



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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SUBMISSION TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY IN RELATION TO ACT LIBRARIES

WHAT I LIKE ABOUT THE LIBRARY SERVICE

1. There's not much wrong with the library service, and there's probably no library which would not be improved with more staff, more space, more programs and more collection items, so while I have made suggestions for improvement, I think that overall the service is well-run and highly valued by the community.
2. Being able to order books online, then receive an SMS message when they are ready for collection, is a great service.
3. I enjoy browsing the new book shelves and often borrow from them, and although I understand the library can't buy every new book, I wish it could buy more of them.
4. Opening hours are OK (I mainly use Dickson), but I think branches should open at 8:30am so that people could visit after dropping kids off at school. Weekend opening hours (at least for Dickson) are fine.
5. Internet access for those who would not otherwise have it is very, very important, especially with more and more government business conducted online.
6. Digital literacy classes like 'Tech savvy seniors', and 'What do I do with this smart phone my granddaughter has just given me?' are important in terms of social justice and equity of access to technology.
7. The children's programs are wonderful – for both children and their parents.
8. Co-location with other services e.g. Civic library and licence renewal, is a great idea – after all the library is open when government offices are closed.
9. The Home Library Service is greatly appreciated by its customers and with an ageing population, usage is likely to increase. It says the ACT Government cares about its community.

WHAT I THINK COULD BE IMPROVED

1. Apart from the wonderful children's programs, and the programs and events advertised on the website, interaction between library staff and customers seems to be limited to managing Internet bookings, fixing printing problems and other low level tasks. It would be great if staff were able to give advice on what to read/view/listen to next.
2. With the widespread adoption of streaming services the library service may be able to reduce its expenditure on DVDs and CDs and spend more on new books, including ebooks.
3. The library's Sirsi Dynix catalogue system has a very plain user interface which could easily be made more attractive to encourage use. Also, there are unimplemented modules within the system, for example, Visibility, which would direct library users from Google to the library's catalogue.
4. The location of branches needs to follow the pattern of population growth.
5. I think the library service could experiment with member advisory groups at a local level. For example, the Dickson library advisory/reference group could meet once a quarter to review usage patterns and make suggestions for collection development, activity programs and other issues of local concern.
6. Dickson library is taking soooooo long to be fixed.
7. There are cafes at Woden and Gungahlin. Why not in all branches? The space required need not be much more than the setup at CMAG, and it would encourage people to stay and make more use of the collections and the spaces.
8. The government appears not to do a whole lot to promote the library and its services. Vanessa's updates on ABC radio are always interesting, but there seems to be little other promotion. Maybe the Chief Minister's letterbox drop reports could consistently mention what's on at the library. Or reminders on milk containers??

From Ian McCallum [REDACTED]

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29.8.18