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## **Libraries as Space and Place**

**Beyond co location to convergence: designing and managing new model library spaces and services to reflect trends in convergence and integration**

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### **Abstract**

*Separation, isolation, independence, co-location, cooperation, collaboration, merging, blending, partnerships, integration, convergence.* These key words provide a snapshot of the evolving environment for collecting institutions including public libraries. In response to this new environment, a number of new model library buildings and services have emerged that integrate cultural disciplines through whole of facility space planning and design and where the boundaries between traditional staff structures and activities have blurred. Traditional silos of professional practice are being challenged. Community participation levels have grown and the library's place as a community and cultural hub has been enhanced.

### **Full Text Paper**

This Paper was written in Sydney, Australia – an international city located on the traditional land of the Darug people of the Eora nation. This is somewhat ironic since the Indigenous people of Australia would not understand why, at this pre-conference; we are fixing our gaze on cultural integration or convergence. As the world's oldest surviving culture, the Australian Aborigines adopt a seamless approach to culture as their way of life. For them culture including the arts, creativity and tradition cannot be separated from the environment, from the landscape, the

community, from traditional beliefs and customs, from the experience and role of place and identity and from the respected cultural principles or values that ensure tribal cohesion and connectedness.

Be that as it may, cultural facility planning and management trends have recently included innovative strategies that move beyond collocation and project based partnerships to establish new ways of working with professionals across cultural and arts disciplines particularly in the collecting institutions such as archives, libraries, art galleries and museums. By integrating building planning and space design and by reviewing organisation and staffing structures, the role and place of cultural institutions (including public libraries) in the life of their community's has been enhanced.

This paper seeks to document these trends from a public library perspective, to present a working definition of convergence, to discuss the benefits and costs of convergence and integration and to provide a number of illustrated case studies that document the opportunities as well as the lessons learnt. The paper has been written based mainly on the Australian and New Zealand experience although international trends in the United Kingdom and North America have also been taken into account. The paper also concentrates its focus on cultural facilities at the local government level since public libraries are in the main resourced and supported by local government rather than by State or national/ Federal government. In Australia it is generally at the local government level where the innovative, convergence models are occurring although this is not to say that convergence opportunities aren't possible for community based/ volunteer led facilities or for larger State and national cultural institutions.

The Case studies included here relate to large facilities providing services in regional cities in England, Australia and in New Zealand. In addition one case study presents a small but nevertheless successful integrated public library/ cultural centre model operating in a suburban metro area of Sydney.

This Paper builds on the research commissioned by IFLA's Public Libraries Section Standing Committee and undertaken

in 2004 and 2005 and published by IFLA in 2008. The 2004 project researched and documented trends in collaboration and cooperation between public libraries, archives and museums. The project carried out by Yarrow, Clubb and Draper identified a diversity of collaborative programming related projects as well as joint use facilities where collaboration has been broadly interpreted to include programming partnerships, technology partnerships and/ or physical co locations.

Now 4 years on, our analysis provides an update on the 2005 research particularly in relation to the planning and design of library, museum, gallery and archives building assets and to the evolution of new organizational/ staffing models.

### **What do we mean by convergence?**

I first came across the term 'convergence' when I was working in the media and broadcasting sector in the 1980s and in this context the term 'convergence' was used to describe anticipated future worlds where the technical boundaries between telecommunications and technology would blur and content would be delivered in a seamless stream to global audiences. Nearly 30 years on, that future has well and truly arrived for most people.

But what does convergence mean in 2009 for public libraries and their sister cultural institutions such as museums, art galleries and archives? As a start it's useful to consider what convergence doesn't mean - that is silos of activity, isolation and independence. Convergence in the 21<sup>st</sup> century means more than co-location, cooperation and collaboration where separation continues but opportunities to work together on programs or to share spaces are encouraged or even tolerated. Convergence in this Paper is defined as:

*the realization of the seamless and flexible integration of cultural spaces, organisation structures, services and programs including in public libraries, museums, archives and art galleries, where professional disciplines are respected and enhanced in order to increase community access and participation which fosters education and lifelong*

*learning as well as a sense of identity and community cohesion.*

Convergence could be regarded as one outcome of decades of effort to reposition public libraries in particular as key community cultural resources. This includes the collocation of public libraries with community centres, with other arts and cultural facilities such as art galleries/museums in cultural precincts or their location within suburban shopping malls or in recreation and leisure complexes. This has happened around the world – as just one high profile example, remember the Pompidou Centre in Paris way back in 1977 where the art museum, contemporary music research centre and public library were collocated in one building to enormous critical acclaim and to the obvious delight of the local residents, to the wider City community and to visitors.

Ultimately convergence at its optimum will result in a new model cultural facility which communicates and engages with diverse audiences through innovative and imaginative service delivery and programming designed by multidisciplinary teams of qualified and experienced staff. The facility would provide flexible and adaptable space delivering access to library, museum, art gallery and archival services at the core and supported by other compatible spaces and activities such as meeting rooms, café, workshops, studios, multimedia labs, play spaces etc.

## **21<sup>st</sup> Century Public Library and Cultural Sector Trends**

In the evolution of the public library since the 1970s a number of trends can be identified as having an influence on convergence. These have been presented below and clustered to reflect general planning trends and also to document specific cultural/ arts related trends that impact on library facility planning and management.

### **General trends relevant to library planning**

- Sustainability and the need to plan for environmental, economic, social as well as cultural benefits.

- Cultural tourism precincts/hubs and the clustering of facilities to retain and attract new audiences.
- Building design that is responsive to user needs as well as to operational demands including purpose built new facilities and adaptive reuse of existing buildings.
- Ongoing development of strategies that rebrand/market libraries in the face of perceived challenges to public library role and relevance
- Heightened audience/ customer expectation of the delivery of quality service and memorable experiences
- Commitment to audience, customer and community needs analysis that respects and responds to community feedback and develops strategies to implement
- Recognition of the need to understand and engage with diverse audiences across cultures and generations and to build new audiences through relevant and imaginative programming
- Heightened interest and commitment by governments in fostering social inclusion and equity of access through cultural and arts facilities and programs
- Recognition of the fundamental education role of libraries and cultural facilities and the need to deliver education and lifelong learning programs in new and innovative ways
- The role of technology in breaking down barriers and improving access to information (web sites), in encouraging shared standards in the documentation of collections (digitization and cataloguing) and in increasing opportunities for community engagement and participation (social media/ community curation and story telling).

### **Cultural facility specific trends**

- Innovative and integrated program design and delivery that interprets cultural content in new and imaginative ways
- Rationalisation of cultural resources and services at the local level to achieve economies of scale such as shared foyers, loading docks, integrated events calendars, shared community cultural bus services, cross-area specialists such as City-wide collection coordinators
- Integrated senior management where diverse cultural facilities and programs are united under one management structure to encourage joint operational planning and enhanced opportunities to collaborate.

- Increasing mobility between cultural/arts disciplines including curators working in public libraries as local studies/local history professionals; cultural events producers working across galleries, museums, libraries to enhance program quality ; librarians managing library and museum teams; education specialists coordinating learning programs and teams in libraries, galleries and museums.
- The engagement of specialist arts/cultural contractors to deliver projects and programs to enhance services and which require qualifications and experience not available within the current staffing skills mix
- Growth in lifelong learning where specialist professionals enhance their skills and qualifications in different but complimentary disciplines e.g. librarians pursuing museum studies; social history museum professionals pursuing art history curatorship; local studies librarians moving from oral history to digital storytelling using new media including social media.

### **Analysis**

These trends indicate a sector in transition where the boundaries are blurring across cultural disciplines particularly in the collection sector but also across traditional artforms. The trends also indicate socio-demographic change at a rapid rate with mass movement of people across the globe; the experience of dense urban living and the loss of local identity; the decline of traditional economies and the rise of the service economy including knowledge and creative industries and the competitiveness of cities including regional cities. At the heart of these trends is the continued challenge of inequality across the world and the uncertain impact of the global financial crisis. Being proactive and responding to the challenges requires innovative and lateral thinking, a clear understanding of roles and purpose, a focus on strategy, and a willingness to commit to collaboration, partnership and cooperation.

### **Impacts of convergence – costs and benefits**

Convergence is an emerging strategic issue for public libraries and the jury is still out on whether it presents a sustainable solution for cultural facility planners and

managers at the local government level in particular. In 2009 however there are sufficient examples that have been evolving over some years to establish a basis for discussion and analysis. The authors have analysed available data and information related to these facilities and present a snapshot of impacts including benefits and costs, advantages and disadvantages of convergence as a model for consideration for the library sector including for public libraries.

### **Convergence Costs**

- resistance to change which slows innovative capacity when specialist staff whose professional identity and commitment to traditional sector organisational cultures may be threatened by new ways of management and program delivery
- disbenefit potential in a change for change sake scenario where a traditional service (say a public library or stand alone museum) is operating effectively, is well used, relevant, flexible and adaptable.
- potential impact on diverse collections which traditionally have been managed in different ways and using different standards
- possibility that one sector, say for example art galleries, resist opportunities to 'converge' due to traditional concepts of art and culture as being profoundly different with different roles. This could result in their becoming protective of the status quo, isolated and irrelevant.
- potential for staff reductions due to economies of scale and need to avoid duplication of services
- potential for higher staff turnover due to change culture and limited tolerance for new models
- limited potential to attract staff with relevant qualifications and skills particularly in regional areas
- need for staff (and volunteers) to undertake further training and/or skills development in addition to already established specialist qualifications and experience
- resistance from volunteers who have made a commitment to one 'silo' specialist service and are not engaged in a converged model. and need to invest in their broader training
- widely held perception that convergence dilutes quality service commitment in public libraries, museums, art galleries and archives

- convergence could lead to an erosion of best practice particularly in collection management
- potential to adopt a one size fits all approach to planning and management rather than acknowledging the need to be flexible and to adapt to local circumstances
- possible confusion for the public in differentiating between roles or in developing an understanding of the integrated nature of the converged facility/ service. Public/visitor confusion could lead to reduced use and visitation

### **Benefits of convergence**

- greater opportunities to design innovative cultural programs e.g. connected services and projects that make use of wide range of cultural resources in a range of formats, utilizing diverse staff skills and which deliver to broad audiences
- provides opportunities for innovative facility/ space design that accommodates the blurring of art form and cultural boundaries and takes account of technology delivery of services and programs
- fosters a culture of flexibility, adaptability and the permission to be creative resulting in a dynamic and satisfying workplace
- encourages respect for community needs and interests resulting in services that are relevant and responsive
- encourages heightened awareness and celebration of local culture relevant to multiple audiences and utilizing diverse artforms and ways of seeing and storytelling
- contributes to the democratization of culture and breaks down notions of 'high art'/ 'low art' and cathedrals of culture.
- growth in repeat and loyal audiences as visitors generally take opportunities to consume everything on offer across the facility and to come back as programs are refreshed
- provides an environment where the high visitor levels generally attracted by libraries are leveraged and encouraged to visit more museum/ galleries focused services
- public libraries are also potentially able to grow their traditional audience base by siphoning gallery and museum audiences
- heightened understanding of and commitment to strategic planning as an overarching umbrella that integrates segments/ departments within overall structure
- opportunities to develop integrated marketing for a specific audience rather than generic facility based programming

- integrated programming fosters more points of entry and connection for diverse audiences
- technology driven initiatives build on consumer led interest in cross-artform access and appreciation and provide pilot program opportunities that enhance convergence
- improved career paths for multi skilled, qualified and experienced cultural resource workers
- development of courses that provide technical and theoretical qualifications in cultural resource management and program design and delivery

### **Analysis**

No one wants to devalue the role of our cultural institutions or to 'dumb them down'. This includes any collecting institutions such as museums, libraries and art galleries and archives. Although convergence presents significant complexity for management and staff, once after rigorous analysis of the costs and benefits, it has been agreed that local circumstances warrant and are appropriate for convergence, then opportunities are presented to redefine the role and operation of public libraries and other related services. Redefinition should focus on enhancing and not diluting their relevance to the diverse audiences of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Communities quite rightly expect 'more than books' and at a time when public libraries are starved of funds and face stiff competition from within and without the cultural sector, convergence offers a new model that enhances knowledge, ignites inquiry and stimulates creativity. It also presents opportunities to stretch resources both human and financial in innovative ways.

The following case studies indicate that whilst there are many paths to converged cultural spaces and management there are a number of key success factors that they all share. The development of the models and spaces have been characterised by extensive community consultation and whilst economic factors may have been a catalyst in these models a focus on community and audience access, development and expectations are paramount in the success of the converged cultural spaces. As with the success of any new model the convergence model requires visionary leadership, appropriate management structures,

clear objectives and strategies, implementation of change management techniques and appropriate professional development and recruitment.

## **Case studies**

### **Albury LibraryMuseum, Albury NSW, Australia**

Albury is a small city of approximately 50,000 in regional NSW. In 2007 the Albury LibraryMuseum opened as an integrated cultural community space. The building opened to great community expectation welcoming 7000 visitors on opening day. Since opening the facility is averaging 20,000 visitors a month – a 100% increase in usage compared to the previous Albury Public Library and Albury Museum.

The LibraryMuseum was designed by Architects Ashton Raggatt McDougall, well credentialed in Australia for design of a number of cultural buildings including the Australian National Museum in Canberra. It is fair to say that the building designs created community controversy with many maintaining the building with its striking X façade and orange and green external colours did not fit with Albury's heritage streetscape. The building design and colour elements were in fact inspired by the local environment, with the X façade referencing an iconic railway bridge.

A key driver of the architectural brief for the building was the convergence of spaces – the building was to incorporate the functions of a public library, research and technology centre and social history museum but with limited barriers between the zones in the building to encourage integration of spaces and experiences.

The drivers for this level of convergence is multifold, harking back to 1999 and the development of a strategic plan charting the future of library, museum and gallery spaces and services in AlburyCity. The key outcomes of the strategic plan were the identified need to upgrade and develop new cultural facilities, with Library and Museum being a priority. At that stage a co-located facility was recommended.

The strategic plan also recommended the redevelopment of the cultural precinct concept. Albury has a central square around which many of its cultural facilities are based – Art Gallery, Conservatorium of Music, Performing Arts Centre and the previous public library. It made good sense to suggest that a new Library and Museum be co-located in this central square, reconfirming the cultural precinct concept and to bring life, a sense of pride and identity, heritage, entertainment and education to the heart of the city.

Co-location was supported by Council management for a range of reasons, including financial. Economies of scale was certainly a major consideration – there were not the available funds or funding opportunities to build and operate two quality cultural facilities and therefore one facility with co-located staff, storage, research, café, retail and foyer areas made sense. It was also likely that a co-located facility would attract a wider range of grant funds. Whilst Library and Museum services were managed and largely funded by the local council, NSW State and Australian federal funding were sought for the new facility. The NSW Cultural Accord between the State Department, Arts NSW and the Local Government and Shires Association encouraged greater integration of the operation of local Government cultural facilities, recognising the important cultural collections held by local government and of making these resources more accessible to the community and this was supported by funding opportunities.

During the planning stage for the Library and Museum AlburyCity staff began researching co-location and integrated cultural services and became aware of the concept of convergence. Puke Ariki in New Zealand was possibly the only active example of a public authority culturally converged facility, but other models served as inspiration. This included institutions that may not have seen themselves as converged facilities, but showed many of the characteristics. Such as State and National Libraries which manage and provide access to and interpretation of wide ranging collections of documents, monographs, photographs and objects through traditional research libraries, exhibitions and educational programs. Research and Discovery Centres in museums also served as convergence models with their role

of providing one-stop information on collections and research questions, utilising technology, artefacts and primary and secondary research sources.

Research and the potential management needs guided AlburyCity to develop a fully converged cultural services management structure that operates across the LibraryMuseum and also across Art Gallery and Cultural Development Services. Cultural facilities do not have managers but team leaders who manage functions across the venues. Cultural Services is headed up by a Group Leader with three team leaders responsible for:

- Programs (exhibitions, learning and public programs, cultural development and customer service)
- Collections and Assets (collection management and access, building management and information management)
- Performing Arts and Business Development.

It was clearly felt that there were enormous benefits in developing such a structure to underpin the management of the soon to be opened LibraryMuseum. There has been recognition that additional training and education for some existing staff was required to fit the demands of newly converged positions. Three Library staff have or are undertaking Museums studies courses, and an educationalist was recruited to manage the Learning and Outreach team.

So 2 years from opening does the converged structure enhance the services and space that is the Albury LibraryMuseum? As mentioned earlier the architects have developed a significant building in a central cultural square in Albury. The internal spaces are as striking as the external design and they have kept well to their brief of designing a welcoming space without boundaries that lives up to its marketing as the “living room of the city”.

Holistic collection management was probably the start of Albury City’s convergence journey. Museum and Library local studies collections were viewed as highly synergistic,

with documents held in one collection supporting and providing useful research information on objects in another collection. These collections are now managed by one team and although at this stage on separate databases, a search engine has been developed to provide access across both databases providing seamless collection and information access. Technology has provided a convergence bridge where services to users are enhanced.

The Infozone area at the LibraryMuseum was conceived as the hub of the buildings physical convergence. Infozone is the social history research, technology and information zone in the facility and seen as a key area of convergence between the skills of library and museum trained staff. Curatorial and information services staff are rostered to provide research, information and technology assistance. As well as local studies monographs, museum objects will be integrated into the zone. Short films on local history topics have been developed with a viewing area in the space as well as a heritage photographic kiosk.

There are core exhibition areas within the LibraryMuseum but exhibitions can be located in many areas of the facility where relevant – the foyer, the library zone, Infozone – adding interest, a range of experiences and audience cross over. Certainly the professionalism of museum exhibitions has impacted favourably on displays and exhibitions in the more traditional library zones of the building. Conversely the social nature of the library zones has impacted on the formal exhibition zones, with sitting, browsing and activity areas being integrated into these spaces. A range of touring and in-house exhibitions are scheduled and can relate to programs such as the Write around the Murray Literary festival.

Programs are developed and branded as AlburyCity LibraryMuseum programs. This assists with targeted marketing of programming – for example school holiday and other children's programs are aimed at a family market. At times themed programs can occur across the LibraryMuseum and all AlburyCity Cultural facilities, such as the literary festival noted above or a celebration of Youth Week or Children's Week. Alternatively an exhibition such as

Great Collections (treasures of NSW galleries, museums and libraries) can provide the theme to build programs around.

Both libraries and museums are educative and interpretive organisations and this recognition has fed the development of the educational marketing of the LibraryMuseum. Educational resources have been developed related to the facilities exhibitions and programs and educational e-bulletins and packaging of a range of a curriculum based activities are targeted at regional preschool, primary and secondary teachers.

The overwhelming catalyst for the development of a fully converged facility was the potential for audience development. If a new way of operating could enhance services, attract new audiences and acknowledge the common goals and functionality of cultural facilities then it was worth pursuing. An examination of new users indicates this has certainly been the case with the facility attracting and retaining a much wider demographic, with young people being a key user group.

The facility is a success as a community hub – it is a friendly welcoming facility with a range of services and programs that attract and retain community visitors, as well as tourists. In the facility you can borrow a book, research your family history, gain an understanding of the history of Albury and the region by viewing the Crossing Place: Story of Albury exhibition, view a touring exhibition – whether it be contemporary media art, a touring exhibition or a community based exhibition, listen to music, surf the net, attend a meeting in the community meeting rooms, or simply sit and read the papers.

The converged nature and management of this space has assisted in its success, but it would be fair to that despite the research AlburyCity staff were operating without a detailed blueprint and was at times – making it up as we went along.... The space and structure are evolving.

**Hampshire Discovery Centres, United Kingdom**

Hampshire County Council in the United Kingdom has commenced an ambitious revitalisation of its Library services and buildings with the Discovery Centre concept. Two Discovery Centres have opened with more planned to come on line. Discovery Centres aim to bring a range of cultural, community and heritage functions together under one Discovery Centre brand and management structure

Gosport Discovery Centre opened in 2005 and incorporates 3 venues in close proximity under one management structure. At the centre of all the Discovery Centres is the public library – Gosport also incorporates a Museum on the mezzanine as well as collection and exhibition areas integrated throughout the main building, a conference centre, café, learning centre and technology areas. Separate venues incorporate a Touring exhibition gallery space and a Local Studies and Geology Gallery.

The Discovery Centre concept was developed through extensive community consultation and as a response to libraries losing users, book borrowing declining and user groups getting older. It has at its heart the concepts of access, inclusion and participation. To deliver on this philosophy and ensure the centre is relevant to a wider audience it was determined that the library concept and space needed to be transformed. Hampshire's means of achieving this is developing a space where a wider range of services and opportunities can be delivered.

Chris Edwards, Hampshire's Discovery Centres and Capital Programme Manager, explains – "Our Discovery Centre Program is.....designed to create new, inspirational and community focused buildings. Discovery Centres will be transformational with regard to service delivery and aim to shift the public perception in the use of public buildings. Services will include libraries, museums, community spaces, exhibition areas, Youth services and business partners. The exact composition of each Discovery Centre will be tailored to the local demographics."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Harper, P Library design has arrived, 2006 Cilip update magazine

Gosport is one of the lower socio-economic areas in Hampshire. The library was losing relevance with its community, particularly young people. Consultation indicated that whilst a traditional library service characterised by books and reading should be the core of the Discovery Centre, to attract non-users a broader range of services needed to be offered. A partnership was undertaken with Gosport City Council to provide a semi permanent Museum exhibition space to display collection items and tell the Gosport story in an interactive manner. The storytelling boat in the Children's section of the Library incorporates local stories and objects in a fun environment.

Three years on from opening the Discovery Centre is a welcoming, family friendly environment, well patronised by younger people. The centre seems to have achieved its aim of being accessible, modern and family friendly. In its first year of operation visitors' increased by 49%, with the age profile of visitors more closely matching the community profile. There has been a significant rise in the proportion of 15 – 24 year old using the facility and whilst many utilise the free technology it is also very much a meeting and social space.

Winchester Discovery Centre opened in November 2007, incorporating the following services: Library, Reference centre, Technology areas, learning suites, conference & meeting rooms, a touring exhibition space allowing significant touring or curated exhibitions, a community gallery space (in partnership with Winchester City Council), Express check out, Café and retail area.

Winchester is very different demographically and economically to Gosport, being a prosperous Cathedral city attracting many tourists. Architects gutted and extended the old library building – opening it up and developing a welcoming, comfortable, bright space that again attracts and is highly accessible to a wide ranging demographic. Young people are using the centre to meet, drink coffee, use computers, research and borrow books.

Further Discovery Centres will be coming on line. They are spaces that provide a range of cultural, recreational and

learning experiences, mediated by customer service staff who can work across all partner services. Centres are managed holistically as is programming and marketing.

The Discovery Centres concept has created national interest in the UK and some controversy and discussion on the evolutionary role of public libraries. Yinnon Ezra, Director of Recreation and Heritage, Hampshire County Council responds to those who think the rebranding of libraries as Discover Centres as “silly” and a move away from books and reading “ He admitted the strategy was risky in some areas, but that the Council had to find ways to engage new users. Doing nothing was not an option, as this would result in libraries being marooned. ”<sup>2</sup>

### **Puke Ariki, New Plymouth, New Zealand**

Puke Ariki has an international reputation for leading the way in the convergence of library, information and museums services. It incorporates a public library, museum, touring exhibition space, heritage research centre, Tourist information, shop, café and wine bar. It opened in June 2003 following a consultative and development phase of 10 years to merge two co-located facilities into one.

The stated role of Puke Ariki – where library, museum and information centre merge – is to tell stories and facilitate discovery, learning and study about the region of Taranaki, its people and role in NZ. The facility has been labelled a knowledge centre to reposition it in the minds of visitors.

Puke Ariki is located in New Plymouth in the Taranaki region of New Zealand’s North Island, serving a regional population of approximately 100,000. The facility, managed by New Plymouth District Council, cost around \$22 million NZ to build. One of the goals of Council was to generate a percentage of entrepreneurial funding through its facilities and public private partnerships continue to be a key element in the success of Puke Ariki. The facility is marketed to the regional community, but is also as a major tourist destination.

<sup>2</sup> Garrod, P Public Libraries: the changing face of public libraries, 2004 , Ariadne Issue 39

Visitation certainly reflects this welcoming approximately 2000 visitors per day, with 900,000 visitors in the first full year of operation. This facility and the equally world renowned Govett Brewster Art Gallery have led an economic regeneration of the New Plymouth waterfront. Puke Ariki's café and wine bar is a destination in itself. Puke Ariki has the reputation, business drive and appropriate facilities to attract international exhibitions, such as 'A T Rex named Sue', further enhancing its reputation and service delivery opportunities.

The management structure has evolved with a number of iterations in the 6 years since opening. There is an integrated and cohesive management structure, with Bill MacNaught as Centre Manager and key skill areas under this including Service Delivery (including library service delivery), Heritage and Collection services (Research, Curatorial services), Business Development and Exhibitions. There was initially some concern regarding the dumbing down of the separate library and museum professions, as has occurred at all the converged facilities studied. The high staffing levels at Puke Ariki (approximately 70 full time equivalent staff) have allowed specialised staff to be retained and changes in staffing structures have addressed some of these concerns.

The facility is clearly a convergence success – how is this achieved? The Taranaki Research Centre brings together the archives and artefacts of the Taranaki Region in one research venue, providing a one stop local and genealogical research venue allowing integrated access to traditional library and museum collection items. There is an integration of relevant collection artefacts throughout the Library areas adding interest and colour to the library shelves. The Children's area is a real convergence success combining children's library resources, comfortable reading areas with an interactive children's museum. It is very much a family destination in itself.

The extensive semi-permanent Taranaki stories exhibition is extended by Infopods (computers) in the exhibition that provide further information and links to additional resources housed in the Taranaki Research Centre.

As with the other converged facility case studies the marketing and programming is developed and managed cohesively. A wide range of programs are scheduled to cater for a wide community demographic including homework club, artist led talks, varied touring exhibition schedule, children's book festival and school holiday activities.

The website is an excellent introduction to the facility as well as an on-line extension of the Puke Ariki space. The website encourages participation in and the sharing of Taranaki stories and culture as does the physical Puke Ariki space.

### **Library and Cultural Centre, Kogarah, Sydney, Australia**

In 2005, Kogarah Council in metropolitan Sydney commissioned a Review of its Library Services. Kogarah is a relatively small local government area serving a population of 55,861 residents. The community is diverse including people from Greek and Italian cultural backgrounds and a growing number of Chinese born Australians. The area is recognised for its commitment to education and learning with an above average number of schools and technical colleges, and for its role as a health services hub with two hospitals and associated support services.

The Review occurred just at the time when the Council was developing a new central Library in its town centre and the opportunity arose to integrate the Council's emerging interest in cultural/ arts development with its planning and provision of public library services.

The recommendations of the Review Study were embraced by Council.<sup>3</sup> They provided an opportunity to develop a Library and cultural centre in the Town Square and to reorganise the library's staffing structure to better reflect its core roles. Under the expanded structure, the Library Services manager became the Manager, Library and Cultural Services and three specialist staff teams were established to reflect the Service's core strategic roles.

<sup>3</sup> Review of Library Staffing, 2005. Neutral Bay: Australia Street Company for Kogarah Council.

These are:

- Collection Management and IT
- Central and Branch Services
- Community and Cultural Services

Over the past 4 years the Service has evolved into a dynamic customer driven service that is ambitious in its planning and service delivery and which reflects its role as an integrated community cultural hub. The 'overarching areas of focus of the Service are service, access, collection, connection and staff' and management takes an integrated approach to service and program planning and delivery<sup>4</sup>. Cross functional teams plan and deliver services across the community including to target audiences such as young people, to multicultural families with young children, to the arts community and to the heritage sector. Since 2005, the Service has met and exceeded its performance targets and this is largely due to the commitment, imagination, flexibility and professional standards which underpin all planning and service delivery across the Kogarah Library and Cultural Services. The Service also has the support and confidence of the Council and executive management. In April 2009 the Centre was awarded a NSW Local Government Cultural Award for Connecting Community and Culture – Libraries in Action.

### Performance snapshot

DATA CATEGORY	2004-5	2007-8
Annual loans	295,223	401,434
Annual visits	206,808	388,445
Programs and events attendance	4404	10,172
Exhibition and displays	Nil	39
Staff numbers –	9 (includes	11 (includes

<sup>4</sup> Library Report 2007-2008. Kogarah: Library and Cultural Services for Kogarah Council.

DATA CATEGORY	2004-5	2007-8
qualified staff	librarians/ library technicians only).	librarians/ technicians, curators, teachers)
Opening hours pw	126	137
Annual budget	A\$1,074,106	A\$2,740,310
Space/ floor area	672 m sq	1700 m sq

### Conclusion

The notion of convergence is controversial and promotes passion in the library sector but also amongst other professions including those working in museums, galleries and archives. It also attracts criticism as well as praise from researchers and scholarly users of cultural facilities where the critics perceive integration and the converging of services, programs and staff resources as being disrespectful of human inquiry and the search for meaning and knowledge and the traditional value placed on the organisation of information and services based on specialist skills and disciplines.

Convergence is not appropriate for all places and is just one model to consider when seeking to establish new, improved and effective models of delivery in the cultural sector. Any consideration of converged facilities, services, programs and resources needs to be underpinned by objective analysis and evaluation and a balancing of the benefits and costs to reflect community/ audience benefits as well the usual financial considerations. Spotlighting the treasures in a converged facility is welcome 'when it ignites enquiries into a library's holdings' as was recently stated by a respected Australian scholar<sup>5</sup>. Encouraging the interflow between wonder and research and the search for knowledge has provided a foundation for public library planning since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Converged facilities must continue to keep these core roles

<sup>5</sup> McQueen, Humphrey, "An Implosion of knowledge" in *Meanjin Quarterly* 1, 2009. pp. 56-61.

and principles at the forefront when exploring new library models for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Ultimately converged facilities must have community building, equity of access and democratisation of culture at the heart and create participatory and engaging environments that provide a range of mediated cultural experiences. The successful converged facility is a community hub.

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