



#VoteLibrary

How libraries support you and your electorate

When people think about libraries, they think about public libraries, but across Australia there are some 13,000 public, school, university, TAFE, health, law and other special libraries, serving more than 10 million people. There are government department and parliamentary libraries, assisting researchers and policy makers. And there are our National, State and Territory Libraries providing access to heritage materials which document the living history of the nation.

NT

School	190
Public	30
University	1
TAFE	4
National, State and Territory Libraries	1
Parliamentary	1

QLD

School	1770
Public	323
University	9
TAFE	24
National, State and Territory Libraries	1
Parliamentary	1

NSW

School	3107
Public	446
University	10
TAFE	96
National, State and Territory Libraries	1
Parliamentary	1

ACT

School	136
Public	10
University	2
TAFE	3
National, State and Territory Libraries	1
Parliamentary	2

SA

School	715
Public	191
University	3
TAFE	22
National, State and Territory Libraries	1
Parliamentary	1

VIC

School	2254
Public	370
University	8
TAFE	70
National, State and Territory Libraries	1
Parliamentary	1

TAS

School	262
Public	52
University	1
TAFE	6
National, State and Territory Libraries	1
Parliamentary	1

WA

School	1108
Public	242
University	5
TAFE	18
National, State and Territory Libraries	1
Parliamentary	1

There are also as many as 2,000 special libraries in Australia serving clients in government, health, law, business, banking, consulting, research, science and technology, heritage, the arts, media and other sectors.

The goal of all libraries is for a smarter, more literate population, with universal access to information, leading to increased civic engagement. By literate, we mean not only reading and writing, but also the ability to use digital technologies (digital literacy) and understand the difference between information and misinformation, news and fake news (media literacy).

Libraries and you



Connection with community

You know how popular public libraries are with your own electorate: how much they value these safe, welcoming spaces; the non-judgemental help of the library staff; the vast collection of fiction, non-fiction and reference titles, in print and electronic formats, and the many programs supporting all ages and interests, from storytimes for preschoolers to Tech Savvy Senior classes. Libraries are good places for you to meet local people and sound out their views.

You also know how much families rely on school libraries to support readers, and how important school, TAFE and university libraries are for teaching students independent research skills and providing them with access to a world of knowledge.

Parliamentary insights

Parliamentary libraries at federal, state and territory level provide invaluable support for those in government, back benchers, the opposition and independent politicians. They provide bespoke research, publications on topics of current and historic interest, an independent perspective on legislation, useful seminars, lectures and other services, all of which help keep you fully informed and best able to participate actively in the debate.

Essential government information

Libraries which sit within government departments provide similar services to the staff who provide information to Ministers and their advisers. Government libraries play a vital role in ensuring that policy is evidence-based and supported by research. They also provide an essential due diligence check for decisions affecting millions of Australians.

Libraries and your electorate

Libraries comprise collections, physical and virtual spaces, technology, programs and services, expert staff and are shaped around the needs of their 10 million-plus users.



Physical spaces

Public libraries provide a shop window in 1500 locations across Australia, with many more places served through mobile libraries, pop ups and other outreach services. School, TAFE and university libraries give students the quiet space they need for individual study and the rooms for group work, with university libraries increasingly offering 24/7 access to sites. National, State and Territory Libraries welcome students, science and humanities researchers, and historians, with spaces tailored to their requirements, while special libraries play a similar role within their own organisations.



Technology

Libraries bridge the gap between the digital haves and have-nots. There are more than 14,000 public access internet-enabled devices in our public libraries and many more across school, TAFE, university, special, National, State and Territory Libraries. As well as basic PCs and tablets, there is advanced equipment for maker spaces, media labs and music studios, enabling people to develop their talents.

Libraries not only provide the hardware, they also hold licences to the latest creative software – often beyond the reach of the people who most benefit from it.



Library users

Some 9.3 million people¹ are registered public library users and in a non-COVID year there are more than 110 million visits each year from members and non-members. All school, TAFE and university students, teachers and faculty are served by their institution's library. National, State and Territory Libraries welcome more than 7 million visitors a year to their buildings and 60 million to their websites². There are no published figures for special libraries, but users include government researchers, policy makers, medical practitioners, lawyers, judges, business executives, scientists, artists, journalists, broadcasters, historians and family history researchers.

¹ www.nsla.org.au/sites/default/files/documents/nsla-publibstats-2019-20.pdf

² www.nsla.org.au/about-us



Virtual spaces

In addition, libraries exist in the virtual space. During COVID-19 public and school libraries saw a dramatic take up of lending through their ebook platforms. University libraries are often responsible for their institutions' digital repositories, as the home for academic research papers and raw data. Special libraries often operate services and provide information feeds through their organisations' intranets.

National, State and Territory Libraries' collections are available through Trove, home to digitised and born digital publications, newspapers, images and websites, and itself one of the most visited government websites. Together, these libraries have also developed NED, the national edeposit platform, a world-first collaborative service for collecting, preserving and accessing Australian electronic publications.



Collections

Libraries hold millions of print and ebooks and constantly add to their collections. During the COVID-19 lockdown, libraries kept Australians provided with reading material for pleasure, for study and for research.

We estimate that libraries account for around 7% of all book sales in Australia annually and give exposure to Australian authors and illustrators which leads to more consumer sales of their works.

Libraries hold information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their culture and heritage, as well as works by contemporary Indigenous creators. A major push is being made to make libraries culturally safe spaces for Indigenous people and to understand through engagement with communities how collections can be respectfully held within cultural parameters.



Programs and services

There are programs and services for all ages, from storytime for young children in public and school libraries, through coding and robotics classes for adults and young people, to tutorials for family historians in State Libraries. In public libraries alone, there are more than 213,000 programs every year, serving 6.4 million people.

These programs encourage parents to read with their children, even if they are not confident readers themselves. They teach seniors how to use the internet and be cybersafe. They promote media literacy, encouraging a healthy scepticism about website and social media content in young and old users. Some librarians help students and researchers identify sources of information in print and electronic collections on site, while others are responsible for digitising items from the collection to provide access to historic materials to people living in regional and remote Australia.



Expert staff

Libraries employ more than 22,000 people³, three quarters of whom are qualified Librarians or Library Technicians, with others coming from complementary disciplines – IT, humanities, social work, marketing and other allied professions. Alongside medical workers, librarians form one of the most trusted professions.

³ The Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business 2019

9.3 million registered public library members



4 million students in schools and 296,000 teachers*



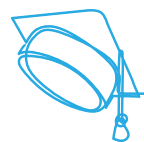
3.9 million VET students**



7.2 million visits to National, State and Territory libraries



1.6 million student and staff population for university libraries***



Libraries are one of the most popular cultural institutions. In 2017-2018, more than 30% of Australians visited libraries and archives, and they attracted the highest frequency of visits (33% visited 11 or more times), more than double that of cinemas (14% visited 11 or more times)⁴.

Libraries provide services for a cross-section of society. For example, people living with disability rate libraries highly for their accessibility. A recent NDIS report showed 55% satisfaction with library experiences (the second highest score for community-based activities, after museums and art galleries)⁵. Libraries provide an entry point for migrants and refugees settling into their new home; services are provided in community languages and there are programs to support people learning English.

Where to from here

The library and information sector provides one of the best examples of an industry riding the wave of digital disruption. Our libraries embrace new technologies and the opportunities they bring to pursue our goals of universal literacy and access to information. We are keenly aware of the role libraries play in delivering the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and helping to achieve the global 2030 Agenda.

Around Australia, state, territory and local governments are investing in new libraries, recognising the need for this essential civic infrastructure. For many, the simple act of sharing a library study space, joining a

book club or searching the local history collection promotes a sense of connection and well-being, and is the entry point for closer engagement with their community.

How you can help

We need your help to progress our goals around early literacy, media literacy, digital inclusion, open access to government funded research, modernisation of copyright law and lending rights and greater recognition of the role libraries are able and willing to play. We welcome opportunities to discuss our shared ambitions for Australia's strong and sustainable future.

Contact us to talk about how we can make a difference in your community, advocacy@alia.org.au.

* <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/education/schools/latest-release>

** <https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/visualisation-gallery/latest-vet-statistics>

*** Council of Australian University Librarians 2020

⁴ www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/attendance-selected-cultural-venues-and-events-australia/2017-18

⁵ www.lchs.com.au/assets/uploads/2020/10/Improving-accessibility-and-inclusivity-of-people-with-disability.pdf