



APLA meeting, 26 February 2026

The online meeting included representatives from ACT, NSW, NT, QLD, TAS, VIC & WA

Key Messages from meeting and State/Territory/Association reports

ALIA

- The ALIA/DoHDA (Department of Health, Disability and Ageing) Aged Care Reforms Hub project is complete.
- All 750 ALIA/Office of Social Inclusion DoHA (Department of Home Affairs) Community Cohesion programs have been approved by ALIA. 330 programs have been delivered by participating libraries with the remaining 420 to be delivered in March/April.
- NSS merchandise is selling well ahead of National Simultaneous Storytime on 27 May 2026. The NSS 2026 book, *Luna Roo the Kangaroo Baller*, will be featured at Dymocks Sydney in March to align with the Women's Asian Cup Australia 2026. The authors will appear on a children's author panel at ALIA National 2026 and be available for book signings.
- ALIA has received 7 applications for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LIS workers to attend the ALIA National Conference. These applications are currently being assessed.
- Australia Awards are supporting 25 library staff from Papua New Guinea to attend the ALIA National Conference and preconference workshops.
- ALIA has provided a submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport inquiry supporting calls to increase Federal Assistance Grants to local councils and for Federal government departments to partner with public libraries to deliver national priorities.
- An ALIA/ALACC submission to the Attorney General's Department calls for ALIA and Australian Libraries and Archives Copyright Coalition (ALACC) to retain their places on the Steering Committee of the Copyright and AI Reference Group (CAIRG).
- ALIA/Press Reader/AMLA collaborated on a media literacy and public libraries survey with findings to be presented at the ALIA National Conference.
- Australian Media Literacy Alliance (AMLA) was successful in its application to be a registered charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNA) and is currently preparing a tender to design and develop the National Media Literacy Strategy in partnership with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts.

- The ABC is launching a new three-part tv series on misinformation hosted by Hamish McDonald. The program *The Facts of the Matter* is scheduled for late March. The ABC approached ALIA to identify and recruit 20 public libraries to assist in delivering a 90-minute media literacy workshop in 20 public libraries.
- The 6 libraries selected to host a Prime Minister's Literary Awards (PMLA) winning author have been put to Creative Australia who are currently finalising arrangements with the authors.
- The *Promoting Low Income Parents' Digital Media Literacies* project has been launched. Queensland University of Technology is leading the project in partnership with other universities, ALIA and several not for profit organisations.
- ALIA has been approached by media to talk about Freedom to Read book banning issues in response to the draft legislation before the NSW parliament which set out that local libraries across NSW may freely collect library material.

ACT

- Libraries ACT organisational changes are being bedded down following the recent restructure.
- Libraries ACT continues to work as part of the *Village for Every Child*, social impact collective, which aims to improve school readiness in young children.
- A Psychological First Aid training course being delivered to library staff has been well received.
- Recent Libraries ACT activities and events include the:
 - National Multicultural Festival which highlights libraries as welcoming hubs of diversity and lifelong learning.
 - Community Corner featuring services such as Employment Pathways (OWN NSW) career support for older women, MAS National apprenticeships and employment opportunities support service, and COTA ACT help with housing, forms and more.
 - ALIA/DoHA Community Cohesion sessions
 - School holiday programs

NSW

- The school holiday period was very busy, with holiday activities and extreme weather events increasing visitor numbers.
- Local newspapers and TV stations are being proactive in their coverage of library programs, services, and events in many regional areas.
- Library staff "lunch box" professional development sessions on topics including grant writing, media literacy, and leadership are proving very popular, with 50-60 people attending each session. Staff training in conflict management is a priority area.
- The 2025 SWITCH conference was very successful. SWITCH 2026 will be in Bathurst on 10–13 November.
- Recent NSW library programs and initiatives include:
 - *Open Doors, Open Books, Open Minds* events

- Partnerships with local Genealogy Association and Questacon
- Launch of Japanese collection
- Introduction of 24/7 library services
- Trialling of story time for adults with a disability – co-designed with disability organisations

NT

- During CDU Orientation Week, LANT staff will be engaging with students and staff to promote NT libraries as a valuable free resource.
- LANT has a new Strategic Plan 2026-31 and work is currently underway to align associated business and action plans and policies.
- Library staff have been attending Sensory Awareness in libraries training to learn about making spaces more inclusive.
- LANT hosted a whole day event to celebrate the Chinese Lunar New Year in partnership with the Confucius Institute.

QLD

- QPLA's Constitution was successfully amended following its submission to the QPLA 2025 AGM. QPLA Regional Representative terms will now extend to two years. QPLA Board elections for FY26/27 will commence in March 2026 with Treasurer, President-Elect and Regional Rep roles open for nomination.
- QPLA LEaD Conference 2026 will be in Brisbane on 14-16 October 2026.
- QPLA undertook an EOI process for a sponsored opportunity for a Queensland public library staff member to participate in the ALIA 2026 Respect and Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Knowledge Cultures and Country Course. Natasha Morris, Somerset Regional Council was the successful applicant.
- QPLA Professional Development Series 2026 has been announced. QLD public library staff are invited to participate in four upcoming sessions during February and March with Insight Exchange.

SA

- LGA SA is currently negotiating with the Libraries Board regarding the next funding agreement, with the existing agreement in place until mid-2026. With the State election scheduled for 21 March, the LGA has identified public library funding as a key advocacy priority. Their position is to seek increased investment in public libraries, including the restoration of annual indexation to ensure funding keeps pace with rising costs, expanding services, and growing community demand. The *How Good are Libraries* campaign will continue through to the election, with the next phase of the *campaign Too Good to Lose*.
- Library Lovers Day sparked a wave of creative and engaging promotions across the state, with libraries hosting lively events, “date with a book” activities, book chats, and a strong presence across social media. The energy and enthusiasm generated online showcased not only the success of the day itself, but also the ongoing impact of libraries in building community connection and raising awareness of the essential services they provide.

- Heatwaves in January and February highlighted the vital role of libraries in supporting community wellbeing. SA libraries received positive media attention as safe, welcoming, and free spaces where people could escape extreme temperatures.

TAS

- The Public Libraries Census, which ran on 12 February 2026, collected information about library users (both members and non-members), reasons for visiting and the value of services. Information will be used to better understand communities, improve services, and inform to strategic evaluation and planning.
- A full upgrade of the LMS, migrating the current Library Management System (LMS) to a Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) solution, will be undertaken in May 2026. The State-wide system serves public libraries, TAFE and school libraries.
- As part of the Tasmanian State Government's *Lifting Literacy* initiative, public libraries have been working on adapting teaching resources and developing four core library specific modules to support staff in early years program delivery. Staff training will take place later in the year.
- The *Big Summer Read (BSR)* ran from 1 December 2025 to 31 January 2026 with 791 participants. 12,110 books were read in 2025-2026 compared to 6,213 in 2024-2025.
- A new Spanish language collection has been launched. The resources cover a range of genres and age groups and are designed to meet the needs of both children and adults. Additional community language collections will be launched in 2026 in Chinese, Punjabi and Nepali.

VIC

- PLV is working with Raising Literacy Australia to roll out the *Words Grow Minds* program in public libraries. This process includes updating the Early Years Handbook for public libraries. Library staff will have access to free online learning modules and webinars.
- PLV is working with State Library Victoria (SLV) to design and deliver a Senior Leadership Program for library managers. This will be the second program in the *Future State: Empowering Library Leaders* suite. The program runs between March and September and features a combination of in-person and online training.
- The Minister for Local Government, Hon Nick Staikos, has arranged an event at the Parliamentary Library on 17 March to showcase libraries. Public Libraries Ambassador, Andrea Rowe, will conduct a story time session for primary school children and PLV CEO Angela Savage will provide a presentation on public libraries. Library managers are invited to attend to speak with MPs about their services and the challenges they face in meeting community demand.
- For the fourth consecutive year PLV in partnership with CAVAL will roll out the *Love Your Library in Your Language* campaign in March. The campaign invites library users to write a message of love for their library in their preferred language. This year, in addition to the campaign postcards in English, digital postcards will be available to libraries in eight community languages.
- PLV is preparing a research report *Making a Nation of Readers: Strengthening reading culture through library book clubs*. The report forms the basis for a paper that will be delivered at ALIA National Conference.
- Recent VIC library programs and initiatives include:

- The annual Brimbank Writers & Readers Festival is now in its 21st year. The six day program, running from 12–17 March, will feature free interactive workshops, author talks, panel discussions, storytelling and more.
- The redeveloped Rosanna Library opened in February. The new multi-level library offers a wide range of facilities for all ages, including a light-filled children's area, study and quiet rooms, community meeting spaces, and Yarra Plenty Regional Library's first podcasting and music recording studios.

WA

- A new ILLS system will be implemented across in March. *Rapido* is currently in testing phase with a go-live date of 16 March.
- PLWA Executive are developing a bursary program, offering funds to assist one person per year to attend and present at a relevant conference.
- The 2026 PLWA/SLWA Kay Poustie Award is open for applications. The Award provides \$8,000 for an individual or team to research and report on a topic related to the current library strategy.
- A position statement *We Stand with Creators* has been developed by PLWA to advocate for payment to creators of content where it has been harvested by AI. This has been posted to social media and will be sent to other organisations of interest soon.
- PLWA are currently working with CAVAL to develop and present *Spark 2026* which will be a 2 day vendor presentation and mini conference in August.