

**Women with Disabilities ACT Response to  
Inquiry into Libraries ACT  
QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**1. Do you have any concerns about the fact that residents of Weston's nearest library is in Woden?**

There are several issues with Woden library being the closest library to Weston Creek. Woden's facilities themselves are aging and there are some accessibility issues. This can only be compounded by Weston Creek's increasing population in the Molonglo Valley. There are also many people living in Weston Creek who would go to Cooleman Court and the facilities there rather than Woden, that would benefit from a closer, newer library. Travel to Woden can take over 30 minutes by public transport from parts of Weston Creek, which may be too far for people with disability, older people or people with chronic illness. This prevents them from accessing vital social networks, activities and resources provided by libraries.

**2. Would your organisation support the expansion of shop front style libraries (e.g Kingston library) across Canberra? For example at Cooleman court and Erindale.**

Shop front style libraries could be a solution for already crowded centres however, they do not provide the same level of community facilities that a fully-fledged library does. The activities provided by larger libraries are very valuable for social inclusion, and where possible, should be provided regionally to support marginalised members of our community, such as women with disability and older people.

**a. Do you see any advantages to this model of libraries if it meant relocating resources away from the regional libraries?**

The only advantage would be that there are more access points for service. If libraries integrate government service currently provided by Access Canberra, that could be quite helpful. However, large, high quality facilities would still be more advantageous.

**3. Does your organisation support the use of micro libraries – ie old phone boxes, as a way of bringing books and internet access to local suburbs?**

**a. Do you see any advantages or disadvantages of this?**

I can see some advantage in having free local internet access in suburbs – just look at the patronage of CBRFree wifi in the city. However, the recent repeated vandalism of the O'Connor unofficial community library could indicate that would be a threat for books kept in micro libraries. I would also be concerned about the accessibility of things like old phone boxes – the shelves may be too high for wheelchair users, for example.

One WWDACT member has been a patron of the Library at Home service for many years and has found that to be the most accessible solution. Could resources be better spent on expanding an on-demand service like that?

**b. Do you see any advantages to this model of libraries if it meant relocating resources away from the regional libraries?**

No, as micro libraries offer very few of the facilities that libraries have. Free wi-fi requires people to still bring their own devices and does not allow them to be assisted. There are also no ways to facilitate social events.