



Inquiry into annual and financial reports 2024–2025

Answer to question taken on notice

Asked by: Mr Andrew Braddock MLA

Addressed to: Minister for City and Government Services

In relation to: Libraries ACT and staffing guidelines and cost savings

Hearing: 13 November 2025

Uncorrected Proof Transcript: pp 4-5

Transcript provided: 19 November 2025

Answer Due: 26 November 2025

MR BRADDOCK: Firstly, in terms of the working group report, I am just trying to understand in terms of—there does not appear to be an intention of the performance of the ACT against the Australian Public Libraries Alliance and Australian Library Information Association guidelines and standard of 0.8 FTE per 3,000 residents being as a guideline. So, I am just wondering in terms of how is ACT performing against that particular guideline?

Ms Cheyne: I need to bring up the report but I, effectively, I think that Mr McMurray's analysis showed that how we had originally compared that against—done our own analysis against the standard was potentially erroneous due to how our libraries are structured and based on the regional model and in fact that across most of our libraries we are over servicing in comparison to that standard.

MR BRADDOCK: So how much FTE do we have per capita population here in the ACT?

Ms Cheyne: I would have to bring out the report, I just do not have it open in front of me, I am sorry.

MR BRADDOCK: That is all right. You can take that one on notice if you would like.

Ms Cheyne: I will.

MR BRADDOCK: I also got a question in terms of why in that report are cost savings positioned as a prospective benefit given it also recommends that libraries need additional funding?

Ms Cheyne: I would have to check.

MR BRADDOCK: Okay. Take that one on notice too.

Ms Tara Cheyne MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

It is important to note that comparing Full Time Employee (FTE) to any standard should be read and considered as point in time, and will change consistently, particularly noting the mobility of the ACT Public Service workforce and reform agenda underway in Libraries ACT as well as well as demographic changes and shifting customer needs.

The standards note that "*variations in social and geographic conditions between and within jurisdictions create different community demands and needs... Individual library services can also deploy different delivery methods in response to local factors. Therefore... use of the standards in setting targets for libraries should only occur with a clear understanding of the geographic, demographic, jurisdictional and service context in which the library operates.*"

Specifically, against that FTE per 3,000 population it notes in the interpretation of the standards that staffing per capita is typically lower where the population is more concentrated (e.g. ACT) due to people being serviced by multiple branches and more staff. The ACT currently operates nine library branches, with some branches less than 5km apart (Dickson and Civic, and Erindale and Tuggeranong).

Based on March Quarter population updates, the FTE number against the standard is approximately 0.6, however as noted above this figure will continue to change, particularly noting there is current branch-based recruitment in market.

ACT Population – 483800 – March 2025 BOS

FTE – Jan 2025 as per report – 92.46 FTE

$483800 / 3000 = 161.26$

$92.46 \text{ FTE} / 161.26 = 0.573$

The standard provides a helpful benchmark to continuously improve against but should also be considered in the context of our service delivery and shifting customer preferences. For instance, since 2020-21, there has been a 48% increase in the number of digital loans registered (776,827 digital loans during 2020-21 to 1,152,311 digital loans in 2024-25). This can shift how resources are allocated. Regardless, providing accessible and inclusive services that meet community expectations remains the priority.

In terms of cost savings, I will note that the report was prepared by an Independent Working Group for government consideration. Libraries ACT currently has a significant cost pressure and is running overbudget. Libraries ACT joining Access Canberra and broader City and Environment Directorate provides opportunities for efficiency in the streamlining of some support functions, enabling greater resourcing support in branches. This is currently being considered as part of the broader restructuring activities.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Transport and City Services

Signature:



By the Minister for City and Government Services, Ms Tara Cheyne

Date:

24/11/25