



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

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Minister for City Services
Minister for Community Services and Facilities
Minister for Multicultural Affairs
Minister for Roads
Member for Murrumbidgee

Ms Suzanne Orr MLA
Chair
Standing Committee on Environment, Transport and City Services
ACT Legislative Assembly
GPO Box 1020
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Ms Orr

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the ACT Government Submission to the Standing Committee on *Environment and Transport and City Services Inquiry into ACT Libraries*.

On behalf of the ACT Government, I am pleased to provide the attached Submission. It incorporates input from directorates across the ACT Government.

The Submission identifies the importance of libraries in the ACT to the democratic process, literacy, lifelong learning, self-education, social inclusion and the economy. The Submission also highlights the commitment by the ACT Government to the provision of library services to the community, and the broad scope of services that Libraries ACT provides.

I look forward to reviewing the findings of the Standing Committee on this matter.

Yours sincerely

Chris Steel MLA
Minister for City Services

21 SEP 2018

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Submission to the
Standing Committee on Environment and Transport and
City Services

For the

Inquiry into ACT Libraries

By



17 August 2018

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Terms of Reference

The Standing Committee on the Environment and Transport and City Services inquire into the current and future need for library sites and the best, most cost effective model of library service points with particular reference to:

1. The role of libraries within the ACT community
2. Strategic planning for libraries in the ACT including:
 - a. Current practice
 - b. Potential revisions to current practice and the associated benefits
 - c. Opportunities for community involvement
3. The nature and extent of current and future community demand for different library services including:
 - a. Non-digital offerings
 - b. Digital offerings
 - c. Education and training opportunities
 - d. Facilities available for public use
 - e. Spaces for learning, creativity and for achieving social inclusion
 - f. Other government services co-located with libraries, and
 - g. Any other library services sought by the community
4. The extent to which ACT Libraries are positioned to respond flexibly to meet current and future community opportunities and demands
5. The extent to which ACT Libraries are accessible to the community, including:
 - a. Opening hours
 - b. Locations and
 - c. Disability access
6. The cost effectiveness of existing branches
7. Comparative analysis of ACT Libraries with library services in other jurisdictions and community take-up of these services
8. Any legislative considerations that may be relevant
9. Any other relevant matter

Introduction

“Freedom, prosperity and the development of society and of individuals are fundamental human values. They will only be attained through the ability of well-informed citizens to exercise their democratic rights and to play an active role in society. Constructive participation and the development of democracy depend on satisfactory education as well as on free and unlimited access to knowledge, thought, culture and information.

“The public library, the local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision- making and cultural development of the individual and social groups.

“[The public library is] a living force for education, culture and information, and as an essential agent for the fostering of peace and spiritual welfare through the minds of men and women.”¹

Libraries ACT provides the ACT community with a comprehensive range of public library services, and is also responsible for the ACT Heritage Library, which preserves the unique stories of Canberra and its people and places the history of the ACT on the national record.

Public library services in Canberra began through an extension division of the National Library of Australia, with a lending collection of fiction offered in 1948. Small, temporary libraries targeted at children opened in the early 1950s, and by the end of that decade a mobile library began operating across the region.

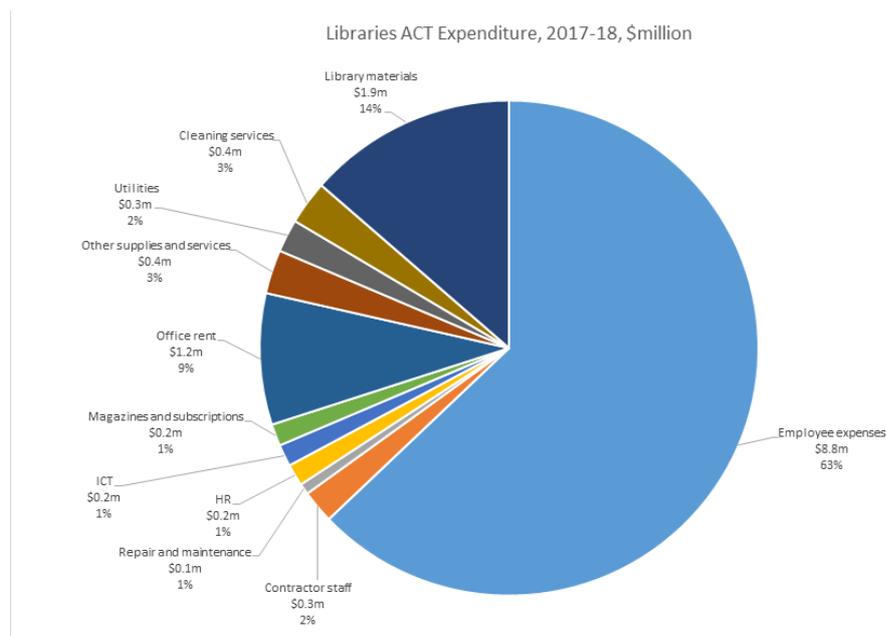
The name Canberra Public Library Service was adopted in 1960, and in 1961 a public library opened in Civic. The first permanent district library, which opened in 1969, was Dickson and additional libraries followed over the years.

In 1981, responsibility for the Canberra Public Library Service transferred to the Department of Capital Territory. Following self-government for the ACT in 1989, responsibility was again transferred, this time to the ACT Government.

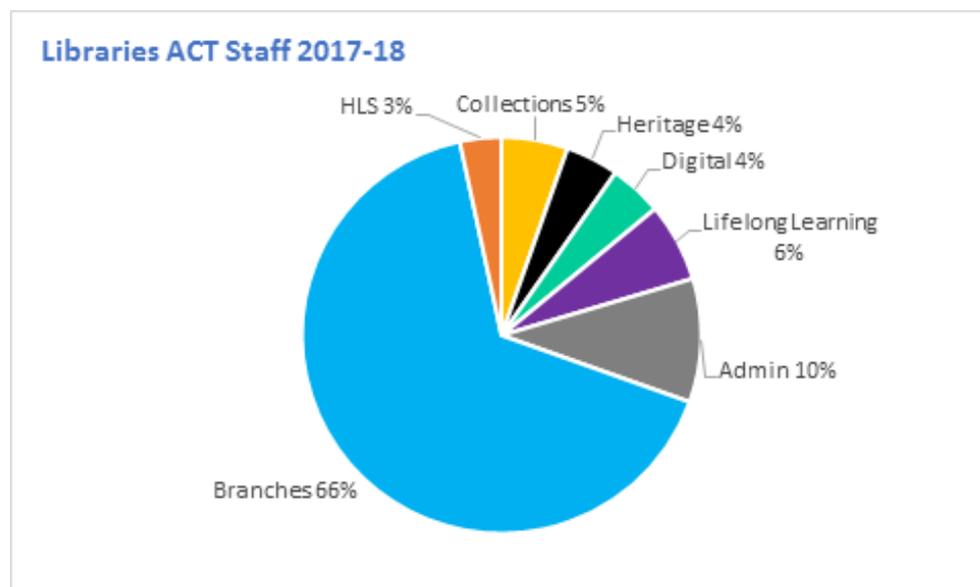
The ACT Government has shown its support for library innovation with changes in society and technology reflected in significant changes and additions to library services from the 1970s. This has included the introduction of an automated library system in 1990, provision of public access internet in 1996, and more recently, the availability of wifi, eBooks, and other digital services. In 1977, Woden branch library was the first library in Australia to be designed to include a café.

¹ IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 1994, *International Federation of Library Associations, 1994.*

The current funding of Libraries ACT is demonstrated in the following graph which shows how the Libraries ACT budget is allocated.²



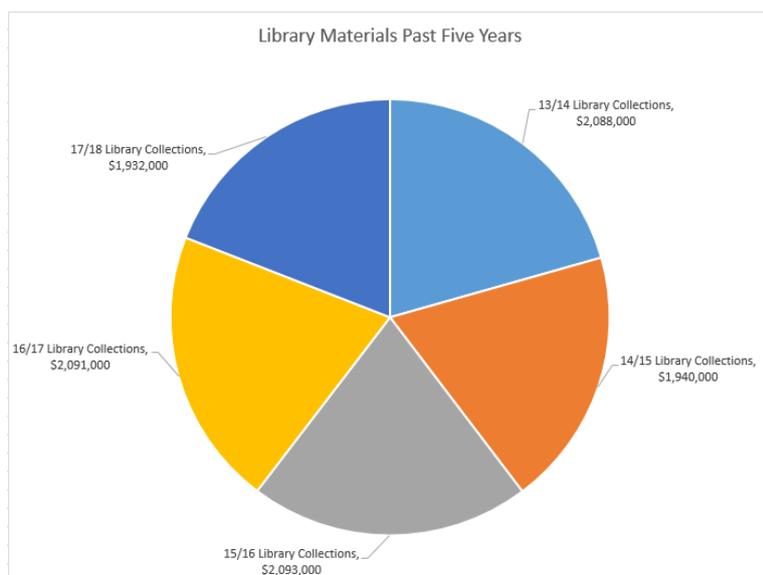
A summary of Libraries ACT employee roles is provided in the graph below.³



² Transport Canberra and City Services, 2018. (Note: HLS = Home Library Service)

³ Libraries ACT, 2018.

A summary of expenditure on library materials from 2013-14 to 2017-18 is below



An international perspective

The 1994 IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto⁴ outlines missions that relate to information, literacy, education and culture that should be at the core of public library services. These include:

- Creating and strengthening reading habits in children from an early age;
- Supporting both individual and self-conducted education;
- Providing opportunities for personal creative development;
- Stimulating the imagination and creativity of children and young people;
- Promoting awareness of cultural heritage, appreciation of the arts, scientific achievements and innovations;
- Providing access to cultural expressions of all performing arts;
- Fostering inter-cultural dialogue and favouring cultural diversity;
- Supporting the oral tradition;
- Ensuring access for citizens to all sorts of community information;
- Providing adequate information services to local enterprises, associations and interest groups;
- Facilitating the development of information and computer literacy skills; and
- Supporting and participating in literary activities and programs for all age groups.

Government policy and other conventions

The provision of services and programs in public libraries are guided by national and international standards and guidelines. They include, but are not limited to the:

- *UNESCO Public Library Manifesto*⁵
- *Guidelines, Standards and Outcome Measures for Australian Public Libraries*⁶
- *Early Literacy Framework and Strategy for Australian Public Libraries*⁷, and

⁴ IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 1994, International Federation of Library Associations, 1994.

⁵ IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 1994, International Federation of Library Associations, 1994.

⁶ *Guidelines, Standards and Outcome Measures for Australian Public Libraries*, The Australian Library and Information Association, 2016.

⁷ *Early Literacy Framework and Strategy for Australian Public Libraries*, The Australian Library and Information Association.

- International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) advice
 - *Guidelines for Library Services for Babies and Toddlers*⁸
 - *Guidelines for Children’s Library Services*⁹
 - *Multicultural Communities Guidelines for Library Services*¹⁰, and
 - A range of guidelines for people with special needs.¹¹

Public library services delivered by Libraries ACT align with a number of ACT Government strategies, including:

- Renewing Libraries: Libraries, Literacy and Learning Strategy 2015 – 2019
- Digital Canberra Action Plan 2014 – 2018: A Leading Digital City
- Chief Minister’s Statement of Ambition
- ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2015 – 2018
- ACT Multicultural Framework 2015 – 2020
- ACT Early Childhood Strategy
- ACT Human Services Blueprint
- ACT Government Infrastructure Plan 2011-2021
- ACT Women’s Plan 2016 – 2026
- ACT Children and Young People’s Commitment 2015 – 2025
- ACT Carer’s Strategy 2018 – 2028
- Disability strategy

Public library services in the ACT

In line with the UNESCO manifesto and national guidelines, standards and outcome measures, Libraries ACT offers a range of services to meet the recreational, educational, social, information and employment-related needs of library users of all ages and interests. These services are in line with other Australian public libraries.

The range of individual and community impacts includes:

- Literacy and lifelong learning;
- Informed and connected citizens;
- Digital inclusion;
- Personal development and wellbeing;
- Stronger and more creative communities; and
- Economic and workforce development.

Library trends and developments

In the current period of rapid economic, social and technological change, communities need the skills, capabilities and assets to both respond to challenges and capitalise on new and emerging opportunities.

Libraries are an invaluable asset in helping communities respond to change and are unique in their ability to do so. Arguably, few organisations or services have the capacity, or the ability to change so many lives. As noted by Anne-Marie Schwirtlich, the then CEO and State Librarian of the State

⁸ *Guidelines for Library Services for Babies and Toddlers*, International Federation of Library Associations, 2006-2007.

⁹ *Guidelines for Children’s Library Services*, International Federation of Library Associations, 1999-2003.

¹⁰ *Multicultural Communities Guidelines for Library Services*, International Federation of Library Associations, 2011.

¹¹ International Federation of Library Associations.

Library of Victoria: “No other agency in society has the multiplicity of roles, or user range and diversity, or potential to influence so many lives.”¹²

There are numerous reasons libraries play an important role in communities, particularly at this point in time. Libraries:

- Are activity generators -- they help to grow activity and movement
- Are supported by the public and are widely used by the community
- Contribute to the image of government and are widely recognised as a government service
- Can perform a range of functions and roles in the community
- Appeal to a broad cross section of the community
- Engender social and economic wellbeing
- Facilitate community capacity building

A range of trends are reshaping the role, function and nature of modern libraries in a number of areas, as outlined in *Shaping Library Services in Gungahlin*.¹³ They include:

- Meeting needs of an ageing population
- Meeting needs of young people
- Meeting needs of diverse populations
- Technology
- Co-location and activity hubs
- Program focus
- Design
- Cultural development
- Partnerships
- Space requirements
- Adaptive reuse of heritage buildings

Role of libraries

Central to the provision of public library services are concepts outlined in the *IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 1994*¹⁴. They include free access to information, including unrestricted, uncensored access to information and ideas, and that public library services are offered with equality.

It is with this in mind that Libraries ACT’s vision is “Literacy and learning for life”. In achieving this, the library seeks to champion literacy, learning and the pleasure of reading, and inspires and connects people, engaging them with their community and the world. It has a crucial role in:

- Lifelong learning -- Providing access to learning resources and programs on topics including health and wellbeing, sustainability, music, art, writing, science and life skills, and supporting learning outside formal education pathways.
- Connecting people with information and ideas in various formats (print, audio visual, digital, and new and emerging formats)
- Supporting literacy for all ages – Starting at birth and progressing through early childhood library resources and programs are essential in supporting children’s language development,

¹² *Libraries Building Communities: The Vital Contribution of Victoria’s Public Libraries: A Research report for the Library Board of Victoria and the Victorian Public Library Network*, State Library of Victoria, 2008.

¹³ *Shaping Library Services in Gungahlin*, Macroplan, 2008

¹⁴ *IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 1994*, International Federation of Library Associations, 1994
<https://www.ifla.org/publications/iflaunesco-public-library-manifesto-1994>.

which at age 3 is the single most important predictor of language skill at age 9, directly impacting their learning and lifelong achievement. This support continues into adult hood, with a volunteer adult literacy tutoring program for the approximately 31% of adult Canberrans unable to read or write well enough to successfully support themselves in daily life.

- Offering access to technology and support and opportunities to develop digital skills.
- Reflecting the diversity of our community – Sharing and celebrating different cultures, including that of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and of the various multicultural communities who have immigrated to Australia.
- Social inclusion – Offering a place that welcomes all members of the community, and provides access to information and services they may not be able to otherwise access. For some library users, a visit to (or from) the library is the only contact they have with other people.
- Providing meeting spaces and places which can act as a “community lounge room”.
- Providing a trusted, unbiased venue for Government to engage with the community and seek their feedback or ideas.

Public libraries influence the health and wellbeing of the community by addressing four key areas of public policy: social, cultural, economic and education. This influence is generated when libraries connect people with information and ideas in various formats and support learning in different ways – reading, listening, watching and doing – and do so outside of the formal education pathways which can be inaccessible, costly, and confronting.¹⁵

Libraries ACT’s *Renewing Libraries: Libraries, Literacy and Learning Strategy 2015-2019*¹⁶ addresses this through a focus on literacy, learning, and responding to the digital shift. A large part of this response is accomplished through library programs and events which offer people opportunities to learn, and link them to library resources to further their learning and use of the library.

As the peak body for libraries in Australia, the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA), has reported on some ways in which public libraries in Australia play an important role in the community. Examples are provided below.

*Australian Libraries: Support the Sustainable Development Goals*¹⁷:

“[Libraries] and access to information contribute to improved outcomes across the SDGs by:

- Promoting universal literacy, including digital, media and information literacy and skills, with the support of dedicated staff.
- Closing gaps in access to information and helping government, civil society and business to understand local information needs better.
- Providing a network of delivery sites for government programs and services.
- Advancing digital inclusion through access to ICT.
- Serving as the heart of the research and academic community.
- Preserving and providing access to the world’s culture and heritage. ALIA has been working to assist Australian library and information professionals and their

¹⁵ *Speaking Volumes: The impact of public libraries on wellbeing*, Carnegie UK Trust, 2014.

¹⁶ *Renewing Libraries: Libraries, Literacy and Learning Strategy 2015-2019*, Libraries ACT, 2015.

¹⁷ *Australian Libraries: Support the Sustainable Development Goals*, The Australian Library and Information Association, 2018.

organisations to be part of this international drive for greater social equality, improved economic prosperity and a more sustainable environmental approach.

“[Initiatives] are based on three roles for libraries:

- Supporting freedom of access to information outcomes.
- Providing examples of success, which can be used as part of Australia’s reporting.
- Helping to communicate the 2030 Agenda to the general population.”

*Australian Libraries: The digital economy within everyone’s reach*¹⁸:

“Australians must have access to the internet and the skills needed to create and locate accurate information. They must feel confident and safe online, and they must have a reason to be engaged with digital services. Libraries see the need and the opportunity. [They] have extended [their] remit beyond traditional literacy (reading and writing) into information and digital literacies. [They] have introduced public access computers and other digital devices into public libraries. [They] provide access to the internet for everyone, and [they] are working hard to build people’s confidence, with cyber safety education. [They] also give people positive reasons to become more digitally connected.”

*10 ways public libraries power smart cities*¹⁹:

1. Award-winning designs – A physical manifestation of smart city ambition, with engaging experiences contributing to a sense of community.
2. Technology hotspots – High speed internet connections and access to technology, training and cybersafety advice.
3. Economic prosperity – Provision of information and facilities for jobseekers, teleworkers, business start-ups, researchers and others.
4. Creative industries – Support for creators and publishers, introducing creators to the community and creating new audiences.
5. Literate nation – Supporting reading from birth, as well as supporting digital, financial and information literacies.
6. Informal learning – Taking a cradle to grave approach in offering lifelong learning with free training, programs and events, as well as resources to support interest in traditional and new and emerging subjects.
7. Formal education – Support through partnerships, and meeting and study spaces.
8. Digital access – Creating and sharing digital content, such as historical collections, and offering access to digital resources.
9. Equality – Providing services to members of the community with different or special needs, including those who are housebound, or visually impaired.
10. Engaging new migrants – Often one of the first points of contact for new arrivals, libraries offer material in languages other than English, English conversation classes for those learning English, and other services and connections.

*How public libraries contribute to the STEM Agenda*²⁰:

¹⁸ *Australian Libraries: The digital economy within everyone’s reach*, The Australian Library and Information Association, 2017.

¹⁹ *10 ways public libraries power smart cities*, The Australian Library and Information Association, 2016.

²⁰ *How public libraries contribute to the STEM agenda*, The Australian Library and Information Association, 2017.

“Governments across the world are agreed that in order for countries to thrive in today’s knowledge-based economy, their workforces need a strong STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) skills base.

“It is vitally important that people engage with the technical subjects, gain confidence and build a solid understanding so that they can take advantage of new technologies. At the same time, people need to develop the right side of their brain – the side that deals with creativity and imagination – so that they can not only use new technologies, but also be the innovators who create the next wave of inventions.

“Public libraries are uniquely placed as centres of informal learning for all ages, at the heart of their communities. They have embraced the opportunities to bring STEAM initiatives to all, from the very young through to those who are post-retirement.”

*National Welfare & Economic Contributions of Public Libraries*²¹:

This research into the economic benefits of public libraries in Australia found that the ACT had the best return on investment, with \$4.10 of benefit for every \$1 spent on public libraries in the ACT.

“The costs of operating existing public libraries are clearly identifiable through their recurrent operating costs.... The benefits of public libraries are wide ranging and encompass the value delivered to library users directly and indirectly.... Non-users of public libraries also gain benefits from public library services. These include the value non-users place on having the option to use public libraries in future, as well as the value of knowing that public libraries exist for others to use, both now and in future.... [It] is estimated that a net annual benefit of some \$1.97 billion is provided to Australians by public library services. This is reflected in a benefit cost ratio of 2.9, meaning that the annual benefits generated outweigh the annual costs by a factor of 2.9. This is considered to be a sound return on investment.... Public libraries stimulate the national economy through their recurrent operating expenditures, as well as by triggering library user spending, predominantly on retail goods and services.”

Strategic planning

Current practice

Libraries ACT has a strategic plan for its public libraries which is due to conclude in early 2019. It is entitled *Renewing Libraries ACT Libraries, Literacy and Learning Strategy 2015 - 2019*. This plan and the Library’s previous strategic plan were developed in a quite traditional model of community, stakeholder and staff engagement. The current strategic plan was developed using community feedback via surveys and staff input through workshops and the Library’s annual planning days. In developing the previous strategic plan, a series of community workshops were conducted and were advertised through the library branches. The Library receives constant feedback from the community via its website, the customer information email service and through feedback forms in library branches.

Included in the current strategic planning process is research into world’s best practice in libraries, learning cities and lifelong learning initiatives.

²¹ *National Welfare & Economic Contributions of Public Libraries*, SGS Economics and Planning, 2013.

The library service was also included in the Better Suburbs deliberative democracy program conducted by Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate throughout August 2018. Through this process it is clear that the community values our libraries and the services provided. The community feels that the broad scope of services provided by our libraries is not well understood and increased and improved marketing and communications is needed.

The ACT Heritage Library recently released its first Strategic Plan, *A Capital Identity*. This was developed through workshops with key people and organisations in the local research and history arena. Staff workshops were also conducted and there were individual consultation sessions with key stakeholders across the community, government and the library sector.

Potential revisions to current practice and associated benefits

Between 60% and 67% of Canberrans are library members. Many of these are engaged with the library, provide feedback and are likely to be interested in contributing to a new strategic plan for libraries in the city. It is important that the views of the 33% to 40% who are not registered users are considered and their needs met. Current practices to develop a new strategic plan are less likely to engage with these people.

Opportunities for community involvement

Given the increasing interest in our community in genuine co-design activities, this could be applied to planning for libraries into the future. Such an approach for a library service is best illustrated by the Aarhus Library in Denmark, where the library building and the services delivered were the result of an extensive community/government co-design process.

Well facilitated co-design for the Aarhus Library resulted in a beautiful bell that hangs in the foyer of the library. Each time a new baby is born in the local hospital, the parents press a button in the delivery suite and the bell rings in the library. Everyone in the library stops and acknowledges a new life in the community. Parents immediately have a strong connection with the library and so the reading, learning and literacy journey for the newborn begins. Such a community connection is possible from the collective power of a community/government co-design process.

The State Library of Victoria undertook a broad co-design process for their \$88.1 million redevelopment, including working with school students, families, and toddlers.

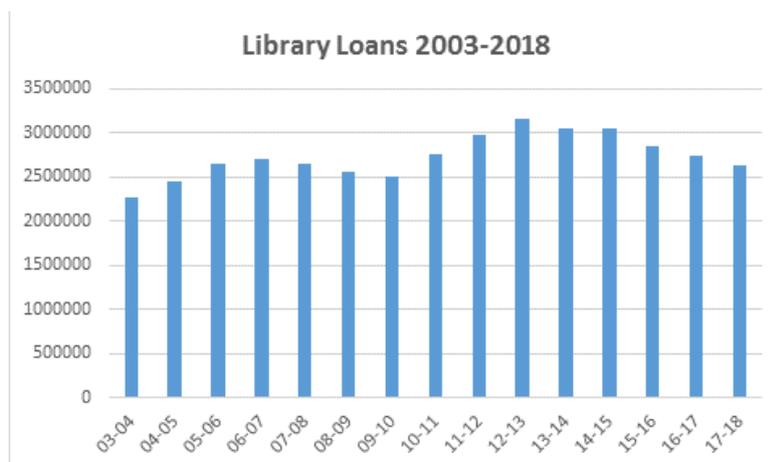
Community demand for library services

Non-digital services

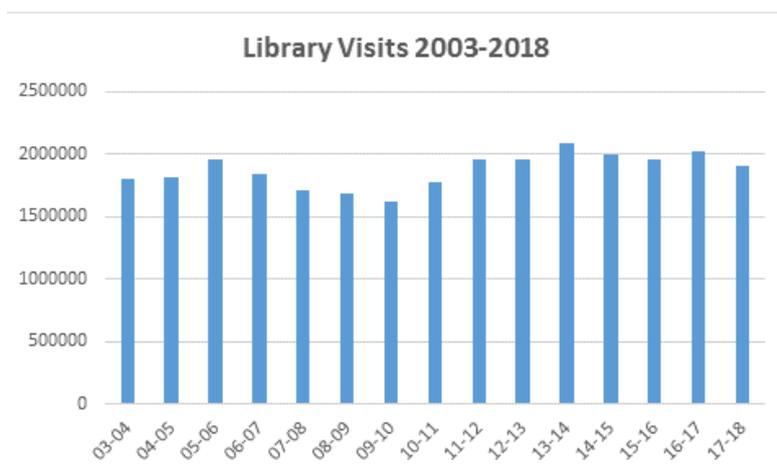
Non-digital library services include:

- A collection of more than 547,300 items, including fiction, non-fiction, large print, children's DVDs and CDs, and 106,200 in the ACT Heritage Library
- Resources in more than 18 languages other than English
- Book sets loaned to independent book groups – 168 groups are currently registered and have borrowed 9,999 items
- Inter-branch requests – requests borrowed from the library comprise approximately 14% of the total loans
- Inter-library loans to borrow items from other library services where they cannot be provided by Libraries ACT
- Suggestions for purchase made by the community (40% of suggestions are fulfilled, the rest are either not still in print, are duplicate requests, or do not meet the library's collection development policy)

Loans of resources have declined over the last few years. This is in line with libraries nationally. Some of this relates to access to the internet for answering specific information related questions but it also reflects the time-poor nature of our community, as evidenced by the continued high use of the Library’s request system.



The role of libraries as community meeting and learning spaces continues to grow, as evidenced by the strong trend in library visits. A recent exit survey of library visitors identified that after borrowing or returning items, most people visited the library to spend time in the library space (studying or reading) followed by using the Library’s wifi.

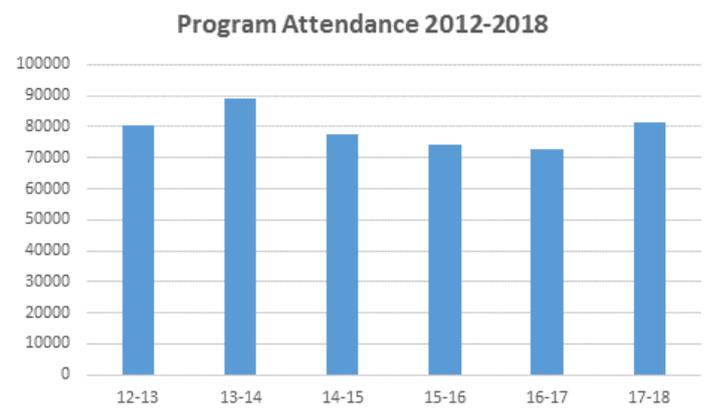


Community participation in lifelong learning programs in 2017-18 is summarised below.

Total program attendance by stream													
	Jul-17	Aug-17	Sep-17	Oct-17	Nov-17	Dec-17	Jan-18	Feb-18	Mar-18	Apr-18	May-18	Jun-18	Total
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	390	20	221	61	160	36	40	46	100	18	162	82	1336
Books Art Music	229	258	429	202	63	4	385	21	143	235	100	238	2307
Community	1141	1277	1047	1162	1206	601	817	936	1192	852	1182	1047	12460
Digital Literacy	90	55	46	63	54	34	115	69	49	193	60	34	862
Family Literacy	3574	6732	4601	5057	6660	3143	71	6123	5294	2671	5777	4577	54280
Health Wellbeing	6	106	389	8	19	2	3	7	33	0	0	0	573
Heritage	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	0	22
Life Literacy	45	0	15	21	35	14	40	8	1	16	41	21	257
Multiculturalism Diversity Disability	314	1077	463	414	568	151	10	1482	478	221	472	504	6154
School Visit	101	210	113	247	46	31	93	51	200	58	123	144	1417
STEAM	98	441	90	65	26	0	548	24	36	121	16	0	1465
Sustainability Environment	44	2	31	40	61	26	0	0	10	18	36	6	274
Total	6032	10178	7445	7345	8898	4042	2122	8767	7536	4403	7986	6653	81407

Total program attendance by program type													
	Jul-17	Aug-17	Sep-17	Oct-17	Nov-17	Dec-17	Jan-18	Feb-18	Mar-18	Apr-18	May-18	Jun-18	Total
Author Event	84	82	61	119	45	0	40	0	18	47	0	38	534
Giggle & Wiggle	2451	4405	3289	3223	4503	2154	0	3262	3810	1874	3604	3143	35718
Information Session	696	1224	1123	524	594	176	56	379	621	170	539	520	6622
Intro Digital Literacy 1-on-1 sessions	7	15	29	14	26	26	36	54	40	113	52	26	438
Intro Digital Literacy Group sessions	22	33	42	40	35	8	17	15	9	29	8	8	266
Other Library Program	50	238	118	490	146	49	62	1835	224	149	186	274	3821
School Holiday Program	447	461	254	119	7	0	1010	30	0	235	55	19	2637
Social / Community Program	1218	1220	1076	1153	1354	654	790	936	1022	900	1227	1028	12578
Story Time	1057	2500	1453	1663	2188	975	111	2256	1792	886	2315	1597	18793
Total	6032	10178	7445	7345	8898	4042	2122	8767	7536	4403	7986	6653	81407

Trend data for lifelong learning programs is below



Digital services

Libraries ACT offers services and opportunities to develop digital skills, incorporates technologies into the library and provides electronic access. This includes providing free access to computers, the internet and Wi-Fi; and maintaining a presence on social media.

The library shares information about library services, news and events online via multiple channels including its website, which has approximately 1.3 million visitors annually, and social media (with active accounts on Facebook and Twitter).

Digital library services include:

- Free internet use – around 72,000 hours used each year
- Free wifi and computers available for public use
 - 31 catalogue and eResources PCs (with approximately 4.3 million catalogue searches)
 - 89 other PCs (with 124,155 instances of use)
- A library website – currently being updated to provide an improved experience for users
- Access to millions of digital items through 30+ electronic resources such as reference databases, full text articles, and language learning programs
- Images ACT - searchable digitised images from the ACT Heritage Library
- ACT Memorial website honouring the men and women of the ACT who served in conflicts and peacekeeping missions throughout the world
- Digitised newspapers 1925-1995 contributed by the ACT Heritage Library to the National Library of Australia's Trove discovery service
- Downloadable digital resources – more than 425,000 digital resources were downloaded from the library in 2017-2018 including:

- 92,705 eBooks -- the library has subscribed to an eBook service for its members since 2006 and currently offers a growing collection of thousands of titles for download
- 87,910 eAudio books – available through the same services as eBooks
- 68,178 eMagazines – full, cover to cover magazines are available in digital form through the RBdigital service with members able to read them online or download and keep issues of the hundreds of popular Australian and international titles
- 78,836 music tracks – the full Sony Music catalogue of hundreds of thousands of music tracks is available to members via the Freegal service which enables members to stream and download and keep a specific number of tracks each week
- 98,110 articles and other downloads

Libraries ACT has been funded to replace its existing Library Management System (LMS) and Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) systems which no longer meet the needs of members. These systems are central to delivery of library services as they store and manage library collections and membership databases, and manage loans, returns, and requests, and security of library materials.

The new, integrated library management system will provide an all new catalogue and self-service kiosks which will make using the library easier and offer more options for members. Implementation of the new system is expected in early 2019.

Lifelong learning

Lifelong learning is a pillar of the Libraries ACT strategic plan with two of its strategic directions being to celebrate reading and literacy, and to be a catalyst for lifelong learning. Objectives supporting this include:

- Contribute to literacy and language development
- Foster book clubs and special interest groups
- Advocate and train for information and digital literacy
- Promote intergenerational learning
- Facilitate, host and conduct enriching programs and activities which meet the needs of the community

To this end Libraries ACT provides a range of formal and informal learning and training opportunities primarily delivered through:

- External parties offering classes and programs using Libraries ACT rooms and facilities
- A range of programs and training delivered by Libraries ACT staff, or brokered by them, covering a variety of topics in the following categories:
 - Books, art and music
 - Digital literacy
 - Family literacy
 - Health and wellbeing
 - Heritage
 - Life literacy (e.g. life skills and personal development)
 - Multiculturalism, diversity and disability
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture
 - STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Maths)
 - Sustainability and the environment

In 2017-2018 there were almost 82,000 participants in library programs, including 35,718 at Giggle & Wiggle and 18,793 at Story Time.

Parents are their children's first and most important teachers. Early literacy programs such as Giggle & Wiggle and Story Time offer an experience for children and their parents and carers which supports language and literacy development in the crucial early years. These programs model reading and related behaviours, and present books and activities which adults can share with their children at home.

Early literacy programs help develop:

- A love of books and lifelong use of libraries
- Pre-reading skills and a desire to learn to read
- Listening and language skills
- Cooperative behaviour as part of a group
- Understanding of simple concepts
- Imagination and creativity

Digital one-on-one and group training sessions are offered by the library to help the community embrace the opportunities provided by technology, and support them to develop skills, knowledge and confidence in using it. This is particularly important as more services, including Government services, move online. Those without skills or access need help to find and use them.

Technology changes rapidly and the community looks to the library to learn how to use new technologies which bring with them many benefits, risks and challenges encountered by both new and experienced users in our digitally connected world.

Libraries ACT is accredited as an eSmart Library through the Alannah and Madeline Foundation's eSmart Libraries program. Being eSmart means Libraries ACT and its staff are empowered to understand the benefits and risks of using technology, and responsibly use and manage it.

Services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Libraries ACT strives to reflect the diversity of the ACT community and has made it a particular priority to work with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and multicultural communities. To that end the library employs a coordinator for each of these areas.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Coordinator and the Multicultural Coordinator work closely with their specific communities to connect them with the library and its services, develop programs and services that meet their needs, and to share and celebrate their cultures. Work is also taking place to review and improve collections for these communities.

In 2017-18 the library offered programs sharing and celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture with the wider community, including about Aboriginal dot painting, artefact making, and scar trees and other indigenous plants. For International Mother Language Day the library offered story time featuring Ngunnawal language.

Libraries ACT participates in the annual Tracks to Reconciliation program organised by the Child & Family Centres during Reconciliation Week, and has hosted a photographic exhibition called 'Serving Country', which shared the stories and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women who served in the Australian Defence Forces.

Services for culturally and linguistically diverse communities

Regular programs for multicultural communities include the hosting of English conversation groups and orientation visits from organisations that work with new migrants and refugees, such as the Migrant and Refugee Service, and Navitas who deliver the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) in the ACT.

A recent initiative has seen Libraries ACT partner with Global Sisters to deliver online privacy and security awareness training to women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Global Sisters is a not-for-profit organisation working with women who have barriers to full time employment, and delivers a course comprising nine sessions to help them set up their own businesses. One of the sessions is a hands-on workshop delivered by library staff in simple English, which ‘unpacks’ words such as spam, phishing, malware and viruses so that the women know how to protect their personal details online, the importance of creating strong passwords and how to keep their devices secure.

The library also partnered with Child and Family Centres, Canberra Museum and Art Gallery and the ACT Bilingual Education Alliance to provide a Children’s Sanctuary at the 2018 Multicultural Festival. Children and their families were able to participate in a range of family friendly activities including Bilingual Story Times and learning to write their name in other languages. Through these activities, children were able to explore the wonders of different languages and cultures at a less hectic pace, and families were introduced to the library’s multilingual resources.

Through providing the library’s multicultural resources and programs the ACT Government is supporting multilingualism and the maintenance of mother languages for the community.

To celebrate Canberra’s diversity and the work of many organisations that work with and for people from a culturally and linguistically diverse background in Canberra, the library hosted a 2018 Harmony Day networking morning tea to allow people to meet each other and hear what work is being done to support and promote the benefits of multiculturalism. The event was positively received, with many people delighted they had been able to connect with organisations that they previously didn’t know existed, and in some cases are working towards similar goals as their own. It was a wonderful way to celebrate and share success in the community.

ACT Heritage Library

The ACT Heritage Library records the lives of Canberrans at home and in the wider community by collecting, preserving, promoting and providing access to a range of resources. It also provides research and collection support to ACT Government directorates and community researchers.

The ACT Heritage Library’s collection includes publications, archival collections, images, maps and plans, and ephemera. Original materials are acquired from individuals and local organisations, and in 2018 the library acquired the nationally significant collection of family and personal papers of Charles Weston, the ACT’s first Superintendent, Parks and Gardens.

In 2017-18, the ACT Heritage Library received more than 4,500 books and reports from the National Capital Authority documenting the planning of the ACT from the 1950s-1980s. It also deposited more than 450 ACT Government publications to the National Library ensuring the ACT Government meets its eDeposit obligations for government publications.

The ACT Heritage Library will soon re-locate from Woden to Fyshwick to address its physical and historical risks and capacity issues, and ensure the ongoing preservation and access to the documentary heritage of the ACT community.

An ongoing challenge for the ACT Heritage Library is the need to add 'born digital' publications. These are community resources which are only published electronically and need to be preserved and made accessible just as print publications are. The ACT Heritage Library continues to investigate affordable digital preservation systems.

Library spaces for public use

Library facilities available for public use include a variety of spaces for use by community groups to facilitate community learning, literacy, economic development and social inclusion. Rooms vary in size and charges for room hire vary across sites depending on size and facilities available. Cost is also determined by user category: commercial groups, not for profit groups, Government agencies, and small unincorporated groups with a learning outcome. The library is required to comply with the National Competition Policy with regard to commercial users.

Rooms are used by groups for varied purposes including:

- Language and English conversation
- Health, wellbeing and support
- Parent groups
- Special interests and hobbies (e.g. art, board games)
- Business meetings and workshops
- Community council meetings
- Government meetings, consultation and community education

Library spaces for learning, creativity and for achieving social inclusion

Libraries ACT remains flexible and responsive to community needs. The library stays informed of current research and identifies trends to be agile in its responsiveness.

Social inclusion is a priority along with equity of access. Along with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Coordinator and Multicultural Coordinator, it has also developed an Adult Literacy program being delivered by trained volunteers for native English speakers who need help with reading and writing; and is working with other agencies to identify opportunities for supporting homeless people.

Bilingual story times are currently being held in Hindi and Mandarin, with Arabic, Farsi and Vietnamese commencing soon. It is planned to introduce additional languages as suitable presenters are found.

Since 2017 Libraries ACT has partnered with Take 1 Leave 1: The Winter Coat Project to provide access to winter coats for disadvantaged people in each of our branches.

Other Government services and libraries

Other government services currently co-located with Libraries are the Access Canberra Drivers Licence Shopfront at Civic and joint use libraries with colleges at Gungahlin, Erindale and Lake Tuggeranong.

Further opportunities for co-location include the potential for small Access Canberra service points in libraries, and further development of existing relationships and/or co-location with Child and Family Centres.

The library hosts a program of Justices of the Peace and Legal Aid staff connecting with the community in libraries. Opportunities exist for this to be extended to other parts of Government, such as town planners.

Whilst Libraries ACT has a high level of membership it remains that approximately 33%-40% of the population are not current members or even users of the Library service. Through the work of the

library's Family Literacy Coordinator we have strong empirical evidence that many of the people who are accessing services through the Child and Family Centres are not library users.

Continuing to foster this relationship enables a targeted customer-centred approach and ensures that Libraries ACT can support families in developing early childhood literacy which is fundamental to the development of ongoing literacy and therefore civic engagement.

Libraries ACT supports other government agencies by, for example, offering services to:

- Council on the Ageing (COTA) by facilitating applications for ACT Senior's Cards
- Legal Aid ACT by providing the community with access to Legal Aid staff on library premises
- Other government agencies and directorates by helping to distribute information, providing spaces for community consultation and delivering collaborative programs.

Other library services sought by the community

Libraries ACT proactively researches current trends and stays abreast of community interests. It is anticipated that areas of future demand will include emerging technologies and applications. The most frequently cited request from the community is related to free access to community rooms, which is not something supported by the current fees and charges framework.

There is also a tension for the library in provision of resources, to balance buying enough copies of new and popular titles with wasting resources after an initial rush for them. Similarly there can be an expectation the public library should buy material which is for curriculum support (primary, secondary, tertiary), which is actually the role of school and university libraries, or to purchase resources for niche subjects which are not part of the library's collection development policy.

The library is planning to introduce a consumer council or group to enable subject matter experts from the community to provide input into new library initiatives.

Positioning of Libraries ACT to respond flexibly

To address current and future community opportunities and demands, it is important that Libraries ACT continues to monitor and respond to local, national and international trends within society and the library industry. Key strategies in achieving this include partnerships and collaborations, membership of national and international organisations, and workforce and professional development.

Libraries ACT is a member of peak bodies such as National and State Libraries Australia (NSLA) and the Australian Public Libraries Alliance (APLA) of the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA). Through such partnerships, Libraries ACT contributes, shares and accesses expertise, experience, innovation, continuous improvement and collaboration in striving for excellence in library services that meet community needs.

Libraries ACT is able to derive many benefits from being involved in projects or initiatives with the larger states.

Examples of recent and upcoming initiatives in this area include:

- The development of a National eDeposit service (NED) for electronic publications. NED will be "an online service for the deposit, archiving, management, discovery and delivery of published electronic material across Australia. It will provide an easy one-stop online deposit service for publishers; and will make more publications openly and easily available for users."

- An Indigenous Cultural Competency program to ensure libraries are more culturally safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and customers, and make “programs, services and collections accessible, respectful and responsive”.²²
- Communities of practice in areas such as visitor experience, digital preservation, and literacy and learning.
- Development of National guidelines, standards and outcome measures for public libraries.
- Nationally coordinated partnerships such as those with the Department of Communications to promote Stay Smart Online, the Alannah and Madeline Foundation and Telstra for eSmart Libraries, and the Australian book industry to support Australian authors and publishers through the annual Australian Reading Hour.

Locally, Libraries ACT has partnered with a broad range of ACT Government and community organisations to help the community access information and services, and continues to do so. These organisations include: Nutrition Australia, the ACT Writers’ Centre, ACT NoWaste, Child and Family Centres, Transport Canberra, and The Smith Family.

Libraries ACT has had early discussions with the Community Services Directorate and Education Directorate in relation to cross-agency development of strategies to work together on early literacy and collaboration to support the early years.

It is important to have appropriate expertise and professional staff to deliver library services, and to recruit staff with relevant qualifications and/or specialist skills and experience.

Professional development (PD) plays an essential role in positioning Libraries ACT staff to be aware, understand and be equipped to meeting opportunities and demands. Libraries ACT staff have access to a range of PD opportunities including library and related industry training, workshops and conferences.

As the industry’s professional association, the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) promotes excellence and supports ongoing learning and professional development. Opportunities available through ALIA and other industry peak bodies include: Mature Matrix Services for Seniors, STEM Programming in Libraries, Libraries and Metadata, Cultural Connections, Community Engagement, and Share It! Resource Sharing Futures.

Accessibility of Libraries ACT

Opening hours

Our libraries are open 411.5 hours per week, which compares well with bench marking libraries/jurisdictional comparisons.

Library opening hours take into account loan statistics, patterns of use and community feedback, and manages this by focussing resources in branches where they will be most effective. They aim to balance sustainable delivery of services with access to branches on weekdays, evenings and weekends, and takes into account an increase in use of electronic resources.

Often the community calls for additional opening hours however despite this feedback, when such hours have been offered, use has been low.

Evening opening at most branches was offered for many years, however low use caused this to be reduced to three evenings per week – Monday at Woden, Wednesday at Gungahlin and Friday at Dickson. Patterns of use often show a significant drop in use during the last 2-3 hours of opening.

²² National and State Libraries Australia <https://www.nsla.org.au/our-work>

Early morning opening from 8.30 am one day per week at each branch was introduced in response to community feedback in 2008. In order to make this possible, each branch also opened at 11 am one day per week. However, patterns of use in response to this did not reflect the requests and these hours of opening ceased at the end of 2010.

Sunday morning opening was offered in 2008 and use was poor and ceased by 2011 at which time Sunday afternoon opening was offered at five branches.

The three most recent changes to opening hours occurred in 2008, 2011 and 2013.

Locations

Libraries ACT has nine public library branches which are located in Tuggeranong, Erindale, Woden, Kingston, Civic, Dickson, Belconnen, Kippax and Gungahlin. By the end of 2018, the ACT Heritage Library will move from its current site on the first floor of the Woden branch to new premises at 255 Canberra Avenue, Fyshwick.

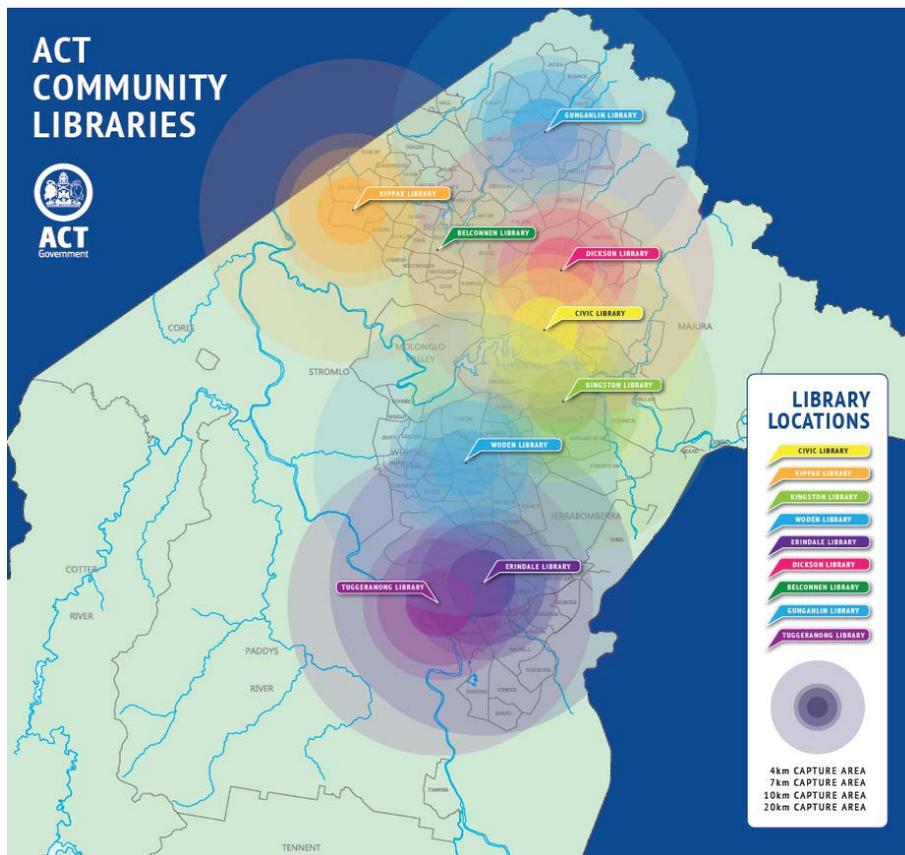
The following map demonstrates the location of each public library branch and the distances from each – in 4 kilometre, 7 kilometre, 10 kilometre and 20 kilometre radii.

The Gungahlin branch operates as a major regional library adjacent to the shopping precinct. It was designed to serve the total planned catchment of the Gungahlin area which was estimated at the time to be approximately 90,000 residents. On the other hand, Erindale and Tuggeranong Libraries cross over the same catchment and are less than 4 kilometres apart.

Research conducted in 2008 for the planning of Gungahlin Library found that 72.4% of respondents linked their library visits with other activities, with majority of respondents combining their library visits with shopping 73.2%.²³

This is borne out by the relative success of some branches over others. Woden, Dickson and Gungahlin are the best performing branches, each in close proximity to shops and relatively easy parking. These branches provide best value for money to the community as the costs of providing the service are amortised across more visits and loans. There are economies of scale to providing a major regional library compared to multiple small suburban branches.

²³ *Shaping Library Services in Gungahlin*, Macroplan, 2008.



Gungahlin Branch Library

The first Gungahlin library was a small facility originally opened in 2001. It relocated in 2011 as a shared facility with the Gungahlin College. The library was built on 21st century library principles of lifelong learning, literacy and social inclusion, with flexible learning spaces and up to date technology.

This library is quite well located, adjacent to the town centre shopping precinct. It has trialled a different method of displaying the non-fiction collection – in zones rather than by the Dewey Decimal system. This is an experiment in providing the community with a bookshop-like experience and is currently being reviewed to see if it will be rolled out across all public library branches.

Gungahlin is a relatively high performing branch although some in the community prefer to use libraries that are not shared with college students. It is the newest building in the library service, and as a result it is the one which most reflects 21st century, contemporary library design.

Kippax Branch Library

This library opened in 2005 and is a suburban rather than town centre branch. Its benefits include its proximity to the Kippax Fair shopping centre and the easy and free parking available. It is quite traditional in its design and lacks flexible learning spaces of a significant size.

Future planning for this branch will be important as the Ginninderry development progresses and the catchment population increases. Consideration of floor space, the types of spaces, facilities and service levels will be needed.

This library enjoys a strong relationship with the West Belconnen Child and Family Centre and works collaboratively to develop programs and other opportunities for the community.

Belconnen Branch Library

Opened in 1981, the Belconnen Library is a significant distance from other services that the community wants to access in a multi-purpose trip. There is limited parking around the library. Considering both the resident and working populations of Belconnen it would be expected that this branch performs as well, or better than, Woden, which is not the case.

The Belconnen Branch Library currently also hosts the Home Library Service, which provides home delivered library materials for the elderly and housebound in our community.

This building was recognised in 1982 with the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA) ACT Chapter Canberra Medallion, and in the 2010 ACT Architecture Awards as winner of the 25 Year Award for Enduring Architecture.

Dickson Branch Library

An Enrico Taglietti designed building, this branch was opened in 1969. It is a high performer and is the busiest branch per square metre. The building was awarded the Royal Australian Institute Association (RAIA) ACT Chapter 25 Year Award in 1995.

It is in an ideal location and the community have a great deal of fondness for this branch, many of whom grew up using it as their local library. In June 2018 the library was temporarily closed for urgent repair works and was partially re-opened on 6 July. As with buildings of this age, there are increasing maintenance issues and the library service is constrained about what can be undertaken in the library by the fact that it doesn't meet current building codes and it is heritage listed.

It is expected this branch will become even busier as more apartments are built along the Northbourne Avenue corridor and supermarkets are added to the shopping centre. This will necessitate some important future planning for the site. In November 2016, approximately 450 people arrived at the Dickson Branch for a single Giggle & Wiggle session. As a result of this increasing use, the library service introduced bookings and multiple sessions for this program.

Following is an example of some of the many comments received by Dickson branch after it partially re-opened in July 2018.

13/7/18. So glad that Dickson library is open again! I didn't realize how much I would miss it.

Hope everything is back to full operation soon 😊

14/7/18 Oh how wonderful to have our library back again! I didn't realise how much I used it & appreciated the "ambience" and helpful, friendly staff!! MK.

23/7/18 Great to have the library open. We love borrow box, audiobooks, playaways & all of the library resources. Great friendly staff. Thankyou!

Civic Branch Library

This branch opened on its current site in 2006 after moving from the city bus interchange. Visits and loans dropped following this move, with a lack of easy parking and London Circuit as a physical barrier for shoppers and workers in the city centre.

Currently the Civic Branch does not offer many programs for children, although as new city apartments come on line and should demographics in this area change, the library service may change this approach.

As with many city-based libraries, Civic is used frequently as a pick up point for requested items. The Access Canberra Drivers' Licence Centre is located in this branch.

Kingston Branch Library

Opened in 2009, this branch is the result of the first ALP/Greens Agreement. The brief to the architect for this library was 'funky New York loft bookshop' and the library is a diminutive 190 square metres. The community have embraced this little library although it is relatively expensive to run given the commercial rent paid and the number of visitors.

This branch was recognised in the 2010 ACT Architecture Awards with a commendation in the Interior Architecture category.

Woden Branch Library

The busiest branch in terms of visitors and loans, the Woden Branch is well located and used. It enjoys the benefit of being located adjacent to the Westfield Shopping Centre and Commonwealth Government offices.

Opened in 1977, the heritage listing on this building allows more flexibility than Dickson and when the ACT Heritage Library moves out later this year, a small refurbishment will occur. Already, the resumed space from the re-location of the Access Canberra shopfront is being put to good use by the community as a meeting and learning space.

Woden branch hosts a café which is a social enterprise. Through this, the ACT Government is able to support migrants starting out on their employment journey, while improving the customer experience for library patrons.

With the upcoming redevelopment of the Albemarle and Alexander buildings into apartments, there are opportunities to extend the range of services to residents in close proximity to the library and planning for this will occur in the very near future.

Erindale Branch Library

Erindale is a shared facility with the Erindale College. It is a relatively quiet branch. It is remembered fondly by locals as the branch opened in 1983 by Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales.

Like many of our branches, Erindale has been host over the years to different community groups and activities. It is also the branch with high ceilings and an installation which has displayed community quilts over many years.

Tuggeranong Branch Library

The most southern of our branches was opened in 1990 and was recognised with an architectural design award. While an award-winning building, the design does present challenges to operating a 21st century public library service. Shared with the Lake Tuggeranong College, this branch is located with a beautiful view of the lake.

This branch is tucked out of the way and there is not a lot of passing foot traffic to encourage new users. It is not close enough to the main street of Tuggeranong for the community to park the car and do the multi-purpose trip – shop and visit the library.

ACT Heritage Library

The ACT Heritage Library has been located on the first floor of the Woden Branch Library since 2001. The library's collection has outgrown the space available and will move to new premises in late 2018. The new space at 255 Canberra Avenue Fyshwick is being fitted with fire retardant walls and climate control to manage both temperature and humidity conditions for often fragile paper and other materials.

This relocation is a medium term, temporary one. In the future it is hoped that a purpose built or modified facility can be created, shared with Archives ACT and the Canberra Museum and Gallery. All three agencies, while with a different focus, need similar storage conditions to ensure the preservation of irreplaceable documents and objects of significance to the ACT's cultural and historical heritage.

Disability access

Some of our libraries were built in the 1960s and 1970s, at a time when disability access standards were not as well-developed as today.

The following services are currently available across the Libraries ACT network: Large Print collateral on request, translator and interpreter services, access to teletypewriter service and Speak and Listen service for speech or hearing impaired customers.

Collections are provided in audio and large print as well as a large range of e-resources. Public access computers can be set to large font for ease of reading with some computers being set up permanently.

All branches have had disability access and disability toilet facilities retro fitted.

There are a range of guidelines which will help inform actions for improving access for people with disability such as Web Content Accessibility Guidelines²⁴, with Libraries ACT compliant with WCAG 2.0 (AA). With a new website, currently being developed, the site will be WCAG 2.0 (AAA) compliant with the exception of some of the ACT Heritage Library pages.

An accessibility audit of Libraries ACT is planned for the latter months of 2018. From this a disability inclusion action plan will be developed for Libraries ACT, with the knowledge that it is often the barriers that exist in community rather than disability itself that limits a person's ability to fully participate. The principles of Universal Design²⁵ will be embedded in the plan.

Accessibility means more than physical access to a building and includes access to resources, programming and information. Access for people with disability is not a 'one size fits all' solution. Improvements that will be investigated over the next 12 months include improved services for people with a physical, hearing, vision, or cognitive impairment.

²⁴ Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, Web Content Accessibility Guidelines Working Group, 2008
<http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/>.

²⁵ Universal Design, simply put, is 'human-centred' design of everything with everyone in mind' and includes places, information, communication and policy which allow for access by everyone without special or separate design.

Cost effectiveness of Libraries ACT

The cost effectiveness of Libraries ACT branches (2016-17) is summarised in the table below.

Branch/Area	FTE	Employee Expenses Estimated	Non Employee Costs	Total Cost	Loans	Cost per loan	Visits	Cost per visit
Woden	10.9	\$949,234	\$392,558	\$1,341,792	467,040	2.87	372,860	3.60
Dickson	8.3	\$726,881	\$201,921	\$928,802	301,416	3.08	214,292	4.33
Gungahlin	9.3	\$813,978	\$243,737	\$1,057,715	315,099	3.36	342,261	3.09
Belconnen	7.3	\$649,300	\$280,691	\$929,991	297,128	3.13	179,923	5.17
Erindale	5.9	\$517,608	\$161,450	\$679,058	185,875	3.65	159,891	4.25
Kippax	5.9	\$517,608	\$134,299	\$651,907	194,829	3.35	125,171	5.21
Tuggeranong	6.3	\$551,141	\$224,149	\$775,291	177,794	4.36	293,787	2.64
Civic	5.8	\$517,608	\$483,373	\$1,000,981	118,669	8.44	150,659	6.64
Kingston	3.2	\$280,597	\$175,451	\$456,048	104,304	4.37	70,022	6.51
Home Library Service	3.2	\$244,028	\$8,732	\$252,760	36,015	7.02	n/a	n/a
Digital Loans	4.1	\$398,956	\$199,646	\$598,602	426,672	1.40	n/a	n/a
Administration	10.6	\$1,277,192	\$400,631	\$1,677,823	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Lifelong Learning	5.1	\$480,995	\$59,993	\$540,988	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Collections	5.1	\$474,741	\$63,075	\$537,816	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Heritage Library	4.1	\$419,766	\$242,290	\$662,056	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Other		-\$34,143	\$29,876	-\$4,267	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total	95.2	\$8,785,490	\$3,301,872	\$12,087,362	2,742,220		1,908,866	

Participation in lifelong learning programs per branch in 2017-18 is summarised on the next page.

	Total number of program participants by branch												
	Jul-17	Aug-17	Sep-17	Oct-17	Nov-17	Dec-17	Jan-18	Feb-18	Mar-18	Apr-18	May-18	Jun-18	Total
Belconnen	479	990	663	748	1069	296	194	670	856	373	349	815	8102
Civic	239	503	384	317	368	125	146	1459	155	124	375	282	4477
Dickson	778	1732	1218	1316	1365	567	127	935	1161	611	609	0	10419
Erindale	775	1078	762	835	1089	479	226	766	796	469	349	774	8998
Gungahlin	1298	1842	1294	1241	1458	693	458	1130	1299	770	1408	1151	14042
Kingston	43	124	56	92	101	57	0	32	56	34	65	77	737
Kippax	604	996	871	628	872	568	334	719	1055	711	1102	1079	9539
Tuggeranong	604	1075	750	619	899	413	373	640	600	410	934	899	8216
Woden	806	1638	1226	952	1416	706	224	620	1256	301	1560	1439	12744
Outreach	406	200	221	597	261	138	40	1796	302	0	35	137	4133
Total	6032	10178	7445	7345	8898	4042	2122	8767	7536	4403	7986	6653	81407

Comparative analysis with other library services

The information below (2015-16) indicates how the ACT compares with other states and territories.²⁶ Data for 2016-17 and 2017-18 is not available to date.

2015-2016	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Australia
FINANCIAL									
Public library expenditure per capita (excluding library materials)	\$29.26	\$43.19	\$41.47	\$39.07	\$55.57	\$51.63	\$33.39	\$48.66	\$41.30
Library materials expenditure per capita	\$4.80	\$4.53	\$4.63	\$6.10	\$5.64	\$5.41	\$5.57	\$4.90	\$5.25
HUMAN RESOURCES									
Total staff (FTE) per 10,000 persons	2.4	3.0	3.7	3.1	4.0	5.3	3.0	3.4	3.2
Population served per staff member	4,143	3,370	2,721	3,254	2,531	1,905	3,318	2,938	3,160
COLLECTIONS									
Items per capita	1.3	1.5	1.3	1.4	2.0	1.2	1.4	1.7	1.5
USAGE									
Percent of population who are library members	63.6%	40.4%	27.2%	41.6%	34.8%	22.8%	34.9%	41.7%	38.9%
Circulation per capita	7.2	5.5	3.3	7.5	8.9	8.0	7.8	6.4	6.9
Customer visits per capita	5.0	4.5	4.5	4.5	6.0	5.7	4.9	4.0	4.7
OPERATIONS									
Public access internet devices per 10,000 persons	2.2	4.2	6.4	5.0	6.6	11.8	6.8	2.9	5.2
Program attendance per capita	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.3
POPULATION									
Population June 2016 - Australian Demographic Statistics -- 3101.0 -- June Quarter 2016 -- *Excludes other territories Released 15/12/2016	396,100	7,725,900	244,900	4,844,500	1,708,200	516,600	6,068,000	2,617,200	24,123,900

Legislative considerations

There are no active legislative considerations at this time however the ACT Government remains open to any future considerations.

Libraries change lives

Libraries ACT often receives feedback about what its libraries mean to the community. The examples below offer some insight into this.

“Libraries, public ones – are proof of the community spirit – a lot of people we say have none left but it’s not true.”

“I love the library! So many books, so little time.”

“Came here for the first time in ages today. [The staff] were gracious, kind and extremely helpful. No more Amazon for me -- this is my new home.”

“We haven’t been in for over a year and when we came in and saw people of all ages enjoying the space and all the great services, we will now visit every week.”

“I have been using this library for 10 years, and I think it’s the BEST ever. Staff are so FANTASTIC and incredibly HELPFUL. Nothing too much trouble for them. Also I often need help with the computers and the staff are fantastic and very PATIENT. Thanks so much.”

“I have been using this branch of the library for since 1984 (34 years). It has been a weekly part of my life. I think it is better than ever now that you have rearranged the seating and ‘decluttered’ it so all the stacks are easy to access. I love it as it is nice and open.”

²⁶ *Australian Public Library Statistics 2015-2016*, National and State Libraries Australasia, 2017.

“One of the things I have to do every week is come to this library. I can’t come into the library without checking what has been set up for me to discover on the display inside the door. And then there are the books propped open in different sections with a ‘look at me, look at me’ air about it. I’ve lost count of how many times that the very book I’ve been seeking, or one I didn’t know I needed to read. And now we have a comfortable section for browsing magazines where we can sit quietly and sip coffee. Thank you staff members for your thoughtfulness. It’s truly appreciated.”

“We love our local library. Have borrowed hundreds of kids’ books over the years. What a great way to give the kids a love of reading without contributing to rampant consumerism.”

“Can’t say enough good things about the library! I’m currently off work caring for a toddler and pre-schooler. I love that I can walk up to the library from my home. I love that my kids can enjoy the children’s section – meeting new friends, finding free colouring in pages, relaxing on the bean bags ... I love the ever-changing children’s books which I can borrow for free, enjoy at home and then return to get more (I still find that an amazing community service!). I love that I can find recent magazines which I can no longer justify buying new. I love the friendly staff, most of whom will smile and say hello to my children. I love the convenient toilet facilities. Perfect for a pre-schooler who never remembers to go before we leave home ... I love that I could access a Justice of the Peace when I needed to last year. I love the adult nonfiction shelves – lots of great books. I love the online services too – I’m always ordering new releases. Thanks for the great service. Visiting the library is a weekly activity the three of us always look forward to.”

The following stories of people Libraries ACT has helped are examples that demonstrate the type of need in our city which is able to be addressed by technology training offered by the library.

Anne, a 50 year old with significant digital literacy issues, came to her first group session after two months of individual sessions. When she first came for help, she did not know how to turn on the iPhone her grandson had given her. She started by learning how to “use the internet”, gaining confidence in her ability to navigate her Windows computer, and said that she would now only need to come in if she couldn’t “Google it”! When she came to her first group session, she contributed to the discussion and helped others who were less skilled than her, feeling able to apply the lessons she had learnt to help others.

Dave came for help with problems getting Microsoft Outlook to do what he wanted. He couldn’t figure out how to send the same email to all members of his sporting club. With the help of a trainer, he was guided through how to create a group with multiple contacts. He then learnt to use CC and BCC to send an email to specific members of his group, and moved on to learn how to save documents into folders on his computer.

Janice, a 58 year old who never read more than two books, asked for help with an eReader she had been given by a family member and a desire to be more literate in print as well as digital media. She attended regular one-on-one sessions, working her way through setting up an email address, connecting her eReader to her laptop and downloading library books as well as free books.

Elsa needed help with her new laptop. She had recently moved to the region to take care of her elderly mother and needed the laptop to streamline her schedule, look for work, and remain in contact with friends and family. After multiple sessions, Elsa was confident using her laptop. She had learnt cybersafety basics and how online banking worked. She had updated her resume and was applying for jobs online. She was happy that improving her

digital literacy enabled her to manage her time more efficiently and she felt more employable and connected to her friendship and family networks outside of Canberra.

The following are stories of people who rely on visiting their local library regularly and for whom the social inclusion aspect of the visits are important to their wellbeing.

Ms W visits her local branch once each week. She is an avid DVD borrower and loves light English dramas. Ms W is familiar with staff, and enjoys interactions with them. She is a regular observer of Giggle and Wiggle as she enjoys the songs and seeing the babies. Ms W visits the library with a support person, but browses the shelves and interacts with staff without supervision. Ms W borrows from the Customer Service Desk as her choices are reviewed by staff and her support worker, as requested by her parents.

Mr B visits the library daily for between three and seven hours. He uses the newspaper resources to document statistics. Mr B is familiar with staff and other regular library customers, after over many years using the library service. Mr B knows the staff by name, and regularly engages to discuss the newspapers, sometimes talking about headlines that he finds distressing. The library team notice when Mr B is absent, and have raised concerns after not seeing Mr B for several days.

Mr N is a regular visitor to the library, up to four times each week. Mr N enjoys interaction with staff and often asks for assistance when using the internet services. Staff know Mr N and spend time with him each visit, as this is a key part of his library experience. Mr N has complex needs, and time and care is required during conversation to ensure his needs are understood and met. Mr N is welcomed into the library on each visit and is a familiar face to other regular library users who interact with him as well.

All of these library patrons access their local library independently, confirming the library is a safe and supportive environment for people with different needs to engage. These community members are valued, and their engagement is an integral part of the library community.

Conclusion

Libraries ACT is a well-loved and used service of the ACT Government which has reinvented itself to meet the changing environment and needs of the community.

Just as the library developed from a books only service in its early days, to incorporate new formats and services, it will continue to respond and participate in priorities of the local community and society more broadly, including reading, literacy, cybersafety and digital engagement.

Libraries ACT will need to:

- Continue to offer resources and services to support reading and literacy.
- Continue to develop digital resources and services, including eBooks and other electronic resources, and respond to the need for new and emerging formats.
- Work collaboratively and in partnership with other libraries, community and commercial organisations, and Government agencies.
- Continue to provide engaging, interactive and socially inclusive experiences for the community.
- Respond to innovation and be innovative itself.
- Preserve the ACT's unique identity.

As a 21st century library, and as a service of the ACT Government, Libraries ACT will provide leadership in the community and strive to achieve its vision of "Literacy and learning for life".

Attachments

1. Libraries ACT Strategic Plan 2015-2019
2. ACT Heritage Library Strategic Plan 2018-2023
3. What's On at Libraries ACT August-September 2018
4. National and State Libraries Australia (NSLA) Strategic Plan 2018-2020