

# Libraries as learning organisations – changing our approach to learning

**Andrew Hiskens**  
**Rebecca Ong**

**ALIA, Melbourne, 17 September, 2013**



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“are we more mature  
learning organisations  
than we were three years  
ago?”



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# **Libraries as learning organisations – changing our approach to learning**

**(or a hero's journey – the Cinderella approach to 'getting there')**

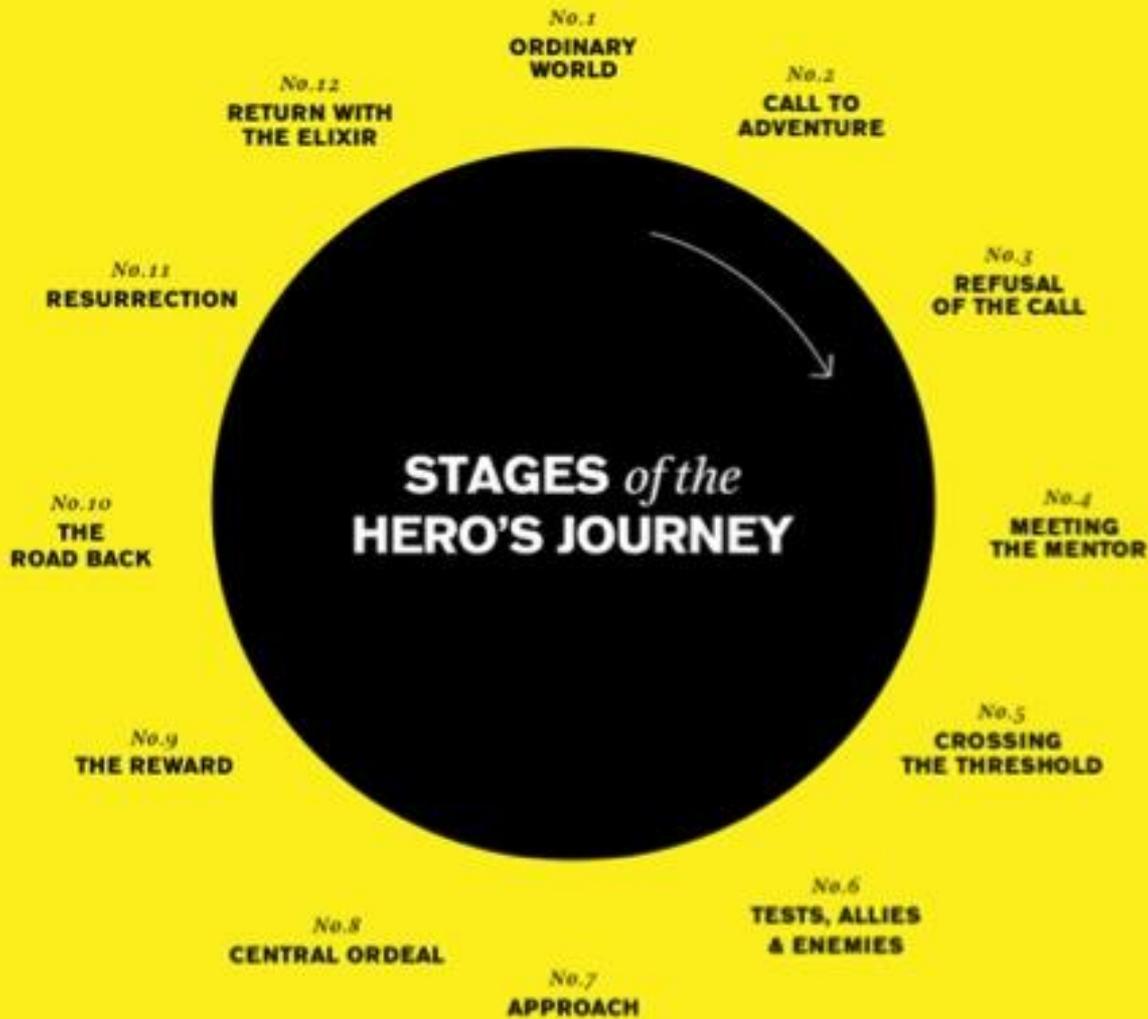
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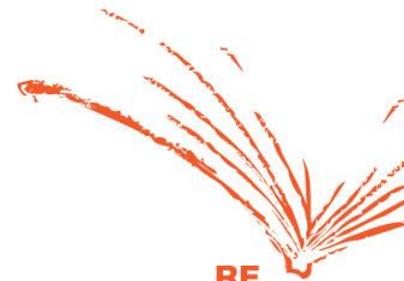


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# The hero's journey

## Cinderella



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# Ordinary World

## Cinderella cleaning



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# NSLA



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# Call to Adventure

## An Invitation to the Ball



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Image [http://2012.freeplay.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Freeplay2011\\_LemonJousting-95991.jpg](http://2012.freeplay.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Freeplay2011_LemonJousting-95991.jpg)

“The first step in solving a problem is recognizing that there is one.”



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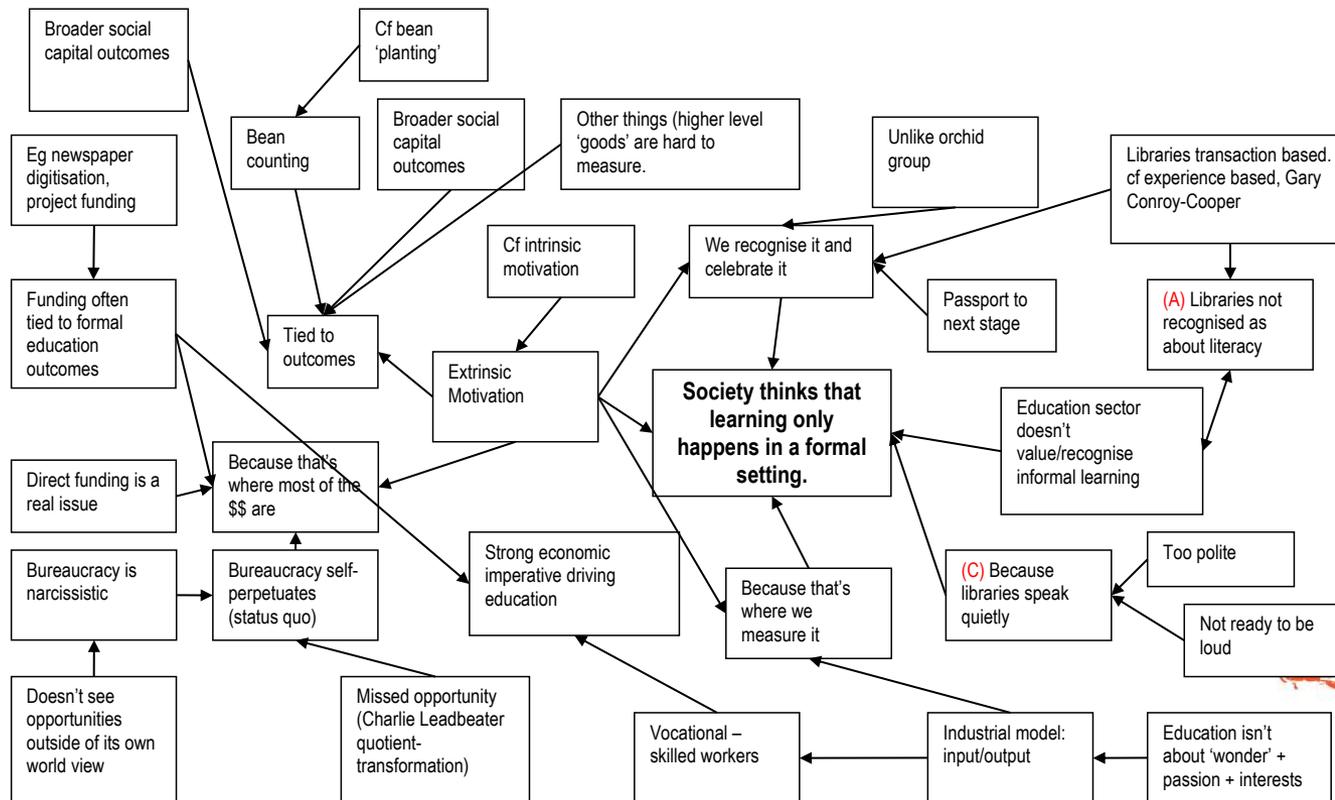
# Issue/problem definitions

- Society does not have a habit of learning
- Society thinks that learning only happens in a formal learning environment
- Low literacy in society leads to low participation in society.

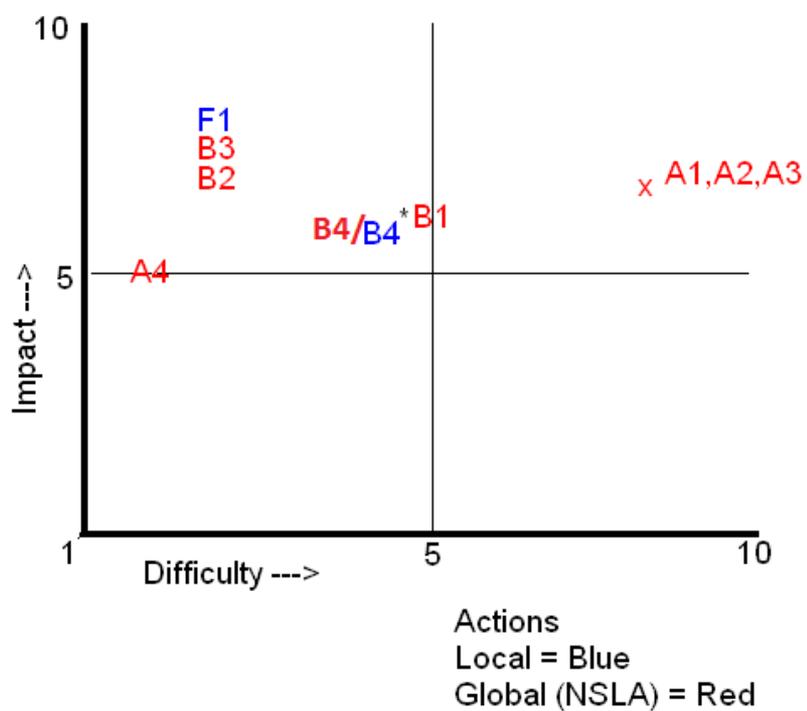


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# Problem map/s



# Impact/difficulty matrix



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# Refusal of the call

Cinderella can't go...



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# Meeting the Mentor

The fairy godmother



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## Critical Friend

“a trusted person who asks provocative questions, provides data to be examined through another lens, and offers critiques of a person’s work as a friend.”

- Costa, A. and Kallick, B.

# Crossing the threshold

Cinderella will go to the Ball...



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PROCESS:

- SELF-EVAL<sup>N</sup>
- PEER REVIEWED

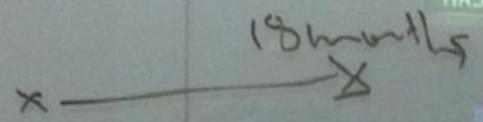
EMERGING  
'LEARNING  
INSTITUTION'

DEVELOPING

ACTIVE  
'LEARNING  
INSTITUTION'

Literacy

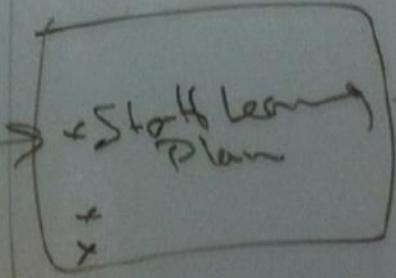
- Internal
  - Policy
  - Resources (Prof Comp)
- Public



TIME

Learning

- Int
- Public



# Tests, Allies and Enemies

The pumpkin carriage, the dress, the glass slippers



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## Matrix brief

“to improve NSLA Libraries’ organizational understanding and practice as learning institutions and their ability to deliver literacy and learning programs to staff and public.”



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# Learning organisation

- engaged in the delivery of literacy and learning programs within and for its constituent communities, and
- constantly evolving organizational understanding and practice and thereby modelling the adaptive power of learning to deliver the best outcomes for its communities.



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Domains	Starting	Knowing	Doing	Being
<b>Learning and learners</b>				
<b>Internal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The concept of 'learning' is generally equated with 'training'</li> <li>Few resources are allocated for learning and development</li> <li>Staff perceive operational activities to be more important than learning</li> <li>Staff feel time poor but recognise their need to grow and develop</li> <li>There is a general desire to build understanding and to do things differently</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is an awareness of the value of learning</li> <li>Staff are included in the dialogue about identifying learning needs</li> <li>The need for learning and development is acknowledged, but the area is under-resourced</li> <li>The complex nature of learning is recognised</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a clear understanding of the importance of meeting learning needs across the library</li> <li>Individuals assume responsibility for their own learning</li> <li>Appropriate resources are allocated to meet these needs</li> <li>Processes are in place to support formal learning activities</li> <li>The value of informal learning is recognised</li> <li>Technology, tools and processes are used to support the sharing of knowledge and expertise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People represent the active force of the library</li> <li>Learning and development are integral to the library's future</li> <li>The ability to question, challenge, experiment and reflect is accepted practice</li> <li>All staff have their own personal development plans</li> <li>Opportunities for learning and mentoring are embedded in the daily operations of the library</li> </ul>
<b>External</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The library focuses on transactional service provision for individual, passive clients</li> <li>Library staff act as gatekeepers to expert service</li> <li>A general sense of arrogance prevails: 'we are here for you, you will come to us'</li> <li>Complacent attitudes block the ability to address the barriers that exist</li> <li>There is a desire to build understanding and to do things differently</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members of the community are aware of their specific learning needs</li> <li>Community learning needs are identified through dialogue and consultation</li> <li>Staff work with clients to develop options and choices for new learning opportunities</li> <li>The library is recognised as a venue where community members can meet and share ideas; it is viewed as a good place to learn</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Library staff believe they can contribute to other people's learning</li> <li>The library is recognised as contributing to the achievement of community goals</li> <li>Partnerships are developed to support strategies for collaboration within the community</li> <li>There are opportunities to work with community groups to co-create collective learning programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The library works with the community: programs and services are underpinned by community consultation</li> <li>Community learning is embedded in all aspects of the library's services and programs</li> <li>Multiple learning approaches are available: onsite, offsite, online, participative, collaborative and social</li> <li>The community supports and advocates for the library as a centre of formal and informal learning</li> </ul>

# Approach

## Cinderella arrives



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# Central Ordeal

Cinderella falls in love...



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# The Reward

The Prince falls in love...



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# The Road Back

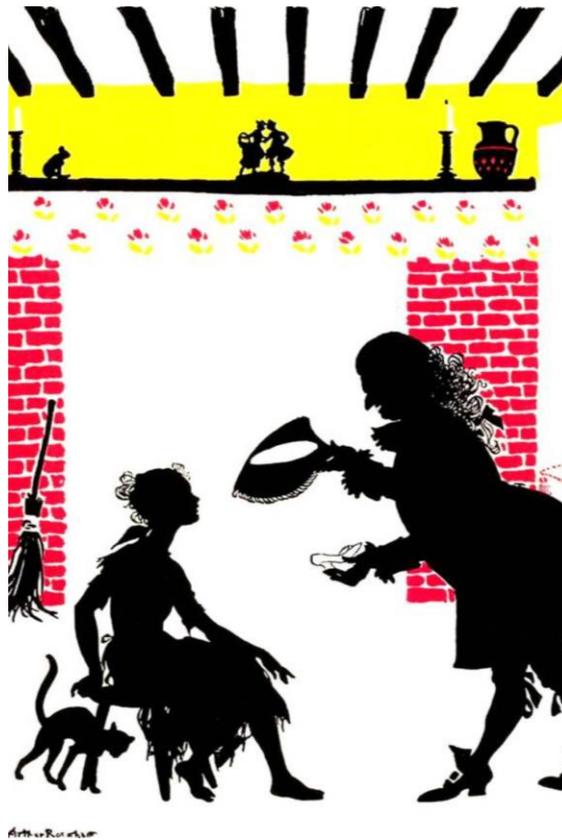
Midnight – the flight...



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# Resurrection

The shoe fits...



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# Making the shoe fit...

Starting = Awareness  
Knowing = Discussion  
Doing = Implementing  
Being = Embedding



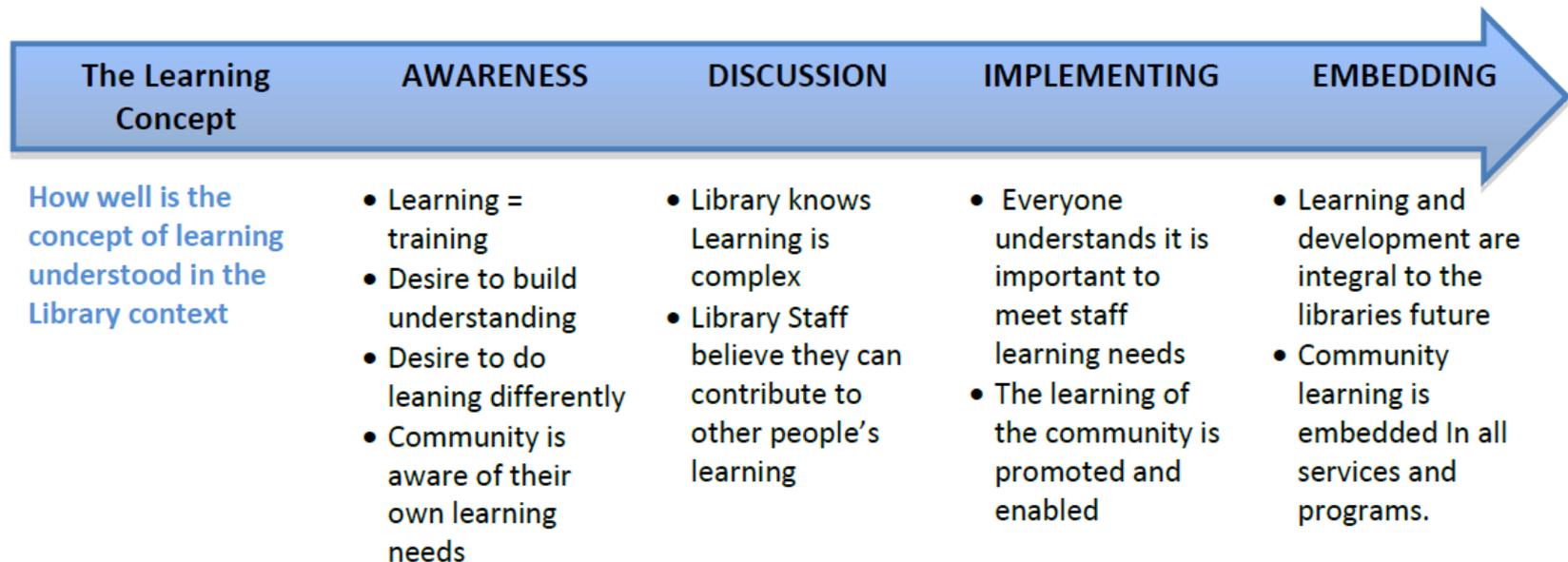
# Return with the Elixir

The world changes...



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# NTL - advagram



## Validation

“...your framework captures the complexity of both the dimensions of learning and the developmental nature of learning, based on theories and models...”



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## Validation

“I see applicability in many of the framework dimensions, if I just change “library” to “organization.””

Sandra Palmer, Learning Consultant  
Office of Biometric Identity Management (OBIM)  
National Protection and Programs Directorate  
US Department of Homeland Security



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(New) ordinary world

Happily ever after...



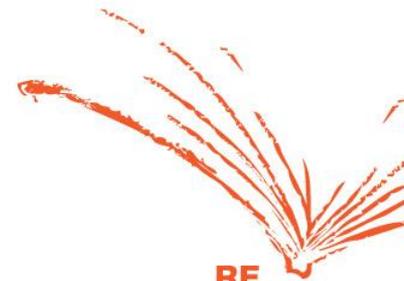
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# Yes (or maybe?)



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**TO BE  
CONTINUED** 

# Credits

## **Project Sponsors:**

- State Library of Victoria – Sue Hamilton, succeeded by Sue Roberts
- State Library of Western Australia – Margaret Allen

## **Literacy and Learning Group**

- State Library of Victoria – Andrew Hiskens (Project Manager)
- State Library of Western Australia – Anne Rennie, succeeded by Rebecca Ong (Project Manager)
- Libraries ACT– Rachel Davis
- LINC Tasmania – Jane Forward, succeeded by Helen Ebsworth
- National Library of New Zealand – Geraldine Howell, supported by Andrew Cowie
- Northern Territory Library – Anja Tait, Kerry Blinco
- State Library of New South Wales – Megan Perry
- State Library of Queensland – Jane Cowell, supported by Deb Miles
- State Library of South Australia – Geoff Stempel, succeeded by Shane Cathcart and Nel Duffield
- Honorary member – Adjunct Professor Gillian Hallam, QUT



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- Hallam, Gill, Hiskens, Andrew and Ong, Rebecca. *Conceptualising the learning organisation: creating a maturity framework to develop a shared understanding of the library's role in literacy and learning*, *The Australian Library Journal* Vol. 63, Iss. 2, 2014.

# Us:

- Andrew Hiskens, Manager – Learning Services, State Library of Victoria
  - Email – [ahiskens@slv.vic.gov.au](mailto:ahiskens@slv.vic.gov.au)
  - Twitter - @ahiskens
- Rebecca Ong, Manager of Participation and Learning, State Library of Western Australia
  - Email - [rebecca.ong@slwa.wa.gov.au](mailto:rebecca.ong@slwa.wa.gov.au)
  - Twitter - @RebeccaOng1
- NSLA Literacy and Learning Group
  - <http://nsla.org.au/projects/literacy-and-learning>



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