

Australian Public Libraries Statistical Report 2024–25



Australian Library and
Information Association



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Australasia



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The authors acknowledge that AI tools were used in the creation of this report. Microsoft Copilot was used to assist with initial data analysis, readability and copyediting of this report. AI outputs were human-led and verified.

Front cover image: Biyal-a Armstrong Creek Library. Back cover image: Yellamundie Library, Liverpool.

Foreword

Welcome to the *Australian Public Libraries Statistical Report 2024–25*. Produced in partnership by the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) and National and State Libraries Australasia (NSLA), this report provides a national snapshot of the many ways public libraries continue to enrich, support and strengthen communities across Australia.

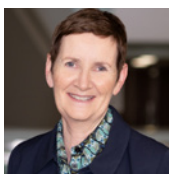
The story told in this report underscores the role of public libraries as vibrant hubs, bringing people together and strengthening community connections at a time when cost of living and social cohesion are front of mind for many communities.

This year's data shows that public library use has continued to grow over the past five years. Physical and online visits, borrowing, program participation and use of library spaces have all increased year on year. In 2024–25, Australians visited their public library an average of 5.9 times, up 7.3% from 5.5 in 2023–24. Use of library collections also increased this year, with Australians borrowing or accessing an average of 6.6 library resources, including books, eResources and databases, in 2024–25, up from 6.5 the previous year. This confirms that in 2025 libraries are more relevant than ever and continue to play an essential role in Australian society as open, welcoming community spaces belonging to everyone.

Meanwhile, the ways in which people engage with libraries continue to evolve, with significant growth in use of digital collections (up 3.4%), online borrowing (up 10.5%) and Wi-Fi use (up 9.6%). This demonstrates how vital libraries are to support digital inclusion and help Australians connect with information, services and learning in an increasingly digital world.

Finally, libraries are also thriving as places of connection and belonging. Increased use of meeting rooms, growing numbers of book clubs and record participation in programs show the important role libraries play in bringing people together to learn, create, share ideas and build community.

Taken together, the data in this report tells a compelling story: that in 2025 public libraries remain valued community institutions, providing access to knowledge, technology, opportunity and connection, and that, if anything, this role is more important in the digital age. As communities continue to change and grow, libraries are evolving alongside them, ensuring they remain welcoming, relevant and essential places for all Australians.



Catherine Clark

Chair Elect,
National and State Libraries Australasia
CEO and State Librarian,
State Library of Western Australia

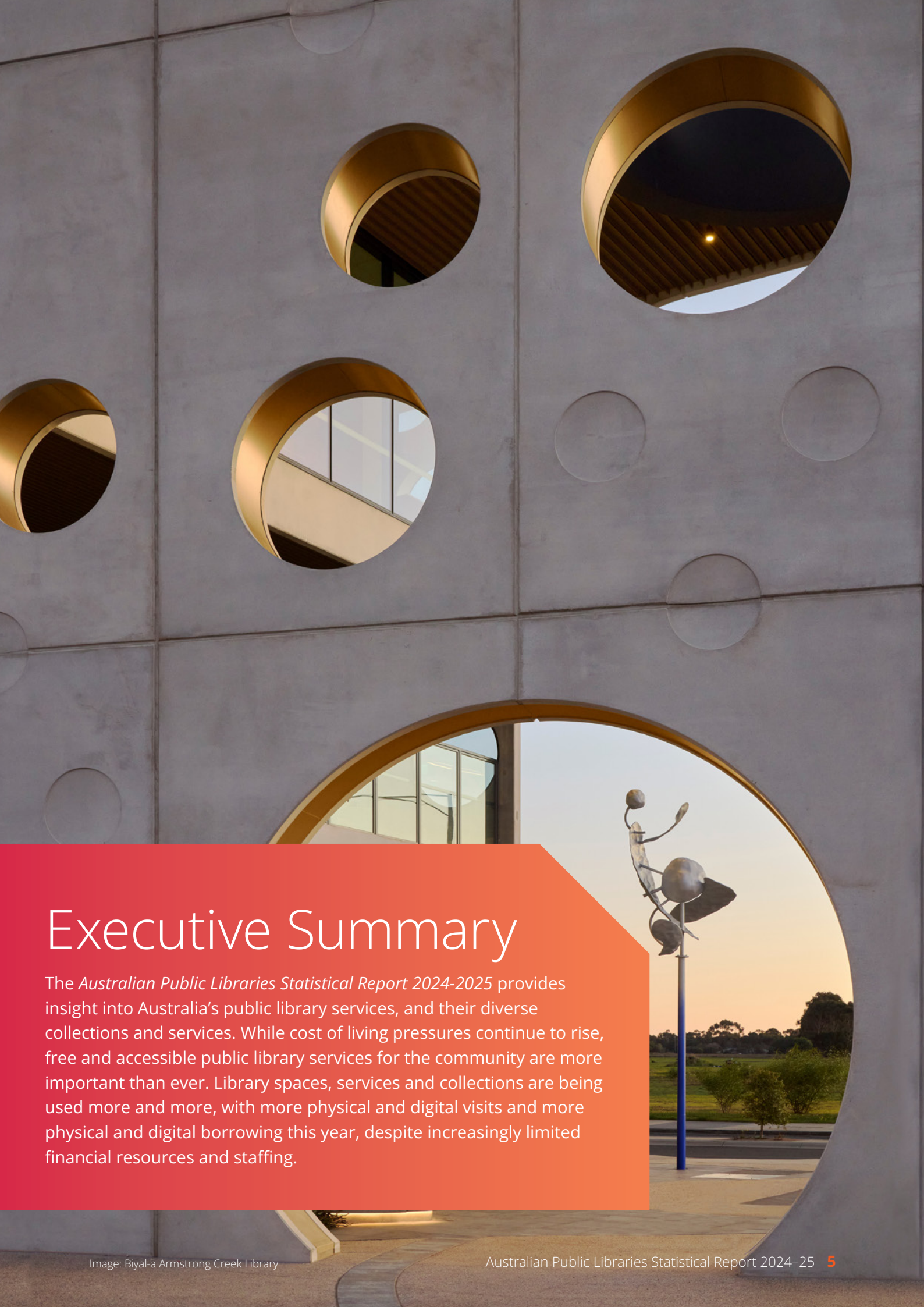


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Executive Summary

The *Australian Public Libraries Statistical Report 2024-2025* provides insight into Australia's public library services, and their diverse collections and services. While cost of living pressures continue to rise, free and accessible public library services for the community are more important than ever. Library spaces, services and collections are being used more and more, with more physical and digital visits and more physical and digital borrowing this year, despite increasingly limited financial resources and staffing.

Key trends

- Public library use has increased over the last five years and the ways in which they are used are changing.
 - Physical and online visits increased by 8.5% from 2023-24.
 - Both physical and digital borrowing increased, with digital borrowing growing at a faster rate.
- Public libraries are one of Australia's most important digital inclusion infrastructures, quietly underpinning access, skills and participation.
 - Digital collection usage (loans, database use and streaming) has increased by 80% over the five years since 2020-21.
 - Use of Wi-Fi and public computers continues to increase year on year, up by 9.6% since last year and by 97% since 2021-22.
- Libraries are flourishing as places of connection, facilitating access to communities, connectivity and space.
 - Use of library meeting rooms has increased by 24% since 2023-24 and 81% since 2021-22.
 - The number of book clubs increased by almost 20% in the last four years, bringing more people together around reading and literacy.
 - Program sessions and attendance have almost doubled in five years with programs on literacy and lifelong learning the most offered and attended program type.
- Use of public library collections and spaces continues to grow within a context of funding and professional constraints.
 - While engagement and services have expanded, overall funding for libraries decreased 0.6% in 2024-25 to \$1.383 billion; adjusted for inflation, per capita spending decreased 13% over five years.

The story in numbers

Key figures from 2024-25:

- Public library services offered 1,733 service points, including 1,409 branches, 90 mobile libraries, and 234 other outlets (including self-serve kiosks, library depots and collection vending machines).
- There were 90.5 million in-person library visits and 70 million website and catalogue visits recorded.
- Public library collections were used 180 million times, including 119 million physical item loans and 61 million digital loans, downloads and retrievals from electronic collections.
- On average, Australians accessed 6.6 library items across the year, chosen from a total of 47 million collection items available for the use of the community.
- An investment of \$135 million kept these collections current and relevant.
- A record 434,000 library programs attracted over 7.2 million attendees.
- 1,884 bookable rooms and meeting spaces were occupied for 938,000 hours.

About this report

This Australian Public Libraries Statistical Report covers the financial year 1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025. The report is intended to provide a broad snapshot of Australia's public library services.

Public libraries are governed by a variety of jurisdictional administrative arrangements, ranging from services wholly delivered by the state/territory government through to services wholly delivered by local government. This leads to a lack of national consistency in data gathered across jurisdictions, meaning that for some data points there are limits on the ability to compare services to each other.

Public libraries continually change and update the services they provide to communities, reflecting shifting demographics and social and cultural expectations and needs. Accordingly, the kinds of data collected for national statistical reports are reviewed periodically to highlight the most relevant data. The most recent national review was in 2020-21 as part of the *ALIA-APLA Standards and Guidelines for Australian Public Libraries*, in which several changes were made to the annual data collection survey. As a result, some questions have had data collected for only four years¹. Another national review is in progress at the time of publication.

Data is supplied by the state or territory authority responsible for public library services, and compiled by National and State Libraries Australasia (NSLA). The analysis and report is then created by NSLA together with the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA). Collating and processing data from all states and territories takes time, and the authors acknowledge this report reflects public libraries activity and usage at a delay.

NSLA is an alliance of the national, state and territory libraries of Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. In Australia, NSLA members represent the interests of public library networks within their jurisdictions. ALIA is the peak body and national professional association for the library and information services sector. ALIA's public library sector committee, the ALIA Australian Public Library Alliance (ALIA APLA) is the peak body for public libraries in Australia and comprises representatives from the state-based public library associations, the territory libraries and Libraries Tasmania.

¹ Note that in the 2024-25 report the State Library of Queensland no longer collects statistics from the twenty-six Indigenous Knowledge Centres operating in thirteen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island councils and has reduced the reporting requirements for the twenty-nine councils with populations of under 15,000 that operate sixty-six Rural Libraries Queensland (RLQ) Services.



1. Five-year national comparison

1.1 Service points

Public library services were provided across Australia through a total of 1,733 outlets in 2024-25, continuing the growth observed over the last five years. This figure includes mobile libraries and other outlets (self-serve kiosks, depots and collection vending machines).

There were small fluctuations across the eight jurisdictions with a notable increase in mobile libraries in Victoria, where there has been an increase in popularity of small agile vans functioning as outreach aids in metropolitan areas.

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Number of library branches	1,419	1,405	1,412	1,413	1,409
Number of mobile libraries	71	74	76	78	90
Number of other library outlets ²	200	227	226	226	234
Total number of library outlets	1,690	1,706	1,714	1,717	1,733
Total opening hours	2,884,922	2,944,811	2,910,186	3,023,634	3,013,817

1.2 Physical and online library visits

There was a five-year high of 160 million library visits in 2024-25. Physical visits to public libraries in 2024-25 grew by three million in this reporting period compared with the previous reporting period, rising from 87.5 million to 90.5 million. This represents a per capita increase from 3.2 to 3.3 in-person visits per year.

Digital visits to library websites increased even more rapidly, from 60 to almost 70 million, a per capita increase from 2.2 to 2.6.

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Total visits (physical and website)	112,825,175	111,936,483	149,494,653	147,834,155	160,355,132
Library visits (physical facilities)	57,747,548	56,329,191	78,878,875	87,577,447	90,535,091
Physical visits per month	4,812,296	4,694,099	6,573,240	7,298,121	7,544,591
Physical visits per capita	2.2	2.2	3.0	3.2	3.3
Website visits	55,077,627	55,607,292	70,615,778	60,256,708	69,820,041
Website visits per capita	2.2	2.2	2.7	2.2	2.6

² Includes self-service kiosks (in separate locations from branches), automated vending machines, deposit and unstaffed depots and all other outlets.

1.3 Collections and usage

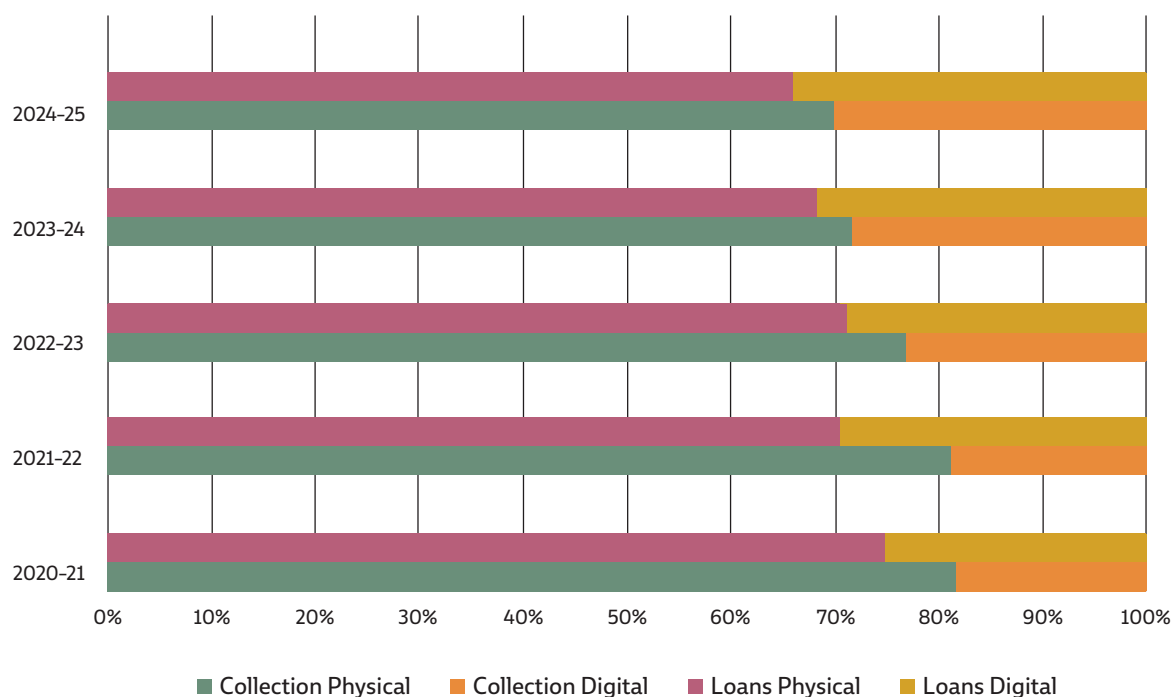
Loans of collection items (physical and digital combined) have increased by 24% over the five-year period to almost 180 million loans in 2024-25. On a per capita basis this is an increase from last reporting period, meaning loans per capita are also at a five-year high, at 6.6 loans per person annually.

Overall, usage of collections increased by 6 million instances compared with the previous reporting period. This was largely the result of an increase in digital loans.

Public library collections have steadily grown over the last five years from around 40 million items in 2020-21 to 47 million items in 2024-25 (physical and digital combined). On a per capita basis there are 1.7 public library collection items for every person in Australia, a marginal decrease from the last reporting period.

Digital collections, including ebooks and audiobooks, now account for a larger proportion of total collection holdings, growing from around 18% five years ago to 30% in 2024-25. These larger digital collections are in turn reflected in greater lending figures of digital collection items, which have increased over the same period from around 34 million in 2020-21 (23% of loans) to 61 million in 2024-25 (34% of loans).

Five-year comparison of physical and digital collections and physical and digital loans



	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Physical collection items	32,543,251	34,289,207	33,483,271	34,330,881	32,700,013
Digital collection items	7,326,673	7,946,203	10,060,510	13,551,906	14,018,526
Total collection items (physical & digital)	39,869,924	42,235,410	43,543,781	47,882,787	46,718,539
Collection items per capita	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.7
Physical collection usage	101,072,889	102,951,529	113,403,662	118,767,707	118,956,778
Digital collection usage	33,956,538	43,095,123	45,585,736	55,188,827	61,007,675
Total collection usage (physical & digital transactions)	144,833,515	146,046,652	159,058,567	173,956,534	179,964,453
Collection usage per capita	5.6	5.7	6.1	6.5	6.6



1.4 Services

Digital access

Access to information and services online is essential for full participation in civic life. Libraries play an essential role connecting people with information in many ways, including through public internet access devices and providing Wi-Fi.

Digital access provision continues to expand. Reporting on the number of hours of Wi-Fi use is incomplete, as only four of the eight Australian states and territories report on this metric. However, in these four alone more than 14.8 million hours of internet access was provided in 2024-25, more than double the first year data was collected in 2021-22.

While use of Wi-Fi access rose, the hours of use of public access devices decreased slightly, from 5.7 to 5.6 million hours, and the number of public access devices fell slightly too. This suggests a trend of upward demand for Wi-Fi on personal devices and a tapering of use of public access devices.

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Public access internet devices ³	12,683	14,247	14,704	14,640	14,082
Number of hours public access devices in use	-	3,538,690	5,336,213	5,705,835	5,633,760
Hours of Wi-Fi use on BYOD and public access devices	-	6,587,260	11,806,269	14,061,725	14,807,509
Number of Wi-Fi sessions ⁴	-	8,587,713	12,018,781	15,445,677	16,931,818

3 Inclusive of all public access internet devices for use within library branches, including desktops, laptops and tablets.

4 Excluding the ACT, South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria

Case study – Digital access at Hinchinbrook Libraries, Queensland



Hinchinbrook library reopening. Image supplied by Hinchinbrook Shire Library

When floodwaters peaked at 14.93 metres in Ingham on 3 February 2025, the Hinchinbrook Shire Library found itself surrounded by water, cut off from the community it serves. The building suffered roof damage, a significant mould outbreak and remained closed for 17 weeks.

What could have been a major setback instead became a story of resilience and renewal.

During the closure, library staff quickly expanded access to digital services, helping residents stay connected through ebooks, audiobooks, magazines and online resources. What began as a response to disaster became a lasting shift in how the community engages with its library.

More than a year later, digital usage continues to grow. Digital loans and accesses increased from 971 in June 2025 to 1,429 in July 2026, representing 47% growth.

The community's return to the library has been equally impressive. Following the reopening in June 2025, collection transactions surged from 5,970 to 14,611 by August 2025, while visitor numbers increased from 2,550 to 3,588. Nearly 300 new members joined during 2025-26, with memberships growing by 49%.

Library programs have also flourished, with regular events increasing by more than 50% and attendance growing by around 70%.

These results demonstrate that Hinchinbrook's libraries have not simply recovered from one of the region's most significant natural disasters. They have emerged stronger, with increased visitation, growing digital engagement and expanded community participation.

Restoration works were enabled by the joint Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) in partnership with Hinchinbrook Shire Council.

Meeting rooms

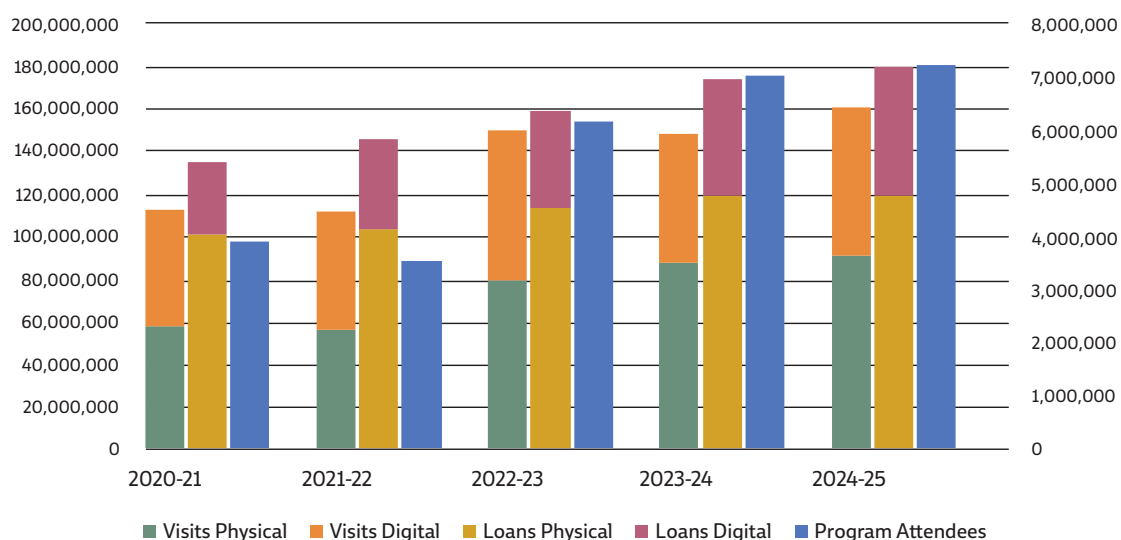
Meeting room usage increased by 24% in this reporting period, with over 200 more rooms available. Since data began being collected in 2021-22 on the number of meeting rooms and the number of hours booked to use, there has been a marked increase year-on-year in their usage, nearly doubling over the four-year period.

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Bookable meeting rooms/ spaces	n/a	1,478	1,292	1,654	1,884
Hours booked in meeting rooms/spaces	n/a	518,940	646,583	754,011	937,757

1.5 Programs

Public library program sessions have continued a four-year upward trend in 2024-25. This is matched by increased public participation in library programs: over 430,000 programs attracted some 7.2 million attendees.

Five-year comparison of physical and digital visits,
physical and digital loans and program attendance



	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Programs	148,591	259,620	354,978	409,444	433,624
Program attendances	3,887,526	3,527,149	6,148,529	7,030,453	7,230,276
Library-facilitated book clubs	n/a	5,323	6,232	6,124	6,382
Local history collections	n/a	488	526	554	488

Program sessions and participants by outcome areas

Outcome area measures track programs and program participation in line with the six measures set out in the *ALIA-APLA Standards and Guidelines for Australian Public Libraries*⁵:

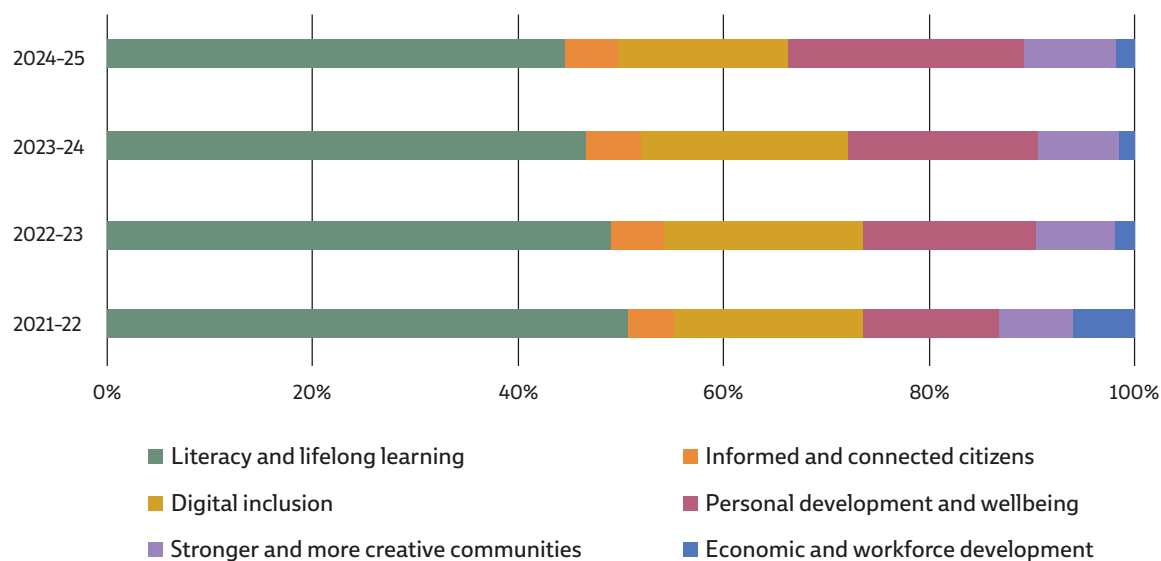
- **Literacy and lifelong learning** - Programs whose primary purpose relates to literacy and/or educational learning, e.g. storytime, English conversation, homework help, reading-related programs, programs supporting development of learning habits and skills.
- **Informed and connected citizens** - Programs whose primary purpose is community connection and/or build community capacity to participate in community discussions, access government services and participate in political processes, e.g. eGov sessions, new residents morning teas.
- **Digital inclusion** - Programs whose primary purpose is to increase participants' confidence using digital technology, e.g. Tech Savvy Seniors, PC skills, internet skills, coding.
- **Personal development and wellbeing** - Programs whose primary purpose is social inclusion or personal development, e.g. hobby clubs, author talks, health-related programs.
- **Stronger and more creative communities** - Programs whose primary purpose is to support expressions of culture, identity and community pride, e.g. cultural celebrations, multilingual programming, local history events, writing workshops.
- **Economic and workforce development** - Programs whose primary purpose is to improve employment and productivity outcomes, e.g. programs for jobseekers, programs for micro/small business owners, vocational programs.

Given libraries' central focus on literacy and lifelong learning it's no surprise that the majority of sessions held are aligned with this outcome area. What is clear from participant data is that they remain the most well attended type of program, accounting for 40-50% of sessions, but between 60 and 70% of participants over the last four years.

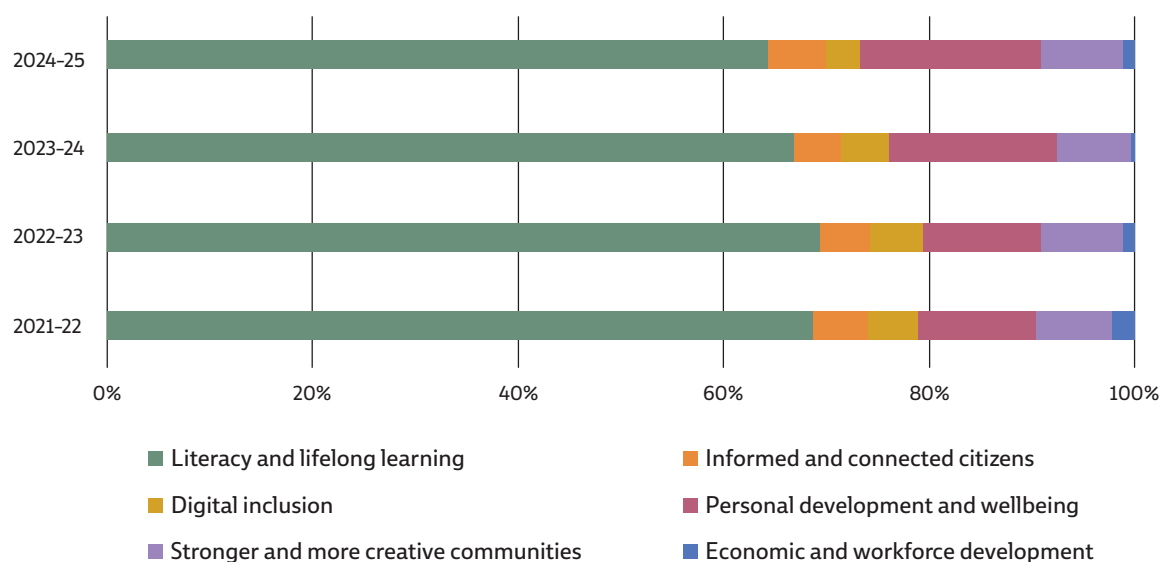
Personal development and wellbeing programs had significant growth since 2023-24 with increases of 35% in sessions and 11% in participants. Literacy and lifelong learning remained the largest outcome area, bolstered by early childhood programming. Digital inclusion remained above 2022-23 levels for sessions but recorded a 20% decline in participants, making it the only outcome area to report lower participation than in 2022-23. This may reflect a greater focus on one-on-one support over group programming.

⁵ ALIA (2021) *ALIA-APLA Standards and Guidelines for Australian Public Libraries*. <https://read.alia.org.au/apla-alia-standards-and-guidelines-australian-public-libraries-may-2021>

Proportion of program sessions by outcome area



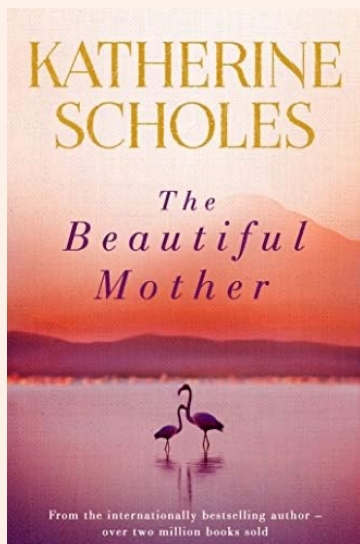
Proportion of program participants by outcome area



		2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
SESSIONS	Literacy & lifelong learning	119,085	171,457	184,232	190,093
	Informed & connected citizens	10,983	17,987	20,111	21,221
	Digital inclusion	42,771	66,339	79,727	70,613
	Personal development & wellbeing	31,285	58,214	71,284	96,240
	Stronger & more creative communities	17,240	25,826	31,412	37,748
	Economic & workforce development	13,111	6,389	4,646	6,721
PARTICIPANTS	Literacy & lifelong learning	2,305,898	4,086,777	4,482,012	4,486,038
	Informed & connected citizens	178,389	277,164	305,477	391,209
	Digital inclusion	166,184	300,030	317,136	241,453
	Personal development & wellbeing	379,686	679,670	1,100,971	1,223,258
	Stronger & more creative communities	253,855	464,891	478,580	559,702
	Economic & workforce development	73,305	75,431	25,275	83,892

Case Study: Mary Hutchinson Women's Prison book group, Libraries Tasmania

At Mary Hutchinson Women's Prison in Risdon Vale, Tasmania, around eight female prisoners come together each month to discuss a specific book. They're one of many groups throughout the state accessing Libraries Tasmania's free Book Groups Tasmania program. Program participants can borrow multiple copies of the same book, from a range of over 500 fiction and non-fiction titles.



In January 2025, the Mary Hutchinson Women's Prison book group read *The Beautiful Mother* by Katherine Scholes, an international bestselling author who was born in Tanzania and now lives in Tasmania. The following month, Katherine accepted an invitation to meet with the group to discuss her work. She talked about her journey as an author, discussed the themes of *The Beautiful Mother* and her other novels, and shared stories and photos of her incredible childhood in Tanzania.

One book group member said that "Katherine blew all of us away with her engaging stories, which were at times hilarious and other times heartbreaking". Katherine was thankful for the invitation and opportunity to connect with the women in the group.

Since Katherine's visit, members of the Mary Hutchinson Women's Prison book group have continued to meet. They've also continued welcoming visiting authors, including Tasmanian author Rachael Treasure as part of Tasmania Reads Week in March 2025.

1.6 Library membership

Active library membership in real figures and as a percentage of the population decreased for the fifth consecutive year in 2024-25, dropping by 1.4 percentage points from 30.2% in 2023-24 to 28.8%. Despite this, the data shows physical and online attendance increasing by 8.5% in the same period, and collection use increasing by 3.4%. This indicates that library *engagement* is actually increasing, and that libraries are serving as open points of access and civic forums, moving away from closed membership services.

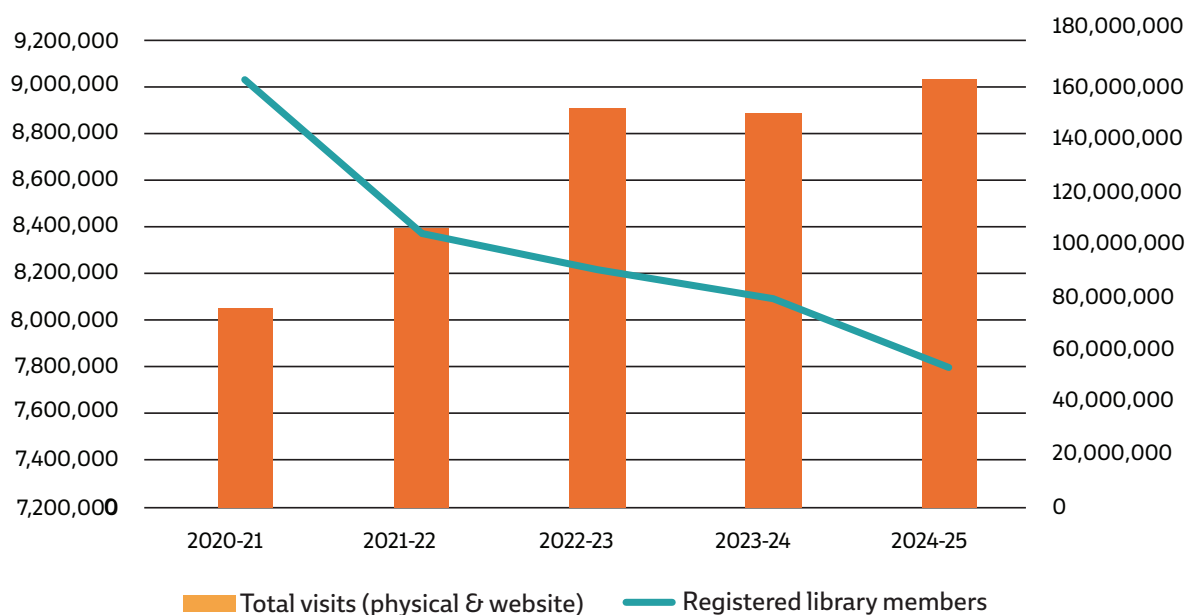
The decrease in membership is likely due to a number of factors. To some extent it reflects a redefinition of 'active library membership' in some jurisdictions, and moves to single-card family memberships.

Further, while membership is normally required to borrow library items, a large majority of library services are available to both members and non-members, such as:

- attending programs and events
- accessing books, newspapers and magazines while remaining within the library
- study and remote work
- family visitation
- getting help with accessing government services like Centrelink and
- using Wi-Fi and other digital resources on site.

In addition to this, people use the physical library space without formally accessing services, such as people needing to charge devices or seek respite from weather, to those who are experiencing homelessness.

Registered library members vs. total visits



	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Registered library members	9,048,570	8,407,465	8,260,566	8,133,262	7,848,030
Members as % of total population	35.2%	32.6%	31.0%	30.2%	28.8%
Total visits (physical and website)	112,825,175	111,936,483	149,494,653	147,834,155	160,355,132



Case Study: Expanding Access at Manly Library - Northern Beaches NSW



Manly Library at night. Image supplied by Northern Beaches Libraries

Northern Beaches Council in northern Sydney has launched 24/7 access at Manly Library, making it the second library in the region to offer round-the-clock, unstaffed entry for eligible members.

Following the launch of the enormously successful Forestville Library 24/7 in 2022, Northern Beaches Council responded to overwhelming community feedback requesting an expansion of full unstaffed access to alternative library sites.

Manly Library continues to provide a full range of services and remains staffed during business hours but now provides access outside of staffed hours, 24 hours a day – 7 days a week with full access to library services through self-service infrastructure.

Since launching in June 2025, more than 2,200 community members have signed up for 24/7 access, with over 40,000 visits recorded out of hours at Manly Library.

"I'm a 24/7 member and I just wanted to say it's been so incredibly helpful to have a quiet, safe space to study early in the morning and at night with such a great atmosphere, especially for students like myself in senior years of high school because there's an underlying sense of community which I think everyone can appreciate." 24/7 member

24/7 library services are demonstrating a shift in service provision as we recognise our community's changing lifestyles and expectations, adapting service delivery to *always on and always open*.

1.7 Staff

Public libraries staff numbers decreased slightly in 2024-25, which is also represented in per capita figures. In line with this drop, positions that require an ALIA-accredited higher education qualification, Diploma level qualification, or a non-library qualification decreased marginally.

The decrease in library staffing figures, both with specialist qualifications and those without, is in line with the general decrease in public library funding, as shown in the section below.

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Total staff (full time equivalent – FTE)	7,798	7,727	7,753	7,787	7,750
Staff members (FTE) per 10,000 persons	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.9	2.8
Number of positions (not FTE) that require an ALIA-recognised library technician qualification.	1,044.22	968.91	953.71	1,083.09	946
Number of positions that require an ALIA-recognised library and information science qualification at undergraduate or postgraduate levels.	1,666.3	1,516.13	1,592.8	1,579.55	1,503
Number of positions that require a non-library qualification, e.g. accounting, marketing, education.	N/A	525.24	527.44	586.92	559

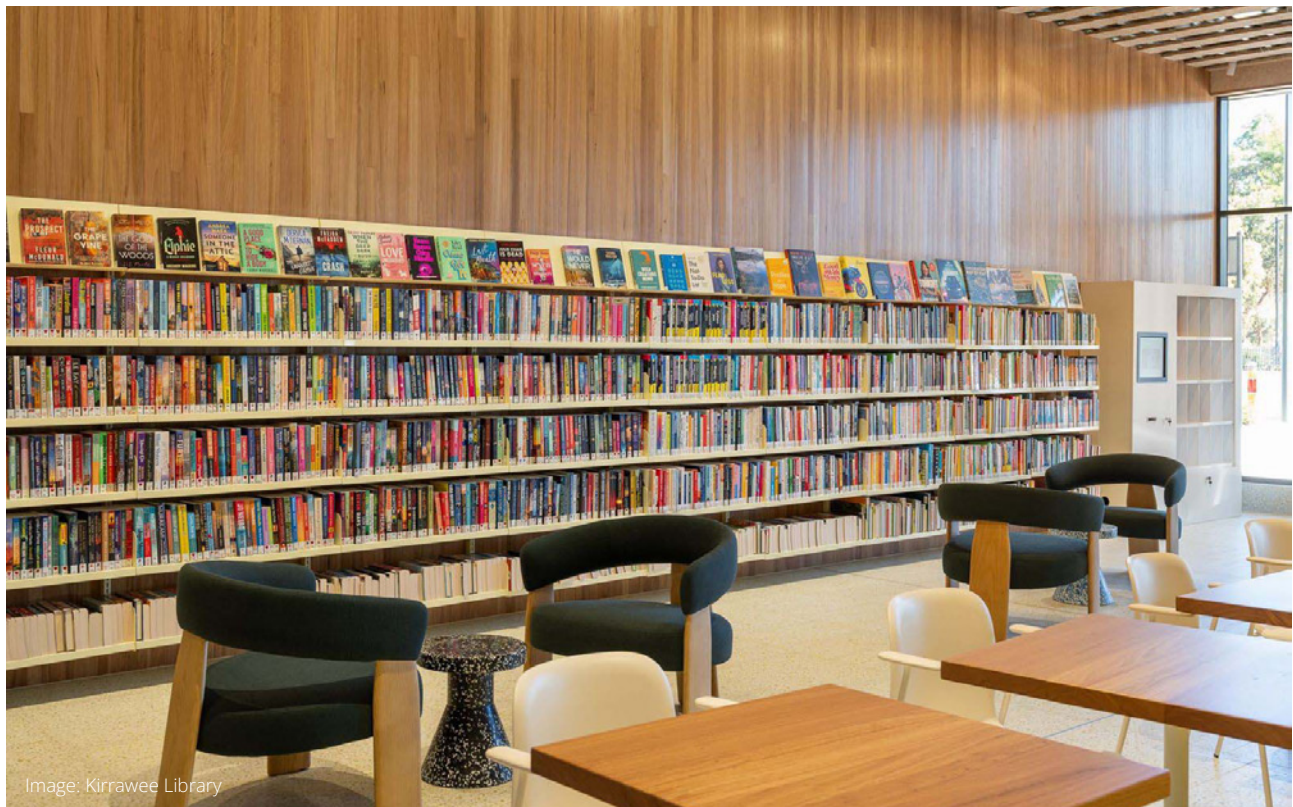


Image: Kirrawee Library

1.8 Expenditure⁶

Overall funding for public library services decreased by 0.6% from 2023-24 to 2024-25, which is equal to a \$2.02 per capita decrease, adjusting for inflation. Over the five-year period, there has been a 13% funding decrease in real terms, again adjusting for inflation.

Expenditure on collections decreased by 5.8% from 2023-24 to 2024-25, and by 19% over the five-year period (both figures adjusted for inflation).

Despite real value decreases in funding and staffing, public libraries nevertheless continue to develop physical and digital collections, expand program offerings, extend Wi-Fi access, offer more bookable meeting rooms, and have seen physical and digital visitation and borrowing figures increase significantly.

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Expenditure on public library services	\$1,264.77m	\$1,259.89m	\$1,306.39m	\$1,391.42m	\$1,383.42m
Expenditure per capita	\$49.15	\$48.90	\$49.74	\$51.60	\$50.84
Expenditure per capita adjusted for inflation to 2024-25	\$58.66	\$55.86	\$53.09	\$52.86	-
Collections expenditure	\$132.54m	\$135.83m	\$143.51m	\$138.66m	\$135.49m
Collection expenditure per capita	\$5.15	\$5.27	\$5.46	\$5.16	\$4.98
Collection expenditure per capita adjusted for inflation	\$6.15	\$6.02	\$5.83	\$5.29	-

⁶ Note that, unless otherwise noted, these figures have not been adjusted to reflect Consumer Price Index changes over the period.



2. State and territory comparative data

This section presents comparative data across Australia's eight states and territories in 2024-25.

2.1 Service points

Service points stayed relatively steady, with a small increase in New South Wales and small drops in the Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia, and Western Australia. Opening hours also remained relatively steady, with small fluctuations across jurisdictions.

	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	Tas.	Vic.	WA	Aust.
Number of library branches	10	365	30	303	132	45	292	232	1,409
Number of mobile libraries	0	27	1	14	4	0	43	1	90
Number of other library outlets ⁷	0	74	5	22	31	4	84	14	234
Total number of library outlets	10	466	36	339	167	49	419	247	1,733
Total opening hours	21,385	847,650	31,605	562,205	285,839	75,175	770,035	419,923	3,013,817

2.2 Collections and usage

Collections

In 2024-25 overall collection sizes fell slightly. Physical collections decreased slightly, with drops in all jurisdictions apart from the Northern Territory and Western Australia. Overall digital holdings grew, but with fluctuations across jurisdictions, with some adjustments in data collection.

Total collection holdings per capita across Australia have remained relatively stable over the longer term, with the general trend across states and territories being that the physical collection size remains stable and that the digital collection increases year-on-year.

	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	Tas.	Vic.	WA	Aust.
Total collection items (physical & digital)	0.54m	16.97m	0.35m	8.86m	3.16m	0.57m	9.58m	6.69m	46.72m
Total number physical items	0.38m	12.72m	0.31m	5.49m	2.55m	0.45m	7.06m	3.74m	32.70m
Total number digital items	0.17m	4.24m	0.04m	3.37m	0.61m	0.12m	2.52m	2.95m	14.02m
Local history collections	1	89	15	33 ⁸	108	45	50	147	488

⁷ Includes self-service kiosks (in separate locations from branches), automated vending machines, deposit and unstaffed depots and all other outlets.

⁸ Note changes in statistics reported by Queensland mentioned in 'About this report' above.

Usage

Overall collection usage, through physical and digital borrowing, database access and streaming is at a five-year high. Digital borrowing increased in all jurisdictions apart from the Northern Territory and South Australia. Physical item loans decreased slightly in all states and territories apart from South Australia and Victoria. This mirrors the overall trend of physical borrowing increasing at a slower rate than digital borrowing year on year.

	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	Tas.	Vic.	WA	Aust.
Total collection usage	2.63m	50.41m	0.73m	41.63m	17.02m	3.22m	47.44m	16.86m	179.96m
Total physical items usage	1.48m	33.79m	0.46m	25.15m	11.32m	2.10m	33.70m	10.95m	118.96m
Total digital items usage	1.15m	16.62m	0.26m	16.48m	5.70m	1.12m	13.74m	5.92m	61.00m
Per capita collection usage	5.46	5.90	2.77	7.66	9.00	5.60	6.77	5.61	6.61



Case Study: Digital Inclusion at Cummins School Community Library and Coffin Bay Community Library, South Australia



Digital session at the Cummins School Community Library. Image supplied by Cummins School Community Library

Public libraries remain at the forefront of digital inclusion across Australia, providing access to a wide array of digital resources and vital support for navigating an increasingly online world.

At Cummins School Community Library, Digital Assist sessions run every Tuesday and Thursday, supporting community members with a diverse range of technical queries. Whether it is setting up new devices, accessing eBooks and streaming services, or navigating government forms online, people of all ages depend on the library's expertise to confidently participate in digital activities.

Similarly, at Coffin Bay Community Library, staff deliver Digital Assist each Tuesday & Thursday, with frequent drop-ins from local residents. The presence of two staff members in this small coastal town ensures personalised guidance, and the sessions are highly valued for meeting individual needs, from troubleshooting everyday technical issues to helping users access educational content.

Cummins School Community Library regularly holds Digital Literacy workshops in partnership with Public Library Services (PLS) and both the Cummins & Coffin Bay Libraries prominently feature Be Connected displays, actively encouraging older adults to improve their digital skills. These initiatives have proven to make a significant impact, enabling residents to keep in touch with family, participate in lifelong learning, and independently access essential services.

The combined efforts of Cummins and Coffin Bay Libraries highlight the critical role public libraries play in empowering communities, ensuring all members enjoy the benefits of the digital age and are equipped to engage fully in modern society. Not only this, but it also provides great connection to community members who otherwise may not have anyone to turn to for this sort of assistance.

2.3 Visitation

There were 3 million more in-person library visits, reflecting a 3.3% increase in the 2024-25 reporting period. All jurisdictions apart from the ACT and Queensland reported higher in-person visitation numbers in 2024-25.

Online visitation (website and catalogue) visits increased by 9 million, a 16% increase from 2023-24 to 2024-25, with the most substantial increases in South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia.

This is the fourth year that libraries have provided data on hours booked in publicly available meeting rooms. The total number of hours booked has increased substantially each year, from 518,940 hours in 2021-22 to 937,757 hours in 2024-25.

	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	Tas.	Vic.	WA	Aust.
Onsite visitors	1.41m	28.11m	0.78m	16.94m	8.08m	2.30m	24.20m	8.73m	90.54m
Website visits, inc. catalogue	1.13m	14.44m	0.49m	18.21m	12.46m	2.36m	14.73m	6.01m	69.82m
Hours booked in rooms / spaces	6,744	256,480	7,826	219,998	70,744	27,629	256,652	91,684	937,757



Image: Yellamundie Public Library

Case Study: Planting Sustainable Seeds of Connection at Joondalup Libraries, Western Australia



Library program at Duncraig Library. Supplied by Joondalup Libraries

Planting the seeds of connection at Joondalup Public Libraries plays a vital role in addressing social isolation by providing welcoming, inclusive spaces where people can reconnect, build confidence and form meaningful relationships.

Located in Perth's northern suburbs, Joondalup Libraries deliver programs such as Cuttings and Cake, which demonstrate how simple, low-barrier activities can create opportunities for friendship, learning and personal growth within the community.

At a recent Saturday morning session, around twenty participants came together to share plant cuttings, enjoy morning tea and engage in relaxed conversation. The popularity of the program was evident, with most of the shared plants finding new homes by the end of the session.

For one participant, the impact was particularly profound. After a period of recovery at home following a serious injury, she attended the session as her first step back into social life. Through friendly interactions with both staff and fellow attendees, she experienced a renewed sense of connection and described the library as a place where she felt comfortable, welcomed and supported.

Stories like this highlight the broader role libraries play in community wellbeing. By offering accessible programs that encourage participation, creativity and learning, libraries help reduce isolation and empower individuals to re-engage with the world around them. These shared experiences, whether through gardening, conversation or simply spending time together, strengthen social bonds and reinforce the library's position as a trusted community hub.

2.4 Internet access

Despite there being a substantial drop of 600 fewer public access devices available across the country, their usage decreased by only 72,000 hours. Public access device numbers dropped in all jurisdictions apart from South Australia and Western Australia.

The number of Wi-Fi sessions and the number of hours used both increased by 1 million in 2024-25. Currently only four jurisdictions are able to report on these metrics, so while it is difficult to establish an accurate picture of Wi-Fi use in libraries due to incomplete data, there is an overall upward trend.

	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	Tas.	Vic.	WA	Aust.
Public access devices	107	4,730	259	2,884	1,606	238	3,056	1,202	14,082
Public device usage hours	53,045	1,934,071	92,398	1,054,262	505,906	NA	1,552,192	441,886	5,633,760
Total Wi-Fi sessions	NA	11,527,673	287,584	4,016,923	NA	NA	NA	1,099,638	16,931,818
Hours of Wi-Fi use	NA	NA	303,671	2,248,129	NA	NA	5,744,686	876,813	9,173,299



Image: Biyal-a Armstrong Creek Library

2.5 Public programs

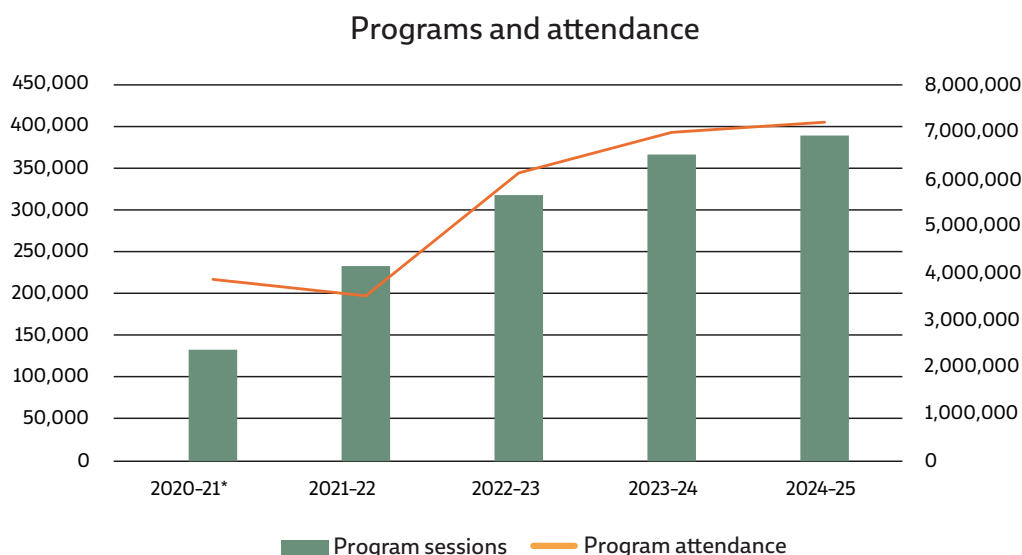
Australian public libraries delivered 433,624 program sessions nationally in 2024–25, attracting more than 7.23 million participants. Compared with 2023–24, the number of sessions increased by 5.9% and attendance grew by 2.8%, continuing a year-on-year trend of growth and demonstrating the ongoing value of library programs in supporting learning, connection and community wellbeing.

2.5.1 Program sessions by target audience

Audience-specific programming demonstrates how libraries adapt their services to meet the needs of people at different life stages within their community. A strong focus on early childhood programming reflects their ongoing commitment to nurturing literacy and learning from an early age, while adult programs position libraries as valued spaces for learning, connection and recreation.

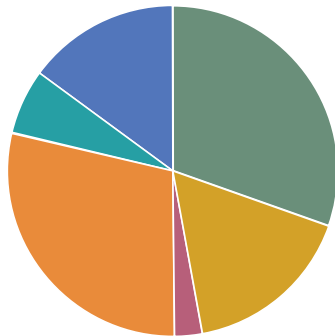
Target audience categories are not always defined consistently across Australian states and territories or between reporting periods. Variations in definitions (particularly relating to young adults and seniors) do not always align neatly with the categories used in this report. This combined with other local reporting practices, can result in audience reporting fluctuating from year to year.

SESSION	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	Tas.	Vic.	WA	Aust.
Early childhood	1,561	35,206	1,213	30,049	9,518	1,844	37,088	16,094	132,573
Children	406	18,486	1,147	12,170	11,753	952	19,763	7,558	72,235
Young adult	7	3,485	240	1,626	110	533	4,070	1,778	11,849
Adults	612	28,313	1,382	14,878	23,563	1,998	37,578	15,964	124,288
Seniors	412	9,672	225	3,473	3,602	405	5,732	5,040	28,561
All ages	22	8,313	677	5,612	23,156	1,215	8,366	16,757	64,118
TOTAL	3,020	103,475	4,884	67,808	71,702	6,947	112,597	63,191	433,624

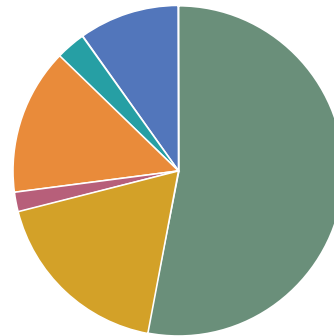


2.5.2 Program participants by target audience

2024–25 Programs by target audience



2024–25 Participation by target audience



- Early Childhood
- Children
- Young adult
- Adults
- Seniors
- All ages

The graphs above highlight the popularity of early childhood programs, which represent more than half of total participant numbers and draw an average of approximately 29 attendees per session⁹.

SESSION	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	Tas.	Vic.	WA	Aust.
Early childhood	57,284	905,239	30,066	874,932	271,546	48,455	1,219,268	433,221	3,840,011
Children	4,591	297,252	21,673	275,446	130,934	14,166	396,038	145,964	1,286,064
Young adult	140	45,978	3,088	18,526	1,348	4,699	45,501	15,361	134,641
Adults	6,012	297,212	4,251	158,331	105,366	11,661	304,225	150,404	1,037,462
Seniors	4,975	77,885	941	22,969	16,207	2,209	64,225	30,585	219,996
All ages	225	196,533	8,905	158,203	133,821	12,233	111,894	90,288	712,102
TOTAL	73,227	1,820,099	68,924	1,508,407	659,222	93,423	2,141,151	865,823	7,230,276

⁹ Note that this figure includes both parent/guardian and child participants at early childhood sessions.

Case Study: Colourful Connections: Mardi Gras family sessions at Kings Cross, Customs House and Newtown libraries, New South Wales



Friendship bracelets. Image supplied by City of Sydney Libraries

Colourful Connections was a free, family-friendly activity which brought together people of all ages and provided a welcoming space for people of diverse sexualities and genders, along with their families and allies. The programs were attended by a broad range of age groups, with particularly strong attendance from young adults.

Held during the Mardi Gras festival, participants were invited to create friendship bracelets, creating opportunities to meet others, share experiences and build a sense of belonging in the local community.

The relaxed format encouraged conversation. By bringing people together through a shared creative activity, the program provided a natural focus that removed some of the pressure often associated with social situations. Working side by side, participants began conversations naturally and formed new connections.

Participants shared positive feedback about their experience:

"My grandchildren had a really good time, with lots of help from everyone there. Please pass on my thanks to all involved and Happy Mardi Gras."

"I attended the Mardi Gras event with my child, and we happily made beaded bracelets all afternoon."

The sessions were intentionally held alongside the library's dedicated LGBTIQ+ collection, creating a visible and affirming environment for participants. Featuring books, films and graphic novels, the collection reflects the diverse experiences, histories and identities of people of diverse sexualities and genders. Hosting the program in this space helped foster a sense of safety and belonging while also encouraging participants to discover resources within the collection.

2.5.3 Programs by outcome area

The outcome area measures illustrate programs and program participation in line with the six measures related to the *ALIA-APLA Standards and Guidelines for Australian Public Libraries*¹⁰ as mentioned in 1.5 above.

Outcome area classifications, like target audience categories, can vary slightly across jurisdictions. The assignment of programs to particular outcome areas often involves a degree of judgment, which may result in some differences in reporting practices.

SESSIONS	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	Tas.	Vic.	WA	Aust.
Literacy & lifelong learning	2,135	51,850	1,557	36,067	16,546	3,003	50,315	28,620	190,093
Informed & connected citizens	31	5,890	168	3,156	4,294	179	5,074	2,429	21,221
Digital inclusion	-	9,645	386	6,384	27,249	1,135	18,969	6,845	70,613
Personal development & wellbeing	772	18,964	1,196	19,482	17,560	1,738	22,606	13,922	96,240
Stronger & more creative communities	82	10,554	708	2,422	5,771	368	9,090	8,753	37,748
Economic & workforce development	-	573	869	297	319	524	3,646	493	6,721

PARTICIPANTS	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	Tas.	Vic.	WA	Aust.
Literacy & lifelong learning	62,763	1,151,220	36,040	968,350	353,412	58,912	1,366,149	489,192	4,486,038
Informed & connected citizens	583	115,343	1,625	56,715	76,209	3,804	107,315	29,615	391,209
Digital inclusion	-	44,773	2,127	40,433	43,721	3,448	68,518	38,433	241,453
Personal development & wellbeing	8,796	255,053	19,910	397,349	131,079	19,622	281,227	110,222	1,223,258
Stronger & more creative communities	1,085	191,441	7,418	40,804	52,029	5,745	173,947	87,233	559,702
Economic & workforce development	-	9,766	1,804	4,756	1,041	1,892	61,889	2,744	83,892
TOTAL	73,227	1,767,596	68,924	1,508,407	657,491	93,423	2,059,045	757,439	6,985,552

¹⁰ ALIA (2021) *ALIA-APLA Standards and Guidelines for Australian Public Libraries*. <https://read.alia.org.au/apla-alia-standards-and-guidelines-australian-public-libraries-may-2021>

2.5.4 Programs by delivery mode

This measure reflects libraries' efforts to meet community needs by delivering programs in diverse modes, depending on the audience, context or content. They are:

- **library onsite** - at the library, delivered/arranged by the library
- **partner onsite** - delivered by a partner organisation at the library; use of facilities only, not private hire
- **community location** - offsite and outreach
- **online** - livestreamed, pre-recorded, posted on social media

In 2024–25, program delivery continued to focus mostly on library-based programs, with library onsite delivery increasing to 88.3% of all programs (up from 86.6% in 2023–24). Partner onsite and online delivery declined, while community-based delivery remained largely unchanged.

SESSIONS	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	Tas.	Vic.	WA	Aust.
Library onsite	2,509	93,197	3,925	63,120	69,045	5,878	92,148	52,394	382,216
Partner onsite	438	8,382	590	NA	1,629	801	7,980	6,507	26,327
Community location	33	3,816	320	4,283	1,888	224	8,930	2,432	21,926
Online	40	673	37	405	140	44	642	241	2,222

PARTICIPANTS	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	Tas.	Vic.	WA	Aust.
Library onsite	70,881	1,867,259	49,763	1,256,700	664,612	78,797	1,711,000	697,474	6,396,486
Partner onsite	1,241	132,248	8,513	NA	27,469	9,121	123,907	60,807	363,306
Community location	982	113,883	4,763	230,768	48,207	5,360	209,392	66,453	679,808
Online views ¹¹	123	64,606	5,887	20,875	6,392	145	14,746	12,666	125,440

11 Including livestreamed or pre-recorded sessions shared via social media or library websites.



3. Data sources

The data used to prepare this report was made available from each individual State or Territory authority. It should be noted that the data may vary from that published separately by individual States and Territories.

For further information on the data please contact:

Australian Capital Territory

Libraries ACT
PO Box 158
CANBERRA CITY ACT 2601

New South Wales

Public Library Services
State Library of New South Wales
Macquarie St
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Northern Territory

Assistant Director, Library Sector Services
Library & Archives NT
Department of People, Sport and Culture
GPO Box 42
DARWIN NT 0801

Queensland

State Library of Queensland
PO Box 3488
SOUTH BRISBANE QLD 4101

South Australia

Public Library Services
State Library of South Australia
GPO BOX 1971
ADELAIDE SA 5001

Tasmania

Libraries Tasmania
91 Murray Street
HOBART TAS 7000

Victoria

Public Libraries Victoria
C/O Chief Executive Officer
Level 12/60 Collins Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Western Australia

State Library of Western Australia
25 Francis Street, Perth Cultural Centre
PERTH WA 6000



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