

ACT Library and Information Service

Public Library
Resource Development
and
Access Strategy

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1 INTRODUCTION

Our libraries are an integral part of the network of public information services provided by the ACT Government.

This Policy is intended to provide guidelines for the selection, distribution and management of public library resources and materials and has been developed to help foster an information rich environment that enhances the quality of life for all Canberrans by:

- Providing a balanced collection of materials that caters for the ACT community's cultural, education, information / reference, lifelong learning and recreation needs.
- Providing high quality reference & information resources for the community
- Developing lending collections which are responsive to the changing library & information needs of the ACT community
- Facilitating access to library resources.

Through the development of these collections and resources it is intended to create an operating environment which enables services to be provided which meet the library and information needs of the community.

More details and background information concerning this policy, including methodology regarding the distribution and allocation of funds, are available in the 2000-2001 Public Library Resource Development and Access Policy Supplementary papers.

A separate policy has been developed for the documentary heritage of the ACT and a policy is to be developed for the collections held by the ACT Legislative Assembly and Government Library.

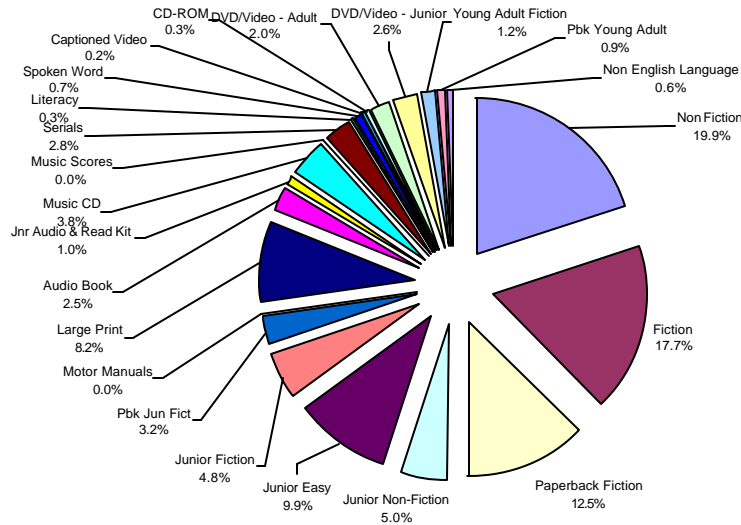
The Resource Development and Access Policy will be revised on a regular basis. Comments and suggestions on the policy are welcome and should be directed to:

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2 RESOURCE USAGE, DISTRIBUTION & AGE

Chart 1 shows that 50% of the library loans are comprised of adult non-fiction, fiction and paperback collections. The Junior fiction, junior easy, junior non-fiction and large print collections are also heavily used.

Chart 1 - Lending Collection Usage



Graph 1 shows collection distribution based on the population served by each library. The stock provided in each library is shown in Chart 2. The largest collections are at Belconnen and Woden with over 30% of the collection held in these two libraries. The collections at Dickson, Erindale, Griffith and Tuggeranong hold 47% of the collections and the Civic and Kippax libraries a further 13%.

Graph 1 - Stock per capita

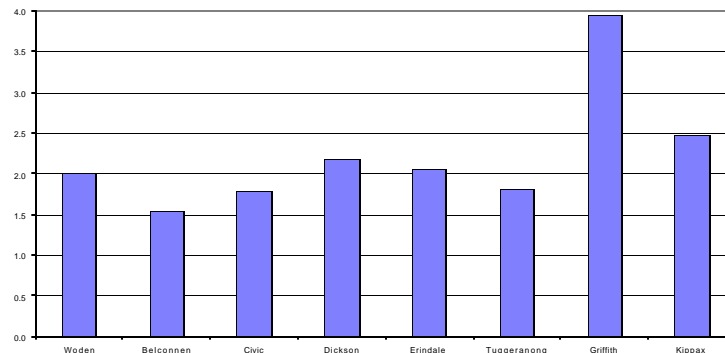


Chart 2 - Collection distribution by location

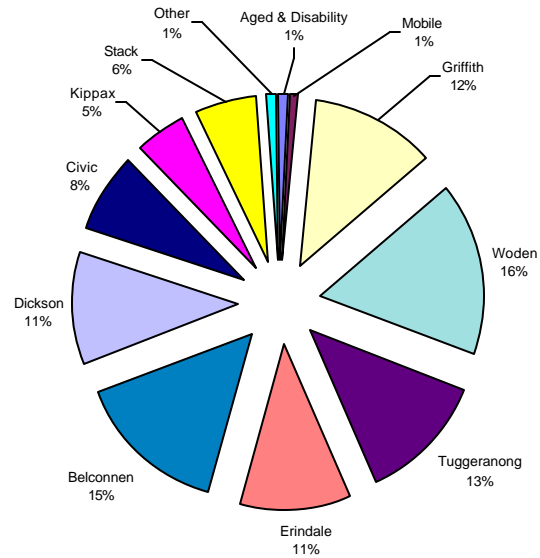
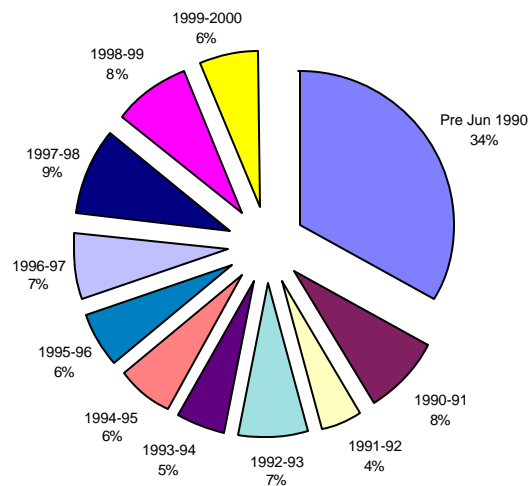


Chart 3 shows the age of the Collection with over 30% purchased before June 1990.

Chart 3 - Collection Age

Number of Items in the Public Library Collection Dec-99



3 ACHIEVING COLLECTION AIMS

Providing a balanced collection of materials that caters for the ACT community's cultural, education, information / reference, lifelong learning and recreation needs.

The provision of a balanced collection of materials is necessary to achieve the standards expressed in the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto which states that:

'The public library is the local centre of information, making all kinds of knowledge and information readily available to its users.

The services of the public library are provided on the basis of equality of access for all, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language or social status. Specific services and materials must be provided for those users who cannot, for whatever reason, use the regular services and materials, for example linguistic minorities, people with disabilities or people in hospital or prison.

All age groups must find material relevant to their needs. Collections and services have to include all types of appropriate media and modern technologies as well as traditional materials. High quality and relevance to local needs and conditions are fundamental. Material must reflect current trends and the evolution of society, as well as the memory of human endeavour and imagination'.¹

And that 'freedom can be protected in a democratic society only if its citizens have access to information and ideas through books and other basic sources of information'²

Therefore the Library follows the following guidelines and criteria when selecting resources for inclusion in the library:

- the Library has a role as an unbiased source of recorded knowledge and ideas. The Library should provide free access to materials and information presenting, as far as possible, all points of view on current and historical issues, including controversial issues;
- the Library should endeavour to provide comprehensive and balanced information resources, as far as budget, space, and availability allow;
- materials should not be excluded on moral, political, racial, religious, sexist, language, or other sensitive grounds alone, whatever pressure may be brought to bear by individuals or groups, except where subject to lawful Federal or Territory prohibition (e.g. by the Office of Film & Literature Classification).

¹ UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 1994

² ALIA Statement on Freedom to Read 1985

- resources should not be limited because of the possibility that material may fall into the hands of children. Placement of material in the library's children's collections is carried out by library staff on the basis of professional knowledge and evaluation. The inclusion of material in these collections is a guide only. The suitability of material for a particular child will depend on many factors and it is recognised that monitoring the reading of children is the responsibility of their parents or guardians;
- staff should not exercise censorship in the selection of resources by rejecting, on moral, political, racial, religious, sexist, language, or other sensitive grounds alone, resources which are otherwise relevant and meets the Library's standards;
- the arrangement of the collections should facilitate access. As restricting access to certain titles or classes of materials, eg. by holding them in special collections available on request, may be used as an indirect form of censorship, resources should not be held in closed access except for the express purpose of protecting them from injury / theft, where legal restrictions regarding access to material must be observed or where material is in little demand.
- Special access arrangements may also be required to manage access to material of a sensitive nature. This would include Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander material which is considered secret or sacred by the community to which it pertains.
- continuous review of material is necessary as a means of maintaining current and useful resource material. This procedure should not be used as a means of removing materials presumed to be controversial or disapproved of by sections of the community.

Materials being considered for selection are selected, using the professional abilities of library staff, according to content, demand, arrangement / style and physical presentation criteria guidelines. Materials are removed from the collection to ensure that the collection remains current, relevant, and physically attractive.

Items are assessed at the service point with a decision made to relocate the item to another service point, withdraw the item from the collection altogether or to send the item to Stack. Items which are no longer physically fit for use are disposed of according to government procedures.

The depreciation period used for public library collections is 10 years. This period recognises that most items held by the library would be kept for a period of 10 years apart from those withdrawn due to damage. Newspapers and Electronic Subscription Services are not depreciated.

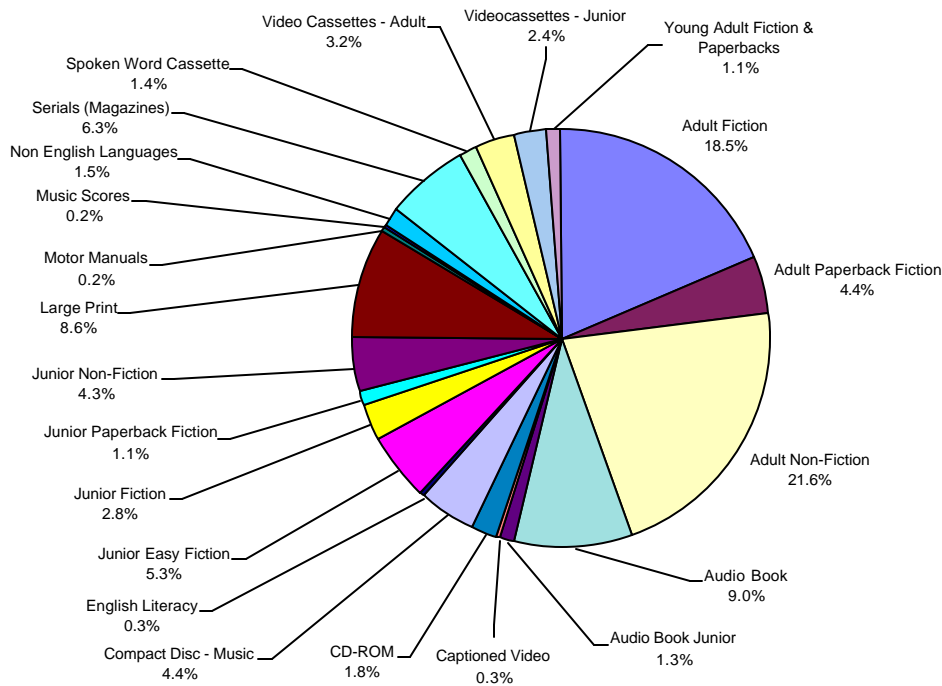
Developing lending collections which are responsive to the changing library & information needs of the ACT community.

\$945,000 is available for the development of the public library lending collections in 2000-2001.

Customer Usage of the different library collections is directly used to determine demand and to allocate funds to each material category. The allocated funds are then adjusted to recognise the need for greater expenditure on some particular areas to address issues of aging material and inadequate, new or developing collections. Usage is regularly monitored to enable changing customer preferences to be recognised and catered for.

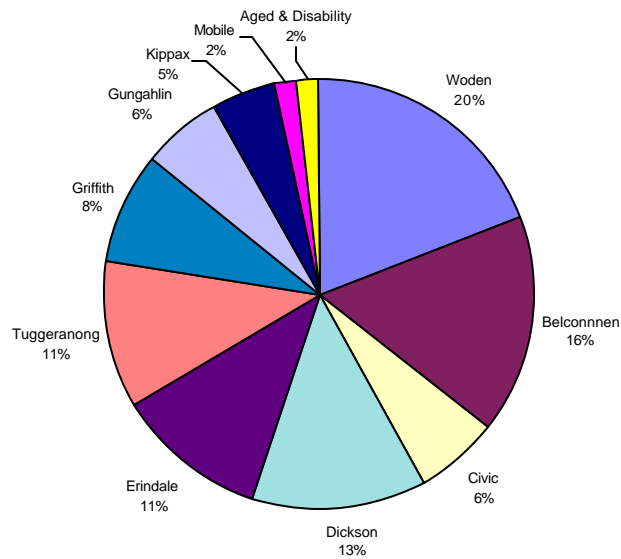
Budget allocations for lending collections by category are provided in chart four.

Chart 4: *Lending budget by collection category.*



Funds are allocated to each service area on the basis of the percentage of loans made by each area. In 2000-2001 these have been adjusted to provide an initial amount of \$56,500 for the Gungahlin Library. Chart 5 shows the allocation of funds by library.

Chart 5: *Lending budget allocation by site.*

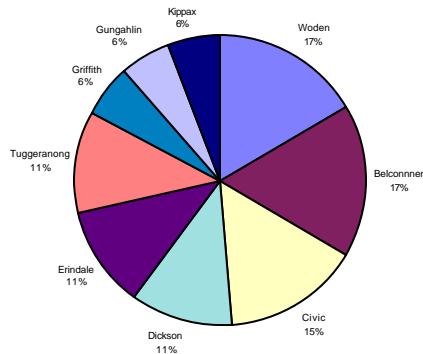


Providing high quality reference & information resources for the community.

Reference & Information Resources

The continued provision of high quality reference and information resources has been ensured through the allocation of \$128,000 for the development and maintenance of the libraries reference collections. These funds will be used to develop the principal reference collections at Belconnen & Woden, to provide medium sized general reference collections at Civic, Dickson, Erindale and Tuggeranong and smaller collections of reference materials at the Griffith, Gungahlin and Kippax libraries. A specific allocation of \$5,000 is provided for the development of the Business Reference Collections located at the Civic Library. The reference budget allocation by site is presented in chart 6.

Chart 6 – Reference budget allocation by site



On-line Information Services

\$40,000 has been allocated for access to on-line information services. This includes funds to be used as part of a consortia with other State and Territory Governments to provide on-line services to all Australians.

The provision of information links to freely available web based information is an important element in the provision of information resources for the community. Through the library web pages these links are provided and maintained to enable the community to more easily access information of use to them.

Public Access Internet & CD-ROM facilities

A total of \$197,000 has been provided for the provision of free Public Access to Internet and CD-ROM facilities in all ACT Public Libraries. The Internet is used to provide access to electronic information and resources from around the world to enhance and supplement the wealth of information available in the ACT public library's hard-copy print, electronic and audio collections.

Facilitating access to library resources.

Collection Access

Most library collections are on open access and 95% of the collections are available for loan. A small collection of material kept in a closed stack due to infrequent usage. The collection of spoken word audio books is, due to copyright reasons, restricted to those with a print disability. Materials can be transferred to any service point on request.

To facilitate access to the resources and collections obtained by the library all materials and resources are catalogued and classified. This information along with the location of each copy is made available through the Library's on-line catalogue which is available on the Internet and through terminals located in all branch libraries. The distribution of these terminals is shown in table two.

Table 2 Catalogue terminal access points

Belconnen	6
Civic	4
Dickson	3
Erindale	3
Griffith	2
Gungahlin	2
Kippax	1
Tuggeranong	4
Woden	6
Internet/Intranet access	35 concurrent sessions

CD-Rom Access

All branch libraries have a public access CD-ROM terminal available to enable public use of the library's CD-ROM collections.

Internet Access

To facilitate public access to the Internet, Public Access terminals are freely available at all Branch Libraries. The number of terminals provided is based on usage. In 2000-2001, with the addition of four terminals in the Gungahlin library, the number of terminals provided by the public library will increase to 35. The distribution of these terminals is shown in table three.

To encourage and promote use of the Internet by Seniors two of these terminals are made available for Seniors priority use at each of the Belconnen & Woden Libraries. In addition up to 4 terminals at each library are made available for introductory training sessions for Senior's and others as required.

To enable to as many people as possible to use the terminals, and to provide special conditions to encourage the use of the Internet by Seniors, users of the Public Access Internet Service are required to read and agree to abide by the ‘Conditions of Use for Public Library Internet Service’.

Table 3 Internet terminal access points

Belconnen	6*
Civic	4
Dickson	3
Erindale	4#
Griffith	2
Gungahlin	4
Kippax	2
Tuggeranong	4#
Woden	6*

* includes 2 Seniors priority use terminals at Belconnen and 2 at

The Department of Education provides an additional 4 terminals at the Tuggeranong joint-use library and 2 terminals at the Erindale joint-use libraries.

4 MEASURING SUCCESS

The success of this resources development policy can be measured in the following ways.

		Targets	1999-00 Result
Customer Satisfaction	Percent of users obtaining required information	75%	n.a.
	Percent satisfied with resources provided	85%	n.a.
Customer demand.	Loans per capita	7.8 ³	7.9
	Public Access Internet Terminal Hours used	60,000	48,000
	Percent of available Public Access Internet Terminal Hours used	75%	74%
	On-line Electronic Resources accessed		
Relevance / Currency	Loans per item	5.7 ⁴	3.8
	Percent of lending collection less than 5 years old	44% ⁵	38%
	Percent of reference collections less than 5 years old	44% ⁶	45%
Customer choice.	Adult collections - items per person 15 and over	2.0	2.18
	Children's collections - items per person under 15	2.0	2.36
	ACT resident non-English speakers - items per person	0.5	0.28
	Public Access Internet Terminals provided per 10,000 persons	1.1	1.0
	CD-ROM Terminals provided per library	1.0	1.0
	Public Access Catalogue terminals provided per 10,000 persons	1.0	1.0

³ Based on the average of Brisbane 99-00, Tasmania 99-00 and NSW Metropolitan 97-98.

⁴ The target is based on each item being on loan for 33% of the time or 17 weeks per year. With a three week loan period this equals 5.7 loans per item.

⁵ NSW state average 1997/98.

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External access on-line databases provided	2	n.a.
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