Ripples

Australian Learning Communities Network Inc

Welcome to the Winter Edition
We trust that you will find items of interest and we would appreciate any feedback. Otherwise we have little idea if the articles are meeting your needs

We thank those who made contributions

Inequality in Australia

Understanding how issues affect young people starts with listening to them and hearing their perspectives. Many organisations and stakeholders try to work in the interests of young people without asking their views on the issues that affect them most.
Read more

Prioritising School Industry partnerships

Globalisation and advances in smart technology are transforming jobs, workplaces and careers at an unprecedented rate. More is being demanded of schools to prepare young people for an unpredictable and uncertain future, but there are limits to what schools can achieve in isolation from the wider community.
Read more

Refugees and Urban Gardening

There's a difference between simply settling somewhere and finding a home. Refugees are faced with this reality every day — among new neighbours in a new city, building a sense of belonging is no small task. Working to create a place for oneself is a bold act of hope for a new life. So, what can public spaces do to help create a sense of place for refugees?
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From around the Network

Items from members of the Australian Learning Communities Network
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Community Grants

Members of Parliament regularly receive requests directly or through their electorate offices about funding opportunities for community groups. This Issues Backgrounder is designed to assist in responding to these requests. This guide provides links to selected funding opportunities for community groups and is organised under the following sections:

1. Government gateways to community grants;
2. Non-government gateways to community grants;
3. Grants in selected subject areas;
4. Selected Private Sector Funding Sources;
5. Selected NGO Funding Sources; and
6. *Selected Local Government funding sources*

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Libraries and Safe Places

Libraries provide a unique service to their users, as both a public space and as a portal for meaningful access to the information that people and communities need to learn, grow and develop. This is particularly essential for youth, who are discovering their independence and identities, and have important information needs.

Read more

Inequality

Excessive inequality in any society is harmful. When people with low incomes and wealth are left behind, they struggle to reach a socially acceptable living standard and to participate in society. These are Australia's real 'battlers'. When a minority of people accumulate income and wealth well above the rest of the population, this can lead to excessive concentration of power that becomes self-perpetuating, fraying the bonds of social cohesion and trust. Australia prides itself on its egalitarian traditions, where the extremes of neither poverty nor affluence (a 'bunyip aristocracy') are acceptable.

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Libraries Need to Improve Online Services

Bridging the gap between online and physical experiences is a key challenge for libraries reveals the latest Civica *Changing Landscape Report: the intrinsic value of libraries as public spaces- Physical-digital*, communication the new normal. The report was developed by the Institute for Public Policy and Governance and Civica.

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Welcoming Cities

The Australian Standard for Welcoming Cities (The Standard) is a central element of the Welcoming Cities network. The Standard establishes the framework for local councils to:

- benchmark their cultural diversity and inclusion policies and practices across the organisation;
- identify where and how further efforts could be directed; and,
- assess progress over time.

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Libraries and Technology

In 2017, archaeologists discovered the ruins of the oldest public library in Cologne, Germany. The building may have housed up to 20,000 scrolls, and dates back to the Roman era in the second century. When literacy was restricted to a tiny elite, this library was open to the public. Located in the centre of the city in the marketplace, it sat at the heart of public life. We may romanticise the library filled with ancient books; an institution dedicated to the interior life of the mind. But the Cologne discovery tells us something else. It suggests libraries may have meant something more to cities and their inhabitants than being just repositories of the printed word.

Read more

Decentralisation

In this inaugural discussion paper, former Victorian Premier, Steve Bracks, and former Victorian Deputy Premier, Pat McNamara, discuss the four policy pillars of a future population decentralisation agenda for Victoria.

The four pillars discussed are:

- A decentralisation program must set clear targets
- Areas across the entire state, not just the large regional centres must be included
- Transport and land use planning must be better integrated across the state
- The private sector must be more involved in the financing and delivery of infrastructure needed to support a structured decentralisation program

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Inequality in Australia: a young person's perspective

20 AUG 2018

Youth Action
Youth Action

DESCRIPTION

Understanding how issues affect young people starts with listening to them and hearing their perspectives. Many organisations and stakeholders try to work in the interests of young people without asking their views on the issues that affect them most.

That's why we surveyed 3,400 young people to seek their views on the issues that they care about and which have the greatest impact on their lives.

We overwhelmingly found that young people place a huge value on fairness, equity and equality within Australia. Their attitudes and goals on important issues such as education, employment and housing are most often altruistic and aimed at creating a better society for everyone.

On critical issues young people are seeing widening inequality gaps within society as a whole, between generations and even within their own peer group.

They are also overwhelmingly disappointed by government's response to their issues, citing politicians' lack of vision and inability to listen to young people. They feel that governments are not acting in their best interests or the interests of future generations.

Our report provides direct quotes from young people on issues that are having an impact on them.

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Connecting the worlds of learning and work

Prioritising school-industry partnerships in Australia's education system

30 JUL 2018

Kate Torii
Mitchell Institute

DESCRIPTION

Globalisation and advances in smart technology are transforming jobs, workplaces and careers at an unprecedented rate. More is being demanded of schools to prepare young people for an unpredictable and uncertain future, but there are limits to what schools can achieve in isolation from the wider community.

Both schools and industry play a role in ensuring that all children and young people are given learning opportunities that enable them to reach their full potential and develop the skills and capabilities that are needed in future jobs.

In June 2018, Mitchell Institute brought together a group of leaders for a policy roundtable – to build greater understanding of the roles industry can play in education, and address how Australia's education system can better support partnerships between schools and industry that equip all young people for their futures.

This policy report brings together views from the expert stakeholder roundtable and analysis of current policies and research.

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Cultivation Place
Refugees and urban gardening in Baltimore

KATHERINE PEINHARDT

APR 13, 2018

EQUITY & INCLUSION

This article is a part of an ongoing series about underlined refugees in public spaces. PPS works onplacemaking for peacemaking, highlighting the importance of public spaces in building communities for displaced people.

There's a difference between simply settling somewhere and finding a home. Refugees are faced with this reality every day — among new neighbours in a new city, building a sense of belonging is no small task. Working to create a place for oneself is a bold act of hope for a new life. So, what can public spaces do to help create a sense of place for refugees?

One of the first points of contact for refugees entering the U.S. is often the International Rescue Committee (IRC), a non-profit that resettles nearly 10,000 refugee cases annually, and helps them with everything from navigating new kitchen appliances to finding jobs and learning English. This work gives refugees a good start, but from there, they still face perhaps one of the most difficult parts of the process: becoming a part of their new community. The IRC began its New Roots program about 10 years ago in the hopes of using agriculture and community gardening to support refugees in rebuilding their lives and livelihoods. The program works in shared gardens in cities across the United States, giving refugees the opportunity to strengthen existing skills in gardening, to preserve their culinary identity by growing culturally relevant foods, and, in some cases, to participate in farmers markets. One participating city was Baltimore, where the IRC started up a small network of shared refugee-focused gardens by working with local churches and the Goodnow Community Center. The gardens, in churchyards and on the lawns surrounding active community hubs, quickly became busy with refugees looking to connect with nature, grow their own crops, and plug into the local food system.

A mobile farmers market parked outside one of the gardens in Baltimore.

But the spaces soon transcended these uses — in addition to the crops the refugees were planting, Baltimore's gardens began to nurture a sense of social cohesion among residents. In the fall of 2017, PPS joined IRC staff in Baltimore to help the New Roots gardens reach beyond their initial purpose and combat social separation in refugee communities. PPS and IRC staff, along with several community partners and stakeholders evaluated the urban gardens and discussed whether they were bringing long-time locals and refugees together. Workshop participants realized that efforts initially intended to protect the refugees' space were leaving them closed off to passers-by. The IRC's Technical Advisor for Food and Agriculture recalls that "one of the big breakthroughs of the meeting was that if we want to build community, [the process needs to be] something that involves everybody…There were definitely people walking by, wanting to know what the garden was about, but not feeling like they had anything to do with it." More than a space just for refugees, the gardens would be even more valuable as spaces designed to attract everyone; bringing about the small daily interactions that break down barriers between people. Now, the New Roots program is part of "a grassroots approach, helping people to see across difference," through the lens of agriculture.

A recent mosaic workshop in the garden. Photo Credit: IRC.

Since the fall, placemaking is taking root in the gardens. Fences around the garden plots have come down, and the gardens are open to other Baltimore residents. IRC staff are converting an unused greenhouse into a community reading room, and during a recent garden party, local artists led a bench

decorating project with an array of neighbours and gardeners. New Roots staff have partnered with other local programs to host non-gardening activities like yoga and music therapy, while other cities' New Roots gardens have launched "English in the Garden," and support groups in these spaces. The activities connect Baltimore residents, old and new, forging the types of bonds that help refugees to adjust to their new homes. Instead of fenced-off sanctuaries, the gardens are evolving into destinations for long-time residents and recent refugees alike.

While community gardens are almost always places of healing, they can only foster social integration when there are opportunities for everybody to participate. From the outset, Baltimore's gardens were places of refuge for the city's newest residents — but it was only when they were made open to all that they became places for refugees to connect with their new community. And what better place than an urban garden to sow the seeds of inclusion?

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From Around the Network

Kitchen Science Storytime

For inquisitive pre-schoolers Kitchen Science Storytime will be held in the Children's Area of the Wagga Wagga City Library. Science engages the natural curiosity of children and encourages them to ask why.

Apart from the fun, there are many benefits for young kids learning about science. Science teaches youngsters a combination of skills for life, such as problem-solving, researching, patience and perseverance. It also encourages children to be inquisitive, ask questions and ponder possible solutions.

When: Wednesday, 15th August and Friday, 17th August

Capturing Memories through Oral History - the why and how to
Sat, 18 Aug 2018 13:30:00 +1000

Jessica Ferrari from Oral History Australia looks at the importance of recording family history. Jessica has produced stories for the ABC and National Geographic.

She will show recent documentary

Wyndham City Living

Not sure where to start when it comes to building a website for your business? As part of the Digital Innovation Festival, Wyndham City is running a free, personalised session for selected Wyndham-based businesses to build their first website. Expressions of interest now open until Tue 28 Aug – find out more here: https://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/grow

Wyndham City Libraries' Junior Chess Tournament

All chess players aged 8 to 13 are invited to participate in Wyndham City Libraries Junior Chess Tournament 2018! Registrations open Saturday 1 September.
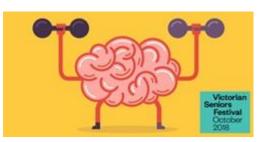
Cyber Safety

Ensure positive online experiences and protect your private information by becoming scam savvy. Free, bookings necessary.

Flemington
Friday 5 October, 10am-12pm

Super Brain Train

Super Brain Train is a dementia awareness workshop. Presented by Maggie Flanagan, a counsellor and wellness coach with 18 years' experience in conducting community health education courses. This session will focus on daily holistic dementia prevention tips. Free, bookings necessary.

Trace the history of your home

Curious about the history of your house? Participants in this workshop will be shown print and online resources to aid in researching the history of their home and street. Free, bookings necessary.

Flemington
Tuesday 16 October, 6.30pm-7.30pm

Funding opportunities for community groups

20 JUN 2018

Matthew Dobson
NSW Parliamentary Research Service

DESCRIPTION

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PUBLICATION DETAILS

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How libraries provide safe spaces for (all) youth

12 AUG 2018

International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions
International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions

DESCRIPTION

Libraries provide a unique service to their users, as both a public space and as a portal for meaningful access to the information that people, and communities need to learn, grow and develop. This is particularly essential for youth, who are discovering their independence and identities, and have important information needs.

This is not to say that the job is an easy one, given the challenges many young people face. This essay from IFLA, drawing on experiences shared at the World Library and Information Congress, highlights how libraries are already, successfully, providing youth with the support they need. It offers lessons and suggestions for others in doing the same, as well as providing evidence of the need to place libraries are the heart of youth policies.

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Inequality in Australia 2018

31 JUL 2018

Peter Davidson, Peter Saunders, Jacqueline Phillips
Australian Council of Social Service
University of New South Wales

DESCRIPTION

Excessive inequality in any society is harmful. When people with low incomes and wealth are left behind, they struggle to reach a socially acceptable living standard and to participate in society. These are Australia's real 'battlers'. When a minority of people accumulate income and wealth well above the rest of the population, this can lead to excessive concentration of power that becomes self-perpetuating, fraying the bonds of social cohesion and trust. Australia prides itself on its egalitarian traditions, where the extremes of neither poverty nor affluence (a 'bunyip aristocracy') are acceptable.

Too much inequality is also bad for the economy. When resources and power are concentrated in fewer hands, or people are too impoverished to participate effectively in the paid workforce, or acquire the skills to do so, economic growth is diminished. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) estimates that rising income inequality has reduced economic growth by an average of around 5 per cent across OECD countries over the two decades to 2010.

There will always be debate over how much inequality is 'too much'. What is not in doubt is that in most wealthy nations, inequality of income and wealth has increased substantially since the early 1980s. The OECD reports that on average in wealthy countries in 2015, the 10% of people with the most income received 9.6 times the income of the 10% with the lowest incomes. In the 1980s, that ratio stood at 7:1, rising to 8:1 in the 1990s and to 9:1 in the 2000s.

The purpose of this report is to provide a factual underpinning to the debate about inequality in Australia, rather than to advocate policies to reduce it. We lay out, as simply and clearly as possible, the latest information on the incomes and asset holdings of people at the upper, middle and lower rungs of the ladder of economic prosperity, and who sits on each rung. We map trends in income inequality from 1999 to 2016, and in wealth inequality from 2003 to 2016 (based on the years for which reliable, comparable data is available), and point to some likely explanations for these. We also compare Australia's experience with other countries who are members of the OECD.

The changes being experienced in Australia (as elsewhere) have the potential to fundamentally change the nature of our society, who benefits from our economy, and how. This change needs to be understood and debated if we are to plot our own destiny for the benefit of all people, and this report contributes to these tasks.

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Libraries need to improve online services

Bridging the gap between online and physical experiences is a key challenge for libraries, reveals the latest Civica *Changing Landscape Report: the intrinsic value of libraries as public spaces – Physical-digital*, communicating the new normal. The report was developed by the Institute for Public Policy and Governance and Civica.

[DOWNLOAD REPORT](#)

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The Australian Standard for Welcoming Cities

VERSION 2

23 AUG 2018

Welcoming Cities
Welcoming Cities

DESCRIPTION

The Australian Standard for Welcoming Cities (The Standard) is a central element of the Welcoming Cities network. The Standard establishes the framework for local councils to:

- benchmark their cultural diversity and inclusion policies and practices across the organisation;
- identify where and how further efforts could be directed; and,
- assess progress over time.

The Standard applies to all local councils in Australia. This includes cities, shires, towns, or municipalities. Councils can access and progress through the Standard according to their capacity and resources. We describe these stages (from lowest to highest) as Established, Advanced, Excelling, and Mentoring.

The extent to which local councils measure their activity against the Standard will be based on their understanding of their community's needs. It is noted that local councils are already addressing elements of the Standard. The Standard validates existing efforts and recognises the connections to fostering cultural diversity and inclusion.

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Technology hasn't killed public libraries

It's inspired them to transform and stay relevant

In 2017, archaeologists discovered the ruins of the [oldest public library](#) in Cologne, Germany. The building may have housed up to 20,000 scrolls, and dates back to the Roman era in the second century. When literacy was restricted to a tiny elite, this library was open to the public. Located in the centre of the city in the marketplace, it sat at the heart of public life.

We may romanticise the library filled with ancient books; an institution dedicated to the interior life of the mind. But the Cologne discovery tells us something else. It suggests libraries may have meant something more to cities and their inhabitants than being just repositories of the printed word.

***Read more:* [State libraries need our support and participation to survive](#)**

Contemporary public libraries tell us this too. Membership has generally [declined or flat-lined,](#) but people are now using libraries for more than borrowing books. Children come to play video games or complete homework assignments together. People go to hear lectures and musical performances or attend craft workshops and book clubs.

Libraries have become vital for the marginalised, [such as the homeless](#), to access essential government services such as Centrelink, and to stay connected. They have become defacto providers of basic digital literacy training – such as how to use an iPad or access an eGov account. Others cater to tech-enthusiasts offering [advanced courses on coding or robotics](#)in purpose-built spaces and laboratories.

We do romanticise libraries as being repositories of ancient knowledge. Clarisse Meyer/Unsplash
Yet the future of Australia's public libraries is unfolding according to a contradictory, double narrative. One-off funding for "feature" libraries built by star architects exists in parallel with cuts and closures of libraries on the margins. In Victoria's city of Geelong, for example, three regional libraries on the city's periphery [faced closure](#) scarcely a year after the opening of the A\$45m Geelong Library and Heritage Centre.

Part of the reason for this is that the expanded contribution of libraries to our communities and cities isn't recognised at higher levels of government.

***Read more:* [Has the library outlived its usefulness in the age of Internet? You'd be surprised](#)**

How libraries are changing

In the early 2000s, as archives shifted online, futurists predicted an imminent death to public libraries. But the threat of obsolescence made libraries take proactive steps to remain relevant in a digital world. They thought creatively about how to translate services they have always offered – universal access to information – into new formats.

Libraries digitised their collections and networked their catalogues, exponentially extending the range of materials users could access. They introduced e-books and e-readers to read them with. They mounted screens to watch movies or to play video games.

They also installed computers crucial to that 14% of the population who don't have access to the internet at home. And they wired up their spaces with free WiFi, retrofitting extra power-points so users could plug in their own devices.

Libraries have a lot of programs around technology and the use of computers. from shutterstock.com

Besides offering new technologies and services, libraries offer people a welcoming, safe space to gather without the pressure to spend money. Investing in attractive, versatile furnishings, they have actively encouraged people to dwell in their spaces, whether this is to read a newspaper, complete a job application online, or to study.

In an age where communication technologies create both efficiency as well as forms of isolation, such spaces assume a renewed social importance.

Read more: Friday essay: why libraries can and must change

How libraries shape the city

As vital as libraries are to individuals, their value is also connected to broader civic agendas. Libraries have deliberately sought to change perceptions of themselves from spaces of collection to spaces of creation. Some, such as the State Library of Victoria, see themselves facilitating creativity not only in an artistic sense, but also as hubs for start-ups and budding innovators.

Public libraries have promoted their relevance to cities by strategically aligning themselves with government visions of economic growth. For instance, the Geelong Library and Heritage Centre was a signature investment in Geelong's Digital Strategy, promoted as a "platform" to build "digital capacity" and a visible symbol of the city's transition to a digital future.

Others, such as Dandenong library in Victoria, attract high levels of funding as part of urban renewal projects aimed at revitalising declining urban precincts.

These high-profile libraries, usually in urban centres, overshadow the uncertain fate of smaller libraries on the periphery, viable due to insufficient funding.

The Geelong Library and Heritage Centre cost millions of dollars to build, while three local libraries lost funding. from shutterstock.com

This contradiction is occurring because provisioning for libraries is not embedded at high levels of urban planning and policy making. There is no nationally consistent model for allocating funds between the states and local government. Nor is there a consistent framework across Australia for evaluating library performance.

Critically and most revealingly, libraries are evaluated based on traditional metrics, such as loan and membership numbers, capturing only a fraction of the full value they contribute to our individual and collective life. Failure to recognise this by governments and policymakers puts at risk the diverse and nuanced ways libraries might shape Australia's future.

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Victoria's future state
Why decentralisation should be our priority

Paper prepared for the Balance Victoria online initiative

14 AUG 2018

Steve Bracks, Pat McNamara
Balance Victoria

DESCRIPTION

In this inaugural discussion paper, former Victorian Premier, Steve Bracks, and former Victorian Deputy Premier, Pat McNamara, discuss the four policy pillars of a future population decentralisation agenda for Victoria.

The four pillars discussed are:

- A decentralisation program must set clear targets
- Areas across the entire state, not just the large regional centres must be included
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