



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT AND CITY SERVICES

Ms Suzanne Orr MLA (Chair), Miss Candice Burch MLA (Deputy Chair)

Ms Tara Cheyne MLA, Ms Nicole Lawder MLA

Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into ACT Libraries

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From: Jennifer Holmes
To: [LA Committee - ETCS](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Libraries enquiry
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Good morning, MLAs Orr, Candice Burch, Cheyne and Lawder
Standing Committee on Environment and Transport and City Services, ACT Legislative Assembly

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my opposition to some changes to ACT Libraries in the Committee's Inquiry.

Terms of Reference

The Role of libraries within the ACT Community

The role of the Libraries in the ACT Community is vital. Toddlers to the Elderly use public libraries and will libraries be sadly missed if they are axed.

Strategic planning for libraries in the ACT including

I am not sure what to say about current practice and potential revisions to current practice and the associated benefits, but I do know that opportunities for community involvement are vital.

I want to retain non-digital offerings. Books are my life blood. I like the feel of one, the way you can bookmark it and just pick it up without any of the hindrances with digital offerings. I have used the technological training forums but obtain my information related to my iPhone directly from the vendor. I don't need education or training as I attend U3A classes. I follow my own path in life-learnings, through borrowing books.

Being able to conduct book reading groups as a public use in library accommodation is important, as it brings people together and they can discuss their opinions of books. My only objection is that most people think that reading a book is reading a novel! I generally read non-fiction as I have an insatiable thirst for knowledge. Not that novels are not educational; they are. I just don't have the patience these days to read one as English literature was my university major. I borrow a lot of recipe books! While I use Wikipedia, there are some limitations with that. Books from the library are better.

I think spaces for learning, creativity and social inclusion are all important, as a library is a better forum space than the pub! The social entrepreneurial café, Café Ink, at Woden is a special space at Woden library and functions as a social gathering meeting spot. It is such a good idea! One can discuss one's books, one's personal life and contribute to the community.

We saw the demise of Access Canberra at Woden with the Shopfront as it was called, moving to the Cosmopolitan Building; thereby breaking the co-location of the library. A lot of people liked the 'handiness' of the two. I have given direction to lost people on more than one occasion.

The extent to which ACT Libraries are positioned to respond to flexibly to meet current and future community opportunities and demands

It is good that you are asking if we would like other library services. I have expressed my dissatisfaction with the seating, in particular the lounge seating, at Woden, in the comments book but nothing has changed. I was complaining about how my legs are not long enough to go over the seat with my back aligned to the back of the chair. If I sit back, my legs go straight out in front from the hips so that my back is resting against the back of the lounge or the lounge chair. Not only that, I think ACT Libraries could do with face-lifts.

I have no idea about current or future community opportunities and demands, except their demise. I know that it would be digital or technological! Something I am not too keen on. Reading a book on an e-reader is just not my thing. Mainly because they all seem to be novels and not non-fiction. Can one obtain non-fiction in an e-reader?

The extent to which ACT Libraries are accessible to the community, including:

Opening hours are good at Woden but I have thought that the hours could be changed to opening at 9am instead of 10am. Woden is handy for me but Weston Creek has had a library, and as much, a swimming pool, on the want-list for decades, while new suburbs at Molonglo are getting these services before Weston Creek does. Disability access does not affect me but as policy it is very important for those who need it. Not only disabled but the elderly. I might need disability access in the future as I am in my 60s.

The cost-effectiveness of existing branches

I know that if the libraries are not cost-effective, then they would probably go but that would be a great loss. Maybe there has even been a drop in the number of people going to libraries but like buses, which are poorly patronised, they must remain to serve the needs of those who want them to remain. It is fantastic that libraries offer to the public a purchase service, so that a reader can request a library purchase of a new book. Demand for borrowings is great because when I request books online for borrowing, I often have to wait several weeks for the other readers to return their copies.

Comparative analysis of ACT Libraries with library services in other jurisdictions and community take-up of these services

Katoomba Library in the Blue Mountains has in the last couple of years been upgraded to a cultural centre and the environs are state of the art. It is a meeting place and serves the reading public, even if they only use the café. I am not sure of the size of the library but it is the most modern building in Katoomba! Obviously the Katoomba and Blue Mountains Council thought it worth the trouble and the cost to build this new feature right in the centre of the town, for the continuing education and social requirements of the residents there and access is very easy for all, the even disability access. It provides a resting point for those grappling with the hills which are there. The toilets are state of the art! They compare well with Canberra Airport!

Any legislative considerations that may be relevant

I have no idea about legislative considerations that may be relevant.

Please don't axe ACT Libraries! I realise that times are changing but meeting places are more important than ever, as we seclude ourselves with digital technologies. Young people need them, especially when they are under drinking age. Toddlers and young children and their parents need libraries!

Thank you for your time.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully

(Ms) Jennifer Holmes

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