



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT AND CITY SERVICES

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Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into ACT Libraries

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From: Margaret Curran
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To whom it may concern

Public libraries play an integral role in our local communities and should continue to do so into the future. This is particularly given the growing use of digital and social media which, whilst being great forms of information exchange, do not always provide much needed face to face communication for people of all ages. This is self-evident in visiting our local libraries on any day and seeing families with children attending story time, people reading newspapers, or those attending groups such as 'Knit and Natter', as well as those reading and borrowing books or making use of the internet facilities.

Of course we need to move with the times, and the availability of BorrowBox and other on-line facilities should continue to grow. While such amenities provide valuable on-line services for all, and particularly those with mobility challenges, they should be seen as an adjunct to, rather than a substitute for, locally accessible real buildings with real books. This means that our smaller local libraries are as important as the larger ones located in town centres, acknowledging the associated overhead costs. In the ideal world, (and in accordance with Walter Burley Griffin's vision for Canberra), every suburban shopping centre would have it's own mini-library staffed by a local resident. Whilst this may be an unrealistic ideal, the committee may be aware of some of the little street libraries springing up around Canberra on the initiative of local residents. It would be worthwhile considering the role of such facilities as part of this Inquiry.

With our current libraries consistency of staffing where possible (and acknowledging the need for flexibility) would be very helpful in fostering a sense of community and belonging.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the ACT Public Libraries Inquiry.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Curran

