



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, Mr James Milligan MLA

Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into ACT Libraries

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Committee Secretary
Inquiry into ACT libraries
ACT Legislative Assembly

My experience of ACT libraries

- Kippax is my local library and therefore the one I use the most, but I drop into other branches from time to time.
- I am continually borrowing from the library and frequently have 40-50 items out at one time.
- I borrow books (fiction & non-fiction), audio books, DVDs, & CDs.
- I constantly search the internet site of the library for specific books, as well as authors & topics (fiction & non-fiction).
- I am constantly using the electronic on-line reservation system to line up books I want to read or use for research.
- I use the text alert system to let me know when a book I have reserved has arrived at Kippax.
- I use the photocopier to copy things of interest.
- From time to time I put in a request for the library to purchase a book that I am particularly interested in (although this is rare as most titles I look for are in the library, even those receiving current attention).
- From time to time I attend community activities held in the library meeting rooms such as scrabble.
- My book group of 30 years borrows from the Reading around Canberra system. About half the books we read each year are borrowed from this system.
- Since my partner retired last year as a regulatory biological scientist, he has attended various courses run by the library (such as "Live your best life", a series of 5-6 interactive sessions) which he regarded very highly and found to be very useful.

My assessment of ACT libraries

- Every time I enter the Kippax library, the thing that jumps out at me is the sense of community. People may be reading papers, chatting, using PCs, sitting in lounge chairs reading books, chatting in the open community room, browsing the stacks, studying, reading stories aloud/playing in the children's section. There are all ages, multicultural backgrounds, a range of personality types. The vibe is comfortable, relaxed. The library staff make everyone welcome and handle all enquiries and all situations without judgement or prejudice. I cannot think of any other community facility which offers such an environment for such a cross section of the community. This is to be cherished and recognised for its contribution to the sense of community in the ACT.
- At Kippax, the 2 sessions a week of reading to small children is clearly a great hit with the local community with up to 100 children and their parents/grandparents attending. This is a delight in its own right - the energy and excitement is a joy to experience, not to mention introducing children to the wonders of stories and reading. As well, it is another instance of the library bringing a cross section of the community together which is not available elsewhere in the community - & the latter is to be encouraged wherever it occurs to enhance the harmony of the ACT community.
- The staff at Kippax are unfailingly welcoming, relaxed and helpful with any enquiries. They clearly know a lot of the regulars but have gone beyond the polite, impersonal interactions one would expect, to engaging and getting to

know individuals in the library community, and building relationships with them. I have no doubt this contributes enormously to people being attracted to the place and comfortable spending time there. I am well aware that the tone set by the staff is a product of the team leader as well as the way the team works together. Until recently, the team leader was Pamela Chittendon and it was quite evident that there was a collegiate working relationship across all the staff under her subtle leadership. I sincerely hope that this is not eroded as a result of the change because it is pivotal in all that I have described about the sense of community that pervades Kippax.

- I have used libraries throughout Australia when I have been on holidays in various locations, especially in regional locations such as Newcastle. Each time I use a library elsewhere, I am reminded of how extensive the ACT catalogue is compared with other library locations.
- It is an outstanding service to be able to search the catalogue on line, make reservations that are delivered to Kippax, and receive texts to let me know when they arrive.
- The design of the Kippax library is superb - much natural light through big windows, lots of open space without clutter or the place dominated by stacks, comfortable lounging areas with lounge chairs, areas for people to work/study quietly, while not being intruded on by young children having a great time in the children's section, study areas that can be quickly cleared to allow everyone coming to children's reading time (100+ !!!) to fit in comfortably. The staff at Kippax are to be commended for the changes they have made to the venue to allow all these disparate activities to blend harmoniously in the building.
- Kippax's location is also ideal, being at the hub of Kippax, and right next door to the bus interchange, allowing accessibility to those using buses and "Shank's Pony", as well as cars.
- The opening hours at Kippax six days a week works well for using the library for its multiple uses. The Saturday opening hours are essential for those in the Monday to Friday workforce who would not otherwise be able to utilise the range of library services.
- In short, much would be lost in terms of community, inclusion and harmony, if Kippax Library was merely a "depot" to borrow books and resources from.

Jenny Nash

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Friday 21 September 2018