



John Hargreaves MLA

MINISTER FOR TERRITORY AND MUNICIPAL SERVICES

MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

MINISTER FOR HOUSING

MINISTER FOR MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS

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CHANGES TO THE PROVISION OF LIBRARY AND SHOPFRONT SERVICES

Territory and Municipal Services Minister, John Hargreaves, today announced a new direction for ACT Government Shopfront and Library services.

“A full review has been done of the ACT Public Library by renowned library consultant Dr Veronica Lunn to benchmark it against other jurisdictions and look at every aspect of its operation,” Mr Hargreaves said.

“As part of the revitalisation program for our public libraries we are committed to putting resources into improving libraries with a strong record of community usage – hence the building of a much larger Civic Library as part of the \$16 m Civic Library and Link Project, the \$1.1 m refurbishment of Belconnen Library and the construction of the new \$3.5 m Kippax Library last year.

“Following this review and extensive consultation with staff the decision has been made to relocate Griffith Library’s services into other libraries, specifically the new Civic Library. This library will be over 60% larger than the existing one and will have new computer facilities including a training room, community meeting space and even a youth area with MTV, Playstation and CD listening devices.

“It will also provide exciting opportunities for new strategic partnerships with the library’s neighbours in Civic Square – the Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre and Resource Library (refurbished at a cost of \$3 m), as well as the Canberra Museum and Gallery and the Canberra Theatre which are part of the Civic Library and Link Project.

“While visitation to our eight other public libraries has increased in recent years, visitation to Griffith Library has been declining and consequently it will close on Friday 1 December, with the new Civic Library to open on Friday 8 December.

“Our research shows there is a high level of cross usage with other libraries in close proximity to Griffith, mainly Civic and Woden. Griffith Library users will be able to travel from Griffith to Civic Library on bus routes 36 and 38 or to Woden Library on bus route 38.

“Mobile Library and Home Library services will be relocated to Belconnen Library over coming months. They will both continue to provide a much-needed service for the elderly, housebound and those in remote areas.

“Currently two-thirds of our collection materials are over five years of age so we will be making a substantial investment in modernising ACT Public Library collections, as well as introducing

technologies that make borrowing easier. We also recognise the need to expand the Gungahlin Library to meet the needs of the area's rapidly growing population."

Mr Hargreaves said that a review had also been done into ACT Government Shopfront services

"Over the past five years, the ACT Government has pursued a strategy through Canberra Connect to direct customers to more efficient and user-friendly service channels. Options now include Australia Post payment facilities which provide a face-to-face service, Bpay, automated phone payments, online payments, and the Canberra Connect call centre. These service channels have contributed to an overall reduction in shopfront customer numbers as the community shifts to self-service and other alternative options. These options provide additional convenience as they are not restricted to normal business hours. For example, in August 2002 about 65% of transactions were done through Shopfronts and in August 2006 this was down to approximately 40%.

"As a result of this shift, Civic Shopfront will close on Friday 1 December 2006."

Mr Hargreaves said that members of the community will be able to use the many alternatives available (such as Australia Post outlets, Bpay, 13 22 81 or www.canberraconnect.act.gov.au) and will still have access to Dickson Shopfront (which is four kilometres away), as well as Belconnen, Woden and Tuggeranong Shopfronts which will continue to deliver the full range of services.

"To cater for those in our community who do not have access to the Internet and who shop, work and live in Civic, the new Civic Library will provide free internet access. Moves are also in progress to incorporate a limited user-friendly service facility into the Library which would provide driver licence renewals and some other information services from early-2007.

"Customers visiting Civic Shopfront over the next month will be informed of the service options and of the alternative payment and information methods."

People with enquiries should call Canberra Connect on 13 22 81 or visit www.canberraconnect.act.gov.au

Statement Ends

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