

LEGAL DEPOSIT AMENDMENT BILL 2023

Second Reading

Resumed from 21 September.

MS L. DALTON (Geraldton) [12.11 pm]: I rise to speak on the Legal Deposit Amendment Bill 2023. I, like many members, absolutely adore libraries. Many of us will have childhood memories of visiting a library. I support this amendment bill as it will improve library operations and unlock resources for libraries to improve programming, develop and promote their local cultural industries, become more sustainable through collaboration, improve deposit processes and streamline the complex tasks of cataloguing, indexing, recording, managing and providing access to deposited publications.

The bill will delete section 12 of the Legal Deposit Act 2012, making it possible to make regulations for the depositing of Western Australian internet publications with the State Library of Western Australia using NED, the National edeposit service, to collect, preserve and make available online publications. This will minimise compliance costs and efforts required by publishers to satisfy their legal deposit obligations and maximise efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the State Library.

NED is a collaboration between Australia's nine national, state and territory libraries. For more than 100 years, Australian librarians have captured literary works, academic publications, novels, music and news articles by documenting them for public access and the preservation of our cultural heritage, supported by legal deposit laws. This ensures that a comprehensive collection of our country's published works is preserved for future generations. With the great disrupter of the internet and proliferation of self-publishing, it is important that we support libraries to continue to capture new media forms of our cultural expression and research output.

Journalist Peter Grete was present at the launch of NED in 2019 and said —

In this age of information disorder, libraries have never been more crucial. Collecting, organising and making Australian publications available to people is not just fundamental to our freedoms, it is fundamental to our ability to make sense of the world.

I have many fond memories of my local library, Geraldton Regional Library. It used to be situated straight across the road from my high school, Stella Maris College, so it was the natural place for us to hang out after 3.00 pm, while waiting for either the bus or our parents to pick us up after school if we did not feel like walking, which was often the case for me. I was supposed to do my homework there, but instead I used this time to catch up with friends, grab the latest *Dolly* magazine, which I was never able to purchase myself but had the opportunity to read there, and feign being studious. I remember that I would take all my schoolbooks across the road to the library, unpack them on a table and then pack them back into my bag to take back home.

Mr D.A.E. Scaife: Member, did you conceal *Dolly* inside one of those books?

Ms L. DALTON: The member is onto me!

Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski interjected.

Ms L. DALTON: Exactly! God; I have a feeling that I was not alone.

These days, our fabulous library has relocated to Marine Terrace, right in the middle of town. The wonderful staff do an absolutely tremendous job in fulfilling the core duties of the library by providing a large range of fiction and non-fiction publications and running the types of programs that community members enjoy, from early childhood programs through to an outreach service for seniors and those in assisted living who have limited mobility. One of my favourite services provided by Geraldton Regional Library—this might come as a shock to some members after I have disclosed my passion for *Dolly* magazine—is its local history collection, a collection of newspapers, photographs, books, sketches, maps, newsletters, annual reports, oral history interviews, local newspapers and genealogical references. I love the opportunity to go through and discover, particularly in the microfiche indexes et cetera, the history of Geraldton and what people were talking about and what was news of interest 30, 40, 50 or 60 years ago. The fact that we are able to go through ephemera that focuses on the midwest is an absolute treat.

The local history collection also boasts an extensive Randolph Stow collection. Julian Randolph Stow was an award-winning novelist and poet who was born in Geraldton in November 1935. His works include *To the Islands* and *The Merry-Go-Round in the Sea*, which is my favourite book of all time. I remember first studying it during my year 12 English literature class and then reading it again later in life as an adult. Randolph truly captured the feeling of living in regional Western Australia through his descriptive use of words about sounds and feelings, and especially about life in Geraldton, a town by the sea. I particularly remember his description of the leaning trees in Greenough. If anyone has made their way along Brand Highway from Perth to Geraldton, they will have gone past the wonderful leaning trees along the road. I particularly loved his way of describing the leaning trees as reminding him of his old grandmother, who had long grey hair. He described the way she leant forward and washed her hair in

the basin, and likened that to the leaning trees. I always loved that description. A lot of people talk about the leaning trees, but I always think about how Randolph Stow described how they reminded him of seeing his grandmother, as a little boy, washing her hair in the basin. His legacy is preserved and celebrated by Geraldton Regional Library through the annual Randolph Stow Young Writers Awards. More than 540 entries for the awards were received from young writers across the midwest this year. I absolutely do not envy the work of the judges. Somehow, they were able to narrow it down to award 33 entrants, including two recipients of the annual Hon Sandra Carr MLC Emerging Young Writers Scholarship.

Another great event coordinated by Geraldton Regional Library is the Big Sky Readers and Writers Festival that some members may have heard of. That festival has been running for 18 years. In previous years, Hon Sandra Carr, a member for the Agricultural Region, and I were sponsors of this four-day event. I am pleased to learn that the library received a grant of \$22 525 this year from the regional and remote festival funds. The City of Greater Geraldton stated that it allocated a portion of its \$81 000 Lotterywest grant for cultural experiences to assist in the presentation of this year's festival, which was held over four days from late September to early October. The program was absolutely jam-packed with both large and intimate events, and was a showcase of Geraldton's love of literature, with local and visiting authors and illustrators presenting panels, workshops and readings. It is interesting that a lot of local writers, novelists and authors from past writers' festivals return to Geraldton to present on the panels.

Geraldton is quite well placed in that it has cultured artists such as the famous Geraldton author Holden Sheppard. Members may have heard the recent story that he discovered that some of his work was among 27 000 books that were scraped and analysed by a website called Prosecraft, for which the outputs effectively trained another program called Shaxpir to teach others how to manage their writing process. This potentially means that new works could be created in Holden Sheppard's writing style, in his voice, but without the consent of, or payment to, the original author. It is a real concern and cements the importance of this amendment to improve the collection of original published Australian works through the National edeposit service, to streamline collections and centralise access for Australians all over the country.

Libraries will always have my support for the crucial function they play by providing access to information to regional, remote and low-resourced communities; in their role of preserving our cultural heritage; and in their endeavour to create a thriving creative ecosystem through development opportunities and exposure for emerging local authors, artists and content creators. Libraries also have the capacity, creativity and flexibility to adapt to change. During the COVID-19 pandemic, libraries across Western Australia continued to improve and provide services through mobile libraries, contactless book exchanges and the provision of web-based magazines, newspapers, books and other media. I am glad that library membership is free, because I could not possibly put a value on a monthly subscription.

Libraries have also adopted new technologies. They are the research and development specialists of information collection, cataloguing, indexing and access. It is great to see libraries strengthen our social infrastructure by being the hub for our community to learn new technologies by providing internet access and printing and scanning services. I have learnt that people can access 3D-printing machines at the Beechboro, Bullsbrook, Ellenbrook and Midland libraries in the City of Swan, as well as sewing machines and overlockers—which I think is fabulous!—at the MakerSpace at Canning libraries. This initiative is really important because it contributes to a less wasteful society, and we now have access and options for making and mending clothing, designing and creating 3D-printed items and even laser-cutting tools. It is a space where a member of a library can tinker without having to invest in an expensive piece of equipment.

One of the strategic initiatives of NED is to integrate First Nations collection description guidelines and Indigenous cultural and intellectual property protocols into the NED policy framework and software. This has been demonstrated through the culturally safe libraries professional development program, wherein participating libraries implement practices to sustain and insist upon culturally informed and respectful ways of working with First Nations colleagues, communities and collections. A demonstration of this in real-life application is the State Library of Western Australia's Storylines online archive, which has played a pivotal role in providing a safe and responsive keeping place for Aboriginal people to access its heritage collections. Material identified as sensitive, secret or sacred can be restricted or removed in a flexible and responsive way to allow for Aboriginal knowledge and terminology to be added to the library's collections.

Another example of a culturally safe library is the Geraldton Regional Library, which supports Yamatji people to collect, archive and promote the culture and language of the traditional owners of our regions. Last year's *Wilunyu Words of Wisdom Language Exhibition* was coordinated by the Geraldton Regional Library in partnership with local Aboriginal artist Nicole Dickerson, whereby words that were culturally approved for use were interpreted by local school children into works of art, which were then displayed in Geraldton's CBD at the open-air Post Office Lane Lightbox Gallery. I was absolutely thrilled to attend the launch of the exhibition that day.

Before I close, I would like to take this opportunity to relay my condolences to Mary Moore, the Snell family and friends of Professor Edgar William “Ted” Snell. Born in Geraldton in 1949, Ted’s long career in arts and literature made him very well known in the Perth arts scene and internationally. He championed local artists across his many leadership roles, including those at John Curtin Gallery at Curtin University as Professor of Contemporary Art and Dean of Art; Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery at the University of Western Australia as director and chief cultural officer; and, finally, at Edith Cowan University, where he became an honorary professor at the School of Arts and Humanities in 2021.

I thank members for the opportunity to speak to the Legal Deposit Amendment Bill 2023. It is always fabulous to talk about the great work of libraries. I commend the bill to the house.

MR D.A.E. SCAIFE (Cockburn) [12.26 pm]: I rise to speak on the Legal Deposit Amendment Bill 2023. The member for Geraldton is quite a hard act to follow! I was never one to read *Dolly*, I will confess. What was the one other than *Dolly*?

A government member: *Cosmo*.

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: It was *Cosmopolitan*. I was more of a *Cosmopolitan* kind of guy than *Dolly* guy.

Several members interjected.

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: This has got off to a very bad start already!

I will make a confession that, other than being an avid reader of *Cosmopolitan*—which is not really true!—I am actually not much of a reader at all, and that will come as a surprise to some people. People assume that with my background as a lawyer and whatever else that I must be a pretty voracious reader. My whole family are readers. My father was when he was alive and my mother and my sister just read and read, but I was the member of the family who would complain to them to put their books down and please do something interesting. I am just not a reader. I can go years without reading a book; it is a shameful confession for me to say that. I cannot even remember the last book that I read. I do not read for pleasure; I read for work and that is it. However, today I want to focus on the importance of libraries because, even though I am not a reader, I have always found libraries to be those kinds of sacred places in our communities for a variety of reasons. I want to talk a little bit about the evolution of libraries over time because this bill, although technical and somewhat minor and dry in nature, speaks to the evolving nature of libraries, particularly in relation to depositing electronic copies of materials that have been published with the State Library of Western Australia.

I first want to touch on the nature of public libraries. The member for Geraldton talked about libraries being part of the community and providing all different services, but I note that it was not always the case that libraries were publicly accessible facilities; in fact, the concept of a public library is a relatively new idea. If we go back thousands of years, human civilisation has had some magnificent libraries. Thousands of years ago, the Library of Alexandria in Egypt apparently held 500 000 manuscripts and scrolls of the ancient Egyptian culture. The library burnt down, of course, and is lost to us, but it is known, from records from that time, for being quite a sight. We have the Bodleian Library at the University of Oxford, which is the second largest library in the United Kingdom. It has been around for hundreds of years and is considered to have been a centre of research, discovery and scholarship for many, many years. Over history, libraries were only ever available to a select few people. Libraries like the Library of Alexandria were available only to the royalty of the time. For most of its existence, the Bodleian Library was available only to students and researchers at the University of Oxford—an extremely exclusive university that was much more exclusive a few hundred years ago than it is even now. Those libraries, although fantastic, were not available to ordinary people. For much of history, ordinary people did not even necessarily have the literacy to be able to engage with public libraries.

In fact, the concept of a public library came about only in the 1800s, so they are only a couple of hundred years old. The person we have to thank for that, largely, is the American industrialist Andrew Carnegie. Members might know of Carnegie Hall in the United States, which is named after Andrew Carnegie. He was a steel industry magnate of the time. Rather than building a library to house his private collection and show off all his antiquities, Andrew Carnegie set up a program to give grant funding to communities to build public libraries. He established something like 2 500 public libraries around the United States. He said he would give towns something like \$2 500 to establish a library, and it would be just a simple building to house books and records. He said they had to maintain it but he would establish it. The concept of a simple, practical building that everybody can access to do research, read and learn is a very recent invention. Over the next couple of hundred years, we saw an explosion in the number of public libraries.

In representing a metropolitan area, I am very fortunate to have three public libraries in and around my electorate that the City of Cockburn maintains in Spearwood, Coolbellup and Success, which is right near my office. I also think about my colleagues in this chamber who represent regional electorates. I am sure they would say that, in

addition to buildings like churches or council chambers, small community libraries, which have been dying in recent years, were often a centre of the community. I wanted to make the point that they are relatively new.

Melbourne Public Library, which is now known as the State Library of Victoria, was the first public library established in Australia in 1854. A few decades later, the first public library was established in Western Australia—the State Library of Western Australia. It was established through a £5 000 grant from the Legislative Council. Of course, at that time in 1886, the Legislative Assembly did not exist because the Swan River Colony had not been granted “responsible government”, which I believe is the constitutional phrase. We had only the Legislative Council at that stage in Western Australia. We did not have the Legislative Assembly. The Legislative Council granted £5 000 to celebrate the jubilee of Queen Victoria to establish the State Library Western Australia.

That gives members a little bit of a history of public libraries around the world and here in Australia and Western Australia. We have had the State Library of Western Australia for only about 150 years. Over that time, it has become a repository for the history of this state, whether that is our increasing focus on recognising and appreciating the history of our First Nations people, who were here for so many tens of thousands of years before white settlers were, or recording the more modern history of Western Australia over the last 150 or so years. Things have changed dramatically in that time. As society has changed and as our approach to record keeping has changed as digitisation has taken off in the last several decades, obviously the demands on libraries have changed as well. Libraries now are so different from what they used to be. Libraries like the Bodleian Library were available only to a very exclusive number of people and were not available to ordinary people, as I said. They were really just places with dusty books and reading rooms compared with libraries these days, which have to be less about written text and more about other things that bring people in, like online resources. I love that libraries are places where someone who might not have a computer at home can go to access the computer to do simple things in their life like paying bills or just exploring and researching the world.

During the COVID pandemic, the City of Cockburn partnered with an organisation called Youngster.co. It is an organisation that provides “youngsters” to assist people who are having difficulties with technology—to mentor that person and guide them on the use of technology. I have made the point that although I am not really a youngster, there is an assumption that millennials like the member for Hillarys and myself must be proficient with technology, but I reckon I could benefit from Youngster.co half the time, and I am getting nods of agreement from the member for Hillarys. I wanted to acknowledge that was a great program, particularly during the COVID pandemic when we were setting up the ServiceWA app and people were putting it on their phones. They were also grappling with the disaster that is or was the myGov app. I had a lot of people coming into my office asking for assistance. I am very lucky to have had a series of generation Z-ers working in my office who are much more proficient in these things than I am. They helped a lot of people. I also want to acknowledge that the City of Cockburn Libraries, through the Youngster.co program, did a great job assisting people.

Libraries do even more things than that. Of course, one of the things that has now entered my life, which I am going to start to appreciate Cockburn Libraries for, is Pram Jam. The City of Cockburn Libraries runs Pram Jam three times a week. I have not been yet but my wife went a couple of weeks ago. She said it was pretty eye-opening. She said the babies all seemed pretty confused by what was going on but that the parents seemed to enjoy it. We reckon, being biased, that is what really matters. I am looking forward to my future participation in Pram Jam.

Something that is hopefully not on my horizon is that the City of Cockburn Libraries is putting on ukulele holiday sessions. In fact, I think some have already been held. I reckon that could be in my distant, although not-as-distant-as-it-used-to-be future. My mother is an avid ukulele player. I was going to say that I cannot think of much worse, but I think a recorder would be considered worse—or the trombone. The suggestion from the clerk’s table was a trumpet session. I take that suggestion. I am an obscure oboe player and I think that can be worse in the wrong hands as well! Ukulele holiday sessions are coming up and there is Pram Jam. There are so many things happening at local libraries right around the state. I want to pay tribute to libraries, librarians, and the staff at those facilities for the wonderful work that they do bringing our communities together and providing that suite of services that go so far beyond just books that we can take home. While wandering through sections of a City of Cockburn library the other day, I must have got a little lost because I realised that all the books were large print. I thought that was great. There was a whole section of the library for large print books for people who might have vision impairments. Talking about things in my future, that is probably in my future too, but I thought that was great. I was not even aware that that was available.

Ms M.J. Davies: Audiobooks, member. I do audiobooks. There is a lot to read when you are at work.

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: I will take that interjection because when I have been successful engaging in books in my adult life, it has been mainly through audiobooks in the car or on my phone. I do not have it anymore, but I used to have Audible on my phone and listened to some great books. That is another example of the how type of content that we are consuming is changing. I think it is changing for a variety of reasons. For members in this chamber, and particularly the members for Central Wheatbelt, Pilbara and Geraldton who travel long distances, I suspect

that audiobooks and podcasts and the like are a welcome respite from the rigours of the road. I sometimes do long journeys in the car but it is just being stuck on the freeway for an hour when coming in in the morning, which does not compare with the tens of hours that members of the regional areas sometimes have to travel. I recently signed up as a member of the City of Cockburn library. I did that mainly because I wanted to access its audiobook collection. I want to pay tribute to the libraries, the librarians and all the staff who provide all those services.

In closing, I pay tribute to a couple of writers in Cockburn. People often say that everyone has a book in them. I think that is a saying.

Ms C.M. Rowe: It is not true, though.

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: I do not think it is true, either. I reckon everyone has a book in them but the difference is I have a book in me but it is not one that anyone would want to read. Not everyone has a book in them that everyone would want to read but I think everyone has a book in them. My memoir will be a collection of my second reading contributions, like this one.

Ms L.L. Baker interjected.

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: It will be a big book, but not a big seller, member for Maylands. It will be an annotated collection of my second reading contributions. I might have to do several volumes, depending on how long I last here.

I want to reflect on two Cockburn locals I know who had books in them and have produced those books. The first person I acknowledge is Doreen Moulds. Doreen is a good friend of mine who wrote a book called *Sifting the Pieces* that is part memoir of her life and part family history reflecting on her family's history all the way back to the United Kingdom and their experiences of being part of group settlement 79 Linfarn just north of Manjimup when her family came from the UK and settled there. Thank you, Doreen. Doreen is also a poet and is always actively engaged with my office on social justice issues, so she is a great advocate for the community.

The second person I want to acknowledge is Richard Dunbar. Richard is also a good friend and supporter of mine. Richard shared with me a copy of his book titled '*Oh, Richard. You Are Not My Son.*' It is a memoir of his life and particularly reflects on the revelation that came to him very late in life, in his middle age, that he was adopted. That was a particular shock to Richard not only because he had no idea about that, but also he had worked his whole life in child protection as a social worker and had worked with children who had been put up for adoption and with their families. I want to say how brave Richard is for telling that story and sharing it with the world, given how personal it is and how important it is that we tell our local and personal stories about things like adoption. I note in that regard that the Legislative Council is conducting an inquiry into forced adoption practices.

In closing, obviously the Legal Deposit Amendment Bill 2023, as the member for Geraldton said, will delete section 12, which essentially would have duplicated the process for depositing a published text with the State Library. It is a minor thing, but it makes it easier for us to collect the cultural history of Western Australia and indeed of the whole country. I confess that I am a little bit unsure about when I will be interrupted given the two minutes on the clock, but I look to Acting Speaker (Mrs L.A. Munday) for guidance because I think this is a very good bill.

Ms M.J. Davies: What was the last audiobook you listened to?

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: It was a little while ago. I think it was about housing and the rental crisis in the United States. It was pretty heavy, but it was a great book! On that note, I commend the bill to the house.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

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