



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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LACommitteeETCS@parliament.act.gov.au

Dear Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide a submission on the public libraries in the ACT. I am a regular and keen user of the library, and have been using it since I was a child. To me, there is nothing more valuable than the ACT government provides for me culturally than the library, and I hold the library system close to my heart. It gives me access to a whole world of books and through that, to dreams!

I would also like to acknowledge the role of the library in supporting the community, particularly the vulnerable in our society. People who have nowhere to go during the day are provided with a safe place that they can feel secure and have access to computers, books and some social interactions. I think the value of libraries for this cannot be underestimated. I was unemployed for a short period of time, and most days I would visit the library to use the internet or simply to have somewhere to go that wasn't expensive. I think a key indicator for how valued the libraries are is how many people are waiting to gain admission every day.

I most regularly frequent the Belconnen library, but have used the Tuggeranong, Woden, Civic and Kippax libraries at particular times as well. I have used many services, including the facilitated book groups, the run your own book groups, the giggle and wiggle sessions and the story time/craft sessions as well.

Attending Giggle and Wiggle on a Thursday with my children was a real highlight each week and I made some good friends through that process. Early introduction to the library is also essential for building strong literacy in children.

The best things about the library

- The use of the online request system (allowing requests across the whole of the ACT is wonderful) , and being notified via text message that your book has arrived
- The range of books you can suggest to be purchased
- The range of children's books
- The 'BorrowBox' online lending system
- The physical buildings
- The 'can't borrow til you bring something back' rule –this is the best way to ensure people return books on time.

Ideas for improvement

- The ACT library website member log in doesn't not work very well on phones and could easily be more user friendly. An app would be ideal.
- I would also like to be able to access my user history – all the books I have ever borrowed at my fingertips would be excellent.
- The search function on the website – you often have to adjust the parameters of the search significantly to turn up the book you know the library holds.
- Better displays of books or other media at the library
- More low key events – eg you could hold a lunch time reading of a classic novel or a new book
- The opening hours are not conducive to working full time and being able to access the library easily. It would be good if there was some later night openings, and also longer opening hours on the weekend.

I am a passionate and evangelical user of the library – I find it an invaluable part of my life. Thank you for providing this service and such wonderful books. My deepest thanks goes to all those who administer the library, those who serve the public, those who work in the library policy and maintain the collections and also those who do the myriad tasks that keep a library system going – the delivery persons for the book requests, those who keep the air conditioners and heaters on, those who refurbish and clean the library. I truly believe that the ACT Libraries is the jewel in the crown of the ACT government.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission.

Alicia Costello

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