

Within three months, Minister Collins announced an additional \$3 million dollars for public libraries. This was an extraordinary achievement and represented the first funding increase for many years.

The increase in funding served as the catalyst for a renaissance in the provision of public library services in country NSW that has continued, with Councils taking a new pride in their library services. Many new purpose-built libraries have been constructed, the quality and range of collections has improved remarkably with many new formats introduced, and it has seen the widespread adoption of new technologies, including free access to the internet.

### Association milestones

Some of the key milestones in the 20 year history of the Association follow.

- The formation of zones across the state, with regular meetings of library staff has created a vibrant network to share and develop ideas for new and improved library services.
- The annual conference has been held every year since 1989, and is a key forum for the Association. Major issues confronting the members are discussed and resolved upon, and future directions set for the year ahead.
- Participation in the **Library Funding Review Committee** in the early 1990s led to a more equitable distribution of funding for country libraries.
- The establishment of **NSW.net services** was made possible through the strong country library networks of the CPLA, and led to the State Government providing recurrent annual funding for the service.
- The establishment of the **Colin Mills Scholarship** provides encouragement and incentive for professional development.
- The establishment of the **Marketing Awards** provide strong encouragement for libraries to develop their marketing and promotions skills and initiatives.
- The agreement with **Libraries Australia** provides strongly discounted access for country libraries to their services.
- The close co-operation with the **Metropolitan Libraries Association** has seen success with lobbying efforts .
- The change of name to **Public Libraries NSW-Country** and the recent establishment of a part-time Executive Officer position have moved toward dealing with the increased complexities of running the organisation, and greater member expectations.

### Lobbying campaigns

Lobbying and advocacy have been a core role for the Association in the past 20 years. In 2001, the CPLA joined forces with the Metropolitan Public Libraries Association and the Local Government and Shires Associations to strongly lobby the State Government. Representatives of these organisations met with the Premier Bob Carr, and the result was a strong increase in funding from \$19.9 million in 2001/02 to \$24.8 Million by 2005/06.

In November 2007, the Association organised the **Public Libraries Day of Action** to protest cuts to library funding in 2006/07 and 2007/08. Country libraries held a protest rally outside of Parliament House in Sydney, and libraries across the state organised a variety of protest activities.

In 2009 the State Government announced an additional \$9m in funding for country libraries, \$1 million in 2008/09, and increasing to an additional \$2 million from 2009/10.

### Conclusion

In June 2009 , country library delegates gathered once again in Parkes to celebrate 20 years of a remarkable organisation, and launched a special book on the history of the Association. But the task doesn't end there, and the Association is still hard at work charting the way forward to meet the challenges for the next 20 years.

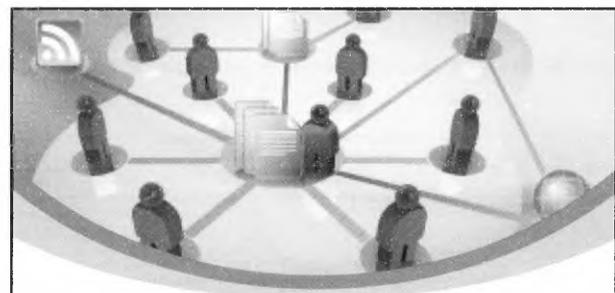
(Copies of the History book for the NSW Country Libraries Association can be obtained by emailing [peter.conlon@qcc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:peter.conlon@qcc.nsw.gov.au) )

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## Is this the smallest operating public library in Australia?

Quambone is a small rural community about 60km to the west of Coonamble NSW and is part of the Coonamble Shire Council. The Quambone Village Library has been referred to as one of the smallest operating public libraries in NSW and Australia. It measures 3m by 3m. It has been established for about 30 years and is open for one hour, twice a week. The book stock of about 450 items includes adult fiction and non-fiction, junior fiction and picture books. It serves 90 people and does about 150 loans a year.

Please help the Coonamble tourism people to verify the accuracy of this claim. If it's true, then they want to use it for promotion to attract people to the village. Can you help? Please email [incite@alia.org.au](mailto:incite@alia.org.au) if you know of a smaller operating public library in Australia.



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