

# AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

## STATISTICAL REPORT

### 1999-00

Library Policy & Analysis  
Customer Services & Information  
Department of Urban Services

2002



## **Foreword**

Australia's public libraries are a vibrant and dynamic part of our community life. They provide access to a diverse range of information and meet users' business, recreational and educational needs.

The growing diversity of how information is provided - in print, on microform, on CD-ROMS, online databases and via the Internet - has increased the role of public libraries as reliable, easy to access sources of information.

The Council of Australian State Libraries (CASL) is the peak body representing the State and Territory libraries and the National Library throughout Australia. CASL members also represent the interests of the public library networks within their States and Territories.

The Australian Public Libraries Statistical Survey is a CASL project that identifies and measures the usage and activities of Australia's public library services. The survey highlights the range of services our public libraries provide and the support for public libraries by State and Territory and local governments.

CASL publishes national public library statistics on a regular basis, and highlights are accessible on the CASL website (<http://www.casl.org.au>).

### **Chair**

Council of Australian State Libraries

2002



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## 1 Selected National Statistics

Australia's Public Libraries are a significant component of the Cultural and Information industry providing services throughout Australia to the community.

These statistics show that expenditure on public libraries has increased from \$456million in 1996-97 to \$533m in 1999-00, a 17% increase. The return to the community on this investment is estimated to be in excess of \$1 726 million.

Public library services are delivered to over 6.5 million people each month.

Access to services are provided through a network of 1,362 libraries and 88 mobile libraries throughout Australia, one service point for every 13,212 persons. Over 60% are open for more than 30 hours each week, with 27% open more than 45 hours per week.

Public Libraries are an important community access point to the wealth of information available via the Internet, with 62% of service points providing public Internet access compared to only 20% in 1996-97. In addition to the 3,000 public access terminals provided to enable Internet access a further 1,800 public access computer terminals are provided for word processing, CD-ROM use etc.

Library collections of more than 37.1 million items (1.9 items per person) were made available for the use of the community and over \$75 million was spent on ensuring that these collections remain up to date and relevant. More than 50% of public library collections are more than 5 years old.

165.7 million items were lent to the 9.5 million registered members of the library, 8.7 items for each person in Australia.

These services were provided by the 6,400 staff (fte<sup>1</sup>) staff employed in Australian Public Libraries.

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<sup>1</sup> fte - full time equivalent staff

**Table 1 – Services**

	<b>1996-97</b>	<b>1997-98</b>	<b>1998-99</b>	<b>1999-00</b>
Total Loans	160,277,548	163,435,210	168,045,422	165,770,847
Value of items lent <sup>2</sup>	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	\$1,726m
Loans per head of population	8.8	8.7	8.9	8.7
Total information enquiries	n.a.	5,988,491	8,125,541	10,435,719
Information Enquiries per 10,000 persons	n.a.	4,343	5,300	5,977
Internet terminals per 10,000 persons	0.38	0.64	1.21	1.54

**Table 2 – Customers.**

	<b>1996-97</b>	<b>1997-98</b>	<b>1998-99</b>	<b>1999-00</b>
Customers per month (excluding WA)	5,627,448	6,249,288	6,679,619	6,529,298
Customer visits per head of population	4.1	4.9	4.9	4.6
Registered Library Members	9,495,282	9,231,590	9,585,262	9,535,749
Members as a percent of total population	52%	49%	51%	50%
Percent Adult Members	n.a.	75%	76%	78%
Percent Junior Members	n.a.	23%	23%	22%

<sup>2</sup> Based on the estimated value of collections in the ACT, Tasmania and WA. Actual values of individual state collections cannot be imputed from this figure.

**Table 3 – Collections & Resources**

	<b>1996-97</b>	<b>1997-98</b>	<b>1998-99</b>	<b>1999-00</b>
Total number of library materials	36,767,511	37,308,960	35,874,197	37,125,343
Total number of Public Access Internet Terminals	689	1,199	2,300	2,954
Number of Public Access Computers for Word Processing etc	n.a.	n.a.	1,858	1,888
Library materials per head of population	2.01	1.99	1.89	1.94
Total library materials expenditure	\$65,482,901	\$70,875,153	\$73,588,653	\$75,315,611
Collection value	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	\$386,540,000
Library Materials expenditure per capita	\$3.58	\$3.78	\$3.88	\$3.93
Percent of resources purchased in last 5 years	n.a.	51%	50%	45%

**Table 4 – Staff**

	<b>1996-97</b>	<b>1997-98</b>	<b>1998-99</b>	<b>1999-00</b>
Total Staff (full time equivalent)	6,031	6,208	6,060	6,417
Population served per staff member	3,035	3,017	3,130	2,985
Staff members (FTE) per 10,000 residents.	3.29	3.31	3.19	3.35
Loans per full-time equivalent staff member	26,574	26,328	27,732	25,832



**Table 5 – Service Points**

	<b>1996-97</b>	<b>1997-98</b>	<b>1998-99</b>	<b>1999-00</b>
Number of Service Points (including each mobile library <sup>3</sup> as a single service point) <sup>4</sup>	1,529	1,525	1,486	1,450
Population served per service point	11,974	12,282	12,764	13,212
Service Points per 10,000 persons	0.84	0.80	0.78	0.76
Libraries open more than 45 hrs per week	n.a.	25%	26%	27%
Libraries open 30 to 44 hrs per week	n.a.	35%	38%	35%
Libraries open 10 to 29 hrs per week	n.a.	27%	25%	26%
Libraries open less than 10 hrs per week	n.a.	13%	11%	12%
Percent of service points with Internet terminals	20%	39%	58%	62%

**Table 6 – Expenditure**

	<b>1996-97</b>	<b>1997-98</b>	<b>1998-99</b>	<b>1999-00</b>
Total Expenditure on Public Library Services	\$456,326,000	\$468,380,000	\$489,384,000	\$533,307,000
Public Library expenditure per capita	\$24.93	\$25.00	\$25.80	\$27.84

<sup>3</sup> 79 mobile libraries visit 1,161 locations.

<sup>4</sup> Access to library services is also provided through 141 deposit stations.

## 2 Public Libraries Services in Australia

Public Library services are delivered by a variety of administrative arrangements. These vary both between and within each State and Territory, ranging from services wholly delivered by the State / Territory through to services wholly delivered by local government.

### Australian Capital Territory

The Australian Capital Territory is a single administrative entity that combines both State and Local Government functions. Community Service and Information within the Department of Urban Services is responsible for the delivery of library services to the community and government.

**Library Policy & Analysis** monitors the delivery of a range of library and information services. The section manages library assets, collects and analyses performance measures, benchmarks services, develops policy and provides advice for government on library and information services.

The **ACT Library & Information Service** delivers public library services to the community and also provides specialist information services through the ACT Assembly Library, Women's Information & Referral Centre and ACT Heritage Library. Two of the ACT's public libraries are joint use facilities with Department of Education Colleges.

All libraries are connected to a high speed network enabling access to the Library Management System and a range of Information Resources.

### New South Wales

Public library services in New South Wales include a mixture of independent (or stand alone) library services operated by a single local government authority and regional libraries where up to 12 local councils have entered into an agreement to provide a combined service. All 177 local councils in NSW have adopted the *Library Act 1939*.

The State Library of New South Wales is responsible for administering the *Library Act 1939* and *Library Regulation 1995*. Local councils and their library services are autonomous and self governing. The State Government funds public library services via a subsidies and an annual grants program. The subsidy payments are based on population, isolation, and demographic factors.

The State Library's Public Libraries Branch provides a range of services to the New South Wales public library network. Branch responsibilities include:

- management of the Library Development Grants program and the allocation and payment of subsidies and grants;
- monitoring public library compliance with the *Library Act 1939* and the *Library Regulation 1995* and providing advice and guidance;
- collecting, collating and distributing public library statistical and other information;

- providing a continuing education / training / seminar / workshop program for public library staff;
- providing information and advisory services on all aspects of the provision, control and management of public library services;
- managing a research program on behalf of the public library network; and
- providing specialist advice in the areas of technology; evaluation; information services, children's and young adult services, multicultural services, and library promotion.

## **Northern Territory**

The Northern Territory is unique in the range of services and support provided to public libraries, including those in small and remote Aboriginal communities. The Northern Territory Government, through Northern Territory Library and Information Service (NTLIS), provides direct and indirect funding to enable the operation of all Territory public library services.

NTLIS provides a centralised model of support to the Public Library Network of the NT (PLNT). The PLNT network comprises 27 public libraries of varying sizes, ranging from the Darwin Public Library Information Service, with 4 branches servicing a population of 72,000 to Peppimenarti a small remote community with a population of 249. In addition, some centralised support services are provided by NTLIS to a number of secondary schools and college libraries within the Territory.

A Country Borrowers Service is operated for those living in small and isolated communities and stations unable to access public libraries. The service is operated in conjunction with the Alice Springs and Tenant Creek Public Libraries in the centre and by NTLIS in the Top End. The service provides a regular exchange of books and other resources to individuals on a free basis.

Other services provided by NTLIS include the Northern Territory Library, Parliamentary Library Service and the Government Libraries and Information Service (GLIS). The GLIS, which was established in 1998, comprises 5 specialised library clusters (Law & Justice; Education; Natural Resources & Environment; Planning & Development; and Arts & Culture) providing a seamless information service to government agency staff throughout the NT.

## **Queensland**

123 Queensland local governments and three Aboriginal community Councils offer free library services throughout Queensland.

The Library Board of Queensland administers the library service through the Cash Grants scheme to Independent public library services and through the operations of the Country Lending Service. The cash grant scheme provides funding on a weighted per capita formula to 38 library services. The grant is tied to the purchase of library stock with up to 5% being available for the processing of library materials.

The Country Lending Service libraries receives subsidy in kind whereby 81 local governments with populations of 20,000 or less are allocated a minimum of one book per capita by the Public Libraries Division of the State Library of Queensland. These books are exchanged on a minimum basis of 25% per year. The exchange rate varies according to population size from a one yearly exchange turnover to a 4 yearly rate.

The Public Libraries Division provides:

- advisory and consultancy services and training on all aspects of library management, including special needs services
- statewide distribution of resources to meet the needs of the whole community, including specialised resources, reference services and interlibrary loans
- facilitation of public library networking and resource-sharing throughout Queensland, including effective application of information technologies to enhance accessibility to global resources

## South Australia

There are 138 public libraries in South Australia, representing 69 Local Government Authorities. In the cases where no council exists, the Libraries Board of South Australia provides the full operational subsidy.

Forty-nine of the rural libraries in South Australia are in very small communities. In order to provide appropriate services to these communities, the Libraries Board and the local government authority join with the Department of Education, Training and Employment to operate very successful School Community Libraries.

The State Government of South Australia provides funds for the provision of public library services through an agreement between the State Government and the Local Government Association of South Australia.

The funds allocated to public libraries by the South Australian Government are administered by the Libraries Board of South Australia, under the **Libraries Act 1982** and the *Public Libraries, Audio Visual and Community Information Agreement*. From these funds, the Libraries Board allocates to libraries an untied operating grant, a materials grant and fixes the PLAIN Central Services budget. The majority of the materials grant is spent through the PLAIN system, to capture maximum discounts and efficiencies through economies of scale.

PLAIN Central Services manages the complex task of centralised selection, acquisitions, cataloguing and distribution for South Australian libraries on behalf of client libraries, with the librarians in the field managing their collection development activities and leaving the actual acquisitions, cataloguing and distribution to the staff of PLAIN. The PLAIN system provides on-line Inter-Library Loans, the statewide Video and Film booking service and a statewide delivery system. Staff at PLAIN undertake a wide range of research and development roles with public librarians.

## Tasmania

The State Library of Tasmania provides for the development and operation of statewide library and information services to meet the information, educational, cultural and recreational reading needs of the Tasmanian community. All public libraries are managed and funded by the State Library service.

Services are delivered through an integrated network of seven city libraries; forty-one branch libraries; and six reference and specialist collections including the State Reference Library, the Parliamentary Library, the Tasmaniana Library, the WL Crowther Library, the Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts, and the Department of Education Library and Information Centre.

State and public library services are fully integrated with a number of services provided or coordinated centrally such as purchasing, processing, cataloguing, systems support, staff training, reference and information services, and inter-library loans. All libraries are linked through the Tasmanian Automated Library and Information System (TALIS) network, a library management system which includes an integrated catalogue and electronic information databases.

Resources include lending and reference collections, electronic information, free public access to the Internet, Tasmaniana, collections of rare and specialist items, education resource and media collections, and a range of electronic information resources.

Library services are provided for customers with special needs including people with disabilities and people speaking languages other than English, through the use of special format resources, specialised equipment and delivery services. Delivery of specialised format resources to the homebound is also provided.

The State Library is administered within the Education Department. The Tasmanian Library Advisory Board provides a channel of communication from the community to the Minister. A State government levy on local government requires each municipality to pay an annual contribution into Consolidated Revenue towards the provision of library services.

## Victoria

There are 42 public library services in Victoria, covering all 78 municipalities. Two types of public library services operate in the State: single service municipalities (26) and regional library corporations (16). Single services are run by their municipalities and are mainly located in metropolitan Melbourne. Regional libraries are two or more councils which have agreed to provide services jointly. Regional library corporations are constituted under the **Local Government Act 1989** and have the same operating and reporting structures as municipal councils. Services to people with print disabilities through the Libraries of the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind and Vision Australia are also included as public library services.

Specific responsibility for public library policy in Victoria rests with the Minister for Local Government who is advised by a Ministerial Advisory Council on Public Libraries. The Office of Local Government is responsible for administering core public library funding; the collection of public library statistics and benchmarks and regional library corporations legislation, and has as a priority area ongoing networking with public libraries, the State Library of Victoria, and key industry groups. The Office of Local Government is part of the Department of Infrastructure.

Under the Libraries Act 1988 the Library Board of Victoria retains the following functions in relation to the wider library network: to oversee cooperation in programs with libraries and information organisations to promote access to library and information resources; and to exercise leadership and promote high standards in the provision of library and information services; and to provide advice and information to the Minister on any matter concerning libraries and information organisations. It continues to work collaboratively with the public library network through the coordination by the State Library of Victoria of a range of programs aimed at enhancing and developing the state-wide provision of library services. These state-wide programs include marketing the public library network; a comprehensive training and development program for public library staff; touring literary programs; children's programs; research initiatives and business case development.

### **Western Australia**

Public library services in Western Australia are provided through a partnership between the State Government, represented by the Library Board of WA, and local government authorities. The local government authority provides the library building, staff and operating costs, while the Library Board is responsible for acquiring and preparing shelf ready stock delivered to public libraries. The Library Board also provides extensive catalogues, indexes, training, consultancy, regional subsidies and back-up services in the form of special collections, information and reference services and inter library loan services.

Library materials are supplied to public libraries at a minimum standard of 1.25 per capita, with the minimum size being 1,025. Library stocks range from this minimum in small country libraries to 60,000 in the largest libraries. The public library stock is treated as an integrated state-wide collection and remains the property of the Library Board of WA. Stock is not allocated to a library on a permanent basis, but is circulated throughout the State on a regular basis at an agreed annual turnover percentage. This enables library collections to be constantly refreshed with different stock (new and used) and ensures that the collection is not "read out". The State Library of Western Australia acts as a clearinghouse for the circulation of the stock between libraries.

There are 144 local government authorities in Western Australia, including Christmas Island and the Cocos Islands. These authorities operate most of the State's 234 public libraries. In addition some other organisations are recognised as "participating bodies" and they provide specialised services to people with visual impairment (through the Association for the Blind) and library services in prisons.

### 3 Data Sources

This statistical report has been compiled on behalf of the Council of Australian State Libraries (CASL) by ACT Library Policy & Analysis using data supplied by the authority responsible for public library services in each State and Territory.

The data used to prepare this report is available at <http://www.act.gov.au/actinfo/policy>. Please note that it is difficult to use this data to compare library services with each other due to the widely varying social and geographic criteria applying from State to State and within each State. These conditions create differing demands and needs which effect the type and scope of public library services provided. Further difficulties in comparing data are caused by the diverse service delivery methods used to provide public library services. It should be noted that the data may vary from that published separately by the States.

For further information on the data please contact the relevant State or Territory authority. These are:

Library Policy & Analysis  
ACT Department of Urban Services  
PO Box 158  
Canberra ACT 2601.

Northern Territory Library and Information Service  
Department of Corporate and Information Services  
GPO Box 42  
Darwin NT 0801

PLAIN Central Services  
8 Milner St  
Hindmarsh SA 5007

Office of Local Government  
Department of Infrastructure  
Level 19 Nauru House  
80 Collins St  
Melbourne Victoria 3000.

Public Libraries Branch  
State Library of New South Wales  
Macquarie St  
Sydney NSW 2000

Public Libraries Division  
State Library of Queensland  
PO Box 3815  
South Brisbane Qld 4101

Public Library Services  
State Library of Tasmania  
91 Murray Street  
Hobart Tasmania 7000

The State Library of Western Australia  
Alexander Library Building  
Perth Cultural Centre  
Perth WA 6000

## 4 1999-00 Data & Indicators

1999-00	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	AUSTRALIA
Expenditure on Public Libraries (excluding library materials and capital purchases)	\$8,129,391	\$148,560,252		\$73,773,268	\$43,427,514	\$9,134,016	\$88,596,156	\$49,185,297	\$420,805,894
Expenditure on Library Materials	\$1,324,899	\$21,214,734		\$17,818,437	\$6,043,358	\$1,130,000	\$19,961,932	\$7,822,251	\$75,315,611
State Govt. costs directly related to the delivery of public library services not included above		\$486,920		\$5,104,420	\$31,594,467			\$0	\$37,185,807
Total Expenditure on Public Library Services	\$9,454,290	\$170,261,906		\$96,696,125	\$81,065,339	\$10,264,016	\$108,558,088	\$57,007,548	\$533,307,312
Total State/Territory costs related to the delivery of public library services	\$9,454,290	\$18,406,920		\$21,121,215	\$49,470,872	\$10,264,016	\$25,491,592	\$12,254,097	\$146,463,002
State/Territory Funding as a percent of Public Library Expenditure	100%	11%		22%	61%	100%	23%	21%	27%
Capital Expenditure on Public Libraries (not including library materials)	\$0	\$15,562,803				\$176,000	\$4,891,133	\$2,938,916	\$23,568,852
Total Expenditure on Public Library Services (\$m)	\$9.5	\$170.3		\$96.7	\$81.1	\$10.3	\$108.6	\$57.0	\$533.3
Public Library expenditure per head of population (excluding library materials)	\$26.15	\$23.06		\$22.12	\$50.09	\$19.42	\$18.59	\$26.11	\$23.91
Library Materials expenditure per head of population	\$4.26	\$3.28		\$5.00	\$4.04	\$2.40	\$4.19	\$4.15	\$3.93
No of qualified librarians (fte)	28.94	784.92		289.00	257.51	48.00	500.60	209.5	2118.47
Total staff (fte)	98.30	2,171.85		1108.00	654.00	161.00	1443.20	780.80	6417.15
No of Librarians (FTE) per 10,000 persons	0.93	1.21		0.81	1.72	1.02	1.05	1.11	1.11
Total Staff (FTE) per 10,000 persons	3.16	3.36		3.11	4.37	3.42	3.03	4.14	3.35
Population served per staff member	3,162	2,976		3,219	2,290	2,922	3,302	2,413	2,985
Loans per fte staff	25,744	19,998		34,009	25,474	28,191	30,925	20,871	25,832
Total number of library materials	701,434	13,463,175		6,708,302	3,694,224	702,367	8,723,117	3,132,724	37,125,343
Collection Value (\$)	\$4,692,756	\$140,251,971		\$69,883,410	\$38,484,399	\$9,719,369	\$90,872,647	\$32,635,000	\$386,539,552
Average value of items in the collection	\$6.69					\$13.84		\$10.42	\$10.41
Percent of collection purchased in previous 5 years	39.0%	43.6%		62.0%		33.5%	34.3%	60.0%	45.4%
Library materials per head of population	2.3	2.1		1.9	2.5	1.5	1.8	1.7	1.9
Value of items lent (\$m)	\$16.9	\$452.5	#DIV/0!	\$392.5	\$173.6	\$62.8	\$464.9	\$169.8	\$1,726.0



Australian Public Library Statistics 1996-97 to 1999-00

1999-00	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	AUSTRALIA
No. of fixed point libraries	8	393		300	126	48	250	235	1,362
No. of mobile libraries	0	27		19	9	0	32	1	88
No of service points (including Book Mobiles)	8	420		319	137	48	282	236	1,450
Population served per service point	38,855	15,389		11,180	10,932	9,800	16,900	7,982	13,212
Service Points per 10,000 persons	0.26	0.65		0.89	0.91	1.02	0.59	1.25	0.76
No. of locations served by mobile libraries	0	400		153		0	605	3	1,161
Open 45 hours or more	7	126		49		9		64	255
Open 30 - 44 hours	1	102		109		8		104	324
Open 10 - 29 hours		80		102		25		33	240
Open less than 10 hours	0	28		55		6		22	111
Not specified	0	84		4	137	0	282	13	520
Total Hours per week	393	14,915		8,865	5,798	1,178	10,885	8,074	50,107
Total hours open per annum	19,992	775,565		443,250	289,878	58,875	555,155	411,794	2,554,510
No. of deposit stations (small unstaffed collections not included in service point indicators)	0	96		0	0	0	45	0	141
Total circulation	2,530,590	43,432,152		37,681,542	16,660,187	4,538,743	44,631,200	16,296,433	165,770,847
Circulation per capita	8.14	6.72		10.57	11.12	9.65	9.36	8.65	8.65
Loans per volume held	3.6	3.2		5.6	4.5	6.5	5.1	5.2	4.5
Number of Reference / Information Enquiries	112,534	2,628,504		3,609,307		289,014	2,788,337	1,008,023	10,435,719
Information Enquiries per 10,000 persons	3,620	4,067		10,120		6,144	5,851	5,351	5,977
Total library visits	1,785,992	26,946,749		12,452,907	10,137,090	2,613,412	24,415,430		78,351,580
Customers per month	148,833	2,245,562		1,037,742	844,758	217,784	2,034,619	0	6,529,298
Customer visits per head of population	5.75	4.17		3.49	6.77	5.56	5.12		4.59

Australian Public Library Statistics 1996-97 to 1999-00

1999-00	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	AUSTRALIA
No. of registered library users	138,996	3,201,908		1,590,879	916,489	149,138	2,445,242	1,093,097	9,535,749
Percent of population who are Library Members	45%	50%		45%	61%	32%	51%	58%	50%
Adult Members 65 and over	10,073						82,239		92,312
Adult Members under 65 (or age not specified)	90,591	2,226,984		1,212,009			1,134,914	854,698	5,519,196
Young Adult (definition varies usually 15 - 20)	16,031	83,498							99,529
Junior Members (definition varies usually <15)	20,661	626,275		378,870			322,718	238,399	1,586,923
Not Specified	1,640	226,385		0	916,489	149,138	894,194	0	2,187,846
Other		38,766					11,177		49,943
Percent Adult Members (15 and over)	85%	79%		76%	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	79%	78%	78%
Percent Junior Members (<15)	15%	21%		24%	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	21%	22%	22%
No. of Service Points with Public Access Internet Terminals at 30 June 2000	8	94		242	125	45	266	123	903
Service points with Internet terminals	100%	22%		76%	91%	94%	94%	52%	62%
No of Public Access Internet Terminals provided at 30 June 2000	35	711		534	457	97	829	291	2,954
Number of Catalogue Terminals provided	31				343				374
Number of other Public Access Computer Terminals Provided	9	491		809	321	18	240		1,888
Total Public Use computer terminals	75	1,202		1,343	1,121	115	1,069	291	5,216
Internet terminals per 10,000 persons	1.1	1.1		1.5	3.1	2.1	1.7	1.5	1.5
Population June 2000 - Australian Demographic Statistics - 3101.0 - June Quarter 2000	310,839	6,463,455	195,463	3,566,357	1,497,634	470,376	4,765,856	1,883,860	19,157,037