Mobile & Outreach Services

NSW Public Libraries

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Practice, *standards* *& guidelines*

Mobile Branch Guidelines

The following guidelines are based on Living Learning Libraries[14]. Additional information has been added to include scope statements, the mobile as a branch library, and mobile stops as mobile branch locations.

OBJECTIVE

To provide public library services and programs via a specially designed and equipped vehicle to those people who cannot reach a fixed or static branch library.

SCOPE

A mobile library - sometimes a division of a public library, using transport means to provide documents and services directly to users as an alternative to access on library premises [Item 2.1.8 ISO 2789:2013 (E)]

Activities outside the library premises - a mobile branch library may also be involved in delivering, or supporting, outreach services and programs [Item 3.3.2 - ISO 2789:2013 (E)]

Services and activities include:
- Lending services to the population to be served i.e. access to the library collections (mobile branch collections may be dedicated or sourced from the library service's greater collection)
- Technology access e.g. access to information, eMaterials, and the Internet via fixed or portable technology
- Photocopying, printing, saving to USB
- WiFi access
- Readers' advisory services
- Reference services
- Inter-library lending
- Programs e.g. children's story time or activities, homework help, adult programs
- Outreach services and support e.g. home library service, and institutional services such as nursing homes, and schools
- Elements of mobile maker spaces

MOBILE AS A BRANCH

Mobile library services are effectively moveable branch libraries, in that they generally offer the same suite of core services that are provided by a static branch. The availability of user space, the spread of opening hours at any given location, and the lack of access to amenities, are the major differences. There is also (in NSW) a difference between the qualifications required to run a static branch and those required for a mobile branch operator. In many cases the appropriate driver's licence appears to take precedence over a library qualification (at least in the first instance).

MOBILE BRANCH LOCATIONS

An opportunity exists to redefine mobile stops as branch locations i.e. the mobile branch stop becomes a branch, when the mobile is in attendance. For example, when the Richmond-Tweed Mobile is on location in Nimbin, it becomes known as the Nimbin branch. This approach strengthens the connection between static branch and mobile services, both in a management and community sense. Current nomenclature and structure, albeit unintentionally, could be seen as defining mobile services as an add-on to static services, rather than part of the seamless whole.

GUIDELINES

1. Access is provided to a representative range of the library's services and collections within the mobile branch library, including access to library technology
2. The mobile branch library's schedule and opening hours are appropriate for customers and locations

SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

1. Mobile branch sites are chosen and reviewed according to criteria developed by the library service with reference to published guidelines[15]
2. The mobile branch library size and vehicle type is appropriate for the services and outreach programs delivered from it, and for the access constraints of the locations it services.
3. The mobile branch library is designed and configured for ease of access and satisfies relevant work health and safety requirements.
4. Mobile branch library staff are qualified in line with static branch staff, and with reference to *Staffing Standards S7 – Qualified staff members – minimum level; and S8 Staff members – special responsibility for targeted services.*[16]
5. Mobile branch library staff are appropriately licensed for the type of vehicle employed.
6. Mobile branch library staff are knowledgeable about the library's collections, services and procedures, and work health and safety requirements.
7. Sufficient staff are available to meet demand at high activity stops.

[14] Living Learning Libraries: Standards and guidelines for NSW public libraries 5th Edition http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/services/public_libraries/docs/living_learning_libraries2013.pdf [accessed Jan 2015]
[15] For example, IFLA, Queensland
[16] Living Learning Libraries: Standards and guidelines for NSW public libraries 5th Edition http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/services/public_libraries/docs/living_learning_libraries2013.pdf [accessed Jan 2015]

8. Sufficient backup staff, qualified to drive the vehicle and qualified in library service delivery, are available to maintain continuity of service.
9. Mobile branch library staff participate in training and professional development programs.
10. Mobile branch library staff participate in service and program planning.
11. The mobile branch library vehicle is maintained and replaced according to a planned schedule.
12. Mobile branch library supports and participates in the delivery of special needs and other outreach services.
13. Mobile branch library services and programs are measured separately (from static branches and central library) against the population to be served i.e. number of individuals for whom the mobile branch library has been established to provide services and materials.

ISO USER DEFINITIONS

The following ISO definitions are provided to inform service scope and measurement[17].

- **Population to be served**: the number of individuals for whom the library is set up to provide services and materials (for public libraries, this will normally be the population of the legal service area (authority) [...] e.g. LGA)
- **Active borrower**: registered user who has borrowed at least one item during the reporting period [This count underrates the number of active users, but for many libraries this is the only manageable measure]
- **Active user**: registered user who has visited or made use of library facilities or services during the reporting period [includes active borrowers, may include users of electronic services if possible to identify individual uses, or if data can be obtained by means of surveys]
- **Active user**: unregistered (active user not registered as a member). If a library can identify unregistered active users e.g. by surveys, these should be counted separately
- **External user**: user of the library who does not belong to that library's population to be served (may be a registered or unregistered user) e.g. non-resident workforce, tourists/visitors, those from other LGAs targeting specific services or activities (users of multiple library services)

OTHER RELEVANT ISO DEFINITIONS

- **Branch library**: part of a larger administrative unit providing, in separate quarters, a service for a particular user group (e.g. children) or for a locally defined clientele
- **Event**: pre-arranged activity with cultural, educational, social, political, scholarly, or other intent [These are only events arranged by the library on its own or in partnership – inside or outside the premises. Events organised inside the library by other organisations are excluded. Virtual events are also excluded]
- **Performance indicator**: numerical, symbolic, or verbal expression derived from library statistics and data used to characterize the performance of a library
- **Target population**: groups of actual and potential users appropriate to an individual library as the object of a specific service or as the primary users of specific materials
- **Target population with special needs**: part of a library's population to be served with needs that require special library services [special needs can be caused by physical and health impairment, economic disadvantage e.g. long term unemployment, cultural difference, educational background, or other circumstances that require special library services. Those without additional needs are not included. A library may have more than one target population with special needs; and an individual may belong to more than one such target population]