



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), Mr James Milligan

Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into ACT Libraries

Submission Number: 078

Date Authorised for Publication: 17 October 2018

From: Judith Pabian
To: [LA Committee - ETCS](#)
Subject: ACT Libraries Review
Date: Tuesday, 25 September 2018 12:30:26 PM

Dear Committee,

Apologies for missing the deadline for official submissions. This is the first chance I've had to sit down and deal with non-work, non-home-and-family matters. I'll be brief and address particular parts of the ToRs.

Role of libraries within the ACT community:

I live in Lynham. I regularly use Dickson Library and observe it as a focal point bringing together a wide range of local communities.

Spaces for learning, creativity and achieving social inclusion:

Public libraries may be unique as significant community-building and integrating facilities available to everyone. They increase users' awareness of and inclusion in their diverse communities through serendipitous encounters. Thus they offset the isolationism of overworked lives in which human connections may easily be limited to the monocultural and/or purely digital.

Education and training opportunities:

I mostly use Dickson Library to access research materials because the ACT Library offers easily-accessible non-fiction holdings of relevance to my work as a historian. It provides essential, **easily accessible** sources. I also use the National Library. I hardly ever use the ANU library because its online system is convoluted and its use of faint type and lines make it very difficult for people like me with lesser visual ability.

I think it would be brilliant if public libraries were extended to **include two or three study rooms** that could fit up to five people say and were reasonably sound-proofed. This would be great for community groups, reading groups and for schoolies.

Facilities available for public use:

I am also a recreational borrower of books, DVDs and CDs. I occasionally use newspapers and news journals - the library allows me to catch up on papers I've not been able to buy myself. An important part of my use of the Dickson Library used to be studying there. The removal of study carrels a couple of years back denied users a clear compartment for their books and equipment and this no longer works for me.

Toilets are an important facility at the library. Please restore Women only toilets. Sorry guys but women keep toilets cleaner, more hygienic. Since Dickson Library introduced "Unisex" toilets, as a woman I've noticed/endured piss-spots all over the floor where males have shaken their dicks or missed the loo and of course, they wouldn't dream of wiping up the mess. This move is hardly equitable - I get the equal opportunity to use a filthy toilet? I don't think so. If, for access purposes you want to create an all access situation, then have Female only, Male only and "Unisex".

Other government services co-located with ACT Libraries:

Fantastic, do it - but do it thoroughly and not at the expense of downgrading ACT Library spaces. In busy lives it would be great to have these services available on weekends - e.g. renewing driving licences for people like me who need to front up personally due to special requirements.

Accessibility to the community:

Opening hours - weekend opening is a must these days. It allows families and full-time workers to access the local library. Also Friday nights would be great too.

Locations - have lots of them. Certainly main centres like Dickson and build them into new town developments from the get go. New centres need the community building potential of public libraries as much as they need shops, schools etc. Especially because schoolies use libraries after hours.

Disability access - conventionally, disability planning is often limited to physical access. **I am visually less abled** and have been all my life - I'm functionally monocular so I have no depth vision and moving from one part of a document to another or one part of a scene to another takes much much longer than well-sighted people. So believe me, I'm the one who deals with this every day, reading books on screen is woefully slow and frustrating. For me it is almost impossible and certainly grossly time-wasting to negotiate some digital sources. I can't efficiently read digital books - even on a larger screen, I can't deal with faint lined, faint font documents or forms, I can't easily decipher documents that are cluttered up including, sadly, Facebook. So what this means for me is really clear, simple graphic design of catalogues etc and the continuing availability of hard copy sources. Generally I believe it is still considered not great medically for people to spend too much time on screens. For me it's just impossible.

Please feel free to contact me for follow up.

Judith Pabian

