



# evaluation

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





Northern Territory Library  
GPO Box 42  
Darwin NT 0801

Phone: (08) 8999 7177  
Fax: (08) 8922 0760  
Email: [jo.mcgill@nt.gov.au](mailto:jo.mcgill@nt.gov.au)

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### EVALUATION BRIEF

This evaluation of the Libraries and Knowledge Centres (LKC) in the Northern Territory was commissioned by Ms Jo McGill, Director of the Northern Territory Library, to provide an external view of the LKC concept in the early development phase, a snapshot of the progress to date, and to gain some baseline information to guide future developments.

This evaluation is also a strategic process in the developing phase to ensure clear articulation between the Northern Territory Library's policy objectives and the Northern Territory Government's plan for development and capacity building in the regions:

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

The following research team collaborated to evaluate early developments with LKCs, and to recommend items for further consideration and future developments:

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Prof N Martin Nakata | Jumbunna IHL, University of Technology Sydney                         |
| Ms Vicky Nakata      | Jumbunna IHL, University of Technology Sydney                         |
| Dr Jane Anderson     | Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies |
| Mr Victor Hart       | Oodgeroo Unit, Queensland University of Technology                    |
| Dr Jane Hunter       | Distributed Systems Technology Centre, University of Queensland       |
| Ms Sonia Smallacombe | School of Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Charles Darwin University     |
| Ms Cate Richmond     | Northern Territory Library  |
| Dr Brian Lloyd       | Northern Territory Library  |
| Ms Gibby Maynard     | Northern Territory Library  |

The Director of Northern Territory Library wishes to thank the collaborative partners and their respective institutions for providing the time and resources to undertake this evaluation, and the many participants who took part in the interviews and group discussions during our visits to communities in Darwin, Wadeye, Galiwin'ku and Angurugu.



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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

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

For this to be realised, development of the Libraries and Knowledge Centres model must be:

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

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



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### INTRODUCTION

The Northern Territory Library (NTL) has a key role in the Northern Territory Government's plans for "the development of the Northern Territory community by providing all Territorians with access to information, literature and their documentary heritage".<sup>1</sup> Its primary task is to develop "services and service delivery partnerships which will best ensure that the information needs of all individuals and institutions within the community can be met".<sup>2</sup> The creation of Libraries and Knowledge Centres is one such initiative to help "meet the Northern Territory Government's vision for strong, sustainable communities".<sup>3</sup> This initiative is guided through NTL's broad policy goals:

- developing communities through libraries
- connecting people to information
- preserving NT documentary and cultural heritage
- helping people to learn.

A key task for this evaluation is to gain some measure of the capacity of the Library and Knowledge Centres (LKC) concept to achieve these goals, including some measure of the value placed on these provisions as a contribution to broader government goals.

Any provision of sustainable, relevant and useful services must take into account Territory demographics<sup>4</sup> and the knowledge and information needs and interests of people in different

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<sup>1</sup> See [http://www.dcdsca.nt.gov.au/dcdsca/intranet.nsf/pages/ntlis\\_home](http://www.dcdsca.nt.gov.au/dcdsca/intranet.nsf/pages/ntlis_home)

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> See for example general ABS data at

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abscensus2.nsf/b4bb8f0005386a4aca256ce1007e022a/22ae2eb7bc5c76ffca256d39007d1d5e!OpenDocument> and

<http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/2001maps.nsf/Homepages/Ausstats+NRPs> ; Indigenous specific data at

<http://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/9cfdfe271b7930bbca2568b5007b8618/b60844668143e73aca2569440080cb94!OpenDocument> and social and health issues confronting Indigenous people at

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communities.<sup>5</sup> It must provide access to knowledge and information from the quite distinct Western and Indigenous knowledge traditions (often identified as external and local sources of knowledge and information) to meet these needs and interests.<sup>6</sup> It must also deal with the various constraints that operate in remote contexts, which include the lack or ineffectiveness of essential service and social infrastructure<sup>7</sup>, the low levels of literacy and formal education that currently characterise Indigenous communities<sup>8</sup>, the capacities within communities<sup>9</sup>, the

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<http://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs%40.nsf/9cfdfe271b7930bbca2568b5007b8618!OpenView&Start=1&Count=1500&Expand=18#18>

<sup>5</sup> See for example D Nathan, 'Plugging in Indigenous knowledge: connections and innovations', *Journal of Aboriginal Studies*, vol 2, 2000, pp. 39-47.

L Dyson, 'Cultural issues in the adoption of information and communication technologies by indigenous Australians', in F Sudweeks and C Ess (eds.), *Proceedings, cultural attitudes towards communication and technology*, Murdoch University, Australia, 2004, pp. 58-71.

A Lieberman, *Taking ownership: strengthening Indigenous cultures and languages through the use of ICTs* at [http://learnlink.aed.org/Publications/Concept\\_Papers/taking\\_ownership.pdf](http://learnlink.aed.org/Publications/Concept_Papers/taking_ownership.pdf)

See also, Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, *Strategic study for improving telecommunications in regional, rural and remote Indigenous communities*, information and issues paper, Telecommunications Services Inquiry (TSI), [http://www.dcita.gov.au/tel/publications/indigenous\\_communications\\_-\\_information\\_and\\_issues\\_paper/conduct\\_of\\_the\\_study\\_-\\_scope\\_-\\_indigenous\\_telecommunications\\_study](http://www.dcita.gov.au/tel/publications/indigenous_communications_-_information_and_issues_paper/conduct_of_the_study_-_scope_-_indigenous_telecommunications_study)

<sup>6</sup> See also general discussion of knowledge-based economies at <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/66f306f503e529a5ca25697e0017661f/371268d066f69612ca256c220025e8a6!OpenDocument>

<sup>7</sup> See for example, J Taylor & O Stanley, *The Opportunity Costs of the Status Quo in the Thamarrurr Region: A report to the partners in the COAG (ICCP) trial at Wadeye—the Thamarrurr Regional Council and community, and the Northern Territory and Australian Governments*, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, The Australian National University, Canberra, 2005.

<sup>8</sup> *Learning Lessons, final report of the independent review of Indigenous education in the Northern Territory*, at [http://www.deet.nt.gov.au/education/indigenous\\_education/learning\\_lessons\\_review.pdf](http://www.deet.nt.gov.au/education/indigenous_education/learning_lessons_review.pdf)

effects of significant relative disadvantage expressed in social and economic indicators<sup>10</sup>, as well as the complex governance and policy contexts which involve different levels of government and different sectors and agencies in policy, programs, service delivery and funding arrangements.<sup>11</sup>

All of these factors, which inform the possibilities for implementing successful public library services in the Northern Territory, are interconnected and are themselves situated within changing contexts. For example, globally, over the last fifteen years, the knowledge and information sector has undergone rapid change due to advancing Information Communication Technologies or ICTs<sup>12</sup>, bringing about changes in the perception and provision of public library services.<sup>13</sup> Changes in understanding about the value and use of Indigenous Knowledge have also been evident across the globe in the same period.<sup>14</sup> Globalisation and the shift to knowledge-based economies have brought about social and economic change that have resulted in governments and policy makers implementing changes to the ways public services are resourced and delivered.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> House Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, *Many ways forward, report of the inquiry into capacity building in Indigenous communities*, 2004, <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/atsia/indigenouscommunities/report.htm>

<sup>10</sup> Overcoming Indigenous disadvantage: key indicators 2003, report of the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision, <http://www.pc.gov.au/gsp/reports/indigenous/keyindicators2003/keyindicators2003.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> COAG's agreement on Indigenous affairs at [http://www.nt.gov.au/dcm/indigenous\\_policy/pdf/20050406/OverarchingAgreement.pdf](http://www.nt.gov.au/dcm/indigenous_policy/pdf/20050406/OverarchingAgreement.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> See UN World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) at <http://www.itu.int/wsis/basic/why.html>

<sup>13</sup> See IFLA's preparatory work on the UN WSIS at <http://www.ifla.org/III/announce/un-wsis.htm>

<sup>14</sup> M Nakata, 'Indigenous knowledge and the cultural interface: underlying issues at the intersection of knowledge and information systems (abridged version)', In Anne Hickling Hudson, Julie Matthews & Annette Woods (eds.), *Disrupting preconceptions: postcolonialism and education*, Post Pressed, Flaxton, 2004, pp. 19-38.

<sup>15</sup> See for example, M Laroche & M Mérette, 'On the concept and dimensions of human capital in a knowledge-based economy context', *Canadian Public Policy - Analyse De Politiques*, vol. XXV, no. 1 1999, <http://economics.ca/cqi/jab?journal=cpp&view=v25n1/CPpv25n1p087.pdf>



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Many of the underlying rationales and concepts emerging in the language of global change are the subject of often contentious debate and are open to various interpretations as they attach to various interests. An abundance of literature and opinion has been produced, discussing and analysing developments in these areas and what they mean for local communities undergoing social and economic transition, in both developed and developing economies. The interconnectedness of these changing contexts is highly relevant to this evaluation because the production and flow of knowledge and information to communities is fundamental to the ability of remote communities to build better futures.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> See NT Govt, 2002 document, *Building a better Territory*,  
[http://www.nt.gov.au/dcm/otd/publications/major\\_projects/economic\\_development\\_strategy/building\\_a\\_better\\_territory.pdf](http://www.nt.gov.au/dcm/otd/publications/major_projects/economic_development_strategy/building_a_better_territory.pdf)



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### THE CHANGING CONTEXT

#### Shifting Dimensions of Public Libraries

Historically, public library services have revolved around the provision of access to collections of printed material, open to all on equal basis, but with greatest benefit to those least able to provide for themselves by private means. As knowledge and information institutions, public libraries view their role as fundamental to the development of an informed information-literate citizenship able to participate in democratic life. Equitable and free access is central to the public library mission.<sup>17</sup>

As public spaces, libraries have provided safe and neutral places for individuals of all ages, backgrounds, and walks of life to browse, search, borrow, or seek assistance in finding the information they want for whatever purpose, for example, government or community information, materials to support personal interests or to improve life skills, general knowledge and understanding of the wider world beyond community.<sup>18</sup>

In this role, public libraries have been an important support to lifelong education and learning, providing the infrastructure to support the information needs of those engaged in formal, informal, self-directed and incidental learning. They have also provided spaces for community groups to meet and disseminate information, and have served local authorities in their community information dissemination. Situated under local government authorities, public libraries have developed as an important part of essential community services and are part of the social infrastructure that provides for community well-being as other public cultural, sporting and recreational spaces and facilities do.

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<sup>17</sup> See for example Australian Library and Information Association's core values statement at <http://www.alia.org.au/policies/core.values.html>

<sup>18</sup> E Cox, *A safe place to go: libraries and social capital*, University of Technology Sydney & State Library of NSW, Sydney, 2000.

Although in a rapidly changing world the value of public libraries as community assets has not generally been called into question, funding bases have decreased in real terms.<sup>19</sup> Public libraries generally have to do more with less, despite the cost demands of ICTs, and so have begun to look more broadly for ways to gain leverage for their position in relation to other competing services.<sup>20</sup>

Over the last decade, with the global shift to knowledge-based economies now facilitated by electronic and digital technologies, public libraries worldwide have been repositioning themselves, advocating their contemporary and future relevance as knowledge institutions and as valuable community assets, and re-aligning their delivery of information and services to fit with rapidly advancing information technologies and the contemporary challenges their local communities face.<sup>21</sup>

Globally, local communities undergoing rapid social and economic change as a result of the shift to knowledge-based economies are being challenged to maintain or rebuild social cohesion, to regenerate economic activity and to be competitive, and to align more closely to government policy.<sup>22</sup>

Across the globe, national and state governments are increasingly developing policy to address social and economic issues in ways that extend the traditional departmentalised approaches to service delivery by encouraging cross-sector approaches that can make more

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<sup>19</sup> State Library of Victoria, *Libraries/building/communities: the vital contribution of Victoria's public libraries*, research report for the Library Board of Victoria and the Victorian Public Library Network, February 2005, [http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/about/information/publications/policies\\_reports/plu\\_lbc.html](http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/about/information/publications/policies_reports/plu_lbc.html)

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, *Framework for the future: libraries, learning and information in the next decade*, prepared by C Leadbeater, 2003, [http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive\\_2003/framework\\_future.htm](http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive_2003/framework_future.htm)

S Howley, 'Routes to knowledge' *Library and Information Research*, vol. 28, no. 88, Spring 2004, pp. 42-46.

Canadian Library Association, *The world summit on the information society: a submission to the government of Canada*, November 2003, [http://www.cla.ca/issues/wsis\\_cla\\_submission.pdf](http://www.cla.ca/issues/wsis_cla_submission.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> See for example, M Laroche & M Mérette, 1999.

effective use of resources via inter-agency cooperation, 'joined-up services', or 'whole of government' approaches which share responsibility for agreed service or resource delivery through partnership and cooperative arrangements.

As well, regionalisation is a concept with global currency, both for devolving decision-making from centralised governments as well as for building overarching structures across local government entities in order to more effectively deploy or share resources. Local communities or groups, as well as different levels of government and/or service sectors are being asked to share responsibility for agreed-upon outcomes on the ground in return for ongoing commitment of resources from the public purse.

At all levels, including the local level, communities have to now accept that the globalised knowledge economy is "information and knowledge driven, entrepreneurial, skill intensive, continually innovative, with a high concentration of virtual, knowledge-based or symbolic goods, and with a high proportion of services and 'experiential' products".<sup>23</sup>

In this environment, the concept of 'lifelong learning' has been harnessed by political and economic agendas with a major interpretation since the 1990s being to link it to retraining and learning new skills.<sup>24</sup> Education, once seen as the formal preparation period for a life of citizenship and work, undertaken and completed by early adulthood, is now something considered ongoing throughout life, not just for personal development and active citizenship but also for updating skills and knowledge for changing work patterns. Across this context, increasing numbers of people from various age groups rely on public libraries for study facilities and access to materials, information services and basic skills programs to support formal study, or to informally update their skills.

In reference to this changing political, economic, social, and educational context, public libraries are reasserting their value as public institutions which:

- contribute to the social infrastructure by strengthening communities,

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<sup>23</sup> Gurstein, 2001 cited in A Keneally, *Public libraries in learning communities, a research paper*, State Library of Victoria, 2003.

<sup>24</sup> C Medel-Anonuevo, T Ohsako & W Mauch, *Revisiting lifelong learning for the 21<sup>st</sup> century*, UNESCO Institute of Education, 2001, p.4, <http://www.unesco.org/education/uie/pdf/revisitingLLL.pdf>



- 
- support lifelong learning and information literacy, basic skills programs and assistance with literacy, including ICT and multimedia literacies, across all ages,
  - provide resources and facilities for those engaged in formal and informal learning,
  - provide open and public access to the Internet for those unable to afford it,
  - help build 'learning communities'.<sup>25</sup>

In turn, to support these claims, public libraries are recognising that they need to raise their profiles and visibility if their skills and capacities in relation to knowledge and information are to be valued and utilised in the current information environment. Public libraries around the world are gaining leverage by advocating their potential value or impact on a range of social, educational, and economic issues to connect library and information services more broadly to government goals and to assist the articulation of national and regional goals at local levels.

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<sup>25</sup> State Library of Victoria, *Libraries/building/communities: the vital contribution of Victoria's public libraries*, research report for the Library Board of Victoria and the Victorian Public Library Network, February 2005, [http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/about/information/publications/policies\\_reports/plu\\_lbc.html](http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/about/information/publications/policies_reports/plu_lbc.html)

D Schmidmaier, Submission to Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education References Committee, inquiry into the progress and future direction of life-long learning, CASL (Council of Australian State Libraries, June 2004, <http://www.casl.org.au/papers/CASL%20Submission%20to%20Life-long%20Learning%20Inquiry.doc>

A Keneally, 2003. *Public libraries in learning communities, a research paper*, State Library of Victoria, 2003.

Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts References Committee, *Libraries in the online environment*, October 2003, [http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/ecita\\_ctte/completed\\_inquiries/2002-04/online\\_libraries/report/index.html](http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/ecita_ctte/completed_inquiries/2002-04/online_libraries/report/index.html)

Council of Australian State Libraries, *Information Literacy Standards*, <http://www.casl.org.au/papers/casl/information.literacy.standards.pdf>

AM Schwirtlich, *The role of ICT in building communities and social capital*, Discussion paper and submission to Department of Communication, Information Technology and the Arts, March 2005, <http://www.casl.org.au/papers.and.publications.cfm>

For example, in the UK, various documents articulate the position of libraries in relation to national agendas on learning and literacy, social inclusion and cohesion, and the social and economic regeneration of communities undergoing change. Libraries and other key cultural institutions are participating in the regionalisation process to decentralise services and positioning themselves as key sites for facilitating the 'joined-up' approach to service delivery across various departments and agencies.<sup>26</sup> In relation to these activities, the *Framework for the Future* report<sup>27</sup> noted that the best library services were found where local authority managers had considered how their library services could help them deliver their key corporate objectives, had developed strategies for using them, and resourced and managed them according to a clear set of priorities.

### Indigenous Knowledge (IK)

In addition to these broad considerations, the provision of relevant public library services in Indigenous communities cannot achieve any real legitimacy within those communities without taking into account the place of Indigenous Knowledge—Indigenous traditional, historical (i.e. colonial), and contemporary local knowledge.

Globally, the acknowledged failure of applying imposed scientific or Western knowledge to solve problems in sustaining populations in the developing and formerly colonised world has led to belated recognition of the value of local, including Indigenous, knowledge. Indigenous and local or traditional knowledge remains critical to the livelihoods of all those who remain outside of, or who are marginalised by market economies and continues to be relevant to 80%

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<sup>26</sup> See for example, Resource, The Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries, *Using museums, archives and libraries to develop a learning community: a strategic plan for action, Draft for Consultation*, VIP Print Ltd, London, 2001. <http://www.mla.gov.uk/documents/usestrat.pdf>

Museums Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), Consultation Response to 'Literacy and Social Inclusion: the policy challenge, A discussion paper by the National Literacy Trust', 2004, <http://www.mla.gov.uk/documents/resp200408c.pdf>

D Stoker, 'Social exclusion, 'joined-up government', public libraries and the Internet', *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*, vol. 32, no. 2, June 2000, pp. 53-55.

<sup>27</sup> See [http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive\\_2003/framework\\_future.htm](http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive_2003/framework_future.htm)

of the world's population.<sup>28</sup> The scientific community's concern about the loss of bio-diversity and its associated body of knowledge across the planet likewise has led to recognition of the value of the Indigenous knowledge base. The political and cultural reassertion of colonised Indigenous peoples still contained within nation-states around the world also contributes to this trend.

This increase in global interest does not reduce the threats to Indigenous knowledge. Recognised by corporate, commercial, government, scientific and research interests as a largely untapped well of future innovation and utility, "Indigenous knowledge fuels multi-billion dollar genetics supply industries, ranging from food and pharmaceuticals in developed countries to chemical product, energy and other manufactures".<sup>29</sup>

Documentation assists with IK preservation and retention and ICTs have enabled the proliferation of Indigenous knowledge databases and networks of information over the last decade.<sup>30</sup> Databases also facilitate broader access to this knowledge and can make it more vulnerable to exploitation or misuse<sup>31</sup>. At the same time, documentation is a critical means to protect Indigenous cultural and intellectual property within intellectual property regimes.<sup>32</sup>

Indigenous cultural and intellectual property (ICIP) rights is one of the most critical developments in relation to the protection of IK for the future benefit of Indigenous people and their communities and is a significant area of United Nations activity and Indigenous and Australian legal activity.<sup>33</sup> Recent developments associated with the Convention of Biological

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<sup>28</sup> See M Nakata, 2004.

<sup>29</sup> United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) Civil Society Organisations and Participation Programme. (CSOPP), 1995, p. 9.

<sup>30</sup> See the *Indigenous Knowledge Development Monitor* at <http://www.nuffic.nl/ciran/ikdm/>

<sup>31</sup> See A Agrawal, 'Indigenous knowledge and the politics of classification', *International Social Science Journal*, September 2002, vol. 54, no. 173, pp. 287-297.

<sup>32</sup> M Langton & Z Ma Rhea, 'Traditional Indigenous biodiversity-related knowledge', in M Nakata & M Langton (eds.), *Australian Indigenous knowledge and libraries*, Australian Academic & Research Libraries, Canberra, in press.

<sup>33</sup> T Janke, *Our culture, our future: report on Australian Indigenous cultural and intellectual property rights*, Michael Frankel & Co, Surrey Hills, 1998.

Diversity<sup>34</sup>, the Bonn Guidelines<sup>35</sup>, the Voumard Report<sup>36</sup>, and the *Nationally Consistent Approach For Access to and the Utilisation of Australia's Native Genetic and Biochemical Resources*<sup>37</sup> provides some basis and optimism for the development of an Australian regulatory framework for the protection of Indigenous cultural and intellectual property. But there is still a way to go to enshrine protection in state and national legislation, to develop workable administrative arrangements, and to resolve issues of collective rights and extra-territorial protection of these rights outside of Australia. There is a growing body of international literature around all of these issues.

Likewise, literature on libraries and Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous knowledge management has also emerged in the last decade. Documented traditional knowledge is a

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World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), *Minding culture: case studies on intellectual property and traditional cultural expression*, prepared by Terri Janke for World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Geneva, 2002, <http://www.wipo.int/tk/en/studies/cultural/minding-culture/index.html>

J Anderson, *The Production of Indigenous Knowledge in Intellectual Property Law*, unpublished doctoral thesis. University of New South Wales, Sydney, 2003.

J Anderson, 'The Politics of Indigenous Knowledge: Australia's Proposed Communal Moral Rights Bill' *University of New South Wales Law Journal*, vol.3, no. 27, 2004, pp585-605.

J Anderson, 'Indigenous communal moral rights: the utility of an ineffective law', *Indigenous Law Bulletin*, vol. 5, no. 30, 2004, pp. 8-10.

M Davis, *Indigenous peoples and intellectual property rights*, research paper no. 20, 1996-97, Information and Research Services, Department of the Parliamentary Library, Canberra, viewed 14 August 2004, <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/rp/1996-97/97rp20.htm>

Australian Copyright Council, *Protecting Indigenous Intellectual Property*, Redfern, 1998.

<sup>34</sup> See Convention details at <http://www.biodiv.org/default.shtml>

<sup>35</sup> See details at <http://www.biodiv.org/programmes/socio-eco/benefit/bonn.asp>

<sup>36</sup> See John Voumard, 2000, *Commonwealth public inquiry into access to biological resources in Commonwealth areas*, <http://www.deh.gov.au/biodiversity/science/access/inquiry/>

<sup>37</sup> See Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council report, <http://www.deh.gov.au/biodiversity/publications/access/nca/>

derivative form of Indigenous knowledge or IK.<sup>38</sup> The contradictions in the global rush to document traditional knowledges for 'preservation' via *ex situ* storage in databases developed within the Western information science context are well documented<sup>39</sup>, although not widely discussed, and centre on differences in epistemology and ontology, fragmentation of IK via database categorisation processes, and removal from the cultural and oral contexts which give it its fullest meaning<sup>40</sup>. Such contradictions are accepted to some degree in the face of rapidly disappearing Indigenous knowledge and the urgent need to retain it in some form.

The value of utilising and/or integrating IK with other forms of knowledge is of particular interest to Indigenous people who live at the interface of two different knowledge traditions and who recognise that both are relevant and useful to futures<sup>41</sup>. It is also of considerable academic and research interest. In Australia, some documentation projects and IK research

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<sup>38</sup> M Langton & Z Ma Rhea, in press.

<sup>39</sup> A Agrawal, 'Dismantling the divide between Indigenous and Western knowledge', *Development and Change*, vol. 26, no. 3, 1995, pp. 413-439.

A Agrawal, 'Indigenous and scientific knowledge: some critical comments', *Indigenous Knowledge and Development Monitor*, vol. 3, no. 3-4, 1995, viewed 14 January 2004, <http://www.nuffic.nl/ciran/ikdm/3-3/articles/agrawal.html>

R Ellen & H Harris, 'Concepts of indigenous environmental knowledge in scientific and development studies literature: a critical assessment', paper presented at the East-West Environmental Linkages Network Workshop 3, 8-10 May, 1996, Canterbury UK, viewed 14 January 2004, [http://www.ukc.ac.uk/rainforest/SML\\_files/Occpap/indigknow.occpap\\_1](http://www.ukc.ac.uk/rainforest/SML_files/Occpap/indigknow.occpap_1)

<sup>40</sup> See M Christie, *Words, ontologies and Aboriginal databases*, Charles Darwin University, Darwin, Australia, <http://www.cdu.edu.au/centres/ik/publications/WordsOntologiesAbDB.pdf>

M Christie, *Computer, databases and Aboriginal knowledge*, Charles Darwin University, Australia, <http://www.cdu.edu.au/centres/ik/pdf/CompDatAbKnow.pdf>

<sup>41</sup> M Nakata, *The cultural interface: an exploration of the intersection of Western knowledge systems and Torres Strait Islander positions and experiences*, unpublished doctoral thesis. James Cook University, Townsville, 1997.

activity are underway in this area.<sup>42</sup> Whilst there is an interest in utilising IK for understanding and managing the environment, and for health and well-being, there is also an interest in utilising it for productive or commercial purposes that might bring about economic activity and benefits. In the absence of legislation, the need to protect Indigenous interests in these activities increasingly requires adherence to ethical and cultural protocols by all those involved and indeed rests on the involvement of Indigenous people in these activities.

As well, Indigenous interest in reclaiming IK that has been removed from their communities and housed in libraries, museums, archives and galleries is also an urgent priority. Moreover, the imbalance in library collections and the barriers to accessing local or contemporary Indigenous or traditional knowledge sources contained within collections or excluded from them has in recent times become the focus of some attention by the library sector around the world<sup>43</sup>, including Australia.<sup>44</sup> The Australian library, archive and information sector has had protocols<sup>45</sup> for dealing with Indigenous issues for a decade. These have recently been subject to a review.<sup>46</sup> A large part of their activities have been related to the provision of access to information to assist with family history and link-up and Native Title claims. Library and archive activities include the development of electronic guides and portals to Indigenous

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<sup>42</sup> See for example Tropical Savannas CRC at <http://savanna.ntu.edu.au/>, Desert Knowledge Centre at <http://www.desertknowledge.com.au/index.cfm?attributes.fuseaction=home>, and Centre for Arid Zone Research at <http://www.cazr.csiro.au/>

<sup>43</sup> See IFLA's Statement on Indigenous Knowledge at <http://www.ifla.org/III/eb/sitk-drft04.html>

<sup>44</sup> See Australian Library and Information Association Policy on Indigenous matters at <http://www.alia.org.au/policies/aboriginal.html>, National Archives at [http://www.naa.gov.au/The\\_Collection/indigenous\\_records.html](http://www.naa.gov.au/The_Collection/indigenous_records.html)

<sup>45</sup> See Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols for Libraries, Archives and Information Services at <http://www.cdu.edu.au/library/protocol.html>

<sup>46</sup> See M Nakata, A Byrne, V Nakata, & G Gardiner, 'Indigenous knowledge, the library and information service sector, and protocols', in M Nakata & M Langton (eds.), *Australian Indigenous knowledge & libraries*, Australian Academic and Research Libraries, Canberra, in press.

See M Nakata, A Byrne, V Nakata, & G Gardiner, 'Libraries, Indigenous Australians and a developing protocols strategy for the library and information sector', in M Nakata & M Langton (eds.), *Australian Indigenous Knowledge & libraries*, Australian Academic and Research Libraries, Canberra, in press.

information, the digitisation of some materials for remote access, importantly, the construction of Aboriginal Name Indexes, the employment of Indigenous professionals and the development of more inclusive services. Much of this activity has been grant-dependent. Repatriation of materials, most often as digital copies, is a serious Indigenous agenda.

Whatever the associated debates about the place or value of IK in contemporary Indigenous life, about the issues surrounding documentation, storage, access and utilisation of this knowledge, it is largely accepted that Indigenous people themselves must determine their own interests, processes and activities in relation to their own knowledge. It should also be said that equipping Indigenous people with information, resources, and skills to make and enact informed determinations in these matters falls prey to the same inadequacies and failures of various sectors to provide adequate resources and to develop the knowledge and skills base of Indigenous people to 'self-determinedly' act in relation to improving their situation and future.

Whilst the retention of IK and Indigenous languages is viewed as fundamental to cultural identity, ongoing links to land and to ancestral traditions, it is also viewed as critical to contemporary and future well-being and to strengthening Indigenous communities. But this Indigenous perspective does not come at the exclusion of Western knowledge and information. Indigenous people understand and assert the need for access to knowledge, information and education in the world beyond their communities, as a way of understanding the historical events of colonisation, of engaging effectively with current circumstances, and as the path to pursuing and protecting future interests.

The question for NTL in relation to facilitating IK as one part of the publicly accessible information set is, amidst all these other developments and arenas of IK activity, what role should public library services assume and how do they develop activities that support and facilitate retrieval, documentation, storage and access of IK and local knowledge? The other is, how are activities and the processes for managing them appropriately to be developed when knowledge production is not a primary traditional library activity and when the activities and issues associated with IK retrieval, documentation and access are emergent ones, and matters requiring complex negotiations between knowledge traditions and their associated mechanisms for legal protection?



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### Library Services for Remote Communities in the Northern Territory

The provision of public library services relevant to remote Indigenous communities of the Northern Territory provides an added set of challenges associated with limited infrastructure, the remoteness of communities, small and isolated centres of population, low levels of formal education, skills, and literacy, and the diversity of local Indigenous language, cultural, and knowledge traditions that communities wish to reclaim, maintain, document and utilise for the benefit of present and future generations.

Despite geographic isolation, these communities are not immune from the impact of global trends. The trends described in the section above as they relate to information and knowledge-based economies—knowledge-based innovation and enterprise as a basis for economic regeneration, the importance of literacy, information literacy and lifelong learning, social cohesion, whole of government approaches, regionalisation, ‘joined-up’ service approaches, inter-agency cooperation and partnership activity—all apply to the Northern Territory and most particularly to remote Indigenous communities, and can be evidenced in current government policy priorities at all levels.

The NT Government’s *Building a Better Territory*, and *Building Stronger Regions—Stronger Futures*, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agenda for ‘joined-up’ services and the recent trial sites<sup>47</sup>, and the proliferation of shared responsibility agreements (SRAs)<sup>48</sup> are examples of Australian, Territory, and Indigenous uptake of these global concepts. Advocacy of these approaches and strategies are also found in a number of Northern Territory reviews relating to Indigenous issues, for example, *Learning Lessons*<sup>49</sup>, and *Review of Governance Training for Indigenous Organisations & Communities in the Northern Territory*.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> See COAG trial sites at <http://www.indigenous.gov.au/coag/default.html>

<sup>48</sup> See communities with SRAs at <http://www.indigenous.gov.au/sra/kit/map.pdf>

<sup>49</sup> See the Collins Review, *Learning Lessons* at [http://www.deet.nt.gov.au/education/indigenous\\_education/learning\\_lessons\\_review.pdf](http://www.deet.nt.gov.au/education/indigenous_education/learning_lessons_review.pdf)

<sup>50</sup> See NT Department of Community Developments, Sports and Cultural Affairs document at [http://www.dcdsca.nt.gov.au/dcdsca/intranet.nsf/Files/GovernancePlanning/\\$file/igt\\_review.pdf](http://www.dcdsca.nt.gov.au/dcdsca/intranet.nsf/Files/GovernancePlanning/$file/igt_review.pdf)



Facilitated at the Northern Territory government level but managed on site under local government services, the provision of library and information services in remote communities sits within this changing policy and service provision context that is currently shaping community governance contexts and the delivery of services and programs. The question for all stakeholders, not just for the Northern Territory Library, is where do public library and information services sit within this complex array and what is its relevance to this agenda?

### Key Focus Areas

The brief sketch above of some of the relevant background issues belies the enormous complexity of debate in all the areas that construct understanding of the complex cross-cultural contexts in which remote Indigenous people enact their daily lives. In every sector that impinges on Indigenous political, economic and social life, the issue of how to harness two sets of knowledge and understanding to solve very real problems remains the major challenge—in all levels of education, in health, in community governance and management, in the development of economic activity, in policing, law and justice, in the socialisation of children, the engagement of youth, in land and sea management, in political organisation, and so on.

Library and information services, as providers of access to knowledge and information clearly have an important role. The value of their services depends on how well they are utilised by the communities they serve. How well they are used in turn depends on whether services are relevant to the needs and interests of their communities, the currency of materials and services and their fit with needs on the ground, their currency in terms of the way they are valued by all those with a stake in improving conditions of Indigenous people and communities, and most importantly in these remote contexts, continuity and sustainability of service provisions.

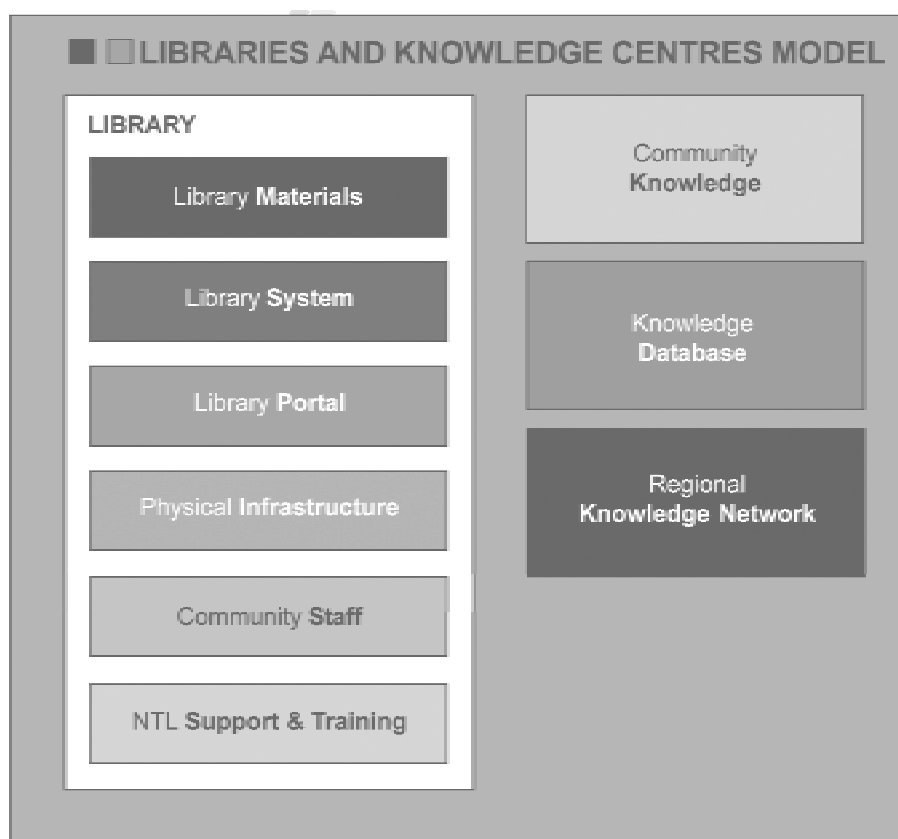


### THE LIBRARIES AND KNOWLEDGE CENTRES (LKC) MODEL

In considering how to deliver sustainable, relevant and useful library and information services to remote communities, the Northern Territory Library has developed a community-centred Libraries and Knowledge Centres (LKC) model, based on the public library model for information services but with the capacity to incorporate local Indigenous knowledge as an important part of the information and knowledge base.

#### Description of the Model

The LKC model is made up of elements from traditional and non-traditional library services, from which each community can select according to its needs and preferences. Components of the model include the library system, community knowledge, a knowledge database and the facility to link local communities through a regional knowledge network. In each community, a local LKC officer manages the centre on behalf of the community and is provided with ongoing training and support from NTL.





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The aim of LKCs is to:

- support recording, sharing and secure access for local Indigenous knowledge,
- provide access to knowledge from the wider world,
- raise literacy, information literacy skills and ICT skills across the community by providing exposure and access to materials,
- offer training and support to community members engaged in gathering and recording cultural knowledge,
- create opportunities for the kind of recreational activities that can be encompassed in a library setting, for groups across the community.

Database facilities to hold digitised local materials are a key component of the model. The database product<sup>51</sup> used in LKCs has a record of implementation in Indigenous communities elsewhere, and as a result of development in that context has an interface designed for Indigenous users. The database software has been re-named *Our Story* for use in the Northern Territory LKCs. It is based on FileMaker Pro and enables communities to establish databases of local knowledge. Each community will have a different *Our Story* database that has been constructed through ingestion of local information and knowledge, primarily in the form of digitised photos, sound recordings and film. Each community can also localise the name of their *Our Story* database to reflect their community. For example, in Wadeye the database is known as *Murrinh Nekinigme* and in Peppimenarti it is called *Ngan'gi Ngagurr*. Access to individual items can be restricted according to cultural sensitivities. In all cases, the community owns the content and the data must be stored according to rules set by community leaders.

Consultation with communities is an integral part of the strategy. A project plan is identified for each community that establishes the roles and responsibilities of both the Community Council and NTL. The plan requires approval from the Community Council and acceptance by Community Library Officers (CLOs) and community leaders.

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<sup>51</sup> *Ara Irititja* Database developed for *Anangu* (the Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara people).



### Implementation Plans

Implementation of the model commenced its first phase in July 2004. Phase Two, scheduled for 2005/06, will extend the model to other existing community libraries, beginning with the Tiwi Islands, Nyirranggulung, Ltyentye Apurte and Anmatjere. NTL proposes in Phase Three to roll out the model to communities that do not currently have a community library, subject to securing additional funding.

Implementation of the first phase of LKC involved eight communities across three priority regions:

1. Port Keats/Daly River: Wadeye & Peppimenarti
2. Groote Eylandt: Umbakumba, Angurugu, Alyangulya
3. East Arnhem: Ramingining, Milingimbi, Galiwin'ku

### Current Status

#### Wadeye

Implementation of the LKC model at Wadeye commenced in June 2004. Members of the Wadeye community have been collecting and creating local material for a number of years. This has, in part, been driven by the desire to preserve local languages and culture, which are at risk of being lost as older community members pass away. Prior to commencing the LKC project, Wadeye already had a significant amount of digitised material including songs, videos and photographs. The large number of digitised files however, made it difficult to manage the items and it was not easy to find and retrieve specific images or recordings. There are now more than 8,500 photographs and 1200 sound recordings in the Wadeye *Our Story* database. A group of Elders is working with the Community Library Officer (CLO) and LKC team members to determine access levels for each item. In recent months, groups such as Elders and school children have been providing additional descriptive data to enrich items in the database and improve their searchability and accessibility. An LKC staff member facilitates these sessions with assistance from community members. The ability to view items through the database has streamlined the process of adding information (metadata) to each item. Material identified as 'public' is accessible to the entire community through a computer located in the LKC. Back-up processes are in place to ensure data is not lost due to hardware or power failure. The future challenge at Wadeye will be to ensure sustainability of the LKC. This will involve sharing of skills and knowledge with community members and providing



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opportunities to be actively involved. The school at Wadeye now has a copy of the database, which can be used for curriculum development.

#### **Peppimenarti**

Implementation of the LKC model at Peppimenarti commenced in January 2004. Prior to the development of the LKC model, Peppimenarti Council had already begun a database project using the *Ara Irititja* software. NTL staff undertook several visits to the community in recent months to provide support to the newly appointed CLO and to begin training of local staff working on the database. The database contains approximately 2,000 media items.

#### **Umbakumba**

Implementation of the LKC model at Umbakumba commenced in September 2004. A significant amount of local material has been identified for the database and a new CLO has recently been appointed. NTL staff visited in April and May 2005 to provide training. Once local staff are trained, the database is expected to develop and will involve input from community Elders on appropriate content and access levels.

#### **Angurugu**

Implementation of the LKC model at Angurugu commenced in April 2005. The Angurugu Council recently appointed new staff to work in the library and to begin work on the *Our Story* database. New computers were delivered to the community in April 2005 and NTL staff have commenced on-site training. The project has the support of the Angurugu Council, the Anindilyakwa Regional Council and Groote Eylandt Linguistics. A significant amount of material relating to the community is currently being digitised. Elders from the community specify access levels for content loaded into the database. The database contains approximately 700 media items.

#### **Alyangula**

The joint community and school library at Alyangula does not have sufficient space or equipment to facilitate development of a local database. Once appropriate infrastructure is in place, the Umbakumba and Angurugu databases could be developed as a basis for an installation at Alyangula.



#### Ramingining

Implementation of the LKC model will proceed once appropriate infrastructure including staffing is available.

#### Milingimbi

NTL has commenced discussions with the Milingimbi Council Clerk and the CLO regarding the LKC model. The model will be extended to this site in November 2005. The CLO is a qualified librarian and once she has received training in the use and management of the *Our Story* database, it is anticipated that she could work with and train local people to help with digitisation and database management.

#### Galiwin'ku

Implementation of the LKC model at Galiwin'ku Indigenous Knowledge Centre commenced in September 2004. The Council recently appointed a Knowledge Centre Coordinator and identified a number of local people interested in working on the *Our Story* database. Training of local staff commenced in April 2005, and the Coordinator spent three days in Darwin undertaking training in May 2005. A six-month action plan is being developed in conjunction with the Council. Yolngu cultural and knowledge structures have required a different approach to the implementation of the LKC in the sense that the community expects physical separation between areas of knowledge. NTL has proposed the installation of separate databases at a number of sites in the community, including: Yalu Marnggithinyaraw, the Women's Centre, the school Literacy Production Centre and Knowledge Centre. NTL will provide initial training of staff at all locations and provide ongoing support and training to Knowledge Centre staff. It is proposed that items added to each database that are identified as *garma* or public knowledge will be uploaded to the Knowledge Centre database, which will provide the whole community with access to an integrated collection of publicly available resources. Sensitive information, which needs to be restricted to a particular family or clan, will be kept separate and maintained by the authorised people. The database contains approximately 400 media items.

#### Southern Region - Anmatjere and Ltyentye Apurte

Implementation of the LKC model at Anmatjere and Ltyentye Apurte commenced in April 2005. The *Our Story* database is now installed at both community libraries. An LKC team member based in Alice Springs has been undertaking regular visits to both communities to train local staff and liaise with Council members, local staff and community Elders. The

Anmatjere *Our Story* database has been given a local language name (*Angkety* Database) and links have been established with the Language and Culture staff at the school. The Ltyentye Apurte database has been named *Anwerne-kenhe Ayeye*. A collection of digitised images of local family groups is being added to the database, together with text information relating to the images. NTL is working with staff at the Strehlow Research Centre to identify material relating to each of these communities, with a view to making it available through the local databases. Some relevant material has recently been digitised. The database at Anmatjere contains approximately 500 media items. The database at Ltyentye Apurte contains approximately 500 media items.

In sum, the eight communities identified in Phase One are at different stages of implementation, based on local conditions and readiness to implement the model. States of implementation range across a spectrum and developments are now underway in Anmatjere and Ltyentye Apurte as well as at other Phase Two sites. In some LKCs, the *Our Story* database is being accessed by clients, who are annotating objects in the database, whilst further objects are being added by staff. In other instances, digital objects are being created by local LKC staff for future addition to the database, but the database is not yet being viewed in a live situation within the community, and initial staff training and equipment preparation is still taking place. In a third tier of implementation, consultations with community Councils and other stakeholders are in train to negotiate suitable accommodation for the LKC.



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### EVALUATION METHOD

To evaluate the LKC model, we employed a mixed-method<sup>52</sup> to allow a purposely-broad focus for a number of reasons. Firstly, the implementation of LKCs is in its first phase and LKCs are still in the process of establishing themselves. To rely on an outcomes-based evaluation limited to LKC activity and data, either on quantitative measures or fairly subjective qualitative measures such as anecdotal reports would reveal little more than what NTL already knows.

Secondly, only three sites out of eight were visited. These were selected from each of the three priority regions, as a cross-section of implementation stages and differential community configurations of the model components. The aim of the visits was to achieve a 'snapshot' of how the model operated in practice in different stages and configurations and under different community conditions, as well as an opportunity to meet with a range of stakeholders and community members. Under these circumstances, the collection of traditional measurements of library service data, such as client surveys, visitation and borrowing rates, types of information activity facilitated by the library etc. was not possible and would lack legitimacy as reliable indicators on which to draw conclusions, given the differences between contexts. Rather, the detail that was gathered was deemed more useful as the content of evidence of broader points and issues.

Thirdly, and perhaps most saliently, the interconnectedness of the changing contexts and issues discussed above indicate that the perceptions of all stakeholders who have vested interests in knowledge and information services in these communities—in funding, supporting, linking to, deriving benefits from, and using those services—are critical to how those services are valued, and therefore resourced, supported, maintained, and used. That is, there is likely to be a connection between how the various stakeholders perceive the value of LKC services and how they prioritise those services in relation to other priorities within communities. Likewise, how NTL and the LKCs promote and insert themselves in relation to other community development agendas and stakeholder interests influences others' perceptions of their role and capacity. This information is synthesised along with other more tangible data viz., legislation, inquiries, reviews, policy documents, planning and program documents,

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<sup>52</sup> See JC Greene, 'Mixed-method evaluation: a way of democratically dealing with difference', *Evaluation Journal of Australasia*, vol. 2 (new series), no. 2, December, 2002, pp. 23-29.



partnership agreements, contracts, institutional websites, and so forth. But once again, this data set provides content to evidence broader issues, which nevertheless may contribute to difficulties with the finer details of implementation or impede the optimal functioning of the model.

The evaluation, then, synthesises data gathered from visits to three Library and Knowledge Centres (Wadeye, Angurugu, Galiwin'ku), interviews with a range of community people, staff and stakeholders during those visits and in Darwin, a review of the NTL website, and a range of associated information and documentation sources including materials provided by NTL. Although it discusses organisational performance against claims embedded in NTL/LKC goals which framed the evaluation brief, it also includes broad analysis of the position of LKCs in relation to other community organisations, levels of governance, and broader policy goals.

The evaluation is organised into a number of sections beginning with issues that are general across all functions of the LKC and moving to more detailed analysis within the focus areas of investigation of different members of the evaluation team. They outline the salient issues, which lead to a list of recommendations. The sections are as follows:

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



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### GENERAL ISSUES

This section draws on our visits to communities. It reports community and stakeholder perceptions of the value of the LKC model. It also considers how the local knowledge component of LKC activity sits alongside the general library service component and the implications of the dual components in terms of location of services and space issues, staff training issues and collections issues and, in turn, what these all mean in terms of sustainability of services and achieving the broader aims set by NTL.

### Perceptions of the LKCs

The LKC model allows for the blending of general library services components (based around access to external information) with local knowledge activities (documenting local or traditional knowledge). During our visits, it became quite evident that it is the local *Our Story* database component which is providing the excitement and stimulus for community visitation to the LKC and the interest by other organisations or agencies. Further, it is the potential and the activities associated with the database and traditional knowledge that were highlighted in all conversations that were held in the communities. Indeed, questions or conversations about general library services (relating to external information) inevitably wound their way back to talk of the *Our Story* database and the opportunities provided by this activity. This occurred in relation to the perceived value and relevance of the two components to community knowledge and information interest and needs, to questions about literacy development, and to questions related to building community capacities and futures.

### Value of the local knowledge component

The value of the local *Our Story* database is central to the LKC model and is fulfilling a real need and a meaningful engagement with traditional or community knowledge and ICTs in Wadeye and Angurugu, where the databases were available for public viewing. Many, across the sites visited, easily and consistently expressed the value of the *Our Story* database activity:

- traditional knowledge was rapidly disappearing and the need to capture it for future access is urgent
- the provision of facilities for this activity in LKCs was a demonstration that local people's knowledge was valued which raised individual and community self-esteem and provided a



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strong message to the younger generation about the value of continuing and using this knowledge

- local and traditional knowledge was the starting point for communities to understand themselves and from there they could better understand their position in the wider world,
- traditional knowledge was an important source for strengthening culture, well-being and community
- the *Our Story* database software allowed for visual/aural modes of information and therefore provided a service with which Indigenous people could more easily engage
- interest in local knowledge will bring people into the LKC and expose them to other materials and services provided by the LKC

These values were seen also to support or have potential for building community capacities.

Public libraries do not traditionally undertake knowledge production activity, they collect, store and provide access to such knowledge. This should be qualified by acknowledging public libraries' support for local history activity, which in recent years in some places in Australia has been extended to include Indigenous local history and in particular family history services.<sup>53</sup> Local or traditional knowledge<sup>54</sup> in Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory is a different case in point, because the first priority is to retain it, which involves recording oral knowledge and experiences in formats that can be imported into databases, or retrieving or collecting already documented forms for importing into databases, including knowledge already in other databases.

The implications of this for NTL/LKCs are considerable. Database activity engages with complex technology issues, complex issues of ownership/permissions, copyright, intellectual property, and issues of future use of such content. NTL is politically and culturally correct to

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<sup>53</sup>N Briggs-Smith, 'Promoting library services for Aboriginals', *Link-up*, 1997, pp. 3-6.

Cooloola Shire Library Service, 'So you want to offer indigenous library services...', *inCite*, October, 2001, pp. 24-25.

<sup>54</sup> Traditional knowledge is used here as reference to the cumulative body of knowledge about Indigenous traditional practices, and local knowledge is used as reference to knowledge specific to a locale.



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leave the issues associated with the database content in the hands and control of the community but the issues that must be addressed by the community are complex ones, which cannot be overlooked.

#### **Value of general library services**

Although the value of the *Our Story* database was clear to all, there was a wider range of opinion about the likely extent of engagement with external sources of information, particularly the print-based collections. All the Indigenous people and LKC staff interviewed believed that both access to external information and materials in English were very important and were needed in their community. This was expressed at Galiwin'ku as well where the traditional library services component was not yet operating.

Opinion amongst non-Indigenous people from other agencies and organisations was not so uniform. Many commented that low levels of literacy prevented engagement with these materials, even if people were interested in them or had a need for them. A few people went so far as to say that there was little relevance of these materials for Indigenous people, one person claiming that even the early childhood picture books collection would not hold much interest for Indigenous children. Some ventured that visiting the LKC would not be the preferred activity by most members of the community who would be more attracted by the prospect of an air-conditioned venue rather than any motivation to engage with collections or services.

However, most who were pressed further on the issue could identify some printed materials that might be accessed, for example, Indigenous publications in English, publications in the local language, Indigenous newspapers, English magazines or books on fishing, football, and other local topics of interest. Those pressed on the issues of visitation to the library because it was air-conditioned also acknowledged that once there, individuals were more likely to engage with resources in some way. Others were more positive about local engagement with print collections but emphasised the need to provide materials that people wanted and activities that would draw them in (for different age and interest groups), build their confidence, and promote return visits.

Within discussions of external information there was more support for local interest in Internet access to information, though low literacy and information/computer literacy levels was seen to be a factor that would militate against widespread or effective engagement in the online environment as well.

But what stood out was that it was clearly much easier for all involved to speak of the value, the benefits and the potential of the *Our Story* database component than it was with regard to general library services. References to the value and relevance of external sources of information and English print resources, in particular, were generally qualified by comments about communities' capacity to engage with them fully.

What was also evident in our discussions at the three sites was that whilst Indigenous people strongly express that access to external information in English is important, it would appear that it is more difficult for them to lead the necessary dialogue to promote engagement with it, offer suggestions for activities, or take steps to overcome the barriers to engaging with such knowledge and information services.

As well, although limited familiarity and facility with technology and low levels of literacy were issues that were seen to affect the extent and quality of interaction with both the *Our Story* database and external sources of information, these impediments did not seem to risk any reduction in the degree of interest or engagement in local knowledge documentation activity. In relation to external sources of information, the technological and literacy impediments suggested a continuing and much wider disengagement with the world of external information.

The LKC model potentially provides a lot of scope for engagement with external knowledge and information services that builds connections between local needs and interests and the wider world beyond communities. Given that external information and general knowledge about the world outside communities was viewed by all as critical to building Indigenous communities' futures, an obvious implication that can be drawn from our discussions with people in the communities is that NTL/LKCs have work to do in raising perceptions, not just amongst community members, but amongst all stakeholders in community development, of the value of library services in engaging local interests and contributing to community information needs. This will involve active promotion of the potential of LKC services to be useful to local government bodies, organisations, and agencies and support for their activities. It will also involve clear articulation of how community engagement with LKC services can contribute to the development of community capacities, in the immediate, medium and long-term. It cannot be assumed that stakeholders understand the value of public libraries and the services they can and do offer in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Ensuring that the potential value of LKCs is realised will also rest on identifying community needs for or interest in external information sources, developing locally relevant collections



and designing ways to develop the skills base for accessing and utilising such sources. These will be discussed further in the sections on collection development and literacy.

#### **Understandings of the interface of local knowledge development and access to external knowledge**

In addition to information activity within these dual sets of information (external and local), the interface between these two sets of knowledge and information activity (and their associated languages) is a site for knowledge and information activity as well. Only a few people emphasised a position on this Interface, namely, that understandings derived from traditional knowledge systems had to engage with understandings within Western systems of knowledge (and vice versa) if Indigenous people and communities were to strengthen their capacity to operate confidently or independently in these intersections and make informed decisions in their own interest. Those that did mention this interface did so in reference to activities of other organisations in their communities.

For example, Yalu Marnggithinyaraw (Nurturing Centre) at Galiwin'ku runs programs to support families to become strong and healthy. This involves exploring connections between health and education and balancing Yolngu and Western views through a combination of traditional knowledge and food practices and Western nutritional and health advice. This organisation was also involved in literacy practices based around the production of film and the production of recipes.

In Wadeye, the Thamarrurr Regional Council CEO had a considered analysis of information needs in the community at the interface of the two different sets of knowledge from which Indigenous and non-Indigenous people drew their understandings. In his opinion, government programs fail because they begin in the wrong place by assuming what people know. A two-way flow of information and knowledge was needed so that Indigenous members of the Thamarrurr Regional Council understood contemporary external systems and expectations and external bureaucrats understood the traditional domain.

As an example of interface information activity, the Council had conducted a three day workshop on the Australian Constitution to provide comparisons with Thamarrurr Elders' concepts of governance so that they could see how their principles for governance and law fitted or differed with those on which the governance of the rest of the Australian community were based. They also conducted one on the United Nations and its activities in relation to



Indigenous peoples. Such activities, it was argued, help Indigenous people understand the basis of thinking that informs government programs and goals.

Determining information needs that these workshops addressed came from discussions in Council and the questions of Indigenous people. Workshops were not just one-way delivery of information about a topic but were discussion-based as a way of layering in information to broaden current levels of Indigenous understanding. In the process these sessions helped Indigenous people to identify the areas that non-Indigenous people did not understand—the gap in understanding—and to develop a language for communicating across that space.

Another example provided to illustrate the need to bridge this information gap was in relation to land management and this example also demonstrates the relevance of traditional knowledge to contemporary situations, the importance of documenting traditional knowledge, and the place of traditional knowledge as the starting point for bridging the information gap because it is the traditional knowledge base that informs local understanding. The Council saw a need to map the traditional Estates because land is a valuable asset. Traditional Estates are not about neat line boundaries but are mapped with stories and so it is important to preserve and pass on these stories. Traditional Estates are also similar in function to Family Trust companies—different clans are custodians over different sections for the benefit of generations to come. Yet, according to the experience of Thamarrurr Regional Council, Canberra-based bureaucrats still understood collective ownership as all 4000 people owning all the land in the Thamarrurr region. According to the Council, it is these sorts of knowledge gaps that must be bridged if there is to be informed responses and decision-making, and a better dialogue between Indigenous communities and governments.

In determining priorities for what to document, Thamarrurr Regional Council had come up against the difficulty associated with finding out what information is already documented but held elsewhere for example, in the Northern Land Council, AIATSIS, museums, private collections, etc. As well, and although the long-term goal is to document everything, in the shorter term it was considered more useful for community-building goals to have a practical reason for collecting and documenting information.

Whilst LKC staff do not have the expertise to facilitate such sophisticated or complex engagements, there is a role for NTL/LKCs to support these types of activities through the provision of resources or the collection of any documentation that is a production outcome of these engagements in other organisations, including audio or visual recordings of the sessions.



Thamarrurr Region's activity around traditional knowledge documentation also signals a further issue that may arise more frequently in the future. The Thamarrurr region's GPS mapping of country had community support and was considered to have current and future value, however, there appeared to be less clarity and planning around the issues associated with storage and future access to such knowledge. If NTL has a responsibility to collect documented heritage, what role should or can they play in the collection, storage and provision of access to any publicly available material that emerges from other organisations?

How LKCs might approach this will be discussed further in the section on literacy and lifelong learning and the fit with broader community goals.

#### *Recommendation 1*

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

#### **Location of LKC Services**

International literature about the value of libraries emphasises the importance of public libraries as a physical space and the importance of location in attracting visitation. Similarly, the physical presence of LKCs emerges as an important facet of the service.

Centrality of positioning in remote communities is already something that NTL acknowledges as playing an important role in the success or otherwise of LKCs. Visitation increases substantially when LKCs are effectively positioned at a central point in a community, a point that has had considerable influence on the recommendations and conditions which NTL brings to the table when it negotiates with councils to establish an LKC.

The state of buildings and fittings also plays a part in this relationship. Councils are responsible in agreements with NTL to provide a suitable space for the housing of the library collection and other equipment associated with LKC services, such as ICT equipment. Establishing these conditions can in itself present a significant challenge in the process of establishing services.

The Wadey facility is situated in the community Transaction Centre. It is a well-lighted place, with air-conditioning providing good conditions for clients and ICT equipment. A relatively





small room, it has nevertheless been organised in zones of use as per standard library practice, with areas for public Internet access, use of *Our Story*, reference and magazine areas doubling as a video/DVD viewing area, and a small staff area where a separate computer database holds audio objects from the community.

While the obvious good repair of the room had a positive impact on the visiting team, the limitations of the space were also thrown into relief. With nine team members and another four to five staff and other community members present, and a locally-produced DVD being viewed, the sense of a zoned structure to the room gave way to the evident impossibility of maintaining separate uses under normal conditions of use.

In addition, while the location in the Transaction Centre had clear benefits for the security of LKC materials and equipment, and was properly placed in terms of physical centrality to the community, there are limitations to opening hours, and to available physical space, that are brought about by this arrangement.

At Angurugu, although the physical premises were not nearly as well maintained, the greater extent of physical space, and its organisation, led to multiple activities being pursued without any sense of overflow. Again, the presence of the team modelled in some rough way for conditions of use, and during data gathering a number of separate conversations and circles were able to function at the same time, including community members viewing the Angurugu *Our Story* in a separate area that had been partitioned off from the main room. This sort of amenity points the way for further development of LKCs, and is clearly important in promoting use of the facility. It is important to note that the relative privacy afforded to *Our Story* viewers is likely also to be a significant facilitator of use, given the potentially sensitive nature in a cultural sense, of material held in the database. The current physical state of the Angurugu facility however sends important conscious and unconscious signals to clients about the health and attractiveness of the service.

The Galiwin'ku LKC holds no conventional library materials and is, in its present state, a workroom associated with digital capture of the kinds of objects *Our Story* is designed to house. Hesitation over use of this database, as against another product, has resulted in only a limited amount of material being added to a local *Our Story* installation. As such, there is no true public-access area for viewing the database or for public Internet access, as yet.

The LKC model also allows communities to choose the components of the model that suit their needs and interests. Wadeye and Angurugu have both the local knowledge and general library service components and at Galiwin'ku only the *Our Story* database has been installed

although discussions concerning the location of early childhood library services at Yalu Marnggithinyaraw Centre have taken place.

This approach allows NTL to respond more flexibly to conditions across different communities. In communities, where housing issues are the critical priority and physical infrastructure is insufficient to meet community needs, locating sufficient and suitable space for the LKC assumes a lower priority, even when its services are highly valued.

NTL has also been open to providing access to the local databases in different locations throughout the community. In Galiwin'ku, databases were located at both the Galiwin'ku Knowledge Centre and the Literacy Production Centre at Shepherdson College. At Wadeye there were databases at the LKC and the Literacy Production Centre at the school and the Language Centre. At Angurugu the two components were co-located at the LKC and there were no other access points in the community.

This dispersal of components represents a tension between the public library model of providing 'neutral' spaces for access by all and the conditions on the ground in the communities. Conditions include insufficient buildings and physical infrastructure in communities to provide sufficient space for collocation of services and the understandable priority within Councils for improving housing over public spaces such as LKCs. Conditions also include tensions between groups and individuals in communities, which supports an argument that multiple access points facilitate broader usage of facilities by individuals or groups who feel unable to visit certain places. The ability to encompass use across a community rather than by sectional interests plays an important role in determining that a facility gets used, and that investment by NTL and Councils are rewarded by returns across the community.

Galiwin'ku illustrates both the value and the challenges of this flexibility. The issue of gendered knowledge was very strong in Galiwin'ku and this complicated the physical use of the KC in that women felt that it was not their place to go and use. The flexibility of the model gives NTL the capacity to mediate these different needs of communities *in situ* and locate *Our Story* databases and services at other sites. On the other hand, this flexibility also meant that as yet Galiwin'ku does not reflect the intent of the LKC model, because public access had been compromised in the early implementation phase and there was a perception that one clan had a dominating interest. The choices are sometimes difficult in the circumstances—to provide within the constraints or delay the provision of services.

Although provision of services should not be delayed because of the less than ideal conditions in communities, the long-term goal should be to pursue collocation of services so that firstly, local and external knowledge sets are acknowledged as working together to contribute to the development of community capacities and broader community and Northern Territory goals, and secondly, so that LKCs' knowledge and information provision and access begins to be perceived as a central service relevant to organisations and agencies of the whole community.

Where location of components across organisations makes sense, such as placing copies of the database in schools or established organisations that can add documentation to enhance the contents of *Our Story* database, then it is important to develop processes for ensuring all databases reflect the entire set of content being generated. At the least, processes should ensure that the database in the LKC contains the sum content of databases across other organisations.

However, the issue of collocation does not just apply to placement of the two components of the LKC model. At the broader community level, some thought could be given to how to approach the provision of public access to information and Internet services in ways that encourage the most efficient long-term and sustainable development of resources, physical infrastructure, and skills, to overcome the effects of *ad hoc* project-based activity that results in duplication and fragmentation of similar services across a range of organisations. For example, in Wadeye the Thamarrurr Regional Council had established a Community Information and Education Centre to begin to deal with some of the requests for information assistance and Internet access that are currently directed to Council staff. This was project-based and depended on one person to facilitate training, its current emphasis being financial literacy. At Galiwin'ku, the Council was extending its premises in part to make provision for more public Internet access. A more coordinated approach to planning for public information access, including Internet access must deliver better efficiencies in space, physical infrastructure and technology infrastructure, especially if this is the goal of the joined up service approach in remote communities. Appropriate and accessible space is fundamental to this goal.

The collocation of such services in LKCs, even if they require collaboration and additional project-based funds, would increase community perceptions about the central role of LKCs to provide knowledge and information services, including Internet access and access to Council information. All these roles are performed by public libraries in local government jurisdictions all over Australia and the world. There is a benefit for the community and all stakeholders in

community development in recognising that LKCs can play a pivotal role in centralising and thus delivering more efficiency in knowledge and information support and access. Another benefit is the ongoing nature of the support and training provided by NTL. This ensures developments are sustainable through annual funding.

So although flexibility is a great strength of the model, essential in present circumstances, and necessary to accommodate different circumstances in communities, this flexibility should primarily respond to issues associated with Indigenous knowledge management or community needs or tensions.

It would appear important not to allow flexible approaches to provide support to the status quo of fragmented, ad hoc service delivery and inadequate physical infrastructure for essential community services, under a convenient premise that communities prefer service delivery in this way. Communities, like others, seek solutions within the constraints. This is not justification for continuing the constraints. Library and information services require buildings appropriate to their intended functions and these functions should be seen as supporting a range of community activities and broader community goals, not just LKC activities. The intended functions of LKCs require the provision of multi-purpose venues that can accommodate a range of activities.

The issue of LKC space is difficult to raise in a context where housing is critically short in communities but it needs to be said that any view to LKCs as in competition with urgent projects in communities is neither helpful nor productive.

#### *Recommendation 2*

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

### **Staffing, Training and Skills**

One of the key themes to emerge out of the evaluation was the challenge faced in providing sufficient, and sufficiently continuous, services in remote communities.

Informants at Angurugu pointed to dynamics in relation to the Community Library (precursor to the LKC). This is a familiar story, in which an interested party from the local community had in the past achieved some success with the library service before departing for another

community. This had led to substantial interruption to service and an end to community expectation, and therefore use, of the library facility. During this negative cycle of the library's history, the physical state of the building suffered, and is only now in early stages of repair and refurbishment.

It must be the case that the rising and falling levels of service and expectation are deeply discouraging to the community as a whole. It means that each time there is a rising cycle in the history of the service, it must begin anew to recruit, not just staff, but also the interest and support of its client groups and, indeed, of other potential interested parties, such as Council. Without the expectation that the library will reliably exist, it is difficult, probably impossible, to achieve the kinds of long-term benefits that accrue from consistent engagement with materials that promote literacy development in communities. Library attendance itself is a facet of cultural practice that requires long-term availability of the service to become established as an ongoing pattern. Once established, multiplier effects emerge, so that younger clients are engaged on the pattern of, and through the actions of, older patrons.

An important part of this 'known quantity' or 'predictability' effect is something that is taken for granted in 'mainstream' public libraries namely, regular and appropriate opening hours. Without an established and regular pattern of opportunity to access the LKC, it is difficult for clients to start building the LKC into their patterns of life. Anecdotal evidence suggests that community members may try several times to access facilities where there are failures in the opening hours regime, but that after a sequence of failed attempts clients tend to become disengaged from the service, and don't continue to seek access. Again, this has at times been a significant challenge, even obstacle, to establishing a working relationship between library facilities and communities.

Clearly, a key aspect of the predicament across all such services offered in remote communities is that they tend to rely on the energy, commitment and expertise of one or two individuals whose permanency can't be guaranteed. It is common for people to move on from communities due to changes in their circumstances of health, other job offers, or as a result of political tensions inside the community. And not all people capable and trained to run these services are interested in working in remote communities. Thus, replacing staff is often difficult, with positions often remaining open for lack of suitable applicants. The result can make, and often is, the difference between a service open for business and a service closed.

Local training then becomes a critical factor in creating sustainable services, such as LKCs. It is a stated aim of the LKC program that local Indigenous people will be recruited to staff

LKCs, and that NTL will provide training to that end. This is a key rationale of the whole program viz. that LKCs will provide a site and a reason for Indigenous people to acquire and extend their skills in ICT and information disciplines.

Beyond that, the capacity of NTL to train more than one layer of staff capable of running the LKC services—to provide for a necessary level of redundancy—is critical to efforts to counter the negative effects of discontinuity which are so graphically displayed across all remote community services. As well, the need for contingency plans for a sudden exodus of knowledge from a particular community could help to minimise the detrimental effects associated with how LKCs are seen in communities when there is a falling off of service. To this, we can add that present levels of staff skill limit the preparedness and confidence in mounting programs that might raise the use and effectiveness of LKCs.

The ICT-related components of LKCs' staff responsibilities add a further urgency to this imperative. Ideally, LKC staff should be capable of disseminating basic knowledge and skill about ICTs and the online environment to their clientele, as well as being instrumental in the addition of digital objects to the *Our Story* database through appropriate scanning and other digital capture procedures. Both of these roles entail more than a minimal understanding of the technical environment in order to be successfully applied. Arguably, a similar level of understanding is also needed for the LKC physical collections, where skilled local observers should have the capacity to inform NTL of what materials work, or don't work, in the context of the particular LKC. This is especially important in view of limited levels of item borrowing in the community context, which could otherwise provide NTL with a point of reference for user demand.

The dual components of the model also mean that staff face competing claims on their time to support client access, print photos and burn CDs for clients from *Our Story* collections, maintain the physical collection and participate in the work-flow associated with adding to the database. Again, this predicament emphasises the importance of having well-trained staff in LKCs, capable of exercising discretion and judgement well in excess of minimal requirements for their positions. Creating these conditions is likely to remain a challenge for the program.

There is another element in local conditions that underscores this emphasis on the need for training. This is the practical requirement that LKC staff shall be capable of independent work, self-motivated and self-directed. Anecdotal evidence suggests that LKC staff attract varying levels of support and interest from local councils and council staff, and that any particular level

of support cannot be assumed. Also, while LKC staff are resourced and supported from NTL, sheer physical distance limits the level of day-to-day support that can be achieved.

The consequence of this range of conditions is that the effort to train staff must be a central concern for questions of sustainability. Integral to that, in turn, are questions of what level of technical knowledge are required by programs in LKCs. Too high a requirement—where daily operations require a higher level of technical skill—will have a direct ability on NTLs capacity to train more than a minimum of daily operational staff.

The more that the LKCs can understand skill levels and preferred ways to interact with ICTs, the better the decisions that can be made about appropriate training for staff and users. NTL can enhance this process by taking steps to ensure that knowledge held by NTL staff about these issues is shared effectively through the LKC team, and by keeping abreast of practically-oriented research work in the area.

The Angurugu Community Library Office (CLO), had commenced a certified Business Administration course, which included a computing component and had on-site teaching and tutoring support. The Wadeye LKC had grown to three staff members to accommodate the level of activity occurring there. In Wadeye and Galiwin'ku, there was evidence of community members seeking Internet assistance at other agencies and organisations. As the implementation phases are rolled out across the NT, the need for training programs for staff will grow and the need for additional staff is also likely to grow if services are successfully sustained.

The involvement of a range of community members to perform specific functions in LKCs, such as the recruitment of interested mothers for early childhood activities, or interested or motivated young adults for assistance with Internet skills, may be an avenue for both developing skills across the community and building a pool of people to draw on. However, a genuine work need in communities should be supported by the creation of genuine job descriptions and positions, even if part-time and flexible arrangements are necessary to avoid skills investment in too few people.

#### *Recommendation 3*

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

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

That NTL develops an overall LKC strategy:

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

### Collection Development

Collection development is an important part of library services. In LKCs, it provides an area of challenge. To be relevant and encourage engagement with library services, collections need to reflect local interests and needs and respond to language issues and literacy levels in communities.

Once again, a major strength of the LKC model is that the *Our Story* database provides a basis for engaging with local interest and building specific local collections.

In relation to the characteristics of collections associated with general library service component (or external sources of information), a number of issues became evident during the field trip.

Of the three sites visited, only Wadeye and Angurugu currently hold library materials. On NTL's part, it is recognised that the purchase of appropriate materials, which reflect the needs of community, is crucial in gaining support for the service.

In general, both collections in these centres manage to sketch out a range of material to suit a range of client sub-groups. In this sense they do have the appearance of working libraries. What is more of a challenge in these remote areas is to provide the currency (i.e., recently published) and variety of material that would reward a library user who invested time and interest in using the service. In fact, it would be difficult to support the assertion that these imperatives are satisfied in current LKCs collections, for instance a consideration of reference holdings shows a fairly low rate of currency.

A second reasonable expectation is that they provide comprehensiveness and continuity in their coverage—meaning that there is no obvious failure to cater to significant groups in the community, or to provide the means for client groups to progress to other materials where





necessary, for instance from materials suitable for children to those suitable for teenagers. Both Wadeye and Angurugu collections did attempt to provide for all groups, although the challenge is finding a range of suitable materials to engage all ages and interests, particularly in the area of fiction.

The provision of video/DVD formats of knowledge and information provides an easier engagement with external information sources than a lot of print material. Careful selection of these formats based on identified local interests could help to extend engagement with LKC services. These formats may help to encourage a culture of borrowing as well.

If the basic model of the LKCs truly spans a dual focus on local knowledge development and knowledge of the wider world, this part of the collection clearly has an important role to play. Professionals with an understanding of what different types of sources can offer will appreciate that this means more than, but includes, providing public access to Internet facilities in LKCs.

There is much that could be done by NTL to mediate external sources of electronic information so that local access to relevant information is easier and quicker. Identifying local interest and needs assists in providing better access, provides a basis for teaching information literacy skills, connects to local interest in using ICTs, builds confidence to explore other sources. Most importantly, it tunes NTL/LKC staff into local interests in ways that directs local collection development of external sources of information. Local, regional or even Territory-wide collections of Internet links developed on the basis of identified or likely areas of Indigenous interests should be considered as an important part of the development of LKC collections. Local pages of links to information that supports other community projects and activities can also help to generate a sense of local control over the wide wide world of electronic information. This is discussed in more detail in the Literacy section of this report.

Currency and variety are elements of service that are more easily arranged in bigger facilities, where larger client numbers, budgets and collections serve to spread the cost of new items across a larger per-head number of clients. In smaller, remote facilities the task of supplying both continuity (the ability to come back to a source) and variety (to encounter new sources) is much harder to achieve, but remains a necessity if a culture of library use is to be fostered and maintained.

Further characterisation of these needs in financial terms, not just for the base establishment of libraries, but also for their necessary extension, could be a useful element in assessing and applying for resources for LKCs in the future.



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#### *Recommendation 4*

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



### INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS AND INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

This component focused on identifying the issues around Indigenous knowledge and intellectual property in the context of LKCs. In this regard the assessment began by considering what kinds of material were being used in the databases and within the LKCs (for example photographs or text), and to what extent this material might already have copyright questions associated with it. From this starting point, the assessment then considered the accessibility of information around intellectual property and in particular copyright, for example, what kind of copyright issues might arise in the future and what kind of responses the NTL might consider in the short term and for the future development of LKCs.

Whilst questions around intellectual property and Indigenous knowledge are diverse, the assessment primarily focused on the urgent practical issues involving copyright within the LKCs. This included investigating what issues currently exist and how the NTL might best develop certain strategies that would work to resolve these. Consequently the recommendations reflect this practical focus and are aimed at enhancing the capacity of NTL to manage and mediate copyright issues when they arise within the LKCs.

#### An Overview of the Issues

The LKCs are developing as an important site within Indigenous communities for the facilitation of access to a range of contemporary and historical material and information. The current success of the LKCs lies in a combination of factors, which can be different for each LKC. Factors influencing the current success of the LKC model include types of material accessible in the LKC, the physical location of the LKC within the community, increasing Indigenous community participation in the project, broader community support and networking, and the ongoing commitment and support by NTL staff within any given community.

One of the fundamental features contributing to the success of the LKCs is the underlying intention to make culturally significant material more accessible to Indigenous people, especially in regions that have historically been under-serviced in terms of libraries and library access. This presents certain challenges not just in logistics, for example providing sustainable services to regional and remote communities, but also in managing the differing kinds of rights that may vest with such material.

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In a general public library, issues of intellectual property are relatively benign. This is for two primary reasons. Firstly, a majority of the libraries holdings will already be published thus making issues of ownership relatively straightforward. Secondly, the exceptions within the Copyright Act relating to Libraries and Archives (Division 5 Copyright Act 1968 (Cth)) are designed to clarify the kinds of copying and reproduction allowed by the library and archive for preservation purposes and with regard to the consequential users of copyright material. These provisions are relatively generous and allow the public library to maintain its mandate of providing access to information and other copyrighted material. That said, there are a range of emergent challenges for libraries specifically related to managing material in the digital environment.<sup>55</sup> These challenges are certainly not restricted to NTL and are being experienced across Australia and internationally.<sup>56</sup>

It is significant that in the context of the LKCs, storage and delivery of copyright material through digital technology is providing an important mechanism for facilitating increased access by Indigenous people within their community. But this presents its own difficulties in relation to intellectual property. These difficulties have two separate but interrelated intellectual property components: one relates to the material itself, and the second concerns the digital delivery of that material through the compilation of databases to hold the material.

The material being delivered, stored and accessed within the Indigenous communities through LKCs include a range of historical material, often not previously known or accessible. This material comes in the form of photographs, sound-recordings, manuscripts and films.

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<sup>55</sup> See: House Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs Inquiry into technological protection measures (TPM) exceptions [Australia]. Submissions to the Inquiry at <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/laca/protection/subs.htm>

<sup>56</sup> K Lehmann, 'Making the transitory permanent: the intellectual heritage in a digitized world of knowledge', *Daedalus*, vol. 25, no. 4, 1996, pp. 307-329.

A Kenyon & E Hudson, 'Copyright, digitization and cultural institutions', *Australian Journal of Communications*, vol. 31, 2004, p. 89.

J Anderson, 'Access and control of Indigenous knowledge in libraries and archives: ownership and future use', paper presented at *Correcting course: rebalancing copyright for libraries in the national and international arena*, American Library Association and the MacArthur Foundation, Columbia University, New York, May 5-7, 2005.

The status of the material ranges from published, unpublished and public domain material. In certain cases, providence is hard to determine. With such different kinds of material come a set of corresponding issues regarding ownership and reproduction of copyright material. As the material is not all of one kind, there can be confusion over what kinds of rights exist, the duration of these, and what kinds of permissions for reproduction are necessary. With the expectation that most, if not all, of this historical material derived from multiple persons and institutions around Australia, will be stored in each community through a specially designed database, *Our Story*, the extent of the copyright issues increases.

### Types of Material

Each field visit provided a snapshot of the types of material forming the corpus of the LKC. In each case this varied depending upon the size and capacity of the LKC. To get a full picture of the types of material, as well as the amount of material being added to the database, it is considered appropriate to break these down into each locale with a special emphasis on the kinds and amount of material currently added to each database.

### Wadeye

The LKC has a collection of materials in various formats including books, magazines, videos and a small number of CDs. The *Our Story* database was installed in September 2004 and there are now over 9,000 items in the database. The main proportion of this material is photographic and tends to date from the emergence of Wadeye as a Catholic Mission in 1945 to the present.

A significant amount of material within the database is material that has been collected within the community over many years. Thus, prior to the LKC, Wadeye already had a sizeable collection of digitised material including songs, videos, oral histories and photographs. Most of this material is documented. That is, it is dated and the participants in the recordings noted. It remains unclear whether or to what extent the 'author' of the recording or documentation has been acknowledged.

There is an ongoing project within the LKC to store a range of older as well as contemporary digital music files. The types of music being stored included older community and/or clan specific music and music made more recently within the community. These files were being stored separately to the *Our Story* database on a central computer using iTunes™. Given this kind of storage, people were making playlists and burning them onto new CDs.



Whilst a significant amount of the material emanates from the community itself, there was an expressed desire to reclaim a variety of research material that has been collected by the Northern Land Council (NLC) over a period of around twenty years. Much of this material would be field-notes, published and unpublished reports and photographs. It was stated clearly that the material was 'owned' by Wadeye, as it emanated from this locale. However, for the purposes of legal ownership, it is possible that the Land Council itself has copyright ownership to a majority if not all of the material. This would be because the Land Council either commissioned or directly employed staff and/or consultant anthropologists to collect the material. Thus it would be necessary to either enter into a licence agreement with the NLC, which would allow the LKC to put the material in the database and for it to be reproduced by the community for whatever purpose it decides are appropriate, or to enter a different kind of agreement about use and not ownership. It would be preferable for the agreement to be between the local government body and the Land Council rather than the LKC. This raises another issue to be addressed later in this section about the need to determine whether responsibility for intellectual property issues around cultural material and its future use is vested with the LKC or the local government body or both.

#### **Angurugu**

Angurugu has a collection of printed materials including books, pamphlets and magazines. The *Our Story* database holds about 700 items, the majority of which are photographs, short ethnographic film footage and excerpts from ethnographic filmic footage. The ethnographic film material dates from the 1940s.

Angurugu LKC is seeking to increase the contents of the database, and like Wadeye, would eventually like to get access to other archival material that relates to Groote Eylandt. In particular there was discussion about accessing and making copies of archival holdings of the local mining company. The same issue to that discussed above in relation to Wadeye arises. That is, who would be the legitimate legally recognised authority responsible for future intellectual property licence arrangements? This raises the additional concern about who has the skill base to negotiate these agreements and to what extent would the LKCs be a primary place to broker these?

#### **Galiwin'ku**

Galiwin'ku LKC is different to the aforementioned sites because it does not have a general library component. Instead the LKC is predominately digitally based. Whilst there are some

photographs and slides that can be found within the LKC much of the material that constitutes the LKC has already been digitised and is thus either already being stored digitally or within the *Our Story* database. The *Our Story* database was installed in December 2004, and as such there is only a limited amount of material that has been placed in the database. Most of the digital material, photographs, films, sound-recordings, field-notes, are stored in separate files or on external hard drives on four computers at the LKC.

Galiwin'ku LKC holds a mixture of historical and contemporary material. The historical material comes from a variety of sources for example, other archival institutions, individual owners/collectors, and universities. The material predominately can be classified as published or unpublished, however, some material is in the public domain (that is the period for the protection for copyright material has expired). With most of the material still under copyright, there is currently not a consistent way of documenting the author/creator with the work in the computer system. For instance there are hundreds of photographs in the computers, but there are few names associated with the photographs and few dates. Whilst on one level this is a cataloguing issue, it will affect the extent to which the LKC can make use of material for other purposes in the future without the risk of copyright infringement.

### Some General Issues

One of the issues confronting NTL and the future of LKCs revolves around the issue of intellectual property management. As LKCs grow and develop and more material is added to the database through digitisation processes, it would be in the interests of both the NTL and the LKCs to have some kind of over-riding policies about intellectual property management. These do not need to be onerous on staff, but could be more instructive. As an example, the policy could address issues like 'what is the NTL's policy on reproducing copyright material for purposes other than education?' and 'who can I call to talk to about intellectual property or copyright issues?' As observed by the assessment team, a central concern for the LKCs relates to the capacity of the staff and Indigenous community *in situ* to access information about intellectual property. It is therefore important for NTL to address this issue. While this is a general problem and not specific to LKCs or the NTL, recognising the knowledge gap and working towards some strategies that practically strengthen IP capacity ultimately will benefit the LKCs and the communities.

Another advantage in having a policy relating to intellectual property management is that if an issue is raised then there is a document that helps determine the way in which the NTL or the LKC can respond. To this extent, and also recognising the limitations in terms of



administration of bureaucracy within the LKCs themselves, as well as language/translation needs, it would be useful to have two separate but overlapping policies viz., one for the NTL more generally in relation to all its collections and material and then a more specific policy that addresses the needs of the LKC. The LKC policy would not need to be overly complicated or legalistic but provide some guidance on these IP issues. For instance explaining why dates and authors need to be acknowledged and associated with the work, what kind of copying within the context of the LKC is allowed, what kind of permissions need to be clarified with authors of contemporary works, for instance with recent photographs or films, and so forth.

The formation of these policies would provide guidance and a streamlined approach to intellectual property matters. At this stage, with no policy around intellectual property, it is difficult to instruct or advise staff in the LKCs. The policy needs to be accessible to staff working in the LKC and would also provide a basis for the development of guidelines in relation to process and procedures, for instance with the future documenting of material within the database.

#### *Recommendation 5*

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

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

#### **Databases—current issues**

In terms of copyright, the creation of a database, as a compilation, is an act of originality and authorship and is thus protected under the Copyright Act as a literary work. The content of the database can be owned by individuals other than the creator of the database, however, unless otherwise stated, the act of compiling the information confers copyright authorship on the individual who 'compiled' the information. In copyright law, communal ownership of the content of the database is not recognised. However, copyright law does recognise joint-ownership.





A significant problem arises given the extent of databases being generated within communities and for communities where clan or other types of joint ownership are recognised as part of their traditional law. Unless explicitly stated, ownership of the database will be vested with the person who made the database, that is, the person or people who physically exerted labour in its compilation. As an example, with photographs or a recording of a song series, a primary difficulty will be that communities who may culturally 'own' the songs are still disadvantaged in terms of owning the database that holds their cultural material because they may have a minimal role in actually making that database.

The creation of databases of Indigenous knowledge raises a set of intellectual property issues and concerns that have not been fully articulated or addressed either nationally or internationally. In terms of the *Our Story* software, NTL purchased the software for each community through a licence agreement with the original owners/developers of the database system. In the course of this assessment, it became clear that the intention in terms of ownership of the database was that it, and the developing content, would be held by each community. But as stated above, the law does not recognise communal ownership only joint-ownership. It seems necessary then to clarify the ownership status of the database framework and if necessary, assign rights of ownership to the representative structure within the community, which would probably be the local government body. This would avoid potential problems in the future and set a precedent about clarifying ownership of databases at the outset.

Then there is the issue of content, where there can be a variety of rights, for instance the author of a sound recording or photograph taken in the 1980s still retains copyright rights over that object, even when it is added to the database. Likewise, the person who adds information and text, for instance a description of an event, will individually retain copyright in that component of the database. Thus potentially there will be many people holding individual copyright over elements that make up the database. Whilst this is not necessarily a problem, an issue could manifest itself if the database content was copied without permission and used in an unauthorised way. In this sense it may be difficult to determine authorship and thus make a legitimate claim of infringement. To this end it would be useful to have a process for getting permissions from the relevant authors and/or owners of work being added to the database and keeping a record of contributors.



### *Recommendation 6*

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

### **Databases—future issues**

With the increasing number of databases that store material relevant to Indigenous people, it is possible that any given community may have a range of databases functioning within it. Some of these may combine with or enhance the *Our Story* database. In Angurugu for example, there was the potential combination of the *Our Story* database with a plants and animals database being designed by Julie Waddy through the Literacy Centre. In legal terms the combination or overlap of databases will produce new rights over the combined elements separate to those already existing in the individual database. In this regard, the NTL may find it useful to develop a set of guidelines for acting when this situation arises. Whilst the combination of the plants and animals database with the *Our Story* database in Angurugu does not really raise critical issues at this stage more complex interests might arise that need to be mediated in relation to more corporate or university commissioned studies.

### *Recommendation 7*

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

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

### **Future Intellectual Property Management**

In the last ten years Australia has seen a dramatic increase in interest and knowledge about intellectual property. This has produced a range of effects. One effect has been an increase in claims of copyright infringement for unauthorised use, or copying of works. Many cultural/collecting institutions that manage material but do not own the copyright have developed risk management strategies in relation to intellectual property. In short these strategies are designed to address issues that may arise in relation to using copyright material where the copyright owner is deceased or cannot be located. The idea is to manage the risk where potential infringement may arise.



Risk management strategies may be useful for the NTL given the extent of copyright material that may be incorporated into the LKCs over time. The strategies seek to balance out the risks against the advantages of utilising types of material and managing complaints if they arise. These management strategies could be tailored to the needs of the LKC or apply more generally across the NTL. They could also be adapted from already existing strategies like those at the National Museum of Australia. The advantage of a risk management strategy is that in the unlikely event of some kind of complaint of copyright infringement against a LKC or NTL, there would be grounds to argue that certain procedures had been followed that helped inform the decision to utilise or reproduce copyright material. It would also help identify material that might be in high risk of producing a complaint. For instance, some copyright owners of films and sound-recordings made in Arnhem Land in the 1960s and 1970s are highly litigious and do pursue unauthorised use of material quite rigorously. In this sense, use and reproduction of this material would be seen to sit in a high-risk category and thus warrant further consideration in order to secure permissions before being used.

The risk management strategies might also be utilised to address issues of privacy that could arise in relation to the use of the LKCs as points for other kinds of information gathering, for example, internet banking.

#### *Recommendation 8*

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

#### **Further Advice**

It may be useful for the NTL to investigate, either themselves or through an intermediary, the extent that the LKCs are considered an archive or library for the purposes of the exceptions within the Copyright Act. This may provide greater scope for reproducing and using copyright material (for preservation purposes within the community) that would be similar to the way in which other libraries and archives manage their material. Advice regarding this suggestion may be requested from the Attorney General's Department or the Northern Territory's Attorney General's Department.

#### *Recommendation 9*

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





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### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES (IT)

The information technology issues associated with LKCs are a critical factor in the provision of relevant, useful, and sustainable services within LKCs. Information and communication technologies determine the quality of provision and access to both electronic information sources (via the Internet and the NTL iPortal) and meaningful community engagement with the *Our Story* databases. The aim of this section of the report is to focus on the ITs being employed within the three LKCs that were reviewed (Wadeye, Angurugu and Galiwin'ku) and to evaluate them in terms of their contribution to the utility, relevance and practicality of the LKCs. The main focus is on the issues associated with the *Our Story* databases.

One of the challenges of this evaluation has been to separate the IT issues that underpin the goals and documentation activity envisaged for the *Our Story* databases in LKCs from the quite complex issues that are emerging in other areas of IK documentation activity and IK management systems. Some of this complexity is evident in the issues surrounding intellectual property discussed in the preceding section. In relation to technological issues, a number of trends are considered relevant to this evaluation.



Firstly, software designers are developing increasingly sophisticated systems for managing IK to respond to the needs imposed by traditional systems of knowledge management.<sup>57</sup> This is a global development. Secondly, there are increasing amounts of Indigenous knowledge documentation underway. Much of this documentation is project-based and specialised, for example, research activity in environmental resource management, or flora and fauna documentation, audio-visual song/ceremony documentation, GIS mapping, and so on. There is also an increasing Indigenous interest in retrieving documentation from other institutions or organisations for access, primarily in digital form, in local communities.

Across all this activity, and amidst a sense of urgency to document IK, there appears to be less focus, as yet, on the issues associated with future access to all this documented knowledge. These are not just limited to issues associated with ownership, as discussed in the section above, but also include issues associated with technology. How can documented knowledge, from a range of organisations and institutions, in a range of varieties, formats, sources, software, and management systems be made accessible in culturally-appropriate ways in a particular location and to satisfy a range of purposes? And how can this accessibility be maintained into the future as technologies advance and are updated?

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<sup>57</sup> J Hunter, "[Rights Markup Extensions for the Protection of Indigenous Knowledge](#)", Global Communities Track, WWW2002, Honolulu, May 2002.

J Hunter, B Koopman, J Sledge, "[Software Tools for Indigenous Knowledge Management](#)", Museums and the Web 2003, Charlotte, March 2003.

J Hunter, R Schroeter, B Koopman, M Henderson, 'Using the grid to build bridges between museums and Indigenous communities', GGF-11, Semantic Grid Applications Workshop, Honolulu, 10 June 2004

J Hunter, 'The role of information technologies in Indigenous knowledge management', in M Nakata & M Langton, *Indigenous knowledge and libraries*, Australian Academic & Researchers Libraries, Canberra; in press.

M Christie, *Words, ontologies and Aboriginal databases*, Charles Darwin University, Darwin, Australia, <http://www.cdu.edu.au/centres/ik/publications/WordsOntologiesAbDB.pdf>

M Christie, *Computer, databases and Aboriginal knowledge*, Charles Darwin University, Australia, <http://www.cdu.edu.au/centres/ik/pdf/CompDatAbKnow.pdf>



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The provision of *Our Story* databases in LKCs sits within a broader context of IK management (IKM). These management issues are wider than evidenced in the current use or envisioned goals of the LKCs' *Our Story* database. But they are not entirely irrelevant, especially in terms of the future.

NTLs goals for the *Our Story* databases within LKCs fit within the public library model of service delivery—to provide relevant library and information services to meet local interests and needs:

The concept provides a means for community members to connect with their history in a simple and direct manner. It provides a measure of ownership over local historical and cultural records. It inspires a sense of pride and self worth in individuals. Young people particularly are learning how to use the database and developing the skills needed to manage it. It is bringing more people into the local library, where they can access a range of library services, designed to promote literacy and lifelong learning.<sup>58</sup>

NTL has built the databases using the *Our Story* software, which is a version of the *Ara Irititja*<sup>59</sup> software developed for the Pitjantjatjara community by Martin Hughes from Smartworks. The database has a simple, user-friendly interface and a proven record of successful implementation and use by Anangu (Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people).

This evaluation begins with:

1. A description of the information technologies in the three LKCs visited,
2. A set of criteria for examining both the database and LKCs processes for activities associated with its use,
3. Identification and discussion of key issues. These are limited to an evaluation of ICTs against LKC goals, with additional discussion of future issues for consideration,
4. A set of recommendations emerging from the discussion.

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<sup>58</sup> NTL website [http://www.dcdsca.nt.gov.au/dcdsca/intranet.nsf/pages/ntl\\_lkc](http://www.dcdsca.nt.gov.au/dcdsca/intranet.nsf/pages/ntl_lkc)

<sup>59</sup> See <http://www.irititja.com/>



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### Description of Information Technologies employed within LKCs

#### Wadeye

There are 5 PCs for public use in the LKC, which also provide public Internet access and 4 Macs (G5 G3, eMac and iBook) for staff use.

Storage consists of 2 x 500Gb and 4 x 1000Gb external hard drives.

The current staff member who works on the *Our Story* database has a strong interest in Aboriginal culture and its preservation. In terms of technological skills, he is primarily self-taught, building on personal interests in photography, music and computers. There are two main databases—1) song/music database and 2) *Our Story* databases.

The WASI Song database was recorded using a Marantz PMD 670 digital recorder—saved to Compact Flash card as BWF (WAV) format. The database contains a significant number of funeral songs. Metadata for the song database consists of—title of song, name of group, members of group and their roles (often change over time), date of recording, multilingual names. iTunes™ is being used for the indexing and search interface to the songs and music database. There is significant demand in the community for copying songs to CDs.

The *Our Story* database at the LKC contains mostly colour slides scanned using Nikon scanner and saved as (25 Mb, 2500 dpi) TIFF masters—which are archived to CDs. High resolution JPEG images are ingested into the database plus some AIFF audio files. There are also three UPS (Uninterrupted Power Supply) units.

Some genealogy work has been done using Family Records software Genealogies 9.9.

The Literacy Production Centre attached to the school also has an *Our Story* database and independent databases of videos, photos, stories, about ceremonies and bush tucker. There is a need to organise a process to link the schools' databases to the LKC and to catalogues of print resources.

Numerous Telstra satellite Internet connections have been set up throughout the community—each user must pay for downloads.

#### Angurugu

The Angurugu LKC has not been operating for very long. It provides 2 large-screen iMacs (G5 processor) dedicated to *Our Story* database viewing, 1 UPS (for *Our Story* machines), 1 older



HP inkjet printer (model 610C), 1 new HP inkjet printer (model 1180C), and 1 Canon flatbed scanner.

The LKC has one computer with Internet access for the use of clients.

The CLO has received some training to digitise objects for upload into the *Our Story* database. She is undergoing ongoing training.

The community also has another Indigenous Knowledge database, Julie Waddy's plant, animal, language, and genealogy database.<sup>60</sup> Julie Waddy (linguist) and co-worker Sibella Herbert (biologist) are keen to integrate this knowledge into the *Our Story* database.

#### **Galiwin'ku**

At Galiwin'ku, the LKC model is still in the process of being implemented. It does not yet include a general library component and the current building which houses *Our Story* is not very suitable for housing computer equipment because it is not dustproof and is too small to expand to include a library. The neighbouring BRACS (Broadcasting in Remote Aboriginal Communities) building is under consideration as a more suitable venue.

The Galiwin'ku LKC also houses an ongoing project, which commenced before the installation of *Our Story*. This project is retrieving knowledge belonging to the Gupapuyŋu clan from collecting institutions. The *Gupapuyŋu Legacy Project* is developing its own knowledge management systems to reflect the Yolgnu system which makes provision for separating restricted, peri-restricted and public levels of knowledge and knowledge relating to the two principal moieties. There is a perception in the community that the Centre is not inclusive of other community members (in particular, the women), despite the work of the Centre having been extended by the incorporation of the *Our Story* database and the appointment of a Knowledge Centre Officer to add content to this database. The *Our Story* database is intended to capture the *garma* (public) knowledge collected through the *Gupapuyŋu Legacy Project* and other projects. The Galiwin'ku Indigenous Knowledge Centre is also currently focusing heavily on songs, due to funding from the *National Recording Project for Indigenous*

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<sup>60</sup> JA Waddy, *Classification of Plants and Animals from a Groote Eylandt Aboriginal Point of View*, Vols. 1 and 2.

*Performance.* Current staff are trying to get CDEP workers to assist with work of the Knowledge Centre and to broaden the skill base.

Documentation of local knowledge is also occurring in Yalu Marnngithinyaraw who identified areas that NTL/LKCs could assist them in. These included additional iMovie computer skills training plus a FAQ facility, and simple online help documents preferably in Yolngu.

The Literacy Production centre at Shepherdson College also has an *Our Story* database provided by NTL but was requesting Yolngu fonts before it could proceed much further with adding content. These have since been provided. Some way to link and integrate content between *Our Story* databases is sought.

### Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria focused on: digitization procedures; the database software; standards employed; security; specific requirements for Indigenous Knowledge; user interfaces/useability; staff and training. Although resourcing and cost issues are important, we considered these matters for NTL and maintained the focus on functionality and process issues.

The evaluation criteria are broader than required by NTL. This was designed to anticipate future issues that may need to be considered in the light of IK documentation and management systems developments occurring elsewhere and which are continually progressing.

### Digitization Procedures

- Digitization and archival selection process—who chooses what to digitize or what to capture, what selection criteria are used, are the decisions made by individuals or independent committees?
- What equipment is available/used for capturing content e.g., scanners, audio recorders etc?
- Is there any copyright clearance procedure prior to digitizing and ingesting new content?
- What formats are captured—both for archival and delivery? Are they of sufficient resolution/quality? How long do they take to download and display?



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### Database Software

- What is the underlying database technology?
- What size of collections is supported? Is it scalable to larger collections?
- What file formats are supported?
- Are annotation tools provided in which individual annotations are clearly attributed?
- Is the database software sufficiently–platform independent? flexible/adaptable? fast/efficient?
- Is the source code available?
- What is the quality of documentation? Are there online help systems and FAQs that are community oriented?

### Standards

- What metadata schemas are used? E.g., what fields are captured? Are controlled vocabularies or thesauri used? Metadata schemas used - fields, controlled vocabularies or thesauri used?
- Is there support for exporting to or importing from XML? Does the database software enable easy sharing of data and interoperability with other legacy databases or new emerging systems?
- Is there support for persistent unique identifiers? How are identifiers allocated to digital objects?

### Security

- Rights management and access constraints–can these comply with traditional law and privacy concerns?
- What security mechanisms are employed to prevent computer hackers/illegal access?
- User profiles–which user attributes are recorded?
- Are periodic backup procedures in place?

### Specific Requirements for Indigenous Knowledge

- Is there any support for traditional languages and special fonts?

- Is there fine-grained access control or separation of content for different community groups?
- What capability exists for integrating or linking multiple databases e.g., links to mapping GIS data, genealogy data, other cultural or community databases and information sources?

#### **User Interfaces/Usability**

- Is there a standards web browser interface (IE, Mozilla, Firefox) or is it a proprietary interface? Can the database be accessed remotely through the Internet or a WAN or only locally?
- What are the features and functions of the search, browse and retrieval interface?
- Is the user interface sufficiently simple and intuitive but also sophisticated enough, given the level or range of computer and English literacy of the users?
- Is there built-in flexibility so the user interface can be adapted to suit changing communities' needs or different user needs?

#### **Staff/Training**

- What are the major staffing issues—both at NTL and LKC?
- What is the level of support and training required and provided? Is it sufficient to enable capacity building in communities?

#### **Key Issues**

##### **Digitization Procedures**

Our visits revealed that none of the LKCs currently have a policy for selecting content to be digitised or saved to the database. Submission to the database is generally an ad hoc or subjective process based on community requests and/or decisions made by individuals with the knowledge of how to use the system. This is not necessarily a problem if there is general consensus or community satisfaction with what is being added. However, as interest grows or differences of opinion emerge, it may be useful for LKCs to develop selection/digitisation policies or plans that reflect community priorities and which will engender the widest possible community investment in this aspect of LKC activity.



Policies or plans should be local and could address selection priorities across a number of areas such as historical material already available in the community, historical material held in other collecting institutions that is suitable for digital repatriation, and contemporary productions of local knowledge or events. This would provide direction to LKC staff and identify local interests for NTL, providing them with some indication for future directions.

Development of policy in this area could be facilitated by NTL to standardise the process as much as possible across communities, but be developed in its detail at the community level. It will require some local mechanism, such as a community advisory committee. Those involved will need to be informed on the key criteria and issues to consider. See, for example, <http://www.ncecho.org/Guide/selection.htm> and the AIATSIS Digitization Program, guidelines and principles, standards, and selection criteria, at [http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/lbry/dig\\_prgrm/hm.htm](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/lbry/dig_prgrm/hm.htm)

Selection policy should also incorporate or work alongside any Intellectual Property protocols developed as an outcome of recommendations in this report.

### **Database Software**

Discussions with LKC staff, NTL staff and community users together with testing of the *Ara Irititja* software, indicates that there are both pros and cons associated with its deployment within the Northern Territory's LKCs.

#### *Strengths*

The major advantages of the system are that: it is an off-the-shelf product that is relatively simple to install; inexpensive to maintain; easy for NTL to support, user-friendly (particularly for Indigenous users) and it supports a wide range of media formats e.g., photos (.gif, .au, .bmp, .jpeg, .jpg, .tiff), movies (.mov, .avi, .mpeg, .dv), sounds (.aiff, .wav, .mp3, .au, .m4a, .mp4), documents (scanned textual documents) and objects. Although FileMaker Pro is not ideal for large-scale relational data, as long as the system can export the data to an XML format that can be imported to other databases, this problem can be overcome.

The interest *Our Story* has generated and the ease with which it can be used indicates that the system is working satisfactorily for this context.

#### *Limitations*

The system is inflexible in that the design and functionality of the front-end search and browse interface and the underlying metadata structure cannot be modified, except by the developer. As well, the underlying content structure is fixed—collections/folders/photos, movies, sound,

documents, objects—and this structure does not reflect the communities' knowledge structures. The maximum number of items per folder is also fixed when the maximum size will depend on available disk space and the size of each information object.

These structural limitations may not detract too much from NTL/LKCs intentions for the database, which are relatively modest, and which fit within the public library mission to provide access to relevant local items. In the short to medium term, this especially may be the case.

We do suggest that NTL/LKCs consider some of the limits identified that relate to annotation functions because these will in time affect the quality and reliability of information contained in the databases.

For example, all annotations go into a single massive information field meaning there is no clear attribution of information to individuals. Apart from lack of acknowledgement of sources of local knowledge, this also makes it difficult to clarify information or significantly different interpretations or accounts. Including this capability would be useful and strengthen the validity and reliability of content. As well, it would be useful if the system could record an audit trail documenting additions, deletions or changes to the database. It would also be useful in the context of remote communities and low levels of literacy to include a function for spoken annotations; currently only textual annotations can be added.

Unique identification of objects in the database depends on a manual naming approach—via collection names, folder names and Item Numbers. If multiple users are submitting content to the same database, this may prove problematic. As well, there is currently no way to ensure users conform to predefined formats for dates (e.g. DD/MM/YYYY), people names, place names etc. Conformity and consistency would be desirable as the content increases and could be ensured by the use of pull-down menus.

Names can only be added to fixed grid regions. The grid regions are often the wrong size or location. It would be useful if users could attach names and other types of information to user-specified regions.

#### *Future enhancements*

This evaluation also identified a considerable number of enhancements that could be provided but which the *Our Story* software cannot accommodate.

Some of these enhancements relate to search fields and browsing functions.

Some relate to access restrictions and security appropriate for Indigenous Knowledge systems. For LKC purposes, the main focus of *Our Story* is on providing access to public knowledge, so sophisticated systems for restriction may not be necessary. However, taking this approach does suggest that care needs to be taken with selection of archival material, so that items are not subject to inappropriate access. Care also needs to be taken that the issues outlined in the section on Intellectual Property are considered.

Some enhancements relate to issues associated with the integration of *Our Story* database with other databases and some were functions that people interviewed suggested or requested.

Others relate to general structural improvements.

Future enhancements that could be considered include the following:

- It would be useful to be able to search on clan names as well as the first name of a person.
- It may be useful for users to be able to browse large collections of images via thumbnails or to browse large video files via keyframes.
- Adding further access restrictions on moiety, clan, gender and age might allow the addition of more content.
- Given the types of other documentation currently occurring, it may be useful in the future to consider systems that have the capacity to integrate the *Our Story* database with Genealogy databases (e.g. Alliance software) or GIS/mapping data (MapInfo, ARC/Info) to enable people or mapping interfaces. The ability to integrate local GIS data with animal, plant and clan estate information is seen as a very useful capability in order to relate historical and cultural IK more closely to the land and to assist with land management decisions and land rights claims. Although this goes beyond LKCs' goals for *Our Story*, it may lend itself to collaborative activity in the future.
- The "export" and "import" functions of *Our Story* enable data to be exported/imported to and from other systems but it requires Excel spreadsheets with columns that correspond precisely to the fields in the database. XML-based export and import functionality would be much more useful.
- It may also be useful in the future to be able to relate or link entities in the database (e.g., people, places, animals, plants, subject, art, story, song, ceremony, seasons, clan, moiety,

event) automatically through underlying inferencing rules and ontologies, rather than manually through *Subjectfield*, as is currently the case.

- Operators thought it would enhance the database if transcripts of songs and stories could be aligned with audio files. (This might be a useful literacy aid). Songs currently have audio file plus text (in language) plus English notes. A method is needed for synchronizing these and presenting them logically. Song metadata should ideally include the occasion, singer, didgeridoo player, who created the tune, subject of the song, clan that owns the song.
- Some users interviewed requested the ability to store objects of interest in their own saved virtual collections.
- The user interface looks the same for every community and for every user within a community. Ideally each community could customize the front-end to reflect their local community's language, activities, environment and people. It should be easy to add links to other related web sites. In addition, different users should see different user interfaces (font sizes, buttons, menus and metadata fields) depending on their language and cultural background, computer literacy and role within the community or LKC.
- Users may be assisted if documentation, online help and FAQs are more community-oriented. An audiovisual or interactive tutorial for first-time users may assist in this.

Many of these enhancements may not be immediately practical or will affect sustainability in the short to medium term. Nevertheless, as Indigenous communities become more informed about the issues surrounding IP and more aware of software possibilities for managing IK and cultural items, and as the amount of available documentation increases, a demand may emerge in the future for database capabilities that do enhance function in these areas.

#### **Future Approaches to Indigenous Knowledge Management (IKM) Software Issues**

Arguably, the ad hoc, dispersed, and project-based nature of IK documentation in Australia, will provide challenges for future accessibility. In addition to this, collecting institutions who hold documented heritage originating from Indigenous communities/people are likely to be subject to increasing numbers of requests for repatriation of materials in digital form. Indigenous Knowledge Management and the software that supports it will be a central feature of these developments. The major national and state collecting institutions and archives, Indigenous stakeholders, and others such as academics and researchers working in the fields of IT and Indigenous knowledge, could make sound arguments to collaboratively establish a research testbed to be used to thoroughly evaluate existing technologies and integrate, refine





and extend them to satisfy the needs of Indigenous communities. The development of an open source system that is maintained by a collaborative community would mean that activity could be coordinated, duplication of effort would be reduced, and existing resources more focussed and efficiently employed. NTL, with their growing investment in LKCs and leadership in developing an appropriate model for public access to local collections of documented heritage, is well positioned to contribute to arguments for such a project.

#### **Networking Issues**

Currently each community that we visited has numerous Telstra satellite Internet connections. It would be better to have fewer broadband satellite connections and a community intranet or local area network (LAN) connecting the computer systems and databases of the main stakeholders e.g., the LKC, School, Arts Centre, Health Care Centre, and Council etc. This approach may also reduce the number of servers required in the community. For example, each group/stakeholder organisation could have distributed/remote access to their partitioned local knowledge database but all the community databases could be stored on a single server. Each stakeholder organisation could have a different front-end search interface and home page.

This is an issue that has implications for broader community/regional planning. Although it is an issue that is outside of LKCs' immediate concerns, it does have implications for community capacity building and creating efficiencies in the area of IT infrastructure.

#### **Training and Staff Issues**

Apart from administration work, technical training for LKC staff needs to correspond to the tasks they undertake in relation to the *Our Story* database and Internet and electronic service provision in the LKC. This includes training in:

- digitization methods including use of digital cameras, scanners, mp3 recorders etc.,
- basic data ingestion,
- and simple web site design, modification and addition of links to new information sources.

As well, should LKCs establish Community Advisory Committees, members will require some information on criteria to consider when establishing policies or making decisions about what to capture and save to the database and any other high priority information resources that should be made accessible.

It would be an advantage if Darwin-based NTL staff who are supporting LKCs have wide-ranging skills from IT (simple programming) to multimedia to management. It would also be helpful for establishing future directions if NTL staff were able to access information on the latest relevant technologies, for example, digital libraries, metadata standards, digital formats, Indigenous Knowledge Management systems, genealogy and mapping software, multi-lingual software etc.

Staff issues in LKCs discussed elsewhere in this report—allowing for a level of redundancy—are amplified in the IT realm because of the need for continuous availability of technically skilled people. It would be prudent to employ and train multiple (2-3) part-time Indigenous staff (ideally from different moieties or clans) and avoid investing totally in one person who may move on.

#### **Sustainability Issues**

Sustainability emerged as a central issue in relation to IT based services and IT infrastructure. This is particularly true when the term is interpreted broadly so that it embraces more than a minimal definition of equipment, but also the skills and manpower needed to run a sustainable service, and the training requirements that emerge as a result.

In the short-term, sustainability will require trade-offs between optimum functionality for management of Indigenous Knowledge systems (database features), useability from a staff and community perspective, and funding and human resource capacities of NTL and local government bodies.

The *Our Story* databases are currently in an early stage of implementation; there are some thousands of images scanned into database instances at the moment. Given that this represents a fraction of future potential holdings, failures in collection management and metadata are not yet likely to manifest their consequences in restricting the usefulness of collections. As collections grow, however, a clearer vision of what objects to add to collections, and how best to describe them in metadata, will grow increasingly important, not only for basic functions of searching, browsing and viewing, but to support management functions: potentially, for example, to address conflicting or inconsistent data, or to manage rights over items.

In a similar vein, 'annotation' metadata is captured in an unstructured text field without any level of validation. Entries even in more structured fields, such as personal name, exhibit a high degree of variation that, extrapolated to a much bigger collection of digital objects, will



prove to be an obstacle. Un-validated metadata does not only allow variations in discrete terms. It also allows variations in interpretation of the kind of data, or the kind of statement about data, that may appear in a particular field. It is particularly when collections are blended or split that this kind of variation can emerge as being problematic. This could in the future be as a result of aggregated access to database content over a network or the Web, but these are possibilities in the future, and may not be implemented as a result of cultural sensitivities and other impediments. Closer to current day practice are the consequences of variation in metadata when databases are added to from a range of related sites in the same community, such as the LKC, the school, the Literacy Production Centre and so forth—all sites where material could be added, annotated and viewed with benefits to the community.

These issues, in particular, need to be given some thought so as to enable some planning for the future sustainability of not just the service but also the vision that underpins the LKC model viz., to include the Indigenous knowledge base as a legitimate and critical part of the knowledge and information needed in the development of community capacities.

Currently, the LKC program is constrained and obliged to choose reliability over enhancements and continue with the current software in order to keep the service continuing in a sustainable condition. Nevertheless, even now, there are both IP and IT issues that demand attention under the banner of sustainability, because they will have future implications for the reliability and validity of database content and therefore the legitimacy of the service.

#### *Recommendations 10*

That NTL considers the establishment of LKC advisory committees in each community whose membership include Elders from clans, council representative, members of other relevant community organisations and agencies.

That NTL assists advisory committees to develop local archival selection policies to determine additions to *Our Story* databases (these policies should link with NTL's collection development policy for LKCs, referred to in Recommendation 4).

That NTL considers processes to assist Advisory Committees in quests for repatriation of materials from archives and other collecting institutions, should this be one of their future goals.



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That NTL encourages other stakeholders in community development to consider more effective networking of technology for communities in the long-term in the interest of economic efficiency as well as efficiency of services.

That NTL determines technical training priorities according to the tasks undertaken by CLOs, NTL staff, and Advisory Committees.

That NTL considers a long-term approach to software issues associated with storing and retrieving based on research input, and a consideration of common issues emerging in the national context.

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



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### LITERACY, INFORMATION LITERACY, AND LIFELONG LEARNING ISSUES

Commitment to literacy, information literacy and lifelong learning is a core value but often-invisible function of the library profession around the world.<sup>61</sup> NTL has a commitment to contribute to literacy development in communities through its LKCs. In particular, NTL supports the broader NT government goals of improving English literacy in communities as a central aspect of building community capacities. This supports national policy goals in the area of Indigenous literacy as well.<sup>62</sup>

Given the early stage of implementation of the LKCs visited, it is difficult to evaluate the contribution of LKCs to literacy development in communities. Although any engagement with text, media and technology could be said to support literacy development, it is not possible to comment on any effect or outcome beyond reporting the types of engagement currently occurring in LKCs visited. The focus is therefore on the potential within the LKC model to contribute to literacy development and to make some suggestions for future activity that ensures these activities are clearly articulated to the functions and capacities of LKCs, and to community information needs, as well as complementary to other community literacy activity, including in the formal education sector.

### Concepts of literacy

Any development of strategies to support literacy in LKCs will be more easily developed and promoted amongst other agencies and stakeholders in communities if NTL/LKCs can articulate, firstly what they mean when they talk of 'literacy' in LKCs, and secondly, how what they do can make a contribution to other community and government goals.

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<sup>61</sup> See Australian Library and Information Association, <http://www.alia.org.au/policies/core.values.html> and American Library Association, <http://www.ala.org/ala/ourassociation/governingdocs/keyactionareas/litaction/literacybrochure.htm>

<sup>62</sup> See Department of Education Science and Training, National Indigenous English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (NIELNS), [http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/indigenous\\_education/policy\\_issues\\_reviews/national\\_indigenous\\_english\\_literacy\\_and\\_numeracy\\_strategy.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/indigenous_education/policy_issues_reviews/national_indigenous_english_literacy_and_numeracy_strategy.htm)

Literacy is defined in numerous ways but for the purposes of this report we begin with that given by the Australian Council of Adult Literacy (ACAL):

Literacy involves the integration of listening, speaking, reading, writing and critical thinking; it incorporates numeracy. It includes the cultural knowledge which enables a speaker, writer or reader to recognise and use language appropriate to different situations. For an advanced technological society such as Australia, the goal is an active literacy which allows people to use language to enhance their capacity to think, create, and question, in order to participate effectively in society.<sup>63</sup>

It is also helpful to highlight the definition of literacy experts from *The Centre for Literacy of Quebec*<sup>64</sup>

Literacy is a complex set of abilities needed to understand and use the dominant symbol systems of a culture—alphabets, numbers, visual icons—for personal and community development. The nature of these abilities, and the demand for them, vary from one context to another.

In a technological society, literacy extends beyond the functional skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening to include multiple literacies such as visual, media and information literacy. These new literacies focus on an individual's capacity to use and make critical judgements about the information they encounter on a daily basis.

However a culture defines it, literacy touches every aspect of individual and community life. It is an essential foundation for learning through life, and must be valued as a human right.

These definitions underline the need to understand literacy, not as a singular construct but as multiliteracies.<sup>65</sup> The concept of multiliteracies recognises that in the digital age knowledge is

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<sup>63</sup> ACAL Policy Statement, 1989, cited in R Wickert & M Kevin, *No single measure: the final report*, Commonwealth Department of Employment Education and Training, Canberra, 1995.

<sup>64</sup> See <http://www.centreforliteracy.qc.ca/def.htm>

increasingly represented in multiple modes and that 'texts' are increasingly complex systems of meaning-making, where print sits alongside the visual, audio and spatial forms of representation.

As well, following these definitions, we would caution against the tendency to view literacy simply as a set of technical skills that people acquire. Rather, we would encourage the conceptualisation of literacy as a set of social practices.<sup>66</sup> Viewing literacy as a practice shifts the focus to what people do with literacy—to the types of activities where literacies have a role, including those activities that are embedded in broader social and cultural priorities and goals of communities. This is particularly useful for NTL and LKCs because it encourages the development of an approach that begins with considering how LKCs, through their collections and services can support people (individuals, interest groups, organisations, agencies, and so forth) already involved in literacy practices designed to facilitate particular community goals. It also encourages LKCs to consider how to engage communities in literacy activities not currently practised in communities but which may contribute to the development of community capacities.

We would also make the point that technology is inherent in literacy; there cannot be literacy without technologies of information and communication. The practice of literacy began with the development of written language, which is a particular technology for information communication, but as different technologies for information and communication have become available, they have all been necessarily implicated in the acquisition and practice of literacy.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Following the New London Group, M Kalantzis & B. Cope (eds.), *Multiliteracies: literacy learning and the design of social futures*, Routledge, London, 2000.

<sup>66</sup> For a brief but useful overview of theories of literacy, see I Kral & RG Schwab, *The realities of Indigenous adult literacy acquisition and practice: implications for capacity development in remote communities*, discussion paper 257, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, Canberra, 2003.

<sup>67</sup> C Lankshear, C Bigum, et al., *Digital rhetorics: literacies and technologies in education—current practices and future directions*, 3 vols, project report, Children's Literacy National Projects, QUT/DEETYA, Brisbane, 1997.

We consider this a useful point to consider because, firstly, it emphasises that LKC users are always already engaged in 'literacy' activity. Wherever there is engagement with documented forms of knowledge and information, in whatever formats or language, literacy practices and skills are required to access and use them.

Secondly, the view of technology being inherent in literacy encourages a more integrated but complex view of modalities of literacies and their development in the LKC context, which adds weight to the view that visitors to LKCs will likely be negotiating different systems of technologies and symbols as they interact with documents and textual productions.

Importantly, this discourages the view that there is a hierarchy of literacies, or an order for acquiring them, or that some are inherently more important or should be more valued than others. This is important in the cross-cultural context of LKCs where two knowledge systems interface and a range of literacies—English literacy, traditional language literacy, computer literacy, Web literacy, multi-media literacy, visual literacy, functional literacy, information literacy—can be identified, and potentially overwhelm or unnecessarily complicate any approach for developing or supporting literacies. The reality is that current technologies of information and communication require many of these aspects of literacy to work together when people are engaged in locating, or reading, or viewing, or printing, or downloading, or listening to, or using an item of textual production, whether it be print, audio, visual, multimedia, electronic or hardcopy text or whether it be in the traditional/local knowledge domain or the Western/external knowledge and information domain.

As well, we would point out the trend to link literacy to particular social or age groups such as emergent or early (childhood) literacy, family literacy, adolescent or young adult literacy, adult literacy, etc. These generally denote the common interests, or appropriate strategies for meeting the needs of those groups. Reference is made to these groups here because they receive increasing attention in the international literacy and libraries literature as groups within communities that libraries can assist with in cooperation with other agencies.<sup>68</sup> They may

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<sup>68</sup> For example, T Quigley, 'How public libraries can promote adult literacy with the World Wide Web', *Feliciter*, issue 1, 2003, <http://www.cla.ca>

K Crockatt & S Smythe, *Building culture and community: family and community literacy partnerships in Canada's north*, <http://www.nunavutliteracy.ca/english/resource/reports/building/cover.htm>





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provide some structuring elements for the way that LKCs approach literacy and lifelong learning issues.

Understandings of literacy as social practice, as multiple and multimodal means that LKCs need not be anxious about 'which literacy' or 'literacy in which language', or 'which literacy for which knowledge domain'. Rather, the focus becomes one of how to support individuals and groups in knowledge and information activities that require a range of literacies.

### Information Literacy

However, having encouraged an integrated view of literacies, we consider it relevant to single out information literacy for further attention. Information literacy is one aspect or type of literacy but the one most closely associated with the functions of libraries and information services. According to the Council of Australian State Libraries,

Information literacy is a prerequisite for lifelong learning and is common to all disciplines, all learning environments and all levels of education. It enables learners to engage critically with content, become self-directed, and have greater control over their own learning. It is not only about access and information and communications technology skills, but goes beyond that to mean having the knowledge, skills and authority to engage with information productively.<sup>69</sup>

There is an extensive literature on both lifelong learning and information literacy, and numerous definitions. However, the following provides a useful list of the common elements in definitions of information literacy:

- effective information seeking
- informed choice of information sources
- information evaluation and selection

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B Russell & K Curry Lance, *Adult and family literacy activities in Colorado public libraries*, Colorado Literacy Research Initiative, November, 2003,  
[http://www.literacyresearch.org/download/closer\\_look\\_public\\_library\\_literacy\\_03.pdf](http://www.literacyresearch.org/download/closer_look_public_library_literacy_03.pdf)

<sup>69</sup> Council of Australian State Libraries, *Information literacy standards*, 2001, p. 2, viewed 30 May 2005,  
<http://www.casl.org.au/papers/casl/information.literacy.standards.pdf>

- comfort in using a range of media to best advantage
- awareness of issues to do with bias and reliability of information, effectiveness in transmitting information to others.<sup>70</sup>

Information literacy is therefore a key competency for independent use of information services, including those offered by LKCs. Due to changing technologies and the exponential growth of knowledge and information, the abilities needed to identify, find, and use information are continually expanding in line with the changing formats and technologies for knowledge and information production, storage and delivery. Finding and using information encompasses knowledge of subject classification systems and systems of information management, and engagement with a range of changing technologies and formats and the skills needed to use them.

Information literacy is developed in practice as library users or information seekers become adept at accessing knowledge and information in libraries, other organisations, and on the Internet. Teaching the specific skills required to access different types of information is the realm of qualified librarians in school libraries, academic libraries, specialised libraries and public libraries. In the absence of qualified library professionals in LKCs (and often in community schools as well), NTL needs to carefully consider how to approach the development of information literacy skills in LKCs. This is particularly in the case of access to external sources of information, most of which require English literacy for productive engagement.

So whilst the NTL/LKCs have developed a 'dual-focus' approach to information provision that recognises the traditional/local knowledge domain and the importance of provision and access to external sources of information, which are usually in English, this duality disappears in the practice of literacies. In many instances, both staff and visitors to the library are engaged in multi literacies at any one time, whether they are engaged in activities associated with the *Our Story* database or accessing external sources of information using the Internet and a range of other formats.

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<sup>70</sup> P C Candy, *Information literacy and lifelong learning*, white paper prepared for UNESCO, the US National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, and the National Forum on Information Literacy, for use at the Information Literacy Meeting of Experts, Prague, The Czech Republic, 2002.



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### Literacy, Information Literacy and Lifelong Learning

The increasing interest in information literacy has developed in tandem with the increasing emphasis placed on lifelong learning.<sup>71</sup> Lifelong learning has gained currency as a concept in light of the effects of globalisation, changing patterns of work, social change, new technologies, and the exponential growth in available information<sup>72</sup>, all of which require people to keep abreast of change. Lifelong learning encompasses formal, non-formal, informal and incidental learning. Lifelong learning is:

A continuously supportive process which stimulates and empowers individuals to acquire all the knowledge, values, skills and understanding they will require throughout their lifetimes and to apply them with confidence, creativity and enjoyment in all roles, circumstances and environments.<sup>73</sup>

In the context of LKCs, multiple literacies, including information literacy, are fundamental for lifelong learning. However, as Candy points out, “the capacity for and predisposition towards learning is largely determined during the early years of a person’s life. Accordingly attention must be paid to creating and encouraging those circumstances that are linked to the orientation towards learning...”<sup>74</sup> This provides support for NTLs decision to engage in early childhood literacy development as a way of developing an early habit of engagement with LKC services and as a way of contributing to broader literacy goals.

But, given the shortfalls in educational outcomes via formal education in Indigenous communities, it also points up the need for NTL to actively create the circumstances that will encourage engagement of all ages with all LKC services, including those where low levels of

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<sup>71</sup> A Bundy, *For a clever country: information literacy diffusion in the 21st century*, background and issues paper for the first national roundtable on information literacy conducted by the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA), State Library of Victoria 28 February 2001, <http://www.library.unisa.edu.au/about/papers/clever.htm>

<sup>72</sup> See PC Candy, 2002.

<sup>73</sup> World Initiative on Lifelong Learning: An action agenda for lifelong learning for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. *Final report from the First Global Conference on Lifelong Learning, Rome, 30-November - 2 December 1994*, Brussels, WILL.

<sup>74</sup> PC Candy, 2002, p.6



literacies prevent successful and satisfying engagements that will facilitate learning. This is particularly the case with external sources of information, where interest and need does not produce enough motivation to lead to persistent independent engagement or productive learning experiences. This also suggests a role for LKCs to support the needs of those already oriented towards learning—those already engaged in formal or workplace learning or those motivated to investigate further education pathways.

### Current Literacy Support in LKCs

The provision of access to collections and the provision of access to services such as the Internet and the local *Our Story* databases offer individuals who engage with them the opportunity to develop and practice multi literacy competencies.

Currently, activity that could be said to contribute to literacy development in Wadeye and Angurugu LKCs is incidental and on an immediate needs basis. It is occurring in three main areas:

- traditional/local knowledge documentation and access associated with the local *Our Story* databases in Wadeye and Angurugu and activity associated with local media production (for example viewing locally produced videos etc)
- activity to assist users to use the Internet for access to external information or services such as banking
- activity to engage children

LKC staff currently have some capacity to assist visitors to the library in these activities but varies between the LKCs we visited.

### Local Knowledge Activities

In Wadeye, the LKC officer who worked on the *Our Story* database was recruited for his interest and skills in the area. Currently, he facilitates groups such as Elders and school children who have been providing the content to enrich items in the database and make them searchable and accessible. In the urgency to document knowledge, it is not clear if the Indigenous participants are learning skills associated with the database or are limited to supplying advice and knowledge. Browsing on the database is relatively easy but 'working' on it will require appropriate support.



At Angurugu, where the *Our Story* database had not been in operation very long, the Community Library Officer, or CLO, had received initial training in digitising objects and had commenced computer skills and Business Administration certified training at the Music Centre, which also had the capacity to prepare students for entry into courses at Charles Darwin University. At the time of visit, only the CLO was developing these skills. Despite the recent start, community members were accessing the *Our Story* database and sharing the necessary skills on their own initiative with new visitors to the LKC. These are limited to browsing and viewing skills, as there is very little annotation that has been added as yet.

Galiwin'ku had one LKC staff member appointed to work on the *Our Story* database, which at the time of visit was not available for public viewing.

#### **Access to External Sources of Information**

It was difficult to get an accurate picture of the extent of local access to external information but anecdotal reporting would suggest it is quite limited. Low levels of English literacy and unfamiliarity with systems of information organisation, including online organisation of information, and much less interest in and perceived relevance of external information contribute to this. Wadeye CLOs reported community interest in browsing on the Internet and use of the Internet for banking purposes and they assisted people to do this. Adults were interested mainly in magazines.

#### **Children's Activities**

In the area of children's activities, the Angurugu Library Officer reported introducing book behaviours, such as page turning and care of books, and concepts of print (reading from front to back, left to right, top to bottom) to a child who visited regularly. Angurugu had also approached the school to explore possible activities for students but at the time of the visit no discussions had occurred, although the school recognised the possibilities for students to be involved in activities associated with the *Our Story* database.

Wadeye LKC had also run a successful holiday activity program with the assistance of a schoolteacher. The CLOs had expressed an interest in doing this again but acknowledged they would need to learn how to undertake such activities themselves. Wadeye staff also reported assisting children with the Tumble Books program, an interactive, electronic reading program. School-age children were a significant cohort of visitors to the Wadeye LKC. Wadeye staff also reported that whilst children looked at books they generally could not read



them. Staff read stories when they could and sometimes older children read to younger ones. Video viewing was a favourite activity.

At Galiwin'ku, there was no traditional library component to services. Nevertheless, *Yalu Marngithinyaraw Nurturing Centre* thought that they could manage and use a children's collection to supplement the activities they undertook to strengthen families.

As well, in the area of children's services, NTL is currently planning to develop Lap Sit programs for remote libraries. This follows the success of such programs elsewhere around the world, including in Darwin public libraries. Lap Sit programs vary in their details but in general terms they are structured sessions for children between 0-2 years of age (sometimes split into two different age groups) and their mothers. The purpose of these programs is to introduce parents to activities they can also do at home, to age appropriate literature, to familiarise them with libraries and what they offer children, and to help prepare babies for story sessions.<sup>75</sup> The activities that underpin Lap Sit programs are tried and tested strategies that assist children to make connections between the spoken word and the printed word and help children to develop an early enjoyment of books and reading. Educational research consistently supports the assertion that children who are read to from an early age and are familiar with books learn to read more easily and are more likely to have reading success upon reaching school.<sup>76</sup>

NTL has identified the early literacy area as a 'gap' that is not a focus of attention by educational agencies in communities and an area of early childhood literacy development to which they could make a contribution. Focussed activity with this age group also encourages continued use of the library as children grow and develops parental skills and understanding of the oral-literate connection as well.

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<sup>75</sup> L Phelps, *Babes n books: a program for parents and babies from zero to twelve months old*, <http://www.alia.org.au/groups/topend/2004.symposium/babes.n.books.html>

<sup>76</sup> A Bundy, *Australian bookstart: a national issue, a compelling case*, a report to the nation by Friends of the Libraries Australia (FOLA), Friends of Libraries Australia, Melbourne, 2004, p.3.



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### Developing an Approach to Literacy in Three Key Areas

Public libraries play a major role in providing opportunities for informal learning, and supporting those engaged in formal learning in their local communities but have no official responsibility in the area of formal literacy education, which is the province of state and territory education departments.

The formal education sector itself faces ongoing challenges in teaching literacies in Indigenous contexts, especially the requisite levels of English literacy that are needed for successful schooling, further education and work, and for effective participation in community development. This should not lead LKCs to assume too ambitious a role in relation to literacies.

Whilst libraries around the world are developing more structured programs to 'fill in the gaps', the gaps in Indigenous communities are extremely wide. This means that any program must be developed and structured much more carefully than would normally be the case and with more reference to expert advice on structuring learning experiences for Indigenous contexts.

The capacities of LKC staff to develop and implement structured programs are currently limited and they cannot be expected to perform the functions of either qualified library professionals or literacy educators.

Any approach therefore needs to be realistic in relation to resources and capacities of NTL and LKC staff. It needs to fit with and enhance the relevance, functions and capacities of LKCs and work on expanding those functions and capacities to make a contribution to literacy development and to building community capacities. To do this, the approach needs to facilitate community information needs, as well as be complementary to and supportive of (rather than duplicate or compete with) other community knowledge, information, and literacy activity, including in the formal education sector.

We propose in this approach that LKCs continue, but sharpen, their focus on supporting library users in the literacies required to access and engage with LKC collections and services as provided through the LKC model. To achieve this, we suggest that local needs and interests provide the stimulus for activity through (a) activities associated with use of the local *Our Story* database, (b) activities designed to improve local access to external information resources in ways that respond to community information needs and interest, and (c) activities in the area of children's services.

These areas are three distinct areas of activity and are within LKCs capacity if the approach is planned sufficiently with a view to keep moving forward in line with needs and increased capacities within communities and LKCs. That is, they are areas that can start small and be expanded progressively.

These three areas are also important areas of practice that can make a contribution to the development of community capacities. The value of local knowledge documentation on this point has been discussed earlier in this report. The development of information literacy skills, especially those needed to access external sources of information is not yet an area of community practice but has the capacity to extend individual, organisation, and community capacities to recognise and identify the need for information, and to locate and use information in local settings, for a range of individual and community purposes. Early literacy development is an identified gap in educational provision. It is also an area best addressed through informal activity. Successful developments in this area that are negotiated at the local level have the potential to improve the transition to formal schooling and encourage ongoing visitation by children to LKCs. Ultimately, they encourage early literacy activities as an area of family social practice in communities.

Activities in these areas also take advantage of and build on local interest and motivation to maintain and utilise local/traditional knowledge as well as build local collections for future generations. They respond to the need for communities to develop skills necessary to engage with external information for a range of purposes, and recognise the place of both in children's futures.

These areas are not finite. Some communities, for example, might see value in developing activities for engaging youth in learning. We would still suggest that these activities be developed in ways that increase engagement with LKC services in the areas of local knowledge or external information literacy via taking advantage of youth interest in technology or particular topics of interest.

#### **Local Knowledge Documentation Activities**

Local knowledge documentation provides opportunities to develop literacies that build on the motivations and interests of communities to preserve their heritage and maintain their knowledge. Local knowledge documentation also builds connections between oral and literate traditions that develops literacy practices that are relevant and meaningful for community members and which fit with broader community goals. Local knowledge documentation also



stimulates communities to search for and retrieve documented knowledge from external sources, or might stimulate community members, other organisations, or collaborative projects in further production of local contemporary knowledge in a variety of formats. These activities engage the use of information technologies, and in many instances require engagement with written language in both the local languages and English.

Activity on the part of LKCs could start simply with assisting users to become familiar with the interface to access the contents and build to more advanced skills involved in scanning and annotation. It is important that LKC staff take as much opportunity as possible to transfer the skills they develop in relation to operating the *Our Story* database to as many users as possible and to involve the broader community in decisions about content additions and annotation processes. The recommendations put forward in the sections on IT and Intellectual Property need to inform how LKCs move forward in this area. To this we would reiterate suggestions that explanatory or procedural instructions be displayed in print form in English and where the community requests, in local languages. The practice of backing up oral instructions with printed ones encourages those who can read to be independent and increases familiarity with genres of print for those who are not independent readers. As much as possible procedures and processes should be consistent across LKCs.

Local knowledge documentation also provides opportunities for beginning with the known and from there connecting people to external information. For example, if communities are interested in genealogy documentation, LKCs can play a part in involving users in the location of information about family history, through the NTL web pages, the Name Indexes of various archives and libraries such as AIATSIS, National Archives, InfoKoori, South Australian State Records and NT Archives. This develops information literacy skills and a wider understanding of external sources of Indigenous historical information. These activities may result from decisions at the (suggested) local advisory committee level and may lend themselves to be developed as 'projects' in collaboration with other organisations or institutions, such as, for example, the collaborative work of the *Pacific and Regional Archive for Digital sources in Endangered Cultures*, the *National Recording Project for Indigenous Performance*, and ARC funded projects in Wadeye and Galiwin'ku.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> See project details at <http://www.music.usyd.edu.au/research/index.shtml>

Interest in local knowledge documentation is also a good beginning point for building the local collection. Local knowledge that cannot be incorporated into the *Our Story* databases should be pursued in other ways. Copies of videos and CDs, links to other electronic sources or databases, indexes of local resources held elsewhere all build on local interest but build understanding also of how and where documentary heritage is preserved, stored and able to be accessed.

Local knowledge documentation activity can also be extended to children's activities where oral story telling can be recorded and extended into written form for reading. These could be projects for holiday programs that involve all ages.

Other organisations in communities were undertaking local knowledge documentation activities and these provide opportunities for LKC staff to learn or be mentored by people working in such organisations as well as opportunities for LKCs to consider how they can support such activities in the future, or incorporate the textual items produced in other organisations into LKC collections.

For example, at the Yalu Marnggithinyaraw Nurturing Centre at Galiwin'ku stories are collected around traditional nutrition practices. Food collection activity is documented on film with the focus on links between traditional food and Western nutritional understanding. The Centre has been doing hands-on literacy development around cooking, producing and reading recipes etc. LKCs could develop a process for organisations and collaborative projects to lodge copies of the production of their materials in LKCs.

Consistently working to expand these resources that occur in relation to knowledge documentation or application of local knowledge in contemporary projects necessitates links with other organisations and outlines a process for LKC staff to follow up the needs of other community organisations and projects.

#### **Access to External Sources of Information**

Improving local access to external information sources in ways that address community needs and develop information literacy skills is an area of practice that communities require assistance with. Almost all the people we spoke with on the topic in the three communities visited commented on the difficulty Indigenous people have engaging with external information. Not knowing what information is relevant or available, or where it might be found, and low levels of English literacy make engagement and thus interest in external information sources a particular challenge in remote communities. Information literacy relates to the ability



to locate and use information to meet a particular need. Whether information exists, how information is organised, where it might be found, how one begins to look for unfamiliar information in unfamiliar places requires specialised skills. Librarians have expertise in this area but LKCs are not staffed with professional librarians. Despite the constraints, there is much that NTL can do to assist LKCs in this area.

#### *Mediation of external online information sources*

Because it is perhaps the most challenging area in terms of developing community engagement, NTL will need to consider interim steps to facilitate access to information already identified as being of some interest to Indigenous people and communities. There appears as yet to be little mediation of information for Indigenous people beyond the provision of Internet access to NTL's portal and the Internet.

As a general observation, the NTL website does not highlight any services for Indigenous people. The first link to LKCs gives no indication to anyone who does not already know that these are largely services for Indigenous communities. The Family History Service link makes no mention of whether these apply to Indigenous people. This is less than most other State Libraries who highlight their services for Indigenous people and have a focus on Family History services and is disappointing considering the population proportion of Indigenous people resident in the Territory. It sends a less than positive message to Indigenous Territorians about how NTL values, encourages, and provides for their patronage.

In addition, the NTL iPortal is an unfriendly portal for Indigenous people or people with few information skills although commendably it does provide a quick link to resources in Indigenous languages. The search for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander resources or resources that might be of Indigenous interest assumes knowledge and is not intuitive. Indigenous resources have to be accessed through generic links at the first and second levels. Access is facilitated through *Online resources* and then under *Subject Guides*, before *Larrakia* resources can be found. Under *Genealogy*, *Resources of genealogy for Indigenous people* can be found another level down. Under *Selected Internet Links*, it is possible to find links to lists of *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander*, *Native Title*, and *Stolen Generations* online resources. These access points could easily be improved and give Indigenous users a quicker sense of the NTL as an institution that contains resources of interest and easily accessible by them.

There is a lot of knowledge on the ground about what sort of information Indigenous people need access to, or are interested in. These provide important starting points for firstly providing access points, secondly from which to build relevant local collections of external sources, and thirdly, from which to build information literacy skills. If the world of information is a mystery, then a few signposts along the way would assist Indigenous people as they seek to make connections between what they know and what they do not know. At the very least, such signposts would assist CLOs to improve their information literacy skills to a level that would help them mediate information needs in local settings.

In our short visits to communities, a number of areas of external information were mentioned. These included access to information and procedures for transactions such as Internet banking and bill paying services; government information such as car/boat registration, accessing online employment details; travel enquiries, flight bookings, locating and booking accommodation; study and course information; job and employment information. Other areas of interest also mentioned were Indigenous news, music, and sport.

To these can be added likely sources of interest beginning with the presence on the Internet of other Indigenous communities within Australia and around the world, websites and information with an Indigenous focus including health, education, environmental resource management information, traditional knowledge, law, politics, stories, histories, major issues, Indigenous news sources etc. A lot of these are external to local communities but connect to the broader Australian and global Indigenous community and global information sets.

It would be a useful project for NTL to provide some mediation of the vast external information environment for Indigenous Territorians in remote communities, beginning with guides to selected resources for identified or likely areas of interest, along with some evaluation of resources to encourage the development of information evaluation skills on the part of CLOs and users. To organise such areas of information in ways that allow Indigenous users more control over or successful searching of the vast amount of information, should not be looked upon as de-skilling or disempowering. Rather, it should be seen as part of a staged plan that assists LKCs and CLOs to begin the process of mediating information for their clients.

It was pointed out that accessing government information is a complex maze, even for those with good English literacy levels. It is heavily print-based and the organisation of departments and names of service sections is often a prerequisite for successful searching. It was suggested, in our discussions, that this sort of information and the way to find it could be simplified. Whether this is practical given that the content of government sites is always

changing, it does suggest that some thought does need to be given to how to make some sorts of information more accessible.

#### *Information support for local organisations*

There is also scope for NTL through their LKCs to consider the development of a process to identify the external information needs of local organisations so that LKCs begin to be perceived as local institutions that facilitate access to all sorts of information and knowledge and to promote the perception that LKCs are an important community resource. Where local documentation or literacy activities occur in other organisations—such as health, women’s, Council, workplaces, and projects—LKCs could assist in building collections to match these interests through web-based portals associated with particular projects. A process for CLOs to transmit these needs to Darwin and to receive assistance in providing access in the local setting would help deliver information in a relatively timely manner and increase staff knowledge and skills in this area.

#### *Building locally relevant collections*

Building a local collection of external information resources, both in terms of collections of links to electronic information and print and multi-media material plays an important part in developing information literacy skills. It begins to give community members a sense of the field of available information that reflects their interest and needs.

LKCs could also incorporate into local collections publications that relate to their communities or interests, such as government reports, academic research, (for example, CAEPR publications), parliamentary papers on various topics, and also build the physical collection by providing some means to enable downloading or hardcopies of electronic publications for those who might need to browse more slowly than access to the Internet may allow in LKCs. Even if levels of English literacy preclude robust engagement with the content of these sources, knowing of its existence helps to reveal the extent of relevant external information. This provides a motivation or stimulus for deeper engagement with information and literacies.

The current capacity of CLOs is limited both in terms of skills and in terms of time management. A project of specified duration that also ensures training in the local community (or region) for the skills required to update links to identified online sources could be considered.



### Children's Services

Children's services are an important area because they encourage the development of literacy as a social practice, associating it with pleasure, leisure, and personal interests rather than the set curriculum and performance demands of formal schooling. Lap Sit and toddler sessions also necessarily involve parents and so develop parental skills and understanding about early reading behaviours. Early childhood activities are designed to encourage return visits and establish a culture of library engagement that can progress through childhood. Although arguments can be put that these literacy engagements are not part of traditional Indigenous societies, nevertheless they are important building blocks for preparing children for formal schooling. They do not need to replace traditional early learning activity but provide an additional layer that has important implications for future educational success.<sup>78</sup>

#### *Lap Sit programs*

These move children from the familiar to the unfamiliar by beginning in the oral and moving towards the literate—making the connections between the spoken and printed word, long before children reach school age. The strategies in these programs also move children from physical and oral activity (singing, dancing, rhyme and rhythmic activity) to quiet, settled, listening activity. They connect the visual (pictures and illustrations) to the spoken and printed word. They also impart reading behaviours such as how to hold a book, turn pages and so on. If progressed into toddler sessions and 2-4 years age groups, children can be introduced to concepts of print such as left to right, top to bottom, front to back and so on. All this can occur in the context of fun and play-based activity without any of the performance pressures associated with formal schooling.

The added value of early childhood sessions is that they require the participation of parents. This develops parental understanding of early literacy acquisition. It provides mothers with a model for engaging children in pre-literacy activities, for reading to children, and it demonstrates to parents how children can enjoy interacting with books.

If the interaction is viewed as moving children from oral texts to print ones, then the issue of 'which language' becomes less important than the value of engaging with textual production.

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<sup>78</sup> See discussion of issues in *Effective learning Issues for Indigenous children 0-8 years*, discussion paper, MCEETYA Taskforce on Indigenous Education, June 2001.



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Obviously, language issues are best negotiated at local levels. Whilst we see advantages with using texts in English and local languages from infancy, we do suggest that NTL take advice and consult with community and education experts on this issue. Considerable thought needs to go into book (and song) selection as the quality of the selection is paramount to success.<sup>79</sup> LKCs could note what texts children enjoy and develop their lists according to local circumstances and children's pleasure.

Keneally<sup>80</sup> reports on the Lillooet Area Library Association, which is developing First Nations literacy programs in British Columbia. Through partnership with local schools working to revive the St'at'imc language, the library had commenced a Books for Babies Translation Program and had translated, for example, *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star* into the local language and provided audio books of the melody and song in each language to accompany the text. There were plans to continue this program. Opportunities exist in the NT to pursue similar collaborative and negotiated projects.

Lap Sit programs, whilst they can be organised and run by LKCs, do not necessarily have to be led by LKC staff. Interested mothers or volunteers with a talent in the area, including secondary school students, could be assisted to develop the skills to perform these roles, in order to widen the community skills base. This should be qualified by emphasising that the appropriateness of activities and quality of songs and books are critical and that suitably qualified people should be involved in the planning of activities and selection of resources. But for continuity of service, training of a number of people would be prudent. It is important in these sorts of activities that leaders and participants do not just learn to 'do' these activities but understand why they are important and the value they can have for children's uptake of literacy at school.

Whilst the emphasis should at all times be on fun and informal learning so that children build an enjoyable association between books and reading activity, we do encourage NTL, in conjunction with education agencies, to track the progress of children who attend such programs. This may be not much more than LKCs keeping a record of who attends by having mothers sign in to sessions, keeping ongoing records about return visits of children over the

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<sup>79</sup> A Bundy, 2004, p.22.

<sup>80</sup> A Keneally, 2003, p.13.



years, and keeping records of the proportion of English/local language texts used so that schools can assess if there is any correlation between early activity and later success in school reading programs. This would contribute useful data for educational research, and provide NTL with leverage for ongoing resource support for children's services generally.

This area of activity is potentially valuable and largely unexplored in the Indigenous literacy context. It should be noted that Wadeye LKC attracts non-attending school age children who often arrive earlier than the 3.00pm entry time (for school age children) and who on the day of our visit could be heard asking through the window, "Is it 3 o'clock yet?" This would appear to confirm that children who do not enjoy school can enjoy their interactions with toys, books, computer interactive programs and so on in the LKCs. This in turn would seem to indicate that developing positive associations with the world of print and textual production in the LKCs could assist not just literacy development but also the transition to school and a more positive approach to formal learning. At the very least it signals that LKCs are a potentially valuable informal learning site for children alienated from the schooling process.

#### *Other children's activities*

In addition to Lap Sit, LKCs could also over time provide sessions for children up to the age of school entry.

There is also value in active and informal learning well into the school age years. Activities with dance, puppets, song, and story telling can be linked to recording, documenting, writing, print and reading for all ages and literacy levels. Another example provided by an educator was the practice of recording reading activities of children and playing them back to children and parents as a way of engaging parents in their children's reading activity. Many of these activities will fit with after-school or holiday programs for children.

LKCs could also over time invest in other computer interactive programs as another way of engaging the young in enjoyable activity that builds a range of awareness and skills that contribute to literacy development.

LKCs also provide toys and puzzles for children, which is a valuable practice in preparing children for literacy and numeracy. Well selected and age/skill appropriate educational toys promote concentration skills, eye-hand coordination, fine-motor skills, visual discrimination, pattern recognition, sequencing, and problem-solving skills. These are valid and valuable LKC activities in communities where family provision of educational toys is not a common practice.





#### *Other parental activities*

In some places, Lap Sit programs have provided a vehicle for other community or maternal education. Local councils in other places have used sessions to promote programs such as water use, recycling, pets, road safety etc.<sup>81</sup> Links with other organisations could identify opportunities for other organisations to disseminate information to mothers with small children. The organisation of visits to LKCs by other organisations where women congregate for meals, nutrition, health or parenting advice could also be an excellent pathway where informal early literacy preparation is seen as one component of child development and preparation for lifelong learning, including formal learning in schools.

Two educators commented on the general lack of signage in communities, and the 'invisibility' of literacy for young children until they reach school. The power of signage, public displays or viewings, and dissemination of information via posters in LKCs and across the community should not be underestimated as a way of raising the visibility of literacy in communities.

#### *Planning structured activities*

It is relatively easy to think of children's activities that will contribute to literacy development. However, it should be remembered that to facilitate a session assumes some specialised knowledge about the acquisition of early literacy skills that is rooted in another knowledge and cultural tradition. The cross-cultural context needs consideration in terms of preparing mothers for activities or adapting activities for communities. Lap Sit sessions have been assessed as effective because they are structured and repetitive and so require fairly continuous attendance. The most effective preparation for local facilitators and participants in this context is full explanation of what this activity is for, how it works, the essentials for success, and what it achieves for children.

It is critical that activities are well planned and rehearsed and always enjoyable. Unsuccessful or poorly developed children's activities could well be counterproductive for both future visitation to LKCs by children and their mothers and for the development of positive attitudes

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<sup>81</sup> For details on 'Storytime Partnerships' with other Council departments, see Fairfield City Council Storytime summary, at Local Government Cultural Awards, <http://www.lgsa.org.au/docs/policy/community/cultural%20awards/2005/Cultural%20Awards%20Shortlist%20Booklet%2005.pdf>

to the world of books and reading. Qualified professionals need to be involved and CLOs or other community facilitators need to be well prepared and supported. Progress, however, should be systematic. If Lap Sit programs commence and are successful then, toddler sessions should unfold in line with growing children. This will need considerable forward planning.

Any age-based activity will possibly require collaboration with other groups where mothers congregate because the restriction of activities on an age basis will require other children to be minded for the duration of a session. All these contingencies need to be considered as cross-cultural matters, if programs are to succeed and become established practice.

### Summary

In sum, literacy development through engagement with LKC services and collections should begin and build on local interest, motivation, needs and purposes for engaging with knowledge and information. To do this, LKC activities that develop and support literacies should be identifiably aligned with the dual functions of the LKC model—local knowledge documentation activity and the provision of access to external sources of information. The identification of the early literacy area as a third site of literacy development should be considered a strategic investment in growing community engagement with LKCs over the long-term, and an important contribution to the development of the beginning literacies required for success in formal schooling.

Where LKCs identify the need to develop specific programs to develop or extend skills, expert and community advice in the relevant areas should always be sought. To support other knowledge, information and literacy activities across the community, NTL will need to position LKCs as a central site for local knowledge and information resources, and an essential part of community infrastructure.

### *Recommendation 11*

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



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### THE FIT WITH BROADER POLICY GOALS

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

The Northern Territory Labor Government has moved towards “a whole-of-government, whole-of-community regional planning approach to develop opportunities for sustainable growth in regions”<sup>82</sup>. The proposal by the Government to amend the Northern Territory Local Government Act to create the Northern Territory Regional Authority and Local Government Act, and its priority to establish regional development plans, regional development boards, and agency coordination committee commits a clear pathway forward for changing both the prioritisation and delivery of government services and programs<sup>83</sup>. A key aspect of this approach is to encourage a more enabling political and policy environment that is inclusive and accountable to the agreed plans.

Real regional development happens when people in an area agree on what is to be done and work together to achieve those outcomes and where the rest of the Territory, represented by the Government, is a partner in working for those results.<sup>84</sup>

Another important aspect of the NT Government’s agenda is partnerships. This complements the Federal Government’s COAG agenda for ‘joined-up’ services, and shared responsibility agreements (SRAs). Where the NT Government’s agenda aims to regionalise the decision-

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<sup>82</sup> Northern Territory Government, Building a better Territory: the economic development strategy for the Northern Territory, 2002, p. 43.

<sup>83</sup> Northern Territory Government Department of Community, Development, Sport and Cultural Affairs, *Building stronger regions - stronger future*, 2003. Online document accessed 20 January 2005 at <http://www.dcdsca.nt.gov.au/dcdsca/intranet.nsf/pages/StrongRegions>

<sup>84</sup> Northern Territory Government’s Building a better Territory: The economic development strategy for the Northern Territory, 2002, p. 1.

making process in development planning, the Partnerships/SRAs agenda aims to achieve, for example, a whole-of-community and whole-of-government approach to identified projects: “community leadership and governance initiatives; ...programs and services... [that] deliver practical measures...; ...forging greater links... [with] the business sector... to help promote economic independence.”<sup>85</sup>

A key aspect of the NT government’s approach is the need for education, knowledge and information to help develop capacities for decision-making and governance in their decentralised process. A team of thirty-five Development Officers and a Capacity Development Fund has been announced to carry out these tasks. A 2004 review of governance training for Indigenous people in the Northern Territory also marks the significance of capacity building in the regional development plans<sup>86</sup>. The rationale here is that the more informed the participants are in the regional planning processes the more focused the development agenda.

The experience gained in implementation of these approaches in international contexts illustrates some of the challenges. International experience of NGO involvement in decentralisation policy in developmental contexts cautions against a tendency to install regional/local government authorities with a more localised “top-down government-dominated approach to development”<sup>87</sup>. Public service agreements (PSAs) in the UK to facilitate ‘joined-up government’ approaches argue the need for ‘target’ and ‘outcomes’ regimes to achieve policy priorities but experience in regards to evolving practice has indicated that government

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<sup>85</sup> Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination, *What are Shared Responsibility Agreements (SRAs)*, Fact Sheet, accessed 26 September, 2005 at [http://www.indigenous.gov.au/sra/kit/what\\_are.pdf](http://www.indigenous.gov.au/sra/kit/what_are.pdf)

<sup>86</sup> Northern Territory Department of Community Development, Sport & Cultural Affairs, *Review of governance training for Indigenous organisations and communities in the Northern Territory-final report* October 2004, viewed 18 March 2005 at

<sup>87</sup> A Fowler, *Striking a balance: a guide to enhancing the effectiveness of non-Governmental organisation in international development*, Earthscan Publications, London, 1997, p. 12.

departments achieve more successful outcomes if they consult more widely and grant more local autonomy with the setting of targets<sup>88</sup>.

Experience elsewhere suggests, that successful implementation of these approaches requires the development of explicit strategies to ensure the reorientation of government programs, bureaucracies and technocratic attitudes to people, capacity building, and a more inclusive community development agenda<sup>89</sup>.

Others<sup>90</sup> suggest that the coordinated approach between agencies works more effectively when all those involved understand the mandates of different agencies involved, that is, what particular agencies do and what expertise they have and how they contribute to overall goals. Some<sup>91</sup> suggest interagency agreements supported by legislation, transition coordinators, and clear guidelines can bring about greater participation of agencies<sup>92</sup>.

In Australia, there are concerns about the lack of detail with the Federal Government's SRAs<sup>93</sup>. Despite this, the value is seen in, for example, the accountability of governments in meeting agreed targets, more local autonomy in the prioritisation of projects, and the closer linking of projects to community development needs.<sup>94</sup> How progress will be measured, what counts as progress, and from whose perspective are, however, matters of ongoing contention.

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<sup>88</sup> O James, 'The UK core executive's use of public service agreements as a tool of governance', *Public Administration*, 2004, vol. 82, no. 2, pp. 397-419.

<sup>89</sup> A Fowler, 1997.

<sup>90</sup> R Webb & G Vulliamy, 'Joining up the solutions: the rhetoric and practice of inter-agency cooperation', *Children & Society*, 2001, vol.15, pp. 315-332.

<sup>91</sup> K Crane, M Gramlich & K Peterson, 'Putting interagency agreements into action', *Issue Brief: Examining Current Challenges in Secondary Education and Transition*, September 2004, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 1-4.

<sup>92</sup> See also J Dixon, 'Case study: service level agreements-a framework for assuring and improving the quality of support services to faculties', *HERDSA*, 2002, pp. 200-206.

<sup>93</sup> Australian for Native Title and Reconciliation, '*mutual obligation*', '*shared responsibility*' and '*mainstreaming*' in *Indigenous affairs*, online fact sheet, viewed 20 June 2005, <http://www.antar.org.au/>

<sup>94</sup> See COAG's agreement on Indigenous affairs at [http://www.nt.gov.au/dcm/indigenous\\_policy/pdf/20050406/OverarchingAgreement.pdf](http://www.nt.gov.au/dcm/indigenous_policy/pdf/20050406/OverarchingAgreement.pdf)



The international experience is salient to the Northern Territory context with respect to the project-based focus of these SRAs. The experience with international developmental projects is that 'project' activities often mistakenly assume a greater role than need be in the development of a whole community or region. Projects are often designed for specific purposes or problems and not necessarily for long-term 'whole of community' development, to turn the phrase around. Bringing balance between urgent and needed outcomes and the development of the capacities of participants in the processes contributes towards long-term structural change, whereas skewing the emphasis to the former without attending to the latter tends to perpetuate the need for 'urgent-outcome projects' to address problems viz., a focus primarily on crisis management. And there is the issue of how to measure short-term outcomes and targets against, for example, long-term measures of community or individual health and well-being.

The *Building Stronger Regions—Stronger Futures* strategy goes some way towards avoiding these pitfalls, by ensuring that people and capacity-building are at the centre of the strategy by providing

a framework, structure and community development processes to enable the ideas and views of people living in each region to be expressed directly to government.<sup>95</sup>

The broad whole-of-government, whole-of-community approach to regional and social economic development, and the use of inclusive community development processes, stand as central pillars of the strategy.<sup>96</sup>

Although regional plans are in the early stages of development, and are at different stages of discussion or development in the three sites visited, there were indicators that for the NTL at least, these concepts were not working in a way that was fundamentally different from any other period of service delivery. That is, provision of community library services (the pre-

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<sup>95</sup> Northern Territory Government Department of Community, Development, Sport and Cultural Affairs, *Building stronger regions - stronger future*, p. 5, 2003, viewed 20 January 2005,

<http://www.dcdsca.nt.gov.au/dcdsca/intranet.nsf/pages/StrongRegions>

<sup>96</sup> Northern Territory Government Department of Community, Development, Sport and Cultural Affairs, *Building stronger regions - stronger future*, p. 6, 2003, viewed 20 January 2005,

<http://www.dcdsca.nt.gov.au/dcdsca/intranet.nsf/pages/StrongRegions>

cursor to LKCs) in the NT, has always required some sort of arrangement between State and local authorities for funding and service delivery and some degree of inter-departmental co-operation.

What was evident, in meetings and discussion with stakeholders was that there was limited currency for LKCs in the bigger regional development plans. This is different from saying that there was limited currency for LKCs in the communities or with individuals in organisations, including the Councils and Regional Development Officers; there most definitely was. But this support for the presence of LKCs did not translate into a clear role for LKCs in the regional plans for community and capacity building or for a clear understanding of the role that LKCs could play to contribute to literacy development in communities beyond providing access to print, multimedia, and Internet sources and materials.

Rather, the LKCs were clearly evidence of a commitment to provide social infrastructure and services but did not appear to be viewed as a key essential service that could be incorporated into regional plans to develop, and over time deliver, more focused or targeted 'bridging' services in the areas of knowledge, information, literacy and basic skills development, that could make a contribution to community building or strengthening capacities in communities. Although there were differences between communities, generally LKCs were a low priority compared to essential services, for example, housing, leaking taps, etc. Their role in the bigger plan was 'incidental' and 'recreational' rather than strategic.

The immediately observable effect of this was that the community crisis in physical infrastructure restricted Councils' ability to satisfactorily provide quality physical space for the activities that the LKCs want to develop and provide. For example, in Wadeye, the space was secure and well organised but too small for current use. In Angurugu the size and organisation of the floor space was adequate but the state of the facility (especially as a workplace) was substandard. In Galiwin'ku, the location of the local database for documenting traditional Indigenous knowledge was both an unsatisfactory environment for ICT equipment and for public access, and the neighbouring building identified to house the library component of services had not been fully settled with Council.

Physical facilities are an important factor in the successful workings of LKCs, particularly as the nature of services provided by the model requires a multipurpose space that can house groups or individuals using the local knowledge databases, Internet and computer-based activities including group activities, the viewing of video/audio and multimedia materials, floor activities for small children—reading, educational play, and other children's activities. Although

the model allows for flexible placement of different components according to community conditions and wishes, in the long-term the development of a community culture of engagement with information services will be facilitated more effectively by as much central co-location of information services as possible. The question to ponder is to what degree has the tendency to fragment and disperse services an outcome or legacy of insufficient physical infrastructure and generally inadequate service provision developed ad hoc under the projects framework and via the chronic under-resourcing of sustainable services in the Indigenous context. In small communities central, neutral, multipurpose venues to support knowledge and information activities should be the long-term aim. This would seem to suggest a larger plan across the Territory to achieve this.

But there were other effects that flowed from the uncertain role of LKCs in the bigger community development plans that had more import. Again, although there were differences between communities, there were common issues. The articulation of the LKCs knowledge and information role to other knowledge and information activities and projects within communities was unclear. This was evident with respect to external and local knowledge and information. The 'natural' alignments between different projects, stakeholders, centres, agencies and institutions within the community were identified but these linkages and partnerships were not developing in a way that would better connect the efforts of those organisations working to similar ends or struggling with similar challenges. In all three sites, this stood out given the push to develop partnerships and joined up services and make best use of resources.

A number of examples could provide content for this, however Wadeye provides a useful example. Firstly, of the three sites visited, Wadeye is the most established and successful LKC so it is possible to get a better measure of issues that could be instructive for future implementation of the LKC model elsewhere. Secondly Thamarrurr Regional Council had the most sophisticated analysis of Indigenous community knowledge and information needs and were actively developing strategies to meet these needs. The success of the LKC and the progressive stance on knowledge and information of the Council presents Wadeye as a best-case scenario. The Thamarrurr Regional Council recognised the knowledge and information gap at the interface of external and local knowledge systems namely, what Indigenous people need to know of external positions and what non-Indigenous outsiders need to know about Indigenous positions before there can be a productive engagement or dialogue between the two sets of understanding. The Council had developed workshops on relevant topics for Council members (e.g. the UN, comparative concepts/systems of collective



ownership/beneficiaries—Clan Estates/Family Trusts, how does dispute resolution work in other contexts etc). It had also established with Federal and private funding a Community Information and Education Centre (CEIC) whose main aim was to facilitate information literacy in areas that people often approached the Council for assistance. The current focus was financial literacy. The CEIC was housed in a different building to the LKC and the Council and had both computer and Internet facilities.

As the CEO stated, 'nobody funds this information gap', and NTL/LKCs may be better placed to make arguments for funding this gap than Councils. At the same time, NTL was not abreast of this development, indicating the issue had not been a topic of discussion between the two organisations. And yet, it is well within the public library mission, which underpins the LKCs, to develop activities that would contribute to 'bridging' the gap. Indeed the LKC was also being used for Internet banking by the community and could be said to be supporting financial literacy. The CEIC was doing basic skills work and mainly one on one activity. The development of these activities separately within a Regional Council that clearly values community engagement with external and local knowledge and information services enough to develop strategies for dealing with it, points to serious weaknesses in the partnership approach. Even under the considerable constraints that both Council and NTL face in skills, funds and physical space for such activity, an effective partnership approach could have provided, opportunities of mentorship by the CEIC officer to broaden the skills of the Community Library officers (CLOs) to undertake this type of activity, the opportunity for NTL staff to be involved and assist in putting together a locally manageable LKC program that fulfils or supplements an identified community need from the Council's perspective, and which could then continue on a regular basis or be adapted for other topics or communities. Instead the very disjuncture that the regional and joined up services approach is designed to address continues perhaps because Councils have to be opportunistic in finding funds and skilled personnel and NTL itself has limited resources.

This example from Wadeye is instructive for all those involved in strengthening regions and communities or delivering services and for future planning and implementation of LKCs precisely because Thamarrurr Regional Council is to be commended for its engagement with knowledge and information issues and is further along than the other sites we visited. Key personnel in other communities had varying positions in relation to the value and/or relevance of both external and local knowledge and information and the need to develop community knowledge and understanding at the interface between them. So for example, in communities where there is a view by individuals in Councils and other government departments/agencies



that members of the community have no real interest in much of the external information that LKCs might provide access to, or where the view is that literacy levels are too low for meaningful engagement with external information, the need for Regional Plans to clearly articulate the role that LKCs can play to develop community engagement with this information and contribute to community building and literacy development in those communities is even more critical. It assists Indigenous people (all those we met with, for example, believed that access to external information and development of English literacy were important components of the LKC) and others who support the LKC role to more clearly argue the case for support. Communities who acknowledge the importance of access to both sets of understanding, would also be assisted by a clearer articulation of what sort of services and activities LKCs could develop in partnership with other providers.

In addition, it is in relation to linkages and partnerships that NTL, needs to be more proactive in assisting communities. Although the LKC model supports the notion that linkages need to be made and worked on the ground and supported by NTL, there is room for NTL to articulate much more clearly at a higher planning level what sort of partnerships would assist community engagement with LKC activities to contribute to community building and literacy skills. It appeared that whilst NTL was identifying possible partners and linkages, the operational detail was left to those interested parties on the ground in communities, all of whom were busy dealing with their own challenges and constraints and with little time for 'partnership' development.

The Wadeye example therefore highlights the challenges that will affect all LKC implementations. These include the lack of physical infrastructure and Councils' need to place housing issues at the top of priorities, which has implications for the location and co-location of different knowledge and information projects. The way that LKCs can assist with the development of community engagement with external and local knowledge and information needs to be more clearly understood. The skill base within communities affects the LKCs ability to develop programs and activities and, in the short to medium term will require partnership with other agencies and their personnel. Along with ICT infrastructure issues, all these challenges could be managed more effectively if NTL/LKCs were involved in policy and planning at higher levels in the governance chain. That is, if there is a partnership or linkage between schools and LKCs, then that should be articulated and facilitated at a higher planning level as well as on the ground and be less dependent on the interests and personalities of individuals on the ground.

In view of the hard work being done in communities in difficult circumstances, it was disappointing to observe that the role that LKCs could play in community building was not more uniformly clear. The engagement with knowledge and information in communities and between local communities and external communities, by individuals of different age and interest groups, is fundamental to increasing Indigenous and community capacity. International experience bears out the fact that public libraries need to be part of the regionalisation process if they are to be effective local sites for facilitating national social and economic policy agendas. It is also clear that as yet, the 'whole of government', regional and inter-agency and partnership approaches that are being developed to more effectively deal with many of the issues are not working and appear to be perpetuating the chronic issues that affect service delivery in these contexts. The sustainability of the types of public library provision that the LKC model offers is dependent on the effectiveness of current policy strategies to build community capacities and yet NTL expertise, in terms of how it can be utilised more effectively at local levels to contribute to these areas, is not part of that agenda at the planning level.

#### *Recommendation 12*

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



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### LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

#### *Recommendation 1*

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

#### *Recommendation 2*

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

#### *Recommendation 3*

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

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

That NTL develops an overall LKC strategy:

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

#### *Recommendation 4*

That NTL establishes a collection development policy for LKCs which emphasises the development of the local knowledge collection, development of the general library collections of print, audio/visual materials, and the development of locally relevant lists of electronic



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resources. The policy should reflect the goal of LKC collections in all these areas to connect local priorities, interests and needs to external sources of information and knowledge of the wider world in order to promote engagement with knowledge and information useful to capacity building and well-being in the community.

#### *Recommendation 5*

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

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

#### *Recommendation 6*

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

#### *Recommendation 7*

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

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

#### *Recommendation 8*

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

#### *Recommendation 9*

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



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#### *Recommendations 10*

That NTL considers the establishment of LKC advisory committees in each community whose membership include Elders from clans, council representative, members of other relevant community organisations and agencies.

That NTL assists advisory committees to develop an archival selection policy to determine additions to *Our Story* databases.

That NTL considers processes to assist Advisory Committees in quests for repatriation of materials from archives and other collecting institutions.

That NTL encourages other stakeholders in community development to consider more effective networking of technology for communities in the long-term in the interest of economic efficiency as well as efficiency of services.

That NTL determines technical training priorities according to the tasks undertaken by CLOs, NTL staff, and Advisory Committees.

That NTL considers a long-term approach to software issues associated with storing and retrieving based on research input, and a consideration of common issues emerging in the national context.

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

#### *Recommendation 11*

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

#### *Recommendation 12*

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



### GLOSSARY

|         |   |
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| AIATSIS | Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies |
| BRACS   | Broadcasting in Remote Aboriginal Communities                         |
| CAEPR   | Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research                        |
| CDEP    | Community Development Employment Project                              |
| CLO     | Community Library Officer   |
| COAG    | Council of Australian Governments                                     |
| GIS     | Geographical Information Systems                                      |
| ICT     | Information and Communication Technology                              |
| ICIP    | Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property                         |
| IK      | Indigenous Knowledge  |
| IP      | Intellectual Property   |
| IT      | Information Technology  |
| LAN     | Local Area Network  |
| LKC     | Library and Knowledge Centre  |
| NGO     | Non Government Organisation   |
| NT      | Northern Territory  |
| NTL     | Northern Territory Library  |
| SRA     | Shared Responsibility Agreement                                       |

