

"TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE AND THE COMMUNITY LIBRARY"

Robert McEntyre*
Robert McEntyre & Associates Pty Limited
PO Box 701
Wahroonga NSW 2076
Australia
Telephone: 61 2 9489 2310
E-mail: robert@mcentyre.com.au

Abstract

Sustainability, and the associated "Triple Bottom Line" (TBL), is a recent concept used by organisations and corporations to define, manage and report on their contribution to the economic, social and environmental development of economies (communities). The implementation of a TBL approach is premised on:

- ~~///~~ A strategic approach to economic, environmental and social considerations
- ~~///~~ The definition of values associated with economic, environmental and social matters
- ~~///~~ Identifying and measuring performance areas of importance to key stakeholders.

Key *outcomes* and *benefits* from the TBL approach include:

- ~~///~~ Enhanced marketplace and community services and perceptions.
- ~~///~~ More efficient use of resources
- ~~///~~ Reduced risk exposures and liabilities.

In this paper, the *TBL concept is applied to future community libraries*. Consideration will be given to:

- ~~///~~ Key future community stakeholders, community segments and their needs: 2004-2010
- ~~///~~ The strategic direction, positioning and focus for a community library: 2004-2010
- ~~///~~ Community library products and services in the TBL framework
- ~~///~~ Defining, measuring and reporting the *value* of future community libraries.

1. Introduction

The Polish poet Stanislaw Lec once asked "*is it progress if a cannibal uses a fork?*"

John Elkington pursued this thought in his book "*Cannibals with Forks: the Triple Bottom Line of 21st Century Business*".

This book discusses how business can help society achieve the three interlinked goals of *economic prosperity* (a traditional success measure), *environmental protection* and *social equity*.

The related concepts and practices associated with

- ✂ Sustainability,
- ✂ Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), and the
- ✂ Triple Bottom Line (TBL) - the measured contribution by an organisation to economic prosperity, environmental quality and social development,

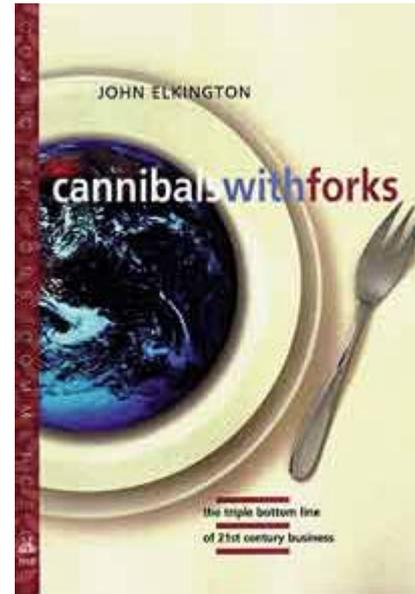
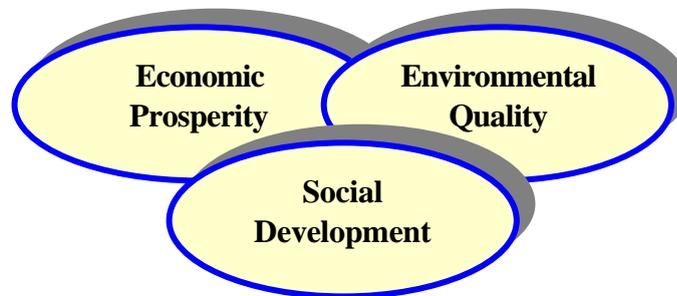


Figure 1
Triple Bottom Line Elements



are being increasingly considered by organisations in many sectors (with potentially a *quadruple bottom line* emerging due to the growing focus on Corporate Governance).

This paper examines the TBL concept, and its current and future impact on, and relevance to, the strategic direction of local government, and specifically on how community (public) libraries can address and utilise the TBL concept in defining, creating and providing value to stakeholders.

2. Corporate Social Responsibility and The Triple Bottom Line

Elkington argues that "seven revolutions" are in progress that will drive business and economies towards TBL goals. The seven revolutions are:

- ✍ Markets
- ✍ Values - value shifts occurring in the community
- ✍ Transparency - a shift towards openness
- ✍ Life cycle technology - the need to manage technologies and associated costs both upstream and downstream in supply terms
- ✍ Partnerships - which covers supply chain partnerships and building deep partnership with customers and the wider community
- ✍ Time - the rising importance given to the longer term view and the use of scenarios
- ✍ Corporate governance.

The New South Wales State Chamber of Commerce's *Common Good Program* - a report of 2001, titled "*An overview - Corporate Social Responsibility in Australia*", identified that the Australian business community was lagging behind the UK, USA and the EU in some key aspects of CSR. It was identified that very few Australian organisations had an integrated strategy to manage CSR activities.

The program assists the Australian business community to pursue social and environmentally responsible practices, while building long-term competitive advantage.

Key drivers for Australian organisations practising CSR were considered to be 1) sustainability and 2) long-term competitive advantage. Four different rationales were being used in the adoption of CSR:

- ✍ Profit maximisation
- ✍ Altruism
- ✍ Self-enlightened self interest
- ✍ Corporate Citizenship.

At a March 2003 seminar in Sydney hosted by the Australian Financial Review BOSS Club on "*Corporate Social Responsibility - Rhetoric or Reality?*", guest speakers Richard Lambert, a former editor of the UK *Financial Times*, and Julia Cleverdon, CEO of the UK based *Business in The Community*, presented their UK observations and experiences with CSR.

Richard commented that CSR does not necessarily mean charity nor writing cheques nor PR and marketing spin - it is about raising educational standards, improving working conditions, and organisations having a positive impact on the physical environment. Businesses are able to use their collective powers for the benefits of communities through costed and measured business plans.

Richard cited three reasons for organisations adopting CSR:

- ✍ It is strategic to their sustainability*
- ✍ It impacts on their values, morale, recruitment and development: for example, London based law firms and banks are involved in community projects in which they apply their management and business expertise*
- ✍ It impacts on their image and reputation.*

He commented that companies bring "scale" to CSR projects - their experience in business management, project management and mentoring, and being able to easily form partnerships, take calculated risks, and move quickly with projects.

Julia Cleverdon indicated that business leaders are working with different parts of society to understand *real* community issues - the outcome is that communities can trust businesses that can then be regarded as "good community neighbours". Her views on the drivers for the uptake of UK CSR initiatives included:

- ✍ Increasing community expectations of business*
- ✍ A change in the composition of the workforce - many cultures that are now accommodated*
- ✍ The media's interest in social issues.*

3. Local Government: Strategic Direction and the Triple Bottom Line

New Zealand, Australia and Canada are examples of countries with local (municipal) government. Both Australia and Canada have three tiers of government, whilst New Zealand has two.

Table 1
Government in New Zealand, Australia and Canada

| Country | Population (millions rounded) | Federal or Central Government | State or Provincial Governments | Regional, Local or Municipal Governments | Number of Regional, Local or Municipal Governments |
|-------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|
| New Zealand | 4 | Yes | No | Yes | 86 |
| Australia | 20 | Yes | Yes | Yes | 600+ |
| Canada | 30 | Yes | Yes | Yes | 1000+ |

Information Sources: Australian Local Government Association (ALGA)
Local Government of New Zealand (LGNZ)
Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)

The City of Melbourne Council (Australia) has adopted triple bottom line reporting to guide all its decision making. Triple bottom line accountability means Council not only takes into account the economic factors of its endeavours, but also takes responsibility for social and environmental improvements. *“As a leader in Local Government, this Council has made sustainability the key objective in our strategic planning, and we must ensure our decision making and reporting techniques offer a high level of transparency,”* said CEO, Michael Malouf.

For the City of Melbourne, triple bottom line accountability includes the following:

- ✍ Social equity - making decisions that lead to greater physical, cultural and financial access and equity in services and justice.
- ✍ Environmental quality - not using more resources than required to deliver activities and services; improving the overall amenity, including physical amenity, while reducing the effect on natural assets. Practical steps include using energy from renewable resources, maximising resource and infrastructure use and minimising pollution and waste.
- ✍ Economic prosperity - promoting the development of jobs, business prosperity and market growth in a sustainable manner.

They launched the *"Triple Bottom Line Toolkit for Australian Local Governments"* in May 2002 as part of Melbourne's commitment to actively promote the development and implementation of socially and environmentally progressive policies.

The Hamilton City Council (New Zealand) has a vision *"that Hamilton will continue to develop in a sustainable way, using fewer economic resources to achieve more social, economic and environmental benefits for everyone in the city"*. It has six strategic focus areas (with associated goals and sustainability indicators):

- ~~///~~ Sustaining Hamilton's environment
- ~~///~~ Growing Hamilton
- ~~///~~ Promoting Hamilton
- ~~///~~ Experiencing our arts, culture and heritage
- ~~///~~ Living in Hamilton
- ~~///~~ Enjoying our city.

The Manakau City Council (New Zealand) saved around \$500,000 on its power bill due to small changes. The Council's emphasis is on highlighting community, environmental and economic aims and initiatives. The principles and values adopted by the Council are based on the TBL approach.

The Council's aim is to identify the needs of the community and service those needs equitably and fairly by fully considering community participation, environmental values? and economic development. This is achieved through exhibiting four core practices:

- ~~///~~ Civic Leadership - citizens sense a direction for the District and see progress.?
- ~~///~~ Community Involvement - citizens participating in decision-making and be in partnership with the Council.
- ~~///~~ Customer Service - citizens treated as important customers.?
- ~~///~~ Delivering Value - council provides service efficiently and effectively as an organisation.

The Maroochy Shire Council (Australia) has launched its first reports focusing on Triple Bottom Line reporting to measure Council's contribution to future sustainability. Report cards on social and environmental aspects of Council's business will accompany the current financial report cards, producing SEE (Social, Environmental and Economic) reports to Council.

The Maroochy Council CEO stated that *"our objectives are to enhance the quality of life of the people of the Shire, building vibrant communities and improving the quality of services, support the sustainable development of the regional economy and improve the Shire's infrastructure, and protect and enhance the Shire's natural and built environments while ensuring the financial success and viability of Council. These are the criteria by which our performance will ultimately be judged both by ourselves and by others, now and in the future."*

Mawson Lakes in South Australia, is in the southern sector of the City of Salisbury. It emulates the sophistication and the forward thinking of locations such as Silicon Valley, California and the University City of Montpellier, France. However, Mawson Lakes has taken the planning and objectives of these towns a step further.

By combining the elements of an existing technology park and university campus and adding in high quality innovative residential design complete with environmentally friendly design components, the residents of this community have been given the opportunity to '*live, learn, work and play*' in the one suburb.

The Mawson Lakes development arose out of active lobbying by the City of Salisbury to transform a once vacant and barren area into a leading edge urban development. With staff committed to the delivery of innovative environmental design principles in areas such as water and energy conservation, and the establishment of high level community facilities, the City of Salisbury has played a crucial role in ensuring that the development meets the standards set for it to be a showcase for future urban living.

As a partner in the development, the City of Salisbury is responsible for particular delivery aspects such as road infrastructure; drainage; and establishing the new Mawson Centre intended to provide *community learning facilities* to all members of the broader Salisbury community.

ICLEI - The International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives

ICLEI is an international association of local governments implementing sustainable development. Its purpose is "*to build and serve a worldwide movement of local governments to achieve tangible improvements in global environmental and sustainable development conditions through cumulative local actions*".

More than 445 cities, towns, counties, and their associations from around the world are full Members of the Council, with hundreds of additional local governments participating in specific ICLEI campaigns and projects. Sixty (60) Australian, five (5) New Zealand and (20) Canadian local councils are members of ICLEI.

Through its campaigns, ICLEI helps local government generate political awareness of key issues, build capacity through technical assistance and training, and evaluate local and cumulative progress toward sustainable development.

4. The Strategic Direction of Community Libraries: 2004-2010

"There are too many books in public libraries" (Robert McEntyre, in statement to a library sector client in November 2002).

Australian Senate Enquiry into the Role of Libraries in the Online Environment

There has been a Senate inquiry into the role of libraries as providers of information in the on-line environment, with the tabling of findings due in mid October 2003.

Some preliminary work has been undertaken on the development of a Public Libraries Strategy as a way of seeking Federal funding to make public libraries a key access point to new technologies for their communities. This would make public libraries a major gateway to online information including government information and services.

UK Public Libraries

Public library developments in the UK of the late 1990's were seen as leading the world at the conceptual and policy level. The Blair government defined its vision for how the UK would position itself to take advantage of the new technologies in its paper *"Our Information Age"*. It identified five key areas for government action: transforming education, widening access, promoting competition and competitiveness, fostering quality and modernising government.

The previous government established the Libraries and Information Commission in 1995. In its statement *2020 Vision*, the Commission articulated a concise but far-reaching statement on the value of libraries and information services to the government's economic, education and social policy development. It had three main concepts:

- ~~✎~~ Connectivity - providing universal access to the products of the human mind
- ~~✎~~ Content - creating a digital library of the UK's intellectual heritage of culture and innovation
- ~~✎~~ Competences - equipping individuals and organisations to play their full role in a learning and information society.

Public libraries are seen as the ideal vehicle for transferring knowledge and technical skills necessary to acquire that knowledge through information technology. Public libraries are seen as being a change agent at the hub of the community.

International Network of Public Libraries

Christchurch City Libraries is a member of the International Network of Public Libraries, which is sponsored by the Bertelsmann Foundation in Germany.

The objectives of the network are to pool the know-how that exists worldwide, to give momentum to the international exchange of experience among experts in public library management, to develop successful concepts, and to put them into practice.

In a recent paper titled "*Strategies for Public Libraries in the 21st Century*" (Rasmussen and Jochumsen, 2003), key points made include:

- ✍ *"Today, the public library is the most popular cultural institution in Denmark, seen in terms of the number of users. More than half the population uses the public library at least once a year and many more come there much more often"* (Fridberg, 2000).

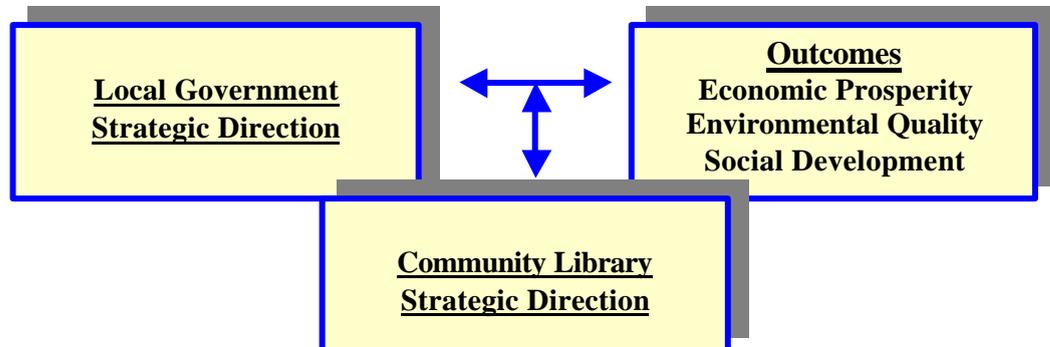
- ✍ The library is related by users with four types of organisations or services: cultural institutions, places of enlightenment, local administration and social services, and meeting places such as community centres and day centres.

- ✍ The political priority of public libraries is relatively low when compared with health and education.

- ✍ Two Danish librarians (Graabeck and Gilling, 2000) have argued for a new and different "lifestyle library" - they imagine an "erotic library" with a café environment, superior and exclusive coffee, Belgian chocolates and Italian magazines.

The Community Library Direction: 2004-2010

A key assumption for a community library's strategic direction is that it is couched in the context of the parent Local Council's strategic direction, which has sustainability, and the associated *economic prosperity*, *environmental quality* and *social development* outcomes focus.



Stakeholders, their Needs and Library Products and Services

The community library will have a range of stakeholders for whom services can be investigated, provided and supported. The stakeholders will include:

- ✍ The Council Management Team, Councillors and all Staff (including Library):
The library being the information arm of local government - providing managers, councillors and staff access to information on global, national and local trends.
- ✍ The Residential Community:
The library providing access to entertainment, leisure, culture, learning and recreation.
- ✍ The Visiting Community:
The library providing access to local knowledge, tourist destinations and commercial facilities.
- ✍ Local Community, Sporting and Cultural Groups:
The library assisting with information and recreational activities, and participating in community service initiatives and cultural exhibitions.
- ✍ Local Business, Industry and Media:
The library keeping these groups informed, and working with them on joint community development initiatives.
- ✍ Government:
The library enabling information access to on-line information.
- ✍ Local Schools:
The library participating in joint education and learning initiatives on information literacy - access and utilisation.
- ✍ National and International Information Chain Networks:
Maintaining relevant links to the national and international library and information services community, and with commercial suppliers, to keep abreast of, and input into, major trends and developments.

The Strategic Purpose and Focus for a Community Library: 2004-2010

The community library's *purpose* will be:

"Enriching and inspiring community life through being a gateway to and facilitator of education, entertainment, cultural development, recreation, social interaction and information".

The *strategic focus* for community libraries will embrace:

- ☞ Visibility and communication:* a high profile both locally and nationally.
- ☞ Stakeholder relationship management:* working and communicating closely with all identified key stakeholders including local, national and international consortia and networks.
- ☞ Information chain management:* managing efficient access to information and related products and services by utilising a range of relevant technologies.
- ☞ Products and services management:* continually reviewing and refreshing the products and services offered by and/or accessed through the community library service and its partners.
- ☞ Resource management:* contributing to the efficient management of all resources including the development and enrichment of staff.

Within these strategic focus elements, key goals, strategies and initiatives will be defined.

Defining, Measuring and Reporting the Value of Future Community Libraries.

The triple bottom line represents the macro outcomes on which local government will focus. The future community library service will be operating in this context. Applying *the balanced scorecard* concept to the TBL implies that libraries will measure their performance for a range of *outputs* and *outcomes*:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <i>☞ Stakeholder satisfaction:</i> | For all key stakeholders - the perceived value of the image, relationships, products and services of the community library. |
| <i>☞ Products and services:</i> | Product and service relevance and utilisation. |
| <i>☞ Operational performance:</i> | Business processes and technologies, their relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. |
| <i>☞ Innovation:</i> | New product and service developments and implementation; new beneficial relationships formed; economic value models. |
| <i>☞ Resource management:</i> | Revenue and expense; cost savings. |

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The Australian Senate's *Inquiry into the Role of Libraries in the Online Environment*. Australian Library and Information Association - ALIA (www.alia.org.au).

The International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (www.iclei.org).

The New South Wales State Chamber of Commerce (www.thechamber.com.au).

The web sites for Local Government:

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| The City of Melbourne (Australia) | www.melbourne.vic.gov.au |
| The City of Salisbury (Australia) | www.salisbury.sa.gov.au |
| Christchurch City Council (New Zealand) | www.ccc.govt.nz |
| Hamilton City Council (New Zealand) | www.hcc.govt.nz |
| Manukau City Council (New Zealand) | www.manukau.govt.nz |
| Maroochy Shire Council (Australia) | www.maroochy.qld.gov.au |
| Napier City Council (New Zealand) | www.napier.govt.nz |