

**LEGAL DEPOSIT AMENDMENT BILL 2023**

*Second Reading*

Resumed from 22 June.

**MS C.M. COLLINS (Hillarys)** [10.09 am]: I rise today to speak on the Legal Deposit Amendment Bill 2023. These changes are part of our state government's commitment to making sure that Western Australia's documented history will continue to be not only collected, but also cared for and made accessible for future generations.

Librarians and archivists are truly some of the most important careers when it comes to documenting our history and all the information and knowledge that our society rests upon, and local libraries really do play an important role in our community. My local library is the Whitford Public Library in Hillarys. It is just across from my office and the Whitford Senior Citizens Centre. It really is the centre point of the electorate and has been an invaluable hub in our community since the early 1980s. It is run by the City of Joondalup, and is no longer just a place where people might go to quietly read a book; this library—along with many others across the state—hosts thousands of events every year. It is certainly not just about what we used to stereotypically think about libraries—that is, reading or writing in the corner.

I will read out some of the popular programs that the library has to offer. There is one called CoderDojo, which teaches students valuable coding STEM skills. Other programs include Lego Club, which encourages screen-free creative play for children, and Baby Rhyme Time. The library encourages platforms for local artists and local writers and creators to showcase their work. It has been a really important feature for fostering local creativity and the cultural and arts scene.

The Whitford Public Library also plays a critical role in sharing local literary works with local audiences, and gives authors and illustrators the support they often need to build their success in the initial stages. Last year I took former Premier Mark McGowan to Whitford Library to be a special story presenter for Toddler Time, and the kids loved hearing the local storybook *Where Are You, Magoo*, by Briony Stewart. We were also fortunate enough to be there when an artist was painting a mural sponsored by the City of Joondalup. Her works really illustrate the local area; she draws inspiration from the bushland and the coastline, and the unique beauty of the City of Joondalup. She also incorporates photographs into some of her work.

Libraries can not only host local events but also become meeting places for like-minded individuals and groups. Whitford Library has a group for knitting and crochet-minded people. It is often cheeky older ladies who get together and love a catch-up and a chat while partaking in their hobby. In addition, the library serves as a venue to show off artwork from the local government area. At the moment there is the YAAS! program, which stands for young adult art space. The scheme allows artists aged between 12 and 18 years to show off some of their works in a public space.

Libraries are now moving more towards embracing the digital age and technological advancements to remain relevant in the twenty-first century. We are seeing more and more resources go online and also more e-books and digital learning platforms.

These days I do not spend as much time in libraries as I used to, but once upon a time they really were a second home for me. Throughout my uni years, and even prior to that, in years 11 and 12, I would spend a lot of time in Reid Library at UWA or the State Library, studying for my ATAR exams. I would use this opportunity to catch up with students from other schools, exchange notes, and share life updates and procrastination strategies. But ultimately, it was an opportunity to utilise the resources that the school library perhaps might not have had available—whether it was books or online journal databases, which I became very dependent on in my uni years.

In 2012 I undertook my honours year at University of Notre Dame and did my research thesis on radicalism in South-East Asia. When embarking on the ambitious task of trying to write up a thesis, you really do depend on those digital repositories because in that short period of less than 12 months you do not necessarily have the opportunity to get on a plane and go to interview people overseas, if the subject of your thesis requires international insights, so I was very, very much dependent on those databases.

Of course, it would be remiss of me to not mention another library that has perhaps become a part of all members' lives, and that is the Parliamentary Library. Many members—myself included—would be quite lost without its services. It has published journal articles, exhaustive archives of newspaper clippings, the latest fiction and non-fiction books and, of course, the leather-bound *Hansards*, dating right back to the 1800s. Often some of the subject matter that we deal with in this chamber is quite complex, and we cannot be expected to be experts on all subjects, so the library is an important tool for contacting the Parliament librarians and asking them to provide us with facts and information to help us refute dodgy claims that might be made. We all get emails from people who claim one thing or another, so it is really important in our role to check facts. Another thing I would like to point

out about the Parliamentary Library is just what a beautiful, stunning room it is. Whenever I am taking guests of Parliament on a tour around this place, I make sure to make a stop at the library.

As part of my electorate work I have actively taken trips down memory lane, for a few reasons. It has been really incredible to research and find out what my electorate looked like 30 or 60 years ago. Interestingly, that is something that constituents also really enjoy and engage with. I started doing “Throwback Thursday”, for which I try to find an old image from the State Library archives or the Joondalup Public Library archives and post it on my social media pages. It stimulates and generates so many conversations in the community. Many are of the people I speak to who live in the northern suburbs come from generations of northern suburbs residents—their parents and grandparents lived there, so these images that I post really do stimulate trips down memory lane and a sense of nostalgia.

To be honest, though, the northern suburbs are quite new suburbs, compared with many others. I might be lucky to find an image from the 1980s—perhaps Hillarys Boat Harbour, which opened in 1988. It makes people think about what they were doing at that time, and just reading through the comments and the memories that people share of going down to Hillarys Boat Harbour as children is really beautiful.

As I said, people love to look back on their history. The City of Joondalup recently posted an image of MacDonal Reserve in Padbury from 30 years ago, and there were hundreds and hundreds of responses to that post. They called the old hall the “Binny Shell”, and people reminisced about doing gymnastics, book clubs, jazz ballet, taekwondo or rollerskating. It really inspired people to reflect on their past and it was a very positive interaction. One photo can bring about so much joy. The northern suburbs have dramatically changed in the past 30 years and the State Library of Western Australia is constantly undertaking complex and difficult work trying to keep up with retaining and caring for those older digital formats. It is really important that we protect this heritage. This bill is about making sure that it is cared for in a way that will allow future generations to access it. Some of the most highly engaged posts on the State Library’s page have been nostalgic posts looking at the Perth CBD from 100 years ago.

One of my favourite parts of this job is visiting schools during Children’s Book Week, a week that celebrates reading and often local authors as well. It can be a career-limiting move when the schools ask members to judge the competition. Parents take Book Week very seriously. I have actually declined to be a judge at those events for that very reason—smart move! They have become a carnival of creativity. There are characters jumping out left, right and centre. There are always a few *Where’s Wally?* costumes in the crowd. Teachers also get into the spirit by donning costumes that are sometimes even more creative than the students’ costumes. This year, I went to Craigie Heights Primary School’s book parade and I hope to go to many more over the next few years.

I want to touch on the WA Premier’s Book Award. This is an annual book award that is managed by the State Library on behalf of the state government. Several years ago, the Barnett government downgraded those awards from an annual event to a two-year event. This, of course, was a huge blow and disappointment for the WA arts sector. I will read out comments from arts patron Diana Warnock. She said —

“It’s a tremendously disappointing decision ... “I would have thought the magnificent effect of The Giants on the community was enough to convince any government that spending money on the arts isn’t wasted.

Award-winning author Amanda Curtin went on to say that the state government seems to be undervaluing the importance of literature. It was fantastic that in 2018, the then McGowan government reinstated these awards to become an annual event.

We are incredibly lucky in Western Australia to have had generations of journalists, authors and academics become subject matter experts in matters of policy on nationally significant events. Their work is valuable and much of these published works will go on to be read and inform minds for decades, so it is really important that we celebrate Western Australian authors. There is much talent here to be celebrated. This valuable service gets to the heart of why these amendments to the Legal Deposit Act 2012 are so important. We need to guarantee that certain published materials are kept as part of our history and entrusted with the state librarians. These amendments will ensure that these institutions can collect materials and ensure the free access of its information. Technology, of course, allows archivists to collect this subject matter in more timely and efficient ways. It allows more information to be accessible not just in Perth’s arts and cultural hub, but in rural and regional towns hundreds of kilometres away from the State Library and the CBD.

I would like to thank the book publishers for working with the state government to ensure that their products will be accessible for decades to come and I look forward to these reforms making Western Australian libraries even stronger community hubs, sources of knowledge and providers of free information. I commend this bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr D.A. Templeman (Leader of the House)**.

[Continued on page 5043.]