

LEGAL DEPOSIT AMENDMENT BILL 2023

Second Reading

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MS C.M. ROWE (Belmont) [2.57 pm]: I rise to make a contribution on the Legal Deposit Amendment Bill 2023. As other members have touched on, this bill will bring about critical changes to the existing legal deposit framework. The bill brings to attention the significance of the preservation of our cultural heritage and the evolving landscape of legal deposit in the digital age. At the heart of this discussion lies the imperative to safeguard our state's published documentary heritage for both present and future generations. The Legal Deposit Act 2012, in essence, mandates the deposition of certain published materials within the State Library of Western Australia, ensuring the perpetual preservation of our state's history.

As other members have discussed in their contributions, it really highlights for me the important role played by not just libraries in our local electorates, but also, of course, the State Library. I want to use this opportunity to talk a little bit about the State Library and some of the important things that the State Library does on literacy and the programs it runs. As part of my research, it was interesting to discover that the State Library was established in 1886 as a free public library that would be open to everybody, which is a wonderful concept. As we heard from the member for Cockburn, that was not necessarily the case for all libraries when they first came to fruition, so it is a great sentiment. It is really interesting and exciting to learn that they still hold relevance in the modern and digital era. That is evidenced by the fact that last year more than 1 million people visited the library in person or online. That is fantastic.

One program I want to use my contribution to highlight is the Better Beginnings family literacy program. This is a multi-award winning program that has been run by the State Library since 2004. The State Library partners with other agencies as well. The program has delivered 1 million reading packs to Western Australian families, supporting them through stories, playing, talking and singing to children right from birth. This program was brought to my attention by one of my constituents, Mrs Michelle Campbell, who is a local in Ascot. She works for the State Library and is one of the main proponents rolling out this program across the state, so I acknowledge her work in advocating for this great program because it came to my attention. Since then, I have had a keen interest in watching it grow and flourish. There have been some further developments. This program is now being rolled out in the Kimberley and Pilbara regions. There are community-led grants programs as well, so communities can apply for grants to have these programs, which is fantastic.

The State Library also has a role in acquiring materials for Western Australian heritage purposes, so collections and general reference materials. I find the collection of heritage items really interesting. When I was studying for my diploma of screenwriting, for example, I was able to go to the State Library and access a huge amount of historical information that was preserved on microfilm. People can look at old newspaper articles, which are really fascinating. It is so important to have access to archival materials and to see them firsthand. Interestingly, the library holds magazines and newspapers, as I have just mentioned, but also music recordings, music scores, motion pictures and unpublished material such as manuscripts, original artwork, photographs, diaries, journals and private papers. They are truly fascinating. It is important that we preserve those documents in perpetuity for future reference, but they have to be preserved in the correct fashion and the State Library is the ideal place to do that and manage the appropriate climate and conditions to ensure the longevity of those materials.

Another way to ensure that we preserve materials and that they are readily accessible is to digitise them and make them available online. To support this our state government is providing nearly \$4.5 million over the next five years for the library to do just that and digitise its most at-risk materials so they do not deteriorate sooner than necessary.

Since its inception in 2013, the State Library's Storylines online archive has played a pivotal role in providing a safe and responsive keeping place for Aboriginal people to access heritage collections. This is particularly important. The State Library plays a really pivotal role in this because it has become a place to contain and collect material identified as sensitive or sacred, so it can be restricted or removed in flexible and responsive way, and it allows for Aboriginal knowledge and terminology to be added to some of the library's collections. That is especially interesting to me because I was previously a long-term member of the board of the Film and Television Institute of WA, and for a time its chairperson as well. At that time the Film and Television Institute ran a fantastic program collecting Aboriginal stories on country, so there was a relationship between the Film and Television Institute and the National Archives of Australia, I think in Sydney. These stories were often collected orally. Filmmakers would be sent on country to speak with elders. Sometimes they collected the stories in traditional language and they were kept. I think we ended up collecting near on 100 stories, maybe even more. There was also the opportunity coinciding with that to teach young kids on country in really remote communities how to make films. These film educators got all the kids involved in making short films and they would show them. It was a really, really great program. I am really sad that the Film and Television and Institute no longer exists and that program no longer exists. It

again speaks to the important role that libraries continue to play not only in being the keepers of knowledge, with books and archives and all the rest, but preserving culture, really importantly, for our First Nations people.

I also thought it would be really pertinent to use this opportunity to talk about the fantastic local library in Belmont. We have the Belmont Hub, which is an amazing building. It is brand new and a really beautiful space. Any time of the day there are always groups of young people meeting in the communal spaces there. Some are there to study, but a lot of are not. They are just there to hang out and catch up with friends. There is a library at the Belmont Hub and there is also a section just for children. There is a whole suite of family events rolled out around the library. There is story time for really young kids. Of course, they are education based, and they are an opportunity for parents to engage with other parents. Obviously, the focal point is early literacy. There are also some other fantastic programs. There is a program called Curious Kids, which is a hands-on workshop to explore science and engineering. Yes, the space is a library, but it also runs really fantastic events that are not technically based around books. There are courses for parents. There is also learning English through story time. In Belmont there is a significant population of new migrants, so it is fantastic to see that reflected in the programs provided at our local library at the Belmont Hub. There is also a program called Historia. As someone who is little bit of a history nerd, it is nice to see a history session for kids aged from eight to 13 years. I think I would have Buckley's chance of getting my kids along to this, but it is great that the library offers it. It looks at mysteries, wonders and maybe even some spooky stories—I do not know. But it looks fun. There is a Lego club, a coding club and a steam lab. There are school holiday programs and a whole bunch of things.

The library also does great programs for adults. It does e-smart workshops to help, generally, older people with their computer literacy. These programs are all free to the community, so it is pretty amazing. The library also does board game days. There are craft sessions. There are also writing and creative sessions. In the most recent *Belmont Bulletin* I saw that the library was doing an interview with a local author. The author was coming to the library to speak to community members. It is a way to encourage budding novelists. We heard from the member for Cockburn that he thinks everybody has a book in them. I am not sure about that, but some people in my community think that they do, which is wonderful, and they can come along and hear from a published author. As I said, there are speaking series, interest groups, parenting clubs and a book club, which is great. Sadly, I do not seem to find time to do any of these things myself, but it is great that the library provides these wonderful resources to the community. It also does inclusive programs that are available for people of all abilities, which is just terrific.

I take this opportunity to do a shout-out to the City of Belmont because they have really made Belmont Hub, as the name implies, a hub. The library has become a real focal point for our community and the community celebrates it. It is a beautiful building that provides an anchor point for people to meet and participate in activities. I love that the activities are centred around literacy because that is a terrific thing for our community. On that, I congratulate the Minister for Culture and the Arts for bringing this bill to the house and conclude my remarks.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Culture and the Arts) [3.10 pm] — in reply: I am very pleased to respond, in my second reading reply, to a number of queries and, indeed, congratulate and thank those members who have contributed to the vote on the Legal Deposit Amendment Bill 2023. Everyone understands the importance of the bill; it is very much a modernisation of the existing legislation that will ensure that in the collection of much enhanced information, much of it in the social media and other digital mediums, the legislation, as updated, will enable our collecting agencies, particularly, of course, the State Library of Western Australia, to continue to do the work they do. I acknowledge the State Librarian and all the staff at the State Library for their tremendous work. I also acknowledge the Library Board of Western Australia for the work that it does and the way that it supports the ongoing importance of libraries in Western Australia.

I thank the members who spoke today—the members for Belmont, Geraldton and Cockburn. I also thank the member for Joondalup for her contribution in which she talked about a number of important things regarding libraries and the role they play, particularly the role they played during COVID. I thank the member for Vasse, the Leader of the Liberal Party, for her contribution and support of this bill. I also acknowledge the member for Southern River, who gave an extensive contribution—it was very extensive because it goes on for pages—and it is still going on, Mr Healy! I thank the parliamentary secretary, the member for Mirrabooka, who made an excellent contribution. She acknowledged the work of libraries and highlighted the importance of libraries for migrants and people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities. There is a great example of that in Mirrabooka. The member for Bicton made a contribution, which was outstanding as always. The member for Collie–Preston highlighted a range of matters, particularly given that she, of course, was a teacher. I also thank the Leader of the Opposition for his contribution as the lead speaker. I want to give some reassurance to the Leader of the Opposition, who raised an issue about Toodyay Public Library and the changes that were made to enhance the interlibrary loan service. The Leader of the Opposition said he received a letter in June, from memory. I want to assure the Leader of the Opposition of a couple things. First, the interlibrary loan service is still available to all public libraries.

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: No. Can you just wait?

The only change that has been made is to the delivery method. The old way of delivery, whereby requested books were sent long distances, had become financially inefficient. The new system essentially gives three choices. The first is to provide the literature that is sought online to those who wish to access it online. Secondly, if that is not the case, books are requested through the interlibrary loan service because it works out cheaper for libraries to purchase a requested book if they do not already have it as part of their stock list. Thirdly, if a library book needs to be delivered, it is delivered—a lot of books are sent this way—by Australia Post. The old system of couriering books became inefficient and expensive. The only change has been in the delivery method and the community continues to access the materials it needs and wants. The preferred method of the delivery of physical materials, like books and audiobooks, is now postage. I have some statistics that relate to Toodyay Public Library, particularly for the latter half of this year, that the Leader of the Opposition may be interested in. Toodyay Public Library is a very well utilised library; it is very popular. Traditionally, a large number of people utilise that library, which is tremendous. Toodyay library is one of the largest users of the interlibrary loan service, with the next closest being Denmark Public Library. Of the 76 libraries that have received interlibrary loans, the average is about 95 books a month. The statistics show that many of the titles requested by Toodyay library, particularly since June, have been purchased. The requested books have been purchased by the library and that means, of course, that not only is a hard copy available to the person who requested it, but also it goes back into the library and can be used by other people in the community. The number of downloads of online e-sources, digital access, has also increased and the average seems to be 300 or just over 300 a month for the months of June, July, August and September. There has been no restriction to the three choices of methods of accessing information for the people of Toodyay. In fact, they certainly utilise the digital method, and when they request a hard copy, the library is mainly purchasing those books. There are still some interlibrary loans; in other words, some copies of books are posted through Australia Post, with the average number sent to Toodyay library being about 42 a month. There is no decline in the public's usage of Toodyay library; in fact, it has very robust numbers. I wanted to reassure the Leader of the Opposition that the modernisation of the system has by no means seen a decline in services. We want to continue to ensure that no matter where a person might live in Western Australia, they will continue to have access to high quality library resources.

Turning to the Legal Deposit Amendment Bill 2023, the second reading debate has given all members an opportunity to put on record their strong support and admiration for those who are involved in the delivery of library services throughout the state. Whenever I go to a community, I try to visit the local library to acknowledge the work of the staff. A number of members have highlighted that local libraries have adapted to changes in the community and society more broadly. Libraries are not only very much the repositories of hardcopy books, but also they are in the digital space. A lot of information is available digitally. We are very aware that people of all ages have preferences. I will never read an ebook; I like to read from a hardcopy book. Ebooks are not my thing but, for others, they are a great innovation. This Legal Deposit Amendment Bill 2023 respects the adaptations and changes that have occurred in society to ensure that one of the key roles of the State Library is as a collector and archiver of information that is created and produced. The bill will allow us to do that in an efficient way, particularly for digital and other technological advances that may take place in the future.

That is essentially what the bill will do. As members know, our State Library is the custodian of a remarkable collection of all sorts of materials. It has done a lot of work in the Noongar language area, for example. There is a wonderful unit at the State Library that I know many, many Noongar people have utilised to reconnect with and, indeed, research their own family history and the history of their Noongar heritage.

It is really important that we continue to support the State Library in its role in a newly enhanced Perth Cultural Centre Precinct. As members will be aware, the government is spending some \$35 million to upgrade the Cultural Centre Precinct, which will allow our major cultural institutions—the Art Gallery of Western Australia, the Western Australian Museum Boola Bardip, the State Library and other entities within the Cultural Centre—to be better connected. There are great days to come for the State Library.

It is really important that we continue to collect film, maps, music and oral histories. I do not know whether members have utilised this, but it comes up and is shared quite regularly: the State Library's regular social media uploads about various aspects of Western Australian lifestyle and heritage. Quite often it will feature a town or regional city in Western Australia, or a particular event that might have occurred decades ago, reliving and re-sharing experiences of an historical nature. That is really important, because in time to come we will look to collection agencies like our State Library to remind us of things that have occurred in our history. A good example this year was the fortieth anniversary of the America's Cup win in 1983. When we look at the media footage and newspaper articles, we see that most of the capturing of that significant event—an event that I consider to be the most significant team sporting achievement in Australian history to this point—was through traditional methods: newspaper articles, journal articles and television, but even the television footage is very much inferior to the technology of today. However, it is those means and mechanisms that capture moments in history, and in years to come there will be reflection back on the last few years that we have experienced, in this state and around the world, with regard to

the COVID situation. I know the State Library ensured that all sorts of materials were collected relating to that very strange and challenging period in Western Australian history.

The State Library's collection of information on early Aboriginal history is remarkable and continues to build. It also holds materials on early colonial life; the development of cities; the development of the railway systems in WA; the development of major public infrastructure, like our water pipeline to the goldfields; and the social phenomena and world events that affected Western Australians, including conflicts such as World War I and World War II, the Vietnam War, the Korean War and other conflicts. These are all part of the history of this great state, the living history and the memories of so many Western Australians who have made a contribution to the state's story in the way that they played out of their own individual stories.

Although this legislation may seem fairly straightforward, it is really important. It means that we will be able to continue, with authority, to collect the materials, digital or otherwise, that will continue to reflect on the enduring history of Western Australia. I thank all members for their contributions. I understand that we will not be going into consideration in detail, so I will seek to proceed forthwith to the third reading. Again, I thank all members very much for their support of the passing of the Legal Deposit Amendment Bill 2023 and I commend it to the house.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

[Leave granted to proceed forthwith to third reading.]

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by **Mr D.A. Templeman (Minister for Culture and the Arts)**, and passed.