



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

Submission Number: 075

Date Authorised for Publication: 26 September 2018

From: [REDACTED]
To: [LA Committee - ETCS](#)
Subject: Submission
Date: Sunday, 23 September 2018 7:48:08 AM

Submission to the ACT Standing Committee on Environment and Transport and City Services inquiry into library services.

From Gerard De Ruyter, [REDACTED]

Submission:

My submission focusses on the central role that libraries play in our community (Terms of Reference 1). That role is multifaceted – to some, libraries are just a welcome free resource to support their learning or their interests (through primary school, high school, college and beyond), to others they are a community hub, eg for storytelling or talks, or a place to have access to promotional brochures on a range of events elsewhere in the community. And to others, they simply give vital connection with other human beings. There are many isolated lonely people out there, and libraries give refuge and connection at little personal cost.

And in this digital age, a repository of books shows up the intrinsic benefits that hard copy provides – a visible, tangible, tactile collection of words of wisdom from around the world all in one spot, and free for the asking. What a bounty they symbolise!! God help us if the day comes that we move away from this model to a purely digital ‘virtual’ library model; they provide no gathering point – no focal point.

In terms of the ‘cost effectiveness of existing branches’, I fully support maintenance of the current branch structure. I support having libraries in each town centre and major suburb, in order to maximise ease of access. Do not rationalise your holdings any further! Do not underestimate the power of libraries in the minds of ACT residents – we know the value of books (and videos and magazines and CDs etc), and – just like the ABC – hold them dear to our hearts – tamper at your peril!!

Thank you for your time.

Gerard De Ruyter