

# NT Public Libraries – Connected Communities

## Review of Activities 2018-2019



City of Palmerston Library Tales to Tails



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# Northern Territory Public Libraries

**This report provides an overview of some of the work of the Northern Territory public library sector in 2018-19.**



In 2016, the Northern Territory Government undertook a community consultation process to find out what Territorians want from their public libraries.

The *Connected Communities, Vision for Northern Territory Public Libraries 2017-2023* report articulates this vision for our public libraries.

*Connected Communities, Future Libraries* is based on outcomes developed by the Australian Public Library Alliance and the Australian Library and Information Association which identifies six areas in which libraries make a difference to their communities:

- Literacy and lifelong learning
- Informed and connected citizens
- Digital inclusion
- Personal development and wellbeing
- Stronger and more creative communities
- Economic and workforce development

Through this framework, we've reported on some of the significant achievements of the Northern Territory public library sector this year.

## PRINCIPLES

- 📖 Access for all
- 📖 Responsive to local community needs
- 📖 Inclusive services
- 📖 Respect for Aboriginal culture
- 📖 Customer focused
- 📖 Innovative solutions and partnerships
- 📖 Effective and efficient services
- 📖 Sustainable services
- 📖 Effective network



We have also identified progress made towards meeting future opportunities through *Connected Communities, Future Libraries*.

This report showcases the many ways in which Northern Territory public libraries support and develop their communities. We have highlighted the immense diversity and value of programs and services being offered to communities across urban, regional and remote areas of the Northern Territory.

We encourage you to visit your local library and discover for yourself just how much is going on in Northern Territory libraries.



**IMAGES:**

Left: Nhulunbuy Community Library  
 Above, then clockwise: Nhulunbuy Community Library - eResources Display  
 Drag Queen Storytime at Palmerston City Library  
 Storytime at Nhulunbuy Community Library  
 Storytime at Borroloola Library

## Stronger Sector

**Library & Archives NT<sup>1</sup> supports some of the most remote libraries in the world. There are 31 public libraries across the Northern Territory, serving a culturally and linguistically diverse, mobile and often remote population of 240,000 people.**



1. Library & Archives NT was formed by the merging of Northern Territory Library and Northern Territory Archives Service in September 2019. All references to the Northern Territory Library for 2018-19 reflects the organisational arrangements at that time.

Library & Archives NT supports the sector by providing;

- Operational grant funding through the Public Library Funding Agreement 2017-2023
- Funding for collections and eResources through the Library Resource Allocation
- A Territory-wide library management system, LibrariesNT
- Free public Wi-Fi as a baseline public library service in 46 remote Aboriginal communities
- Learning and development opportunities and strategic advisory services

The new model for the funding of public library services across the Northern Territory was implemented through five year funding agreements with local governments commencing in 2018-19.

Improving governance, reporting capacity and providing opportunities for collaboration have been priorities for Library & Archives NT this year – the most prominent example being a complete restructure of the manner in which libraries monitor, report and evaluate library services through new contemporary methods of data input and reporting.

In 2019, the CollectConnect online statistics gathering tool was introduced to public libraries to allow for real time data reporting on library programs and services. Further reporting frameworks based on outcome measures have been implemented to improve the capacity of libraries to innovate and evaluate.



In line with our focus on the principles of effective and efficient services and responsiveness to local community needs, Library & Archives NT has worked with East Arnhem Regional Council and Litchfield Council to transition the operational management of Nhulunbuy Community Library and Taminmin Community Library respectively to local council control. This transition has improved both program and service delivery for community members.

The investigation of opportunities for collaboration and partnerships occurred through the facilitation of Big Rivers and Central Australian library services forums and the development of several new sectoral working groups.

These include;

- Public Libraries Strategic Development Committee
- LibrariesNT Collection Development Working Group
- LibrariesNT Early Language and Literacy Working Group
- LibrariesNT Library Management System User Group
- LibrariesNT Local History Working Group

These working groups have been tasked with progressing opportunities identified in *Connected Communities, Vision for Northern Territory Public Libraries 2017-2023*. In addition the working groups have identified valuable opportunities for learning and development.

Through recommendations made by the Public Libraries Strategic Development Committee, a Public Libraries Strategic Masterclass was held for senior council Directors in September 2019.

**IMAGES:**

*Left: Celebrations at Nhulunbuy Community Library*

*Above: Taminmin Community Library - Refurbishment Celebrations*

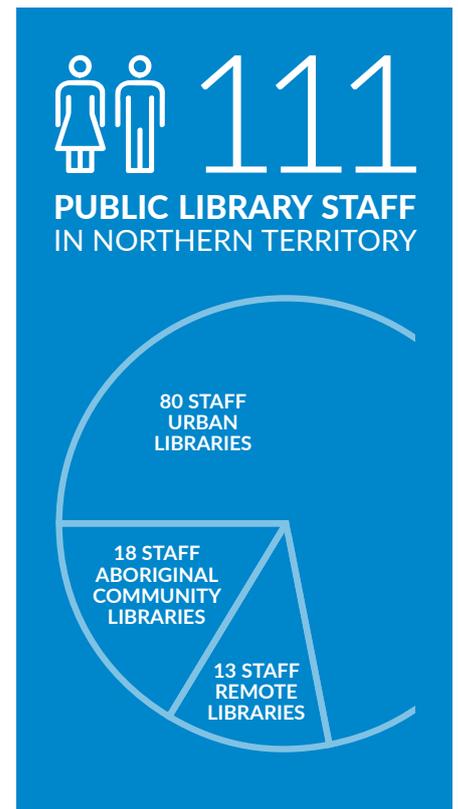
## Our Workforce

The public library sector has a specialised set of skills and knowledge required to deliver professional programs and services.



The public library sector has a specialised set of skills and knowledge required to deliver professional programs and services. Public libraries must serve culturally and linguistically diverse and technologically sophisticated communities. A key area is the ability to enable people to connect with the world of information, empowering people in all aspects of their lives.

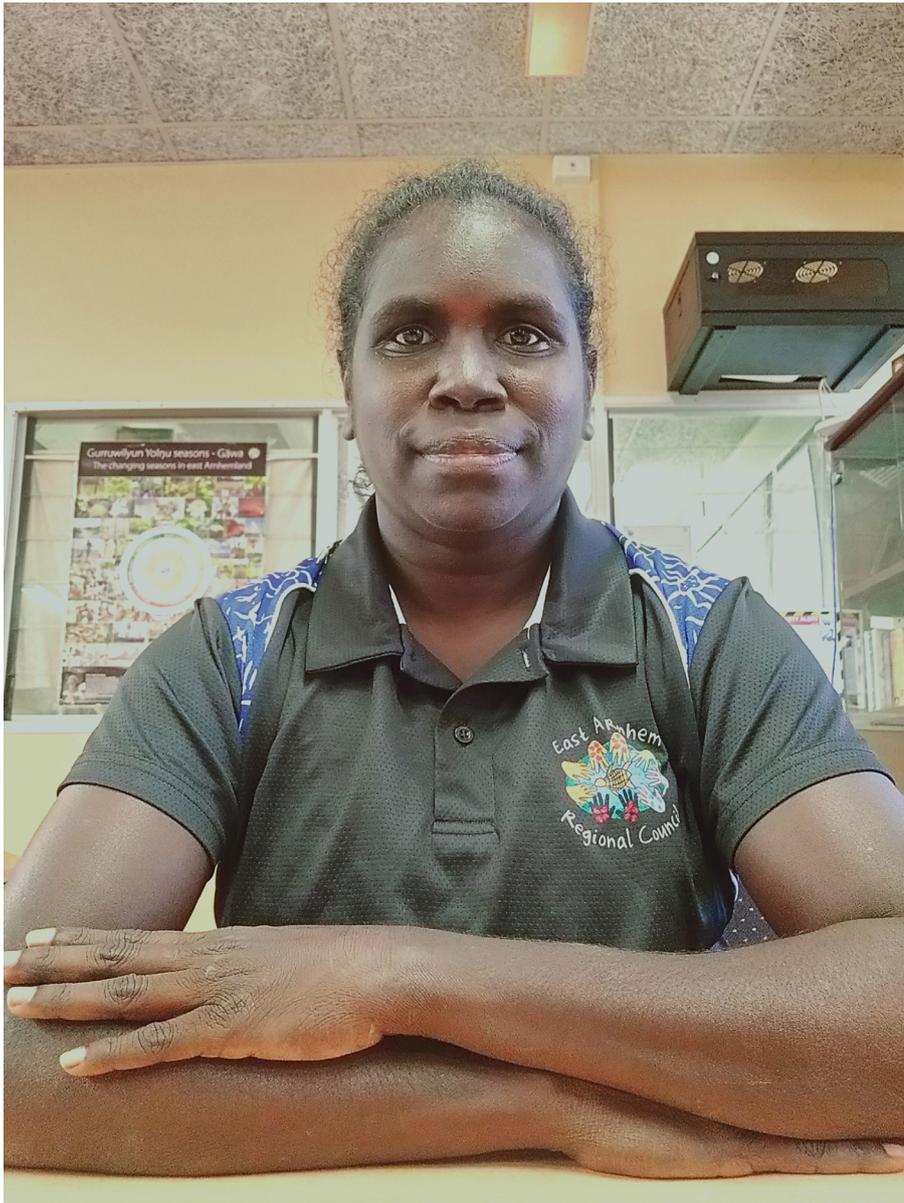
Library staff across the Northern Territory demonstrate commitment, passion and enthusiasm for the communities for which they serve. Without such dedicated staff Northern Territory libraries would not be the success they are today.



**IMAGES:**

Left: Adelaide River Library

Right: Rebecca Nunydjulu, Milingimbi Community Library



“  
On Mondays we have visitors from pre-school. I sometimes read with them in both language English and Djambarrpuyngu, our first language. I love selecting new books for the library and helping community people use online resources.”



Rebecca Nunydjulu

## In Focus

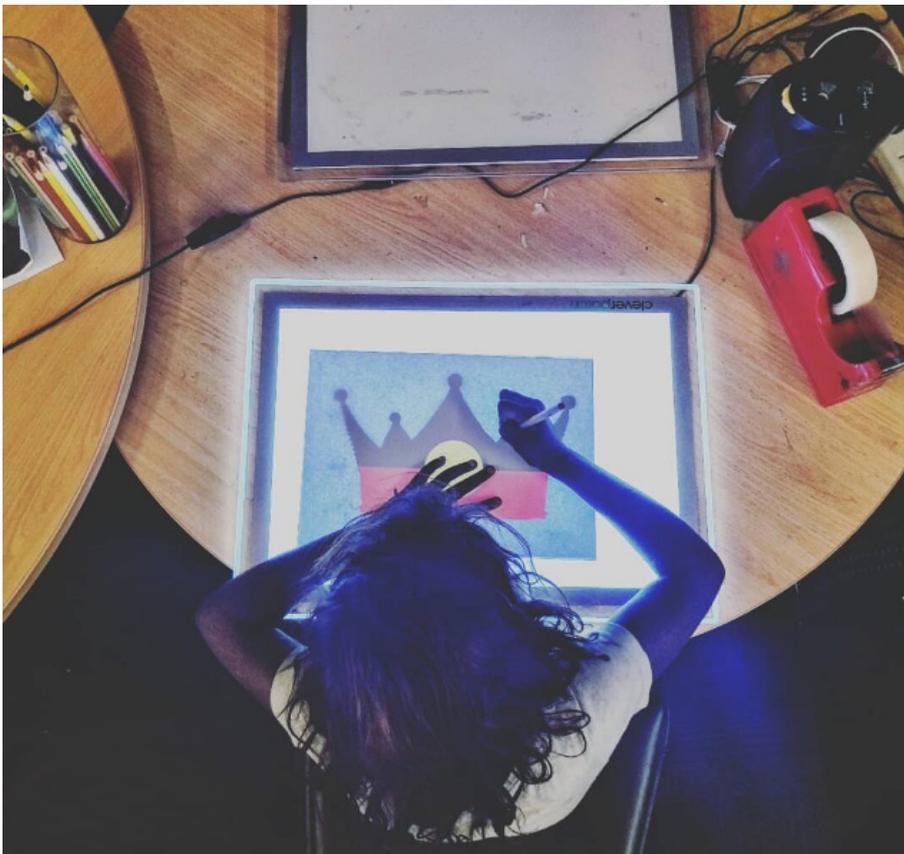
### Rebecca Nunydjulu at Milingimbi Community Library

Rebecca Nunydjulu, a lifetime resident of Milingimbi Community in East Arnhem Land, manages the Milingimbi Community Library, a joint-use school and community library in Milingimbi.

Rebecca was recently presented with an award for 13 years of outstanding service and dedication to East Arnhem Regional Council. Rebecca is well known at Library & Archives NT for her commitment, passion and enthusiasm for providing library services in Milingimbi.

# Literacy and Lifelong Learning

**Literacy has a profound effect on a wide range of life outcomes in Australia, including levels of employment, education, health and interaction with the justice system.**



## The role of public libraries

Public libraries play an essential role in literacy development in the Northern Territory. They foster a culture of reading in early childhood, by providing a wide range of family reading materials in safe, supported and accessible public spaces, and through the delivery of early childhood literacy programs such as Storytime designed to support the development of a culture of family reading.

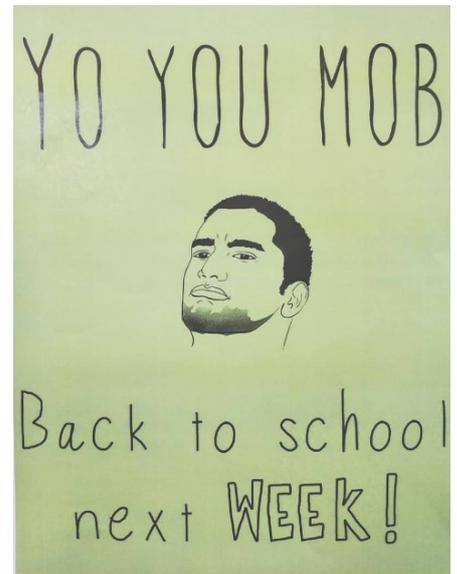
This year, libraries across the Northern Territory have supported and fostered literacy and learning through a range of programs including rhyme time for children up to 12 months of age and Storytime for parents and children aged from 1-5 years. In 2018/19 more than 19,000 children attended an early literacy session in a Northern Territory library. To put that in context, there were 17,630 children residing in the Northern Territory aged between 0-4 years according to the 2016 Census.

Libraries also provide extensive collections and targeted programs to support adult learning and can also act as spaces for the delivery of learning programs by other organisations.

**1,232**  
EARLY LITERACY  
SESSIONS 2018/19

**19,698** CHILDREN ATTENDED  
AN EARLY LITERACY SESSION

The infographic is a blue rectangular box containing a white icon of an open book on the left. To the right of the icon, the number '1,232' is written in a large, white, sans-serif font. Below this number, the words 'EARLY LITERACY SESSIONS 2018/19' are written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. At the bottom of the box, the text '19,698 CHILDREN ATTENDED AN EARLY LITERACY SESSION' is written in a white, sans-serif font.



## In Focus

### Geek in Residence – Alice Springs Public Library

Alice Springs Public Library has developed an award winning youth program. Geek in Residence aims to provide an inclusive space run by youth workers that provides lifelong learning opportunities for young Aboriginal people visiting the library. This program has seen tremendous success with over 11,355 youth accessing the program in 2018/19. The program supports youth workers to develop fun and accessible activities for youth including providing access to emerging technologies. The library even received a personalised video recording from Baker Boy, the 2019 National Indigenous Music Awards Artist of the Year.

### Tales to Tails – City of Palmerston Library

2019 saw City of Palmerston Library commence a new program aimed at improving the confidence of children aged 8-14 years to practice their reading and elevate their literacy skills by reading to a trained therapy dog. The program was quickly oversubscribed, with large numbers of children wanting to sign up for the three week program. The Library is working towards including this program on a regular basis in 2020.

### Young Territory Author Awards – City of Darwin Libraries

In its 29<sup>th</sup> year of production, the Young Territory Author Awards is an annual writing competition where entrants write and produce their own book. The Awards aim to inspire children and young people in the Northern Territory to explore ideas and turn them into stories. In 2018/19 more than 300 young people entered the awards, providing them with an opportunity to develop their writing skills and be nationally recognised.

#### IMAGES:

Left: Geek in Residence – Alice Springs Library

Above, then clockwise:

Tales to Tales – City of Palmerston

Geek in Residence – Alice Springs Library

Geek in Residence – Alice Springs Library

# Informed and Connected Citizens

Libraries are community information hubs that support the development of informed citizens who are able to effectively participate in community discussions, access government services and participate in local, Territory and national political processes.



## The role of public libraries

People are increasingly turning to libraries for support in navigating e-government services, and government agencies are using library spaces to provide information services.

### In Focus

#### Centrelink hub at Pine Creek Library

In 2018/19 Centrelink partnered with Victoria Daly Regional Council to provide Centrelink services at Pine Creek Library. Centrelink has provided a full self-service access point including touchscreen computers, phone and printers. The access point provides an accessible and supported place for community members to access government services.

#### Seniors Morning Tea at Taminmin Library

For many years, Taminmin Library in partnership with Friends of Taminmin Library has been delivering regular Senior's Morning Teas. Social isolation can be a problem for rural seniors and this program is aimed at promoting social and community connectedness. Ongoing learning opportunities are also provided as a diverse range of speakers attend the morning teas including health experts, horticulturalists, historians and local authors.



#### IMAGES:

Left: Centrelink hub at Pine Creek Library  
Right top: Seniors Morning Tea at Taminmin Community Library



### **Spoken English Meet Up – Alice Springs Library**

In 2019 Alice Springs Library continued to support its diverse community through the offer of regular English conversational meetings at the Library. The library offers an inclusive and welcoming environment where new migrants and those with limited English can engage in a relaxed space for practicing English skills.

# Digital Inclusion

The role of public libraries in supporting digital inclusion is more critical in the Northern Territory than elsewhere in Australia given the remoteness of many communities.

## The role of public libraries

Barriers to digital inclusion exist at several levels:

- Infrastructure (e.g. the availability of internet services in a particular location)
- Affordability (internet services are often most expensive in remote locations)
- Skills (individuals need to be able to operate technology and understand the online environment)
- Relevance (people need a reason to engage with online services)



Library services aim to address the affordability and skills gaps in particular. In 2018/19 libraries held 585 digital literacy sessions and over 1,000 people attended a digital literacy session at a Northern Territory public library.

In 2018/19, Library & Archives NT completed the rollout of Wi-Fi hotspots to 46 communities in the Northern Territory.

Provision of free internet access is a foundational public library service across Australia.

With the rollout complete, all of the Territory's 31 public libraries now provide this service supporting access to information across the Territory. In 2018-19 these community internet services were used 485,440 times, representing an increase in usage in the last two years of over 2,000% from the 23,326 sessions in 2016-17.

Access to the internet provides a range of benefits including accessing government services, banking, health and education opportunities.

## In Focus

### **Be Connected – Adelaide River Library, Alice Springs Library, City of Darwin Libraries, City of Palmerston Library, MacDonnell Regional Council**

Be Connected is an Australia wide initiative committed to increasing the confidence, skills and online safety of all Australians. Be Connected aims to empower everyone to use the internet and everyday technology to thrive in our digital world. Libraries host various digital literacy sessions covering subjects like using your smartphone, social media and staying safe on the internet. Be Connected sessions are being held in libraries across the Northern Territory both urban and remote.



### **RFID Establishment – City of Palmerston Library**

2018/19 saw the implementation of RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) at the City of Palmerston Library. This new system offers a faster and more efficient method of borrowing and returning items to the library. RFID technology enables efficient inventory, security and circulation operations in libraries. RFID enhances individual privacy by allowing users to checkout materials without relying on library staff.



### **Steam for Seniors – City of Darwin Libraries**

City of Darwin Libraries introduced a drop in technology zone for seniors. The Tech Zone is an inclusive, welcoming space for people of all ages to engage with and try emerging technologies. Most popular among Darwin seniors are the VR Goggles, followed closely by robots.

#### **IMAGES:**

*Left: Launch of RFID at City of Palmerston Library*

*Top: Be Connected – Adelaide River image  
Above: STEAM for Seniors at City of Darwin Libraries*

## Personal Development and Wellbeing

**Libraries contribute to the wellness of their communities. International studies have found a significant association between regular library use and reported wellbeing, as well as correlations between literacy and both physical and mental health.**



### The role of public libraries

Libraries contribute to the health prevention agenda. They provide collections of books, magazines, DVDs and audio materials that support self-development and reading for pleasure. They also provide collections of reputable healthcare information.

Home Library Services are an integral part of library services across the Northern Territory. Home library services exist to provide services to users who through reasons of disability, illness or mobility are unable to access library services in person. Several libraries across the Northern Territory provide home library services, often managed by dedicated volunteers. In 2018/19 there were 88 home service library patrons across the NT who received 7,479 items.



## In Focus

### High Tea – Adelaide River Community Library

2018/19 saw Adelaide River Community Library continue with its successful high tea program. This weekly morning tea for children provides a safe, inclusive space to learn conversation and social skills whilst having fun with new experiences. High Tea at the library has become the high point of the week for many children in Adelaide River.

### Lego Clubs – Alyangula, Jabiru and Taminmin Libraries.

Lego Clubs have become a standard offering in many urban libraries in the last few years. Lego clubs have been found to teach children about teamwork, creativity, fine motor skills and problem solving. Alice Springs Library, City of Darwin and City of Palmerston Library all have flourishing Lego clubs. In 2018/19 we saw the development of Lego clubs to more remote libraries such as Jabiru Library, Taminmin Library and Alyangula Community Library in East Arnhem Land.

### Seed Library – Katherine Public Library

The Katherine Seed Library's primary focus is on providing free and easy access to viable seeds so that as many people as possible are encouraged to grow and enjoy healthy organic food. Community members donate seeds to the library which are loaned to library members who return new seeds after harvest.

#### IMAGES:

Top: School holiday fun at Nhulunbuy  
Right: Home Service Team – Palmerston Library



# Stronger and More Creative Communities

Libraries build communities, and have a long and proud track record of breaking down barriers to access to information and community support.



## The role of public libraries

Social inclusion is at the heart of the public library: a free, welcoming public space which is shared by all members of the community, where people can meet and talk and which are open for a range of groups and users.

Libraries also celebrate culture, identity and community pride. They collect information that documents the history of communities, such as books, photographs and newspapers.

They host exhibitions, telling local stories or highlighting the work of local artists, musicians or community groups. In 2018/19, Northern Territory libraries ran over 3,818 programs and over 78,000 people attended a diverse variety and range of programs in our libraries.

## In Focus

### Re-imagining Classification in Galiwin'ku Community Library – East Arnhem Regional Council

In 2017 Galiwin'ku Community Library embarked on a pilot to redefine library services with Yolŋu language and culture at the centre of the library. East Arnhem Regional Council partnered with Library & Archives NT to facilitate the development of a new classification system, in Yolŋu Matha eschewing traditional Western classification schemes and practices. The project has been considered a great success by all stakeholders with several other Councils interested in pursuing similar projects in their libraries. The pilot has seen national acclaim in the library sector, particularly as this is believed to be the first time an Australian library has developed a classification system that aligns with Indigenous knowledge management concepts.

#### IMAGES:

Left: Tabletop Gaming – Tennant Creek Library

Right top to bottom: Jabiru Library Reference Group

Galiwin'ku Library

Drag Queen Storytime – City of Palmerston

### Jabiru Library Reinvention – Jabiru Library

In recent years, a quiet reinvention of library services and spaces has been underway at Jabiru Library. A renewed focus on developing safe, welcoming and culturally relevant services and collections has led the library to rethink the layout, furniture and programs on offer to the Jabiru community. A new library reference group was formed by members of the community to assist in the library's transformation. New technology, furniture and programs has contributed to a redesigned library service that continues to support a changing Jabiru community.



### Drag Queen Storytime – City of Palmerston Library

Responding directly to community feedback requesting more programs that support LGBTQI+ children and families, City of Palmerston Library trialled Drag Queen Storytimes as part of a commitment to providing opportunities for all people to participate in activities that celebrate themselves and their families. Vogue and Ferocia from Drag Territory were fabulous entertainers and certainly got everyone dancing. The reaction from the community has been overwhelmingly popular and very well attended with more than 100 participants at each Storytime.



### Tabletop Gaming – Tennant Creek Library

In 2018/19, Tennant Creek Library introduced Tabletop Gaming for tweens and youth. Internationally, gaming has seen a surge of interest in young people in returning to libraries. Games foster life skills such as socialisation, literacy, problem solving and most of all, they are fun. Saturday sessions at Tennant Creek Library has become quite popular and developed into a dedicated group of participants.



# Economic and Workforce Development

**Libraries play a significant economic role within their communities. They improve employment opportunities through developing literacy and digital skills, through supporting people undertaking formal study with space and resources, and through providing programs such as resume writing skills for job seekers.**

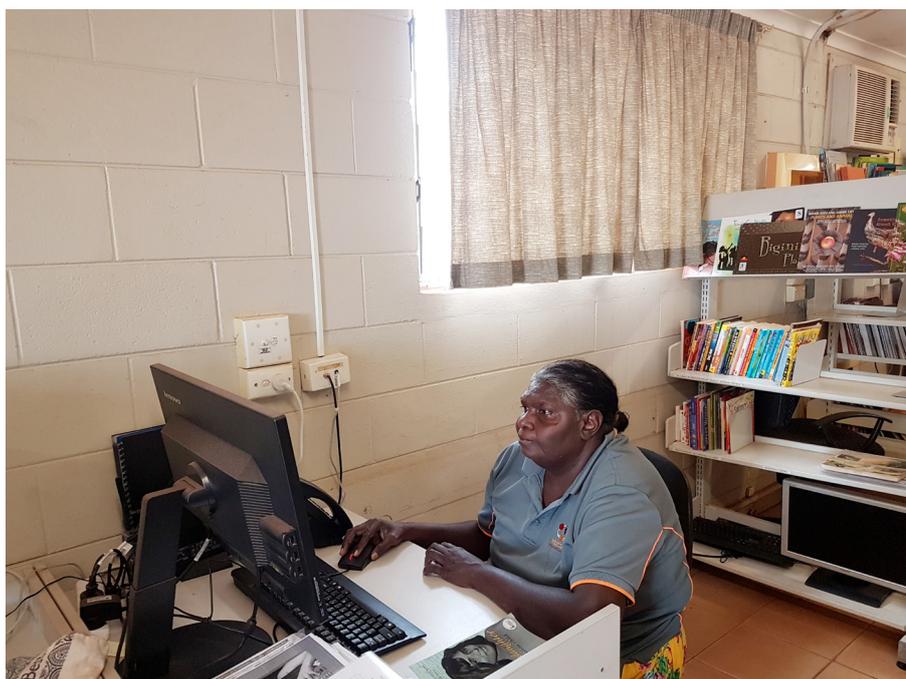
## The role of public libraries

Libraries support individual businesses through providing workspaces and internet connectivity, particularly valuable services for mobile workers.

They are spaces that frequently support tourists, providing local information, internet connectivity and comfortable relaxation areas.

Much of the economic benefit delivered by libraries is long term, and flows from the development of more literate and educated communities, which have been shown to lead to higher economic performance as well as reduced costs to services such as healthcare and justice systems.

In 2018/19, NT libraries community or meeting rooms were booked for over 4931 hours by community groups or small businesses.



## In Focus

### Get That Job – City of Darwin Libraries

In collaboration with the City of Darwin's Youth Services Team, the library offers Get that Job – a series of workshops designed to provide young people with workplace skills to improve and expand their employment opportunities. In 2019 workshops included public speaking and developing online portfolios.

### Get Job Ready – City of Palmerston Library

2018 saw City of Palmerston Library introduce a job seeker support program which is run alongside Drop-In Computer Sessions. Anyone can drop in and receive assistance and support from library staff in writing resumes and preparing job applications.

### Mataranka Library and Museum Refurbishment

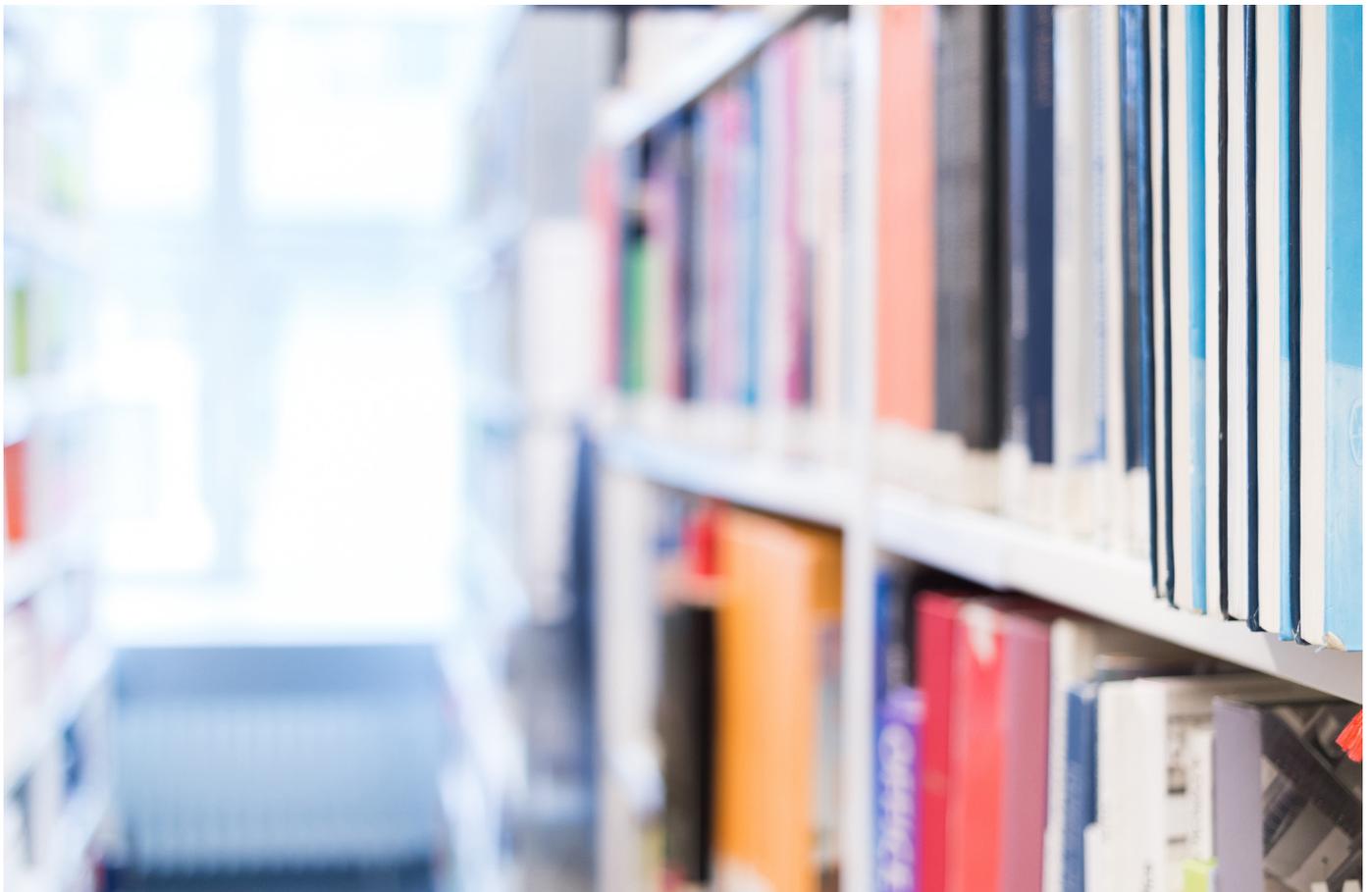
On the 5<sup>th</sup> April 2019, Mataranka Library was reopened after several months of closure as the new Mataranka Library and Museum. In 2017 Roper Gulf Regional Council saw an opportunity to improve access to the Never Never Museum through a refurbishment of the library space. Including new computers, furniture and an increased space with a contemporary feel and look for the library. Now, with increased hours, additional library staff and access to the Never Never Museum, Mataranka Library is contributing to cultural tourism in the Roper Gulf Region.



#### IMAGES:

Left: Wadeye Community Library  
 Top: Mataranka Library and Museum  
 Right: Milikapiti Community Library

# Northern Territory Public Libraries Key Statistics 2018-19

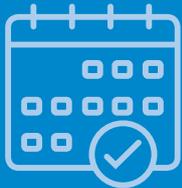




**858,690**  
**LIBRARY VISITS**  
2018/19



**69,575**  
**LIBRARY MEMBERS**  
IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY<sup>1</sup>



**3,818**  
**PROGRAMS**  
NT PUBLIC LIBRARIES



**30%**  
**NT POPULATION**  
ARE LIBRARY MEMBERS

**78,926 ATTENDEES**  
LIBRARY PROGRAMS 2018/19

**TOTAL LOANS 724,287**



**1,232**  
**EARLY LITERACY**  
**SESSIONS** 2018/19

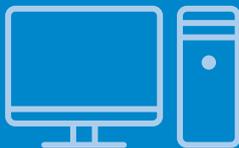


**638,911**  
**PHYSICAL LOANS**

**19,698** CHILDREN ATTENDED  
AN EARLY LITERACY SESSION



**85,376**  
**eLOANS**  
(eBOOKS, eAUDIOBOOKS, eMAGAZINES)



**DIGITAL LITERACY**  
2018/19



**89%** PHYSICAL LOANS  
**11%** DIGITAL LOANS

**585** SESSIONS    **1,095** ATTENDEES

**484,440** INTERNET SESSIONS  
ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY WI-FI

<sup>1</sup> Library membership numbers cannot be ascertained in some remote libraries where library usage is primarily onsite. Overall NT public library membership is likely to be higher than stated.



Adelaide River Library at the Campdraft