



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

Submission Number: 067

Date Authorised for Publication: 26 September 2018

value and legitimate place of languages and facilitating the sharing of language skills fosters a more inclusive, cohesive and creative society.

As with Giggle & Wiggle and Story Times in English, the bilingual sessions led by skilled library staff and community members provide networking opportunities and increase parents' awareness of how they can contribute to the cognitive and literacy development of their children. Through their professional staff and multilingual resources, the Libraries thus help lay a foundation for success at school for all.

Hearing and seeing other languages in libraries can encourage families with non-English-speaking backgrounds to make more use of libraries, explore and access their resources, and read to their children in whichever language they feel most comfortable.

Research shows that maximising opportunities for children to continue to develop their linguistic and conceptual skills in their home languages assists with English language learning. It also helps to maintain connections with family and to develop a sense of identity and belonging, all of which are essential for personal and social development.

Libraries in the ACT also support learning throughout the school years. They provide access to reference materials that complement and supplement resources at school and at home. They also provide free access to a range of interesting books and written materials of all types, thus helping to encourage the love of reading - the key to life-long learning. The availability of library branches after school hours and at weekends makes available safe quiet places for homework and study. Libraries ACT are well patronised by students for meeting each other or mentors/ tutors, which all support discussion and deep learning.

Finally, we acknowledge the resources and materials in community languages that ACT Libraries make available for the many Canberrans who are more proficient in these languages than English and/or wish to learn or improve their skills in other languages.

Final remarks and suggestions for forward planning

While we understand the importance and increasing popularity of eBooks and online access to other resources, libraries are important social and educational centres. The role of their physical settings, with the richness of interpersonal and language interaction they can provide, should not be underestimated. Their multiple locations, easy access by public transport and extended opening hours are key factors to the value and social impact of ACT Libraries.

Given the many benefits of bilingualism, and how promoting it can assist access and equity, we hope that ACT libraries will continue to offer and further develop programs and activities that support language and literacy development in English as well as other languages

We suggest that further ways to publicise library activities be explored to ensure that all sectors of the community are aware the educational, training and social possibilities they offer. For example through broadcasting in other languages on community radio.

The library should regularly review its range of materials in other languages and in which branches they are held to ensure they match the demands and needs of a changing multicultural demographic.