




Annual Report 2023-24





Members of National and State Libraries Australasia (NSLA) Inc. acknowledge the Traditional Custodians and Kaitiaki of the lands on which our libraries do their daily work, preserving and sharing our collective cultural heritage.



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Introduction

FROM THE CHAIRS OF NSLA, VICKI McDONALD (2023) AND SUE McKERRACHER (2024)

It was a privilege to conclude my term as NSLA Chair at a time coinciding with NSLA's 50th anniversary of leadership and collaboration between the national, state and territory libraries of Australia and New Zealand. The Board celebrated this anniversary by hosting representatives of our library councils at a dinner in the Mortlock Chamber, State Library of South Australia, on 22 November. A keynote address on children's art and citizenship by Dr Barbara Piscitelli AM was a highlight of the evening.

Key successes in the second half of 2023 include the official launch of the *Guidelines for First Nations Collection Description*, which were launched with a webinar and presentation by *Guidelines* author Tui Raven, and the completion of ICIP policy templates and guidelines. This work underscores the commitment and responsibility we each hold, as leaders of institutions, to strengthen respectful and responsive relationships between libraries, First Nations library professionals and tangata whenua.

Coinciding with our 50th anniversary, 2023 also saw the fulfilment of an ambitious communications program that concluded with online conversations series and webinar series, which attracted close to 2,500 registrants and brought together national and international library professionals and leaders to share expertise.

I acknowledge with thanks the strong support of colleagues and NSLA staff during my two year term.

- Vicki McDonald AM FALIA (Chair, to end December 2023)

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Introduction

FROM THE CHAIRS OF NSLA, VICKI McDONALD (2023) AND SUE MCKERRACHER (2024)

In January 2024, the immediate concern was to recruit a replacement for our outgoing Executive Director Dr Barbara Lemon, who had served the organisation so well for more than five years. We had a strong field, with Simon Polson emerging as the candidate best placed to take NSLA forward into its 51st year.

Simon joined us at the end of February and was in place for the NSLA meeting in March, which took place in Launceston, Tasmania. It was rare for NSLA to meet outside the capital cities and Board members agreed it was something to consider occasionally in the future, as it provided the opportunity to connect with libraries in regional areas.

Key foci for discussion in 2023-2024 were the linked subjects of democracy, freedom of expression and freedom to read, in the light of further book banning attempts in Australia. NSLA put out a statement on the freedom to read in May 2024 and NSLA members are likely to return to this topic many times in the coming months and years, as it goes to the heart of our library ethics and values.

I would like to thank NSLA colleagues – Board members and the team – for their support during my six months as Chair, and for their continued work in making NSLA a strong and sustainable organisation to pass on to Rachel Esson for 2024-2026. We greatly value the trans-Tasman collaboration within NSLA and look forward to New Zealand occupying the Chair for the next two years.

- Sue McKerracher (Chair, January-July 2024)

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Left and above: the NSLA Board's meeting in March 2024 in Launceston coincided with Tasmania Reads week.



Introduction

FROM THE CHAIRS OF NSLA, VICKI McDONALD (2023) AND SUE McKERRACHER (2024)

2023-2024 Highlights

- Launch of the *Guidelines for First Nations Collection Description*, November 2023.
- Conclusion (October 2023) of a six-part conversation series on emerging archival topics, with directors and senior staff from all ten NSLA member libraries attending.
- Completion of ICIP policy templates and guidelines, November 2023.
- NSLA 50th Anniversary Celebration Dinner, Mortlock Library, State Library of South Australia (November 2023) with the launch of the ‘What’s special about NSLA libraries?’ animation.
- Conclusion (November 2023) of the 2023 NSLA webinar series, comprising four webinars, which attracted a total of 2,490 registrations and featured 18 speakers, including interviews with prominent participants (Director-General, National Library of Australia; University Librarian and Director of Library Services, Cambridge University; National Librarian and Chief Executive, National Library of Scotland).
- Networking Booth and presentations about the NSLA collaboration, and NED and legal deposit, at ALIA National 2024 in Adelaide, May 2024.
- Launch of the Official RDA – Project Scope project, and the recruitment of Melissa Parent (seconded from SLV) to lead the scoping of Original and Official RDA in the Australian library sector, June-September 2024.

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Left and below: The NSLA/SLC Boards in 1973 and 2023, depicted in the 'What's Special about NSLA Libraries' video animation, produced by Greta Robinstone, November 2023.





Financial reports

SUMMARY

Hardwickses of Deakin (ACT) were again appointed to perform an audit of NSLA's accounts and financial position as at 30 June 2024. Financial oversight of NSLA's finances continues to be the responsibility of the Executive Director(s), who provided financial updates and forward budget estimates to each meeting of the NSLA Board. The Executive Director is supported by the ALIA Financial Officer and Chief Operating Officer.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT: KEY POINTS

- The final surplus for 2023-2024 was \$125,626.
- This surplus includes funds carried forward from previous NSLA and NED operating budgets (in July 2024 the Board resolved to separate the NSLA and NED funds and transfer a portion of this carry over to both accounts, as well as to the NSLA Reserve Fund (Business Saver)).
- The greatest expenses in 2023-2024 were again the salaries of the NSLA Office, followed by the fees and associated costs of NSLA's consortium memberships and subscriptions to national and international bodies across the sector.
- The financial statement and forward budget for 2023-2024 were presented to the NSLA Board at its AGM (July 2024).
- **The balance as at 30 June 2024 was \$535,118.** This total includes the operating surplus from 2023-2024 and the balance of NSLA's Reserve Fund (Business Saver).

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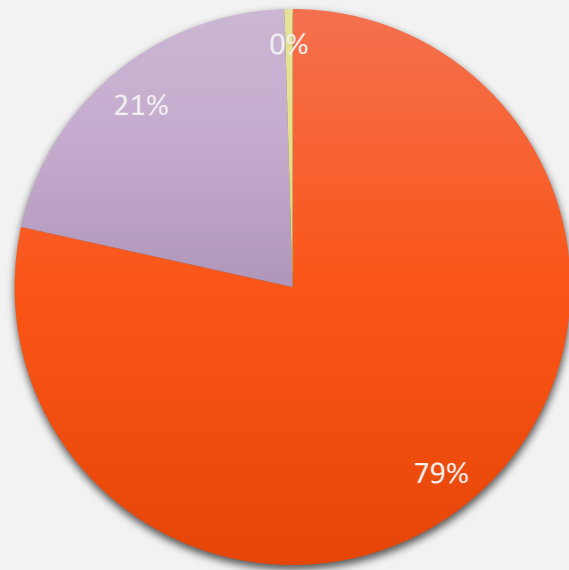
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Financial reports

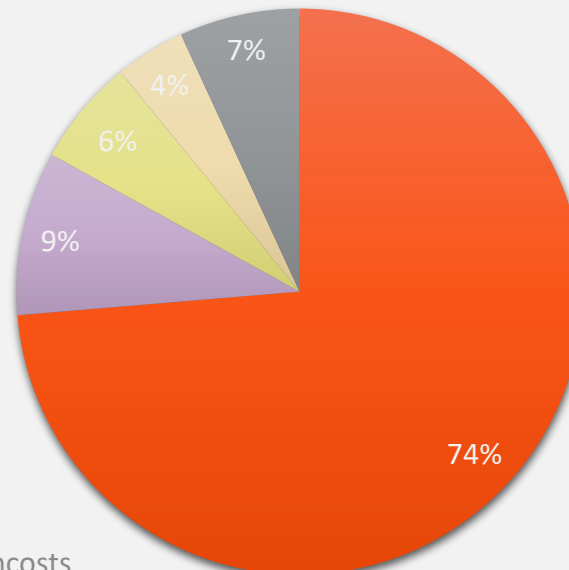
REVENUE VS EXPENSES, 2023-2024 (NSLA INC.)

NSLA Inc. Revenue



- NSLA membership fees
- NED membership fees
- Credit interest

NSLA Inc. Expenses



- Salaries, oncosts
- Memberships
- Travel
- Communications & events
- Operating expenses

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Financial reports

REVENUE VS EXPENSES, 2023-2024 (ITEMISED, NSLA AND NED PROGRAMS)

NSLA PROGRAM

- **REVENUE**

Membership fees	\$595,873
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- **EXPENDITURE**

Salaries, oncosts	\$336,738
Memberships	\$59,802
Travel	\$34,141
Comms., events	\$25,600
Operating expenses	\$38,599
TOTAL	\$494,880

NED PROGRAM*

- **REVENUE**

Membership fees	\$160,000
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- **EXPENDITURE**

Salaries, oncosts	\$133,770
Travel	\$4,709
Operating expenses	\$5,319
TOTAL	\$143,798

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*In November 2023, the NSLA Board resolved to present independent budgets for NSLA and NED.



Left: the NED Steering Group and Operational Group's meeting at the National Library of Australia, March 2024 (l-r: Catriona Bryce, Lesley Sharp). Above: the inaugural meeting of the NSLA Public Libraries Network, via Microsoft Teams, with ALIA and APLA guests, 12 June 2024.



Governance & program reports

RESIGNATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

2023-2024 saw transition at the NSLA Board table, with the resignation and relocation of some long-serving colleagues:

- In August 2023, Tracy Puklowski (Library and Archives NT) joined as Director following the relocation of Patrick Gregory to Libraries Tasmania in June 2023.
- In November 2023, Dr Caroline Butler-Bowdon (SLNSW) joined as Director following the resignation of John Vallance as CEO and State Librarian, State Library of New South Wales.
- In June 2024, Peta Harding (ACT) joined as Director following the resignation of Vanessa Little as Executive Branch Manager, Libraries ACT.

The NSLA Office also underwent transition with the resignation of Dr Barbara Lemon as Executive Director in January 2024.

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Governance & program reports

NSLA BOARD

As at 30 June 2024, members of the NSLA Board of Directors were:

- Dr Marie-Louise Ayres (National Library of Australia);
- Dr Caroline Butler-Bowdon (State Library of New South Wales);
- Catherine Clark (State Library of Western Australia);
- Paul Duldig (State Library Victoria);
- Rachel Esson (National Library of New Zealand/Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa, deputy chair);
- Peta Harding (Libraries ACT);
- Vicki McDonald (State Library of Queensland);
- Sue McKerracher (Libraries Tasmania, chair);
- Tracy Puklowski (Library and Archives NT);
- Geoff Stempel (State Library of South Australia).

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Governance & program reports

NSLA PROGRAM

The Board is supported by the NSLA Office, which as at 30 June 2024 employs:

- Dr Simon Polson (Executive Director);
- Jo Ritale (NED Program Manager);
- Dr Abi Beatson (Communications and Engagement Coordinator);
- Aimee Hay (Program Coordinator).

No changes are reported to the governance of the NSLA Program:

- Cathy Pilgrim (NLA) continues as convenor of the Heads of Collections Advisory Group;
- Margaret Warren (SLQ) continues as convenor of the Heads of Copyright Advisory group;
- Hanlie Erasmus (SLSA) continues as convenor of the Heads of Corporate Services Group;
- Tim Kong continues as convenor of the First Nations Advisory Group.

NSLA also launched a Public Libraries Network in June 2024, complementing the existing program of networks.

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Left: NSLA's Networking Booth at the 2024 ALIA National Conference, (l-r: Aimee Hay, Abi Beatson, Jo Ritale, Simon Polson). Above: Board Director Geoff Stempel representing NSLA on the plenary panel 'Facing the Future Together - Strategy and Partnership Across the Industry' with ALIA, CAUL and IFLA (photo credit: Blue Razoo Photography).



Engagement & advocacy

MEMBERSHIPS

Memberships and subscriptions

NSLA is a member of the following external organisations, and provides one or more committee representatives to:

- Australian Libraries and Archives Copyright Coalition (ALACC);
- Australian Media Literacy Alliance (AMLA);
- Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC);
- National Early Language and Literacy Coalition (NELLC);
- ALIA Professional Pathways Board / LIS Workforce Board;
- Trove Strategic Advisory Committee;
- Open Access Australasia;
- Australian Open Science Network.

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Engagement & advocacy

ADVOCACY

Submissions and statements, 2023-2024

- Submission to the Department of Industry, Science and Resources on the responsible use of AI (August 2023).
- Provision to the Chief Scientist on information on the expenditure by NSLA members on academic journal subscriptions (2022-2023) to support advice being provided to the government on options for open access to research literature (February 2024).
- Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters Inquiry into Civics Education, Engagement and Participation in Australia (May 2024).
- Statement on the freedom to read (May 2024).

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Above: Jo Ritale (NED Program Manager) at the NED face-to-face in Canberra, March 2024.
Right: NSLA Board meeting, Launceston, March 2024.

