

Australian public libraries statistical report 2019-20

Compiled by State Library of Queensland

March 2021

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Introduction

The Australian Public Libraries Statistical Report is an annual project that identifies and measures the usage and activities of Australia's public library services. The report is compiled by the State Library of Queensland on behalf of National and State Libraries Australia (NSLA) using data supplied by the authority responsible for public library services in each state and territory.

NSLA is the peak body for Australia's national, state and territory libraries. NSLA members also represent the interests of the public library networks within their jurisdictions and work closely with colleagues in the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA), and the Australian Public Library Alliance (APLA).

1. Selected national statistics 2019-20

The 2019-20 reporting period was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the mandatory closures and restrictions in each state and territory from March 2020 onwards. These challenging circumstances for library services, particularly lockdowns and facility closures, social distancing constraints, limited or no onsite programming and physical attendance are reflected in the figures that follow. Details of the response by Australia's public library services to continue to serve their communities during this period are included in the commentaries by state/territory in section 4 of this report.

Summary of findings

In 2019-20:

- the total expenditure on public libraries was over \$1.28 billion, an increase of 8.6% since 2015-16. On a per capita basis, the total expenditure on public libraries has increased by 2% over the same period to \$50.11
- access to public library services was provided through 1,664 service points, including 1,407 branches, 80 mobile outlets serving hundreds of separate locations, and 177 other outlets
- in-person visits to library facilities were curbed by restrictions around COVID-19, resulting in a 24% decrease in attendances. The subsequent uptake of online resources and services saw a 23% increase in visits to public library websites
- library memberships increased by 3% to more than 9.3 million registered members, representing more than 36% of the total Australian population
- total collections of more than 37.5 million items (1.5 items per person) were available for the use of the community, with expenditure of more than \$137.7 million to ensure that these collections remained up to date and relevant
- total usage of public library collections was over 141 million instances, comprised of more than 107.9 million loans of physical items and more than 34 million loans, downloads and retrievals from electronic collections
- more than 213,000 library programs attracted over 6.4 million attendances, with many library services offering online programming during COVID-19 closure periods
- public library staff responded to over 6.9 million requests for information or assistance.

2. Five-year national comparison

2.1 Expenditure

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Total expenditure on public library services	\$1,184.79m	\$1,227.81m	\$1,224.06m	\$1,331.17m	\$1,286.9m
Total expenditure per capita	\$49.11	\$49.92	\$48.99	\$52.49	\$50.11
Total collections expenditure	\$126.6m	\$126.42m	\$129.39m	\$133.9m	\$137.76m
Collection expenditure per capita	\$5.25	\$5.14	\$5.18	\$5.28	\$5.36

2.2 Service points

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Number of library branches	1,408	1,408	1,410	1,409	1,407
Number of mobile library outlets	78	77	79	81	80
Number of other library outlets¹	170	181	181	193	177
Total number of library outlets	1,656	1,666	1,670	1,683	1,664
Annual opening hours	2,808,966	2,805,737	2,833,557	2,950,318	2,774,524

2.3 Members and visits

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Registered library members	9,376,083	9,341,327	9,002,081	9,051,026	9,318,194
Members as % of total population	38.9%	38%	36%	35.7%	36.3%
Library visits (physical facilities)	113,139,641	114,284,534	111,480,357	110,612,784	84,229,103
Physical visits per month	9,428,303	9,523,711	9,290,030	9,217,732	7,019,092
Physical visits per capita	4.7	4.6	4.5	4.4	3.3
Website visits²	30,445,333	47,953,247	51,018,201	51,901,444	63,627,539
Website visits per capita	1.3	1.9	2	2.1	2.5

2.4 Services

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Total number of public access internet devices³	12,806	13,531	13,902	14,228	14,235
Internet connected devices per 10,000 persons	5.3	5.5	5.6	5.6	5.5
Programs⁴	211,423	231,925	250,099	273,041	213,295
Program attendances	6,108,367	6,518,292	7,035,173	7,441,019	6,425,311
Program attendance per capita	0.25	0.27	0.28	0.29	0.25
Reference and information requests⁵	8,315,949	11,123,092	11,494,994	8,160,155	6,903,046

¹ Includes self-service kiosks (in separate locations from library branches), automated vending machines, deposit and unstaffed depots and all other outlets.

² Total and per capita website visits exclude Northern Territory.

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

⁴ Excluding Victoria.

⁵ Excludes: Victoria and South Australia for the entire period; Northern Territory since 2017-18.

2.5 Collections and usage⁶

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Collection items (physical and electronic) ⁷	38,693,572	37,515,169	39,976,999	39,209,249	34,169,029
Collection items per capita ⁸	1.6	1.5	1.6	1.5	1.5
Collection usage (all physical and electronic transactions)	165,335,828	161,427,006	157,454,780	158,648,004	141,966,136
Collection usage per capita	6.9	6.6	6.2	6.3	5.5
Percentage of physical collections purchased in last 5 years	64%	64%	62%	59%	61%

2.6 Staff

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Total staff (full time equivalent – FTE)	7,634	7,734	7,748	7,930	7,852
Staff members (FTE) per 10,000 persons	3.2	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1
Collection use per FTE staff member	21,658	20,872	20,031	20,006	18,081

3. Comparative data

The figures in the following tables compare data from each state and territory, as well as showing the national total.

3.1 Expenditure on public library services

Total expenditure on public libraries has grown over the past five years, with an overall increase of 8.6% bringing the Australian total to over \$1.28 billion. For 2019-20, only the Northern Territory and Queensland reported increases in total expenditure.

3.1.1 Expenditure on public library services, including the purchase of library materials

	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Aust.
2015-16	\$13.5m	\$368.7m	\$11.3m	\$249.6m	\$106.5m	\$29.6m	\$261.0m	\$144.6m	\$1,184.8m
2016-17	\$13.7m	\$402.3m	\$11.6m	\$246.2m	\$105.1m	\$30.0m	\$266.3m	\$152.7m	\$1,227.8m
2017-18	\$14.1m	\$389.2m	\$11.5m	\$261.1m	\$109.0m	\$29.8m	\$257.3m	\$152m	\$1,224.1m
2018-19	\$20.3m	\$462.3m	\$12.2m	\$256.6m	\$116.2m	\$38.6m	\$267.5m	\$157.5m	\$1,331.2m
2019-20	\$19.1m	\$428.2m	\$13.1m	\$261.5m	\$107.2m	\$38.3m	\$263.4m	\$156.2m	\$1,286.9m
Change over 5-year period	41.3%	16.2%	15.7%	4.8%	0.6%	29.3%	0.9%	7.9%	8.6%
Change to previous year	-5.9%	-7.4%	6.7%	1.9%	-7.8%	-0.8%	-1.5%	-0.8%	-3.3%

⁶ Reported collections are inclusive of all formats, including physical and electronic/digital collections and services.

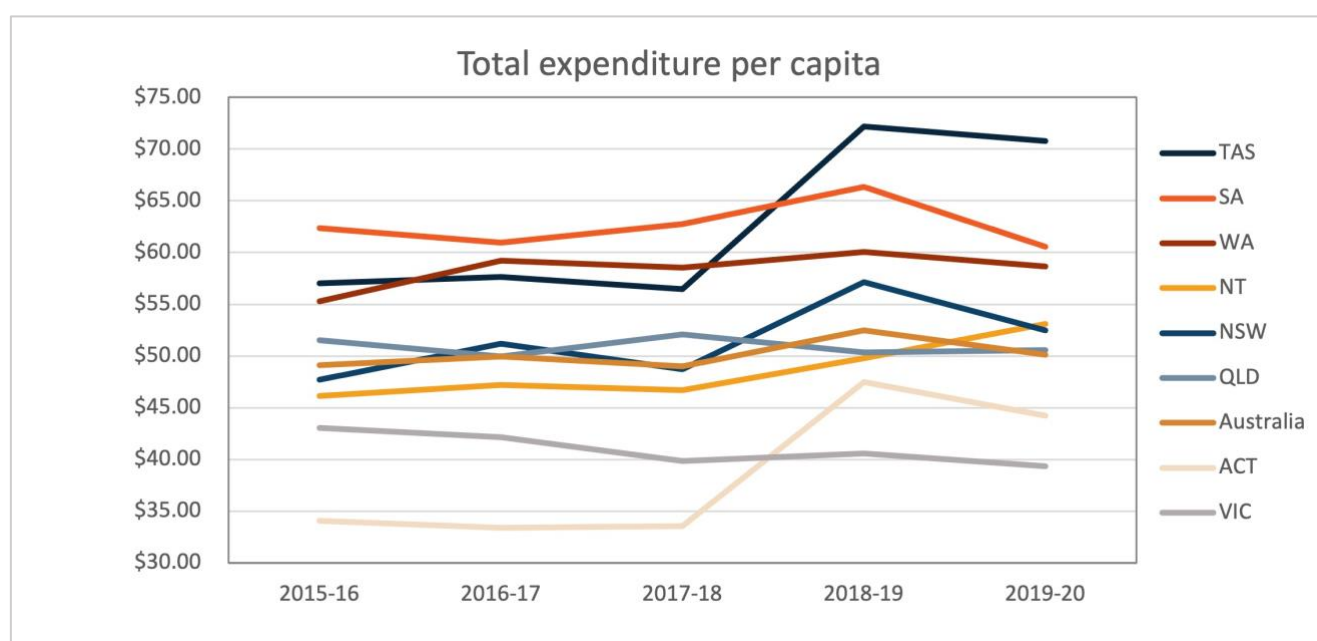
⁷ The identification and inclusion of consortia-level collection items is a factor in the large increases reported in 2017-18 and 2018-19. New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia report substantial consortia holdings.

⁸ The per capita measure includes all reported consortia holdings.

3.1.2 Total expenditure per capita (including capital and collection expenditures)

Nationally, per capita expenditure has grown by 2% to \$50.11 over the five-year period. Tasmania has reported the highest per capita spend for the previous two-years, with the Northern Territory and Queensland reporting the only annual increases for 2019-20.

	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Aust.
2015-16	\$34.06	\$47.72	\$46.10	\$51.51	\$62.37	\$57.04	\$43.01	\$55.27	\$49.11
2016-17	\$33.38	\$51.17	\$47.19	\$49.95	\$60.95	\$57.62	\$42.11	\$59.19	\$49.92
2017-18	\$33.54	\$48.73	\$46.68	\$52.09	\$62.76	\$56.47	\$39.83	\$58.55	\$48.99
2018-19	\$47.48	\$57.15	\$49.79	\$50.36	\$66.33	\$72.21	\$40.56	\$60.07	\$52.49
2019-20	\$44.23	\$52.45	\$53.10	\$50.54	\$60.58	\$70.80	\$39.34	\$58.66	\$50.11
Change over 5-year period	29.9%	9.9%	15.2%	-1.9%	-2.9%	24.1%	-8.5%	6.1%	2%
Change to previous year	-6.8%	-8.2%	6.6%	0.4%	-8.7%	-2%	-3%	-2.3%	-4.5%



3.2 Expenditure on public library collections

Expenditure on public library collections increased 8.8% during the five-year period, with South Australia (18.8%) and Victoria (18.3%) reporting significant increases. The Australian Capital Territory (-29.2%), Tasmania (-12.5%), the Northern Territory (-10.4%) and Western Australia (-4.2%) reported less expenditure on collections at the end of the five-year period. The only significant annual decrease was reported by the Australian Capital Territory (-25.7%).

3.2.1 Total expenditure on public library collections

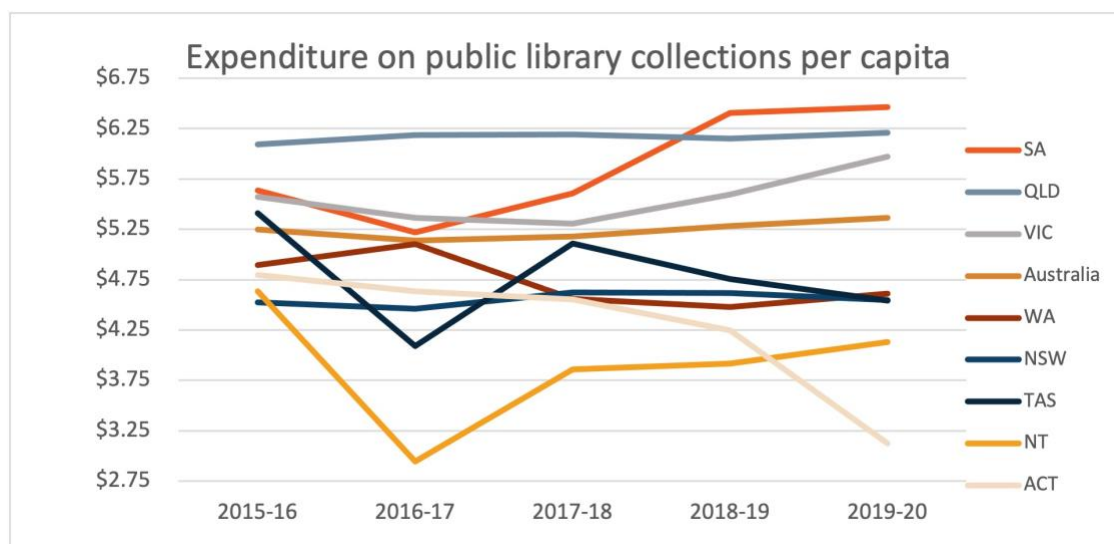
	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Aust.
2015-16	\$1.90m	\$34.97m	\$1.13m	\$29.53m	\$9.63m	\$2.81m	\$33.81m	\$12.82m	\$126.6m
2016-17	\$1.90m	\$35.07m	\$0.73m	\$30.50m	\$9.00m	\$2.13m	\$33.94m	\$13.17m	\$126.42
2017-18	\$1.92m	\$36.92m	\$0.95m	\$31.05m	\$9.74m	\$2.70m	\$34.27m	\$11.84m	\$129.39
2018-19	\$1.81m	\$37.35m	\$0.96m	\$31.34m	\$11.22m	\$2.54m	\$36.92m	\$11.74m	\$133.9m
2019-20	\$1.36m	\$37.11m	\$1.02m	\$32.14m	\$11.44m	\$2.46m	\$39.98m	\$12.28m	\$137.76

	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Aust.
Change over 5-year period	-29.2%	6.1%	-10.4	8.8%	18.8%	-12.5%	18.3%	-4.2%	8.8%
Change to previous year	-25.7%	-0.7%	5.6%	2.5%	1.9%	-3.4%	8.3%	4.6%	2.9%

3.2.2 Expenditure on public library collections per capita

The national per capita expenditure on public library collections reflects the total expenditure, with a 2.2% increase over the five-year period and a modest annual increase of 1.6%. The most significant decrease in per capita expenditure was reported by the Australian Capital Territory for both the five-year and annual periods.

	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Aust.
2015-16	\$4.80	\$4.53	\$4.63	\$6.10	\$5.64	\$5.41	\$5.57	\$4.90	\$5.25
2016-17	\$4.63	\$4.46	\$2.95	\$6.19	\$5.22	\$4.09	\$5.37	\$5.10	\$5.14
2017-18	\$4.55	\$4.62	\$3.86	\$6.19	\$5.61	\$5.11	\$5.31	\$4.56	\$5.18
2018-19	\$4.25	\$4.62	\$3.92	\$6.15	\$6.41	\$4.76	\$5.60	\$4.48	\$5.28
2019-20	\$3.12	\$4.55	\$4.13	\$6.21	\$6.46	\$4.54	\$5.97	\$4.61	\$5.36
Change over 5-year period	-34.9%	0.4%	-10.8%	1.9%	14.7%	-16%	7.2%	-5.8%	2.2%
Change to previous year	-26.5%	-1.6%	5.6%	1.0%	0.9%	-4.6%	6.7%	3.0%	1.6%



3.3 Collection usage

With total collection usage being one of the most negatively impacted outputs during 2019-20, both annual and five-year decreases were reported for all jurisdictions except for South Australia.

3.3.1 Total collection usage

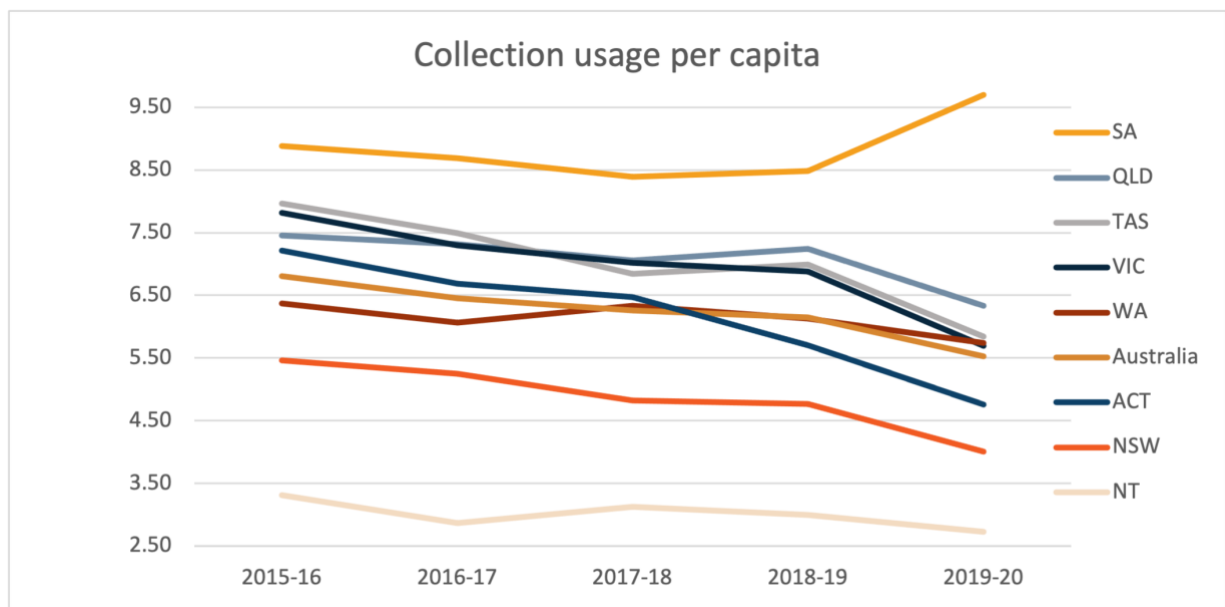
	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Aust.
2015-16	2.86m	42.18m	0.81m	36.10m	15.16m	4.13m	47.43m	16.67m	165.36m
2016-17	2.74m	41.26m	0.71m	36.05m	14.97m	3.90m	46.14m	15.65m	161.43m
2017-18	2.73m	38.53m	0.77m	35.35m	14.57m	3.71m	45.36m	16.44m	157.45m
2018-19	2.43m	38.54m	0.74m	36.89m	14.85m	3.74m	45.40m	16.06m	158.65m
2019-20	2.05m	32.74m	0.67m	32.78m	17.16m	3.16m	38.13m	15.28m	141.97m

	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Aust.
Change over 5-year period	-28.2%	-22.4%	-17.3%	-9.2%	13.2%	-23.6%	-19.6%	-8.3%	-14.1%
Change to previous year	-15.7%	-15.1%	-9.0%	-11.2%	15.5%	-15.5%	-16.0%	-4.9%	-10.5%

3.3.2 Collection usage per capita

As with the total collection usage measure, per capita collection usage aligns with the outputs reported above. With the exception of South Australia, all jurisdictions reported both annual and five-year decreases.

	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Aust.
2015-16	7.21	5.46	3.31	7.45	8.88	7.96	7.82	6.37	6.85
2016-17	6.69	5.25	2.87	7.32	8.69	7.49	7.30	6.07	6.56
2017-18	6.24	4.72	3.13	7.05	8.10	6.84	7.02	6.06	6.21
2018-19	5.70	4.76	3.00	7.24	8.48	6.99	6.88	6.13	6.26
2019-20	4.76	4.01	2.73	6.33	9.70	5.84	5.70	5.74	5.53
Change over 5-year period	-34.0%	-26.5%	-17.7%	-15.0%	9.3%	-26.6%	-27.1%	-9.8%	-18.8%
Change to previous year	-16.6%	-15.8%	-9.0%	-12.5%	14.4%	-16.5%	-17.2%	-6.3%	-10.1%



3.4 Public access internet devices

The total number of public access internet devices increased over the five-year period (11.2%), with South Australia (52.7%) and the Northern Territory (52.3%) reporting significant increases. Victoria and Tasmania reported decreases in both annual and five-year trends.

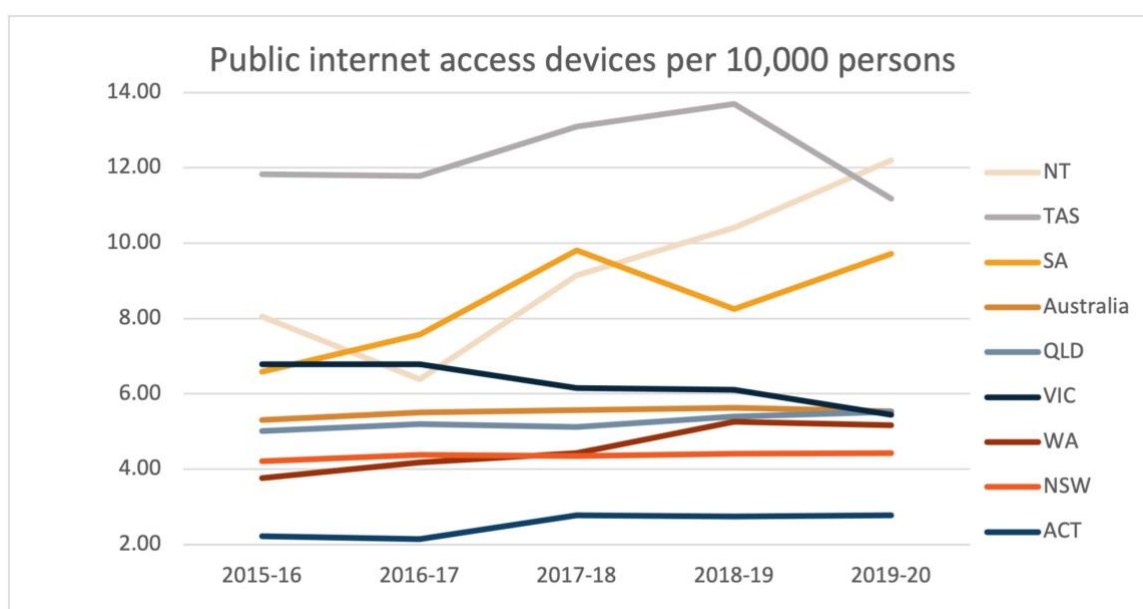
3.4.1 Total public access internet devices

	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Aust.
2015-16	88	3,252	197	2,426	1,125	614	4,119	985	12,806
2016-17	88	3,439	157	2,564	1,304	614	4,286	1,079	13,531
2017-18	117	3,472	226	2,566	1,703	691	3,978	1,149	13,902
2018-19	117	3,567	214	2,746	1,446	732	4,029	1,377	14,228
2019-20	120	3,614	300	2,856	1,718	604	3,649	1,374	14,235
Change over 5-year period	36.4%	11.1%	52.3%	17.7%	52.7%	-1.6%	-11.4%	39.5%	11.2%
Change to previous year	2.6%	1.3%	17.2%	4.0%	18.8%	-17.5%	-9.4%	-0.2%	-0.2%

3.4.2 Public access internet devices per 10,000 persons

The trend is repeated with the number of public access internet devices per 10,000 persons increasing by 4.4% over the five-year period, with the Northern Territory (51.6%) and South Australia (47.4%) reporting significant increases over the five-year period.

	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Aust.
2015-16	2.22	4.21	8.04	5.01	6.59	11.83	6.79	3.76	5.31
2016-17	2.14	4.37	6.38	5.20	7.57	11.79	6.78	4.18	5.50
2017-18	2.78	4.35	9.14	5.12	9.81	13.08	6.16	4.43	5.56
2018-19	2.74	4.41	8.70	5.39	8.25	13.70	6.11	5.25	5.61
2019-20	2.78	4.43	12.2	5.52	9.71	11.17	5.45	5.16	5.54
Change over 5-year period	25.3%	5.2%	51.6%	10.2%	47.4%	-5.5%	-19.7%	37.1%	4.4%
Change to previous year	1.5%	0.4%	17.1%	2.4%	17.6%	-18.5%	-10.8%	-1.7%	-1.5%



3.5 Library programs

As with collection usage, the number of programs provided by public libraries was negatively impacted in 2019-20, with an annual national decrease of 21.9%. All states and territories reported significant percentage reductions, consistent with the period facilities were closed to the public. Despite the disruption of compulsory closures, the number of programs delivered by public libraries in 2019-20 exceeded those in 2015-16.

3.5.1 Total number of library programs

	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC ⁹	WA	Aust.
2015-16	1,830	84,105	2,611	70,115	21,141	4,650	n/a	26,971	211,423
2016-17	2,090	84,801	2,356	75,751	30,909	4,642	n/a	31,376	231,925
2017-18	2,901	87,734	3,090	83,700	36,088	4,836	n/a	31,750	250,099
2018-19	3,113	95,623	3,435	87,386	36,088	7,604	n/a	39,792	273,041
2019-20	2,347	75,699	2,814	64,649	32,364	4,943	n/a	30,479	213,295
Change over 5-year period	28.3%	-10.0%	7.8%	-7.8%	53.1%	6.3%	n/a	13.0%	0.9%
Change to previous year	-24.6%	-20.8%	-18.1%	-26.0%	-10.3%	-35.0%	n/a	-23.4%	-21.9%

3.5.2 Library program attendance

The attendance at library programs in 2019-20 decreased by more than 13% on an annual basis, following the limits and restrictions on the number of programs that could be delivered during the period. All states and territories reported decreases in annual attendance, with the notable exceptions of Western Australia (22.5%) and New South Wales (1.5%). As per 2.5.1, at the national level the number of program attendances in 2019-20 exceeded those of 2015-16.

	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Aust.
2015-16	74,103	1,574,8	77,306	1,422,8	459,18	84,607	1,873,5	541,93	6,108,36
2016-17	72,805	1,659,0	64,778	1,617,5	463,79	80,679	1,973,8	585,75	6,518,29
2017-18	81,407	1,751,6	78,792	1,786,4	528,03	83,169	2,089,8	635,76	7,035,17
2018-19	75,176	1,890,3	80,187	1,817,6	528,03	107,02	2,259,7	682,86	7,441,01
2019-20	63,904	1,918,2	76,023	1,330,2	508,85	67,825	1,623,6	836,65	6,425,31
Change over 5-year period	-13.8%	21.8%	-1.7%	-6.5%	10.8%	-19.8%	-13.3%	54.4%	5.2%
Change to previous year	-15.0%	1.5%	-5.2%	-26.8%	-3.6%	-36.6%	-28.1%	22.5%	-13.7%

3.5.3 Library program attendance per capita

	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Aust.
2015-16	0.19	0.20	0.32	0.29	0.27	0.16	0.31	0.21	0.25
2016-17	0.18	0.21	0.26	0.33	0.27	0.15	0.31	0.23	0.27
2017-18	0.19	0.22	0.32	0.36	0.30	0.16	0.32	0.24	0.28
2018-19	0.18	0.23	0.33	0.36	0.30	0.20	0.34	0.26	0.29
2019-20	0.15	0.23	0.31	0.26	0.29	0.13	0.24	0.31	0.25
Change over 5-year period	-20.8%	15.3%	-2.1%	-12.5%	7.0%	-23.0%	-21.5%	51.8%	-1.2%
Change to previous year	-15.9%	0.5%	-5.2%	-27.9%	-4.6%	-37.4%	-29.2%	20.7%	-14.7%

⁹ Victorian public libraries do not report the number of library programs.

4. Commentary by state/territory

While this report aims to provide a broad snapshot of Australia's public library services, it must be noted that it is difficult to use this data to compare state/territory services with each other.

Not least of the reasons for this are that public libraries are governed by a variety of jurisdictional administrative arrangements, ranging from services wholly delivered by the state/territory through to services wholly delivered by local government. As well, the significant variations in social and geographic criteria between and within jurisdictions create differing community demands and needs, affecting the type and scope of public library services provided. The diverse delivery methods used to provide public library services is also a factor.

With this in mind, each state and territory has provided a brief commentary below on the reporting period, noting any reasons for significant changes in service delivery or uptake, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Australian Capital Territory

Australian Capital Territory implemented a new integrated library management system (Spydus) in 2019-20, with increased self-service features for customers, and an improved catalogue and website. The January 2020 fires and the response to COVID-19 impacted greatly on public programs, visits and loans, and some of these self-service features have not been able to be implemented as planned. Fines for overdue library items were abolished in October 2019.

Digital resource usage increased greatly during the lockdown period, as many customers switched to this method of service provision. This trend continued post-lockdown and was seen across the entire range of digital resources: e-books, e-audiobooks, e-magazines, kids' e-resources, family history and research databases, with the most significant increase in use being e-audiobooks. A telephone Digital Helpline was created to facilitate public access to these resources, and to enable new members to join without having to physically visit a branch. Additional digital resources were purchased, and 2,411 book packs were distributed to vulnerable families. These packs also contained information about how to access online Story Time and Giggle & Wiggle, including the story times that were offered in 10 languages other than English. Libraries ACT collaborated with the Floriade spring festival for the first time in 2019, providing babies and pre-schooler programs for 1,688 adults and children over the duration of the festival.

Libraries ACT celebrated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture through a number of initiatives in 2019-20: collection items with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander content or authorship were highlighted with a sticker, and the ACT Heritage Library upgraded its bibliographic records for all holdings containing Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language content with new AUSTLANG codes. Each library branch hosted a smoking ceremony before reopening post-lockdown, and all branches began using a child-friendly Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners at the beginning of all public programs and events, including those held online.

New South Wales

Across NSW there are 362 public library buildings, with a further 60 outlets, and 24 mobile libraries that provide services to approximately 422 smaller and isolated communities. Public libraries are operated by local councils in accordance with the *Library Act 1939*, with statutory links to the State Government through the State Library of NSW.

The State Library works with local libraries to develop quality services, build capacity in the library workforce and ensure library buildings, technology and facilities meet the needs of diverse communities across NSW.

In 2019-20 the Public Library Funding Strategy managed by the State Library delivered a record \$36.478 million to public libraries in subsidies, grants and program support. The NSW Government is providing an additional \$60 million to public libraries over the four years from 2019-20, including \$24 million in capital grants to assist library building and IT improvements. NSW local councils collectively also budgeted over \$340 million for public libraries in 2019/20.

Public library service in 2019-20 was affected by COVID-19, with all library buildings closing from 23 March to 1 June 2020. Libraries quickly adapted and implemented enhanced online services which were enthusiastically taken up by local communities. Other low-contact services, such as 'click and collect' and home delivery, provided hard copy materials to readers. The State Library of NSW worked closely with Premier and Cabinet and NSW Health to develop a COVID-19 Safety Plan for Libraries which was regularly updated in line with Public Health Orders.

Northern Territory

Library & Archives NT continued to drive [Connected Communities: Vision for Northern Territory Public Libraries 2017-23](#), which included a focus on embedding new governance and reporting frameworks and providing ongoing opportunities for collaboration. In 2019-20, NT public libraries collaborated on a Territory-wide audit and review of the diversity of children's collections. This project has been critical in driving evidence-based acquisition processes and ensuring our collections accurately reflect the richness and diversity of our communities.

Whilst public library buildings were physically closed during the nation-wide shutdown in April 2020, Territory public libraries continued to support and provide services including virtual story times, 'click and collect' services and online membership.

During this period, whilst physical library visits decreased, digital loans increased by 33%, membership increased by 8% and virtual programs accounted for more than 86,000 views. Library staff are increasingly seeking to connect with community members through a diverse offering of both physical and online services, including the creation of self-serve kiosks, book clubs and STEAM clubs.

Queensland

The State Library of Queensland advocates for public libraries and partners with local government to enable a thriving network of public libraries and Indigenous Knowledge Centres. Statewide outcomes for 2019-20 included the development of new [Queensland Public Library Standards and Guidelines](#) to assist local governments in the planning and development of library services, a refreshed [Public Libraries Connect](#) website for Queensland public library staff to access information and connect with State Library and the network, and the release of the [Realising our potential toolkit for public libraries](#) encompassing a suite of strategic resources to support the implementation of the public library vision ([Realising our potential: A vision for Queensland public libraries](#)).

Although the 2019-20 reporting period was impacted significantly by COVID-19, the response of Queensland's public libraries and Indigenous Knowledge Centres to the rapidly changing operating environment were significant. New services and procedures were developed and implemented that responded to the specific needs of each community and are summarised in the Queensland public libraries [COVID-19 survey](#). Following the closure of all physical facilities in March 2020, online or virtual programming, new or expanded home delivery services and alternative delivery methods such as 'click and collect' or outdoor pick-up services were the most popular services offered. The increase in availability and use of digital collections was made possible with the majority of library services offering immediate access to resources through online membership registration. This engagement of new audiences with electronic resources resulted in an annual increase of 84% in the usage of all resources, including ebooks, representing more than 30% of all reported collection usage.

South Australia

The Memorandum of Agreement between State and Local Government supports the funding of public libraries in South Australia and ensures that both governments build significant investment in public libraries and achieve the key outcomes of the South Australian Strategic Plan. State funding in excess of \$20 million in 2019-20 contributed to the operations and materials budgets of all public libraries.

During the 2019-20 financial year, expenditure on public library services decreased by 8%, partly attributed to fewer building works across the metropolitan libraries compared to the previous financial year. In this same period, however, expenditure on digital library materials has increased.

Digital loans of e-books and e-audiobooks continue to increase by approximately 44%. The growth in digital usage is due to the development of curated collections and promotion on social media and as a result, expenditure has risen to meet this demand. As seen globally, the impact of COVID-19 and library closures during 2020 saw library members maximise the use of online digital services. A surge of new users during this period has also occurred. The decrease in physical loans has also been consistent with patterns over recent years but also attributed to COVID-19.

The number of adults, children and one-on-one library programs decreased by approximately 21%, 15% and 31% respectively this financial year. This can be attributed to fewer statewide face-to-face programs delivered due to COVID-19 and libraries closing their doors for a period of time in 2019-20.

Tasmania

Libraries Tasmania's physical spaces closed to the public on 25 March 2020 due to COVID-19, however, online services continued and from 18 May a modified 'click and collect' service was introduced, enabling members to borrow and return physical items for the remainder of the period.

Programs and events saw a promising increase in attendance, particularly in digital inclusion programs, until in-person programs were cancelled in March. Clients continued to engage through recorded video sessions of early learning programs, Storytime and Rock & Rhyme, which were uploaded to individual library Facebook pages. Online English conversation groups and lifelong learning program sessions were delivered through video conferencing, and nearly 150 adult literacy clients were supported by home-based tutors using technology and phones.

Expenditure on printed library collections decreased by 17% compared to the 2018-19 period. This is in part due to limited availability of physical items from vendors and an internal reallocation of funding to address other priority areas. Expenditure on electronic/digital library collections was increased by 55% to accommodate a 51% increase in e-library collection items, contributing to and assisting with the 43% increase in collection usage in the 2019-20 period.

Victoria

Public Libraries Victoria's 2019-20 statistical survey compiled data from all 48 public library services, including municipal libraries, regional library corporations, library networks and Vision Australia. The survey captured the statistical information summarised in this report, as well as targeted data on early years indicators and LOTE collections. In addition to use of the data for local benchmarking purposes, the aggregate data is used to inform the statewide [Libraries Change Lives](#) advocacy campaign and other collaborative library sector initiatives.

Library closures due to COVID-19 restricted customers' physical access to Victorian libraries from mid-March until the end of June 2020 (and beyond), reducing the volume of library use (e.g. visits, loans, program participation, technology use) by around 25% from annual norms. However, this did not mean that public library services stopped being delivered. Demonstrating their adaptability and commitment to customers, many library services across the state (where staff were able to continue working) quickly adopted new or expanded existing service models to maintain services to their communities. Downloads of e-books, e-magazines and other online collections increased by more than 50%. Libraries published online Story Time videos (live and podcast) which were watched over and over again by tens of thousands of toddlers and their parents. New online content and programs (e.g. book clubs, author talks) were created and shared via library websites. Home delivery services were expanded, with many members introduced to new authors among old favourites in their care packages of books. Customers in lockdown accessed online genealogical databases and online training resources. Parents used online library resources to support home schooling.

In the face of adversity, Victorian public libraries became a lifeline reaching out to their communities in innovative ways to keep people connected – to their reading material and to one another.

Western Australia

Due to COVID-19, all Western Australia's 233 public libraries were directed by the State Government to close to the public from 23 March to 18 May 2020. Reopening was impacted by a phased lifting of occupancy restrictions.

With access to physical collections and in person programs limited, public libraries quickly shifted focus to online resources and programming. The number of Western Australians who are members of a public library increased 20% as members of the public joined their local public library to access online resources while in lockdown. While in-person visits to public libraries and loans of physical materials decreased 23% and 13% respectively, this was countered by a 21% increase in loan of online materials, like e-books and e-audiobooks, and a 53% increase in the use of online databases. The popularity of public library programs continued to grow with the number of patrons attending in person and online increasing by 23%.

At 30 June 2020, public libraries had not returned to pre-COVID-19 levels of activity and engagement with restricted occupancy, physical distancing and some members of the public unwilling to visit a public library continuing to effect the number of in person visitors to public libraries, loans of physical materials and staffing levels.

5. Data sources

The data used to prepare this report is 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 Tourism, 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
GPO BOX 1971
ADELAIDE SA 5001

Tasmania

Libraries Tasmania
91 Murray Street
HOBART TAS 7000

Victoria

Executive Officer
Public Libraries Victoria Network
Level 12/60 Collins Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Western Australia

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

6. 2019–2020 summary data

2019 - 2020	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	AUSTRALIA
INCOME (stated in whole dollar amounts)									
Operational funding – Aust. govt					45,770		708,656	412,812	1,167,238
Operational funding – state govt	12,796,671	31,305,340	7,494,401	26,568,965	23,126,915	36,543,510	46,282,684	233,000	184,351,486
Operational funding – local govt			5,064,267	221,759,620	61,913,798		208,403,915	101,967,880	599,109,480
Capital funding – Aust. govt									
Capital funding – state govt	3,206,117	6,000,000	100,996		605,193	460,008	1,445,258	8,524,000	20,341,572
Capital funding – local govt				22,981,122	2,261,267		11,630,556	1,658,078	38,531,023
Sponsorship					107,705			32,767	140,472
Other Income	159,568	0	612,248	3,790,809	1,552,167	1,626,431	7,995,862	2,951,698	18,688,783
Total Income	16,162,356	37,305,340	13,271,912	275,100,516	89,612,815	38,629,949	276,466,931	115,780,235	862,330,054
EXPENDITURE (stated in whole dollar amounts)									
Wages and salaries	10,263,861	206,214,002	8,505,619	134,085,048	61,687,406	28,019,127	173,957,043	78,187,690	700,919,796
Staff Training	72,960		42,445		254,049	94,868		256,603	720,925
Operating and corporate expenses	6,419,644		3,147,255	76,006,583	29,424,790	7,241,364	34,699,348	45,519,313	202,458,297
Printed library collections	563,445	25,576,056		19,110,212	7,482,843	1,342,913	30,631,876	8,196,932	92,904,277
Non-printed library collections	153,597	6,414,790		4,841,713	1,787,041	207,155		1,936,713	15,341,009
Digital library collections	628,685	5,115,040		8,187,328	2,166,815	904,991	9,346,871	2,148,333	28,498,063
Total expenditure on library collections	1,345,727	37,105,886	1,016,822	32,139,253	11,436,699	2,455,059	39,978,747	12,281,978	137,760,171
Capital expenditure	966,898	29,452,724	163,014	19,293,565	2,448,872	465,397	12,555,342	2,634,228	67,980,040
Other expenditure (not included above)		155,464,922	186,886		1,933,272		2,208,184	17,268,096	177,061,360
Total expenditure	19,069,090	428,237,534	13,062,041	261,524,449	107,185,088	38,275,815	263,398,664	156,147,908	1,286,900,589

2019 - 2020	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	AUSTRALIA
HUMAN RESOURCES									
Number of permanent full-time equivalent employees	92	2,368	78	1,626	675	264	1,864	885	7,852
Number of positions that require an ALIA-recognised library technician qualification		682	10	195	159			52	1,098
Number of positions that require an ALIA-recognised library and information science qualification at undergraduate or postgraduate levels	26	799	15	413	205			260	1,718
Number of positions that do not require library-related tertiary qualifications	76	887	66	1,018	598			759	3,404
COLLECTIONS									
Number of printed items	295,516	8,006,803	236,465	4,904,870	2,413,590	471,496		3,308,489	19,637,229
Number of audio items	30,491	564,418	10,436	284,536	151,698	40,375		219,332	1,301,286
Number of video items	34,667	1,051,653	26,345	602,926	376,355	46,214		458,049	2,596,209
Number of all other physical items	9,756	999,955	1,850	64,213	61,215	619		46,008	1,183,616
Total physical collection	370,430	10,622,829	275,096	5,856,545	3,002,858	558,704	7,583,035	4,031,878	32,301,375
Number of electronic book items		670,202	13,730	624,545	87,912	41,995		303,606	1,829,902
Number of electronic audio items		192,086	4,805	373,221	28,590			140,195	767,487
Number of electronic video items		80,173		84,225		1,144			165,542
Number of all other electronic/digital items		1,381,062	75	190,139	10,816	387			1,582,479
Total electronic/digital collection	35,275	2,323,523	18,610	1,272,130	127,318	43,526	823,492	443,801	5,204,177
Total ALL collections	405,705	12,946,352	293,706	7,128,675	3,130,176	602,230	8,406,527	4,475,679	37,505,552
Number of printed journal/serial subscriptions (titles)	48,153	19,496	468	5,858		2,443			76,418
Number of databases and other electronic services	58	2,063	6	426	134	32	0	196	3,049

2019 - 2020	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	AUSTRALIA
Percentage of physical collection purchased in previous 5 years	59.9%	51.0%	29.0%	74.1%		61.0%	66.0%	62.0%	61.0%
USAGE									
Number of print item loans	1,194,486	21,441,002	401,640	17,845,689	10,458,748	1,966,758		11,222,713	64,531,036
Number of physical audio item loans	69,722	1,120,055	12,020	757,516		109,787			2,069,100
Number of physical video item loans	173,823	4,930,030	81,083	3,935,192		270,379			9,390,507
Number of all other physical item loans	485	279,720	41,646	299,503		69831			691,185
Total physical item loans	1,438,516	27,770,807	536,389	22,837,900	10,458,748	2,416,755	31,280,410	11,222,713	107,962,238
Number of e-book loans	124,153	2,043,103	50,416	2,846,102	1,009,149	287,805		1,617,683	7,978,411
Number of electronic audio (e-audio) loans	170,726	1,682,395	60,665	1,796,172	422,593	117,216		799,479	5,049,246
Number of electronic video (downloadable video) loans	12,160			128,353				106,602	247,115
Number of all other electronic/digital item loans	77,888	372,575	22,480	490,802	4,731,017	190,270		275,411	6,160,443
Total electronic/digital loans	384,927	4,098,073	133,561	5,261,429	6,162,759	595,291	6,853,239	2,799,175	26,288,454
Total ALL loans	1,823,443	31,868,880	669,950	28,099,329	16,621,507	3,012,046	38,133,649	14,021,888	134,250,692
Total downloads, document retrievals and other usage of electronic collections	227,413	869,953	1,034	4,674,377	537,100	146,231		1,259,336	7,715,444
Total collection usage	2,050,856	32,738,833	670,984	32,773,706	17,158,607	3,158,277	38,133,649	15,281,224	141,966,136
Number of inter-library loans supplied to library members	63	39,562	1,436	28,066				78,123	
Number of inter-library loans supplied to other libraries	43	37,612	948	22,090				83,905	

2019 - 2020	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	AUSTRALIA
Total number of registered or active members	176,338	3,139,207	77,851	2,026,804	525,072	123,136	2,242,625	1,007,161	9,318,194
Number of registered or active members aged 0 to 14 years		318,089			63,701	25,950		130,442	
Number of registered or active members aged 15 to 19 years		169,131			29,603	5,724		58,543	
Number of registered or active members aged 20 to 64 years		2,141,442			311,310	62,812		572,924	
Number of registered or active members aged 65 years and over		471,596			120,458	27,874		118,187	
Number of library visits (physical)	1,446,320	25,699,698	720,439	16,326,538	8,139,538	2,228,041	21,865,871	7,802,658	84,229,103
Number or library website visitors	946,762	11,978,274		16,150,440	8,487,843	2,899,143	18,835,455	4,329,622	63,627,539
Number of reference transactions and information requests	1,373	2,759,725		2,691,324		52,279		1,398,345	6,903,046
OPERATIONS									
Number of library branches	10	362	30	311	137	47	277	233	1,407
Number of mobile library outlets		24		12	15		29		80
Number of other library outlets		60			39	5	64	9	177
Total number of library outlets	10	446	30	323	191	52	370	242	1,664
Total opening hours	18,281	822,050	29,354	567,900	265,853	47,671	619,150	401,265	2,771,524
Total number of library programs	2,347	75,699	2,814	64,649	32,364	4,943		30,479	213,295
Total number of program participants	63,904	1,918,223	76,023	1,330,206	508,859	67,825	1,623,615	836,656	6,425,311
Number of public access devices	120	3,797	313	3,322	1,903	604	3,649	1,374	15,082
Number of public access devices with an internet connection	120	3,614	300	2,856	1,718	604	3,649	1,374	14,235

7. 2019–2020 population-based indicators

2019 - 2020	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Australia
National, state and territory population, June 2020 Australian Bureau of Statistics -- Reference period June 2020 (Release date 17/12/2020)	431,100	8,164,100	246,000	5,174,400	1,769,300	540,600	6,694,900	2,661,900	25,682,300
FINANCIAL									
Public library expenditure per capita (excluding library materials)	\$41.11	\$47.91	\$48.96	\$44.33	\$54.12	\$66.26	\$33.37	\$54.05	\$44.74
Library materials expenditure per capita	\$3.12	\$4.55	\$4.13	\$6.21	\$6.46	\$4.54	\$5.97	\$4.61	\$5.36
HUMAN RESOURCES									
Total staff (FTE) per 10,000 persons	2.1	2.9	3.2	3.1	3.8	4.9	2.8	3.3	3.1
Population served per staff member	4,666	3,448	3,154	3,182	2,621	2,049	3,592	3,009	3,271
COLLECTIONS									
Items per capita (inc. consortia collections)	1.1	1.6	1.2	1.4	1.8	1.1	1.3	1.7	1.4
USAGE									
Percent of population who are library members	40.9%	38.5%	31.6%	39.2%	29.7%	23.3%	33.5%	37.8%	36.3%
Collection usage per capita	4.8	4.0	2.7	6.3	9.7	5.8	5.7	5.7	5.5
Customer visits per capita	3.4	3.1	2.9	3.2	4.6	4.1	3.3	2.9	3.3
Website visits per capita	2.2	1.5		3.1	4.8	5.4	2.8	1.6	2.5
OPERATIONS									
Public access internet devices per 10,000 persons	2.8	4.4	12.2	5.5	9.7	11.2	5.5	5.2	5.5
Program attendance per capita	0.15	0.23	0.31	0.26	0.29	0.13	0.24	0.31	0.25