Workforce Sustainability and Leadership: an Australian study

Conducted by:
Public Libraries Victoria
State Library of Victoria

Presented by:
Debra Rosenfeldt
State Library of Victoria
May 2009
Victorian public libraries
Perceived issues of concern

- Current workforce ageing rapidly and inadequately skilled to meet today’s demands
- Difficulty attracting younger, appropriately skilled staff, especially librarians, of high standard
- Difficulty retaining talented younger staff
- Looming leadership vacuum
- Without strong leadership, where will public libraries be in 15 years time?
A three-stage approach

Stage 1 (2006): **Scoping study**

Stage 2 (2007): **In-depth survey and analysis**

Stage 3 (2008): **Planning of initiatives**

With the assistance of **Workplace Research Centre**, University of Sydney
In-depth survey and analysis

Qualitative data:
- One focus group with library managers
- One focus group with new graduates

Quantitative data:
- Online survey of senior managers
- Online survey of all other staff
- 484 responses (18% of the workforce)
In-depth survey and analysis

Looking for hard data about:

- Demographics of the workforce
- Aspirations of the workforce
- Factors contributing to stay or go decisions
- Existing skills; current tasks
- Development areas; skills shortages

Identification of the gaps between the skills of the current workforce and future skill requirements
Key survey findings (1)

- Significant areas of understaffing – librarians; children’s, multicultural, virtual, ICT and outreach services
- An impending workforce exodus – 64% turnover within 10 years
- Lack of role clarification between library officers, library technicians and librarians:

  There is almost no distinction between who does what. We had a librarian who didn’t last three months because she was expected to do CSO and technician work.
Key survey findings (2)

- Mismatch at the lower skill level between tasks staff *want* to do more frequently and tasks they are *needed* to do
- Limited opportunity and even less support for career progression:

  > There’s no room to progress or change so I won’t stay in public libraries. I want to see what it will be like in a specialist library. I want to be given more to do... Public libraries are Maeve Binchy and nothing else.
24 recommendations in five categories

1. Establish a Workforce Development Team
2. National initiatives to be promoted
3. Standardisation and revision of position descriptions
4. Develop a tailored performance management system for public libraries
5. Invest in succession planning and career development
Some follow-up actions

Formation of an ALIA Careers group to promote working in the library and information sector as a ‘sexy’ career choice. Activities include:

- DestinationLibrary wiki
- Library careers promotional postcards
- Annual Victorian Library and Information Careers Evening
Librarians are more than just sexy. They are interesting, knowledgeable and mysterious. Read on...

Gone are the days of cardigans, pearls and sensible shoes. (actually, we still wear all of those things, but in a cool ironic sort of way)

This wiki is a resource for everyone considering a career in the library and information industry.

Win a Nintendo Wii!
LIBRARY CAREERS
FREE INFORMATION EVENING

TUESDAY 26 MAY 2009, 5.30–7PM
Experimedia
State Library of Victoria
328 Swanston Street
Melbourne

Bookings: Call 03 8664 7099 or email bookings@slv.vic.gov.au
(Please book by Friday 22 May.)

For more information, visit destinationlibrary.pbwiki.com.
Significant investment (1)

- Mentoring program for staff identified as future leaders
- A website about secondments
Significant investment (2)

- Subsidisation of leadership development opportunities, e.g. places in Aurora Leadership Institute and the recent study tour of Great Public Libraries of the World
Significant investment (3)

- Two scholarships (A$30,000 each), enabling recipients to pursue a development opportunity of their choice
- Shared Leadership program in 2009/10 and 2010/11
Shared Leadership program for Victorian public library staff

- 40 participants in two programs
- Future industry leaders
- Ten days over six months
- Residential workshops
- Action learning projects in syndicates
- 4 modules: Self Awareness; Leading Change; Achievement Through Teams; Leadership and Influence
Workforce Sustainability and Leadership: Survey, analysis and planning for Victorian public libraries


Debra Rosenfeldt
State Library of Victoria
drosenfeldt@slv.vic.gov.au