

Characteristics of [Australia](#) and its Public Library System

In 2011 Australia's population was 22.6 million. The current estimate is 23.2 million (Source: [Australian Bureau of Statistics](#)). 85% of Australia's population lives around the coastline and 77% of the population lives in the three eastern seaboard states of Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. Australia has three tiers of Government - Federal (1), State (6) & Territory (2), and Local (560). Local Government is both the principal deliverer and funder (84%) of Australia's public library services. Total funding of Australia's public libraries increased by 24% to \$1.01 billion in the five-year period 2008-12. Funding per head of population increased by 17% to \$44.55 in the same period. In 2012, 44% of Australians were public library members (Source: [NSLA Public Library Statistics 2011-12](#)). The organisations supporting Australia's public libraries include [ALIA](#), [PLA](#), [NSLA](#), [FOLA](#), [ALGA](#), [LGMA](#) and the [National Library of Australia](#).

The [Northern Territory \(NT\)](#) has a population of 0.24m. [Darwin](#) is the capital of the NT. NT councils provide public library services under the *Local Government Act 2008*. The libraries are supported by the [Northern Territory Library](#) including the NT Library's [Public Libraries and Knowledge Centres Program](#). In 2007 the Northern Territory Library won the [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Access to Learning Award](#) for this program. In 2012, NT's public libraries were funded 55% by Local Government and 45% by the [Northern Territory Government](#).

[Western Australia \(WA\)](#) has a population of 2.5m. [Perth](#) is the capital of WA. WA public libraries operate under the *Library Board of Western Australia Act 1951* and the *WA Local Government Act 1995*. In 2012, the WA public libraries were funded 88% by Local Government and 14% by the [WA State Government](#). The libraries are supported by the [State Library of WA](#). The Public Library Association is [PLWA](#).

[South Australia \(SA\)](#) has a population of 1.7m. [Adelaide](#) is the capital of SA. SA's public libraries operate under the *SA Libraries Act 1982* and the *SA Local Government Act 1999*. In 2012, SA's public libraries were funded 80% by Local Government and 20% by the [SA State Government](#). The libraries are supported by the [State Library of South Australia](#) and work collaboratively within the [SA Public Library Network](#).

[Victoria](#) has a population of 5.7m. [Melbourne](#) is the capital of Victoria. Victoria's public libraries operate under the *Victorian Libraries Act 1988* and the *Victorian Local Government Act 1989*. In 2012, Victoria's public libraries were funded 83% by Local Government and 17% by the [Victorian State Government](#). The libraries are supported by the [State Library of Victoria](#). The [SWIFT Library Consortium](#) is a library partnership business model. [PLVN](#) is the Victorian public libraries' advocacy and partnership organisation.

[Tasmania](#), the island state, has a population of 0.51m. [Hobart](#) is the capital of Tasmania. [LINC Tasmania](#) is a statewide network that gives Tasmanians access to library services, research and information, adult literacy support, community learning, online access, and archive and heritage services. In 2012, LINC Tasmania was 100% funded by the [Tasmanian State Government](#). LINC Tasmania operates under the *Tasmanian Libraries Act (1984)* and the *Tasmanian Archives Act (1983)*.

[Queensland](#) has a population of 4.6m. [Brisbane](#) is the capital of Queensland. [Brisbane City Council](#) is Australia's largest council. Queensland's public libraries operate under the *Queensland Libraries Act 1988* and the *Queensland Local Government Act 2009*. In 2012, the Queensland public libraries were funded 89% by Local Government and 11% by the [Queensland State Government](#). The libraries are supported by the [State Library of Queensland](#). The Public Library Association is [QPLA](#).

[New South Wales \(NSW\)](#) has a population of 7.3m. [Sydney](#) is the capital of NSW. NSW public libraries operate under the *NSW Libraries Act 1939* and the *NSW Local Government Act 1993*. In 2012, NSW public libraries were funded 92% by Local Government and 8% by the [NSW State Government](#). The libraries are supported by the [State Library of NSW](#). The [SWIFT Library Consortium](#) and [Shorelink](#) are library partnership business models. The Public Library Associations are [MPLA](#) and [PLNSW](#).

The [Australian Capital Territory \(ACT\)](#) has a population of 0.38m. [Canberra](#) is Australia's capital city. [Libraries ACT](#) provides public library services to the ACT community. It is a business unit within the Territory Services Division of the Department of Territory and Municipal Services in the [ACT Government](#). The [ACT Heritage Library](#) is a unique arm of Libraries ACT. In 2012, Libraries ACT was 100% funded by the ACT Government.