collections should be commenced until systems integration is

complete. Should integration not be a pre-requisite for co-location of collections, then in reality simple daily activities such as photocopying, scanning, locating and shelving materials, catalogue and database searches will require library staff or clients to perform identical functions many times over using different systems, equipment and catalogues. With a multiplicity of systems and split collections, clients will find self-service difficult to achieve. There are no efficiencies in such a scenario.

The intended benefits of greater opportunities to share resources and knowledge in a more structured environment cannot be realised until systems integration is complete. ViGLA has provided an alternative strategy of employing a good federated search facility that enables benefits realisation around access to shared resources and knowledge much earlier than does the DTF proposal. Likewise, the ability to manage collections in respect of MOG changes is achieved much earlier with a federated search facility than with an integrated library management system.

Most of the libraries in scope for co-location have moved into new accommodation in recent years. The DTF proposal assumes that co-location has not previously been considered by Departments who are well placed to evaluate the value of consolidation of collections and services.

ViGLA is also concerned that no contingencies are in place should arrangements be unwound in the future.

There is further concern that the fit-out of co-located libraries is unlikely to meet *ALIA's Guidelines for Australian Special Libraries*² and is likely to adversely impact upon Occupational Health and Safety manual handling issues.

Duplication

(Not addressed in rationale or benefit)

Experience has shown that when staff don't have easy access to collections, they build their own collections [books and journals subscriptions], thereby incurring extra cost to their departments and negating potential benefits of consolidating library collections. Government library collections are kept up to date and 'rich' with content that department staff contribute because the library is perceived as a trusted partner. As an example, government libraries also collect and manage 'internal use only' reports for their organisation. The loss of that trust results in a wide range of important grey literature [consultants reports etc] not being made available via the library. Staff will retain material in the own areas, thereby creating hidden and unmanaged silos of government IP

Governance

(Not addressed in rationale or benefit)

The placement of knowledge workers and their strategic, policy and service delivery imperatives with operational staff in the areas of facilities, accommodation and car pools (FACs) displays a lack of awareness as to the nature of library services. There are no synergies between Library service delivery and the other ancillary services, i.e. FACs. Membership and Terms of Reference of the proposed SSP Board of Management are not stated. Under the proposed arrangements the Board is likely to be predominately occupied with issues relating to facilities, accommodation and car pools rather than library services.

² <http://www.alia.org.au/policies/special.libraries.html>

The proposed SSP organisation structure has no linkages between the Strategic Library Projects Unit (SPU) and the Library Service Operations team (except for a reporting line to the Executive Director).

Consultation

(Not addressed in rationale or benefit)

Government libraries are primarily used by research, policy, project and technical staff. Yet to date the Government libraries key user groups have not been consulted about the proposed shared services model for library services in Victoria.

The proposal does not include an interim or draft Service Level Agreement between DTF and Departments. There is no evidence for benefits realisation with regard to greater clarity about library services and service levels as these benefits have not been defined. The DTF proposal encompasses a number of staffing impacts outlined previously that will jeopardise the ability of a WoG library service to provide a catalogue of library services that meets the needs of government.

No indication is given of how operating budgets will be determined or managed, what arrangements will be made for existing financial delegations, or how local human resource and accommodation issues will be managed. Departments will have to create new positions to manage Service Level Agreements with the SSP to ensure their library services are being adequately met.

CONCLUSION

ViGLA is encouraged by the Government's commitment to enhancing access to library services through the proposed establishment of a Library Strategic Projects Unit (SPU) as a development and planning entity exploring the cost benefit of a WoG library service. This recognition by the Government of the need to plan improved access to library services for Government employees is commendable.

However ViGLA believes that the work of the SPU needs to be completed prior to any changes to employment arrangements for Government library staff or moving libraries.

Making costly changes including moving libraries before:

- developing a fully costed model of a WoG Library Service
- consulting with key users groups
- developing Service Level Agreements with Government departments

exposes the Government to financial risk and the departments to the risk of service deterioration.

ViGLA's alternative proposal, developed with input from its members and a library management consultant, identifies the risks in the Government proposal and makes recommendations on a way to move forward the development of Victorian Government Library Services.

Appendices

- A. Victorian Government Shared Library Proposal: Rationale and intended benefits
- B. Current financial members of ViGLA Inc.
- C. Proposed Staffing Model For The SPU

Appendix A.

Victorian Government Shared Library Proposal: Rationale and intended benefits

Rationale:

The strategic intent of the shared Ancillary Services project is to:

- Deliver year on year savings as part of the efficiency drive of Government;
- Reduce the effort, delays and costs associated with machinery of Government changes;
- Enhance workforce productivity by providing improved information sharing, collaboration and mobility capabilities; and
- Free up employee resources for redirection with public facing services.

General Benefits of Shared Services (library-specific only listed here):

- A simplified and integrated library service across Government;

Anticipated Benefits from the Shared Library Service Project:

- to library staff

- Greater opportunities to share resources and knowledge in a more structured environment (for example through one library management system);
- Greater opportunities for career progression and related opportunities for career progression and related opportunities such as higher duty assignments;
- Improved equity and consistency in position descriptions and classifications across VPS library staff; and
- Greater opportunities to develop specific skills and expertise in areas of interest.

- to library users

- Greater access to library resources from across Government, regardless of location;
- Consistency in systems and processes across Government will assist staff transferring across departments or agencies;
- Ability to leverage combined library staff skills and knowledge in development of resources and services for users such as training packages and promotional materials; and
- Greater clarity about library services and service levels through documentation in a formal service level agreement and catalogue of services.

- to Government

- Greater efficiencies through economies of scale, increased purchasing power and centralised management (through a centre of excellence);
- Reduced floor space costs;
- Address the inequalities of service delivery across Government; and
- Increased ability to manage machinery of Government changes (collections will no longer be required to be split and relocated across Government).

Appendix B.
Current financial members of ViGLA Inc.

All in-scope Victorian Government departments and agencies are represented on ViGLA, with the exception of SRO, which is not a financial member, and Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD). A predecessor Department to DEECD closed its corporate library in the 1990's, and subsequently closed the Office of Training and Further Education Library in 2004.

Aboriginal Affairs Victoria - Alick Jackomos Library
Department of Human Services - Library and Information Service
Department of Innovation, Industry & Regional Development - Library and Information Services
Department of Justice - Corrections Victoria Resource Centre
Department of Justice - Library
Department of Planning and Community Development - Research & Learning Hub
Department of Primary Industries - Knowledge Resource Centre
Department of Sustainability and Environment - Knowledge & Learning Centre
Department of Transport - InfraLib
EPA Victoria Library
Library: Departments of Premier & Cabinet, Treasury & Finance Library:
Melbourne Magistrates' Court - Library
Metropolitan Fire & Emergency Services Board - Library and Resource Information Centre
Museum Victoria - Library
Office of Public Prosecutions - Library
Parliament of Victoria - Library
South East Water Ltd - Corporate Strategy Library
Supreme Court of Victoria - Library
Transport Accident Commission - TAC Library
VicRoads - Business Information Centre
Victoria Institute of Forensic Medicine - Library
Victoria Legal Aid - Library
Victoria Police - Forensic Services Department Library
Victoria Police - Victoria Police Library Service (Flinders Street and Waverly locations)
Victorian Auditor-General's Office - Information Resource Centre
Victorian Civil & Administrative Tribunal - VCAT Library
Victorian WorkCover Authority - Library

Appendix C. Proposed Staffing Model For The Library Strategic Projects Unit,
based in Department of Premier and Cabinet

**Library Strategic Projects Unit
Proposed Structure**

