



Collection Development Strategy

April 2008

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1. Executive summary

The demographics of the Great Lakes area reveal an aging population with disposable time and a need for social interaction. This is a high demand environment for the library and it is hardly surprising that statistics show the Great Lakes Library Service to be amongst the busiest in NSW.

To meet such high levels of demand it is vital that the library provide a collection tailored to best meet the needs of its community. This Strategy recognises that in the process of developing a collection there are a range of factors that impact on the effectiveness of the collection. Some are collection-focused others, such as building size and opening hours, need to be addressed outside the scope of this Strategy.

Through an extensive analysis of collection data the Strategy identified that there has been a decline in loans across the system in the past year largely due to a mixture of budget cuts and a reduction in stock weeding rates. The analysis also showed variability of lending rates across library service points with only Tea Gardens demonstrating growth in the past three years. The collection mixture at the services points merits closer scrutiny.

The data also revealed a changing shape to the collection with greater emphasis being placed on purchasing non-print resources. This is largely based on demand, particularly in the case of DVDs, but trend observations on stock turnover rates should be observed closely as stock turnover rates for talking books and CDs appear to be in decline, above and beyond the impact of the latest budget cuts.

The Strategy also considered future trends in society and information delivery. These would indicate that conditions remain strong for ongoing library usage, with increasing emphasis on customer service and the provision of space for social interaction. Consideration must be given to developments in the non-print environment that will impact on format selection and the effectiveness of certain collections in the print form (e.g. reference and junior non-fiction).

A SWOT analysis of the library service reveals that the library continues to have strong patronage based on a healthy, young collection, a better staffing structure to meet community needs and positive standing in both the community and with Council. Factors that would impinge on this relate to resourcing levels that a) limit

new purchases b) result in inadequate floorspace and c) restrict opening hours. These can be addressed by adequate recognition and support from Council. Further funding cuts will, however, have a detrimental impact on the service.

In light of the analysis undertaken in this Strategy three key indicators will be evaluated to assess the health of the collection. The benchmarks for these indicators are:

- Stock turnover of 7.25 loans/item/year;
- Items per capita set at 2.25;
- Annual discard rate set at 13% of the entire collection.

In addition to establishing benchmarks based on the environment within which the library operates the Strategy clearly identifies key access and equality principles for the library for both physical and virtual resources.

Central to an effective collection is the process by which stock is selected. The Strategy identifies criteria for selection of stock and online resources as well as the input mechanisms designed to best shape the collection to community needs. In this context, recognition is given to the fact that in some instances support collections from other library services may be required to meet needs outside the scope of the collection. Distribution of stock across all branches should be monitored to best fit local needs.

Having identified performance indicators for the health of the overall collection the Strategy also establishes a range of measures and feedback mechanisms to assess the suitability of stock being selected.

The expansion of out-sourced cataloguing is recognised and, in conjunction with this, the development of profiles for the various collections. Profiling is already occurring within current collection purchasing practices but there is scope for greater refinement. The details of such profiling will be contained within support guidelines, yet to be fully established.

The Strategy also identifies the importance of effective weeding practices to maintain the relevance and appeal of the collection to the community. Weeding criteria are established which are designed to be used in conjunction with key performance indicators and ongoing analysis of community need.

Finally, the importance of shelving arrangements and collection layout is acknowledged and should be considered in all future developments of the library service points.

2. Mission, vision and values of the Great Lakes Library Service

In 2007 the staff of the Great Lakes Library Service developed values, a mission and a vision for library service provision. These must underpin the Collection Development Strategy.

2.1 Values

The provision of our library service is underpinned by the following values:

Respect

We will respect individual differences and provide a service to meet the needs of all the community. Equity of access will be fundamental to our library service.

Attitude

We will take a positive and welcoming approach to all that we do.

Communication

We will communicate in a timely, effective and non-judgmental manner.

Responsibility

We will be proactive when dealing with people and be responsible for our actions.

2.2 Mission/Purpose

Great Experience – Great Service – Great Library

To offer services, activities and an environment that:

- Builds community capacity and supports lifelong learning
- Actively contributes to the quality of life and culture in our community
- Creates a safe, relaxed, equitable and socially inclusive place where all people feel welcomed

2.3 Vision

Library Services are an investment not a cost.

We will be the pre-eminent place in the community for people seeking inspiration, information, innovation, education, elevation, relaxation and interaction.

This will be achieved through:

- Continued development of library service points to meet community expectations and needs
- Enhancement of our role as the meeting place of the community
- Provision of a wider range of services to identified groups within the community

- Continued development of key partnerships that enhance the library service
- Improvement in accessibility of the library service
- Raised community awareness of the library's central role in education and lifelong learning and develop our services to meet this responsibility

3. The purpose of the collection development strategy

This strategy is a critical tool in assisting the library to shape its collection to meet the community needs and in enabling the mission, vision and values of the library to be achieved. The strategy should:

- Identify the underlying principles of collection development and equality of access;
- Outline the environment within which the library operates;
- Identify all significant factors, both internal and external, that impact on the development of the collection;
- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the collection as it relates to the Great Lakes community;
- Provide framework in which the collection can meet community needs;
- Establish standards for a healthy collection;
- Identify best practice selection processes that incorporate community input;
- Identify appropriate collection weeding practices that ensure the thoroughness of the collection is not compromised;
- Inform the public on the treatment of donated materials and censorship matters;
- Provide the Great Lakes Council with an understanding of the patronage of the library and the way in which it endeavours to meet its community's needs;
- Assist in the development of funding priorities and alternatives.

Previous collection development strategies produced by the Great Lakes Library Service have contained significant detail on all collections held. In taking a more strategic approach this section has been excluded from the current document. Such fine detail will be address through supporting documentation.

4. Demographics

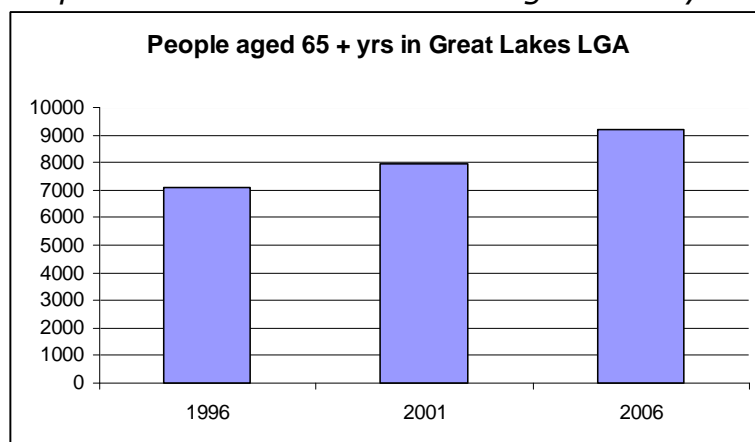
4.1 Population growth

As at June 2006 the Great Lakes LGA had a population of 33,114. This has grown from 31,384 people in 2001, at an annual rate of 1.1%. Over the past decade this growth rate has averaged 1.5%.

4.2 Age of the population

In 1996 there were 7,079 people aged 65+ years (24.7% of the population). In 2001 this age group represented 25.5% of the population and by 2006 it has reached 28% (9,227 residents).

Graph 1: Increase in residents aged 65 + yrs for Great Lakes LGA



Significantly, the number of people aged 85+ had risen from 627 in 2001 to 950 in 2006 (52% growth in 5 years). The median age for the community is 50 years, with the State median being 37 years. In 2001 the median age for Great Lakes LGA was 47 years. It is likely that Great Lakes LGA has remained the oldest community in NSW.

4.3 Isolation

The population of Great Lakes is becoming increasingly isolated. Household size has dropped from 2.4 people in 1996 to 2.2 in 2006. This is well below the State median of 2.6.

Great Lakes LGA also has a high proportion of couples without children (54.7% of total families). This compares to a State average of 36%.

The Great Lakes LGA also has a significant representation of widowed residents (9.6% of the population as compared to the State average of 6.2%).

4.4 Income

The Great Lakes LGA is a low income community. Weekly household income is \$614, as compared to a State average of \$1,043. 43.4% of the population is not in the workforce (compared to a State average of 27.5%).

The above indicates that the Great Lakes LGA has strong growth with an aging population. Residents have low incomes, disposable time and many live in isolated conditions.

All these have a direct impact on the library. Residents with disposable time but little disposable income will turn to the library to meet their social, leisure and information needs. It is not surprising that the Great Lakes Library Service is one of the busiest services in NSW. There is every indication that, as long as there is adequate provision of services, this will remain the case.

The aging of the community carries additional implications. There is a demand for a home library service, which the library is in the process of establishing. This service, along with the needs of mobile older members of the community, places pressure on the library to purchase talking books and large print items. These are notably more expensive than normal print items. Talking books cost 490% more than the average book and large print items cost 41% more. Talking books and large print items consume over 36% of the library budget but only represent around 14% of the collection. It is costly to provide a library collection for an aging population.

5. Current level of collection availability

The Great Lakes Library Service operates out of five library service points:

- A central library in Forster/Tuncurry;
- Staffed branch library in Tea Gardens;
- Library service point coordinated by volunteers in Bulahdelah;
- Library Service point at Nabiac staffed by volunteers but centrally coordinated by Forster;
- Joint branch library and District Office facility at Stroud.

Opening hours are limited at these facilities though, with the exception of Stroud, all have after-hours return facilities.

The library is currently establishing a home library service that will assist in delivering items to homebound members of the community and/or nursing homes/retirement villages.

6. Existing factors affecting usage of the library collection

Whilst demographic analysis will identify potential usage patterns there remain a range of factors that affect and constrain the library from meeting the needs of the community. It is important to identify these and integrate their resolution into the future development of the library and its collection.

6.1 Age of collection

Research has indicated that one of the most important influences on stock turnover is the age of the collection¹. Collections with a high proportion of newer material will be more actively used than those with aging stock. As indicated in Table 1, below, the Great Lakes Library Service has a collection noticeably younger than the State median. This suggests good weeding practices are in hand and should continue to be encouraged.

6.2 Collection size

The library is also committed to ensuring that the collection meets the reasonable expectations of its public. The NSW State median values of items per capita for public libraries is 2.24 items/resident². The State Library of NSW is currently reviewing its standards for library services and it is expected that this median value will be adopted as a minimum goal. Drawing from this research the Great Lakes Library aims to maintain a collection level at a minimum of 2.24 items per member of the public.

At this point in time the library holds approximately 2 items per capita. Currently funding is unlikely to maintain this level and more will be needed to raise the overall holdings. It must be stressed that whilst grant funding for collection enhancements may be sought (though with no certainty) it is essential that such funding is not required to meet the core collection needs of the community.

6.3 Buildings

Essential to the use of any library service collection is the provision of adequate floorspace to display the material. The State Library of NSW recognises this and has established standards for provision of floorspace. These standards set a minimum area for any library service as well making provision for expanded floor area for larger population bases³. At present only the Tea Gardens Library meets the standards for their population base. In addition to this adequate parking needs to be provided for residents to be able to access the library. This is a particular issue for the Forster Library.

¹ Jones, Chris *Maintaining a healthy library collection: the need to weed*, APLIS, 20(4), December 2007

² State Library of NSW, *Public Library Statistics 2005/06*, State Library of NSW, 2007

³ State Library of New South Wales, *People Places: a guide for public library buildings in New South Wales*, 2nd ed., 2005

Whilst a collection development strategy is not the appropriate forum for addressing such floorspace and parking shortcomings it must be understood that this will impact on the level of collection provision and the patronage made of the collection.

6.4 Staffing levels

The speed with which items progress from selection to shelf is affected by the level of staffing and support provided to this aspect of the library service. At present the Great Lakes Library Service has one of the highest staff workloads in the State. Clearly, this can only present delays in the processing of stock. As a consequence of this the library has begun to implement an out-sourced cataloguing program to reduce processing times. The library also relies heavily on volunteers to undertake stock processing. A number of library services across NSW have already implemented programs where the items are processed by the book supplier and arrive shelf-ready. At this stage the Great Lakes Library Service has insufficient funding to undertake this in a comprehensive fashion.

6.5 Opening hours

The degree to which a library service's collection can be accessed by the public is significantly influenced by its opening hours. At present the Great Lakes Library Service offered some of the most limited opening hours in NSW, particularly in relation to its central library at Forster. These hours make it difficult for key sectors of the community to access the service. Those particularly disenfranchised are working people and their families. The barrier of opening hours should be addressed if the Great Lakes Council wishes to provide equitable access to the library collection.

7. Collection shape, condition and usage

The Great Lakes Library Service has one of the highest collection turnover rates in NSW and has done so for many years. This has resulted in a greater replacement rate for stock, which has impacted on the age of the collection and the total holdings per capita. The holdings per capita has also been affected by budgetary limitations. Table 1 contains comparisons between the Great Lakes Library Service and the NSW median for key performance data⁴.

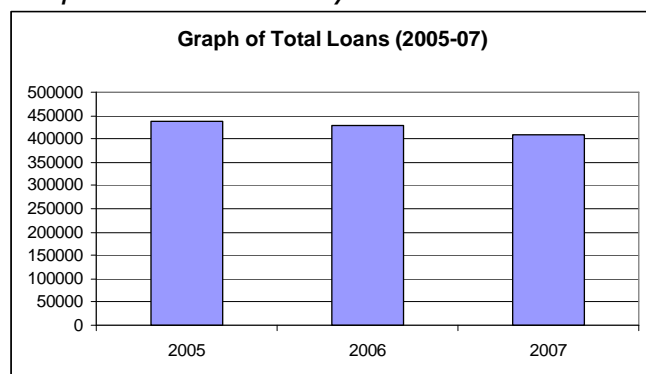
⁴ State Library of NSW, *Public Library Statistics 2005/06*, State Library of NSW, 2007

Table 1: Key library statistics comparing the Great Lakes Library Service with the NSW median (2005-06)

	NSW	Great Lakes
Loans per capita	6.88	12.70
Stock turnover	3.55	7.22
Stock per capita	2.24	2.05
Percentage of collection aged under 5 yrs	48.37	69.91
Percentage of collection aged under 10 yrs	89.31	119.74
Discards as percentage of total stock	9.45	15.21

Total annual loans across the library service for the past three years are given below:

Graph 2: Last three years of total loans



This reveals an overall downward trend in loans, representing a drop of 28,000 loans (6.5%) over this period.

In order to fully understand this trend and its implication on collection development finer detail is needed. The influence of location, format and currency of the stock needs to be identified.

7.1 Loan trends by location

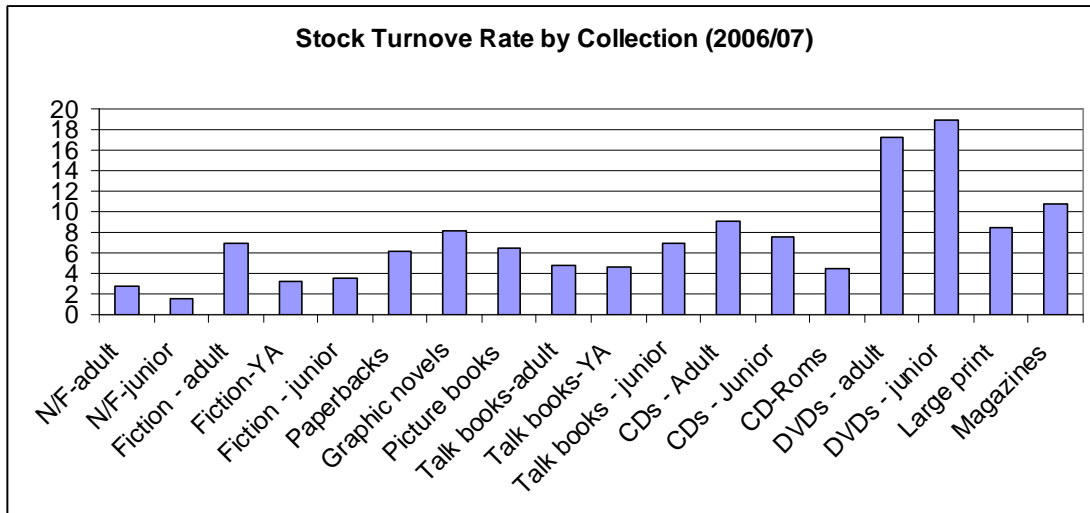
The lending rates at all the library facilities over the past three years are provided in Appendix 1. The graphs reveal that:

- Over the three-year period from 2005 to 2007 loans at Forster fell by 21,500 (6%). This represents the vast bulk of the total drop in loans across the Great Lakes Library Service;
- Over the same period loans at Tea Gardens rose by 1,100 (2.5%), though there was a drop in loans of 2% from 2006 to 2007;
- From 2005 to 2007 loans at Bulahdelah dropped by 300 (4%), though there was a slight increase from 2006 to 2007 (1%);
- During this three-year period loans at Nabiac dropped by 1,700 (15.5%);
- From 2005 to 2007 loans at Stroud dropped by 772 (9%).

7.2 Loan trends by format and collection

Stock turnover rates are more informative when analysed by the format of the item and by major collections. Overall turnover rates are shown in Graph 3.

Graph 3: Stock turnover rate for major collections and formats for 2006/07



The above graph is excellent for providing a snapshot of the collections and formats with the highest and lowest stock turnover rates but provides no indications of trends with each collection. Data for the past three years is provided in Appendix 2.

From the combined data the following can be noted:

- DVDs clearly remain the most popular collections, with virtually all non-print formats being amongst the most popular collections;
- The non-fiction collections, as a whole, have the lowest stock turnover rates;
- Generally speaking, collections and formats with an adult target audience are more popular than their youth or junior counterparts;
- Stock turnover for non-fiction fell approximately 10% in 2006/07;
- Stock turnover rates for junior non-fiction have fallen to just 1.5 loans/item/year. This is a drop of nearly 40% over the three year period;
- All fiction collections suffered a drop in stock turnover rates in 2006/07. having held steady, or even increased, from 2004/05 to 2005/06;
- The adult talking book collection saw a drop in turnover of 25% over the two year period, with the most significant decline occurring from 2005/06 to 2006/07. Young adult talking books also experienced a decline in usage, though this is a much

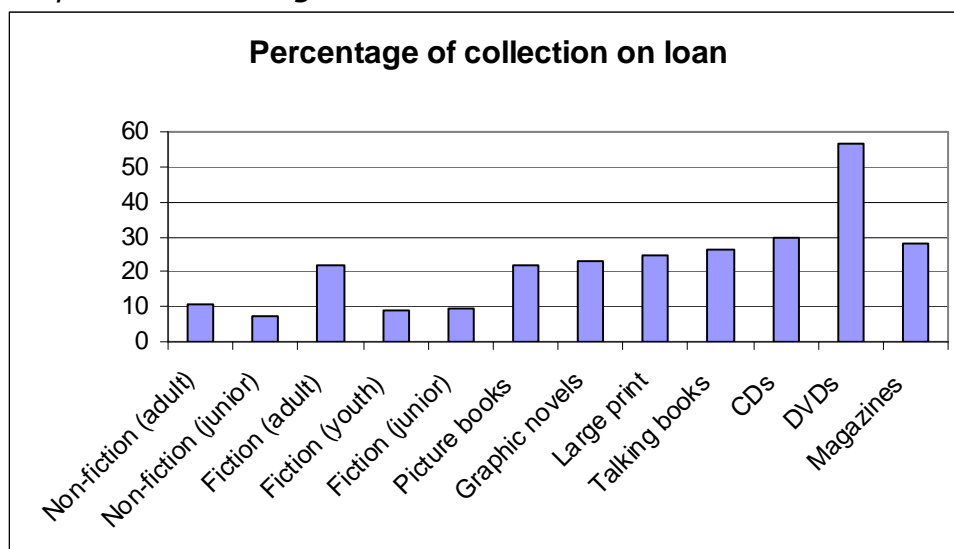
smaller collection and there is potential for volatility in the analytical data. The junior talking books also showed some decline over the three year period;

- Stock turnover rates for adult and junior CDs both exhibited a noticeable decline. Adult CD stock turnover rates dropped 30% and junior CDs dropped 25%. The decline was steady across the three years;
- Even the library’s highest turnover item, the DVD experienced decline from 2005/06 to 2006/07. There was a decline of around 10% in the turnover rate for adult DVDs and a drop of over 20% for junior DVDs. They still remained the format with the highest stock turnover rate. Prior to 2006/07 the stock turnover rate for DVDs was increasing;
- The CD-Rom collection stock turnover rate declined 30% from 2005/06 to 2006/07. Prior to this patronage was increasing;
- The stock turnover rate for large print items drop over 10% from 2005/06 to 2006/07. Prior to this the rate had remained constant.

7.3 Collection “on loan” rates

In addition to stock turnover rates it is useful to look at the current levels of the collection on loan. This also enables us to incorporate the magazine format into the data. The information is provided in Graph 4 below, and is valid as of April 2008.

Graph 4: Percentage of individual collections on loan



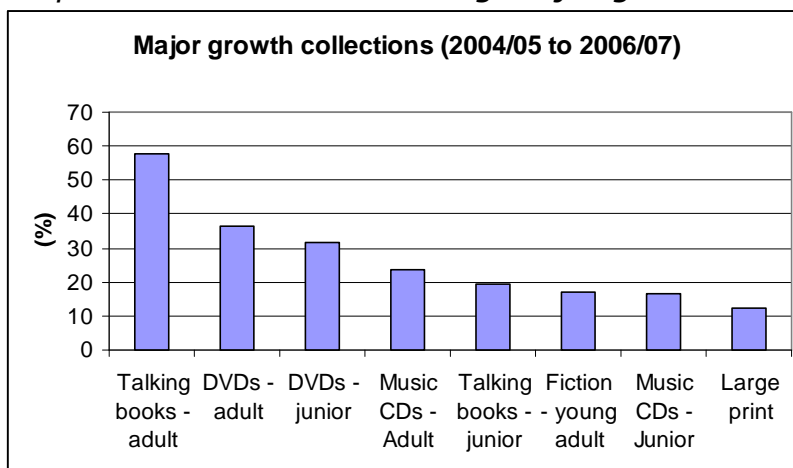
As a result of the stock rotation system in place it is not possible to derive meaningful stock turnover information by branch. It is, however, possible to analysis the percentage of the collection on loan by branch. This is provided in Appendix 3. The following observations can be made on the data:

- The non-print collections generally have the highest on loan rates and non-fiction and junior/youth collections have the lowest percentage;
- Forster Library has the highest percentage of its collection on loan across almost all formats and collection. A bias in holdings per capita towards the branches is likely to be a factor in this;
- Generally Tea Gardens has the next highest percentage across the formats though there are exceptions;
- The branch data supports the overall “collection on loan” data though it is clear that Forster usage has a very strong influence on the data. This is most effectively illustrated when looking at graphic novels usage (no branch has more than 10% of graphic novels on loan except Forster, yet the total percentage of the graphic novel collection on loan is over 20%);
- The large print collection at Nabiac appears to be receiving low levels of patronage. This is because a significant large print collection has been housed there due to floorspace shortage at Forster. This should be reviewed, taking into consideration the development of a home library service;
- Stroud Library has opted to retain only a very small junior non-fiction collection, which accounts for the low level of items on loan.

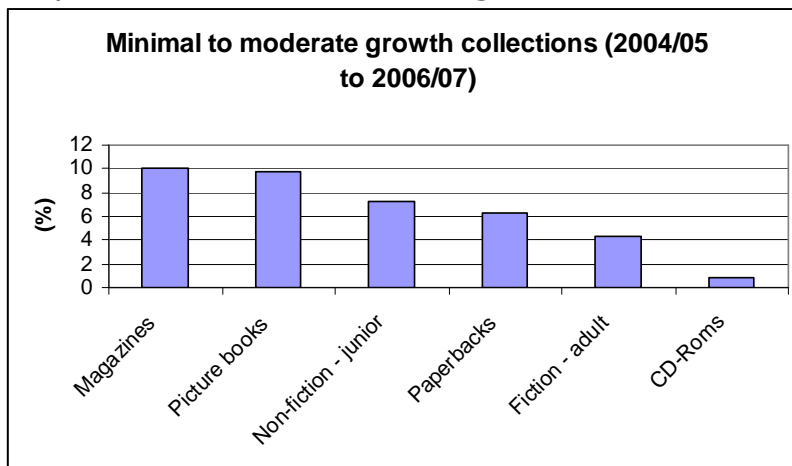
7.4 Change in collection sizes

Monitoring the growth or reduction of specific collections provides information on the evolving shape of the library collection. The following graphs show the change in collection size over the past three budget cycles.

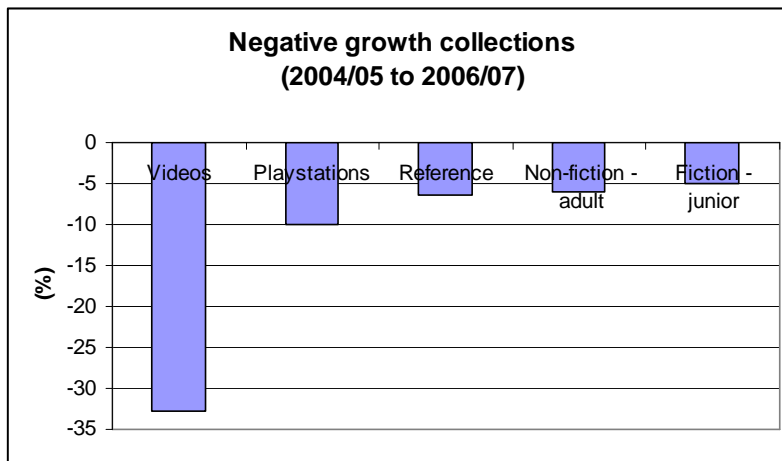
Graph 5: Collections exhibiting major growth



Graph 6: Collections exhibiting minimal to moderate growth



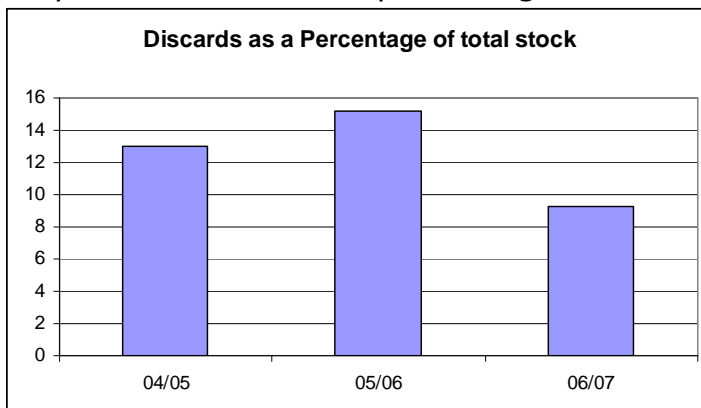
Graph 7: Collections exhibiting negative growth



7.5 Currency of the collection

The best available indicator for the years 04/05 to 06/07 for the currency of the collection is a comparison of discards to total stock. This is provided in Graph 8.

Graph 8: Discards as a percentage of total stock



8. Analysis of collection shape, condition and usage

The following observations can be drawn from the data above:

- From 2005/06 to 2006/07 the library suffered a major cut to its collection budget. This reduced the number of new titles that could be purchased, effectively aging the collection;
- The number of items held per capita now stands at around 2, which is below the minimum standards being developed by the State Library of NSW;
- This is far from making the collection size healthy but it is an increase on the 2004/05 levels. This was achieved largely by reducing the number of items culled. This again aged the collection. The drop in loans clearly shows that holding levels alone do not reflect the health of the collection;
- The culling of the collection seems to be a significant factor in lending rates. 2006/07 had the lowest total loans for the year since the Tea Gardens Library commenced operations. This was also the year of the lowest percentage of total discards. The argument for positive levels is supported by recent Statewide research;
- Only the newest library, Tea Gardens, showed any upwards trend in loans over this total period. This indicates that strong consideration should be given to developing the remaining facilities, all of which have largely remained untouched in the past 10 years;
- Collections at the various library locations are receiving variable patronage. This will bear further monitoring and may impact on both purchasing and stock rotation practices;
- The non-print environment is constantly evolving new formats and this is reflected in the growth and decline of various collections e.g. DVD and videos. Consideration must be given to developing collections in new formats e.g. MP3;
- Whilst the talking book collection appears to be undergoing major growth it must be noted that there are 818 talking books in cassette format still within the system. These are likely to disappear over the next 2-3 years. If they are excluded from calculations the talking book collection has grown by only 2%, making it one of the smallest growth collections;
- If the year 2006/07 is excluded from considerations, due to the significant impact of the budget cuts demand for many of the collections remained strong and even increased. The exceptions to this are the CD and junior non-fiction collections, which will both bear further monitoring.

Overall it would appear that the patronage on the collection is dependent on adequate funding to purchase new items and for the library to maintain a healthy level of stock culling.

9. Future trends predicted to impact on the library collection

9.1 Aging community

As indicated above the population is aging and this has a direct impact on the library collection. It be expected that, providing an adequate library service is available, patronage of the collection will remain strong. Usage levels of similarly aged populations in NSW support this argument⁵.

In addition, the aging community will place significant pressure on the library to purchase large print and talking book items.

9.2 Social space

Demographics also indicate an increasing level of isolation in the community. This gives rise to a need for social interaction space which public libraries are increasingly modifying their service to meet. Consequently, public libraries are creating a more relaxed atmosphere and considerations must be made in layout of the collection to accommodate this, including appropriately accessible shelving.

9.3 Service expectations

There is a general trend across all service industry towards higher customer expectations. In relation to the library collection this means 1) tailoring of the items held to meet customer needs 2) the speedy delivery of items.

9.4 Variety of formats

One of the great challenges public libraries confront is provision of stock in a wide range of formats. This is particularly the case for non-print materials. For example, talking books can now be purchased in cassette, CD and MP3 formats. Library patrons take up new technology at varying rates which means that the library has patrons using older formats, right through to those at the cutting edge of new technology. Wherever possible the library will meet this range of needs, but it must be recognised that the library collection budget is limited. Consequently, the library will no longer purchase cassettes, though the existing talking books on cassette collection will be maintained until such time as the material is

⁵ Jones, Chris, *The impact of an ageing population on coastal public libraries in New South Wales*, APLIS 19(1), March 2006

obsolete or ceases to function. The same applies to the video format.

A trend that is evident now with music and will increasingly become evident with talking books and DVDs is the direct downloading of items. The library will monitor this trend as it is certain to impact on the future shape of the collection. Already the library has expressed support for providing handheld devices (known as Navigators) which store talking books. The content held by these Navigators will be downloaded at the library.

There is potential for e-books (books provided electronically through online downloading) to play a role in the development of the library collection, though licencing challenges remain and the take up of e-books tends to vary from community to community. In general, older and rural communities appear to have a strong preference for books in the print form. Again, developments here need to be monitored.

An important consideration in adopting non-print items is the licencing requirements. Such requirements have increasingly placed limitations on library purchasing practices. The library will now no longer purchase Playstation style games and only CD-Rom with public domain classification will be purchased.

9.5 Internet

The Internet certainly has had an impact on library services, though the implications for collection development should be handled with caution. Several decades ago predictions within the library community were that the Internet would replace demand for the book. This has clearly not been the case with traditional stock lending remaining strong.

It is fair to say, however, that the emergence of the Internet has impacted in certain collection areas. Online databases are replacing tradition printed reference resources. This has the potential for increasing access to many databases, though the financial and licencing implications place constraints on the library's take-up of such databases.

Patronage of the junior non-fiction collection would indicate that there is a trend for children to seek information for assignments etc online.

9.6 Entertainment competition

The past decade has seen a significant growth in alternate forms of entertainment. These range from electronic games, the Internet and online entertainment and multi-channel television. This has the

potential to impact on the library service, though it is interesting to note that all the above analysis would indicate that the strongest influence on the popularity of the library is the extent to which Council provides funding for new stock.

10 SWOT analysis

In light of the information and observations in the preceding two sections there is merit in undertaking a Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis.

10.1 Strengths

- High aged community with disposable time and a need for social interaction space. These are high level library users;
- Positive standing in community. All feedback on the library indicates high levels of attachment to and regard for the library;
- High stock turnover. Typically one of the highest, if not the highest in NSW;
- Better staffing structure. The library now has a more effective staffing structure to meet the current and developing needs of the community;
- A generally young collection, though the age of the collection has been trending upwards in recent years;
- Library Committee is a strong supporter of the library service and is knowledgeable of the needs of the community in this regard.

10.2 Weaknesses

- Lowest funding per loan in NSW. Whilst this demonstrates the efficiency of the library is also reveals a library service operating on sub-standard resourcing levels;
- Limited floorspace and older facilities. With the exception of Tea Gardens all the remaining libraries are approaching 20 years of age. They all fall below, often well below, size standards for the communities they serve;
- Limited opening hours. The Great Lakes Library Service has some of the lowest levels of opening hours in NSW, particularly for the central library at Forster. This is compounded by poor levels of car parking at this same facility;
- Declining loans at smaller branches

10.3 Opportunities

- A new facility is planned for Forster (supported by Section 94 funding);
- There is scope for a new facility in Stroud also;

- The development of appropriate benchmarks for the collection;
- Expansion of out-sourced cataloguing;
- Council has regularly expressed support for the library.

10.4 Threats

- Further cuts to funding. This will be occurring in 2008/09

11 Key performance data in maintaining overall collection and service standards

11.1 Stock turnover

Whilst stock turnover alone does not fully reflect a healthy collection relevant to its community, it still remains a key performance indicator. The Great Lakes Library Service has consistently had a total stock turnover rate of between 7 and 7.5 since 1995/96. The proposed annual benchmark is 7.25 loans/item. It must be stressed that this is a total collection target. Certain collections will have lower stock turnover rates but will continue to be supported for the completeness of the collection and the service provided.

11.2 Items per capita

At present the Great Lakes Library Service holds 2.05 items/capita, which is well below the minimum standard being developed by the State Library of NSW. Efforts must be made to reach this minimum standard of 2.24 items/capita whilst not compromising the age of the collection to achieve this level of collection holdings.

11.3 Discard rate

One of the great strengths of the Great Lakes Library Service collection is its comparative young age. This has been due to a constructive and positive weeding program of older stock. The periods of highest lending rates for the collection have occurred when discards as a percentage of total stock has ranged between 13 and 15%. The benchmark proposed is 13%. Whilst this is an appropriate benchmark it is also important to understand that the high level of usage of the collection necessarily drives a high replacement rate.

At present there are no benchmarks available for speed of processing of library stock. There are indications these will be developed by the State Library of NSW. When this occurs efforts will be made to assess the library service against this bench mark.

It should also be noted that both opening hours and building capacity have been identified as key factors affecting patronage. These should, and will, be raised in other forums.

The collection will be monitored against these benchmarks through the process of collating data for the annual statistical return to the State Library of NSW.

The appropriate benchmarks are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Collection benchmarks for the Great Lakes Library Service

Key Performance Indicator	Benchmark
Stock Turnover	7.25
Items per capita	2.24
Discards as percentage of total collection	13

12 Censorship and collection access principles

The following principles are a natural extension of the values, mission and vision of the Great Lakes Library Service.

12.1 Censorship

The Great Lakes Library Service respects the rights of individuals to pursue their own interests. For this reason, the library service will leave the role of censor with the appropriate State and Federal bodies. The library will ensure that items prohibited by law are not purchased for the library collection. Parents and guardians are responsible for the suitability of library materials or information accessed by their children. The library does, however, recognise legislative requirements on access to the Internet and requires parental approval for children to use public Internet PCs within the library.

12.2 Equality of access

In compliance with the Library Act (1939) and in keeping with fundamental principles of equality of access to information the library will not charge a membership fee to residents or members of other public library services. Furthermore, no charges will be levied for core library services.

The library also supports the principle that material and information within its collection should not discriminate against library users on the grounds of age, sex, race, religion, national origin, disability, economic condition, individual lifestyle or political or social views.

In taking this egalitarian position Great Lakes Library Service supports the Australian Library and Information Association's Statement on Free Access to Information (Appendix 4).

In developing its collection the Great Lakes Library Service will ensure that it complies with the Library Act of 1939, the Library Regulation of 2005 and the Local Government Act of 1993.

12.3 Free access to the Internet and other online databases

The library will provide free public access to the Internet. This is in keeping with the library's values and with ALIA's position (Appendix 4). Such access will also be provided to other databases that it draws upon. This should be qualified by recognising that in some instances the library may, for financial reasons, elect not to provide open access, but rather, search on individual's behalf. It is also possible that the library may be in a position whereby it can only provide database access, for licencing reasons, within the library building.

12.4 Free e-mail access

As discussed above, the library has an emerging and fundamental social interaction role. In keeping with this function and recognising that e-mail is an electronic extension of this principle, the Great Lakes Library Service will provide free e-mail access.

12.5 Filtering access to websites

The Great Lakes Library Service does not screen/filter its Internet access on the basis that such systems have a propensity to limit access to legitimate sites. The library fully supports ALIA's Statement on Online Content Regulation (Appendix 5).

Recognising that there is an issue of access by minors to inappropriate web sites the library does require parental signatures for minors to access the web.

12.6 Disabled access

The library provides appropriate disability access equipment to enhance access to the collection and online resources.

12.7 Home Library Service

The library has established a Home Library Service complimented by a volunteer delivery service to support patrons unable to physically access the facilities. This service will require significant access to the large print and talking book formats which may impact on distribution of these collections within the system.

12.8 Literacy

The library supports the concept of improving literacy in the community, but it recognises the difficulties in achieving this. Previous attempts to establish and support a literacy collection received little patronage and now a separate collection no longer exists. If, in future, there is strong evidence for the establishment of a special collection this will be investigated, but any undertaking will be designed to build

self-esteem rather than a sense of isolation through a segregated collection.

One move that has been taken towards increasing the relevance of the library to print-challenged residents is to establish a graphic novels collection. This is a highly visual medium and appeals to a very broad range of ages.

13 Stock selection

13.1 Donations and multiple copies

A donated item will be evaluated using the same criteria as those applied to items to be purchased. The condition of the items donated will also be taken into account in the evaluation process. The Great Lakes Library Service is receptive to and appreciative of donations but it reserves the right to deal with such items in a professional and reasonable manner. Donated items will be evaluated by Information Services staff and then either added to the collection, included in library booksales, or dealt with in any other appropriate manner.

Donated items will not be accepted if the donor places restrictions on the final disposition of the items involved.

Reasonable and timely access to desired items is an essential feature of a library service. For this reason it is appropriate, where the need arises, to purchase multiple copies of an item. The library does this for popular fiction items in a pre-emptive fashion, through the use of standing orders for popular authors.

In addition to this, if demand for an item is unexpectedly large and is not considered transitory in nature then further copies will be purchased. As a general rule, if borrowers are likely to wait for more than two months to obtain a reserved item once it has entered the system the library will purchase an additional copy of it.

13.2 Criteria for selection

Stock selection must be in keeping with the needs of the community. Bearing this in mind material will be evaluated on the basis of a combination of the following criteria:

- Existing or predicted customer demand;
- Importance of the material to the collection;
- Cost of the item;
- Currency of the information;
- Authenticity of the information;
- Quality of the production;
- Significance of the work;
- Part of a series;

- Licencing conditions;
- Format

13.3 Selection input

The Great Lakes Library Service has and will continue to develop appropriate input mechanisms to shape the collection to best meet then needs of the community. Such input mechanisms can be broken up into two categories 1) Predicted needs 2) Identified gaps.

Predicted needs selection

- **Standing orders** - These identify all the key authors that would be purchased in a given year and the number of copies of each volume that would be purchased. These are then pre-ordered. This approach attracts a good discount and ensures all authors of note are purchased;
- **Profiling** – Profiles of predicted collection needs can be developed and provided to a supplier, or range of suppliers, so that suitable material is purchased;
- **Reviews and Bestseller listings** – Popular titles are selected based on reviews and best-selling titles;
- **Publisher catalogues** – Potentially popular or important titles are purchased from publisher catalogues.

Identified gaps

- **Targetted enhancement** – Through appropriate assessment of the health of the library collection library staff will undertake targetted enhancements;
- **Collection analysis** – Assessment of the overall strengths and weaknesses of the collection. This is a holistic approach rather a targetted one;
- **Information request needs** – Information requests from the public identify needs and potential collection gaps that can be incorporated into selection requirements;
- **Reservations** – titles receiving high reservation rates are given serious consideration for purchase;
- **Suggestions** – Purchasing of material based on the suggested collection needs identified by customers. The library's Comments Board may also provide meaningful collection suggestions;
- **Inter-Library Loan requests** – Requests for material not held by the library help to identify potential collection gaps;
- **Customer purchasing sessions** – Customers are invited to select titles from a range of books;
- **Customer surveys** – Surveys of customers provide an opportunity to determine collection weaknesses;
- **Series gaps** – Assessment of book series that may identify gaps;

- **Ad hoc needs** – Gaps in the collection not identified by any of the above mechanisms.

13.4 Branch considerations

The Great Lakes Library provides a service to its residents through facilities at Forster, tea Gardens, Bulahdelah, Nahiack and Stroud. Such a multiplicity of collections presents the scenario of duplicating stock. The Library system has shied away from this option because of the cost implications. Great Lakes Library Service does purchase multiple copies of items, but this is done only in regard to popular material to meet a general need and expectation across the whole Library system. The branch locations have sufficiently low levels of usage that a representative slice of the collection is sufficient in each.

The exception to this arrangement is the Tea Gardens Library, which is the second largest library facility in the Great Lakes and is receiving growing patronage. Consequently, the Tea Gardens Library has a broader collection with greater depth. Duplicates of significant titles may also be purchased to house at Tea Gardens.

Selection of stock sent to branches is shaped to meet any differences in clientele between the branch and the central library.

Also, as a result of the lower levels of patronage at the branches no steps have been undertaken to specialise collections, other than in consideration of local area studies.

To support this arrangement the Great Lakes Library Service offers an effective reserves and inter-branch transfer system.

In order to ensure there is an adequate flow of titles through the branch collections the library service has developed a stock rotation system. All branch service points also receive new stock.

Recognising that access to information at a branch system can be challenging at times the library has installed free public access Internet points into all the Library branches.

13.5 Specific collection exclusions

The library no longer purchases cassette formats, videos or Playstation games. In the case of videos and cassettes this is as a result of moving towards newer formats. Playstation games are no longer purchased due to licencing restraints.

14 Online electronic resources

There are three forms of online data: 1) Links to sites via the website
2) Access to online databases 3) Links to online data via the library catalogue.

14.1 Links via the website

The Library now has an extensive range of links to various online sources through its library links page:

<http://www.greatlakes.nsw.gov.au/Library/links.htm>

The Information Services Librarian monitors the content of this page. It is important that website links are structured to maximise accessibility. On this basis, the library has committed to the following:

- A flat hierarchy so that a visitor to the website is able to get to a desired location within three steps/selections of links;
- Subject heading for groups that are transparent to the public and follow, as much as possible, the same subject structure for the print collection.

14.2 Online databases

The Library provides free online access to a range of databases provided by the NSW.net scheme. The databases can be found at:

http://www.greatlakes.nsw.gov.au/Library/links/online_databases.htm

The library will also subscribe to other databases, subject to them meeting appropriate selection criteria.

The library subscribes to two online databases, for collection control and Inter-Library loans purposes. These are *Online Dewey* and the *Libraries Australia*.

14.3 Links via the catalogue

It is feasible for the library to place links to offsite data within its library catalogue. This is something that the Library will continue to review, but the reality is that the current workloads of staff are likely to preclude any significant movements in this area.

14.4 Criteria for selection

It is essential that databases and online links, whether via the web or the catalogue, be subject to appropriate selection criteria, given below:

- Existing or predicted customer demand;
- Importance of the material to the collection;
- Currency of the information;
- Authenticity of the information;
- Significance of the work;

- Cost of accessing the site;
- Presentation of the site;
- Licensing arrangements;
- Speed with which useful information can be derived from the site.

14.5 Selection input

Selection methods for offsite material will incorporate the following:

- Journal and newspaper reviews;
- Staff suggestions (both within the library and from other library sources);
- Customer suggestions;
- Publisher's catalogues.

15 Support services to the collection

Whilst every effort is made to provide a collection to meet the community's needs there will always be times when a request is made for something outside the scope of the collection. In order address this issue the library provides the following support services.

15.1 Reciprocal borrowing rights

A cooperative network exists within New South Wales to which the majority of libraries belong. As a result of this network members of the public are able to access collections of other library systems outside their own through the presentation of a library card from their usual place of residence.

15.2 Inter-library loans

Great Lakes Library Service is part of a network of New South Wales libraries that enables each participating library to borrow from and lend to others within the network.

As part of the library's effort to incorporate more public input into the process of stock selection items request for inter-library loan will be favourably viewed for direct purchase if the item is still commercially available. The purchasing of such items will still be subjected to the appropriate selection criteria.

15.3 Foreign language resources

Australian Bureau of Statistics data reveals that those speaking languages other than English at home represent only a small group in the community, constituting 1.9% of the population in the Great Lakes area⁶. For this reason there has been little local interest in languages other than English (LOTE) collections and the Library

⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *2006 Census of Population and Housing, 2007*

meets what demand there is through the Multicultural Services Collection available at the State Library of NSW.

16 Measures to assess selection suitability

16.1 Physical resources

The library has put in place a range of mechanisms to provide feedback on collection suitability. It is appropriate to constantly review this process to ascertain its effectiveness. Consequently, the library will monitor:

- Total number of inter-library loans;
- Total number of suggestions;
- Customer comments on the collection;
- Stock turnover rates.

A growth in the first three measures may provide an indication of the need to further refine the selection process. This should be qualified by an understanding that growth in these areas may reveal 1) improvements in the effectiveness of the service 2) an increasing confidence in the public that the library is open to input.

In the case of stock turnover rates the intention is to monitor these for any downwards trends. Based on the information contained in Graph 3 the following stock turnover rates will be set as the current benchmark:

Table 3: Stock turnover rates by collection (2006/07)

Collection	Turnover Rate
Non-fiction (adult)	2.8
Non-fiction (junior)	1.5
Fiction (adult)	7.3
Fiction (junior)	4.2
Paperbacks	6.2
Graphic novels	8.1
Picture books	6.5
Talking books (adult)	4.8
Talking books (young adult)	4.6
Talking books (junior)	6.9
Music CDs (adult)	9.1
Music CDs (junior)	7.5
CD-Roms	4.4
DVDs (adult)	17.2
DVDs (junior)	18.9
Large print	8.4

It is recognised that simply basing benchmarks on historical data alone presents a partial picture of the suitability of the collection. Other factors and environmental developments must always be taken into consideration but individual stock turnover rates still provide a useful indicator.

There is also the option of developing a system of auditing the collection for its completeness. This is no trivial undertaking, particularly as there is a dearth of tools/resources to enable such an audit. Furthermore, there are significant staffing implications. In light of these challenges the library will hold off from undertaking such a project at present. In this context acknowledgement should be given to the wide range of selection input mechanisms the library employs that already provide indicators of the quality and completeness of the collection.

16.2 Online resources

In the case of online databases suitability statistics will be based on patron usage.

17 Out-sourcing of cataloguing

As part of the evolution of the library service and its collection development practices out-sourcing of cataloguing will be implemented. To ensure customer access to the collection is not compromised by inaccurate cataloguing the library has developed guidelines for the cataloguing practitioners and the quality of the cataloguing will be monitored periodically.

18 Profiling of the library collection

A developing practice in public libraries is to provide book suppliers with a profile of the needs of the library which directs them to purchase titles according to this profile. Profiling is, in essence, already occurring within the library. As mentioned above the library has implemented a standing orders program, which involves directing preferred suppliers to provide titles of identified authors in single or multiple copies and in a variety of formats.

In addition to this the library will continue investigations into further expanding the profiling system.

19 Weeding of the library collection

Weeding of the library collection is as important as stock selection. It is critical that such weeding be done using appropriate guidelines.

19.1 Criteria for weeding

The objective of weeding a collection is to maintain its currency and its relevance to the public and to ensure the collection can be housed in the facilities available. To achieve this items are weeded using the following criteria:

- The material is obsolete;
- It is in poor physical condition;
- It is no longer of relevance to the community;
- It has low usage levels.

Fiction discarded because of condition will be replaced if it is a 'classic', part of a series or a popular author. This applies whether the title is in the adult, large print, youth, junior or easy fiction collections. These 'stock gaps' are generally filled by ordering from local supplier.

If non-fiction is discarded because of condition/age steps will be taken to ensure that the subject is replaced with more recent/up-to-date publications. These gaps will be filled by special order from supplier or at next supplier visit.

If an item is no longer available for purchase then the item should be re-evaluated to determine if weeding is appropriate.

Whilst duplication of items can be a consideration in weeding material, if multiple copies do meet the stock selection criteria they should be retained.

The earlier analysis of collection shape and usage identified the importance of regular and significant culling to the health of the collection and its turnover rate. This is not to advocate weeding for weeding sake but rather to establish a standard that will ensure the quality and currency of the material available.

The established overall weeding/discard rate was set at 14%. This is a global target and rates will differ from collection to collection but will be based on the above weeding criteria. This may result in certain collections receiving more significant culling' particularly if stock turnover rates or specific collection size indicate targeting weeding is appropriate.

In theory available shelving space should not be a weeding consideration, but in reality as collections outgrow the facilities that house them there will be pressure to use this as an additional criterion.

19.2 Weeding of offsite material

Offsite material (e.g. database links) and databases will also require weeding to ensure the collection remains appropriate. This would be done using the following guidelines:

- The material is obsolete, or the site is not updated regularly enough;
- The authenticity of the site becomes questionable;
- It is no longer of relevance to the community;
- A site containing richer information is available as a replacement;
- A cheaper similar source of information is available.

20 Presentation of the collection

Though not traditionally a component of collection development strategies the presentation of the collection merits attention as it will impact on stock turnover rates.

20.1 Shelving arrangements

Where possible all free-standing shelving will have a maximum height of 1500 mm and be a minimum of 300 mm above the floor.

Wall mounted shelving should be no higher than 1800 mm.

Every effort will be made to place as much stock face-out as possible.

The above considerations will be taken into account in the planning of new facilities and the purchasing of furniture

20.2 Collection arrangements

All major adult fiction collections in the Great Lakes Library Service have now been placed into genre groupings. These groupings are:

- Crime/thriller;
- Fantasy/science fiction;
- Horror/supernatural;
- Romance/family saga;
- Western;
- Adventure/War/Sea;
- General

At this stage the non-fiction collection has only been partially separated into collections. These are:

- Biography;
- Indigenous;
- Literature

There is potential to further group the non-fiction collections, as many public library systems have now done. This will receive due consideration.

21 Objectives

1. Present the Great Lakes Library Service Collection Development Strategy to Council for adoption.
Timeframe: By June 2008
2. Monitor and apply key overall collection benchmarks.
Timeframe: Immediate
3. Review stock selection practices against data contained within this Strategy.
Timeframe: By June 2008
4. Inform Council of collection needs for budgetary considerations.
Timeframe: By November 2008
5. Monitor developments in the wider community and use this process to inform stock selection practices.
Timeframe: Immediate
6. Develop suitable profiles to support selection practices.
Timeframe: January 2009
7. Assess general shape of the non-fiction collection and use targeted enhancements to redress any identified weaknesses.
Timeframe: Assessment by November 2008
Collection enhancement by May 2009
8. Establish an MP3 collection, pending identification of funding.
Timeframe: By June 2009
9. Review collection distribution across all service points.
Timeframe: By November 2008
10. Assess collection impact of the establishment of the home library service.
Timeframe: By December 2008
11. Review stock selection input mechanisms to determine most suitable combination.
Timeframe: By November 2008

12. Commence monitoring the selection suitability measures identified above.
Timeframe: Immediate
13. Complete implementation of out-sourced cataloguing.
Timeframe: By June 2009
14. Review timeframes for total processing of stock and develop and adopt suitable benchmarks.
Timeframe: February 2009
15. Review and update collection weeding practices as appropriate.
Timeframe: By December 2008
16. Integrate new shelving and collection arrangements into planning practices for new library facilities.
Timeframe: As the opportunity arises
17. Update the Strategy when new industry benchmarks become available.
Timeframe: December 2008

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Jones, Chris *Maintaining a healthy library collection: the need to weed*, APLIS, 20(4), December 2007

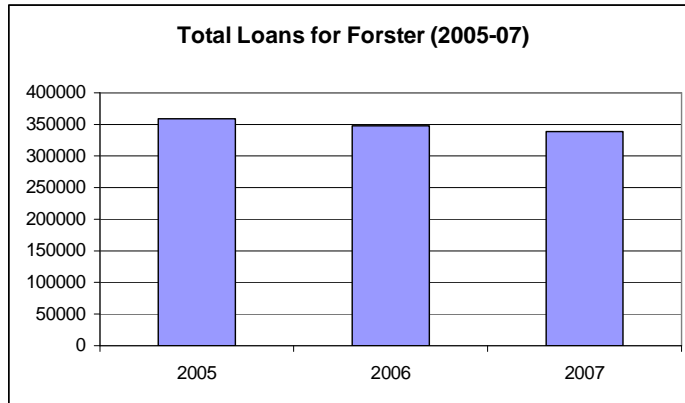
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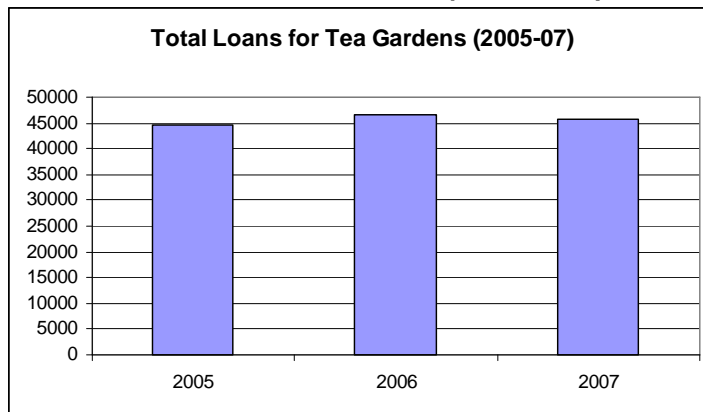
Appendix 1

Loans by branch location

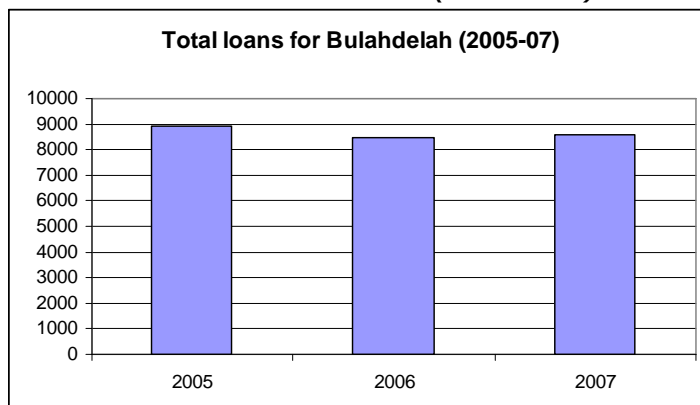
Total loans at Forster (2005-07)



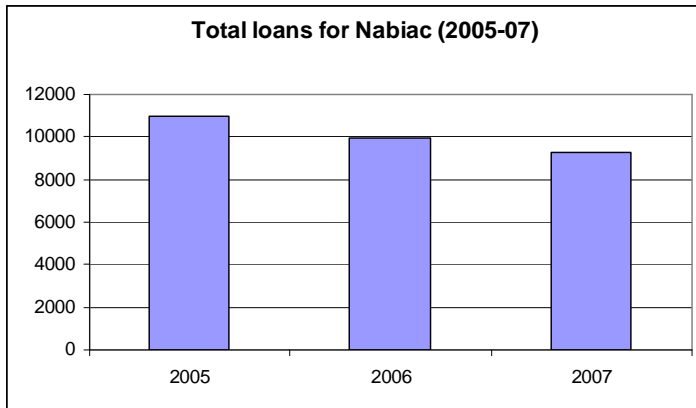
Total loans at Tea Gardens (2005-07)



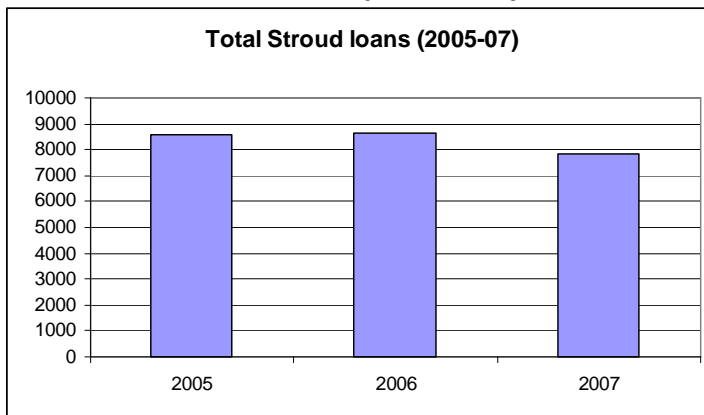
Total loans for Bulahdelah (2005-07)



Total loans for Nabiac (2005-07)



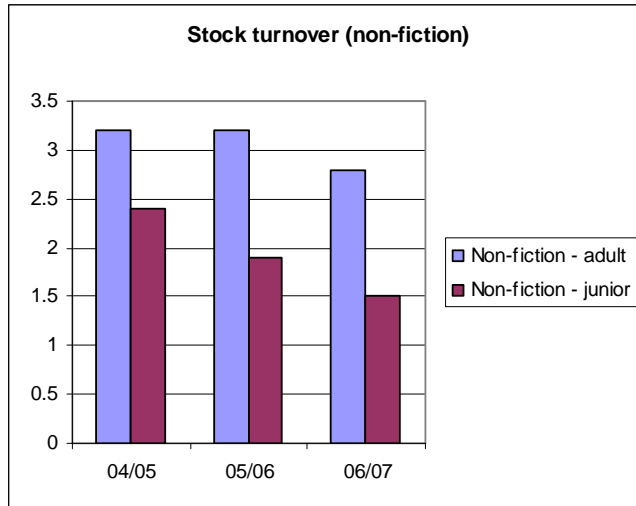
Total loans for Stroud (2005-07)



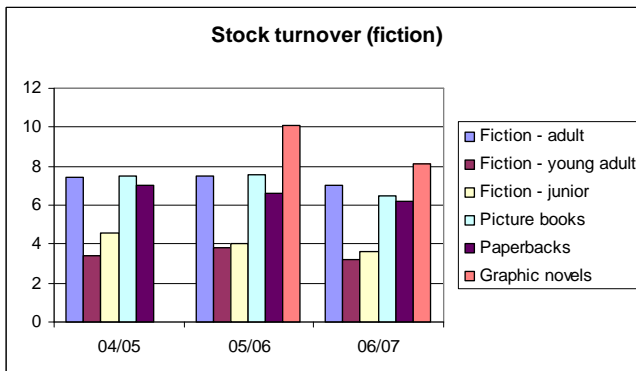
Appendix 2

Stock turnover rates by format

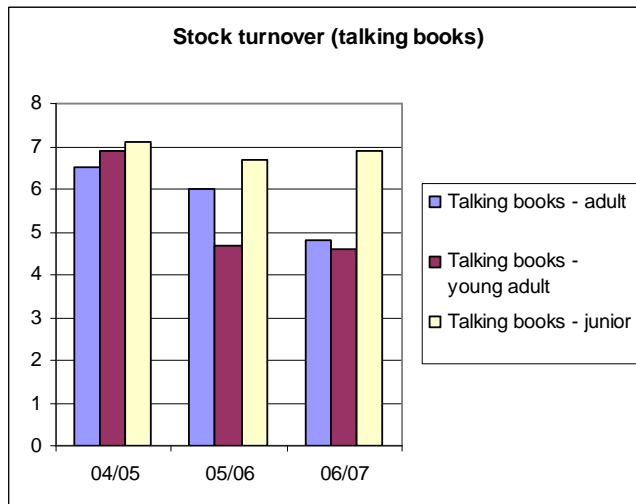
Stock turnover for non-fiction



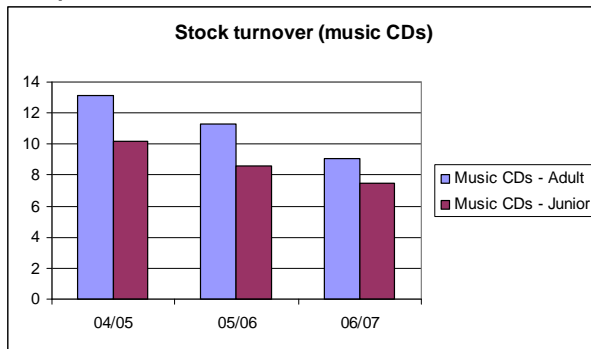
Stock turnover for fiction



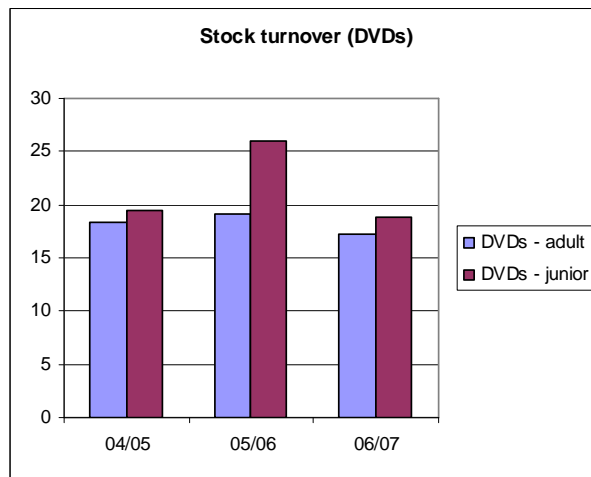
Graph 10: Stock turnover for talking books



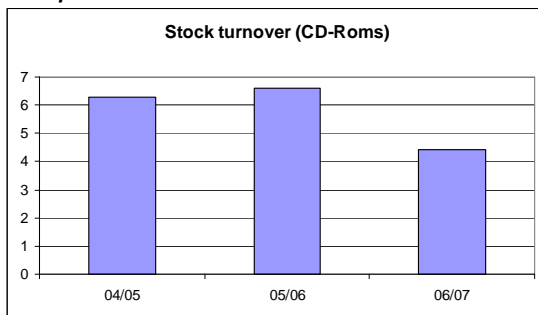
Graph 11: Stock turnover for music CDs



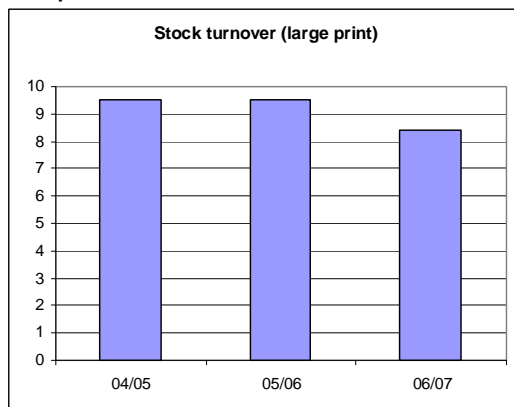
Graph 12: Stock turnover for DVDs



Graph 13: Stock turnover for CD-Roms



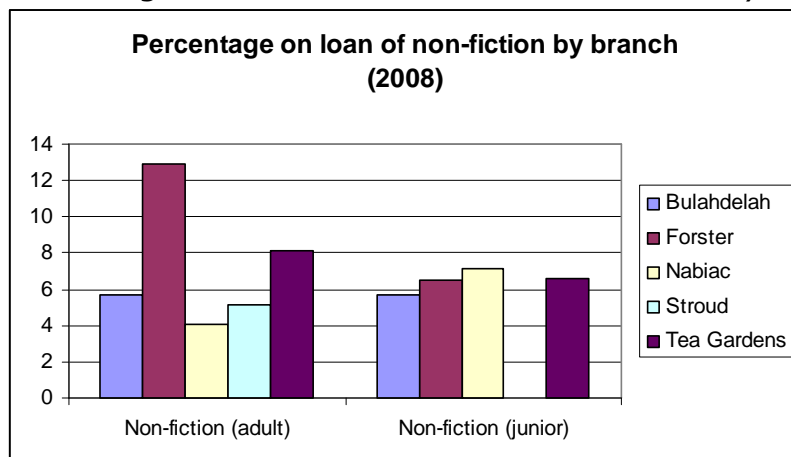
Graph 14: Stock turnover for large print



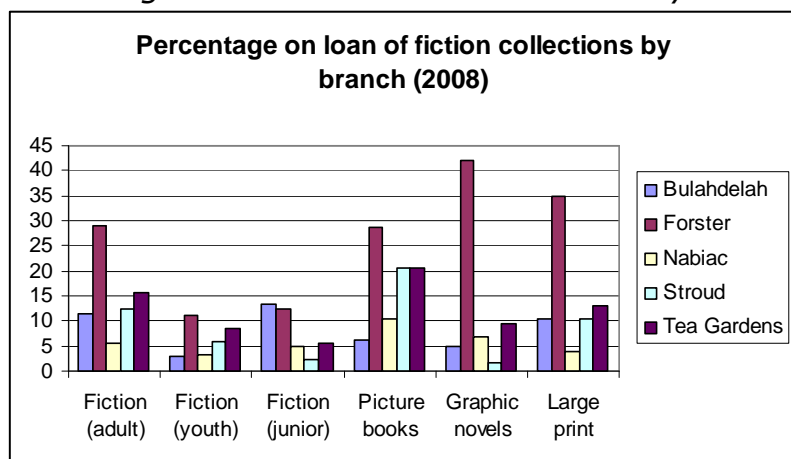
Appendix 3

Percentage of items on loan (April 2008)

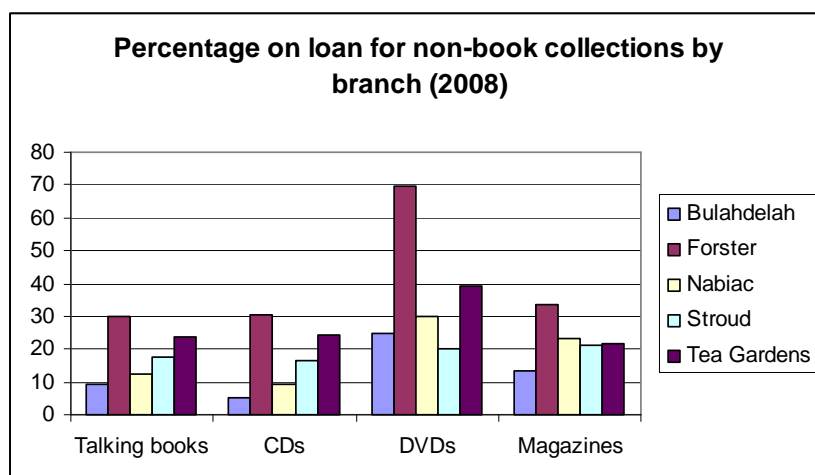
Percentage of non-fiction collections on loan by branch



Percentage of fiction collections on loan by branch



Graph 18: Percentage of non-book material collections on loan by branch



Appendix 4

ALIA Statement on free access to information

ALIA objects addressed

To promote the free flow of information and ideas in the interests of all Australians and a thriving culture and democracy.

Principle

Freedom can be protected in a democratic society only if its citizens have unrestricted access to information and ideas.

Statement

There are several different levels at which the free flow of ideas can be impeded. At the societal level, legislative bodies of all kinds are expected to consider the legal and regulatory frameworks they put in place to support the free flow of information and ideas about the interests and concerns of citizens. At the institutional level, library and information services are expected to encourage the free flow of information and ideas within the scope of their roles and responsibilities. At the individual level, citizens are expected to make informed decisions in exercising their rights and responsibilities.

The Australian Library and Information Association believes that library and information services have particular responsibilities in supporting and sustaining the free flow of information and ideas including:

1. asserting the equal and equitable rights of citizens to information regardless of age, race, gender, religion, disability, cultural identity, language, socioeconomic status, lifestyle choice, political allegiance or social viewpoint;
2. adopting an inclusive approach in developing and implementing policies regarding access to information and ideas that are relevant to the library and information service concerned, irrespective of the controversial nature of the information or ideas;
3. ensuring that their clients have access to information from a variety of sources and agencies to meet their needs and that a citizen's information needs are met independently of location and an ability to pay;
4. catering for interest in contemporary issues without promoting or suppressing particular beliefs and ideas;
5. protecting the confidential relationships that exist between the library and information service and its clients;
6. resisting attempts by individuals or groups within their communities to restrict access to information and ideas while at

- the same time recognising that powers of censorship are legally vested in state and federal governments;
7. observing laws and regulations governing access to information and ideas but working towards the amendment of those laws and regulations which inhibit library and information services in meeting the obligations and responsibilities outlined in this Statement.

Related documents

Article 19 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights

<http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>

Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/a_ccpr.htm

International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom

<http://www.ifla.org/faife/policy/iflastat/iflastat.htm>

Replaces: Free library services to all, Freedom to read

Adopted: 2001

Location of Statement:

<http://www.alia.org.au/policies/free.access.html>

Appendix 5

ALIA Statement on online content regulation

Short title

Statement on online content regulation.

ALIA objects addressed

To promote the free flow of information and ideas in the interest of all Australians and a thriving culture, economy and democracy.

Principle

Freedom can be protected in a democratic society only if its citizens have unrestricted access to information and ideas.

Statement

Libraries and information services facilitate and promote public access to the widest variety of information, reflecting the plurality and diversity of society. The selection and availability of library materials and services, including online content and services, is governed by professional considerations and not by political, moral and religious views.

Libraries and information services support the right of all users to unhindered access to information of their choice regardless of format. Access to electronic information resources should not be restricted except as required by law and this basic right should not be eroded in the development of regulatory measures for online information.

Users are assisted with the necessary skills and a suitable environment in which to use their chosen information sources and services freely and confidently. Each user's right to privacy and confidentiality is protected with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted.

In addition to the many valuable resources available on the internet, some are incorrect, misleading and may be offensive. Libraries and information services proactively promote and facilitate responsible access to quality networked information for all their users, including children and young people. They enable library users to learn to use the internet and electronic information efficiently and effectively.

Related documents

ALIA Statement on Free Access to Information

<http://alia.org.au/policies/free.access.html>

International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom

<http://www.ifla.org/V/press/pr990326.htm>

International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)

Internet Manifesto: <http://www.ifla.org/III/misc/im-e.htm>

Article 19 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights

<http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>

Guidelines relating to ALIA's Statement on online content regulation (members-only)

<http://www.alia.org.au/members-only/advocacy/internet.access/guidelines.html>

Adopted: **1997**

Amended: **2001, 2002**

Location of Statement

<http://www.alia.org.au/policies/content.regulation.html>