Submission for the Australia 2020 Summit
from
Australian Library and Information Association
and
Public Libraries Australia

PUBLICATION DETAILS #
So that your submission can be published on the www.australia2020.gov.au website before the Summit, we need you to provide a 'Name for Publication' that you are happy to have appear with your submission. If you ar submitting on behalf of a group, this may be your group's name.

Individual Name/Group Name for Publication on the website*	Australian Library and Information Association and Public Libraries Australia

CONTACT DETAILS
We need to collect some personal details from you in case we need to contact you in the lead-up to or after the summit to discuss your ideas further. These details will only be used for this purpose. If you are making a group submission, please provide these details for one member of your group.

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Economic Infrastructure, the digital economy and the future of our cities

The *Australia 2020* Summit will examine ways to:

   a. Boost public and private investment in economic infrastructure

   b. Improve planning and coordination of infrastructure investment across different levels of government and the public and private sectors (including maximising the most efficient future design of our cities)

   c. Ensure that digital technologies are harnessed to improve consumer services, business productivity and the delivery of government services.

Australians are supported for their development of literacy/reading, education, business, community and digital access through a network of approximately 1,522 national, state and public library service points. Australians use these libraries heavily – they made over 108 million visits in 2005-06. In addition Australians benefit for services provided by approximately 9000 school libraries, 42 university libraries, technical and further education libraries, health libraries, law libraries and other special libraries.

As a nation we lack basic literacy skills. In January, the Australian Bureau of Statistics released its report, *Adult literacy and life skills survey*, finding that slightly less than half of the Australian population, approximately 7 million, failed to achieve the minimum required level or higher in prose and document literacy.

To be able to harness digital technologies and equip our nation to compete, libraries need to be recognised as providing vital information, information skills and collections. Libraries individually are selectively digitising the nation's documentary heritage, working to increasingly deliver support for government services online[1] and providing information skills.

Information and literacy skills are vital – recent research has found that they are associated with individual and business success. A US study[2] found:

> The habit of daily reading, for instance, overwhelmingly correlates with better reading skills and higher academic On the other hand, poor reading skills correlate with lower levels of financial and job success.

Access to the Internet through a new national broadband network will open a door to information for many Australians. Computers in schools will also increase access. Information on the Internet is, however, of variable quality and reliability. Australian libraries, including public and school libraries, have together selected quality electronic resources. At present only a small number of libraries can afford these resources, but investing in these online resources would be of great benefit to the community. In addition, support for training would increase computer and information literacy and enable individuals to use the Internet for education, business, health or community information.

We need:
- Australian culture online with a nationally funded digital program, rather than requiring libraries and other cultural organisations to reduce other services to provide digital collections
- Literacy skills with partnerships which recognise and fund roles for schools, libraries and community organisations rather than fragmented, piecemeal solutions
- National online quality resources to support education, business and communities
- Recognition and support for the delivery of government services through public libraries, rather than cost shifting.

The current level of literacy in Australia is not something to be proud of. We have much to achieve and many infrastructure issues to address to ensure that we as a nation have the skills and resources to operate in the digital economy. National debate should go beyond learning at school to engage with business, community and libraries, recognising that improvements can only be made if the wider community is involved.

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[1] Environmetrics (2004) *NSW Public Libraries and eGovernment*. Sydney: State Library of New South Wales for the Public Library Network Research Committee. http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/services/public_libraries/docs/egov_report.pdf
[2] National Endowment of the Arts (2007) *To Read or Not To Read: A Question of National Consequence*, http://www.nea.gov/research/ToRead.pdf

Australia 2020 Summit – Submission Form

Future directions for rural industries and rural communities

The *Australia 2020* Summit will examine:

   a. What rural industries are best positioned to take advantage of the global consumer markets of the 21st century

   b. What options are possible for effective structural adjustment for rural industries and communities suffering the long term impact of climate change

   c. What is the most intelligent form of support the Government can provide to ensure the long term sustainability of rural and regional communities, including the fostering of the next generation of Australian farmers.

Libraries are often the strongest and most sustainable source of support in rural communities. They provide access to information, government services and meeting places.

Intelligent support should include fostering centres which are already established with programs that offer outreach in a sustainable form, skills and resources information services at the point of contact in rural communities.

Towards a creative Australia: the future of the arts, film and design

The *Australia 2020* Summit will examine:

   a. Future directions for Australia's principal arts bodies

   b. Future directions for the ABC, SBS, Australia Television and Radio Australia

   c. How best to develop a globally innovative and competitive film industry

   d. How to encourage participation in emerging global industries such as game design, the internet 2.0, graphics-rich applications and animation

   e. How we build on the creative sector's potential as a major Australian export industry.

Much of the record of Australia is contained in its libraries – particularly national, state and public libraries. While developments in recent years have led to digitisation, particularly pictures and newspapers and now a national newspaper digitisation program, much of our creative heritage is locked up and inaccessible to the nations citizen and new generation of creative people simply because of geographic location.

Our digital programs are world class – the National Library's Pandora program of creating a national archive of digital publishing has led development of standards, technologies and preservation.

Without a national framework and funding, our creative achievements and histories are fragments strewn through physical collections and roadkill on the information superhighway.

To move forward we need national thinking and programs, such as those suggested by the Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts Committee report *Libraries in the online environment*.

Innovative industry depends on access to our creative resources, which needs a national program to provide a future for activities such as Picture Australia, Music Australia and digitisation programs.