



LIBRARIES, LEARNING AND LITERACY POSITION STATEMENT

PURPOSE

- Embrace and adopt current policy and practice for learning and literacy in cultural institutions
- Articulate the contribution of Northern Territory Library to learning and literacy for Northern Territory residents and visitors

LIBRARIES

Learning is core to the mission and activity of libraries. “As stewards of cultural heritage, information and ideas”¹, libraries play a critical role in enabling people to access, discover and explore information. Libraries are the only government funded agency available to citizens throughout their lives that provide access to resources and services to support learning and literacy.

Northern Territory Library is one of the leading creative and cultural institutions in the Northern Territory, which:

- collects and preserves the documentary and cultural heritage of the Northern Territory, providing local, regional and global access to the collection;
- initiates and contributes creative leadership to sustainable partnerships that strengthen and make visible learning and literacy within and beyond libraries and related cultural institutions;
- advocates for and contributes Northern Territory perspectives to national and international discourse about learning and literacy; and
- disseminates current policy and exemplary practice for learning and literacy, to public libraries and related cultural institutions in the Northern Territory.

LEARNING

Learning, both formal and informal, is acquiring new, or expanding existing knowledge, skills and understandings. Learning is a lifelong endeavour, and libraries are a valued resource for families, organisations and individuals, from infants to senior citizens.

¹ Institute of Museum and Library Services <http://www.ims.gov/>

LITERACY

Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create and communicate across a range of platforms, tools and media, for information, communication, creative expression and recreation.

The Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey, an international study, reported that 46% of Australians (15-74yrs) do not have “the minimum literacy skills required to meet the complex demands of everyday life and work” (ABS, 2006)². In the Northern Territory, school-age children continue to record the lowest literacy and numeracy scores for the National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), with 30-40% of students at year 3, 5, 7 and 9 not reaching minimum national standards³.

Literacy conventionally refers to reading, writing, speaking, viewing, and listening effectively in a range of contexts. In the twenty first century, the contexts for literacy have expanded to embrace multiple platforms, tools and media. The contemporary library is fluid, adapting to changes and challenges. Literacy in its diverse forms is central to creative and inclusive library services. A library is more than a physical location, and can provide access to programs, print and digital resources, across platforms, anytime, anywhere, for information, communication, creative expression and recreation.

LIBRARIES, LEARNING AND LITERACY

Libraries serve culturally, socially and economically diverse communities across the globe. This requires a strategic and coordinated approach in each region of the world, to maximize opportunities for learning and literacy across all ages and all education levels.

Northern Territory Library partners with libraries, educational and research institutions, community, child and family services throughout the Northern Territory, offering opportunities that extend language, learning and literacy skills, enabling people to learn and engage with information, services and individuals in their community and in the broader society.

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² Australian Bureau of Statistics, (2007) *Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey: Summary results, Australia* (cat. No. 4228.0). Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.

³ http://www.nap.edu.au/verve/_resources/NAPLAN_2012_National_Report.pdf